CHAPTER-V

MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS OF TANTRIC ART
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In the beginning, before the advent of religion man was 'one' with nature. This vision of his unity prompted the creation of symbols to enable him to see himself as a part of the Cosmo-breathing and moving with a life in which all elements of existence are interlinked. The Tantras make an extensive use of mystic symbols. The use of mystic symbols in Indian culture can be traced back to 300 B.C. Tantrism as a science employed these symbols and power diagrams to harness one's inner life force. As tools of self-enhancement these complex symbols hold multiple layers of metaphysical meaning within its form, action, energy and sound associations. According to Carl Jung, "symbols are not manufactured but discovered through primal inner sources. These patterns emerge from man's strife to fuse the opposite forces within him. Such symbols freely recur across various cultures of the world."

Symbol is a medium through which one conveys his sentiments. This medium can either be a language, figure or image. At initial level symbols are required for layman, but not for the sadhaka like Shree Ramakrishna Paramhansea, for whom "everywhere there is a linga". He feels, not at particular place or in object but everywhere. This identity is the base of Indian symbolism. As Daniel Alain observes, "The whole Hindu iconography is built on a code of symbols based on the assumption that there exists a natural affinity between forms and ideas".¹

Plate - 35
Shiva manifests himself in linga form,
Brihadeshwar Temple, Tanjore,
c. 11th century A.D., Tamil Nadu
[1] YANTRAS:

A Yantra, which means 'aid' or 'tool', is generally drawn on paper or engraved on metal, either to aid meditation or as a tangible image of the deity. The Yantra is a diagrammatic equivalent of the deity and consists of linear and spatial geometrical permutations of the deity.

The dynamic graph or the diagram of forces by which a thing or a force is represented is the Yantra. The Yantras are not abstractions; they are living images of cosmic forces of graphs of definite processes. In Yantra, the spheroid is looked upon as a sphere in the process of breaking itself into separate units, each with its own center. It represents the division of wholeness for the sake of multiplicity.  

Yantra is a mystic diagram. Yantra worship is a marked feature of Tantra Sadhana; it symbolizes the higher mystic power. Yantra means an apparatus by which anything is accomplished. The Yantras come from the Vedic diagram, which may be of various shapes according to the rules of sacrifice. The Yantras or diagram possessing occult significance and power play a very important role in Tantric rituals. They are of two kinds, one for wearing on the neck, arm or lock of hair as an amulet and the other, taken as identical with the deity for the purpose of worship. Such Yantras are often engraved on metal plates, bhurja leaves etc. Thus, the second part gives the direction for the making, by means of royal Mantra and three other famous Vaisnava

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All tantric deities have their corresponding yantra forms. Top, from left to right: yantra of Annapurna, a form of Durga, and three yantras of Mahavidya Bagala-mukhi; above, from left to right: two yantras of Surya, the Sun God; one of Siva; and one of another aspect of Siva, Mrtunjaya, the Conqueror of Death. *Mantramahodadhi*, Rajasthan, c. 18th century. Gouache on paper
Plate- 37
Sri Yantra, the most celebrated of all tantric yantras.
Rajasthan, c. 1700. Gouache on paper
Mantras, of a diagram, Yantra, which worn on the neck, the arm, or a lock of hair, will prove a potent amulet. The Yantra or the image is nothing but means for aiding dhyana or japa. It should be regarded however as the first step for the sadhaka.

Sri Yantra, among all the Yantras, is the most auspicious Yantra represents devi or Shakti. Sri is prefix which denotes auspiciousness. The formation of the Sri Yantra is unique. Five triangles with downward apex are superimposed by four triangles with downward base. This combination results into forty three triangles. The outer appearance of these triangles can be classed into seven circles which are considered as the centres of consciousness. It starts from Bindu and ends into Bhupura.

There are many types of Yantras meant for securing one or the other objectives like liberation, perfect health, wealth, power, prestige, to overcome diseases, to secure long life etc.\(^3\)

[2] MANTRA :

Mantra is Shakti (power) in the form of sound, words, and letters. It is a cultivation of true knowledge necessary to get rid of worldly fetters. Mantra is an ultimate reality in the form of sound, letters, words or sentences are its different forms through which Shakti appears in the individual. The Mantra is powerful when it comes from a preceptor who is pure, and has repeated it continuously and is able to visualize the Mantra – person or the deity sacred

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\(^3\) Chattopadhyaya, Sudhakar, Reflections on the Tantras, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1978, P. 30.
to the Mantra. When the Mantra becomes powerful, the vibrations let loose by
the worshipper react on the universal Sunya. Mantras are of illimitable
varieties. The power of Mantra is two fold – vacaka and vacya. There are two
grades of sound, the more subtle state is known as bindu and the most subtle
as nada. The expression of sound is possible through letters and hence the
letter is the bija (seed) of Mantra. The mystery of Mantra is equated also with
the principle of creation.  

The root verb of Mantra is ‘Oman’ means to meditate. In the Nyasa, we saw
the significance of thought power. Mantra is nothing but the condensed form
of that thought power. And that is why proper pronunciation and
concentration on it gives results. The place of Mantra in the Tantric Sadhanas
is very significant, not a single Tantric rite is done without Mantra.

In the Mantra Sadhana Mantras are divided into four groups namely friendly,
serving, supporting, and destroying. At the time of intuition, guru according
to the nature of disciple gives the proper Mantra and that Mantra should be
done constantly. Mantra means the sound-variation in conformity with the
rhythm of the basic evolution.

Mantra is an important element in the Tantric ritual. A basic Mantra is a
single syllable ending in a nasal ‘m’, some times ‘k’ or ‘t’. A complex Mantra
is made up of a series of these syllables. Some are purely meaningful sounds
in their own right, and the best known is the ancient vedic ‘Om’, while others

Hrim, Seed mantra of goddess Tripura – Sundari, denoting the unity of the male and female principles.

Srim – Seed mantra of goddess Lakshmi, the Shakti of plenitude and fortune

Krim – Seed mantra of the goddess Kali, representing her power of creation and dissolution

Klim – seed mantra of Krishna symbolizes his eternal aspect of love.
are generally the first syllables of the names of the devta, sometimes with slight modifications and also addition of ‘m’ to their ending. A Mantra is a sort of nucleus or central power of storage for the concentrated form of cosmic power. It may be recited either voicefully or voicelessly thousands of times over and again, what is known as *japa*, so as to produce a commutative stream of energy. Mantras may be woven on clothes or printed many times over as a visual equivalent to *japa*.

A single Mantra may focus more intensely cosmic energy crystallized into a grosser form or a bodily representation. For e.g., the word ‘Ram’ in a ‘Fire’ Mantra, and ‘Hrim’ a heart Mantra (based on the Sanskrit word *Hridaya* which means ‘heart’ which is used for evoking the heart energy of the *devata*.

Each Mantra creates its own special kind of resonance in space in the realm of subtle sound-vibration. Tantras are closely connected with the science of sound in the form of Mantras.⁶

[3] **MANDALA**:

A Mandala is a mystic circle filled with figural symbols, and in keeping with the concept of macrocosm and microcosm it may represent the universe, the body or a particular stage of meditation. All representations of external objects found on the mandala have a parallel with physiological forces found in the individual, which will be encountered during the process of purification and meditation. For e.g. an elephant skin is a symbol of ignorance; knife

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Plate-41
Mahalinga Mandala, Painting, Rajasthan, c. 18th century, A.D.
Plate - 42

Surya or Sun-Mandala
Rajasthan, c. 19th century,
Ink on paper
represents that which slashes pride and sin; and deformed faces are used to signify the denial of all theories.\(^7\)

Mandala is of Hindu origin but is also used in a Buddhist context to refer to various tangible objects. In practice, mandala has become a generic term for any plan, chart or geometric patterns which represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically, a microcosmos of the universe from the human perspective.

Mandala – A gathering of aspirants who perform collectively the rituals of the five Ms. They sit in a circle (Chakra) along with their female partners, the central figure of the ritual and his consort in the middle. Mandala also denotes Tantric diagrams of which there are many varieties such as Sarvatobhadra etc. In the Buddhis Tantras mandala is the magic circle mystic figures and diagrams and figures of gods and goddesses constitute the Mandala. Mandalas for ordinary Tantric worship are geometrical diagrams drawn on the ground with powder using five colours.

A Mandala, especially its center can be used during meditation as an object for focusing attention. The symmetrical geometric shapes that mandalas tend to have drawn the attention of the eyes towards the center.\(^8\)

In Hindu cosmology the surface of the earth is represented as a square, which after the triangle is the most fundamental of all Hindu forms. The earth is

\(^7\) Tucci, Guiseppe, The Theory and Practice of Mandala, Samuel Weiser, New York, 1961, pp. 70-72.
\(^8\) Saran Prem, Tantra – Hedonism in Indian Culture, Print World Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, p. 73.
Plate - 43

Mandala Diagram, Nepal, c. 1700,
Gouache on cloth
represented as four corners with reference to the horizons relationship with sunrise and sunset, the north and south direction. The earth is thus called Caturbhrsti and is represented in the symbolic form of the Prithvi Mandala. The astrological charts and horoscopes also represent in a square plan the ecliptic, the positions of the sun, moon, planets and zodiacal constellations with reference to the native’s place and time of birth. The Vastu Purusha Mandala is the metaphysical plan of a building, temple or site. The Manadala of the hexagram, somewhat resembling the star of David is an archetypal symbol for the sacred union of opposite energies formed by intertwining of the “fire” and “water” triangles this symbol represents the masculine and feminine principles in perfect union.9

[3] HUMAN BODY AND ITS REPRESENTATION:

In the symbology of Tantra art, the structures of the various centers in the subtle body are represented in lotus forms, known as charkas. Each of the chakra [center] are described as being “lotus – like” with “petals” of a specific number and colour, and with associated “Seed – Sounds” [bij], Forms [Yantra] and presiding “deity” [devata]. The “petals” branch off into the “pathways” [nadi] like spokes of an umbrella, through which the subtle airs can move throughout the whole psycho-organisms. These develop and control the secretions [bindus], which in turn [by means of the endocrine-mechanism] govern the physical body.10

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Plate- 44
The Subtle Body
The yoga instructions on the visualization and activation of the subtle body vary according to the tradition of the guru. First there is the visualization of the “emptiness” and “hollowness” of the body.

Then a central axis [Mount Meru] is imagined, reaching from the base of the spine to the crown of the head. Then to each side of the central staff is a smaller channel; each of which are also hollow and the breath is associated with these channels. The *kundalini – Shakti* which manifests as a “fire-serpent” is the cosmic energy which, rising up from the navel center, reaches the head center where upon resides the cosmic consciousness is the supreme force in the human body.\(^{11}\)

There are certain signs that suggests that *Kundalini* has been awakened:

1. Bodily heat increases

2. There are all over the body sweating occurs copiously.

3. Sharp sensation like scorpion bite

But the urge to continue the exercise is so imperative that after this stage one does not usually give up. As one preservers, however, these signs give way to more abstract and less distracting signs. It is interesting that these are at first essentially vigorous auditory hallucinations, like sounds made by the sea, at a distance, peals the thunder, and the roar of the waterfalls. Than the sounds becomes softer and more pleasant; jungling and tinkling of ornaments worn on the body, a soft strains from a hand drum, the muffled sound from a hand

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\(^{11}\) Dauglas, Nik, Tantra Yoga, Munshiram, Manoharlal Publications, New Delhi, 1971, p. 71.
Anahata chakra

Vishuddha chakra

Plate- 45

Ajna chakra
bell, the musical notes from a lute or flute. Finally, the sound becomes exceedingly subtle, like the humming of a bee. At this stage, it is reported that one feels dizzy, and salvation becomes copious; the heart beat gets familiar, but steadier; bodily sensation are benumbed, and immediate surroundings seem to fade away. This is ‘the voice of inner silence’ unstruck, and inarticulate.

Simultaneously in some cases, but as frequently reported subsequently, one begins to ‘see things’ dots of bright light, flames of fire, orb of brilliance, gleaming liens of diverse colours, and geometric patterns of great variety of light. Higher stages are said to be characterized by ‘sights’ of stars, bright and whirling circles. These are the particular technique employed for the awakening of Kundalini, but it is based on practitioner’s temperament, talent, early experiences and situational involvements.¹²

ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGES:

Iconography literally means “description of Images” or “writing in Images”, which is a means of understanding the religious, philosophical, symbolical and mythological aspects of religion. Religious iconography defines a relationship between word and pictorial scheme, each of which follows its own logic. Visual forms are not discursive they do not represent their message sequentially but simultaneously. While the meanings given through verbal

Icons on paper by Sevati Savara of Antarjholi village, Orissa

Icons on paper by Sakuntala Savara of Antarjholi village, Orissa

Plate - 46
language are understood successively, those given through visual forms and understood only by perceiving the whole at once.\textsuperscript{13}

Iconography deals with the icons and icons were made with the basic aim of worshipped may be in stone, terracotta, bronze, painting or on coins or seals. In the words of Dr. J.N. Banergea, the greatest authority on Hindu iconography, "this branch of knowledge is not merely concerned with the study and interpretation of the characteristics of the principal icons or images proper which are enshrined in the main sanctum of a temple or church, but it also deals with the delineation of the special features and the understanding of the true significance of the figure, sculptures, frescos or such other objects which are executed on different parts of the shrine mainly for decorative purpose".

Thus, in its broader sense, the term iconography really signifies the interpretative aspect of the religious art of a country which becomes manifest in diverse ways.\textsuperscript{14}

Art is the service of Tantra, however, had to serve its different forms and schools. Therefore, tantric art contained numerous iconographic images, their residues, and different combinations. Among such iconographic elements, some important ones simplified, are:

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
1. Geometrical:

*Bindu* or dot (Primal point), or invisible central point, which has existence. *Bindu* carries within itself the seeds of its future, its multiple potentialities symbolically represented by the white and red points. Oval (a cosmic egg), square (the perfect form manifested by pairs of opposites acting as complimentary rather than contradictory, symbol of the extended world in its order), Circle (symbol of continuous movement), Triangle and its variations (facing upwards, symbolizing *purusha*, the male principle, and facing downwards, symbolizing *prakriti*, the female principle).\(^\text{15}\)

2. Floral:

The lotus blossom is one of the principle archetypal symbols used in Yantras. Generally centred on the axis with its geometrically abstract petals pointing towards the circumference it is the appropriate image to illustrate the unfolding of power or the divine essence. In Ancient Indian Cosmology, the lotus was associated with creation myths, and is a type of physical prop to the universe for e.g., it is, often depicted as springing from *Vishnu's Navel*, supporting and giving birth to *Brahma*. Since the earliest times, the lotus has always been a symbol of the citadel of the heart, the seat of the self Yogis believe that there are actual spiritual centres within us whose essential nature and luminosity can be experienced during modulation, these spiritual centres are often represented symbolically as lotuses.

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Thus, the true city of the Supreme Principle is the heart, or central core of the individual, symbolized by the lotus. From the Tantric point of view, the lotus is the pure self revealed in meditation, the spiritual state in its fullness. Because of its association with progression, development and the life expanding quality of Prana (breath), the lotus represents the 'out-petalling' of the soul flower in the process of spiritual realization. \(^\text{16}\)

The Goddess of wealth Laxmi is called Padma, Kamla, and Kamlasana after the other names of the flower. The four headed Vishnu is depicted bearing a conch, chakra, mace and lotus in each of his four hands.

According to Yoga and Tantra there are seven lotus wheels in the human body. The lotus is the object of meditation in Tantric Buddhism. The lotus motifs has also been extensively used in shrines, art, architecture and sculptures of the Jains. The lotus presented an alternative to the banality of human existence. \(^\text{17}\)

3. God & Goddesses:

Tantric Iconography concerned generally well known and important deities such as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Dasha Mahavidya, Mahalakshmi. Each of these deities is worshipped in a concrete image (Murti) that can be seen and touched. The images have more than two arms and their hands, posed in definite gestures, hold the attributes that cannote the deity’s power and

\(^\text{16}\) Khanna, Madhu, Yantra – The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity, Thames and Hudson Ltd. London, 1979, pp. 32-33.

\(^\text{17}\) Sahai, Bhagwat, Iconography of Minor Hindu and Buddhist Deities, Abhinav Publications (New Delhi), India, 1975, p. 1.
Plate – 47
Lakṣmī • Gajalakṣmī
Ref. p. 69
Plate – 48
Devi Durgā
Plate – 49

Brahma, the Crator, Aihoole. 7th century, A.D.
establish its identity. The image serves as a Yantra, an “instrument” that allows the beholder to catch a reflection of the deity whose effulgence transcends what the physical eye can see. As a reflection of this transcendental vision, the image is called Binika. This reflection is caught and given shape also by the Yantra, a polygon in which the presence of deity worship is laid out diagrammatically. The Yantra is constructed with such precision that the “image” emerges in its unmistakable identity.

The God and Goddesses represented in many types of Images, for each of these deities has multiple forms or aspects. The main object of Shiva worship is linga. The word linga means “sign” here, a sign in the shape of a cylinder with a rounded top. The image of Shiva visualize the god’s two complimentary natures his grace and his terror. Shiva has multiple arms; their basic number four, implies the four cosmic directions. The ornaments, the necklaces, belts, earrings and the trident, serpent crescent moon rosary, and antelope, are the part of God’s image.

The stand straight like a pillar image of Vishnu has four arms symmetrically holds the god’s main attributes:

1. Conch – born from the primordial ocean – with its structure spiraling from a single point is a symbol of the origin of existence,
2. Wheel – represents the cycle of the season of time,
3. Mace – stands for the power of knowledge,

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18 Sharma, B.N., Iconography of Sadasiva, Abhinav Publications, (New Delhi), India, 1976, p. 64.
4. Lotus flowers symbolizes the unfolded universe resin from the ocean of creation.

*Brahma* has four faces represents the eastern - *Rig Veda*, Southern - *Yajur Veda*, Western - *Sama-Veda*, and the northern - *Atharva Veda*. His four arms represents four directions, melted hair and the skin of a black antelope as garment. He sits in *Padmasana* in a chariot drawn by seven Swans represents seven *Lokas* (worlds) on right hand holds rosary represents time another right hand holds *Kamandalu* (vase). The whole universe evolves out of water therefore *Brahma* carries water. He looks *Saumya* and *Toshmya* happy and worthy of propiliation. His eyes are closed in meditation.¹⁹

The great goddess, 'Devi' represents the creative principle worshiped as female. She is *Shakti*. Her main image is that of *Durga* in the act of beheading the buffalo demon. In her image as Killer of the buffalo demon the young and lovely goddess is accompanied by her mounts the lion.

Tantric deities mainly the Mahavidya goddesses, are very often worshipped in images. The most popular image is that of Daksina-Kali. In the textual iconological description where she stands on the chest of Shiva lying as a corpse. She has four hands, in two of which she holds a skull and a sword and the other two exhibit *vara* and *abhaya* poses. She has untied hair and a lolling tongue pressed by her teeth.

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4. Minor Deities:

Some of the minor Tantric deities worshipped are Indra. It is represented as a fair man riding a white elephant, Airavat. He is four armed. In one hand he carries the Vajra (thunderbolt) and in the other are seen a conch shell bow and arrows, a hook and a net, Agni – In scripture and paintings it is represented as pot –bellied, red in colour, with one or two faces represents the two fires – solar and terrestrial, His three legs represents three sacred fires – the nuptial, the ceremonial and the sacrificial, seven arms may denote the universal power of the all pervading fire. He rides a ram. Yana, Nirruti, Varuna, Vaju, Chamunda, Kubera and Isana are others.  

5. Guru:

Guru plays a very prominent role in Tantra. The importance given to the teacher in the Tantra is very great. Says a Text: “There can be no salvation without initiation, and there can be no initiation without a teacher”, “For one without initiation there is no progress, nor success; therefore one must be by all means get initiated by a teacher”.

In Tantra an exalted position has been accorded to women. A female guru is preffered to a male. A woman, associated with a men for Tantric worship is for Maithuna, is called ‘Shakti’, Prakrti’ or Lata”.

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Durga (an aspect of Kali)
Dharana Yantra, with mantras
Plate – 51

Kali, the personification of death and destruction, a bronze sculpture, Gwalior Museum
Plate - 52

Agni, the god of fire, Mathura Museum 8\textsuperscript{th} century, A.D.

Ref. P. 72
Plate – 53

Yogini, Ramappa Temple, Madhya Pradesh c. 12th century A.D.
Stone
Ref. p. 72
Plate – 54
Tantric symbols
Ref. p. 72
The Yoginis occupy an important place in the Tantric cults. The term Yogini denotes female Tantric aspirants, a class of goddesses, and also different aspects of the Female Principle residing within the human body.

The earlier Yoginis were women of flesh and blood, priestesses supposed to be possessed by the goddess. Later they are raised to the status of divinity.21

Mudras (Hand poses) and Asanas (postures) are associated with Indian deities and these have great significance in iconography.

Mudra’s are the movements and positions of the hands which have profound symbolic meaning. Asana is also used to mean pedestal or seat on which deity is seated, standing or sleeping. The pedestal on which a deity sits many represent a lotus, when it is called ‘padmasana’—The ‘Simhasana’ is a lion—pedestal. The deities are often accompanied by a ‘vehicle’ or mount which help in their identification. The Bull Nandi—Shiva, Guruda of—Vishnu.

Indian deities carry a number of objects in their hands. They hold weapons like conch (Sankha), lotus (Padma), mace (gada), wheel (chakra) gada (ankusa), noose (pasa), bow (dhanus), arrow (bana), shield (Khetaka), Thunderbolt (Vajra), trident (trisula), sword (khadga), spear (shakti), plough (hala), pestle (musala), chisel (tanka), club made of box (Khatvanga), battle axe (parasu), javelin or trident (Sula), fire (Agni), citron (seed of the universe) Damaru (drum), stringed musical instrument (Vina), Bell (Ghanta).

Different types of Tilaka (Signs) were also found on the forehead of the three main deities – Shiva, Vishnu – Brahma. The Tantric symbol prevalent in the pre-historic India is Swastika. It stands for spiritual victory over mundane existence. The vertical line stands for the casual Brahman, the horizontal line represents the Effect Brahman.22

Apart from Yantra and Mantra there are also some figures or symbols which have played prominent role in Tantric symbolism.

a) Linga:

The Tantric Text “Anubhava Sutram” clearly declares the linga as a source of creation and dissolution that source is nothing but the lord Siva Himself. This view is also supported by the Abhinava Gupta. In his Tantra-loka, he declares that “the wise man should consider linga as a cause of creation and destruction”. The Sivapurana consider “linga as a first cause, the source of consciousness and substance of universe”. While according to the linga purana, “linga is both the cause of dissolution and evolution”. Tantra has not applied linga as physical or gross phallus but as a prime cause of creation of universe. This view is also supported by Danielou, Alain, “when Hindu Worship the linga, they do not deify a physical features, they merely recognize the divine eternal form manifest in the microcosm. It is the human phallus which is a divine emblem of the eternal causal form.”

Plate - 56
Shiva Linga
Plate- 57

Linga-Yoni, Painting, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, c. 10th century, A.D.
b) *Ardhanarisvara*:

The term *ardhanarisvara* means half male – half female form. As we know, only *linga* or male pole is not sufficient for any creation. Creation is a result of copulation which demands on the other pole, that is Yoni, the female pole. Jantra represents the synthesized form of *linga* – *Yoni* or *Shiva Shakti* through the symbol of *Ardhanarisvara*. The concept of Ardha is not a fancy of Tantra seers, but, it also contains both spiritual and scientific significance universe is a creation. This pre-supposes its creator who contains both positive and negative or M/F poles. Tantra has projected this polarity in the Higher Reality. In the words of Mookerji, Ajit, "The composite figure of *Shiva* and *Parvati* as half male and half female indicates that male and female elements are balanced in both of them. Full emancipation is dependent upon our realization of this fact."^23^

c. *Yajna* (Sacrifice):

*Yajna* is performed both externally and internally. In the external formation of sacrifice, an altar is performed out from special materials and by experts. Burning fire is placed inside the altar. During the performances of *Yajna*, clarified butter is constantly poured into the sacrificial fire. Sometimes animals are also used as an object of oblation for the satisfaction of deity. The *Yajna* takes place in the physical body. According to Tantra, body is an altar in which the soma or elixir is being constantly dropped from the *Sahasrara*

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Plate – 58

Ardhanarishwara, 10th century A.D.,
Somesvara Temple, Mukhalingam
Plate – 59
Symbols of five elements
Ref. p. 76
Chakra or brain. This elixir is being consumed by the fire situated in the navel region. Semen is the gross form of elixir which is ejected maximum in quantity in intercourse. Constant or frequent section of semen naturally results into decay because semen is the very base of life. This is the real Tantric Yajna which later place within the body with the result that Sadhaka enjoy the immortality. The concept of Yajna is the core of the Sadhana aspect. In Tantra Sadhana, Sadhaka mentally offers all the five element forces namely. Earth (Prithvi), water (Ap), Fire (Teja), Vaju (Air) and Ether (Akasa).

d) Panea Makara: 5 M’s:

The symbol 5 M’s means five items which start with the Syllable ‘M’. These are namely Madya (wine), Mamsa (meat), Matsya (Fish), Mudra (grain) and Mathuna (copulation).

i) Madya – Wine: Madya means wine, but it is not utilized in Tantra in the sense of wine. In Tantra Madya is not a liquor but it is an energy. The utilization of this Tantric Madya results into not in a temporary relief as it so happens in the gross wine but it gives life – time bless to the Sadhaka. Hence, Tantric Sadhaka is not a drunk and but he is a worshipper of Shakti or energy.

ii) Mamsa – Meat: Mamsa is one of the seven components of the body i.e. Rakta (Blood), Rasa (Essence), Mamsa (Meat), Majja (veins), Arthi (Bone), Sukra (semen) and Meda (Marrow). In Tantric puja, meat is an animal, sometimes of a human being is also offered to a deity for the
Plate - 60

Bhairavi-chakra illustrating the five M’s, ingredients of the tantric Pancha-makara rite. Rajasthan, c. 19th century, Gouache on paper.
satisfaction of deity. In Tantra, whenever the term animal is used, it does not indicate animals like goat, donkey, deer etc. In Tantra, man in a natural state is considered as *Pasu* or an animal. To sacrifice this animal means to raise man from his natural state to a Supra natural state or even to the spiritual state. Offering meat means process of sublimation, from gross to subtle.

iii) *Matsya* - Fish: In Tantra, *Matsya* symbolically represents mind and *prana*, the vital force. As fish floats in the water, mind also floats in the sea of sense objects. Mind always moves from one sense object to the other and due to its covalent movement it loose its power. So far the channelization of mental powers, according to the Tantra, mind should be a entrappeal by the net of Sadhana.

The other subtle meaning of *Matsya* is *prana* or vital force. According to Tantra, though *prana* pervades in the entire body; we breath. In the Yogic terms, life span depends upon the amount of *prana* consumed through respiration. So to enejoy longevity one has to control the *prana*, which mones like a fish.

iv. *Mudra* - Grain: *Mudra* means grain or cooked food. In Tantra, *Mudra* is not merely a cooked food but it also contains spiritual meaning. According to Tantra, in the realm of Sadhana, the spiritual body of a *Sadhaka* should be strengthened by the spiritual food like desire, greed, anger, greed anger, lust etc....which should be cooked or sublimated into
the fire of Brahman. This is the real food of sadhaka by which he sustains his spiritual life. So this is the Tantric meaning of Mudra.

v. **Maithuna – copulation** : Copulation is an union of male and female, the opposite poles required to be brought together for the purpose of creation by nature. Tantra has presented the subtle meaning of creation, that is spiritual creation for which two opposite poles are required. These two poles are Shiva and Shakti. Shiva resides at the Sahasrara (Brain) while Sakti at the Muladhara Chakra (Pelvic region). In between these two there are six centres of energy around the spinal cord. The energy which resides at the pelvic region awakens and penetrates all the centres and unites with Siva at the Brain. This is so it is not a gross maithuna or copulation taking place between two physical bodies but it is spiritual communion with Shiva and Sakti which gives birth or transform the whole personality of Sadhaka.24

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