



## Concept of Yogini - A Study

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The Sakti concept developed from 7th Century A.D. in India after its first mention in the *Markandeya Purana*. Here in *Kavacastotram* we find description of nine Durgas, eight Matrukas and several Yoginis.<sup>1</sup> These are called Khadgadhari, Varuni, Kauveri, Suladharini, Jaya, Vijaya, Ajita, Aparajita, Dyotini, Maladhari, Yasasvini, Trinetra, Yamaghanta, Sankhini, Dvaravasini, Carcika, Citraghanta, Kamaksi, Dhanurdhari, N a l a k u b e r i , Vajradharini, Dandini, Sulesvari, Nalesvari, Kamini, Guhesvari, Karali, Urdhvakesini, Kalaratri, Mukutesvari, Padmavati, Cudamani, J v a l a m u k h i , Dharmacarini, Chatresvari, Ksemankari, Jayanti and Papanasini etc. Even there are yoginis moving on earth, those moving in the sky, those born in water, those directed and induced by others, those born in one's family, like Mala, Sakini, Dakini and other forces.<sup>2</sup>



*Chausathi Yogini, Ranipur Jharial, Dist.- Bolangir*

called ? According to T.V. Kapali Sastry prayer to an indefinite something, to an impersonal divinity can only evoke impersonal or indefinite response. If a response is sought to be evoked for a particular need, the prayer could be fruitful when it is addressed to a channelised centre of the

Divinity, the personal form which is active for the purpose in question, and that is precisely what the Devata in its higher sense is in the Tantra.<sup>3</sup> Now the Yoginis appearing first in Buddhist Tantras and subsequently in v a r i o u s iconographies are based on the aforesaid concept.

Further it may be pointed out that when Indian Philosophy believes in one ultimate reality, "Brahman", how such peculiar concept of Yoginis arose in the socio-religious arena. It is quite likely that Sakti concept was in rudimentary forms in Buddhist religion which was evolved in greater details in the later Buddhism like Mahayana and Vajrayana concepts. Amitabha, Avalokitesvar,

What is the basis of such type of subordinate deities or whatever these may be



Aksobha deities of Buddhism have had their Saktis and that precisely arose because of Buddhist Samghas comprising both male and female mendicants. The one does not negate the many. The one God does not overrule the other gods in their respective fields of operation. He is the soul, they are his limbs (*Sa atma angani anya Devatah*). And each limb has a specific function to perform. There is a gradation and a hierarchy of delegated functions of Isvara and the gods deriving their authority from the supreme Godhead and posted in various planes on the rising tier of consciousness, i.e., *Citsakti*.

According to *Lalitasahasranama*, Devi, the Prime Sakti is called *Kulayogini*<sup>4</sup> and also named as the Deity<sup>5</sup> worshipped by 64 prime Yogini herds, their being several crores. Thus Yogini is at the same time the Prime Goddess and also the subordinate godhead. This explains the concept that there are two aspects of *Sakti*, *Samavayini* and *Parigraha Sakti*. As *Samavayini Sakti* she is *Cit* and so identical with Siva Himself. *Yogini Hrudaya Tantra* supports this stand by saying that who knows the heart of Yogini i.e., Sakti except Siva Himself, the Sakti holder ? As *Parigraha Sakti* she is inert and evolving i.e. in Tantric parlance *Bindu*. Again *Bindu* as pure aspect of *Cit* is *Mahamaya* or *Mahayogini* i.e. Pure conduit of creation and as mixed or *Asuddha maya* or Yogini i.e. Inherent cause of material world the impure conduit,

It is quite possible that Yogini must be a concept quite akin to its function i.e. Yoga. Samvit or *Cit* which is self-luminous is the root of all experience though one and undivided. Objective knowledge is divided into seer, what is seen and the function seeing and as *Kulayogini*.<sup>6</sup> Devi connects the knower, knowledge and what is known and who is also the measurer, measure and what is measured. As *Mahayagakrama*,<sup>7</sup>

Devi is described as one who is offered oblations with 64 Yoginis, or who is the subject of an occult meditation in the prescribed manner performed by Siva-yogis. In other words Yoginis are tutelary deities who are evoked for certain *abhicara* purposes to acquire occult power.

This Yogic connection of Yoginis is more evident in the descriptions of *Cakras* and its presiding deities beginning from *Muladhara* to *Sahasrara* in the yogis plexuses of human body.<sup>8</sup> The Yogini called *Sakini* is situated in the *Muladhara Cakra* (the lower most plexus just below the spinal column close to anus) having four petals exposing four syllables from 'va' to 'sa' with *Bindu*. She is having five faces, an elephant hook, a lotus a book with *Jnanamudra* in her four hands. She is attended upon by *Varada*, *Sri Sarada* and *Saraswati*. The *Yogini Kakini* abides in *Svadhithana* above *Muladhara* lotus and below the navel quite in opposite direction of *Bajra* or *Yoni*<sup>9</sup> of the body upon spinal column with six letters 'ba' to 'la' with *Bindu* in each petal. She is of four faces. Her weapons are a trident, a nose, a skull and an elephant-hook. She is yellow in colour and is surrounded by *Saktis* like *Bandhini*, *Bhadrakali*, *Mahamaya*, *Yasasvini*, *Raka* and *Lambosthi*. The *Yogini Lakini* resides in *Manipura Cakra* at the navel having ten petals. She has got three faces. Her weapons are specified as *Bajra*, *Sakti* and *Danda* in three hands and the *Abhaya mudra* in the forth. She called *Rudhirasamsthita* presiding over blood element of human body. She is surrounded by *Kalaratri*, *Khandita*, *Gayatri*, *Ghantakarsini*, *Nagna*, *Canda*, *Chaya*, *Jaya*, *Jhankarini*, *Jnanarupa*, *Tankahasta*, and *Thankarini* on the twelve petals of the heart-lotus. The *Yogini* residing in *Visuddhi Cakra* is called *Dakini*. She is the presiding deity of throat region of the body. This *Cakra* is having sixteen petals exposing sixteen vowels with *Bindu*. She holds and uses her



weapons specified as the club or a rod with a skulltop, sword, trident and shield respectively in each hand. She is having only one face. She is surrounded by deities of great power like Amrita, Akarsini, Indrani, Isani, Uma, Urdhvakesi, Rudra Rukara, Lukara, Likara, Ekapada, Aisvaryatmika, Omkara, Ausadhi, Ambika and Aksara. Her description in the *Lalitsahasranama*<sup>10</sup> is really very interesting in ascertaining the *Tattva* of Yogini.

*Grivakupe Visuddhau nrupadala Kamale  
Svetaraktan trinetrām  
Hastai Khatvāngakhadgān trisikhampapī  
Mahacama sandharayantim  
Vaktrenāikena yuktam Pasujanabhayadam  
Dakinim biravandyam*

The Yogini called Hakini resides in the *Ajñacakra* which has petals exposing two syllables 'Ha' and 'Ksa' in it. She is spotless white in complexion having six faces. She is attended by Saktis called Hamsavati and Ksamavati. This Hakini is the up bringer of all peace and pleasure. She is having three eyes. This otherwise means that by contemplation of it in *Ajñacakra*, Sadhaka becomes happy and contented and his third eye i.e. the eye of knowledge *Samvit* is unfolded.

Lastly the Yogini called Yakini abides in the *Sahasrara Cakra* having one thousand petals. She shines with all colours as a variegated deity and surrounded by fifty alphabets, *varnamala* arranged in alphabetical order and in its reverse order. She is having all kinds of weapons. This is otherwise known as 'Siva's abode, *Kundalini* in *Muladhara* plexus below the spinal column rises

by *Tantra Sadhana* and reaches Siva in *Sahasrara* which otherwise means that the power and power holders in polarized form comes nearer, joins with each other and is ignited thereby bringing immense power to a Sadhaka. So the Yoginis are the intermediary deities confronted by a Sadhaka in his journey to attain divinity. In Yogic terms these are temporal powers or Sakti that Sadhaka is endowed with, by which he should not be swayed away and continue his *Sadhana* for attainment of perfectness or *Vibhutva*. In the light of this the 64 Yogini idols available in Hirapur and Ranipur-Jharia in Orissa are required to be studied.

#### Foot Notes :

1. Shankaranarayanan, S. - *Glory of the Divine Mother*, pp.96-85.
2. *Ibid*, p.95, Verse-45.
3. Kapali Sastry, T.V. - *Further Lights : The Veda and the Tantra*, p.311.
4. *Lalitasahasranama*, V.56.
5. *Ibid*, V.58.
6. *Lalitasahasranama*, P.60.
7. *Ibid*, p.88.
8. *Satcakranirupana*.
9. Male and female organs respectively.
10. *Lalitasahasranama*, Verses 475-483.

Courtesy : Orissa Review, October, 1994.