

THE MOTHER GODDESS IN INDIAN SCULPTURE

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The Concept of the Mother Goddess:

India may be described as a land of goddesses. Far more than the gods, it is the goddesses who seem to attract the attention of the people. If we were to study the thousands of ancient and modern temples and other monuments that dot the extensive terrain, we would notice that it is the goddesses more than the gods, who draw the interest of the common man. Unlike the ancient Greeks, the ancient Indians tended to believe that it was the female body and not the male, that was beautiful. Indian literature speaks more of woman's love for man than man's love for woman, and in India it was usually the female rather than the male, who symbolized authority and power. A glance at the thousands of ancient temples of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism will reveal numerous attractive statues of young uncovered women, but rarely if ever do we find nude statues of men. Many of these statues are of goddesses, though statues are also found of *apsaras*, *yakshinis*, *naginis*,¹ and other such creatures, who so to say occupy a position midway between humans and divinities. What may be the reasons for this popularity of the goddesses in India? Scholars as one may imagine have offered a range of explanations, some of which I shall hereafter discuss.

¹ Apsaras are celestial nymphs who are personifications of mists or clouds, and who have the forms of young and beautiful women. Yakshinis or Yakshis are female spirits inhabiting nature. Their male counterparts are called Yakshas. Yakshas and Yakshinis are regarded as custodians of treasures hidden in the roots of trees. Naginis are female mythical serpents and the males are called Nagas. Apsaras, Yakshinis, and Naginis, are noted for their sensuality and beauty.

If we were to conduct a general investigation of the personalities of these goddesses, we would notice that they differ greatly from one another. Some have a tendency to adopt a strongly maternal attitude towards their worshipers, but there are others in whom such a protective attitude is greatly lacking. Some are autonomous and strong-willed. They are excellent warriors, musicians, and dancers, and they usually tend to act on their own without reference to any male deity. Others however tend to be homely and domestic, and are very rarely referred to alone. They are usually referred to in conjunction with their male consorts. Some are associated with forests, mountains, or darkness, while others are associated with culture, beauty, and Art. Some like Sita the wife of Rama² are faithful and loving wives, usually keeping a low profile before their husbands, while others like Parvati the wife of Shiva the lord of destruction, are passionate and indefatigable lovers. Some like any normal human being tend to exhibit tendencies such as jealousy, anger, stubbornness, and impatience, while others appear matured and balanced in their behavior. However, for many Indian people, these various goddesses are but different manifestations of one great mysterious female divinity, whom we refer to as the 'Mother Goddess.' As the same object presents a different appearance when viewed by people from different angles, this single Mother Goddess has various different manifestations.

How may we define this Mother Goddess? A simple definition would be, 'any female divinity whom the worshiper accepts and reveres as his own mother.' This Mother Goddess appears in various different forms in the history of Indian culture. As stated earlier she is the wife of Shiva the lord of destruction, having the names Kali, Durga, Parvati, Uma, Bhavani, Bhairavi and many others. She is looked upon as the conveyer and the possessor of the power of her husband Shiva, because all of Shiva's power is symbolized in her, and it is through her that it

² Rama and Sita are the hero and heroine of the Ramayana epic.

becomes active in the world. She is sometimes the wife of Vishnu the preserver of the universe, having the names Lakshmi or Shri, or other appellations such as Chanchala, Lokamata, Jalandhija, Kamala, and so on, and in this form she is specially revered as the goddess of good fortune and beauty. She is also worshipped in her various incarnations.³ When Vishnu came down to the earth in the form of the handsome prince Rama, she became his wife the princess Sita. When Vishnu was the prince Krishna, she became Rukmini, one of his several wives. When Vishnu took the form of the dwarf Vamana, she became Kamala, a lotus flower. When Vishnu was Parashurama the famous warrior of the axe, she became Dharani the earth goddess.

Even lesser known goddesses are sometimes identified with the Mother Goddess. As an example of these we have Sarasvati the wife of Brahma, the patroness of learning and Art. Folk goddess such as Manasa the goddess of snakes, Sitala the goddess of small-pox, and Shashthi the protectress of pregnant women, are also at times identified with the Mother Goddess. That is to say, the Mother Goddess has numerous manifestations. Some of these manifestations have been in existence for centuries, and some have arisen only recently. For example, the cult of 'Santoshi Ma,' the daughter of the elephant-headed god Ganesha and the grand-daughter of Shiva and Parvati, appeared only about thirty years ago. The late A. L. Basham of the Australian National University, speaks of a goddess whose image he found in one of the bazaars of India called 'Srama Devata,' or the goddess of hard work. He describes her as a beautiful woman with four arms, holding in her hands emblems such a ploughshare and a cog wheel, and surrounded by peasants, doctors, and scientists.

³The Sanskrit word *avatara* roughly means 'incarnation.' The preserver of the universe Vishnu from time to time comes down into the earth taking different forms, in order to deliver the holy, to destroy sin, to punish sinners, and to establish righteousness. Traditionally Hinduism has accepted ten avataras. They are *Matsya* (fish), *Kurma* (tortoise), *Varaha* (wild boar), Narasimha (man-lion), Rama (a human being and a prince), Krishna (a human being and a prince), Parashurama (a warrior who fights with an axe), Vamana (a dwarf), Buddha, and Kalki (a warrior who has yet to appear in this world).

There are certain goddesses who are worshipped only by people following a certain profession, such as 'Katalamma,' who is worshipped by the fisher-folk of certain parts of the south Indian coast of Kerala, and 'Renukadevi Yelamma,' who besides others is worshipped by certain prostitutes of south India. There are certain goddesses who are worshipped only in a particular village or town. For example, in the village of Periyapalayam close to the south Indian city of Chennai, is found the cult of a goddess named 'Periyapalayattamma,' or the 'mother of Periyapalayam.' This goddess is unknown outside the village.

All these various deities are looked upon as different manifestations of the One Great Mother Goddess, that mysterious entity who brought this world into being, who is seen in different forms in the various paintings and temple sculptures of India, and who loves and protects all living beings, as a mother would love and protect her own children. She is 'Annapurna' the earth mother, bounteous and rich in food, who ceaselessly nourishes her children. She is 'Camunda,' the controller of old age, disease, and death, and she is 'Shakti,' or pure energy.

Why is this mother goddess so popular in India? As stated earlier, scholars have offered different explanations. Some are of the opinion, that the reason why all goddesses and chiefly the Mother Goddess is so popular in India, is because of the great reverence that people have for the land, and for the nation of India as a whole. Since Indians by and large are an agricultural community, from ancient times the land was considered very important by the people of its approximately 700,000 villages.

The Mother Goddess in Ancient Scriptures:

The most ancient religious scripture of India is the *Rig Veda*, and this contains several hymns to 'Prithvi,' the earth goddess. Here the earth is praised for its abundant fruitfulness, and also for its majestic stability. The earth is perceived as a great and powerful goddess, and

the entire cosmos is perceived as a great living being. This reverence for the goddess continued also in later ages. According to a later Indian myth, a demon named Hiranyaksha or 'golden eyed,' on one occasion kidnapped the earth goddess, and dragged her into the bottom of the ocean. The gods all appealed for assistance to Vishnu the preserver of the cosmos, who assuming the form of a wild boar plunged into the ocean, and battled with the demon for a thousand years before ultimately slaying him. The Mother Goddess is also identified with Prakriti the primordial matter or nature, a concept which appears in Samkhyan philosophy.⁴

One of the most important texts dealing with the Mother Goddess, is the *Devi Mahatmya*. This text which scholars have declared to be roughly 1500 years old, is also referred to by various other names, such as *Durga Mahatmya*, *Chandipatha*, *Chandi Saptasati*, and so on. It is a poem of 700 verses written in 13 chapters, a long hymn in praise of the Mother Goddess who is referred to as Shakti, and who descends upon the earth from time to time to rid the world of demons and evil-doers. This *Devi Mahatmya* is itself a part of another famous text, namely the *Markandeya Purana*. According to the *Devi Mahatmya*, the earth is filled with the goddess Shakti (11.5). She constitutes every created object (11.6). According to another text namely the *Devi Bhagavata Purana*, she is said to be present everywhere, right up from the creator god Brahma, down to a blade of grass (1.9.31-32). She proclaims to Vishnu that she is everything that is seen (1.15.52). At the time of the dissolution of the earth she is said to withdraw the earth into her womb, and she exists as the seed of the earth until the next creation, when she will grow and blossom forth again (3.3.54-55). Just as a spider weaves its web out of its own body, the Mother Goddess Devi or Shakti, creates the entire universe, out of her own body. The *Devi Bhagavata Purana* states that the Mother Goddess symbolizes all

⁴ Samkhya is a school of Indian Philosophy which accepts the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti, or spirit and primordial nature.

reality. The earth is her loins, the ocean her bowels, the mountains her bones, the rivers her veins, the trees her body hair, the sun and moon her eyes, and the nether world her hips, legs, and feet.

In the scripture entitled the *Lalita Sahasranama*, she is referred to by various symbolic names, such as 'Sarvamayi,' or 'she whose form is all.' 'Kshetrasvarupa,' or 'she whose body is matter,' 'Jadatmika,' or 'she who is the world.' 'Vishvagarbha,' or 'she whose womb contains the universe,' 'Bhumarupa,' or she whose form is all existing things. She is also called 'Mahi' and 'Dhara,' which are two common names for the earth.

Sometime roughly between the 4th and the 5th century of the Christian era, after the fall of the mighty Gandhara Empire, India was ruled by the Gupta emperors. The Gupta dynasty was referred to as a golden age, because among other things, nearly three hundred years of comparative peace produced a tremendous renaissance of Art. The Gupta emperors saw themselves as godlike instruments of Vishnu, the preserver and ruler of the cosmos, and like Vishnu they saw themselves as protecting the universe and maintaining cosmic stability. The boar, which was the form that Vishnu took while rescuing the earth goddess from the demon Hiranyaksha was very popular among the Gupta emperors, and represented a mythical exemplar, that expressed understanding of their rule. Today the cult of 'Bharat-mata or 'Mother India' that exists in the sub-continent, is according to Kingsley, probably a residue of these ancient Gupta ideas. India is considered as a mother, and all Indians are considered as her children. Bharat-mata is usually shown as a tall beautiful woman dressed in a sari with long flowing hair, wearing a crown upon her head and holding a trishul⁵ in her hand.

⁵ A three-pronged spear, usually associated with Shiva the lord of destruction.

The Indus Valley Civilization:

In the ruins of the Indus Valley Civilization of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, hundreds of little female figurines have been discovered. Some are inefficiently made of terracotta, while others are ingeniously made of bronze, as for example the famous 'dancing girl.' The male statues in comparison are rather few in number, and some scholars have expressed the view that there was perhaps a female statue existent in every house. Some of these statues are indistinguishable according to sex, while others are androgynous, with both breasts and male genitals. Other famous discoveries are a nude figure, probably a woman, with her legs spread out and a tree emerging from her womb. These female figurines are not at all like the so-called Venus figurines discovered in pre-historic Europe. Very few of the Indus Valley figurines emphasize the breasts, hips, or genital areas. Although there are some of this type, most of the Indus Valley figures are found to be slim, often small breasted or having pointed breasts. Many are of unfeminine build, appearing very boyish. A few have very constricted waists, pointed breasts and flared hips, reminiscent of the way female figures were portrayed in later Hinduism. A striking feature of most of these figurines is the well articulated head. The coiffures are usually very intricate, and head ornaments or even horns might be shown in addition to hair. A few disclose the reproductive organs, and none can be said to be unmistakably pregnant.

Another interesting discovery among the Indus Valley ruins, consists of certain ring-shaped stone objects, having holes in the center. Some scholars have concluded that these pierced discs are meant to represent the vagina, and that the Indus Valley people followed a religion that emphasized human sexuality. These objects are said to be prototypes of the 'linga' and 'yoni' of later Hinduism. The word linga means plough or digging stick, and it is usually a cubic object made of stone, metal, earth, or wood, and which is worshipped as a symbol of the sexual energy of the god of destruction Shiva. Famous linga shrines are

Achalesvara in Mount Abu, (Achalesvara means 'immovable lord'), Amaresvara in Ujjain, and Amarnath in Kashmir, (both these words mean the 'deathless lord'). The word yoni has many meanings such as 'holder, vulva, origin, nest, lap, or womb.' This is usually a somewhat round object with a hole pierced in it, which represents the sexual energy of the goddess Parvati, the wife of Shiva and a prominent symbol of the Mother Goddess. The linga and the yoni together form a sexual symbol, a symbol of creation. As a mother gives birth to her child, she the great goddess, gives birth to the entire world.

The Matrakas:

One group of goddesses who are dominant symbols of the Mother Goddess, and who have for a long time played a deeply influential role in the history of Hinduism, are the 'matrakas' or mothers. These goddesses always move or function in a group, and they are usually said to be seven in number, though sometimes they may be eight or even sixteen. In the earlier Hindu scriptures they are regarded as unpropitious, or sometimes even as ominous, but later they began to be looked upon as guardians or benefactors, as mothers who watch over their children with loving care and solicitude. In certain portions of the *Mahabharata* which are considered as belonging to the first century of the Christian era, a group of goddesses called matrakas are mentioned, who are sent by Indra the king of Heaven to kill Kartikkeya the son of Shiva and Parvati, who had just been born. As they approach him with the intention to kill however, their powerful motherly instincts rise to the forefront, and milk oozes from their breasts. Setting aside all thoughts of killing him therefore they ask him to adopt them all as his mothers. One of these goddesses is born of anger, and she carries a spike in her hand, while the other who is the daughter of the sea, is said to be bad-tempered, red-complexioned, and a creature who lives on blood. The text does not specify the number of goddesses, but it is possible that the others also are malignant and ill-omened. (*Vana*

Parva, 215. 21-22). We notice in the Mahabharata, that these goddesses are characterized in general as dangerous. In another episode dealing with Kartikkeya's birth, a large number of fierce goddesses are said to be born from the child, when Indra strikes him with a thunderbolt. Kartikkeya however adopts all these goddesses as his mothers, and divides them into two groups of good and evil spirits. All these matrakas however have one important characteristic, and that is a tendency to steal children. This dangerous nature of the matrakas is further detailed as follows: There are six sages whose wives had been unfairly charged with being the mothers of Kartikkeya, and their husbands in anger divorced them. These six divorced women came to Kartikkeya, and requested him to adopt them as his mothers. Kartikkeya out of compassion adopted them as his mothers, and then asked them if there were anything else that they needed. They then made two requests to him. First, they requested that they be recognized and worshipped as great goddesses throughout the world, and second, that they be permitted to live off the flesh and blood of children, since they themselves have had their marriages terminated, and thereby swindled out of the possibility of having children of their own. Kartikkeya however replied that he found it painful to grant them the second request, and suggested instead that they protect children instead of harming them. When they agreed to this, Kartikkeya declared to them as follows: "In your various forms you may harass children until they reach the age of sixteen. I grant you an indestructible nature. You may live happily with that nature, worshipped by all." As a group, these goddesses are called mahamatrakas, or great mothers.

In the same story, another list of ten female spirits are mentioned, all of whom serve inauspicious functions, or are described as bloodthirsty and vicious. Their names are, Vinata, Putana, Raksasi, Aditi (or Revati), Diti, Surabhi, Sarama, Kadru, Lohitayani, and Arya. All but two of them, namely Vinata and Lohitayani, devour or torment children

or pregnant women. They are described as eating flesh, drinking strong intoxicants, and prowling about in the confinement chamber where birth takes place, for the first ten days of a child's life. Until the age of sixteen they torment children in various ways, but later they act as positive influences.

In another section of the *Mahabharata*, namely the *Salya Parva*, Kartikkeya is described as the supreme commander of the army of gods, who battles with the demons. Among his host are mentioned a group of female beings (over 92 are mentioned), who help him in his battles. Some are described as lovely, cheerful, fair, and youthful, while the majority are dark, with long nails, large teeth, and protruding lips. They are said to live in trees, at crossroads, in caves, mountains, springs, and burning grounds, and they speak a variety of languages and inspire their enemies with terror.

Most references to the goddesses in the *Mahabharata* emphasize the fact that they are dangerous, that they have fearful appearances, and that their behavior is violent. They are attracted to children, and their dangerous nature is mostly directed towards children.

Goddesses antagonistic to little children are also found elsewhere in Indian tradition. The goddess Hariti who is well known in Buddhism, is described as stealing the children of other women and feeding herself and her own children with them. The Buddha however transformed her into a benign being, and promised her that in the future people would worship images of herself and her children.

Why are these matrakas so attracted to children? Scholars have different opinions, but many feel that this concept developed from the belief that women who die childless or in childbirth, linger on as evil spirits who are envious of other women and their children, and whose jealousy is appeased by stealing or harming their children. People therefore originally worshipped the matrakas out of fear. Even today in India, some women hate to refer to their children as attractive or charming, and they at times even mark their children's faces with

collyrium or other substances, in order to hide their beauty. These are practices meant to prevent the goddesses from noticing their children, lest their jealousy be aroused and they cause harm to them or to their mothers. To make much of one's children might attract the attention of the goddesses, and risk incurring their dreadful afflictions.

Some scholars feel that the matrakas in the *Mahabharata* represent many village goddesses throughout India who are widely worshipped by the common people, and who are often associated with diseases or the prevention of diseases, especially those which afflict little children. These goddesses are not found in the *Vedas*, and hence they are clearly non-Aryan. This is probably the reason why the authors of the *Mahabharata* were clearly suspicious of them.

The Matrakas after the Fifth century:

After 400 AD, the personality of the matrakas underwent a drastic change. Their numbers and names became standardized, and they became popular among the people. They were portrayed as combating the demons who intimidate the gods, or disturb the constancy of the universe. The *Natyashastra* recommends that the matrakas be worshipped prior to the setting up of the theater and stage for dance performances. Other texts such as the *Carudatta* of Bhasa, *Mrcchakatika* of Sudraka, and the *Kadambari* and *Harsha Carita* of Bana Bhatta, also speak very favorably of the matrakas. However the best description of the matrakas in the medieval period, is found in the *Devi Mahatmya*. Here two demons named Shumbha and Nishumbha seized the authority and position of the gods. On being requested by the gods, the Mother Goddess Shakti, went out to confront them. In order to help Shakti in her fight against the demons, the gods created female counterparts of themselves, and sent them out onto the battlefield along with Shakti. Each of these female counterparts resembled the god who created her. Brahma created Brahmani, Shiva created Maheshvari, Kartikkeya created Kaumari, Vishnu created Vaishnavi,

Varaha created Varahi, Narasimha created Narasimhi, and Indra created Aindri. These seven goddesses along with another goddess named Camunda, devastated the demons together with Shakti. After the battle they drank the blood of the victims, and began to dance. This description is repeated in two other scriptures, namely the *Devi Bhagavata Purana* (5.28-29), and the *Vamana Purana*(30).

These seven goddesses are to be understood not so much as the consorts of the male gods, but as different forms of the Mother Goddess, who is named Shakti or Devi. This is clearly stated in the text, because after Nishumbha is killed, Shumbha protests that her victory was due not to any power of her own, but because of the assistance she received from her many female allies. Shakti on hearing this declared that all the matrakas are merely her own different forms, and she proved this by absorbing them all into her own body.

However even in this later period, there are scriptures which still refer to the malevolent nature of the matrakas. The *Varaha Purana* states that Maheshvari is the symbol of anger, Vaishnavi of greed, Kaumari of attachment, Brahmani of pride, and Camunda of depravity. Yet, when they came to be considered as forms of the Mother Goddess Shakti, the attitude towards them changed from one of revulsion and fear, into filial devotion and love.

Sculptures relating to the Mother Goddess are to found all over India, but some notable examples are in the South Indian state of Tamilnadu. The ancient sculptures of Tiruchirapalli, Mamallapuram, Tanjavur, Kanchipuram, Cholahapuram, Chidambaram, and Tirutanni in the state of Tamilnadu, are all noteworthy for the sculptures of the Mother Goddess found in their many beautiful temples.

In Tiruchirapalli, the Upper Cave Temple which belongs to the early 7th century was built during the reign of king Mahendravarman of the Pallava dynasty, who belongs to the period (580-630) AD. Here we find a unique statue of Shiva the lord of destruction, receiving the goddess Ganga who symbolizes the Ganges river, in his hair. Ganga is one of

the many manifestations of the Mother Goddess.

At Mamallapuram which served as the port city of the Pallava rulers, at the Trimurti Cave temple which belongs to the 8th century is found a statue of the Goddess Durga standing on a buffalo's head, and framed by a foliated arch which springs from Makaras, or sea monsters. In the the same city, within the Varaha Cave temple which belongs to the late 7th century one can find a statue of Varaha, which is the wild boar incarnation of Vishnu, carrying the Earth Goddess, who is referred to as Bhudevi. Also seen in this temple are the Goddesses Durga and Lakshmi. In this city we also have the Mahishasuramardini Cave Temple, wherein is shown the Goddess Durga destroying the demon Mahishasura.

In the city of Tanjavur which rose to prominence between the 9th and 12th century under the Chola dynasty, lies the famous Brihadeshvara temple. Here we see several carvings concerning legends of Shiva, such as for example his marriage to the Goddess Parvati.

Kanchipuram which is one of holiest cities of Hinduism was the capital of the Pallava rulers between the 7th and 9th century, and even later it continued to maintain its importance during other dynasties such as the Chola, Vijayanagar, and Nayaka. Here the Kailasanatha temple of the early 8th century is famous for its statue of the Shiva linga, and also for its statues of Durga and Bhairavi. Here in the Ekambareshvara temple which belongs to the period between the 16th and 17th century, is seen a large linga. This linga, is shown worshipped by a Goddess called Kamakshi, one of the many manifestations of the Mother Goddess.

The city of Chidambaram has been an important Hindu center since at least the 9th century. Here, according to a legend, the famous Nattraja temple or temple of Shiva 'the king of the dance' was founded as a result of a dance competition between Shiva and the Goddess Kali, in which Shiva was the victor. We find here statues of Goddesses such as Durga and Sarasvati.

In the city of Tirutanni, in the Virattaneshvara temple which belongs to the 9th century, are seen statues of Durga, and also statues of the matrakas.

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インドの彫刻にみられる母なる女神

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インドは女神の国である。この広大な大地に点在する何千もの寺院や遺跡では、人々に崇拜される、様々な女神の姿を見ることができる。たくさんの中、市井の人々の熱い信仰をあつめるのは、男神ではなく女神だ。

それぞれの女神は、異なった性格を持つ。信者に対して母のような愛をもって対峙する女神もいれば、そのような「母性」にはまったく欠けているものもある。ある女神は意思が強く、武道に優れ、音楽や踊りをたしなむ。この女神は常に一人で行動し、ほかの神々に依存することはない。一方、より家庭的で、素朴な趣きの女神もある。彼女は主人の隣に寄り添い、ともに行動する。また、ある女神は、森、山、暗闇などと結びつき、ある神は文化や芸術とつながりをもつ。夫の前では一歩引いて振る舞う、従順な愛すべき妻としての女神がいる一方で、情緒的で、移り気な女神もある。ふつうの人間のように嫉妬や怒りといった感情をあらわにする神もいるし、その反対に、自制心があり、円熟した神もいる。

このように、インドにはさまざまな性格を持った女神がいる。しかしこれらの神々は、インドの人々にとっては、母なる偉大な女神、「大母神」の一つの形成にすぎない。ある物を見る人によって異なって見えるように、この偉大な女神は多様な人格を持って信者の前に現れる。

それでは、このような多様な顔を持つ女神をどのように定義すればいいだろう？ もっとも簡単なものは、「人々がその母として受け入れ、敬う神は、すべて母なる女神である」というものである。この女神は、インドの長い歴史のなかで、パールヴァティー、ラクシュミー(吉祥天)、サラスヴァティー(弁財天)など、さまざまな名前をもって登場してきたが、これらは宇宙の創造主である大女神のひとつの形成である。この母なる女神は、子供に対する母親のように、生きとし生けるものすべてを愛し、守護する。ヴェーダ、マハーバーラタ、ラーマヤナなどのヒンドゥー經典にも登場し、ハラッパやモヘンジョダロといったインダス文明の遺跡からも、何百もの

小さな女性の彫像が発掘されている。

長い歴史を持つヒンドゥ教において、重要な位置を占めてきたのは、マートラカと呼ばれる女神である。この神は、常に7、8人から16人もの集団を作って移動し、行動する。初期のヒンドゥ經典には不吉で危険な神として登場するが、時を経るにつれ、加護、あるいは恩恵をもたらす存在として見なされるようになる。

母なる女神と関わりがあると思われる彫像は、インド各地で見られる。とくに南インドのタミルナードゥは、女神信仰のさかんな地として有名である。ティルチラパッリ、マーマラブラム、タンジャヴル、カーンチブラム、チョーラーブラム、チダムバラム、ティルタニなどのヒンドゥ寺院では、美しく、力強い女神たちに出会うことができる。