

tripurasundarii ashhTakaM

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Octad to tripurasundarii

by shriimad.h sha.nkaraachaarya

Introduction

The transliteration of Sanskrit terms is according to ITRANS scheme, which is close to the pronunciation. The translation and commentary on this text can be found in <http://www.geocities.com/RodeoDrive/1415/tripura8-itx>

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Before we begin, let us offer ourselves at the feet of the Divine Mother, mahaatripurasundarii, who as Ishvara rules the world but is none other than the indwelling spirit (Atman) within us and which pervades us all that exists.

This introduction deals with the background on the name of tripurasundarii . It is one of the best epithets to describe the Devi meaning that she is the belle of all the three worlds . The word tripura can be interpreted variously . The kaalikaa purANa says that by the will of pradhaana, the body of Lord Shiva became triple : the upper part became Brahma, the middle part became VishhNu and the lower part became Rudra . As these three pura-s (bodies) are in Lord Shiva, he is called Tripura (three bodied) and his wife is known as tripuraa . In the kaamakalaa vilaasa (13,14), the honored sage, abhiyukta, mentions that Devi created all the three forms and she is before all (purobhava), because she is in the form of all the three (trayiimayi) and exists even after the dissolution of the three worlds and recreates them again . In the brahmANDa-purANa, it is mentioned that the Goddess tripurasundarii rules over the entire universe and She is the supreme empress, and Brahma, VishhNu and Shiva are mere functionaries in her empire . The Lalitaa Sahasranaama portrays Her as being attended by Lakshmi and Saraswati on either side. Shankaracharya, in his saundrayalahirii, mentions that Brahma, VishhNu and Shiva started their cosmic processes when the Supreme Shakti knitted Her brow for a split second.

The Devi mantra consists of three syllables, and her fifteen lettered mantra panchadashaakshari is composed of three kuuTa-s (peaks). She resides in three naaDi-s (nerve channels), namely sushhumnaa, pingalaa, and iDaa . She is the ruler of the three Shaktis - ichchaa (will), kriyaa (action), and GYana (knowledge). She pervades all the three worlds - heaven, earth and the nether world . She is the controller of all the three bodies - sthUla (gross), suukshhma (subtle), and kaaraNa (causal). She is the self which is present through the three states of existence - jaagrat (waking), svapna (dream), and sushhupti (deep sleep). Though she is above all guNa-s, She pervades the three modes of energy- sattva (purity), rajas (mobility) and tamas (inertia).

Love and joy are the inherent qualities of beauty . Sundarii means belle and beauty . Shankaracharya, while explaining Chandogya upanishhad 7, 31:1, mentions that all longing and desire is a source of pain, and in what is finite there is no bliss . He mentions that the Infinite alone can produce bliss . When bliss takes on a form, it is sundarii: sarvaa.nga sundarii (lalitaa trishati, verse 130) and Shankara comments on this name of the Devi as the one who possesses all the marks of beauty and has all the

qualities of perfection and is thus the source of Bliss.
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May the Divine Mother guide us in our every action and thought, and may
She confer upon us the greatest gift of all, moksha (liberation) by removing
the veil of maya which She weaves.

At Her feet, AUM tat.h sat.h

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