

The Jaina Tradition

enunciation has been the hallmark of classical Indian tradition of *Śramaṇism*. The Jaina religion represents an important branch of the *Śramaṇa* tradition of ancient India. It is one of the most ancient living faiths in the world ; it has held aloft the banner of ascetic ideal of renunciation for more than twenty-five centuries now, nearly four million modern Indians still profess the Jaina faith.

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism has remained confined to India; unlike Buddhism too it has had, however, a continuous history in its homeland. Orthodoxy and resilience have characterized the history of the Jaina faith ; the remarkable degree of tolerance and capacity of assimilation shown by the Jaina monastic *saṃgha* as well as the laity right through the ages are also marked features of Jainist history. These characteristics seem to reveal the secret of the continued vitality of the Jaina Community in India.

The ideas and practices expounded by the Victorious Ones (*jinas*) were continuously preached and developed by the *munis* or *śramaṇas* of the Jaina tradition. The highest ideal of the Jaina religious striving has been that of Liberation (*mokṣa*) from conditioned existence (*saṃsāra*). This ultimate concern, the quest of Liberation from the realm of *Karma* and rebirth, has inspired a considerably complex system of moral and religious culture which we call the Jaina culture. The metaphysical presuppositions underlying the moral and religious principles and practices of Jainism are, for the most part, peculiar to it. This is realized and appreciated when one compares the Jaina theoretical framework of the goal and the technique of eradicating defilements and bonds with those of the other religious systems of India.

THE ORIGINS OF JAINISM

In the nineteenth century, when the Jainist studies were in their infancy, scholars had expressed conflicting views about origin of Jainism. Wilson, Lassen and Weber had believed that Jainism represented one of the many sects of Buddhism. This erroneous view was founded on the striking similarities existing between some of the doctrines and practices of the Buddhists and the Jainas. On the other hand, Colebrooke, Prinsep and Stevenson had rightly believed that Jainism is older than Buddhism, though this belief was based on the wrong supposition of the identity of Indrabhūti Gautama, a disciple of Mahāvīra, with Siddhārtha Gautama. It was the merit of Euhler, Jacobi and Hoernle that they established that historical contemporaneity of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra and Sākyamuni Buddha after making a comparative study of the Jaina and Buddhist canonical texts. Hermann Jacobi had the particular distinction of pointing out that Mahāvīra had some predecessors and that the Jaina church was older than the Buddha.

THE THEORY OF VEDIC ORIGIN

The older generation of Indologists taught the theory of the Vedic-Brahmanic origin of Jainism and Buddhism. They maintained that these religious ideologies came into existence as a result of "The revolts against the Brahman doctrines." The ascetic doctrines and practices

of Jainism and Buddhism were believed to have Vedic origin¹. In other words, Jainism originated as a protestant movement within Vedic-Brahmanic tradition.

The theory of the Vedic origin of Jainism has been widely propagated for a long time, and it has become customary to refer to Jainism as a "heterodox system."² A number of

1. See, for example, Jari Charpentier in *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I PP.134-135.

2. See, for example, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, 1957.

assumptions are at the basis of this theory. The first assumption is that the ascetic stream of culture, the *Śramaṇa* thought, developed within the Vedic-Brahmanic tradition as a reaction to sacrificial ritualism of the Vedic Āryans. Another assumption is that the Vedic culture is the earliest culture of India ; the third assumption is that the earliest Upaniṣads are older than Jainism and Buddhism. Not only the earliest Upaniṣads but also some of the Vedic sutra texts are believed to be the pre-Buddhist and pre-Jinist. The institution of the fourth stage, *śamnyāsa-āśrama*, is also supposed to have been established first in the Brahmanical circles. Let us briefly examine the validity of these assumptions.

THE PRE-VEDIC BACKGROUND : THE MUNIS

The theory of the Vedic-Brahmanic origin of ascetic culture of *Śramaṇa* thought was propounded at a time when practically nothing was known about non-Āryan and pre-Vedic cultures of India. After the discovery of the Harappan Culture or the Indus Valley Civilization this theory had to be modified. The ruined cities of Harappā and Mohenjo-Daro revealed that before the Indo-Āryans arrived in India, a highly advanced and mature culture had been flourishing in the North-West of India. Compared to this culture, the Vedic-Āryan culture appeared to be primitive. The historians of Indian culture began to revise their notion of the antiquity of Vedic culture. The coming of Āryans into India is now generally dated in about 1500 B.C. The Vedic literature and culture began to develop after this date. The Harppan Culture, however, has been placed between 2500 and 1500 B.C. Thus the pre-Vedic and pre-Āryan Harappan culture is much more ancient than the Vedic Āryan culture.

The legacy of the Harappans has been acknowledged by several modern archaeologists. It is now generally accepted that several elements of our ancient thought and culture are of non-Āryan and pre-Āryan origin. The ascetic strand in Indian culture has been traced to non-Vedic Harappan culture complex. The reaction to Vedic sacrificial ritualism found in the later Vedic texts, such as the old Upaniṣads, is now known to have been due to non-Āryan ascetic influences. Many years ago Dr. G.C. Pande had expressed this view in the following words :

"It has been held by many older writers that Buddhism and Jainism arose out of this anti-ritualistic tendency within the religion of the Brāhmaṇas. We have, however, tried to show that the anti-ritualistic tendency within the Vedic fold is itself due to the impact of an asceticism which antedates the Vedas. Jainism represents a continuation of this pre-Vedic stream, from which Buddhism also springs, though deeply influenced by Vedic thought. The fashionable view of regarding Buddhism as a Protestant Vedicism and its birth as a Reformation appears to us to be based on a misreading of the later Vedic history caused by the fascination of a historical analogy and the ignorance, or neglect of pre-Vedic civilization."³

In his epoch-making researches into the genesis of Buddhism, Dr. Pande for the first time brought to light the facts of ultimate origin of *śramaṇa* thought. Earlier, John Marshall had demonstrated in detail the Harappan origins of the practice of *yoga* (asceticism) and *dhyāna* (meditation).⁴ The views of Marshall have been generally accepted because they are based on concrete archaeological evidence. The figures of men seated in ascetic posture of meditation or standing in *yogic* pose have been discovered among the antiquities of the Indus Valley Civilization.⁵ Dr. L.M. Joshi has pointed out that the ascetic sculptures of Harappan origin

3. G.C. Pande : *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, p. 317

4. Sir John Marshall *et al*, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus civilization*, Vol. I. pp. 48 ff.

5. *Ibid.*, vol. I, plates XIII, 17a, XVI, 29 ; CXVII. II.

depict the figures of *munis* and *śramaṇas* of pre-historic India. What Marshall and others describe as the proto-type of Śiva, he describes as the proto-type of *yogin* or *muni*.⁶ Referring to the famous steatite seal from Mohenjo-Daro, discovered by E. Macay and described by Marshall as "the proto-type of historic Śiva," Dr. Joshi makes the following observation :

"Long before the ideas of Śiva, Mahadeva, Trimūrti and Paśupati had come into existence in historic Brahmanism and Hinduism, there had been in pre-historic India and in Buddhism and Jainism what are called munis, Yatis and Śramaṇas. The Indus seal therefore should be looked upon as the figure of an ascetic of pre-Vedic Indian culture."⁷

The existence of *yoga* and *dhyāna* practices in Harappan culture proves beyond doubt that the *śramaṇa* thought is of non-Āryan and non-Vedic origin. The appearance of ascetic ideas in Vedic Upaniṣads must therefore be treated as a non-Āryan influence. As a matter of fact, old Vedic ideas and ideals were not ascetic ; they were opposed to ascetic culture. The beliefs and practices of Vedic brāhmaṇas ran counter to those of *munis* and *śramaṇas*. The contrast between Vedic Brahmanism and early *Śramaṇism* has been elaborately discussed by Dr. G.C. Pande and Dr. L.M. Joshi.⁸

THE IMPACT OF PRE-HISTORIC MUNIS

The Vedic Āryan conquerors were soon conquered by the culture of the autochthonous people. Non-Āryan influences have been seen in Vedic literature and religion. The Vedic god Rudra, for example, is now believed to have been originally a god of non-Āryan people. The Vedic literature occasionally

6. L.M. Joshi : *Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, pp. 62-63.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 62

8. G.C. Pande, *op. cit.*, chapter on the Vedic Background ; L.M. Joshi, *op. cit.*, pp.31-45; *ibid.*, *Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History*, pp. 14-26

refers to the non-Āryan ascetics. The *Ṛgveda* describes a, "silent sage" (*muni*) who practiced austerity and meditation. He is called "long haired" (*keśin*) and probably lived naked (*vātaraśanā*).⁹ Other Vedic texts show that the munis either lived naked or wore tawny-coloured or 'soiled' (*mala*) garments. Keith and Macdonell have rightly pointed out that a *muni*

"was probably not approved by the priests who followed the ritual and whose views were essentially different from the ideals of a *Muni*, which were superior to earthly considerations, such as the desire for children and *dakṣiṇā*."¹⁰

That the *munis* and *śramaṇas* were known to the Vedic teachers is proved by the Brāhmana texts also. These texts, however, leave no room for doubt that the beliefs and practices of *munis* and *śramaṇas* were against the central philosophy of Vedic *brāhmaṇas*. This is made clear in the following passage of the Aitareya *Brāhmaṇa* :

*Kim nu malam kim ajinam kimu śmaśrūṇi kiṁ tapaḥ !
Putram brāhmaṇa icchadhvaṁ sa vai loko vadāvadaḥ !!*

"What is the use of wearing dirty or *kaṣāya* garments, what use of antelope's skin, what use of (growing) a beard, what use of austerity ? Desire a son. O *brāhmaṇa*, that is the only praise-worthy thing in the world."¹¹

This Passage shows that there were some ascetics who wore tawny-coloured clothes, kept beard and moustaches, wrapped their bodies with antelope's hide and did not live a married household life. The disapproval of ascetic mode of life was in accordance with the Brāhmanical emphasis on

9. *R̥gveda*, X. 136, 2-4

10. A.A. Machonell and A.B. Keith : *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, vol. II pp. 167-68

11. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII. 13. 7 ; cf. *Samkhayana Srautasutra*, XV, 17 ; L. M. Joshi : *Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, p. 35.

leading a householder's life. But the *munis* and *śramaṇas* seemed to have continued their ascetic tradition outside the pale of Vedic society throughout the Vedic period. In the course of time their ideas and practices deeply influenced the sages and seers of Vedic tradition.

It has been pointed out by several scholars that the Yoga, Sāṁkhya, Jainism and Buddhism were originally derived from the religious tradition of pre-historic *munis* and *śramaṇas*. Some characteristic ideas of these systems begin to appear in old Upaniṣads, obviously due to the impact of *munis* and *śramaṇas*. Referring to the great antiquity of Sāṁkhya-Yoga ideas, Heinrich Zimmer had made the following remarkable observation :

"These ideas do not belong to the original stock of the Vedic Brahmanic tradition. Not, on the other hand, do we find among the basic tradition. Nor, on the other hand, do we find among the basic teaching of Sāṁkhya and Yoga any hint of such a pantheon of divine Olympians, beyond the vicissitudes of earthly bondage, as that of the Vedic gods. The two ideologies are of different origin, Sāṁkhya and Yoga being related to the mechanical system of the Jainas, which...can be traced, in a partly historical, partly legendary way, through the long series of the Tirthankaras, to a remote, aboriginal, non-Vedic, Indian antiquity. The fundamental ideas of Sāṁkhya and Yoga, therefore, must be immensely old. And yet they do not appear in any of the orthodox Indian texts until comparatively late-specifically, in the younger stratifications of the Upaniṣads and in the *Bhagavadgītā*, where they are already blended and harmonized with the fundamental ideas of the Vedic philosophy. Following a long history of rigid resistance, the exclusive and esoteric *brāhmaṇamind* of the Āryan invaders opened up, at last, and received suggestions and influences from the native civilization. The result was a coalescence of the two traditions. And

this is what produced, in time, the majestic harmonizing systems of medieval and contemporary Indian thought."¹²

This shows that the traditional theory of the Vedic Āryan origin of Jaina ideas and *śramaṇa* thought is untenable. Jainism, Buddhism, Yoga, Sāṃkhya and ascetic ideas of old Upaniṣads were inspired by the ideas of *munis* and *śramaṇas* who continued a very old tradition of non-Brahmanical Harappan antiquity. These ideas included the doctrines of *samsāra*, *karma*, *yoga*, *dhyāna* and *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*. The legacy of the *munis* and *śramaṇas* formed the dominant ideas in the formation of Indian culture.

In view of the above argument it is no longer possible to trace the origin of the institution of *saṃnyāsa* to Vedic *Brāhmanism*. It has been already pointed out by distinguished scholars that the Brahmanical theory of the fourth āśrama is post-Buddhist in origin.¹³ Dr. Sukumar Dutt has also stated that "the theory of the Brahmanical ascetic being the original or prototype of the Buddhist or Jaina religious mendicant seems scarcely tenable."¹⁴ In the old Upaniṣads the idea of the ascetic stage or *saṃnyāsa* was not recognized.

Dr. L.M.Joshi states that the word *śramaṇa* occurs for the first time in *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* and it never became a word of respect in Brahmanical literature. According to him, "no Upaniṣad text can be proved to be pre-Buddhist in date." He has pointed out that even the two of the oldest Upaniṣads namely, the *Brhadāranyaka* and the *Chāndōgya*, are not older

12. Heinrich Zimmer : *Philosophies of India*, p. 281.

13. G.C.Pande, *op.cit.*, pp 251 ff; L.M.Joshi. *Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, p. 48 ;

14. Sukumar Datt : *Early Buddhist Monachism*, p. 39

than Buddha and Mahāvīra. He places these two Upaniṣads in the fifth century BC. and the remaining of the oldest upaniṣad between 400 and 200 BC. He draws attention to the fact that king Ajātaśatru of Magadha is mentioned in *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1.1) and the *kausītaki Upaniṣad* (IV. I). This king was a contemporary of Buddha and Mahāvīra.¹⁵ A.B. Keith had also said that :

"It is wholly impossible to make out any case for dating the oldest even of the extant Upaniṣads beyond the sixth century B.C., and the acceptance of an earlier date must rest merely on individual fancy."¹⁶

The Brahmanical Dharma-Sūtras which mention the fourth āśrama are post-Buddhist in date. The contention of Bühler, Jacobi and Charpentier, that the Jaina and the Buddhist ascetics borrowed the rules of Brahmanical *saṃnyāsins*, is therefore not correct. The institution of *saṃnyāsa* was accepted by the Brāhmaṇa law-givers after the Jaina and the Buddhist institution of the monastics.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE JAINA TRADITION

In the study of the history of Jaina ideas, we must take due note of the Jaina myths and legends. According to the belief of the Jainas, their religion is immensely old. They have preserved a list of as many as twenty-three *Tirthankaras* or Spiritual Teachers who preceded Mahāvīra. According to this view, Mahāvīra was not the originator of the Jaina faith, he was a discoverer of a doctrine which had been existing from times immemorial. The list of the predecessors of Mahāvīra includes the following names :

15. L.M.Joshi : *Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History*, pp. 15-16. see also L.M. Joshi : *Studies in the Buddhist Culture of India*, p. XVIII.
16. A.B.Keith : *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣhads*, vol. II, pp. 498-502.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Ṛṣabhadeva | 2. Ajitanātha | 3. Sambhavanātha |
| 4. Abhinandana | 5. Sumatinātha | 6. Padmaprabhu |
| 7. Supārśvanātha | 8. Candraprabhu | 9. Suvidhinātha |
| 10. Sīitalanātha | 11. Śreyāṁśanātha | 12. Vāsupūjya |
| 13. Vimalanātha | 14. Anantanātha | 15. Dharmanātha |
| 16. Śāntinātha | 17. Kunthunātha | 18. Arahamātha |
| 19. Mallinātha | 20. Muni Suvrata | 21. Neminātha |
| 22. Ariṣṭaneminātha | 23. Pārśvanātha. | ¹⁷ |

The twenty-fourth and the last *Tirthaṅkara* was Mahāvīra, the celebrated contemporary of Sākyamuni Buddha.

It is not possible to establish the historical existence of these teachers. But the belief in the existence of so many predecessors of Māhavīra shows that the tradition claimed a great antiquity.

Some scholars believe that Ṛṣabhadeva, the first in the list of *Tirthaṅkaras*, is mentioned in the Vedic texts.¹⁸ Ṛṣabha is mentioned also in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.¹⁹ It is not certain whether these references refer to a historical person. But the Jaina tradition unanimously regards him as the originator of the Jaina path to Liberation.

Among the successors of Ṛṣabha, the Brahmanical Purāṇas mention Sumatinātha. The twenty-second *Tirthaṅkara*, Ariṣṭaneminātha, is related to Kṛṣṇa in legends.²⁰

Pārśvanātha : About the historicity of twenty-third *Tirthaṅkara* Pārśvanātha, however, there is some evidence.

17. For an account of 24 Jinas and other great men of Jaina tradition, see the *Trisaṣṭisalāka-puruṣacarita*. See also Hermann Jacobi, "Jainism" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. vii, pp. 466 ff. and the *Kalpasūtra* of Bhadrabāhu.
18. See Hira Lal Jain : *Bhāratiya Śanskriti mein Jaina Dharma Kā Yogadāna*, pp. 342-343 ; *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, p. 250.
19. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* Eng. Tr. By H.H. Wilson, p. 133 ; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, v. 3-6.
20. See S.B. Deo : *History of Jaina Monachism*, p. 59.

The Jaina tradition holds that he flourished 250 years before Vardhamāna Mahāvīra. This would suggest eighth century B.C. as the date of Pārśvanātha.

Traditional biographies of Pārśvanātha tell us that he was born as the son of King Aśvasena and his queen Vāmā in Banāras (Vārānasī). He lived the life of a householder for thirty years after which he became an ascetic. Throughout a course of ascetic austerity he attained omniscience (*kevalajñāna*). Having preached his religion for about seventy years he attained *nirvāṇa* at the age of 100 years at a place called Sammeta Śikhara in Bihar.²¹

The teaching of Pārśvanātha is called *Cāujjāma-dhamma* (*Cāturyāma-dharma*) or the doctrine of four-fold restraint. The four rules included in this category are the following : (1)

ahimsā (non-Killing), (2) satya (truthful speech), (3) *asteya* (non-stealing) and (4) aparigraha (non-possession of worldly goods).

The existence of the followers of Pārśvanātha in the sixth century B.C. is proved by several passages in the Pāli Canonical texts. Hermann Jacobi has already drawn attention to these passages²². The Pāli texts refer to the doctrines of Nirgranthas. Mahāvīra is referred to as Nātaputta (Jñātrputra) because he belonged to Nāta (Jñātr) clan²³ and his parents were the followers of Pārśvanātha's ethical tradition.²⁴

We come across many references in the early Buddhist canonical literature to Niggrantha Nātaputta (Mahāvīra). In the *Āṅguttaranikāya* it is stated :

"The Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta... knows and sees all things, claims perfect knowledge and faith.... teaches the

21. *Kalpasūtra*, SBE. Vol. XXII, pp, 271-75.

22. See *Jaina Sutras*, SBE, vol XLV. Introduction, p. xv ff.

23. Cf. *Ācāramgasūtra*, ed. By Sri Atmaramaji Maharaja, Ludhiana, 1964, p. 1373. 24. Cf. *Acāramgasūtra*, p. 1370

annihilation by austerities of the old karman, and the prevention by inactivity of new karman. When karman ceases, misery ceases. ²⁵

In the *Mahāvagga*, Sīha, a lay follower of Mahāvīra and the General of Licchavis, is said to have visited the Buddha against the wishes of his master. He rejected the Nirgrantha doctrine of *kriyāvāda* and adopted the Buddhist doctrine of *akriyāvāda*²⁶. The Jaina doctrine of *kriyāvāda* inculcates the belief in the soul, in the world, and in the action whereas *akriyāvāda* doctrine does not include these things.

The Principles of the lay followers of the Nirgrantha are also discussed in the *Āṅguttaranikāya*. The vow of the Jaina Śrāvaka is thus stated : "I shall go only in certain fixed directions today." ²⁷ The other passage of the *Āṅguttaranikāya* states the vow of *uposatha* which means to observe the fast for twenty-four hours during which time the layman is supposed to be like a monk in thought, word and deed.

The *Sāmaññaphala-sūta* of the *Dighanikāya* mentions the phrase *cātuyāma-Saṃvara-saṃvuto*²⁸. This reference occurs in the course of a dialogue between Lord Buddha and king Ajātasatru where the king relates his visit to Nirgrantha Nātaputta. According to Jacobi the Pāli *Cātuyāma* is equivalent to the Prakrit *Caujama*, a well-known Jaina term which denotes the four vows taught by Pārśvanātha. As E.W. Hopkins states : "The Niggaṇṭhās are never referred to by the Buddhists as being a new sect, nor is their reputed founder Nātaputta spoken of as their founder whence Jacobi plausibly argues that their real founder was older than Mahāvīra and that this sect preceded that of Buddhism."²⁹

25. *Āṅguttaranikāya*, Vol. IV, p.67

26. *Mahāvagga*, pp. 249 f.

27. *Āṅguttaranikāya*, Vol. I, pp. 190-191.

28. *Dighanikāya*, vol.I, p. 50

29. E.W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, P. 283 foot note.

This shows that there were followers of Pārśvanātha even before Mahāvīra started his career as a teacher.

The preceding discussion leads us to conclude that the Jaina tradition claims a non-Vedic and pre-Vedic origin. Jainism, like Buddhism, does not accept ; the authority of the Vedic

revelation. The Predecessors of Mahāvīra were the sages of Śramaṇic tradition. Mahāvīra inherited their spiritual legacy and systematized it. The Śramaṇic tradition, as noted above, seems to have been connected with the *yoga* practice of Harappan age. Several scholars have expressed the opinion that some elements of Jainism can be traced to Indus-Valley Civilization. Thus Jyoti Prasad Jain approvingly quotes following words of Prof. S. Srikantha Sastri :

"The Indus Civilization of c. 3000-2500 B.C., with its nudity and *yoga*, the worship of the bull and other symbols, has resemblance to Jainism, and, therefore, the Indus Civilization is supposed to be non-Āryan or of non-Vedic origin."³⁰

Dr. Hira Lal Jain has also traced the origins of Jainism to Harappan culture. Among other things, he notes the striking resemblance between a Harappan piece of stone sculpture representing a nude male with the torso of a nude male found from Lahānipur.³¹

THE AGE OF MAHĀVĪRA

It seems that the community of the followers of Pārśvanātha was flourishing in east India, especially in Magadha in the age of Mahāvīra. It was an age of considerable changes in the cultural history of India. Politically there were two main forms

30. J.P. Jain : *Jainism the Oldest Living Religion*, p. 51, quoting *Jaina Antiquary*, XV, 2, p. 58.

30. Hira Lal Jain : *Bhāratiya Sanskriti mein Jain Dharma kā Yogadāna*, pp. 342-343

of government, one monarchical and the other republican. Magadha and Kośala represented strong monarchies which believed in expansionism and imperialism. On the other hand, the Licchavis of Vaiśālī, Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Mallas of Kusinagara etc., represented republican tradition. They loved their freedom and democratic institutions. There were frequent wars between the kingdoms and republics. King Ajātaśatru of Magadha, for example, is reported to have been the enemy of the Licchavis of Vaiśālī. Likewise, King Vidudabha of Kōśala is known to have attacked and harmed the Sākyas of Kapilavastu. Another important political event of the age was the Persian invasion of Punjab. This, however, had practically no impact on the history of Magadha and Kośala.³²

The century in which Vardhamāna Mahāvīra was flourished was a time of religious upheaval also. Old Vedic religion was declining. The sacrificial ritualism of the Vedic *brāhmaṇas* had to face a strong challenge posed by the religion and philosophy taught by *munis* and *śramaṇas*. The ideological conflict between the *brāhmaṇas* of the Vedic tradition on one hand, and *śramaṇas* of the non-Vedic tradition on the other hand, is reflected in the earliest literature of the Buddhists and the Jains. These texts also refer to the existence of numerous sects and schools, of religious teachers. Thus the *Brahmajālasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* refers to sixty-two philosophical opinions.³³

The *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* mentions three hundred and sixty-three sects and sub-sects prevalent in the age of Mahāvīra.³⁴ Most of these sects and schools seem to have been led by ascetics called *śramaṇas*, and *parivrājakas*. Atheism, materialism, determinism, theism, skepticism and agnosticism and other forms of metaphysical theories were prevalent among these

32. See H.C. Raychaudhuri : *Political History of Ancient India*. 1953, pp 187 ff. 239 ff.

33. *Dighanikaya*, vol. I, *Brahmajālasutta*.

34. *Suyagadāṅga* with the commentary of Silanka, Agamodaya Samiti Bombay, 1917, pp. 208 ff. SBE, XLV, p.315 ; S.B. Deo, op. cit., p. 64

teachers. According to Dr. G.C. Pande, the dominant ideas of *śramaṇas* and *munis* were ascetic, pessimistic, atheistic and pluralistic. All these four features are found in early Jainism. Among the teachers of *Śramaṇa* lineage there were the followers of Pārśvanātha. It was during this age of religious ferment and ascetic revival that Vardhamāna Mahāvīra appeared on the scene.

LIFE OF MAHĀVĪRA

The word Mahāvīra means "Great Hero" It is an epithet signifying the moral and spiritual achievements, rather than the personal name of the last *Tīrthaṅkara*. Vardhamāna was possibly his proper name. He was born possibly in 599 B.C. at Kuṇḍapura or Kuṇḍalagrāma near Vaiśālī, in modern Basārḥ, in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. The name of his father was Siddhārtha who belonged to the tribe of Jñātr *kṣatriyas*. The name of his mother was Triśālā. She was the sister of Ceṭaka, the Licchavi chief of Vaiśālī. There are many texts dealing with the biography of Mahāvīra and they are well known.³⁵

According to the Śvetāmbara tradition, Vardhamāna was married to Yaśodā and had one daughter named Priyadarśanā. This tradition, however is rejected by the Digambaras. At the Age of thirty, he renounced home life and became an ascetic.

During the next twelve and a half years, Vardhamāna practised very severe austerities and rigorous bodily mortifications and attained omniscience (*kevalajñāna*).

Next thirty years he spent in teaching the duty of renunciation and the joy of mercy ; he stressed the ascetic mode of life and the vow of chastity or celibacy. To the *cāturyama* of Pārśvanātha he added a fifth precept, that of chastity

35. See *Kalpasūtra*, SBE, vol XXII, P. 217-270 ; *Trisastiśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, Eng. Tr. Published in GOS, Nos. 51, 77 ; Hira Lal Jain, op. cit., Chapter I

(*brahmacarya*). He organized his earnest followers into a body of disciplined renunciators. This is called the Jaina *Samgha*. It included four classes of members : monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. It seems that the old *saṃgha* consisting of the followers of Pārśvanātha got merged into the new *saṃgha* founded by Mahāvīra. A chapter in the *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra* describes the meeting between Keśi, a disciple of Pārśvanātha, and Gautama, a staunch disciple of Mahāvīra. The two leaders discussed the difference existing in their sects and brought about the union between the old and the new *saṃghas*.³⁶

BASIC FEATURES OF JAINISM

Our discussion of the origin and antiquity of Jainism has shown that its basic ideas are radically different from those of the so-called "traditional" and "orthodox" Brahmanism. Jainism does not acknowledge the authority of the Vedic *śruti*, its doctrines are revealed by the *Jinas* or *Tīrthaṅkaras*. These *Jinas* are believed to be completely liberated from all passions and desires and possessed of all knowledge. Jainism means the doctrines taught by the *Jinas*.

Another distinguishing feature of Jainism is that it is non-theistic religion. Like Buddhism, Jainism also demonstrates the fact that the Ultimate Reality cannot be conceived in theistic terms alone. The idea of God as the creator and governor of universe is not accepted in Jaina tradition. As in the case of Buddhist religion, the definition of religion cannot be reduced to mere belief in God-Creator. The Jaina religion therefore is an atheistic religion.

Metaphysically, Jainism is a pluralistic system of thought. In this respect it differs strikingly from Buddhism and Vēdānta.

36. *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra*, Chapter XXIII (ed. By R.D. Vedekar & N. V. Vaidya, Poona, 1959), P. 64. This chapter deals with the dialogue between Kesi and Gautama and with the unity of the followers of Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra.

In contrast to Buddhism, Jainism teaches an elaborate doctrine of *ātman*. The plurality of selves (*ātman*) is a fundamental doctrine of Jainism, whereas Buddhism denies the reality of *ātman* altogether. The Jaina *ātmavāda* differs from Vēdantic *Ātmavāda*. In the Upaniśads and the *Bhagavadgītā*, the ultimate unity of *ātman* is taught, whereas in Jainism infinite number of *ātmans* is taken for granted.

A most important feature of Jainism is what may be described as *yoga*. The word *yoga* implies two things : meditation or *dhyāna*, and renunciation or ascetic mode of life. Jaina *yoga* is non-theistic.³⁷ Jainism has consistently stressed asceticism. Examples of extreme form of austerity are described in numerous Jaina texts. Lord Mahāvīra is known to have attained liberation through extreme forms of ascetic practices. The tradition of strict ascetic discipline (*vinaya*) has been maintained by Jaina monastic community throughout the ages.

One of the cardinal tenets of Jaina thought and culture is the idea of *ahimsā*. This word has often been translated as nonviolence. But it is not merely negative in meaning ; it also connotes the notion of compassion, harmlessness, and respect for the sanctity of life in all forms. The Jaina teachers of antiquity analyzed this notion in great detail and formulated an elaborate system of restrictions. Although the doctrine of *ahimsā* is taught in Buddhism and Hinduism also, Jainism has laid the greatest stress on its observance.

Philosophically, the most important doctrine of Jainism is that of *anekāntavāda*. The doctrine teaches that the different standpoints about truth represent only partial perspectives. Some scholars have referred to this doctrine as the principle of relativity. It is a non-absolutist theory which may be said to have promoted the freedom of speculative views. The doctrine

37. See L. M. Joshi, *facets of Jaina Religiousness in Comparative Light*, Ahmedabad : L.D. Institute of Indology, 1981

was especially elaborated by the later Jaina logicians although its author is believed to be Mahāvīra himself.

The Ultimate goal of religious striving envisaged in the Jaina tradition is called liberation (*mokṣa*, *mukti*, *nirvāṇa*, *kaivalya*). The authentic ancient texts describe it as the state of absolute freedom, bliss, knowledge and peace. Often it is described negatively ; it is said to be beyond speech and thought. It is, however, a state of being endowed with positive qualities.

Along with the highest goal of liberation, Jainism has also taught a lower goal of good rebirth (*sugati*) or heavenly life. Vast majority of the followers of Jainism aspire to be reborn in a happy state. In accordance with this two-fold goal there is a two-fold *dharma* : the *śramaṇa-dharma* or religious practices of monks and nuns, and the *śrāvaka-dharma* or religious practices of the laity. The monastic community and the laity have always lived in harmony and inter-dependence. The monks and nuns have preserved the sacred tradition of religious life and learning, while the faithful laity has consistently extended liberality and hospitality towards monks and nuns. As in Theravāda Buddhism, so in Jainism, monastic community has always enjoyed a superior and respectful position in Jaina society.

Finally, It should be mentioned that the doctrine of *saṃsāra* is one of the basic doctrines of Jainism. It implies a pessimistic and ascetic outlook towards this worldly life and its concerns. The existence in *saṃsāra* is subject to the law of *karma*. The doctrine of *karma* is a moral law of retribution. It implies rebirth in this or some other world. Each and every action bears its consequence accordingly as it is good or bad. The doer has to reap the consequences of his deeds in this or next life. This involvement in the chain of moral causation inherent in the law of *karma* is conceived as bondage (*bandhana*). There is no end to the series of rebirths so long as *karmas* continue to bear their consequences. Since rebirth in every form is evil or suffering, existence in *saṃsāra* is considered undesirable. The sovereign antidote to this disease of suffering is to uproot the very foundation of tree of conditioned existence in *saṃsāra*. In other words, he who seeks liberation from the round of transmigration must cut off the chain of *karma*. The Jaina culture has evolved a detailed system of religious discipline leading to the eradication of *karmas* and their consequences.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAINISM

Lord Mahāvīra had eleven *Gaṇadharas* or chief disciples who were great and holy men. Their names are as follows : Indrabhūti, Agnibhūti, Vāyubhūti, Vyakta, Sudharmā, Mandika, Māurya, Akampita, Acalabhrātā, Metārya and Prabhāsa.³⁸

All these eleven *Gaṇadharas* were learned scholars. They knew the twelve *Aṅgas*, the fourteen *Pūrvas* and the whole *siddhānta* of the Jainas.³⁹ The two *Gaṇadharas* named Indrabhūti and Sudharmā survived the *parinirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra but others had attained liberation after twelve years of Mahāvīra's *parinirvāṇa*. After him Sudharmā became the head of Mahāvīra's faith and he narrated all the Jaina doctrines to his disciple Jambusvāmi,⁴⁰ which he had heard from his master, Lord Mahāvīra.

According to the Jaina tradition, Jambusvāmi was the last omniscient sage and he attained liberation after sixty-four years of *parinirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra. After Jambusvāmi, the most remarkable among ancient Jaina religious leaders was Bhadrabāhu. Jaina tradition states that he was the guru of Emperor Candragupta Maurya. He was recognized as one of

38. *Gaṇadharavada*, p. 8 ; *Samavayanga*, comy of Abhayadeva, Ahmedabad, 1938, pp. 69-b, 83-a, 84b-100b.

39. *Kalpasūtra*, SBE, vol. XXII, p. 287

40. As it appears from several Jaina canonical texts, Sudharṇa says to Jambu
*"suyam me ausam tēna bhagavaya evam
akkhayam etc....upto....evam khulu Jambu."*

the earliest teachers and as a most prominent author among the Jainas. According to the Śvetāmbara tradition, Bhadrabāhu had gone to Nepal for certain specific yogic practices,

whereas the Digambara tradition states that he went to South India with a large number of Jaina monks for the propagation of Jaina ideals.

Like Buddhism, Jainism was espoused and patronized by great kings and queens, royal ministers and rich merchants. Many great kings such as Bimbisāra and Ajātasatru of Magadha, Cētaka of Vaiśāli, Pradyota of Avanti, Udayana of Vatsa, Dadhivāhana and Candragupta Maurya etc., contributed to the growth and development of Jaina order.⁴¹ Queens like Prabhāvati of Udayana, Mrgāvati and Jayanti of Kauśāmbi, and queens of kings Srēṇika and Pradyata were also true followers of Lord Mahāvīra and they had joined the order (*saṃgha*) of Mahāvīra⁴² Princes like Atimukta, Padma, Megha and Abhaya⁴³ etc., became Jaina monks and promoted the growth of Jainism. It is also claimed that Candragupta Maurya became a Jaina monk and propagated Jainism as he himself joined Bhadrabāhu's march to the South as his follower.

King Samprati had contributed to the development of Jainism by erecting Jaina temples throughout India and by sending Jaina monks, preachers and missionaries to South India and Afghanistan. In the second century B.C., king Khāravela of Kaṅga adopted Jainism and promoted it by setting up Jaina images and constructing rock-dwellings.⁴⁴

THE SCHISM

It is said that there was dissension in the Jaina order (*saṃgha*) during the life time of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra. Even

41. S.B.Deo : *History of Jaina Monachism*, p. 70.

42. Ibid, p. 70

43. Ibid., p. 71.

44. M.L. Mehta : *Jaina Culture*, p. 17.

before the rise of two major sects, that is, Digambara and Svetāmbara, it is believed that there had been seven schisms.⁴⁵

These schisms, however, could not flourish and ultimately merged into the original order (*saṃgha*). But the eighth schism finally divided Jainism into two main divisions, that is, Digambar or the sect of naked monks, and Śvetāmbara, the sect of the white-robed monks. These two sects by and large are united so far as Jaina philosophical thought is concerned but they differ with regard to the observance of certain monastic rules and regulations.

The Digambaras believe in going about naked. According to them liberation cannot be achieved without practising nudity; therefore they do not wear any clothes. The Śvetāmbaras on the other hand wear white clothes and think that nudity is not essential for the attainment of liberation.

According to the Digambaras, women cannot attain liberation as they cannot practice nudity. The Śvetāmbaras hold that women can attain liberation. They point out the example of Mallinātha, the nineteenth *Tirthaṅkara*, who was a female *Jina*.

The Digambaras hold that the original *Āgamic* collections containing the actual words of Lord Mahāvīra have been lost. They do not accept as authentic the extant *Āgamic* collections of the Śvetāmbaras. The Śvetāmbaras, however, believe that they have preserved a large portion of the urkanon.

These two major Jaina sects are further divided into a number of sub-sects. There are three important sub-sects of Digambara ; Bisapanthi, Terāpanthi and Tāraṇapanthi. The

45. See S.B.Deo : *History of Jaina Monachism*, pp. 79-80. The names of these sects are as follows : (1) Bahuraya, (2) Jivapaesiya, (3) Avvattaga, (4) Samuccheiya, (5) Dokiriya, (6) Nojiva. (7) Abaddhiya.
See K. K. Dixit : *Jaina Ontology*, pp 129-30 ; Kamal Chand Sogani : *Ethical Doctrines in Jainism*, pp 7-8.

Śvetāmbara sect too has three sub-sects : Mūrtipūjaka, Sthānakavāsi and Tērāpanthi. The Mūrtipūjakas are in favour of worshiping images of *Tirthaṅkaras*, whereas Sthānakavāsis and Terāpanthis do not worship the images of *Tirthaṅkaras* ; Sthānakavāsis and Terāpanthis both have differences regarding the observance of certain monastic rules. The Bisapanthis believe in image worship and worship by using fruits, flowers, incense etc., whereas the Tērāpanthis make use of lifeless things. The Tāraṇapanthis worship scriptures instead of images. All these sub-sects have their own history and religious background in addition to common points.

FORMATION OF THE JAINA CANON AND THE COUNCILS

The meaning and content (*artha*) of the *Āgamas* are of prime importance for the Jainas and not the words (*śabda*) which are only the media of communication of thought. According, to the Jaina tradition the meaning of *Āgamas* was told by Lord Mahāvīra, whereas the verbal expositions of the meaning and content were given by the *gaṇadharas*, the principle disciples of Lord Mahāvīra, which, later on, got the shape of the *sūtras*.⁴⁶ As the contents of the *sūtras* are in conformity with the fundamental preachings of Lord Mahāvīra, the *sūtras* are regarded as the words of Lord Mahāvīra.

It is believed that the essence of the preachings of Lord Mahāvīra was preserved in the fourteen *pūrvas* which were handed down to the eleven *gaṇadharas* by Lord Mahāvīra. In course of time the knowledge of the fourteen *pūrvas* was lost, and it is said that by the time of Candragupta Maurya Bhadrabāhu was the only *śrutakevali* who knew the fourteen *pūrvas*. During the reign of Candragupta Maurya there was a great famine. It is

46. Cf. attham bhasia araha suttam ganthanti ganahara niunam ! sasanassa hiyathhaye tao suttam pavattai !!
Avasyakaniryukti 192.

believed that Candragupta Maurya, a follower of Jaina faith, left the throne and went to South India with Bhadrabāhu and a number of Jaina mendicants. Some of the monks who stayed at Pātaliputra, were kept under the guardianship of Sthūlabhadra. Due to the famine which lasted for twelve years, the Jaina monastic life suffered a great set back, and the Jaina church was disrupted. When the famine was over, a council was convened by Sthūlabhadra at Pātaliputra to collect the portions of the canon which were disappearing, as the monks could not preserve them in their memory during the period of famine. As Bhadrabāhu was the only person at that time who knew all the fourteen *Pūrvas*, Sthūlabhadra was authorized by the council to learn them from him. But he was not allowed to preach the last four *pūrvas* by Bhadrabāhu, hence only the ten *pūrvas* were compiled in the council of Pātaliputra.

In the ninth century after the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra, a second council of Jaina monks was held at Mathurā under the leadership of Ācārya Skandila and they collected the available knowledge of the canon. Another similar council was held at Valabhi under the leadership

of Nāgārjunasūri. The credit of holding this third council goes to the leader Devardhigani Kṣamāśramaṇa who took initiation for writing down all the canonical texts. Whatever canonical literature we have at the present time the credit for that goes to the preceptor Devardhigani Kṣamāśramaṇa.

The Śvetāmbara canon is divided into six groups of texts, known as :

Twelve *Aṅgas* :

1. *Āyāraṅga (Ācāraṅga)*
2. *Sūyagadāṅga (Sūtrakṛtāṅga)*
3. *Ṭhānaṅga (Sihānāṅga)*
4. *Samavāyāṅga.*
5. *Bhagavati Viyāhapannatti (Vyākhyā-prajñapti)*
6. *Nāyādhammakahāo (Jñātādharmakathā),*
7. *Uvāsagadasāo (Upāsakadaśā)*
8. *Aṃtagadadasāo (Antakṛddaśā),*
9. *Anuttaraupāpatikadaśā,*
10. *Paṇhāvāgaranāim (Praśnavyākaraṇāni),*
11. *Vivāgasūyam (Vipākasūtram)*
12. *Ditthivāya (Dṛṣṭivāda) (not extant).*

Twelve *Upāṅgas* :

1. *Uvavāiya (Aupapātika)*
2. *Rāyapaseṇiya (Rājaprasniya)*
3. *Jivābhigama (Jivājivābhigama)*
4. *Paṇṇavanā (Prajñāpanā)*
5. *Sūriyapaṇṇatti (Sūryaprajñapti)*
6. *Jambuddivapanntti (Jambūdvīpa-prajñapti)*
7. *Candapaṇṇatti (Candraprajñapti)*
8. *Nirayāvalio (Nirayāvali).*
9. *Kappāvadamsiāo (Kalpāvatamsikāḥ).*
10. *Pupphiāo (Puspikāḥ)*
11. *Pupphacūliāo (Puspacūlikāḥ)*
12. *Vanhidasāo (Vṛsṇidaśāḥ).*

Four *Mūlasūtras* :

1. *Uttarajjhayana (Uttarādhyayana)*
2. *Dasaveyāliya (Daśavaikālika)*
3. *Āvassaya (Āvaśyka)*
4. *Pimdanijjutti (Pinḍa-niryukti)*

Six *Chedasūtras* :

1. *Nisiha (Niśiṭha)*
2. *Mahānisiha (Mahā-Niśiṭha)*
3. *Vavahāra (Vyavahāra)*
4. *Āyāradasāo (Ācāradaśāḥ or Daśāśrutaskandha).*
5. *Kappa (also called Br̥hat-Kalpa)*
6. *Pañca-kappa or Jiyakappa (Pañca-kalpa or*

Jita-kalpa).

Ten Prakirṇakas :

1. *Causaraṇa* (*Catuhśaraṇa*)
2. *Aurapaccakkhāṇa* (*Āturapratyākhyāna*)
3. *Bhattapariṇṇā* (*Bhakta-parijñā*)
4. *Samthāra* (*Samstāra*)
5. *Tamdulaveyāliya* (*Tanḍulavāicārika*)
6. *Camdāvijjhaya* (*Candravedhyaka*)
7. *Devindatthaya* (*Devendrastava*)
8. *Gaṇivijjā* (*Gaṇividyā*)
9. *Mahāpaccakkhāṇa* (*Mahā-pratyākhyāna*)
10. *Viratthaya* (*Virastava*)

Two Cūlikā-sūtras :

1. *Nandisutta* (*Nandisūtra*)
2. *Anuogadārāim* (*Anuyogadvāra*)

The Digambaras, give a separate list of their canonical literature which is classified under four headings viz.,

1. Prathamānuyoga, consisting of mythological legends such as *Padmapurāṇa*, *Harivaṃsapurāṇa*, *Trisaṣṭilakṣaṇapurāṇa*, *Mahapurāṇa* and *Uttapurāṇa*.
2. Karnānuyoga, consisting of the works on cosmology such as *Suryaprajñapti*, *Candraprajñapti* and *Jayadhavalā*.
3. Dravyanuyoga, consisting of the philosophical works of Ācārya Kundakunda, the *Tattvārtha-sūtra* of Umāsvāti and the *Āptamīmāṃsā* of Samantabhadra.
4. Caraṇānuyoga, consisting of the works on rites and rituals of monks and laymen, such as the *Mūlācāra* and *Trivarṇācāra* Vattakera, and *Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra*.

The canonical literature of the Śvetāmbaras is written in Ardhamagādhī Prākṛit, whereas the Digambara Āgamic Literature is in Śauraseni Prākṛit. Besides these two Prākṛit Languages, The Jainas also used Mahārāstri-Prākṛit, Apabhraṃsa and Sanskrit languages.

GROWTH OF JAINA LITERATURE

The contribution of Jainism to the growth of Indian languages and literature is immense. The Jaina canonical texts reveal the growth of different Indian languages as they were interpreted by different teachers in different languages though a series of commentaries known as Niryuktis, Cūrṇis, Bhāṣyas and Tikās. The Jaina authors have written on various subjects in different languages like prākṛit, Apabhraṃśa, Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada, Hindi and Gujarati, etc. In this way they made significant contributions to the development of many languages. Modern Jaina authors have enriched the wealth of Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Kannada and Marathi.

The Jainas possess both sacred as well as secular and scientific literature of their own. Some of the most important works are Umāsvāmi's *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra*, *Viśesavaśyakabhāṣya* of Jinabhadra, *Sanmatitarka* and *Nyāyāvātāra* of Siddhasena Divākara, the *Ratnakaranda Srāvākācāra* of Samantabhadra, the *Triṣaṣṭisalāka-puruṣacarita* by Hēmacandra, *Syādvādamañjari* by Mallisena, etc. The texts like *Sūryaprajñapti* and *Candraprajñapti* deal with astronomy, and the *Jambūdvīpaprajñapti* is a work on cosmology. It is clear that Jaina

teachers have written on all the subjects like philosophy, poetry, grammar, logic, mathematics, astrology and astronomy, etc. Thus they made marvellous contributions to the whole range of Indian literature. Speaking of the importance of Jaina literature George Bühler says :

"In grammar, in astronomy as well as in all branches of *belles-lettres* the achievements of Jainas have been so great that even their opponents have taken notice of them and that some of their works are of importance for European Science even today. In the South where they have worked among the Dravidian peoples, they have also promoted the development of these languages. The Kanarese, Tamil and Telugu literary languages rest on the foundations erected by the Jaina monks. Though this activity has led them far away from their own particular aims, yet it has secured for them an important place in the history of Indian literature and civilization".⁴⁷

The Jainas have taken meticulous care for the preservation of their old and sacred specimens of art and literature in places like Jaisalmer, Jaipur, Pattan and Moodbidri etc..

JAINA ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Jainism has made important contributions also to art and architecture in India. The marvellous temples embedded with precious stones, remarkable sculptures with the artistic touch, wonderful carved pillars, fine gateways and beautiful statues are among the greatest artistic achievements of India. Like Buddhists, Jainas too erected *stūpas* and statues in honour of their great heroes, sacred saints, spiritual prophets, worthy seers and blessed ones. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Jaina images were made in abundance in Bundelkhanda region. At Śravaṇabelgoḷa in Mysore, as is well known, a monolithic figure of Jaina saint Bāhubalin, Sixty feet in height, is a feat of architectural and sculptural engineering.

Already in the second century B.C. Jainas had started building rock-cut temples. The Hāthīgumphā and Rānīgumphā belonging to the Suṅga period, look like natural caves. In Jaina canonical texts there are many references to *caityas* (shrines) which were consecrated to *yakṣas*. There are references to arhat-caitya in the *Bhagavatisūtra*, *Upāsakadaśāsūtra* and the *Jñātādharmakathā*. There is also description of eternal images

47. After A.N. Upadhye : *Mahāvīra and His philosophy of Life* p. 7.

(*śāśvatapratimās* in the Rājaprasnīya, Sthānāṅga and Jīvābhigama-sūtra.⁴⁸

Generally, the Jaina icons depicts the *Jinas* in the posture of meditation. There is no ornamentation and the figures symbolize austere and sublime mood.

In the sacred memory of the *Tirthaṅkaras*, the Jainas erected *stūpas* over their relics. Remains of one of the earliest Jaina *Stūpas* were discovered at Mathurā. This *stūpa* was dedicated to Pārśvanātha, and another similar *stūpa* found at Vaiśālī (*Basārḥ*) is dedicated to Munisuvrata.⁴⁹ Apart from the worship of the images of *Tirthaṅkaras*, Jainas also worshipped *caitya*-tree, the *dharma-cakra*, *āyāgapaṭas*, *dhvaja*-pillars and auspicious symbols like *svastika*, the *srivatsa* mark, the lotus, a pair of fish etc.⁵⁰

The numerous Jaina temples are remarkable in artistic expression such as the temple of Pārśvanātha at Khajurāho, the temple cities of Śatrunjaya (near Pālitānā), Girnār (near Junāgarh), Rājgir and Pāvāpurī in Bihar.

The earliest Jaina paintings are attractive and fascinating as they beautifully depict devout men, women, elephants, buffaloes, lotus flowers, fishes etc. Examples of earliest Jaina paintings are found at Hāthigumphā in Orissa of the time of King Khāravela, and examples of seventh century paintings have been found at Sittannavasal near Tanjore. The artistic activity inspired by Jainism also developed miniature paintings and adornment of scriptures. The decorative palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Nisīthacūrṇi*, *Jñātādharmakathā* and other anga texts are well known. This school of miniature paintings was developed during medieval centuries mainly in Gujarat

48. Mohan Lal Mehta : *Jaina Culture*, p. 125 ; see also L.M.Joshi : in *Jainism*, pp. 96-114.

49. Umakant P. Shah : *Studies in Jaina Art*, p. 9 ; quoting Avasyakacūrṇi of Jinadasa, pp. 223-227, 567.

50. Umakant P. Shah, op. cit., pp. 10-11

and Rajasthan. The *Kalpasūtra*, the *Kālakācāryakathā* and the *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* were mainly chosen for adornment. ⁵¹ In this way, the tradition of Jaina art had continued to our own times. ⁵²

RĒSUMĒ

It is evident from the foregoing survey of the development of Jainism that the Jaina tradition had a non-Vedic Śramanic origin. It cannot be regarded as an off-shoot of any other non-Jaina religious tradition. In the course of its long and continuous history, Jainism produced a lofty system of philosophy, a great moral culture, an extensive literature, rich art and architecture and a sizable community of the faithful.

Unlike the Brahmanical tradition, the Jaina tradition developed a non-absolutistic approach to reality, it also denied the existence of a creator God ; instead it taught the doctrine of the plurality of selves.

Jainism does not accept the Vedic scriptures as a source of religious authority. It has its own scriptural collection dating from a venerable antiquity. The literature and the art of Jainism may be studied as manifestations of Jaina ideals and practices.

The ultimate aim of religious striving according to Jainism is perfect peace and spiritual freedom (*mokṣa*). This state of being is essentially the real nature of the self (*ātman*) endowed with supreme wisdom and supreme vision. Among all the living species, man is considered to be the most developed creature. He had the capacity and potentiality for realizing the perfect

51. Mohan Lal Mehta, op. cit. pp.132-133

52. See L.M. Joshi on '*Jaina Literature and Art*' in *Jainism*, Patiala, Punjabi University, 1975 ; Many valuable articles on Jaina sculpture, architecture and painting by Moti Chandra, U.P. Shah, M.A. Dhackay, H. K. Prasad,

R.C. sharma and M.L. Nigam are published in Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya Golden Jubilee Volume, pt. I, Bombay, 1968.

state of the self. The religious and moral culture taught by the *Jinas* forms the practical pathway to the perfection of the self.

It goes without saying that Indian religions have stressed the urgency of attaining liberation. What distinguishes the Jaina attitude is its stress on renunciation and ascetic culture. Suffering is recognized as the hallmark of existence in the *Samsāra*. In addition to suffering there are the elements of impermanence and chances of prolonging bondage through the deeds inspired by ignorance and passions. The awareness of these facts of phenomenal existence has been specially propogated by the two branches of Śramaṇa Culture, Jainism and Buddhism. As in Jainism so in Buddhism, existence in the world is invariably associated with manifold sufferings. The quest of liberation springs out this awarences of suffering.⁵³

Indeed, the Jaina doctrine of non-absolutism-*anekāntavāda* had always welcomed a just appreciation of the points of view of the votaries of different faiths and philosophies.



53. See L.M. Joshi : *Facets of Jaina Religiousness in Comparative Light*, Ahmedabad : L.D. Institute of Indology, 1981, pp. 1-37