CHAPTER SIX

A. DEGENERATION OF TANTRA

In spite of Tantra’s long, glorious journey into the all parts of India and despite of its immense popularity, vast literature, universal character, scientific approach, zenith position, royal patronage, stupendous influence upon the people’s daily activities related to rituals, Tantra came down from the highest peak of popularity.

A scholar observes,

"Now, Tantra had acquired a very odious name due to many unfortunate developments in the downward curve of our civilization."

We have seen in the history of India that, whenever masses in large number rushed and got into any cult and made it widely popular, many reactionary elements, extraneous customs and unrestrained practices infiltrated into the original form of that cult and disfigured it. Ultimately it declined and lost its glory.

It also happened to Tantra. Scholars and researchers have sorted out the main causes of the downfall of Tantra. We may put forward some of those causes of the degeneration of Tantra.

a) Cryptic Language

All the principal Hindu philosophical works were written in Sanskrit. Tantra language is also Sanskrit. But Sāndhya Bhasā, which is purely a symbolic language.
frequently used in Tantra. This technical language was beyond the capacity of the common people. Only initiated Sadhakas could understand the symbolic language of Tantra with the help of the skilled Tantric teachers. Moreover, Tantra is full of technical terms like Bhūtaśuddhi, Pañcatattva, Satcakra, Ṣāṭkarma etc. Common people misinterpreted the principles of Tantra for want of their knowledge of the cryptic language of Tantra. So Tantra was 'largely misunderstood for its symbolic language'.

A scholar views,

The texts were difficult to comprehend because of their complex symbolisms pertaining to mystical powers of circles, diagrams and triangles.

Of course, a scholar justifies the cryptic language of Tantra -

*The Tantric texts were written in an obscure language, which attempted to hide their true meaning from those who could misuse them for selfish reasons.*

This explanation seems to be true. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the symbolic language of Tantra is one of the most important causes of the declined position of Tantra.

b) Debased Practices

Forgetting the importance of wine and woman in Tantric rituals, some Tantric Sadhakas got themselves involved into corrupt practices. These debased practices infiltrated into society and smashed the moral standard of community life.

A scholar writes,

*Tantra had acquired a reputation of debased and morally corrupt practices.*

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8. TH, p. 16.
9. PHS, p. 84.
particularly the group sex of the left hand sect of the Five Makaras.3

Some of the Tantra texts practically inculcated what appears to non-Tantrikas—unbridled licence.12

A famous scholar explains,13

The history of religion teaches us an important lesson. It is that any exaggerated importance attached to the female element in religion, or the association of amorous elements, even though inspired or prompted by the highest spiritual motive and backed by meta-physical or mystic interpretations, is sure to lead to the degradation of its followers. This is best illustrated by the fate of Šākta and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cults.

It cannot be denied that the ignorance of the hidden meaning of the secret symbols of Tantra was to a very great extent responsible for the heinous and obscene practices and the low standard of morality prevailing in the society.14

c) Oppression by some Muslim Rulers

According to Padoux, Tantra was in fact very widespread and indeed the common property of all the religions of ‘medieval India’.15

But Tantra became the eyesore of some fundamentalist Muslim rulers in medieval India. They vowed to carry on the large-scale destruction of Tantric centers.

In the language of a scholar,16

Tantric practices flourished on a grand scale throughout eastern India until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the Moslem invaders laid to waste the great universities and centers of Tantra. Many thousands of books, manuscripts, paintings and

14. PHS, p. 86.
15. Padoux as quoted in THIC, p. 39.
Icons were destroyed............ This was the end of the golden age for Tantrism in India.

d) Dread of Tantric Practice

All Tantric rituals are not easy to be practised. Tantric rituals like Savasadhanā could not and cannot be performed by any ordinary Sādhaka-cum-householder. Moreover some Tantric practices found among the Kāpālikas and Aghori's could not be performed by ordinary householder Tantric practitioners. These dread practices compelled many ordinary Sādhakas to leave the Tantric Cult.

e) Actual Abuse of Injunction

Many Tantrics forgot the essence of Tantra Sādhanā. Their aim was to possess physical strength and supernatural powers (Siddhis) by performing Tantra Sādhanā. They began to misuse their energy in the application of Śat karma for their material gains and supremacy over enemies. The result was that fear, abhor and hatred grew up in the minds of the masses.

An eminent scholar observes18,

It can be easily seen how a creed like this can give rise to degenerate doctrines and impure practices. In the hands of the evil-minded, the very teachings of the Tantras can and have become dreaded doctrines. The Yoga system of philosophy tells us how the centers of the body combined with the constant development of concentration by the mind leads man to develop some extra-ordinary powers such as telepathy, telekinesis and clairvoyance. When the Śakti worshipper finds it easy to stop his worship and attains such powers, using them for his own personal glory, he becomes a menace to society .... Many have fallen for the lures of extra-ordinary powers attainable on the way, thus bringing

17. KN, 14/3-14; MN, 4/56-57; KNT, p. 134; TMSB, p. 148; RUY, p.90.
18. CSH, p. 93.
disgrace not only on themselves, but to the highest ideals which they were supposed to hold aloft. It is for this reason that Sakti worship has fallen on evil days today and is looked down upon.

f) Socio-Religious Condition

Tantra's revolutionary nature was not liked by the orthodox Brahmanical society. Tantra allows women and the Sudras in all the Tantric rituals. This freedom for women and the Sudras was restricted to the prevalent Vedic Cult at that period when Tantra flourished. It was also not easily accepted by other orthodox philosophies. Other philosophers threw bitter comments against Tantra. Constant propaganda against Tantra by some philosophical schools diverted a large section of people from the Tantric path with the result of the decline in its popularity.

A scholar comments19,

“When Tantra was in full form, some other systems also emerged out which were contrary to Tantric doctrines. Tantra believes in the gratification of social and family life, while the other systems declared strict austerity and renunciation of worldly and family life as a way of salvation. This contrary concept created a conflict in the layman.”

g) Influence of the Western Civilization

Due to the influence of the Western Civilization upon the educated Indian youth, Tantra had to lose its strong ground.

In spite of vowed attempts of Tantric scholars like Shiva Chandra Vidyarnava, John Woodroffe and M.M. Gopinath Kaviraja, to remove all misconceptions about Tantra, Tantra failed to re-occupy its previous position as it was in the peak period.

19. ET, ii, p.166.
B. CRITICISMS AGAINST TANTRA AND THEIR REFUTATIONS

In the philosophical, religious and cultural history of India, no other word has been able to attract the attention of the philosophers, critics and religious teachers as Tantra. Sceptic critics and detractors of Tantra have left no stone unturned to underestimate the vast Tantric Literature. They often attack the Tantric Cult by labelling various charges against Tantra. Questions of the utility of Tantra are frequently raised, the potency of Tantra is vehemently opposed and the contribution of Tantra is often questioned.

A Tantric scholar laments 

Discussion and agitation and insult have to such an extent and with such constancy persecuted and wounded the community of Sādhakas that no one who is a son with a body of flesh and blood and strength can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and Father of the Universe slandered and abused in such manner.

“For long, Tantra was a step child of Indology, ignored or undervalued by Western scholars and representatives of the so-called Hindu Renaissance”, observes another scholar.  

Moreover, there are persons alleged to be orientalists who talk about Tantra glibly and in such a strain that the term Tantra stands, as if, for all conceivable evil embodied in the basal side of human nature.

Generally following charges are labelled against Tantra.

A class of black magic, full of obscene and repulsive elements, unfit for a man


22. ODA, p. 13.
good taste to study, meaningless mummeries, shop of opium seller Sāstra of slaughter Kāla, written by intoxicated Śiva under the influence of Gānjā (Opium), a burial ground of all the dead and obsolete religious rites, full of morbid practices, committing of sin religiously, clothed in bombastic and high-sounding words.

Kumaril Bhatta charges,

As the water of the Ganga, if kept in the bag made of the skin of a dog, is not pure. So, Tantra, though Vaidika, may not be granted.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was much critical of Vāmācāra, though he himself was initiated into the Tantric Cult by Mother Bhairavī.

Even Swami Vivekananda warned the young generation against the debased principles of Tantra and accused some of Tantra works of preaching falsehood.

“Give up this filthy Vāmācāra that is killing your country. You have not seen other parts of India. When I see how much the Vāmācāra has entered our society, I find it a most disgraceful place with all its boast of culture. Those who come out in the day

23. HTR, p.4.
24. ŚAŚ, p.39.
25. TTT, p.6.
27. Ibid, p. 6.
28. TMSB, p. 175.
29. Ibid, p.173
30. HOD, v, ii, p. 991.
32. Kumaril Bhatta as quoted in MCKC, Introduction.
33. ŠRK, v, p. 181.
34. SVBR, v, pp. 237, 251.
time and preach most loudly about achara, it is they who carry on the most horrible
debauchery at night and are backed by the most dreadful books."35

Sanskrit Literature which arose during the Tantric period is full of condemnation and caricatures by means of wine, flesh and sexual laxity. We may find these in Mālatīmādhava of Bhavabhuti36, Prabodhacandrodaya of Krishna Mishra37 and in some others.38

Guenther observes39,

There is hardly any other kind of literature that has met with so much abuse particularly by those who never read or seriously studied a single line of it, or that has so much fascinated those who on the testimony of misinformed and uninformed people thought the Tantras to be most powerful and hence strictly guarded means for the gratification of purely biological urges. Only very few people tried to form an opinion on the Tantras by their own.

Let us now sort out the causes of the criticisms labelled against Tantra. Our studies have found out the main causes of these bitter criticisms. They are - (i) the practice of Pañcamakāra, (ii) the practice of Śaṭkarma and (iii) the practice of Bali.

Let us begin our discussion with Pañcamakāra and see whether Pañcamakāra is an object of bitter criticisms or not.

35. As quoted in SRK, v, p. 181.
36. MTM, 5th Act.
37. PRC, 3rd Act.
38. HOD, v, ii, pp. 1073-1075.
39. Guenther as quoted in TMV, p. 10
We have already stated in the chapter “Tantra Sādhanā” that Pañcamakāra means40 – wine, meat, fish, grains, copulation.

\[mādyāṁ māṁsaiṁ matsyaṁ mudrā maithunameva ca\]

Pañcamakāra has two meanings – (i) Gross (ii) Subtle. We may discuss these meanings to refute the charges labelled against Tantra in connection with Pañcamakāra.

**Subtle Meaning**

**Madya**

According to some Tantra texts,41 Madya means ‘tasting the flow of supreme nectar oozing from the Brahmārandhra situated at the top of the spinal cord’.

*Tantratattvaprakasa* says,42

That which is filled into the lotus-vessel of Sahasrāra and which is diluted with white nectar of the moon, is Sura to be drunk.

\[bhramasthānāṁ saropa-patra-lasita brahmāṇḍa-trīpti-pradaṁ\]
\[yā subhrāṁśuklā sudhā-vigalita sā pūna-yogya-surā\]

It is also said that the knowledge acquired by the Yoga practice about the unaffected pure Brahman, is called Madya.

*Yogini Tantra* says43,

Madya means the tasting of the flow of Supreme nectar oozing from Bindu as result of the union between the Kuṇḍalini Power Śakti and Śiva (Bindu).

\[kuṇḍalīyā milanādbindoḥ sravate yat-parāmṛtam\]
\[pivet yogī maheśāni satyāṁ satyāṁ varūnane.\]

40. MN, 5/22; KNT, 10/5.
41. KNT, 5/107-108.
42. Tantra-tattva-prakāśa as quoted in TMV, pp. 250-251.
43. YOG, 1/6/69
Kularnava Tantra⁴⁴ says that Madya (wine) is energy.

\[ \text{madyāṁ ṣaktiḥ} \]

Tantra also says that Madya does not mean Mādhavi wine, it means the nectar comes, out of Sahasrāra as a result of the union of Śiva-Śakti.⁴⁵

\[ \text{na madyāṁ mādhavi-madyāṁ ṣaktiṁ ca rasodbhavam} \]

Māṁsa

Māṁsa means speech and hence the practice of eating Māṁsa means 'speech control'.⁴⁶

Tantra says⁴⁷,

Oh! Rasanāpriya! the word ‘Mā’ stands for Rasana (Tongue). Vākya or sentence is its part. One who controls his speech, is really the meat-eater, i.e., speech-controller.

\[ \text{mā-śabdāṁ rasana jñeyā tadāṁśāṁ rasana-priye} \]
\[ \text{sadcā yo bhaksayet devī sa eva māṁsa-sādhaṇa} \]

Yoginī Tantra⁴⁸ explains that the Sādhaka kills ‘Paśu’ in the forms of virtue and vice with the knowledge-sword and sets his mind on the Brahman and controls his senses.

Kularnava Tantra⁴⁹ says that he who kills the Paśu in the form of virtue and vice with the knowledge-sword and sets his mind on the Supreme Being, is a real meat-eater.

\[ \text{punyāpuṣya-paśuṁ hatvā jñāna-khadgena yogavit} \]
\[ \text{pare layaṁ nayeccittāṁ palaśī sa nigadyate} \]

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⁴⁴. KNT, 5/77.
⁴⁵. As quoted in TMV, p. 250.
⁴⁶. TTV, p. 51, TMSB, p. 145.
⁴⁷. As quoted in TMV, pp. 252-253.
⁴⁸. YOG, 1/6/70-71.
**Matsya**

Matsya means ‘breath control’.\(^{50}\) Tantra says\(^{51}\),

\[
\text{gāṅgā-yamunayormadhya masyau dvau carataḥ sadā}
\]
\[
tau masyau bhakṣayet yastu sa bhavematsya-sādhakaḥ.
\]

Two fishes are always swimming in the rivers of the Gāṅgā and the Yamunā (i.e. Iḍā and Pīṇgalā). A person who eats these two fishes is really a fish-eater. He inhales and exhales through Iḍā and Pīṇgalā and controls his breath with the method of Kumbhaka.

It also means controlling the senses and bringing them to the contact of the self.\(^{52}\)

**Mudrā**

The practice of eating Mudrā means ‘digesting the sentiments of desire, fear, hatred, and vanity’.\(^{53}\)

Mudrā also means ‘giving up the company of evil persons’.

*Tāntrika Guru* says\(^{54}\),

\[
\text{sat-sangena bhavenmukti-rasat-sangesu bandhanam}
\]
\[
\text{asat-sang-mudrapaim yat tanmudrā parikértā.}
\]

Salvation issues from good company. Bondage issues from evil company. The leaving of the evil company is called Mudrā.

50. TTV, p. 51; TMSB, p. 146.

51. TMV, p. 260.

52. KNT, 5/110.

53. TTV, p. 51.

54. Tāntrika Guru as quoted in MCKC, p. 31.
Maithuna

The union of Bindu with Kuṇḍalinī in Sahasrāra is called Maithuna

_Yoginī Tantra_ says\(^{55}\) –

\[\text{saḥasrāropari} \text{ bindau kundalyā} \text{ melanām śive} \]
\[\text{maithunaṁ śayanaṁ divyaṁ yatīnāṁ pariśritam} \]

Oh! Śive! The union of Kuṇḍalinī with Bindu situated in the Sahasrāra is called the Great Copulation of the Yatis (Seers).

Maithuna\(^{56}\) means union between Brahman and the individual self –

\[\text{paraśakyātma-saṁyo} \text{ga na vīrye maithunāṁ mataṁ} \]

The union\(^{57}\) of Parā-Śakti and Para-Śiva is Maithuna.

All scholars do not agree to the views of the scholars who are in favour of the subtle meanings of Pañcamakāra. So some Tantra texts prescribe Anukalpa (substitution for ordinary Śādhakas.

Whatever may be the weightage of the symbolic meanings of Pañcamakāra, Tantric scholars cannot completely deny the significance of the gross meanings of Pañcamakāra.

We have already stated that Pañcamakāra is prescribed for the Śādhakas of high rate\(^{58}\) and also for those Śādhakas who follow the codes of Vāmācāra.\(^{59}\)

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55. YOG, 1/6/41.
56. Ibid, 1/6/73.
57. KNT, 5/112.
58. YOG, 1/6/14.
59. RUY, Introduction.
Charges against Pancamakara refuted

It is true that no other philosophy of Hindu Sadhana prescribes this much criticize. Pañcamakāra. Naturally vital questions arise —

Why was this Pañcamakāra prescribed in Tantra Sadhana by Tantrics who were luminous stars in the sky of the spiritual world and who were the proud inheritors of India’s rich cultural heritage? Were they not aware of the fact that any exaggerated importance attached to the female element in rituals or the association of religion with amorous elements, even though inspired or prompted by the highest spiritual motive and backed by metaphysical or mystic interpretation is sure to lead to the degradation of its followers? Why did they proclaim? —

\[ \text{panca-tattva-vihīne tu vimukhī jagadambikā} \]
\[ \text{panca-tattvaṁ vitā nānyat ūktānāṁ sukha-mokṣayoh.}^{60} \]

Divine Mother is displeased if Pañcatattva is not prescribed. The Śaktas do not derive any happiness and achieve salvation without Pañcatattva.

In reply to these questions we place here the psychological, historical and scientific explanations of the introduction of Pañcamakāra.

(i) Psychological Explanation

According to Sigmund Freud, famous psychologist, human mind has three layers— (i) Conscious (ii) Pre-conscious (iii) Unconscious. Unconscious layer consists of primitive and naked desires. It wants only enjoyments. It desires all that are approved or not approved by society. But it cannot fulfill desires directly. Ego fulfills it. Freud says an

60. KĀM, 3/28.
61. AEP, p. 47.
From the very outset the ego has to try to fulfil its task of acting as an intermediary between the Id and the external world in the service of the pleasure principle, to protect the Id from the dangers of the external world. In this battle on two fronts the ego makes use of various methods of fulfilling its task, i.e., to put it in general terms, of avoiding danger, anxiety and unpleasure. We call these devices defense mechanisms.

People who have intense primitive desires, cannot easily give up their objects of enjoyment at the time of religious rituals. If they try forcibly to turn their mind away from their objects of enjoyments, they face disastrous consequences. Tantric seers who first introduced Pañcamakāra. Sādhana were well-aware of the dangers of attempting to suppress or repress one's desires. They witnessed the downfall of many monks and nuns who used to take withdrawal reactions of Defence Mechanisms. They suppressed their desires at the initial stages, but could not continue it for the whole life. They were compelled to indulge in licentious, sensual and sexual pleasures. It is not unusual for those who remain virtuous in early life, fall prey to immoral desires later in life.

Suppression of natural instincts cannot expand mental horizon. Sublimation of instincts can derive wonderful desired results. Tantric seers were great psychologists. So, they advocated for sublimation of instincts by substituting a Yoga of enjoyment for the Yoga of abstinence and asceticism.

Moreover all the Makāras are related to body. This ritual supplies the body with nutritious food and also mental satisfaction. While carrying out this practice, they limit the degree of their indulgence. By limiting the use of objects of enjoyment, they gradually increase their psychic power and ultimately rise above the allurement of enjoyment.

63. DOT, ii, p. 47; TP, pp. 49-50.
64. Ibid, p. 47; TCF, p.287.
Copulation with the Śādhaka’s own wife or Śakti is not licentious. A Śādhaka is advised not to enjoy his female associate through the feeling of lust, but to look upon and enjoy her as a human representation of the Divine Mother. Gradually, this Motherhood is attributed to all women. Thus a Śādhaka leaves his animality and reaches divinity. A female Śādhaka is also advised to look upon and enjoy her male associate as a human representation of Śiva.⁶⁵

ṣrīmāyātīka jagatsarvām puruṣāṁ śiva-rūpiṇāṁ

Thus a Śādhaka conquers his own flesh and prepares his mind for spiritual realization, not by avoiding temptations, but by boldly facing and over coming them.⁶⁶

(ii) Historical Explanation

Studies of the history of the world reveal that rituals and social codes were generally made on the basis of the geographical and social condition of that particular period when these sprang up. In this context, we are tempted to quote a few lines from Philosophy of Life and Death regarding the codes prescribed in Islam.⁶⁷

‘Islam was born in the deserts of Arabia where water is scarce, where and vegetation is a source of delight and a well-watered garden can indeed be considered something close to paradise. If, therefore, paradise is described in these terms, it should come of no surprise............ In the Sixth Century A.D. life in Arabia’s leading city Mecca was anything but serene. Drunken orgies were common, bloodshed an everyday affair and at nights, dancing girls tilted from tent to tent inflaming the passions of the nomads, it was this world that Muhammad set out to instruct and reach. He had to speak the emotional language of the people to recapture their hearts. If therefore, Islam speaks of paradise in visual terms, it has to be understood in the context of the day.’

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⁶⁵. KUT, 7/7.
⁶⁶. ITHI, p. 96.
⁶⁷. PLD, pp. 95-96.
So almost all the codes of Islam are based on social, geographical and historical condition of Arab.

There was a period in India when masses of common people were being drawn towards Buddhism. Tantric Sādhakas wanted to retain them within the Hindu fold. A common people drank wine and ate meat, they were told that they would attain higer spiritual levels even while indulging in meat and drank provided they followed Tantric Guru and practices.68

*Kulāryāva Tantra* says,69

One can attain the highest goal, i.e., the Supreme Godhead, only by drinking wine, eating flesh and looking at the face of a woman.

\[\text{peyai} \text{madyain \ palai} \text{ khādyain \ samālokya priyāmukham} \]
\[\text{ityevacaraṇam jāpyain pariṛṣyain parampadam} \]

This simple principle also attracted a large number of people and they did not leave Hindu Religion.

Some scholars argue70 that the founder of the Tantric Cult or the Śākta Cult of the Five Makāras threw defiance at the terrible aspect of God or the Highest Spirit, that rules the destinies of men and things and that made man sometimes suffer terrible even if he led lives of virtue, to do the worst for their disregard of conventional morality and social practices and helped by their Yoga exercises to attain a higher psychical powers and bliss.

Some scholars also opine that Vāmācāra means rituals practised by Vāma, meaning ‘women’. According to them, Tantric rituals were practised by Vāmā, i.e., women.71 So the admittance of women in Pañcamakāra Sādhanā is the recognition of...
women's role in the Tantric Cult.

These scholars also view that human reproduction and agricultural production are closely linked up.\textsuperscript{72} Probably here also lie the significance of the introduction of \textit{Pañcamakāra Sādhanā} and the importance of women's role in it.

(iii) Scientific Explanation

The holy design of Tantric Sādhakas who introduced \textit{Pañcamakāra Sādhanā} can be understood if we study the principles of modern Homeopathic Treatment.

Homeopathy implies a particular way of applying drugs to diseases according to specific principle known as 'Similia Similibus Curentur'. 'Let likes be treated likes'. It is a method of curing the sufferings of a person by the administration of drugs which have been experimentally proved to possess power of producing similar sufferings in a healthy human being.\textsuperscript{73}

The principles behind \textit{Pañcamakāra Sādhanā} are like the principles of Homeopathy.\textsuperscript{74} According to \textit{Kulārṇava Tantra}\textsuperscript{75}, the Kaula system that favours \textit{Pañcamakāra}, eradicates poison by poison –

\textit{yaireva patanaṁ dravyaiḥ siddhistaireva codita}

A Sadhaka can rise to the spiritual plane with the help of those things that are liable to bring downfall in the life of man.

When a Sādhaka perfectly performs this \textit{Pañcamakāra Sādhanā}, the whole world appears to him as divine. This \textit{Pravṛtti-mārga} is simply a step towards \textit{Nivṛttimārga}. In the practice of \textit{Pañcamakāra}, \textit{Pravṛtti} is transformed into \textit{Nivṛtti}. Bhoga reappears as Yog.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, pp. 286-287.
\textsuperscript{73} OM, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{74} RET, p. 205.
\textsuperscript{75} KNT, 5/48.
Kulārṇava Tantra says,

yogī cennaiva bhogī syāt bhogī cennaiva yogavān
bhoga-yogātmakaṁ kaulāṁ tasmāt sarvādhikāṁ priye.

According to other Ācāra, a Yogi cannot be a Bhogi or a Bhogi cannot be a Yogi. But the Kaula Ācāra is ‘bhoga-yogātmaka’ (Bhoga is transformed into Yoga and vice versa).

Moreover, Tantra prescribes restricted use of wine, fish and meat.

Wine is graded according to quality. Selected animals for flesh are prescribed; Female animals are spared. Some selected fish are prescribed. Eating of female fish are prohibited in their spawning period.

Mudrā or grain is also selected. Copulation is permitted under many restrictions.

Tantra prescribes Pañcamakāra in the Cakra Pūja. So it warns that wine, meat and fish cannot be taken without the time of Tantric practices.

matsya-māṁsa-surādīnāṁ mādakārāṁ niśeṣau
yoga-kālaṁ vināʾyatra na mayā kathitāṁ priye.

76. Ibid, 2/24.
77. Ibid, 5/29; MN, 6/2.
78. Paraśu-rāma-kalpa-sūtra as quoted in MCKC, p. 15.
79. SRC, 24/24.
80. MN, 6/8.
82. ATV, p. 645.
83. KNT, 5/89.
It also warns

\[
\text{asamskrtam piveddravyam balatkareya maithunam}
\]
\[
\text{svapriyena hatain ma\'insain raurava\'in narakain vrajet}
\]

A person who drinks unrefined wine, enjoys the opposite sex by force and kills animals for the sake of own pleasures, goes to Raurava Hell. It is admitted that it is very risky to practise with Pa\'ncamak\'ara, specially with Maithuna. There is every chance of downfall at every step.

Tantra warns

\[
\text{krpana-dh\'ara-gamanat vy\'aghra-kaptha-valambanat}
\]
\[
\text{bhujanga - dh\'ara-p\'aninama\'akyam kula-vartanam}
\]

The practice of Kulam\'arga is more dangerous than walking through the edge of a sword or clasping the neck of a tiger or catching hold of a snake.

Moreover, this practice is done secretly under the guidance of and in presence of the Guru and it is generally practised by either a V\'ira Sadhaka or a Divya Sadhaka.

A scholar justifies the introduction of Pa\'ncamak\'ara thus

‘Even if ordinary meanings of Pa\'ncamak\'ara are taken, this is nothing bad in itself as there are people who will anyhow take fish or flesh or wine. But if it is linked with spiritual Sadhan\'a, slowly his mind will take a turn and go from Pravrtti to Nivrtti. This is the method of sublimation whose progress may be slow but sure. The ideal method of Pa\'ncamak\'ara can be seen in the life of Sri Ramakrishna who is considered to be a Kaula by the S\'aktas. As soon as he heard of Karana (Wine), he would think of Jagat-karan.'

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85. Ibid, 2/123
86. KN, 8/237-238; 9/9-10.
87. GUR, 28. sl.
88. HSO, p. 44.
(cause of the Universe). If he heard of union, he would not think of physical union but would immediately enter into Samādhi thinking of the union of Siva-Sakti.

**Criticisms Against Śaṭ-Karma Refused**

Tantra has also been an object of criticism for its Śaṭ-Karma rituals.

Tantra warns against the application of Śaṭ-Karma without any proper cause:

\[ yojayedanimittam yo ātma-ghātī na saṁśayāḥ. \]

A person has to commit suicide if he practises Śaṭkarma without any proper cause.

Tantra also allows a Sādhaka for the practice of Śaṭkarma for killing harmful persons and sinners.  

\[ apakārisu duṣṭesu pāpisṭhesu janesu ca \]
\[ prayogairhanyamāṇesu doṣo naivaprajñāya \]

In spite of bitter criticisms against Śaṭkarma, many scholars admit its utility. According to them, Śaṭkarma is essential to success in life. A Sādhaka can remove three types of obstacle on the course of life by the application of Śaṭkarma.

A Sādhaka can bring a dishonest and unruly person or disobedient wife under control or make a king, his officials and a scholar, who are corrupted, duty-bound by the application of Vaśī-araṇa-karma.

A Sādhaka can control the flame of fire, stupefy the enemy and check inauspicious journey by the application of Stambhana-Karma.

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89. UD, 1/39.
90. Ibid, 1/38.
91. MCKC, p. 7.
A Sadhaka can avoid evil company, give up illicit relation and do away with the forbidden connection by the application of Vidveśaṇa-karma.94

A Sadhaka can make an enemy confused and can move him from one place to another place by the application of Ucchātana-karma.95

The killing of the most harmful person of society or the country is made possible by the application of Māraṇa-karma.96

A famous scholar explains differently,97

The killing of one’s ego is called Māraṇa. The meaning of Ucchātana is to make a person free from ego-bondage and raise him above all trivial feelings. Stambhana means ‘to remain stable’ and ‘lead mind to one’s Iṣṭa’ (Deity or Guru). Vāśikaraṇa means ‘to make God or Devi attracted towards the Sadhaka’. The Sadhaka pleases God by offering reverence and devotion. God or Devi becomes his own nearest and dearest one.

It is also certain that Śaṭkarma can be applied for the benefit of mankind, for the development of society, for the progress of the country. So the utility of Śaṭkarma depends upon the intention of the practitioner.

Criticisms Against Bali Refuted

Almost all the Śākta Tantras give much importance on Bali, i.e., animal sacrifice. Attacks from different corners fall on Tantra for its Bali ritual in Tantra Sādhanā. Some scholars also refute all attacks on Bali of Tantra.

95. Ibid, p.7.
97. JKT, p. 20.
Sarvollāsa Tantra says, 98

balidānam vinā devi pūjane nāsti yogyatā.

A Pūjā (Tantric Pūjā) is not performed without Bali.


Some scholars interpret 100 that ‘Chāga’ stands for Kāma or lust. ‘Go’ for Vāk or speech, Mahiṣa for Krodha or anger and so on. So animal sacrifice means the annihilation of the evils of lust and anger or the practice of speech control.

Many scholars do not accept the symbolic meanings of animal sacrifice. According to them, animal sacrifice is prescribed only for Vīrabhāva Sādhakas. 101

As meat was a common food in the agronomical society, indiscriminate killing of animals for flesh was also naturally found. Tantra warns that a Sādhaka should not kill an animal for himself. 102 Tantra also prohibits people from the killing of female animals. This injunction 103 checked indiscriminate killing of animals.

98. SARU, 14/2.

99. TTV, p. 80.

100. Ibid, p. 80.


102. KNT, 5/45-46

103. KPU, 67/101.
The killing of animal is done through the application of a scientific method. The head of the animal placed before the Devi for sacrifice, is chopped off by one stroke only.\textsuperscript{104} Before the chopping off the head of the animal, some rituals related to it are done in order to create solemn mood among the persons who are present there and who take the meat of the animal sacrificed as ‘Mahaprasāda’.

The method of chopping off the head of the animal sacrificed at one stroke at the time of Bali ritual tends to advise the human race that if at all man desires to kill an animal for its flesh, he should kill it by inflicting the least possible pains on it.\textsuperscript{105}

Thus we see that Pañcamakāra, Śaṭkarma and Bali which are bitterly criticized were introduced by the Tantric Sādhatras on the basis of psychological, geographical social and historical background of the common masses.

Tantra’s main aim is to help a Sadhava to feel oneness with Śiva-Śakti and to get his soul liberated.\textsuperscript{106} He has to make his body strong and mind balanced. He has to face all the worldly challenges and overcome them with strong body and mind.

Pañcamakaras, Śaṭkarma and Bali are completely related to body and mind. physically sound and mentally balanced Sādhatra can run through the path of Tantra. If all these three Tantric rituals are done perfectly under the guidance of a qualified Guru and these are performed with good intention for self-development and the progress of society, we cannot find any objections to the introduction of these three in Tantric rituals. Tantra should not be blamed for these rituals. The Sādhatra who applies these with evil motive, to be blamed, not Tantra.\textsuperscript{107}

104. TTV, p. 89.
105. Ibid, p. 89.
107. MCKC, p. 7.
C. SURVIVAL OF TANTRA

In the midst of criticisms, attacks and charges, Tantra continued its journey touched every corner of India, spread out-side of India, reached the highest point descended and also survived. During its long journey, it infiltrated into the mainstream o the glorious culture and tradition.

Winternitz remarks,\textsuperscript{108}

For during centuries and even at the present time these writings are the spiritual food of millions of India.

Scholars also observe,\textsuperscript{109}

Many Hindu temples, house images which trace their origin to the Tantric visualizations, and there are few religious observances which do not have a strong element of Tantric symbolism.

M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj asserts,\textsuperscript{110}

A topographical survey of India would show that the country is scattered over with numerous centers of Śakti Sādhana (Tantric Practices). It was widespread in the past and has continued unbroken till today.

Another scholar says,\textsuperscript{111}

Tantrism, in its original form, therefore, is not merely ancient, it is also modern, even contemporary.

\textsuperscript{108} HIL, I, p. 579.

\textsuperscript{109} TY, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{110} Gopinath Kaviraj as quoted in LOK, p. 324.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, pp. 323-324.
The survival of Tantra is a big question to all the scholars. Ultimately they have sorted out the following causes of the survival of Tantra.

Tantra's synthetic and accommodative nature are the main potential energies that provided Tantra with inner strength for the 'struggle for existence'. During its long journey which started in the pre-historic period, Tantra permeated almost all the important philosophies of India. Tantra never hesitated to accept the useful elements that suited the people in different ages, from other philosophies.\(^{112}\)

Tantra has effected a mutually helpful and perfecting co-ordination of Karma Yoga, Jñāna and Bhakti. It has emphasized will and effort, yet self surrender, mercy and grace have their vital place and function; and it combines the systematized ritualism of Karma with the inner purifying process of Yoga; the purest Advaita-jñāna with the purest Bhakti and the most passionate yearning and love.\(^{113}\)

It is further observed by scholars,\(^{114}\)

Historically one has to admit that certain Tantric ideas and practices are evidently rooted in primitive sex rites based on the magical association of natural and human fertility ...... With the advent and popularity of the new religious doctrines like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity or Islam preached by distinguished individuals the Tantric or neo-Tantric rites associated with earlier existing religious systems sank into oblivion. In India, however, under diverse historical conditions, these primitive elements survived and were given new forms and interpretations in accordance with the changing demands of time and taste.

\(^{112}\) PHS, p. 275.

\(^{113}\) CHI. iv, p. 240, Article : The Spirit and Culture of the Tantras.

\(^{114}\) HTR, p. 9.
Tantra certainly brought the gods nearer the hearts and homes of men and inspired their devotion, prompted their collective action for charity and gave a fillip to the building of religious edifices which played multi-role in leading millions to the practice of Tantra. Moreover, the emergence of various Tantric sects maintained the flow of the Tantric Cult and contributed to the continuation of Tantra in this country.

Tantra's ritualistic and practical feature contributes much towards the continuity of Tantra. Its attachment to the arts of agriculture, metallurgy, manual and technical labour, chemical sciences, physiology, embryology and medicine is one of the important causes of the survival of Tantra.

A scholar writes,¹¹⁵

' The problem of the survival of Tantrism in this form is not solved simply by tracing its origin to the beliefs and practices of the tribal people living at the early agricultural phase. It needs to be presumed that concrete elements of the material conditions to which Tantrism owes its origin must have somehow or other survived in the general social fabric of later India to sustain and nourish these ideological elements.'

In course of time a special class of Tantric priests emerged in different Tantric centers and the Śaktipithas. Those priests termed as 'Pāṇḍās' played a significant role in the protection, preservation and transmission of the Tantric Cult. Tantric centers having this special class of Tantric priests took main role in cultivating, preaching, spreading, professing, initiating and transmitting the Tantric Cult from one generation to another generation. All the Tantric centers including Kāmākhya¹¹⁶ and Puri¹¹⁷ were made targets by some iconoclast Muslim rulers. Indescribable tortures, the large-scale destruction of

¹¹⁵. LOK, p. 324.
¹¹⁶. KKA, p. 21; EP, p. 10
¹¹⁷. CJ, p. 48.
temples, indiscriminate killings and incessant oppressions could not compel the Tantric priests in Tantric centers to retreat from protecting the Tantric Cult.

In this context, it may not be irrelevant if we quote Fawley.¹¹⁸

When India was invaded by foreign powers, the Brahmins proved to be great obstacle, particularly against religious conversion. Muslim rulers made special efforts to convert or even to kill Brahmins. They destroyed Hindu temples in order to deprive the Brahmins, who were mainly temple priests, of their influence and their income.

To sum up, we may place the view of a scholar,¹¹⁹

One of the causes of its survival as a parallel tradition was the adherence of the so-called lower people to the Tantric way of life.

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¹¹⁸. AB, p.68.

¹¹⁹. HTR, p. 21.