

Bhairavashtakam
(The octet on different forms of Bhairava of Varanasi)

Translated by

P.R.Ramachander

Bhairava is a fierce deity and is the guardian of the city of Varanasi. His origin is interesting. It seems Once Lord Brahma got very proud and neglected God Shiva. Lord Shiva burnt with anger and his fierce anger reframed itself in to Lord Bhairava, who immediately went to Lord Brahma's place and pinched one of the heads of Lord Brahma (Those times he had five heads). This was a Brahmahathi sin and the head got attached to the hand of Lord Bhairava. He was advised to go to Varanasi and worship Goddess Annapurneswari to get rid of the sin. He did so and as a result the head of Brahma got detached. Lord Shiva then appointed him to guard the holy city of Varanasi. He sits there in several forms. This octet addresses him first in his principal form of Kshethrapala (guardian of the temple) and then to the eight different forms located in different places of Varanasi. These temples are located in Varanasi at:-

Kshethrapala Bhairava Or Dwara Bhairava-Kasi Viswanath temple
Ruru Bhairava - Hanuman Ghat
Chanda Bhairava - Durga Kund
Asitanga Bhairava - Amrit Kund
Kapala Bhairava or Lat Bhairav
Krodha Bhairava - Kamaccha
Unmatta Bhairava - Bhimchandi Sadak
Samhara Bhairava - Trilochanganj
Bhishana Bhairava or Bhut Bhairav

Bhairava is worshipped as an incarnation of Lord Shiva by some Shaivaites and as his aid by majority of them. There was a time when the fierce branch of Shaivism known as Kapaliakas considered him as their deity. But this sect has almost disappeared.

In this stotra , the ashta Bhairavas are related to the ashta Mathas(mothers) viz Brahmani, Maheswari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Kaumari, Indri , Narasimhi and Chamundi

In South India , it is a normal practice to take permission of Lord Bhairava (whose temple would be outside the main temple) before going to see Lord Shiva.

It is believed that if we worship Lord Bhairava , he would protect our assets and wealth. It is a practice to light a pepper lamp before him and offer him curd rice on Krishna Paksha Ashtami days.

Kshethra Pala Bhairava
(Bhairava who is the guard of earth)

Raktha jwalaa Jada dharam , sasi dharan, Rakthanga thejo mayam,
Dakka Shoola kapala pasa gadha dharam Bhairavam,
Nirvanam Gathavahanam Trinayanamcha Ananda kolahalam,
Vande bhootha pisacha natha vadukam Kshethrasya palam Shubham. 1

I salute the leader of ghosts and Ghouls , Lord Bhairava,
Who wears the red flame as his matted hair,
Who wears the moon , who shines in red colour,
Who holds a drum , spear , skull , rope and mace in his hands,
Who is nude , who rides on a dog , who has three eyes,
Who is always happy and exuberant and is the guard of the temple.

Asithanga Bhairava
(Bhairava who has a dark body)

Trinethram , varadam shantham , munda mala bhooshitham,
Swetha varnam , krupa murthim , Bhairavam Kundalajjwalam,
Gada kapala samyuktham , kumarsya digambaram,,
Banam pathrancha sankham cha Aksha maalaam kundalam,
Naga Yagnopaveetham cha dharinam suvibhooshitham,
Brahmani shakthi sahitham , hamsaroodam suroopinam,
SArvabheeshta dharam nithyam asithangam Bhajamyaham. 2

I pray the dark Bhairava who fulfills all desires,
Who is forever, who has three eyes , who blesses and is peaceful,
Who wears a skull garland , who is white , who is the Lord of mercy,
Who shines in his ear globes, who holds mace and the skull,
Who is young and nude , who holds arrow, vessel, conch , bead chain and ear globes,
Who wears snake as sacred thread , who is well ornamented,
Who is with Goddess Brahmani , rides on a swan and is good to look at.

Krodha Bhairava
(Bhairava who is angry)

Trinethram , varadam , santham , kumarancha digambaram,
Gadam shankam cha Chakrancha pada pathrancha dharinam,
Lakshmyacha sahitham vame garudasana susthitham,
Neela varnam maha devam Vande Sri Kroda Bhairavam. 3

I salute the angry Bhairava , who is blue and a great God,
Who has three eyes , blesses, peaceful , young and nude,
Who is armed with mace , conch , wheel , rope and a vessel,
Who is near Goddess Lakshmi riding on Garuda the eagle.

Unmatha Bhairava
(Bhairava who is mad)

Trinethram , varadam , santham , kumarancha digambaram,
Hema Varnam , maha devam , hastha vahana susthitham,
Gadgam, kapalam , musalam , dathantham , kedagam thadha,
Varahi shakthi sahitham Vande Unmatha Bhairavam.

4

I salute that mad Bhairava who is power called Varahi,
Who has three eyes , blesses, peaceful , young and nude,
Who is of golden colour , great God and rides on a swan,
And who holds sword , skull , Pestle and also the shield.

Ruru Bhairava
(Bhairava who is the teacher)

Trinethram , varadam , santham , kumarancha digambaram,
Dangam krisna mrugam pathram bibranam chakru panakam,
Maheswaryayudham devam vrusharoodam smitha vahanam,
Shudha sphatikam sankaram , namami Ruru Bhairavam.

5

I salute the Bhairava with the deer ,who is like pure crystal and a destroyer,
Who has three eyes , blesses, peaceful , young and nude,
Who holds a hatchet, deer, drinking goblet and a sword in his hands,
Who has the armed Maheswari by his side and who is smiling and rides on a bull.

Kapala Bhairava
(Bhairava of the Skull)

Trinethram , varadam , santham , kumarancha digambaram,
Pasam , Vajram , thadha Gadgam pana pathranch dharinam,
Indrani shakthi sahitham Gaja vahana susthitham,
Kapala Bhairavam Vande padma ragha prabham Shubham.

6

I salute the Bhairava of the skull, who has a shining body ,
Who has three eyes , blesses, peaceful , young and nude,
Who holds rope, Vajrayudha, Sword and Drinking Goblet,
Who has with him Indrani Shakthi , is being well praised and rides on an elephant.

Chanda Bhairava
(Fierce Bhairava)

Trinethram , varadam , santham , kumarancha digambaram,
Dhanur banancha bhibranam , Gadgam Pathram Thadaiva cha,
Koumari shakthi sahitham , Shikihi vahana sthitham,
Gowri varnyudham DEvam Vande Sri Chanda Bhairavam.

7

I salute the Chanda Bhairava who is pure white in colour,

Who has three eyes , blesses, peaceful , young and nude,
Who holds rope, Vajrayudha, Sword and Drinking Goblet,
Who has with him Kaumari Shakthi and rides on a peacock.

Bheeshana Bhairava
The fearful Bhairava

**Trinethram , varadam , santham , kumarancha digambaram,
Gadgam soolam Kapalancha darinam musalam thadha,
Chamunda shakthi sahitham pretha vahana susthitham,
Raktha varnam maha devam Vabde Bheeshana Bhairavam,.**

8

I salute the fearful Bhairava who is a great God of blood red colour,
Who has three eyes , blesses, peaceful , young and nude,
Who holds sword , trident , skull and pestle in his hand,
Who has with him Chamunda Shakthi and rides on a corpse.

Samhara Bhairavam
Bhairava the destroyer

**Dasa bhahum trinethram cha sarpa yagnopaveethinm,
Damishtra karala vadanam ashtaiswarya pradhayakam,
Digambaram kumarancha simha vahana samsthitham,
Soolam damarugam shankam , gadam chakrancha darinam,
Gadgam pathram cha Gadwangam pasa mangusa meva cha,
Ugra roopam madonmathamam bada vaalai,
Chandika shakthi sahitham dyayeth samhara Bhairavam.**

9

I meditate on Bhairava the destroyer who is with Chandika Shakthi,
Who has ten hands, three eyes and snake as sacred thread,
Who has protruding teeth , fearful look and grants eight type of wealth,
Who is nude, a youth and rides on a lion,
Who holds trident , drum , conch , mace and wheel in his hands,
Who holds sword , vessel , Gadwangam, rope and goad.
And who has fearful looks , wears skull garland and greatly exuberant.