

# Shakta padavalis of Bengal and it musical aspects



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## Abstract

In this article I have tried to expose one more hidden treasury of Indian classical music which is only known to Bengal. Shakta padavali or shakta music is one of the most beautiful forms of music which expresses the mother son love beautifully with tender and gentle musical tunes. These songs also compels a man to think about his/her inner powers. It is only shakti /power which regulates the whole universe and we should realize what are our powers. God is the only source which makes us feel how powerful we are and enables us to do what we want to. So god is nothing else but source of energy of every being.

**Keywords:** Kali Puja, Shaktism, Mother Kali, Shakta Concept, Shakti Sadhna, Sadhak Ramprasad

## Introduction

In shakta doctrine god is mother which produces, maintains and withdraws the universe and the worshipper or devotee is her child. Rather than understanding the mother son concept in philosophical terms it is more important to realize the presence of the divine.

Shakta concept says that each man and woman carries within themselves a vast power which we also call "Shakti". The word shakti comes from the word 'shak' (the root) which means to be able to do, to have force to do, to act. Now the problem is how to identify our shakti which resides in us, so the solution is through sadhna, kriya (concentration-nyas and yantra.....gestures or mudra). Cementing black magic and sadhna with each other is meaningless. Black magic is completely a different thing. There are a few people who says that they would abandon everything in some future days, they think that in their old age they would surrender themselves at the mother's feet. Such people think that their desires and responsibility for wife, children, parents are standing in the ways of her service. But according to shakta doctrine these thoughts are common mistake. 'Maya' is also a source of shakti.

Devi is both formless and form. Union with devi is possible through both the ways i.e. Bhakti as in mukti in enjoyment as well as liberation. The former is sthula (gross) and the latter the sukshma samrasya (subtle union). The mass of men or simply speaking the devotees or worshippers who praises devi in groups are the worshippers of the shristirupa or the creative devi. But those in whom all the worldly desires are burnt they seek the formless through the worship of the sanghar rupini devi, who leads man back to herself alone.

Generally people relate tantra with shakti devotees. We need to know what is tantra. Tantra word is derived from 'tan' which means to spread. Tantra is that scripture by which knowledge (gyaana) is spread.

"Tanayate vistaryate gyanam aneta iti tantrm"

The suffix 'tra' is from the root to save, there fore the meaning which comes out is the knowledge used and spread to save.

It is common misconception that tantra is the name of scriptures of the shakta or the worshippers of shakti. But it is wrong. We can speak of tantras as we do of purans because tantra's of shaiva's, vaishnava's and so forth are also available. Tantriks are worshippers of saguna ishwar.

Now coming back to the topic which is shakta padavali, the question arises from where it came, so the answer is during Madhya yuga the flood of kirtana came into Bengal and because of extreme changes in political, religious and social conditions in Bengal a movement took place. Kirtana was the musical manifestation of the religious movement.

Shaktism based on tantrism was one of the most religious cults of

Bengal during the pre chaitanya era, but it was not known to people because of the great upheaval created by vaishnava movement. Shakta gitis or padavalis are dedicated to mother who is bhayankari, she is a fighter of evils on one hand and protective and loving mother on the other hand. Saint composers found expressions for their deepest philosophical musings which is classed as shakta padavali. The strong desire of the child for his mother's love are the theme of these songs or padas. The mother son's love is the whole soul of these songs.

On one hand these devotional songs are based on the daily chores story where the simple mother and son relationship is shown and on the other hand deep philosophical and spiritual aspects to achieve 'Moksha' through 'Sadhna'. Shakta padavalis are divided into three categories i.e.

1. Agamani Vijaya Songs
2. Shyama Sangeet
3. Kali Kirtana

Foremost composer to introduce kalika concept with Uma's early life as daughter of Giriraj and Menka. He was the originator of Shyama sangeet and Agamani vijaya songs.

The Agamani songs were set by him in developed type of raga based music, with a touch of folk.

The cravings of a child for his mother's love is the basic concept of Shyama sangeet, where goddess kalika is the affectionate mother and devotee is her child. Kali kirtanas are sung in chorus by the bhakta mandalis (group of devotees). Because of the kirtana pattern it is generally known as kali kirtan. Shakta padavalis are rich in content as well as in musical form and it needs proper attention to be secured for our next generations.

#### Reference

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