

PREFACE

Shri Raj Krishen Jain Memorial Lectures, graciously held every year under the benign auspices of the University of Delhi and ably organised by its prestigious Department of Buddhist Studies, have earned, since their inception in 1975, a place of honour both among the academicians in general and among the Jainologists in particular by providing active encouragement to them to present before the scholars and interested persons the outcome of their advanced research work in different aspects of Jainological Studies. As a result in these Lecture Series eminent authorities like Dr. D.S. Kothari (New Delhi), Justice T.K. Tukol (Bangalore), Dr. Nath Mal Tatia (Ladnu), Dr. T.G. Kalghatagi and Dr. S.K. Khadabadi (Dharwad) and Dr. Kailash Chandra Shastri and Dr. Darbarilal Kothia (Varanasi) did expound before enlightened audiences their considered views and issues about their particular specialised fields of Jaina Studies. Again it is quite noteworthy that these lectures have been published in book forms for the benefit of students and general public by the “Shri Raj Krishen Jain Charitable Trust, New Delhi” through whose munificent donations the scheme of “Raj Krishen Jain Memorial Lectures” was instituted in the University of Delhi.

Obviously I was very happy indeed to deliver on the 27th September, 1991 in the Department of Buddhist Studies of the University of Delhi a series of two lectures on “Jaina Society Through The Ages” under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. A.M. Shah, Head of the Department of sociology, University of Delhi, since I did some pioneering work in the field of studies of Jaina Society during the last forty five years as a result of which studies on ‘Jaina People’ now form an important part of Jainological studies.

In the initial stages, the Jainological Studies were mainly concerned with the studies in Jaina Religion and Philosophy’ as they formed the very basis of Jaina Culture. As a result it was earlier thought that the Jainology was the study of Jaina Religion and Philosophy. But soon the studies in ‘Jaina Literature’ in different languages got prominence as it had enshrined and preserved the knowledge about the tenets, doctrines and practices relating to ‘Jaina Religion and Philosophy’. In this way studies in Jaina Languages and Literature’ constituted another branch of Jainology along with that of studies in ‘Jaina Religion and Philosophy’. Later it was realised that the studies in Jaina Culture would be complete only with the studies of several forms of Jaina Arts and

Architecture as they had contributed to a great extent in enriching and developing the different aspects of Indian Culture. Consequently the studies in 'Jaina Arts and Architecture' soon assumed the status of a distinctive branch of Jainology.

Later it was keenly felt by scholars in Jainology that the studies of 'Jaina People' from Sociological point of view should be undertaken in a scientific way as the Jain Society had been mainly responsible not only for the preservation but also for the development of Jaina Culture and Indian Culture through all these centuries in an uninterrupted manner and inspite of the fact that the Jainas constitute a small minority in India. As a step in this direction work of a pioneering nature was done by Dr. Vilas Sangave by submitting in 1950 his thesis entitled 'Jaina Community : A Social Survey' to the University of Bombay for Ph. D. in Sociology. As a result of publication of this thesis in 1959 scholars in Social Sciences from India and countries of the West were attracted to the study of various aspects of Jaina Society. In fact, there were two major considerations in selecting Jaina Society as a separate subject of study by Social Scientists. In the first place, the Jaina Society was the only society in the world which actually practiced nonviolence in all its aspects and in all its activities.

As such, the Jainas were the only persons who represented the non-violent way of life in this world of violence and destruction. Secondly, the Jaina Society had preserved its separate identity and culture through all these centuries in spite of the fact that the small minority community of Jainas had to live amidst the other major communities of India.

In view of these pressing and important academic considerations Social Scientists and especially Social Anthropologists, Sociologists and Social Historians from different parts of the world began to devote their serious attention to the study of Jaina Society from their particular points of view. These specialised studies got impetus in 1974 due to the world wide observance of 2500th Nirvana Mahotsava of Lord Mahavira and then in 1980 due to the publication of the second edition of Dr. Bilas Sangave's pioneering book in the field, viz., 'Jaina Community : A Social Survey'. As a consequence, these studies in Jaina Society assumed the form of inter-disciplinary studies-with actual field work attached to it in some cases-and were carried out with devotion by the Universities and Advanced Research Institutes not only in India but also in Western Countries like England, France, Germany and U.S.A.

In this connection it is very gratifying to note that the old, prestigious and well-developed Department of Social Anthropology of the ancient and world-reputed University of Cambridge in England took the lead in the matter, carried out extensive field works for studying different aspects of social conditions actually prevailing in the Jaina Society at present in different parts of India and England and even organised in June 1985 at Cambridge the “First International Seminar On Jainas As A Community”. I had the pleasure of taking part in this seminar as a resource person. This International Seminar of an inter-disciplinary character was the first attempt to bring together for discussion the leading Social Scientists, Orientalists and Jainalogists from different parts of the world. In this fruitful seminar a number of useful research papers were discussed and it is heartening to find that a large volume based on these papers and discussions has been recently published by the University of Cambridge (vide “The Assembly of Listeners: Jains in Society”, edited by Michail Carrithers and Carolone Humphrey, Cambridge University Press, 1991.).

In view of this position that the subject of studies in ‘Jaina Society’ has now got an international recognition and as I have been continuously involved in different capacities in

carrying out these studies during the last five decades, I selected the subject of “Jaina Society Through The Ages” for my lectures. During these lectures I dealt with the significant features of Jainas as a minority, brought out the social demographic position of Jainas in India, delineated the process of division going on in the religious and social fields among Jainas, pointed out the contributions made by Jainas to Indian Culture, explained the causes of survival and decline of position of Jainas, and at the end discussed the fundamental problems of vital importance with which the Jaina Society is confronted at present.

I am indeed grateful to the constructive social leader, the propagator of studies in Jainology, and the worthy Chairman of ‘Shri Raj Krishen Jain Charitable Trust’ Shri Prem Chandra Jain for giving me this rare opportunity to deliver lectures on a new subject like ‘Jaina Society’. My thanks are also due to him and to the members of his family for providing kind hospitality to me during my stay in Delhi. It is again really good of him to bring out these lectures in a book form in such a record time and in a nice manner.

I also wish to express my feelings of gratitude to Prof Dr. K.K. Mittal, Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies,

University of Delhi for sponsoring and organising these lectures in a fruitful way, to Prof. Dr. A.M. Shah, Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi for presiding over the lectures and for presenting a critical appreciation of those lectures, and to my friend and eminent scholar Dr. B.K. Khadabadi, Retired Professor of Prakrit, Karnataka University, Dharwad for extending every co-operation to me during these lectures as in the past.

My thanks are also due to the staff of Rajaram College and Shivaji University Libraries in Kolhapur for their ready help in all respects and to Shri Mohan Patil for preparing a neat typescript of my lectures.

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Villas Adinath Sangave

**Mahavir Jayanti,
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