

P.R. SARKAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO TANTRA

by Steve Gunther

The word Tantra means liberation from crudeness or dullness. Tantra as an integrated way of life developed ten to twelve thousand years ago in India. About seven thousand years ago Lord Shiva, who was born in a Dravidian-Mongolian family, laid the foundation of classical Tantra. Five thousand years later it was divided into Shakta, Vaesnava, Shaeva, Ganapatya and Saura Tantra. Later, when Jainism and Buddhism flourished in India, we also find Buddhist Tantra and Jain Tantra. By this time the Tantric system had synthesized with the Vedic system, and Tantra lost its original form.

P.R. Sarkar, known as Shrii Shrii Anandamurti and also as Baba to his disciples, revived Tantra and simultaneously changed certain traditional forms and notions. He also interpreted Tantric symbols and symbolic terms in their real sense.

The differences between classical Tantra (today known as Hindu Tantra), Buddhist Tantra and Vaesnava Tantra are very little except for those name and symbols.

The four main aspects of Tantra are: Yantra (tool or symbol); Mantra (word with special power); Diiksa (initiation); and Guru.

Lord Shiva used the Yantra (symbol) Bhaeravii Cakra, also known in Israel as the Star of David. The triangle with a lower vertex means infinite knowledge, and that with the upper vertex infinite energy or creative principle. Lord Krsna used the same Bhaeravii Cakra with a lotus at the centre, which means non-attachment. Anandamurti introduced the Bhaeravii Cakra with a sun and swastika in the middle, which mean all-round progress and victory, respectively.

As far as Ista Mantras (the mantra that leads to the Goal) are concerned, Anandamurti did not change any, but he did make them available to everyone quite easily. As per the classical Tantric tradition, hard penance and total surrender to Guru were prerequisites to get Ista Mantra. Aspirants sometime had to wait years to get initiation. But strangely, Anandamurti made it available to even half-sincere aspirants through his acharyas (spiritual teachers).

Tantra is divided into two branches - Kapalika and Yoga Marga. The Kapalika system is an esoteric process to be done in a secluded place like a graveyard or forest. This is subdivided into three further branches - Pasvachara, Viirachara and Diivyachara. Anandamurti introduced Viirachara and some aspects of Diivyachara. Yoga Marga is a simpler form and is divided into several branches - Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga and Rajadhiiraja Yoga.

Anandamurti was somewhat critical of both Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga as introduced by Patanjali. He made a critical analysis of yoga philosophy in his book, *Namami Krsna Sundaram*, and called his system Rajadhiiraja Yoga. In Ananda Marga it is known also as Sadharana Yoga, Sahaja Yoga and Vishesa Yoga. Anandamurti also revived the Avadhuta system, which is different from its traditional connotations. Avadhutas (male) and Avadhutikas (female) are those who renounce family and adopt the life of a monk or nun. Traditionally they were not supposed to remain in normal

society. But Anandamurti changed the tradition and asked them to remain in society. He defined Avadhuta as follows:

**Svashane va' grhe, hiranye va' trine tawuje va' ripu, huta'she va' jale
Svakiye va' pare samatvena buddhya viraje avadhutam dvitiya mahesa.**

**Either in the cremation ground or at home,
Either in a bed of gold or of grass,
Either with friends or enemies,
Either in fire or in water,
Either amidst relatives or with unrelated persons –
Who can remain unaffected,
S/he is Avadhuta(tika), second embodiment of Shiva.**

Anandamurti 's system is a synthesis of three philosophical schools: Shakta (fighter), Vaesnava (universalist) and Shaeva (conscious). Every aspirant should start as Shakta, become Vaesnava and culminate in Shaeva. Amongst the psychological schools - Vamachara, Daksinachara and Madhyamachara - Anandamurti, like Buddha, adopted Madhyamachara or the middle path.

Vamachara, which is loosely known as left-hand Tantra, developed to a large extent in China. Three thousand years ago a Tantric named Vashistha brought it back to India from China. The "Five M's" or so-called sex Tantra is part of it. Anandamurti redefined the meaning of the Five M's as follows. Mamsa in the crude sense is meat eating, in the subtle sense control of the tongue or speech. Similarly, Matsya or fish eating in a subtle sense means opening of the Vishuddha Cakra. Madya or drinking wine means drinking the divine nectar from the Sahasrara Cakra. Mudra or use of crude symbols became the use of subtle symbols. And Maethuna or sex relations in the subtle sense means unity of the unit and consciousness, or the mystic union of Shiva (consciousness) and Shakti (the creative principle). Between Vidya and Avidya Tantra, Anandamurti taught Vidya Tantra and discouraged Avidya Tantra, which is witchcraft or black magic.

Anandamurti 's main mission as a Tantric Guru was to bring change in the world's collective psychology. As a first step he introduced a systematic process of meditation and specific way of life, known as Ananda Marga. He also introduced a system of collective meditation once a week known as Dharmacakra. This system is similar to that introduced by Buddha. Buddha said that the Dharmacakra (wheel of Dharma) must not stop. It must move on. Apart from its spiritual significance, Dharmacakra creates a sense of unity and collective spirit. Besides Buddhism this system of weekly gathering is also followed by Christianity and Islam.

Anandamurti also introduced a system of Dharma Maha Cakra (DMC), where he himself gave spiritual discourses which are compiled in his books Subhasita Samgraha. At the end of DMC he gave a special mudra known as Varabhaya Mudra. Through this mudra he radiated positive microvita (subtle cosmic waves) for the welfare of society. From the different status of Buddha it appears that Buddha was aware of the significance of this mudra and had acquired sufficient power to use it.

Lord Shiva introduced classical Tantra, but he did not propound any philosophy. Lord Krsna introduced the philosophy of the Giita, which is a synthesis of the yogas of jinana (knowledge), karma (action) and bhakti

(devotion). Anandamurti also introduced Ananda Marga philosophy, which is the synthesis of the above three.

Buddha preached a philosophy of negation towards the relative world and created ideal monks and nuns. But he was not so much concerned with creation of ideal householders. Islam on the other hand stressed the need for ideal householders but did not introduce the concept of monkhood or nunhood, i.e. renunciates. Anandamurti, in turn, stressed the need for both and introduced proper social codes for both. Christianity has a similar tradition.

We find Krsna's concept of the doctrine of action adopted by both Buddhist and Christian monks. Anandamurti also stressed a similar doctrine of action, with a spirit of service, for all spiritualists.

In the Vedic system women were neither entitled to get Ista Mantra nor allowed to become acharyas (spiritual teachers). Catholicism and Islam also refused to recognize women priests. Anandamurti revived the Tantric tradition and introduced Ista Mantra for all and created women acharyas.

Anandamurti 's system is a reflection of Tantric spirituality and fighting spirit, the doctrine of action of Krsna, the intuitional science of the Vedas, the humanistic essence of Buddhism, the missionary spirit of Christianity, the devotion of the Vaesnava, the social unity of Islam, the spirit of harmony of Taoism, the scientific aptitude of the ancient Greeks and the socio-economic awareness of socialist thinkers of Europe.

Anandamurti 's concept of Neo-Humanism is a spiritually aware collective psychology, in which the entire living world should be viewed in harmony with the spirit of unity in diversity.



Ananda Marga Acaryas (spiritual teachers) recall the 1979 visit of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti to Fiesch in Switzerland.

