

# The Dasamahavidyas at Kamakhya: Intimations of the Solar System

## Introduction to Kamakhya

India's ancient mountain sanctuary in Assam, is where the *yonis*, or womb and genitalia, of Goddess Kali is understood to live on Earth. Fifteen hundred priests serve here today and although it seems that no official priestesses work at Kamakhya, female saints and advanced tantric practitioners abound in the vicinity. Throughout the year, tens of thousands of devotees visit Kamakhya from all over the world in order to attend ecstatic collective rituals, present newborns in her honor, or simply offer their private respects and sacrifices at one or more of the eight temples on Nilaparvata mountain dedicated to the Dasamahavidyas, the ten wisdom goddesses whose original source is the primordial and sovereign Kali. Her mountain is also bejeweled with many temples consecrated to Siva, the Lord of absolute consciousness, and the loving partner from whom Kali is essentially indistinguishable.

When I first visited this astonishing place in October 2002, I arrived as a typical devotee of Kali and Siva, but I also strongly suspected that Kamakhya was an astrological complex, one holding important clues as to the ancient Goddess-preeminent roots and contours of astrology. Based on my experiences during a previous pilgrimage in 2000 -- a ten-day Durga Puja celebration in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley—I had reason to wonder if the Dasamahavidyas, the ten wisdom goddesses born and worshiped at Kamakhya, were a female-centered mode of reference for the ten primary astrological bodies referred to in the west as the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, North and South Nodes of the Moon, and Ascendant.

During my first visit to Kamakhya, this theory was confirmed unmistakably by the atmosphere, design, placement, and interactions of the temples and landscape. I was astonished that decades of western astrological theory and practice had never led me in this direction, yet also well aware that my fresh certainties were entirely unsubstantiated in all of the religious and astrological literature with which I was familiar, for teachings at Kamakhya seem largely to be private ones, safely transmitted only within the family systems of the local priesthood. After meditating upon these impressions for almost a year, I decided to make another pilgrimage, in the hope that the astrological significance of

Kamakhya would be more reliably revealed. A few days before my departure in June 2003, I received a vote of confidence from the cosmos when a dear friend gave me a booklet in Hindi from a temple in Varanasi, India. I couldn't read a word, but the cover-embellished with the Dasamahavidyas and the planets of our solar system-was crystal clear!

Thrilled, I boarded the plane for Kamakhya, bound for Kali's sacred spring on Nilaparvata Mountain at the time of year when it runs red, heralding the annual menstruation of Earth and attracting pilgrims from all over the world. Fortified by an auspicious contact within one of the priestly families, I was able to present the correlations I had made between the 10 astrological figures and Kamakhya's 10 wisdom goddesses to a delightful priest, and after reviewing my papers, he was so kind as to confirm my correlations, as well as to correct a few key errors. As a result, even though I cannot quote any books in English with respect to this information, the following material on the astrological dimensions of Kamakhya has at least one source of official validation. I thus feel comfortable with the prospect of leading the reader through the first stages of the town of Guwahati and the sanctuary of Kamakhya, retracing my steps and relaying a sense of my findings.

Along the way, I will give some sense of how my journey to Kamakhya actually began seven years earlier, when I became a professional astrologer in 1995. For although I had coexisted peacefully for several decades with the patriarchal GrecoRoman deities that westerners routinely use to invoke the ten primary astrological bodies of our solar system—the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, North and South Nodes of the Moon, and Ascendant—when I became a professional, as a feminist, I could no longer invoke these deities with a clear conscience. Furthermore, as an historian of religion, my professional instincts as an astrologer kept leading me toward a female-centered history of the field. For the next five years, I sought support along these lines within the western astrological tradition and community, but the pickings were slim; in the meantime, I chanted mantras to the male planetary deities of the Indian astrological tradition, praying to Goddess to reveal the female-centered planets as well, so that I could offer a more balanced version of the cosmos to my astrological clients, most of whom tend to be women. Then, on my maiden voyage to Asia in September 2000, at Nepal's Durga

Puja festival—where the mysteries of the Dasamahavidyas that Kali gave birth to at Kamakhya come alive for ten days—I finally came into direct contact with the female-centered planetary deities that I had ardently sought for so long. Therefore, at the end of this paper, I will briefly describe the Dasamahavidyas, the ten great wisdoms or sciences, in astrological terms.

Granted, I approach this task with a certain trepidation, given that Kamakhya, Kali, Siva, the Dasamahavidyas, and the ten primary astrological figures of our solar system are divine realities that range utterly beyond the reach of conceptual thought. Even more seriously, *the concluding section of this essay contains an enormous amount of material that has yet to be confirmed* by my gentle and subtle teachers from Hinduism's *shakta* tradition, a spiritual lineage where Goddess reigns supreme. Still, I feel that I owe Kali a devoted, if bold sketch of the astrological contours that seem to ooze palpably from what is arguably her most sacred historical terrain, Kamakhya, with the knowledge that however many mistakes are made, in the end, she always arranges for some helpful soul to set me straight. This essay, then, is a humble offering to the majestic presence of Kali and the Dasamahavidyas at Kamakhya, and in the future, with the help of generous and enlightened readers, I hope to make good on the promise of this line of inquiry.

### **The Town of Guwahati**

About an hour's flight north of Kolkata, Guwahati is the capital of the state of Assam, nestling on the southern bank of the broad and fertile Brahmaputra River, in the northeast hinterland of India, where probably the fewest tourists roam. Around here, armed conflict between indigenous tribal groups and immigrants from Bangladesh and Nepal has not been uncommon during recent years; pockets of matriarchal cultures, Catholics and Protestants maintain their positions; and the ethnic blend can be brought to a boil by differences between animists, Hindus, Moslems, and communists. Airport authorities record one's arrival, one thinks twice about traveling overland, and one stays on the beaten track—and even the beaten track calls for constant vigilance, owing to the precipitously irregular surfaces of streets, sidewalks, stairways, and paths in this part of the world! Yet Guwahati felt to me like a large, friendly, old-fashioned village, one teeming with gracious residents, many of whom I will never forget. I loved the fact that my credit

cards and American Express travelers checks were practically useless, that bills were invariably calculated by hand, and that no matter where I went, almost no one spoke English.

As an astrologer, one of the most fascinating things to me about Guwahati is that when it was the capital of the kingdom of Kamrupa, it was named *Pragjyotishpur*, which means “ancient place in the East of the science of light, or astrology / astronomy.” The earliest astrological treatises from Kamrupa date back 1500 years, and according to the 9th century C.E. compilation *Kalika Purana*, the sacred text upon which the rites and rituals of Kamakhya are still based, prime creator Brahma made his home in Guwahati, and used the area as a launching pad when he first created the stars.

### **Siva's Astrological Precinct, the Navagraha Temple**

To visit Kamakhya Temple, one travels about eight miles west of Guwahati and climbs Nilaparvata mountain. But my first climb was in the opposite direction, to Chitrachala mountain in the east, for Chitrachala is sacred to Lord Siva, Kali's partner, and in these parts, heartfelt devotion to God is a prelude to any pilgrimage to Goddess—and likewise, devotion to Goddess permits an easy rapport with God. Moreover, paying initial respects to Lord Siva is a salutary habit in my case, since he seems to be the only male deity on Earth who can truly mitigate my anger about the violence of patriarchal religions. These days in particular, the male-monotheistic marriage between the Abrahamic god and the imperial state—the marriage that has unleashed thousands of years of terror and genocide upon global cultures in terms of witch burning, goddess iconoclasm, sexism, racism, homophobia, and imperialism stares me palpably in the face on front pages as the contemporary *War on Terra* accelerates, and as the imperial battle for oil and other natural resources inspires ever more savage acts of domination. Regardless of how unpopular it may make me at home, I cannot ignore that the passion play of World War III's Central Asian theatre is fueled not only by the imperatives of global capitalism, but by the fundamentalisms of the three exclusively male-monotheistic Abrahamic creeds: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Therefore, now as never before, it's a relief to leave the diatribes of Yahweh, God, and Allah behind, and to take refuge in ascetic, yet erotic Siva, he who rests in utter stillness beyond the bounds of time and

space, perfectly absorbed in the void of absolute reality, while dancing the entire cosmos into being.

So, with a heartfelt desire to receive Siva's blessing, and to pay my respects to the nine astrological figures received as his emanations at the Navagraha Temple, I ascended the sprawling expanse of Chitrachala Hill. A sacred place of the dead since at least the 10th century A.D., the glorious remains of Assamese people have long been cremated and buried in this territory. Its mysterious slopes are now dense with lush green jungle growth, speckled with temples, and popular with Siva-Sakti worshippers. For myriad reasons is Chitrachala Hill the stomping ground of Siva, and to a lesser extent, his tantric consort Kali!

At Chitrachala's peak, I arrived at the Navagraha *Temple*—*nava* means nine and *graha* means planet—where the nine planets are understood to live on Earth. Present in some form since at least the 10th century CE., the temple is a large, low-slung, stone dome dated to 1752 C.E. Bearing white flowers, candles, incense, fruit, and money, I stopped at the entrance to deposit these offerings before the elephant god Ganesha, remover of obstacles and guardian of astrology, and before the host of other deities nestled at his feet.

Once inside the dark interior of the dome, I found that the nine planets were arranged in a huge circle on the floor, with the ninth in the very center. This floor plan mirrors a now-destroyed temple roof, one with nine domes that was designed and built in the 18th century CE. Each of the nine planets was represented with a *yonil-lingam*. Ubiquitous in India, these sacred statues—visual renderings of the sacred union of all duality, including any sense of duality posed in the mind by the notion of Goddess and God—are stone carvings of an abstract male genital cone resting within an abstract female genital oval. This was the first time that I had ever seen the solar system as a whole represented with any sense of female imagery, and it was my first indication that the female planets were alive and well in this part of the world.

On Siva's mountain, the central *yonil-lingam* on the floor is the Sun's home, our home star, and the source, sustainer, destroyer, and regenerator of our solar system. Surrounding this central Sun, the eight remaining *yonil-lingams*—named for the six additional visible planets and the two nodes of the Moon—are the homes of the eight

remaining male astrological bodies and deities. I was taught to visit each planet in the order reproduced below, and I noted that this order almost exactly corresponds to the sequence of *dasas*, vedic astrological cycles based on the Moon. *Dasas* are given extraordinary weight in a vedic astrological reading, since they suggest how karma will unfold over a lifespan; their order is shown here:

6. Saturn *Sani*
- |                                       |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4. North Node of the Moon <i>Rahi</i> | 5. Jupiter <i>Brihaspati</i>          |                         |
| 3. Mars <i>Mangala</i>                | 1. Sun <i>Surya</i>                   | 7. Mercury <i>Budha</i> |
| 2. Moon <i>Candra</i>                 | 8. South Node of the Moon <i>Ketu</i> |                         |
9. Venus *Sukra*

Although Kali and Siva are traditionally associated with the planet known in the west as Saturn, I also like to conceive of them as solar, and thus stellar; the central position of the Sun at Siva's *Navagraha* temple echoes this understanding. Like the Sun and other stars, Kali and Siva create, sustain, destroy, dissolve and regenerate, and I imagine that long ago, when great seers first attuned to the frequencies of Kali and Siva, they may have responded in part to the omnidynamic galactic rhythms of stellar birth, growth, death, dissolution and regeneration at ceaseless play among the inconceivably vast pockets of our expanding universe.

In resonance with this broad vision, on Siva's mountain, the music of the spheres plays all the time. I learned that Kajjala hill just to the east was described in the *Kalika Purana* as the home of the *vidyadhara*s, the celestial musicians, and when I chanted planetary mantras before of each of the nine planetary *yoni-lingams* at the *Navagraha* Temple, the sound that emerged was unearthly, for the overtones rang so deeply within the great stone dome of the building that I seemed to be poised within an enormous bell. The temple acoustics easily induced an altered state of consciousness, perennially teaching that Siva and Kali's cosmic manifestations in space and time occur first as frequency, vibration, tone, harmonic overtone. Kali herself wears embryo earrings, reminding us that hearing is the only sense perfectly developed within the womb, and the last one to

drift off before we die.

On a feminist note, I spent delightful hours at the *Navagraha* Temple, but on the whole, they were hours passed in astrological patriarchy. I distinctly felt the weight of centuries of an astrological tradition that was managed and interpreted by men, for men, within the context of a male-dominated society. To begin with, despite the ubiquitous *yonis*, or female part, surrounding each planetary god's *lingam*, I doubted that the planets here were truly perceived to be female as well as male, for I found no formal opportunity to pay my respects to Kali prior to entering Siva's temple, and this imbalance, to me, was weighed strongly in favor of the male. Also, I found no trace of astrological priestesses, and since I happen to be one, I was disappointed. Granted, the precinct was packed with male astrologers-priests known as *Daivajnas*, or *Daibagnas*—and their seemingly near magical abilities and spirited community service inspired my respect: one priest was so kind as to conduct a spirited Saturn puja for my benefit. Still, it seemed that these men understood English, and after hours of offerings and chants, they still spoke not a word to me. Upon reflection, I realized that the *Daivajnas* probably wouldn't have much to say to someone like me, anyway. Vedic "female horoscopy" concerns itself with the sexual, reproductive, domestic, and marital prospects of the female in question, and since I need abundant freedom and movement to fulfill my life purpose, these realms absorb very little of my consciousness. Also, in terms of women's history and future, I've learned to be supremely wary of these realms: however much they may be romanticized or genuinely enjoyed, they also happen to precisely delineate the contours of female slavery in patriarchy! Therefore, although I had tremendous regard for *Daivajna* traditions and powers, I had to wonder whether these priests were culturally equipped to say much of anything on my behalf—or on behalf of any female whose identity in the world turns on something other than the joys and bonds of sexual, reproductive, domestic and marital life.

Finally, I felt myself to be deeply ensconced in astrological patriarchy since I found no trace at the *Navagraha* Temple of the astrological circle of the *nakshatras*, the subtle and determinative belt of stars which, taken as a whole, constitutes the dazzling darkness of Kali's integral body in the sky. The spectrum of her *nakshatra* body, marked by the nocturnal passage of the Moon, is laid out in terms of 27 goddess asterisms, plus a supremely mystical 28th, ranging far to the north, around the star we know as Vega. As

patriarchy was consolidated, on top of this extremely ancient expanse of Kali's mystical brilliant blackness, the 12 solar zodiacal signs with which westerners are now familiar were subsequently overlaid—as was the absurd patriarchal notion that the 27 immortal goddesses of Kali's integral body were fighting with one another, engaged in sexual competition for the favors of an all-important male Moon.

### **The Seven-Year Journey Toward Kamakhya**

At this point, I set off across town for the sacred mountain of Nilaparvata. Here lives the yoni of Goddess; here she menstruates each June, as Saubhagya Kunda pool turns ochre red; here live the Dasamahavidyas, the ten wisdom Goddesses. Pilgrims cluster around Kamakhya Temple, and perform *pujas*—prayerful offerings of the elements, especially in the form of flowers—in numerous other shrines to the Dasamahavidyas and Siva. But as a prelude to the temples, I must review how I came to be on this pilgrimage in the first place, since my journey to Nilaparvata mountain, and to the female planets, actually began seven years earlier.

### **MY DESIRE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE GRECO-ROMAN GODS**

When I became a professional astrologer in 1995, I began to pray for an alternative to the Roman names of the Greek gods that westerners use to receive the planetary astrological energies of our solar system. Every time I used these Greco-Roman names—names like *Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto*—I knew that they were anything but neutral. By using these Greco-Roman names, I was literally invoking the energies of these deities, and that however inspiring these gods may have been to people in the past, they could no longer inspire me, for these gods waged war in order to conquer Goddess cultures; imprisoned women in marriage; raped maidens as a matter of course; physically and emotionally abused their wives; betrayed their sisters; ate their children; and generally acted like jerks. Nor was I satisfied with the two token females lodged in the western solar system, the "mother" and "mistress" known respectively as Moon and Venus. The Greco-Roman gods only seemed to make Earth safe for the attempted murder of Goddess and the consolidation of patriarchal social order, and since most of my astrological clients were women, and I wanted to serve them well, I began to pray for an alternative to the Roman

gods and to chant Sanskrit planetary mantras.

## **MY DESIRE: A FEMALE-CENTERED HISTORY OF ASTROLOGY**

Also, an intense desire to restore the role of women to the origins of astrology brought me to Nilaparvata mountain. As my astrology practice deepened during from 1995 to 2000, I grew disenchanted with the common view that astrology "began" roughly 4,000 years ago with the dethronement of Goddess, the consolidation of patriarchy, and the invention of writing. According to this line of thinking, astrology began among the settled ways of agrarian societies in the so-called Fertile Crescent-or perhaps among the Egyptian dynasties-with the accumulation of an agricultural surplus and the development of elites. Delegated to a specialized group of priests, it was symbolized ever more elaborately, establishing the sciences of astronomy, mathematics, and navigation, as well as the arts of medicine, ritual and mythology.

All of this seemed accurate to me, but I felt that the date of astrology's origins had to be much earlier, perhaps 10,000 years ago, and theorized that the astrology with which we are familiar today first began to take shape as a primal religious language after the end of the last Ice Age, around the fires of our distant ancestors, the nomadic gatherers and hunters. In my mind's eye, this primal religious language was a gentle inquiry into the ways of nature, one based on observation and correlation. Ultimately, it was a shamanic language that gave voice to a vast energetic web at play upon, above, and beneath Earth, a web that stretched from an invisible source, and reached into our coordinates of time and space from other planes and dimensions. The language of the web, which I would personally characterize today as the language of Kali and Siva, taught us to become conscious of intimate relationships between discrete and apparently unrelated entities, whether minerals, plants, animals, humans; the Sun and Moon, the planets and stars. It taught us to perceive immense bandwidths of energies proceeding from the intelligence of stars and inhering in time, (whether transmitted in stately solar or racing lunar terms, or in the irregular drift of the visible planets) and also to perceive how these intelligent celestial energies accorded rather perfectly with changing circumstances on Earth. Therefore, the language of the web revealed an uncanny harmony between the eternally changing material world of natural laws, and the absolutely still realm of absolute reality, the

peaceful, deathless, timeless, spaceless place of transcendent emptiness. In shamanic practice, as the boundary between natural law and the void of emptiness dissolves, the course of events can be predicted, and the experiences of souls prior to birth and after death can be brought into consciousness.

Given this expansive frame for the identity of astrology, I was able to theorize about the commanding role that women played in its origins and early development. To begin making these connections, one must explore the core mechanics of astrology in terms of the Earth, Sun, and Moon, and the reality of women's labor during the past 10,000 years.

### **Astrology and Women's Labor: The Mysteries of Solar Agriculture and Lunar Reproduction**

Regardless of how many books western astrologers have written about the planets, astrology's first teachings embody an ongoing three-way conversation between the presence, force, and intelligence of a primordial trinity: 1) Earth; 2) Sun, the star from which our solar system was created and around which it revolves; and 3) Moon. I connect this trinity very closely with women's lives, whether 10,000 years ago or, in many cultures, up to the present day, for women have been intimately related to the ongoing conversation between Earth, Sun, and Moon due to women's leadership in two primary labors required for human survival: *food* and *children*. Agriculture and reproduction are obviously both grounded in Earth, in terms of fertile fields and the female body, but they are also inseparable from the Sun and the Moon, as follows.

**Solar food.** First, women produced food, primarily by gathering and growing plants. Women gathered and grew vegetables, fruits, roots, grasses, stems, flowers, herbs; women preserved and prepared food, including animal flesh and fish from the hunt; women distributed food to our children, and to others in need, as long as a surplus was available) and women undertook these labors and pleasures by day. These primary labors cannot be understood apart from the Sun, because annual solar rhythms attend the seasonal growth of plant foods, whether gathered or sown; because food is preserved or more easily digested by drying it in the sun, or cooking it over a fiery hearth; because the political power of distributing food in the community is distinctly "solar" authority; and

because photosynthetic food, plant food, is largely a miracle of solar light. Therefore, *female responsibility for food, in terms of a round of intense organic participation in scouting, gathering, sowing, tending, harvesting, preserving, preparing, and distributing, has always been held in deep collaboration with the annual frequencies and rhythms of diurnal light and solar intelligence.*

**Lunar children.** Secondly, women have done almost all the work of producing children since, in clinical terms, the male reproductive role is biologically restricted to intercourse. Granted, mating is profoundly lunar for both males and females, since our sexuality heavily rides the lunar tides of emotion, body, and memory, and since sexual union and conception are generally tied to the night. However, the female reproductive role entails far more than the pleasure of sexuality. It calls for intense constructive participation in the largely lunar rounds—dense with emotion, body, memory, and consciousness—of ovulation, menstruation, conception, spontaneous or chosen abortion, gestation, labor, birth, lactation, and primary infant care, for in many ways, children are a miracle of nocturnal lunar light. Moreover, as any astrologer can tell you, youngsters are far more lunar than-solar, since it takes about seven years for solar identity to fully activate in a child. Therefore, female responsibility for children—in terms of a round of intense organic participation in ovulation, menstruation, sexuality, conception, spontaneous or chosen abortion, gestation, labor, birth, lactation and childcare during the early years—has always been held in deep collaboration with the monthly frequencies and rhythms of nocturnal light and lunar intelligence.

I therefore consider it to be highly likely that astrology was originally developed by women as a source of guidance with respect to food and children, beginning during the Neolithic revolution, from approximately 8000-6000 B.C.E. During this period, people increasingly abandoned the more nomadic gathering, herding, and hunting ways of life, taking up the more settled ways of agriculture and livestock. Although initially, a lunar calendar was no doubt sufficient for the timing of agricultural and procreative labors, eventually the complex overlapping schedules of various crops, including grafted fruit trees and grapevines, required greater precision, and the first solar calendars were subsequently designed. Working for thousands of years with solar agriculture and lunar procreation, I think that women birthed and tended the gardens of astrology in order to

address, describe and predict natural cycles of birth, growth, death and regeneration—especially with respect to the crucial matters of food and children—and also, in order to work shamanically on behalf of the clan, whether predicting the course of events, or making practical contact with human spirits during gestation, prior to birth, and after death.

Moreover, it seems to me indubitable that a collective spirit of devotion to Goddess attended the ripening of the astrological arts and sciences. Many have theorized that Goddess-preminent religions were adopted by 7000 B.C.E. with the initial consolidation of early farming and trading societies, and indeed, we have access to abundant archaeological evidence of the canopies of mother-rites that legitimized the authority of mother-clan societies, memorializing the sacrality of agricultural and procreative labors that were conducive to our survival. It would not surprise me if the triumph of the mother-clan societies--the prosperous, relatively peaceful, even voluptuous era referred to as the "Golden Age" in classical Greece—generated an astonishing level of astrological creativity, as women, especially in teams of mothers and daughters, went forth to the fields and back to their homes in great streams, succeeding with great love in the mysteries of food and children. Female leadership in this realm of the sacred probably would strongly feature the sharing of food with children—the original holy communion—a rite later appropriated by the father and son god of patriarchal Christianity—for the ritual of breaking bread with one's offspring beautifully synthesizes the solar mysteries of food and the lunar mysteries of children. As an aside, the mysterious tradition of the "double goddess" found in so many parts of the world may also relate to the twin labors of food and children, with the solar goddess as the divine female of the agricultural year, and the lunar goddess as the divine female of reproductive month.

Miraculously, this same collective spirit of devotion to Goddess, in terms of the sacrality of mother-daughter bond, solar plant life, and lunar mammalian life, is one that survives every year in the autumn Durga Puja rituals observed by millions of men and women in Hindu Asia, such as the one that I attended in Nepal. Bearing in mind that there is no difference between Goddess Durga, Goddess Kali, and Goddess Kamakhya—the Hindus use thousands of names for her—it is no coincidence that *the Durga Puja proceeds today according to the exact same solar and lunar schedule once observed in Greece during the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone*. Each festival

spreads over nine nights and ten days, and each occurs at the first new Moon after the autumn equinox. Only at equinox are Earth's northern and southern hemispheres precisely balanced in terms of their reception of solar light, and only at equinox, from every location on the Earth's surface, does sunrise occur in the exact east, and sunset in the exact west, setting the directions. Also, autumn equinox is more challenging than spring equinox, since it heralds the wintery season of cold and darkness, and hence our eventual encounter with death. To me, the Durga Puja today, as well as the Eleusinian Mysteries of the Mediterranean past, commemorate the ancient tale of women's original Neolithic leadership in the annual solar and monthly lunar labors of food and children, and thus, of the guiding presence of Goddess in so many of her abiding cosmological aspects.

This female-centered, Goddess-preeminent view of astrology's origins is a far cry from the conventional western view, with its patriarchal scribal priesthood, and rapist, militaristic Greco-Roman planets. Over the years, as a feminist, I became accustomed to the intellectual and spiritual pressure of the western perspective, never expecting that an enormous path away from such burdensome thoughts would open up for me in Asia, but that's exactly what happened. During Durga Puja in the Kathmandu Valley, Goddess flew freely in the sky, her red flags hanging from rooftops, her bright songs flooding the air.

### **The Durga Puja in Kathmandu Valley**

In September 2000, I traveled to Asia to celebrate the Durga Puja in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley. Here, during the Nine Nights of Mother Divine, Goddess Durga triumphs over cosmic evil in a fantastically complex community ritual that is the most important religious event of the Nepali year. Although I went on this pilgrimage purely for devotional purposes, setting my astrological work aside, I was nevertheless unconsciously accompanied by the dead weight of five years of professional discomfort with the sexist planets and conventional history of western astrology. Suddenly, I was granted my first array of exciting insights with respect to Goddess in the sky. Basically, I was repeatedly triggered by the ways in which the numerals 108, 7, 8, 9, and 10—core astrological numbers in every case—persistently cropped up during the Puja with reference to Durga and her ten-fold spectrum of Dasamahavidya deities. Naturally, I made many inquiries as to the symbolism of these astrological numbers within the context of the Puja, but the

Nepalis were tight-lipped: stellar mysteries are closely guarded, and with good reason. Alas, on my maiden voyage to Asia, I had not yet the confidence to ask Durga herself for guidance, but perhaps if I do so at a later date, she may see fit to help me out. At this point, however, I can provide a brief description of the significance of these numbers—108, 7, 8, 9, and 10—in astronomical and astrological terms, and place these numbers within my admittedly superficial perception of the Durga Puja ceremonial context.

### **Goddess in the Sky at the Nepali Durga Puja: 108 in the Context of the Galaxy**

In Nepal, we visited a famous female shaman who enters trance every year during the Durga Puja so as to embody 108 diverse aspects of Goddess for the benefit of her community. Upon hearing this number, I found myself flying through Kali's unfathomable brilliant blackness, for the number 108 instantly summons the dazzling darkness, spanning the zodiac, of her entire *nakshatra* body. Here's why.

In the first place, each one of the aforementioned 27 of her asterisms on the 360 degree circle of her zodiacal body takes up 1/27th of the whole, and in arithmetical terms, this works out to 13.333 ... degrees of space for each *nakshatra*, or in astronomical terms, 13 degrees and 20 minutes. This distance in the sky—13 degrees and 20 minutes—is approximately the distance that the Moon appears to travel each day from our perspective on Earth.

Next, in addition to this first series of 27 *nakshatras*, each individual *nakshatra* of 13 degrees and 20 minutes is further subdivided into four distinct portions, since Kali always harmonizes Earth, Sun and Moon, and since the Moon makes four rapid galactic steps with respect to the Sun and Earth each day, as follows:

- 1) the Moon's position when the Sun appears to rise on Earth;
- 2) the Moon's position when the Sun rises highest above the Earth at midday;
- 3) the Moon's position when the Sun appears to set on Earth; and
- 4) the Moon's position when the Sun lies deepest beneath the Earth at night.

Once Kali's 27 *nakshatras* have each been subdivided into four portions—the portions that celebrate the steps, or *padas*, of the Moon with respect to the Sun and Earth each day—the arithmetical result is 3.333 ... degrees for each step, or in astronomical terms, 3 degrees and 20 minutes. Since 27 *nakshatras* are each divided into four steps, the

multiplied total comes to 108 steps, each clearly delineated within Kali's zodiacal circle of the *nakshatras*, and therefore, in India, the number 108 is intimately related to Goddess in the sky.

It is no coincidence that 108 is also the number of elements on the string of prayer beads known as the *mala*, for with every circular series of mantras, the devotee establishes a connection with the inconceivable breadth of her time and space, with the transcendent peace of her absolute void, and with the fusion between time, space and the void that is continually revealed by her primordial trinity of Earth, Sun, and Moon.

Therefore, in Nepal it seemed quite likely to me that the female shaman embodied the 108 goddesses by placing herself in a state of receptivity to pace the void of Kali's galactic body—in other words, by stepping through the stellar goddess mansions of the 27 *nakshatras* in terms of their 108 steps—especially since 108 also refers to the total number of steps contained in the sacred temple dances, many of which are performed to this day by Indian priestesses.

### **Goddess in the Sky at the Nepali Durga Puja: Seven (7) in the Context of the Solar System**

Often, Goddess Durga was said to be composed of seven goddess emanations, and upon hearing this number, I would feel myself circling our solar system, since its astrological vocabulary begins with seven. Our solar system is comprised of seven bodies the western Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn that have long been viewed with the naked-eye to drift among the stars and largely along the same path in the sky. Our species is so accustomed to the idea of measuring time and space in terms of these seven visible bodies that many cultures still name Earth's daily axial rotations in accordance with them (our Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday). Astrologically, these seven bodies travel within Kali's limitless *nakshatra* form, like seven stepdown transformers that continually transmit specific frequencies of her subtle, yet burning stellar intelligence.

## **Goddess in the Sky at the Nepali Durga Puja: Eight (8) in the Context of the Solar System**

Goddess Durga was also understood to be composed of eight emanations, and the astrological vocabulary expands to eight when the all-important nodal axis is added. An abstract axis possessed of unspeakable invisible power, the nodal axis expresses the relationships in time and space between her primordial holy trinity of Earth, Sun, and Moon.

To visualize the *nodal axis*, first imagine the route of the Sun from our perspective on Earth: it travels on a regular path—a path known as the *ecliptic-rising* in the east and setting in the west each day. The Sun's apparent plodding progress along the ecliptic—actually, about one degree per day in the opposite direction, or from west to east—moves the Sun slowly through the degrees of the zodiac, day by day. As the Sun progresses through the entire circle of the zodiac, we measure one year of time.

Next, imagine the route of the Moon from our perspective on Earth. The Moon, like the Sun, and indeed, like all the rest of the planets, travels along the *ecliptic*, since our solar system is arrayed more or less in a single plane in space. However, interestingly, from our perspective, during every monthly lunar cycle, the path of the Moon swoops above and below the Sun's essentially straight track! Therefore, *the Moon regularly traces out an undulating, snakelike line with respect to the Sun*, because of the apparent movement of the Moon above and below the apparent track of the Sun. The two invisible places in space where these solar and lunar paths intersect every month establish the 180-degree *nodal axis*. These regularly intersecting solar and lunar lines were of overwhelming importance to the ancients, since the intersections—the places where the moving energies of Sun and Moon “connect”—happen to be the precise points in space at which solar and lunar *eclipses* are created! This occurs, miraculously, because from our perspective on Earth, the small Moon and huge Sun appear to be the same size—the Sun “shrinks” owing to its 93-million mile distance—and thus, the Moon and Sun are uniquely capable of periodically obscuring one another. Therefore, only by focusing upon, and fully understanding the slow, steady path of the Sun, as well as the rapid, swooping path of the Moon, could the ancients predict the timing of eclipses.

As you might imagine, in terms of the relationship of stellar intelligence to

experience on Earth as transmitted by solar and lunar light, the *nodal axis* is a line of tremendous existential force. On the whole, the *nodal axis* also delineates the stamp of karmic patterning from one incarnation to the next. More precisely, it portrays a picture of how one willfully chooses to obscure her own portion of divinity on Earth due to ignorance, illusion, force of habit - and how fateful spirals of initiation and sacrifice come to pass, in order that she might surrender selflessly to her own unique manifestation of divinity, and thus, to speed and deepen the evolutionary progress of her soul.

### **Goddess in the Sky at the Nepali Durga Puja: Nine (9) in the Context of the Solar System**

Goddess Durga was also understood to be comprised of nine emanations, so much so that her Puja consists of nine nights. Known as the Nine Nights of Mother Divine, this festival is arguably the most blessed time in the annual Hindu calendar, and one celebrated all over the world.

Astronomically, when the aforementioned abstract nodal axis is divided into two parts, the core astrological vocabulary amounts to nine. Again, the *nodal axis* is the 180-degree line connecting the two invisible points in space where the apparent paths of the Sun and the Moon intersect during a given lunar cycle. Often visualized as an invisible dragon or snake, when this axis is divided into head and tail sections, the head of the dragon marks the Moon's movement north of the Sun's apparent path, and is thus termed the North Node of the Moon, while the tail of the dragon marks the Moon's movement south of the Sun's apparent path, and becomes known as the South Node of the Moon. This division is astronomically significant, because the cycle of solar and lunar eclipses with respect to the cosmic backdrop of stars-a complex cycle recurring only every 18.6 years or so-can only be correctly predicted when the dragon's head and tail are clearly distinguished from one another, as follows.

**Solar eclipses.** About every six months, the Moon becomes *New* in very close proximity to the invisible point in space where it intersects the apparent path of the Sun. At this point, from our perspective, *the Moon moves in between the Sun and the Earth, thus blocking the normal flow of sunlight onto the Earth's surface.* Owing to the obstructing presence of the Moon, which casts its shadow on the darkening surface of

Earth, the Sun itself is partially, or even entirely blocked from our view. (Just remember: *solar eclipses happen only at the New Moon*, because the Sun and Moon have to be "together" in space for the Moon to be able to block the Sun's light.)

**Lunar eclipses.** Either two weeks before or after the solar eclipse, the Moon becomes *Full*, once again in very close proximity to the point at which it intersects the path of the Sun. At this point, however, the relationship of Kali's primordial trinity has shifted, and *Earth moves in between the Sun and the Moon, thus blocking the normal flow of sunlight onto the Moon's surface.* Owing to the obstructing presence of Earth, which casts its shadow on the darkening surface of the Moon, the Moon itself is partially, or even entirely blocked from our view. We must remember: *lunar eclipses happen only at the Full Moon*, because the Sun and Moon have to be opposite" in space for the Earth to be able to block the Sun's light.)

Astrologically, once the divided nodal axis clearly individuates the dragon's head and tail, or the North and South Nodes of the Moon, the dragon's head or North Node speaks of the personal initiations-akin to the blazing spectacles of solar eclipses—that come, however explosively, to terminate the willful obscuration of a design. In contrast, the dragon's tail or South Node-akin to the soft shadowing of lunar eclipses - speaks of the ways in which one must gently release memories and other kinds of attachments, in order to evolve spiritually toward a fresh and unknown future.

### **Goddess in the Sky at the Nepali Durga Puja: Ten (10) in the Context of the Solar System**

The Nepali Durga Puja finishes after ten days, for each dawn is linked with one of the ten Dasamahavidyas, or ten great wisdoms or sciences, all emanations of Durga, or of her daughter Kali, who clinches the battle against cosmic evil, and I do not think it a coincidence that ten total astrological bodies exist in our solar system. At the tenth position, Earth finally rises into view, and the far-flung heavens finally come home to roost, for Earth is our home, and—at least prior to the invention of airplanes and spaceships—everything we have known and experienced as a species has unfolded on Earth. As the center and fulcrum of astronomical and astrological consciousness, however we may gaze skyward toward the solar system and stars, even with orbiting

telescopes today, Earth remains the fundamental point of reference.

Astrologically, only when Earth strides to the center of the picture can anything else make sense, since Earth's daily rotation is the only factor that grants the zodiacal degree of the Ascendant. More specifically, in response to the daily rotation of Earth on its axis, the zodiacal degree lying on the eastern horizon changes about every four minutes, and this quickly-shifting eastern horizon progressively exposes the unfolding revelation of the heavens. With the zodiacal degree of the Ascendant in hand, the rising sign and remaining 11 houses can be enumerated, and the positions of planet in houses can be identified. However, without an Ascendant degree, astrology becomes virtually impossible to practice, for every factor remains literally up in the air. In essence, Earth sits at the center of every astrological chart, however infrequently it may be acknowledged as such, since in the end, it is only the zodiacal degree of the Ascendant that determines the relationship of Earth to the solar system, and indeed, to the cosmos itself.

### **Return to Guwahati**

At last, this essay's prelude to the temples of Kamakhya is finished. The foregoing review of why I originally traveled to Kamakhya, and why I returned in June 2003, has, in retrospect, been a quick effort to honestly embrace the "baggage" that I brought to Kamakhya, not only as a pilgrim, but as a feminist astrologer and historian, in the following terms:

- 1) My desire for a Goddess-preeminent history of astrology, that is a version sensitive to women's leadership in agriculture and reproduction;
- 2) My desire for a female-centered astrological solar system;
- 3) My own speculative links, drawn from the Nepali celebration of Durga Puja, between the number 108, the female shaman's efforts, and Kali's *nakshatra* body; and
- 4) Further Durga Puja links between the numbers 7, 8, 9, 10, the astrological figures of our solar system, and the Dasamahavidyas goddesses.

No doubt, my own ignorance, illusion and forces of habit have helped to create these preoccupations, but at least the mentality that I brought to Kamakhya has been openly accounted for. At this point, I am free to retrace my steps and relay a sense of my findings, so we now return to Guwahati, and travel from Siva's *Navagraha* Temple on Chitrachala

Mountain, to Kali's Kamakhya sanctuary on Nilaparvata.

### **Two Mountains in Balance: Siva's Chitrachala and Kali's Nilaparvata**

My understanding of the relationship between Siva and Kali first convinced me that Kali's sanctuary at Kamakhya was an astrological site, for these two deities are so profoundly in balance that if the planets made their home on his eastern mountain, Chitrachala—probably named for *Chitra*, the *nakshatra* that stands for divine union, yoga, marriage—the planets would simply have to be at home on her mountain to the west as well. In contrast to Christianity, the exclusively male-monotheistic religion within which I was raised, Hinduism seems to perennially acknowledge an inconceivable fusion between the eternally changing relative reality of natural law in time and space, and the spaceless, timeless, deathless and purely transcendent void of emptiness. As a result, Hindu consciousness not only maps ultimate reality as both male and as female, it playfully proceeds to philosophically stretch this classical dualism into such a fabulous variety of dualistic, non-dualistic, and qualified non-dualistic postures that one's mental muscles have no choice but to relax into a state of peaceful submission as to the impossibility of ever figuring the divine male-female polarity out! As such, within the *shakta* tradition, although Kali is categorically pre-eminent as the supreme parthenogenetic creatrix, Kali and Siva participate in the same essence, and are ultimately indistinguishable from one another, simply because Kali Ma's style of leadership is always unitive, and never divisive.

### **Two Diverse Sanctuaries: Siva's Navagraha Temple and Kali's Kamakhya**

Yet at the same time, an abiding diversity persists among the two mountains spanning Guwahati, for only nine planets live in Siva's eastern precinct, as compared with ten Dasamahavidya sites in the west. I suspect that Siva embodies nine planets because males do not give birth, so Kali adds the tenth step. The tenth astrological factor, remember, is when Earth, in terms of its rapid daily rotation, is placed in the center of the astrological picture, granting the zodiacal degree of the Ascendant, and thus rounding out our solar system's astrological vocabulary of ten elements, since the degree of the Ascendant synthesizes the relationship of Earth to the cosmos. Interestingly, *the Ascendant can be identified only at birth*, whether at the birth of a child or an event, and

this is, to me, the reason why the Ascendant is purely female.

This astrological diversity between Siva and Kali's sanctuaries is potentially intensified by the fact that after fertilization, human gestation lasts for ten lunar cycles, or approximately 280 days, and therefore, each of the ten Dasamahavidyas might also correspond to one lunar cycle of pregnancy. Westerners are generally disabused of any tendency to view the stages of pregnancy as spiritual phases, however, the idea that prior to birth, the soul "descends" through planetary spheres is one commonly found in European mystical and alchemical tracts, especially from medieval and renaissance periods. In western texts, of course, spiritual power is only attributed to the exclusively male western God, rather than to Goddess, the union of Goddess and God, or the biological mother, child, and father.

However, influenced by the force field of Kamakhya's divine atmosphere, I began to visualize the ten lunar cycles of human pregnancy in terms of twin functions. On one hand, obviously, during these ten lunar cycles, the physical sheaths of the fetus—flesh, organs, bone, blood—are gradually drawn into manifestation within the womb. Meanwhile, as many astrologers would agree, astrological identity, triggered by conception, continues to activate during pregnancy and for several months after birth, and therefore, the subtle, etheric, metaphysical, and spiritual sheaths of the ten female planets—characterized as the ten Dasamahavidyas—might well be profoundly interwoven with physical development in the womb. In point of fact, in the same fashion that each of the ten Dasamahavidyas emanated from the primordial creatrix Kali, the planets of our solar system were all initially formed by the Sun, and moreover, each female child is born with all of her eggs intact, and each egg—resting like a central star within her tiny ovaries—when viewed under a microscope is almost identical in color and shape to the telescopic image of the Sun. Why, then, would the ten planets as emanations of Mother Durga or Daughter Kali not harmoniously spin and orbit in tandem with the most intimate of partnerships, that of mother and child?

### **Entering the Mystery: Kamakhya's Manobhava Cave**

Around 50 bodily parts of Goddess—for example, her right eye, her rectum, her left breast—are dispersed throughout India in their respective temples, and according to

patriarchal mythology, it's all because of an episode of dismemberment, one where Goddess was split apart in a domestic quarrel between her parents and her husband. However, as I approach Kamakhya, I wholly disregard this ugly myth. However much it has been romanticized, it seems to me to be simply another "instant replay" of a violent drama played the world over since the consolidation of patriarch—when matrifocal, matrilineal, Goddess-pre-eminent family systems were shattered by enforced, and male-dominated, marriage and inheritance laws. Instead, I choose to conceive of all such Goddess sites in India as reminders of the sacredness of the human and divine body as embedded in the landscape of Earth, and also, as magnificent supports for the meditative practice of "placing" the physical aspects of Goddess within one's own body.

At any rate, Kamakhya is where the *yonī*, or womb and genitalia, of Goddess is understood to live on Earth. Although there are eight separate Dasamahavidya shrines spread over Nilaparvata Mountain, the nuclear core is Manobhava Cave, easily the most sacred, and the most private, of her approximately 50 sacred sites in India.

The trail down to her *yonī* in Manobhava Cave is arduous. It is meant to be so, for it mimics the slow and grinding progress down the birth canal of the biological mother. For most Indians, it takes hours. As the crowd winds around the temple in a labyrinthine coil, those such as I, who can afford to make generous donations, cut to the front of the line, enjoying a relatively quick "birth" via caesarean section. Even so, the heat, and the pressure of sticky and unfamiliar flesh pressed against one's own, are heavy, intense, uncomfortable. The rocky path winds down steeply over irregular steps, with everything dark and shadowed beneath, thick with sweaty bodies and fevered devotional cries, and sharply punctuated by the shouted instructions of the hardworking priests whose job it is to manage this excited and difficult crowd. I knew that many of the bodies digging into me would only make this heated descent toward her *yonī* once in their entire lives, even as they were biologically born on just one occasion, and it seemed that pilgrimage to Kamakhya for such people may often be a heartfelt experience of literal rebirthing within the womb and genitalia of Goddess. Priests are shouting instructions and chanting up against your face, and just when you begin to wonder when it will all be over, you arrive at her genital organ: a large, flat, square red stone, always wet with water from a natural spring, with many pools around, and everything densely carpeted with mounds of red

blooms. Sprinkling her sacred waters over your head, and quickly siphoning some into your camera film canister, you deposit your offerings of incense, fruit, flowers, money—and of course, your heart and chant her mantra:

*Aum Kamakhye varode devi nilaparvatavasini tvam devi jagatam  
matah yonimudre namostute*

And you review what pilgrimage to her *yoni* at Kamakhya really means, in terms of your own evolution, in other words, your own persistent efforts to burn off the ways in which you still willfully obscure and deny your own portion of divinity. In my case, this pilgrimage signifies the following:

1. My desire to work in solidarity with the entire complex of intense female participation in the reproduction of the species, including ovulation, menstruation, sexuality, conception, spontaneous or chosen abortion, gestation, labor, birth, lactation, and primary infant care;
2. My desire to work for sexual and reproductive health and freedom for all women and girls, including my own;
3. My desire to work so that freely-chosen human sexuality, and the freely-chosen female role in human reproduction, might be safely installed within a position of absolute dignity within world religions;
4. My desire to work for a female-centered, Goddess-preminent history of astrology, that is, a version sensitive to women's world-historic leadership in agriculture and reproduction, and to the intimate relationships that women have always enjoyed with her primordial astrological trinity of Earth, Sun, and Moon; and
5. My desire to work toward astrological enlightenment as to the 108 shamanic dance steps of Kali's glittering *nakshatra* body, and the numbers 7, 8, 9, and 10—including the 10 lunar cycles of human gestation and birth - with reference to the astrological solar system of the ten wisdom goddesses, the Dasamahavidyas.

**Kali: First Dasamahavidya**

She is the parthenogenetic creatrix of every aspect of time and space, resting simultaneously, yet outside of time, in the spaceless place that is the void of emptiness

**First Moon of Pregnancy**

The stage of all potential, when the newborn daughter's eggs rest within her ovaries

**Glyph: Earth over Moon**

The cross of Earth, suspended over the crescent of the Moon

**Root chakra**

The base

**Aspect of Kali's body**

Root chakra

**Male deities: Saturn or Sani Tara: Second Dasamahavidya**

Balancing life and death in the cremation grounds, pregnant, gleaming white like the Moon, she wields the lotus of love and enlightenment, the chalice of menstrual and maternal blood, the sword of initiation, and the scimitar that severs the umbilical cord

**Second Moon of Pregnancy**

After fertilization has occurred, but before the point of commitment to the child-and before the child has truly committed to incarnation-and thus, the period during which spontaneous and chosen abortions may still take place

**Third eye chakra**

Unobscured! that all concerned might see clearly

**Glyph:**

The lunar crescent

**Aspect of Kali's body**

Her lower right hand, bearing all blessings and boons

**Other deities: Moon (female) or Candra (male) Sodasi/Kamakhya/Tripurasundari/Lalita: Third Dasamahavidya**

The most complex of all the Mahavidyas, other than Kali herself

**Third Moon of Pregnancy**

Commitment to the child, and the child's commitment to incarnation

**Throat chakra**

The point of synthesis, or mediation, between the solar crown chakra, and the lunar third eye chakra

**Glyph:**

The lunar crescent and solar disk, mounted above the cross of earth

**Aspect of Kali's body**

Throat

**Male deities: Mercury or Buddha Bhuvaneshvari: Fourth Dasamahavidya**

The triumph of the material plane, in terms of the unity of all the worlds

**Fourth Moon of Pregnancy**

When growth within the womb is loud, confident, unchecked

**Heart chakra**

Balancing all chakras in love

**Glyph:**

The solar disk mounted above the cross of earth

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Throat

**Other deities: Venus (female) or Sukra (male) Chinnamasta: Fifth Dasamahavidya**

When the spiritual obligations of incarnation are confronted

**Fifth Moon of Pregnancy**

When doubts and fears arise as to the challenges ahead

**Crown chakra, obscured (solar eclipse)**

Initiation, akin to the blazing spectacles of a solar eclipse that terminates the willful obscuration of divinity

**Glyph:**

Unknown origin

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Upper left arm, wielding her initiatory sword of nonduality

**Male deity: Rahu Bhairavi: Sixth Dasamahavidya**

The intervention of wisdom

**Sixth Moon of Pregnancy**

When doubts and fears are assuaged

**Abdominal chakra**

The *hara* or gut; the watery seat of digestive and sexual fires

**Glyph:**

Lunar crescent, poised above the cross of earth

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Her womb

**Male deities: Jupiter or Brihaspati Dhumavati: Seventh Dasamahavidya**

The measure of loss; the tonic, and curative power, of oblivion

**Seventh Moon of Pregnancy:**

When preparations for birth begin

**Third eye chakra, obscured (lunar eclipse):**

The soft imperative of release, akin to the shadows of lunar eclipses, that allows one to relinquish attachment to matter and the karmic past, in order to evolve in faith

**Glyph:**

Unknown origin

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Her lower left hand, holding the head of sacrifice and surrender

**Male Deity: Ketu Vagalamukhi: Eighth Dasamahavidya**

Astonishing surges of will, power, intelligence, renewal

**Eighth Moon of Pregnancy**

When the brain really develops, as the child's independence bursts within the

womb

**Diaphragm chakra**

The power of breath

**Glyph:**

The cross of earth, poised above the solar disk

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Diaphragm

**Male deities: Mars or Mangala Matangi : Ninth Dasamahavidya**

The primordial elephant matriarch, bringing the blessings of ancestors and community

**Ninth Moon of Pregnancy**

When the mother lumbers, and the child waits, and the solar birthday is imminent; may also include the lioness fire of labor and birth

**Crown chakra**

Unobscured and triumphant solar and stellar fire

**Glyph:**

The solar disk

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Upper right hand, radiating the perfection of love

**Male deities: Sun or Surya Kamala: Tenth Dasamahavidya**

The red bloom (lotus, rose, hibiscus) of perfection and beauty

**Tenth Moon of Pregnancy**

Safe birth, giving birth in a pool of water, cleansing waters of purification

**The circuit of chakras**

Harmony within the newborn body

**Glyph:**

The cross of earth

**Aspect of Kali's body:**

Entire

**Absence of conventional astrological deities, since unfortunately, Earth and Ascendant are not considered to be divine.**

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