

= Matangi =

Matangi is one of the Mahavidyas , ten Tantric goddesses and a ferocious aspect of Devi , the Hindu Divine Mother . She is considered to be the Tantric form of Sarasvati , the goddess of music and learning . Like Sarasvati , Matangi governs speech , music , knowledge and the arts . Her worship is prescribed to acquire supernatural powers , especially gaining control over enemies , attracting people to oneself , acquiring mastery over the arts and gaining supreme knowledge .

Matangi is often associated with pollution , inauspiciousness and the periphery of Hindu society , which is embodied in her most popular form , known as Ucchishta @-@ Chandalini or Ucchishta @-@ Matangini . She is described as an outcaste (Chandalini) and offered left @-@ over or partially eaten food (Ucchishta) with unwashed hands or food after eating , both of which are considered to be impure in classical Hinduism .

Matangi is often represented as emerald green in colour . While Ucchishta @-@ Matangini carries a noose , sword , goad , and club , her other well @-@ known form , Raja @-@ Matangi , plays the veena and is often pictured with a parrot .

= = Iconography and textual descriptions = =

The Dhyana mantra (a mantra that details the form of the deity on which a devotee should meditate) of the Brhat Tantrasara describes Ucchishta @-@ Matangini , one of the most popular forms of the goddess . Matangi is seated on a corpse and wears red garments , red jewellery and a garland of gunja seeds . The goddess is described as a young , sixteen @-@ year @-@ old maiden with fully developed breasts . She carries a skull and a sword in her two hands , and is offered leftovers .

The Dhyana mantras in the Purashcharyarnava and the Tantrasara describe Matangi as blue in colour . The crescent moon adorns her forehead . She has three eyes and a smiling face . She wears jewellery and is seated on a jewelled throne . In her four arms , she carries a noose , a sword , a goad , and a club . Her waist is slim and her breasts well @-@ developed .

The Dhyana Mantra of Raja @-@ matangi from the Purashcharyarnava describes Matangi as green in colour with the crescent moon upon her forehead . She has long hair , a smiling expression and intoxicated eyes , and wears a garland of kadamba flowers and various ornaments . She perspires a little around the face , which renders her even more beautiful . Below her navel are three horizontal folds of skin and a thin vertical line of fine hair . Seated on an altar and flanked by two parrots , she represents the 64 arts . The Saradatilaka , adds to this description that Raja @-@ Matangi plays the veena , wears conch @-@ shell earrings and flower garlands , and has flower paintings adorning her forehead .

According to the Shyamaladandakam , Matangi plays a ruby @-@ studded veena and speaks sweetly . The Dhyana Mantra describes her to be four @-@ armed , with a dark emerald complexion , full breasts anointed with red kumkum powder , and a crescent moon on her forehead . She carries a noose , a goad , a sugarcane bow and flower arrows , which the goddess Tripura Sundari is often described to hold . She is also described to love the parrot and is embodied in the nectar of song .

The green complexion is associated with deep knowledge and is also the colour of Budha , the presiding deity of the planet Mercury who governs intelligence . Matangi is often depicted with a parrot in her hands , representing speech . The veena symbolizes her association with music .

= = Legends = =

Matangi is often named as the ninth Mahavidya . A list contained within the prose of the Mundamala equates Vishnu 's ten avatars with the ten Mahavidyas . The Buddha is equated to Matangi . A similar list in the Guhyatiguhya @-@ Tantra omits Matangi altogether , however the scholar Sircar interprets the goddess Durga ? equated to the avatar Kalki in the list ? as an allusion to Matangi .

In a story from the Shakta Maha @-@ Bhagavata Purana , which narrates the creation of all the Mahavidyas , Sati , the daughter of Daksha and first wife of god Shiva , feels insulted that she and Shiva are not invited to Daksha 's yagna (" fire sacrifice ") and insists on going there , despite Shiva 's protests . After futile attempts to convince Shiva , the enraged Sati transforms into the Mahavidyas , including Matangi . The Mahavidyas then surround Shiva from the ten cardinal directions ; Matangi stands in the northwest . Another similar legend replaces Sati with Kali (the chief Mahavidya) as the wife of Shiva and the origin of Matangi and the other Mahavidyas . The Devi Bhagavata Purana describes Matangi and her fellow Mahavidyas as war @-@ companions and forms of the goddess Shakambhari .

The Shaktisamgama @-@ tantra narrates the birth of Ucchishta @-@ matangini . Once , the god Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi visited Shiva and his second wife Parvati (a reincarnation of Sati) and gave them a banquet of fine foods . While eating , the deities dropped some food on the ground , from which arose a beautiful maiden who asked their left @-@ overs . The four deities granted her their left @-@ overs as prasad , food made sacred by having been first consumed by the deity . This can be interpreted as the Ucchishta of the deity , although due to its negative connotation the word Ucchishta is never explicitly used in connection to prasad . Shiva decreed that those who repeat her mantra and worship her will have their material desires satisfied and gain control over foes , declaring her the giver of boons . From that day , the maiden was known as Ucchishta @-@ matangini .

The Pranotasan Tantra narrates that once Parvati longed to go back to her maternal house for some days and asked Shiva 's permission to do so . The reluctant Shiva agreed on the condition that if she did not return in a few days , he would come to fetch her . Parvati agreed and went to her father Himalaya 's place , where she stayed for many days . The lovesick Shiva went to Himalaya 's abode disguised as an ornament seller and sold shell ornaments to Parvati . In order to test her fidelity , the disguised Shiva asked for sex in return . The disgusted Parvati was about to curse the ornament @-@ seller , when she realizes by her yogic powers that it was none other than Shiva . She agrees to grant sexual favours but at the appropriate time . In the evening , Parvati returns to Shiva 's abode disguised as a Chandala huntress . She is dressed in red and had a lean figure and large breasts and performs a seductive dance to lure him . She told Shiva that she had come to do penance . Shiva replied that he is the one gives fruit to all penance and took her hand and kissed her . Further , they made love when Shiva himself changed into a Chandala and recognized the Chandala woman as his wife . After the love @-@ making , Parvati asked Shiva to grant her wish that her form as a Chandalini (the Chandala female form in which Shiva made love to her) might last forever as Ucchishta @-@ Chandalini and that her worship in this form precede his for his worship to be considered fruitful . This tale is also found in many Bengali Mangalkavyas . In these texts , however , Parvati is not explicitly identified with Matangi .

The Svatantra @-@ tantra mentions that Matanga practised austerities for thousands of years to gain the power to subdue all beings . Finally , goddess Tripura Sundari appeared and from eyes emitted rays that produced goddess Kali , who had greenish complexion and was known as Raja @-@ matangini . With her help , Matanga fulfilled his desire . Many texts including the Shyamaladandakam describe Matangi as the daughter of the sage Matanga .

Another tale is associated with the temple dedicated to Kauri @-@ bai ? an aspect of Matangi ? who appeared in low caste area of Varanasi . Kauri @-@ bai was a goddess who was obsessed with the Brahmin ways and purity and abhorred Shiva 's heterodox practices like dwelling in cremation grounds , partaking of intoxicants and being in the company of ghosts and goblins . While Shiva simply ignored Kauri @-@ bai 's words at first , after his marriage his wife Parvati could not bear Kauri @-@ bai 's abusive words toward her husband and cursed Kauri @-@ bai to be reborn in and spend her entire lifetime within an " untouchable " area of Varanasi which Kauri @-@ bai considered polluted . Consequently , Kauri @-@ bai was indeed reborn in the low @-@ caste area of Varanasi and felt very unhappy . She pleaded Shiva ? the Lord of Varanasi ? who granted her the boon that no pilgrimage to Varanasi would be deemed complete without her worship .

= = Associations = =

Matangi is often associated with pollution , especially left @-@ over or partially eaten food (Ucchishta or Ucchish?a , ?? ? ??? ? ?) considered impure in Hinduism . She is often offered such polluted left @-@ over food and is in one legend described to be born from it . Matangi is herself described as the leftover or residue , symbolizing the Divine Self that is left over after all things perish . As the patron of left @-@ over food offerings , she embodies inauspiciousness and the forbidden transgression of social norms .

Matangi is often described as an outcaste and impure . Her association with pollution mainly streams from her relation to outcaste communities , considered to be polluted in Hindu society . These social groups deal in occupations deemed inauspicious and polluted like collection of waste , meat @-@ processing and working in cremation grounds . In a Nepali context , such groups are collectively called Matangi , who collect waste ? including human waste ? and other inauspicious things , and often live outside villages . Thus she is associated with death , pollution , inauspiciousness and the periphery of Hindu society .

Matangi is also associated with forests and tribal peoples , who lie outside conventional Hindu society . Her thousand @-@ name hymn from the Nanayavarta @-@ tantra mentions epithets that describe her as dwelling in , walking in , knowing and relishing the forest .

Matangi represents the power of the spoken word (Vaikhari) as an expression of thoughts and the mind . She also relates to the power of listening and grasping speech and converting it back to knowledge and thought . Besides spoken word , she also governs all other expressions of inner thought and knowledge , like art , music and dance . Matangi presides over the middle part of speech (Madhyama) , where ideas are translated into the spoken word and in her highest role , represents Para @-@ Vaikhari ? the Supreme Word manifested through speech and that encompasses knowledge of the scriptures . She is described as the goddess of learning and speech , and the bestower of knowledge and talent . She is also called Matrini , the mistress of the sacred mantras . She also represents the word of a guru , who serves as a spiritual guide . Matangi is described as dwelling in the Throat chakra ? the origin of speech ? and on the tip of the tongue . She is also associated with a channel called Sarasvati from the third eye to the tip of the tongue . According to David Frawley , her description as impure refers to the nature of the spoken word , which labels things and stereotypes them , thereby hindering actual contact with the soul of things . The goddess is described as one who helps a person to use words in the right way and to go beyond it to seek the soul and inner knowledge , which lie outside the demarcated boundaries of tradition .

Matangi is regarded as a Tantric form of Sarasvati , the goddess of knowledge and the arts of mainstream Hinduism , with whom she shares many traits . Both embody music and are depicted playing the veena . They are also both said to be the Nada (sound or energy) that flows through the Nadi channels in the body through which life force flows . Both are related to rain clouds , thunder and rivers . Though both govern learning and speech , Sarasvati represents the orthodox knowledge of the Brahmins while Matangi ? the wild and ecstatic outcast ? embodies the " extraordinary " beyond the boundaries of mainstream society , especially inner knowledge . Matangi is also associated with Ganesha , the elephant @-@ headed god of knowledge and obstacle removal . Both are related to the elephant and learning . Matangi is also sometimes regarded as his consort . Matangi is also described as a minister of the Mahavidya goddess Tripura Sundari or Rajarajeshvari , the Queen of Queens .

= = Worship = =

Besides the Mahavidya Bagalamukhi , Matangi is the other Mahavidya , whose worship is primarily prescribed to acquire supernatural powers . A hymn in the Maha @-@ bhagavata Purana asks her grace to control one 's foes , while the Tantrasara says that recitation of her mantra , meditation on her form and her ritual worship gives one to the power to control people and make them attracted to oneself . Her devotees , especially Tantric sadhakas , are regarded to have transcend the pollution by offering her left @-@ over or partially eaten food (Ucchishta) and thus overcome their ego .

Worship of Matangi is described to allow her devotee to face the forbidden and transcend pollution , leading him to salvation or allowing him to gain supernatural powers for worldly goals . The Purashcharyarnava describes pleasing the goddess would result in her answering all the devotee 's queries by whispering in her ear .

Matangi is often worshipped with the mantra syllable Aim , which is associated with Sarasvati and is the seed @-@ syllable of knowledge , learning and teaching . A longer mantra of twenty syllables is also used :

Om hrim aim srim namo bhagavati ucchishtacandali
sri matangeshvari sarvajanavashankari svaha

" Reverence to adorable Matangi , the outcast and residue , who gives control over all creatures "

Her mantra may be repeated ten thousand times , repeated one thousand times while offering flowers and ghee in a fire sacrifice , or repeated one hundred times while offering water (Arghya) or while offering food to Brahmin priests . Her yantra (sacred geometric diagram) , whether physically constructed or mentally envisioned , is used in worship along with the mantra . Offering certain items to a fire sacrifice ? particularly those performed at cremation grounds , river banks , forests , or crossroads ? while repeating the mantra is said to fulfil specific goals . An offering of Bael leaves is said to result in kingship ; salt gives the power to control ; turmeric gives the power to paralyse ; neem twigs bring wealth ; and an offering of sandalwood , camphor and saffron together or a salt and honey mixture grants the power to attract people . A rice @-@ flour bread prepared while repeating her mantra is said to give the power to attract women . It is likewise said that it is possible to make a person one 's slave by feeding him or her the ashes of a crow whose stomach was stuffed with a conch and burnt in a cremation ground while repeating the goddess ' mantra .

Leftover or partially eaten food (Ucchishta) is recommended to be offered to Matangi with the devotee in the polluted Ucchishta state , that is , having eaten but not washed , with the remains of food in the mouth and hands . Offering of leftovers to Hindu deities or being in the polluted Ucchishta state is a taboo in mainstream Hinduism . Another taboo that is broken in Matangi worship is the offering to the goddess of a cloth stained with menstrual blood to gain the ability to attract a mate . Menstrual blood is considered polluted in almost all Hindu scriptures and menstruating women are kept away from Hindu worship and temples . The outcaste Matangi community of Nepal collect polluted substances and items related to death and bad luck such as sacrificial animal heads and clothes of the deceased , and offers them at special stones kept at crossroads called chwasas , where the " dangerous " Matangi " consumes " them as an offering , thereby getting rid of the pollution . The Tantrasara also advises offerings to Matangi of meat , fish , cooked rice , milk and incense at crossroads or cremations grounds in the dead of the night to overpower enemies and gain poetic talent . Oblations of Ucchishta , cat meat and goat meat to the goddess are said to help achieve Supreme knowledge . A text proclaims Matangi 's worship becomes fruitful only if the devotee reveres women as goddesses and refrains from criticizing them .

No fasts or rituals to purify oneself before worship ? typical of Hindu worship ? are prescribed for Matangi worship . Anyone can use any mantra for worship , even though he is not initiated or considered unfit for worshipping any other deity . A thousand @-@ name hymn from the Nanayavarta @-@ tantra and a hundred @-@ name hymn from the Rudradamala are dedicated to the goddess . The reciting of the Sanskrit alphabet , the chanting of mantras , the reading aloud of the scriptures , and performance of music and dance are also described as constituting acts of her worship .