

Ancient Jaina Texts of History

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Study of Jaina history is a very wide and an important aspect in the study of ancient and medieval history of India. Systematic and constructive research in Jaina history demands a sound knowledge in the field of epigraphy (study of inscriptions), archaeology, āgamas & post āgamic literature written mainly in Prakrit and Sanskrit languages. Apart from common attributes of various ancient Indian texts of history which gives the glimpses of social and political situations and traditions, Jaina historical texts also helps in better understanding of its philosophical evolvement over the span of various centuries since the last Arhat Vardhamāna Mahāvīra. Various aspects of ancient Indian history can be better understood with the help of Jaina Texts (both canonical and non-canonical Texts). In this article I present the introduction of few important ancient texts dating from 5th century CE till 14th century CE which are exclusively devoted to the subject of history of Jaina faith, contribution of various Jaina monks as well as important past events. These are the texts whose central theme appears to be history of Jainism, but they also contain various important aspects of political, cultural and socio-religious history of India. Apart from these texts, there are many more texts whose central theme is not history, but contain a lot of data with regards to different aspects of history. e.g. Ācārya Udyotanasūri's *Kuvalayamālākahā* written in Mahāraṣṭrī Prakrit contains interesting information about cultural position and beauty of ancient India. Another important work is *Vārāṅga-caritra* written by 'Ācārya Jaṭāsīmhanandī' which has the honour of being the first Sanskrit Mahākāvya of Jaina tradition. *Vasudevahinḍī* by 'Saṅghadāsagaṇī' is again a rich source for understanding socio-cultural aspects of ancient India. In this context, it is important to mention *Nandīsūtra* written by Śrī Devavācaka, which contains a very important lineage of sages of Jainism and a list of āgamic literature out of which few of them are lost over a period of time.

The *Munīsvratasvāmī Caritra* authored by Śrīcandrasūri of *Maladhārī Gaccha* contains the biography of two prominent saints namely Abhayadeva and Hemacandra (both of Maladhārī Gaccha) in a very systematic manner which provides us with the data regarding position of Jaina community in Rajasthan and Gujarat during their time period. This text says that The Mahāvīra temple at Gwalior was closed by the officials, Ācārya Abhayadevasūri himself met the King Bhuvanapāla for reopening of the same.

1) Prabandha Cintāmaṇi: Written in V.S 1361 by Ācārya Śrī Merutuṅgasūri (of Nāgendra Gachha) at Vadwan in Gujarat, this is treated as an authentic history work by many modern scholars such as Buhler, Jinavijaya & Forbes.

This work contains the narratives of Rājā Vikrama, Sātavāhanas, Vanrāja Chawda, Mūlrāja, Bhoja, Mahākavi Dhanapāla, Rājā Siddharāja, Kumārapāla Mahārāja, Ācārya Devasūri, Ācārya Hemacandrasūri, Mantrī Udayana, Bahad, Āmarabhaṭṭa, renovation of Śakunika-vihāra (at Bharuch), Rājā Ajayapāla, Mantrī Vāstupāla & Tejapāla, Rājā Śīlāditya, Rājā Lakṣmaṇasena, Rājā Jayacandra of Kāśī, Ācārya Pādālipitasūri (1st century CE), Siddha Nāgārujana and many other small narrations.

Prabandha Cintāmaṇi is written in Sanskrit and serves as an important source for the study of Jaina history along with history of Gujarat. During the lifetime of the author, Gujarat came under the foreign rule and dynasty of Cālukyas of Aṇhilpur Pāṭana was declining and nearing its end. The author has made a sincere attempt to record all the major socio-religious and political events that occurred during the rule of this dynasty. The narrative about Sidharāja and Kumārapāla portrayed in this work is considered to be very authentic and historical in nature. One of the most important features of this work is the chronology of Kings of Aṇhilapur Pāṭana. In which, a king rules for how many years is indicated which also correlates with inscriptions of those period. In the pilgrimage for Palitānā organised by Vāstupāla 21000 Śvetāmbara Jains and 300 Digambara Jains had participated. Such valuable data about the rulers

of Gujarat is not found in any of the works prior to “*Prabandha Cintāmaṇi*.” For a student of Jain history, this work is a ‘compulsory read.

Ācārya Merutuṅgasūri has also indicated his purpose of writing this book. He is of the opinion that age old and repeated narratives of mythology may not be a good read for an intelligent reader. Therefore, he has tried to present the history of ideal personalization of recent past, in which he has been successful. The writers post Ācārya Merutuṅgasūri have utilized the valuable data of his work and it can be seen in their works. For example Ācārya Jinaprabhasūri in his ‘*Vividha Tīrthakalpa*,’ Ācārya Rājaśekharasūri in his ‘*Prabandhakośa*,’ Ācārya Jayasimhasūri in his ‘*Kumārapāla-caritra*’ etc. and many others have made good utilization of *Prabandha Cintāmaṇi* in their literary works.

Translations in English, Hindi and Gujarati of this work have been published in the past. About Ācārya Merutuṅgasūrijī and his life we don’t have any sources to know. He has written another work ‘*Mahāpuruṣa Caritra*’ describing lives of five Tīrthanāka namely Rṣabhadeva, Śāntinātha, Neminātha, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīrasvāmī.

2) Vividha Tīrthakalpa (Kalpapradīpa): This work is authored by Ācārya Jinaprabhasūrijī in 14th century CE. He was highly intellectual as well as a prominent influential personality of his time¹. The original name of text was *Kalpaprādīpa*, but the editor of this text Jinavijayajī had given its name as *Vividha Tīrthakalpa* and since then it is popular by this name. This work was completed during the reign of Sultan Mohammad Tuglaq at Delhi. This text is divided into 62 *kalpas*, which were written by the author during different points of time. The main theme of the text is about the introduction and history of various tīrtha (pilgrimage centers). In total this work records the history of some 40-41 *tīrthas* and it also records the names of 84 Jaina tīrthas under the title ‘*Caturśītimahātīrthanāma saṅgrahakalpa*’.

State wise nos. of *tīrthas* in *Vividha Tīrthakalpa* are as follows

- i. Uttar Pradesh - 13
- ii. Bihar - 7
- iii. West Bengal - 2
- iv. Odisha - 2
- v. Madhya Pradesh - 7
- vi. Rajasthan - 11
- vii. Gujarat - 23
- viii. Karnataka - 3
- ix. Andhra Pradesh / Telangana - 3
- x. Maharashtra - 6

This text is one of the very important sources in reconstructing Jaina history as well as history of different places. The author belonged to Kharatara Gachha, a subsect of Śvetāmbara sect, but he has also recorded few famous *tīrthas* of Digambara sect .

Apart from history of pilgrimage centres it also contains the following:

- i. Minister Vāstupāla & Tejapāla's generous deeds and donations
- ii. Significance of Navakāra Mantra (Pañcaparamesṭhis Namaskāra)
- iii. Description of Samavasaraṇa
- iv. Pañca Kalyāṇaka Stavana
- v. Dhimapurī-Stavana
- vi. Śrī Ujayanta Stavana (Girnar)
- vii. Life of King Sātavāhana (ruler of Pratiṣṭhānapurī)
- viii. Life story of Devī Ambikā and Kāpardī Yakṣa

For the history of few places, this text is the sole source. For example except this text, there is no other literary source for the history of Hanama Koṇḍā Jaina Tīrtha (Telangana). The information about the origin of this *tīrtha* along with Katakīya dynasty is historic in

nature and is further confirmed with archeological sources currently found there. This shrine is now converted into a Hindu temple. Similarly, the author has recorded the name of Śrī Parvata Tīrtha (dedicated to Tīrthaṅkara Mallinātha and Yakṣa Ghaṇṭākaraṇa Mahāvīra) under the list of 84 *mahātīrthas*. This proves the existence of Jaina temples at Śrī Parvata (modern Shrishailam) atleast till the author's period. From the inscriptions in the temple of Mallikārjuna, we find the records of massacre of Śvetāmbara Jains at this place². We don't find any reference of Śrī Parvata in post Jinaprabhasūri's records.

There is a lot of scope for comparative and critical study of ancient Jaina pilgrimage centres by taking *Vividha-Tīrthakalpa* as the base. It seems that the author had himself visited various places and recorded the facts and narratives on the basis of what he saw there and heard there. He has clearly expressed this at the end of some *Kalpas*. The information contained in the text offers a good guidance for undertaking archaeological excavations at many places which Ācārya Jinaprabhasūri has described, but have not survived till date as a result of religious intolerance prevalent in India during the medieval time where in large number of religious structures and libraries were destroyed. Excavations can bring to light various remains which can help in understanding various aspects of social, religious and political situation prevailing in past and helps in uncovering various hidden facts. Mathura in Uttar Pradesh was a major settlement of Jains in past and its description is also available in *Vividha Tīrthakalpa*. However, nothing was surviving there until excavations were conducted, which resulted in the discovery of remains of ancient Jain stūpa³ (3rd Century BC) which was known as 'Deva Nirmita Stūpa' in Jaina literature.

Historians and Archaeologists have since long neglected the importance of Jaina literature. If excavations can be conducted on the basis of texts like 'Mahābhārata' which contain more of mythology than facts, then why should not excavations be conducted on the basis of *Vividha Tīrthakalpa* which contains so much historical data

and much more can be recorded with the help of comparative studies and scientific excavations. Hindi translation by Dr. Ranjan Suridev is published by Research Institute of Prakrit, Jainology and Ahimsā, Vaishali, Bihar.

3) Prabandhakośa: This work was written by Ācārya Rājaśekharaśūri who belonged to 'Maladhārī-gaccha.' He completed this work in the year 1348-1349 in Delhi, when 'Mohammed-bin-Tugalaq' was ruling Delhi. This work was divided into 24 chapters containing the biographies of 24 different personalities who are Jaina Ācāryas, Kings and Śrāvakas (Jaina lay-devotees). This work is also known as 'Caturviṃśati Prabandha. When we compare Prabandhakośa with Prabandha-cintāmaṇi, we find that the former is more descriptive in nature and information about 10 persons (4 Ācāryas, 4 Kings, & 2 Śrāvakas) is common in both the works. Ācārya Rājaśekharaśūri was a scholarly personality who had knowledge of different literature like *Jaina Caritras*, *Hindu Mahākāvyas*, logic and *Purāṇas*. It is very interesting to observe that we find names of around 70 ancient texts in Prabandhakośa which suggests the author's authority on various types of literature. In his work, the author has tried to present in an orderly manner various important aspects of Jaina history. Out of the 24 *prabandhas*, 10 contain the lives of famous Jaina Ācāryas. One of the objectives of study of history is to get a proper idea of the past including understanding historical mistakes and avoiding the same in future. As an able historian, Ācārya Rājaśekharaśūri wanted his readers to understand the above objective and aim for a prosperous future.

This work is in Sanskrit Language, and his other works are as follows:

- i. *Sūrimantra Nitya Karma*
- ii. *Syādvāda Kalikā*
- iii. *Antarakathā Saṅgraha*
- iv. *Commentary on Nyāya Kandālī*
- v. *Upadeśa Cintāmaṇi*
- vi. *Vrītti-traya Nibandha*

vii. *Neminātha Phāgu*

viii. *Editor of Śāntinātha-caritra of Ācārya Munibhadrāsūri*

ix. *Ṣaḍadarśana-samuccaya*

No English or Hindi translation of the text is available but Gujarati translations are published. Dr. Pravesch Bharadvaj has written a book '*Prabandhakoś kā Aithihāsika Vivecana*'⁴ Publisher: Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur in Hindi in which he has discussed various historical contents of the text. To conclude, this work is more factual than fiction.

4) Prabhāvakacarita:- This work is written in Sanskrit by Ācārya Prabhācandra (a Śvetāmbara monk) in 11th century CE. This work contains the life history of 22 Jaina Ācāryas (Śvetāmbara) who lived in different time periods, namely:

- i. Ācārya Vajrasvāmī
- ii. Ācārya Ārya Rakṣita
- iii. Ācārya Ārya Nandīla
- iv. Ācārya Kālaksūri
- v. Ācārya Padalīptasūri
- vi. Ācārya Vijaya Simhasūri
- vii. Ācārya Jīvasūri
- viii. Ācārya Vrīddhvādisūri
- ix. Ācārya Haribhadrāsūri
- x. Ācārya Mallavādisūri
- xi. Ācārya Mānatuṅgasūri (author of *Bhaktāmara-stotra*)
- xii. Ācārya Bappabhaṭṭisūri
- xiii. Ācārya Mānadevasūri
- xiv. Ācārya Siddharṣi (author - *Upamitibhavaprapaṅca-kathā*)
- xv. Ācārya Vīrasūri
- xvi. Ācārya Śāntisūri
- xvii. Ācārya Śrī Mahendrasūri
- xviii. Ācārya Sūrācārya
- xix. Ācārya Abhayādevasūri

xx. Ācārya Vīrācārya

xxi. Ācārya Vādidevasūri

xxii. Ācārya Hemacandrasūri (Kalikāla Sarvajña)

This work is a valuable treasure of Jaina History, and information regarding various rulers of Ancient India can also be found in this work, which serves as an important source for reconstruction of Ancient Indian History. The biography of Ācārya Hemacandrasūri consists of 853 verses and that of Ācārya Bappabhaṭṭīsūri consists of 772 verses. Names of various Āgama Śāstras, their commentary, *Prakaraṇa*, *Caritakāvyam*, *Kośa Grantha* (Dictionary), *Kathā sāhitya*, works of Haribhadrāsūri, etc., can be found in *Prabhāvakacarita* which totals up to 54.⁵

Ācāryas Hemacandrasūri's '*Parīṣiṣṭa Parvan*' has served as an inspiration to Ācārya Prabhācandra to write this work. Hemacandrācārya has written the biography of *Pūrvācāryas* till Ārya Vajrasvāmī. Therefore, Prabhācandra wrote this work to cover the life history of Ācāryas post Vajrasvāmī up to 12th century CE. Apart from biographies of *ācāryas*, important historical facts about political and social condition are also found in this work. Ācārya Prabhācandra has used various ancient texts available during his time to ensure authenticity of *Prabhāvakacarita*.⁵ For the complete list of names of literary works refer *Prabhāvakacarita* (Hindi) - Dr. Ranjan Suridev ; pg. vii-viii, Publisher: Research Institute of Prakrit, Jainology and Ahimsa, Vaishali, Bihar (2013).

5) Kahāvalī:- *Kahāvalī-kathā* is written in Prakrit by Ācārya Bhadreśvarsūri around 10th -11th century CE. (Pt. Amrutlal Bhojak places him between 993-1093 CE) *Kahāvalī* is a huge work and aims at narrating the universal history of Jainism.

It starts with the life stories of Tīrthaṅkaras, Cakravartīs, Vāsudevas and ends with life history of famous Jaina Ācārya's like Pādaliptasūri, Vācaka Umāsvāti, Mallavādī, Siddhasena, Jinabhadragaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa and Haribhadrāsūri. In total we can find 306 ⁶

narratives in *Kahāvalī* which are of immense value in the study of History of Jainism. Some of the interesting narratives which contain historical facts are as follows:

- i. *Vajrasvāmī Kathā*
- ii. *Ārya Rakṣitasūrijī Kathā* (who divided the ancient āgamas into 4 Anuyogas)
- iii. *Aśoka and Kuṇāla*
- iv. *Emperor Samprati* (he sent missionaries across India for spread of Jainism)
- v. *Cāṇakya and Candragupta Maurya*
- vi. *Stories of 7 Nihavas*
- vii. *Origin of Digambara sect of Jainism*
(in Śivabhūti's Kathā)
- viii. *Episode of Rathayātrā of Jīvanta Svāmi of Ujjain*
(Image of Lord Mahāvīra carved during his lifetime)
- ix. *Kālakasūri Kathā*⁶ (records an important event on how Śaka rulers came to India (at Kathiawad) and the role of Jainacārya Kālakasūri in the same and defeat of rulers of Ujjain who had kidnapped the sister of Kālakasūri by the Śaka Rulers.)
- x. *Different Vācanas of Jaina Canonical Literature*
- xi. *Jinabhadraṇi Kṣmāśramaṇa* (Author of Viśeṣāvaśyaka Bhāṣya)
- xii. *Haribhadrasūri* (Author of 1444 Books)
- xiii. *Kālakasūri* (change of Paryūṣaṇa date from fifth to fourth day of Bhādrapada)

This work is earlier than the above works discussed so far. The available version of *Kathāvalī* consists of 12600 ślokas and manuscripts of the same are preserved in Jaina libraries of Patan, L D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad and Pravartaka Kantivijaya Saṅgraha Jñānabhaṇḍāra in Baroda. Muniśrī Kalyānakīrti Vijayajī

has edited *Kahāvalī* (Shrivijaysenasūrīśvarajī Svādhyāya Mandira, Ahmedabad -2012) based on the ancient copper plate manuscripts of Pātan and is published in two parts.⁷ It is unfortunate that not much attention has been paid towards *Kahāvalī* because of lack of printed edition of original text and its translation. However, with the effort of Muniśrī, now the original text of Prakrit is accessible. Considering the volume and its wide coverage, it is one of the important texts that a student of Jaina history and culture must refer to.

For further studies on the life of Ācārya Kalaksūri refer to:

a) *Ārya Kālaka* - by Paṇyāsa Kalyaṇa Vijayajī (in Mahaveer Dwivedi's Abhinandana Grantha)

b) *Suvarṇabhūmi men Kālakācārya* - by U. P. Shah ; Publisher : Jaina Sanskriti Sanshodhan Mandal, Banaras (year-1956)

6) Pariśiṣṭa Parvan: This work is written by Kalikāla Sarvājña Ācārya Hemacandrasūri in 12th Century CE in Sanskrit, it is also known as *Sthavirāvalī Caritra*. It is a legendary history of the patriarchs from Jambusvāmī down to Vajrasvāmī. i.e. a series of historical legends and their information arranged in a chronological order. *Pariśiṣṭa Parvan* consists of 3460 *Ślokas* divided into thirteen chapters of unequal length. Important narratives included are those of Prasannacandra, Jambūsvāmī, Bhadrabāhu, Sthūlibhadra, Cāṇakya, Chandragupta, Aśoka, Samprati, Sayyambhava (author of Daśavaikālika-sūtra), Prabhavasvāmī, Udayana, Nandas, Sambhūtivijaya, Ārya Mahāgiri, Ārya Suhasti, procession of Jīvantasvāmī Image, Avantīśukumāla, Vajrasvāmī, and Ārya Rakṣita.

Ācārya Hemacandra has used ancient Jaina canons, their commentaries and other Jaina canons, their commentaries and other literature available during his time to present the history of Jaina patriarchs in a chronological order. According to Hemacandra,

Samprati was responsible for sending missionaries to popularise the Jaina code of conduct in the South so that it would be convenient for the monks to travel in South India practicing their ascetic conduct. In this context, it is important to note that one of the earliest archaeological evidence of existence of Jainism in Andhra Pradesh is of Mauryan Period. It is the remains of a Jaina Stūpa excavated from a place called Vaḍḍamanu. One of the label inscription which is in Brāhmī script and Prakrit Language reads as 'Sampati Vihāra' (Samprati Vihāra). The *Brhatkalpa Bhāṣya* of Saṅghadās Gaṇi also credits Samprati for sending missionaries in various regions including South India. In the *Pariśiṣṭa Parvan*, it is said that Vajrasvāmī had travelled in South India.

Harman Jacobi has edited *Pariśiṣṭa Parvan* using old manuscripts and had written an introduction of the same (published in 1932 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal). RCC Fynes has translated this text in English titled '*Hemacandra: the lives of the Jaina elders*' which was published from the Oxford University Press, New York. This work is also notable for providing information on the political history of ancient India. The period largely covered in the *Pariśiṣṭa Parvan* corresponds to 500 BC to 400 CE.

7) Titthogālī Painṇaya (Tirthogālī Prakīrṇaka) : *Titthogālī Payiṇṇaya* is written in Prakrit. Its authorship and when it was written is not known. The earliest reference of this text is found in *Vyavahārasūtra Bhāṣya* written by Saṅghadāsa Gaṇi. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that it is a work written prior to 5th century CE. A copper plate manuscript of this text is preserved in Jñāna Bhaṇḍara of Patan.

Apart from the description of lives of Śalākāpuruṣas and Metaphysics, *Titthogālī Painṇaya* contains various aspects of History. It gives a lineage of ascetics from Sudharmā Svāmī (the first Paṭṭadhara of Mahāvīra Svāmī) till Ārya Sthūlibhadra. It describes in detail the life history of Sthūlibhadra and his study of *Pūrvas* under Ācārya

Bhadrabāhu (the last Śrutakevalī). Such lineage of ascetics is also found in *Kalpasūtra* and *Nandīsūtra*. The Mathurā Kaṅkāḷī Ṭīlā excavation brought to light many ancient idols and inscriptions which mention names of different ascetics, their *Kulas*, *Gaṇas* etc. Most of which are mentioned in *Kalpasūtra* and *Nandīsūtra*.

The lineage of ascetics after Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, as given in *Titthogālī Prakīrṇaka* is as under:

- i. Vardhmāna Mahāvīra
- ii. Ārya Sudharmā
- iii. Ārya Jambū
- iv. Ārya Prabhava
- v. Ārya Sayyambhava
- vi. Ārya Yaśobhadra
- vii. Ārya Sambhūti
- viii. Ārya Bhadrabāhu
- ix. Ārya Sthūlibhadra

Reference of *Stūpas* and their destruction in Pāṭalīputra (Modern Patna) is described in this text. Time periods of various rulers of post Vardhamāna Mahāvīra is given in this *Prakīrṇaka*. Muniśrī Kalyānavijayjī in his magnum opus '*Vīranirvāṇa Saṁvat aura Jaina kālagaṇanā*' has made good use of this text (along with various other ancient texts) to critically analyze and establish a chronological order of events after Vardhamāna Mahāvīra. The Jaina Monks had to face lot of difficulties in ancient times is described in many instances in this text.

References:

1. For Authentic life sketch, refer *Jaina Tirthon kā Aitihasika Adhyayana*, page no.14-24 by Dr. Shivprasad, P.V. Varanasi
2. For detailed study refer - *Śrī Parvata Jaina Tirtha* (Hindi) - *Kalyāṇa* (Monthly) November 2019, Surendranagar (Rushab R Bhandari)
3. For detailed Study, refer '*The Jain Stūpa & Other Antiques of Mathurā*' - Vincent Smith, ASI & '*The Jaina Stūpa at Mathurā: Art & Icons*' by Dr. Renuka Porwal (Published by Prachya Vidyapith, Shajapur)

4. Publisher: Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur
 5. For the complete list of names of literary works refer *Prabhāvakacarita* (Hindi) -Dr. Ranjan Sūridev ; pg. vii - viii, Publisher: Research Institute of Prakrit Jainology and Ahimsā, Vaishali, Bihar (2013).
 6. For complete list of narratives, see Dr. Dalsukh Malvania's article on *Bhadreśvara's Kahāvalī in 'Kahāvalī'*, Editor-Munishri Kalyan Kirti Vijaya (2012)
 7. Publisher : Kalikala Sarvajña Śrī Hemcandrācārya Navam Janmashtabdi Smruti Sanskar Shikshan Nidhi, Ahmedabad.
- * For further studies on the life of Ācārya Kālakasūri refer to:
- a) *Ārya Kālaka* - by Paṇyasa Kalyāṇa Vijayajī (in Mahavira Dwivedi's Abhinandana Grantha)
 - b) *Suvarṇabhūmi men Kālākācārya* -by U.P.Shah ; Publisher : Jain Sanskruti Sanshodhan Mandal, Benaras (year-1956)
- * *Titthogālī Prakīrṇaka, gāthā no.-702-806*, Translator- Dr.Atul Kumar Prasad Singh,(2012), Publisher- Jain Vishva Bharati Sansthan, Ladnun.

