

The Jaina Path of Purification

PADMANNABH S. JAINI

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS
PRIVATE LIMITED • DELHI

First Published in 1979 by University of California Press, USA

First Indian Edition: Delhi, 1979

Reprint: Delhi, 1990

First Paperback Edition: Delhi, 1998

Reprint: Delhi, 2001

Copyright © 1998 by PADMANABH S. JAINI

All Rights Reserved.

ISBN: 81-208-0700-6 (Cloth)
ISBN: 81-208-1578-5 (Paper)

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007
236, 9th Main III Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560 011
8 Mahalaxmi Chamber, Warden Road, Mumbai 400 026
120 Royapetiah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004
Saras Plaza, 1302 Bajji Rao Road, Pune 411 002
8 Camac Street, Kolkata 700 017
Ashok Rajpath, Patna 800 004
Chowk, Varanasi 221 001

Printed in India

BY JAINENDRA PRAKASH JAIN AT SHRI JAINENDRA PRESS,

A-45 NARAINA, PHASE-I, NEW DELHI 110 028

AND PUBLISHED BY NARENDRA PRAKASH JAIN FOR

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED,
BUNGALOW ROAD, DELHI 110 007

to the Memory of My Parents

Abbreviations

AdS	Anuogadavara-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)
AP	Ādipurāna
AS	Ācarāṅga-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)
BhS	Bhagavati-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)
BJP	Bhārāṭya Jānapiṭha Publications (Varanasi)
JG	Jivaraj Jaina Granthamālā (Sholapur)
JOI	Journal of the Oriental Institute (Baroda)
JP	Jānapiṭha-piṭhājāli
ISK	Jinendra, Jainendra Siddhānta Kośa
JY	Williams, Jaina Yoga
k	kārikā (Sanskrit verse)
KS	Kalpa-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)
NNP	Nityanimittika-pāṭhāvai
NS-ADS	Nandsūtān Anuogaddāraṅ ca
RŚr	Ratnakaraṅśāravakacāra
Sams	Samavāya-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)
SD	Sāgaradharmānṛta
SJP	Tatia, Studies in Jaina Philosophy
SM	Syādvādanamañjarī
SMVGV	Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyalaya Golden Jubilee Volume (Bombay)
SS	Sarvārthasiddhi
ShtS	Śihānāṅga-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)
TS	Tattvārtha-sūtra
TSPC	Triśaṣṭīśalākāpurasaccaritra
UP	Uttarapurāna
Uis	Uttarādhyayana-sūtra (Suttāgame edition)

I

Mahāvīra and the Foundations of Jainism

It is August, 1955. On the holy mount of Kunthalagiri, in the state of Maharashtra in India, an old man called Śāntisāgara (Ocean of peace) is ritually fasting to death. He is the *ācārya* (spiritual leader) of the Digambara Jaina community; now, after thirty-five years as a mendicant, he is attaining his mortal end in the holy manner prescribed by the great saint Mahāvīra almost 2,500 years earlier. Śāntisāgara has owned nothing, not even a loincloth, since 1920. He has wandered on foot over the length and breadth of India, receiving food offerings but once a day, and then with only his bare hands for a bowl; he has spoken little during daylight hours and not at all after sunset. From August 14 until September 7 he takes only water; then, unable to drink without help, he ceases even that. At last, fully conscious and chanting the Jaina litany, he dies in the early morning of September 18.¹ The holiness and propriety of his life and of the manner of his death are widely known and admired by Jains throughout India.

Who Are the Jains?

The designation Jaina, applied to the approximately four million members of one of India's most ancient *śramāna* or non-Vedic religious traditions,² literally means "follower

1. For a detailed description of ācārya Śāntisāgara's last days, see *Sannati* (Marathi monthly), Oct. 1972, Bahubali, Kolhapur.

2. Jains have always claimed for themselves a degree of antiquity greater than that of Buddhism, the other important religion of this type. Their claim

of a *Jina*.³ The Jinas are "spiritual victors," human teachers said to have attained *kevalajñāna* (infinite knowledge) and to have preached the doctrine of *mokṣa* (salvation). Such figures are also called *Tīrthānkaras* (Builders of the ford [which leads across the ocean of suffering]).⁴ It is believed that twenty-four of them appear in each half of a time cycle,⁵ have done so from beginningless time, and will continue to do so forever.

Hence a *Jina* or *Tīrthānkara* is not the founder of a religion; he is rather the propagator of a truth and a path which have been taught in the same manner by all teachers of his everpresent, imperishable tradition. Each *Jina* reanimates this tradition for the benefit of succeeding genera-

³ resis mainly upon an appeal to legendary materials; those few sources which do lend themselves to historical verification might allow us to push the date of Jainism to the ninth century B.C., but certainly no further. (For a more detailed discussion of the evidence available here, see nn. 16–19.) In any case, at this point the fundamental attitudes characterizing any group to which the rubric "non-Vedic" has been applied should be clarified. They are three in number: rejection of the scriptural authority of the Vedas, Brāhmanas, Upaniṣads, *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana*, and *Dharmaśāstras*; denial of the efficacy of sacrifice; and refusal to accord any "divine" status to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, or the great avatars depicted in the eighteen traditional Purānas. While ancient India abounded with various heterodox mendicant sects, only those which displayed this sort of pronounced antagonism towards brahmanical tradition received the appellation *śramana*. For a discussion of the conflict between the śramanas and brahmanical society, see P. S. Jaini 1970.

⁴ In ancient times the epithet *Jina* was applied by various groups of śramanas to their respective teachers. Mendicant followers of what eventually became known as the Jaina tradition were originally known as *Nigaṇṭha* (Sanskrit *Nirgrantha*), meaning "the unattached ones." It was only after other śramana sects using the term *Jina* (e.g., the Ājīvikas) either died out or simply abandoned this term in favor of another (as in the case of the Buddhists) that the derived form *Jaina* (*Jina*-disciple) came to refer exclusively to the Nigaṇṭhas. This seems to have occurred by around the ninth century, from which time inscriptions have been found containing the word "vardhajāin Jainaśāsanam" (may the Jaina teaching prosper). See Upadhye 1939. For Buddhist references to Nigaṇṭhas, see Malalasekera 1938: II, 61–65; C. J. Shah 1932: 5–7; P. S. Jaini 1976b; and n. 17 below.

⁵ Early Buddhist texts employ this term (*tīrthiya* in Pali) as the general (and derogatory) label for teachers of non-Buddhist schools; Jains have themselves used it exclusively for the teacher-propagators of their own faith. Here the traditional Jaina definition is followed—in terms of which "Jina" and "Tīrthānkara" are equivalent. (Modern usage sometimes applies the former designation to any *kevalin*—any person who has attained *kevalajñāna*—whether he goes on to fulfill the role of exalted teacher or not.)

⁶ For a description of these cycles, see 55: §418.

tions. The teachings are neither received through divine revelation nor manifested through some inherent magical power (as, for instance, the Vedas are alleged to be). It is the individual human soul itself which, aided by the earlier teachings, comes to know the truth. Strictly speaking, then, worshipping or following the teachings of a *particular Jina* has no special significance; nothing new is taught, and the path remains always the same. Even so, it is natural that those teachers who most immediately precede the present age would be remembered more readily. Thus we find that the last few Jinas—Nemi, Pārśva, and especially Mahāvīra, final teacher of the current time cycle—are often regarded as *the* teachers and taken as the objects of a certain veneration. Recent activities in the Jaina community celebrating the 2,500th anniversary of Mahāvīra's *nirvāṇa* (final death) attest to this phenomenon.

Although the scriptures assert time and again that the *Jina* is a human being, born of human parents in the usual way, the Jaina laity is usually raised to regard him more as a superhuman personage. Certain fantastic attributes are popularly held to characterize the *Jina*-to-be. He is born with a special body, its frame having an adamantine (*vajra*) quality; such a body is considered necessary if he is to withstand the terrible rigors of meditation intense enough to bring salvation in the present life. As a psychic corollary to this physical aspect, he possesses supermundane cognition—*avadhijñāna*—by means of which he may perceive objects and events at enormous distances. Similarly, a fixed and rather stylized set of supernatural occurrences is said to mark his career. Although he has practiced the virtues requisite to *Jinahood* during several previous lives, he is not spontaneously aware of his impending attainment in the present one. Hence the gods, appearing miraculously at the appropriate moment, urge him to awaken to his real vocation and thus to renounce the household life. And whereas ordinary men require a *guru* for initiation into the spiritual life of a mendicant (*muni*), the *Jina*-to-be needs no teacher or preceptor. He renounces

the world on his own, becoming the first monk of a new order. Upon attainment of Jinahood, he enters the state of kevalajñāna, from which there can be no falling away. At this point all normal bodily activities—eating, sleeping, talking, and so on—come to an end; the Jina sits, absolutely unmoving, in his omniscient state. And yet, as he sits there, a miraculous sound (*āṭiyadhvani*) will be heard emanating from his body. Several *ganaadharras* (supporters of the order) will then appear. Each will possess the ability to interpret the divyadhvani and thus to convey the Jina's teachings to others, answering accurately all questions pertaining to his path and doctrine. Finally, at the end of his life, the Jina sheds his mortal body and ascends to his permanent resting place at the very apex of the universe.

This, then, is the Jina ordinarily envisioned by the Jain layperson. But in the sacred literature of the tradition we find a picture that conforms much more closely to the usual image of a saintly human teacher. With reference to the career of Mahāvīra, for example, there are numerous details of his daily life prior to the enlightenment: his family, his personality, the travails of the quest. Rainy seasons spent in different cities, encounters with heretical contemporaries, and various discourses to disciples, all following his attainment of omniscience, are likewise described. On the basis of such descriptions it is possible to construct a brief biography of Mahāvīra, most recent of the historical Jinas and of greatest importance to the shape of the present order. This account of the Jaina religion most appropriately begins with the great saint's life; for in considering what may at first glance seem the bare facts of an individual existence, the reader will discover ties with the prehistoric past, a fantastically complex cosmological system, and the seeds of controversies that have split the Jaina community for 2,000 years.

The Digambara and Śvetāmbara Schism

In recounting the story of Mahāvīra we are actually dealing with two stories, or rather with divergent narratives each

purporting to accurately describe a single set of events. These conflicting versions reflect the positions of two distinct and virtually irreconcilable traditions within Jainism: that of the Digambaras (Sky-clad) and that of the Śvetāmbaras (White [cotton]-clad). This split among the followers of the Jina may have originated with the southward flight of one portion of the previously unified Jaina community in the face of a disastrous famine, circa 300 B.C.

Some sources suggest that a large group of migrants was led by the famous *ācārya* Bhadrabāhu into what is now Karnataka State (Mysore), where they resided for some twelve years. It is further held that Bhadrabāhu himself passed away before any return was possible, but that his followers did make their way back to Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna in Bihar State), only to discover that an "official" recension of the sacred texts had been prepared in their absence. Many points of this recension, codified under the leadership of Sthūlabhadra, were unacceptable to the recently returned monks; even more significantly, the "northerners" had taken up certain habits, especially the use of clothing, which the southern group found intolerable. Unable to effect any alterations either with regard to the contested doctrinal issues or to the "lax" conduct of Sthūlabhadra's followers, this group (later called Digambaras) not only declared the entire canon heretical and invalid, but proclaimed themselves the only "true" Jinas. Eventually they wrote their own *purāṇas* (legends), giving a history of Mahāvīra which often contradicted that found in the texts possessed by the other faction, the Śvetāmbaras.⁶ Our story will attempt to reflect both versions, and to bring into focus the points of contention from which

6. The account given here of the Pāṭaliputra council and the subsequent schism follows main elements of the Digambara and Śvetāmbara description of these events. It should be noted that Śvetāmbaras do not completely accept the Digambara version of the migration incident, contending that Bhadrabāhu was at that time not in the south but in Nepal. They also maintain that the schism actually began in the 609th year after the nirvāna of Mahāvīra (A.D. 82), when an order of naked (*bodhiya*) monks was established by one Śivakoṭi in Rathavīrapura; members of this order supposedly became the

such important religious and social ramifications have developed.

Vardhamāna Mahāvīra: Legends Connected with His Birth

The word Mahāvīra, great hero, is an epithet, not the given name of the man to whom it is applied; but the universality of its application has rendered it functionally equivalent to a personal name. Tradition has it that this Jina-to-be was born in 599 B.C. at Kundagrāma, a large city in the kingdom of Vaiśālī (near modern Patna).⁷ His father was one Siddhārtha, a warrior (*ksatriya*) chieftain of the Jñātrī clan; his mother, Trīśalā, was the sister of the Vaiśālī ruler Ceṭaka.

Before a description of the birth itself, several important events said to have preceded it must be considered. According to Śvetāmbara sources, conception of the child was accompanied by Trīśalā's witnessing of fourteen dreams (see pl. 4): (1) A white elephant; (2) a white bull; (3) a lion; (4) Śrī, the goddess of beauty; (5) garlands of mandāra flowers; (6) the full moon; (7) the rising sun; (8) a large and beautiful flag; (9) a vase of costly metal, filled with water; (10) a lake adorned with lotuses; (11) an

first of the "sky-clad" sect. (See Stevenson 1915: 70-80; C. J. Shah 1932: 67-74; Schubring 1962: §26-27.) Digambaras, for their part, claim that Bhadrabāhu migrated to Mysore together with Candragupta Maurya, first king of the Maurya dynasty, who had become a Jaina mendicant. It is believed that they both ended their lives in the holy manner on the site of modern Shravanabelgola. Numerous inscriptions in that area, dating from the fifth century A.D., lend some credibility to the account of a southward migration, though not necessarily to the fact that either Candragupta or Bhadrabāhu took part therein. (See B. L. Rice 1909: intro. 3-10; Saleatore 1938: 4, n. 1.)

Certain Jaina sources (e.g., the Kannada *Vaḍḍārādhane* of Śvakoti, circa A.D. 1000) place the great schism not in Pāliṣputra but in Ujjeni. They also indicate that final separation between the two sects occurred in Valabhi, when those monks wearing a single loincloth (*aṛḍha-phāṭaka*) were required by King Lokapāla to become fully clothed in white garments; this group thus came to be known as Svetāpāla or Svetāmbaras.

7. For the Svetāmbara accounts of Mahāvīra's life, see Jacobi 1884; TSPC: X (tr. Johnson); Boodchand 1948; Schubring 1962: §17-22. For the Digambarā version, see UP: lxvii-lxxvi; and *Mahāvīraṅgu*: lxx-cii. For a complete bibliography, see H. Jain 1974: 41-45.

ocean of milk; (12) a celestial abode (a glorious house in the sky); (13) an enormous heap of jewels; (14) a blazing fire. To this list the Digambaras add: (15) a lofty throne; and (16) a pair of fish playing in a lake.

Jainas recall and re-enact these dreams even today when they celebrate the five auspicious moments (*kalyāṇākas*) of Mahāvīra's life: conception (*garbha*), birth (*janma*), renunciation (*vairāgya*), enlightenment (*Kevalajñāna*) and final death (*nirvāna*). The dreams are also depicted in the sculptures and paintings which adorn the interiors of Jaina temples. They seem to allegorically portray the descent of Mahāvīra's soul into the womb from an exalted and heavenly abode. Such symbols indicate that he was destined to become either a universal monarch (*cakravartin*) or a great saint, a Tīrthaṅkara.

In the Svetāmbara texts there is also an unusual prebirth episode, unknown to the Digambaras: a change of womb during the early embryonic period. This story maintains that the child was originally conceived by a brahman couple, Rṣabhadata and Devānandā. But Śakra, king of the gods, found this situation unacceptable and transferred the embryonic Jina-to-be to the womb of the *ksatriya* woman Trīśalā; the baby she had been carrying was placed within Devānandā.⁸ It is well known in the Jaina tradition, as well as in the Buddhist, that only a member of the warrior caste can become a "monarch," whether spiritual or temporal.⁹ But this tenet itself reflects the underlying conviction that, contrary to the ordinary caste hierarchy

8. The actual transference was carried out by Harinegimesi, commander of Śakra's celestial armies. The antiquity of this legend is attested to by its representation in certain sculptures found at Mathura: these, depicting Harinegimesi as a goat-headed demigod, probably date from around A.D. 200. See Smith 1901. Also, see below, pl. 5.

9. . . . na eyaṃ bhūyaṃ na eyaṃ bhavaṃ, na eyaṃ bhaviṣṣaṃ, jaṃ naṃ arahaṃṃā vā cakka vaṭṭi vā . . . bhikkhāvakuṭṭesu vā mahānakuṭṭesu vā ayaṃṃsu. KS: §21. Compare: taṃ kuḷam olokayanto "Buddhā nāma vessakule vā suddakule vā na nibbattanti, lokasammute pana khattiyakule vā brāhmaṇakule vā dvīsu yeva kuḷesu nibbattanti, idāni ca khattiyakulaṃ" lokasammataṃ, taṃtha nibbattissāmi" ti kuḷam paṇi. *Jāṭaka*: I, 40.

which places *brahmins* at the apex, it is in fact the *kṣatriyas* who are highest. The rationale here is that a brahman must depend for his subsistence upon the gifts of others; he is thus placed in a lower position than the *kṣatriya*, who not only gets what he wants or needs in the world by his own power, but also supports the brahman out of his goodness and generosity. The brahmanical tradition, of course, rejects any such notion, and it is to the proponents of this tradition that the story seems addressed. Not only does it suggest that the great saint was born as a *kṣatriya*, but also that the opportunity for birth as a brahman was available and yet was rejected.

While this tale has been treated here as a pointed metaphor, the Śvetāmbaras consider it true; indeed, they sometimes list the time of embryo transfer as a sixth auspicious moment in Mahāvīra's life. One scholar has suggested that Devānandā was in fact a brahman wife of Siddhārtha, and that her child by him was foisted upon the *kṣatriya* queen to give it greater status.¹⁰ This explanation seems dubious, however, in light of the strict rules that have always prevailed forbidding the marriage of a brahman woman and a *kṣatriya* man. Certain modern Jaina scholars have dealt with the problem by proposing that Devānandā was perhaps a wet nurse to the baby.¹¹ This view is given some credence by a famous scene in the *Bhagavati-sūtra*, in which Devānandā, now an old woman, meets the fully-grown Mahāvīra. Milk flows from her breast at that moment, while he is heard to say, "This is my mother."¹²

A final important prebirth episode relates how, even in Trīṣālā's womb, the baby Mahāvīra displayed a highly developed sense of *ahimsā*, nonharming, the primary moral precept for all Jinas. He lay completely still, lest his kicks should cause his mother pain. Only when he

perceived with his supernatural knowledge that Trīṣālā feared him dead did he stir slightly to reassure her. Further, his awareness at this time of the ease with which parental concern is converted into mental anguish moved him to vow that he would not renounce the household life until both his parents had passed away.¹³ This last point is not accepted by the Digambaras, who believe that Mahāvīra became a mendicant while his parents still lived, although he solicited and received their permission to do so. Both versions stand in sharp contrast to the description of Gautama's renunciation in the Buddhist Pāli literature, where great emphasis is placed upon the need to abandon the worldly life no matter how strong familial pressures to the contrary.

The birth was attended by numerous marvels: gods and humans celebrated, music filled the air, a general amnesty was proclaimed throughout the land. The pre-naming rites were performed on Mount Meru, where the baby had been taken immediately after birth by the power of Śakra. Following the ritual bath and various auspicious rites, the child was named Vardhamāna, he who brings prosperity, apparently because his parents' wealth had increased markedly during the pregnancy. The name Vardhamāna was of course only the first of many to be given him: Vīra (Hero); Mahāvīra (Great hero);¹⁴ Sanmati (Of excellent wisdom); Kāśyapa, his lineage name; Jñātiputra,¹⁵ his clan

13. lae nam samane bhagavam Mahāvire gabhathie ceva imevārūvam abhiggaham abhiganhatai: no khalu me kappai ammapūthim jivamtehim . . . aḡārāo anagāriyam pavvaittae. K5: §91.

14. According to the canonical tradition, the name Mahāvīra was given to Vardhamāna by the gods in recognition of the fortitude and steadfastness with which he performed austerities: bhīmahayabheravam uraḡam acelayam parisaham sahai ti kaṭṭu devehim se nāman kayam samane bhagavam Mahāvire. A5: §998. A later tradition suggests that they gave him this name when, as a baby, he caused Mount Meru to tremble by pressing it with his toe: ākampio va jeṇam Meru anguṭṭhaeṇa ḡāe / teṇha Mahāviro nāman sī kayam surindehim // *Paumacariya*: II, 26.

15. Prakriti Nāyaputta (or Nātaputta): teṇam kāleṇam . . . samane bhagavam Mahāvīre Nāyaputte Nāyakulanivatte . . . A5: §1002. It is identical with the Pāli Nātaputta. See Malalasekera 1938: II, 61-65.

10. Jacobi 1884: intro, xxxi, n. 2.

11. Boolchand 1948: 23.

12. Devānam'ā māhaṇī mama ammagā, ahaṇ nam Devānam'dae māhaṇīe attae. BHS: ix, 33 (§380).

name; and śramaṇa *bhagavān* [venerable] Mahāvīra (the Venerable Ascetic Mahāvīra).

Mahāvīra's Early Life

It should be noted that both Siddhārtha and Trisalā are described in the *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* as followers of Pārśva,¹⁶ the penultimate Jina of the time cycle that Mahāvīra was to complete. The historicity of this Pārśva, who is said to have flourished in Banaras circa 850 B.C., seems definite. Buddhist texts refer to the existence of large numbers of Nigaṇṭhas (Unattached ones) who followed the *cātuyāmasarivara*,¹⁷ the fourfold restraint that Jacobi and others have convincingly identified with the teachings of Pārśva.¹⁸ Such references, moreover, suggest a Jaina community older than that of the Buddhists, hence predating Mahāvīra as well. This conclusion is based upon the fact that sectarian writings of the period were not ordinarily willing to grant "established" status to rival groups only then developing (witness the failure of Jaina texts to provide any mention whatsoever of the Buddha or his followers). The Nigaṇṭhas of the Pali literature, therefore, must have been members of a very ancient religious order.¹⁹

Little information is available pertaining to Mahāvīra's childhood. There is one story of how he subdued a terrify-

16. samanassa bhagavao Mahāvīrassa ammaṇḍiyaro Pāsāvaccijjā samanovāsagā yavī hoṭṭha. AS: §1002. For an account of the legends surrounding Pārśva, see Jacobi 1884: 271-275; Bloomfield 1919; B. D. Jain 1925; Zimmer 1951: 181-204.

17. idha, maharāja, Nigaṇṭho Nātaputto cātuyāmasarivarasamvuto hoṭi. *Dighanikāya*: I, 57 (Samaññaphala-sutta).

18. See Jacobi 1880; also n. 32 below.

19. Jacobi seems to have been the first scholar to recognize this fact: "The Nirgranthas are frequently mentioned by the Buddhists, even in the oldest part of the *Piṭakas*. But I have not yet met with a distinct mention of the Buddhas in any of the old Jaina *Sūtras*, though they contain lengthy legends about Jamali, Gosāla and other heterodox teachers. As this is just the reverse position to that which both sects mutually occupy in all aftertimes, and as it is inconsistent with our assumption of a contemporaneous origin of both creeds, we are driven to the conclusion that the Nirgranthas were not a newly founded sect of Buddha's time. This seems to have been the opinion of the *Piṭakas* too: for we find no indication of the contrary in them." Jacobi 1880: 161.

ing snake by means of his great courage and peaceful aura; beyond this, we know virtually nothing. It can be assumed that as a member of a royal household the child must have spent his time in mastering the arts suitable to the vocation of a prince: writing, mathematics, archery, and the like.

With regard to Mahāvīra's family life after coming of age, both traditions provide commentaries; these diverge along lines generally corresponding to those laid down in the controversy over the saint's vows *in utero*. Śvetāmbaras contend that the young man fulfilled all duties of the householder: that he married the princess Yaśodā, fathered one daughter called Priyadarśanā,²⁰ and, as mentioned above, continued in this role until both his parents had died. The Digambaras, on the other hand, believe that Mahāvīra remained a bachelor throughout his life (although they do not hold that this is a prerequisite to the attainment of Jinahood). In general, their version stresses his disinclination for worldly affairs from an early age.

Both traditions agree that when Mahāvīra was thirty years of age certain gods appeared and urged him to renounce the world; only thus could he fully develop the predispositions towards becoming a Tīrthankara that had been fostered during so many previous lives. This encouragement of the Jina-to-be is customarily performed by a particular type of god called Laukāntika, world-ender; the designation refers to the fact that such beings are in their last birth but one (that is, that they will take human form and achieve *mokṣa*, release, in the very next lifetime).²¹ Their words to Mahāvīra:

Victory, victory to thee, gladdener of the world! Victory, victory to thee, fortunate one! Luck to thee, bull of the best kṣatriyaśi! Awake, reverend lord of the world! Establish the

20. samanassa bhagavao Mahāvīrassa bhajjā Jasovā gottenam Kodhina, dhūyā Kāsāvogottenam, tise nam do nāmadhejā evaṃ āhijjanti: Anojjā i vā Piyadamaṇā i vā. AS: §1001.

21. lokānte bhavāḥ laukāntikāḥ. te sarve paritasamsārāḥ. tataścyutā ekam garbhāvśaṃ prāpya paritrivāsyanti. SS: §489.

dharma-irttha (teaching of the holy path) for the sake of every living being in the entire universe; it will bring supreme benefit to all!²²

The Great Renunciation

Mahāvīra's renunciation is made much of in the texts; indeed, such an act engenders widespread glorification of the renunciant in Jaina communities even today. One reads that he was adorned with garlands by the gods, then carried on a palanquin in magnificent procession through the city and beyond it to a large park. There, accompanied by a great retinue, he descended from his seat and, beneath a holy *asoka* tree, renounced from his seat and, beneath a Digambaras he removed his clothing and garland-ornaments and then, following the ancient tradition, pulled out his hair by hand; this final act indicates both an end of concern for the body and willingness to face pain for the sake of the goal. Having thus become "sky-clad" (totally nude), he abandoned the household life.²³

The Śvetāmbara version of this event states that after arriving at the park Mahāvīra isolated himself and sat, fasting, for two-and-a-half days. Then still completely alone, he put on a *deva-dūṣya* (divine cloth) given to him by Śakra, tore out his hair as above, and set forth upon the mendicant's path.²⁴ It is further said that he continued to wear the *deva-dūṣya* for thirteen months thereafter,²⁵ at that point, the garment was accidentally caught on a

22. *jaya jaya namdāi jaya jaya bhaddāi bhaddam te jaya jaya khatiya-varavasahāi bujjihāhi bhagavan loṅanāhāi pavaittehi dhammattham . . .* KS §110.

23. *vastābharaṇanāmalīyāni svayam-śakraḥ samādāde / muklāṅy etiāni putāni maivā māhāṅmyam idhāsam // UP: xlvii. 305.*

24. . . . *āharaṇamālīlāṅkāraṁ omuṭṭā sayameva paṅcamuṭṭhiyaṁ loyaṁ karai . . . chaṭṭheṇaṁ bhattenāṁ apāṇaṇam . . . egaṁ devadūṣam ādāya ege abhe munde bhavittā āgārāo aṅgarīyaṁ pavāte. KS: §114.* The *deva-dūṣya* would appear to be a finely woven piece of cloth thrown over the shoulders; *komalāṁ dhavalāṁ sūksmāṁ syulāṁ candrakararīva / devadūṣyaṁ devarājāh skandhadese nyadhāṁ vibhoḥ // TSPC: I, iii, 64.*

25. *sarṇvaccharaṇaṁ sāhyam masaṁ jaṇṇaṁ nā rikkāsi vaṭṭhagaṇaṁ bhagavam / acceḷo tato cāt taṁ vosirījja vaṭṭham aṅgāte // AS: §465.*

thorn bush and pulled off. Either Mahāvīra neglected to pick it up or he remained unaware of the loss until later, when the cloth had already been carried off by a brahman.²⁶

The latter narrative brings to attention what is doubtless the single most important point of contention between the two traditions: *is a man who wears clothing truly a monk?* The Digambaras believe that Mahāvīra and the other Jinas were sky-clad at all times after their respective renunciations, and that anyone who claims to be a true follower of the Jina's path, a Jaina mendicant, must adopt the practice of nudity. The fact that Mahāvīra eventually became sky-clad even in the Śvetāmbara story does not alter the basic difference of intent in the two recensions. Whereas the Digambaras clearly show the renunciant purposely casting aside all garments, the Śvetāmbaras not only suggest that he wore clothes for a time but even that he may not have given them up voluntarily. Of course, they do not assert that the great saint was *attached* to clothing; after all, he never bothered to obtain a second garment. Indeed, one passage in the Śvetāmbara canon goes so far as to show Mahāvīra saying "I uphold the practice of nudity."²⁷ Nevertheless, the Śvetāmbaras maintain that he did not require his mendicant disciples to go naked. All of this is nothing less than anathema to the Digambaras, for whom the retention of clothing indicates the retention of shame; hence it constitutes a falling away from the strict renunciation of all possessions, internal as well as external, that is required of a Jaina monk. Of course a man who goes naked may still harbor a sense of shame; nudity alone does not make one a monk. But for the Digambaras the use of any clothing whatsoever is an *absolute* indicator of residual shame and thus negates all pretensions to monkhood.

26. This narrative is found only in the commentaries and such later works as Hemacandra's *TSPC*. See Johnson 1962: 40ff.

27. *mac samānaṇam niggaṁṭṭhāṇam paṅcamahavaṭṭe sapadikkamaṇe accelaḥ dhamme paṇṇate. ŚM: 5: §916.*

The controversy is deepened by Śvetāmbara doctrine concerning the practices of Jinas other than Mahāvīra. Not only do they maintain that Rṣabha, first Tīrthankara of the present cycle, went naked in the same rather haphazard or optional manner that Mahāvīra did (see pl. 1), but they hold further that the twenty-two remaining Jinas never abandoned the clad state. (It is even suggested that some of them wore decorative clothes of variegated colors.)²⁸ In the context of such a belief, Mahāvīra's practice of nudity can be depicted as a departure from the tradition of his predecessor, Pārśva. This theory is based mainly upon the Keśi-Gautama-saṃvāda,²⁹ a dialogue in the Śvetāmbara text *Uttarādhyaṃya-sūtra*. Here Keśi, a fully-clad mendicant-disciple of Pārśva, is discussing doctrinal issues with the naked monk Indrabhūti Gautama, chief disciple of Mahāvīra. The two consider certain differences in doctrine between their respective sects, especially those pertaining to the use of clothing. They eventually arrive at a compromise, concluding that external signs are of little consequence and function merely to help identify various groups engaging in particular practices.³⁰ The underlying implication of the dialogue is, of course, that since Pārśva is more ancient than Mahāvīra his teachings are in some sense superior; thus it is better to remain clad, or at most to have nudity as an optional practice. The Digambaras reject the

28. Devendra (KS: app. 1, nn. 7-10) quotes the following in support of these beliefs: "acelavyaṃ" śrī Ādinātha-Mahāvīra-sādhanāṃ vastram māna-pramāṇasahitam jīrṇapṛāyaṃ dhavalam ca kalpate. śrī Aṭṭhāvīraśāstīrthakarasādhanāṃ tu pañcavarnam. (*Kalpa-sūtraKalpalatā*): aceluko dhammo purimassa ya pacchimassa ya jīṇassa/ majjhimagāṇa jīṇāṇam hoi sacelo acelo ya// (*Kalpasamāhāna*).

29. Jacobi 1895: 119-129.

30. acelaḡo ya jo dhammo, jo dhammo santarutarō/ desīyo Vaddhamāneḡa Pāsena ya mahāśasā// ekakajjapavannāṇam viṣese kiṃ nu kāraṇam/ jīṇge dūvīṇe meḡhāvī kahaṃ vippaccaḡo na te// Kesim evam buvaṇṇam tu Goyamo jīṇamabhavī/ vināḡeṇa samāḡama dhammasāhanamicchīyam// paccayattham ca logassa nāṇāvīhavigappāṇam/ jattattham gahaṇattham ca loge jīṅgaḡoyāṇam// aha bhave paṇṇā u, mokkhasesbhūyasāḡaṇā/ nāṇam ca dāṇṣaṇam ceva caritāṇṇam nichchae// sāhu Goyamaḡ paṇṇā te, chinno me saṃsao imo// *Uṭṭ*: xxiii, 29-34.

authenticity of this dialogue, as well as the sort of compromise it explicitly suggests.

Indeed, the history of Jainism is rather remarkable for the almost total lack of doctrinal accommodation between sects that has taken place over the centuries, especially regarding the issue of nudity. There was only one apparently "compromise" movement, now long extinct, that probably flourished in South India circa a.d. 500. Literary evidence indicates that monks of this sect, known as Yāpanīyas, went naked in the forest but wore a single piece of clothing (*eka-phāḷaka*) when in populated areas.³¹ They recognized the authenticity of the Śvetāmbara scriptures, and they propounded two doctrines traditionally acceptable only to Śvetāmbaras: that women can attain salvation and that the omniscient being partakes of food. The Yāpanīyas seem to have eventually merged into the larger Digāmbara community by which they were surrounded; their tendencies toward a more ecumenical Jainism died with them.

The Tradition of Pārśva: Cāturyāma-dharma

A second issue raised by the discussion between Keśi and Gautama has to do with the apparent difference between the "law of the four restraints" (*cāturyāma-dharma*) preached by Pārśva and the five great vows (*pañca mahāvratā*) taken by mendicant followers of Mahāvīra.³² The affiliation of Mahāvīra's own parents with the tradition of Pārśva has already been noted, as has the existence of Buddhist materials which specifically identify cāturyāma

31. For various traditions concerning the origin of the Yāpanīyas, see Upadhye 1933; Premī 1956: 56-73; and n. 92 below.

32. cāujāmo ya jo dhammo, jo imo paṃcasakkho/ desīo Vaddhamāneḡa. Pāsena ya mahamuni// egakajjapavannāṇam, viṣese kiṃ nu kāraṇam/ dhamme dūvīṇe meḡhāvī, kahaṃ vippaccaḡo na te// tao Kesim buvaṇṇam tu, Goyamo imam abhavī/ paṇṇa samikkhae dhammam, latāṇṇam tattavūṇchayam// . . . purimāṇam dūvīsōjho u, carimāṇam durāṇpāḷo/ kappo majjhimagāṇam tu, suvīsōjho supāḷo// sāhu Goyama paṇṇā te, chinno me saṃsao imo// . . . *Uṭṭ*: xxiii, 23-27. For a translation of this section, see Jacobi 1895: 119-129. For further details on the four vows and five vows, see Jacobi 1880: Schubring 1962: §16.

with this tradition. Whereas the Digambaras may reject the authenticity of the Keśi-Gautama dialogue, particularly with regard to its position on nudity, the Buddhist reference to cāturyāma forces them to confront the “discrepancy” between the teachings of Pārśva and Mahāvīra which this dialogue seems to express. The problem is rendered even more crucial by the Śvetāmbaras’ use of this discrepancy to support their view that not all Jinas pronounced identical doctrines; once such variation is admitted, it is only a small step to suggesting that Pārśva need not have required nudity even if Mahāvīra did.³³

Although Buddhists employ the term *cāturyāma-samvāra* (Pali: *cātuyāma-samvāra*) to describe the teachings of Pārśva, they fail to make clear exactly what the term entails.³⁴ The Śvetāmbara canon gives the first comprehensive definition. Here, the cāturyāma is said to involve restraint from four sorts of activities: injury, nontruthfulness, taking what is not given, and possession.³⁵ This list agrees with that of Mahāvīra except that it omits the fourth of his five vows, which specifically prohibits sexual activity.³⁶ But even the Śvetāmbaras have not been willing to suggest that Pārśva allowed his monks to engage in such activity; their later eleventh-century commentators Abhayadeva and Śāntyācārya interpreted the vow of nonpos-

33. . . . purimapaścchimavajjā majjhimagā bhāvīsam arahaṃtā bhagavanti cāujāmaṃ dhammaṃ pannavimīti. *SūH5*: §329.

34. idha, mahārāja, Nigaṇṭho cātuyāmasamvārasamvuto hoti, katham ca . . . hoṭi idha, mahārāja, Nigaṇṭho sabhavāriphūto ca hoṭi, sabhavāriphūto ca hoṭi, sabhavāriphūto ca, sabhavāriphūto ca. *Dīgharūkāya*: I, 57. The Pali commentaries suggest that the word *vāri* in this passage refers to water and thus explain the cātuyāma-samvāra as restraint from the use of water (by a Nigaṇṭha mendicant). See Malalasekera 1938: II, 61. The Buddha is said to have also taught a kind of cātuyāma-samvāra, in this case involving the four precepts against injury, stealing, lying, and unchastity. See *Dīgharūkāya*: III, 48.

35. . . . cāujāmaṃ dhammaṃ . . . tam jahā: savvāo pāṇāivāyāo veramaṇaṃ, evaṃ musāvāyāo, adinnādānao, savvāo bahiddhadānao veramaṇaṃ. *SūH5*: §329.

36. paṇca mahāvayā pannaṭā tam jahā: savvāo pāṇāivāyāo veramaṇaṃ, savvāo musāvāyāo veramaṇaṃ, savvāo adinnādānao veramaṇaṃ, savvāo mehūṇāo veramaṇaṃ, savvāo pariggahāo veramaṇaṃ. *SūH5*: §48.

session as including celibacy.³⁷ Even so, they imply that the slight difference in emphasis between the two sets of rules does leave open the possibility of variation from one Jina to the next.

Western scholars, following Jacobi, have generally accepted the Śvetāmbara interpretation and understood the cāturyāma as above, prohibiting four specific kinds of action.³⁸ The recent research of P. K. Modi, however, shows that this interpretation is subject to serious difficulties.³⁹ First, we should expect Mahāvīra, as a follower of the tradition of Pārśva, to have initially taken the same vows as his predecessor. Yet even the *Acārāṅga-sūtra* of the Śvetāmbaras has him pledging only to follow a single great restraint called *sāmāyika-cāritra*, which entails avoiding all evil actions whatsoever.⁴⁰ Moreover, the term cāturyāma never appears in Digambara literature; Mahāvīra is invariably said therein to have undertaken the *sāmāyika-samyama*, which in the *Bhagavati-sūtra* is shown to be identical to the *sāmāyika-cāritra*.⁴¹ In light of

37. “cāturyāma . . . sa eva maithunaviramānāmakaḥ pañcāvratasāhlah . . .” Quoted from Modi in *Pāśanāharaviḥ*: intro. 47 (from Śāntyācārya’s commentary on the *Uṣ*).

38. For example, Renou (1953: 115): “Mahāvīra seems to have developed the ethical aspect of Jainism by introducing a fifth axiom which brought a modification in the import of the fourth . . . Finally, it was he who required his monks to dispense with clothing, setting an example himself, whereas Pārśva’s monks were clothed.” Jacobi’s rather pro-Śvetāmbara views on both the cāturyāma and the issue of nudity generated a good deal of heated discussion between followers of the two Jaina sects. The Śvetāmbara and Digambara positions in this interesting dispute have been set forth, respectively, by P. C. Nahar 1929, 1930, and K. P. Jain 1930.

39. Modi’s ed. (1965) of the *Pāśanāharaviḥ*: intro. 46–53.

40. tao nam samane bhagavaṃ Mahāvīre . . . pañcamuṭṭhiyaṃ loyaṃ kareṭṭi siddhantaṃ namokkāraṃ kareṭṭi savvaṃ me akaraṇṭṭiyaṃ pava-kammaṃ ti kaṭṭu sāmāyiaṃ caritaṃ padāvajjai. A5: §1013. Jacobi (1884: 198) seems to have gone wrong here by translating *sāmāyika* simply as “holiness,” failing to understand the technical meaning of the term, he was unable to see its wider implications. See P. S. Jaini 1976a.

41. Modi quotes the following passages from the Digambara text *Mūlācāra*: virado savvasāvajjaṃ tigutto pihitīdyo/ jīvo sāmāyiaṃ nāma sarjajamāhānam uttamaṃ // vii, 23. Compare: sāmāyiammi u kae cāujāmaṃ anutāraṃ dhammaṃ / tivahēna phāsāvāṃto sāmāyiasarjajo sa khalu // *BH5*: xxv, 7, 1 (§785).

these facts, Modi has suggested that *cāturyāma* did not imply four vows at all, but rather the four *modalities* (mind, body, speech, and the senses) through which evil could be expressed.⁴² Thus, he concludes, both Pārśva and Mahāvīra practiced and taught the same, single, all-encompassing *sāmāyika* restraint, while the five-vows that Mahāvīra set forth are no more than a specification of the main areas of conduct to which this restraint applied. Whether or not any variation of doctrine between Jinās is possible remains an open question; in any case, the “*cāturyāma* evidence” so often used in support of such a possibility can no longer be considered particularly significant.

Addressing the issue of nudity more directly, the Śvetāmbaras have cited passages from the Buddhist Pali texts that talk of certain “*eka-sāṭaka*” (one-cloth) Niganthas;⁴³ this is taken as testimony to the clothed state of at least some Jaina monks in Mahāvīra’s time. The Digambaras interpret this admittedly unbiased evidence as referring simply to certain laymen who progressively renounce their possessions while continuing in the household life.⁴⁴ This sort of renunciation involves eleven stages (*pratinā*): in the final stage, called *ailaka* (perhaps Prakrit for *acelaka*, unclothed), the aspirant retains only one piece of clothing.⁴⁵ Such “progressive renunciants” are found in the Digambara community even today. They take no “great” vows (*mahāvratā*) and thus technically remain householders until such time as these vows, which go hand in hand with complete nudity, are taken. Digambaras further cite a passage from the Śvetāmbaras’ own *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* in support of their position. This passage states that weak men, who cannot tolerate going sky-clad but wish to practice fasting and other virtuous activities, should do so

while continuing to wear clothing.⁴⁶ The Digambaras wish to identify the “clothed Niganthas” of the Buddhist sources with these “weak” practitioners—whom they regard as engaged in beneficial but not mokṣa-producing activities.⁴⁷ Even some of their own books, such as *Mūlācāra*, seem to support such modified practices in certain unusual cases.⁴⁸ But to suggest that these practices are legitimate for all monks, as well as for a Tīrthāṅkara, is of course unacceptable to them.

Modern scholars tend to favor the Śvetāmbara contention that followers of Pārśva did wear clothes while those of Mahāvīra did not.⁴⁹ Some have suggested that Mahāvīra instituted the practices of nudity as a result of meeting with and being influenced by the naked ascetic Makkhali Gosāla, eventually leader of the Ājīvika school. There is an apparent correspondence in time between their meeting and Mahāvīra’s “loss” of his garment. It has been held that this is too great a coincidence to ignore;⁵⁰ but this contention is somewhat weakened by the fact that the Ājīvikas were far from being the only mendicant sect of that period given to nudity. Furthermore, the canonical description of the first encounter between the two men shows Gosāla as a clothed householder who threw away his garments and

46. *Je bhikkhū acele parivusie tassa nam evaṃ bhavati: cāemi ahaṃ taṇa-phāsaṃ . . . siyaphāsaṃ . . . teuphāsaṃ . . . ahīyāsettae . . . hiripadicchādānaṃ caḥaṃ no saṃcāemi ahīyāsettae. evaṃ se kappai kaḍḍhaṃdhaṇaṃ dhārittae.* A5: §433.

47. K. P. Jain 1928: 61ff.

48. Compare: *āryākāraṇaṃ āgame anujātaṃ vastraṃ, kāraṇāpekṣayā bhikṣuṇāṃ. hīrmaṇ ayogyāśāraṇāvayo duścāraṃbhāṇambamānābhiḥ vā parīśaḥ-sābhaṇe vā akṣamaḥ sa grhṇāti. Mūlācāra [Vijyodāyā-ḥikā] 427. Premī (1956: 63) is of the opinion that the *Mūlācāra* was originally a text of the Yapaniya sect.*

49. For example, see Weber (1958: 196): “The severity of the flight from the world appears to have varied. According to the tradition, it must have increased: originally it entailed neither absolute lack of possessions nor unconditional chastity. It is controversial which of the two forms was introduced at a later time as an absolute commandment. As this supplementary introduction is ascribed to Mahāvīra, in contrast to the milder commandments of the penultimate tīrthāṅkara, it is identical with the formation of the order of monks itself.”

50. Chatge, quoted by Deo (1956: 75): “. . . some significance must be attached to the coincidence of Mahāvīra giving up his garment in the year of his meeting with Gosāla.”

42. Compare: *cāuvvīthe saṃjāme paṇṇatte taṃ jāhā: maṇasaṃjāme. vaṣaṃ-jāme. kāyasaṃjāme. uvagāraṇasaṃjāme. Sīh5: §365.*

43. *Āḡuttarānikāya*: III, 384.

44. K. P. Jain quotes SD: vii, 38, 48.

45. See below, ch. VI n. 54.

begged Mahāvīra to take him as a disciple.⁵¹ The whole problem of this and other contacts between these teachers is of great interest to the study of both doctrine and practice in Jainism; we shall have reason to return to it shortly.

In the final analysis, Digambaras have shown very little interest in such academic discussions. Śvetāmbaras have traditionally recognized two sorts of monks, the *jinakalpin* (who follows Mahāvīra's example and lives alone, naked, in the forest) and the *sthavirakalpin* (who lives clothed and in an ecclesiastical community), and have considered both practices equally valid paths to salvation; but all such distinctions are heretical and even blasphemous to the Digambaras.⁵² For them, nudity remains the necessary condition for mokṣa; hence they denounce Śvetāmbara mendicants as false Jains (*Jainabhāsa*).

On this level, the level of faith and practice, matters of textual criticism and scholarly research have had negligible impact. Thus the two sects have remained generally indifferent to one another through the ages; there have been no joint councils and few cordial meetings of monks. Encounters between the two laities have been purely for the purpose of disputation; indeed, it is only recently that leaders of the long-estranged communities have begun to suggest that, in light of the Jains' extreme minority position in India, certain joint activities might be valuable. Thus far these have been restricted to shared celebration of the auspicious moments in Mahāvīra's career. It remains to be seen whether such efforts will be fruitful in healing a rift of two millennia. When such factors are considered as the continuing Digambara claim that the Śvetāmbara scriptures are totally inauthentic, or the still prevalent Śvetām-

bara practice of marking the lips, eyes, and torsos of naked Jina-images (even those of Mahāvīra) in their temples, thus "clothing" them and making it impossible for Digambaras to worship there, it must be admitted that a full-fledged reconciliation may not be forthcoming in the near future.

Mahāvīra's Encounters with Makkhali Gosāla

To return to Mahāvīra's postrenunciation career, both traditions have him wandering from place to place for twelve years, engaging with grim determination in severe penances. The most important of these voluntary mortifications involved complete fasting—abstaining from water as well as food, sometimes for as long as a week. The epithet *dīgha-tapassi* (he who engages in extended penances), which is applied to Nigaṇṭhas in the Buddhist texts, probably alludes to this sort of fasting.⁵³ The practice has made an indelible impression upon the Jaina psyche; even today many of the Jina's followers, from children to the elderly, occasionally undertake long waterless fasts as a major expression of the holy life. This emphasis upon fasting, more than any other single factor, distinguishes the religious practice of the Jaina layperson from that of the Hindu communities which surround him. Jaina monks undergo such fasts as a common and regular aspect of their daily existence.

The Digambaras have a tradition that Mahāvīra observed a vow of silence during these twelve years as a wanderer. Since silence is not a prerequisite to the saintly life even for Digambaras, we may well be justified in regarding this notion as a sectarian device aimed at denying certain episodes found in the Śvetāmbara version of the same period. Of greatest import here are several stories, to which we have alluded earlier, involving Mahāvīra and the Ājīvika Makkhali Gosāla. Gosāla was by profession a

51. *sādhvāo ya pādhyāo ya kuṇḍivāo ya pahaṅāo ya cittaṭṭhahagām ya māhane āyamettā . . .* *Bh5*: xv, §340. See Basham 1951: 40.

52. The Digambaras recognize these two categories of monks but maintain that both must adhere to the vow of nudity: "jina iva vtharantīti jinakalpakā eka evety atīśayo jinakalpakānām. itaro jinhgādir ācārah prāyena vyāvartitarūpa eva." Quoted in *JSK*: II, 329. For the Śvetāmbara view, see Calliat 1968: 94-95, n. 22-23.

53. *tena kho pana samayena Nigaṇṭho Nālaputto Nālandāyām pavīvasati mahatīyā Nigaṇṭhapaṇisāyā saddhim. aha kho Dīghatapassi Nigaṇṭho . . . yena bhagavā ten upasaṅkami . . .* *Majjhimanikāya*: I, 371 (Uḍāḷi-sutta).

bard, spinning tales and showing pictures for the entertainment of local audiences. He was the follower of an old, established Ājīvika sect; eventually he came to be regarded as the leader of this sect and as the chief spokesman of the "fatalist" doctrines to which it adhered.

According to the *Vyākhyārajñāpī* (also known as the *Bhagavati-sūtra*),⁵⁴ a prominent Svetāmbara scripture, Gosāla heard tales of Mahāvīra's miraculous powers, particularly his uncanny accuracy in prognostication; wishing to come into contact with such powers himself, the Ājīvika came to the future Jina and asked to become a disciple. It is further related that the two spent six years together. On one occasion Mahāvīra displayed his yogic prowess to his companion, when they came across a heretical brahman ascetic named Vesiyāyana, who was doing penance by fasting and sitting with hands upraised to the sun for several days. He was covered with lice but was too compassionate to hurt them. Gosāla taunted him, saying, "Are you a muni (sage), or a host for lice?" When this insult was uttered a second time Vesiyāyana became enraged; stepping back eight paces, he released in Gosāla's direction the magical heat which he had accumulated through long yogic practice. But Mahāvīra quickly neutralized the effects of this deadly heat with a cooling emanation of his own. The brahman recognized that he was no match for Mahāvīra.

Gosāla begged to be given the secret of such power. Granting his request, Mahāvīra described the six-month penance required for accomplishment of the goal. Gosāla then left his teacher and pursued his own career; eventually, through the practices that Mahāvīra had taught him, he attained great yogic powers and proclaimed himself a Jina. It is said that he made his headquarters in Śrāvastī at the workshop of the potter woman Hāhālā, with whom he lived under compromising circumstances. There he spent his time codifying the Ājīvika scriptures.

54. *Bh5*: xv. For a complete account, see Basham 1951: 39-79.

and mounting polemics against all rivals, even his former companion and instructor.

Makkhali Gosāla has one other important part to play in the life of Mahāvīra. To observe this we must go ahead of the story for a moment to a time long after Mahāvīra's enlightenment, when the Jina felt it necessary to make public the history of his relation with the Ājīvika leader and to show the latter's claim to Jinahood for the sham it was. Gosāla reacted to this "slander" with verbal threats against Mahāvīra's life. When this produced no effect beyond the refusal of Jinas to associate with Ājīvikas, he sought out and reviled Mahāvīra, even using his magic powers to incinerate two of the Jina's disciples when they tried to oppose him. Finally he turned his power on Mahāvīra himself, accompanying it with a curse: "You are now pervaded by my magic forces, and within six months you will die of a fever."⁵⁵ But Mahāvīra's superiority and purity protected him; although he did become ill, he was able to cure himself.⁵⁶ As for Gosāla, it is said that the evil

55. *lunam nam āsō Kāsavā, mamam tavenam teenam annāṭṭhe samāne anto chaṇham māsamam pīṭṭajjaraparigayasarīre dāhāvakkamṭhe chaumathī ceva kālam karesasi. Bh5*: xv, §552.

They have traditionally shared with Digambaras a belief that the area surrounding a Tirthankara is pervaded by peace and good feeling; to accommodate this belief with an acceptance of the kind of malice and death manifested in the story is no easy task. Hence they classify the whole occurrence as an extraordinary thing (*āścarya*), an unheard of calamity (*upāsarga*), an event so astonishing that it could happen only once in billions of years. In fact the Śvetāmbaras have noted altogether ten such events described in their scriptures. Of the remaining nine, two are points of great controversy with the Digambaras; who of course reject them completely: the transfer of embryo episode (see above, n. 8) and the attainment of Tirthankara status by a woman (see below, n. 93). A list of all ten *āścaryas* is given in the *5thS*: § 107a.

It should be noted here that the Digambaras have a similar belief, subsumed under the doctrine of *huṅḍavasaṅgrīṇī*. This designates a period during which there may occur certain extraordinary events, for example, a calamity befalling a Tirthankara. The *Tīlojopannatī* (k 1615-1623), in which this topic is discussed, informs us that the current *avaśarpiṇī* falls into the *huṅḍa* category, but the text remains silent on whether or not any untoward events actually affected Mahāvīra himself. See *5K*: II, 91-92.

56. The circumstances surrounding this cure are controversial. First of all, even Śvetāmbaras would never suggest that the Jina was so attached to life as to personally desire such a cure. The text relates, however, that one mendicant

power of his attack returned to its source; he became delirious and died soon afterwards in the workshop of Hālāhālā.

Both of these tales, found in the *Bhagavati-sūtra*, are unknown to, and thus rejected by, the tradition of the Digambaras. While they would clearly suppress, on the basis of doctrinal considerations, any notion of a perfected Jina engaging in worldly dispute, their nearly total lack of awareness of the significant place held by Makkhali Gosāla in Mahāvīra's pre-enlightenment career is less easily explained.⁵⁷ Perhaps the idea of a Jina-to-be associating so intimately with a heretic was repugnant to them. Other

disciple, called Siha, was distraught over the possibility that his master's illness would prove fatal. To assuage Siha's anguish, Mahāvīra sent him to procure a particular medicinal substance which would undo the harmful effects of Gosāla's attack. The substance in question is called *kukkula-māmsa*, which ordinarily refers to the flesh of a chicken. But no Jaina can accept the idea of even an ordinary mendicant consuming meat, regardless of circumstances; to suggest that a Jina might have done so is nothing less than blasphemous. The Śvetāmbara commentators have therefore gone to great pains to show that the term *kukkula-māmsa* here refers not to meat at all but to the flesh of a certain seed-filled fruit (called *biṭṭapūraka-katāha*, perhaps Aegle Marmelos, or *bel-phi* in Hindi) commonly used for medical purposes (to treat dehydration:) such "animal" terminology for an herbal substance is often found, for example, in the *Ayurveda*. The fact that this term was not suppressed or eliminated from the literature long ago supports their interpretation; those commentators closest in time to the original text must have assumed that there would be no danger of misunderstanding. Indeed, it was not until the 1941 publication of Dharmānanda Kosambi's *Bhagavan Buddha* (in Marathi) that anyone (in India) even suggested the possibility of taking *kukkula-māmsa* as actual flesh. The controversy raised among Jainas by Kosambi's remarks was of course restricted to the Śvetāmbara community; Digambaras, who deny that a kevalin eats anything at all (see below, n. 83), found the entire issue irrelevant.

The controversial passage appears as follows in the *BAS*: xv (Vaidya ed., p. 34.): tam no khalu aham Sihā . . . kalam karesam; aham nam annam soja-savassam jine suhathi viharissamī. tam gacchaha nam tumam Sihā. Mendhi-yegāmam nayaram. Revaie gāhāvaṇiṇe ghe. tatha nam Revaie . . . manam aṭhāe dūve kavoyasavira uvakkhadīyā. tehiṃ no aṭhho. aṭhho se zanne pāyivāṇiṇe mājārakade kukkudamamsae. tamāharāhi. eṇam aṭhho. ("mājāro" virāṭā-bhidiṇako vanaopativāsas tena "Kraṃ" bhāvītam yat tat tathā. kim tat? ity āha "kukkulamāmsakam" bhīṇūrakam kaṭāham, "āharāhiti" niravadyaṭvād iti") *Abhayaudevāsī-ṛiti* (quoted in Vaidya ed., p. 66).

57. Digambaras do admit an encounter between the two men shortly after Mahāvīra's attainment of kevalajñāna, but they describe Makkhali Gosāla (called Makkadi or Masayari) as a mendicant in the tradition of Pāstya who wished to become one of Mahāvīra's gaṇadhara. Failing to be chosen, he established his own school—for which heresy he is said to have suffered rebirth in the dismal state of the *nigodas* (see Ch. IV, n. 7); Masayari-pūṭāna-riśiṇo

possibilities have been suggested by Hoernle and Basham. The former makes the rather sweeping statement that the Ājīvikas were in fact themselves the earliest form of the Digambara movement; this idea seems to be based on certain similarities in the dietary practices of the two sects (for example, the lack of a begging bowl), as well as on the rather unconvincing premise (noted above) that nudity was introduced by the Ājīvikas.⁵⁸ Basham's theory is more reasonable, suggesting that many Ājīvikas were absorbed into the Digambara community in medieval times.⁵⁹

In either case, it might follow that the Digambaras would thus have quashed all reference to the "heretical" background of part of their community in order to ensure homogeneity and orthodoxy in the present; this phenomenon is common enough in cases of conversion and assimilation. It would seem however, that we can understand the Digambaras' glaring omission of so important a figure as Gosāla without resorting to such speculations. In their displeasure over certain portions of the codified canonical recension of Pāṭaliputra, they probably rejected so much material as to leave themselves with virtually no canon whatsoever. This explanation also fits well with the Digambaras' extreme emphasis upon aspects of practice (especially nudity) rather than literature, for in the absence of ancient scripture it was finally only the code of conduct of their sect which could define it as a unique and individual entity.

Mahāvīra's Austerities

If any single event can be labeled the most significant of Mahāvīra's life, it must be his attainment of kevalajñāna,

uppanno Pāsānāhatthammi/ siriVirasamavasaratane agāhivaḥjunina niyattena// . . . na munai jīnakahiyasuyam sampai dikkhāya gāhiva Goyamao/ vippo veyyabbhāsi tamhā mokkham na nānāo// *Bhāṭṭasāngraha*: k 76-78. See also: siriViranāhatthiṭṭhe bahussudo Pāsasāṅghaganisō/ Makkakadapūranasāhu ānānam bhāsāye loe// jīnamaggābhāhīram jam taccam samdarisūṇa pāvamaṇo/ nūccanigoye patto satto majjesu vivhesu // *Darsanasāra*: k 20-23. See Upadhye 1933: K. P. Jain 1928: 20; Prem: 1956: 202; P. S. Jaini 1976a.

58. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*: I, 259-269.
59. Basham 1951: 277.

for it was upon this experience that his entire career as a Tirthankara was based. He is said to have pursued the austerities leading up to this event with unwavering dedication, never once deviating from their practice. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* has many passages describing such austerities:

Ceasing to inflict injury on living beings, abandoning concern for the body, and having perceived the true nature of the self, the Venerable One, houseless, endured the thorns of the villages [that is, the abusive language of the peasants].

Like an elephant at the head of battle, so was Mahāvīra there victorious. Sometimes, in the country of Lāḍha, he could not even enter a village [to stay overnight].

At other times, when he approached a village the inhabitants met him outside and attacked him, saying, "Get away from here."

He was struck with sticks, fists, and lances; he was hit with fruit, clods, and pots/berds. Beating him again and again, they raised a huge din.

Once when he [sat in meditation], his body unmoving, they cut his flesh, tore his hair, and covered him with dirt. They picked him up and then dropped him, disturbing his meditational postures. Abandoning concern for his body, free from desire, the Venerable One humbled himself and bore the pain. Just as a hero at the head of a battle is surrounded on all sides, so was Mahāvīra there. Undisturbed, bearing all hardships, the Venerable One proceeded [on the path of salvation].⁶⁰

Or again:

Being averse to the impressions of the senses, he wandered about, speaking little. Sometimes in the cold season the Venerable One meditated in the shade.

60. nihaya daṇḍaṃ pāṇehiṃ taṃ voṣaḥkāya kāyaṃ anagāre/ aha gāmakantāc bhagavaṃ te ahivase abhisameccā// nao saṅgāmasāse va paṛe taṭṭha se Mahāvīre/ evaṃ pi taṭṭha Lāḍhehiṃ aladdappurvo vi egadā gāmo// uvasaṅkamaṇāṃ apadīnaṃ gāmaṇīyaṃ pi appatāṃ/ padīnikkhamitū lussaṃsu etāo paraṃ palēhi ti// haṃpavuvvo taṭṭha daṇḍeṇa aha vā muṭṭhiṇā aha phalaṇaṃ/ aha lēluna kavaleṇaṃ haṃtā haṃtā bahave kaṇḍiṃsu// maṃsuṇi cchinna-puvvāṃ oṭṭhabhiyāe egadā kāyaṃ/ paṛissaḥāṃ luncchiṃsu ahavā paṃsuṇā uvakarīṃsu// uccāliya nihīṃsu aha vā āsāṇo khalāṃsu/ voṣaṭṭhāke paṇa-tāsi dukkhasahe bhagavaṃ apadīne// sūro saṅgāmasāse va saṃvudde taṭṭha se Mahāvīre/ paḍisevamane pharuṣaṃ acāle bhagavaṃ rīṭṭhā// AS: §502-507.

In summer he exposed himself to the heat, squatting beneath the blazing sun. He lived on rough foods: rice, pounded jujube, and beans. Taking only these three, the Venerable One sustained himself for eight months. Sometimes he drank nothing for two weeks or even for a month. And sometimes he did not drink for more than two months, or even for six months: day and night he was without desire [for food and water]. Even when he did eat, his food was always of a tasteless kind. Sometimes he ate only every sixth day, or every eighth, or every tenth, or every twelfth; free of desires, he remained engrossed in meditation. He meditated free from aversion or desire, attached neither to sounds nor to colors; though still in bondage (*chadmastha*), he never behaved carelessly during his wanderings.⁶¹

Thus:

With supreme knowledge, with supreme intuition, with supreme conduct, with supreme uprightness, with supreme valor, with supreme dexterity, with supreme patience . . . with supreme contentment, with supreme insight, on the supreme path to that final liberation which is the fruit of truthfulness, restraint, and good conduct, the Venerable One meditated for twelve years on the nature of the self.⁶²

Jainas point with pride to the fact that Gautama Buddha, unlike his Nigaṇṭha counterpart, gave up extreme austerities and followed the "middle path"; they suggest that this model of less than single-minded purpose led the Buddhist order (*sangha*) to fall eventually into various sorts of laxity from which the Jaina community, based upon the example of Mahāvīra, remained free.

The Enlightenment

Mahāvīra's actual attainment of kevalajñāna took place precisely twelve years, six months, and fifteen days after he set out upon the mendicant's path:

61. AS: §512-521. According to Śvetāmbara commentators, during the more than twelve years that Mahāvīra wandered prior to his enlightenment, he took food on only 349 days. At other times he fasted completely. See Devendra's *Kalpa-sūtra*: 185.

62. tassa naṃ bhagavāntassa . . . appāṇaṃ bhavemāṇassa duvāṭassasam-vaccharaṃ vikāṃtāṃ. K5: §120.

During the thirteenth year, in Vaisākha, in the second month of summer (May/June), on the tenth day of the waxing moon, when the shadow had turned towards the east . . . outside the town of Jṛmbhikagrāma, on the bank of the river Rjupālikā, not far from an old temple, in the field of the householder Samaga, when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation Utaraphālguni, (the Venerable One) sat with joined heels, exposing himself to the heat of the sun. After fasting for two-and-a-half days, taking not even water, engaged in deep meditation, he reached the highest *jñāna* (knowledge) and *darśana* (intuition), called kevala, which is infinite, supreme, unobstructed, unimpeded, complete, and full.⁶³

When the Venerable Ascetic Mahāvira had become a Jina and an *arhat* (worthy of worship), he was a kevalin, Omniscient, comprehending all objects. He saw and knew whence they had come, where they would go, and whether they would be reborn as men, animals, gods, or hell beings. He knew the ideas and thoughts, the food, doings, desires, and deeds of all the living beings in the world.⁶⁴

Upon attaining the omniscient state Mahāvira became, as we have noted earlier, the twenty-fourth and final Jina of the present cycle. In order to understand exactly what this means, it is necessary to digress once more from the

63. *terasamassa samvachcharassa amtarā vaittamānassa je se gūmhānam māse cautte pakkhe vaisāhasuddhe tassa nam . . . dasamī . . . Jambhivagāmassa nagarassa bahiyā Ujvaliyāve naie tīre vīyāvattassa ceḷyassa adūratāsamīte Saṃgassa gāhāvaiassa kaitakaraṇaṃsi sālāpāvavassa ahe godohiyāe ukkudūyanisijjāe āyāvāṇe āyavemānassa chaithenam bhātenam haritthūtharāhim nakkhātenam jogam uvāgaenam jhāṇantariyāe vaittamānassa aṇṇite aṇṇitāre nivvaghāe nīṭāvarāne kaṣiṇe padḍipune kevalāvaranānadamsiṇe samuppanne* KS: §120. See also: *bhagavān Vardhamāno 'pi nīvā dvādāsāvatarān/ chādmasīthyena jagadbāndhur Jṛmbhikāgrāmasamīdhau/ Rjupākūṇadītre manoharavānāntare/ mahārataśīlāpatīe pratimāyogam āvasan/ sīhivā saṣṭhōpavāsena so dhasatī salābhurūhā/ vaśāke māsi saḷyotsnādāsanyām aparāhṇake/ . . . paramāitnapadam prāpak parameṣṭhi sa Saṃmatih/ Uḷ: lxxiv. 348- 355.*

64. *tae nam se bhagavam araha jāe jīne kevali savvanu savvadarisi sadeva-māṇuyāsaurassa logassa pariyāyāṃ jāṇai pāsai. savvaloe savvajīvāṇam āgāim gaṇiṃ thīṇi cavanam uvavāyāṃ takkam maṇo mānasīyam bhūṭiam kadam padisevīyam āvikammaṇi rahokammaṇi araha arahassabhāgi tam tam kālam mānavāṇakāyājoge vaittamāṇāṇam savvajīvāṇam savvabhāve jāṇamāṇe pa-samāṇe viharai. KS: §121.*

life of Mahāvira, this time to explore the larger cosmological system of which that life is a part.

The Jaina Universe and the Role of the Tirthaṅkaras

Jainas envision the universe as a vast but finite three-dimensional structure, somewhat resembling a man with arms akimbo and legs apart. Within this structure are three main tiers, ordered vertically. The middle tier, called Madhya-loka, is of primary concern to us, for here exist the "worlds" in which all human activity takes place. These worlds are arranged in countless (*saṃkhyātā*) concentric rings of land surrounding a central island (*dvīpa*): each ring is separated by water, much in the manner of coral reefs. The land of the second ring from the center of this system is divided into inner and outer halves by a range of huge mountains. It is usually believed that human beings cannot be born anywhere beyond this range,⁶⁵ outlining regions are hence the domain solely of the animals and the vegetable kingdom.

The central island is called Jambūdvīpa, after the jambū tree which stands, atop Mount Meru, at its very center. Jambūdvīpa comprises seven *varṣa* or "continents": Bharata, Haimavata, Ramyaka, Videha, Hari, Hairanyaka, and Airāvata.⁶⁶ These continents are separated from one another by six great mountains. Of the seven continents, only Bharata, Airāvata, and half of Videha are *karma-bhūmi*, or realms of action, that is, places in which mokṣa can be attained. Actions which bring about rebirth in the highest heaven or the lowest hell are also limited to these karma-bhūmis. The remaining four-and-a-half continents are *bhoga-bhūmi*, realms of enjoyment, where there occurs

65. The upper and lower tiers are for the most part occupied by gods and hell beings, respectively. For details, see below, Ch. IV, the sketch of Joka-ākāsa.

66. *prān Mānuṣōtaran manuṣyāh/ TS: iii. 35. Tuṣkaravaradwīpābhūma-dhavadēsābhāgi valayavritto Mānuṣōtaro nāma śailāḥ. tasmāt prāḡ eva manuṣyā na Bahir iti. S5: §434.*

nothing but the experiencing of sense pleasures; such places are not, of course, conducive to renunciation.⁶⁷

The first ring surrounding Jambūdvīpa is called Dhātākī-khaṇḍa; its land mass is twice that of Jambū, and it has an identical arrangement of continents and bhūmis. Next is Puṣkaravara, which is in turn double the size of Dhātākī-khaṇḍa; it too has an analogous internal structure. (As we have seen, however, only the interior half of this ring is inhabitable by human beings. Questions of action [karma] versus enjoyment [bhoga] thus become irrelevant beyond this point.) Given the fact that Jinahood can only be attained in a karma-bhūmi area, we are now in a position to tentatively calculate how many continents are "available," as it were, to the appearance of a Tīrthankara. Jains perform this calculation by taking the continent-size of Jambūdvīpa as the standard of measurement.

Thus we have:

Jambūdvīpa

2½ karma-bhūmi continents

Dhātākī-khaṇḍa

5 karma-bhūmi continents (2½ x 2, since each continent is twice the size of its Jambūdvīpa counterpart)

Puṣkaravara

5 karma-bhūmi continents (2½ x 4 = 10 x ½ = 5, since each continent is four times the size of its Jambūdvīpa counterpart, but only half the land is inhabitable by human beings)

This gives a total of twelve-and-a-half continents conceivably suitable for the arising of a Jina. The situation is complicated further, however, by the Jains' belief that karma-bhūmi areas are subject to an endless temporal cycle, half progressive and half regressive. These half-cycles, called *utsarpiṇī* and *avasarpiṇī*, respectively, are themselves each divided into six time stages (*kāla*) as follows.

utsarpiṇī (progressive half-cycle):

- 1) *duṣamā-duṣamā* (extremely unhappy)
- 2) *duṣamā* (unhappy)
- 3) *duṣamā-suṣamā* (more unhappy than happy)
- 4) *suṣamā-duṣamā* (more happy than unhappy)
- 5) *suṣamā* (happy)
- 6) *suṣamā-suṣamā* (extremely happy)

avasarpiṇī (regressive half-cycle):

- 1) *suṣamā-suṣamā* (extremely happy)
- 2) *suṣamā* (happy)
- 3) *suṣamā-duṣamā* (more happy than unhappy)
- 4) *duṣamā-suṣamā* (more unhappy than happy)
- 5) *duṣamā* (unhappy)
- 6) *duṣamā-duṣamā* (extremely unhappy)⁶⁸

The *utsarpiṇī* and *avasarpiṇī* follow directly upon one another in unbroken succession; there is no period of *pralaya* (demanifestation) during which the karma-bhūmis are not in one of the above stages. These half-cycles each last for a vast but finite number of years. The life expectancy of human beings dwelling in the karma-bhūmis increases with each stage of the *utsarpiṇī*, and correspondingly decreases with each stage of the *avasarpiṇī*. It is believed that only during the third and fourth stages of a half-cycle, when there is neither an extremity of happiness nor of unhappiness, can anyone possibly attain *mokṣa*. The point is that only at such a time are human beings sufficiently short-lived and unhappy to understand impermanence and suffering, yet free enough from misery to conceive of and pursue *mokṣa*. Jains claim that there will be precisely twenty-four Jinas during each half-cycle;⁶⁹ this is true for every karma-bhūmi continent except the *Videhas* (that is, the "half-in-karma-bhūmi" areas of each

68. SS: §418.

69. Some of the Jina's followers may also attain to *kevalajñāna*, hence *mokṣa*, during this period. But they are known as *kevalin* or *arhat*, not Jina. The distinction here derives not only from the fact that they do not become teacher-propagators, as Jinas do, but also that without the Jina's assistance they would not have reached so exalted a state in the first place. For a discussion on the status of an *arhat* in Jainism and Buddhism, see Ch. VIII, n. 31.

67. . . . *krṣṣvādīlakṣaṇasya . . . tatra vātarambhāḥ karmabhūmivṃyapadeśo vedītavayah. Itarāstu . . . kalpavṛkṣakalpitabhogānubhavanād bhogabhūmayah . . .* SS: §437.

dvipā), which are said to be *always* in a condition equivalent to the end of the third stage. This latter claim underlies the further contention that at every moment there is a living Jina *somewhere*. In other words the path of salvation is open at any time; one need only be born into one of the Videhas in order to have an immediate chance for mokṣa.⁷⁰

At the present time our earth (Bharata-kṣetra) is in a descending or regressive half-cycle, an avasarpinī. The first Tīrthankara of this avasarpinī was Ṛsabha, who is said to have introduced agriculture, the caste system, law, monarchy, and the spiritual path of the mendicant. Thus he was, in the Jaina view, not only the first to undertake the holy life in this era, but also responsible for laying the groundwork of our entire civilization. After living for an extremely long period, approximately 600,000 years, he obtained mokṣa on the summit of Mount Kailāsa. The cult of Ṛsabha has long been extremely popular among Jains; indeed, during the medieval period, this cult was so well known in India that the Hindu text *Bhāgavata Purāna* included Ṛsabha as an *amśāvātāra* (minor incarnation of Viṣṇu).⁷¹

We may thus assume that the first Tīrthāṅkara has been the object of more worship than even Mahāvīra; but it is probably not correct to infer that he was ever considered *the* teacher of our era; this role has belonged to Mahāvīra alone. One interesting tale, found in the later Purānas, links these two Jinas by suggesting that Ṛsabha's grandson, Marīci, was later born as Mahāvīra.⁷² It is further related how this Marīci became full of vanity and conceit upon hearing a prophecy of his future Jinahood; such excessive pride necessitated that he become the last (shortest-lived) Jina of the cycle. Scholars like Hirralal Jain have tried to

bring the first Jina, and thus the beginnings of Jainism, into historical times, maintaining that the name Ṛsabha (having the sense of "bull") appears as an honorific term in the *Rgveda* and could therefore refer to the Jaina lawgiver.⁷³ More convincing theories, taking note of the yogic, śramanic, and anti-Vedic underpinnings of Jaina tradition, have sought to discover the roots of this tradition in pre-Āryan Indic civilizations. Nude standing images found in the Indus Valley ruins bear a striking resemblance to the oldest Jaina sculptures;⁷⁴ further, there may be a link between the Indus bull-seals and the bull-insignia of Ṛsabha.

Of the remaining Tīrthāṅkaras, only three can in any way be connected with historical evidence. The twenty-second, Nemi, seems to have flourished in Saurashtra, near the famous Girnar mounts (site of the Aśokan inscriptions), and to have been a contemporary of Kṛṣṇa.⁷⁵ Pārśva, as we have seen, lived and taught in Banaras; he was of course followed in the same area some 250 years later by Mahāvīra.⁷⁶ Thus, while Jainism may very well be pre-Vedic, the geographical location of at least its two most recent teachers does not suggest an origin in the Indus valley. A. N. Upadhye has proposed that in light of the other śramana sects (Ājīvika, Buddhism, the antiritualistic Upaniṣadic tradition, and so on) which flourished in the Magadha region along with Jainism, we can reasonably postulate a distinct Magadhan religious complex, devel-

73. H. Jain 1962: 11-18.

74. "Another familiar motif is that of a nude man represented as a repeat motif in rigidly upright posture, his legs slightly apart, arms held parallel with the sides of his body, which recurs later as the Jain Tīrthāṅkara, repeated row upon row. The hieratic style favoured by that religious community . . . its rigid conformism, and its utilitarian outlook, so resemble the Harappan culture that it appears more than likely that the prehistoric traits were handed down over many centuries." Lannoy 1974: 10.

75. "Even more remarkable is the traditional contemporaneity of Nemi and the divine hero Kṛṣṇa . . . Kṛṣṇaism seems to have left its mark on Jaina legend, a Kṛṣṇaism which we must assume . . . to be an earlier form than that described in the Brahmanical texts." Renou 1953: 114. See Jacobi 1884: 276-279; and Ch. IX, no. 54.

76. Pārśvakaīrthiśāntāne pañcāśad dvīśatābdake/ tad abhyantaravartyāyur Mahāvīro 'tra jātvān // *UṇP*: lxxiv, 279.

70. Such acāryas as the famous Kundakunda are reputed to have traveled to these "continents" by yogic methods, obtaining first-hand clarification on doctrinal matters from the Tīrthāṅkaras living there. See *Pravaccanasāra*: intro. 6.

71. *Srīmad Bhāgavata*: V, iii-vii. See P. S. Jaini 1977a.

72. See *Viśeṣānūśyaka-dhāraṇa*: k 1781-1812: *AP*, xviii, 61-65. *TSPC*: I, vi, 1-52.

oped at the foot of the Himalayas where Āryans from the Puriab encountered the non-Vedic cultures of the Ganges Valley.⁷⁷

Mahāvīra's Career as a Tīrthṅkara

All these questions remain open to debate. Our aim here is not to solve such problems, but to gain some feeling for the position of Mahāvīra in the overall Jaina scheme of universal cycles and Tīrthānkara lineages. It is said that Mahāvīra was born when seventy-five years, eight-and-a-half months were left in the fourth stage of the current avasarpinī, and that he remained in the world for exactly seventy-two years. Thus the fifth stage began less than three years after his death; no more Jinas will appear in our world until it enters the third stage of the upcoming utsarpinī. As the fifth and sixth stages last 21,000 years each, it will be a long time before the next half-cycle even begins, and far longer before it reaches its third phase. Hence, despite the fact that there has been an infinite number of Jinas and that somewhere in the universe a Jina is at this very moment preaching the path of salvation, the accomplishment of Mahāvīra nevertheless assumes majestic proportions when considered from the limited perspective of the average person. By attaining the omniscient state, he reached a position so rare and exalted that we can hardly be surprised to find that most Jinas view him as something more than human.

As we have seen, the Digambaras adopt this "more than human" position doctrinally as well as on the level of conventional belief. They describe Mahāvīra after his enlightenment as totally free from the eighteen defects of human existence—hunger, thirst, sleep, sweat, fear, disease, aging, and so on.⁷⁸ He is said to have engaged, at that time, in no mundane activities whatsoever, since omniscient

cognition and sensory cognition are held to be mutually antithetical. Thus he sat in the lotus posture, maintaining constant omniscient trance, housed in an assembly hall which had been miraculously created by the gods. His body, free from all impurities, shone like a crystal on all sides.⁷⁹ Above his head was hoisted the royal insignia of a white umbrella, signifying that nothing could be higher or holier than he. A divine sound (*divyadhvani*) emanated from his person for the benefit of the audience. As this audience consisted of gods, demi-gods, human beings, and animals, the entire assembly was called *samavasarana*, a place of resort for all.⁸⁰ Although the perfected Jina initiated no acts of organization, a Jaina community was nevertheless formed through the efforts of the gaṇadhara attracted by his Tīrthānkara nature. In this sense the Jina is conventionally said to have "established" the four-fold *tīrtha*: monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

Specifically, according to Digambaras, sixty-six days after the enlightenment there appeared on the scene a brahman called Indrabhūti Gautama; although well-versed in the Vedas and proud of his knowledge, he could not comprehend the Jaina teachings when they were conveyed to him by Indra, king of gods (disguised as a brahman). Thus he went to the assembly hall where Mahāvīra dwelt in all his splendor. At the mere sight of the pillar standing before this hall, all of Gautama's pride and vanity disappeared; he instantly understood the teachings and became the first of the gaṇadhara. His brothers, Agnibhūti and Vāyubhūti, followed his lead. Soon the three of them were

79. It is said that even the blood which flowed through his veins became transparent or milky in color (*gokkhirapāndure manasa-sotte*, *Sams.* §111). Zimmer (1951: 209) suggests that the use of alabaster in making Jina images, as well as the practice of pouring milk over these images during the *abhīśekā*, can be traced to this belief.

80. For a description of the *samavasarana*, see *AP*: xxii, 76-312; *TSPC*: I, iii, 452-477. See below, pl. 10.

81. Pillars which stand before Digambara temples are thus called *mānastambha* (that which brings an end to pride); these typically include at their apex a four-faced Jina in *samavasarana*. For further details, see Ferguson 1891: 276-278, U. P. Shah 1955: 60ff. See below, pl. 23.

77. See Upadhye, intro. to *Pravacanasastra*.

78. For eighteen imperfections (*doṣa*) from which a kevalin is forever freed, see *Upāsakādhyayaṇa*: k 52-56.

joined by eight other brahmins. These eleven gaṇadharaś formed the nucleus of the new order; having mastered the Jina's doctrine upon hearing his divine sound, they in turn composed all the Jaina litanies, rules of conduct, and so on.

According to the Śvetāmbaras, Mahāvīra's first audience after his enlightenment consisted only of gods, to whom he preached his doctrine for a short time. After a while he approached a ceremonial enclosure, where a Vedic sacrifice was in progress. There he delivered a sermon on the virtue of nonharming and was subsequently able to convert three of the brahman priests, Indrabhūti Gautama and his two brothers. These three, along with their 1,500 disciples, were immediately received into the new mendicant order. Soon thereafter, eight other brahmins were converted, completing the "inner circle" of eleven chief disciples, the gaṇadharaś.⁸² The addition of their many followers to the Jaina order swelled its ranks to over 4,000.

Countering the Digambara belief that a person endowed with kevalajñāna does not partake of ordinary human food (*kavala-āhāra*, literally "food made into morsels") but subsists merely on the (involuntary) intake of some subtle food, such as that partaken by the gods,⁸³ Śvetāmbaras maintain that existence in the state of embodiment requires even the most exalted one to obey bodily laws. Hence they suggest that the Jina must eat and perform other mundane activities; but these activities are said to in no way interfere with his omniscient cognition.⁸⁴

Consistent with their belief in the relatively "human" characteristics of the Jina, the Śvetāmbaras have preserved a meticulous record of Mahāvīra's travels during and after

82. See Solomon 1966: *Vīśeṣāraṇya-ke-bhāṣya*: k 1993-2080.

83. For the Digambara position on this as well as on *śrīmukhi* see *Pravacanasāra* [*Tāpanyaṅgiri*]: i.20, iii.25. For a refutation of the Digambara views (by Yapaniyacārya Sakatīyana) see *Śrīnirvāna-Kevalībhūktiprakaraṇe*.

84. Śvetāmbara commentators have sought to "refine" these activities in the case of the Jina by adding that he did not beg; food was brought to him by the disciple Lohārya. It is held, moreover, that no one ever saw him eat or engage in other bodily functions; these were carried out in absolute privacy: paṭcāṇne āhāraṇīhāre adisse maṃsasaṅkhuṇḍa/ *Sam*:5: §111.

his enlightenment. The following passage, for example, lists the various places in which he resided during the forty rainy seasons of his teaching career:

At that time, the Venerable Ascetic Mahāvīra stayed the first rainy season in Asthikagrāma, three rainy seasons in Campā and Prsticampā, twelve in Vaiśāli and Vāṇiagrāma, fourteen in Rājagṛha and the suburb of Nālandā, six in Mithilā, two in Bhadrīkā, one in Śrāvastī, and one in the town of Pāpā in King Hastipāla's office of the scribes; that was his very last rainy season.⁸⁵

Regardless of their dispute over the location and method of his preaching, both Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras agree that during Mahāvīra's career as a Tīrthāṅkara the Jaina congregation grew to a large number: ostensibly, 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns (under the supervision of the chief nun Candanā), 159,000 laymen, and 318,000 laywomen.⁸⁶ The preponderance of female followers probably resulted from the fact that many men had more than one wife, and that these wives became nuns when their husbands took the vows of a monk.⁸⁷

Mahāvīra's Death

It is agreed by both traditions that at the age of seventy-two the Venerable Ascetic Mahāvīra passed into nirvāna; he thus became a *siddha*, one who is fully liberated, forever free of embodiment. Śvetāmbara records tell us that this event took place at the office of scribes maintained by King Hastipāla in the town of Pāpā, identified with modern Pāvāpurī, near Patna. The traditional date of Mahāvīra's death is fixed near the end of the rainy season in 527 B.C.; it is from this date that Jains count the Vīra-nirvāna period, the longest continuous "era" in Indian

85. K5: §122.

86. *Ibid.*: §133-135.

87. This step seems to have been preferable to functional widowhood. The Jains were probably the first religious sect in India to open their ranks in this manner to the female relatives of initiates. See Ch. VIII n. 8.

history.⁸⁸ At the time of Mahāvīra's departure from this earth, only two of the eleven gaṇadhāras—Indrabhūti Gautama and Sudharman—still lived.⁸⁹ It is believed that Indrabhūti Gautama attained omniscience in a matter of hours after his teacher had passed away. These two nearly simultaneous events are celebrated by the Jains in their Dīpāvālī (Festival of Lights), following a tradition supposedly begun by the local kings on that very day so many years ago. As the *Kalpa-sūtra* says:

On that night during which the Venerable Ascetic Mahāvīra died . . . cut asunder the ties of birth, old age, and death, became a siddha, finally liberated . . . his oldest disciple, the monk Indrabhūti of the Gautama gotra, obtained the highest knowledge and intuition, called kevala, which is infinite, supreme . . . and full.⁹⁰

And on that night during which the Venerable Ascetic Mahāvīra died . . . the eighteen confederate kings of Kāśī and Kośāla, the nine Mallikas and nine Licchavis instituted an illumination on the day of the new moon, which was a fasting day; for they said: "Since the internal (*bhāva*) light (of intelligence) is gone, let us make an illumination with the external (*dravya*) light (of matter)."⁹¹

Points of Controversy

Between the Two Major Sects
In the account above many examples of conflict have been noted between the Digambara and Śvetāmbara traditions

88. One Jaina source (Hemacandra's *Parīśiṣṭaparva*: viii, 341) places this event at 427 B.C.; this is somewhat closer to the approximate date of 477 B.C. put forth by Jacobi (1932: intro. vii). See Basham 1951: 77ff; H. Jain (1974: 50–52) refutes these views in favor of the traditional date.

89. For details concerning the gaṇadhāras, see Ch. II.

90. K5: §126.

91. Jain rayanin ca nam samane bhagavam Mahavire . . . jāva dukkhappa-hine tam rayanin ca nam nava Malī nava Licchavi Kāśī-Kosalagā aṭṭhārasa vi-gaṇarāyāno amāvāse pārahoyam poshovavāsam paṭhavaṃsu, gate se bhā-viṇo dāvuvijoyam karissāmo. K5: §127. Compare: tatas tu lokah prativarṣam ādārī, prasiddha-dīpālikayātra bhārate/ samudyalah pūjāyitum jineśvaram, jineḍranirvāṇavibhūtibhaktibhāk // *Harttvarṇāpurāṇa*: lxvi, 21.

of Jainism. It might now be helpful to categorize these points of controversy in a general way.⁹² Three issues seem paramount:

1. *The nature of the omniscient Jina.* For Digambaras, such a being engages in no worldly activity and no bodily functions (eating meals, for example), since these are considered antithetical to omniscient cognition. He "preaches" by means of a magical "divine sound." Śvetāmbaras see the Jina as engaging in normal human activities and functions while *simultaneously* enjoying omniscient cognition.

2. *The role of nudity in the holy life.* Digambaras, as their name implies, stress the practice of nudity as an absolute prerequisite to the mendicant's path—the only mode of conduct through which one can become truly free of shame and sexuality and thus hope to attain mokṣa. Śvetāmbaras emphasize the optional nature of this practice; while they decry *attachment* to clothing, they do not admit that clothing per se is an obstacle to salvation. The Digambaras hold that retaining *any* possession is functionally equivalent to retaining *all* possessions, that is, to remaining a householder. Hence they deny that Śvetāmbara monks are monks at all.

3. *The position of women.* Digambaras believe that a woman lacks the adamantine body necessary to attain mokṣa; hence, she must be reborn as a man before such an attainment is possible. Śvetāmbaras take the opposite position, stating that women can be born with such bodies and thus are capable, in the present lifetime, of the same spiritual accomplishments as men. Indeed, they claim that the

92. Gunaratnasuri, a Śvetāmbara writer (circa 1400), summarizes the main features of the various Jaina sects as follows: Jaināḥ divividhāḥ Śvetāmbara Digambaras ca, tāra Śvetāmbaranāṃ rajoharāna-mukhavasirikālocādi hīṅgam, colapattīkaiṇāko veśah . . . Digambarā punar nāgryalingāḥ pāpātrās ca, te caturdhā Kāśīhāsamgha-Mūlasamgha-Māhurasamgha-Copyasamgha-bhedena. Adyas trayo 'pi samghāḥ . . . strīnām muktiṃ kevalinām bhuktiṃ sadvratasyāpi sacivarasya muktiṃ ca na manvate. Gopyās tu . . . strīnām muktiṃ kevalinām bhuktiṃ ca manyante. Copyā Yapaniyā ity apy ucyante . . . śeṣam ācāre gurau ca deve ca sarvam Śvetāmbarais tulyam, nāsī teṣāṃ mithah śāstresu tarkeṣv aparo bhedah. *Saddarsānasamuccaya*: iv, 1. For a history of the three samghas mentioned in this passage, see Jhtrapurkar 1958.

nineteenth Tirthankara, Malli, was a woman.⁹³ These conflicting doctrines seem to grow mainly out of the social implications of the nudity issue. The idea of a woman appearing naked in public, particularly while subject to the menstrual cycle, is unacceptable to Indian society at large; neither of the Jaina traditions allows its nuns to go about sky-clad.⁹⁴ For the Śvetāmbaras, of course, this poses no doctrinal difficulty with regard to salvation, but for the Digambaras it is an automatic disqualification.

Other important differences in practice between the two traditions which should be noted here concern begging and eating habits. Śvetāmbara monks carry small pots and beg food door-to-door. They may not enter a house to eat; all food and water must be collected in bowls, taken back to the monastery, and there entirely consumed. A Digambara monk, on the other hand, has no pot or bowl; he receives

93. In addition to its unique claim that Tirthankarahood is available to women, the Śvetāmbara legend of Malli provides useful insight into Jaina ideas on the factors leading to a female birth. It is said that the soul which later became Malli was in a former life a male, specifically, a king named Mahābala. This king, together with seven friends, renounced the world and became a Jaina mendicant. All eight made a solemn agreement to undertake an identical number of fasts as part of their austerities. Mahābala, however, constantly found excuses (ill health, and so on) to skip meals; he thus abrogated the agreement by deviously accumulating a larger number of fasts than his friends. His conduct being in all other ways quite faultless, and including the several virtues prerequisite to Tirthankarahood, he attained in the second subsequent birth to the destiny of a teacher-savior. The prior misdeed of "cheating" on a pact, however, could not go without retribution. Thus the soul of this being, although ready for the exalted status of a Tirthankara, was born as a female, Malli. During her youth she was sought after by numerous lustful suitors, some of whom went to war over her. Disgusted both by being regarded as a sexual object and by being the cause of violence, she renounced the world, became a nun, attained to kevalajñāna, and propagated the Jaina doctrine. Both Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras, while disagreeing over the verity of this particular story, share the notion that such vices as cheating, capriciousness, greed, and cunning are the fundamental causes of rebirth as a woman. For the Śvetāmbara account of Malli, see *Jātarāharmakathā-sūtra*: viii: 75PC; VI, vi, 19-213. For the Digambara version, see *UP*: Ixvi, 1-65. For a sculptural representation of the female Malli, see U. P. Shah 1956. See below, pl. 9.

94. Āśādharā, a Digambara writer of the thirteenth century, approved of administering vows of nudity to a woman on her deathbed; he appears to have been the only authority to adopt such a position, however: *yad autsargikam anyad vā lingam uktaṃ jinaiḥ śrītyāḥ/ purnvat tad isyate mṛtyukāle svalpi-kṛtopadheh/* *SD*: viii, 38.

offerings in his upturned palms, called *pāṇi-pātra* (hand-bowl). He may enter a house and eat if he has gone there only to beg, without any prior invitation.⁹⁵ Even inside, however, he must use no plate or utensils. Finally, the Śvetāmbara monks beg and take food two or three times daily; Digambaras are restricted to a single meal.

Thus concludes this brief introduction to the foundations of the Jaina faith and to the two traditions through which this faith has manifested itself. We have seen the ways in which these traditions differ: one a bit more conservative, with a doctrine that rests heavily upon faith; the other tending to be more liberal, relaxed, pragmatic, and oriented toward scriptural and historical evidence. But in the remainder of this book we shall discover that on many levels, from the layperson's daily practice to the logical intricacies of the philosopher-monk's most abstruse formulations, it is in fact a combination of essential contributions from both traditions that has sustained the vital flow of the Jina's teachings through so many centuries.

95. For details on the rituals pertaining to this practice, see Ch. VII.