Personal Biography in Jaina Literature

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In Western literary history, it is often said that biography and especially autobiography form the beginning of the emphasis on subjectivity and the individual that is so prevalent in modern humanistic thought. However, in the Western encounter with pre-modern Indian literature, it immediately becomes clear how very little focus there has been on individuals and their historicity, even to the extent that it sometimes has been said that Indians have no sense of history, and, in fact, have no history at all.[2] Fact-based sources for pre-modern Indian history must often be sought in texts written by foreign visitors, whether Greek, Chinese, or Middle-Eastern chroniclers and historiographers.

In the beginning, Indian genres of biography (*carita, caritra, prabhāvaka,* etc.) were purely devoted to describing the careers of the religious founders, such as Mahāvīra, the Buddha, and various other such figures from the distant past. Or else, they were devoted to describing the glorious deeds of semi-mythological figures, i.e., persons not ascertainable in 'historical' time, such as the epics (*mahākāvya*) and legends (*purāṇa*) about Rāma, the Pāṇḍava brothers, the various incarnations (avatāra) of Viṣṇu, etc.

Then in the 11th century, Indian literature suddenly took a new turn when Indian authors began to produce biographies (*prabandha, pravṛtti*) of more recent historical individuals. In particular, they began to write hagiographies of religiously significant individuals, and thereby brought a new focus on the individual into the Indian perception of the universe and man's place therein. It is here of note that the appearance of these new biographical genres occurred more or less simultaneously in Jainism and Buddhism.[3]

Admittedly, Indian medieval biography has little pretense of the

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facticity usually sought by the modern historian, which he bases in a notion of an objective past reality that stands outside the parameters of the text itself. However, as text as such, namely the fact that a given biography was written at a certain time and locality, the sources nevertheless possess historicity: as specific instances of writing, they provide insight into how a given personal narrative was formed at an age- and place-specific juncture in history. Just like the art-historian may distinguish the pictorial representations of a given motif chronologically to determine how the motif developed over time, the text-historian perceives how various narrative constructs formed and evolved, and these formations can be described as historical fact. Accepting this as the text's historical reality operates with a different understanding of historicity than proposing that the contents of a given biography depict a knowable, objective historical reality about the person being portrayed. It is this view of history that forms the basis for my study, and which makes the historical study of literature one of the most accessible inroads into mankind's knowable past.

The study of the appearance and development of personal narrative in Jainism is particularly significant for the general study of medieval religious biography in India. When personal biography began to appear in 10[4]th-century India, the other literary Indian religions all had extensive foreign contacts. Buddhism was active throughout Central, East, and South-East Asia, and Buddhist pilgrims from these nations constantly visited India bringing with them many outside influences. Hinduism had by then been carried widely into South-East Asia with a strong presence as far as present-day Indonesia. Islam, whose spread in India was just at its beginning, was with its ties to the Middle East still an outsider's religion, rooted in immigrant trader-communities. Jainism, on the other hand, had little presence - if any at all - outside of India.

Even though many Jains were merchants with international trading-ties, the religion itself remained local. Jainism seems to have maintained an introversion not found with the other much more extrovert Indian religions. Therefore, to study the rise of this new

biographical turn in Indian literature with a focus on the tradition of Jainism may allow a particular understanding of this literary phenomenon in relative isolation from outside influences, thus enabling a better understanding of its nature and character.

In the following pages, I shall first briefly survey the overall development of biography in earlier Jaina literature, providing a picture thereof which may also be so familiar to the reader from Buddhist literature. Thereupon, I will turn to present and discuss the appearance of personal biography in Jaina literature in some detail. Although the underlying question of my study is broadly to understand the circumstances that led to the appearance of personal biography in Indian literature, this paper remains quite limited in this attempt, seeking merely to gain a basic overview of the genre and its appearance in Jainism, while suggesting a few possible venues for further inquiry.

1. Proto-Biographies in the Early Canon

The Jaina canonical literature of both the Śvetāmbara and the Digambara sects contain proto-biographies, mainly depicting the lives of Mahāvīra and other Tirthaṅkaras. These may be called "proto"-biographies, since they are not written in the form of separate biographical texts bearing any genre-specific titles, such as *caritra* or *prabhāvaka*, as seen with later biographies.

In the Śvetāmbara canon, the oldest written layer of the canonical literature dates, according to JACOBI (1884 : xliii), to the 3rd-2nd century BCE. The *Āyārāṅgasutta* (Skt. *Ācārāṅgasūtra*) in its first book, viz. the first *Suyakkhaṅdha* (Skt. *Śrutaskandha*), ends with a versified account of Mahavira's behavior and austerities,[5] which JACOBI (1884 : xlviii) dates slightly later than the preceding segments of the same text. This account, however, is not an actual biography aiming to provide a chronological outline of a person's life, but rather serves to state major facets of Mahāvīra's religious code of conduct. The second *Suyakkhaṅdha* of the same text, moreover, contains in its third part a partial biography of Mahāvīra,[6] which in turn formed the basis for later Mahāvīra-biographies. Inscriptions and reliefs from the 1st century CE accord

with the canonical descriptions of Mahāvīra's life found in this text, and these epigraphic and art-historical sources thus attest to the antiquity of the written accounts (WINTERNITZ, 1920:264). Other Śvetāmbara canonical works contain other proto-biographies, in particular the fifth *aṅga*, viz. the *Bhagavatī* (*Viyāhapaṇṇatti*, which contains brief stories of earlier *tīrthaṅkaras* (*ibid* :300-301) 0-301).

In the scriptures of the Digambara sect, which must be considered a relatively later textual layer than the Śvetāmbara canon, the *Prathamānuyoga* section contains the life-stories of Mahāvīra as well as of other *tīrthaṅkaras*. There stories are said to have been derived from the fourth part of the lost 12th *aṅga* called *Dṛṣṭivāda* (BHUTORIA, 2005:46)

2. Early Biographies in the Canonical and Post-Canonical Literature

In terms of actual biographical literature, WINTERNITZ (1920:327) presents a distinction between two forms of biography: *caritra* and *prabandha*.[7] The Sanskrit word caritra (also written *carita* ; Prakrit *cariya*) literally means "going" and has the derived figurative meaning of "deeds, gestes, behavior, exploits, biography, life-story." The word also points to its derivative form *caritra* (CORT, 1995:476), meaning "right conduct," "observance of vows," thereby indicating the implicit purpose of the *caritra* genre, namely to exemplify the ideal religious life as exhibited by a saint. The word *prabandha* literally means "connection, band" and carries the derivative meaning "continuance, succession, story, fiction, collection." According to the medieval Jaina author Rajaśekhara (CORT, 1995:498, fn. 26), the word *caritra* occurs in titles of works presenting life-stories of *tirthaṅkaras*, mythical rulers (*cakravartin*), and holy men (*Ṛṣi*) from the ancient past, whereas the word *prabandha* signifies stories of monks and laymen from the historical age. However, as the genre-survey below will show, such a rigid distinction between the usages of the two terms is not feasible, since the word *caritra* also is used of biographies of historical persons.

The earliest biography having the word *caritra* as part of its title is

found in the *Kalpasūtra*.[8] The *Kalpasūtra* is a Śvetāmbara canonical text forming the eighth chapter of the *Āyāradasāo*, viz. the fourth *Chedasūtra*. The *Kalpasūtra* is ascribed to Bhadrabāhu, the sixth patriarch of the Jaina community after Mahāvīra's death, who is said to have died 170 years after Mahāvīra's death. The first part of the *Kalpasūtra* is entitled *Jinacaritra*, "The deeds of the Jinas." It commences with the vita of Mahāvīra,[9] parts of which are adopted verbatim from, or have close correspondence to, the earlier, partial Mahāvīra-biography of the *Āyārāṅgasutta*. The same chapter of the *Kalpasūtra* continues with other biographies of the earlier tīrthaṅkaras, including Pārśva (*tīrthaṅkara* no. 23) (JACOBI, 1884:271-275), Ariṣṭa-Neminātha (no. 22) (*ibid.*:276-279), and Ṛṣabha (no. 1).[10] For the other twenty *tīrthaṅkaras*, only their names are listed.

In the fourth century, the Digambara-author Yati Vṛṣabha composed the Prakrit text *Tiloyapaṇṇatti*, which is the first text giving an outline of the lives of a group of figures referred to as the sixty-three great men (*mahāpuruṣa*) or the sixty-three torch-bearers (*Śalākāpuruṣa*).[11] The sixty-three great men are the twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras, twelve universal monarchs (*cakravartin*), nine Vāsudevas, nine Baladevas, and the nine foes of the Vāsudevas (Prativāsudeva). The Vāsudevas, Baladevas, and Prativāsudevas are all semi-divine kingly and princely Jaina figures related to the epics of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, which thus ties Jaina mythology in with the *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa*, and other Vaiṣṇavaite Hindu epics of the Bhāgavatism that became popular in India from the fourth century CE onwards.[12]

The lives of the *tīrthaṅkaras* and other religiously significant non-historical figures were told and retold, often under the name *purāṇa*, "legend," thereby making these stories parallel to the *purāṇa* genre of Hindu mythology. The term *purāṇa* was used by both Śvetāmbara and Digambara authors, but the word became particularly popular with texts belonging to the latter sect (CORT, 1995:478). The *Mahāpurāṇa*, "The Great Legend," is one such example. It consists of two parts. The first part entitled *Ādipurāṇa*, "The First Legend,"

was written by Ācārya Jinasena at the Raṣṭrakūṭa court in Karnataka before his death in 887 CE. To this was added a second part entitled *Uttarapurāṇa*, "The Subsequent Legend," completed by Jinasena's disciple Ācārya Guṇabhadra in 897 CE. The *Ādipurāṇa* gives the story of the first Tirthaṅkara, Ādinātha or Ṛṣabha, while the *Uttarapurāṇa* narrates the stories of the remaining twenty-three *tīrthaṅkaras*. According to WINTERNITZ (1920:333 fn. 2), the *Uttarapurāṇa* was further enlarged in 898 CE by Guṇabhadra's student Lokasena. Other Digambara *purāṇas* include texts parallel to several well-known Hindu *purāṇas*, such as Jinadāsa's *Harivaṁśa* written in 783 (parallel to the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* in the Hindu tradition) and Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (partially parallel to the Hindu epic *Mahābhārata*).

In or about 868 CE, Ācārya Śilāṅka authored the treatise *Cauppannamahāpurisacariya* in Prakrit giving detailed biographies of the sixty-three great men.[11] It seems to have been partly based on the fourth Śvetāmbara canonical *aṅga*-text entitled *Samavāyāṅga*.

Yet, the most comprehensive set of stories of the sixty-three great men was written in 1160-1172 CE at the Caulukya court in Gujarat by theŚvetāmbara author Ācārya Hemacandra Sūri (1088/9-1172)[14] in his magnum opus entitled *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, "Lives of the Sixty-Three Illustrious men".[15] Hemacandra's Sanskrit text was partly based on Śīlāṅka's earlier Prakrit work. Its tenth chapter on Mahāvīra also appears in manuscripts as an independent work bearing the title *Mahāvīracaritra* (WINTERNITZ, 1920 :329). The story of each *tīrthaṅkara* centers around five auspicious events (*kalyāṇaka*), viz. conception, birth, mendicant initiation, enlightenment, and bodily liberation at the moment of death (CORT, 1995:474), which are identical for each *tīrthaṅkara*, and all the stories thus follow more or less the same narrative pattern. In an addendum entitled *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*, "The Appendix Chapter," or *Sthavirāvalīcarita*, "Lives of the Line of Elders," Hemacandra gives in brief the vitae of the *Daśapūrvins*, i.e., the earliest teachers of Mahāvīra's doctrine who still knew the now lost ten *pūrvas,* i.e., the 'oldest' or 'former' (viz. pre-canonical) Jaina texts.[16]

Long narratives of the lives of individual *tīrthaṅkaras* were later worked out by a number of authors. Jinasena (9th century) wrote the *Pārśvābhyudaya*, "The Rise of Pārśva," giving a poetic description of the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara Pārśvanātha's life.[17] The Digambara-author Haricandra (10th century?) wrote the epic poem *Dharmaśarmābhyudaya*, "The Rise of Dharmaśarman," which in twenty-one songs describes the life of the fifteenth Tīrthaṅkara Dharmanātha.[18] Vāgbhaṭa (12th century) depicted the life of the 22nd Tīrthaṅkara Nemīnātha in his poem *Neminirvāṇa,* "Nemi's *Nirvāṇa*." Vardhamānasūri (13th century) wrote the *Vāsupūjya-caritra* giving the story of the 12th Tīrthaṅkara Vāsupūjya. Kṛṣṇadeva wrote the lifestory of the 13th Tīrthaṅkara Vimala. Devasūri narrated the biography of the sixteenth Tīrthaṅkara Śāntinātha was narrated by Devasūri.[19]

The stories told in these *caritra* texts are thus mainly stories of the *tīrthaṅkaras*, especially Mahāvīra, Nemīnātha, and Pārśvanātha, or of various persons associated with Mahāvīra or earlier Jinas, particularly with Nemīnātha, such as Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, etc. The foci of the stories is thus predominantly a distant ('universal') past, and no stories are found of any persons living in the historical ('localized') age closer to the centuries CE in which these texts were put into writing from their former oral transmission or composed anew.

3. Personal Biographies of Jaina Scholars and Teachers

In his study of Jaina historical literature and its various genres, John E. CORT (1995) describes the above-mentioned *caritra* and *purāṇa* literature as pertaining to what he calls the "Jaina Universal History." The term "universal history" is derived from a 19th-century German historiographical concept, signifying the writing of a universal history of all of mankind transcending national histories. This term was, in turn, adopted by a number of early 20th-century German Indologists when referring to certain aspects of Hindu and Jaina narratives. According to CORT (1995:480), Jains thus consider the stories of *tīrthaṅkaras* and so forth as reflecting universal events in the recurrent structure of cyclical time, where

each downward and upward cycle of time will see the similar appearance of twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras*, who - though consisting of different individuals in each time cycle - follow the same universal biographical pattern in their paths to liberation and omniscience. In contrast to such stories of universal time, CORT (*ibid.*) speaks of what he calls 'localized histories', signifying "the histories of the Jaina tradition in the centuries since the death and liberation of Mahāvīra a little over 2,500 years ago."

In its earliest and simplest form, such localized histories did not consists of actual biographies, but were simply canonical and post-canonical lists of monks who had headed the Jaina community. These monks were bearers of the Jaina transmission of mendicant initiation (*dīkṣā*), which is the ritual that allows every monk or nun entry into the order of the ordained community. Since it was of great significance to be able to claim the authority of an unbroken line of transmission reaching all the way back to Mahāvīra himself, such transmission-lines were recorded and preserved in so-called avali, i.e., "lineage"-texts, bearing such titles as *paṭṭāvalī* ("The line of Seat-Holders"), *sthavirāvalī* ("The Line of Elders"), or *gurvāvalī* ("The Line of Gurus").[20] The oldest example of such a text is a segment in the *Kalpasūtra* following the life-stories of the tīrthaṅkaras entitled *Therāvalī* (Skt. *Sthavirāvalī*), which simply gives the names of the line of head-monks of the early Jaina community.[21] However, in the later literature, such texts often came to include some biographical detail of the major individuals listed, as, e.g., seen in Hemacandra's above-mentioned appendix to the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra* entitled *Sthavirāvalīcarita*, "Lives of the Line of Elders." CORT (1995:482) mentions that the Śvetāmbaras in the 11th-12th century began to write more extensive versions of such texts, describing the transmission lines right up to the time of the (gradually ongoing) composition of the text, in accordance with the particular sectarian affiliation of the author (s). While not biography per se, such texts were certainly intimately linked with the genre of Jaina religious biography, partly sharing the purpose of establishing the authority and glory of a given religious lineage.

More specific biographical genres of ('localized') historical individuals began to appear around the same time, i.e., from the 11th century onwards, embodied in the genres of *prabandha* ("collections"), *caritra* ("deeds, lives"), and *kāvya* ("poem"). GRANOFF (1989b:331) states that these biographies are much less school-specific or sectarian than the above-mentioned *āvalī*-texts with their focus on specific sectarian transmission-lineages, noting that the biographies are "concentrating on the lives of those monks who would have been most widely acceptable to Śvetāmbara Jains regardless of any particular loyalty to a local group or *gaccha*" (*ibid.*).

The following is a survey of primary sources containing Jaina personal biography, while surely not exhaustive at least lists some of the major and most well-known texts:

- 1077 CE, the Digambara-author Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa*,[22] "*The Treasury of Stories.*" This is a collection of miscellaneous stories in two distinct parts (UPADHYE, 1974:16). The first part contains 90 stories, while the second part, probably being a slightly later supplement possibly written by a different hand who in the colophon is called Bhaṭṭāraka Śrī Prabhācandra, contains 32 stories. The text incorporates brief life-stories of three historical authors, namely:

1. Story no. 1: (Vidyānanda) Pātrakeśarin (ca. 8th century, author and opponent of the Vedāntin Śaṃkarācārya).

2. Story no. 2: The Digambara Ācārya and author Akalaṅka (second half of 8th century).[23]

3. Story no. 4: The Digambara author Samantabhadra (*ca.* 2nd century CE).[24] The story of Samantabhadra also includes the story of his student Śivakoṭi, whom the author considers identical to Śivārya (date unknown), the author of *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā.*[25]

- First half of 12th century, Sarvarājamuni's commentary to Jinadattasūri's *Gaṇadharārdhaśataka*, "Hundred and Fifty Heads of the Assembly," containing, among others, the

biography of theŚvetāmbara teacher and author Haribhadra suri (second half of the 9th century).[26]

• 1134 CE, Āmradevasūri's Prakrit verse-commentary *Ākhyānakamaṇikośavṛtti*,[27] "Commentary on the Jewel-Treasury of Narratives," containing the life-story of the Śvetāmbara author Siddhasena Divākara (5th century CE).[28]

• Mid-12th century, Bhadreśvara's *Kahāvalī*,[29] "*The Line of Stories*," containing several biographies, including that of Haribhadra.[30]

• 1160-1172 CE, Hemacandra's (1088/9-1172) *Triṣaṣṭiśalākapuruṣacaritra*, "*Lives of the Sixty-Three Torch-Bearers*", which includes details of his own life in the tenth chapter of the text (WINTERNITZ. 1920:329), i.e., the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* or *Sthavirāvalīcarita*.

• Late 12th century, Sumatisūri's *Jinadattacarita*, "*The Deeds of Jinadatta*," concerning the Śvetāmbara Kharatara Gaccha[31] monk Jinadattasūri.[32]

• 1277 CE, Prabhācandra's and Pradyumnasūri's *Prabhāvakacaritra*, "Lives of Illustrious [Monks]."[33] The Sanskrit text consists twenty-two biographies (*prabandha*) and is written in Śloka-verse, providing the vitae of the following twenty-two famous Śvetāmbara monks: (1) Vajrasvāmī (199 verses); (2) Āryarakṣita (279 verses); (3) Āryanandila (84 verses); (4) Kālakasūri (156 verses); (5) Pādaliptasūri (also including the story of Āryakhapaṭa)(357 verses); (6) Vijayasiṁhasūri (141 verses); (7) Jivadevasūri (203 verses); (8) Vṛddhavādisūri, viz., Siddhasena Divākara (180 verses); (9) Haribhadra (224 verses); (10) Mallavādisūri (75 verses); (11) Bappabhaṭṭisūri (772 verses); (12) Mānatuṅgasūri (168 verses); (13) Mānadevasūri (84 verses); (14) Mahākavi Siddharṣi[34] (157 verses); (15) Viragaṇi (169 verses); (16) Vādivetāla Śāntisūri (132 verses); (17) Mahendrasūri (328 verses); (18) Sūrācārya (261 verses); (19) Abhayadevasūri

(including the story of his teacher Jineśvara)(177 verses); (20) Vīrācārya (94 verses); (21) Vādidevasūri (290 verses); (22) Hemacandra (853 verses).

• Early 14th century, *Purātanaprabandhasaṁgraha*,[35] "Collection of Ancient Narratives," containing various biographies, including that of Haribhadra, Siddhasena, and Āryakhapaṭācārya.

• 1304 CE, Merutuṅga's (14th century) *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*,[36] "Wish-fulfilling Jewel of Narratives." This is a semi-historical anthology of biographies containing stories of significant historical monarchs, including the story of Hemacandra and king Kumārapala, as well as the story of Siddhasena.

• 1333 CE, Jinaprabhasūri's pilgrimage-guide *Vividhatīrthakalpa*,[37] "The Cycle of Various Holy Places," containing in passing several life-stories, including that of Siddhasena Divākara.

• 1349 CE, Rajaśekhara's Sanskrit text *Prabandhakośa*, "Treasury of Narratives."[38] It contains the life-stories of ten Jaina ācāryas (including Hemacandra, Mallavādī, Kālakācārya, Bhadrabāhu, Āryanandila, Āryakhapaṭācārya, Bappabhaṭṭisūri, Pādalipta, Siddhasena, and Haribhadra), four poets (Śriharṣa, Harihara, Amaracandra, and the Digambara Madanakīrti), seven kings (including Sātavāhana), and three other figures.[39]

• 1366 CE, Saṅghatilakasūri's *Samyaktvasaptatikāvṛtti*, "Commentary on the Seventy Verses on Perfection," giving the life-story of Siddhasena Divākara.[40]

• 1370 CE, Śrī Guṇākarasūri's commentary on Mānatuṅga's devotional poem entitled *Bhaktāmarastotra*, "Praise to the Worshipped Deathlessness," containing a number of miracle-stories related to this praise, including the life-stories of Mānatuṅga and Āryakhapaṭācārya.[41]

•1419 CE, Devamūrti's *Vikramacarita*, "The Deeds of [King] Vikrama," being a cycle of tales including the story

of Siddhasena Divākara.

• 1434 CE, Jayasāgaropādhyaya's *Gurupāratantrya*, "Reliance on the Guru," including the life-story of Jinadatta.

• 1436, Jinamaṇḍana's *Kumārapālacaritra*, "The Deeds of [King] Kumārapāla," including the life-story of Hemacandra.

• 1443 CE, Śubhaśīlagaṇi's *Vikramacarita*,[42] "The Deeds of [King] Vikrama," being a cycle of tales including the story of Siddhasena Divākara.[43]

• 1468 CE, Pratiṣṭhāsoma's *Somasaubhāgyakāvya*, "Poem on the Auspiciousness of Soma," concerning the Tapā Gaccha monk Somasundarasūri (1374-1443).

• Late 15th century, Sumatisādhu's *Somasaubhāgyakavya*, "Poem on the Auspiciousness of Soma," concerning the same monk.

• Late 15th or 16th century, Ratnanandin's *Bhadrabāhucarita*, "The Life of Bhadrabāhu," i.e., the story of the fourth century BCE Jaina monk and leader of the Digambara monastic community Bhadrabāhu.

• 1590 CE, Padmasāgaragaṇi's *Jagadgurukāvya*, "Poem on the Guru for the World," concerning the Tapā Gaccha monk Hīravijayasūri (1527-1596).

• Late 16th century, Siddhicandropādhyaya's *Bhānucandra-gaṇicaritra*, "The Deeds of the Assembly-Head Bhānucandra," concerning the Tapā Gaccha monk Bhānucandragaṇi.

• Early 17th century, Devavimalagaṇi's *Hira-saubhāgyakāvya*, "Poem on the Auspiciousness of Hīra," concerning Hīravijayasūri.

• 1625 CE, Hemavijaya's *Vijayapraśastikāvya*, "Poem of praise for Vijaya," concerning Hīravijayasūri.

• Mid-17th century, Vallabhopādhyaya's *Vijayadeva-māhātmya*, "The Grandness of Lord Vijaya," on the Tapā Gaccha monk Vijayadevasūri (1578-1653).

- 1699 CE, Meghavijayopādhyāya's *Devanandamahākāvya*, "The Great Poem [that brings] Pleasure to the Gods," on Vijayadevasūri.

- *Ca.* 1710 CE, Meghavijayopādhyāya's *Digvijaya-mahākāvya*, "The Great Poem of World Conquest," on the Tapā Gaccha monk Vijayaprabhasūri (1621-1693).

- 1787 CE, Vijayalakṣmīsūri's *Upadeśaprāsāda*, "Clarity of the Instructions," containing the life-story of Siddhasena Divākara.[44]

4. Prolegomenon on the Emergence of Personal Biography in Jaina Literature

The above survey of personal biography in Jaina literature illustrates that biographies of historical individuals of a recent ('localized') past began to appear in the second half of the 11th century. There may, to be sure, have been several reasons and influences leading to this turn in Jaina writing, and I shall here but attempt some cursory and quite preliminary remarks for explaining this development.

The first circumstance to consider is the nature of the earliest text containing personal biographies that I have hitherto been able to identify, namely the first work listed in the above survey: Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa*, "The Treasury of Stories." This text was composed in the late 11th century (UPADHYE, 1943:62), possibly in the year 1077 CE (date according to GRANOFF, 1989a:110). The text begins with a verse of homage, wherein the author characterizes his text as a "collection (*prabandha*) of genuinely good stories (*sat-su-kathā*) on the *Ārādhanā*" (*Āradhanāśatsukathāprabandha*).[45] This statement is, in fact, parallel to the title by which the author himself later refers to his text, namely, *Ārādhanā-kathā-prabandha* (UPADHYE, 1943:60), meaning "A Collection of Stories on the *Ārādhanā*." The word *Ārādhanā* refers to a text entitled *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā*, and it is thus clear that the *Kathākośa* is intimately linked with this work.

The *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā* is an important Digambara work composed by Śivārya (date unknown), possibly written in the early

centuries CE. It deals with a long series of ascetic practices culminating with death through fasting. It is, in fact, just one of several *Āradhanā* texts dealing with this topic.[46] In the words of UPADHYE (1943:47), "*Āradhanā* consists in firm and successful accomplishment of ascetic ideals, namely, Faith, Knowledge, Conduct and Penance, that are laid down in Jainism; in maintaining a high standard of detachment, forbearance, self-restraint and mental equipoise at the critical hour of death; and in attaining spiritual purification and liberation." In his study, UPADHYE (1943:72-80) shows that Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa* is closely linked with several earlier texts bearing the title *Kathākośa*,[47] especially with the 9th-century work *Bṛhatkathākośa*, "The Large Treasury of Stories,"[48] written by Hariṣeṇa.[49] UPADHYE concluded that the majority of these *Kathākośa*-texts, including Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa*, were intended as narrative commentaries on the *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā*. Unlike the formal commentaries on the *Ārādhanā*,[50] which had the purpose of explaining the words and overall meaning of the Prakrit verses of the *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā* root-text, the *Kathākośa*-texts were intended as collections of stories providing edifying illustrations (*naya*) of selected verses from the *Ārādhanā* text.

In this vein, Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa* begins, right after the above-mentioned verse of homage, by citing the first two verses of the *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā*. The text then provides its first thirteen stories to exemplify the meaning of these verses. Thereafter, the author goes on to illustrate other verses from the *Ārādhanā*, usually citing the pertinent verse or part thereof at the beginning of a story. In first part of Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa* (stories 1-90), the selected verses from the *Ārādhanā* occur in sequential order, but in the second supplementary part (stories 90*1to 90*32) the verses are random in order.[51] Prabhācandra's *Kathśkośa* shares almost all of its stories with Hariṣeṇa's earlier and larger work, the *Bṛhatkathākośa*. Only eight of the 122 stories found in Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa* are not found in *Bṛhatkathākośa*.

Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa* includes three personal biographies, namely the life-stories of the Digambara authors Pātrakesarin (8th

century), Akalaṅka (8th century), and Samantabhadra (ca. 2nd century CE). These biographies constitute stories no. 1, 2, and 4, and thus belong to the sequence of the text's first thirteen stories meant to illustrate the meaning of Bhagavatī Ārādhanā's verses 1-2. The story of Pātrakesarin (story no. 1) is meant to illustrate the manifestation of rightness (samyaktvoddyotana). The story of Akalaṅka (story no. 2) exemplifies the manifestation of knowledge (jñānoddyotana). The third story, showing the manifestation of good conduct (cāritroddyotana), is the legendary tale of the sage Sanatkumara, and is thus not a personal biography. The biography of Samantabhadra (story no. 4) illustrates both the qualities of knowledge and conduct combined (ubhayoruddyotana).

What is here noteworthy is that none of these three personal biographies occur in the Bṛhatkathākośa or any other extant, earlier Kathākośa-text, and it therefore seems that Prabhācandra was the first to include stories of recent historical persons into this genre. If this is so, the beginning of personal biography in Jaina literature is in the Kathākośa genre and is aimed at providing edifying illustrations of ascetic practices.

While the above analysis may explain one of the circumstances in which personal biography first appeared, it did not reveal any particular reason as to why Prabhācandra chose to include stories of historical individuals, where he could simply have chosen stories of non-historical figures as seen in all the other tales of his work. It may just be noted that he felt sufficiently assured that the vitae of these well-known Digambara masters were suitable illustrations for the spiritual qualities he wished to exemplify, and that he chose to place these biographies at the very beginning of his work. The two earlier Kathākośa-texts on which Prabhācandra's work is partly based, namely Hariṣeṇa's Bṛhatkathākośa and Śrīcandra's Apabhraṁśa Kathākośa (10th century),[52] did not provide any prototype for stories to illustrate verses 1-2 of Bhagavatī Ārādhanā, since both these texts begin their first stories as illustrations of Āradhanā's verses 19, 22, and 23.[53]

It may be that Prabhācandra included the biographies to state his

veneration for earlier, outstanding masters of the Digambara tradition. It is at least of note that the last biography, that of Samantabhadra, includes the story of Samantabhadra's student Śivakoṭi, whom Prabhācandra considers identical to Śivārya, the author of the *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā*. To be sure, the three biographies are not given in chronological order, since Pātrakeśarin and Akalaṅka, who both belong to the 8th century, postdate Samantabhadra (*ca.* 2nd century CE) with six centuries. Yet, as authors whose thought may have been significant to Prabhācandra, the three biographies could be seen as a sequence expressing a certain intellectual heritage in a line ending with Samantabhadra and his student Śivārya, whose work Prabhācandra is setting out to illustrate at this point in the text. This remains, however, merely a hypothesis, the validity of which can only be determined by a much more in-depth study of Prabhācandra's relationship to these three authors.

If meant to provide a sense of heritage, the beginning of personal biography in Jaina literature might be seen as related to the importance of lineage and to the authority of holding an unbroken transmission. In Buddhist literature, where personal biography began within the context of the Tāntric tradition, the earliest biographies were either accounts of Tāntric lineages or life-stories of major figures considered to be founders of various Tāntric transmissions.[54] It is possible that a similar emphasis on heritage and lineage was significant for the appearance of personal biography in Jaina literature.[55]

In this case, personal biography ought to be, at least partly, traceable to the Jaina genres of lineage-records, the so-called *Āvalī*-texts mentioned above, which were accounts of the transmission-lines of mendicant initiation (*dīkṣā*). While in their earliest form such records, e.g., the *Therāvalī* found in the *Kalpasūtra,* did not include biographies, CORT (1995:482) notes that biography began to be included already in Hemacandra's *Sthavirāvalīcarita*, "Lives of the Line of Elders," written in 1160-1172 CE. Likewise, later avali-texts often came to include personal biographies (CORT,

1995:482). This development in the avali-literature thus paralleled the rise of the personal biographies listed in the survey above, and this fact may further highlight a desire for heritage and in extension thereof a need for pedigree as significant factors. Yet, what was it in the 11th-12th centuries that gave rise to such needs?

To consider some possible answers to this complex question, one explanation may have been the way in which the Śvetāmbara sect from the 11th century onwards began to splinter into several sub-sects. GRANOFF (1999:297) has noted that she has "sought to understand the compiling of certain collections of stories, didactic and biographical, the line is not always so finely drawn, as a response to a deeply-felt need to create a community self-image that would transcend the many dividing borders that were rapidly coming to criss-cross the religious map of Śvetāmbara Jainism." In other words, by writing biographies of beloved teachers that any Śvetāmbara group would consider their own, a sense of common heritage and unity could be produced in the otherwise divided Śvetāmbara community. Whether such an explanation would also be true for the production of Digambara biographies, such as Prabhācandra's *Kathākośa* discussed above, remains to be seen. Yet, it is a fact that Śvetāmbara biographical texts far outnumber the Digambara writings of this genre.

Another circumstance that could have created a need for a clearer sense of heritage and for the authority of an authentic transmission could have been the many political alliances with royal courts that Jaina monks were beginning to maintain. After the end of the Gupta Empire in the 7th century, the political landscape of India fragmented into many smaller kingdoms. The Pāla Dynasty (770-850) brought a brief state of partial unity, which was quickly replaced by another breakup into petty kingdoms. This environment must have put more stress on leaders of the Jaina community to establish donor-relations and religious-political alliances with many more rulers than with just a single monarch of a large empire. In view of this, access to narrative about eminent Jaina monks who had performed miracles for their kingly patrons would certainly have been useful for the

Jaina monks residing at the royal courts. Stories of this kind figure prominently in many Jaina biographies. The theme is, for example, reflected in the many accounts of Siddhasena Divākara's miracle of manifesting a Pārśvanātha image out of a Hindu statue or a *linga* before the eyes of a king (GRANOFF, 1989b, 1990), and it also occur in the famous story of Hemacandra's role as advisor to the Gujarati King Kumārapāla (1143-1173). GRANOFF (1989a:122-123) has also underlined the fact that "Jainism was making significant Hindu conversions, particularly among royalty" in the 12th century and has noted that "the *prabandhas* were primarily written for royal audiences or for ministers close to the kings" (*ibid.*). She (*ibid.)* has consequently argued that this political development may have been the cause for the strong anti-Buddhist tone seen in some biographies of this time, intended as a way to distance the Jains from the by-then somewhat unpopular Buddhists with whom they had formerly been closely associated in the eyes of others.

Besides the arrival of the Turkic and Pashtun invaders in the 12th-13th centuries, and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206 might also have created a further need for Jaina monastic leaders to foster stronger bonds with local Hindu rulers. At the same time, it is also not inconceivable that the Indian notion of writing personal biography to begin with was inspired by the gradual influx of Islamic culture with its much stronger tradition of historical writing. This influx began already in the centuries leading up to the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Muslim scholars, such as Al-Bīrūnī (973-1048), visited India in the 1030s and studied there, and it is conceivable that the presence of their scholarly traditions left an early impact on Indian thought and writing. This remains, however, another aspect that requires further study to be considered properly.

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1. The author wishes to thank The International Summer School for Jaina Studies (ISSJS) in general and Dr. Shugan Chand Jain in particular for their great support and kindness. This article is merely a quite preliminary survey of the Jaina biographical sources primarily based on the

available secondary literature.

2. See CORT (1995:469ff,) for a discussion of this statement.

3. I have not yet had the opportunity to examine the history of personal biography in Hindu literature, and it therefore remains merely a hypothesis when I mention the possibility of such biographies appearing also in Hindu literature at this time.

4. While the eleventh century mentioned above is valid for Jainism, the tenth century applies to Buddhism (see below).

5. For an English translation, see JACOBI (1884:79-87).

6. For an English translation, see JACOBI (1884:189-202).

7. I shall here not treat the closely related genre of *stotra*, i.e., eulogies, paeans, and praises, wherein devotional descriptions of various sages' lives also may occur.

8. Edition and translation by SAGAR (1984).

9. For a translation, see JACOBI (1884:217-270).

10. For a translation, see JACOBI (1884: respectively 271-275, 276-279, and 281-285).

11. For a description of this group of men, see CORT (1993). Brief mention of the 'illustrious men' (*śalākāpuruṣa*) occurs in various canonical scriptures (see GEEN, 2009:88-89), but those passage fall short of actual biography.

12. This is though not to say that the Prakrit Jaina versions of these stories necessarily were adopted from their Sanskrit Hindu equivalents. As partly argued by CHATTERJI (1936:458ff.), the written texts in either language and religious tradition reflect to some extent older layers of oral narratives rooted in local lore associated with semi-animistic village gods (grāma-devatās), thereby transcending their later pan-Indian religious affiliation and eventual Sanskritization. For a comparative study of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva and his foes in Jaina and Hindu literature, see GEEN (2009), who considers the Jaina figures of Kṛṣṇa and hisfoes to have been adopted from their Hindu counterparts. See also JAINI (1977 and 1984) for further links between Jaina and Hindu literature.

13. For the Sanskrit text, see BHOJAK (1961) as well as BRUHN (1954).

14. For information on Hemacandra, see WINTERNITZ

(1920:327-332).

15. For an English translation, see JOHNSON (1931-1962).

16. For a German translation of some excerpts, see HERTEL (1909).

17. For the life of Pārśvanātha, see BLOOMFIELD (1919).

18. The words *Śarman* and *nātha* are synonyms, both meaning "guardian, protector"

19. My present mention of such biographies of the *tīrthaṅkaras* is far from exhaustive. For a list of more of such biographies of individual *tīrthaṅkaras*, see Hiralal JAIN (1997:83-84). CORT (1995:478) states that over two hundred such texts have been composed in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhraṁśa, and various regional languages between the early centuries CE and the present.

20. For some editions and articles on these genres, see GRANOFF (1989b:373 fn. 6).

21. For a translation, see JACOBI (1884:286-295).

22. For a Sanskrit edition based on a single available manuscript, see UPADHYAYE (1974).

23. See GRANOFF (1989a:110).

24. See GRANOFF (1989b:352-358).

25. See UPADHYE (1943:53).

26. For information on Haribhadra, see WINTERNITZ (1920:317-318) and GRANOFF (1989a). For Sarvarājamuni's text, see GRANOFF (1989a:111).

27. For an edition, see PUNYAVIJAYJI (1962).

28. For information on Siddhasena, see GRANOFF (1989b and 1990).

29. On the dating of this text, see GRANOFF (1989a:124 fn. 4).

30. For a study, see MALVANIA (1983).

31. The Kharatara Gaccha and the Tapā Gaccha (mentioned below) are two major sub-sects of the Śvetāmbara. For a thorough list of such sub-schools, see Kamal JAIN (1975:50-52).

32. This and some of the following information is based on CORT (1995:499, fn. 30).

33. For a critical edition, see MUNI (1940).

34. Siddharṣi was the author of the grand epic *Upamitibhavaprapañcakathā* written in 906 CE. The story

goes that he started out as a Jaina monk, then became a Buddhist for some time, and finally returned to Jainism.

35. For a Sanskrit edition, see MUNI (1936).

36. English translation by TAWNEY (1901); for a Sanskrit edition, see MUNI (1933).

37. Edited by MUNI (1934).

38. For an edition, see MUNI (1935).

39. For a comparative discussion of *Prabhāvakacaritra* and *Prabandhakośa*, see DELEU (1981).

40. Published as vol. 35 in the Devchandra Lalbhai Pustakoddhara Series.

41. Edition by KAPADIA (1932). For a discussion, see GRANOFF (1989b:363).

42. For an edition and translation, see EDGERTON (1926). NB. I am not sure whether Edgerton's edition and translation is of Devamurti's or Śubhaśīlagaṇi's *Vikramacarita.*

43. Edited by Pandita Bhagavandas, *samvat* 1996.

44. Published in Rajanagara, 1938.

45. Edition by UPADHYE (1974:1).

46. For a list of such texts, see UPADHYE (1943:47-55).

47. For an overview of *Kathākośa* texts, see UPADHYE (1943:39-47 and 57-72).

48. As argued by UPADHYE (1943:81), the word *Bṛhat* "large" may have been added to the title at a later stage to distinguish it from other Kathākośa texts.

49. See also GRANOFF (1986:396ff.) for more information on this text.

50. For a survey of *Ārādhanā* commentaries, see UPADHYE (1943:55-57)

51. For a table showing which stories of *Kathakośa* are related to which verses of *Ārādhanā*, see UPADHYE (1974:12-15).

52. See UPADHYE (1943:59-60).

53. See the table correlating verses and stories in UPADHYE (1943:73).

54. One of the very early Buddhist collections of biographies is a lineage-history of Sahaja-teachings found in Lakṣmī's *Sahajasiddhipaddhati* possibly written in the 10th century (see KRAGH, forthcoming). Other early Buddhist

biographies include the Sham Sher Manuscript, perhaps written in the late 11th o12th century, containing the life-story of Maitrīpada (TATZ, 1987), as well as Abhayadattaśrī's *Caturaśīti-siddha-pravṛtti (*Tib. grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus*, Tibetan Peking Tanjur no. 5091) written in the twelfth century giving the hagiographies of the eighty-four *Mahāsiddhas*.

55. I have not had the opportunity to consider whether the Jaina monks whose vitae appear in the earliest texts containing personal biographies held any particular importance for the Jaina Tāntric tradition. I have also not had opportunity to examine whether Jaina Mantra and Yantra texts contain their own lineage-histories with biographies. In general, it seems that Jaina Tantric works appeared roughly side-by-side with the Buddhist and Hindu Tāntric literature, and these sources may need to be considered for a further study of Jaina biography.

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