

Iconography of Yakshis (Shasandervis) in the Jain Temple of Deogarh

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Deogarh is located in the latitude 24°35'N and 78°15'E on the right bank of Betwa river. The inscriptions preserve three names for this place- Sri Shantinath teerth, Luachhagiri and Kirtigiri.¹

Fort and ruins lying 30 kms, South West of the town of Lalitpur, which is now a well-known tirtha of the Jains who have consistently maintaining it. The Fort is believed to have been built around 997 A.D during the period of Kirtivarman.² On a hill towering above the river is an extensive line of circumvallation, approached by a sloping ascent leading up to a gateway. Inside the wall of the north east corner stands a group of Sixteen Jain temples, probably of Chandel origin. Many of them are in fair repair and the carvings of some is particularly good.³

There are several inscriptions in various parts of the ruins, ranging from 997 A.D to Eighteenth Century. The fort was held by the Bundelas till 1811 when Col Bapteste took it.⁴ This site was embedded by atleast 40 temples, though the official number fixes the figure at 31. The size and shape vary greatly. Large temples with tall shikhars stand side by side with tiny cells not even allowing even a person to stand erect. The door frames of the temples are usually beautifully carved. Few temples show the characteristics of North Indian lithic translation, all other are consisting only a square or rectangular room.

An inscription engraved on the inner door frame of temple No 12 records that the place was known after the presiding deity of the temple Shri shantinath Teerth in 10th century A.D.⁵ The earliest among the dated Deogarh inscriptions comes from the period of Bhoja Partihara put up on a pillar in temple No 12.⁶ Around four hundred inscriptions lie incised in the Jain tirth of Deogarh.⁷ but the large number of them are donors inscription dedicated to some Tirthankaras.

Deogarh is Undoubtedly a miraculous place of Digambara Jain and consisted around 1500 Jain Tirthankaras and other deities. This place was once

inhabited by the great sculptors as a large number of wonderful similar images are found scattered here and there on the Hill. For safety point of view the Archaeological Survey has pasted them in the boundary wall of the fort, which is called Kirtigiri Fort.(fig 1).

In first inscription of 919 A.D found in temple No 12 provides the earliest date for the architectural and art activity at Deogarh in Jaina context. But architectural and sculptured examples stylistically suggest that the art activity in jaina context commenced even earlier. In 7th and 8th Century A.D.⁸

In Jainism there are 25 Yakshis, who are frequently represented in Jain temples. Each one is regarded as the guardian goddess of one of the present Tirthankara Shri Simandhar Swami and twenty four Jain Tirthankaras.

As remarked by MPN Tiwari “ Deogarh was an important centre of Sarasvata Sadhana (education and religious learning) and Jain sangha evidenced by the presence of profuse number of images of Jain acharyas, Upadhyayas, Bhattarkas, Sadhus and Sadhvis who were living together at Deogarh for meditation, Study and Sastra charcha (disputation).⁹ The figure of Sarasvati and in one example (temple No 1) her rendering with the Jinas in tritirthi Jina image also reinforce the point.

Shantinath Temple (Temple No 12) is the largest and also one of the earliest Jina temples at Deogarh. It's a marvel of architecture and iconography. The earliest rendering of twenty-four Yakshis with labeled inscriptions are found in its façade (Outer three walls). These Yakshis are carved in small independent niches all along the façade of the temple. From architectural point of view this temple consist of a garbhagriha surrounded by inner pradakshinapath, antarala, ardha mandapa and long rectangular mandapa and also a nut mandapa. It has all the features of Pratihara group of temple. Some of the door frames are of later period and

two door jambs were erected in samvat 1133 (A.D 1076) as is evident from an inscription appearing on one of them. Along with the figures of Rishabh Nath and Shantinath, a few Jain figures in Kayotsarg- mudra are also carved. In the remaining space the two armed standing figures of navgrahas are also depicted. Surya wearing Kirita mukuta , holding one stalked lotus flowers in both the hands. The other planets are shown in standing posture with jata mukuta. They are holding water vessels in left hand, while the right hand is in abhaya mudra. Four armed Lakshmi, Chakreshwari with Garuda Vahana and disc in hands are shown on the left extremity of the door lintel. The corresponding right end of the door lintel is occupied by four armed figure of sarasvati holding Pustak and Vina. Ambika holding bunch of mangoes and child is shown above the figure of sarasvati.

The noteworthy feature of this temple is depiction of Yakshis along with their Tirthankaras on the façade of the temple. These Yakshis are depicted in standing posture dwibhang or tribhang with their respective Jina on the top of their niches. They are usually shown with four hands holding respective ayudhas and mudras. The detail of Yaksha and yakshis of various Tirthankaras are described in detail by MNP Tiwari in his work Art and Aesthetics.

The Jain Pantheon and Iconography grew considerably after the Gupta period. The Jain rituals are celebrated with strong influence of Hindu rites as evident from Pratistha-Saroddhara of Asodhara (Digambar) and the Aacardinkar of Vardhaman Suri (Svetambar) ¹⁰

Yakshi Ambika- The cult of mother goddess in Jain iconography is justified by the figures of Ambika found from Deogarh. This goddess represents the fertility cult. Towards the close of sixth century A.D she was transformed into Yakshi Ambika, the

Shasandevi of 22nd Tirthankara Neminath. Thus, Ambika in Jain context is an example of assimilation of popular belief of the mother goddess in Jain worship to formulate the form of one of the most favoured Yakshis, who is shown with two sons.¹¹

She is shown with the symbol of fertility such as a pair of sons and amralumbi (Bunch of Mangoes) and mango tree. Ambika in Jain iconography rides a lion and holds in her hand amraalumbi, noose, child and ankusha. Sometimes she is shown accompanied by seven dancing female figures, which may be the Jain adaptation of Saptamatrikas.¹²

Ambika is found in many numbers in Deogarh. In one of the image she has shown with two arms, one holding a bunch of mangoes and the other hand is holding a child. She is sitting under a tree and her Jina Neminath is depicted above her head. Her mount lion is resting under her throne. She is wearing a fine garment which is shown skin fit with vertical lines in it. This garment covering her legs up to her ankles. Her hair is beautifully done like a round cap above her head.(fig 2). Another figure of Ambika is in standing posture holding a child in her left hand and a large bunch of Mangoes in her right hand. Lion is depicted beneath.(Fig 3). Yet another fine sculpture of Ambika is shown independently on a stone slab. She is sitting under a mango tree with Jina Neminath seated on the upper portion of the slab. She is holding a child in her left hand but her right hand is broken. Her mount lion is seated near her feet. Another child is standing by her side. In the façade of Shri Shantinath temple Ambika is standing in tribhanga posture and having four arms. The lower left is holding a child while upper left is holding a flower. The lower right is holding some fruit while the upper right holds a chamar.(fig 4)

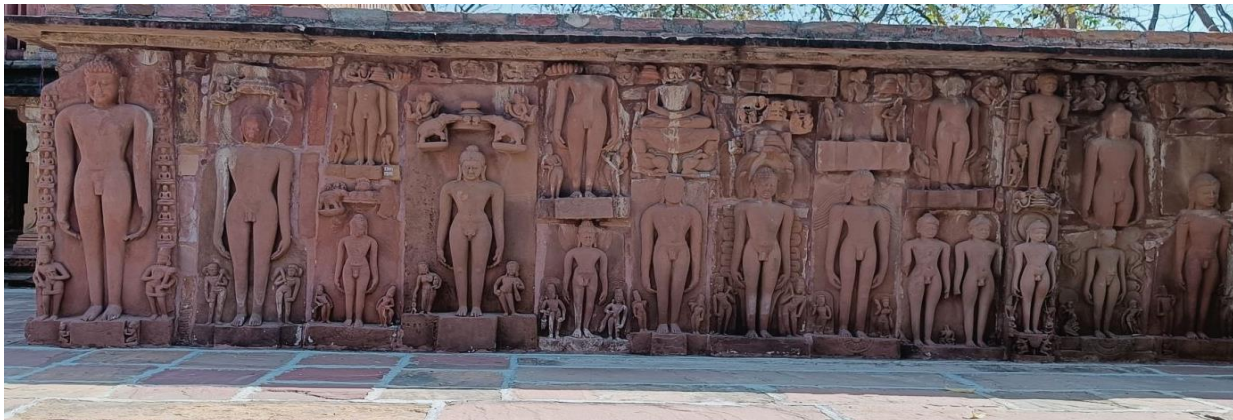


Fig 1- The independent sculptures of Jain Tirthankaras which are pasted on the wall by ASI



Fig -2 Ambika with two arms



Fig-3- Yakshi Ambika with two arms



Fig 4- Ambika on Façade



Fig 5- Ambika on a separate slab

Yakshi Chakreshwari or Apratichakra Yakshi - The images of Chakreshwari are also found in a large number in Deogarh. The mount of Chakreshwari is Garuda (Eagle represented in art mostly in human form with pointed nose and snake around the neck and sometimes also with wings)¹³The earliest Iconography

of Chakreshwari is known from 9th century A.D which is found on the façade of temple No 12(A.D 862) at Deogarh. She is holding Chakra in all her four hands. Garuda is depicted in human form with wings and standing in Anjali Mudra. This was the feature of Mahavidya Apratichakra.(Fig-6)



Fig-6 Chakreshwari on facade, temple 12



Fig 7- Chakreshwari on a manstambha temple 11

A ten armed figure of Chakreshwari is depicted on a pillar near Shantinath temple. She is shown with her mount Garuda in human form. In her five left arms she is holding Chakra, noose, bow and sankh. In her right arms she is shown with chakra, sword, Gada, Thunderbolt and Varada hasta mudra. She is wearing mukuta.

Bhrikuti of Jwalamalini Yakshi- Associated with Jina Chandraprabha- Svetambara text mentioned her as riding an varaha (or varala or even goose) and carrying sword and mudgara in right hand and shield and axe in left hands. Digambara texts on the other hand, visualize eight armed Jwalamalini as riding a buffalo and holding Disc, bow, noose, charma (or shield), trident (or shula) arrow , fish and sword. The name of Yakshi is given in an inscription, which is shown with a lion mount. Svetambar text name her Bhrikuti where as Digambar text mention her name Jwalamalini. The yakshi is standing in dwibhang mudra exhibits sword, shield, abhay and katihasta mudra. MNP Tiwari identified it with the iconographical form of 16th Mahavidya Mahamanasi.



Fig 8- Sumalini Yakshi- Temple 12 Deogarh



Fig 9- Rohini Yakshi - Deogarh

Ajita or Rohini Yakshi- Associated with Jina Ajitanatha- The eight armed figure carved on the manstambha¹⁴ at Deogarh represent Rohini seated in Laitasana with a cow mount.¹⁵ and with the attributes like Varada Mudra, goad, arrow, disc, noose, bow, spear and fruit. She is represented as seated on Lohasana (iron Mount) in Nirvanakalika (18.2) and the Trishstishalakapurushacarita (2.3.845-46). (Fig 9)

Duritari or Prajanapati- According to Svetambara tradition she is four armed, who rides a mesha (ram) or even a peacock or a buffalo. In Deogarh she is represented with two arms. This Yakshi is associated with Jina Sambhavnatha. Kalika or Vajrashrinkhala Yakshi- She is associated with Jina Abhinandana. Svetambara texts¹⁶ she sits on a lotus and her hands are represented in varada mudra, noose, snake and goad. The Digambara sect provide Hamsa as her vahana who carries varada mudra, nagpasha, rosary and fruit in her hands. In case of Deogarh, the inscription call the Yakshi as sarasvati.

Mahakali or Purushadatta Yakshi- she is associated with Jina Sumatinatha. According to Svetambara tradition she sits on lotus and represented with varada nudra, noose, fruit and goad in her hands. Purushadatta in Digambara tradition is visualized as riding an elephant and as carrying disc, thunderbolt, fruit in three hands while one hand is in Varada mudra. (MNP Tiwari p 95)

Achyuta or Manovega Yakshi- The four armed Achyuta in svetambara texts is Nara vahana who is represented with varada mudra, vina or noose or arrow in right hand and bow and abhay mudra in left hands. The Digambara texts visualize Manovega as riding a horse and carrying a shield, sword and fruit, besides her one hand being in varada mudra. Deogarh temple No 12 A.D 862 she is represented as sulochana with the figure of Padmaprabha carved overhead. She is represented here with horse mount. The four armed yakshi standing in tribhang holds bow, arrow, lotus in three hands while the fourth one rests on waist.



Fig 10 – Sulochana Yakshi

Shanta or kali Yakshi- Associated with Jina Suprarsvanatha- In Deogarh temple No 12 she is represented as Mayurvahi and she is in vyakhyan mudra, flywhisk –cum-lotus, manuscript and conch in her hands to suggest the bearing of sarasvati.



Fig 11- Shanta or kali Deogarh and varada hasta Fig 12- Yakshi with manuscript, flower, kamandala

Sutara or Mahakali Yakshi- Associated with Jina Suvidhinatha (or Pushpadanta) -The four armed Sutara rides a bull according to Svetambara texts and shows Varada mudra and rosary in right and pitcher and goad in left hands while the four armed Mahakali of Digambara tradition is represented with tortoise vahana and thunderbolt , mudgar, fruit and varada hasta. At Deogarh the two armed yakshi bears flywhisk cum lotus in one hand, (Fig 13)



Fig 13- Mahakali labeled as Bhurupi



Fig 14- Vahini Yakshi

Ashoka or Manavi Yakshi – Associated with Jina Shitalanath- The four armed Ashoka in Svetambara tradition has lotus and Manavi in Digambara tradition has boar (or black cobra) as Vahana. In Deogarh temple No 12 the Yakshi carved with Shitalanatha is labeled as Shriya Devi who hold fruit, lotus , pitcher in three hands while the fourth one rests on waist.

Manavi or Gauri Yakshi- Manavi Yakshi of 10th Jina Shitalanatha in Digambara tradition becomes the Yakshi of 11th Jina Shreyamshanatha in Svetambara tradition, who is called Shrivatsa or Vidyunada.¹⁷ The earliest figure is from Deogarh where two armed yakshi carved with Shreyamshanatha is labeled in inscription as ‘Vahini’ (MNP Tiwari p-99) (fig 14)

Chanda or Gandhari yakshi- Yakshi of Jina Vasupujya- The four armed Yakshi in Svetambara tradition is also known as Prachanda and Ajita. She has a horse mount. The four armed Gandhari in Digambara texts is provided with lotus and makara vahana. The two armed Yakshi carved with Vasupujya in Deogarh, is labeled as Abhaugaratina. The Yakshi with snake and long garland in hands does not correspond with textual injunctions.(Fig 15)



Fig 15- Yakshi with Serpent



Fig 16- Sulakshana Yakshi

Vidita or vairoti Yakshi- Associated with Jina Vimalanatha. The two armed Yakshi without any distinctive attribute stands with fly whisk in left hand and the right is Akimbo. She is labelled as Sulakshana at Deogarh.(Fig 16)

Ankusha or Anantmati Yakshi – Associated with Anantanath. Svetambara text mention her with lotus mount while Digambaran text attribute her with swan. In Deogarh the name of Yakshi is inscribed as Anantvirya. The two armed Yakshi with fly whisk and kati hasta show no other features mentioned in the Jain texts.(Fig 17)



Fig 17- Yakshi Anantvirya

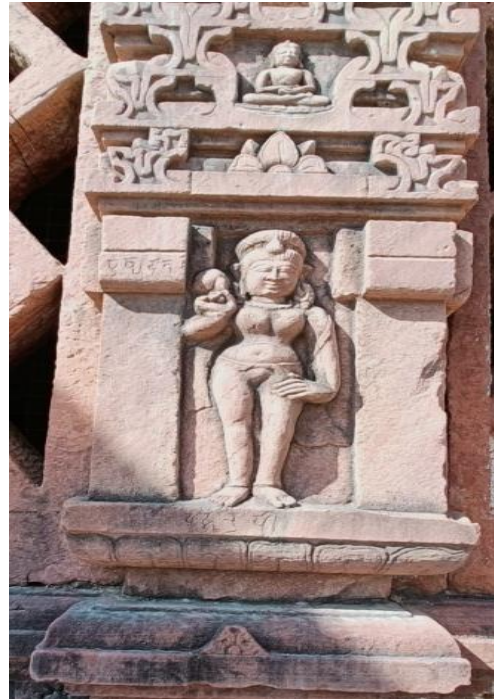


Fig 18- Surakshita Yakshi

Kandarpa or Manasi Yakshi- The svetambara text speak of Fish mount while Digambara text represent her riding tiger. In Deogarh as noticed by Tiwari MNP she is labelled as Surakshita, who hold lotus in right hand and left one is Akimbo.(Fig 18)

Nirvani or Mahamanasi Yakshi- In Deogarh, the four armed Yakshi (in tribhang) with Shantinatha has been labelled as Shriyadevi. The Yakshi with Buffalo mount holds sword, disc, shield and axe, which are the features enunciated for the 6th Mahavidya Naradatta.(fig 19)



Fig 19- Shriyadevi Yakshi

Bala or Jaya Yakshi- Associated with Jina Kunthunatha is represented at Deogarh Shantinath temple with nara vahana and four armed. She is holding Disc, lotus and skull in three hands and the fourth hand rest on thigh. Fig 20



Fig 20 – Bala or Jaya Yakshi



Fig 21- Taravati Yakshi



Fig 22- Himadevi Yakshi

Dharni or Taravati Yakshi- Associated with Jina Aranatha- According to Svetambara text, dharni is having four arms and mounted on Lotus. Digambar text assign her swan mount. In Deogarh according to Tiwari Yakshi with Aranatha is labelled as Taravati but her iconographical figure is not traditional. Fig 21

Vairotya or Aparajiat Yakshi – Associated with Jina Mallinath. She is labelled as Himadevi, a name not known from any text. The two armed Yakshi is in Tribhanga Pose holds pitcher in her right hand while the left is Akimbo.

Naradatta or Buurupini Yakshi- Associated with Jina Munisuvrata.- As identified by Tiwari the four armed Yakshi with the figure of Jina Munisuvrata carved overhead is surprisingly labelled as Sidhai. It may be mentioned that siddhayika is the Yakshi of Mahavir. The Yakshi standing in tribhanga mudra with lotus mount hold in her hand a chain, abhay mudra- cum lotus or noose and lotus looking like a trident while the fourth hand is resting in thigh. Fig 23

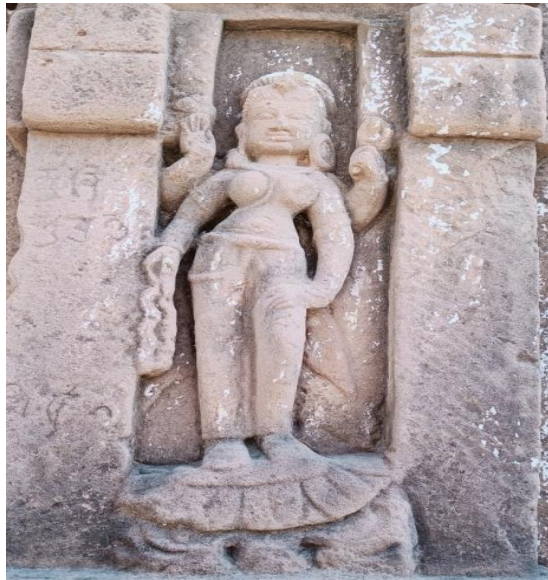


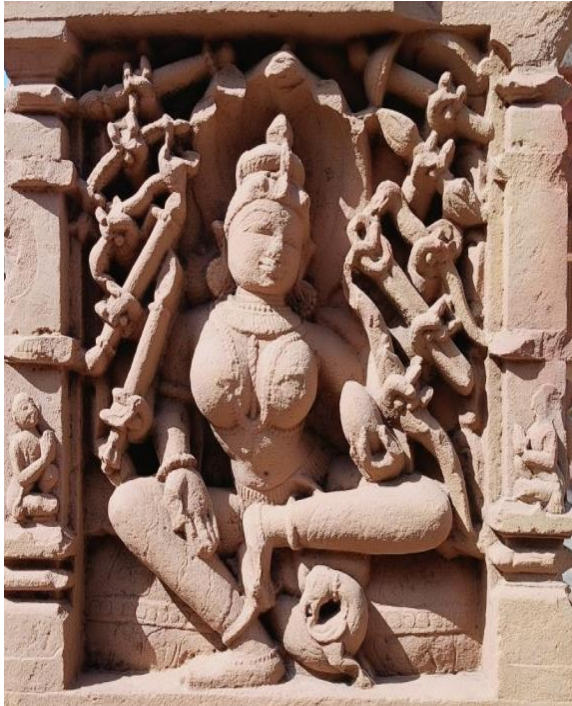
Fig 23- Sidhai Yakshi.



Fig 24- Chamunda Yakshi

Gandhari or Chamunda Yakshi- Yakshi of Neminath . represented here with two arms without any distinguishing attribute and even Vahana. The Yakshi hold pitcher in the right hand while the left hand rest on thigh.

Padmavati Yakshi – Associated with Jina Parsavnatha. Padmavati the snake goddess is one of the four most popular Yakshis of Jaina tradition. Both the traditions provide composite Kukkuta- sarpa (Cock – snake duo) as vahana.



This figure from Deogarh is representing Padmavati with snale canopy. The maximum variety in the form of Padmavati noticed at Deogarh where two , four and twelve arms were carved during 9th to 12 th Century. The figures are mostly carved on Manstambhas. The attributes were mostly lotus, pitcher, goad, noose, manuscripts, swords, thunderbolts, umbrella, snake, bow, fruit etc.

Siddhayika Yakshi- Associated with Jina Mahavir. A two armed Siddhayika standing in tribhanga is carved on the wall of the temple No 12 at Deogarh. The Yakshi represented with Vardhaman is called Aparajita (in place of Siddhayika) and shows a bud like object in her left hand, while the right hand is resting on her thigh.



Yakshini Aparajita

Thus we have found all 24 yakshis sculptured in the temples and Manstambhas of Deogarh. These architectural and iconographical works are found since 6th century onwards at Deogarh, Pawa, Jakhlaon and other nearby places which certifies that on e the entire region was under the sway of Jain religion. From Deogarh Uttar Pradesh to Sonagiri Madhya Pradesh we have many Jain religious places which needs an extensive study of Jain religion.

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