

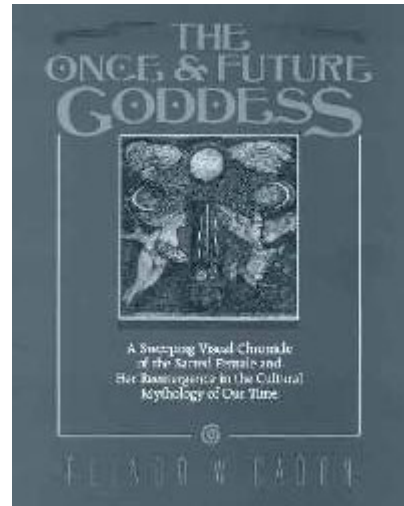


Elinor Gadon

Elinor Gadon has devoted much of her life to the intellectual and spiritual pursuit of the origins of sati, the feminine principle of the universe, and how it has manifested itself in cultures throughout the world from pre-historic times. In her scholarship she is remarkable for her ability to look back and search for roots and simultaneously to look forward to the future guided by the holistic ideals of the Once

and Future Goddess that reside within us all. Elinor's writing and research grows from a strong feminist ethos that embraces all of humanity and Nature. In her thoughtful way she compels us to rethink the issues of patriarchy and feminism, the domination of the Earth and the recognition of the inevitability of the powers of Nature. I think of Elinor as a feminist philosopher and anthropologist, however, at heart and in reality she is an arthistorian. She considers understanding to be an aesthetic process, one that involves imagination, an innerknowing that allows for the integration of the experience with worldviews and social values. In her work she has stressed the relevance of the experiential. She has visited India many times over the last forty years and is recognized as one of the leading scholars of Indian art history. She is particularly respected for her research into the tribal worship of Gramadevi, the autochthonous goddess of Orissa, where she has witnessed the importance of visual experience and the spiritual empowerment of darshan, the act of seeing and being seen, by the god residing in an iconic image. Using the tools of visual cultural theory Elinor is providing new ways to understand how the idea of Gramadevi pervades tribal and village life that is in sharp distinction to the hierarchical nod that this topic has previously been given. Through her words and illustrations she brings to life the inspired art of little known cultures. In Elinor's thinking there is the need for balance and harmony. She follows the Daoist way of yin-yang complementarity, or the Vaisnavite urge for equanimity, in her persuasive writing on the masculine ego where she explores the myth of the wounded minotaur as a sign of his unconscious impulses she

taur in reclaiming the sacred male psyche. analysis of Picasso's obsession with the lays bare the symbolic role of his mistresses and wives. principle as counterpoint to her work on the goddesses. The strength of Elinor's work comes from her own inner resources. She has lived a very rich and full life and has experienced the joys and tragedies of womanhood. Nowhere has this been more evident than in her role as an inspiring mentor and teacher. She is a visionary who has had the courage and conviction to introduce new ways of thinking that encourage collaborative learning. Elinor is indefatigable. Through her endurance and discipline and her passionate commitment to her research she is an inspiring role model to her students and colleagues. The goddess Gramadevi manifests herself in many ways: she is inspiring; she is creative and productive; she has rigorous standards and makes demands; she is caring and protective; she is indefatigable; she is prolific; she is a friend; she is a mother; she is Elinor.



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