

# MECHANISM OF TANTRA IN THE LIGHT OF BUDDHISM: A MEANS TO ENLIGHTENMENT (SOCIETY FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES)

SHIMI C. M. <sup>1</sup> & DR. RAJIBA LOCHAN BEHERA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph. D. Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, SreeSankaracharya University of Sanskrit Thalayattumpilli, Kalady, Kerala 683574, INDIA.

<sup>2</sup>Postdoc Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad CUC, Gachibowli, Hyderabad, Telangana 500046, INDIA.

Received: May 29, 2018

Accepted: July 10, 2018

## ABSTRACT

*Tantra means knowledge of methodical and mechanical investigationaltechniquethrough which we develop our consciousness and faculties of consciousness. It is also a process through which we can able to be realized our inherent spiritual powers. The term "Tantra" has been derived from the Sanskrit term "Tan" which means to "Magnify" or to "Outspread". People use Tantra in a very mechanical way to transform their personality from animalhood to divinity. Basically, in the school of Buddhism, Tantra has developed a system of thought which makes us see the universe as if it were within ourselves, and ourselves as if we were within the universe. In addition, we can argue that the forces governing the cosmos on the macro-level are believed to govern the individual in the micro-level. According to Tantra, there is a pyramidamong individual being and universal being rather both sides are same. Thus all that exists in the universe must also exist in the individual body. It means we are all one under the umbrella of the sky. According to Buddhism, Tantra is the best way to salvation. Because, through the mechanism of Tantra, people can overcome to ignorance and affection towards the material world and can achieve wisdom.*

**Keywords:** Tantra, Tantra Sadhana, Buddhism, Mechanism of Tantra, etc.

## 1. Introductory remarks:

This paper presents the mechanism of Tantra according to Buddhism and also it will demonstrate to the present society. There are two sections in this paper viz; *Section A: Tantric philosophy in Buddhism: A Means to Enlightenment* and *Section B: Mechanism of Tantra in Buddhism: A Knowledge of Systematic and Scientific Experimental Method*.

Tantra is the important stream of Indian culture and civilization. Tantra is ancient and indigenous to India (Singh, 2010). BuddhistTantra is in general concerned with particular types of meditation and ritual that are seen as especially efficacious and powerful. These techniques are generally centered on the ritual evocation and worship of deities who are usually conceived of as awakened and enlightened (Williams, Tribe, & Wynne, 2012). The key to this process is the use of mantras and methods of visualization. It is a successful evocation of a deity would then give the practitioner the power to achieve her or his desired goal. Tantric tradition also took root in China and from there spread to Japan, where it has survived to this day by way of the Shingon School. However, it was in Tibet, where Buddhism became thoroughly tantric in complexion with all four of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism regarding tantric Buddhism as the highest and most effective form of Buddhism. These are the major crux of this paper, and also concerning the peculiarities of Vajrayana Buddhism and Tantric Buddhism. Towards the end of this paper trying to claim that the techniques of Tantra are applicable to enlightenment (Wayman, 2013).

## 2. Section A: Tantric Philosophy in Buddhism: A Means to Enlightenment

Tantric philosophy in Buddhism emerged independently from Hinduism for many centuries. The Brahminical and Buddhist tantra have some similar elements, even though it would be wrong to suppose that the tantricism in Buddhism is nothing but a borrowed religion. Hence Buddhist tantra uses dissimilar kinds of symbols in explaining their intricate esoteric systems. In several Asian religions, there are incalculable practices and which has been lumped together by Western scholars under the title called "*Tantra*" (Swami Lokeshwarananda, 1989, p. 16). Professor Chintaharan Chakravarti, in an admirable article in the Indian Historical Quarterly, (antiquity of Tantrikism, VI. Pp. 114 ff) has traced the reference to Tantrarika practices in their earlier stages amongst the Hindus, Buddhist, and Jains (Swami Lokeshwarananda, 1989, p. 86). These references in the ancient literature show that some of the rudimentary Tantrika practices are as old as the time of the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda* is full of them (Swami Lokeshwarananda, 1989, p. 86).

At first, the Buddhist philosophy has been made a hostile outlook towards such kind of practices, that which is integrated with Tanticism. But when we can make an analysis about the origination of Buddhist Tantra

philosophy supposed to definitely tolerate to the mystic practices of the Tantricism (Childers, 2013, p. 157). Buddha himself practiced the asphanaka-yoga (yoga of psychic expansion) (LALITAVISTARA, 1881, p. 315) when he was in search of the eternal Truth. To some extent, we can say that the origin of Buddhist Tantra is from *Vajrayana* (diamond vehicle). *Vajrayana* is one among in the three 'yanas' (vehicle), the other two are *Hinayana* (small vehicle) and expounded by the historical Buddha. *Vajrayana* is the most scientific and positive approach to spiritual awakening and enlightenment. *Manjusri Mulakalpa*, *Sadhanamala* and *Guhya-Samaja-Tantra* are the earliest canonical literature on *Vajrayana* (Singh, 2010, p. 27). *Manjusri Mulakalpa* lays down the ethical disciplines to be strictly practiced, like *sila* (moralism), *caryas* (do's of the disciple), *kriya* (rites), *vrata* (vows), *saucacara* (cleanliness in acts), *niyama* (regulation of mind), *japa* (incantation) and *dhyana* (meditation) (Singh, 2010, p. 27). Among this *Guhya-Samaja* deals with *yoga* (ordinary esoteric practice) and *Anuttarayoga*, (Tantric forms of sadhana) (Singh, 2010, p. 27).

Buddhist Tantra is a means to enlightenment. It is sometimes called '*deity-yoga*'. It is not to believe in external spirits or worship. It is a kind of mechanism which practice by practitioner's own deepest nature. The central objective of Buddhist Tantra is to cultivate wisdom and compassion, which leads to the attainment of quiescence (*Nirvana*) (Singh, 2010, p. 23). The quiescence or *Nirvana* is nothing but enlightenment. The mind is the instrument through which we can know the consciousness. That consciousness is a continuum flow and it never is destroyed or be separated. This is the state of the pure continuum, so there is no duality of physical and mental states. This continuum is known as emptiness (Singh, 2010, p. 24). This is the process for enlightenment. But in Tantricism they are using some kind of *mantras* (mystic spells), *mandalas* (mystic diagrams), *mudras* (facial and figure expressions) (Singh, 2010, p. 25).

### 3. Section B: Mechanism of Tantra in Buddhism: A Knowledge of Systematic and Scientific Experimental Method

In Buddhism, there are some unique techniques between Sutra and Tantra. *Vajrayana* (Ray, 2002) teachers put side by side what they call the gradual, causal or *sutrapath* of Buddhism to the speedier Tantra path and Sutra path is mean for the meditative concentration and of enlightenment. In this way, enlightenment will be realized in the future. On the other hand, tantra is a means to convey this result which will happen in future, into the present moment by realizing oneself as an enlightened being. Hence tantra offers an unconventional path to enlightenment. Their teachings are aimed at lay practitioners in particular, rather than monks and nuns. It recognizes mundane (*laukika*) aims and attainments, and frequently deals with which are more magical in character than spiritual (Singh, 2010). It teaches special types of meditation (*sadhana*) as the path to realization, aimed at transforming the individual into an embodiment of the Divine in this lifetime, such kind of meditation make all-embracing use of various kinds of *mandalas* and *mantras*. At this point, these are elucidating briefly.

- i) Mandalas are two or three-dimensional representations of a sacred space understood to be the realm or domain of a *particular deity* which is symbols of an enlightened mind liberated from all obstacles and features throughout all forms of tantric practice.
- ii) Mantras are also at the heart of tantric practice and they may consist of a syllable or word, or a series of words and in *Vajrayana*, (Ray, 2002) these all are used essentially as invocations to Buddha. The important thing is that they have some effect of power beyond that of just uttering the sounds which it is composed. By concentrating on the significance of the mantra and opening themselves to their transformative power, practitioners awaken their own latent potential for enlightenment.

These are concrete expressions of the nature of reality and the formation of images of the various deities during the meditation by means of ingenious imaginations play a key role in the process of realization. There is a proliferation in the number and types of Buddhas and other deities. A great stress is laid upon the importance of a *guru* and the necessity of receiving the instructions and apposite initiations for the *sadhanas* from him. A spiritual physiology is taught as part of the process of transformation (Trungpa, 2012). Moreover, it is a kind of experience of pleasure into the realization of enlightenment. An esoteric teaching is an important aspect of in *Vajrayana* through which the practitioner is introduced spiritual teaching under the supervision of a *guru*. Even though *Vajrayana* teachers articulate on the whole of the practices of Buddhist tantra are not sexual and what is predominantly involves visualizations. Many tantric masters are celibate. It's likely nothing goes on in upper-level Tantra couldn't be shown to youngsters. The reason for the secretiveness is that the teachings could easily be understood or misused by people who are not being properly guided by an authentic teacher.

At length there is a concluding remark with regards to that tantric Buddhism is in broad-spectrum concerned with particular types of meditation and ritual that are seen as particularly powerful and efficacious. The goals of these practices are both sophisticated, alleviation of sickness, control of weather and soteriological. The means for this process is the use of mantras and methods of visualization. The successful evocation of a deity would then give the practitioner the power to achieve his or her desired goal (Ray, 2002). Through tantric practice, one was proficient to trounce afflictions and deluded thoughts and progress swiftly through the Buddhist path. The time by and large requisite by non-tantric Mahayana texts- the whole process could be buckled into a single lifetime by following the Vajrayana. The general focus of Vajrayana was on ritual, visualization, and symbols in order to effect this hasty transformation. The role of the teacher or the Vajra master furthermore is converted into, of vital importance since it was through the teacher that tantric teachings were transmitted and given access to. Towards the close, we can see that Tantric Buddhism preaches that the teacher's instructions become essential to the successful practice of multifarious psychophysical meditation techniques (White, 2002). According to Buddhism, Tantra Sadhana leads to higher and spiritual levels of perfection so a yogi should continue till he/she achieves the supreme end of life. Tantra is a combination of combines science and spirituality, fact and ideal. It is based on the rule of identity in life. What some people believe that it is mystic power but that the mystic power of Tantra denotes a state of consciousness which is considered by a complete cessation of sensations, ideas, concepts and subject-object relationship. Through Tantra Sadhana, the mind reaches the pure state of Consciousness and Bliss.

Generally, some people believe that Tantra Sadhana is meant for solvation only but it is their misunderstanding. Actually, through the mechanism of Tantra Sadhana we can also attainment of the fourfold objective of life, viz. Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksa. It is genuinely real that human life is multidimensional. So, how can we think that Tantra Sadhana is only meant for salvation? Actually, to attain the salvation, we must have to attain the all other three. The point is that if we consider that life is road then these four objectives of life are the four junctions of the road. So, if you want to complete the road, then you must have to do the Tantra Sadhana and the Sadhana will these four objectives of life. We believe that this is a holistic view of the reality. But in the present society, some people believe that the material science more important than Tantra Sadhana. But, actually, the material science does not give any holistic view of the Reality. It is just a method of analysis which explains the phenomenal world in mathematical forms and physical concepts. These forms and concepts are mere abstractions. The approach to Reality through science remains only partial (Singh, 2010).

#### 4. Concluding remarks:

Some people believe that Tantra is a black magic. But we should not worry about it because human life is multidimensional. The account of Tantra philosophy has mainly been drawn from Buddhism, the system Tantra is a rich spiritual heritage and a developed form of cultural history and is rich in Buddhist philosophy which has been persisted a fact only. It has not received the attention it deserves. According to Sir John Woodroffe, Tantric culture is neither magic nor an immoral practice. But, it is knowledge of systematic and scientific mechanism which has created by the technique and practice of Tantra. Further, it is very difficult to understand Tantra without one's initiation into its science. To a layman, the mantra is a nonsensical syllable and full of mystic power. But through Tantra Sadhana, it shows us the path to liberation from the fetters of the world. According to Buddhism, the mystic experience of Tantra Sadhana is not unreal but vivid, direct and integral. Actually, in the intuitive experience, the yogi feels the impact of Reality. The mystery of the Absolute cannot be rationally determined. It is beyond the scope of logical concepts. As we know that according to the Vedas, the Supreme Reality is 'not this, not this'. He is non-being. He is nothing, that is, the Vedas simply affirm that the Reality cannot be realized through the various categories of reason. But Tantra is an in-tuitional science for the realization of God. The mystic and the scientific bases of Tantra are variations of the central theme that the Divinity is to be realized with the awakening of a mystic process of divinization. It leads one to the path of inner spiritual transformation. Tantra is a spiritual science, the holistic wisdom bond between ourselves and the universe we dwell.

#### References

1. Bagchi, P. C. (1939). Studies in the tantras: Part 1. Calcutta: University of Calcutta.
2. Childers, R. C. (2013). Dictionary of the Pali language. Place of publication not identified: Book On Demand Ltd.
3. LALITAVISTARA (1881). The Lalitavistara ... translated by Rājendralāla Mitra.
4. Pandit, M. P. (1988). Studies in the Tantras and the Veda. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
5. Ray, R. A. (2002). Buddhist Tantra: [teachings and practices for touching enlightenment with the body]. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

6. Ray, R. A. (2002). *The secret of the Vajra World: The Tantric Buddhism of Tibet*. Boston: Shambhala.
7. Swami Lokeshwarananda (1989). *Studies on the Tantras*, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark Kolkata.
8. Singh, L. P. (2010). *Tantra, its mystic and scientific basis*. New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co.
9. Singh, L. P. (2010). *Buddhist tantra: A philosophical reflection and religious investigation*. New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co.
10. Trungpa, C. (2012). *Journey without a goal: The tantric wisdom of the Buddha*. Toronto: CNIB.
11. Wayman, A. (2013). *Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*. Taylor & Francis.
12. White, D. G. (2002). *Tantra in practice*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
13. Williams, P., Tribe, A., & Wynne, A. (2012). *Buddhist Thought: A complete introduction to the Indian tradition*. London: Routledge.