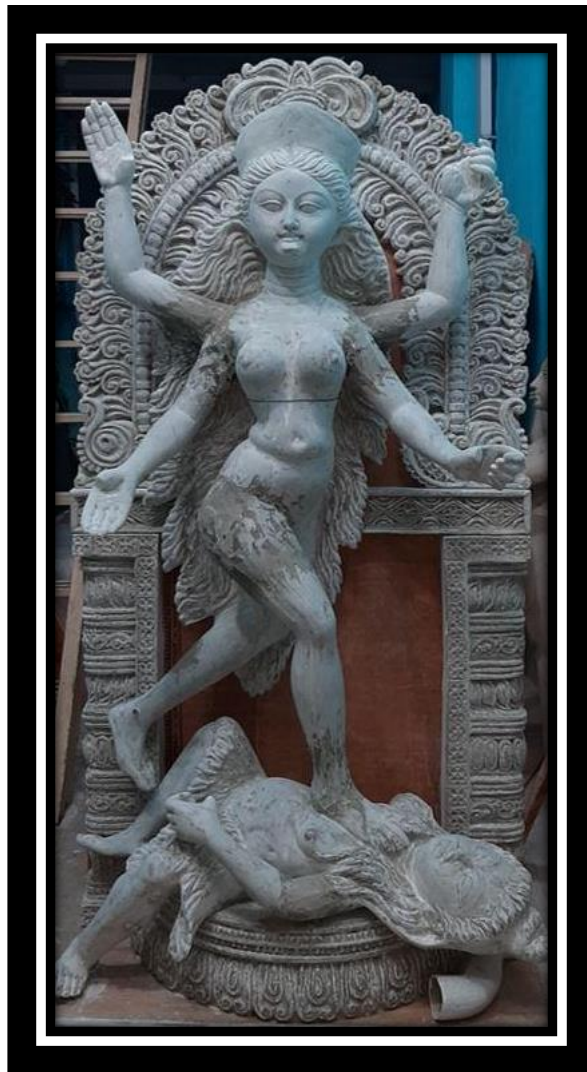


AUGUST 2025 MONTHLY BLOG/ 176

## CAN WE FIND A GREAT STATUE TO A FEMALE GOD OF TIME?

By Penelope J. Corfield  
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**Fig.176.1**  
**British Museum statue of Kali,**  
**Hindu goddess of Time & Destruction:**  
see <https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/feminine-power-welcoming-new-goddess-kali-icon>  
(viewed 28/7/25)

Thinking about Time is as endless and as fascinating a process as is unfolding Time itself.<sup>1</sup> And it is a real challenge to depict such a universal cosmic power. Often Temporality is depicted in male form, as in the case of Old Father Time.<sup>2</sup> He can be kindly or menacing or both. And he appears on countless weather-vanes, heralding either good weather or bad. Yet it would be good also to have some female input into images of majestic Temporality. So let's see if we can find a statue to female god of Time.

It turns out that there are various goddesses in a variety of globally different cultures, who are associated with aspects of Time. Much the most famous and the most dreaded is Kali (also Kalika) in traditional Hinduism.<sup>3</sup> She is associated with Time and also with Death and Destruction. She is a dominant force. Hence statues to this deity often portray her with one foot majestically placed upon a prone figure who lies inertly before her. He represents the supreme god, Lord Shiva - and, according to some variants of the story, Kali kills him in her destructive fury - but then realises what she has done and breathes life back into him again. And she calms down, halting her frenzy.

Kali is usually presented as young, lithe, active, full of energy. She has four (sometimes more) arms. Her great power can be benign; and in some versions of Hinduism Kali is worshipped as the Divine Mother. Yet at the same time, her energy and fire can destroy. If enraged or opposed, Kali has no inhibitions about unleashing her powers. Yet the implication is that she is targeting evil forces, rather than simply destroying things for the sake of destruction. Kali is therefore not an evil figure in herself, though she can be a vengeful and terrifying one.

There are very many variants to the forms of Kali-worship, some stressing her benevolent powers, others stressing her darker side. That is shown in the second image shown here (see Fig. 176.2). Kali is still distinctly female, lithic and active. But she also carries a scythe; is adorned with skulls; holds in one hand a severed head; and protrudes her tongue, in reference to the legendary

account of how she defeated a malevolent male demon. His nefarious powers were such that he raised a fresh crop of demons every time his blood dropped onto the ground. Kali counter-attacked by herself lapping up every drop of his spilt blood. It was a clever but also frightening manoeuvre, signalling her unstinting resolve allied with ultimate power.



Fig. 176.2 Cast bronze statue of the Goddess Kali, the Destroyer of Evil Forces & Divine Protector - Made by the Veronese Design Company (2019): see <https://veronesedesigns.com/>.

Well, all thoroughly fascinating and thought-provoking. But is the dynamic power of Kali quite the same as the cosmic universality of Time? Of course, it

can be claimed, quite truthfully that Time both creates and destroys. Yet Time unfolds daily, whilst always remaining the same. It thus constitutes not only each and every fleeting moment but, simultaneously, the very long term, verging on eternity.

All that is supremely hard to express visually. It's too huge, too complicated, too strange, too .... unique! So, just as there are very few good jokes about Time,<sup>4</sup> so there are very few successful statuesque images - whether male or female. Indeed, why should a statue of Time have any specific gender identity? Time is male, female, and, equally, sexless.

So my final answer, when people ask if they can see Time for themselves, is to say that we all can - and very easily too. Just look at the cosmos - whether close at hand, or in the far distant galaxies. All of these are the handiwork of Time, which is linked integrally with Time-Space. All humans too, down to the last wrinkle and grey hairs ... After all (to repeat my own summary statement) Time is the dynamo; Space (and all within it) its physical manifestation.

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>1</sup> For further thoughts on the nature of Time, see P.J. Corfield, *Time-Space: We Are All in it Together* (London, 2025), esp. pp. 93-162.

<sup>2</sup> BLOG/175 (July 2025) in PJC 2025 Time-series: [www.penelopejcorfield.com/monthly-blogs/175](http://www.penelopejcorfield.com/monthly-blogs/175).

<sup>3</sup> See variously S. Harshananda, *Hindu Gods and Goddesses* (1981); A. Mookerjee, *Kali: The Feminine Force* (1988); F.W. Bunce (ed.), *A Dictionary of Buddhist and Hindu Iconography* (1997); and S. Mohanty, *The Book of Kali* (2009).

<sup>4</sup> BLOG/171 (March 2025) in PJC 2025 Time-series: [www.penelopejcorfield.com/monthly-blogs/171](http://www.penelopejcorfield.com/monthly-blogs/171).