

Cultivating Shakti Telecourse

Suggested Readings Relevant to Our First Class

On Navaratri:

- 1) *Devi: The Devi Bhagavatam Retold* by Ramesh Menon
A popular version, in modern language, of the essential mythological text (Purana) of Shakta practice. The story of Mahishasura is on P. 86-133.
- 2) *In Praise of the Goddess* by Devadatta Kali
A rendering of the Durga Saptah Shati, the 700 Verses in Praise of the Devi, which is the essential text read and chanted during Navaratri

On Goddesses

- 1) *The Song of the Goddess: The Devi Gita*
Translated with an introduction by C. Mackenzie Brown.
This short text, excerpted from the *Devi Bhagavatam*, is mostly in the voice of the Goddess and describes the nature of Shakti as well as giving her spiritual instructions to a devotee. It echoes the format of the Bhagavad Gita, and is intended as a parallel text for people who honor Shakti as the Absolute.
- 2) *Awakening Shakti* by Sally Kempton

On Spanda and Non-Dual Tantra

The actual stanzas of the Spanda Karikas are available on the Student Page in the Handouts/Articles/Downloads section. We've also posted a chart of the descent of Shakti through the Tattvas on the Student Page in the same section.

- 1) *The Doctrine of Vibration* by Mark S.G. Dyszkowski
This is a dense read, but if you want to go more deeply into the Spanda teachings and Kashmir Shaivism in general, it's a great text
- 2) *The Stanzas on Vibration* by Mark S.G. Dyszkowski
For those of you who like to read primary texts, this is a complete translation with commentaries on the Spanda Karikas.
- 3) *Tantra Illuminated* by Christopher Wallis
A readable and very detailed exposition of the core non-dual tantric world-view in its many iterations.

Shakta Hymns:

The Thousand Names of Lalita is the key text of Shakta practice. There are many versions of it, including some chanted versions on YouTube. This text describes the Goddess Lalita Tripura Sundari, who is the form of Shakti most popular in South India and in Sri Vidya Tantra. These verses praise the Goddess in her sthula (iconographic) form, as well as describing the various attributes of Shakti and of her essential nature as the cosmic creative power. They are normally chanted as a sadhana, and the wisdom within them reveals itself through the practice.

- 1) *The Lalita Sahasranama* translated with an introduction by Swami Tapasyananda
- 2) *The Thousand Names of the Divine Mother*, transliteration, translation and commentary by M.N.Namboodiri