

# Yogini Tantra

*In the place of Kama, which is in the centre of the place of Kama and in the middle of Kama, one should fashion a hole. By Kama one should accomplish Kama, and should place Kama within Kama. Having made oneself a lover by Kama, in the place of Kama one may agitate the world - **Vamakeshvarimatam IV, 45-46***

The Yogini Tantra is a voluminous work held in high regard by practitioners of Vamachara. In a total of 28 chapters divided into two parts, it outlines every topic familiar to the Kaula and Vama traditions. What follows is an abstract of the first nine patalas or chapters.

## First Patala

This opens with a familiar tantrik scene on Mount Kailasa where [Shiva](#) is addressed by Parvati. She says she has heard exposition of tantras before on Shri Shaila mountain, in Varanasi, in Kamarupa and in Nepal. Now she wants to hear more from Shiva, the world guru. In answer, Shiva says he will declare the great Yogini Tantra, the giver of both wealth and liberation. It is to be concealed and is unknown to all the devatas, to the asuras, to the yakshas and others but he will declare it out of love for Parvati.

He starts by eulogising the goddess as the cosmic mother (Vishvamata), dark as a thunderstorm, wearing a garland and waist-band of skulls, with dishevelled hair, completely naked (digambaram).

She has a rolling tongue, makes a terrifying roar, three reddened eyes, and has a wide open mouth. She wears a moon digit on her forehead, has the corpses of two boys as her earrings, and is adorned with various gems, which are of the brightness of the Sun and the Moon. Laughing loudly, she has two streams of blood pouring from her mouth, while her throat is red with blood. In her four arms she holds cleaver, head, and makes mudras dispelling fears and granting boons. She, the supreme Nitya, is seated in reverse (viparita) intercourse with Mahakala upon the corpse of Shiva. The whole scene is set in the cremation ground.

After this detailed dhyana of [Kali](#), Shiva begins to outline the tantra, declaring that he is Parvati's slave.

He starts with the characteristics of the guru, who he describes as the root of all shastra, the root of this world and the very self of Parabrahma and the essence of Shiva. The guru can save a disciple where even gods and goddesses cannot intercede. The guru's family is to be considered as identical with the guru. There follows a dhyana of guru in the palace of wish-fulfilling gems on Mount Kailasa, surrounded by hosts of Bhairavas. The palace is surrounded by the seven oceans.

The guru is one with Mahakala Adinatha and knows all mantras, whether they be Shakta, Vaishnava or Ganapatya. The greatness of the guru is hymned in all the shastras.

## Second Patala

Devi asks Shiva to speak of Kali and Tarini. Shiva says that Kalika is the greatest of the great vidyas, supreme and giving nirvana and liberation to people. Her disciples are Brahma, Vishnu and himself. If a sadhaka recites the Kali mantra, he becomes her son. Kali, [Tara](#) and [Cchinna](#) are the mahavidyas. One successful in Kali becomes similarly successful in the others. Shiva begins to speak of initiation. He says that the rosary to be used in the puja should be made of human skullbone for long-lasting success. A sadhaka or sadhika may also use crystal or ruby rosaries. A full rosary should have 108 beads. The meru, or bead to mark the beginning and the end of the mala, should be made of a king's tooth. Shiva proceeds to outline the number of times the mantra should be recited holding the rosary and the way the fingers should count. He speaks of the nature of other rosaries including pearl, tulsi (basil) when worshipping Vishnu, ivory for [Ganesha](#), and rudraksha or red sandalwood for [Tripura](#). Dhatura growing in a cremation ground

is used for Dhumavati. He then describes ritual accessories to be used in the puja and the times in bright and dark fortnights of the moon which are favourable and unfavourable as well as other restraints due to time as well as suitable places for the rite.

### Third Patala

Devi asks how catastrophes including war and fever can be warded off. In reply, Shiva recites a kavacha or armour which can be used to protect against malefic influence. It is not to be revealed lightly. He then speaks of a way to subjugate the world (jagadvashyakara). Sage Narada also asked Shiva to speak of this of old.

Shiva says that when she is imagined as a naked Devi, Kali is the deludress of the world. He then gives the Trailokya Mohana Kavacha (armour bewildering the three worlds). Kalabhairava is the rishi of the mantra, anushtubh is the metre, Shmashana Kali is the devata. After giving the armour, Shiva describes how to make it. It should be written on bhurja (birch) bark and worn round the person. It should be written on the eighth day of the bright fortnight and placed inside a golden container. Wearing it on different parts of the body gives different results. On the head, it destroys disease. On the right shoulder, it gives whatever is desired. Vishnu now chimes in and says Narada achieved the desires he wanted by employing this kavacha.

### Fourth Patala

The Devi now wants to know of other prayogas to give dominion, knowledge and wealth. Shiva mentions the *Phetkarini Tantra* and the *Nila Tantra* as sources. One process is to draw a hexagon with the mantra of Tara within plus the sadhya (the object). Devi asks about the satkarmas, six magical acts. Shiva says these are pacifying, subduing, causing enmity, driving away, uprooting (uccatana) and causing death. He says there are six Shaktis appropriate to these acts. The Padmini is suitable for pacifying and Sankhini for subjugation. He then outlines the mantras appropriate to the six acts.

### Fifth Patala

Shiva describes a great sadhana in the cremation ground, involving the fifteen Kali Nityas. This sadhana can also be performed in a desert, by the side of a river, on a mountain, at a crossroads, at the root of a Bilva tree, at a place where there is a single lingam, at a place where there are no people as well as in the cremation ground.

### Sixth Patala

Devi asks about the different classes of sadhaka. Shiva says they are divided into the divya (divine), vira (heroic) and pashu (herdlike) categories. The meditation for the divya should be concealed, Shiva speaking of vira meditation. He says a vira should meditate on the three bindus in the form of a 16 year old woman. The first is as bright as 10,000,000 dawn suns, extending from the head to the breasts. The second extends from the breasts to the hips and the third from the yoni to the feet. This is the Kamakala form, the very essence of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The vira and the divya may employ madya, mamsa, matsya, mudra and maithuna (the five 'm's) in their worship. According to Shiva, the rishis, the vasus, the daityas all became great through this puja. Shiva speaks of this worship for the four Hindu divisions (varnas) and also for the Avadhuta. Much of this material is repeated in the *Yoni Tantra*. He says the great nectar flows from Kundalini when it has risen to the top of the head. This is the great wine. She is the supreme Shakti within the body.

### Seventh Patala

Devi asks Shiva to tell her of Devi Svapnavati (she who moves in sleep). He gives the mantra. Shiva says: 'This Svapnavati Vidya is very hard to obtain in the three worlds. It is the cause of great miracles, declared by Mahakala.' It should be recited 108 times then Svapnavati visits in sleep always. A sadhaka who masters the mantra sees everything in his dreams he wishes. The god then speaks of the Mritasanjivani vidya. This appears to give the power of bringing back the dead to life. He describes other vidyas including Madhumati and the Trilokyakarshi vidya. This attracts whatever a sadhaka desires in the three worlds. Maidens will cross oceans and mountain ranges to get to him. Shiva goes on to give vidyas of Padmavati, the Vashikarani vidya. He then returns to the topic of Svapnavati. This appears to involve awakening while in the dream state (lucid dreaming?). The mantras should be concealed and given only to the devoted, the unstained otherwise hosts of Dakinis consume a person.

## **Eighth Patala**

Shiva speaks of the Yoginis. They look terrifying, with blazing eyes and 50 lakhs of faces. The daitya Ghora then recites a hymn to Devi, celebrating her victory over the Daityas. Shiva chimes in, praising her greatness in battle. Towards the end of the patala, Shiva gives a meditation image of Shakti as Kali.

## **Ninth Patala**

Shiva starts this lengthy chapter by speaking of the Devi as the Brahmanda, the macrocosm. In this guise, she has an immense form, with millions upon millions of arms and heads. She is the sum of everything, containing puranas, vedas, smriti and vedas. As such she is of the brilliance of millions upon millions of suns and moons and fires, consisting of all knowledge, all paths, all dharma, all bliss, all shastra, all veda and all worlds, in short, everything. Then follows a meditation on Shakti as being present in the different parts of the body. Shiva closes by saying that Kali is the form of consciousness (citrupa), the impartite absolute.