



**ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF
JAIN RELIGION**

Edited by
K.L. CHANCHREEK
DR. MAHESH K. JAIN

'*Encyclopedia of Jain Religion*' is a multi-volume elaborate study of this oldest religious sect. This *Encyclopedia* has been designed to cover a wide range of *Jain* religious thought in a systematic manner, theme wise and serves as an authentic reference tool. In the new millennium this is perhaps the first systematic study of *Jain* religion.

Volume one of this *Encyclopedia* deals with the antiquity and historicity of Jainism which attracted the attention of scholars to study and trace the long history and a large continuing presence of Arhat tradition which is pre-Aryan; Volume two is a prolegomenary description of Jaina scriptures, which developed through centuries and by stages and took a literary and philosophical form during ten centuries from Mahavira's salvation. Volume three traces the Jaina way of worship, observance of specific rituals and fasts besides celebration of fairs, festivals and festive occasions since ancient days. Jains worship only five worshipful once the Arhats, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyayas and Sadhus besides some Godlings—Yakshas and Yakshis and attending guards. Volume four and five traces and analyses the Jaina concept of God and creation of the universe, doctrine of worship, theory of Soul, doctrine of Karma, Lesyas, Nine Padarthas (Fundamental Truths and Pudgala—Matter), moral themes and philosophical issues like doctrine of Anekantavada, Panch Mahavratas, Sramans culture, Yoga, Penance and Santhara and liberation. Volume six traces how people earned their livelihood through agriculture, farming and trade, according to Jaina texts. Jains were actively involved in the growth of agricultural activities, industry and trade channels. Undoubtedly the management

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Volume 1

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Introduction

'*Encyclopedia of Jain Religion*' is a multi-volume elaborate study of this oldest religious sect. The *Encyclopedia* has been designed to cover a wide range of *Jaina* religious thought in a systematic manner, theme wise and serves as an authentic reference tool. In the new millennium this is perhaps the first systematic study of *Jain* religion.

Though Jain religion is an oldest and eternal religion of the world, however in India having a population of more than one billion, the total followers of *Jainism* are four million only. The followers of *Jainism* are called *Jains*, known for moral character, pious nature and humble living. Like *Buddhism* which spread throughout the world, for long Jainism was not known outside India. During the colonial rule many western scholars were impressed towards the study of *Jain* religion so ancient a sect of *Indian* soil.

The work of foreign scholars undoubtedly made this religion known in the world. There is a long list of scholars and researchers who have contributed much on the rich tradition of *Jaina* religion and philosophy in *European* languages during the last two hundred years.

The names of some of the researchers like Colin Mackenzie, Barnett, Dr. F. Buchanan, Dr. H.H. Wilson, Weber, J.G. Buhler, Walther Schubring, Leumann, Winternitz, Guerinot, Hermann Jacobi, Hoernale, Glasenapp, Osborn Martin, N.R. Guseva etc. are worth mentioning.

According to *Jain* belief also it is eternal, revealed again and again in every endless succeeding periods of the world by innumerable Tirthankaras. In the present *Avasarpini* period the first Tirthankara was Rsabha (Rishabha) and the last and twenty fourth Tirthankara was Mahavira.

In *Jaina* religion the Tirthankaras have been the upholders of the cult of non-violence, truth, mercy, and moral values. While the first twenty-two Tirthankaras are considered as mythological figures, Parsva Nath, the twenty-third Tirthankara and Mahavira, the last prophet and the twenty fourth Tirthankara are considered historical figures.

In *India*, the age of Mahavira and Buddha has been of tremendous social, religious and philosophical change. Furthermore a good number of thinkers and philosophers; were seen wandering about as ascetics and mendicants holding different philosophical views and opinions. Many of them propagated materialistic views, rejecting existence of God as ultimate reality. They did not believe in soul. Buddhist texts have mentioned six leading teachers who were Buddha's contemporaries, viz., *Purana Kassapa*, *Makkhali Gosala* (Mankhali Putra, according to Jains), *Pakudh Kachchayana*, *Ajit Keshkambali*, *Sanjaya Belatthi putta* and *Nigantha Natputta*. Each one is described as the leader of his philosophical school. Much before these sects and philosophical systems, *Jainism* had existed in India.

Thus antiquity and historicity of *Jainism* attracted both Indian and foreign scholars interested in the study of *Jaina* religion and philosophy. As Arnold Toynbee says: 'The interest of *Jainism* to the student of religion consists in the fact that it goes back to a very early period.' We know that the *Sacred Books of the Jains* are old, avowedly older than the *Sanskrit* literature, which we are accustomed to call classical, as viewed by Max Muller.

Mahavira was elder to Buddha and born in a golden age of philosophers like Confucius and Lao-tze in *China*, Zoroaster in *Persia* and Pythagoras in *Greece*, who were famous in seeking the *truth* and revolutioning the human thought and conduct in their respective countries, so also his contemporary Buddha and he himself in *India*, in the 6th century B.C.

Both Mahavira and Buddha in the 6th century B.C., revolted against the Brahmanical religious and social order, the sacrifices of animals and various forms of *yajnas* and believed in ascetic life and complete withdrawal from worldly attachments. They condemned caste system, priestcraft and supremacy of the priestly class and propagated ethical values.

Buddhism arose with the emergence of Buddha, but Jainism has a long history, continuity and existed even before Aryan invasion in *India*. There are proofs that Jainism took root in India much before Aryan settlement. *The Vedas*, the *Avesta* and *Puranic literature* testify the existence of Arhat tradition, the Shramana culture in India.

Noble Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen said that 'Buddhism was the dominant religion in *India* for many hundred years, and has also an equally long history and in fact a large continuing presence.' Jain scriptures believe that *Jainism* is eternal and has been revealed time and again by the Tirthankaras (creator of passage). One *Jaina Acharya* has remarked: 'If we consider it beginningless as well as endless there would be no exaggeration.'

Jainism believes that we are subject to two endless temporal cycles, the *Ascending* (Utsarpini) and the *Descending* (Avasarpini). In the first cycle there is an overgrowing evolution of *righteousness*, whereas in the later *righteousness* decreases until *chaos* and *confusion* reign over the earth. Each of the cycles then

last for a number of years and follow one after another in an unbroken succession. The first time stage is said to be the happiest stage. Worst of all was the last stage of extreme unhappiness which is still to come.

During this stage terrific storms would blow, dust would cover everything, clouds would shower poisonous water (gases), everything would perish and whole earth would be ablaze with fire. In the *Hindu* mythology this is '*mahapralaya*'.

Jaina thinkers believe that twenty four Tirthankaras, the form-makers are said to be born in these two stages. In *Rigveda*, there is mention of the first Tirthankara Rishabhadeva. He was also the first king and a thinker who renounced his kingdom, got himself initiated into monkhood and did the highest order of penance (the *tapa*) and achieved *Kevalajnana* (Omniscience). He has been mentioned as '*tittaraya*.' A Tirthankara literally means one who creates to make '*tirtha*' or shore. Jainism believes that great teachers, the path finders, who create a shore beyond the ocean of *samsara* (*bhavasagara*) in the form of '*dharamtirtha*' are known as Tirthankaras. *Jaina* system does not consider a Tirthankara to be an incarnation of God, as Hindus believe in the theory of incarnation but with the full following of one's spiritual powers any soul can become an *omniscient*, Tirthankara or a *Jina*. Tirthankaras attain certain special qualities of head and heart, when special and rigorous penance performed by them in their previous birth or due to the merit earned by them through noble, pious and holistic deeds, as well as full withdrawal from life's normal and routine like work, all worldly possessions, desires and attachments. This is the highest stage of *Kaivalyajnana*.

The Twenty Four Tirthankaras

Name	Colour	Cognizance	Attendant	Born at	Died at
1. Risabhadeva or Adinatha	Yellow or Golden	Bull	Gomukha and Cakresvari	Ayodhya	Astapada
2. Ajitnatha	Yellow or Golden	Elephant	Mahayaksa and Ajitbala (Sammeda Shikhar)	Ayodhya	Sameta Sikhara
3. Sambhavanatha	Yellow or Golden	Horse	Trimukha and Duritari (Digambara Prajnapati)	Sravasti	Sameta Sikhara
4. Abhinandana	Yellow or Golden	Ape	Nayaka and Kalika (Dig. Yakesvara and Vajrasinkhala)	Ayodhya	Sameta Sikhara
5. Sumatinatha	Yellow or Golden	Red Cross or Partridge	Tumburu and Mahakali (Dig. Purusadatta)	Ayodhya	Sameta Sikhara
6. Padmaprabha	Red	Red Lotus flower	Kusuma and Syama (Dig. Manovega) (Manogupil)	Kausambi	Sameta Sikhara
7. Suparsvanatha	Yellow or Golden	Svastika	Matnaga & Santa (Dig. Varanandi and Kali)	Benares	Sameta Sikhara
8. Chandraprabha	White	Moon	Vijaya and Bhrikuti (Dig. Jvalamalni)	Chandra pura	Sameta Sikhara

9. Suvidhinatha	White	Crocodile (Dig. Crab)	Ajita and Sutaraka (Dig. Mahakali)	Kanadi- Nagara	Sameta Sikhara
10. Sitalanatha	Yellow or Golden	Srivatsa Figure (Dig.)	Brahma and Ashoka (Dig. Manavi) (Ficus religiosa)	Bhadrapura	Sameta Sikhara
11. Sreyamsanatha	Yellow or Golden	Rhinoceros	Yaksha and Manavi (Dig. Isvara and Gauri)	Simhapura	Sameta Sikhara
12. Vasupujya	Red	Male Buffalo	Kumara and Canda (Dig. Gandhari)	Campapuri	Campapuri
13. Vimalanatha	Yellow or Golden	Boar	Sanmukha and Vidita	Kampilya	Sameta Sikhara
14. Anantanatha	Yellow or Golden	Hawk (Dig. Bear)	Patala and Ankusa (Dig. Anantamati)	Ayodhya	Sameta Sikhara
15. Dharmanatha	Yellow or Golden	Thunderbolt	Kinnara and Kandarpa	Ratnapuri	Sameta Sikhara
16. Santinatha	Yellow or Golden	Deer	Garuda and Nirvani (Dig. Purusa and Mahamanasi)	Kin- Gajapura or Hastinapura	Sameta Sikhara

17. Kunthunatha	Yellow or Golden	Goat	Gandharva and Bala (Dig. Vijaya)	Gajapura or Hastinapura	Sameta Sikhara
18. Aranatha	Yellow or Golden	Nandavarita Diagram	Yakseta and Dhapa (Dig. Kendra and Ajita)	Gajapura or Hastinapura	Sameta Sikhara
19. Mallinatha (according to the Svetambara, a woman)	Blue	Water-jar	Kubera and Dharmapriya	Mathura	Sameta Sikhara
20. Munisuvrata	Black	Tortoise	(Dig. Kendra and Ajita) Varuna and Naradall.a	Rajagriha .(Bahuruopini) Mathura	Sameta Sikhara
21. Naminatha	Yellow or Golden	Blue Lotus (Dig. Ashoka tree)	Bhrikuti and Gandhari (Dig. Camundi)	Sauripura	Gimar
22. Neminatha	Black	Conch Shell	Gomedha and Ambika (Dig. Sarvahna and Kusum Indini)	Benares	SametaSikhara
23. Parsvanatha	Blue	Snake	Parsvayaksa or Dharamendra and Padmavati	Kundagrama	Pavapuri
24. Mahavira or Vardhmana	Yellow or Golden	Lion	Matanga and Siddhayika		

Adopted from Dr. Burger's Appendix to Buhler, 'Indian Sect of the Jains', pp. 6 ff

As far as Jaina canon is concerned, it developed through centuries and by stages. The words of Mahavira were handed down by an oral tradition, which took a literary and philosophical form through ten centuries or so from his salvation. The Ganadharas and the *Jaina* Acaryas have made unique contribution to Jaina religion, philosophical themes and other disciplines like *Metaphysics, Philosophy, Logic, Astronomy, Spirituality, Ethics, Conduct, Yoga, History, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Mathematics, Medicine* and *Literary* topics etc. etc.

According to Buhler *Jains* did not stop at merely expounding their own doctrines, but also devoted themselves to the secular sciences of the *Brahmanas*. Their achievements in *Grammar, Astronomy, Literature* are excellent and contributions still important for European Science. The Jaina canonical and non-canonical traditions have enriched *Dravidian* languages and literature and occupied an important place in the *History of Indian Literature, Culture, Arts and Architecture, Social and Economic* life. Jaina literary, philosophical and religious works undoubtedly furnish rich and authentic materials for an all round history of India, from 6th century B.C. onwards.

The most pious and heart searching, eternal and sacred teachings of Mahavira, in *Jain canon* were presented and preserved by the Ganadharas in *Sutra style*. As a matter of fact in the canonical texts the Lord's teachings are called '*Niggantha Pavayana*'.

According to Abhayadeva the *Angas* were composed by Mahavira's Ganadharas either immediately in the spirit of oral tradition or indirectly after first *Purva* (Puvva) having established that tradition. Bhadrabahu, according to Svetambara tradition belongs to the sixth generation following Mahavira, who played significant role in preserving the Jain Agamas.

Walther Schubring has observed that the oldest and authentic Jaina texts, as pointed by Jacobi and several learned scholars, seem to date from times not earlier than the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century A.D.

The *Sacred Books of the Jainas* or the *Agamas* consist seven divisions and *Angas* form the oldest and important division amongst the canonical literature. The *Angas* are eleven and the twelfth '*Drstivad*' had either been lost, or not traceable as yet.

Many scholars believe that some authoritative Jaina texts were lost or mostly composed in a high poetical and prosaic style, following legendary and mythological accounts for Digambaras, the *Angas* of Svetambaras are of younger age.

The scope of philosophy is much wider than ethics. While philosophy seeks to find out the truth and ultimate goal of life, ethics is concerned with the entire field of human activity. In *Jaina* religion every householder and a Sramana (monk) is required to observe some specific ethical norms and certain code of conduct, and the whole religious edifice has been built around conduct and moral values.

Jainism aims at the highest development of soul and emphasises purification of head and heart, thought and conduct. Mahavira inherited Parsva's tradition, which served as a basic foundation of his philosophy. While the vision of truth came to Mahavira as a legacy from Parsva, Buddha created his own order and tradition. Buddhism crossed the boundaries of *India*, whereas *Jainism* very much remained in *India*, because of its avowed aim and practices of self-realization and hardly cared about its spread.

Mahavira spent twelve and a half years in meditation and penance and attained *Kaivalya* and ultimately came to perceive and know the truth directly. In his very first sermon he explained the fourfold path of self-realization, at the very spot where he had attained *Kaivalya*. It is believed only the heavenly beings were present then. In his second sermon he propounded the reality of soul, spiritual development of soul, principle of transmigration, nature of bondage of *Karma*, nature of righteousness and sinful deeds, nature of *nirvana*, a state of liberation.

Doctrine of *Anekantavada* or *Syadvada* is the basic foundation of *Jaina* philosophy. To think from a single point of view is partial truth. *Anekantavada* enjoins thinking about any object from various points of views. It is the doctrine of 'May be', which no other philosophical system has discussed so precisely.

Jaina religion is unique in prescribing great vows (*panca mahavratas*) and certain specific norms and practices to be followed by the *Sramanas* or the monks. Virtually a Jain *Sramana* is expected to strictly observe these great vows, e.g. non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and possessionlessness. These vows are regarded as a form of self-discipline and basic fundamentals of *Jaina* philosophy. It is believed the *Jaina* *Sramana* Culture is alive because of strict discipline and observance of these vows. Here *panca mahavratas* have been discussed in this encyclopedic study in a lucid manner.

Jainism considers that the road to deliverance lies in *Right Knowledge*, *Right Faith* and *Right Conduct*. These are called the three jewels or *Ratnatraya* in *Jaina* religion. In fact, every *Jaina* canon deals with this subject as it sums up the philosophy of liberation or omniscience.

From the practical point of view the threefold path of *Right Knowledge*, *Right Faith* and *Right Conduct* is required to be pursued by an embodied soul so that the body which is a mass of subtle Karmic matter would cease to be a hindrance in the attainment of perfection.

The Conception of Idealism and Reality has been discussed by various thinkers, both *Indian* and foreign since ancient days and here a comparative study made, though in brief. In *Jaina* philosophy Idealism and Reality are defined in a scientific way.

Idealism is the belief or doctrine according to which thought is the medium of the self-expression of *Reality*. The mind of man is taken to be the organ through which *Reality* expresses itself, and it is almost certain that man alone has the capacity to interpret

experience through intellectual ideals, than it follows that man alone can be an organ of *Reality*. Jaina philosophy is very much clear that *Reality* is possessed of origination, decay and permanence.

In *Jaina* religion penance or *tapa* occupies a pious and pride place. *Jaina Agama* literature refers to the *Sramans* (Sramanas) as those who were intense performers, essential performers and the great performers of penance.

While most of the religions like *Hinduism*, *Christianity*, *Muslim* religion believe that the universe is the creation of God, on the contrary Jainism believes that the universe is not the creation of God. It is beginningless and eternal. Buddha discouraged all speculation on the origin and the end of the universe. Buddha has nothing to do with *Soul*, *God*, *rebirth* etc., and the centre of his *Dhamma* is man and his relation to life and how to get rid of miseries and pains of life.

Jaina cosmology regards the universe as comprising of six substances or *dravyas*; viz. *soul*, *matter*, *time*, *space*, principle of *motion* and *stationariness*. For *Jainism* universe is external and uncreated, subject to integration of and dissolution in its forms and aspects. Jainism believed only in Tirthankaras who become *Kevali* through penance and perfect withdrawal from Karmic activity and attained *Moksha*. For the Jainas no personal God existed, nor they supported the theory of *Hindu* Gods.

The *Jaina* theory of *Soul* is unique among all philosophical systems. Actually, *Jaina* philosophy is an *Atmavada Darsana*, a philosophy accepting the existence of *Soul* and propounding a special doctrine of *Soul*. In this encyclopedic study not only the theory but the spiritual development of *Soul* has been elaborated. *Carvaka* and early *Greek* philosophers like *Thales* etc., did not believe in an independent existence of *Soul*. But Mahavira successfully attempted to prove its existence, even from the psychological point of view, viz. memory, recognition, doubt, judgment, etc., are never possible, if there is no *Soul* on the ground of doubt, as well.

The supreme importance of the Doctrine of Karma lies in providing a rational and satisfying explanation to the apparently inexplicable phenomena of birth and death, of happiness and misery, of inequalities in mental and physical attainments and of the existence of different species of living being. *Jainism* believes that *Soul* is bound with *Karmic* matter from eternity, it becomes involved every moment into the influx of fresh Karmic matter. Connected with the idea of Karma is the doctrine of incarnation and transmigration of Soul. *Jain* Karma theory is more elaborately thought out and systematized than Hinduism and Buddhism. It is a fundamental part of *Jaina* philosophy like Soul. According to *Jaina* metaphysics, the universe is divided into two everlasting, uncreated and independent categories of substances, Jiva (the Soul) and *Ajiva* (non-soul). The link between the soul and non-soul is Karma.

Jaina religion had also influenced the Indian Art and Architecture in a very big way.

No body can deny the importance of *inscriptions*, numismatics, monuments and other art materials which contributed a lot to the history and culture of our past. Inscriptions supply valuable and authentic information of historical and social importance of different age. *Inscriptions* put together provide autobiography of civilization and culture, as engraved on stone or metal facts cannot be tempered. Coins help us to build up and know the history of the country in many ways. In Buddhist and *Jaina texts* there is mention of circulation of coins and the art involved in them.

Undoubtedly, a large number of *Mathura* inscriptions have revealed the high standards of *Jaina* Art and Architecture and the spread of Jainism besides image worship which existed in *Mathura* region even prior to Christian era and afterwards. Similarly, Kharavela's Hathigumpha inscription is a high source of early *Jaina* history, discovered in 1825 A.D. This inscription, no

doubt, is a great piece of sculpture in the history of *Jaina Art*. It reveals the socio-economic conditions of that dark period in the history between the fall of Mauryan dynasty and the rise of the Guptas, beginning with the *Kushana* age. Among historians and paleographers Kharavela inscription for long has been a subject of great controversy. According to the inscription, Kharavela promoted *Jainism* and patronised ascetic culture; built *Jaina* temples, royal palace, rebuilt an old canal, public places and gardens etc. He also popularised fine and performing arts.

The opening of the epigraph with the *Jaina* hymn of obeisance makes Kharavela a staunch follower of *Jaina* religion, at a time when Buddhism was patronised by the Mauryan kings, specially the great Asoka. The inscriptions of Asoka, definitely of an early date than Kharavela epigraph, however also provide information of socio-religious life of that age.

In the field of art and architecture the age of the Mauryas constituted a notable epoch. The stone pillars of Asoka have no parallel in the history of architecture. The sculpture of the stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi recorded current events and legends connected with the life of Lord Buddha as described in the *Jatakas*.

Mauryan art indoubtedly influenced both Brahmanical and *Jaina* art. It is believed two stone images of Tirthankaras from Lohanipur, a torso of a *Yaksa* are assigned to the Mauryan period. There is rich and varied archaeological treasures and wealth of *Jaina* monuments in Orissa. From the third century B.C. onwards the built heritage is recorded for about twenty two hundred years. The remains of Sisupalgarh fort and temples are a piece of classical architectural style, near Bhubaneswar town. At a distance of about six km lie the Dhauli hills where on a low granite boulder are inscribed the edicts of Asoka after his conquest of Kalinga. It is believed he embraced Buddhism and propagated the teachings of Lord Buddha throughout his life. But he respected all religions and gave due respect to the monks, including *Jaina* religion. His religious tolerance is thus marvellous.

Again about 10 Km. to the N.W. of ruined Sisupalgarh fort are the famous Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves, which have both large and small caves.

There is much in *Jaina* canon on *Jaina iconography* and throughout the course of about 2500 years, Jainas have installed innumerable images and erected marvellous shrines in honour of the Tirthankaras. Virtually they have enriched Indian Art and patronised Indian craftsmen and artists for centuries. The Evolution of *Jaina* Art is visible in all the periods of history. The followers of the sect encouraged construction of stupas, temples, assembly halls, caves and places of charities in order to spread the message of the Tirthankaras. The *Jaina* canon and archaeological sources have proved it fully well.

Jaina studies during the last 200 years have brought to light the rich heritage of *Jaina architecture, sculpture, paintings and epigraphs* as an authentic source of Indian history and culture. Beginning from the stone-age tools, pre-historic rock paintings, seal and sealings to *Jaina* cave temples and dwellings, inscriptions and images of Tirthankaras and *Jaina* deities, the *Jaina* Art and Architecture had flourished in all the ages.

In *Jaina* canon, there are many references to *Jaina* iconography. A large number of *Jaina* images, in sitting as well as standing postures from *Kankali-tila, Mathura* from *Chausa near Buxur* in Bihar have suggested that image worship existed at least by about the beginning of the Christian era. Tirthankara sculpture with Mauryan polish obtained from *Lohanipur, Pataliputra* proves that Tirthankara image worship had come into vogue in the Asokan period.

As a matter of fact in *Jaina* philosophy there is no creator God. For attainment of emancipation, image worship is not necessary. However, at a very early stage when image worship was introduced in Buddhism and Brahmanism, *Jainism* also could not escape this trend. In *Jaina* image worship Tirthankaras who were human-beings and have attained Kevala-Jnana and reached

perfection of the soul freed from all bondages are worshipped. Besides *Tirthankaras*, *Siddhas*, *Acaryas*, *Upadhyayas* and *Sadhus* (Monks) being five supreme ones—the Panca Parmesthins, and the worship of *Yaksas*, *Nagas*, *Bhutas*, *Mukunda*, *Indra-Skanda*, *Vasudevas*, trees, and rivers etc., as referred to in Jaina canon began among the lay worshipper or common man. The deities were invoked with various desires for reward etc. Thus in Jaina temples, images of Tirthankaras were installed along with Jaina deities and prominent events of their lives portrayed in art, which took several forms.

World fame Jaina Temples of Khajuraho were built during AD 950 to AD 1050, representing *Candella* (Chandela) architecture. There is no doubt that in an erotic sculpture of Khajuraho, the existence of 24 *Jain* temples (big and small) is a testimony of religious tolerance and harmony which the Candella king showed; and due to this fact *Vishnu*, *Shiva* and *Jaina Temples* lie in close vicinity in Khajuraho.

The three larger old *Jaina* Temples are of Parsvanatha, the Ghantai and the Adinatha. There is also fourth complex of various shrines of early and very late date that is of Santinatha. These temples are all well preserved and in several respects possess distinguished features of plan and design. This shows that Indian art in the past has remained fully dedicated to the service of religion.

M. W. Meister has studied the Jaina Temples in Central India, which are primarily dedicated to the Digambara sect. Most of the temples however, have been ruined, rebuilt and ruined again, leaving little, besides stray images for the historians to study. Few Jaina temples architecturally most important and discussed by Krishna Deva are the Malade at Gyraspur and temple no 12 and 15 preserved in the hill fort of Devgarh. Temple no. 12 is of ambulatory (Sandhara) type, once common in Central India. This style is transitional between the 'Gopadri' style in the eighth century and the 'Pratihara' style of the ninth. Its companion shrine, though

rebuilt, considerably preserves a Sarvatobhadra plan unique among extant temples in India.

The Gyaraspur Malade *Jaina Temple* is of the last half of the ninth century. It is a large Sandhara temple having a peculiar plan and projections.

The *Jaina Temples* of Kumbharia called '*Arasana*' built in mediaeval times, are today better known sites of the *Jainas*, in Banaskantha District of Gujarat. Dandanayaka Vimala of Dilwara was the first *Jaina* builder associated with '*Arasana*'. From the time of Bhima Deva-I onward *Arasana* formed a part of the Solanki empire, and with the erection of *Jaina* temples it became a holy site for the *Jain* community who visited it and installed images in the temples there. The temples are dedicated to the Tirthankaras, built wholly of white marble. All the temples are *Nirandhara-prasada-s* and belong to the Svetambara sect.

Jaina Cave Temples at Ellora represents temples and monasteries fashioned out of the solid rock form as early architectural remains of *India*. Actually *Jaina* caves are few in number at Ellora and most of the caves have distinguishing names representing Buddhism and Brahmanism. It is a fact that Ellora caves represent unique cultural harmony in three ancient religious orders—Brahmanical, Buddhists and *Jainas*. This religious catholicity is considerably reflected through the various artistic and iconographic exchanges.

Burgess has described the grandeur and impressive architectural style of *Ellora* *Jaina* temple caves e.g.—Chhoti Kailasa (grouped under cave No. XXXI), and this cave recently cleaned between the last and Indra Sabha (grouped under cave No. XXXII), Indra Sabha assigned as a work of high craftsmanship (as cave No. XXXIII) and Jagannatha Sabha (cave No. XXXIII) are really of great artistic and architectural value as well as religious importance.

In history, the *Ellora* caves are the largest of the kind in India and one of the wonders of world on account of their extent, huge dimensions, elaborate carvings and splendid art work. Out of the 34 number 12 are Buddhist, 17 Brahmanical and 5 Jaina caves. The Buddhist caves are of seventh and eighth centuries; Brahmanical of eight and ninth centuries, whereas Jain caves belong probably to tenth to thirteenth centuries and cleaned up very recently.

Jaina Art and Architecture had greatly flourished under the Colas also which represent continuation of the tradition left over by the Pallavas in the North and the Pandyas in the South. From Aditya-I, Colas extended support to the Jaina church and contributed substantially to patronise Jaina art through-out the South. The early phase of Colas witnessed the growth of cave temples which were confined to the hill regions of Tamilnadu. Rock-cut sculptures depicted Tirthankaras and their attendant deities. Thus many *Jaina* temples were constructed under Cola rule. Bronze Jain images were also made for worship. R. Nagaswamy and A. Ekambaranathan has thrown much light on Jaina Art and Architecture which flourished in various parts of Tamilnadu during Cola rule. P.R. Srinivasan has traced the Jaina Bronzes now preserved in Madras Museum in his illustrated book "Bronzes of South India" which were under worship during that period.

Shravan-Belgola is the most ancient and prominent centre of the Jainas located in South India. Here the impressive colossal image of *Gommateshvara*, Lord Bahubali is unique in the *Jaina History of Art and Architecture*. The 58 feet high colossus of Lord Bahubali atop the Indragiri hill in tiny town of Shravan-Belgola in Chennayapatan Taluka of Hassan district of Karnataka is a poem in stone, a masterpiece of craftsmanship, a symbol of best of iconography, a lofty monolith and a beautiful piece of sculpture. It was consecrated by ChamundaRaya on March 12, 981 A.D.

The *Industrial Revolution* and *Renaissance* in Europe has tremendously brought the *East* and the *West together*. And, as a matter of fact, as already mentioned many Western scholars were attracted towards the study of the religion, philosophy, culture, literature, history as well as life and the social pattern of the people of India, during the imperial rule.

Alongwith the study of Buddhism, Hinduism and other sects, the foreign scholars have studied the antiquity, historicity and doctrines of *Jainism* elaborately during the last 200 years or so. They have discussed at length authoritatively various aspects of Jaina religion; primarily based on *Jaina* scriptures, inscriptions, excavated finds as well as historical references. They appreciated that the *Jaina* order of monks rejected the Vedic and Brahmanic authority in a big way when Vardhamana or Mahavira preached and propagated the religion of the *Jinas*. Mahavira was son of the chief of Jnatrika tribe, born in Besarh (Basukundagama) near Patna, in Bihar, At the age of about 30 years, he joined the sect of nudist, the nirgranthas founded by Parsva during eighth century B. C. In the *Jaina* canon Parsva was the twenty third Tirthankara and Mahavira, the last and the twenty fourth Jaina prophet. He went naked (Digambara) and for nearly 13 years practiced austerities, and finally attained *Kaivalya*, the topmost level of release from Mundane matters, total lack of Karmic activity.

Long before the invasion of India by Alexander, the Great, the *Greeks* had travelled here in search of knowledge. Pythagorus had studied India's socio-religious system and *Chinese* travellers took tremendous interest in Indian culture, religion and specially in the study of Indian religious system.

Strabo and others refer to the Indian sect of philosophers and their peculiar way of life.

The *Greek* glossator Herychaio of the 5th century A.D. mentions 'gennoi' as naked philosophers, while Schmidt and others have called them the *Jains*. *Chinese* traveller Hiuen Tsiang who

visited India during the 7th century A.D. calls Jaina ascetic (Nirgranthas) as 'Li-Hi'.

They kept their bodies quite naked and pulled out their hairs. Their skin all cracked, feet hard and chapped. On the basis of Topra edict (7, 26) Buhler said that Asoka knew the Jains as '*Niganthas*.'

It is noteworthy that the oldest works of the Singalese canon, which apparently from the beginning of the second century after Buddha's death or the fourth century B.C., mention presence of an opposite sect of the *Nirgranthas*.

Buddhist canon has innumerable references regarding the existence of the sect of the *Nigantha Nataputta* (Vardhamana Mahavira).

In the island of Ceylon King Pandukabhaya ruled from 367-307 B.C. and built a Jaina monastery for *Nirgranthas*. He liberally patronised the religion of the *Jinas* and promoted *Sramana Culture* in the land.

A later king, Vattagamini (Cir. 38-10 B.C.) however, caused it to be destroyed, after it had existed during the reigns of twenty one Kings and instead built a Buddha monastery and thus caused great harm to the sect of *Jinas*. Emperor Asoka's inscriptions mention Vardhamana's sect. Asoka, patronised Buddhism and promoted it beyond the border's of India, though he respected Jainism and other true religions and faiths.

Greek historians confirm the existence of the Nirgranthas sect-a religious order of the naked ascetics, besides presence of the contemporaries like Antiochos, Magas, Alexander, Ptolemaens and Antigonas.

Emperi or Chandragupta Maurya was a great promoter of Jaina religion. According to Jain tradition, he abdicated his throne in 301 B.C., to become a Jain monk in South India, where he fasted till his death, while his son Bindusara, took control of Pataliputra. There is no doubt Buddhist and *Jainist* monastic order

and ideals influenced the Hinduism to have their third and fourth ashramas (vanaprastha and sannyas). Great king Kharavela who ruled over the east coast of India from the year 152 to 165 of the Mauryan era in the 1st half of the 2nd century B.C. promoted *Jainism*. Famous Jaina inscription at Khandagiri-Udayagiri in Orissa was inscribed by him, though this inscription is partly disfigured but prove the antiquity and historicity of Jainism during that period.

Similarly great Siddha and Arhat tradition appear in *Jaina* inscriptions of *Mathura*. A large number of Jaina Inscriptions have come to the light dated the year 5 to 98 of the era of the Indo-Scythian King-Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasudes (Bozodeo), being at least to the end of the 1st and the 2nd century A.D. Jains of Mathura were Svetambaras and had built a number of monasteries for the Jain monks.

Jaina society from Mahavira onwards flourished first in Ganges basin and afterwards in southern parts of India. Hindu, Buddhist and *Jaina* sources reveal that *Jaina* community was highly industrious and enterprising besides following the high morals and code of conduct prescribed by the Tirthankaras.

In the *Jaina* annals there are direct references that *Jainism* enjoyed royal patronage both in the days of Parsva and Mahavira. Both Parsva and Mahavira were born in royal families. With this royal backing it is but natural that they have had great influence on social life. It is said Mahavira's parents were the followers of the tenets of Parsva and hence with them it is highly probable that whole clan of the Naya Kashatriyas were also the followers of the same tenets. *Jaina literary* texts support this viewpoint.

Mahavira was born in a royal family and had blood relations with dynasties of his age. Dr. Jacobi had proved that Siddhartha was a powerful monarch. According to Ray Chaudhuri, Rhys Davids and Cunningham, Bhojas were descendents of those whom Rishabha, the first Thirthankara acknowledged as persons

deserving honour. Mahavira's mother Trisala was the Licchavi princess. King Cetaka was a Licchavi and Trisala was his sister. This royal connection helped in spreading the Jaina religion in Mahvira's age.

Scholars point out that Mahavira spent three of his rainy seasons at Campa, which was a great centre of Jainism. Barnett and Hoernale says that Cetaka, the maternal uncle of Mahavira and Ajatasatru, the son and successor of Bimbisara of Magadha were greatly influenced by *Jainism*. There were other small and large kingdoms which patronised, respected and popularised Jaina culture. Mallas of Pava (Kushinara) where Mahavira finally got nirvana, were great followers of the Tirthankara Mahavira. It is believed Mallas extended great support to *Jaina church*.

On the nirvana of Mahavira, Mallas observed fast and instituted an illumination with the words, "*since the light of the intelligence is gone, let us make an illumination of material matter.*"

Kashi-Kosala confederacy which were among the prominent mahajanpadas patronized both *Jaina* and Buddhist Church. Jaina history tells Parsva and Mahavira had visited these places.

Beginning with the Saisunagas, the Nandas, and the Mauryas upto the time of Kharavela-*Jainism* and *Jaina society* got enough support from the royal families.

The most distinguishing and memorable feature of Jainism is that it has maintained its universal catholicity both in matters of religion and social order. The *Jaina society* had always been dynamic and value based. It is a fact Mahavira never differentiated between Aryans and the non-Aryans, the rich and the poor, the peasants and the business community while addressing his sermons. The great teacher's religious discourses were for all. He even admitted despised *Mlechhas* and low caste people in Jaina church. As such *Jainism* never attached importance to the prevailing caste system rather opposed it. In *Jainism* 'Jati' has

been used to describe the mundane conditions of the Jiva (soul). It believed men of all Kulas (Clans) are competent to attain salvation. It never accepted birth as a basis of caste. It declared that actions of man are the main determinants of his social status in life. A man's high or low status is because of his Karman (actions). A man belonging to upper caste becomes low if his actions are degenerating. For a follower of *Jina*, caste is a trivial consideration.

As such there were no community distinctions in Jainism of yore. There is mention in *Jaina* texts that orthodox Vedic Brahmans were highly upset of *Jaina* catholicity. In later days Hindu Puranas attacked Jainism and Buddhism for admitting low caste Sudras in *Jaina* and Buddhist church.

Epigraphic evidences support the prevalence of catholicity in *Jain Samgha* upto the 13th century. *Jaina* religion was somewhat reformatory movement also and tried to uplift the low castes *Shudras*, male and female slaves, the artisans and the *Candalas* and protested against artificial man made caste barriers and social rigidities.

Jaina social order followed the teachings of the Trithankaras, specifically Parsva and Mahavira, and believed in social equality, social justice, non-violence, social harmony and peace.

Through simple and pious worship, observance and participation in institutionalized festive occasions ordinary laymen and women satisfy their religious hunger and gratify their sentiments, give vent to their religious zeal, identify moral requirements and above all religious solidarity.

Jainism does not believe in any Supreme Being, supernatural powers, incarnation, gods and goddesses. But it looks strange and paradoxical that they too have faith in the worship of paradisaical figures similar to Hinduism.

Jains perform worship of chosen deities before their images. There are no signs of infidelity.

In Jainism, the principal objects of worship are the five

worshipful ones (Panch—Parameshthins)—the Arhats, the *Siddhas*, the *Acaryas*, the *Upadhyayas* and the *Sadhus*. In their most sacred Panch—Namokar mantra—salutation, obeisance and homage is paid to these ideal representatives. The first place of honour is assigned to the Arhantas, who had attained perfection and omniscience and become Kevalin, a *Jina*, the God-in-man. All Tirthankaras had become Arhantas, Kevalin in their life time. The Siddhas or the liberated, pure and perfect souls which live forever in the state of perfect God-hood constitute the second category of the worshipful ones. The third worshipful ones are the Acaryas, the master, who head and govern the congregation and guide in the due observance of self-discipline, austerities and rule of *Right Conduct*. The fourth worshipful ones are the Upadhyayas, the ascetic teachers who are engaged in learning and teaching the scriptures. The Sadhus are the fifth worshipful ones, the remaining ascetic seekers, who are an example of selfless devotion and dedication to the *Jaina-path*. In fact, the Acaryas, upadhyayas and Sadhus represent the true gurus and thus become objects of veneration and worship.

For Jain community, Tirthankaras are great spiritual teachers of ancient times. Offerings are made by Jains at the ordinary and routine morning temple ritual, know as deva-puja, like Hindus who make offerings to their Gods expecting of benefits in return, happiness and prosperity etc. The Buddhists also offer morning prayers to Lord Buddha in a humble way.

People believe that there are numerous gods and goddesses, celestial beings, angelic and satanic ghosts, and spirits more powerful than human beings. Yet they are not divinities, they are much lower beings, who possess *Right Faith*, *Right Knowledge* and *Right Conduct*. Generally, people are tempted to have faith and worship *Ksetrapalas* or *Dikpalas*, being godly guards of regions, Sarswati, the goddess of learning, attending *Yaksha* and *Yakshis* of the different Tirthankaras. In Jaina temples images of

these godlings are installed but in a lower and inferior position to those of the Tirthankaras and people worship them. More enlightened and orthodox however do not worship these attending godlings. In Jaina doctrine, pure and perfect men are mostly favoured to these angelic godlings and celestial beings. Only a man being born can attain nirvana and siddhahood through pious and righteous self-control and austere discipline.

In Jaina literature there are enough references on Yaksha and Yakshi worship. Hinduism and Buddhism admit their presence. From *Vedas* to *Puranic literature*, from *Jatakas* to *Jain puranas* and *Katha* texts, the worship of Yaksha or their presence as celestial beings have been admitted. They are regarded as vegetation spirits, directly controlling and bestowing upon their devotees fertility and prosperity. In Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina iconography, after post-Gupta age, we find numerous attending Yaksha and Yakshi figures in hypothetical postures.

From the very beginning Jains had been very illustrious, industrious, visionary, planners and technocrats. The first Tirthankar Rishabhadeva invented agriculture and various arts and crafts. Since then Jainas had been village and city financiers and bankers, landlords and money lenders, agriculturists and a mercantile community.

In Jain canon, *Jain Katha* texts, Puranic literature, inscriptions and historical documents there are enough authentic references and narrations on *Jain economic* life, which reveal their role in shaping the country's economic and industrial map. In due course of time a Jaina householder, besides a religious and pious soul, became synonym to wealth, spiritual development and divinity.

People in ancient and medieval India earned their livelihood through agriculture, farming and trade. According to Jaina texts Samaraicakaha, Kuvalayamala, Upamitibhava-prapanchakatha and several other works agriculture was the important source of earning. Peasants were the backbone of the society. There were both small farmers and big landlords. Jaina texts give information

about the earlier agricultural technology and systems of irrigation of fields, principal crops, industrial ventures, professional groups of skilled craftsmen and the working class.

According to *Jain Katha* texts next to agriculture, spinning and weaving were the most important industry in ancient and medieval times. Cloth was manufactured throughout the country. There were trade guilds in the form of economic corporations. The guilds had some power to make their own rules and regulations relating to the conduct of their business and every member had to follow them. Important guilds were almost a medium between the king and the merchant. *Jain Katha* texts also refer to the trade in ivory, lac, gold, silver and pearls.

Merchants used to store properly the cereals, cotton, salt, wool and oil. For greater gains they sent out carvans of bullock carts, camels and asses throughout the country. *Jain canon* had prohibited preparation, purchase and sale of alchemic articles. A trader was supposed to give an account of the country to be visited and the articles of import and export. For earning wealth and adventures he generally used to visit far flung countries and acted as country's religious and commercial ambassadors; developed trade relations and earned wealth.

Apart from the sea-going vessels, there were different types of small and large boats which sailed in the rivers. There is mention of sea-routes and principal ports which existed in the ancient days.

The country's flourishing trade afforded great possibilities for a rich coinage. Coins made of copper, silver and even gold were the regular media of exchange in buying and selling commodities. Though barter system had also existed in rural areas. Besides coins, cowries were also used in buying and selling commodities.

In ancient times people were mostly engaged in agriculture and various crafts. Ruling chiefs had their regular armies. A definite trend from ignorance to light, disorder to discipline and from poverty to richness is visible in literary and religions texts. In the post-Mauryan period there was sharp rise in trade and industrial

activities, growth of agriculture and economy, international trade links, as well as development of art, culture and literature. At this juncture, the *Jain community* flourished and Jain religion had spread because of its scientific outlook got patronage in royal families. Jaina church mainly depended on commoners to provide alms. The tremendous economic growth and rise of merchants encouraged Jaina religion to grow and spread throughout the country.

Truly since ancient days till today the *Jains* have played an important role in agricultural growth, industry and trade, science and technological progress.

Besides they are more conscious of their religious duties and obligations. And at the top as super managers control the industry and trade and occupy an important position in the nations socio-economic life.

In the twentieth century the contribution of the Jain community to the enrichment of Indian philosophy, literature, art, architecture, history and culture, and above all economic and social spheres have been largely remarkable.

In the new millennium it is hoped they will contribute much more and serve the nation with dedication. They are a numerical religious minority community in India, though divided in various sub-sects, within the same religion.

In India, some religions have been orthodox and more ritualistic. Some oppressive and some liberal and humanistic. Now, the scientific and social forces have compelled them to change their age old ideology, attitudes and behaviours. In the religious history of India, *Jainism* since its emergence has been liberal, humanistic, broad-minded, logical and more scientific religion.

The present *Encyclopedia of Jain Religion* is a great reference work and is the result of outstanding research work carried out by the eminent scholars and writers from where we have excerpted and quoted the required theme material pertaining to Jaina religion and philosophy. While preparing this study, we

are highly grateful to all the scholars and writers for their long investigation and academic labour which will go down in the Jaina history, for all time to come.

It is hoped this Encyclopedia containing valuable and scholarly representative material on various subject-themes of *Jain* religion and philosophy will be helpful in understanding vast and growing ideas and practices of this ancient religion of India and welcomed by Indian and foreign scholars as well as general readers.

We are grateful to Mrs. Sushila Jain for providing all sorts of help at the compilation state of this Encyclopedia.

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KL Chanchreek
Dr. Mahesh Jain

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1

ANTIQUITY OF JAINISM

The Jainism is one of the most ancient religions of India. Economist and Nobel Laureate, Prof. Amartya Sen, delivering the Second Sir Dorab Tata Memorial Lecture on "The Indian Identity" said on February 26, 2001 in New Delhi that "India prior to Muslim invasion was not primarily Hindu in nature, since Buddhism was the dominant religion in India for many hundred years and Jainism has also an equally long history and in fact a large continuing presence."

In recent times some scholars and students of Jaina religion had created a confusion that Jainism was an offshoot of Hinduism. Some even said that it is parallel to Buddhism. But it has been proved now that Jainism is not an offshoot either of Hinduism or Buddhism. It is totally an independent religion. Jain Tirthankaras and monks had propagated the message of Ahimsa (non-violence), co-existence, peace and harmony, control of passions and service to the humanity since earliest times, even when Aryans have not properly settled down or Buddhism took its birth in India.

Jainism as a religion distinct from Brahmanism and Buddhism reveals the relation of man to the universe, which is more precise and scientific than its two rivals. In the sphere of logic and reasoning, Jainism has developed the doctrine of 'Anekantavad or Syad-vad'. In the sphere of metaphysics, it gives an ultimate analysis of the universe. In the ethical and religious sphere it lays down the code of conduct in the minuteness and comprehensiveness. It is like a vast ocean of knowledge, austerities logic and morality.

For philosophers, Jainism is more scientific religion, leading to the path of holyness and spiritualism. For the layman and ordinary householder it is an ethical way of life.

According to Jaina tradition lord Rishabha is considered to be the first of the Tirthankaras. He is placed in Krita Yug, and supposed to be the last of the 'Manus' and the first of the "Jinas". His name has been referred to in the Vedic literature, Upanishads, Puranic literature, Ramayana and Mahabharata.

In Rigveda and Yajurveda, Brihad Aranyaka, Bhagwat Purana, Padama Purana, Brahamanda Purana, Prabhasa Purana, Shiva Purana, Naga Purana, Skanda Purana, Mathura Inscriptions and Tamil works etc., Tirthankara Rishabhadeva, has been mentioned and acknowledged as the founder of the Jainism. Much before Rigveda, the Tirthankaras and Jaina monks were worshipped in India. Tirthankaras had condemned the animal sacrifices in agni-festivities (Yagyas), causing large killings of domestic and friendly animals in Vedic age. Various superstitions and unscientific religious practices were all discouraged and condemned by Jaina monks.

In the opinion of well known authority on Jainism, Dr. Jagdish Chandra Jain :

"It is difficult to say how a particular philosophical system is originally formulated and exactly and under what influences. Moreover it is certain that religion which has enormously influenced human society, must have its deep roots somewhere in the past, which is an accumulation of generations of valuable experiences and wisdom. This accumulation of experiences helps the inner growth of man, so that he develops a capacity to understand the viewpoint of others and is capable to make himself understood.

Before Mahavira and Buddha, there were a number of philosophical enquiries which have been recorded in the Jaina and Buddhist canons, though some of them can hardly be traced in the Upanishads. We shall deal with them later. Such ideas were

conveyed from generation to generation through an unbroken chain of succession of teachers and pupils, although these traditional ideas were modified or even suppressed by writers later on. Mahavira must have pronounced a few fundamental principles pertaining to life and such things are never numerous, but bear a remarkable kinship to one another."

He further says, "According to the Jain scriptures, the Jain religion is eternal and has been revealed time and again by the Tirthankaras (creator of a passage). According to Jainism we are subject to two endless temporal cycles, the Ascending (Utsarpini) and the Descending (Avasarpini). In the first cycle, there is an evergrowing evolution of righteousness (dharma), whereas in the later, righteousness goes on decreasing until chaos and confusion reign over the earth. Each of these cycles are further subdivided into six time stages. The Descending cycle is subdivided into :

1. Extreme Happiness
2. Happiness
3. Happiness and Unhappiness
4. Unhappiness and Happiness
5. Unhappiness
6. Extreme Unhappiness

Each of these cycles then last for a number of years and follow one after another in an unbroken succession. The first time stage is said to have been the happiest stage when the children born were always twins, a boy and a girl, and their parents died immediately after their birth. The worst of all was the last stage of extreme unhappiness which is yet to come. It is said that during this stage, terrific storms would blow, there would be dust all over, the clouds would shower poisonous water, everything would perish and the whole earth would be ablaze with fire.

It is also believed that the third and the fourth stages of a cycle in which happiness and unhappiness are mingled, a Tirthankara would be born. Thus the twenty-four Tirthankaras of

the Jains are said to have been born in these two stages. At present we are passing through the fifth time stage of the Descending cycle. The first Tirthankara named Rishabha and the remaining twenty-three, were born in this cycle.

Rishabha, the first Tirthankara, was also the first king, the first monk and the first founder of the code of ethics. He was born in the Ikshvaku Kshatriya family, in the city of Ayodhya in Northern India and attained salvation on Mount Kailas in the Himalayas. He is said to have introduced agriculture, the institution of marriage and to have taught various arts and crafts to the people. He is said to have reigned for countless numbers of years and retired in the favour of his son Bharata, who was declared the first universal monarch."

Then the list of the remaining twenty-three Tirthankaras is provided. All of whom were born Kshatriyas and a majority of them attained salvation on the mountain Sammeda (Parasnath Hill, Hazaribagh district in Bihar State). So far, no historical evidence has come to warrant the historical existence of the first twenty-two Tirthankaras. On the other hand, taking into consideration, the extraordinary tenure of their careers and the intermediary periods between each of them, they appear to be legendary figures.

According to some scholars, the Jains are pre-Aryans as they are associated with non-Aryan ethnic environment. They contend that Jainism is a part of the pre-Vedic Indus civilization and compared the nude standing images in the meditative posture depicted in a seal, with the Jain deity Rishabha. Some writers have tried to trace the names of distinguished personalities of Jainism such as Rishabha, Arishtanemi, Keshi, the chief disciple of Parshva, and others to the Rigveda, the most ancient sacred book of the Hindus, thereby emphasising the existence of Jainism in about 1500 B.C., the approximate period of the composition of the Vedas. It can be pointed out here that some form of asceticism is traceable to the social and religious life of primitive

people, who in order to get rid of natural calamities, took recourse to certain austerities or self-immolation. Thus the origin of asceticism cannot be claimed by Jains. Moreover, it has to be ascertained whether the above mentioned terms traced in the Rigvedic text, are really associated with the distinguished personalities of Jain mythology or convey some different meaning. The moving about of at least the last two Tirthankaras of the Jains does not suggest their origin in the Indus Valley. The preaching of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing and possessionlessness further indicates that the Indian society had long passed the antiquated primitive stage and preconceived the idea of private property, hitherto unknown. The injunction against adultery shows that the rigid rules of family life were formed then and the society had passed the age of group marriage of early society. The twenty-second Tirthankara Arishtanemi or Nemi, is said to have been a cousin of Lord Krishna, a great hero and an incarnation of God in Hindu mythology. He was born in Soriyapura (Surajpur in Agra district) and had attained salvation on Girnar mountain in Saurashtra, in Gujarat State. It is said that when he was going to marry princess Rajimati, he heard the pathetic lowing of the cattle, intended to be slaughtered to feed the wedding guests. Moved by the thought of slaughter of the innocent cattle, he renounced the world and proceeded to Girnar to practise austerities."

It seems after Rishabha, the first Tirthankara, Parshva is famous in the Jaina canon, who is the 23rd Tirthankara.

Further according to Dr. Jagdish Chandra Jain : "Parshva, the immediate predecessor of Mahavira is said to have flourished 250 years before him. He was born in Benares, where he lived for thirty years as a layman. Then after leading an ascetic life for seventy years, he attained salvation on Sammeda Mountain. Mahavira's parents were the followers of Parshva and Mahavira during his ascetic career, had shown reverence to him calling Parshva 'the highest among men'. We learn from the Jain

canonical literature that the ascetics belonging to Parshva's order moved in a congregation and there were lay followers too, who followed his religious precepts. An important meeting between Keshi and Indrabhuti Gautama, representing the creed of Parshva, and Mahavira respectively, has been recorded in the Uttaradhyana Sutra, an important part of the canon, when the former abandoned the 'law of the four restraints' (*i.e.* abstinence from injury, telling lies, stealing and from external possession) ascribed to Parshva, and accepted the five great vows (the addition of the vow of abstinence from indulgence in sex) of Mahavira. Though there are no archaeological evidences in support of the historicity of Parshva, the literary evidence recorded in the Jain and Buddhist texts presuppose the existence of a Niggantha (unattached, free from bonds) order founded by Parshva before Mahavira. Thus there remains no legitimate doubt that Jainism was prevalent before the 8th century B.C., even before the rise of Buddhism, and Mahavira was no more than a reformer of an older Niggantha order.

Parshva preached his religion to the non-Aryan tribes, including the Santhalas, the Mundas and others who dwelled in the vicinity of the mountain Sammed in Bihar, on the border of West Bengal, where he attained salvation. This hilly area is surrounded by the Santhal Pargana, Birbhum and Bankura districts in the East, Purulia, and Dhalbhum in the South and Lohardaga in the West—which were all tribal areas. The worship of the mountain deity, called Marang Buru is common amongst hill people. In this area dwells a community called Sarak (Sravaka—a Jain Layman) who observes the rules of non-violence and calls itself the follower of Parasnath. The worship of Manasa, the serpent deity, is popular in this region now and its worship is specifically performed during the four months of the rainy season (June-September) which are considered holy by the Jains. These months are of significance to the Jains. It is significant to note that the snake god Dharanendra and his consort Padmavati are said to have been the protectors of Parshva.

We do not get the details of the doctrine preached by Parshva. The rules of conduct enunciated by him, seem to be almost the same as those preached by Mahavira, except that Parshva affirmed four vows as mentioned above, while Mahavira made them five, adding one more. Parshva was born in Benares and attained salvation at Sammeda, whereas Mahavira was born in Vaishali (Basarh, Muzaffarpur District, Bihar) and attained salvation at Pava (Pavanagar or Papaurgaon, in Deoria district, in Eastern Uttar Pradesh)."

In the Jaina and Buddhist literature Magadha has an important place due to various reasons. Dr. Jagdish Chandra Jain further says :

"Magadha (Southern Bihar), situated on the east of Kashi region of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the centre of activities of Mahavira and Buddha, was an important region in Eastern India. In fact, the political history of India begins with Shishunaga kings Shrenika Bimbisara and Ajatashatru Kunika, the rulers of Magadha, who were contemporaries of Mahavira and Buddha (6th to 5th century B.C.). In the Brahmanic scriptures, the land of Magadha has not been favoured, and is considered the land of sin, unfit for the sacrificial rites, and to be visited only on a pilgrimage."

Describing the *significance of tribal institutions*, Dr. Jagdish Chandra Jain further observes :

"The area of northern Magadha and the foothills of the Himalayas were inhabited by the tribal confederations of the Vajjis, the Licchavis (the chief element of the Vajjian confederacy), the Mallas, Kolis, Shakyas and other tribes and clans. These tribal states were ruled by collective republican government. To form the government, votes were cast and the representatives were elected. The clan of the Licchavis was known for its unity and organization. If someone fell ill the members of the clan considered it to be their duty to look after the sick and if a religious saint visited the town, they all gathered and attended

on him. When king Ajatashatru Kunika planned his military expedition against the bordering clan of the Vajjis, Buddha is said to have predicted the failure of the expedition. He told his disciple Anand "O Anand! as long as the following conditions of 'insurance against adversity' subsist among the members of the clan, no one can do any harm to them. The conditions were :

1. They hold full and frequent assemblies.
2. They decide everything unanimously and follow their decision.
3. They are not prompted to do any unlawful deed.
4. They pay respect to elderly people.
5. They do not outrage women.
6. They sanctify the religious places.
7. They pay reverence to holy people.

That is to say, as long as their tribal institution is intact, they will remain invincible.

But the historical process could not be reversed as the means of production increased, leading to the growth of agriculture, the surplus, thus resulted in giving rise to private property. The chieftains and the tribe leaders started accumulating wealth and power resulting in pursuit of avarice, greed, vanity and pride causing feuds, dissension and mutual hostility. Formerly, in tribal traditions, the most valuable property within the tribe was held in common but now the creation of private property brought about a distinction of small and big, inferior and superior, and poor and rich among the members of the clan.

The Arthashastra, a treatise on polity, refers to the technique of the breaking up of tribes and reducing them to vassal age by an ambitious king as follows :

"Agents-provocateurs should gain access to all these tribes, and discover the possible sources of jealousy, hatred, contention among them, should disseminate the seeds of progressive dissension.....Public decision and tribal custom should be brought

to dissolution by insistence upon the contrary. Litigation should be turned into a fight by the (king's paid) bravo, who at night destroy property, beasts or men of one party, to throw the blame upon the other thereby fomenting quarrel”.

The tribal republican government was being replaced by absolute monarchy, and attempts were made to annihilate the tribal society even by employing ambush, poison, assassination, strong drink, women, actors, dancers and so on. Needless to say, that king Ajatashatru with the help of his shrewed Prime Minister, Varshakara succeeded in routing the clan of the Licchavis by employing the technique of sowing dissension between them by spreading false and malicious rumours among them so that the tribal assembly lost its unanimity.

“The victory of king Ajatashatru over the Licchavis obviously must have come as a shock to Mahavira and Buddha, as both were born among tribal Kshatriyas. Mahavira belonged to the Licchavi tribe and was born in a suburb of Vaishali, called Kundagrama (Basukunda), whereas Buddha belonged to the Shakyans race, and was born in Kapilavastu (in Nepal basin).

The clan of the Licchavis and Mallas were the two main independent military oligarchies at the time of Mahavira and Buddha. Vaishali was the capital city of the Licchavis, ruled by Chetaka, the most eminent among the Licchavi princes and an influential leader of the confederate kings of Kashi and Kosala (territory surrounding modern Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh), who fought against Ajatashatru. Chetaka's sister Trishala was the mother of Mahavira. The Mallas had their centers at Pava and Kusinara (Kasia in Uttar Pradesh), where Buddha died during his last journey. The Shakyas were a small tribe who were proud of their ancestry. Their king was a chieftain who was elected from the leading families by rotation. As Ajatashatru unleashed the brutal massacre on the Licchavis, so did Vidudabha (Viddhubha), the prince of Kosala, on the Shakyas. In the Brahmanic scriptures, the Licchavis and the Mallas both are

grouped together as low mixed castes. This gives an idea of the social and political background of Magadha at the time of Mahavira and Buddha.”

We can mention here that Shakyas were related to Kolis, Licchavis and Mauryas, who were Kshatriyas. These small clans have a definite and important place in the Indian history. They produced thinkers, teachers and administrators.

Contemporary Schools of Philosophy

Dr. Jain tracing the contemporary schools of philosophy in Mahavira's time says : “The age of Mahavira and Buddha had been one of tremendous mental ferment, giving rise to divergent philosophical views in Northern India. This age had its wide impact also outside of India, giving birth to Socrates in Greece, Confucius in China and Zoroaster in Persia. As the populace was passing from the pastoral society to an agricultural one, it was noticed that the agriculture could support a larger number of people than a pastoral economy within the same territory. This factor greatly reduced the importance of the sacrificial rites, involving slaughter of animals, enunciated in the early Vedic literature. Consequently, the people were losing faith in the efficacy of Indra, Varuna and the other Vedic deities and the priesthood of Brahmanas.

Further more, in this age of fermentation, a large number of philosophers and thinkers, were seen wandering about as ascetics, mendicants and recluses, in the streets, lanes and alleys of a city, holding different views and opinions and preaching their religious sermons. They were no ordinary beggars, and were treated with courtesy, respect and even reverence. They raised their voices against the authenticity of the Vedas, sacrificial rites prescribed in the Vedic texts, and the superiority of castes and the exploitation of the lower section of the people by the ruling or the privileged class. Many of them propagated materialistic views, rejecting the existence of the soul or God as the ultimate reality. Others were

sceptics and doubted the generally accepted conclusions, current at that time, others still were agnostics with no categorical answer to the questions related to life and the universe, and yet others identified body and soul, and sought the greatest good of life in worldly pleasures.

In the Upanishads (700-600 century B.C.) themselves, which started with the reaction against Vedic priesthood and rituals, we come across a variety of philosophical views, regarding soul, ultimate reality, creatorship of God, human action and so forth. At this time several accepted answers to the following questions were re-examined :

What is the ultimate reality?

How do we live?

What is Universe?

What is our final rest?

Who controls happiness and misery?.....etc.

Pupils were directed to learned teachers to satisfy their queries. Some proclaimed Time as the First Principle, others considered Nature, Fate, Chance, Elements, Energy and yet others pointed out Intelligence to have been the First Cause. The Brahman or the Ultimate Reality was symbolically identified sometime with natural objects of wonder such as the sun, moon, ether and so on, sometimes with parts and functions of the body, and at other times with innerself, food, vitality, mind, consciousness and pure happiness. At times it was described in negative terms, beyond the comprehension of human intellect and logic.

Of the other available sources of the period, the Jain and Buddhist texts refer to numerous classes of intellectual upholding various views and opinions. In the Jain canonical texts we come across 363 philosophical views which were current at the time of Mahavira, They included those who deny the fruits of human actions and endeavors, the monists, the pluralists, the hedonists,

the eternalists, the annihilationists, the agnostics and those who believed in practising certain moral codes without knowing their real impact. The Buddhist texts refer to 62 philosophical schools, upholding different views about the soul and death. Amongst them are the advocates of a conscious and an unconscious soul after death, those who believed in the existence of the soul and the world for eternity, those who presumed the continuity of the soul forever without any change, and upholders of the view that the world originated accidentally without any cause, and many others.

In the absence of their authentic texts, it is difficult to have an exact idea of the doctrines propounded by these schools. At places, their doctrines are also mixed up with each other. For example, in the Jain texts we come across various scattered ideas about these schools, and sometimes the definition given about a certain school is applicable to Jainism itself. Whatever meagre knowledge we have about these schools is mostly included in the Jain and Buddhist sources, and such knowledge may not be considered authentic for reasons above. Whatever it may be, the views and the idea preached by these schools, were the urging implications for a change, and thus they must have also exerted considerable influence in finally shaping the Jain and Buddhist doctrines.”

Dr. Jain throws light on the six celebrated religions teachers in the following words : “The Buddhist texts have mentioned six leading teachers of certain sects, contemporaries of Buddha. They are Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala (Mankhaliputra according to the Jains), Pakudha Kachchayana, Ajita Kesakambali (of the hairy blanket which was his garment), Sanjaya Belatthiputta (of Belatthi clan), and Nigantha Natputta (of the Nata or Jnatri clan). Each one is described as the leader of a school, learned, celebrated, Tirthankara, revered by the people, old experienced and long initiated.

These religious teachers arose from the tribal Kshatriyas like Mahavira and Buddha and some of them founded their own sect.

This shows that the tribal society had reached a state of disintegration and a new society had to be created on a different basis other than which the disintegrated tribal life could not furnish. A need was strongly felt for a new type of philosophy and religion, distinct from Brahmanic ritual, which could consolidate the various elements and components together for the purposes of society. Following the ascetic tradition, these new religious teachers preached self-restraint, detachment from worldly pleasures, penance and renunciation, with the view that perhaps thereby they might be able to restore at least a part of the already disintegrated tribal institution. These popular teachers moved from place to place sometimes in a congregation, propagating their religious and philosophical dogmas.

Purana Kassapa : He was a senior contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira, with a large following of disciples. His theory was that no action had any consequence of sin or merit. According to him, if some one kills all the living creatures of the world and puts them on to a heap, or takes what is not given to him, indulges in theft, commits adultery or speaks lies, is not guilty.

Makkhali Gosala (Goshala) : Fortunately we have some details about Makkhali Gosala or Goshala and Mankhaliputta in the Jain scriptures. He is considered as the third Tirthankara of the Ajivika sect, which seems to be of older standing, than Goshala himself. He was born in a cowshed, therefore he was named Goshala (cowshed). His father was a mendicant, who went about begging by exhibiting religious pictures. Goshala was well-versed in the science of great omens and we are told that some Jain preceptors acquired this knowledge from him. In the Jain scriptures, we read about the ascetics belonging to the Ajivika sect, who practised severe penance, abstained from delicacies and were indifferent to pleasant and unpleasant food. There were twelve prominent followers of this faith, who considered Goshala as Arihanta Deva (God, worthy to be worshipped), were devoted to their parents, abstained from various kinds of fruits and roots and maintained themselves only through trade activity which did

not involve injury, and employed only uncastrated bulls to pull their vehicle. Shravasti (Sahet-Mahet, Gonda District, in Uttar Pradesh) is mentioned as a center of his activities.

It is stated that in the third year of the ascetic life of Mahavira, Goshala joined him and lived with him for six years as his disciple. Then arose some ideological difference between the two, and Goshala parted company from him, declaring himself to be a Tirthankara and became the head of the Ajivika sect. They met again after sixteen years and had a hot exchange of words. Goshala, by his magic powers destroyed Mahavira's two disciples, who tried to oppose him. Then Goshala turned his magic powers against Mahavira himself, declaring that he would die of bilious fever within six months.

But Mahavira retorted saying that he himself would yet live for sixteen years longer, while on the contrary, Goshala's magic powers would turn against him and he would die within seven days. It is stated that as a result of Goshala's attack, Mahavira did suffer bodily pain, but he was cured and lived after Goshala's death. This account, preserved in the Jain canonical text seems to be somewhat biased, was perhaps presented to decry and vilify the character of Goshala.

Like Mahavira, Goshala went about naked. It is stated that the Ajivika monks discarded clothing, practised severe penance and accepted alms in the hollow of their palms. They did not accept any invitation for meals and did not eat food specially prepared for them, similar to the Jain monks.

Goshala is depicted as an upholder of fatalism. According to him, the whole universe was conditioned and determined to the smallest detail by an impersonal cosmic principle known as 'destiny'. Therefore in his opinion there was no such thing as exertion or labor or power or vigour or human strength, but that, all things were subject to a fixed and unchangeable series of existence.

As indicated earlier, unfortunately, no authentic statements recording the tenets of Goshala are available and we have to depend solely on the Jain and Buddhist sources. However it seems to be certain that Goshala and his Ajivika sect exercised considerable influence on contemporary Indian sects including Mahavira and Buddha. Buddha has compared Goshala to a blanket woven out of hair, instructing his disciples to be aware of him. Elsewhere Goshala has been depicted as the most dangerous heretical teacher by Buddha, who like a fisherman, catching fish in his net enticed people by adopting every type of trick. Mahavira too had advised his disciple Ananda, to forbid his followers to have further contact with the heretical Goshala. This shows that Goshala must have been a powerful personality of his time and since Mahavira and Goshala had long been associated, they must have been influenced by each other.

Pakudha Kachchayana : He believed in the permanence of the seven elements-earth, water, fire, air, happiness, sorrow and life-which are all neither created nor moulded. A being is composed of these seven elements, hence there can be no killer. If a sword passes through the body of a being, it does not destroy it but only transforms one element into another.

Ajita Keshkambali : He seems to have been a pro-materialist of his time. He believed that charity, sacrificial rites, ritual, gods, good or evil deeds had no importance. According to him, a human being is made of four elements. When he dies, the earthly in him returns to earth, the fluid to the water, the heat to the fire, the wind to the air, and his faculties pass into space. According to him, in this world no recluses or Brahmans have attained perfection in wisdom, and to talk of gifts is a doctrine of the fools.

Sanjaya Belatthiputta : He is generally described as an agnostic, who was unwilling to give any definite reply to the ultimate problems, which according to him, were indeterminable. He neither affirmed nor denied that good and evil deeds had good or evil effects, or that there was or not a world beyond."

The Materialist Protest

Dr. Jain briefly describes the Lokayata system as following : “The Lokayata or the Charvaka system, which represents the materialistic view in Indian philosophy, was the strongest opponent of the Vedic ritual and priesthood. This system had a regular literature of its own, but unfortunately, again as none of its religious or philosophical texts survived, we have to rely on the numerous quotations in Brahmanic, Jain and Buddhist works, attributed to them. Throughout the Indian philosophical disposition, the Lokayatas have been referred to with such a scorn and contempt, that one feels that the orthodox traditional philosophers did not like to suffer any criticism against their established order. However, it seems that by forwarding their biting criticism against the established theories such as those of after-life, god, sacrifices and priesthood, propounded by the Brahmanic texts, the upholders of the materialist system gained much popularity and were called Lokayata (extended to people). It is relevant that we have the glimpses of the main developments of ancient Indian materialist philosophy as mentioned in the Upanishads, as well as in the Buddhist and Jain scriptures. Materialists and the so-called unreligious undercurrents are also traceable in some secular literature such as the Arthashastra of Kautilya and the Kamasutra of Vatsyayana.

The General attitude of the Lokayatas, according to their critics, was that religious observance and morality were futile. The following verse is quoted in the Sarvadarshana Sangraha (a treatise on the various systems of philosophy) by Madhavacharya (said by Charvaka) in support of the above assumption :

As long as a man lives, he should live happily and feed with butter though he may run into debt; once the body is turned to ashes how can there be return to life?

The Lokayatas do not believe in the existence of soul. According to them, what is called consciousness is nothing but a

by-product of the four material elements such as the earth, water, fire and air, having no independent existence out of the body. This consciousness is compared to the quality of intoxication in the wine, emerging through the mixing up of certain ingredients, not intoxicant by themselves, which are required for its production. Rejecting the transmigration theory of the soul, it is stated in the above text : “If a man really left his body and passed on to the other world, how is that one does not come back drawn by the love for his kith and kin”. The Lokayatas claim that it is a folly to renounce what is actually observed like the pleasures of this world and run after the heavenly pleasures which are never observed. “Whoever turns in fear from joy that he sees before him is a fool, no better than an animal”. According to the Lokayatas, the supposition of God as a creator is unnecessary. The world come into existence by the spontaneous combination of the material elements. There cannot be a better God than the king. They question as to who made the fire hot, the water cold, the air cool? And who has created sharpness in thorns and colorfulness among the birds and animals? No one. They are independently thereby nature, they would sang. The Lokayatas have condemned the authority of the Vedas, the sacrificial rites, the priesthood and the superiority of caste in the bitterest of terms. The same text also has stated: “The sacrifice, the Vedas, the practice of holding the three staves as a religious profession, and smearing of the body with ashes-all are nothing but the ways and means of earning livelihood of those who have neither intellect nor manliness”. Condemning the animal sacrifice, it is stated in the same text :

“It, as claimed by the priests, the animals killed in the sacrifice, straightaway attain heaven, then why does not the sacrificer kill his own father in order to ensure heaven for him”. Condemning the hierarchy of the castes and creed, it is said further :

“The same color of blood is running through the veins of a Brahman and a Pariah, and both of them look similar in their

appearance, then why at all the distinction is made between the two?"

Thus we see that the Lokayata philosophy has to some extent played an important role in the development of a rationalistic unorthodox attitude in Indian philosophical thought. The system fearlessly attacked the beliefs and the creed of the priestly class which appeared irrational, illogical and superstitious to them. The philosophical approach of the time, not only influenced the religious leaders like Ajita Keshkambali, Makkhali Gosala, Sanjaya Belattiputta and others, but might have had its influence on the systems like Sankhya Mimamsa, Jainism, Buddhism and others in shaping of their final doctrines."¹

Cosmic Cycle

According to Saryu Doshi, who repeats the same doctrine of birth of Tirthankaras and other legends, myths, beliefs etc., the Jainism has its roots in the remotest past. Doshi remarks :

"Jains maintain that their religion is timeless and has been revealed again and again by countless teachers known as Tirthankaras—those who show the way to salvation. The term Tirthankara literally means "the one who builds the ford by which to cross *samsara*," by forming the four-fold religious order of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. Forty-eight Tirthankaras are born in every cosmic cycle which, according to the Jains, is like a pendulum that swings back and forth. Its movement has neither a beginning nor an end. The downward swing represents the *Avasarpini* era during which conditions on earth gradually deteriorate from utmost happiness to extreme unhappiness. The upward turn represents the *Utsarpini* era with steadily improving conditions—from extreme unhappiness towards utmost happiness."

1. Jain, Dr. Jagdish Chandra : The Jain Way of Life, pp. 1-14

Doshi further writes, "In every cosmic cycle twenty-four Tirthankaras are born during the downward course and twenty-four during the upward swing. Mahavira was the last Tirthankara of the *Avasarpini* era in the current cosmic cycle. The Jains state and there is textual evidence to support their claim that the Tirthankara preceding Mahavira, Parshva, was an actual historical figure who lived and taught in Banaras in the ninth century B.C. The antiquity of the Jain religion can be traced back to the twenty-second Tirthankara who lived in the region of Mount Girnar in Saurashtra, and was a contemporary and a clansman of Krishna. But thereafter the history of the religion shades off into legends and myths."²

"The interval of time between the twenty-fourth and twenty-third, as well as between the twenty-third and twenty-second Tirthankaras appears to be approximately two or three centuries. And if this period of time is an indication of the time-span that separated each Tirthankara from the one who preceded him, then the date of the first Tirthankara of the current cosmic cycle can be set sometime in the seventh or eighth millennium B.C. which may have coincided with the genesis of the Indian Civilisation. In fact, the Jains regard this first Tirthankara, Rishabha, as the founder of the Indian Civilisation. They believe that he created a social organisation and taught his children the various arts and crafts as well as the science of numbers and the art of writing. When he became disenchanted with the mundane pleasures of worldly existence he sought spiritual peace by becoming a homeless mendicant monk, spending his time in penance and austerities. After attaining omniscience he created a religious order with four segments—monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen—and established a code of religious conduct. Because he set up a religious order he is known as a Tirthankara and is distinct from and superior to other *kevalins* and *siddhas*. It may be added here that the Hindu *Purana*, *Shrimad Bhagawata* elaborately records

2. Doshi, Saryu : Masterpieces of Jaina Paintings, pp. 15-16

the life of Rishabha and describes him as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. Therein he is attributed with the creation of a new type of religion based on detachment and total control of the emotions and senses.

The Jains do not regard Rishabha or any other Tirthankara as the founder of their religion because they believe it to be timeless. To them, Tirthankaras are the propagators of a truth and a path that has already been revealed by an established set of teachings. These teachings are not manifested through magical powers (as the *Vedas* are supposed to be) nor received through divine grace. It is the human soul, aided by an inherent knowledge, that comes to know the truth. Each Tirthankara reanimates the imperishable Jain tradition. As the order created by one Tirthankara fades it is recreated by the next."

Doshi further writes, "According to Jain sources, Mahavira's parents were followers of the *Nirgrantha* religion preached by the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parshva. Mahavira too, was raised to believe in it. Parshva's religion was known as *Chaturyama Dharma* as it enjoined restraint from four sorts of activities : injury, non-truthfulness, taking what is not given, and possession. Mahavira preached the same principles, those of *ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya* and *aparigraha*. He, however, added a fifth vow—that of *brahmacharya*. This was a departure from earlier teachings which considered celibacy to be an aspect of the vow of *aparigraha*. Mahavira also drew a distinction in the levels at which these five vows were to be observed : at a higher level they were known as *mahavratas* to be practised by the ascetics and at a lower level they were called *anuvratas*. The *anuvratas* were less severe and designed primarily for the Jain laity. Thus the vows were and still are the same for the lay votaries as well as the ordained persons; they differ only in the degree of strictness advocated in their observance."³

3. Ibid., p. 16

“Despite the stress on severe discipline of both mind and body, Mahavira’s teachings appealed to the people, and at the time of his death in 527 B.C. the Jain following consisted of 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns, 159,000 laymen and 318,000 laywomen.”⁴

About eighty years ago, “archaeological operations in the Indus Valley of India now in Pakistan revealed at the ancient sites of Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa a new culture which is presently known as the Indus or Harappan culture.... The domain of this culture was considerably larger than that of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, to which it was in part contemporaneous. The Harappans had cultural contacts through the Persian Gulf with Mesopotamia and with settlements further west, besides with the regions to their north and east. Perhaps, primarily, these contacts were of a commercial nature.”

..... This society is organised in cities, their wealth derived mainly from agriculture and trade, which have extended far and wide in all directions.”⁵

In the words of Jaina Acharya Ratna Prabha Vijaya : “Oriental scholars are generally of opinion that the Aryans who settled down in Indus Valley, came later into India, and pushed earlier Aryans who were living there, towards the east. The theory of two different waves of invasions of Aryans not only implies two political groups but also two different cultural groups.

The former group of Aryans according to our theory, were the followers of Ahimsa doctrine associated with Jainism, which probably was responsible for the springing up of Upanishads—a new atman (soul) cult accepted by the Aryans of the Gangetic Valley and which pushed to the back-ground as inferior and unimportant the cult of Vedic sacrifice. Rishabha, according to the traditional account, belongs to this group of Aryans. The tribe of Ikshvakus is referred to in Rigvedic literature as an ancient

4. Ibid., p. 16

5. Khanna A.N. : Archaeology of India, p. 4

tribe. Therefore, by the time the Aryans, of the Indus Valley composed their hymns, these Ikshvakus of which tribe Lord Rishabha was the greatest hero, was considered an ancient clan and almost forgotten.”⁶

On the basis of researches it has now proved that the Rishabha cult or Jainism is quite an ancient religion. It has survived because of its concepts of non-violence, high ethics, divinity, meditation and worship. The Jaina doctrine of universe and its constituents, the fundamental principles like the ‘tattvas’ or ‘padarthas’, the stages of spiritual progress etc. deserve the attention of the scholars of Indian religions thought.

The Jainism has laid stress on good conduct and simplicity. It has preached that the liberation of the ‘Atman’ from the clutches of Karman depends upon the cultivation of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct working in unison.

Even in this modern age of Science and Technology, Computer technology and Automation, the Doctrines of Ahimsa, Anekantavad and Aprigraha have more relevance, when the humanity constantly faces the problems of the growing materialism, dangers of terrorism and nuclear weapons.

The Jainism, like Buddhism, denied animal sacrifices as a form of worship in the yajnas. Totally rejected the authority of Brahmanical scriptures like Vedas, Dharmashastras and other similar literature. Did not recognise the divinity in the Brahmanical gods and deities.

As Doshi says :

“In fact, the Jains and the Buddhist were atheistic in their approach, they did not believe in any Supreme Being nor did they accept the *superiority* of the Brahmanical caste. They denounced Brahmanical religious practices as not only unnecessary but also as hindrances in attaining the goal of

6. Vijaya, Muni Ratna Prabha : Shramana Bhagavan Mahavira, Vol I, Pt I, Intro, pp. 50-51.

salvation. The way to salvation, they claimed, was through self-discipline, meditation and ascetic practices.

The Basic similarities between the Jain and Buddhist religions, especially the fact that Mahavira and the Buddha lived at the same time in the same region, led to much confusion and for a long time scholars were not prepared to grant a separate and independent status to the Jain religion. They paid no heed to Jain claims and tended to regard Jainism as an offshoot of Buddhism. It was only in the late nineteenth century, on the basis of information provided in Buddhist text, that Jainism came to be accepted as a religion in its own right. Actually, Jainism is a highly original system of thought containing very ancient material, even more so than Buddhism. The two religions, though similar in approach, evolved along different lines and gathered a vast number of followers. But Jainism, unlike Buddhism, never spread beyond the frontiers of India. Its hold over its adherents in India, however, continued to be strong throughout the ages and it was able, therefore, to successfully counter the disruptive forces of the Hindu Revivalists. Buddhism, on the other hand, could not withstand these pressures, and consequently disappeared from the land of its origin. Jainism, though restricted to minority, continues to be a living tradition in India today.”⁷

As stated earlier the Jains believe that their religion is very old and timeless. It has been revealed by countless teachers known as Arhats and Tirthankaras.

Many rulers of Bihar of ancient days were patrons and followers of Jainism. The Lichchavi kings were Jains. Chetaka a Lichchavi ruler married his sister to Siddhartha. Mahavira was born to this princess.

Members of Nanda dynasty were Jains, Chandragupta Maurya in the beginning was impressed with Jainism. Parsva ruled over Kalinga. There are several inscriptions and historical records

7. Doshi, Saryu : Masterpieces of Jaina Painting, pp. 9-10.

regarding this statement. Badli (Ajmer), Mathura excavations, Sahet Mahet (Sravasti) finds furnish evidence of Jaina sculpture. Hathigumpha inscription of Khandagiri-Udaygiri Hills are famous. Kalinga emperor Kharavela patronised Jainism according to remains and inscriptions.”⁸

During his life time, Buddha himself had visited Mathura. He had very poor opinion about this city and its citizens. Besides, Buddhism, Mathura had been famous for Jaina culture.

Mohan Lal Mehta says : “An inscription of the second century A.D. has been found in the ruins of a Jaina *stupa* excavated in the mound called Kankali Tila at Mathura. The inscription says that the *stupa* was built by gods. The truth underlying this type of belief is that at that time the *stupa* was regarded as of immemorial antiquity. The sculptures and inscriptions found at Mathura are of great importance for the history of Jainism. They corroborate many of the points current in the Jaina traditions. For instance, the series of twenty-four *tirthankaras* with their respective emblems was firmly believed in, women also had an influential place in the Church, the Order of nuns was also in existence, the division between Svetambaras and Digambaras had come into being, the scriptures were being recited with verbal exactitude, and the like.”⁹

No doubt Mathura *stupa* also indicates that Jainism is quite much more ancient religion.

It is a religion of the most civilized people, who lived in India before Aryans. It is not only an ancient religion but also an independent religion. Though resembles with Buddhism, it discarded the Vedic rituals and Lokayata system, a philosophy of materialism, in toto.

On the antiquity of Jainism Mehta is quite clear when he says : “It is wrong to say that Jainism was founded by Lord

8. See Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : Ancient, India. pp. 137-143.

9. Mehta, Mohan Lal : Jaina Culture. p. 18.

Mahavira. Even *Lord Parsva* cannot be regarded as the founder of this great religion. It is equally incorrect to maintain that Jainism is nothing more than a revolt against the Vedic religion. The truth is that Jainism is quite an independent religion. It is even older than the Vedic religion. The Jaina culture, which represents now the Sramanic culture in India, is in negative terms, non-Vedic, non-Aryan and non-Brahmanic. It has its own peculiarities. It is flourishing on this land from times immemorial. The Indus Valley civilization of Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa sheds some welcome light on the antiquity of Jaina culture. Of course, we cannot deny that there has been a good deal of mutual influences on both the currents of Indian culture. In fact, Indian culture is a composite culture. The two most predominant currents in the stream of Indian culture are Brahmanism and Sramanism. They have greatly influenced each other, and thereby, contributed to the composite Indian culture. It is true that they have some similarities and certain common principles. But it is equally true that they have their own peculiarities and marked differences.”¹⁰

Various discoveries, researches and canonical texts have thus proved that Jainism is an original religion of Jambudweep, a vast land, much bigger than present day modern India. A reasonably certainty goes back to show that it is a pre-Aryan religion, with primitive currents of religious and metaphysical speculation. A large number of seals, images and other finds during Harappan and Mohan-jo-daro excavations have revolutionized the whole conception of pre-Aryan civilization and culture which existed in India.

These discoveries in the opinion of historians were of monumental importance. Marshall wrote in 1924 :

“Hitherto India has almost universally been regarded as one of the younger countries of the world. Apart from palaeolithic and neolithic implements and such rude primitive remains as the

10. Mehta, Mohan Lal : Jaina Culture, pp. 5-6.

Cyclopean walls of Rajagrha, no movements of note were known to exist of an earlier date than third century B.C., when Greece had already passed her zenith and when the mighty empires of Mesopotamia and Egypt has been all but forgotten. Now, at a single bound, we have taken back our knowledge of Indian civilization, 3000 years earlier and have established the fact that in the third millennium before Christ, and even before that, the peoples of the Punjab and Sind were living in well-built cities and were in possession of a relatively mature culture with a high standard of art and craftsmanship and developed system of pictographic writing.”

No doubt the discoveries at Harappa and Mohen-jo-daro disclose splendid representative specimen like the images of Rsabha (Rishabha)[§] and the bull, the first Tirthankara with his emblem, the Svastika which is the emblem of Suparsva, the 7th Tirthankara and a seal containing a script deciphered as Jinesvara. It is believed Brahmi script was developed by Rsabha (Rishabha).

The Rigveda and Yajurveda as mentioned earlier refer to Risabha, Suparsva and Neminath, being the first, the seventh and the twenty second Tirthankaras.

Shakya and Koliyas are also an ancient tribe of Ikshvaku Kshatriyas. They are pre-Aryan people. Buddha was born in Shakya clan and married a Koliya princess. His mother was a Koliya. Like Jains, Kolis believe in non-violence cult.

Thus, Jaina and Shakya-Koli culture flourished together in India in pre-Aryan period as well as in Buddha age and there are ample proofs in support of this historical statement.”¹¹

In the words of Tukol : “The history of human thought discloses that man has been in constant search of truth and happiness. He wants to save himself from misery and pain. As he

11. See Archaeology of India by A. N. Khanna, John Marshall's works on *Indus Civilization and Koli Jati ka Itihas* by K.L. Chanchreek for details.
§. Rishbha has also been spelled as Rsabha.

is a social being, his solution for his problems of happiness and pain has to be with reference to his society or the world at large. He has a soul and a body. In any experience of happiness or misery, pleasure or pain, the question involved is one either with reference to the soul or the body, or both. Besides, there is the Universe. The relationship between Man and the Universe has been the subject-matter both of science and religion, the common objective of which has been the search for truth.

Science has concerned itself with the discovery of order in the phenomena of nature. It seeks to formulate laws inherent in natural events and to account for them in an analytical manner without recourse to the mysterious or the mythological. Though the achievements of science in the realm of the external have been excitingly remarkable, the problems of the reality and the meaning of life still remain outside its perview.

Early religion has tried to answer the essential questions relating to the relation that exists between Man and the Universe, man and his duties, his goal of life and the path that leads to its attainment. Many saints and sages have answered these questions from time to time by precept and example. What they said and did have been noted down and have formed the creeds of their religions. The one point on which they have differed is about the existence of God, his attributes and work.

Jainism does not recognise that the Universe is the Creation of God. The Universe is made up of Jivas (souls) and Ajivas (non-souls) which are eternal, uncreated, co-existing and independent by nature. The non-souls are of five kinds, *viz.* pudgala (matter), dharma (motion) and adharma (stationariness), kala (time) and akasa(space). Jiva is characterised by Jnana and darsana, is formless, the karta (agent) co-extent with the expanse of its body, enjoyer of the fruits of the Karmas and possesses upward motion. It exists in Samsara and is Siddha while in perfect state. The soul is immortal while matter is indestructible. The Vedantin recognises only the Brahman as the cause of creation.

Jainism recognises that plants and particles of earth, cold water, fire and wind are each possessed of life. This scientific classification does not derive its authority from the Vedas or the other scriptures sacred to the Hindus. While the Upanishads assert the oneness of the self and the Transcendent Being, Buddha did not concern himself much with the metaphysical questions and left them as inexplicable (avyakta). He refused to answer either affirmatively or negatively all questions about the soul and body, the nature of the world, and existence or non-existence of the soul after death. He refused to speculate on these subjects.

The theological concepts of Jainism are clear and rational. Jainism regards a liberated soul which has attained its inherent qualities of perfect bliss, knowledge etc. as God. Godhood is the ideal of perfection. God does not control the universe or the individual. He can neither grant nor deny grace or happiness to anybody. But Hinduism recognises a personal God as the creator, the preserver and destroyer of the world.

Consistently with the principle of each individual's capacity to attain perfection or Godhood, the ethical principles of Jainism prescribe a code of conduct which requires an individual to be an ideal person with ahimsa as the foundation of his life. It preaches universal love aiming at the good of every being in the world. Selfishness, greed, anger and pride are passions which are the main causes of our misery and pain. They are to be eschewed at all costs and are to be overcome by selflessness; charity, compassion, forgiveness etc. which elevate the soul and contribute to the happiness of others in society. It has shown the way for attaining ethical and spiritual excellence gradually in eleven stages (pratima) in the career of a house-holder, at the end of which one has cut all ties from family life. It recognises fourteen stages of spiritual evolution (gunasthana) for the soul, the house-holder's eleven stages being included in the fifth stage here. The five small vows or the anuvratas; not hurting any life, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and the need to impose limitations on one's

own possessions, are rules to be observed in daily life. While they conduce to the well-being of the individual, they have immense implications of social good. Similarly, the other rules of daily study of scriptures, charity and worship help the layman to keep himself pure and unsullied in thought and action. the ethics for the monks and nuns are still more rigorous and comprehend all aspects of human life.

The Jaina rituals aim at helping the individual in the development of his devotion towards his religious ideal and attainment of purity in thought, speech and action. They are intended to help man to lead a righteous life and strengthen his desire to realise the goal of perfection shown to him by the Omniscient Tirthankaras.”¹²

Summing up the Jaina doctrine, Tukol further writes :

“Jainism is a way of life shown by the Jinas or the Tirthankaras. It is a religion which helps its follower to destroy the Karmas and attain the highest happiness. The three Jewels viz. Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct together constitute the path of liberation or emancipation. The three in unison can alone help the soul to reach the peak of perfection. That is the song of life heard from the Holy Ones who are twenty-four in number and who flourished and attained Godhood in the present Cycle of Time. The first Tirthankara, according to the Jaina tradition, is *Rishabhadeva* while the last one is Mahavira.”¹³

No Indian or Western religion has preached the doctrine of Karman so precisely and showed the path of liberation following the path of Ratnatrayas : the Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct as Jainism.

While many religions have been mainly of orthodox character, oppressive nature or purely of renunciation of the world and running away from duties towards family, neighbours, society

12. Tukol, T.K. : Compendium of Jainism, pp. 1-3.

13. Ibid., p. 3-4.

and nation in larger context, Jainism has adopted a middle path for spiritual growth and development of the individual soul and human welfare.

In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "According to Jaina tradition of 24 Tirthankaras, the first Rishabha revealed the ahimsa-dharma. The last of these was Mahavira who was an elder contemporary of the Buddha. It is now accepted that Jainism is older than Buddhism and that Mahavira who lived from 599 B.C. to 527 B.C. was not the founder of Jainism and that his predecessor *Parsva* who lived 250 years earlier was also a historical person. The Ahimsa doctrine preached by Rishabha is possibly prior in time to the advent of Aryans in India and the prevalent culture of the period."¹⁴

"In spite of the modern advances in researches made in the fields of ancient Indian history and philosophy, there are still some scholars who assert that Jainism is an offshoot of Vedic Brahmanism and that the Jains, like the Buddhists, are dissenters of Hinduism. Even an eminent historian like Arnold Toynbee asserts that Mahavira is the "founder of Jainism" and mentions Jainas as "amongst the fossilized relics of similar societies now extinct." He proceeds to observe : "Similarly, the Jainas of India and the Hinayanian Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma and Siam can be seen to be fossils of Indian society in the State in which this society was when it was developing under the Mauryan Empire." These views are obviously based on insufficient, if not erroneous material.... Jainism is neither an outgrowth of some other religion nor an antiquated out-of-date religion as is sought to be conveyed by the words "fossilized relics." It is true that today the Jainas are a numerical minority but their contribution to the enrichment of Indian philosophy, literature, art, architecture and culture has been remarkably enduring. The interest of Jainism to the student of religion consists in the fact that it goes back to a very early period.

14. S. Radhakrishnan : History of Philosophy—Eastern and Western, Vol. I.

We know that the sacred books of the Jainas are old, avowedly older than the Sanskrit literature which we are accustomed to call classical, as viewed by Max Muller.”¹⁵

Jainism and Lokayata System

Lokayata philosophy has been discussed earlier in brief, but lucid manner. Jainism rejected it altogether.

Lokayata system is a philosophy of materialism. Charvaka was one of its principal exponents. This philosophy emerged in India in the period intervening between the early Upanishads and the rise of Jainism and Buddhism. It was a revolt against Brahman supremacy ; with its priesthood, rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices.

Lokayata system lost its mass appeal as nobody liked it. Jaina philosophy did not favour the materialistic theory of Lokayata.

The ancient materialism, however, remained a crude, vulgar, mechanical materialism which was not based on any scientific analysis of natural and social phenomena. The unscientific type of materialism gave a one-sided, distorted picture of the world. “Even the Lokayata, which combined in itself the most consistent materialistic outlook of the time and the sharpest polemics against Brahmin priesthood and its values was not devoid of this narrow simplistic approach.”¹⁶ Moreover, the Lokayatas were condemned as immoralists in social life because of their extremist-hedonistic outlook on life. In fact, an unqualified hedonism was their “ethical ideal.”¹⁷

The vehement protest against the oppressive social system, tyrannical priesthood and theistic transcendentalism, launched by the Lokayata, in ancient India, was undoubtedly welcomed by

15. Arnold Toynbee : *A Study of History*, Vol. I, p 86 (OUP).

(Quoted by Tukul, pp. 4-5)

16. Damodaran, K. : *Man and Society in Indian Philosophy*, p. 39.

17. Reyna, R. : *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p. 84.

the most of the people; but that could not become a mass social philosophy, for in contrast to Brahmanism, it represented another extreme as it emphasized sensual pleasure as the sole aim of human life. If Brahmanism practised social segregation, the Lokayata led to social anarchism. If the Upanisadic philosophy taught sterile spiritualism, the Lokayatas, thus, tried to counter-act social spiritual extremism by hedonistic and materialistic extremism. It tried to beat extremism by extremism. The result, therefore was that although it contributed something towards shattering the Brahmanic ideology of social determinism, it could not capture the mind of the masses.

Perhaps, it was left to Jainism and Buddhism which denied the authority of the Vedas and of the whole system of sacrifices and ceremonies prescribed by them; and in so doing they placed themselves "outside the pale of Brahmin orthodoxy."¹⁸ Jainism and Buddhism also differed materially from Brahmanism in their organization. Brahmanism was strictly confined to the caste system, in which a man's social and religious duties were determined once and for all by his birth. Jainism and Buddhism made a wider claim to universality. In theory, all distinctions of castes ceased within the religious community. In practice, the firmly established social system proved too strong for both religions."¹⁹

The creed of Jainism, "which rejected the authority of the Veda and belief in a creator-God or First Cause, arose among Sramana circles distinct from the priestly followers of Vedas."²⁰ It paved the way for man's freedom from the forces of social and theological determinism. For in Jainism, man is ever-becoming ever-rising to perfection by his own karma. "His destiny is to

18. Rapson, E.J. : Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 34.

19. Ibid., p. 36.

20. Devaraja, N.K. : Hinduism and Christianity, p. 17.

(Quoted by Dr. D.R. Jatava in Evolution of Indian Social Thought. pp. 40-41)

free himself from the burden of karmic matter that weighs him down. Only by austerity and meditation can he free his soul from the cosmic, automatic law of karma that acts through the properties of matter. The Jains believe neither in God nor in the divine mercy. Man is the maker of his own freedom or bondage.”²¹

Jainsim protested against the tyrannical forces and hypocritical trends of the previously existing social order. It was opposed to Brahmanism. In Jainism, the path to emancipation does not lie in prayers and petitions, rituals and sacrifices, but in moral and spiritual discipline. The caste system, based on birth, has no place in Jainism. It also believes that “conduct and character of an individual is the basis for his status in the society.”²² The Jain concept of the Atman is not only distinct from but even opposed to that of Brahmanism, for if all living beings are endowed with Atman, violence to any living being is impermissible. Jainism was “the first to make ahimsa, non violence, into a rule of life.”²³ This was especially directed against the Brahmanical system of animal sacrifices which was rampant in the society of Aryan people.

As Jiva is everywhere, Jainism firmly believes in the principle; not to kill and not to harm any living being. It is, however, based on the ideal of life-negation. The Principle “not to kill and not to harm” does not arise “from a feeling of compassion, but from the idea of keeping undefiled from the world. It belongs originally to the ethic of becoming more perfect, not to the ethic of social action. It was for his own sake, not from a fellows-feeling for other beings, that the pious Indian of those ancient days endeavoured very strictly to carry out the principle

21. Mukerjee, R.K. : *The Culture and Art of India*, p. 77-78.

22. Jain, P.R. : *Jainism and Untouchability*, (An article).

23. *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, p. 25.

(Quoted by Dr. Jatava in *Evolution of Indian Social Thought*, pp. 41).

of non-activity in his relations to living creatures. Violence seemed to him the action that most must be avoided.”²⁴

Ahimsa, indeed, has a social educative effect, for the Jains have given up bloody sacrifices, use of meat, hunting and wild beast fights. They also make it their duty to be careful not to trample unaware creeping things and insects as they walk. The Jain monks go so far as to tie a cloth in front of their mouths in order that while they breath, they may not swallow the tiny creatures of the air. Even the Jain laymen are enjoined to abandon field-work, because it is impossible to dig up the earth without damaging minute living beings. That’s why the Jains are mainly engaged in trade.”²⁵ However, seriously man may undertake to abstain from killing and damaging, he cannot entirely avoid it. He is under the law of necessity which leads him to kill and to damage both with and without his knowlege. Jainism, thus, fell into exaggeration in the field of ahimsa, seems “to care much more for the security of animals and plants than for that of human beings.”²⁶

It was, in fact, an extreme attitude and Jainism did not succeed in counter-acting Brahmanic extremism by its own extremism of ahimsa. It failed in arousing mass consciousness against the existing social order in the same way in which the Lokayata system failed, for both of them adopted extremist social postures. What appeared as a Jain protest against caste system also proved a deception, for the Jains believed in caste and untouchability. It was “the irony of history that even the Jains forgot the preachings of their defied souls and started practising untouchability.”²⁷ The Jains were satisfied long ago by becoming

24. Schweitzer, A : *Indian Thoughts and its Development*, p. 80.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

26. Rapson, E.J. : *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 144.

27. Jain, P.R. : *Jainism and Untouchability*.

(All Quoted by Dr. Jatava in *Evolution of Indian Social Thought*. pp. 42-43).

the members of Vaisya caste and they were mainly engaged in trade and commerce. The Jains, for all practical purposes, became a big caste of Hindu social life. "Caste distinctions and divisions, that were once brushed aside, were reimposed and they became active with all their unflexible rigidity. This sapped the original vitality of the Jain community, though it continued to survive in even decreasing numbers."²⁸ In brief, Jains were not opposed to the caste system which had been "brought about by one's karmic retribution... and they ignored the practice of the five virtues : non-violence; truth-speaking; non-stealing; chastity in thought, words and deed; and non-attachment to all worldly possession, which otherwise were well-thought for strengthening the forces of democratic relationship between man and man.

Jainism and Buddhism

Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson holds the view that "both Buddhist and Jaina orders arose about the same time, the sixth century B.C., a period when the constant wars between various little kingdoms must have made the lot of the common people hideous with suffering and oppression; and a man might well have longed to escape from all fear of rebirth into such a sorrowful world, and hoped, by renouncing everything that could be taken from him, and by voluntarily stripping himself of all possessions and all emotions, to evade the avaricious fingers of king or fortune."

The view that both these religions arose at about the same time as expressed by Mrs. Stevenson does not hold the field since even Geo. P. Taylor who has written an introduction to her book has dissented from her. He says : "Within the last thirty years a small band of scholars, pre-eminent amongst them are the late Hofrath, Professor Buhler, Professor Jacobi and Dr. Hoernle, have effected a great advance in our knowledge of Jainism. For long it

28. Luniya, B.N. : *Evolution of Indian Culture*, p. 115.

(Quoted by Dr. Jatava in *Evolution of Indian Social Thought*, pp. 42-43).

had been thought that Jainism was but a sub-sect of Buddhism, but, largely as a consequence of the researches of Orientalists just mentioned, that opinion has been finally relinquished, and Jainism is now admitted to be one of the most ancient monastic organizations of India. So, far from being merely a modern variation of Buddhism, Jainism is older of the two heresies, and it is most certain that Mahavira though a contemporary of Buddha, predeceased him by some fifty years.”²⁹

Jainologist Mohan Lal Mehta says : “Jainism and Buddhism represent the Sramanic culture. If we examine the antiquity of Jainism from the Buddhist and Jaina records, it will be clear that Jainism is older than Buddhism. The Nigantha Nataputta of the Buddhist scriptures is none else but Lord Mahavira, the last *tirthankara* (fordmaker) of the Jainas. The place of his death is mentioned as Pava. The Buddhists often refer to the Jainas as a firmly established rival sect. Buddha made several experiments in the quest of enlightenment. But such was not the case with Mahavira. He practised and preached the old Nigantha Dharma. He made no attempt to found or preach a new religion. Buddha is even said to have entered the Sramanic (Nirgrantha or Jaina) Order of ascetics in his quest or enlightenment.

The Samannaphala-sutta of the Digha-nikaya refers to the four vows (*caturyama*) of the Nirgrantha (Nigantha) Dharma. It shows the Buddhists were aware of the older tradition of the Jainas. Lord Parsva, who preceded Lord Mahavira had preached the four fold Law (*chaturyama dharma*). Mahavira adopted the same but added one more vow to it and preached the five-fold Law (*pancayama dharma*). This is clear from the Uttaradhyayana-sutra of the Jainas. In this canonical text there is a nice conversation between Kesi, the follower of Parsva, and Gautama, the follower of Mahavira. In this conversation the two leaders realise and recognise the fundamental unity of the doctrines of their respective

29. Stevenson, Mrs. Sinclair, : Heart of Jainism, p. 6.
(Humphrey Milford, OUP., London).

teachers. They discuss the view-points of the four vows (non-injury, truth, non-stealing and non-possession) and five vows (chastity added) and come to the conclusion that fundamentally they are the same.”³⁰ In the beginning of this chapter all these points have been quoted in detail.

Though Buddha and Mahavira were contemporaries the monks of both the sects very often criticised each other. There are references both in Buddha and Jaina literature regarding such remarks and criticism. Both have preached almost in the same region. The number of Buddhist monks seems to be larger. While Mahavira died in Pava, Buddha too died after few years in Kushinara (Kushinagar), very near to that place. Actually both the places are situated in the same Janpad (District) and have been under the control of Mallas, an ancient Kshatriya tribe, still politically strong in this region.

Here Dr. Ambedkar has his own views. He said, “It was Buddhism which, by avoiding the Lokayata hedonistic extremism and the Jain ascetic spiritualism, gave to the people a new social thought. It did not accept many of the ideas of Lokayata and even of Jainism, for it developed its own standard of judgement in social relationship and metaphysical thinking. It was, indeed, a democratic thought of Buddhism because it brought a fundamental change in people’s outlook. The strife between Buddhism was a crucial fact in India’s social history.”³¹

The Buddha felt that the world could be made better by human effort alone. By proclaiming that each man could attain nirvana for himself without the mediation of priests or the reference to gods, he increased respect for human nature and raised the tone of social morality. Buddha raised his voice in protest against superstition and dogmatism. He denied the divinity of gods and did not believe in the authority of Vedas.”³² In the

30. Mehta, Mohan Lal : *Jaina Culture*, pp. 8-9.

31. Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. : *Untouchables*, p. 147.

32. Dhammaratan, U. : *Buddha and Caste System*, pp. 11-12.

collapse of ancient culture, Buddha provided ideas for new social base through dialectical thinking. His was perhaps the first instance of "dialectical thinking" in the Indian philosophical tradition which arose as a social and religious reaction against the Upanishads."³³

The Buddha put forth not a set of dogmas, but a rational scheme of human development. "He rejected the infallibility of the Vedas, condemned the bloody animal sacrifices, protested against the complicated, elaborate and meaningless ritual, challenged the caste system and the priestly supremacy and denied or doubted the existence of a supreme creative spirit....Buddhism, therefore, was more a social than religious revolution. It taught the code of practical ethics and laid down the democratic principle of social equality."³⁴ Buddha pronounced a nontheistic world outlook and emphasized "the democratic side of religion, the spiritual enfranchisement of Sudras and women, and the preachings or religion through the medium of the popular languages, that is the vernaculars.

The Centre of Buddha's doctrine was man, and he has nothing to do with soul, God, sacrifices, sacred rites of Brahmans. We may call it essence of Buddhism.

Similarly, Jainism also opposed ritualism, the authority of the Vedas, the sacrifices, the caste structure and preached for a more disciplined life based on ethical norms under the captainship of Mahavira. But in due course of time it became a religion of wealthy people and Jainism's opposition of caste structure merely a ritualism, according to some critics.

Tukol mentions : Such opinions apart, the Buddhist history and literature establish that after he had renounced the world, the Buddha was for sometime an ascetic following the Jaina cult of

33. Chattopadhyaya, D.P. : *Indian Philosophy*, p. 131.

34. Luniya, B.N. : *Evolution of Indian Culture*, p. 119.

(Quoted by Dr. Jatava, pp. 43-44).

Parsva who was the twentythird Tirthankara of the Jaina religion. In Buddhist literature Mahavira has been described as Nigantha Nataputta. In the Majjhima-nikaya, there is a reference to the ascetics who were the followers of Mahavira telling that their Master was Omniscient and that he had disclosed to them details about their previous births. There is also a narration by the Buddha himself to his disciples about his experiences when he went naked, took food in his own palms and followed the various restrictions regarding the taking of food. It is obvious that the course of conduct first followed by him is quite identical with ordinances of the Jaina ascetic life. That book also contains a reference to Upali who was first a devotee of the Buddha, had a difference of opinion with him about comparative gravity of the bodily and mental Karmas and was ultimately converted to Jainism.

Tukol further observes : The *Dhammapada* is the Bible of the Buddhistic religion. It is an anthology of verses collected from the different books of the Tripitaka which stand for the sacred scriptures in Pali containing the original teachings of the Buddha. Both Jainism and Buddhism belong to the stream of Sramanic culture, and naturally there is an attempt to redefine the term Brahmana, not based on heredity but on individual good qualities (See *Dhammapada* 393). Vrsabha, Mahavira and the Buddha belonged to the same Sramanic culture and were Brahmanas by virtues. That is what is stated in verse 422 of *Dhammapada* :—

“Usabham pavaram Viram
Mahesim vijitavinam
anejam nahatakam Buddham
tamaham brumi brahmanam.

“The most excellent (pravara) foremost Vrsabha, the victorious and the great saint (Vijita and Maharsi) Vira (*i.e.* Mahavira) and Buddha, the desireless and pure (aneja and nahataka), him (taking every one individually) do I call a Brahmana.”

Besides, there are differences between the two religions in their metaphysical and philosophical concepts. The animistic ideas of the Jainas are more ancient. While Buddhism regards all things as transitory, Jainism regards Jiva and Ajiva as eternal substances. According to Buddhism, there is no continuity of individuality from life to life. The universe is transient and soulless. The soul is not immortal. During transmigration from one life to another, only a new life arises as part of the chain of events.”³⁵

As already discussed in detail, like many Indian and Western scholars, Tukol has formed a view point that Jainism is purely a non-Brahmanical doctrine and thus not an offshoot of Buddhism or Hinduism. He quotes Prof. Hermann Jacobi who has referred to the common misconception of Jainism being an offshoot of Buddhism and dispelled all doubts; “... the Jains being non-Brahmanical, have worked upon popular notions of a more primitive and cruder character, *e.g.* animistic ideas. But the metaphysical principles of Buddhism are of an entirely different character... there is no absolute and permanent Being, or in other words, that all things are transitory. Notwithstanding the radical difference in their philosophical notion, Jainism and Buddhism being outside the pale of Brahmanism, present resemblance in outward appearance, so that even Indian writers occasionally have confounded them. It is, therefore, not to be wondered that some European scholars who became acquainted with Jainism through inadequate samples of Jaina literature easily persuaded themselves that it was an off-shoot of Buddhism. But it has since been proved that their theory is wrong... The canonical books of Buddhists mention as a rival sects, under their old name Nigantha (Sanskrit : Nirgrantha, common Prakrit, Nigganath) and their leader in Buddha's time, Nataputta (Nata or Vataputta being an epithet of last prophet of Jainas). Vardhamana Mahavira, and they name the latter's place of death Pava, in agreement with the Jaina tradition. Mahavira was a contemporary of Buddha and probably somewhat older than the latter who outlived his rival's decease

35. Tukol, T.K. : *Compendium of Jainism*, pp. 6-7.

at Pāvā..... Mahavira, however, unlike Buddha, was most probably not the founder of the sect which reveres him as their prophet, nor the author of their religion. According to unanimous Buddhist tradition, Buddha had under the Bodhi tree, discovered by intuition the fundamental truths of his religion as it appears throughout his personal works; his first sermons are things even to be remembered by his followers as are the doctrines which he then preached. No such tradition is preserved in the canonical books of the Jainas about Mahavira. Thus Mahavira appears in the tradition of his own sect as one who from the beginning, followed a religion established long ago; had he been the founder of Jainism, tradition ever eager to extol a prophet, would not have totally repressed his claims to reverence as such. But he is without doubt the last prophet of Jainas, the last Tirthankara. His predecessor Parsva.... whose death took place 250 years before that of Mahavira.”³⁶

Jainism and Hinduism

Tukol has made a comparative study of Jainism and Hinduism. He writes : Some of the Western scholars have propounded that Jainism is a result of revolt against Hinduism. Mrs. Stevenson asserted : “It must always be remembered that Jainism, though a rebellious daughter, is nonetheless, a daughter of Brahmanism, many of whose leading beliefs are still held by Jains....”³⁷ Instead of finding support for her view from the essential doctrines of the two religions, she contents herself by saying that “much of their worship resembles Hindu worship, and their domestic chaplains, though not their temple officials, are still Brahmins.”³⁸ There are some Indian scholars who

36. James, Hastings (Ed.) : *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, pp. 465-74.

37. Stevenson, Mrs. Sinclair : *Heart of Jainism*, p. 5.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

(Quoted by Tukol, pp. 7-8).

subscribe to this view and assert that Jainas are Hindu dissenters and their religion is an offshoot of Vedic-Hinduism. B.N. Luniya holds the view that sixth century B.C. was the time of great ferment of minds in the whole world, that the Hindus in India became disappointed at that time with the old philosophic dogmas, that they stood for simplicity of worship and that Jainism constituted a reformatory movement in Brahmanism.”³⁹ The popular impression is that Jainism is a religion of those who revolted against animal sacrifices of the Hindus.

Tukol further observes that : a solution to this question is to be found on the strength of the fundamental distinctions between the philosophical and metaphysical concepts of the two religions. The Vedas which are supposed to be of divine origin, contain verses primarily in adoration of the three gods : Surya, Indra and Agni. These are the most prominent, dieties of the Vedic age. Varuna was regarded as guarding the cosmic order, omnipresent, and as punishing people for their sins. Sacrifice was the most vital method of worship. Its primary object was the gratification of gods to obtain their grace. Later on during the period of the Brahmanas came Brahma, Visnu and Mahesa. It was during the period of the Upanishads that the doctrines of transmigration and Karman became popular. They recognised Brahman as the Atman to be realized in order to be free from transmigration. Man becomes free from the joys and sorrows when he reaches the stage of Brahman. “The identity of the souls of the individuals and the universe is reiterated throughout the Upanishadic literature, with varying emphasis and with differing interpretations of the nature of identity and the character of the universal soul. “Tattvamasi” ‘you (the individual) are that universal essence’... is the leading theme of the Upanishads.

These fundamental principles of the Hindu religion have very little in common with Jainism.

39. Lunya, B.N. : *Evolution of Indian Culture*, p. 8.

(Quoted by Tukol, pp. 8-9).

“Mrs. N.R. Guseva has noted the points of difference between the two religions : “There are at least eight features which distinguish Jainism from Vedic religion and Brahmanism. Those features are so much substantial that they do not afford any possibility of regarding Jainism as a sect of Brahmanism or its some other product. These features can be reduced to the following : (1) Jainism rejects holiness of Veda. (2) Stands against the dogma that gods are the main objects of worship. (3) Rejects bloody sacrifices and number of other elements of Brahmanic ritual. (4) Does not recognise Varna—Caste system of the Brahmanic society. (5) Prescribes defence of other’s life. (6) Prescribes asceticism. (7) Prescribes nudity at the time of ritual. (8) Allows women monkhood, learning of holy books etc.”⁴⁰ I may also add that Jainism does not recognise the theory of creation of the Universe by God or that the latter is its protector. There are however three elements common to the two religions and Buddhism. They are : faith in the rebirth of the soul, the doctrine of the karman holding that each has to enjoy or suffer the fruits of one’s own actions and the belief in the possibility of attaining final liberation or salvation. “..... they (the three elements) are apparently borrowed by the later Brahmanism from non-Vedic faiths and it means that they are hardly brought into Jainism by the Aryans.”⁴¹

It is still a matter of further research about the antiquity of Jainism, as claimed even now both by its large followers as well as scholars. But certainly in due course of time it mixed up with Arya Dharma, like many other faiths.

From what has been said above, it should be clear that Jainism which differs fundamentally from Hinduism cannot be regarded as its offshoot. The question then would be, whether Jainism is an older religion than Hinduism.

40. Guseva, Mrs. N.R. : *Jainism* (tr. from Russian), p. 20.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

(Quoted by Tukol, pp. 10-11)

From Vedic literature and other religious sources and canonical texts Tukol gives references of the Jaina Tirthankaras etc. to prove his viewpoint as follows :

Vedic and Other References

There are references to the Jaina Tirthankaras, the Sramans, Arhats and their principles in the Rigveda, Yajurveda and the Puranas. Subbayya Sastri has quoted from these sources in his introduction to the Shatkhandagama a large number of references, some of which are quoted below from pages 10 to 12 of that volume. According to the Jaina tradition, Vrsabhadeva had among others two sons by name Bharata and Bahubali and that India has been named as Bharata after the eldest son. The account of Jaina tradition is given in the Mahapurana of Acarya Jinasena. This finds support from the account in the Visnu Purana also :—

Rsabhat Bharato Jajne jyesthah putrah satagrajah |
Tatasca Bharatam varsam etalokesu giyate ||

This means “Bharata was born of Rsabha (Rishabha). He was the eldest amongst the hundred brothers; it is from his time that this land is known as Bharata in the world.” In the fifth chapter of the fifth part of Bhagavata Purana it is stated :

“Bhagavan Vrsabhadevah upasamasilaman uparatakarmanam maha-muninam bhaktijnanavairagyalaksanam paramahamsa-dharmam upasiksamanah.

svatanayajyestham bharatam dharani-palanaya abhisicya svayam urvaritasarira-matra-parigraha pravaravraja.”

This Means that “Bhagavan Rsabha (Rishabha) seated his son Bharata, who was well-versed in religion and was devoutly inclined towards the ascetics through his signs of devotion and renunciation, on the throne for ruling over the earth and renounced the world.”

This theory that India came to be known as Bharata after the eldest son of Bhagavan Rsabha deva who ruled over the country is contradicted by some scholars who assert that it is Bharata the son of Dusyanta and Sakuntala that is entitled to the honour. It cannot be disputed that Dusyanta was a king of later date and brought into prominence by the drama named Sakuntala by Kalidasa.

In the Rigveda, we have reference to another Tirthankara viz. Aristanemi. It reads : “So asmakam Aristanemi svaha Arhan vibharsi sayakani dhanvarhanistam yajatam visvarupam arhannidam dayase.” (Astak 2, Varga 7)

There is another reference in the same Veda at Astaka 1. Adhyaya 6 and Varga 16 : ओं स्वस्तिनःविधवेदाः स्वस्तिनरनाक्ष्यौ अष्टिनेमिः स्वस्तिनो बृहस्पतिर्ददानु। Visavedha svastinastaksyo Aristanemihi svastino brhaspatiradatu.....”

In the Yajurveda, there are references to the three Tirthankaras viz. Rsabha, Suparsva and Neminatha in cantoes 25 and 92 respectively :

“Om namo arhato Rsabho, om Rsabhah pavitram
 puruhutmaddhvaram yatisu nagnam parama maha.....
 svaha. Om trataramindram Rshabham vadanti
 amrtaramindram have sugatam superisvamindramahuriti
 samsutam varam... Vajasyanu prasava avabhuvmachha
 visvabhuvanani sarvatah sa nemiraja pariyati vidvana
 prajanpushtim vardhamanah.”⁴²

Here the references are obviously to the first, seventh and twenty-second Tirthankaras. Dr. Radhakrishnan accepts the validity of these references and observes : “Jaina tradition ascribes the origin of the system to Rsabhadeva (Rishabha), who lived many centuries back. There is evidence to show that so far back as the first century B.C. there were people who were worshipping

42. Tukol, pp. 12-13.

Rsabhadeva, the first Tirthankara. There is no doubt that Jainism prevailed even before Vardhamana or Parsvanatha. The Yajurveda mentions the names of three Tirthankaras—Rishabha, Ajita and Aristanemi. The Bhagavata Purana endorses the view that Rsabhadeva was the founder of Jainism.”⁴³

There is a reference to the first Tirthankara in the Manusmṛti also :

astamo marudevyam tu nabherjitah urukramah |
darsayan karmaviranam surasura-namaskrtah |
nititrayasya karta yo yugadau prathamō jinah ||

In the beginning of the age (*yuga*) was born the first Jaina to Marudevi from the eighth Nabhi Manu, who was the hero of action, saluted by the gods and demons and propagated the ethics and rules of punishment. Similar description is found in the Bhagavata Purana. Not only do the verses conform to the tradition mentioned above but also give the details of advice which Risabha gave to his sons and which is consistent with the principles of Jainism.

The aforesaid reference to the Arhats and the three Tirthankaras can only mean that these personalities must be pre-Vedic and that the religion that they preached was earlier to the Vedic religion. “According to the belief of the Jains themselves, Jaina religion is eternal and it has been revealed again and again, in every one of the endless succeeding periods of the world by innumerable Tirthankaras.. The interest of Jainism to the student of religion consists in the fact that it goes back to a very early period, and to the primitive currents of religions and metaphysical speculation, which gave rise to the oldest Indian philosophies—Sankhya and Yoga and to Buddhism. It shares in theoretical pessimism of these systems, as also in their practical ideal-liberation.”⁴⁴

43. S. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 287.

44. James Hastings : Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, p. 465.

(Quoted by Tukol, pp. 13-14.)

Dates of the Vedas

For long there is dispute among scholars regarding the dates of the Vedas. Tukol says : "There is considerable difference of opinion as regards the dates of composition of the Vedas. "the dates of the composition and collection of the hymns of the Rgveda (Rigveda) are unknown.... There is evidence to indicate with some certainty that the hymns were current fifteen centuries before Christ, somewhat in the arrangement in which we have them at the present time."⁴⁵

"The epoch of creation of the Vedas consists of a long duration viz. the period between the third and the first millennium B.C."⁴⁶ It appears that B.G. Tilak carried it fifteen centuries earlier while the later historians consider that the Vedas were formed during the second and the first half of the first millennium B.C. The process of accumulation of the Vedic hymns was gradual and partly proceeded in the course of many centuries until the arrival of Aryans in India."⁴⁷ The Widely accepted view of the age of the Rgveda is not later than 2500 B.C."⁴⁸

Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa Finds

Enough light has already been thrown on the link of the Jainism with Indus Valley civilization. According to Tukol : "Many scholars have carried on researches about the nature and antiquity of the Indus civilization, known to archaeologists as Harappan culture. Harappa is the modern name of the site of one of the two great cities on the left bank of the river Ravi in the Punjab. Mohen-jo-daro is the name of the site of the second city

45. Radhakrishnan, Dr. S. and Moore, Charles : *Source Book of Indian Philosophy*, p. 6.

46. Guseva, Mrs. N.R. : *Jainism*, p. 2.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

48. Mukherjee, Dr. Radhakumud : *Hindu Civilization*, Pt. 1, p. 34.

(All quoted by Tukol, p. 14).

which is on the right bank of the river Sindhu or Indus. The site is about 250 miles from the mouth of that river. Sir John Marshall's monumental works on Mohen-jo-daro refer to six seals, marked plate xii and plate cxviii figure. These were studied by Chanda and he has pointed out in his article in the *Modern Review* for August 1932 that the standing deities on these seals "in the posture of Yoga known as Kayotsarga, a standing posture peculiar to the Jaina Yogis as illustrated, for instance, in the famous statue of Rishabhadeva of about second century A.D. are on view at the Mathura Museum. The name Rsabha itself means the bull, which is also the emblem of the Jaina. It is curious that the seals numbered (f) (g) and (h) of Plate ii (!bl) also show a standing deity with a bull in the foreground. Can it be the forerunner of Rsabha? If so, Jainism also along with Saivism, must take its place as one of the oldest religions of Chalcolithic origins, thus helping the over hiatus between the Indus and subsequent Indian civilizations as phases in a common cultural evolution" Another seal found at Mohen-jo-daro contains a standing figure of a deity in nude form standing between the branches of a tree.

These figures are undoubtedly in conformity with the tradition and culture of Jainism. Acharya Tulsi considers that the pose of *yogasana*, in which several figures are drawn on the seals of Mohen-jo-daro, was worked out by the Jains, was widely known in pre-Aryan India and was borrowed much later by the Hindu ascetics. Prof. Pran Nath Vidyalkar says that "the inscription on the Indus seal No. 449 reads according to my decipherment, Jineswara or Jinesa (Jin-i-i-sarah").

Among the seals discovered by the archaeologists, some of them have signs of Swastik on them. Referring to them, Mrs. Guseva observes : These are "common in the symbols of Jainism. Swastik is the symbolic sign of the 7th priest (Tirthankara), Suparsva. The Jainas consider that there were 23 Tirthankaras before Mahavira and the middle part forms the sign of the 18th Tirthankara Ara. This sign is always drawn in manuscripts and in the ornaments of the Jaina temples etc.

The excavations have revealed the existence of well-planned beautiful cities constructed long prior to the invasion of the Aryans.”⁴⁹

As mentioned earlier also Mehta opines that : “The time assigned to the Indus Valley civilization is 3000-4000 B.C. The Indus culture is quite different from the Aryan culture in the Vedic period. A comparison of the Indus and Vedic cultures shows that they were unrelated. The Vedic religion is generally not iconic. At Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa iconism is everywhere apparent. In the Houses of Mohen-jo-daro the firepit is conspicuously lacking. There have been discovered at Mohen-jo-daro many nude figures which depict personages who are no other than ascetic yogis. Iconism and nudity have been two chief characteristics of Jaina culture.

The nude figures of Mohen-jo-daro clearly indicate that the people of the Indus Valley not only practised yoga but also worshipped images of yogis. Along with the seated deities engraved on some of the Indus seals the standing deities on them also show the *kayotsarga* posture. This posture of yoga or meditation is peculiarly Jaina.

The pre-Aryan people are no doubt non-Aryans, the Dravids, the Dasyus the Vratyas or natives including Jains. According to Mehta :

“In the opinion of some scholars the Jaina culture is identical with the pre-Vedic Dravidian culture. Both are simple, unsophisticated, clear-cut and direct manifestation of the pessimistic outlook. Jainism believes in pessimism, *i.e.*, the conviction that life is full of misery. No trace of this type of pessimism is available in the optimistic attitude of the Vedic Aryans. An atheistic attitude and a kind of dualism between soul and matter characterise both the Dravidian religion and Jainism. The doctrines of transmigration and karma are peculiar to both the religions. They were unknown to the early Brahmanas. The

49. Tukol. pp. 14-16.

general tendency of scholars has been in favour of the theory that the Indus people were of Dravidian stock. The Mohen-jo-daro people were Dravidian, their language was a purely Dravidian language and their culture was also Dravidian.”⁵⁰

According to Tukol, “There is unanimity amongst the research scholars that the civilization and tradition of the people who built them must be about 4000 B.C. and that they were superior to the culture of the Aryans. Prof. Chakravarti draws pointed attention to the absence of weapons of warfare and concludes that the civilization of the Indus Valley was obviously based upon the principle of ahimsa which is the central creed of the Jaina culture. He agrees with other scholars in their inference that the figure of the yogi and the figure of the bull found in the excavation of Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa may be closely connected with Lord Rishabha, whose cult of ahimsa was the faith of the people living in the Indus Valley.

After the Aryans had won victories over the sections of people who opposed them, they settled in the Punjab and the Western part of the Gangetic plain. They called the residents Dasyus and pushed them to the extreme east and regions beyond the Vindhya. They introduced the worship of various gods by sacrifice of animals and later brought into their social structure changes in the form of Varnas which played an important role in the development of the country, much to the detriment of cohesion and harmony amongst the people. The followers of the ahimsa cult condemned both the animal sacrifices and the varnas.

Apart from these doctrinal developments, Mrs. Guseva refers to the philosophic conception of atma-vidya as being a contribution of the Kshatriyas and observes : “The tradition, widely represented in the ancient Indian literature asserts that the conception of ‘Atma-vidya’ had spread precisely in the eastern Gangetic regions (*i.e.* where the faith of Jainism was formed)

⁵⁰ Mehta, Mohan Lal : *Jaina Culture*. pp. 6-8.

and that even Brahmins used to come to listen to the sermons of Kshatriya ruler of these regions... Ancient Indian literature contains indications of the antiquity of the sources of Jainism and it also indicates that the Kshatriyas and ascetics from Vratyas i.e. non-Aryans played noticeable role in establishing non-Vedic teachings....” It is worthwhile to remember the even though the Vedas made no mention of Atmavidya, the Upanishads which came later propounded the theory of Atmavidya or Brahma vidya.”⁵¹

Views of Foreign Scholars

Western scholars have a keen interest in the study of Jainism. Tukol has quoted several authorities. Many foreign and Indian Scholars confirm the antiquity of Jainism. Jacobi says : “There are no reasonable grounds to reject the recorded tradition of a numerous class of men as a tissue of lies. All the events and incidents that relate to their antiquity are recorded so frequently and in such a matter-of fact way that they cannot be properly rejected, unless under force of much stronger evidence than the one adduced by scholars who are sceptic about the antiquity of Jainism.”⁵² Both Dr. Fuhrer and Prof. L.D. Barnett accept that Lord Neminatha the 22nd Tirthankara was a historical person.”⁵³ A.A. Macdonnel refers to the antiquity of the Hindu Puranas and states that the antiquity of Jainism goes back to a period prior to the origin of Brahmanism itself.”⁵⁴

Very clearly, Major Gen J.R.G. Forlong has come to similar conclusions : “there also existed throughout upper India an ancient and highly organized religion, philosophical, ethical and severely ascetical, viz. Jainism, out of which clearly developed the early

51. See Tukol, p. 16.

52. Quoted in Jain, Jyoti Prasad : Jainism the Oldest Living Religion, p. 20

53. Ibid., p. 20.

54. Macdonnel, A.A. : History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 299.

ascetical features of Brahmanism and Buddhism. Long before the Aryans reached the Ganges or even the Saraswti, Jainas had been taught by some twentytwo prominent Bodhas, saints or Tirthankaras, prior to the 23rd Bodha (Ford Maker) Parsva of the 8th or 9th century B.C....."⁵⁵

Indian Scholars

Recently, besides Western researchers, Indian scholars, Jaina monks, munis and Acharyas have written on Jainism in almost all the major Indian languages.

Referring to serious researches, Jaina scholar Tukol observes : "Vedic literature in its various stages, of development will reveal the fact that there have been two parallel developments of thought, one in conflict with the other. One emphasises strictly the principles of Ahimsa and the other the duties of sacrifice.... the Ahimsa doctrine preached by Rsabha (Rishabha) is possibly prior in time to the advent of Aryans in India and the prevalent culture of the period." Writing on the history of Jainism, Professor Hiralal expresses almost identical views; "The Jainas claim antiquity for their religion. Their earliest prophet was Rsabhadeva, who is mentioned even in the Vishnu and Bhagavata Puranas as belonging to a very remote past. In the earliest Brahmanic literature are found traces of the existence of a religious order which ranged itself strongly against the authority of the Vedas and the institution of animal sacrifice. According to the Jaina tradition, at the time of the Mahabharata war, this order was led by Neminatha, who is said to have belonged to the same Yadava family as Krsna (Krishna) and who is recognised as the twenty-second Tirthankara. The order gathered particular strength during the eighth century B.C. under Parsvanatha, the twenty-third Tirthankara who was born at Varanasi. Dr. A.N. Upadhye who is an eminent scholar on Jainology and Prakrit studies, supports the

55. Forlong, J.R.G. : *Shorter Studies in the Science of Contemporary Religion*, pp. 242-44. (Tukol, p. 18).

conclusions reached above : “To take a practical view, the Jaina Tirthankaras like Rsabhadeva, Neminath, Parsvanath, Mahavira etc. have been some of the greatest mystics of the world.....It would be interesting to note that the details about Rsabhadeva given in the Bhagvata practically and fundamentally agree with those recorded by the Jaina tradition.

There are other Indian scholars who have subscribed to the antiquity of Jainism. Dr. Vidya Bhushan opines that Jainism reflects back to the beginning of the creation itself. I have no doubt in asserting that Jaina philosophy is much anterior to Vedanta and other systems. Dr. N.N. Basu has been quoted by Jyoti Prasad as saying : “Probably Rsabhadeva was the first to discover the art of writing. He seems to have invented the Brahmi script for the propagation of Brahma Vidya and that is why he came to be known as the 8th Avatara. He was born to Marudevi, the queen of the Indian king Nabhiraja and is mentioned in the Bhagavata as the 8th of the 22 Avataras. Vinoba Bhave, the Sarvodaya Leader has opined “Mahavira Svami is regarded as the 24th Tirthankara. The birth of the Jaina faith has taken place thousands of years before him. In the prayer of the Bhagavan (Lord) in the Rgveda it is said in one place “Arhan idam dayase visvam abhayam”, that is ‘Oh Arhan, you show compassion over this insignificant world’, In this, the two words : *Arhan* and *Daya* are dear to the Jainas. I am in agreement that perhaps the Jaina religion is as ancient as the Hindu religion.” Prof. G. Satyanarayan Murti is more specific in his views : “*Jainism seems to be an indigenous product of ancient schools of thought. Whatever the European scholars of fame have said to the contrary, it is to be noted that Jainism with all the glory of its Dharma and plenitude of its literature, both secular and religious, has been handed down from a hoary antiquity. Jainism has a history of its own, a history on most of the obscure parts of which fresh light is being thrown almost every year owing to the patient researches of many scholars, both in India and abroad. The sources of the history of Jainism are now many and they have themselves, curiously enough*

*a history of their own..." My own belief is that Jainism was the religion of the Dravidian people who were pre-Aryan inhabitants of India."*⁵⁶

Compared to Buddhism, Jainism got less support and patronage from the ruling class in different ages. However, there are several historical and canonical references, wherein mention are made that Jainism also got patronage.

Kumarapala and Hemacandra

Coming to the medieval period, King Siddharaja Jayasimha (A.D. 1094-1143) of Gujarat, although himself a worshipper of Siva, had Hemacandra, a distinguished Jaina preceptor and writer, as a scholar member of his court. King Kumarapala (A. D. 1143-1173), the successor to Jayasimha, was actually converted to Jainism by Hemacandra. Kumarapala tried to make Gujarat in some manner a Jaina model State. On the other hand, Hemacandra, taking full advantage of the opportunity, established the basis for a typical Jaina culture by his versatile scientific work. He became famous as the *Kalikalarvajna*, i.e., the Omniscient of the Kali Age. In South India the Gangas, the Rastrakutas and the Hoysalas were Jains. They fully supported the faith, observes Tukol."

Doctrinal Changes

The historicity of Jainism will not be complete unless we study the changes within the sect.

A Jaina scholar Smita Sahgal⁵⁷ has traced the changes within Jainism which developed between c. 200 B.C. and c.A.D. 300, resulting in division among the followers of Mahavira, namely Svetambaras and Digambaras. Buddhism had also faced the same problem. According to Sahgal : "Jainism was not some kind of an unchanging monolith; it was conditioned by the spirit of time

56. See Tukol, pp. 19-20.

57. Sahgal, Smita : Spread of Jainism in North India, pp. 212-216.

and space. Between c. 200 B.C. and c. A.D. 300 changes took place both at the ascetic and popular levels. In the first case differences are visible in doctrinal changes and in developments within Jaina monastic order. At the popular level, the expansion of Jaina pantheon, beginning of idol worship and various developments in the fields of arts point out the direction in which Jaina popular activities was growing. Apart from the developments in the socio-economic field what accounted for the changes in the sects was the challenge thrown by rival sects of Buddhism and Brahmanism and an increased interaction between the ascetic and lay population.

Before we take up the issue of doctrinal changes in greater detail, it is important to make a reference to the schism that divided the Jains into Svetambaras and Digambaras, sometimes during the period under review. The process of schism had started as early as sixth century B.C. In all eight schisms took place up to the major Digambara-Svetambara division.⁵⁸

Certain economic factors were apparently responsible for the division. The famine of the third century B.C. resulted in the migration of a number of Jaina monks to South India. The famine must have made this section within the sect take to a strictly austere life-style. Their rigidity was not welcomed by the rest who found it an encumbrance in social interaction and spread of their sects... The schism was a long process and no definite date can be assigned to it only on the basis of early Digambara text can it be given a rough date of first century A.D.”

Further in the words of Sahgal⁵⁹ : “The doctrinal changes that came about in our period of study were a result of intense intellectual activities that affected not only Jainism but other sects as well. Buddhism, for example, witnessed the emergence of a number of schools. At Mathura itself there were two different sects that shifted from early Buddhist realism to absolute idealism.

58. S. B. Deo, *History of Jaina Monachism*, p. 79.

59. Sahgal, Smita, p. 212-213.

These were the Sarvastivadins and the Mahasanghikas⁶⁰ who popularised the concept of Bodhisattvas and worship of idol of Buddha. Similarly in case of Brahmanism new schools of philosophy were gradually taking shape in the post-Mauryan period like the Nyaya-Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta.

The changed intellectual atmosphere brought into open debate issues like cosmology, prominence of soul, *karma*, consciousness, etc. Faced with growing popularity of rival sects and with the question of its own survival, Jainism was forced to alter its own philosophies and to equip itself with the argumental sophistication of its rivals. The result was a subtle shift from the realistic nature of Jaina standpoint to an idealist one.

At its incipient stage⁶¹ Jainism was an ethical religion which wanted to solve the socio-economic crisis of a particular age. The principles propagated by Mahavira were based on reason and logic. Early Jaina thinkers did not give up their empirical base. Still targeting against Brahmanism, the Jaina thinkers questioned the absoluteness of truth and eternity. This resulted in the idea of Syadvada, the assertion of possibilities of seven-fold paroligism (Saptabhangi). At this stage, the Jaina philosophy represented knowledge of nature, acquired through contemplation, observation and investigation of the phenomenon of nature itself. The approach of understanding of nature was scientific. God had no place in Jaina ideology because he could not be perceived.⁶² Jiva was an animate object and Ajiva an inanimate.

Jaina philosophy founded on empiricism underwent a change at a sophisticated stage. Here we come across a conflict within

60. Reference to the sects available in Mathura Inscriptions by Jenart, pp. 114, 212, 170, 190; *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, p. 212.

61. A term used by N.N. Bhattacharya to distinguish it from the later sophisticated stage. *Jaina Philosophy : Historical Outlines*, p. xvii.

62. N.N. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. xix.

(Quoted by Sahgal in Spread of Jainism in North India)

the system, a conflict between empiric ideas of an earlier tradition and the intrusion of elements of *a priori* abstract ideas which opened the way for idealism. The concept of Jiva was revised. The biological considerations were thrown aside; the Jiva came to be looked upon as different from the body, its existence was sought to be proved in that of consciousness itself.⁶³ New classifications were added to the concept of Jiva and also to *karma*.

Some of the philosophical changes were in line with certain developments taking place in other schools of philosophy. For example, six classifications of *karma* can well be compared to the four that developed in the Yoga system. Jainism made its stance clear vis-a-vis the Mimamsakas when it underlined consciousness as the very essence of the soul, a point denied by the former. It was primarily to answer the philosophical issue that surfaced with the revision and formulation of ideologies of so many schools of the period, that Jainism was compelled to bring about a change in its own stance. The doctrinal shift, however, took a long time to become evident and cannot be specifically assigned to a period under review.

On monastic order, based on Jaina canon, Sahgal further observes : "A somewhat similar problem comes up when we try to assess the developements within Jaina monastic order. With the sources at our disposal we cannot limit the developments only to the period under review. Our main source of information is the Jaina canon. Of the undivided community the canon is not available and the one preserved is claimed by Svetambaras to be their own. This includes the twelve Angas, the twelve Upangas, the Prakirnas, the six Chedasutras, the four Mulasutras and Anuyoga.

There are a number of non-canonical texts and commentaries but there is the problem of dating them. The earliest among them

63. N.N. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

(Quoted by Sahgal).

cannot be placed before the post-Gupta period. Even among the canonical texts there is the problem of stratification of the text. It is difficult to assign any specific date to them. For our purpose here, we have taken into account the Angas the formulation of which started from 300 B.C. and stretched right up to the end of the Gupta period. However, it is important to bring in an element of caution. The developments suggested below as gathered from the canon probably took place in our period but we cannot speak with certainty.

It was realised by the Jaina thinkers that in order to spread the influence of Jainism they would have to organise their church. A church hierarchy⁶⁴ was worked out with *seha* or students at the bottom and *gani*, the seniormost church officer, at the top. In between came *thera parvartin* and *acarya*. For the purpose of smooth functioning of the church it was divided into various units. The *gana*⁶⁵ was the largest unit and comprised a group of monks having common reading. *Kula*⁶⁶ was a subdivision of *gana* and comprised a group of disciples of a particular *acarya*... *Sambhoga*⁶⁷ was a further sub-division and comprised a group of monks bound by identical *samacari* and took food together. We come across yet another division, that of *sakha* which is explained as a line which branches of one teacher, in the *Kalpasutra*.⁶⁸

A cursory look at the various regulations made for the Jaina monks as prescribed in the Angas highlight the importance Jaina thinkers laid on maintaining social rapport with the lay population. For example, monks were forbidden from frequenting the same houses for begging of food lest people began thinking that they

64. Details given in *Thananga*, pp. 120b, 66.

65. *Samvayanga*, p. 4b.

66. *Thananga*, p. 516a.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 139b.

68. *Kalpasutra : Sacred Books of the East.*, Vol. XXII, p. 28.

(All quoted by Smita Sahgal.)

became monks because they did not want to work.⁶⁹ It was with the idea of becoming socially acceptable that the Svetambara monks were instructed to wear clothes. The *Thananga* clearly states the purpose of wearing clothes was to avoid shame (*hiripattitan*) and to avoid disregard from people 'if they feel so on seeing the monks' distorted limbs (*pansahavattiyan*)'.⁷⁰ Thus the picture that emerges from the study of *Angas* is that of an effort made by the Jaina church to organise itself in a way that not only would the contact with the masses be retained but actually strengthened.

So far we have concerned ourselves with the impact of the socio-economic changes on Jaina monastic life and on Jaina doctrine. It is important to take into account the changes that came on a popular level also, specially the laity which provided the full fledged economic and social support. It was difficult to impress an ordinary man with the abstract doctrines. These doctrines lack something very essential to him, that is, a god or a supernatural force which he could identify. In order to appease this very important section of the society, Jainism had to create a pantheon around its Tirthankaras. The deities chosen were pre-Vedic, already popular at mass level. The Yaksha or Jakkha or Sasandevata was absorbed because of his non-Vedic character. The Yaksas were projected as possessors of the power to assume any shape and to award a boon to the people or take it away. Because of their earthy character they impressed the masses and entered both the Jaina as well as the Buddhist art as attendants of Jinas and Boddhisattvas.

Smita Sahgal further says : "The popularity of Yaksas can be seen as early as the time of the *Anga* literature. The *Nyayadhammakahao* refers to the shrine of Salaga Jhakka who

69. *Acaranga*, II, p. 172.

70. *Thananga*, p. 138a.

(All referred to by Smita Sahgal).

had the form of a horse, situated in a *vanakhanda* at Ratandvipa.⁷¹ The Jhakka saved two merchants from the clutches of cruel robbers and carried them to the city of Campa. These and many other examples can be cited from Jaina literature to comprehend their popular nature.

Along with Yaksha worship also came idol and *stupa* worship. Though Jainism ruled out the existence of god it could not ignore the emergence of contemporary Mahayana form of Buddhism which assigned the status of a god to Buddha and received a positive response from the laity. The spirit of competition led to an equally tremendous growth in idol worship. It should be asserted that Jainism was not traditionally against idol worship. A Jina need not be worshipped in the traditional sense of the term *i.e.* he is not there to provide boons but his idol is there to inspire the laity if they want emancipation from the worldly bonds. This as a clause enough to promote development in Jaina iconography. Hundreds of Jaina statues discovered from various sites of north Indian and especially from Mathura attest to the growing popularity of idol worship in the period under review.

The practice of erecting *stupa* and *stupa*-worship also had a similar connotation. The *stupas* which housed some remains of the Jaina or his statue was certainly not for the benefit of the monks and yet the practice of *stupa*-worship was condoned by them.⁷² Numerous *pratimalekha*⁷³ found from Kankali Tila complex at Mathura suggest the eagerness of monks to associate themselves with those who made donation of idols at the complex. It is obviously indicative of an active religious interaction between the ascetics and thinkers had to modify their view and life-style in accordance with the changing environment.

71. *Nayadhammakahao*, Vol. II, p. 127ff.

72. Kendell Folkart, 'Jain Religious Life at Mathura : The Heritage of Late Victorian Interpretation', in Srinivasan, ed., *Mathura. The Cultural Heritage*, p. 111.

73. Most of these appear in *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, II, X and *Luders List* (given as appendix in *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. X.) (Quoted by Sahgal)

By the beginning of the Christian era the Jaina lay community had become resourceful enough in terms of both monetary strength and impressive following to make a dent in the original form of Jinism. This coupled with the changes in the rival sects of Brahmanism and Buddhism and the development on a socio-economic front, spelt out a different course for Jaina history.”⁷⁴

Mohan Lal Mehta in his famous book *Jaina Culture* writes : “There were both types of monks, viz., *sacelaka* (with clothes) and *acelaka* (without clothes), in the Order of Mahavira. The terms *Sacelaka* and *svetambara* signify the same sense and *acelaka* and *digambara* express the same meaning. The monks belonging to the Svetambara group wear white garments, whereas those belonging to the Digambara group wear no garments. The literal meaning of the word *digambara* is sky-clad and that of the *svetambara* is white clad. It was, probably, up to Jambus’s time that both these groups formed the composite church. Then they separated from each other and practised the faith under their own Heads. This practice is in force even in the present time. The Svetambaras hold that the practice of dispensing with clothing has no longer been requisite since the time of the last omniscient Jambu.

The following main differences exist between the Digambaras and the Svetambaras :

- * The Digambaras believe that no original canonical text exists now. The Svetambaras still preserve a good number of original scriptures.
- * According to the Digambaras, the omniscient no longer takes any earthly food. The Svetambaras are not prepared to accept this conception.
- * The Digambaras strictly maintain that there can be no salvation without nakedness. Since women cannot go without clothes, they are said to be incapable of

74. Sahgal, Smita : Spread of Jainism in North India (a research based article, in *Jainism and Prakrit in Ancient and Medieval India*).

salvation. The Svetambaras hold that nakedness is not essential to attain liberation. Hence, women are also capable of salvation.

- * The Digambaras hold that Mahavira was not married. The Svetambaras reject this view. According to them, Mahavira was married and had a daughter.
- * The images of *Tirthankaras* are not decorated at all by the Digambaras, whereas the Svetambaras profusely decorate them.

The two main Jaina sects, viz., the Svetambara and the Digambara, are divided into a number of sub-sects. There are at present three important Svetambara sub-sects : Murtipujaka, Sthanakavasi and Terapanthi. The number of present important Digambara sub-sects is also three : Bisapanthi, Terapanthi and *Taranapanthi*. The Murtipujakas worship images of *tirthankaras* etc. The Sthanakavasis are non-worshippers. The Terapanthis are also not in favour of idol-worship. Their interpretation of non-violence (ahimsa) is slightly different from that of the other Jainas. The Bisapanthis use fruits, flowers, etc., in the idolatry ceremony, whereas the Terapanthis use only lifeless articles in it. The *Taranapanthis* worship scriptures in place of images. All these sub-sects have their own religious and other works in addition to the common ones. They have their own temples and other religious and cultural centres as well.”⁷⁵

The new and more enlightened generation of the followers of Lord Mahavira or Jaina religion, for sometime, is trying to bring together both Svetambaras and Digambaras, including their sub-sects, in the wider interests of the faith, a pious religion of minority community. Some small new liberal sects are also emerging.

The need of the hour is to pay more attention towards understanding and following the preachings of the fordmakers,

75. Mehta, Mohan Lal : Jaina Culture, pp. 19-20.

the Tirthankaras and work towards promotion of Jaina religion through literature in India and abroad to preserve the rich cultural and religious heritage.

In the new millennium, when the nation is celebrating the 2600 birth day of the great teacher Lord Mahavira, the study of Prakrit language and literature (Ardhmagadhi) and Jainology should compulsorily be introduced in all the universities and institutions of higher learning in the country.

Besides this, those who study Pali and Buddhism, a paper on Jainology may be made compulsory to promote comparative study of Buddhism and Jainism, which will help in understanding moral values, the concept of humanity and social justice. This short of moral education will go a long way in promoting global peace, good will and communal harmony.

2

TWENTY FOUR TIRTHANKARAS **A Long Tradition**

There is much in the Rigveda as well as Avesta which testify that when the Aryans entered in the vast land of India they found highly developed societies and cultured races such as the Pisacas, the Vratyas, the Asuras, the Dasas (Dasyus), the Dravidians and had to struggle with these non-Aryan races. We find mention of big cities and trade channels of the non-Aryans in the Rigveda, besides prolonged struggle with invaders. Indra is shown as destroyer of non-Aryan cities.

The excavated sites of Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa have proved quite a developed culture and civilization of non-Aryans.

Writing on Indus Valley civilization, Marshall tells us :

“One thing that stands out clear and unmistakable both at Mohen-jo-daro and Harappa is that the civilization hitherto revealed at these two places is not an incipient civilization, but one already age-old and stereotyped on Indian soil, with many millenniums of human endeavour behind it. Thus India must henceforth be recognised, along with Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt, as one of the most important areas where the civilizing processes were initiated and developed.”

This civilization was superior and much more advanced. There is no doubt that the Arhat tradition was flourishing in India, before Aryan-invasion and Rishabhadeva was the chief religious leader of monks. The Arhats and monks lived a pious life, away from cities. They were wise, but desireless.

John Marshall, who himself was responsible for the excavations further says : "equally peculiar to the Indus Valley and stamped with an individual character of their own are its art and its religion." Undoubtedly first Jaina Tirthankara Rishabhadeva encouraged all sorts of arts and crafts as well as religion in those days, developed 'Brahmi script', founded and strengthened 'Arhat' tradition. He emphasized the importance of animals in daily life and preached non-violence, which influenced the later Aryan culture.

We see that the Tirthankaras did not believe in vague dreams and unrealizable supernatural world, but preached and followed higher ethical standards leading to perfect self control, and freedom from the bondage of Karma. A free soul that has achieved its aloofness, Kaivalya.

The words 'Barhata' and 'Arhat' are found used in the Rigveda. The 'Arhats,' no doubt had been the Jaina monks. They were the up-holders of the non-violence cult having faith in kindness, mercy, universalism and welfare of the mankind. The Rigvedic 'Arhats' protected killing of innocent animals in yajnas. They advocated peace and ignored violence. The Aryans had called them Vratyas. The Vratya means those who follow the practices of observing vows or vratas such as fasting etc. Historians believe Vratyas were non-Aryans, the Dravids. Atharvaveda, with the commentary of Sayana (15|1|1|1) designates Vratyas as performers of specially good or meritorious deeds, who were mentioned in the Rigveda as the 'Vatarasanamunis'. In his commentary on Rigveda (10|136|2), Sayana calls them 'Atindriyarthdarsi' (who aim at the goal beyond senses).

In Rigveda Kesi and other monks of Sramana (Arhat) tradition are mentioned as the Vratyas (10-11.1, 36.1). In Jaina literature 'Arhat' has been applied to a Tirthankara. The word Arhat has been used for each Tirthankara upto Parsvanath, while Vardhamana Mahavira was also called 'Niggantha Nataputta.'

Buddha, a great teacher and contemporary of Mahavira knew his cult. In Buddhist literature and inscription of Ashoka 'Niggantha' has been used for Mahavira. The Ganadharas and the Acharyas were also called Nirgranthas. In the seventh century A.D. in Bengal there used to be a cult of Nirgrantha who were quite influential.

In the Jaina canon like Dasavaikalika, Uttaradhyayana and Suttrakritanga, the words Jinasasana, Jinamarga, Jinapravacana etc. have been used. Matsya Purana used 'Jina Dharma'.

According to Haripada Chakraborti, Jainism is believed to have come down from unknown antiquity through 24 teachers, called Tirthankaras (founders of the faith). Rishabha stands first in the list of teachers. The Kalpasutra (C 300 B.C.) of Bhadrabahu gives us life of each Jina. However, the first 22 Tirthankaras seem to be mythical and the last two historical persons.

A Tirthankara in Jainism is ancient and most religious technical term. The first Tirthankara Rsabhadeva (Rishabhadeva) too had been mentioned as 'Titthayara', a word that has been used quite predominantly in Jaina literature; of course, its use in the Buddhist literature has also been made at numerous places. Tirthankara means 'one who creates or makes a Tirtha means the shore. Therefore those important missionary persons who create a shore beyond the ocean of samsara (*bhavasagara*) in the form of *Dharma tirth* are known as Tirthankaras. *Ahimsa* (non-violence), *Satya* (truth), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Brahmacarya* (continence) and *Aparigraha* (non-possession) these are dharmas and the fourfold collectivity (*caturvidhasangha*) of *Sramana* (Monks) *Sramanis* (*nuns*) *Sravakas* (the lay men-followers) and the *Sravikas* (the lay lady followers) who uphold these dharmas is known as the *Dharma Tirtha*.¹

In Sanskrit literature the word 'Tirtha' has been used in the sense of a shore or a bank as it has also been used for the 'means'

1. (a) *Bhagavatisutra* 2.8.682; (b) *Sthanangasutra* 4.3; (c) *Jambudvipa prajnapiti-usahacariyam*.

or 'the way' of getting rid of the worldly suffering.² Those who find out the path are the Tirthankaras.³ From the point of view of the Jaina-dharma they are they ones who having renounced the worldly attachment achieve spiritual excellences, (siddhis) by engaging themselves in uninterrupted spiritual exercises (Akhandā Sadhana), and thereby obtain unveiled omniscience and than having compassion on all the suffering living being (jivas) teach them dharma for their benefit.

Devendra Muni further says :

"This must be remembered that Jainism does not consider a Tirthankara to be an incarnation of God, nor is he regarded a strange fellow in the divine creation. Jainism does want to tell us that one who becomes a Tirthankara was at one time, like any ordinary human being, a man steeped in the mud of evil (papapanka-dhusarita), impure, prone to indulge in anger and sensuality and thus unpraiseworthy (Kasaya-kamakrodha-kalusita). It was through good company (satsanga) that he got the discriminative knowledge (bhedavijnna-the capacity to distinguish good from the bad) and thus was awakened in him the desire to understand reality (Tattvajnana-jijnasa) through which he obtained the knowledge of the true character of his soul (satyatmabodha) and then it was that he abandoned attachment with the false (mithyavasana) and started having an appreciation of the true (satya-upasana). He did excellent penance (utkrsta tapa) and religiously followed the path of self-control (*Samyamaradhana*) and one day with the utter purity of feelings (*bhavanirmalata*) he pursued with diligence the religious exercise known as *tirthankaranamakarma anubandhana* and only then did he

2. "Taranti maharnavam yenanimittena tattirtham"

—Yuktyanu. Tika 62.

3. Tiriyate Samsara samudroaneneti tirtham.

Tatkaranasilastirthankarah. —Jivabhigam Malayagiri vitti 2-142 p. 255.

(All quoted by Devendra Muni : Jaina Religion and Philosophy, p. 8)

become, at the third level of being (tritya bhava), a Tirthankara. This must be quite clearly understood that so long as one is involved in or engaged in worldly enjoyments cannot become a Tirthankara. In the last step of the progress towards becoming a Tirthankara one must renounce the regal prosperity and all the worldly objects of enjoyment. One has to undergo a religious exercise of the highest order (utkrsta sadhana). Only then do the veils obscuring knowledge and experience (*jnana evam darsana-avaranas*) are torn asunder, worldly infatuation of all types gets destroyed (*sakala mohanasa*) and one becomes a Tirthankara by establishing the fourfold unity (*caturvidha samgha*) of the Sramana Sramani, Sravaka and the Sravika."⁴

Uttaravada

Thus Jainism believes not in Avataravada (Descendence) or Incarnation of God but in Uttaravada the ascendance of man to godhood. Uttaravada stands for the rise of man from the deteriorating life of a human being and reaching to that godly life that knows no deterioration. To become a Tirthankara it is absolutely essential for one to develop one's own internal qualities or excellences. With the full flowering (complete development) of one's spiritual powers any soul can become an omniscient, Tirthankara or a Jina.

Jainism clearly holds that from the point of view of the spiritual development there is no difference between an ordinary Arihanta or an omniscient (*sarvajna*) and a Tirthankara. But the Tirthankaras have certain external special qualities (*bahya visestayen*) which are in them as a result of the special penance (*visesa tapa*) performed by them in their previous lives (*purva-janma*) or are due to the merit earned by them through the good deeds, done previously (*purvarjita punya*). The other freed souls cannot do Dharma-pracara (Religious preaching) like the

4. Devendra Muni, pp. 9-10.

Tirthankara. At one time and at one and the same place there can be many omniscients but only one Tirthankara.

According to the Jainagamas (the Jaina Scriptures) the universe is subject to change. It is compared to a wheel. The precedence and succession of progress and degrees, rise and fall continues in it ever. The moving world-wheel is conceived as having twelve spokes. The period of rise is called *utsarpini* and that of fall *avasarpini*. Both periods comprise of six spokes each. The Tirthankara of the age is supposed to occupy the middle of the moving wheel. The present period of decline (*avasarpini*) has had as many as twenty four Tirthankaras and the first among them has been Lord Rishabhadeva.⁵

Devendra Muni observes : "According to Jinagamas, Bhagavan Rishabhadeva had been extant during the concluding movement of the third spoke of the present *avasarpini* (downward movement) period. According to the Vedic Puranas Rishabhadeva was extant towards the end of the first satya-yuga. Thus, he came much before the Avataras, Rama and Krishna.

Brahamanda Purana regards Rishabhadeva as the founder of ten kinds of Dharmas⁶ Srimad Bhagvata mentions that 8th incarnation of Vasudeva was Rsabhadeva (Rishabha) who took birth from the womb of Maru-Devi and his father was Nabhi. He showed a path that was respected by people belonging to all ashramas (brahmacharya, the age for studentship; garhasthya, the age of the householders; vanaprastha, the period for staying in the jungle and sannyasa, the age for renunciation) or of all ages.⁷ Rishabhadeva had one hundred sons wise and expert in Brahmanvidya.⁸ Nine of them were known to be masters of

5. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

6. Iha Iksvakukulavamsodbhavena Nabhisutena Maru-Devya Nandanena/Mahadevena Rsabhena Dasaprakaro dharmah Svayameva ciraah//

—Brahmanda Purana

7. Srimad Bhagavata Purana 1.3.13.

8. Ibid., 11.2.16 (Quoted by Devendra Muni).

Atmavidya (*Atmavidya visarada*). His eledest son, Bharata became THE GREAT EMPEROR (Chakravarti Samrat) and it is on his name that this country of ours came to be known as "Bharata-varsa". Bharata, it is said, was a great yogi.⁹ Rishabhadeva himself is described by *Srimad Bhagavata* as the Lord of yogis (yogesvara).¹⁰ He had mastered various kinds of yogic observances (yogacarya siddha) Acarya Subhacandra accepted him as the progenitor of the science of yoga (yogavidyapraneta).¹¹ *Hathayoga-Pradipika* a famous treatise on Hatha-Yoga, mentions Rishabhadeva as great teacher of Hatha-yoga.

He taught his son Bharata seventy two arts and the other son Bahubali the characteristics of living beings. He got her one daughter, Brahmi, trained in eighteen scripts and the other daughter, Sundari, in mathematics. He taught women their special sixty four arts and men he trained in one hundred kind of crafts besides giving them education about agriculture.¹²

He was the first and foremost king. He disseminated education in political science, social science and ethics etc. But at last he renounced his kingdom, got himself initiated into monkhood, did the highest order of tapa (utkrshtha tapa Sadhana) and obtained Omniscience (*kevalajnana*). He was born on the 8th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Caitra according to the lunar calander. His initiation also took place on the same date (tithi). He got Nirvana (death) on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Magha and the place of his Nirvana (Nirvana-bhumi) had been Astapada Parvata (a mountain named Astapada).¹³

9. Ibid., 11.2.20

10. Ibid., 5.5.7

11. *Jnanarnava* 1.2

12. Jambudvipaprajnapti, Usahacariya

13. Devendra Muni, pp. 11-13.

The Other Twenty Two Tirthankaras

The Second Tirthankara was Ajita Nath. He was born at Ayodhya. The name of his father was Jitasatru and that of his mother was *Vijyadevi*. His birth took place on the 8th day of the lighted fortnight of the month of Magha and Nirvana on the 5th day of the lighted fortnight of the month of Caitra. The place of his Nirvana is Sammeda Sikhara or Sammeta Sikhara.

The Third Tirthankara was Sambhava Nath. He was born at Sravasti. His father's name was Jitari and mother's was Senadevi. He in his previous birth as king Vipulavahana had gifted away his entire royal treasure to his famine affected subjects. The date of his birth had been the 14th day of the lighted half of the month of Margasirsa and of his Nirvana had been the 5th day of the lighted-half of the month of Caitra. His Nirvana bhumi also is *Sammeda Sikhara*.

The Fourth Tirthankara was Abhinandana Nath. He was born at Ayodhya. His father was king *Samvara* and his mother was *Siddhartha* by name. He took birth on the 2th day of the lighted-half of the month of Magha and Nirvana on the 8th day of the lighted-half of Vaisakha. The place of his Nirvana too had been Sammeda Sikhara.

The Fifth Tirthankara Sumati Nath was also born in Ayodhya. His father's name had been Maharaja *Megharatha* or *Meghaprabha* and that of his mother was *Sumangala Devi*. He was born on the 8th day of the lighted-half of Vaisakha and got Nirvana on the 9th day of the lighted-half of Caitra. The reason for his being named as Sumati Nath had been that right from the time of conception due to the influence of his being in the womb of his mother she had become sharp in intellect. The place of his Nirvana too was Sammeda Sikhara.

The Sixth Tirthankara Padma Prabha was born at Kausambi or Kosambi. His father was king Sridhara and mother's name Suseema. His birth took place on the 12th day of the dark

half of the month of Kartika and he attained Nirvana on the 11th day of the darkhalf of the Magha month. His Nirvana bhumi too is Sammeda Sikhara.

The Seventh Tirthankara Suparsva Nath was born in Kasi. His father was king *Pratistha* and mother's name was *Prithvi*. His birth took place on the 12th day of the lighted-half of the month of Jyestha and Nirvana on the 7th day of the darkhalf of the month of Bhadrapada. The place of his Nirvana had also been Sammeda Sikhara.

The Eighth Tirthankara Candrarabha was born in the city called Candranagara or Chandrapuri. His father's name was Mahasena and that of the mother Laksmana. He took birth on the 12th day of the lightedhalf of the month *Pausa* and got Nirvana on the 7th day of the dark half of the Bhadrapada at Sammeda Sikhara.

The Ninth Tirthankara Named Suvidhi Nath was born in a town called Kakandi Nagari. His father was king Sugriva and his mother's name was Ramadevi. His birth took place on the 5th day of the dark half of Margasirsa and Nirvana, at Sammeda Sikhara on the 9th day of the lighted-half of Bhadrapada.

The Tenth Tirthankara Sitala Nath was born in town called Bhadri Kapuri. His father was king Drdharatha and the name of his mother was Nandirani. His birth was accomplished on the 12th day of the dark-half of the month Magha and his Nirvana took place, at Sammeda Sikhara, on the 2nd day of the dark half of Vaisakha.

The Eleventh Tirthankara Sreyamsa Nath was born at Sinhapuri. His father's name was Visnusena and that of his mother was Visnadevi. The 12 day of the dark half of the Phalguna and the 2nd day of the darkhalf of Sravana were respectively the days of his birth and Nirvana. The place of his Nirvana had also been Sammeda Sikhara.

The Twelfth Tirthankara Vasupujya took birth in a town called *Campanagari*. Vasupujya was his father and Jayadevi his mother. He was born on the 3rd day of the dark-half of Magha month and got Nirvana on the 7th day of the dark half of Asadha. The place of his passing away (Nirvana bhumi), too, is Sammeda Sikhara.

The Thirteenth Tirthankara Vimala Nath was born in Kampilya or Kapilapura. His father's name was Krtavarman and that of his mother Syama Devi. The date of his birth had been the 3rd day of the bright half of the month of Magha and that of his Nirvana the 7th day of the dark-half of Asadha. The place of his Nirvana, too, is Sammeda Sikhara.

The Fourteenth Tirthankara Ananta Nath was born in Ayodhya, the name of his father was Simhasena and that of his mother was Sarvayasa or Suyasa. He took birth on the 3rd day of the dark-half of Vaisakha and got Nirvana on the 5th day of the bright-half of Caitra. His place of Nirvana was also Sammeda Sikhara.

The Fifteenth Tirthankara Dharma Nath got birth in Ratnapuri. His father was known as Bhanuraja and his mother as Suvrata. He was born on the 3rd day of the bright-half of Magha and got Nirvana on the 5th day of the bright-half of month of Jyestha. The place of his Nirvana had been Sammeda Sikhara.

The Sixteenth Tirthankara had been Santi Nath. He was born in Hastinapura. His father's name was Visvasena and that of mother was Acira. The date of his birth as well as that of Nirvana had been on the 13th day of the dark half of the month of Jyestha. The place of his Nirvana had been Sammeda Sikhara. Santi Nath was not only a Tirthankara but also a great Emperor (Chakravarti Samrat). He in his previous birth as king Medharatha had saved the life of a pigeon by offering to the hawk and feeding the latter with the meat cut from his own body. Before he was conceived people were distrubed because of a great epidemic

(Mahamari). The noble influence of his conception itself brought relief and peace to the people. His name Santi Nath had been significant that way.

The Seventeenth Tirthankara was Kunthu Nath. The place of his birth had been Hastinapura. His father's name was Suraraja and that of his mother Sridevi. He was born on the 14th day of the dark-half of Vaisakha and the 1st day of the same fortnight (paksa) of the same month was the day of his Nirvana. He had also been the 6th great Emperor. The place of his Nirvana had been Sammeda Sikhara.

The Name of the Eighteenth Tirthankara was Ara Nath. He was born at Hastinapur. His father's name was Sudarsana and that of his mother was Mitradevi. Both his birth and Nirvana took place on the 10th day of the bright-half of Margasirsa. Along with being a Tirthankara he was the 7th great Emperor (Chakravati Samrat). His place of Nirvana was Sammed Sikhara.

The Nineteenth Tirthankara's name was Malli Nath or Malli Bhagavati. His or her place of birth was the Mithila town. His or her father's name was Kumbharaja and that of the mother was Prabhavati. His or her birth date was the 11th day of the bright-half of the month of Margasirsa and that of Nirvana, at Sammeda Sikhara, was the 12th day of the bright-half of Phalguna. Among the 24 known Tirthankaras she alone is a lady Tirthankara.¹⁴

The Twentieth Tirthankara was named Muni Suvrata. The place of his birth was the Town of Rajagrha. The name of his father was Sumitra and that of his mother was Padmavati. His birth date had been the 8th day of the dark-half of Jyestha month, whereas that of Nirvana, at Sammeda Sikhara, had been the 9th day of the dark-half of Jyestha.

14. The Svetambara tradition regards this Tirthankara to be a woman whereas the Digambara tradition considers this Tirthankara to be a man. The name, of course, in each case is Malli.

The Twenty-first Tirthankara's name was Nami Nath. The place of his birth was Mithilapuri. The name of his father was Vijayasena and that of the mother *Vapradevi*. His birth date was the 10th day of dark-half of Sravana, whereas that of Nirvana was the 10th day of the dark-half of Vaisakha. The place of his Nirvana had been Sammeda Sikhara.

The Twenty-second Tirthankara's name was Nemi Nath. His another name was Aristanemi also. His birth took place in a town near Agra, named Sauripura. His father's name was Samudravijaya and that of the mother Sivadevi. His birth date had been the 5th day of the bright half of Sravana and that of Nirvana the 8th day of the bright-half of Asadha. The place of his Nirvana had been the mountain Girnara in Saurashtra which was also known as Revatagiri. The Karamayogi Sri Krishna had been his paternal uncle's son. Vasudeva Krishna was much impressed of his preachings. When he was in Grhasthasrama (householder's life) his marriage was fixed to be performed with Rajamati; the daughter of king Ugrasena. But when he came to know that the animals were to be killed for the preparation of food for the marriage party his heart melt with kindness and mercy. He thought if his marriage would mean the death of some than he was not prepared to get married. He, therefore, returned from the bride's house without marrying and took monk's initiation. The Jaina Agama literature narrates the events of the life of lord Aristanemi elaborately. In Mahabharata¹⁵ and the Vedas¹⁶ we find a mention of his name.

The Twenty Third Tirthankara was Lord Parsva Nath. He is a historical figure. Some more points in brief are as follows : "His birth place was Varanasi. His father's name was king Asvasena and that of the mother was Vamadevi. He was born on

15. *Mahabharata* Vanaparva 184/8; Santiparva 288/5.46.

16. *Rigveda* 1/14/89/6; 1/24/180/10; 3/4/53/17; 10/12/188/1; *Yajurveda* 25/10; *Samaveda* 3/8. (Quoted by Devendra Muni, p. 18).

the 10th day of the dark-half of month Pausa, in 850 B.C. and got Nirvana, at Sammeda Sikhara, on the 8th day of the bright-half of Sravana month. During his times were prevalent many unwise practices of Penance (Tapasa kriya-kanda). Even when he was yet in the grhasthasrama (in the householders fold) he taught a tapas kamatha—'a man engaged in penance', the real dharma and by bringing out and saving a half-burnt snake from his burning woodpile (Dhuni), worked towards the real upliftment of the man. On achieving *Kevalajnana* (Omniscience) he taught and preached for the right and wise practices of spiritual exercises (Sadhana). Well known Western as well as Eastern scholars like Hermann Jacobi, H.T. Cole Brooke, Stevenson Sinclair, Edward Thomas, Karlcharpentier, S.K. Belvalkar, S.N. Dasgupta, S. Radhakrishnan, wrote about Parsva Nath as a historical personality.¹⁷

We do get references of Bhagavan Parsva Nath in the Buddhist literature as well. According to the commentary (Atthakatha) of Anguttaranikaya the uncle of Gautama Buddha, Bappa, Nirgrantha, was a lay Jaina follower (Sravaka). A well-known scholar of Buddhist literature Dharmananda Kausambi writes, "In early period Buddha, the Tathagata, had followed the tradition of Parsva Nath."¹⁸ Historians Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee and Mrs. Rhys Davids, are of the opinion that the spiritual pursuit of the Buddha was influenced by the principles taught and preached by Parsvanath.¹⁹

The 'Dhyana-yoga' that became current among the schools of Buddhism shows the clear impact on it of the *Parsvadhyana sadhana* (The mode of Meditation enjoyed by Parsva Nath).

17. See Devendra Muni's Hindi work—*Bhagavan Parsva : Eka Samiksatmaka Adhyayana* pp. 61-69.

18. See Dharmanand Kausambi's work in Hindi, "*Bhagavan Parsva Nath ka Caturama Dharma*" pp. 28-31.

19. Mukherjee, Dr. Radhakumud : *Hindu Civilization*, p. 238, Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Gautama the man*, pp. 22-35.

(All quoted by Devendra Muni, pp. 20-21)

Lord Mahavira

The last and the 24th Tirthankara had been Bhagavan Mahavira. He is a historical figure. His place of birth was a suburb named Ksatriya-Kunda or Kundapura of the city of Vaisali. The name of his father, a King, was Siddhartha and that of his mother Trisaladevi. The date of his birth has been the 13th day of the brighter half of the month of Caitra and that of his Nirvana has been on the 15th day (Amavasya) of the dark half of Kartika. The place of his Nirvana had been Pavapuri. In accordance with the Georgian calander the date of his birth and nirvana are placed respectively B.C. 599 and 527. During his times sacrifices (yajnas) were a rage-prevalent involving much of violence.

We get many references to Lord Mahavira in the Buddhist literature also. He was a contemporary of the Buddha and top most among many great teachers of that age.

His main disciple was Indrabhuti Gautama who had been a man of great intellectual capability. He had in Jainism, the same place with Lord Mahavira as Svetaketu with Uddalaka in Upanishads; Arjuna with Lord Krishna in Gita; and Ananda with Lord Gautama Buddha in Buddhism. He was greatly inquisitive. He raised thousand of questions which were all provided with their proper replies by Lord Mahavira quite in line with his style of Multiaspected Point of View (Anekantavada).²⁰

Sudharma and Jambuswami (Jambu-Svami)

After Lord Mahavira, Sudharma (Sudharman) took charge of carrying on his work and after the latter Jambuswami assumed the responsibility (became a Pattadhara). The life of Jambuswami was unique and inspiring for his renunciation and detachment impressed on the minds of the people a glorious image of a great renunciate (vairagi). He had been the last Kevali (Omniscient) of

20. Devendra Muni, p. 21.

the current age of decline (Avasarpini). After him there has been no Kevalajnani, carried on till his time, the natural purity of thought and practices started moving towards its deterioration gradually with the impact of time. After him, there came a disorganisation in respect of the following ten matters of spiritual development :

1. Manah Paryayajnana (telepathy *i.e.* mind knowledge),
2. *Paramavadhijnana* (ultimate stage of clairvoyance *i.e.* extra ordinary knowledge beyond the normal range or limits of space and time for senses).
3. *Pulakalavadhi*.
4. *Aharakasarira*.
5. *Ksapakasreni*.
6. *Upasamasreni*.
7. *Jinakalpa*.
8. Samyamatrika (self control of three kinds :
 (a) Pariharavisuddhi carita.
 (b) Suksamasamparaya caritra.
9. *Kevalajnana* (Omniscience) and
10. Siddhapada (Achievement of highest spiritual status).²¹

After Lord Mahavira's death there were differences amongst his followers and Jainism divided into several sects and subsects. First of all the Digambaras differed between themselves on the question of not wearing or wearing clothes, the Jaina canons and various codes of conduct.

We do find the advent of many great torch-bearing (Jyotirdhara) teachers (Acharyas) in both the Svetambara and the Digambara tradition after him. The names of Acarya Bhadrabahu Swami, Acarya Sthulabhadra, Acarya Vajra Swami, Acarya Devarddhigani, Kshamasramana, Acarya Umasvati, Acarya

21. Devendra Muni, p. 22.

Silanka, Acarya Haribhadra, Acarya Malayagiri, Acarya Abhayadeva, Upadhyaya Yasovijaya, Acarya Samayasundara, Acarya Kundakunda, Acarya Samantabhadra, Acarya Jaisena, Acarya Yativrasaba, Acarya Subhacandra, Nemicandra Siddhanta Chakravati, Akalankadeva, Vidyananda, Pujoyapada and the like can be mentioned as great teachers and acaryas, though there are many more till this time.

3

THE TIRTHANKARAS AND MAHAVIRA

Lord Mahavira the 24th and last Tirthankara is a historic figure and today, Jainism is much known in the world through his teachings. He preached his principles (philosophy) in the peoples language. His teachings were quite different which existed in those days. It is generally believed by Jainas that Buddha was inspired by his teachings. His doctrine of many-sidedness of truth or Anekantavada is a scientific way of reasoning which is not found in other contemporary disciplines.

The teachings of Mahavira are based on the principle of cessation of worldly activities which could be cultivated by practising peacefulness and tranquility of the mind. Here Ahimsa or non-violence has been advocated as the highest virtue. In order to fulfil the requirements of non-violence, the theory of non-possession or non-attachment is prompted to harm others for fulfilling our selfish ends. But how shall we put the theory of non-violence into practice?

Here we are introduced to the doctrine of the many-sidedness or the manyfold aspects of truth. In the words of Dr. Jain :

“The world in which we are living is very complicated. We are unable to understand its mysteries, Besides this, we are not able to express fully our thoughts. Many a times it happens that we say something and mean something quite different. We are also not able to understand fully the bearing of what others say. Our prejudices and preconceived notions also come in the way.

Philosophical views, propounded by great thinkers, sometimes confuse us and we find ourselves incapable of grasping them in their right perspective. Numerous ideas and conceptions have been proposed keeping in view of the demands of society of a particular period and situation. The Vedic sages paid the highest tribute to natural phenomena such as the sun, the rains, the storm, the fire, the dawn and so on. Later on as we proceed to the Upanishadic era, we find the prominence of knowledge in the place of rituals. Then comes the period of the six systems of Indian philosophy when each system tried to solve the problems of the time in its own way. Each system apparently seemed to have advocated opposite and contradictory views, but really speaking these views demonstrate the divergence of reality, viewed from different angles. The theory of the many angles of truth or Anekantavada is a particular point of view, postulating that truth is many-sided; it is not a philosophy in itself. It is a comprehensive Jain view, according to which any particular thing can be viewed from manifold aspects. Everything of the universe can be viewed from many points of view, and each point of view yields different conclusion. In other words, every proposition is conditional and there is nothing which can be called absolute affirmation or absolute negation. According to this view, a certain thing exists only with reference to its particular substance (dravya), space (kshetra), time (kala) and mode (bhava), and is non-existent with reference to its different substance, space, time and mode. For example, a question is asked, whether the universe is finite or infinite. It is called finite because its substance is finite in space, and it is infinite due to its temporal dimension and *modal* expressions. Similarly, the soul is eternal as it never dies; and it is non-eternal as it changes its forms from birth to birth and is noticed united with the body. According to the Jain view, the existence or entity of a particular thing depends on its 'origin', destruction and 'permanence'. The soul, for example, exists not because it is "indestructible", "unborn" or "stable" as advocated by the Nyaya system of the Indian philosophy, but it is "existent"

as it is characterised by its attributes of 'origin', 'destruction' and 'permanence'. When the soul has transmigrated from one state to another, its new state is its 'origin', the loss of the previous state its 'destruction', and the identity of the same soul in both the states its 'permanence'. Thus according to the Jain system of thought, an object cannot be called absolutely eternal or unchanging, or absolutely non-eternal or changing, but it is eternal or unchanging when it is viewed with reference to its substance, the form of its continuous flow, and it is non-eternal or changing in so far as it undergoes a change or a new modification every moment. Those who believe in absolute point or view, laying emphasis only a single aspect of an object, are compared with those blind persons, who in order to obtain the knowledge of the shape of an elephant, feel its ear, trunk, feet and other parts of the body separately, and believe that they have the complete view of the shape of an elephant.

No wonder that such thoughts pertaining to relativity of truth are advocated by numerous philosophers of the West. The great philosopher Hegel has remarked :

"Reality is now this, now that; in this sense it is full of negations, contradiction, and opposites : A plant germinates, blooms, withers and dies; man is young, mature and old. To do justice to something we must tell the whole truth about it, predicate all its contradictions and show how they are reconciled and preserved in the articulated whole which we call the life of the thing." (Thilly, History of Philosophy).

Bradely, an advocate of New Idealism, has observed in his "Appearance and Reality" :

Everything is essential and everything is worthless in comparison with other. Now where is there even a single fact so fragmentary and so poor that to the universe it does not matter. Here is truth in every idea however false, there is reality in every existence however slight".

Joachim has expressed similar ideas in his "Nature of Truth".

No judgment is true in itself and by itself. Every judgment as a piece of concrete thinking is informed, conditioned to some extent, constituted by a percipient character of the mind.

Similar ideas have been affirmed in the "Quest of Ideal" as follows : "Let us take the antithesis of the swift and the slow. It would be nonsensical to say that every movement is either swift or slow. It would be nearer the truth to say that every movement is both swift and slow, swift by comparison with what is slower than itself, slow by comparison with what is swifter than itself."

In the Indian philosophical systems we find mutually antagonistic views regarding the fundamentals of philosophy. In the process of argumentations and debates, in order to reach to a conclusion, the upholders of these systems attack one another, without caring much for the element of truth the opponent might contain in his statement. Here comes a Jain logicism with his non-absolutist or relative pluralist view holding that all particular theories based on logic are true to a certain extent and from a certain point of view. A certain cognition is valid from the point of view of its own object but invalid when it discards its contradictory cognition as unreal. In criticising the non-Jain systems of Indian philosophy, Jains do not hold that their views are absolutely wrong, but they believe that they are only partial expressions of truth. For instance, according to them, the Buddhist doctrine of *momentariness*, denying the reality of an abiding substance, follows the dogma of the non-eternalist, is true only from the analytical standpoint. Similarly, the Vedanta doctrine maintaining that the Being is eternal and absolutely unchangeable, asserts the eternalist viewpoint, is true only from a synthetic standpoint. In the same way, the Samkhya, the Nyaya the Yoga and the Charvaka systems of Indian thought are true only from certain standpoint. It is stated that as different jewels when strung together form a necklace, so also is the case with different Indian philosophical systems, which viewed from the relative standpoint, become part and parcel of the whole reality."¹

1. Jain. Dr. Jagdish Chandra : The Jain Way of Life, pp. 44-47.

“Different philosophical systems possess different aspects of one and the same object, and a dispassionate seeker of truth has to find out the origin of these sources, by studying critically the conditions and situations under which such ideas were developed.

Thus we see that an impartial objective and all comprehensive attitude is responsible for the origin and development of the doctrine of the many-sidedness of truth. The upholder of this doctrine has to be tolerant, patient, *persevering* and capable of restraining his attachment and aversion which are considered the great enemies of philosophical speculation. Haribhadra, a popular author of the 8th century, has remarked:

“A person who insists only on his own views and does not want to submit to the opinion of others, his arguments blinding follow his thinking, whereas the thinking of a balanced person is supported by his arguments.”

Yashovijaya, another Jain philosopher-monk of the 18th century, has asserted :

‘The one who is faithful to the doctrine of the Anekantavada, does not hold aversion to any philosophical system. He views all of them which are only partial expression of truth, with fondness, like a father to his sons. He cannot afford to have too much attention to one or too little to another. He alone should be considered as really acquainted with the holy scriptures, who taking recourse to the doctrine of the many-sidedness of truth views all the systems with equanimity. Really speaking, the broad view towards all philosophical systems is the great secret of the scriptural studies, which is known as righteousness.’

To demonstrate the spirit of accommodation contained in this doctrine, Anandaghana, a Jain mystic saint of the same century, has proclaimed the six systems of Indian philosophy as the six important constituents of the body of God Jina.”²

2. Ibid., pp. 44-47.

Compared to Buddhism, not much has been written on Jainism during the last 1000 years. In the present time Buddhist scholars and organisations are academically working on Buddha and his Dhamma in an organised manner on international level. Surprisingly, very little has been done to spread globally the message and teachings of Mahavira.

During the last one hundred years, apart from Jaina monks, Indian and Western scholars are no doubt attracted towards the study of Jaina philosophy, but there is still a vast scope in bringing out meaningful literature in all the Indian languages, as well as other popular languages of the world. Private Jaina Institutes, research organisations, individual writers, scholars and students of Jaina philosophy are doing some appreciable research work and bringing out academic research based literature, for quite sometime. A Documentation and Bibliographic account of such researches and publications can be brought out at this historic juncture.

This chapter on Jaina 'Tirthankaras and Mahavira' briefly examines their biographical references and teachings which have appeared in earlier researches and writings. In this age of science, technology and computer skills, when the world is shocked and under constant fear of world wide terrorism only the teachings of Mahavira and Buddha can save the world.

Arhats of pre-Aryan Time

According to Mehta, "the Arhats of pre-Aryan time were the followers of Jainism. The monks may have lived nude (nirgranth). Aryan people, who were outsiders and settled down in India in due course of time had quarrelled with the natives and called them 'Vratyas', which meant a defiled race.

"There existed in India sects different from the Vedic faith long before Mahavira and Buddha. *Arhats* and probably *Arhat-caityas* were also in existence before their birth. The followers of these *Arhats* were known as *Vratyas*., They had republican form

of Government. They had their own shrines, their non-Vedic worship and their own religious leaders. They with their well-built cities and non-violent, non-sacrificial cult were the indigenous rivals and enemies whom the first Aryans had to encounter for settling and extending in this country. In the Vedic period some saints were known as *yatis* who probably belonged to the non-Vedic group, *i.e.*, the Sramanic (Samana) society. Some of the saints are described as naked which indicates that they practised stern asceticism. Such people who liked renunciation and abandoned all pleasures were the pillars of the Sramanic society, *i.e.*, the society of the non-Aryans. The Brahmanic view of life was quite different. It longed for long life, heroic progeny, wealth, power, abundance of food and drink and the defeat of the rivals. It seems that the idea of renunciation did not much appeal in the beginning to the Brahmanic society, *i.e.*, the society of the Aryans.

The Jaina philosophy, no doubt, holds certain principles in common with Hinduism, but this does not disprove its independent origin and free development. If it has some similarities with the other Indian systems, it has its own peculiarities and marked differences as well. Its animism, atomic theory, karmic theory, etc., are quite peculiar.”³

Rishabha as First Tirthankara

“There was a time when it was believed that Jainism was merely a branch of Buddhism. However, it was later on found by scholars that Jainism was a separate religion by itself. The earlier identity between Buddhism and Jainism was due to the fact that both religions put emphasis on the Law of Karma and Ahimsa. Likewise, it was believed at the beginning that Mahavira was the founder of Jainism in the same way as Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. However, it is now recognised that Mahavira was the twenty-fourth Tirthankara or Prophet of Jainism. The sacred

3. Mehta, Mohan Lal : *Jaina Culture*, p. 7.

books of the Jains tell us that the real founder of Jainism was Rishabha who was succeeded by 23 Tirthankaras. According to the orthodox view, Rishabha was the father of King Bharata, the first Chakravartin king of India.”⁴

Jainism and Early Civilization

Tukol writes : “In the earliest state of civilization, man knew neither the arts nor the occupations like agriculture. He depended wholly on fruits and roots for his diet, and leaves and barks of trees for his clothing. So the trees were called Kalpa-vrkasa as they yielded all that man needed or desired. This age was followed by the ages of work and toil. This tradition is in conformity with modern researches which have disclosed that until the invention of tools, agriculture etc., man subsisted on fruits and roots of trees.

Evolution has been gradual. During that period, there appeared fourteen Kulakaras or Manus one after the other. It was these wise men that were responsible for the progressive changes in the world by the invention of new skills and arts and by introduction of order and new phases in the art of living. Pratisruti, Sanmati, Ksemankara, Ksemandhara, Simankara, Simandhara, Vimalavahana, Caksuman, Ysasvin, Abhicandra, Candrabha, Marud deva, Prasenjit and Nabhi are the fourteen Manus or wise men who are the benefactors of mankind as they not only paved the way for comfortable living but also enlightened mankind on the basic rules of morality and goodness.”

The last Manu Nabhi had a wife by name Marudevi who gave birth to a son by name Rsabha or Rishabha. Jaina tradition is unanimous in recognising Rsabha as the first Tirthankara. Samantabhadra says :—

Yena pranitam prathu dharma-tirtham |
Jyestham janah prapya jayanti duhkham ||

4. Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : Ancient India, p. 137.

A Tirthankara is one who has laid down the principles of the highest religion with whose assistance people can conquer their sorrows." He is also called an Arihanta or one who has conquered all enemies like lust, greed, etc. and destroyed all the destructive and non-destructive Karmas; his other name is Arhat or one who is worthy of respect. European scholars have interpreted the term Tirthankara as meaning "a holy teacher", or "a ford-maker" or "remover of all obstacles on the way to salvation", or "boatman across the current of existence". The royal emblem of Rishabha was the bull. Since he taught people how to grow sugarcane, his lineage came to be known as Ikshvaku-vamsa. He taught people the art of domesticating animals and the use of bulls for cultivation of lands. He laid down and followed the path of Ahimsa and Truth. He organized the society into three occupational groups : agriculturists, traders and soldiers. The last group consisted of only able bodied men who could defend the country and maintain order in society. He ruled over his kingdom for several years. He had many sons, but of them, Bharata and Bahubali are quite well-known. He led a life of great piety and purity.

As a matter of fact, Lord Rishabha laid the foundation of civic life and taught men how to co-operate with one another for mutual benefit. He taught 72 arts to men and 64 fine arts to women which included writing, painting, music etc. But the most important of his worldly teaching was the cultivation of grains and manufacturing of pots. As such, Prof. Lothar Wendel is right to call him "the Father of agriculture and culture, the greatest achievement of which was the recognition of soul; the basic fundamental for the sanctity of all life and for the manifestation of Ahimsa.

The details of his life as given in the Maha Purana and Padma Purana of the Jains are corroborated by the Hindu Puranas like the Bhagavata and Siva Purana. When Rishabha was ruling his kingdom, making the lives of his subjects happy and purposeful, an event of great significance occurred. While he was sitting one

day in his Darbar, a dancer by name Nilamjana was brought there to dance. She began her dance to the accompaniment of music and when she had reached the climax of her graceful art, she suddenly collapsed and breathed her last. This incident was sufficient to convince him about the uncertainty and fleeting character of life. He decided to renounce the world.

Rishabha crowned his eldest son Bharata as his successor. He distributed his kingdom amongst his sons including Bahubali. It is due to the memorable reign of Bharata that India acquired the renowned name of Bharatvarsa. Rishabha parted with everything that he had and took to the life of a Sramana. He went to Mount Kailasa where he practised penance as a naked Muni. He attained Omniscience and preached the religion of ahimsa, love and truth. He had 84 Ganadharas or apostles who interpreted his sermons to the audience. Vrsabhasena, the younger brother of Bharata was the first to become the spiritual messenger of the Tirthankara. Somaprabha and Sreyamsa at whose place he accepted food after long fast, also became the apostles. His eldest daughter Brahmi was the first to accept aceticism and become a nun. His second daughter Sundari was the next to join the order of nuns. It may be noted that according to tradition, Rishabhadeva is credited with the invention of a script to teach his daughters and that it is for that reason that the script came to be known as Brahmi script.

That Rishabhadeva preached the gospel of Ahimsa is mentioned in the Visnu (Vishnu) Purana and Vayu Purana, which only proves that the Tirthankara was respected even by the Hindus. After preaching his religion which came to be known as the religion of Jinas, he retired to Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas and attained salvation or Nirvana after destroying the Aghatiya Karmas. He attained Nirvana on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month of Magha.

Reference has already been made to the finds during the excavations at Harappa and Mohen-jo-daro where nude images of ascetics in Kayotsarga and seals with emblem of bull have

been found. Scholars have deduced from the numerous finds that the Indus Valley civilization was a pre-Aryan civilization with the Ahimsa cult. From the absence of any weapons of war amongst the find, scholars have informed that there might not have been wars and that the state administration must have been founded on the principle of non-violence. It is a good augury that such archeological discoveries and other evidences are gradually favouring the Jaina tradition of its antiquity.”⁵

Cycle of 24 Tirthankaras

During the present cycle of time, there were 24 Tirthankaras :

<i>Name</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Place of Birth</i>	<i>Emblem</i>
1	2	3	4	5
1. Rsabha (Rishabha) or Adi Nath	Nabhiraja	Marudevi	Ayodhya	Bull
2. Ajita Nath	Jitasatru	Vijayadevi	Ayodhya	Elephant
3. Sambhava Nath	Jitari	Sena	Sravasti	Horse
4. Abhinandan Nath	Samvara	Siddhartha	Ayodhya	Monkey
5. Sumati Nath	Megha prabha	Sumangala (Mangala)	Ayodhya	Curlew (Kraunea)
6. Padmaprabha	Dharana (Sridhara)	Susima	Kausambi	Red Lotus
7. Suparsva Nath	Supratistha (Pratistha)	Prithivi	Kasi	Svastika
8. Chandraprabha	Mahasena	Laksmana	Chandrapuri	Crescent
9. Puspadanta (Suvidhi Nath)	Sugriva (Supriya)	Rama	Kakandi	Crocodile (Makara)
10. Sitala Nath	Drdharatha	Sunanda (Nandi)	Bhadrikapuri (Bhadrilla)	Wishing Pipal tree (Srivatsa)
11. Sreyamsa Nath	Visnu	Visnudri (Visna)	Simhapuri	Rhinoceros
12. Vasupujya	Vasupujya	Vijaya (Jaya)	Champapuri	Buffalo
13. Vimala Nath	Krtavarman	Suramya (Syama)	Kampilya	Boar

5. Tukol, T.K. : Compendium on Jainism, pp. 27-30.

1	2	3	4	5
14. Ananta Nath	Simhasena	Sarvayasa	Ayodhya	Bear (Falcon)
15. Dharma Nath	Bhanu	Suvrata	Ratnapuri	Spike-headed Club- (Vajradanda)
16. Santi Nath	Visvasena	Acira	Hastinapura	Deer
17. Kunthu Nath	Surya (Sura)	Sridevi	Hastinapura	He-goat
18. Ara-nath	Sudarsana	Mitra-(Devi)	Hastinapura	Fish
19. Malli Nath	Kumbha	Raksita (Prabhavati)	Mithilapuri	Waterpot
20. Munisuvrata	Sumitra	Padmavati	Kusagranagar or Rajagrha	Tortoise
21. Naminatha	Vijaya	Vapra (Vipra)	Mithilapuri or Mathura	Blue Lotus
22. Nemi Nath	Samudra- vijaya	Siva-Devi	Sauripura or Dvaraka	Conch
23. Parsva Nath	Asvasena	Vama	Kasi	Serpent
24. Mahavira or Vardhamana	Siddhartha	Priyakarini (Trisala)	Kundapura	Lion ⁶

Place of Nirvana

Except Rishabha Vasupujya, Nemi Nath and Mahavira, all the Tirthankaras attained Nirvana on Mount Sammed (modern Parasnath), in Bihar while the aforesaid four attained Nirvana on the Mount Kailasa, Champapuri, Mount Girnar and Pavapuri or Pava respectively.

In the words of Tukol, "The details given in the Maha Purana about their parentage, about the dreams that the mother of each had at about the time of conception (garbha-kalyana), birth, (janma-kalyana), ascension to the throne (kalyana rajyarojana), initiation (diksha-kalyana) and attainment of Nirvana (Moksha-kalyana) are full of details. The gods led by Indra attended and actively participated in each function. Each Tirthankara has a

6. Jaini, J.L. : Outline of Jainism.

history of his previous births as man and beast until his last birth as a human being in which he attained Nirvana and became a Jina. The first Tirthankara was a person of stupendous height and his life span extended over millions of years.

The dreams dreamt by the mother of each of the Tirthankaras must have been inserted in the Puranas to impress on the parents that they were to have a son who was destined to be a Jina and that austere life of purity and piety on their part was most essential. The worship and the celebrations on the five occasions called panca-kalyana pujas were perhaps necessary to create an awakening amongst the public and to herald to the world the advent of a new teacher. The descriptions about the height and span of life were intended to impress on the followers the physical and spiritual zenith each Jina had reached; it is not unlikely that the poet who visualized in his mind the most astounding strength and prowess, attributed the same to each of the Jinas in his poetic descriptions and thus impressed on his readers their divine grandeur and lustre all through their worldly existence. The Bhavavali or the history of previous births and deaths is intended to emphasise the inexorable character of the Law of Karma operating in the life of every living being, however exalted might be the status he ultimately realized.”⁷

Tirthankaras were great teachers. They all lived pious and religious lives. In the Jaina sources historicity has been mixed up with mythology. Even though they are all worshipped and accepted as leaders of Jainism. Many scholars have brought out their exaggerated biographical sketches which are a source of inspiration to Jainas.

Muni-Suvrata

Muni-Suvrata is the 20th Tirthankara who is said to have been born in the month of Vaisakha, on the second day of the dark half of the month. He was born at Rajagrha or Kusagranagar.

7. Tukol, T.K. : Compendium on Jainism, p. 34.

His father was Sumitraraja while Padmavati was the name of his mother. His emblem was Tortoise. He attained salvation on the mount Parasanath on the 12th day of the dark half of the month of Phalgun. Dr. Kamta Prasad has referred to the mention of Kurma-Rsi in the Rigveda (2-3-27-32) as also to his teachings which is possible to identify with this Tirthankara. He also refers to Kurma Purana. There is no other evidence.”⁸

Aristanemi (Arishtanemi) or Nemi Nath

“Aristanemi has been mentioned in the Rigveda as already referred to. He was born at Mathura on the second day of the bright half of the month of Sravana. His father was Samudravijaya while his mother was Sivadevi. Vasudeva, the father of Sri Krisna (Krishna) was the Younger brother of Samudravijaya. They belonged to Yadava Kshatriya clan. According to Jaina Purana, king Ugrasena had a daughter by name Rajamati. It had been settled that Neminatha should marry Rajamati. So while he was proceeding in procession to the house of his father-in-law, he heard the groaning of some animals and saw some of them tied to pillars. When he questioned others, he was told that the animals were intended to be killed for food to some of the guests attending the marriage. His heart melted with pity and he drove back his chariot. He renounced the world and took to asceticism inspite of the *entreaties* of Shri Krisna and other relatives. When Rajamati came to know of the turn of events, she too abandoned her royal life and became a nun. He preached the religion of compassion, self-control and renunciation in the kingdoms of Magadha, Pallava etc., before he retired to Girnar where he attained Nirvana after severe penance.

Reference had already been made to the mention of the name of Aristanemi in the Vedas and to the opinion of Dr. Radhakrishnan who does not doubt the historicity of this Tirthankara. Dr. Prana Nath, whose reading of a copper-plate grant

8. Jain. Kamta Prasad : Religion of Tirthankaras. p. 42. 67-70.

(Referred to by Tukol, pp. 35-36)

by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnazaar I of 1140 B.C. has been published, has stated that the King had come to mount Revata to pay his homage to Lord Nemi Nath. Dr. Fuherer has declared on the basis of his studies on the archeological discoveries at Mathura that Nemi Nath was a historical personage.⁹ Dr. Kamta Prasad mentions that some inscriptions of Indo-Scythian period express reference to this Tirthankara.¹⁰ It is stated in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata that the Epic War took place at the advent of Kali-era which is said to have commenced 3101 years B.C. Nemi Nath was a cousin and a contemporary of Shri Krisna, though he did not participate in the War, like the latter. The Jaina Puranas assign 2750 years before the birth of Parsva as the year of his attainment of Nirvana. This calculation almost tallies with the calculations made on the basis of Mahabharata War. Until further evidence of unimpeachable character becomes available, it may not be erroneous to accept these dates to uphold the historicity of Lord Nemi Nath. In this connection, quite noteworthy is a paper "Before Mahavira" by Dr. R. Williams published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (April 1966). In his opinion Nemi emerges from the background of the traditional hagiography with a profile at least as clear as that of Parsva (Parshva).

Mahavira's Relationship with Parshva

According to Paul Dundas¹¹ : "In the *Kalpasutra* there occurs the first description of the life of Parshva, the twenty-third form-maker, extremely short in extent and probably modelled on that of Mahavira. Parshva is stated to have been born in Benares, to have renounced the world and founded a community of ascetics and lay people and, after a life of one hundred years, to have attained liberation on Mount Sammeta in the Ganges basin two hundred and fifty years prior to Mahavira. Circumstantial

9. Epigraphica Indica, Vol. I, p. 389.

10. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 206-10. (Referred to by Tukol, p. 36)

11. Dundas, Paul, The Jains, pp. 26-27.

evidence, including a description of his teachings in the 'Sayings of the Seers' (IBh 31). dictates that he must be viewed as a historical figure. While the *Kalpasutra* does not formally link Parshva to Mahavira, placing his biography after that of the last fordmaker, a passing remark in the second chapter of the *Acaranga*, that is, not in the very earliest stratum of the biography, that Mahavira's parents were followers of Parshva and lay devotees of Jain ascetics (AS 2.15), has led to the general scholarly conclusion that Mahavira must have renounced within Parshva's ascetic lineage.

The question of the relationship the two fordmakers hinges on the fact that Jain tradition holds that Parshva and his ascetic community followed a Fourfold Restraint (Prakrit *caujjma*). A definition of what this might be does not occur until about the second or third century CE when the *sthananga*, one of the encyclopaedic text of Svetambara-canon, states that the fourfold vow involves absention from violence, lying taking what has not been given, and possession (Sth 266). Mahavira, on the other hand, according to tradition preached, or rather stipulated as a mode of ascetic initiation, Five Great Vows (Prakrit *mahavvaya*), not seriously dealt with in the earliest stratum of the biography, which consist of Parshva's Fourfold Restraint along with the avoidance of sexual relations. Yet the Buddhist Pali Canon, albeit not an infallible guide to early Jainism, consistently identifies Nigantha Nayaputta, that is Mahavira, with the preaching of a Fourfold Restraint alone.

A well-known passage in one of the older scriptures of the Svetambara-canon (UttS 23) attempts to explain why there should be a difference between the teachings of the two fordmakers. Keshin, a follower of Parshva, and Gautama, a disciple of Mahavira, are depicted as discussing whether the Fourfold Restraint or the Five Great Vows represent the true doctrine. Gautama's explanation is that there is a discrepancy in the outward appearance of the doctrine, which is in reality unified, because the moral and intellectual capabilities of the followers of the

fordmakers differed. In the time of the first ffordmaker there was difficulty in understanding the doctrine which was being preached for the first time, while in the time of the last ffordmaker, as the process of moral and spiritual decline began to take hold, people had difficulty in putting it into practice. In the time of the twenty-two intervening ffordmakers, however, it was possible to both understand what was entailed by the doctrine and put it into practice. In other words, the first and last ffordmakers formulated their teachings in the form of the Five Great Vows in which prohibition of sexual relations is specifically prescribed as a result of the inadequacies of their followers, whereas such a ban would have been understood by the followers of the other ffordmakers as being incorporated in the prohibition on possession. A further form of differentiation is said to be that the male ascetic followers of Rishabha and Mahavira were naked, while those of Parshva and the other ffordmakers wore clothes.”

In 1977, Jugalkishor Mukhtar wrote a paper in Hindi in which he argued, employing Digambara as well as Svetambara sources, that the ffordmakers had not all taught the doctrine in the same manner and that the second to the twenty-third had in fact taught one single restraint of ‘equanimity’ (*samayika*), whereas Rishabha and Mahavira had been obliged because of the defects of the times in which they lived to specify more precisely the five main areas of moral significance.¹² More recently, P.S. Jaini, drawing on research by P.K. Modi, although without any apparent reference to Mukhtar’s work, has attempted to explain this problem in rather similar terms. Starting with the premise that Mahavira must have been initiated into the same ascetic vows as his predecessor Parshva, Jaini points to the common occurrence in both Svetambara and Digambara literature of references to the *samayika* as representing the sole vow which Mahavira took at the time of renunciation and suggests that Parshva’s Fourfold Restraint in fact related to the four modalities of the body (mind,

12. Reprinted in Mukhtar. (Quoted by Paul Dundas).

body, speech and senses) while Mahavira's Great Vows were simply slightly different articulations of the same basic ethical and sensory equanimity.¹³

Leaving aside the difficulties that the modalities of the body are traditionally regarded as being three¹⁴ and that none of the sources adduced concerning the single *samayika* can be located in the earliest stratum, this explanation has considerable merit. However, the criticism must remain that it derives from an insistence, difficult to sustain on a purely textual basis and deriving in the last resort from traditional Jain belief, that there was some kind of formal link between Parshva and Mahavira.

The 'Exposition of Explanations' is the best source for the relationship between Mahavira and contemporary followers of Parshva. Mahavira is portrayed in one passage as converting Parshvite monks by enunciating cosmological views which he describes as having already been taught by Parshva whom he refers to with respect. However, the conversion of these monks is effected by their abandoning the Fourfold Restraint and taking the Five Great Vows : there is no suggestion that the two are parallel expressions of one single vow of renunciation (Bh 5.9).¹⁵ Elsewhere, an elaborate description of the mechanism of rebirth is affirmed to be both based on Parshva's teachings and at the same time a truth which Mahavira had established for himself through his Omniscience (Bh 9.3).¹⁶

It is impossible to be certain about the relationship between Mahavira and Parshva. What can be stressed is that all biographies of Mahavira portray him as, unlike all other fordmakers, renouncing the world alone (AvNiry 224-5) with only the gods

13. Jaini, P.S.

14. Schubring, 1977 (trans.) with reference to Jaini.

15. Deleu (1970).

16. Deleu (1970) where Mahavira concurs with the doctrine preached by Parshvite monks. (All quoted by Paul Dundas, p. 28)

in attendance, and there is never any suggestion that he entered an already existing ascetic corporation. A tentative explanation might therefore be that early Jainism coalesced out of an interaction between the cosmological ideas of Parshva and a more rigorous form of orthopraxy advocated by Mahavira, with the relationship between the two teachers eventually being formalised within the evolving fordmaker lineage.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that later Jain writers did not see Parshva's monks as precursors of their own tradition. Starting with the *śutrakṛitāṅga* where the Parshvites are associated with failure to think through the implications of a life based on non-violence (SKS 2.7), Svetambaras came by medieval times to view them, long after they had disappeared, as pseudo-ascetics who gained their livelihood from the dubious practices of magic and astrology.¹⁸

Such speculations about the connections between the two fordmakers are a matter of irrelevance for the majority of Jains. For them, Parshva, as the fordmaker who removes obstacles and has the capacity to save, is the greatest focus of devotional activity within the religion and is indeed the most popular of all the fordmakers, as a census of images in Jain temples throughout India would clearly demonstrate. According to a famous story which does not appear in literary form until the eighth century, Parshva in his previous birth saved a snake which was being burnt in a Brahman's sacrificial fire. Reborn as the twenty-third fordmaker, Parshva, sunk in meditation, was attacked by the Brahman, now in demonic form, with fire and rocks, but the snake, also reborn, this time as a mightily cobra prince called Dharanendra, shielded Parshva by spreading his hoods over his head.¹⁹

A historian might point to the existence of images of Parshva with a canopy of cobra's hoods which date from just before and

17. Early source for Parshva.

18. Dundas, p. 29.

19. Shah, U.P. (1987) : Legend of Parshva.

(All quoted by Paul Dundas, p. 29)

after the common era as evidence for Jainism's early assimilation of popular snake cults. More significant is the way that various ethical themes in Jain teaching come together in the figure of this fordmaker : compassion, non-violence, fellowship with all living creatures, rejection of the Vedic sacrifice and awareness of the fact that actions have consequences which bind individuals together."

According to Mehta "Tirthankara Neminatha or Aristanemi, who preceded Lord Parsva, was a cousin of Krisna. If the historicity of Krisna is accepted, there is no reason why Neminatha should not be regarded as a historical person. He was son of Samudravijaya and grandson of Andhakavirasmi of Sauryapura. Krisna had negotiated the wedding of Neminatha with Rajamati, the daughter of Ugrasena of Dvaraka. Neminatha attained emancipation on the summit of Mount Raivata (Girnar)."²⁰

Regarding Parsvanatha Mahajan observes, "Parsvanatha was the twenty-third Tirthankara or Prophet and he seems to have been a historical figure." Professor Jacobi says : Parsvanatha was the real founder of Jainism. According to the Kalpasutra of Bhadrabahu written in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, Parsvanath was a Kshatriya. He was the son of Asvasena, King of Benaras. He was married to Prabhavati, daughter of King Naravarman. As a prince, he was very much loved by the people. He lived as a householder for 30 years and then became an ascetic. After deep meditation for 83 days he attained the highest knowledge called Kevalam. He had eight Ganas and eight Ganadharas. He had a following of 16,000 Sramanas with Aryadatta as their head. He had 38,000 nuns as his followers. He had also 1,64,000 men and 3,27,000 women as his followers. He died at the age of 100 years "on the summit of Mount Sammeta." He is stated to have lived during the eighth century B.C. His death took place about 250 years before the death of Mahavira."²¹

20. Mehta, Mohan Lal : *Jaina Culture*, pp. 9-10.

21. Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : *Ancient India*, p. 137.

Parsvanatha is equally respected and worshipped among the followers of Jain sect, like Lord Mahavira. Mehta observes on the basis of Kalpasutra :

“The historicity of Lord Parsva has been unanimously accepted. He preceded Mahavira by 250 years. He was son of King Asvasena and Queen Vama of Varanasi. At the age of thirty he renounced the world and became an ascetic. He practised austerities for eighty-three days. On the eighty-fourth day he obtained Omniscience. Lord Parsva preached his doctrine for seventy years. At the age of a hundred he attained liberation on the summit of Mount Sammeta (Parassnath Hills).

The four vows preached by Lord Parsva are : not to kill, not to lie, not to steal and not to own property. The vow of chastity was, no doubt, implicitly included as the last vow, but in the two hundred and fifty years that elapsed between the death of Parsva and the preaching of Mahavira, abuses became so abundant that the latter had to add the vow of chastity explicitly to the existing four vows. Thus, the number of vows preached by Lord Mahavira was five instead of four.”²²

According to Tukol, “Parsvanatha was twenty-third Tirthankara. He was born at Varanasi. His father Visvasena was then ruling over Kasi which was his kingdom. His mother’s name was Brahmi. He was born on the 11th day of the dark half of the month Pusya in the year 1039 B.C. According to tradition his birth took place 2,750 years after Lord Neminatha had attained Nirvana. He belonged to Ugra Vamsa and Kasyapa-gotra. His royal emblem was a hooded cobra. He was a great reformer and had a stately personality. Even from his boyhood he was full of compassion.

It is usual to associate every great personality with some incidents that speak of his heroic power or divine nature.

It is said that when once the prince was walking in a forest, he saw an ascetic who was no other than Mahipala, his maternal

22. Mehta, Mohan Lal, *Jaina Culture*, p. 9.

grandfather. Mahipala had renounced the world on the death of his queen and gone to a forest to practise penance. He was then practising austere penance by being surrounded by five fires. Parsva was hurt. Then Mahipala started cutting a tree for fuel to feed the fires around him. Prince Parsvanatha understood by his mental powers that there were two living serpents in that branch of the tree which he was cutting. Thereupon, he advised the ascetic not to cut the tree as there were a male and a female serpents in it and that austerities of the type he was practising were not conducive to spiritual elevation. The ascetic did not heed his advice and went on thoughtlessly cutting the tree. To his great dismay, he saw two serpents smothering from the branch of the tree he had cut. The serpents were reeling with pain and were actually dying. Prince Parsvanatha took pity on them and out of affection for them, repeated loudly the Panca-Namokara-mantra before them. The snakes died while hearing the holy Mantra and were born in the Nagaloka as Dharanendra and his queen Padmavati. It may be mentioned that in most of the Jaina temples where there is the image of Lord Parsvanatha as the presiding God, there are images of these two Yaksha and Yaksini.

When the prince attained thirty years of his age he heard that King Devasena of Saketapura was celebrating the Panca-Kalyana pujas of Lord Rishabhadeva. He went there and came to know how the Lord had renounced the world. He felt that life was transitory and that there was in the himsa (injury) in name of religion. He decided to renounce the world much to the grief of his parents. He advised them about the ills of life and the greatness of true asceticism.

He went to a forest. On going there, he removed all his ornaments and clothes. He removed his hair with his own hands and started observing all the rules of conduct of a Sramana. He observed fasts and penance. He acquired the Manahparyaya Jnana or the Knowledge of reading the thoughts of other. He radiated all affection and purity. It is said that when he was deeply

engrossed in his meditation, Sambaradeva who was no other than Mahipala in his next birth, started pouring heavy rains and trying to cause all sorts of pain. The two Nagas-Dharanendra and Padmavati came to know it and spread their hoods on the Lord who was undisturbed by what was taking place. It is worthwhile to mention that the image of Lord Parsvanatha has the hood of a cobra spread over his head like an umbrella. Cobra is his emblem.

Tukol further writes : "Parsvanatha continued his penances undisturbed and in full control of himself. At last, when he became absorbed in Sukladhyana (lustrous meditation), he obtained Omniscience on the fourth day in the dark half of the month of Caitra. He then started preaching the gospel of Jina and called upon all people to observe the vows of Ahimsa, Truth, Non-stealing and Non-possessiveness or *aparigraha*. He went to different places in the country like Kasi, Kosala, Magadha, Kalinga and Pancala etc. After preaching till he attained 69 years and 9 months of his age, he proceeded towards the Sammedagiri and became engrossed in meditation. When he had reached 100 years of age, he attained Nirvana on the seventh day of the bright half of the month of Sravana in the year 939 B.C. The Sammedagiri which had been hallowed by the attainment of Nirvana by 19 Tirthankaras earlier came to be named after him as Parsva Nath Hill which is regarded today as the holiest place of pilgrimage for Jainas."²³

To prove the historicity of Parsvanatha, Tukol has further quoted several leading authorities :

"The historicity of Lord Parsvanatha is no longer in dispute as stated by Dr. Jacobi. The scene of his life are found sculptured in the caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri in Orissa. They belong to the second century B.C. The inscription of Indo-Scythian period found at Mathura also establishes his antiquity."²⁴ Dr. Zimmer

23. Tukol, T.K. : Compendium on Jainism, p. 36-38.

24. Jain, Kamta Prasad, Religion of Tirthankaras, p. 79.

has observed; "More striking still are those Jaina images of Parsvanatha that represent him with two serpents sprouting from his shoulders; these point to a connection of some kind with ancient Mesopotamian art, and suggest something of that great antiquity of the symbol incorporated in the Jaina cult."²⁵

As mentioned in earlier pages religion preached by Parsva Nath was more comprehensive than the one preached by his predecessors. It appears from the conversation between Kesi, the follower of Parsva and Gautama the follower of Vardhamana as recorded in the Uttaradyayana Sutra that the three Jewels, *tiz*, Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct had already been part of the Jaina religion. Parsva preached only the four anuvratas as mentioned above thinking that aparigraha included celibacy also. Parsva permitted the monks the use of an under and an upper garment. The explanation by Gautama is that the Tirthankara fixed what is necessary for carrying out the rules of the Dharma.²⁶ It appears that the question of garment was not regarded as of much consequence since what was important was internal purity. It is recognised that the earlier Tirthankaras had preached Samayika (introspection) and Samyama (self-restraint). Pratikramana or repentance was prescribed for all breaches of rules of vows committed by a Sramana. Besides Parsva opened the minds of people to the futility of wrong practices and rituals for spiritual elevation and emphasised the need of perfect faith, knowledge and conduct for self-realization.²⁷

Mahavira

According to Saryu Doshi, a Jaina Scholar and Art Historian, "Although the Jain scriptures attest that a Tirthankara is a human being born of human parents, the Jain laity regards him as a superhuman personage. In fact, all Jains believe that a person can

25. Zimmer Heinrich : *Philosophies of India*, p. 208.

26. Jacobi Hermann : *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 45, pp. 119-23.

27. *Ibid.*, (All quoted by Tukol, p. 39)

be born as a Tirthankara only as the result of a special kind of *karma*—the *Tirthankaranama-karma* which endows the Tirthankara with an excellent mind and body : a physique with an adamant quality so as to withstand the rigours of intense meditation and severe austerities, and a mind which at birth possesses three kinds of knowledge—*mati-jnana*, *shruta-jnana* and, lastly, *avadhi-jnana* which enables him to perceive objects and events at great distances. The *Tirthankaranama-karma* ensures that the Tirthankara is born in an aristocratic Kshatriya family; that a fixed set of supernatural occurrences—the *panchakalyanaka*—mark his career; that he obtains *mahaparyaya-jnana* as soon as he renounces the world (*diksha*) and that he needs no guru but is *swayambuddha*. Upon attaining *kevala-jnana*, he preaches his religion and sets up a religious order. Finally, at the end of his life, the very apex of the universe—*siddhashila*.

The Digambara and Svetambara texts agree that Mahavira, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara of this era, was born in 599 B.C. in Kundagrama, a large city in the region of Magadha. His father, King Siddhartha, was a Kshatriya and belonged to the Jnatra clan. His mother, Queen Trishala, was the sister of Chetak, the ruler of Vaishali. Mahavira's life, like that of every Tirthankara before him, was marked by five auspicious events : *garbha*, *janma*, *diksha*, *kevala-jnana* and *moksha*. Celestial beings descended on earth to celebrate each event."²⁸

Conception

The different sects of Jaina religion give quite divergent views regarding conception of Trishala, the mother of Mahavira, which are of superhuman in character and more mythological. Saryu Doshi puts the same point of view regarding conception as follows :

In their descriptions of this event in Mahavira's life, the Digambara and Svetambara traditions diverge widely.

28. Doshi, Saryu : Masterpieces of Jain Painting, p. 18.

The Digambara sources, state that at the time of conception, Trishala saw sixteen auspicious dreams : (1) a White Elephant (2) a white bull (3) a lion (4) Shri, the goddess of beauty (5) a pair of fragrant floral garlands (6) the full moon (7) the rising sun (8) a large flag (9) a precious vase filled with water (10) a lotus lake (11) the Ocean of Milk (12) a celestial abode (13) a heap of Jewels (14) a crackling smokeless fire (15) a lofty throne and (16) a pair of fish sporting in the lake. These dreams indicated that Mahavira was destined to become either a universal monarch or a great saint.

The Svetambara texts state that the twenty-fourth Tirthankara was originally conceived in the womb of Devananda, the wife of Brahman Rishabhadatta. When Shakra (Indra), the king of the gods, discovered this, he was nonplussed as it was ordained that Tirthankara must be born in the Kshatriya caste since only a member of the warrior caste could become a monarch—be it in the sphere of temporal or spiritual matters. Immediately he arranged for the transfer of the Tirthankara's embryo from the womb of the Brahman mother to that of Trishala who was a Kshatriya queen and for the transfer of the embryo in Trishala's womb to that of Devananda. It would appear from this episode that the Jain tradition, like the Buddhist, did not acknowledge the higher status of the Brahmins in the caste hierarchy. Actually, they considered them lowly since they depended on gifts from others for their living. The episode of the exchange of the embryos is often treated as the sixth auspicious event in Mahavira's life. It does not occur in the Digambara texts; in fact they reject it altogether.

In the Svetambara texts, the conception of Mahavira, is also accompanied by auspicious dreams. However, in their tradition, only fourteen dreams occur when any Tirthankara is born—the first fourteen described in the list of the Digambara tradition. These dreams appeared twice in the case of Mahavira. They first occurred when Devananda, the wife of Brahman Rishabhadatta, conceived

Mahavira in her womb. Later, when Harinegameshi—the goat-headed commander of Shakra's celestial infantry—under instructions from Shakra carried out the exchange of embryos and placed the Tirthankara's embryo in Trishala's womb, she too witnessed the fourteen lucky dreams.

The Svetambara tradition goes on to relate how the little Mahavira, even when in the womb, showed an awareness of the principle of non-violence. For, in his concern for his mother, he lay completely still lest his movements should cause her any pain. Only when he realised, through his clairvoyant knowledge, that his mother, feeling no movement, feared that the embryo had withered, did he stir slightly to reassure her that he was well. At that moment it occurred to him that parental concern could turn into anguish very quickly and he decided not to take *diksha* as long as his parents were alive."²⁹

Birth Celebration

Saryu Doshi outlines the divergent views of Digambaras :

"The Digambaras, again, differ with the Svetambaras when they point out that Mahavira did not wait until his parents had passed away to adopt the spiritual path but solicited and received his parent's permission to take *diksha*.

The Digambara as well as Svetambara sources contain glowing descriptions of how celestial beings and mortals celebrated the birth of Mahavira. They say that Shakra descended from heaven and carried the child to the summit of Mount Meru for his lustration. According to the Digambaras, Shakra, after putting Queen Trishala to sleep with a magical spell, took the infant Mahavira in a grand procession to Mount Meru where he and other celestial beings performed the lustration rites. The Svetambaras account varies slightly; according to their texts, Shakra came down on earth and cast a spell on the queen, inducing deep slumber. He then laid a false Mahavira by her side and

29. Ibid., pp. 18-22.

replicated himself into five selves; one self lifted the infant, the other held a parasol above him, the third and fourth stood on either side waving *chauris* and the fifth, bearing the thunderbolt, danced in front of the holy child. Then with other celestial beings, he proceeded to Mount Meru to bathe and anoint Mahavira with wonderful substances.

Both traditions, however, agree that the parents named the infant Vardhamana (increase in prosperity) because, after his conception, the family fortunes increased markedly. This was the first of the many names that the twenty-fourth Tirthankara received during his lifetime. He was also called Mahavira (the great hero), Sanmati (of excellent wisdom), Kashyapa (his lineage name) and Jnatraputra or Nataputta (his clan names)."

Mahavira as Young Man

"The Svetambara and Digambara traditions diverge in their accounts of Mahavira's life as a young man. The Digambara version narrates that until he was thirty, Mahavira led a happy, normal life. Then, for no apparent reason, he became restless, found the prospect of being a householder very dreary and longed for spiritual enlightenment. He sought and received permission from his parents to renounce the world of luxury and comfort for the life of a humble mendicant. Unmarried and celibate, he departed on his spiritual quest. The Svetambara version contends that Mahavira, in accordance with the vow he had made while still in his mother's womb, fulfilled all his duties as a householder. He married princess Yashoda and they had a daughter named Priyadashana. After the death of his parents, Mahavira took up the life of a mendicant monk."³⁰

Renunciation

Among Jaina quarters the renunciation of Mahavira has a great significance as Doshi further observes :

30. Ibid., p. 22.

“The act of renunciation evokes great admiration among the Jains and is a much celebrated and glorified event. At the time of Mahavira’s renunciation ceremony, the Digambaras say he was dressed in costly clothes and jewels and carried in a palanquin by the gods through the city. This magnificent procession came to a hall outside the city, Mahavira stepped out of the palanquin, removed all his clothing and ornaments, sat under a holy *ashoka* tree, and pulled out his hair in five handfuls. This last act signified the renunciant’s willingness to end his concern for the body, and his readiness to face the travails that awaited him on his way to achieving his objective of salvation. The act of divesting himself of clothing and accepting total nudity signalled the fact that the householder had now become a monk.

As a Nude Monk

“This episode is described slightly differently in the Svetambara texts. According to them the procession bearing Mahavira’s palanquin passed through the city and came to a wooded park outside it. Mahavira dismounted, removed his clothing, and undertook the six-meal fast. Then he tore out his hair in five handfuls, put on the divine robe (*devadushya*) given to him by Shakra, and became a homeless monk. At this time a Brahman came to him seeking alms and Mahavira tore his garment into two, and gave one piece away. He continued to wear the other half of the divine cloth until it got caught in a thorny bush and slipped away. Mahavira did not notice the loss or, if he did, he did not care to retrieve the garment. Thereafter he wandered about as a naked monk.”

This event clearly brings into focus the central question between the Digambara and the Svetambara tradition: can a man who wears clothing be a monk?”³¹

“On this issue the Digambaras take the stand that nudity is an essential aspect of renunciation; retention of clothing is an

31. Ibid., p. 22.

indication of residual shame signifying a falling away from the requirement of renouncing all possessions, external as well as internal. They maintain that all Tirthankaras were sky-clad after they accepted *diksha* and the practice of nudity is mandatory for anyone who claims to be a Jain monk.

Although the Svetambara version of Mahavira's life shows that Mahavira eventually became a nude monk, there is no denying the basic difference of intent between the two sects : the Digambara recension depicts Mahavira as consciously and purposefully divesting himself of clothing whereas the Svetambara recension conveys that Mahavira wore clothes for a while, and even when he discarded clothing, the action was more a result of chance than choice. After losing his piece of clothing, Mahavira, however, did not bother to obtain another, and in a passage in the Svetambara canon he is alleged to have said : "I uphold the practice of nudity." But neither the event nor the statement can be taken as any indication that Mahavira considered nudity as a requirement for monkhood, especially since he did not insist that his disciples dispense with clothing altogether. Although the Svetambara scriptures mention that Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of the present cosmic era, like Mahavira, preferred the naked state, they maintain that the remaining Tirthankaras never abandoned their clad state. Indeed, some of their descriptions suggest that the Tirthankaras wore robes of variegated colour and design. These factors, point towards the conclusion that the Svetambaras tended to regard the issue of nudity for Jain monks as optional, and a matter of personal choice. Actually, the Svetambara tradition recognises two types of monks—the *jinakalpin* and the *sthavirakalpin* and considers both practices as equally valid paths to salvation."³²

"Both traditions agree that after his renunciation, Mahavira wandered from place to place for twelve years performing the most severe austerities with unswerving determination. He

32. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

practised self-mortification which involved abstinence from food as well as water for several days together. The Jain laity emulated his example and, even today, many Jains undertake such fasts as an expression of spiritual activity.

Often during his meditation, Mahavira was attacked by uncomprehending villagers who "struck him with fists, sticks and lances" or "cut his flesh or tore his hair" but he endured it all. In fact, the Digambaras believe that throughout this period Mahavira observed a vow of silence.

Omniscience

Indian tradition is to see and depict their gods, prophets and teachers as omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Like Brahmans and Buddhists, Jains also see Mahavira as omniscient. There is much in Jaina scriptures about Mahavira's omniscience. Doshi further says :

"Upon reaching the omniscient state, the sage Mahavira became a Tirthankara. This state is so rare and exalted that Jains regard Tirthankaras as superhuman beings.

After attaining omniscience, Mahavira sat in the lotus position and maintained a trance while Shakra and the gods miraculously created an assembly hall where all could come and hear him preach. The audience consisted of gods, demigods, human beings and animals. The assembly was called the *samavasarana*. Mahavira sat in the centre and his body, which had become free of all impurities, shone like crystal. A special feature of the *samavasarana* was that the spectators could see the Tirthankara *en face* from all four sides.

The Tirthankara is distinguished from an ordinary *kevalin* by the eight miraculous phenomena that accompany him all the time everywhere. These include : (1) a throne upon which he is seated (2) a three-tiered parasol above him (3) a resplendent halo behind him (4) an *ashoka* tree near him (5) sixty-four attendants

waving *chauris* standing around him (6) celestial music (7) the beating of kettle-drums and (8) cascades of flowers from the heavens. These eight attributes remain with the Tirthankara until such time as he attains *moksha*.

While these beliefs are common to all the Jains, the Digambara sect asserts that every Tirthankara, after obtaining omniscience, becomes totally free from biological processes and functions such as hunger, thirst, sleep, perspiration and age. The Svetambaras disagree with the Digambaras and contend that even in the omniscient state, the exalted one is required to obey bodily laws, eat ordinary food and engage in physical activities.”³³

Teachings

The sermons of the Tirthankara, according to the Digambara tradition, take the form of *divyadhvani* which is a monotone—the sound of om—and this is only understood by the *ganadharas*. After grasping the import and meaning of the Tirthankara’s teachings, the *ganadharas* translate it into *sutra* form. The Svetambaras, do not agree with this belief. They declare that the Jina speaks in a language which is universally understood by animals and people from all regions. In this context the role of the *ganadharas* should not be that of translators but of compilers of the Jina’s teachings.

Again, the Svetambaras differ from the Digambaras as regards the content of a Tirthankara’s teachings. The Digambaras believe that all Tirthankaras propound an identical doctrine, and that following the teachings of a particular Jina has no special significance; nothing new is taught. This view appears rather extreme to the Svetambaras who are willing to admit that slight variations can exist between the teachings of the various Jinas. This issue comes to the fore when comparing the teachings of Parshva and Mahavira. The tradition of *Chaturyama Dharma* that Parshva preached enjoined the four vows—*ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*,

33. Ibid., p. 23.

aparigraha. To these, Mahavira added a fifth vow—that of celibacy. This meant a slight elaboration of what Parshva had taught, since celibacy was generally accepted as part of the fourth vow of *aparigraha*. But, the granting of independent status to a particular aspect, which until then was understood only by implication, does reflect a difference in emphasis between the two traditions. Also, with regard to the practice of nudity, the Svetambaras profess that Mahavira's acceptance of nudity was a departure from the tradition of his predecessor Parshva. However, these discrepancies do not affect the Svetambara[§] sect as it believes that the teachings of each Tirthankara need not be absolutely identical in every detail."³⁴

As earlier said : "In every cosmic cycle 48 Tirthankaras are born to lead humanity to salvation : 24 in the *avasarpini* era and 24 in the *utsarpini* era. In Both eras one Tirthankara is born in the *sushama-dushama* phase and the remaining 23 are born in the *dushma-sushama* phase.

According to Jain myths, in the present cosmic cycle which is passing through its *avasarpini* era, Rishabha was destined to be the first Tirthankara.

The Jains believe that : "The first phase of the current cosmic cyle was a period of great happiness, people were beautiful both in mind and body, free from all blemishes. Their existence knew neither strife nor want because the ten Kalpavrikshas abundantly satisfied all their needs and desires.....The second cosmic phase. that of sushama was also one of happiness, although not of utter bliss. In the third phase, happiness became tinged with unhappiness, and as the phase drew to an end, the power of the Kalpavrikchas diminished."³⁵

34. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

35. Ibid., p. 86, 88.

§. The word Svetambara is also written as Shvetambara.

4

MAHAVIRA'S BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

Lord Mahavira is a great historical figure and teacher of his age, contemporary of Buddha, slightly elder to him.

The biographical facts of Mahavira which expanded and evolved over a long period of time have not changed though Digambaras reject certain elements of his birth and marriage etc. Even after two thousand and six hundred years, Mahavira is considered as being the great propagator of Jainism. On the sources of Mahavira's biography the renowned writer and scholar Paul Dundas has observed : "the Svetambara sources alone must be relied upon for an understanding of the earliest stages of Mahavira's biography, for the Digambara scriptures provide no significant early evidence. Secondly, the accounts of the Council of Valabhi, (or Vallabhi) which took place in the first half of the fifth century CE and at which the Svetambara scriptures were supposedly redacted for the final time, provide no help with regard to the dating of the actual sources involved. While we may be reasonably confident about the most important texts redacted at Valabhi, we can only establish a relative chronology for them on the basis of language, metre and the evidence of style. The datings which I adduce for the Svetambara scriptures are therefore tentative, although deriving from what has become a scholarly consensus.

Generally accepted as being the oldest parts of the Svetambara scriptures are the first books of the first and second 'limbs' (*anga*) of the canon, called the *Acaranga* (AS), because

it relates to behaviour (*acara*), and the *Sutrakritanga* (SKS), probably so named because it describes the doctrines found in the writings (*sutra*) of those sects whom the Jains regarded as their opponents. Both of these books originated from about the fifth or fourth centuries BCE, although a slightly earlier dating cannot be ruled out, and they represent the most ancient stratum of Jain textual material.

The second book of the *Acaranga*, which is of particular importance since it presents (AS 2.15) Mahavira's life as a totality for the first time, is accepted by the commentators as being later than the first book. It can perhaps be assigned to the second or first centuries BCE and to a second stratum of biographical material, as can the *Kalpāsutra* (KS), whose name relates to the monastic ritual (*kalpa*) which forms one of its main themes. It is the *Kalpāsutra* which, as well as providing an extended biography of Mahavira, albeit one which concentrates on the events which led up to his birth, for the first time links the last fordmaker with a chain of twenty-three predecessors and gives very short accounts of the lives of three of them, Rishabha, Nemi and Parshva.

Still more difficult to date is the voluminous 'Exposition of Explanations' (*Vyakhyaprajñapti*), usually referred to by Jains as *Bhagavati*, 'Revered' (Bh). This contains a great deal of disparate material about Mahavira, his career and teachings, disciples and relations with other holy men, especially Makkhali Gosala who is not mentioned in the earlier scriptures. However, this is unquestionably a composite text and it is difficult to be confident about which portions of it are genuinely old and which originated nearer to the Council of Valabhi, although it can provisionally be taken as falling within the second stratum of the biography. The *Aupapātika* (Aup), which takes its name from the spontaneously born (*aupapātika*) gods and hellbeings described in the text, can probably, on the grounds of its often highly ornate prose style, be dated to the early centuries of the common era when such a mode of literary diction was emerging

in Sanskrit and Prakrit belles-lettres and thus be provisionally located within a third biographical stratum.”¹

“Most important of all for the literary expansion of Mahavira's biography and for the development of the Universal History as a whole is the commentarial literature which came to cluster around the *Avashyakasutra*, the canonical text describing the six Obligatory Actions (*avashyaka*) incumbent upon every ascetic. The earliest portions of this material are the Prakrit mnemonic verses (*niryukti*) which perhaps date from about the second or third century CE, while the Prakrit prose commentary of Jinadasa was written in the seventh century CE. A further expansion of this exegetical literature was provided by Haribhadra. It was the commentators on the *Avashyakasutra* who organised the raw material for the Universal History, drawing together and expanding it to create an image of the promulgator of the true path with which they could confront the inadequate myths and hagiographies of their sectarian opponents.”²

Mahavira's Date and Place of Birth

Both Mahavira and Buddha were contemporaries.

Futher according to Paul Dundas : “It is fruitless to attempt to locate a historical Mahavira outwith the parameters of the texts which describe him. Even such a basic question as when he lived is not certain. So, while his traditional Svetambara dating is 599 BCE to 527 BCE, the Digambaras hold that he died in 510 BCE. There has been considerable scholarly debate about this matter since the nineteenth century and a variety of different datings have been proposed. The arguments are technical but it should be noted that Mahavira's dates depend in the last resort on synchronicity with those of the Buddha since the two were contemporaries and if, as is increasingly being suggested, a re-examination of early Buddhist historical material, nothing

1. Dundas, Paul : The Jains, p. 20-21.

2. Ibid., p. 21.

comparable to which exists in Jainism, necessitates a redating of the Buddha, then a shift in Mahavira's dating will also be entailed.

Equally uncertain is the question of Mahavira's birthplace. The *Kalpasutra* states that he was born at Kundagrama, a site generally taken as having been in the vicinity of Vaishali, at that time one of the greatest towns of the Ganges basin. The exact location of Kundagrama has remained elusive, however, doubtless because the Jains began to migrate at a relatively early date from the east which subsequently went into economic and political decline for a considerable time so that accurate knowledge of the region where Mahavira had preached was soon at a premium, and there is still disagreement between the Svetambaras and the Digambaras over this matter. This is in contrast to the general concord between the two sects with regard to the location of Mahavira's death, with the town of Pava mentioned in the *Kalpasutra* as the place where this event occurred being identified by about the thirteenth century with the village of Pavapur in the state of Bihar."³

The historicity of Mahavira is sought to be proved by comparing vital facts obtained from the Buddhist canon. The Pali Buddhist texts on the life and teachings of the Buddha are claimed to have been compiled shortly after his death. They specifically mention Nataputta, who belonged to the sect of the Nirgranthas (Niganthas), meaning free from bonds. Buddhist sources reveal Nataputta died in Pava near Kasia (Kushinagar), thirty years before the death of the Buddha.

The Niganthas, according to Buddhist⁴ sources were known for extreme asceticism.

Epithets

"There is no knowledge of Mahavira's given name Vardhamana in the earliest stratum of the biography and the use

3. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

4. For details see Pali Buddhist texts.

of the epithet Mahavira as a personal name, while occurring in the first book of the *Sutrakritanga*, is unknown in the first book of the *Acaranga*. Furthermore, the oldest texts never use the term 'fordmaker' and very seldom *jina*, the word which gives Jainism its name. Instead we find terms such as *nayaputta*, 'son of the Nayas', an obscure expression which seems to refer to Mahavira's clan, called in Sanskrit *Jnatri*, and the name by which he is known in early Buddhist writings, 'ascetic' (*muni*, *samana*, *niggantha*), brahman, 'venerable' (*bhagavan*) and occasionally *araha*, 'worthy', a term found frequently in early Buddhism, and *veyavi*, 'knower of the Veda', which here may just signify 'wise'.

The *Acaranga* does not describe Mahavira as all-knowing but only as all-seeing. However, a eulogy of Mahavira as ideal being, supposedly uttered by one of his disciples, occurs in the *Sutrakritanga* (SKS 1.6) and provides a remarkable picture of the qualities, principal among which was full omniscience, with which early Jain tradition credited him. Stress is laid on his humanity, freedom from the constraints of life and gaining of full physical and mental restraint. The limitless nature of his attainments, through which he sees and knows everything, 'this world and what lies beyond it' (SKS 1.6.28), renders him the equal of the king of the gods and all the great mountains and oceans of the universe. The confidence which this ancient text expresses in the power of Mahavira's teachings to alter one's next birth for the better has characterised the attitude of Jains towards Mahavira and the other fordmakers to the present day."⁵

The Transfer of the Embryo

"The first references to the transfer of Mahavira's embryo from the womb of a Brahman woman called Devananda to that of Trishala, along with a reverse substitution of the embryo which was already in Trishala's womb, occur in the second chapter of the *Acaranga* and the *Kalpasastra*, that is to say, not in the oldest

5. Ibid., p. 22-23.

stratum of the biography. the reference in the 'Exposition of Explanations' to Mahavira's acknowledgement of Devananda as being his real mother clearly alludes to this aspect of the biography (Bh 9.33).

It is possible to interpret this event in two ways. Firstly, the account in the *Kalpasutra* would appear to represent an attempt to devalorise the authority of the Brahman caste which ranked itself hierarchically above the warrior caste into which all the fordmakers are born. Devananda's husband is depicted as somewhat vaingloriously rejoicing in the fact that his son, after being born, will master the Veda, a type of learning which Jainism rejected as being worthless. Indra, however, assumes control over the destination of the embryo since he knows that fordmakers can never be born into three types of low family, those of the poor, the insignificant or Brahmins.

Secondly, a comparison with the unusual births associated with hero figures of other religious traditions, such as the Buddha who was born from his mother's thigh or Jesus whose mother was a virgin, might suggest a desire to present Mahavira through his anomalous arrival in his final birth as both human and at the same time transcending the normal mortal state."⁶

Mahavira's Asceticism

"In the fully developed biography of Mahavira, much stress is placed on his pre-enlightenment career as a wandering ascetic, with relatively little being said about events between his enlightenment and his death. The core of this account, and the earliest version of any part of Mahavira's life, occurs in the eighth chapter of the first book of the *Acaranga* which is known as the 'Pillow Scripture' (*Uvahanasuya*) because Mahavira's various religious practices supported him as a pillow does the head. Up to this point the *Acaranga* had been giving a general description

6. Ibid., p. 23.

of monastic behaviour and then proceeds to particularise its injunctions with reference to the greatest ascetic of all. This must be taken as part of a larger oral account for it commences with a reference to Mahavira's refusal to cover himself with 'that garment' (AS 1.8.1.1), an allusion understandable only in the light of the description in later strata of Indra's bestowing a divine robe upon him at the time of renunciation.

The 'Pillow Scripture' is concerned not so much with Mahavira's decision to reject the world as with the harshness and mortifying nature of the life which he led as a consequence of this. The violence shown to him by householders as he wandered, attacks by animals and insects, his nakedness and lack of concern about washing, his fasting, disregard for sleep, shelter or contact with other people, all are described as part of a long struggle to shake off the bondage brought about by body and mind and bring about a state of inner control : to abstain, in other words, from action (*karman*) and win through to spiritual freedom.

"While it is likely that the 'Pillow Scripture' was composed retrospectively with full awareness of Mahavira's doctrine and the nature of his claim to enlightenment, it should be noted that he is portrayed prior to his enlightenment as being familiar with the fact that earth, water, air, fire and plants are full of life-forms and that true austerity involved causing them no injury (AS 1.8.1.11-12). Thus, knowledge of the underlying structure of life and a proper attitude towards it are presented in this early text as being the necessary preliminaries to enlightenment rather than its actual content.

The basic description of Mahavira's ascetic career was gradually expanded in later strata of the biography. The only specific region mentioned in the 'Pillow Scripture' as having been visited by the fordmaker was *Ladha*, now West Bengal, a dangerous and probably un-Aryan country where he was subjected to grievous treatment. An itinerary was subsequently provided for his travels by the *Kalpasutra* which gives a list of thirteen

towns and cities in the Ganges basin where Mahavira passed various rainy seasons and the later strata connect these places with specific events in the biography.

At no point in the 'Pillow Scripture' and the second stratum of the biography is Mahavira described as being subjected in the course of his ascetic career to any sort of temptation or attack by supernatural forces. This is in contrast to the biography of the Buddha, a central motif of which, apparently deriving from a relatively early date, is his temptation by Mara, the god of death, who attempts to dissuade him forcibly from the attainment of enlightenment. While the Universal History was to introduce entirely new episodes into the biography of Mahavira in which he is attacked by inimical serpents and deities, the emphasis is firmly upon the great hero's forbearance and indifference in the face of difficulty; the issue of his ability to gain enlightenment is never called in question.⁷

A portion of the developed biography which may well be of Buddhist origin, or perhaps derives from some common fund of stories about the trials and tribulations of ascetics, is the episode in which a cowherd asked the meditating Mahavira, who in a previous life had mistreated him, whether he had seen his cows and on not receiving a reply drove blades of grass deep into the cavities of the ascetic's ears, the removal of which caused him great agony. The earliest reference to this occurs in the mnemonic verse commentary on the *Avashyakasutra* (AvNiry 525), that is, a text dating from the common era and representing approximately the third or perhaps fourth stratum of the biography, although the elliptical manner in which the theme is referred to implies its earlier existence. A similar incident is described as having befallen the Buddha in one of the oldest *sutras* of the Pali Canon and it was depicted on several occasions in Buddhist art and literature.⁸

7. Bruhn's introduction to CMPC : 6. (quoted by Dundas, pp. 23-24).

8. Dundas, Paul, p. 25.

(Quoted by Dundas from Wujastyk, D (1984) : The Spikes in the Ears of the Ascetic. An illustrated tale of Buddhism and Jainism)

The elaborate descriptions found in the Universal History of this particular period of Mahavira's life do not serve merely as a narrative preamble to the account of his enlightenment. There was at an early date abstracted from the textual delineation of his austerities what became a stereotyped list of twenty-two 'endurances' (*parishaha*), physical and mental afflictions which are regarded as encompassing all the difficulties to which Jain ascetics have always been subjected. Every Jain monk and nun, through the hardships of fasting and mendicancy, partly replicates Mahavira's austerities.

Kalpasutra

According to Jaina scholars : "The Kalpasutra is the most ancient, revered and prominent canonical work of the Svetambara sect. Acharya Bhadrabahu who lived in the 4th century B.C. has written this canonical book. The Kalpasutra has 1200 slokas written in prose, the work consists of three parts : The Jina Charita, the Sthaviravali and the Sadhu-Samachari.

The first part '*Jina-Charita*' contains an account of the lives of the twenty-four Tirthankaras. It begins with a description of the life of the twenty-fourth and the most recent Tirthankara, Lord Mahavira. The text also narrates briefly the lives of the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parshvanatha and the twenty-second Tirthankara Neminatha. Thereafter only the names of the Tirthankaras are given, except narration of the first Tirthankara Rishabha Deva.

In the second part '*Sthaviravali*' names of leaders who founded the numerous sub-sects over the centuries, are given.

The third, section '*Sadhu-Samachari*' the code of conduct prescribed for monks and nuns during the rainy season appears in detail.

The Kalpa denotes conduct, right behaviour or prescribed rules.

The Kalpasutra is virtually the eighth chapter of a larger canonical work, the Dasha-Shruta-Skanda and is known by one

of the two titles :Pajjosavana-Kalpa and Pajjosamana-Kalpa. Pajjosavana is equated with 'Paryushana', which in Jaina literature signifies the spending of four months of the rainy season (varshavas). The Buddhist monks also observe varsha-vas for four months during rainy season. The second title Pajjosamana is equated with Paryushana-Samana, which implies forgiveness.

“According to Jaina tradition”, says Saryu Doshi⁹ : “all monks recited the Kalpaautra on the fifteenth night after the commencement of their rest for the rainy season. The custom of reciting the Kalpasutra to large congregations where the laity also participated became popular sometime around the fifth century, A.D. and has continued till today. This practice necessitated the ready availability of copies of the Kalpa-sutra, and as a result it became the most reproduced text.

“Hundreds of Kalpa-sutra manuscripts were prepared between the twelfth and the twentieth centuries and kept in the Shastra-Bhandaras.”

Svetambara Jains promoted the reproduction of illustrated manuscripts, embellished with miniatures and adorned with borders. Some manuscripts were written in gold and silver inks.

Jain literature no doubt has its own qualities. It is still a dynamic faith having oldest religious traditions, with Mahavira as their beacon-light.

Jain scholars narrate the biographical stories connected with the last three Tirthankaras—Mahavira, Parshva and Neminatha and the first Tirthankara Rishabha based on Kalpa-sutra and Jain Puranas. There are charming divinely legends like their co-religionists, specially for propagating their doctrinal values, combining the natural with the supernatural. We find, the Jaina doctrine is intimately connected with the life and teachings of Mahavira, in a big way.

9. Doshi, Saryu : Masterpieces of Jain Painting, p. 103.

There is no doubt Jain Scholar Saryu Doshi has narrated the biographical sketch of Mahavira in a very lucid manner based on illustrated Jain manuscript tradition or paintings of Mahavira with biographical references. But the source material is similar.

The Kalpa-Sutra—begins with the *namokaramantra* or the five-fold obeisance to the Arhats the Siddhas, the Acharyas, the Upadhyayas, and to all Sadhus.

Jina Charita

“The life of each Tirthankara follows the same pattern : (1) he descends on earth after having spent a long period of time in one of the celestial spheres; (2) his life is marked by *panchkalyanaka* : conception, birth, renunciation, omniscience and liberation. At the time of his birth, the gods shower the earth with riches and Indra takes the infant Tirthankara for his lustration on top of Mount Meru. At the time of renunciation, the *Laukantika* gods hail the Tirthankara for his decision to enter the life of a homeless monk. When he attains omniscience, the gods build a large *samavasarana* wherein men and beasts can hear the Jina preach. In the life of the last Tirthankara, Mahavira, there occurred a sixth auspicious event—the transference of the embryo from the womb of Brahmani Devananda to that of Kshatriyani Trishala.”

Life of Mahavira

“Of the six major events in the life of Bhagavana Mahavira, five occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the *uttarphalguni* constellation. It was during this conjunction that he (1) descended into the womb of a Brahman woman, Devananda; (2) was transferred to that of the Kshatriya lady Trishala; (3) was born; (4) pulled out his hair, and became a homeless mendicant and (5) attained supreme knowledge. The sixth and last event, which was *moksha*, occurred when the moon was in conjunction with the *svati* constellation.

Conception

“On the sixth day of the bright half of the month of Ashadha, after completing his life of twenty *sagaropamas* in the celestial abode Pushpottara, Bhagavana Mahavira descended on earth. At that time he was in possession of three out of the five types of knowledge : *mati-jnana*, *shruta-jnana* and *avadhi-jnana*. He was conceived at midnight in the womb of Devananda, the wife of Brahman Rishabhadatta, who lived in the Brahman quarter in the town of Kundagrama in Magadha. At this time the cosmic cycle was on its downward course and nearing the end of its fourth phase. Twenty-three Tirthankaras had preceded Mahavira and prophesied his coming.

On the night when Bhagavana Mahavira descended into the womb of Devananda, and as she lay half asleep on her bed, she had fourteen wondrous and lucky dreams—auspicious and sublime. She saw an elephant, a bull, a lion, the lustration of goddess Shri, a garland, the moon, the sun, a flag, an urn, a lotus pond, the sea, a celestial vehicle, a heap of jewels and a burning fire.

After experiencing these supremely fortunate visions Devananda awoke, filled with joy and deep contentment, and the hair on her body stood erect like the petals of the fragrant *kadamba* flower at the touch of raindrops. She rose from her bed and, with the unhurried gait of a graceful swan walked to where her husband Rishabhadatta lay sleeping. She venerated him, saying “may you be victorious, may you be ever successful,” and seating herself by his side, bowed to him, touching her forehead with the ten fingertips of her folded palms. She then recounted her lucky dreams and asked him what they indicated. Rishabhadatta was pleased with her words and after pondering over them in the light of his inborn wisdom and acquired knowledge, he commented. “These noble dreams foretell a happy enjoyable future¹⁰ and also

10. Ibid., p. 104, 106.

indicate the birth of a son, a beautiful child. He will possess a flawless physique and an alert and intelligent mind. His body will bear auspicious signs. After infancy and childhood, when he becomes a youth, he will be learned in many disciplines and sacred lore. Indeed you have witnessed dreams that augur good fortune." This interpretation gladdened Devananda's heart.

At that time Indra, known also as Shakra, the thousand eyed king of the gods, the wielder of the thunderbolt, the one who rides the elephant Airavata, was presiding on the throne of the celestial sphere Sudharma. Surrounded by his queens and bodyguards, attired in garments as spotless as the sky and wearing trembling earrings wrought in gold, he spent his time enjoying pleasures such as drama, story-telling, singing and music.

From the heavenly heights Indra kept watch over earth. Through his *avadhi-jnana* he noted that Mahavira had entered the womb of Devananda. He rejoiced at this event, rose from his throne, placed his seamless robe over his left shoulder and, with palms folded to form a bud, he took seven or eight steps in the direction of Mahavira. He knelt and did obeisance by thrice touching his forehead to the floor, and in reverence praised the Tirthankara."

Exchange of Embryos

"Indra¹¹ was however, deeply concerned. He reflected, "It has never been, nor will it ever be that either an Arhata or a Chakravartin is born in a minor clan or in families of humble origin or the priestly Brahman caste. They are always born in powerful, princely and affluent clans belonging to the warrior Kshatriya caste." If an exception did occur the established practice for Indra was to have the embryo of the Arhata transferred to the womb of a Kshatriya woman. Accordingly, Indra resolved to have the embryo of Mahavira transferred from the womb of the Brahmani Devananda to that of the Kshatriyani Trishala, who

11. Ibid., p. 106.

lived in the Kshatriya sector of the same town, and to have the embryo in the womb of Trishala inserted into that of Devananda. He summoned the commander of his infantry, Harinegameshi, and instructed him to carry out the exchange of the embryos.

Harinegameshi set forth on his mission. With great speed he traversed vast distances, crossing oceans and continents, till he arrived at Kundagrama. He went directly to the house of Brahman Rishabhadatta and, after performing the ritual of obeisance to the embryo of the Tirthankara, he cast a spell which threw Devananda and her attendants into a deep slumber. Then with the words, "May the Venerable one graciously permit me," he gently took the embryo of Mahavira in his palm and carried it to Trishala in the palace of her husband, King Siddhartha. There, after casting a similar spell on Trishala and her attendants, he exchanged the embryos and carried the embryo from Trishala's womb to that of Devananda. His task accomplished, he returned to Indra's court.

On the night that Mahavira was placed into the womb of Kshatriyani Trishala, she saw the same fourteen auspicious dreams that Devananda had witnessed at the time of Mahavira's conception. The exterior of Trishala's bed chamber was plastered in gleaming white and its interior was decorated with murals bathed in a soft glow emanating from the gemstudded ceiling. The floor, smooth and covered with auspicious signs and diagrams, was heaped with fragrant variegated flowers and surrounded by curling fumes of burning incense. Trishala lay dozing on a soft and pliant mattress with pillows at the head and the foot of the couch. Spread on the couch was an exquisite coverlet, sprinkled with fine scented powders. A canopy of red netting, soft to the touch like fur, covered the bed. Kshatriyani Trishala saw in her dreams :¹² (1) a loudly trumpeting four-tusked elephant, whiter than a heap of pearls, with ichor streaming from its temples; (2) a resplendent, majestic white bull, whiter than a

12. Ibid., pp. 106-108.

heap of white lotus petals; (3) a magnificent lion with the sheen of moonbeams and sharp teeth and claws; (4) the bejewelled goddess Shri, her face like the full moon, seated at the top of the Himavat mountains on a lotus in a lotus lake; (5) a fragrant garland of white and coloured flowers floating down from the firmament; (6) the full moon shining white like milk foam and bright like a polished mirror; (7) the rising sun, red and refulgent, dispelling darkness; (8) a large fluttering flag, fastened to a staff of pure gold and crested with iridescent peacock feathers; (9) a silver urn filled to the brim with crystal-clear water, adorned with a wreath of scented flowers that bloom in the different seasons of the year; (10) a lotus lake with thousand-petalled lotuses, playful fish and cranes and ducks; (11) the Ocean of Milk, its waters surging in waves in all directions, flecked with camphor-coloured foam; (12) a magnificent celestial vehicle of 1008 columns made of gold, inlaid with gems and festooned with pearls; (13) a heap of jewels as high as Mount Meru, illuminating the sky with their brilliance; (14) a blazing fire with flames leaping and fusing with one another, lighting up the firmament.

A thrill of happiness coursed through Trishala's body and she awoke with a gladdened spirit. Contemplating her dreams, she walked with the gait of a regal swan to the couch where Siddhartha slept. Very gently she awakened him and after taking his permission, narrated the dreams that had come to her that night.

Siddhartha was transported with joy when he heard Trishala's dreams. He reflected upon them and addressed Trishala : "The dreams augur long life, prosperity and happiness. They predict the birth of a son who will bring fame and glory to the family and will be the crowning ornament of the clan. He will have perfect health and will bear auspicious marks. When he grows up our son will be a mighty warrior and rule over a large kingdom" Trishala was filled with delight and after bowing to Siddhartha rose from her chair and returned to her bed chamber. Afraid that

the potency of her good dreams might be diluted by bad dreams, Trishala did not sleep that night but spent it listening to moral and virtuous tales of gods and great men.

Early next day, at day-break, Siddhartha summoned his attendants and instructed them to have the outer audience-hall swept and decorated with perfumed flowers and innundated with the fumes of incense. He ordered a throne to be placed there.

On the following day, at dawn, King Siddhartha went to his gymnasium for his exercises in athletic jousting, fencing and wrestling, after which his attendants anointed and massaged his body in accordance with the four-fold technique of shampooing. The King felt stimulated; his senses and body were revitalised. He then proceeded to his bath chamber with its chequered mosaic floor of precious stones. After his bath the attendants applied sandal paste to Siddhartha's body and helped him attire himself in costly apparel, ornaments and floral garlands.

King Siddhartha, attired in rich raiment and Jewels, made his way to the audience-hall. His attendants held a royal parasol above his head and fanned him with *chauris*. Accompanying him were numerous chieftains, army officers, soothsayers, caravan leaders and ambassadors. He appeared "like the resplendent moon emerging from a cloud surrounded by bright planets, stars and constellations."

"King Siddhartha entered the outer audience-hall and, facing east, took his seat on the throne. After performing protective rites with mustard seeds, he arranged for eight chairs to be covered with white cloth for the soothsayers. He then requested a beautifully designed and embroidered screen to be placed near him—neither too far nor too near. Behind it, he had a stately chair installed for Trishala. Thereafter Siddhartha instructed his attendants to fetch the dream diviners who were well-versed in the science of prognostics. They arrived in a group and King Siddhartha received them and duly honoured them¹³ with

13. Ibid., pp. 108.

propitiatory gifts. With humility and respect, the King recounted the dreams that had come to Queen Trishala and requested them to explain their significance. The soothsayers discussed the meaning of the dreams among themselves and informed King Siddhartha that "the science of dreams speaks of seventy-two dreams, thirty of which are major and the remaining forty-two minor. The fourteen dreams that you have described are from the group of thirty and appear to mothers of religious leaders or world conquerors at the moment of conception. O King, the Queen has seen the most auspicious of dreams. They presage good fortune and foretell the birth of a son who will become a valiant hero and a great lord. He will be a Chakravartin with dominions extending in all four directions. But, it may also happen that he will become a great religious leader, a Tirthankara." King Siddhartha was overjoyed and proffered generous gifts to the soothsayers. He climbed down from his throne, walked behind the screen to Trishala and repeated the prophesies of the soothsayers. Queen Trishala acknowledged the divinations with folded palms.

Ever since Mahavira had entered Trishala's womb, hosts of flying gods, under orders from Indra, carried Kuber's urns to distant and deserted places where ancient forgotten treasures were buried. They brought this wealth to the palace of Siddhartha. The family flourished in every way and therefore Mahavira's parents decided, "When he is born we shall name our son Vardhamana."

"While in the womb, Mahavira lay extremely still out of compassion for his mother. But she grew alarmed, wondering if the embryo did not move because it had withered away. Dispirited and despondent, she sat brooding with her cheek resting on her hand and her eyes fixed on the ground. All joyous activities in the palace of Siddhartha ceased; all cheer drained away and the royal court succumbed to a spirit of dejection.

Mahavira sensed both his mother's anxiety and the reason for it, and stirred a little. Feeling the embryo's movement, Trishala was overcome with relief and exclaimed, "The child in my womb

lives, it is safe." At the moment, while yet in the womb, Mahavira resolved that he would not renounce the life of a householder for that of a monk while his parents still lived.

Thereafter, Trishala offered prayers to the family deities, performed the rites of protection and ate nourishing food so that the child in her womb may be healthy in body and mind.

Birth

Mahavira was born at midnight on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra. Assisting at his birth were fifty-six *dikkakumaris*. On the night Mahavira was born, countless gods and goddesses glided up and down creating divine lustre everywhere, and hosts of flying gods showered silver, gold, jewels and ornaments, leaves, flowers and fruits, colours and powdered perfumes on King Siddhartha's palace

Indra came down to earth and after putting Trishala into a deep sleep, laid a 'false Mahavira' by her side. He took the newly born Mahavira and made himself five-fold : On self held the child, the second self held a parasol over Mahavira and the third and fourth selves stood nearby waving fly-whisks. The fifth self danced for the child, holding a thunder-bolt. Indra and other heavenly beings then proceeded to Mount Meru and participated in the lustration rites. After the nativity celebrations Indra returned the holy infant to its mother.

At daybreak, King Siddhartha assembled his guards and instructed them to free all prisoners, abolish taxes, sweep the towns, sprinkle the streets and squares with water and scatter rice everywhere. Also, he asked them to decorate the town with flags and banners, ornamental gateways and garlands; mark doorways with palm-prints and let the smell of incense saturate the atmosphere; arrange for dancers, rope-walkers, jumping acrobats, jesters, story-tellers and ballad singers.¹⁴

4. Ibid., pp. 108, 113.

Thereafter King Siddhartha, his royal household and entourage celebrated the birth of Mahavira for eleven days with great pomp and splendour. On the first day the parents of Mahavira performed the *sthiti-pratijya* ceremony, on the third day they showed the child to the Sun and the Moon, on the sixth day they kept awake the whole night in a ritual vigil and finally on the eleventh day, the ceremonies of ritual purifications connected with child-birth came to a close. On the twelfth day King Siddhartha and Queen Trishala held a banquet to which they invited their friends, relatives and other eminent people. After performing auspicious rites the royal couple, along with their guests, partook of the feast. The King and Queen honoured their guests with gifts and flowers and informed them that "ever since our son was conceived, our honour, wealth, power and happiness have increased. We have therefore resolved to name him Vardhamana because the name is worthy of him and is appropriate to the qualities he has manifested." And thus the infant was called Vardhamana.

Mahavira grew up in the palace with other princes as his companions. During his boyhood Mahavira encountered and suppressed a jealous god who was determined to crush his courage. One day while Mahavira was at play with his companion, this god assumed the shape of a serpent and appeared near a tree where Mahavira was playing with his friends. All the boys fled in fright but Mahavira, unperturbed, lifted the snake and flung it away. The god then reappeared as a playmate of the boys. During one of the games the winner, Mahavira, rode the backs of the other boys. As he mounted the back of the god, the latter suddenly turned into a terrifying demon with hair "like a forest fire," eyes like burning coals and two pointed tusks. The demon kept increasing in size until Mahavira struck him on the back. That mighty blow reduced the god to the size of a dwarf. When he was vanquished the god paid homage to the greatness of Mahavira."¹⁵

15. Ibid., p. 113.

Nataputta and His Family

Further in the words of Saryu Doshi : “Mahavira belonged to the Kashyapa line and was known as Jnatraputra or Nataputta since he also belonged to the Jnatra clan. Though he was named Vardhamana by his parents, others called him Shramana because he was tranquil and blissful and the gods referred to him as Mahavira on account of his tremendous steadfastness in the face of hardships and dangers. Mahavira’s father was known by three names: Sidhartha, Shreyamsa and Yashamsa. His mother was called Trishala, Videhadatta and Priyakarini. His elder brother was Nandivardhana; his sister, Sudarshana, and his wife, Yashoda. Mahavira’s daughter had two names: Anavadya and Priyadarshana.”

Time for Renunciation

“Mahavira was both handsome and intelligent, upright and modest. He spent thirty years of his life in the region of Videha and, after his parents had passed away, he sought and received permission from his elders to take the vows of an itinerant monk. Since Mahavira was in possession of unprecedented, unlimited and unimpaired knowledge from birth, he was able to perceive that the time had come for his renunciation rites. Preparatory to his renunciation, for a whole year, Mahavira gave away his gold, ornaments, carriages, warehouses, treasure-houses and all that was of value. At that time the *Laukantika* gods came and said, “*Arhata*, propagate the religion which is a blessing to all creatures in the world.

“Indra also came down from the heavens, revered the future Jaina and set him on a throne placed on a magic dias. He anointed, bathed and decorated Mahavira and then produced a palanquin called Chandraprabha for him to depart from the world of mundane activities. On the tenth day of the dark half of the month¹⁶ of

16. Ibid., pp. 113, 115.

Margashirsh, in winter, Mahavira left home in his renunciation palanquin. Accompanying him were gods and men; some were playing musical instruments, some blowing conches, others chanting auspicious verses and still others ringing bells. As he proceeded on his journey Mahavira was followed by reverent eyes, voices singing hymns of praise and adoring hearts.

The procession passed through the streets of Kundagrama to a park called Jnati-Sanda-Vana, and halted under an *ashoka* tree. Mahavira descended from his palanquin, shed his finery, ornaments and garlands and plucked out his hair in five handfuls. Indra received the hair in a diamond cup (which he cast later into the Ocean of Milk). Then putting on the divine robe given to him by Indra, Mahavira became a homeless mendicant wandering alone. At the time of Mahavira's renunciation, a Brahman named Soma approached him saying that he had not received any gift when Mahavira was distributing his wealth. Since Mahavira had nothing except the divine robe given to him by Indra, he tore it into half and gave one part to Soma keeping the other part for himself. When a weaver saw this cloth, he informed Soma that it was exquisite and that he should try and obtain the other half as well. So, Soma followed Mahavira and, a year and a month later, Soma's desire was fulfilled. For, as Mahavira passed a thorny bush, his robe got caught in it and it slipped away, Mahavira did not care to retrieve it and Soma was overjoyed with his acquisition."

"For twelve years Mahavira cultivated the attitude of not caring for the body. He had lost his robe, was devoid of all belongings and used the hollow of his palms as a begging bowl. While wandering as a monk, Mahavira endured all adversities that came his way, caused by gods, men and beasts. Villagers set their dogs on him and beat him or tore his hair out. But he patiently endured all such insults and treatment. A jealous god, Samgamaka,¹⁷ troubled Mahavira for six months-first with ants,

17. Ibid., p. 115.

dust-storms, fire and weapons and than with attractive promises of heaven and beautiful women. But his efforts were in vain. One day, towards the end of his quest, Mahavira was in deep concentration while performing ascetic penance. A cowherd whose bulls had wandered away in the forest while he was busy milling the cows, saw Mahavira and asked him if he had seen the bulls. But Mahavira was too engrossed in meditation to reply. In spite of repeatedly questioning him the cowherd could not elicit any response. In fury he took two spikes and drove them into Mahavira's ears until they met inside his head. Then the cowherd cut off the protruding ends to prevent anyone from extracting them from Mahavira's ears. When Mahavira completed his meditation and went to the village to seek alms, a physician perceived his agony. With the help of a merchant the physician bathed Mahavira and had shampooers massage him to loosen his joints. The spikes fell out of Mahavira's head causing him tremendous pain.

Once, during his perigrinations, Mahavira was advised to avoid walking through a forest because a fierce serpent named Chandakaushika lived there. Mahavira, undeterred, entered the forest which was desolate with withered trees and dead leaves. While he sat in meditation, the serpent saw him and attacked him, but to no avail. Mahavira then spoke to the serpent and it immediately recalled its past births, repented its evil ways and went to heaven when it died."

Omniscience

"Finally, in the thirteenth year of his wanderings, Mahavira attained ultimate knowledge while meditating under a *shala* tree and became omniscient. The gods set about preparing a *samavasarana* as they did when any Jaina obtained perfect knowledge. They cleaned a *vojana* of earth and perfumed and decorated it. Then they built an enclosure with an outer wall of silver, a middle one of gold and an innermost one of jewels. Each

wall had four jewelled gates. In the centre the gods placed a throne for the Jina. From the *samavasarana* Mahavira, who could be seen from all four sides, preached to gods, men and animals.

“Mahavira spent the last rainy season of his life in the scribe's hall of King Hastipala in the town of Pava. He died on the fifteenth night of the dark half of Kartika, and his soul, freed from the fetters of life, death and decay, attained perfection and was liberated. His spirit ascended to *siddhashila* which is the apex of the universe; it is made of pure white gold and is shaped like a crescent or an inverted parasol, thick at the middle but tapering off at the ends till it is as thin as a fly's wing.”¹⁸

Other Scholars and Historians on Mahavira

Historians and Scholars have described Mahavira's birth, upbringing and other important life events in the same way, based on Kalpasutra and other Jain sources.

In the words of Dr. Mahajan : “According to the Kalpasutra, the father of Vardhamana, celebrated the occasion of the birth of his son on a large scale. The custom taxes*and confiscations were released, the buying and selling prohibited, no policemen were allowed to enter houses, great and small fines were remitted, debts cancelled, measures and weights increased, and all prisoners set free in the town of Kundapura.”

There is a lot of controversy regarding the date of birth of Mahavira. According to the traditional date, his death took place 470 years before the birth of Vikrama, whose era began 18 years later in 58 B.C. According to this view, the death of Mahavira ought to have taken place in 546 B.C. (470+58+18). Hemchandra dates the reign of Chandragupta in 313 B.C. He also states that this took place 155 years after the death of Mahavira. Thus, according to Hemchandra, the death of Mahavira should have taken place in 468 B.C. Both Mahavira and Buddha were

18. Ibid., p. 115.

contemporaries and only that date can be acceptable which is applicable to both. According to the Buddhist tradition, Mahavira died before the death of Buddha. This is clear from the following statement of Sariputta : "The Nigantha Nataputta, friends, has just died at Pava." Sariputta died before the death of Buddha. It is also stated that Prasenajit told Buddha that Mahavira was senior to him in age.

Vardhamana married Yashoda and a daughter was born to her. When parents died, with the permission of his elder brother, Vardhamana became an ascetic. For twelve long years, he wandered from place to place doing penance. According to the Acharangasutra. "He wandered naked and homeless. People struck him and mocked at him—unconcerned, he continued in his meditations. In Ladha, the inhabitants persecuted him and set dogs on him. They beat him with sticks and with their feet, and threw fruits, clods of earth etc. on him. They disturbed him in his meditations by all sorts of torments. But like a hero in the forefront of the battle, Mahavira withstood it all. Whether he was wounded or not, he never sought medical aid. He took no kind of medicaments. he never washed, did not bathe and never cleaned his teeth. In winter, he meditated in the shade; in the heat of the summer he seated himself in the scorching sun. Often he drank no water for months. Sometimes he took only every sixth, eighth, tenth or twelfth meal, and pursued his meditation without craving."

Dr. Mahajan further says, "In the 13th year, he reached Nirvana under a Sal tree near an old temple in the field belonging to a householder named Samaga on the river Rijupalika outside of the town called Jrimbhika grama, becoming an Arhata, a Jina and a Kevalin, an omniscient."

Describing the *relations between Mahavira and Parsvanath*, Dr. Mahajan writes, "Parsvanatha had advocated four vows, viz., not to injure life, not to lie, not to steal and not to possess any property. Mahavira added the fifth vow of chastity. It appears that even during the lifetime of Mahavira, there were two sections

of the Jain church. One section followed Parsvanatha and the other section followed Mahavira. According to Acharangasutra, "The parents of Mahavira were themselves worshippers of Parsva and followers of the Sramanas." It is possible that the Svetambaras were the followers of Parsvanatha and Digambaras were the followers of Mahavira. Most probably, a sort of union was brought about between the two sections in the time of Mahavira. In spite of that, the followers of Parsvanatha and Mahavira continued as distinct orders.

Mahavira and Gosala lived together for six years and practised penance. However, they parted later on. After that, Gosala founded the sect of the Ajivikas. There are references in which it is found that Gosala was one of the greatest critics of Mahavira and his teachings. To quote Gosala, "As a merchant desirous of gain shows his wares and attracts a crowd to do business, in a similar way acts the Sramana Jnatiputra (Mahavira)."¹⁹

It is thus clear different scholars have attempted to throw light on Mahavira in their own style and genius. There is so much natural and supernatural about him, his personality, character, virtues and so many other things that he is still a source of inspiration to so many thinkers and scholars besides a his large number of followers throughout the world.

As Jaina Scholar Mohan Lal Mehta says : "According to the Pali texts, he was a contemporary of Buddha but they never met. The early Prakrit texts do not mention the name of Buddha. They totally neglect him. This indicates that Mahavira and his followers did not attach any importance to Buddha's personality and teachings. On the other hand, in the Pali Tripitaka, Mahavira is regarded as one of the six *tirthankaras* of Buddha's time. This shows that Mahavira was an influential personality and a leading venerable ascetic."²⁰

19. Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : Ancient India, pp. 137-139.

20. Mehta, Mohan Lal : Jaina Culture, pp. 10.

Mehta has given more or less the similar facts on the life and teachings of Mahavira based on Jaina texts. He narrates :

“According to the tradition of the Svetambara Jainas, the liberation of Mahavira took place 470 years before the beginning of the Vikrama Era. The tradition of the Digambara Jains maintains that Lord Mahavira attained liberation 605 years before the beginning of the Saka Era. By either mode of calculation the date comes to 527 B.C. Since the Lord attained emancipation at the age of 72, his birth must have been around 599 B.C. This makes Mahavira a slightly elder contemporary of Buddha who probably lived about 567-487 B.C.

There are many references in the Buddhist canon to Nataputta and the Niganthas, meaning Mahavira and the Jainas. The Buddhist canon refers to the death of Nataputta at Pava, at a time when Buddha was still engaged in preaching. According to Hemchandra, Mahavira attained liberation 155 years before Candragupta's accession to the throne. This leads to a date around 549-477 B.C. for Mahavira and places his death slightly later than that of Buddha. Some scholars support this view.

There is no doubt that Parsva preceded Mahavira by 250 years. The Jaina canon clearly mentions that the parents of Mahavira were followers of Parsva whose death took place 250 years before that of Mahavira (527 B.C.). Since Parsva lived for a hundred years, his date comes to 877-777 B.C.

Mahavira was not the inventor of a new doctrine, but the reformer of a Law already long in existence. The Uttarahyayana-sutra gives a good account of this fact. The following is the essence of this account :

There was a famous preceptor in the tradition of Lord Parsva. His name was Kesi. Surrounded by his disciples he arrived at the town of Sravasti. In the vicinity of that town there was a park called Tinduka. There he took up his abode in a pure place.

At that time there was a famous disciple of Lord Mahavira. His name was Gautama (Indrabhuti). Surrounded by his pupils

he, too, arrived at Sravasti. In the Vicinity of that town there was another park called Kothaka. There he took up his abode in a pure place.

The pupils of both, who controlled themselves, who practised austerities, who possessed virtues, made the following reflection :

‘Is our Law the right one or the other? Are our conduct and doctrines right or the other ? The Law taught by Lord Parsva, which recognises only four vows, or the Law taught by Lord Mahavira (Vardhamana) which enjoins five vows ? The Law which forbids clothes for a monk or that which allows an under and an upper garment ? Both pursuing the same end, what has caused their difference ?’

Mehta further writes : “Knowing the thoughts of their pupils, both Kesi and Gautama made up their minds to meet each other. Gautama went to the Tinduka park where Kesi received him. With his permission Kesi asked Gautama : “The Law taught by Parsva recognises only four vows, while that of Vardhamana enjoins five. Both Laws pursuing the same end, what has caused this difference ? Have you no misgivings about this two-fold Law ?” Gautama made the following reply : “The monks under the first *tirthankara* are simple but slow of understanding, those under the last are prevaricating and slow of understanding and those between the two are simple and wise. Hence, there are two forms of the Law. The first can but with difficulty understand the precepts of the Law and the last can but with difficulty observe them. But those between the two can easily understand and observe them.” This answer removed the doubt of Kesi. He asked another question : “The Law taught by Vardhamana forbids clothes but that of Parsva allows an under and an upper garment. Both Laws pursuing the same end, what has caused this difference ?” Gautama gave the following reply : “The various outward marks have been introduced in view of their usefulness for religious life and their distinguishing character. The opinion of the *tirthankaras* is that right knowledge, right faith and right

conduct are the true causes of liberation.” This answer, too, removed the doubt of Kesi. He, thereupon, bowed his head to Gautama and adopted the Law of five vows.

It is clear from this account of the Uttaradhyayana-sutra that there were two main points of difference between the followers of Parsva and those of Mahavira. The first point was relating to vows and the second was regarding clothes..... The Venerable Ascetic Mahavira spent his second rainy season in a weaver's shed at Nalanda, a suburb of Rajagraha. Gosala, the Ajivika, approached the Venerable Ascetic and made a request to admit him as his disciple. Mahavira did not entertain his request. Gosala again approached the Venerable Ascetic when he had left the place at the end of the rainy season. This time his request was, however, accepted and both of them lived together for a considerable period. While at Siddharthapura, Gosala uprooted a sesamum shrub and threw it away challenging Mahavira's prediction that it would bear fruits. Owing to a lucky fall of rain the shrub came to life again and bore fruits. Seeing this Gosala concluded that everything is pre-determined and that all living beings are capable of reanimation. Mahavira did not favour such generalisation. Gosala, then, severed his association with Mahavira and founded his own sect known as Ajivika.”

Mehta further says : “Mahavira had travelled up to Ladha in West Bengal. He had to suffer all sorts of tortures in the non-Aryan territory of Vajrabhumi and Subhrabhumi. Many of his hardships were owing to the adverse climate, stinging plants and insects and wicked inhabitants who set dogs at him. The Venerable Ascetic had spent his ninth rainy season in the non-Aryan land of the Ladha country.

Mahavira passed twelve years of his ascetic life with equanimity performing hard and long penances and enduring all afflictions and calamities with undisturbed mind. During the thirteenth year on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month

of Vaisakha the Venerable Ascetic obtained omniscience under a Sala tree in the farm of Syamaka on the northern bank of river Rijupalika outside the town of Jrmbhikagrama. He preached the Law in the Ardhamagadhi language, taught five great vows etc., initiated Indrabhuti (Gautama) and others and established the four-fold Order (monks, nuns, male lay-votaries and female lay-votaries).

Jamali, who was the son-in-law of Mahavira and had entered his Church, left the Order after some time and founded a new sect known as Bahurata. He is regarded as the first schismatic (*nihnava*) in the Jaina Church.

Lord Mahavira passed the last thirty years of his life as the omniscient *tirthankara*. He spent his last rainy season at Papa (Pavapuri). On the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Kartika the Lord attained liberation there at the age of seventy-two. The eighteen confederate kings of Kasi and Kosala (and eighteen kings) belonging to the Mallaki and Lecchaki clans were present there at that time. Thinking that the spiritual light of knowledge has vanished with the passing away of the Lord they made a material illumination by lighting lamps.

Lord Mahavira was the head of a excellent community of 14000 monks, 36000 nuns, 159000 male lay-votaries and 318000 female lay-votaries. The four groups designated as monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen constitute the four-fold Order (*tirtha*) of Jainism. One who makes such an Order is known as *tirthankara*. *Tirthankara* Mahavira's followers comprised three categories of persons: ascetics, lay-votaries and sympathisers or supporters. Indrabhuti (monk), Candana (nun), etc. form the first category. Sankha (layman), Sulasa (laywoman), etc., come under the second category. Srenika (Bimbisara), Kunika (Ajatasatru), Pradyota, Udayana, Cellana, etc., form the third category. The *Tirthankara's* *tirtha* or *sangha* consisted of only the first two categories.²¹

21. Ibid., pp. 10-15.

It is Lord Mahavira, the 24th and the last Tirthankara, who gave new dimensions to Jainism. And even today only through him and in his name (Mahavira) Jainism is known throughout the world.

He is nodoubt, like a brilliant and illustrious moon, while others shining stars in Jaina order.

According to Tukol the exact date of birth of Mahavira is 599 B.C. He narrates many of his virtues as following :

“.....In the Buddhistic literature he is called Nataputta. According to tradition, he had been gifted at birth with Matijnana (perceptional knowledge), Sruta-Jnana (knowledge of the sacred lore) and Manah-paryaya Jnana (clairvoyance). He was thus born with all the intellectual and spiritual gifts which marked him out as a great religious teacher. He was educated as a prince. He possessed a gifted personality and a brilliant intellect. It is said that two sages Vijaya and Sanjaya who had heard about him, entertained doubts about his greatness. So they went to see him; but when they saw him actually, all their doubts were dispelled. They therefore called him Sanmati. Although he was born in a royal family, he had hardly any love of power or wealth. He perceived that every living being had a soul with the same potentialities of greatness as his own; his conduct towards every living creature was full of compassion and love. The material comforts had no attraction for him. Self-restraint was a way of life for him. He was sweet-tempered and bore no ill-will towards anybody.

“A couple of stories built around him are very popular and may therefore be briefly referred to. One is that while he was in the palace, he saw people running about helter-skelter in fear. When he came out, he saw the royal elephant running madly frightening the citizens. He ran out at once, caught hold of the elephant by its trunk and pacified it in no time. His marvellous courage and self-control were subjects of high admiration by the

citizens. Similarly when he was playing in a garden with his friends, the latter were frightened by the approach of a terrifying cobra. While others tried to run away, the prince stood calm and when the cobra came near him, he caught hold of it and danced on its hood much to the amazement of his friends. Such a story is told about Sri Krsna also. It is said that it was on account of his brave acts like these that he was called Mahavira or Great Hero.

Mahavira thus grew up with all accomplishments and courage into a handsome youth. When he was about twenty-eight years old, his parents naturally thought of his marriage. On this point, there is a difference of view between the Digambara and the Svetambara traditions. The former maintains that Mahavira declined to marry as he was always spiritually inclined and regarded marriage as a hindrance to spiritual progress. The Svetambara version of his life-history is that he was married to princess Yashoda of Kalinga and had a daughter who was latter married to Jamali; the latter was his disciple for sometime but parted company later.

According to both the traditions, Mahavira took the vow of monk when he was thirty years old by which time his parents had died. He distributed his wealth in charity. He moved to forest where he cast off his clothes and pulled out his hair with his own hands. He spent most of his time, in penance in caves and forests, on hills and mountain-peaks. He often suffered at the hands of cow-herds and other ignorant people, all kinds of privations and ill-treatment. It is said that when he was once engrossed in penance, a farmer asked him to look after his cattle and went away to his village for food. On his return, he found his cattle missing. He held the saint responsible for the disappearance of his cattle. He beat him but when he found him unmoved and smiling, he realised his folly and begged for pardon. He would observe fasts for days together as he used to get engrossed in deep meditation. He had acquired full control over his body, mind and speech as he had set upon self-purification, which is a

necessary pre-requisite for liberation of the self from the body. He was unmindful of social status and ignored the distinction between the high and the low. Once he accepted food from a girl by name Candana who was a slave in the house of a rich man by name Vrsabhadatta but was pure in heart and conduct. He did this when numerous rich house-holders were eagerly waiting to offer him food. Thus he tried by example to abolish distinctions based on birth and status."

As described earlier Tukol further says : "he spent twelve years of his life in observing austerities and long spells of deep meditations. He went to Jrmvikagrama or modern Jharia in Bihar and took his seat under a sal tree on the bank of the river Rijukula. He became engrossed in Sukladhyana or lustrous meditation and destroyed the four destructive Karmas : Darsanavaraniya, Jnanavaraniya, Mohaniya and Antaraya. He attained Kevala-jnana or Omniscience. It was the 10th day of the bright half of Vaisakha when he attained supreme knowledge and intuition.

When the Venerable Ascetic Mahavira had become a Jina and Arhat, he was a kevalin, omniscient and comprehending all objects; he knew and saw all conditions of the world, of gods, men and demons : Whence they come, whither they go, whether they are born as men or animals or become gods or hellbeings, the ideas, the thoughts of their minds, the food, doings, desires, the open and secret deeds of all the living beings in the whole world; he, the Arhat, for whom there is no secret, knew and saw all conditions of all living beings in the world, what they thought, spoke, or did any moment.

On coming to know that the Lord had obtained Omniscience, large number of people collected to worship the Arhat. Amongst them was one Indrabhuti Gautama, a reputed scholar in Vediclore. The first sermon was delivered on the Vipulacala hill, near Rajagrha. The Svetambara version is that it was delivered near Pavanagar where they have built a temple. On hearing the first

Sermon, Indrabhuti Gautama had his doubts dispelled and got new enlightenment. He and his followers including his brothers Agnibhuti and Vayubhuti sought for initiation into the order of Sramanas and were so initiated. Indrabhuti Gautama became the first Ganadhara or (apostle) the interpreter of the sermons. This event was a great revolution in the spiritual thinking in Magadha."

Regarding his teachings, Tukol further writes : "Mahavira started preaching the principles of Ahimsa and Truth, of self-control, self-reverance and self-knowledge as leading man to salvation. He preached what he had realised during the period of twelve years when he had turned his vision inwards by penances and austerities. There used to be large gatherings of people, irrespective of caste and creed, to hear his sermons. According to Jaina traditions, such assemblies where he held his sermons are known as Samavasarana or a refuge of equality and equanimity, for all. He spent his rainy seasons in many places including Vaisali, Rajagruha, Nalanda, Mithila and Sravasti. Thousands of people who had thirst for spiritual knowledge used to gather at the feet of the Lord. He spent his rainy season at Pavapuri where on the 15th day of the dark fortnight he breathed his last when he was sitting absorbed in penance early before dawn. He annihilated his aghatiya Karmas and attained Nirvana in the morning of the Amavasya day, in the month of Asvija in 527 B.C. freeing himself from the ties of birth, old-age and death. He became fully liberated and became a *mukta*" The Kings of Kasi, Kosala and Vaisali celebrated the event with illuminations on the first new moon day and said : "Since the light of intelligence is gone, let us. take an illumination of material matter." Even to this day, the day is observed as a festival day, a day of illumination, Dipavali.²²

The religion preached by Lord Mahavira is not a new religion; it is the religion of the Jinas who had gone before him

22. Tukol, pp. 39-43.

(Quoted by Tukol from the writings of Jacobi Hermann : Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 45, pp. 263-64 and 266.)

and popularised the basic principles of the greatness of Self, says Tukul. The two basic principles of the Universe are Jiva and Ajiva. They are connected with each other from the beginning. It is the activities of the mind, speech and body that are responsible for entanglement of the soul with karma which is possible to prevent and eradicated by austerities, observance of the principles of religion and by meditation. Man is the architect of his own destiny. The goal of his life is attainment of infinite Faith, Knowledge and Bliss so as to be free from the fetters of the Karmas. The principles of Ahimsa (Love) and Satya (Truth) have guided the destinies of our country and of other countries that have abided by them. Mahatma Gandhi used them as his armour in our country's struggle for freedom and proved that they are not weapons of the weak but of the brave."

Mahavira delivered his sermons in the language of the people, viz., Ardhamagadhi. His disciples have collected his teachings under twelve titles called the Dwadasangas or the Twelve Scriptures. His message is not one of "empty heart". He emphasised that life had a meaning and could be purposeful only if one lived it with an awareness of its sacred goal. It is a message of hope for a life of piety and love, observes Tukul.

Mahavira preached celibacy (*brahmacarya*) as a separate vow so as to make the total number of vows five : viz. Ahimsa, Satya, Acaurya, Brahmacarya and Aparigraha. He also constituted the community into a Sangha consisting of the Munis (Monks), Arjikas (Nuns), Sravakas (male house-holders), Sravikas (Female house-holders). For the first two classes, he prescribed the five vows as Mahavratas or the big vows while the same were termed Anuvratas or small vows for the lay men and lay women. The big vows implied that the votary was to observe them with greater rigour and minuteness, exercising greater care and meticulousness in the observance of each vow in all aspects. He evolved eleven stages (pratimas) amongst the lay men and lay women commencing from the cultivation of Right Faith till the final stage

of having the minimum clothing. He also emphasised that for averting the effects of transgressions, sincere repentances for every lapse was efficacious. He preached that austerities and regular observance of vows were essential for preventing the influx of fresh karmas.²³

Existence of God

“Mahavira did not believe in the existence of God. He did not believe that God is “only the highest, the noblest and the fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man.” It was all waste of time to recite the Mantras or perform the sacrifices. The three essentials for good life were Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Action. These three things were called the three jewels or Ratnas (Ratnatraya). Mahavira asked his followers to live a life of virtue and morality. Every kind of pain and injury was to be given to the body to realise the truth. Death by gradual starvation was recommended. Even suicide was advocated for salvation (moksha, nirvana). Marriages were forbidden and a life of celibacy was prescribed. The followers were asked to discard clothes and go about naked.

Mahavira put great stress on *Ahimsa*. According to him not only men and animals but also plants, wind and fire had souls. Pain or injury was felt by stones and plants, in the same way as was felt by men and animals. Under the circumstances, it was desirable that no injury should be done to animals, birds, plants, etc.

The highest goal to be achieved was Kevalin. Without “intuitive knowledge”, one was bound to commit sins and when sins were committed, rebirth became inevitable. A person could be released from the cycle of rebirths only after attaining “Siddha Sila.”

23. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

According to Mahavira, everybody should try to annihilate Karma by practising austerities and shutting out the influx of bad karma. The austerities prescribed by Mahavira were fasting, gradual abstention from food from a full meal of 32 morsels to one of one morsel, begging, giving up delicious food, of mortification of the flesh, study, humility, service, etc.

Mahajan gives the following extract from the Majjhima Nikaya regarding the teachings of Mahavira : "There are, brethren, certain recluses, Achelakas, Ajivikas, Niganthas, etc. who thus preach and believe : Whatsoever an individual experiences, whether it be happy or painful or neutral feeling, all has been caused by previous actions. And thus from the cancelling of old actions by *tapas*, and by abstaining from doing new actions, there is no influx into future life; by this non-influx, Karma is destroyed, and so ill is destroyed, and so feeling is destroyed, and so all pain will become worn away. This, brethren, is what the Niganthas say.... It is true, I asked them, that you believe and declare this?.... They replied..... 'Our leader Nataputta, is all-wise.... Out of the depth of his knowledge he tells us : Ye have done evil in the past. This ye do wear away by this hard and painful course of action..... Thus all Karma will eventually be worn away, and all pain. To this we assent.²⁴'"

24. Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : Ancient India, pp. 139-140.

5

FOLLOWERS OF MAHAVIRA IN JAINA LITERATURE

In the Acharanga (Acaranga) sutra there is reference that Mahavira's parents were followers of Parshva. The first description of Parshva occurs in the Kalpasutra as the twenty third Tirthankara. But his biographical narration is shorter to Mahavira's. Parshva born earlier to Mahavira has a large following. In Jaina texts Mahavira is portrayed converting Parshvite monks by enunciating his cosmological views. In the modern times, followers of Jainism, have great regard to Mahavira as well as other Tirthankaras and practice vegetarianism, non-violence and certain ethical codes. When Mahavira attained supreme and unique knowledge, many, teachers, kings and lay votaries joined his faith in a very big way.

Born as royal, in a Kshatriya tribe, Mahavira himself was connected with several royal families in one way or the other like Buddha, in the sixth century B.C. According to some texts Mahavira has links with illustrious Ikshavaku dynasty.

“According to Anguttara Nikaya, the Lichchavi prince Abhaya Kumara respected Mahavira very much. As a matter of fact, Jainism became the state religion of the Lichchhavis. Abhaya Kumara, a son of King Bimbisara, was also stated to be a follower of Mahavira. Both the Jains and Buddhists claim Bimbisara and Ajatsatru as the patrons of their religions. It is possible that as Hindu kings, they might have shown respect towards all religions. But it is pointed out that Ajatsatru could not be a follower of

Jainism which was the state religion of the Lichchhavis whom Ajatsatru was determined to crush.

Mahavira must have received help from the Mallas. It is stated that Mahavira died in the palace or place of king Shastipala of the Mallas. The Mallas had also illuminations in honour of the death of Mahavira. The 18 Ganarajas of Kashi and Kosala etc. are also stated to have held illuminations in honour of the death of Mahavira.”¹

In some texts Shakyas and Kolis have been mentioned showing great respect on Mahavira's death, who were directly related to Buddha. It was Buddha who first heard the news of Mahavira's salvation.

“There is a reference to 11 Ganadharas or chief disciples of Mahavira. According to Jacobi, the Gana denotes “The School derived from one teacher; Kula the succession of teachers in one line; and the Sakha, the lines which branch off from one teacher.” The Ganadharas referred to in the Kalpasutras were Ananda, Kumardeva, Suradeva, Kunda Koliya, Mahasayaga, Saddalaputta, Chullasayaga, Arya-Sudharman, etc.”²

Paul Dundas has remarked that “Until his enlightenment, Mahavira was imperfect and still subject to the occluding effects of Karma. Finally, at the end of the thirteenth year after his renunciation, in a field belonging to a farmer called Samaga which was situated near a small village on a riverbank, he attained supreme and unique (*kevala*) knowledge, the omniscience which Jains regard as defining enlightenment. The earliest accounts of this event, precisely described as to date and location, occur in the second book of the *Acaranga* (AS 2.15.25-6) and, with near identical wording, in the *Kalpasutra*. No doubt partly retrospective and without any true awareness of what Mahavira really did

1. Mahajan, Dr. DR. V.D. : Ancient/India, p. 140. (see also Koli Jati Ka Itihas by K.L. Chanchreek).

2. Ibid., p. 140.

experience in Samaga's field, it nonetheless gives a clear picture of what Jain tradition regards as defining each occurrence of the attainment of enlightenment."³

According to the 'Kalpasutra' Mahavira attained enlightenment after fasting for two and a half days without water, in the full glare of the Sun, not far from a tree, in the rigorously ascetic posture of squatting on his haunches. Buddha has been portrayed as having become enlightened while sitting under a tree in the lotus position.

Paul Dundas has given an analytical account of Mahavira's relationship with Makkhali Gosala. He observes : "The most remarkable episode in the later descriptions of Mahavira's pre-enlightenment career is his period of fellow mendicancy with Makkhali Gosala who is generally regarded as having been the head of an ascetic order known as the Ajivikas, the 'Followers of the Way of Life'. Although there are references to Makkhali Gosala in the Buddhist Pali canon, the fullest source which describes his life is the fifteenth chapter of the 'Exposition of Explanations' which is undoubtedly an interpolation into the larger text, showing a consistency and internal coherence unusual in that loosely structured work.

According to this Jain story, Makkhali Gosala (the latter part of his name signifies that he was born in a *gosala* or stable) persuaded Mahavira in the second year after his renunciation to accept him as his disciple and the two then wandered together for a period of six years. Makkhali Gosala proved to be an unsatisfactory pupil, both headstrong and jealous of his teacher's ascetic attainments, trying fruitlessly to disprove Mahavira's powers of prescience and on one occasion having to be rescued by the fordmaker from a Brahman ascetic whom he had antagonised. The expanded version in the Universal History describes other episodes of this sort.

3. Dundas, Paul : *The Jains*, pp. 29-30.

Eventually, according to the 'Exposition of Explanation', Makkhali Gosala, after gaining a degree of magic power from his association with Mahavira, left his teacher and falsely proclaimed himself to be a spiritual conqueror. Furious at Mahavira's refusal to acknowledge his status, he attacked him with a blast of ascetic heat which he released from his body, but such was the adamant nature of Mahavira's physique that it rebounded back upon Makkhali Gosala who eventually died after confessing that the fordmaker was a true spiritual teacher. Mahavira subsequently predicted that Gosala would eventually attain enlightenment and spiritual release.

The Ajivikas were undoubtedly a fully fledged ascetic corporation in their own right with a community of lay supporters and there is evidence that they were still in existence in South India as late as the thirteenth century. However, the precise nature of Makkhali Gosala's doctrine remains unclear. The account of it found in early Buddhist literature credits him with pro-pounding an elaborate if obscure cosmology and of arguing that fate or destiny (*niyati*) was the central motive force in the universe against which no human effort could have any effect. All later accounts of Ajivika doctrine echo this description. In the absence of any Ajivika writings, any conclusions must remain speculative, but it seems doubtful whether a doctrine which genuinely advocated the lack of efficacy of individual effort could have formed the basis of a renunciatory path to spiritual liberation. An examination of the 'Sayings of the Seers', which counts Makkhali Gosala among the authoritative teachers, suggests that he was in fact simply arguing for the virtue of imperturbability in the face of the continued change and modification which were to be seen in the world (IBh 11)

The suspicion must be that the Jains and Buddhists deliberately distorted Ajivika doctrine for their own polemical purposes. Furthermore, it may well be that the developed biography of Mahavira could not easily dispense with Makkhali

Gosala from its narrative structure because there was a persistent reminiscence of a genuine historical connection between the two, and there remains the possibility that Mahavira and early Jainism were influenced by the Ajivikas. There are, for example, inconsistencies in Jain karma theory which could be explained with reference to what little is known of Ajivika doctrine.”⁴

Ganadharas

“Mahavira’s first samavasarana took place after his attainment of enlightenment. Only the gods assembled to hear him. But practically nobody was converted. Digambaras believe the absence of human beings, was due to the lack of disciples (Ganadharas), whose function is to interpret and mediate to other people the divine sound (divya-dhavni) which emanated from the body of Mahavira when he preached.

In the early biographical literature there is no significant references to the Ganadharas. Most important of them, Indrabhuti occurs frequently as an interlocutor with Mahavira, and occasionally as a converter of heretics. The Fordmaker tells Indrabhuti that both are friends through a series of rebirths and now living in their final existence after which both will be in the state of spiritual deliverance.

The two factors which united Gautama and the other ten Ganadharas were that they were all in origin Brahmanas and they were all enlightened by Mahavira and became omniscient Kevalin (literally possessing unique Knowledge).”⁵

Mahajan observes : “Out of the 11 Ganadharas, 10 pre-deceased Mahavira. Sudharman was the only Ganadhara who survived Mahavira and he became the head of Jain Church after Mahavira. There is practically a blank in the history of Jainism for the next 150 years. It appears that Jainism was favoured by

4. Dundas, Paul, pp. 25-26.

5. Ibid., pp. pp. 33-34.

Udayin (Udayan) who succeeded Ajatsatru to the throne of Magadha. According to the Hathigumpha inscription of King Kharvela of Kalings, the Nanda kings were favourably inclined towards Jainism. It is stated in that inscription that one King Nanda was in possession of "an idol of the first Jina." Sudharman was succeeded by Jambu. Towards the end of the rule of the Nandas, there were two heads of the Jain Church and their names were Bhadrabahu and Sambhutavijaya. The latter was succeeded by Sthulabhadra in the time of Chandragupta Maurya.

According to the Jain accounts, a terrible famine visited Magadha in the time of Chandragupta Maurya. A year after the monsoon failed. The result was that all the accumulated stores of grain were consumed. Half the Jain community moved to south India under the leadership of Bhadrabahu and settled in a place known as Sravana-Belgola. King Chandragupta Maurya also accompanied them. Chandragupta committed suicide by self-starvation. When the famine ended after 12 years, the emigrants came back to the north. The returning monks condemned those monks who had stayed behind and called them as heretics. The differences began to increase between the two sections. With a view to bring about a compromise, a Jain Council was held at Pataliputra but the monks who had come back from the south refused to participate in the deliberations. Bhadrabahu had retired to Nepal and he allowed Sthulabhadra to teach only ten Purvas out of 14 Purvas. The Jain Council at Pataliputra established only a part of Jain canon called Siddhanta from which the canon of the Svetambaras has been derived. The view of the returning monks was that the original canon had been completely lost.

Another Jain council was held in *Vallabhi* (Valabhi) in Gujarat under the presidency of Devariddhi Gani. The object of the council was to collect all the sacred texts and give them the shape of books. The result of the second Jain council was that the Jain canon was given a definite shape in which it is found even today.

It has rightly been pointed out that Jainism, though a rebellious daughter, was nonetheless a daughter of *Brahmanism*. Many leading beliefs of the Hindus are still held by the Jains. Much of their worship resembles the Hindu worship. Their domestic chaplains, though not their temple officiants, are still Brahmanas.

Jainism spread in all parts of India but after some time, it began to decline. The Jains attribute the first destruction of their temples to the hostility of the Brahmanas, especially under Ajayapala, in 1174-76 A.D. However, it is pointed out that the injuries inflicted by him were nothing in comparison with the destruction brought about by the Muslims. Ala-uddin Khilji who conquered Gujarat in 1297-98 is described as "the bloody" by the Jains. He razed many of their temples to the ground. He massacred their community and destroyed their libraries. Many of the most beautiful Muslim mosques in India have been built out of the material taken from the Jaina shrines."⁶

Most of the sects of Mahavira and Buddha's times have disappeared. But Jainism and Buddhism are still alive even after so many hurdles-invasions and foreign rule for centuries.

Jaina Caves and Temples

Mahajan further observes : "Like the Buddhists, the Jains built Bhikshu-grihas or cave dwellings for the residence of their monks. Their best examples still exist at Udayagiri (Tiger Cave), at Ellora (Indra Sabha), Lakkumdi, Pulitana, Mount Abu, at Girnar, ruins at Parsvanatha Hill, at Ranpur in Jodhpur, at Khajuraho in Bundelkhand, the Ghantai and Adinath temple, and at Chittor. In south India, there are beautiful Jain shrines at Sravana Belgola, at Mudabidri and at Guruvayankeri. There are traces of several Jain temples having been converted into mosques and the most important examples are the Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra at Ajmer, the Kutab near New Delhi, buildings at Kannauj, Dhar and many other places."

6. Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : *Ancient India*, pp. 139-141.

Jaina Canon

“.....Both the Svetambara and Digambara sects called their sacred books the Agama-Siddhanta. Both of them agree in calling the 12 Angas as the first and most important part of their canon. The Siddhanta comprises 45 to 50 books. The Parvas contained the original doctrine in 14 texts which Mahavira himself taught in Ardhamagadhi Prakrit to his disciples. The individual works in the canon comprising only the Siddhantas of the Svetambaras consist of 12 Angas, 12 Upangas, 10 Painnas, 7 Chheya Suttas, 4 Mula Suttas, one Nandi Sutta and one Annogadara. All these sacred book have been written in the Sutra style. They are both in prose and verse mixed.”⁷

Two hundred years after the death of Mahavira, a Jain council met at Pataliputra and decided the canon of sacred literature, but that was not accepted by all the Jains. Skandila at Mathura and Nagarjuna at Vallabhi made efforts to settle the old canon of the Jains. However, this work was successfully done by the Second Jain Council held at Vallabhi in the 5th century A.D. The present text in Ardhamagadhi belongs to the Svetambara Jains.

Besides cononical texts, Jain monks wrote Niryuktis or commentaries. Siddhasena and Samghadasa re-arranged the commentaries and gave them the form of Bhashyas. To begin with, the commentaries written by Jain scholars were in Prakrit, but later on they began to write in Sanskrit. Instead of the Churnis in Prakrit, the Jain writers wrote the Tikas in Sanskrit, Haribhadra was a Jain scholar who lived in the 9th century A.D. He used Sanskrit for the expression of his views. Akalanka, Pujiyapada and Siddhasena did a lot for the development of Jain philosophy.

Like the Svetambara Jains, the Digambara Jains also had their own literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit. Kundakunda was a great Digambara scholar. The other Digambara scholars were Vattakera, Swami Kertikeya and Yati Vrishabha and they all wrote

7. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

in Prakrit. However Samantabhadra and Manatunga wrote in Sanskrit.

The Charitras give the stories of the Tirthankaras and sages. The Prabandhas deal with the lives of Jain monks.

Early commentaries on Jain canon and a good deal of the secular poetry composed by the Jains are in what is known as Jaina Maharashtra. After the Christian era Sanskrit gradually won its way to the place of *lingua franca* in Northern India. It was adopted by the Buddhists and later on by the Jain writers also. A large part of Jain Sanskrit literature consists of scholastic and philosophic works connected with the exposition and defence of the faith. However, the Jain writers also distinguished themselves in grammar, lexicography and moral tales. The two northern recensions of the Panchatantra show a lot of Jain influence.

In Tamil literature, Jain poets held a high place for centuries. The Jivaka Chintamani, which is perhaps the finest of all Tamil poems, is a Jain work. The Kural of Tiruvalluvar is considered to be the masterpiece of Tamil literature. Its author was a Jain. According to Bishop Caldwell, the tone of this book is "more Jaina than anything else." An old Tamil dictionary and an old Tamil grammar are attributed to Jain writers. The latter also laid the foundations of Telugu literature. Classical Kanarese literature begins with a great succession of Jaina poets and scholars.

Hemchandra was probably the greatest of all Jain writers. He was born near Ahmedabad in 1088 A.D. of Jain parents. His mother dedicated him to religious life under the care of a monk called Devachandra who took him to Cambay where he was eventually ordained. At Cambay, he studied logic, dialectics, grammar and poetry and proved himself to be a past master in every branch of study he took up. He was appointed the spokesman of the Jain community at Anhilvada Patana to welcome the great Chalukya king, Jayasimha Siddharaja on his return from a famous victory in Malva. His poem won the heart of the king and he was appointed the court Pandit and court annalist in the royal capital.

He compiled two lexicons and wrote his famous Prakrit grammar. He also wrote a number of hand-books, lives of Jain saints, a history of Gujarat, a work on Yoga Sastra etc. He died of self-starvation in the approved Jain fashion.

A lot of work has been done on Jainism by Prof. Buhler, Prof. Jacobi, Dr. Hoernle, Dr. Banarasidas Jain, Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson and Shah.”⁸

According to Muni Ratna Prabha Vijay : “Ganadharas are the disciples of the Tirthankaras of the time, and they become apostles of the religion soon after receiving tripadi from the Tirthankara. They compose holy scriptures. They are great benefactors of the human race, and as such they deserve highest respect. Pravacanapada can be adored by rendering service to the three above named objects.”⁹

Tukol in his compendium of Jainism (p. 45) writing on Ganadharas observes : “Ganadharas interpreted the principles of Bhagavan Mahavira after he had started preaching his gospel on attaining omniscience. The first scholar to do this work was Indrabhuti Gautama. He was a Brahmin well-versed in Vediclore. He entertained some doubts about the interpretation of some metaphysical principles. On hearing of the Omniscient Lord, he went to him to know what was meant by the six dravyas, the five astikayas and the seven principles etc. He was fully satisfied with the interpretation of those principles by the Tirthankara. Mahavira preached what life was, what the meaning of Karma was and how Karma was responsible for different births and rebirths. Indrabhuti felt enlightened and became a convert along with his five hundred disciples to the religion of Sramana. After this, the two brothers of Indrabhuti, viz., Agnibhuti and Vayubhuti, who were also erudite scholars of Vedic faith and they too had their doubts clarified.

8. Mahajan, Dr. V.D. : *Ancient India*, pp. 142-143.

9. Vijay, Muni Ratna Prabha, (Vol. I, pt. I), p. 287.

Besides these three brothers, there were eight other Brahmin and Kshatriya scholars who were similarly attracted by the preachings of Mahavira and they too became converts to his faith along with their disciples. They are : Sudharma, Mauryaputra, Maundrya, Putra, Maitreya, Akampana, Acelaka and Prabhava.

Of these Ganadharas, Indrabhuti Gautama was the wisest and possessed sound powers of exposition. He therefore, became the first Ganadhara who not only interpreted the sermons of Mahavira but also reduced them to writing.

The Great Teacher went about from place to place preaching to all people irrespective of caste and creed the principles of the five vows, of the path of salvation and of self-control and self-knowledge. Many great rulers of the time like Srenika and Ajatsatru of Magadha, Chetaka of Vaisali, Prasenajit of Sravasti, Flocked to hear sermons and became his followers.

Of the eleven Ganadharas, only two of them, Gautama and Sudharma, survived Mahavira while the rest of them adopted the vow of Sallekhana at different times at Rajagraha and attained salvation.

After the Nirvana of Mahavira, Indrabhuti Gautama lived for about 12 years and attained omniscience. Sudharma then assumed the spiritual leadership and he too attained omniscience. He was followed by Jambusvami who was the last to attain omniscience."

After Jambusvami had attained salvation in 403 B.C. Prabhava continued the leadership of Jaina thought and died in 397 B.C. It was during his time that the two sects of Oswala (Oswal) Jaina and Srimala (Srimali) Jaina arose.¹⁰ It may be noted that upto Jambusvami, there is unanimity between Digambara and Svetambara traditions. Thereafter, the Svetambara tradition gives the names of Prabhava, Svayambhava, Sambhutivijaya and Bhadrabahu, while the Digambara tradition mentions the names

10. Stevenson, Mrs, Sinclair : Heart of Jainism, p. 69.

(Quoted by Tukol, p. 45.)

of Visnu, Nandi, Aparajita, Goverdhana and Bhadrabahu. These are called the Sruta -Kevalins who did not attain omniscience like their three predecessors.¹¹

It is an outstanding event of history that it was this Bhadrabahu who was the Guru of Chandragupta of the Maurya dynasty who migrated to the South along with his 12000 disciples as he sensed a famine of terrible severity. Chandragupta also accompanied his Guru and the inscriptions at Sravanabelagola and elsewhere bear ample testimony to this great event in the spread of Jainism in Southern parts of India. Chandragupta became a Jaina ascetic after abdicating his throne in 297 B.C. and died twelve years later at Sravanabelagola after adopting the vow of Sallekhana.¹²

Jaina and Buddhist Monks and Nuns

Noted Jaina scholar of the present age Dr. Muni Nagaraja has made a comparative study of Jaina and Buddhist monks and nuns who were deeply associated respectively with Lord Mahavira and Buddha. He observes : It is an inevitable fact of history that certain persons acquire immortality because of their association with the great men of their Age. We have many such personalities associated with the lives of both Mahavira and Buddha. Eleven Ganadharas of Mahavira have become immortal with him. They were the leaders of their respective teams called gana :

1. **Indrabhuti Gautam**—He was the foremost among Mahavira's disciples, and is inseparable from him. He used to ask from the most commonplace to the most difficult questions to the Master, and based on these questions and answers, there has been the compilation of the biggest of the Jaina *Agamas*, *Vihaya Pannatti*, popularly called *Bhagavati*. He was also famous for his great spiritual powers.

11. Sushil Muni : Jaina Dharma, p. 41.

12. Stevenson, Mrs. Sinclair, p. 70. (All quoted by Tukol, p. 46).

Gautama had the deepest affection for the Master. On the occasion of Mahavira's death, this affection over-powered him completely like a river flooding both the banks, and Gautama was deeply aggrieved at the apparent lack of reciprocation from the other side. But soon he controlled himself. He recognised the supreme detachment of the Master and his own attachment. From the outward, he turned to the inward. The veil of ignorance was torn. He attained the supreme and limitless knowledge and himself became Arhat.

Once, Gautama felt a great mortification for his own self for not attaining the supreme knowledge. To rid him of this, Mahavira said :—

“Gautama ! For a very long time, you are tied with me by affection. You have been all praise about me for a very long time. We have been acquaintances for ever, and for ever you have served me, for ever you have followed me, and for ever you have carried out my orders. In your previous lives, whether as a god or as a human being, you were always linked with me, and what more, after we die, and when this body is destroyed, we shall be together again, in the same state, as liberated souls.” (Bhagavati Sataka 14 Uddesaa 7).

The above should indicate how very intimate was Gautama's relation with Mahavira.

(2) **Candanabala**—She was the foremost in Mahavira's order of nuns. Her position in the order was called Pravartini. She was a princess, but her life was full of many vicissitudes. She spent a part of her life as a maid-servant. She underwent the experience of being in chains. But in the closing chapter of her life, we see her holding the most illustrious position of being the head of Mahavira's order of nuns.

According to the *Thananga* and the *Samavayanga* (Thanang, Sutta 230; Samavayanga, Sama 110.), 700 in Mahavira's order attained Omniscience (According to the Kappa Sutta (Sutta 144),

700 monks and 1400 nuns were perfected.), 1300 attained *avadhi* knowledge, 500 attained *manah-paryaya* knowledge, 300 were the masters of the 14 Purvas, and there were many other monks and nuns who held great powers, who had practised hard penances, who were great debaters, and so on.

At times, Mahavira even mentioned about the specialities of his monks and nuns.

In the *Tripitakas*, too, we have accounts of monks who lived around the Buddha, foremost among them being Sariputta, Moggallana, Anand, Upali, Mahakassapa, Ajnakodinna, and so on. In the Jaina order, the Ganadharas enjoyed a dignified position and were entrusted with a well-defined responsibility. In the Buddhist order, there is no counterpart of Jaina *Ganadhar*; but Sariputta and others held quite high positions of honour and responsibility in that order.

3. *Sariputta*—As was *Ganadhara* Gautama to Mahavira, so was Sariputta an inseparable companion of the Buddha. He was highly intelligent and learned and great commentator. The Buddha depended on him in various matters. On one occasion, the Buddha had observed, Sariputta !. In whichever direction you go, you emit the same sort of light as the Buddha does.”(Anguttara Nikaya Atthakatha, 1-4-1.)

The *Tripitakas* give an illustration of Sariputta’s intellect. When the Buddha’s recalcitrant disciple *Devadatta* broke away from the order with 500 Vajji monks, it was mainly the wit of Sariputta that could reclaim these 500 from the clutches of the rebel. (Vinaya Pitaka, Cullavagga, Sangha-vedaka-khandhaka.)

Once the Buddha said to Ananda,

“How do you like Sariputta”?

Ananda said in reply,

“*Bhante!* Who will not like the long-lived Sariputta unless he is a fool, a wicked person, or one with an unbalanced

mind? The long-lived Sariputta has a great knowledge and a great wisdom. His wisdom is as delightful as it is sharp." (Samyutta Nikaya, Anathapindikavagga, Susima Sutta.)

At Sariputta's death, the Buddha observed,

"A vast branch of *Kalpa* tree of Religion is gone".

The Buddha nick-named him as the spiritual commander.

4. **Moggallana**—Moggallana, like Sariputta, was among the foremost disciples of the Buddha. He was a great monk and was considered to be endowed with the greatest power (Anguttara Nikaya, 1-14.). As in the Jaina tradition we have many examples of the occult powers (*labdhi*) of Gautama, so in the Buddhist tradition, we have many stories about the occult powers (*radhi*) of Moggallana.

With Sariputta, Moggallana too had a hand in the reclamation of the 500 Vajji monks for the Buddha's order from the clutches of rebel Devadatta. (Vinaya Pitaka.)

Visakha, a female devotee of the Buddha had decided to erect an abode (Vihara) for the Buddha and his monks on an outlay of 27,00,000 gold coins. She prayed to the Buddha to give her a monk who could help her in supervising this work. Said the Buddha :

"You pick up the begging bowl and the rag of the monk whom you intend to have for this purpose."

Visakha thought the Moggallana commanded great powers by dint of which he could help her in the quick construction of the shelter. So she named him and the Buddha agreed. It is stated that because of the occult powers of the great Moggallana that Visakha's masons were able to mobilise big trees and stone-slabs from a distance of even 60 yojanas in course on a single night. (Dhammapada Atthakatha, 4-44.)

The Jaina tradition, however, does not permit a monk to assist in this sort of enterprise, nor does it consider worthwhile to permit a monk to display his occult powers. But even in this tradition, (in somewhat different contexts) we have on record many strange accounts of labdh-power and its application. We have noted elsewhere how Nandisena, a son of Srenika, who had joined the monastic order of Mahavira, displayed his power to stupefy a prostitute.

We have in the Jaina tradition the story of Mahavira shaking the whole of Mount Meru by the touch of his thumb in order to alert the Indra. Likewise, we have in the Buddhist tradition the story of Moggallana shaking a palace named Jayanta by the touch of his thumb for a similar purpose (Majjhima Nikaya, Cula-Tanha-Samkhaya Sutta.). It is stated that once the Buddha, Moggallana and others were at the topmost floor of a shelter (purvarama). At the ground floor of the same building some misguided monks were making a noise and indulging in indecent talks. To warn them, Moggallana shook the whole palace by dint of his occult power. When these misguided monks became thrilled and alarmed, the Buddha spoke to them words of enlightenment. (Samyutta Nikaya, Mahavagga, Rddhipada, Samyutta Prasada-Kampana-vagga, Mauggalana Sutta.)

About the monks of Mahavira, we have the following in the *Uvavai* (Uvavaiya, Sutta 15.) :—

There were many who could mentally curse or favour anyone.

There were many who could do the same by their speech.

There were many who could do the same by physical activity.

There were many who commanded *slesmausadha labdhi*; with their phlegm could be cured even most difficult diseases like leprosy.

There were many who commanded *jallausadha labdhi*; their body-dirt could cure any disease.

There were many who commanded *amarsausadha labdhi*; a drop of their urine could cure any disease.

There were many who commanded *amarsausadha labdhi*; a touch of their hand could cure any disease.

There were many who commanded *sarvasausadha labdhi*.

There were many monks who commanded *padanusari labdhi*.

There were many monks who commanded *sambhinnasrotr labdhi*; with any one sense organ, they could take the objects of all the sense organs. (For instance with their eyes, they could not only see, but also hear, smell, taste and touch).

There were many monks who commanded *aksinamahanasa labdhi*, they could feed hundreds, even thousands, with food they had begged before they themselves ate.

There were many monks who commanded *vikurvana labdhi* by dint of which they could assume any form.

There were many monks who commanded *janghacarana labdhi* by placing their hand on the upper part of the leg, they could, in a single flight, reach the 13th Rucakavara Isle or the summit of Mount Meru.

There were many who commanded *Vidyacharan Labdhi*; by a slight *upasatambha*, in two stages, they could reach the eighth isle named Nandisvara or the summit of Mount Meru.

There were many who commanded *akasatipati labdhi*; they could fly into the sky and shower from there silver and many other wholesome and unwholesome objects.

It is, however, stated that Moggallana had a very tragic end. People of other faiths became so very jealous of him that they beat him to death like a beast. His bones were smashed to small particles so that no single particle was bigger than a grain of rice. It is further stated that he could have saved himself by dint of his

spiritual powers, but he did not do that. He submitted to the torture silently taking it to be the outcome of his past karma. (Dhammapada Atthakatha, 10-7; Milinda-panna, Pari. 4, Varga 4, p.229.)

(5) *Ananda*—In several respects, Ananda was more intimate with the Buddha than either Sariputta or Moggallana. His relation with the Master makes an interesting and inspiring account. He was associated with many historic events which have become immortal in the Buddhist tradition. The inclusion of nuns in the Buddhist order was the outcome of his zeal. The Buddha was never in favour of it. He saw many faults in it. It was at the suggestion from Ananda that he initiated *Mahaprajapati* Gautami as a nun. But at the same time, the Buddha said,

“If, without nuns, this order would have lasted for a thousand years, now it will remain for not more than 500. The initiation of a woman in my order has knocked out half its life-span”.

The *Tripitakas* were compiled at the first Buddhist Council. Among the 500 *arhat-bhiksus* who attended, Ananda was the only one who had an authoritative knowledge of the *Sutras*. It was on his exclusive authority that the *Suttapitaka* was compiled. It is, however, interesting that for not obtaining the necessary clarifications about the texts from the Buddha during his life-time, Ananda had to make atonments before the whole *Sangha*. But by far the most surprising thing is that the *Sangha* penalised him on account of his proposal to the Buddha for the inclusion of women in the monastic order. (Refer to Jaina Texts.)

Ananda was the Buddha's personal attendant (*upasthaka*). The story of his attaining this position is very interesting. At his 56th year, the Buddha called all his monks and said :

“*Bhiksus*! Engage an attendant for me. In the absence of one, I am not getting proper attention. I say, go by this route, and the *Bhiksus* go by another route. Carelessly they place my bowl

and cloth on the ground. Overriding the claim of Sariputta, Moggallana and others, the Buddha took Ananda as his personal attendant." (Anguttara Nikaya Atthakatha, 1-4-1.)

From the time, Ananda became the Buddha's inseparable companion. Sometimes he put questions to the Buddha as *Ganadhara* Gautama did to Mahavira; and sometimes he gave his suggestions. Just as it stated that Gautama was linked to Mahavira in his previous births, so we have many accounts in the Jataka about Ananda's link with the Buddha in his previous births. When strangers came to see the Buddha, they had invariably to apply through him. Just as after the passing away of Mahavira, Gautama became very much overwhelmed with grief, so was Ananda after the passing away of the Buddha. As Ananda had come to know before hand that the Buddha would pass away on that day, he went aside, took the support of a pole and wept bitterly. In the case of Gautama, he became omniscient during the same night when Mahavira passed away. Ananda attained arhathood after a considerable gap but before he went to attend the first Buddhist Council. Like Gautama who felt a remorse till he became omniscient, Ananda too passed through a similar state till he became an arhat. Thus there is much similarity between the two events. (Uvasaga-dasao, Adhyayana 1.)

Mahavira too had a devoted follower bearing the same name (Ananda), but he was a householder. Beyond a similarity of the two names, there is nothing to cause confusion between the two. There was still another Ananda who was a monk in Mahavira's order. It was to this (third) Ananda that Gosalaka had said :

"By the stroke of my fiery powers, Mahavira will soon meet with his end."

(6) *Upali*—At the first Buddhist Council, it was Upali who reproduced the *Vinaya-sutta*. He had memorised this during his intimate association with the Buddha. (A barber by birth), he was initiated as a monk in the company of five Sakya princes named Bhaddiya, Ananda and others.

(7) **Mahakasyapa**—He was one of the very hard-working disciples of the Buddha. His early life was also very illustrious and inspiring. The legend of Pippalikumara and Bhadrakumari (Agama and Tripitaka Vol.2.) is based on his life. In the Buddha's monastic order, the same Pippalikumara became the long-lived Mahakasyapa. Touching his delicate and costly garment, once the Buddha spoke highly of it. He offered his garment to the Buddha, when the Buddha said :

“Supposing I accept your garment, can you use my old, coarse and dirty rags”?

Mahakasyapa was ready whereon there was an exchange of robes between the two. This has been considered to be a historic event in the life of the Buddha, as also in the Buddhist tradition.

Mahakasyapa was a learned man. He became famous as the commentator of the Buddhist suttas. At the Buddha's funeral, again, it was he who directed the funeral rites. On the day and at the time when the Buddha was to be cremated, he came in the company of 500 monks to the cremation ground (Digha Nikaya, Mahaparinivvana Sutta.). It was at his suggestion that King Ajatasatru preserved the bones of the Buddha in a metal casket which, at a later period, was opened by Emperor Asoka, and portions of the same were sent to far-off lands (Digha Nikaya Atthakatha, Mahaparinivvana Sutta.). He was one of the leading organisers of the first Buddhist Council. (Vinaya Pitaka, Cullavagga, Pancasatika Khandhaka.)

There were many other monks such as Ajna-kodinna, Anuruddha and many others who were intimately associated with the Buddha.

(8) **Gautami**—In the Buddhist tradition, the name of *Mahaprajapati* Gautami is as much famous as that of the great nun Candanavala in the Jain tradition. There is, however, no common ground between the early lives of the two, though both

were the first women disciples of their respective masters, and both headed the orders of nuns in the two orders.

Two things in life of Gautami are deserving of special attention. She not only induced the Buddha to accept women in his monastic order, but also suggested that the nuns should be given equal status with the monks. But in accepting Gautami in his monastic order, the Buddha imposed a number of conditions. One such condition was that even a fresh monk would be entitled to homage and obeisance from a veteran nun. Gautami agreed, but very soon after her initiation, she took the matter up with the Master. She submitted :

“Bhante ! Why do you insist that a veteran nun must pay homage and obeisance even to a newly initiated monk? Why should it not be to the contrary that a newly initiated monk should pay his homage and obeisance to a veteran nun”

On this, the Buddha said :

“Gautami ! Such is not the practice even in religious orders which are lesser than mine; and, you know, mine is a very superior religious order.” (Vinaya Pitaka, Cullavagga, Bhikkhuni-Khandhaka.)

The question raised by Gautami about the status of women in the Indian society at a distance of about 2556 years has not lost its significance even now. In contrast with the importance of the issue, the reply given by the Buddha would appear to be very evasive. The reply would give the impression that even among the great men, there are few who are prepared to give recognition to fresh values; most of them prefer to adhere to established practices and conventions. It is true that even now women are fighting to improve their status in a society which is dominated over by men; but the fact remains that even 2546 years earlier, there was a woman in this country who had made it an important issue with no less a man than the Buddha himself.

Gautami apart, a number of other nuns, notably Khema, Utpalavarna, Patacara, Bhadra, Kundala kesa, Bhadra Kapilayani and many others, became famous in the Buddhist order. In naming the Etadagga Vagga (foremost among the foremost) (Angutara Nikaya, Ekeka-nipata 14.), the Buddha himself had honoured the names of 41 monks and 12 nuns, giving specifically the best quality in each. The list would run as follows :

1. Ajna-Kaundinya—for his devotion to the Buddha; a *Brahmana* from Drona-vastu near Kapilavastu in the Sakya country.
2. Sariputta—for his wisdom; a *Brahmana* from Upatisya (Nalaka) which was not far from Rajagrha in Magadha.
3. Mahamoggallana—for his spiritual powers; a *Brahmana* from Kolita near Rajagrha in Magadha.
4. Mahakasyapa—for his renunciation; a *Brahmana* from Mahatirtha Brahmanagrama in Magadha.
5. Anurudha—for his divine vision; a Kshatriya from Kapilavastu in Sakya country. He was the cousin of the Buddha, being the son of his uncle Amrtaudan.
6. Bhaddiya Koligodha-putra—for his noble parentage; a Kshatriya from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
7. Lakuntaka Bhaddiya—for his mild voice; a Dhani (*Mahabhoga*) from Sravsti in Kosala.
8. Pindola Bharadvaja—for his roaring voice; a *Brahmana* from Rajagrha in Magadha.
9. Purna Maitrayani-putra—for being the best speaker of spiritual lores; a *Brahmana* from Dronavastu near Kapilavastu in Sakya contry.
10. Mahakatyayana—foremost among commentators; a *Brahmana* from Ujjaini in Avanti.

11. Cullapanthaka—for his mastery in giving shape to imagination and for his expertise in psychiatry; a son of a Sresthi's daughter from Rajagrha in Magadha.
12. Mahapanthaka—for his mastery of definitions (concepts); son of a Sresthi's daughter from Rajagrha in Magadha.
13. Subhuti—foremost among those who were liberated from pains; a Vaisya from Sravasti in Kosala.
14. Revata-Khadira-Vaniya—foremost among the forest-dwellers; a *Brahmana*, Sariputta's younger brother, from Nalaka Brahmana-grama (near Rajaraha) in Magadha.
15. Kankha Revata—foremost among mediators; a *Mahabhoga* from Sravasti in Kosala.
16. Son Kodivisa—most enterprising; a Sresthi from Campa in Anga.
17. Sona Kutikanna—foremost among speakers; a *Vaisya* from Kuraravara in Avanti.
18. Sivali—foremost among the covetous of spiritual gains; son of Supravasa, daughter of Koliya; a Kshatriya from Kundiya in Sakya country.
19. Vakkali—foremost among the most devoted; a *Brahmana* from Sravasti in Kosala.
20. Rahula—foremost among those who observed the discipline of the Sangha; son of Siddhartha (Buddha). a Kshatriya from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
21. Rastrapala—foremost among those who were initiated for their devotion; a Vaisya from Thullakonnita in Kuru.
22. Kundadhana—first to pick up the stick (*salaka*); a *Brahmana* from Sravasti in Kosala.

23. Vangisa—foremost among the writers of verses; a *Brahmana* from Sravasti in Kosala.
24. Vanganta-putra—foremost among the most graceful; Sariputta's younger brother; a *Brahmana* from Nalaka Brahmana-grama in Magadha.
25. Malla-putra Dravya—foremost among those who were in charge of beds and cushions; a Kshatriya from Anupiya in Malla.
26. Pilindivatsya—foremost among the beloved of the gods; a *Brahmana* from Sravasti in Kosala.
27. Vahiya-daru-ciriya—for his sharp intellect; a Kulaputra from Vahiya-rastra.
28. Kumara Kasyapa—among extempore speakers; from *Rajagrha* in Magadha.
29. Mahakosthita—foremost among the most consoled souls; a *Brahmana* from Sravasti in Kosala.
30. Ananda—foremost among the most well-versed, with keenest memory, most progressive outlook, with greatest perseverance and among the most intimate companions of the Buddha; son of Amrtaudan; a Kshatriya from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
31. Uruvela Kasyapa—foremost among the councillors; a *Brahmana* from Varanasi in Kasi.
32. Kala-Udayi—foremost among those who had brightened their lines; born in the family of a minister from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
33. Bakkula—foremost among those enjoying a most perfect health; a Vaisya from Kausambi in Vatsa.
34. Sobhita—foremost among those who had a memory of their previous birth (s); a *Brahmana* from Sravasti in Kosala.

35. Upali—foremost among the most courteous; by caste a Barber from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
36. Nandaka—chief adviser in the affairs of the order of nuns; from a noble family at Sravasti in Kosala.
37. Nanda—foremost among those who had subdued their senses; son of Mahaprajapati; a Kshatriya from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
38. Mahakappina—chief adviser in the affairs of the monks; born in a royal household from Kukkutavati on the frontier.
39. Svagata—foremost among experts in teja-dhatu; a Brahmana from Sravasti in Kosala.
40. Radha—foremost for his great brilliance; a Brahmana from Rajagṛha in Magadha.
41. Mogharaja—foremost among those who put on coarse rags; a disciple of Bavari; a Brahmana from Sravasti in Kosala.

The following is the list of the foremost amongst the nuns :

1. Mahaprajapati Gautami—for her great devotion for the Buddha; wife of Siddhodana; a Koliya Kshatriyani from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
2. Khema—for her great wisdom; wife of Bimbisara, King of Magadha; a princess from Sagala in Madras.
3. Utpala-varna—for her great spiritual powers; born in a Sresthi family of Sravasti in Kosala.
4. Patacara—foremost for her courtesy; born in a Sresthi family of Sravasti in Kosala.
5. Dhammadinna—foremost among discourse-givers; wife of Visakha Sresthi of Rajagṛha in Magadha.
6. Nanda—foremost in meditation daughter of Mahaprajapati Gautami; from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.

7. Sona—most enterprising from a noble household at Sravasti in Kosala.
8. Sakula—foremost among those endowed with a divine vision; from a noble household at Sravasti in Kosala.
9. Bhadra-Kundalakesa—the most brilliant; born in a Sresthi family at Rajagrha in Magadha.
10. Bhadra Kapilayani—for her memory of previous birth(s); wife of Mahakasyapa; a Brahmani from sagala in Madras.
11. Bhadra-Katyayani—for her divine powers (abhijan) daughter of Rahulamata who, in turn, was the daughter of Suprabuddha, resident of Devadaha; a Koliya Kshatriyani from Kapilavastu in Sakya country.
12. Krsa Gautami—for her use of coarse rags; a Vaisya from Sravasti in Kosala.
13. Sragala-Mata—the most respectful; born in a Sresthi family at Rajagrha in Magadha.”

According to Jain Muni, Dr. Nagaraja, “In the Jaina Agamas, we do not come across any list of the foremost among the foremost as we have in the Buddhist texts cited above; but the figures in the Kappa Sutta of the omniscients and others and the account in the Uvavaiya give an idea about the length of penances of the nirgrantha monks and their other multifarious qualities. As to penances, it is stated, in part, as follows:

“Many monks practised a penance called kanakavali, many practised ekavali, laghusinha-niskridita, mahasinha-niskridita, bhadra-pratima, mahabhadra-pratima, sarvatobhadra-pratima, ayamvila-varidhamana, tapah, pratima, for one month, for two months, and so on, till seven months, pratima for one, two or three weeks for whole day and night, pratima for one day-night, pratima for one night, seven

saptamika pratima, yava-madhyha-candra-pratima, and many practised vajra-madhyha-candra-pratima”.

As to qualities of the monks, it is stated in the same Sutra :

“The monks were endowed with knowledge, with vision, with conduct, with humility and with simplicity. They were endowed with oration, brilliance, speech and fame. They had conquered senses, slumber and hardships. They had no expectation from life and no fear from death. They were experts in arts like prajnapiti, etc., and in the use of mantras. They were excellent, wise, restrained from sex, truthful and clean. They wore a beautiful complexion., They had overcome all the worldly desires. They were above all curiosities, careful about the observance of rules prescribed for a monk and experts in breaking both the external and internal ties. They were well-acquainted with their own philosophies as well as those of others. They were foremost in defeating their rivals who held different views. They knew well the 12 Angas and were the masters of all the ganipitakas. They knew all word-formations and all languages. Although they were not yet complete Jinas, they were very much near them”. (Uvavaiya, Sutta 15-16.)

The life-story of many monks and nuns remains scattered here and there in the entire Agamic literature from which it is possible to gather their individual traits.

(9) **Dhanya of Kakandi**—Dhanya of Kakandi became a monk by giving up 32 young maidens and 32 seraglios.. Under the guidance of Mahavira, he practised very severe penances so that his body was reduced to a mere skeleton. On a point of enquiry about him by King Bimbisara, Mahavira said, in part, as follows :

“In a group of 14,000 monks, this monk Dhanya is about to perform something most difficult by dint of his penances, his spiritual exertions.” (Anuttarovavai-dasao, Varga 3, Adhyayana 1.)

(10) **Meghakumara**—During the first night after his initiation, Meghakumara, the son of King Bimbisara, deviated from his path. Thought he :

“Till yesterday, when I was a prince, all the monks took care of me and expressed their affection and respect for me. Today, I have become a monk, but where are their affection and respect for me gone? Without caring for me, they run about their own affairs. They do not assemble round me as they did in the past. The place allotted to me for taking rest (sleeping) is the last one near the door so that while going out or coming in they disturb me all the time. What sort of behaviour is this towards me? At dawn, I shall return my monk’s garment to *Bhagavan* Mahavira.”

In the morning, as he stood before Bhagavan Mahavira, the latter know his mind by dint of his omniscience and said :

“Meghakumara ! Last night, you had such and such thoughts in your mind, and you have made up your mind to go back to your palace-home by handing over the monk’s pot, duster, etc. Is it correct?”

“*Bhante* ! Every word of what you have stated is correct”.

In order to refix him in necessary restraint, Mahavira gave him necessary advice and spoke to him revealing his life in the previous birth whereon Meghakumara was refixed in restraint.

Meghakumara acquired the knowledge of his previous birth. He studied and mastered 11 Angas. He practised the most difficult of penances named guna-ratna-samvatsara and also 12 pratimas. In the end, with the permission of Mahavira, he courted death by a long fast unto death, and was born as a god in an excellent existence.

(11) **Nanda**—In the Buddhist tradition, a new initiate named Nanda (the Buddha's Cousin) underwent a similar predicament as did Meghakumara in the Jaina tradition, Remembering the final entreaties of his newly-wed bride Janapada-Kalyani Nanda, he was shaken immediately after his initiation. The Buddha came to know this and went to reclaim him. The Buddha pointed to a she—monkey on the street whose ears, nose and tail were cut, whose hairs were burnt, whose skin was wrecked and blood dropped therefrom, and said :

“Is Your life more beautiful than this?”

“Sure, of course” !

Thereafter the Buddha took him to the Trayastrimsa heaven. The Indra along with him nymphs bowed before him. Pointing to the nymphs, the Buddha said :

“Is your Janapada-Kalyani Nanda more beautiful than these”?

“No, sir, to these, Janapada-Kalyani stands in the same position as the lame monkey does to her”.

The Buddha said :

“Then why are you so much excited for her? Observe the rules of monkhood, and you will acquire nymphs like these. (Vide Avasyaka Sutta, Malayagiri Commentaries.)

Nanda was refixed in the monastic order. His motive for a material gain was, however, completely erased only after he was ridiculed by 80 monks including Sariputta who said that Nanda had become a monk in order to win the nymphs. In this manner, Nanda was freed from desires and he became an *arhat*. (Suttanipata Atthakatha, p 272.)

The facts over which Meghakumara and Nanda became perturbed were somewhat different, but the course of events for both bears a lot of resemblance. Mahavira refixed Meghakumara by showing him the scene of tenacity and perseverance which he

possessed in his previous life, whereas the Buddha reclaimed Nanda by pointing to the joy he will be entitled to by leading the life of a monk. Deserving of special note is that like Meghakumara who was an elephant in his previous birth, we have it on the authority of the Jatakas that Nanda was also an elephant in his previous birth. (Sangamavacara Jataka 182, (Hindi ed.) Vol. 2, pp. 248-254.)

(12) **Salibhadra**—Salibhadra of Rajagraha, whose treasures had been a cause of wonder of King Bimbisara, became an excellent monk in his life. He regularly practised fasts for one, two or even three months at a time. Once Mahavira came to Rajagraha in the company of a large number of monks. Salibhadra was in the group. On the day they arrived, Salibhadra was to break his fast for a month.

So, with his head bent low, he sought permission from *Bhagavan* Mahavira to move into the city to beg. Said *Bhagavan* Mahavira :

“You go and receive food from your mother’s hand”.

Salibhadra came to his mother Bhadra. She was busy in her own business and did not pay attention to the monk. Other members of the household did not recognise him. Salibhadra returned empty-handed. On the way, he met a milk-maid who carried a pot of curds on her head. When she saw the monk, she felt a spontaneous affection for him. A spark of thrill ran through her body, and milk flowed out from her breasts. She requested the monk to accept some curd from her. The monk accepted it and returned to the shelter. After he had broken his fast, he made the following submission to *Bhagavan* Mahavira :

“*Bhante* ! You asked me to receive food from my mother’s hand in order to break my fast. How is it that it did not materialise”?

Said *Bhagavan* Mahavira :

“Salibhadra ! You have broken your fast with food received from your mother in the previous birth”.

On the same day, with the permission of *Bhagavan* Mahavira, Salibhadra went up the Baibhara hill and courted fast unto death. Meanwhile, Bhadra came to Mahavira's congregation. From *Bhagavan* Mahavira, she got a complete account about her son from the time he visited his former home in order to beg food to break his fast till now when he was on a fast unto death. The mother's feelings for her darling child are easier to imagine than state. At once, she rushed to the hill and went up. She was completely overwhelmed and shaken to see the initiated frame of her son, now dedicated to death by a fast. She began to cry aloud. King Bimbisara spoke words to console the mother's grief and took her back home.

Having discarded his mortal frame, Salibhadra became a god in heaven. He had started the life on the pinnacle of wealth and affluence; but when it closed, he was on the pinnacle of restraint and renunciation.

(13) *Skandaka*—He had been inducted from the order of parivrajaka monks into the monastic order of Mahavira. It is extremely noteworthy that, a highly accomplished man as he was, he not only changed over to another order, but soon gained for himself a noteworthy position in the new order of his adaptation. We have it in the Agamas that monk Skandaka walked carefully, stopped carefully, sat carefully, slept carefully, ate carefully and spoke carefully. He practised restraint towards one-organ beings, two-to-five-organ beings, flora-bodies and static beings. Skandaka had courted the five precautions, was restrained in mind, in words and in body, was devoid of desires and of restlessness and was rooted in restraint. Skandaka mastered the 11 Angas under the guidance of the senior monks, and with the permission of *Bhagavan* Mahavira, performed a prolonged penance named

guna-ratna-samvatsara. As a result of this severe penance, his body which was beautiful, well-proportioned and pleasant became rough, dry and *emaciated*. All his flesh was gone, and he was reduced to a mere skeleton with a cover of skin on it. When he moved, his bones rattled like a moving cart loaded with dry leaves or with charcoal. But he shone all the time due to brilliances acquired through severest penances.

What to speak of talking, Skandaka felt weak even when he desired to talk. Considering the state of his body, one day, he came to *Bhagavan* Mahavira and sought his permission for a fast unto death. Having obtained the necessary permission, and duly attended by fellow monks, he proceeded to Mount Vipula where he courted the fast as per rules. After fulfilling the fast for a month, he passed away to be born as a god in a heaven named Acyutakalpa. Among the monks around *Bhagavan* Mahavira, he held a very important position.

Among the nuns in Mahavira's order, Candanavala was indeed the leadingmost; but others deserving mention were Mrgavati, Devananda, Jayanti, Sudarsana and others.

Such is the brief account of the monks and nuns who lived with and around the respective leaders of the two order, Mahavira and Buddha.

Wending through the *Agamas* and *Tripitakas*, one comes across ample material about the followers and disciples of both Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. To signify these, both the orders have used a common term, *Srama-nopasaka*. Both Jainism and Buddhism were of a common cult called *Sramana*, and the term *Sramanopasaka* reveals the common source of the two. Even the word *sravaka* has been used in both the traditions; but whereas in the Jaina tradition, a *sravaka* is a lay-follower, in the Buddhist tradition, it may be a monk as well as a follower, e.g., *bhiksu-sravaka*, *upasaka-sravaka*.

Leading Jaina Upasakas

Muni Nagaraja further observes : “The accounts about the leading followers are more organised and detailed in the Agamas than in the Tripitakas. Among the 11 *Agamas* in the Jaina tradition, the seventh one is devoted to the life-story of 10 leading *Sravakas*. This apart, the *Bhagavati* and many other canonical texts have noticed innumerable followers, both male and female. The account of 10 *Sravakas* in the Uvasagadasao gives details of their conversion, their riches and their cowherd. Each one of these 10 *Sravakas*, it is stated, possessed 24,00,00,000 gold coins and 80,000 cowherds. The Buddhist follower Visakha is stated to have even a much greater amount of wealth with her and she is stated to have spent 27,00,00,000 gold coins in the construction of Purvaram, a shelter for the use of the Buddhist monks. We further learn from the *Tripitakas* that the Buddhist followers, too, maintained large herds of cattle. The main traits of the Buddhist followers have been stated to be lavish outlay on the construction of shelters for the monks and on making offers of food, clothing etc. to the monks. In contrast, the principal traits of the Jaina followers have been the fulfilment of 12 vows, practice of equanimity, penances, etc. We have thrilling accounts of the disturbances created by gods (with wrong outlook) in the performance of spiritual practices by the followers. In consequence, some slipped from their path, while others held firm. The ten leading followers of whom account is given in the Uvasagadasao are as follows:

1. Ananda from Vanijyagrama possessed 40,000 cows and 12 crores of gold coins.
2. Kamadeva from Campa possessed 60,000 cows and 18 crores of gold coins.
3. Culinippiya from Varanasi possessed 80,000 cows and 24 crores of gold coins.

4. Suradeva from Varanasi possessed 60,000 cows and 18 crores of gold coins.
5. Cullasataka from Alambhika possessed 60,000 cows and 18 crores of gold coins.
6. Kunda-Kolika from Kampilyapura possessed 60,000 cows and 18 crores of gold coins.
7. Sakadala-putra from Polasapura possessed 10,000 cows and 3 crores of gold coins.
8. Mahasataka from Rajagraha possessed 80,000 cows and 24 crores of gold coins.
9. Nandini-pita from Sravasti possessed 40,000 cows and 12 crores of gold coins.
10. Salihi-pita from Sravasti possessed 40,000 cows and 12 crores of gold coins.

Apart from these 10 leading followers, *Bhagavan* Mahavira had many others of whom the following are deserving of mention:

Sankha, Pokhali, Sudarsana, Sulasa, and Revati. It has been stated that Mahavira had a total of 1,59,000 male followers and 3,18,000 female followers. But it is not indicated what type of followers they were *i.e.* whether they were ordinary followers of Mahavira or they practised the 12 vows prescribed by him.”¹³

As referred earlier in detail, the presence of Ganadharas in Jaina literature is very important, who were disciples of Mahavira.

According to Mohan Lal Mehta, “of the eleven principal disciples (*ganadharas*) of Lord Mahavira, only two, *viz.*, Indrabhati and Sudharman survived him. After twenty years of the liberation of Mahavira Sudharman also attained emancipation. He was the last of the eleven *ganadharas* to die., Jambu, the last omniscient, was his pupil. He attained salvation after sixty-four years of the liberation of Mahavira.

13. Nagaraja, Dr. Muni : Agama and Tripitaka—A Comparative Study. pp. 348-371.

The detailed account have been given in earlier pages. We may mention a few :

Bhadrabahu

Bhadrabahu, belonging to the sixth generation since Sudharman, lived in the third century B.C. He died 170 years after Mahavira. He was the last *srutakevalin*—possessor of knowledge of all the scriptures less four Purvas (a portion of the Distivada). He could learn the first ten Purvas with meaning and the last four without meaning. Thus, knowledge of the canonical texts started diminishing gradually. There are still a good many authentic original scriptures preserved in the Svetambara tradition. Of course, some of the canons have, partly or wholly, undergone modifications. The Digambaras believe that all the original canonical texts have vanished.

Mehta further says : “Up to Jambu there is no difference as regards the names of pontiffs in the Digambara and Svetambara tradition. They are common in both the branches. The name of Bhadrabahu is also common, though there is a lot of difference regarding the events in relation to his life. There is no unanimity with regard to the name of his own successor, too. The names of intermediary pontiffs are, of course, quite different. Judging from the total picture it seems that in fact there had been two different preceptors bearing the name of Bhadrabahu in the two traditions. Probably they were contemporary. The Svetambara account mentions that the death of *srutakevali* Bhadrabahu occurred 170 years after the liberation of Mahavira, whereas the Digambara tradition maintains that Bhadrabahu died 162 years after Mahavira’s emancipation.

According to the tradition of the Svetambara, preceptor Bhadrabahu had been to Nepal and remained there engaged in some specific course of meditation. Sthulabhadra and some other monks went to Nepal to learn the Dristivada from Bhadrabahu.

The Digambara tradition believes in a migration of Bhadrabahu and other monks to South India. It holds that the Head of the Jaina Church in the times of Candragupta's reign (322-298 B.C.) was Bhadrabahu. He was the last *srutakevalin*. He prophesied a twelve-year famine and led a migration of a large number of Jaina monks to south India. They settled in the vicinity of Sravana Belgola in mysore. Bhadrabahu himself died there. King Candragupta, an adherent of the Jaina faith, left his throne and went to Sravana Belgola. He lived there for a number of years in a cave as an ascetic and finally embraced death."

Full account has been mentioned earlier also.

Samprati

Samprati was great promoter of Jaina religion. Mehta observes : "Sthulabhadra's pupil Suhastin had won King Samprati, the grandson of and successor to Asoka, for Jainism. Samprati was very zealous in the promotion and propagation of Jainism. He showed his enthusiasm by causing Jaina temples to be erected over the whole of the country. During Suhastin's stay at Ujjain (Samprati's capital), and under his guidance, splendid religious festivals were celebrated. The devotion manifested by the king and his subjects on such occasions was great. The example and advice of King Samprati induced his vassals to embrace and patronise Jainism. He had sent out missionaries as far as to south India. In order to extend the sphere of their activities to non-Aryan countries, Samprati sent there Jaina monks as messengers. They acquainted the people with the kind of food and other requisites which Jaina monks may accept as alms. Having thus prepared the way for them, Samprati induced the superior to send monks to those countries. Accordingly, missionaries were sent to the countries of Andhra and Dramila in south India.

Kharavela

King Kharavela patronised and propagated Jaina religion. Mehta observes : "Somewhere near Samprati's time there lived King Kharavela of Kalinga. His inscription in a cave of Khandagiri, dating around the middle of the second century B.C., tells among other things of how he constructed rock-dwellings and gave abundant gifts to Jaina devotees. There are some Jaina caves in sandstone hills known as Khandagiri, Udayagiri and Nilagiri in Orissa. The Hathigumpha or Elephant Cave, as it is now known, was an extensive natural cave. It was improved by King Kharavela. It has a badly damaged inscription of this king. The inscription begins with a Jaina way of veneration."

Kalakacarya and Gardabhilla

"In the first century B.C. when Gardabhilla was the king of Ujjain, there lived a famous Jaina preceptor known as Kalakacarya. King Gardabhilla carried off Sarasvati, a Jaina nun, who was the sister of Kalakacarya. After repeated requests and threats when Kalakacarya found that the king was not prepared to set the nun free, he travelled west of the Indus and persuaded the Sakas to attack Ujjain and overthrow Gardabhilla. The Sakas attacked Ujjain and established themselves in the city. Vikramaditya, the successor to Gardabhilla, however, expelled the invaders and re-established the native dynasty. He is said to have been won for Jainism by some Jaina preceptor."¹⁴

Religious and Ascetic Upsurge

The sixth century BC is a period of global religious and social revolt and transformation. In India, Mahavira and Buddha, during this period changed the entire course of history.

According to Rekha Chaturvedi : "The general atmosphere of Mahavira's and Buddha's time was of religious and ascetic

14. Mehta, Mohan Lal : *Jaina Culture*, pp. 16-18.

upsurge and of intellectual pursuits. The era was lit up by the personalities of reformers who denied the God, the Vedas, superiority of Brahmins, their institution of sacrifices and rituals. Both encouraged monastic life, irrespective of caste, creed or sex. For them the shortest way to salvation was only possible through spiritual discipline, self realisation and renunciation. Both emphasised that by living an austere life of purity and virtue man's emancipation from suffering was possible. Out of his own group of six heretical teachers, Ajit Kesakambalin was utter materialist, *Purana Kassapa*, the amoral cynic, Pakudha Kaccayana the hedonist and Sanjay was sceptic who rejected all possibility of the knowledge of self. In spite of these a number of theories and doctrines were expounded by many religious teachers of the era."¹⁵

Mahavira clung to the doctrine of self mortification while Buddha fought the middle path. He considered the path of asceticism of no value. Mahavira declared that Nirvana could be attained through the difficult and painful path of rigorous practices of asceticism. Self restraint with regard to the body, speech and mind were the other practices of the same path. Mahavira prescribed that austerities or penances were to be resorted for ultimate liberation.

In Jainism the conduct of a house holder occupies a subservient position to that of a monk. In fact the life of a householder is just a stepping stone to the life of a monk.

15. Chaturvedi, Rekha : Aceticism in Jaina Monastic order.

6

MAHAVIRA : WANDERINGS AND MONSOON CAMPS

In olden days great prophets and teachers like Mahavira and Buddha and several other philosophers have travelled through thick forests, crossing rivers and mountains on foot unmindful of hunger and thirst. They never bothered for cold and heat, rough and rugged pathways. Both Mahavira and Buddha preached their principles of truth, non-violence, peace and equality, moving from one place to another, meeting people and showing them path of ultimate reality. This shramana tradition went on for long and still alive in one form or the other.

In the Agamas and Tripitakas there is mention of Purana Kassapa, Pakudha Kaccayana, Ajita Kesakambali, Sanjaya Velatthiputta, who were contemporaries of Mahavira and Buddha.

Mahavira and Buddha arose from the Kshatriya clan, and following ascetic tradition, the shraman culture preached self-restraint, detachment from worldly pleasure, penance, and non-violence, quite distinct from Brahmanic rituals and their monastic order. Both preached their own philosophy and religion and their teachings attracted a large number of people while travelling from village to village and cities. Much is written in Jain and Buddhist texts regarding their religious trips (dhamma jatras), wanderings and monsoon camps, known as chaturmas or varshawas in popular language.

In the words of Dr. Muni Nagaraja :

“Both the great men of their age bear a close resemblance in their wanderings as well as in their monsoon camps. Both walked through Magadha, Videha, Kasi, Kosala, Vatsa, Anga, Vajji, Malla and many other kingdoms. Rajagraha, Mithila, Varanasi, Sravasti, Kausambi, Campa, Vaisali and Pava, these were the capitals of the aforesaid kingdoms. Both passed through these places many a time. Both spent a good number of their monsoons at these capital cities. According to the calculations both must have spent at least two monsoons together at Rajagraha.

A complete account of Mahavira's monsoon camps is given in the *Kappa Sutta*. Monsoon sojourns apart, the account of Mahavira's visit to other places is scattered throughout the *Agamas* in the context of other events. A chronological account of the events of Mahavira's life is contained in the *Niryukti*, Curni and commentary of the Avasyaka, in the commentaries of the *Kappa Sutta*, and in the biographies of Mahavira written by Nemicaandra, Gunacaandra and Hemacaandra. But there is no separate account of his wanderings and monsoon camps either in the *Kappa Sutta* or in other Jaina literary works. Some recent scholars, notably Muni Kalyanvijayji and *Acarya* Vijayendra Suri have sought to fill up this gap.¹”

Though according to Dr. Muni Nagaraja in Buddhist canon the wandering and monsoon camps of Lord Buddha are not available in chronological order, but Buddhist scholars have made a detailed study and there is enough material on this subject.

Like Mahavira, Buddha after renouncing the world established his religious order, wandered from place to place, preached his teachings and within a short span of time a large number of people joined him as Bhikhus (Baudha shramana). Many kings and merchants of repute have been mentioned in Buddhist sources who became his followers. During his life time this practice continued vigorously.

1. Nagaraja, Dr. Muni : *Agama and Tripitaka— Comparative Study*, p. 561.

Buddhist Pitakas have given the account of his wanderings. There is fairly a good record of his monsoon camps and other religious travels in Anguttara Nikaya, Atthakathas, Jatakas etc. Buddhist scholar Bharat Singh Upadhyaya had made a detailed study of Buddha's wanderings and monsoon camps from geographical view point. A chronological account of their wanderings and monsoon camps is reproduced below from Jaina source

I. Mahavira's Wanderings and Monsoon Camps²

<i>B.C.</i>	<i>Year (ordinal)</i>	<i>(As a Monk) Wanderings</i>	<i>Camps</i>
1	2	3	4
569	1	Kundagrama, Jnatakhandaavana, Karmaragrama, Kollaga Sannivesa, Moraka Sannivesa, Duijjantaka Ashrama, Asthikagrama.	Asthikagrama (Vardhaman)
568	2	Moraka Sannivesa, Vacala, South Vacala, Suvama Valuka (river), Rupya Valuka (river), Kanakakhala Ashramapada, North Vacala, Svetambi, Surabhipura, the Ganga, Thunaka Sannivesa, Rajagraha, Nalanda Sannivesa	Nalanda Sannivesa
567	3	Kollaga Sannivesa, Suvama-khala, Brahmanagrama, Campa	Campa
566	4	Kalaya Sannivesa, Patta Kalaya, Kumaraka Sannivesa, Coraka Sannivesa, Prastha-Campa.	Prstha-Campa
565	5	Kayangala Sannivesa, Sravasti, Halidduyam, Jangala, Avatta, Coraya Sannivesa, Kalamkabuka Sannivesa, Radhadesa (non-Aryan land), Purnakalasa (non-Aryan village), Malaya Pradesa, Bhaddiya	Bhaddiya

2. Ibid., p: 562.

1	2	3	4
564	6	Kayali Samagama, Jambusanda, Tambaya, Sannivesa, Kupiya Sannivesa, Vaisali, Gramaka Sannivesa, Salisirs, Bhaddiya.	-do-
563	7	Magadha, Alambhiya.	Alambhiya
562	8	Kundala Sannivesa, Maddana Sannivesa, Bahusalaga, Salavana, Lohargala, Purimatala, Sakatamukha park, Unnaga (Tunnaga), Gobhumi, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
561	9	Ladha, Vajrabhumi, Sumhabhumi, non-Aryana lands.	Vajrabhum
560	10	Siddharthapura, Kurmagrama, Siddharthapura, Vaisali, the Gandak (river), Vanijyagrama, Sravasti.	Sravasti
559	11	Sanulatthiya Sannivesa, Drdhabhumi, Polasa caitya, Valuka, Hatthisisa, Tosali, Siddharthapura, Vrajagaon, Alambhiya, Seyavia, Sravasti, Kosambi, Varanasi, Rajagraha, Mithila, Vaisali (Kama Mahavena).	Vaisali
558	12	Sumsumarapura, Bhogapura, Nandigram, Mendhiyagrama, Kosambi, Sumangala, Succheta, Palaka, Campa.	Campa
557	13	Jambhiyagrama, Mendhiya, Chammani, Madhyama Apapa, Jambhiyagrama, the Riju-valuka (river as a Kevalin).	
557	1	The Riju-valuka, Pavapuri, Rajagrha.	Rajagraha
556	2	Rajagraha, Brahmanakunda, Vaisali.	Vaisali
555	3	Vaisali, Kosambi, Sravasti Vanijyagrama.	Vanijyagrama
554	4	Vanijyagrama, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha

1	2	3	4
553	5	Rajagraha, Campa, Vitabhaya, Vanijyagrama.	Vanijyagrama
552	6	Vanijyagrama, Varansasi, Alambhiya, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
551	7	Rajagraha.	Rajagraha ³
550	8	Rajagraha, Alambhiya, Kosambi, Vaisali.	Vaisali
549	9	Vaisali, Mithila, Kakandi, Kampilyapura, Polasapura, Vanijyagrama, Vaisali.	Vaisali
548	10	Vaisali, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
547	11	Rajagraha, Krtangala, Sravasti, Vanijyagrama.	Vanijyagrama
546	12	Vanijyagrama, Brahmanakunda, Kosambi, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
545	13	Rajagraha, Campa, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
544	14	Rajagraha, Kakindi, Mithila, Campa.	Campa
543	15	Campa, Sravasti, Medhiyagrama, Campa, Mithila.	Mithila
542	16	Mithila, Hastinapura, Moca City, Vanijyagrama.	Vanijyagrama
541	17	Vanijyagrama, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
540	18	Rajagraha, Prasth-Campa, Campa, Darsanapura, Vanijyagrama.	Vanijyagrama
539	19	Vanijyagrama, kampilyapura, Vaisali.	Vaisali
538	20	Vaisali, Vanijyagrama, Vaisali.	Vaisali
537	21	Vaisali, Rajagraha, Campa, Prastha- Campa, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
536	22	Rajagraha, nalanda.	Nalanda

3. Ibid., p. 563.

1	2	3	4
535	23	Nalanda, Vanijyagram, Vaisali	Vaisali
534	24	Vaisali, Saketa, Vaisali.	Vaisali
533	25	Vaisali, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
532	26	Rajagraha, Nalanda.	Nalanda
531	27	Nalanda, Mithila	Mithila ⁴
530	28	Mithila	Mithila
529	29	Mithila, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
528	30	Rajagraha, Apapapuri. (Liberation)	Apapapuri (Pava) ⁵

II. Buddha's Wanderings and Monsoon Camps⁶

553	1	Kapilavastu, Anupiya (Malla) Rajagraha, Uruvela (According to the Mahayana tradition, Kapilavastu, Vaisali, Rajagraha, Uruvela).	Uruvela (Senanigrama)
552	2	Uruvela	Uruvela
551	3	Uruvela	Uruvela
550	4	Uruvela	Uruvela
549	5	Uruvela	Uruvela
548	6	Uruvela	Uruvela

(After Enlightenment)

547	1	Uruvela, Gaya, Risipattana (Varanasi)	Risipattana (Varanasi)
546	2	Risipattana, Uruvela, Gaya, Rajagraha. (According to Bharat Singh Upadhyaya, Vaisali, Kapilavastu, Anupiya, Rajagraha).	Rajagraha

4. Ibid., p. 564.

5. Ibid., p. 565.

6. Ibid., p. 566.

1	2	3	4
545	3	Rajagraha, Kapilavastu, Anupiya (Malla), Nalakapana (Kosala) Rajagraha. (According to Upadyaya, Rajagraha, Vaisali, Sravasti, Kitagiri, Alavi, Rajagraha).	Rajagraha
544	4	Rajagraha, Vaisali, Sravasti, Rajagraha. (According to Upadhyaya).	Rajagraha
543	5	Rajagraha, Kapilavastu, Vaisali.	Vaisali
542	6	Vaisali, Mankula Parvat.	Mankula Parvat
541	7	Mankula Parvat, Rajagraha, Sravasti, Trayastrimsa.	Trayastrimsa
540	8	Trastrimsa, Samkasyanagar, Sravasti, Rajagraha, Vaisali, Sumsumaragiri.	Sumsumaragiri
539	9	Sumsumaragiri, Kosambi, Balaka Lonakara, Pracina Vamsadava. (According to Upadhyaya, Kosambi, Kammasadamma, Kuru).	Kosambi
538	10	Pracina Vamsadava, Parileyaka, Sravasti.	Parileyaka
537	11	Nala (Ekanala, according to Upadhyaya).	Nala
536	12	Nala, Nalanda, Pancasala, Kammasadamma (Kuru) Mathura, Veranja. (Sravasti, Veranja, according to Upadhyaya).	Veranja ⁷
535	13	Veranja, Varanasi, Vaisali, Caliya Parvat (Veranja, Mathura, Veranja, Koreyya, Samkassa, Kannakujja, Payagapati-tthana, Varanasi, Vaisali, Sravasti, Caliya Parvat, according to Upadhyaya).	Caliya Parvat

7 Ibid., p. 567.

1	2	3	4
534	14	Caliya Parvat, Vaisali, Bhaddiya, Apana (Anguttarapa), Kusinara, Atuma, Sravasti.	Sravasti
533	15	Sravasti, Manasakata (Kosala) Icchanangala (Kosala), Opasada, Khanumatta (Magadha), Campa, Kapilavastu.	Kapilavastu
532	16	Kapilavastu, Ketagiri, Alavi.	Alavi
531	17	Alavi, Rajagraha. (Alavi, Sravasti, Alavi, Rajagraha, according to Upadhyaya).	Rajagraha
530	18	Rajagraha, Caliya Parvat.	Caliya Parvat
529	19	Caliya Parvat, Campa, Kajagala, Silavati (Suhma), Setakannika (Suhma), Caliya Parvat. (According to Upadhyaya, Caliya Parvat, Alavi, Caliya Parvat).	-do-
528	20	Caliya Parvat, Rajagraha.	Rajagraha
527	21	Rajagraha, Sravasti, Kapilavastu, Samagama, Pava, Vaisali. (According to Rahula Samkrtayana, Buddha visited Samagama and Pava only two years before liberation, and not at this date).	Sravasti ⁸

We find, detailed mention of Buddha's wanderings and camps in various Buddhist sources which have been located by historians as well as Buddhist Scholars.⁹

In the words of Paul Dundas : "For twelve and a half years, Mahavira wandered in the region of the Ganges basin part of which time he spent with another ascetic called Makkhali Gosala, often

8. Ibid., p. 568.

9. Chanchreek, K.L. : *Buddha Vansaj Koli Jati ka Itihas*, pp. 106, 131. (For detailed study see Upadhyaya, Bharat Singh : *Buddha Kalin Bhartiya Bhugol*, pp. 51-165).

enduring physical abuse from men and attacks by animals, fasting and meditating all the while, as a result of which heroic mode of his life he received the epithet Great Hero (Mahavira) and subsequently, in accordance with the destiny of all formakers he attained enlightenment. He then converted eleven Brahmans who were to become the leaders of the troop (Ganadharas), the heads of the ascetic order and the basis of the community as a whole. Mahavira died aged seventy-two at the town of Pava.¹⁰

In the Jaina history all these places where Mahavira stayed have become holy places.

10. Dundas Paul : *The Jains*, p. 19.

JAIN TRADITION AFTER MAHAVIRA

I

Difference Within the Sect

After the salvation (nirvana) of Mahavira at Pava, some differences arose among his followers which is also visible in other contemporary sects. Therefore it is not surprising but a natural phenomenon.

As already stated Mahavira has large following besides Ganadharas during his life time and even after his salvation. From an oral tradition of his teachings and philosophy, systematic codification was made in a council of monks at Pataliputra.

In the words of Tukol : "It is immensely difficult to be the torchbearer of a great Master. Mention has already been made that Indrabhuti Gautama was initiated into the Order of Sravanas (Shramana) culture along with his two brothers and that Gautama became the first Ganadhara or the Apostle. Of the eleven ganadharas or apostles, Indrabhuti and Sudharma (Sudharman) were the only persons to survive their Master. Mahavira was the head of an excellent community of 14000 monks; 36000 nuns, 159000 male lay-votaries and 318000 female lay-votaries. Indrabhuti attained liberation 12 years after his Master had attained nirvana. Sudharma followed him eight years later. Jambusvami was the disciple of Sudharma and he attained nirvana 64 years after the nirvana of Mahavira.

Bhadrabahu and Silabhadra were contemporaries in the sixth generation after Sudharman had attained liberation. It is natural that there should have been differences between the groups of followers about the tenets preached by the Tirthankara. Even during the life time of Mahavira, Makkhali Gosala and Jamali had differences with their Master and broke away from him. The former started his own sect of Ajivikas while the latter founded a sect known as Bahurata.”¹

Oral Tradition

Enough light has been thrown on ganadharas as well as Bhadrabahu’s migration to south India when famine approached Magadha.

Saryu Doshi has observed : “After Mahavira’s death, eleven *ganadharas* propagated his teachings. The faith was promulgated orally, and for the next few hundred years, the religious, and philosophical dogmas were handed down from preceptor to disciple.

The dangers inherent in the system of oral transmission became apparent in the fourth century B.C. when a disastrous famine ravaged the region of Magadha. Just prior to this event Acharya Bhadrabahu could foretell, from certain prognostic signs, that a calamity was imminent and he decided to migrate southwards. A large number of followers accompanied him. Of the monks who chose to remain in Magadha many died of starvation and, with them, the knowledge of Mahavira’s teachings was irretrievably lost. Matters became even worse when the Jain community realised that malnutrition had seriously impaired the retentive powers of the surviving monks. The knowledge of the Jain religion was fast diminishing and to salvage it from total oblivion, the Jains convened a Council of Monks at Pataliputra. In this council, under the leadership of Monk Sthulabhadra, the disordered Jain canon received systematic codification.

1. Tukol. T.K. : Compendium of Jainism, p. 48.

Twelve years later the monks who had migrated to the south with Acharya Bhadrabahu returned to their homeland and were appalled by the laxity that characterised the attitude of their brethren. The Magadhan monks had resorted to the use of clothing and this, according to the recently returned monks from the South, was a gross violation of the fifth tenet of non-possession. It was therefore unacceptable to them. Equally unacceptable was the recension of the Jain canon compiled at Pataliputra because of the many inaccuracies and discrepancies contained in it. These and several other points of contention resulted in sharp disagreements between the two factions leaving no room for compromise. The group from the south not only declared the canon compiled at Pataliputra heretical, but also proclaimed themselves as the true Jains—the Mula Sangha. The community was split into two sects : those who were more conservative and staunch advocates of nudity for Jain ascetics formed the Digambara (sky-clad) sect and those who preferred to use clothing grouped themselves into the Svetambara (clothed in white) sect. The two traditions separated and from the first century A.D., have evolved along parallel lines, each retaining its own identity.”²

<i>Tirthankara</i>	Svetambara		Digambara	
	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Cognizance</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Cognizance</i>
1. Rishabha	gold	bull	yellow	bull
2. Ajita	gold	elephant	yellow	elephant
3. Sambhava	gold	horse	yellow	horse
4. Abhinandana	gold	monkey	yellow	monkey
5. Sumati	gold	curlew	yellow	curlew
6. Padmaprabha	red	red lotus	red	red lotus
7. Suparshva	gold	svastika	green (or blue)	svastika
8. Chandraprabha	white	crescent moon	white (or black)	crescent moon

2. Doshi, Saryu : Masterpieces of Jain Paintings, pp. 16-17.

<i>Tirthankara</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Cognizance</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Cognizance</i>
9. Pushpadanta	white	<i>makara</i>	white	<i>makara</i> (or crab)
10. Shitala	gold	shrivatsa	yellow	<i>shrivatsa</i> (or pipal tree)
11. Shreyamsa	gold	rhinoceros	yellow	rhinoceros (or garuda)
12. Vasupupujya	red	buffalo	red	buffalo
13. Vimala	gold	boar	yellow	boar
14. Ananta	gold	falcon	yellow	ram (or bear)
15. Dharma	gold	thunderbolt (or mace)	yellow	thunderbolt
16. Shanti	gold	antelope	yellow	antelope
17. Kunthu	gold	goat	yellow	goat
18. Ara	gold	<i>nandyavarta</i>	yellow	fish
19. Malli	blue (or green)	water-jar	yellow	water-jar
20. Munisuvrata	black	tortoise	black (or blue)	tortoise
21. Nami	gold	blue lotus	yellow	blue (or red) lotus (or <i>ashoka</i> tree)
22. Arishtanemi	black	conch	black (or blue)	conch
23. Parshva	green (or blue)	serpent	green (or blue)	serpent
24. Mahavira	gold	lion	yellow	lion ³

Differences

The migration of Jaina monks to south and their differences have been narrated by almost all Jaina Scholars. As Saryu Doshi says : "The differences between the two sects are not confined

3. Ibid., p. 17.

merely to interpretations of a doctrinal nature. Even the account of how the division of the Jain community came about varies in both traditions. The Digambara sect maintains that Acharya Bhadrabahu migrated to south India with his royal disciple Chandragupta Maurya and twelve thousand followers. When this group reached the place now known as Shravana (Sravana) Belgola, Bhadrabahu, sensing that his end was near, decided to remain there. He ordered his followers to proceed without him; only Chandragupta Maurya stayed back to take care of his preceptor. Bhadrabahu died at Shravana Belgola while performing the austerities prescribed for *sallekhana*. The Digambara tradition claims that when the followers of Bhadrabahu returned to Magadha after twelve years in the south, they discovered many aberrations in the compilation of the Jain canon as well as in the conduct of the monks. These differences led to dissensions which culminated in the division of the community. Certain other Digambara sources, however, do not place the great schism in Pataliputra but in Ujjain. They also indicate that the final division into the two sects occurred in Vallabhi in Gujarat in the sixth century A.D., when the monks wearing a loin-cloth were required by the local kings to become fully clothed in white garments. The Svetambara tradition reveals many departures from that of the Digambaras. It claims that Acharya Bhadrabahu did not go to the south but was in Nepal at the time of the famine in Magadha. The Svetambaras also believe that the schism into Svetambara and Digambara took place in A.D. 82 when an order of naked monks was established by Shrivastika of Rathavirapura, and members of this order became the first sky-clad monks.

In the last two thousand years no doctrinal accommodation has taken place between the Svetambara and Digambara sects : both sects have developed their own distinctive literary traditions and legends. These differences become most apparent in the biographical descriptions of Mahavira provided by the two sects.

Both accounts purport to narrate the events that took place in the life of a known historical figure and yet are at variance with one another and contain several contradictions. These conflicting versions are very revealing inasmuch as they bring into focus the areas of disagreement between the two sects as well as their implications in social and religious practices.”⁴

Pandit Sukhlal Sanghavi has observed : “Between the two streams of the Indian culture, *viz.*, Brahmana and Sramana, a casual observer will discover differences in many respects. Whereas the Brahmana cult lays stress on sacrifices leading to animal slaughter, on the purification of diction, purification of the enchanted words (mantras), these items are just secondary in the Sramana cult, But in contrast, between the two streams of Sramana cult *viz.*, Jaina and Buddha, there is much common ground in these matters. Both have questioned the divine origin of the Vedas and denied recognition to the erstwhile caste system.”⁵

Jainism V/S Buddhism

Comparing Jainism and Buddhism Jagdish Chandra Jain says : “Jainism and Buddhism were both basically ethical religions, and not much involved in metaphysical and theological speculations. Both tried to preach in their simplicity the path of self purification, elaborating a moral code of behavior, injury, even unpleasant truth, greed, egoism, avarice, selfishness and other evils, emphasising simplicity, truthfulness, sincerity and honesty. In order to solve the mysteries of life they did not pursue the quest of God. They firmly believed that one can reach emancipation by one’s own efforts, through moral and intellectual perfection.

4. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

5. Sanghavi, Pandit Sukhlal, Introduction (AReview), (Agama and Tripitaka : A Comparative Study), p. IX.

But with the passage of time, the social and political conditions deviated and the religion of Buddha lost charm of the simplicity and under the pressure of Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism, around the 1st century A.D., it got involved into metaphysical and theological concepts. The Mahayanists considered themselves as the followers of the Noble Path, calling the earliest system of Buddha's doctrine Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle). Later on, a third Vehicle, appeared in Eastern India, around the 8th century, known as "the Vehicle of the Thunderbolt" (Vajrayana), which spread rapidly in Bengal and Bihar. This cult was influenced by the primitive ideas of sympathetic magic and sexual mysticism. No doubt, Jainism too could not remain uninfluenced from such sectarian and superstitious beliefs. However, it did not, on the whole, deviate from its basic concepts of established ethical codes.

Despite having a common basis, Jainism and Buddhism became rival creeds as is evident from the canonical literature of the Jains and Buddhists. Buddhist texts mention the existence of a large number of 'Niganthas' (Unattached, free from bonds). There is a frequent mention of rivalry between 'Nigantha nataputta', an epithet of Mahavira, and Gotama Buddha, where the former is being styled as 'dighatapassi' (one who engages in extended penances). There are numerous references to Jains and their doctrines in the Buddhist texts, though the references to Buddhists and their doctrines in Jain texts are comparatively few.

The principal difference between the two sects can be noted as follows:

1. "According to Buddhism, nothing really is permanent in this universe, and that everything changes from moment to moment.

According to Jainism, change and permanence are both real. Jains believe that the doctrine of non-eternalism or momentariness is one-sided.

2. The Buddhists deny the existence of a permanent soul. They propose that it is an aggregate of mental states, known as the stream of consciousness.

According to the Jains, the soul is eternal by nature, and manifests itself taking on the form of the respective body.”

Though Lord Mahavira and Buddha belonged to Sramana tradition, but differed on the existence of soul and rebirth. Many of their views are quite similar. Dr. Jagdish Chandra Jain has further observed :

“Both Mahavira and Buddha were followers of the ascetic tradition. They were both contemporaries and travelled in the same land and city, preaching their religious sermons. Both of them belonged to the Kshatriya-warrior class. The real name of Mahavira was Vardhamana but since he was born in the Jnatrika clan, he was known as Jnatriputra (son of the Jnatrikas).

/ Buddha’s real name was Siddhartha, but as he was born in the clan of the Shakyas, he was known as Shakyaputra (son of the Shakyas). Both of them renounced worldly pleasures and joined the ascetic order. After observing the strict discipline of monks, they achieved enlightenment and were commonly known as Buddha (The Enlightened) and Jina (The Conqueror). Mahavira attained Nirvana (the state of absolute blessedness) at the age of 72 and Buddha at 80.

Buddha was slightly older than Mahavira and he attained Nirvana after Mahavira. The followers of the two religions met and discussed various religious topics and if convinced, modified their teachings and accepted the other faith. The members of the same family practised religion preached by Mahavira and Buddha. It is difficult to compare the two great personalities with their different approach and outlook, as they both had a common objective. Both of them were prominent religious leaders, and insisted on moral values, right conduct and self-discipline. They

admitted right knowledge to be the means of eliminating the endless craving of worldly existence. Both were opposed to the authority of the Vedas as having superhuman origin and rejected the efficacy of Vedic ritual. They did not accept the supremacy of the priestly class and thought it sinful to take the life of innocent animals. Both denied the existence of an intelligent first cause of this world and emphasised on one's own actions leading to good or bad results. They both had a message of universal benevolence and love for all. They preached that never in this world does hatred cease by hatred, but it ceases by love, anger not by anger, but by kindness and evil not by evil but by good. They both believed that not by birth, but by one's own conduct, a person becomes a low caste or a Brahmin. Both appealed to logic, reason, and experience and condemned miracles, revelations and dealings with the supernatural. They had organised their sect in a similar way into Sangha, community or groups. They discarded the use of Sanskrit, the language of the learned, and preferred to preach in the local dialect of Magadha, which was easily understood by the common people."

3. "Nirvana or emancipation is absolute extinction or annihilation of individual existence or of all desires and passions, according to the Buddhists. It is compared to the flame of a lamp which is extinguished by the exhaustion of oil, and the end of the wick of the lamp.
According to the Jains, Nirvana is an eternal and state of absolute blessedness of the soul, characterised by infinite vision, knowledge and energy.
4. Buddha refused answer questions related to metaphysics such as, whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, whether the soul and the body are identical or different, and whether the soul exists after death or not. Mahavira expressed definite views about world, soul and transmigration.

5. In Buddhism, ascetic practices are not essential for reaching the ultimate goal. Buddha envisaged the Middle path, exhorting his disciples to avoid the two extremes, the pursuit of desires and pleasures, and that of pain and hardship. Jainism lays more stress on asceticism than Buddhism does as can be noticed in the ascetic career of Mahavira himself.
6. Buddha allowed his monks to accept non-vegetarian diet under certain conditions. Jainism preaches adherence to strict vegetarianism.
7. Buddhist doctrines were permeated by Tantric practices. Jainism has remained, for the most part, free from such practices.”⁶

Jainism in North India

Though one may believe or not as Smita Sahgal says who has examined the Spread of Jainism in North India. “That Jinism⁷ (Jainism) has been largely ignored by ancient Indian historians. For a sect that enjoyed a continuous existence at least from the time of Parsva Nath (c. 800 B.C.) to the modern day, surprisingly little attention has been paid to it. Brahmanism and Buddhism

6. Jain, Dr. Jagdish Chandra : *The Jaina Way of Life* (Introduction), pp. XIV-XVII.

7. There is need to recognize grammatical aberration involved in the use of the more popular form *i.e.* Jainism. the word ‘Jaina’ which means a follower of the Jina is an adjective of the word Jina. It is, thus, incorrect to form another adjective of the word to connote a sect (Jainism). The correct usage should be Jinism or alternatively Jain religion. A similar argument can be put forward for the use of terms like Vaisnavism and Saivism which should be Visnuism and Sivaism. Interestingly, while we use Baudhdha for a follower of the Buddha, the expression used is Buddhism and not Baudhdhism. So, why Jainism? (author’s personal views)

have been better worked upon by historians. This hold specially true of the period under review.”⁸

As we see in the history, Buddhism enjoyed patronage of the Kings and ruling classes. The monks were treated properly both by the business community as well as principalities, while Jainism was not so much patronized and favoured compared to Buddhism. There were often quarrels between Jain monks and the Buddhist monks on religious superiority.

Buddhism was more a revolt, a reformist radical movement against Brahmanical order, which attracted the masses. Royal patronage made it a state religion for a longer period. Virtually, Sunita Sahgal’s learned paper on Spread of Jinism (Jainism) in North India between 200 B.C. and A.D. 300 has tried to prove that Jainism maintained distance from the ruling classes, however it enjoyed the sympathy of the Business class :

“The period between c. 200 B.C. and c.A.D. 300 or roughly the post-Mauryan period was one of intense fluidity in the social economic and political field. It witnessed India’s link with international trade. Foreigners such as the Bactrian Greeks or Yavanas, the Saka-Pahlavas and Kusanas invaded north India and made it a part of their empire. Archaeological and numismatic finds from various sites in north and north-west India, such as Taksasila, Ahicchatra, Kausambi, Mathura etc. attest to a flourishing state of trade, industry and money economy. On the social front, this period witnessed the emergence of Vaisyas, specially the mercantile community, as a group of considerable importance.

8. Historians of the period like B.N. Mukherjee’s *Mathura and Its Society*, and *Rise and fall of the Kusana Empire*, Bhaskar Chattopadhyaya’s *Kusana State and Indian Society*, *A Study in post-Mauryan Polity and Society* And S.C. Bhattacharya’s *Some Aspects of Indian Society* have dealt with Jinism only in passing, laying greater attention to Buddhism and Brahmanism. (Smita Sahgal, p. 205)

All these developments had an important impact on religion also. The period under review witnessed growth of Brahminism under the Sungas, Kanvas and Satvahanas. Buddhism received patronage from the foreign rulers like the Sakas and Kusanas. Kaniska was very open in his advocacy of Buddhism as his personal religion. These facts one gathers from various works on the post-Mauryan period. But what of Jainism? Historians do apprise us of its existence in the post-Mauryan period but not much is elaborated upon. Readers get an impression that Jinism had receded in the background after its initial popularity in the sixth century B.C.

Here we would like to show that not only jinism existed in the period under review, it actually flourished. It failed to catch the attention of the historians because unlike the other two sects it did not receive state patronage (at least in north India), and hence is not mentioned in those sources connected with royal life.

The absence of a strong link with people in authority (king) was something insisted upon in the Jaina literature. According to *Vyvaharasutra*⁹ a post-Maurya text, the Jaina monks should not cultivate links with king or people close to him and at the same time do nothing to incur his displeasure. Though the text is not for the period under review, it does highlight the general Jaina attitude to maintaining distance from those in power. Their approach was of cultivating direct contact with the masses. This explains the absence of figures of Jina Tirthankara from the royal coins or their mention in the royal epigraphs. On the other hand there is a preponderance in source related to popular culture, specially art.

In the process of establishing the popularity of Jinism we can also study its pattern of growth *i.e.* the socio-economic factor

9. S.B. Deo, *History of Jaina Monachism*, p. 234. (Quoted by Sahgal, pp. 205-206.)

behind its development, the changes within Jainism and the areas of its spread in north India.

The Jainism and Buddhism had their origins in North India. Both Mahavira and Buddha, in a broader term, had preached in the same belt; Buddhism had spread in the entire Asia, while Jainism confined to the Indian soil. Sahgal has specifically centred the study regarding the Spread of Jainism in North India during the most important and transitional period of Indian history."

"It is important¹⁰ to specify what we understand by the term North India. Jainism in the Indian subcontinent is too expansive a topic to be covered in just one research paper. For the sake of convenience in handling research material and also for studying a smaller area in some depth, we have only taken up North India which includes middle and western Ganga plain and Yamuna plain. Bihar, Bengal and Orissa have been taken to be sites of Eastern India and Maharashtra, Gujarat and Malwa area are sites of Western India. However, northwest is taken into account here and some of its sites like Taksasila and Simhapura have been studied. There is a definite reason for including this area in the study. We are studying a period when the North Western part of the subcontinent became the centre of the political gravity. Various changes—political, economic and social—that took place in the Indian mainland had their genesis in this area. Therefore, North Western India and North India have been clubbed together under one heading.

"The break-up of the Mauryan empire brought about consequences of far-reaching importance. It destroyed the political edifice so laboriously built by the succeeding dynasties of Magadha from the time of Haryankas to the Mauryas. The Sungas and Kanavas failed to hold the country together.¹¹ Around the

10. Sahgal, p. 206.

11. K. A. N. Sastri, ed., *A Comprehensive History of India*. Vol. II. pp. 99-104. (Quoted by Sahgal)

end of the 2nd century B.C., a number of local dynasties emerged in the western Ganga plain for which we have numismatic evidences. At Kosala, descendants of Sungas with the name of 'deva' established themselves. Their kingdom was absorbed in the Kusana empire by the end of the first century A.D. At Ahicchatra and Kausambi too the rule of 'Mitra' rulers is attested by their coins before their absorption in the Kusana confines. Mathura too witnessed the rule of 'Mitra' and 'Datta' rulers before being taken over by the foreigners.

Along with emergence of those regional powers, an incident of far greater significance ensued. The end of the Mauryan rule opened the flood gates of north-west and stream, of foreign invaders crossed the Hindukush and Powerd in the country from Central Asia. The Bactrian Greeks or Yavanas, Sakas, Pahlavas and Kusanas entered the subcontinent.

The Bactrian Greeks were the first to come after the collapse of the Mauryan empire. At least one of the rulers, Menander or Milinda, reached as far as Mathura. His return to Bactria and subsequent death resulted in the decline of Bactrian Greeks. They were followed by the Sakas or Scythians (as known from Chinese sources) from Central Asia. The construction of the great wall by the Han emperor Shi Hung Ti in the first century B.C. compelled the pastoral tribes of Scythia and Yu-e-Chis (or Kusanas) to migrate to South and West Asia in the hope of new pastures.

The Sakas established themselves in North-West, Northern and Western India. In the north and northern India the Sakas had to face challenge from yet another incoming Central Asian tribes *i.e.* the Kusanas. There had been two known Kusana lines in the Indian subcontinent; the Kadphises and the Kaniska. According to Fan-Yeh's¹² history of the Han dynasty, the Yu-e-chi chief Kujula Kadphises united five tribes and established himself at Kabul. His son Wema Kadphises strengthened Kusana territories

12. Fan Yeh, *Hou Han Shu* (Ssu-Pu Pie edition), Chapter II.

(Quoted by Sahgal, p 207).

in north-west India. However, the most powerful of the Kusana rulers was Kaniska I whose relationship with the former rulers is not quite established. He extended his empire as far as Banaras and Sanchi while retaining the control of north-west. Kaniska I was followed by Vasiska, Huviska and Vasudeva I. The effective Kusana power declined after Vasudeva I in about A.D. 186, though we do hear of Kusana kings like Vasudeva II and Kaniska III continuing till the mid-third century A.D.

Behind the maze of these varied political events certain economic motivations and forces can be discerned. The very movement of Sakas and Kusanas from China to Central and South Asia was determined by the need to locate new pastures. With the growth in trade and commerce and their growing importance in economy, we find the areas controlling the main trade routes,¹³ specially the routes commanding the foreign trades, also coming to hold the reigns of political history. In fact the struggle of the Kusanas with Parthia was for controlling the Central Asian part of silk trade between Rome and China. Even in India, they set their eyes in commercially profitable areas; Taksasila, Ahicchatra, Mathura, Saketa and Kausambi.

The Kusana rulers sought to promote commercial activities within their empire. By integrating Central Asia with north India, and providing security to the traders, throughout the empire, the Kusanas ensured frequent movement of merchants and goods and that too, with maximum tariff posts. They, for the first time, provided Indian merchants with the chance to participate in the silk trade.

The efforts of the Kusana government in fostering trade can be further seen in their issuing gold coins which were initially modelled on the roman pattern of similar weight standards.¹⁴

13. S.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

14. After the reforms of Nero at Rome the weight standard was reduced though purity of gold was maintained. In the Kusana Empire the weight standard was maintained throughout the rule of the Kusanas even when the purity

These were obviously meant for international market. We have evidences of their being accepted outside Indian confines.¹⁵

“We have numerous examples of internal trade also. Among the objects of Kusana period found at Begram in eastern Afghanistan, there were not only glass vessels from Syria and lacquerbowls from China and Rome but also palques of carved bones and ivory from India. At least some of the figures were carved in the style of Mathura art and might have been brought from there. Mathura like Begram was a part of the Kusana empire. Stylistic influences of Mathura school can be noticed in a few ivory plaques unearthed at Dalverzin Tepe in Uzbekistan and datable to Kusana period.¹⁶

Luxury items were in maximum demand both inside and outside Kusana empire. These included intems of cosmetics like perfumed oils, scented juices mentioned in *Angavijja*¹⁷ and cosmetic caskets as discovered in Kausambi excavations. Indian pearl was also in great demand in Roman marts and so were textiles. Mathura was an important centre for Sataka type of cotton and perhaps of silk industry also.¹⁸ That fashion and luxury were feeding some of the major industries is an indication of general prosperity of the people. Other industries also thrived which included mining and metallurgy. According to B.N. Mukherjee,

was reduced, e.g., Vima's coins had 98% gold while Vasudeva's coins had only 58%. McDowall. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. 22, 1960, pp. 63-64.

15. For example, hoards of coins have been found in Ethiopia, *Congress Internationale di Numismatica*, Rome, 1961, p. 475f.
 16. B.N. Mukherjee. 'Revenue, Trade and Society in the Kusana Empire', *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. VII, Nos, 1-2, 1980-81, p. 34.
 17. *Angavijja*, Chap. 58.
 18. R.S. Sharma. *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, p. 17.
- (All quoted by Sahgal, pp. 207-208)

as in the Mauryan days, even now the mining industry was controlled by the state.¹⁹

Since Buddha's time till post Mauryan period North India was the centre of economic activities. Though agriculture was the main source of livelihood, the artisans were engaged in Khadi weaving and other numerous cottage and village industries. In Both Jaina and Buddhist literature a long list of artisans class, engaged in different gainful vocations is available, which proves mostly people lived on agriculture and agro-based industries. Wealthy people, identified in different names, helped and contributed in the economic growth of the country. They patronised the religious teachers, monks and Shramanas, without caring much which sect they belonged.

There are references in non-canonical literature and gathas that traders and money lenders were helpful in the spread of Jaina and Buddha religion.

Sahgal further says that Jainism became much popular amongst the trading communities because of its virtuous character :

“India's expanding commerce, aided by the growth of industries led to economic advancement. That the effect of this development percolated to the masses can be verified from the numerous coins found in all denominations and metals like gold, silver, copper, potin and lead found from the Kusana levels as Taksasila, Ahicchatra, Sravasti and Sanghol in Mathura. The regular use of low denomination coins of metals is indicative of their being used for day-today-transactions.

The unplanned and controlled growth of industry and trade as well as money economy had definite impact on social life also. It led to concentration of wealth in the hands of Vaisyas and even

19. B.N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

(All quoted by Sahgal, pp. 208-209)

among them the traders benefited the most. Merchants in the post-Mauryan period were not a homogeneous group. Ability and chance to accumulate power brought differences in their economic and social ranking. The epigraphs of the time allude to *negama*,²⁰ *Sarthavahas*,²¹ *settis*²² and *vanikas*.²³ *Negama* was the leader of a *nigam* i.e. an industrial or business corporate.²⁴ *Setti* was also a banker²⁵ as well as a big trader often moving with the *sattas*. *Sarthavaha* was the caravan leader with considerable authority over the *satta*. *Vanika* or *Vannijja* was a comprehensive term including all shades of traders from big business magnates to small traders like *suvarnika* (trader in gold), *lohavanijja* (iron trader) and others.²⁶

Those engaged in Khadi and Silk Weaving besides its trading were Tantuvai or Tantis. They were a rich and reputed class.

“How far did Vaisyas follow the profession of artisans, it is difficult to assess. Kangle and Sharma²⁷ have counted artisans as Sudras, who were exempted from cash tax payment but have to perform forced labour (*visti*) once in a month. This however, should not be considered a definite proof of their becoming Sudras. In fact in a Jaina text artisans were called Aryans.²⁸

20. Luder's List (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. X) 1000, 1024, 1072.

21. M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 1915.

22. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, pp. 381-82.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

24. S.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 135. According to him it is wrong to interpret *nigama* as a town. He argues for its being a merchant organization or corporation for which he gives a lengthy argument.

(All quoted and referred to by Sahgal, p. 209.)

25. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

26. S.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

27. R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part III, pp. 146-218.

R.S. Sharma *Sudras in Ancient India*, p. 1796.

28. *Pannavana*, p. 61.

(References quoted by Sahgal, pp. 209)

However, their economic position was certainly not as sound as that of the traders. Traders who were engaged in selling goods reaped greater advantage of economic growth than did the producers. It was perhaps to demand higher wages and to face the competitions of big industrialists that a large number of artisans organised themselves in guilds. Guilds gave them advantage of bargaining power in a sense of security against exploitation of traders as well as political pressure."

From Rigveda to Jain Trithankara Mahavira's time and even after that in whole of Northern India the Weavers[§] organised their guilds as *Tantushalas* where artisans worked and all sorts of fabrics were sold. Both Mahavira and Buddha had stayed in the guilds of weavers. They were very rich people and served the community needs and exported finest quality fabrics to other countries.

"Thus even among the Vaisyas, wealthy merchants have status over and above all other caste groups. Even the position of agriculturists was not good. With the exception of the village headman or *gramika* who risen to the position of a petty landowner as a result of grant of land in lieu of his services, the peasantry witnessed a decline in the status. The *Milindapanho*²⁹ and other texts refer to the emergence of landlordism and depression of peasantry to a position where they were clubbed with slaves, hired labourers and servants. This was the beginning of feudalism. The ranks of dependent peasantry swelled up as a result of adoption of agriculture as a profession by the Sudras. This coupled with the expansion of trade and industry led to the withdrawal of a substantial section of the Vaisya *varna* from agriculture.³⁰ Generally speaking commerce followed by industry was a most lucrative profession in the post-Mauryan period, more than agriculture.

§. K.L. Chanchreek : *Koli Jati ka Itihas/Mahatma Kabir* (for details)

29. *Milindapanho*, p. 147.

30. S.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

(Quoted by Sahgal, p. 210.)

“With the money and power at their command, it was natural for the wealthy Vaisyas to seek social prestige. The brahmanical social order accorded them the third position after the Brahmanas and Ksatriyas which was more in line with their religious right than economic situation. **In fact right from the sixth century B.C. many among the Vaisyas had shown their inclination towards Buddhism and Jinism. These were anti-Vedic sects and gave due importance to their social standing. It was the mercantile community among the Vaisyas that formed the social base of Jinism, perhaps because the Jaina emphasis on non-possession was taken to be an injunction against possession of land. The post-Mauryan period, as we have seen, brought about a boon to the mercantile community and this probably prompted them to support their Samgha in a big way. It may be added that by the post-Mauryan period jinism had succeeded in forming a base, though small, amongst the rural population also. This we gather from a donative inscription³¹ which makes a reference to donation by a lady from the family of *gramika*. Jinism, thus, had won over at least a section of the village population. This is clearly an indication of the changing values within Jinism and the possession of land even among Jainas. The process was very slow during the post-Mauryan period. Except for this example, we have no other reference of Jaina base in the rural areas.**

The relationship between Jain Samgha and laity was very strong. The Jaina church did not engage itself in any productive activity and depended on commoners to provide alms. In the post-Mauryan time their help came in form of various donations. This was a process which was taking place not only within Jinism but in Buddhism also. In fact Buddhists were the first to receive land grants both from the rulers as well as the laity.

31. *Epigraphia, Indica*, Vol. I, No. XI, p. 388.

Out of the seven private land grants made to them as many as three were made by *negamas* and *settis*.³² No land grant was made to Jaina church at this point of time probably because of its very small rural base.

The role of the mercantile community in promoting Jinism is best understood by a survey of its area of spread. Suffice it is to say here that Jinism in north India flourished in those areas which were also important centres of commerce.

The tremendous economic growth and rise of merchants was perhaps the main factor in the growth of Jinism in the post-Mauryan period. However, we cannot ignore the political climate of the period and how conducive it was to the existence and spread of Jinism.

The foreign rulers, Sakas and Kusanas, followed a very liberal religious policy. Among the Sakas, we know that Mahaksatrapa Ranjuvala and his son Sodas were Buddhists. Their religious affiliation become clear from the famous Lion capital inscription at Mathura.³³ The inscription refers to a religious donation of cave monastery and a relic of Buddha to the Buddhists monks by the chief queen of Ranjuvala. Despite their open declaration of Buddhism as their personal religion, we have no evidence of the persecution of people of other sects by them.

The Imperial Kusanas also tolerated and even patronised to some extent, the practice of diverse religious systems in the empire; at least during the rule of Kaniska I, Vasiska and Huviska. Numerous deities, such as Oesho (Greek goddess), Sakya Muni (Buddha) and so forth occur on the Kusana coins. Kaniska was vocal in his inclination to Buddhism. The fourth council of Buddhism was held in Kashmir during his time. He erected a Buddhist monastery at Peshawar. At the same time he was a patron

32. Luder's *List* Nos. 1000, 1024, 1072.

33. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. II, pt. I, p. 48.

(References quoted by Sahgal, pp. 210)

of other sects also. Kaniska is said to have been connected with the establishment of a dynastic sanctuary at Surkha Kotal associated with the fire cult.³⁴

Describing the liberal and far sighted view point of the Kusanas towards sects, Sahgal says : "Even the successors of Huviska were tolerant of other sects. The evidence of contemporary sources like the products of Bactrian, Gandhara and Mathura art and various coin devices indicate the presence of a general spirit of toleration and even syncretism throughout the major part of the empire. Not only the great religious faith with large following in the different parts of the empire flourished but also sects that received no royal patronage like Jinism did not lag behind.

It was political expediency which demanded that the Sakas and Kusanas remain religiously liberal. They were aliens to the country and so it was necessary for them to adopt a popular faith like Brahmanism or Buddhism and at the same time give recognition to other religious forms."³⁵

There was yet another reason for the existence of multiple sects; it was the heterogeneous character of the Kusana society. The Kusana empire was vast and included various ethnic types. The complexity of the situation was accentuated with the movement of trade, people and ideas from the one region to another. The growth of new urban centres brought diverse populations together. This favoured co-existence, co-mingling and co-fusion of races and ideas. An effort to bring about uniformity in the empire by imposing a single religion could have resulted in unrest. Thus for their own survival the Kusanas followed a pragmatic policy. Though Buddhism and Brahminism were consciously promoted, at least no effort was made to wipe out other sects like Jinism," Sahgal observes.

34. B.N. Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of Kusana Empire*, p. 388.

(Reference quoted by Sahgal, pp. 211)

35. Sahgal, p. 212.

Quarrels

Besides quarrel and differences within the Jaina-sect, the Buddhist sources prove disunity between Jaina and the Buddhist monks. As Tukol observes : --

“It appears from the Buddhistic literature that there used to be quarrels amongst the monks who were followers of Mahavira. From the accounts given in the Dighanikaya, it appears that the quarrels relate to the correctness or superiority of knowledge of the tenets as propounded by Mahavira. Sometimes, there used to be serious exchanges of words; assaults were not unusual.

It is very difficult to say that these quarrels gave rise to the new sects. It appears that even during the time of Parsva, there used to be some monks who wore short loin clothes but they had no differences either with their Master or with his successor. There are, however, differing accounts of the birth of new schisms. There are some legends also.”³⁶

Doctrinal differences since ancient days, is not a new thing. Even among Brahmans and Buddhists there have been differences and quarrels and there is lot of literature on this topic. Students of history and religion fully know about it. Therefore we need not mention the details here.

Other Historical Sources

Much has appeared in earlier pages on Bhadrabahu's migration to south and differences in Jainism.

In the words of Tukol : “The migration of Bhadrabahu along with a body of 12000 monks to the south sometime between 296 or 298 B.C., is a landmark in the history of Jainism. The first inscription of 600 A.D. at Sravana Belgola in Karnataka refers to this event and the relevant part may be quoted here : “Now indeed, after the Sun, Mahavira who had risen to elevate the whole world

36. Tukol, T.K. : *Compendium of Jainism*, p. 48-89.

and who had shone with a thousand brilliant rays, his virtues which caused the blooming of the lotuses, the blessed people, nourished the lake of the supreme Jaina doctrine which was an abode of pre-eminent virtues had completely set, Bhadrabahu Svami, of lineage rendered illustrious by a succession of great men who came in regular descent from the venerable supreme rise Gautama-Ganadhara, his immediate disciple Lohacarya, Jambu, Visnudeva, Aparajita, Govardhana, Bhadrabahu, Visakha, Prosthila, Krttikarya, Jayanama, Siddhartha, Dhrtisena, Buddhila and other teachers, who was acquainted with the true nature of the eight-fold great omen and foretold in Ujjayani a calamity lasting for a period of twelve years, the entire Sangha (or the community) set out from the North to the South and reached by degrees a country with many hundreds of villages and filled with happy people....³⁷ According to the tradition, Chandragupta Maurya who was Emperor abdicated his throne and accompanied the Srutakevalin. Two inscriptions (Nos. 17 & 18 on the Chandragiri Hill and two other found near Srirangapattanam mention Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta as two ascetics,. That the two came together to Sravana Belagola is confirmed by a Kannada work 'Munivamsabhyudaya' by a poet called Cidanandakavi who wrote, his work in 1680 A.D."

"The historicity of this event has been doubted by some scholars. R. Narasimhacharya has referred to Dr. Leumann as saying that the migration to the South is "the initial fact of the Digamber tradition". Dr. Hoernle after a critical examination of the Jaina pattavalis or the lists of succession of Gurus, says : "Before Bhadrabahu, the Jain community was undivided; with him, the Digambaras separated from the Svetambaras.... The Digambara separation originally took place as a result of the migration southwards under Bhadrabahu in consequence of a severe famine in Bihar, the original home of the undivided Jaina

37. Narasimhacharya, R. : *Carnatica Epigraphica*, Vol. II, p. 1

(Quoted by Tukol, p. 49).

community³⁸” R. Narasimhacharya opines that the Jaina tradition may be accepted as a working hypothesis until the contrary is proved by future research.³⁹ S.R. Sharma has stated that “the conclusion of Dr. V.A. Smith, regarding the possibility of the persistent tradition about Chandragupta Maurya having accompanied Bhadrabahu (the last of the Jaina Srutakevalin) to Mysore and died there by Sallekhana may be accepted without more ado.⁴⁰ Recent researches have not brought out to light any contrary evidence.”

Nudity among Jain Monks existed even before Mahavira.

According to Tukol : “.....There is little doubt that there were Digambaras in the North at the time of the invasion of India by Alexander (327-326 B.C.), as the Greek historians have referred to them as gymosophists, that is, naked philosophers. There appear to have been some monks during the time of Parsva who wore a loin cloth. Mahavira himself adhered to the cult of nudity. Hence the practice of wearing a loin cloth did not assume any importance in his time. P. Bechardas, a Svetambara Pandit expresses the view that it was only after the Nirvana of Jambu-svami that laxity in conduct must have started, departing from the rigorous rules laid down by Mahavira and that the poison tree of division seems to have started growing.”⁴¹

“The monks started using white clothes for covering part of their bodies and possessing some wooden pots. The practice of adorning the idols of Tirthankaras with gold and diamond ornaments and silk cloth came into vogue. S. Gopalan holds the view that the division became permanent in 83 A.D. Hermann Jacobi opines that the sect of Ardhapalakas developed in 80

38. Ibid., introduction, p. 40.

39. Ibid., p. 42.

40. Sharma, S.R. : Jainism and Karnataka Culture, pp. 5-6.

(All quoted by Tukol, p. 50).

41. Tukol, p. 51.

A.D.⁴² into the Svetambara sect and observes : "It is possible that the separation of the Jaina church took place gradually, an individual development going on in both the groups living at a great distance from one another, and that they became aware of their mutual difference about the end of the 1st century A.D. But the difference is small in their articles of faith.⁴³ J.L. Jaini holds similar views : The division of the Jaina community into two sects of Svetambaras, "white-robed" and Digambaras, "sky-robed", *i.e.* naked, took place according to their concurrent testimony, 609 years after Mahavira, *i.e.* about 80 A.D. But in germ it existed as early as the time of the First Council."⁴⁴

A.L. Basham is quite positive in his views : "Out of this migration arose the great schism of Jainism, on a point of monastic discipline. Bhadrabahu, the elder of the community, who had led the emigrants, had insisted on the retention of the rule of nudity, which Mahavira had established. Sthulabhadra, the leader of the monks who had remained in the north, allowed his followers to wear white garments, owing to the hardships and confusions of the famine. Hence arose the two sects of Jainas, the Digambaras ("space-clad" or naked), and the Svetambaras ("White-clad"). The schism did not become final until the 1st Century A.D. Mrs. Stevenson also says the division became final in A.D. 79 or 82.

Basic Differences

Tukol observes : "Though there never were any fundamental doctrinal differences between the two sects, the division continues to this day. The minor differences between the two sects are : (1) The Svetambara monks wear white clothes and their idols are decorated with gold and diamond ornaments, with glass eyes and

42. Gopalan, S. : *Outlines of Jainism*, p. 23.

43. Jacobi, Hermann : *Studies in Jainism*, p. 46.

44. Jaini, J.L. : *Outlines of Jainism*, p. IX (fn.)

(Quoted by Tukol, p. 51.)

silk jackets. The Digambara monks of the ideal type are naked as also their idols of Tirthankaras. (2) Digambaras hold that on account of their physical conditions and social disabilities, women as women cannot attain liberation. The Svetambaras hold the contrary view. (3) It has already been noted that according to the Digambara tradition Mahavira was unmarried while Svetambaras hold that he was married and had a daughter. (4) The Svetambaras believe in the validity and sacredness of canonical literature that is the twelve Angas and Sutras as they exist now while Digambaras hold that the original and genuine texts were lost long ago. (5) The Svetambaras hold the view that the Omniscient or the liberated Kevalins took food while the Digambaras do not support it. (6) The Svetambaras hold that seventeenth Tirthankara Mallinatha was a female by name Malli while the Digambaras hold that he was male. (7) The Svetambara monks collect their food from different houses while the Digambara monks take food standing in one house only where there preconceived idea (sankalpa) is fulfilled.”⁴⁵

Digambaras

Even amongst the naked sect of Digambaras, some groups or Sanghas seem to have developed. Mula Sangha seems to have been popular as it is mentioned in some of the inscriptions at Sravana Belgola. During the time of Indranandi, Sanghas like Vira, Aparajita Sena, Bhadra Simha, Candra etc. seem to have come into existence in course of time. They received recognition at the time of Arhadbali. In Vikrama Samvat 753, Kumar Sena Muni established the Kastha Sangha. They started using a bunch (piccha) of hair of cattle-tail instead of feathers of peacocks. They used to initiate women as nuns and administer the oath of celibacy to them. Two hundred years later, a Sangha known as Mathurasangha came to be founded in Mathura. The monks of this Sangha dispensed with piccha altogether. One Vajrasuri seems

45. Tukol, T.K. : *Compendium of Jainism*, p. 52.

to have started a Sangha by name Dravida-sangha. Though here was laxity in their conduct, they used to have temples repaired and receive gifts of lands etc. for the use of temples.”⁴⁶

The sect of Digambaras (naked monks) have further been grouped under various subsects, viz. (1) Terahapantha (2) Bisapantha and (3) Taranapantha.”⁴⁷

There are some minor sects in South India like Panchamas, Caturtha, Bogara, Setavala etc. but they seem to have originated on the basis of occupations; they are not mentioned in any of the books or other records of historical value.

(i) Terahapantha : The heads of Jaina Mathas were called Bhattarakas. They possessed property and other paraphernalia incidental to their office. A section of the community seems to have taken objection to their way of life and stopped respecting them or saluting them. One Banarasidas, a resident of Agra seems to have headed this opposition sometime in the 18th century. The group came to be known as Terahapanthi. The followers do not respect the Bhattarakas. They are opposed to decorating the idols. They prohibit the use of flowers and saffron in the worship. The group spread to all parts of India.

(ii) Bisapantha : The supporters of the Bhattarakas styled themselves as Bisapanthis. They follow the customary practices of worship of naked idols. They use flowers and scented agarbattis (incense sticks) at the time of worship and make offerings of fruits etc.

These groups continued to live in peace and luckily there have been no quarrels between them. They accept the scriptures of Digambaras.

(iii) Taranapantha : One person by name Taranatarana-svami who died in Malhargadha in the former princely state of

46. Ibid., p. 53.

47. Ibid., p. 53-54.

Gwaliar in 1515 A.D. was the originator of this creed. The place of his Samadhi is regarded as a place of pilgrimage by his followers. They prohibit idol worship. They build temples but keep sacred books for worship. They do not offer articles like fruits and flowers at the time of worship. Besides the books sacred to the Digambaras, they also worship the books written by their Acaryas." Their population is mostly confined to Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Svetambaras

Svetambaras (Svetambaras) are those who bear white robes. They are further divided in various sub-sects.

"There are three sub-sects among the Svetambaras⁴⁸ ; Murtipujaka, Sthanakavasi and Terapanthi. Reference has already been made about the features of Svetambara monks. Apart from wearing white clothes, they worship idols bedecked with ornaments, costly silks and diamonds. The monks began to reside in temples and make accumulations of money etc. They eat food and delicacies brought by women and make use of scents, dhupa etc. for worship. They sing and make predictions on astrological data. There are many gachha among them like Upakesagachha, Kharatara, Tapagaccha etc."

Caitya-vasi (Temple Residents) : "Even though there are differences of opinions about the precise data of the origin of this sub-sect, it appears to have originated in the beginning of the 4th Century A.D. Kalyanavijayaji takes the view that it might have originated before 355 A.D. The followers of this sect gave up the idea of residing in viharas or rest-houses and started residing in temples with the growth of laxity in behaviour. Their number increased in course of time. They maintain that it is proper for the ascetics to reside in temples during the present times. Haribhadrasuri has criticised this practice and has protested against

48. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

their use of scents, flowers and fruits, taking food twice or thrice, taking bath, using oils, purchase children to make them disciples, resort to, practice of mantras and tantras and prevent people going to ascetics who behave in accordance with the scriptures. They have been subjected to criticism by Jinavallabha, Jinadatta and other later ascetics. In about 745 A.D. or so, the king of Anahilapura by name Chavada issued an order at the instance of Silagunasuri prohibiting the entry into town of ascetics other than Caitya-vasis. This order was got changed in about 1013 A.D. after Jinesvarsuri and Buddhisagarasuri defeated the ascetics of this school in the Darbar of king Durabhadeva in the discussions on the sanction of the Sacred Books for the different schools. Thereafter, the Caityavasis decreased in strength, and those who style themselves as "Yati" or "Sripujya" amongst the Svetambaras belong to that School. Those who style themselves as "Samvegi" are the followers of forest-dwelling ascetics."⁴⁹

Sthanakavasi : "This sect was founded by Lomkashaha who was born in about 1415 A.D. in a village by name Arahatawada of the former Sirohi State, now in Gujarat. He was born in an Oswal family. At the age of twenty five, he went to Ahmedabad where Mohamad Shah was ruling. He became acquainted with Lomkashaha during certain transactions of sale of diamond. Mohamad Shah became very pleased with Lomkashaha due to skill shown by him and appointed him as the custodian of the iron safe where he had kept all his ornaments. When Mohamad Shah died due to poisoning, he became very unhappy and left his service. He was employed by a Muni by name Jananasri, being pleased with his handwriting, to copy the scriptures. He copied a number of scriptures and while doing so, he used to keep one copy for himself (Mirji Anna Rao : Jainism). In course of time, he found that the type of idol-worship which was then in vogue had not the sanction of scriptures. So he undertook to reform the Jaina religion and those who crowded at Ahmedabad to hear his

49. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

preachings were greatly influenced by him and requested him to accept them as his followers, Lomkashaha declined on the ground that he was still a house-holder. Jnanasri Muni initiated him into asceticism and hence was born the Lomkagaccha. There is however another version that Lomkashaha left the service of the Shah when he was overcome with pain and pity on seeing a Muslim engaged in hunting. The followers of this school of thought came to be known as Dhundhiyas, also called Sthanakavasis because they carry on their religious duties in Sthanaks which are like prayer halls. The followers of the school are largely to be found in Gujarat, Marwar, Kathiawar etc. They regard themselves as part of the Svetambara-sect.

There are however differences between the Sthanakavasis and the Svetambaras in the observance of religious practices. The Sthanakavasis do not build temples, do not believe in the worship of idols and do not have faith in places of pilgrimage. They tie a white piece of cloth to their mouth. Like Lomkashaha, they admit the authenticity of only 31 of the scriptures. In about the 18th century Satyavijaya Muni advised the Svetambaras to wear yellow clothes to distinguish them from the Sthanakavasis and that practice is still in vogue to this day.”⁵⁰

Non-idolatry-Terahapanthis

“This sub-sect was established in Marwar by one Acharya Bhikshu or Bhikamarsi. He was born in about 1860 A.D. in Kantalia, then in Jodhpur State but now in Rajasthan, and was initiated as a monk in 1885 A.D. (Samva 1803). He founded this sect on the plea that though Ahimsa was foundation of religion we were resorting to Himsa in our daily affairs and that we were practising irreligion in place of religion. The head of the Munis is respected by all the members of the Sangha who carry out his directions in their daily life. They have to salute him everyday

50. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

according to usual practice. Though there are followers of this sect in Calcutta and other towns, they are to be found in big numbers in the western part of India.”

Yapaniya Sangha

“Besides the Digambaras and Svetambaras, there was an ancient Sangha called the Yapaniya Sangha; it was also called the Gaupya Sangha. This tradition seems to have been founded by a Svetambara monk by name Srikalasa in about the year 148 A.D. Since this was about 70 years after the division of the community into two sects as noted already, the new creed seems to be a compromise of the traditions of both. This seems to have taken birth somewhere in North Karnataka. A large number of allusions to the Yapaniyas found in the epigraphs of the Kannada country as contrasted with their almost total absence in other regions show that the Yapaniyas were rather exclusively, a product of Karnataka Jainism and that they grew from strength to strength and developed several monastic orders of their own, encouraged by the ruling class and supported by the sections of the populace in many parts of Karnataka from fifth century to the fourteenth century A.D.”⁵¹

“Two strongholds of the Yapaniya monks have been in the Saundatti Taluka of the Belgaum District, one at Hosur and the other at Manoli.

This creed seems to have developed a very liberal outlook. The founders adopted a reformist attitude, though they adhered to some of the important traits common to Digambaras and Svetambaras. While their monks were naked, they moved with a bunch of peacock feathers and took their food in their hands. They worshipped nude idols and blessed the saluting devotees; ‘May true religion thrive’ (Satdharma-vrddhirastu). They accepted the Svetambara belief that women can also attain salvation and

51. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

that Kevalins could accept food from them. Grammarian Sakatayan also known as Palyakirti belonged to this tradition. The works composed by him were read by the followers. They accepted some of the Sacred Books based on the Svetambara traditions.

The Yapaniyas seem to have been very liberal. They accepted that the followers of other doctrines including even house-holders can attain salvation. These generous persuasive practices secured warm welcome to the monks wherever they went. The same sense of accommodation and capacity for adaptability must have been responsible for the popularisation of the Yakshi cult and also for the ceremonial and ritualistic innovations in the worship of gods by the Jaina priests in South India. The Yapaniyas and their views met with an opposition from the conservative sections of the community. Their popularity was mainly due to flexibility in religious precepts, free movement among the masses, grant of minor concessions to other creeds, introduction of Yaksa and Yaksini cult, establishment of religious institutions owing to the generous grants from the rulers and the public, and encouragement to women to enter the monastic order.

It is difficult to say when the new school of thought disappeared, inspite of the popularity of its doctrines and influence of its monks and nuns on public life. It seems to have survived till the end of the 15th Century A.D. as evidenced by inscriptions mentioning the death of two saints by name Dharmakirti and Nagacandra in Vikrama Samvat 1451, found at Kagwad in Belgaum District.

Mention is made in some books about the tradition of Ardhapthalaka, particularly by Sri Ratnanandi Acarya in his 'Life of Bahubali'. Ratnanandi has stated that the monks of this sect used to cover their nakedness by a piece of cloth. It can therefore be inferred that this sect was in vogue just before the Svetambara sect fully developed into a division of the Jaina community.

Whatever may be the number of divisions, all schools are unanimous in recognising the Tirthankaras and the principles preached by them. The differences are superficial in that they pertain more to form than to the substance of theology, ethics and metaphysics of the Jaina religion.”⁵²

Some Acharyas, Munis and Jaina intellectuals have stressed the need to unite the followers of the Tirthankaras and share the common platform in ideological meets in the new millennium.

52. Tukol, pp. 58-59.

8

RICH TRADITION OF JAINISM

As stated earlier, Mahavira in Jaina Religion is generally known and treated as the Fordmaker a Kevalin, throughout the world. He was the last and the twenty fourth Tirthankara, as well as a linking chain of great Jaina teachers and torchbearers, who all communicated the doctrine of Jainism as his predecessors.

In the opinion of the 12th century Svetambara teacher Jinadatta Suri the Jains are an upright community. Though it is a minority religion, but it is the most ancient philosophical tradition which is rather more important than numbers.

Scholars on Jainism

The Jainism being one of the foremost ancient religions of India has attracted the attention of the western scholars during the last 500 years. Its central tenet involves non-violence (ahimsa) to all creatures. Jainism throughout its history has rejected traditional Hindu notions of the creation and dissolution of the world, Vedic ritualism and Hindu theology. It is not clear when the term 'Jain' was first employed to designate a specific religious faith. In the ancient scriptures, 'niggantha' (free from bonds) was used to describe members of the ascetic community. In due course of time the word Jina (Jain) eventually became current for both the teachings of the religion and its followers. The Jainism has its own pretty long history, all the 24 Tirthankaras, prophetic scriptures, acaryas and teachers as well as rituals and principles.

Different Jain sects have their own philosophical traditions, ways of worship and interpreting Jain religion. The Sanskrit word Jain derives from Jina, the conqueror which is employed to designate great teachers, who having overcome the worldly passions obtained enlightenment, preached the doctrine of non-violence and attained the freedom from rebirth. In Jain scriptures there is enough doctrinal and spiritual literature.

As a matter of fact Europeans have taken interest in the deep study of Jainism since the beginning of the sixteenth century. The western students of philosophy and religion and missionaries were more interested in Jain ascetics and Jain life, but serious efforts were made only in the beginning in the nineteenth century by the British and German Indologists. German-scholar Albrecht Weber's "Über die Heiligen Schriften der Jains" is a great work of classical Indological scholarship, which was rated a high research study of the nineteenth century. Weber (1825-1901) never visited India, but material was sent to him in Berlin, while he was working on Jain religion.

Other Western scholars as mentioned earlier like Buhler, Jacobi and Leumann produced their ground breaking studies on Jain history, literature and doctrine. Jacobi in his famous paper (1874) established that Jainism was not an offshoot of Buddhism but an independent religion having a great intellectual tradition.

In the words of Paul Dundas : "Europeans have been aware of the Jains since the beginning of the sixteenth century,..... Predictably, western travellers and missionaries were more interested in the outward aspects of Jain life and the appearance of Jain ascetics and they are vague about the details of their doctrine and belief. References, by and large respectful, to non-violence, vegetarianism and ascetic practice are frequent, but since most of these observations took place in Gujarat, the Svetambard stronghold, little mention is made of the Digambaras."¹

1. Williams, R. : Accounts of the Jain taken from 16th and 17th century Authors, in Upadhye et al, 259-69 (1977).
(Quoted by Dundas : The Jains, p. 6.)

The first serious attempt to get to grips with the Jains as a historical and social phenomenon took place with the advent of the British at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with some of their reports achieving a reasonable degree of accuracy, although not based on any knowledge of Jain literature.² Unfortunately, the likelihood of any genuinely informed judgement on the part of the early British observers was vitiated by their determination to view the Jains as a group almost entirely congruent with the Hindu caste system. While Jainism has rejected the traditional Brahman idea of society being structured around purity and impurity, castes do nonetheless exist as a significant component within Jainism. However, an additional and equally important mode of social differentiation among the Svetambaras (for it is they who in the main were being described) is sectarian division, a source of great confusion to the British who, in trying to impose an artificial model of unity and consistency upon Jainism, failed utterly, as have most other western commentators, to respond adequately to its complex and often idiosyncratic texture.”³

German-speaking Indologists provided the first truly successful effort to reveal Jainism's past. It is indicative of the marginal position that Jain studies have always occupied that Albrecht Weber's 'Über die Heiligen Schriften der Jains' has never been acclaimed as one of the greatest feats not just of classical Indological scholarship but of nineteenth century scholarship in general. Working with manuscript material sent from India to the Preussische Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Weber (1825-1901), who himself never set foot in the country whose ancient literature he studied so assiduously, performed the

2. Bender, E., An Early 19th Century Study of the Jains (Journal of the American Oriental Society, 96 : 114-19 (1976)

3. Banks, M. : Defining Division : A Historical Overview of Jain Social Organisation.

(All quoted by Dundas, p. 6-7)

prodigious task of sifting through and analysing the contents of the huge body of Svetambara scriptures at a time when western knowledge of Jainism, its teachings and the dialect in which the scriptures were written was minimal.⁴ Building on this groundbreaking work, scholars such as Buhler, Jacobi and Leumann started to produce editions of texts and studies of technical problems in Jain history and literature, the full implications of which in Leumann's case are only just now emerging. It was Jacobi who in a famous paper of 1874 authoritatively established that Jainism was not merely an offshoot of Buddhism, as some scholars had argued, but an independent religious and intellectual tradition."⁵

At the same time, a negative picture of Jainism was also emerging, no doubt in part because of the failure of its supposed founder, Mahavira, to conform to the stereotype of an Asian Socrates which had been so congenial to the first serious western interpreters of the life and teachings of the Buddha, and many European scholars came to express extreme discontent with the textual material with which they were working. Weber's comments about his weariness with the tedium and inelegance of the Svetambara canon in time became received wisdom, although they are somewhat surprising in the light of the convoluted style in which he himself often wrote.⁶ Barnett, one of the few British scholars to work on the Jain scriptures, clearly had an active dislike of the literature he translated which he extended into a denunciation of Jainism in general and what he described as its 'grim ideal' and 'morbid' view of life.⁷ Certainly, the idiom of a great deal of Jain literature, its frequently repetitive subject matter and the complex classificatory systems employed in Jain teachings

4. Weber (1883-85) in *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 17-21 (1888).

5. Jacobi, H. : On Mahavira and his predecessors. *Indian Antiquary*, 1880.

6. *Indian Antiquary* 1892. Vol. 21.

7. Barnett, L.D. (1907), *The Antegada—Dasao and Auttarovavaiya—Dasao*, London. (Quoted by Dundas, p. 7.)

do indeed often make serious demands upon the student. However, there are specifically doctrinal and taxonomic reasons for such a style, in part deriving from the originally oral nature of early Jain literature, and it does not require much imagination to realise that ancient Jain teachers would have had more immediate concerns than the possible impact of their scriptures upon the aesthetic sensibilities of Victorian and Edwardian scholars.

Much of this unsympathetic approach to Jainism can be found embodied in the missionary Mrs Sinclair Stevenson's *The Heart of Jainism*, published for the first time in 1915 and still reprinted in India.⁸ This book provides a mixture of accurate and inaccurate information, leavened with a lofty disdain for its subject matter. Jainism's 'heart', it would appear, is its heartlessness, the material wealth of its followers masking a spiritual impoverishment, a barrenness of belief far from the saving grace of Jesus. It has taken over sixty years for the English-speaking reader to gain an accurate sense of what Jainism involves with the publication of *The Jaina Path of Purification* by Professor P.S. Jaini, a Digambara from South India.⁹

".....More generally, there has been a failure to integrate Jainism adequately into the wider picture of Indian society and a concomitant lack of desire to allot it a recognisable place amongst the world's religions. This latter point can be seen most markedly in the recent multi-volume *Encyclopedia of Religions* edited by Mircea Eliade, which both sums up research over the last half-century and will to a large extent set the agenda for the study of religion in the immediate future.¹⁰ Only three entries in this monumental work relate specifically to Jainism, and only one Jain individual, the last formaker Mahavira, is given a separate entry.

8. Stevenson, Mrs. Sinclair : *Heart of Jainism*, London, 1915.

9. Jaini, P.S., *Jaina Path of Purification*. Berkeley. 1979.

10. Eliade, M. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York, 1987.

(All quoted by Dundas, Paul p. 8).

The largely textual orientation of nineteenth century and subsequent western scholarship has also been responsible for the creation of a distorted perspective on Jain society and its history. The excavation at the end of the last century of the great funerary monument (*stupa*) at the north-west Indian city of Mathura and the examination by the Austrian scholar Buhler of the inscriptional evidence there confirmed both that the information about ascetic lineages found in ancient scriptural texts had a genuine basis in reality and that the Jain ascetics formed a fully fledged religious community at a period prior to the common era. So mesmerised do Victorian scholars seem to have been by this corroboration, admittedly an important one, of the results of their textual researches that they failed to draw a more important conclusion. Jain ascetics are not allowed to erect building, religious or otherwise, and there is no evidence that the situation was any different in ancient Mathura. It is obvious that only a sizable and thriving lay community which must have been in existence for some time, in other words near to the very beginning of Jainism, could have been responsible for such an impressive undertaking.”¹¹

“Unfortunately, the Jain lay community has never been adequately studied and the history of Jainism, inevitably based on literature emanating almost exclusively from the ascetic environment, has been presented solely in terms of the preoccupations of the ascetic community, with the laity emerging only intermittently and in largely idealised fashion. Yet, in purely numerical terms, to be a Jain today effectively means to be a layman or a laywoman since the ascetic community is now relatively very small; there are at this time, for example, little more than one hundred and twenty fully initiated monks and about half as many nuns out of a total Digambara population of around one million. Although statistics are nearly impossible to estimate for earlier periods of Jain history, there can be no doubt that lay people have throughout Jain history always constituted by far the

11. Folkart, K.W., Jain Religious Life in Ancient Mathura, 1989.

more substantial proportion of the community, and the ascetic vocation, whatever its prestige and vital role in the construction and promulgation of Jain culture, has been adopted by only a few. However, virtually no ethnographic studies of the contemporary Jain lay community have been undertaken, with the only significant monograph to date dealing with the cooking and dietary customs of the Digambaras of Delhi, and the rituals and attitudes of lay people have been largely ignored, thus ensuring a distinctly lopsided view of Jainism.”¹²

“Western scholarship, then, has hardly begun to provide an adequate assessment of the Jain religion. Furthermore, despite the genuine achievement of figures such as Weber and, rather more recently in this century, Schubring, the west cannot be regarded as having in any serious manner retrieved Jainism for the Jain community or mediated the tradition to it.”¹³ The Jain situation is here different from that of Theravada Buddhism which was in the last century greatly influenced, at least in certain circles, by western scholarly interpretations of Buddhism as well as by the activities of Christian missionaries. While Jain ascetic culture, along with the learning and charismatic leadership associated with it, went into a decline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the impetus towards its regeneration and the reactivation of its scholarly tradition came very much from within the Jain community itself and, if it would be going too far to say that all ascetics this century have been uniformly learned, there have nonetheless emerged from within its ranks some major interpreters of Jainism’s intellectual tradition. The great Svetambara monk Muni Punyavijaya (1895-1971) is a striking example of a scholar whose mastery of a wide range of learning, cataloguing and editing of manuscripts and extensive publications in Hindi and Gujarati, all of which owe little or nothing to western prescriptions, set the

12. Mahias (1985)

13. Schubring (1935) and (1977).

(All quoted by Dundas, pp. 9-10).

highest possible standards. The Jain laity also, both Svetambara and Digambara, has produced many remarkable scholars whose grasp of the technicalities of the Jain literary and philosophical tradition has remained largely unknown in the west, mainly because of the lack of interest of many of them in publishing in English.”¹⁴

Schisms of Jaina Religion

The richness of Jain history's past and present has not seriously been studied, as most of the followers of Jaina religion has spent thier precious time either in worshipping the Thirthankara attending the monks.

The history of the Digambaras, after Mahavira can be divided into four periods :

1. The first five or six centuries after Mahavira, *i.e.* the period between Mahavira and the beginning of the Christian era.
2. The period of the Acharyas, upto eighth centuries from the beginning of the Christian era.
3. The period of the dominance of Bhattarakas, *i.e.* upto the 17th-18th century.
4. The period of reformation and liberalisation from 17th-18th century to the present day.

Digambaras have doctrial differences with the Svetambaras (Svetambaras) on many religious norms for centuries.

The Svetambaras, as a distinctly separate church developed only after the Valabhi Council. This was held in the year 980 or 993 after the death of Mahavira, (about the middle of the 5th century A.D.) for the purpose of colleting the sacred texts and for reducing them to writing. During this period Kalpasutra of Bhadrabahu was completed. Many canonical books of the Svetambaras were compiled and written during this period.

14. Dundas. Paul, p. 10.

Western scholar, Paul Dundas has observed as following : "According to Svetambara tradition, eight, concealments' (nihnava) of the doctrine, or heresies, occurred in the six centuries after Mahavira's attainment of enlightenment. The first of these which took place during Mahavira's life time supposedly originated with his son-in-law Jamali, who rejected a tenet important for an understanding of the functioning of Karma and attempted to found his own rival ascetic order.¹⁵"

According to Ashim Kumar Roy "The main schisms of the Jaina Church was the one between the Svetambaras and the Digambaras. The Svetambaras believe that even before this schism, there had been seven other schisms. These schisms had started when certain important leaders of the Church had disagreed with the views of the main Church on some points of philosophy or ritual. These leaders had then taken away their followers and established what one might call separate sects. However, these schisms had little permanent effects, for the newly born sects had either disappeared or had joined the main Church again on the death of their leaders. The seven schisms have been all described together in *Avashyaka Nirvyukti*, VIII, 56-1000."

Roy has further observed : "The first of these schisms, as we have already seen, happened during the life of Mahavira himself. Its leader was his own son-in-law Jamali. Jamali broke away with his followers from Mahavira, fourteen years after the latter had attained omniscience. The point on which Jamali differed from Mahavira would appear to an outsider to be a mere quibble.

The second schism was started by Tissagutta in Rajagrha. This happened also during the life time of Mahavira and only two years after Jamali's schism. Tissagutta's followers were called Jivapaesiyas. They controverted Mahavira's view that the soul is permeated in all the atoms of the body.

15. Ibid., p. 41.

The third schism was led by Asadha at Seyaviya, 214 years after the death of Mahavira. Asadha's followers were called Avattiyas, and they held that there was no difference between gods, saints, kings and other beings."¹⁶

The fourth schism was started by Assamitta in Mihila 220 years after Mahavira's death. Assamitta was a disciple of Kodinna who was a disciple of Mahagiri. Assamitta's followers were called Samuchchheiyas and they held that since the end of all life will come some day, the effects of good or bad deeds are immaterial.

The fifth schism was started by Ganga at Kullakatiya, 228 years after the death of Mahavira. Ganga was a disciple of Dhanagutta, another disciple of Mahagiri. His followers were called Dokiriyas, and they held that two opposite feelings such as cold and warmth could be experienced at the same time.

The sixth schism arose in Antaranjiya and was started by Sadulaya, otherwise known as Rohagutta, 544 years¹⁷ after the death of Mahavira. Sadulaya is said to have been the author of the Vaisheshika sutras. His followers were called Terasiyas and they held that between life (*jiva*) and non-life (*ajiva*), there is a third state 'no-*jiva*'. According to the *Kalpa-sutra*, the Terasiya sect was founded by Rohagutta a disciple of Mahagiri.¹⁸

The seventh schism was led by Gotthamahila at Dashapura, 584 years after Mahavira's death. His followers were called Abaddhiyas and they asserted that *jiva* was not bounded by *karman*.¹⁹

No trace of these seven schisms is now left in the Jaina religion.

16. Roy, Ashim Kumar : History of the Jainas, p. 86.

17. The difference between Rohagutta and Bhadrabahu is of 374 years. Rohagutta was disciple of Suhastin the 8th patriarch. This gives only 4 patriarchs during 374 years—94 years for each. Jacobi says this is an absurd estimation.

18. Sacred books of the East, Vol. XXII, p. 290.

19. Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 87.

The Eighth Schism—Digambaras and Svetambaras (Svetambaras)

According to Roy : “The Jaina community is divided into two sects Digambara and Svetambara. Both the sects have exactly the same religious and philosophical beliefs and practically the same mythology. The only noticeable difference in the mythology of the two sects is regarding the sex of the nineteenth *Tirthankara* Malli. The Svetambaras believe that Malli was a woman, while Digambaras think that Malli was a man. This difference of opinion about Malli arises out of the few differences in the beliefs of the two sects. The Digambaras think that it is not possible for a woman to achieve salvation, and as all *Tirthankaras* do achieve salvation, the nineteenth *Tirthankara* could not have been a woman. Another difference between the two sects is that the Digambaras think that all Jaina ascetics should follow the example of Mahavira and remain nude, while the Svetambaras think that the practice of remaining nude known as *jinakalpa* was given up by the great teachers of the Church within a few generations after Mahavira (*i.e.* after Jambu) and they had started wearing white garments. This practice was known as *sthavirakalpa*. The present-day ascetics according to the Svetambaras need follow only these great teachers (*sthaviras*), and it was not necessary to practice the *jinakalpa*. The third point on which the two sects differ is regarding the food of the *kevali* (omniscience). The Digambaras maintain that a *kevali* does not need any intake of food, while the Svetambaras think that they do. The point is academic, for both the sects are unanimous that nobody is going to become a *kevali* in the foreseeable future.

Digambaras also deny two of the Svetambara beliefs about Mahavira, *viz.*, that Mahavira’s embryo was taken from the womb of the Brahmana woman Devananda and transferred to the womb of Trishala, and also that Mahavira had married and had a daughter. (Other minor differences between these two communities are given later).

It will be noticed that these and similar other differences are of a minor nature and do not affect the main tenets of the religion which were essentially same for both the sects. On the other hand, these differences minor though they might be, have cleaved the Jaina community into two distinct groups with practically no inter-mixing on the religious or even social plane ; for even inter-marriage between the two sects is not ordinarily permissible. This was because the two communities have necessarily their own temples, the Digambaras having the images of the *tirthankaras* nude, and the Svetambaras clothed. The monks or ascetics who are the religious leaders of the sects are similarly nude, and clothed in white, respectively. Also, due to some reasons mentioned later, the Digambaras refuse to recognize the canonical books of the Svetambaras, and have their own texts.²⁰

“Thus we see that the two sects both swearing allegiance to Mahavira and his teachings, behave in their practical religious life as two different societies. How a community with the same religious philosophy started behaving at some point of time as two distinct communities is not clearly known. The early religious literature of both the sects is practically silent on this point. It is thus possible to conjecture that the Church was undivided in the beginning, the more orthodox ones among the monks practising nudity (*jinakalpa*), and the others not discarding clothes (*sthavirakalpa*). Indeed we have in the *Parishishtaparvam* of the Svetambara polymath Hemachandra, the narration that during the time of king Samprati in Ujjaini, the Church had two leaders Mahagiri and Suhastin. After some time “Mahagiri made over his disciples to Suhastin and lived as a *jinakalpika*, though *jinakalpa* had by that time fallen into disuse.”²¹ Thus perhaps while nudity was optional in the beginning, it became later the fixed manner of all those who adopted it, considering it to be the orthodox way of Jainism. The separation of the Digambaras and

20. Roy, Ashim Kumar, p. 88.

21. The *Parishishtaparvam*, canto XI gl. 1-4.
(Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 89).

Svetambaras according to this thinking was thus a gradual process, and there was no point of time when there was any actual schism. this appears to be a plausible theory.

A slight modification of this theory would be that Hemachandra was wrong, and the *jinkalpika* was never given up. One group of Jaina ascetics continued to practise it throughout, and this group was later called Digambara. The great scholar of Jainism, Hoernle has argued in his essay on the Ajivikas in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, that originally the Digambaras were those Ajivikas (Ajivakas) who were unhappy at the behaviour of their leaders Makkhali Goshala at the time of his death. After leaving his sect they had joined Mahavira and had become the latter's followers. thus the Digambaras as a group were separate from the time of Mahavira himself. Hoernle's conjecture is based mainly on two grounds. Firstly, not only did the Ajivikas practise strict nudity (they were *achelakas*), but also a few of their other customs resembled those of the Digambara monks to some extent. On this latter point Hoernle has cited some instances which do not seem to be borne out by facts. For instance. Hoernle says that Ajivikas used to carry a stick (*ekadandi*), and so do the Digambara monks now-a-days. As a matter of fact, it is the Svetambara monk who may carry a stick, and not a Digambara monk who can have practically no earthly possession. The second point on which Hoernle bases his arguments is that many ancient authors and lexicographers have confused the Ajivikas with the Digambaras.

A.L. Basham in his *Ajivikas*²² has shown that Hoenle had mis-read most of these ancient authorities, and there was no such confusion in them as Hoernle alleges. But Basham fails to explain one comment of the Svetambara Pandit Shilanka (9th century). In his commentary on the *Sutrakritanga*, speaking about those ascetics who revile the followers of Mahavira, Shilanka said that these revilers were the Ajivikas or the Digambaras.²³ Is it possible

22. The Ajivikas, London, 1951.

23. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XLV. p. 267n.

that such a learned Jaina author as Shilanka would by mistake equate Ajivikas with the Digambaras? It is possible to think with Hoernle that Shilanka really thought that the Ajivikas were the same as Digambaras. The bulk of the evidence however, is against Hoernle's conjecture, and the theory that some Ajivikas formed the nucleus of the Digambara sect cannot be built upon this one stray reference by Shilanka.

(In the same commentary Shilanka make another enigmatic reference²⁴ to the Ajivikas. This time he equates the followers of Goshala (*i.e.* the Ajivikas) with the Terasiyas, the followers of Rohagutta, the leader of the sixth schism of the Jaina Church.)

Roy further observes : "The Jainas themselves both Svetambaras and Digambaras. have their own versions as to how the schism between them occurred. This appear in their later books composed long after the alleged occurrences. As stated earlier these are mere legends and cannot be verified as history. The Svetambara version is given in *Avashyakabhashya* a work of about 500 A.D. The legend is as follows :

There was a person called Shivabhuti who had founded a sect called the Bodiya in the city of Rathavirapura. The occasion for doing this arose in this mannar :

Shivabhuti had won many battles for his king, and the latter showered honours on him. Naturally, Shivabhuti became very proud and used to return home late at night. His mother on the complaint of her daughter-in-law refused to open the door one night, and asked him to go to any place the door of which he was likely to find open. Getting wild Shivabhuti entered such a place which, however, turned out to be monastery. He asked the head priest to initiate him but the priest refused to do so, whereupon Shivabhuti himself plucked out his hair and wandered as a monk.

After some time this self-initiated monk Shivabhuti happened to come to the same place. The king, his former friend came to

24. Ibid, p. 245n

(Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 90)

know of his arrival, and sent him a costly garment (*ratnakambala*) as a gift.

Shivabhuti's superior protested and disallowed him to use such a garment. When Shivabhuti did not listen to his advice the teacher tore off that garment and used it as a mattress. Getting wild and excited Shivabhuti gave up all clothing.

(A slightly different version of this says that the occasion for it arose when once, his teacher, expounding the texts to a class, came up against the following, alluding to a special stage of *Jinakalpa*.

"*Jinakalpia ya duviha*". It meant that *Jinakalpiyas* were of two kinds. Some of them might have the necessary requisites, and others not. On hearing it Shivabhuti asked his teacher. 'While there is the system of *Jinakalpa*, why should there be the bondage of clothes ? A monk following *Jinakalpa* and living in solitude should follow the principles of austerity, including nudity". The teacher tried to bring him round, but Shivabhuti would not be persuaded, and gave up all clothing. He thus created a schism in the community).

His sister Uttara also followed him and she also became naked. But when the courtesans of the city complained that nobody would go to them seeing the ugly nature of the female body, Shivabhuti disallowed his sister to accept nudity. Thus nudity was started by the Bodiya under Shivabhuti. The Bodiya presumably were later called the Digambaras. Thus, the eighth schism according to the Svetambaras occurred in 609 A.V. or A.D. 83."

The Digambara version of how the Svetambaras broke away from the main Church which the Digambaras call the Mula Sangha is completely different. It was also recorded much later. The first record is found in Harisena's *Brihatkathakosa* of A.D. 931.²⁵ This is as follows :

25. Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 91.

In the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, Bhadrabahu had predicted a terrible famine in the country of Magadha, for a period of 12 years. Hence a part of the community migrated to south India under his leadership, while the rest remained in Magadha.

When after some time the leaders met together in Ujjayini, the famine was still there, and hence they allowed the monks to wear a piece of cloth (*ardhaphalaka*) to hide shame while on the begging tour. But even when the famine was over these monks refused to give up the use of the piece of cloth. The conservative elements protested against this. And thus these *Ardhaphalakas* proved to be the forerunner of the Svetambara sect.

The final separation came later due to Chandralekha, queen of king Lokapala of *Valabhipura*. It is related that these *Ardhaphalaka* monks were invited by her; but seeing them neither clothed nor naked, the king was disappointed, and the queen, therefore, asked them to dress completely. thenceforth the *Ardhaphalakas* began to put on white clothes and came to be called *Shvetapatas*. This happened in A.D. 80.²⁶

(There is a reference to a *Shvetapata* community in a grant²⁷ issued in his fourth regnal year by the Kadamba king *Mrigeshavarma*, (A.D. 475-490). The grant of a village was made to a community of Jainas living in the city of *Vaijayanti*. The village was divided into three shares, the first to the holy *Arhat*, the second to the eminent ascetics called *Shvetapatas*, who were intent on practising the true religion (*sad-dharma*), and the third for the eminent ascetics called *Nirgranthas*. Thus the *Shvetapatas* and *Nirgranthas* in this city in Karnataka were worshipping the same image of *Arhat* in a temple. Whether the *Shvetapatas* referred to in the inscription and the *Shvetapatas* sect referred to in the above *Digambara* legend were the same is not known).

Roy further observes : "There is a serious weakness in this *Digambara* version : It is not supported by the earliest *Digambara*

26. Ibid., p. 91-92.

27. Saletore : *Medieval Jainism*, p. 32. (Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 92)

epigraph that mentions this famine. This epigraph, at Shravana Belgola, says that Bhadrabahu had predicted the famine in Ujjayini and not in Magadha; moreover he himself is not recorded to have accompanied the community to South India. thus there are contradictions in the Digambara versions. On the other hand the Svetambara version as to how the church split into two is a bit too puerile for such an important event. It appears that all these stories were invented long after the actual split which in the beginning must have been a gradual process which was completed some time at the end of the 5th century. We do not know when actually the two sects finally separated but we have epigraphic records to prove that even in the 3rd century A.D., the difference, if any, within the community was not sharp. The images found at Kankali-tila in Mathura belong to this period. They depict the *Tirthankaras* in a nude state. Yet the donors of these images presumably belonged to the Svetambara sect for the *Shakhas* and *Ganas* to which they belonged are the same as those which are mentioned in the Svetambara that some of the donors were nuns or the disciples of nuns. Thus though the images were in the Digambara style the worshippers did not observe the Digambara orthodoxy about disallowing women to become nuns. The exact dates of the Mathura inscription cannot be determined. They are dated in the Kusana era and the dates mentioned are from 5 to 98 this era. However, the controversy as to when the Kusana era started is not yet over, and if we go by the date suggested by R.C. Majumdar then this era started A.D. 244, and, therefore, the Mathura Jaina inscriptions belong to a period from the middle of the 3rd century to the middle of the 4th century. Similarly, the other *Tirthankara* images of this period found in northern India are also nude. The inscriptions²⁸ of Kahum in the Gorakhpur district refers to the installation of five images of Adikartris. This inscription is dated A.D. 460. The images found here are nude.

28. Inscription no. 15 in Copus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. 3.

(Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 93)

The conclusion would be that the difference in beliefs of the two sects, if they had at all parted company by that time, was not upto then clear cut and both the sects worshipped nude images.

The actual parting of the ways perhaps came some time near the middle of the 5th century, when the Valabhi Council was held. It is said that the canon of the Svetambaras had been reduced to state of disorder and was even in danger of being lost altogether. Hence in the year 980 (or 993) after the death of Mahavira (*i.e.* about the middle of the 5th century A.D.), a Council was held in Valabhi in Gujarat, presided over by Devarddhi Kshamashramana, the head of the school, for the purpose of collecting the texts and writing them down. The twelfth *Anga* containing the *Puvvas*, had already gone astray at that time. This is why we find only eleven *Angas* in the recension which has come down to us, and which is supposed to be identical with that of Devarddhi.

The Digambaras completely deny the authority of the texts collected by this Council. They say that not only was the knowledge of the 14 *Puvvas* lost at an early period, but knew all the 11 *Angas* had died. The teachers who succeeded him knew less and less *Angas* as time went on, until the knowledge of these works was completely lost 683 years after Mahavira's *nirvana*. Thus the Valabhi Council marks the final split between the Svetambaras and Digambaras.

There is some iconographic evidence which supports the theory that it was the period of the Valabhi Council when the two sects actually parted company. As stated earlier all the *Tirthankara* images found at Mathura and datable to the Kusana period depict the *tirthankaras* either in the standing position and nude, or, if seated, in the cross legged position, are sculptured in such a way that neither garments, nor genitals are visible. Thus upto the Kusana period both the sects worshipped nude images. The earliest known image of a *Tirthankara* with a lower garment is a standing Rishabh Natha (Risabhadeva) discovered at Akota in Gujarat. The date of his image has been fixed at the later part of the fifth

century.²⁹ This was shortly after the period of the Valabhi Council.”

Roy says : “The geographical distribution of the two sects also would give some support to the theory that the Valabhi Council was the chief reason of the schism. It is found that the main concentration of the Svetambaras is round about and within 500 kilometres of Valabhi. Most of the Jainas in Gujarat, and Western Rajasthan are Svetambaras, while most of the Jainas of Eastern Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the Jainas of South India are Digambaras.

It is possible that so far as the Jainas of Northern India were concerned, they might have had a Council of their own at Mathura. Its president was Skandila. This name does not occur in the list of *Sthaviras* of the *kalpa-sutra*, but the name of Shandilya occurs 33rd in the list. Jacobi remarks³⁰ in this connection : “I think Shandilya is the same as Skandila, who was president of the Council of Mathura, which seems to have been the rival of that in Valabhi.”

In other words, those who accepted the literature edited and collected at Valabhi as canonical were later called Svetambaras, and those who either had their own Council at Mathura, or did not have any Council at all, as in South India, were later called Digambaras.”

“The Digambaras of South India, long before the time the Valabhi Council of the Svetambaras had met, had started developing their own sacred literature. They had to do this because according to them the last of the *acharyas* who knew even a part of the *Angas* had died 683 years after the death of Mahavira. The name of this *acharya* was Bhutavali. Nobody was left who knew

29. Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th edn., vol. 10, p. 8.

30. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXII, p. 294.

(Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, pp. 93-94.)

even a part of the original canon. The next pontiff according to some Digambara lists was Bhadrabahu II. Kundakunda who claimed to be a disciple of this Bhadrabahu, therefore, started writing the sacred books for the Digambaras. He is said to have written altogether 84 such books. The names of all the works composed by Kundakunda are not known. But three of his works, viz., *Samayasara*, *Pravachanasara*, and *Panchastikayasara* are considered so important by the Digambaras that together they are called *Prabhritatraya* or *Saratraya*, a name which reminds one of the *Prasthanatraya* of the Vedantists. Indeed Kundakunda is considered so important personality in the Digambara hagiology that a popular Digambara benedictory verse runs thus :

Mangalam Bhagavana Viro, mangalam Gautamogani,

Mangalam Kundakundyadyau, Jaina dharmostu mangalam.

To the Digambaras thus Kundakunda is as important a teacher as Sudharma (Sudharman) is to the Svetambaras.

Kundakunda was followed by many other Digambara writers such as Vattakera, Kartikeya Svamin, etc. Practically all these authors belonged to south India. Thus by the early centuries of the Christian era while the intellectual centre of the Svetambaras was developing in western India, the Digambaras had their own intellectual centre in South-West Karnataka. Perhaps this geographical separation of the intellectual centres was the main reason why the two sections of the Jainas drifted. To some extent even the gods began to differ : The Digambaras in South-West Karnataka made Bahubali, a son of the first *Tirthankara*, one of their most important deities and built colossal statues for him. Bahubali on the other hand is scarcely, if at all, mentioned in the Svetambara mythology.

The Digambaras called their Church, the Mula Sangha or the Main Church. The Mula Sangha is then said to have branched off into Nandi, Sinha, etc. But all Digambaras to whatever *gaccha* (sub-sect ?) they might belong, claim the descent of their *gaccha* Ultimately from the Mula Sangha.

In the first few centuries of the Christian era, the dominant sect among the Jainas of the Deccan and South India were the Digambaras. Only one inscription—a grant has been found in these parts of India, which refers to the Shvetapatas (Svetambaras?) by name. This is the Devagiri (Dharwar district) inscription³¹ of king Mrigeshavarmana referred to earlier. His period according to Saleore³² was A.D. 475-490.

Roy has mentioned 18 points of difference between Svetambaras and Digambaras. He says : “The total number of points on which the Digambaras differ from the Svetambaras are eighteen, These are listed below :

The Digambaras do not accept the following Svetambara beliefs :

1. That a *kevali* needs food;
2. That a *kevali* needs to evacuate (*nihara*);
3. That women can get salvation. (In order to get salvation a woman has according to the Digambaras to be born again as a man);
4. That Shudras can get salvation ;
5. That a person can get salvation without forsaking clothes ;
6. That a house-holder can get salvation;
7. That the worship of images having clothes and ornaments is permitted;
8. That monks are allowed to possess fourteen (specified) things;
9. That the *Tirthankara* Malli was a woman;
10. That the eleven of the 12 original *Angas* (canonical works) still exist;

31. Jaina Shila Lekha Sangraha, Vol. II, pp. 69-72.

32. Saleore : Medieval Jainism, p. 32.

(Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 96.)

11. That Bharata Chakravarti attained *kevalihood* while living in his palace;
12. That a monk may accept food from a Shudra;
13. That Mahavira's embryo was transferred from one womb to another; and Mahavira's mother had fourteen auspicious dreams before he was born. The Digambaras believe that she had actually 16 such dreams;
14. That Mahavira had a sickness due to the *tejolesya* of Goshala;
15. That Mahavira had married and had a daughter;
16. That a cloth offered by the gods (*devadusva*) fell on the shoulders of a *tirthankara*;
17. That Marudevi went for her salvation riding an elephant; and
18. That monk may accept alms from many houses.³³

Sudharman

Much has appeared earlier about Sudharma or Sudharman. The Svetambara version, according to Ashim Kumar Roy is that "Jainism was confined, during the first one or two centuries after Mahavira, within the area in which he had preached the religion. Mahavira's principal disciple Sudhamma (Sudharman) succeeded him as the head of the Church. His name was later Sanskritized to Sudharman. Mahavira is said to have had eleven principal disciples or *ganadharas*. Nine of them had died during the lifetime of Mahavira and only two namely Sudharman and Indrabhuti Gautama, are said to have survived him. But apart from Sudharman we know nothing about the other ten *ganadharas*. The historicity of these ten has been questioned. However, it is quite clear that in the history of Jainism, it is not important to establish the fact that they existed. These ten *ganadharas* have

³³ Roy, Ashim Kumar. p. 96-9.

left no successors, and they did not make any contribution, so far as we know, to the development of Jainism after Mahavira.

Sudharman on the other hand was an important figure. Many of the teachings of Mahavira are known to us in the version in which Sudharman taught them to his principal disciple Jambusvamin. Many lessons in the Jaina canonical works start with the words of Sudharman : “Now Jambusvamin.....”

Sudharman survived Mahavira by twenty years. He is said to have become a *kevalin* (omniscient) twelve years after Mahavira's *nirvana*, and then lived on for eight years more, reaching the age of 100 at the time of his death. Jambu, his principal disciple, succeeded him to the pontificate. Jambu's principal disciple Prabhava succeeded him on his death forty four years later in 64 A.V. Thus, for several generations, the supreme dignity and power of the Jaina Church devolved from teacher to disciple.

“It must be pointed out that the above is the Svetambara tradition. Some Digambaras maintain, on the other hand, that the first two successors of Mahavira were Gautama and Lohacharya, and Jambu had succeeded Lohacharya. Some other Digambaras think that Gautama was succeeded by Sudharman and Lohacharya was another name of Sudharman. However, for the history of the Jaina Church, we have to rely on the Svetambara version. Digambaras have not written any history of the Church and apart from some *pattavalis* and inscriptions, we do not know their version of the story for a few centuries after Mahavira.

The list of the successors of Mahavira in the pontificate, as known to the Svetambaras, is given in the *Kalpasutra* in the chapter known as Theravali (or Sthaviravali), and also in two of their canonical works. these two are the *Nandi* and the *Avashyaka sutras*. The list of the patriarchs given in these two *sutras* are in agreement with that given in the *Kalpasutra* upto Mahagiri and Suhastin, the pair of patriarch in the eighth generation after Mahavira. At that point, the succession diverges in two lines.

one starts from Mahagiri, the other from Suhastin. The first is recorded in *Nandi* and *Avashyakasutras*, and the second in the *Kalpasutra*. Both lines are entirely independent of each other and have no members in common. Almost all those who figure in the ancient legends (*kathanakas*) belong to the line of Suhastin. As far as I am aware there is but one legend related to a member of the Mahagiri line, viz. Mangu, see *Abhidhanarajendra Kosha*, S.V. Mangu.³⁴

Thus, for all practical purposes, the list given in the *Kalpasutra* is the only authentic list, so far as the Svetambaras are concerned. The *Kalpasutra*, however, does not give, apart from the succession list, any other information about the patriarchs of the Jaina Church. This history is contained in Hemachandra's *Parishishtaparvam* or *Sthaviravali* and in the last part of Bhadresvara's *Kathavali*, a huge work in Prakrit prose. Both these are legendary histories or rather hagiographies, i.e. they give mostly the legends connected with the lives of these patriarchs and the contemporary kings. The "history" of the Jaina Church as given below is mostly based on Hemachandra's *Sthaviravali*. A large part of the *Sthaviravali* describes the good deeds done by the patriarchs in their previous births as a result of which they were rewarded with saintly lives in their present births. The work also describes the political events of the period, specially in reference to the influence that the Jainas had on these events. These descriptions are of general interest. (The events are perhaps described as the Jainas would like them to have happened, and not necessarily as they actually happened)."

Jambu

After Sudharman, Jambu did appreciable and noble work for the Jaina Church. He was a scholarly parson and a great teacher.

34. H. Jacobi in his introduction to Hemachandra's *Parishishta-parva*, p. xiv. (Quoted by Ashim Kumar Roy, p. 90)

Virtually, "Sudharman's successor was Jambu. It is related that once Sudharman, surrounded by his disciples, Jambu etc., arrived in Campa, and took up his abode in the park outside the town. As was usual, a crowd gathered to hear his preachings. King Kunika (Ajatashatru) saw the crowd and came to hear the sermon. When the sermon was at an end, the king asked Sudharman who Jambu was, for the king was greatly struck with the beauty and the remarkable appearance of Jambu. Sudharman related to him Jambu's history, and foretold that he would be the last *kevalin*. After him nobody would reach *Manahpayaya* and the *Paramavadhi* stages of supernatural knowledge ; the *jinakalpa* would be abandoned together with other holy institutions and practices, while on earth the sanctity of men would go on decreasing." (IV, 1-54)³⁵

Here perhaps we get the first hint of the schism between the Svetambara and the Digambara Churches. As said earlier also. One of the practices of *jinakalpa* is the complete nudity of the monks. The Svetambara monks have abandoned this practice and follow what is known as *sthavira-kalpa*. It is interesting to note that the name of Jambu's successor Prabhava who presumably followed the *sthavirakalpa* does not appear in any of the lists of patriarchs of the Digambaras.

Prabhava

Prabhava was a learned ascetic. According to Sthaviravali, "Jambu reached beatification 64 years after Mahavira's *nirvana*, having appointed Prabhava of the Katyayana *gotra* as the visible head of the Church." (IV, 55-61). He was a great monk and a teacher.

35. The figures in the brackets refer to the canto and 'shlok' numbers in the Asiatic Society edition of Hemachandra's *Sthaviravali*. The portion within inverted commas are Jacobi's summaries of these *shlokas*.

Shayyambhava

Shayyambhava was born a heretic and at first he studied the Vedic religion under his *guru*. Once he met two monks who said : 'Ah, you know not the truth'. This unsettled his mind and a few days later he took farewell of his *guru* and went in search of the two monks. At last, he came to Prabhava from whom he asked for instruction in the Jaina religion. Prabhava explained to him the five vows of the Jainas ; and when Shayyambhava had renounced his former heretical views, he received *diksha* and became a zealous ascetic. He learned the fourteen *purvas* and became, after Prabhava's death, the head of the Church" (V, 36-54)

When Shyyambhava took *diksha*, he had left his young wife behind. They had as yet no children. The circumstances made the forsaken woman's case appear still more miserable, so that people compassionately asked her if there was no hope of off-spring. She answered in Prakrit, "*manayam*", i.e. "a little". Hence the boy to whom she eventually gave birth, was called Manaka.

Manaka and Dashavaikalika

When Manaka was eight years old, and became aware that his mother was not dressed like a widow, he asked her who his father was. He then learned that his father was Shayyambhava, who, becoming a monk, had left her before he, Manaka, was born, and never returned. Manaka who yearned for his father secretly left his mother and went to Campa. There he met his father, and as he did not recognise him as such, he inquired of him about his father by whom he wanted to be ordained. Upon which Shayyambhava gave himself out as the most intimate friend of his father in whose stead he would ordain him. Manaka agreeing to this Shayyambhava brought him to the monks withut explaining the relation subsisting between the boy and himself. Then the boy was ordained. Shayyambhava by means of his supernatural knowledge perceived that his son would die in six months. The

time being too short for mastering the whole sacred lore, *in extenso*, Shaiyambhava condensed its essence in ten lectures which he composed in the afternoon. Hence the work is called *Dashavaikalika*. For though to make abstracts of the Law is allowed to none but the last *Dashapurvin*, yet under certain circumstances a *Shrutakevalin* may do so. Manaka learned the *Dashavaikalika*, and thus he was well instructed in the religion. When the six months were over and he died, Shaiyambhava wept so much at Manaka's death that his disciples were at a loss to comprehend his deportment which appeared so unbecoming of a world-renouncing monk, and said as much. He then told them Manaka's history, and declared that he wept for joy because his son had died a saint. The disciples learning then that Manaka was their *acharya*'s son, wondered why he had not told them this before. Shaiyambhava replied that if they had known Manaka to be his son, they would not have exacted the obedience which is the duty of every novice, and the most meritorious part of his moral exercise. He added that for the sake of Manaka's instruction, he had composed the *Dashavaikalika*, but now the object being attained, he would cause his work to disappear. The disciples, however, moved the *Sangha* to solicit Shaiyambhava that he should publish the *Dashavaikalika*. Shaiyambhava complying with their wishes, that work has been preserved." (V, 55-105)

Yashobhadra

At last Shaiyambhava died, having appointed Yashobhadra as his successor." (V, 106-107). He was a great monk and a learned teacher.

"After a most exemplary life of an ascetic and a teacher, Yashobhadra died leaving the management of the Church to his disciples Bhadrabahu and Sambhutavijaya." (VI, 1-4)

Hemacandra in his *Sthaviravali* now goes back about a hundred years to the time when Pataliputra, the new capital of Magadha, was founded. Later he describes the political history

of the period of Nandas and the Mauryas and then comes back to the history of the Jaina Church.

Sthulabhadra

According to Jaina sources Kunika was the king of Magadha at the time of Mahavira. He was succeeded by new capital Pataliputra and a Jaina Temple. After murdering Udayin (Udayan), Nanda became king of Magadha. He was son of a barber.

Seven descendants of Nanda succeeded each other. The ministers of these Nanda kings were the descendants of Kalpaka. His name was Sakatala. Sakatala had two sons, Sthulabhadra and Shriyaka. Shriyaka was in the service of the king whose confidence and love he had gained.

On the death of Sakatala, the king offered Shriyaka the seal of the Prime Minister, but he refused in favour of his brother Sthulabhadra. Accordingly the same offer was made to Sthulabhadra, who said that he would take the matter into consideration. Ordered to make up his mind without delay, his reflections took an unexpected turn; for perceiving the vanity of the world he resolved to quit its empty pleasures, and plucking out his hair he acquainted the king with his resolution. He later took *diksha* under Sambhutavijaya.

Hemachandra described the manner in which the ten *purvas* were preserved by Sthulabhadra. The principal character in this famous incident was Bhadrabahu, and as Bhadrabahu died 170 years after the *nirvana* of Mahavira, i.e. fifteen years after the accession of Chandragupta, it is clear that the incident happened during the reign of Chandragupta.

Sthulabhadra Learns the *Purvas* From Bhadrabahu

“A dreadful dearth prevailing about this time forced the monks to emigrate as far as the seaside. During these unsettled

times they neglected their regular studies, so that the sacred lore was on the point of falling into oblivion. The *Sangha*, therefore, reassembling at Pataliputra when the famine was over, collected the fragments of the canon which the monks happened to recollect, and in this way brought together eleven *angas*. In order to recover the *Drishtivada*, the *Sangha* sent monks to Bhadrabahu in Nepal commanding him to join the Council. Bhadrabahu, however, declined to come, as he had undertaken the *mahaprana* vow which it would take 12 years to carry out ; But after that period he would in a short time teach the whole of the *Drishtivada*. Upon receiving the answer, the *Sangha* again despatched two monks to ask Bhadrabahu what penalty he who disobeyed the *Sangha* incurred. If he should answer excommunication, then they should reply that such was his punishment. Everything coming about as foreseen, Bhadrabahu requested that out of consideration for his vow, the *Sangha* should send him some clever monks to whom he would daily deliver seven lessons at suitable time. Accordingly 500 monks with Sthulabhadra as their leader, were sent to Bhadrabahu. But all of them except Sthulabhadra, becoming tired by the slowness of their progress, soon fell off; Sthulabhadra alone stayed out the whole term of his master's vow. At the end of it he had learned the first ten *Purvas* (IX, 55-76).

Sthulabhadra and Bhadrabahu, it appears, then went back to Pataliputra. Sthulabhadra had seven sisters. These sisters of Sthulabhadra paying their reverence to Bhadrabahu after his arrival in Pataliputra, asked him where their brother stayed, and were directed to some temple. On their approach Sthulabhadra transferred himself into a lion, in order to gratify his sisters with the sight of a miracle. Of course the frightened girls ran back to their *guru* to tell him that their brother had been devoured by a lion. Bhadrabahu however assured them that their brother was alive, and so they found him on their return to the temple." (IX, 77-82).

"When his sisters had left Sthulabhadra, he went to Bhadrabahu for his daily lesson. But the latter refused to teach

him any more, as he had become unworthy of it. Sthulabhadra then replied that he remembered no sin since his ordination. But being reminded by him of what he had done, he fell at his feet and implored his forgiveness. Bhadrabahu, however, would not take up his instruction. Even the whole *Sangha* could only with great difficulty overcome his reluctance. He at last consened to teach Sthulabhadra the rest of the *Purvas* on the condition only that they (*viz.* the last four *Purvas*) should not be handed down by him to anybody else. On Bhadrabahu's death, 170 years after Mahavira's *nirvana*, Sthulabhadra became the head of the Church." (IX, 101-113).

Mahagiri and Suhastin

"Sthulabhadra had two disciples. Mahagiri and Suhastin As they were brought up by Yaksarya,³⁶ the word *arya* was prefixed to their names. They were taught by Sthulabhadra the ten *Purvas*, for the last four *Purvas* he was forbidden to teach. After their teacher's decease they succeeded to his place." (X, 36-40).

"After some time, Mahagiri made over his disciples to Suhastin and lived as a *jinakalpika*, though the *jinakalpa* had by that time fallen into disuse." (XI, 1-4).

Hemchandra (Hemacandra) had stated earlier that *jinakalpa* was abandoned after Jambu. Does Mahagiri's acceptance of *jinakalpa* (nudity) signify the break up of the Jaina Church into the two sects Digambara and Svetambara ? this does not appear to be the case, for Mahagiri's name does not figure in any list of *sthaviras* of the Digambaras. Also, Hemachandra's statement that Mahagiri had handed over his disciples to Suhastin is perhaps not correct, for the Nandisutra, a Svetambara text, gives the succession list of Mahagiri's disciples, and this list is completely different from the list of successors of Suhastin given in the *Kalpasutra*.

36. "Evidently Sthulabhadra's eldest sister is meant." (Note by Jacobi).

In other words, when Mahagiri started living as a *jinakalpa*, he either had not made over his disciples to Suhastin, or if he had done so, then he might have had picked up a new group of disciples later. One thing is clear :Mahagiri's successors did not leave much impress in the history of Jainism. Except for the *Nandisutra* list, their names have practically disappeared. As stated earlier the only one whose name occurs in the legends composed in the later times was Mangu.

Samprati and Spread of Jainism

Due to royal patronage Buddhism had spread all over India and to some places outside India. History testify the missionary efforts of Ashoka. A similar role in the case of Jainism was played, according to Hemachandra, by Ashoka's grandson Samprati. Hemachandra continues :

“The king (Samprati) looking up to Suhastin as his greatest benefactor, was converted by him to the true faith, and henceforth strictly performed all duties enjoined to the laity. He further showed his zeal by causing Jina (Jaina) Temples to be erected over the whole of Jambudvipa (Jambudwipa).” (XI, 55-65).

“The example and advice of Samprati induced his vassals to embrace and patronise his creed, so that not only in his own kingdom, but also in the adjacent countries, the monks could practise their religion.

“In order to extend the sphere of their activity to uncivilized countries, Samprati sent these messengers disguised as Jaina monks. They described to the people the kind of food and other requisites which monks accept as alms, enjoining them to give such things instead of the usual taxes to the revenue collectors who would visit them from time to time. Of course, these revenue collectors were to be Jaina monks. Having thus prepared the way for them, he induced the Superior to send monks to these countries, for they would find it in no way impossible to live there. Accordingly, missionaries were sent to the Andras (Andhras) and

Dramilas, who found everything as the king had told. Thus the uncivilized nations were brought under the influence of Jainism.” (XI, 89-102)

“Such was the religious zeal of the king (Samprati) that he ordered the merchants to give the monks gratis all things they should ask for, and to draw on the royal treasury for the value of the goods. It may be imagined that the merchants did not hesitate to obey the king’s order.” (XI, 103-112).

All this necessarily had a corrupting effect on the Jaina monks, and Mahagiri, the ascetic-minded patriarch protested. Hemachandra continues :

“Although the alms with which the monks were supplied are expressly forbidden by the rules of the Church, Suhastin, afraid to offend the zealous king, dared not make any opposition. Mahagiri, therefore, severely blamed Suhastin, and resolved definitely to separate from him. For as he said, there was an old prophecy that after Sthulabhadra, the conduct of the Jainas would deteriorate. Accordingly after saluting the image of Jivantasvamin, he left Avanti and went to the Tirtha Gajendrapada. There, starving himself to death, he reached *Svarga*. Samprati dying at the end of his reign, during which he continued a patron of the Jainas, became a god and at last he will reach *Siddhi*.” (XI, 113-127).

Avantirukvamala and Mahakala Temple

There was a merchant’s son called Avantisukvamala. Once he heard the preaching of Suhastin and was thus greatly attracted towards Jainism. He became a monk, but as he was of a delicate constitution, he could not stand the rigour and died while starving. His son “built a magnificent temple at the spot where his father so manfully had faced death. This temple still exists famous in the world as the temple of Mahakala.”

(Hemachandra does not say so specifically, but the implication clearly is that this temple was originally a Jaina

temple, and was later converted into a Hindu temple by the *Shaivites*. In the thirteenth century (A.D. 1234) Iltutmish destroyed this temple. The present temple of Mahakala was built on the same site by Ramchandra, Diwan of the Peshwa, in 1745).

“In the course of time Suhastin left this world starvig himself to death, and entered heaven”. (XI, 176-178).

Hemachandra then leaves out the next four patriarchs whose names come after that of Suhastin in the *Kalpasutra*, and takes up the life of Vajra the fifth patriarch after Suhastin.

According to the *Kalpasutra* list of the patriarchs from Suhastin onwards is as follows : Suhastin, Susthita-Supratibuddha, Indra, Dinna, Sinhagiri, Vajra.

Hemachandra does not mention Susthita, Indra and Dinna at all, and mentions Sinhagiri only as the *guru* of Vajra.

Vajra and Bhadrugupta

Vajra was the son of Dhanagiri, a disciple of Sinhagiri. Dhanagiri had left his house soon after his wife became pregnant. The child who was born to this abandoned woman was very troublesome and her relations gave him away to Sinhagiri when he had come to the area on a preaching mission. Since the child was very heavy in weight Sinhagiri named him Vajra. He was then educated in the sacred literature. Sinhagiri wanted Vajra to be a master in the knowledge of the sacred books, so he sent Vajra to Bhadrugupta in Ujjayini. Bhadrugupta was master of ten *Purvas*.

“Soon afterwards Vajra arrived, and was most cordially received by Bhadrugupta, who readily imparted to him the knowledge of the *Purvas*. The object of Vajra’s mission being accomplished in a short time. He returned to Dashapura and joined his *guru*. The latter permitted him to teach the *Purvas*, which event the gods celebrated by showering down a rain of flowers. Sinhagiri, after having made over to Vajra, his *gana*, put an end

to his earthly career by self-starvation. Vajrasvamin, then travelling about in company with 500 monks preached the Law; wherever he went he was admired and praised by all" (XII, 208-241).

Vajrasen and Gotthmahila

Now, Hemachandra ends the Sthaviravali, the history of the patriarchs of the Jaina Church. In the 13th canto of this work he mentions one or two incidents from the life of Vajrasen who was the successor of Vajra, but these are not important in the history of the Church. (Aryarakshita whom Vajra had taught most of the *Purvas* never became a patriarch, but his pupil Gotthmahila was the person who started the seventh schism of the Jaina Church in 584 A.V.)

It appears from the account given by Hemachandra that generally it was one person who occupied the top place in the Church, and this person was the one who knew the Jaina sacred literature in full. There was upto that time no written record of this literature and everything had to be committed to memory. People with such good memory are not easy to find at any time, and the Jainas had to find such men among the limited number of people who would accept the strict rules of the Jaina monkhood. Only twice there were two heads of the Church living simultaneously. The second of this occasion was during the reign of king Samprati in Ujjayini. At that time Mahagiri and Suhastin headed the Church simultaneously. Of the two, Mahagiri was conservative. He wanted the Jaina monks to live strictly in the manner prescribed in the Law. Since he was unable to enforce this, he went away and starved himself to death.

As noted earlier Hemachandra does not describe the lives of the four patriarchs between Suhastin and Vajra. These four patriarchs are named in the *Kalpasutra* list is a complete one, for the possibility is that the number of patriarchs between Suhastin

and Vajra was more than four. Jacobi arrives at this conjecture on the following basis³⁷ Hemachandra mentions that Bhadrabahu died 170 years (170 A.V.) after the *nirvana* of Mahavira. As Bhadrabahu was the sixth patriarch, this gives an average period of a little less than thirty years for each patriarch upto Bhadrabahu.

37. Introduction to the Sthaviravali, p XVII.

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and control of industry and trade was primarily in the hands of the mercantile class and they occupied a prominent position in the society. Volume seven traces how Jaina society developed through the ages as a dynamic and value based social order. Mahavira never differentiated between Aryans and the non-Aryans, the rich and the poor while addressing his sermons. Thus Jaina society never believed in caste gradation. Volume eight and nine are devoted to the study of Jaina Art and Architecture having a long and continuing rich tradition which flourished in various parts of India under royal patronage during different periods of history and remained fully dedicated to the service of the religion of the Tirthankaras. Volume ten is a comparative study of Jaina religion and philosophy and includes selected writings of Western scholars like O. Walther Shubring, Dr. J.G. Buhler, Hermann Jacobi, Dr. H. Zimmer, Max Weber, Miss Elizabeth Frazer, M. Guerinot, Dr. O. Pertold etc. The last Volume number eleven traces the historical evolution of the Jaina faith and the long chain of its twenty four Tirthankaras beginning with Rishabha Deva. In this volume considerable emphasis has been given on the first Tirthankara and the twenty fourth and the last Tirthankara Mahavira.

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