R. B. KITAJ

RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION AT HIRSHHORN MUSEUM, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Travelling to:
The Städische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, 5 February – 21 March 1982

Represented by:
Marlborough Fine Art (London) Ltd., 6 Albermarle Street, London W1X 3HF
Telephone: 01-629 6181, Cables: Bondartos London, Telex: 286259
VIDYA DEHEJA

THE YOGINI Temples of INDIA

A Preliminary Investigation

Introduction

Indian temples generally evoke images of shrines with tall towers and impressive gateways covered with an abundance of figural and decorative sculpture. We are aware of dimly lit interiors with a series of halls at the end of which is the mysterious garbhagriha or womb-chamber with the image of the deity visible only by the flickering light of oil lamps. But the Yogini temples of India present a total contrast to such a picture. They are simple circular enclosures without a soaring superstructure and in fact, with no roof at all. There is no dark, hidden sanctum; instead the temple remains completely open to the sky, permitting the bright Indian sunlight to pour into its exposed arena (Fig. 1). The walls of the circular enclosure, built of plain undecorated blocks of stone, stand between six and eight feet in height. These walls are generally left completely bare, apparently the work of a competent stone mason unaided by the sculptor. The entrance into these Yogini temples is in the nature of an interruption in the circular wall, resulting in an open undecorated doorway. Within the enclosure and placed in niches in its circular walls are a series of female images of Yoginis, generally six-four in number, while at the centre of the circle is an open pavilion housing an image of the god Siva (Fig. 2). A Yogini temple consists then of an open circle of Yoginis surrounding a central image of Siva, the entire group being exposed to the vagaries of climatic changes.

The Yoginis, placed along the inner walls of these temples, are usually depicted as beautiful-bodied women with high rounded breasts, slender waist and broad hips, wearing a skirt held in position by a jewelled girdle placed low on the hips (Fig. 3). Their bare torsos are decorated with several necklaces and garlands and they are further adorned with armlets, bangles, anklets, earrings and elaborate headdress. These remains figures present us however with widely varying countenances, some of which are clearly non-human. One Yogini has the face of a horse...
transform human beings into animals and birds with the aid of a magical thread? Any man for whom a yogini acquired a passion was in great trouble if he did not readily comply with her desires. By tying a charmed thread around his neck, he could convert him into a parrot or any other creature and thus keep him in captivity. Whenever she wished to enjoy the pleasures of love, she temporarily removed the thread and the man regained his human form! Several other stories about such yoginis indicate that they had the power to fly through the air, that they usually travelled in groups and met in cenotaphs in a circular formation where they worshipped their god Siva in his fearsome aspect of Bhairava. Such stories indicate that a human victim, often a corpse, was offered to Siva. However, the yogini of our Yogini temples, while in certain ways allied to these other categories of yoginis, is distinctly a goddess.

Yoginis and their temples seem to inspire in the average person a deep sense of awe born of fear. Generally people refer to them in hushed tones as if at all they mention them. To such an extent is this secrecy carried that the very existence of the Yogini temple at Hirapur in Orissa became public knowledge as recently as the year 1953. It is extraordinary that this well-preserved shrine, barely ten miles from the major temple complex of Bhulaswan, should have remained unknown all these years. There is a widespread fear that one may be cursed by the Yoginis for a whole host of reasons and it is believed that every approaching their temple may lead to disaster. This deep-seated fear makes the average villager or town-dweller steer clear of the Yogini temple; he would rather not talk to you about Yoginis, much less lead you to one of their shrines. This fear of the Yogini seems to have been prevalent from ancient times. Several texts, including the Brahmi Pravachana and the Varahamihira Tattva, warn that whoever touches secret knowledge to a non-initiate will be cursed by the Yoginis or will be deprived of them. Possibly it is this type of reasoning and consequent fear that have resulted in the secrecy of the Yogini cult remaining locked away for several centuries.

These intriguing Yogini temples with their enigmatic images are scattered over the northern part of India and popular in sites that are remote and difficult of access. Now deserted and badly damaged, the temples were rediscovered in the middle of the 19th century and proved to be a local mystery both to British discoveries and to the local populace. An amusing legend associated with one of these isolated temples still survives in parts of central India. We are told that once a group of local belles were chased by British soldiers. Fleeing to the top of a nearby hill, the girls prayed to their goddess to come to their rescue, and in her compassion, she turned them into stone rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the soldiers.

For some reason, the cult of the Yoginis and the temples built for them have not been studied by modern scholars. To historians of architecture, the simple hypaethrae of the Yoginis may have appeared insignificant in the context of the history of the Indian temple. But it is more difficult to understand why the exquisitely sculpted and detached devotional images of Indian sculpture. Surprising too is the fact that even historians of Indian religion have paid little or no attention to a cult that was of notable consequence during the medieval period, judging from the considerable number of Yogini temples that still exist and others that have been destroyed.

The Cult and the Circle

The Yogini temple takes for its form the circle, that purest and simplest of symbols, yet one of the most powerful and widely used. The circle represents the sun, the seering, the pulsing, the cyclic, time and eternity; it is Nothing and yet it is All. It is the shape that expresses most effectively the complementary concepts of completeness and separation; a circle is complete in itself and separated from everything outside of it. The circle is also a symbol of the Soul, of the self-contained psychic whole. "It expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and the whole of nature" and "always points to the single most vital aspect of life - its ultimate wholeness."

In certain schools of thought such as Zen, the circle symbolizes human perfection and hence Enlightenment.

Since ancient times, circles have been used all over the world to mark the boundaries of sacred areas, to set them apart from mundane usage and to protect them from external harmful influence. The circular walls of the Yogini temple formed an enclosed and sacred space which remained open to the sky. Within this sanctified area were erected the rites of the Yogini cult in order to appease and placate the Yoginis who could be cruel and wrathful if displeased but who would grant the devotee all manner of powers if appropriately adored. Existing temples of the Yoginis confirm that the circular ground plan was customary and the most prevalent but reveal also a few instances of the less familiar rectangular form. Mandalas, yantras and chhatras (both circular and square) were frequently drawn on the walls or on the ground with powdered colours, or inscribed on metal sheets. Such mandalas were of great importance in the worship of the Yoginis, and it seems likely that this was the earlier manner of their worship, the stone temples to house their images being a later development.

It will not be possible here to discuss the origins of the Yoginis. There is little doubt that the cult was originally esoteric. Even after it was brought within the fold of tantric Hinduism, it remained a secret cult and was never a popular religious phenomenon. Tantric texts indicate that broadly the Yogini cult formed an important part of the Kaaul sect of Sivasam. Followers of the Kaaul path worship the Goddess as Siva and Siva as Kaaul. The scene of these two deities is regarded as the highest state of bliss, which, the Kaaul belief, can be achieved on earth by attaining the state of chakara-puja or worship in a circle. This chakara-puja must be performed in great secrecy and by the initiated only. Both male and female initiates gather periodically, are paired impersonally and sit in a circle. During the performance of the rite each man is considered an embodiment of Siva, and each woman of the Goddess. Within such a circle the entire ritual of ecstasy is enacted, the five following elements being essential: libation (aftir), meat (singam), parched grain (mushal), liquid (maha) and sexual intercourse (maha). Because each of these Sanskrit words begins with the letter ma, the series of ritual practices is popularly referred to as the five ma's. The culmination of the rite comes when the circle is broken, the earth is turned by the goddess, receives in sexual union the male as the earthly representative of Siva. These Kaaul worshipers appear to have regarded the Yoginis as their special deities who protected them all possible harms, blessed their ventures and gave them all their desires.

However, a sub-sect of the Kaauls, known as Yogini Kaula, were exclusive devotees of the Yogini only, and it would appear that temples of the Yoginis were built by-
tible attraction; of subjugation through such attraction; the subduing power to subdue all beings and to subdue any being and to subdue the subduing power of subduing beings and to subdue the power of the subduing power of subduing beings and to subdue the power of the subduing power of subduing beings. Temple of the Yoginis was usually built a little distance away from the town and the reason for such a location seems to lie in the nature of their cult practice. Texts clearly indicate that it was corporeal, conspicuous, and not human sacrifice, but was part of the yoginis’ cultic practice. The consumption of flesh off the corpse was also part of the esoteric rite. Obviously the nature of the rites necessitated a somewhat remote location from the town. The texts and the clay seals filled with blood could scarcely be offered in the heart of a town where it would cause revulsion and perhaps invite law suits. The consumption of flesh off the corpse was also part of the esoteric rite. The Yoginis enjoyed a more elevated status and much greater power than the gods of Siva. There is belief in two tantric and taoistic texts a large number of names of Yoginis and one finds that the names in the various lists seldom correspond one with the other. Even more frustrating is the fact that the names in these texts are quite different from those that occur on the one or two sets of inscribed Yogini images. It becomes apparent that no single devotional tradition may be relied upon in identifying the Yoginis of any one temple unless we have evidence to indicate that a particular text was brought into the area, and are convinced that the sculptors had been instructed to model their figures on those specific textual prescriptions. Since such a situation does not arise, the entire practice of all the individual Yoginis in the temples becomes a somewhat meaningless enterprise. Each Yogini temple reflects a different and localised tradition, and it would be useless to seek the specific names and detailed rituals associated with each temple.

Orizzonti Temples

Typical of the Yogini temples are two shrines in Orizzonti dedicated to the Yoginis. One is the coasts of the island of Siva and the other the deep in the hilly interior. Lying in the midst of paddy fields is the beautiful little town of Hirappur, the smallest of the Yogini temples (Fig. 1). Built of coarse sandstone blocks, the enclosure measures only 30 feet in diameter, which is just over six feet high. The inscriptions of the Yoginis, each about two feet in height, are carved on slabs of fine-grained limestone that have been fitted into prepared niches. The circle is surrounded by four pillars, each over four feet, facing the walls of the central Siva shrine which today is bare of its decorum. The atmosphere of this exists within the miniature circus of standing and sitting figures. The temple consists of a procession of overwhelming power and seems to transmit the dynamic and vital power of its 64 divine figures.

What is most striking about the Hirappur Yoginis is the simplicity of the figures. Most of the Yoginis have two arms (often have four and one has eight), and some of them, with wide smiles, make out to be sculptures remarkably human. There is also great variety in the hairstyles, the most unusual being the most common mode being the stylish boulous plaited and placed on the side of the head.
Sculpturally, the Hirapur Yoginis offer us some of the most masterly of the female form in Orissa. But for their animal mounts or their occasional animal heads, they are clearly the very embodiment of feminine charm and sexuality, and one wonders how they could have been so freely interpreted in the temple during the performance of the Kaula rites. The Yoginis are shown nagged in various, mundane activities and are strikingly picturesque, as one drinks from a cup (Fig. 12) and another appears to be adjusting her anklet (Fig. 13). Another beautiful Yogini (Fig. 14) stands gracefully on a boulder and is busy cutting grass. Her supple, sensuous body is shown to advantage and by giving her a smiling face, the sculptor perhaps wanted us to believe that she is a bounteous one rather than of animals. Even when they have animal heads (Figs. 15, 16), the Hirapur Yoginis are truly captivating figures and are as attractive as the finest yakshis and gauris that make the surface of the Hindu temple pulsate with life.

There are no inscriptions in this temple, nor are there any textual references to Hirapur in local Orissa or Sanskrit literature. Our best means of establishing the date of this temple is by comparison with the wealth of sculptures at the nearby center of Bhubaneswar. Because of the nearness of the site, it is not far-fetched to assume that the same workshops that produced the temples at Bhubaneswar were also responsible for the Hirapur temple. Stylistically the Hirapur sculptures display the closest affinity with the bas-relief carvings adorning the Mukteswar temple at Bhubaneswar. This shrine is generally assigned to the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 10th century. The sculptures at both Hirapur and Mukteswar exhibit a similarly modest and sensitive modeling of the female form which is characterized by a sense of restrained animation and quiet decorum. The details of jewellery and ornamentation form an interesting contrast to the smooth rounded planes of the upper body. The carvings in the Hirapur and Mukteswar temples are more refined and rich than those in

Fig. 11. Hirapur Yogini temple, Orissa.

Fig. 12. Hirapur Yogini drinking from a skull-cup.
Ranipur-Jharial

Orissa’s other Yogini temple of the 64 Yoginis stands as a rocky outcrop between the small villages of Ranipur and Jharial, almost on the border of Mathura Pradesh. From small stone temples survive on the slopes of the hill, each crowning the rocky mounds in a circular temple. The dancing Yoginis (Fig. 11). At the foot of the hill is a large sacred tank which, a thousand years ago, appears to have been a significant pilgrimage spot. With a diameter of approximately fifty feet, Ranipur-Jharial is more than was the shrine of Hirapur. The images are larger and all the Yoginis are shown dancing, each striking an identical pose, with positioning of the legs and all forms of danse en l’air all in one place. Thus, the Yoginis are posed as if ready to commence their dance (Fig. 17). There are 46 niches in the circle and at its centre, still surviving intact, is the original small roofed pavilion containing an image of dancing Siva (Fig. 2). It is only appropriate that the Lord of dance should be surrounded by a circle of dancing Yoginis.

At least fourteen of the surviving Yoginis at Ranipur-Jharial have animal heads. Thus, the propitiating animal-headed Yoginis at this site is much higher than that of Hirapur.

There can be little doubt that the Kaulas who worshipped at this temple followed a different iconographical tradition than that which was followed at Hirapur. This is also evident from the fact that the goddesses are shown as dancing. Among the various animal heads that are clearly recognizable are the cat, the leopard, the ass, the sow, the bull, and the antelope (Fig. 18). The four-headed Yogini (Fig. 17) appears to be a female counterpart of the more popular Hindu god known as Ganesh.

Ranipur-Jharial’s Yoginis are all carved from the same coarse-grained sandstone used to construct the walls of the temple. This inferior stone has weathered badly and the quality of the sculptures has been greatly affected. Only in a few instances can one discern the finest and original charm of the figures. Occasionally we get an indication of the once finely delineated features of their handsome faces (Fig. 19), or the expressive carving of the grotesque-Saint yoginis with hooked noses and flaming hair crowning a turban of curls. The sculptures here do not have the same aesthetic impact as those at Hirapur, but it appears that the reason lies in the unfortunate choice of the material rather than in uninspired workmanship. It is not easy to arrive at a specific date for this uninscribed Yogini temple, judgements on the basis of sculptural style would be invalid; apart from the badly worn condition of the stone, there is little sculptural material in interior Orissa, and comparison with the work of sculptors in the distant centre of Bhubaneswar would scarcely be correct. However, the simple carving of the Yoginis also devoid of the attendant figures that we shall encounter at later temples, as well as the absence of haloes which seem to become a standard later feature, lead us to suggest that this temple of the dancing Yoginis may have been constructed soon after AD 900.

Central Indian Temple

Judging from extant remains, the Yogini cult appears to have reached a peak of popularity during the 10th and 11th centuries when a large number of shrines were constructed, mostly in the region of central India. We shall confine ourselves here to only one of these temples: Lokhari because of the curious nature of its Yoginis; whereas because it is a temple of 81 Yoginis rather than of the customary group of 64; Kajjikala because it has a rectangular floor plan; and Shahdad because of the exquisite carving of its images. Of these four sites, Lokhari and
Shahidul consists of collections of images without a temple and Khasiwaro's rectangular shrine is a temple bereft of all images; Sheringhat alone is relatively well preserved.

Lokhari

On top of an isolated hill in the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh are a set of twenty images of Yoginis together with masses of stone blocks that once formed the walls of the Lokhari temple. Each Yogini, about five feet in height, is carved on a slab of coarse sandstone with a rounded top. As in the Orissa temples we considered, only the figure of the Yogini and her mount are carved against the Plain slab of stone. This feature, together with the absence of halos, indicates a similarity with the Orissa shrines and we would suggest that Lokhari belongs to the first half of the 10th century. The Lokhari Yoginis (Fig. 20) do not possess the artistic beauty and finesse we have seen at Hirapur. The modelling of the figures is minimal and some features such as the feet are rendered in almost a clumsy manner. With rounded moustachs and large prominent breasts, the Yoginis usually sit with one leg folded against a seat or a stool and the other resting on the ground. Despite the lack of artistic elegance, the Lokhari Yoginis have a special fascination which lies in the fact that most of them have animal heads, with the human face being a rare occurrence.

A unique image not found in other Yogini groups is a rabbit-faced goddess, with small rabbits peeping out from each end of her seat (Fig. 6). Holding a strand of her hair in one hand and a water vessel in the other, the Yogini is with a meditation band (yogottama) around her knees, which is unusual. The snake-faced Yogini is another unusual image (Fig. 8). In other Yogini temples, the snake-headed Yogini has a large snake hood behind a human face. Here, however, the snake hood takes the place of her head and makes her a strikingly bizarre figure. She sits gracefully with one leg on her elephant mount and with a swastika on the other end of the slab. A horse-faced Yogini rests upon a creature that looks like a hyena, with an imposing figure with large melon-like breasts (Fig. 21). In one hand she holds a fish and in the other a long object which she appears to be eating. Another horse-headed Yogini gazes heavenwards, supporting a horse-headed child on her knee. She sits on a human corpse and holds a skull on one hand. The goat-headed Yogini rests her feet on elongated peacock and holds a rosary and water vessel (Fig. 22). Similarly, the same animal is used both for the head and for the mount of many other Yoginis. Thus, a cow-headed Yogini has the cow as a mount, a bear-headed goddess, the lion and so on. Other animal-headed Yoginis include the elephant, the sambar deer, the buffalo, the fox and the monkey.

This predominance of animal-headed Yoginis reminds us of a statement contained in the tantric text to the effect that the Yoginis, when they wander on earth, assume the forms of the various earthly creatures. Specifically mentioned among animals are the jackal, goat, ox, cat, tiger, elephant, horse, snake and frog, while among birds are the dove, vulture, swan, owl, crane, peacock and cock. Referring to a similar tradition is a list of Yoginis contained in the Khanda Purana, of whom nearly half have bird or animal heads. The Lokhari temple with its predominantly animal-headed goddesses must, when intact, have presented an unusual and bizarre sight.
Bheraghat

Located on top of a hill at Bheraghat near Jabalpur and overlooking the river Narbada is a large circular dham. The temple is 110 feet in diameter, with a height of 62 feet. It is one of the largest and most impressive temples in the region. The temple is dedicated to the goddess Durga, who is considered the protector of the world. The temple is surrounded by a circumambulatory walkway that encircles the main shrine. The temple is located in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India.

The temple has a large and impressive entrance, with a series of large stone carvings depicting various scenes from Hindu mythology. The carvings are highly detailed and depict a variety of gods and goddesses in different poses and positions. The temple is surrounded by a large number of stone carvings, including depictions of animals, deities, and scenes from mythology.

The temple is a popular tourist destination, with thousands of visitors coming every year to admire its intricate carvings and to pray to the goddess Durga. The temple is considered one of the most important pilgrimage sites in the region, and is a major attraction for tourists and religious devotees alike.
Slightly over life-size in dimension, the Bheraghat Yoginis are all seated figures (Fig. 24). These are not like the goddesses like those we saw at Hirapur. Most of these maternal figures, generously endowed with broad hips and ample bosoms, the Bheraghat figures seem to exploit the more ancient fertility aspect of the goddess. The unusually large size and their somber, unsmiling countenances make them a formidable and awesome group of Yoginis.

Barefoot and in a lower garment, the Yoginis are adorned with multiple strands of necklaces and pendants and they wear a variety of armlets, bracelets and anklets (Fig. 25). Slung low on their hips is a jewelled girdle from which is suspended a transparent skirt that reaches down to their ankles. At times the skirt is just a strip of cloth above jewelled ankles, while at other times the design of the fabric or its folds are articulated. Each Yogi has a halo indicating her divinity (a feature absent in the Yoginis so far considered) and all have multiple arms (six to sixteen) that reinforce their divine status. Unlike the Yoginis so far examined, the Bheraghat slabs are elaborately carved with a series of attendant figures such as a decorated throne against the central background and groups of flying figures at the top. There is an incised sacred label along the base and the entire slab is placed upon a moulded pedestal that raises the image well above the ground.

The commanding presence of the Bheraghat Yogini suggests that these deities are highly placed aśvats of Dēvi or that they are aspects of the Great Goddess herself. One of the Bheraghat Yoginis is named Kamalā (Giver of Love) and below her lotus seat is a very explicit scene of yoni-puja or worship of the female vulva (Fig. 26). Kamalā is a name given to the Great Goddess in the Kālidāsa's Ambara where Kamā is identified with sexual love and it is spri-
only need that Kāmaṇḍi removes frigidity.17 The Yogiṇī
Kāmaṇḍi must indeed be the Yogiṇī who gives sexual en-
joyment. Bheraghat’s Sarvaratnasūkhi (she who faces all di-
rections) is reminiscent of Vīvatātmakā (she who faces all di-
rections) which is one of the names of Devī in the Lālīḍh
Śaktiśāstra.18 Sarvaratnasūkhi is depicted with three faces of
which the central one displays extraordinarily large teeth in
an open mouth, while the face to the left reveals fangs
(Fig. 25). A tiara and a long garland of skulls with a massive
tusk pendant, together with hair standing up around her
head in fearsome disarray, add to her awesome aspect.
The female attendants hold a severed human head, a
sword, a skullcup and a curved knife. Carved below Sarva-
ratnasūkhi is the akṣara for her special worship, consisting of
the mantra Hṝ̄m inscribed within a star, circled first by an
eight-petalled and then by a sixteen-petalled lotus. Man-
tras, nibhānas arranged in a particular set pattern, express
the essence of a deity; a bija (seed) mantra such as Hṝ̄m is
in essence of a mantra, almost the essence in shorthand.
It is repeatedly emphasized in the tantras that a mantra
must not be uttered except for specific purposes and then
only by those who understand its power and significance,
as its repetition is said to bring about automatic results.
Although only the sound of a mantra is potent, writing it
down, or even reciting it silently, should not give the reader
false hope.

Sī Amākṣara (she who destroys) has an exquisitely
feathered body that contrasts with her fearsome face
(Fig. 28). With her open mouth, protruding circular eye-
balls and a tiara of skulls placed upon a headress of
flowers, she is awe-inspiring. Horse-faced Yogiṇī Emūlī is
one of the masterpieces at Bheraghat, and here, as at Hira-
pur, the animal head scarcely detracts from the sensuality
and nudity of the figure (Fig. 25). The elephant-headed
Yoginī, seen also at Hiraipur, Bānjarpur-Jharial and Loh-
kari, is here named Amigiri and she has an elephant-head-
ed male as mount (Fig. 29). Sī Phañandari (Lady of the
sung) has snake hoods behind her human head and a
bouncing male as her mount. In view of the fact that Yogi-
ṇīs grant magical powers to their devotees, it is interesting
to note that Bheraghat has a Yogiṇī named Sī Indrajāli
(she who is adept at magic). With an elephant as her
mount, she is attended by skeletal figures holding skull-
cups, knives, while one attendant carries a gigantic
bell. The river goddesses who do not form part of a group-
ing of 64 Yoginīs are included among the 81, with Gangā
taken as her mother and Yamūndā with her tortoise.

There are two standing Yoginīs in the Bheraghat circle
of otherwise seated figures. Sī Teranāvī, an 18-armed
Yoginī, stands with one foot placed firmly on the ground
and the other placed on the back of a decapitated buffalo
that lies on the ground (Fig. 30). Teranāvī is clearly the
local name for the Brahmanical Mahīkāsūkhi-śakti who is
included as a Yogiṇī in several Yoginī temples.
Sī Chandikā, the other standing Yoginī, has her feet plac-
ed upon a reclining skull figure and is adorned with a gar-
land of skulls and a crown of skulls with a snake as cen-
tre-piece. With a gaping mouth, sunken eyeballs, prominent
teeth, drooping breasts and hollow stomach, she is fear-
some to behold. With two hands Chandikā holds aloft an
elephant skin and she is surrounded by a host of skeletal
figures of whom holds a severed human head.

Several Bheraghat Yoginīs indicate an association
with severed human heads, skull-cups, knives and corpses,
and we have seen earlier that the rituals associated with
corpses appear to have formed part of the Yoginī cult.

Among the attendants of the Yoginī Śimhasthīnī (No. 2) we

Fig. 26. Yoginī Amākṣara (The Destroyer), Bheraghat.

Fig. 29. Elephant-headed Amigiri, Bheraghat.

Fig. 30. Yoginī Teranāvī, a version of the Brahmanical Mahīkā-
śakti, the goddess who killed the buffalo-demon.
see a standing skeletal male eating a human hand and another devouring a human leg. The suggestion here is that the consumption of human flesh also formed part of these rites. Skeletal males are occasionally shown at Bheraghat with prominently erect phalli, as among the figures surrounding Sri Vibhushana (Dreadful One; No. 10) or Sri Bhishma (Terrifying One). Perhaps this is to be seen as an indication that machismo or ritual copulation was also part of the practices of the Yogini cult.

Since all known textual tradition associates the number 64 with the Yoginis, it was particularly rewarding to discover in the Nepal manuscripts of the Sri Madhava Tantra a description of a grouping of 64 Yoginis known as the Mula Chakra. This group of Yoginis centers around a concept of nine Mothers as opposed to the more usual seven or eight. Each Mātā, together with eight other goddesses, forms a group of nine Yoginis, and nine such groupings result in 81 Yoginis. Worship of the entire group of 81 Yoginis in one circle will give the devotee all his desires, amrit and the eight great magical powers. However, each group of nine Yoginis may be worshipped independently. Brahmin in the east is worshipped by those who desire a male heir, while Mathad in the south confers the eight great magical abilities. Kaumudī in the west is worshipped for destroying enemies, while Vaishnavi in the north fulfills all desires for a kingdom. Vārāni in the north-east is important for the success of the army; Avindrī in the south-west is in special command of securing the gain of another's kingdom; Chāmūndī in the north-west is to be adored in order to banish all one's fears when the clan or country is being destroyed. Chandikā in the north-east is worshipped for victory in battle when attacked by other kingdoms, while Lakshmi at the centre is propitiated by those who have lost their kingdom and wealth and are being oppossed by enemies. The benefits that accrue from the worship of the independent groups of nine Yoginis indicate that the Mula Chakra of 81 Yoginis was intended primarily for royalty. One may assume therefore that a temple of the 81 Yoginis would have been constructed by royalty and that worship of the group would on the whole be restricted to the royal family and nobility. Bhiraghat with its 81 Yoginis must then be a temple constructed by one of the Kalachuri rulers wishing to establish and enhance his political position and strength.

How do we date the Bheraghat temple? The inscription of the pedestal of the Yoginis lends itself to palaeographic dating and an analysis suggests that they belong to the last quarter of the 10th century. The absence of any later evidence supports such a date since the sculptures in real characters that one encounters in the figure of the Bheraghat temple which were common in India between 950 and 1050. The sculptors at both sites relied on the depictions of the full and statue image female form, and at both Bheraghat and Kajjarahragh there is an obvious influence in the treatment of these voluptuous figures. If the date suggested above is correct, then the Kalachuris must have had a temple of the Bheraghat period.

Kajjarahragh

Not far from the main group of Chandel temple is a famous site of Kajjarahragh, standing somewhat apart at the mound of slight eminence, is a rectangular Yogini temple built of granite blocks (Fig. 31). Sixty-five individual Yoginis, each plated as a miniature rectangular temple with a pyramidal tower and distinct base modelling, are placed side by side to form a rectangular façade of assurance. Thirty-two cells of equal size are placed on either side of a much larger central cell, which may have served as a house of sorts. There is no evidence of a separate central projected as we have seen in other temples.

It is not clear why Kajjarahragh adopted a rectangular plan when other Yogini temples are circular. The suggestion is that the mound on which the temple is built could not have accommodated a circle that was totally unfounded.

Shaahd

The last of the Yogini sites we are here considering is in the Shaahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, which appears to have housed two temples of the Yoginis. It is possible to divide the collection of images from this region into two groups, one being a set of seated Yoginis and the other a series of standing images (Figs. 33, 34). Since the two types of figures are not combined in any temple (with the exception of a standing Māhakāla Yogini in a shrine of the seated goddesses), we may assume that the Yoginis come from two independent temples. Further evidence for the existence of such shrines comes from the fact that the previous conceptions of the Yoginis are two seated and the other seated. Both varieties of images have inscrip- tion labels and belong palaeographically and stylistically together, suggesting that the two temples were of contemporaneous construction. Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify the exact location of either temple.
The Shadash Yogiins are today dispersed in three different locations - in the Dholaha Museum not far from Khajuraho, in the Indian Museum at Calcutta where they are labelled as belonging to Sana, and in the two Shadash villages of Amara and Parsharoo. Various factors indicate that the images in these three locations belong together. The Yogiins are all carved from what appears to be the same block of wood, and all are roughly three feet in height. All have labels that are palaeographically similar and, further strengthening the suggestion of their common authorship, is a sign on the label that resembles the nagari numeral four though in itself is a numeral found on all three sets of images. Elaborate halos are placed behind the heads of people enshrined by a ring of alternately conical and circular forms. This identical treatment of halos is seen on the Yogiins in all three locations, further confirming their common origin. Groups of flying figures flank the halo while the central background is occupied by a rearing lion rampant that appears as a bracket support for the throne. The base of each slab is stepped back with the inscribed label on the broad front portion of the slab. All the Yogiins are closely akin in terms of iconography. Each seems to have a maudra and a whole host of attendants and devotees are carved along the edge of the slab. Standing Yogiins generally have both feet placed firmly on the ground. The Shadish goddesses usually have eight or more arms, most of them unfortunately being broken off at their elbow or knuckle. The Yogiins are described as being on an elevated platform.

A few of the more striking of the Shadish Yogiins merit individual description. One such outstanding image is named Shadash Tara (Tara or Gauri), One-eyed Yogiins, a prominent cutting of a figures with aristocratic features and a tapering beard (Fig. 35). In contrast to other Shadash Yogiins, this one is carved with a perfectly round head, and a perfectly round body. Another striking Yogiin is Shadash Tara (Tara or Gauri), One-eyed Yogiins, a prominent cutting of a figure with a tapering beard (Fig. 35). The name Shadish Tara, which is clearly written and says the doing of reading, is puzzling unless it is a title of Tara (Volgoi One), while the first glance of a figure without a sound unlike for a goddess, we may pointed towards the texts list a Yogiin by the name of Lampsii (Lalish Out). Whatever the case, the Shadash Yogiins in this region are heavily decorated with various gods and goddesses, the buffalo demon, is present here with the localized name of Krishna Bhagvati, known for her beauty and grace. She is depicted with a long, flowing hair, wearing a crown, and holding a MH to her side. In her left hand, she holds a sword, while her right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. The Shadish goddesses are made of wood and are often depicted with eight or more arms, each arm holding a different object. They are usually shown standing on a lotus flower, with a在他的 gestures of note (aux graving) and abhay (fear-dissipating) indicating her compition. More than one Shadish Yogiins holds a human head in her hand including Sri Bhanji (Gauri One) to whom we have already referred (Fig. 34). The attendants surrounding her all suggest their own importance as the rites connected with rites and offerings to the gods. As we see, in the main male holds a severed head and a carved knife, while the female does likewise, another female is holding a human head (Fig. 34). The only ten standing Yogiins from Shadish has been traced. Among the better preserved figures is Sri Bhanji, an elegantly posed Yogiin in a dancing pose, wearing long garland of human skulls and surrounded by natural

tees and attendants (Fig. 34). The Mahishamadari Yogiins of this group stands with one leg placed on the ground and the other pressing down upon the vanquished buffalo; no human demon is apparent in this version. This format, where the Yogiin holds a severed human head and a shield, with the lion standing beside her. But unfortunately the inscription is defaced, thus depriving us of the opportunity to learn yet another local name for this important goddess. In the context of these goddesses granting black magical power to their favoured devotees, it is interesting to note a Yogiin named Sri Thabh. The name lends itself to the interpretation "She who paralyzes" (from Sanskrit which means the suppression of any force by magical power).

Dating of the Shadish Yogiins is possible on both the basis of palaeographic evidence and on stylistic considerations. The leafing of the Labels is more advanced, more singular and more stylized than those on the Bheraghat images. The carving is precise and the engraving was observed on the hands of a contemporaneous style. It would appear that a date somewhere in the last quarter of the 11th century is likely for stylistically. Stylistically too, the Shadish Yogiins appear to be later than those at Bheraghat. While they are of a smaller size, the carving is more sophisticated and displays greater finesse. We suggest that the two Shadish temples of the Yogiins were constructed around the middle of the 11th century or in its last quarter, and that would make Shadish among the latest of the known Yogiin temples.

Rajas and the Yogiin Cult

Although the Yogiin temples do not contain inscriptions directly relating to their construction, it is possible to see something interesting to try and reconstruct a picture of the ambiance in which these shrines were created. The connection of royalty with the cult of the Yogiins is emphasized in various texts relating to worship of these goddesses. We have also seen in the inscription of Bheraghat that worship of the group of 81 Yogiins was almost exclusively a royal prerogative, and that the 81 Yogiins were identified with the deities of the various city states. It appears, however, that the group of 64 Yogiins too conferred special boons on their royal worshippers. One mantra tells us that a king worshipping the 64 Yogiins once assured himself that his fame will reach the shores of the four oceans. Elsewhere we are told that the Yogiins will make a man into the forefathers of monarchs, while a promise assures the royal worshippers of the 64 Yogiins that he will receive untold wealth and victory in all disputes. One may surmise from such statements that the connection of these shrines to temple complexes of the Yogiins, which undoubtedly involved considerable expenditure, may have been the result of royal patronage. It appears probable that the original and earlier mode of worship was entirely through mandals, yantras and chakras, until royal interest in the Yogiin cult led to the erection of stone shrines. Eight and perhaps ten Yogiin shrines are located in territories directly or indirectly through vassals under the control of the Chandella dynasty of central India. This ruling family came into power at the beginning of the 9th century and survived amid fluctuating fortunes into the 13th century. Muslim invaders of the 13th century may have been frequent and one can therefore imagine the constantly threatened monarchs paying paludalsa amounts to the cult of the Yogiins. Although there is no direct evidence to connect the Chandella with any of the Yogiin temples in their kingdom, we cannot ignore the fact that one of these shrines is located at Khajuraho, which was their capital. Khajuraho also provides evidence for the Kasa and Kaspariya sects with which the Yogiin cult appears to have been connected. Among the famous erotic carvings on the temple walls of the many Khajuraho temples, portraits of actors of the Kasa and Kaspariya sects have been identified. The blatant carving of such figures on the temple walls suggests that the Chandella monarchs who built these temples were themselves patrons of these orders. We have seen earlier that the Yogiin cult was a branch of the Kasa sect and was probably known as Yogiin Kasa. It is thus probable that the Chandella kings were also patrons of the Yogiin cult and that certain of the monasteries of the Kasa sects or members of the royal family may have been responsible for building temples and shrines within their kingdom. Thus, Chandella patronage may have been a factor of significance in encouraging and supporting the cult of the Yogiins in and around the kingdom as a whole.

From the 9th to the 12th centuries, Yogiin temples were built in several parts of the country. In these texts we find mention of four specially important Yogiin temples - at Broach, Ajmer, Ujjain and Yogiin temples in, which has survived. Later inscriptions added to certain Yogiin temples indicate that these shrines remained in worship and retained their importance well into the 13th century. As a number of later worship in the temples ceased, the Yogiin circles were abandoned and the magnificent images of the Yogiins, once so deeply revered and feared, were changed. The once powerful Yogiin cult faded into an almost total memory of oblivion, so that when these temples were rediscovered in the late 19th century, few traces remained...
to the significance of the Yoginis or the reasons for their worship. And yet, paintings and paper chauds were made in Rajasthani at the turn of the present century to indicate that at least token homage was still being paid to the 64 Yoginis (Figures 35, 37). These folk-style works of art testify to an ancient mythological reverence to a cult with ancient roots, combined with a fear of the possible ill-consequences of such an insipid and unnecessary reversion.

NOTE
1. Kukuruchanda, ed. K.S. Sarasvati, Patna, 1961, Book VII, Ch. 4-5 contains two such sources.

2. Lalita Sāhāsireṇī (which is a section of the Brahmaṇa Purāṇa), ed. Anantakshara Saṅsāry, Adyar, 1951, Ch. 5, V. 83, Ashvina Muhaṭa Tane, Ch. 18.


5. Several kālas exist and each of these details should be studied. See Raisāmī Tej, ed. Antar Avadāna, Madras, 1968, ed. Ch. 5.

6. The 55 Sāntana Tej is an unprinted manuscript in the Nagpuri National Archives. However, a later copy of this manuscript has been published by the Gokuldevi Saṅsāry, ed. Jānandār Saṅsāry, Varanasi, 1973. Although this version is incomplete, it follows the 55 Sāntana Tej closely and may be referred to as the published version of the original text. In Ch. 20, Devi asks Śiva to explain on how to live the life of the Yogini, the knowledge of which gives one the ability to do so in the ancient text.

7. Ch. 7. V. 24 for details of these powers. Also see Purāṇa Kṛṣṇā Kānda, ed. K.D. Vedavyas, Calcutta, 1965, Ch. 45.

8. See Gokuldevi Śaṅsāry, Ch. 29 for these and similar descriptions of the Yoginis.


10. Khajurao Temples, Ch. 5, V. 21-23.


12. Gokuldevi Śaṅsāry, Ch. 4. Contains details on the stories of the corpse selling for instance that it should be a rose or that it is still womaning itself, and as such it is not a living being.

13. Such instructions clearly rule out human sacrifice.

14. Ananta Purāṇa, Ch. 22. 16 discusses the Yogini’s activity to the plough or to the guidance of the plough.

15. For example see Khajuraho Parāṇa, Purāṇa Kṛṣṇā Kānda, Ch. 17.

16. Mahabodhīpurāṇa, Ch. 39 refers to the Yogini as the daridar of the Goddess.

17. An inscription in a śāla temple at the foot of the hill forms us that in bathing in this tank known as Sompall, one’s sins will be washed away.

18. In addition to the six temples discussed in this paper or following additional Yogini sites are known: Hingūlā, Bārāṇi, Dūrāli, Bārdi, Narma and Ardā. It is said that behind India housed a Yogini temple in the vicinity of Jāmpakam. All these are discussed in my forthcoming book on Yajñalīla and the Goddesses.


20. Khajuraho Parāṇa, Purāṇa Kṛṣṇā Kānda, Ch. 43. ruined and called the 64 Yoginis contains this list.

21. For the recent source see R. K. Sharma & Tej Singh, Temple of Chausath Yāgī in Bhopal, 1975, Delhi, which does not even acknowledge the problem of 64 as opposed to 62.

22. Gokuldevi Śaṅsāry, Ch. 32.


25. For historical synchronicity see the very real world that has been presented to Elinor S. Dresher & Ramanujan Aiyer, Khajuraho: The Sculpture, 1960.

26. Ch. 19, V. 24, 24 and 24, all of which state that there is no doubt (no am śita) that these siddhas will appreiate him to whom they are devotees.

27. Ch. 7. V. 24 for details of these powers. Also see Purāṇa Kṛṣṇā Kānda, ed. K.D. Vedavyas, Calcutta, 1965, Ch. 45.

28. Great Britain

29. ITALY

30. MILAN


34. GREAT BRITAIN

35. GREAT BRITAIN

36. ITALY

37. MILAN

38. PALACE DELLA POMONTE, Via San Marco 49-50, 40122, Milan, 02 March, 1977.
the composition is about the same distance above and below the building's cornice, which is essential to the overall unity of the Romanesque style. The stone used for the building is very uniform in color and texture, which adds to the harmony of the composition. The use of large, roughly hewn stones for the walls is typical of Romanesque architecture.

A parallel development in both composition and content is evident from the 9th century onwards. The 11th century is a very important period in both art and society. Throughout the century, there was a significant increase in the production of religious art, particularly in the form of manuscripts and illuminated manuscripts. These manuscripts often contained elaborate illustrations and were produced in monasteries and cathedrals. The use of gold and other precious materials in these manuscripts indicates the high level of craftsmanship and skill involved in their production.

The text goes on to describe the architectural elements of the cathedral, such as the use of large, roughly hewn stones for the walls, the large windows, and the sculpted capitals. The text also mentions the importance of the cathedral as a center of religious and social life, with the provision of services such as baptism, marriage, and burial. The text concludes with a description of the role of the cathedral as a symbol of the power and influence of the Church in medieval society.