

Contents

Acknowledgements	xi
Introduction	1
<i>Setting the Stage</i>	1
<i>Textual Issues</i>	7
<i>Summary of the Book</i>	16

ONE

The Feminine Principle in the Vedas	19
<i>Cosmogony, Cosmology, and Goddesses in the Vedas</i>	19
<i>Samhitās</i>	22
THE WATERS	22
EARTH	30
ADITI	32
VIRAJ	34
VĀC (AND SARASVATĪ)	37
ŚACI/INDRĀṆĪ	41
<i>Brāhmaṇas</i>	43
THE WATERS	43
EARTH/ADITI/VIRAJ	46
VĀC/SARASVATĪ	47
INDRĀṆĪ	52
<i>Upaniṣads</i>	54
THE WATERS	54
EARTH	56
VĀC	56

TWO

*Prakṛti, Māyā, and Śakti: The Feminine
Principle in Philosophical Discourse* 61

Prakṛti 62

THE TERM PRAKṚTI IN EARLY VEDIC, GRAMMATICAL, AND RITUAL
CONTEXTS 62

PRAKṚTI AS A MATERIAL PRINCIPLE 64

PRAKṚTI IN VEDIC AND PROTO-SĀMĀKHYA CONTEXTS 65

THE MARRIAGE OF VEDIC AND PROTO-SĀMĀKHYA

MATERIALS IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA 72

PRAKṚTI IN CLASSICAL SĀMĀKHYA 84

Māyā 87

MĀYĀ IN VEDIC AND EARLY POST-VEDIC CONTEXTS 88

MĀYĀ IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA 90

Śakti 97

VEDIC ROOTS 98

ŚAKTI IN PHILOSOPHICAL LITERATURE 101

ŚAKTI IN GRAMMATICAL LITERATURE 105

ŚAKTI IN TANTRIC LITERATURE 108

THREE

The Feminine Principle in Purāṇic
Cosmogony and Cosmology 117

Introduction to the Goddess Materials in the Epics and Purāṇas 117

The Devī-Māhātmya 119

Cosmogony and Goddesses in the Purāṇas 122

Primary Creation (Sarga): Basic Cosmogony 128

SĀMĀKHYA-TYPE ACCOUNTS OF COSMOGONY 128

RECONCILIATION OF COMPETING PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS IN ACCOUNTS
OF PRIMARY CREATION 131

Secondary Creation (Pratisarga) 137

CREATION OF THE WORLDS 137

CREATION OF PROGENY 139

*The Explicit Introduction of the Feminine Element in Creation: Prakṛti/Śakti
as the Consort of God* 144

REFERENCES OUTSIDE OF ACCOUNTS OF COSMOGONY 144

*Integration of the Feminine Principle in Accounts of Cosmogony: Sarga and
Pratisarga* 145

VAIṢṆAVA PURĀṆAS AND VAIṢṆAVA SECTIONS OF CROSS-SECTARIAN PURĀṆAS 146

ŚAIVA PURĀṆAS AND ŚAIVA SECTIONS OF CROSS-SECTARIAN PURĀṆAS 170

ŚAKTA PURĀṆAS 178

FOUR

Concluding Remarks 185

Resume 185

CONTEXTUAL ISSUES 186

THEMATIC ISSUES 186

HISTORICAL ISSUES 190

INTERPRETIVE ISSUES 191

Further Implications of the Study: Historical and Socio-Political Implications 192*Further Implications of the Study: Cultural Implications* 194

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GODDESSES AND WOMEN 194

THE AMBIGUOUS GODDESS 198

Śakti/Māyā 198*Prakṛti/Māyā* 199

THE AMBIGUOUS FEMALE: FROM DIVINE TO HUMAN 201

Women and Creation of the Social Order 208*Women and Maintenance of the Social Order* 211

Notes 215

Bibliography 249

Index 275