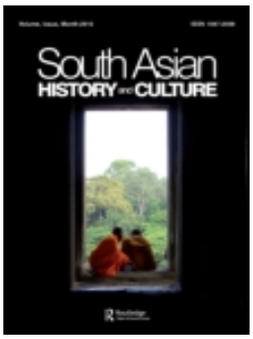

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Chastity and desire: representing women in Jainism

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This article explores the Jain construction of womanhood. It analyses how this construction is on the one hand different from Brahminical models, and how on the other it reiterates some of the more common paradigms of Brahmanism. While Brahminical texts have emphasized women's religiosity in their roles as householders, Jainism is distinguished by its recognition of women as independent spiritual agents with the capacity for renunciation and salvation. Not only do the earliest Jain monastic codebooks acknowledge the presence of women renouncers, popular tales about Jain women capable of extreme chastity and asceticism also establish them as the icons of Jain religiosity. However, the Jain imagery in this respect is not uniform, and there exist multiple discursive registers that at once enable and disempower women as autonomous religious beings. Existing alongside the positive portrayals of women's spirituality are deeply misogynist renderings of women as snares and temptresses. How then is the study of women in Jainism significant to our understanding of religion and womanhood in the South Asian context?

Keywords: Jainism; nuns; renunciation; sexuality; desire

Women's religious lives in South Asia have most often been examined through the lens of domesticity. This is hardly surprising as the most appropriate and codified religious roles for women – as enunciated in the Hindu texts of *Dharmashastra*s and *Smriti*s – lie in the domain of the household. The primary moral and religious duty of a married woman is *pativratadharma*: those actions that are directed towards the welfare of her husband and all that is related to him – his home, kin group and the performance of his duties towards his ancestors and deities. Indeed, it is she who, by begetting him sons, enables him to pay off his debts to ancestors and attain liberation. The two primary vehicles towards the fulfilment of this duty, *dharma*, are the numerous votive rites or *vrata*s that women observe, and sati, the ritual ending of life on the dead husband's pyre – the essence and epitome of a woman's *pativratadharma*. The *Dharmashastras* and *Smriti*s lay down that it is in performing her wifely and motherly duties that a woman fulfils her religious duties, which in any case remain submerged or conjoined with that of her husband's. In the classical Upanishadic framework, renunciation implies the repudiation of the sacrificial fire, the ritual of *sanyasa* indicating the interiorization (*samorohana*) of the sacrificial fires in the performer. Renunciation is principally a male pattern of life – and at that a twice born male mode of existence. Women having already been declared unfit (*anadhikarin*) to perform the sacrifice

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independently by the normative codebooks are thus rendered ineligible for the performance of the *sanyasa* ceremony, and concomitantly *sanyasa* itself.[1]

While the compilers of religious texts do not discount the possibility of liberation for women, which might accrue from her observing *vrata*s, they do prescribe *saubhagya* or marital felicity as the ultimate good for her.[2] Renunciation of traditional wifely roles would imply the withdrawal of the woman's reproductive capacities and the disruption of the normative order of *samsara*. Not surprisingly, there is a deep mistrust and antagonism in most South Asian religious traditions towards women who fail to fulfil their ideal prescribed role. This has traditionally resulted in the denial of woman's right to salvation. Women are not considered legitimate soteriological agents with texts and scriptures abounding in misogynist views. They are never the renouncers, but constitute par excellence that what is renounced. Women represent *maya*, the illusory and transient material world that draws the 'self' into unending cycles of bondage.[3] This denial of soteriological agency to women has its roots in a deep-seated contempt – a kind of 'gynophobia'[4] – for women's bodily processes such as menstruation, reproduction and their sexuality. As purported bearers of uncontrollable libido, not only are women incapacitated for the project of salvation, but are also perceived as snares and temptations for the male spiritual aspirants.[5] The attitude of the sadhus towards women, a study reported, ranged from abject hatred to glorification.[6]

Indeed all those women – from the widow, to the ascetic, to the prostitute – who do not subscribe to these given role models are condemned to a process of 'othering'. While the renunciant rejects marriage and family life, the widow steadfastly holds on to hers by avowing a loyalty to her dead husband; yet, in the absence of a male guardian, they are identified as the same. Similarly, a parallel is drawn between the renunciant, who rejects worldly ties of marriage in her love for the lord, and the prostitute, who becomes a bride every day. They are both *nitya sumangali* – eternal brides. This dissolving of difference between various categories of women who transcend social norms is a feature of both orthodox and heterodox faiths.[7]

This does not, however, mean that female renouncers have been completely absent or unknown in Indian history and culture. The challenge to orthodox Brahmanism's stand against women's spiritual pursuits came from heterodox traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism, which admitted of women's right and equality to seek salvation, even making institutional arrangements towards this. But even so, a trace of gynophobia was present even in these new religions. One may recall here Buddha's initial reluctance in ordaining women into monastic orders and the imposition of an extra eight rules for nuns that perpetually bound them in a position of subordination to the monks.[8]

This article examines the representations of women within Jainism in order to explore the extent to which they rupture or reinforce the ideals of womanhood purveyed by orthodox Brahmanism. We have noted above that renunciant discourses are often gendered in such a way as to disempower and exclude women from the project of salvation.

Jainism is especially relevant to the study of renunciation in India because the central defining ideals of this religion are the twin principles of non-attachment and non-violence. It comprises a single-minded pursuit of severe individual asceticism and avoidance of harm to even the tiniest of living organisms. What makes this particular religious tradition so central to an understanding of gender and asceticism is its almost unique insistence upon women as legitimate soteriological agents. The recognition of women's ability to seek salvation through asceticism is reflected in the fourfold division of society – the *Chaturvidhasangha* – envisaged in Jainism. A class of female ascetics and pious female lay followers – sadhvis and *shravika*s, respectively – is not only distinctly identified, but is

placed on an equal footing with the two male classes: sadhus (or munis) and *shravak*s, that is, male ascetics and pious male householders.

It must be stated at the outset that the gender question in Jainism is far from resolved. Indeed, women's capacity for salvation – and for undertaking severe austerities on which salvation is premised – has been at the centre of a fierce, and as yet irreconcilable, debate between its sectarian divisions, namely Digambars (the sky clad) and Shvetambars (the white clad). Though there exists an amazing doctrinal consensus between the two sects on major issues, Digambars and Shvetambars diverge on the question of *strinirvana* (female salvation). Nudity being central to the Digambar conception of correct mendicant path, and on account of the impossibility of 'sky clad' nuns, Digambars dismiss the likelihood of female salvation. On their part, Shvetambars do not attach any great significance to nudity and indeed hold that the nineteenth tirthankara was a woman by the name of Malli Devi (which the Digambars of course refute vehemently, arguing that the said tirthankara was Malli Nath, definitely a male). Even so, Digambars are not averse to allowing women into their orders, albeit as quasi-mendicants.

What remains undisputed also is the visible numerical predominance of female ascetics over male ascetics, both in contemporary and historical times. A census of the Jain mendicant population in late 1990s gave the following figures:

Total Jain mendicants: 11,518
Male mendicants: 2572
Female mendicants: 8946[9]

Jainism with its recognition of female soteriological agency, one would assume then, offers radically different normative models of womanhood – models that would stress women's independent spiritual quests and capacities. This article surveys early monastic codebooks, interrogates popular stories and other Jain literature in an attempt to unpack the related construction of gender and sexuality, which heavily influenced ideas of women's capability for renunciation.

Cult of the female goddesses

Theoretically, the Jinas or tirthankaras are beyond the pale of human world and have developed a decided disinterest in the workings of *samsara*. Their followers, therefore, cannot call upon them for intervention and assistance in their worldly affairs.[10] This task falls upon a plethora of mother goddesses. Central to lay Jain devotional practices, and rampantly depicted in Jain iconography, Jain goddesses are categorized into three kinds: those residing in the upper realm (*urdhvaloka*), middle realm (*madhyaloka*) and the lower realm (*adholoka*). In the upper realm are goddesses such as Sarasvati and Lakshmi who have clear Vedic affinities. In *madhyaloka* are the undifferentiated Tantrik *vidyadevi*s. Described in early texts as occult powers gained through *sadhna*, by *c.* 5th–7th AD, *vidya*s (or *vidyadevi*s) come to be established as goddesses. Eventually, the number of *vidydevi*s came to be fixed as 16 in both Shvetambar and Digambar traditions. The most important of all goddesses, *yakshi*s are to be found in the lower realm, the *adholoka*. *Yakshi*s, also called *shasandevata*s, are the attendant deities of various tirthankaras or the sites associated with them or other liberated beings such as Bahubali in Shravanabelagola in Karnataka. While some *yakshi*s remained minor figures in Jain devotional practices, at least three goddesses, Padmavati, Charkesvari and Ambika, command independent cults. Padmavati's temple at the Lal Digambar temple complex in Old Delhi is the largest devotee puller.

These goddesses are invoked to intercede in human affairs, and, indeed, texts and inscriptions suggest that they were called upon to aid a king's victory in battle, a monk's success in theological debate and to settle disputes.[11]

Narratives about chaste Jain woman

Jainism has a thriving tradition of sati narratives. These are popular stories about chaste women and the miraculous powers their chastity grants them. Fohr argues that, in Hinduism, the image of woman first and foremost as a temptress (rather than a soteriological agent) impeded the attraction of Hindu women to a life of mendicancy.[12] On the other hand, she claims, the representation of women as satis or chaste women, capable of a life of renunciation, facilitated the entry of Jain women into its monastic orders. Fohr also cites the popular circulation of sati narratives as evidence of the Jain conception of the feminine as essentially chaste. Jain tradition recognizes 16 mahasatis (great satis),[13] whose lives and deeds are recorded in the canonical texts, later commentaries and popular biographical tales. These biographical literatures document their transition from pious laywomen to nuns. The most popular sati narratives are the stories of sati Rajimati and Chandanabala (the first head of the nuns' order during Mahavira's time). Many nuns and laywomen repeated these stories to me by way of elaborating the ideals of feminine chastity among the Jains. These are also the subjects of popular drama performances during Jain festivals or *chaturmas*.

The life of Chandanbala

Without doubt, the most feted of all Jain female renouncer figures is Chandanbala, the first woman to take ordination under Mahavira. She is seen by nuns and laity alike as a model of renunciation; her extraordinary life worthy of popular propagation. Hers is a story that is widely known among ordinary Jains, and her trials and tribulations are the stuff of popular drama performances and Jain storybooks.

Chandanbala was born in the royal family of Champa. Her mother, Queen Dharani, was a pious Jain laywoman and devoted to scholarship and religion and bequeathed the same values to her daughter. Chandanbala convinced her parents to allow her to devote her life to the high ideals and remain unmarried. So passed their life peacefully till one day, Champa was attacked and vanquished by the army of Kausambi. The Princess was sold off as a slave but saved by Dhanavah, a virtuous trader. Dhanavah's fatherly affection for Chandanbala was misunderstood by his wife, who exploiting Dhanavah's absence one day, cut her beautiful, long hair, chained her legs and locked her in an underground cell for three days without food and water. On his return, Dhanavah was horrified to learn of his adopted daughter's condition. On finding only boiled lentils, kept for feeding animals, in the house, he plied Chandanbala with it. Meanwhile, he sent for an ironsmith to break the cuffs. Fortuitously, Lord Mahavira was passing that way, having taken a particularly harsh vow for breaking his fast. He had undertaken to accept only boiled lentils from the hands of one who was once a royal, but now a slave; whose hair was shorn and feet chained; and who had fasted for three days. For five months and 25 days, he had roamed finding no suitable candidate at whose hands he could accept food. As he came upon Chandanbala, her chains broke and her hair re-grew, as if by their own volition. Chandanbala, finally, broke Mahavira's fast by offering him food. His sermons moved her to renounce *samsara* and take ordination under him. Eventually, she headed the sadhvi *sangha* of 36,000 sadhvis.

Though I had heard the story many times, I realized the full force of its moral and emotional content while watching Bharati sri, a Sthanakvasi sadhvi, direct children in a play based on Chandanbala's life. Bharati sri's hands would go up to her ears in horror when the little girl playing Chandanbala was enacting the scenes in which she is being sold to a prostitute or when she is being tortured by the trader's wife. 'How our satis suffered to preserve their vows! Oh, how they had to endure! They were no ordinary women', she would tell me repeatedly.

The story of Rajimati

Rajimati, the wife of the tirthankara Neminath, was passing through a dense forest on way to the Girnar Mountain when it began to rain. She took refuge in a cave not knowing that her brother-in-law, monk Rathanemi, was meditating there. She took off her clothes to dry. Seeing her thus in a naked state, he was sexually aroused and propositioned her. Upon realizing his presence and intentions, she tried to dissuade him by reminding him that his brother had forsaken her. 'I am akin to vomit, how can you ingest something that has been vomited. You have reached an exalted state, please exercise control', she urged him. Rajimati's admonishment brought Rathanemi to his senses. Both practised severe austerities and eventually attained liberation.

Thus it is the chaste and virtuous Rajimati who prevents the moral downfall and spiritual degradation of a monk. It is she who through her active intervention becomes, really, the agent of her own and Rathanemi's enlightenment and *moksha*. Indeed, this is how most Jains also interpret and present it in various dramatized versions.

However, at least in one instance, I found a radically different interpretation of the sati Rajimati narrative. Sadhvi Prafullprabha of the Tapa Gacch deployed this story to substantiate her claim of women's innate and out-of-control sexuality and fickle nature. This came up during a discussion on patriarchal references to women found in some texts. Prafullprabha defended such allusions to women insisting that women being more fickle minded and coquettish required greater discipline and control. Only occasionally were women like Rajimati able to exercise control over their sexual urges, she maintained. When I argued that Rajimati's story indicated the inability of men, *rather than women*, to control their sexual desires, Prafullprabha's response was to ask me in turn: 'but who was responsible for provoking his sexual desires?'

It was the sight of Rajimati's naked body that provoked Rathanemi to be aroused. Rajimati became the *nimitta* (the express cause) of Rathanemi's arousal, as indeed are all women potentially *nimitta* for men's spiritual downfall. Thus we see that even sati narratives glorifying the virtuous woman have the possibility of being harnessed in service of creating and constructing an alternative and patently negative view about women.

Mothers and virtuous wives

Virtuous as the Jain satis are clearly accepted by Jains to be, 'their lives are not chosen . . . as models for the lives of the laywomen in their families'.[14] This is because the Jain sati narratives usually conclude with these glorified women becoming nuns; the tension between the demands of the family and the draw of the faith is resolved in favour of the woman renouncing the obligations of kin and family. This renders sati narratives as inappropriate models of emulation for laywomen, who must above all uphold the values and honour of the family, in preference over an independent spiritual pursuit. This tension is resolved in a very different way in the numerous stories that appear in Jain magazines,

journals and festschrifts honouring senior nuns. These are stories occasionally written by nuns, laywomen or even men. Several of these deal with women who are pious Jains, whose piety and devotion is tested by opposition from affinal kin. The female protagonist engages in prolonged fasting, worshipping and even undertakes pilgrimages. This is resisted by the affines because there is a clear competition between her devotion to religious practices and her duties towards her husband and his family. Although these stories are also narratives of glorification they do not conclude with the woman turning a renouncer; rather the resolution is mediated through the transformation of the family. The steadfastness of her devotion, what Kelting calls 'self- focused religiosity', forces the affinal family to realize her virtues and participate in her piety. In resolving the conflict in a manner that preserves the priority of household and family without abandoning the ideal of a pious Jain woman, these stories approximate the Hindu tradition of *satimata*[15] rather than the Jain sati narratives.

The most exalted model of womanly and wifely conduct is Mayna Sundari. Mayna was a princess deeply committed to Jain values. Devoted to the Jain goddess Charkeshvari, she performed severe austerities and undertook all rituals prescribed for pious Jains. This irked the King, her father. In order to teach her a lesson, he married her off to a leper, Shripal, challenging her to cure her husband's leprosy through recourse to her austerities and devotion. Unperturbed, she instructed her husband in the teachings of Jain faith, converting him into a devout Jain. As a result of their joint devotion to the goddess Charkeshvari and rigorous fasts, her husband was miraculously cured and they became prosperous. Mayna Sundari and her husband have attained the status of exemplary Jain married couple: her virtuosity is commemorated in the *navpada oli* (nine-day) fasts undertaken by women for the well-being and felicity of their husband and family. She is the ideal Jain *pativrata*, a virtuous wife and a Jain evangelist.

In women's telling of the story, Mayna Sundari is placed at the centre, while her husband Shripal is cast as a supporting character. This is how several nuns narrated the story to me. In contrast, other versions committed to writing push Mayna Sundari to the margins, rendering it as the story of King Shripal – who was cured of leprosy by his wife's devoutness.[16] Furthermore, in this story, she is even denied any religious agency: the *ayambila* fasts she undertakes are at the instructions of an acharya; even the *sidhachakra*[17] she worships has been devised by the acharya. The edge of her 'self-focused religiosity' has been blunted and domesticated completely.

Gold, in her study of devotional Rajasthani songs and stories, has noted a striking difference in the way men and women narrate stories about independent women. Jungli Rani, who gains divine favours through her devotion, is cast as a dangerous and evil character in the popular renderings. When women recount this tale on the day of sun worship, she is depicted as a much-misunderstood woman, who is finally accepted on her terms. In other tellings, however, a grimmer fate awaits her: she is turned variously into a gold statue or even killed.[18] Elsewhere, Ramanujan has argued that women often tell their own lived realities through these stories. Storytelling thus becomes an act invested with their agency.[19]

It is interesting to note that no sadhvi I met cited the nineteenth tirthankara Malli Devi as a role model for Jain women, lesser so for Jain female mendicants. While the Digambar nuns of course outrightly denied the possibility of a female tirthankara, even the Shvetambar sadhvis deemed her presence in the tirthankara pantheon as 'an exception and a wonderment' (*ashcharya*[20]), 'a rare occurrence', likely to be never repeated again. The most alluded to role models were the mothers of the tirthankaras, who raised their sons to be world renouncers. Sadhvi after sadhvi deployed the mothers of tirthankaras, especially

Maru Devi[21] and Trishala,[22] to counter the negative depictions of women in Jain texts. These women had proved, in the view of many sadhvis, that women were the real sources of greatness in this world. Only, that their greatness may derive not necessarily in seeking salvation for their own selves, but in acting as spiritual guides for their sons. The feminine quality of nurture was the most easily acceptable ideal of a good Jain woman.

There were thus obvious limits to the independent course that women may be allowed to chart: the obligations of kin and family demand that female spiritual virtuosos are not privileged as the principal models for Jain womanhood. Examples of chaste and virtuous wives who preserve the agnatic code of honour are just as replete. These women embody a religiosity that does not conflict with familial and domestic duties. Furthermore, the stereotype of woman as temptress is not altogether missing, as is evident, from the numerous warnings issued to monks. The debate on *strimoksha* also serves to define women as sites of shame, desire and violence, rendering them antithetical to the project of renunciation.

Ascetic rules

There are exhaustive rules guiding the ascetics about their conduct in a variety of situations: from the everyday mundane part of an ascetic's existence – such as begging for clothes and food to the extraordinary, such as ideal mendicant conduct when confronted by ruffians while crossing a river by boat (the mendicant is expected to leap off the boat while remaining unruffled). These rules are to be found in its corpus of monastic codebooks such as *Acharanga Sutra*, *Uttaradhyayana* and *Sutrakritanga*. Most of the injunctions, by beginning with 'a monk or a nun should' or 'a monk or a nun should not' recognize the existence and centrality of nuns in the monastic order. In Book II of the *Acharanga Sutra*, the foremost book of mendicant conduct, we find numerous strictures that are aimed at segregating and protecting mendicants from the temptations that define a householder's existence. Being itinerant, monks and nuns had to perforce seek residence in a *shravak*'s home to spend the night. There were only certain kinds of lodgings that mendicants were allowed, others such as the one described below were to be avoided by the conscientious mendicant:

> A *monk or a nun* [emphasis added] should not use for religious postures . . . a lodging where the householder or his wife . . . rub or anoint each other's body with oil or ghee or butter or butter or grease; for it is not fit . . ..' Similarly, '*a monk or a nun* [emphasis added] should not use for religious postures . . . a lodging where the householder or his wife . . . rub or shampoo each other's body with perfumes, ground drugs, powder, *lodhra* . . . for it is not fit'.[23]

The spiritual equivalence of nuns and monks is recognized in these books of discipline by the manner in which both nuns and monks are equal recipients of disciplinary directives.

Re-looking at the ascetic codes

All mendicants, irrespective of their gender, are expected to remain scrupulously loyal to the *pancha mahavrata*s or the five great vows, which are undertaken at the time of *diksha*. These five vows are *ahimsa* (vow of absolute non-violence), *satya* (vow of absolute truthfulness), *asteya* (vow of absolute non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (vow of absolute celibacy) and *aparigraha* (vow of absolute non-attachment and non-possession).

Even though there is no explicit difference in the rules prescribed for nuns and monks – both nuns and monks are expected to follow the vows of non-violence, truth, non-stealing,

celibacy and non-possession – there are enough hints that, when it comes to warning the mendicants to adhere to the vow of absolute celibacy, the rules appear to be primarily addressing men. Examine for instance the vow of *brahmacharya*, which enjoins the ascetics hence:

> I renounce all sexual pleasures, either with gods or men or animals. I shall not give way to sensuality and . . . exempt myself.

It lays down five clauses to this great vow:

The first clause runs thus:

> A Nirgrantha does not continually discuss topics relating to *women*. The Kevalin says: If a Nirgrantha discusses such topics, he might fall from the law declared by the Kevalin, because of the destruction or disturbance of his peace . . .

According to the second clause:

> A Nirgrantha does not regard the lovely forms of *women*. The Kevalin says: If a Nirgrantha regards the lovely forms of women, he might fall . . .

According to the third clause:

> A Nirgrantha does not recall to his mind the pleasures and amusements he formerly had with women. The Kevalin says: If a Nirgrantha recalls to his mind the pleasures and amusements he formerly had with *women*, he might fall . . .

The fourth clause exhorts the following:

> A Nirgrantha does not eat and drink too much, nor does he drink liquors or eat highly seasoned dishes. The Kevalin says: If a Nirgrantha did eat and drink too much, or did drink liquors and eat highly seasoned dishes, he might fall . . .

The fifth is as follows:

> A Nirgrantha does not occupy a bed or couch affected by *women* [emphases added], animals or eunuchs. The Kevalin says: If a Nirgrantha did occupy a bed or couch affected by women, animals, or eunuchs, he might . . .[24]

Masculinizing renunciation

Elsewhere, *Acharanga Sutra* warns monks of the dangers – and the ever-possible fall into the cesspool of sin – that lurk in a householder's lodgings where women reside, as in the following lines:

> While the mendicant lives together with the householders, he might see the householder's earrings or girdle or jewels or pearls or gold or silver or bracelets . . . or necklaces (those consisting of three strings, or those reaching halfway down the body . . .) or decked or ornamented girl or maiden. Thus the mendicant might direct his mind to approval or dislike: 'Let her be thus'; or, 'Let her not be thus.' So he might say, so he might think.
>
> . . .
>
> [Again]: While a mendicant lives together with householders, the householder's wives, daughters, daughters-in-law, nurses, slave-girls or servant-girls might say: 'These reverend

> Sramanas . . . have ceased from sexual intercourse; it behooves them not to indulge in sexual intercourse: whatever woman indulges with them in sexual intercourse, will have a strong powerful, illustrious, glorious victorious son of heavenly beauty.' Hearing and perceiving such talk, one might induce the mendicant to indulge in sexual intercourse.
>
> Hence it has been said to the mendicant that he should not use for religious postures . . . a lodging used by the householder.[25]

The above passage throws open several questions. The most obvious being that, contrary to the earlier cited rules of conduct that address both the male and female mendicants by specifically evoking the terms, 'monks and nuns', this one is conspicuously directed to the more general 'mendicant'. However, it quickly fixes the gender of this generic mendicant by making references to the 'decked or ornamented girl or maiden', against whom the mendicant is strictly warned. Moreover, the desire of the women of the household to mate with the one who has 'ceased from sexual intercourse' tends to characterize asceticism in terms of semen retention, its glorification in terms of the power of his stored seed, which when released would spell not only the end of his mendicant vows but also produce a son of unparalleled beauty and vigour.

What it achieves, above all, is a reversion to the script made familiar to us in the practice of orthodox Hindu asceticism, with its recognizable cast of the male ascetic and the female temptress. From the lady of the house to the lowliest slave-girl, each one stands as a potential cause for the downfall of the mendicant by causing him to break his vows, either in thoughts – by thinking of the bedecked maidens; or in deeds – by being induced into sexual intercourse. By bedecking herself with ornaments, a woman is not deliberately seeking the mendicant's attention; however, by contriving to beget a son by him, she comes to be invested with sexual agency. Whether or not she is plotting to seduce the monk, it is clear that women, especially the women of the household, are best avoided by monks to preserve their vows and to circumvent their descent into sinfulness.

Men as mendicants/women as temptresses

This theme gets an even more elaborate treatment in some other texts: the *Sutrakritanga* (the second *anga* or limb of the Jaina canon) and the *Uttaradhyayana* (the second *Mulasutra* text). Dealing with a variety of subjects, both works are guides for young initiates, instructing them in true Jain doctrine, the correct path to the highest good, the principal duties of a monk, but, above all, the dangers that punctuate a monk's spiritual life.

Lecture XXXII of *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* titled the 'Causes of Carelessness' recalls some of the sanctions we came across in *Acharanga Sutra*:

> A *Sramana* engaged in penance, should not allow himself to watch the shape, beauty, coquetry, laughter, prattle, gestures, and glances of women, nor retain a recollection of them in his mind.[26]

Soon enough, feminine influence comes to be identified as one of the prime causes of carelessness – and the principal source of danger – in a monk's spiritual career. Attachment to women, decrees *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, is the most difficult to surmount and those who have achieved this will find it simple to sever their affections to other ties and pleasures. Forbearance and indifference to womanhood is the mark of a true monk – 'those who possess the three *guptis* cannot be disturbed even by well-adorned goddesses'. Yet the wholesome way for a monk is still to live alone, especially sheltered from the female presence because 'it is not safe for mice to live near the dwelling of a cat . . .'.[27]

Thus the threat to the monk's chastity and ascetic vows derives not merely from his own lack of control and continued attachment to the pleasures a woman affords, but from the cat-like predatory female who presents an unrelenting threat to his spiritual pursuits.

The *Sutrakritanga Sutra* devotes an entire chapter to the 'Knowledge of Women'. Its principal intent is to familiarize and caution the monks about the ways of the women, their seductive tricks, their fickle nature and the terrible consequences that befall those who give in to this temptation. Part I is titled, 'How Women Tempt a Monk'. Here the monk is upgraded from the status of a mouse to that of a fearless single lion. The woman though remains the entrapper who ensnares the monk/lion with a piece of flesh.[28] The 'flesh' here is not simply allegorical, for it is her physical flesh that tempts the ascetic and misleads him from his true path. Subsequent passages regard the monk variously as an antelope, a man who drinks poisoned milk, a pot filled with lac, and the woman as hunter, poison, thorn and fire (which causes the pot of lac to melt).

A woman is defined simultaneously by stupidity and caprice: 'with clever pretences women make up to him, however foolish they be; they know how to contrive that some monks will become intimate with them'.[29] Pretending to be pious, women will, the monks are warned, attempt to lure them by beseeching them to accept a robe, an alms bowl, food or drink from them, or even by pleading the monks to teach them the law of asceticism, as if they wish to give up their current way of life.[30] However, a monk should never trust a woman because 'one man [women] have in their heart, another in their words, and another still in their actions'.[31]

Such views are also echoed by many contemporary sadhvis too. While narrating the story of a legendary monk, Sadhvi Prafullprabha, a Shvetambar nun, endorses the view that women are by nature fickle minded and bearers of unbridled sexuality.

> Sthulbhadra Muni lived with a prostitute for twelve years. But later, he was transformed and thought that he should convert the prostitute into a pious *shravika*. When he returned to her [with this aim], the prostitute thought that he had come back to her for pleasure. Upon seeing him in muni *vesh*, she exclaimed that he, who used to look like a prince earlier, resembled a beggar now. The Muni replied that he had renounced the world and become a Jain sadhu. The prostitute mocked at him and challenged him to observe his *chaturmas* in her pleasure palace. So the great Muni spent his rainy retreat in her house, which had erotic pictures painted on its walls. The prostitute danced before him and tried to ply him with rich foods. But he remained utterly unmoved. His was only one aim – that of converting the prostitute to a *shravika*, to bring her to the true path. And finally he succeeded. His absolute control and discipline convinced the prostitute.
>
> Sthulbhadra's guru had four disciples: one spent his *chaturmas* at the edge of a lion's den; another near a snake's pit; the third on the periphery of a well. But upon hearing them all, the Guru declared that Sthulbhadra's had been the most severe because he had won over the woman. So if one sees, all of these were very dangerous but Sthulbhadra had passed the most difficult test. Even great munis can fall from their greatness [because of women].[32]

The nun as a sexual agent

The complete absence of nuns in these strictures is quite conspicuous. Should we assume that the early Jain texts believed that nuns were capable of exercising self-restraint or were asexual beings not requiring the same degree of discipline that was being enjoined upon the monks? Or should we draw a different conclusion: that notwithstanding the ostensible equal attention to both nuns and monks in laying down the rules governing their conduct, Jain texts were still unable to fully abandon the norms of the surrounding culture, which characterized renunciation as exclusively male. Falk in her study of the Buddhist nun

orders attributes the decline of female orders in Buddhism to precisely this reason. She has argued that Buddhism was unable to shake off the patriarchal norms of Hinduism, even while offering a radically different ideology of women's spiritual entitlements. It appears that Jainism too, despite recognizing women as equal components of the Jain spiritual world, both as *shravika*s and sadhvis, could not wrench free from the tendency to portray renunciation as an essentially male pursuit. Thus we see many of its monastic codes almost unknowingly erase the presence of its female practitioners, with their role then reduced to being mere impediments in the path of this essentially male quest for salvation.

One direct consequence of characterizing the feminine as inherently sexual – inimical rather than amenable to the path of renunciation – was that even those women who were engaged in the pursuit of liberation were invested with a sexual agency. Their ability to renounce sex and remain steadfast to the vow of celibacy was rendered suspect. If, in the earlier texts, the nuns are effaced from discussions on celibacy, many post-canonical texts, such as *Brihatkalpasutra*, *Brihatkalpabhashya*, *Nishitha Churni* and *Avashyaka Niryukti*, developed specific rules for female mendicants in great detail. Writers have noted that while in its early phase Jainism, like other *shramanic* religions, defended an egalitarian outlook towards women, many of its later texts and commentaries developed a panoply of additionally stringent rules for female mendicants. These were geared towards maintaining a strict control over the nuns' conduct, especially their sexual conduct. *Brihatkalpasutra*, for instance, forbids a sadhvi from venturing out of the *upashraya* on her own, unaccompanied, for the purpose of *gochari* (alms), food or toilet. Further, it prescribes 11 kinds of clothes for the nun, and all of which must be worn while the nuns are travelling.[33] It indicates the constant fear of sexual lapse so far as the female ascetics were concerned.

These codes are, however, relatively mild when compared to the prescriptions of the *Brihatkalpabhashya*. This text prohibits the nuns from keeping in their possession or using all those fruits and vegetables, which had elongated or oblong shapes. Similarly, objects with handles and knobs were banned for nuns. These objects were taboo on account of their similarity in shape to the male organ. It was believed that the sight of these fruits and objects would stir sexual desires in nuns and that they could be deployed for gaining sexual pleasures.[34] Further, nuns were strictly warned that they should repudiate any pleasure arising from the accidental touch of an animal and refrain from masturbation under all circumstances. Indeed, strict penalties have been stipulated for any infraction.[35]

It was the opinion of the writers of these texts, that for many women, asceticism was a refuge from the problems of life and not driven by purely spiritual aspirations. These women could not therefore embrace a life of renunciation, nor follow the five *mahavrata*s it entailed in any genuine manner. They continued to hanker after worldly pleasures, including sexual pleasure, necessitating a strict regime of control.

There is a perceptible difference in the kind of strictures pertaining to celibacy that are issued to the male and female mendicants. The strictures to monks lie more in the domain of cautions and warnings – portents of the depths to which a monk may sink if he fails to solidly defend his vow of *brahmacharya*. His portrayal approximates that of a victim who needs to continuously guard his chastity from women.

A nun, however, needs to be protected both from potential molesters and rapists *as well as her own self*. There are no stories that gently mock her possible spiritual degradation; neither fables lampooning the chains of domesticity that might bind her. Instead we have a harsh indictment of the feminine itself.

Manly restraint and womanly sensuality: the female in Jain narrative literature

Jains are known as the principal storytellers of India. Their narrative literature straddles the genres of *katha*, *charitra*s, *prabhanda*s or universal histories. These have been the primary vehicles of disseminating the Jain values of asceticism, of defining the normative models of conduct and socially accepted behaviour. There is, expectedly, a great deal of overlap between these genres, as when a biography of an illustrious Jain mendicant is told as a tale, or incorporated into a story, in order to expound a Jain moral or to explicate the obligatory rituals to be performed by ascetics or lay people.

Several themes are outlined in the rulebooks of the Jain ascetics: virulent female sexuality, women's beguiling and fickle nature, the necessity of equanimity even in face of temptation, but, above all, the paramount concern with resolving the dilemma of sensuality and asceticism surfaces with amazing frequency in Jain narrative literature. Of particular interest to us may be a series of polemical stories that appear in Hemachandra's *The Lives of the Jain Elders*.[36] The bulk of the text comprises stories exchanged between Jambu[37] and his eight wives on the night of their wedding, held just a day prior to the embracing of ascetic vows by Jambu. These can be seen as truly emblematic of the way in which Jainism conceives of the conflict between chastity and sexual desire (which is the metaphor for all worldly pleasures).[38] Again, the impulse towards chastity is rendered male through the figure of Jambu while sexual desires are condensed into the figure of female via Jambu's eight wives who tell him stories that extol the virtues of enjoying the pleasures of the flesh and underline the urgency of doing so. Jambu's purpose in narrating these stories is to fob off his wives' overtures by foregrounding the importance of chastity and the terrible consequences that ensue from sexual gratification.

Jambu narrates the story of Vidyunmalin, who comes to earth to gain magical powers along with his brother, Megharatha.[39] The formula to gain these powers is to cohabit with a woman while preserving one's chastity. Both soon marry two untouchable girls: one one-eyed and the other buck-toothed. While Megharatha remains steadfast to his vows and becomes a master of magic, Vidyunmalin falls passionately in love with his deformed wife and makes her pregnant. His brother entreats him to leave the community of untouchables since they have now gained the magical powers and will be able to enjoy a 'free choice of beautiful goddesses'; Vidyunmalin confesses that he has deviated from the true path and as a result remains deprived of the magical powers. Despite his brother's appeals, Vidyunmalin begs off saying that he lacks 'the moral worth to abandon this pregnant, low-caste woman . . . I have caused myself to go astray through this lustfulness of mine'.[40] He promises to master the magical powers within a year. The story then recounts the next two years in the lives of the two brothers: while Meghartha, deploying his powers lives in a palatial house and enjoys all the good things of life, Vidyunmalin wallowing in the gutter of passion for his ugly wife becomes a slave to her wishes and that of her family and a nurse to their son.

'The Story of Vidyunmalin' appears to be a dramatization of the various rules of chaste conduct and the consequences of breaking them.[41] There is a difference though. Here, the woman lacks sexual agency (she is never depicted as ensnaring the man); and she is characterized in singularly repugnant terms (deformed, buck-toothed, low-caste), which makes the slavishness of the male even more inexplicable. It sets up a series of oppositions: Between the two brothers who are the denizens of a mountain place (dear-to-the-sky) and their wives who reside on earth; the brothers' exalted status as master magicians and the girls' low social status as untouchables; Megharatha's steadfastness in his vows and Vidyunmalin's desertion of the same; the celestial beauties at Megharatha's service and the ugly untouchable

wife; the heavenly pleasures enjoyed by Megharatha and the degradations suffered by Vidyunmalin. All these oppositions seek to accentuate the virtues of chastity and the dangers that accrue from blind passion. Thus Jambu tells his wives that he shall not emulate Vidyunmalin.

The wives' stories are celebrations of the pleasures of the flesh and caution Jambu against abandoning the delights their bodies offer to him in pursuit of a distant and unrealizable goal.[42] Most remarkable is the 'Story of Nupurapandita and the Jackal'.[43] The tale actually comprises of two separate sets of events, propelled by the unchaste actions of two women. It opens with the goldsmith's daughter-in-law, Durgila – 'foremost of cunning women, she was an ocean of beauty'[44] – bathing in the river. A young handsome man is passing by and the two immediately fall in love, but they go their separate ways without meeting that day. While both are pining for each other, the young man enlists the support of a Jain nun – '*who was like a family goddess for loose women*'[45] – as a messenger [emphasis added]. To cut the long story short, the lovers meet in the Ashoka grove behind Durgila's house, but are discovered by the father-in-law who removes her anklet as proof of her nocturnal rendezvous with another man.

Durgila though has noticed this and sets in motion a plan to outwit her father-in-law and to emerge from this with her badge of the chaste wife intact. She hurries her young lover away and returns to her husband's chamber, brings him to the same spot in the Ashoka grove, makes love to him and, when he has emerged from his post-coital slumber, complains to him that her father-in-law has removed her anklet while they were asleep. The son confronts and rebukes his father for this act. Durgila then vows to clear her name of this accusation by passing between the legs of the *yaksha*, who is believed to trap all guilty people between his testicles. As she is proceeding towards the *yaksha*, her lover – as arranged beforehand – emerges from the crowds and clings to her like a mad man. Durgila beseeches the *yaksha* that she be trapped between his testicles if she had known the touch of any man other than her husband and this mad man who touched her in the temple. While the *yaksha* is still contemplating the merit of her arguments, she quickly passes between her legs and is hailed as a chaste wife by all present. 'Because she had refuted the stain of dishonour which had come about through the removal of the anklet (*nupura*), people called her Nupurapandita ("Clever Nupura").'[46] The wives then narrate the story of an adulterous queen. At its conclusion, one wife says: 'So pay no heed to these parables of persuasion and dissuasion. They're unsuitable for people like us. Enjoy sensual pleasure!'[47]

Nupurapandita's tale also makes an appearance in *Avashyaka Sutra.*[48] The story of the clever adulteress is rather unique in attributing moral dubiousness to a Jain nun (who helps out the young lover in meeting Durgila); but while Hemachandra's narrative portrays her as the patron of 'loose women', in the *Avashyaka Sutra* story the indictment is much harsher. The young man solicits the nun's help through flattery and concludes, 'since the nun bursts out laughing playfully when she is spoken to by handsome youth, *surely she goes in search of love while in search of alms*'[49] [emphasis added].

The climactic story recounted by Jambu decides the argument resolutely in favour of the worthiness of chastity and culminates finally in the undertaking of renunciatory vows not only by Jambu but also by his eight wives. It is a chronicle of a lusty and adulterous queen, Lalitanga, who takes a handsome paramour.[50] Their lovemaking is interrupted by the arrival of the suspicious King, whereupon the queen and her servant throw the young man into a cesspit behind the palace for fear of being discovered. There he survives for months like a dog on the remains of the meals thrown by the queen and her maidservant. In the rainy season the palace gutters flood the hole with water, which carry him into the moat outside. Lying on the banks of the moat unconscious he is discovered by his old

nurse, who takes him home to his family who nurse him back to good health. Jambu poses this question to his wives: with his vigour renewed, would the young man return to the queen's quarters even if she begged him? The wives are unanimous that he would not. The matter is settled and they too wish to renounce with him.

What is remarkable about this story is its coding in terms of the dark gynaecological processes: Lalitanga, revelling in sexual pleasures, represents the embodied soul; the dark hole in which the young man is pushed stands for the womb; the remnants of meals thrown down the cesspit symbolize maternal nurture, the time spent in the hole is equivalent to the foetus' time in the womb. The man's expulsion from the hole denotes the developed foetus' emergence through the vagina; his fall into the moat is the child's arrival in the mother's room, the swooning of the young man at the banks of the moat is comparable to the baby's swooning when it is freed from its protective membrane of skin and blood, and so on.

It is a story where we may more palpably see the gynophobia inherent in other stories and texts. In a culture where fecundity is celebrated as auspicious, it is quite extraordinary that the process of reproduction and birth are painted in such murky terms, calculated to disgust and, in this case, inspire renunciation. Food leftovers, vagina, foetus, the messiness of blood and skin are all guaranteed to evoke loathing for the very process of reproduction – and the female body that is its site.

Conclusion

Examination of the culturally coded roles ascribed to women yields a multiplicity of images: pious nuns, great mothers and even a female tirthankara. All of these are glorified for their commitment to the Jain faith, indeed celebrated as 'active militants of Jainism'.[51] The triumph of their religiosity in the face of odds is memorialized in a variety of ways. This would suggest that a premium is attached to women's self-focused religiosity and their autonomous spiritual aspirations. At the same time, however, Jain popular stories, didactic tales as well as rule books create virulently misogynist portraits of women. If the sheer ubiquity of nuns in the religious and community life of the Jains continuously presents a model of female religiosity that is strikingly in contrast to the Brahminical code of *pativrata*, counter representations are always at hand that erode the paradigm of the independent and self-focused religiosity of the former. The domestic ideal is never far from the surface; indeed, for the large majority of lay Jain women, it is the ideal of the pious householder that is privileged. This privileging occurs through numerous discursive strategies – by honouring the mothers of tirthankaras who had inculcated Jain values in their sons and facilitated their entry into tirthankarhood; through the narratives and rituals focusing on virtuous heroines such as Mayna Sundari and even through the gentle effacement of female ascetics from the monastic code books.

It is to be noted here that despite the fact that Jainism's ideals of severe asceticism can only be realized fully in a life of renunciation, lay religious lives are also marked by a high level of austerities. The task of upholding this austere Jain way of life falls invariably upon the woman of the house. It is she who undertakes fasts, cooks according to the rigorous dietary requirements, visits the temples and renounces to pay obeisance. In the course of research, it was found that even nuns do not take lightly the domestic ideal, as reflected for instance in the rueful assertion of a Shvetambar nun that Mayna Sundari was no longer heeded to as a model by Jain women.[52]

Jainism has therefore negotiated constantly between its legitimation of women as rightful soteriological agents and the impulse to masculinize the practice of renunciation

itself. Thus, on the one hand, it approved of asceticism as a valid option for women and, on the other, implicated women as the very antithesis of this way of life. In the process, we are confronted by a multiplicity of images pulling in different directions. There is no single archetype but a heterogeneity of ideals that appear sometimes to buttress women's claims to independent spiritual life and at other times to erode this pursuit.

A survey of gendered roles and representations in Jainism affords us a greater insight into the way religious traditions have constructed religious roles differently for men and women. Far too often, students of South Asian culture and society have focused on Hinduism, especially Brahminical Hinduism, with the result that other trends and sectarian traditions have been marginalized. If one were to focus on the orthodox Hindu tradition alone, the salvation seeking woman of independent spiritual pursuits would remain unknown, or at best an enigma. G.S. Ghurye's *Indian Sadhus*, for instance, remains a work on the rise, history, work and present organization of *Hindu* asceticism despite its more universal sounding title. And indeed, his focus on Hindu tradition alone blinds him to the presence of female renouncers, so much so that when he confronts young sadhvis, he writes that 'the source of recruitment of those sadhvis . . . is not known'.[53] One striking difference in the way that Hindu and Jain renunciant discourses treat the gender question is that the latter offers to women the ideal of *swadharma* (self-focused religiosity) in addition to the overriding ideal of *stri dharma*, which is then seized upon by Jain female ascetics to undermine the negative portrayals of womanhood and to ward off the cultural expectations of marriage and motherhood. Ojha writes that in orthodox Hinduism, while a man can choose between two competing ideals – the householder and ascetic – the woman in choosing a life of renunciation has 'left the norm behind'.[54] Outside of this solitary ideal, she appears only as 'a taunting demon . . . who threaten[s] to lure well-intentioned but susceptible yogis to the fires of hellish delusion'.[55] For Jainism, we may say, that though such virulent characterizations were never absent, the presence of a simultaneous positive acknowledgement of women's spiritual capacities enabled female spiritual aspirants to disregard or downplay the disparaging references and cultural models. An investigation of the kind undertaken above reveals the complex and nuanced nature of such construction – how the images and ideals of heterodox traditions may overlap or digress from those purveyed by dominant Hindu normative codes.

Notes

1. Ojha, 'Feminine Asceticism in Hinduism', 255–8.
2. McGee, 'Desired Fruits', 77.
3. Babb, 'Indigenous Feminism', 108.
4. Olville, 'Ungendered Atma', 83.
5. Women's sexuality unless tamed by motherhood always remains dangerous. Lynn Bennett studies the contrast between 'dangerous wives' and 'sacred sisters' in her study of high-caste Nepali women, *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters.*
6. Tripathi, *Sadhus of India*, 193.
7. Ramaswamy, *Walking Naked*, 10–11.
8. Legend holds that the Buddha extracted from the nuns a promise to follow these rules as a price for allowing them to find their own Orders (*Bhikkhshuni-sangha*). These rules are: as follows:
   (1) Any nun, no matter how long she has been in the order, must treat any monk, even the rudest novice, as if he were her senior.
   (2) Nuns should not take up residence during the annual rainy season retreat in any place where monks were not available to supervise them.
   (3) Monks should set the dates for bi-weekly assemblies.

(4) During the ceremony at the end of the rainy season retreat, when monks and nuns invited criticism from their own communities, the nuns must also invite criticism from the monks.
(5) Monks must share in setting and supervising penances for the nuns.
(6) Monks must share in the ordination of nuns.
(7) Nuns must never revile or abuse the monks.
(8) Nuns must never reprimand monks directly.

See Falk, 'Case of the Vanishing Nuns', 159–60.

9. From *Jain Samagra Caturmas Suchi* (1998) cited in Balbir, 'Women in Jainism', 88.
10. Jain religious practices are, however, more complicated than this. John Cort's work on Jain devotional practices makes us sensitive to the presence of Jina bhakti where followers may in fact seek the divine grace of Jinas. Cort, 'Jainism as a Bhakti Religion'.
11. Cort, 'Medieval Jaina Goddess Tradition', 235–55.
12. Fohr, 'Restrictions and Protection: Female Jain Renouncers', 159.
13. The 16 mahasatis are: Brahmi, Sundari, Chandanbala, Rajimati, Draupadi, Kausalya, Mrgvati, Sulasa, Sita, Damyanti, Sivadevi, Kunti, Subhadra, Chelana, Prabhavati and Padmavati. See Balbir, 'Women in Jainism', 82.
14. Kelting, 'Good Wives, Family Protectors', 648.
15. *Jivit satimata*s are those women who wished to become sati at their dead husband's pyre but were disallowed to do so for fear of legal reprisal following the criminalization of the practice in colonial times. These women then embraced a life of austerities and gained great fame. See Courtright, 'Sati, Sacrifice and Marriage', 184–204.
16. For instance, Ratnasekharsuri's *Shirivala Katha* in Prakrit, composed before 1372, and the Gujarati *Shripal Rajano Ras*, composed by Upadhyaya Vinayvijay and Mahopadhyay Yasovijay in 1682. See Cort, *Jains in the World*, 164.
17. It is a diagram of nine petals, representing the five supreme lords of Jainism: The Jina, siddha, acharya, upadhyaya, and sadhu; the three jewels; and asceticism. As representative of Jain soteriology, *sidhachakra* is an object of devotion.
18. Gold, 'From Demon Aunt to Gorgeous Bride', 203–30.
19. Ramanujan, 'Flowering Tree', 426.
20. In discussion with Sthanakvasi sadhvis at Jain Vir Nagar Colony, Delhi.
21. Mother of Rishabha, the first tirthankara. She is believed by the Shvetambars to be the first person in the current cycle to have attained liberation.
22. Mahavira's mother.
23. *Acharanga Sutra*, Book II, Lecture 2, Lesson 3, trans. from Prakrit by Hermann Jacobi. See Muller, *Sacred Books of the East*, Part I, 131.
24. Ibid., Book II, Lecture 15, iv, 4, 207–8.
25. Ibid., Lecture 2, Lesson 2, 123–4.
26. *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, Lecture XXXII, trans. from Prakrit by Hermann Jacobi. See Muller, *Sacred Books of the East*, Part II, 186.
27. 'As it is not safe for mice to live near the dwelling of a cat, so a chaste (monk) cannot stay in a house inhabited by women'. *Uttaradhyayana*, Lecture XXXII, Ibid.
28. *Sutrakrtitanga Sutra*, Book I, Lecture 4, chap. 1, trans. from Prakrit by Hermann Jacobi. See Muller, *Sacred Books of the East*, Part II, 272.
29. Ibid.
30. 'A young women, putting on fine ornaments and clothes, will say to a Sramana: "I shall give up (my former way of life) and practise the rough (viz., control). Reverend Sir, teach me the Law!"', Ibid., 274.
31. Ibid.
32. Interview with Tapa Gacch sadhvi, Prafullprabha at Atmanand Jain Sabha, Delhi.
33. Cited in Singh, *Jain aur Bhikshuni Sangh*, 107.
34. Ibid., 108.
35. *Brihatkalpasutra*, cited in Singh, *Jain aur Bhikshuni Sangh*, 108.
36. Hemachandra was a twelfth-century Shvetambar scholar-monk. He enjoyed a close relationship with the Chaulakyas of Gujarat and is said to have converted Kumarapala, a Chaulakya ruler, to Jainism. A prolific writer, he composed a book of Sanskrit grammar, a manual of conduct (*Yogashastra*), and two universal histories of Jain personages and events, *The Lives of the Sixty-three Illustrious People* and *The Lives of the Jain Elders*. See Hemachandra's *The Lives of the Jain Elders*.

37. The last person in this time cycle to gain omniscience.
38. Lecture XXXII of *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* already notes that 'to those who have overcome the attachment (to women), all others will offer no difficulties; even as to those who have crossed the great ocean, no river though big like Ganges, (will offer any difficulty)', 186.
39. 'The Story of Vidyunmalin', Canto 2, *The Lives of Jain Elders*, 82–5.
40. Recall the passage that warns about the dangers arising from supporting women, *Sutrakritanga Sutra*, 274.
41. Especially, 'How They Treat him Afterwards', in *Sutrakritanga Sutra*, Book 1, Lecture 4, chap. 2, Ibid., 275–8.
42. This is the moral of the story of the monkey couple, for instance, in which the monkeys are magically turned into humans by jumping at a holy spot, whereupon they proceed to indulge in love play. The woman (formerly she-monkey) is contented with her life but the man (the former male monkey) desires a divine status. The woman says: 'Let divinity be; *our pleasure certainly surpasses divinity*, [Emphasis added] that pleasure which we two enjoy, always unseparated, freely and without hindrance'. The monkey not heeding the female's pleas jumps at the same spot again in the hope of being elevated to the status of Gods. Alas, he resumes the monkey form. The story ends with the woman becoming the queen and the monkey performing at the court. See, 'The Story of the Pair of Monkeys', Canto 2 in *The Lives of the Jain Elders*, 66–9.
43. Canto 2, *The Lives of the Jain Elders*, 69–82.
44. Ibid., 69.
45. Ibid., 71.
46. Ibid., 76.
47. Ibid., 82.
48. *Avasyaka Sutra* is the repository of obligatory duties to be performed by Jain monks. Commentaries on the *Avashyaka Sutra* were huge storehouses of *katha*s, which illustrated the importance of adhering to these essential duties. Nupurapandita's story appears in Granoff, *The Clever Adulteress.* The translation of this story in the anthology is by Nalini Balbir.
49. Ibid., 21.
50. 'The Story of Lalitanga', Canto 3, *The Lives of Jain Elders*, 104–10.
51. Balbir, 'Women in Jainism', 83.
52. Tapa Gacch sadhvi Sayamratna cited the example of a Jain woman in the locality sadhvis were staying, who had re-married following the death of her first husband. Interview at Atmanand Jain Sabha, Roop Nagar, Delhi.
53. Ghurye, *Indian Sadhus*.
54. Ojha, Feminine Asceticism in Hinduism, 256.
55. O'Flaherty cited in Introduction in Khandelwal, Hausner and Gold, *Nuns, Yoginis, Saints and Singers*, 6.

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