

HART 295.01.
Spring 2009

Women in South Asian Art



Professor Jinah Kim
Office: Old Gym #210
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4:00pm or by appointment
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All the handouts for the course will be available on the blackboard. Please enroll yourself on the blackboard for this course, if you have not already done so. Go to <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/oak>, and find this course by the course title and number.

Course Description

This course explores manifold issues related to female representations in South Asia from the Mohenjodaro (2600-1900 B.C.E.) to the present. One of the main goals of the course is to understand the cultural and social significance of the prominence of goddesses and their cult in South Asia, especially in India. In this regard, we will examine mythologies and iconographies of different goddesses and the historical development of their cult, while exploring the relationship between the prominence of goddesses and women's social status in pre-modern India. We will also scrutinize visual representations of female body in South Asia and critically reassess the Orientalizing perspective that emphasizes femininity of South Asian art. Sensuous sculptures of goddesses and courtesans from ancient South Asia are so visually provocative that they sometimes serve as a representative of South Asian art in the West. What is the significance of the sensuous representations of female body in relation to women's status in ancient India? Are they public and private displays of male fantasy, rendering the female body as an object of desire? Or is it an acknowledgement of the female power unique to South Asian cultural traditions? How are we to understand seemingly contradicting views of the femininity in South Asian art? We will examine a few key examples of "erotica Indica," including the prevalent use of erotic imagery from medieval temples for illustrating the Kama sutra in the West. The last two classes of the course will be devoted to analyzing the political use of female imagery, especially of powerful goddesses in colonial and post-independence India, based on our understanding of goddesses and female representations in pre-modern India. The readings for this course are interdisciplinary, and we will cover a wide range of materials from ancient clay toys, to

medieval sculptures of goddesses, to miniature paintings, to an interpretive animated cartoon of the famous Hindu epic, *Rāmāyana*, and to award-winning contemporary films.

Required Texts

Vidya Dehejia. *Indian Art*. London: Phaidon, 1997.

John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff, *Devi: Goddesses of India*. University of California Press, 1996.

Christopher Pinney, *'Photos of the Gods': The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India*. London: Reaktion books, 2004.

Recommended:

Vidya Dehejia, *Devi: The Great Goddess-Female Divinity in South Asian Art*.

Washington D.C.: Sackler Gallery, 1999.

Wendy D. O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*. University of Chicago Press, reprint 1982.

Also see, <http://www.asia.si.edu/devi/index.htm>

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Attendance: You are required to come to every class well prepared and ready to discuss the assigned readings. Your grade will be lowered significantly for repeated absences. Every two classes you miss without any notification, your grade will drop by one letter grade. If you miss a class due to illness or other unavoidable emergencies, please contact me as soon as possible. A note from Dean Bergquist will be required for unexpected absences to be excused.

Participation: Your preparation for every class will be a key to a good participation grade. This includes completing the assigned readings before class and being prepared to present your critique on the readings in class. We will take turns in leading discussion for readings throughout the semester. When you are the discussion leader, it is your responsibility to circulate your question/topic before class. Occasionally, you will be asked to prepare a written response to the reading and share it with the class.

Written Assignments: 65%

All written assignments should be double spaced with one and a half inch margins in size-12 font. Multiple pages should be stapled. Detailed instructions will be given about each assignment throughout the semester.

- Response papers to films, 1-2 pages each (10%)
- Visual analysis (5%)
- Prospectus for Research Paper, 1-2 pages (5%)
- Annotated Bibliography for Research Paper (10%)
- Outline/Draft of Research Paper (5%)
- Research Paper, 10-15pages including bibliography and notes (30%)

Quiz: 15%

Late Assignments

All written work must be completed and submitted in class on the day they are due. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade for each day past the original due date. If an A paper is turned in two days late, the grade will drop to a B+. No assignment will be accepted after passing three days from the due date. You will not get any credit for the missed assignment.

If you have any illness or personal emergency due to which that you find it difficult to meet a deadline, please speak with me in advance. I will accommodate all legitimate and reasonable requests for extension for such cases.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Please visit http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/Honor_System.htm for further information on the plagiarism and other issues related to Vanderbilt's Honor System.

** - Required

* - Recommended

No mark - Reference material

Jan 7(W) Introduction: Of Yakṣīs, Goddesses, and Women in South Asia

**Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 4-48.

**Vidya Dehejia, "Encountering Devi," in *Devi: The Great Goddess* (Sackler Gallery, 1999), 13-36.

*Vidya Dehejia, "Issues of Spectatorship and Representation," in *Representing the Body* (Kali for women, 1997), 1-21.

*Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "For the Greater Glory of Indian Art": Travels and Travails of a Yakshi," in *Monuments, Object, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Columbia University Press, 2004), 205-236.

Jan 14 (W) Tempresses, Nuns, and the Goddesses for enlightenment: Representations of Women in South Asian Buddhist traditions

☉Visual Analysis assignment☉

**Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 51-100, esp.64-76, 92-100.

**Diana Paul, "'Tempress': Daughter of Evil," and "The Mother," in *Women in Buddhism* (Asian Humanities Press, 1979), 5-10, 60-67.

**Reginald A. Ray, "Accomplished Women in Tantric Buddhism of Medieval India and Tibet," in Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross ed. *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980), 227-242; (3rd edition, Wadsworth, 2001), 233-242.

**Miranda Shaw, "Women in Tantric Theory," in *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 35-73.

*Gregory Schopen, "The Suppression of Nuns and the Ritual Murder of Their Special Dead in Two Buddhist Monastic Codes," in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters* (University of Hawaii, 2004), 329-359.

Jan 20 (T) **Films Screening: Deepa Mehta's film, "Water" –Women's social status in South Asia** (5:30-7:30pm, location: Old Gym 106 or TBA)

**Rachel Fell McDermott, "The Westren Kālī," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 281-313.

Jan 21(W) **Goddesses on the Periphery**

**Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 4-8, 124-134, 185-192.

**John Stratton Hawley, "Prologue: the Goddess in India," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 1-28.

**Diana Eck, "Gaṅgā: The Goddess Ganges in Hindu Sacred Geography," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 137-153.

*Wendy Doniger, "Saranyū/Samjñā: the Sun and the Shadow," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 154-172.

* John Cort, "Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions," *Numen*, Vol. 34, Fasc. 2. (Dec., 1987), pp. 235-255

Jan 28 (W) **From Periphery to Center: Emergence of Temples to the Goddess and the Goddess cult**

☺ Visual Analysis due ☺

**Vidya Dehejia, "Origins and Spread of The Yoginī cult," in *Yogini Cult and Temples: A Tantric Tradition* (New Delhi: National Museum, 1986), 67-90.

**Vidya Dehejia, "The Many Aspects of Yoginis," *Yoginī: Cult and Temples, a Tantric Tradition* (New Delhi: National Museum, 1986), 11-38.

**George Michell, "Temples to the Goddess," in Vidya Dehejia ed. *Devi: The Great Goddess* (Washington D.C., Sackler Gallery, 1999), 59-72.

**Dennis Hudson, "The Ritual Worship of Devi," *Devi: The Great Goddess*, 73-98.

**Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 137-152, 234-246.

Feb 4 (W) **Visions of the Great Goddess: the *Devi Mahātmyā***

** Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 196-200.

**Gary Michael Tartakov and Vidya Dehejia, "Sharing, Intrusion, and Influence: The Mahiṣāsura-mardīnī Imagery of the Calukyas and the Pallavas," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 45, No. 4. (1984), pp. 287-345.

**Thomas B. Coburn, "Devī: the Great Goddess," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 31-48.

** Thomas B. Coburn, "The Threefold vision of the Devi Mahatmya," *Devi: The Great Goddess*, 37-57.

*Terence McNerney, "Mysterious Origins: The *Tantric Devi* Series from Basohli," *Devi: The Great Goddess*, 119-135.

Feb 11 (W) **Consorts to the Divine 1: Kālī, Pārvatī, and Lakṣmī (Śrī)**

**David R. Kinsley, "Kālī: Blood and Death Out of Place," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 77-86.

** Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, "The Shifting Balance of Power in the Marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī," *Divine Consort*, 129-143.

* _____, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (University of Chicago Press, reprint 1982), 77-148.

** Vasudha Narayan, "Śrī: Giver of Fortune, Bestower of Grace," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 87-108.

Rita M Gross, "Hindu Female Deities as a resource for the contemporary rediscovery of the Goddess," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 46, No. 3. (Sep., 1978), 269-291.

Feb 17 (T)☼ **Mandatory Office Hour to discuss paper topics** ☼

Feb 18 (W) **Consorts to the Divine 2: Rādhā and Sitā**

** Donna M. Wulff, "Rādhā: Conosrt and Conqueror of Krishna," in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 109-134.

** Madhu Kishwar, "Yes to Sita, No to Ram! The Continuing Popularity of Sita in India," *Manjushi* 98 (1997), 20-31.

** Linda Hess, "Rejecting Sita: Indian responses to the ideal man's cruel treatment of his ideal wife," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 67, No. 1. (Mar., 1999), 1-32.

** Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 337-362, esp. 346-360.

Feb 25 (W) **Rādhā and Sitā in action: Screening of the film, *Fire* by Deepa Mehta**

☺ Research Prospectus due ☺

** Sangeeta Datta, "Globalisation and Representations of Women in Indian Cinema," *Social Scientist*, Vol. 28, No. 3/4. (Mar. - Apr., 2000), pp. 71-82.

Feb 28 1-Mar 8 Spring break

Mar 11 (W) **Longing for the hero or a Woman's Fate: representations of subversive women in various epic tales and contemporary films, *Fire* and *Water* (*Screening of the *Sitāyāna* by Nina Paley)**

☺ Annotated Bibliography Due ☺

** Molly Emma Aitken, "Spectatorship and Femininity in Kangra Style painting," in Dehejia, *Representing the body* (1997), 82-101.

* S. Sutherland, "The Bad Seed: Senior wives and Elder Sons," in S. Sutherland, ed. *Bridging Worlds: Studies on Women in South Asia* (UC Berkeley, 1990), 23-52.

** Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 337-362.

* Purnima Mannekar, "'Women-Oriented' Narratives and the New Indian Woman," *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics*, 104-164.

* W. O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (University of Chicago Press, reprint 1982), 33-61.

Mar 18 (W) **Erotica Indica?: the *Kāma sūtra* and Sexual imagery on the temples of Konarak and Khajuraho**

** Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 155-170, 177-182.

**Jyoti Puri, “Concerning “Kāmasūtras”: Challenging Narratives of History and Sexuality,” *Signs*, vol.27, no.3 (2002), 603-639.

**Annapura Garimella, “Engendering Indian Art,” in Dehejia ed. *Representing the Body: Gender issues in Indian Art* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1997) 22-41.

*Thomas Donaldson, “Propitious –Apotropaic Eroticism in the Art of Orissa,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol.37, no1/2 (1975), 75-100.

*Devangana Desai, *The Religious Imagery of Khajuraho*. (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1975), 149-173, 175-198.

Mar 25 (W) Contentions on female nudity and sexuality: Varied representations of female nudes and the “Rape” of the Goddess

**Tapati Guha Thakurta, “Art History and the Nude: On Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality in Contemporary India,” in *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Columbia University Press, 2004), 237-267.

** _____, “Clothing the Goddess: The Modern Contest over Representations of Devi,” in Vidya Dehejia ed. *Devi: The Great Goddess*, 157-180.

** Christopher Pinney, ‘Photos of the Gods’: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India (Reaktion Books, 2004), 60-78.

*Purnima Mankekar, “Television Tales, National Narratives, and a Woman’s Rage: Multiple Interpretations of Draupadi’s “Disrobing”,” in *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India* (Duke University Press, 199), 224-258.

Apr 1 (W) Images of Women and the struggle for Independence

**Christopher Pinney, ‘Photos of the Gods’: *The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (Reaktion Books, 2004), 14-44, 106-144.

**Partha Chatterjee, “Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 4. (Nov., 1989), pp. 622-633.

**Dehejia, *Indian Art*, 379-406.

Apr 8 (W) Mother India (Bhārat Mātā): Politics of Popular images and the Hindu Nationalism

☺ Research paper draft due ☺

** Christopher Pinney, ‘Photos of the Gods’: *The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (Reaktion Books, 2004), 146-210, esp. 146-180, 202-210.

** Lise Mckean, “ Bhārat Mātā: Mother India and Her Militant Matriots,” in Hawley and Wulff eds. *Devi: Goddesses of India* (University of California, 1996), 250-280.

Apr 15 (W) Student Presentations on Women in South Asian Art

☺ **Final paper due on April 23 by noon** ☺