

Synopsis

Jain Goddesses and their worship in Karnataka

Jainism which had its genesis as a heterodox religion is considered to be conservative in character and its tenets lay total emphasis on renunciation of the material world and liberation of the soul where only the male being would be entitled to this privilege. Thus all the worship and rituals are directed towards the Thirthankaras. However over centuries, several Yakshas and Yakshis have come into being as attendants of these Thirthankaras and with the Yakshis gaining credence as Mother Goddesses, there are temples in Karnataka dedicated to the Jain Female Principle that even possess Tantric overtones .

The paper “Jain Goddesses and their worship in Karnataka ” endeavors to examine the causes that led to the creation of these Yakshis, their assimilation into the Jain fold , the powers that have been conferred on them and the ritualistic worship conducted to propitiate them. As a case study, a temple dedicated to Goddess Padmavathi at Humcha near Shimoga will be discussed.

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