An Investigation of Textual Sources on the *samavasarana* 
("The Holy Assembly of the Jina")

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0. Introduction: 0.1. Preliminary remarks; 0.2. The Canonical *samavasarana*.
2. Other textual material on *samavasarana*: 2.1. Typological survey; 2.2. Remarks.
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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. The Sanskrit word *samavasarana* is a technical term familiar to all Jains. In the modern Indo-Aryan languages they speak (e.g. Hindi, Gujarati) they use it as a loan-word (sometimes with the pronunciation and spelling *samavasaraṇa*). It calls to their minds the event of Enlightenment (*kevala-jñāna*), one of the main auspicious events (*kalyāṇaka*) in the Jinas' biographies followed by their preaching to the whole universe assembled on this occasion. As such it is a "symbolic expression of community" which is present in their daily religious life. The concept is often embodied in their temples in the form of a movable roundish silver structure consisting of three

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1 This contribution, especially its first part, is an expansion of Nalini Balbir, *Āvāya-studien* vol. 1. Stuttgart 1993, p. 65, where the *samavasarana*-topic has been mentioned but not dealt with at length. Over the years, it has benefited from various discussions with both Prof. K. Brunh and Prof. C.B. Tripathi.

2 References given in the usual Sanskrit dictionaries are only to Jaina sources (Hemacandra's *Parīśṭapatarvan* in Monier-Williams, with the meaning "descent (of a Jina from heaven to earth) or place of descent"; Somadeva's *Yasastilakacampō* in Schmidt's Nachträge to the Petersburg Dictionary; Apte gives the same meanings as Monier-Williams without any reference), and to Buddhist sources. On *samavasarana* in Buddhist Sanskrit, see Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* s.v.

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tiers, on the top of which a small statue is placed. In this case, and also if it is an independent stone-structure located inside the temple (e.g. at Abu, Vimalavasahi temple, cell 20; Kumbharia, Mahavir temple) or outside (e.g. at the entrance of the newly built Jaina temple in Leicester, U.K.), or if it is a bronze image (see below 2.1.4), it is a three-dimensional structure. If it is carved or painted on the ceiling of a temple (e.g. Shantinath temple, Kumbharia, North Gujarat; Tiruparuttikunnaram, Tamil Nadu), or if it is a pata or a miniature-painting on a palm-leaf or paper manuscript, it has the appearance of a flat round mandala with three concentric circles, or, less often, it takes the shape of a square. There seems, anyway, to be such a basic connection between samavasarana and any type of representation that samavasarana is mainly deemed as a topic belonging to the study of art, even if the authors do take into account the rich textual material on the subject which is available and start with it: see, for instance, the important ten pages in U.P. Shah’s Studies in Jaina Art (1955), his further remarks in Jaina-śīpa-maṇḍala (1987), or the analysis (by Gopalal Amr) based on Digambara sources in Jaina Art and Architecture (1975). The problem is that these studies tend to lay too much emphasis on the architectural aspect of the samavasarana and to consider all the written sources on the same level, which leads us to think that the samavasarana was always a full-fledged entity that underwent no change. The aim of this paper, which in no way pretends to exhaust the subject, is to examine the textual material in all its variety in an attempt at understanding the Jaina concept of samavasarana and, more generally, the classical Indian conception of “sacred space”. Like other cognate Indian forms (e.g. stūpa and maṇḍala), samavasarana belongs to the field of the history of religions. If for no other reason, the investigation of the written sources may be justified by the fact that the first texts (however vague their dates may be) probably much antedate any of the representations of the samavasarana available to us. Moreover we have no right to neglect the written sources, since we are lucky enough to have them: those who study the stūpa could rightly be envious. Although the Digambara sources cannot be omitted in an attempt towards a comprehensive understanding of the samavasarana, they will remain in the background and will not be studied so intensively as their Śvetāmbara counterparts which present a “less complex” picture. The Digambara data would deserve a full-fledged investigation which goes far beyond the scope of the present paper.

0.2. In the early scriptures (Angas and Upāṇgas) of the Śvetāmbaras, the substantive samosadhe is not as frequent as the verb which is almost exclusively used as a past participle, AMg. samosadhe (v.l. samosarīe) in two kinds of stereotype formulas: 

(a) samane Bhagavam Matāvire ...gāmāngamānamā damājamānam iham āgāne, iha sampaste, iha samosadhe, iha Campade nayari bāhīṃ Puṣṭabhaddhe cetō ahd-pādīravam oggahām oṣīnīhī samāmeṇam tavaś appānāṃ bhāvemāṃ viharāḥ (Aupsatikstutā 38; etc.).

1 See, for instance, M. Benuisti, “Entretenu sur le stūpa dans l’Inde ancienne”, Bull. de l’Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient, L. 1 (1960) p. 89: “Les textes sanskrits décrivant le stūpa sont des plus rares”. This remains partly true although new documents have come to light since then: see, for instance, G. Roth’s contribution to The stūpa, its religious, historical and architectural significance, ed. by A.L. Dallapiccola, Wiesbaden 1980, p. 183ff. (see below 2.2.2).


3 Results based on the examination of all occurrences given in the Āgamasādabodha (Ladun). The use of the substantive (in the plural) to designate various non-orthodox doctrines (cf. Sūtrakṛtāṅga 1,12 and Bhagavat XXX) is not considered here.
The subject of the verb is mostly the name of a Jina (Mahāvīra, Arsiṇāṃ, Munisūvra), but can also be any Elder (thera) of the Jain community (Śuddhārma, Thāveccaṇu). The first part of the Aupāpatika-sūtra, which bears the title "samavasaraṇa", forms the standard text on the topic and gives substance to the mere sketch of (a) and (b). The scenery of the place where Mahāvīra will sit consists of the following items: a park outside the city, a sanctuary (cei; Sk. caitya), an asoka-tree in the centre of the enclosure (various decorations), and a place to sit at the foot of the tree (§§ 1-10). The audience consists of lay-persons, ascetics and gods. The emphasis is laid on the preparation of the audience for the event, on the preaching of the Law which is attended by others by the main representative of the lay-community, i.e. the king, and its spiritual outcome, viz. taking the vows or giving up worldly life by the audience. The samavasaraṇa is basically a speech-act. The communication between the speaker and the audience is assured since the Jina's language (Aradhāmāgaddha) has the faculty of translating itself in such a way that it becomes each person's own language:

... sā vi naṃ addhāmāgahā bhāsā tesim savesim ariya-m-anāriyāṇam appaṇo sabhāsa parināmenaṃ parināmata (Aupāpatika-sūtra § 56).

On the other hand, the communion is also increased by the possibility of a dialogue. The solemn preaching of the Jina is often the occasion for a member of the audience to ask him a question in order to get an explanation about the apparently strange destiny of himself or of somebody else. The riddle is solved after the Jina has unfolded the intricate network of the previous births. This element, which was to become a popular motif in the later narrative literature, already appears in some Canonical sources: e.g. sāmi-samāsaranam, sāvaka-dhamman, puuva-bhava-puccaḥ (Vipākāstruta 2,1,1). More generally, any type of questioning is closely associated with the samavasaraṇa. To sum up: At this early stage, samavasaraṇa is a solemn event and it may refer to any solemn preaching of any person having the necessary qualifications for it. It does not refer to any structure and nowhere designates the place where the preaching takes place. The main component of the setting is a sacred tree. The large audience as described in the Aupāpatika-sūtra (§ 56) does not explicitly include animals.

1. The samavasaraṇa-tract preserved in the exegetical literature

The first full-fledged record coming close to what we usually understand by samavasaraṇa is a "tract" or "block" of 52 Prakrit (Jaina Māhārāṣṭri) verses (āryā) found in the earliest layer of the Jaina exegetical literature (first centuries after Christ), viz. Āvāṣyakārvikya (hereafter N) and Bhātakalpabhaṣya (hereafter K). This text presents the archetype of the classical Śvetāmbara samavasaraṇa. It can be considered as the original pattern of all later Śvetāmbara accounts (below 2) and has been either partly reproduced in some of them (below 1.3) or at least used for wording in Prakrit or Sanskrit; Hemacandra's Trisāṭṭhālakāpurusācarita (12th cent.) is the best representative of such a process.

1.1. Contexts

The nirukti-s and bhāsya-s are not "commentaries" in the strict sense of the term. As stated by Prof. Bruhn (in one of his striking sayings), they are rather "pseudo-exegetical vis-à-vis the sūtras" on which they are allegedly based. This has two
effects: the explanations we would expect are often lacking and topics we would not think of looking for there are found. The samavasarana-tract in the Brhadakalpabhyasa is an instance of the second tendency. This extensive bhaya (6490 verses) is based on a disciplinary sutra which discusses the rules of conduct (kalpa) of monks and nuns. The samavasarana-tract appears fully unexpected, a metrical block (vss. 1176-1217) hardly connected with the rest. The efforts of the Sanskrit commentator to hide what could appear to us as a shortcoming in the composition are comparatively meagre. The verse preceding the beginning of the tract contains the word kouga(hı)m ("wonder, etc.") explained as follows: kaukuka samavasarana, adi-grahana bhagavato dharmadeśanā-sravanādi-parigraha, ata kai idam samavasarana? iti tad-vaktvayatam pratipādayiṣur dvāra-gūhām āha (p. 365); it serves as an excuse to include the samavasarana-tract. The concluding remarks point in the same direction: evaṁ tāvat samavasarana-vaktvayat prasangata ukā (p. 377). As a matter of fact, the adverb prasangatah ("incidentally") is normally used to indicate an excursus or an alien element interrupting the main thread of ideas of the work. Here it probably also implies that samavasarana was such a well-known topic that it had somehow to be included. In this text, it is certainly one of those "specific units which are known a priori and which do not participate in the intricacies of the text to the same extent as the other portions". 18

In the Āvaśyaka-tradition, the connection of the unit with the whole is less disorientating. The samavasarana-tract (vss. 543-590) forms one block attached towards the end of the "Universal History" section of the Āv.-niryukti, and just precedes the Ganadhavarāḍa, the concluding block of this section (vss. 591-659). 19 The word ganadhara, appearing in the last verses of the samavasarana-tract helps to connect it with the next tract and at the same time accounts for its inclusion at the place where it is found, namely in connection with Mahāvira (the only Jina to have ganadhara.s) and not in connection with Rṣabha or any other Jina. What we find for them is only a reference to the spiritual outcome of their samavasarana.s, viz. the number of people who entered the sangha (N 265, 344-345). By inserting the tract after Mahāvira’s attainment of kevala-jñāna has been stated, the Āvaśyaka-tradition provides a starting point for the fixing of the pair kevala-jñāna / samavasarana which

became so prevailing and indissociable in the later sources (see below 2.1.1). 20

1.2. Structure and stratification

In our two parallel traditions, the subject of samavasarana is dealt with in the usual fashion of Jaina exegetical literature: the programme of the tract is outlined in a list of catch-words in telegram-style (dvāra-gūhā), either in the stem-form or in the nominative (ending in -e in the present case, which may denote an old verse); it is followed by its gradual development, and includes an illustrative anecdote (vs. 40, below 1.4.3). But one thing is clear: we are neither in possession of the "Ur-samavasarana-tract", nor of a complete tradition. What we have is a set of 52 Prakrit verses, a Prakrit prose-commentary related to these verses as handed down by the Āv.-tradition (the Āv.-cūṇi), and the Sanskrit works of two commentators: Haribhadra (8th cent.) for the Āv.-tradition 21 and Kṣemākirti (12th cent.) for the Brhadakalpa-tradition. But some of their statements show that they knew and consulted other sources (especially Prakrit) which are now extinct: thus Haribhadra (on vs. 12 of the tract) quotes a Prakrit sentence from the mūlaśākā-kṛt or refers to anonymous groups (apare tu, on vs. 47) whom we cannot identify, whereas the two cūṇis on the Brhadakalpabhyasa used by Kṣemākirti (again on vs. 12) and the Vīśeṣacārṇī quoted by him (for vss. 19bis-22bis) are still unpublished. These references and quotations (more important in the case of samavasarana than elsewhere) suggest that there were some discussions of the topic among specialists.

Differences of opinions concern firstly the subdivisions of the tract. Vs. 1 runs:

samosaraṇe, kevayā, ruva, puccha, vāgarana, soya-parināme, dānam ca, deva-malle, mallanāyaṇe, uvari tithe 22

The words and their sequence are well-established, and no variant is recorded which could help us in restoring a correct rhythm for the first line. An attempt to connect the list with the subsequent verses on the basis of the vocabulary used therein is possible:

20 According to the Āv.-tradition (N 265 and 540), this is in fact Mahāvira’s second samavasarana.

21 In this precise case, the later commentators of the Āv.-niryukti, such as Malayagiri and Jñānaśāgara do not contribute anything new. I shall therefore refer only to "Haribhadra" as a representative of this tradition.

22 So eds. See below for the reading and the metre of the first line.
items and is very clear about their contents, described respectively in vss. 31–35, 36, 37–38; the Āv.-commentaries rather feel that they should somehow be combined together but hesitate about the way to proceed: does the question turn on the Jina’s beauty (rūva-puccha) or on the nature of his exposé (vāgarana-puccha)? Whatever the solution, the metre of the first line as it is not correct. A way to emend it would be to read rūvam instead of rūva, and to consider that the word puccha (without any real equivalent in the subsequent verses, except for tena) was a later insertion as a separate entry of the programme.

That the samavasaraṇa-tract underwent reworkings and some kind of enlarging is clearly proved by the groups of verses numbered 19-22 / 19bis-22bis. From the point of view of the contents both groups are similar and run parallel: they provide an explanation of vss. 16 (called saṃgraha-gāthā by Kṣemakīrti) and 18 which give a bare list of gods and human beings who attend the Jina’s samavasaraṇa by telling us where precisely they should take up a position. But the difference of wording in the two traditions (Āv. / Bṛhatkalpa) is a proof that these verses are parallel expansions which were not a part of the "original" tract. The commentators are aware of this: Haribhadra ascribes these verses to the bhāṣya-kāra; Kṣemakīrti quotes them in his Sanskrit commentary but does not admit them on the same level as the other verses of the tract and seems to indirectly criticize Haribhadra and those who agree with him.24

Another sign of textual manipulation is provided by the fact that vss. 3-6 are found only in the Āv.-niruktī as handed down by Haribhadra and the later commentators, but are totally absent from the Bṛhatkalpaḥśya and from the Āv.-cūrṇī. In this case, it is quite clear that the Bṛhatkalpaḥśya and the Āv.-cūrṇī have both preserved the older tradition, and that vss. 3-6 are one example of a post-cūrṇī insertion in the Āv.-niruktī. As a matter of fact, vss. 3-5 tell how the Abhiyoga gods (a kind of servant-class) richly prepared the ground with jewels, spread flowers of all colours everywhere around, and created in all four directions doors with their usual ornaments (śālabhāṣṭika-figures and banners having the image of the god of Love). These verses are made of semi-poetical and rather awkward clichés (see the repetition of the compound maṇi-kaṇaga-rayana-cītīm, vss. 3 and 5) which could apply anywhere and are borrowed from the Canon: it would be easy to show how what we have here

24 Arthastare bhāṣyādarṣeṣu keśucal etā gāthā dhīyante ... etā ca dvayor api cūrṇayor agraḥitaṁ prakṛpe-gāthāḥ sambhāvyante, Kṣemakīrti.
is a versification of the Abhiyogas' tasks as described in the Rājapraśāniya. As for vs. 6, it is a kind of duplicate of vss. 7 and 8, which strangely interrupts the regular line of the development:

pāgāra-tiyāṃ (vs. 2)
tinnī ya pāgāra-vare .... kavisīsaga... (vs. 6)
pāgāra tinnī (vs. 7)
kavisīsā (vs. 8)

A final case, very similar to the preceding, is provided by vss. 9-10 which, again, are absent both in the Āv.-cūrṇi and in the Bṛhatkalpaḥāsyāya. They describe in emphatic terms the exuberant turmoil accompanying the celebration of the Jina's samavasaraṇa and the perfumed incense-pots magically created by the gods.

In short, there seems to be enough evidence to indicate that the two slightly different versions of the samavasaraṇa-tract which we have are reworkings of an old independent source embozed in different contexts. A similar hypothesis was expressed by E. Leumann in his unpublished edition of the Āvaśyaka-prose commentaries:

"Dieses über das Samosaraṇa handelnde Niryukt-Stück findet sich mit Ausnahme der offenbar secundären Strophes 20-23, 26f., 36-39 [i.e., in our numbering vss. 3-6, 9-10, 19-22], wieder in Kalpaḥāsyāya 1,370-411. Auch die zugehörigen Ausführungen unserer Cūrṇi stimmen wörtlich überein mit dem betreffenden Teil der KalpaCūrṇi; nur fehlen in der letzten nebst den einleitenden Worten die an V.18 angelehnten Bemerkungen, die eben nur eine Anknüpfung an Vorhergehendes bezwecken und eigentlich nichts von Belang enthalten, sondern einfach V.23-28 und 45 Anf. in gekürzter Form anticipieren. Bei der literargeschichtlichen Wichtigkeit des so in doppelter Weise überlieferten (vielleicht gemeinsamlich einem früheren Werk entnommen) Samosaraṇa-Commentarien haben wir denselben in extenso aus [wobei wir wie früher die Abweichungen der KalpaCūrṇi durch C anmerken]."

1.3. Critical edition

Material used

— Āvaśyaka-niryuktī (N, Bh) 543-590: text handed down by the various commen-
tors: Haribhadra (p. 230a-239b), Malayagiri (p. 301a-311a), Jñānāsāgara (p. 297-309). For this section the traditional numbering used in manuscripts, in the ed. of the Āv.-cūrṇi and by Leumann, is section V, vss. 18-69.


— Later Śvetāmbara literature where verses of the tract are quoted as such or, more often, have to be identified as quotations: Nemicanda (12th cent.), Mahāvīra-cariya, p. 60a-62a ( = MVC; ed. Muni Caturvijaya, Bhavnagar vikram sam. 2044; reprint Shri Jaina Shāsana Ārādhana Trust); Jainprabhasūrī (14th cent.), Vividha-Tirtha-Kalpa No. 46, vss. 20-38(2) ( = VTK; ed. Muni Jinavijaya, Shantiniketan 1934: Singhi Jain Series 10). These verses are:

15cd: MVC 1408cd 19-22 quoted MVC 1421-1424 24: VTK 26
24-25: MVC 1425-1426 28: VTK 27 30: VTK 28

1.3. Critical edition

Programme of the tract

1. samosaraṇā, kevaiyā, rūva(m), [puccha], vāgarāṇa, soya-parināme, dānaṃ ca, deva-malle, mallāṇayaṇe, uvari tithe (N 543 = K 1176)

Samosaraṇa; below 1.4.1

2. jattha avpuv’-osaraṇaṃ, jattha va devo mat-iḍhio eivā-udaya-puppha-vaddala23-pāgāra-tiyāṇ ca Abhihogā (N 544 = K 1177)

3. mani-kaṇaga-rayaṇa-citam bhūmi-bhāgaṃ samantau surabhīṃ ā-joaṃ-antaraṇaṃ kareṇi deva vicittam tu (N 545)

4. veṣṭa-ṭhāṃ surabhīṃ jala-thalayaṃ diva-kusuma-nīhariṃ pairant samanteṇa das’-addha-vanpaṃ kusuma-vasaṃ (N 546)

5. mani-kaṇaga-rayaṇa-citam cau-didhip pariṇaṃ vīvanti sa-cchatta-sālabhanjiya24-mayaraddhaya-cudha-sañhāre (N 547)

6. tinnī ya pāgāra-vare rayāṇa-vicittate tahirṇa sura-gaṇ’-indā

25 On vs. 1-19, see below 2.1.5.
26 Vadhala-labda udaka-puppayoh prayeyam abhisambadhyate, Haribhadra.
27 Śālabhānīkāḥ stambha-puttalikāḥ, Haribhadra.
21. avareqā Bhavaṇavā Ṛanta-Joisa-surā ya aigantun
avar-uttara-disi-bhāge thanti jīmaṇ to namanṣiṇī (Bh 118)
(2bis. Joisīya Bhavaṇa Vanaṭaya, sa-sambhama laiya-kundala-dharaṇa
pavisaṇi pavciimeṇa ṹi tunga-dippanta-sihaṇeṇa, K)
22. sa-mah-'indā kappū-sura rāya ṇara-nāro udīṇeṇa
pavisaṇi puvv-uttara-disi ciṇṭhaṇi panjaiṭa (Bh 119)
(2bis. sa-mah-'indā Kappovaca-deva rāya nāro ya nāro
pavisaṇi uttareṇa pavara-maṇi-māthin-ōheṇa, K)
23. ekk-ekkāya desā tīgam tīgam ho sannuviṭhadu tu;
ādi-carine viniṣṭic thī-purīṣa; sasā patteyaṃ (N 561 = K 1188)
24. entaṃ maḥ-'idhiyam panvayantī thīsam avī vayantī paṇamantā;
ṇa va jantaṇa na vikāha na parippara-macchara na bhayaṃ (N 562 = K 1189)
25. bīyaṃni honi tīriyā, taie pāga-ra-mantare jāṇa;
pāgara-jadhe tīriyā vi honi patteya missā va (N 563 = K 1190)
26. savvaṃ ca, desa-viratīṃ, sammam ghucchati va hoti kahāṇa u
ihārī amudha-lakkho na kahi bhavissai na tam ca (N 564 = K 1191)
27. maṇu ca-m-annayaram; tīriṃ niṇa va duve va paḍvaije;
ja n'athī niyamaco cciya suresu sammatta-paviyattti (N 565 = K 1192)
28. tiṭṭha-paṇāmaṃ kāuṃ kaihe sāharaṇena saḍdeṇaṃ
davesaṃ samṣiṃnaṃ joyana-thānihinā bhagaṇaṃ (N 566 = K 1193)
29. ta-puṇyayā arahayā pūya-pūya ya vinayaka-kammam ca
kaya-kicco vi jaha kahāṃ kahaṃ nama tāhā tiṭṭham (N 567 = K 1194)

How many? (kevaiyā); starts here according to K and Av. cūra
30. jattha apuvvol-saranana na diṭṭha-puvaṃ (N 568 = K 1195)
31. bansahā, āhāra, anuttarā ya jāva Vanaṇ Cakkhi Vāsu Bālā
Maṇḍaliyā tā hiṇa; cha-thāṇa-gaya bhavaḥ sesā (N 570 = K 1197)

27. Ekkekki, K.
29. Na diṭṭha-puvaṃ, K; adiṭṭhapaṭṭaṃ, VTK.
33. sanghayana, rūva, saṃthaṇa, vaṇṇa, gai, sattā, sāra, uṣsāsa ³³
   em-äi 'nuttarāṁ havanti nāmōdaṁ tassa (N 571 = K 1198)

34. pagāḍīṇaṁ anāṇuṁ vi parasatthā udāyā anuttāṁ honūti
   khaya uvasame vi ya taḥa khayāmi avigappam ḍhāṁsu ³⁹
   (N 572 = K 1199)

35. assāya-m-aśyā jā vi ya a-suhā havanti pagāḍī
   ṃīmba-rasa-lavo vva pa eşa honūti tā a-suḥyā tassa (N 573 = K 1200)

36. dhammādānaṁ rūvaṁ kareṇa rūvassino vi jai dhammaṁ
   gījha-vāo ya su-rūva pasasamo tena rūvaṁ tu ⁴⁰
   (N 574 = K 1201)

Exposé (vāgarāṇa); below 1.4.3

37. kālēna sanaskēna vī sankhātītā naṃsaśaṇan tu
   mā samsaya-vocchittī na hōja kama-vāgarāṇa-dosā
   (N 575 = K 1202)

38. savvattha avisāmattham riddhi-visesa akāla-haraṇaṁ ca
   savvaṇṇa-paccaco vi ya acinta-gunā-bhūtio jugavaṇṇ (N 576 = K 1203)

Impact of the Jina’s exposé on the audience (soya-pariṇāme); below 1.4.3

39. vāsōdayassa va jahā vaṇṇadī honūtī bhāyaṇa-visesa
   savveseṁ pi sa-bhāṣaṁ ⁴¹ Jīna-bhāṣa parināme evaṁ
   (N 577 = K 1204)

40. sāhārāṇasavatte tad-uvango ⁴² u gāhaga-gīrāe
   na ya nivijjīya soyaḥ kidīḥ-vānīya-dūrī-hāranā (N 578 = K 1205)

41. savvaṇṇaṁ pi soyaḥ khavejja ⁴³ jai hu savayaṁ ḍiṇo kahae
   sī'-uṇha-khup-pivāsā-parissama-bhac avivaṇento
   (N 579 = K 1206)

Gift (dānaṁ); below 1.4.3

42. viti u suvaṇṇpassa bārasa addhama ca sayasaḥsāṁ
   tāvayaṁ ciya koḍi piti-dānaṁ ca Cakkissa ⁴⁴ (N 580 = K 1207)

43. evaṁ c’eva pamānāṁ naṭharaṁ rayayaṁ tu Kesavā denti;

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³³ Úsāsā, K; nāmodāya, K; Haribhadra seems to understand the whole line as one compound.
³⁹ Payaṇaṇaḥ annaṇaḥ avī, K; pagāḍīṇaṁ anāṇuṁ vi ti saṣṭhy-arthe saptami, Haribhadra.
⁴⁰ Gajjavaco, K; rūvaṁ evaṁ tu, K.
⁴¹ So K and Malayagiri; sa-bhāṣa, Haribhadra.
⁴² Taovavo, K.
⁴³ JhaAppenda, K, VTK.
⁴⁴ Priḍhaṇṇaṁ tu Cakkissa, K.
1.4. Discussion of specific issues

The programme of the samavasaraṇa-tract includes items of different kinds. Samosaraṇe, the first and the longest item, deals with what concerns the place of the preaching and is thus connected to the study of what historians of religions call "sacred space". The next terms of the list are the starting point for theoretical discussions meaningful in the setting of Jaina dogmatics and also constitute attempts at justifying why certain elements of the samavasaraṇa are what they are. The last items relate to magico-religious rituals and seem to possess an archaic flavour. The dogmatic and ritual aspects are peculiar to the samavasaraṇa-tract in all its versions. In other sources (see below 2), they almost disappear and the architectural aspect comes in the foreground.

1.4.1. Samavasaraṇa as a sacred space

First of all, it is important to note that the main agents for all the tasks connected with the samavasaraṇa are the gods. This is not unexpected. They are known from the Canon to participate in all the main episodes of a Jina’s life. In the Aćārāṅga (II, 15), they are instrumental in Mahāvīra’s incarnation in his mother’s womb, in the transplantation of the embryo, on the occasion of his birth, on the day of his renunciation, on the day when he reaches Omniscience and they also attend his first general preaching. In the Kalpasūtra (Jinacarita), they are mentioned on the occasion of the Jina’s incarnation, transplantation, night of birth, renunciation and nirvāṇa. In some cases, "gods" mean only Śakra alone, in others, it means specific groups, especially the following four:

Bhavanavāsin, Vyanṭara, Jyotiṣka, Vaimānika

who are also those mentioned in the context of samavasaraṇa. The categories of gods involved and the respective part played by them depend on the magnificence of the samavasaraṇa. Vss. 2 and 12 draw a (rather unclear) distinction between the extraordinary (apīrva) samavasaraṇa where all categories of gods participate and the ordinary one (sādhārana) where all tasks can be performed by any god who is present. The following description is applicable to the first case.

The first task of the gods is the establishment of a sacred space clearly separate from its surroundings. This is done by inferior gods (Abhiyoga) through purification by the means gods usually have at their disposal: rains of water, flowers and a "world-destruction-storm" (vāya, vs. 2, for samavataya vāya, Āv.-cūṇi 325.11). The brief evocation of vs. 2 and the corresponding prose of the Āv.-cūṇi are an echo of stereotyped Canonical passages used for similar occasions, e.g. Jambutrīpiṇaprājāpati V describing the birth-consecration performed by the gods for every new-born Jina. Many details of the samavasaraṇa architecture also recall the construction of the god Śurīyāha’s flying palace described at length in the Canonical Rājapraṣāṇya (see already above 1.2).

The mention of the three walls (vs. 7) shows that the samavasaraṇa-space is a constructed area. At this stage there is no clear specification about the exact geometrical shape (circular / square). The institution of a hierarchy and of different levels of sanctity in the three zones so defined is the main point. It is present in the form of a network of correspondences between different planes, as is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wall</th>
<th>Divine architects</th>
<th>Corresponding world of the Jaina cosmology</th>
<th>Material of the wall / of the coping (vs. 8 kaviṣa)</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner</td>
<td>Vaimānikas</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Jewels (rubies) / gems</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Jyotiṣkas</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Gold / rubies</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer</td>
<td>Bhavanavāsin</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Silver / gold</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the symbolic connection between the classes of gods and the type of material used for the walls is not explained in the texts and is not clear, this kind of correspondence is not unknown. We are partly reminded of the town of the Cakravartin as it is described in Buddhist sources: each of its seven concentric walls corresponds to

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24 While vs. 7 only puts the terms side by side, the prose commentaries relate them to each other without ambiguity: abhīhatarīlam pāḍāram Vemāṇyōdeva karenī, mahījhimā Jotīṣyā, bāhirāram Bhavanavāsī karenī. abhīhatarīlam Vamāna, mahījhimā kanyāgama, bāhirāram rayatamaya, Āv.-cūṇi 325.13-14, very similar to 325.2-4: anupūryā, Haribhadra; yathādraṭum, Kṣemākṛiti.
25 Information on colour is available only in the extract from one of the two Bhaktalakṣaṇas as quoted by Kṣemākṛiti (p. 367): atra Viṭeka-cūrṇāḥ tināṃ Viṭeka-dṛṣṭaye: cauḍāvyāṁ tinām pāḍārā raiḥjānti caudārā, abhīhatarīlī lohīyakheṣīṁ, mahījhimī piṭākeḥ, bāhirārīlī sacyeḥīṁ, savvo samosaraṇa-bhāgo jayōnaṁ. abhīhatarī-narjīhīmā pāḍāroṇaṁ antaraṁ jayaṁ. mahīhima-bāhīhimaṁ pāḍāroṇaṁ antaraṁ āvahitāṁ. 
one type of precious stone. More generally, the map of the samavasarana also refers us to the traditional pattern of city planning in South Asia, where life is organized in concentric circles revolving around a central temple. On the other hand, the mention of only three groups of gods (the Vyantaras are here absent), each referring to one of the three worlds of the Jain cosmology, is a way of suggesting that the samavasarana is an image of the cosmos (below 2.2.4). The higher they are in the vertical image of the worlds, the closer to the centre they are. About the material of the walls, the striking and queer thing is that the list mixes ratna-s, for the first one, and dhātu-s (gold and silver), for the second and the third. The general connection between rubies and sun in the Indian tradition might account for the fact that rubies are used for the central part.

The central point of the sacred space is the place where the objects meant for the Jina are located. According to vs. 11, they are: a sacred tree (aśoka, prose commentaries), a small stool at the foot of the tree surmounted with a canopy (chandaya), a throne surmounted with superposed umbrellas and fly-whisks. Ca (in ḫaṁ caṇaṁ, vs. 11) is understood by the commentators as implying a wheel of the Law (dharma-cakka) placed on a lotus-flower. However, there seems to have been diverging traditions about the gods who are involved in the preparation of these objects: the Vyantaras according to the verse tract and all the prose-commentaries (Āv.-cūrṇi, Haribhadra, Kṣemakīrti), other gods of a better status according to another (apparently contradictory) passage: the aśoka-tree is fashioned by Śakra, umbrellas and fly-whisks by Iśāna, other objects by Bali and Camara (Āv.-cūrṇi 325.5-6). Except for the tree (already present in the Canonical sources as the main sign of the preaching setting) and the dharma-cakra, all objects point to a royal figure rather than to an ascetic. However, the wonder of the arising of lotuses where the Jina (or the new-born Bodhisattva) steps (vs. 13) may refer to both ascetic and royal milieus.
The sequence of directions of entry underlines the importance ascribed to the eastern direction which is the starting point of the circle. On the spiritual level it corresponds to the most advanced stage. It is therefore the place from where the religious community enters, in an order which reflects the level of the different groups: The ganadhara.s are the closest to the Jina in space as they are close to him from the point of view of their knowledge and behaviour; the elder one must be very close (vs. 14cd). Our tract introduces a hierarchy among the members of the religious community.

Some features of this location of different groups are difficult to explain. If it is possible to understand why the Vaimânikas are separated from other groups of gods, since they are normally said to have more ability for right faith, the fact that their gods and goddesses side with human beings is puzzling. The place of the Vaimânika goddesses after the monks but before the nuns may suggest that they are closer to spiritual achievement than the nuns. Why the directions other than east correspond to the groups of gods / goddesses remains an unanswered question. The insistence is on an organization based on triads. The fact that only the north-eastern and south-eastern groups are mixed (males and females together) is explicitly stated (vs. 23).

The hierarchy is based not only on the places in the respective quarters, but also on the posture (standing / seated) which determines a sub-hierarchy within certain groups. It is explicitly stated for the north-eastern group: only the male

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Beings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>ganadhara.s, kevalin.s, monks having special powers (labdhī.s) and all types of knowledge except Omnisience, other monks, Vaimânika-goddesses, nuns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>Goddesses of the following three classes: Bhavannāsīn, Jyotisīka, Vyantara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>Gods of the following three classes: Bhavannāsīn, Jyotisīka, Vyantara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>Vaimânika gods, men, women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

members of the religious order are allowed to sit, while both the Vaimânika-goddesses and the nuns stand: thāyantī, na nisidantī, as the Āv.-cūrṇī says (327.8-9). The fact that no clear specification is given in the case of other groups (only thāyantī: "take their positions"? or "stand?" is used) has slightly annoyed Haribhadra, and is also a problematic issue for some later sources (cf. 2.1.5):

    atra ca mālaṅkā-kāreṇa Bhavanapati-devi-prabhūrinām sthānaṁ niṣidanaṁ vā spaśāksarair nōtām, avasthāna-māram eva pratipāditaṁ, pūrvācārāyopādesa-liṅkita-paṭṭakādī-citrakarma-balena tu sarvā eva devyo na niṣidantī, devah pūruṣāḥ strīyaṁ ca niṣidantīti pratipādavyanī kacana iti ayaṁ prasangena (Haribhadra 233b.1-3).

We note, en passant, that in order to sort out this point Haribhadra clearly refers to the existence of iconographic material and to its being based on an old tradition (pūrvācārāyopādesa-liṅkita-paṭṭaka), which indicates that already in his time (8th cent.) the representation of samavasarana was common.

The middle and outer circles are of decreasing sanctity. Their organization seems to be a little looser. The middle circle is allotted to animals, and the outer one is the place for all vehicles, especially those of the gods (vs. 25ab). The freedom is even greater outside the compound, where the choice between segregation and mixture is possible (vs. 25cd), and where all categories of beings may be represented: according to the commentators, vi (in irīryā vi) means "also gods and human beings". However, the general striking and original feature of the samavasarana is its religious (spiritual)-based organization, in accordance with the basic principles of the Jain doctrine and its favouring of a teaching meant for all (pravacana), conversely, its avoidance of any social criterion: according to our tract, all human beings take their places in the same quarter (north-east), which supposes that they are all able to progress. The interpretation may have slightly changed later on: a late samavasarana-paṭṭa has in its legend the words strāvaka and strāvikā, i.e. Jain lay-followers, instead of a generic term (nara / nāri; manuṣya, etc.).

1.4.2. Ritual aspect of the samavasarana.

The final phase of the samavasarana is the occasion for a curious magico-religious rite. The Prakrit term malla (in deva-malla / mallāṇyāṇa, vs. 1) used for its designation in the verse-programme is apparently an hapax legomenon and perhaps some kind of taboo-word. The Āv.-cūrṇī (332.13) understands devamalla as a chrono-

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62 Most textual and pictorial sources usually only distinguish the following three groups: monks, Vaimânika-goddesses and nuns. See, for instance, the samavasarana-paṭṭa in C. Caillat - Ravi Kumar, The Jain cosmology, No. 5, where the legend reads sādhu, Vaimānikadevi, sādhvi.

63 Tirīyā vi: api-sabdā manuṣyā devā api, Haribhadra and Kṣemakṛti.
logical designation of the precise moment when the first porisi after sunrise is over (viz. around 9 a.m.). However, malla is attested neither in the verses developing the entry (vss. 46-49), nor in the prose-commentaries, where it is artificially sanskritised as mâlya and replaced by a more common word: bâli (fem.; see above 1.3. note on vs. 49), i.e. religious offerings. One must avoid an improper offering (qubâlî). A proper offering consists of one âdhaga (= four prastha.s) of high quality rice, full, cleaned, without impurity. The adjectives recur elsewhere, for instance in the Tandulavacaîrika-prakîrîkâ. The syntagm bâli pavisai ("the offerings enter") is a metonymic designation. In the account of the Âv.-cûriî, the relevant passage runs as follows:

"At the end of the first porisi (deva-malle) either the king or his minister, or a leading person from city (pauram!) or village enters with (offerings) through the eastern door. They are surrounded by the gods and the sound of musical instruments. So much for the bringing. When the offerings have entered and are inside the inner wall, the Tirthâmâkara, who was preaching the Law, becomes silent. Then the king and others, the offerings in their hands, surrounded by the gods, perform a triple pradaîsî of the Tirthâmâkara and put the offerings at his feet. The gods take half of them, without letting them fall on the ground. Half of the rest the king takes. The rest is taken by the people. Then, if a lump of rice is thrown (by the Jina) on to the head of somebody, his previous diseases will cease, and for the next six months he will not get any new disease. After the offerings have been made, the Tirthâmâkara gets up, goes out through the northern door of the first (innermost) wall, and in the east where the divine canopy (devacchandaya) is, there he sits as if in meditation (samâdhi) (333.1-7)."

The solemnity of the event is emphasized by the contrast between the music and the silence of the Jina. The offerings have a symbolic value. They seal the exchange-process between the Jina and the audience and they are a further sign of the perfect cohesion of all actors and participants in the samavasarana, since gods, representatives of the society and the Jina have their own part to play. The going and coming of the offerings from the king and people to the Jina and back, as well as their sharing among all participating groups, also point in the same direction. Their power comes from the fact that they have been endowed with a supplementary value through their direct contact with the Jina. The specification about the fact that they should not fall is important: the holy contact should not be broken under any circumstances. The whole process evokes the familiar gesture of the Jaina monks, when, at the end of their vyâkhyâns, they shower handfuls of white or coloured grains of rice which the audience eagerly catches, or the Hindu prasâd.

1.4.3. Samavasarana and Jaina dogmatics

The samavasarana-tract is an opportunity to emphasize certain fundamental ideas of the Doctrine.

The main aim of the samavasarana, achieved by the Jina’s preaching and favoured by the all-pervading peaceful atmosphere, since, as an often quoted half-verse says, "there is neither oppression, nor wrong talk, nor mutual hate, nor fear" (vs. 24cd), is to help beings in their spiritual progress. This is expressed (vs. 26) through the chain savam (abbreviation for savva-viraîm), desa-viraîm and sammaîm (= suyaîm and sammaîm, cf. N 796). This chain defines the basic concept of sâmâyika, broadly "equanimity" or ability to consider all beings as having as much importance as oneself, and enlists its four stages in descending order: full renunciation (of ascetics), partial renunciation (of laypersons), scriptural knowledge and right faith. The number and the nature of varieties accessible are related to the class of beings to which one belongs. Human beings can reach any of the four stages, while animals may attain the second or at the most the third stage. In case no human being or animal reaches the first stage, at least one of the gods attains it.

The qualities of dâna (vs. 42-45) are extolled. The gifts of money are meant as awards offered by the king to the person, an official or not, who has brought the announcement that a samavasarana is to be held (vs. 44). As is well-known, this figure has become a standard character in the narrative literature. The amounts to be offered are not fixed and depend on the wealth possessed in the case of ordinary
kings, but are fixed and extraordinarily large in the case of Cakravartins, members of heroic triads (Baladeva/Vāsudeva/Pratīvāsudeva), or so-called mandaliya.s.69 They decrease in quality (gold/silver) and quantity from one case to the other. The dry list of words defining the good reasons to perform such offerings (given in vs. 45) looks stereotype and could fit anywhere: desire to please the gods, proof of devotion, sign of worship, reinforcing of the religious community, desire to show one’s sympathy to the person who has announced such good news, to propagate the Jain faith and to perform a good karman.

The peculiarity of the samavasaraṇa-tract is also to consider that certain points are not self-evident and need justification to be understood in the proper way.

The first question is: Why does the Jina pay respects to the tīrtha before he starts preaching (vss. 28-29) although he has reached the Goal (kaya-kicca vi)? The term tīrtha has different connotations: the Jaina community (ascetics and lay-followers), the corpus scriptorum, the supreme knowledge (kevāla-jhāna), the Tirthankara himself; seemingly all four are implied here. The question is answered by saying that the Jina is continuing the tradition of earlier Arhats; he worships the objects of reverence, and thereby follows the disciplinary ritual.

The query about the Jina’s beauty (rūva, vss. 31-36) in the samavasaraṇa is even more crucial. This beauty is "unsurpassed" (anuttara). It concerns the constitution, the shape, the structure, the colour, the general appearance of the body, the inner essence, the voice and the respiration. It cannot be paralleled by that of any other being (see the descending scale of vs. 32 and the prose commentaries thereupon) and cannot be duplicated even by the heavenly beings. There is no contradiction with the three replicas prepared by gods (see above 1.4.1), since their origin is the internal power of the Jina alone. Secondly, this extraordinary beauty is explained in terms of the karma-theory. The category responsible for it is the so-called nāma-karman (vs. 33) which gives every individual his own characteristics. Moreover, all categories of karman effect positively in the case of the Jina.70 This is summarized in the striking formula dharmadānaṃ rūvaṃ (vs. 36). "beauty arises from the practice of the Law". The fact that even beautiful beings practice the law is an incitation for others, and the fact that the being whose words have to be grasped is beautiful is a means for taking away from the assistants the pride they could derive from their own beauty.71

In spite of the diversity of the audience, the Jina’s exposé (vāgarāṇa, vss. 37-38) is addressed to all at the same time (jugavān). This needs an explanation. An exposé done in succession (kama) would require such an immeasurable length of time that there would be a risk of innumerable beings not having their doubts removed and remaining deprived of access to spiritual improvement, if, for instance, death took them away before time. This would be a defect, since the samavasaraṇa is a preaching for all. There is no inconvenience in a simultaneous exposé, which is made possible by the extraordinary qualities (rīḍhi-visesa) of the Jina and by his being Omniscient. His far-reaching voice itself is also endowed with the faculty of helping beings in their progress: as the Áv.-cūrī says (331.11), it is "a protection against hell", and is meant for all and at the same time unrivalled (sāhāranāsattva, vs. 40). Its application is in accord with the language of the listener so that he never gets tired of it, and could spend his whole life listening to the Jina, if he preached continuously. This idea is somewhat naïvely illustrated through the awkward and meagre anecdote of the old maid servant (kīḍhī = therī) of a merchant expanded only in the prose commentaries: while bending down to pick up some wood which had fallen down, she came to hear the voice of the Jina and remained in the same position from midday to sunset, forgetting about food, drink, heat and tiredness.72 The exegetical tract takes on the canonical statement, which may belong to the nucleus of a samavasarāṇa, that the Jina's language is transformed in the respective language of all members of the audience.73 However, the comparison with the different effects rain has on different soils may be a secondary embellishment.

Finally, there is a necessity to explain the part played by the ganadhara.s who represent the Jina in the second portis (bide, vs. 51). The argument that it is a means to avoid the Jina any pain (kheya-vīno, vs. 50) is not very convincing, especially on account of what has been specified in the previous verses. The main point is, however, to show the qualities of the Jina’s disciples and to convince the audience

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69 The mention of these "Great men" befits the inclusion of the samavasaraṇa-tract in the "Universal History" section of the Āvāsyakanirukti.

70 For all the technical terms used here see H. von Glasenapp, The Doctrine of Karman in Jain Philosophy. Bombay 1942.

71 Cp. the presence of the so-called mānasambha in the samavasarāṇa-structure of the Digambaras (see below 2.2.1).

72 Áv.-cūrī 331.13-332.4; also in Prakrit in Haribhadra’s and Kṣemakīrti’s commentaries. See Nalini Balbir, Āvāsyaka-Studien, vol. 1, p. 142.

73 See above Introduction § 2. The statement of the Áv.-cūrī corresponds to Aupapātikasūtra § 56, whereas Kṣemakīrti quotes the relevant extract from the Samuvalyangka (see n. 13).
about a real continuity in the tradition. So, sitting on a throne brought by the king or on a mere stool, a ganadhara will tell the innumerable previous births of beings, or answer any question which is put to him (puchchijja, compare above 0.2). His skill is such that listeners cannot guess that he does not possess Omniscience and superhuman qualities (vs. 52) which are strictly speaking the characteristics of the Tirthamkara alone.

2. Other textual material on samavasaraṇa

It is proposed to establish here a typology of the works in one of these examples of information about the samavasaraṇa and see what it can teach us about the conception of the samavasaraṇa in different contexts.

2.1. Typological survey
2.1.1. Descriptions of single samavasaraṇa.

This is the richest category. Such descriptions are found in narrative literature. An account of the samavasaraṇa is a topos (or a "standard episode") of the "Universal History". Any work dealing with the career of a Jina is a fitting place for the inclusion of such a description, which is invariably appended to the account of his attainment of Omniscience. A list of some of these passages, with a brief analysis of their most remarkable individual features, is given below.\(^{75}\)

Śvetāmbara tradition:

— Vimalasūri, Paumacarīa (end of the 3rd cent.? 2.50-61: Jaina Mähārāṣṭri; verses (āryā); description of Mahāvīra's samavasaraṇa. The place is clearly stated to be circular: note the use of the term manḍala (in *manḍalābhyayam, 50). A special word is used to name the three concentric circles where the various kinds of beings sit or stand to attend the preaching: pk. vakkhāra. The monks are in the first one; the goddesses of the Saudharma in the second one; and all other beings, viz. nuns, other goddesses (iyotiska, Vyantara, Bhavanasāsin), all gods (iyotiska, Vyantara, Bhavanasāsin, Saudharma, Kalpavāsin), men and kings, animals are in the third one. The Jina is said to speak in Ardhamāgadhī.


\(^{75}\) See 1.3 above for Hemacandra's Triśaṭṭhālakāpuruaracarita, Nemicandra's Mahāvīracarīya and Vividhatīrthaḥkalpa No. 46, vs. 20-38; below 2.1.5 for Vividhatīrthaḥkalpa No. 46, vs. 1-19.

— Sanghadāsā, Vasudevahinī (between 4th and 6th cent.) 341.14ff.: prose description of Śantinātha's samavasaraṇa in Jaina Mähārāṣṭri with occasional stereotype poetical compounds. The word samavasaraṇa occurs only at the end (343.7). The part played by the gods is variously emphasized. The whole account betrays a knowledge of the evidence available from the samavasaraṇa-tract or any other comparable tradition. Note the details about the places occupied by the various categories of beings in the sacred space (341.26ff.): tao ya payakhiṇi-kāñca kaya-pañīvyāo Vemāṇya-devio bhavissa-sāhu-ūhanna dakkhiṇa dakkhiṇa-puṣveraṃ samīhiyā, bhavissa-sāhu-ghanāya ya. pacchimenaṃ Bhavānāhīya-Vaiṣayara-Joisyia-devio dāhiya-pacchimenaṃ bhavaṇo ūhīyā, pacchimenaṃ dūvāra-uttareṇa Bhavānāvai Joisyā Vantarā ya deva. Vemāṇiyā deva uttara-dūvāreṇa, puracchimena manaṇyā maṇṇisā ya. The picture is the same as in the samavasaraṇa-tract (see above 1.4.1). The last two sentences are written in a cryptic abbreviating style: understand (pacchimena-)uttareṇa and (uttara-)puracchimena. — 345.23ff.: very brief evocation of Kunthu's samavasaraṇa. Out of five sentences, there refer to the preparation of the ground (samosaraṇa-bhām), its cleaning and purification.

— Uddyotanasūri, Kuvalayamālā (dated 779 A.D.): Jaina Mähārāṣṭri; verses (āryā); 96.28-97.23: samavasaraṇa of Dharmanātha; full-fledged description close to the theoretical tract found in the exegetical literature (compare, for instance, 97.20 with vs. 24cd). However, the location of the audience is rather imprecise (kathai ... kathai). — 217.21ff.: brief prose description (long compounds) of Mahāvīra's samavasaraṇa confined to the main elements. — Ratnaprabhasūri's Sanskrit version of the Kuvalayamālā (13th cent.) has a remarkably long passage in Sanskrit anustubhs (p. *40-*41).

— Śīlāṅka, Cauppaṇṇamahāpurusacarīya (9th cent.): Jaina Mähārāṣṭri; mixed verse and prose; p. 42 (lines 2-5): Śārba's samavasaraṇa: very brief description in a few long compounds (cp. above, Kuvalayamālā 217.21ff.); p. 83: Padmaprabha's samavasaraṇa. No real description. The only point stressed is the disappearance of all conflicts and hates between beings on the occasion of a samavasaraṇa; p. 300 and 303: two metrical and similar descriptions of Mahāvīra's samavasaraṇa in ornate style.

— Gūnacandra, Mahāvīracarīya (11th cent.), beginning of chap. 8, p. 251b-253a: Jaina Mähārāṣṭri; mixed verse and prose; in spite of its sophisticated kaśyap-like style, it is still in the orbit of the samavasaraṇa-tract: vs. 15 of Gūnā-
canda is a reminiscence of vs. 11 of the tract, as well as the compound *kaya-kicco* vi ("though he has attained the goal"), on which see above 1.4.3. The specific mention of Śakra and Jīśa as responsible for the making of the *asoka*-tree and the three umbrellas remind us of the Āv.-cūrṇi (see above 1.4.1).

— Hemacandra, *PariśīṢṭaparvan* (12th cent.): Sanskrit; anuṣṭubh; 1.29-45: Mahāviśra’s *samavasarāṇa*. No mention of beings other than the Jīna and the king.

— Bhāvadevasūri, *Pārśvanāṭacarīta* (13th cent.): 6.222-259: Sanskrit; anuṣṭubh (see below 2.2.2).

— Dhaneśvara, *Śrutiṭayamāhāmya* (14th cent.): Sanskrit; anuṣṭubh; Rṣabha’s *samavasarāṇa*. Information about the construction of the sacred space (*racana*), including measurements and ornamentation; traditional data about the entrance and location of the audience.

— Vinayacandrasūri, *Mallināṭacarīta* (15th cent.): 5.293-323: Sanskrit; anuṣṭubh (see below 2.2.2).

Digambara tradition:

The oldest, most detailed and important accounts of this class are:

— Raviśena (7th cent.), *Pāḍmacarīta* 2.135-154; 4.23ff.


— Jinasena (8th cent.), *Harivamsapurāṇa*, chap. 57 (182 vss.): Sanskrit; anuṣṭubh; the *samavasarāṇa*-area is said to be a square (57.6).


Shorter and selective accounts are, for instance:

— Asaga (10th cent.), *Śāntināṭaporāṇa* 15.38-50: Sanskrit; anuṣṭubh.

— Vīrakavi (11th cent.), *Jambūsāmīcarīt* 1.15-17: Apabhramśa; very sober and clear description of the twelve compartments (*bāraha kothā*) around the centre where the following beings take their places in succession: male members of the religious community, Kalpavāsin-goddesses, nuns, Jñotiṣa-goddesses, Vyantra-goddesses, Bhavanavāsin-goddesses, Jñotiṣa-gods, Vyantra-gods, Bhavanavāsin-gods, Kalpavāsin-gods, men, animals; description of the central area with the Jīna and the eight marvels.

— Muni Nayanandi (11th cent.), *Sudāṃsanaacarīt* 1.8-9 and Padmakīrti (11th cent.?), *Pāḍmacarīt* 15.7-8: Apabhramśa; no remarkable feature.

— Raikū (15th cent.), *Sammaivaacarīt* 6.9-10: Apabhramśa; indication about the main architectural components (staircases, dhūlīśāla-pavillon, mānasabhaśa, gardens, wells, small temples); description of the central area and details about the location of the audience similar to Jambūsāmīcarīta (above).

— *Pāḍmacarīt* 4.15-16: Apabhramśa; noteworthy is the clear mention of the three walls and the areas they define.76

2.1.2. Works on cosmology

The inclusion of a *samavasarāṇa*-passage in works of this category is not systematic. It is to be expected only where cosmology as such (description of the three worlds) is discussed in the frame of "Universal History", viz. if the career of a Jīna (usually Rṣabha) is narrated. This means that this category is contextually very close to the preceding. However, the care it takes in giving precise measures makes it globally different when viewed from its contents.

Digambara tradition: *Trilokaprājñapti* 4.710-894: Jaina Śaurusenī Ṛakrit. A systematic general description of *samavasarāṇa* in 31 points (summarized analysis and drawings in *Jainendrasiddhāṅkakośa* vol. 4 s.v. *samavasarāṇa*, p. 334-335). Measurements are given for each element. They are different depending on the Jīna concerned, and decrease from Rṣabha to Mahāvīra.

Śvetāmbara tradition: Vinayavijaya, *Lokapraśa* 30.530-655. This late Sanskrit work (17th cent.) presents an inflated account of the *samavasarāṇa* and integrates almost all the earlier material, sometimes in the form of quota

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2.1.3. Modus operandi for the construction of a samavasarana-structure

In the sections they devote to Jaina architecture and iconography, some of the vástusāstra.s written in western India by the architects (Somapurā or Sūtrakṛta) of the Middle Ages (11th-15th cent.) include prescriptions on building the independent samavasarana-structure found in the temples, usually "in front of the Jina's image". References can be collected from the brief survey published by Prabhashankar O. Sompara and M.A. Dhaky, "The Jaina Architecture and Iconography in the Vástusāstras". I have had access only to the Dipārāya, a late compilation, whose 25th section deals with samavasarana. The first part gives instructions for the building of the different components making the three-dimensional structure called "Meru-samavasarana", along with their measurements. The vocabulary used betrays Hindu influences (cf. Kālāsa, sadāśiva). The second part of the chapter (vss. 43-55) is a general account of what a samavasarana is.

2.1.4. Inscriptions and allied literature

Occasionally, inscriptions record the installation of a samavasarana vertical stone structure inside a temple. The most famous is the one found in the Vimalavasahi temple at Mount Abu. saṃ. 1212 (= 1155 A.D.) Jyeṣṭha-vadi 8 Bhome śri-Korana-gacche śri-Nannācārya-sanātane śri-Ośavamśe mantri-Dhādhukena śri-Vimala-mantri-hāsītādīyaṁ śri-Ādinātha-samavasaranaṁ kāraṇaṁ ca; śri-Nannasūria-paṭṭe śri-Kakkaśārīriḥ pratiśhitam. Vellāpali vástavane. 78

77 Published in U.P. Shah - M.A. Dhaky, Aspects of Jaina Art and Architecture. Ahmadabad 1975, p. 13-19. The works in question are the Vástuśāstra of Viṣvaśarman (11th cent.), the Vástuvidyā (12th cent.), the Prakāṣamaṇḍana of Sūtrakṛta Maṇḍana (15th cent.) and the Vṛksārjya (15th cent.).

78 Photograph in D.R. Bhandarkar, "Jaina Iconography. II. Samavasarana", Indian Antiquary 40 (1911) Fig. 1; Muni Shri Jayantivijaya, Holy Abu. Bhavnagar 1954, Fig. 21; U.P. Shah, Jainarūpa-maṇḍana, Fig. 182 (Plate XCV, etc.


A similar inscription, dated samā. 1536 (= 1479 A.D.), is found in the cella of the Rṣabha temple in Jaisalmer:

[names of the donor and his family-members] ... śri samavasarana(m) kārtiṇaṃ pratiṣhitam śri-Kharata-gacche .. śri-Jinabhadrasūri-paṭṭe śri-Jinanandrasūriḥ śri-Jinasamudrasūri-pramukha-sahitaiḥ ... 80

Two inscribed bronzes depicting samavasarana have been treated by U.P. Shah: the Cambay bronze is dated samā. 1252 = 1195 A.D.; the Sirohi / Surat bronze is dated samā. 111x (circa 1053-1062 A.D.). 81

Confirming evidence is available from the semi-historical works of the 13th-14th centuries: see, for instance, the Kharatagaraccha-bhyanadvavali about the installation of two original (mūla) samavasarana-models in samā. 1379 (= 1322 A.D.) at Śatrūnjaya, and about another one installed in Pāṇā two years later. 82 The prabandha.s mention the number of samavasarana.s sponsored by the famous persons they eulogize among their religious deeds. Thus the minister Vastupāla is credited with 505 samavasarana.s on cloth. 83

2.1.5. Hymns

The catalogues of manuscripts abound in works named samavasarana-stava, *stotra and the like, popular among both sects of the Jainas.

One Śvetāmbara work is Dharmaghoṣa's Samavasarana-stava (13th cent.), a short hymn in Prakrit (24 vss.) accompanied by a useful detailed Sanskrit commen-

80 Ed. in A. Nahta - Bh. Nahta, Bikāner Jain Lekhasamgraha. Calcutta virābda 2482, No. 2810 p. 397. An independent samavasarana-stone structure (without inscription) is found in the Mahāvīr-temple of Kumbharia; the structure found in the Śāntinātha-temple, wrongly named samavasarana b some, in fact represents the Astāpada, as is clear from the accompanying inscription (dated samā. 1266).

81 "Jaina Bronzes from Cambay", Lalli Kalā 13 [1967] p. 31-32. A photograph of the Sirohi / Surat bronze is also published in U.P. Shah, Studies in Jaina Art, Fig. 76. For another samavasarana-bronze, dated samā. 1534 (= 1477 A.D.), see U.P. Shah, Treasures of Jain Bhandāras. Ahmedabad 1978, Fig. 170 and p. 97.


83 505 samavasaranaṇī paṭṭasūramayāṇi, Purātanprabhāsasamgraha 65.24. Instead o paṭṭasūra the corresponding passage of the Prabandhakośa (129.18 = 132.10) uses the won jādara(mayā), "type of white silk" (B.J. Sandesara - J.P. Thaker, Lexicographical Studies in Jain, Sanskrit. Baroda 1962, p. 64).
tary. It offers an interesting combination of features imported from the old tract and from other sources. In their contents and wording its verses 4, 22 and 23 clearly betray the influence of the tract (vvss. 7-8, 12 and 1ab respectively). The Āv. -cārṇī and vṛttī are explicitly referred to and quoted (vs. 17) in the discussion concerning the posture (sitting or standing) of certain members of the assembly (see above 1.4.1). On the other hand, the architectural aspect is a new element: the distinction between two possible shapes of the samavasarana-space (round / square) and their consequences on the organisation of the components are considered (vs. 5ff.). The personification of some decorative elements (e.g. the banners, vs. 13) and the mention of individual gods and goddesses along with their attributes in the function of dvārapālas (vvss. 19-21) probably come from the iconographic tradition. This work seems to have been highly reputed: it has obviously inspired the first part of Jinaprabha’s Vividhatthātākāla (No. 46, in certain manuscripts of the VTK it follows Jina’s own tract.

Viṣṇusena’s Samavasarana-stotra is a representative of the Digambara tradition in Sanskrit. This literary composition using different metres for its 63 verses describes the various elements of a samavasarana (going from the centre towards the outer part), their sophisticated ornamentation, their number or measurements, following the pattern of the Trilokaprajñapti (above 2.1.2), of which one verse (4.808) is quoted. The popular motif of perfect harmony between natural foes is present (vvss. 58-59).

2.2. Remarks on the survey

2.2.1. The convenient distinction between Śvetāmbara and Digambara sources is fully justified. The accounts of both sides indeed exhibit a basically similar conception of the samavasarana and some common basic elements, for instance the central aśoka-tree. But a mere perusal is sufficient to show that there are differences in the components and in the technical vocabulary used by authors of both trends.

The Digambara samavasarana has elements such as the dhūlīśālā (a pavilion located outside the precinct), the gandhakālī (name given to the central part where the Jina is), or the mānasstambha,7 to mention only a few important ones, which are specific to it. The Digambara samavasarana, with its forests and lakes, is comparable to a full-fledged town or a paradise and includes derived elements. Its structure is much more complex than its Śvetāmbara counterpart. On the other hand, the Digambara sources ascribe the organisation of the samavasarana to a particular god, viz. Kubera, who prepares it following Indra’s command; the Śvetāmbara works speak in terms of classes of gods. Digambara authors also unambiguously state that the samavasarana takes place in the sky: the Sudaṃsaṇacari (1.9.1) specifies the distance above the ground; elsewhere we read that those who want to watch a samavasarana have to raise their eyes.8 The absence of all these features in a given work can be regarded as a proof that it is not of Digambara affiliation. However, contamination cannot be totally excluded (see above 2.1.5).

2.2.2. No category of works throws any substantial light on the significance of the various elements making a samavasarana. None of our sources is similar to a treatise such as the Buddhist Kriyāsāṃgraha or the Sūpa-lakṣañā-kārikā-vivecaṇā investigated by M. Bénisti and G. Roth respectively.9 They provide us with a "stupa-structure-cum-doctrinal-notion-symbolism" (G. Roth, p. 197) and give a "systematic catalogue" (ibid. p. 186) of homologies between a specific element and a dogmatic concept. However, a few hints of this type are — quite rarely — found in some of the later Jaina descriptions (and seem to be confined to them). As in the Buddhist tradition, the numerical correspondence plays a fundamental part in these symbolic identifications. Thus, for instance, the three umbrellas (chattra-traya) are equated with the three jewels (tri-ratna) of the doctrine.10 In other cases, there is no precise correspondence, but only the general idea that the various architectural components of a samavasarana do have a religious part to play or are auspicious and contribute to spiritual progress. Thus, the dharma-cakra, compared to the full disc of the sun,

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8 Jo samorasana laccile ujjीolo, uddha-diśñāhi niyādehi puṣa joo, Jambūsāmicariu 1.15.9.
9 See references in n. 8 above.
10 Asaga, Śāntindharatpurāṇa 12.45.
is considered as able to repel enemies in the form of wrong belief.\(^9\) Elsewhere, the vediktās are said to destroy all obstacles, the main temple is said to annihilate all sins, and the stairs which lead towards it are equated with the (figurative) steps (technical term śreṇī) which lead to ultimate release.\(^7\) The full auspicious jars are, so to say, ready to sprinkle with water the believers dried up by illusion, and the jars filled with incense have been made by the gods to destroy the bitings of misfortunes.\(^9\) The wish of some writers to introduce poetical embellishments (in this case upreksās marked with īva) may be responsible for such equations. In fact, writers seem to have attached less importance to this type of identification than to those stressing the parallel between the samavasarana as a microcosm and the macrocosmos. They are found in works of all categories: see, for instance, the Digambara Śāntināthapurāṇa (15.41) where the samavasarana is said to be known under one hundred names, one of which is triloka-sāra, "an essence of the three worlds". The structure of the samavasarana with concentric circles and the Jina at the centre reminds the authors of the Jambūdvipa. In the Ādi purāṇa, Jinasena stresses the connection between the central aśoka-tree and the rose apple tree of Jambūdvipa (22.186), or between the small stūpa.s found in the Digambara samavasarana and Meru (22.265). Elsewhere the correspondences concern some specific component of the samavasarana: the three umbrellas are meant to praise the magnificence of the three worlds;\(^9\) the four doors leading to the centre are there as if to invite the four guardians of the directions.\(^9\) The actual shape of the samavasarana-structure does not appear to be a basic point and is of no consequence in this regard: the theoretical tract does not specify it. The Trilokaprajñāpāti (one of the earliest texts) indicates that Rṣabha’s samavasarana is "as round as the disc of the sun",\(^6\) but from other texts and pictorial representations we know that it can be either round (vṛttā) or square (caturasra).\(^9\) The first one is better attested, but both are actually two different ways of representing the same idea of an oriented sacred space.\(^9\)

2.2.3. The Śvetāmbara passages listed in 2.1.1 clearly appear as the application of the model provided by the samavasarana-tract, as is seen, for instance, from the use of the same specialized vocabulary. Thus they provide an instance for the study of repetition cum variation in the process of re-writing. The ritual aspect and the filling up of the sacred space, which emerge as fundamental features of the theoretical tract, give precedence to the description of decorative and architectural elements (banners, auspicious symbols, step-wells, parks) to the extent that several writers take this opportunity to exhibit their ability as poets (long compounds, alliterations, similes, etc.). Noteworthy is the growing tendency to mention individual gods with their attributes.\(^9\) In many cases, the orientation of the sacred space is not described carefully or is conspicuous by its absence. Its presence or absence cannot be accounted for in terms of chronology. Hemacandra, 12th cent., is more faithful in this respect to the old model than Śīṅkha, 9th cent. Hemacandra exhibits his faithfulness to tradition by stating the presents to be offered to the person who brings the news of the samavasarana\(^9\) (see above 1.4.3), by keeping to the traditional numbers,\(^10\) or by systematically taking into account the ritual of the bāli (see above 1.4.2).\(^10\) These points are not dealt with in other samavasarana-texts which all show a tendency towards selection instead of exhaustiveness. The almost constantly recurring elements are the characteristics of the Jina’s voice and speech,\(^10\) and the three replicas resulting from his personal supernatural power.\(^10\) The halo behind the Jina (bhāmaṇḍala) is repeatedly mentioned.\(^10\) Together with the preceding elements, it serves to enhance

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\(^6\) On the possible origin of the square shape of the samavasarana, see the discussion in U.P. Shah, Jaina-rūpa-maṇḍana, p. 25; and, more generally, S. Kramrisch, The Hindu temple. University of Calcutta 1946, vol. 1, p. 22.

\(^7\) Raidhū, Sammaitīnacarītu 6.9.30, 35-36.

\(^8\) Mallināthacarīta 5.302 and 304.

\(^9\) Mallināthacarīta 5.307 or the Sanskrit version of the Kuvalayamālā vs. 234.

\(^10\) Mallināthacarīta 5.300.

\(^11\) Trilokaprajñāpāti 4.716: ravaṇaṇḍalam vā cace.

\(^12\) E.g. Vividhatīrtha-kāla No. 46 vs. 19; Dharmaghoṣārī, Samavasarana-rūpam vs. 5; Lokapratikā 30.574; U.P. Shah, Jaina-rūpa-maṇḍana p. 25; ubi alia.
the wondrous side of the samavasarana.

2.2.4. Categories 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. are basically different from categories 2.1.3ff. In the first set, samavasarana refers both to an act (the preaching of the Jina) and to the place of preaching. In the second set, samavasarana is to be understood as an object which becomes an object of worship, to the extent that it can become the subject of an hymn as a Jina (or a god or a goddess) is, the centre of a pūjā (especially among Digambaras) or that even a temple can be dedicated to it: Bhandarkar mentions the temple of Kumalgaḍ in Udaipur state, where the setting of the different groups attending the samavasarana is very much in agreement with the old sources. This may also account for the fact that the samavasarana became a subject which could be dealt with in the Vividhatirthakalpa, side by side with compositions devoted to Śatruñjaya, Girnar and other sacred places. This is probably the result of an evolutive process, which is not unique in Jainism. Nandīśvaradvīpa, originally a continent of the Jain cosmology, and Aṣṭāpada, a mythical mountain, have similarly become objects of worship which are either depicted on the walls of the temples, or constitute themselves the centre of a temple. Their original meanings have been retained, but they have been enriched through such a process. One of the reasons why these three items have been submitted to it may be that they all somehow embody the quint-essence of the cosmos.

3. Conclusion

In its general meaning, the word samavasarana refers to any assembly of beings. In its technical meaning, documented by the Canonical Śvetāmbara literature, it refers to a sacred assembly held outdoors. Its description remains factual, and the setting is simple. The emphasis is on the sacred speech of the Jina. Slowly, incorporating and attracting elements from Canonical descriptions of various types of constructions (earth-palaces, flying-palaces of the gods, etc.), the samavasarana develops into a fully built fictive structure, especially in Digambara sources where it is a religious counterpart of a paradisiac town. The samavasarana-tract preserved in the exegetical literature is important, for it gives a complete picture of the early conception. The sacred space, which is first consecrated and then constructed, is both organized into a hierarchy and inclusive. The centre is endowed with symbolism. Architectural ele-

ments are still simple. Great emphasis is laid on the "anatomie surnaturelle" of the Jina, his wondrous, extraordinary and beautiful appearance and voice which are given a rational explanation thanks to the karma-theory. In other sources, this idea is strengthened, so that a samavasarana-description almost always includes a complete list of the "eight marvels" (aṣṭa-prāthiṇḍa) or of the 34 "excellencies" (aṭṭiṣa). This idea also accounts for the representation of the Jina as a richly adorned figure in the manuscript-illustrations. On the occasion of the samavasarana, the Jina, who is supposed to have just reached Omiscience, unites all varieties of perfections, both spiritual and physical. He goes beyond the opposites, and combines both the qualities of a supreme king (cakravartin) and of a spiritual master. Thus, the samavasarana can be viewed as the Jaina archetype of all religious assemblies, which daily re-enact it, and, finally, it is a resort for all: some writers apparently like formulas of the type samavasaranaṃ Šaraṇaṃ. The iconography of samavasarana has developed along its own lines: as is well known, the motif of pairs of animals who are natural enemies but peacefully listen together to the Jina's teaching has become a distinctive feature of miniature-painting, whereas the literary tradition does not put it in the foreground.


108 See R. Williams, Jaina Yoga, p. 216, 221, 222 for statements of correspondences between the daily ritual and the samavasarana in the Medieval śravakädhyāya.
Circular representation of a _samavasarana_. As usual, the Jina is an adorned figure. The human and divine audience is shown in the four intermediate directions, in groups of three. Two pairs of animals appear in the corners of the picture. Folio of a palm-leaf manuscript, end of the 14th cent. Museum and Picture Gallery Baroda. In: S. Doshi, *Masterpieces of Jain Painting*. Bombay, Marg Publications 1985, No. 11, p. 37.