



Dasa Mahavidya

Umakanta Mishra

Mahavidya Tattwa with its intrinsic value over super conscious thought has got a special significance in *Tantra Vidya*. It covers a wide gamut of procedures of worship of the ten goddesses. The worship leads to *mantra chaitanya* or *mantra vidya* meaning divine knowledge. The meaning of *mantra* cannot be understood by reasoning. The inherent meaning of *mantras* are revealed to deserving *Sadhakas*. *Mantra sakti* opens the gate of truth revealing the true nature and essence of the universe. This is the underlying principle behind all the *Mahavidya upasana*. The ten *devis* of *Mahavidya* pantheon are Tara, Sodasi, Bhubaneswari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagala, Matangini, Kamalatmika and Kali.

Tara

Tara is known as Nilasaravai and Ugratara. She is of dark blue complexion. She places her left leg on the chest of Siva, who lies like a corpse. She is of short stature and she appears in a tiger skin and puts on a garland of severed demon heads. She is in the prime of her youth and adorned with *pancha mudra*. She has four hands with the tongue spread out of the mouth. She wears a single braid of matted hair on her head. She is endowed with three eyes and she stands in the midst of funeral pyre. She laughs, engrossed in her emotion and is decked with valuable ornaments including a blue lotus in one hand, a *kartri* and a *khadga* in her other two hands and a vessel of skull in the third. There are snakes covering her body. She is also known as Tarani and her *dhyana mantra*





occurs in a number of Tantric texts to gain power over spirit, wealth, education and so on. The Jains and Buddhists also worship her with slight modifications in terms of appearance, colour and ayudhas in their respective temples.

Sodasi

Sodasi is identified as Tripura Sundari in the *Sodasi Tantra*. She has four arms and she holds a noose, an elephant hook, an arrow and a bow. Her colour is red. This goddess is extremely beautiful and of dazzling brilliance. She is also described as standing in the orbit of Sun. She has four hands; she holds a book, a rosary in two hands, the other two hands are in *Abhaya* and *Varada* poses. She is worshipped as *Para* and *Apara*.

Bhubaneswari

Her complexion is that of a rising sun. She wears a crescent on her forehead and crown over head. Her breasts are full. She is three eyed and her face is ever lit up with a smile. In her two hands, she holds the noose and the goad and in the other two, the pose of granting boons and assurance to her devotees to alley their fears. This is known as *Varada* and *Abhaya* mudras. She adorns herself with valuable ornaments. She seats on a lotus throne. She is the goddess having the moon diadem, large breasts and three eyes. She is also described in two forms as Saubhagya Bhubaneswari and Maya Bhubaneswari, in red and blue colour respectively. One can come across excellent icons in Srimandira, Puri. She is the protectress of the world. Her three eyes represent *icha*, *kriya* and *jnana sakti*.

Bhairavi

Bhairavi or Tripura Bhairavi wipes out all types of distress of *Sadhakas*, The letter *Bha* symbolizes *Bharana* or maintenance, *Ra* stands for *Ramana* or sport like creation and *Va* for

Vamana or release by way of either destruction or liberation. She resembles the luster of a thousand rising suns. Her three eyes resemble red lotus and the moon shines in her bejewelled crown. Her garment is red. She has a garland of heads round her neck. Her breasts are covered with blood. She holds a rosary and manuscript in her two hands. She is believed to be a kin of Bhairavi of Buddhist Tantric religion.

Chinnamasta

She is endowed with three *gunas-Satwa*, *Raja* and *Tama*. She is also known as *Trigunamayi*, bright as tens of millions of suns shining together. Her mouth is expansive. Her hair is dishovelled and adorned with varieties of fragrant flowers. In her right hand, she holds a sword and wears a garland of human heads around her neck. She is naked and of fearful appearance. Her right leg is in front while her left leg is a little behind. She wears a serpent as a sacred thread. She is on a standing posture with Rati and Kama embracing each other in enjoyment. This means that when the *Kundalini* in *Muladhara* is united with Siva in *Sahsrara*, realization or liberation flows, which is not other than the *Swarupa* of Devi herself. Yoginis like Dakini and Sakini are beside her.

Dhumabati

Goddess Dhumabati is to be invoked for purpose of destroying enemies. She is pale, tremulous and angry. She is rough, her robes are unclean and her hair is united. She is a widow and has only four teeth. She rides a chariot on which the banner depicts a crow. She is tall and has hanging breasts; she is harsh looking with a big nose. She holds a winnowing fan in one hand and shows *Varada* pose in the other. She is always hungry and thirsty, terrifying and quarrelsome.



Bagala

According to the *Sri Tatwanidhi*, she is of yellow complexion and is three-eyed. In her four hands she holds a trident, a cup, a mace and the tongue of the enemy. She has the features of a beautiful woman so far as her lips, neck and breasts are concerned. She is adorned all over with garlands and ornaments. Bagala symbolizes cessation of all dualities or *dwandas*, at the realization of which there would be no enemy and pure consciousness would emerge.

Matangini

Matangini is the goddess of royalty. She is the deity for defeating demons and establishing peace, tranquility and prosperity. In the *Matangini Tantra*, she is described as dark, with a white crescent in her garland. She sits on a dazzling jewelled throne. She holds a noose, a sword, a shield and an elephant nook. Her head is adorned with the moon. There are various forms of Matangini: Uchhista Matangini, Raja Matangini, Sumukhi Matangini, Vasya Matangini and Karna Matangini.

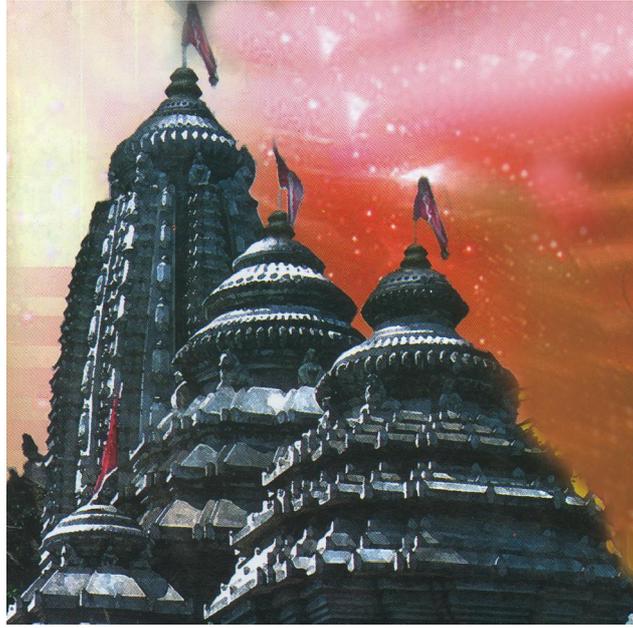
Kamatmika

She is the incarnation of Mahalaxmi also known as Sri. She is of golden complexion, bathed

by four white elephants holding golden jars of nectar in their upraised trunks. She holds two lotuses in her two upper hands. She wears a crown sparkling with gems. Her perfectly comely body radiates the highest degree of eroticism.

Kali

According to *Kali Stotra*, at the time of meditation, she is in a state of eternal bliss playing on the bosom of Siva. The surrounding is a cremation ground. She is black in colour because it is the seed stage of all colours and it represents *Tamoguna*. She appears cool and appealing as the light of million moons brought together. Her teeth is terrible but she is the benign mother



Durga Temple, Bolangir

conferring boon on all by raising her arm in Varada mudra. Her mouth is wide open. She is endowed with three eyes, representing *Trikala*. She wears a necklace of demon heads. She is the embodiment of *sakti, budhi, ridhi* and *sidhi*. She is known as Dakshinakali, Shyamakali, Hrudayakali and Rakshyakali. The sun and moon are her earrings.