

DISCUSSION From Mother's Day to the Flower Communion by way of the Divine Feminine

This poem was posted on the EUU E-mail list on Mother's Day. As I read it, you're invited to reflect upon what you learned, have learned or are trying to learn from your mother.

What I Learned From my Mother by Julia Kasdorf

I learned from my mother how to love the living, to have plenty of vases on hand in case you have to rush to the hospital with peonies cut from the lawn, black ants still stuck to the buds.

I learned to save jars large enough to hold fruit salad for a whole grieving household, to cube home-canned pears and peaches, to slice through maroon grape skins and flick out the sexual seeds with a knife point.

I learned to attend viewings even if I didn't know the deceased, to press the moist hands of the living, to look in their eyes and offer sympathy, as though I understood loss even then.

I learned that whatever we say means nothing, what anyone will remember is that we came.

I learned to believe I had the power to ease awful pains materially like an angel.

Like a doctor, I learned to create from another's suffering my own usefulness, and once you know how to do this, you can never refuse.

To every house you enter, you must offer healing: a chocolate cake you baked yourself, the blessing of your voice, your chaste touch.

I. How would you finish this sentence: I learned from my mother (mother-figure) ...

THE PROPHETIC SISTERHOOD

The Universalist Church of America was the first religion to sanction a woman minister, Olympia Brown in 1863.

By the end of the 1890's, 20 or so women in the West took pulpits that no men wanted. They were known as the Prophetic Sisterhood. The women's churches had strong congregational life, impressive membership growth, and financial prosperity.

Rev. Mary Safford, one of the leaders of the Sisterhood, said that the world of the divine wasn't in theology, but in day-to-day lived experience.

2. What do you consider divine? Is it in the theology, day-to-day living? (It's said that to err is human, to forgive divine. What else is divine?)

3. If you were a goddess (which you are ;), which one would you choose?

The Prophetic Sisterhood said they "reinstated the **feminine facet** of the mother-father God." Their expression of the maternal aspect of the divine carried with it the fundamental idea that humans felt God most immediately as the binding force that held them together and made their relationships possible.

4. How do you practice, express and/ or celebrate the Divine/ Sacred Feminine, or the feminine facet of the mother-father God? (What's feminine?)

The Rev. Norbert Chapek, originated the Flower Communion in 1923. He felt the need for some symbolic ritual that would bind people together more closely, making him, in my opinion, divinely feminine. He addressed God in his sermons by "Mother God, Father God." It was his wife, the Rev. Maja Capek, who introduced the Flower Communion to the United States in 1940.

5. How do you picture your deity or spirit? Is a gender association necessary?

The sacred feminine, she moves behind us`
 She leaves her fingerprints everywhere
 Every time the snow drifts, every time the sand shifts
 Even when the night lifts, she's always there
 In us. For all of us.

Adapted from the song entitled "Mary"

Sources

2009. Rev. LoraKim Joyner | *The Prophetic Sisterhood and the Sacred Feminine*; reference to Cynthia Tucker's *Prophet Sisterhood*.

Reginald Zottolli | *Flower Communion* <http://www.uua.org/documents/zottolireginald/flowercommunion.pdf>

PHENOMENAL WOMAN by Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman

Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Paravati

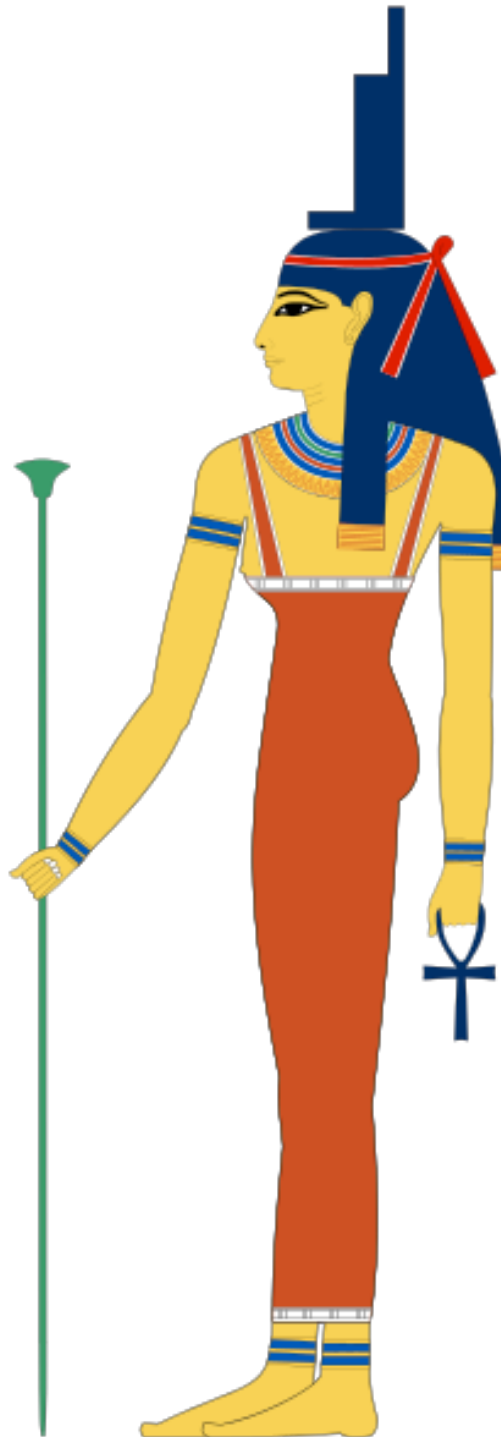
Parvata is one of the Sanskrit words for "mountain"; "Parvati" translates to "She of the mountains" and refers to Parvati being born the daughter of Himavan, lord of the mountains and the personification of the Himalayas.

Parvati is the source of all the powers and weapons. She is the base of all kinds of powers that are used for doing any work. She is the ultimate source of power for all beings, gods and Devas. When her anger reaches its peak, she can destroy the whole universe, gods and Trimurti in just seconds. Even Trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, never try to make her angry at any cost.



Isis

Isis is a goddess in Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs. She was worshipped as the ideal mother and wife as well as the patroness of nature and magic. She was the friend of slaves, sinners, artisans and the downtrodden, but she also listened to the prayers of the wealthy, maidens, aristocrats and rulers. Isis is also known as protector of the dead and goddess of children.



Gaia

In Greek mythology, Gaia was the personification of the Earth, one of the Greek primordial deities. Gaia was the great mother of all: the primal Greek Mother Goddess; creator and giver of birth to the Earth and all the Universe; the heavenly gods, the Titans, and the Giants were born to her. The gods reigning over their classical pantheon were born from her union with Uranus (the sky), while the sea-gods were born from her union with Pontus (the sea). Her equivalent in the Roman pantheon was Terra.

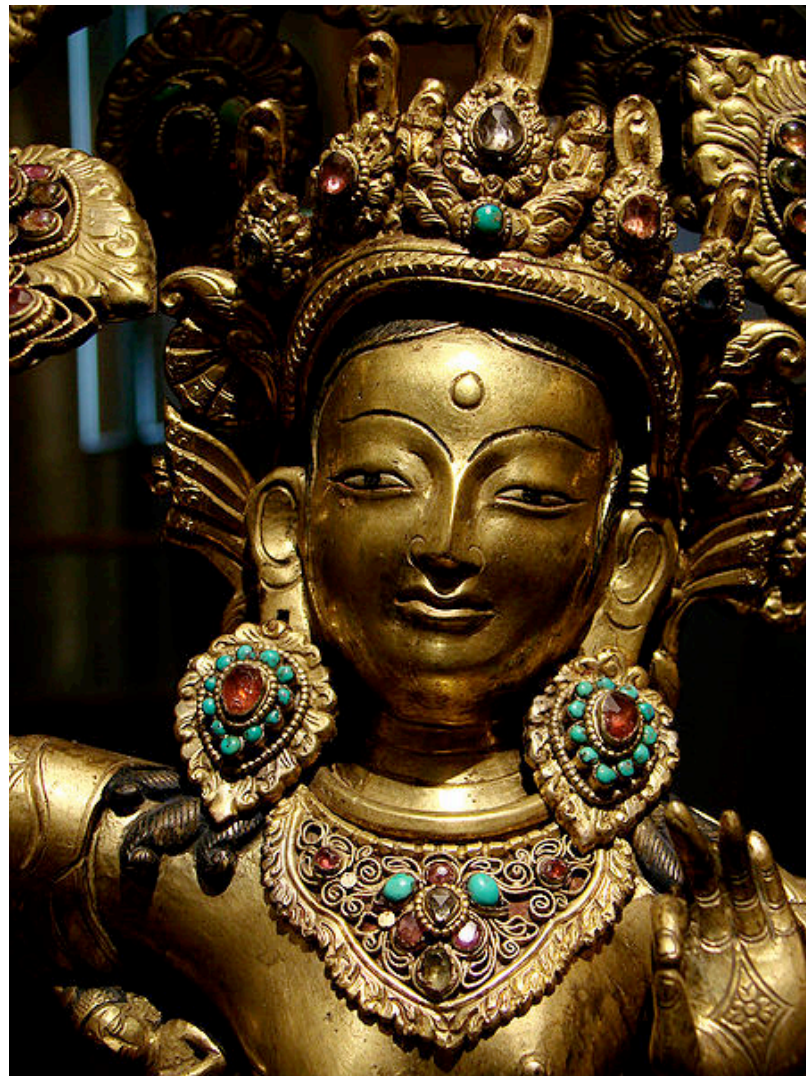


Māyādevī

Queen Māyā of Sakya (Māyādevī) was the birth mother of Gautama Buddha, the sage on whose teachings Buddhism was founded, and the sister of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, the first Buddhist nun ordained by the Buddha.

Māyā means "love" in Nepali. Māyā is also called Mahāmāyā ("Great Māyā") and Māyādevī ("Queen Māyā"). In Tibetan she is called Gyutrulma and in Japanese is known as Maya-fujin.

In Buddhist tradition Maya died soon after the birth of Buddha, generally said to be seven days afterwards, and came to life again in a Buddhist heaven, a pattern that is said to be followed in the births of all Buddhas. Thus Maya did not raise her son who was instead raised by his maternal aunt Mahapajapati Gotami. Maya would, however, on occasion descend from Heaven to give advice to her son.



Vasudhārā

Vasudhārā whose name means 'stream of gems' in Sanskrit, is the Buddhist bodhisattva of wealth, prosperity, and abundance. She is popular in many Buddhist countries and is a subject in Buddhist legends and art. Originally an Indian bodhisattva, her popularity has spread to southern Buddhist countries. Her popularity, however, peaks in Nepal where she has a strong following among the Buddhist Newars of the Kathmandu Valley and is thus a central figure in Newar Buddhism. She is named Shiskar Apa in Lahul and Spiti.

