

YOGA OF A YOGINI: IN CONTEXT TO FEMINIE ENERGY

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1. Introduction

Since antiquity the contest of strength between Shaivism and Bhaktism has been in fashion. If the propounder of Shaivism owe their allegiance to Lord Shiva, the adherents of Bhaktism have a soft spot for Lord Vishnu. The former is hailed as the God of Destroyer (of maya), the latter of the universal householder or the Preserver. The emblematic indications of these two sects are vividly pronounced and detailed. The former smears tilak(a distinctive spot of coloured powder or paste smeared on the forehead by both gender as an emblem to the allegiance that they owe to) called as Tripundra is three liners(indications of the triguna:satvika,tamasika and rajasika) on their forehead horizontally; while the latter smears Vishnu-Tilak called as Urdhvapundra or upward-U shaped feet of Lord Vishnu that the devotees smear on their forehead, indicating that the devotee looks upward for possible upliftment from material world to spiritual world and finally, to liberation or moksha. Interestingly, if 'Hari' is the other name of Lord Vishnu that the devotees utter;'Hara-Hara Mahadev'(That Mahadeva or the God of Devtas reside in everyone, har)is the slogan that the devotees of Shiva scream out.¹[Mubeen and ShahMubeen and Shah]

1.1. Stree and Yogini

The very name Yogini is derived from the Sanskrit term 'Yoga'or the methodological physical and mental practices that one is trained into. In simple words, Yogini is a lady who is associated with the practice of Yoga.Lady or Stree in Sanskrit, is a derivation of the three terms, satvika(st) tamasika(tr)

and ra- jasika(Ree). A stree technically, is one who is an amalgamation of satvika guna, or that which is pious, happy, light with its emblem white as its colour; tamasika,that which is dark, heavy and malefic with it's emblem 'black' as its colour and rajasika is the activator or the free agent who decides on the given options, the path that she would want to trod on,her colour significantly being 'red.'

1.1.1 Mythology and Yogini

The concept of Yogini has diverse narratives. The most credible narrative is the emergence of the Yoginis in their ferocious designs numbering to 64 from Shiv- Shakti's encounter. This encounter traces back to the adamant Sati, youngest daughter of King Daksha insisting on her husband, Lord Shiva on visiting the Yagna or ceremonial fire at her father's place without invitation. On being denied initial permission, it is said that Sati put her foot down and took the brutal, tigerish 64 roopa as Yogini. Lord Shiva awkwardly exited from the premises of the exit and falteringly let Sati go.²

In the Mahabhagavata-purana Siva forbids Sati to disrupt her father's yajna and in doing so he makes her very angry. In her wrath she transforms into a fearful woman who is plainly unlike the graceful Sati. She loses her composure, her hair messy and her temperament fiery; she develops four arms and her wagging tongue lolls out of her mouth. She is also garbed in a garland of human heads and a half- moon crown. This terrifying form of Sati is known as Kali. Siva is so afraid by this he tries to flee but to prevent his escape Sati blocks his way with her ten different forms, the Mahavidyas or wisdom

¹ Mubeen, N. and V. Shah. 64 yoginis

² Dehejia, V. (1986). Yoginī cult and temples: a tantric tradition.

god- desses. Siva is so shocked and terrified by this that he finally allows Sati to go to the sacrifice.³

Traditionally, yogini or Mahavidyas as called is a deity who emits from the second part of Stree-tamasica. It is the strong Shakti found in tamasica guna that converts a Stree to a Yogini. Satvika is the polar opposite of tamasica as it is submissive, giving and nurturing in nature. Though few Yoginis are taken as an extension of Satvika guna too. Popularly, there are taken to be 64 Yoginins. Though this number is contestable. These 64 Yoginins are: 64 Tantric Yoginins

1. kali nitya siddhamata Eternal Dark Goddess Mother of Perfected Yogis
2. kapalini nagalaksmi Snake Goddess of Prosperity who Wears a Garland of Skulls
3. kula devi svarnadeha Illumined Tribal Goddess of Golden Body
4. kurukulla rasanatha Cause of Knowledge, Ruler of Nectar
5. virodhini vilasini Enjoys Paradox
6. vipracitta raktapriya Inspires the Heart for the Passionate Beloved
7. ugra rakta bhoga rupa Form of Enjoyment in Untamable Passion
8. ugraprabha sukranatha Ruler of Clarity Wonder, and Commander of the Untamable
9. dipa mukti rakta deha Lights the Lamp of Freedom through the Body of Passion
10. nila bhukti rakta sparsa Enjoys the Beautiful Illusion of Space through the Touch of Passion.
11. ghana maha jagadambha Fullness of being the Great Mother of the World
12. balaka kama sevita Youthful Lady Served through Pleasure
13. matr devi atmavidya Illumined Goddess Mother who Reveals the Wisdom of the Soul
14. mudra purna rajatkrpa Fully Demonstrates the Mercy of Passion
15. mita tantra kaula diksa Initiator into the Tribal Circle of Tantric Practitioners
16. mahakali siddhesvari Great Dark Goddess Empress of Yogic Powers
17. kamesvari sarvasakti Empress of Desire Who is All Potency
18. bhagamalini tarini Savior who Wears the Garland of Fertile Prosperity
19. nityakalina tantraprita Eternal Dark Goddess who is Pleased through Tantra
20. bhairunda tattva utama The Power of the Naked and Vulnerable Crescent Moon Goddess is the Highest Principle
21. vahnivasini sasini Fiery Glow of the Crescent Moon
22. mahavajresvari rakta devi Illumined Goddess who is the Great Diamond Thunderbolt of Passion
23. sivaduti adi sakti Primal Energy Carried by Shiva
24. tvarita urdhvaretada Swiftly Raises Energy Upwards
25. kulasundari kamini Lustful Tribal Beauty
26. nilapataka siddhida Perfected One bearing the Flag of the Transformative Void
27. nitya jnana svarupini Intrinsic Form of Eternal Wisdom
28. vijaya devi vasuda Glorious Illumined Goddess of Earth
29. sarvamangala tantrada Entirely Auspicious Bestower of Tantra
30. jvalamalini nagini Snake Goddess Wearing a Garland of Flames
31. citra devi raktapuja Prismatic Illumined Goddess Worshipped by Passion

³ Kinsley, D. R. (1998). Tantric visions of the divine feminine: the ten mahavidyas. Motilal Banarsidass Publ

32. lalita kanya sukrada Resplendent Playful Maiden
33. dakini madasalini Primal Wild Dancer Whose Beauty is Maddening
34. rakini paparasini Goddess of Watery Sensuality who Destroys the Sins of Destiny
35. lakini sarvatantresi Goddess of Personal Power who is the Empress of All Tantra
36. kakini naganartiki Compassionate Snake Dancer
37. sakini mitrarupini Evocative Goddess in the Form of a Friend
38. hakini manoharini Inner Guide who Bewitches the Mind
39. tara yoga rakta purna Through the Fullness of Passion comes Union with The Maternal Goddess of Unquenchable Yearning
40. sodasi latika devi Illumined Goddess who Sprouts Sixteen Vines of Beautiful Desires
41. bhuvanesvari mantrini Empress of the Worlds and Corresponding Three Mantras
42. chinnamasta yonivega Severs Her Head to Stimulate Her Vagina
43. bhairavi satya sukrini Awe-Inspiring Eternally Fertile Goddess
44. dhumavati kundalini Tender-Hearted Unsanctioned Energy of Higher Consciousness
45. bagalamukhi guru murti Guru Personified as the Beauty of Her Face is Hypnotic
46. matangi kanta yuvati Youthful Lover who Disregards Social Conventions
47. kamala sukla samsthita Abides like a Pure Lotus
48. prakrti brahmendri devi Illumined Goddess Who is the Pinnacle of Nature
49. gayatri nityacitrini Mother Endowed with Eternal Hymns
50. mohini mata yogini Enchanting Yogini Mother
51. sarasvati svargadevi Illumined Creatress Goddess of Heaven
52. annapurni sivasangi Beauty of Shiva who Feeds All Beings
53. narasimhi vamadevi Illumined Beloved Woman-Lion Goddess
54. ganga yoni svarupini The Divine River of Heaven descends through Her Vagina Revealing Her Essential Form
55. aparajita samaptidha Everything Culminates with Her as Victor
56. camunda pari anganatha Ruling Woman Skilled at Destroying Imbalances
57. varahi satyekakini Unearths the Oneness of Truth
58. kaumari kriya saktini Virginal Energy of Spontaneous Movement
59. indrani mukti niyantrini She Rules, Controls, and Liberates
60. brahmani ananda murti Goddess of Creation who is Bliss Personified
61. vaisnavi satya rupini Nurturing Goddess whose Form is Truth
62. (mahesvari paras)akti Great Empress who is the Supreme Energy
63. (lakshmi manoramayoni) Goddess of Prosperity whose Vagina Charms the Mind
64. (DURGA) Lion-Riding Goddess who Removes Confusion to Reveal the Eternal Consciousness of Divine Bliss.⁴

Yogini is an embellishment of Shaktism followed in our Indian culture. However, the offerings offered to appease the Yoginis are often crude and gross in their tamasic form such as blood, meat, alcohol and more. This much is clear that Shaivism or Shaktism is the anti-thesis of Vaishnavism.

⁴ Kinsley, D. R. (1998). Tantric visions of the divine femi- nine: the ten mahāvīdyās. Motilal Banarsidass Publ

2. Yoga and Yogini

Yoga as a philosophical school was introduced by the saint Patanjali. Let me begin with the following quote:

I respectfully bow down with folded hands and offer my salutations to Sage Patanjali, the highest among the Munis (sages), who has presented the remedies for removing the impurities of the body through his treatise on Ayurveda, of language through his treatise on grammar (Patanjala Mahabhashya) and the impurities of the Chitta (mind field) through his treatise on Yoga (Yoga Sutras of Patanjali).⁵

The Yoga-sutra 2.29 mentions about Asthangayoga or the 8 limbs of Yoga- Darshan clearly in the following way: Eight Limbs Yama (restraint) Niyama (observance) Asana (physical posture) Pranayama (regulation of breath) Pratyahara (Sense withdrawal) Dharana (focus/concentration) Dhyana (meditation) Samadhi (total absorption) – Sutra 2.29⁶

2.0.1 Yoga

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are without an iota of doubt, the most authentic and authorised elementary texts on yoga-darshan and self-examination. The Yoga-Sutra are more than 2,200 years old and their thematic relevance is more new than ever before. Yoga darshan is the only philosophy that not only nurtures the physical modality of a person but also trains the mental and enhances the spiritual sides of an individual. Yoga darshan by all means is all-inclusive as it is a testimony from across all genres and ages. However, the exploration in this paper has been specifically on the relationship of Yoga and Yogini. In the next section, I shall be mentioning certain poses of Yoga that helps to unleash the feminine energy in a Yogini.

⁵ Yoga, A. (1978). The yoga sutra of patanjali. Trans. and commentary by Swami Satchidananda. Pomfret Center, Conn.: Integral Yoga Publications

⁶ Мөн тэнд.

⁷ Wong, P. Y. M. (2006). The siling (four cardinal animals) in Han pictorial art. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom).

3. Unleashing of Feminine Energy

In this section, I shall be picking up few Yoginis and their Yogic postures that demonstrates the awakening of their inner Goddess. For this, a visual-graph will be provided to display that feminine energy when habituated and introspected, self-examined and pondered upon unleashes the vortex of feminine energy.

Yin And Yang Let us analyse the following quotation: In the I Ching, originally a divination manual of the Western Zhou period (c. 1000–750 BC),^[28] yin and yang are represented by broken and solid lines: yin is broken and yang is solid. These are then combined into trigrams, which are more yang (e.g.) or more yin (e.g.) depending on the number of broken and solid lines (e.g., is heavily yang, while is heavily yin), and trigrams are combined into hexagrams (e.g. and). The relative positions and numbers of yin and yang lines within the trigrams determines the meaning of a trigram, and in hexagrams the upper trigram is considered yang with respect to the lower trigram, yin, which allows for complex depictions of interrelations.⁷

Further, it has been stated The yin-yang symbol (also known as the Tai Chi symbol) consists of a circle divided into two halves by a curved line. One half of the circle is black, typically representing the yin side; the other is white, for the yang side. A dot of each color is situated near the center of the other's half. The two halves are thus intertwining across a spiral-like curve that splits the whole into semicircles, and the small dots represent the idea that both sides carry the seed of the other. The white dot in the black area and the black dot in the white area con- note coexistence and unity of opposites to form a whole. The curvy line signifies that there are no absolute

separations between the two opposites. The yin-yang symbol, then, embodies both sides: duality, paradox, unity in diversity, change, and harmony.⁸

The above said quotations depict the complex attribute of the Chinese concept of Chi symbol called as Yin and Yang. As much as they radiate, apparent contradictions with one being solid, the other broken; or one being masculine, the other feminine. The underlying point of narration is they are not mutually exclusive of each other and in fact complements the other in the holistic theoretical and practical framework. Many who sided only with a part of it, portrayed an incomplete side of yin being dominant or yang, undermining the balanced connotation of reciprocity that both share. Going ahead with this bifurcation, the ideologies of feminism or woman-centric-ness evolved. What is being missed out is all the display of the 64 Yoginis is a fine elucidation of Yin and Yang. For nowhere do the Yoginis come close to be broken or disheveled instead they exude a formidable presence of piercing discomposure, abhorrence and agitation. This is made crystal clear from the following passage:

According to the scholar Vidya Dehejia, the roots of Yogini worship are outside the normal orthodox Brahmanical traditions. The Yogini traditions are tantric in nature and therefore have strong connections to rural and tribal traditions (Donaldson 617). The origin of the Yoginis appears to be in small, rural villages (Dehejia 1). They are local village goddesses, grama devatas, who look over the welfare of an individual village (Dehejia 1). Through Tantrism, these local deities were able to gain new forms and vitality as a group of goddesses who could impart magical powers to their worshippers (Dehejia 2). The cult of the yoginis is often associated with a sense of fear and awe because the yoginis are sculpted with demonic expressions or other dark attributes (Gadon

33). When the yoginis are depicted in sculpture or described in text they often have the heads of various birds such as: parrots, hawks, peacocks, eagles, pigeons, and owls (Kinsley 197). They were also carved with characteristics from other animals (Donaldson 619). These include: the frog, elephant, jackal, goat, ox, cat, tiger, horse, and snake (Donaldson 619). Along with having the qualities of birds and other animals, the yoginis are repeatedly talked about as having severed heads in their hands or scattered around their feet (Gadon 33). In one story from the Padma Purana, the yoginis are called by Siva to consume heaps of flesh from a demon head that Siva has severed (Donaldson 622-623). This story talks of how they rejoiced after eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the demon, and describes them as having enormous bodies and sharp fangs (Donaldson 623). Yoginis are occasionally depicted with numerous arms, anywhere from four to eight (Donaldson 640).

It is pivotal to point out at this stage that Yin and Yang are not the binary antithesis as they are made out to be. As distinct and unique the both are, there is an underlying thread that connects the two extremes. This thread is the thread of shared belongingness that echoes with harmony, balance and parity. The ardor of Yin is marked by sun, masculinity and stout heartedness; whereas, Yang is characterised by moon, softness and nurturing. However, most of the Yogic postures of Yogini ascribed below states how Yin and Yang are subliminally merged so that they emerge in bold, confident sitting or standing poses which exude in undaunted, valiant and self-assured upbeats. The poised positions and postures of Yoga oozes with strength, bold and fearless moves. Yoga is surely not for the faint-heartedness for Yoga demands rigorous discipline, solid practice, and long and strenuous hours of commitment. The veterans of Yoga speak about unvarying, unexceptional and sanctioned customary part and parcel of every day life. The physical and corporeal moves gives way to the smooth

⁸ Мөн гэнд.

blending of emotional, mental and spiritual roundabouts. Yoga completes both the outer and inner hygienic, healthy and sanitised way of life.

4. Feminine energy

The diversified postures of Yoga not only illustrates the detoxifying segment of the inner world but also augments the stillness of spiritual journey that harmonises the physical body with the mind and spirit.⁹

Invocation of feminine energy can be transcended when one closely examines the Yogic postures of a Yogini. Some of these are:

The Visuals of the Yogic postures attached below belongs to the professional Yogic Model, Ms. Geetanjali Bhuyan Rajkhowa based in Ireland



2. The Archer Pose This accomplished posture of an archer of a Yogini oozes with durability, substance and vitality. The regular wear and tear that the tissues, nerves, and all of our physical body is prone to gets greatly miniaturised with this Yogic posture. This posture also speaks the inner warrioriness or *Stree-Shakti* that lies dormant in every female. This energy when provoked unleashes out in the most magnifying and glorious form.



1. The Namaskaram posture is the starting of any greeting or salutation in any course of event. This Yogic posture enables the restless mind to be calm, silent and aware. Self-awareness is the highest form of liberation for spiritual enhancement.



3. Apanasana is the blissful posture of a Yogini that radiates a cocoon side to her. To embrace herself, pamper herself, indulge herself only validates that charity begins at home and she

⁹ Miller, B. S. et al. (1996). Yoga: Discipline of freedom: The yoga sutra attributed to patanjali. Univ of California Press.

is in total love with her Stree-Shakti. This Shakti could be anything satvika, tamasika or rajasika. This posture of Yogini oozes with the theme of Acceptance. Accepting oneself the way one is without change, without edits, without force, without anything extraneous efforts.



4. Half-Pigeon Pose of a Yogini depicts the stretch on her hip areas that enables her to discharge the tension loaded. Stree-Shakti or creation that a Yogini is elemental, rewards a woman with advanced and regular blood circulation and openness of chest region depicts the nurturing and nourishing overflowing of her heart to the world outside.



5. This Mudra awakens the inner power of an Yogini. The ease-ness to digest intake in the large intestines followed by the output of sweats being exuded only speaks volume of the speed up inner health of an individual. When the inner health is sound, the outer health has to be sound.



6. The Matsyayana posture of a Yogini transcends to an entire narrative of Stree-Shakti. Considering that the ten Avatars of Lord Vishnu starting from Matsya or fish, this asana is energised by it. The Yogini here is in perfect stillness and in sync with her inner and outer world. She can delve deep down into the troubled waters as much as she can afloat from all the worldly material temptations. This asana helps in activating an imbalanced thyroid hormone and radiates the Yogini with sheer joy and delight.



7. Drinking Bird Yoga posture trickles down with girth and grace. The aligning head speaks of low thoughts or heavy thoughts thrown at bay. The forced hands thrown backwards indicate the fullness through which Stree Shakti of a Yogini unleashes out her inner power. This visual is tell-tale of harmony, empowerment and recognition of one's own

inner Shakti. This posture also triggers the mula-dhara chakra of a Yogini.



8. The Salutation of a Yogini exudes the warmth, the ambition and the hard-word to reach the zenith of success. While the pursuit of onward journey for the betterment of Stree Shakti is on, the root- edness of the Yogini is underlined.



9. The Nava Yogini that I have selected is the Ultimate symbol of unleashing Yogini's Stree-Shakti. The overall stretches of the body parts screams of penance, hard-work and an exhilarating joy accom- panied with this Yogic posture. It is the finest of all for

it is the symbol of woman emancipation, empowerment and sublime-ness.

The goddess in various forms of Yoginins fierce ones such as Kali, Chinnamastika, to Chandala, to Dhumavatai, to the more pleasing and appealing Yoginins like Laxmi, Parvati, Saraswati embodies the Stree Shakti in truest sense. The ex- tensions of each of the Yoginins' manifest via the various Yogic postures, some of which are mentioned above. This procedure of Yoga is the only platform that can transcend a Stree (which is a Sanskrit name of Satvika, tamasika and rajasika) to a Yogini.¹⁰

As much as the entire narrative of Yogini can be pushed under the umbrella term of Shakta cult or tantra, let us not forget that Vaishnavism and Shaivism are the two sides of the same God. If Lord Vishnu is addressed for a portion of his name evokes 'vish' or poison, Lord Shiva is called the 'Neelkantha' for he drinks 'vish' or 'halahal' to save mankind. If Lord Shiva wears, the creepy seprent around his neck, Lord Vishnu rests on the pavilion of Shesh-Naag or the Lord of Serpents. The treatment, diagnosis and the care of each of the cult's worshippers might differ in terms and conditions but let us not forget that the presence of one is pivotal for then only the significance of the other can be illustrated. Assam for instance, has a rich tradition of the two cults running parrallely. As much as there is the opulent presence of Shakti-peeths like Kmakahya Devi or ferocious Yoginins like Ugra-Tara Devi Mandir, there has also been the tradition of Bhakti movement or the sing-song praises to Lord Vishnu . Thus wave of change was largely seen post the 15th century Vaishnavite saint of Assam, Srimanta Sanlardev whose philosophy of 'Ek-Charana-Naama-Sarana' [Rajkhowa and SankaradevaRajkhowa and Sankaradeva] or taking refuge in the feet of Lord Vishnu is enough to be under his protection.

The rythm of Stree Shakti emerges

¹⁰ Kinsley, D. R. (1998). Tantric visions of the divine femi- nine: the ten mah'avidy'as. Motilal Banarsidass Publ

when both the powers of Yin and Yang comes together and is fused to emerge into a successful narrative of the legend of Stree-Shakti. The odyssey of a Yogini is thus not only empowering but also resourceful, inspirational and liberating.

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Товч утга: Энэтхэгийн соёлын өвөрмөц илэрхийлэл болсон иога нь философи болон домгийн сэтгэлгээний өргөн агуулгатай юм. Энэхүү өгүүлэлд иога дахь эм эрчимийн тухай өгүүлэхдээ түүний уг гарваль, онцлогийг Патанжалийн иогийн судар дахь иогийн тухай, хятадын философи дахь инь янь категори, мөн энэтхэгийн философи, шашны томоохон өв болох шайвизм, бхактизмын уламжлалд харьцуулан гаргасан байна. Иогини бол “иога” буюу бие болоод сэтгэлийг нэгтгэх дасгалыг илэрхийлсэн санскрит үгээс эхтэй, нөгөөтэйгүүр иогийн дасгалыг хэрэгжүүлэгч эмэгтэй хүнийг илэрхийлдэг юм. Түүхнээ шива-шактийн хүчийг агуулсан (эр, эм хүч) 64 иогинийг авч үздэг бөгөөд эдгээр нь тус бүрдээ тамас, саттва гуна буюу эрчимийг тээдэг хэмээдэг.

Домогт өгүүлснээр Дакша хааны бага охин Сати эцгийнхээ үйлдэж буй галын тахилгад нөхөр Шивагийн хамт урилгагүйгээр ирж өөрийн хүчийг харуулдаг бөгөөд тэрээр олон дүрд хувирч чаддаг охин тэнгэр юм. Түүнийг мөн Шакти хэмээн эм хүчийг бэлгэдэн нэрлэдэг. Иймээс иогийн дасгал, байрлалууд нь бие, сэтгэлийг нэгтгэх, ариусгах, ухаарах сүнслэг тэрхүү эм хүчийг хэрэгжүүлж буй хэрэг мөн гэдгийг энэ өгүүлэл нотлохыг зорьжээ.