How Jains Know What They Know: A Lay Jain Curriculum

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In a fieldwork entry dating from 1985, the late Kendall W. Folkert gave a list of what he called "lay readings' according to Munijē." At the time Folkert was researching the Śvetāmbara Jain scriptural canon with an eye to understanding it from a performative perspective. He sought to understand the Śvetāmbara canon as it is shaped or vectored by actual ritual performance (in this case pratikramaṇa), rather than by any abstract theoretical framework. Folkert had obviously asked Muni Jambūvijayji, with whom he was studying as part of this research, what Munijē thought would make up a lay Śvetāmbara Mūrtipājaka Jain canon. The lay canon listed by Muni Jambūvijayji is not shaped exclusively by ritual performance, but rather is a reading list that would tell a lay Jain what he or she needs to know, both to perform a number of key Jain rituals and to understand the cosmological, theological, and philosophical assumptions that underlie those rituals. What is immediately noticeable about this list is that it does not include many of the texts one might expect, texts found in most introductory accounts of the Jains, such as the 11 Śvetāmbara aṅgas. The texts on this list are not the "original canon" of early Jainism, but rather medieval textbooks designed for the systematic study of Jain doctrines and practices in their developed and mature forms. Most of the texts on this list are missing from almost all overviews of Jainism in any language, even the excellent recent English ones of Jaini (1979) and Dundas (1992). The list is as follows:

I. Pañca Pratikramaṇa (= vernacular for āvaśyaka)

II. Nine Smaraṇas (poems used as mantras)
III. Four Prakaraṇas

1. Jīvavicāra of Śāntisūri
2. Navatattva
3. Daṇḍaka (24 kinds of jīvas)
4. Saṅgrahāṇī (ślokas by Haribhadra on geography and astronomy)

IV. Tribhāsyas by Devendrasūri

1. Caityavandana
2. Guruvandana
3. Paccakkhaṇa (fasting, vows, not sallékhanā)

V. Six Karmagranthas

VI. Two Brhamasaṅgrahanīs

1. Maladhārī Candrasūri (most read)
2. Jinabhadrā

VII. Two Brhadṣetrasamāsas (different authors)

VIII. Tattvārthādhigamasūtra

There is no evidence that Folkert followed up on this list, except for his unfinished research on pratikramana. In this essay I will fill in that gap, by surveying why it is that a respected Jain monk-intellectual might present this as a curriculum for lay Jain study. This list forms what in another context I have termed a “Canon-near”, in contrast to the usual sets of texts studied by scholars of Jainism, which in some ways form “Canons-far.” As I defined these two concepts, “In a Canon-near text, primacy and authority are defined by praxis and the resultant contextualized understanding, whereas in a Canon-far text primacy and authority are located in some intrinsic ontological value of the texts themselves” (Cort 1992: 175). While I doubt if any but a very small number of Jain laity actually study these texts, for the list is really much closer to what one would expect of a curriculum for either mendicants or lay pandits, it nonetheless provides us with a textual entrée into Jainism that is an alternative to the usual ones of the 45 Śvetāmbara Āgamas or other such lists.
Pañca Pratikramaṇa

In its narrowest form, pratikramaṇa refers to a specific ritual in which the individual dissociates him or herself from any intention behind all karma-creating actions, and thereby seeks to minimize the karmic bondage resulting from actions. It is performed as a requirement by all mendicants twice daily, and laity are expected to perform it at least once annually, on the occasion of Paryuṣaṇa (Folkert 1993: 189-211). There are five slightly varied liturgies, for use daily in the morning and evening, every fortnight, every four months, and every year. But the term also has a wider meaning, covering what is otherwise denoted by the six āvāsyakas or six daily rituals obligatory for all mendicants (Williams 1963: 184-215, Balbir 1993). In terms of lay Jainism, this wider meaning is quite nicely summarized by Folkert (1993: 92):

The Pratikramaṇa Sūtras is essentially a manual for Jain daily religious ritual, and consists of excerpts from canonical texts, rearranged into patterns for ritual recitation, plus devotional poetry and chants. This material is usually in Prakrit, the Jain classical language, but it is commonly transliterated into Gujarati script [in Gujarati] so that laypeople can read and pronounce the older material. This literature is accompanied by Gujarati [or other vernacular] explanations and detailed instructions for the ritual actions that are to be performed as the Prakrit passages are read or sung. The Pratikramaṇa material forms the major part of all the religious literature, or scripture, that the Jain layperson knows. This form of transmission is the dominant mode, and has been for the last 500 years, of “scriptural” use by Jains.

Printed texts of the pratikramaṇa are readily available, and found in the houses of most Jains, as well as in large numbers in the collections of local congregations. There are both shorter editions containing the two daily pratikramaṇa liturgies (devasia and rāśa), and longer editions containing all five liturgies. In addition to the pratikramaṇa liturgies, these manuals contain the liturgies for paccakhāṇa (Sanskrit pratyākhyāna), in which one resolves to perform certain austerities in order to wear away accumulated karma and to avoid karmic influx; guruvandana, in which laity venerate mendicants; caityavandana, in which the person venerates a Jina image; sāmāyika, a vow of meditative equanimity for a restricted
period; posadha, a vow of temporary mendicancy; and other ascetic rites. Some manuals also contain the texts of the Nine Smaraṇas (discussed below), and other hymns in Sanskrit, Prakrit and vernacular languages. Thus, like a book of common prayer or missal in orthodox Christian contexts, these manuals provide a pious Jain with all the hymns and liturgies needed for an orthoprax religious life.

The Nine Smaraṇas

The nine “remembrances” are a set of Prakrit and Sanskrit hymns in which the individual eulogizes the Jinas and the cardinal teachings of Jainism. The first of these is the Navakāra Mantara [Namokkāra Maṅgala], the nine-line universal Jain mantra in which the individual pays homage to the spiritual hierarchy of the Jinas, other liberated souls, mendicant leaders, mendicant teachers, and all other mendicants.

The other eight texts are longer hymns, several with a distinctly Tantric flavor, in which the individual pays homage to a specific Jina, and thereby actualizes the salvific and world-enhancing virtues symbolized by that Jina². The five-verse Prakrit Uvasaggharaṁ Stotra is attributed to Bhadrabāhu (5th-4th c. B. C. E.)*, who composed it to remove (hara) the obstacle (uvasagga) of plague from the Jain congregation of Ujjain by praising Pārśvanātha. The 14-verse Prakrit Śāntikaram Stotra was composed by the Tapā Gaccha Ācārya Somasundararasūri (1380-1447) to remove plague from a local congregation in Mewar by praising Śāntinātha. The 14-verse Prakrit Tijayapahutta Stotra is attributed to Mānadevasūri (c. 4th c.)†, who composed it to prevent hostile vyantara gods from causing problems for the Jain congregation in Takshashila; in it he invokes the 16 Tantric vidyādevis (see Cort 1987: 237-40). The 24-verse Prakrit Namiṇa Stotra, also known as the Bhayahara Stotra, is attributed to Mānatiṅgasūri (c. 4th c.)‡; the recitation of this hymn to Pārśvanātha is said to cure many kinds of disease. The 40-verse Prakrit Ajitaśānti Stotra alternates verses to Ajitanātha and Śāntinātha; it is attributed to Nandiśena Ācārya, who is

★ c. B. C. 325-297 — Editors.

+ Either by Mānadeva I (c. 9th cent. A. D.) or by Mānadeva II (c. latter half of the 11th cent. A. D.) — Editors.

× c. 6th-7th cent. A. D. — Editors.
said to have been contemporaneous with Mahāvīra. The 44-verse Sanskrit Bhaktāmara Stotra devoted to Ādinātha is attributed to Mānatuṅgasūri, who composed it in the royal court at Banaras to win a contest of the powers of mantra-poetry to free the poet from oppression. The 44-verse Sanskrit Kalānāmāndira Stotra dedicated to Pārśvanātha is attributed to Siddhasena Divākara, who is said to have composed it in the first century B. C. E. in Ujjain; by reciting it he caused an image of Pārśvanātha to burst forth from a śiva liṅga, by which means he converted King Vikramāditya to Jainism.

The ninth Smarana is the Sanskrit (with some Prakrit) mixed prose and verse Brhadchānti Stotra attributed by Vādivetāla Śāntisūri (d. 1039); it is chiefly addressed to Śāntinātha, and invokes peace upon all beings in the cosmos.

Some collections add other similar hymns to this group. These include the Ātmaraṅka Navakāra Mantra, an 8-verse Tantric version of the Navakāra Mantra in which the reciter extends it onto his own body for protection; the 19-verse Sanskrit Laghu Śānti Stava, attributed to Mānadevasūri, who composed this hymn to Śāntinātha to remove a cholera epidemic; and the 102-verse Sanskrit Rāṣṭiāntāla Stotra, attributed to Mahāvīra’s first disciple Gautama Svāmī, which describes a complex Tantric mandala for invoking a large array of Jain deities in order to protect the worshipper.

Many of these hymns are recited daily by Jains, both lay and mendicant. Some of them, such as the Bhaktāmara Stotra, have been among the most popular of all Jain texts for centuries. Several also find a place in the pratikramana and other liturgies. Neither bhakti nor tantra have been adequately studied in their Jain contexts; we see here that both play important roles in everyday Jain practice. In most of these hymns the two

★ The hymn in question was composed by the Digambara poet and dialectician Kumudacandra in c. A. D. 1100–1125 — Editors. (However, see clarification on the issue of ‘dates’ by Cort in this paper under his annotation 2.)

+ It is a medieval composition — Editors.

N. B. What John Cort described are the Navasmaraṇas as incorporated in the tradition of the Tapā-gaccha. Those of the Kharatarā-gaccha is the Saptasmarana or seven hymnal compositions which include those by their own medieval hymnists, namely Jinavallabha sūri (c. A. D. 1060–1119) and his successor Jinadatta sūri.—Editors
are intertwined: the author’s and singer’s devotion to the Jina, based on samyagdarśana or correct faith in the basics of the Jain worldview, is what makes these hymns efficacious; and the Tantric power of the words themselves in these hymns, each of which is understood to be in its entirety a mantra, is what generates the worldly results. We also see in these hymns a concern not for liberation (mokṣa) from the rounds of rebirth, but rather a concern for improving one’s wellbeing within rebirths.

Four Prakaraṇas

The four medieval Prakrit textbooks give the basic Jain teachings on metaphysics, ontology, and cosmology. They have served as the introductory texts for studying these subjects for hundreds of years. Only the more ambitious Jain intellectuals move on from these textbooks to tackle the more difficult earlier texts, both those in the Śvetāmbara “canon” and the systematic treatments of the early Jain philosophers. The commonly-available editions of them are sārth or “including explanation”: in addition to the Prakrit root text, they provide word-by-word Prakrit-to-vernacular glosses, Sanskrit trots, and extensive vernacular explanations, for ease of comprehension. These scholarly aids are the modern reflections of the copious medieval commentaries on many of these texts.

The 51-verse Jīvavicāra is attributed to the same 11th century Vādīvetāla Śāntisūri mentioned above, but there is not a scholarly consensus in support of this attribution (Mehtā and Kāpadiyā 1968: 166). It provides an extensive catalogue of Jaina ontology, in particular the various forms in which unenlightened souls can embody: from single-sensed through five-sensed bodies, and in the four realms of possible rebirth of humans, heavenly beings, hellish beings, and plants and animals.

Neither the author nor the date of the 30-verse Navatattva are known. This text provides a basic overview of the nine verities (tattva) that are the building blocks of Jain metaphysics: (1) sentient soul (jīva); (2) insentient nonsoul or matter (ajīva); (3) influx of karma into contact with the soul (āsrava); (4) bondage of the soul by karma (bandha); (5) meritorious forms of karma (punya); (6) demeritorious forms of karma (pāpa); (7) blockage of this karmic influx (samvara); (8) dissociation of the soul from karma (nirjarā); and (9) liberation (mokṣa, nirvāṇa). There are hundreds of copies of the Navatattva in Jain manuscript libraries, and
more than half-a-dozen commentaries written between the 14th and 17th centuries (Mehta and Kapadiya 1968: 182).

The Dandaka Prakarana, also known as the Vicarachattisayutta and the Laghusangrahanī, is a 44-verse Prakrit text authored in the 16th century by Gajasara Muni (Mehta and Kapadiya 1968: 173-74), that partly overlaps in subject material with the Jivavicara. In it the author details the physical and mental qualities and abilities of living beings in the 24 possible life forms (dandaka) : (1) hellish beings, (2-11) ten forms of heavenly beings, (12-16) five forms of single-sensed beings (with bodies of earth, water, fire, wind, and plant), (17-19) two-, three-, and four-sensed beings, (20) womb-born animals, (21) womb-born humans, and (22-24) vyantara, jyotishi and vaimanika deities.

The fourth Prakarana is the 29-verse Jambudvipa Sangrahanī, also known as the Laghu Sangrahanī, attributed to Haribhadrasuri, although quite likely this is not the same as the one (or two) famous Haribhadras who lived in the formative years of Svetambara philosophy. It provides an introduction to Jain geography, discussing the features and dimensions of the various lands, mountains, rivers, and other features in the middle, human-inhabited section universe.

These four texts together provide the reader with a detailed portrait of the physical universe as understood according to the Jain worldview. Much of the subject matter here is rather abstruse, consisting of long lists of categories and sub-categories that can make for tiresome reading. But without a firm grasp of these aspects of the Jain physical universe, the Jain moral universe and its expression in Jain praxis cannot be adequately understood.

Tribhāsyas

The subject of Jain praxis is the next one treated in this reading list. The Tribhāsyas, also known as the Bhāsyatraya, are Prakrit commentaries by Devendrasuri on three of the āvasyakas, the daily rituals obligatory for all mendicants and recommended by many Jain intellectuals for the laity as well. Devendrasuri (d. 1271) was the disciple of Jagaccandrasuri, the founder of the Tapā Gaccha. It was Devendrasuri who established the intellectual foundations of the gaccha, and his texts remain central to
the Tapā Gaccha intellectual tradition today. In the 63-verse Caityavandananabhāṣya, he explains the rite of veneration of the Jinas; in the 41-verse Guruvandananabhāṣya, he explains the rite of veneration of the mendicant gurus; and in the 48-verse Pratyākhtānabhāṣya, he explains the rite of stating one’s intention to perform austerities, as well as many of the details of Jain ascetic and dietary practice.

Six Karmagranthas

These textbooks on Jain Karma theory are also largely the work of Devendrasūri. In a total of 304 Prakrit verses, he wrote revised versions of five of the six classical Karmagranthas. His set was therefore known also as the Navya Karmagranthas. The titles of these five, which were the same as the titles of the classical texts, are Karmavipāka, Karmastava, Bandhasvāmītva, Śaḍaṣṭī, and Śatakā. While Devendrasūri himself wrote Sanskrit commentaries on these five texts, most modern popular editions are accompanied instead by a vernacular commentary. Most editions are also completed by the 91-verse Prakrit Saptati, the sixth of the classical Karmagranthas, attributed by Candrasūri Mahattara. Together these texts provide a thorough, albeit dense, treatment of the Jain karma doctrine.

Two Bṛhadadsanāgraḥaṇis

These are two more texts on Jain cosmology. One is a 318-verse Prakrit text by the 12th century Candrasūri, disciple of the great commentator Hemacandra Maladhāri (not to be confused with his contemporary namesake Ācārya Hemacandra [1089-1172], known as Kalikālasarvajñā or “the omniscient one of the dark age”). The other is a 367-verse Prakrit text by Jinabhadragaṇī Kṣamāśramāna (c. 6th c.). Folkert’s notes indicate that, according to Muni Jambūvijayji, the former is more widely read. It is certainly more widely available, as several popular editions of it have been published, whereas the latter exists only in out-of-print editions from early in the century.

Two Bṛhadkṣetrasamāsas

These are still further cosmological texts. One is in 637 or 655 verses, and composed by the same Jinabhadragaṇī Kṣamāśramāna mentioned above (Mehta and Kapaḍiyā 1968: 168-69). Folkert’s notes do not indicate who the author of the second of these texts might be; Mehta and Kapaḍiyā
(1968 : 167-70) list several other texts by the same name, none of which is very widely known.

*Tattvārthasūtra (Tattvārthādhigamasūtra)*

The 350-verse Sanskrit *Tattvārthasūtra* by Umāsvāti (c. 4th century) is the most famous of the texts on this list, and the one that clearly would be included in anybody's reading list of essential Jain texts. This was the first systematic presentation of Jain doctrine (and in fact went a long way toward creating this systematization) for a pan-Indian audience in the pan-Indian scholarly language of Sanskrit and the pan-Indian genre of śāstra, and so provides a suitable summary of the basics of that doctrine. Starting out with a definition of Jainism as the path to liberation (*mokṣamārga*) consisting of correct faith, knowledge, and conduct (*samyagdarśana*, *samyagjñāna*, and *samyakcāritra*), Umāsvāti then proceeds to outline the Jain understandings of cosmology, ontology, karmic bondage, and liberation. The text itself consists of short, cryptic aphorisms, and so is nearly unintelligible without a commentary. Dozens of them have been composed over the centuries, starting with one that the Śvetāmbara tradition ascribes to Umāsvāti himself. Almost every edition of the text will contain one or more commentaries, some of them older, well-known commentaries in Sanskrit, others more recent vernacular commentaries. Each commentator has leaned heavily on the preceding commentaries, and so any given edition essentially comprises over one thousand years of accumulated tradition.

**Concluding Comments**

This curriculum provides the reader with everything he or she needs to be both an orthodox Jain, who has both *samyagdarśana* or correct faith in the verity of the Jain worldview, and *samyagjñāna* or a correct intellectual understanding of the technical specifics of that worldview. It also provides everything needed to be an orthoprax Jain, who is engaged in *samyakcāritra* and so performs correct ritual conduct in response to that worldview.

By reading the *Tattvārthasūtra* and the *Navatattva*, one will gain an understanding of Jain metaphysics. By reading the various *Saṅgrahāni* and *Kṣetrasamāsa* texts, in addition to the *Tattvārthasūtra*, one will learn the complex Jain theories of cosmology; this Jain vision of a vast universe of souls in bondage underlies the urgency with which Jain teachers urge
the individual to seek liberation. This vision is further explained by reading the texts that explain Jain theories of ontology, the Jīvaviccāra, Daṇḍaka, Tattvārthasūtra, and the Karmagranthas. These last two also provide one with an analysis of the causes and mechanisms of karmic bondage, in other words, the Jain explanation for the imperfect and unsatisfactory human condition. Finally, the other texts in this curriculum provide one with a practical way to respond to this growing understanding of human bondage and suffering. The Pañca Pratikramaṇa Sūtras explain the āvaśyakas, those rituals incumbent upon mendicants as daily practice to advance along the path to liberation. The Triḥāśyas also explain the daily practice, as oriented in three directions: devotion to the Jinas as the exemplars of the possibility of perfecting and liberating the soul, devotion to the gurus as those who are travelling the path of liberation, and the various forms of asceticism that coupled with devotion make up the Jain path. The Navasmarana hymns are not explanatory texts, but rather ritual actualizations of the powers inherent in the Jain path, the performance of which both advance one along the path and provide the mundane protection needed to sustain the Jain community.

This curriculum is specifically a Śvetāmbara Mūrtipūjak one. A similar curriculum for a Digambara, Sthānakavāsi, or Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī layperson would consist of different texts. The topics covered in such a curriculum would be broadly the same, although there would some difference in both specific doctrines and practices and in the overall tenor of the curriculum. This curriculum is in some ways even more specifically Tapā Gaccha, and so a curriculum for a layperson in the Kharatara, Aṭīcalā, Tristuti, Pāśvacandra, or other gacchas would also include some different texts. This very specificity indicates that the careful study of the intellectual history of Jainism needs to pay attention to issues of sectarian affiliation. The portrayal of Jainism as a single set of teachings that is the same regardless of time, place, or sect results in the portrayal of a reified entity that exists more in the scholar’s study than it ever has on the ground in India.

I noted at the outset of this essay that this curriculum provided at Folkert by Muni Jambūvijayjī has a distinctively mendicant cast to it. While many of these are texts that most Mūrtipūjakas mendicants study, it is only the most committed layperson who would have much familiarity with any
of these texts except for the Navasmarāṇas. Nonetheless, one will find copies of some of these texts in a large number of Jain households, and these are the texts to which a Jain interested in learning more about the intellectual foundations of his or her religious tradition would turn. With the exception of the Tattvārthasūtra, this curriculum contains none of the scriptural canon of “original” Jain texts with which Jainologists usually begin their explications of Jainism. But, as Kendall Folkert (1993 : 35-94) so clearly demonstrated, the scholarly predilection to focus exclusively upon “original” texts when studying a religious tradition itself betrays one of the origins of the academic study of religion in Protestant Biblical Studies, a tendency inherited by many scholars who themselves are not Protestant Christians11. But it is not these original texts to which Jains turn when they want to learn about their own tradition, and so it behooves scholars to pay attention more to what Jains might actually read if they want to understand how Jains know what they know.

Annotations:

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Kendall W. Folkert, through whom I was first introduced to Muni Jambūvijayī.


2. Information on the Smarāṇa texts is derived from a variety of popular sources, in particular the introductions found in Navāb and the unattributed 1972 Ahmedabad edition. Traditional dates and attributions of authorship for several of these hymns are clearly improbable. My discussion reflects a Jain self-understanding of the history of these texts and authors, what I have elsewhere (Cort 1995) called a “localized history”, not the voice of text-critical historicist scholarship.

3. Another tradition says he was a contemporary of Neminātha. (His real date seems c. late 5th early 6th cent. A. D.)*

4. For introductions to these topics, see Cort forthcoming-a, Dundes 1998, and Jain 1997.

5. The dynamic tension and interplay between the ideology of the path to liberation (mokṣamārga) and the religious value of wellbeing is the subject of Cort forthcoming-b.

★ See Dhaky, “The Date of Ajita-śānti-stava,” in which
6. Mehta and Kapadiyā 1968: 170-71. On the theory that there were two principal Haribhadras, in addition to later authors by the same name, see Williams 1965. (There are no two early Haribhadra-s as was envisaged by Williams. This point is now becoming increasingly clear. The problem is being discussed elsewhere — Editors.)

7. In addition to the Trīḥāyas and the Karmagranthas discussed herein, Devendrasūri was the author of a commentary on the Pratikramaṇa Sūtras, the Vandāruvrtti; a manual of lay conduct, the Śrāddhadinakṛtya; as well as several books on various topics in Jain metaphysics, praxis, and mytho-history such as the Śūddhapāṅcāśikā, Siddhadaṇḍikā, Dānādikulaka, Dharmaratnaṭīkā, and Sudarṣanācaritra (Mehta and Kapadiyā 1968: 129 and 185). A thorough study of this giant of medieval Śvetāmbara intellectual history is needed. (He also had composed a few fine hymns in Sanskrit.) — Editors.

8. Some scholars are of the opinion that its author was Śivaśarmasūri; see Mehta and Kapadiyā 1968: 128. The length of the text also varies; the edition in the bibliography has 91 verses, Mehta and Kapadiyā (112) say it has 75 verses, and von Glasenapp (1942: xiii) mentions manuscripts containing 70, 75, 77, 89, and 93 verses. (′Śivaśarma′ could be Vācaka Śivanandi [c. 5th cent. A. D.] who had commented on the Jyotisakaraṇḍaka of Pādalipta sūrī I of the mid Kuśāṇa period.) — Editors


10. There has been extensive scholarly discussion of the date of the author and whether the author was Śvetāmbara or Digambara. See Dhaky 1995 and Johnson 1995: 46-7, and the references therein. (In reality, Umāsvāti was never Śvetāmbara or Digambara, nor Boṭika- Kṣapaṇaka or Yāpanīyā. He belonged to the main Northern Indian Nirgranth stream in which mendicants maintained nudity but kept minimum possession a piece of cloth in hand, a single bowl, and the broom. As such, he recognized and respected the āgamas, the doctrines, and the dogmas.) — Editors

11. See also Cort 1990.
I have given readily-accessible modern Gujarati editions of the texts whenever possible, rather than more scholarly critical editions, since the former are what a lay reader is likely to encounter. Dates reflect the copies in my personal collection; most of these texts are regularly reprinted.


*Jivavicāra of Vādivetāla Śaṅtisūri*. Mehsana : Śrīmad Yaśovijayjī Jain Sanśkrit Pāṭhśālā ane Śrī Jain Śreyaskar Maṇḍal, 1985 (10th printing).


MODERN WORKS


