

Kalabhairavashtakam,

By

Adhi Sankara Bhagwat Pada

Translated by

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(Kalabhairava is the God who is the protector of Benares. He is supposed to be the fearsome aspect of Lord Shiva. Once Brahma insulted Lord Shiva and his fifth head teasingly laughed at Lord Shiva. From Lord Shiva came out the Kalabhairava (Black Bhairava) who tore off the fifth head of Lord Brahma. On the entreaties of Lord Vishnu, Shiva pardoned Lord Brahma. But the sin (in the form of a lady) of beheading Lord Brahma followed Kalabhairava everywhere. Also the head of Brahma stuck to him. To keep away the sin and punishment which were chasing him, Kalabhairava entered the city of Benares. The sin could not enter the city. Kalabhairava was made as the Kotwal (Inspector general) of the city of Benares. Kalabhairava rides on a dog. A pilgrimage to Kasi (Benares) is not supposed to be complete without visiting the temple of Kalabhairava.

Another story identifies Kalabhairava with Veerabhadra who cut off the head of Daksha the father of Sathi Devi, when he insulted lord Shiva. Sathi's body was cut into pieces and strewn all over India giving rise to Shakthi Peetas. Outside every Shakthi Peeta is the temple for Bhairava.

There is also another interpretation. He is the form of Shiva who controls the growth and management of time. (Kala means time). Whoever wants to spend, manage or ration their time in a proper manner should pray him.

He is also considered as the guardian of temples of Lord Shiva. After locking the doors of the temple of Lord Shiva, the keys are ceremonially offered to Bhairava and taken back in most of the Shiva temples.

This very musical stotra of Lord Kalabhairava is supposed to be written by Adhi Sankara Bhagawt Pada. Even today this ashtakam is recited by the priests of the temple of Kalabhairava in Benares before blessing the devotee with a tap by the cane of Lord Kalabhairava)

**Deva raja sevya mana pavangri pankajam,
Vyala yagna suthra mindu shekaram krupakaram,
Naradadhi yogi vrundha vandhitham digambaram,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 1**

**I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Whose lotus like feet is being served by Devendra,
Who is merciful and wears the moon on his forehead ,
Who wears a snake as his sacred thread,
Who wears the different directions as his cloth,
And who is worshipped by sages like Narada.**

**Bhanu koti bhaswaram, bhavabdhi tharakam param,
Neelakanda meepsidarta dayakam trilochanam,
Kalakala mambujaksha maksha soola maksharam,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 2**

I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Who shines like billions of suns,
Who helps us cross this miserable ocean of life,
Who is supreme and has a blue neck,
Who has three eyes and grants us our desires,
Who is the death to the God of death*,
Who has lotus flower like eyes,
Who has the undefeatable trident,
And who does not have decay.

* could also be translated as death to the time.

**Soola tanga pasa danda pani madhi karanam,
Syama kaya madhi devamaksharam niramayam,
Bheema vikramam prabhun vichithra thandava priyam,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 3**

I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Who has a spear, a chord and a stick as weapons,
Who is black in colour and the primeval cause,
Who is deathless and the first God,
Who is free from decay and ill health,
Who is the Lord who is a great hero,
And who likes the special vigorous thandava*

*dance with male's vigorous movements. .

**Bhukthi mukthi dayakam prasashtha charu vighram,
Bhaktha vatsalam shivam* , samastha loka vighram,
Vinikwanan manogna hema kinkini lasath kateem,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 4**

I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Who fulfills desires and also grants salvation,
Who is well known for his pretty mien,
Who is a form of Shiva ,who loves his devotees,
Who is the God of the entire world,
Who assumes various forms,
And who has a golden waist thread,
On which jingling bells are tied.

* Another version mentions as Stitham –the one who is static.

**Dharma sethu palakam, thwa dharma marga nasakam,
Karma pasa mochakam , susharma dayakam vibhum,
Swarna varna sesha pasa shobithanga mandalam,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 5**

**I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Who maintains the bridge of dharma in life,
Who destroys paths which are not right,
Who saves us from the ties of Karma,
Who is the lord who makes us ashamed ,
When trying to do wrong things,
Who has a shining body because of golden rope ,
With bells tied in various places.**

**Rathna padukha prabhabhirama padayugmakam,
Nithyamadwidheeyamishta daivatham niranjanam,
Mrutyu darpa nasanam karaladamshttra mokshanam,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 6**

**I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Who has feet adorned by the shine of gem studded sandals,
Who is eternal and does not have any one second to him,
Who is our favorite God who bestows everything,
Who takes away the fear of death from humans,
And who grants them salvation by his terrible teeth.**

**Attahasa binna padma janda kosa santhatheem,
Drushti pada nashta papa jala mugra sasanam,
Ashtasidhi dayakam kapala malikadaram,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 7**

**I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Whose loud roar is enough to destroy all those created by Brahma,
Whose sight is sufficient to destroy all sins,
Who is crafty and strict ruler,
Who can grant the eight occult powers,
And who wears the garland of skulls.**

**Bhootha sanga nayakam, vishala keerthi dayakam,
Kasi vasa loka punya papa shodhakam vibum,
Neethi marga kovidham purathanam jagatpathim,
Kasika puradhi nadha Kalabhairavam bhaje. 8**

I salute Kalabhairava, the lord of the city of Kasi,
Who is the chief of the society of Bhoothas,
Who grants broad based fame,
Who is the lord who judges good and bad deeds,
Of those who live in Varanasi,
Who is an expert in the way of righteousness,
And who is eternally old and lord of the universe.

**Kalabhairavashtakam patanthi yea manoharam,
Jnana mukthi sadhanam , vichithra punya vardhanam,
Soka moha dainya lopa kopa thapa nasanam,
Thea prayanthi Kalabhairavangri saniidhim druvam. 9**

Those who read this enticing octet on Kalabhairava,
Which is the source of eternal knowledge,
Which increases the effect of righteous deeds,
And which destroys grief, passion, poverty, want and anger,
Would surely reach the holy presence of Kalabhairava.