

ISSN : 2457-0583

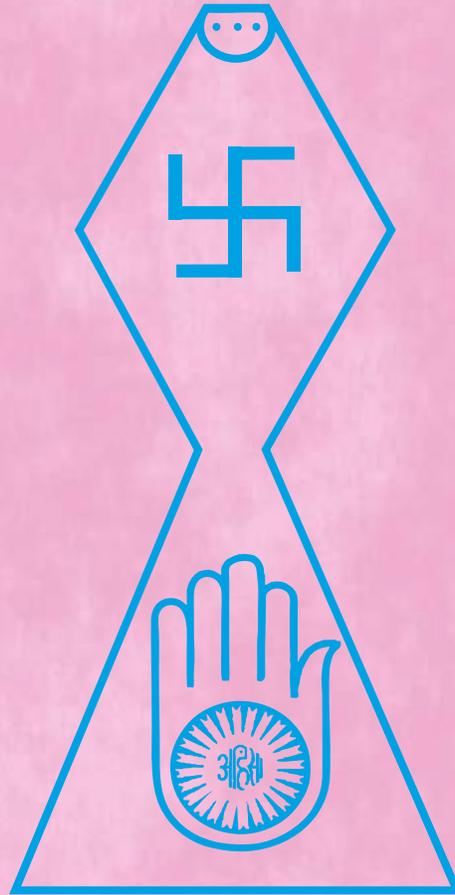
# ISJS - TRANSACTIONS

A Quarterly Refereed Online Research Journal on Jainism

**VOL. 3**

**No. 2**

**April-June, 2019**



**International School for Jain Studies**

D-28, Panchsheel Enclave  
New Delhi - 110 017, India

[www.isjs.in](http://www.isjs.in)



ISSN: 2457-0583

# ISJS – TRANSACTIONS

A Quarterly Refereed Online Research Journal on Jainism

VOL.3  
No.2  
April - June, 2019

## CHIEF EDITOR

**Prof. Prakash C Jain**

Former Professor  
School for International Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi  
Email: [pcjain\\_jnu@yahoo.co.in](mailto:pcjain_jnu@yahoo.co.in)

## EDITOR

**Dr. Shrinetra Pandey**

Joint Director  
International School for Jain Studies  
New Delhi  
Email: [dr.snpandey1981@gmail.com](mailto:dr.snpandey1981@gmail.com)



**International School for Jain Studies**

D-28, Panchsheel Enclave  
New Delhi – 110017, India  
Ph: +91-11-4103 3387

Email: [isjs.india@gmail.com](mailto:isjs.india@gmail.com)

Website: [www.isjs.in](http://www.isjs.in)

### ADVISORY BOARD

- **Dr. Shugan Chand Jain**, Chairman, International School for Jain Studies, New Delhi. Email: [Shuganjain1941@gmail.com](mailto:Shuganjain1941@gmail.com)
- **Prof. Kamal Chand Sogani**, Director, Jain Vidya Sansthan, Jaipur. Email: [jainapa@rediffmail.com](mailto:jainapa@rediffmail.com)
- **Prof. Kusum Jain**, Former Director, Center for Advance Philosophical Research, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Email: [kusumonnet@yahoo.com](mailto:kusumonnet@yahoo.com)
- **Dr. Sulekh Chand Jain**, Former President, JAINA, USA. Email: [scjain@earthlink.net](mailto:scjain@earthlink.net)

### EDITORIAL BOARD

- **Prof. Viney Kumar Jain**, Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Yoga and Science of Living, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun-341306, Dist. Nagaur, Rajasthan, India. Email: [vineykjain@yahoo.com](mailto:vineykjain@yahoo.com)
- **Prof. Christopher Key Chapple**, Director, Master of Arts in Yoga Studies, University Hall, Room 3763, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California-90045, USA. Email: [christopherkeychapple@gmail.com](mailto:christopherkeychapple@gmail.com)
- **Prof. Anne Vallely**, Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, 55, Laurier East, Ottawa, ON, Canada- K1N 6N5. Email: [avallely@gmail.com](mailto:avallely@gmail.com)
- **Prof. Jayanti Lal Jain**, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Mangalayatan University, Mathura - Aligarh Highway, 33rd Milestone, Aligarh -202145. Email: [jl.jain@mangalayatan.edu.in](mailto:jl.jain@mangalayatan.edu.in)
- **Dr. Priyadarshana Jain**, Assistance Professor & Head i/c, Department of Jainology, University of Madras, Chennai – 600 005. Email: [priyadarshanajain@yahoo.in](mailto:priyadarshanajain@yahoo.in)

Articles can be sent in favour of International School for Jain Studies, New Delhi

ISSN: 2457-0583

### PUBLISHED BY

Dr. Shugan Chand Jain for International School for Jain Studies, D-28, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi – 110 017. Email: [issjs.india@gmail.com](mailto:issjs.india@gmail.com)

© International School for Jain Studies

**Note:** The facts and views expressed in the Journal are those of the authors only.

## From the Chief Editor's Desk

Dear readers,

I am glad to present the second issue of the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of *ISJS-Transaction*. This issue contains four research papers highlighting diverse aspects of Jain Studies ranging from *anek ntav da* to ecological issues and from contemporary Jain religiosity in India to a comparative account of conversion in medieval Jain and Chinese literatures.

The first research paper “Religiosity among the Jains of Bundelkhand: A Sociological Study” by Prof. Prakash C. Jain highlights the select aspects of religiosity in the contemporary Jain community of Bundelkhand which include religious ideology, daily routine, dietary preferences, spiritual interaction with ascetics, self-study, watching television programmes of Jain religious events and discourses, and the extent of pilgrimage. An attempt is also made to assess the nature of religiosity in terms of the conceptual categories of orthodoxy, neo-orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

The second paper “On Jain *anek ntav da* and Pluralism in Philosophy of Mathematics” by Landon D. C. Elkind argues that a relatively new position in the Philosophy of Mathematics overlaps in striking ways with the much older Jain doctrine of *anek ntav da* and the associated doctrines of *nayav da* and *syadv da*. The author also takes note of the strong points of overlap and the morals of this comparison of pluralism and *anek ntav da*.

The third paper entitled “Conversion in Medieval Jain and Buddhist Chinese Literatures” by Anna explores the nature of religious conversion represented in Jain *dharmakath* stories (ca. 500 CE to 1500 CE) and compares it with the Chinese Buddhist medieval conversion stories which adopted Buddhist conventional concepts in the familiar framework of miraculous tales in the zhiguai志怪 genre (records of anomalies). It also highlights the importance of looking outside the traditionally-studied genres—S tras and other doctrinal literature—in order to have an accurate understanding of how religion was actually practiced and spread in a certain period of time.

The final piece “An Applied Approach to the Practical Nature of Modern Jain Ecological Views” by Amanda explores aspects of the Jain reasoning for the ecological crisis, the Jain definition of a living being, the effect of *ahi s* on environmental action, and how Jains' views on compassion seek to limit environmental degradation. The paper also attempts to identify the possible remedies that are offered by the Jains before exploring a critique of Jain Ecology and its limitations.

I am very thankful to all the scholars for contributing their research papers to this issue. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Shugan C. Jain, Chairman, ISJS for his continuous support and guidance, and Dr. Shrinetra Pandey, Editor of the journal, for maintaining the quality control in terms of selection and presentation of the articles published in the journal. Thanks are also due to Ms. Jyoti Pandey for diligently computing the work and Mr. Sushil Jana for type-setting and putting the journal on our website.

The readers are most welcome to send their valuable suggestions to further improve the quality of the journal.

Prof. Prakash C Jain



## CONTENT

From the Chief Editor's Desk

- |   |   |                     |       |
|---|---|---------------------|-------|
| 1 | Religiosity among the Jains of Bundelkhand: A Sociological Study            | Prakash C. Jain     | 1-12  |
| 2 | On Jain Anek ntav da and Pluralism in Philosophy of Mathematics             | Landon D. C. Elkind | 13-20 |
| 3 | Conversion in Medieval Jain and Buddhist Chinese Literatures                | Anna Sokolova       | 21-29 |
| 4 | An Applied Approach to the Practical Nature of Modern Jain Ecological Views | Amanda Lee Whatley  | 30-37 |

# Religiosity among the Jains of Bundelkhand: A Sociological Study

Prakash C. Jain\*

Bundelkhand region, located in Central India, officially consists of 13 districts -- seven of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) and six of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.). Presently its total population is estimated around 20 million. Jains constitute an important community in the region. They are mainly involved in trade and commerce, banking, money-lending and various kinds of professions and services, and as such they have been vitally integrated into the regional economy.<sup>i</sup>

In 2011 census the total population of Jains in Bundelkhand was enumerated at 148,612. Of these 52% were male and 48% female. The level of urbanisation was 66% which is significantly lower than the Jain national average of 80%. The Jain sex ratio in Bundelkhand is 917 which is lower than the Jain national average figure of 954 females per 1,000 males.<sup>ii</sup> Data from our study also suggest the small size family norm of 4-5 members. Among other demographic indicators, literacy (94.18%) and education among the Jains of Bundelkhand appears to have gone up which is reflected in increased number of them working/getting employed as professionals in public as well as private sectors within the region and outside it.<sup>iii</sup>

## Research Methodology

This article is derived from a larger sociological study on “Socio-Economic Change among the Jains of Bundelkhand” which was carried out during 2013-15 for the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.<sup>iv</sup> Data for the study were collected during February and March 2014 through a questionnaire administered in the four core districts of Bundelkhand, namely Lalitpur, Jhansi, Sagar and Tikamgarh. The first two districts are located in U.P.-Bundelkhand and the last two in M.P.-Bundelkhand. Data were collected not only from the above mentioned four cities, but also from two tehsil (sub-district) towns (Mahroni and Madawara) and three villages (Saidpur, Sadumal and Birdha – all of them located in Lalitpur district). Additionally, the data were also collected from about twenty Bundelkhand Jain respondents who had been living in different towns and cities of India. In all, 210 questionnaires were sent by mail/personally distributed to the respondents, of which 180 were found to be in order.

In addition to sociological fieldwork, I have also drawn on my life-long experience as a member of the Jain community and a native of Bundelkhand. Away from the region since about the late 1960s, I continued to remain in touch with the community ever since through scores of visits to family members, relatives and friends on occasions of marriage, death, tourism and/or just courtesy calls.

Among the secondary sources, the autobiography *Mer Jvana G th* (My Life Saga) of Kullaka Ganesh Prasad Varni, written in Hindi language and published in 1949 is perhaps the only authentic work that provides a perfect referent-point as well as the backdrop against which the continuity and change in the religiosity of Jains in the Bundelkhand region can fruitfully be analysed.<sup>v</sup>

---

\* International School for Jain Studies, New Delhi; Formerly Professor of Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, E-mail: [pcjain.jnu@gmail.com](mailto:pcjain.jnu@gmail.com)

## Religious Orthodoxy

Scriptural reading of Jainism and particularly that of its ethical codes of conduct establishes the salvation or *mok a-m rga* discourse as central to Jainism. The *mok a-m rga* ideology exhibits all the characteristic features of a religious orthodoxy which can be defined as the way of life involving regular interaction with ascetics, observance of rituals, “recitation of prayers and mantras, full acceptance of the authority of Mah v ra and his teachings, and a concern with correct practice and sectarian exclusivity, all typically associated with women and old-people.”<sup>vi</sup> It was therefore quite appropriate for Max Weber and many other scholars to characterize Jainism as soteriological religion.<sup>vii</sup>

Recent fieldwork-based studies of vet mbara Jains in Gujarat and Rajasthan however do not entirely support this view.<sup>viii</sup> Thus, in his ethnographic study of vet mbara M rtip jaka Jains in Jamnagar, Marcus Banks points out “the lack of knowledge about doctrines and also the lack of modeling of the lay behaviour after ascetic ideals.”<sup>ix</sup> According to Banks, “Jainism in practice therefore is a collaborative project undertaken by both lay and ascetic (rather than the graduated project implied by P. S. Jaini’s account of lay and ascetic paths, where the former is seen as wholly subordinate to the latter.”<sup>x</sup>

In his study of vet mbara Jains in Jaipur, Laidlaw also examines the practicality of Jain asceticism, and argues that the “asceticism which lay Jainism exudes comes not from uniform adherence to a set of socially enforced rules.”<sup>xi</sup> “There is no single view expressed either in ancient sacred texts or in religious debate and practice today.”<sup>xii</sup> The numerous vows including those of fasting and dietary practices that Jain laity undertakes are often voluntary and based on personal decisions “which Jain teachers have charted out, and around which contemporary asceticism tends to move.”<sup>xiii</sup> Laidlaw further argues that “the self that Jainism proposes for its followers to make of themselves is fragmented and incomplete, torn between conflicting ideals and focused ultimately on an impossible one.”<sup>xiv</sup>

Similarly, John Cort in his study of vet mbara Murtip jaka Jain community of Patan, Gujarat argues that the *mok a-m rga* ideology, spelled out some two thousand years ago in such works like *Tattv rtha S tra* and *Uttar dhyayana S tra*, “has remained remarkably consistent throughout the Jain history.”<sup>xv</sup> It is however mainly practiced only by ascetics and a few Jain laypersons, and for the vast majority of laity it is not compelling. For the latter the realm of wellbeing is more important which involves “a mix of health, contentment, peace and prosperity”. Furthermore, “the *mok a-m rga* ideology and the value of wellbeing are held in unresolved tension because of the multivocality of the symbols by which the two are expressed. According to the *mok a-m rga* ideology, an individual has to make a choice between wellbeing and the *mok a-m rga*. In practice the two are held in tension, and people act and live on the assumption that one can have it both ways; following practices of the *mok a-m rga* brings wellbeing, and pursuit of wellbeing (within certain boundaries) advances one at least a small way along the *mok a-m rga*.”<sup>xvi</sup>

These studies need to be contextualised in terms of the sectarian monastic organisation in that the vet mbara lay Jains are not generally stratified along the path of *mok a-m rga* unlike their Digambara Jain counterparts. As Cort himself remarks elsewhere, “The principal hierarchical differentiation among Digambara occurs before full initiation as a *muni*, in the level of advanced householdership of *brahmac r*, *k ullaka* and *ailaka*, while the mendicants consists mainly of the single level of *munis*, with hierarchy determined by seniority of

initiation. The *vet mbara*, on the other hand, exhibit uniformity among the laity – they are all just *r vakas* (men) and *r vik s* (women) – but a graduated hierarchy of initiatory ranks among the mendicants.”<sup>xvii</sup>

The sect-specific monastic organisation in Jainism becomes clear when we contrast these studies with two studies of north Indian Digambara Jains done by Ravindra K. Jain – one based on the autobiography of Kullaka Ganesh Prasad Varni (1949) that describes in detail the various aspects of the Jain community of the Bundelkhand region of central India, and the other, a brief ethnography of Digambara Jains of Baraut of Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>xviii</sup> These studies maintain that in Varni’s accounts of Digambara Jain communities of Bundelkhand the “doctrine and practice are closely tied up with each other” and that there is “a continuous and ever-increasing stress on the path of purification among Digambara Jain householders,”<sup>xix</sup> which manifests in hierarchical differentiation of laity in the form of *brahmac r*, *k ullaka* and *ailaka* (collectively called *ty g s*). Along with *ty g s*, Jain *pa ditas* (teachers and scholars) form a significant intermediate layer between the ascetics and the laity in Bundelkhand region. The sectarian context thus puts the *mok a-m rga* ideal and ascetic-laity interaction in some perspective. However, Cort’s thesis cannot be dismissed lightly. Indeed, it provides deeper insight into the world of Jain laity as rightly argued by Peter Flugel in his review article of *Jains in the World*.<sup>xx</sup> Undoubtedly, more studies are required on the issue before we discover the underlying sociological patterns. Nevertheless, in this context one cannot avoid discussing the emergent Kñj Sv m Pantha that, as we shall see shortly, can well be seen as a challenge to the Digambara Jain orthodoxy.

Whether the salvation ideology and its twin pillars, namely *M l c ra* and *ravak c ra* require any change or modern reinterpretation in the context of the contemporary life is a moot sociological question. The orthodox Jains would obviously support the *status quo* in this regard. The reformists on the other hand would certainly insist on some changes. Scores of inconclusive seminars have also been held on *ravak c ra* and *M l c ra* with no concrete plan to modify or even reinterpret the old codes of conduct, although the need for doing something about this situation has been underlined in the face of increasing laxity in observing the prescribed codes of conduct by ascetics.

*ithil c ra*, or the laxity in observance of the *M l c ra* on the part of the *s dhus* has been an old problem in Jain community. A majority of our respondents (64.4%) agree with the observation that there have been changes in the conduct of *munis* over a period of time. The rigorous code of conduct is not appropriately followed by some of the ascetics. A number of them have not been able to control even such basic impulses as anger, greed, pride and envy. Some of these behavioural traits are extended to intra-group and inter-group levels. A subtle under-current of rivalry and politics can easily be discerned among the various *muni-sa ghas*. So much so, that some *munis* even avoid sharing public meeting platforms with certain others. Some others are also accused of *ekala-vih ra* (moving or living alone, and not with the *sa gha*), inviting criticism from many quarters in the Jain community. Seeking name and fame has also been a weakness with some *s dhus* and *ryik s* – something which is strictly prohibited in Digambara Jain ascetic code of conduct. There has been an increased tendency among them to getting celebrated their birthdays and *dk* days, etc. Patronage is also provided by most *s dhus* to rich *r vakas* (*Se has* and *r mantas*, etc.) for getting new temples built, and for getting published their own religious discourses in book forms, or CDs, etc. The *munis* also patronize Jain pundits and other scholars by recommending their names for awards and fellowships of various foundations/trusts/NGOs run by the Jain *Se has*.

**Table 1: Some aspects of Jain religiosity**

Issues/aspects	Yes	No	No Response	Total (%)
Observe <i>r ddha/varas</i> of diseased	12(6.7)	166(92.2)	2(1.1)	180 (100)
Jainism is the best of all religions	167(92.8)	11(6.1)	2(1.1)	180 (100)
Change in conduct of Jain monks	116 (64.4)	38 (21.1)	26(14.4)	180 (100)
Differentiate between <i>Ni caya</i> and <i>Vyavah ra Naya</i>	55(30.6)	114(63.3)	11(6.1)	180 (100)
Supporter of Kanji Swami Pantha	35 (19.4)	138(76.7)	7(3.9)	180 (100)
Supporter of B la-D k	18 (10)	155(86.1)	7(3.9)	180 (100)

### **K ñj Sv m Pantha: A Challenge to Orthodoxy**

During the past few decades, a “new sub-sect” called K ñj Sv m Pantha (KPS) in Digambara Jainism has emerged which is known after its founder Kanji Swami (1889-1981). A vet mbara Sth nakav s by birth, Kanji Swami, who was based in the town of Songarh in Gujarat, interpreted the first century Digambara Jain text *Samayas ra* written by c rya Kundakunda in a manner and perspective that gives more prominence to *ni caya-naya* (realistic/essential standpoint) than to *vyavah ra-naya* (practical standpoint). The *ni caya-naya* lays emphasis on understanding and contemplating on the true nature of the soul with a view of its purification, whereas the *vyavah ra-naya* considered to be a temporary and transitory view-point helps one in adjusting to the practical issues in life.

The basic tenets of KSP are essentially a variation in Digambara Jain *mok a-m rga* ideology. Ever since its consolidation as a reformist ideology it has generated a bitter controversy at the ideological level In the Digambara Jain community of Bundelkhand.<sup>xxi</sup> The KSP challenges the religious orthodoxy at least on two important points: (i) In the face of the problem of *ithil c raamong* Digambara Jain *munis*, the K ñj Sv m Pantha appears to side-line the very institution of naked asceticism by emphasizing the point that there is no possibility of becoming an ideal *muni* in present times; (ii) Its focus on the soul and self-realisation from the standpoint of *ni caya-naya* makes religious rituals unnecessary and redundant. These two implied reforms in the KPS ideology attempt to strike at the very roots of orthodoxy in Digambara Jainism in that the devotion to ascetics (*muni-bhakti*), idol worship and allied rituals are no longer considered necessary for the attainment of liberation. The critics of the KSP ideology believe that it violates the doctrine of *Anek ntav da* – in this context the preference of one *naya* at the expense of the other.

It is interesting to note here that in a way K ñj Sv m Pantha comes closer to T ra aTara a Pantha of 15<sup>th</sup> century AD that emphasized on absolute spirituality sans idol worship. Not surprisingly, K ñj Sv m greatly admires T ra aTara a Sv m 's views on spirituality. In his words: “Muni T ra aTara a Sv m was a great spiritualist saint on account of the fact that deep mysteries (of spiritualism) are present in *stras* written by him.”<sup>xxii</sup>

K ñj Sv m Pantha is supported by about 20% of our respondents and its influence in the Bundelkhand region is slowly increasing. A number of separate temples have come up at Sagar, Lalitpur, Damoh, Tikamgarh, Khaniadhana and Chhatarpur. Dr. Hukam Chand Bharill and his brother Pt. Ratan Chand Bharill are the well-known supporters of the K ñj Sv m

Pantha among Bundelkhandi panthas. They live in Jaipur and propagate the KSP ideology through Pandit Todarmal Smarak Trust, Jaipur. Among the other supporters of KSP ideology mention must be made of Pt. Gyan Chand Jain, Vidisha; Dr. Suddhatm Prakash, Mumbai; Prof Sudeep Jain, Delhi; Pt. Shreyansh Singhai, Jaipur; Pt. Abhay Kumar Jain, Jabalpur; Pt. Uttam Chand Jain, Siwani and Pt. Hem Chand Jain "Hem", Jabalpur.

### Neo-Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy

Contemporary Jain studies in modern Indian as well as diasporic Jain contexts have thrown up two variant concepts and practices of orthodoxy in Jainism, namely neo-orthodoxy and heterodoxy.<sup>xxiii</sup> According to Dundas, neo-orthodoxy "presents itself as modern and progressive with an emphasis on those aspects of Jainism which can be interpreted as scientific and rational and can therefore be accommodated to and encompass western modes of thought."<sup>xxiv</sup> Again to quote Dundas:

Heterodoxy involves an interpretation of Jainism as theistic and frees from the metaphysical complexities which many feel to be a feature of the religion, with the form-makers being viewed as in some way the manifestation of a supreme deity and endowed with the capacity to intervene directly in human affairs and offer assistance. Here God-focused devotion plays an important part in the Jains who have espoused this heterodoxy see no incongruity in, for example, worshipping in Hindu or Sikh temples.<sup>xxv</sup>

In the context of the Bundelkhand Jain community, whereas the adherents of neo-orthodoxy appear to be in great majority, there are very few takers of heterodoxy. In this study it was confirmed by asking a few questions. Thus, when asked, "is Jainism the best of all religions?", an overwhelming majority of respondents (92.8%) replied in the affirmative. Although the respondents were not asked to explain their replies, my fieldwork observations and casual talk on the subject would often bring the conversation towards the scientific nature of Jainism and its antiquity.

In highlighting the scientific nature of Jainism the most frequently mentioned themes/sub-themes that are integral parts of Jain philosophy and religion are: Jain cosmology, especially the notion that the universe is self-supporting, infinite and not-created by God, concepts of atom and molecule, the existence of *jiva* (life) in even plants, benefits of vegetarianism and avoiding eating food after sunset, moral implications of the ethical principles of Ahimsa, *aparigraha* and *anekantavada/syadvada*, a religion open to all, irrespective of caste, class, creed or colour, and so on.

As per the definition of heterodoxy mentioned above, a majority of Jains in Bundelkhand do not believe in heterodoxy. Two questions were asked to find out the extent of heterodoxy present among the Jains of Bundelkhand: (i) Do you worship any family deity? and (ii) "Do you have faith in Gods of other religions?" The reply to both these questions was given in the negative by a great majority of respondents (85.0% and 86.7% respectively). Thus only about 15% of respondents tend to support heterodoxy. The data thus clearly support the contention of Ganesh Prasad Varni, Pt. Phoolchandra Shastri and other scholars (e.g. Jain, Ravindra K.) that Bundelkhand Jain community still continues to carry on the original unbridled tradition (*mula murti*) of Lord Mahavira, Acharya Kundakunda and other Digambara Jain Acharyas.<sup>xxvi</sup>

### ***Dinacary* (Daily Routine)**

Daily routine of Jains in Bundelkhand does not seem to have changed for over a century. Writing about the daily *dinacary* of Bundelkhand Jains of the early twentieth century, Ganesh Prasad Varni wrote: “Followers of this religion (Jainism) practice compassion, use only filtered water, do not eat after sunset, maintain cleanliness, visit temples everyday.....there is daily discourse in the temple..... and carefully scrutinize all food materials before use.”<sup>xxvii</sup> Although these practices are only the external signs of religiosity, they are inexplicably woven with the “Jain path of Purification”.<sup>xxviii</sup> True to his time, Varni could not mention self-study (*sv dhy ya*) as another daily activity of majority of Jains of Bundelkhand which is now possible because of the easy availability of published scriptural material.

In response to a question: “As a follower of Jainism, what is your *dinacary* from morning till evening?”, an overwhelming majority of respondents in our study narrated the following sequence of daily activities: getting ready for the day, temple visit of varying duration, ranging from 10 minutes to 2 hours during which the recitation of *namok ra mantra*, *s m yika* (meditation), worship and/or self-study of scripture(s), are done; breakfast/early lunch; attending shop/office; meal before sunset; early night temple visit for listening to religious or philosophical discourse from a *Ty g/Pa ita* or Muni. Author’s field observations suggest that the complete sequence of this *dinacary* is followed by elderly males, most of the females and only a few male youngsters.

Heavily loaded schedule of daily routine puts enormous pressure on the day-to-day life of Jain women in Bundelkhand. This is particularly so in those households which are dependent on business and trade for livelihood. Though a majority of women continue to bear the extra burden of household chores, the upcoming new generation of educated women tend to revolt against “the traders’ life style”, and prefer to marry salaried-class boys working in bigger towns and cities. This obviously amounts to coming out of “only domestic” domain and going out and see the world.

Laxity in observance of this *dinacary* and an overall indifference towards religion on the part of Jain youth has caused a considerable concern within the Jain community of Bundelkhand in recent decades. Thus, over 76% of our respondents have said “Yes” in reply to the question “Are Jain children becoming indifferent to their religion?” About 21.7% maintained an attitude of status quo in this regard, whereas about 2% respondents did not reply to the question (see Table 6.1). An overwhelming majority of respondents (97.7%) were therefore in favour of giving compulsory religious education in one form or the other to the youngsters, both male and female.

Table 2: youth’s indifference towards religion

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	137	76.1
<b>No</b>	39	31.7
<b>No Response</b>	4	2.2
<b>Total</b>	180	100

Table 3: Should Jain children be given compulsory religious education?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	176	97.7
<b>No</b>	3	1.7
<b>No Response</b>	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	180	100

When asked how, a number of suggestions were offered by the respondents. Although it was a structured question, and respondents were required to give only one response, almost all of them gave two or more responses and therefore it was not possible to quantify the responses. A very significant number of respondents were in favour of parents or some other senior family member educating and training their children in Jain way of life. A little less number of respondents thought that children should be given religious instructions during or as part of the evening religious discourse in the temple. Still others suggested that children be sent to Jain *pahal* son part-time basis. A fourth option endorsed by a large number of respondents was to organize religious camps of a short duration to impart education and training about Jainism.

This fourth option also appears to be the preferred option of the various Jain associations and leaders. In many parts of north India including Bundelkhand, the Jain religious camps have been in vogue for the past two decades or so. These are generally organized by local or regional chapters of national Jain associations, and are quite popular with the community. One such programme that is being continuously held since 2009 in Bhopal is known as “Sanskar Education Camp”, and is organized by the regional chapter of Bharat Varshiya Digambar Jain Mahasabha, Delhi. In 2015 the camp was organized during May 10-20 at 21 centres in the city which was attended by about 1,000 youngsters. The daily activities started with temple visit, idol worshipping, education and training sessions in the forenoon and afternoon and religious discourse late in the evening. These programmes were held in temple premises.<sup>xxix</sup>

### **Diet and Dietary Regulations**

A few individual exceptions apart, Jains all over India in general, and in the Bundelkhand region in particular, are strictly vegetarian. In this study we deliberately did not ask any question about vegetarianism. An overwhelming majority of Jains of Bundelkhand show zero tolerance towards non-vegetarian food items. This however does not mean that a few youngsters occasionally may not have been taking non-vegetarian food outside their homes, away from the gaze of the family and community members. More or less the same situation exists about alcohol and some other intoxicants like ganja, charas etc. Besides these, scriptures also do not permit the following food items but the Jains in Bundelkhand do consume them with varying degree of openness: garlic, onion, potato, brinjal, arvi, radish, carrot and tomato.

Most Jains in Bundelkhand do not prefer even occasionally to eat out in hotels, restaurants, etc. This is so because most such establishments are run by non-Jains who do not use cloth-filtered water for cooking or drinking purposes. Use of garlic, onion, etc. in many cooked food items also put off Jains from consuming such food. A strong sense of purity and

pollution, and the lower caste background of cooks and waiters further act as deterrents for the Jains to go to such places. The overall perception is that hotels/restaurants food is generally unhygienic and therefore must be avoided at any cost. This perception and practice is slowly changing in case of younger generation when they are travelling long distances, or are using hostel facilities of educational institutions.

The above discussion clearly suggests that ordinarily Jains in Bundelkhand not only pay considerable attention to the distinction of eatable and non-eatable food items, but also to the details of how to prepare and cook them.<sup>xxx</sup> Even more care is taken in preparing and cooking food for the spiritually inclined members in the family. The following 16 kinds of purity-precautions have been prescribed in Jainism for preparing such a food which is popularly known in Bundelkhand as '*solahak kh n*'. It is particularly taken by *ty g s* and spiritually inclined elderly men and women. Food prepared under the similar conditions is offered to the ascetics with far more ritually prescribed precautions. The sixteen kinds of precautions are as follows:

1. Material purity: (1) food items' purity, (2) water purity, (3) fire purity, (4) cook's purity.
2. Place/Space purity: (1) light purity, (2) air purity, (3) space purity, (4) odourless environment.
3. Time Purity: (1) avoiding eclipse time, (2) avoiding mourning time, (3) avoiding festive time, (4) avoiding religious festivity time.
4. Purity of Intensions: (i) child-like intensions, (2) compassionate intensions, (3) devotion (*vinayabh va*), (4) giving away (*d nabh va*).

Thus, food should not only be prepared with utmost attention and cleanliness at proper place and time, but also be consumed with and/or offered with good intensions. *Solahak kh n* is an idealistic prescription and the concerned people try to follow the precautions as much as possible. However in the Bundelkhand context where there are a number of constraints regarding kitchen and dining space, availability and quality of water, drainage system and electricity, etc. much is left to be desired. This is more so on the occasions of marriage and other group functions.

### **Festivals and Pilgrimage**

Jains generally celebrate all the major Hindu festivals such as Rak bandhana, Dussehra, D p val, and Hol. Different reasons are given for celebrating them. Thus D p val, for example, is celebrated by the Jains not so much because that day Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya after the victory over the Lanka king R va a, but because T rtha kara Mah v ra attained *Nirv a* on the same day. The birthday of Lord Mah v ra (Mah v ra *Jayant*) has been a public holiday in India since the late British days for which the Jains had to indulge in some politics.

Other important festivals celebrated by Jains are *Paryu a a Parva/Da a Lak a a* (last eight/ten days of *Bh dra*) and *A hnika* (the last eight days of *K rtika*). These are regarded very auspicious by the Jains. During these days the atmosphere in most Jains families is charged with high spirituality and almost all the Jains make it a point to go to the temples for worship, and recite or listen to the scriptures. In many temples or *Sth nakas*, Pa itas are also engaged for delivering religious discourses in the evenings. Most Jains in Bundelkhand observe fast during these 10 days. In our survey about 83.3% of respondents said yes to

keeping fast during *Paryu a a Parva*, whereas this figure came down to only 26.11% when asked if they kept fast on every *am* and *caturda i* (eights and fourteenth day of lunar fortnightly cycle) (See Table 3). Needless to say, keeping fast at regular intervals and/or on auspicious days is an important component of Jain spiritual practices. At the conclusion of *Paryu a a/Da a Lak a a*, *Pratikrama a* or *K am v* ceremony is held in which repentance of faults and forgiveness is asked for and given to all. Some Jains do the same thing through newspaper advertisements, and/or through sending hand-written or printed letters by post, or through emails.

**Table 4: Some Other Indicators of Religiosity**

Religiosity	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Response (%)	Total (%)
Fast during <i>Da a Lak a a</i>	150 (83.3)	30 (16.7)	0 (0)	180(100)
Fast during <i>Am /Caturda i</i>	47 (26.1)	132 (73.3)	1 (0.6)	180(100)
Worship of any family deity	26 (14.4)	153 (85)	1 (0.6)	180(100)
Faith in deity of any other religion	23 (12.7)	156 (86.7)	1 (0.6)	180(100)

Jains have a vast network of pilgrimage places (*T rtha K etras*) all over India. These can broadly be classified into four categories. “The *Kaly aka K etras*, associated with the birth and other memorable events in the life of the *T rtha karas*; the *Siddha K etras*, where the *T rtha karas* or other saints attained *Nirvana*; the *Ati aya K etras*, associated with some miracle or myth; and *Kal K etras*, reputed for their artistic monuments, temples, and images.”<sup>xxxii</sup> There are at least 238 Digambara Jain *T rtha K etras* in India.<sup>xxxii</sup> Of these the following pilgrimage places are frequently visited by the Jains: Ayodhya, Mathura, Varanasi, Champapur, Hastinapur, Patna, Rajgrahi, Kundalpur, Pawapur, Sammedshikharaji, Giranara, Khandagiri, Taxila, Sonagiri, Devagarh, Khajuraho, Gwalior, Chanderi, Mahavirji, Chittor, Ajanta-Ellora, Ranakpur, Mount Abu, Dharmasthala, Mudhabidri, Sravanabelagola, etc.

Jains often go on pilgrimage in groups. During the winter months a large number of Jains can be seen traveling from place to place in the reserved buses, jeeps, and cars. Others travel by trains and some even by air. Air conditioned vehicles, hotels, and *dharma l s* have facilitated the pilgrimage even during the summer months. In recent years some temple sites in Nepal, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Kenya, the U.K., Canada and the U.S., etc have been fast emerging as the new pilgrimage places, at least for those who can afford to visit them.

**Table 5: Any family member gone on Pilgrimages?**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	169	93.9
No	8	4.4
No Response	3	1.7
Total	180	100

From the point of view of Bundelkhand Jains, Jain *T rtha K etra* can be classified into two categories: (i) distant, and (ii) local/regional. In the first category the most visited ones are: Sammed Shikharjee (Jharkhand), Mahavirji (Rajasthan), Shravanbelgola (Karnataka), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh) and Girinarji (Gujarat). In the second category one can put three to four dozens of pilgrimage places, of which Deogarh, Sonagiri, Chanderi, Aharji, Papauraji, Nainagiri, Kundalpur are the important ones. In response to a question whether any family members have gone on pilgrimage in recent years, the overwhelming majority of respondents (93.9%) replied in the affirmative (See Table 5). Planned family pilgrimage occasions for visit of pilgrimage places also occur when *pañcakaly āka, siddhacakra vidh na, ke alonca*, and other such religious ceremonies are held there. Most Jains from Bundelkhand also go to pilgrimage places for *mu āna sansk ra* of the male or female child. In some cases marriage ceremonies are also held at places of pilgrimage.

All over India Jain pilgrimage place are being renovated and modernised with better boarding as well as lodging facilities. So much so that many such places have now also begun to double up as venues for conventions, seminars and conferences, in addition to *c turm sa* places for ascetics. Thus All-India Digambar Jain Newspaper Editors' Association held its convention on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at P r van tha Digambara Jain Ati aya K etra, Kargujanji (Jhansi). In the presence of Acharya Vimarsh Sagarji Maharaj a Jain youth convention was held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at r Digambara Jain Ati aya K etra, Paporaji (Tikamgarh). Similarly, r Digambara Jain Siddha K etra, Sonagiri was witness to five international conferences of Jain engineers, doctors, bankers, etc. during the months of October, November and December 2015.

Mass media have also added additional dimensions of religiosity in the Jain way of life in India. Presently there are three Jain Television channels, namely Paras, Jinvani and Kalash that continuously relay programmes related to Jain events, religion and rituals. In most Jain homes of Bundelkhand these channels are regularly watched with due reverence and faith. Elderly men and women are particularly glued to these programmes daily for several hours on end.

## Conclusion

Jain way of life and identity is primarily derived from Jain philosophy and religion, particularly from its ethical codes of conduct. In the case of the Jain community of Bundelkhand, Ter pantha Digambara Jainism is the basis of the Jain way of life. In this orthodox sub-sect of Digambara Jainism the adherents are guided by *mok am rga* ideology of *samyakdar ana, samyakjñ na* and *samyakc ritra*. Accordingly, Digambara Jain T rtha kars, ascetics and scriptures are worshipped and venerated.

For generations religious orthodoxy continued to hold sway on the Jain community of Bundelkhand. This can be seen not only in the daily routine (*dincary*) of laity and ascetics but also in many other aspects of their religiosity. Morning and evening daily visits to a Jain temple, celebration of *Paryu a a Parva* and other festivals, keeping periodic fast on auspicious days, regular interaction with ascetics, etc. have been very much intact in varying degrees among the Jains of Bundelkhand. Needless to say, women's participation in all these activities is much more vigorous than that of their male counterparts. Jain women of Bundelkhand are also quite knowledgeable about Jain philosophy and religion.

Vegetarianism is the trade mark of the Jains in Bundelkhand. They are also very particular about using cloth-strained water for drinking and cooking purposes. Dietary regulations

require them not to use garlic, onion, potato, etc. Consumption of alcohol and other intoxicants are also a taboo. The famed Bundelkhandi Jain *cauk* (kitchen) and *solahak kh n* (food prepared with 16 precautions) are also the integral parts of the Jain religiosity.

During the past few decades the religious orthodoxy in Bundelkhand Jain community has been challenged from both within and without. While the KSP ideology and activities can be considered a challenge from within, the on-going socio-economic changes and modernisation pose a major threat to it from without. The indifference and “drift” of a section of youth is a clear manifestation of this latter development which can be observed in the form of significant laxity in “daily routine” and dietary rules and regulations. Needless to say, more systematic studies are required to fully understand the changes and continuity in the religiosity among the Jains of Bundelkhand.

### Notes and References:

- i Jain, Prakash C. “Jain Community of Bundelkhand: A Sociological Introduction.” *Arhat Vachan*. 30.1 (2018): 51-64.
- ii Jain, Dheeraj. *Population of Jains in India (A Perspective from the Census 2011)*. New Delhi: International School for Jain Studies, 2017.
- iii Jain, Prakash C. “Jain Population in Bundelkhand.” *Bundelkhand Research Portal*. 4 August 2019. Web. 4 September 2019. <<https://bundelkhand.in/research/jain-population-in-bundelkhand-by-prof-prakash-jain-jnu>>.
- iv Jain, Prakash C. (2015) *Socio-Economic Change among the Jains of the Bundelkhand Region: A Sociological Study*. New Delhi: ICSSR (Mimeographed), 2015 (The Report is going to be published as a book *Jains of Bundelkhand: Socio-Economic and Cultural Changes* by Shipra Publications, New Delhi).
- v Ganesh Prasad Varni, born in a Hindu Vaishnav caste named Asati in Hansera village of district Lalitpur (Uttar Pradesh), was greatly influenced by Jainism since his childhood. Subsequently he got converted into Jainism. After a brief stint as a teacher at several places, he again turned to studies of Sanskrit and Jainism at Jaipur and later on at Mathura. At the age of 30 he went to Benaras (Varanasi) for further studies where he was humiliated by a Brahmin scholar on the ground that he was a follower of Jainism, a religion that does not believe in the authority of Vedas and therefore is a *nastic* (non-believer). Subsequently, Ganesh Prasad was able to get another tutor for teaching him Indological subjects, particularly Grammar and Logic, but was determined to establish a Jain Sanskrit school and was eventually successful in his efforts. This was the beginning of the celebrated Shri Digambar Jain Syadvaad Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya at Varanasi in 1905 whose first student as well as the founder was Ganesh Prasad Varni himself. Besides setting up Jain Sanskrit Vidyalayas at Varanasi and Sagar, Ganesh Prasad Varni and his two disciples Brahmachari Manoharlal Varni and Brahmachari Chidanand Varni were instrumental in getting established about three dozen Jain pathshalas, gurukuls, vidyalayas at different places in Bundelkhand. Many more schools and other educational institutions, both sacred and secular, were named after Ganesh Prasad Varni during and after his life time. Ganesh Prasad Varni was a life-long learner, a student and a scholar, a social and educational reformer, an activist, a volunteer and a community leader. On top of these he was also a *tyagi* (renouncer), a spiritual seeker and practitioner of the Jain ethical principles. Because of all these qualities he earned the honourific title of Varni – meaning a preacher of religion and morals. In Digambar Jain ascetic hierarchy he rose to become a *Kshullak*, and died as a naked ascetic, 108 Muni Ganesh Keerti at Isri (near the foothills of Sammed Shikharjee). Ganesh Prasad Varni traveled far and wide in north India and especially in the Bundelkhand region that he knew very intimately. The Bundelkhand Jain community reveres him like a saint. Not surprisingly, he is regarded as the “Mahatma Gandhi of the Bundelkhand Jain community”.
- vi Dundas, P. *The Jains*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992: 233.
- vii Weber, Max. *The Religion of India*. New York: The Free Press of Glenco, 1958; Jaini,

- Padmanabh S. *The Jain Path of Purification*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1979; Sangave, V. A. *Jain Community: A Social Survey*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1980.
- viii Banks, Marcus. *Organising Jainism in India and England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992; Cort, John E. *Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India*. New Delhi and London: Oxford University Press, 2001; Laidlaw, James. *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy and Society among the Jains*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- ix Cited in Jain, Ravindra K. *The Universe as Audience: Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1999: 51.
- x Banks, Marcus. *Organising Jainism in India and England*. Op. cit.: 3.
- xi Laidlaw, James. *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy and Society among the Jains*. Op. cit.: 170.
- xii Ibid, 191.
- xiii Ibid.
- xiv Laidlaw, James. *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy and Society among the Jains*. Op. cit.: 20-21.
- xv Cort, John E. *Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India*. Op. cit.: 186.
- xvi Ibid, 200.
- xvii Cort, John E. "The Shvetambar Murtipujak Jain Mendicant". *Man*. 26. 4 (1991): 663.
- xviii Ravindra K. *The Universe as Audience: Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India*. Op. cit: 50-82 and 83-100.
- xix Ibid, 51.
- xx Flugel, Peter. "Jainism and Society." *Bulletin of SOAS*, 68(2006): 91-112.
- xxi Jain, Neeraj. *Songarha Sam k* (in Hindi). Lucknow: Bharatvarsheeya Digambar Jain Mahasabha, 2006.
- xxii Quoted in Bharill, Ratan Chand "Introduction", in Harilal Jain (Compiler) *Adhyatma-Vani: Discourses by Kanji Swami on TaaranTaran Swami's Works*. Sagar: Shrimant Seth Bhagwandas Shobhalal Jain Parmarthic Sansthan, 2010: viii.
- xxiii Banks, Marcus. Op. cit. *Organising Jainism in India and England*; Dundas, P. Op. cit. *The Jains*; Jain, Yogendra. *The Jain Way of Life*. Getzville, NY: Federation of Jain Associations in North America: 2007; Mardia, K. V. *The Scientific Foundations of Jainism*. Delhi: MotilalBanarasidass, 2003; Kachhara, N. L. *Living Systems in Jainism: A Scientific Study*. Indore: Kundakunda Jnanpitha, 2018; Rankin, Aidan. *The Jain Path: Ancient Wisdom for an Age of Anxiety*. Delhi: New Age Books, 2007.
- xxiv Dundas, P. *The Jains*. Op. cit.:1992: 233.
- xxv Ibid.
- xxvi Varni, Ganesh Prasad. *Mer J vana G th* (in Hindi). Banaras: Bhargava Bhusan Press, 1949.
- xxvii Ibid, 27.
- xxviii Jain, Ravindra K. *The Universe as Audience: Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India*. Op. cit: 69.
- xxix See: *Jain Gazette*, 22 June 2015: 8.
- xxx Singh, Kishan. *Kriy ko a* (in Hindi). Agas: Shrimad Rajchand Ashram, 2005: 11-34.
- xxxi Jain, Jyoti Prasad. *Religion and Culture of the Jains*. Delhi: Bhartiya Jnanpith Publications, 1983: 128.
- xxxii Jain, Anupam. *Digambara Jain T rtha Nirde ik* (in Hindi). Indore: Kundakunda Bharati, 2015.

# On Jain *anek ntav da* and Pluralism in Philosophy of Mathematics

Landon D. C. Elkind\*

I claim that a relatively new position in the philosophy of mathematics, pluralism, overlaps in striking ways with the much older Jain doctrine of *anek ntav da* and the associated doctrines of *nayav da* and *sy dv da*. I first outline the pluralist position, following this with a sketch of the Jain doctrine of *anek ntav da*. I then note the strong points of overlap and the morals of this comparison of pluralism and *anek ntav da*.

I direct this comparison to pluralism's prospective critics and pluralism's prospective defenders. Prospective critics of pluralism may rethink tried critiques of pluralism, especially after noting the frequent conflation of pluralism and relativism. Prospective defenders of pluralism in turn will see the benefits of further exploration of Jainism.

## 1. *Anek ntav da* and Associated Jain Theses

Let us first understand the Jain doctrine of *anek ntav da* and its closely related doctrines of *nayav da* and *sy dv da*, also called '*sapta-bha g -naya*'. Jeffrey Long calls all three theses "the Jain doctrines of relativity", and, as Long notes, *anek ntav da* is a metaphysical claim, *nayav da* is "an epistemic corollary of [*anek ntav da*]", and *sy dv da* is a constraint on the analysis and evaluation of assertions that follows in turn from *sy dv da*.<sup>i</sup>

I begin with *anek ntav da*. *Anek ntav da* claims that substances (*dravya*),<sup>ii</sup> or all those entities that comprise reality, have infinitely many modes and qualities.<sup>iii</sup> Modes dictate in what respect a substance possesses a quality; the qualities never leave the substance, but only change in their metaphysical expression from the substance.<sup>iv</sup> To take Long's example (taken from Mookerjee), a pot possesses pot qualities in the affirmative mode, and a pot also possesses pen qualities in the negative mode.<sup>v</sup>

We thus find two metaphysical facts: that the pot has pen qualities and that the pot does not have pen qualities, but both these statements obtain in some respect, or in some way.<sup>vi</sup> This leads us to the doctrine of *nayav da*, which holds that the truth or falsity of a statement "depends upon the perspective" from which the statement is asserted.<sup>vii</sup> In the above case, 'The pot is pen-like,' will be false from the existence (of the pot) viewpoint and true from the non-existence (of the pen) standpoint. A standpoint ('*naya*') is a perspective from which an object is viewed.<sup>viii</sup> Understanding and right knowledge requires understanding the *nayas* from which claims are made.<sup>ix</sup> As an example, let us take the substance standpoint and the modification standpoint from Siddhasena Div kara; from the substance standpoint, the self is permanent (the self never comes to be or ceases to exist), but from the modification standpoint, the self is changing (undergoing successive states).<sup>x</sup> Jain authors vary on the question of how many *nayas* are admitted, but for our purposes, we need only keep in mind that the truth of a statement and the proper understanding of an object, all take place from a particular *naya*.

This largely epistemic thesis brings us to the final "Jain doctrine of relativity", *sy dv da*, or "conditional or qualified assertion".<sup>xi</sup> As the name suggests, this Jain doctrine dictates that

---

\* Visiting Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Iowa, Alumni ISSJS (2014)  
E-mail: [landon-elkind@uiowa.edu](mailto:landon-elkind@uiowa.edu)

philosophical claims must be formulated, expressed, and analysed from a some *naya*; this is achieved by prefacing statements with the particle ‘*sy t*’.<sup>xii</sup> So *sy t* acts as a sentential operator that qualifies an assertion by some *naya*, for in the Jains technical sense of ‘*sy t*’, ‘*sy t* means “in some respects” or “from a certain point of view”’.<sup>xiii</sup> For example, ‘The self is permanent’ would be ill-formed according to *sy dv da*; “*Sy t*, the self is permanent,” is properly formed, and from one perspective (the substance standpoint), the claim holds, while from another one (the modification standpoint), the claim does not.

Thus, *sy dv da* claims that no assertion is correct unless it is qualified by ‘*sy t*’; combined with ‘*eva*’, the phrase ‘*sy t eva*’ qualifies an assertion by ‘in this particular respect’.<sup>xiv</sup> Four factors may be associated with this particular respect: (1) a specific being or object (‘*sva-dravya*’), (2) a specific location (*sva-k etra*), (3) a specific time (*sva-k la*), and (4) a specific state (*sva-bh va*).<sup>xv</sup> In one assertion, all other times, places, objects, and states are excluded; any specific assertion thus leaves room for many more.

But while there may be infinitely many standpoints, qualities, and modes from which a substance may be understood or from which a claim concerning a substance may be asserted, only seven truth-values are possible for such a statement and from a particular perspective. All statements are thus partial or limited; this is the doctrine of *sapta-bha g -naya*, “the theory of sevenfold predication”. Seven statements, where ‘statement’ is understood to include the necessary specifications, may be made concerning any object: (1) in some respects it is (*sy t asti eva*), (2) in some respects it is not (*sy t na asti eva*’), (3) in some respects it is and it is not (*sy t asti eva sy t na asti eva*’), (4) in some respects it is inexpressible (*sy t avaktavyam eva*), (5) in some respects it is and it is inexpressible (*sy t asti eva sy t avaktavyam eva*), (6) in some respects it is not and it is inexpressible (*sy t na asti eva sy t avaktavyam eva*), and (7) in some respects it is and it is not and it is inexpressible (*sy t asti eva sy t na asti eva sy t avaktavyam eva*).<sup>xvi</sup>

Let us summarize our findings. We start with *anek ntav da*, a metaphysical thesis that all substances possess infinitely many qualities and modes. We proceed to an epistemic corollary of *anek ntav da*, *nayav da*, an epistemic qualification of any truth by the standpoint from which a substance is understood in its infinitely many qualities and modes. We finally reach *sy dv da*, a linguistic thesis and principle of philosophical analysis that insists on disambiguating philosophical claims by formulating, expressing, and analysing assertions via the perspective from which one asserts such claims - most transparently, by qualifying every statement by a *sy t* particle. These are “the Jain doctrines of relativity”.

## 2. Pluralism as a Philosophy of Mathematics

I proceed to characterize pluralism. For a first approximation of pluralism in the philosophy of mathematics, let us start with Friend’s description of someone who subscribes to pluralism:

A pluralist in the philosophy of mathematics is someone who places pluralism as the chief virtue in his philosophy of mathematics. He brings the attitude to bear on mathematical theories and on different philosophies of mathematics. Pluralism is founded on the conviction that we do not have the necessary evidence to think that mathematics is one unified body of truths, or is reducible to one mathematical theory (foundation).<sup>xvii</sup>

Thus, a pluralist refuses to privilege one mathematical theory (or foundation) over others.

Let us, with Friend, distinguish three levels at which one might be a pluralist: first, at the level of specific theses or results within some theory; second, at the level of multiple theories, usually viewed within some full-fledged mathematical theory; and third, at the level of full-fledged mathematical theories.<sup>xviii</sup> Someone might be a pluralist at the level of particular theses or the level of theories without being a pluralist in the “deeply radical” sense meant by Friend (and me), for dogmatism of all sorts coheres with first-level or second-level pluralism.<sup>xix</sup> Pluralism properly so-called, what Friend calls “third-level pluralism”, at least requires first-level pluralism and second-level pluralism; Friend writes:

Third-level pluralism is pluralism towards at least: (i) mathematical activity at the [(first) level] of working within a mathematical theory, or working with several mathematical theories to prove or verify purported theorems, (ii) mathematical activity at the [(second) level] of developing whole mathematical or logical theories, or working within a theory to compare ‘smaller’ theories to each other, (iii) philosophical work concerning particular results or notions in mathematics...with, or without, having any particular philosophical tradition informing the work, and (iv) philosophical work at the (second) level of developing a foundational philosophy of mathematics.<sup>xx</sup>

But we may push pluralism further, to apply the pluralist bent to pluralism itself, as Friend does.<sup>xxi</sup> A pluralist of this sort (at the third level) concedes that the background (para consistent) logic of pluralism admits of multiple coherent (because non-trivial) interpretations.<sup>xxii</sup> Thus, the para consistent logic underpinning pluralism tolerates pluralisms, or pluralism towards pluralism, meaning multiple non-trivial interpretations of the same position in philosophy of mathematics admit of approximately the same degree of epistemic confidence; a pluralist may thus remain agnostic even on the privileged interpretation of the para consistent logic that supports the pluralist position.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Let us now summarize the pluralist philosophy of mathematics. Pluralists adopt an attitude of agnosticism towards the norms of mathematics, mathematical theories, and foundations of mathematics. The pluralist willingly dons the lenses of a theory to do fruitful work, thereby adopting the point of view internal to that theory (along with its corresponding norms), but has no qualms against donning multiple lenses at once (say, to see a particular mathematical theorem or theory more clearly.)<sup>xxiv</sup> The pluralist refuses to privilege any of the competing theories, foundations, or norms of mathematics, even to the point of finding mathematical fruits in trivial theories, like A. N. Prior’s “Tonk Theory”.<sup>xxv</sup> Pluralism is motivated by insufficient evidence for privileging any particular theory over others; we cannot know that one theory or foundation is ‘the’ correct, supposing that there even is such a thing; nor can we reasonably believe that such a theory shall be found, soon or even ever.<sup>xxvi</sup> However, new evidence may remove this epistemic barrier to accepting a “unified foundation”.<sup>xxvii</sup> Thus, a pluralist may develop multiple coherent but mutually inconsistent extensions of orthodox theories in mathematics, even as foundational theories.<sup>xxviii</sup>

### 3. Points in Common

Without any suggestion of identifying Jain *anek ntav da* and pluralism in the philosophy of mathematics, I turn to the overlapping features of *anek ntav da* and pluralism.

First, we find both Jains and pluralists refuse to privilege one theory or perspective.<sup>xxix</sup> “The worst philosophical error one can commit, and which is the root of all error, is *ek ntat* - one-sidedness, or absolutism.”<sup>xxx</sup> Again, “The Jains evaluate alternative schools of thought as

representing partially correct, but incomplete, *ek nta nayas* [‘one-sided view points’].<sup>xxxix</sup> Friend also writes, “[I]s the pluralist ever intolerant, and if so, what about?...The pluralist is intolerant towards dogmatism and absolutism.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

Second, we discover a similarity in the objections to each position; both Jain *anek ntav da* and pluralism are sometimes accused of being species of rampant relativism, a relativism according to which the proponent’s view (whether Jainism or pluralism) undermines itself.

On the Jain side, we see that especially sensitive targets include *ahimsa*: “With *sy dv da*, for instance, how can one claim, as the Jains do, that violence is evil?”<sup>xxxix</sup> And again:

“If all our knowledge concerning reality is relative, they say (the old Indian critics like ‘Sa kara, R m nuja etc.), the Jaina view must also be relative. To deny this conclusion would be to admit, at least, one absolute truth; and to admit it would leave the doctrine with no settled view of reality, and thus turn it into a variety of scepticism.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

Such charges have often been levelled against *anek ntav da*; for a list of the more aptly put ones, see L. V. Joshi’s superb summary of Bhasarvajna’s *Nyayabhushana* (950 CE).<sup>xxxv</sup> But Jains may avail themselves of a quick reply by reference to omniscience, or the absolute (unqualified perspective) of an omniscient being such as Mah v ra, the 24<sup>th</sup> t rtha kara of Jain religion.<sup>xxxvi</sup> On this point, Ramjee Singh is excellent:

[T]he Jaina theory of relativism does not go against the Jaina theory of omniscience because...relativism, according to Jaina philosophy, applies to our knowledge of reality in virtue of the fact that we i.e., lay man, approach reality only from this or that point of view. Therefore, if it is made possible to approach reality from all possible points of view, i.e., from no-one-particular-point-of-view, then the resulting knowledge will not be vitiated by relativism.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

I think that we must conclude that the self-refutation charge misses its target.

We encounter two similar (also apparent) problems for the pluralist, which can be put as follows.<sup>xxxviii</sup> A pluralist refuses to set norms for mathematics or adjudicate between competing mathematical theories.<sup>xxxix</sup> The pluralist thus seems to dispense with all principles competent to decide between competing theories. Absent setting or endorsing some norm to adjudicate between mathematical theories, does a pluralist thereby support any theory, and so embrace rampant relativism? This appears to collapse pluralism into a trivial theory, or a theory in which any well-formed proposition (because all mathematical theories) holds!

Friend responds by noting that not all contradictory theories are trivial theories: considering a proposition from two different but together inconsistent theories do not entail triviality, for we can reason in inconsistent settings without lapsing into triviality.<sup>xl</sup> Moreover, a pluralist does not accept trivialism, since not every judgment holds good: two plus nine is not equal to thirty-four in Peano Arithmetic, and for this judgment, we need not appeal to mathematical norms, but simply the axioms of Peano Arithmetic.<sup>xli</sup> In Jain vocabulary, fixing a *naya* determines the truth-values of assertions.

Third, we can note that *anek ntav da* applies to itself, just as pluralism self-applies. We already saw that Friend is pluralist towards pluralism; for *anek ntav da* applied to itself, we can turn to Mahaprajna (quoted in Long): “The propounder of non-absolutism...admits both

non-absolutism and absolutism in their proper perspective. This is why the system of sevenfold predication is applicable to non-absolutism...itself”.<sup>xlii</sup>

We thus see some points of overlap in Jain *anek ntav da* and pluralism in the philosophy of mathematics; first, both positions refuse to privilege one among competing perspectives or theories, second, both positions endure frequent criticisms of relativism or self-refutation against each view (which fail), and third, each position applies to itself.

#### 4. Points of Difference

Let us now turn to the points of difference between Jain *anek ntav da* and pluralism in the philosophy of mathematics. The pluralist will thereby be informed about a number of these presenting distinct takes on and justifications for pluralism.

In the first place, Jain *anek ntav da* does not endorse contradiction, whereas pluralism decidedly does. Against criticisms that Jainism endorses contradiction, Jains may reply:

This criticism, however, is easily met with the recognition that it is based on a misunderstanding of the system of *nayas*. As mentioned earlier, the Jain position is not that contrary assertions can be made of an entity in the same sense, but only in different senses and from different perspectives - perspectives which the Jains spend a great deal of time and energy delineating.<sup>xliii</sup>

In contrast, Friend embraces paraconsistent logic according to which inconsistency does not entail triviality: “I am starting with a paraconsistent logic, so the standard model is already paraconsistent.”<sup>xliv</sup> In Friend’s case, the endorsement of contradiction is straightforward. But one may object that the Jains do in fact endorse contradictions.

B. K. Matilal, for instance, suggests an affinity of paraconsistent logics and *anek ntav da*, focusing especially on the third primitive predication of *sapta-bha g -naya*: “This metalinguistic predicate ‘Inexpressible’ as a viable semantic concept has been acknowledged in the discussion of logical and semantical paradoxes in modern times.”<sup>xlv</sup> He writes:

The ‘Inexpressible’ as a truth-like predicate of a proposition has been explained as follows: It is definitely distinct from the predicate ‘both true and false’. For the latter is only a combination of the first two predicates. It is yielded by the idea of the combinability of values or even predicates that are mutually contradictory. Under certain interpretation[s], such a combined evaluation of the proposition may be allowed without constraining our intuitive and standard understanding of a contradiction and consistency...However, the direct and unequivocal challenge to the notion of contradiction in standard logic comes when it is claimed that the same proposition is both true and false at the same time in the same sense. This is exactly accomplished by the introduction of the third value - ‘Inexpressible,’ which can be rendered also as paradoxical.<sup>xlvi</sup>

We find in Matilal a different answer from Long. We must therefore decide whether the Jain truth-value of inexpressible matches contradictions in modern paraconsistent logics.

Let us see how Friend defines contradictions: “A contradiction is a sentence of the form ‘ and not ’.”<sup>xlvii</sup> Now, let us grant (as Long does not) that the Jains endorse a contradictory

sentential operator, *sy t avaktavyam eva*. Even those favouring this reading, like Matilal, admit that the modern notion of contradiction differs from the Jain notion:

Samantabhadra and Vidyananda both explain the difference between the ‘true and false’ and the ‘Inexpressible’ as follows: The former consists in the gradual (*kramarpa a*) assigning of the truth-values, true and false, while the latter is joint and simultaneous (“in the same breath”) assigning of such contradictory values (cf. *saharpa a*). One pat suggestion is that the predicate is called ‘Inexpressible’ because we are constrained to say in this case both ‘true’ and ‘false’ in the same breath. Something like ‘true-false’ or ‘yes-no’ would have been better, but since these are only artificial words, and there are no natural-language-words to convey the concept that directly and unambiguously flouts non-contradiction, the Jainas have devised this new term ‘Inexpressible’ to do the job - a new evaluative predicate, non-composite in character, like ‘true’ and ‘false’.<sup>xlviii</sup>

The last line is key, namely that the Jains treat contradiction to be a matter of contrary predicates being assigned simultaneously to the same object, not a matter of truth-functional contradiction by conjoining a proposition with its negation; as Matilal notes, truth matrices are anachronistic in understanding *sapta-bha g -naya*.<sup>xlix</sup>

Furthermore, simultaneous affirmation of contrary predicates does not commit Jains to paraconsistency. Jonardon Ganeri is helpful on this score:

[The Jains’] goal is, to be sure, to reconcile or synthesize mutually opposing philosophical positions, but they have no reason to suppose that a single philosophical standpoint [*naya*] can itself be inconsistent. Internal consistency was, in classical India, the essential attribute of a philosophical theory.<sup>1</sup>

Ganeri continues by quoting Prabhacandra’s *Prameyakamalam rta a*:

[I]n the fourth value “non-assertible”, there is no grasp of truth or falsity. In fact, the word “non-assertible” does not denote the simultaneous combination of truth and falsity. What then? What is meant by the truth-value “non-assertible” is that it is impossible to say which of ‘true’ and ‘false’ it is.<sup>ii</sup>

We see that a non-paraconsistent interpretation of *sapta-bha g -naya* offers itself. We already noted that the paraconsistent understanding of contradiction relies on truth-functional operators (conjunction and negation) rather than contrary predicates, and we also noted some disagreement amongst scholars (say, Long and Ganeri versus Matilal) as to whether the Jains truly endorse inconsistent *nayas*. All of this leads me to say that pluralism departs from Jainism in admitting true contradictions, as opposed to inexpressible assertions.<sup>iii</sup> This is our first main difference, and the lesson seems to be that a pluralist-friendly philosopher could assume pluralism from a classical logic and see where this leads; such a pursuit, seemingly, would be really aided by a thorough investigation of *sapta-bha g -naya* and *anek ntav da*.

Next, Friend’s “external paradox [of pluralism]” resembles absolutist criticisms of Jains:

[I]f we are tolerant towards other positions than our own, then what if the other position is intolerant of our own? In the name of tolerance, if we accept that the other position is, in some sense correct, then the intolerance towards us is correct, and we should give up our original position.<sup>iiii</sup>

But the resolution in Friend's case is quite different from the Jain resolution:

Again, the limiting factor upon the universalization of the Jain philosophy of relativity is the fact that the perspectives from which particular truth-claims can be affirmed must finally be coherent with the total Jain worldview.<sup>liv</sup>

The Jains thus resolve the external paradox by appeal to a transcendental understanding of reality, that of omniscient beings. Pluralism, in contrast, resolves this paradox by flatly refusing to admit dogmatism "all the way up":

Under this third-level pluralism, each mathematical and philosophical theory at lower level[s] is tolerated up to the point of dogmatism, that is, up to the point where the dogmatic claim is made...By refusing to recognise as legitimate, particular dogmatic claims, the pluralist solves the external paradox of tolerance for the pluralist...the pluralist does not even have to insist on the dogmatism (of rival positions) being incorrect. It is enough to remain agnostic, and insist on scientific honesty: that unless we have further evidence for the truth of a dogmatic position, we remain pluralist. Should such evidence present itself, then it is, of course, correct to give up pluralism. Remember that pluralism includes a principled agnosticism, not fanatical agnosticism.<sup>lv</sup>

The basis for this refusal is lack of evidence; Friend simply notes, "Intolerance is no guarantee of correctness!"<sup>lvi</sup> A pluralist cannot be refuted by pretensions towards intolerance, but only on the basis of reasoned argument. This is quite a marked difference in response, and shows how the Jain relativism transforms into pluralism on the backs of omniscient Jinas, whereas pluralism skirts relativism (and trivialism) by deferring to epistemic uncertainty.

In summary, we saw a number of point of overlap and points of difference between Jain *anek ntav da* pluralism in the philosophy of mathematics. The present article, hopefully, will underscore the following: further work bridging pluralism, perhaps philosophy of mathematics more broadly construed, and Jainism stands to offer fruitful results.

## References & Notes:

- 
- i Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd: Noida, 2010: 117.
- ii *There are six substances (dravyas): soul (j va), matter (pudgal), (medium or principle of) motion (dharma), (medium or principle of) rest (adharma), space ( k a), and time (k la).*
- iii Nemichandra, Sarat Chandra Ghoshal. Trans. *Dravya-Sangraha*. Pardi: Yogeshwar Print & Pack, 1986: 23.
- iv "Gu apary yavad dravyam", Tattv rta S tra 5/37.
- (a) "Dravy ray nirgu gu /Tadbh va pari ma r" Ibid, 5/40-41.
- (b) "Though modes too reside in a substance and themselves devoid of any quality, they are subject to origin and destruction...The qualities, on the other hand, are permanent, and hence they always reside in a substance." See, for instance, Tattv rtha-bh ya 5/29. (Quoted from Matilal, Bimal Krishna. *The Central Philosophy of Jainism (Anek ntav da)*. Ahmedabad: Creative Printers Pvt. Ltd., 1981: 35.)
- v Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 142.
- vi "The Jains do not thereby commit to a contradiction; each predication in apparently contradictory claims is qualified by distinct perspective rather than qualified by the same perspective." Ibid, 143.
- vii Ibid, 143
- viii (a) Jain, Shugan C. *Jainism, Key to Reality (Tattv rtas tra by c. Um Sv mi, 1/6 )*. Hastinapur: Digambar Jain Trilok Shodh Sansthan, 2011: 11.
- (b) "Knowledge is typically understood as being of objects (not propositions or facts, say) in Jainism." Bothra, Pushpa. *The Jaina Theory of Perception*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976 : 21.
- ix Matilal, Bimal Krishna. *The Central Philosophy of Jainism (Anek ntav da)*. Op.cit., 41.
- x Ibid, 32.
- xi Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op.cit., 146.
- xii (a) "Add a sy t particle to your philosophic proposition and you have captured the truth." Matilal, Bimal Krishna. *The Central Philosophy of Jainism (Anek ntav da)*. Op.cit., 61.
- (b) Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op.cit.,147.

- xiii Matilal, Bimal Krishna. *The Central Philosophy of Jainism (Anek ntav da)*. Op.cit., 53.
- xiv Ibid, 147.
- xv (a) "Jain authors vary on the respects that a statement may be evaluated. Some list eight: time, nature, substance, relationship to substance, modification, location, contact, and linguistic expression". Bhattacharya, Shree Harisatya. *Anek ntav da*. Bhavnagar: Shree Mahodaya Press, 1958: 31.  
(b) Matilal, B. K. "Anek tna: Both Yes and No". *Jaina Theory of Multiple Facets of Reality and Truth (Anek ntav da)*. Ed. Nagin J. Shah. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000: 7.
- xvi (a) I adopted the Sanskrit of Pragati Jain. (Jain, Pragati. "The Jaina Theory of Sevenfold Predication: A Logical Analysis". *Philosophy East and West*. 50: 3 (2000): 386.  
(b) Ibid, 387.  
(c) Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 148.
- xvii Friend, Michele. *Pluralism in Mathematics: A New Position in the Philosophy of Mathematics*. New York : Springer, 2014: 103.
- xviii Ibid, 110.
- xix Ibid, viii.
- xx Ibid, 113.
- xxi Ibid, 189.
- xxii Ibid, 190.
- xxiii Ibid, 194-195.
- xxiv Ibid, 104-105.
- xxv Ibid, 200.
- xxvi Ibid, 19-20.
- xxvii Ibid, 154.
- xxviii Ibid, 24-25.
- xxix *For purposes of bridging Jains and pluralists, we can usefully treat nayas as inclusive of mathematical theories, and we can treat mathematical theories as different nayas*. Ibid, 25.
- xxx (a) Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 145.  
(b) "It seems to be a truism that these two Jaina doctrines [of *sy dv da* and *anek ntav da*], which may be given the class-name of relativism, are opposed to any absolutistic position." Singh, Ramjee. *The Jaina Concept of Omniscience*. Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1974:163.
- xxxi Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 145.
- xxxii Friend, Michele. Op.cit. 2014: 29.
- xxxiii Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 151.
- xxxiv Hiriyanna, M. *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1949: 69, quoted in Padmarajah, Y. J. *A Comparative Study of the Jaina Theories of Reality and Knowledge*. Jain Sahitya Vikas Mandal: Bombay, 1963: 364.
- xxxv Joshi, L. V. "Ny ya Criticism of Anek nta (With special reference to the Ny yabh a a)." *Jaina Theory of Multiple Facets of Reality and Truth (Anek ntav da)*. Ed. Nagin J. Shah. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000:95-110.
- xxxvi Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 151.
- xxxvii Singh, Ramjee. *The Jaina Concept of Omniscience*. Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1974:164.
- xxxviii Friend, Michele. Op.cit. 2014: 196.
- xxxix Ibid, 73.
- xl Ibid, 189.
- xli Ibid, 199.
- xlii Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 153.
- xliii Ibid, 150.
- xliv Friend, Michele. Op.cit. 2014: 194.
- xlv Matilal, B. K. "Anek tna: Both Yes and No". *Jaina Theory of Multiple Facets of Reality and Truth (Anek ntav da)*. op. cit., 14.
- xlvi Ibid, 13-14.
- xlvii Friend, Michele. Op.cit. 2014: 114.
- xlviii Matilal, B. K. "Anek tna: Both Yes and No". *Jaina Theory of Multiple Facets of Reality and Truth (Anek ntav da)*. op. cit., 14.
- xlix Ibid, 15.
- <sup>1</sup> Ganeri, Jonardon. "Jaina Logic and the Philosophical Basis of Pluralism". *History and Philosophy of Logic*. 23. 4. (2010): 273.
- li Ibid.
- lii Perhaps 'independent of the given naya' captures the sense of fourth predication most accurately [4, 273]. This presents another direction to develop the principled agnosticism motivating pluralism.
- liiii Friend, Michele. Op.cit. 2014: 175.
- liv Long, Jeffrey D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. Op. cit., 153.
- lv Friend, Michele. Op.cit. 2014: 178.
- lvi Ibid, 177.

## Conversion in Medieval Jain and Buddhist Chinese Literatures

Anna Sokolova\*

Jains have produced a vast fairy-tale literature, in prose and in verse, in Sanskrit, Pali and Apabhramsa. All these works, be they stories in plain prose or in simple verse, or elaborate poems, novels or epics, are all essentially sermons. They are never intended for mere entertainment, but always serve the purpose of religious instruction and edification. Usually the plots of these stories are very repetitive; they involve the elaboration on the karmic effect and final renunciation by the main hero. In a similar way the Buddhist Chinese stories use conventional themes such as tracing the karma effect throughout numerous lives of the main character. The Buddhist motives started to be used in a framework of the traditional Chinese miraculous stories or stories on anomalies, however, they were set in a familiar background making it simple for lay audience to perceive the basic Buddhist concepts.

This paper seeks to emphasize the importance of looking outside the traditionally studied genres—sūtras and other doctrinal literature—in order to acquire an accurate understanding of how religion was actually practiced and spread in a certain period of time. Robert Ford Company argues that “the genre of miracle tales is especially useful because they bear invaluable witness not only to the content of the collective memory of religious groups but also to the social process by which collective memory was shaped, transmitted, and preserved”.<sup>i</sup> Thus, both Chinese and Jain medieval tales were not recounted simply to verify the religious beliefs, but they had a function to help assimilating their major philosophical ideas or the broad lay auditory.

### Historical Background of the Conversion into Jain Identity

To touch upon the beginning of the phenomenon of conversion in Jainism, Andrea Jain in the *Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversions* claims that after achieving *kevalajñāna* or an enlightened state of omniscience, Mahāvīra became a countercultural religious teacher, who attracted adherents to his movement. His closest disciples consisted of twelve men called the *gaadhara*s who were Brahmins converted from Hindu orthodoxy. Thus, the process of conversion was paramount to the establishment of the early Jain community.<sup>ii</sup> Lay people were also attracted. Following Mahāvīra's death the Jain community continued to grow between the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Many Jains were successful in commerce, increased economic development and growing of the merchant class, which in turn provided the lay support for the monastic community.

Very early Jains started to attract non-Jains to the Jain tradition using the vernacular languages and popular myths in literary endeavors. The Northern city of Mathura had a wealthy Jain laity by the second century BCE. Since Mathura was religiously dominated by Vaiṣṇavism, especially in the form of devotion to Kṛṣṇa (the *avatāra* or incarnation of Viṣṇu), Jains also included Kṛṣṇa in their own narrative traditions. They even reconstructed their own Kṛṣṇa mythology, in which Kṛṣṇa is the cousin of Nemiṁtha, the twenty-second Tṛtha-kara. They wrote Jain renditions of popular Vaiṣṇava myths, including the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, with reorientation of such myths toward Jain teaching, especially a Jain interpretation of *ahimsā*.

In addition, lay and monastic Jains were a part of the thriving *bhakti* movement in Mathura and participated in image worship in Jain temples.<sup>iii</sup> Such active participation in the religious eclectics.

---

\* Alumni ISSJS (2013 and 2014), E-Mail: [annasokolova@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annasokolova@yahoo.co.uk)

In the medieval period (500 CE to 1500 CE) Jains continued to attract converts by participating in eclectic religious cultures. Granoff points out that Haribhadra (eighth century thinker) permitted lay Jains “to worship the Gods of others” including Buddha, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Jain spiritual practices also included devotion to *yakṣas*, powerful spirits who were popular as objects of devotion because of their abilities to punish and reward. Furthermore, Jains participated in the worship of goddesses in order to compete with the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva bhakti movements for the laity’s attention. Jain claims that “adaptation to the growing and thriving bhakti movement provided a social context in which Jain conversion was possible, since converts could construct new identities while not having to endure a radical break from such popular practices”.<sup>iv</sup>

Some Jains participated in other growing religious trends. For example, Haribhadra shows “cosmopolitan” interest in the yoga ideas and teachings of *tantra*. Christopher Key Chapple argues that Haribhadra places yoga in an “orthodox Jain framework” in an attempt to expand his audience.” Such practical innovations enabled Jains to participate in the eclectic religious culture and consequently maintain the Jain’s tradition’s popularity among competing religious sects.<sup>v</sup> In their seek for the conversion options Jains largely used literature as a convenient means to attract the audience of various background and religious believes.

### Jain Conversion Stories

Winernitz in his *History of Indian Literature* argues that “the Jaina monks and authors have always been tellers of tales rather than historians.”<sup>vi</sup> Usually even the commentaries to the sacred texts contain not only a mass of traditions and legends, but also numerous fairy-tales and stories, and moreover, the legendary poems, the *Purāṇas* and *Caritras* were often only a frame in which all manner of fairy-tales and stories are inserted. In addition to all this, the Jains have produced a vast fairy-tale literature. They are never intended for mere entertainment, but always serve the purpose of religious instruction and edification.

Peter Flugel gives the account of the literary genres which used the elements of conversion. There are the biographies and universal histories, the *caritras* and *purāṇas*, and monastic chronicles and genealogies, the *sthavir valis*, *pāvalis* and *gurv valis*, mix or combine mythological tales with historical facts and eulogies, but also secular clan histories and genealogies, *vaś valis* and *khytas*, and similar genres of history within the Jain tradition, such as narrative tales, *kathas*, or collections of stories, *prabandhas*, epic poetry, *mahākavya* or *rīsa*, or song, *gīta*, written in Prakrit, Sanskrit and vernacular languages. Although it contains numerous references to historical personalities, events, places and practices, notable is the didactic nature of most texts and their emphasis on transformative experiences such as conversion, renunciation and initiation.<sup>vii</sup>

Peter Flugel argues at the heart of a wide variety of Jain narrative genres, seek to accomplish their aim to evoke in the listener the interiorisation of Jain values by way of identification with and imitation of the exemplary acts of the paradigmatic heroes of Jain history. The principal narrative technique is self - referentiality. Jain conversion stories generally relate how the act of narrating conversion-stories creates actual conversion experiences leading to monastic initiations. Religious discourse, *katha*, or more precisely: *dharmakatha*, is of four kinds (1) *kāpā* : attracting the listener, (2) *vikāpā* : establishing one’s own religion after characterizing others, (3) *śāvedan* : inspiring detachment by pointing to the deficiencies of the body, (4) *nirvedan* : inspiring indifference by enumerating the bitter and pleasant fruits of *karman*.<sup>viii</sup>

The earliest religious novel (*dharmakatha*) was *Taraṅgat* by Padalipta (Palitta) Suri. It must have been written before the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. However, the original has not come down to us but

only a shorter version, written a thousand years later, in 1643 Prakrit stanzas. The subject-matter of this romantic love-story, which ends in a pious sermon, is briefly as follows:

A nun, who is conspicuous for her beauty, tells the story of her life. She was the charming daughter of a rich merchant. One day she sees a couple of ducks in a lotus pond, and falls into a swoon: for she remembers that in her previous life she has been a swan like this, and that out of love for a drake killed by the hunter, she had burnt herself with him. She longs for a husband of her previous life? And after many love-sorrows, she finds him by the aid of the picture which she paints of the couple of ducks. The man carries her off, on their flight they are captured by robbers, and they are to be sacrificed to the goddess K 1 . They are rescued, and the parents agree to the marriage. The wedding takes place. Soon afterwards they meet a monk who delivers a lecture to them on the religion of the Jina. Through the encounter with the monk, who in his previous life has been a hunter who killed the drake, they are so much affected that they renounce the world.<sup>ix</sup>

Thus, it is very common occurrence in Indian ascetic poetry, for a king to be forcible reminded of the vanity of existence, and to renounce the world. For example, the king sees a snake, devouring a frog, but itself devoured by a sea-eagle, which in its turn is devoured by a boa constrictor. This sight causes him to renounce the world and become an ascetic.

Winter itz claims that on the whole, it is rather tiresome always to follow wonderings of the same persons from one rebirth to another, the one always killing the other, the one going to heaven and the other to hell or being reborn as an animal, in one instance even as a coconut palm. However, we also meet with some interesting tales, romantic love-stories, such as of the Sanatkum ra and Vil savat , who are reunited after a long separation and after inexpressingly sorrowful adventures. Another story of Dhara a and Lak m is a pretty fairy-romance, full of adventures on land and sea, with many familiar fairy-tale motives. Thus we find there a motif of ungrateful wife:

Dhara a and Lak m are wondering in the forest. The woman is nearly dying of thirst. Dhara a draws blood from his arm, and cuts off some flesh from his tights, so as to nourish his wife. Soon afterwards, nevertheless, she tries to get rid of her husband, in order to follow a robber, to whom she has taken a fancy.<sup>x</sup>

The destinies in the course of the reincarnations are multiple. For example, a merchant is reborn as a pig in his own house and is slaughtered for the festival meal. Reborn in the same house as a snake, he remembers his previous existences, but is not angry with the cook who slaughtered him as a pig. Hereupon in his next rebirth he again becomes a man, in fact, he is reborn as the son of his son. When he is one year old, he remembers his previous existence. He sees that his daughter-in-law has now become his mother, and that his son is now his father, and is at a loss to know how to address him. Hence, he does not speak at all, and is called “the dumb one”. When he has reached the age of twelve years, an all-knowing monk invites him to come and be instructed by him. Then he breaks his vow of silence, and follows the monk into the religious life.<sup>xi</sup>

Dharmakath or religious novel, reaches its culmination in the allegorical Sanskrit novel Upamiti-bhava-prapañca Kath by the poet Siddhar i who, according to his own statement completed his work in 906 AD.

Flugel suggest that compared to their ‘Hindu’ counterparts, Jain (conversion) stories appear realistic, pragmatic and un-poetic. They deny, as a rule, super-natural intervention into human affairs and stress the responsibility of the individual for its own fate. The prime purpose of Jain

stories, including histories, is didactic. Jain stories do not merely want to inform, entertain or edify the Jain community, but also to demonstrate the explanatory power, the usefulness and effectiveness of Jain religious principles in everyday-life contexts, and hence to influence their audience to embrace Jainism.<sup>xii</sup>

First and crucial step is attraction of the audience. For this purpose, the Jains appropriate to themselves all the favorite popular themes from Br hma ical and general Indian literature, so as to be in a position thus to offer their adherents within the fold of their own religious community, all threat they could find elsewhere to. At time, they established a very slight connection between the ancient themes and the Jain religion: in other cases, however, they completely changed, and spoil them, in order to give them a Jainistic appearance.

Modern scholars, such as Bruhn, Balbir and Granoff, identified general rhetorical features of medieval Jain story literature, which, on the whole, was not very innovative, but relied on the appropriation and strategic reinterpretation of popular folklore and older Br hma ical literature. Flugel suggests a term ‘malapropism’, which is, deliberate or tendentious corruption. Granoff similarly argued that the vet mbara authors of medieval Jain miracle stories deliberately refrain from references to conflicts and philosophical arguments in order to avoid sectarian divisions, but instead use the methods of ‘repetition of familiar stories’ and ‘allusion’ as key devices for the fabrication of an ‘all-integrative group image’ with an appeal to a wide audience of believers.<sup>xiii</sup> Flugel interprets the use of allusions in Jain narratives not as means for achieving social harmony, but as a preliminary rhetoric device intended to generate conversational cooperation to be subsequently exploited by *Verballhornung* and similar rhetorical strategies.<sup>xiv</sup>

Flugel comments: “In order to influence an often entirely unfamiliar audience, the mendicant, the paradigmatic narrator, needs to establish first a common ground between speaker (writer) and hearer (reader). This is usually done with the help of allusions to common-places (familiar situations, stories, typical social conflicts etc.) which will involve the audience and attract emotional commitment. Only if a relationship of cooperation between speaker and audience is established can second order processes of manipulation and ‘flouting’ of this relationship be potentially effective. This kind of literary narration, meant first to catch the attention and then to preach for conversion, is not peculiar to Jain literature, but is common to many religious works of edification in India”.<sup>xv</sup>

A very similar process can be found in Chinese medieval Buddhist stories which seem to adopt similar strategies of conversion through input of the spiritual message in a recognizable plot of a story and aim to use similar methods of attraction of the broad lay auditory such as self-referentiality.

### **Brief Historical Background of the Chinese Buddhist Conversions**

As far as we know, a number of monks and laymen of foreign extraction, often with the help of Chinese assistants, began translating Buddhist scriptures from Indic languages into literary Chinese in the middle of the second century of the Common Era. Buddhist-inspired visual imagery was deployed in various places throughout China around this same time. But in this earliest period, the audience for the translated texts was vanishingly small. Not until the fourth century, it appears, was Buddhism practiced by significant numbers of Chinese. It seems to have been late in the fourth century that literate Chinese men who wanted to promote Buddhist values and practices began circulating, recording, and collecting records of miraculous events. These events were thought to demonstrate the power of the Buddha, bodhisattvas, monks, and nuns; to prove the efficacy of Buddhist devotional practices, to illustrate the veracity of Buddhist claims; and to warn of the consequences of violating Buddhist norms. They adopted these themes to the

genre of "strange stories" which they started to use as a framework for the Buddhist didactic content.

Political situation in the Han China (206 B.C. - A.D. 220) was one of the stimuli for the growth of miraculous literature. This was the time when the empire began to disintegrate, and as the political structure that it supported disintegrated. Consequently, the Confucian ideological framework of the state also fell into disrepute. Gjerston claims that "intellectuals turned increasingly to more speculative and escapist ways of thought, and this was accompanied by an increasing interest in the supernatural and in man's relationship with the unseen world."<sup>xvi</sup> Early in the post-Han era these scholars began to record the first collections of indigenous Chinese tales, which are usually referred to in Chinese as *zhiguai* 志怪, or "recording the strange." These collections were composed of short accounts and descriptions of a rather heterogeneous nature which dealt, for the most part, with the unusual or the supernatural, and whose literary antecedents can be traced to Han times or earlier. The earliest collection of strange tales is usually considered to be the *Lieh-i chuan*, attributed to Ts'ao P'eiz, Emperor Wen' (197 - reigned 220 - 227) of the Wei dynasty (220 - 265). In the tales that remain from the *Lieh-i chuan* one finds no reference to Buddhism, although motifs that become widely used in the later Chinese Buddhist miracle tales are already in evidence. One of the more famous tales attributed to the collection is concerned with a journey to the nether world, a motif often seen in later tales. It is entitled "Ts'ai Chih's Wife".

Ts'ai Chih of Lin-tzu was a runner for the district office, and once received a letter to deliver to the prefect. He lost his way, and coming to the foot of Mountain Tai-tsungai, he saw what appeared to be a double-walled city. When he entered to deliver the letter, he saw an official with an awesome ceremonial escort: everything was just as if he were a prefect. [The official] set out a sumptuous refreshment of wine and delicacies. When it was finished, he entrusted [Chih] with a letter and said, "Deliver this to my grandson." "Who is your honor's grandson?" enquired the runner. "I am the God of Mt. T'ai," was the reply, "and my grandson is the Emperor of heaven." The runner was astonished, and thereupon realized that where he had come to was not in the human realm. He then went out the gate, mounted a horse, and left. After a time he reached the Grand Protected Palace of the Throne of the Heavenly Emperor, where there were officials in attendance to left and right: everything was just as if he were an emperor. When Chih completed his delivery of the letter, the emperor ordered him to sit, gave him wine and food, then asked him, "How many are there in your family?" He replied, "My father, mother, and wife have all passed away, and I have not yet remarried." The emperor asked, "How many years has it been since your wife died?" "Three years," replied Chih. "Would you like to see your wife?" asked the emperor. "I would be indebted to the Heavenly Emperor's favor!" answered Chih. The emperor then ordered the president of the Board of Census to command the Arbiter of Fate to move the census entry of Ts'ai Chih's wife to the register of the living, and to accompany Chih when he departed. Chih then returned to life and returned home, where he opened his wife's grave. He looked at his wife's body, which indeed showed signs of life. After a time she sat up and spoke just as before.

The growing influence of Buddhism coincided with the disintegration of the Chinese empire and the turn from Confucian orthodoxy to more speculative thought. It was not until the late Han and post-Han interest in new philosophical inquiry that the influence of Buddhism began to grow among the intellectuals. Gjerston states that Buddhism offered a very highly developed metaphysics to those speculative minds that were dissatisfied with traditional Chinese explanations, and as Buddhism spread more widely and gained more adherents, a need arose for the Buddhist literature first to be translated into Chinese, and then recreated in familiar literary patterns.<sup>xvii</sup> Therefore, the Chinese Buddhist miracle tale appears to have been shaped by two

major influences. One was an indigenous Chinese tale writing tradition that antedated the appearance of the Buddhist miracle tale; the other was, Buddhism itself.

The *Kuang-shih-in ling-vlen chi*, or "Records of Miracles Concerning Avalokitesvara," is the earliest surviving collection of Chinese Buddhist miracle tales, and dates from the last half of the fourth century. Then other collection followed, every one suggesting new themes and variations, however, maintaining similar patterns.

These Buddhist miracle tales are indistinguishable from the strange tales, and have in fact often been considered part of that genre. Gjerston describes these tales as "usually a straightforward narration of a single incident handled in normal time sequences-with the important exception of tales concerned with visits to the nether world, which often contain a "flashback" to relate the details of the visit. But even in such exceptions, the story is confined to the present lifetime of the protagonist, and is usually concerned with the narration of a single incident."<sup>xviii</sup>

Among other characteristics Gjerston mentions that the tales are written in what might be called a simple literary Chinese, and are distinguished by a notable lack of classical and literary allusion. Both the compilers and readers of these miracle tales seem to have considered them to be factual accounts of events that actually took place. The tales were also closely associated with biographies of eminent monks.<sup>xix</sup>

Belief in Buddhism was growing as well as the spread of the Buddhist motives in folklore. Therefore, the compilers of the Chinese Buddhist tales were not content merely with relating as unusual anecdote; they were also concerned with demonstrating the efficacy of belief and the truth of their doctrine. The tales validate that miracles happen for specific reasons, and also show how closely woven the Buddhist unseen realm is to the living world.

The stories usually fall within several different narrative frames. For example, one of the most popular narrative is calling to the Bodhisattva Guanyin. The frequency of this narrative is attributed to the recent availability of the *Lotus Sutra* in early medieval China. Other narratives include: protagonists returning from death to recount journeys through hells; brief visits from deceased loved ones; extraordinary monks and nuns; and punishments for assaults against the Buddha or the *Dharma*. Gjerston notes that "the social construction and retelling of these tales "ensures their typedness". In other words, similar to a good commercial jingle, the repetitive themes and abundance of these tales helped to insert their Buddhist agendas into Chinese society".<sup>xx</sup>

Amongst the most common motifs is that of a visit to the nether world. This motif illustrates the terrors of the hells and the pleasures of the heavens, shows nether world bureaucracy, to be vividly communicated back to those in the world of the living. The motif is seen already among the earlier strange tales, and it continued to appear throughout the miracle tale collections, being found in many of the longer, more intricate, and therefore more memorable examples of the genre. The way in which the motif was turned to didactic use by the Buddhists is well illustrated by the following tale, which is taken from the T'ang collection of Buddhist stories *Lin's Ming-pao chi*":

During the early years of the Wu-te period (618-626) there was an administrator of the secretarial service in the office of the commander-in-chief of Suichou' named K'ung K'o, who died of a sudden illness. After one day he returned to life and told this story. He was arrested and taken to a government office, where he was asked why he had killed two oxen. K'o said, "I did not." But the official continued, "Your younger brother has testified that you killed [the oxen], why don't you confess?" The younger brother was then called forth he had already been dead for

several years-and when he arrived he was very securely locked up in cangue and fetters. The official asked him, "What you said about your elder brother killing the oxen, was it true or false?" "My elder brother was sent as an emissary to pacify the Liao tribes," said the younger brother, "and he sent me to kill the oxen to give a feast for them. In actuality, I was only following my brother's orders, I didn't kill the oxen on my own." K'o then said, "That I ordered my younger brother to kill the oxen to feast the Liao is true, but this was an affair of state, how can it be considered a sin of mine?" The official replied, "When you killed the oxen to feast the Liao, it was because you wanted to pacify them and gain merit which would be useful in seeking official reward. It was for your own personal gain, how can you say it was an affair of state?" [The official] then said to K'o's younger brother. "We have detained you a long time in order to have you testify against your elder brother. Your elder brother has now confessed that he sent you to do the killing, and you have committed no sin, so you are being released to go and be reborn." No sooner had the official finished speaking than the younger brother disappeared, without even having the chance to say anything. The official again asked K'o, "Why did you also kill those two ducks?" "When I previously held the office of district magistrate," K'o replied, "I killed the ducks to present to official visitors. How is it my sin?" "The official visitors had their own provisions without the ducks," the official said. "When you killed [the ducks] to present to them, it was because you wanted to gain a good reputation. If that's not a sin, what is it?" He continued his questioning: "And why did you kill those six hens' eggs?" K'o replied, "Normally I don't eat hens' eggs, but I remember one time when I was eight years old. It was Cold Food Day, and my mother gave me six eggs, which I cooked and ate." "That's right," said the official, "but are you trying to implicate your mother?" "Of course not," K'o replied, "I was just explaining how it happened. It was I who killed them." "You have taken the lives of others," said the official, "and you must receive retribution." When he finished speaking, several tens of men suddenly appeared, all wearing blue clothing, who picked K'o up and were about to take him out. K'o cried out loudly, "This office is being grossly unjust!"

The official heard him, and called him back. "How are we unjust!" he asked. "All of my sins," answered K'o, "have been listed without omission, but absolutely none of my good works have been recorded. Is that not unjust?" The official asked the chief secretary, "What good works has K'o done? And why haven't they been recorded?" The chief secretary replied, "His good works have also been recorded, but we calculate the amount of good works and sins, and if the good works are more, we have him rewarded first; if the sins are greater, we first have him punished. In K'o's case, the good works were few and the sins many, so we didn't discuss his good works."

The official became angry, and said, "Even though he should first be punished, why didn't you call out his good works and make them known?" He ordered that the chief secretary be given one hundred lashes of the whip. In a moment, after the whipping had stopped, with his blood running down and splattering the ground, the chief secretary called out the good works that K'o had done during his life, forgetting or omitting none. The official said to K'o, "You should first be punished, but I will release you to return home for seven days, where you can devote yourself to good works." He then despatched someone to escort K'o home, and he returned to life. K'o gathered together a large number of monks and nuns, carrying out religious services and repenting his sins. He was very diligent in the services, and personally related this affair. After seven days, he bade a final farewell to his family, and in a few moments he died.

My elder brother was attached to the administration in Sui [-chou], and therefore knew the matter in detail.<sup>xxi</sup>

Gjerston suggests to compare this story to the strange tale attributed to the Lieh-i chuan translated above ("Ts'ai Chih's Wife"). Here the extent of the Buddhists' adaption of tale literature to didactic purposes becomes apparent. The earlier strange tale was also concerned

with a visit to the nether world, but the tale did not seem to be offering any sort of message. In the Mingpao chi tale, however, the didacticism is obvious. The tale describes vividly the operation of the nether world court where one's good or evil actions will be weighed, thereby demonstrating the inevitability of karmic retribution, and it also emphasizes the high regard one should have for living beings, a basic tenet of Buddhist faith.

## Conclusion

It is notable to see that two religious traditions used the same instruments for the needs of the spread of their doctrines to a broad auditory by means of adopting the essential concepts of their doctrines to the conventional literary patters. This was helpful to introduce readers to basic Buddhist beliefs without overwhelming them with advanced philosophical concepts. The tales for both Jain and Chinese Buddhist lay auditory were more accessible than doctrinal literature. Further, the resemblance of the text's style to historical genres or to the biography genre lent veracity to these stories. These texts also helped intensify the conversion processes by blending situations and conditions familiar to the auditory with the unfamiliarity of the doctrines' belief and practice. As these stories worked their way into the social consciousness of medieval Jain and Chinese lay oriented audience and the production of similar tales was ensured.

The other value of these stories is that it demonstrates how unclear our understanding of early religions, such as Buddhism in China or medieval Jainism, remains. These tales call for scholars to continue to look outside traditional sources to find alternative representations of religion.

Additionally, we can see that various strategies applied by scholars to the studies of Jain miracle conversion stories are easily applied to the Chinese Buddhist miracle tales. First, they use familiar literary patterns familiar to a broad auditory. Second, they attract the auditory by a plot which, at first sight, belongs not to the doctrinal literature but merely to a fairy-tale, ghost, fantastic or love-story based tales. Thirdly, they seek to involve the effect of self-referentiality and interiorisation which were suggested by Peter Flugel for Jain stories, but can be useful for the analyses of the Chinese medieval stories. Therefore, similar strategies can be applied and claimed to be universal for the literature with the intentions of conversion for various religious traditions.

## Notes and References:

- 
- i Company, Robert Ford. *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai Press, 2012: xii.
- ii Jain, Andrea R. "Conversion of Jain identity". *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversions*. 2014: 446.
- iii (a) Cort, John E. "Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition: Understanding Devotional Religion in South Asia." *History of Religions*. 42.1 (2002): 59-86.  
(b) Bhakti refers to emotionally charged devotional religiosity that became increasingly popular in medieval India.
- iv Jain, Andrea R. "Conversion of Jain identity". Op. cit. 448.
- v Ibid, 449
- vi Winternitz, Maurice. *A history of Indian Literature, Vol. II*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1993: 224.
- vii Flugel, Peter. "Worshipping the Ideal King on the Social Implications of Jaina Conversion Stories." available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/2792576.pdf>
- viii Ibid.
- ix The story is reproduced from Winternitz, Maurice. Op.cit. 213.
- x Ibid, 218.
- xi Ibid, 524-525.
- xii Flugel, op. cit. "Worshipping the Ideal King on the Social Implications of Jaina Conversion Stories."
- xiii Cited in Flugel, op. cit. "Worshipping the Ideal King on the Social Implications of Jaina Conversion Stories."
- xiv Ibid
- xv J. Filliozat, "The Jaina Narrative Literature in South India and its Counterparts", *Indological Taurinensia* 11 (1983): 99. Cited in Flugel, op. cit. "Worshipping the Ideal King on the Social Implications of Jaina Conversion Stories."

- xvi Gjerston, E. David. "The Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tale: A Preliminary Survey." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. 101. 3 (1981): 287-301.
- xvii Ibid.
- xviii Ibid.
- xix Ibid.
- xx Ibid
- xxi Ibid

# **An Applied Approach to the Practical Nature of Modern Jain Ecological Views**

Amanda Lee Whatley\*

## **Introduction**

Jainism's essential nonviolent standpoint can be seen as a boon for the environmental movement. In direct opposition to the more anthropocentric views held by other religions, Jainism holds that all living things are valuable and should be protected. This creates a unique space in which Jains view nature and ecology. In Judaism "humankind is superior to animals, animals to plants, and plants to the inanimate".<sup>1</sup>

This places human life as superior than all others and naturally places the needs of humans as the most important. This is not to say that man is not important in Jainism however, his needs are secondary to the imperative to commit no violence to living and non-living beings. Jain ecology is based on spirituality and equality. Each life form, plant, or animal, has an inherent worth and each must be respected.

Currently across the globe many of our ecological problems stem from our ability to take what we desire and ravage the earth in the process. The tenet of *ahi s*, or complete and absolute non-violence, in Jainism does not allow for this practice. This paper will explore the Jain reasoning for the ecological crisis, the Jain definition of living being, the effect of *ahi s* on environmental action, and how their views on compassion seek to limit environmental degradation. This paper also seeks to identify possible remedies that are offered by the Jain community before exploring a critique of Jain ecology and its limitations.

## **Reasons for the Ecological Crisis**

Jain scholars have stated that the "...root of ecological crisis is a spiritual crisis of self-centred greed, aided and abetted by ingenious technologies no longer properly restrained."<sup>2</sup> *Aparigraha*, or non-possessiveness is failing. It is man's desire for more things and the technological advancement aiding this greed that is causing the ecological crisis. It is this greed that drives environmental degradation and threatens to kill the souls that reside on this planet. One may be hard pressed to prove that greed is not a driver of climate change, but it certainly is not the only factor. The search by developing countries for a higher standard of living certainly affects development, as does that implication that protecting the planet's health might mean the giving up of luxuries some countries already enjoy.

The global ecological crisis cannot be solved until a spiritual relationship is established between humanity as the whole and its natural environment. Jainism has been staunch protector of nature since inception of the Jain faith. The religion of nature, Jainism paves the way to understanding nature's utility and the essential nature of plants, worms, animals, and all sorts of creatures that have their own importance for maintaining ecological balance. Jainism therefore says that the function of souls is to help one another.<sup>3</sup>

---

\* Assistant Director of Adult Basic Education at Central Arizona College, Alumni ISSJS (2014)  
E-Mail: [amandal.whatley@gmail.com](mailto:amandal.whatley@gmail.com)

Another factor Jainism considers is the natural life cycle. According to the Jain Declaration on Nature, the universe has no life and no death, no beginning nor end.<sup>4</sup> All time is on a pendulum that swings from great times to terrible woes. It is believed that we are currently on a downward movement, which could also account for environmental issues, "...Jainism has a teleology of decline and subsequent renewal built into its mythical structure...Jain tradition is clear that, as we enter the final stages of each particular movement of the wheel of time, it is necessary and inevitable that both humankind and the natural world socially and ecologically decline".<sup>5</sup> This process of environmental degradation could be a part of the natural time cycle expressed in Jain cosmology. Another symptom of this decline is the inability of any person to attain *mok a* or liberation. However there is hope, the Jain concept of time suggests that after the decline the world and all living beings will again enter into an uplifting state which moves all beings towards happiness.

### **Living Beings According to Jainism**

According to Jain cosmology every living being in the universe is imbued with a life force or spirit called *j va*. When a body dies, the *j va* leaves its host and moves to another corporeal form based upon the karmas accrued throughout its previous lives.<sup>6</sup> In this karmic universe there is no action without an effect. Any *j va* could be reborn as a one, two, three, four, or five sense being. Each *j va* contains consciousness, energy, and the ability to attain *mok a* or *nirv a*. Although there is inherently a hierarchy of importance, where single sense beings (such as plants, water, fire, and microorganisms) are seen as less important, by defining living beings in such a broad manner Jainism attempts to offer protection of all living creatures under the tenet of *ahi s*. In practice one must sometimes kill the one sense beings for sustenance (fire, water, air, microorganisms, etc.), but even this practice is highly regulated. Mah v ra preached protection of all living beings and the essential connection of all life. A broad definition of what is living has great implications for environmental protection.

### **Ahi s as a Source for Environmental Protection**

*Ahi s* is a principle that Jains teach and practice not only towards human beings but towards all nature. It is an unequivocal teaching that is at once ancient and contemporary. The Lord Mah v ra stated, "There is nothing so small and subtle as the atom nor any element so vast as space. Similarly, there is no quality of soul more subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life".<sup>7</sup> In every action taken by a Jain ascetic the quality of nonviolence is of the greatest consideration.

Even single sensed beings are considered living and therefore should not be harmed. One sensed beings experience suffering through the touch sense.

"Gautama asking Mah v ra, 'Do all earth bodied beings have an equal feeling of suffering?'  
'Yes, they have an equal feeling of suffering.' 'Why?' 'All earth bodied beings are devoid of a conscious mind and so they experience pleasure and pain in an indeterminate way or with the absence of positive knowledge'.<sup>8</sup>

This is only a single example of Lord Mah v ra's belief in the protection of all life. Jain literature is rife with examples of T rtha kara insistence to protect any living beings it is asserted in numerous times that all plant and animal life is sacred. By defining all life as sacred, including water and plant life, Jainism offers that any form of ecological destruction is outside the realms of positive living. Anyone who participates or even encourages such action

will be accruing negative karmas and impeding one's ability to attain *mok a*. The very notion of environmental degradation is *hi s*, violence. Possibly the simplest and most beautiful example of the Jainism concept of *ahi s* is captured in this short prayer called the *Pratikrama a* (here in its Tap Gaccha form):<sup>9</sup>

700,000 earth bodies,  
 700,000 water bodies,  
 700,000 fire bodies,  
 700,000 air bodies,  
 1,000,000 separate plant bodies,  
 200,000 two sensed beings,  
 200,000 three sensed beings,  
 200,000 four sensed beings,  
 400,000 divine five sensed beings,  
 400,000 infernal five sensed beings,  
 400,000 plant and animal five sensed beings,  
 1,400,000 human beings:  
 in this way there are 8,400,000 forms of existence. Whatever harm I have done,  
 caused to be, or approved of, by mind, speech,  
 or body,  
 against all of them:

may that harm be without consequence.

This prayer encapsulates the constant devotion to the protection of life demanded by Jainism however it also highlights a flaw. The *pratikrama a* also reveals that at the end of the day Jainism's search for *ahi s* is driven by the belief that through violence one accrues karma, and it is the shedding of bad karmas individually that should be the centre for one's life. Jainism does not necessarily preach protection out of an altruistic attitude. It is the obsession of a follower to cease all influx of karma and shed as many negative karmic qualities they have already accrued as is humanly possible.

### **Compassion as a Vehicle of Ecological Non Violence**

The core of compassion, *anukamp*, according to Mah v ra is to not harm any living thing,<sup>10</sup> but also to render services to those who need it. The Tattv rtha S tra defines compassion in several ways: in 7.1 it prescribes abstinence from violence,<sup>11</sup> 6.13 prescribes compassion through charity,<sup>12</sup> and 5.21 defines the function of souls as rendering service to one another.<sup>13</sup> These *s tras* clearly state that compassion is a core tenet of nonviolence. These assets include examples of environmental protection. To harm a plant, the air, water, or fire is to participate in *hi s*. A Jain cannot not even take pleasure in the harming of any life form. This could be seen as great groundwork for the cessation of pollutants to be released into the atmosphere to participate with joy in any item that has resulted from the production of pollution (e.g. material goods) would mean that one is partaking in *hi s* and accruing negative karma.

Possibly the most well-known example of a Jain embodying the tenet of compassion is A oka, who saves animals from the slaughter. The Grinar Rock Edict No. 1 states that A oka states:

No living being should be slaughtered for sacrifice and no festive gatherings should be held. For King Priyadar [A oka]...sees manifold evils in festive gatherings... Many hundreds of thousand living beings were formerly slaughtered every day in the kitchen of Priyadar , Beloved of the Gods, for the sake of curry. But now, when this record relating to Dharma is written, only three living creatures are killed daily for the sake of curry...these three living beings too shall not be killed in the future. (Inscriptions of A oka 39-40)

Compassion for all living beings has been an integral facet of Jain life for many centuries, and bears witness to the philosophical concern for environmental welfare. But what of a guide for the current issues? It is near impossible to find practical remedies from the teachings of Mah v ra and the 23 other Tirtha karas, but this is not to say that Jainism has left its followers without guidance. Using the concepts of *ahi s* , compassion, and the definition of living, modern Jain scholars are drawing upon the teachings of yore to discover solutions to modern day problems.

### **Practical Applications of Jain Ecology**

Perhaps the most obvious benefit of Jain living is their strict adherence to vegetarianism. To stop eating meat would most certainly cut down on methane outputs and the production of carbon monoxide worldwide. Two calories of fossil fuel are required for the production of one calorie of protein from soybeans, while 78 calories of fossil fuel is required for a single calorie of beef. The fish industry does not fare any better. It requires five pounds of sea animals to be consumed in order to create just one pound of farm raised fish.<sup>14</sup> In 2009 several studies concluded that "... a nonvegetarian diet consumed 2.9 times more water, 2.5 times more primary energy, 13 times more fertilizer, and 1.4 times more pesticide than a vegetarian diet. These statistics suggest that vegetarian diets are, in fact, less taxing on the environment".<sup>15</sup> After some research into the environmental destruction caused by meat eating, it becomes obvious that adherence to a vegetarian lifestyle would have a great benefit. While Jains may participate in a vegetarian diet to avoid *hi s* based upon the killing of multiple sense beings, the positive environmental repercussions cannot be denied.

But it is not only Jain eating that could affect the environment positively. Inherent in Jain vows are a life of restraint and non-waste:

Wants should be reduced, desires curbed and consumption levels kept within reasonable limits. Using any resource beyond one's needs and misuse of any part of nature is considered a form of theft. Indeed, the Jain faith goes one radical step further and declares unequivocally that waste and creating pollution are acts of violence.<sup>16</sup>

The simple notion of creating less waste is imperative to any successful environmental movement. Simply increasing recycling is not enough. Society must consume less and produce less. If creating pollution is seen as an act of violence, and thereby in direct opposition to the tenet of *ahi s* , it becomes essential that Jains refrain from over consumption of goods or even supporting polluting practices in an industry. The tenet of *aparigraha* is bolstered by the concept of *ahi s* in this case. To possess less is to practice *ahi s* .

To cause any harm to any being is against the tenets of Jainism. Sources of harm in Jainism would include pollution of any kind, the destruction of forests, improper disposal of goods, and many other environmentally harmful actions that currently take place around the world.

## Critique of the Jain Environmental Ethic

Despite the modern tone of Jain philosophy and teachings, in actuality a “Jain environmental ethic” did not exist broadly until the early 2000’s. This non histrionic assertion by Jains that their religion has always been founded upon ecological protection could hurt the growth of a Jain environmental ethic.<sup>17</sup> By focusing on rewriting the past instead of looking towards the future Jain scholars are in danger of not taking any actual action and instead focusing on glorifying rhetoric.

It is only recently that the various religions have had to question their sources with regard to the interaction of humans with their environment in response to the explosion in the numbers of people and their consumption of the earth's resources at a rate that threatens to exhaust its life sustaining capacity.<sup>18</sup>

To try to attempt to create a historical lineage would mean that Jainism would have to rely too much on their belief of the perfection of their scientific outlook and all-knowing omniscients, which could greatly hinder and only entrench their viewpoint, further castigating problems of ecological degradation. This attempt at winning the ecological contest against other religions distracts from the real purpose, the environmental movement, and simultaneously abandons *anek ntav da*, or multiple viewpoints.

Another point of contention amongst Jain environmental discussions is the wealthy lay community. It is their interactions as a merchant class and business men that has placed them at the forefront of environmental degradation.<sup>19</sup> This may seem like a small obstacle, but Jain society is highly stratified in behaviour required by adherents. As a religion that already requires a great deal of separation between the life of an ascetic as opposed to that of a lay person it would be easy to compartmentalize environmental stewardship as relegated to the ascetic group. A vow of environmental nonviolence may seem too difficult and therefore only enter into major vows (*sakala*) instead of including those who take minor or partial vows (*vikala*) i.e. householders.

...the Jain scriptural canon, presumably some time before its semi closure in the fifth century c.e., came to include a good deal of material relating to lay followers. Even at this relatively early time in Jainism's history, we find an awareness of the necessity of the pious disbursement of wealth by the layman who is represented in idealized form as a figure effectively as near to a monk as to householder.<sup>20</sup>

In short, the ascetics rely on the lay people for nearly everything. If the lay community itself were to cut back on consumption it could negatively affect the ascetics as well. The holding of lay people in almost as high esteem as monks has allowed many Jain laypeople to enter into vows partially, yet hold respect from the community at a great rate. Jain laypeople do not have to follow all the tenets of Jainism, they are free to practice their religion to the best of their ability and still receive praise.

This is seen as a problem because Jainism is a highly individual religion. P j is often completed alone and the focus of all actions is on the individual's responsibility to cease the accrual of karmas and work towards their removal. This does not leave much room for group action. The individual nature of Jainism paired with the highly segregated community organization could prove to be a difficult issue when it comes to problems associated with the environment.

Another issue that is raised by the concept of a Jain ecological ethic is the very notion of time. If it is natural that the world is falling into ruin, then there may not be any reasoning to solve the issue at hand. As discussed earlier there is neither beginning nor end in Jain cosmology after a ruinous period things will surely fix themselves. The problem with this concept is that it holds an ecological decline as natural, an essential fact of the Jain universe. To hold these views in doubt would mean to negate the teachings of the omniscient beings of the past. But more troubling is the concept that if this is a natural process and the world will improve as the pendulum swings back to “happy happy” times no action need be taken. Some Jains may believe that this is the way the world is right now and hopefully in a future life I will see better times.

The Jain community has changed their history to make themselves fit into the societal model that was needed for the time. For example, changing the fourteen forbidden livelihoods to only seven so that the Jain community could compete economically even though the newly allowed careers caused violence upon the earth. Also in response to societal pressure Jains began building temples so that they could have a more "Jain way of life", and function in a society that loves places of worship. The very building of a temple or place of worship is seen as an act of violence upon the earth in Jain dogma. The ground must be raised, stone cut out of the earth, and many beings will be destroyed in the process of erecting the temples. Some see this realignment with modern ethic as another political shift by Jains to fit into the culture of which they are already a part. It should be noted that it is not fair to view Jains in a vacuum. This community is a part of a greater society, just like any religion. The shortcomings of Jainism only become apparent through the modern shift in their rhetoric, and the obvious gap between the lives of the ascetic and the lay person.

## Conclusion

Inside Jainism there lies a philosophical groundwork that could benefit the environmental movement greatly. The focus on ahimsa, *aparigraha*, and defining living beings as valuable no matter how complex, could shed light on the importance of nature for society as a whole. The espousal of vegetarian eating and abandonment of consumerist lifestyle is essential for the cessation of environmental degradation. In order to become more effective stewards of this belief system, it is imperative that Jain scholars abandon attempts to redefine the history of Jainism and focus on moving forward. There is great value in a religion that focuses on the belief of human as part of its ecosystem, but the gulf left between those who practice Jainism in full versus those who are only partial practitioners leaves a dangerous loophole. But there is hope. The callings of *ahi s paramo dharma* “nonviolence is the highest religious duty” and *parasparopagraho j v n m* “mutual support to all living creatures” ring true to the environmental movement. These two simple assertions offer Jainism a great place to develop an ecological ethic that is sound and ready to take action.

## Notes and References:

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Soloman, Norman. “Judaism and the Environment.” In *Judaism and Ecology*. Ed. Aubrey Rose. London: Cassell Publishers, 1992. 27.
  - <sup>2</sup> Tatia, Nathmal. “The Jain Worldview and Ecology.” In *Jainism & Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. Ed. Christopher Key Chapple. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2006: 14.
  - <sup>3</sup> ‘*Parasparopagraho j v n m*’ Tattv rthas tra, 5.21
  - <sup>4</sup> “The Concept of God in Jainism”. Jaina: Federation of Jain Association in North America. Web. 15 May 2019.<<https://www.jaina.org/page/ConceptofGod>>.

- 
- 5 Dundas, Paul. "The Limits of a Jain Environmental Ethic". In *Jainism & Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. Op. cit. 2006: 97.
- 6 Chapple, Christopher Key. "The Living Earth of Jainism and the New Story: Rediscovering and Reclaiming a Functional Cosmology." In *Jainism & Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. Op. cit. 2006: 119-140.
- 7 Singhvi, L. M. *Light of Indian Intellect*. Delhi: Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd., 2008: 186.
- 8 Bhagavat s tra, 1:39-40.
- 9 raddh Pratikrama a S tra 2/120-121
- 10 Tatia, Nathmal. "The Jain Worldview and Ecology." In *Jainism & Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. Ed. Christopher Key Chapple. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2006: 6.
- 11 "Hi s 'n tastey 'brahmaparigrahebhyo viratirvratam", Tattv rtha S tra 7/1.
- 12 "Bh tavratyanukamp d nam sar gasa yam diyoga k nti aucamiti sadvedyasya", Ibid 6/13.
- 13 "Parasparopagraho j v n m", Ibid 5/21.
- 14 Jain, Yogendra. *The Jain Way of Life Handbook: A Guide to Compassion, Healthy, and Happy Living*. New York: Federation of Jain association of North America - JAINA, 2007: 30.
- 15 Kraftson, Stephanie et al. "Are Meat-Based Dites Bad for the Planet". *Vegetarianism*. Ed. Amy Francis. New York: Greenhaven Press, 2015: 22.
- 16 Singhvi, L. M. "The Jain Declaration on Nature". *Jainism & Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. Ed. Christopher key Chapple. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2006: 224.
- 17 Cort, John E. "Green Jainism? Notes and Queries towards a Possible Jain Environmental Ethics". *Jainism & Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. Op. cit. 2006: 66.
- 18 Ibid
- 19 Dundas, Paul. "The Limits of a Jain Environmental Ethic". Op. cit. 2006: 102.
- 20 Ibid

**International School for Jain Studies 'ISJS'**: A leading institution for academic studies of Jainism setup in 2005. Its mission is to introduce academic studies of Jainism in the universities globally. So far 705 participants from 141 universities and 105 schools from 22 countries, primarily from USA have attended ISSJS.

ISJS also conducts seminars, undertakes funded research projects, and publishes papers and books on various aspects of Jainism and its application in today's society. ISJS is associated with a number of universities and research organizations and works closely with leading scholars of Jainism.