



The Heart of Jainism (Classic Reprint)

Sinclair Stevenson

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Jainism, the most fascinating and complex among the Indian religious, offers an interesting field of enquiry for the scholar of comparative religions. Originating as heterodox sect in the sixth century BC it has added considerably to the development of Indian thought and culture while maintaining to this day its distinct identity and philosophy as a religion par excellence of love and kindness. The history of Jainism attains a greater significance, in particular, for, despite the limited number of its adherents and its non-competitive character, it was able to stand on its own during the various stages of its history.

Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, in her present work, *The Heart of Jainism* has analyzed these factors in significant detail. While tracing the origin of Jainism to the revolt of the Kshatriya against Brahmanical exclusiveness and the ritual-ridden structure, she has shown how it sustained itself through the course of its history. This, in her view, became possible because in Jainism the body of ascetics was provided adequately by its lay community and the permeation of strong Hindu influences. In this painstaking work, Mrs. Stevenson has examined, in clear details, not only the history and development of Jainism as it is practiced today. Her exposition of the Nine Categories of the Fundamental Truth of the Jainas and their subdivisions is distinguished by a careful and valuable analysis and she has gone into the details of examining the Jaina belief in existence and other allied terms as they mean to the Jaina themselves. She has also described in detail the Jaina worship and religious customs, the various ceremonies observed during the life-time by Jaina—both the layman and the ascetic, mythology, architecture and literature. A detailed treatment has been given to the analysis of the Nine Categories and the twenty-four Tirthankaras in the two appendices

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