

Tamil Acharyas →

After the saints of the Tamil Bhakti, South India witnessed emergence of a series of scholars or philosophers known as the Acharyas belonging to both Vaishnavite and the Shaivite tradition, known as Vaishnavacharyas and Shaivacharyas. These scholars tried to find ideological or philosophical justification or explanation for the spirit of Bhakti that is the popular cult of devotion. This had become particularly imperative or desirable because of the ^erival of the philosophy of Vedanta in form of Advaita by Shankaracharya based on monism, which was not in harmony with the popular cult of devotion.

The ^erival of non dualistic vedic of philosophy at the elite level was not in harmony with the popular dualistic cult of devotion. The Tamil Acharyas, particularly the Vaishnavacharyas, became more famous due to their more effective handling of these enterprises.

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Nathmuni

The first Vaishnava Acharya was Nathmuni who is particularly known for compiling the songs of the Alvars (Prabandham), but the most famous Vaishnavacharya was Ramanujacharya belonging to the 11th - 12th centuries (born at Sriperambudur, Tamilnadu).

Ramanuj in his attempt to find the ideological justification or philosophical justification for the cult of Bhakti tried to base himself on a very creative reinterpretation of philosophy of Advaitavada given by Shankracharya. Based on this reinterpretation he came up with his own philosophy called Vishista Advaitavada based on the notion of a qualified non-dualism.

According to this new philosophy Ramanuj ~~made~~ ^{made} a departure from the Vedavata position of monism but did not go to the extent of dualism, according to him the creator was not a universal soul, but was an ultimate Soul (Parmatama), who was qualified by both the soul and matter. Thus Ramanuj also made a departure from the vedic tradition of

to the Puranic tradition of Saguna.

In due course of time another Vaishnava philosopher Madhavaacharya came up with his philosophy of Advaitavada in which he accepted both the soul and the God as real and distinct entities and the new philosophy providing more convincing justification for the attitude and spirit of Bhakti.

Q. Highlight the Contribution of Ramanuj in giving shape to the modern Hindu religious consciousness to what extent he modified the philosophy of Advaitavada.

Tantricism

Tantricism emerged as a general trend mostly at the popular level initially in the eastern parts of the Indian subcontinent. During the early Christian centuries with time it came to inform, almost all sects and denominations of the Indian subcontinent. In tantrism the ultimate objective appears to be the acquisition of some super-natural powers for the fulfilment of worldly objectives.

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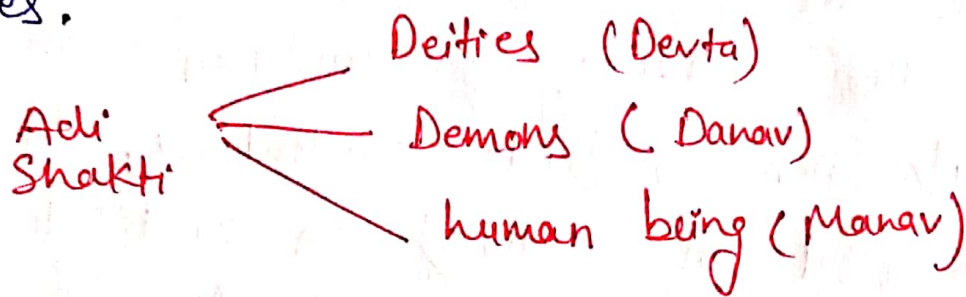
particularly the day to day concerns of the life of the masses.

In tantraism Reliance was placed upon the use of magic, charms, spells with special emphasis on some magical utterances, we also find some strange and mysterious rituals which went even to the extent of sacrificing not only animals but also human limbs and lives.

Shakti-cults

The Shakti-cults became quite a prominent in the medieval initially in Easter parts of the subcontinent before becoming a popular across the country they develop enlose connection with tantraism and most of the time we find the use of tantrik means for the fulfilment of objectives. In such cults we find worship of the supreme power (Adi-Shakti) which was perceived as a female power at we find worship of some female devinties like Durga, Kali, Chandi, Parvati, etc. as the manifestations of the supreme power.

The Ultimate objective was to obtain the grace of the Adishakti for the acquisition of some super natural powers for the the fulfilment of some worldly objectives.

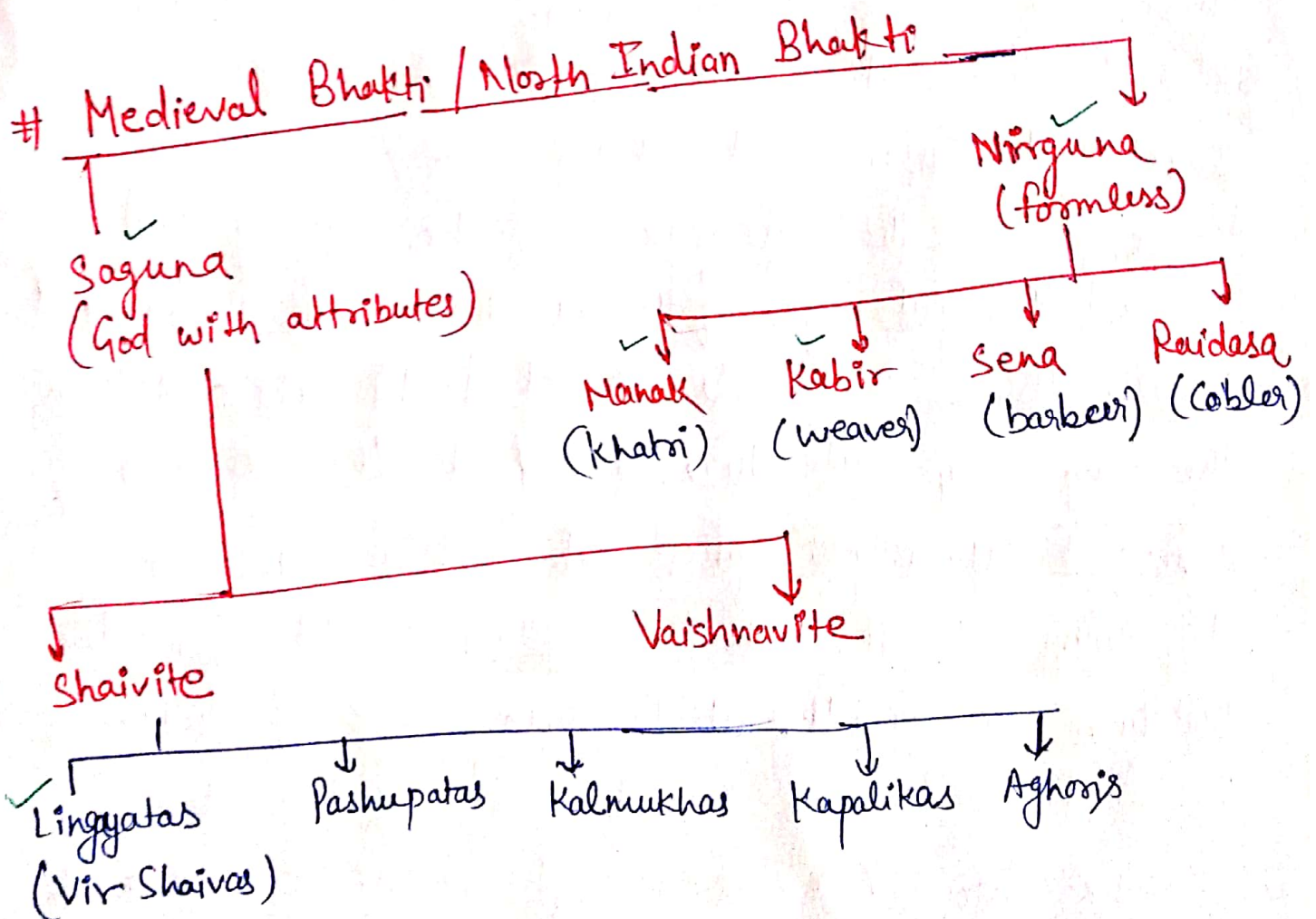


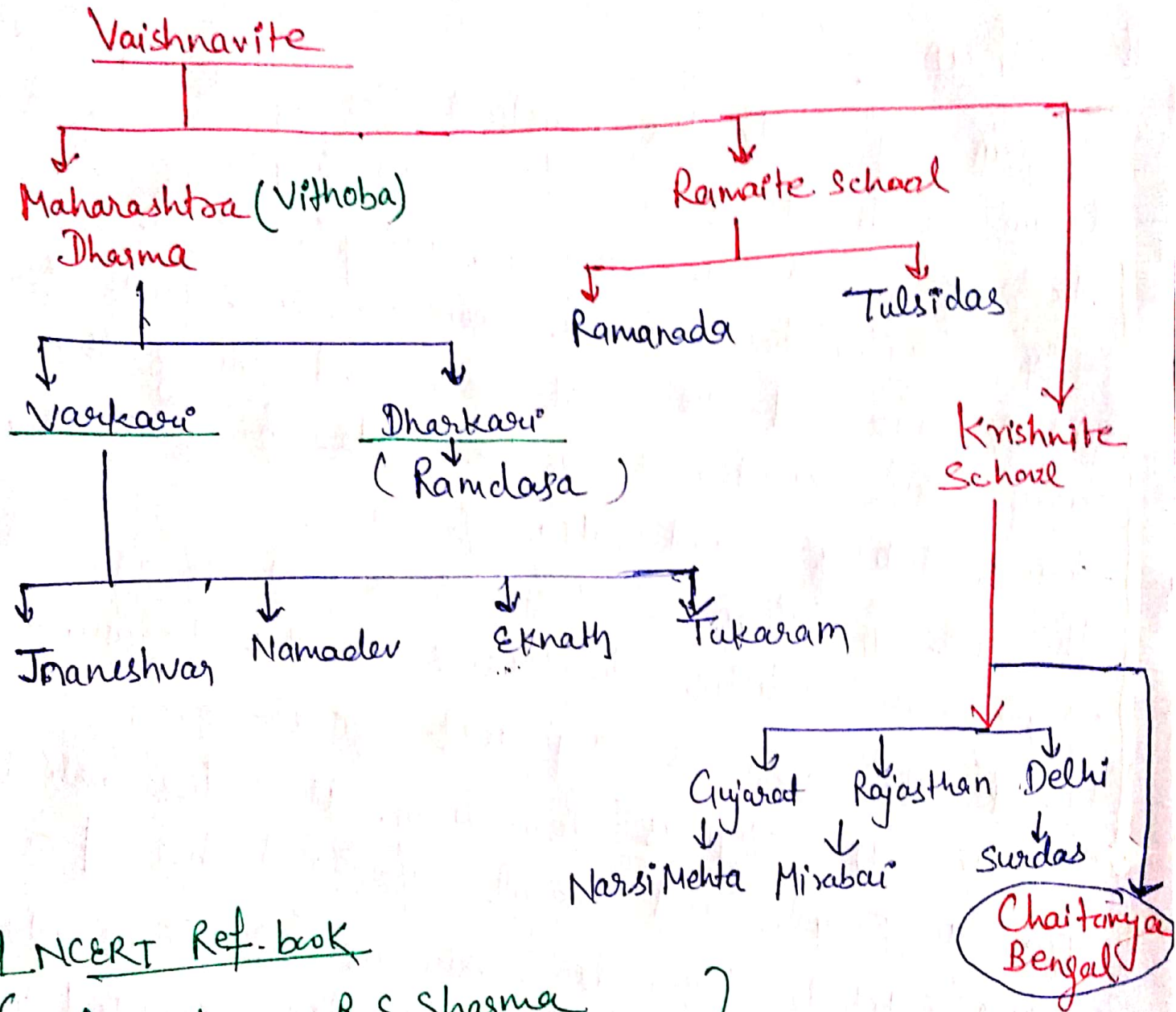
Vajrayana / Mantrayana / Tantrayana

These are sects of Buddhism which developed enclosed association with or under the influence of both tantrism and Shakti-cults. They initially developed in the eastern parts of the country and received the patronage of the Pala Rulers of Bengal and Bihar. These sects also reached Tibet and in the contemporary literature we find the mention of some buddhist philosopher like Atish Dipankar, and Sanghrakshit. who are given credit for introducing Buddhism in Tibet. In these sects of Buddhism we find mainly the worship of Bodhisatva Avlokiteshrava (graceful) and his divine consort Tara.

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The Ultimate objective was to acquire super natural powers relying upon some magical utterances and even strange rituals but we do not notice the system of sacrifices as Buddhism even under the influence of tantrism could not surpass its non-violent credentials. In such sects we find an emphasis on meditative and contemplative practices with special significance attached to some finger positions.





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|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|---|
| { | Ancient | - R.S. Sharma | } |
| | Medieval | - Satish Chandra | |
| | Modern | - Bipan Chandra | |
| Orient Black Swan Publication | | | |

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Sufism

Sufism represents the mystical trend / strand in Islam which tried to revive the simplicity of the religion and the Quranic piety (morality). Its early manifestation can be seen in some parts of Central Asia and the West Asia and among the early Sufis mentioned can be made of Mansur, Shams Tabrizi and Rabi'a of Basra.

The rise of Sufism is seen as a protest against growing materialistic tendencies in the Islamic world and also as a protest against over ^{insisted} ~~insisted~~ emphasis on religious formalism. The Sufies ~~insisted~~ upon a simple and moral life and showed a critical attitude towards religious formalism. It is for this reason Sufism is also accepted as a reformist tendency in the Islamic world.

By the end of the 12th century Sufism started making its mark even on the Indian soil. With the arrival of a large number of ^y ~~n~~ mystics and scholars mostly organised in different orders called Silsilah based on the chain of spiritual leaders and their disciples.

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The most important Sufi order in India was Chisti (Chistiya) order with its founder Kwaja Moinuddin Chisti who best himself at Ajmer. Among other orders of Sufism mention can be made of Suhrawardis, Nagshbandis, Qadiri and Qubrawiya.

The Sufis stroived for the establishment of communion with the God through inner realisation of the God within oneself. This required not only love, surrender and devotion but also some sort of intuitive understanding of the God. Thus the ultimate objective in Sufism was the realisation of the 'unity of being' called 'Wahdat-ul-Wajud'. This state is realised by a process of self-annihilation called 'fana'.

Sufis for the realisation of their objective embarked upon a path of spiritual progress (Tariqa) characterised by successive stage of spiritual development. At each stage of the development the role of a spiritual Mentor called Pir or Murshid is supposed to be essential who not only guides his disciples (Murids / Murhids)

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but also evaluate their spiritual progress.
The position of spiritual mentor or Pir is different from his counterpart in Bhakti in the sense that he is not only the spiritual mentor but also representative of (haq) reality by virtue of his realization of the state of Wahdat-ul-Wajud which abolishes the distinction between the creator and the creation.

For the realisation of their objectives the sufis mainly relied upon the following means which also highlight the syncretic tendencies found as a part of Sufism making it an important component of the composite culture of the medieval age.

- ① Recitation of the name of the God.
(dhikr / Zikr)
- ② Meditation and contemplation regarding the nature of God. (fikr)
- ③ Love, Surrender and devotion.
- ④ Life of seclusion
- ⑤ Social Service (Service to humanity)
- ⑥ Life of Poverty (fakr)

⑦ Music (Saman)

The sufi musical gathering known as Saman and they were meant for creating a mood of/sense of closeness or nearness to the God.

Sufi Saint in Delhi
Nizam-ud-din Auliya
is known as the
perfect man.

⑧ Dance (Raks)

⑨ Yoga / Yogic Practices

⑩ Tantraism