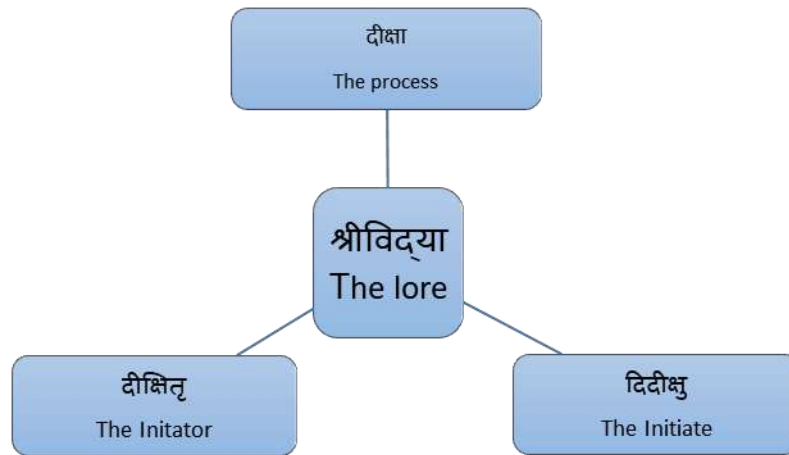


Dīkṣā, Dīkṣitṛu, Didīkṣu - A Peep into the Samaya Method of Worship

(Specific Focus on the Initiation, Initiator and Desirous Initiate Factors)

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The term Dīkṣā is understood as the initiation. Any student is known as an initiate. He is taught the discipline slowly in a step by step manner. Certain process' are followed one after the other systematically. These are known as the procedures or *vidhi* to be followed. These pertain to the aim to be realized, the specifications, the rules and procedures to be followed, in the undertaking. These pertain to the subtle part – the concept and the process. The next is the actual pertaining to those who are actually involved – (i) one who guides, should himself be an adept, an expert an *adhikarin*. He is the Guru or the didīkṣu. And (ii) one who acquires the lore is the instructed, is overseen and guided in performance first as an apprentice and later as an independent performer is the desirous initiate. He is eager to learn, desirous to acquire the knowledge and wishes to be initiated into world of the spirituality. Such a desirous, earnest disciple is the didikshu or the desirous initiate. The present paper focuses on the three points to get a better understanding of *Samayacara*.



Introduction -

The theme for the international conference revolves around Srividya – the Supreme Knowledge. As the ViṣṇuPurāṇa says सा विद्या या विमुक्तये | (1.19.41) that is Vidya which liberates the seeker. Sri Sankaracarya says – this Supreme knowledge is the soul of all other deities¹. She as the Supreme Being encompasses and pervades everything making them sentient². The theme of the conference in its umbrella approach deliberates upon that one supreme form, as the Chhandogya Upanisad says, the understanding of which everything becomes known³. This supreme knowledge is SriVidya or the knowledge par excellence. The Mahalakshmi Ratna Kosa a less known Pancaratra work on the SriVidya defines SriVidya as the Vidya⁴ which is endowed with the śrī-bīja. This Supreme knowledge is presided by goddess, the mother of the universe, is shining, bright, and is located In the heart lotus of the worshipper⁵ thus extols Shri Sankaracarya. This Supreme knowledge or SriVidya is of two types viz Para and Tripura they are in fact the two modes of worship offered to the same goddess different only by name⁶. Shri Sankaracarya says in the Tripurasundari-Veda-Pada stotra proclaims that Sri-Vidya alone is capable of conferring ultimate release and bestowing eternity of the soul. The other Vidyas though are translated as faculties of knowledge are only for namesake. They cause disillusion – bhraanti and cause erroneous or faulty perception of the Ultimate⁷.

In his world, there are many Vidyas, paths and systems of worship to choose from. Each of them self-proclaim their own superiority of their own path and present a rosy picture of the benefits

1. Complete Works of Sri Sankaracharya in the Original Sanskrit Volume-II Miscellaneous PRAKARANAS

Prasnottaratnamalika कः सर्वदेवतात्मा – विद्या 62.b, pg 102

2 का च परदेवता – चिच्छक्तिः | 54.a pg 100 ; MRK –I, सर्वेषां हृदयेदेवी चिद्रूपा परसुन्दरी | ३६.५९a pg 226

3 एक विज्ञानेन सर्वविज्ञानं भवति | छान्दोग्य.. 6.1.3

4 MLRK ३६.३६b श्रीबीजसहिता विद्या श्रीविद्येति च कथ्यते | pg 223

5 शंकराचार्य, त्रिपुरसुन्दरीवेदपादस्तोत्रम् -- त्वामेवाहं स्तौमि नित्यं प्रणमि, श्रीविद्येशां वच्मि संचिन्तयामि | अध्यास्ते विश्वमाता विराजोहृत्पुण्डरीकं विराजं विशुद्धम् || १०८, pg184

6 श्रीविद्या च द्विधा प्रोक्ता परा च त्र्युपेश्वरी | परजीवत्मानोर्देवि न हि भेदोऽस्ति वस्तुतः | ३६. ५०.

7 त्रिपुरसुन्दरीवेदपादस्तोत्रम् – सन्तु विद्या जगत्यस्मिन्संसारम्रमहेतवः | भजेऽहं त्वां यथा विद्वान्विद्यामृतमश्नुते || ६३

enjoined in the worship acquired by their system thereby attracting the aspirant. Three forms of worship are prevalent – the Samaya, the Vama and the Misra. The Samaya is of subtle nature, is inconspicuous, very simple and is hardly seen externally. To the external world it appears as a matter of faith of the worshipper. The *Vama* on the other hand, is a gross form of worship is rather loud, boldly exhibited and well conspicuous. The *Misra* type tries to be an intermediary between the former two types. An important point to be noted about the two-worship extremes is both are highly secretive in nature. Samaya – because it is internal and Vama because of certain unacceptable loud and bold practices which are considered crude, primitive by the evolved, developed and culturally advanced society.

The paper undertakes a study of the Samaya Practice of the worship of the Goddess – SriVidya and will specially focus on the spirit^oritual part of dīkṣā or initiation process and analyzing the two main factors of the ritual viz. the dīkṣitṛu or the initiator and didīkṣu or the incumbent initiate. The word dīkṣā is Vedic in nature and refers to the act of initiation into the study of specialization after the basic course of Vedic studies. Dīkṣā ordinarily meant induction into the formal education system, following the prescribed syllabus. At the end of which, was the abhiseka ritual followed by the Samavartana program. Later dīkṣā meant initiation in special lore or some special subject involved in rituals related to the physique involving the mind and affecting the psyche. The ritual process involved the use of verbal utterances, physical ritual activity with the mind focused completely on the object of the undertaking. The terms Dikṣit, Dīkṣādhār, meaning- ‘The ordained one’ thus must have evolved. It was believed that the dīkṣā process endowed some special qualities, protection on the aspirant. They now differentiated themselves from the other students as recipients and practioners of special lore by means of physical markings as external exhibit of their special status. They also suffixed their names as Dikṣita with the specialization forming a prefix. These Vedic sacraments were almost followed in toto by the Samaya system⁸. The researcher intends to analyze the initiation practices followed by the Samaya system understand their relevance and validity in the then society. The purpose of undertaking a study was to understand the three **W’s**- **What? Who?**

⁸ HSD 4.2.1,2 प्रमाणं वेदाश्च ॥१॥ स्मृत्यादयोऽपि ॥२॥

Whom? –Aspects - which were not dealt with adequately before? This study will throw some light on the subject which will help in understanding the subject of Sri-Vidya.

Dīkṣā – The Lakshmi-Tantram, a Pañcaratras Agama text defines the term dīkṣā as – That which shatters and destroys the tormenting, painful activities; having destroyed the impurities, bestows the supreme place. This is known as dīkṣā thus opine the adepts of Vedas and those who understand its philosophy.

यद् द्यति क्लेशकर्मादीनीक्षयतखिलं पदम् ॥५॥
क्षपयित्वा मलं सर्वं ददति च परं पदम् ।
दीक्षेति तेन तत्त्वज्ञैर्वर्णयते वेदपारमैः ॥६॥⁹

The Parasurama-Kalpasutram pg 45 gives the etymology of dīkṣā as ‘That which bestows oneness with Siva, shatters all bonds of attachments whatsoever’ दीयते शिवसायुज्यं दीर्यते पाशबन्धनम् । अतो दीक्षेति कथिता *दीर्यते = क्षीयते

The Lakshmi Tantra states that the Guru causes the desirous initiate to listen to the mantra by directing and overseeing¹⁰.

We can thus sum up that the term dīkṣā is derived from the root Diś - meaning that which is ordered and Eeksha meaning seen or supervised. Thus the dīkṣitṛ initiates the incumbent initiate, guides him and also oversees his Sadhana. दिशते ईक्षते च इति दीक्षा ।

Types of Dīkṣā.

Everything is systematized and arranged, there are categories and classification of types and sorts. The texts of tantra mention classification and categorization of the initiation ritual. Different texts state different types and number of steps to be followed in the initiation ritual process.

Hayagriva speaks in detail about the concept of dīkṣā. HSD¹¹ speaks mentions two types of dīkṣā as varnadīkṣā or matadīkṣā and

⁹ लक्ष्मीतन्त्रं ४१.५, ६ pg 162

¹⁰ ज्ञापयेद्विधिवन्मन्त्रान् गुरुदृष्ट्या समीक्ष्य तु ।

¹¹ HSD 16.2.1-5 pg. 64

saktidīkṣā. He elaborates about the stages of dīkṣā and gives five-fold classification in each type.

The Laksmītantram¹² speaks of three types of dīkṣā as gross, subtle and paraatmana. And again this threefold becomes four-fold depending on the category of the desirous to be initiated¹³.

The PKS¹⁴ speaks of three types of initiation - Shambhavi, Shakti and Mantri¹⁵. In Shambhavi dīkṣā the initiator places the red'n'white feet of the goddess Kameshvari and her spouse Kamesvara on the head of the didikshu. By this, the internal and external impurities of the didikṣu are flushed out.

In Shakti dīkṣā, the initiator causes the luminous energy surge to flow within the body of the incumbent initiate. This followed by the Matrukanyasa¹⁶ wherein the guru touches specific points in the body invoking the goddess to be present thereby. Then he taps gently the heart of the initiate¹⁷.

The next is Mantri dīkṣā in which an elaborate ritual is performed. This will be referred later in the dīkṣā-ritual section below. The Kalpasutrakara and the Nityotsavakara¹⁸ states these are three levels in initiation and can be undertaken one after the other at the same time. The MRK¹⁹ mentions of two initiation procedures → touch and whisper.

ParasuramaKalpas utram	Nityotsav am	LakshmiTantram	Mahalakshmi RatnaKosha
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12 LaksmīTantram pg 162, दीक्षा सा त्रिविधा तावत् स्थूलसूक्ष्मपरमात्मना || ४१.७अ

13 LT pg 162, 41. 7b पुनर्दीक्षयविभेदन त्रिविधा सा चातुर्विधा || ४१.७ब

14 PKS 1.1.32 pg 52 दीक्षास्तिस्रः शक्ती शम्भवी मान्त्री चेति |

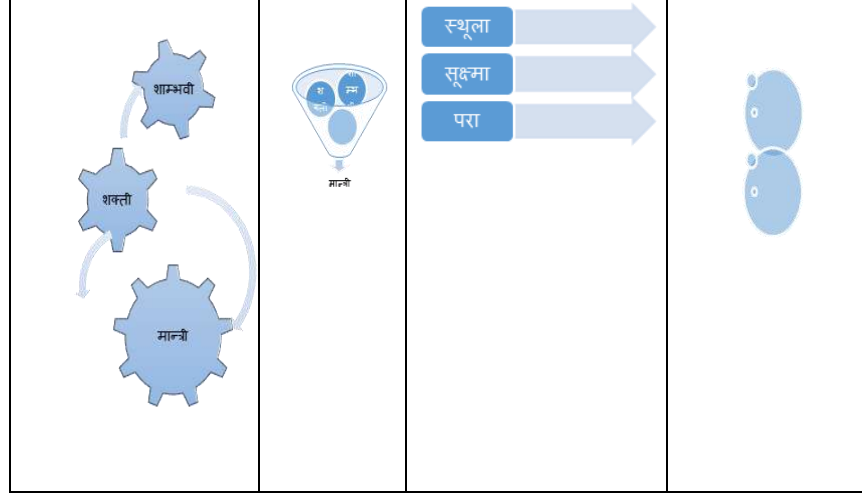
15 PKS 1.1.32 pg 52 तत्र शक्ती शक्तिप्रवेशनात् शम्भवी चारणविन्यासात् मान्त्रीमन्त्रोपदिष्ट्या सर्वाश्च कुर्यात् || ३२

16 LT 23.34 pg 78 मानुकाकृतविन्यासः स्वयं संमानुकामयः | उद्धरेदीप्सितं मन्त्रं शिष्यस्योपदिशेत्ततः || ३४||

17 LT 41.43a pg 164 हृदये ताडयेच्छिष्यं तारय हुंफडन्ताय |

18 PKS 1.1.33 pg 53 एकैकां वेत्येके || ३३ NitU pg 10

19 MRK 34.41,44,45 pg 209



Varṇa or caste played an important part in the initiation processes. Samaya being pro-vaiddik system, the Varna and the ashrama system were strictly followed. Strictly the Caturvarṇya system was followed. Ritualistic and procedural initiation was followed strictly for the male members of the first three caste alone. Different types of dīkṣā are mentioned according to ones caste, the stage of life, ones desire and needs, personal socio-economical status, gender etc...

Hayagriva defines Varna-dīkṣā as the initiation in the lore of the Savitri-mantra²⁰. He speaks of five-tier system of the varṇa-dīkṣā process. These are referred by Professor K.V. Abhyankar as the Dīkṣā-Pancakam. The Sandhya rituals followed by the japa of the gayatri mantra were mandatory for the process of initiation²¹. So important was this ritual that other important routine works were stopped, paused, concluded for the unhindered performance of the Sandhya ritual.

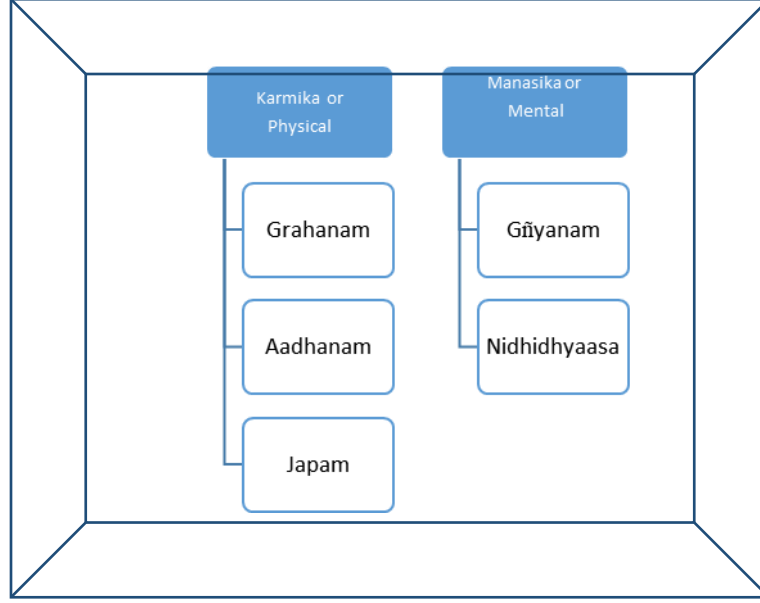
They are 1. Grahanaṁ 2. Adhanaṁ 3. Japaṁ 4. Jñānaṁ 5. Nirvana.

Grahanaṁ – The process of obtaining the 24-syllabled Gayatri-mantra known as Savitri for the Brahmins, Gayatri for the Kshatriyas, Sarasvati for the Vaisyas. There is no Gayatri-mantra initiation for the

20 HSD pg 69, सावित्रीग्रहणं वर्णदीक्षा | १६.२.१

21 LT 42, 29 LT 28, 22,23 शुद्धये सर्वभूतानां संध्या देवि प्रवर्तते || २८.२३अ LT 24,45,46

Sudras and for women. Varna-dīkṣā can be categorized as physical and as mental.



Each of these five stages is marked by initiation by the dīkṣitṛu or Guru. Drawing a parallel, Hayagriva mentions a five-fold classification of Sakti-dīkṣā²². They are Samaya, Vishesa, Samanya-Gnyana, Vishesa-Gnyana, and Nirvana.

Samaya – Receiving the root-mantra from the guru is known as Samaya dīkṣā²³.

Visesa – Undertaking Puja-arcana to the goddess is Visesa-dīkṣā²⁴.

Mahavisesa – The performance of special arcana to the Avarana-devatas in the Yantra²⁵. He is also entitled to perform Homa, Tarpana

22 HSD 15.2.3 pg. 64 समय-विशेष-महाविशेष-ज्ञान-भेदात् पञ्च ।

23 HSD 15.2.4 and 15.3.6

24 HSD 15.2.5 pg 64 and 15.3.8 pg 65

25 HSD 15.3.9 pg 65

etc... and is entitled to worship the form of the Goddesses in a pearl, a coral, tusk or root of white-arca plant.²⁶

4a. Samanya-gnyana - The didīkṣu undertakes reading the Mahabharata the puranas.

4b. Visesa-Gnyana – The didīkṣu undertakes the study of Devi literature such as the Devi-mahatmayam, the Devi-bhagavata-purana.

Nirvana – The state of realization about the real form of the goddess. Thereby dismembering all layers of appearances, projections etc...

The LT²⁷ says that the Samaya initiation be for own son or likewise the Para dīkṣā is meant for a sadhaka alone.

Dīkṣā by Caste²⁸ –

Caste played an important factor in the initiation process. Caste and the sacraments ordained to the four castes were definitely upheld by the Sutrakara. He states that only a person who is purified by the sacraments of the caste, is initiated in the respective gayatri-mantra, he attains bhakti. Bhakti or steadfast devotion is the first step towards dīkṣā process. All the samaya works have unanimously upheld the position of the caste of their birth.

Brahmins by birth undisputedly enjoyed a high position as was evident the supremacy of an initiated Brahmana was more than a Brahmin by birth. This was the same for the other caste as well. The members of the fourth caste were not initiated²⁹. Hayagriva spells the purpose of initiation and he classifies the caste on the basis of Guna. The sutrakara states that each of the caste can be further segregated³⁰ as *SamanyaVarnina*, *KarmaVarnina* and *GnyanaVarnina*.

26 HSD15.3.10 pg 65

27 Lt 41.8 pg. 162 समयी पुत्रकश्चैव तृतीयः साधकस्तथा | आचार्यश्चेति दीक्ष्यास्ते तेषामन्यत्र विस्तरः ||

28 HSD 15.3.1. pg 62

29 HSD 16.1.4. pg 68

30 HSD 17.1.9,10,11. Pg 73

The Brahmin-batu finds the first place in the hierarchy of caste structure. Hayagriva³⁴ states that Brahmins are of two types → Adiksita and Diksita. The Karma-brahmans ie. Those who have taken birth in the particular caste. They are Adiksita. The Diksita are the Gnyana Brahmanas, they have taken initiation and have knowledge of their

वर्ण →	ब्राह्मणः	वैश्यः	शूद्रः
व्याख्या →	सामान्येषु सत्त्वपरा ब्राह्मणाः ³¹	राजसा वैश्याः ³²	तामसाः शूद्राः ³³
गुण →	सत्त्व	रजस्	तमस्
आश्रम →	१ बटु २ गृही ३ वनी ४ यतिः	१ बटु २ गृही ३ वनी ४ यतिः	
दीक्षा प्रकार →	१ समय २ विशेष ज्ञानदीक्षित ३ महद्ज्ञानदीक्षित ४ सामान्यज्ञानदीक्षित		
प्रयोजनम् →			

undertaking. They undergo the four stages of life and strive for emancipation. The same applies for the other two castes. The following chart will aid quick understanding.

The Dīkṣā process. The process of dīkṣā is an elaborate and lengthy process. The PKS³⁵, the Nityotsava³⁶, the MRK³⁷ and the LT³⁸ speak in

31 HSD 17.1.5 pg 72

32 HSD 17.1.7 pg 72

33 HSD 17.1.8 pg 72

34 HSD 17.1.1,2,3 pg 72

35 PKS Ramesvara's commentary pg 53-65

36 Nityotsava pg 10 - 12

detail about the procedural and the ritualistic part in detail whereas Hayagriva does not speak anything about the dīkṣā process as he had about the concept of dīkṣā and its social aspect.

Ramesvara³⁹ the commentator on the Kalpasutras of Parasurama says that in the process of initiation, the initiator first places himself in the place of the initiate designate. This is what modern pedagogy speaks or the management principles speak. Perform a SWOT analysis that is, to be in the place of the needy – know him well, understand what the needs / requirements are, remove / answer any doubts, resolve any threats/ fear of the initiate and then impart the Mantra to the designate initiate.

Umanandanatha states that need is the first step for initiation. *Kala* or time is an important element for the dīkṣā process to commence. As such the dīkṣitṛu should have a fair understanding of the almanac and astrology. This is said because the initiator had to choose the suitable month, day, date, timings etc... for the initiation process. He also had to confer the suitable mantra for the desirous initiate. The NitU⁴⁰ quoting *Manthana-Bhairavatantra* and *Saarasamgraha* gives the list of auspicious months, days, dates and the benefits as such acquired by initiation. The MRK specially speaks of Monday and Friday to be of special significance⁴¹. The place for initiation is also another element in the process mentioned by the LT⁴². The MRK states that for the process of dīkṣā a special well decorated canopy be erected, in the center the place for homa, decorated pots filled with water in which thirteen types of herbs, roots, with psych-medical properties along with the ashes of the Durva grass mixed with the soil specially collected from seven places, scattered with pearls, corals, and mixed with a paste of fragrant sandal paste and other aromatic resins and gums. The pitcher is then draped with a pair of new clothes. Such a well prepared and decorated picture is now placed above the layer of grains and decorated with mango leaves

37 MRK pg 161,162,163,165,170,171

38 LT 28.38 -50 pg 96, and 23.5-11 pg 77

39 PKS pg 10 गुरुशिष्यपदे स्थित्वा स्वयमेव सदाशिवः । प्रश्नोत्तरपरवाक्यैर्तन्त्रं समवतारयत् ॥

40 Nityotsava of Umanandanatha pg 2,3

41 MRK 33.37b pg 209 एतद्ब्रुवतमं गौरि ज्ञात्वामन्त्रगृहं परम् । सोमवारे शुक्रवारे सुसंपत् क्षेमसाधके ॥

42 LT २८.३८ सुविविक्ते शुचौ देशे निःशलाके मनोरमे ॥

and flowers be arranged. The Goddess Mahalakshmi⁴³ be invoked in the prime pitcher or the three goddess Shri, Shyama and Vartali be invoked in the prime pitcher meant for dīkṣā-abhisheka⁴⁴. The didikshu meditates on the form of the goddess while he is blindfolded with a cloth all the while. The LT, PKS and the MRK agree to the procedure with slight variations. Another interesting aspect mentioned in the PKS⁴⁵ and LT⁴⁶ is that the designate-initiate, is seated on a seat on which the Matraka-Yantra is specially drawn. All the while the dikshitrū speaks about the glory of the Goddesses, briefs him about his duties and responsibilities. Finally the waters of all the pitchers and the prime pitcher are poured on the head of the didikshu who is now purified and divine. The didikshu is now given a new pair of clothes, well decorated, is garlanded. He is made seated in front of the Guru who performs the Matraka-Nyasa⁴⁷ on his person. The LT⁴⁸ resonances wonderfully the Shakti dīkṣā process of conversion and directing the energy from one level to the other. In the process of initiation, all the energy-psyche centers of the initiate-designate are charged and ready by the Matrakaanyaasa. Next with the slight tapping of the heart by the Guru sets the mantra activated in the initiate. This is what modern science calls as transfer of energy from a higher medium to a lower medium. This does not result in energy loss. In contrast, both retain the charge though the amount and extent varies. Finally the dīkṣā-Mantra, Guru-Paduka-Mantra is initiated by uttering it softly in his right ear which resonates within the initiate.. The guru slowly releases the blindfold of the newly initiate into the luminous world of worship⁴⁹. The dīkṣā-abhisheka is highly glorified in the MRK⁵⁰

43 MRK 28. 22a,87,88,89 pg 163, 170

44 PKS 1.1.38 pg 60,61

45 PKS 1.1.38 pg 60चातुरश्रे मात्रुकायन्त्रे शिष्यं निवेश्य तेन कुम्भाम्बसा तिसृभिः विद्याभिः स्नपयेत्॥३८॥

46 LT 23.40 pg 96 आसनं चक्रमास्थाय पद्मं स्वतिकमेव वा ।

47 LT 41.40 pg 164 इत्थं शिष्यतनुस्थानांतत्त्वानां जडरूपिणाम् । आवाहत्याशु संबोधं दीक्षा ध्यानमयी त्वियम्॥

48 LT 27. 25-28 pg 92आचार्य आदिशेद्विद्यां परब्रह्मस्वरूपिणीम्॥२५॥

हस्तदेहाङ्गविन्यासं विधायात्मनि वै पुरा । विन्यस्य शिष्यदेहे च ततश्चोपदिशेन्मनुम् । २६॥

स्थापयेद्भूदि शिष्यस्य भावपुर्णं मनुं परम् । पुनश्च स्थापयेत् स्वस्य हृदये मन्त्रमुत्तमम्॥२७॥

49 LT 41.28b,29a pg 163 आनीतस्याथ शिष्यस्य नेत्रबन्धं विघट्टयेत्॥२८॥

50 MRK 28. 109 pg 172 लोके यावन्ति भूतानि तथा पापन्यनेकशा । अभिषेकात्सुरेष्ठशमनं यान्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

which states that by the water pouring from the prime picture destroys all sins and pacifies all afflictions and he attains a divine form⁵¹.

The entire process of dīkṣā is a feeling which involves the elements. The gross body can be said to be representing the Pruthivi Tattva, the charging through touch with the Agni Tattva, the mantra initiation through sound with the Vayu Tattva, and finally the abhiseka ritual involving water with the Jala Tattva - all these lead to the process of ecstasy and joy which can be related to the Akasa Tattva.

The fee – Daksina plays an important role in any theistic ritual worldwide. The Samaya cult of Shakta which is pro-Vedic is no exception. The initiate, says the MRK⁵² on receiving the initiation should offer worship to the guru with wealth, ornaments etc..The process of dīkṣā underlines that the didīkṣu should be liberal⁵³ and unhesitant in spending and offering the fee to the initiator - guru. In spite of this, one can see a lot of monetary relaxation in the process as per ones economic condition. The Initiate the PKS, NitU say that dīkṣā is for anyone who is sincere and dedicated. The dīkṣitṛu having verified intent, dedication and condition of the incumbent initiate should initiate accordingly⁵⁴. The LT overrules monetary condition as a hurdle in initiation. As discussed before, Dīkṣā process takes into account the economic viability of the desirous initiate and approves initiation for all those who have steadfast devotion⁵⁵. This highlights the flexibility, concern and inclusiveness of the theistic approach.

The philosophical and spiritual concept of dīkṣā is chiefly conceptual. This is the first aspect of the three-pronged study – the **what** aspect concerning knowledge, understanding and inquiry. We now focus on the practical aspect. We proceed to understand the gross, the concrete aspect who are directly related with the process –the **Who** and the **whom** aspects – i.e. the imitator and the designate-initiate.

51 LT 41.61 pg 164 अभिषिञ्चेदुरुः शिष्यं प्रसन्नेनान्तरात्मना | लब्धरूपस्ततः शिष्यं संसाराम्बुधिपारगः|

52 MRK 34.47 pg 209 इत्थं प्रसोपदेशस्तु पूजयेद् द्रविणैर्गुरुं | संभूषय भूषणैर्वस्त्रैः स्वस्य स्वस्य शक्तिं अवञ्च्य च ||

53 LT 41.62 pg 164 महता विभवेनाथ गुरुयागं समाचरेत् | , LT 41.63a अर्घ्याद्यैः पूजयेत् सर्वैः स्वर्णरत्नादिभिस्तथा च ||

54 PKS, Ramesvara in his gloss on the sutra अथातो दीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः ||१|| pg 13,14

55 LT 41.10 pg 162 वित्ताद्यस्याल्पवित्तस्य द्रव्यहीनस्य क्रमात् | आनीय दुर्दसंकल्पं चिरकालपरीक्षितम् ||

Dīkṣitru – The initiator.

The next aspect of the topic is the Guru - the initiator the starting point of all knowledge, spirituality and understanding. The Shakta tantra is a science, a system which allows you to test, check, doubt, and question and resolve the conflict, arouse the intellect and proceed ahead. The SVT⁵⁶ says just as a Guru should observe and test and gauge the eligible disciple, similarly a Sishya too can test the Guru. Thus highlighting that initiation is not a one-way process. The focus for all queries and source for all answers is the Guru. There are some necessities spelt by the Samaya texts. This can be simply stated as – qualities which are physical and qualifications which are intellectual. The PKS, the NitU, the LT, the SVT speak about the necessary qualification and essential qualities necessary for being a guru. In modern context we call them essential eligibility criteria. Agastya⁵⁷ in Shakti-Sutram says that, the Guru is verily the form of all divinities. The HSD⁵⁸ becomes more specific and states that the guru is the one form of the five divinities – Hari, Hara, Brahma, Surya and Shakti. And the ultimate accomplishment of the initiate is to please the Guru⁵⁹ because without the grace of the Guru nothing is possible anywhere⁶⁰. The HSD⁶¹ mentions of three types of Gurus who are known as Ougah or flood stream. They are classified as - Divyaougah, Siddhaougah and the Manavaougah. It thus builds the guru-connect from the mortal level through the intermediary to the celestial level. Agastya in the Saktisutram defines the guru as the one who initiates the mantra⁶².

The Physical traits of the Guru - The PKS⁶³, the NitU, and SVT say that the Guru should be good looking, with a pleasant face, of good

56 SVT द्वितीयःश्वासः → शिष्योऽपि लक्षणैरेतेः कुर्याद् गुरुपरिक्षणम् ।

57 AKSS 4.4.9,11 pg 132 गुरुव सर्वदेवात्मा ॥४॥ गुरुस्मरणं सर्वदेवस्मरणम् ॥९॥ गुरुदर्शनं वेदेवदर्शनम् ॥११॥

58 HSD 5.3.12, pg 19 हरिहरब्रह्मसूर्यशक्त्यात्मको गुरुः ॥

59 HSD 5.3.17 pg 19 गुरुतोषणं परमं साधनम् ॥

60 HSD 5.3.14 pg 19 गुरुकटाक्षं विना न किञ्चिदुभयत्र ॥

61 HSD 18.4.1,2,3. शिवस्कन्दब्रह्मेन्द्रविष्णवो दिवौकोगुरुवः शाक्तस्य ॥१॥

HSD दौर्वसौशनसहयाग्रीवबादरिनन्दिनस्सिद्धौघाः ॥२॥ सुमेधदौघादयो मानवौघाः ॥३॥

62 AKSS 4.3 pg 132 मन्पूदेष्टारं गुरुमीशं मनुते ॥३॥

63 PKS pg 32 Ramesvara's commentary also NitU pg 5 quoting the Tantraraja Tantram

conduct, physically clean, with well-formed limbs, erect body posture and restrained. He should have sincere devotion to the faith, resolve any doubts, not be greedy, and have devotion and deep faith. The Guru should be easy to approach, without ego, and speaks for the welfare of the sishya. The LT⁶⁴ says that the Guru is of the form of the Sun, the Moon and The Fire in this world engulfed by the darkness in the form of ignorance. He pacifies the afflictions and the fire in form of sorrows. The LT says that a guru should be a Brahmana well versed in the Vedas, know the six acts of expiation etc., He should be a handsome, of pleasing appearance. He should not be bald, with any physical disorder, should not lack in any limb or possess an extra limb, should neither be stout nor too lean, and should not be short tempered. One should avoid approaching a person not from a noble lineage, of bad conduct, a cheat, conceited. He should not have any skin disease or disorder⁶⁵. Should be honest, endowed with mercy and compassion, an expert in drawing the lines ie. The yantra, should be a contented person and possess a beautiful sweet smile and a compassionate heart⁶⁶.

The caste factor - Caste definitely played an important role in the pro-Vedic samaya system of worship. With regard to the question about whom should be approached for initiation, the SVT⁶⁷ states that a Brahmana is the authority for giving initiation. In the absence of him, the other two castes may do so. But this comes with a rider – the Kshatriya can initiate a Kshatriya and a Vaishya only to a Vaishya. A Brahmana can initiate all the three castes. This throws light on the social beliefs and customs of the then society.

The Dilemma in Initiation - The Samaya texts answer many FAQs and one of them is on whom to avoid approaching for receiving initiation. With regards to the question of initiation within the family the SVT⁶⁸ tells to avoid the following people to receive dikṣā from. They are one's

64 LT 4.64 pg 1 अज्ञान गहनालोकसूर्यसोमामिर्मूर्तये | दुःखत्रयान्मिसंतापशान्तये गुरवे नमः ||

65 LT 21.30-34a pg 72,73 सर्वलक्षणसंयुक्तः ब्राह्मणः वेदपाठः | न हीनङ्गोऽतिरिक्तो न शिवितरीत् न च डम्भिभक्तः ||

66 LT 21.34b-36pg 73 अकुलीनं दुराचारं शठं जिह्वं च वर्जयेत् |

67 SVT प्रथमःश्वासः, द्वितीयःश्वासः → ब्राह्मणः सर्वकालज्ञः कुर्यात्सर्वेष्वनुगहम् | क्षत्रविट्शुद्रजातीयाः प्रतिलोभ्येन दीक्षयेत् |

68 SVT द्वितीयःश्वासः → निर्वीर्यं च पितुर्मन्त्रं तथा मातामहस्य च |

own father, maternal grandfather, a younger brother, a person belonging to opposite / opponent side, a mendicant, a forest-dweller, a sanyasin, one who has given up maintaining the fires. This reflects the check on family based father-son, grandfather-grandson emotion based initiation process.

We can infer that apart from educational qualifications, presentation also mattered a lot. If knowledge entertains the intellect and soothes the heart, then physical appearance attracts and pleases the eye. Thus the teaching and personal appearance of the Guru, create a long lasting audio-visual imagery impact in the aspirant.

The next most important factor is for **whom?** the one who is the receiver and marks the end of the dīkṣā process. It is the didīkṣu or the desirous initiate. As said earlier dīkṣā is for anyone who is desirous to know more⁶⁹. Almost all the samaya works speak about the qualifications and the attributes of the desirous initiate. They also classify the earnest initiate in various ways – caste, gender, type of worship etc...

HSD⁷⁰ gives a fivefold classification of the didīkṣu. They mark the five stages of the initiate.⁷¹ Among these five categories, Hayagriva says that a NamaNistha⁷² as the one who is made pure in two ways – Eka-Putra purified by one way i.e. through mantra japa and UbhayaPutra⁷³ purified by mantraJapa and worship. There were the KarmaNishtas⁷⁴ who according to the Hayagriva purified in three ways – who undertake the performance of special arcanas, undertake special japas and undertake special homas on a daily basis. As discussed earlier, initiation was caste based. While the first three castes could get initiated in the lower order of caste hierarchy, the fourth caste was excluded from initiation processes.

The LT⁷⁵ says that a should possess all the positive traits mentioned for the Guru over and above that he should be endowed with

69 ज्ञातुम् इच्छा जिज्ञासा |

70 HSD 15.2.12 pg 64 नामनिष्ठ-कर्मनिष्ठ-मन्त्रनिष्ठ-ज्ञाननिष्ठ-योगनिष्ठेति दीक्षितः पञ्चदशः ||१२||

71 HSD 15.2.13-19 pg 64.

72 HSD 15.4.8 pg 67 नामनिष्ठो द्विधा || ८||

73 HSD 15.4.10 pg 67

74 HSD 15. 4. 11-15 pg 67 दीक्षात्रयपूतःकर्मनिष्ठः ||११||

75 LT 21. 37-41 pg 73 also 27.25a pg 92

patience, serene, devoted to his Guru, engaged in worship, and do all the duties prescribed for his caste. The LT⁷⁶ speaks about initiation for the fourth caste as well as for women. NitU and LT⁷⁷ About initiation for women it states that – a lady who is wise and follows the prescribed rules ordained for her stage and caste. She is devoted to her husband and undertakes initiation being permitted by her husband, The NitU⁷⁸ quoting the Tantrasara tantra says that women are eligible only for mantra-dīkṣā. Women were safeguarded and reflects the nature of the society where they were dependant on their husband's permission for embarking on the spiritual voyage.

The journey of the dīkṣā process begins with the Guru and ends with the didīkṣu. But it is not the end all stage, it is a stage of catharsis, marked by significant changes and developments and a final transformation before the cycle begins again renewed and afresh enabling the Sadhaka to embark on the spiritual journey.

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76 LT 21.39.b pg 73 ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियं वैश्यं शूद्रं वा भगवत्परम् ॥

77.LT 21. 40b,41a pg 73 वर्णधर्मक्रियोपेतां नारीं वा सद्विवेकिनीम् ॥ विद्यादनुमते पत्युर्न्यानां पतिमानिनीम् ॥

78 NitU pg 10 ,Ramesvaras commentary on Deeksa types → स्त्रीणां तु वाग्दीक्ष विहिता न नान्येति...| वाग्दीक्षा मन्त्रोपदेशः ॥

Abbreviations

1. AKSS - Agastya Krutam Shakti-Suktam
2. HSD - Hayagriva's Sakta-Darsana
3. LT - Lakshmi-Tantra
4. MRK - Mahalakshmi Ratna Kosha – I
5. NitU - Nityotsava of Umanandanatha
6. PKS - Parasurama-kalpa-sutra

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