

The representation of feminine in shaktism

Religion



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Black being a colour, which absorbs most light and heat itself it's only natural to depict Kali as black and call her 'kali', a name which refers to this colour itself. She is termed so and always depicted in black because she's not the absence of light like common understanding but the most intense heat form and or light there can ever be. Her name makes reference to the word 'kaal' which means time so she's also symbolic of the nature of time to bring everything to an end only for it to start again. For kali to destroy everything she needs Shiva as he was the first conqueror of time, the first complete yogi. This mutual interdependence of the Feminine and the masculine principle is represented in Shaktism and, I believe, is tried to be depicted in the half Parvati and half Shiva statue.

She's the Divine Light, which destroys and burns in the fire of her pure consciousness any malevolent force and any residue of ignorance. This is done to show that she devours everything in the end. She is the most intense and powerful concentration of goddess Durga and depicted in black colour as it's the boldest, most intense and powerful colour itself. Black is not the absence of colour but the most intense colour in art. It's the colour where all colours meet. Each matter is associated with space-time and also, each matter is a condensed form of energy. She is also symbolic of energy hence often referred to as 'Shakti'. As Kali is in itself the most acute form of energy, she's portrayed as black to show the density of energy of the entire universe, which resides in her. She is considered as the ultimate Shakti of the universe in Vedic science.

As shadows are both made and destroyed by sunlight it makes Kali the shining centre of the universe as she's the master of this illusion. She's

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darkness to evil and light to good. She is also the light that uplifts humanity. She is the plague that destroys humanity. She's depicted in a nude form as she portrays the nude reality of totality of everything as it is and has nothing to hide from anyone as everything and everyone is hers. Kali clearly is the ultimate truth and she is aware of it. She need not have any finite fabric to wrap her identity. Her name also means 'kaal' which is understood as time. As time is unforgiving it takes everyone to death eventually and therefore Kali is also known as the goddess of death and destruction and gives another reason for her portrayal as black as the colour is linked to death too. The goddess is depicted with her tongue out to depict that she swallows the swarm of blood born demons and the blood of the original demon Rakta-bija because from his blood more of his duplicates were formed. Her tongue sticking out is a reminder that time ultimately consumes all life and that in no way can you resist ending for eternity or escape her. She wears a garland of 50 human male heads, showing that she is the sole knowledge because 50 heads denote 50 alphabets of Sanskrit. With her sword, she performs her role as the ultimate annihilator- time. Holding a human head in her hand, which denotes the decapitated ego, she makes us free. Her hair is unsettled and always flowing indicating autonomy and freedom. Her third eye represents the eye that sees beyond what everyone can see. She is the complete observation and the observer at once. She has the Abhaya mudra facing upwards through which she tells her devotees not to be afraid of anything. With Varada mudra facing downwards, she provides and sustains all the requirements of the devotees. Depicted with her foot on Lord Shiva's chest she shows the supremacy of time over man. It shows that even a Yogi who is on the path of attaining 'Siddhi', so he can control his time of death,

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has to surrender to time to conquer it. Shiva himself surrendered to Kali to overpower her.

This way Shiva overpowered time; the highest form of Siddhi for a Yogi. That's why he is considered the ultimate yogi and the first complete Yogi. This is also the reason he is called 'pati' of Kali, which means 'lord'. Kali is bound to destroy everything if Lord Shiva wants — i. e. if a conqueror of the Time wants. The masculine potentiality is actualized by feminine dynamism, symbolized by Shakti.

Shaktism, a branch of Hinduism holds that the feminine represents the dominant power in the universe over and above that of males. However, it doesn't forget to remember that genders must be subsumed. The masculine potentiality is actualized by feminine dynamism, symbolized by Shakti and embodied in the multitudinous goddesses who are ultimately reconciled into one. In religious art, this mutual dependence of Shakti and Brahman is powerfully expressed in the half-male, half-female picture known as Ardhanarisvara, or "The lord who is half woman." For such depictions, the female half is represented by Parvati, who is just a form of Kali, and the male half is represented by her husband, Shiva.