At the outset the Tantra may be described as a methodology of widening man's individual energy up to the extent of all beings in all worlds. That energy pervading the universe is the Cosmic Energy. The term 'tantra' is derived from Sanskrit root 'tan' meaning to extend, to spread. The Tantra is practical as well as scientific knowledge how to extend man's potentiality for the good and welfare of beings. The aim of the Tantra refers to the extension of an individual's life force to that of universe, that is, to spread over the inner effulgence of an individual on the cosmic effulgence in the sphere.

The origin of the Tantra is controversial and that may be discussed in details elsewhere. In brief, the Tantra probably originated from the laws of Nature reflecting on man's mind since the primitive days of human culture. In the early days of human history the primitive men could explore an existence of inherent power within themselves. They visualized embodiments of that power persuading all over the earth, the Sun, the Moon, the planets and the stars above.

The Truth which had revealed before them was the two-fold manifestations of the Energy, i.e. the potential energy, apparently static but is not and, the kinetic energy incessantly appearing as changeable and changing. The Tantra tends to a universal approach to find out equality and symmetry in the midst of diversities in the Nature. The Tantra promulgates an awareness of the self-nature (aiva-dhära) of beings on the universe and has developed that through the ages.

The codification of the Tantra, as a branch of human knowledge came later on. As and when the esoteric practices became familiar in the early Indian societies the Tantra practices were no longer obscure, and thereby those were accepted and codified. Many say, suktis are of two kinds, the Vedic and the Tantric. The Atharvaveda, the Mahâ-BrâhmaN, the Gâita, and the
Manipulation of the Jains in the Indian literature may be cited as instances of codification when the Tantra was not systematised. Several customs, manners, rites and practices prevalent then among the primitive men entered and were incorporated. Subsequently these formulated the Tantra in the course of systematisation and stratification. The Tantra develops a basis of man's life determining his day-to-day functions, the ways of life, his endeavour to attain a state of equality, and lastly, the seeing of the Sinnerness or unification of the twofold manifestations of the Energy.

The seers attain an immanent life-force to do and to undo for the cause of well-being of the universe. Their performances occasionally appear mystic, magical, supernatural and, sometimes, unintelligible to man's ordinary sense and reasoning. The effulgence that spreads around the seer unites that of the cosmic universe. As a methodology, the Tantra prescribes many secret formulae and practices of asceticism, so that a practitioner seeking immanence may succeed within his span of life here.

DHAMMACHKKAPAVATTANA

Sakyaputra Gautama is said to have achieved a distinction of being the Awakened One (Buddha). The Pali Vinayasutta preserves the traditions in a Discourse with Upaka prior to his turning of the Wheel of Dharma (Dhamma-kkappavattana). Gautama Buddha declares the immanence:

Victorious one all, Omniscient am I,
Among all beings, I am the only teacher,
By knowing for myself, when should I follow?
One like me does not exist,
In the world with its devas
No one equals me,
For I am perfected in the World,
The teacher supreme am I,
I alone am all-awakened.
Became cool am I, nirvana attained
The above sayings explicitly refer to the core of the Tantra practice tending to retroversion (pratyāhāra). A successful practitioner confidently declares, ‘No one equals me’, ‘I am an all-awakened’. These are the characteristics of him who regains man’s self-nature having the mind free from cravings. It is not an instance of self-boasting or false vanity of Gautama Sākyamuni.

The Buddhist literature deals with the measures how to realise man’s self-nature. The life-force of a being emerges out of hindu and discloses in hindu that is, arrives at the condition from which it originates. That is retroversion (of matter). In the deep-mind similar retroversion functions. Retroversion is distinct from exotroversion (praśravya) and introversion (aviruddha). The living beings, inclusive of men, according to Gautama Buddha, are the conglomeration of mind and matter (nāma-rūpa) with a strong attachment (huśraśa) under the latent impressions (sañcikkhāra) on account of ignorance (avidyā). It is therefore other than their self-nature. On account of ignorance about self-nature a being always becomes delighted in several pleasures and enters again and again in the cycle of birth and death. A being fails to know what is deathlessness and finds pleasure in the realm of Mara under the fetters of craving.

Gautama Buddha knowing himself becomes ‘Victorious’ (Vija). He claims: ‘Victorious one all. Omniscient am I... by knowing for myself’. Man possesses omniscience in potentiality. Because of ignorance man fails to realise his self-nature. The Tantra teaches how to visualise the self-nature (sva-bhāva) which is essencelessness (nirviveśa-bhāva). He who visualises the essencelessness is ‘Awakened’ (Buddha) from the slumber-like ignorance. Gautama exclaims:

This that through many tides I’ve won -
Enough! why should I make it known?
By talk with lust and hate consumed,
This dhamma is not understood,
Leading on against the stream.
Subtle, deep, difficult to see, delicate,
Unseen it will be by passions’ slave
Cloaked in the muck of ignorance.

The teachings of Buddha are also ‘leading on against the stream’ but these are aids to develop vision of eyes (occhikāra) and awareness of mind.

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His followers thereby possess an appropriate contemplation to concentrate on the source or root of beings in the world (abhavesaccakiriya) for right sight (sammāsati) and right concentration (sammāsamādhi). The self nature (sacca-bhāva) of beings is correctly visualized by ‘going on against the stream’. In other words, practices are done in the method of retroversion (parīvrttī) which is followed in the Tantra. The Tantra seeks how to extinguish five passions to attain Buddhahood when the attainer ascertains:

"Become cool am I, nirvana attained”. With undaunted confidence a Buddha beats his drum of deathlessness among the ‘blind on account of ignorance’.

Thereafter, Gautama Buddha turns the Dhammacakkha in Kashi city for the welfare of beings in the worlds.

**NATURE OF BUDDHA’S DHAMMA**

The Pali Vinaya-pitaka refers to the nature of Buddha’s Dhamma prior to his deliberation in presence of the group of the Five Elders (Pupphavaso-virabhikha). The words of Gautama Buddha follow as:

"The dhamma won by me, is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond dialectic, subtle, intelligible to the learned".

He further continues:

"But this is the creation delighting in sensual pleasure, delighted by sensual pleasure, rejoicing in sensual pleasure. So that for a creation delighting in sensual pleasure, delighted by sensual pleasure, rejoicing in sensual pleasure these were a matter difficult to see, That is to say casual uprising by the way of cause. This too were a matter very difficult to see, that is to say calming of all habitual tendencies the renunciation of all attachment, the destruction of cravings, dispassion, stopping, Nirvana."

The Sammāsambuddha (thoroughly Awakened One) sees the worlds of existence through his wisdom-eyes (buddhacakkhu) and understands the real state of happening where he sees (yattha bhūta). No dialectic therefore arises and his dhamma is beyond dialectic. The Tantra also disowns any debate or dialectic as it is based on direct visualization of the Truth.

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UTTARIMANUSSADHAMMA

At the first sight of Gautama Śākyamunī, while he was approaching to the group of the Five at Isipatana near Kassī, the said hermits are said have determined not to pay any respect to Gautama who had been their mate in practice and left their company of hermithood. But they failed to hold their determination strongly as soon as Buddha appeared in person before them. It is not an instance of miracle, nor a charm (iddhī). The effulgence spreading out from the embodiment of Buddhahood perplexed the five hermits at a time and, instantaneously, they all paid regards to the Awakened One. Buddha. Such incidents make ordinary men astonished and succumb with wonder.

The Paññavadantapitaka refers to similar stories regarding Buddha Gautama in many instances. For example, the Rāṣṭrasūrya story, the Munissida story of the Serpent who is said to have spread his hood for the protection of Gautama. And, Tapussa and Bhallika story in which four Lokeśvara deities appeared to accept the offerings with requisite bowls for Tathāgata.3

BRAHMACARIYA

Gautama Buddha is said to have laid highest emphasis on Brahmacariya i.e., the leading of a moral life as the way to end suffering. The first ordination made by Buddha declares the praise of Brahmacariya. Any failure in observance of Brahmacariya amounts to expulsion from monkhood (pārāśāvā, offence) from the Sāṅgha. Among the moral precepts to be observed by the yellow-robed Brahmacariya is the foremost.

The observance of Brahmacariya gathers potentiality for performing four Brahmavihara that is, love (mettā), compassion (karuna), joy (mudita) and, an attitude of indifference in pleasure and pain (upekkhi). In the course of gradual sanctification Brahmavihara strengthens a practitioner to extend good and welfare of beings in the worlds like the Brahmakālīya gods.

The Tantra is equally strict in the pledge of Brahmacariya and observance of moral precepts for discipline of a practitioner. Any amount of departure from Brahmacariya leads to utter ruin. The Guhyasamāja (7.5) reads: Bodhi is to be attained when body, speech and mind remain in their respective
self-stone; failing that, untimely death awaits and thereafter fall into the
dungeon of hell.

THE CRYPTIC EXPRESSIONS (SANDHĪYABHĀṢĀ)

The Tantra justifies the nature of Buddha's dhamma when a number of
cryptic forms of expression have been occasionally used. For instance, the
Guhāśrīmārga (7.1.) reads: The practitioner who desires the company with
mother, sister or daughter will achieve a great success, according to the
esential of the Mahāyāna.⁹

Similar expression may be read there (7.1):

By enjoying all sorts of desires and being enjoyable to others as much as
one likes, one will attain Buddhahood quickly.⁹ All such expressions are
difficult to understand (dhammañcana) as mentioned in the Vinayaśāstra. In
addition to the propogity of such cryptic form of expressions
(Sandhīyabhāṣā) Candrakīrti states:

In order to express the significance of Truth (dhammañcana) among the
persons having different likings, the ambiguous expressions have been
used and this is known as sandhīyabhāṣā.

Regarding such state of vanity in grasping ability of men the Pali
Vinayaśāstra refers to the visualizing of the Buddha through mental state of
beings by Buddha eye. An excellent smile of shapes in a big lake clarifies
the actual state of affairs.

NO PRAJÑOPĀYA (VAIRĀBIA) YOGA IN PALI

The Pali Vinayaśāstra does not refer to Prajñā (Wisdom) nor Karuṇā (compassion) as principles; nor their unification leading to nonduality
(yugmadhida) or Oneness (samaṃsa) as the Tantra holds.¹⁰ Despite that, the
Pali Vinayaśāstra lays emphasis on the higher state of meditation when the
perceptual world unifies with the inherent mind under state of deep
concentration of formlessness (anupassanāparīti) That occurs in the sphere
of Nirvāṇa where no attachment of skandhas remains The Pali Vinayaśāstra

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To sum up, it has been evident from the above that Gautama Buddha's experiences as traditionally depicted in the Pali Vinaya Pitaka bear resemblance with experiences of an accomplished Tantra practitioner (tantrapudgala). Entrance to the Tantra in the Buddhist thought is generally said to be a later addition or a phase of the later Buddhism since 3rd–4th Century A.D. At the earliest such entry of external matters may date back to the lifetime of Nagarjuna 1st Century A.D.

The Tantra is generally regarded as secret literature, relating to male and female principles with symbolism. Mantra, mudrā, caatra, mangala, homavīdia etc. are more or less rituals as prescribed to the Tantra. These have been mostly applied for sādhana karma including śāntaka and pāngika. In fact, they are the ways or means how to empower a practitioner for being eligible to enter in the realm of abhisambhāra. Full awakening of the self-nature of the universe inclusive of this world by the extension of effulgence (teṣām).

Since Gautama is said to have achieved supra mundane attributes like bala, vaśīk vaśāśraya, abhūta and bodhīśakti as his experiences narrated in details in the Vīśākha Pitaka. These evidences suggest that the nucleus of the Tantra prevails in the Pali Vinaya Pitaka, as the earliest source come down to us.
The importance of नारायणम् mantra has been appreciated in the विनयपितक-सहायेन-विनयदर्शिनीसंहिताय (6:23.42) ओषधिमण्डलस्य व्याख्या नारायणेण ओषधिमण्डलस्य पुरुषं। ततः युगेन समुद्रतः स्तोत्र भवेत् सुखं। अन्तर्गत नारायणम् नारायणायां सुखं। (1) Occasional references of mantra may be observed in Pali literature, विनयपितके, विनयदर्शिनीसंहिताय ओषधिमण्डल 79, PTS, ग्रंथादिर्र 111 p. 5f. The definition of tantra in योगसाधनायाय is प्राणस्य तथा अति अति परमपरमा यथायथः (XVIII, 33-35).

Tibetan rgyud corresponds to the Tantra which may be divided into four classes: rgyud tse btsi, namely (i) Bya ba'i rgyud (Kriya Tantra), (ii) byod pa'i rgyud (caryā Tantra), (iii) 'byor ba'i rgyud (yoga tantra) and (iv) 'byor bla ma med pa'i rgyud (anuttarayoga tantra). In the Buddhist gyur coffee, "rgyud" suggests also the tantra manuals and is classified in five sections: (i) rgyud pa ram pa lha.

2. Vinayasastika Mahavagga 1.6.3 (p. 75); Book of Discipline, J.B. Honer, Vol. IV, 1.6.8.
3. Ibid 1.5.3
4. Ibid 1.5.2.
5. Vinayasastika, p. 20f (P.T.S)
6. एष विकृत्वेत्त वर्णे यथार्थम् स्वाभावः सम्बन्धसम प्रवृत्तिर्योगः । (Ibid p. 18)
7. अवक्षेत्रामालिकायाय प्रवृत्ति रहस्यं सदार्थे अभयं द्वारकायायाः (ed. B. Bhattacharyya GOS. 193). VII 5)

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The Pali Viśayāyatana (vīśāhākhandhak) categorically debar a yellow robed one for such heretical offenses like pārāśūrāja, viśampatītaka, upekkhikākhātaka, viśampatītākha (1.53, 112, 1.20, 30), viśampatītaka and viśampatītākha The Guhyasamāja uses the above words in Śāntakāla.

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12.  

[Contextual or terminological notes possibly related to the content of the text.]

[Further content possibly related to the scholarly discussion context of the text.]

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