

Shri Bhairava Deva

Bhairava holds within Himself the entire universe by reducing all the shaktis to sameness with Himself and inasmuch as He completely devours within Himself the entire mass of ideation (which is responsible for sense of difference) - Shiva Sutras, Jaideva Singh

Bhairava means "terrifying" and it is an adjective applied to Shiva in his fearful aspect. Yet in Kashmir Shaivism, the three letters of this name are taken in a different manner. *Bha* means bharana, maintenance; *ra* means ravana, withdrawal and *va* means vama, creation of the universe.

The [*Rudrayamala Tantra*](#), quoted in a puja manual *Bhairava Upasana*, describes the worship of Vatuka Bhairava, or Bhairava as a small boy, and gives his mantra as *hrim vatukaya apadudharanaya kuru kuru batukaya hrim*. Although the ascription to *Rudrayamala* is commonly found in the colophons of tantrik texts, these passages do not appear in the modern work now available.

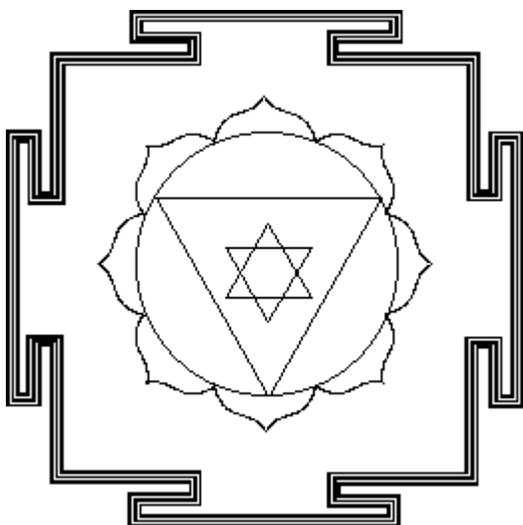
However, the same work gives *dhyanas*, or meditation images of Vatuka Bhairava as comprising the entire three gunas, and also separately as Vatuka in his sattvik, rajasik and tamasik guises. In his form as the three gunas, he is described as being like pure crystal, effulgent as the rays from 1,000 suns, shining like a sapphire thundercloud and wearing sapphire coloured clothing. He has three eyes, eight arms, four arms and two arms, depending on the preponderance of the guna, has a fanged, fearsome gaping mouth, and a girdle and anklets of live serpents. He is digambara (naked as space), He is the prince-lord (Kumaresha), and is very powerful. In his right hands he holds a staff with a skull on the top (khatvanga), a sword, a noose and a trident. His left hands hold the hourglass-shaped damaru drum, a skull, he shows the mudra bestowing boons and holds a snake in the last.

The sattvik dhyana describes Vatuka Bhairava as resembling crystal, and as white as the kunda flower, wearing celestial clothing and nine gems, of a flaming appearance, adorned with anklets of bells, having a bright, beautiful and handsome face, with three eyes. He has two hands, one of which wields a trident (shula).

The rajasik dhyana says he resembles the rising sun, with three eyes, with red limbs, in his four hands showing the sign bestowing boons, and holding a skull. In one of his left hands he holds a trident and with the other shows the mudra (hand gesture) dispelling fear. He has a blue, bejewelled throat, on his forehead is a fragment (kala) of the crescent moon and he wears clothes red as the banduka flower.

The last, tamasik dhyana, has Vatuka Bhairava as stark naked, blue in colour, with reddened hair, with terrifying fangs, three eyes, anklets of jingling bells, and with eight arms.

The yantra of Bhairava, in all his different forms, is similar to that shown below.



From the yogic point of view, if an individual applies the Bhairava Mudra, he or she looks both outwards and inwards at the same time and is one with Shiva-Shakti. Bhairava is terrible, terrifying, because he represents pure consciousness, before which the kleshas (obstacles) and conditioning of an ignorant human being crumble. The following chapter from the *Netra Tantra* reveals more of the mysteries of Bhairava.

Shri Netra Tantra 10

Bhagavan said: Now I speak of the characteristics of the Bhairava Agama, resembling a mass of fragments of collyrium, like the fire at the end of an aeon. [1]

Five faced, seated on a corpse, with ten arms, the dispeller of anxiety, resembling a host of night flowers, the final peal of thunder, making a terrifying roar. [2]

Having a gaping fanged mouth, and fearsome brows and eyes, enthroned on a lion-seat, adorned with vicious fangs, wearing a rosary of skulls, large in body, wearing a garment of elephant-hide, with the Moon as a diadem, carrying skull-bowl and a skull-staff, bearing a cleaver and a goad, with hands granting boons and dispelling fears. [3-5]

A great hero, holding a vajra and a battle-axe. After worshipping Bhairava, one should meditate on she who is on his lap. [6]

Similar to the fire causing dissolution, effulgent, like red lac and vermilion, with dishevelled hair and a mighty body, dreadful and truly terrific. [7]

With a great belly and with five faces, each of which is adorned with three eyes, having horrible talons, the protectress of the fortress, adorned with a rosary of skulls. [8]

A Devi with arms like Bhairava who carries Bhairava's weapons, thus is declared Iccha Shakti, who of her own free will goes lovingly on Bhairava's lap. [9]

Thus should one meditate on the renowned Aghoreshi having the above form. Spoken of in all tantras, but never made plain [10], my essence is by no means clear and is hard to attain. In ailments, punishment, evils and so on, in various setbacks, in protection, for desires, in pacifying and in nourishing, for cowns and for brahmins one should worship (Bhairava Yamala). Resembling a himakunda flower, like the pearly effulgence of the Moon [12], resembling 10,000,000 Moons, like the clearest crystal.

(Chit Bhairava) is like the fire at the end of the aeon, red as the China rose, equivalent to 10,000,000 Suns. One should meditate on him as red or blackish in hue. Effulgent as a red lotus or like yellow orpiment [14], being of the nature of Will (Iccha), the deva bestowing the fruit of Icchasiddha.

One should meditate on (these forms) placed in the centre of a lotus and should worship, according to the ritual injunction [16] with food, flower, incense and distilled liquor abundantly. The Devi resembling cow's milk, effulgent as a necklace of pearls [17] like beautiful pure crystal, white as snow, pure as camphor, with four arms and one face adorned with three eyes. [18] The Devi wearing white garments, ornamented with white pearls, seated on a deer with a vajra in her hand, very powerful, the (Siddha Devi). [19]

The Devi carrying a noose and a goad, ringing a bell, is placed in the east of the god of gods. [20] A man who meditates on her as one with himself is successful quickly. (Rakta Devi) resembles 10,000,000 Suns, is as effulgent as flaming fire, like a heap of vermilion, the form of lightning, inspiring fear, with three eyes and a terrifying face, with a large belly and a great body, pot-bellied, with pendulous breasts. [22]

Seated on a corpse, very powerful, wearing a rosary of skulls with a tiger skin around her hips, wearing the hide of an elephant. Naked, adorned with a garland of skulls, like great firebrands they shine and they glow. [24]

With four arms and one face, holding a cleaver, a shield a skull and a skull-staff, placed in the south. One should meditate thus. [26]

Dark red, the great light, skeletal with a deformed face, is Shushka, the protectress of the fortress. With one face and four arms, three eyes and a terrifying mouth, adorned with a necklace of teeth, a mighty-bodied one with dishevelled hair, adorned with a garland of skulls. [27]

With limbs the tendons of which are like knotted cords, carrying a cleaver and a shield, her mouth full of meat and entrails, holding a pot in her hand. One should meditate in this way in the west of the god of gods, seated on a crocodile, with the throat of a buffalo, the shoulders of an elephant, horse's ears and the face of a ram, with diamond-hard talons like weapons, legs like a beast of prey and a crocodile, with the back of a tortoise and the tail of a fish - this is the renowned Kumbha. [31]

Dusky like a blue lotus, resembling the autumnal moon and with three eyes and one face, dressed in dark clothes the colour of sapphire, adorned with sapphires, seated on the back of a lion, holding a bow and an arrow in preparedness, and carrying a dart in her hand, a great Devi. Meditated thus, she (Utpalahasta) is the giver of the desired fruit. [33]

So in the four directions are situated the Devis of Bhairava, O Mother of Hosts! [34] In the intermediate points are placed the Dutis, the south east being first and the north east last. Kali, Karali, Mahakali and Bhadrakali are the renowned Devis placed there. The Devis have two arms and sit on a lotus, carrying a knife and a severed head. The attendants of the door are Krodhana, Vrintaka, Karshana and Gajanana [37], with two arms, of deformed appearance and holding a cleaver and a shield. In the matter of pacifying acts, they are all-white, or in other acts according to their forms. [38]

Now I declare the characteristics of the Rajaraksha. By the yoga of enveloping in a mantra, one should write the name in the centre. [39]

Above this, one should worship the lord of nectar, who is Bhairava, dear one. Similarly, the Devis should be worshipped in the petals of the lotus. [40]

Afterwards, one should worship the Dutis and the servants using the root mantra. On the outside of the lotus one should draw a very white Moon mandala. On the outside of this is a bhupura, marked with the vajra symbol. Having drawn it using rochana, kumkum or white milk, one should worship, in pacifying

acts, using all-white ritual accessories, giving suitable food, and animal sacrifice of vicious beasts of prey. [43]

The wise man should do homa using white sandal, mixed with camphor and ash, unhusked rice, sesame oil together with white sugar, ghee and milk. Great peace comes swiftly by worshipping the Mrityunjaya. [45]