

Classic Poetry Series

Rupa Bhavani
- poems -

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Rupa Bhavani(1621 - 1721)

Devi Rupa Bhawani, like Lal Ded, is one of the great female mystic poets of Kashmir.

Rupa Bhawani was the second great mystic poet of 17th century. She had a great and deep experience of ups and downs of life. The worldly sufferings showed her the path of spiritual life. Her spiritual 'Guru' was her father Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar who initiated her into the mysteries and practices of yoga. She gave rich mystic poetry to Kashmiri language. In her poetry, we can find the influence of both Kashmir Shaivism and Islamic Sufism.

She is said to have been born on the first day of the Hindu festival of Navaratri, the nine days dedicated to the Goddess. As a mark of how greatly she is revered, some legends say she was an incarnation of the Goddess who wished to bestow a blessing upon her saintly father.

The exact year of her birth varies in different accounts between 1620 and 1624.

Her father is said to have initiated her into yogic practice.

Although her father was a devotee of Hinduism and her poetry clearly uses yogic terminology, some elements of her poetry also suggests the influence of Sufi mysticism, as well. Today, she is honored by both Hindus and Muslims.

Rupa Bhawani entered mahanirvana, a saint's conscious exit from the body, in 1721. The day is commemorated in Kashmir as Sahibi Saptami.

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'Selflessness is the sign of the selfless;
Bow down at the door of the selfless.
The selfless are of the highest authority,
The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.

These lines show her spiritual understanding. According to her dissolution of self is essential for Realisation. Rupabhawani was a great preacher of yoga. She describes her yogic practice. The different stages of 'yoga' and awakening of Kundalini has been described in the simple language of common men:

I dashed down into the nether regions and brought the vital breath up;
I got its clue out of earth and stones;
Then my kundalini woke up with nada;
I drank wine by the mouth,
I got the vital breath gathered it within myself;

This great mystic poetess had experienced the truth and then explained the same. Such mystics had real experience and not a bookish one. That is the reason why this mystic poetry in every language is considered great after so many centuries.

I Dashed Down Into The Nether Regions And Brought The Vital Breath Up

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Rupa Bhavani

I Did Not Come On This Earth As A Seed

I did not come on this earth as a seed,
To fall in the circle of births,
I am not the elements
Earth, water, fire, air and ether
I am beyond the primordial universal self and the individual self,
I am the Supreme Consciousness.

Rupa Bhavani

Selflessness Is The Sign Of The Selfless

Selflessness is the sign of the selfless;
Bow down at the door of the selfless.
The selfless are of the highest authority,
The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.

Rupa Bhavani