



The Sri Lalita Trishati Stotram Puja

By Susan Marshall

Two years ago, Swami Chetanananda gave a group of Movement Center students the Sanskrit chant known as the Sri Lalita Trishati Stotram, or the chant of the 300 names of the goddess Lalita. We studied a rough English translation of the Sanskrit and chanted along with a recording of a silver voiced Indian woman. We learned to perform the puja, making the offerings to the goddess and distributing prasad (blessed food) at the conclusion of the puja.

At the July 2013 Meditation Retreat, Swamiji installed the Sri Chakra, a three-dimensional geometric representation of the goddess, by performing the pranapatishta (installation of the spirit) and the abhishek (ritual cleansing) on the Sri Chakra. He served as pujari as all the retreat participants chanted the Sri Lalita Trishati Stotram. Since then, the Lalita chant and puja have become a daily practice after morning meditation in the meditation room at The Movement Center, taking about fifteen minutes to perform.



Last year musician Kath Robinson provided us with a wonderful new English translation and Sanskrit pronunciation key for the chant. This has made the Lalita so much more accessible to those wanting to learn the chant and perform the Puja on their own. (A recording and written copy of the chant and Puja are available through Rudra Press.)

Most people are struck by the sheer beauty of the sound of the chanted Sanskrit words. For me chanting is an effective way to regulate my breathing, focus my mind and lighten my heart. Chanting the Lalita, as a Guru given chant and puja practice, is even more special. The vibration created during the chant inspires gratitude and a sense of awe and wonder of the universe. The heart chakra opens so easily—a great way to enhance a meditation practice!

The words of the chant capture the aspects of the goddess Lalita, who represents and is the entire universe. There is no part of the universe that is not the goddess.

Some examples of the 300 phrases:

“She whose mere look enlivens the worlds.”

“She who does everything and who bears everything.”

“She who destroys everything and who is ancient.”

“She who is the repository of ten million desires and who grants the objects of desire.”



The pujari (the person who prepares the offerings and performs the puja) is not thought to be separate from the goddess. He or she is one with the goddess. The offerings are items that already belong to the goddess. They are aspects of the universe we experience with our human senses: flowers (touch), sweets of the earth (taste), the aroma of incense and sandalwood powder (smell), the arati of lighted candles (sight), and mantras, spoken and silent (hearing). During the puja the circle of life and death is celebrated. All is offered in a world where pain, suffering, beauty,

equanimity, laughter, sadness, sickness, vibrancy, all exist simultaneously and unending.

Any time you come to Portland, please join us for this extraordinarily beautiful puja. Feel the blessings of the goddess. At the conclusion sit and bask from your open heart chakra in the sweetness of simply being. Thank your Guru for sharing the practice with you. ॐ

Susan Marshall has been a student of Swami Chetanananda since 1979. She teaches the Introduction to Meditation class, somatic yoga and Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement® classes. She coordinates the daily Lalita Puja.

She can be reached at susan.marshall@feldenkraispx.com.

