The Indian approach to the study of any discipline which is in the mainstream of Sanatana Samskrti (perennial culture) is through experiential learning. This study is meant to be a representative model of this researcher’s upasana as performance research. Hence this is not intended to serve as an elaborate linguistic exercise like that of a conventional commentary. This kind of learning and research require living with a person of experience, a master. A master alone can show the route. It demands the preparedness and willing readiness to be a disciple. A disciple alone can search the root. The roots of Tantra Vidya are to be searched in and through the family trees (for example, the one given in Shukta Pramoda) of the masters and their disciples. There is no room for and no necessity of speculative approach here. Every master remembers one’s lineage of masters. The master of masters who was never a disciple of another master is identified as Eshwara (the supreme Lord). Maharshi Patanjali’s Yoga Sutram reveals Eshwara as स पूर्वेणामपि गुरु (He who is the Guru of all). He exists before the manifestation of time and space and He pervades everything within time and space. Maharshi Vedavyasa’s Brahma Sutram asserts that the infinite Lord is the womb of all shastras, शास्त्रयोनित्वात् (because the Lord is known through the shastras which originate from and are rooted in the Lord). And as the Lord resides in the heart of every being the roots of the shastras are to be discovered in one’s own heart. The eligibility criteria for this search are laid down in the shastras. Before proceeding to study them, certain general terms of Tantra Shastra are enlisted here to facilitate self evaluation regarding one’s eligibility in the context of experiential learning.

How far one is able to feel the being mode while these terms click through the mind?

अधिकारी, अन्तेकारी, शिष्य, दीक्षा, उपदेश, मन्त्र, शुद्धि, आसन, आचारम्, आचार, गुरु, विद्वान्, अष्टंक, भक्ति, ध्यानम्, साधनम्, साधना, साधक, सिद्धि,, देयता, पूजा, पूजनम्, अनुसंधानम्, उपासना, उपासना, उपासक, तन्त्रम्, शास्त्रम्,

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36 Shukta Pramoda (Bombay Khemraj Srkrishnadas, 1982), p. --- behind author’s acknowledgement
37 Maharshi Patanjali, Patanajlayogadarshanaam, text and Vyasa bhashya in Sanskrit, Hindi trans & com Shrimat Swami Harcharananda Aranya, 3rd revised & edn (Delhi Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), p 80 Pada 1, Sutra 26
38 Sri Shankarabhagavadapadacharya, Brahmasutrabhashyam, Sanskrit, (Madras Swami Kamakoti Koshasthanam, 1954), p 10, Chap 1, Pada 1, Su 3
39 Hereafter referred to as Kamakoti edn
39 The enlisted terms are common enough in the entire scriptural lore. They are found in Puranas, Stotras, Epics, and Upamshads besides the Tantra texts.
Some of the above terms are meant to activate the performance mode in the reader’s mind. But it happens only in a mind which is exposed to these experiences. Just as it does not take deliberate thinking or analytical enquiry to mention or mark one’s gender in an application, it does not require any external stimulus to experience the intimate feeling of hunger. Much deeper is the being mode than the physical consciousness of gender and hunger. These terms can be rearranged to form four columns under the titles 1) The seeker, 2) The means, 3) The practice, and 4) The benefit/goals. A seeker would feel being a seeker and would identify with all that goes with seeking. The most important term deliberately excluded in the above list is the fourth purusharth/moksha. This will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

The eligibility criteria to be complied with to accomplish the goals mentioned in the Tantra Shastra are enumerated below:

1) अधिकारिप्रयोजनसंबन्धविवेकः
2) विषयप्रयोजनसंबन्धविवेकः
3) साध्यसाधनसंबन्धविवेकः
4) अधिकारविषयसंबन्धविवेकः

The four terms to be discriminatively and rightly understood are अधिकारी, विषय, साधन, प्रयोजनम्. The key term is viveka. It is this quality which helps one to put forth the proper and adequate effort to achieve the scripturally valid and experientially vouchsafed goals in life. Four simple questions can be derived from the above criteria in the context of Tantra Vidya. They are as follows:

1) What is Tantra Vidya? (content)
2) For whom is Tantra Vidya? (eligible seeker)
3) What for Tantra Vidya? (purposes, benefits, and goals)
4) How to apply Tantra Vidya? (means and applications)

The answer to the first question also includes the answers to the remaining three questions. The eligibility criteria of a seeker of Tantra Vidya, its well defined goals, and the practical applications form the content of Tantra Shastra. An encyclopedic description of everything about Tantra Vidya would fall short of one thing and that is the practical direction born of performance research. Whether it is the dictionary of.

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40 Sri Parsurama, Parsuramakalpasutra, (Baroda Oriental Institute, 1979), p 26 Sutra 6 स्वविवेकः पुरुषार्थः
M Monier Williams or the volumes of Woodroffe, the common lacuna found in their presentation of the content of *Tantra Shastra* is that there is no positive, personal note regarding it as a discipline of practice. A seeker is accepted by a master as a disciple only when the seeker fulfills the requirements of the prescribed eligibility criteria in the given field of study. And the common factor in every field of study without any exception is *shraddha* (here it means the humble receptivity with an attitude of pending discovery). It grows to the *Vedic* level of *Shraddha* in course of time.

It is the sacred responsibility of the master to expose the potential disciple to the glories of the practice of a given *Vidya* (discipline). The *parampara* has its own value in this regard. The more a master knows about his lineage the greater authenticity he commands in his field. Being a disciple in the lineage of great masters is considered a matter of grace.

*Tantra Vidya* is a discipline perpetuated by great masters like Adya Shankaracharya (hereafter referred to in this thesis as Bhagavatpada), Sri Madhvacharya (hereafter referred to in this thesis as Poornaprajna), Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Bhaskararaya Makki and many others in the grand galaxy of *Acharyas*. The tangible components of *Tantra Vidya* like the sacred items of worship which are used by these masters are still present in the centres established by them for the spiritual upliftment of humanity. These components are not preserved in the museums or archives. They are reverentially placed at the altars and worshipped with devotion over generations till today.

These *Acharyas* based their works (like the *Prapanchasara Tantra* of Bhagavatpada and the *Tantrasarasamgraha* of Poornaprajna) on earlier works which were available to them. And they did not hesitate to introduce certain modifications in the then prevailing practices. An example of Bhagavadpada’s *Soundaryalohari* containing a few modifications upon his *Guru*’s work is cited in the second chapter of this thesis. Any *achara* (practices in daily life) which goes against the conscience of *Vedic Dharma* is considered *avaidikam* by them. The further clarifications and procedures introduced from time to time by the dedicated masters in course of time are faithfully followed by the seekers and they are fully and fairly rewarded with the spiritual benefits there of. This *parampara* (living tradition) of *Tantra Vidya* has many streams across the sacred land of *Bharatam*. Its authenticity has stood the test of time. The *Vedic* and *Tantric parampara* are essentially oral and demonstrative. Learning takes place from heart to heart. Least dependence on external props for learning and recalling makes this *parampara* the most effective.

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41 Items such as the *Panchayatana, Sr Chakram, and rare Saligramas*
42 For e.g. at Shringen, the Jagadguru’s unit of *Puja* maintained by successive *Acharyas*
At the deepest ground of spiritual truth the word and its meaning cease to be verbal constructs. Maharshi Panini’s धातुपाठ (a collection of Sanskrit Roots) is chanted or recited much before the child is capable of going into the sap of meaning. And later when the master points out the roots of the compound term Tantra Vidya to the disciple, the roots are recalled by the child within with high resolution clarity. Among the six auxiliary disciplines of the Vedas, four are apparently linguistic exercises. But they are the keys to open the esoteric experiences which are delineated in the Tantra Shastra. The moment a master utters the meaning into the learning heart of the disciple, the meaning emerges.

This process is called शब्दव्यूहत्वात् (emergence of meaningful sounds) and अर्थव्यूहत्वात् (emergence of experiential meaning).

*तन्त्र तन्त्रम् *अद्व *सत्तायाम् विषते विस्तारे अाणेविविशालाश्च लाजेवेद तन्त्र तन्त्रम् शास्त्रम् विचारणे देशि तन्त्र तन्त्रम् शास्त्रम् तन्त्रविद्या
*शास्त्र शास्त्रम् शास्त्रशास्त्रम् मन्त्रविद्या
* यज्ञ यज्ञम् यज्ञशास्त्रम् यज्ञविद्या

When an acharya communicates the shabda and the artha in a unique way as given above, the interconnectivity of the shabda and artha gets registered in the mind through oral recitation unavoidably.

Tantra, mantra, and yantra are interconnected and are meant to serve the purpose for which the Shastra has been applied as Vidyā ever since the Rshis and Acharyas downloaded it into their hearts. From where? Indeed from the cosmic reservoir of all knowledge possibilities.  

Tतः निधिशयाम् सर्वजीवजम् (There, the unparallel seed of all knowledge possibilities is available) 44Bhagavatpada quotes the following verse45 which means that the Maharshis got the Vedas with the Itahasas which were hidden at the end of the Yuga, as ordered by the Creator, through tapas (penance) युगाल्पत्तिःतिक्रियादान्तिःतिहासान्मध्ययम्।

लेबिरे तपसा पूर्वमनुजात्स्वयमभूमय ए॥

He states that the Darshana Shastras 46 of the Rshis emerged at the dawn of the creation आर्यां दर्शनानि प्रातुर्भवत्तात्मादिविषययाणि।

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43 These roots and derivative terms with meanings were recited during the traditional teaching sessions at Ujjain, where this researcher lived to learn at Sri Mahakaleshwar Temple, 1983
44 Maharshi Panjali, Patanjalyogadarshanam, (Delhi Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), p 72 Pada 1 Sutra 25
46 Holenarsipur edn Taittireeya Upanshad, Sanskrit text with Shankarabhashya, (Holenarspur Adhyatma Prakashana Karyalaya, 1961), p 46
Mantra is related to the mind. The inner circuits of the nadis (channels), the subtle body of the pranas (energies), the intricate programme of memory, perceptions, feelings, and other modifications of the mind, all these are the areas of operation of the mantras. A mantra in movement protects one who applies it properly. A mantra functions as thought movement and protects. Mantra as shabda and mantra as artha have distinct functions. Mantra as bindu, nada, kala, yoti and rashmi under akshara, swara, and varna domains of experience is a seminal area in the performance research of Mantra Vidya.47

A Yantra is Tantram (a device) in operation. Take for example, a loom or arani (fire churner). The Rig-Veda 48 uses the term tantram to mean such devices. A device does not display its function unless it is run by an adept. For a tantram to operate as a yantram the relevant mantra programme is necessary. The mantra is the dynamic aspect of a tantram. The application of mantra involves the conscious movement of the mind. Unfortunately M. Moner Williams was not able to see this subtle implication when he edited and published the Sanskrit dictionary. The living body presided by God is called a yantra in the Bhagavad-Gita. 49 The life itself is the mantra programme regulated by the breathing process of Ham-Sa. 50 The upasakas who have inherited the Vidya do experience this during the moments of practice.

Sri Arun Kumar Sharma, an upasaka and the author of Tantravijnan (Hindi), states that he has inherited rare manuscripts in Pandulipi and Gandharva Bhasha from his grandfather. Tantravijnan has the ring of clarity and it reflects the qualities of an advanced sadhaka. The following six descriptions are gathered from this book 51

1) तन्त्रम् दिष्टायते आनमण्डलेति तन्त्रम् (that which brings about the expansion of consciousness)

2) तन्त्रम् बिशुलान्त अर्यन् तन्त्रमत्सशब्दितानां अर्थं च कुर्वक योमाकुः तन्त्रजित्यस्मिन्निधीयते ॥

(It is called Tantra as it gives plenty of means, methods, and their applications which protect the seeker.)

3) Sri Sharma observes that the term tantram is used in the Brahmastraabhya of Sri Adya Shankaracharya to denote the Sankhya Darshana

47 The script/alphabet is called akshara, the articulate vowel is swara, and these have varna (colour vibrations) according to the traditional upadesha.
48 M Moner Williams , A Sanskrit English Dictionary, p 436.
49 Gorakhpur edn Bhagavad-gita, p 456 Ch 18 v 61.
4) A text which deals with the five limbs of upasana involving the divine form of the devata (deity), the mantra duly derived, and the methods, procedures, and techniques of using them in the yantras and further applications in upasana is called Tantra. पटलम्, पद्मिनि, कवचम्, सहस्रलाम्ब, स्तोत्रम् are the five limbs.

5) According to Varahi Tantram, Agama is another name of Tantra. An Agama text gives the details of the creation, dissolution, and worship of Devata (deity), all means to accomplish the šatkarman (six objectives such as remedial measures, subjugative attraction), and the methods of meditation of शुद्धिक्र प्रलयशैये देवतनाम् यथार्थनम् साधनम् चैव सर्वोष पुरुषर्णमेव च ||

6) That text is an Agama by which the means of welfare and well-being are brought to clear understanding, says Sri Vachaspati Misra. आगच्छलिति बुद्धिमारोहिति यस्मात् अभ्युदयलित श्रीयलोपारास् आतनम् | 52

In the puranas, epics, and vast stotra literature in Sanskrit and in all Indian languages the practical aspects of Tantra Vidya are found in abundance. Prayer and worship as the procedures and processes of sadhana (spiritual practices) are Tantra specific elements which are found in many of these texts. In Srīmatbhagavatam, the term tantra is used to mean the discipline of practices including puja (worship). There are also many occasions in which the Lord is called अत्मतन्त्र (self sufficient and never subservient to anything else). The compound terms such as अत्मतन्त्र, पुरुषतन्त्र, and स्वतन्त्र, mean absolute self mastery, the freedom of choice, and sovereignty according to the context in which they are used. In contrast to these terms, परतन्त्र, कार्यतन्त्र, and वस्तुतन्त्र point out the nature of things and beings and their relationship in the creation.

Maharshi Panini's sutra hints at the spiritual reality of the Lord by using the compound term स्वतन्त्र कर्ता | 53 (the doer is self sufficient, self dependent, and hence the Lord alone is, in the real sense, the sovereign doer). The Lord is rightly called शास्त्रयोगिः | because along with the creation the shastras also come to manifestation through the eligible medium of the Lord's communications. The rṣhis and the acharyas who never deviate from dharma are always aware that it is their duty to perpetuate the discipline of practices. For this sacred purpose they created oral manuals. These are learnt by heart as a part of the practice. The sutra texts belong to this category. 54

The Shiva Sutras, an important sutra text of the Kashmir tradition of Tantra Vidya, defines the mind in terms of mantra चित्तम् मन्त्र. | 55 (the continuous flow of thoughts

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52 ibid p 16
54 There are many sutras which are only in the active memory record, like the sutras to draw the Sri Chakram by the upasakas.
55 Siva Sutras, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), p 82
aided by the memory and the movement of thought is *chittam* This dynamic aspect is *mantra*). The *Tatttireeya Upanishad* of the *Yajur-Veda* provides the highlight on *manomaya kosha* \(^{(56)}\) (the treasure and the sheath of mind). It is treasure from the macro cosmic level and it is sheath from the micro cosmic level. The ego-bound individual is not allowed to have free access to the cosmic resources of knowledge and power.

However, intuitive glimpses are not denied to the spiritually refined persons Srim Kavyakantha Vasishtha Ganapathi Muni’s *performance research* with his disciple Srim Daivarata has proved that it is possible in the twentieth century to have visions of *Veda mantras*. Both of them had undertaken practices for this purpose which includes procedures from *Tantra Shastra*. A brief account of their sadhana (practice) is given in the third chapter of this thesis \(^{(57)}\).

In the tradition of Siddhas of Nath sampradaya the initiates greet each other uttering *Adesh, Adesh* The Siddha-Siddhanta-Paddhati states that the term *adesha* means the unified glory of *atma, paramatma*, and *jivatma*. This edifying term used in greeting a yogi confers upon one the glories of *Eshwara*. \(^{(58)}\)

Any mantra, be it *Vedic* or *Tantric*, has to function in the mind. The following diagram depicts the *manomaya kosha* in the proper perspective. It also proves that the *Atharvaveda* provides the base for *Tantra Shastra*. The *Vedas* and the *Tantra Shastra* extol the glory of *pranava mantra*. It is the most compact *sutra* found in the beginning of the *Vedas* and the meaning of the *Vedas* is contained in it. The *Vedic* chanting is always begun with it and is concluded with it. The *Yoga Sutras* contain a *sutra* on *pranava* which has vertical dimensions. In the context of sadhana different names given to these dimensions do not create any problem to a disciple. It is not the linguistic exercise which unfolds the experience. The *pranava* is called the *kosha* of the infinite in the *Tatttireeya Upanishad* \(^{(60)}\) and the *mantra* directly addresses the Lord as *pranava*. This monosyllable *Aum* / *OM* is also called *vaidika pranava*. The *Tantrika pranava* is *Hreem* which is also known as *hrllekha*. This does not mean that it is the *Tantrika’s pranava*. The vertical dimensions of this *mantra* have the same features as those of *pranava*. More of this will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis \(^{(61)}\).

The diagram of the *manomaya kosha* \(^{(62)}\) is in the form of a bird. Among the five *koshas* as given in the *Upanishad*, this is the third *kosa*. *Annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya, and the anandamaya* are the five *koshas*. Each one is subtler.

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\(^{(56)}\) Holenarsipur edn *Tatttireeya Upanishad*, p 100

\(^{(57)}\) See, p 72 of this thesis


\(^{(59)}\) Maharshi Patanjali, *Patanjalayodharshanam*, p 80  *Pada 1 Sutra* 27

\(^{(60)}\) Ed. *Eshadi Nau Upanishad*, (Gorakhpur Gita Press, Sam 2040)

\(^{(61)}\) See, p 46 of this thesis

\(^{(62)}\) The diagram of *manomaya kosha* is developed by this researcher
Highlight on Manomaya Kośa in

PANCHAKOŚA

FROM GROSSEST TO SUBTLEST

1 ANNAMAYA KOŚA
2 PRANAMAYA KOŚA
3 MANOMAYA KOŚA
4 VIJNANAMAYA KOŚA
5 ANANDAMAYA KOŚA

This diagram is developed by this researcher.
than the previous one. The subtler the principle the more pervasive and interior is the experience. The latter permeates through the former in such a manner that the outermost kosha is the anandamaya. The presence of the guru brings ananda to the receptive seekers because of this reason. But the annamaya is mistaken to be the outermost because it is the most tangible object of experience and the locus of self identification. The being mode is always felt in the gross physical body as long as one is physically conscious. However, the mistake is perpetuated by placing the anandamaya as a dot within four concentric circles.

The head of the manomaya kosha is Yajur -Veda, the trunk is Adesha, and the tail is Atharvaveda. Adesha means the directives provided by the cosmic base or the universal mind Bhagavatpada’s bhashya makes it very clear by stating that the directives are to perform such remedial rituals or yajnas which are meant for removing the obstacles (the threefold obstacles namely adhyatmika, adhidaivika, and adhibhoutika) and for bringing about the balance, harmony, and prosperity so that the pursuit of Dharma and Moksha will be free from hindrances. The mantras and brahmana which are revealed to the Rshi Atharvana, who is also known as Angira are collectively pointed out as Atharvangirasah. It also contains protective means and devices which are linked with Dhanur-Veda.

Lord Rudra presides over Shatarudreeya Mantras of Yajur-Veda and this sukta begins with invoking the bow and arrows of Lord Rudra for the protection of the good. Without his divine consent the devices of Dhanur-Veda and the means of Atharvaveda do not operate. Arjuna seeking the grace of Lord Rudra as advised by Bhagvan Vyasa in the Mahabharata does not seem to be a myth. The five faces of Lord Rudra namely sadyojata, vamadeva, aghora, tatpurusha, and eshana have given out the Tantra Shastra, as revealed in the Parsuramakalpasutram which is a sacred text recited by those who belong to the Shakta Parampara. This text deals with the details of Srividya Upasana (the meditative worship) of Sri Maha Tripura Sundari, who is one of the Dasha Maha Vidya Goddesses. She is the presiding Shakti of the Sri Chakra. The tradition identifies Lord Dattatreya as the Guru of Sri Parasurama and as one of the divine resource persons of Srividya Parampara.

Resuming the study of manomaya kosha, one finds it spiritually rewarding to observe the presence of the famous Gayatri mantra in all the three Vedas. She is rightly called Veda Mata as she is the womb of all mantras. In the Atharvaveda she takes another form which is not made available to the uninitiated and unauthorized researchers.

63 Ed Tattireeya Upamshad ,text and Shankar Bhashya in Sanskrit, Hindi trans
64 Srimadabhinava Shankaracharya, Rudrabhashyam,Srirangam Sri Vanivilas Press,1962),
65 Sri Parasurama, Parasuramakalpasutram , (Baroda Oriental Institute, 1979), p 16
66 ibid p xii
and this form is well protected by the Rshis. The right wing of the manomaya kosha is the Rig-Veda. The left wing is the Samaveda. The tail is the Atharvaveda. Unlike an assembled aircraft a bird is a whole living being. Similarly all the Vedas form certain sound frequencies in certain sequences. Many of the oral traditions of the Veda mantras are seemingly lost. Even then whatever is available is poornam (complete in itself). When the Gayathri mantra is chanted properly it amounts to chanting the whole Veda. The vertical movement of the chanting pervades the whole being of the person while the Gayathri mantra is chanted. The effulgence of this mantra pervades all the five koshas.

The twenty four letters of the Gayathri mantra move in the upward direction from the bottom of the spine to the top of the head. During this course along the sushumna nadi (roughly translated as the spinal cord), all the subtle centres of the koshas are refined and the person is spiritually refreshed. The lotuses, wheels, and geometrical patterns are associated with these centres which have dynamic colour patterns Padma, charka, mandala, and varna are the terms frequently used in the Tantra Shastra to denote them. Thus the vaidika Gayathri mantra reveals in the spiritual interior of the performing seeker the vast expanse of experience which is common enough to all who devotedly pursue the mantra sadhana (the practical applications of the mantra). Sri Bhaskararaya Makhí who belonged to the Rg-Veda shakha proclaims in the opening stanza of his bhāshya (commentary in Sanskrit) on Sri Lalitasahasranama that his unswerving faith in the threefold Veda, the three sacred fires, and the supreme Goddess Sri Maha Tripurasundari, as an ardent adherent of the sanatana vaishnavadharma. This great master unfolds the esoteric dimensions of the creation in terms of the Gayatri mantra in his treatise titled Vairavayarahasya in Sanskrit. He asserts with sufficient supportive scriptural citations that the Gayatri mantra has two forms:

\[ \text{तस्या स्पष्टतियम् तैःकम् यत् प्रपत्येत्स्यम्} \]
\[ \text{वेदेशु चतुर्थ्यिपि परस्तयन्तम् गोपनीयाम्} \]

She is of two forms one of them is clear, being what is recited in the four Vedas, the other (Srividya) is not clear, being exceedingly esoteric.

The above translation of Pundit S. Subrahmanya Sastri does not bring to fore the subtle implications of the author's own commentary in Sanskrit. The three quarters of the Gayatri mantra are expressed in articulate form in the Vedas. The fourth quarter only

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67 Data edn Lalitasahasranama, with Bhāshya of Sri Bhaskararaya, (Data Shri Pitambara Sanskrit Parishad, May, 1982), p 37
69 Ibid p 8
suggests the *mantra* with the term *para*. Sri Bhaskararaya refers to those sequences of the *Rg-Veda* and derives the *mantra* called *Srividyā*. While the major aspect of the *Gayatri* mantra is *pranava*, the major aspect of *Srividyā mantra* is *hrilekha*. He provides the names of the vibration sequences of *hrilekha* and mentions that they can be heard and that they have increasingly subtle durations of manifest notes. The element of direct *experience* is very much evident here. A tabular statement in *Sanskrit*, which gives the verbal matrix of such experiences, attached to the above mentioned translator’s edition provides a sweeping vision of the vastness and depth of this *Shastra*. It is based upon the statement published in the *Malayalam* edition, as mentioned in the foreword by the translator.

*Japa* (loud /muttered/silent chanting of a *mantra*) is a very important practice prescribed in the *Veda parampara* and also in the *Tantra parampara*. The following definition of the *Gayathri mantra* shows that these two streams of *parampara* constitute the main stream of *Sanatana Dharma* which may be considered the *Sushumna nadi* of *Bharatasamskrti*. Extending this metaphor, the two streams may be aptly considered the *Ida nadi* (the channel which controls the thought flow and *Pingala nadi* (the channel which controls the life energy flow) respectively.

The practice of mental chanting of *Gayatri mantra* brings about the expansion of the vertically located centres in the *Sushumna nadi* beginning from the *muladhara* up to the terminal of *brahmarandhra*. This practice also protects the six *charkas* of these centres and hence this *mantra* is called *Gayatri*. This definition is quoted from *Gayatri Tantra* by Sri P.R. Ramavarmaraja in his exclusive and exhaustive study, *Gayatri* in *Malayalam*. In the first chapter of this study the author quotes a descriptive meditation verse on *Gayatri* from *Mantrapravayogamanjari*. He makes use of the word breakup of this verse as titles for the gracefully written sixteen chapters of his study. In the sixth chapter titled *agamasakalapurunanethasaiakabijam* he observes that the whole text of *Ramayana* is set to the twenty four letters of *Gayatri* and he quotes authentic sources to point out the *Gayatri Ramayana* consisting of those twenty four verses of the original *Ramayana* which commence with the letters of *Gayatri* progressively. Each of these verses is found marking every thousandth verse among the twenty four thousand verses of the original text. He also shows *Srimadbhagavatapurana* as the epitome of the essence of *Gayatri*. His spiritually elevating approach to *Gayatri*

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70 ibid p 10
has yielded to him certain remarkable insights. He successfully explores and finds the
going from the first verse of Sri Adya Shankaracharya’s 

The third chapter of the study under discussion depicts Gayatriprapanchachakram (an innovative circular diagram evolved by the author to explain the whole creation in terms of Gayatri mantra and Srividya mantra)

In the eighth chapter of the study he derives the bija mantras (seed syllables) used in Tantra Sadhana (practices prescribed in the manuals) from the MaheshwaraSutras. These fourteen sutras on Sanskrit grammar contain the primordial seed vibrations of the Panchamahabhuta (the five great elements) and also other esoteric codes required for the advanced practices HA, YA, VA, RA, LA, these are the letters which indicate the mantras required for the manasapuja (mental worship) and these are felt along the Sushumna nadi as instructed by one’s guru. These sutras came into manifestation while Lord Nataraja drummed the Dhakka nine and five times at the end of His Cosmic Dance. The above author derives the mantras of the Great Elements, and other cosmic and micro aspects of the instruments of the life as follows 72

### 1.1 The fourteen Sutras exist in seed form in OM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sutras</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¹</td>
<td>औ व अ (म द्र) अ-परंब्रह्म-इ-चित्तका,उजगन्</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>²</td>
<td>ऋ ल (र्र्) ऋ-महेंशर: ; ल - सृष्टिरस मनोवृति:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>³</td>
<td>ए औ (इ) ए-माया, औ-ईशर:-सर्दमूतसाकी</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⁴</td>
<td>अष औ (त्) अ-ब्रह्मस्वरपम्, औ- बहात्मकसृधिविधानेच्छा</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These four Sūtras deal with the vowels and hence, are called स्वसृधिविधानी।

The following ten Sūtras deal with the consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sutras</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¹</td>
<td>ल (ण) पृथिवी-वीजम् (मल्ल: )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>²</td>
<td>ह-य-व-र (ट) आकाश-वायु -अप-तेज-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>³</td>
<td>इ-म-ज-ण-न (म्) शब्द-स्पर्श-रूप-रस -गत्य-तन्मात्रबीज</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72 ibid p 139-148
It is very significant to note that all these Mantra- Alphabets are systematically applied in various procedures such as Nyasa

Another remarkable work on the Gayatri mantra in Kannada, by Sri Yedathore Subbaraya Sharma, derives the Jyotisha Vidya (the discipline of Astronomy and Astrology) from the combinations of the words of the Gayatri mantra. This work shows that the design of veena (the Indian classical string instrument) is according to the structure of the Gayatri mantra. He quotes from Aitarevaranvaka to point out this fact.

Dr C N Srinivsaengar, Retired Professor of Mathematics, Bangalore, has written in English his remarks on the work in the beginning. The following select extracts would give an overall view of the content:

“The book is in four chapters. In the first chapter, the meaning of the Sacred Gayatri Hymn and the meanings pertaining to the twelve constellations (Mesha etc.) of astronomy and astrology are correlated to the principles of the creation, existence, and ultimate dissolution of the Universe. The remaining three chapters deal respectively with the Sun and Moon, the structure of the Universe, the Wheel of time.”

“----------It has been generally believed that these names are based on fanciful pictures of animals or of things joining the stars in the constellations. Shri Sharma’s work reveals to us that this is not so, but that the names are associated with deep spiritual facts concerning the evolutions of the Universe. Similar meanings of great spiritual importance.

Yedathore Subbaraya Sharma, Sri Gayatrimahume – Jyotishashastra. (Mampal Academy of General Education, 1968), P 12
are to be given to the names of the 27 Nakshatras, and also to the associations of particular Nakshatras to particular Rasis."74

“For the sake of clarification, one or two examples will be mentioned. Mesha does not mean Goat, but निस्सिसन गौत्र: . It means that the Supreme Lord begins to blossom out and give birth to the Universe.”75

In the second chapter of the above book Sri Sharma quotes the Taittireeya mantra to substantiate his tabular statement which correlates the Saptamatrkas (the seven goddesses) the Saptavyahrtis (the seven terms which are mantras as well as the names of the seven planes of the creation), and the seven days of the week, the seven Grahas (the seven names of the days in the Indian calendar also indicate the seven planets), the seven Swaras (the seven musical notes), and the seven Lokas (the names of the vyahrtis are meant here)

It may be noted here that these insights by themselves do not amount to experiential knowledge. They sound meaningful to one who is familiar with the scriptural lore. One has to listen to the guru, closely observe the living example in the guru, refer to the shastras, and all these should go on along with one’s spiritual practices without any compromise. Then alone what is understood would get transformed into the being mode, which has been indicated as experience throughout in this thesis. The Shwetashwatara Upanishad asserts that it happens and assures this enlightenment only to one who has parabhakti (devotion at all times, in all places, and in all occasions) in the Lord, and in the guru.76 This is a matter of self observation with the help of culturally refined, morally enlightened conscience.

One ought to know into which parampara one is born. One ought to know the roots of one’s kulaparampara (family tree). Being human requires being true to one’s dharma. The Sanatana Dharma is value oriented and the values are Veda bound Dharmam chara is Vedic injunction which means live value bound life whose value is based on the need of being human always as the birth demands. In order to become culturally refined and morally enlightened it is required to master the two branches of learning namely Para Vidya and Apara Vidya as prescribed in the Mundakopanishad.77

A careful study of the mantras of the Upanishads and the scriptural lore makes it clear that these two branches of learning require maximum activation of memory through listening and recollection. Hence a Vedic student’s prayer to God who is manifest in the sacrificial fire is meant to invoke the grace to grant the powers needed for sustained effort.

74 ibid p 13
75 ibid p 13
76 SRK Math edn, Svetasvataramanusa, p 124
77 Gorakpur edn, Eshadi Nau Upanishad, p 191 1st Mundaka 1st Khanda Mantra 4
78 Original texts of all available Upanishads
in learning throughout the life. Such learning does make the human being less and less imperfect.

*Para* means that which is not bound by time and space. Hence its value is not limited by time and space. *Para Shakti* means the sovereign Power of the Lord which operates beyond time and space and that which makes time and space manifest. Obviously *Apara* means everything which comes within the fold of time and space. It also means everything which subserves the *Para Shakti*. Therefore only with the grace of the Lord one can learn any *Vidya*. One may learn any *Vidya*, but the *Para Vidya* must be kept in the background, because it releases one from mortality and confers upon immortality.

This is the purpose of *Mangalcharanam* (the act of invoking auspiciousness) at the commencement of any classical text book on any *Shastra* in the sacred land of *Bharatam*. Hence knowledge is not only power but it is also divine. The diagram of *Para Vidya* is prepared by this researcher on the basis of the study of the *Upamshads*. It depicts the place of the sacrificial *fire* which is the *Vedic* as well as *Tantric* medium for invoking the presence of the Lord. This *fire* operates in the fourteen *Lokas* (worlds or fields of experiences) of which seven are positive and increasingly subtle in the upward direction and the other seven are negative and are in the downward direction. The *sun* and the *moon* and the *fire* have different levels of functions and meanings in the *Vedas* and the *Tantra Shastra*.

What is this *Para Shakti*? The *upanishad* gives the answer. How to realize her? The *Upanishad* shows the way. The relevant excerpts from the *Svetasvataropanishad* are given here. Some of the compound terms are used in the diagram given on page 124 of this thesis.

1) घरास्य शकिविविषेय श्रुयते । 

स्वाभाविकी नानवलकिया व ।

2) ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपशयन् । देवात्मशक्तिम् स्त्युगुणिनिगुणाम् ।

His *Shakti* (Power) alone is described as of different kinds in the *Vedas*. She is the innate Power of the Lord. She is said to have three modes, namely *knowledge*, *strength*, and *action*. This is the answer to one of the above two questions. *Sri Lalitasahasranama* describes these terms differently. Unlike the *upanishadic* expressions, these terms

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79 The arrow marks indicate that each discipline is linked to every other branch and has *multidirectional interconnectivity*.
This diagram is developed by this researcher.
form a compound which is meant to be used to address the Divine Mother. She is the power of creative will, the power of sustaining knowledge, and the power of transforming action. She is unapproachable to the indulging extrovert and is easily accessible to the self-disciplined devotee.

Those Rshis who enquired about the ultimate cause of the cosmos with the discipline of _dhyana_ (visualization) and _yoga_ (allied practices which help _dhyana_ ) entered the perpetual state of _dhyanayoga_ (effortless vision in communion) and saw within themselves the _Devatashakti_ (self-effulgent power of one's _inner being_, God) concealed within her own _gunas_ (the Elements and their attributes). Once seen it is unending because it is ever self-evident. Such Rshis choose to serve the Lord by perpetuating any branch of _Shastra_ and practice any discipline of _Vidya_, as they recognize the divine glory in every _Shastra_ and _Vidya_. Hence it is found that the authors of all the _Shastras_ are known as Rshis. The centres of learning established by them were known as _Rshikulam_. Perhaps this term seems to be the root and forerunner of residential _school_. The _Rshikulas_ did not condition the minds of the teacher and the taught with bell oriented sense of learning and bell regulated sense of punctuality. It was the chanting of the _Shanti mantra_ which marked the commencement of the session and again it was the _Shanti mantra_ which indicated the conclusion of the particular session. This helped sustaining the sense of reverence in the minds of the teacher and the student. The learning and leisure dichotomy was not created in the minds of the students. Living in the _Rishikula_ was a continuous experience of learning and internal growth of the student as it was experiential learning. The _Veda Pathashalas_ in the villages in South India did inherit some of the features of the _Rshikulas_. The _Mutts_ established by the _Acharyas_ of various _sampradayas_ like _Advaita_ adapted the same pattern of these _Pathashalas_. This is very much evident in the conduct of the _Pathashalas_ in Shringeri and Udupi _Mutts_ in Karnataka.

### 1.2 A broad survey of the Guru-Śiśhya parampara

A survey of _Guru-Shishya_ – _Śhāstra- Sampradāya- Paramparā_ prevailing across the country brings to fore the following aspects:

1) The _Paramparās_ which are perpetuated by _Mutts_ associated with the _Peethas_ through _Sannyāsīs_ (the renunciates). The unbroken chain of _Gurū –Śhishya – Paramparā_ of _Sri Shringeri Jagadgurus_ is a striking example.

2) The _Paramparās_ perpetuated by the householders who have received the blessings of the _Āchāryās_ of the _Mutts, Peethas_ and other authentic centres of spiritual _Śādhanā_.

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81. Adyar edn Mantrasastra Lalita-Sahasranaman, p 266
82. SRK Math edn Svetasvataraopamsad, p 18
3) The **Avadhoota Paramparās** which do not have any establishment or institution are many across the country. The **Avadhoota** stage of spiritual perfection is attained by a very few Masters Sri Śukāchārya and Sri Jadabharata are classical examples of Sri Bhāgavatam.

4) There are **Vaishnava Avadhootas**, **Śiva Avadhootas** and **Śaktta Avadhootas** found wandering along the sacred rivers like the Ganga, the Narmada. The **Ḍāsa** Tradition of Karnataka is a standing example wherein are many **Avadhootas** from whom thousands of seekers received the blessings and enlightenment. Among the saints of the **Basava** Tradition, there are examples of **Avadhootas** like Sri Akka Mahādevī. Almost in every state of Bharatam there are living examples of **Avadootas** who have attained spiritual perfection through **Tantra Sādhana**.

5) The term **Sampradāya** has more than one meaning according to the context in which it is used.

i) **Dvaita Sampradāya**, **Viśishtādvaita Sampradāya**, and **Advaita Sampradāya** mean the customs and conventions which are system specific by which a member of given system is identified by another member. The appearance of the person gives out the signals such as the religious marks on the forehead. Certain verbal expressions such as greeting, mode of wishing, references to one’s Guru, Mutt, Sampradāya, these convey the identity of the system to which one belongs.

ii) Technical and esoteric aspects of performing certain **Pujās** are referred to with the term **Sampradāya**. However, these are not arbitrary and superficial matters. The how and why of such details are orally conveyed which are not to be brought to public debate. For example, the **Sringeri Sampradāya** of offering worships on **Sríchakram** to Sri Śharadambā.

iii) **Sam+Pra+Da**. The two prefixes added to the verbal root ‘da’ which means to give, provide a variety of meanings to the process of giving and the product given. Sri Mā Anandamayī says that the Guru giving himself to the Śhishya completely in total identification with the Supreme Reality is **Sampradāya**. In the absence of this giving everything else becomes superficial. This is orally communicated by Sri Kedarnath.

6) Certain practices are given supreme importance and the texts associated with these practices become unavoidable limbs of these traditions. **Pārāyanam** (loud reading of a given sacred text) is one of such practices.

1.3 The core practice of **Tantra Vidya**

There are texts dedicated to different **Devatās**. These texts are derived from **Ithihāsās** viz., Sri Rāmāyana and Sri Mahābhārata, the Purāṇas, and also from the **Vedās**. Sometimes these are combined according to certain rules and methods of **Mantra Śhāstra** to accomplish well-defined goals permitted by the **Dharma Śhāstrās**. Here follows a few samples.
1) Sri Durga Saptashati / Chandi Pārāyanam.
2) Srimad Bhāgavata Pārāyanam
3) Sri Devi Bhāgavatha Pārāyanam
4) Sri Sundara Kānda Pārāyanam [Sri Ramayana].
5) Srimad Bhāgavadgīta Pārāyanam [Sri Mahābhārata].
6) Sri Soundarya Lahari Pārāyanam [Stōtra]
7) Sri Nārāyaneeyam Parayanam [Stōtra].
8) Sri Guru Charitra Pārāyanam [Prose Narration].
9) Sri Rudra Pārāyanam [Yajur-Veda Mantras].
10) Sri Pavamāna Pārāyanam [Veda Mantras]
11) Sri Vishnu Sahasranāma Stotra Pārāyanam.
12) Sri Lalitha Sahasranāma Stotra Pārāyanam

i) Most of the above Pārāyanams require Mantra Deeksha (initiation into a Mantra) by a Guru who is the active link in the lineage of a given Parampara. The number of days taken for the completion of a text is invariably fixed in the text itself or according to the instructions of the Guru. Without the help of a text on hand if the content is recited by heart it becomes Japa of a very high order. Usually a yaga is performed after the Parayanam invoking the presiding Devata of the Grantha (text).

ii) Japa and Homa In order to accomplish certain goals and fulfill certain wishes there are specific Mantras pertaining to the Devatās who make it possible to materialize the wishes. There are herbs, vanaspatīs, medicinal wood and grains and other materials which are to be offered into the fire after invoking the Devatā. The offering should be preceded by Japa. There are traditions of Nitya Ganesha Havana/Gana Homa practiced by many sādhakas and saints across the country. The Sampradāya followed in Kerala is different from Karnataka in certain aspects. Yet the Devatā invoked is according to the Śhāstra Paramparā and it is authentic and vouchsafed by experience in terms of Phala siddhi, the result.

iii) The traditions of preparing the Dhāranā Yantra, Sthāpanā Yantra and Poojana Yantra are preserved and perpetuated in a unique way. The instrument of inscription plays an important role in invoking the presence of the Devatā through the medium of the
palm-leaf, copper plates, silver and gold plates and even of silk. The guru or the eldest member of the family who practices the Prayoga (application of Yantras) hands over the instrument with total prayer, faith and blessings to the deserving disciple or successor who becomes the receptacle of the power of inscription after undergoing the required discipline with the guidance of guru.

The instrument of inscription of the great mystic and avadhoota Sri Tunjath Ezhuthachan is preserved in Kerala with the blessing of which many children get initiated into Aksharabhyasa (writing the alphabets) at Tunjan Mattom, Kerala. His full name is Tunjath Sri Ramanujan Ezhuthachan. He has authored many works which include Sri Bhagavatam in vernacular folk style called Kilippattu, Sri Mahabharata, Sri Ramayana, and Sri Harinama Keertanam.

In many houses across Kerala even today, the Parayanam of his works are undertaken as a vow to fulfill the wishes. Especially in Thrissur, those who do not know Sanskrit take to his works and the ladies also undertake the vow of Parayanam. The temples also become the venue for it.

The essentials of guru-shishya-shastra-sampradaya-parampara of the Vedas and Tantra Vidya are preserved and perpetuated through oral transmission. Unlike the dead documents of history, the orally transmitted sacred word dies not. Sampradaya and parampara are the breath and blood of it. The same is the case with every Vidya. For example, the Guru Parampara Stotra of the Shringeri Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peethom refers to all the Pontiffs of this Peethom. It is the foremost Vedic centres of Sanatana Dharma. This Peethom has a vast network of branch mutts (residential centres) across the country. The common prayer of guru parampara nation wide in the context of Shankara Parampara is given below.

शंकराचार्यमध्यमाम्। ।
अस्मादाचार्यययत्वताम् वद्दे गुरुपरमपराः॥५४॥

Another verse, common enough as the above verse, gives the details of the acharyas/gurus of the above lineage which begins with Lord Narayana followed by Padmabhuva (Hranyagarbha, Brahmaa), Brahmarshi Vasishta, Shakti, Parashara, Vedavyasa, Shuka, Goudapada, Govinda Yogindra, Sri Shankaracharya Padmapada, Hastamalaka, Trotaka, Vartikakara, and others up to one’s gurus whom one should prostrate always. There is no contradiction regarding Lord Sadashiva and

85 ibid p 41
Lord Narayana being the originators, which an academician may be tempted to look for. The divine intentions and interventions are better known to the gurus.

In the context of Shakta Parampara there are many streams of lineages which begin with Lord Dakshinamurti, Lord Dattatreya, Lord Anandabhairava, and so on. There are divine, semi divine and human groups in the array of gurus. There are paramparas of house holders which are called grhasta parampara. A careful and devoted search for one’s family tree and its roots of Kula Parampara would reveal the details of one’s Kula Devata (family deity). If this is forgotten over generations in a family the members will find it difficult to establish health, prosperity, and peace individually and collectively. With the help of Jyotisha Vidya it is possible to identify the family deity, the relevant mantra, and the ways of resuming the practices according to one’s parampara. This helps one to come back to the main stream of Sanatana Dharma.

The earthly link between the guru and the shishya is the Shastra. It is activated through Sampradaya. The divine link is the mantra and the Devata. The spiritual contact of the guru with the Devata activates the mantra. It becomes the valid password for the shishya to contact the guru and the Devata. Hence it is called guru mantra and also moola mantra. However, to get entry into a parampara the essential samskaras (purificatory rituals) are to be complied with. There are special samskaras which are specific to a given parampara. The traditional pilgrimage to Shabarimala Sri Ayyappa Temple in Kerala, Sri Subrahmanya Temple, Palani in Tamil Nadu, are examples of regional parampara which involve nama-mantra, mala-mudra, vratam, vastram (oath bound cloths), and group rituals besides individual disciplines. But these are optional and annual procedures.

There are many practices which have the basis of the Tantra Shastra as in vogue in daily life across this sacred land. Bhoomi Puja (invoking Sri Bhuvaneshwari who is one of the Dasha Maha Vidya Goddesses) before the commencement of construction of a house, depositing gold and precious gems in the foundation pit, Vasthu Homa (offerings unto the fire invoking the Vastu Purusha), Bali and Rakshoghna Homa (offerings to the guardian forces, and dispelling the evil forces through offerings unto the fire), before occupying the newly constructed house, women folk worshipping the threshold of the entrance door, making floral design using rice flour and natural colours at the entrance, fumigating aromatic herbs during dawn and dusk, welcoming the guests with water, jaggery and fruits, keeping coconuts wrapped in white or colour clothe on the beam of the entrance door, all these and many more are performed with great shraddha. And yet seldom one enquires into the shastra behind it. A thing done with knowledge and faith assures total efficacy.

A close study of Vedic Yaga Shala (the open platform with minimum superstructure and mathematically and geometrically conceived fire pit) and the classical
temple layout and structure would disclose the fact that they serve the spiritual purpose for which they are designed at different levels. Both are considered representations of the cosmic life cycle in which fire plays a dynamic role. Both are designed in terms of the human body. The sacred chamber of the Bimba/Vigraha (that of which the soul is a reflection and that which is easily grasped by the soul) is called the garbha grha (the Lord who is full in the chamber which is like a womb). The Yaga Shala deals with the adhibhuta aspect of the cosmic life, whereas the Temple deals with the adhidaiva aspect of it. And the living body of the devotee is considered the adhyatma locus for both the birds, namely the doer-enjoyer-agent who is the soul, and the presiding overlord of the cosmic life who is God.

At all the three levels of adhibhuta (Elements), adhidaiva (planes of Cosmic Consciousness), and adhyatma (the living microcosm) God presides over, but the soul resides in the given temple of God, the living body. The soul breathes and God beats. The soul eats and God digests. The soul speaks and God gives the meaning. The soul interacts and God acts. The soul lives and God enlivens. The bhutagni (elemental fire), the yajnagni (sacrificial fire), and the pranagni (digestive fire) are the manifestations of Chidagni (sovereign Power of the Lord) which makes the manifestations possible. Thus from the Vedic perspective the human being is a yaga shala, and from the perspective of the Tantra Shastra the human body is a temple. In the process of creation which itself is a Yajna, the Yajna/Yaga manifests first and then comes the Kshetra (temple, body), and at last the Kshetrajna (the embodied being) who is given a chance to realize the mystery of life in and through life. The Vedas prescribe the Upasanas and the Tantra Shastra elaborates and demonstrates them in many ways from different perspectives. The Dasha Maha Vidya Sutras show how the Vedic Vidya and Tantra Vidya are identical in experience.

There are different paramparas of the Tantra Shastra which are based on different levels of perspectives. They present before the upasakas (those want to pursue the practices prescribed in the Vedas and demonstrated in the Tantra Shastra) these perspectives as Vidyas. Thirty-two Vidya-s is a volume in English which provides references from the source material in clear terms. Authentic extracts are given from Bhagavadpada’s bhashyas (Sanskrit commentaries on the Prasthanatraya scriptures consisting of the Bramasutras, Upanishads, and the Gita) The list of Vidyas is compared with the bhashyas of Sri Ramanujacharya, and this makes the work comprehensive. A few points from this work are noted below.

86 S Shankaranarayanan, Sm Chakra, 3rd ed (Pondicherry Depti Publications, 1979), p 95 verse of Jnanarnava quoted ज्ञानस्थिति वाणवयः ै च शेषाकुम्भे प्रपुजये ।
87 Adyar edn The Thirty-Two Vidya-s, Eng. compiler K Narayanaswami Aiyar, (1916, rpt Madras, The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1975),
The fruits of these Vidyas, according to the Vedanta sutras (Brahma sutras), are mentioned as 1) Duritaksaya, 2) Aisvaryaprapati, and 3) Kramamukti The first one is the warding off of calamities or misfortunes This is said to be the visible result The more the Vidyas is practiced, the more the warning is given by the guru or Ista-devata of the impending danger Then next one is the invisible result, namely Aisvaryas (siddhus, occult powers) which render a man invincible in the outer world The last is Kramamukti (release by successive steps). This is where the upasaka becomes gifted with perfect knowledge

In the introduction on Gayatri Vidyas a crucial warning is given by the compiler of the above work As the Upanishads put it, the adhyatmika (microcosm), and the adhidaivika (macrocosm), should be taken into consideration. "Should the study go on from the standpoint of the segregated unit of man alone, it will end in black magic, as Madame H. P. Blavatsky put it" 88 Hence the Brhadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads (which are the biggest of all and which, in the compiler’s opinion, are veritable forests of occult knowledge) dwell on adhyatma and adhidaiva aspects and correlate man with the universe.

1.4 Is Tantra Vidyas witchcraft, black magic, wizardry, or sorcery?

Based on different paramparas and their different perspectives, there are sixty four branches of Tantras as enlisted in the Sanskrit commentaries on Soundaryalahari. 89 These branches are considered detrimental to the spiritual refinement of the upasaka. Those who practice them with selfish and ulterior motives have brought the black mark of black magic on the Atharvaveda and the Tantra Shastra in every Yuga. The rakshasas and danavas among them have macabre appearance, whereas the asuras have attractive exterior and repulsive interior The puranas and the itihasas depict their vicious campaigns to destroy the good for establishing the evil. San-mantravada and Dur-mantravada are two expressions very common among the upasakas in Kerala which indicate the positive and negative possibilities of using the Mantra Shastra The term atharvana also has somehow gathered the negative meaning This however, is not the fault of the Shastras It is possible to present the negative side with undue focus Such a presentation will be at the cost of one’s culture The Acharyas like Govinda Bhagavadpada have decried such practices as nunditam (contemptible)

The book Indian witchcraft, A Study in Indian Occultism 90 is a typical example of derogatory interpretation of the Atharvaveda This book has black outer jacket with a white skull and a white bone The inside picture plate depicts a macabre goblin in black and white print The author states that witchcraft was taught in Taxila, Nalanda, and Vikram shila Four types of charms namely mantrasara (including all mantras),

88 ibid p 11
89 ORI Mysore edn Soundaryalahan, p 73-79
90 R N Saletore, Indian witchcraft, (New Delhi Abhirnav Publications,1981),
yantrasara (the science of cabalistic figures), prayogasara (the method of using them for attaining any object), and tantrasara (the science of symbolical acts with or without words). It is rather unfortunate that inapt translation of Sanskrit terms abound in this scholar’s work. Ironically he claims to have had authentic personal experiences of witnessing inexplicable feats performed by a villager in his ancestral village. A contrast to this book is the pleasing appearance of the blue sky and snow white ranges of mountains and the emerald waters with globules of reflected light on the cover of the Kannada book titled Atharvaveda- Ondu Adhyayana. It stands out as an epitome of cultured study the Atharvaveda. The author’s access to the original text and available commentaries in Sanskrit makes the study scholarly. He quotes from the Charanavyyuha Parishushtam of the Atharva Veda to point out the nine branches of this Veda. These nine branches describe various disciplines like Ayurveda. These branches do not unfold to academic scholarship, literary appreciation, and critical approach which take away the spirit of sadhana and consequently the whole effort to reach the being mode is lost or missed. Like the medical history of a patient which is not a thing of past removed from the present when the suffering is a continuous experience, spiritual sadhana is a movement in consciousness in terms of refinement and expansion. It never becomes a thing of past.

It was stated earlier in this thesis that the Rshis realized within them the Devatmashakti endowed with mysterious gunas. This realization is made possible by gradually growing out of tamoguna (the binding aspect of Shakti which throws a veil over knowledge and prevents knowledge at the microcosmic level, and that aspect of Shakti which makes the manifestation of gross, inert things possible at the macrocosmic level). Tamoguna withdraws when rajoguna (the projecting aspect of Shakti which causes bondage and finitude in the individual being, and that aspect of Shakti which keeps the wheel of time moving at the macrocosmic level) is activated with the support of sattvaguna (the revealing aspect of Shakti at the microcosmic level and, that aspect of Shakti which maintains the balance of the manifest cosmos). The Rshi becomes gunateeta (one who has grown out of the need of rajoguna and also sattvaguna) when his realization is never subjected to the fluctuations caused by the three gunas and their unending combinations. He is a mahatma (mahapurusha) in the Gita sense of the term. Such masters are capable of blessing the deserving upasaka without the physical contact. Some of them are ordained by the Lord to perpetuate the shastra parampara and they become the Acharyas. They perpetuate only sattvic paramparas which are bound by

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91 ibid p p 8 & p 76
92 Shesha Navaratna, Atharvaveda-Ondu Adhyayana. (Dharvad Manohara Phanikara, Samaja
93 ibid p 11
94 See, foot note No 82
satsampradaya (virtuous procedures which facilitate spiritual comprehension of the contents of the shastras)

The major satvic paramparas of Tantra Vidya are presided over by such Rsis who are Yuga Purushas (those who are ordained to serve the Lord throughout the Yuga). The great sages Vasishtha, Sanaka, Shuka, Sanandana, and Sanatkumara are the authors of Shubhagama Panchaka (five auspicious texts) which are called Vaishnava Agamas. There are also Shaiva Agamas and Shakta Agamas which deal with various aspects of upasana of the Devatas in whose name these Agamas are known. They deal with four aspects of jnana, yoga, kriya, and chharya. The acharyas follow the directions of the Rsis and the Devatas (presiding deities of satvic forces) as available in these Agamas. This is evident in the living examples of temples revived by the acharyas across the holy land of Bharatam. Bhagavatpada is known as Shanmatasthapanacharya (one who revived the six disciplines of upasana) Among the six Devatas five are combined to form five units called Panchayatanam (five abodes for worship). His Prapanchasara Tantra and Poornaprajna's Tantrasarasangraha prescribe the disciplines of upasana of different Devatas which involve yantras, mantras, and their applications. Sri Bhaskararaya Makh's contribution to this field of upasana is very significant. The next chapter briefly deals with some of the practical aspects of upasana as highlighted by these masters and their disciples.

The Śāstra Paramparā of Kāli, Tārā, Tripurasundari, Bhuvaneswari, Chinnamastā, Tripurasharanvi, Dhūmāvati, Bagalāmukhi, Mātangi, Kamalāmukhā constitute the Dasa Maha Vidyas (Ten Great Disciplines) These invoke the Supreme Power of the Infinite Divinity as revealed in and through the relevant Mantra. They are gathered in Śākta Pramoda. So also, Durgā, Śiva, Ganesā, Sūrya and Vishnu Tantras given in it contain the relevant Mantras and related disciplines.

The above note of the publisher in Sanskrit adumbrates the procedures followed in pursuing the required Śādhanā prescribed by one's Guru

1) ध्यानम् - Verbal Image of the Devatā to be meditated upon.
2) यन्त्रोपलिप्तय: - Derivation of the From pattern of the Devatā
3) स्वास्तिकाः - Derivation of the Sound pattern of the Devatā
4) पूजाविधि: - Method of worship of the Devatā with the Yantra and Mantra
5) स्तोत्रम्- Recitation of the Glories of the Devatā

95 See, chapter Two pg 25 of this thesis
96 Śakta Pramoda (Bombay Khemaraj Srikrishnadas, 1982),
97 ibid p 3
6) कवचम् :- This is a special oral recital of Mantra - combined verses.
7) _पुनर्वचन:- This is the heart of the Mantra and the Devata. Like the Kavacham this is also to be loudly recited
8) अपनिदयतः.- The available texts of Upanishads pertaining to the Devata of some of the Mahavidyas are given. These are meant for meditative study.
9) शतनामः - The hundred names of the Devata are given in each of the Tantras compiled. They are meant for chanting and meditative study
10) सहस्त्रनामः - The thousand names of the Devata are given in each of the Tantras compiled. They are meant for chanting and meditative study.

All the above limbs are centered on Mantra and Mantra is centred on the Guru. Therefore the Šāstra Paramparā gives supreme importance to the Guru.

The Shastras have classified the Power of Grace अनुग्रहशाश्वित्तः into four viz ; गुरुकृपा, शास्त्रकृपा, ईश्वरकृपा and आत्मकृपा, the Grace of Guru, of Šāstra, of Eswara and of the Self. Obviously these are not four different units, but only manifestations at different levels and stages.

The Kutārnava Tantra points out that a seeker should never entertain any thought such as
i) The Guru as a mortal being.
ii) The Mantra as mere alphabets
iii) The idols/ images of Devatās as stone or inert matter.

These thoughts prevent any accomplishment such as Mantra Siddhi.

The same text emphatically substantiates the faith of idol worship in the following verses.

ग्यां सर्वानज्ञात श्रीरं सर्वेऽ मनुष्यायनां |
तथा सर्वांगी देवं गृहमायु विराजते ||

99 Ganesha&Company edn Bhavanopamshad, Sanskrit section, p 4 Tantraraja quoted in Bhaskararaya's bhashya
100 Motilal edn Kulamava Tantra, p 154 verses 45,46
101 ibid p.77 verse 75
The milk in a milch cow is yielded through the udder though the milk is processed within the whole cow. Similarly the all pervasive Deva shines in the idols, because,

आमिरूप्याच्या बिण्वस्य पूजायाचे विशेषतः ||

साधकस्य च विश्वासात् संबंधी देवता भवेत ||

The charm of the idol, the intense worship of the seeker with unflinching faith make the Devata manifest in the idol in a special way.

There are ten altars where the worship to a given Devatā can be offered.

लिङ्ग स्थङ्किण वहनयंयु सूर्यं कुञ्जपतेषु च ||

मण्डले फलके मूर्तिः हुँदि या दशा कीर्तिता: ||

Lingam, Sthandilam, Vahni, Ambu, Šūrpah, Kudyapata, Mandala, Phalaka, Moordhā, Hrt are the ten loci where in the Devatā of a given Mantra can be worshiped. Idols made of different materials are not mentioned here as they belong to a different category and they require specific procedures of installation and worship.

1.5 The Tantra Lore and Sādhana Topics.

The Tantrik scriptures are classified in different ways on various grounds. All such classifications are for the convenience of understanding the contents from the standpoint of the sādhaka’s requirements, eligibility and temperaments. The following classification104 is according to Tantra Vijnān, in Hindi, with brief explanations.

The author asserts that in the seventh century there were twelve paths prevalent based on five systems. 1) पाण्ड्रस्त्र 2) पाण्डपर्त 3) कापालिकम् 4) शाकम् 5) गणपत्यम्. The twelve paths are

1) भागवत 2) कपिल 3) चार्वक 5) काणाद 6) पौराणिक 7) धातुवाद ( देश्वर कारणिक कारायथमित ) 8) सप्त तान्त्र 9) वैयाकरण 10) बोध 11) पाण्ड्रारिक 12) औपलिपिद 105 According to this author the foundational system and path which have gone into all other systems and paths is पाण्ड्रारिक. He states that Sri Adya Shankaracharya evolved his system and path based on पाण्ड्रारिक. 106 पाण्ड्रारिक is Vaishnava Tantra. It is पाण्ड्र (five fold) because it deals with five topics such as 1)परस्तत्त्व, 2)भुक्तिः 3) सुक्तिः, 4) योगः, and संसारः.

102 ibid p 77 verse 76
103 ibid p 77 verse 73
104 Arun Kumar Sharma, Tantravijnan, p 81-84
105 Arun Kumar Sharma, Tantravijnan, p 81-84
106 ibid p 81
(Designed by this researcher)

Note. Dvaita, Advaita, Dvaita-Advaita denote the sampradayas revived time and again by the Acharyas whose advent is marked as “Jayanthi” in the Indian calendar. This does not mean that the sampradaya did not exist earlier.
It is also known as STRcTcT and 'HKdcl| There are two types m, one deals with the Lord alone and the other deals with the Divine Mother alone Srimadbhāgavatam and Sri Devibhāgavatam belong to these two respectively.\textsuperscript{107}

There are 108 Samhitās of Pāncharātram among which four deal with aspects of Tantra They are Abhiruddhnya Samhitā, Jayākhya Samhitā, Eśāhwara Samhitā, and Vishnu Samhitā.\textsuperscript{108}

There are many procedures and methods which help a sadhaka to attain the goal towards which all paths, systems, disciplines, at various stages are named differently and hence, appear different. All these are brought under ḍhātmārghā: 6 titles which deal with 1) प्रयोगः (applications) 2)आचारः (conduct) 3)कर्म (rituals) 4) मंत्र (devotion) 5)योजना (the discipline of different aspects related to the energies of suitable body) 6) अधीरसाधन (mastering the Rajas and Tamas elements), प्रकृति (of the Nature).\textsuperscript{109}

The six Āmnayas mentioned earlier are related to these six paths and their details. Thus पूर्व, पश्चिम, उत्तर, दक्षिण, ऊर्ध्व, अधर, आम्नायय: have emphasis on their paths respectively.\textsuperscript{110}

Further, based on the three Gunas of Prakṛti the paths are classified as Dakshina - Sattva guna oriented, Vāma -Rajoguna oriented and Aghora -Tamoguna oriented Vāma and Aghora together form Bhairavi Śādhanā invoking the Pancha Makāra, the Five Ms, Māmsa, Madirā, Mīna, Mudrā and Maithuna. The five Great Elements of Prakṛti are contacted through the Five Mantrās and the experiences are refined and elevated. Thes are transcended during the Śādhanā itself.\textsuperscript{111}

There are many misconceptions about the Pancha Makāra and Vāmāchāra which have caused damage to the Śāstra Paramparā. Tantra became a synonym of Vāmāchāra and Vāmāchāra meant Witchcraft, moral corruption and debauchery. In the name of Tantra these came into vogue. The innocent faith of the gullible got exploited Craving for easy pleasures without responsibility, easy money without accountability and easy power without efforts prompted such pursuits invoking the lower forces of the Nature which yield to flesh, wine and women. This in short, is Tantrik Siddhi of the bars and red light as propagated by the unscrupulous persons.

\textsuperscript{107} ibid p 82
\textsuperscript{108} ibid p 82
\textsuperscript{109} ibid p 48
\textsuperscript{110} ibid p 6
\textsuperscript{111} ibid p 26
However, the Element *Prithivi* (Earth) is meant by *Mudrā*. Water is meant by *Mina*. Fire is meant by *Madyā/Madīra*. Air is meant by *Mamsa*. Space is meant by *Maithuna*. These are terms which mean differently at different levels of experiences during the *Sādhanā* and the individual *Sādhaka* effortlessly understands the contexts in which the *Śhāstra* and Guru mention them and mean them.\(^{112}\)

**Bhāva and Āchāra**

*Paśhu, Veera* and *Dvya* are the three *Bhāvas* the *sādhaka* has to scale through before attaining the highest state of Perfection. *Bhāva* is related to the state of mind which is regulated by the compositions of the three *Gunās* of *Prakrti Tantra Śhāstra* prescribes suitable *Bhāvanā* (attitudinal modifications, and meditations) and corresponding physical *Āchāra* (conduct). There are seven *Āchārās*

*Paśhu* literally means an animal. A *sādhaka* who is aware of one’s animal impulses and is desirous of growing out of them is called *Uttama Paśhu* (a good animal). For such *sādhakās* there are four *Āchārās* viz, *Vedāchāra, Vaishnavāchāra, Śaivāchāra*, and *Dakshināchāra*.

*Veera* etymologically means वीरस् रति इति, one who saves and preserves the life-energies without dissipating them through the senses. At this stage the *sādhaka* comprehends the possibilities of cosmic unity within the Divinity. *Vāmāchāra* and *Siddhāntāchāra* are meant for such *sādhakās*.

*Divya* means the being which has the attunement with the Divine. A *sādhāka* who has this attunement with the *Devatā* who has been invoked through consistent, devoted discipline as guided by the *Guru* is eligible for pursuing *Koulāchāra* which is the seventh *Āchāra* according to the tradition highlighted by Arun Kumar Sharma.\(^{113}\)

Woodroffe also refers to the seven *Āchārās* in his *Introduction to Tantra Śhāstra*. His descriptions are exhaustive and are supported by extensive footnotes with authentic references from various sources of *Tantra Śhāstra*. Under the sub-title ‘worship’ which is the seventeenth among twenty one sub-titles in this book Woodroffe covers a wide range of topics related to *Tantra Sādhanā* over fifty two pages.

Like the statutory warning printed in micro characters in the mega advertisement of cigarettes, Woodroffe gives the foot note, in micro print, “Though mere

\(^{112}\) ibid p 25  
\(^{113}\) ibid p 23
book knowledge is, according to the Sat-karmadipikā, useless”. He quotes an important verse in Sanskrit in transliteration but without translation.\(^{114}\)

However, the verse points out the futility of bookish efforts even if undertaken for ages

\textit{पुस्तके लिखित विघा चैन सुन्दरि जाप्येऽ।}

\textit{सिद्धिन्तं जायते देवि कल्पकोटिश्तयैः॥ वो} who says to whom is also a matter for serious consideration for a \textit{sādhaka} This verse is evidently addressed by the Lord to Divine Mother It warns every \textit{sādhaka} to abstain from any curious dabbling of any instruction given in any text book of \textit{Tantra}.

The common features of the different \textit{Tantra Shastra paramparas} are summarized here before concluding this chapter.

1) They are meant to serve the common goals of the fourfold \textit{Purushartha}

2) They are bound by the values of \textit{Sanatana Dharma} of the \textit{Vedas}. They adhere to the \textit{Dharma Shastras} in the matters of daily conduct of life Sri Bhaskararaya Makhi emphatically asserts that the \textit{Tantra Shastra} is a part of the \textit{Dharma Shastras}

3) They are ever linked to the spiritual centres of \textit{Mahakshetras} (the great temples) related to the presiding \textit{Devata} of the given \textit{parampara} (for example, according to the \textit{Vashnava Parampara}, Sri Badrinath in the Himalayas is considered the national spiritual centre of Bharatam where \textit{Devarshi Narada} pursues the \textit{upasana} of Lord Sri Badri Narayana. The \textit{Nambudiri} priests of this temple belong to Kerala. This tradition of appointing the \textit{Kerala Brahmin} priests was started by \textit{Bhagavatpada})

4) They follow the six auxiliary disciplines of the \textit{Vedas}, especially the \textit{Kalpa Sutras} and the \textit{Jyotisha Vidya} to perform the \textit{upasana}. The spiritual calendar is calculated according to the \textit{Jyotisha Vidya}. The fourteen \textit{Maheshwara Sutras} of Maharshi Panini’s Sanskrit Grammar expand into the vowels and the consonants which constitute the fifty \textit{Aksharas} (immortal alphabets) of the \textit{Mantra Shastra} It has been already pointed out that these \textit{sutras} contain the seed \textit{mantras} of the \textit{Panchamahabhutas}

5) They follow certain identity insignia such as dress, marks on the forehead and the limbs, codes and modes of greeting each other, and they pursue organized group observances of annually recurring festivals and pilgrimages are under taken during special occasions during the months, weeks, and days specified in the Lunar /Solar calendar of the year

6) Each \textit{Parampara} recognizes the value and place of every other \textit{Parampara} in the total scheme of cosmic spiritual harmony

7) Auspicious time, holy place, and pious performance make these *Paramparas* pulsate and perpetuate in and through generations after generations.

8) For want of flowing water a river may go dry. And the river bed may give way to the civilization. But the living *Paramparas* would outlive the terminator forces of modern moral indifference.

9) All the *Paramparas* are well protected by the supreme, sovereign Power of the Lord.

\[ \text{त्यतः सनातनो धर्मो रक्ष्यते तनुभिस्तवा} \]

\[ \text{धर्मस्य परमो गुरुम् निर्विकल्पो भवान् मतः} \] 115

Oh Lord! You are known to be the supreme secret of *Dharma* devoid of any ambiguity and the *Sanatana Dharma* is protected by Your Bodies (incarnations and divine limbs)

Oh Lord! You are the source of *Sanatana Dharma*.

As already stated in this chapter, the two prefixes *sam* and *pra* added to the root *da* go into the make up of the term *sampradaya*. Sri Ma Anandamayi says that the *guru* giving himself to the *shishya* completely in total identification with the Supreme Reality is meant by *sampradaya* In the absence of this giving everything else becomes superficial. Scripturally accepted procedures which facilitate this giving are also called *sampradaya* In search of the roots of *Tantra Vidya* one has to only turn within and keep chanting, Sri *Sampradayeshwaryai namah*. The *sutras* under study help an *upasaka* to reach the root and reap the fruit of *Tantra Vidya*.

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115 Bombay edn *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Sanskrit text with notes,(Khémaraj Srikrishnadasa,1997),p 35 3rd *Skandha* 16th Chap Verse 18