

New Year's Immersion:

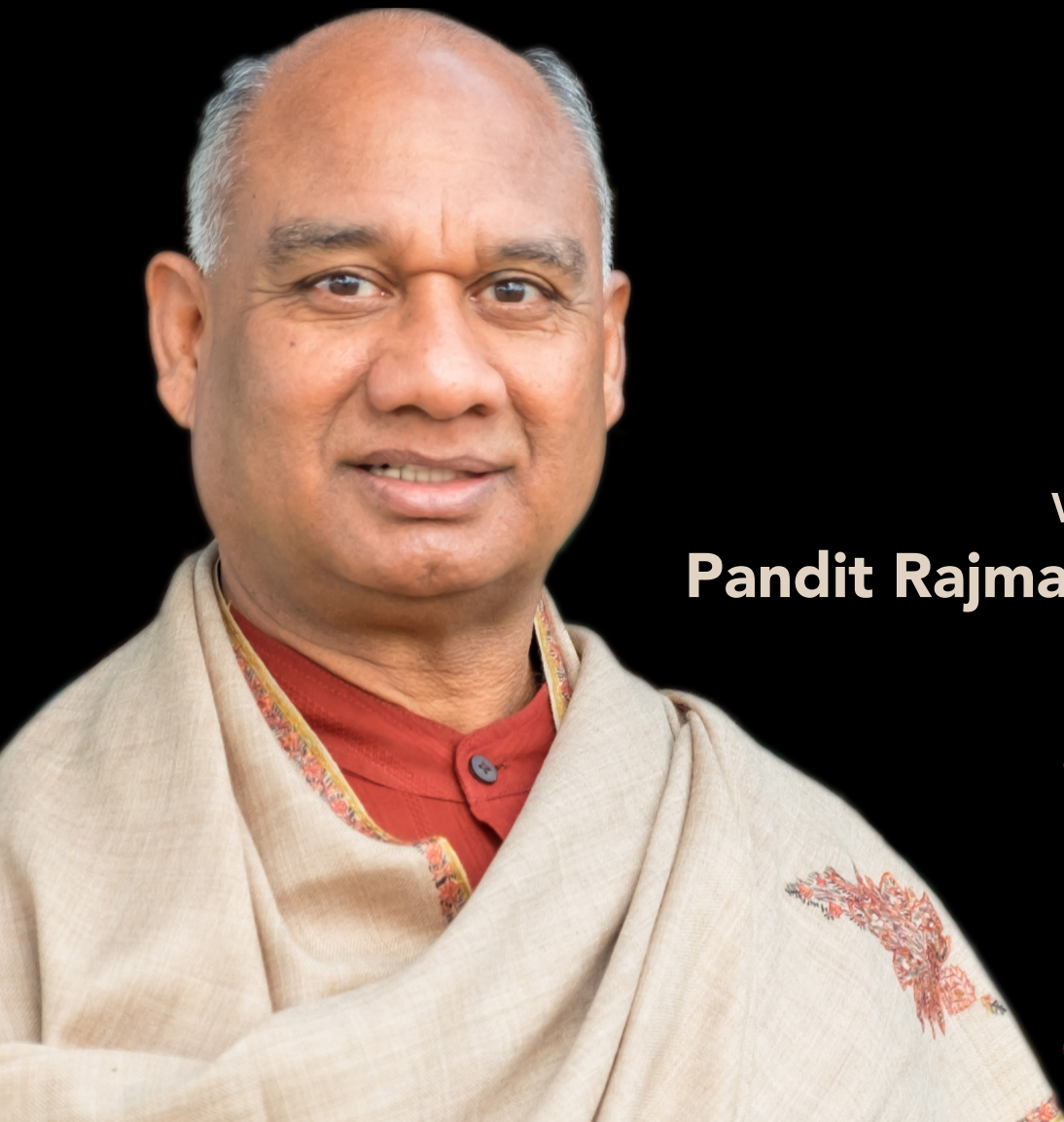
Tantric Rituals

December 27-30

Tantric Meditation

December 30-January 1, 2017

featuring
Rudra Yaga and Sri Chakra Puja



with

Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, PhD



For the first time, Pandit Tigunait is teaching an aspect of right-hand tantra that has been a carefully guarded secret for centuries. Experience the *puja* of **64 Yoginis, Rudra Yaga, and Sri Chakra Puja**, and partake in the healing and life-changing energy emitting from the *shaktis* presiding over these yantras and mandalas.

Why Now?

Our society is run by fear and riddled with uncertainty and indecisiveness. We must summon the courage to change the course of events, as well as to empower ourselves with independent thinking, clear vision, and self-trust. The practice we will learn during this New Year's Immersion is one of the surest means of accomplishing this goal. As we participate in this practice, we'll gather the tools for conquering our inner unrest and strengthening our resolve to face and overcome the demands of this troubled world. We'll put our resolution into practice by undertaking a group practice of 64 Yoginis, Rudra Yaga, and Sri Chakra—the embodiment of tantric experience.

General Structure of Study and Practice

This program is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the rituals of right-hand tantra and has the celebrated tantric practices of 64 Yoginis, Rudra Yaga, and Sri Chakra puja at its core. The second part focuses on tantric meditation in the *samaya* tradition of the Himalayan Masters. Both parts of the program are highly experiential.

Each morning, Panditji will teach the dynamics of the group practice we will be doing in the afternoon. He will explain its inner meaning and provide insight into what the practice and its fruits mean in our personal life. In the afternoons, you will participate in the practice of Rudra Yaga and Sri Chakra Puja. In the evenings, Panditji will answer any questions that arise during the afternoon practice.

Prior to the New Year's Immersion, numerous senior students and teachers living both at the Institute and in other parts of the world will undertake an 11-day practice (December 17–27). The intention behind their practice is to infuse the collective consciousness with the energy conducive to Rudra Yaga and Sri Chakra Puja that you will be experiencing in the afternoons. Many of these individuals will be available should you need personal assistance with the recitation of the mantras or with following the steps of the ritual.

Transition from Tantric Rituals to Tantric Meditation

Your understanding of and participation in **Tantric Rituals** will be immensely useful in laying the foundation for **Tantric Meditation**. The two go hand in hand: Rituals enable you to identify the subtle steps and procedures of meditation, while the meditative techniques breathe life into rituals. Together, rituals and meditation open the door to experiencing the full range of tantra.

Immersion Schedule

Part 1—Tantric Rituals, December 27–30

December 27,	7:30 pm	Principles of Tantric Rituals <i>Lecture</i>
December 28,	10:00 am	Rudra Yaga in the Order of Right-Hand Tantra <i>Lecture</i>
	2–5:00 pm	Rudra Yaga—Traditional & Experiential <i>Group Practice</i>
	7:30 pm	Q&A and Discussion
December 29,	10:00 am	Sri Chakra Puja in the Order of Right-Hand Tantra <i>Lecture</i>
	2–5:00 pm	Sri Chakra Puja—Traditional & Experiential <i>Group Practice</i>
	7:30 pm	Q&A and Discussion
December 30,	10:00 am	Summary and Take-Home Experience

Part 2—Tantric Meditation, December 30–January 1, 2017

December 30,	7:30 pm	Translating Tantric Rituals into the System of Tantric Meditation <i>Lecture</i>
December 31,	10:00 am	Steps to Unleashing the Radiance of Kundalini Shakti at the Navel Center <i>Lecture</i>
	3:30 pm	Meditation on the Radiance of Kundalini at the Navel Center— A Step-by-Step Practice <i>Practicum</i>
	7:30 pm	Q&A and Discussion
January 1,	10:00 am	A Take-Away Gift—A Plan to Live with Purpose <i>Lecture</i>

64 Yoginis

The practice of 64 Yoginis is one of the most esoteric and potent of all tantric practices. *Yogini* means “power of union” or “the power that facilitates union”. In tantric mythology, yoginis are described as fertility goddesses. They are numberless—some yoginis are benevolent and others, fierce; some rule over our negative tendencies and others over our positive ones. Together, they create a condition both inside and outside us conducive to finding lasting fulfillment. These pervasive forces shape our thoughts, speech, and actions. Our likes and dislikes are influenced by them. They cloud our consciousness as well as clear it. Thus, either we find ourselves fully empowered or we remain entangled in hopelessness.

To a tantric practitioner, life is an ongoing process of self-transformation. Self-transformation is dependent on eliminating undesirable circumstances and replacing them with desirable ones. Tantrics accomplish this process by establishing an intimate relationship with the yoginis—the forces of self-empowerment and disempowerment. The infinitely vast range of yoginis is viewed in 64 groups, hence 64 Yoginis.

In our tradition, we recognize and propitiate the 64 Yoginis while following the injunctions of right-hand tantra. We invoke the 64 Yoginis in barley sprouts. By doing so, we invoke and embrace the goddess of fertility in an aspect of nature that is about to blossom and reward the practitioners with life's abundance. In the samaya tradition, which is our tradition, the goddess is internalized and worshipped at the navel center as *Jatavedasi*, the goddess of inner richness and brilliance.

Rudra Yaga

Rudra is *prana shakti*, the vibrant life force. This intelligent energy pulls us out of inertia, makes us vibrant and energetic, and puts us on the path of inner fulfillment and freedom. It is represented by Rudra—the most energetic form of Shiva—emerging from the primordial fire. Intent on filling the universe with life force, Rudra performs his cosmic dance. In response, the goddess of immaculate love, beauty, and bliss emerges, and the union of the two fills the universe. It is in *this* universe everyone and everything lives and thrives.

Rudra Yaga is one of the most ancient and pristine rituals for accessing Rudra Shakti, the life-sustaining force within and without. The masters in our tradition access this shakti in three different ways—*kaula*, *mishra*, and *samaya*. *Kaula* is a purely ritualistic path, whereas *samaya* is purely yogic. The yogis following the method of *mishra* combine rituals with meditative and pranayama techniques. Each of these paths has its own unique characteristics.

The ritualistic path of **kaula**, if followed while observing the precise rules of tantra, bears fruit almost instantly. The rituals are elaborate and require the recitation of thousands of mantras unknown to casual seekers and practitioners. The preparatory steps to the ritual-heavy Rudra Yaga are lengthy. They consist of invoking the benevolent forces of nature which govern, guide, and nourish the functions of earth, water, fire, air, clouds, lightning, and seasons. These same forces nourish and guide our body and mind. The preparatory rituals invoke and help us connect with the forces that preside over constellations, zodiac signs, stars, planets, the four directions, time, the laws of cause and effect, and ultimately, the all-pervading force that holds the numberless aspects of nature together in harmony. Each step of these preparatory practices is accompanied by the recitation of mantras and intricate ritual offerings. The main course of Rudra Yaga begins only after these preparatory practices have been completed. The **samaya** method of Rudra Yaga is totally opposite to the ritualistic method. Here, a yogi is led to awaken *kundalini shakti* at the *muladhara* chakra, located at the perineum. With the help of pranayama and mantra japa, *kundalini shakti* is then brought to the *manipura* chakra, located at the navel center.

Samaya is the specialty of the Himalayan Tradition. We are taught to take extreme precautions not to get distracted during the upward journey of the vibrant energy from the *muladhara* to the *manipura*. Finally, we are taught the precise method of meditating at the *manipura* chakra. In the tantric tradition, the *manipura* chakra is described as the center of fire. The fire here is a miniature cosmic fire, the ultimate vortex of the life force. Rudra Yaga at the navel center opens the floodgates to experiencing the divinity that embodies the inexhaustible life force. Only after we have gained access to the navel center and become fully established there are we taught how to meditate on the crown

center, which subsumes all other chakras. The system of Rudra Yaga in the samaya school of tantra uses the human body itself as an altar, and all rituals are completely internalized.

The **mishra** method of Rudra Yaga combines ritualistic kaula and yogic samaya. In this system, the purpose of rituals is to awaken the forces of nature and guide them to awaken the power that lies dormant in the various chakras. A specific segment of rituals and the power engendered by them awakens the inherent power of the first three chakras and brings it to the heart center. This process frees us from fear, doubt, insecurity, and grief. It infuses us with self-confidence, self-trust, courage, and determination. Other parts of the rituals awaken the forces inherent in the higher chakras, mainly the center between the eyebrows. This frees us from confusion and the cravings that create turmoil from inside. Finally, the main course of Rudra Yaga commences.

At the outset, most students in our tradition are led through the disciplines of mishra, which combine both the ritualistic approach of kaula and the yogic approach of samaya. The reason for this is that the anatomy both of the mind and of the pranic force, which pervades and permeates every nook and cranny of our body, is so subtle that it is an impenetrable mystery. Therefore, the practice of samaya is difficult for most seekers in the beginning. Ritualistic practices are somewhat easier. The majority of tantric texts are ritual manuals. Learned tantrics break lengthy rituals into smaller steps, and rearrange them in a manner conducive to accomplishing the intended goal.

Once the ritualistic portion of the practice is fully firm in the mind, we can apply the same procedure to awaken and become fully connected to our inner core. Unlike the internal practice of Rudra Yaga, a group of adepts and aspirants can participate in the ritual-driven practice of Rudra Yaga. This group practice creates a collective consciousness that is transforming both at a micro and macro level. In the past, whenever society was suffering from upheaval and unable to supply the nourishment necessary for stable health, wealth, peace, and happiness, adepts and aspirants undertook mega-sized group practices such as Rudra Yaga. In this way enlightened souls restored peace to society, brought nature into balance, and created an environment where people can live without fear and sorrow.

The Main Course of Rudra Yaga

The main course of Rudra Yaga consists of mantra recitation and fire offerings. Unlike meditative mantras, the Rudra Yaga mantras are lengthy. There are 123 Rudra mantras, which are divided into six parts. The first part consists of 6 mantras; the second, 16 mantras; the third, 6 mantras; the fourth, 12 mantras; the fifth, 17 mantras; and the sixth and final part, 66 mantras. Memorizing these long and often difficult-to-articulate mantras is a challenge. However, once we are able to recite them from memory, our brain and mind will not be able to disobey the commands of our soul.

Sri Chakra Puja

Sri Vidya is the embodiment of the tantric experience—all forms of tantric practices are subsumed in it. Sri Chakra is the visual expression of Sri Vidya. Sri Chakra allows us to identify the supreme power of intelligence, tracing it from its most subtle form to its most visible, manifest form.

Sri Chakra is made of nine circuits, with a dot in the center representing transcendental love, beauty, and joy. The ritual practice of Sri Chakra is preceded by Rudra Yaga—only after Rudra Yaga is completed does the puja of Sri Chakra begin.

Each circuit of the Sri Chakra is composed of a cluster of divinities. These divinities correspond to different forces in the universe and in our own body and mind. For example, there are 28 divinities in the outermost circuit of Sri Chakra. These divinities govern the forces that control and nourish our physical world and each has its corresponding mantras. Although independent in their own right, collectively these divinities work toward a common goal—our ultimate freedom and fulfillment. As we go deeper into the circuits of Sri Chakra, our quest becomes increasingly refined and fulfilling.

The worship of Sri Chakra can be relatively simple, moderately elaborate, or extremely elaborate. As part of daily practice, students in our tradition do not worship Sri Chakra with rituals but use the ritualistic procedure as a road map and meditate on Sri Chakra internally. This meditation is completely different from visualizing Sri Chakra or its circuits.

During auspicious occasions, we worship Sri Chakra moderately in honor of the forces that are constantly providing us with guidance and nourishment. Moderately elaborate practice is often goal-driven and done by a group of practitioners. In other words, it is a group practice. Yogis in our tradition arrange a group practice of Sri Chakra for the welfare of society or to restore nature's equilibrium.

Extremely elaborate practice is done at highly significant times, such as during the *sandhi* of two *yugas*. *Sandhi* means “joint” or “transition.” There are times when the forces of light and darkness clash—both forces are at their peak, both are unyielding, and a collision could wipe out thousands of years of human achievement. At such times, we undertake the extremely elaborate practice of Sri Chakra. In order to include high-minded seekers and friends in the practice and help create a collective consciousness, we resolve to do Sri Chakra worship with rituals.

Similarly, when the most exalted and motherly force, Sri Vidya, is invited to reside permanently at a particular place, we organize an extremely elaborate Sri Chakra worship. This highly intricate and elaborate ritual worship is used to gather the benevolent motherly force of Sri Vidya from the cosmos, from the minds and hearts of the sages, and from the existing “awakened” shrines, and request her to reside at a new place. Such a place is called a shrine.

Procedure for Puja at the Five Altars

December 28 and 29, 2–5 pm

Introduction

Tantric practices of the 64 Yoginis, Rudra Yaga, and Sri Vidya vary in length, depth, size, and complexity. It may take a few hours, days, weeks, or even months to complete such a practice. We are completing this practice in just two days only because a group of us will do the practice on behalf of all of you continuously for eleven days, completing it on December 27. With these tantric practices, we invoke the guiding grace of the primordial master, the transcendental being, and all those great souls who constantly drink the nectar of that guiding grace. It is under their guidance we invoke and propitiate nature's forces that exude life and light, and thus enable us to be healthy, happy, peaceful, and prosperous in every aspect of life.

During this practice, we'll invoke, propitiate, and imbibe the shakti of a vast range of divinities clustered in five groups. There are five altars, each distinctly designated to one of these groups of divinities.

Altar 1–Guru Pitham

This altar represents matha-amnaya pitham, the seat of the cave monastery of our tradition. At this altar, we invoke and propitiate the masters of our lineage, and the divinities which preside over our tradition, providing guidance and nourishment to the teachers and students. The invocation begins with lighting the flame. Then one by one, we invoke the Masters of the Tradition.

The first and foremost master is Ishvara, the absolute divine being, represented by pancha-brahma. Thereafter, there are three categories of masters: divya, siddha, and manava. At this altar, we invoke and propitiate masters belonging to all of these categories. Steps for the invocation follow:

1. With eight verses of Parampara Ashtakam, we invoke the lineage
2. With the Pancha Brahma mantra, we worship the Primordial Master
3. Invocation to Bhagavan Dakshinamurti
4. Invocation to Divya masters
5. Invocation to Siddha masters
6. Invocation to Manava (human) masters
7. Samashti puja, the collective puja of all masters, all known and unknown sources of knowledge

Altar 2–Vishvedeva Pitham

This altar is for Vishvedeva, the divinities that preside over all aspects of our life as well as the whole universe. Ganesha presides over these divinities. The kalash—the vessel filled with sacred water—occupies this altar and is the locus for Ganesha and all the divinities accompanying him. The procedures and steps for invoking and propitiating the divinities at this altar follow:

1. Invocation with Vishvedeva Sukta
2. Invocation to the five main divinities, beginning with Ganesha
3. Invocation to the divine forces which illuminate and protect the directions, and infuse us with clarity and confidence in our quest. These forces are collectively known as Dikpala, and they are headed by Indra.
4. Invocation to the celestial bodies headed by the sun and the nine planets
5. Invocation to Yajnesvara, the Lord of Rituals
6. Invocation to Sthana Devata, Grama Devata, Kula Devata, Parampara Devata, Ishta Devata, Mantra Devata, and finally, Rishis, the Seers.
7. Invocation and worship of Ganesha along with Avarana Devata
8. Conclusion with Ganesha Stotra

Altar 3–Yogini Pitham

This altar is the seat of the 64 Yoginis, and is represented by barley sprouts. We invoke the 64 Yoginis collectively with the first verse of Nitya-shodashikarnava, and it is followed by Nama-mala mantra consisting of the names of the 64 Yoginis. The practice pertaining to the 64 Yoginis is unique to our tradition and furnishes the foundation for all tantric practices, especially the practices for healing, and the yogic siddhis such as those described in Vibhuti Pada, the third chapter of the *Yoga Sutra*.

Altar 4–Rudra Pitham

This altar is the seat of Rudra. Rudra is prana shakti, the vibrant life-force. Rudra presides over our health and longevity. It is the primordial pool of healing force. The yantra of Rudra consists of eight avarna, circuits of shaktis. The innermost circuit is comprised of a circle, and is the locus for the power of Maha Mrtyunjaya mantra. Surrounding this circle, there are seven circuits, each consisting of eight petals. These petals serve as a locus for fifty-six shaktis that ensure we live a healthy, happy, peaceful, and fulfilling life. They grant the protection and guidance we need in our worldly and spiritual quests. The last circuit is a square with four gates. Since four prominent divinities guard these gates, those divinities are viewed as our guardians. They are Durga, the force that pulls us out from helpless, insurmountable situations; Ganesha, the one who removes the obstacles from our path; Nandi, the one who infuses our mind and heart with courage, enthusiasm, and joy; and, Batuka Bhairava, the one who infuses our minds and hearts with intuitive wisdom and indomitable will.

We'll conduct Rudra Yaga while keeping the Rudra Yantra at the center of our sadhana. The invocation and propitiation of the cluster of divinities will follow the method of right-hand tantra as taught in the Sri Vidya Tradition. We'll enter from the northern gate of Rudra Yantra with the blessings and guidance of Divine Mother Durga, and continue moving from outside in, clockwise, to finally reach the center. More clearly, the steps of the practice are as follows:

1. Invocation and puja of the first circuit consisting of the four gates. It begins with the invocation of Divine Mother Durga, and the other three divinities.

2. Invocation and puja of eight loka-palas, the protectors of the directions, or, the divinities who provide directions in life.
3. Invocation and puja of Dhara, Uma, etc.—eight shaktis which bring stability in life.
4. Invocation and puja of Arya, Prajna, etc.—eight shaktis which infuse us with clarity, intuitive wisdom, and power of discrimination.
5. Invocation and puja of Vishva, Vidya, etc.—eight shaktis which manifest in us in the form of creativity and ingenuity.
6. Invocation and puja of Rama, Raka, etc.—eight shaktis which manifest as beauty, tranquility, and sustainability.
7. Invocation and puja of Sharva, Bhava, etc.—eight shaktis which serve as a locus for everything that exists, and hold the entire web of life together in a mutually supportive manner.
8. Invocation and puja of the innermost divinity, Rudra, the breath of life.

This is where a group of students who will have just completed their eleven-day practice will do the final recitation of Shat Rudriya.

Altar 5—Sri Chakra

Sri Chakra puja is the culmination of the tantric experience. Sri Chakra is comprised of ten circuits. Each circuit consists of large families of shaktis. During this practice, we'll follow the method of right-hand tantra that has been passed down in the samaya tradition of Sri Vidya. After propitiating each circuit from outside-in, we'll do the puja of all divinities in the order of *Khadga Mala*, the mala of the sword.

Khadga means sword. In spiritual literature, the sword is the symbol of knowledge. The sword of knowledge cuts asunder our long-cherished afflictions and fear, doubt, sorrow, and grief arising from them. In the Sri Vidya tradition, this sword of knowledge, khadga mala, is made of the names of hundreds of shaktis that reside in Sri Chakra. These names are recited in fifteen different ways. Thus, one khadga mala mantra means doing 15 malas of japa for each shakti residing in Sri Chakra. Khadga mala mantra is one of the top secrets of tantra which has been passed on from one generation to the next.

The khadga mala practice of Sri Chakra will conclude with the recitation of Sri Sukta, followed by the Kalyana Vrishti stotra, a set of fifteen tantric mantras. These mantras invoke Vrishti, the rain of Kalyana—goodness, beauty, and bliss—hence the term Kalyana Vrishti.