



The Meaning of *Smara Sādhanā* in The *Kama Tattwa* Manuscripts: A *Tantrāyāna* Philosophy Perspective

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Abstract

Talking about sex is often regarded as a taboo subject and something that should not be discussed in public. In fact, understanding the true nature of sexuality is very important and even necessary in order to avoid deviant sexual behavior. This study aims to examine the philosophical dimension of *Smara Sādhanā*, or sacred sexuality, in the *Kama Tattwa* manuscript through the perspective of *Tantrāyāna* philosophy, by referring to three principal Balinese Hindu palm-leaf manuscripts, namely *Smara Krida Laksana*, *Resi Sembina*, and *Rahasya Sanggama*. This research employs a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach. The findings show that *Smara Sādhanā* represents an integral spiritual system grounded in *Tantrāyāna* non-dualism, in which sexual union symbolically represents and simultaneously actualizes the metaphysical unity between *Puruṣa* (consciousness) and *Prakṛti* (creative energy). Ontologically, sexuality is understood as a manifestation of cosmic energy; epistemologically, knowledge of sexuality is derived from the authority of sacred texts (*śabda pramāṇa*), direct experience (*pratyakṣa*), reasoning (*anumāna*), and ultimately reaches direct spiritual realization (*aparokṣānubhūti*); and axiologically, the concept of *Smara Sādhanā* upholds values of bodily sanctity, respect, compassion, and spiritual responsibility. Thus, the human body is viewed as a microcosm, and *sanggama* (sexual union) becomes a medium for attaining higher consciousness (*ānanda*). This study finds that the *Kama Tattwa* manuscript contains a profound philosophical discourse on sacred sexuality that challenges reductionist and moralistic interpretations of sex. Instead, these texts present sexuality as a path of spiritual transformation integrated within *dharma* and ethical relations among human beings. The conclusion of this study is that, in the Hindu perspective, sex is regarded as a sacred activity and understood as a form of *sādhanā*, a view that is likewise emphasized in *Tantrāyāna* philosophy. Therefore, by understanding sexual activity as something sacred, it is expected that sexual conduct can be placed in accordance with the teachings of *Dharma* and that deviant sexual behavior can be avoided.

Keywords: *Smara Sādhanā*; *Kama Tattwa*; *Tantrāyāna*; Sacred Sexuality; Non-Dualism; Hindu Philosophy

Abstrak

Berbicara tentang seks, maka dianggap sebagai pembicaraan yang tabu, serta tidak boleh untuk dibicarakan di publik. Padahal memahami tentang hakikat seks merupakan hal yang sangat penting serta sebuah keharusan untuk menghindari diri dari perilaku seks yang menyimpang. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengkaji dimensi filosofis *Smara Sādhanā* atau sebuah seks yang sakral dalam manuskrip *Kama Tattwa* melalui perspektif filsafat *Tantrāyāna*, dengan merujuk pada tiga lontar utama Hindu Bali yakni *Smara Krida Laksana*, *Resi Sembina*, dan *Rahasya Sanggama*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan hermeneutika. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Smara Sādhanā* merepresentasikan suatu sistem spiritual integral yang berlandaskan pada non-dualisme *Tantrāyāna*, di mana persatuan seksual

melambangkan sekaligus mengaktualisasikan kesatuan metafisis antara Puruṣa (kesadaran) dan Prakṛti (energi kreatif). Secara ontologis, seksualitas dipahami sebagai manifestasi energi kosmis; secara epistemologis, pengetahuannya bersumber pada otoritas teks suci (śabda pramāṇa), pengalaman langsung (pratyakṣa), penalaran (anumāna), hingga mencapai realisasi spiritual langsung (aparokṣānubhūti); dan secara aksiologis, konsep Smara Sādhanā menjunjung nilai kesucian tubuh, penghormatan, cinta kasih, serta tanggung jawab spiritual. Sehingga, tubuh manusia dipandang sebagai mikrokosmos, dan sanggama menjadi medium untuk mencapai kesadaran yang lebih tinggi (ānanda). Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa dalam manuskrip Kama Tattwa memuat wacana filosofis yang mendalam mengenai seksualitas yang sakral, yang menantang penafsiran reduksionis maupun moralistik terhadap seks. Sebaliknya, teks-teks tersebut menghadirkan seksualitas sebagai jalan transformasi spiritual yang terintegrasi dalam dharma dan relasi etis antar-manusia. Simpulan dari penelitian yakni dalam pandangan Hindu, seks sebagai aktivitas yang sakral serta disebut sebagai sādhanā, serta hal yang sama juga yang dijelaskan dalam filsafat Tantrāyāna, sehingga dengan memahami aktivitas seks sebagai sesuatu yang sakral, maka diharapkan untuk dapat menempatkan aktivitas seks harus sesuai dengan ajaran Dharma, serta tidak menyimpangkan perilaku seksual.

Kata Kunci: Smara Sādhanā; Kama Tattwa; Tantrāyāna; Seks Sakral; Non-Dualisme; Filsafat Hindu

Introduction

The study of sexuality to this day remains a field that is rarely pursued by researchers, especially when viewed from a philosophical perspective. Research on sex has largely been conducted by scholars in the fields of medicine, reproduction, or health sciences, with primary attention given to its biological and physical dimensions. Meanwhile, other aspects such as sexual behavior, psycho-social dimensions, and the cultural sphere remain areas that receive minimal scholarly attention. This situation opens a significant space for philosophical inquiry to explore more deeply and uncover the philosophical meanings of sexual activity, which is still often regarded as taboo something that should not be discussed, considered sinful to examine, and deemed inappropriate for open and free discourse. In fact, sexuality is one of the most sensitive domains of human life because it touches upon the most intimate aspects of identity and interpersonal relationships (Suwantana, 2011). Sexuality, as an integral part of human existence, encompasses not only biological needs but also emotional, psychological, and social dimensions. Every individual requires space to express their sexuality freely and authentically, as this plays an essential role in the formation of personal identity and humanity itself (Atputharajah, 2000).

Various perspectives on sex flourish and gradually shape individual modes of thinking. On one hand, sex is perceived merely as recreation; on the other, it is viewed as procreation, closely related to birth and lineage. This dualism of perspectives directs individuals toward two different paths of action: pursuing sexual pleasure solely for enjoyment, or orienting sexuality toward procreation while the former may open opportunities for free sex and deviant sexual behavior. Sex constitutes a universal domain that occupies a fundamental position in human life.

This universal sphere develops integrally and requires space for expression. However, from another viewpoint, social ethics often render this domain taboo. Yet, upon deeper reflection, something that is excessively tabooed may ideally produce negative consequences for those who impose the taboo so it is with sexuality. The taboo

surrounding sex has led many people to misunderstand its meaning. Generally, people tend to view sex merely from the perspective of instinct, while neglecting conscience. Sex brings happiness to many people. It also brings illness, suffering, and even humiliation to others (Aryana, 2008). Returning to a fundamental principle: if someone uses a medium properly, correctly, and wisely, that medium will benefit the user. Conversely, if it is misused or handled improperly, it may result in harm. Likewise, sexuality may be understood as a medium that can assist human beings in attaining their intended purposes depending on how it is understood and practiced.

When viewed biologically, sex and the desire to fulfill it are natural and normal phenomena, comparable to the feeling of hunger that demands food. However, the perspective changes when sexuality is seen through the lens of religion. In general, discussing sex within religious discourse is like untangling a knotted thread complex and difficult to unravel. In sacred scriptures, sex is often portrayed merely as a supporting figure in a film scene: appearing only briefly and then disappearing without further elaboration (Aryana, 2008). This statement underscores the fact that people's knowledge about sexuality remains very limited, largely because the sexual domain is rarely discussed openly and is considered private something too embarrassing to be shared publicly. In fact, sacred texts contain relatively comprehensive discussions on sexual knowledge, as can be found within Hinduism. Hinduism, as one of the religions officially recognized in Indonesia, demonstrates a certain tolerance toward the existence of ancient manuscripts or texts containing information about sexuality, as long as these texts remain aligned with the path of truth (*dharma*).

Upon deeper examination, sexual teachings in Hinduism are not inherently taboo. Implicitly, sexuality constitutes one of the aims of human life, as articulated in the doctrine of *Catur Purusārtha*: *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (prosperity), *kāma* (desire), and *mokṣa* (liberation). *Catur Purusārtha* refers to the four goals of human life, and the concept most directly related to sexuality is *kāma*, which signifies desire and passion (Suwantana, 2011). In the pursuit of *mokṣa* or ultimate liberation, that Hinduism recognizes two paths: *Prawerti* (*Pravṛtti*) and *Niwerti* (*Nivṛtti*), both of which ultimately lead to liberation. The *Prawerti* path emphasizes self-discipline through the control of the senses to achieve inner purity, including the regulation of sexual impulses. In contrast, the *Niwerti* path allows the senses to function and move freely, yet under conscious control understanding sexuality itself as a possible path toward liberation rather than something to be avoided. These teachings form the basis of what are known as *tengen* (right-hand path) and *kiwa* (left-hand path), also recognized in the concept of *Rwa Bhineda* (dual complementary opposites) (Atmaja, 2017).

Regarding ancient manuscripts that explore sexuality, it is essential to approach them with proper understanding in order to prevent misinterpretation or deviation from their intended meaning. A perspective rooted in sexuality as a symbolic system through which humans understand themselves and their world provides a legitimate philosophical foundation. Nevertheless, research on sexual themes in ancient manuscripts remains very limited, even though sex education is profoundly important especially for adolescents, who represent the future leaders of the nation.

In the contemporary technological era, negative influences have become increasingly concerning (Pangkahila, 2005). The study of sexuality, particularly as presented in classical Balinese texts, is therefore crucial for further exploration. In today's context, sex is often considered taboo to discuss openly, yet phenomena such as sexual harassment remain widespread, especially within the educational sector. Consequently, there is an urgent need to clarify that sexuality is a positive and sacred aspect of life, to be expressed responsibly within the institution of marriage. Sex, as something sacred,

should be conducted in sacred ways. For this reason, sex education becomes essential in order to provide constructive and positive understanding about sexuality. Through the study of the *Kama Tattwa* text, it is hoped that a comprehensive insight can be offered regarding sex, sexual ethics, and sexuality as a sacred human activity. Therefore, this study seeks to identify and analyze how *Smara Sādhanā* is constructed as a philosophical system within the framework of *Tantrāyāna*.

Method

This study fundamentally employs a qualitative research method within the field of Philosophy. This study also employs Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophical hermeneutic approach, which seeks to uncover the most authentic possible interpretation of the text by using the *verstehen* paradigm. This approach is chosen because the data presented emphasize qualitative aspects related to meanings, concepts, characteristics, and values inherent in the object under investigation. The type of research conducted is a textual study, in which the object of analysis concerns a manuscript examined as a philosophical text (Bakker and Zubair, 2007). The data for this research were obtained through Library Research. The sources include the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* text, as well as works related to *Tantrāyāna* philosophy and other scholarly publications that support this study. These references consist of academic journal articles, undergraduate theses, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations that address themes similar to the object of this research. The material object of this study is the *Lontar Kama Tattwa*, a Balinese manuscript that specifically discusses sexuality. The text elaborates extensively on the essential nature of sex, presenting it not merely as a form of pleasure, but as something sacred and imbued with profound spiritual values (*Smara Sādhanā*), since sexuality is understood as a form of yoga. Meanwhile, the formal object of this research is *Tantrāyāna* philosophy. This framework is employed because *Tantrāyāna* offers a comprehensive perspective on the teachings concerning sexuality. Through an analysis of the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* using the lens of *Tantrāyāna* philosophy, this study seeks to obtain a broad and holistic understanding of sacred sexual teachings as a path toward liberation (*mokṣa*).

Result and Discussion

1. Sex as Sādhanā in the *Kama Tattwa* Text

Lontar Smara Krida Laksana, which belongs to the corpus of *Kama Tattwa* texts, contains teachings on yoga, particularly yoga related to the science of love as explained in the *Kama Śāstra*, namely sexual yoga. This text affirms that sexual intercourse is not merely the fulfillment of physical desire, but rather a *sādhanā* a spiritual practice imbued with sacred value and self-restraint as a path toward higher consciousness. Furthermore, this is explained in *Lontar Smara Krida Laksana* 2a as follows:

Nihan prayoganing kapurusa guhiana ri patemuning cecetik. Hana tunjung bang lawa tatiga, jroning lawa hana gni, ikang tunjung tumuuh sakèng sare windu. Hana kurmagi ngaran, pasta areping kuemāgni, hana ong kara, patemoning rasa kabèah, ngaran sang hyang kama (Lontar Smarakridalaksana 2a).

Translation:

This is the yoga that should be practiced by the husband before *sanggama* (sacred union): focus the concentration on the tailbone. There, visualize a red lotus with three petals; at its center there is fire. This lotus grows from a round-shaped pond. At the base of the pond there is a fire turtle; the penis should be imagined as the head of that fire turtle. There is the seed syllable "Ong" which is the essence of the union of all sensations this is declared to be *Dewa Kama*.

Based on the excerpt from the *Smara Krida Laksana* text, it is explained that before a husband engages in *sanggama* (sacred union) with his wife, he is advised to first perform a ritual or spiritual practice. This rite aims to prepare the mind and consciousness so that they are not solely focused on physical pleasure, but also on inner purity. The process begins by concentrating on the tip of the tailbone as the starting point of the flow of spiritual energy. In a state of silence and focused awareness, one visualizes there a three-petaled lotus (*Padma*) as a symbol of the union of body, mind, and soul.

Afterward, the concentration is directed inward to the core of the lotus. If focus is successfully maintained, within the center of the flower a flame will appear, symbolizing life energy. This flame is then symbolically entered, guiding consciousness to a deeper level until reaching the base of the lotus, which is described as growing from a round pond. This pond represents the source of vital energy, the abode of all spiritual power. When concentration becomes steady, at the base of the pond a whirl of light resembling fire in the form of a turtle appears, depicting a latent, stable, and eternal power.

Within this luminous vortex, the sacred sound “*Ong*” is gradually heard, representing the primordial vibration of the universe. This sound is then visualized according to its syllabic symbol as the center of all sensation and energy. In the context of *Smara Krida Laksana*, this process forms an essential part of sexual yoga, in which physical union is transformed into a spiritual practice that unites human consciousness with divine energy. This section of the *Lontar Smara Krida Laksana* portrays both the theory and stages of sexual *yoga* practice, rich in spiritual symbolism.

Each stage of sexual union is described in detail not merely to depict physical action, but to demonstrate how awareness and spiritual energy must be present throughout the entire process. Sexuality, in this context, is viewed as a means of meditation and the unification of energy between husband and wife. Therefore, every movement, gaze, and touch carries profound meaning as an expression of self-control and conscious love.

Yan kumeter sarwa sandinia, manggeh ya mangupia, manglih, sisigen, yan wus mangkana aywe maswè dèning aninggali caya, dunugen jiwaning stri ring cakralingga, aywa simpang dènarasa patia, katemu pralingga, ika swarga skala, murca kang stri. Risamangkana mangdadia ngipi marèng smaralaya, apan kasinetan tamanira Sang Hyang Asmara, Taladwaja ngaran, tuhu cakreng bwana, mangkana ulahning smarakridalaksana. 2.a.

Translation:

When the wife’s joints begin to tremble, and it is evident that she is enjoying the sensation moaning softly, sighing and sobbing at that moment one should not gaze upon the light for too long. Guide the wife’s soul toward the genital *chakra*, without allowing it to deviate; there the *prāṇa liṅga* will be encountered. This is the visible heaven (*sorga sekala*), the entrance into pure consciousness. At that time, she feels as though dreaming of being in the heaven of *Dewa Asmara*, for she has been entered and inspired by *Dewa Asmara*, who at that moment is known as *Taladwaja*. Such is the technique of *sanggama* according to *Smarakridalaksana*.

The first stage of this practice begins with attentive observation and full awareness of the partner’s body. The husband is instructed to direct his attention to the symbols of beauty and sacredness in his wife’s body, such as the cloth covering her breasts, her navel, and her forehead. This observation is not merely an expression of desire, but a form of contemplation of the presence of sacred feminine energy. When a spiritual light begins to appear on the wife’s forehead, it becomes a sign of inner readiness to enter the next stage, namely the warming phase carried out with gentleness and loving affection. Subsequently, the stage of intimacy is performed through kisses, caresses, and embraces

undertaken slowly and mindfully. All these actions are intended to harmonize the vibrations of masculine and feminine energies. Every touch and stroke becomes a form of spiritual communication that involves not only the body but also the soul. In certain positions, the husband is advised to maintain inner calm, avoid excessive lustful impulses, and remain conscious of the spiritual purpose of the union.

When the wife begins to experience pleasure, marked by the release of fluid from the vagina, the husband is encouraged to continue the process with full awareness and careful attention. Each movement and touch upon sensitive points such as *purna sasangka* (clitoris) and *windu* (G-spot) is carried out with the intention of stimulating *kundalini* energy to flow throughout the body. This stage symbolizes the union of cosmic energies between man and woman, resulting in spiritual harmony. The culmination of this process occurs when the wife reaches *murca pwa strina*, a state of orgasm accompanied by full awareness.

At this moment, sexual energy is transformed into spiritual energy that flows toward the chakra in the genital region. The process is not regarded as a mere release of desire, but as a liberation of energy leading to the union of souls. Thus, *Lontar Smarakridalaksana* does not merely teach techniques of lovemaking, but emphasizes the spiritual meaning and sacred consciousness within sexual relations as a path toward union with the Divine. The *Resi Sembina* text explains that the relationship between husband and wife constitutes a sacred, symbolic ritual imbued with spiritual meaning.

In this view, sexual union is not merely the fulfillment of physical desire, but a holy event containing the secret of ultimate truth about life. Therefore, sex is regarded as a phenomenal existential experience capable of connecting the physical and spiritual dimensions of human beings. Sex as a sacred ritual between husband and wife in this text is elaborated through various guidelines and procedures that describe the process until it reaches the peak of enjoyment. This process is not solely physical, but also embodies values of harmony and loving affection between partners.

The instructions are addressed to a wise and discerning husband, referred to as *Sang Maha Widagda*, so that he may provide both physical and spiritual fulfillment to his wife and attain a pleasure that is not merely physical, but also spiritual in nature. As with many other texts, *Lontar Resi Sembina* is anonymous, and the identity of its author remains unknown. Most Balinese texts preserve a strong sense of secrecy, and to this day the authors of many *lontar* manuscripts in Bali have not been definitively identified. Although the name of the author of *Lontar Resi Sembina* is not explicitly mentioned, traces of thought and writing style suggest the presence of a researcher or *resi* who engaged in deep observation and contemplation of the meaning of this sacred union (Suwantana, 2011).

The teachings contained in *Lontar Resi Sembina* are highly confidential; due to their esoteric nature, they are revealed with great caution, considering that these teachings are not intended for the general public who remain unfamiliar with such knowledge. Therefore, *Lontar Resi Sembina* explicitly elaborates on the secretive nature of this manuscript as follows:

Rinahasia teki denira sang kawi waneh, yadiapin anta prana, wara gata, warang sangka, rinahasia rikeng aji.

Translation:

Because of my diligence in investigating what has been kept secret by other sages, even if I must die, die young, die in a maiden state still that which is concealed within the sacred letters shall remain hidden (Rai: 3).

This teaching was originally kept secret by the *pengawi* (poet-sages), so that not many people in society were aware of the mysteries of *Kama Tattwa*. The author later courageously expounded this scripture and made it known to a wider audience. Therefore, knowledge that was once highly esoteric and understood only by those who comprehended the true essence of *Kama Tattwa* has now been disseminated more broadly. This is also explained in *Lontar Resi Sembina* as follows:

Nung tang winara laken sang widagda ring wang len, rahasia ya denira. Ya teka winarahakenku. Sarasaning ananga sastra, teki prayoga winarahakenku. Ikanang yogya gawean de sang widagda.

Translation:

Such matters were not disclosed to others; they were kept secret by him. Now it is I who inform you, concerning the practice of the scripture of *Sang Hyang Asmara*. This, moreover, is the proper procedure for engaging in sexual union. I shall tell you what ought to be carried out by a wise person (Rai: 2).

The author intends to share with everyone the secret of *sanggama* (sacred union). The proper procedures of sexual intercourse must be understood by society, for through this understanding one may attain true enjoyment. The pleasure obtained through the guidance of sacred scripture can lead a person toward the fulfillment of life's purpose. For those who do not understand this secret, all their efforts will be in vain. The *Lontar Rahasya Sanggama* text contains explanations of three methods of sexual union aimed at achieving both physical and spiritual pleasure.

These three methods are: (1) *angguliprawesa*, namely the insertion of the fingers into the vagina; (2) *purusaprawesa*, namely penile penetration into the vagina; and (3) *jihwaprawesa*, namely the use or insertion of the tongue into the vagina. These three methods reflect variations of technique in sexual relations, explicitly described in the lontar as part of the teachings on attaining sensual enjoyment within the marital relationship. A clearer explanation is presented in the following excerpt.

Nihan Rahasya Sanggama, tiga Iwirnya, anguli prawesa, purusa prawesa, jihwa prawesa. Kramanya yan meh metwa kamanya ginelisen dening anguli ulingaken. Kiwanen tengenaken wttwake, pasukaken, pahalon pahagelis, yapwan meh metwa kaman strinya lan akas purusanya, yekawidagda ngaranya.

Translation:

This is the secret of sexual union; there are three types. One is called *angguliprawesa* (by inserting the fingers into the vaginal opening), *purusaprawesa* (by inserting the *phallus/penis* into the vaginal opening), and *jihwaprawesa* (by using or inserting the tongue into the vaginal opening). The practice is such that when the semen is about to be released, the movement should be accelerated shaken to the left and right then the male organ is withdrawn and inserted again, withdrawn and inserted repeatedly. The movement during *sanggama* is alternately slowed down and quickened. If the woman is about to release her essence, and after that the male organ remains firm, such a person is called wise.

Of the three techniques, two of them *angguliprawesa* and *jihwaprawesa* appear to be primarily focused as practical guidance for the husband in providing sexual satisfaction to his wife. These two methods represent forms of sexual relations that are worldly or horizontal in nature, emphasizing the wife's physical pleasure. Meanwhile, the method of *purusaprawesa* holds a deeper position because it is not merely biological, but also reflects a spiritual dimension and symbolizes the union of *lingga* and *yoni*, or the integration of masculine and feminine principles (*ang-ah* and *pertiwi-akasa*).

This union involves mutual pleasure while simultaneously embodying the sacred meaning inherent in the process of creating life. Engaging in sexual relations, especially within the context of building a harmonious family, is viewed as requiring a certain foundation of knowledge and awareness so that both spiritual and emotional goals may be achieved. *Lontar Rahasya Sanggama* emphasizes that the relationship between husband and wife should not be lived merely instinctively, but must be accompanied by a wise and purposeful inner attitude. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

Nihan dening manganaken purusa prawesa, tengahnya lener atah wowara prasuta, purusa widagda ngaranika, nari I Yawa I Jro, I sor I rubur ndantanpahidep, ton lawa-lawu ikang, rotih mjila, mwanng kri-krimi wuri ring kapana, tan kapangiha I riya Sunya ikang nari kabeh, adah kayikan mangkana, tan kasaputan mangsa ihanang mangkana, keneng purusa walagda yan mangkana dening maleken purusa, gegelikang purusa, ulahaken mutra wewara, yaya dening angulahaken.

Translation:

This is the proper way to engage in sexual union in a manly manner: in the midst of it there is moisture that flows from the entrance of the cave (the female genital organ) and from the male organ. Such a man is called wise. One should contemplate what is within and what is without, what is below and what is above. One must first visualize *Dewi Ratih* dwelling within the wife's body; none of the wife's imperfections should be imagined. Instead, envision everything as an empty pond filled with clear water. If one is able to maintain such visualization, the man will no longer merely seek to satisfy lust as one eats meat to quell hunger. If a man is able to act in this way, he is called wise, for he has properly exercised his manliness. When he desires union and his organ has become firm, it should not be inserted immediately. This is the proper way when wishing to engage in *sanggama*: insert it gradually, beginning only with the tip of the male organ. After that, insert it to the midpoint; there it should be gently moved, and then gradually brought deeper until reaching the *palemahan*, meaning the deepest part.

The meeting between *cukla* and *swanita*, which in modern terms are known as sperm and ovum, occurs through the *sanggama* (sexual union) of husband and wife and marks the beginning of the fertilization process. From the encounter of these two elements arises *manik*, the seed of life that will later develop into a baby. *Lontar Anggastyaprana* refers to this *manik* as *Sang Hyang Antigajati*, which attaches to the mother's womb, grows day by day, and eventually manifests as *rare* (a child). Thus, *sanggama* is understood not merely as a biological event, but also as a cosmic process involving divine creative power.

Lontar Rahasya Sanggama bears conceptual affinity with *Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra*, particularly in its emphasis on inner control and concentration of consciousness. The difference lies in the fact that this text applies yogic principles through the path of *sanggama*. If in the *Yoga Sūtra* the stage of *dhāraṇā* represents the peak of mental concentration, in *Rahasya Sanggama* that peak appears in the phase following the orgasm of both partners, when consciousness reaches its most intense and focused state. The shared orgasm is regarded as the beginning of creation as well as a gateway to divine light. Therefore, this moment demands a positive inner attitude, clarity of mind, and focus on noble intentions rather than mere gratification of desire. With such awareness, *sanggama* is directed as a path toward true happiness, in which the creation of life and the search for spiritual meaning converge in a unified and holistic experience.

2. Characteristics of *Tantrāyana* Teachings

Mapping the characteristics of *Tantra* is by no means a simple task, especially when *Tantra* is positioned as an independent philosophical system. Such efforts often lead to demands that *Tantra* demonstrate clear and exclusive differences from other philosophical systems. As a result, many researchers encounter conceptual confusion, since *Tantra* frequently appears to overlap with other streams of spirituality. In fact, as can be inferred from Mircea Eliade's view, *Tantra* need not be understood as a completely separate philosophical system (Eliade, 1963). Rather, *Tantra* is more appropriately seen as a "color" or spiritual nuance that permeates various philosophical systems and religious practices.

From this perspective, *Tantra* functions as an approach, a method, and an inner orientation that can infuse diverse traditions without negating their fundamental identities. A number of scholars have attempted to formulate the primary characteristics of *Tantra*, although to this day no consensus has been reached regarding features that are truly unique and exclusive to *Tantra* (Fic, 2003). Nevertheless, these attempts at classification remain valuable. They provide at least an initial framework for understanding the patterns of thought, symbolism, and practices of *Tantra* in a more systematic manner. Therefore, in this context, the characteristics of Tantric teachings will be described as follows.

a. *Tantra* as Esoteric Teaching

The term *esoteric* literally means "secret" or "hidden," referring to knowledge that is not intended for general consumption (Faizah, 2023). In the tradition of Indian philosophy and spirituality, this term is closely related to the concept of *adhyātmika*, the dimension of knowledge concerned with inner and spiritual reality within the human being. Within this framework, *Tantra* has from the outset been understood as esoteric, both in terms of its content and the way it is transmitted. In terms of doctrine, *Tantra* does not stop at outward theological or moral understanding, but directs the seeker toward profound self-exploration.

Tantric practice invites individuals to delve into consciousness beyond the limits of ego identity and the physical body, moving toward the experience of unity with the highest reality. Because it touches extremely subtle and powerful layers of awareness, this teaching is considered dangerous if practiced without adequate mental, ethical, and spiritual preparation (Bjonness, 2013). This emphasis on secrecy is clearly reflected in many *mantras*, *śāstra*, and *Nusantara lontar* manuscripts, which repeatedly warn of the dangers of misusing the teachings.

In the Balinese context, there is the expression *hayyawawera*, which essentially means "do not be careless". This phrase is not merely a social prohibition, but a philosophical and ethical warning that sacred teachings should not be conveyed, interpreted, or practiced without spiritual responsibility. The secrecy of *Tantra* also indicates that it is not intended for the general public. Unlike religion in its exoteric sense open, communicative, and intended to reach as many adherents as possible *Tantra* operates within a limited and intensive sphere (Sandika, 2023).

Furthermore, a concrete expression of *Tantra's* esoteric nature is the practice of *dīkṣā* or initiation. *Dīkṣā* is a sacred process in which a disciple is formally accepted into the circle of Tantric teaching by a guru. Through this initiation, the disciple not only receives knowledge but is also spiritually "activated" to enter particular stages of practice. Without *dīkṣā*, a person is considered not to possess the inner authority to access *Tantric mantras*, *yantras*, or rituals. This principle can be found across various traditions, including *Śaiva Tantra*, *Vajrayāna Buddhism*, and Balinese *Tantric* texts.

Initiation serves as an ethical safeguard as well as spiritual protection, both for the disciple and for the teaching itself (Yudiantara, 2019). Esotericism in *Tantra* not only marks its limited and selective nature, but also reveals its universal dimension. *Tantra* works beyond the boundaries of religious dogma, which often divide humanity into rigid categories (Strube, 2023). By penetrating these boundaries, *Tantra* seeks to unveil the fundamental unity that connects all existence, regardless of differences in tradition, identity, or symbolic belief.

The universality of *Tantra* is transcendental and metaphysical in character, for what it addresses are not outward regulations, but the deepest reality of being. From this perspective, all beings share the same essential truth the single source of consciousness and life. *Tantra* regards this essential truth as a reality that transcends name, form, and concept, yet serves as the foundation of all apparent diversity (Olsson, 2024). This essential truth is not located far outside the human being, but is present immanently within oneself and within the dynamics of everyday life.

However, because it is concealed beneath layers of ego, habit, and superficial perception, it appears as though it were secret. Its secrecy lies not in exclusivity, but in the depth of awareness required to recognize it. Therefore, the effort to unveil this hidden reality is profoundly personal. Each individual walks their own path according to their readiness and inner discipline. Within this framework, *Tantra* can be understood as an individual journey toward the realization of consciousness beyond the personal self a transformative process from ego-centered awareness to transpersonal consciousness that recognizes the unity of all things.

b. *Tantra* as a Holistic–Integrative Teaching

Holistic means viewing something in a comprehensive and unified manner. In *Tantra*, this holistic quality is clearly reflected in the way the body, mind, and the reality of life are understood as a single continuum of experience. *Tantra* does not separate the physical and the spiritual, the sacred and the profane, or the individual and the cosmos; rather, it sees all of them as parts of an interconnected order of life. This holistic and integrative approach emphasizes that diversity is not something to be set in opposition. Like pieces of a puzzle with different shapes and colors, each element finds its meaning only when harmoniously arranged within a greater whole.

A complete picture can emerge only when differences are integrated in harmony, not treated as mutually negating oppositions (Yudiantara, 2019). In principle, *Tantric* teaching rests upon integralism, a perspective that emphasizes synergy among the various elements within the human being and within life itself. This principle is closely intertwined with the doctrine of *Śākta-vāda*, which views the self, nature, and all reality as concrete (*sakala*) manifestations of śakti, the dynamic energy of the Supreme Consciousness.

To actualize this integration, *Tantra* stresses the importance of understanding every element that composes the self and existence. These elements are known as various forms of *tattwa*, that is, levels or aspects of reality. The spirit of integralism in *Tantra* is clearly evident in the way it regards life as an interconnected unity. Integralism does not rigidly separate elements of existence, but harmonizes them so that they function synergistically. Within this framework, the human being is seen as the meeting ground of consciousness, energy, and lived experience, all of which possess spiritual meaning and function.

At the level of embodiment, *Tantra* views human existence as consisting of three primary dimensions: the physical body, the subtle body, and the causal body. These three do not stand independently, but must be integrated in order to fulfill the purpose of existence. The Supreme Consciousness manifests itself in order to experience the

dynamics of life, and these three layers of the body serve as vehicles for that experience from the physical body with its objects of enjoyment, to the energy body with its various potentials, and to the mental body with its emotions and ego-centered tendencies (Yudiantara, 2019). Furthermore, from the *Tantric* perspective, none of these bodily layers is to be rejected or denied. The soul, as the underlying cause of all these layers, animates and directs their respective functions. All elements are considered important and beneficial when properly understood and rightly positioned.

Spiritual obstacles arise not from the existence of these bodies, but from the human inability to understand, manage, and integrate them in a balanced and conscious way (Groudriaan and Gupta, 1981). On the second level, namely the relationship with nature, *Tantra* perceives a fundamental correspondence between the human body and the universe. The personal body is understood as the microcosm, while the universe is regarded as the macrocosm. In essence, the two are not separate, for they are built from the same elements and essence, differing only in scale and manifestation.

After the three bodily layers physical, subtle, and causal are harmoniously cultivated, attention is directed toward the relationship between the body and nature. In *Tantric* thought, inner and spiritual balance cannot be separated from harmony with the cosmic environment. Therefore, maintaining bodily harmony also means preserving cosmic balance; conversely, damage to the relationship with nature leads to inner disharmony. The concepts of *bhuwana alit* (the small world) and *bhuwana agung* (the great world) affirm that the human body is a reflection of the greater body of the universe (Crawford and Fritzman, 2022).

On the third level, the spirit of *Tantric* integralism is realized in the union of spirituality and worldly life. *Tantra* does not regard life with its social, material, and emotional dynamics as something opposed to the spiritual path. Rather, living in accordance with one's present stage of existence is itself a spiritual practice, not an obstacle to the attainment of awareness. In contrast to many spiritual teachings influenced by *māyā-vāda*, which view the world as an illusion to be transcended or abandoned, *Tantra* understands life as a reality that truly exists.

Life is recognized as a real manifestation at the level of *sakala*, without denying the existence of the transcendent *niskala* dimension. *Tantric* integralism thus views life and all its elements in a comprehensive and unified manner (Yudiantara, 2019). Fourth, the spirit of *Tantric* integralism is clearly visible in its interpretation of *ritual*. In *Tantra*, ritual is not understood merely as an expression of devotion (*bhakti*) to a supernatural power outside oneself often referred to as *Deva*, *Bhaṭāra*, or God. *Ritual* indeed retains a symbolic and external dimension, yet its meaning goes far beyond that, for its true essence is directed inward rather than outward.

Worship (*puja*) and ritual practice function as gateways to interior experience. External *rituals* are still considered necessary at certain stages, especially as preparatory means for spiritual discipline. However, all outward forms ultimately serve as introductions to a subtler journey the process of self-realization that unfolds within the practitioner's own consciousness. The culmination of worship in *Tantra* is not merely the fulfillment of petitions or symbolic closeness to the object of devotion, but the attainment of union between the worshipper and the worshipped.

At this stage, there is no longer any distance between "I who worship" and "That which is worshipped." Consciousness unites with the essence that has long been revered, for in truth that revered reality abides within as the innermost core of being. This perspective is deeply rooted in the theory of *tattwa* that forms the foundation of *Nusantara Tantric* texts. All divine manifestations are understood as realities present within the various layers of human existence.

Thus, ritual is not merely symbolic activity, but a method for unveiling the inner structure of reality, enabling consciousness to recognize its own essence as inseparable from the Supreme Reality (Yudiantara, 2019). In this way, *Tantra* may be understood as monotheistic both conceptually and practically. The worshipper and the worshipped are essentially one and have never been separate. Unawareness of this unity arises from attachment to bodily experiences and the phenomenal world. *Tantric* worship and ritual function as means of reconditioning consciousness a meditative and contemplative practice to remember the primordial unity that has always existed from the beginning.

c. *Tantra* as a Transformative Teaching

Transformation is essentially a process of fundamental change, and in the context of *Tantra*, this change primarily concerns the realm of consciousness. Consciousness is understood as the foundation of all life experience how one thinks, feels, acts, and interprets reality. Therefore, when consciousness undergoes transformation, life itself is inevitably transformed. *Tantric* teachings do not regard change as something merely abstract or metaphysical, but as a reality that can be concretely experienced in everyday life. Within this framework, the success of understanding and practicing *Tantra* is not measured by spectacular experiences or lofty spiritual claims.

Its primary measure lies instead in the quality of one's consciousness and life itself: whether a person becomes more aware, more integrated, freer from harmful attachments, and more responsible for their own life (Yudiantara, 2019). *Tantrikas* are scientists; the body and life are their laboratories. In human existence, there are always two parallel conditions: the condition presently experienced and the condition one aspires to attain. *Tantra* serves as the bridge of transformation that connects the two. The transformative process in *Tantra* unfolds at least on two principal levels: the personal and the transpersonal. On the personal level, change is marked by the emergence of inner mastery and authority (*wisesa*) over the various elements of oneself. On the transpersonal level, transformation goes beyond the individual self, even transcending space and time.

d. *Tantra* as Erotic Teaching

The popularity of *Tantra* in the modern era has often arisen through misunderstanding, particularly when it is reduced to merely "sexual *yoga*." This misconception stems from the inability to distinguish between *Tantra Śāstra* and *Kāma Śāstra*, such as the *Kāma Sūtra*. In fact, the two stand upon very different aims, philosophical frameworks, and practical orientations (Orzech, 2006). *Tantra* concerns liberation and the transformation of consciousness, whereas the *Kāma Sūtra* focuses on the art of relationships and pleasure within the framework of household life. Within the *Tantric* tradition, the symbol of "cosmic intercourse" indeed occupies an important place, but it cannot be understood merely in a literal sense. Such union is a philosophical and cosmological metaphor used to explain how reality operates. Many *Tantric* texts, both *Śaiva* and *Śākta*, employ erotic language as a symbol of the union of the fundamental principles of existence, not as a guide to hedonism or mere gratification of desire (Yudiantara, 2019).

Tantra does acknowledge literal sexual practices, such as *maithuna*, yet these are highly ritualistic, symbolic, and framed within strict spiritual discipline. Their purpose is not bodily pleasure in the Western sense, but the transmutation of energy and consciousness (Biernacki, 2006). Therefore, eroticism in *Tantra* must be understood as a spiritual symbol and means, not as an ultimate goal much less equated with the orientation of the *Kāma Sūtra*, which places pleasure as its primary focus.

e. *Tantra* as Aesthetic Teaching

Tantric teaching possesses a profoundly aesthetic character because it views reality as an expression of the beauty of consciousness. In *Tantra*, beauty is not merely

understood as something that pleases the senses, but as an ontological quality of existence itself (Yudiantara, 2019). The human body is regarded as an aesthetic medium within *Tantra*. The body is not a prison of the soul, but a sacred *mandala* in which consciousness expresses itself. By understanding this, a practitioner of *Tantra* realizes that the cosmic dance of the universe is intricately interwoven with what exists within the human body. All these elements can harmonize and form a profound beauty in the integration of macrocosm and microcosm.

f. *Tantra* as Ethical Teaching

Tantra, like esoteric spiritual traditions in general, places great emphasis on the order of conduct as an inseparable part of the path of transformation. Human attitudes, habits, and patterns of reaction do not arise spontaneously, but are shaped through long processes of conditioning by life experiences. Many of these patterns operate automatically and may become sources of suffering, alienation, and attachment without being consciously recognized. Therefore, *Tantra* holds that liberation cannot be attained without awareness of one's way of living in daily life (Davidson, 2002).

As a holistic methodology of consciousness transformation, *Tantra* does not stop at inner experiences or symbolic practices alone, but also stresses concrete changes in behavior. This transformation addresses how a person responds to oneself, relates to others, and faces the dynamics of life. In the *Tantric* perspective, higher awareness is not measured by spectacular mystical experiences, but by tangible changes in the quality of life: being more present, more responsible, and more harmonious (Yudiantara, 2019). One of the primary means of reconditioning consciousness in *Tantra* is the cultivation of awareness in thought, attitude, and action.

Practitioners are invited to become aware of every inner impulse before reacting, so that old automatic patterns may gradually be transcended. Here, *Tantric* values function as personal guidelines rather than externally binding social norms. These values are intended for self-regulation, not for judging or controlling others. Within this framework, various practices such as *tapa*, *brata*, and *sila* are known in *Tantric* tradition. Their forms may vary widely depending on the lineage and cultural context, ranging from dietary discipline, regulation of speech, management of sexual energy, to practices of silence and sensory restraint.

All these disciplines are not ends in themselves, but tools for refining the structure of consciousness so that it becomes clearer and more sensitive. What is emphasized is not outward compliance, but the inner awareness that underlies it. The relationship between ethics and spirituality in *Tantra* is dialectical and complex. On the one hand, ethics is understood as the fruit of spiritual realization: a person whose consciousness has developed will naturally radiate compassion, honesty, and responsibility. In this sense, ethics is not an imposed rule, but a spontaneous expression of mature awareness. On the other hand, *Tantra* also acknowledges that such realization requires conscious effort in everyday life. Each moment becomes a field of practice for reshaping old habits and planting the seeds of new awareness.

3. The Philosophical Dimension of *Smara Sadhana* in the *Kama Tattwa*

a. The Ontological Dimension of *Smara Sāadhanā*

Philosophically, *Smara Sāadhanā* has a strong ontological foundation by viewing sexuality as the energy of life (being) that flows throughout the entire cosmic order. This energy is not understood merely as a biological drive, but as an existential force that sustains life and consciousness. Within this framework, sexuality is an expression of *śakti*, namely the creative power that enables life to continuously unfold and regenerate (Kulshrestha and Caplikaite, 2024). Therefore, *Smara Sāadhanā* places sex as an integral

part of the ontological structure of human beings and the universe, rather than as a profane aspect separated from spiritual meaning. Furthermore, *Smara Sādhanā* is also understood as a relation of consciousness (relation), namely an encounter between subject and subject, rather than between subject and object. Sexual relations, from this perspective, represent an existential dialogue between individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness. This encounter is not merely physical in nature, but also involves inner dimensions of feeling, awareness, and deep spiritual consciousness. Thus, sexuality becomes a sacred relational space in which love, reverence, and awareness merge into a holistic spiritual experience (Rawson, 1973). *Smara Sādhanā* is also understood as a process of transformation (becoming). In this teaching, the body is not seen as an obstacle to spirituality, but as the primary medium of spiritual transformation. The body is understood as a sacred, living, and dynamic entity, a site where cosmic energy operates and is cultivated through disciplines of awareness.

Through the practice of *Smara Sādhanā*, sexual impulses are transformed from instinctive desire into a spiritually awakening energy. This process marks the human journey from ordinary states of consciousness toward higher and more reflective awareness. At its culmination, *Smara Sādhanā* becomes a path toward union with ultimate reality. Sexuality and spirituality are not positioned as two opposing poles, but as a single existential unity within a non-dualistic framework (Sweet, 2020). The physical and the spiritual converge in an integral experience of consciousness, in which the body becomes the vehicle for attaining supreme awareness (*ānanda*).

b. The Epistemological Dimension of *Smara Sādhanā*

From an epistemological perspective, *Smara Sādhanā* affirms that knowledge in this practice is derived primarily from *śabda pramāṇa*, namely the authority of sacred texts and inherited tradition. Texts such as *Kama Tattwa* and related Balinese palm-leaf manuscripts function as normative and conceptual foundations that provide direction, boundaries, and spiritual legitimacy to the practice of sacred sexuality. This textual knowledge is not intended as rigid dogma, but rather as a map of meaning that guides practitioners so as not to fall into reductionist or hedonistic interpretations of sexuality.

In addition to textual sources, the knowledge of *Smara Sādhanā* is also grounded in *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*, namely empirical and direct experience lived by the subject (Bala, 2025). In this context, the body becomes a legitimate epistemic instrument through which knowledge is acquired via lived awareness, feeling, and the energetic processes at work in the practice of *sanggama*. Bodily experience is not regarded as misleading, but as an authentic source of knowledge when undertaken with awareness, discipline, and a proper ethical spiritual framework (Mullis, 2013).

These experiences and textual teachings are then deepened through *anumāna pramāṇa*, that is, reflective and contemplative reasoning. Such reasoning serves to connect empirical experience with broader philosophical and cosmological principles. Through reflection, individuals are able to grasp the symbolic and metaphysical meanings of *Smara Sādhanā*, so that sexual experience does not remain at the level of sensation alone, but is transformed into conscious, critical, and spiritually meaningful knowledge. The pinnacle of *Smara Sādhanā*'s epistemology lies in *aparokṣānubhūti*, namely direct, non-dual experience that transcends the subject-object dichotomy.

At this stage, knowledge is no longer mediated by texts, the senses, or reasoning, but is realized directly as the unity of the self, the partner, and ultimate reality. *Aparokṣānubhūti* signifies the transformation of knowledge into integral awareness, in which sexuality becomes a path of enlightenment rather than merely a bodily activity (Deutsch, 1980). Thus, the epistemology of *Smara Sādhanā* forms an integral spectrum of knowledge, ranging from textual authority to direct spiritual realization.

c. The Axiological Dimension of *Smara Sādhanā*

Axiologically, *Smara Sādhanā* affirms the sacrality of the body as something that cannot be reduced to a mere biological object. The body is understood as a microcosm, a miniature universe in which cosmic energies operate and interact. From this perspective, the body possesses intrinsic and noble value because it serves as the vessel of consciousness and life. Therefore, every action involving the body, especially in the context of sexuality, must be undertaken with ethical and spiritual awareness, rather than with exploitative or instrumental attitudes (Malkani, 1961).

Another central value in *Smara Sādhanā* is the unity of body and soul. This teaching rejects the dichotomy that separates the body as a source of sin and the soul as a sacred entity. Instead, body and soul are understood as a single existential unity that mutually animates one another. Sexuality, within this framework, becomes the space in which this unity is concretely experienced, so that bodily experience simultaneously becomes inner and spiritual experience. Furthermore, *Smara Sādhanā* positions sexuality as a medium of love and compassion.

Sexual relations are not interpreted as unilateral gratification of desire, but as encounters grounded in respect, empathy, and responsibility. Love, in this context, is not merely a personal emotion, but a spiritual energy that connects individuals with one another and with cosmic reality (Christian, 2006). Accordingly, the ethical values of *Smara Sādhanā* demand a deep relational awareness in which the presence of one's partner is treated as equal and sacred. At its highest level, the axiological values of *Smara Sādhanā* culminate in spiritual unity. This practice is directed toward transcending ego and narrow individuality in order to reach a broader experience of oneness. Sexuality becomes a means of cultivating awareness of existential interconnectedness between the self, the partner, and God. In this way, *Smara Sādhanā* not only establishes a dignified sexual ethic, but also guides human beings toward a transformative spiritual orientation grounded in sacredness, love, and ultimate unity.

4. *Smara Sadhana* in the *Kama Tattwa* Text from a Tantric Perspective

In Tantric teaching, the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* is a spiritual process involving the alignment of body, mind, and energy. When *kuṇḍalinī* is awakened, this energy rises through the subtle channels (*nāḍī*), particularly the *suṣumṇā*, and pierces the energy centers known as *cakras* (Rebelle, 2024). Each *cakra* symbolizes a particular level of consciousness, ranging from instinctual awareness to transcendental awareness. The ascent of *kuṇḍalinī* is not merely an energetic experience, but also a profound psychological and spiritual transformation.

In *Tantric* practice, the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* is typically achieved through the integration of *mantra*, *mudrā*, *yantra*, *prāṇāyāma*, and meditation (Rosati, 2020). *Mantra* functions as a vibrational force that stimulates energy; *mudrā* directs the flow of *prāṇa*; and *yantra* serves as a visual focus that stabilizes awareness. *Tantra* emphasizes that the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* must be undertaken consciously and gradually, as this energy is extremely powerful (Pott, 1966). Philosophically, *kuṇḍalinī* symbolizes the journey from ignorance (*avidyā*) to true knowledge (*vidyā*).

When *kuṇḍalinī* reaches the crown *cakra* (*sahasrāra*), the union of *Śakti* and *Śiva* occurs, understood as the realization of non-dual consciousness (Singer, 2014). At this stage, the boundary between subject and object dissolves, and one experiences inner liberation even while living in the world (*jīvanmukti*). Thus, in *Tantra*, *kuṇḍalinī* is not merely biological or psychological energy, but the primary symbol and means of spiritual transformation toward the highest consciousness (Rebelle, 2024). The human body is regarded as a sacred space and a microcosm in which divine power resides.

Therefore, *Tantra* does not separate spirituality from the body, but makes the body the primary vehicle for the transformation of consciousness. The awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* within the framework of the *Sapta Cakra* (Seven *Chakras*) is understood as the journey of energy through seven principal centers of consciousness located along the spine up to the crown of the head. These seven *cakras* are *Mūlādhāra*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna*, *Maṇipūra*, *Anāhata*, *Viśuddha*, *Ājñā*, and *Sahasrāra*. Each *cakra* represents a particular level of consciousness and specific spiritual aspects (Anandamurti, 2008).

At the level of *Mūlādhāra Cakra*, the foundational energy center located between the anus and the genitals, *Mūlādhāra* symbolizes the foundation of human existence and is associated with the earth element. In *Tantra*, the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* from *Mūlādhāra* does not mean rejecting the instinctual aspects of humanity, but transforming them. The basic energy originally bound to primitive drives is redirected toward higher awareness. As *kuṇḍalinī* rises, it enters the second *cakra*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna*, associated with the water element, emotions, creativity, and desire.

In the *Tantric* perspective, the sexual and emotional energies centered in *Svādhiṣṭhāna* are not considered spiritual obstacles, but potential energies that can be purified and transformed. *Tantra* emphasizes the sublimation of this energy into creative and spiritual power that supports the journey of consciousness (Chenet and White, 2003). Next, *kuṇḍalinī* penetrates the *Maṇipūra Cakra*, the center of willpower, personal strength, and the fire element. *Maṇipūra* symbolizes ego, ambition, and the drive for power. In the *Tantric* framework, this stage is crucial, as the practitioner is tested in managing the increasing inner power.

Transformation at *Maṇipūra* means converting egoism into self-discipline, responsibility, and spiritual steadfastness, so that energy is not trapped in mere self-dominance (Twist, 2022). The next stage is the *Anāhata Cakra*, the center of compassion and balance, located in the heart. *Anāhata* serves as a bridge between the lower *cakras*, which are instinctual in nature, and the higher *cakras*, which are transcendental. When *kuṇḍalinī* reaches *Anāhata*, spiritual energy begins to manifest as compassion, empathy, and universal love. In *Tantra*, this experience marks a significant shift from self-centered seeking toward a broader relational awareness (Custodi, 2003).

Kuṇḍalinī then rises to the *Viśuddha Cakra*, the center of expression, sound, and purity. This *cakra* is associated with the element of ether and with the human capacity to express truth. In *Tantric* practice, *Viśuddha* is closely connected with *mantra* and sacred syllables, since sound is regarded as a direct manifestation of cosmic energy. When *kuṇḍalinī* energy reaches this center, words and expressions no longer arise from the ego, but from a clearer and more authentic consciousness. Subsequently, *kuṇḍalinī* enters the *Ājñā Cakra*, often referred to as the third-eye center.

Ājñā symbolizes intuition, wisdom, and inner vision. It becomes the center of integration for spiritual experience, where knowledge is no longer conceptual, but intuitive and immediate (Zepa, 2022). The culmination of *kuṇḍalinī*'s journey occurs when this energy reaches the *Sahasrāra Cakra*, the crown center at the top of the head. *Sahasrāra* symbolizes pure consciousness and the union of *Śakti* (energy) and *Śiva* (consciousness). In *Tantra*, this stage is understood as the realization of non-dual awareness and the experience of inner liberation, even while living in the world (*jīvanmukti*). Thus, the relationship between *kuṇḍalinī* and the *sapta cakra* (seven *cakra*) affirms the core of *Tantric* teaching: that enlightenment is a gradual process of transformation occurring within the human body and consciousness itself.

Therefore, in this context, the sexual energy rooted in the *Mūlādhāra Cakra* and *Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra* is not regarded as something to be avoided. Rather, this energy is to be transmitted and transformed toward enlightenment. Sexual energy must be recognized

as an energy that inherently exists within the human being. If it is merely suppressed or repressed, it may later manifest in aggressive or uncontrolled ways. Thus, becoming aware of one's sexual energy is already a step toward transforming it into a force that leads to liberation and awakening (Chenet and White, 2003).

Similarly, in the context of *Smara Sādhāna*, sexual energy is understood as a sacred life force, not as an instinctual drive left to flow aimlessly. *Smara*, associated with *Kāma* or love, is not interpreted merely as sensory desire, but as a powerful spiritual potential. Therefore, in *Smara Sādhāna*, sexual energy must be transformed not repressed nor impulsively expressed. This transformation is essential so that the energy functions as a means for deepening awareness rather than becoming a new source of attachment. The transformation of sexual energy in *Smara Sādhāna* begins with awareness.

In terms of the cakra system, sexual energy rooted in the *Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra* is directed upward toward higher centers of consciousness. *Smara Sādhāna* emphasizes that experiences of love and eroticism should not end in bodily satisfaction alone, but must be refined so as to reach the dimension of the heart (*Anāhata Cakra*). At this stage, sexual energy is transmuted into compassion. This transformation marks a shift from possessive love to spiritual love (Jackson, 1992). Furthermore, in the practice of *Vāmācāra Tantra*, *maithuna* is also performed.

In this context, it cannot be understood merely as physical sexual intercourse, but as a spiritual *tattva* (principle) representing the union of two cosmic polarities: *Śakti* and *Śiva*, *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, energy and consciousness (Feuerstein, 1998). Here, *maithuna* becomes a medium of inner transformation, not a hedonistic goal. *Smara Sādhāna*, as a discipline for cultivating and refining the energy of love (*smara*) and desire, serves as an ascetic framework that guides *maithuna* within a soteriological horizon. Scholars such as Gavin Flood and André Padoux affirm that *Tantra* operates through the sacralization of desire that is, transforming desire into a path toward transcendental awareness, rather than rejecting it through purely ascetic means (Padoux, 2024).

The initial stage of this interconnectedness appears in the concept of *Samana*, which may be understood as the process of balancing and harmonizing internal energies. In *Smara Sādhāna*, *Samana* refers to the regulation and harmonization of *prāṇa*, *manas* (mind), and *indriya* (senses), so that desire does not erupt instinctively but is instead consciously refined. From *Samana*, the practice then moves toward *Samgama*, meaning encounter or union in a more concrete sense between two spiritual subjects. *Samgama* is not identical with merely biological activity; rather, it encompasses affective, ethical, and spiritual encounter grounded in ritual awareness (*vidhi*).

In *Smara Sādhāna*, *Samgama* requires the presence of *bhāva* (inner attitude), *smṛti* (reflective awareness), and transformative intention. Here, *Maithuna* functions as *yajña* (sacred offering), in which erotic energy is redirected into *tapas* (spiritual ardor) and *jñāna* (wisdom). David Gordon White notes that in many Tantric texts, *Samgama* is positioned as a means of penetrating the duality of subject and object, rather than reinforcing worldly attachment (White, 2019). The culmination of the relationship between *Samana* and *Samgama* is *Samyoga*, a total union that transcends duality and opposition.

Samyoga is no longer merely a relational event, but a state of non-dual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna*), in which distinctions between self, partner, and cosmos dissolve. Within the framework of *Smara Sādhāna*, *Samyoga* marks the full sublimation of the energy of love into pure awareness. At this stage, *Maithuna* becomes entirely spiritual, even when symbolically expressed through the body. Flood (2005) refers to this phase as a form of embodied liberation a liberation that does not reject the body but transcends it from within.

In summary, *Maithuna* in *Tantra* and *Smara Sādhāna* forms a practical trajectory that moves from *Samana* (harmonization), to *Samgama* (conscious encounter), and culminates in *Samyoga* (transcendental union). This approach aligns with Abhinavagupta's view in the *Tantrāloka*, that even the most human experiences including love and desire can become gateways to the highest consciousness when undertaken with *jñāna*, *bhakti*, and proper *sāadhanā* discipline. In *Tantra*, sexual energy is understood as *śakti*, the cosmic life force that is the source of creativity, awareness, and spiritual transformation.

In this context, *Tantra* does not reject sexual energy but refines and transforms it into a path of liberation (Buhemann, Harper and Brown, 2003). *Maithuna* appears both as symbol and sacred praxis, affirming that the body is not an obstacle to spirituality but a vehicle for realizing the highest consciousness. The concept of *Smara Sādhāna* provides the ethical and spiritual foundation for cultivating this energy. The process begins with *Samana*, the harmonization and balancing of inner energies. From *Samana*, the practice progresses to *Samgama*, the concrete encounter or union.

The gradual integration of *Samana* and *Samgama* ultimately leads to *Samyoga*, total union that transcends duality. *Samyoga* is no longer merely a relational experience, but a state of non-dual awareness in which the boundary between “self” and “other” disappears. At this stage, sexual energy is completely sublimated into pure consciousness. *Maithuna* is no longer understood as an act, but as a state of being suffused with divine presence (Woodroffe, 2003). The culmination of *Samyoga* is realized in the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*, symbolizing the fusion of pure consciousness (*Śiva*) and dynamic energy (*Śakti*).

Śiva without *Śakti* is passive, and *Śakti* without *Śiva* is directionless; their union gives rise to living cosmic consciousness. Within the human being, this encounter manifests when consciousness (soul) and bodily energy unite harmoniously. This is the essence of *Tantric* realization: divine consciousness experienced immanently within the human body. Furthermore, *Samyoga* also represents the harmony between *Bhuana Agung* (the macrocosm) and *Bhuana Alit* (the microcosm). What occurs within the human body is viewed as a reflection of cosmic dynamics.

Sexual energy, when properly cultivated, becomes a bridge between the universe and the human self. *Tantra* thus affirms the principle *yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍe* as within the body, so within the cosmos. In essence, this entire process culminates in the encounter between God and humanity, and in the union of body and soul. Through *Maithuna* and its alignment with the concept of *Smara Sādhāna*, *Tantra* demonstrates that authentic spirituality does not reject human nature, but sanctifies it. The body becomes a *mandala*, sexuality becomes sacred energy, and love becomes the path toward the Divine.

Conclusion

This study affirms that *Smara Sādhāna* in the *Kama Tattwa* manuscript particularly in *Smara Krida Laksana*, *Resi Sembina*, and *Rahasya Sanggama* contains a profound and well-structured philosophical dimension that situates sexuality as a sacred spiritual practice. Sex is not understood reductively as a merely biological activity or instinctual gratification, but as a *sāadhanā* that integrates body, energy, and consciousness in a process of spiritual transformation toward supreme bliss (*ānanda*) and union with ultimate reality. Ontologically, *Smara Sādhāna* views sexuality as a manifestation of cosmic energy living within the human being. The relationship between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* is not merely symbolic, but serves as a metaphysical principle affirming the unity of consciousness and energy in human experience. The body is understood as a

microcosm (*bhuana alit*) reflecting the structure of the macrocosm (*bhuana agung*), so that sexual practice within this framework becomes a space for the actualization of divine consciousness immanent in human existence. Epistemologically, the understanding of *Smara Sādhanā* is constructed through the integration of *śabda pramāṇa* (scriptural authority), *pratyakṣa* (direct experience), and *anumāna* (rational reflection), culminating in *aparokṣānubhūti* (non-dual realization). This demonstrates that sacred sexuality in the *Tantrāyāna* perspective is not merely a normative discourse, but a form of transformational knowledge requiring the existential involvement of the subject. Sex becomes a path of direct experience toward *advaya* (non-dual) consciousness, wherein the dichotomies between sacred and profane, bodily and spiritual, and subject and object are dissolved in spiritual unity. Axiologically, *Smara Sādhanā* affirms the values of bodily sanctity, mutual respect, loving-kindness, moral responsibility, and spiritual commitment within the marital relationship. The *Kama Tattwa* manuscript not only establishes the metaphysical foundation of sacred sexuality, but also formulates a relational ethic that situates sexuality within the framework of *dharma*. Thus, sexuality becomes a medium for shaping a harmonious, ethical personality aligned with the cosmic order.

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