Kali and Medusa

POSTED ON OCTOBER 23, 2023 BY ADMINISTRATOR

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A notorious aspect in which a parallel of Kali with Medusa is appreciated, is that of some representations where both are figured with the tongue outward.

In Kali's case, the tongue outward is said to have been intended to drink the blood of the demon Raktabija. More also, and as in the case of Medusa, it can be interpreted that it is a way of frightening his enemies, also emitting a terrifying guttural type sound.

This on the other hand suggests an ophidic meaning.

In the case of snakes, when they stick their tongues out, the hypnotic call to the victim then arises. In the same way that Medusa maintains as a kind of hypnotism, captivating as well as paralyzing and petrifying.

Both Kali and Medusa embody and represent dark aspects of the Goddess, such as dark shaktis, linked to death, the dark dimensions, and that which is forbidden and taboo for most.

Although there are no representations of Kali with snake hair, if Kali shapes or aspects can be found with snakes in her hair.

One of the ways Kali is depicted with snakes is the terrifying Raksha Kali.

He is listed with 4 arms, and with a dark complexion. In his right hands he holds a container and a blue lotus, and in his left hands a dagger as a weapon, and a kapala (a skull).

They adorn two necklaces of decapitated skulls, which he wears around his neck, and attached to the dreadlocks of his hair.

Also, and here the ophidic presence, carries snake garlands.

Like other forms of Kali, it has tiger skin on its underside, and one of its legs is on a body (Shava, representing Shiva in a sleeping or latent state), while the other leg on the back of his vahana or vehicle, which is a lion.

It is a terrifying aspect since his eyes are also perceived as red, injected into blood, drinking wine from his kapala, and bursting into thunderous laughter, that generate terror in everyone who listens to it.

Another form of Kali in which he is depicted with snakes is Guhya Kalika, who is the only one of the 32 Kalikas who wears a crown of snakes.

It also manifests itself in 8 forms, with 8 different mantras, known to 8 great sages.

Guhya means secret, or hidden, thus being the secret Kali, which hides or reveals mysteries. As Guhyakalika's counterpart, Shiva, her husband, manifests as Guhya guru, the mysterious guru.

In Tantrasara Guhya Kalika is said to wear black clothing, a tiara in the shape of hundreds of snakes on her head, and her body is covered in snakes.

Also the Ananta Sesha snake appears next to it.

In the Mahakala Samhita, Mahakala (Shiva) provides a description of Guhyakalika, to his wife Mahakali, including a variety of mantras and yantras.

It is said to reside in the crematorium, although it must be distinguished from Smashan Kali, another form of Kali, which also dwells in crematoriums.

The Guhyakalika cult honors the Vetalas or vampires, 8 tridents, vajras (rays), corpses, jackals, and other dark entities or crematorium inhabitants, such as Bhairavas, Dakinis, Chamundas and Kshetrapalas.

His form of worship and tantric practice are secret, transmitting, as in the Kaula tradition, from Guru to disciple in a personalized way.

It is also worth remembering that Shiva, who has Kali as his consort, always appears with snakes on his body, such as the Naga Vasuki snake, coiled around his neck., And other snakes in his arms, waist, wrists, and ankles.

For this reason, among its many names, the one in Nagbushan or « decorated with snakes » stands out.