

The Philosophical Perspectives in the Meditational practices of Tantric Buddhism.

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‘Shunyata yasya yujyate, tasya sarvam cha yujyate’
that is “For whom emptiness is possible all is possible”
says, Arya Nagarjuna.

Introduction

Meditation is usually practiced since antiquity as a component of religious practices in monastic traditions both in the east and west. In India it is found in almost all philosophical schools in varied forms. It has its roots in our ancient tradition and treatises. Buddhist meditation focused on the meditative practices associated with the religion and philosophy of Buddhism. The ancient Buddhist texts have preserved the core meditational techniques but over the centuries they have proliferated and diversified through the teacher – student communication. The goal or the very pursuit of meditation was towards enlightenment or Nirvana.

To the beginners, Buddha taught the path of renunciation [*for Theravadans*], where the emphasis is on completely renouncing the passions and seeking a personal nirvana, that is the end to the cycle of uncontrolled birth-death and rebirth. To more advanced assembly of disciples, that is those who were well established in the path of renunciation of samsara, Buddha taught the Mahayana and the ideal of Bodhisattva, which emphasized great compassion for others. The Vajrayana or the tantric path was taught by Buddha to the assembly of those great Bodhisattva yogis who were well established on the path towards renunciation and great compassion.

Vajrayana has made itself attractive and popular by its interesting tenets, doctrines and practices which they had developed in the representation of images. Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana is a complex, comprehensive and versatile system of Buddhist philosophy, its thought and practice evolved over several centuries. It derives its name from the centrality of the concept of ‘vajra’ in its symbolism. The Vajrayana or the ‘diamond vehicle’ is believed to have originated in India in the middle of the first millennium. The esoteric rituals and such rites distinguishes it from the other schools of Buddhism. The metaphysics of Yogachara and Madhyamika thought is very much behind the core aspect of Vajrayana. Tantric Buddhism is a name for such phenomenon which calls itself as Mantrayana, Vajrayana or Mantra Mahayana. The tantric version of Buddhism brought about a profound change in Buddhist values. Many scholars believe that the innate awakening in Vajrayana becomes the goal. The many schools of Vajrayana Buddhism have several highly complex systems of tantra that have been developed over many centuries. Those who practice this path have attained sufficient purity of mind to be able to ‘metabolize’ the poisons of lust and anger and to transform the energy of the passions into the wisdom of non-duality of subject and object. Due to the purity of their minds, they were able to perceive the Buddha’s subtle form – the Sambhogakaya – to receive the teachings directly. Those who practiced Tantric Buddhism were referred as yogis, siddhas, mantrins, sadhakas and so on. Thus the word “tantric” for Buddhism

taught in the tantras is not native to the tradition but certainly a borrowed term which has served its purpose. The tantric culture presupposes Raja Yoga and Hatha yoga. The initiates of this path were expected to keep their learning in secret. The secretive learning and understanding of the mantras and symbols were for those who willed to embark on this path voluntarily. The role of guru and the worship and propitiation of deities also follow.

It is imperative to understand the meaning, implication and connotation of meditation in the light of philosophy . Buddhism in general and Tantric Buddhism in particular has dwelled on the idea of mantras and symbols. It has been found that today even the non-Buddhists take up many forms of Buddhist meditation for various reasons. Though meditation as such has become popular yet the ancient connectivity with Tantrism is very interesting to explore.

Tibetan Buddhism exists in the form of four major orders – 1. The Nyingma-pa, 2. The Kagyu-pa, 3. The Sakya-pa and 4. The Geluk-pa. These are the sole schools of the ancient Indian Buddhist Tantrism. These four Tibetan orders contain in the persons of their gurus, in their scriptures and texts and in the living cycle of ritual art and practice. The entire set of instruction is known as the highest Yoga Tantra.

1. Nyingma-pa: The followers of this school practice Yoga Tantra in three phases called Maha Yoga, Anu Yoga and Ati Yoga (Dzokchen).
2. The Kagyu-pa are the descendants of Indian Mahasiddhas who practice and propagate various lineages of the six yogas that combine the essential practices of Tantra.
3. The Sakya-pa are the descendants of the Mahasiddhas like Virupa and Gayadhara.
4. The Geluk-pa are the followers who bring the lineage of Dalai Lamas. They lay stress on monasticism. They are known for dialectical and analytical skill. They follow a structured path laying a greater emphasis on a detailed study of Sutras and Tantras. They also practice Tantric meditation.

According to the Buddhist Tantra, the deities of the pantheons are all manifestations of the shunya. It is due to the Tantric Buddhism that Buddhism can boast of an extensive and varieties of Gods who were invoked for the purpose of seeking perfection and attainment of Siddhis. The deities were in various forms, colors and having invoked, they discharged multifarious functions. To Buddhists, the external world as such has no existence. Even the body with the sense organs is unreal. The real Noumenon is only shunya, which along with Karuna, constitute the Boddhichitta. In the text, Guhyasamaja, we find this idea of Buddhist pantheon being crystallized properly. There are references to mantras, mandalas, and their shaktis.

Tantrism is a transition from Buddhist philosophy to Buddhism as a religion. This introduction of Tantrism in Buddhism takes the highest form in Vajrayana. Tantra followed the pattern of cooperation with established religious institutions set by Mahayana. As with Mahayana, we presume that Tantra reflects social as well as religious changes. The Tantric monks would take the Boddhisattva vows and receive monastic ordination under the pre-Mahayana code. Those who practice Tantra would live in the same monastery with non-Tantric monks. Thus, Tantric Buddhism became integrated into Buddhist high tradition even as the Siddhas continued to challenge the values of Buddhist monasticism. Tantra in general makes use of symbols, rituals and doctrinal elements which were found in the early Buddhism. The mystical formulas called mantras and Dharanis formed the central aspect of Tantrayana. This method of realizing the ultimate reality by means of esoteric practices and mantras is not peculiar to Buddhism, for Tantrism as a religious method was very much prevalent in ancient India.

Vajrayana could be used to describe the early documented manifestations of Tantric practices in India. It derives its name from the centrality of the concept, Vajra which means diamond, also characterized as solidity and brilliance. In other words, it is metaphor for hardness and destructiveness. Spiritually speaking, it represents the eternal, the innate state of Buddhahood possessed by all human beings and also the cutting edge of wisdom. From the standpoint of Tantric Buddhism, the voidness or shunya which is ultimate reality is not a negative fact but has a positive significance of substantial existence. The personification of this condition and power is Vajrasattva, a deity and an abstract principle. It is defined as follows:

*By vajra is meant emptiness;
sattva means pure cognition.
The identity of these two is known
as the essence of vajrasattva.*

This vajrasattva stands for the non-dual experience that transcends both emptiness and pure mind. The innate quality of non-dual is also represented by the concept of “the thought of awakening”. This innate awakening in Vajrayana becomes the objective for the seekers. In other words enlightenment is present in its totality and perfection in this human body, the thought of awakening is expressed as:

*“The thought of awakening is known to be
Without beginning or end, quiescent
Free from being and nonbeing, powerful
Undivided in emptiness and compassion”.*

Hindu Tantrism And Buddhist Tantrism

Tantrism in India has its root in Karmakanda. But later it went on to a higher level that is, it gave impetus to Buddhism. Vedic traditions and Buddhism have many similarities with respect to Tantrism, its method, the practices and all that follows. For both, ultimately the liberation is the goal. For the former, liberation is the actual emancipation of the soul to merge with the power. While for latter, in Mahayana, it is the emptying of the mind. The content of shunyata lies in the very emptying of the soul. In this sense, liberation has the same universality. Thus, meditation in Tantrism is the same as in both Hindu philosophy and in the Buddhist doctrine. We can describe the form and matter from the external point of view which implies, one has to diverse the form from the formless. As such they are not apart. Tantrism as such makes use of mantra and yantra which takes the form of shakti. This shakti merges into formless which is the emptiness of the mind. Perhaps, Tantrism takes a backdoor entry into the home of Madhyamika. Tantrism is that Madhyamika philosophy which ended in Vajrayana in order to reach shunya. According to the Vajrayana tradition, at certain times the body and mind are in a very subtle state which can be used by advanced practitioners to transform the mind stream. Such luminal times are known in Tibetan Buddhism as Bardo states and include such transitional states very elevating during meditation, dreaming, sex and death. Lama Thubten Yeshe writes in his book, Introduction to Tantra: A Vision of Totality:

“Tantric meditational deities should not be confused with what different mythologies and religions might mean when they speak of gods and goddesses. Here, the deity we choose to identify with represents the essential qualities of the fully awakened experience latent within us. To use the language of psychology,

such a deity is an archetype of our own deepest nature, our most profound level of consciousness. In tantra we focus our attention on such an archetypal image and identify with it in order to arouse the deepest, most profound aspects of our being and bring them into our present reality.”

Vajrayana is using Tantrism and such practices for moving ahead in this journey passing through various siddhis. Regarding the mode of practice, it's very similar in case of mantra chanting in Vajrayana as well as Shri Vidya upasana. There are few also who go into the practice of meditation to see both the aspects. Buddhist tantric practice is categorized as secret practice; this is to avoid misuse of the practices by misinformed people. One of the methods to keep this secrecy is that tantric initiation is required from a master or preceptor before any instructions can be received about the actual practice. During the initiation procedure in the highest class of tantra (such as the Kalachakra), students must take the tantric vows which commit them to such secrecy. Basically, one has to drop everything at the core of shunyata in Vajrayana. Similarly, everything has to merge in the Shiva-Shakti concept in Hindu tradition. The recitation of mantras results in certain change in the psyche.

Tantrism in both the traditions is very rich in symbols which are used in meditation and in the conduction of rituals. Indeed, the body itself is a symbol of the cosmos and the male & female bodies symbolise Shiva and Shakti for Hindus, or Prajna (Wisdom) and Upaya (Means) for Buddhists. Sexual union therefore becomes a symbol of liberation understood as the union of Shiva and Shakti or of Prajna and Upaya. In Hindu Tantrism Shakti is active female energy and Shiva is passive, male consciousness, whereas in Buddhist Tantrism Prajna is the passive female element and Upaya the active, male element. Other Tantric symbols are mantras, yantra mandalas (sacred diagrams) and mudras (ritual hand gestures). The Tantras also contain a symbolic language which associates the body with the male-female polarity in the cosmos. The shakthi is that energy which is worshipped and invoked through the practice of meditation. The main tantric practices can be summarized in the Four Purities:

1. Seeing one's body as the body of the deity
2. Seeing one's environment as the pure ground or mandala of the deity
3. Perceiving one's enjoyments as bliss of the deity, free from attachment
4. Performing one's actions only for the benefit of others (bodhichitta motivation, altruism)

As it is said in Buddhist writings:

“He who sees how things in the world, for there is ‘is not’,
He who sees how things decay and die in the world, for there is the ‘is’ ,
Truth is the middle.!”

It is a simultaneous process as we see ‘is not’, it is and when we realize it is, it is not. It calls for a breakthrough and that is meditation. The tantric practices are meant to express this wondrous experience at least for a second. While watching this wild expansive nature, one can break through this ‘is’ and ‘is not’. The universe in all its glory is showing this every moment. Tantrism is an effort to do something to get into the proximity of this. As Kenneth Morgan writes in his book: “The Path of Buddha”, that ‘there is no real existence; all things are but appearance and are in truth empty. Voidness or emptiness is not nothingness nor annihilation, but that which stands right in the middle between affirmation and negation, existence and non-existence, eternity and annihilation.’

Meditation

Yoga as a system can be practiced independently. Each system in Indian philosophy owes much to Yoga. Buddhism and the Jaina doctrine have taken the help of Yoga, especially Yama and Niyama, which were structured by Patanjali. Tantric Buddhism and the Vedic tantric practices have adopted various forms of Yoga in their application of philosophy. Success lies in the amount of it, which has been borrowed. The Nirvikalpa Samadhi of Yoga is nothing but the emptying of all forms and modifications of mind, which is also the goal of Vajrayana. Throughout all the stages of meditation the practice of yoga is meant for utilizing the psychic energy for the use of spiritual powers of man. Tibetan tantric practices too are guarded against intellectual aspiration or material benefits. It is believed that psychic powers obtained without moral aspects and spiritual intention and without humanitarian consideration through compassion and wisdom are likely to be vulgar, evil and destructive in its very purpose. Tantric practices do not divert the attention of the seekers to aim at such acquisitions of powers like floating in the air, transfer of consciousness or transforming oneself into other shapes etc. the target here is supreme enlightenment for the sake of all beings. The tantric mantras in Buddhism are equally loaded with meaning. For instance, the idea of 'Padma' is common in Vajrayana as well as in Kundalini Yoga.

The recitation of mantras may be in different languages but they all mean the same. The transition of Buddhist philosophy into Buddhist religion came about with the introduction of Tantrism in Buddhism, of which the highest form is Vajrayana. In doing this, Buddhism as a religion has incorporated several practices and rituals at regular intervals. In awe of Buddhism, Sam Harris calls it as the richest source of contemplative wisdom that any civilization has produced. He laments that the wisdom of the Buddha is currently trapped within the religion of Buddhism. The Buddhism as a philosophy, leans heavily on the fact that it is less dogmatic than most other religions. This argument, however, ignores mysticism. Through meditation, Siddhartha Gautama intimately experienced what is beyond subject and object, self and other, life and death. The enlightenment experience is the outcome of Buddhism. It's said that the only way to understand Buddhism is to practice it. Through practice, one perceives its transformative power. Buddhism that remains in the realm of concepts and ideas is not Buddhism. Due to the need of the hour the robes, ritual and other trappings of religion that came onto vogue are did not corrupt Buddhism, as some imagine, but they became expressions of it. Having taken birth in Indian soil and flourished for centuries it was influential to many other schools of thought with respect to the practical aspect of any philosophy. This shift was essential in order to get itself established in the India and to suit the minds of millions in India who were already exposed to tantric tradition. All these practices were meant to produce that environment in order to take a lead from religion to philosophy and ultimately back to the truth. The core of Buddhist teaching was neither non-scriptural, nor written by Buddha but the scattered truth was compiled by his disciples and got interpreted as philosophy of Buddha. Later, it got formulated along with several practices of which Vajrayana is the most significant as a method in the Tantric tradition. Many tantric practices may appear complicating the mind but having done that, there is a need to throw the mind. In this context, the relevance of meditation comes into focus.

Meditation has become the integral part in Buddhism too, in order to reach the highest goal. It needs the skill and personal guidance as everything cannot be gathered from written scriptures. The role of a teacher or a guru is therefore mandated to

understand the subtleties regarding the skill and the capacity of the student to prepare him gradually for the inner journey. Learning meditation is compared to any activity which involves a skill. It could be compared to the skill of playing a musical instrument. It calls for him to tune the mind and play. It is sometimes compared to gardening as one cannot force the plant to grow but provide sufficient conditions and allow it to grow naturally. Buddhism as philosophy begins with a search for truth. The entire life and sojourn of Buddha is a testimony to this. It does not begin with any assumption or presupposition about God or any other reality or first cause. There is no claim of any kind revelation as such. Buddha as Siddhartha searched with direct insight and discovered the nature of cosmos and the cause for all suffering. Since he had a rationalistic approach he wanted man to rely on themselves and not use scriptures or texts or such as crutches. Buddhism to many scholars is not a religion in the sense that it is not a system of faith and worship. There are no dogmas to be believed and followed. Reason in general makes man to systematize and rationalize knowledge in order to find the truth.

Buddhists take their first refuge in Buddha. It is because he had unfathomable compassion for man's weakness, sorrow, grief, disappointment and suffering. The Buddhists take their second refuge in Dhamma. One learns to practice Dhamma daily in one's life. Realization is always possible only through practice. One of the important qualities of Dhamma is that it invites everyone to come and see for himself. As Buddha says, "*He who honors me best who practices my teaching best.*" The third refuge Buddhists take is the Sangha. It is a living stream through which Dhamma flows to humanity directly. It is like a bridge between man and absolute truth.

Guru yoga is the foundation of the Tantric sadhana which is the formal tantric meditative session. Although it is the foremost of the preliminaries, it forms the basic foundation for the more complex visualization and practices various stages of highest yoga tantra. Each tantra has its own specific guru yoga associated with the deity and mandala of that particular tantra. In Buddhism the tantras are taught in a sequential manner. For the beginners, whose power of visualization is not yet fully developed, simple sadhanas are provided which increase in scope and complexity as one moves to higher tantric levels. In the various levels of Tantra, one is expected to experience an inferential cognition of emptiness. It is in this 'inner space' of emptiness that the practitioner cancels out the ordinary appearance of self and the other and instead visualizes in vivid three dimensional details like a hologram projected by the mind, a perfect reality embodied as a divine being in a divine world.

The purpose of visualization is to block and negate our habitual sense of ordinariness about ourselves and our world and to prepare the mind to cognize reality as it is: perfect and pure. This is one of the principal purposes of tantra. Tantras are divided into 4 sects namely - Kriya tantra (action), Charya tantra (behavior), Yoga tantra and Maha-annuttara yoga tantra

Kriya yoga: here there is great emphasis is on austere external actions such as rituals, ablutions and on creating pure & clean environment, etc. Simple diet, fasting and recitation of mantras are practiced for the invocation. It is very similar to what Patanjali referred in his yoga sutras as yama and niyama. It includes soucha which stands for purity and both physical and mental level. Then there is a mention of astheya in yama that is non-stealing and ahimsa non-hurting both at physical and at mental-level. There are eight Mahayana precepts namely:

1. not to kill
2. not to steal
3. to be celibate
4. to speak no lie

5. to desist from intoxicants
6. to take only one meal
7. no seats made of animal skin
8. no use of perfume etc..

Charya tantra: Here the visualization of deities take place. These are complex and emphasis on internal meditative stabilization though austerities, fasting and such are also given.

Yoga tantra: Here the stress is on mainly internal meditative experience. Again as in yoga where the last three limbs of yoga namely: Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi is practiced to enhance the process of obliterating the modifications of the mind. Here the complexity of the deities, mandalas, etc., become more intricate. Generally, wrathful forms become objects of meditation.

Highest yoga tantra: At this profoundest level of inner yoga, all deities are manifesting and symbolically in sexual union with respective consorts. A typical tantric deity of highest secret mantra would have the color of one of the five Buddha families to which it belongs. Deities of highest secret mantra are usually of three types –peaceful, wrathful, and very wrathful. As such all are manifestly and symbolically in union with respective consorts.

Role of a Guru

It is the Guru who decides the location deity, etc., after gauging the disciple's emotional and intellectual caliber. Now the indivisible emptiness: luminosity, the naked mind is stripped and it dwells in the uncreated state i.e., the Bardo. Guru yoga is a practice that has many variations, but may be understood as a tantric devotional process whereby the practitioners unite their mind stream with the mind stream of the guru. The guru is engaged as yidam, as a nirmanakaya manifestation of a Buddha. The Guru or spiritual teacher is essential as a guide during tantric practice, as without his assistance, blessings and grace, genuine progress is held to be impossible for all. The process of guru yoga might entail visualization of an entire lineage of masters as an invocation of the lineage. The form of Buddha one can best relate to is known as yidam (in Tibetan) or ishtadevata (in Sanskrit). For the purpose of self-identification with a Buddha-form, Buddhist tantric techniques make use of symbolism and visualization. Every Buddhist takes refuge regularly in the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. The Vajrayanist adds guru also to this. That is because without a mentor or lama, access to any of the special methods would be impossible. Secrecy and the commitment of the student to the vajra guru are aspects of the samaya or sacred bond that protects both the practitioner and the integrity of the teachings.

The Guru is Buddha, the Guru is Dhamma, the Guru is also Sangha - this reflects the importance of the preceptor in the spiritual path for the disciple. The guru is considered even more compassionate and more potent than the Buddha because we can have a direct relationship with the guru. Vajrayana Buddhism is esoteric, in the sense that the transmission of certain teachings only occurs directly from teacher to student during an initiation or empowerment and cannot be simply learned from a book. Many techniques are also commonly said to be secret, but some Vajrayana teachers have responded that secrecy itself is not important and only a side-effect of the reality that the techniques have no validity outside the teacher-student lineage. In order to engage in Vajrayana practice, a student should have received such an initiation or permission. Offerings are usually accompanied by appropriate chanting of verses. It is done along in order to arouse joyful and devout feelings which enhances the contemplation of the

qualities of deity. It is done as an offering of flowers too. The impermanence and ephemeral nature of human life is so well brought in the following verse in Pali:

“This mass of flowers, fresh-hued, odorous and choice,
I offer at the blessed lotus-like feet of the Lord of Sages.
With diverse flowers, the Buddha/Dhamma/Sangha I revere;
And through this ‘merit’ may there be release.
Just as this flower fades, so my body goes towards destruction”.

This combines many things like joyous reverence, aspiration, veneration, and reflection on the impermanence of human life .

In Buddhism, the chanting of mantras has become a vehicle for devotion. The idea of meditation is the emptying of the mind which is similar to the yogic idea of Chittavritti Nirodha, which is the cessation of mental modifications. At every stage, each thought must be abandoned. The state of no-mindfulness is achieved when there is no awareness of the thought processes or the immediate, prior moment of consciousness. We get a glimpse of it necessarily while absorbed in any work like a musician who is lost in the music or an artist lost in the painting. In losing oneself in such an activity, actually one finds oneself. The idea of no thought is not confined to a quiet place or to a remote environment but can be attained amidst all daily activities. In this sense, Buddhist meditation is most relevant and still remains a meaningful exercise in this techno-charged world. When the mind is all scattered in various objects and in their manifested forms, thus making it more cluttered, we need to get back to meaningful meditative practices.

This helps in the actual ‘dropping of thoughts’. Thus, there is a need to use the meditational techniques as a method with sincerity and perseverance. This shall enable us to live just every moment in its completeness. In other words, we shall learn to live just that moment of that activity. It is like while eating, we ‘just’ eat and not thinking of eating. Or while walking, it is ‘just’ walking and not thinking of walking. Similarly, while thinking it is just only thinking. This ‘no-thought’ cannot be concluded as something passive, inactive, dull or a lethargic disposition. But, instead it is full awareness, where the mind simply flows freely. It is direct and not cluttered with other thought forms. In this state, there is spontaneity and the beauty of living is felt every moment.

In spite of many controversies as to which system influenced the other what is interesting is the striking similarities in both the traditions which have stood to the test of time. The popular Hindu worship of shakthi in the form of ten manifestations known as dasa maha vidyas, there is mention of Tara. The others are Kali, Sodasi, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Chinmasta, Dhumavathi, Bagala, Matangi, and Kamala. It is an accepted fact that Tara is of Buddhist origin taken as Hindu deity and along with the rituals and worship. The goal of spiritual practice within the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions is to become a Buddha, i.e., attain complete enlightenment, whereas the goal for Theravada practice is specific - to become an arahant, i.e., attain the enlightenment and liberation of nirvana. Buddhist chanting is neither singing nor a monotonous hymn. With its variation in pitch and rhythm it brings about solemnity. Similar to the chanting in Hindu worship, irrespective of such variations using different keys, one can see the blending of all tones into a harmonious soothing whole. Since in both the traditions they use ancient languages such as Pali or Sanskrit, its all the more enchanting and adds to the sanctity. As Osho puts it simply “Yoga is suppression with awareness; tantra is indulgence with awareness.”

Conclusion

To conclude, Buddhism does not demand blind faith from its adherents. Here mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by confidence based on knowledge. A Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha because it was he who discovered the path of deliverance. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says, "*Prayers take the character of private communications, selfish bargaining with God. It seeks for objects of earthly ambitions and inflames the sense of self. Meditation on the other hand is self-change.*" Unlike other religions Buddhism does not believe in the Almighty god, or revelations, supernatural power or divine messengers and so on. There is neither monopoly of truth nor condemnation of other religions and faiths. Buddhism recognizes the infinite latent possibilities of man and teaches that man can gain deliverance from suffering by his own efforts independent of divine help or mediating priests.

Any philosophy to become a religion, the metaphysical stand must be kept intact, yet the message must be put in a pragmatic way. Buddhism too in all its forms and sects has kept the core truth that anything and everything is bound to decay and die. In other words the impermanence and change is the truth as such. Keeping Kshanikavada and anatmavada as its nucleus Vajrayana has moved cautiously to bring out the practicality of Buddhism through the form of meditation. Therefore even today the ripples that have formed in the beautiful lake of this religion are just the reminder to get back to the center. In this sense the meditation process of Buddhism is all the more relevant today as we are unable to understand the vicissitudes of the mind. The moment we realize that "this moment" is all that we have, we experience the eternity and that is shunyata.

Tantric Buddhism is just showing us this path which open to the intellectuals and to common folks alike. Living every moment is the quintessential of Buddhist philosophy. As Albert Einstein says, "*The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend personal God and avoid dogma and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things natural and spiritual as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description. If there is any religion that could cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism.*" The very essential and most influential aspect of Buddhism which has permeated through centuries and across the East Asian countries is meditation. The man today is caught in the web of mental modification and has become slave to the whimsical nature of mind. Therefore it's time to get back to such practices in order to control the mind and get the glimpse of eternity in every moment!

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2500 years of Buddhism