

THE ATTENDANT DEVIS OF JINAS

(Inscribed to the sacred memory of Late Tumuluri Anjaneyulu)

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Samadhigatanugibhyo devavrndadgariyo nayanarava radebhyah Sarvadastu tebhyah-Caturvimsika.

Among the stotras¹ of Jaina literature, Caturvimsika,² by Sobhanamuni,³ marks a significant stage of merit and distinction. Caturvimsika seems to be a type of Stotra⁴ composition, wherein praise and prayer for all the twenty four jinas of the religion is incorporated. This type has a set standard and Sobhanamuni attained a distinction for such a composition. Normally jinas are extolled together with their attendant deities. Such type of stotras occupy an enviable place in the curriculum of worship⁵ by Jains.

Sobhanamuni seems to have derived inspiration from the magnanimity and greatness attained by the respective jinas and he became poetic in order to re-emphasize their greatness together with the advantages that Jainism promises to its followers. At 10th century his work should have inspired, several and turn to the worship of the Jinas Jainism, underwent several stages from time to time. Hereunder the mythological aspect of the Stotra is described.

Jainism takes a different phase of deities who are familiar even in Hinduism.⁶ Many times this Jainism projects a view that Devis and other Galaxy of devas are not superior before Jinas. Jinas are the Supreme personalities who have gained control over the objects of the universe and the various regions of the worlds.

Jainism underwent a great gap and chances to lapse itself in its importance and prominence in the midst of other competitive religions. At right period, Jinas have influenced the people and attracted their attention by their sweet pronounciation of valuable doctrine regarding this religion.

Jinas, by virtue of their austerities and attainments, have transcended all limitations and they enjoyed a stete just similar to Parabrahma of Hinduism; Jainism expects such jinas to be supported and that they would take care of the ardent devotees, who approach them with folded hands and with a surrendered attitude. Before jinas nobody is anything.

Jinas are known for their unmatched qualities and virtues which are ordinarily impossible for the normal folk. A jina is known for self-control. Through that discipline he would have a command over his senses and other attributes of human body. Since through experience and deep meditation, they learnt that, unless one raises above these considerations, a kind of happiness of immortal standard would be something impossible. Most of the jinas are Ksatriyas and kings who gave up their wealth and took to renunciation for spiritual attainment.

Jinas are to be guarded. So Jainism believes in the tradition that each of the 24 jinas enjoy the attendance and care by Devis. Their blessings are invoked. There are only two Jinas who are attended by Yakshas. The detailed mythology in respect of these Devis and Yakshas could be vast. But hereunder, it is proposed to present a view of Sobhanamuni together with certain details of the respective Devis and Yakshas in order to mark the ruling characteristics of devis of Jain mythology.

In a length of 24 slokas, Sobhanamuni,⁷ of tenth century A. D. has extolled the Devis as a part of concluding verse, of each of the Jinas, in his stotra work viz. Caturvimsika. The only extant available work of Sobhanamuni is caturvimsika and eulogy running into ninety six verses wherein the twenty four tirthankaras are praised and their blessings are invoked. Sobhanamuni is regarded as mahakavi and as an author of several other works also. But unfortunately none of other are available. The special contribution of Sobhanamuni lies in exclusively characterizing the female deities attendant on these Jinas.

An exclusive discussion over these deities as presented by this muni, is presented below and this would help to discriminate the mythology of these deities as presented by the others. Normally "Bhakti" becomes the determining factor with respect to Devi and visualization of the same. Moreover, a strong belief too reigns over their anthropomorphic features and their abstract powers over mankind. Further, through these descriptions, the superiority of jinas in general become established. The very fact that Devi's blessings become expedient to the jinas and the jainas, indicates the importance of these deities. Moreover, there is also a method to invoke the blessings of all the jinas collectively, a special practice introduced by Sobhana Muni. The stuti by Sobhana Muni incidentally attracted the scholarship of Dhanapala who wrote 'Curika' (Notes) for the same. As a result Sobhanamuni becomes better understood by people at large. Also the intrinsic intentions of this muni too become evident. It is so because this muni has paraded all his poetic wealth and rich imaginations and also his good command over the Sanskrit language and its stylistic turns. His style marks a note of distinction and that contributes to the value of Jaina works in Sanskrit of that century.⁸

From his stotra, one can notice the deep erudition he had irrespective of the religion and philosophy. In a length of ninety six Slokas, symmetrically distributed, this muni is successful in providing the essence and the message of Jainism and its influence over people. He seems to be a staunch advocate of Jainism of those times. Hereunder let us note certain details in brief about the Devis in particular and jinas in general.

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The twenty four tirthankaras and the connected female Deities are as follows :

Jinas	Devis
1. Rishabha	Sruta Devi
2. Ajita	Manasi Devi
3. Sambhava	Sri Vajrasrunkhala
4. Abhinandana	Rohini
5. Sumati	Kali
6. Padmaprabha	Gandhari
7. Suparsva	Mahamanasi
8. Candraprabha	Vajrakshi
9. Suvidhi	Jvalanayudha
10. Sitala	Manavi

11. Sreyamsa	Mahakali
12. Vasupujya	Sri Santi
13. Vimala	9 Rohini
14. Ananta	Acyuta Devi
15. Dharmanatha	Prajanaptir
16. Santinath	Brahmasanti (Yaksha)
17. Kunthu	Purushadatta Devi
18. Ara	Chakradhara Devi
19. Mallinatha	Kapardi (Yaksha)
20. Suvrata	Gauri
21. Nami	Kali
22. Nemi	Amba
23. Parsva	Yata devi
24. Vardhamana	Ambica

The list above points out Rohini Devi and Kali Devi are common to two of jinas each. But the poet's description in the stotra marks a special distinction and that would be noted elsewhere. The iconographical and other details of these respective deities may be noted below in brief.

1. Sruta Devi :

Sruta Devi is believed to be the personification of the doctrine of jinas themselves and as a part of managalasamsana, her blessings are primarily sought at several occasions. This further clarifies, the respect unto 'Jaina Sarasvati' that the religion held all along.

This Devi is supposed to be connected with Rsabha, the erstwhile jina of this religion. His life was at distant past.

Sruta Devi is requested to extend protection from all evils. She is pure and lustrous with white complexion and her hair too quite fragrant. Such a devi is requested to protect all devotees. The poet is impersonifying himself and on behalf of devotees, he is making prayer to the goddess for over all protection. Moreover, she seems to be the very life of Jainism personified.

2. Manasi Devi :

She rides a swan. She bears a thunderbolt in her arms. That thunderbolt is highly lustrous and powerful. She is never defeated even by those enemies exalted for their pride. She extends happiness to devotees. She is

connected with Ajitajina who has a great lustre and who drove away all sins belonging to his devotees.

3. Vajrashrunkhala Devi :

She is known for her beautiful golden complexion of her body. She is highly worshipped by all. She seats herself on a lotus. With subdued pride, all devotee salute her. She causes good to those free from sin. This Devi attends upon Sambhavajina who is famous for victory over enemies both internal and external and who grants happiness to devotees.

4. Rohini Devi :

She bears a bow in her hands. Also she holds arrows and conch. She has driven away many enemies of her devotees. She is white in her complexion. This diety is connected with Abhinandanjina who is capable of destroying all unauspicious luck belonging to devotees. The very sight of this jina was a matter of joy to celestial beings too.

5. Kali Devi :

She wields a mace, she is highly bright. She is as dark as the cloud. She is a terror to her opponents and those who neglect her worship. Kali is attendant upon Sumatijina who blesses people known for devotion and poised mind. Correspondingly this jina is known for anger against non-givers and non-worshippers.

6. Gandhari Devi :

She wields a pestle, a deeply strong one, in her hands. She is dark blue in her complexion. She has her sway of power over the regions viz. earth and neither world. This goddess is pertained to Padma prabhijina who extends bliss (pramoda) to his worshippers.

7. Mahamanasi Devi :

It is interesting to note that this Muni leaves choice to the deity herself when he says "oh, Goddess, let you protect those whomever you liked". She is envying sun in the lustre of her body. She bears sword in her hand. She throws all her enemies into the mouth of lion. This devi is connected with Suparsvajina who had exercised regorous discipline and controlled senses and in view of his magnanimity, all the beings revere him with folded hands.

8. Vajrankusi Devi :

She is requested to put forth every effort in safeguarding the interests of all animals. She holds Kulisa (Vajra) in her hands. (Kulisabhrt). Probably in view of the ayudha, she is designated as Vajrankusi Devi. She caused amassment of wealth to devotees. She by herself, is as lustrous in body as gold. She seats over a rutty and best elephant as her vehicle (Vahana). She connected with Chandraprabhajina who was revered by host of intellectuals who knew not self-pride.

9. Jvalanayudha Devi :

She is requested to extend happiness and blessings to deities. The poet becomes conscience of her slimness, a mark of beauty, in her body. He describes her as having beautiful slim waist. She is white in her complexion.

She bears dark and thick plait of hair. She having face as bright as that of moon. She rides a kind of devine vehicle which has seat, a broad one, for comfortable sitting. This diety is connected with Suvidhijina whose feet is respected by all, who would grant prosperity to all his devotees.

10. Manavi Devi :

She is bright and lustrous. She is in association with divine and lustrous beings viz. gods. She wields a best weapon (name not specified). She shares with fruits and sacred leaves for worship. She is seated on a lotus. She is connected with Sitalatirtha, a jina known for his association with spiritual beings.

11. Mahakali Devi :

She bears Vajra, fruit, japamala (rosary) and Ghanta, a kind of weapon. She has enlightened several ascetics with the grace of knowledge. she is syamavarna (dark-blue) unlike 'Kala Vana of earlier deity. She is pure. She controls the unhappiness like worry, dirt, sin, oldage etc. of earthly beings. she gives rise to the king with her lotus hands. She is connected with Sreyamsajina who has his fame due to sense control and other attainments.

12. Shanti Devi :

She bears in her hand the rosary (akshamala) and a Kundika as well as white lotus. She bestows peace of mind/prosperity upon devotees. She drives away all evil belonging to his devotees viz. Rakshas and Kshudra energies, grahas and other enemy kings etc. She has matted hair. This deity is connected with Vasupujya jina who has a special distinction upon jinas and who has reached successfully the farthest point viz., emancipation in the road of spiritual practices.

13. Rohini Devi :

This deity is requested to bestow fulfilment and auspiciousness in the devotees. A peculiar epithet to her beings, acapala and abhimana viz., free from fear in the mind. this deity's description by the poet deserves a special attention in a sense that human weakness and other relevant facts are shown and denial for she same is pointed out in the verse in favour of this devi.

Rohini devi wards off sins and other evil. Only with reference to this deity the poet viz., Sobhana muni turns selfish and makes a mention that in him the deity should keep prosperity. She is exclusively described as one bestowing amatv over a devotee. She is connected with Vimalajina who bestows prosperity and luck over devotees.

14. Acyuta Devi :

She is perfect. She bestows happiness on people. She has goldenlike complexion. She holds a bow, arrow and sword. She rides a horse. She is connected with Anantajina whose consecration is referred in the poem. He is requested to bestow on devotees prosperity and luck.

15. Prajnapti Devi :

She is prayed such that she volunteered to bestow profits to devotees (aparthita labhan dadyat). She is seated on peacock (kekistha). She wields Sakti, a kind of weapon. She is connected with Dharmanathajina who is pure and who grants prosperity to devotees and who is known for compassion and self control.

16. Brahmashanti :

He is Yaksha, a semimythical being. He bestows happiness upon people. He holds a staff (Danda) umbrella and a Kamandala in his hands. He is respected by several munis. He is connected with Santinathajina who is known as a distinguished one among jinas.

17. Purusadatta Devi :

She is described to be as beautiful and lustrous as the lightening (Vidyut). A special request is made that her blessings must be effectful at right sessions. (tava prasadah sadasi phalakara bhavantu). Her laughter is graceful (abhimahase). But it is fierceful to enemies. She holds a sword and khetaka weapons. She is connected with Kunthanathajina who removes yet ignorance from munis known for their rigid sensecontrol.

18. Cakradhara Devi :

She is seated on the back of an eagle (garuda). The eagle is known for variegated colors (Vinatatmaja prstham adhista). Her complexion of the body was as bright as fire. She would bestow happiness muda. She has heroic attainments. She has killed enemies on earth belonging to devotees as well in other regions. The class of enemies, she quelled belong to such heroes known for pride and terror. The poet/muni seems to be a bit partial to this deity as he spends more attention on highlighting this deity. Cakradharadevi is described as connected with Arjina who had renounced the emperorship and took to the path of spiritual awareness and attainment.

19. Kapardi :

He is a Yaksha, attendant upon Mallinathajina. He is the second who attends upon another Jina. He is requested to take seat in the mind of devotees (here the muni applies to refer if to himself only). It implies the devotee who prays the deity with that verse. He rides the elephant viz. Airavata. He resides in a tree devoid of serpents. He is lustrous and hence the quarters too turn bright due to him.

20. Gauri Devi :

She rides an animal by name godhiika (toad). Her face is golden in hue. She has tilak on her forehead, She has lotuses in her hands. She has beautiful tresses of hair. She is described with reference to Munisuvrath jina who is capable of protecting devotees from the mire of samsara. She destroys those who destroy good. She is the unique Devi to whom 'tilak' is mentioned by the poet.

21. Kali Devi :

She quells down the armies of enemies. he bears mace (Jada) and rosary in her hands. She highly unmatched in her beauty. She has her pure lotus feet that is respected. She dark in complexion like that of the dark cloud. She has friends with Lakshmi, the daughter of ocean. This devi is connected with Namijina known for destroying the sins of devotees.

22. Amba Devi :

She bestows wealth bhuti in devotees. She bears a mango creeper in her hand. With her roar she frighten enemies. She has lustre that of gold. She rides a lion. She is fond of mango-groves. She is connected with Nemijina known for heroism in battles once, but attained spiritual heights for the good of his devotees.

23. Yata Devi :

She is highly victorious in literary sessions. She has her rich dark hair highly beaming with brilliance. She is respected by celestial ladies even. She protects devotees from fear. She is the consort of Nagapati. She has bodily lustre like that of lotuses, she is free from pride but graceful to devotees. She is described while Parsvajina is eulogized by Sobhanamuni. This jina is capable of destowing happiness and protection upon devotees.

24. Ambika Devi :

Sobhana mini seems to be biased towards this devi as well Mahaveera on whom this deity shown her special attendance.

Ambika's lotus feet is revered by several women belonging to celestial regions. Merely, with her roar, this deity drove away in fear all the enemies and became victorious. She is brilliant. She bestows protection. She is addressed as lioness, indicating her lion-like activity. She is recognized as best in granting emancipation from his world. She is herself seated on lion, the best enemy of best lions. She is connected with Vardhamana Mahavira who is capable of granting happiness of Nirvana to the sincere devotees.

III (3)

The foregoing description of these female deities and two Yakshas reveal the characteristics of the respective deities in nutshell. It is interesting to note that only two jinas are having Yakshas, male beings as their respective attendants. A glance at the deities further shows out that each deity has a brilliant stature and powers enough to protect the respective devotees of jinas besides safeguarding the interests of the respective jinas.

Sobhanamuni with his effectful poetic composition has enlightened even non-jinas by describing the jinas, jinatai and jainism and the attendant deities in a very crisp manner. The scheme is appreciable. Due to his such solitary work which acclaimed unique position in many aspects, Sobhanamuni remains immortal in the minds of the followers of this religion. Although the names of these deities are familiar in Hinduism, there are several characteristic differences which would be described at another occasion. It is not, however, to be disputed in respect of comparisons of levels. After all belief is the foundation of religion and religion is the chief strength of unity and solace among people. No religion proclaims in an unrighteous way. The goal of all religions is to elevate mankind into better regions of behavior and happiness. Nirvana is ultimate. Mahavirajina¹⁰ blesses devotees the same in case one is assiduous towards that.

"Sa Jinottam agamah Sampadam disatu"

(Let that speech of great jinas direct us into prosperity)