

# Chandraghanta

**Chandraghanta** (Sanskrit: चन्द्रघण्टा, romanized: *Candraghaṇṭā*, lit. 'adorned with the moon as her bell')<sup>[1]</sup> is a form of the Hindu goddess Mahadevi, venerated as the destroyer of demons and protector of her devotees.<sup>[2]</sup> She is the third of the Navadurga, and is worshipped on the third day of Navaratri.

## Legend

According to Shiva Purana, Chandraghanta is the shakti of Shiva in the form of Chandrashekara. There are two legends associated with Chandraghanta:

### Wedding to Shiva

Long ago, after her deep penance, Parvati was finally to be married to Shiva. The great day arrived, and Shiva came with his wedding procession. But his appearance was unlike any groom anyone had ever seen. His body was smeared with ash, snakes coiled around his neck, a garland of skulls rested on him, and he rode upon his mighty bull, Nandi. Behind him followed a strange company—ghosts, spirits, ascetics, and ganas, all howling and dancing wildly. The members of Parvati's family were terrified. The joyous wedding atmosphere turned into fear and confusion.

Seeing this, Parvati smiled calmly. She understood that to protect her family's honor and to bring balance to Shiva's wild form, she needed to show her own divine strength. At that moment, she transformed into Chandraghanta. She appeared radiant, riding on a lion,

## Chandraghanta

Destroyer of demons



Murti of Chandraghanta

**Affiliation** Avatar of Durga and Parvati

**Planet** Venus

**Mantra** *piṇḍajapraavarārūḍhā*  
*caṇḍakopāstrakairūtā*  
*prasādam tanute mahyam*  
*candraghaṇṭeti viśrutā*

**Weapon** trishula, lotus, gada, kamandalu,  
sword, bow, arrow, japamala,  
abhayamudra, jnana mudra

**Mount** tiger

**Consort** Shiva as Chandrashekara

her ten hands holding weapons of power—trident, sword, bow, arrow, mace, lotus, and more. Upon her forehead shone a crescent moon shaped like a bell, from which she got her name, Chandraghanta.

As she approached Shiva with this form, he attempted to pacify her, requesting her to return to her true form. She obliged, and in turn asked him to assume his own benevolent form. Their wedding then commenced with great pomp.<sup>[3]</sup>

## **The Story of Jatukasura**

After the divine wedding of Shiva and Parvati, the universe seemed to rest in peace. But peace does not last long when demons rise in arrogance.

There was a powerful asura named Jatukasura. Fierce in strength and swollen with pride, he sought to rule not only the earth but also the heavens. Through his penance, he had gained great powers, and in his madness he raised a terrifying army—not of men, not of beasts, but of giant bats. These bats, black as night, flew in countless swarms. Their wings blotted out the sun, plunging lands into unnatural darkness. They swooped down on villages, tore apart crops, disturbed sacred rituals, and filled the air with shrieks that made the bravest men tremble. Even sages in the forests could not meditate in peace, for Jatukasura's bats haunted every corner of the world. The gods, tormented and weakened, prayed to the Mother of the Universe. They called upon Parvati, for only her divine energy could restore balance. Answering their cries, the goddess took on her fierce form of Chandraghanta.

She appeared radiant and terrible at once—riding her lion, with ten arms bearing mighty weapons, her forehead adorned with a crescent moon shaped like a bell. From her bell rang a sound that echoed across the three worlds, shaking the hearts of demons. Jatukasura, proud and mocking, unleashed his bat army against her. The sky darkened as thousands upon thousands of bats swirled toward the goddess, shrieking and clawing. But the roar of her lion and the deafening sound of her bell scattered them. Disoriented, the bats fell in heaps, struck down by her arrows, her mace, and her sword. The skies cleared, and light returned.

Seeing his army destroyed, Jatukasura himself charged into battle. A fearsome duel began—his brute strength against her divine power. He struck with fury, but Chandraghanta met every blow, her weapons flashing like lightning. At last, she raised her trident and, with one mighty strike, pierced the demon's chest. Jatukasura fell, his roar fading into silence. The heavens rejoiced, the earth breathed again, and the gods showered flowers upon the goddess. With Jatukasura defeated and his bats destroyed, peace returned to the world.

## **Form**

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Chandraghanta has ten hands where two hands hold a Trishula(trident), Gada(mace), bow-arrow, khadak(sword), Kamala(lotus flower), Ghanta(bell) and kamandalu (waterpot), while one of her hands remains in blessing posture or abhayamudra(Fear dispelling). She rides on a lion as her vehicle, which represents bravery and courage, she wears a half moon depicting a Bell on her forehead and has a third eye in the middle of her forehead. Her complexion is golden. Shiva sees Chandraghanta's form as a great example of beauty, charm and grace.

Chandraghanta rides a lion as her vehicle, however in accordance with many of the scriptures there is the mention of "Vrikahvahini", "Vrikahrudha" which refer to the lion (Vrikah) as being ridden (Rudha) or them being seated on as (Asana) by the goddesses. This form of Chandraghanta is a more warrior ready and apparently aggressive form that goddess Durga takes, however despite being adorned with the various weapons, she is also equally caring, benevolent and represents motherly qualities to her devotees. While the primary cause of this form was the destruction demons, her rather fierce depiction brings with it the encouragement that praying to her can grant one fearlessness. She is otherwise the very embodiment of serenity.

Chandraghanta is depicted as a compassionate mother to her devotees but ready to destroy the wicked. During the battle between her and the demons, the thunderous sound produced by her bell is known to have paralyzed and stunned the demons. Her abode is in Manipura chakra.



Idol of Chandraghanta on tableaux during the Mangalore Dasara procession. 

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## References

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