

# Kankalamalini Tantra

*Women are divine, women are life, women are jewels. One should always be either amongst hosts of women or with one's own woman. When she is on the breast of a sadhaka in sexual intercourse, then speedily she becomes like the cow of plenty - Devirahasya*

The word *kankalamalini* means garlanded in bones, or skeletons, a constant theme of texts related to the goddess [Kali](#). This work therefore falls into the Kalikula category of tantrik texts. The edition used for this abstract was published by Kalyana Mandir Prakashan in 2033 Samvat (1973 c.e.).

The *Kankamalinitantra* is a relatively short work of only five patalas (chapters). Like many tantras, each is of uneven length. Chapter five is probably longer than the previous four chapters put together. In the colophon at the end of each chapter, the tantra is ascribed to the Dakshinamnaya, or southern tantrik current. Mantras are given below using the iTrans format to preserve their correct form and pronunciation (see [Tantrik Texts](#) for more information on iTrans). There is a transcription of this text in Sanskrit now at the [Muktabodha Project](#).

## Chapter One

The first chapter opens with Bhairavi asking Bhairava to tell her about the letters of the alphabet. He says that the letters A to Ksha form the absolute as sound (*Shabdabrahma*), and then proceeds to enumerate the female shaktis associated with these letters. Bhairava says that the letters A to Ksha consist of Shiva and Shakti, and without knowledge of their true meaning, it is not possible to be successful practising the Vama path. The letters are made up of the three gunas. This chapter, shorter than the others, then discusses the major bija or seed mantras, including OM, shrii.m (Lakshmi bija), krii.m, klīi.m, hrii.m, hu.m, huu.m, hrau.m, ai.m, krau.m, svaahaa, drii.m and duu.m, prii.m, Tha.m Tha.m and sphrii.m.

## Chapter Two

Bhairavi addresses Bhairava as Nilakantha (the blue throated) Mahadeva and asks him to explain to her the meaning of yoni mudra and the three tattvas. He says that yoni mudra is very secret and should not be revealed. It is the very form of the absolute, representing the chaitanya or consciousness of mantra and bestows liberation. By grace of the yoni mudra, Bhairava says he was able to conquer death. Semen, blood and their conjunction are the temple of Manmatha (the god of love). The yoni bija mantra should be recited 108 times and the yoni itself is the true form of the supreme absolute. The yoni should be encircled with three threads, which are the ida, the pingala and the sushumna. The yoni of Devi is the primordial (Adya) form of Prakriti (nature). It is Kundalini and Mahakundalini, says Shiva.

Bhairava then speaks of the nadis or channels of energy in the body. There are 3.5 koti (a koti is 10 million) nadis, but the three nadis mentioned above are the chief, and represent the moon, the sun and fire. Bhairava then goes on to describe the six well known chakras through which runs the thread of the sushumna or central nadi in the spine. Details are given of the Dakinis, the gods and goddesses, and the bijas of each of these chakras, with very similar details to those published by Sir John Woodroffe in *The Serpent Power*. Above the Ajna chakra, says Bhairava, is a lotus of 1,000 petals, which is the place of the seventeenth kala.

Kundali Shakti is the form of mantra, dwelling in the muladhara chakra and rising through the Chitrini to the Brahmanda or 1,000 petal lotus, is the rosary of letters, says Bhairava.

There then follows a Yoni [kavacha](#) which is of some interest. Ishvara says that by holding it and reading it, it causes all shaktis to give boons.

The rishi of the kavacha is Sadashiva, the metre for it to be pronounced in is Gayatri, the devata is the Eternal Yoni form, while it gives the four aims of mankind.

OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH mama shiro raxantu svaahaa .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH OM maa.m OM aakuuTaa.m  
mama raxantu svaahaa ma.m maa.m .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH hR^idayaadi daxe bahu.m  
raxantu .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH hR^idayaadi vaama bahu.m  
raxantu .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH daxe paada.m raxantu mama .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH vaama paada.m raxantu mama  
sadaa svaahaa svaahaa .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH hR^idaadiSu naasaa.m  
raxantu svaahaa .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH upastha.m raxantu mama  
sadaa svaahaa .  
OM ma.m maa.m mi.m mii.m mu.m muu.m me.m mai.m mo.m mau.m maH ida.m hi yoni kavacha.m  
rahasya.m paramaad.hbhuta.m .

The kavacha should be recited in the Muladhara, before the eternal yoni. It gives equality with the sun and the moon, and through the grace of Devi causes success in the yoni mudra. The text says it should be recited with one's own woman or with another woman, following which there should be intercourse. This is an example of tantrik code. The "other woman", according to tantrik insiders, is one's wife or woman, while one's own woman here refers to the Devi within. From this point of view, sex with one's own woman is adultery. On the other hand, this tantra may well be speaking literally.

The kavacha, continues Ishvara, should be written on bhurja leaf (birch) and written with svayambhu flowers (menstrual blood), and semen, and with other scents such as gorochana. It should be placed inside a gold ball and worn on the body. Reciting the kavacha 108 times gives success in whatever is desired. The chapter closes with the mantra namo yonyai namo yonyai kuNDalinyai namo namaH.

## Chapter Three

This chapter returns to comparatively more sedate matters, including guru puja, the guru mantra and a guru gita (song).

Ishvara says the two syllables of the word guru represent that which is without qualities and the supreme absolute, respectively. This mantra, he says, is the mahamantra, and should be concealed.

He follows by giving a dhyana of the guru, situated in the 1,000 petal lotus. He is seated in the virasana, with his two hands showing the mudras dispelling fear and giving boons. On his left thigh sits his shakti, whose face shows compassion. She wears red clothes and jewels.

The guru and his shakti should be worshipped with mental offerings (upachara). After reciting the mantra of the shakti, the kavacha of the guru should then be read. This kavacha differs from that given in the *Matrikabhedatantra*. Wearing the kavacha on different parts of the body washes away demerit in the same way as the Ganges river washes it away. The chapter closes with a brief song (gita) extolling the virtues of the guru.

## Chapter Four

This chapter centres around the worship of Mahakali. Parvati asks Shiva to give the Kali mantra, and describe her puja.

Ishvara (Shiva) says that the mantra of Mahakali bestows every type of success. All the gods and rishis achieved what they did through her worship. It gives both liberation and enjoyment and bestows liberation through enjoyment, when heard from the mouth of the guru.

Shiva gives the mantras of Mahakali and says her one syllable mantra is the gives siddhi in the Kali age. He then gives a three syllable mantra of Dakshina Kalika, followed by other three syllable mantras producing different results.

Conventional rules in the worship of Mahakali are suspended, says Shiva. There is no rule as to time, as to the woman who is the shakti, or to defects of the mantra. Similarly, one need not pay attention to bodily defects. The sadhana may be done during the day or at night, and the recitation (japa) of the mantra may be done anywhere.

By pleasure one gains liberation, Shiva says. He says: "This is true, true, true and again true, I say."

Puja is of three types, he says: daily, every so often, and according to desire (kama). Here he says he will speak of the daily puja of Mahakali. Bhairava is the rishi, Ushnik is the metre, and the devata is Mahakali, who gives the four aims of mankind.

Without five fold purification, any puja undertaken is black magic (abhichara). Those five purifications are of the atma, bath, the materials, the mantra and the devata. Following the placing of the materials, one should bow to the gurus on the left and to Ganapati on the right, and should then perform bhutashuddhi, the purification of the elements. (This is a meditation in which the different elements within a sadhaka are purified. There is a complete explanation and translation of this process in Woodroffe's edition of the *Mahanirvanatantra*).

Different [nyasas](#) are then performed, and the text follows with a meditation image of Mahakali.

One should meditate on Adya Mahakali as being in a celestial spot, on the central peak of the Himalaya range, under a jewelled pavilion which is the great pitha, her lotus feet served by Narada and the best of saints, worshipped by Bhairava. She is the colour of sapphire, with two large high breasts, wears variegated colour clothes, and has four arms and three eyes.

The text then follows with a description of her inner meditation, where she has limbs the colour of thunderclouds, dishevelled clothing, three eyes and is seated on Shiva's corpse. She is ornamented with a chain of skulls. In her left upper hand she holds a man's severed head, and with the lower hand holds a cleaver. She has dishevelled hair.

Shiva then gives a further dhyana of Mahakali, where she has a fierce, fanged mouth, is completely naked, and has three eyes. She sits in virasana on Mahakala and makes a terrifying noise, wears a garland of skulls (mundamala) and has streams of blood pouring over her full breasts. She sways backwards and forwards, as if intoxicated. In her left hands she holds a cleaver and a severed head, and in her right shows the mudras giving boons and dispelling fear. She has a terrifying face and her tongue rolls wildly. She has earrings made up of a bird's wing and an arrow. She is served by terrifying, roaring jackals in the cremation ground and by Bhairavas making fearful laughing noises, and who dance over men's skeletons, making their victory cries.

Whew. The text then follows with a description of Kali's fifteen attendants, the [Kalinityas](#). This leads up to the left-hand worship with the panchatattva or panchamakara. Shiva says whoever does Kula puja without wine or flesh loses the merit of 1,000 good incarnations. "Without wine, there is no mantra, there is no

mantra except with wine," Shiva says. After performing the rite of the five makaras (see virasadhana, elsewhere on this site), one should bow again to Mahakali before doing the dismissal and cleansing rites.

## Chapter Five

This chapter is concerned with purashcharana, the rites to be performed by an initiated tantrika to make a mantra successful.

Elsewhere on this site, we have described the elaborate rules, stretching over several days, which a sadhaka has to undertake. But the *Kankalamalini*, in a similar matter to the *Devirahasya* and the *Brihadnilatantra* seems to suspend these rules.

Parvati is told by Ishvara that in the Kali Yuga, folk are short lived and unable to perform rites in the way they were able to do in previous times. He says that for this worship there is no bad time, no special day or night, no need to do the puja on "great nights", such as the eighth or fourteenth of a dark fortnight, nor is there a necessity for worship at the twilights (sandhya).

There are no rules about directions, places, recitation of mantra, time to do the worship. "Here, svecchacharya (doing the rite according to will) is the rule for the mahamantra in sadhana," Ishvara says.

Performing worship in the Kali Yuga in this fashion brings siddhi in six months, according to the text. Shiva says: "Devi, in the Kali Yuga, there are no tirthas (bathing spots), no vows to undertake, no homa, no bath, and no twilight worship (sandhya). " Those rites belong to the previous eras of the Saya, Dvapara and Treta Yugas, he says.

However, purashcharana is still necessary, he adds, and proceeds to give the rite suitable for tantriks during the Kali Yuga. There then follows a lengthy rite which includes the giving of substances including ghee, milk, and sugar, and the recitation of many mantras, the performance of many nyasas. The importance of the rudraksha [rosary](#) is stressed at great length. The sadhaka should smear himself with ash, and put three lines on his forehead as well as a tilak.

Rules are given about the use of the Gayatri mantra, and towards the end of chapter five, there is a lengthy discourse on the Devis of the bodily dhatus, such as Dakini, Lakini, Rakini and so forth, along with their bija mantras and their various meditation images. These Devis are situated in the different chakras.