

Basics  
*of Tantra*



# *Left Hand and Right Hand Tantra*

In Tantra, people often speak of the left hand path and the right hand path. The left hand path includes the body and also sexuality. The right hand path works more through meditation, inner orientation, and symbolic practice. In reality, though, they cannot always be clearly separated. Many tantric schools use elements of both.

From the outside, the right hand path can sometimes look strict or ascetic, for example through retreat, silence, or long meditations. But that alone does not say very much. These practices can still be deeply tantric when they arise from awareness rather than from rejecting life.

Tantra is not about leaving the world behind. It is about meeting life more consciously and integrating it more fully. That is why it matters not only what a practice looks like, but also why it is being done. Some people see the right hand path as the higher one. To me, that is too limited. The left hand path is not less spiritual. It simply begins from a different place. And for many people today, it is often the more honest and accessible entry point.

Most people do not live in celibacy. Sexuality is part of their lives. So it makes sense that a spiritual path also includes this part of being human, rather than excluding it. That is exactly what the left hand path does. It does not treat sexual energy as a problem. It sees it as something that can be lived consciously and transformed into growth.

The fact that this path is often misunderstood has a lot to do with Western conditioning. For a long time, sexuality was linked to guilt, shame, and sin. That still lives deeply in many people.

Because of that, it can be difficult to see sexuality as something sacred. As something that is not separate from spirituality, but can be part of it.

On top of that, media, advertising, and pornography have often separated sexuality from depth, awareness, and real connection. Much of it shows stimulation, but very little presence. A lot of surface, but not much embodiment. Tantra offers something different here. Not repression, and not unconscious indulgence, but a more conscious, loving, and truthful way of relating to this life force.

# *Left Hand and Right Hand Tantra*

Through media, advertising, and pornography, sexuality in our time has often been separated more and more from awareness, depth, and spirituality. As a result, many people have lost touch with the sense of sacredness that sexuality can hold within tantric paths. Within the left hand path of Tantra, there is often a further distinction between Spiritual Tantra and Magical Tantra.

Spiritual Tantra includes practices that support the inner evolution of the practitioner. It is about growing in awareness, maturing, integrating different parts of oneself, and embodying one's energy with more clarity and love.

Magical Tantra also works with energy, but places more focus on using that force to create effects in the world. Here, sexual energy is consciously directed in practices that support manifestation or influence certain outcomes. Within Magical Tantra, there are further distinctions as well.

White Tantra is more spiritually oriented and uses energy in ways that support awareness and inner alignment.



# *Left Hand and Right Hand Tantra*



Black Tantra turns toward what society often considers taboo. This is not simply about provocation or crossing boundaries, but about meeting what has been rejected or pushed away and bringing awareness into those places. Red Tantra places more emphasis on sensuality, erotic energy, and sexuality.

It is important not to understand these terms too quickly or too superficially. In many modern interpretations, they are reduced or distorted. That is why it matters to look more deeply at the intention behind a practice and the inner path it is truly serving.

It is also interesting to remember that present day Hinduism is far more shaped by Tantra than many people realize. Many assume it is based almost entirely on the Vedas. Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the founder of the Bihar School of Yoga, pointed to exactly this.

# *The Roots of Tantra*

The roots of Tantra remain unclear in many ways. Its origins are generally traced back to India around the 2nd century. However, the teachings do not seem to appear in a clearer and more complete form until around the 7th or 8th century at the earliest.

Tantra is not one single religion, but rather a spiritual movement that developed across different traditions. Its influences and expressions can be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and also Taoism.

One important distinction within Tantra is the difference between Hindu Tantra and Buddhist Tantra. While these two paths share certain foundations, they evolved within different religious and philosophical contexts.



# *Tantra in Hinduism*

In Hinduism, Tantra appears in a form that is closely connected to early Vedic thought and relates to Hindu gods and goddesses. Many Hindu tantric texts are structured as a dialogue, often between a male and a female deity. One of the most common examples is Shiva and Shakti.

Within Hindu Tantra, there are different streams depending on which deity is at the center. The three main traditions are:

Shaivism, when the focus is on Shiva  
Shaktism, when the focus is on Shakti  
Vaishnavism, when Vishnu is central

In all forms of Hindu Tantra, mantras play an important role. They help focus the mind and attune it to specific deities such as Shiva, Kali, or Vishnu.

These deities can also be worshipped outwardly through flowers, incense, and ritual offerings. But even more important is the inner practice. In meditation, the practitioner turns toward the deity, visualizes them, and opens to their quality and presence.

In this way, Tantra in Hinduism becomes a special form of puja, a ritual of devotion and sacred connection. The deities are not only called upon, but are included in the practice in a deep and direct way.

In addition, many Hindu tantric pujas work with a yantra or mandala. These sacred symbols serve as a focus for meditation and help deepen awareness, energy, and inner alignment.

# *Tantra in Vaishnavism*

## *(Vaishnavacara)*

Vaishnavacara is a branch of Hindu Tantra in which Vishnu and his different forms are worshipped as the highest divine principle.

Vaishnavism is one of the major traditions within Hinduism. People on this path seek to devote their whole lives to the Divine. At the heart of it is the understanding that all of creation is an expression of Vishnu. Vaishnavas also believe that Vishnu appeared in the world through ten incarnations. These include Rama and Krishna.

Within the tantric understanding of Vaishnavism, the connection between Krishna and Radha takes on a special meaning. It can be seen as another expression of the sacred union, similar to Shiva and Shakti. From the Vaishnava view, Krishna and Radha are not completely separate beings, but two expressions of one absolute reality.

So here too, we can see a core tantric principle: two forces appearing in relationship, while in their essence they remain one.

# *Tantra in Shaivism*

## *(Shaivacara)*

Shaivacara is a branch of Hindu Tantra in which Shiva and his different forms are worshipped as the highest divine principle.

An important part of this is Advaita Shaivism, which originated in the Kashmir Valley and later became known as Kashmir Shaivism.

At its core is the view that everything is an expression of pure consciousness. Nothing is separate from it. All of life is permeated by the same divine essence.

The goal of Tantra in Shaivism is therefore self realization. It is about recognizing who we truly are and realizing that, in our deepest essence, we are not separate from Shiva.

Shiva here represents divine consciousness living in and expressing itself through everything. Not only in spiritual practice, but in all of life.

Many Shaivite tantric texts are written as a dialogue, often between Shiva and his consort, such as Parvati. In the Agamas, Shiva appears as the teacher, while Parvati listens and receives.

# Tantra in Shaktism (Shaktacara)

Shaktacara is a branch of Hindu Tantra in which Shakti, the divine feminine power, is worshipped as the highest principle.

Those who follow this path are called Shaktas. Within this tradition, there are two main paths or ways of life.

One is the right hand path. Here, sexual practices are not physically performed, but may be approached inwardly, symbolically, or through visualization. The other is the left hand path. In this path, sexual practices can also become part of the ritual.

It is especially this left hand path that became widely known in the West. Because of that, many people mainly associate Tantra with sexuality. But that is far too limited. These practices are only a small part of tantric methods and are held within a very clear ritual and spiritual framework.

In Shaktism, Shakti is also understood as Kundalini, the creative life force within the human being. Each chakra is connected with a certain form of the goddess.

Liberation, in this context, is seen as the rising of this energy through the chakras, leading the practitioner step by step into deeper realization, inner maturity, and ultimately freedom.

One term used here is Siddhantacara. It points to a perfected form of worship that leads to liberation from Samsara, the cycle of suffering and rebirth.



# *Tantra in Buddhism*

In their early form, the Buddhist Tantras mainly consisted of mantras. Over time, many more scriptures were added, also dealing with philosophy, ethics, and spiritual practice.

Buddhism was divided into two main branches: Hinayana and Mahayana.

Buddhist or esoteric Tantra, also called Vajrayana or Mantrayana, took much of its symbolic imagery and mythology from the Mahayana branch of Buddhism.

These Buddhist tantric texts are mostly doctrinal teachings or ritual instructions. Mudras, or sacred hand gestures, also play an important role.

The practices of Buddhist Tantra are meant to purify the mind and support the path toward enlightenment.

Examples of Buddhist Tantras include:

**Kriya Tantra,**  
**Charya Tantra,**  
**Yoga Tantra,**  
**Anuttarayoga Tantra.**



# *Kriya Tantra*

Kriya Tantra is also known as Action Tantra. This path places a strong emphasis on outer conduct, ritual purification, and a clear and conscious way of living.

It works with rituals and external forms of practice to create supportive conditions for spiritual growth. The aim is to build merit and prepare the ground for inner development.

In this way, Kriya Tantra often serves as a foundation for more advanced tantric practices.

It includes different forms of ritual purification, specific clothing, special nutrition, fasting, mantra practice, and clear outer discipline.

The focus is more on purity in action, speech, and behavior. It also includes simple visualizations and rituals that are performed on certain days or under certain constellations.

## *Yoga Tantra*

Yoga Tantra is meant to guide the practitioner more deeply inward and open them to the joy of inner absorption and meditative stillness.

Here, yoga means union with the Dharmadhatu, the realm or field of Dharma. This happens through deep contemplation and focused meditation on a deity or Buddha form.

The path moves from the outer to the inner. More and more, the practice is about gathering the mind and entering deep concentration. This inner focus is seen as a gateway to personal liberation.

Samadhi arises when the mind becomes quieter, discursive thoughts begin to settle, and awareness remains steadily focused on the object of meditation.

In Yoga Tantra, the practitioner often imagines themselves in the form of the Buddha. In this way, body, mind, and actions are gradually transformed into the qualities of the Buddha.

# Charya Tantra

Charya Tantra is meant for practitioners who enjoy working with outer ritual actions while also being devoted to the inner path of yoga.

The word Charya means conduct or lived practice. On one level, it refers to the actions performed in the ritual itself. On another level, it points to the inner attitude with which a person prepares for and carries out the ritual.

Charya Tantra consists of four parts.

1. The first is initiation. It prepares the person to become a suitable vessel for seriously walking the path.
2. The second part is the purification of vows and commitments, which is also found in Kriya Tantra.
3. The third aspect is the process of preparatory selfless service. This is about opening, serving, and letting the ego step back more and more.
4. The fourth part describes the method through which, after a certain level of maturity in selfless service, spiritual attainments or siddhis may arise.

In this practice, the aspirant usually visualizes the deity as something outside of themselves, as a higher presence above them.

Charya Tantra helps the practitioner become familiar with the Dharma and deepen their relationship with it step by step.

# *Anuttarayoga Tantra*

Anuttarayoga Tantra is a form of Tantra for practitioners who feel drawn to the deeper inner forms of practice.

Within this path, there are four initiations. These are the vase or master initiation, the secret initiation, the wisdom or knowledge initiation, and the fourth initiation.

The path of Anuttarayoga Tantra is divided into two stages: Generation and Completion.

The first stage is known as the path of maturation. Here, the male and female deities are visualized as a complete mandala. Their forms, symbols, and bija mantras are used to gather, clarify, and purify the different aspects of the personality.

This purification is necessary before the next stage can unfold.

The second stage is Completion, also called the path of liberation. Here, the purified forms and forces are brought into union. The mandalas and bija mantras of the deities are also part of this practice.



# *Black Tantra*

Black Tantra is a lesser known branch of ancient Tantra. The name can sound dark or mysterious at first. It is often explained by the fact that, unlike White Tantra, Black Tantra does not focus on retaining sexual energy, but works with orgasm and ejaculation as part of practices meant to shift or awaken consciousness.

But it is not only about sexuality. Black Tantra also includes methods that aim to influence inner perception and mental reality.

These can involve strong forms of mental focus and projection that may be powerful, but do not automatically lead a person closer to enlightenment. Depending on how they are used, they can also lead in other directions.

One reason these practices remained hidden for so long is that they were traditionally not taught publicly. The teachings were usually passed directly from teacher to student, orally and through practice.

This path is also not considered suitable for everyone. In some traditions, it is even said that the student does not choose the path, but that the teacher chooses the student, often before the person fully understands what lies ahead.



# Black Tantra

One tradition often mentioned in this context is that of the Aghori. They belong to a Hindu sect of sadhus, spiritual renunciates or holy men.

Aghoris share core beliefs of Hinduism, but their path is considered highly unusual and radical. Like others, they worship Shiva as the supreme reality. For them, Shiva is not only linked to consciousness and divinity, but also to death, impermanence, and the cremation ground.

For this reason, Aghoris often meditate in places that many other Hindus would avoid: cremation grounds, where bodies are burned.

These places are often seen by others as impure, frightening, or connected to spirits. For Aghoris, however, they are places of deep spiritual practice.

In general, many other Hindus tend to keep their distance from the Aghoris because their rituals and way of life are seen as extreme or difficult to understand.

In this context, the term siddhis also appears. These are understood as special abilities that, according to tradition, may arise through intense spiritual practice. In some teachings, they include extraordinary or supernatural powers.

In the case of the Aghoris, such powers are said to arise not only through meditation and austerity, but also through unconventional rituals, sometimes in direct contact with death and impermanence.

From their perspective, these practices are not simply about gaining power. They are meant to help dissolve karmic burdens, deepen spiritual growth, and ultimately move toward liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering.



# *Black Tantra*

Within the Indian understanding of reincarnation, immortality is sometimes seen as a desirable goal. Behind this is the idea that it may be easier to live through karmic connections within one continuing life than to be reborn again and again.

In this context, Kundalini Yoga also speaks of the union of Shiva and Shakti. This union represents a state of deep wholeness. One image for this is Sadashiva, a form in which the feminine and masculine principles are united. For this state to unfold within the human being, Kundalini is said to rise fully. The head is seen as the highest seat of consciousness.

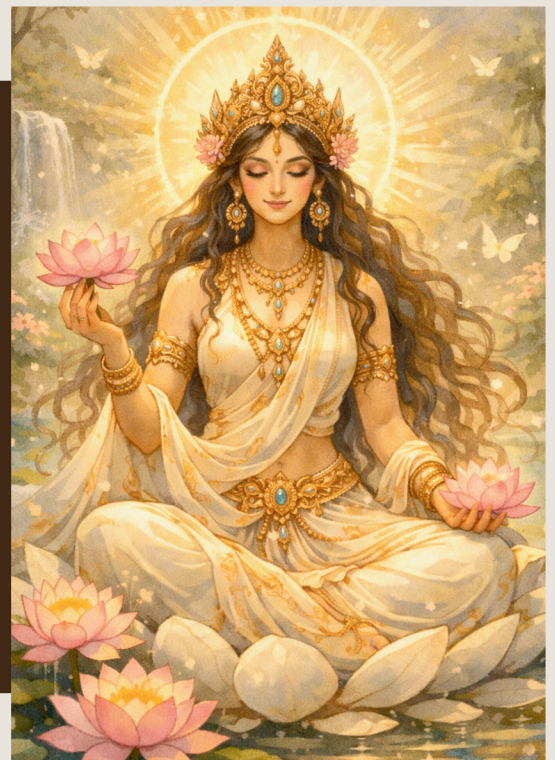
In some tantric and Aghori traditions, there are also very unusual ideas about how immortality or power might be attained. These include references to herbs, minerals, or extreme rituals associated with death, spirits, or other subtle realms.

These accounts belong to the realm of esoteric and occult tradition. They should not be understood as something romantic or easily imitated. Traditionally, such practices were considered hidden, risky, and meant only for very few.

Mahavidia Tara

Some texts claim that certain tantrics or Aghoris work with bound forces, spirits, or non physical beings in order to exert influence or gain extraordinary abilities. In these traditions, this is sometimes also described as a form of siddhi.

At the same time, these paths are repeatedly described as dangerous. Even small mistakes are said to have serious consequences. This is another reason why such practices remained mostly hidden and, if transmitted at all, were passed on only very selectively.



# Black Tantra

“ *In an ordinary person, Kundalini lies asleep at the base of the spine. In that state, Shiva is without Shakti. Such a person is not yet Shiva, but more like a lifeless body. I often look at people as if they were skeletons, because until their Kundalini Shakti awakens and begins to dance upon their Shiva, they are not yet truly alive within.* ”

Aghora is a path of devotion to the great Mother Goddess Kundalini, here appearing in the form of the goddess Tara.

This path belongs to the most intense and radical expressions within Tantra. Its aim is to break through the ordinary human limitations of the practitioner, so that he or she can grow beyond the usual sense of self and move closer to the divine.

The Aghori seeks to overcome these limits by inwardly confronting everything that people normally avoid, reject, or experience as taboo. At the same time, the path is about developing a body and mind strong enough to hold very intense emotional, energetic, and sensory experiences.

In this way, the practitioner gradually builds a system that can explore deeper levels of consciousness without breaking under the intensity. Without the right preparation, training, and guidance, such experiences could otherwise become overwhelming or destructive.

That is why the necessary teachings, practices, and above all the connection to the Goddess are seen as essential on this path.

Aghoris believe that the divine exists in everything. Whether something is seen as pure or impure, beautiful or disturbing, does not ultimately change its sacred nature. For them, everything is an expression of the holy.

Because of this, they do not see anything as fundamentally unholy or excluded. Everything belongs to the whole.

Outwardly, Aghoris are said to possess very little. It is often described that they carry only a bowl made from a human skull, a few Rudraksha garlands, and a simple cloth to cover the body.

# Heart of the argument

To become an Aghori sadhu, it is said that a person often goes through many years of intense practice, sometimes around twelve years. During this time, they meditate, live under the guidance of a teacher, and complete certain rituals meant to strengthen them inwardly and prepare them for the path.

The Aghori path is considered extremely demanding and uncompromising. Those who walk it leave ordinary worldly life far behind, often including family, possessions, and familiar forms of security.

Traditional accounts say that Aghoris work in ritual with things that society would usually see as impure, disturbing, or taboo, such as ash, objects from cremation grounds, or materials connected with death and impermanence.

A teacher is central on this path. Usually, the practitioner needs someone who has already gone through the process and can guide them step by step. It is also traditionally said that a human skull is used as a ritual bowl for eating and drinking.

Aghoris mainly worship the destructive and transformative aspect of Shiva. Their path seeks to dissolve the usual division between pure and impure, holy and unholy. Behind this is the understanding that the divine exists in everything and that nothing is ultimately outside of it.

The more these familiar inner boundaries dissolve, the more spiritual force or special abilities are said to arise from that process.

## **Black Tantra $\neq$ Black Magic**

**Black Tantra** works with the deeper and often hidden forces of consciousness. In some traditions, it is about not rejecting darker or more intense energies, but holding them consciously and transforming them into awareness. Ideally, this path is not about manipulating others, but about inner transformation.

**Black Magic**, by contrast, is more closely linked to ego, control, and influence over others. It is often not rooted in the heart, devotion, or alignment with the Divine, but in power and deliberate manipulation.

Especially when sexual energy is used to influence or control others, many spiritual traditions see this as deeply problematic, also because of the karmic consequences.

A much more wholesome path is one in which orgasmic or sexual energy is not used for manipulation, but for surrender, opening, and allowing divine guidance to unfold more fully in one's life.

# Conclusion:

Some people mistakenly assume that the sexual side of Tantra is automatically the same as Black Tantra. This shows how much misunderstanding and confusion still surrounds Tantra. Because of that, Tantra is often quickly dismissed as dangerous, suspicious, or unusable.

Yet the tantric tradition itself makes it very clear that energy should never be used to manipulate others. The real path of Tantra invites a person to expand their consciousness and to recognize the deep interconnectedness of all life.

Under the guidance of an experienced teacher, a practitioner learns not to simply discharge sexual energy, but to hold it consciously, direct it, and refine it. This is an important difference from what is described in relation to Black Tantra, where sexual energy is more often released through orgasm and ejaculation.

Some teachings say that Tantra awakens awareness of the emptiness behind our desires, while Black Tantra awakens awareness of our deepest inner desires. This can become risky when a person is not clearly guided and begins to get lost in their own patterns.

At the same time, Black Tantra should not simply be seen as a false or corrupted branch. It is also part of the wider tantric landscape and, in certain contexts, has been used for intense ritual or meditative union with divine forces.

After many years of disciplined practice, traditions say that siddhis, or special abilities, may also arise and support the spiritual journey.

What becomes clear is this: Tantra and its different paths require maturity, clarity, and proper guidance. Without an experienced teacher, the practice can quickly become confusing, overwhelming, or distressing.

There are no shortcuts. Every path has its place. What matters most is the attitude, the maturity, and the guidance with which it is walked.

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*Unfortunately, a large number of tantrikenthusiasts, in both the West and the East, mistakenly identify tantra as the yoga of sex, black magic, witchcraft, seduction, and an amalgam of techniques for influencing the minds of others.*

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*Tantrik Master Shri Aghorinath Ji*

# Conclusion:

This is also because Tantra is both a spiritual path and a kind of inner science.

As a spiritual path, Tantra is concerned with the purification of heart and mind. It is about living more consciously, becoming clearer within, and cultivating a way of life that is rooted in truth, connection, and awareness.

At the same time, Tantra also works with very precise methods and techniques. In that sense, it has a scientific aspect, because the result often depends on how consciously, accurately, and correctly a practice is applied.

In simple words, some tantric practices can be understood almost like a formula. When they are applied properly, they can produce a result, regardless of how mature, clear, or spiritually developed the practitioner may be.

And this is also where one of the dangers lies. When this more technical side of Tantra falls into the hands of people who are immature, manipulative, or dishonest, it can easily be misused. This is one of the reasons Tantra has gained such a distorted reputation in some places.

Fortunately, there are still authentic teachers, clear lineages, and serious scriptures that help correct these false images and make a deeper understanding of Tantra possible.

When seen in that light, Tantra reveals itself not as something sensational or obscure, but as a subtle, profound, and powerful path.



# *Neo Tantra*

## *– Rising Intimacy*

### *What Neo Tantra became known for*

Neo Tantra is probably the form of Tantra most people in the West know today. And for many, it is mainly linked to sexuality. This image grew especially strongly through the sexual liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s, and through teachers like Osho, who spoke openly about sex, desire, the body, and the harm that repression can cause.

### *Why it became so powerful*

At a time when religion, morality, and social shame had deeply disconnected people from their bodies, Neo Tantra offered something radically different. It said that sexuality is not dirty, sinful, or something to be hidden. It is part of life, part of our nature, and part of our energy. When met consciously, it can become a doorway to healing, freedom, and deeper awareness.

### *The wound beneath it*

For centuries, people were taught to suppress desire, pleasure, curiosity, and even the basic connection to their own bodies. Women were shamed. Men were taught to hide. Homosexuality, self pleasure, menstruation, kink, erotic desire, and many other natural expressions of being human were judged, silenced, or condemned.

This created generations of shame, fear, inner tension, and disconnection from the body.

### *What Neo Tantra offered*

Neo Tantra became powerful because it gave people something they had been missing for a very long time: permission.

Permission to feel.  
Permission to speak.  
Permission to explore.  
Permission to be with their bodies without shame.

In that sense, Neo Tantra did not only promise healing through sexuality. In many ways, it helped heal sexuality itself.



# *A sanctuary for many people*

For many, Neo Tantra became a sanctuary. A place where sexuality could be spoken about openly and without immediate judgment. A place where people could reconnect with their bodies, their desires, and with others who were also longing for truth, freedom, and acceptance.

This is a big part of why it spread so strongly and why it still resonates today.

## *The shadow side*

At the same time, Neo Tantra has also been misunderstood and misused. Because it is open, intimate, and often connected to sexuality, it has sometimes attracted people who were not acting from love, integrity, or genuine spiritual intention.

This is where discernment becomes important. Tantra, at its core, is not about using others for personal gratification. It is about awareness, connection, respect, and the understanding that how we meet one another matters deeply.

## *The deeper heart of Neo Tantra*

The deeper heart of Neo Tantra is not just sexual expression. It is the longing to come back into relationship with life, the body, love, and truth.

It reminds us that there is nothing wrong with desire itself. What matters is how consciously, lovingly, and honestly we meet it.

# *Why it still matters today*

Part of why Neo Tantra still matters today is that many of the same wounds are still here. Shame is still here. Judgment is still here. Women are still shamed for sexual expression. Queer people are still attacked. Many people still hide important parts of themselves in order to feel safe or accepted.

So once again, people are looking for spaces where they can breathe, soften, and be more fully who they are.

## *Conclusion*

Neo Tantra speaks to a very human longing. The longing for peace in body, mind, and soul. The longing to be allowed to exist as we are. The longing to love and be loved without shame. And maybe also the longing to remember that spirituality does not have to stand against the body, but can move through it.

Neo Tantra is not perfect, and it is not free from distortion. But one of its deeper gifts is this:

It gives many people a way back to themselves.

