

Kamadhenu Tantra

That self of the nature of food is pervaded by the self of the nature of vital energy; similarly the self of vital energy is by nature pervaded by the self of the nature of mind - - Katharudropanishad, 24

This text, of 24 chapters, deals at length with the matrikas or letters of the alphabet, considered by the tantrik tradition to represent the goddess as sound. The text used for the abstract below was published by Kalyana Mandir Prakashan. Chapter 22 and most of chapter 23, are missing from this edition.

The word *Kamadhenu* means the wish-fulfilling cow, and here is adjectivally applied to the Devi in her form as Sarasvati, who rules speech, eloquence, words, music and all letters of the alphabet. She is represented as the shakti or consort of Brahma, one of the trinity (*trimurti*) in Hinduism.

The tantra is cast in the normal question and answer fashion between Parvati (Shakti) and Mahadeva (Shiva). Chapter one starts with Parvati asking about the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and their relationship with the tattvas. Shiva says that by knowing this doctrine, a sadhaka can become liberated whilst still alive (*jivanmukta*). The devi, he says, has different vidyas, or female mantras, so that in her form as the Matrikadevi, she consists of all of the others.

The letters A to Ksha, together with visarga and bindu represent her triple form, the body of the absolute. From the letters come Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Shiva gives a meditation on the letters of the alphabet representing the tattvas in which they are as effulgent as the autumn moon, consisting of five angles which also represent the five devas. She, as the very self of the bindu tattva, is both with qualities and without qualities.

In chapter two, Mahadeva proceeds to describe the fifteen vowels of the alphabet (iTrans transliteration scheme used). The letter aa is the self of Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra, conch-coloured, and consists of the five (main) breaths or pranas. The first letter of the alphabet, a, is not mentioned here. It is Paramakundali (supreme Kundalini).

The letter i is supremely blissful, like a sweet smelling flower, consisting of Hari, Brahma and Rudra. It is the guru, it is Sadashiva, and also Parabrahma. It is Kundali.

Letter ii is again described as composed of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and being fourfold knowledge as well as supreme Kundalini. It consists of the five devas. The letter u is described as effulgent as the yellow champaka flower, and giver of the four aims of mankind, that is dharma, artha, kama and moksha. It also includes the five pranas.

Letter uu is called the supreme bija, very hard to obtain. It is as white as the kunda flower, consists of the three gunas and is called the bestower of happiness, also including the five pranas.

R[^]i is described also as being of an effulgent yellow colour, is made of the three shaktis and consists of fourfold knowledge.

R[^]I, the next letter described, is also of a yellow hue, and has a practically identical description to the last letter.

The letter L[^]i is called the Paradevata, where Brahma resides constantly. It is made up of the five pranas, the three gunas, and is also of a yellow, lightning-like colour.

The next letter, L[^]I, is effulgent as the full moon, has the self of the three gunas, and also represents the four aims of human existence.

Letter e is called the supreme, celestial self of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and is of the colour of a bandhuka flower, the very self of supreme Kundalini.

Chapter three continues in the same tone as chapter one but then moves on to more detailed matters. Surely Devi must by now be wondering why Shiva is repeating himself, but she politely listens until the sequence of vowels is completed.

The letter ai is called Mahakundalini, and is effulgent as 10 million moons, comprises in itself the three bindus and the five pranas.

The letter o is of the appearance of red lightning, and is made of the three gunas, and like the rest represents the five pranas and is supreme Kundalini.

Also red is the letter au, which is said to bestow the four aims of existence and conjoined with Ishvara, as well as being the five main vital breaths in a human.

The letter am is yellow in colour, consists of all knowledge, has within it the three bindus and the three shaktis, the five pranas and is supreme Kundalini. The letter aH, says Shiva, is red in colour, consists of all knowledge, includes the five devas and the five breaths, and Atma and the other tattvas.

Chapters four to six describe the consonants. Ka is as bright as Kundali and is the essence of the four aims of mankind. The letter Kha is as brilliant as a snow white conch. Ga is pure and the essence of the Shakti.

In chapter seven, Shiva says he will describe the japa of the Matrikas this being the ultimate mantra. The text starts to describe the letters of the alphabet, each of which is preceded and followed by O.m - so O.m a.m O.m, O.m A.m O.m, O.m i.m O.m, O.m I.m O.m and so forth to the letter Ksha. He then gives a dhyana of the Matrika Devi. She is effulgent as a koti of Moons, seated on a white lotus with her three eyes moving playfully to and fro. The white shining Devi has various faces corresponding to the sacred texts and she is adorned with white gems and white clothes.

The chapter goes on to say that a person ends up in hell and all puja is useless without the eight letter groups a-ka-cha-Ta-ta-pa-ya-sha. By worshipping the letters with the bindu and visualizing them as effulgent as the sun, doing this a lakh times, a mantrin becomes successful in giving the letters of the alphabet life.

Chapter eight speaks of the greatness of Matrika as the 50 letters. In her are all macrocosms and vidyas and she exists as both the Devi with qualities (gunas) and without qualities (nirguna). She is the self of all Vishnu mantra, Shiva mantra, Ganesha mantra, Saura mantra, Shakti mantra. The fifty letters as fifty young maidens are the self purana, of veda, and of smriti. In her form like this she is the self of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Ishvara and Sadashiva. She is also the very self of Kundalini.

The brief ninth chapter describes the chief nadis in the human body, with sushumna in the centre, wound around by the ida and pingala nadis. The vital breath (prana) flows through these. By reciting the fifty letters of the alphabet with the out and in breaths, 12 times at the three twilights (sandhya), one does jiva nyasa and becomes the equal of Shiva.

Chapter 10 describes how the Matrika is related to the body. The letter a is on the forehead, the letter A is on the mouth, the letter i is on the right eye, the letter I is on the left eye, the letter u is on the right ear, the letter U is on the left ear, the letter R^i is on the right nostril, and the letter R^I on the left nostril. The letter L^i is on the right cheek, while the letter L^I is on the left cheek. The letter e is on the upper lip, the letter E on the lower lip, the letter o is on the upper teeth, while the letter au is on the lower teeth. The letter A.m is on the head, while the letter aH is the face itself.

The five letters of Ka-varga are on the right arm, while the five letters of cha-varga are on the left arm. On the right foot are the the Ta-varga, while ta-varga is on the left foot. The pa is on the right of the body, while pha is on the left of the body. The letter ba is on the back, while the letter bha is on the navel. The letter ma is on the belly, while the letter ya is on the heart. The letter ra is on the right shoulder, while the letter la is on the left shoulder. This chapter goes on to describe a correlation between the letters of the alphabet and the tattvas, then correlating different letters with the five elements aether, air, fire, earth and water. The letters are then related to 50 forms of Devi.

Chapter 11 is the Kulluka and Setu chapter, while chapter 12 deals with Matrika Dhyana as well as bija dhyana. The subject of bija dhyana is continued in chapter 13 and the effects of pronouncing each of the Matrikas separately.

Chapter 14 deals of dhyanas of the letter Ka using different colours and scents. When red, the bija bestow kingship, when white and used with white sandal it gives liberation, with rochana it subjugates, with aguru or kumkuma it causes delusion, and with black it causes destruction and death. Placing the letter Ka on the forehead using rochana is called the "people deluding" tilak.

The fifteenth chapter describes the merits of visualising the ishta devata in the heart lotus of 12 petals and visualising a bija in each petal along with the vidya of the desired devata causes unity with the deity.

The sixteenth chapter describes a rite to be performed on a Saturday (Shani) or Tuesday (Mangala). This involves a detailed puja using the full set of ritual accessories, and a number of detailed nyasas. Copper plates for each letter of the alphabet are to be inscribed with each of the Matrikas, and anointed with various sweet smelling substances.

In chapter seventeen, it's said that the letter ka is the root of all the varnas, and so a person should worship this letter with every effort. Chapter eighteen continues to praise the greyness of the letter ka, described as the Lamini Devi. Various prayogas for obtaining success are prescribed. The nineteenth chapter continues this topic and says that success in worshipping ka and Kamini causes one to realise the essence of the Kamadhenu. Kamini continues to be eulogised in chapter twenty, which describes Kamini as the form of light, while she should be meditated upon in the 1,000 petal lotus - the subject is continued in chapter twenty one.

There's a break in the tantra with only a fragment of chapter twenty three remaining, chapter twenty two is completely missing in this edition.

The last chapter, chapter twenty four, closes with a dhyana of devi as having two arms, golden, with fair limbs, wearing yellow clothes, adorned with various bright jewels, newly adolescent, as bright as the moon, with long fingers and shining nails, the colour of kadamba, chewing paan, with a sindura forehead mark