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Mother Goddesses Worship in India Special Reference to Tamil Nadu

Dr. P. Ganesan

Assistant Professor, Department of Ancient History,
School of Historical Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract:

The origin of this concept can be traced by inferring that the mystery of beginning of life in the universe was associated with the act of a woman giving birth to a child. Our prehistoric ancestors observed and realized that the body of the females, which changed during pregnancy. They also observed that from the same womb, babies of both the sexes were born; the woman therefore, was not only able to give birth to a baby of her own gender. Other important observation was that all the main events in the biological life of the women were always accompanied by the discharge of fluids, blood during menses and child, birth and milk during lactation. Those vital fluids become the symbols of life giving agents which were to be necessary for the survival of the human species. They also noticed that men cannot produce milk and the loss of blood, in most cases, meant for them severe pain and possible death, whereas the women were periodically bleeding without losing their strength and energy. All these function in the female body gave rise to the beliefs of special inexplicable powers associated with the woman. The phenomena of generation and growth of the seed in the depth of the soil and the generation and growth of the emerge in the darkness of the women's womb, originated the ancient beliefs of the earth as a primeval mother goddess with whom the women were sharing her sacred generative power. In the Tamil Sangam literature the goddess porungattukorri is mentioned as the presiding deity of the battlefields. The Vahai trees, the mountains, the forests and the cemeteries. In the Tamil epic Manimekalai the Chakravalakettam (Temple of heaven) situated close to the sudukattu, kottam (city of the dead) the cemetery was dedicated to Kadamarselvi, the virgin goddess of the forests who resides upon graves. Another goddess widely worshipped in Tamil Nadu in the past that shows all the characters and attributes of an archaic mother goddess. Iconographically she has been portrayed with huge beasts, abdomen and hips suggesting abundance and fertility. Wrongly this deity had been considered inauspicious, most probably, like many archaic all powerfully goddess she has been demonized and purposely "transfigured" by new patriarchal religious creeds. In the kailasanatha Temple in Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, other image of her were worshipped several temples and cave temple in Tamil Nadu.

1. Introduction

The present day archaeological evidence, the cult of the Mother Goddess was universal cultural and religious phenomenon common to all human societies forming the basis of all systems of worship of ancient civilization. Archaeological excavations have brought to light hundreds of cultic figurines, statues, paintings and engravings which refer to a primeval deity perceived as "Female" and represented with evident attributes of "Maternity". The origin of this concept can be traced by inferring that the mystery of beginning of life in the universe was associated with the act of a woman giving birth to a child. Our prehistoric ancestors observed and realized that the body of the females, which changed during pregnancy. They also observed that from the same womb, babies of both the sexes were born; the woman therefore, was not only able to give birth to a baby of her own gender. Other important observation was that all the main events in the biological life of the women were always accompanied by the discharge of fluids, blood during menses and child, birth and milk during lactation. Those vital fluids become the symbols of life giving agents which were to be necessary for the survival of the human species. They also noticed that men cannot produce milk and the loss of blood, in most cases, meant for them severe pain and possible death, whereas the women were periodically bleeding without losing their strength and energy. All these function in the female body gave rise to the beliefs of special inexplicable powers associated with the woman.

2. Paleolithic Image of Mother Goddess

This explains why among all the prehistoric anthropomorphic finds dated from the Upper Paleolithic image of mother goddess- dated from 28000B.C., found inside caves, burials and settlements, show the deity with huge breasts, abdomen, buttocks and genitals emphasized, suggesting pregnancy. The artists that painted or carved these images seem to have devoted all their attention and applied their skills in portraying the torso of these figure, whereas not much emphasis was given to the arms, legs and faces, which often are

featureless or bear animals-like features but only to these parts of the woman's body where the magical process of life takes from and place.

3. The Iconological analysis of Mother Goddess

The iconological analysis of some of the mother goddess image. We can infer that the scating or kneeling positions, in which the deity was often portrayed, denote some of the most common postures adopted by women during child birth. These positions facilitate delivery as the women can make full use of the gravity force. In many ancient painting and artifacts, the women is shown adopting such postures during labor

4. The Women is equated to Earth

Our ancestor must have also observed and realized that all forms of life in this world, human, animals as well as vegetal, were the fruit of a combination of a seed and a soil in which a mysterious power developed them into various species of organism. The phenomena of generation and growth of the seed in the depth of the soil and the generation and growth of the emerge in the darkness of the women's womb, originated the ancient beliefs of the earth as a primeval mother goddess with whom the women were sharing her sacred generative power. As J.J.Bachofen has noted "Mother" –right is grounded in the material nature of women .The women is equated to the Earth. The Greek words are (Earth) and gyne (women) or, gaia are equated. A woman takes the place of the Earth and continues the primordial mother –hood of the Earth among mortals.

We should not forget here that the meaning of the Greek term *naos* and the Sanskrit term *garbha*, which both denote the centre and the innermost scared area of a temple is, in both language, "womb" .Similarly the Greek term *omphalos*, which means "navel" was use to refer to the centre of the Earth –shrines viewed as the "commic navel" the sacred centre, like the *bindhu* of the *yonis yantra* and *sri chakra* in the tantric symbolism. Here from the navel of the earth goddess .Shown in a birth giving posture, plants and flowers are sprouting and blossoming.

5. The Goddess of Life and Death as Virgin Mother

The two anthropomorphic figures from TamilNadu represent a female deity is also suggested by further anthropological, literary and ethnological evidence of later periods. A prehistoric bronze figure which portrays mother goddess has been found in the megalithic site of Adichanallur in the Tirunelveli District, TamilNadu dated around 7th century B.C.E.

6. Artifacts found in the Harappa Sites

This is another evidence for the association of Sri with the ancient earth mother of pre-Vedic origin. In a Harappa seal she is depicted with a plant sprouting from here womb. From the analysis of the artifacts found in the Harappa sites, we can presume that the mother goddess was not only the tutelary deity of the house hold, the protectness of child –birth, the mistress of wild and domestic animals, the lady of vegetatation, but also the guardian of the underworld.

7. Earth Goddess Prithvi

Later in Vedic period, the earth goddess Prithvi has also been associated with burials. In the Rig -Vida (x18.10.12) she is addressed as the guardian and protectorates of the underworld and she is invoked to receive gently the dead and to not press down too heavily upon him as a loving mother tenderly covers her child with her mantle.

8. Sangam Literature

In the Tamil Sangam literature the goddess porungattukorri is mentioned as the presiding deity of the battle fields. The Vahai trees, the mountains, the forests and the cemeteries. In the Tamil epic Manimekalai the Chakravakettam (Temple of heaven) situated close to the Sudukattu, kottam (city of the dead) the cemetery was dedicated to Kadamarselvi, the virgin goddess of the forests who resides upon graves.

9. The Attributes Characterized the Archaic Mother Goddess

This type of the attributes characterized the archaic Mother Goddess, free independent, self created, before the advent and the domination of patriarchal oriented culture in which the goddess were known mostly as spouses. Another goddess widely worshipped in Tamil Nadu in the past that shows all the characters and attributes of an archaic mother goddess. Iconographically she has been portrayed with huge beasts, abdomen and hips suggesting abundance and fertility. Wrongly, this deity had been considered inauspicious, 'most probably, like many archaic all powerfully goddess she has been demonized and purposely "transfigured" by new patriarchal religious creeds. In the kailasanatha Temple in Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, other image of her were worshipped several temples and cave temple in Tamil Nadu.

10. The Distinctive Feature of the Tamil Goddess

The present time one realizes that the benign and the ferocious aspects of the ancient mother goddess are the distinctive feature of the Tamil Goddess Marriamma, who like the other entire Indian village, goddess has kept till now in charged her bivalent nature. She is worshipped as the protectors of the village and their boundaries. She is considered the source of fertility and health. She is believed to be the cause of abundant rain, but at the same time, she is the one who spreads deadly epidemics. Her anger generates "heat" which cause drought and consequently famine, starvation and health. She gives life, but she also takes it back to she gives birth and them she

devours her creatures. Mother Goddess, creatrix, preserver, dissolver and regeneratrix of life. This archaic deity was addressed by her devotees.

With many names which indicated her true and multiform nature. As Durga and Kali, she was called enoplios, the one who bears weapons and like them she was the only one capable of rescuing from danger gods and humans and to establish justice and order amongst them. The same concept is expressed in the Tamil epic Silappadikaram where the goddess is addressed as Shakthi who has shiva as her right half "Sakthi one shown united. Yet the composite figure is said to stand for Shiva and is called *Ardhanari Shiva*. But in the instance the composite figure is Devi to whom Shiva appears as an Anga a part of her. This is intended to emphasize the supreme position of the goddess.

11. Wombs Tombs Temples

They revealed a mode of thought peculiar to religion, in which the more of thought peculiar to at religion in which the mother figure and the mother right are predominant. The destiny of plants. Animals and human begins pursues its course through the birth- death, Rebirth cycle, the earth goddess. Envisaged as a mother thus became the goddess of death and the creatrix. The other goddess was also worshipped in the shape of the woman's breasts to generative organs carvings and effigies of female breasts. And religious concepts formulated by the inquisitive human mind. Which each single animal and plant play an important role and in which we humans are, along with any other living being. The children and also food. In this equalitarian law of nature (physics), which regulates the rhythms of the eternal cycles of life and death. No creative is superior to the other as we, humans. Too often assume to be a great lesson of humility, sensitivity and respect too.

12. Conclusion

The religious observations of the various human groups in India, particularly those that are lowest in the social, economic cultural and economic scale, show roughly the order in which his particular groups were enrolled into a greater, productive society. In a general way, this is true of many higher strata as well. The fossilized and stratified remnants of primitive observations, combined with caste and religion, hold a particular group together. The observances also located the coherent group relatively to others within highly composite society. Change of economic status is reflected in, and acted till recently through some corresponding information in caste, sometimes by change in cult as well.

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