

New Year's Immersion: Tantric Rituals & Tantric Meditation 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.