

Inner Tantric Yoga



*Working with the Universal Shakti:
Secrets of Mantras, Deities and Meditation*

DAVID FRAWLEY

Table of Contents

Foreword

Note by Lokesh Chandra

Author's Preface

Part One.Principles of Inner Tantric Yoga

Shakti and Deity Yoga

The Yoga of the Ishta Devata or Chosen Deity

The Gods and Goddesses as Forms of Brahman

Atma Devata: The Self as the Supreme Divinity

The Shiva Linga and the Shakti Yoni: Symbols of the Two Primal Powers

Part Two.Working with the Universal Shakti

The Primacy of Shakti

Shakti as the Cosmic Energy

Meditation on the Shaktis of Nature

Meditation on the Shaktis of Body and Mind

Shaktis of the Practice of Yoga

The Shakti of Relationship

The Shaktis of Emotion

Healing Shaktis

Part Three.The Forms and Personalities of the Goddess

The Personality of Shakti

The Goddess Kali: The Supreme Shakti of Infinite Space and Eternal Time

Kali and the Power of the Sacrifice

The Goddess Sundari and the Flow of Soma

The Goddess Bhairavi and the Kundalini Fire

Drishti Yoga, the Yoga of Perception

The Goddess Sati and the Power of Existence

Part Four.The Yoga of Shiva and Shakti

Rudra and the Fire of Prana

The Four Inner Lights and Energy Centers

Soma and the Yoga of the Crown Chakra

The Spiritual Heart and the Crown Chakra

The Chakras and the Spiritual Heart

Atma-Shakti, The Power of the Self

Appendix One.Teachings and Tradition

The Question of Tradition

Tantra and Non-duality

Shakti and the Vedas

Appendix Two. Reference Material

1. Note on the Use of Mantras

2. Phonetic Pronunciation of Mantras

Sanskrit Pronunciation Key

[Glossary of Sanskrit Terms](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[About the Author](#)

Inner Tantric Yoga

Working with the Universal Shakti

Secrets of Mantras, Deities and Meditation

By David Frawley



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Foreword

Yoga is such a big part of Western culture these days that most of us believe we're already aware of everything it has to offer. After all, Hatha Yoga classes are available everywhere people exercise together, and yogic stress reduction techniques are taught at medical clinics around the country. Everyone knows how healthy a vegetarian diet is, and that meditation produces an impressive array of psychological and physiological benefits. This resume is dazzling enough; what more could there be?

Plenty, it turns out. In fact the more time I spend with traditionally trained yogis and yoginis from India, the more amazed I am at how little of the authentic tradition has reached our shores. It's as if the yoga masters feed us small pieces of it at a time, as much as people raised in our far more materialistic culture are able to assimilate. Only after we've had a chance to digest those teachings do they reveal more advanced techniques and insights.

Looking back, it's easy to see that yoga swept into Western culture in waves. In 1893 Swami Vivekananda first introduced Americans and Europeans to the four great paths: Raja Yoga (physical and mental exercises), Jnana Yoga (the intellectual quest for spiritual experience), Bhakti Yoga (devotion) and Karma Yoga (the practical yoga of enlightened daily activity). In the 1930s Paramahansa Yogananda initiated Western students into Kriya Yoga, which focused on subtle inner experiences involving the gradual arousal of Kundalini. But it was in the late 1960s that yoga leapt from the fringes of American culture into the mainstream when, thanks to adepts like Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Swami Rama, claims about yoga's astounding physical effects were finally validated in scientific research studies. Then in the late 1980s India's yoginis (female yogis) began making their mark here, often emphasizing the spiritual value of social service.

But what is the next wave? Important elements of the yoga tradition — elements considered absolutely essential by most practitioners in India — remain virtually unknown in the West. Ironically, this was not always the case. Historians of Western religious traditions have shown that some of these elements were known to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and were even embraced by many early Christians. Tragically, during the Dark Ages a great deal of spiritual lore disappeared in Europe. The long lost “wisdom of the ancients” was preserved in India however, and beckons us to reclaim it. Are we ready for even deeper and more powerful dimensions of yoga practice?

Most of us first get involved with yoga not because we want to be enlightened but because we want to be healthy. We're got our hands full dealing with the world around us; we don't want to devote hours a day to inner realms when contending with the outside world is challenging enough. We just want to learn some yoga postures and maybe a few tips about cooking healthier meals. But yoga opens the door to inner experience whether we consciously turn the doorknob or not. After an hour of hatha poses and yogic breathing we feel incredible. We're experiencing a level of clarity and tranquility, of focus and well being, that we've rarely touched before. We get to know ourselves in a whole new way, as a calm, bright, creative *soul* rather than a restless, worried, chronically dissatisfied *mind*. Yoga practice has carried us beyond our body and thought processes, and introduced us to *spirit*.

This is the point where many students start exploring yoga philosophy and sign up for meditation classes. We learn a whole new vocabulary for amazing inner states that English doesn't even have words for, but that yoga texts describe in detail. We become eager to experience these extraordinary states ourselves. “Enlightenment” is no longer just an abstraction to us — it becomes an actual goal.

But then, for many yoga students, something goes wrong. As I travel around the United States

visiting different yoga centers, students report a common problem: they complain their meditation practice eventually becomes so lifeless, it's difficult to stick with it. They've been taught to sit mechanically counting their mantras as if they were spiritual accountants, or to work with their posture and breath as if yoga was nothing more than a clever way to manipulate their nervous system. No wonder they're bored and uninspired!

It's time for the next wave of yogic wisdom to surge across our shores. There is so much more the masters have to share; if we're ready for this knowledge it will sweep us past the stuck points in our practice to a vastly expanded experience of spirituality. This is the aspect of yoga science that cracks us out of our self-preoccupation and opens our meditation to the universal forces flowing around us and through us. This is the knowledge the adepts in India use to lift and expand their personal practice, to *connect* with the living universe in a way that galvanizes their spiritual life. The secret — openly known throughout India but barely hinted at in the West — is the *Devata*, the inner deities or cosmic powers of yoga.

In the book you now hold in your hands, Dr. David Frawley will introduce you to the *Devatas* that lie at the heart of traditional yogic practice. (You should be aware that Devatas were also recognized by spiritual masters like Socrates, Iamblichus and Proclus in the West centuries ago.) The Devatas are the living intelligence in nature, sparks of spirit that guide and illumine, divine beings we've called "angels" in the West without really understanding what angels are. These are the forces that make mantras, yantras and mandalas come alive, that activate our intuitive powers, and that assist and protect us in the state after death.

In all my years of studying the sacred tradition in India, I've never met a yogi or yogini who wasn't actively engaged with these powerful inner energies. They link us with the many *Shaktis* or powers that govern the physical and subtle worlds. They serve as bridges to higher fields of consciousness.

In one sense Devatas are wholly the hidden powers of our own superconscious mind. In another sense they are independent entities operating outside us. In reality they are rooted in a transcendent realm where the distinctions "inner" and "outer" no longer have any relevance. To practitioners in India, they're the essence of spiritual life.

For thousands of years incorporating the Devatas into one's spiritual practice has made inner discipline a pleasure, transforming meditation from mental drudgery into heartfelt worship. Meditation comes alive when Shakti, the power of consciousness, is activated. This is the next level of practice for serious yoga students, a whole new realm of spiritual experience for intrepid inner explorers.

I'm profoundly grateful to Dr. David Frawley for beginning the complex task of introducing these forces to Western students. For decades he has been sharing the wisdom of the East with the students of the West in language we can all understand. He is one of the most respected Western-born scholar-practitioners of the yogic tradition in India itself. Dr. Frawley is the perfect teacher to instruct us in inner Tantric yoga, sharing the cherished secrets that lead to a richer, fuller spiritual life.

Linda Johnsen Sonoma, California March, 2007

Note by Lokesh Chandra

Enclosed in this beautiful book are drops of wisdom from the veins of the visualizations of the modern Rishi Vamadeva Shastri (Dr. David Frawley). In his scintillating flow of lucid cosmic language, he leads our psyche from the stormy sea of Maya into the undifferentiated luminous being of Shiva and Shakti. The cosmic processes of the Divine are integrated within the depths of our own being. He raises our consciousness to the pure bliss of *Sat-chid-ananda*, reminding us of the words of the renowned yoga treatise of *Gheranda Samhita*:

Let him find in his heart a broad ocean of nectar, Within it a beautiful island of gems, Where the sands are bright golden and sprinkled with jewels.

The perceptive words of Rishi Vamadeva reflect the subtle sound of Yoga leading to the profoundest knowing. As the yogi tries to hear finer and finer tones, he goes into a depth that invokes an absence of mind and senses to eliminate all external stimuli, in preparation of concentration and meditation. From the physical world of senses called *Bhur-loka*, he ascends to the subtle energy regions of the *Bhuvar-loka*, and then to realms of light or *Svar-loka*. Rishi Vamadeva puts these jewels in our hands, whose radiance bursts into the full bloom of Shiva and Shakti. The two are the *Para Samvit* or Supreme Consciousness that fills all existence. The world is a garment of Shiva and Shakti. The ego and things are but waves provoked by divine necessity. This flux of the universe leaps into pure consciousness, into the crystalline brilliance of Shiva and Shakti. In the secret lotus of the heart is the unfolding of Shiva and Shakti.

The Rishi Vamadeva shows the path to the palin-genesis of the spiritual state that has its origins in the depths of the heart. The *Amrita-ratnavali* says: "The essence of all things resides in our bodies," for without the body we cannot catch the glimmer of the Divine. The psychic life of the individual reflects that of the universe. In the Shaiva and Shakta traditions, two intersecting triangles represent the expanse from the One to the All (triangle with the apex downwards) and of reintegration (triangle with the apex upwards). Vamadeva shows the path to awaken this light that dwells asleep in the psyche. He exhorts us to bloom like a lotus flower, beyond the moment to the eternal. This book is an inspiring calligraphy of the Divine that does not speak words, but brings paths of reflections where we walk inside ourselves, to sketch the Echo, to search the sacred rhyme in the sparkle of life, in the interminable imminence forever beyond.

Rishi Vamadeva presents the multiple facets of Yoga, of symbolism, of the fundamental harmony of the Vedic and Tantric transcendence, and of the vast canvas of other innumerable concepts and practices, in crystal clarity of language that conveys the essence to a layman as much as to a scholar. You can hear in his words the murmurs of vedic rishis in the shimmer of their vision, the reflection of yogis, the structuring of philosophers, and gaze at the fountains of visions of sadhakas (practitioners). Inner Yoga lives in his jewel-like words that transcend in their clarity even the exegesis of the great masters of India. To read him is to walk inside ourselves in a thread of illumination that guides our meandering reflections.

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April 2007
Delhi, India*

Author's Preface

Shakti is an important principle, almost a mantra, which has entered into the new spirituality at a global level, and the worldwide resurgence of the worship of the Goddess. Shakti is the prime focus of Tantric Yoga, one of India's greatest traditions, which contains a comprehensive worship of the Goddess through beautiful and profound rituals and meditations. Tantra affords us a direct means to access her power and presence through a tradition that has never lost connection to her grace.

Yet Shakti, like Tantra, is a subject that is commonly misunderstood. Shakti is not simply about sexuality or about the feminine, though it includes these in important ways. Shakti relates to all cosmic energies and the union of all opposites. Shakti represents the awesome and cataclysmic powers of the magical Conscious Universe in which we live, on all levels of matter and mind, nature and spirit, the individual and the collective.

Shakti is ultimately the power of the Absolute or 'Pure Consciousness', what is called *Para-Shiva*, the 'Supreme Shiva' in yogic thought. Shiva is the cosmic masculine principle that compliments Shakti as the cosmic feminine force. So any real examination of Shakti must include an examination of Shiva as well.

The cosmic forces of Shiva and Shakti in turn form the basis for the divine powers or deities that rule over all the different processes within the universe. So any real examination of Shakti must look into the role of these deities as well, the great Gods and Goddesses of the living world.

Inner Tantric Yoga examines Shakti in a broader context as the power of universal awareness. It explores Shakti as the underlying source behind all the forces of nature from physical forces like electromagnetism to spiritual energies like the Kundalini. The book looks at Shakti from two primary perspectives, from a naturalistic point of view and from the point of view of deeper yogic practices of mantra and meditation. It uncovers the Shaktis at work both in the world of nature and in the higher potentials of consciousness within us.

As its name *Inner Tantric Yoga* indicates, the book is not just a presentation of the outer aspects of Tantra or an academic study of the subject, but aims to instruct serious students in the deeper Tantric tradition of Self-realization through working with Shakti and Shiva. The book reflects the larger and older tradition of Tantra, which includes the teachings of Kashmiri Shaivism, South India's Shaiva Siddhanta, the Advaitic Tantra of the great vedantic guru Shankara, and the work of the great modern Tantric seer Ganapati Muni. Yet, perhaps uniquely, the book reflects the connections between Tantra and the older Vedic tradition, which most modern studies do not understand. It shows how traditional Tantra relates to Vedic rituals and mantras, and how both similarly work with the powers of nature as forces of higher consciousness.

The goal of the book is to help awaken the Goddess and Her powers within us — to energize the Shakti of our deeper being for the realization of our true nature. Shakti is the real power behind any authentic inner yogic process. It is not we as individuals who control or direct the inner movement of Yoga. All that we personally attempt remains but a mere spark, reflection or ray of light of this more powerful Shakti. To really move forward on our path, we must learn to cooperate with the inner Shakti in its deeper activity, which is to unfold the higher potentials of awareness within us, without obstruction.

Inner Tantric Yoga teaches the inner aspect of Yoga, what one could call the 'inner Yoga', of mantra, meditation, and the quest for the higher Self. As such, the book presents a different view of Yoga than what is popular today, which emphasizes the 'outer Yoga' of asana or Yoga postures. While this 'outer Yoga' has its value; its real purpose is to provide a foundation for the 'inner Yoga',

not to be an end-in-itself.

Specifically, the book explains several powerful mantras, not only to the Goddess but also to Shiva. In so doing, it is not setting forth these mantras mechanically, to be repeated superficially to fulfill mere personal desires. It is meant to provide an inner contact with the real energy and meaning of the mantras, so that we can use them in a discriminating and transformative manner.

Only use the mantras indicated with a sattvic (pure) intention to promote healing, harmony and the removal of negativities. Use the mantras along with a sattvic (pure) life-style of clean living, good thoughts and respect for the sacred nature of all life. Make sure to first look at the 'Note on the Chanting of Mantra' in Appendix 2 for more information on this topic.

The book is divided into four sections and an appendix.

- The first section explains Shiva and Shakti as cosmic principles relative to the practice of Inner Tantric Yoga, including the importance of the use of deities (Devatas).
- The second section focuses on Shakti and its many powers in the outer world of nature and the inner world of the psyche, including various methods of 'meditation on Shakti' in the body, mind and world of nature.
- The third section focuses on the forms and personalities of the Goddess, primarily Kali, Sundari, Chhinnamasta and Bhairavi and their worship relative to the chakras and Inner Tantric Yoga, including explaining their mantras.
- The fourth section addresses the deeper practices of Tantric Energy and Vedic Light Yogas, providing keys to understanding the process of Self-realization through the chakras.
- The appendix addresses the issues of tradition and the connection between Vedic, Vedantic, Yoga and Tantric teachings, as well as providing a glossary, bibliography, footnotes and other resource material and information.

The book is based on my personal study and practice of Yoga, Tantra, Veda and Vedanta for more than thirty years. It also reflects my work with Ayurvedic medicine and Vedic astrology, though its concern is not with personal healing but with inner transformation. It is closely related to my previous book, *Tantric Yoga and the Wisdom Goddesses* (1994), and like it reflects the teachings of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni. Ganapati Muni was the chief disciple of Ramana Maharshi, the renowned Advaitic guru of modern India. However, Ganapati was also probably modern India's greatest Sanskrit writer. Most notably, he mastered the secrets of mantra, Tantra, Shakti, Veda and Vedanta through which he connected the entire Yoga tradition into a single stream of inspiration.

Recently eleven volumes of the Muni's collected Sanskrit works have become available, though without English translation, allowing his works to be preserved. This has occurred through the dedicated service of K. Natesan, who now over ninety years of age, is living proof of the grace of both Ramana and Ganapati. I have been fortunate to have known Natesan for many years, and he has been a great source of encouragement in these studies. I hope that this book encourages further study of Ganapati's work as well.

Finally, I would like to dedicate the book to Shambhavi Chopra who served to draw me back into the realms of Shiva and Devi and has shown me the living reality of the deities in their Himalayan abodes. Those looking for a deeper experiential view of the Inner Tantric Yoga should examine her books.

May the Inner Tantric Yoga connect you to the Supreme Shakti and the Supreme Shiva within your deepest nature!

*David Frawley (Vamadeva) Santa Fe, New Mexico
May 2008*

Part One.Principles of Inner Tantric Yoga

Only when Shiva is united to Shakti does he gain the power to create. Otherwise the Lord does not even have the power to stir. O Goddess, as you are worshipped by the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe, how can a mere mortal who has no merit be able to praise you?

Shankaracharya, *A I*

This section introduces the main factors of the Inner Tantric Yoga, including Shakti as the power of the Goddess, Shiva as the Supreme Deity of awareness, the Devatas or Gods and Goddesses as the universal cosmic powers, and the higher realities of Atman and Brahman, the Supreme Self and the Absolute. It includes a deeper examination of what Yoga is and how it works on all aspects of our being.



Mahakali

Shakti and Deity Yoga

The art and science of Yoga has a tremendous, if not magical capacity to transform our existence on all levels of body, mind and spirit. It connects us with the awesome forces at the root of the world of nature as well as with the supreme energy that transcends time and space. Performed in the optimal manner, an inner Yoga practice can awaken us to a radically different dimension of awareness in which we can realize all of existence, from the infinitesimal to the infinite, as aspects of our own greater being, consciousness and joy.

For such an inwardly transformative Yoga to be possible, the question inevitably arises: *How can we learn to practically work with the universal forces within us?* Important keys to this inner alchemy lie in the approaches of the ancient Yoga — along both Tantric and Vedic lines — which are largely forgotten or misunderstood in modern Yoga teachings that are usually more physical in nature.

Tantra provides us the understanding of *Shakti* or universal energy necessary for any deep changes to occur within the psyche. Veda provides us with the understanding of *Jyoti* or universal light,

to illumine our path beyond the darkness of spiritual ignorance. Tantric and Vedic Yogas — particularly if used together — enable us to harness the deeper powers of Yoga in an experiential manner, just as modern science shows us how to use the subtle natural forces of electricity or solar power for our technological benefit.

However, to really work with the inner powers of Yoga, we must first be willing to live a life of experiential spirituality. True Yoga practice is not just a hobby, sidelight, exercise system or a business. For this to occur, our daily activities must become part of a deeper ritual, offering and meditation to the great Unknown. We must consecrate all aspects of our being to the inner force and the inner light deep within us.

We must dedicate ourselves to the ‘Inner Yoga’ or *Antar Yoga* in Sanskrit,¹ the union with the divine energies within ourselves that has always been the essence of real Yoga, not simply to the physical or psychological aspects of Yoga that have so far predominated in the modern world, what is more appropriately called the

‘Outer Yoga’ or *Bahir Yoga* in Sanskrit. It is in the direction of this ancient and transformative inner Yoga that the journey of this book proceeds.

Classical Yoga and Self-Realization

We are all seeking a greater Self-realization, trying to unfold our hidden potentials in one way or another, gradually moving towards a more expansive energy and awareness. Yet we seldom examine the nature of the Self that we are seeking and how it relates to the greater existence around us. Only if we discover our deepest Self and spiritual essence, can we find lasting peace and the full unfoldment of our inner being. Any other type of Self-realization or empowerment is likely to be that of the ego, the mind or the time bound personality which keeps us limited to the realm of duality and sorrow.

Classical Yoga is a universal tradition aimed at the highest Self-realization. This is not merely the fulfillment of our human potential but the realization of the universal Being as our true nature beyond body and mind. This extraordinary spiritual aim goes far beyond our usual personal, intellectual or religious concerns and aspirations. Such a ‘spiritual Self-realization’ is the ultimate goal of all embodied life that releases the soul from its bondage to karma, time and limitation, death and suffering. It is the realization of the Godhead or the Absolute, as both one with our own deepest consciousness and as the very essence of all that is or all that ever could be.

Through the insights of the inner Yoga, we journey from the transient and finite aspects of our nature as body and mind, to the eternal and the infinite reality as unconditioned consciousness and unbounded energy. For such a radical change to occur, we must set aside our ordinary thought processes and our personal ego in favor of an awareness that is not circumscribed by the brain or by the mind. We must open up to the entire universe — from the smallest subatomic particle to the vastest expanse of space — as our true home and deeper being.

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