



INTRODUCTION

“The Goddess is now returning. Denied and suppressed for thousands of years of masculine domination, she comes at a time of dire need. . . . Here mythology unexpectedly comes to our aid.”

—Edward C. Whitmont, *Return of the Goddess*

Long before written texts and the ascent of the organized religions we know today, the Goddess reigned over all life on earth. She provided her people with food and other necessities; she protected them during birth and death; she guided them in love and war; she taught them art, music, and law. Mythology tells us that the Goddess also formed heaven and earth. In short, the Goddess governed every facet of human existence.

One of the oldest artifacts shaped by human hands is the Venus of Willendorf, a 25,000-year-old figurine of a female that anthropologists suggest may represent a mother/fertility goddess. Archaeologists have also unearthed other goddess artwork from ancient Egypt, Greece, China, and elsewhere. These, along with millennia-old literary works such as the Vedas and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, provide information about widespread goddess worship through the ages.

REDISCOVERING HERSTORY

In modern times, we’re rediscovering “herstory”—or history viewed from the female perspective. Through this lens we understand the past in a new way and, more specifically, how that past is relevant to our present.

Early cultures were polytheistic, and their legends describe thousands of goddesses, some benevolent and nurturing, others frightening and cruel. It’s safe to say there was a deity associated with each and every thing in the known universe. Goddess myths reveal our ancestors’ concepts of the cosmos; their desires, fears, and values; and the ongoing



AMATERASU

“Her gentle beauty and warmth radiated life force and hope throughout the blessed land of Japan, and far beyond. Amaterasu was the one who showed the people their beauty and potential.”

—Melissa Osborne, “Amaterasu: Out of the Cave and Into the Light,” www.lyricalworks.com

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

The Japanese goddess of the sun, Amaterasu also holds such laudatory titles as Heaven Shining, Great August Deity, and Great Divinity Illuminating Heaven. As the most important goddess in the Shinto religion, she rules the sky as well as the region of the spirits known as *Takama no Hara*.

Mythology tells us she was born from the eye of her father, Izanagi, and her grandson, Jimmu, became Japan's first ruler. She had an annoying younger brother named Susano-O, the thunder god, who tormented her and caused her a great deal of trouble. According to a well-known legend, Susano-O killed a sacred horse and brought it to the weaving hall where Amaterasu was working with her sister. The incident upset the goddess so much that she withdrew into a cave, leaving the world without its sun goddess. The world plunged into darkness. Evil spirits rampaged through the land, unchecked by the goddess who ordinarily controlled them.

In an effort to draw her out of her isolation, other deities appealed to Amaterasu's love of beauty by positioning a tree decorated with jewels, gorgeous garments, and a mirror outside the cave. It wasn't until another goddess, Ama-no-Uzume, did a bawdy dance outside the cave and caused all the gods to laugh that Amaterasu peeked out to see what the fuss was about. One glimpse of her beautiful reflection in the mirror momentarily distracted Amaterasu, and the other dieties were able to grab her and bring her out of the cave.

In Japan, Shinto's most significant shrine at Ise is dedicated to Amaterasu. The mirror that is housed there is considered to be one of the three imperial treasures.

VIRTUES

This solar goddess's great beauty and generosity symbolize the sun's light, which animates life on earth. Amaterasu's dominion over the spirit realm suggests that light keeps darkness, evil spirits, and the underworld in check. She's also revered for having taught people how to grow rice and weave cloth. Therefore, she embodies the qualities of generosity, kindness, and creativity.

In Western psychology, the mirror that hung from the tree outside Amaterasu's cave represents recognizing what psychoanalyst Carl Jung called "the shadow," or the unacknowledged parts of ourselves, both loathsome and wondrous. In addition, the erotic dancing of the goddess Ama-no-Uzume may signify a connection with sexual energy and its creative power.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

Amaterasu urges you to see your own brilliance, for each of us shines with a unique radiance. If you feel unattractive or insignificant or unappreciated, call upon this goddess to help you identify your own value and express what's special about you. Dedicate a piece of jewelry, such as a necklace, to the goddess and wear it to attract her energy. You can also hang the necklace near your mirror to call in Amaterasu's presence.

Connecting with Amaterasu can help you face your inner shadow and bring it into the light. Is there a part of you that lies hidden that you are ashamed of? If so, ask the goddess to reveal it to you. Stand before your mirror and have an honest conversation with yourself: What do you accept about yourself? What don't you feel comfortable with? What would you like to understand more fully?

ATHENA

“As an archetype, Athena is the pattern followed by logical women, who are ruled by their heads rather than their hearts.”

—Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD, *Goddesses in Everywoman*

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

This Greek goddess (whose Roman counterpart is Minerva) had a most unusual birth: she emerged fully grown from the head of the great god Zeus and had no mother. Some accounts say Athena was born wearing armor. However, this warrior goddess took no pleasure in battle; she used her powers to defend the state against outside aggression, and, as such, became respected as a true patriot by her people. According to some legends, Athena was her father's favorite child and the only one he trusted with his fabled weapon, the thunderbolt.

Athena is honored as the goddess of wisdom, reason, literature, art, and other intellectual pursuits—perhaps due to the conditions of her birth. She's also considered a virgin deity, more concerned with the mind than the body—an independent goddess who bowed to no god or man.

Mythology tells us Athena became the goddess of the city of Athens after winning a contest with Poseidon. Both deities gave the people of Athens a gift: Poseidon a salt spring and Athena an olive tree. The people chose Athena's gift, and the olive tree remains an important source of food and revenue for Greece to this day. She also plays a role in many myths, including guiding Perseus in his quest to slay the monstrous Gorgon Medusa and directing Jason as he built his ship, the *Argo*, to search for the fabled Golden Fleece. In Homer's epic, the *Odyssey*, she encourages Telemachus to find his father, Odysseus.

Many temples were built to honor Athena, including the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens. There is also a smaller temple nearby that is



known as the Temple of Athena Nike, *nike* being a Greek term that translates as “victory.”

VIRTUES

Best known for her intellectual prowess, Athena is often depicted with an owl, the symbol of wisdom, as her companion. She wears a helmet and carries a spear and a shield. She is the only Olympian goddess who appears dressed in armor. She was an unparalleled strategist in battle, practical and prudent, as well as a divine protector.

According to legend, the innovative Athena introduced many useful inventions into the world, including the ship, chariot, yoke and plow, bridle, trumpet, and flute. A patron of craftspeople, she's also credited with teaching mortals pottery and weaving. She's respected for her ethical character and for her diligence in maintaining the state's structure, industry, and prosperity. Athena applied her intelligence and reason to promote law, order, and justice in the courts and in society.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

As goddess of the intellect, Athena can aid you in any mental endeavor. Call upon her to assist you if you want to ace an exam, learn a new subject or skill, or gain insight into a perplexing matter. Display an image of an owl in a prominent place to signal your desire for wisdom and Athena's blessing. She can also spark your ingenuity and show you how to be more inventive in handling problems. Olives, which she gave to Athens, are considered a “brain-healthy” food, so cook with olive oil to nourish your gray matter.

If you're facing a challenge or feel threatened by an adversary, ask Athena to give you the courage and clarity to see the way out of your dilemma. Make her picture your cellphone's home screen or print a picture and carry it with you to sense her presence. As you listen to her wise counsel, you may hear her advising you to use intellect and ingenuity rather than force.

BRIGID

“Brigid is the all-provider, the nurturer, enabling
the Spirit to survive in bodily form.”

—Shirley Toulson, *The Celtic Year*

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

This beloved goddess is a favorite of the Irish people and one of the most powerful deities in the Celtic pantheon. Her name means “exalted one.” Mythology tells us Brigid was the daughter of Ireland’s great god Dagda. She married Bres, a king from a hostile tribe, and together they had three sons who became great warriors. When Christianity moved into Ireland, the Catholic Church adopted the goddess and canonized her as Saint Brigid.

Brigid goes by many names, including Lady of the Flame, Goddess of the Hearth, Bright One, and Breo-saighead, meaning “fiery arrow.” She has three rivers named for her—Brigit in Ireland, Braint in Wales, and Brent in England—as well as many wells and springs. At the most famous of her shrines near Kildare, where a great oak revered by the Druids grew, priestesses learned healing, poetry, music, divination, and other knowledge. They also cared for Brigid’s sacred wells and groves, and kept a fire burning constantly.

In pagan tradition, the holiday Imbolc is dedicated to Brigid. Also known as Candlemas, it is usually celebrated from the evening of January 31 until February 2. At this time in the Northern Hemisphere, the days are growing longer and, although winter still holds the land in a frozen grip, Imbolc heralds the promise of spring. Imbolc means “in the belly,” and the holiday honors all forms of creativity—of the mind as well as the body.

VIRTUES

The goddess of healing, smithcraft, and poetry, Brigid presides over both the homemaker's cook fire and the metal smith's forge. At first glance, she seems a contradiction. As a solar goddess, she offers the fiery gifts of light (knowledge), inspiration (associated with the fire element), and the healing vitality of the sun. Yet she also has connections with water, signifying intuition and the power of divination. Thus, she represents a blend of feminine and masculine energies, body and mind, and the union of polarities necessary for creation.

Illustrations of Brigid sometimes show her stirring a great cauldron, the witch's magic tool that symbolizes the womb and the receptive, fertile nature of the Divine Feminine. As goddess of inspiration, Brigid encourages everyone, regardless of gender, to stir the inner cauldron of creativity that exists within.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

Creative people, especially poets and musicians, can call upon Brigid to spark inspiration. Light candles in her honor and thank her for her assistance. Gaze at the flickering flames to focus your attention as you allow your imagination to expand.

Women who wish to become pregnant may connect with the fertile nature of this goddess. Legend says that Brigid protects all life under her green mantle. A patron of children and midwives, she attends every birth. According to an old fertility ritual, you can build a small fire in a magic cauldron dedicated to Brigid and jump over it to encourage pregnancy.

Healers and those who seek healing may petition Brigid for aid. Take a ritual bath by candlelight to gain insight and guidance from the goddess, or write your request on a piece of paper. Build a small fire in a cauldron and drop the paper in the flame while you envision your wish coming true.

DURGA

“I am the Queen, the gatherer-up of treasures, most
thoughtful, first of those who merit worship.”

—Rig Veda 10.125.3

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

In Hindu mythology Durga is considered the Mother of the Universe, the first goddess. She creates, maintains, and destroys everything in the world. One ancient text describes her as the Supreme Being. Her name translates from Sanskrit as “fort” or “something unassailable.” It also means “one who eliminates suffering.” Therefore, the indestructible Durga protects her earthly children and eases the pain of human existence.

Sometimes she’s described as the wife of Shiva and mother of the deities Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesh, and Kartikeya. This complex goddess has many manifestations and many names, including Shakti, which can confuse Westerners. Ultimately, all Hindu goddesses are different aspects of the Goddess (or Devi).

Mythology also shows the beautiful Durga as a warrior goddess, willing to battle evil forces that threaten her creations or what’s good and right and sacred. One legend says the gods came together and combined their energy to produce Durga, who turned out to be more powerful than all the other deities. Riding on the back of a lion (or a tiger), she fought a monstrous demon and prevented him from destroying everything in heaven and earth. (This story is also told of Kali.) The lion on which Durga rides can be seen as a symbol of pride as well as strength and leadership. Her commanding position signifies the power that results from taming the inner beast. Therefore, the “battle” may be interpreted as a struggle against the ego.



VIRTUES

Artists usually show Durga with either eight or ten arms (sometimes more) that represent Hinduism's eight (or ten) directions. With these the goddess protects and guides everything, everywhere. In her hands she holds objects that symbolize her creative and destructive powers: a conch shell, a bow and arrow, a thunderbolt, a lotus flower, a discus, a sword, and a trident. These symbols not only represent the weapons Durga uses to protect her devotees but they also suggest the "tools" needed to overcome ego and follow the spiritual life.

The goddess has three eyes—the left signifies the moon, the right corresponds to the sun, and the center represents knowledge. Often she wears golden-yellow or red to indicate her connection to the fire element. Some sources link her with Mother Nature. Revered for her creative power, courage, and intelligence, Durga is worshipped in India, Nepal, and other parts of Asia.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

Seen as the most powerful of all deities and the source of everything, this awe-inspiring mother goddess encourages you to honor and express the feminine force in the universe and in yourself (whether you're a woman or a man). Durga's creative energy can inspire and intensify your own fruitfulness. Call on her to help you fulfill your potential, produce wondrous works of art, or birth new ideas. Light golden-yellow candles in her honor, to thank her for her assistance.

Durga can guide you as you fight the good fight. Ask her to lend you her formidable energy and wisdom so you can stand up for what's right. She'll help you defeat the demons around or within you and emerge victorious. Carry a figurine of a lion in your pocket to remind you of her presence and support when you must "do battle."

FREYA

“The ninth Battle-Plain, where bright Freya / Decides
where the warriors shall sit: / Half of the fallen follow
the goddess, / And half belong to Odin.”

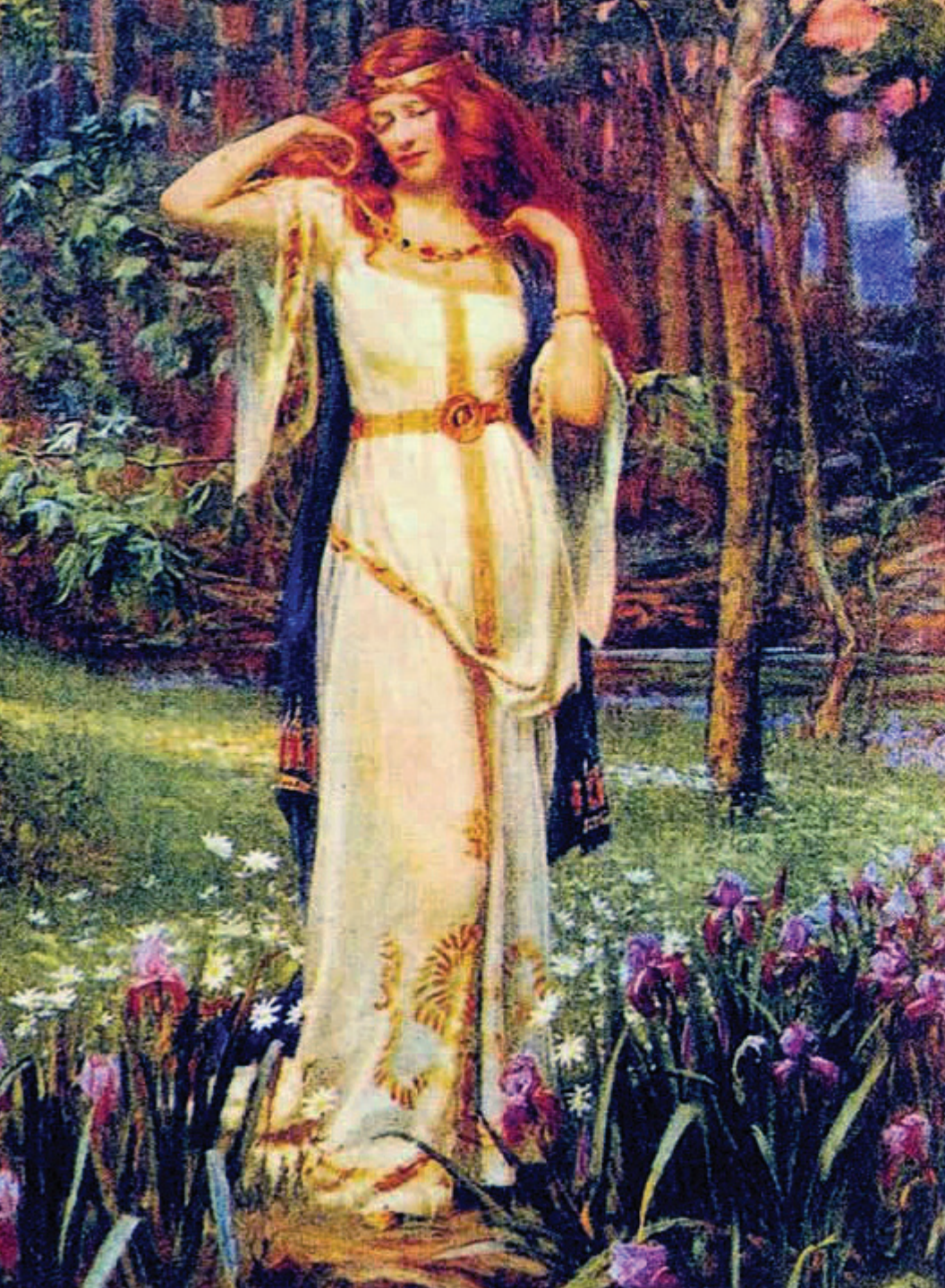
—*The Elder Edda: A Selection*, “The Lay of Grímnir,”
translated by W.H. Auden and P.B. Taylor

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

Mythology tells us the Norse/Germanic goddess Freya brought light and fire to the people of Northern Europe. Her name means “lady” and is spelled in various ways, including Freija, Frøjya, and Frejya. A fiery deity, she’s linked with the flames of the hearth and forge as well as with sexual passion. Freya reputedly taught her female prophetesses and followers the dance of ecstasy, which enabled them to divine the future.

The exquisitely beautiful daughter of Njord, god of the wind, waves, sailors, and the coastal regions, and his sister Nerthus, Freya had a twin brother named Freyr. Legends say she married the god Ord, but it’s possible she actually wed Odin (some sources say they’re two names for the same deity), and had two children, Hnoss and Gersimi. She hails from the world of Vanir, one of the nine realms suspended in the great tree Yggdrasil.

Freya, however, isn’t only a love goddess. She also plays a key role in warfare. During a war waged by the two tribes Vanir and the Aesir, Freya was sent to the Aesir (the better-known clan to which Odin belonged) to cement a truce between the two nations. Folklore says that whenever soldiers die in battle, she chooses half of the fallen men and ushers them into the afterlife; the others are consigned to Odin’s great hall in Valhalla.



VIRTUES

Artists often show Freya riding across the heavens in her chariot drawn by two cats. She can also fly on her own if she wishes, due to a magic cape she wears made from the feathers of falcons. Usually she's depicted with golden hair from which flowers fall, and her tears are the colors gold and amber.

Legend tells us the sensuous Freya loves jewelry, fine clothing, and other beautiful things, and that she often used her beauty to acquire the luxuries she adored. Most precious of her treasures was the magnificent golden necklace of the Brisingamen, which she acquired by trading sexual pleasures to four dwarves.

Adept in the Norse magic known as *seidr*, Freya knows how to weave the web of destiny to direct the course of life on earth. As such, she has connections to the Norns, the three wise women who spin the thread of life, measure it, and cut it.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

Freya teaches the art of sexual love. She can show you how to express your sensuality more joyfully and give pleasure to a partner. Call on her to help you appreciate the creative power of sexual union and to honor the divine nature of that which brings forth life. Rub amber resin on your pulse points to enhance your attractiveness and sensuality.

A "material girl," Freya can help you acquire wealth. Study the practice of sex magic, which taps sexual energy to produce material outcomes, in order to attract greater abundance in your life. In Norse tradition, deities ruled over the days of the week. Friday is Freya's day, so petition her for assistance on Fridays. In return for her aid, offer her a gift of amber jewelry.

ISIS

"I, Isis, am all that has been, that is or shall be;
no mortal man hath ever me unveiled."

—Devi Press, www.goddess.ws

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

The Egyptian fertility goddess of marriage, motherhood, and magic, Isis is the daughter of the sky goddess Nut and the earth god Geb. She's also the wife and sister of Osiris and the mother of Horus. One of the most important members of the Egyptian pantheon, her devoted followers included the ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as modern-day pagans.

Perhaps the best-known myth connected with Isis tells us that Set, her brother and god of evil, murdered Osiris and dumped his coffin in the Nile. Heartbroken, Isis searched for her husband and discovered the coffin in another country. When she brought him home, however, Set dismembered the body, ripping it into fourteen pieces that he scattered across the land so Osiris couldn't have a proper burial. Her sister, Nephthys, helped her find all but one piece (his penis), which Isis refashioned from wax. Due to his wife's magical abilities, Osiris came to life again for one night, during which he impregnated Isis with their son Horus.

Another legend says Isis tricked the sun god, Ra, into revealing his secret name. Once the goddess knew this name, she could control him. Ra, at the time, was an old, sick, drooling deity and Isis used his spittle to create a snake (or possibly a scorpion) that bit Ra. She promised to heal him—which she did—but only after he relinquished his throne to her son Horus.

VIRTUES

Because of her devotion to Osiris, Isis is considered the ideal wife. Her ability to bring her husband back to life and conceive a child with him



indicates her magical skill and regenerative power—she holds the key to immortality. Mythology tells us the tears Isis cried over the death of her husband were so copious that they caused the Nile to overflow each year. This annual flooding, which enables crops to grow, is another symbol of her role as a fertility goddess.

Images frequently show Isis with magnificent wings outstretched to guard against evil. Her wings also provided protection for the souls of the deceased. Some sources say she used her wings to fan air back into the body of her murdered husband, thus emphasizing her magical abilities and the power of life over death. She also holds an ankh, symbol of life.

Her name means “throne,” and she’s often depicted wearing a throne-like headdress. This suggests her connection with the pharaoh, viewed as the divine representative on earth. She’s sometimes shown nursing the pharaoh, sometimes Horus—an image that researchers link to Christianity’s mother and child.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

As the goddess of marriage, Isis can help you handle relationship problems, especially those related to devotion, fidelity, and renewal. Dedicate a special time each week to do something with your partner that you both enjoy. Celebrate your relationship in small ways often. Make a list of the good things in your relationship and share it with your partner. In addition, Isis teaches that women need not be subservient to their mates; rather, they possess the magic to nurture what’s important, create what’s essential, and repair what’s been damaged on their own.

As a mother goddess, Isis encourages you to nourish, protect, and inspire the child within. What gifts have you neglected? What are you grieving? What’s preventing your happiness or success? In meditation, imagine magnificent wings sprouting from your shoulder blades. Ask Isis to help you spread your wings and fly high.





KUAN YIN

“One is meant to forgive, to forgive
and be compassionate.”

—Hope Bradford, *Oracle of Compassion: The Living Word of Kuan Yin*

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

The most revered goddess in the Chinese pantheon, Kuan Yin is sometimes thought of as the female equivalent of the Buddha. Her name is spelled various ways, including Quan Yin, Guanyin, and Kannon. However, not only the Chinese honor this beloved deity and bodhisattva—she holds a place of power and respect throughout Eastern Asia and is sacred in Taoism as well as Buddhism. *Kuan* means “earth” and *yin* refers to the feminine life force.

Mythology tells us that this merciful goddess heard the cries of humanity and, instead of entering heaven, she returned to earth. Here she will remain until all sentient beings have become enlightened, free from the cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation.

Many legends surround the goddess. One says Kuan Yin emerged from a pure white ray of light emanating from the eye of the Amitabha Buddha. According to another, a Chinese princess and Buddhist saint named Miao Shan, who lived about 700 B.C.E., was the embodiment of Kuan Yin. She wished to alleviate suffering due to illness, old age, and death, so instead of marrying, she became a nun. For nine years she lived on the sacred island P’u-t’o Shan where she rescued and healed shipwrecked mariners. Even today, she remains the patroness of seafarers. P’u-t’o became a holy destination for Kuan Yin’s worshippers. Many temples, shrines, and monasteries exist there, where pilgrims claim to have seen miracles and visions of the goddess.

VIRTUES

The goddess of mercy and compassion, Kuan Yin upends a bottle or vase that contains the water of life, pouring it onto the earth to purify and heal all who abide here. Usually she wears a white robe and either sits on or holds a white lotus, representing purity. Sometimes she's depicted with a sheaf of rice or willow branch dripping nectar to show that she brings sustenance to the world. In some images she holds the pearls of illumination, signifying her enlightenment and all-encompassing peace. She's also portrayed riding a dolphin, a symbol of intuition, protection, and feminine power, or with a dragon, which represents wisdom and the primal creative force in the universe.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

Kuan Yin offers peace and blessings to all who call on her, especially women and children. The goddess of limitless mercy, she encourages you to nurture loving-kindness and compassion within you. She can help you become more gentle, patient, and forgiving toward yourself and others. When you feel yourself growing hard or judgmental, meditate on her example as you chant the mantra Om Mani Padme Hum to open your heart.

If an illness or disability is troubling you, ask Kuan Yin to ease your suffering or help you bear it with poise. Set a small statue of her in a place of honor and light a stick of incense to invite her spirit into the figurine. You can also float a white lotus blossom in a bowl of water as a gift to the goddess.



LILITH

“Lilith is not an enemy of womankind. She holds the ancient fruit of knowledge, the secrets of our deepest sexual nature, and She is willing to offer this fruit to us.”

—Daughter RavynStar, <https://journeyingtothegoddess.wordpress.com>

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

One of the most misunderstood goddesses, Lilith frequently gets vilified in history and mythology as a demon or worse. Perhaps the first feminist, she's discussed in the Bible and in the Talmud, but also in ancient epics, including the millennias-old Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Legend says Lilith was the first woman on earth, Adam's first wife, created at the same time he was. Described as independent and lusty (which may be why Christian and Jewish texts speak unfavorably of her), she's often connected with magic and witchcraft. Supposedly she demanded equality with her husband, sexually and otherwise, which caused problems in their relationship and resulted in Lilith either leaving or getting kicked out of Paradise.

One myth says Lilith—whom other stories say protected women and their babies—was punished for her audacity by being forced to give birth to a hundred demon children each day, who then died. Other legends say the night goddess Lilith shape-shifted into an owl and drank the blood of children while they slept. She's even said to have transformed herself into the serpent who convinced Eve to eat the apple and thus gain knowledge. (Was she causing trouble or trying to help Eve?) Still other tales link Lilith with the succubus and vampires.

VIRTUES

Passionate and sensual, independent and freedom-loving, this beautiful goddess terrified patriarchal religious cultures because she understood

(and expressed) her sexual power. Furthermore, she defied the authority and demands of males, be they deities or mortals. She showed courage and confidence toward the “powers that be” and refused to be subservient to anyone, including her husband Adam.

Mythology tells us Lilith watched over and protected women and their infants during childbirth. Some stories say she nursed newborns, giving them extra strength that only a deity could provide.

According to legend, Lilith shape-shifted into an owl, symbol of wisdom. An ancient Sumerian relief sculpture portrays her with wings and bird feet. She supposedly took up residence in a sacred huluppu tree. In some cases, she’s said to represent the tree’s branches (parallels to the Kabbalah’s Tree of Life) or to have lived as the tree’s spirit/deva. Sometimes she’s depicted with the head and torso of a woman and a serpent’s lower body.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

Lilith can encourage you to stand up for your rights and beliefs. Do you feel undervalued? Are you being treated in an inequitable way? Perhaps you aren’t being paid what you deserve or you’re expected to put in more effort than your coworkers (or bosses) and you’re not receiving the recognition you merit. From a tarot deck, choose the Empress card, which signifies feminine power, and meditate on it to gain perspective on how to handle your situation and claim your rightful authority.

Do you have questions, concerns, or anxiety related to your sexuality? Are your needs unfulfilled? Does your passionate spirit seem threatening to others? Ask Lilith to help you confront your fears and/or other people’s judgment regarding your sensuality. Learn about snakes as age-old symbols of magic, knowledge, healing, transformation, and sexuality. Let Lilith show you how to express your sexuality fully. Read books or online articles about the sacred nature of sex that the ancients knew. Consider exploring the practice of sex magic and its creative power.

ODUDUA

“A family is like a forest, when you are outside it is dense, when you are inside you see that each tree has its place.”

—African proverb

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

Worshipped by the Yoruba in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, the earth goddess Odudua is the sister of the sky god Olorun. Together the two deities personify earth and heaven. According to myth, Odudua is the mother of all that exists on earth—she formed our planet from her primal energy. Odudua (a.k.a., Odua) married Obatala, god of harmony, and gave birth to the beautiful water goddess Yemaya.

When it becomes necessary to protect the earth or her people, legend says Odudua shifts into warrior mode. At such times she may stir up destructive weather patterns or natural disruptions such as earthquakes to thwart an enemy.

Also a goddess of love, Odudua reputedly had many mates. One story says she took an interest in a handsome hunter, a mortal, and they engaged in a passionate affair. After a few weeks they parted company, but the goddess promised to protect him always and to take care of everyone who came to the place where they had lived together happily. A community soon arose in that spot and developed into the city of Ado-Ekiti in southwestern Nigeria.

VIRTUES

Odudua translates as “black one” and artists usually portray the goddess as a vibrant, handsome woman with ebony-colored skin, adorned with jewelry, sometimes wearing an ornate cap on her head. Mother-earth



goddesses everywhere watch over and protect women and children, and Odudua is no exception. Not only is she a patron of mothers but she also supports and nurtures family life in general. Along with her husband Obatala, she endeavors to bring peace and unity to her people. Maintaining harmony within the larger community is also Odudua's responsibility. This amiable deity just wants everyone to be happy.

Like earth goddesses in other cultures, Odudua governs fertility, abundance, and creativity in many forms. She's responsible for the fruitfulness of the land as well as human reproduction. Her primal energy, from which she formed our planet, continues to nourish all of earth's inhabitants to this day.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

When disagreements, ego battles, or everyday stresses upset your family life, turn to Odudua for guidance. She can show you the importance of restoring unity and order, and encourage you to nurture the good things that hold you together as a clan. Myths often connect Odudua and her peace-loving husband with the calabash (a type of gourd with a hard skin that can be made into a dipper-like utensil). Make a soup for your family members and serve each other with a gourd ladle. The act of sharing this dish is a sign of coming together and nourishing one another.

If you desire greater prosperity or if money seems to go out faster than it comes in, tap into Odudua's fertile nature. Acquire a black stone—jet, onyx, or obsidian, for instance—and carry it in your purse or pocket. If you prefer, you can bury the stone just outside the door to your home to stabilize your resources. Or, take the stone to work and set it on your desk—or wherever you perform your job—to attract wealth.





WHITE BUFFALO CALF WOMAN

“The arrival of the white buffalo is like the second coming of Christ....It will bring about purity of mind, body, and spirit and unify all nations—black, red, yellow, and white.”

—Floyd Hand Looks For Buffalo, Oglala Medicine Man

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY

Some indigenous people of the North American plains say that White Buffalo Calf Woman taught human beings how to live peacefully and be good stewards of the earth. According to one version of her myth, two young hunters encountered the goddess dressed in white buckskin. One man started to force himself on her, but the deity, who could intuit his motives, dissolved him into a pile of bones. She told the other man to return to his tribe and prepare for her visit.

Four days later, the goddess, in the form of a white buffalo calf, floated to earth on a cloud. The calf rolled on the ground, changing colors from white to black to yellow to red—the four colors of the medicine wheel. She then transformed herself into a beautiful young woman holding a bundle that contained sacred objects, including the pipe.

White Buffalo Calf Woman schooled the people in dancing, singing, rites, prayer, and ceremony. Then she departed, leaving the bundle in their keeping. However, she promised to return—again as a white buffalo calf—when the world fell into chaos and she would restore harmony. Perhaps she is already here, for in 1994 on a farm in Wisconsin a rare white buffalo calf was born. Since then, two more white buffalo calves have been born on the same farm, the most recent in 2006.

VIRTUES

White Buffalo Calf Woman understands the interconnectedness of all things in the universe. Through her wisdom and leadership, she guided the people of the plains, teaching them the secrets of the earth and how to walk in balance with all life. The four colors she took on while in the body of a calf also represent the four races, signifying the oneness of all peoples.

The goddess is credited with bringing sacred traditions and arts to humankind. A visionary, White Buffalo Calf Woman conveys messages from the divine realm to the mundane one. With her power of prophecy, she can see a coming time of chaos; however, she also offers hope with her promise to return. The white buffalo calf, a most sacred symbol among many tribes, represents rebirth.

Legend says that after the deity's visit, the buffalo herds increased and abundance returned to the land. Thus, she's connected with prosperity and fruitfulness. Although White Buffalo Calf Woman is known as a goddess of peace and compassion, she won't tolerate harmful behavior, as is shown by the way she annihilated the mythical young hunter. When she returns, she may destroy the wicked and restore peace.

MANIFESTING HER POWER

White Buffalo Calf Woman can reveal to you the sacredness of All That Is and teach you the mysteries of existence. Draw and color an image of the medicine wheel and reflect on its meaning. Ask the goddess to show you how to stop struggling and coexist harmoniously with others on the planet. Her loving guidance can keep you on the right road, leaving behind harmful ideas and behaviors, thereby gaining peace and a sense of purpose in your life.

If you've experienced a difficult time and feel discouraged or depleted, ask White Buffalo Calf Woman to give you hope for the future. If you've suffered losses, she can help you see the way to renewed abundance.