Jaina Literature [ From Earliest Time to c. 10th A. D. ]

Jaina Literature of Early Period

Ancient Indian Literature was composed mainly in three languages, i.e., Sāṃskṛta, Pāli and Prākṛta. Out of these three Pāli is nothing but a shade of Prākṛta language. As a literary language, Prākṛta, being a group of various local dialects as Māgadhi, Pāli, Pāścā, Śauraserī, Mahārāṣṭri, was never developed as a single language but as a group of languages. Various types of Apabhraṃśa were also developed from Prākṛta. Its various shades developed according to their different places and time. If we consider these three main languages from religious point of view, all the Vedic religious literature is found in Sāṃskṛta while the Jaina canonical and Buddhist literature is in Prākṛta and Pāli, respectively. So far as the Jaina religious literature of early period is concerned, it was mainly written in Prākṛta known as Prākṛta canons. Jainas started writing from c. 3rd-4th A. D. in Sāṃskṛta but notably these Sāṃskṛta works are based on Prākṛta works whether as an independent or in the form of commentaries.

So far as the Jaina literature ( of early period ) prior to c. 3rd A. D. is concerned, barring few of the early philosophical and literary treatises, it is mainly confined to the canonical literature only. Majority of the canonical literature belongs to this period, though their final editing and writing on palm-leaves belong to c. 5th A. D. Among Śvetāmbara canons, except the Nandīsūtra and the later edition of Praṃavyākaraṇa, most works were composed before the c. 3rd A. D. No doubt, some interpolations and changes did take place therein at the time of Valabhi Council yet they are clearly traceable. It would be a great mistake if on account of these interpolations and changes the whole of the Āgamas are regarded as posterior. Although most of the works of this period contain the religious preachings with some popular parables and stories as well as religious code of conduct, certain works deal with Jaina cosmology, metaphysics, Karma philosophy and theory of knowledge also. The list of canonical literature is, for the first time, found in Nandīsūtra ( c. 5th A. D. ). If we accept Nandīsūtra as a work of c. 5th A. D., all the works referred to in Nandīsūtra belong to a date prior to it. But they all were not composed in a single spur of moment. All the canonical works, it seems are composed in during c. 5th B. C. to c. 4th-5th A. D., i.e., within one thousand years. The works mentioned in the Nandīsūtra are the following:
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Angapraśīta

1. Ācārāṅga
2. Śūtrakṛtāṅga
3. Sthānāṅga
4. Samavāyāṅga
5. Vyākhya-prajñāpti
6. Jñātādhammakathā
7. Upāsakadāsāṅga
8. Antakṛddhaṅga
9. Anuttaraupapātikadāsāṅga
10. Praśnavyākaraṇa
11. Vipākasūtra
12. Drṣṭivāda

Angabāhyya

Āvaśyaka

1. Sāmāyika
2. Caturvimsatistava
3. Vandana
4. Pratikramaṇa
5. Kāyotsarga
6. Pratyākhyāna

Other than Āvaśyaka

Kālika
Uttarādhyayana
Daśārṣutasandha
Kalpa
Vyavahāra
Niśītha
Mahāniśītha
Rṣibhāṣita
Jambūdvipaprajñāpti
Dvipaśīgaraṇaprajñāpti
Candraprajñāpti
Kṣullikāvimānapraṇavibhakti
Mohallikāvimānapraṇavibhakti
Aṅgacūlikā
Vaggacūlikā
Vivāhacūlikā
Aruṇopapāta
Varuṇopapāta
Garuṇopapāta
Dharaṇopapāta
Vaiśramanopapāta
Velandharopapāta
Devendropapāta
Uttānāśrūta
Samutthānāśrūta
Nāgaparijñāpanikā
Narakāvalikā
Kalpiṅka
Kalpavatāṃśikā
Puṭipīṇa
Puṣpapacūlikā
Vṛṣṇidaśa

Ukālikā
Daśavaikālikā
Kalpiṅka
Kalpikā
Cullakalpaśruta
Mahākalpaśruta
Aupāpāṭika
Rājapaśṇīya
Jīvābhīgamā
Prajñāpanā
Mahāprajñāpanānā
Praṇādāpramāda
Nandīśūtra
Anuyogadvāra
Devendrastava
Tanḍulavaicārika
Candravedhyakā
Sīryaprajñāpti
Paṅruṣimandala
Maṇḍalapraveśa
Vidyācaraṇa Viniścaya
Ganivyā
Dhyānavibhakti
Maṇavibhakti
Āṭmaviśodhi
Vitarāgaśruta
Samlekanāśrūta
Vihārakalpa
Cāraṇavidihi
Āṭurpratyaṅkhyāna
Mahāpratyaṅkhyāna
Unfortunately, all the above mentioned works are not available today. Some of them are lost. Out of twelve Āṅga Āgamas, the 7th chapter of Ācārāṅga (Mahāparijñā) and the major portion of Drṣṭivāda are said to be extinct. So far as the subject-matter of 7th chapter of Ācārāṅga is concerned, in my opinion, it was mainly related to the Jinakalpa or strict code of conduct of naked monks. When the followers of this strict code of conduct disappeared gradually, no serious efforts were made to restore it and finally it got lost. Likewise, the twelfth Āṅga Drṣṭivāda, said to be containing five parts (i) Parikarma, (ii) Sūtra, (iii) Purvagata, (iv) Anyuyoga and (v) Cūlikā, seems to have dealt mainly with the philosophical doctrines of other schools of thought including the Pārśva tradition. Purvagata, the third part of Drṣṭivāda, exclusively, dealt with the doctrines of Pārśva tradition, later on accepted as the doctrines of Mahāvīra. All these works were preserved only through oral tradition, because, Jain monks and nuns were strictly prohibited to write on palm-leaves, those days. That study and preservation of the Jaina literature, written on palm-leaves were prohibited due to the strict observance of non-violence. They were of the opinion that in the process of writing, studying and preserving the palm-leaf works, the injury to the Jīvas was inevitable. That is why, they made no efforts to restore them in written form. This was the reason behind the loss of Drṣṭivāda as well as some other āgamas. In my opinion, Drṣṭivāda, in particular, became extinct, because of following factors — firstly, its contents were not fully in accordance with Mahāvīra's tradition and were mostly related with philosophical discussions of other traditions and schools, hence unable to arouse interest in Jaina monks. Secondly, the concepts, accepted by Mahāvīra's tradition, were included in other Āgamic texts also, hence Jaina monks did not make any effort to preserve the Purva literature. Thirdly, due to the oral tradition, other Āṅga āgamas could not remain intact. We find that earlier subject-matter of Praśnavyākaraṇa has been completely changed. Similarly, partial changes as well as some additions are also noted in the subject-matter of Jñātadharma-kathā, Antakṛddasāṅga, Anuttarapapātika and Vipākasūtra. Among the secondary canons (Āṅga-bāhyā āgamas) following works, known as Kālika and Utkālika, respectively were also lost due course of time. The details of such canons are as under:

Kālikasūtra not available presently —
1. Kṣullikāvimānapravibhakti
2. Mahallikāvimānapravibhakti
3. Āṅgacūlikā
4. Vaggacūlikā
5. Vīvāhacūlikā
6. Arunotapāda
7. Varunotapāda
8. Garunotapāda
9. Dharanotapāda
10. Vaiśramanaṭotapāda
11. Velandarotapāda
12. Devendrotapāda
13. Uttānaśruta
14. Samuttānaśruta
15. Nāgaprajñāaptipanikā.

Utkālikasūtra not available presently
1. Kalpičakalpičā
2. Cūlačakalpičā
3. Mahāprajñāpanā
4. Pramāṇāpramāṇā
5. Pauruṣimaṇḍala
6. Maṇḍala Praveśa
7. Vidyācaranā Viniścaya
8. Dhyānavibhakti
9. Vītarāga Śruta
10. Vihārakalpa
11. Cāraṇavidhi.

About the subject-matter of these Kālika and Utkālikasūtras, not extant today, it is very difficult to
comment upon. Their subject-matter can be inferred on the basis of their titles only. One Aṅgasūtra, i.e., Drṣṭivāda, 15 Kālikasūtra and 11 Utkālikasūtras, thus, the number of extinct or not available texts, comes to be 27, in total. Except these 27, all the 51 texts are available. At present six Āvasyakas being counted as one, the number finally becomes 46. It is not possible here to deliberate on the corresponding authorship, date and subject-matter of each and every text of this list in this article, so I shall discuss, in short, only few important works in their chronological order.

**Primary Canons (Aṅgas)**

Ācārāṇga is considered as the oldest of all the works of the early period. According to the scholars, the first part of Ācārāṇga belongs to the c. 5th-4th B.C. This part contains the original preachings of Lord Mahāvīra. It deals with the spiritual preachings alongwith the basic principles of non-violence and ethical code of conduct, prescribed for Jaina monks and nuns. Its last chapter depicts a real picture of the ascetic life of Lord Mahāvīra. The 7th chapter of the first part is supposed to be lost after the composition of its Niruykti, i.e., c. 2nd-3rd A.D. The second part of Ācārāṇga is known as Āyāracūla — an appendix. It mainly deals with the detailed rules and regulations or the code of conduct of Jaina monks and nuns alongwith some of the events of the life of Mahāvīra. Modern scholars opine that the second part of Ācārāṇga was composed during the c. 2nd-1st B.C. Another important canonical work of this era is Sūtrakṛtāṇga dating c. 4th-3rd B.C. This work is also full of spiritual and moral preachings but its peculiarity lies in the presentaion of different philosophical views prevalent in that particular era. Like Ācārāṇga, it also comprises two parts (Śruta-skandhas). Scholars are of the opinion that the second part of Sūtrakṛtāṇga is some what posterior to the first.

The third important work in chronological order of the Jaina canonical literature is Isibhāsiyāiin (Ṛṣibhāṣītaiin). All the scholars of Prākṛta and Jainology : Western and Indian, consider it of c. 4th-3rd B.C. It marks the catholicity of early Jaina thinkers. It contains the ethical preachings as well as philosophical views of forty-five thinkers. Out of these Nārada, Asitaidevala, Aṅgirasa, Pārāśara, Āruls, Nārāyaṇa, Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka, Vidura etc. definitely belong to Upaniṣadic tradition. Similarly, Śāriputta, Vajjiputta, Mahākāśyapa etc. belong to Buddhist tradition while Pārśva and Vardhamāna belong to the Jaina tradition. A few others are of other independent Śramaṇic tradition, not extant today. This work shows that in the early period the Upaniṣadic and other Śramaṇic traditions were tolerant as well as respectful to each other.

Uttarādhyayana and Daśavaikālika are other important works of this early phase. Uttarādhyayana contains thirty-six chapters, mainly dealing with the religious preachings as well as some metaphysical doctrines of Jainism. Some chapters of this text are regarded as the later additions by the scholars but in no way they are later than the c. 2nd or 1st B.C. The next work Daśavaikālika, composed by Ārya Śayyambhava (c. 5th-4th B.C.) mainly deals with the ethical code of conduct of Jaina monks and nuns alongwith the spiritual discourses and preachings. However, we can not deny the possibility of the interpolations to the some extent in its final editing.

The other works dealing with the ethical code of conduct are Niśitha, Daśāśrutaskandha (Āyāradāsā), Vyavahāra and Kalpa, all composed by Ārya Bhadrabāhu inc. 3rd B.C. These works, not only deal with the code of conduct but with transgressions and atonements also.

Against general belief, that all the Aṅgas are composed by the Gaṇadharas, direct disciples of Lord Mahāvīra, some opine that except Ācārāṇga and Sūtrakṛtāṇga, all the Aṅgas are composed later on. In
my opinion, it is very difficult to assign any particular
date or authorship to these extant works because of
containing different levels of the development of
Jaina thought, occurred through different ages.

After Ācārāṅga and Sūtrakṛṭāṅga, next two
Aṅgas in successive order are Sthānāṅga and Sama-
vāyāṅga. They may be considered as encyclopaedia
of early Jaina thoughts and beliefs, mainly based on
the numbers more or less similar to Aṅguttaranikāya
of Buddhist tradition. Both these works provide more
information about the Jaina order and development of
Jaina thoughts of the later period, i.e., c. 3rd-4th A.D.
The next in the list is Bhagavatī (Vyākhyaṣṭprajñapti)
mainly dealing with different aspects of Jaina philo-
sophy. According to a group of scholars, this
voluminous work, was composed at different phases
and not at one time. Evidently, it has references to
the later works like Prajñāpana, Anuyogadvāra, etc. be-
longing to c. 1st-4th A. D. and side by side, depicts
various earlier original concepts, witnessing change in
the process of development of Jaina thoughts. The
next work of early period is Jñātadharmaṇakathā.
Second part of this work is considerably later than the
first. The first contains mainly stories preached by
Lord Mahāvira to his disciples. Its 19 chapters, refer-
ted to in Āvasaṇyaka-sūtra, are undoubtedly, com-
posed in the early period. The next among Aṅga
canons is Upāsanakāsāṅga, considered as the first
work related to the code of conduct of lay devotees
(Śrāvakas). It comprises life-sketches of ten promi-
nent lay followers of Lord Mahāvira. Not having any
trace of any later work, it belongs to the early period.
Antakṛttadasāṅga deals with the life-stories and ascetic
life of the persons, attaining their salvation in the last
span of their life. According to Sthānāṅga, it has only
ten chapters dealing with life-stories of 10 persons.
But present volume contains life-stories of 93 persons.
It clearly shows that not at the time of Valabhi Vācana
alone but even after that some additional matters
were incorporated in Sthānāṅga. Same is the case
with Anuttaropapāṭikādaśāṅga. Its early edition con-
tained life-stories of only ten persons who attained
Sarvārthasiddhi Vimāna and were supposed to attain
liberation in their next births. Of Jaina canon Praśna-
vyākaraṇadasā, unfortunately, the earlier contents are
totally extinct. It seems that the present subject-matter
of this work was incorporated in around c. 7th A.D. Its
extant edition deals with five āsravas, viz., violence,
untruthfulness, theft, unchastity and possessiveness
along with five saṁvaras, viz., truthfulness, non-
stealing, chastity and non-possessing. Last available
work of Aṅga canon is Vipākadasā, dealing with
fruits of merit and demerits.

Secondary Canons (Upāṅga)

The first work of the secondary canons is
Aupapāṭika, dealing with the episode of Sūryabhade-
va. It also depicts a beautiful picture of ancient art
and architecture. On the basis of this depiction,
scholars date this work not earlier than c. 1st-2nd A.D.
The next work of this category is Rājapraśnīya which,
so far its subject-matter is concerned, is more similar
to the Buddhist Pāli canon - Pasenīyasutta. The third
and the fourth, Jīvābhīgama and Prajñāpana, respec-
tively, deal with the Jaina metaphysics in general and
the concepts of jīva and ajīva in particular. The
authorship of Prajñāpana is attributed to Ārya Śyāma
(c. 1st A.D.). Out of these twelve secondary canoni-
cal works only Prajñāpana's authorship is known.
About the authorship of other works, we are still in
dark. The fifth one is Jambūdvīpapraṇāpti, mainly
dealing with Jaina Geography in addition to the life-
history of Rśabhadeva. The subject-matter of next
two works, Sūryapraṇāpti and Candrapraṇāpti are
related with Jaina cosmology in general and Jaina
astronomy in particular. Scholars date these c. 2nd-1st
B.C. Other five works of this bunch are very short and
rather of less important.

Besides Aṅga & Upāṅga canonical literature,
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Candrakavedhyaka, Tandelavaicarika, Aturpratyakhyana, Mahapratyakhyana, Maranavibhakti, mainly concerned with the Jaina Sadhanas, are known as Prakrnakas, in general and Samadhimaranas in particular. All these works are, undoubtedly earlier to the c. 4th-5th A.D.

Among the non-canonical works of this period, very few in number are extant, namely Tattvartsha-sutra and its auto-commentary (c. 3rd-4th A.D.), Paumacariya of Vimalastiri (c. 2nd-5th A.D.) and Digambar works composed in Saraseni Prakta like Kasayapahuda of Gunadhara (c. 4th A.D.) and Satkhanda-gama of Puspadanta Bhutabali (about c. 5th A.D.). Apart from these, the works of Kundakunda, Samantabhadra and Siddhasena Divakara may also be considered as the works of early period. Scholars differ on the exact date of composition of these works, except that of Tattvartsha-sutra. They date these in between c. 2nd-5th A.D.

Among non-canonical literature, the first Niryuktis, ten in number, are of great importance. These (Niryuktis) mainly explain the meaning of Jaina technical terms from the various stand-points along with the brief account of the subject-matter of that particular Agama. Scholars widely differ about the time and authorship of Niryuktis except that of Govindaniryuki. Some are of the opinion that these Niryuktis are composed by Bhadrabahu-I (c. 3rd B. C.) while others consider these to be composed by Bhadrabahu-II, the brother of Varahamihira (c. 6th A.D.). But in my humble opinion, as external and internal evidences show it was neither of Bhadrabahu-I or of Bhadrabahu-II. But, Aryabhada of c. 2nd-3rd A. D., in all probability, was the author of these Niryuktis. I have given various reasons in support of this view in my independent article published in Sagara Jaina VidyaBharati (Parvanatha Vidyapitha, Varanasi, 1994). Presently, we have only the following Niryuktis:

1. Avasyakaniryukti,
2. Daivaikalianiryukti,
3. Uttaradhyayananiyukti,
4. Acaraniryukti,
5. Sutrakrtaniryukti,
6. Dasasrutaskandhaniryukti,
7. Kalpaniryukti and
8. Vyavaharaniryukti.

Apart from these, two more Niryuktis — Ogha and Pincha are also available, but considered to be the part of Avasyakaniryukti and Daivaikalianiryukti, respectively, hence, not independent works. We also have a mention of two more Niryuktis on Suryaprajnapti and Rishbasita, but they are extinct now.

To conclude, we can say that more than hundred works could be considered to belong to this early period but about thirty of them are now extinct.

Jaina Literature of this Period

The evolution and changes occurred in Jaina thought and practice during c. 3rd-10th A. D. is traceable through its literature. For literature is the mirror of the cultural development of any society. The prime period of the composition of literary works of Jainism corresponds to c. 3rd-10th A. D. Almost all the important works of Jainism were finally composed and edited in this period. The literature, which emerged in this period, may be divided into five categories:

1. Agamas and their commentaries.
2. Philosophical works.
3. Works related to the Jaina religious practices.
4. Jaina epics and other narrative literature.
5. Secular Literature of Jainas.

1. Agamas and their Commentaries

As I have already mentioned that except Nandisutra and present edition of Prasnavyakarana, most of the Agamas were composed before c. 3rd A.D. but their final editing had been done only in the
c. 5th A. D. At the time of this final editing, interpolation of many later developed philosophical concepts and informations regarding the Jaina order creaped into these. The Nandisūtra, the āgamic work composed during this period, deals with the Jaina theory of five-fold knowledge as well as contains its later developments which took place inc. 4th-5th A. D. Similarly, the drastic changes in the original subject-matter of Praśnavyākarana and partial changes in Antakṛddāsā and Anuttaraupapatiṣākāsā also occurred during this period. Almost all the Prākrta and some of the early Śamkrta commentaries on the Jaina Āgamas were written in this period, in form of Niryuktis (c. 3rd-4th A. D.), Bhāsya (c. 6th A. D.) and Cūrtis (c. 7th A. D.). This period is of great literary importance because majority of the Āgamic works were finally edited and some of them were even composed also in this period.

Besides these Niryuktis, Oghaniryuktī and Piṇḍaniryuktī are also available but Oghaniryuktī is considered as the part of Āvaśyakāniryuktī and Piṇḍaniryuktī as the part of Daśavaiktānirnityuktī, hence they are not independent works. Though, Niryuktis on Sūryaprajñāpti and Rśibhāsīta are referred to in Āvaśyakāniryuktī (Verse 85) but at present these two are not available. The Niśithaniryuktī, considered to be the part of Ācāraṅganiṃrṇityuktī is mixed with its Bhāsya. All these Niryuktīs are written in Prākrta verses and deal very precisely with the contents of the respective Āgamas.

After Niryuktī, Bhāsyas on āgamic texts were composed in c. 5th-6th A. D. The Bhāsyas are more exhaustive and elaborate than those of Niryuktīs. They were also composed in Prākrta verses. Bhāsyas are quite prolific in their contents referring to various concepts of Jaina philosophy and the code of the conduct for monks and nuns with their exceptions and punishments.

Among Bhāsa, Viśeśāvaśyakabhāsa is the most important. It is the first work of Śvetāmbara tradition, dealing with the problems of Jaina philosophy with minute details. The concept of five-fold knowledge has been discussed elaborately with a critical approach herein. Among various proofs given for the existence of soul, one bears similarity to that of Rene Descartes (c. 16th A. D.), a Western philosopher, proving the existence of soul through doubt itself. In Viśeśāvaśyakabhāsa, various contrary views of Jaina acāryas are mentioned and reviewed alongwith the views of some rebellious Jaina thinkers, i.e., Nihnavas. It also deals with the differences of Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions regarding the successiveness and simultaneity of Kevalajñāna and Kevaladarśana as well as the problem of naked-ness of the monk with full details. Other Bhāsyas mainly deal with the ethical code of conduct of ascetics with their exceptions and conditions in which these exceptions could be followed alongwith their atonements. The Bhāsyas, dealing with the code of conduct of monks are—Daśāvaikālikabhāsa, Uttarādhyayanabhāsa, Bṛhatkalpabhāsa, Vyavahaṛabhāsa, Niśithabhbhāsa and Jītakalpabhāsa. Some of the Bhāsyas also contain some informations of historical importance. As the authors of the Bhāsa, we have only two names : Jinaḥbhadraṇaṇi and Saṅghadāsagani. Jinaḥbhadraṇaṇi is the author of Viśeśāvaśyakabhāsa while Saṅghadāsagani is the author of Bṛhatkalpa, Vyavahaṛa and Niśithabhbhāsa. Of these two Saṅghadāsagani is supposed to be senior to Jinaḥbhadra, because Jinaḥbhadra, in his work Viśeśaṇavatī has referred the Vasudevahindī, a work authored by Saṅghadāsagani. The period of Jinaḥbhadra, is undoubtedly, the latter half of the c. 6th A. D. As Saṅghadāsagani was senior to Jinaḥbhadraṇaṇi, it leaves no room for doubt that he must have flourished in second half of the c. 6th A.D. All these bhāsyas are of considerable length, composed in Prākrta verses and deal with
their subjects exhaustively. We find a rich cultural data and some informations about the cultural history of India in the Bhāṣyas.

Next, the Čūrṇis, unlike the Nirūktis and Bhāṣyas are written in prose. Nirūktis and Bhāṣyas are written in Prākṛta only, while the Čūrṇis in Prākṛta mixed with Sanskrita. Among Čūrṇis — Āvaśyaka, Daśāvākālika, Uttarādhyayana, Śūtrakṛtāṅga, Anuyogadvāra, Nandī and Niṣītha, are the most important.

All these Čūrṇis were written by Jinādāsa-gañi Mahattara. In Nandīcūrṇi it is clearly mentioned that this work was completed in Śaka Samvat 598 corresponding to 676 A. D. It is, therefore, concluded that most of the important Čūrṇis were written in c. 7th A. D. Some Čūrṇis viz., Daśāvaikālika of Agastyaśimha and Čūrṇisūtras on Kaśyapadha-asutta are the earlier among the Čūrṇi literature.

Among whole of the commentary literature Čūrṇis hold an important place because first, they deal with the various subjects and are directly concerned with social and cultural heritage of Jainism. Second, they supply so many informations about the Jaina History pertaining c. 1st-6th A. D.

Čūrṇis were succeeded by Sanskrita commentaries, written on different Āgamic texts, known as Vṛttis or Vivaraṇas. Among Sanskrita commentators Haribhadrasūri is the earliest, flourished in the middle of the c. 8th A. D. He wrote commentaries on Āvaśyaka, Daśāvaikālika, Jīvabhiṣagama, Prajñāpanā, Nandī, Anuyogadvāra and Piṇḍanīrūktya. Āvānka-cārya, flourished in the c. 9th A. D. believed to have written several commentaries on Āgamas but unfortunately at present only two commentaries on Ācārānga and Śūtrakṛtāṅga, are available. After Āvānka, Abhayadevaśūri and Sāntisūri are the prominent names among commentators. Abhayadevaśūri has commented on nine of eleven Āgās except Ācārānga and Śūtrakṛtāṅga, hence called Navāngī-vṛttikāra. Sāntisūri has written a commentary on Uttarādhyayanasūtra. Both of these later Samśkrita commentators flourished, during c. 10th-11th A. D. This trend of commentary-writing is still current in Śvetāmbara tradition.

In Digambara tradition, Kasāyapāduḥdasutta and Satkhaṇḍāgama are considered as equivalent to Āgamas. These works are written in c. 4th-5th A. D. On Kaśyapadha-asutta first commentary was written by Yativrṣabha in the form of Čūrṇi-sūtras i.e. 6th A. D. After that inc. 9th A. D. Vīrasena wrote two commentaries Jayadhavala and Dhavalā on Kaśyapa-pāduḥa and Satkhaṇḍāgama, respectively. Mahā-dhavalā is a commentary on the one part of Satkhaṇḍāgama, written by his disciple Jinasena. These commentaries mainly deal with Jaina philosophy in general and Karma theory in particular.

2. Important Philosophical Works of this Period

Among the Jaina philosophical works composed between c. 3rd-10th A.D., the Tatvārthasūtra, with its auto-commentary by Umāsvāti, is the pioneer one and may be considered as the first systematic work on Jaina philosophy. Composed in c. 3rd A.D., it also has the credit of being the first Sanskrita work of Jaina literature, written in the style of other Sūtragranthas of Indian philosophy. The especiality of this work is that it is equally respected as well as accepted by both the sects of Jainism — Śvetāmbara and Digambara. It encompasses ten chapters dealing with Jaina metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Its first chapter deals mainly with Jaina theory of knowledge, Naya and Nikṣepa, second with Jīva (living substance), third and fourth with hells and heavens, fifth with Jaina metaphysics, sixth to ninth chapters with Jaina doctrine of Karma and Jaina sādhanā or ethical code of conduct of house-holders and monks, respectively. Finally, the tenth one deals with the concept of liberation (mokṣa). Notably, the concept of Guṇasthāna and Saptabhaṅgīnaya (Seven-fold
judgement) are totally absent in it. This shows that these concepts came into existence later during c. 5th-6th A.D.

After Tattvārthasūtra, Ācārya Siddhasena Divākara’s Sanmatitarka is the next critical and important work, composed in c. 4th A. D. in Prākṛta verses. It explains critically the concept of dravya (substance), guṇa (properties), paryāya (modes) and their mutual relationship on the basis of the Jaina theory of Naya, Nikṣepa and Anekāntavāda (non-absolutism). It is the first work in which one-sided views of other philosophers are critically examined to establish Jaina theory of Anekāntavāda. Some of the Dvātrimśaka-dvātrimśikās, of the same author, also, critically examine the philosophical views of other Indian schools under the pretext of praising the Jina. Even if the refutation of the philosophical views of other schools of Indian philosophy is found in the canonical works also, they are neither critical nor systematic in their approach. Siddhasena for the first time, critically examined the views of other Indian philosophies, showing their logical inconsistencies. So far as the works on Jaina epistemology are concerned, Nyāyāvatāra of Siddhasena may be considered the first work on Jaina logic. This work provides the base to understand the later gradual developments in Jaina logic, particularly the contribution of Akalaṅkā and Vidyānandi in this regard.

Among the writers of the Digambara sect, who wrote independent philosophical treatises, Samantabhādra (c. 5th A. D.) occupies an important place. His Āptamīmāṃsā is a noted scholarly presentation. It imitates Sanmatitarka of Siddhasena, in style but differs in language. Sanmatitarka is in Prākṛta verses, while Āptamīmāṃsā is in Samśkrta verses. It also critically evaluates the one-sided views of other philosophies. These two works namely, Sanmatitarka and Āptamīmāṃsā, may be considered as the prime works for the exposition of Jaina theory of Anekāntavāda. Āptamīmāṃsā is an important work which establishes the concepts of Jainism after a critical evaluation of those of the other schools of Indian philosophy.

Another important work of this age is Dvādaśāranayacakra, authored by Mallavādi inc. 5th A. D., aiming to establish Jaina theory of Anekāntavāda by pointing out inconsistencies in the thoughts of other schools of Indian philosophy. The style of this work is somewhat different from that of Sanmatitarka and Āptamīmāṃsā, as these two later works are composed in verses and deal with their subject-matter in a precise manner. Nayacakra is composed in prose and deals with its subject-matter exhaustively. The distinguishing feature of Dvādaśāranayacakra is that it critically examines the views of one philosophical school through the arguments of its opponent. In this way it makes a circle (cakra) in which the last school of thought is refuted or critically examined by the first one. On the basis of these three important works, this age is known as "The Age of Critical Presentation of Anekāntavāda". Besides 'Anekāntajayapatākā' and 'Anekāntavādapraveṣa' of Haribhadra (c. 8th A. D.) also deal with the same subject-matter, but in a different manner. Viśeṣa-vāsyakabhāṣya, of Jinabhadrāṅgi Kṣamāśravāna, is one of the important work of this age. In Śvetāmbara tradition it is the first work which deals with various problems of Jaina philosophy in detail and with minute observation. In Digambara Tradition also the Tattvārthasūtra is considered as the first systematic work on Jaina philosophy. The oldest available commentary on Tattvārthasūtra in Digambara tradition is Pūjyapāda Deva-nandi’s Sarvārtha-siddhi which is next to Svopajña-bhāṣya (auto-commentary of Umāsvāti). It is composed in the first half of c. 6th A. D.

During c. 8th A. D. two more commentaries were produced namely Akalaṅka’s Tattvārthavārttika
and Vidyānandi’s Ślokavārttika which are of great importance. Both of these works not only propound the Jaina philosophy but also critically evaluate and estimate the other philosophical systems. Like other works, these commentaries also discuss the points of dispute between Śvetāmbara and Digambara sects, such as the concept of women's liberation (strīmukti), the taking of food by omniscients (kevalībhukti) etc. At the same time in Śvetāmbara tradition too, two commentaries on Tattvārthasūtra, namely Tattvārthādhigamasūtra and Tattvārthasūravārttika by Siddhasena (c. 7th) and Haribhadra (c. 8th) respectively, were brought out.

The composition of independent works on Jaina doctrine of Karma starts with c. 4th A. D. In Digambara tradition the independent works on Jaina doctrine of Karma composed during c. 4th-10th A. D. are Mahākarma-prakṛti-prābhṛta (Ṣaṭakhaṇḍaśāstra) by Puṣpadanta Bhūtabali (c. 4th A. D.), Kaśāyaprābhṛta by Gunadhara (c. 4th A. D.), Kaṇāyaprābhṛta Cūrṇi by Yativṛṣabha (c. 6th A. D.), Dhavala Śīkā and Jayaḥdvavā Śīkā by Vīraśena (c. 9th A. D.) and Gommaṭasāra by Nemicandra Siddhāntacakravarti (c. 10th A. D.). Similarly, in Śvetāmbara tradition Karmaprakṛti by Śivaśarmasūri (c. 5th A. D.), Prācinśa-Ṣaṭkarmagrantha, Śātaka and Saptatikā by Śivaśarmasūri and Pañcasaṅgraha are the noted treatises composed during this age. All these works present detailed description of Jaina Philosophy in general and Jaina doctrine of Karma in particular.

Haribhadrasūtri composed more than eighty works on different aspects of Jaina philosophy and religion. He developed a Jaina system of Yoga on the basis of Patañjali’s Yoga and established some new concepts of Jaina Yoga. Haribhadra was a prolific writer who has written on every aspect of Jaina philosophy and religion. His Śadārśanasamuccaya and Śāstravārāsamuccaya are two important works which describe comparatively the thoughts of other systems of Indian philosophy. In Śāstravārttasaṃuccaya, he has paid more respect and veneration to the other schools of thought. It was Haribhadra who for the first time started the cult of commentary writing in Śaṃskṛta which was developed by Śīlānka (c. 9th A. D.) and Abhayadevasūri (latter part of c. 11th A. D.). These commentaries not only explain the facts about the different āgamic topics but also critically examine the philosophical concepts.

During this period a number of spiritualistic treatises appeared. Kundakunda added distinct idea to Jaina spirituality through his voluminous literature. According to Digambaras, his period is supposed to be c. 1st A. D., mainly based on the evidence of Markara Abhilekha which has already been proved as fake inscription. According to new researches his period has been established as c. 6th A. D. (See — Aspects of Jainology, Vol. III, ed. by Prof. M. A. Dhaky & Prof. S. M. Jain, P. V., 1991, p. 8). He has contributed a lot to the field of Jaina philosophy, by writing his distinguished works as Samayasāra, Pravacanāsāra, Niyamasāra etc.

3. Works on Religious Practices and Ethics

The literature related to Jaina religious practices may be divided into following five categories:

(i) Hymns composed in the praise of Tīrthaṅkaras.

(ii) Works related to the modes of worship, rituals and religious ceremonies.

(iii) Works concerned with religious preachings.

(iv) Works composed on Jaina Śādhanā and Yoga.

(v) Works related to the Code of Conduct of Monks and Nuns as well as house-holders.

Under the first category Dwātrinīśikās of Siddhasena Divākara (c. 4th A. D.) hold an important place. He has written 32 Dwātrinīśikās out of which seven — first five, 11th and 21st are composed in the
praise of different Tīrthaṅkaras. Many of these Dvātrimśikās, apart from praising the Tīrthaṅkaras, critically examine the theories of other philosophical systems. The next important work of this eulogistic literature is Samantabhadra's Svayambhūstotra. It consists of 143 ślokas written in praise of twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras. Kundukunda’s Daśabhakti is also an important work dealing with ten-fold lakṣanas of dharma. Another most popular and well-received work, respected equally by both the sects — Śvetāmbara and Digambara, is Mānatunga’s Bhaktāmarastotra (c. 6th A.D.) composed in the praise of first Tīrthaṅkara Rṣabhadeva.

The second category encompasses the work related to Jaina modes of worship and rituals. The first work of this category was Pūjāprakaraṇa by Umāsvāti but unfortunately it is not available. Similarly, in Digambara tradition some more treatises related to this theme viz. Arhatpratīṣṭhā and Jina-bhīṣeka, both authored by Pūjyapāda Devanandi (c. 6th A.D.), are also not available today. A few works on Jaina modes of worship were also composed but presently except some of Pañcāsakas and other works by Haribhadra, none of these are available. Among nineteen Pañcāsakas only following are related to this theme:

(i) Dīkṣāvidhi
(ii) Caityavandanavidhi
(iii) Pūjāvidhi
(iv) Jinabhavana-nirmanā-vidhi
(v) Pratiṣṭhā-vidhi and
(vi) Jinayātra-vidhi.

Haribhadra has discussed the subjects in his Śodaśakas also. Some Śodaśakas such as Pratiṣṭhā-vidhi, Pūjāphala and Dīkṣādhikāra may be regarded as related to this theme. Pañcāsakas are composed in Prākṛta, while Śodaśakas in Sanskṛta. Haribhadra’s Caityavandana alongwith its auto-commentaryCaityavandana-bhāṣya and Pratiṣṭhākalpa are the noted works of this category.

The third category of religious literature includes the works such as Kundakunda’s Aṣṭāpāhuḍa, Pūjyapāda Devanandi’s Iṣṭopadeśa and Dharmadāsagāni’s Upadeśamālā composed in Prākṛta, Sanskṛta and Prākṛta, respectively. However, the authorship of Upadeśamālā is a matter of dispute. Above mentioned both the works lucidly record the preachings of religious doctines. Haribhadra has also contributed some works such as Upadeśapada, Dharmabinduprakaraṇa, Upadeśaparakaraṇa and Sambodhaprakaraṇa to this theme.

The fourth category related to Jaina sādhanā and Yoga, abounds in its literature. Praśamaratiprakaraṇa by Umāsvāti (c. 3rd-4th A.D.) may be regarded as the first work of this category. Pūjyapāda Devanandi’s Samādhitantra (c. 6th A.D.) also belongs to the same category. On Jaina Yoga Haribhadra contributed a lot by writing several books on Jaina yoga. Yogavimśikā, Yogaśataka, Yogabindu, Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya and Dhyānaśataka are some of his important works on Jaina yoga.

The fifth category comprises the works composed on Jaina ethics and code of conduct for Jaina monks and nuns. It is the category to which several works have been contributed by the Ācāryas of both the sects — Śvetāmbara and Digambara. In Śvetāmbara tradition, apart from commentaries (Bhāṣyas and Āvyās ) written on Jaina Āgamas on this very theme, some independent works were also composed, particularly dealing with the ethical code of conduct of Jaina ascetics and lay-followers. Among these works, Umāsvāti’s Śrāvakaprajāpāti may be regarded as the first, but unfortunately it is also not available. In Digambara tradition, Mūlācāra and Bhagavati-Ārādhana, are the important works elaborately dealing with the code of conduct of Jaina monks and nuns.

In my opinion, Mūlācāra and Bhagavati-Ārādhana basically belong to Yāpaniya tradition and
not to Digambara. I have proved this on the basis of multiple internal as well as external evidences in my book Jaina Dharma kā Yāpanīya Sampradāya. In Digambara tradition Ratnakaranḍaśravakācārya of Samantabhadra (c. 6th A. D.) is regarded as the first work composed on the ethical code of conduct for Jaina house-holders, however, its authorship is also a matter of dispute. In Śvetāmbara tradition after ‘Uvasagadasāṇa’, the seventh aṅga of Jaina canons, ‘Sāvayapannatti’ by Haribhadra is the first available work, dealing with the code of conduct for Jaina lay-devotees. Some independent works dealing with the atonement (Prāyaścitta) were also written in this period among which Jinabhadra’s Jītakalpa’ stands as the most important work. Later on, on the basis of Jītakalpa, Indranandi’s Chedapiṇḍaśāstra and Chedaśāstra by unknown writer were composed in Yāpanīya tradition. Especiality of these two works lies in the fact that they not only prescribe the laws of the atonement for Jaina monks and nuns but for the male and female lay-devotees also.

4. Jaina Narrative Literature

Jaina narrative literature of this period is generally divided into five categories, viz. (i) biographies of the 63 illustrious personalities (Śalākāpurūṣas) described together in one book, (ii) life-stories of these religious great personalities described independently in a work, (iii) religious tales in romantic form, (iv) semi-historical prabandhas and (v) compilation of stories in the form of kathākośas.

However, main objective of the narratives was religious exhortation meant for the masses. It may be noted that most of the literature of this form, excluding canonical texts belong to this period, i.e., c. 3rd-10th A. D. Though some prominent works of the narrative literature such as Trīṣaṭṭiśalākāpuruṣa of Hemacandra, semi-historical prabandhas — Prabhāvakacarita, Prabandha-cintāmaṇi, Ākhyānakamaniṣkośa, Prabandhakośa, etc., have been composed between c. 12th-14th A. D.

In the first category Caupannamahāpuruṣacarīam of Śilānkācārya (c. 9th A. D.) depicts the life of 54 out of 63 Śalākāpurūṣas, leaving out 9 Pratīvasudevas, in Prāṇa. Containing 10,800 verses, it deals with 19 characters out of 54, exhaustively, while the remaining characters have been described only in few pages. It belongs to Śvetāmbara tradition. In Digambara tradition, Jinasena and his pupil Guṇabhadra (c. 9th A. D.) also composed Mahāpurāṇa or Trīṣaṭṭiśicarītra in Saṃskṛta. It is divided in two parts—Ādipurāṇa and Uttarapurāṇa, describing the life of 63 great personalities of Jainism. On the same theme Puṣpadanta also composed one of the greatest work of Apabhraṃśa language, namely Trīṣaṭṭiśimalahāpurūṣagunālaṅkāru (later c. 10th A. D.). Puṣpadanta carries to perfection the possibility of Apabhraṃśa as a vehicle of poetry.

Second type includes many Kathās, Ākhyānas and Caritas in Saṃskṛta, Prāṇa and Apabhraṃśa. It deals mainly with the biographies of individual Tīrthaṅkaras and other celebrated personalities of their times. The first and foremost work of this correspondence period is certainly Paumacarīya, of Vimalasūri (c. 2nd-5th A.D.) of Nāila or Nāgila Kula, which deals with the life-stories of Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa. It is a pioneer work of Jainas on Rāmakathā. It has considerable impact on one work of Raviṣeṇa’s Padmacarīta (c. 7th A. D.) in Saṃskṛta and Svayambhū’s Paumacarī (c. 8th A. D.) in Apabhraṃśa. There is also another version of Jaina Rāmakathā represented by Guṇabhadra (898 A. D.) in Uttarapurāṇa and followed by some other Digambara writers of (c. 10th A. D.). Some other works of this category are Pārvābhgyudaya by Jinasena (c. 9th A. D.), Harivamśapurāṇa by other Jinasena (c. 9th A. D.), Varđhamanacarīta by Asaga, Neminirvāṇamahākāvyā by Vāgbhaṭṭa, Candraprabhacarīta by Vīrāsena and some Kannāda works.
such as Ādipurāṇa by Ponna and Śāntipurāṇa by Ponna (c. 10th A. D.) may also be included in this category. It is also to be noted that stories of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are well recognised in Jaina tradition and Jaina writers composed so many independent works on the life of these two great personalities, accordingly.

The third type marks an interesting phase in Indian literature, in which religious tales are presented in a romantic form. The Taranāgalolā of Pādaliptasthīrī in Prākṛta is lost but its epitome in Saṁskṛta Taranāgavatī indicates that it might have possessed engaging literary qualities. Then there is the Vasudevahīndī of Sānghadāsagāṇī (c. 6th A. D.). Vasudevahīndī is probably the Mahārāṣṭrī version of Guṇāḍhya's famous Brhatkathā, written in Sātavāhana period. Vasudeva, the father of the Kṛṣṇa, the romantic hero of this novel, evidently remind us of Naravāhanadatta, the Hero of Guṇāḍhya. Next there is Samarāccakahā of Harishadra in Prākṛta described by author as religious story, i. e., Dharmakathā. The fortune of the hero Samarakātya is traced through his 9 previous births. The underlying principle of these narratives is the doctrine of Karma. Harishadra's Dhūrtākhyaṇa in Prākṛta is also one of the important works of Jaina literature. It shows through this imaginary tale how skillfully the incredible legends of Hindu Mythology could be ridiculed. Next, Kuvalayamālā (Mahārāṣṭrī Prākṛta ) by Śvetāmbara Ācārya Udyotanāsuri, composed in 799 A. D. shows author's thorough acquaintance with works of previous writers by referring to them. He has beautifully described the corrupt city life. Upamitiḥbhavapradaṇcaikathā is composed in Saṁskṛta in 906 A. D. by Siddharṣi. The work of Siddharṣi is an elaborate and extensive allegory. It is a narrative consisting of series of birth stories, i. e., the hero of all the stories is the same person in different births. Ācārya proposes to explain the mundane carrier of the soul (Jīva) under the name of saṁsāri jīva from the lowest stage of existence to the final liberation. The conversion of the cruel king Marudatta to Jainism is the theme of this work. No literature representing the fourth type, i. e., semi-historical prabandhas has been written in corresponding period. All these prabandhas are written after c. 12th A. D.

The last type is represented by the compilation of stories or Kathākośas. The stories contained in these works have got a definite moral purpose to be propogated and as such teachers and preachers could use them independently without any specific context, throughout there discourses. Many of the Kathākośas are of anonymous composition.

The well known work of this type is Dharmopadesamālā of Jaisimhasūri (867 A. D.) composed in Prākṛta. The work has auto-commentary and has 156 stories. Brhatkathākośa, composed in 931 A. D. by Hariṣena, is also one of the important works of Yāpaniya tradition of Jainism. It is very informative Jaina text of early medieval period.

5. The Secular Literature of Jainas

As defined, being a realistic system with a high spiritualistic bias, the basic texts of Jainism deal with the phenomena of the spiritual kingdom as well as physical universe. Jaina Ācāryas introduced various learnings aiming at the development of personalities and character, preservation of its cultural heritage, shoulder the responsibilities of the ascetic and house-holders in society and performance of religious duties. These aims are achieved by learning such subjects as could strike the balance between the spiritual as well as worldly life.

The earlier Jaina canons mention different subjects dealing with worldly phenomena. Sūtra-kṛtāṅga, Bhagavatī, Samavāyāṅga, Nandīsūtra, Prajīpanā, Jambūdvīpaprajīapti, Candra and Śūryaprajīapti describe various aspects of biology, grammar, chanda, nirukta, jyotisā, geography, astronomy
etc., but in Āgamas these different subjects are intermingled. Realising necessities of some independent works regarding worldly phenomena, Jaina ācāryas composed some secular literature dealing with the physical phenomena.

As the result, by the beginning of c. 3rd A. D. several independent works were composed on various subjects such as – Astronomy, Astrology, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Arts and Architecture, Linguistic and Medicinal discipline, i. e., Āyurveda, etc. It would be in the fitness of the things to record some of the details about such works, viz. Lokavibhāga of Sarvānanandi (c. 6th A. D.) and Tiloyapannatti of Yati-vṛṣabha composed in Prākṛta, are two important works on Astronomy and Geography. Some more works like Umāsvāti’s Jambū-dvīpasamāsa and Kṣetramicāra (c. 3rd A. D.) and Brhatkṣetrasamāsa of Jinabhadragni Kṣamaśramaṇa (c. 7th A. D.) also dealt with Geography and some aspects of Jaina cosmology. Among these works, Kṣetramicāra is not available today. Jivasamāsa and Jīvamicāra as well as Taṇḍulavaićārika are the works dealing with Jaina Biology. Pujiyapāda Devanandi (c. 6th A. D.) had composed a treatise named Vaidyakasāstra dealing with Āyurvedic medicines, but this work is also not available. Jyotiśakaranḍaka is a Prakīṃaka which deals with Jaina Astrology. In the field of grammar, Jainendra Vyākaraṇa or Endravyākaraṇa of Indranandi (c. 6th A. D.), Śākaṭāyana Vyākaraṇa along with its auto-commentary, Amogha-vṛtti of Pālyakīrti Śākaṭāyana (c. 9th A. D.) and Śvayambhū Vyākaraṇa of Tribhuvana Svaśambhū (c. 8th A. D.) are regarded as important works of this category.

The literary evolution of Jains, particularly in Prākṛta, which took place during c. 5th B.C.-10th A. D. shows that the Jaina ācāryas were versatile genius. They composed various treatises on different subjects but mainly on philosophical and religious topics.