

Jain Legend

Jain Dharma k  Maulika Itih sa

Author

 c rya r  Hast  Mala J  M.S

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VOLUME 1

ABRIDGED

Era of ford-maker

Relating to T rth karas

Editorial

Jain Legend is the verbatim English translation of series of four volumes Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa (abridged) in Hindi edited by Sh. Gajsingh Rathod. The original voluminous Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa was authored by venerable Ācāryaśrī Hastīmala Jī M.S., the foremost ācārya of Sthanakavasi tradition of Jain congregation.

We have been extremely careful in maintaining the content of Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa (abridged) as it is without any changes / or adding comments by us so as to retain the authentic writings of Ācāryaśrī Hastīmala Jī M.S. Thus the English translation carries his scholarship and research over an extended period of over twenty years.

In this English edition, we have tried to keep some of the definitive terms of Jainism as they are and give their English equivalent (as much representative as possible) on the first occurrence and also listed at the end of this note. To appreciate their understanding and pronunciation, we have used diacritical marks for legendary names of persons / texts / places and the definitive Jain terms e.g. aṃga meaning the limb or part and commonly written as anga, etc.

We express my thanks to following translators and other support staff members for their contribution to bring out Jain Legend

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We request you, the august reader of this series Jain Legend, to please bring out any errors (spelling and the texts) and suggestions for improvement in language and choice of words to our notice for improving the next edition of this book.

Given below are the abbreviation, diacritical marks and some Jain definitive terms used in the books to enable the reader understand and enjoy the content and comprehend the same better.

Abbreviation:

- V.N. Vira Nirvana: Calendar, starting after the liberation of Lord Mahavira.
M.S. Maharaja Sahib: Suffix used by Jains after the name of their preceptor / monk as a sign of respect / veneration.

Diacritical marks used

Ā	‘√k’	‘a’	like in <i>dark</i>
Ī	‘bʌ	‘ee’ or ‘ii’	like in <i>steel</i>
Ū	‘Ā’	‘uu’ or ‘oo’	like in <i>school</i> or you
Ś	‘ʔk²	‘Sh’	like in <i>Shine</i>
ḍ	‘M²	‘D’	like in <i>band</i>
Ṇ	‘.k²	‘N’	like in <i>hand</i>
Ṃ	‘ka v u ʔokj’		Short n, <i>nasal</i>
Ṭ	‘V²	‘t’	like in <i>tea</i>
Ṣ	‘ʔk²	‘S’	like in <i>shut</i>
Ṛ	‘_’	‘Ri’	like in <i>Rishi</i>
Jñ	‘K²	‘Gy’	like in <i>Vigyan</i>
Kṣ	‘{k²	‘Sh’	like in <i>kshama</i>
ḥ	‘% fol xʌ	‘h’	

Jain definitive words used frequently

<i>Ācārya</i>	Preceptor monk and leader / head of a Jain congregation / group
<i>Āgama</i>	Scripture
<i>Avasarpiṇi</i>	Half time cycle in which the happiness keeps on decreasing; the other half, Utsarpiṇi has happiness increasing
<i>Bhaṭṭāraka</i>	Administrator monk; Yati and Śrīpujya are other words used by Svetambara Jains.
<i>Caityavāsī</i>	Temple dweller

<i>Caitya</i>	A place / thing having venerable sign / representation, e.g. footprint, name, idol, photo, auspicious sign like flag etc. generally a holy emblem / place.
<i>Dwādasāṃgi</i>	Twelve limbs of the scriptures bead on Lord Mahavira's sermons and composed by his chief disciples (<i>Gaṇadharas</i>)
<i>Ekādaśāṃgī</i>	Eleven limbs of above except the 12 th called <i>Dṛṣṭivāda</i> (very voluminous and comprehensive).
<i>Gaṇa</i>	Group. A group of monks and sub division of congregation
<i>Gaccha</i>	Sub group. Sub division of <i>Gaṇa</i> .
<i>Kevalī</i>	Omniscient
<i>Kalyāṇaka</i>	Auspicious event in the life of a ford maker (five in number namely conception, birth, renunciation / initiation, omniscience and liberation)
<i>Lokāntika deva</i>	A type of celestial beings who will attain liberation after one more birth, i.e. whose worldly existence is almost at the end
<i>Mokṣa</i>	Salvation / liberation; Pure soul without any material karmas and body
<i>Nirvāṇa</i>	Liberation / salvation; Attainment of bliss
<i>Pūrvas</i>	Fourteen in numbers; Canons prior to Lord Mahavira; Contained in the 12 th limb as well.
<i>Śrāvaka</i>	Votary (male); Believer and practitioner of Jain ethical-spiritual code; Householder / laity are other synonyms used.

<i>Śrāvika</i>	Votary (female); Similar as votary
<i>Samgha</i>	Congregation
<i>Samavaśaraṇa</i>	Religious congregation / assembly of a ford maker
<i>Tīrthaṃkara</i>	Ford maker, Rejuvenator of the Jain creed 24 in present time cycle' Mahāvīra is the 24th Tīrthaṃkara.
<i>Upādhyāya</i>	Holy teacher, Monk, teaches scriptures to fellow monks.
<i>Varṣa</i>	Year /Annual

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INDEX

S. No	Subject	Page. no
1.	From Publisher's Desk	8
2.	Between us (Ācāryaśrī Hastīmalajī Mahārāja) Benefits of the History of Jain Religion	14
3.	Tīrthaṃkara (ford maker) and Kevalīs (omniscient)	19
4.	Introduction to the book	30
6.	Kālacakra and Kulakaras	31
7.	Lord Vṛṣabhanātha Means of attaining Tīrthaṃkara Status	36
8.	The first world emperor (Cakravartī) Bharata	65
9.	Lord Śrī Ajitanātha	83
10.	Cakravartī Sagara	93
11.	Lord Śrī Sambhavanātha	95
12.	Lord Śrī Abhinandana	98
13.	Lord Śrī Sumatinātha	100
14.	Lord Śrī Padmaprabha	105
15.	Lord Śrī Supārśvanātha	107
16.	Lord Śrī Candraprabha Swāmī	109
17.	Lord Śrī Suvidhinātha	111
18.	Lord Śrī Śītanātha	113
19.	Lord Śrī Śreyāṃsanātha	115
20.	Lord Śrī Vāsupūjya	118
21.	Lord Śrī Vimalanātha	120
22.	Lord Śrī Anantanātha	122
23.	Lord Śrī Dharmanātha	124
24.	Cakravartī Maghavā	126
25.	Cakravartī Sanatkumāra	128
26.	Lord Śrī Śāṃtinātha	130
27.	Lord Śrī Kumṭhunātha	134
28.	Lord Śrī Aranātha	136
29.	Lord Śrī Mallinātha	138

30.	Cakravartī Subhūma	152
31.	Lord Munisuvratanātha	156
32.	Cakravartī Mahāpadma	158
33.	Lord Śrī Naminātha	161
34.	Cakravartī Hariṣeṇa	163
35.	Cakravartī Jayasena	164
36.	Lord Śrī Ariṣṭanemi	165
37.	Brahmadatta Cakravartī	213
38.	Lord Śrī Pārśvanātha	233
39.	Lord Śrī Mahāvīra	261

From Publisher's Desk

Unique Decision

History is primarily a mirror to perceive and understand the antiquity of a nation, religion, culture, society or race. History is the systematic and chronological compilation and record of the process of the origin and development, rise and fall and rebuilding of any religious order, nation or race; and of the life-histories of leaders instrumental in the attainment of spiritualexcellence and decadence. Since history is a repository of the context of the emergence, rise and fall and of events responsible for excellence and decay, it is considered as the path-finder and guide for future generations of mankind. Every individual, race, or nation can find appropriate guidance in history through up-to-date facts presented therein, from the ancient past to the present, of individuals, nations or race that ascended the path of constant progress and established themselves on the peaks of excellence and; at the same time, of those who slid into the abyss of decadence by following the wrong path, adversely affecting the fate of their nation, race or religion. History gives guidance to people to walk on the path of progress towards all-round welfare through instances such as these.

History is in fact the beacon light to evaluate the past

It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that a person who is ignorant of the history of his civilization, culture, nation or society, is as good as blind. In the same way as a blind person, unaware of the right or wrong path, faces hurdles at every step, a person totally ignorant of his / her history can neither establish himself / herself on the path of excellence nor lead the society, or nation towards progress. All these facts lead one to conclude that an exhaustive, systematic history (historical account) is indispensable and important for the all-round progress of a society, culture, race or nation.

Jain ācāryas (preceptors) whose knowledge transcended the knowledge of śāstras (scriptures) were well-aware of this fact since the early times. Hence they preserved the comprehensive Jain history texts such as expositions of world history (Prathamānuयोग), Mathematical expositions (Gaṇḍikānuयोग), Chronological listing of names or

personalities (Nāmāvali), etc. Although these texts went into oblivion with time, and not a single of these is extant today, yet texts such as SamavāyāṅgaSūtra, NandiSūtra and Paumacariyaṃ allude to historical facts which were expounded in those early texts. Ācāryas (preceptors) from the later periods in their respective times did not leave any effort in compiling and preserving Jain history in their works in the genres of Niryuktis, Cūrṇis, Purāṇas, Kalpas, biographies (Caritras) and chronologies of elders (Sthvirāvalis). Paumacariyaṃ, Kahāvali, Titthogālipainnaya, Vasudevahiṇḍī, CauvannaMahāpurisa cariyaṃ, Āvaśyakacūrṇi, Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra, Paṛiśiṣṭaparva, Harivaṃśapurāṇa, Mahāpurāṇa, Ādipurāṇa, Mahākavi Puṣpadanta's Mahapurāṇa in Apabhraṃśa language, Himavanta Sthvirāvali, Prabhāvakaacaritra, Kalpasūtrīyā Sthvirāvali, Nandīsūtrīyā Sthvirāvali, Dussamāsamaṇasaṃghathayaṃ, etc. are some of the significant ones. Besides these texts, important aspects of Jain history are scattered or are preserved in places such as the Hāthīgumphā inscriptions of Khāavela, and inscriptions found in other places as well as in copper plate charters. These inscriptions were written not in popular languages but in Sanskrit, Prākṛta, Apabhraṃśa, and regional languages such as old Kannaḍa, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, etc. A selective study and analysis of the historical facts gleaned from the above mentioned texts and documents have brought to the fore important material in chronological order to reconstruct the Jain history of the period of the ford makers (Tīrthaṃkara). Fordmaker / Tīrthaṃkara bring forth the glorious period of Jainism during the period of Tīrthaṃkaras; however the latter period after Tīrthaṃkara, especially starting from Devardhigaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa till seventh century AD, the Jain history is so concealed, disorderly and in relative darkness or unclear that no scholar had the courage to bring that to light. Even those who did try to do so had to give up, after significant effort, disappointed and stating, that five to six hundred years of Jain history following Devardhigaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇais a period of unreliable information as authentic sources to bring to light this history are unavailable.

This reliable and chronological history of Jain religion has been long found wanting. At a conference of sādhus (monks) held in Ajmer from 5th to 29th April 1933, prominent Jain ācāryas and śrāvakas (votaries) decided to initiate efforts towards the writing of Jain history. Jain Conference too, in its annual meetings, passed resolutions to fill this gap

in Jain history but nobody showed courage to take this difficult task because this work called for undaunted labour and discipline.

Eventually, in 1965, the venerable Ācārya Śrī Hastīmalajī M.S. of the famous Ratnavamśa Śramaṇa tradition took up the extremely difficult task requiring time and labour akin to that of the churning of the ocean. In 1965, i.e., Śaka Samvata 1922, a History committee was set up at the Bālotarā rainy season retreat / halt (Cāturmāsa) under the stewardship of Ācāryaśrī Hastīmalajī M.S. and in consultation with Justice Śrī Indranath Modi, esteemed Jain scholar Śrī Dalsukhbhai Malvaniya, Dr. Narendra Bhanavat, etc. Justice Śrī Indranath Modi was elected as chairman, Śrī Sohanlal Kothari as Secretary and Śrī Punamchand Bader as treasurer of the committee by unanimous decision. On several occasions the History Committee sincerely invited many scholarly monks to actively support this difficult task of writing history.

Following the Bālotarā rainy season retreat Ācāryaśrī Hastīmalajī M.S. left for Gujarat with a firm determination to complete this very heavy responsibility. While moving through the desert region and in Gujarat he delved deep into the study of ancient handwritten manuscripts and the Jain corpus and compiled the ancient and historical material available in Pāṭaṇa, Siddhapura, Palanpura, Khedā, Khambhāa, Līmbadī, Baroda, Ahmedabad, etc with untiring effort. These materials are preserved today in the Vinaychand Jñānabhaṃḍāra and Research Institute, Lalbhavan in Jaipur. Writing of history began in 1966, Śaka 2023 during the Ahmedabad rainy season retreat. But the desired progress could not be made till June 1970. The main reason for this was that the History Committee could not find a scholar well-versed in Sanskrit, Prakṛta, Apabhraṃśa and old Rajasthani (a mixture of Gujarati and Rajasthani languages) who would study the available literature in those languages with dedication and present the essence of it all to him. Meanwhile, he himself was immersed in compiling, sorting, analysis and recasting the material collected so far. During this stay in Gujarat, he sorted out and researched very important chronicles (paṭṭāvalis) available in different libraries (Bhaṃḍ rāṅ) and, on the basis of these, composed a poem containing their essence. The History Committee chose Dr. Narendra Bhanavat to edit nearly half of those chronologies of preceptors (ācāryas) and their history, which was published in 1968 as Paṭṭāvali Prabhaṃḍha Saṃgraha.

The eternal truth that work contemplated upon by great men for the welfare of all, can never be stalled was realised with the coming of ācāryaśrī to Jaipur in the month of May 1970. They suddenly found the scholar they were seeking since five – six years with comprehensive knowledge of Jain Prākṛta, Apabhraṃśa and other old Indian languages. The esteemed Jain scholar Śrī Gajsingh Rathod who had just then retired from the Rajasthan Assembly took over the editing of Jain history.

Commentaries (Treatises) such as on Samavāyāṃga, Ācārāṃga, VivāhaPrajñapti, CauvannaMahāpurisa cariyam; Prākṛta texts such as Āvaśyaka cūrṇi, Vasudevahiṇḍ ī, Tiloyapaṇṭī, Sattarisayadvāra, Paumacariyam, Gacchācārapaiṇṇaya, Abhidhāna Rājendrakoṣa (7volumes) etc; Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama, Dhavalā, Jayadhavalā; volumes of Sir Monier’s Sanskrit to English dictionary; Sanskrit texts such as Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra, Ādipurāṇa, Mahāpurāṇa, Vedavyāsa’s Purāṇas; Apabhraṃśa works such as Puṣpadanta’s Mahāpurāṇa were all referred to and by the end of the Meḍatā rainy season retreat the first volume of Jain Dharma Kā Maulika Itihāsa went to press. The second volume also commenced by the time the 1st volume was printed at the Meḍatā retreat.

With the completion of the four volumes of the history of Jain Religion, ācāryaśrī was very happy and a wave of cheer spread among the Jain community, thereby increasing hundred-folds the enthusiasm of the History Committee. Along with the publication of the first volume, the Committee published the last volume as “Three Historical Tīrthaṃkara” Both Jain and non-Jain scholars openly showered praise on the work and its author, the ācāryaśrī. With the magic of his writing skills the ācāryaśrī has made a dry subject like history seem so lucid and fascinating that thousands of devoted and self-taught (readers) read it everyday.

In 1974, ācāryaśrī completed the second volume of Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa which was published by the History Committee in 1975. Even this volume was welcomed with cheer by the Jain community. Esteemed Jain scholar Śrī Dalsukhbhai Malvaniya poured out his heartfelt experience and praise on the publication of this text thus:

Ācāryaśrī

Many respectful greetings to you, I read the Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa and your preface. You have shown rare objectivity in unraveling the Jain history. Your historical text will remain for long an authentic work of history. There is scant possibility of new facts emerging hereinafter. The way you have placed the facts together giving them appropriate place is work akin to that of a well-informed historian. The respect, I had for you, has increased many fold now after reading this work.”

Only a research scholar can rightly value the efforts of another research scholar. Only this can be the ultimate appreciation! What more could be said about ācāryaśrī and his immortal historical creation?

By the end of 1975 compilation of material for the third volume of Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa had begun. Seven to eight hundred years after the demise of Devardhigaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa, the tradition of temple dwellers had established its monopoly in different parts of India. Its newer set of beliefs / practices impacted / influenced the Jain community. Monks and female-monks following the pure original tradition of Lord Mahāvīra were not only restricted from moving from place to place in the provinces of the North but their very entry into these places was prevented by those in power. As a result, the numbers of monks–female-monks, and laity of the original tradition could be counted on one’s fingers. People had even forgotten the term Śramaṇa tradition, what to speak of anyone seeking to be ordained into the same? People began to believe that the newly established Temple dweller (caityavāsī) tradition was the original tradition. While the original pure tradition did not meet its death following gradual decline, it certainly became relatively quiescent, or hidden.

In this way, the temple dwellers tradition which made sustained efforts to completely destroy the pure original tradition of Lord Mahāvīra for seven to eight hundred years – destroying their sign-boards, wiping out their ancient relics – ultimately vanished without a trace by the 20th century V.N. Despite its presence in different parts of the country for 7-8th century’s evidence related to this tradition – texts – paṭṭāvalis, etc – are not available. Due to this, a lot of labour was expended in tracing out and putting together the missing links, in a systematic order, about the period

following Devardhigaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa. However, some evidence relating to the original pure tradition came from a deep study and research based on the various notebooks written by Panyāsaśrī Kalyāṇa Vijayaṇī Mahārāja. MahāNiśītha, Titthogālipainnaya, Jina Vallabha Sūri Saṃghapaṭṭaka, the Oriental Manuscripts Library situated in the Madras University campus, the Mackenzie Collections and old journals that were referred to bring forth some historical material of the dark period 1000 to 2000 of V.N. In the course of research on the Yāpanīya sect, 349 verses (śloka) about the origin and development of the Bhaṭṭāraka (administrator monks) tradition were found in the Mackenzie Collections. Some historical facts about the Karnatak Yāpanīya sect were also found. Based on all this material four volumes of Jain history have been published.

Words fail us in expressing heartfelt gratitude to the great man, the late Ācāryaśrī Hastīmalajī M.S. for his efforts and unimaginable labour expended in producing this wondrous refined grandiloquent text. We express heartfelt gratitude to the disciple of late ācāryaśrī, the present Ācāryappravara Hīracandrajī M.S. for giving his invaluable time in this magnificent work. The chief editor of the present volumes, Shri Gaj Singh Rathod's effort in research and editing of the second edition cannot be forgotten.

Jain Dharma Kā Maulika Itihāsa has been published in four volumes for the sake of convenience and each volume contains 850 – 900 pages. Many editions of the four volumes have been published.

On request of several scholars and seekers the Samyakjñāna Pracāraka Maṇḍala took an unprecedented decision to publish abridged synoptic editions in Hindi and English of Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa. We are happy, as a result, in offering this, 1st abridged volume to English readers translated from the Hindi version. We express heartfelt gratitude to Śrī Ramagopalajī Misra and Dilipakumarajī and through him, other scholars who have supported us in abridging this first volume.

P.S.Surana
President

S.R. Choudhry
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Samyakjñāna Pracāraka Maṇḍala

Between us
(Ācāryaśrī Hastīmalajī Mahārāja)

Benefits of the History of Jain Religion

History, of a country, race or religion, is a chronicle of all that has happened in the past. The objective of writing history is to inspire coming generations to behave in an appropriate manner following the path of great men. We do not see history of religion in as abundant a measure as the history of other subjects. That is why people believe that Jainism has no ancient or corroborative history. But that is not true. Though Jain historical works are available since a long time; however as these works were compiled in Prākṛta and Sanskrit and they did not present historical facts in a systematic manner they could neither attract attention of common people nor become popular. Moreover, readers are more attracted to worldly scenario (matters) and unrefined (gross) affairs of humankind than to the history of religion.

History of Jain Religion

Religion does not have its own independent history. Lives of great religious men and their preaching serve as introduction to religion. History of religious people is the history of religion. History of religion is the chronicle of the thought and conduct, propagation and preaching's of religious men in the country. The path to achieve victory over attachment and other flaws through right thought and right conduct is the essence of Jain religion. About the status of religion, experts of scriptures point out that just as five existents (Astikāyās) have always existed in this universe. Similarly right canons comprising the 12 limbs (Dvādaśāṃgī) comprising Ācārāṅga etc composed by the venerable composers of the sermons of omniscient Lord (Gaṇadhara or gaṇiṭṭhaka) is eternal and without a beginning. In a religious place like India with religious people and their expectations, the start of the religion from the end of the enjoyment period (bhogayuga) and the end period of unhappy period (duḥ ṣamakāla) of the declining happiness epoch can be said to be the end period of religion. The exact description of religion during this period from its start till its (religion) end is called the complete history of religion. The history presented here is from the point of view of India and this half-cycle of regression. The first Tīrthaṅkara

Vṛṣabhanātha came at the end of the third epoch (kāla) of the declining happiness time epoch and it was through him that the systematic religious tradition of listening (śrutadharmā) and conduct (caritradharma) emerged. Hence in terms of place and time this is considered the period of origin of the Jain religion.

Naming this book

According to Jain religious texts, there were 24 Tīrthaṅkara (ford-makers), 12 cakravartīs (world emperors), 9 Baladevas, 9 Vasudevas and 9 PratiVasudevas; in all 63 illustrious persons existed. According to the law of nature stewardship of both popular and religious leaders is essential for the physical, emotional (mental) and intellectual preservation and advancement of human society. Whether in the complete cycle, or half-cycle, while punishment is used (as a means) to destroy bad deeds in human society, the religious leaders, Tīrthaṅkara establish pilgrimage centers / religious abodes, and reform people's hearts through sermons, creating in them an abhorrence for misdeeds. The order of punishment may destroy misdeeds but with the nectar of knowledge religious order does not merely silence misdeeds, but also prevents their outbreak. Religious leaders, Tīrthaṅkara reassure the man through his inner awakening that he is himself the creator of his joy and sorrow (pleasure and pain). This book introduces such Tīrthaṅkara on the basis of ancient texts and hence it has been named "Jain Dharma Kā Maulika Itihāsa"

Basis / Source of History

Rationale of disposition of philosophical doctrine (Dṛṣṭivāda), the twelfth limb of Jain canons is the foundation or basic religious text and source of compiling the history. The fourth exposition (anuyoga) among the five main parts of Dṛṣṭivāda can be considered as prime source or origin of history of Jain religion. In the Prathamānuyoga (biographical exposition of illustrious Jains) the following are described—(1) previous births of Tīrthaṅkara (2) birth in heavens (3) life span / age (4) conception (5) birth (6) anointment / first holy bath (7) coronation (8) renunciation or initiation as monk (9) intense penance (10) origin of omniscience (11) first religious congregation / sermon (12) disciples (13) gaṇa and Gaṇadharas (14) creed congregation (15) boundaries of the four-fold

organisation of the followers (16) omniscient (17) Telepaths / Knower's of the mental modes of others (manaḥ paryayajñānī) (18) Clairvoyants / Knower of hidden and distant physical entities (avadhijñānī) (19) Twelve limbs scriptures (Dvādaśāṅgī) (20) orators par excellence (vādī) (21) Heavenly beings existing above SarvārthaSiddhi heaven (22) roaming heavenly beings (23) achievers of liberated soul status (Siddhas) (24) leaders and preachers of the path of liberation (Tīrthaṅkara) (25) description of the pious death (pādapopagamana) last rites. Similar thoughts and references are found elsewhere in these.

As in the original Prathamānuyoga, Gaṇḍikānuyoga opines on Kulakara, Tīrthaṅkara, Cakravartī, Daśārha, Baladevas, Vasudevas, Gaṇadhara and Bhadrabāhu also. This text also gives a description of Harivaṃśa, ascending and descending happiness time cycles (Utsarpiṇī and Avasarpiṇī). These references make it clear that the Aṅga Dṛṣṭivāda encapsulated the complete evidential history of the Jain religion. Hence the opinion of western scholars such as Dr. Herman Jacobi that the story of Rāmāyaṇa is not found in the original Jain Āgamas and that it is based on Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa or is borrowed from other Hindu scriptures is proved absolutely erroneous and baseless.

Prathamānuyoga is considered an ancient historical scripture and the original source for many available and unavailable texts. The historical facts found strewn across the Śvetāmbara and Digambara Āgama-texts and in Āvaśyakaniryukti are essentially the contributions of Prathamānuyoga. Due to the vagaries of time and fading of memory gradually with the 14 pūrvas the repository of history, the Prathamānuyoga and Gaṇḍikānuyoga scriptures have gone in the oblivion today.

The benefits of earlier ācāryas in history – writing

After the disappearance of Prathamānuyoga and Gaṇḍikānuyoga the credit of preserving Jain history goes to the services of its early ācāryas. They did us a favour having bestowed through the āgama-based Niryuktis, Cūrṇis, Bhāṣya, Tikā etc which has proved to be of great help for contemporary research scholars in history. We think it is necessary to remember those few authors here:-

1. Vimala Sūri wrote Paumacariyaṃ in V. N.530
2. Yati Vṛṣabha wrote texts such as Tiloyapaṇṇatī after V.N. 1000
3. Ācārya Bhadrabāhu wrote niryukti on ten sūtras such as Daśavaikālika, Āvaśyaka, etc between V.N.1000 to 1045.
4. Saṃghadāsa Gaṇi wrote Vṛhatkalpa bhāśya and VasudevaVasudevahiṇḍī between V.N. 1000 and 1055
5. Jīnadāsa Gaṇi Mahattara wrote Āvaśyaka, Nandi Cūrṇi etc in V. N. 1203
6. Jinabhadrā Gaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa wrote Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāśya in V.N. 1203
7. Jīnasena wrote Ādipurāṇa and Harivaṃśapurāṇa in V.N.1310
8. Ācārya śīlāṅka wrote Cauvana Mahāpurisacariyaṃ in V.N. 1395
9. Ācārya Guṇabhadrā wrote Uttarapurāṇa in V.N. 1425
10. Raviṣeṇa wrote Padmapurāṇa in V.N. 1448
11. Puṣpadanta wrote Mahāpurāṇa in Apabhraṃśa language in V.N. 1486-1492
12. Ācārya Hemaandra wrote the historical text Triṣaṣṭi śalākāpuruṣa caritra in V.N 1696-1699
13. Dharmasāgara Gaṇi wrote Tapāgaccha Paṭṭāvalī Sūtravṛtti, a historical text in Prākṛta-Sanskrit in V.N. 1934
14. Bhadreśwara wrote Kahāvalī Grantha in V.N. 17th century
15. Agastyā Siṃha also wrote a Cūrṇi on Daśavaikālika Sūtra.

Works of an awakened group of monks through their Sthavirāvalis, Paṭṭāvalis, etc and many known-unknown scholars through their creations in regional languages also enriched history. We express our heartfelt gratitude to them.

Credibility / Reliability of History

After the above deliberation it can be firmly stated that Jain history stands on a deep and firm foundation and emerges not from hearsays and imaginations from all and sundry but from the uninterrupted / continuous tradition of the early ācāryas. Hence there is no scope for doubting its credibility / reliability. Just as Vimala Sūri writes in Paumacariyaṃ:

*Nāmāvaliya nibaddham āyariyaparamparāgayam Savvam
Vocchāmi pauma cariyam, ahāṇupuvviṃ samāseṇa*

That is, I shall tell in brief all the history composed in the chronology (paṭṭavali). He says further – Scholars should not be dejected / disgruntled by the harm done to the meaning of the early texts on account of time, viz. –

*Evaṃ paramparāe parihāṇi puvvagaṃtha atthāṇaṃ
Nāūṇa kālabhāvaṃ narusiyavvaṃ bahujaṇeṇaṃ*

This proves that the method of preserving history in the abridged form of paṭṭavali was universally acceptable. Thus there is no doubting the fact that history encapsulated in paṭṭavali is ancient as it is evidential / authentic.

Tīrthaṃkara (ford maker) and Kevalīs (omniscient)

There is similarity yet difference between Omniscient and Tīrthaṃkara. With destructive karmas annihilated those supreme souls that acquire kevalajñāna (omniscience) are called omniscient. Just like Tīrthaṃkara they too have pure knowledge (kevalajñāna) and pure perception/intuition (kevaladarśana) i.e. both together as omniscience yet they are not called Tīrthaṃkara. The 24 Tīrthaṃkara from Vṛṣabhanātha up to Mahāvīra are arihaṃta omniscient as well as Tīrthaṃkara. The Tīrthaṃkara and omniscient share same qualities of liberation from bondage and knowledge yet are different. Tīrthaṃkara are the reformers of three worlds. They are capable of self-welfare as well as the welfare of others. They are the benefactors of gods, demons, humans, animals and birds. Right from the time of their birth they come with some peculiarities that may not be present in omniscient, e.g. there are 1008 characteristics on their bodies which are not necessarily there on the bodies of the omniscient e.g. they do not have the superlative speech and abundant veneration by kings and gods ascribed to the Tīrthaṃkara. They have four infinities (intuition, knowledge, bliss and energy) but are not accompanied with auspicious phenomena (mahāpratihāryas). The eight auspicious entities (atīśayas) accompanying Tīrthaṃkara are (1) Aśoka tree (2) shower of divine flowers to the accompaniment of music (3) divine sound (divyadhvani) (4) the whisks (cāmara) (5) crystal throne (siṃhāsana) (6) aura and halo (7) divine musical pipes and (8) triple umbrella (chakra). These are also called pratihārya. Tīrthaṃkara have 34 atīśayas (supernatural elements) and their speech is also one of 35 guṇas (qualities). These atīśayas are not found in simple omniscient.

The power of Tīrthaṃkara

Tīrthaṃkara are rejuvenators and propagators of the tradition hence their energy is infinite right from birth. Their strength is considered to be infinitely superior to that of Narendra (cakravartī) and Surendra. Viśeṣāvaśyaka Bhāṣya and Nirvyukti elaborate this descriptively; viz. they state that cakravartī has double the strength of Vasudeva and Tīrthaṃkara has infinitely greater strength than that of cakravartī. For example, if Vasudeva, sitting by the well, tied with chains, was pulled powerfully by armies of 16,000 kings he sat amused, eating, and did not move an inch.

Tīrthaṅkara' strength can defeat even the Indras as their bodily strength is accompanied by immeasurable mental strength and unbreakable spiritual force. Even gods and divine beings – devas and devendras – pay obeisance to and serve those Tīrthaṅkara whose minds are immersed in the tradition of ahiṃsā (non-violence), self-control (equanimity) and penance. In this context the legend of Sumeru mountain trembling by the (weight) of the toe of an infant Mahāvīra cannot be called an exaggerated event because for a Tīrthaṅkara's incomparable strength and courage these incidents should be considered ordinary.

Tīrthaṅkara and the Kṣatriya clan

In both praxis and theory conduct and penance and a caste or clan are not always given importance. In this context the question arises as to why were Tīrthaṅkara considered to be born into the Kṣatriya caste? Doesn't this emphasize casteism?

A Brahmin is a practitioner of celibacy, truth, contentment and abiding alms seeker whereas a Kṣatriya is brave, expert of war tactics, brilliant, and effective. In preserving and maintaining religious order alongwith practice of celibacy, truth, character, etc along with vigour is essential. A person born in a Brahmin caste is peaceful, of a good character and soft nature, also needs vigour and imposing personality. Propagation of non violence (ahiṃsā) by a person like a Brahmin is not effective as he lacks bravery. But when a brilliant person from the Kṣatriyas courageously gives up weapons and warfare and royal grandeur and talks of ahiṃsā, certainly it has an impact. The Brahmin's propagation of religion is akin to the compassion of a weak shall not impact common people. This is the reason for the Jain religion – being removed from casteism – believes Tīrthaṅkara to have been born into the Kṣatriya caste. From Lord Vṛṣabhanātha to Lord Mahāvīra, all the Tīrthaṅkara born into the spotless firmament of the Kṣatriya caste, continuously spread unblemished light across the world and acquired the strength towards liberation cutting through the toughest of karmas.

The Self-reliant practice of austerities by Tīrthaṅkara

Despite being invoked by the gods and divine beings the Tīrthaṅkara are reliant upon themselves for their practice of penance. They do not seek the help of any god, demigod or human beings. Devendra prayed to Lord

Mahāvīra, “Lord! Great difficulties and calamities are to befall you. If you permit I wish to rid you of all the difficulties remaining in your service” the Lord replied – “Śakra! One has to cut (the chord of) one’s karmas on one’s own. Others’ help may perhaps delay the fruits of the karmas but do not annihilate them”. Tīrthaṅkara snap off their karmas on their own and obtain the status of arihanta. It was with this feeling that the Lord patiently bore the oppression of Śūlapāṇi Yakṣa and in just one night patiently bore 20 kinds of afflictions. What’s more he never thought of solving his troubles invoking the Yakṣas-yakṣiṇis who remain protectors of the Tīrthaṅkara’ place and in times of trouble, protect the Tīrthaṅkara’ followers.

With their tough daily practices and lifestyle Tīrthaṅkara showed this world that every individual should be engaged courageously in snapping their karmas. Running away at the time of eating the fruits of karmas is not bravery. It is an act of bravery to bear with the bad fruits courageously keeping good thoughts in the mind to break the chord of karmas. In reality, this is the path to peace.

The Intervals between Tīrthaṅkara

The time between the respective emancipation (Nirvāṇa) of two Tīrthaṅkara is called the interregnum of liberation. There is also the intervening period between the birth of two Tīrthaṅkara and their respective attainment of omniscience (kevalotpatti), but this time-period is indicated with reference to expectant nirvāṇa (ultimate liberation). Pravacana Sāroddhāra and Tiloyapaṇṇatī speak of the intervals from this perspective. In the intervals between Tīrthaṅkaras the contemporary ruling ācāryas and elders keep the religious order (tradition) intact. In the eight intervening period between Vṛṣabhanātha and Suvidhinātha, and the eight intervening periods between Śāmtinātha and Mahāvīra – in these total 16 interregnums there was no schism in the congregation. But in the seven intervals between Suvidhinātha and Śāmtinātha the religious order was split up.

It is possible that in that period due to some special political or social reasons Jain religion was under huge trouble. According to the ācāryas the period post-Suvidhinātha and pre-Śāmtinātha was so harsh that people were afraid of even speaking of the Jain religion. Nobody was

ready even to listen to the scriptures. Therefore with no development in the four-fold congregation, the religious order spilt up.

The fact is that barring Dṛṣṭivāda in the interval between Vṛṣabhanātha and Suvidhinātha, the remaining 11 Aṃgas survived but in the intervals between Suvidhinātha and Śāmtinātha it is believed the entire 12 Aṃgas were also divided. Prior to Śāmtinātha and Mahāvīra only Dṛṣṭivāda was divided but not the remaining 11 Aṃgas. Thus, in the time of the 24 Tīrthaṃkara from Vṛṣabhanātha and Mahāvīra leaving aside the 7 intervals the religious order carried on. Even though the numbers reduced or increased, the four-fold congregation was never absent. For the tradition of the 11 Aṃgas remained safe. Preserving the scriptures is the means to preserving the religious order.

Thought and Conduct

It is generally observed that even the best of ascetics who preach the highest principles (thoughts) do not practice it. But the specialty of the lives of the Tīrthaṃkara is that they preach, propagate and live in keeping with the lofty ideas they present. Their practice is not different or contradictory to the Āgamas. All the same, a common man might have doubts looking at the events in the lives of Tīrthaṃkara in various places. For example some ācāryas have written that when Lord Mahāvīra began to move around after his dīkṣā (initiation), a poor Brahmin accosted him midway, imploring him pitifully. Touched with compassion the Lord tore a part of his - devadūṣya (divine robe). The question may be asked as to how could the Lord himself act in this manner having prohibited a monk from acts such as dāna (giving alms) that arise from attachments of a householder? Tearing a robe and giving is not limited compassion. The Lord has infinite compassion; it is possible that Siddhārtha or some other divine being in service of the Lord might have done this. The ācāryas might have written about something corresponding to that state.

Similarly despite a vow of aparigraha (non-possession) Tīrthaṃkara living amidst adornments such as divine umbrella, cāmara (whisk) can become cause for suspicion in the minds of common people. In reality, the celestial beings themselves make an offering of these adornments in praise of Tīrthaṃkara at the time of their attaining the status of Tīrthaṃkara. This is an obvious example of the devotion and worship of

Tīrthaṃkaras by the divine beings because by the time of the divine prayers the Tīrthaṃkara have attained omniscience and have become completely devoid of attachment. Yes, in today's context power-hungry people should not indulge in false imitation of the name and conduct of the Tīrthaṃkara.

Doctrine and Practice

Being unattached and beyond intent (kalpātīta), Tīrthaṃkara are not bound by the obligations of conduct (practice). Yet, Tīrthaṃkara have exhorted us towards the path of liberation in the form of intention (inclination) and conduct and did not show traits of acting against this conduct. Yet ācāryas believe that following the attainment of omniscience the Lord walked at night before arriving at Mahāseṇa forest for stay. Although there is no distinction between night and day for the omniscient one yet this is against the conduct. According to the commentary on Vṛhatkalpasūtra, in adherence to the norms of conduct the Lord does not allow easily the thirsty and hungry monks to eat or drink despite there being pure water and sesame in the forest. But in Āvaśyakacūrṇi, there is a mention of giving a portion of the torn robe to the Brahmin. One is to seek to understand seriously as to what could be the connection between these.

We can say this with certainty that the Tīrthaṃkara - “*jahā vāi tahā kāriyā vi havai*” Their conduct is in tune with the preaching's, even if they are determined on their path. Not staying overnight at a place, and after attaining omniscience Mallinātha staying in the commune of female-monks and not of monks prove they do not act contrary to tradition / norms.

The great men of Tīrthaṃkara times

In the times of the 24 Tīrthaṃkara, from Lord Vṛṣabhanātha to Mahāvīra, there came several great men who were worthy of kingdoms but took the path to liberation. Among these, apart from the 24 Tīrthaṃkara, were the 12 cakravartīs, 9 baladevas, and 9 vasudevas, in all 54 great men. Later 9 prativasudevas were added to make the total figure of 63 *śalākāpuruṣas*.

Bharata cakravartī, who came in the time of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, was his son. It is now generally held that this country is named after him. Sagara cakravartī in the time of Lord Ajitanātha and Maghavā and Sanatkumāra, respectively, in between the times of Lords Arahnātha and Mallinātha were the others. Lords Śāmtinātha, Kuṃthunātha and Aranātha were cakravartīs and Tīrthaṃkara as well. The eighth cakravartī Subhūma belonged to the time of the interval between Lords Aranātha and Mallinātha. The ninth cakravartī Padma belonged to the intervening period of Lords Mallinātha and Munisuvratanātha. 10th cakravartī Hariṣeṇa came in the interregnum of Lords Munisuvratanātha and Naminātha while 11th cakravartī Jaya in the intervening period of Lords Naminātha and Ariṣṭanemi. And the 12th cakravartī Brahmadata came in the middle of Lord Ariṣṭanemi's and Lord Pārśvanātha's times. Among the nine Vasudevas, five such as Tripṛṣṭha, etc came in the times of five Tīrthaṃkara such as between Lords Śreyāṃsanātha and Mallinātha, Puṇḍarīka and Datta, came in the times of Lords Mallinātha and Munisuvratanātha. Lakṣmaṇa Vasudeva came in the intervening period of Lords Munisuvratanātha and Naminātha and Śrīkṛṣṇa Vasudeva belonged to the period of Lord Ariṣṭanemi. Just as Vasudevas there are also 11 rudras, 9 nāradas and in some places kāmadevas such as Bāhubalī. (1) Bhīmāvalī (2) Jītaśatru (3) Rudra (4) Vaiśvānara (5) Supratiṣṭha (6) Acala (7) Puṇḍarīka (8) Ajitadhara (9) Ajitanābhi (10) Pīṭha and (11) Satyaki are the 11 rudras. (1) Bhīm (2) Mahābhīm (3) Rudra (4) Mahārudra (5) Kāla (6) Mahākāla (7) Durmukha (8) Naramukha and (9) Adhomukha are the nine nāradas. All these are considered splendid and liberating. The first rudra belongs to the time of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, the second to that of Lord Ajitanātha, third to ninth rudra to that of seven Tīrthaṃkara down from Lord Suvidhinātha, the tenth rudra to the time of Lord Śāmtinātha and the eleventh to Lord Mahāvīra's times. The last two rudras are considered worthy of hell.

Since the main object of this text is history of religion, there is no detailed elaboration on cakravartīs, baladevas, Vasudevas, etc. Among cakravartī Bharata and Brahmadata, among Vasudevas Śrīkṛṣṇa and among prativasudevas Jarāsandha are described briefly from a historical perspective. The fourth mahādihikāra of Tiloyapaṇṇattī gives informative material on rudras and nāradas.

Among the kingly followers of Lord Mahāvīra Śreṇika, Kūṇika, Ceṭaka, Udāyana etc are introduced. Śreṇika was an influential king of Lord

Mahāvīra's times. He secured Tīrthaṃkaragotra through service to the royalty. On account of his previous ungainly karmas he shall first experience hell. He made every effort to break from the confinement in hell but in vain. Lastly he understood that his going to hell was inevitable.

Tīrthaṃkara and the Nātha Sect

Apart from Jain literature reference to Tīrthaṃkara can also be found in Vedas, Purāṇas, etc, Vedic and Buddhist texts such as Tripiṭaka, etc. But there we only find Vṛṣabhanātha, Saṃbhava, Supārśva, Ariṣṭanemi, etc but not the Tīrthaṃkara with the nātha suffix. The same situation exists in Samavāyāṃga, Āvaśyaka and Nandīsūtra. In this context it would be natural to ask since when and with what connotation was the suffix 'nātha' used with names of Tīrthaṃkara.

Literal meaning of nātha is 'Lord'. Each Tīrthaṃkara is the Lord of three worlds and enriched with great qualities. Hence it seems apt and appropriate to use the suffix 'nātha' with their names. Prabhu, Nātha, Deva, Swāmī, etc are synonymous terms, so the terms Deva, Nātha, Prabhu, and Swāmī have been suffixed to the names of Tīrthaṃkara. For the first time in the Bhagavatī Sūtra, Lord Mahāvīra, and in Āvaśyaka Sūtra the arihantas have been invoked with the adjectives "loganāheṇaṃ", "loganāhāṇaṃ", considering them to be Lord of the world, lokanātha. Dīgambara ācārya of the period of around 4th century AD, Ācārya Yativṛṣabha, in his text, Tiloyapaṇṇatī used the term 'nātha' with the Tīrthaṃkara at several places. He also used the term "Īsara", "sāmī" with the names of Tīrthaṃkara. This certainly and indisputably goes to show that by the time of Yativṛṣabha the term 'nātha' was used for Tīrthaṃkara in literature. The term 'nātha' for Jain Tīrthaṃkara became so popular that Śaiva Yogī started using the term 'nātha' with his name and as a result, Matsyendranātha, Gorakhanātha, etc which was part of this tradition became popular as the "nātha sect".

Those from other communities who are totally unaware of the history and importance of Tīrthaṃkara such as Ādinātha, Ajitanātha, etc can get into the misperception that Gorakhanātha gave rise to Nemanātha, Nemanātha and Pārśvanātha gave rise to Gorakhapamthī. Fact is, that Matsyendranātha who is considered the founder of the Nātha sect, is

believed to have belonged to the 8th century, whereas the Tīrthaṅkara Lords Neminātha, Pārśvanātha and adherents of the Jain religion belonged to several centuries prior to that. Neminātha was eighty-three thousand years before Pārśvanātha. There is a long time gap between the two. Thus there is no chance for Gorakhanātha turning into Neminātha, Pārśvanātha. Of course, it is possible that Neminātha, Pārśvanātha can turn into Gorakhanātha but if we thought about it even this does not seem to fit because Lord Pārśvanātha came long before Vikramyear 725 whereas according to scholars Gorakhanātha is considered to be the contemporary of Bappārāvala. It is possible that the yogis of the nātha sect were influenced by the extensive propagation of ahimsā by Lord Neminātha and the dutiful observance of Lord Pārśvanātha as a result of which the tradition of Neminātha and Pārśvanātha became widespread within the nātha sect. As the famous historian Hajārīprasāda Dvivedī has written in his book “nātha sect”.

“Cāṃdanātha was probably the first Siddha (liberated) who accepted the Gorakṣamārga (protecting the cows) tradition. Neminātha and Pārśvanātha of this same tradition, also appear to be followers of the Jain Tīrthaṅkara Neminātha and Pārśvanātha. Neminātha and Pārśvanātha certainly predated Gorakhanātha.”

Differences in historical assumptions / beliefs

It wouldn't be irrelevant here to reflect upon the problem that if the source of history is the same for all; why then were there differences between different ācāryas in writing history?

The fact is that the entire Jain scriptural tradition was oral passed on from teacher to student. In the process of decay and reaching calmness (in the process of learning and unlearning / in the process of destroying and gaining peace) the student who learns through oral tradition begins to see the same knowledge to a lesser or greater degree depending on the process of how much of the oral knowledge has been absorbed in to a lesser or greater extent. As a result the same subject is assigned in their minds to memory in different forms. This is the state of events that happened in the near past, but when it comes to ancient historical events it is natural to have several differing views. Vagaries of time, difference in memory or perception can also be the cause for differing views and perceptions of a writer and reader. Instead of getting distressed over

these differences, readers should feel proud of the fact that on matters of the Tīrthaṅkara' parents, birth place, auspicious star at the time of conception, place, birth star, colour, cognizance, period of initiation, penance after initiation, time of mental training, nirvāṇa, etc the Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions are common. Differences on name, place, date, etc have occurred due to differences in memory or on matters of arithmetic, but that does not make any difference to the original.

In the present text 'Tīrthaṅkara' introductory note, introduction to their lives and where appropriate, points of differences are also shown. There are also some differences that are against the tradition and primarily debatable. For instance, all ācāryas agree that Kṣatriyakuṇḍa was the place of residence of king Siddhārtha, but Ācārya Sīlāṅka believes it to be his resort. Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Kalpasūtra mention Nandīvardhana as the elder brother of Lord Mahāvīra while Ācārya Sīlāṅka mentions him as the younger brother. BhagavatīSūtra mentions the hurling of magical fire by Gośālaka on Sarvānubhūti and Sunakṣatra and of the death of two monks in Samavaśaraṇa, whereas Ācārya Sīlāṅka in his Cauvana mahāpurisa cariyāṃ does not mention the death of any monk by the impact of magical fire hurled at them by Gośālaka. He writes that Lord Mahāvīra, in order to prevent the calamity that would be produced from the magical fire of Gośālaka and Sarvānubhūti, produced cooling power to extinguish it. Unable to bear with its strong power it fell on Gośālaka and started to burn him. Afraid of the extreme flames of the magical fire, Gośālaka fell at Mahāvīra's feet. By virtue of the Lord's compassion, the flames died out. Gośālaka repented his bad deeds as a result of which he obtained a good fire and after death he was reborn as a deva in the Acyuta heaven. There must be some reason for a knowledgeable muni to write something against the traditional dictum. One cannot believe that such a great scholar could write something without forethought. This issue calls for deeper reflection on part of scholars.

Method of propounding in Tīrthaṅkara' times

Despite having the support of gods and divine beings in the times of Tīrthaṅkara, why was Jain religion not widely propounded across countries? What was the method of propounding in the times of the Tīrthaṅkara that even under the rule of the powerful Śrīkṛṣṇa and a flower like the Magadha King Śreṇika, Jain religion was not widely

propagated in the country? Why didn't the monks and ascetics, powerful kings and followers send forth proselytizers and through officials, obtain the rulers' permission to propagate ahiṃsā and Jain religion? These questions naturally come to mind.

Analysing the situation at that time one realises that in the tradition of Tīrthaṃkara, the basic preaching was that of right thought and adherence to right conduct. The basic objective of their sermon was a change of heart. That is why the Lord imparted true spiritual insight to his audience but never did he insist forcibly nor did he coax people to follow certain vows (observances /restraints). After hearing his sermon if someone voluntarily accepted conduct of monk (monkhood) or śrāvaka-dharma (votary) it would be exclaimed – 'be happy' – that is, that which makes you happy, do not err therein. It was left to the audience to decide as to what should be done after the feeling was aroused. Conduct was more important than propagation.

Jain monks would stay in common places, accept alms from all castes and blameless castes and give instructions to all. Initiation was given to anyone who wished to accept the religion voluntarily after becoming aware. The times were such that in a clean societal environment that people could spontaneously live a religious life. The pier of purity was so tenacious that even people were influenced by it. The method of preaching was to train a particular person in manner that he would be able to make thousands abide devoted to the religion. Situation today is different from those times. Today even in bad nations good people travel and stay there and such bad people are also beginning to live on India's earth. Each influences the other. In this context it is essential to propagate ahiṃsā and truth openly so as to explain to them the difference between what is edible and inedible. Otherwise in times of increasingly violence and meat eating, those religious people with weak minds will be influenced by the bad people and move away from religious conduct and behaviour. Propagation is essential but it has to be in accordance with our culture. Our preaching should only give importance to conduct and should be founded on the principle of change of heart through knowledge. This would be the preaching mode in accordance with the Tīrthaṃkara' tradition and it is only through this can be of benefit to the Jain order.

Today's history writers

It is surprising and regrettable that some scholars write essays filled with misperceptions about Jain religion and Tīrthaṃkara despite there being several evidences of Jain history. Whatever religion or sect historians choose to write about, they should do so after studying authentic texts, in an authentic manner. It is not correct to write on the basis of hearsay, without proper study and reflection.

Even when scriptures prove that Gośālaka accepted to become the disciple of Mahāvīra, to write that Mahāvīra accepted the acela (without clothes) tradition from Gośālakaka is erroneous, misleading and wrong. Even today some scholars make a useless effort in showing Jain religion to be a branch of the Vedic tradition; this is their serious mistake. We are not only hoping but are fully confident that our knowledgeable historians will be alert in this direction and enlighten the country with the light of referential knowledge through correct introduction of Jainism as a significant religion of India.

Introduction to the book

The present book, titled “Jain Dharma kā Maulika Itihāsa” is written according to the ancient Āgama tradition of the Prathamānuyoga. In this Tīrthaṃkara -khaṇḍa (section/ volume) previous lives of Tīrthaṃkara, time of heavenly abode, conception, time–period of conception, birth, time of birth, coronation, marriage, year of charities, mendicancy, penance, omniscience, establishment of tīrtha, Gaṇadhara, Āryās, monks both male and female, and particular favours done (by them), etc are introduced. The introduction to Vṛṣabhanātha and Mahāvīra Tīrthaṃkara is based on Sūtras such as Ācārāṅga, Jambūdvīpaprajñapti, Samavāyāṅga, Āvaśyaka, etc, ancient texts such as Āvaśyakaniryukti, Āvaśyakacūrṇi, Pravacanasāroddhāra, Sattarisayadvāra, and Mahāpurāṇa, Uttarapurāṇa, Tiloyapaṇṇatī of the Digambara tradition. In places of variance, the viewpoint in accordance with the Śāstras is given, referring to Triṣaṣṭi Śalākāpuruṣa caritra, Āgamīyamata and Sattarisaya Prakaraṇa.

For research on historical facts, besides Jain literature, it was decided to collect material to the extent possible from Vedic and Buddhist literature as well. In research no literature has been disregarded. Apart from basic texts, literature of modern writers has also been consulted. Literary works of Śrī Devendra Muni, Chief of the editorial committee of Pārśvanātha Prakaraṇa and literary works of Śrī Vijayendra Sūri, Śrī Kalyāṇavijayajī, etc have been used selectively for the section on Lord Mahāvīra.

At the time of writing it was kept in mind that nothing should be contrary to tradition or the tradition of nirgranthas. Particular care was taken to write no unsubstantiated word under the influence of communal persistence. This section deals with Tīrthaṃkara’ introduction, hence it can be called “tīrthaṃkara khaṇḍa”.

Despite taking care to the extent possible of language, emotion and doctrine, if due to the incompleteness of human nature any deficiency remains, for that “*micchāmi dukkaḍaṃ*”. Knowledgeable people shall inform (us) about these deficiencies so that care is taken to improve upon those in future.

(From the Second edition)

Kālacakra and Kulakaras

According to the Jain holy texts (śāstras), the world has been progressing with a constant momentum since beginningless time. Change is the natural, permanent and innate quality of every living non-living thing. The entire ostensible / visible world is permanent / constant when compared to the fundamental matter / substance, but being ever changing, is equivalent to being transient. The cycle of night after day, again day after night, light after darkness and darkness after light, coming and going and coming again and return has been incessant since time immemorial. Rise and prosperity thereafter and the climax of prosperity and the fall followed by complete decline and rise again. In this way the world's incessant sequence has been continuing. This cycle of downfall and rise to excellence in the world is termed avasarpinī (regressive half cycle) and utsarpinī (progressive half cycle). Declining happiness period is the time moving towards the ebb like the waning of the moon in the dark fortnight and utsarpinī period is the period that rises towards excellence like the moon continuously rising in the bright fortnight.

Declining happiness period's declining time sequence is divided into 6 parts: 1. Suṣamā-Suṣama (sukhamā-sukhamī or happy-happy) of 4 koḍ ākoḍṣāgara years duration; Suṣamā (sukhamī or happy) of 3 koḍ ākoḍṣāgara years duration; Suṣamā-duṣama (sukhamā-dukhamī or happy-unhappy) of 2 koḍ ākoḍṣāgara years duration; duṣamā -Suṣama (dukhamā-sukhamī or unhappy-happy) of 42,000 years less than one koḍ ākoḍṣāgara years duration; duṣama (dukhamī - unhappy) of 21,000 years duration; duṣamā duṣama (dukhamā-dukhamī or unhappy-unhappy) of 21,000 years. Similarly the sequence of excellent time, the utsarpinī, is also divided into 6 parts in the reverse order of the declining happiness. Avasarpinī and utsarpinī together make for 20 kodakodi sāgara, one cycle (Kālacakra) of time.

At this time we are all going through the declining happiness cycle. The first ārā (time sequence or period) of the declining happiness cycle is enriched with superlative form, taste, smell, touch and prosperity par excellence. In that time, living beings get all their life-needs met without any effort through the kalpavṛkṣa (the wish fulfilling tree). Hence their life is immersed in self and extremely joyful. There is no reason for

frivolousness and conflicting thoughts in an intoxicated human mind enjoying natural and conveniently available material things. A human being of that time was free from all worries and spent a life of material happiness. This was called the age of enjoying material pleasures (or worldly things; sensual pleasures).

Because of the changing quality of nature, there comes a gradual change in that situation and that period of preeminence on this earth with time moves towards degeneration. Consequently, the qualities of form, taste, and charm (sweetness) of the earth decay subsequently decays and its impact is felt on a human being as well, whose physical development and mental peace and happiness also start to degenerate / decay.

Even as a man's material well being decreases, and he has to face dearth of essential things of life, his peaceful mind becomes a centre of conflicting thoughts. "Deficiency gives birth to the demon tendencies" – according to this dictum along with deficiency (lack) conflicting thoughts and accusations also rise. In this manner when more than half the time of the third āra of the declining happiness cycle has passed, the earth's qualities of form, taste, smell, fertility, etc deteriorates to a great extent. Source materials for livelihood are not available in adequate quantity on account of the kalpavṛkṣa vanishing or decreasing in their potency to fulfill the wishes. In the unexpected (inexperienced) situation of scarcity animalistic tendencies of anger, greed, deceit, enmity, opposition rise to the extent of taking the form of a forest fire the entire human society starts to burn in. When the unbearable fire of disquietude reaches its climax man becomes restless for peace.

Consequently, some special, talented people from that human society, taking the opportunity, arise like a concealed seed from the earth, to show direction of peace to the terrified people.

Situation in the early times and the era of the Kulakaras

People endowed with special strength, knowledge (intelligence) and talents who establish the kulas (lineages) are called kulakaras. They make a temporary arrangement which solves the immediate problem partially. When the problems assume a bigger proportion beyond the capability of the kulakaras, then due to timely influences and the good

fortune of people, an extraordinarily illustrious person is born; as a brilliant gem among men, he sets people on the right path by imparting to them the knowledge of religion, thereby leading them towards the right path of peace and happiness. This is the time when the social and religious history of humankind commences, a brief introduction of which is as follows:-

Men of the times prior to Lord Vṛṣabhanātha were by nature peaceful, physically healthy and ones who led independent / free lives. They lacked in matters of worldly decorum / propriety. They behaved in a spontaneous manner, neither accepting help and services of others nor offering the same to others. They lived on the fruits borne by ten kinds of kalpavṛkṣas¹ and were untouched by any kind of disease or despair. With quantitative decline in the things accruing from the kalpavṛkṣas, mutual conflicts rose in order to address the lack and to fulfill needs. At that point they divided themselves into smaller families. Those who established these families became known as kulakaras. The main kulakaras were: - 1 Vimalavāhana, 2 Cakṣuṣmāna, 3 Yaśasvī, 4 Abhicandra, 5 Prasenajita, 6 Marudeva and 7 Nābhi. There is divided opinion amongst writers about the number of kulakaras. JambūdvīpaPrajñapti refers to 15 kulakaras.

Vimalavāhana was the first kulkara. Once while roaming in the forest, a beautiful white elephant saw a human yugala (male of twin brother sister) and placed him on its back. When people saw the yugala thus seated on a bright vehicle they called him Vimalavāhana and, considering him to be powerful since he was astride an elephant, they made him their leader. On becoming a leader Vimalavāhana prescribed duties for everyone and punishment for those violating them.

When someone violated the code he would be punished by humiliating him exclaiming, “Hā, what did you do!” For a shameful and reticent person of those times this was seen as severe a punishment as losing everything and he would never indulge in any criminal deed thereafter. This method of punishment (“hā”kāra–admonition) continued for a long

¹ In the Jambūdvīpaprajñapti we find reference to trees such as ‘matanga’ which fulfilled all needs of life, which has been termed in commentaries as *kalpavṛkṣa* on account of their being wish-fulfilling. So that its distinction in contrast to ordinary trees becomes clear.

time. After some time the pair of Vimalavāhana and Candrasāsā gave birth to the second kulakar pair Cakṣuṣmāna. In the same way, the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh kulakaras were born. Since they established human families, they were called kulakaras. The hākāra mode of punishment carried on in the time of Vimalavāhana and Cakṣuṣmāna. When the word “hā” did not work with a criminal the use of “mā”, or “do not” was used. This stopped people from doing criminal acts. This came to be known as the “mā”kāra” method and continued till the time of the third and fourth kulakaras. Due to the harshness of the times and rudeness of behaviour when “hākāra” and “mā kāra” methods started to decline in impact, the dhikkāra (reprimand) method began to be used which continued in the times of the fifth, sixth and seventh kulakaras.

Kulakaras: an analysis

In the latter half of the third part of the third Āraka of the avasarpinī (regressive half) cycle when earth’s fertility declined, the production of fruits from the kalpavṛkṣas too decreased. In that period those who depended on the kalpavṛkṣas started arguing among themselves over the notion of ownership of those trees. When this conflict assumed the form of dispute, spreading chaos, people agreed to chose a special talented person as their leader to end the conflict and maintain order. This way, many kulas were formed and the person managing the kulas came to be known as kulakara. Even if there is unanimity about the system and role of kulakaras opinion is divided in the scriptures when it comes to the number of kulakaras. The Jain āgamas – Sthānāṃga, Samavāyāṃga and Bhagavatī and Āvaśyakacūrṇi and Āvaśyakaniryukti talk of 7-7 kulakaras, viz.:- 1 Vimalavāhana, 2 Cakṣuṣmāna, 3 Yaśomāna, 4 Abhicandra, 5 Prasenajita, 6 Marudeva and 7 Nābhi. But Mahāpurāṇa mentions 14 and Jambūdvīpaprajñapti speaks of 15 kulakaras.

Paumacariyaṃ in JambūdvīpaPrajñapti adds Vṛṣabhanātha to the list of 14 to make it 15 kulakaras, which is not problematic even if it differs in terms of the required number. Leaving out the first six kulakaras of the 14 and the 11th, Candrābha, the remaining 7 names are in keeping with the Sthānāṃga. It is possible that the first 6 kulakaras, who looked after the welfare of people and guided them, and unlike the last 7 kulakaras, did not take active part in the system of punishment, etc, hence were considered only secondary in importance. In the same way,

Vṛṣabhanātha is considered the first king for having ended the system of twins and establishing a new kingdom, and is not considered one of the kulakaras and it is possible that the JambūdvīpaPrajñapti took the common meaning of kula as a community and counted him among the big kulakaras.

This description in Jain literature is also found in the Vedic literature. There the term manu is used in place of kulakaras. Probably their contemplative character is a reason behind the title ‘manu.’ Manusmṛti talks of seven illustrious manus like the seven kulakaras of the Sthānāṅgasūtra – Svayambhū, Svārociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata, Cākṣuṣa and Vaivasvata.

Other 14 manus are also mentioned among whom Sāvarṇi, Dakṣasāvarṇi, Brahmasāvarṇi, Dharmasāvarṇi, Rudrasāvarṇi, Raucyadevasāvarṇi, Indrasāvarṇi, following the seventh manu, are mentioned in Śrīmad Bhāgavata as Aṣṭama-manu.

Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa mentions 5 Sāvarṇi after Vaivasvata, along with Raucya and Bhautya, as seven more manus. 14 manus are referred to in Matsyapurāṇa, Daivī Bhāgavata and Viṣṇu Purāṇa including the manus from Svāyambhuva to Sāvarṇi and following them, Raucya, Bhautya, Meru Sāvarṇi, Ṛbhu, Ṛtudhāmā and Viśvakasena.

The time-period of 14 manus is considered to be a thousand yugas (epochs). For an elaborate introduction of the manus 9th to 21st chapters of Matsyapurāṇa and the 421st to 509th hymns of the 4th mahādrikā of the Jain text Tiloyapaṇṇattī are worth reading.

The above comparative evaluation throws good light on the historicity of the ancient order of Indian people.

Lord Vṛṣabhanātha

Means of attaining Tīrthaṅkara Status

Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was the founder of the human society and first form-maker i.e. Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion. When 84 lakh pūrvas, eight and half months of the third epoch (araka or āra) of the present time cycle remained, at that time, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was born from the womb of Marudevī, wife of the last kulakara Nābhi. Special spiritual purification efforts of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha earlier are the reason for the attainment of the exalted status of Tīrthaṅkara by him. In the Jain Āgama Jñātādharma story the origin of the Tīrthaṅkara status is considered to accrue from 20 kinds of reflection / instruments (kāraṇas) and their practice namely: - 1. (Worship of) Arihanta, 2. Siddha, 3. (Listening to) discourses, 4. (Worship of) holy teacher, 5. (Worship of) senior monks / teacher, 6. (Worship of) scholars and 7. Of mendicants and service to them, 8. Consistently gaining knowledge, 9. Persistent adherence to purity of perception, 10. Invocation of the virtuous, 11. Practice of the six essentials as prescribed, 12. True adherence to modesty and the vows, 13. Increasing feeling of detachment, 14. Powerful conduct of penance and (spirit of) sacrifice, 15. To be a repository of the four-fold congregation, 16. Service of those following the vows (vratas) 17. To practise (enhancing of) unique knowledge 18. Faith in the discourse of the detached ones 19. Charity towards the deserving and 20. Preaching / establishing the creed of Jīna / Tīrthaṅkara’.

It is not necessary that all these 20 contemplations/ causes be worshipped. Excellent and assiduous adherence to even one or two of these makes one capable of becoming a Tīrthaṅkara. Tattvārthasūtra and Mahāpurāṇa consider devotion to 16 instrumental concepts / contemplations / causes as being essential, wherein we do not find the Siddha (liberated soul), sthavira (senior ascetics / elders) and tapasvī (ones who undergo severe penance). These are included in the 16 instrumental concepts / contemplations (ṣoḍaśa-kāraṇas). Purity of thought / faith and Humility / modesty is given importance in those texts while in the Jñātādharma-kathā humility is given precedence over devotion to the Arihantas. In order to learn about where and in which birth (worldly existence) Lord Vṛṣabhanātha practiced devotion to these

contemplations and accrued the Tīrthaṅkara nāma-karma, his past lives are briefly given herein.

Past lives of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha and his spiritual practices therein

In one of his lives Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was born as the merchant – owner of a caravan of merchandise – Dhannā in kṣitipratiṣṭha of MahāVideha country. Dhannā had abundant riches, and carried on trade in many far-off lands. Once he made an announcement that anyone desirous of going abroad to make money could travel with him. Hearing this, many people went along with him. Ācārya Dharmaghoṣa too, had to reach Vasantapura. Considering this a favourable coincidence to cross a desolate forest, he joined Dhannā along with his group of disciples. The merchant ordered his servants to take care of the ācārya's food and other requirements. The ācārya told the merchant that food specially made for them, intended for them, is prohibited for Śramaṇas.

The rainy season commenced a few days after, and the sky was overcast with thick dark clouds. Seeing this inclement weather the caravan merchant decided to be stationed at a safe place in the forest. Ācārya Dharmaghoṣa too, stayed there at a faultless place. As a result of spending a long time in the forest, the merchant's provisions exhausted and people began to live on roots, tubers and fruits of the forest. At the end of the rainy season Dhannā suddenly remembered the ācārya. Ashamed, he went to the ācārya with some food and pleaded with him to accept the same. The ācārya explained to him the tenets of Śramaṇadharma in accordance with which it was unacceptable for monks / Śramaṇas to consume food filled with imperfections / faults and food such as fruits and other green substances. Gaining knowledge about the right and wrong codes of conduct the merchant presented the ācārya abundant measures of clarified butter (ghee) with great joy and for the first time in life gained true spiritual insight (samyag-darśana). Thus, leaving out other past lives, this is enumerated as the first incarnation / existence of Vṛṣabhanātha here i.e. of the last 13 bhavas (lives / pre-existences) this is the first.

Getting out of the bhava of Dhannā, the caravan merchant and crossing over various stages of human existence, Vṛṣabhanātha was born as son of physician Suvīdhi. This was Vṛṣabhanātha's 9th bhava. He was named

Jīvānanda. Jīvānanda had four close friends – first was the prince Mahīdhara, second was the son of a trader, third was the son of a minister and fourth the son of a merchant. One day when he was talking to his friends at his home a long meditating ascetic came to his house for alms. The ascetic’s body was infected with worms of leprosy. Seeing the monk’s afflicted state prince Mahīdhara said to Jīvānanda, “Friend, you cure other people but pity you do not seem very keen on doing something for this ascetic.” Jīvānanda replied – “to treat this disease three things are needed, a gem-studded blanket, gośīrṣa-sandal (ox-head sandalwood) and lakṣapāka-oil and I have only lakṣapāka oil with me. Without the other two ingredients I won’t be able to do anything.” Hearing this Mahīdhara started for the marketplace along with his friends to bring those objects and demanded a gem-studded blanket and gośīrṣa-sandalwood from a wealthy trader of the town. The trader quoted one hundred thousand (1 lakh) gold coins each for the two objects and enquired as to why they were needed. Hearing the reason, impressed by the dedication of the young people, the trader thought he might take advantage of this pious deed of serving an ascetic and so handed over the objects without charging any price for them.

The physician’s son, Jīvānanda and his four friends went to the ascetic with the objects. Jīvānanda, after prayers, massaged ascetic’s body with lakṣapāka oil the moment the ascetic’s body absorbed the oil, the leprosy worms started to wriggle out. Then Jīvānanda covered his body with the gem-studded blanket, upon which the worms got stuck to it. The physician then threw the blanket on the corpse of a cow and those worms were absorbed in the flesh of the dead animal. Finally, Jīvānanda smeared gośīrṣa-sandalwood paste on the ascetic’s body. In this way, rubbing the body thrice Jīvānanda cured the ascetic of his disease through his skillful treatment. Through this detached and dedicated-devoted service rendered, Jīvānanda and his friends gained great merit. Their hearts melted seeing the ascetic thus cured and healthy. The monk preached detachment to them; hearing which Jīvānanda and his four friends accepted the Śramaṇa-dharma. Subsequently, dutifully adhering to the Śramaṇa-dharma the five friends became worthy of the status of gods in the 12th heaven of Acyuta-kalpa.

After completing his life as a deva Jīvānanda was born in Puṣkalāvātī to the wife of king Vajrasena, Dhāriṇī. At the time of conception the mother saw 14 great dreams. Vajrasena named his son Vajranābha, who went on

to become a cakravartī (emperor). His four friends were born as his brothers Bāhu, Subāhu, Pīṭha and Mahāpīṭha and became provincial kings. When his father, Tīrthaṅkara Vajrasena, after attaining omniscience (kevalī), started delivering his religious sermons, the cakravartī Vajranābha (due to his past good merits) too accepted initiation (renounced the world). He did penance for a long time and through right devotion of twenty kinds attained Tīrthaṅkara status in that very life, and at the end of his life, became ahamindra deva (chief god) in the anuttara vimāna (highest class of gods) of the sarvārthaSiddha heaven.

Birth

After completing his life as Vajranābha, moving from sarvārthasiddha on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Āṣāḍha, under the uttarāṣāḍhā constellation, Vṛṣabhanātha entered into the womb of his mother Marudevī. In the latter half of that night mother Marudevī saw the following 14 auspicious dreams: 1. elephant 2. Bull, 3. Lion 4. Lakṣmī the goddess 5. A garland / wreath of flowers 6. The moon 7. The sun 8. A flag 9. An urn 10. Lotus pond 11. An ocean of milk 12. A vimāna (a heavenly space vehicle) 13. A heap of gems and 14. Smokeless fire.

Mothers of Tīrthaṅkara who gain the nāma-karma of Tīrthaṅkara coming from the hell worlds dream of a palace in place of a vehicle whereas mothers of those coming from the deva-loka (abode of gods) dream of a vehicle. As per numbers mothers of cakravartīs and Tīrthaṅkara see 14 dreams. In the Dīgambara tradition we find, in addition, a pair of fish and throne to make it 16 dreams.

Here it is worth remembering that mothers of all the Tīrthaṅkara' first see an elephant entering their mouths, whereas Marudevī first saw a bull entering into her mouth. Awakened by the dream Marudevī went to king Nābhi and explained to him the dreams. With his experiential knowledge king Nābhi explained the fruit of the dreams. When the delivery period ended happily Marudevī gave birth to her son on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the Caitra month on the day of Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī under the constellation uttarāṣāḍhā. At some places the birth occurs on a navamī (ninth) instead of aṣṭamī (eighth) which is perhaps based on the time of

rising or setting. Even the religious scripture of the Vedic tradition, Śrīmadbhāgavata mentions the birth of Nābhi from the descendant of the first manu Svāyambhuva, Agnīdhra, and that of Vṛṣabhanātha from Nābhi. Thus even in the scriptures of the Vedic tradition in close similarity with the Jain āgamas, not just the scion of the Raghukula Śrī Puruṣottama Rāma but his ancestors Sāgara, etc and many years before him, the birth of Vṛṣabhanātha is mentioned. At the time of the birth of Vṛṣabhanātha peace prevailed in all directions, the whole world became illuminated. For a moment even the denizens of hell also experienced comfort.

When a great soul, with the virtues /merits of becoming a Tīrthaṅkara and to be venerated by the entire humanity, is born; at that time the thrones of 56 diśākumārīs and 64 devendras begin to tremble. Learning through their clairvoyant knowledge (avadhijñāna) of the birth of a Tīrthaṅkara; the celestial beings, diśākumārīs and devendras celebrate the birth in the form of anointment, etc with customary pomp and wealth as is due to their status, at the birthplace of the Tīrthaṅkara as well as at Mount Merū and the island of Naṃdīśvara, as has been done since the beginningless time. This is an eternal rule for all times. As per these norms, the devas and devendras celebrated the Lord's birth by giving him the holy bath (abhiṣeka) and celebrated eight days of great festivities (aṣṭāhnikā). King Nābhi and his subjects too celebrated the Lord's birth with a lot of gaiety.

Naming (Ceremony), lineage (vaṃśa) and status (gotra)

At the time of conception Marudevī had first dreamt of a beautiful bull, and the child had the auspicious insignia of a bull on his thigh, his parents named him Vṛṣabhanātha. According to the writer of Śrīmadbhāgavata he was named Vṛṣabhanātha by his father Nābhi on account of his good qualities such as a beautiful body, bounteous fame, strength, glory and valiance. In the Digmabara texts we find the name Vṛṣabhanātha. Vṛṣabhanātha is the foremost in the universe, and the best. He showers the nectar of religion on the world for its welfare. That is why Indra named him Vṛṣabhanātha.

When young Vṛṣabhanātha was about a year old, one day the king of gods, Indra came to him. He had a sugarcane stalk in his hand at that

time. The child extended his hands for the sugarcane which Indra gave him. The Lord sucked this sugarcane juice. Perhaps this is why his lineage got the name “Ikṣvāku” and the gotra (clan) came to be known as “Kāśyapa”. The birthplace of the Lord came to be hailed as “Ikṣvākubhūmi”.

When Lord Vṛṣabhanātha entered his mother’s womb, Kubera had showered gold and hence he was also named Hiraṇyagarbha. Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was the first one who propounded the religion and its conduct; hence he was hailed as “Ādinātha” by Jain ācāryas and historians. As a consequence, since centuries Lord Vṛṣabhanātha is more popular as Ādinātha.

The young boy Vṛṣabhanātha’s food

From the commentary literature of the āgamas such as Nirukti, Bhāṣya, Cūrṇi, etc, and texts such as Kahāvali, we get to know that the baby – tīrthaṃkara was not breast-fed. Right from birth the devas-devendras had placed nutritious and delicious nectar in his thumb. Whenever the baby Vṛṣabhanātha was hungry he would place his thumb in his mouth and drink various kinds of nutritious juices. As Lord Vṛṣabhanātha grew up the celestial beings / gods produced for him adequate quantities of desirable fruits and so on. According to the Kahāvali, before becoming a mendicant, as a householder, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha only consumed the fruits of devakuru and uttarakuru (regions) and waters from the kṣīrasāgara(milky ocean).

Unprecedented event

The childhood sports of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha used to be unique, and would fill people with joy, overwhelm and stupefy them. People would throng to have a glimpse of his beauty which was a delight to the eyes. At every sweet smile of the Lord and every childhood sport of his, his mother Marudevī and father Nābhirāja would become overwhelmed and glide along like waves in an ocean of happiness.

Even as people were enjoying the childhood-sports of the Lord, an unprecedented and unheard of event for that time, took place. A pair of twins (male-female) was playing in the forest. Suddenly a fruit from the

tāla-tree fell on the boy and he died. This unforeseen incident filled people with terror. Seeing the girl alone in the forest, the astonished twins took her to Nābhirāja and told him of the strange incident. Nābhirāja told them this incident was meant to be a mere message that the times were changing. Nābhirāja took the girl under his care and said she would marry Vṛṣabha kumāra in good time. She was named Sunandā. Sunandā too stayed with Vṛṣabhakumāra and Sumaṅgalā and played around like a child.

Tīrtheśo Jagatām Guruḥ

All Tīrthaṅkaras possess mati (mind-based), śruta (verbal testimony and reasoning) and avadhijñāna (clairvoyance) even at the time of their conception in their respective mothers' wombs. Lord Vṛṣabhanātha too possessed these three kinds of knowledge from the time of his descent from the sarvārthasiddha vimāna. With his knowledge of his destiny, he was fully aware of his past lives. Hence he did not need to educate himself from any ācārya or guru. He was himself a preceptor par excellence and repository of all skills and all arts.

Marriage of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha

With time, after indulging in child-sports the Lord stepped on to the threshold of youth. When Indra noticed that Lord Vṛṣabhanātha has become a youth, he consulted with Nābhirāja and decided to arrange his marriage with both Sumaṅgalā and Sunandā. In those days marriage was both a fresh and intriguing event. Hence Indra and Indrāṅgīs took charge of all the work. Prior to this marriage in the time of the twins, male and female children were born from the same mother's womb and with time would turn into husband and wife. To see this new and first marriage of the epoch, a huge gathering of twins assembled at Nābhirāja's place. He introduced the system of marriage in the interest of humankind to curb the increasing sensual indulgences within marital relationships and prevent people from falling into the furnace of sensual enjoyment.

The marriage ceremony carried on for many days and the atmosphere was one of cheer. Nābhirāja and Marudevī were thrilled with delight seeing their son Vṛṣabhakumāra in the form of a bridegroom with two new brides. After the completion of the marriage ceremony, Lord

Vṛṣabhanātha commenced his married life with Sumaṅgalā and Sunandā.

The Conjunction period of Bhogabhūmi (enjoying sensual pleasures) and karmabhūmi (era and place of efforts)

While times had started to change even from the time of the first kulkara, yet at the time of Nābhirāja the situation had changed completely as the time came close to the conjunction between the end of bhogabhūmi and the rise of karmabhūmi. Very few wish fulfilling (kalpavṛkṣa) trees remained and people humankind began to plead deliverance from hunger and deficiency. Until then without efforts people were enjoying things, but it was impossible now to get food or water without making any effort. Distressed by hunger and deficiency people went to Nābhirāja and informed him of their plight. Nābhirāja was well aware of the intelligence and extraordinary qualities of his son Vṛṣabha kumāra. He asked his son to show the path to the people thus troubled.

Calming and reassuring the people Prince Vṛṣabhanātha said to them – apart from the fruits from kalpavṛkṣa, consume sugarcane and other food that grows in the forests, drink sugarcane juice. He said to them it was possible to satiate the pangs of hunger by consuming fruits, tubers, flowers and leaves, etc available in the forest and also introduced to them some of the edible varieties of the forest. Now people carried on their lives as per the path shown by Lord Vṛṣabhanātha and began to see him as the desire-fulfilling kalpavṛkṣa.

In this way, besides depending on fruits and roots they also began to cultivate coarse grain which led to complaints of indigestion and stomach problems for some people. When they shared this with Vṛṣabhakumāra he told them to consume sugarcane, grains etc. after removing the outer skin and finely pounding some of them. This was fine until they were using coarse unripe grains, but when it came to ripened grains again a problem arose. The prince then told them to drain ripe grain in water first, and after a while to soak them in water and if they ate it this way there would be no problem. Again for a while this helped but after sometime, eating food thus heated developed indigestion and pains and he taught them the art of producing fire by rubbing wooden sticks and using fire to cook.

The author of the Cūrṇi wrote that one day because of the friction between bamboo trees on a windy day a fire started suddenly. It consumed dry grass and leaves on the ground. The twins, believing the flame to be the light of some gems, tried to hold it in their hands, but burnt their hands in the process. They threw the burning charcoal and ran to Vṛṣabhakumāra and told him the whole story. Vṛṣabhanātha told them this was fire and if they use this same fire to cook their food before eating, they would have no trouble with stomachs. He then taught them to make pots out of wet earth / clay and to cook using these as utensils; the congenital pairs (yugalas) began to consider him god and ruler of men and spent their lives peacefully under his shadow seeking his guidance from time to time. In this way in the transition period between the bhoga-yuga (period of sensual enjoyment without effort) and karma-yuga (time of living with effort) Vṛṣabhanātha looked after the twins like a kulakara. That is why Vṛṣabhanātha is eulogised in āgama commentaries by ācāryas as “jaiyā kira kulakaro usabho.”

Lord Vṛṣabhanātha’s progeny

When Vṛṣabhanātha turned more than 6 lakh years old, Sumaṅgalā gave birth to twins Bharata and Brāhmī. Soon after this, Sunandā too gave birth to Bāhubalī and Sundarī. With time, Sumaṅgalā conceived 49 times and gave birth to 49 twins. Sumaṅgalā gave birth to 99 sons and 1 daughter and Sunandā became the mother of a son and a daughter. Lord Vṛṣabhanātha thus had 100 sons and two daughters, 102 children in all. All of them were endowed of perfectly symmetrical bodies and perfectly set bones and muscles like a rock (vajra) i.e. extremely beautiful and strong bodies. Ācārya Jinasena of the Digambara tradition notes that Lord Vṛṣabhanātha had 101 sons.

Devī Sumaṅgalā saw 14 great dreams at the time of her first pregnancy. Following this she went to Vṛṣabhanātha’s bedroom and expressed inquisitiveness to learn about the significance of the dreams. Vṛṣabhanātha told her it seems from the dreams that she would give birth to a son of great merit with the ultimate body who would one day become the emperor (cakravartī) of the entire universe. Devī Sumaṅgalā gave birth to Bharata and Brāhmī. Bharata’s feet had the insignia of 14 gems.

Training of the Progeny

The omniscient Lord Vṛṣabhanātha knew the end of bhoga-yuga was near and karma-yuga was to commence where there would be deficiency of conveniences and human society would need to toil for a living. He thought if the hundred sons including Bharata and two daughters Brāhmī and Sundarī were given comprehensive training in all the useful arts and skills these would be of great use to humanity at the appropriate time. At that time all my children would go to far-off places and give people the information they need to make their lives easier and happy.

With this foresight the Lord first taught Brāhmī 18 kinds of scripts with his right hand, and with this left, taught mathematics to Sundarī. Thereafter, he taught 72 arts of the men to Bharata and to Bāhubalī he imparted the knowledge of living beings. He then taught the two daughters all the 64 womanly skills. In this manner, in the form of original disciples of the declining happiness era Bharata and his brothers, and sisters Brāhmī and Sundarī learnt with great devotion a the feet of their original teacher, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha the arts and skills of writing, painting, music, āyurveda (medical science), economics, sculpture, war skills, etc and gained expertise in these.

The coronation of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha

The form of nature began to change at great speed. The bounties of nature, such as kalpavṛkṣa trees, etc and other kinds of conveniences began to disappear gradually. The yield of fruits, roots, tubers, crops, etc declined and became inadequate. The extraordinary power inherent in medicines and the vegetable world began to lose its effect. Thus with decline in the quantity of necessities of life a situation of deficiency developed. Due to deficiency the number of complainants increased. Criminal tendencies began to develop in the minds of people struck by deficiency, jostling and fighting started, and so did mutual quarrels. People's peaceful character changed and they became harsh.

Consequently, even the dhikkāra (admonition) method of the final kulakaras became ineffective and fruitless and lost its impact. Worried by these difficult times, twins went to their benefactor, the preceptor Vṛṣabhanātha and apprising him of the situation, and appealed to him to

bring an end to the disturbance, quarrels, plunder and criminal tendencies that had developed among people through his guidance.

Reassuring the twins Vṛṣabhanātha said – “Now karmayuga (a time of effort / action) has commenced on this earth, as a result of which you have to work very hard to manage your lives.” The twins saw a light of hope in their otherwise dark future. Their sense of despair vanished and with a firm determination they said – “Lord! We are ready to do the toughest work at your behest.” Hearing this Vṛṣabhanātha told them they would be successful in making their lives happy and prosperous.

In order to curb crime a code of punishment is necessary which is managed by a king. A king is established on the throne by the elders of the kingdom, and other subject and it is he who preserves and amends that code according to the circumstances. Hearing this yugalas cried with joy and said – “you are our king. We shall right away arrange your coronation.” To this prince Vṛṣabha said – “King Nābhi is our respected elder. You may all please request him”.

The twins presented themselves before Nābhi and placed the facts before him. After listening to them king Nābhi said – “I am old now. It would be better if you made Vṛṣabhanātha your king. In fact he alone is competent in all ways in delivering you all from this difficult situation and worthy of the seat of the king from all angles.”

The yugalas were very happy to gain the approval of Nābhi. They went immediately to Vṛṣabhanātha and in excited voices said to him – “King Nābhi has granted permission to establish you on the throne, hence we shall consecrate you at once with pure water” and happily they went to the lake Lotus (Padma).

Just then a huge gathering of twins (yugalas) reached Vṛṣabhanātha with the waters from the Padma Lake. They could not contain their happiness seeing the Lord seated on the royal throne. They consecrated Vṛṣabhanātha pouring the Padma water on his feet. The atmosphere was agog with the cries of “hail the king of kings Vṛṣabhanātha!” Seeing their politeness the god Śakra ordered Kubera to construct on that land of Ikṣvāku a magnificent city and named it Vinītānagarī which on account of it being impregnable, unconquerable later became famous as Ayodhya.

This way, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha became the first king of the declining happiness cycle. He ended the kulakara system that was in vogue until then and established a new order. The moment the Lord took over the reins of the kingdom the karmayuga commenced and the bhogabhūmi now transformed itself into a karmabhūmi. King Vṛṣabhanātha now invited his subjects to step onto this karmabhūmi and took over the charge of the great new work. Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was 20 lakh pūrvas of age at the time of his consecration.

Building a Strong Nation

After his coronation king Vṛṣabhanātha firstly set up a security department with a security team to establish a good system in place. The person in-charge of this department was called Ugra. He then set up a team of ministers for advice on political affairs and gave each of those ministers charge of their respective departments / sections. The higher officials of different departments were called Bhoga. Thereafter the entire kingdom was divided into 52 janapadas (principalities or districts) and able persons were crowned as smaller rulers to manage those principalities. Under these rulers, several smaller kingdoms were constituted and vassals were placed on the thrones of these kingdoms.

Explaining their duties to those smaller rulers he said – “In the same way as the sun through its rays sucks little quantities of water in the form of vapour from many water sources, without hurting any of these, people may be taxed very little in order to manage the kingdom; and in the same way as the vapours thus drawn by the sun is returned by clouds in the form of rain everywhere, the taxes drawn from people may be spent on activities for the welfare of the people.”

Thus after establishing kingdoms king Vṛṣabhanātha set up an advisory committee of kings for the purposes of sharing ideas on government. He gave those kings titles such as Mahāmāṇḍalika, Māṇḍalika, Rājanya, Kṣatriya, etc. For the protection of the kingdom king Vṛṣabhanātha set up four kinds of armies and placed commanders as high level officials in charge of these.

For the sake of prevention of crime, besides the strict rules, the following penal code was put in place:

1. Paribhāṣaṇa: to punish those guilty of petty crimes in harsh, angry words
2. Maṇḍalī bandha: to hold the guilty for a stipulated number of days in a place, province
3. Cāraka bandha: to imprison the guilty
4. Chaviccheda: to pierce body parts of the those guilty of crimes against humanity, sedition, or the hardened, regular offenders

Some ācāryas aver that the last two of these four kinds of punishments were prevalent in the time of Bharata cakravartī, but the author of the niryuktis, Ācārya Bhadrabāhu opines that bandha nīti (imprisonment) and ghāta nīti (inflicting injury) became operational right from the time of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha.

Various officials were appointed to track and punish criminals.

Training of People / Subjects, Establishment of Towns, etc

Having set up a system of law and order and prevention of crime, king Vṛṣabhanātha made a plan for his subjects to become self-sufficient in the affairs of the karmabhūmi (the mundane world of action). For the welfare of subjects he trained them in asi (art of government / military occupation), masi (writing) and kṛṣi (farming) and a hundred crafts. Among the craftspeople, he first taught pottery, then weaving for clothes, architecture for constructing homes, and thereafter painting; and for hair and nails, the craft of the barber. From these basic crafts, there emerged hundred kinds of other crafts / skills in groups of 20. Vṛṣabhanātha had already trained his 100 sons in these crafts / skills and agriculture, so it helped in imparting training to common people. People were strong and hardy, they laboured hard. They ploughed fields and sowed seeds. It rained at regular intervals and the fields were a verdant lush green. Man hitherto dependent purely on nature, danced in joy looking at the outcome of his sweat and labour. King Vṛṣabhanātha, his sons and daughters and the craftspeople and artists trained under them were determined to build a nation as beautiful as paradise itself.

Conditions of common People, knowledge of the Arts and Crafts and people's welfare

King Vṛṣabhanātha also introduced common people to various beneficial activities as a leader and elder of the state. His status then was the equivalent of a householder's. So, even if he understood the ignoble aspects of (material) possession, he had not yet sacrificed it. He taught asi, masi and kṛṣi to the human society, thus saving them from consuming the inedible / inconsumable, leading a sātvika (pure) life and explained to them that if necessity led them to take up a faulty vocation, in that case, knowing it to be sin, their aim should be to move towards a virtuous life – this was indeed samyaktarśana (right view of reality / true spiritual path).

This way, teaching them the art of leading a happy life at the onset of the karmayuga (epoch of action) he saved humankind from straying. This is his great favour to humankind. For the welfare of humanity he taught 72 skills / crafts to men through his sons. At the same time, he considered it important for women to be useful and endowed with education. Through his daughter Brāhmī he gave the knowledge of writing and alongside, he also taught the 64 useful womanly skills.

Establishing of the caste system by Lord Vṛṣabhanātha

First and foremost, by inculcating in people the feeling of mutual co-existence, cooperation, compassion, tolerance, security, cordiality and camaraderie, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha gave birth to a feeling of brotherhood among people. According to the guṇa-karmas (determining the quality of their vocation) he stratified castes, not by giving importance to birth and explaining to people to behave with others lovingly, by doing their own work and not showing contempt towards anyone. Prior to Lord Ādinātha there was no caste system in India. People had just one caste / race – humanity without any hierarchy. Every person was equal in strength, intellect and wealth. Everyone was content with and loved what they had. When disparity increased among people and greed and attachment spread, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha created the caste system. He laid the foundation of a social order suitable in all respects, teaching men a lesson in co-existence, in order to lead a beautiful, happy and peaceful life. People who were physically very strong and powerful were

appointed for the task of people's security, then he denomination of Kṣatriya. Those who proved to be experts in farming, livestock rearing, buying and selling and trading, were given the denomination of vaiśya. Those who showed interest in service of people by taking up work that other people expressed distaste for, were given the nomenclature of śūdra. Thus in Vṛṣabhanātha's time, only three castes were created—Kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra.

The kingdom of our first king Vṛṣabhanātha was steeped in the feelings of people's well-being. There was not even a trace of covetousness for position in king Vṛṣabhanātha. People had made him king, and he had single-handedly taken the responsibility for people's well-being and welfare to create an obedient, self-sufficient and civilized society. When those children of nature lost the benevolent shade of kalpavṛkṣa Vṛṣabhanātha placed his right hand (of protection) over them and taught them 100 crafts and asi, masi and kṛṣi on his own and also with the help of his sons and as a result with growing experience man consistently moved ahead in great speed. The happy consequence of all this was that our country's land brimmed with verdant fields, expansive gardens, proper pathways for transport, mansions kissing the skies, palaces, etc. Gradually, not a trace of deficiency-accusations remained on this earth.

Resolve to Renunciation, meritorious charity, withdrawal from mundane Life, Initiation into monkhood

In this manner Vṛṣabhanātha ruled the kingdom and looked after the subjects lovingly and judiciously as the first king for 63 lakh pūrvas. Thereafter, in order to obtain permanent peace and live a pious life, he decided to embrace the path of yoga. He believed that man can never obtain permanent peace unless he took to spiritual practice. With this in mind, making his eldest son Bharata the successor to his kingdom and giving the remaining 99 sons the charge of several smaller kingdoms he withdrew from a householder's life and resolved to walk the path of self-discipline.

Sensing this decision the lokāntika gods did their duty by requesting the Lord to manifest the dharma-tīrtha (holy path) for the well-being of the entire world. Hearing the gods' request, the Lord started the process of meritorious charity and every day at the auspicious hour of the morning, donated a crore (ten million) and 8 lakh (one hundred thousand) gold

coins. The Lord gave this charity continuously for a year. Thus he gave in charity a sum total of 3 billion, 88 crores and 80 lakh gold coins at the end of a year. Through this charity he instilled the thought in people's minds that the importance of wealth is not in its enjoyment but in its sacrifice.

Eventually, after spending a householder's life for 83 lakh pūrvas on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Caitra under the constellation uttarāṣāḍhā Vṛṣabhanātha resigned from the mundane life to get initiated into monkhood. He left all the royal splendour and family and renounced all sensual indulgences and leaving Vinītānagara with a large group of gods and men in steeped austerity, under the Aśoka tree, accepted initiation into monkhood with the Siddhas as witness saying – “I renounce all impure activities”, that is violence, and other impure acts are prohibited, hence I renounce them forever. He started to pull out his hair in fistfuls; after four fistfuls he said just like these strands of hair we need to remove impurities / sins from their very root. Upon Indra's request, he let one fistful of hair remain (on his head).

The huge congregation of gods, demons and men were left awe-struck seeing this mighty sacrifice of the Lord. Seeing his renunciation, 4000 other princes of the Kṣatriya caste also became mendicants. Śrī Vṛṣabhanātha did not initiate them into mendicancy, but on their own accord they followed the Lord, pulled their hair, etc, and started to move along with the Lord as monks. In this way, with the resolve of pure discipline Vṛṣabhanātha became venerable first as a monk, mendicant and monk. This day of the Lord's initiation is celebrated even today as “kalyāṇaka divasa”.

Emergence of Vidyādharas (beings with extraordinary powers/skills)

When Lord Vṛṣabhanātha began to wander about, having adopted the attitude of pure sacrifice and detachment, two princes, Nami and Vinami, sons of Kaccha and Mahākaccha, appeared in service of the Lord and said, “Lord, you have given everyone something appropriate, please grant us, too, something.” Having placated him thus, they stayed close to the Lord. Once when Indra went to the Lord, he saw the boys pleading thus. He told the princes that the Lord is devoid of passion, it is not right

to plead with him this way. So that your services are not fruitless, I grant you 48,000 vidyās, which are accomplished by mere recitation, among which are the mahāvīdyās, gaurī, gaṃdhārī, rohiṇī, and prajñapti. With their help, establish your respective cities and live happily as Vidyādaras. Nami and Vinami obeyed the king of gods, Indra and within the south and north boundaries of the Vaitāḍhya Mountain, settled 50 and 60 cities, respectively, and invited civilized people from various countries to reside there. This way, Nami and Vinami divided classes of 8 each through the effect of their vidyās (skills), moved around with pleasure, enjoying like the gods and thus emerged the tradition of “Vidyādaras”.

The first fast-breaking (pāraṇā) of the Lord

In the Tiloyapaṇṇatī of the Digambara tradition we find reference to the Lord observed six fasts. According to Ācārya Jinasena, he observed 6 months fast and in the Śvetāmbara tradition, observed two days fast (belā) is referred to. After becoming a Śramaṇa, for a long time Vṛṣabhanātha visited village after village with a stoic vow of silence, with a feeling of detachment, seeking alms, but he would not get any, as people had no knowledge about this method. The 4000 Śramaṇas with him waited that the Lord would make some arrangements for them. When the Lord did not say anything for a long time, pained by hunger and thirst, they became heretics adorning garments made of tree barks. They did not go back to their homes but in the absence of tolerance to hardships and the sense of discrimination, they fell from the path of the right discipline / conduct as renouncers, spent their lives in the forest consuming fruits, roots, etc.

As he was devoid of passion, Lord Ādinātha continued to wander, with equanimity and unaffected by the situation. Emotionally charged devotees would feel delighted to see him, request him to accept their offerings of valuables, clothes and jewellery, chariots, fruits, etc, but none of them would think of offering alms in the right method. As a result, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha would return empty-handed, leaving those unacceptable gifts. Thus more than a year passed since he had started to wander for alms, yet there was no sense of despair in his mind. Thus wandering, the Lord once reached the Kurū province of Hastināpura. The prince there was the grandson of Bāhubalī and son of king Somaprabha. He dreamt that night – “the Sumeru mountain has lost its sheen, I have

made it shine, sprinkling it with nectar.” Merchant Subuddhi dreamt that the Sun’s thousand rays had left their places but Śreyāṃsa had replaced them in the Sun as a result of which the Sun shone with even more brilliance. King Somaprabha dreamt that Śreyāṃsa had helped a certain person during a battle with the enemies and with that support this person was able to defeat them. The next day the three of them reflected on their respective dreams and concluded that Śreyāṃsa was going to benefit in some way. The same day, by good fortune, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha reached Hastināpura. People were very happy to see the Lord. Walking along the way, the moment Śreyāṃsa kumāra saw Lord Vṛṣabhanātha he was filled with curiosity and with subsidence cum destruction of his knowledge obscuring karmas (kṣayopakṣama), he could visualise his past lives. Through his past life knowledge he understood that he (Lord Vṛṣabhanātha) was the original unattached renunciators who must be offered faultless food.

By a coincidence just at that moment the servants of the palace reached there with a jar full of sugarcane juice. Extremely delighted at this, Śreyāṃsa kumāra moved about seven-eight steps close to the Lord, circumambulated him and with folded hands, following the rules of faultless alms, trikaṛaṇa-śuddhi(purity of mind, body and speech), said to the Lord, “Lord, whatever is appropriate?” The Lord extended his palms, held out like a bowl and Śreyāṃsa poured the sugarcane juice into his palms. The Lord had palms imperforated, not a drop of juice fell to the ground. Śreyāṃsa was very happy. The gods showered a rain of water from five kinds of flowers and the sky reverberated with the cries of “*aho dānaṃ, aho dānaṃ*” (ah! the gift / charity!).

If Lord Ādinātha was the first to teach the world about penance, Śreyāṃsa kumāra was the first to teach humankind about charity – dāna. Since the inexhaustible event of the Lord’s fast-breaking happened on the third day of the bright fortnight of the Vaiśākha month, the day became popular as “akṣaya -ṛtīyā” or “Ākhā-tīja”. Even today, this day is considered “sarvajana-viśruta-parva”. Bharata cakravartī went to the palace of Śreyāṃsa kumāra and congratulated him saying, “Son, you are the founder of the practice of charity in this declining happiness cycle, hence salutations to you!”

It may be questioned that if Lord Vṛṣabhanātha accepted mendicancy on the eighth day of the dark half of the Caitra month through ‘belā’ or

‘śaṣṭhabhakta’ penance and if the next year he broke his fast on the third day of the bright fortnight of the Vaiśākha month, then this would be his penance for 13 months and not a year. In such an event, the reference in SamavāyāṅgaSūtra to “*saṃvacchareṇa bhikkhā ladhā usaheṇa loganāheṇa*” does not seem to correspond, according to which the first penance of Ādinātha is called “saṃvatsara tapa”. In fact, this is a very old and widely discussed question and as an appropriate solution to this it can only be said that at various places in the Sūtras (canon), following the criteria of the compendium in calculating the time-period, where the shorter duration is present along with the longer duration, only the longer time-period is referred to.

In fact, at the time of initiation, the ‘belā’ penance of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha continued for well over 12 months and when Śreyāṃsa kumāra offered food, the event was referred to as “*saṃvacchareṇa bhikkhā ladhā usaheṇa loganāheṇa*”, following the compendiums of Sūtra lakṣaṇas. This is in fact a part of convention. In this convention since the time of more than a year does not add too much, as a round figure it is mentioned as “saṃvatsara” (one year). From the time of initiation to the time of accepting food, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha remained without water and food for 13 months and 10 days, which has been called saṃvacchara in canonical convention. It is possible that the form, language of the convention with time also began to be known as “varṣītapa”. In connection with the first penance of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, it is to be remembered always that the penance that the Lord accepted after initiation was in the Śvetāmbara tradition ‘belā’ and in Digambara tradition 6 months of penance. Although there are differences of opinion about the number of days, the date / time of fast-breaking is unanimously accepted as the third day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha month and from the time of initiation – Caitra, ninth day of the dark fortnight of Caitra month, it amounts to 13 months and 10 days.

In fact, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha has done a great favour to humankind. Growing up in the lap of nature, and remaining dependent on it for every need, when the nature withdrew its hand from the twins, the original world leader Vṛṣabhanātha imparted to them the knowledge of the arts to become self-sufficient and self-dependent. After making them happy and prosperous in the material world, he taught them discipline to free themselves of the cycle of birth, decay and death through the true path. Through his discipline, after gaining pure knowledge (kevalajñāna) he

established eth dharma-tīrtha through which humankind becomes capable of releasing itself from the grind of birth and death that it has suffered since the beginning of time.

Lord Vṛṣabhanātha created a human civilisation full of feelings of mutual co-existence, universal brotherhood and other lofty humane qualities which are beneficial in both this world and the other world. As a result, Lord Ādinātha / Vṛṣabhanātha came to be venerated by humankind. He has the same ecumenical place in all the ancient Indian scriptures as in the Jain scriptures. Ancient texts such as Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda celebrate him. Śrīmadbhāgavata, Śivapurāṇa, Kūrmapurāṇa, Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa, Manusmṛti, the Buddhist text “Ārya Maṃjuśrī”, Sūrasāgara, etc celebrate Nābhi’s son Vṛṣabhanātha and in the Purāṇas he is considered the 8th avatāra (reincarnation) of the god. Akṣaya-tṛtīyā, related to his fast-breaking event, has the same kind of importance and is equally the symbol of devotion and faith and harbinger of merit (puṇya) in the Vedic tradition.

Attainment of Pure knowledge (Omniscience)

After taking to mendicancy, the Lord wandered through villages for 1000 years and manifested his true form through this penance. Eventually, at the garden named Śakaṭamukha outside of Purimatāla city, at dawn on the eleventh day of the dark fortnight of Fālguna month, under the constellation Uttarāśāḍha, with aṣṭamatapa he went into meditation and destroying the four ghātī-karmas (karmas that pollute the quality of the soul), obtained pure knowledge and kevaladarśana (pure perception). He attained the pure knowledge under a banyan tree hence the banyan is considered Lord Ādinātha’s caitya-vṛkṣa and banyan tree is treated with respect and pride across the country. Attaining pure knowledge Lord Vṛṣabhanātha became Arihanta and the 12 attributes (guṇas) of Arihanta became manifest in him.

The Characteristics of Tīrthaṅkara

In contrast to the ordinary omniscient’s, Tīrthaṅkara have some special characteristics which are known as extra ordinary signs or ‘atīsayas’ and which are called ‘cotīsaṃ buddhāisesā’ and ‘paṇatīsaṃ saccavayaṇāisesā paṇnatā’ in the Samavāyāṃgasūtra. Even if the numbers are common to both Digambara and Śvetāmbara traditions, yet

there is a difference. In Śvetāmbara tradition, the 34 atīśayas are divided into 4 basic parts—apāyāpagamātīśaya, jñānātīśaya, pūjātīśaya and vāgātīśaya whereas in the Digambara tradition, these are categorised into 3 parts: the ten atīśayas of birth, 10 atīśayas of pure knowledge and 14 devakṛta atīśayas.

In the Śvetāmbara text Samavāyāṅga Tīrthaṅkara' food intake is said to be invisible and carried out in privacy, whereas the Digambara tradition does not believe in the intake of any basic food by the tīrthaṅkara. From the 6th atīśaya of the fly-whisk (Ākāśagata cakra) to the 11th of the Aśoka tree in the Samavāyāṅga is not found in the Digambara tradition. In their place, the 7 atīśayas of nirmala diśā, clear sky, golden lotus under the feet, divine sound in the sky, pleasing to the living beings, the dharmacakra moving in the sky, aṣṭamaṅgalas are the 7 atīśayas.

In place of the radiant aura behind the head (bhāmaṅḍala) the Digambara tradition considers the caturmukha atīśaya at the time of the omniscient status. The body without a shadow, moving in the skies, and eyes that do not blink found in the Digambara tradition are not found in the Samavāyāṅga or Śvetāmbara tradition. This way, leaving aside doubtful, liberal and popular differences in the points of view, both traditions consider the Tīrthaṅkara as endowed with 34 atīśayas. At the same time, at the Samavaśaraṇa, the speech of the Lord Tīrthaṅkara flows incessantly and this is along with the 35 atīśayas, which can be called the 35 guṇas (supernatural powers) of the Tīrthaṅkara's speech (“Tīrthaṅkara kī vāṇī ke 35 guṇa”).

The discretion of Bharata

The entire world was lit with the radiance of knowledge when Lord Vṛṣabhanātha attained pure knowledge. When emperor Bharata received news of the Lord's pure knowledge he was also informed by the messenger about the occurrence of the cakra in his royal weaponry. According to Ācārya Jinasena he also received news of the birth of his son at the same time.

Hearing three good news at the same time put the emperor Bharata in a dilemma as to which one of these auspicious events called for a great ceremonious celebration but based on his right discretion, he decided that obtaining a cakra jewel or a son are outcomes of kāma (desire), both

these attainments are transient, destructible and worldly but the Lord's pure knowledge is the outcome of dharma and is permanent. Hence devotion to and worship at the feet of the Lord is important first because pure knowledge is the original and greatest merits among all the kalyāṇakas. Thinking thus, cakravartī Bharata left to perform worship at the feet of the Lord.

First instructions/sermon and establishing of the Tīrtha

The place where the Lord gave the first instructions / sermon after obtaining the light of knowledge via pure knowledge in the presence of people, gods-goddesses, community of revered ones, is called samavaśaraṇa. Ācāryas interpret samavaśaraṇa as a congregation of monks (male –female), Saṃgha (the order), etc or an assembly of discourse. The gathering at the tīrthaṃkara's sermon is also called samavaśaraṇa.

Even if Lord Vṛṣabhanātha could have attained liberation following attainment of pure knowledge becoming vītarāga (devoid of passion / attachment) in solitary meditation, yet he gave the sermon. The foremost reason for this being that the Tīrthaṃkara nāma-karma is not fulfilled unless the dharma tīrtha (creed or holy path) is not established. Secondly, as is mentioned in the Praśnavyākaraṇa Sūtra the Lord gave his sermon to safeguard, and out of compassion for, all living beings. Hence Lord Vṛṣabhanātha is considered the first preacher in the scriptures and the preceptor of the ten-fold dharmain Vedic literature.

The day of the first sermon of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was the eleventh day of the dark fortnight of the Fālguna month. On that day, expounding the scriptural (śruta) and caritra (conduct) dharma (scripture and conduct-related), he preached not to eat after dark, ahimsā (non-killing), truthfulness, non-stealing, brahmacarya (chastity) and non-possession. The Lord explained that the objective of human life is not enjoyment but yoga (contemplation / discipline); not attachment but non-attachment; not lust but realisation; not the killing of instincts but quelling of these through knowledge.

Hearing the Lord's speech, full of thoughts of sacrifice and detachment, which was like a shower of ambrosia the emperor Bharata's 500 sons including Vṛṣabhasena and 700 grandsons took initiation in the order of

monks and 500 women including Brāhmī in the order of female-monks. King Bharata became a samyakdarśī śrāvaka (lay follower of the right faith). Thousands of outstanding men such as Śreyāṃsa kumāra and women such as Subhadrā entered into the fold of the laity, accepting the right faith. This way, a four-fold congregation was established consisting of monks, female monks, votaries (śrāvakas) and female-votaries (śrāvikās). Because of the establishment of the religious order Lord Vṛṣabhanātha came to be considered the 1st Tīrthaṅkara.

Vṛṣabhasena became an ascetic and through three question (pṛcchās) and gained knowledge of the 14 pūrvas. Vṛṣabhasena became the first Gaṇadhara among the 84 gaṇadharas of the Lord.

When the 4000 men, who had become mendicants out of fear of hardships, listened to the Lord speak on the dharma-tīrtha after attaining pure knowledge came into the Lord's service and mingled with the monk's congregation, becoming ascetics, barring Kaccha and Mahākaccha.

Mother Marudevī's Liberation / Mokṣa, Seeing the Lord

Mother Marudevī was pining to see her son Vṛṣabhanātha since ages. Even after 1000 years following his renunciation she did not see her dear son even once. Her eyes were brimming with tears every moment in his memory. Looking at the expansion of Bharata's kingdom she would always tell him tauntingly that you are enjoying endless wealth but I do not know where my darling Vṛṣabhanātha is wandering around. Hence when Bharata got news of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha's omniscience he immediately entered in the presence of his mother Marudevī and gave her the good news of his entry into the Purimatāla city and his attainment of pure knowledge. Hearing this mother Marudevī was filled with excessive joy and went along with Bharata to see the Lord.

When mother Marudevī approached the samavaśaraṇa and saw the worship of Vṛṣabhanātha she started thinking that I used to assume my son would be in hardships, but here I see him submerged in an ocean of bliss. In the course of these thoughts, there was a transformation in the direction of her thinking. She went into deep meditation and absorption and within moments she moved beyond the sheath of karmas i.e. obscuring knowledge - (jñānāvaraṇīya), perception (darśanāvaraṇīya),

antarāya(obstacles in experiencing bliss) and deluding (mohanīya) karma towards pure knowledge and pure intuition. With the time of her demise approaching, very soon, totally destroying the remaining four non-obscuring-karmas (karmas relating to embodiment), remaining astride the elephant, she attained liberation (mokṣa).

Some ācāryas believe that she attained liberation while listening to the religious sermon of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha. She holds the position of the first person in this declining happiness cycle to attain liberation.

The Religious Congregation of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha

While the household of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was huge, his religious family was also very large. In fact there would hardly be someone who had not benefited from him or not had faith in him, hearing Lord Vṛṣabhanātha's speech free from passion. But here his religious congregation is elucidated keeping in mind those who took the vows. According to Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti Sūtra, the number of gaṇadharas etc in Vṛṣabhanātha's dharma saṃgha (congregation) was as follows: -

Gaṇadharas 84, omniscient's monks 20000, omniscient female-monks 40000, manaḥ paryavajñānīs (telepaths or ones who were aware of the thought forms of others without the aid of mind or senses) 12650, avadhijñānīs (clairvoyants or those with intuitive knowledge) 9000, 14-pūrvadhārīs (those who had the knowledge of the fourteen prior canons) 4750, vādīs 12650, vaikriya-labdhidhārīs 20600, those to be born in anuttara palaces 22900, monks 84000, female-monks 300000, śrāvakas (laymen) 350000, śrāvikās (laywomen) 554000. Out of this congregation of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha 20,000 monks and 40,000 female-monks; a total of 60,000 monks and female-monks attained liberation having destroyed completely the eight karmas. Many mendicants, infernal beings and celestial beings used to move about in contemplation, thereby purifying their souls.

The kalyāṇakas (auspicious events) in the life of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha

Five kalyāṇakas of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha occurred under the constellation Uttarāṣādhā and the sixth under Abhijita. The kalyāṇakas under Uttarāṣādhā constellation are: Descent from sarvārthasiddha (into the womb of Marudevī), birth, coronation, renunciation of householder

status and becoming mendicant, and attainment of pure knowledge. Destruction of 8 karmas and liberation took place under Abhijita constellation.

Attaining Liberation

Lord Vṛṣabhanātha wandered across India for a thousand years less than one lakh pūrvas as a Tīrthaṅkara. He traveled to Bahalī, Aṃḍabaillā-aṭṭaka region, Arabia, Greece, Persia, Svarnabhūmi, etc and preached dharma to the people there. It was the result of Lord Ādinātha's preaching that the Jain religion was established as a universal religion in different parts of the country.

Vṛṣabhanātha remained a bachelor youth for 20 lakh pūrvas, a king for 63 lakh pūrvas that is, for a total of 83 lakh pūrvas as a householder. The, remained a mendicant, as chadmastha (in a state of partial bondage) for 1000 years. He remained a Tīrthaṅkara, after attaining pure knowledge for 1000 years less than one lakh pūrvas. Totally, he followed the Śramaṇa dharma for 1 lakh pūrvas. Finally, sensing the end of his lifespan, he undertook pādapopagamana fast with his retinue of 1000 monks on the Aṣṭāpada Mountain. There, in the forenoon of the 13th day of the dark fortnight of Māgha month under the constellation Abhijita, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha attained nirvāṇa. The ten thousand monks who had fasted along with the Lord also became liberated. At that point, 89 pakṣas, that is, three years, 8 months and 14 days remained for the 3rd Āraka to end.

The minutest division of an epoch, which is time, has an original rule that at one time, only two beings, with excellent understanding can become Siddhas (liberated beings), but Lord Vṛṣabhanātha of excellent understanding of 500 dhanuṣa, along with him his retinue of 107 – in all, 108 – beings attained liberation at the same time. This can be called one of the āścaryas (extraordinary events) of the 10 extraordinary events of the transitory declining happiness cycle. The 9893 remaining monks who fasted with the Lord attained liberation within moments of each other the same day. Among these Śramaṇas were the Lord's gaṇadhara, sons, grandsons and others.

The Nirvāṇa Celebration

As soon as Lord Vṛṣabhanātha attained nirvāṇa the seats of 64 Indras, including that of the king of gods, Indra trembled. All of them reached

the Aṣṭāpada Mountain along with their respective family of gods. At the command of the king of gods, Indra, three funeral pyres and three litters were constructed. Indra himself bathed the Lord's earthly body with water of the ocean of milk and anointed it with gośīrṣa sandal paste. Other gods similarly bathed and anointed the bodies of Gaṇadhara and monks. Those earthly bodies were placed on very beautiful litters / palanquins, Indra brought the Lord's litter and devas the litters of the Gaṇadhara and monks' to the funeral pyres to the accompaniment of divine musical instruments and the tumultuous chants of "Jai-ho; Jai-ho or hail! hail!" In that process the bodies were placed on their funeral pyres constructed for the purpose as part of the rites. At Śakra's command the Agnikumāras called forth the fire elements on to the pyres and Vāyukumāras lit the pyres with fire. This way completing the cremation ceremonies of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha and his retinue those pyres were quenched with the water of the milk ocean. Thereafter, at the command of the king of gods, Indra, caitya-stūpas were constructed at the place of the funeral pyres. Āvaśyaka-niryukti refers to the constructed caitya-stūpas.

Vedic literature speaks of the emergence of Ādideva in the form of Śivaliṅga (sign) on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Māgha. This seems to correspond with the obtaining of the Śiva-pada (nirvāṇa) of Lord Ādinātha. It is possible that the stūpa which was constructed on the funeral pyre of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha became popular later on as Śivaliṅga.

Vṛṣabhanātha in non-Jain Literature

Just as in Jain literature, there is extensive reference to Vṛṣabhanātha in Vedic literature as well. We find references to him in Buddhist literature too.

With reference to Vṛṣabhanātha the Purāṇas say that Brahmājī created the first Svāyambhuva Manu from his own body. Priyavrata from Svāyambhuva, Āgnīhira from Priyavrata, and thus ten sons were created. Nābhicame from Āgnīdhra and Vṛṣabhanātha from Nābhi. From the womb of Nābhi's love Marudevī was born an extraordinarily brilliant haloed son who was named Vṛṣabhanātha. Vṛṣabhanātha ruled the kingdom righteously and performed various sacrifices (yajñas) then, leaving his kingdom to his son, Bharata, went to do penance in

Pulahāśrama. From the time Vṛṣabhanātha bequeathed his kingdom to Bharata, this part of the snow-capped region became popular as Bhāratavarṣa.

Śrīmadbhāgavata considers Vṛṣabhanātha a half-reincarnation of Viṣṇu. According to this text, in order to gain the love of Nābhi, the Lord emerged from the womb of Marudevī as an entity to reveal the Śramaṇa dharma. From the time of his birth, Vṛṣabhanātha's body had the insignia of thunderbolt, aṃkuśa, etc which is Viṣṇu's signs. King Nābhi called him Vṛṣabhanātha (par excellence) on account of his beautiful body, exceeding brilliance, strength, wealth, valour and courage.

Śrīmadbhāgavata considers VṛṣabhanāthaŚiva himself. There is reference to his marriage with Indra's daughter and a hundred sons born to her from him. Brahmāvarta Purāṇa mentions that he imparted the Ādhyātma-jñāna (spiritual knowledge) to his sons and then became an avadhūta (lit. fearful in form) mendicant. The essence of his teachings in Śrīmadbhāgavata are as follows – “ordinary people cannot understand the secret of my avatāra – body. Pure substance is my body and dharma resides therein. I have left adharma (non-righteousness) way behind; hence good men call me Vṛṣabhanātha. Sons! You serve all the elements with pure knowledge, considering them to be my body; this is true service to me.”

Śrīmadbhāgavata also says – Vṛṣabhanātha placed Bharata on the throne to serve the earth. He became a renouncer to preach dharma. He only retained the body while leaving all the rest at home. Due to penance he had become emaciated and his arteries and veins began to show. In the end, placing a piece of stone in his mouth, in his naked state, he departed. Śivapurāṇa refers to Śiva taking incarnation as the Ādi-tīrthamkara Vṛṣabhanātha.

Buddhist literature mentions that Nābhi's son Vṛṣabhanātha and Vṛṣabhanātha's son Bharata are counted among the original emperors. He was strict in adherence to dharma. He attained salvation on the snow-capped Himālaya Mountain. Dhammapada refers to Vṛṣabhanātha as the most excellent hero. Besides Ādinātha, Vṛṣabhanātha is also known by many names such as Hiraṇyagarbha, Prajāpati, Lokeśa, Caturānana Nābhija, Sraṣṭā, Svayambhū, etc. All these are names of Brahmā in the

Purāṇa as. Hence at some places there is reference to the fact that Brahmā and Vṛṣabhanātha are not two separate entities but one and the same.

The kind of devotion which the Jain texts show in highlighting the magnificent personality of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha the same devotion is seen in sacred scriptures of nearly all ancient Indian religions in the exposition of his world-wide glory. The path he showed to make not only this world but the other worlds better and more beautiful, were boons beneficial not merely for humankind but all living beings. The social norms and polity manifested through him was not meant to benefit any particular class but for the welfare of all, in the same way the religious order he established was for the well-being of all. The religious order established by him was for the spiritual uplift of the entire world. This is the reason that in the ancient texts Lord Vṛṣabhanātha is given the titles of Lord (dhātā), the builder of destiny (bhāgya vidhātā), god (bhagavāna), etc.

Views of some historians concerning the time of Vṛṣabhanātha are given below:

Rāmadhārī Siṃha ‘Dinakara’ says:

“From the point of view of the belief among many Jain scholars that in spite of being referred to in the Vedas, yet Vṛṣabhanātha is prior to the Vedas is not contradictory.”

(Ājakala, March 1962, p. 8)

Dr. Jimbhara writes: -

“The first tīrthaṅkara was Vṛṣabhanātha who taught the lesson of civilisation to humankind.”

(The Philosophies of India, p. 217)

Reference to Lord Vṛṣabhanātha and emperor Bharata are also found in Vedic mantras, non-Jain Purāṇas, Upaniṣadas, etc.

It becomes naturally clear from the dignified references in India’s ancient religious sculptures – Vedas, Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata, 10 Purāṇas of the Śaiva tradition, Manusmṛti and Buddhist scriptures Ārya Maṃjuśrī, etc

that the entire mankind of yore accepted Lord Vṛṣabhanātha as their universal leader, religious preceptor and universal Lord par excellence ruling the hearts. The social order established by Lord Vṛṣabhanātha became popular in the entire universe as 'Viśvadharmā' (world religion) and 'śāśvata dharmā' (eternal religion) whereby Viśvadharmā meant, sans adjectives, simply, dharmā.

The first world emperor (Cakravartī) Bharata

In the present declining happiness cycle the universal cakravartī emperor of the six parts of Bharata region in Jambūdvīpa was Bharata. He was the first king of this region and was the eldest son among the hundred of the first Tīrthaṅkara Vṛṣabhanātha. His mother's name was Sumaṅgalā and when king Vṛṣabhanātha was 6 lakh pūrvas (a very unit of time) old at that point he was born from the womb of Sumaṅgalā along with the twin Brāhmī. When Bharata entered her womb his mother saw the 14 auspicious dreams. Explaining the meaning of those dreams to Sumaṅgalā, Vṛṣabhanātha said to her a son of such excellence body shall be born from your womb who shall become the first world emperor (cakravartī) emperor of this earth and in the end, destroying the basic karmas of worldly sorrow such as birth, decay, death, etc, shall become liberated.

In due course, giving birth to a cakravartī son and daughter, beautiful all over, Sumaṅgalā was very happy. A little while after that the second wife of king Vṛṣabhanātha, Sunandā, too, gave birth to twins Bāhubalī and Sundarī. In due course Sumaṅgalā gave birth to 49 twin sons. This way a total hundred brothers, including Bharata and two daughters were all born.

Nourishment / upbringing and education

All children were brought up with a lot of love and care. When they were older, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha himself began to educate them. All the sons were of sharp intellect and very soon they became experts in the 72 skills suitable for men. In the same way Brāhmī and Sundarī, too, received education on grammar and mathematics besides 64 arts conducive to women. When Bharata was 14 lakh pūrvas old, at that time his father Vṛṣabhanātha anointed him to the throne. After ruling justly for 63 lakh pūrvas, handing over Vinītā to his son Bharata and many other kingdoms to Bāhubalī and other sons, he became a renouncer.

When Bharata was seated on the royal throne of Vinītā he was 77 lakh pūrvas old. He began to take care of his subjects with a sense of justice and expediency. He was comparable to Indra of a beautiful form, bright, soft-spoken, valorous and brave. He was very generous, kind and loved

his subjects. He held the 1008 excellent insignias of the conch, cakra (wheel), gadā (club), padma (lotus), chatra (parasol), cāmara (fly-whisk), dhvaja (flag), śaśi (moon), Sūrya (sun) etc. The glory of king Bharata began to be sung across all directions.

After 1000 years of Bharata's taking over the throne of Vinītā, on account of his strong meritorious deeds, one day a divine cakra (wheel) appeared in his armoury. Seeing this, keeper of the armoury came at great speed in the presence of the king, gave the news to the king of the appearance of the divine cakra. Hearing this good news from the mouth of the keeper of the armoury, the king was overjoyed. He sent him after giving him gifts, etc. completely satisfying him.

Thereafter, adorning himself with fine robes and jewellery, surrounded by a group of high officials of the kingdom, subjects, elders, king Bharata reached the armoury to see and invoke the cakra jewel. After respectful and auspicious ceremonies to the cakra jewel, Bharata returned to his assembly and seating himself on his royal throne ordered the celebrations for eight days on the auspicious occasion of obtaining the wheel (cakra) jewel. At the time of the completion of the aṣṭāhnikā celebrations the cakra jewel was taken out of the armoury. Invoked by thousands of gods the cakra jewel, surrounded by divine long, intense and sweet notes of music, passed through the skies and past the centre of the Vinītā city and the south bank of river Gaṃgā towards the Magadha tīrtha on the east. King Bharata began to follow the divine cakra with four battalions of army on a consecrated elephant. Passing through the skies, the cakra would pause after every yojana distance, and then the king would rest there with his army. The moment the divine cakra would begin its movement in the sky, the king would resume moving ahead with his army. Kings of provinces that came on the way would accept his sovereignty and give him appropriate gifts. This way, raising the banner of his victory king Bharata reached Magadha tīrtha.

Near Magadha tīrtha emperor Bharata set up a huge army camp at a spot that was 12 yojanas long and 9 yojanas wide. When the camp became well-organised emperor Bharata started to observe a fast in honour of the ruling god of Magadha tīrtha. After completing his austerities the emperor moved his chariot ahead in the direction shown by the cakra jewel and covering parts of the earth with his huge army, moving eastwards from Magadha tīrtha entered the salt ocean.

He marked his aim with an arrow with his name and from his divine bow, pulled his bow-string and released his arrow. The arrow thus released by Bharata crossed a distance of 12 yojanas and fell at the palace of the Lord of Magadha tīrtha. Seeing that arrow in the premises of the palace the Lord of Magadha tīrtha got agitated and angry, but the moment he saw the name inscribed on it, his temper cooled down. He began to think that the cakravartī of Bharata region (kṣetra) in Jambūdīpa, Bharata, has come to conquer the six parts. It is the tradition of past, present and future Lords of Magadha tīrtha to present him to the cakravartī and offer appropriate gifts.

The moment he thought of this, the Lord of Magadha tīrtha went to cakravartī Bharata with clothes and jewellery, crowns, etc and the arrow with Bharata's name inscribed on it along with the water of Magadha tīrtha. Amid cried of 'hail-victory', the Lord of Magadha respectfully told emperor Bharata that I salute you as the protector of the last boundary of the eastern direction and offer you some presents on my behalf, pray accept these. Accepting the gifts of Magadha tīrtha's over Lord, emperor Bharata bade him farewell after appropriate honours.

After bidding farewell to the Lord of Magadha tīrtha, Kumāradeva, the emperor returned to his army camp. Breaking his fast, he ordered all his companions and subjects to observe the eight days ceremony of Magadha tīrtha's Kumāradeva. The moment the aṣṭāhnikā ceremony concluded the cakra named Sudarśana came out of the armoury and moved in the direction of Varadāma tīrtha located in between the south and west in the naiṛtyakoṇa. Astride his elephant the emperor Bharata began to follow the cakra with his army. Achieving victory everywhere along the route guided by the cakra, accepting gifts and respected by those he won over, he reached close to Varadāma tīrtha. He ordered his army to set up a camp there and in honour of the over Lord of the Varadāma tīrtha, began his fast. Soon as his fast was over, he started for Varadāma tīrtha guided by the cakra jewel. Halting his chariot near Varadāma tīrtha by the salt ocean, emperor Bharata drew the bow-string, releasing the arrow with his name inscribed on it. The Varadāma tīrtha Lord, too, accepted his sovereignty and said respectfully I am the door-keeper of the southern borders of your kingdom. The emperor Bharata accepted his gifts and after respectful reception and honours, bade him farewell. Returning to

the camp with the army the emperor broke his second fast and ordered celebration of eight days in honour of the over Lord of Varadāma tīrtha.

This way in appropriate manner through observing fasts emperor Bharata brought under his suzerainty the entire land in the north-west quarter and reached close to Prabhāsa tīrtha. The Lord of Prabhāsa tīrtha presented gifts to cakravartī Bharata.

Due to the effect of the fourth fast when Siṃdhudevī of the Siṃdhu river bank learnt from clairvoyant knowledge (avadhijñāna) that the first cakravartī of Bharata, the emperor Bharata is reaching her for taking over the six parts, she went to the emperor with 1008 bejeweled pots, urns (kuṃbha) and many kinds of invaluable gems that are difficult to procure.

Thereafter, emperor Bharata moved ahead towards the Vaitāḍhya Mountain in the northeast. The moment the fifth fast in honour of the Lord of Vaitāḍhya Mountain was completed the seat of the Vaitāḍhya Lord started to tremble. He sensed the arrival and objective of Bharata and presented himself before Bharata with 14 kinds of adornments and vermilion tilaka (mark of goodluck on the forehead) for the jewel (strī-ratna). Bharata welcomed him, accepted his gifts and bade him farewell.

After some time, Bharata approached the Timisra cave. After completion of the sixth fast the throne of the Lord Kṛtamāla, of Timisra, shook. When he realized that emperor Bharata is determined to empower the six divisions (khaṇḍas), he came to emperor Bharata with clothes, jewellery, etc. The emperor accepted the gifts of Kṛtamāla and sent him off with due respects.

After completion of the sixth ceremony emperor Bharata instructed his chief commander, Suṣeṇa, to take the four divisions of the army to conquer the land from the bank of the river Siṃdhu to the Salt Ocean and Vaitāḍhya Mountain and bring all the gems, etc from there as gifts.

The chief commander Suṣeṇa was famous for his daring, brilliance, expertise in all languages, the knowledge of all the secret and indomitable places in Bharata region, expertise in weaponry and scripture, well-versed in economics and polity and was invincible in courage. Coming to the army camp, he left for the river Siṃdhu along

with the well-equipped army. Coming close to the river Siṃdhu the chief commander held up Bharata Cakravartī's cakra jewel. The cakra jewel turned into a huge boat. The commander-in-chief sat inside that boat along with the entire army and after sometime, alighting at the western part of the River Siṃdhu, started his victory campaign. He gained victory over Siṃhala, Aṃgaloka, and the island of the Yavanas (Yavanadvīpa), Arabia, Rome, all countries up north up to the mountain Vaitādhya. The kings of the countries that were won over gave Cakravartī Bharata gifts of hoards of invaluable things through the army-general and accepted emperor Bharata as their sovereign and took refuge under him.

The General offered them all due respect and after some political discussions, sent them back. Following emperor Bharata's instructions over all the defeated provinces crossing the Siṃdhu River, the General came to the emperor. After giving the General and the army some days of rest, one day emperor Bharata ordered General Suṣeṇa to open the southern entrance of the Timisra cave. As per the emperor's instructions, the General offered worship to the Kṛatamāla Lord through a fast in the fasting hall and at the end of it, reached the southern entrance of the Timisra cave along with all the materials of worship. There was also a group of many provincial chiefs, caravan and its maids and attendants with the General. After due worship of the entrance the General saluted the door with folded hands and hit the door with full force using the powerful and competent staff of emperor Bharata. Thus, after hitting the door thrice the doors made a huge rumbling sound and moved backward and opened up wide. The General went to the emperor and gave him news of the doors opening, making the emperor very happy. He honoured the army-general.

At the same time, the cakra jewel too, came out of the armoury and began to move in the direction of the southern entrance of the Timisra cave. Emperor Bharata, too, reached the southern entrance and entered the cave. While entering that dark cave named Timisraprabhā emperor Bharata took in his hands a Kākiṇī gem. With its impact the Timisra cave became luminescent with light that shone as far as 12 yojanas. Two fearsome rivers named Unmagnajalā and Nimaghajalā flow in the middle of Timisraprabhā cave. These two rivers rise out of the eastern part of the cave and merge into River Siṃdhu on the west. River Unmagnajalā throws out anything that falls into it after whirling it thrice, whereas

Nimagnajalā whirls anything that falls into it thrice and drowns it into its depths.

Emperor Bharata instructed his gem to build a strong bridge over those two rivers through which he moved with his army towards the northern entrance of the Timisra cave. As soon as Bharata reached there the northern doors opened up on their own with a rumbling sound. The emperor moved ahead with the army. At that time, prosperous and vibrant people of Mleccha clan by name of Āpāta used to live in the northern part of the Bharata region. Their warehouses were full of gold, gems and ample food grains. They had abundant supply of forces and chariots. By themselves they were strong, healthy, courageous fighters and were unflinching in their aim in the battlefield. When they saw the emperor's army advancing from the foremost end of their region, they held mutual discussions and equipped with different kinds of weapons and arms charged on the first battalion of Bharata's army.

From this kind of attack of the Āpātas, the small battalion of Bharata's army was wounded and terrified and started to flee. Seeing this condition of his army the emperor's General got onto the horse named Kamalāsena and taking emperor Bharata; staff, pounced on the Āpātas with the speed of Garuḍa. None of the valiant soldiers of the Kirātas was able to beat General Suṣeṇa. They felt so defeated, troubled and uncertain about what to do that they left the battleground and ran several yojanas behind, and not finding any path, after due discussions, spread out on the sands at the banks of Siṃdhu river and observing a fast, completely naked, lay down with their faces to the sky and began to invoke their god, the Nāgakumāra named Meghamukha. By the impact of the worship of those Kirātas the seat of the Nāgakumāras trembled.

The Nāgakumāras came to the Kirātas and while staying in the clouds, asked them as to what they could do for them. Hearing the speech of their clan deities thus, the Kirātas were very happy and said – “Some bad person has attacked our country and wants to grab our independence, you may punish them, dissipate their strength and chase them away so that they will never have the guts to attack us anymore.”Hearing the Kirātas the Nāgakumāras told them the person attacking you is the Cakravartī emperor Bharata, who cannot be harmed by any god, demon or gandharva nor can be defeated, yet out of love for you we shall try to fix the king Bharata and trouble him.

Reassuring the Kirātas thus, the Meghamukha Nāgakumāras assumed the form of clouds and sent black clouds over his camp and produced torrential rains. Seeing these extraordinary showers king Bharata held his whisk jewel (carmaratna) which at once spread out across 12 yojanas. The emperor sat on it with his army and his divine umbrella jewel enveloped everybody. This way the entire army was protected. The king placed his gem in the midst of the protective umbrella, which created a bright light. Everything that the army needed could be acquired by the gem. This way the army was safe under the umbrella and the gem even as torrential rains continued to pour on the other end. For seven days this was the situation so emperor Bharata began to wonder as to who is so unhappy with my victory and is creating these hurdles in our path.

Seeing the emperor thus worried, 16 thousand heavenly beings with him reached the Nāgakumāras equipped with all kinds of war equipment and called out aloud, “why are you causing pain to emperor Bharata creating hurdles in his path? It would be better if you gave up this unjust deed and returned to your place, else we shall be forced to do something?” Hearing this, the Nāgakumāras were frightened. They stopped the rains immediately and clearing all the clouds, told the Kirātas that the Cakravartī Bharata is a great powerful emperor who is prosperous and accomplished; nobody can destroy him. Our effort and aim to cause him discomfort have been in vain. It would be good if you too accept his suzerainty and gifting many valuable jewels to him take refuge under him and apologies to him.

After the Nāgakumāras left the Kirātas had a bath and meditated and in wet clothes and their hair left open, reached king Bharata with lots of gems, jewels, etc as gifts and pleaded with him, saying, and “O king! May you live long, may you rule over the entire Bharata to the north and the south. We shall obey your orders, remaining subordinate to your Lordship.” Thus they accepted the suzerainty of king Bharata.

Calling his army General, king Bharata ordered him to win over kingdoms located in the regions of in the east Simḍhu, mountain Vaitāḍhya in the south, the Salt Ocean in the west and mountain Himavaṃta in the north. As per the orders of the king, the General started on his victorious expedition along with the four-fold army divisions. Within very little time he won over all the regions and made them part of Cakravartī Bharata’s vast empire and gaining valuable gifts

from there, presented them to Cakravartī Bharata. Very happily the king conferred honours on the General and gifting the entire army personnel asked them to rest for some time.

One day the cakra jewel again emerged from the armoury and through the skies began to move towards the northeast corner. The king's army, following the cakra jewel, reached close to the mountain Cullahimavaṃta where the cakra jewel stationed itself in the sky. The king ordered the army to camp there. King Bharata started his fast in the fasting hall. This was Bharata's seventh fast in the course of his campaign to win over the six parts of Bharata. On completion of his fast king Bharata took aim with his bow and released the arrow upwards. The arrow went several yojanas up and landed at the palace of Kumāradeva of the mountain Cullahimavaṃta. Recognising the arrow that had fallen in his palace, Kumāradeva understood the situation and he presented himself before Bharata, taking along with him various kinds of invaluable medicines, flower garlands, gośīrṣa sandalwood, etc. King Bharata accepted his gifts and bade him farewell with appropriate honour and ceremony.

He then turned his chariot backwards and came to mountain Ṛṣabhakūṭa. After touching Ṛṣabhakūṭa mountain thrice with his chariot he wrote the following script on the eastern entrance of the mountain with his Kākiṇī jewel: "I am Bharata, the cakravartī, sovereign Lord and first ruler and king Bharata of the second half of the third *ārā* of the declining happiness cycle. I have won over the entire Bharata and I have no enemies."

Having done that, Bharata reached the camp with his army. He broke the seventh fast and making his subjects happy in many ways, ordered the aṣṭāhnikā ceremony in honour of Kumāra of mountain Himavaṃta. After completion of the ceremony, following the cakra jewel the king Bharata reached mountain Vaitāḍhya in the southern direction. There to honour the Vaitāḍhya gods Namī and Vinamī, king Bharata observed a fast. Consequently, by the time the fast was completed, entered Namī with clothes and jewellery and Vinamī with the female jewel named Subhadrā endowed with beauty of form and grace and qualities of a woman in the presence of the king Bharata. Bharata accepted the Vidyādhara's gifts and after due respects and ceremony, sent them. The subjects observed the aṣṭāhnikā ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony the cakra jewel emerged from the armoury and took to the skies in the northeast direction. Following the cakra with his army Bharata reached close to Gaṃgādevī. There in honour of Gaṃgādevī Bharata observed the 9th fast in the fasting hall. On completion of the fast Gaṃgādevī came to Bharata with offerings of beautifully decorated and gem-studded urns, thousand and eight in number, and the gold thrones. Accepting these from Gaṃgādevī he sent her off with due respect and honour. After Gaṃgādevī left he broke his ninth fast, and making people satisfied giving them many kinds of facilities, he instructed them to hold aṣṭāhnikā ceremony in honour of Gaṃgādevī.

After completion of the ceremony of Gaṃgādevī, the cakra jewel came out of the armoury and took skywards towards the southern direction of the west banks of river Gaṃgā and stopped close to the Khaṇḍaprapāta cave. The king observed a fast in the fasting hall in honour of the Lord of the Khaṇḍaprapāta cave, Naityamāla. This was his tenth fast in which he meditated upon the Naityamāla god. On completion of the fast the Naityamāla god appeared before Bharata and with hands folded, said, “I, Naityamāla god, living in your kingdom, am your servant. May you please accept these gifts?” King Bharata accepted the gifts of Naityamāla god and after due respects, bade him farewell. After the Naityamāla god left, Bharata broke his tenth fast and ordered the aṣṭāhnikā ceremony in honour of Naityamāla god.

Soon as the ceremony was over, Bharata called the army General Suṣeṇa. Getting instructed by him, Suṣeṇa established control over the Salt Ocean east of the river Gaṃgā, until the Vaitāḍhya mountain in the south and Cullahimavaṃta and all the rest of the geographical area in the north both easy and difficult to conquer thus taking reins of that specific area.

After resting for a few days the king called for Suṣeṇa. After receiving instructions from the Lord, Suṣeṇa got the doors of the Khaṇḍaprapāta cave’s northern entrance just as his ad the entrance of the Timisraprabhā cave and he intimated king Bharata of it. With the help of his Kākiṇī gem, the king lit up the pathway of the Khaṇḍaprapāta cave, which he entered, and came out from the southern entrance. After exiting the cave the king prepared for the army to camp there and started a fast for procuring the nine treasures. This was the king’s eleventh fast. Sitting on

a seat of grass (darbha) the king meditated single-mindedly on the treasures. By the end of the fast the treasures came to stay with king Bharata. He broke his fast and ordered the aṣṭāhnikā ceremony for the treasures.

Upon completion of the ceremony the king ordered his General to conquer the area east of the river Gaṃgā. The General did as commanded and completed his victory campaign.

Sometime after this the cakra jewel came out of the armoury and taking the sky route, move through the king's army camp, towards the Vinītā city. The king was pleased seeing this. He ordered the army to move towards Vinītā city. After completing 60 thousand years of his victorious campaign over the six parts of the entire Bharata emperor Bharata returned to the capital of his kingdom Vinītā. In the forefront the eight auspicious things, followed by the pitcher, ewer, the divine umbrella, and those holding the gem studded staff and umbrella began to walk. Following them, were in respective order: 7 ekendriyaratna, nine treasures, 16, 000 devas, 32, 000 kings, the army general, 5 ratnas, etc. Following them were thousands of ṛtukalyāṇikā, janapada kalyāṇikā, theatre artistes, cooks, the four-fold army, many kings gods, princes, swordsmen, charioteers, staff holders, singers singing songs, instrumentalists, dancers, and following them were well-decorated horses. Behind them was king Bharata astride the elephant Ratna. He was followed by a convoy of horse riders.

Reaching Vinītā city, ordering the army to camp there, Bharata started the fast in honour of the Lord of Vinītā. Completing the fast, he entered the city astride an elephant along with thousands of gods and goddesses and kings and subjects. The nine great treasures and the four-fold army did not enter the city. Vinītā city was decorated like a new bride. The king reached the entrance of the grand royal palace. Getting off the elephant accepting the welcome and honours from the people of the royal palace there he broke his 12th fast and started to live enjoying all the pleasures.

Sensing that it was appropriate time for his coronation, king Bharata became immersed in a fast in his fasting hall. On completing the fast, he ordered the construction of a huge coronation hall at the north-east corner of the Vinītā city. King Bharata entered the coronation hall in the

same prosperous splendour as he had entered the Vinītā city after his victory campaign over the six regions. There is great, valuable coronation ceremony was conducted. After his coronation, the king again entered his palace and after his bath, etc, started to observe a fast. The subjects celebrated his coronation ceremony for 12 years.

The subjects in king Bharata's kingdom were happy and prosperous in everyway. People did their duty and lived happy lives. He was the sovereign over the entire Bharata. His army was invincible and indestructible. He took care of his people in the form of a cakravartī ruler for thousand less than 6 lakh pūrvas. In his time both the king and the people tasted incomparable progress.

Bharata's Indisposition

Bharata's mind was not peaceful in spite of attaining sovereign rule over the empire. He regretted the dilemma in the minds of his brothers for a destructible kingdom, losing his 99 brothers. Consequently, he was least interested even though he ruled over the entire Bharata.

Once, Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, along with his disciples, was seated in the garden of Vinītā city. He was giving his divine sermon. A listener asked – “O Lord! How will cakravartī Bharata die?” The Lord replied – “attaining salvation!” The questioner said softly – “Ha! Even the Lord is biased towards his son.”

When Bharata heard of this he was sad that the Lord was being accused on his account. To clear the doubts of that man towards the Lord's speech, he called that man and said – “take this vessel filled with oil and take a tour around the markets of Vinītā city but remember, if even a drop of oil falls, you shall be hanged.”

The man went around Vinītā city as instructed by Bharata. There were many kinds of interesting events happening in that time across the city, but due to the fear of death he could not even take his eyes off for a moment. Thus when the king asked him about the theatre events happening in the city, the man replied – “when the fear of death is hovering over a person, how he can he watch plays and all that?” Hearing this Bharata said – “In the same way as you cannot watch plays,

etc fearing death in the same way, I fear the long tradition of impending death, because of which despite enjoying the pleasures of kingship I am unable to be inclined towards it. Physically I enjoy the pleasures of the world but I am indifferent to them.”

Hearing this statement of Bharata the doubt that had entered the mind of that man towards Lord Vṛṣabhanātha was cleared. On account of the people’s welfare under the rule of Bharata this country became known as Bhāratavarṣa.

Commencement of Parivrājakaascetic sect

According to the Āvaśyakaniryukti and other Śvetāmbara texts, listening to the sermon of the Lord and seeing the amazing Samavaśaraṇa, emperor Bharata’s son Marīci too took initiation at the Lord’s feet, but being of a tender age, once during the summer months, suffering from the intense heat, he deviated from the path of penance. He started to think that I could not bear the weight of this difficult path of restraint, what can I do? He thought if he returned from the ascetic path people would call him a coward but if remained in the monk’s form without observing restraint, he will feel self-critical. So he thought of a new kind of robes in keeping with his own situation. He started a new tradition of robes within the Śramaṇa tradition”

1. “The Śramaṇas following the path of the Jina are free from the impure practices of the mind, word and deed and are victors over the senses, but I am not free from them hence I shall keep the three-pointed staff (tridaṇḍa)
2. The Śramaṇas have sacrificed violence, hence pull out their hairs, but I shall be away from basic violence and shall keep my hair shave it
3. The Śramaṇas are renouncers, without possessions of wealth and gold and are virtuous. I am neither pious nor a renouncer, hence I shall adorn myself with sandal paste.
4. Being devoid of illusion Śramaṇas do not keep an umbrella, but being full of illusion I shall have an umbrella and shall also wear slippers.

5. Symbols of pure minds, the Śramaṇas are sky-clad (without clothes) or white-robed. But being impure on account of passion I shall wear black or grey coloured robes
6. Fearing bad deeds, they do not use unpurified water but I shall use limited water for bathing and drinking.”

This way, having conceived of a form of a renouncer, Marīci began to wander around with the Lord. Whosoever came to Marīci with questions on the religion he would preach them the ten-fold Śramaṇa tradition and send them to the Lord? Once Bharata asked the Lord as to who in his assembly would become a tīrthaṅkara like him.

The Lord said your son Marīci who is the first parivrājaka (renouncer), will be the 24th Tīrthaṅkara in this very declining happiness cycle. Before that he will also be the first Vasudeva and the cakravartī of Mūkā city. Hearing this, Bharata was immensely pleased and going to Marīci, said to him – “Marīci! The Lord has said you shall be the 24th Tīrthaṅkara, hence I invoke you.” Marīci’s happiness, on hearing this, knew no bounds. He said – “My lineage is so lofty, my grandfather the first Tīrthaṅkara, my father the first cakravartī and I the future Tīrthaṅkara. Can there be any lineage loftier than this?”

Way, from the pride of his lineage Marīci bound himself to a lower gotra. Later he made the son of king Rājakumāra of Kapila his student, who according to the Purāṇas is considered the founder of Yogaśāstras, and Sāṃkhya philosophy. The tradition of renunciators started systematically from the time of Kapilamuni.

Brāhmī and Sundarī

In the same way as Bharata and Bāhubalī are famous among the hundred sons of Lord Ādinātha, his two daughters Brāhmī and Sundarī are well-known all over. Lord Vṛṣabhanātha gave the knowledge of writing to the people through Brāhmī. The commentator of the Āvaśyaka niryukti speaks of Brāhmī-Bāhubalī and Sundarī- Bharata as couples. A doubt occurs here that if they are considered as being celibate since childhood what is this marriage all about? It is possible that in accordance with the customs of that period their relationship was announced but later even

before beginning the married life they took asceticism at the feet of the Lord.

According to Ācārya Jinasena Sundarī took initiation along with Brāhmī on the very first sermon of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha. But according to the Śvetāmbara tradition, not getting the permission from Bharata, she became the first śrāvikā householder of that time. When Bharata started on his victory campaign over the six parts of the world, Sundarī started observing the daily Āyambila fast. When Bharata returned from his victory campaigns after 60 thousand years, seeing the transient form of Sundarī and her intense aspiration for austerity, she was made an ascetic with Brāhmī who was serving the Lord.

Later traditions after the Śvetāmbara tradition talk of Brāhmī's initiation along with the founding of the congregation tradition but Sundarī's initiation is considered to have occurred after 60 thousand years, that is, after Bharata cakravartī's victory campaigns. But on the other hand there is mention of Brāhmī and Sundarī being sent to arouse Bāhubalī, deep in his meditation, and this is only possible if both their initiations have occurred at the same time, and if we analyse objectively based on existing facts, then the mention of joint initiation of the two as mentioned in the Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti and Kalpasūtra seem more acceptable.

The arousal of Vṛṣabhanātha's sons

Vṛṣabhanātha became a renouncer after giving different kingdoms to all his sons. When Bharata had gained victory over the six zones he wanted to bring his brothers as his assistants too. The brothers consulted each other but could not reach any decision. Ultimately they placed the problem in front of their worldly father Lord Vṛṣabhanātha. When they reached their father he explained to them the transitory nature of worldly kingdom and the importance of the kingdom of spirituality. Everyone was dumbfounded. They accepted the five major vows (mahāvratas) tradition and became the Lord's disciples.

The Non-Violent War

Emperor Bharata wanted to establish his rule over the entire Bhārata. By getting initiated as renouncers, his 98 brothers had made the path easier for him. Yet the trouble was how to conquer Bāhubalī? Without that it

was impossible to gain cakravartī status and establishment of a singular rule. Hence he sent a message to his younger brother Bāhubalī to accept his sovereignty. But Bāhubalī categorically refused. On the basis of his power as a cakravartī Bharata had to decide upon attacking Bāhubalī.

Bharata with his large army camped at the borders of Bahalīdeśa. A war ensued for sometime between the two armies. But to prevent the human killing in this war, Bāhubalī suggested that both the brothers have a decisive duel. Bharata agreed. In all the duels – with the eyes, voice, arms, fist – Bāhubalī won. Bharata was so hurt by the victory of his younger brother over him that he hurled a cakra at his brother to behead him. Initially an angry Bāhubalī wanted to hold the cakra but then thinking that even if his elder brother has done something disrespectful he should not indulge in a heinous crime as the killing of a brother. Since Bāhubalī was a part of Bharata’s family and one of magnificent body, the cakra circumambulated him and returned.

According to Hemacandra’s Triṣaṣṭi śalākā puruṣacaritra the moment Bāhubalī raised his fists to hit Bharata he thought ‘the tradition of Vṛṣabhanātha’s children is that of non-violence and not violence’. But how could he take back the hand that had been raised to fight? He placed the fists he had raised on his own head and pulling out his hair, accepted the Śramaṇa tradition (became a monk).

Even though he desired to present himself in front of Vṛṣabhanātha Bāhubalī could not take a step forward because he attained a sense of vanity in his mind as to how could he simple be present amidst his brothers already initiated. As a result he stood at that very place deep in meditation and remained in that same position for a year. Creepers grew over his body, his soft body shriveled up, his feet got covered by the dust of termites and yet he did not attain omniscience. When Lord Vṛṣabhanātha sensed this condition of Bāhubalī he sent Brāhmī and Sundarī to arouse him. Both the female-monks immediately went to Bāhubalī and in a sweet voice said, “Brother, alight from the elephant, you do not attain omniscience astride an elephant.” Hearing the inspiring, sweet voice of the female-monks Bāhubalī understood that he was riding astride the elephant of vanity. All his vanity disappeared and the moment he lifted his feet to proceed to salute his younger brothers, he attained omniscience. After becoming an omniscient he attended the samavaśaraṇa

of the Lord and after paying obeisance to the Lord, sat in the omniscient council.

Founding of the Brahmin caste by Bharata

According to Ācārya Jinasena when king Bharata became a *cakravartī* he thought he must use his invaluable fame and riches for the welfare and well-being of the society. He also thought, at the same time, that there must be such a class of intelligent, intellectuals who would give assistance of their mind for a just life of the remaining three classes which would help the society move towards greater progress.

He called all the intellectual people to his place. He laid green grass in their path. Most people did not understand its meaning or intent and walked on the grass to Bharata's palace. The wise people thought even green grass has living organisms which will die if we walk over them and shall suffer pain, so they stood outside. King Bharata appreciated their feeling of compassion and called them in from another pathway and honouring them, called them 'māhaṇa' or 'Brahmin'.

According to the Āvaśyaka cūrṇi Bharata became restive when his 98 brothers took to asceticism and thought of what use was such incomparable wealth which could not be of use to his own people. When the Lord came to Vinītā city Bharata invited his brothers to a feast but they did not accept the food they had renounced. Then Bharata wished to felicitate the female-monks to food but the Lord said monks cannot accept food made for them or brought for them. Then Bharata asked them to accept food that was made for him, which they pronounced to be 'rājapiṇḍa' (given by a king) and said it was not acceptable.

When Bharata asked as to how to make use of this food that had been prepared for the monks, Indra told him to donate it to people who were greater than him in qualities and honour them. Bharata gave it all to householders and told them they need not do any occupation for their livelihood; that their work would be listening to, studying the scriptures, thinking, and service to the teacher. Their life's needs would be taken care of by the ruler. This way the householders who would come for a livelihood, would cry 'māhaṇa', 'māhaṇa' and eat the food. Gradually innumerable people started coming looking for their livelihood. So

Bharata instructed the organizers to enquire after the guests and only give food to those who were votaries (śrāvakas). In the course of enquiry those who seemed eligible and right were sent to the king and the king would mark an insignia on them with this Kākiṇī jewel. These people and their progeny remained distinct from the characteristics of the monks and started to teach people not to indulge in violence, and were called as ‘māhaṇa’, ‘māhaṇa’. This way the ‘māhaṇa’ people came about who later began to be called Brhāmaṇa or ‘Brahmin’.

Bharata would make three lines on the śrāvakas through the Kākiṇī jewel of worship to the three gods, teacher and tradition or knowledge, tradition and character and this later on changed into yajñopavīta. This way the Brahmin caste was founded. Thus, between Lord Ādinātha and Bharata cakravartī’s rule, the four castes were established.

Bharata’ realisation of the self, omniscience and liberation

One day Bharata went to his glass palace adorned in finery. He was enchanted by his own self as reflected in the mirrors. Admiring his fingers he felt of the entire fingers one was not beautiful as the finger ring had fallen off somewhere. He then wondered how his fingers would look without any of the finger-rings and one by one he removed all his finger-rings, and then all his ornaments. Seeing his body thus devoid of all ornaments it seemed to him like a pond without a lotus flower, and without beauty. Seeing this Bharata thought all the attraction was due to the ornaments hence all this beauty was not one’s own, but someone else’, not real but false, not natural but affected. He felt that beauty adorned by worldly things is meaningless and full of illusion. Enchanted by it a human being forgets his own true self.

Gradually, the flow of thoughts of Bharata moved from regular rhythm through speed and total disregard for worldly things, and entering apūrvakaraṇa, destroying the four obscuring karmas – jñānāvaraṇīya, darśanāvaraṇīya, mohaniya, antarāya – he obtained pure intuition and pure knowledge. He became the knower and seer of all the modes of the past, future and present cycles. He removed all adornments and removed five fistfuls of hair. Bharata exited the hall of mirrors in the form of an omniscient and came out from the middle part of his palace, he arouse ten thousand kings and initiated them into the Śramaṇa tradition. He then

came out of the Vinītā city with them and gladly wandered about. After wandering for one lakh pūrvas he went to Aṣṭāpada Mountain. There he gave up the four-fold food. He remained in this state, without any desire.

Omniscient Bharata remained a prince for 77 lakh pūrvas and thereafter, for one thousand years as king. Following that he was cakravartī for one thousand years less than six lakhs pūrvas. Thus he remained for three lakh pūrvas in the worldly state. Until obtainment of pure intuition and pure knowledge following self-realisation in the hall of mirrors he was not associated with any position or status. Thus, leaving aside that time for a little less than one lakh pūrvas he remained in the omniscientstatus and for the same number of years as a mendicant. Thus, completing 84 lakh pūrvas, for a month giving up water, under the śramaṇa constellation, he attained liberation from the shackles of birth and death, obtained permanent, blemish-less liberation (śivapada). He followed the path of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha and in the end attained liberation /salvation (mokṣa).

Lord Śrī Ajitanātha

It is the law of nature that a person whose present life is superior, to his past life's efforts must have been as superior. The second Tīrthamkara of Jain religion; Lord Śrī Ajitanātha's past life's efforts were also high and worth emulating. His past life is described as follows:-

In MahāVideha province of Jambūdīvīpa on the southern banks of a river named Sītā there is an extremely prosperous and beautiful heaven (vijaya) named Vatsa. There was an extremely beautiful city there named Susīmā. A ruler, brave, just, religious and one filled with qualities due in a king, named Vimalavāhana ruled there. He was unsullied by pleasures and was disinclined towards royal pleasures. He was popular among people as being magnanimous and compassionate.

While ruling happily one day Vimalavāhana, in the course of self-introspection, thought, what should a living being do having attained a human life? In this world there is neither beginning nor end to the cycle of birth, disease and death. Among 84 lakh existences (yoni), the human destiny is the only one where a living being can attain freedom from worldly pain by following the path of spiritual endeavour. I too have the golden opportunity to be free from this bondage; thus every minute of human life is invaluable. Nothing is to be gained by repenting after the endless, valuable time that has past, but whatever remains of this life, making the utmost spiritual gain from it would be most beneficial to me.

This way king Vimalavāhana had just made a firm resolve towards spiritual endeavour for self-benefit when the gardener saluted him and informed him that due to the good deeds of the people of Susīmā a great ascetic, Ācārya Aridamana had arrived at a garden situated outside the city.

Hearing this timely and happy announcement Vimalavāhana experienced indescribable joy and thought what an auspicious coincidence that when a good feeling arose in my mind I have got the good fortune of meeting an ascetic. The king reached the garden with his kith and kin. Hearing the immortality-bestowing sermon of Ācārya Aridamana, the feeling of disenchantment of Vimalavāhana gained strength. He asked the ācārya with humility that in spite of constantly suffering the agony of the

immense pain of this world the feeling of disenchantment towards the world does not arise in an ordinary person. In this state, why and in what way did a feeling of disenchantment for the world arise in you?

Ācāryaśrī replied that for an intelligent and knowledgeable thinker, at every step in this world, he sees reasons that cause disinclination, but blinded by passion, desire and attachment a human being denies the obvious and continues to live on. A person with knowledge finds reasons, both self-experienced and experienced by others, to immediately become disinterested in the world.

After ascending my royal throne I decided to win over all directions and started on a victory campaign with my four-fold army. In course of that journey I saw a garden as beautiful as Nandana-vana. With its tanks, wells, and streams and canopy of creepers, that garden seemed like heaven. I was enchanted by the beautiful sight of that garden. After resting with my warriors and army generals in that garden I resumed my victory campaign.

In victory-journey I established my rule over many countries but I could never spot that same kind of garden pleasing to the eye again. After my victory campaign when I was returning to capital city I found that garden completely destroyed and disfigured. Mere stumps in the place of thick, magnificent flower and fruit-laden trees there seemed as fearsome as ghosts. Seeing this, my mind and heart were deeply wounded. I began to feel that the entire visible world was momentary and I thought every person in this world has to face this state sooner or later.

After this, I began to tremble and became agitated with the kind of thought that came to my mind. I thought I am a worldly human being crushed in the quern of birth and death since time immemorial, and I too, shall have to face this destiny soon. If I do not take care I shall keep wandering in this endless ocean. I began to see this world as a burning furnace. At that very moment, leaving everything, I took initiation into the Śramaṇa tradition and since then am following the happiness-bestowing major vows.

Hearing that discourse of Ācārya Aridamaṇa, king Vimalavāhana bequeathed the royal throne to his son and became a mendicant. After becoming a monk Vimalavāhana, while serving the monk, studied the

āgamas, besides observing austerities. For a long time he observed with purity the five attitudes of carefulness (samitis) the three attitudes of restraint (guptis) and for a long time destroyed the karmas accumulated over a long time. He practiced many of the twenty sthānakas such as devotion to the Arihanta and obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāma karma. In the end, giving up food, completing his time, he emerged in the form of a god, 33 ocean measured periods (sāgaras) of age, in the Vijaya palace in Anuttara vimāna.

Conception and Entry into the Womb

In the island in Bharata was a city named Vinītā. Here, after innumerable kings of the Ikṣvāku clan of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, a great, brave and religious king named Jitaśatru was born. His pious wife was named Vijayā. Queen Vijayā was endowed with all good qualities, was beautiful in body and form and a religious, intellectual and chaste woman. The royal couple looked after the subjects with a sense of justice, while enjoying the best of worldly pleasures, followed the Śramaṇa religion regularly.

On the 13th day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha month, upon completion of 33sāgaras the god of Anuttara vimāna, 71 lakh pūrvas less 50 lakh crore sāgaras after the nirvāṇa of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, under the Rohiṇī constellation being in conjunction with the moon, with mind based, verbal testimony and clairvoyant knowledge under the Caitra constellation, Vimalavāhana moved from Vijaya palace into the king Jitaśatru's queen Vijayā's womb. On the last quarter of that very night the queen saw the 14 dreams in a half-asleep, half-awake state. Very delighted, the queen narrated her dreams to the king Jitaśatru. King Jitaśatru was also happy. He said we will get a very brave son venerated by the world.

The Second Cakravartī's entry into the womb

On that same night the young princess of Jitaśatru's younger brother Sumitravijaya, Vaijayantī, too, saw 14 great dreams whose refulgence was dull compared to the dreams of queen Vijayā. The next day king Jitaśatru asked able dream-interpreters to explain the meaning of the dreams and after some analysis they said queen Vijayādevī shall give

birth to this declining happinesscycle's second tīrthaṅkara while princess Vaijayantī will give birth to the second cakravartī.

Birth

Upon the completion of the pregnancy period, on the 8th day of the bright fortnight of the Māgha month with moon in conjunction with Rohiṇī constellation, mother Vijayādevī gave birth to a son venerated by the three worlds. Just like the birth celebrations of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha, Lord Ajitanātha's birth was also celebrated. Sometime after the birth of the Lord, princess Vaijayantī gave birth to a son who went on to become the second cakravartī. The atmosphere in the royal palace after the birth of two sons at the same time was filled with happiness and gaiety. People were given various kinds of gifts and rewards. It was an atmosphere of festivity and music all around. On an auspicious day king Jitaśatru invited his family and friends, ambassadors, warriors and important people of the city and after due honours, declared that since this son entered the womb of his mother, I have been unconquerable in the every place, hence it would be appropriate to name this boy Ajita. People expressed their agreement with joy. Prince Sumitra's son was named Sagara.

The development and upbringing of both the princes happened simultaneously. Both children gave happiness to their parents for many years with their child-play and entered adolescence. Prince Ajita possessed three kinds of knowledge since birth, and knew all the arts and skills. Consequently, there was no need to teach him anything, but to make Sagara skilled in all the arts and skills able experts were arranged. Sagara had a sharp intellect, hence on account of devoted and humble study, even before the expected time, he became well-versed in all kinds of knowledge and the 72 arts. During his study period, young Sagara also found his curiosity being resolved by Ajita of great use to him.

This way from childhood to adolescence passed and when both princes reached the youth stage the king Jitaśatru got them married to many qualified, beautiful women with all the womanly qualities. Prince Ajita also accepted it considering it part of the karma of enjoyment. When Ajitakumāra became 18 lakh pūrvas old, king Jitaśatru told him of his desire to accept monkhood and requested him to take up the

responsibility of the king. The prince appreciated his father's resolve to become a renouncer and said that it is necessary for every one desiring mokṣa to strive for it and that in this nobody should be an obstacle but only be supportive. As far as kingdom is concerned you may please give the same to my uncle who is also a prince and capable and qualified to take up that responsibility. Prince Ajita had not even completed his words when prince Sumitra said, I do not want to renounce everything along with the king and take the path of spiritual endeavour. Prince Ajita through his knowledge perception found out that there was some time left for prince Sumitra to become a renouncer so he requested him even if he did not take the responsibility of the kingdom he should remain as a yatī in the house. King Jitaśatru too requested his brother similarly. Prince Sumitra could not say no to this. Hence with great pomp and splendour prince Ajita's coronation was organised and the moment he sat on the throne king Ajita appointed Sagara Kumāra crown prince.

Father's renunciation, omniscience and liberation

Upon completion of the coronation of prince Ajita, king Jitaśatru's exiting ceremony also took place in a festive spirit and he took initiation from an elder monk from the congregation of Lord Ādinātha. Upon initiation as a mendicant the monk Jitaśatru attained pure intuition (kevaladarśana) and pure knowledge through severe penance over a long period, destroying his four obscuring karmas (ghāṭikarmas) and in the end attained mokṣa having destroyed the remaining four remaining non-obscuring karmas.

The Rule of King Ajita

Ajita ruled justly and as per norms for 53 lakh pūrvas. By the strength of good deeds of Ajita, the receptacle of three kinds of knowledge, other kings came under him voluntarily, bowing to him with faith and devotion. In his rule his subjects were in every way prosperous, happy and just, religious and orderly. One day, contemplating in solitude, king Ajita thought now I must renounce the mundane activities of this world and should be determined in my basic purpose. I should not delay in striving to be unbound, devoid of passions and blemish. These thoughts were in the king's mind when the lokāntika gods came in his presence and prayed to him that 'Lord! Establish the congregation and redeem the

living beings.’ After the gods left king Ajita called prince Sagara and said, “I want to renounce all kinds of mundane things and want to be firm in the path of austerities; hence you take over the responsibilities of the kingdom”. Hearing these words from the king’s mouth Sagara stood dumbfounded as though struck by a thunderbolt. His eyes were brimming with tears. Crying, he said, “I have considered you as my father, mother and teacher. I cannot live a moment away from you. Distanced from you I cannot accept even the sole control of the entire world, leave alone this kingdom. If you have resolved to renounce then allow me too to be at your service.” Saying this Sagara laid his head at the feet of his elder brother.

A Year’s charities and Initiation

After the coronation of prince Sagara the king gave charities for one year. He would donate one crore gold coins each every single morning. After completion of a year’s charities 64 Indras including Śakra came in the service of the king. Gods such as Śakra and Devendra and king Sagara organised the king Ajita’s renunciation ceremony. The king, adorned in all finery, was placed on a palanquin named Suprabhā. Groups of people along with gods held the king’s palanquin and reached Sahasrāmravana situated outside the Vinītā city. A huge gathering of gods and people arrived to watch the great ceremony. On the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Māgha month with moon in conjunction with the Rohiṇī constellation, king Ajita himself took his clothes and ornaments off and accepted the divine cloth (devadūṣya) offered by Śakra. Thereafter, pulling five fistfuls of hair reciting “*namo Siddhāṇam*”, saluting the liberated souls, and observing a fast along with one thousand kings he accepted a lifelong conduct of mendicancy. The moment he took initiation he attained direct awareness of thought-forms of others sans the aid of mind and senses (manaḥ paryavajñāna).

Period of mendicancy (Chadmastha)

The next day after initiation king Brahmadata broke the fast of the Lord Ajitanātha with an offering of rice pudding in Sāketa (Ayodhya, another name of Vinītā) and became the first giver of alms. Here five kinds of heavenly showers occurred. After initiation, the Lord wandered from village to village for 12 years as a mendicant. For 12 years the Lord kept annihilating the accumulation of karmas through observation of external

and internal austerities. One day the Lord was observing fast, deep in meditation in Sahasrāmavana. In his meditative state, he completely destroyed the obscuring karmas and attained pure intuition and pure knowledge thereby entering the 13th *guṇasthāna* (sayogī-kevalī) or became omniscient Lord. This way, after 12 years in the state of mendicancy, on the 11th day of the bright fortnight in the Pauṣa month with Rohiṇī constellation being in conjunction with the moon Lord Ajitanātha became the all-knowing, all-perceiving i.e. an omniscient. The gods showered the five auspicious things and the king of gods created the samavaśaraṇa right there. King Sagara got the message of the Lord's being omniscient. Immediately, he along with his ministers, kith and kin, arrived at the garden with royal pomp and majesty. Reaching the samavaśaraṇa, king Sagara paid obeisance to the Lord with devotion and joy and sat there. Lord Ajitanātha, seated on a high seat erected by the gods, gave a sermon at the samavaśaraṇa like a shower of nectar. Gaining knowledge from the Lord's sermon many people accepted the conduct of monks and female-monks and lay-men and lay-women. Lord Ajitanātha had 95 gaṇadharas (principal disciples) among whom Siṃhasena was the first. The Lord's first female disciple was Falgu who started the Lord's female-monk congregation. This way, in his first sermon, Lord Ajitanātha spoke on the scripture and conduct and established the four-fold order.

Deliverance of the people of Śāligrāma

Giving a discourse on the immortal truthful tradition, urging people to walk towards mokṣa, Lord Ajitanātha arrived at a garden located to the north outside Kauśāmbī city. The gods erected the samavaśaraṇa. Seated on a huge pedestal under the Aśoka tree the Lord started his sermon. At that time a Brahmin came with his wife to participate in the samavaśaraṇa and after circumambulating the Lord and praying at his feet sat beside him. After the sermon the Brahmin, with folded hands, asked the Lord, "Why is it so?" The Lord answered, "This is the effect of right belief." The Brahmin asked again, "In what way, Lord?" The Lord explained, "The effect of right belief is mighty. Its result is that enmity is silenced, diseases are eliminated, bad karmas die out, the desired gets done, heavenly-destiny karma is bonded, gods and goddesses are ready to help. These are all the ordinary effects of right belief. By the best observance of right belief a person can destroy all the accumulated

karmas and gain the Tīrthaṅkara-nāma-karma even, can become pure, knowledgeable and emancipated.” On hearing this from the Lord, the Brahmin said, “Lord, if it is so, then there is nothing else other than this.” Saying this, the Brahmin sat with a contented countenance in his place.

To make clear the secret in this sermon for the listeners, Lord’s main Gaṇadhara asked – “Lord, what is the secret of the Brahmin’s question and your response?” To this the Lord Ajitanātha said, “A little distance from here is a village named Śāligrāma. A Brahmin named Dāmodāra used to live there. His wife’s name was Sīmā. Their son was named Śiddhabhaṭṭa. When Śiddhabhaṭṭa attained marriageable age, he was married to the daughter of a Brahmin Śiddhabhaṭṭa, named Sulakṣaṇā, Śiddhabhaṭṭa and Sulakṣaṇā were living happily when both their parents passed away and all their wealth and prosperity too ended. It reached a stage when even two square meals a day was difficult. Śiddhabhaṭṭa was so unhappy with this poverty that one day he left to another country without telling his wife. When Sulakṣaṇā realized this she was shocked. Immersed in an ocean of sorrow the lone Sulakṣaṇā began to spend her life like a recluse far away from everyone. In those very days a preceptor named Vipulā along with two other female-monks came to that village to stay during the rains and started to live in a corner of Sulakṣaṇā’s home. Sulakṣaṇā used to listen to the discourse of the preceptor everyday and she began to develop a taste for the religion. When her cloud of illusion cleared, from within her emerged right belief and she accepted the Jain religion which would help her cross the ocean of this world. Through this her kaṣāyas (passions) were stilled and she developed distaste and disinterest for sensual pleasures. She served the female-monks with devotion throughout the rainy season halt (cāturnās a period). When the rainy season halt ended the female-monks made her accept the minor vows (aṇuvratas), making her a female-votary and left for another place. After the female-monks had left, Sulakṣaṇā’s husband returned home with large sums of money. Sulakṣaṇā was very happy with his coming. When Śiddhabhaṭṭa asked her as to how she spent her time after his departure Sulakṣaṇā said, “I was in distress over your leaving when the female-monks came here and stayed in our house for four months, purifying it. Seeing them my pangs of separation from you were quelled and I got from them the jewel of right belief and a meaning for my birth.”

Śiddhabhaṭṭa was inquisitive to know what right belief was and how did it look like? Explaining the immortal tradition brought to form by the unbound Jinendra to her husband Sulakṣaṇā said, “Destroying passions, hatred, accepting the Jain religion founded by the Jinendra free from bondage, utter devotion towards the true gods, true teacher, and pure religion is right belief. The other name of right belief is correct knowledge of reality. There are five characteristics of right belief – tranquility, increasing inclination leading to disenchantment, disregard for worldly objects, compassion and faith or affirmation. Helping people of the same religion to be steady in right belief, influencing / propagating, devotion, expertise in the doctrine, and service to the four-fold tīrthas, are its five adornments.” Śiddhabhaṭṭa was very happy to have understood very well the true form of Jain religion from his wife. He too accepted the right belief and the couple, accepting right belief, became followers of Jain religion. The other Brahmins of the village began to criticize them, that leaving their own traditional religion they have become votaries.

After sometime, Sulakṣaṇā gave birth to a son. It was winter time. One day, in the morning Śiddhabhaṭṭa took his son near the fireplace where many Brahmins were warming themselves up in the fire. Seeing Śiddhabhaṭṭa approach them they all stayed around the fire in such a way that there was no place for anyone else, and further they said you are a votary hence there is no place for you in our midst and teasing him they laughed at Śiddhabhaṭṭa. Sad and angry with this disrespectful behaviour of the Brahmins Śiddhabhaṭṭa said, “If the Jain religion not be one that helps one cross the worldly ocean, if the Arihanta not be the all-knowing, if right belief and right conduct not be the path to salvation, or if there be no such thing as right belief in this world; then let this my son burn to ashes in the fire, but if all these exist, may not a hair on his body come to harm.” Saying this Śiddhabhaṭṭa threw his son into that fire.

Seeing this, the people assembled there began to cry out, “Oh, Oh, this foolish man has burnt his son”. But the moment they looked towards the fire they did not see even the signs of any fire there and in its place, instead was a huge lotus in full bloom and the child was happily playing on it. The people kept looking at the miracle in wonder.

Actually, it so happened that when Śiddhabhaṭṭa threw his son into the flames, a wandering celestial being (peripatetic deity), who was ever

keen to show the impact of right belief was coincidentally thereabouts, immediately made the fire to disappear and in its place, placed a huge lotus flower, thus saving the child. That peripatetic deity was in her previous birth a female-monk who had criticized the ascetic tradition because of which she became a peripatetic deity upon her death. When she asked an omniscient Lord the reason for her birth as a peripatetic deity, he clarified this point and suggested to her that she should always remain ready to show the influence of right belief and its development. Since then that peripatetic deity is every eager to show the effect of right belief. Śiddhabhaṭṭa returned home with his son. He told his wife everything. She told him he did not do the right thing. If our son had been burnt would right belief, the being of the religion founded by Jinendra, the Arihanta be negated? But their being has been proven throughout all times.

After that the Sulakṣaṇā has come here along with all those people of the village and her husband to make them steady in right belief. The Brahmin came here and asked me about it and I told him of the impact of right belief.

Liberation (Parinirvāṇa)

Ultimately, completing the age of 72 lakh pūrvas, Ajitanātha along with one thousand monks became emancipated, liberated and free on Sammetaśikhara observing fast on the 5th day of the bright fortnight of Caitra month. He spent 18 lakh pūrvas as a child, 53 lakh pūrvas or more as a king, 12 years as a mendicant and little less than 1 lakh pūrvas in the kevalī mode. For a long time his congregation continued successfully in which innumerable souls attained their well-being. His congregation had 95 gaṇadharas, 22,000 omniscient, 12,500 telepaths, 9400 clairvoyants, 3700 14-pūrvadhārīs (all prior canons knowing), 20,400 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 12,400 vādīs (excellent debators), 100,000 monks, 330000 female-monks, 298000 votaries and 545000 female votaries

Cakravartī Sagara

In the present declining happinesscycle in the Bharata region in Jambūdāvīpa king Sagara was the second cakravartī. Some years after Lord Ajitanātha's establishment of the tīrthas a heavenly cakra appeared in king Sagara's armoury. On this great occasion king Sagara instructed a festive celebration across his entire kingdom for eight days. This way, including the heavenly cakra jewel, a total of fourteen jewels appeared at the king's place.

Sagara gained victory over six divisions of Bharata and established his sovereign rule over the entire Bharata for 32,000 years. He had nine treasures. 32,000 crown kings were always ready to serve him. King Sagara's palace had 64,000 queens and 60,000 sons, including Sahasrāṁśu, Sahasrākṣa, Jahnu, Sahasrabāhu, etc. According to Ācārya Sīlāṁka's 54 Mahāpurīṣacariyaṁ and Ācārya Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭi śalākā puruṣa caritra, 60,000 sons including Sahasrāṁśu started a campaign for Bharata with the jewels such as Army General Jewel, Staff jewel, etc with a huge army. After traveling across many places they reached the mountain Aṣṭāpada. There they saw Jina temples and in order to preserve those temples they thought of digging a pit all around the mountain and dug up pits as low as the palaces of the Bhavanapatis. With the help of the staff-jewel, Jahnu dug up the banks of river Gaṁgā and filled the pits with water from there. The water reached the homes of the Bhavanapatis, which aroused the wrath of Nāgakumāras who through the poison in their eyes burnt the 60,000 sons into ashes.

Jain śāstras do not mention the events related to this story or the Jina temples constructed by Bharata. It is possible that the Jain ācāryas presented such a tale inspired by one narrated in the Purāṇas about Indra tying up the sacrificial horse of the king Sagara - desirous of conducting hundred aśvamegha sacrifices - in the netherworld near sage Kapila, and Sagara's sons reaching there and creating a ruckus. Whatever it may be, but king Sagara's narrative / story is one of disenchantment and gives a lesson. The story goes on as follows:-

Hearing of the death of all his sons at the same time produced a heart-rending pain in Sagara. He could not imagine that his state could be so pathetic, helpless and hopeless in spite of being the suzerain Lord of the

six regions of Bharata, the Lord of fourteen heavenly jewels, nine treasures, and a cakravartī emperor. He began to wail in anger as to what could be a better example of the meaninglessness of worldly riches and accomplishments and strength than this. What can be a greater mockery than this that a Lord of six divisions, a cakravartī emperor could not even protect his own family? This entire world is a dangerous web of illusion and a whodunit, unreal and false. It is futile to get stuck in its illusion. I wasted in vain my human life behind this meaningless wealth. Thus, what has to happen and has happened. Now I shall make my human life worthwhile.

This way, disenchanted by worldly affairs cakravartī Sagara anointed his grandson Bhagīratha on the throne and took initiation into mendicancy under Tīrthaṃkara Lord Ajitanātha, observed pure austerities and intense meditation. He destroyed the four obscuring karmas in the flame of his austerities and restraint and obtained pure knowledge and in the end, destroying the non-obscuring karmas also, obtained the immortal happy state of *nirvāṇa*.

Lord Śrī Saṃbhavanātha

A long time after Lord Ajitanātha came the third tīrthaṅkara, Śrī Saṃbhavanātha. In his past life as king Vipulavāhana, on account of highly meritorious deeds he gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāma-karma. King Vipulavāhana used to rule over the kingdom of Kṣemapurī. He loved his subjects. Once a terrible famine broke and Vipulavāhana was very worried. He could not see his subjects suffer the pangs of hunger. He ordered the officials that all food-stock in the warehouses of the kingdom should be distributed among the people. He took care of even the ascetics and religious people. He made arrangements to feed faultless food to the monks and mendicants and would feed the pious people in his presence till they were content. In this way, through serving the four-fold order of mendicants with pure feelings he gained pious karmas to become eligible for the Tīrthaṅkara status.

Once watching the clouds form and disperse he gained knowledge of the actual reality of this world and of impermanence and became detached in his mind. Taking initiation from Ācārya Svayaṃprabhu, he worshipped the religion of self-restraint and attaining his death by fasting, he became a god in the Ānata heaven in the ninth kalpa.

Birth and Naming

After completing his time as a god, Vipulavāhana's soul descended from the heaven into the womb of Senādevī, queen of king Jitāri of Śrāvastī, on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Fālguna month under the constellation Mṛgaśira. Queen Senādevī saw the 14 auspicious dreams that night and listening to the meaning of those dreams from the king Jitāri, became delighted. After nine months in the mother's womb, he was born at midnight, on the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa month under Mṛgaśira constellation. Ever since he entered the mother's womb the kingdom was brimming with huge quantities of sām̐ba grain (paddy), lentils, etc and the fields were verdant with paddy crops, hence his parents named him Saṃbhavanātha.

Marriage, kingship and initiation

After completing his childhood, when Saṃbhavanātha became a young man, the king Jitāri got him married and entrusting the kingdom to him,

became a renouncer. Though Saṃbhavanātha got married and sat on the throne at his father's request, his mind was always detached from worldly pleasures. He used to consider worldly pleasures like poisoned delicacies, that is to say, even a poisoned spread may taste sweet but proves deadly ultimately. Similarly the world's pleasures seem beautiful and give delight at the time of enjoying them but eventually they obscure the guṇas (attributes) of the soul. How shameful it is that a man, who gets the human life on account of great merit, destroys it in attachment and fulfillment of sensual desires. He thought he would himself take to the path of renunciation and inspire ordinary people and impart knowledge of the right faith.

This way, with good thoughts and looking after his subjects as a dutiful king, Saṃbhavanātha, after ruling as a king for 44 lakh pūrvas and 4 pūrvāṃgas, became disenchanted. As is appropriate, the lokāntika gods requested the Lord to accept mendicancy. After giving charities for one year (varṣīdāna) inspired by the renunciation of Saṃbhavanātha, determined to walk the path of self-discipline, 1000 other kings, too, took initiation on the full moon of Mārgaśīrṣa, after pulling out hair in five fistfuls and giving up all the bad karmas. Gods, celestial beings and men were all inspired by the sacrifice of Saṃbhavanātha. He conquered all the senses and mental delusions. When he took initiation he gained manaḥ paryavajñāna (knowledge of mental modes of others) and his initiation had a great impact on all the people.

At the time of his initiation Saṃbhavanātha was fasting (ṣaṣṭambhakta). The second day after the initiation he broke his fast at the house of the king of Sāvathī (Śrāvastī), Surendra and continued his journey to various regions.

Pure knowledge (Omniscience)

After four months of severe penance as a mendicant (*chadmastha*) Lord Saṃbhavanātha destroyed the four obscuring karmas and attained pure intuition and pure knowledge in Śrāvastī on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month under the constellation Mṛgaśira. After attaining pure knowledge, having given the sermon he founded the four-fold congregation and came to be called Tīrthaṅkara.

His main disciple was Cārujī. 102 Gaṇadharas, 15,000 omniscient, 12,150 telepaths, 9600 clairvoyants, 2150 of those who knew the 14 pūrvas (pūrvadhārīs), 19800 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 12000 vādīs, 200000 monks, 336000 female-monks, 293000 śrāvakas (laymen) and 636000 śrāvikā (laywomen) were part of his grand congregation.

Parinirvāṇa (Salvation / Liberation)

After being an omniscient for four pūrvāṅgas less than 1 lakh pūrvas he eventually attained nirvāṇa on the sixth day (chaṭha) of the bright half of the Caitra month under the Mṛgaśira constellation. He spent 15 lakh pūrvas as a youth, 4 pūrvāṅgas and 44 lakh pūrvas as a ruler, and a few years' less than 1 lakh pūrvas as a mendicant. Thus he had the life-span of 60 lakh pūrva years.

Lord Śrī Abhinandana

Following the third Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion Lord Saṃbhavanātha, Lord Śrī Abhinandana was the fourth Tīrthaṅkara. He was born in Ayodhya at the house of king Saṃvara. In his past life as king Mahābala he took initiation from Ācārya Vimalacandra and worshipped twenty reflections / causes (sthānakas or kāraṇas) of Tīrthaṅkaranāma karma and at the end, after his demise, was born as Anuttara god in the palace Vijaya. Descending from Vijaya palace (vimāna) he entered the womb of queen Siddhārthā on the fourth day of the bright half of the month Vaiśākha under the constellation Punarvasu. The queen saw the 14 great dreams, which made both her and the king very happy. On completion of her pregnancy period queen Siddhārthā gave birth to her son on the second day of the bright half of the month Māgha under the constellation Puṣya. From the time he entered her womb there was happiness all over, hence the parents and others named the child Abhinandana.

When Abhinandana reached marriageable age king Saṃvara got him married to suitable women. After this king Saṃvara became disinclined towards worldly pleasures and took initiation as a monk, and placing Abhinandana on the throne went on the spiritual self-restraint path. As a king Abhinandana ruled his kingdom in the best way and in his reign, taught his subjects about justice and to dispense their duties. In a detached manner after ruling peacefully and justly for thirty-six-and-a-half lakh pūrvas he decided to take initiation. On the request of the lokāntika gods and giving charities for one year, on the 12th day of the bright fortnight of the month Māgha under the constellation Abhijita, pulling out five fistfuls of hair, and giving up all the bad karmas, along with one thousand other kings, he renounced the worldly life

He did the two days 'belā' penance at the time of his initiation. The next day he broke his fast at the house of king Indradatta. The gods cried out, "*aho dānaṃ, aho dānaṃ*" ('Ah! the beautiful gift!') making a shower of five substances, flowers, etc. After initiation, for many years, he observed severe austerities and wandered about. Devoid of passions in the attitude of self restraint after wandering as a mendicant for 18 years, he attained pure knowledge and kevaladarśana in Ayodhya, on the 14th day of the bright fortnight of the month Pauṣa under the Abhijita constellation, after completely destroying the four obscuring karmas,

namely, knowledge obscuring (jñānāvaraṇīya), Intuition obscuring (darśanāvaraṇīya), Deluding (mohanīya) and Interfering (antarāya). Thereafter, he gave a sermon in the assembly of gods and men, explaining the difference between good and bad and showing the path towards well-being and established the four-fold order ultimately becoming a Tīrthaṅkara.

Lord Abhinandana spent 12 lakh pūrvas as a youth, 8 lakh pūrvāṅgas plus 36-and-a-half lakh pūrvas as king, and 8 pūrvāṅgas less than 1 lakh pūrvas as a monk, and this way, after spending a life of 50 lakh pūrvas, when his life came to an end, he undertook a fast for one month along with 1000 monks, and destroying all karmas, attained nirvāṇa on the eighth day of the bright half of the month Vaiśākha under the constellation Puṣya. Innumerable souls found their means of salvation through his pure teachings. 116 gaṇas and Gaṇadharas, 14000 omniscient, 11600 telepaths, 9800 Avadhijñānī, 1500 who knew the 14 purvas (pūrvadhāris), 19000 Vaikriya, 11000 vādīs, 300000 monks, 630000 female-monks, 288000 votaries and 527000 female votaries were part of his large congregation.

Lord Śrī Sumatinātha

After a large time gap of nine lakh crores sāgaras from fourth Tīrthaṃkara, Abhinandana came the fifth Tīrthaṃkara, Lord Śrī Sumatinātha.

There was a beautiful town full of happy and prosperous people called Puṣkalāvati Vijaya in Jambūdvīpa. A king named Vijayasena ruled there. King Vijayasena's wife was Sudarśanā. They did not have any children.

One day, on some occasion, people of all classes gathered for some fun and frolic in a large garden. Sitting on her palanquin queen Sudarśanā saw in that garden a woman enjoying herself and surrounded by eight newly-wed women. She was curious to find out about that woman. Her female attendant told her that she is the merchant Nandiṣeṇa's wife Sulakṣaṇā. She has two sons and these are her eight daughters-in-law.

Hearing this, Sudarśanā felt very sad at her childless state. She disliked herself that she could not become a mother of even a single child. She started thinking of what use is a woman's life, youth, wealth and prosperity if she did not have the joy of having a child. With these thoughts the queen went into deep depression. The ambience of the garden started to feel like a graveyard to her. Immediately, she returned to the palace.

Reaching her bedroom in the palace, she began to cry her heart out. A female attendant immediately informed the king of the situation. On hearing this, the king rushed to Sudarśanā at once. He wanted to know the reason for her sorrow so the person responsible may be punished.

The queen said, "Lord, I am responsible for this state of mine. I dislike this meaningless life of mine that I could not beget even a single child." King Vijayasena reassured her in every way and said, "I shall not leave a stone unturned to fulfill your desire through appropriate remedies, medicines, etc."

One day, king Vijayasena undertook the belā fast and worshipped the family goddess, thus pleasing the goddess who visited him in his dream and said, "You needn't lose hope. Soon you will get a glorious son."

Within a few days, in the last lap of the night the queen saw a young lion entering her mouth. Hearing about her dream the king cheerfully said, “Oh queen! As per the goddess’ words, you are going to get an illustrious son, brave as a lion.”

In good time queen Sudarśanā gave birth to an extremely bright son. She was filled with joy and happiness. A celebration was held in the palace. Prisoners were freed and people were made content with gifts. The naming ceremony was arranged with great fanfare and the prince was named Puruṣasiṃha.

The prince was brought up in royal splendour. In time, he was trained in all kinds of skills and the arts by able teachers. This way, when he became young, endowed with all good qualities, his parents got him married with pomp and gaiety to eight extremely beautiful and well qualified princesses. Prince Puruṣasiṃha started spending his life happily amid all the worldly pleasures.

One day, Prince Puruṣasiṃha reached a garden near Śaṃkhapura for some pleasure. There he saw a ācārya, named Vinayānanda, surrounded by monks at a beautiful spot. Seeing him his heart was filled with intense joy and he got goose pimples in excitement. He wondered who this great man was who, in full youth, has conquered lust (kāmadeva) and has become a Śramaṇa. Let me go to him and gain some special important knowledge from him about religion. He presented himself before the ācārya. After paying his respects he said to him, “Lord! Though I have understood that this world is meaningless, all the worldly pleasures are insipid, perfection over karmas extremely difficult, yet would you kindly tell me as to which religion is capable of (helping us) cross the ocean of worldliness?”

Very happy with the question of the prince, Ācārya Vinayānanda said, “Oh gentle one, you are blessed that despite possessing incomparable form and youth your mind has the curiosity for religious matters. From the aspects of sacrifice / giving, conduct, austerity, dharma is of four types. Dāna (giving) is also of four types – giving of knowledge (jñānadāna), giving protection from fear (abhaya -dāna), gift of the right path (dharmo-pagrahadāna) and gift of compassion (anukampādāna). Dharma has a second category – conduct. Adherence to the five

mahāvratas, forgiveness, gentleness / sweetness, simplicity, contentment, control of mind, to be ever alert towards carelessness through constantly being immersed in knowledge, to consider all living beings as friends and indifference to all the goings-on in the world by being without desires, unbiased and detached – this is śīla-dharma (conduct).

Dharma has a third category – tapa (austerity) dharma. Austerities are of two kinds – external and internal austerities. Fasting, eating only a small portion of food, etc are external austerities, and study of scriptures, meditation, suppression of the senses, etc are internal austerities. Gradually increasing the practice of these two types of austerities is tapa-dharma.

The fourth kind of dharma is ‘mental attitude (bhāvanā dharma)’. There are 12 types of attitudes hence bhāvanā dharma is also of 12 kinds. These are: 1 anitya bhāvanā (attitude towards impermanence) 2 aśaraṇa bhāvanā (helplessness) 3saṃsāra bhāvanā (transitory-ness) 4 ekatva bhāvanā (solitariness) 5 anyatva bhāvanā (otherness) 6 aśuci bhāvanā (impure thoughts / impurity) 7 āsrava bhāvanā (karmic influx) 8 saṃvara bhāvanā (stopping karmic influx) 9 nirjarā bhāvanā (dissociation of karmas) 10 lokaswarūpa bhāvanā (cosmos and its structure) 11 bodhidurlabha bhāvanā (rarity of enlightenment) and 12 dharma bhāvanā (spiritual conduct). If a person desirous of attaining salvation reflects, contemplates and focuses on even one of these 12 bhāvanās intensely, that person certainly becomes eligible for salvation very soon. This way the ācārya gave an elaborate exposition on dāna-śīla-tapa dharma.

Hearing from Ācārya Vinayānanda of the true form dharma, prince Puruṣasiṃha opened his mental eye. With folded hands, prostrating before the ācārya he requested, “Revered one! A new path becomes visible to me based on the beautiful form of dharma you have spoken to me of. I am now disgusted with worldly affairs. I request you to initiate me into Śramaṇadharmā and let me take refuge in you.”

Thus taking permission from his parents, prince Puruṣasiṃha took initiation from Ācārya Vinayānanda into Śramaṇa-dharma (mendicancy). After accepting the path of mendicancy he studied the āgamas under his teacher with great dedication, and for a long time, adhering to self-discipline (observing austerities), he attained the nāma karma of a Tīrthaṃkara out of excellent veneration of several causes /reflections out

of twenty. In the end, dying by fasting, he emerged as a powerful god of 33 ocean measured periods in the Vaijayanta palace (vimāna).

Birth of Sumatinātha and naming Ceremony

After completing the stage of residence in the Vaijayanta vimāna, the soul of Puruṣasiṃha descended from there and entered into the womb of queen Maṅgalāvātī on the second day of the bright half of Śravaṇa month under the Maghā constellation. Thereafter, mother Maṅgalāvātī dreamt the 14 auspicious dreams and was very happy. On completion of her pregnancy period she happily gave birth to a son on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha at the midnight hour under Maghā constellation. When he was in her womb, she had resolved fairly complex problems using her balanced intellect hence the son was named Sumatinātha.

Marriage, Kingship and Initiation

When prince Sumatinātha became a young man, the king married him off to suitable brides. Up to 29 lakh pūrvas, after enjoying the king's position, he became inclined towards the path of perfection. On request by the lokāntika gods, after giving charities for one year, he along with a thousand other kings, pulled out five fistfuls of hair and on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha, under Maghā constellation, giving up bad karmas, turned monk.

Pure knowledge and Sermon

At the time of initiation he was observing a fast. On the second day, the Lord reached Vijayapura and there he agreed to break his fast at king Padma's house. After initiation he remained a mendicant for 20 years, wandering about and practicing many kinds of austerities. He stopped the influx of karmas through adherence to dharma. Then he reached Sahasrāmravana where he entered the meditative state and after destroying the obscuring karmas, attained pure knowledge and pure intuition on the eleventh day of the Caitra month under Maghā constellation. After attaining pure knowledge the Lord gave a sermon in the assembly of gods, men and celestial beings on the mokṣamārga (path to salvation) and established the four-fold order, thereby becoming Tīrthaṅkara.

Out of 40 lakh pūrvas Lord Sumatinātha spent 10 lakh pūrvas as a young man, 29 lakh 11 pūrvāṅgas as a king, 12 pūrvāṅgas less of 1 lakh pūrvas as mendicant and monk and sensing the end of his life-span, he remained on fast for a month and on the ninth day of the bright half of the Caitra month under Punarvasu constellation, destroying the 4 non obscuring karmas also attained nirvāṇa.

Besides 100 Gaṇadharas, Lord Sumatinātha's religious congregation had 13000 omniscient, 10450 telepaths, 11000 clairvoyants, 2400 14-pūrvadhārīs, 18400 vaikriya-labdhidhārīs, 10650 vādīs, 320000 monks, 530000 female-monks, 281000 votaries and 516000 female votaries

Lord Śrī Padmaprabha

Lord Śrī Padmaprabha was the sixth Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion. He was born in the house of the king of Kauśāmbī. He gained the nāmākarma of Tīrthaṅkara in his previous life as king Aparājita.

Previous Incarnation

King Aparājita ruled over the city of Susīmā. He used to behave in accordance with justice and righteousness. One day, disgusted with worldly things, he accepted the path of perfection (the holy path) at the feet of the monk Pihitāśrava and by veneration of the arihantas and twenty causes / reflections gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmākarma. At the end of his life, through meditation, after death, he became an excellent god of 31 sāgaras of Graiveyaka.

Birth and Naming

After completing the life-span of a Graiveyaka god, the soul of Aparājita descended from the devaloka into the womb of Susīmā, queen of the king of Kauśāmbī, on the sixth day of the dark half of the Māgha month under the constellation Citrā. The queen saw the 14 auspicious dreams. He was born on the 12th day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month under Citrā constellation. During pregnancy, queen mother Susīmā had the whim of sleeping on a lotus bed and the child's body reflected the splendour of the lotus. Hence the parents named him Padmaprabha.

Marriage and Initiation

After completing his childhood the moment Padmaprabha became a young man. King Dhara married him off to suitable women. After remaining a young man for 8 lakh pūrvas, Śrī Padmaprabha became king. After ruling for more than 21 lakh pūrvas, realizing how futile are the karmas associated with enjoyment (or worldly things), he became inclined towards the path of salvation. On request by the lokāntika gods after giving charities for a year, he formally took initiation observing a day or two's fast. On the 13th day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month, at the same time a thousand princes and others took initiation with him.

The next day he broke his fast at Brahmasthala at the house of king Somadeva. The gods showered flowers, etc, to bless the giving (dāna).

Pure knowledge (Omniscience)

After wandering about as a mendicant and observing intense austerities for 6 months he reached Sahasrāmavana. There observing a fast under the Banyan tree, staying fixed in the kāyotsarga (standing, both arms downwards) posture, in deep meditation, he destroyed the obscuring karmas and on the full moon day of Caitra month under Citra constellation, obtained omniscience. Upon obtaining pure knowledge, he gave religious sermon, established the four-fold order and became a Tīrthaṅkara who is the possessor of four infinities (ananta catuṣṭaya), a knower of all the worlds, a visionary and preceptor.

His grand congregation had 107 Gaṇadharas, 12000 omniscient, 10300 telepaths, 10000 clairvoyants, 2300 14-pūrvadhārīs, 16800 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 9600 vādīs, 330000 monks, 420000 female-monks, 276000 votaries and 505000 female votaries.

Lord Padmaprabha instructed about the meritorious path for many years after becoming a kevalī. At the end of his life-span, sensing the same, fasting for one month, on the eleventh day of the dark half of Mārgaśīrṣa month under the constellation Citrā, stopping all activities, he became enlightened and liberated. His total life-span was 30 lakh pūrvas of which 6 pūrvāṅgas less of 7-and-a-half pūrvas were spent as a youth, 21-and-a-half lakh pūrvas as king and a little less of a lakh pūrvas as mendicant following the caritra-dharma after which he gained nirvāṇa.

Lord Śrī Supārśvanātha

The seventh Tīrthaṅkara after Lord Padmaprabha was Śrī Supārśvanātha. In his previous incarnation Lord Supārśvanātha was king Nandisena of Kṣemapurī. Taking initiation into the right path from Ācārya Aridamana, he gained the nāmakarma of Tīrthaṅkara by venerating the 20 causes /reflections. Eventually, at the end of his life, he became a powerful god in the sixth Graiveyaka heaven. Completing his term in the Graiveyaka, on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapada month under constellation Viśākhā, he entered the womb of Pṛthvī, the queen of King Pratiṣṭhasena of Vārāṇasī. That same night the queen saw the 14 dreams indicating the birth of a great person and at the end of her pregnancy period, she happily gave birth to a son on the 12th day of the bright half of the Jyeṣṭha month under the constellation Viśākhā.

On the 12th day at the time of the naming ceremony, recounting that the mother should maintain her rear beautiful during pregnancy, the king named the son Supārśvanātha. At marriageable age, Supārśvanātha was married off to suitable women and thereafter, he was crowned king. The Lord enjoyed the king's position for some 14 lakh *pūrvas* or more directing subjects on the path of righteousness and justice.

After ruling for a long time, considering useless the sensual karmas, he wished to accept the spiritual path. Upon request by the lokāntika gods, he gave charities for one year, and on the 13th day of the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, took initiation along with 1000 other kings. Having fasted he pulled out five fistfuls of hair in the garden and getting rid of all faults forever, became a monk. Next day his first fast-breaking happened at the house of Mahendra, the king of Pāṭalikaṇḍa.

He wandered about for 9 months observing various austerities as a mendicant. Then, reaching Sahasrāmravana, entered into deep meditation. Destroying the four obscuring karmas such as knowledge deluding, he attained pure knowledge and pure intuition on the sixth day of the bright fortnight of Fālguna under Viśākhā constellation. On becoming a kevalī he gave religious discourse at a grand assembly attended by gods and men, explaining the difference between inanimate and animate, said all things in the apparent world, including even the

body, are not ours. To consider the outer / apparent things as one's own is the root cause of sorrow. Hearing this sermon of his, thousands of men and women became followers of the path of self-restraint. The Lord founded the four-fold creed (tīrtha) and got the status of Tīrthaṅkara.

His congregation had 95 gaṇas and Gaṇadhara, the chief among them being Vidarbha. There were also 1100 omniscient, 9150 telepaths, 9000 clairvoyants, 2350 14 - pūrvadhārīs, 15300 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 8400 Vādīs, 300000 monks, 430000 female-monks, 257000 votaries and 493000 female-votaries.

Out of a total life-span of 20 lakh pūrvas, after spending 5 lakh pūrvas as a youth, a little more than 14 lakh pūrvas as king, 20 pūrvāṅgas less than 1 lakh pūrvas in the spiritual path of self-restraint, when he sensed his life coming to an end, after a month's fast, he attained enlightenment and nirvāṇa, destroying the four obscuring karmas on the 7th day of the dark half of Fālgun and, with him 500 monks, too, became liberated.

Lord Śrī Candraprabha Swāmī

Following Lord Supārśvanātha, Śrī Candraprabha Swāmī became the 8th Tīrthaṅkara. In his previous incarnation as king Padma of Maṅgalāvati city in Dhātākikhaṇḍa, he practised various austerities and consequently developed detachment and taking initiation from the monk Yugandhara he practiced right conduct and by 20 instruments (sthānakas) gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma (karmas responsible for embodiment). At the end of his lifespan he became a powerful god in Vijaya palace.

From Vijaya his soul descended into the womb of Sulakṣaṇā, queen of king Mahāsenā of Candrapurī on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of Caitra month under the Anurādhā constellation. The queen saw the 14 highly auspicious dreams that same night. After completing her pregnancy queen Sulakṣaṇā gave birth to a jewel of a son at the midnight hour on the 11th (12th) day of the dark half of the Pauṣa month under Anurādhā constellation. His birth ceremony was celebrated with great pomp and joy by the gods and celestial beings on the Ati-Pāṇḍu-Kāmbala hillock.

Inviting people to his son's naming ceremony on the 12th day king Padmasena said the pregnancy whim of the boy's mother was to enjoy the moon and the child's body reflects the aura of the moon, hence the boy is named Candraprabha.

When Candraprabha became a young man the king got him married to suitable princesses. After remaining a prince for two-and-a-half lakh pūrvas he was crowned king and he conducted the affairs of the kingdom for a little more than 6 lakh pūrvas and propagated righteousness. Realising the futility of the worldly pleasures the Lord resolved to get initiated as a monk. Upon prayers by the lokāntika gods and a year's giving of charities, he observed a ṣaṣṭabhakta fast with thousand other kings. On the 12th day of the dark half of the Pauṣa month under Anurādhā constellation, completely ridding himself of all bad karmas Lord Candraprabha was initiated into monkhood. The next day he broke the fast at the house of Somadatta, the king of Padmakhaṇḍa by accepting milk, the gods showered five kinds of rain and established the importance of charity / donations.

Wandering for three months as mendicant Candraprabha reached Sahasrāmavana. There he went into a deep meditative state under the Priyaṅgu tree. On the 7th day of the dark fortnight of the Fālguna month, destroying four obscuringkarmas including knowledge deluding, he attained pure intuition and pure knowledge. Then in a large gathering of gods and men gave a sermon about śruta and caritra dharma (scripture and conduct) and re-established the four-fold order. Remaining omniscient for a little less than 1 lakh pūrvas the Lord blessed all beings.

His congregation had 93 gaṇas and Gaṇadharas, 10000 omniscient, 8000 telepaths, 8000 clairvoyants, 2000 14-pūrvadhārīs, 14000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 7600 Vādīs, 250000 monks, 380000 female-monks, 250000 votaries and 491000 female-votaries.

When the Lord saw his end approaching, he fasted for a month on Sammetaśikhara along with 1000 monks and in unobstructed meditation (state of inactivity or 14th guṇasthāna) he destroyed the remaining four non obscuring karmas and on the 7th day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapada under Anurādhā constellation, he attained enlightenment and nirvāṇa.

His age was 10 lakh pūrvas out of which he spent two-and-a-half lakh pūrvas as prince, three-and-a-half lakh pūrvas as king, and a little less than 1 lakh pūrvas as mendicant before attaining liberation.

Lord Śrī Suvidhinātha

The ninth Tīrthaṅkara after Śrī Candraprabha was Śrī Suvidhinātha. He is also known as Puṣpadanta. King Sugrīva of Kākandī city and queen Rāmādevī were his parents.

In a previous life(incarnation) as the king Mahāpadma of Puṣkalāvati Vijaya he had developed disinterest in worldly matters and taken initiation from the monk Jagannanda and through excellent austerities obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. At the end of his life-span observing a fast unto death, he became a powerful god in Vaijayanta vimāna (celestial vehicle). After leaving the Vaijayanta vimāna, Mahāpadma's soul entered into the womb of queen Rāmādevī on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Fālguna under Mūla constellation. Rāmādevī got the 14 auspicious dreams the same night. Upon completion of her pregnancy period Rāmādevī gave birth to a son on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa under Mūla constellation. The gods and the parents celebrated the joy of his birth and for ten days the atmosphere of Kākandī city was one of gaiety.

During her pregnancy the mother was happy in all ways so the king Sugrīva named the boy Suvidhinātha. During her pregnancy the queen Rāmādevī had craving for flowers so the child was also named Puṣpadanta. When he had completed a thousand pūrvas he was married to suitable women. After his marriage, considering him eligible, he was crowned king. For a little more than 50000 pūrvas he ably managed the kingdom being unattached to it.

After thus ruling Śrī Suvidhinātha desired to take up the path of self-restrain. The lokāntikagods dutifully requested him. After giving charities for one year, he took initiation with 1000 kings. On the 6th day of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa the Lord reached Sahasrāmavana and under the constellation Mūla, destroying all sinful karmas he became a mendicant. Soon after becoming a mendicant he attained telepathic knowledge. The next day he broke his fast with rice pudding at the house of the king of Śvetapura. The gods showered five kinds of things to express the greatness of the giving.

Bearing with many hardships for four months he wandered from village to village. Then coming to the same garden the Lord ascended the

accelerated class of annihilating karmas (Kṣapakaśreṇī) and in deep meditation, destroying the obscuring karmas, under the Mālūra tree on the 3rd day of the bright fortnight of Kārtika month under the constellation Mūla, he attained pure knowledge. Becoming an omniscient he addressed a large gathering of gods and men and established the four-fold order being called a Tīrthaṃkara.

The Lord's congregation consisted of 88 Gaṇadharas, 7500 omniscient, 7500 telepaths, 8400 clairvoyants, 1500 14-pūrvadhārīs, 13000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 6000 vādīs, 200000 monks, 120000 female-monks, 229000 votaries and 472000 female-votaries.

Adhering to the spiritual path for a little less than 1 lakh pūrvas, the Lord, sensing the end of his life-span, observed a one-month long fast on Sammetaśikhara with 1000 monks. Then, stopping all activities, destroying the 4 non obscuring karmas, he attained enlightenment and nirvāṇa on the 9th day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapada. It is said that because of a fault of the time-period after Suvidhinātha, the monkorder discontinued and votaries began to give instructions of their own accord on charity, etc. It is possible that this was the important time of propagation of Brahminical culture.

Lord Śrī Śīṭalanātha

Lord Śrī Śīṭalanātha became the 10th Tīrthaṅkara after Lord Śrī Suvidhinātha. He was born as the son of Nandādevī, queen of the king of Bhaddilapura, Dṛḍharatha.

Lord Śrī Śīṭalanātha in his previous incarnation as king Padmottara of Susīmā city ruled for many years and then took initiation into monkhood from the Ācārya ‘Strastāgha’ and after difficult austerities gained the nāmakarma of Tīrthaṅkara. At the end of his time, observing fast and completing the life-span he became a god of 20 sāgaras in the Prāṇata heaven. His soul entered the womb of Nandādevī after leaving the Prāṇat heaven on the sixth day of the dark fortnight of Vaiśākha under the Pūrvāṣāḍhā constellation. The queen saw the 14 auspicious dreams. After completion of her pregnancy she gave birth to a son on the 12th day of the dark fortnight of Māgha under Pūrvāṣāḍhā constellation. King Dṛḍharatha celebrated the birth to his heart’s fill.

The king’s body used to burn terribly and nothing would cure him of this. During her pregnancy one day by the mere touch of queen Nandādevī the long-term pain and burning sensation of the king was cured and he felt coolness and soothing feeling in his mind and body. Hence he named the boy Śīṭalanātha.

From boyhood Śīṭalanātha entered his youth. The parents got him married to suitable brides. After remaining in the role of prince for 25000 pūrvas, on constant pleas of his father, with a detached attitude he ruled the kingdom for 50000 pūrvas and then, sensing the end of the cycle of sensual enjoyments, he expressed desire to take initiation.

Coming to know of Lord Śīṭalanātha’s desire, the lokāntika gods accordingly requested him to do so. After giving one year of charities the Lord reached Sahasrāmṛavana and observing fast, got rid of all the bad karmas and on the 12th day of the dark fortnight of Māgha under Pūrvāṣāḍhā constellation, became a mendicant and immediately thereafter obtained telepathic knowledge. The next day at the home of the king of Ariṣṭapura, Punarvasu, he broke his fast with rice pudding. After this for three months bearing with many kinds of ordeals as a mendicant he again reached Sahasrāmṛavana and under a Pīpala tree

observed deep meditation. In deep meditation he destroyed the four obscuring karmas and on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of Pauṣa under Pūrvāṣāḍhā constellation he attained pure knowledge.

After becoming a kevalī, he gave a sermon in the assembly of gods, celestial beings and men. Speaking of the sad desire for impermanent things in the world, he instructed about the efforts to walk on the path of salvation (mokṣamārga) and established the four-fold order, thus becoming a Tīrthaṅkara.

A little less than 25000 pūrvas he observed the spiritual path of restraint and thereafter sensing his life span coming to an end, observed a month's fast with 1000 monks. Eventually, stopping the activities of the mind, speech and body, destroying all karmas on the 2nd day of the dark half of Vaiśākha under Pūrvāṣāḍhā constellation, he attained enlightenment and nirvāṇa.

His congregation had 81 gaṇas and Gaṇadharas, 7000 omniscient, 7500 telepaths, 7200 clairvoyants, 1400 14-pūrvadhārīs, 12000 vaikriya labdhidhārīs, 5800 vādīs, 100000 monks, 100006 female-monks, 289000 votaries and 458000 female-votaries.

Lord Śrī Śreyāṃsanātha

The 11th Tīrthaṅkara after Lord Śrī Śīṭalanātha was Śrī Śreyāṃsanātha. Śrī Śreyāṃsanātha was the son of Viṣṇudevī, queen of the king Viṣṇu of Siddhapurī city. In his previous incarnation he was the king Nalinagulma of the island Puṣkara. Giving up royal enjoyments which seemed akin to the disease of (obsession for) royalty he took initiation under monk Vajradanta and wandering about and devoid of passions he obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma by 20 instruments / reflections (sthānakas). Ultimately, completing his life-span in pure meditation Nalinagulma became a god with extraordinary powers (ṛddhidhārī) in the Mahāśukra kalpa (heaven).

On the 6th day of the dark half of the month Jyeṣṭha under Śravaṇa constellation Nalinagulma's soul left the heavenly abode and entered queen Viṣṇudevī's womb. The mother saw 14 auspicious dreams that night. Completing her pregnancy period, she gave birth to a son on the 12th day of the dark fortnight of Fālguna. The entire royal family and the kingdom benefitted from the birth of the boy hence his parents named him Śreyāṃsanātha. When he entered his youth, on his father's request he married suitable women. At the age of 21 lakh years he became the king. For 22 lakh years he managed the kingdom judiciously.

After his karmas of enjoyment became futile when he expressed the desire to follow the spiritual path accordingly the *lokāntika* gods requested him. For a year he gave charities and on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of Fālguna under constellation Śravaṇa; he, along with 1000 other kings, observed the 'belā' fast, taking initiation as a mendicant. At Sahasrāmrvana under the Aśoka tree, renouncing all bad karmas he became a monk / renouncer. The next day he broke his fast at the home of king Nanda of Siddhārthapura with rice pudding. After initiation he wandered about for two months as mendicant, bearing with all kinds of hardships with determination and firmness. Observing a fast, ascending the kṣapakaśreṇī on the day of the new moon in conjunction in the month of Māgha, destroying obscuring karmas, he attained pure intuition and pure knowledge. This way, becoming a kevalī, Lord Śreyāṃsanātha addressed a large gathering of gods-men about scripture and conduct and establishing the four-fold order, became a Tīrthaṅkara. After attaining pure knowledge, Lord Śreyāṃsanātha,

wandering about, reached Potanapura. Triṛṣṭha became delighted at the news of his coming and reached to offer worship at the feet of the Lord with his elder brother Acala Baldeva. Hearing the speech like a shower of nectar of samyakh-dharma both brothers accepted the path of self-discipline. Prince Triṛṣṭha and Acala Baladeva were the sons of king Prajāpati and the first Vasudeva and first Baladeva, respectively, of avasarpinī cycle.

The previous incarnation of Lord Mahāvīra, Marīci's soul, in fact, was born as Triṛṣṭha. When the first PratiVasudeva, Aśvagrīva, heard the prophecy from his occult astrologers about the birth of one who would kill him, worried, he started looking out for his rival.

When he learnt of Triṛṣṭhakumāra slaying the fearsome lion in Śālīkheta and freeing people from its terror, he understood that Triṛṣṭhakumāra would be his slayer. Knowing this he decided to get both the brothers killed on the sly by inviting them and sent a message through king Prajāpati. In response to this message Triṛṣṭha sent the message – “We are not ready to take any rewards from a king who could not even kill a lion.” Hearing this Aśvagrīva was filled with anger and attacked Prajāpati with an army. In order to prevent unnecessary killing of men on the battlefield, Triṛṣṭha challenged Aśvagrīva to a duel, whereby, killing Aśvagrīva, Triṛṣṭha became sovereign of half of Bharata.

One day, while enjoying sweet music, when it was time for him to sleep, he instructed the doorkeeper of the sleep chamber that if he fell asleep the music must be stopped. Lost in the melodious music, the attendant forgot the instructions of Triṛṣṭha. When Triṛṣṭha woke up and found the music still playing, in anger he ordered hot glass to be poured into the ears of the doorkeeper, who died in pain. Triṛṣṭha's restraint was destroyed by this cruel act and he attained to a life in hell. After 84 lakh pūrvas of life-span he went to the seventh hell.

When Baladeva heard of the death of his brother, becoming overwhelmed by grief due to brotherly love, losing reason, he cried pitiably and fainted. Recovering consciousness, being advised by elders to self-reflect, he realised the meaninglessness of the world and turning his back to worldly matters, taking initiation from Ācārya Dharmaghoṣa,

destroying all karmas through austerities and restraint, became enlightened and liberated. His life span was 85 lakh pūrvas.

After attaining pure knowledge Lord Śreyāṃsanātha wandered for two months less than 21 lakh years around the world, showing the path of self-salvation to living beings. Sensing his life coming to an end, observing fast along with 1000 monks, in the third stage of deep meditation, stopping all activities and getting rid of all karmas, he became enlightened and liberated on the 3rd day of the dark fortnight of Śravaṇa month under constellation Dhaniṣṭhā.

He was 84 lakh years old. The congregation of Lord Śreyāṃsanātha had 76 Gaṇadharas, 6500 omniscient, 6000 telepaths, 6000 clairvoyants, 1300 14-pūrvadhārīs, 11000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 5000 vādīs, 84000 monks, 103000 female-monks, 279000 votaries and 448000 female-votaries.

Lord Śrī Vāsupūjya

Lord Śrī Vāsupūjya was the 12th Tīrthaṃkara after Śreyāṃsanātha. In his previous incarnation he was king Padmottara of the Maṃgalāvātī Vijaya on the island of Puṣkarārḍha. As Padmottara he constantly devoted himself to the Jina's teachings. He always knew in his mind that wealth is finite and deeds of merit destructible. Hence the true well-being rests in attaining salvation alone. By coincidence he met guru Vajranābha. Becoming interested after hearing his instructions, king Padmottara took initiation and contemplating and practicing instruments (sthānakas) through intense, difficult austerities, obtained the Tīrthaṃkara nāmākarma. At the end of his life, in deep meditation, he became a powerful god in the Prāṇata heaven.

India's famous city of Campā had for its king Vasupūjya, and his queen was Jayādevī. The soul of Padmottara, after its time in Prāṇata heaven, entered the womb of queen Jayādevī on the 9th day of the bright half of the Jyeṣṭha month under constellation Śatabhiṣā. The queen saw the 14 auspicious realms and after completing her pregnancy period, gave birth to a son on the 14th day of the dark half of Fālguna under constellation Śatabhiṣā. Since he was the son of king Vāsupūjya, he was named Vāsupūjya.

According to Ācārya Hemacandra, Vāsupūjya was considered unmarried / a celibate since birth. Jinasena and the Digambara tradition too, have the same view. According to Hemcandra when prince Vāsupūjya became eligible for marriage the king Vasupūjya expressed his desire that you, too, should, like the previous Tīrthaṃkara, follow the former tradition of marriage, kingship, initiation and mendicancy. Responding to his father Vāsupūjya told him those people had certain bhoga-karmas (karmas of enjoyment of worldly pleasures) left while I do not have any. In future, too, Mallinātha, Neminātha, etc will take initiation unmarried; hence you may grant me permission to take the spiritual path of self-restraint. According to Hemcandra his parents agreed with him and he took initiation without enjoying married life or kingship. However, Ācārya Sīlāṃka mentions his having married and ruled for some time before taking initiation. In fact, the activities of Tīrthaṃkara as householder happens in accordance with their bhoga-karmas, hence his being married

or not does not have any special meaning here. Marriage is not an obstruction to Tīrthamkara -hood of a Tīrthamkara.

Completing 18 lakh years, on the lokāntika gods' prayers, Vāsūpūjya gave charities for a year and thereafter with 600 other kings, took initiation with a one-day fast (called caturthabhakta) and on the dark half of the moon being in conjunction in the Fālguna month, under the constellation Śatabhiṣā, renouncing all bad deeds, became a Śramaṇa. On the second day, at the home of king Sunanda he broke his first fast with rice pudding. The gods showered the five auspicious things to express the greatness of the giving/ charity (dāna).

After taking initiation the Lord wandered as a mendicant for a month and in that same garden under the Pāṭalā tree became meditative. In the second stage of deep meditation, destroying the four ghātikarmas, on the second day of the bright half of Māgha month under the constellation Śatabhiṣā, he obtained pure knowledge after a day's fast. As a kevalī the Lord gave a sermon to the gods, demigods and men in a grand assembly, and explaining the ten-fold dharma including kṣānti etc, founded the four-fold creed and became Tīrthamkara of the period. While wandering when Lord Vāsūpūjya arrived at Dwārikā, the second Vasudeva of the time, Dviprṣṭha, hearing the news of his arrival, presented himself there and accepted the path of self-restraint hearing the detached speech. Baladeva Vijaya also accepted the spiritual path and in time became a monk and attained liberation.

This way, like Lord Śreyāṃsanātha, Lord Vāsūpūjya also had a vast influence over the royalty of that time. One month less of 54 lakh years he wandered as a kevalī, preaching lakhs of people and in the end at Campā city, along with 600 monks, he observed a month-long fast and in the fourth stage of deep meditation, stopped all activities, breaking all karmas and attained enlightenment and nirvāṇa on the 14th day of the bright half of Āṣāḍha under the constellation Uttarābhādrapada.

His congregation had 66 gaṇas and Gaṇadharas, 6000 omniscient, 6100 telepaths, 5400 clairvoyants, 1200 14-pūrvadhārīs, 10000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 4700 vādīs, 72000 monks, 100000 female-monks, 215000 votaries (śrāvakas) and 436000 female-votaries.

Lord Śrī Vimalanātha

After the 12th Tīrthaṅkara Lord Vāsupūjya Lord Vimalanātha was the 13th Tīrthaṅkara. His birthplace was Kāmpilapura. King Kṛtavarmā of flawless fame was his father, and his pious and virtuous queen, Śyāmā was his mother.

In his past incarnation Lord Śrī Vimalanātha was king Padmasena of the great city Mahāpurī in Dhātākikhaṇḍa. He became disinterested after listening to the discourse of monk Sarvagupta. Taking initiation with flawless feeling he observed the vows and 20 instruments /reflections (sthānakas) attained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma, and ending his life in fasting, he became a god in the 8th Sahasrāra-kalpa. Leaving his heavenly abode his soul entered the womb of queen Śhyāmā of Kāmpilapura on the bright 12th day of Vaiśākha month under constellation Uttarābhādrapada. The mother saw the 14 auspicious dreams the same night and after a happy pregnancy, gave birth to her son on the 3rd day of the bright fortnight of Māgha month with the moon being in conjunction in Uttarābhādrapada. During the time that the child was in her womb the mother remained pure in body and mind hence the child was named Vimalanātha.

When Vimalanātha became a young boy he got married to suitable women on the request of his parents. After spending 15 lakh years as a youth he accepted the king's responsibilities. He conducted the affairs of the kingdom for 30 lakh years judiciously and righteously. After completing 45 lakh years he expressed the desire to get initiated into the arihanta-dharma. Requested by lokāntika gods he gave the year-long charities and later on the 4th day of the bright half of the Māgha month, under constellation Uttarābhādrapada, along with 1000 other kings, observed a fast at Sahasrāmrvana, and giving up all bad karmas, became a mendicant. The next day he broke his fast at the home of Jaya, king of Dhānyakaṭapura with rice pudding. From hereon, the Lord wandered for two years bearing with different kinds of hardships with equanimity. The, reaching the place where he took initiation, ascending the kṣapakaśreṇī, breaking the four ghātikarmas, on the 6th day of the bright half of Pauṣa month, under constellation Uttarābhādrapada, observing a fast, he attained pure intuition and knowledge.

Following his attainment of pure knowledge, wandering about, the Lord reached Dvārikā. The Vasudeva Svayāmbhū of the time also was present in the auspicious religious gathering (samavaśaraṇa). He accepted the dharma of self restraint and many men and women accepted the doctrine and the practice hearing the Lord's discourse. The Lord established the four-fold order and rendered meaningful the position of Tīrthaṃkara.

His congregation had Mandara etc 56 gaṇas and Gaṇadhara, 5500 omniscient, 5500 telepaths, 4800 clairvoyants, 1100 Fourteen-pūrvadhārīs, 9000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 3200 vādīs, 68000 monks, 100800 female-monks, 208000 votaries and 424000 female-votaries.

The 3rd PratiVasudeva of that era, Meraka, Vasudeva Svayāmbhū and Baladeva Bhadra were contemporaries of Lord Vimalanātha. During His tenure the Jain religion had influenced ordinary people as well as leaders. Vasudeva Svayāmbhū and Baladeva Bhadra accepted samyaktva (right path) on hearing Lord's discourse. After Svayāmbhū's death, Bhadra became a monk and after living for 65 lakh years, attained liberation in the end.

Lord Vimalanātha preached the message of truthful path among people as an omniscient for 2 years less than 15 lakh years. Sensing the end of his life-span he, along with 600 monks, observed a month's fast and destroying non obscuring karmas (aghātikarmas), attained liberation and nirvāṇa on the seventh day of the dark half of Āṣāḍha under Revatī constellation. He was aged 65 lakh years.

Lord Śrī Anantanātha

Following Lord Vimalanātha, Śrī Anantanātha became the 14th Tīrthaṅkara. In his previous incarnation Śrī Anantanātha was Padmaratha, the king of Ariṣṭā city in Dhātakīkhaṇḍa. He was a courageous and brave king. Though he conquered the entire earth by his prowess yet after a while he took initiation from the preceptor Cittarakṣa and became immersed in the attainment of liberation. By the strength of his austerities and restraint he attained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. At the end, leaving his material body, in pure meditation, he became a powerful god in the tenth heaven.

On the seventh day of the dark half of the Śravaṇa month under Revatī constellation, his soul left the heaven and entered the womb of Suyasā, queen of king Siṃhasena of Ayodhya. The mother saw the 14 auspicious dreams and at the end of her pregnancy period delivered a son on the 13th day of the dark half of Vaiśākha month under constellation Revatī. After celebrating the birth of the son for ten days, the king, thinking that ‘when the child was in the womb, a huge and difficult army that came to attack had been won over’, named the son Anantanātha.

Completing 7 lakh 50 thousand years of his life as a boy when Anantanātha became a young man the king got him married to suitable women and seated him on the royal throne. Having ruled the kingdom justly for 15 lakh years, he resolved to become a monk on prayers by the lokāntika gods. He gave charities for a year and on the 14th day of the dark half of the month Vaiśākha under Revatī constellation, along with 1000 other kings, got initiated as a monk, and renounced all past bad deeds. He observed a fast (belā) which he broke the next day at the home of the king of Varddhamānapura, Vijaya Bhūpa, with rice pudding.

After wandering as a mendicant for three years, Lord Anantanātha reached Sahasrāmavana and became meditative under the Aśoka tree. In the second stage of deep meditation through kṣapakaśreṇī, relieving himself of passions broke all obscuring karmas, and on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of Vaiśākha under Revatī constellation, through a fast, attained pure knowledge. Upon attaining pure knowledge, Lord Anantanātha gave religious sermon and establishing the four-fold creed. He became the Tīrthaṅkara of the period. When he was close to Dwārikā, the Vasudeva of that period Puruṣottama and the Baladeva

Suprabha listened to his sermon and attained samyaktva (right perception). Baladeva Suprabha became a monk, having become disenchanted after killing his brother and in the end attained liberation.

The congregation of Lord Anantanātha had 50 gaṇas and gaṇadharas, 5000 omniscient, 5000 telepaths, 4300 clairvoyants, 900 14-pūrvadhārīs, 8000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 3200 vādīs, 66000 monks, 62000 female-monks, 206000 votaries and 414000 female votaries.

After wandering as an omniscient for three years less than 7 lakh years, the Lord observed a month-long fast unto death along with 1000 monks and on the 5th day of the bright fortnight of Caitra under constellation Revatī, having completed a life-span of 30 lakh years, destroying all karmas, became enlightened and attained salvation.

Lord Śrī Dharmanātha

The 15th Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion was Lord Śrī Dharmanātha. In his past life he was Siṃharatha, the king of Bhaddilapura, located in east Videha in Dhātakīkhaṇḍa. He was valorous and ruled over a vast empire. He was very interested in religion, considering insipid all worldly pleasures and renouncing them, became a Jain mendicant taking initiation from the monk Vimalavāhana and observing all austerities obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. After spending a contemplative existence with equanimity and endurance for a long time he became a powerful god in the Vaijayanta vimāna (celestial transport vehicle). Completing his term there Siṃharatha's soul entered the womb of Suvratā, the queen of the valiant king Bhānu of Ratnapura on the 7th day of the bright half of the Vaiśākha month under constellation Puṣya. Queen Suvratā was delighted to see the 14 great dreams. Upon completion of her pregnancy she gave birth to a son on the third day of the bright fortnight of Māgha under constellation Puṣya. The birth was celebrated with gaiety. When the child was in her womb the mother used to get a pregnancy whim of religious merit, thinking thus the son was named Dharmanātha.

When he became a young man, to fulfill his father's desires, Dharmanātha married and then for 2 lakh 50 thousand years ruled the kingdom. After managing the affairs of the kingdom for 5 lakh years he became inclined towards initiation. On request by the *lokāntika* gods Dharmanātha gave charities for a year and observing fast with 1000 kings, on the 13th day of the bright fortnight of Māgha under Puṣya constellation, renouncing all bad karmas, he became an initiate/monk. The next day he broke his fast at the home of the king of Somanasa city, Dharmasiṃha, by taking rice pudding.

After becoming a monk, bearing with many difficulties and trials Lord Dharmanātha roamed about as mendicant for 2 years. Thereafter, reaching the place of initiation, moving from deep meditation to kṣapakaśreṇī under the Dadhiparṇa tree, destroying obscuring karmas, he attained pure intuition and knowledge on the full moon of Pauṣa month under Puṣya constellation. After becoming omniscient, in a grand assembly of gods and men he said in his sermon – “you fight with your own internal flaws /impurities, understand your own self and its nature, and by giving up worldly pleasures, enjoy a state of bliss.” Hearing his

sermon thousands accepted the path of right conduct. Establishing the four-fold creed the Lord became Tīrthaṅkara of the time.

The congregation of Lord Dharmanātha included 43 *gaṇadhāras* including Ariṣṭa, etc. 4500 omniscient, 4500 telepaths, 3600 clairvoyants, 900 14-pūrvadhārīs, 7000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 2800 vādīs, 64000 monks, 62400 female-monks, 244000 votaries and 413000 female-votaries.

Two years less than two-and-a-half lakh years Lord Dharmanātha wandered as an Omniscient uplifting lakhs of people. Sensing the time of his salvation, he observed a fast unto death for one month at Sammetaśikhara with 800 monks and on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Jyeṣṭha under constellation Puṣya, stopping all activities and destroying all karmas, attained liberation and nirvāṇa at the age of 10 lakh years.

The Bright Gems of Lord Dharmanātha's Period

On hearing the greatness of Lord Dharmanātha, Vasudeva Puruṣasiṃha and Baladeva Sudarśana became initiatees into the true religion. Puruṣasiṃha became Vasudeva of three regions (khaṇḍas) by killing PratiVasudeva Niśumbha, and because of his major ill deeds went to the sixth hell. Grieving over his brother, Sudarśana took the vow and observing right austerities, attained liberation.

In the period of Lord Dharmanātha, after his nirvāṇa there were two world-emperors (cakravartīs) – the third cakravartī Maghavā and the fourth Sanatkumāra. A brief introduction to these two cakravartīs follows.

Cakravartī Maghavā

In the Bharata region of Jambūdīvīpa a great king named SamudraVijaya used to rule over a city named Sāvattī. His chief queen was named Bhadrā. Both the king and queen were religious and just. One night the queen saw the 14 great dreams. Interpreters of dreams told the king that according to these dreams the soul that has entered the queen's womb shall grow up to be a cakravartī emperor. Upon completion of her pregnancy period the queen gave birth to a bright and beautiful son. King SamudraVijaya named him Maghavā. With proper training and upbringing when Maghavā became a young boy he was married off to virtuous girls. After 25000 years of youth, immersed in learning and knowledge, King SamudraVijaya anointed him over the throne. For 25000 years he ruled as a provincial king. In his reign a cakrajewel appeared in the armoury / weaponry on account of which king Maghavā spent 10,000 years in expedition of conquest of six khaṇḍas (divisions). Ruling over the six khaṇḍas of Bhāratavarṣa for 39000 years as cakravartī emperor, he became a monk. For 50,000 years he observed the conduct of a Śramaṇa monk and in the end, completing 5 lakh years, he became a god in the third heaven.

Concerning heavenly abode of cakravartī Maghavā, Verse number 57 of Tittogālī Painnaya states that eight out twelve cakravartīs attained liberation. Two cakravartīs namely Subhuma and Brahmadata attained seventh hell while other two cakravartīs namely Sanatkumāra and Maghavā attained abode in third heaven.

Few scholars believe that Maghavā cakravartī attained liberation, and didn't go to heaven. To corroborate this, they cite references in the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 18th chapter 'Sajaijṇam', where, among the souls that gained mokṣa, are included Bharata, Maghavā and Sanatkumāra cakravartīs. In the aforesaid chapter, in the 35th verse the term 'parinivvude' is used for Bharata and Sagara cakravartī; the 38th to the 43rd verses (Gāthās) use the term 'pato gaimaṇuttaram' for Lord Śāmtinātha, Kumṭhunātha, Aranātha and cakravartīs MahāPadma, Hariṣeṇa and Jayasena. In contrast to this in the 36th Gāthā the term 'pavvajjamabhuvagao' for Maghavā cakravartī and in the 37th Gāthā, 'sovi rāyā tavaṃ care' is used for Sanatkumāra. If the last portions of the Gāthā 37 and 38 had been, respectively, 'Maghavam parinivvudo' and

‘patto gaimaṇuttaraṃ’, then it can be certainly concurred that they attained liberation. At the same time, in the Sthānāṃga Sūtra, the verse ‘*dīheṇaṃ pariyāeṇaṃ sijjai jāva savvaḍukkāhāṇamaṃtaṃ karei*’ is used for Sanatkumāra, which means he became liberated.

*“Caittā bhārahaṃ vāsa, cakkavaṇṇī mahiḍḍhio
Caittā uttame bho, mahāpaume tavaṃ care”*

In this, “mahāpaume tavaṃ care” is used for Mahāpadma, which on account of an error in printing in the first edition of the “Basic / Fundamental History of Jain Religion”, 1st volume, was printed as “patto gaimaṇuttaraṃ” and 37th Gāthā for Sanatkumāra, 41st Gāthā for Mahāpadma “tavaṃ care” being used, even then, Mahāpadma unquestionably is considered to have attained mokṣa while Sanatkumāra (not in the Tittogālī but according to Ṭhāṇāṃga) is considered to have been liberated. Thus, it is possible that all the souls described in 18th chapter gained mokṣa.

Cakravartī Sanatkumāra

In the city of Hastināpura, in Bharata region (kṣetra) of Jambūdvīpa, ruled the king Aśvasena. He was a man of courage and character. His pious queen Sahadevī during her pregnancy saw the 14 auspicious dreams and was very happy. At appropriate and good time she gave birth to a bright son with a gold-like aura, who was named Sanatkumāra. With appropriate upbringing Sanatkumāra crossed the stage from boyhood to youth. Sanatkumāra had a brave friend of good qualities, named Mahendra.

One day, king Aśvasena received a gift of a very fine breed of horses. Prince Sanatkumāra climbed onto the finest of these. The moment he did so, the horse started to run with the speed of the wind. The prince tried to stop the horse but the horse would only run faster. Mahendrasimha and other friends tried to chase him but could not catch up with Sanatkumāra. Hearing the news of his son disappearing thus, king Aśvasena was very unhappy and started on his own too, in search of him. Seeing all his efforts go in vain, Mahendrasimha somehow convinced him to return and left alone in search of Sanatkumāra. After searching for one year, there was no trace of Sanatkumāra.

One day, in the forest he heard the sweet sounds of various birds and from the same direction the whiff of a pleasant fragrance came. Hopeful, Mahendrasimha started to move in that direction. After going some distance, he heard the pleasant sounds of beautiful women at play. When he went closer he was pleasantly surprised and happy to see his friend Sanatkumāra in the midst of the beautiful women. Sanatkumāra too recognised Mahendrasimha, embraced and welcomed him. After mutual exchange of enquiries after each other's well-being, Mahendrasimha asked Sanatkumāra about his experiences upon which Sanatkumāra pointed at one of the women and said instead of hearing my story from my mouth it would be better to hear it from the Vidyādhara's daughter, Bakulamatī.

Bakulamatī briefly narrated to Mahendrasimha as to how Sanatkumāra defeated the demonic forces of the Yakṣa and accepted them as his companions. Mahendrasimha was delighted to hear of Sanatkumāra's heroic exploits and reminded him of his parents at Hastināpura.

Sanatkumāra happily started with his family to meet his parents. Hearing of his arrival king Aśvasena was overjoyed. He welcomed the prince with great pomp and ceremony and at an appropriate time crowned him king. Mahendrasimha was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the army and the king himself took initiation from an elderly monk.

Sanatkumāra ruled the kingdom justly and dutifully. After the emergence of a cakra jewel in his armoury he set out on an expedition to conquer the six khaṇḍas and became a cakravartī emperor. Sanatkumāra's beauty began to be discussed even in the heavens. As a result, two gods came to see him in the guise of Brahmins. At that moment, Sanatkumāra was seated naked on the bathing platform, and seeing his charming form the gods were awestruck. Sanatkumāra said to them, "what are you seeing now? After the bath when I sit on the royal throne adorned with fine robes and jewellery, see me then." The Brahmins did just that; but by then there was a change in the form of Sanatkumāra and the Brahmins began to lament in their minds. When the king asked them the reason for their disappointment they said – "king, worms infest your beautiful body now."

Seeing the transient nature of the body and its destructibility Sanatkumāra immediately became disenchanted and, giving up all the glorious possessions, became a monk. After initiation he started observing many fasts as a result of which he got a lot of powers. Once again his praises were heard in the heaven and one god came to test him. The god disguised as a physician came to the monk. The monk said – "Oh physician! If you can cure disease of the mind (spiritual) then it is fine, else even I can cure the disease of the body." Saying thus, the monk spat on his blood-oozing fingers which at once started to shine like gold. Ashamed, the god apologised to the monk and went back to his place. This way, the great monk Sanatkumāra spent 1 lakh years observing austerities and in the end became enlightened and liberated.

Lord Śrī Śāmtinātha

The 16th Tīrthaṃkara after Lord Dharmanātha was Lord Śāmtinātha. His life was beneficial to the world and very inspiring. He had gained the Tīrthaṃkara status after many past lives. Among his incarnations as Śrīṣeṇa, Yugalika, etc, here is given a brief description of his past life as Vajrāyudha:-

In the eastern Videha, in the province called Maṃgalāvātī Vijaya was a city named Ratnasamṇayā. Vajrāyudha was born to Ratnamālā, queen of king Kṣemaṃkara of Ratnasamṇayā. When he grew up he was married to Lakṣmīvātī Devī. After some years Lakṣmīvātī gave birth to a son who was named Sahasrāyudha. At some point in the heavens, in the presence of gods, Indra praised Vajrāyudha's samyaktva (right belief). All the gods were pleased to hear this from Indra but one god named Citracūla expressed desire to test him and appeared in Kṣemaṃkara's court. In the court he said there is nothing called soul, the other world, good, meritorious and bad deeds (pāpa, puṇya), etc; people fall into blind beliefs and bear with pain as a result. Vajrāyudha replied, "Oh God! If you used avadhījñāna (clairvoyant knowledge) you will find that you have done some special deed in your past life as a result of which you have attained a god's position. The present affluence / accomplishment are the result of a past merit. The god was impressed by Vajrāyudha's firmness and asked him to make a wish. Vajrāyudha said to him – I only wish that you would adhere to samyaktva (right path). Pleased with Vajrāyudha's selflessness the god gifted him with a divine adornment and praised his samyaktva.

After some time Kṣemaṃkara left the royal affairs in the care of Vajrāyudha and became a renouncer, attained pure knowledge and was called as psychic Tīrthaṃkara. Here a cakra jewel appeared in Vajrāyudha's armoury and he conquered the six parts of the world and gained the title of universal emperor (cakravartī) and made Sahasrāyudha the crown prince. In time, giving him the kingdom, he took initiation and self-discipline and observing pādopagamana fast, became a Graiveyaka god. Descending from Graiveyaka, he was born as a son from the womb of Priyamatī, queen of Ghanaratha, king of Puṇḍarīkiṇī city. He was named Megharatha. Megharatha was very courageous, brave and

compassionate. When king Ghanaratha took initiation, Megharatha became the king. He performed his religious duties even as a king.

One day, observing a vrata he was in his pauṣadhahall (hall of observing austerities). A pigeon / dove came and fell on his lap, trembling with fear. The king lovingly ran his fingers over its back, and reassured it. Then a hawk came and demanded that the dove be given to it. The king expressed inability to return someone who had taken his refuge. To this the hawk said – “I cannot stay alive without fresh flesh. This way, protecting the dove you are forcing me to die. If you are truly a great person, protect both.” Hearing this king Megharatha said – “if it is so, I shall give you my flesh equivalent to the dove, eat it and let the dove go.” A weighing scale was brought. On one side the king placed the dove and on the other side of the scales he started to place flesh sliced from his body. When the dove’s scale did not move at all, the king gladly placed himself on the other side. Seeing this unique sacrifice the hawk presented itself in its true form and said – “I disbelieved Indra and caused you pain. Please forgive me. Your dedication and compassion are worth emulating.”

After sometime, Megharatha again took the aṣṭama-tapa (fast) in his fasting hall. Indra of Īśāna respectfully bowed to him from the heaven but his consorts, the Indrāṅgīs, wished to test his determination. Entering the fasting – hall they tried in various ways to disturb Megharatha’s concentration but failed to do so and accepting their defeat, left. At the end of the fast when the king resolved to take initiation he left the kingdom to his son and took initiation along with many companions from the monk Dhanaratha. In the past by showing compassion towards living beings and from austerities and restraints, having stopped the influx of karmas, he gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. At the end, with a fast unto death, he became a god of 33 sāgaras life-span in the Sarvārthasiddha palace.

Lord Śāmtinātha’s father was the king of Hastināpura, Viśvasena. His mother was the queen of Viśvasena, Acirādevī. The soul of Megharatha descended from Sarvārthasiddha vimāna and entered queen Acirā’s womb on the seventh day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapada under Bharāṅī constellation. The queen saw the auspicious 14 dreams that night. At the end of her pregnancy at the midnight hour on the 13th day of

the dark fortnight of Jyeṣṭha under Bharaṇī constellation, she gave birth to her son.

Before Śāmtinātha entered the womb, the region around Hastināpura was struck by a plague. Everyone was worried. The moment queen Acirādevī became pregnant the plague began to recede and gradually normalcy returned. Hence the parents named the boy Śāmtinātha.

When the boy Śāmtinātha was 25 thousand years old, and entered youth, king Viśvasena got him married to various princesses. Soon after this, leaving the kingdom to him he became a monk and took the path of soul-cleansing. Śāmtinātha became the king and from his queen Yaśomatī a son was born who was named Cakrāyudha. Having ruled as provincial king for 25000 years, upon the emergence of the cakra jewel in his armoury, he established his suzerainty over six parts and became a cakravartī. After managing his empire as cakravartī for 25000 years he wished to take initiation.

Upon the request of the lokāntika gods he started a year of charities and upon its completion on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of Jyeṣṭha under Bharaṇī constellation, along with 1000 kings, observing a fast (chaṭṭhabhakta), accepted initiation. Surrounded by gods and men, reaching Sahasrāmrvana with Siddhas as witness, giving up all bad deeds (pāpa), he became an initiate. The next day he broke his fast at the home of the king of Maṇḍirapura, Sumitra, with rice pudding. The gods showered the blessings of five substances. After initiation he wandered about for one year observing austerities. Thereafter, he came to eth Sahasrāmrvana and Hastināpura and became engrossed in meditation. Having mounted the kṣapakaśreṇī in deep meditation he destroyed all the obscuring karmas and on the ninth day of the bright half of Pauṣa, under Bharaṇī constellation, attained pure intuition and pure knowledge.

As an omniscient Lord Śāmtinātha said in his sermon in the assembly of gods and men – “The soul is the loftiest in this world, and that work which raises the level of the soul, is the best. Wasted and fruitless is the life of that person who, having attained human life, does not work towards salvation.” Hearing his excellent religious discourse thousands accepted the saṃyama dharma (the path of self restraint). Establishing the four-fold creed the Lord became Tīrthaṅkara.

The Lord spent 1 year less than 25 thousand years as an omniscient and spread the message of self- awareness / welfare among people. Sensing the end of his life, alongwith 900 monks, he observed a month's fast and on the 13th day of the dark half of the Jyeṣṭha month under Bharaṇī constellation, destroying the four non obscuring karmas also, attained enlightenment, liberation and nirvāṇa on Sammetaśikhara.

His life span was 1 lakh years. His congregation had 36 *gaṇas* and Gaṇadharas, 4300 omniscient, 4000 telepaths, 3000 clairvoyants, 800 14-pūrvadhārīs, 6000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 2400 vādīs, 62000 monks, 61600 female-monks, 290000 votaries and 393000 female-votaries.

Lord Śrī Kuṁthunātha

After Lord Śrī Śāmtinātha the 17th Tīrthaṅkara was Śrī Kuṁthunātha. Kuṁthunātha's father was the king of Hastināpura, king Vasu and his mother was queen Śrīdevī.

In his previous incarnation Lord Kuṁthunātha was king Siṁhāvaha of Khaḍgī city in east Videha. Becoming disenchanted with worldly things he took initiation from Ācārya Saṁvara and through arihanta-bhakti gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. Completing his life-span by fasting he emerged as a god in the Sarvārthasiddha vimāna.

Descending from there the soul of Siṁhāvaha entered into the womb of queen Śrīdevī on the ninth day of dark fortnight of Śravaṇa month under the constellation Kārtika. The queen got the 14 dreams. On completion of her pregnancy, queen Śrīdevī gave birth to a son on the 14th day of the dark part of the Vaiśākha month under Kārtika constellation. When the child was in her womb she saw the kuṁthu jewels in a heap, hence the boy was named Kuṁthunātha.

When Kuṁthunātha became a young man, he was married to suitable princesses. After some time, the king anointed Kuṁthunātha to the throne. He ruled for 22000 years as provincial king. When a cakra jewel appeared in his armoury king Kuṁthunātha raised his banner of victory over six parts and became cakravartī emperor, ruling for 23750 years.

Disenchanted with sensual enjoyments, sensing his desire for initiation the lokāntikagods requested him to take the spiritual path. The Lord gave charities for a year and on the fifth day of the dark half of Vaiśākha under Kārtika constellation along with 1000 kings he accepted to be initiated into monkhood and reaching Sahasrāmravana, observing fast, renouncing all demerits, appropriately became a mendicant. The moment he took initiation he attained telepathic knowledge (manaḥ paryavajñāna). The next day, wandering, he broke his fast at the house of king Vyāghrasīṁha at Cakrapura. This way, observing austerities as a mendicant for 16 years, he reached Sahasrāmravana and became meditative. On the third day of the bright fortnight of Caitra under Kārtika constellation, in the second stage of deep meditation,

under the Tilaka tree, destroying delusion and ignorance forever, he obtained pure knowledge.

As an omniscient, Lord Kuṃṭhunātha gave the discourse of scripture and conducts at an assembly (samavaśaraṇa) of gods and men and established the four-fold creed thereby becoming a Tīrthaṃkara. His congregation had 35 Gaṇadharas and gaṇas, including Svayaṃbhū, 3200 omniscient, 3340 telepaths, 2500 clairvoyants, 670 14-pūrvadhārīs, 5100 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 2000 vādīs, 60000 monks, 60600 female-monks, 179000 votaries and 381000 female-votaries.

Sensing the end of his time the Lord went to Sammetaśikhara. There he fasted for one month along with 1000 monks and on the first day of the bright lunar fortnight of Vaiśākha month under constellation Kārtika, breaking all his karmas, he became enlightened and attained nirvāṇa. As an omniscient, he spent 23,750 years. He was 95000 years old.

Lord Śrī Aranātha

After Lord Śrī Kumṭhunātha the 18th Tīrthaṅkara was Lord Śrī Aranātha. In his past life Lord Aranātha, as king Dhanapati of Susīmā city in Mahāvideha, had given valuable and inspiring instructions to his subjects to live with restraint and order. After sometime the king, disinclined towards worldly affairs, accepted initiation from Saṃvaramuni and began to wander observing discipline. He obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmākarma from discipline and devotion to gods, preceptor and religion. In the end, dying in meditative state, he became a powerful god in the Graiveyaka.

Descending from there, his soul came into the womb of Mahādevī, queen of king Sudarśana of Hastināpura on the 2nd day of the bright fortnight of Fālguna. The queen saw the 14 auspicious dreams and was very happy. Upon completion of her pregnancy she gave birth to a son on the 10th day of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa under Revatī constellation. During her pregnancy the mother had seen the spoke of an invaluable bejewelled wheel hence the child was named Aranātha.

When Aranātha became a young man king Sudarśana got him married to suitable girls. After 21000 years passed the prince was crowned king. After ruling as provincial chief for 21000 years, the jewelled cakra appeared in his armoury and he started on his expedition of conquest of six khaṇḍṣ upon completion of which he became a cakravartī emperor and for the next 21000 years caused the increase of knowledge, prosperity and peace in his empire through just rule.

After his worldly life when the impact of his active and rising karma declined, then renouncing the worldly splendours he desired the life of self-discipline. Upon request by the lokāntika gods having given charities for a year, the king placed the kingdom in the hands of his son prince Aravinda and along with 1000 kings in a due procession went for initiation into monkhood. Reaching Sahasrāmrvana, on the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa under Revatī constellation, observing fast, renouncing all bad deeds / activities, he accepted initiation formally. Soon thereafter he accrued telepathic knowledge (manaḥ paryavajñāna). On the second day he broke the fast with rice pudding at the home of king Aparājita of Rājapura city. Observing many restraints, totally giving up sleep, not lying down for three years, the Lord remained a mendicant,

in contemplation. Thereafter he reached Sahasrāmavana and became meditative. On the 10th day of the bright half of the Kārtika month under Revatī constellation, in deep meditation, ascending the kṣapakaśreṇī, destroying all obscuring karmas, he attained pure intuition and knowledge. After becoming an omniscient the Lord gave a sermon in the assembly of gods and men and established the four-fold creed and became Tīrthaṅkara. Bhāvanā Arihantas are free from the 18 imperfections (doṣas) and are bearers of anantacatuṣṭayas (four infinities) and eight mahāpratihāryas (auspicious entities).

His congregation had 33 gaṇadharaśas including Kuṃbhajī, and 33 gaṇas, 2800 omniscient, 2551 telepaths, 2600 clairvoyants, 610 14-pūrvadhārīs, 7300 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 1600 vādīs, 50000 monks, 60000 female-monks, 184000 votaries and 372000 female votaries.

After wandering around and preaching his creed for about for 3 years less than 21 thousand years as omniscient, sensing his end-time approaching, he went to Sammetaśikhara with 1000 monks, there observed a month's fast and obtaining śaileśī daśā (14th guṇasthāna or the state which lasts as long as is necessary to pronounce five short syllables) completely destroying the four non obscuring karmas on the 10th day of the bright half of the Mārgaśīrṣa month under Revatī constellation, attained emancipation and siddha state (formless), at the age of 84000 years.

Lord Śrī Mallinātha

Lord Śrī Mallinātha was the 19th Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion. He was born fifty-five thousand years less than one thousand crore years after the nirvāṇa of the 18th Tīrthaṅkara Lord Śrī Aranātha.

Past Life

In his past life Lord Śrī Mallinātha was a king named Mahābala. The story of king Mahābala goes like this:-

Long, long ago in MahāVideha province of Jambūdvīpa in Salilāvātī Vijaya was a city named Vītaśokā. In Vītaśokā was a king named Bala. One night Bala's queen Dhāriṇī saw in a dream that a lion cub was entering her mouth. Dream interpreters said that the queen is going to give birth to a very strong and brave son. In time, upon the birth of a son king Bala named him Mahābala. In appropriate time Mahābala was married to five hundred extremely beautiful princesses including Kamalaśrī. This way Mahābala began to spend his life enjoying worldly pleasures.

After sometime some older monks arrived at the garden Indrakumbha in Vītaśokā city. King Bala with his kith and kin went to see the monks and be benefited by their sermon. Hearing the discourse of the monk king Bala desired to be initiated into monkhood. King Bala crowned his son Mahābala as king and in the presence of the older monks, took initiation. After initiation king Bala observed the mendicant's conduct with total dedication and faith. In the end he took the vow of pious death (saṃlekhanā) on Mountain Cārū and after one month's fast annihilation all the karmas, attained nirvāṇa.

There, after ascending the throne king Mahābala looked after his subjects with justice and moral integrity. His wife Kamalaśrī gave birth to a bright son who was named Balabhadra. The king and queen brought up Balabhadra in royal splendour gave him appropriate education and at an appropriate age, announced him the crown prince.

King Mahābala had six inseparable friends Acala, Dharaṇa, Pūraṇa, Vasu, Vaiśramaṇa and Abhicanda. There was such deep friendship

between the seven friends that one day they resolved to be together for life and would do everything, including austerities for emancipation, together. In time a few elder monks arrived at Indrakumbha garden. All the seven friends went to see the monks and listen to the discourse. After hearing the religious discourse Mahābala said, “I want to hand over the charge of the kingdom to my son and take initiation”. Hearing Mahābala say this all the six friends said, “What special attraction remains for us here, we too shall take initiation along with you.” All the seven friends gave their respective kingdoms over to their sons and each pulled out five fistfuls of hair each and took initiation from an elder monk.

After initiation into the ascetic order all the seven friends studied the Aṅgas and wandered about, affecting their souls with the power of restraint and penance. After sometime, those seven monks decided that they would do all the penance together to the same extent! As decided, all the seven monks observed the austerities together. After sometime a thought occurred in monk Mahābala’s mind that before accepting monkhood I have been ahead of my friends in terms of prosperity, accomplishment and wealth. These people were never at the same level with me hence I should be ahead of them even in penance. The moment this thought occurred in Mahābala’s mind, it gave birth to the idea of deceit, and hidden from his friends, but along with them, he began to observe greater methods of penance. Thus when six monks would observe ṣaṣṭhama (six days) fast, he would observe aṣṭama (eight days) fast. Consequently, the desire to be greater and a sense of ego polluted Mahābala’s right belief.

This way, despite having taken a vow to observe the same penance with his six friends, hiding his inner secret from them, Mahābala gained the woman nāmakarma. After this, being devoid of all thorns (obstruction) observing 20 causes (sthānakas) again and again, through intense austerities, he gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. The seven monks including Mahābala remained immersed in intense and tough penance. In the end, they undertook a fast along with saṃlekhanā on the Cārū Mountain. Those seven monks, being in saṃlekhanā for two months² and completing their respective eighty-four lakh pūrva years, became ahamindra gods in the anuttaravimāna named Jayanta. Mahābala became

²Jñātādharma Kathāsūtra, Ch.8, sūtra 22

a god of complete 32 sāgara years of age. Mallinātha in the form of monk Mahābala is a source of inspiration for any aspirant and inspires that person to remain ever alert and awake in practice.

Birth and Naming

After completing his life as a god in the anuttaravimāna named Jayanta, Mahābala monk's soul entered into the womb of Prabhāvatī Devī, the queen of king Kumbha of Mithilā city in Bharata region of Jambūdvīpa on the fourth day of the bright fortnight of Fālguna month, under the Aśvinī constellation. That same night the queen dreamt the fourteen very auspicious dreams. The next day, the dream interpreters told the king – “Oh king! The queen has seen excellent dreams. The fortunate woman who sees these dreams becomes the mother of a Tīrthaṅkara or a cakravartī. The dreams the queen saw only infers that you both will soon become the parents of a child who will either be a cakravartī emperor or shall establish the religious fold as a Tīrthaṅkara.” The royal couple's happiness knew no bounds hearing the dream results. After completion of the pregnancy period on the bright fortnight of the 11th day of the Mārgaśīrṣa month in the middle of the night with moon conjunct with Aśvinī constellation, the queen gave birth to a baby girl of incomparable beauty and aura. Indras, devendras, the king and subjects all celebrated the child-birth as per norms. During pregnancy the mother had a whim for sleeping on a bed of flowers of five colours, because of which the king named the daughter Mallī.

Mallī, the princess began to grow by the day. When she was a little less than 100 years old, she found out with her clairvoyance about her six royal friends and knowing all, began to spend her life happily with her female friends. In the meanwhile, she called the men of her family and told them that a huge beautiful hall be built in the grove of Aśoka trees and in its midst be erected six inner sanctums (garbha-gr̥has) with latticed windows and in those six inner sanctums be made a raised platform.

Upon completion of the same as per her instructions, a message was sent to the princess. The princess got made a golden statue resembling her and placed one each on the raised platforms. The statue was made in such a way that anyone who saw it would feel it was Mallī herself. A

hole was made on the head of the statue and it was covered with a lotus leaf. After that, whatever food Mallī ate, some part of it was put into the statue and the hole closed.

The fame of heavenly beauty

The fame of free-spirited, child-like goddess Mallī's heavenly beauty and form and superior qualities began to spread far and wide in all directions. At the same time, there emerged, through distinct factors, an intense love for Mallī in her six friends of the past birth. Those factors are described briefly this way:-

1. King Mahābala's past life friend Acala's soul, completing its time as a god in the Jayanta vimāna, became the king of Kauśāla named Pratibuddhi, born in Ayodhya, the capital city of Kauśāla. Once in Sāketapura the king Pratibuddhi, seeing a beautiful, attractive bouquet of flowers for the queen Padmāvātī to be taken to the Nāgadhara festival procession, asked his minister named Subuddhi, "Have you ever seen such an attractive bouquet?" The minister replied – "Oh king, I once went to Mithilā with your message. This bouquet is not even an iota of that heavenly bouquet I saw at the annual birthday celebrations of princess Mallī. At the same time, princess Mallī too is of unparalleled beauty. Hearing the praise of Mallī's beauty, king Pratibuddhi sent his able messenger to the king of Mithilā and said that he may request the king Kumbha that I wish to marry princess Mallī and for this I am willing to give up my entire kingdom.
2. King Mahābala's second past life friend Dharaṇa's soul completed its god-life in Jayanta vimāna and became the king of Aṃga, Candrachāga, born in Campā city, capital of the republic Aṃga. In those times there used to be many sea-faring merchants in Campā city, to conduct trade on sea. Those merchants used to go on voyages far and wide on the sea for trade. Among those merchants was one named Arahannaka who was not only wealthy and prosperous but also one totally devoted to the Śramaṇa religion. Once Arahannaka embarked upon a sea-voyage with his merchant friends with many kinds of precious commodities of trade in tow huge vessels. After many days of

traveling, playing and combating with the high waves of the sea, the ships tearing through the chest of the sea, they went very far. They could not see anything apart from the waves of the sea and an endless stretch of water in all directions. It was night time. Suddenly, different kinds of phenomena occurred in the sky. Suddenly, the merchants saw a huge fearsome demon, as dark as coal, approaching their ship with a peal of loud laughter dancing like the kāla-bhairava. Around his neck was a garland of human skulls and in his hands a blood-dripping spear. Seeing this death-like demon all merchants held on to each other in fear. Only Arahannaka remained steady, standing on a corner of the ship, he meditated upon the Siddhas and observed a fast. Now the demon approached Arahannaka and began to scare him saying many things. Steady, intense and fearless, Arahannaka remained firm in his penance. Seeing Arahannaka so calm and deep in meditation the demon was upset and angry with his unsuccessful attempt. He gave a frightening roar that could shake up the ten directions and picked up Arahannaka with his two fingers and giving a huge leap said, “If you continue to invoke the Śramaṇas I shall send your vessel to the depths of the sea.” When he saw that Arahannaka was firm in his religion and his faith as before, he placed the ship slowly on the sea-shore and appearing in his god-form, said, “Arahannaka! I am impressed with your unshakeable faith in the nirgrantha sermon. When king of gods, Indra had praised your devotion and dedication I could not believe his words. Hence I took a demon form and placed all these obstacles in your path about which I regret. In fact no amount of praise is good enough for your dedication to the householder’s conduct and devotion to the Śramaṇa religion.” Saying so, the god begged for forgiveness again and again and gifting him two pairs of ear-rings, returned to his abode. After the god left, Arahannaka broke his fast and all merchants resumed their sea-voyage.

Led by the wind, their huge vessels reached the port. The merchants anchored the ships at the port and taking lots of material for sale, ultimately reached Mithilā city. Arahannaka went to meet the adherent of Śramaṇa religion, the king of Mithilā and along with various gift-worthy objects, took the pair of ear-rings given to him by the god. The king

made Mallī put on the ear-rings right in front of Arahannaka. After that he respectfully bade farewell to Arahannaka and his fellow-merchants. Completing their work in Mithilā city they moved ahead, and travelling in their vessels, returned to Campā city. Arahannaka went to the king Candrachāga to inform him of the successful trip and the details of the voyage. Along with him he took some gifts and the second pair of ear-rings given by the god. The king of Campā, Candrachāga, welcomed Arahannaka with love and accepting the gifts happily. He asked him, “You would have gone to many place during your voyages. Did you see any extraordinary sight?” Arahannaka said, “I gifted the same kind of pair of ear-rings to the king Kuṃbha which he asked the princess Mallī to wear in my presence. There can be no human or goddess comparable with Mallī.”

King Candrachāga bade farewell to Arahannaka and his mates after due respects and hospitality and calling his good messenger instructed him to go to the king of Mithilā and request him to marry his princess to me in return for which I shall give him my whole kingdom. The messenger soon started for Mithilā with Candrachāga’s message.

3. The third friend of the past life of king Mahābala, Pūraṇa’s soul, after completing the time as a god in Jayanta vimāna, became the king Ruppī of Kuṇāla city, the capital of the republic Kuṇāla. King Ruppī ruled over Śrāvastī city. His wife Dhāriṇī gave birth to a very beautiful daughter who was named Subāhu. Once, the king organised the bathing festival for his daughter. A special city and a hall was created for that festival. The princess was bathed from beautiful gold and silver pitchers and when, bedecked in clothes and ornaments she came to seek blessings from her father, the king Ruppī was astonished seeing her heavenly beauty. He asked the varṣadharas (eunuchs) – have you seen any girl as beautiful as Subāhu? One varṣadhara replied, “King, once we were present on a similar festival organised for the daughter of the king of Mithilā, Mallī. Your daughter Subāhu’s beauty is not even the one-lakh part of the beauty of Mallī.” Hearing this, the pride of the king of Kuṇāla was quashed and he became eager to gain the princess Mallī. He sent his messenger to the king of Mithilā to ask him to conduct his daughter’s marriage with the king of Śrāvastī, Ruppī.

4. The fame of princess Mallī's heavenly beauty reached the king of Kāśī as well. The king of Kāśī was named Śamkha and in his past life was king Mahābala's friend Abhicanda. Once when one of the pair of ear-rings gifted by Arahannaka broke the king of Mithilā gave it to his goldsmiths to repair, but one of them could do it. Angry with this, king Kumbha expelled all the goldsmiths from his city. Displaced, all the goldsmiths went to the king of Kāśī and requested him if they could stay and work there. When the king of Kāśī asked the reason for their expulsion, they told him of the ear-rings and along with it, also described the beauty of princess Mallī, saying, "Oh king, the heavenly aura that princess Mallī exudes is difficult to find in human or celestial women." Hearing the description of Mallī's beauty from the goldsmiths the king fell for her and became impatient to make her his wife. He immediately sent a messenger with a wedding proposal to Mithilā, and also said that the king of Kāśī is ready to give in return his kingdom.

5. The fame of goddess Mallī's beauty slowly reached up to the Kuru province. The fifth friend of king Mahābala, Vasu's soul, completing its time in the Jayanta vimāna, became the king of Kuru named Adīnaśatru in the capital of the Kuru republic, Hastināpura. The younger brother of princess Mallī was prince Malladīna. He loved painting and one day he organised a painting exhibition in the pleasure garden. Prince Malladīna, too, went to the exhibition. There he became awe-struck and shy seeing his elder sister Mallī. Embarrassed, when he tried to walk away from his sister, his nursing mother told him the person the prince is seeing is not his real sister Mallī but a life-like picture of hers. Hearing this he was angry and he ordered death sentence for the painter. When he learnt that the painter had not sketched Mallī seeing her but imagined her full form based on sighting the princess' toe, impressed by the unparalleled art of the painter and based on the request of the important people and other great artistes, the artist's thumb was sliced off and he was ordered to be expelled. Displaced from Mithilā, the artist reached Hastināpura. At Hastināpura he presented the goddess Mallī's painting to the king Adīnaśatru. Seeing her picture and hearing her description the king Adīnaśatru became enamoured of her.

He called an able messenger and instructed him to Mithilā and said that the king of Videha is eager to make the daughter of the king Kuṃbha his principal queen and is also ready to give his entire kingdom in return.

6. The sixth friend of king Mahābala, Vaiśramaṇa's soul, after completing its years as a god in Jayanta vimāna, became the king Jitaśatru of Pāṃcāla, in the capital city Kāmpilyapura, of the republic of Pāṃcāla. King Jitaśatru had a magnificent palace in the city within which was a huge and very beautiful harem. In that harem were the king Jitaśatru's main queen Dhāriṇī and one thousand queens who were all faultless beauties. During the reign one king Kuṃbha there was a mendicant in Mithilā named Cokhā. Cokhā was well-versed in the scriptures and an accomplished scholar. She used to detailed instructions and also conduct displays of the purifying religion, charities, and purifying from water of various tīrthas. Once she went to the royal palace of Mithilā, too, with many mendicants. There she gave a discourse and display of purifying activities and significance of charity in goddess Mallī's internal chamber. After listening to her explanation princess Mallikā asked her what is believed to be the basics of religion? Cokhā said religion is considered purifying hence cleanliness and purity is very important for religion; hence when something becomes dirty and impure we clean it with mud and water, similarly bathing with water purifies the soul, too. Hearing this, Mallī said, "This is like trying to wash blood-stained clothes with blood itself. This will make it dirtier, more blood-stained and the colour of blood. The soul is enveloped in the karma stains of untruth, violence, lust, attachment, vainglory; the dirt on the soul accruing from these karmas cannot go away from bathing or rituals, etc because all these activities are full of violence and evil. Just as blood-stained clothes are soaked in milk, etc, baked in fire and again washed with water to clean and purify them, in the same way the soul enveloped in bad karmas is immersed in the milk of right belief, and baked in the fire of austerities / penance and bathed in the pure water of restraint to free it from the dirt of karmas". Hearing this clear female-monkciation given by Mallī, Cokhā was speechless and quietly kept looking at Mallī. After

sometime, Cokhā left Mithilā for Pāṃcāla along with other mendicants. Reaching there, she along with her disciple mendicants reached Kāmpilya city and started her discourse on purifying religion. King Jitaśatru welcomed mendicant Cokhā and along with his huge family listener to her discourse in his harem. Even while listening to the discourse, Jitaśatru’s mind was on his faultlessly beautiful queens, their invaluable adornments and within he was feeling proud about his incomparable wealth. After the discourse the king asked Cokhā – “For your discourse you must be visiting huge and wealthy harems, have you seen such a vast one filled with beyond-description faultless beauties anywhere else?” Hearing king Jitaśatru’s question; Cokhā kept laughing for a while and then said, “We have seen the daughter of king of Mithilā, Mallī. Truly she is the most beautiful woman of this world. The beauty of all the celestial women and the nāga women pale in front of her beauty. This, your harem, is insignificant and worthless in front of her beauty.” Saying this, Cokhā left for her destination. Hearing the description of Mallī’s beauty king Jitaśatru sent his messenger to Mithilā with the instructions to convey to the king of Mithilā that I am firm in my resolve to marry his daughter in return for my entire Pāṃcāla kingdom.

Coincidentally, all the six messengers sent to the king Kuṃbha by the six kings including Pratibuddhi reached at the same time and after meeting each other, went together to the royal assembly of king Kuṃbha. After respectful placations the six messengers placed their respective kings’ proposals before the king Kuṃbha. After hearing the wedding proposals for Mallī from the six kings, king Kuṃbha was uncontrollably angry. In an agitated tone, he screamed and told the messengers “Go tell your kings that I shall not wed my daughter to even one of them.” The six messengers left the royal hall and started for their respective kingdoms. Each of them told their kings of the angry and agitated response of the king of Mithilā that he would not wed Mallī to you at any cost or on any condition.

Hearing the negative response, Jitaśatru and others sent messages to each other, and decided that king Kuṃbha had insulted our messengers and sent them out of his palace and rejected out proposal and request, thereby

insulting us. Hence let all six of us together attack Mithilā and defeating king Kuṃbha, avenge the insult meted out to us. Deciding thus, the six kings started for Mithilā together. When king Kuṃbha found out that the six kings including Pratibuddhi were coming to attack Mithilā he readied his army and reached the boundaries of his kingdom to face them even before their arrival.

In a short while all the six kings' huge army came and attacked Mithilā. King Kuṃbha's army could not stay too long to face the might of the six king' army; it got shattered. The six kings surrounded king Kuṃbha. Seeing his life in danger king Kuṃbha became despondent. He at once asked his army to retreat and got all the entry points of Mithilā closed. This way, closing all the doors to the city and organising people's safety, he started to think about the future course of action.

When king Kuṃbha returned to Mithilā with his army all the six kings with their army followed him and reaching Mithilā, surrounded him from all sides. Let alone the king of Mithilā getting help from any friendly kings, even the entry and exit of ordinary people became difficult. Seeing Mithilā surrounded this way, king Kuṃbha wondered what to do. Not having seen her father for many days, princess Mallī went to her father on her own, but king Kuṃbha was worried and lost in thought and did not pay attention to Mallī. Then Mallī asked the king, "father, what is the matter? Why are you so worried that you did not even notice my coming?" King Kuṃbha replied, "nothing like that. In fact it is you I am worried about. Six kings had sent their respective messengers to me asking to marry you. I rejected their proposals and sent their messengers back, insulting them. Now all of them have collectively attacked Mithilā and have surrounded Mithilā. I don't understand what to do." Hearing these words of her father, princess Mallī said, "You may send separate messages to them saying you are ready to give you daughter to them and calling them each separately in the night, send them to separate inner sanctums, then closing all the entrances of Mithilā city, hold all the king here and prepare for self-protection." King Kuṃbha did as told, and calling the kings separately, put them up in separate inner sanctums.

The moment sun shone in each of those sanctums each king, thinking the statue of Mallī to be Mallī herself, stood swept off by the beauty of her form, and kept staring at her without blinking their eyes. At the same

time when they got closer to the statue of princess Mallī and removed the cover on the hole as the entire atmosphere was filled with stench. All the six kings shut their nose with their upper cloth and sat turning the other way.

Seeing this condition of the kings, princess Mallī said, “Oh great men! Why are you sitting this way? Why have you shut your nose with a cloth?” The kings replied, ‘Oh princess we are unable to bear this stench.’ To this princess Mallī said, “Everyday one morsel of food prepared for me has been put into this statue. If the minute transformation of the food particles thrown there can cause such a stench, then filled with many kinds of impurities, home to disease, a body made of bones and skin, the ample food that is put into it everyday, how much bad odour would result from it? Hence oh dear ones! Realising this permanent truth you should not get stuck in worldly sensual pleasures”.

Remember in our third birth prior to this one, we were deep and close friends, princes in the Vītaśokā city, capital of Salilāvātī Vijaya, in MahāVideha province. We did everything together in life and took initiation into monkhood together and becoming monks, decided that we shall do penance together and din the same manner. But I deceived you fellow monks. In the initial period of monkhood, I did more penance in hiding from you, as a result of which karma I got a female form. Later we did the same kind of tough penance and fasts with pure feeling. I observed tough fasts to obtain the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma through 20 sthānakas several times and consequently gained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. We were all immersed in our austerities. In the end all seven of us took saṃlekhanā together on Cārū Mountain and completing our time in observation of the fast, became ahamindras in the anuttaravimānana named Jayanta. In Jayanta vimāna you had fewer years than I did and hence you left there sooner and became kings of six republics. I completed my 32 sāgara years and was born here. Remember your god-form, where we had resolved that once we left the godly abode we shall meet each other.

Listening to the description of their previous births the kings were lost in thought. In that state they gained the knowledge of their past. All the six kings went to Mallī. Mallī said, “I am tired of worldly life and I shall now become a mendicant. You are free to take a decision as per your wishes”. Hearing goddess Mallī’s words they said in that case they

would also like to become mendicants so that like in the previous birth we continue to be guided by you in this birth as well. Goddess Mallī took those kings to her father, king Kuṃbha. The kings saluted him and touched his feet. King Kuṃbha gave them due honour and respect and they left for their respective kingdoms.

Princess Mallī told her father about her decision to take initiation and taking his permission, gave the year-long charities. King Kuṃbha opened food-serving halls at different places in his kingdom where people got different kinds of delicious food to eat. People got what they desired in gifts. Upon completion of the year-long giving, princess Mallī decided to take initiation. The lokāntika gods as per norms requested her to accept the path of spiritual endeavour. King Kuṃbha instructed the family me to quickly bring the necessary things for the departure ceremony of the Tīrthaṃkara. The king of gods, Indra, too, instructed the gods to make all kinds of arrangements on behalf of the gods for goddess Mallī's initiation ceremony. All the articles brought by king Kuṃbha's men and those of the gods were laid out together. At the appropriate time the king of gods, Indra and king Kuṃbha bathed Mallī with water from those pitchers. After the ritual bathing, goddess Mallī was seated on a throne and decorated with clothes and adornments. After that king Kuṃbha asked his men to bring the palanquin named Manoramā. The king of gods Indra too asked to bring a heavenly and beautiful palanquin with many poles. By heavenly effect Indra's and king Kuṃbha's palanquins became combined. Mallī, seated on that palanquin, made a round across the main streets of Mithilā and came under the Aśoka tree in Sahasrāmavana. Under the tree, goddess Mallī herself removed all her clothes and ornaments and removed five fistfuls of hair saying “*ṇamotthuṇaṃ Siddhāṇaṃ.*” Arihanta Mallī bowed to the Siddhas and accepted the right conduct. Soon as she accepted the right conduct goddess Mallī accrued the telepathic knowledge (knowledge of mental modes of others) and became the beholder of four kinds of knowledge. It was the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Pauṣa month under constellation Aśvinī. Along with goddess Mallī 300 women of her internal council (pariṣada) and 300 men of the external council took initiation shaving off their hair. Besides, 8 princes, Naṃda, Naṃdimitra, Sumitra, Balamitra, Bhānumitra, Amarapati, Amarasena and Mahāsena, too, became mendicants. Four kinds of gods sang the glory of goddess

Mallī's departure and observed aṣṭāhnikā on an island named Namḍiṣvara and left for their divine abodes.

Pure knowledge (kevalajñāna)

After becoming a mendicant, the same day goddess Mallī went into meditation in padmāsana posture under the Aśoka tree. Through auspicious results, extensive perseverance and colour of the purity of her soul she entered the state of that unprecedented purity which destroys dense karmic stains and those which obscure, and within a short while, crossing the 12 guṇasthānas, accrued pure intuition and knowledge during the later half of the day. That was the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Pauṣa under Aśvinī constellation. Thus goddess Mallī's mendicancy period was a little more than one measure of the day, that is, one-and-a-half measure of the day. Nobody until the time of Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra after her obtained pure intuition and knowledge in such a short span of time. This was the peculiarity of Lord Mallinātha. Lord Mallinātha's first fast-breaking too happened in pure knowledge in Mithilā at the home of king Viśvasena who was a subordinate ruler to king Kuṃbha.

First sermon and establishing the tīrtha

Sensing the obtainment of Lord Mallinātha's pure knowledge the gods and Indras showered the five auspicious things in celebration of pure knowledge and created the samavaśaraṇa on that very mango grove. The good news of the Lord's pure knowledge immediately spread everywhere. Along with a huge gathering of Jains, king Kuṃbha, queen Prabhāvatī, their entire kith and kin came to participate in the samavaśaraṇa. The six kings including Pratibuddhi, too, gave their respective kingdoms to their sons, and seated on grand palanquins, came to the samavaśaraṇa with the aim of being initiated there. This way, in the grant samavaśaraṇa of gods and goddesses, men and women, seated on a high throne, Mallī in her first heavenly sermon explained the true form of religion that ends all kinds of sorrows in the world and benefits living beings. For the listeners present there it was a unique experience of samavaśaraṇa. After the sermon, Lord Mallinātha established the four-fold religious order. King Kuṃbha and queen Prabhāvatī accepted the householder's conduct. Jitaśatru and other kings took initiation into

monkhood. In time they became the knowers of the fourteen pūrvas and thereafter, becoming kevalīs became liberated and emancipated. This way, founding the four-fold order, Lord Mallinātha became known as Tīrthaṃkara.

The first disciple and principal Gaṇadhara of Lord Mallinātha was Bhiṣaka and the preceptor of the entire group of female-monks was Bandhumatī who was also the Lord's first female disciple. Before and after Mallinātha all Tīrthaṃkara had only one council. But Lord Mallinātha had an internal council (pariṣada) of female-monks and an external pariṣada of monks. Lord Mallinātha wandered across many regions inspiring people on the path of religion and benefiting them for 54900 years. In the end the Lord reached Sammetaśikhara. There, with her 1000 monks – female-monks she observed penance with one month of fasting without food and water. In a tranquil and pure manner the Lord destroyed the four non obscuring karmas and completing her 55-thousand years of life-span, on the fourth day of the bright fortnight of Caitra month on the midnight hour, under Bharaṇī constellation, completing one month of fasting, attained nirvāṇa along with thousand monks-female-monks.

The congregation of Lord Mallinātha comprised of 28 gaṇas and 28 Gaṇadharas, 3200 omniscient, 800 telepaths, 2000 clairvoyants, 600 fourteen-pūrvadhārīs, 3500 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 1400 vādīs, 40000 monks, 55000 female-monks, 2000 anuttaropapātika monks, 184000 votaries and 365000 female-votaries.

Cakravartī Subhūma

The eighth cakravartī of Bharata, emperor Subhūma, came in the intervening period between the Jain religion's 18thTīrthaṅkara and seventh cakravartī Lord Aranātha and the 19thTīrthaṅkara, Lord Mallinātha. Subhūma was the son of the famous, mighty king of Hastināpura, Kārtavīrya Sahasrārjuna. His mother's name was Tārā. We find the introduction to emperor Subhūma in Ācārya Silāṅka's "Caupanna Mahāpuruṣa Cariyaṃ."

According to that:-

In Bharata region of Jambūdvīpa was a city named Hastināpura. Near that city in a vast forest was a hermitage of ascetics. The main ascetic of that hermitage was named Jama or Yama. One day, an orphan Brahmin boy, separated from his friends, wandering about lost his way, reached the hermitage. Ascetic Jama kept that boy with him. After sometime that boy became an ascetic and was named Agni. Later, with the name of the teacher added to his name, he became famous as Jamadagni. After severe penance Jamadagni began to be reckoned among the great sages.

One night when the great sage Jamadagni was deep in meditation under a tree in his hermitage, the gods with the aim of testing him, sat on that tree in the form of a male and female partridge. The female partridge asked the male one, "Will the ascetic doing penance on one leg under this tree be eligible for the joys of heaven on account of his penance"? The male partridge replied, "No." To this the female partridge asked, with surprise in her tone, "But why? If such a great ascetic cannot gain the joys of heaven then who else will?" The male partridge replied, "‘*aputrasya gatirnāsti*’, according to this apt statement the one who does not have a son cannot gain salvation /liberation no matter how great an ascetic he may be. This ascetic has no son".

Hearing the above conversation Jamadagni started thinking. He thought the two birds were right. Doing penance without a son is like chasing Marīcikā in the form of a deer. Hence I shall first get married to a beautiful girl of good descent and try to beget a son. With this thought the next day Jamadagni left for Mithilā with his staff and pitcher. Reaching Mithilā he told the king, 'I want to get married, give me one of

your 100 princesses'. Fearing if he disobeyed an ascetic he might do something inauspicious, he told the ascetic – Lord, you may chose any one of my daughters yourself. Jamadagni chose one named Reṇukā and after marrying her, left for the hermitage.

Reṇukā had a sister named Tārā. Tārā was married to the king of Hastināpura, Kārtavīrya Sahasrārjuna. After sometime, Reṇukā gave birth to a son. Jamadagni gave his son his battle-axe and named him Paraśurāma. One day, Reṇukā went to her sister Tārā's house. At Hastināpura, Tārā extended royal hospitality to her sister. Attracted by the pleasures of the royal palace Reṇukā became enamoured of Kārtavīrya and started living with him indulging in sensual pleasures. When Jamadagni learnt of this, he brought Reṇukā back to the hermitage. When he told his son Paraśurāma of Reṇukā's bad behaviour, he chopped her head off his axe. Hearing of Reṇukā's killing Kārtavīrya reached Jamadagni's hermitage. When he did not find Paraśurāma who killed her, he killed Jamadagni instead. Hearing the news of the killing of his father by Kārtavīrya, Paraśurāma's anger knew no bounds. He went to Hastināpura and killed Kārtavīrya and resolved to wipe off the Kṣatriya race. To rid this earth of Kṣatriyas, Paraśurāma roamed all over seven times and killed them in hordes.

At the time of Kārtavīrya's death, his queen Tārā was pregnant. To save her life she left her palace in disguise and reached an ascetic's hermitage. There she started staying underground. In time she gave birth to a son there who from his birth had jaw-tooth and teeth. As soon as he emerged from his mother's womb, the child held on to the earth's surface holding it with his jaws and stood up. Hence the mother named him Subhūma. The child was reared and brought up underground and grew up there. The hermits of the hermitage gave Subhūma knowledge of all kinds of scriptures and skills. When he grew up Subhūma asked his mother who his father was and why is he being retained underground. On his requesting her persistently Tārā told Subhūma the entire episode. Hearing the name of his father's murderer, Subhūma raged in anger. He asked, "mother, tell me where is that foe of mine who killed my father?" Mother Tārā said, "That savage stays in a city close by. To keep count of the Kṣatriyas killed by him he has removed each Kṣatriya's jaw-tooth and collected them in a huge platter. An astrologer told him sometime in future there will be a man upon whose ascending the throne that plate

filled with jaw-teeth will turn into rice pudding. That man will eat it up and kill you.

Listening to the astrologer's prediction Paraśurāma made an asylum. He has placed a high seat in one of the raised platforms therein, close to which he has kept the jaw-teeth-filled plate. To protect that throne he has placed many soldiers." Hearing about Paraśurāma's account from his mother, Subhūma at once started for that place. Killing all the soldiers there he sat on the throne. Seated on the throne the moment he rested his eyes upon the teeth-filled plate, by an unseen power it became a plate filled with rice pudding. Subhūma started eating that pudding. The injured soldiers gave this news to Paraśurāma.

Hearing the entire account from the soldiers Paraśurāma was reminded of the astrologer's prediction. At once he reached the asylum. There he saw the boy Subhūma eating rice pudding fearlessly and uninhibitedly. He told Subhūma firmly, 'O Brahmin child, who are you and upon whose instructions are you sitting on the throne? Don't you know that plate contains teeth of the Kṣatriyas killed by me, which you are eating with such relish? If you are so hungry there is arrangement for the best food in my asylum, which you can fill your stomach with.' Subhūma fearlessly kept listening to Paraśurāma and eating the rice pudding simultaneously. When Paraśurāma had finished speaking he said, 'I am sitting on this throne not instructed by anyone but on account of my own bravery. I know this plate contained human jaw-teeth, but I am eating rice pudding that it got converted into by an unseen power and I may look like an ascetic Brahmin but I am not, in fact, a Brahmin. I am a Kṣatriya's son and have come to kill you. My arms are twitching to be free of my father's debt. So stop talking and pick up your weapons and show your valour. I am the son of Kārtavīrya Sahasrārjuna. You have got rid of Kṣatriyas seven times on this earth and I shall make this earth free of Brahmins 21 times only then will my anger cool down.'

Hearing this battle-cry of Subhūma Paraśurāma's whole body began to tremble. He at once released a strong of arrows from his bow at Subhūma but the thick and firm body of Subhūma rendered all of the arrows useless. Seeing this Paraśurāma became shocked and bewildered. Keeping his bow and arrow aside he picked up his battle axe but seeing even the battle axe ineffective he was very disappointed. After

contemplating for sometime quietly when he threw his axe towards Subhūma with the aim of beheading him, the axe fell at Subhūma's feet. Subhūma laughed and picked up the plate in his hands, it seemed like a shining cakra. Subhūma, aiming at Paraśurāma's neck, threw the plate, by which Paraśurāma's head fell off like a fruit from a tree, on the ground. Subhūma's anger did not cool off even after killing Paraśurāma. Through fearsome battle he made the earth free of Brahmins 21 times.

After sometime Subhūma brought the entire Bharata under his power and obtained the status of cakravartī. With nine treasures and 14 jewels Subhūma remained ruler of a vast empire for a long time and after enjoying all pleasures, at the end of his life he died and was born in a horrifying hell.

Lord Munisuvratanātha

The twentieth Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion was Lord Śrī Munisuvratanātha. In his past life he was the king of Campā city, called Suraśreṣṭha. He accepted the spiritual path under monk Naṃdana and on account of devotion to the arihanta with 20 instruments and their reflections (sthānakas) he obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma. In the end he completed his time in meditation and became a god in the Prāṇata heaven. After completing his time in the Prāṇata heaven his soul entered his mother's womb on the full moon day of Śravaṇa month under Śravaṇa constellation. The king of Rājagṛha, Sumitra and queen Padmāvati were his parents. On completion of pregnancy period he was born on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of Jyeṣṭha month under Śravaṇa constellation. During her pregnancy the mother kept observing right belief like a monk hence king Sumitra named him Munisuvratanātha.

When he became a young man his father got him married to many eligible women including Prabhāvati and after some time, handing over the kingdom to him, he took initiation. After his father he took over the kingdom, but remained unsullied by royal glory and sensual pleasures. After ruling for 15,000 years, upon request by the lokāntika gods, and a year-long charity giving, leaving the kingdom over to his eldest son, he took initiation along with a thousand princes on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Fālguna under Śravaṇa constellation. On the second day, he broke his fast at the home of king Brahmadata of Rājagṛha.

After wandering for eleven months as mendicant he obtained pure intuition and knowledge at the same garden where he took initiation, while meditating under the Campā tree on the 12th day of the dark fortnight of Fālguna month. After becoming an omniscient Lord Munisuvratanātha gave a sermon on right scripture, and right conduct and after initiating thousands of people, established the four-fold order His congregation comprised of 18 gaṇas and 18 gaṇadharas, 1800 omniscient, 1500 telepaths, 1800 clairvoyants, 500 fourteen-pūrvadhārīs, 2000 vaikriyalabdhidhārīs, 1200 vādīs, 30000 monks, 50000 female-monks, 172000 votaries and 350000 female votaries.

Out of a total life-span of 30 thousand years after observing tranquility / restraint for seven thousand years in the end the Lord along with thousand monks observed a month long fast without even water and on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of Jyeṣṭha under the constellation Aśvinī, became liberated, emancipated and free. According to Jain history and Purāṇas the most venerated of men Rāma (Padma Baladeva) and Vasudeva Lakṣmaṇa belonged to his time-period. Rāma obtained Siddhi through intense practice and Sītā's soul became eligible for the 12th heaven.

Cakravartī Mahāpadma

In the present avasarpinī time in Bharata region of Jambūdvīpa at Hastināpura came the ninth world emperor (cakravartī) Mahāpadma. He was contemporary of Lord Munisuvratanātha.

In the ancient times in Bharata, Hastināpura of Āryāvarta division was a famous and prosperous city. There ruled a brave king named Padmottara who belonged to the lineage of Lord Vṛṣabhanātha. His queen was named Jvālā. One day queen Jvālā dreamt that a lion cub had entered into her mouth. The queen told the king about the dream. The dream interpreters through calculations said that a great and pious soul has entered the queen's womb who will gain immortal fame as he grows up. Upon completion of her pregnancy the queen gave birth to a very beautiful and bright son who was named Viṣṇukumāra.

Later queen Jvālā saw the 14 great dreams. The dream interpreters, satisfying the curiosity of the royal couple, said the son born from the queen's womb will become the cakravartī emperor of Bharata when he grows up. After completion of her pregnancy the queen gave birth to a very bright son with all auspicious traits, who was named Mahāpadma. Viṣṇukumāra and Mahāpadma were both brought up with royal majesty and appropriate education was organised for the princes. Both brothers had a sharp intellect and soon mastered all the arts and from childhood, blossomed into youth. Viṣṇukumāra was disinclined towards worldly affairs and pleasurable activities since childhood; hence he took permission from his parents and accepted initiation as a monk, and studied the Aṅgas, śāstras and started observing severe penance. As a result he obtained easily many kinds of knowledge and accomplishments. There in Mahāpadma developed due qualities of an able ruler and emperor, hence king Padmottara declared him crown prince and gave him the responsibility of the kingdom.

At that time the disciple of Lord Munisuvratanātha, Ācārya Suvrata, wandering unhindered, came to Ujjayinī. Hearing of the ācārya's arrival the king of Ujjayinī, Śrīvarmā, his Prime Minister Namuci, along with many important people came to see him. Namuci was very proud of his knowledge. Sitting there, praising the Vedic rituals, he began to criticize the Śramaṇa tradition. Ācārya Suvrata was silent but one of his younger disciples engaged in debate with him and defeated him in front of people.

Namuci was hurt and he decided in his mind to avenge this insult. Gripped by the feeling of revenge Namuci came to that garden in the darkness of the night with a naked sword, and seeing everyone fast asleep, he moved freely towards the young monk. He held the sword with both his hands in order to kill the monk and lifted his hands. He was about to bring down his hands with full force when he became still in that very posture, his hands remained in eth air and he could not even lift his legs. By mere thought of his bad condition, disgrace and stigma his face lost colour. The next day even before dawn the monks saw Namuci in this state, then the devotees who came to see the monks saw him, and slowly the word spread and the whole city came over to see Namuci in this state. People began to discuss about Namuci. The moment the effect of the stupefaction ended, hiding his face with hurt he went home. It was impossible for him to stay in Ujjayinī; hence he quietly left Ujjayinī and wandering, reached Hastināpura.

Reaching Hastināpura Namuci came in contact with the crown prince Mahāpadma and slowly became his trusted aide. Mahāpadma also made him a minister. At that time a subordinate ruler of Hastināpura named Siṃharatha turned hostile. Looting the surrounding areas he would return to his fortress. The crown prince sent his army to capture Siṃharatha but did not succeed. In the end Mahāpadma instructed Namuci to capture and bring Siṃharatha. Namuci surrounded Siṃharatha's fortress from all sides and put obstructions at all the entry and exit points. Namuci also played a trick and bribed some of Siṃharatha's fortress gatekeepers and took them on his side and one day he entered Siṃharathaa's fortress with his army through a secret pathway and captured Siṃharatha. Mahāpadma was very pleased with this venture of Namuci's and asked him to ask for something. Namuci thanked Mahāpadma for this gesture and said 'O king, you may keep this promise of yours as my deposit I shall take it when the occasion arises.' Crown prince Mahāpadma accepted the request of Namuci's. In time a heavenly cakra jewel appeared in Mahāpadma's armoury and he gained victory over the six divisions and became the master of nine treasures and 14 jewels and adorned with the title of cakravartī. When he was seated on the throne of Hastināpura as cakravartī emperor of Bharata, monk Suvrata came to Hastināpura with his disciples and upon request by the people there, agreed to stay during rainy season halt at a garden on the outskirts.

Namuci found an apt time for his revenge and reminded Mahāpadma of his promise and said ‘I want to conduct a great sacrifice for heavenly accomplishments, for the successful completion of which you may make me the Lord of your kingdom until its completion and make my command binding and may it not be transgressed. Emperor Mahāpadma accepted Namuci’s request.

Small and big officials, important subjects, the supervisor of religious affairs, all went to Namuci and blessed him for successful completion of the sacrifice. Keeping in mind the norm of Śramaṇa tradition to keep away from worldly affairs, Ācārya Suvrata did not go to Namuci. He became angry with this. For, after all, it was to show his animosity towards Ācārya Suvrata and the Śramaṇa tradition that he had planned all this. Raging with anger he went to Ācārya Suvrata and told him ‘you monks leave the boundaries of my kingdom within seven days. After this if any monk is seen in this kingdom he will be put to death.’ To protect the Śramaṇa tradition from this very difficult situation Suvrata called upon his disciple and one of great attainments, Viṣṇukumāra. He tried explaining to Namuci, but he was adamant. In the end he told Namuci – ‘never mind, at least give me land to the extent of three steps.’ Namuci agreed and said ‘ok, whichever monk stays outside of these three steps shall be killed. But then Viṣṇukumāra through his art of transformation started expanding his body. Within moments his body reached as far as the sky. Seeing this form of Viṣṇukumāra, Namuci fell to the ground in fear. Monk Viṣṇukumāra placed one of his steps on the east coast of the sea, and the second step on the west coast. Then, roaring like the end of the world, said – ‘Now tell me, Namuci, where do I place my third step?’ Namuci could not utter a word; he was shaking like a pīpala leaf. Cakravartī came out from his palace, reaching the spot, recognised Viṣṇukumāra, paid obeisance to him and sought pardon for this condemnable crime. Monk Viṣṇukumāra calmed down. He returned to his normal self. He bestowed a forgiving glance at Namuci and repented usage of his labdhis (attainments) to protect the order of the monks and again went back to his austerities. Through penance he annihilated completely all the eight karmas and attained blissful mokṣa. Cakravartī Mahāpadma took initiation at the age of twenty thousand years; through penance destroying all the eight karmas, and ultimately attained liberation.

Lord Śrī Naminātha

After Lord Munisuvratanātha, Lord Naminātha was the 21st Tīrthaṃkara. In his past life he was the king Siddhārtha of Kauśāmbī city in the western Videha province. On account of some factors he became disenchanted in worldly affairs. At the same time monk Sudarśana arrived, from whom he took initiation and observed special form of penance and restraint and obtained the Tīrthaṃkara nāmakarma. In the end, with a good feeling upon the end of his time span he became a god in the heaven named Aparājita.

After completing his years as a god, king Siddhārtha's soul left heaven and entered the womb of Viprā, the queen of the king Vijaya of Mithilā, on the full moon of the bright fortnight of Śrāvaṇa month under Aśvinī constellation. Queen Viprā saw the 14 auspicious dreams and started to protect the womb with appropriate food, relaxation, and conduct. On completion of the time the mother gave birth to a son of golden hue on the 8th day of the dark fortnight of the Śrāvaṇa month under Aśvinī constellation. On the day of the naming ceremony the king told people that when the boy was in his mother's womb enemies had surrounded Mithilā. Mother Viprā cast a kind glance at the enemies from the terrace which transformed the heart of the enemy kings and they prostrated at my feet. This was the effect of the boy in the womb; hence it would be apt to name the child Naminātha.

When Naminātha became a young man his father got him married to suitable princesses and when he was two thousand five hundred years old, prince Nami's coronation as king was held with great respect. Naminātha ruled for five thousand years and then, thought of being initiated. Lokāntika gods requested Naminātha to establish the tīrthas.

After a year of gift giving, king Naminātha handed over his kingdom to prince Suprabha, and with one thousand princes proceeded to Sahasrāmravana for initiation. Reaching there, observing the fast of chaṭhabhakta, duly renouncing all the bad deeds, accepted initiation on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of Āṣāḍha month. The next day, wandering, the Lord went to Vīrapura where he broke his fast at the house of king Datta, with rice pudding. To enhance the glory of the giving, the gods showered blessings of the five auspicious things. After

being initiated Lord Naminātha wandered, while observing different kinds of penance as a mendicant, and then in the same garden under the Boraṣālī tree, entered into a meditative state. There, on the 11th day of the dark fortnight of Mṛgaśira in the fire of deep meditation, he burnt all the ghātikarmas and obtaining kevaladarśana and pure knowledge, became known as bhāva Arihanta. As a kevalī he gave a religious sermon to a huge gathering of gods and humans and, establishing the four-fold order, became a Tīrthaṅkara.

His congregation had 17 gaṇas and 17 gaṇadharas, 1600 omniscient, 1207 telepaths, 1600 clairvoyants, 450 fourteen-pūrvadhārīs, 5000 vaikriya labdhidhārīs, 1000 vadīs, 20000 monks, 41000 female-monks, 170000 votaries and 348000 female votaries.

After nine months less than 2500 thousand years as a kevalī, giving religious discourse, the Lord, with one thousand monks, went to Sammeta śikhara and started a fast. After a month, in the end, in the last stage of deep meditation, stopping the influx of activities, on the tenth day of the dark fortnight of Vaiśākha under the Aśvinī constellation, destroying all karmas, the Lord became omniscient and free. He was ten thousand years old.

Six lakh years after Lord Munisuvratanaṭha, Lord Naminātha attained liberation. The Tīrthaṅkara Naminātha and Namirājarṣi of Mithilā are not one and the same but different. Because of the name and the city some writers consider them to be the same.

Cakravartī Hariṣeṇa

In the time of the 21st Tīrthaṅkara Lord Naminātha, came the tenth cakravartī of Bharata, emperor Hariṣeṇa. In the Pāṃcāla region of Bharata in Jambūdvīpa was a city named Kāmpilya ruled by the Ikṣvāku king Mahāhari. Queen Mahiṣī one night saw the 14 auspicious dreams. Upon completion of the pregnancy period queen Mahiṣī gave birth to a bright son endowed with all qualities of a cakravartī. The parents named their son Hariṣeṇa. The prince was brought up with a lot of love and royal splendour and was trained in suitable skills and arts. When he became young he was married to princesses of good lineage. When he was 325 years old, king Mahāhari placed him on the throne.

Ruling as a provincial king, when 325 years had passed, a heavenly cakra jewel appeared in his armoury. In 150 years, king Hariṣeṇa won over the entire Bharata and became cakravartī emperor and the Lord of 14 jewels and nine treasures. He ruled over Bharata as a cakravartī emperor for 8850 years. Thereafter, he developed disinterest in his mind. Sacrificing all sensual pleasures and wealth, he took initiation as a mendicant. Monk Hariṣeṇa did intense penance and observed pure restraint for 350 years and ending all the eight karmas, obtained the blissful state of liberation/ salvation at the age of ten thousand years.

Cakravartī Jayasena

After the liberation /salvation of Lord Śrī Naminātha, in his Tīrthaṅkara period, emperor Jayasena was the 11th cakravartī.

Many years ago a king named Vijaya ruled over the city Rājagṛha in Magadha kingdom. His queen was named Vaprā. Queen Vaprā once saw the 14 great dreams. The dream interpreters told her this dream is counted among the best dreams and the woman who sees them becomes the mother of a great valorous cakravartī son.

The king and queen and the family members rejoiced on hearing the interpretation. In time, the queen gave birth to a son bright and pleasing to the eye who was named Jayasena. The royal couple brought up their son very well and gave him the best education and training and in time, married him to suitable women. When he was 300 years old the king Vijaya placed Jayasena on the throne and became a monk.

After ruling as a regional king for 300 years, a divine cakra jewel appeared in his armoury. He started on the victory campaign of six divisions and in 100 years, became the ruler of the entire Bharata. As a cakravartī emperor he became the Lord of nine treasures and fourteen jewels. Up to 1900 years, emperor Jayasena ruled as a cakravartī and then renouncing all his wealth, took initiation into monkhood. He spent 400 years in restraint as a monk and through penance, destroying all karmas completing 3000 years of age, attained liberation /salvation.

Lord Śrī Ariṣṭanemi

The 22nd Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion is Lord Ariṣṭanemi.

Past Life

In his past life Lord Śrī Ariṣṭanemi was Śaṃkhakumāra, the son of the king of Hastināpura, Śrīṣeṇa and queen Śrīmatī. When he grew up he became famous as Śaṃkharāja. Prince Śaṃkha was still a child when his father Śrīṣeṇa got the message that the Pallī chieftain Samaraketu had wrecked havoc at the borders of his kingdom. If Samaraketu was not suppressed in time, he would whip up other troubles too. Hearing this news the king gave instructions to prepare his army and decided to go to the battlefield himself. When prince Śaṃkha learnt of this he requested his father to send him to fight such an ordinary king so he could get a chance to learn the tactics of war and prove his bravery. Hearing the prince's brave request he gave him permission to go to war with the army. Very easily the prince captured the Palli chieftain and returned all the things looted by him to their respective owners and taking the prisoners with him, started for Hastināpura. On the way, prince Śaṃkha faced the Vidyādhara Maṇiśekhara who had kidnapped the daughter of Jitāri, Yaśomati and was taking her with him. The prince defeated him, too. Impressed by his bravery, Yaśomati accepted him in her mind as her Lord. Impressed by the prince's courage and ability, king Śrīṣeṇa handed over his kingdom to him and taking initiation became a mendicant and in time attained pure knowledge.

King Śaṃkha was enamoured of and attached to his queen Yaśomati. Once, king Śaṃkha went to listen to the discourse of monk Śrīṣeṇa. At the end of the discourse he asked the monk – Lord, why am I so attracted to and enamoured of Yaśomati? Even if I wish to, I am unable to accept the Śramaṇa path. After staying quiet for sometime the omniscient monk said – the two of you have been in a relationship spanning seven births, and many times you were husband and wife. It is only because of the long relationship of the past births that your love is so deep. After this, completing your time as a god you shall be the 22nd Tīrthaṅkara Neminātha in your next birth. Listening to his past life story, king Śaṃkha became disenchanted and giving his kingdom over to his son, he became a mendicant. After becoming a mendicant, by showing great

inclination towards being devoted to the arihanta, Siddhas and monks, through penance and restraint, he obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma, and completing his life in meditation, became a minor god in the Aparājitavimāna.

Birth and Naming

Completing a full life in Aparājita vimāna, king Śaṅkha's soul entered the womb of Śivādevī, the pious queen of king Samudravijaya on the 12th day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month under the Citrā constellation. She saw the fourteen great dreams and was very happy. On completion of pregnancy she gave birth to a son on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the Śravaṇa month under the Citrā constellation. The gods celebrated the birth, king Samudravijaya, too, gave gifts with a free hand and made people content. Ariṣṭanemi was very handsome. On a dark-hued lustrous body, he had 1008 auspicious qualities, a firm body like the thunderbolt with a face that was very charming. On the 12th day during the naming ceremony the king said that during pregnancy we were all protected from all kinds of calamities and the mother saw the ariṣṭa gem-studded cakra hence the name Ariṣṭanemi for the child would be apt. Ariṣṭanemi's father king Samudravijaya was a valorous king of the Harivaṃśa lineage. The introduction to his lineage's origin is given below as per requirement.

The Origin of the Harivaṃśa Lineage

In the period of the Tīrthaṅkara Lord Śīṭalanātha there was a king named Sumūha in the Kauśāmbī city in Vatsadeśa. He kept with him the very beautiful Vanamālā, wife of a person named Vīraka, and she started to stay at king Sumūha's palace enjoying all pleasures. There Vīraka became perturbed being separated from his wife and began to live in the forest as a young ascetic. One day, the king went for a stroll with Vanamālā to the forest. There both of them became sad seeing the pitiable state of Vīraka and began to repent their bad deed. Suddenly a lightning struck them and both died and in the next birth were born as twins in the pleasure consuming realm named Harivāsa. After sometime Vīraka, too, died and became a kilviṣī god in the Saudharma kalpa. Through his clairvoyance he saw that Sumūha and Vanamālā have been born as twins Hari and Hariṇī and are happily spending their lives

together. He thought, despite having wronged me they are living happily, enjoying the pleasures of the pleasure-consuming realm. They cannot be killed but they can be sent to such a place where, while enjoying intense bond, they get sucked into a cycle of sorrow.

He learnt that the king of Campā had died and people were looking for an able person to make him the king. He at once sent the Hari twins, who had a life-span of one crore pūrvas, along with the Cittarasa kalpavṛkṣa tree (wish fulfilling tree) to Campā city, reducing their life-span to one lakh years and their height to 100 dhanuṣa and gave a call from the skies saying, make these two the king and queen and you shall spend your lives happily. Thinking that to be a god's call from the skies, the people placed Hari on the throne. On account of passion-inducing food and attraction towards sensual pleasures, Hari and Hariṇī died and went to hell. This was a surprising incident because the twins do not go to hell.

It is this Hari-Hariṇī twins who gave rise to the Harivaṃśa lineage. Many powerful, brave and pious kings belonged to this lineage and many cities settled by them are still around. The emergence of the Harivaṃśa lineage is considered to be post-nirvāṇa of Tīrthaṃkara Śīṭalanātha and before the time of Lord Śreyāṃsanātha.

The Harivaṃśa Lineage

After Hari, some of the kings from the Harivaṃśa lineage are as follows: - 1 Pṛthvīpati (son of Hari), 2 Mahāgiri, 3 Himāgiri, 4 Vasugiri, 5 Narāgiri, 6 Indragiri. This way, there were innumerable kings of the Harivaṃśa lineage. Twentieth Tīrthaṃkara Muni Suvrata was also form this lineage.

The son of Mādhava Indragiri was Dakṣa Prajāpati, whose queen was named Ilā and son was named Ilā. For some reason Ilā was annoyed with her husband Dakṣa prajāpati and taking her son Ilā with her, went to Tāmralipti where she established a city called Ilāvarddhana and the son built a city named Māheśvarī. After Ilā, his son Pulina ascended the throne. At one place, he saw a dog facing a lion making a circular gesture and thinking it to be the power of that place; he established a city named Kuṃḍiṇī over there. After Pulina, Varima established the Indrapura city. King Saṃjatī of this lineage established a town called Vaṇavāsī or

Vāṇavāsī. Of the same lineage, the king Kuṇima was the ruler of Kollayara city. His son was Mahendradatta who had two brave sons Ariṣṭanemi and Matsya. Ariṣṭanemi settled the Gajapura city while Matsya built up the Bhaddila city. Both of them had hundred sons each. A king of the same Harivaṃśa clan, Ayadhaṇū, settled a city named Sojjha. Further in time there was a king named Mūla, and then Viśāla, who settled Mithilā city. Viśāla was later succeeded by kings Hariṣeṇa, Nahaṣeṇa, Saṃkha, Bhadra and Abhicandra. Abhicandra's son Vasu was a very powerful and famous king who became famous later on as "Uparicara Vasu" (one who sat on a throne of space in the skies).

Uparicara Vasu

Uparicara Vasu was a famous and valorous king. In his childhood he had studied under a teacher named Kṣīrakadambaka. The son of the teacher Parvata and the sage Nārada were his study-mates. Seeing those three students together one day some miraculous interpreter told his fellow ascetics that of these three one will become a king, one will go to heaven and the third will go to hell. When Kṣīrakadambaka heard this he thought Vasu is the son of a king so he will become a king, but let me find who out of the other two will go to hell. He made an artificial goat and filled it up with lac syrup. Kṣīrakadambaka called Nārada and said – child, I have stupefied this goat with a chant. Today is the eighth day of Bahulā, hence in the evening take it to such a place where nobody can see it and after killing it come back quietly.

Nārada took that goat in the evening to an uninhabited place. When he was about to kill the goat he thought that all the stars and planets are watching. He went still further into the forest taking the goat with him, there he said here all the trees and plants and vegetation are watching. Still further ahead was a small shrine and indeed that place was remote. As soon as Nārada began to kill the goat he thought the god of this shrine is watching. In the end, he took the goat to the teacher and told him everything. The teacher made him an ascetic and said – child, you did the right thing, you may go, but do not tell anyone about this.

After this Kṣīrakadambaka called his son Parvata and handing him the goat, instructed him similarly. Parvata took the goat to an empty lane from where no one could be spotted till a great distance. When he was

certain nobody was watching then he sliced the goat and came back in the hermitage and told everything to his father. The teacher was very angry after hearing his son's words and said to Parvata, "What did you do, you rogue? Don't you know that the gods in the skies, the vegetation and invisible beings that wander about unseen watch everything we do? Or else you should have thought in your mind that at least you were watching yourself. You have done a heinous crime killing the goat; you will certainly go to hell. It is better that you get out of my sight."

After completion of their studies each student took leave of the teacher and started returning to their homes. When Vasu went to the teacher Kṣīrakadambaka for blessings and requested his teacher to ask his reward as a teacher, the teacher said, "Child, when you grow up to be a king, show love towards your teacher's son Parvata, which will be my reward."

Vasu later became the king of the Cedi country. Once, roaming the forest for a hunt, Vasu released an arrow aimed at a deer, but it fell midway. When he went closer there he found a huge transparent rock, which was between the deer and the arrow, on account of which the deer was visible but the rock was not and the arrow hit that rock and fell to the ground even before it reached the deer. Vasu thought such a transparent rock would be very useful to a king like me. Reaching his palace he narrated the whole incident to his minister who got the rock moved to the palace and placing it in the hall, placed king Vasu's throne on top of it. Because it was placed on a transparent rock people thought Vasu's throne was hanging in space. Hence king Vasu's name became popular as "UparicaraVasu".

After the death of the teacher Kṣīrakadambaka' his son Parvata became the teacher and began to teach. He began to explain to his students the meaning of "ajairyāṣṭavyam", that aja, that is, goat, must be used for sacrificial rituals. This when in the Vedas 'aja' is used in the context of 'that which is not born'; that is, grain which does not grow – a seed. When Nārada learnt of this, he at once went to Parvata and started explaining to him that he must not turn the traditional meaning of the Vedas into false meanings. The sages have always that that 'aja' means "traivārṣika-yava-vrīhī" that is, "a grain that does not grow", not a goat. But Parvata did not agree with Nārada's statement. He stuck to how own,

and said if my words are proved fallacious then may my tongue be slashed and if otherwise, let your tongue be slashed. In the end it was decided that this question be placed before the third fellow-student, king Vasu and that his decision shall be binding on us.

When Parvata told his mother this entire account, she said firmly your father considered Nārada a diligent student, hence Nārada must be right. But Parvata was not ready to accept defeat on any condition. In the end Parvata's mother went to king Vasu. Narrating the account of the debate to him she asked Vasu the meaning of "*ajairyasṭavyam*" as explained by the teacher. When king Vasu said it was Nārada's meaning that was attested by the teacher, Parvata's mother became anxious and worried. She told Vasu, "This decision of yours will destroy my son, it is better that I kill myself first." Saying so, the teacher's wife started to take her own life. Seeing this, the king Vasu decided to take a decision favouring Parvata.

Lots of people gathered the next day. When king Vasu seated himself on the throne that seemed to be on space, Nārada and Parvata placed their respective statements before the king. In spite of knowing the true facts king Vasu, giving a decision favouring his teacher's son and wife, said that according to "*ajairyasṭavyam*" a goat must be sacrificed. Because king Vasu 'knowingly favoured untruth', being given up by the gods siding the truth, his throne fell to the ground, he turned from '*Uparicara*' to '*sthalacara*' (one whose throne is on the ground). Seeing the proof, because of foolishness, he attested Parvata's statement to be correct. As a result, through unseen powers Vasu was pushed to the netherworld. Because of favouring untruth in an unjust manner, he had to go to hell. Nārada went to the realm of gods but Parvata, later on, with the help of a god named Mahākāla, who was the enemy of king Sagara, made animal sacrifice mandatory in rituals and was the originator of this tradition.

The Account of Vasu in Mahābhārata

In the ancient times, sages and kings used '*aja*', that is, grains that did not grow, in sacrificial rituals. There was no place for animal slaughter in sacrificial rituals. Animal killing in sacrifice used to be considered bad, heinous and extremely condemnable. This is clear in the Tulādhāra account, the Vicarūnu account and in the accounts of the uparicara king

Vasu in the Mahābhārata. In the Śāntiparva of Mahābhārata, from all chapters from Vasudevahiṇḍī onwards, in most sections there are related accounts. The old and popularly accepted Jain and Vaiṣṇava scriptures unanimously agree on the fact that the original source of killing animals for sacrificial rituals was the usage of the term ‘goat’ in the place of ‘that which does not grow’ and the Cedi king Vasu’s decision favouring this untruth. That by merely uttering the word of using animal sacrifice in rituals uparicara Vasu had to fall into the dark abyss of the netherworld, in this context, the brief introduction to Vasu as given in the Mahābhārata is as follows:

Seeing king Vasu in intense penance, Indra got a doubt that if he continues this way, he will one day take away my position. Perturbed by this doubt, Indra came to Vasu and in order to disengage him from his penance, gave him, besides the vast Cedi kingdom and a crystalline gem-studded airborne palace, a boon of being omniscient. Vasu’s capital was by the banks of the river Śaktimatī. Because he roamed around in the airborne palace given to him by Indra, he became popular as uparicara Vasu. Uparicara Vasu was truthful, non-violent and used to have pure food. Aṅgirasa son, Bṛhaspati was his preceptor. Ruling justly and diligently, king Vasu conducted a great sacrifice of the aśvamegha. Sixteen great sages such as Bṛhaspati, Hotā, Śālihotra, Kapila, Vaiśampāyana and Kaāva were present in that ritual with total non-violent feeling. The potion of gods was fixed from the fruits, roots, etc from the forests used for this ritual. Lord Nārāyaṇa, happy with this ritual of Vasu, appeared before him and accepted the sacrificial oblation offered to him. After completing the great aśvameghasacrifice, king Vasu looked after his subjects for a long time.

Once, a debate ensued between the gods and sages regarding the oblations used in the sacrifice. The gods told the sages – “ajairyasṭavyam”, that is, goats, should be used for sacrifice – by this, they meant ‘aja’ should be translated as ‘goat’. To this, the sages said – seeds should be used in sacrifice. That is what the Vaidika śrutis say. Seeds are called aja, it is not right to sacrifice a goat in the name of aja. Wherever animals are sacrificed in rituals those rituals are not ones in keeping with truth, men or religion.

At the time when this debate was going on between gods and sages, the great king Vasu reached there through the skyway on his palace. Seeing

him the brahmarṣis (sages) told the gods – this king will clear our doubt. He is himself one who conducts sacrifices, looks after the well-being of all living beings and is a great man; he cannot go against the śāstras (scriptures /holy texts). All the sages and gods said, “Oh king! What should be used in a sacrifice; Food or goat?” The king asked them what is dear to each one of them. Who thinks aja means goat and who thinks it means food? Replying to the question of king Vasu the sages said, “Oh king! It is our opinion that food should be used in sacrifice, but the gods think sacrifice must be done with an animal called ‘chāga’. Now you decide.”

King Vasu, taking the side of the gods said, “aja means chāga, or goat, hence goat should be used.” Hearing this, all the sages got angry and said, “Knowing aja’s true inference is food, siding with the gods you have said it is goat, hence you will fall from the sky, and your power to roam around in the skies will end. If you have opposed the Veda scriptures, you shall go to the netherworld and if our word is against the scriptures, we shall fall.” As soon as the sages stopped talking, king Uparicara fell to the earth from the sky and at once went into the netherworld.

Out of the eight sons of Vasu, six of them successively ascended the throne, one after the other, but the moment they did that, by some divine power, they got killed. Scared by this, two of the remaining sons, Suvasu and Pihaddhaya ‘Suktimatī’ ran away from the city. Suvasu settled in Mathurā and Pihaddhaya’s successor was Subāhu. After Subāhu, came respectively, Dīrghabāhu, Vajrabāhu, Ardhabāhu, Bhānu and Subhānu. After Subhānu his son Yadu was a brave king of the Harivaṃśa lineage. In Yadu’s line, Saurī and Vīra were two great and powerful kings. King Saurī settled in Sauripura while Vīra built Sauvīra city.

The Paternal Side of Lord Neminātha

The Harivaṃśa clan’s king Saurī had two valorous sons, Aṃdhakavṛṣṇi and Bhogavṛṣṇi. Aṃdhakavṛṣṇi had ten sons who were popular by the name Daśārha. Among them the eldest, Samudravijaya and the youngest, Vasudeva, were specially talented and influential. Samudravijaya was magnanimous, just and doting king to his subjects. It was Samudravijaya who brought up his younger brother Vasudeva. In time, Vasudeva, too, became famous for his valour.

The Past Life of Vasudeva

In his past life, Vasudeva was a Brahmin, Nandīṣeṇa. After his parents' death, his family members threw him out of the house. After he was thrown out of his house he was brought up and cared for by a gardener. The gardener had assured him he would marry one of his daughters to him. He was hurt to know that not even one of them liked him and so went to the forest to commit suicide. There a monk saw him and stopped him from doing so. Listening to the monk's discourse he took initiation and began to lead a life of restraint, and austerities. To make his condemnable life fruitful, he made a resolve that whenever he got news of any sick monk, he would first serve him and only then accept food. On account of severe penance he got many attainments (labdhi) so that whatever medicine he required for a diseased monk, he was able to acquire it. Because of this selfless service he became very popular and accumulated great merit (puṇya). He was unable to forget the insult meted out to him by the gardener's daughters, hence he decided that if his penance bears fruit, in the next birth he would like to be loved by women. After death, because of his penance, he obtained to the realm of gods and after completing his life there he was born as Vasudeva at Aṁdhakavṛṣṇi's house.

Vasudeva and Kaṁsa

Vasudeva's childhood passed off happily. He was sent to able teachers for appropriate education. When Vasudeva was studying, one day a merchant came with his son to him and said, "This child, Kaṁsa, will serve you, please keep him with you." Vasudeva agreed to the merchant's request. Kaṁsa served him and also started learning at the same time.

One day, Jarāsaṁdha sent a messenger to Samudravijaya and said, "Whosoever will capture the rebellious king Siṁharatha of Siṁhapura, I shall marry my daughter to him and also give a city as a gift." When Vasudeva got the message, he requested Samudravijaya that he may be permitted to capture Siṁharatha and present him. Samudravijaya heeded Vasudeva's request and sent him off with a strong army to fight. Siṁharatha faced Vasudeva. After a fierce battle, Vasudeva's army was weakened. Seeing this Vasudeva instructed his charioteer Kaṁsa to take

him towards Siṃharatha. Kaṃsa did as told and in no time Vasudeva made Siṃharatha's army run helter-skelter. Kaṃsa showed extraordinary war-skills and breaking Siṃharatha's chariot wheels, captured him. Siṃharatha's soldiers ran away. Vasudeva presented Siṃharatha as captive to Samudravijaya. Very happy with this victory of prince Vasudeva, Samudravijaya organised a welcome ceremony.

When they were alone Samudravijaya told Vasudeva that based on some signs of Jīvayaśā, it has been predicted that she will destroy both clans. Hence it doesn't seem beneficial. To this, Vasudeva said, Kaṃsa has a big role to play in the success of this campaign, hence as a reward Jīvayaśā may be given to him. Samudravijaya said how can a high caste woman be married to a merchant's son? Vasudeva said, Kaṃsa's courageous work has proven him to be a kṣatriya's son indeed.

To know the truth, when the merchant was questioned, he said – “Oh king! In fact he is not my son. He was found within a bronze casket floating down the river Yamunā. Hence he was named Kaṃsa.” We also found a ring along with him in that casket, in which was inscribed king Ugrasena's name, seeing which Samudravijaya came to believe Kaṃsa to be his son. At once he went to Jarāsaṃdha's house with Kaṃsa and Siṃharatha and narrating the incident of Kaṃsa capturing Siṃharatha, Samudravijaya said Kaṃsa is in fact king Ugrasena's son. Hearing this, Jarāsaṃdha happily married off his daughter Jīvayaśā to Kaṃsa.

Having come to know the fact that his father left him to float in river Yamunā, Kaṃsa decided to avenge him. The moment he became the son-in-law of Jarāsaṃdha, he asked for Mathurā kingdom from him and the moment he came there he imprisoned Jarāsaṃdha and began to rule there.

Vasudeva's Personality

Vasudeva's personality was very attractive and inspiring. When people would see him going up and down the main streets they would shower free praise on his pleasing to the eye kind of beauty. Women would keep staring at his enchanting glow. But Vasudeva was not even aware of his charming, beautiful youth. One day, he was returning from a stroll in his garden when Samudravijaya told him lovingly, “brother, do not roam

around outside this way, your delicate body is withering away with dust and dirt. Staying within the palace, you can practise some other arts and skills.” Vasudeva listened to his elder brother and started spending time in the palace.

One day, seeing the hunchbacked maid preparing a body-paste for Samudravijaya, Vasudeva asked her, “isn’t this paste for me?” The maid said, “You have done a crime, so the king does not give you clothes and ornaments and paste.” When Vasudeva forcibly took away the paste despite the maid’s refusal, the maid remarked, “It is because of this kind of behaviour that you have been disallowed in royal halls, you do not give up your immodesty.” Shocked, when lovingly Vasudeva spoke to the maid and pleased her, she said, “Actually, some people have told the king Samudravijaya that when prince Vasudeva takes a stroll along the main streets, women leave all their work and chase him and keep staring at him, spellbound. Some young women in fact keep waiting for his arrival. There is hysteria about you all over. Hearing this, your brother has made this arrangement for you.” Hearing this Vasudeva, was worried and thought in this state, it is better to leave from here quietly. In the evening, he got out of the royal palace with an attendant called Vallabha.

On the way was a graveyard where he saw a dead body. Prince Vasudeva asked his attendant to prepare a funeral pyre with some logs of wood. When it was ready, Vasudeva told the attendant, “Go bring my jewel case. I shall donate something and enter the pyre.” Hearing these words of the prince the attendant began to weep. He said, “If you want to enter the pyre, I too, shall follow you.” The prince said, “Okay, but first bring the jewel-case. And yes, do not tell anyone about this.”

The attendant returned to the city. Vasudeva set fire to the pyre. Close by on a tree he wrote, “Despite being one of true character and conduct, people have suspected me, hence I am giving myself up to the fire.” Even before the attendant returned, Vasudeva left that place. On the way, he came across a bullock cart, with a woman who was going from her in-law’s place to her mother’s. An old man was accompanying her. Seeing Vasudeva walking on foot, she felt pity and she asked the old man to take him in the cart; he will rest in our home for a night and leave. Listening to the old man, Vasudeva sat in the bullock cart and, reaching his house, after a bath and a meal, began to prepare for rest. When he was resting he overheard people discussing outside a *Yakṣa* shrine that

finding out about Vasudeva's jumping into the fire the members reached the graveyard and seeing the reasons for his doing so written on the tree, they were very sad and worried and completing all the last rites, returned home. Vasudeva felt worldly bonds are unfathomable, mysterious and transient. It is good. People believe I am no more. Hence they will not try to look for me and I can now uninhibitedly and freely move about.

After resting that night Vasudeva left that place and kept wandering about through different places. In the meantime, he learnt many things, undertook the study of various kinds of skills and on many occasions, put his courage and valour to use. This way, wandering about, Vasudeva reached Ariṣṭapura, the main city in the Kauśala republic. There he found out that the king of Kauśala, Rudhira, was organising a *svayamvara* (the woman selecting a groom for her) for his daughter, princess Rohiṇī, for which many great kings like Jarāsaṃdha, Damaghoṣa, Pāṃḍu, Samudravijaya, Candrābha, Kaṃsa, etc were to be present. Vasudeva, too, sat with a paṇava musical instrument in his hand in a corner at the svayamvarahall. Accompanied by countless maids, the moment Rohiṇī entered with a garland in her hands, the entire hall looked like a painting with her aura blinding it. The faces of the kings (to whom Rohiṇī would go with the garland) would glow like the sun, but the moment she moved on ahead, their faces would turn pale and dark, losing sheen, just as the sun under the effect of the plant Rāhu. Vasudeva made a soft, melodious tune with his musical instrument with the sound of which Rohiṇī, like an enchanted peacock, moved towards Vasudeva leaving all the great kings, and reaching him, placed the garland around his neck and went quietly into her chambers.

There was furor in the hall. Many called out aloud, "after all, she chose a musician." Many kings felt it was not right. One of them said to the king of Kauśala, "If your daughter already likes a singer, what was the necessity for the theatrics of a svayamvara to insult the kings?" To this, king of Kauśala said, "a girl has the right to choose her groom in a svayamvara. She selects the one she finds suitable or her." Vasudeva said, "Is a kṣatriya not allowed to sing or play music? Seeing the paṇava in my hands how did you all think I am not a kṣatriya?" Hearing this, a king named Damaghoṣa said, "Insulting kings of pure clans by choosing a man of unknown descent is not right." Seeing the conversation take this turn someone suggested that if the singer claims to be a Kṣatriya, ask him to introduce his lineage. Vasudeva said, "What is the use of all this

useless debate, the strength of my arms will show my identity.” Hearing this Jarāsaṁdha said, “The root cause of this insult is the king of Kauśala. Capture the king Rūdhira.” All the kings surrounded the king of Kauśala. Seeing this, astride the chariot ‘*dadhimukha*’ of the Vidyādhara king of Arimjayapura, Vasudeva gave out a battle cry. Hearing Vasudeva’s call, when many kings started to attack Vasudeva, king Pāṁdu said, “No, this does not speak well of kṣatriyas that so many kings should together attack one person.” Jarāsaṁdha too expressed consent to this and said, “Yes, let each king take turns and fight a duel with him, whosoever wins, Rohiṇī will be his.” When Vasudeva within minutes defeated the brave kings such as Śatrumjaya and many others, Jarāsaṁdha told king Samudravijaya, “It would be better if you fought with him and gained Rohiṇī.” On Jarāsaṁdha’s request Samudravijaya started hurling a string of arrows at Vasudeva. Vasudeva struck all those arrows down but did not attack him. Seeing his arrows broken and fallen to the ground, Samudravijaya was very angry. At that time, Vasudeva released an arrow with his name on it towards his feet. Seeing Vasudeva’s name on the arrow Samudravijaya was astonished. Forgetting everything, he leapt in joy at Vasudeva. Vasudeva threw his weapon and fell at Samudravijaya’s feet. The elder brother pulled up his younger brother and embraced him. The other eight brothers too met Vasudeva with joy. Jarāsaṁdha and other kings praised the good fortune of the king of Kauśala. In everyone’s presence he conducted the wedding of Rohiṇī with Vasudeva. After completion of the wedding ceremony, all kings went back to their respective kingdoms. Accepting the invitation of the king of Kauśala, Samudravijaya spent one year there, and giving permission to Vasudeva to stay there for some time, left for Sauripura.

While in Ariṣṭapura, Rohiṇī gave birth to a son who was named Balarāma. After spending some more time in Ariṣṭapura, Vasudeva, Rohiṇī and other wives and the son Balarāma, taking leave from the king of Kauśala, returned to Śauripura. After sometime, Kaṁsa extended a graceful invitation to Vasudeva to stay at Mathura with his family for sometime. Vasudeva accepted Kaṁsa’s request and started staying happily in Mathura’s palaces.

Vasudeva-Devakī’s Wedding and the killing of Kaṁsa

One day on Kaṁsa’s request king Vasudeva went to Mṛttikāvātī city to see king Devaka’s daughter Devakī. On the request of Kaṁsa, Devaka

got Devakī married to Vasudeva. Vasudeva came with a lot of wealth and attendants in dowry to Mathura. Kaṁsa too reached Mathura on that auspicious occasion and said to Vasudeva with respect, “give me, too, a gift I seek on this happy occasion.” When Vasudeva said “yes”, Kaṁsa happily asked for seven of Devakī’s infants. Obligated by friendship, not expecting anything untoward, Vasudeva agreed. Later, Vasudeva got to know that when Kaṁsa’s wife Jīvayaśā had made fun of the young Śramaṇa monk Atimuktaka, showing him Devakī’s pleasure-clothes, he had angrily said to her, “What are you laughing at and dancing about? The same Devakī’s seventh son will kill your husband and father.” Hearing of this Vasudeva understood the reason behind Kaṁsa’s request. Still he decided that he will not go back on his word, no matter how great a loss he may have to suffer for it.

After her marriage Devakī became pregnant six times, the infants born thereby would be sent by divine grace of god Hariṇaigameṣī to the laywoman Sulasā and her still-born children would be sent to Devakī. Vasudeva would give the same over to Kaṁsa who would throw them away since they were still-born. When Devakī became pregnant a seventh time, she woke up with seven auspicious dreams. Vasudeva, interpreting the dreams said, - “You will give birth to a great, fortunate son, who will destroy both Kaṁsa and Jarāsaṁdha, when he grows up.” Devakī said, “Lord, we must protect this son by all means; at least one son of mine should remain alive.”

Kaṁsa suspected that even if he was bound by his promise, Vasudeva might try to protect his children, so he had imprisoned Devakī and Vasudeva. When after nine months Devakī gave birth to a son, by divine force, the prison-keepers fell asleep. Vasudeva took his son to Gokula and at that time, there was a slight drizzle, the gods had taken a form of an unseen umbrella. Crossing the river Yamunā, he reached Nanda’s house where Yaśodā had given birth to a daughter. Vasudeva placed his son in the place of the daughter and took her with him to Devakī. When the attendants woke up, they placed her in front of Kaṁsa. Kaṁsa became reassured that his fears had been allayed. There in Gokul Kṛṣṇa was being brought up by Nanda and Yaśodā. When Kaṁsa learnt of Kṛṣṇa’s extraordinary courage and brave acts since childhood he got suspicious about him and tried to kill him several times through many methods but always failed.

When Kṛṣṇa grew up a little, Kaṁsa organised a wrestling competition in palace. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma went there, too. Kaṁsa prepared two giant wrestlers, Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika and also kept an elephant in rut to trample them. But along with Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa killed the wrestlers and the elephant. Seeing his plans fail Kaṁsa became angry. He instructed his soldiers to kill Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma started killing Kaṁsa's soldiers and Kṛṣṇa, pouncing angrily as a tiger, threw Kaṁsa from his throne to the ground and killing him, freed his subjects from his atrocities.

The Wrath of Jarāsaṁdha

After killing Kaṁsa king Samudravijaya released Ugrasena from the prison and made him the king of Mathurā. Ugrasena conducted the wedding of his daughter Satyabhāmā in a grand way with Kṛṣṇa. Angry with Kaṁsa's death, Jīvayāsā went to Rājagṛha saying that she would put an end to Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa and all the ten offspring. Reaching Rājagṛha, she narrated the whole account to her father Jarāsaṁdha. Jarāsaṁdha was very unhappy with his daughter's widowhood. He resolved to destroy the Yādava clan. He instructed his son, Kālakumāra to attack the Yādavas with a huge army and kill them all. Kālakumāra took an oath, "I shall return only after killing the Yādavas. If they enter the fire fearing me, I shall chase them there, too."

When the Yādavas found out that Kālakumāra was coming with his petty army towards them, Samudravijaya and Ugrasena went towards the south-west sea with 18 crore Yādavas. Later they camped on the valleys of the Vindhya Mountains. The deity of the Harivaṁśa clan created a huge mountain with just one entrance on that pathway with her powers, and lit numerous burning pyres on it. When Kālakumāra's army reached there chasing the Yādavas, it became stunned seeing the burning pyres. Nearby was an old woman, weeping. When she was questioned she said the Yādavas were running away fearing Jarāsaṁdha. When they learnt that Kālakumāra was chasing them with a huge army, seeing no way of saving their lives, they lit these pyres and fell into them. Seeing my clan destroyed this way, I am also going to enter into the flames. Saying this, she jumped into the flames. Seeing this, Kālakumāra told his brothers and other kings that he had taken an oath that he shall kill the Yādavas even after they entered into the flames. 'Hence I shall chase them

jumping into the fire.’ Saying this, with a naked sword in his hand, he jumped into the fire and turned into ashes. Jarāsaṃdha’s army returned to Rājagṛha wringing its hands in despair.

Building Dvārikā City

When the Yādavas found out that Kālakumāra had entered the flames and that Jarāsaṃdha’s army had returned to Rājagṛha city, they moved towards the sea-coast happily. They settled on the Raivata Mountain in Saurāṣṭra region. There, Satyabhāmā have birth to two sons, Bhānu and Bhāmara. Kṛṣṇa observed a three-day fast and meditated upon the deity, Susthita, of the salt ocean. On the third day, in the night time, the Susthita god appeared and giving Śrīkṛṣṇa the pāṃcajanya conch and Balarāma the conch named sughoṣa, gems and clothes, asked the reason for being invoked. Śrīkṛṣṇa said, ‘Please return now the Dvārikā city of the earlier ardhacakra you have enveloped within your expanse.’ The god immediately pulled back the sea-water from there. Instructed by Devendra, Vaiśravaṇa created overnight a Dvārikā city 12 yojanas long and 9 yojanas wide, with huge palaces filled with limitless wealth, beautiful tanks-wells, streams and gardens and wide roads. Seeing an auspicious time, the Yādavas entered Dvārikā city and began to live there and enjoying the great prosperity.

War with Jarāsaṃdha

Fearing Jarāsaṃdha’s anger, when the Yādavas were moving towards Dvārikā, at that time child Ariṣṭanemi was barely four-and-a-half years old. He was being brought up in Dvārikā. The Yādavas, too, while in Dvārikā, gradually expanded their kingdom and the glory of their wealth and prosperity soon was being sung far and wide. When Jarāsaṃdha found out about the increasing fame of the Yādavas, he sent one of his messengers to Dvārikā and said ‘the deceitful tactics you people employed to kill my son Kālakumāra shall be certainly avenged by Jarāsaṃdha. You cannot save yourself on land, or the netherworld from the oath he has taken to destroy the Yādavas.’ The Yādava heroes were filled with unbound anger hearing the message, but Samudravijaya calmed them down with a gesture of his hands and told the messenger that whatever happened was on account of a divine power, not the

conspiracy of the Yādavas. You tell your king that what he has started, he must finish.

After the messenger left, Samudravijaya discussed the war-strategy with his ten brothers and king Bhoja, Ugrasena, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc to face Jarāsaṁdha. King Bhoja said the only strategy to be used for Jarāsaṁdha is punishment but this will only prove useful and best when we shall always follow the most important norm of the war, that every person engaged in the war shall fight till the end, putting his life at stake, without desire for even a moment's rest. Everybody agreed with king Bhoja's words and looked for consent at Samudravijaya when he said, "To break the ego of Jarāsaṁdha we must resort to punishment by not sitting in our fortress but by fighting with him on the borders with our army. This will prove our machismo and will keep a large part of the kingdom protected. This unsettles and impacts the enemy and it increases confidence of our army and subjects". Agreeing with Samudravijaya's suggestion the Yādava army started off, and within a few days, set up their camp on the banks of the river Sarasvatī, 45 yojanas or 360 miles from Dvārikā, near Sinīpallī village, 4 yojanas away from where Jarāsaṁdha's army had set up base.

At the time when the Yādava army set up base at Sinīpallī, a Vidyādhara leader came to king Samudravijaya with his armies and said, "Oh king, your army has great warriors such as Ariṣṭanemi, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna, Śāmba, etc. Hence we are at your service and we may be allowed to render service and assistance as per our abilities. We want that Vasudeva be our army general and Śāmba and Pradyumna be there to assist him. Many Vidyādhara kings are friends of the king of Magadha, Jarāsaṁdha and are extending help to him with their armies. You may allow us to keep them occupied in battle on the way." Samudravijaya accepted their request and placed Vasudeva, Śāmba and Pradyumna with them. At that time Ariṣṭanemi gave Vasudeva a medicine that would annul the effect of the weapons used by the gods.

There, Jarāsaṁdha's emissary 'Hansa' trying to explain to him said, "Oh king, you should consider very well what is beneficial to you and what is not, before commencing any work. You are well aware of the strength of Samudravijaya and Vasudeva. At the time of Rohiṇī's svayaṁvara Vasudeva single-handedly defeated all the kings. His sons, Balarāma and

Kṛṣṇa are both valorous. All gods and minor deities bow their heads to Ariṣṭanemi, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. Ariṣṭanemi can single-handedly win over the entire earth by the might of his arms. In your army, leaving aside you, who is that brave and strong? Most of the great ones in your army use deceit and trickery to do their work. Your son Kālakumāra was destroyed by the trick of a clan-goddess. Doesn't this show you that even destiny is not in your favour? The Yādavas too went far from you to Dvārikā, but you have provoked them to a war with you. Even now if you stop this war they will readily return to Dvārikā.” But Jarāsaṁdha did not pay heed to Hansa's rightful speech, but insulted and condemned him.

Both armies created their battalion-placements. After preparing the placements, Jarāsaṁdha appointed Hiraṇyanābha, the king of Kauśala his army general. Samudravijaya appointed Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Anādhṛṣṭi as the army general of the Yādavas. The air was filled with sounds of conch-shells, trumpets and other war musical instruments. The warriors from both sides pounced on each other like hungry lions. When Ariṣṭanemi got ready for war, the king of gods, Indra, sent a chariot, Jaivaratha, filled with divine weapons, with his charioteer Mātali. Upon the request of Mātali, Ariṣṭanemi got on to that chariot. For a long time there was intense fighting. Neither side could break through each other's battalion placements. In the end, when Jarāsaṁdha's army succeeded in breaking past the portion of a placement at the forefront which protected the Garūḍa placement, Kṛṣṇa unfurled the Garūḍa flag and steadied the army. Mahānemi, Arjuna and Anādhṛṣṭi, after intense battle, crushed the army of Jarāsaṁdha. The Yādav army entered the enemy posts, breaking and defeating them. Intense fighting continued. Many great warriors came to be of use on both sides. Both army generals fought with weapons which lasted a long while. In the end, Anādhṛṣṭi beheaded Hiraṇyanābha. There was chaos in Jarāsaṁdha's army. By coincidence, the sun had set as well, hence both armies returned to their respective camps.

On the second day, Jarāsaṁdha declared Śiśupāla his army general. Both armies created their respective circular placements (cakravyūha) and stood facing each other in the battlefield. With a twang of his bow-string, Jarāsaṁdha moved towards Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. Jarāsaṁdha's son, prince Yavana, too, began to attack the sons of Vasudeva with great speed. Sāraṅakumāra chopped off the head of Yavan kumāra with his

sword. Śiśupāla started hurling both weapons and verbal abuses at Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa broke Śiśupāla's bow to pieces, as well as his armour and chariot. Śiśupāla had just about leapt at Kṛṣṇa with his sword when the latter cut and brought to the ground his sword, crown and head. Seeing his army general killed thus, Jarāsaṃdha leapt at Kṛṣṇa like the dreaded time of death itself. Many Yādava warriors jumped at Jarāsaṃdha, but single-handedly he killed them all. Jarāsaṃdha's 28 sons attacked Balarāma. After fighting for sometime, Balarāma killed them with his plough. Seeing his sons killed this way, Jarāsaṃdha attacked Balarāma with his goad. Balarāma fell unconscious. He was about to attack a second time with his goad when Arjuna appeared before him with lightning speed and both started fighting. In this meanwhile Kṛṣṇa killed the remaining 19 sons of Jarāsaṃdha. Jarāsaṃdha was red with fury. He said – "Kṛṣṇa! Consider Balaram dead and you get ready to die too." Saying this, he leapt at Kṛṣṇa when Mātali beseeched Ariṣṭanemi, "Lord! Though you are averse to all murderous activities, yet now you must save your clan from being destroyed. This Jarāsaṃdha is like a mere worm in front of you. Lord, show some of your miraculous deeds."

Ariṣṭanemi's miraculous deeds and killing of Jarāsaṃdha

As requested by Mātali, without any agitation, Ariṣṭanemi blew the Paurandara conch. All the four directions began to tremble by the sound of that conch-shell. Reassured, the Yādava army resumed fighting with renewed vigour. As advised by Ariṣṭanemi, Mātali whirled the chariot around like a fearsome typhoon and Ariṣṭanemi started releasing arrows on Jarāsaṃdha's army and destroyed the flags and crowns and, in a short while, killed one lakh soldiers. He did not kill Jarāsaṃdha, of course, but rendered him almost still as death. The wind-like speed of his was no match for anyone. In this meantime, Balarāma regained consciousness; he got himself together and started killing the enemy soldiers. The entire battlefield was filled with broken chariots, dead elephants, horses, human heads and pots. Seeing this destruction of his army Jarāsaṃdha started fuming. He moved his chariot towards Kṛṣṇa and said, "Kṛṣṇa! Now I want to put an end forever to your deeds of trickery and deceit. You killed Kaṃsa and Kālakumāra through trickery. Now I will kill you and fulfill Jīvayaśā's oath."

Laughing, Śrīkṛṣṇa said, "That will only be fulfilled by Jīvayaśā entering the flames." Śrīkṛṣṇa's words acted like fuel to the fire of Jarāsaṃdha's

rage. Pulling the bow-string, he rained a shower of arrows at Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa kept cutting his arrows mid-way. When Jarāsaṃdha saw that none of his weapons were affecting Kṛṣṇa, he ultimately threw his effective weapon, the cakra. Seeing the cakra move towards Kṛṣṇa, the Yādava army got worried. Many warriors used their effective heavenly weapons on the cakra but they all failed. The cakra kept moving towards Śrīkṛṣṇa. Suddenly, the pivot of the cakra slightly hit Kṛṣṇa's chest, and circumambulating him, stopped at the forefinger of his right hand. Kṛṣṇa soon held the cakra in his right hand on the forefinger. Showers of scented water and flowers began to pour down on Kṛṣṇa and a heavenly voice said – “the ninth Vasudeva has emerged.” Kṛṣṇa told Jarāsaṃdha, “Oh king of Magadha! Do you still see trickery in this?” The egotistic Jarāsaṃdha said, “Just try hurling that cakra of mine towards me.” Kṛṣṇa then whirled the cakra towards Jarāsaṃdha and Jarāsaṃdha's head fell to the ground. The sky resounded with cries of cheer and victory of the Yādavas. Ariṣṭanemi too stopped his chariot. All the kings fell at his feet and begged forgiveness. Ariṣṭanemi took them all to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa embraced Ariṣṭanemi. As per Ariṣṭanemi's suggestion, Kṛṣṇa returned all their kingdoms to them. On Samudravijaya's suggestion, Jarāsaṃdha's son Sahadeva was given the kingdom of Magadha. At that time Samudravijaya was informed by three Vidyādhara kings that ‘Vasudeva, Pradyumna and Śāmba had been engaging the Vidyādhara kings who had come to assist Jarāsaṃdha. Hearing the news of Jarāsaṃdha's death, all of them took refuge at Vasudeva's feet. All of them are now coming here.’ In a while all of them reached there. The Yādavas celebrated their success happily and then reached Dvārikā. Samudravijaya tried to get Ariṣṭanemi married several times but wasn't successful.

Ariṣṭanemi and Kṛṣṇa

Once, wandering about, Ariṣṭanemi entered Kṛṣṇa's armoury. There he saw an extremely bright cakra, a fearsome bow like the Śeṣanāga (serpent), goad, sword and a huge pāṃcajanya conch-shell. The prince became inquisitive seeing the conch. Seeing him reach for the conch the guard of the armoury said, “Oh prince! Only Śrīkṛṣṇa can lift and blow this conch. Let alone blowing it, an ordinary person cannot even lift it.” The guard had not even completed his sentence when prince Ariṣṭanemi lifted the conch and, bringing it to his lips, blew it. The waves of the sea in Dvārikā rose and hit each other at great speed. People's homes in

Dvārikā and its surrounds began to tremble. Elephants blew their trumpets and many people fell unconscious. Even Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa wondered what happened. The armoury guard informed them that prince Ariṣṭanemi had blown the conch out of curiosity. Kṛṣṇa could not believe his ears; just then Ariṣṭanemi came there. Kṛṣṇa seated him next to him and said, “Did you blow the pāṃcajanya conch?” Ariṣṭanemi said – “Yes!” Kṛṣṇa embraced him with great fondness and said, “I am happy that you blew my conch. I was of the assumption that none apart from me could blow it. Why don’t we go to the gymnasium and test our strengths?” Ariṣṭanemi gladly agreed. He was aware of his strength so he thought Kṛṣṇa might have some pain if they wrestled. Thinking thus, he said to Kṛṣṇa, ‘we can test our strength by bending each other’s arms.’ Sensing the prince’s feelings, Kṛṣṇa extended his right arm and asked him to bend it. Without much effort the prince bent Kṛṣṇa’s arm as though it was a tender stalk of a lotus plant. Kṛṣṇa tried to bend his arm but in spite of using all his strength, he could not. Kṛṣṇa was astonished by the prince’s boundless strength. He said, ‘Oh prince, I am very happy to see your divine strength. Kṛṣṇa took the prince to his internal chambers and fed him. Knowing that Ariṣṭanemi was completely free of passions, Kṛṣṇa instructed the guards of his internal chambers to allow him free access at all times to the chambers.

Seeing the boundless strength of his younger brother Ariṣṭanemi, Kṛṣṇa was astonished and pleased at the same time. Even a cakravartī and Indra do not have this kind of unlimited strength. With such kind of immortal strength, why does he not try to bring the six divisions of Bhārata under his control? Balarāma explained that he has no desire for ruling. Rukmiṇī and other queens used to look after him very well. Kṛṣṇa himself would spend a lot of time with him. Suddenly a thought occurred to him, that ‘my brotherly love will be fruitful when prince Nemi shall get married and enjoy the pleasures of a married life and all the wealth of the kingdom. This will only be possible when the prince’s mind is attracted towards worldly pleasures.’ Thinking thus, he instructed all his queens to try to attract Ariṣṭanemi’s attention towards worldly matters.

As per Śrīkṛṣṇa’s instructions, Rūkmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, etc organized the spring festival. With persuasion and request Śrīkṛṣṇa took Ariṣṭanemi to see, and participate in the spring festival. Prince Nemi started seeing all the play devoid of passion, and did not get attracted towards any of that dalliance of his brother Kṛṣṇa with his sisters-in-law. In spite of the

failure of the spring festival, Rūkmiṅīand Satyabhāmā did not stop their efforts. Whenever they found an occasion, they would try to induce in Ariṣṭanemi the desire for the world and would tell him that if he stopped being a loner and made someone his life-companion, he would understand the joys of life. Kṛṣṇa would occasionally, at opportune moments, keep giving him hints about selecting an eligible girl. Thus, seeing his family members persuading him, Ariṣṭanemi would think, ‘how strange is the attraction for the world that people are themselves tied to it and if someone does not wish to be so, they want him too, to get bound by it. It would be better for me to agree to them as mere lip service and do the needful when time comes.’ With this thought prince Nemi agreed to get married.

Everyone was delighted by the acceptance of prince Ariṣṭanemi. Śrīkṛṣṇa began the search for a suitable bride for him. Satyabhāmā told Kṛṣṇa that ‘my younger sister Rājīmatī is in all ways suitable for the prince. Kṛṣṇa was very happy with Satyabhāmā’s suggestion and immediately went to king Ugrasena. Hearing a proposal about Ariṣṭanemi for his daughter Rājīmatī from Kṛṣṇa’s mouth made Ugrasena very happy. He immediately accepted the proposal. Getting Ugrasena’s acceptance, Śrīkṛṣṇa went to Samudravijaya and told him everything. Samudravijaya was beyond himself with joy. After all, which father would not feel happy with his son’s wedding proposal? The time of wedding was decided upon and both sides got busy with the preparations.

On the set date, prince Ariṣṭanemi’s wedding procession moved towards king Ugrasena’s palace. The sight of the bridegroom’s wedding procession was very charming, beautiful and worth seeing. In the midst of beautiful, prosperous and well-decked people in the procession, prince Nemikumāra was looking like a crown jewel of the three worlds. A huge crowd gathered to see prince Nemikumāra as a bridegroom, and whosoever caught a glimpse of him would consider himself as fortunate. The procession slowly reached king Ugrasena’s palace. Princess Rājīmatī’s female friends saw him and were astonished. Running in, they surrounded Rājīmatī and said, ‘you are extremely fortunate that you are to marry the light of the three worlds such as Nemikumāra.’ Rājīmatī blushed on hearing the description of Nemikumāra’s beauty and was feeling shy. Despite her refusal, her friends took her to the window from where she saw Nemikumāra. Rājīmatī had not even dreamt that such a gem of the three worlds, a gem of a man, would be her husband. She

could not understand as to what good deeds of hers gave her a groom as beautiful as Nemikumāra. At this end, the princess was happy and enchanted by her fortune seeing the prince again and again and on the other end, on his way, hearing the wailing of animals, knowing all, Nemikumāra asked his charioteer – “What is this sad wailing I hear?” The charioteer said – “Lord! For your wedding feast they are bringing goats, and other wild animals and birds. Every animal holds dear its life, hence they are crying.”

Nemikumāra asked his charioteer to direct the elephant towards the animal enclosures. Reaching there, Nemikumāra observed that innumerable animals were tied with ropes around their necks and legs and innumerable birds were trembling in fear in a pathetic state inside cages, stuck in meshed wires. The heart of compassionate Nemikumāra bled. He told the charioteer to release all the animals and birds. Within no time all the animals and birds were set free. After releasing the animals and birds, Nemikumāra removed all his ornaments and gave it to the charioteer and instructed him to take the elephant back to his palace. King Ugrasena became helpless. Kṛṣṇa and other Yādavas stood in his way.

Then his father, Samudravijaya asked, “Where are you going turning your face away from this auspicious occasion?” The disenchanted Nemikumāra said, “O! Parents, the same way as these animals and birds were bound, you and I are tied in deep bondage of all karmas. The same way as I have freed them from their bondage, I now want to take the bondage-releasing initiation to free myself from the bondage of karmas forever.”

Hearing Nemikumāra speak of initiation his mother Śivādevī fell unconscious. SamudraVijaya stood still. Kṛṣṇa said, “Brother, I cannot understand the tale behind your attitude of disenchantment; what happened so suddenly?” Ariṣṭanemi said, “Oh Cakrapāṇa! A human being stuck in the cycle of birth and death as a god, as a human being, in hell and in other modes again and again, experiences unbearable pain. This is the main reason of my disenchantment. In innumerable births we had innumerable parents; sons, relatives and friends, but nobody shared the other’s sorrows. Everybody has to experience the results of their karmas on their own. I am tired and broken from walking on this horizon-less path of the world and am in unbearable pain. I want to seek

a strong path for ultimate peace for myself, you and all living beings of this world. I have decided that I shall remove from the root, the karmas that are the basic cause of the endless sorrows. It is not possible to destroy karmas without accepting restraint; hence I shall certainly become a mendicant. You may not put obstacles in my decision unnecessarily.”

Hearing Nemikumāra’s words, Samudravijaya said, “Child! From the time of your conception you have spent your life in riches. How will your delicate body bear the intense heat of summer, fearsome cold of winter and unbearable pain of hunger and thirst?” Nemikumāra said, “Father! Those who know the pain of hell, for them the pain you have just enlisted are petty and negligible. By bearing pain in the path of penance the accumulated karmas are burnt to ashes and in the end, you attain unending and imperishable happiness in the form of mokṣa. Material happiness in the end only opens the gates of the intense pain of hell. Now you tell me, which path should a person take?”

Ariṣṭanemi’s question left everyone speechless. In fact, his words reflected the immortal truth of spiritual thinking. Everyone was certain that Nemikumāra had decided his path. Seeing an opportune moment, the lokāntikagods appeared before Nemikumāra and requested that he establish the religious order. The Lord started the year-long giving.

Hearing the conversation, Rājīmatī fell unconscious and when she regained consciousness, she started to cry. Her friends consoled her – “So what if that dispassionate one has left you? There are many beautiful and qualified Yādavas around. You choose any of them you like.” Hearing this, like an angry lioness, Rājīmatī said – “There is no one better than Nemi in this world. I have accepted him in my mind. Now I will not bring a stain on my clan. I too shall proceed on that path on which my Lord has resolved to walk.”

Departure and Initiation

After the completion of the year-long charities, the Lord’s departure ceremony was held in pomp and splendour, organised by men, kings and gods. The Lord’s departure procession reached the Sahasrāmavana on Ujjayanta Mountain, passing through the main streets, with a lot of people. Alighting from the gem-studded palanquin, under the Aśoka tree

Lord Neminātha removed all his adornments, which were donated by Indra to Kṛṣṇa. Thus, staying as a householder for 300 years, the Lord removed five fistfuls of hair, observing a fast for six days and on the sixth day of the bright fortnight of Śravaṇa month with the moon being conjunct with the constellation Citrā. Śakra took the Lord's hair in his upper cloth and immersed them in the milk ocean. Then the Lord recited the resolve to sacrifice all, with the Siddhas as witness. The Lord took initiation with thousand men. As soon as he took initiation, he gained telepathy (manah paryavajñāna), the fourth knowledge type. The next day, the Lord broke his fast with rice pudding at the house of a Brahmin Varadatta in a cattle-shed. The divine words, “*aho dānam, aho dānam*” resounded in the sky and the gods showered the five auspicious things. Thereafter, with a resolve to destroy his obscuring karmas, the Lord started severe penance and restraint and went wandering elsewhere.

Omniscience and religious discourse (Samavaśaraṇa)

After becoming a mendicant, after observing various kinds of austerities for 54 days, the Lord arrived at Ujjayantagiri-Revatagiri and observing a fast there went into deep meditation. In one night, in the fire of the second stage of deep meditation, destroying the four obscuring karmas like deluding, intuition obscuring, knowledge obscuring etc, on the forenoon of the new moon day of the dark fortnight of Āśvina, under the Citrā constellation, he attained pure intuition and omniscience. The moment the Lord attained omniscience, the gods created the samavaśaraṇa on the Raivatāka Mountain. Kṛṣṇa reached with all the materials of arddhacakrī astride his best elephant, along with the ten ‘daśārho’, mothers, kith and kin to attend the samavaśaraṇa of Lord Neminātha. Lord Ariṣṭanemi (Neminātha) was seated on a transparent throne with the eight auspicious emblems (pratihāryas). The Lord's face was visible from all directions in the same manner. After circumambulating and invoking the Lord, everyone stay in their places. The Lord gave a sermon to all in the language they understood, which was like destroying the darkness of ignorance and throwing the light of knowledge.

Founding the Tīrtha

Listening to the knowledgeable sermon of the Lord, first a king named Varadatta immediately requested the Lord to be initiated at his feet. Lord

Neminātha, finding him in all ways eligible, initiated him. At that time Kṛṣṇa asked him, ‘why does Rājīmatī like you the most?’ In response, the Lord narrated the account of his relationship with her of the last eight births. Hearing this account of the past births, three kings who had come for samavaśaraṇa at once gained knowledge of their past lives and they at once took initiation under the Lord. The same way, two thousand people took initiation following Varadatta. Among those two thousand and eleven monks, the Lord appointed Varadatta among eleven Gaṇadhara, imparting them the three fold reality (tripaḍī) knowledge of origination, decay and permanence. Based on the tripaḍī the monks created the 12 Aṅgas and came to be called Gaṇadhara. At that time, many princesses such as Ykṣiṇī, too, took initiation. The Lord made Āryā Ykṣiṇī the preceptor of the female-monk order. The ten daśārhos; UgraSena, Śrīkṛṣṇa, Balabhadra and Pradyumna too accepted the votary’s conduct and right belief from the Lord. Queen Śivādevī, Rohiṇī, Devakī, Rūkmiṇī, etc and many women accepted the female-votary’s conduct. This way, the Lord established the four-fold tīrtha with monks, female-monks, male and female votaries for the welfare of living beings and became Tīrthaṅkara.

Rājīmatī and Rathanemi

When Ariṣṭanemi returned from the wedding, his younger brother Rathanemi saw Rājīmatī and became attracted to her. He started gifting something or the other everyday to Rājīmatī. As a sister-in-law Rājīmatī behaved in a civilised manner with Rathanemi and kept accepting his gifts quietly. So Rathanemi thought Rājīmatī too was attracted to him. Hence whenever he had an opportunity, he would go to her. One day, finding some time alone with her, he told Rājīmatī, “Dear one! By not marrying you and sacrificing you, brother has done a foolish thing. In fact it is his bad luck. If you wish you can change his misfortune into my good fortune. Agree to marry me. I shall make you my soul mate and keep you in my heart.” Rājīmatī was surprised to hear Rathanemi’s words. Now she realised what was the real intent behind his loving behaviour. She explained to Rathanemi that she has become Ariṣṭanemi’s wife by a promise of the word and she is like his mother, his sister-in-law and such thoughts should not occur in his mind. Not just that, ‘though your brother did not marry me, being his wife by the promise of word, I am like someone else’ food. In the same way as partaking of another

vomitted food is unacceptable and inedible, and hence avoided, desiring another's woman is condemnable and shameful. It is something that binds you to a life in hell. It is a sin to even bring this thought in your mind.' Listening to Rājīmatī's tactful words Rathanemi felt ashamed. After sometime Rathanemi became a renouncer and taking initiation, went to Revatācala to serve Lord Neminātha.

There, Rājīmatī used to be lost in the thoughts of Neminātha everyday, forgetting her own self. After a year's long wait, when she heard of the initiation of Ariṣṭanemi, all her enthusiasm was quelled. She thought in this situation it is best to follow his path. Deciding thus, she took permission from her parents and with a firm mind, accepted mendicancy. Once, after attaining omniscience Lord Neminātha was seated at the RevataMountain. The female-monk Rājīmatī went there with other female-monks to pay obeisance to him. On the way, suddenly a heavy downpour occurred. To protect themselves from the rain the female-monks got scattered looking for shelter. Rājīmatī too went into cave nearby and removed all her wet clothes and set them to dry. Rathanemi was already seated in that same cave meditating, which Rājīmatī was unaware of because of the intense darkness. In the glow of a lightning, seeing Rājīmatī's naked form, Rathanemi's mind became agitated. When Rājīmatī saw Rathanemi, she suddenly got frightened. Seeing her scared, Rathanemi said, "Oh beautiful one! Accept me now. Come; let us enjoy sensual pleasures for a while. After enjoying pleasures we shall again follow the path of the Jina."

Seeing Rathanemi with a demoralised conduct, Rājīmatī fearlessly dressed herself up and said, "Rathanemi! You are an ordinary man; if a vaiśramaṇa god or even Indra comes in front of me, I wouldn't like them. There are snakes of the agandhana clan among the serpents who prefer falling into the fire, but do not even take back poison which has been vomited once. You are a man of a good clan. Would you again accept things renounced? Shame on you Rathanemi,!" Rājīmatī's words worked like a rein on Rathanemi; his mind became steady on the spiritual path. He purified his soul at the feet of Lord Ariṣṭanemi and immersing himself in severe penance, turning to ashes all his accumulated karmas, became pure, emancipated and liberated. Rājīmatī, too, reached the Lord's feet and observing austerities and restraint, obtained omniscience and in the end attained liberation.

The revelation of an extraordinary secret by Ariṣṭanemi

Establishing the religious order, placing many people on the true path, Lord Ariṣṭanemi arrived in Bhaddilapura city, travelling through several republics. There, listening to the Lord's sermon, six brothers; Anīkasena, Ajitasena, etc, becoming disinclined, got initiated at the Lord's feet. Those six brother-monks began to wander around, observing the fasts regularly. Leaving Bhaddilapura, Lord Ariṣṭanemi arrived at Dvārikāpurī with many monks. Taking permission from Arihanta Ariṣṭanemi, the six monks including Anīkasena went to break their fast in groups of two each to Dvārikāpurī. The first two of them, taking alms from many families, reached Devakī's palace. Seeing the monks, Devakī saluted them with devotion and gave them pure food with love. Accepting the alms the monks returned. Within moments, Devakī saw the second set of two brothers entering her palace for food offerings. These two monks looked exactly like the previous two. These two also begged for food, their voices were also similar to those of the first two. Devakī thought, perhaps what I gave them in alms previously was not sufficient for them, hence they have come again; she again gave them food with respect and sense of joy. Both monks returned after accepting the offering.

After these two monks left, the third set of two brothers too, after going to small and big families, by coincidence, came to Devakī's palace. These two monks, too, looked like the previous two sets of monks. Devakī gave offerings with pure feelings, dedication, respect and devotion. After giving the offerings, to clear the agitation in her mind, Devakī asked them – “Lord! It is difficult for less fortunate people to see you. It is my great fortune that you have purified this palace by stepping foot here, but I have a doubt, leaving thousands of people serving monks and the qualified ones in Dvārikā, how have you come to my house thrice?”

To clear Devakī's suspicion, the two monks said to her – “Oh beloved of gods! We are six brothers, sons of the gāthāpati Nāga and his wife Sulasā, of Bhaddilapura. We all look similar in form and shape. All of us six brothers took initiation listening to the sermon of Lord Ariṣṭanemi and have taken to a life-time vow of observing the two-days fast. Today, after self-study in the first half of the day, we six brothers took permission of the Lord and came to break our fast in three sets to higher,

middle and lower caste families and in that course by coincidence, came here in turns. Hence, oh beloved of the gods, the twin-monks who came here first was not the two of us.”

After the monks left Devakī thought, “In Polāsapura city a monk named Atimuktaka had said about me in my childhood that when I grow up, I would be the mother of eight sons, who would all be similar in every way and of extraordinary beauty and in Bharata no one else except me will give birth to such sons. But seeing these six monk-brothers, that prediction seems wrong. Perhaps some other woman has also given birth to such sons.”

Seated on a chariot, Devakī reached the Lord’s samavaśaraṇa and started paying respects to the Lord. Thereafter, the Lord asked Devakī – “Oh Devakī! Have you developed a doubt in your mind about the monk Atimuktaka’s prediction after seeing the six monks of the same bodily beauty and form? And have you come here to me to resolve that?” Devakī confirmed the Lord’s statement.

The Lord said – “At that time there was a gāthāpati named Nāga in Bhaddilapura who was very wealthy. His wife’s name was Sulasā. Sulasā was told in her childhood by a soothsayer that when she grew up, she would give birth to still-born babies. Hearing this Sulasā became devoted to Hariṇaigameṣī right from her childhood and started praying to him with great love. Happy with that laywoman’s devotion that god would make you both fertile at the same time. You both would become pregnant at the same time. Sulasā would beget dead sons. Hariṇaigameṣī would place her dead sons with you and take your sons to Sulasā. Hence, oh Devakī! Those six monks are, in fact, your sons, not Sulasā’s.” Hearing this extraordinary revelation a very happy Devakī saluted those monks and such a deep love emerged in Devakī’s mind that milk started oozing out of her breasts, her eyes were filled with tears and her whole body blossomed and became thrilled. For a long time Devakī kept staring at those monks without blinking her eyes. Thereafter, she saluted those monks and again circumambulating Lord Ariṣṭanemi, went back to her palace.

The same incident is described in “Cauvanna Mahāpurisa Cariyaṃ” somewhat this way:-

When Devakī asked the third set of two monks if ‘Śramaṇa nirgranthas do not get food in Kṛṣṇa’s city of gods, Dvārikā, that you have entered for offerings from the same family thrice’, the monk-twins said, clarifying – “No, it is not like that. In fact, we are six brothers born to the same mother and look similar in form, colour and body. Actually, we were exchanged immediately after we were born, with still-born babies of the lay couple Mṛtavatsā and Sulasā by the god Hariṇaigameṣī. Sulasā brought us up and got us married. When we grew up, hearing the story of the change in our families from the mouth of Lord Neminātha, we became disinclined and to free ourselves from this illusory web, we accepted initiation from the Lord Neminātha.” Hearing this from the monks, Devakī fell unconscious on the ground. When she regained consciousness, her eyes were filled with tears and milk started oozing out of her breasts. Crying, she said – “How unfortunate I am that my six sons were taken away from me and when they meet me, they do so in such a state that they have broken all worldly ties and renounced.” Hearing her pitiable sobbing, other people too reached there. The news spread in the entire Dvārikā. The remaining four monk-brothers too reached there and all the six monks tried to explain to Devakī – “In this world nobody is a mother or father to anybody. Here all living beings, bound by their karmas, wander about in the cycle of birth and death. A person is born as someone’s father in one birth and his son in the next. A Lord of one birth becomes the servant in the next. A mother of the previous birth becomes a lioness in her next birth and kills her sons of the previous birth. In this world, a person is suffering within a web he has created for himself, even if he wants to break free, he cannot. Seeing this horrible, fearsome state of the world, we became disenchanted. We accepted the path of restraint from Lord Neminātha and since then we are immersed in breaking the root cause of the cycle of coming and going in the world.”

Hearing all this, Kṛṣṇa said in a tearful voice – “What a strange thing this is that I am enjoying the wealth of threedivisions and my own brothers are wandering accepting alms. Brothers, think that we are born today. Let the seven of us live together from today and together enjoy the joy and wealth.” Vasudeva too agreed with Kṛṣṇa and requested the six monk-brothers to give up the monk status and return to worldly life. The monks said – “In the same way as a deer, which has released itself from a hunter’s trap never returns to it, having come out of the horrible web of sensual enjoyments, we do not want to get stuck in it again. Monks,

break all kinds of bondage and inspire and show the path to others to do the same. How is it better to free oneself from these bonds and again go back to them? We would like it if, instead of pulling us back into the world, you too, accept initiation into monkhood to break the root-cause of sorrow, the karma bondage.” Saying this, they returned to serve Lord Neminātha.

A sorrowful Devakī too reached the Lord’s samavaśaraṇa following her monk-sons. The Lord soothed the fire of her sorrow with his explanation of how horrible is the bondage of karma.

A description more or less similar to that in Aṃtagaḍa-Sūtra is available in Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra: - Hearing the words of the all-knowing Lord, Devakī was filled with joy. Happily, she prayed to the six monks, and praising her luck, said –“One son born from my womb has set up a grand empire and other sons have accepted initiation which gives the ultimate empire. But it is my lack of good deeds that I have remained away from bringing up even a single son from childhood.”

Soothing Devakī, the Lord said – “Devakī, stop feeling bad unnecessarily. The fact is that in your previous birth, you had stolen your co-wife’s seven gems and after her incessant sobbing, you returned one of the gems back and retained six with you. This karma of yours has resulted in six of your sons going elsewhere and just one remaining with you.”

The epitome of compassion, the monk Gajasukumāla

Devakī returned to her palace after attending the Lord’s samavaśaraṇa. Hearing the revelation of her six sons from the Lord’s mouth, her mind became overwhelmed with love for her sons. In this tension, she stopped eating. Kṛṣṇa got worried seeing his mother in this condition. He understood his mother’s anguish, and for fulfillment of her desire, invoked the deity with a three-day fast. Hariṇaigameṣī appeared. Kṛṣṇa told him – “I want a younger brother.” The god said, “A soul will exit the realm of gods and shall be born as your brother, but when he has passed childhood and becomes a young adult, he will accept initiation from Lord Ariṣṭanemi.” Happily Kṛṣṇa told his mother about the birth of a son. In time, Devakī gave birth to a son, whose body being as soft as an

elephant's palate was thence named Gajasukumāla. With comprehensive care and upbringing, he grew up to be a young man. A Brahmin named Somila lived in Dvārikā. He was a learned person. His wife's name was Somaśrī. They had a daughter named Somā. One day, Kṛṣṇa saw Somila's daughter decked up in good clothes and ornaments, playing with her mats while he was going to see Arihanta Ariṣṭanemi with Gajasukumāla. Distracted by Somā's beauty; the men of the royal household said, "Go to Somila and request his daughter's hand for Gajasukumāla and bring her to the internal chambers with his permission."

Thereafter, Kṛṣṇa began to listen to the sermon of the Lord after paying obeisance him, with his brother Gajasukumāla at Sahasrāmavana. After the sermon, Kṛṣṇa returned to his palace. But Gajasukumāla stayed there and after thinking for sometime told the Lord – "Lord! I have faith in your speech; it is my desire that I seek permission from my parents and accept initiation as a monk." Lord Neminātha said, "Do as it please you."

Reaching the palace, Gajasukumāla expressed to his mother his desire to become a monk. Devakī fell unconscious hearing his words. When Kṛṣṇa heard this he tried to explain to Gajasukumāla, "I give everything of mine to you. What is the need for you to become a monk?" Gajasukumāla said, "We have to ultimately let go of all the things in this world, hence I wish to not even accept them. Instead it is better to accept monkhood under Lord Ariṣṭanemi and accept the tradition of austerities." Thus, Gajasukumāla remained steadfast in his decision and became a monk, getting initiated under Lord Ariṣṭanemi. After initiation, the same day in the afternoon, with the Lord's permission; he went to Mahākāla graveyard, stood like a statue and for one night, became meditative in this state.

There Brahmin Somila, who had gone out of the city to get material for a sacrificial ritual, on his way back passed through the graveyard. There seeing Gajasukumāla meditating, remembering a past life enmity, became angry and agitatedly started thinking – "This Gajasukumāla has left my daughter Somā without any fault of hers and become a monk, hence I must take revenge on Gajasukumāla." Thinking thus, he kept a wet-earth basket on Gajasukumāla's head and in it, placed burning coal picked up from a burning corpse and looking here and there, went home quietly.

Gajasukumāla did not feel animosity for Somila even in his mind and kept bearing the unbearable pain of burning coal on his head. Even as the nerves and veins in the head started to break by the intense heat of the embers, a pure stream of knowledge began to intensify in the monk's mind. These words were echoing within him – “I am deathless, immortal, and indestructible, even if the body burns nothing of mine is burning. I can neither be burnt by fire nor can any weapon break me.”

Mokṣa, so difficult to attain even after millions of birth, came to him within less than a day from true penance with which he proved that it is not impossible to attain it with intense penance with pure feeling and diligence.

Kṛṣṇa's longing for Gajasukumāla

The next morning Kṛṣṇa went to pay obeisance to Lord Aṛiṣṭanemi. When he did not see monk Gajasukumāla, he asked the Lord. The Lord said – “Kṛṣṇa! Monk Gajasukumāla has accomplished his task.” Kṛṣṇa asked – “How is that?” Then Lord Aṛiṣṭanemi told him the entire account. Kṛṣṇa asked in anger – “Lord, who is that, who took Gajasukumāla's life before its time?” The Lord said – “Kṛṣṇa, do not be angry. In the same way as you helped an old Brahmin by picking up bricks on your way here, that man too, helped Gajasukumāla to attain liberation.” When Śrīkṛṣṇa pleaded, the Lord said – “While returning to Dvārikā, the man who, on seeing you, gives up his life, he is Gajasukumāla's murderer.” Then, saluting the Lord, Kṛṣṇa entered Dvārikā. Filled with fear Somila began to think – “Kṛṣṇa has gone to meet the Lord; learning everything from the omniscient Lord, he will destroy me.” Thinking thus, Somila started to run from his house to save his life. By coincidence, he came to the same path from where Kṛṣṇa was returning. Seeing Kṛṣṇa, Somila fell down with fear and, out of fear, immediately died.

Monk Dhamdhaṇa

Lord Neminātha's monk order had monks who were all into severe penance and austerities but among all of them Dhamdhaṇa monk is considered to be the best even by the Lord Neminātha himself. The son of Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa and queen Dhamdhaṇā, Dhamdhaṇkumāra became

disinclined on listening to Lord Neminātha’s discourse. In his full youth, leaving all his beautiful wives and wealth, he took initiation as a monk from Lord Neminātha. Śrīkṛṣṇa himself arranged a grand departure ceremony for his initiation. Becoming a monk, Dḥaṃdhaṇa began to serve Lord Neminātha. On account of his kindness and soft-spoken behaviour he soon became dear to, and respected by all. While observing restraint through tough penance, he studied all the scriptures as well. After sometime, his predestined interfering /obstructing (antarāya) karmas emerged. When he would go for his alms he would not get it. Not just that, the monks who went with him also returned empty-handed. This went on for many days. Thus on one day, the monks asked Lord Neminātha respectfully, “Lord! Dḥaṃdhaṇa monk is a disciple of yours, the Lord of three worlds, and the son of the brave ardhacakrīVasudeva Kṛṣṇa. Why is it that he does not get even small offerings from even the big merchants, pious laymen and magnanimous householders? As if this weren’t enough, the monks who accompany him also return disappointed.”

Dispelling the doubts of the monks, the Lord said – “In his past birth Dḥaṃdhaṇa was a Brahmin named Pārāśara in Dhānyapura village of Magadha province. There he used to undertake agricultural transactions on behalf of the king. He was harsh by nature, used to make people cultivate the king’s land. At lunch time, without giving them a break, he used to make them work. He used to make the hungry-thirsty bullocks draw an extra plough. Due to these bad deeds, he accumulated severe interfering karmas. After many births the same Pārāśara’s soul has taken birth as Dḥaṃdhaṇa. Because of the past obstructing (antarāya) karmas he is unable to get offerings from wealthy families even if they want to give him.” Hearing the above account from the Lord he was repentant for his past bad deeds. Saluting the Lord, he said – “I shall break my own bad deeds and shall not accept food obtained through someone else.” Because of obstructing (antarāya) karma monk Dḥaṃdhaṇa would not get food and he would not accept food brought by others. As a result, it was a penance without food for several days, yet he was steady in his penance and restraint. One day, at the samavaśaraṇa Śrīkṛṣṇa asked – “Who is the monk in your order who does the toughest penance?” Lord Ariṣṭanemi said – “Dḥaṃdhaṇa is the monk who does the hardest penance. Despite spending time without food for several days, he has no ill-feeling in his mind.” Hearing this Kṛṣṇa was very happy. He was

returning to his palace after the discourse when he saw Dhamdhaṇa going for his alms. Alighting from his elephant he saluted Dhamdhaṇa with respect. One merchant was seeing all this. This monk is blessed that Śrīkṛṣṇa is saluting him with such devotion.

By coincidence, Dhamdhaṇa muni was going to that same merchant's house to beg for food. Happily the merchant offered sweets to Dhamdhaṇa. Taking this offering, Dhamdhaṇa went to the Lord and saluting him, asked – “Is my antarāya karma destroyed?” The Lord replied – “No, you have got your offering because of the influence of Hari. Hari saluted you, hence influenced by that, the merchant has given you this offering.”

Dhamdhaṇa did not allow any attachment towards the offering. He went to throw the food on a ground. While doing so, pure thoughts entered his mind – “Oh! How difficult it is to destroy karmas accumulated. While doing bad deeds stuck in passion a person does not think one day he has to bear their consequences.” Thinking thus, he went into the second stage of deep meditation. In this state of meditation he destroyed all the four obscuring karmas and attained pure intuition and omniscience. From that bare ground monk Dhamdhaṇa returned to the Lord and, saluting him, sat in the omniscient congregation. After sometime, destroying all karmas, he became omniscient, enlightened and liberated.

The great wonder in Lord Ariṣṭanemi's time

Śrīkṛṣṇa doted on the Pāṇḍavas who at that time ruled Hastināpura. Once, sage Nārada reached Hastināpura and went to Draupadi's palace. The Pāṇḍavas welcomed Nārada and Draupadi did not pay him much attention on account of his being devoid of vows. Nārada was upset with this insult and left from there with a feeling of avenging this insult. With that same feeling of unrest he went to the women-loving king Padmanābha's palace in Amarakaṃkā city in Dhātakīkhaṇḍa in Bharata. King Padmanābha welcomed Nārada in a big way and took him to his harem. There, pointing to his queens, each more beautiful than the other, he said – “Oh sage! You must have seen harems of many kings, think and tell me, are there any queens in those harems who can compare with the beauty of my queens?” Nārada was just waiting for that occasion. He said – “Oh king! Where have you seen the harems? All your queens look

like maids in front of Draupadi, the queen of the Pāṇḍavas of Hastināpura.” Nārada left but had aimed right. In order to acquire Draupadi, king Padmanābha prayed intensely to his god. The god said – “Draupadi is a chaste woman. She does not like any other men except the Pāṇḍavas. Still out of love for you, I shall bring her.” Saying so, the god reached Hastināpura and through his knowledge of avasvāpinī he put Draupadi to deep sleep and took her to Padmanābha.

When Draupadi woke up she realised her situation. She became very worried. Seeing her anxiety, Padmanābha said – “Goddess! You needn’t be worried. You are in the palace of king Padmanābha of Amarakaṃkā. I want to make you my principal queen.” Draupadi, understanding the complexity of her situation, and after some thought, replied with some foresight – “oh king! Kṛṣṇa of Bharatakaṇḍa is my protector; if he does not come searching for me here within six months, I shall think about what you said.” Padmanābha thought it was impossible for someone to come from another island, so there is nothing wrong in waiting for six months. He agreed with Draupadi’s proposal and kept her in the chambers of other women. Draupadi stayed there observing the āyambila fast.

The next day, not finding Draupadi in her palace, the Pāṇḍavas made efforts to trace her. When they couldn’t find out, they informed Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was just thinking about this problem when Nārada reached there. When Kṛṣṇa asked about Draupadi Nārada said – “I saw someone like Draupadi in the harem of king Padmanābha of Amarakaṃkā in Dhātākhaṇḍa Island.” Hearing Nārada’s words, he started for Mḡadha tīrtha along with the Pāṇḍavas and there, observing a fast, invoked the deity of the salt ocean, Susthita. With the help of god Susthita, the six chariots of Śrīkṛṣṇa and Pāṇḍavas reached Amarakaṃkā, crossing the Salt Ocean.

Kṛṣṇa sent his charioteer Dārūka to Padmanābha asking that Draupadi be returned. But thinking what can these six men do to him, Padmanābha refused to let Draupadi go and declared war. As per the wishes of the Pāṇḍavas, Śrīkṛṣṇa allowed them to fight Padmanābha first, but defeated by his army, they returned to Kṛṣṇa. Thereafter, hearing the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s pāṃcajanya conch and the twang of his Sāmrga bow, Padmanābha’s army ran helter-skelter. Padmanābha too ran into the city and shutting his city’s doors, hid himself in the harem. Taking the form

of Narasiṃha (man-lion) Kṛṣṇa with a blow of his hands broke to pieces the iron doors and went towards Padmanābha's palace. Even the mighty ones' hearts weakened with the lion's roar of Kṛṣṇa. Seeing death himself approaching him Padmanābha fell at Draupadi's feet and begged for his life – "Goddess, please protect me from this dark death-like Keśava, I take refuge in you." Draupadi said – "If you want to save your life then walk behind me wearing my clothes." The scared Padmanābha did as told. In female form, walking behind Draupadi, he fell at Kṛṣṇa's feet. Kṛṣṇa's heart melted and he gave him freedom from fear and took Draupadi to the Pāṇḍavas.

There Vasudeva Kapila, seated in the samavaśaraṇa of the Tīrthaṃkara of that time cycle, Munisuvratanātha, in Pūrṇabhadra garden in Campā city of Dhātākhaṇḍa, hearing Kṛṣṇa's conch, asked the Jina Lord – "Whose conch is this which sounds like mine?" Narrating the account of Draupadi's kidnapping Munisuvratanātha said that this is the conch blown by Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa of Bhāratakhanda in Jambūdvīpa. Kapila said – "Then I must welcome that guest." Munisuvratanātha said – "In the same way was two Tīrthaṃkara and two cakrvarṭiscannot meet in one place, similarly, two Vasudevas too cannot meet. But yes, you will be able to see the rear part of Kṛṣṇa's white-yellow flag."

Hearing Lord Suvrata's words, Kapila Vasudeva, with the desire to meet Kṛṣṇa Vasudeva, followed Kṛṣṇa's chariot's wheel marks towards the sea-coast and he saw the rear part of Kṛṣṇa's white and yellow flag on the chariot that was moving away. He blew his conch with this desire – "this is me Kapila Vasudeva who has come here longing to see you. Please return." Kṛṣṇa replied through his conch – "We have come very far. Now do not ask us to return." Kapila reached Amarakaṃkā with Kṛṣṇa's reply. Condemning Padmanābha, he expelled him and made his son the king of Amarakaṃkā.

Here crossing the salt ocean Kṛṣṇa told the Pāṇḍavas – "I will come after thanking Susthita god, in the meanwhile, you may cross the Gaṃgā." The Pāṇḍavas crossed the Gaṃgā on a boat and to check out how Kṛṣṇa would cross without a boat, retained it there. After bidding farewell to Susthita god, when Kṛṣṇa came to the banks of Gaṃgā River he did not see the boat. He put the chariot into Gaṃgā River, and holding the horses with one hand and using the other hand to swim, he started crossing the

river. Reaching the middle of the river, he was tired and started thinking the Pāṇḍavas are strong that they crossed the river without a boat. Reaching the banks he asked the Pāṇḍavas, ‘how did you cross the river?’ They said – “by a boat.” Upon this Kṛṣṇa asked – “Then why didn’t you send the boat for me?” Laughing, the Pāṇḍavas said – “To test your strength.” Kṛṣṇa became unusually angry and said – “Do you still need to test my strength now? Crossing the limitless ocean, and victory over Amarakamkā did not make you realise my strength?” He broke to pieces the Pāṇḍavas’ chariots with an iron staff, and ordering them to leave his kingdom’s boundary, started for Dvārikā.

The Pāṇḍavas came to Hastināpura with Draupadi. They narrated the whole incident to mother Kuntī. Hearing this Kuntī reached Dvārikā and told Kṛṣṇa – “Kṛṣṇa! You have expelled my sons from your kingdom; tell me where will they live?” Kṛṣṇa said – “Let them settle a new city called Pāṇḍu-Mathurā on the southern sea-coast and live there.” On Kuntī’s advice, the Pāṇḍavas left Hastināpura and settled Pāṇḍu-Mathurā on the southern sea-coast and staying there, made it prosperous in all ways. Kṛṣṇa anointed his sister Subhadrā’s and Arjuna’s grandson, Abhimanyu’s son, Parīkṣita, on the throne of Hastināpura. In due course a city named ‘Rathamardana’ was settled at the place where Kṛṣṇa broke the Pāṇḍavas’ chariots.

The Future of Dvārikā

Redeeming living beings with his nectar-like sermons Lord Ariṣṭanemi arrived at Dvārikā. Hearing the news of his arrival Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma along with their kith and kin went to the samavaśaraṇa. Kṛṣṇa asked the Lord respectfully – “Lord! How will the end of this Dvārikā of mine come about?” The Lord said – “Kṛṣṇa! The great ascetic Parāśara’s son, the celibate monk Dvaipāyana, will be killed cruelly by intoxicated Śāmba and other Yādavas. As a result, Dvaipāyana in his anger shall resolve to burn Dvārikā and the Yādavas and take god-form and he will burn everyone to ashes. Your end will come by the arrow of your elder brother Jarākumāra at the forest of Kauśāmbī.”

Hearing the reply of the Lord people became silent. They looked at Jarākumāra. Filled with self-contempt, disgusted, to save him from this stigma just for the sake of a bow and arrow, he left Dvārikā and became

a forest-dweller. In the same way, Dvaipāyana too started living in a forest to protect the people of Dvārikā.

Kṛṣṇa was pained and sad hearing the prediction about Dvārikā from Ariṣṭanemi. He began to think about the destructibility, transience or royal glory and wealth – “Jālikumāra, etc are blessed that before destruction they have taken the path of renunciation. And I am still unconscious in the path of a vast empire and its wealth.” Understanding well Kṛṣṇa’s internal anguish, Lord Ariṣṭanemi reassured Kṛṣṇa – “Due to consequences, Vasudevas do not ever renounce even in the three cycles. Hence do not worry unnecessarily. Yes, in the forthcoming utsarpiṇī cycle in this very Bharata, you will be the 12th Tīrthaṅkara and in your time, Balarāma too will become emancipated, enlightened and liberated.” Kṛṣṇa was happy to hear these words of the Lord.

Returning to Dvārikā he informed people – “The end of Dvārikā is inevitable, hence whosoever desires may voluntarily take initiation into mendicancy at the Lord’s feet. They need not worry about the food and well-being of their kith and kin. The kingdom will look after them.” Hearing this magnanimous announcement of Kṛṣṇa innumerable people took initiation and became mendicants. On account of the attitude of welfare and service to humanity and the Jina order, Kṛṣṇa gained the Tīrthaṅkara Nāmakarma.

Hearing about the burning of Dvārikā the brother and charioteer of Balarāma, Siddhārtha, took initiation under the Lord. After becoming a monk, observing severe penance for six months, the soul of Siddhārtha, completing its time, became a god.

Here, the order was given in Dvārikā for people to stay away from intoxicants. Since an intoxicant shall cause the destruction of Dvārikā in future, all the available stocks of intoxicating liquor in Dvārikā were thrown into the Kadamba forests and the caves of Kādambarī.

An attendant of Śāmba suddenly for some reason went to Kādambarī cave and dying of thirst, started drinking water from the spring-well near the Kādambarī. Drinking a few drops, he realised that this is not water, but the best liquor. Śāmba’s attendant drank the liquor himself and also collected it in a vessel for his master. When Śāmba drank the liquor he wondered as to how did his attendant get such superior quality liquor.

Learning about the well from his attendant he took many of his friends to the Kādambarī cave and all of them got lost in intoxication.

The liquor that had been thrown on the Kādambarī cave reached the cliffs and ponds below and with the flowers falling into the ponds, the water turned into delicious liquor. The Yādava princes became drunk on the intoxicant they consumed. Roaming about here and there they spotted Dvaipāyana deep in meditation. The drunken Yādavas thought it is this Dvaipāyana who will become the cause for the destruction of our Dvārikā, so let us finish him here and at once all of them pounced on him, and half killing him, ran away. When Śrīkṛṣṇa learnt of this incident he got angry with the Yādavas and sad at once; taking Balarāma with him, he went to Dvaipāyana and begged for forgiveness on behalf of the Yādavas. Dvaipāyana's anger did not subside. He said – “The Yādavas almost killed me beating me up with cruelty, hence I have resolved to kill them, but I shall not do anything to you two brothers.”

Dvaipāyana died and became the god Agnikumāra and reached Dvārikā to burn it to ashes. But Dvārikā had become a land of penance. People were engrossed in different kinds of austerities. Dvaipāyana continuously tried to burn Dvārikā for eleven years, but did not get a suitable opportunity on account of the religious practice of the people there. Because of Dvaipāyana's failed attempts the people of Dvārikā started thinking his influence has waned, hence it is not necessary to give trouble to the body anymore. So people started indulging in liquor and eating flesh, etc that is, falling from righteousness turned to bad deeds and consequences. Agnikumāra got his chance and at once started a rain of fire over Dvārikā. Intense flames started spreading all over Dvārikā. Within moments Dvārikā was almost finished. Śrīkṛṣṇa and Balarāma tried to take Vasudeva, Rohiṇī and Devakī in a chariot but the chariot would not move from its place. Dvaipāyana said – “Kṛṣṇa, I told you then that leaving you two brothers, nobody will be saved. The whole Dvārikā burnt and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma couldn't do anything, just wrung their hands and saw the destruction and after it was all over, left that place.

Facing several ordeals on the way, through constant effort and struggle, they finally reached Kauśāmbī. Dying of thirst, Kṛṣṇa asked brother Balarāma to bring him some water and Kṛṣṇa rested under the shade of a tree. Wearing a yellow robe, he was lying down with his right foot over

the left knee. At that time Jarākumāra came there in search of hunt. Thinking the yellow robed Kṛṣṇa to be a deer, he released his arrow which pierced his right foot. Kṛṣṇa screamed – “Who is this, who attacks me when sleeping? Come, face me.” Recognising Kṛṣṇa’s voice, Jarākumāra came forward – “Brother, I am your unfortunate brother Jarākumāra. To save you I kept wandering in forests and today finally I became your killer.” Kṛṣṇa told him the whole account of Dvārikā burning and giving him the kaustubha gem, said – “Showing this, stay with the Pāṇḍavas. Now without crying for me, leave. In a while Balarāma will be here with water and will not let you alive. The moment Jarākumāra left, Kṛṣṇa died.

After sometime when Balarāma returned with water, he saw Kṛṣṇa sleeping. He was surprised as to how could Kṛṣṇa sleep with such thirst. Then he saw the injury on the foot and in anger, shouted – “Who wounded my brother in his sleep? Come forward, I shall teach you a lesson for attacking on the sly.” Saying this Balarāma started searching here and there for that killer. When he couldn’t find anyone, he tried waking up Kṛṣṇa and then taking his body on his shoulders, started walking ahead and would try to wake up Kṛṣṇa thinking he is asleep.

This way Balarāma kept wandering in the forest, carrying Kṛṣṇa’s dead body. The charioteer of Balarāma, Siddhārtha, had taken initiation under Lord Neminātha and observing austerities, completed his life and become a god. He thought – “How incurable is the result of karma and even people like Balarāma are not immune to it. I must explain to Balarāma. The god tried to explain through various forms and means and again and again kept repeating the words – “Kṛṣṇa is dead.”

In the end Balarāma began to think – “Is Kṛṣṇa really no more? All these people are saying the same thing.” Seeing this question arise in Balarāma’s mind, the god appeared before him and said – “Baladeva! I am your charioteer Siddhārtha. By the grace of the Lord, through austerities and penance I have become a god. You had told me that if I became a god I should come to address you. Oh king! It is the unshakeable rule of the world that one who is born must die one day. Hence, please believe that Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa is no more. If a knowledgeable and able person like you will be shaken up by the blow of death, what will be the condition of ordinary people? Hence it is useless to grieve after what is past. Please accept the path of restraint and self-

redemption, with which you will not have to go through the pain of the loss of a dear one.”

Baladeva’s illusion cleared from Siddhārtha’s speech and he performed the last rites of Kṛṣṇa’s dead body with respect. Knowing the feeling of Balarāma towards initiation, Lord Ariṣṭanemi sent the monk Jaṃghācāraṇa to him. Balarāma took initiation from the monk and through the flame of severe penance, started to burn to ashes his karmas.

Once to break his month-long fast monk Balarāma went to a village for alms. His body, withered from penance, was still beautiful. His body was charming, glowing and his long locks of hair attractive and impressive. The women of the village would keep staring at him when he wandered about seeking food. A woman drawing water from a well, while staring at him, tied the rope around the neck of her child instead of the pot. She was about to tighten the rope when another woman alerted her. When the monk learnt of this incident he decided he would not enter a village or a city seeking alms. He decided to stay in the forest and started doing penance in the deep forests of Tuṃgiyāgiri. By the impact of his penance the creatures of the forest like lions, deer, etc. forgot their enmity and would sit by his side.

One day Baladeva muni was standing in the kāyotsarga posture facing the sun, deep in meditation. At that time, a wood-cutter came to chop wood there. He saluted the monk and started his work. When it was time to eat the wood-cutter sat in the shade of the half-chopped tree and began to eat. Seeing an opportunity the monk too went to him. The deer seated by his side also walked with him that he would see a good deed when the monk breaks his fast. The woodcutter was very pleased to see the monk and with great devotion and faith started to give a part of his food to the monk. At that very moment a strong gust of wind blew and the half-chopped tree fell on all the three. The monk’s penance was great and at the same time the wood-cutter and the deer too had pure and lofty feelings. All the three died together and were born as gods in the fifth kalpa of Brahmaloaka.

The great monk Thāvaccāputra

Thāvaccāputra was among the wealthiest merchants of Dvārikā. Because his father had died while he was still a child, the entire business was

taken care of by the elder Thāvaccā's wife. She maintained her clan's respect and honour in the same way as her husband did. Because of the popularity of the Thāvaccā's wife, her son also became popular as Thāvaccāputra.

Once upon a time, Lord Ariṣṭanemi, along with 18000 monks and 40,000 female-monks, arrived at the Nandanavana Garden on Raivataka Mountain. Hearing the auspicious news of the arrival of the Lord, Śrīkṛṣṇa and countless people of Dvārikā came to the samavaśaraṇa. Thāvaccāputra also came there with his dear ones. The Lord gave his sermon, hearing which Thāvaccākumāra became disenchanted and going to his mother, said – “Mother, I have heard the Lord's nectar-like speech. I want to take mendicancy at the Lord's feet to escape from the cycle of birth and death.” Thāvaccā elder became speechless at her son's words. She tried to explain to him in many ways but seeing him firm in his decision, she gave him permission.

When Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa learnt of Thāvaccāputra's decision he tried to dissuade him, too. But Thāvaccāputra said – “afraid of the cycle of birth, disease and death, I want to become a monk. If you can protect me from these then I am ready to live in this world enjoying its pleasures.” In response to this Kṛṣṇa said – “birth, disease, death are irreversible naked truths of the world which cannot be cured by god or man. These can only be addressed by the destruction of karmas.” Thāvaccāputra said – “Well, that is why I want to become a monk.”

Impressed by the firm decision of Thāvaccāputra, Kṛṣṇa announced that “Thāvaccāputra is taking initiation under Lord Ariṣṭanemi, and if anyone else wants to do the same, he has Kṛṣṇa's permission. People dependent on them will be looked after by me.” People from various families and castes, one thousand of them, became ready for initiation with Thāvaccāputra. Kṛṣṇa himself consecrated those people and all of them took initiation under the Lord at his samavaśaraṇa. After initiation, Thāvaccāputra studied the fourteen pūrvas and through penance, destroying karmas, wandered about. Impressed by Thāvaccāputra's penance and intense austerities, Lord Ariṣṭanemi gave him the thousand monks as his disciples and the liberty and instructions to roam around with him. The monk Thāvaccāputra accepted the Lord's command and immersed himself in wandering with great responsibility.

Wandering with his thousand monks, Thāvaccāputra came to Śailakapura. Impressed by his discourse the king of Śailaka along with 500 men took initiation. From there they reached Saugandhikā city. There a well-established merchant named Sudarśana, who had become a devotee of a monk ācārya named Śuka, who was learned, impressed by Thāvaccāputra monk's religious discourse, became a votary. Learning of his disciple's acceptance of the votary's conduct, Śuka reached Sudarśana's house. When Sudarśana praised Thāvaccā monk, Śuka expressed desire to have a religious discussion with him. Happily, merchant Sudarśana took Śuka to monk Thāvaccā. Śuka discussed with monk Thāvaccā about various religious and philosophical matters. He was very happy when monk Thāvaccā resolved with humility and knowledge all his doubts. Śuka obtained the knowledge of reality listening to Thāvaccā. He saluted monk Thāvaccā, accepted to be his disciple and along with his one thousand followers, removing five fistfuls of hair, became a Śramaṇa monk. Śuka studied, along with his followers, the 14 pūrvas and 11 Aṅgas and in sometime, became famous for his self-knowledge. Then Thāvaccāputra instructed him to wander with his disciples, which Śuka accepted. Impressed by his discourse, the devotee of Śramaṇa tradition, king Śailaka, along with his 500 śrāvaka friends, became a monk. This way, observing restraint and giving religious discourse for many years, Thāvaccā muni reached Puṇḍarīka Mountain. There, after one month of saṃlekhanā, he attained nirvāṇa. His disciples, Śuka and Śailaka (the sage) also reached Puṇḍarīka Mountain after sometime and after a month-long saṃlekhanā, attained nirvāṇa.

Ariṣṭanemi's stay at Dvārikā and redemption of Bhavyas

Despite being a renouncer and omniscient Lord Ariṣṭanemi did not stay at one place. He traveled far and wide. While his monsoon stay was uncertain, it can be certainly said that for most part his place of stay has been Dvārikā. The fact that Lord Neminātha went again and again to Dvārikā shows that it was an important religious centre of that time. Once when the Lord was seated in Nandanavana the ten sons of Aṃdhakavṛṣṇi including Samudra, Sāgara, etc took initiation. The second time we find mention of the initiation of Vṛṣṇ's sons, including Himavanta, etc. The third time there is mention of Baladeva's sons, Sumukha, Durmukha, Kūpaka and Vasudeva's sons, Dārūka and

Anādr̥ṣṭi, are also found to be initiated in Dvārikā. Then Vasudeva and Dhārinī's sons Jāli, Mayāli, etc and Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumana and Jāmbavatī's son Sāmbakumāra, Vaidarbhikumāra, Anirūddha and Samudravijaya's Satyanemi, Dṛḍhanemi and Kṛṣṇa's other queens too took initiation at Dvārikā. This shows that Kṛṣṇa's entire family had unshakeable faith in Lord Ariṣṭanemi.

The liberation of Pāṇḍavas

As instructed by Kṛṣṇa Jarākumāra reached the Pāṇḍavas at Pāṇḍava-Mathurā and showing them the kaustubha gem give by Śrīkṛṣṇa, told them of the burning of Dvārikā, the destruction of Yādava clan and the sudden killing of Kṛṣṇa at his own hands. Hearing this heart-rending sorrowful news from Jarākumāra the Pāṇḍavas became unhappy. The news of the death of their saviour and friend Kṛṣṇa was worse than being stuck by a thunderbolt. The whole world seemed empty to them and their hearts were filled with a feeling of detachment. Sensing the desire of the Pāṇḍavas for the spiritual path of restraint Lord Ariṣṭanemi immediately sent his elder monk Dharmaghoṣa along with 500 monks to Pāṇḍava - Mathura. The Pāṇḍavas handed over their kingdom to Pāṇḍusena and accepted initiation under Dharmaghoṣa. Queen Draupadī took initiation under Āryā Suvratā. After initiation the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī, respectively, studied the fourteen pūrvas and eleven Aṅgas and observed severe penance.

Burning their accumulated karmas through intense restraint and penance the Pāṇḍavas were wandering as mendicants when they heard that Lord Ariṣṭanemi was roaming in Saurāṣṭra region. Taking leave from their preceptor they left for Saurāṣṭra. On the way to Saurāṣṭra they stayed at Sahasrāmavana outside the city Hastakalpa near Ujjayantagiri for a day. Leaving Yudhiṣṭhira there the remaining four monks went to the city to break their fast with food offerings. There they learnt that Lord Ariṣṭanemi had attained nirvāṇa on Ujjayantagiri. The four monks immediately returned to Sahasrāmavana. Upon Yudhiṣṭhira's advice, leaving the food received, the five monks went to Śatruṃjaya Mountain and observed saṃlekhanā. After two months of saṃlekhanā, obtaining pure knowledge, they attained nirvāṇa. Queen Draupadī, after years of severe restraint, penance and austerities, observing a month's saṃlekhanā, became a maharddhika god in the fifth kalpa.

Parinirvāṇa(liberation) and the Congregation

After a little less than seven hundred years of being an omniscient, sensing the end of his time, the Lord, observing one month's fast with 536 monks on Ujjayantagiri, became, emancipated and liberated on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Āṣāḍha month under Citrā constellation at midnight hour, destroying the non obscuring karmas i.e. name, age, status and feeling, while in the niṣadyā posture. Arihanta Ariṣṭanemi was 1000 years old.

The congregation of Lord Ariṣṭanemi had 11 Gaṇadharaś like Varadatta, etc, and 11 gaṇas, 1500 kevalīs, 1000 manaḥ paryavajñānīs, 1500 avadhijñānīs, 400 fourteen-pūrvadhārīs, 800 vādīs, 18000 monks, 40000 female-monks, 169000 votaries, 336000 female-votaries and 1600 of anuttaragatis. 1500 monks, 3000 female-monks i.e. totally 4500 antevāsīs of the Lord became emancipated, enlightened and liberated.

Historical Backdrop

Modern historians only consider Lord Mahāvīra and Lord Pārśvanātha to be historical figures, but for some years now diligent and objective research has proven that Arihanta Ariṣṭanemi was also a historical person. In Ṛgveda we find mention several times of the term Ariṣṭanemi. In the MahāBhārata, the term tākṣrya has been used as a synonym for Ariṣṭanemi. That tākṣrya Ariṣṭanemi gives the king Sagara a discourse related to liberation, which is found in Jain scriptures on mokṣa-related matters. In the 'Ṛṣi-bhāṣita-Sutra' there are 45 chapters related to Ariṣṭanemi and Kṛṣṇa, among them twenty enlightened ones are from Ariṣṭanemi's time-period. The chapters written by them are proofs of the existence of Ariṣṭanemi. Apart from Ṛgveda, other Vaidika literature mentions Ariṣṭanemi. Moreover, it seems that the influence of Ariṣṭanemi was not limited to India alone but also in many other countries. Colonel Todd writes – "I think that there were four enlightened or great men in the ancient times. Among them the first was Ādinātha and the second Neminātha. Neminātha was the first "Oḍina" of the Scandonavians and the first god 'Fo' of the Chinese", Dharmānanda Kausāmbi considers the ghora āṃgirasa to be Neminātha.

The Yajurveda clearly mentions – “the one who showed the spiritual Veda, the one who gave discourse to living beings in the world and the one by whose discourse the soul of living beings becomes strong, we make offerings to that omniscient Ariṣṭanemi.” The Mahābhārata gives thousand names of Viṣṇu. Among these there is the term “Śūraḥ Śaurirjaneśvaraḥ.” The last stanza of these śloka is worth paying attention to. The Jain scholar at the beginning of the 19th century in his work “Mokṣa Mārga Prakāśa” writes ‘Jineśvara’ in place of ‘Janeśvara’. Secondly, in this Kṛṣṇa is mentioned as “Śauriḥ”. Near Baṭesara in Agra district is a place named ‘Śauripura’. According to Jain texts this was the capital of the Yādavas in the beginning. They left from here to Dvārikā. It was here that Ariṣṭanemi was born, hence it is called ‘Śauri’, and he was Jineśvara in any case. From the above facts it is clear that Lord Ariṣṭanemi was, no doubt, a historical person.

Ariṣṭanemi in Vaidika Literature

Many ancient and modern historians world over consider Kṛṣṇa to be a historical person. In that case then there should be no two views on accepting the historicity of his uncle’s son, Lord Ariṣṭanemi nor is there any scope of debate in this matter. Yet there is a puzzle in the mind of historians till date that while Vaidika texts give detached description of the Yādavas there, is Ariṣṭanemi mentioned or not? Efforts were made to resolve this question but the research was limited to Mahābhārata and Śrīmadbhāgavata alone hence even success was limited. As a last resort when Vedavyāsa’s “Harivaṃśa” was perused minutely, a solution to this question came out clearly. In Harivaṃśa Vedavyāsa accepts that Kṛṣṇa and Ariṣṭanemi were paternal cousins. ‘King Yadu had five sons comparable to divine princes, Sahasrada, Payoda, Kroṣṭā, Nīla and Aṃjika.’ Kroṣṭā and his second queen Mādrī had two sons, Yudhājita and Devamīdhuṣa. Kroṣṭā’s elder son, Yudhājita had two sons, Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka. Vṛṣṇi had two sons, Svaphalka and Citraka. Citraka had 12 sons, Pṛthu, Vipṛthu, Aśvagrīva, Aśvabāhu, Supārśvaka, Gaveṣaṇa, Ariṣṭanemi, Aśva, Sudharmā, Dharmabhṛt, Subāhu and Bahubāhu and two daughters, Śraviṣṭhā and Śravaṇā. Along with the clan description of Ariṣṭanemi, Kṛṣṇa’s clan is also described in Harivaṃśa by Vedavyāsa this way – “Yadu had Kroṣṭā, Kroṣṭā’s second son Devamīdhuṣa’ son Śūra and Śūra had ten sons, Vasudeva, etc and five daughters, Pṛthukīrti, etc. Vasudeva had a son Kṛṣṇa from his queen Devakī. Thus the accepted

text of Vaidika tradition, Harivaṃśa's description of the Yādava clan also shows that Śrīkṛṣṇa and Śrī Ariṣṭanemi were paternal cousins and their great grandfathers were Yudhājita and Devamīdhuṣa, who were brothers. The only difference between the two traditions is that in Jain literature Ariṣṭanemi's father Samudravijaya is considered the elder brother of Vasudeva; while in Harivaṃśa Purāṇa, Citraka and Vasudeva are considered paternal cousins. Possibly, Citraka (Citraratha) was Samudravijaya's other name. But in both traditions there are no two views about Kṛṣṇa and Ariṣṭanemi being paternal cousins. The dissimilarity in names in the two traditions could be a result of events, bad times, many fierce battles, clan fights, foreign invasions, etc. But the description gathered in Jain literature and āgamas about Tīrthaṃkara, there is no scope for not considering that proven. Not just that, in Harivaṃśa there is mention of Kṛṣṇa's queen Satyabhāmā's middle sister by the name of Dṛdhavrata, about whose marriage there is no clear description. Dṛdhavrata, this qualifying name is probably indicative of Rājīmatī, because in that time there was no greater woman steady in her vow, who by merely being promised by word to her groom, remained unmarried for life after he went back and observed the mahāvratas.

Brahmadatta Cakravartī

The last cakravartī of this avasarpinī cycle, Brahmadata, was born after the nirvāṇa of Lord Ariṣṭanemi and before the birth of Lord Pārsvanātha, that is, during the time cycle of Lord Ariṣṭanemi. The life of Brahmadata was, on the one hand, akin to the darkness of a new moon night, full of extreme sorrows, and on the other, like the moonbeams on a full moon night in winter, full of worldly pleasures. The life of Brahmadata gives a fearsome picture of an unintelligible course of wandering in a worldly life, which is very inspiring and rouses the feeling of disenchantment.

Brahmadatta was the son of the Pāṃcāla king Brahma and his queen Culaṇī. Queen Culaṇī saw the fourteen auspicious dreams signifying the birth at the time of conception and after her pregnancy period, gave birth to a son who had a stunning aura. Seeing the son's face the Pāṃcāla king felt happy as if he was taking a stroll in knowledge itself (Brahma), hence he named the child Brahmadata. The Pāṃcāla king Brahma had close friendships with the king of Kāśī, Kaṭaka, the king of Hastināpura Kaṇerudatta, the king of Kauśala Dīrgha and the king of Campā, Puṣpacūlaka. These five friends used to live together for one year in each other's capitals. Once, as per this arrangement, the five gathered in the Pāṃcāla capital, Kāmpilyapura. The five friends were spending a happy time together in Kāmpilyapura when suddenly the king of Pāṃcāla Brahma died. Staying with the bereaved family of the king of Pāṃcāla, the four friends completed the last rites of King Brahma. At that time Brahmadata was just 12-years old. Hence the four friends discussed and came to the conclusion that until such time as Brahmadata becomes a young man, for each year one of the four kings would be the care-taker and protector of the Pāṃcāla kingdom. As per this arrangement, leaving the king of Kauśala, Dīrgha at Kāmpilyacity and rest three kings went to their respective kingdoms.

The king of Kauśala, Dīrgha gradually took over the treasury of the kingdom as well as the kingdom itself. Not just that, he ensnared his deceased friend Brahma's wife Culaṇī in his web of love. Culaṇī, too, giving up on the family's honour, started assisting Dīrgha. The prime minister of Pāṃcāla, Dhanu, got a sense of this illegitimate relationship and untrustworthy behaviour. He got a suspicion in his mind that blinded by lust, these two would sometime in future kill Brahmadata, hence he

advised his son Varadhanu to stay with the prince day and night and to be alert with regard to Dīrgha and Culaṇī.

Brahmadatta became very sad to learn about his mother and Dīrgha's illicit relationship. He was also very angry. Through various means he tried to convey his feelings to his mother and to Dīrgha, but their bad behaviour continued. Dīrgha was very clever. He understood Brahmadata's efforts. He told Culaṇī that if we are not careful your son will very soon prove to be our biggest enemy. It would better to trample this snake's head right in the beginning. As a result, Culaṇī began to quench her thirst for her own son's life. To save themselves from infamy, the two decided to get Brahmadata married and set on fire the wax-hall they would spend their nuptial night in, and burn them to death. Culaṇī chose her own brother Puṣpacūla's daughter, Puṣpavatī as the bride and started the wedding preparations.

The Prime Minister Dhanu was completely alert and was keeping abreast of every activity of Dīrgha and Culaṇī. He got to know of this conspiracy and he began to think about ways to protect the bride and groom's lives. Very politely he requested the king Dīrgha, "My son has become completely eligible to take up the role of prime minister and due to old age I am unable to show the required agility for the work of the kingdom. Now I want to spend my time in charities etc. Hence I request that I may be released from the duties of the prime minister." Dīrgha was not so naïve. In his crooked mind he figured that if he is released from his duties he will find out about my plans and shall destroy them. Hence he answered in very sweet tone, "Friend! Without someone like you with a sharp mind, our kingdom cannot be managed even for a day. Hence while remaining on your position you may carry on your religious activities."

Dhanu heeded Dīrgha's request and arranged a huge sacrificial hall on the banks of river Gaṃgā. While taking care of all the duties of the kingdom he arranged a massive programme of donating food at the banks of river Gaṃgā. Thousands of people began to get food in this hall every day. With the money he got for conducting these activities; Dhanu with the help of his workers dug up a tunnel from the wax-house all the way up to the sacrificial hall. At the same time, alerting Puṣpacūla about the conspiracy hatched by Dīrgha and Culaṇī, asked him to proceed very carefully.

As advised by the prime minister Puṣpacūla organised Brahmadata's wedding very well and giving lots of material in the form of dowry, bid farewell to the newly weds. At Kāmpilya city, Dīrgha and Culanī sent their son and daughter-in-law to the wax-hall for their nuptial night. As per Dhanu's hint, Puṣpacūla, who was alert, sent instead of his daughter Puṣpavatī, her look-alike a maid's daughter, without anyone finding out. In the night the wax hall became enveloped in red flames all over and within moments the palace that touched the sky melted and started to scatter about. There, being alerted by Varadhanu about the entire situation, Brahmadata went with him through the tunnel to the sacrificial hall on the banks of river Gaṅgā. The prime minister gave two fast horses to Brahmadata and Varadhanu and sent them away to a far off place and he himself started off looking for an undisclosed location.

Both the horses, running at the speed of wind, came as far as 50 yojanas from Kāmpilyapura, but having run at that speed continuously the horses' lungs gave way and they fell to the ground. Now Brahmadata and Varadhanu began to run on their feet continuously and reached the village Koṣṭhaka. Leaving Brahmadata outside the village, Varadhanu entered the village and came back with a barber. Shaving off his hair with the help of the barber Brahmadata wore black robes and covered his Śrīvatsa sign. Varadhanu put his sacred thread around Brahmadata's neck. This way, changing their appearances, they entered the village, where a Brahmin took them to his house and with great respect, fed them and asked them to take rest.

The two friends had just about sat down when the Brahmin's wife came with her daughter Bandhumatī and stood with her hands folded in front of Brahmadata. The two friends started looking at each other in surprise. The Brahmin's wife said, "My daughter has the fortune of being married to a cakravartī king. The soothsayers who told me about her groom's signs, I have found that today. They had said the person who comes to your house to eat covering his Śrīvatsa sign with a cloth will be your daughter's groom."

Brahmadata got married to Bandhumatī. After a night's happiness, again the ocean of sorrow appeared. The sun had not even risen when Dīrgha's soldiers surrounded the Koṣṭhaka village. Seeing this both friends got out of the Brahmin's house and like wild animals, began to run hiding

behind shrubs and bushes. While running Brahmadaṭṭa felt extremely thirsty. He told Varadhana, “Varadhana! I cannot walk a step more, I am dying of thirst.” Brahmadaṭṭa sat near a tree. Leaving Brahmadaṭṭa there Varadhana left to get some water. While he was returning with water few soldiers surrounded him and questioned him about Brahmadaṭṭa. When Varadhana did not answer the soldiers began to beat him up. While he was being beaten up Varadhana gestured to Brahmadaṭṭa to leave. Brahmadaṭṭa began to run hiding in bushes and shrubs. After running non-stop for three days Brahmadaṭṭa saw an ascetic. The ascetic took Brahmadaṭṭa to the chief of the hermitage. Seeing Brahmadaṭṭa’s brilliant personality and the sign of Śrīvatsa on his chest, the astonished chief of the hermitage asked Brahmadaṭṭa as to how he got into this situation.

When Brahmadaṭṭa told him the entire account he embraced him and said – “Son, your father Brahma was like an elder brother to me. Please consider this hermitage your own and stay here happily.” Brahmadaṭṭa stayed there and started studying. Seeing his sharp intellect the chief imparted him knowledge of all kinds of scriptures, skills and use of weapons. Staying in the hermitage as a student, Brahmadaṭṭa became healthy all over and a 7 dhanuṣa tall young man.

One day Brahmadaṭṭa went with his friends of the hermitage to collect some fruits and roots from the forest. He saw some fresh footprints of elephants in the forest. He started looking for the elephants and, separated from his friends, went quite far. In the end he saw a wild elephant uprooting a tree with his trunk. Brahmadaṭṭa started fighting with the elephant and the elephant pounced on him. Brahmadaṭṭa threw his upper cloth on the elephant and the moment the elephant raised his trunk to hold the upper cloth, Brahmadaṭṭa put his feet over the elephant’s trunk and got on top of it. Sitting astride the elephant for a long time he kept playing around with it when suddenly dark clouds formed and torrential rains poured. Drenched in the rain the elephant blew his trumpet and ran. Brahmadaṭṭa held on to a huge tree branch and climbed the tree. When the rain settled down a little, all the directions seemed misty with the effect of the overcast sky. Brahmadaṭṭa got down from the tree and started walking towards the hermitage but having lost his way, reached another forest. Wandering here and there and lost, he reached the banks of a river. When he crossed over the river and reached the other banks, he found a village destroyed. When he moved ahead he

reached a thick bamboo shrub, where he found a sword and a shield placed there. Out of curiosity he started to cut down the bamboo shrubs. While cutting down the bamboo shrubs he found in front of him a chopped off human head fallen to the ground, struggling in pain. When he observed carefully he found that some man was hanging upside down on the bamboo stalks and practising some kind of penance, and he had chopped him off without noticing. He was filled with guilt that needlessly he killed a young man doing penance. Full of remorse as he moved ahead he saw a beautiful garden and a huge palace in the midst. When he started climbing the stairs of the palace he found a beautiful woman seated on a bed in a worried posture. Surprised, he went closer to the woman and said, “Goddess, who are you and why are you sitting in this empty palace?” The young woman was startled seeing this young man addressing her. She asked, “Who are you and what is the reason behind your coming here?” Brahmadata, reassuring the young woman in a calm and composed manner told her, “Goddess, I am the son of Brahma, the king of Pāṃcāla..!”

Brahmadatta had not even completed his sentence when the young woman fell at his feet and said, “Prince! I am your uncle Puṣpacūla’s daughter Puṣpavatī who was given to you in marriage. But before I got married to you a Vidyādhara named Nāṭyonmatta kidnapped me and brought me here. In order to ensnare me he is doing penance in the bushes nearby. I take refuge in you now, please save me.” The prince, completely reassuring her said, “That Vidyādhara just got killed unknowingly at my hands. You have no fear so long as I am here.” Thereafter, Brahmadata married Puṣpavatī in the Gāndharva tradition and this way, after a period of sorrows again started to sway in happiness.

After the night passed off, hearing the rumbling of the clouds when a startled Brahmadata started looking here and there. Then Puṣpavatī said, “This indicates the coming of the Vidyādhara’s sisters, Khaṇḍā and Viśākhā. I am not afraid of them, but knowing that their brother is dead if they bring their other brothers then you may have to face some trouble. It is better you hide. I will talk to them and try to create attraction for you in their minds, and if I find the attempt working I shall wave a red flag and you can come out without worry. Otherwise, I shall wave a white flag to indicate that their anger has not cooled down and you quietly run

away.” Puṣpavafī went to welcome the Vidyādhara sisters and Brahmadata kept waiting for an indication from her side. Suddenly he saw a white flag being waved and thinking staying there is not out of danger he slowly went towards the forest.

After crossing the deep forest he reached a huge lake. Unable to resist the attraction of the lake he jumped into it and swimming slowly he reached the other end. There he found a very beautiful woman picking flowers from a creeper nearby. He kept staring at her and he felt she was looking at him too and smiling. Then he saw that she was saying something to her friend pointing towards him and after some time both disappeared from that flower bush. Enchanted, Brahmadata kept looking in that direction. Then he heard the sound of anklets nearby. When he turned around he found that beautiful woman with her attendant holding in her hands some betel leaves, clothes and ornaments. She told Brahmadata, “The princess you saw a moment ago has sent you these things and said that I should take you to her father’s minister.” Brahmadata walked behind that attendant as if in a daze.

That beautiful woman was named Śrīkāntā. She was the only daughter of the king of Vasantapura. Though Śrīkāntā’s father was the king of Vasantapura due to some problems with his stars, he had begun to stay and rule over Caurapallī. He welcomed and showered honour and respect on Brahmadata and married his daughter to him in a grand way. Brahmadata began to enjoy royal pleasures once again.

One day desiring to go to Vasantapura, he left Caurapallī. It became dark midway hence he went to a rest-house in a small town to spend the night. After making arrangements to stay at the rest house, he was about to go to the dining hall when entering inside, he saw a man. When he observed closely, he found him to be none other than Varadhanu, his friend. He ran to Varadhanu and hugged him. Varadhanu too danced with joy and astonishment seeing Brahmadata. The two friends ate together and went to Brahmadata’s room to sleep. Varadhanu, narrating his story, said, “I was returning with water for you when Dīrgha’s soldiers surrounded me and beat me up and when they asked me about you I told them a lion had eaten you up. They then asked me to show them that place. Keeping them engaged here and there, I gestured to you to run away. After you ran away they beat me black and blue. Seizing the opportunity I ate pills

to induce fainting, due to which, thinking I was dead, they left me there and went away. After they left I took out the pills from my mouth and stated to look for you but could not find you. Through my father's friend when I found out about my father running away and my mother being harassed I decided to somehow sneak her out of Kāmpilyapura. In a dramatic way, sneaking out my mother from there, leaving her at my father's close friend's house under his care, I went out in search of you and have come here after wandering about.

After this, Brahmadata told him his entire account. Brahmadata had not yet completed his story when he got information about a big battalion of Dīrgha's army coming there. Both of them, running through forests and caves, reached Kauśāmbī city. At a big garden in Kauśāmbī they saw two wealthy merchants betting their cocks to fight for a bet of one lakh rupees each. Both cocks fought each other for a long time, but finally, despite being a pedigree, Sāgaradatta's cock lost to Buddhila's cock. Brahmadata was surprised at the defeat of Sāgaradatta's pedigree cock. He observed closely Buddhila's cock and removing the sharp nails stuck in its claws, set both of them again to fight. In a few moments, Buddhila's cock lost. Having won a lost game, Sāgaradatta was very happy and took the prince and Varadhanu to his house and kept them at his place like his own brothers. But the king of Kauśāmbī was searching for Varadhanu and Brahmadata as requested by Dīrgha; hence they decided to leave Kauśāmbī.

That midnight, seated on Sāgaradatta's chariot both of them left Kauśāmbī. After going up to a little distance, Sāgaradatta returned. The two friends went forward. There they saw a chariot with weapons with a beautiful young woman sitting in it. Seeing them, the young damsel asked – "Where were you so long? I have been waiting for you so long." The prince, astounded, asked her – "O young lady! Who are you? And how do you recognize us?" The woman seated on the chariot said – "I am Buddhila's sister, Ratnavatī. Ever since I saw you at the contest between Sāgaradatta's and Buddhila's cocks, I have been longing to meet you, now I am here to fulfill my desire."

Both friends sat in Ratnavatī's chariot. Varadhanu held the horses' reins. Ratnavatī asked him to take the chariot towards the house of her uncle the merchant Dhanāvaha in Magadhapurī. Varadhanu led the chariot

towards Magadhapurī. The chariot, moving with the speed of the wind, reached the forests outside Kauśāmbī. Brahmadata reached Rājagṛha after facing difficulties such as fight with dacoits in the forest, crying over separation from Varadhanu, among others. Leaving Ratnavatī at a hermitage outside Rājagṛha, Brahmadata went into the city. There he married in the Gāndharva tradition the two sisters, Khaṇḍā and Viśākhā, of the Vidyādhara Nāṭyonmatta and then he reached the house of the merchant Dhanāvaha. Dhanāvaha was very happy to see him and he got him married to Rājagṛha. Brahmadata started staying with Ratnavatī happily in Rājagṛha but he was very sad about the missing Varadhanu. He tried a lot to trace Varadhanu but when he did not get any positive results, thinking him to be dead; he performed his last rites, and called some Brahmins over for the death feast.

Suddenly Varadhanu too arrived in the midst of the Brahmins and said, “The food being served to me will enter Varadhanu’s stomach.” Brahmadata recognised Varadhanu’s voice and embraced him. The sorrowful atmosphere turned into a breeze of joy.

The two friends went to see a festival one day. The entire Rājagṛha was gathered to see the festival, decked in colourful attire and different kinds of invaluable ornaments. At that very moment, an elephant in rut, which was in the elephant stables, broke its chains and reaching the fair, started to blow its trumpet. People ran helter-skelter, many lost consciousness; the entire atmosphere was filled with cries of women and children. The mad elephant picked up a woman with his trunk. People had their hearts in their mouths. Like lightning Brahmadata went and stood facing the elephant and started bellowing at it. Leaving the woman, the elephant leapt at Brahmadata, shaking his long trunk and its tail. Brahmadata was adept at fighting with elephants; hence in the end he tamed the elephant. He went and tied it up in the elephant stable.

Hearing about the incident of the elephant’s account and about its being tamed, the king of Magadha reached there. He was struck by the young handsome man with brilliance of the sun and strength of Indra. When the merchant Dhanāvaha introduced Brahmadata, the king was very happy. He married off his daughter Puṣpamatī to Brahmadata in a grand ceremony. The woman whose life Brahmadata had saved from the elephant was Śrīmatī, the daughter of a merchant of Rājagṛha named

Vaiśravaṇa. Vaiśravaṇa got Śrīmatī married with pomp and splendour to Brahmadaṭṭa. There, the king of Magadha's minister Subuddhi got his daughter Naṃdā married to Varadhanu. This way both friends started to live happily in Rājagṛha. Shortly, tales of Brahmadaṭṭa's courage and beauty spread across homes all over Bhārata. This way, staying in Rājagṛha, making money and fame Brahmadaṭṭa started for Varanasi with Varadhanu, so that he may make necessary preparations to reclaim Pāṃcāla kingdom from king Dīrgha.

When the king of Varanasi heard the news of the arrival of his dear friend Brahma's son Brahmadaṭṭa, he came to welcome him filled with love and brought him into the royal palace with great honour. Seeing an appropriate moment he got his daughter Kaṭakavaṭī married to Brahmadaṭṭa and also gave him his army with four divisions as dowry.

Hearing the news of Brahmadaṭṭa's arrival at Varanasi the king of Hastināpura Karuṇadaṭṭa, the king of Bhāmā, Puṣpacūlaka, the Prime Minister Dhanu, etc came with their respective armies to Varanasi. Gathering all the armies together, Brahmadaṭṭa made Varadhanu his army general and started his journey towards Kāmpilyapura to attack king Dīrgha. When Dīrgha came to know of this he sent a message to the king of Varanasi not to break his friendship with him as 'we were not five friends but like five brothers'. You were given the kingdom and family of Brahma for safekeeping and protection. The way you have betrayed your brother-like friend, that is an unpardonable crime. Brahmadaṭṭa has come on his own to reclaim his kingdom. It is better for you to give him his kingdom back.

Dīrgha too, gathering all his strengths, came to the battle-field to fight Brahmadaṭṭa. There was fierce battle between the two armies. At first Dīrgha's side seemed to have an upper hand, but when Brahmadaṭṭa started attacking with fierce weapons, Dīrgha's army became disabled. Brahmadaṭṭa won over many of the soldiers of Dīrgha's army tactfully to his side. In the end, there was a duel between Dīrgha and Brahmadaṭṭa. After a long duel, too, there was no knowing who was winning and who was losing. Both warriors seemed invincible for each other. It was a matter of surprise that a bad man full of bad deeds such as Dīrgha could also be such a fine and brave soldier.

The fight between Brahmadata and Dīrgha was going on and everyone was watching almost like statues with intense attacks and counter-attacks when a heavenly cakra jewel appeared in the sky with a thunderous roar and lightning with an indescribable brightness, almost blinding everyone, which circumambulated Brahmadata thrice and settled itself on the space about a hand's length higher on his right side. Brahmadata held the cakra on the forefinger of his right hand and swirling it with speed, hurled it at Dīrgha. Within a split second, Dīrgha's head fell to the ground. The victory sounds of various armies on the victory of righteousness and end of bad deeds resounded all over. Brahmadata entered Kāmpilyapura with great ceremony. His mother Culanī understood her unrighteous deeds, even though late, and renouncing the world, left the city even before the entry of Brahmadata. Seeing an opportune moment the subjects of Pāṃcāla held the coronation ceremony of Brahmadata with happiness and gaiety.

As soon as he sat on the throne of Kāmpilyapura, he sent for his nine wives from their respective homes. He managed the kingdom as a provincial king for 56 years and thereafter, with the strength of his four-fold army, started for a victory campaign over the six regions of Bhārata. After many battles and intense struggles of sixteen years, he returned to Kāmpilyapura and unfurled his victory flag over the entire Bhārata thus becoming the Lord of fourteen jewels and nine treasures, with all the prosperity of a cakravartī emperor.

One day he was immersed in enjoyment with his many queens and dear ones when a female attendant presented a grand and attractive bouquet of flowers to him. The flower vase of colourful flowers had very life-like and attractive swans, peacocks, deer, and other birds and animals. Brahmadata was watching that beautiful flower vase enchanted and intensely when he got a feeling that he had seen such a flower decoration before. Through single minded reflection, ūhā and poḥa, and his knowledge obscuring karmas becoming weak, he began to see clearly his life. Unconscious, Brahmadata fell on the ground.

On seeing Brahmadata fall unconscious, all the dear ones present there became worried and anxious. With due medication when he regained consciousness; the picture of his past life picture would emerged in his mind and he became unconscious again. For a long time Brahmadata

was in this state. When he regained consciousness, he thought the people would ask him the reason for this state and he would tell them it was the result of a gall bladder malfunctioning, thereby hiding the truth.

When he got to know about his five past lives, he remembered his own brother of the five births who on account of karmas, was born elsewhere in this birth. Thinking of the fact that for five births they were together and in the sixth birth they were born separately, he would feel very sad and wonder in this sixth birth in what why and in what form was that brother born. In the end he found a way and he made an announcement across his vast kingdom that the person who would complete the fourth part of the quatrain, he would give half his kingdom to him. The lines were as under:-

*dāsā dasaṇṇae āsī, miyā kālimjare ṇage
haṃsā mayamaṅga tīrāe, sovāgā kāsibhumie
devā ya devaloyammi, āsi amhe mahiḍḍhiyā*

(We were two slaves, deers, swans, peacocks, in Kāśī... and gods...)

With the greed of gaining half the kingdom many people tried to solve the puzzle, and as a result the half quatrain was on everyone's lips.

One day, a great Śramaṇa monk named Citta, wandering about, reached Kāmpilya city, and seeing a quiet place in a beautiful garden, became meditative there. The gardener was watering the plants there and mumbling the lines of the half-quatrain. Hearing the lines from the gardener's mouth an agitation and ūhā - poha emerged in the monk's mind and he remembered his past life. He too could clearly see his past five lives. Resolving the puzzle, he made the gardener learnt by rote the remaining lines –

imāṇo chaṭṭhiyā jāī, aṇṇamaṇṇehim jā viṇā

(This is the sixth birth of ours, separated from each other)

The gardener recited all the four lines in front of Brahmadata. Hearing those words Brahmadata fell unconscious. Seeing this, the gardener got worried and said – “these lines are not mine, but a monk who has come

to the garden who made me memorise them by rote.” On gaining consciousness, Brahmadata happily gave the gardener his crown and all other ornaments as gift and with all his kith and kin went to see the monk in the garden. The moment he saw Citta monk, Brahmadata laid his head bedecked in gems and crowns at the feet of the monk and remembering the past love, started crying inconsolably. Barring the monk, everyone’s eyes were filled with tears. Surprised, queen Puṣpavatī asked, “My dear one! In spite of being a cakravartī emperor today you cry inconsolably like an ordinary man, what is the reason?” Brahmadata controlling himself said, “O queen! This monk is my own brother.” The queen asked in the same manner, “How is that, oh king?” Brahmadata said, “This you hear from the mouth of the great monk.”

Upon the request of the queens the monk Citta started narrating, “Every living being in this world has been wandering, since eternal time in the cycle of birth, disease and death, taking various forms. Every person has been tied up umpteen times in the relationships of mother, father, brother-sister, husband-wife, etc. Even the two of us have been siblings in our last five births. In our first birth we were born to a maid, Jasamatī, of Brahmin Śāṃḍilyāyana in the Śrīdaha village. That Brahmin used to make us work the whole day tirelessly. Once during winter months we were working in the agricultural field when suddenly clouds formed and it began to pour. Shivering, we both sat under the shade of a banyan tree at the corner of the field. It just wouldn’t stop raining and there was water all over. In order to sleep in the night both of us were trying to adjust in the cavity of the tree trunk when a poisonous snake bit us and both of us died at once. After that we were both born to a deer as twin-deer on the Kāliṃjara Mountain. When we became young once we went playfully towards the banks of the Vegavatī River to quench our thirst, when a hunter shot his arrow at us. We struggled for some time and then merged with the elements. After that, we were born as swans together to a swan on a lake by the side of the Mayaṃga River. Playing in the lake we attained youth. One day a bird-hunter caught us in his net and breaking our necks, finished our lives.”

“After the swan’s womb we were born as twins to Ahinakā, the wife of a prosperous butcher named Bhūtadīna. My name was Citra and he was named Saṃbhūta. When we were eight years old, at that time the king of Kāśī for some reason ordered death sentence to his priest Namūcī and

handed him over to our father. Our father told Namūcī – “If you agree to make my two sons experts in all the arts, I shall keep you safe in my house.” Namūcī accepted my father’s offer and began to teach us. Our mother used to make arrangements for Namūcī’s food, etc. In some time the priest and our mother became attracted to each other. Because of our greed for learning, we did not tell our father anything about their relationship and by studying with diligence we became skilled in various arts.”

“One day our father learnt of the illicit relationship of our mother and the priest and he decided to kill Namūcī. When this was going on, we quietly sent him away from our house. He reached Hastināpura and became the minister of the cakravartī Sanatkumāra.”

“Being experts in singing we both began to wander about singing on the streets of Varanasi. Impressed by our singing people, especially beautiful women would run to us, forgetting everything. Seeing this, the people complained to the king of Kāśī and prohibited entry for us in the city.”

“One day, the Kaumudī festival was organised in Varanasi. The two of us entered into the city on the sly to enjoy the festival. A music programme was being conducted at one place. Suddenly musical notes began to pour out from us instinctively. Hearing our voices, people surrounded us and a crowd gathered. Suddenly someone shouted – ‘hey, these are the same butcher sons who have been prohibited entry into the city. What then, forgetting all about the music, people ran to beat us up. We ran for our lives, and beaten up, reached the city outskirts. In a quiet uninhabited place, thinking what was the use of this life living like animals and condemned, we both decided to end our lives jumping from the cliff of a mountain.

A top the mountain peak we saw an ascetic deep in meditation in a peaceful posture. We felt peace at the sight of the monk and fell at his feet. We told him our whole story and said we both have come here to take our lives jumping off the cliff. To this the compassionate monk said to us, “suicide will only bring an end to your physical body, not your pain. To end the basic cause of that pain, the accumulated karmas of many births, perform penance.” The monk’s words seemed appropriate to us. At that very moment the two of us accepted mendicancy. The kind

monk imparted to us the knowledge of the basic tenets of the path of liberation. Observing various kinds of fast such as ṣaṣṭama-aṣṭama bhakta etc, and monthly fasts, we made our bodies whither down.”

“Wandering across various places, one day we reached Hastināpura and in a garden outside the city, started doing severe penance.”

“Once in order to break a month’s fast, monk Saṃbhūta went to Hastināpura city. Suddenly Namūcī spotted him and he recognised him. Thinking he might call his bluff, he ordered his people to throw the monk out of the city. Upon his orders the king’s men pounced upon the monk and cruelly beat him up. The monk returned to the garden peacefully. Even at this when Namūcī’s men did not stop beating him up, the monk got angry. Flames of intense fire started to come out of his mouth. The entire sky turned red with the flames. There was havoc in the entire city. People came on hordes and bowing before him urged him to calm down but the monk’s anger was unstoppable. Seeing the flames envelop the skies I reached the spot of the incident and calmed down my brother.”

“Saṃbhūta monk became repentant for what he did. Within moments the flames died down. Both of us monk-brothers started for the garden. Reaching the garden we both reflected that we have to face so many difficulties to feed this destructible body. What is the use of this body or food for us monks? Thinking thus, we observed saṃlekhanā and renounced food for life.”

When cakravartī Sanatkumāra learnt of the whole incident, then he tied up the person responsible for it, Namūcī and presented him before us and requested us – “Oh monks, he is your criminal. What punishment should he be given?” We said – “Oh king! Free him.” Namūcī was released at once and sent out of Hastināpura city.”

“At the same time, the main woman Sunandā came to pay respects to us along with 64 thousand co-wives. While bowing at monk Saṃbhūta’s feet Sunandā’s scented long hair touched the monk’s feet. After paying their respects, the royal family went to the palace.”

“We both completed our life-spans together and became gods in the Nalinīgulma (Padmagulma) vimāna in the Saudharma kalpa. After

completing our life span as gods I was born to Nandā, the wife of a prosperous merchant of Purimatāla, Gaṇapūṃja. Despite having all comforts and pleasurable objects my mind was not attracted to them, hence I renounced, taking initiation as a monk. Practising restraint, wandering across several places, I reached this garden. Hearing some words of the quatrain from the gardener I was reminded of my past life. In this sixth birth I do not have any idea as to how we were separated.”

Hearing this all the listeners became stunned. They would either look at Brahmadata or the monk. Then Brahmadata said – “Oh great monk! Let me tell you the reason for separation in this life. Seeing the cakravartī Sanatkumāra’s wealth and the excellent youth of Sunandā and other queens I had taken a decision that as a result of that penance of mine I should gain the complete wealth of a cakravartī. Until the end I did not criticise this perseverance of mine, hence after completing my time in Saudharma realm of gods, because of that desire of mine, I have become a cakravartī. Please consider my vast empire and wealth as yours. This youth is meant for enjoying sensual and worldly pleasures. Hence you may come and stay with me as my brother and enjoy all the comforts. All these austerities are after observed to obtain happiness. If those are obtainable easily, what is the need for penance?”

The monk said in a tranquil and intense manner – “In this meaningless world only religion is meaningful. Body, youth, wealth, friends, and relatives; are all momentary like water bubbles. The victory you have gained over six divisions is but victory over external enemies. Now get ready to become capable of winning over the internal enemies of lust, anger, etc, through which you will get permanent happiness of liberation. I have understood that all sensual joys are deadly like poison and to be renounced hence voluntarily I have happily renounced these and accepted the path of self restraint. You know yourself that we both have borne pain in our lives as attendants, deer, swans and elephant and thereafter, through the effect of penance, went to the realm of gods and enjoyed those pleasures as well. When our good deeds ended we again fell from the gods’ realm and have been born on the earth. If you do not use your hard-to get human life in making efforts to gain liberation, then I do not know in what unfortunate circumstances bearing how many unbearable pains you will have to wander in your different births. Oh king! Despite knowing it all why are you drowned in sensual pleasures

which are the root-cause of endless pain, like an ignorant child? To waste this precious human life in sensual enjoyments is akin to washing one's hands and feet and throwing the water from an urn of nectar into the soil, instead of quenching one's thirst by drinking that nectar."

Brahmadatta replied – "Lord! Your words are hundred per cent true. I know that desire for worldly objects is the mother of all pain and destruction but the way an elephant stuck in slush cannot come out of it even if it wants to, in the same way having gained these enjoyments through my desire, I am stuck in this quicksand so deep that accepting self restraint is beyond my reach." Citta said – "King! Life is moving fast at great speed. Sense and worldly pleasures are not going to remain forever. The same way as birds leave a tree without fruits, these lustful pleasures will also one day leave you. To leave someone even before his leaving us is far better. You say you are incapable of letting go of the pleasures that you gained through your desire, but remain immersed in being friendly with living beings and in activities of service to others, so that you may get blissful happiness."

Saying this, monk Citta went elsewhere to stay. After observing severe penance for many years, he burnt in the flames of his penance all his karmas and obtaining emancipation and enlightenment, gained nirvāṇa.

Brahmadatta, as always, started to enjoy his wealth as cakravartī. One day Brahmadatta went out of Kāmpilya city astride a horse gifted to him by the king of Greece. To test the speed of the horse the moment he hit it with a whip, the horse began to fly at the speed of wind. Brahmadatta tried a lot to stop the horse but the horse leapt across rivers, canals and forests and reaching a thick forest, stopped. Seeing a nāga (serpent) woman making love with an adulterous man besides a lake Brahmadatta became very angry and he beat them up and tore their skins. After sometime Brahmadatta's attendant came there looking for him and they all went together to Kāmpilyapura.

There the injured nāga (serpent) woman complained against Brahmadatta to her husband the king of serpents – "I was returning from water sports and a stroll in the forests with my friends when Brahmadatta cakravartī saw me and tried to molest me. When I refused he beat me up with whiplash and almost beat me to death. I told him I am the wife of the king of serpents, yet he did not pay attention." Hearing these words from

his wife the nāga king was very angry. He resolved to kill Brahmadata and reached his bedroom in the night on the sly. When he was outside the bedroom waiting for the right moment, he heard – Brahmadata’s queen was asking that the queen heard that astride the horse gifted by the Greek king you went very far into thick forests, did you see anything amazing? Brahmadata told her about the incident involving the female serpent and the adulterous man and said that he had punished them for their uncalled for behaviour. Hearing Brahmadata’s words the serpent king opened his eyes. After some time when Brahmadata came out of his bedroom the serpent king, his head bowed down, stood before him and said – “Oh king! I am the husband of the nāga woman you have punished. Listening to her words I came here to attack you but hearing the truth from you I have changed my mind. I want to serve you.” Brahmadata said – “I wish there would be no theft, illicit relations and accidental deaths in my kingdom.” The serpent king said – “So it shall be. This attitude of service to others is admirable. You may ask something for yourself too.” Brahmadata said – “Oh serpent king! I wish I would be able to understand every creature’s language.” The nāgaking said – “I am so happy with you that I give you even this knowledge that should not be given. But you must remember the unshakable and tough rules of this knowledge that if you share with any other person what that creature spoke, your head will break into seven pieces.” Brahmadata assured the serpent king and the latter gave him that knowledge and left.

Once when Brahmadata was sitting with his favourite queen in the make-up room, he heard two house sparrows talking to each other. The female sparrow was pregnant, she told the male sparrow – “I have this whim that you bring the paste from the king’s body and apply it on my body.” The male sparrow said – “it seems you are now tired of me hence you are pushing me into my death.” Listening to the birds’ conversation Brahmadata began to laugh aloud. The queen was surprised at the king laughing suddenly. She asked him the reason. Brahmadata was in a dilemma. He tried to evade the queen’s question by engaging her in all kinds of conversations but the queen was adamant. Brahmadata tried to explain to the queen – “Oh queen! Try to understand. I do not want to hide anything from you, but there is a secret behind this revealing which my head will break into seven pieces.” The queen said in disbelief – “If that is so, then I too shall give up my life with you, but I cannot live without knowing the secret.”

Seeing this desire in his queen the king instructed for a funeral pyre to be lit for him and the queen and prepared himself to tell her the secret. In order to bring sense into Brahmadata who was ready to die before his time for the love of a woman, the family deity through her divine powers created a female and male goat. The she-goat said to the he-goat – “The king has kept some green barley for the horse, bring me one of those so I can fulfill my pregnancy whim.” The male-goat said – “The king’s men will take my life in this attempt.” The she-goat was adamant – “If you do not bring it I shall take my life.” The he-goat said – “never mind, I shall make another goat my wife.” The she-goat said – “this means you do not love me. See that king, he is dying for the sake of his wife.” The he-goat said – “despite being the Lord of so many queens Brahmadata is being foolish over one queen, but I am not a fool like him.” Hearing the he-goat’s words, Brahmadata regretted his foolishness and putting his necklace around the goat’s neck went into the palace.

When Brahmadata had spent 584 years enjoying the pleasures of a cakravartī his earlier acquaintance, the Brahmin family came to him. Brahmadata extended respectful hospitality to the Brahmin family. At dinner time the Brahmin told Brahmadata – “Oh king, I want to eat the same food that is made for you today.” Brahmadata said – “Friend! This food will be indigestible, and will arouse passion in you.” But the Brahmin did not pay heed to Brahmadata’s words. So the Brahmin and his family were fed the food made for the king. In the night the food showed its effects. Every member of the Brahmin’s family became aroused with insatiable feeling of lust, and to satisfy it the father-son duo, forgetting all due relationships, started dalliance with the women of their family. When in the morning the effect of that royal feast lessened a little, and the Brahmin family’s passions calmed down then everyone understood their respective bad deeds and began to hide their faces in shame. The Brahmin, ashamed of his animal behaviour, left the city abusing Brahmadata.

Aimlessly roaming around in the forest the Brahmin saw a herdsman who was shedding the soft leaves of a banyan tree down with his pellet-bow and feeding them to his sheep. Seeing the sharp aim of the herdsman the Brahmin thought this man can be utilised to avenge Brahmadata. He gave some money to the herdsman, who with his pellet-bow struck both the eyes of Brahmadata. The herdsman was caught immediately. When

the herdsman said he did this on account of the Brahmin, an angry Brahmadatta got the Brahmin and his family killed. When his anger did not subside even then, he instructed the minister that the eyes of all the Brahmins in the city be removed and brought to him on a platter. Instead of eyes the minister placed before the blind Brahmadatta something similar to the eyes, a cluster of mucus-like seedless fruits of the tree *Cordia myxa*. Thinking those to be Brahmin eyes, Brahmadatta would touch them again and again and feel extreme happiness. He used to keep the platter with him day and night and touching them would feel intense pleasure. This way Brahmadatta spent his last 16 years in persistently intense distress and angry thoughts and after completing 700 years of his life, thinking constantly of his queen Kurumatī, died and reached the seventh hell.

A broken link in ancient history

A description of cakravartī Brahmadatta almost similar to that found in Jain āgamas and texts is found in Veda Vyāsa's Mahābhārata and Harivaṃśapurāṇa as well. Some episodes in Brahmadatta's life which are similar to both the traditions are given here for comparative evaluation:-

1. Brahmadatta was a resident of Kāmpilya city in the Pāṃcāla republic.
2. Brahmadatta's soul in a past life, seeing a king's wealth, had resolved that –“if I have done good deeds, observed rules and penance may I be such a king as a result of that.
3. That Brahmadatta got the knowledge of his past life is similar to both traditions barring a few differences in the cause.
4. The description of Brahmadatta's past lives is similar in both traditions.
5. That Brahmadatta got married to a Brahmin woman, even this is similar in both traditions.
6. There is reference to Brahmadatta understanding the language of animals and birds in both the traditions.

7. In the Vaidika tradition, there is mention of a bird named Pūjanikā who tore Brahmadata's eyes, whereas in the Jain tradition this is done by a shepherd on being told by a Brahmin acquaintance of Brahmadata.

In spite of so many similarities there is vast difference when it comes to the time period of Brahmadata between both the traditions. In "Harivaṃśa" there is reference to Brahmadata having existed long before the Mahābhārata time but in contrast, the Jain texts and āgamas mention Brahmadata's existence long after the nirvāṇa of the Pāṇḍavas. Along with the life history of the Tīrthaṃkara, Baladevas, Vasudevas and PratiVasudevas, their time-period is given in a similar manner in all the agamic texts of the Jain tradition. Hence, there is no scope for doubt in the Jain tradition regarding their time periods. If historians were to look for mostly the common points of description of Brahmadata in both these ancient traditions of India, certainly it will be of use in linking up a chain in India's ancient history.

Lord Śrī Pārśvanātha

After the 22nd Tīrthaṅkara Lord Ariṣṭanemi, Pārśvanātha was the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara. He was born in 9th - 10th century B.C.E. He came 250 years before the 24th Tīrthaṅkara Lord Śrī Mahāvīra. Based on historical research today's historians have begun to consider Lord Pārśvanātha a historical person. Major General Furlong has written after due research – “In that time in the entire northern India there was a philosophical religion essentially based on asceticism, that is, Jain religion, based on which an ascetic tradition developed in Brahminical, Buddhist and other religions. Before the āryas reached the banks of the Gaṅgā, at least 22 prominent ascetics, or Tīrthaṅkara had imparted religious discourse to Jains. After them came Pārśva, who had the knowledge of all his past 22 Tīrthaṅkara or sages. He had the knowledge of various scriptures which are known as Purāṇas on account of their being ancient.” A well-established western scholar such as Hermann Jacobi considers Lord Pārśvanātha a historical person and he tried to establish the fact in his edition of Jain āgamas and Buddhist piṭakas. Many other scholars too agree with Jacobi. Dr. Vāsama points out that in the Buddhist piṭakas Lord Mahāvīra is shown to be an opponent of the Buddha, hence his historicity is unambiguous. Dr. Charles Charpentier has written – “We ought also to remember both i.e. the Jain religion is certainly older than Mahāvīra and his reputed predecessor Pārśva having almost certainly existed as a real person. Consequently, the main points of the original doctrine may have been codified long before Mahāvīra.”

The religious conditions before Lord Pārśvanātha

In order to understand the specialty of Lord Pārśvanātha's teachings it is important to understand the religious conditions in India at that time. A study of available Vaidika literature shows that before 9th century BC the last grouping (maṇḍala) of the Ṛg-Veda was completed. As a result inquisitiveness regarding reality / truth had begun to emerge in the country resulting in further serious intellectual discussions and analysis of the same. In the time of the Upaniṣadas this reflection and analysis began to take the form of debates between scholars. Dogmas were propounded on the fundamental truths of the world after serious reflection. With increase in thinking related to the question of the Self (āt mā), it was but natural that interest in sacrifice, other rituals, etc

declined. Because for individual's mokṣa, there is no necessity for sacrifice, rituals, etc. As a result of these philosophies, criticisms began to emerge on the question of timelessness of the Vedas or about them being self created (Svayambhū). These thinkers used to spend their time observing silence and quietly reflecting over Brahma, the world, soul, and super-sensual matters living in quiet and remote places in forests, etc. Hence they got identified as sages (muni). These forest dwellers had committed their lives to penance, renunciation, simplicity and straight forwardness, non-violence and truth. According to the Gītā such feelings are born directly from god (īśvara or Ātmadeva). In that period while there was the kind of knowledge-oriented yajña, on the other hand were yajñas held involving killing of animals in the name of sacrifice to please the gods openly. For the ordinary people it was difficult to decide which path was correct and beneficial. It was in this time in India that Lord Pārśvanātha emerged in Varanasi. At the appropriate time he vehemently opposed the violence in sacrifice and rituals and attracted people's attention to self-reflection and destruction of sensual inclinations. His compassionate, kind heart wanted to show the correct and expansive path to happiness and peace for all living beings.

Some historians imagine that on account of his opposing the violence-ridden yajñas, those in favour of yajñas became his arch enemies, because of which Pārśvanātha had to leave his birthplace and make a place of ārya's the land of his religious discourse. In fact this argument is unsubstantiated because the opposition to yajñas was far more aggressive in the time of Lord Mahāvīra, but Mahāvīra continued to propagate religion in and around his birthplace. Hence, it appears that the travels to non-Ārya places by Lord Pārśvanātha were not on account of opposition but to propagate religion.

Past Life and Penance

No soul realizes its potential fully all of a sudden. It is only after noble deeds and practice of right conduct through several births that one attains purity and a condition apt for mokṣa. In 'Cauvanna Mahāpurisa Cariyaṃ' and 'Triṣaṣṭi śalākā puruṣa caritra' the past ten lives of Lord Pārśva are described as 'in the first birth as Marubhūti and Kamaṭha, second as an elephant, third as a Sahasrāra god, fourth as Vidyādhara Kiraṇa Deva, fifth as the Acyuta god, sixth as Vajranābha, seventh as a

graiveyaka god, eighth as Suvarṇabāhu, ninth as a Prāṇata god and tenth as Pārśvanātha’.

Lord Pārśvanātha accrued the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma in his eighth life as Suvarṇabāhu. A brief description of that birth is given here. Leaving the realm of gods Vajranābha’s soul he was born as Suvarṇabāhu with all qualities of a cakravartī to queen Sudarśanā, the wife of the king of east Videha, Kuliśabāhu. When Suvarṇabāhu became a young man king Kuliśabāhu got him married and crowning him king and himself renounced this world as a monk.

Once, Suvarṇabāhu left on his horse for a pleasure ride, and to enjoy nature. On the way, the horse started running in an uncontrollable manner and took him to a deep forest. When the horse stopped by a lake in the forest, the king got down and washing his face, drinking some water, tying up his horse to a tree, went to take a stroll in the forest. After going some distance he spotted a few young women playing in the garden by a hermitage. His eyes became fixed on a beautiful, charming woman and he kept staring at her without blinking his eyes. Bees began to hover over her face, on account of the sandal paste, on her forehead. While she tried to get rid of them, many more bees began to hover over her face. Troubled, she screamed. Then Suvarṇabāhu shooed away those bees with his cloth and rid the woman of her fear.

The women thanked Suvarṇabāhu and said, “She is princess Padmā, the daughter of king Khecarendra. After the death of her father she has come here with her mother seeking protection at the hermitage of sage Gālava. Yesterday the sage told her that she would get a suitable groom like Suvarṇabāhu. This has come true.” When sage Gālava heard about the arrival of Suvarṇabāhu in his hermitage he reached there, along with queen Ratnāvalī and after extending due respects, got Padmā married to him. After spending sometime there king Suvarṇabāhu returned to his kingdom. While enjoying his royal pleasures a cakra jewel appeared in his place. On that account, winning over six regions, he became a cakravartī emperor.

Once at a garden in Purāṇapura, the samavaśaraṇa of Tīrthaṅkara Jagannātha took place. Happily, Suvarṇabāhu took his family to pay obeisance to him. Suvarṇabāhu, greatly inspired thinking again and again of Tīrthaṅkara Jagannātha and the gods who had come for the

samavaśaraṇa, and thinking of the glory of renunciation, became reminiscent of his past life. As a result, giving over his kingdom to his son, he accepted initiation under Tīrthaṅkara Jagannātha and observing severe penance, obtained the Tīrthaṅkaranāma karmaby observing twenty instruments of arihanta devotion.

With penance he used to make several firm and difficult resolutions for spiritual purification as well. Once, wandering about, at the Kṣīravarṇa forest near Kṣīragiri, he stood facing the sun in relaxation (kāyotsarga) posture. At that time, the soul of Kamaṭha which had just exited from the seventh hell and had become a lion, seeing the monk, on account of a past life enmity, leapt on him with a roar. The monk, completing his kāyotsarga, became meditative, observing samlekhanā. The lion, after attacking him, had begun to tear open his body. The monk remained tranquil and steady. Completing his life in a feeling of equanimity, he became a god in the vimāna named Mahāprabha and got a life-span of 20 sāgaras. The lion died, too, and descended to the fourth hell and got a life-span of 10 sāgaras. On completing his life in hell, for a long time he bore many kinds of pain in animal wombs.

Description of past life in various scriptures

According to Padmacaritra, Pārśvanātha was named Ānanda in his past life. He was born to Vītaśoka Dāmara in Sāketā city. RaviSena considers Pārśvanātha as having emerged from Vaijayanta heaven, whereas in Tiloyapaṇṇatī and Kalpasūtra, he is considered to have come from the Prāṇata kalpa. In Uttarapurāṇa and Pāsanḥ Carium too, there is similar description of the past life of Pārśvanātha. There is also description of his past lives in Ācārya Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭi śalākāpuruṣa caritra and Lakṣmīvallabha's commentary on Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 23rd chapter. Later ācāryas wrote the life-story of Pārśvanātha independently, too.

In the Śvetāmbara tradition, Devabhadra Sūri first wrote an independent account called Siri Pārasanāha Carium. According to Devabhadra Sūri, Marubhūti started remaining sad after his father's death and inspired by the teachings of monk Hariścandra, he began to feel detached from his house, family and his wife. Because of this his wife became attracted to a person named Kamaṭha. Marubhūti learnt of Kamaṭha and his wife from Kamaṭha's wife, Varuṇā. To confirm this information Marubhūti feigned

to be leaving town. In the night, disguised as beggar, he gained permission to spend the night at the same place. There he saw Kamaṭha and Vasundharī meeting. Thereafter, seeing this misdeed, he went to king Aravinda seeking justice. At that very moment the king called Kamaṭha and ordered his soldiers that this sinner's face should be painted black and seated on a donkey, he should be thrown out of the city. The soldiers did so and throwing stones at him, sent him away. Condemned this way, he decided to commit suicide in a forest, but reflecting for a moment, became an ascetic and started meditating.

After sometime Marubhūti reflected that he shouldn't have taken family matters to the king and went to Kamaṭha to beg forgiveness, and seeing him Kamaṭha got angry and throwing a big stone on his head, killed him. Hearing this, king Aravinda became detached and renouncing everything, took initiation.

This way the soul of Lord Pārśvanātha, going through birth and death, in the 9th birth as Suvarṇabāhu, accepted the spiritual path and obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma when he became a lion's prey (Kamaṭha's soul) and completing his life, went to Prāṇata realm of gods.

Birth and Parents

Completing 20 sāgara years in Prāṇata devaloka, Suvarṇabāhu's soul entered the womb of Vāmā, queen of king Aśvasena of Varanasi, on the midnight hour of the fourth day of the dark fortnight of Caitra month under the constellation Viśākha. Seeing the 14 auspicious dreams entering her mouth the queen Vāmā was very happy. On completion of her pregnancy she gladly gave birth to a son on the midnight of the tenth day of the dark fortnight of Pauṣa month with moon being conjunct with Viśākha constellation. According to Tiloyapaṇṇatī, Lord Pārśvanātha was born eighty four thousand six hundred and fifty years after the birth of Lord Neminātha. Happy with the birth of his son the king Aśvasena performed the birth celebrations for ten days. On the 12th day at the time of naming, Aśvasena announced – “When the child was in his mother's womb the mother alerted me about a snake (Pārśva) moving about even in the darkness of night, and saved my life, hence it is appropriate to name the boy Pārśvanātha.” According to Uttarapurāṇa Indra himself named Pārśvanātha.

According to Samavāyāṅga and Āvaśyaka Niryukti, Pārśva's father's name was Aśvasena and mother's name was Vāmā. Ācārya Guṇabhadra and Puṣpadaṃta (in Uttarapurāṇa and Mahāpurāṇa) mention the father's name as Viśvasena and mother's name as Brāhmī. In Vādirāja's Pārśvanātha Caritra the mother's name is mentioned as Brahmadattā. In Tiloyapaṇṇatti Pārśva's mother's name is also mentioned as Varmilā; Aśvasena's synonymous name, Hayasena is also found. Basically, it does not seem to make any difference. Difference in a person's name in terms of qualities, influence and manner of speech is not surprising.

There is no clear reference to Lord Pārśvanātha's clan and lineage in basic āgamas such as Samavāyāṅga, etc. Only the Āvaśyaka niryukti mentions 22 Tīrthaṃkara as belonging Kāśyapa gotra and Munisuvratanātha and Lord Ariṣṭanemi as belonging to Gautama gotra. But in Devabhadra Sūri's 'Pārśvanātha Caritra' and Triṣaṣṭi śalākā puruṣa caritra, king Aśvasenais considered to be of the Ikṣvāku clan as Kāśyapa and Ikṣvāku meaning the same. In some places they use Kāśyapa in place of Ikṣvāku. Puṣpadaṃta claims that Pārśva was from the Ugravaṃśa. Tiloyapaṇṇattī too, mentions his lineage as Ugravaṃśa and today's historians say Pārśva belonged to Uruga or even Nāga lineage. Pārśvanātha was of incomparable strength and of 1008 auspicious qualities. Seeing the boy's brilliance and intelligence queen Vāmā and king Aśvasena were most delighted and contented. Pārśvanātha was endowed with mati (mind-based knowledge), śruti (verbal testimony) and avadhijñāna (clairvoyance) since childhood.

Pārśva's Valour and Marriage

One day king Aśvasena was sitting in his royal assembly when a messenger arrived from Kuśasthala city. Saluting the king, he said – “The king of Kuśasthala, Naravarmā, has accepted mendicancy, and right now his son Prasenajita is looking after the kingdom. Ever since his daughter Prabhāvati heard about your son prince Pārśvanātha's beauty, being praised, she has taken a vow that she will not marry anyone else but Pārśvanātha. The parents were also happy with their daughter's choice but the king of Kaliṅga, Yavana, has ordered attack on Kuśasthala, saying, “How can Prabhāvati be given to Pārśva when I am around?” King Prasenajita is in great dilemma. He has sent me to let you know of the situation.”

Aśvasena was enraged with anger when he heard Kuśasthala's messenger. He said – “How dare that wicked man think of attacking you when I am here?” Saying this he declared war. When Pārśvakumāra heard the war-trumpets he went to his father and hearing about the situation, said – “What is the need for you to go? I am enough to teach that Yavana a lesson, I do not foresee any great effort in this.” Hearing his son's excitement he allowed him to go to war. Pārśvanātha sent a messenger to the king of Kalimṅga that king Prasenajita has taken refuge in king Aśvasena, hence he should give up the idea of attacking Kuśasthala. The king of Kalimṅga in turn sent the message that he needn't interfere in this. 'Let us hope you do not lose your life at my hands unnecessarily before your time.' Pārśvanātha was of course the ocean of compassion. He did not get angry with the Yavana king, but sent a messenger back to him to make him understand. Listening to the messenger's words, the Yavana king said – “it seems you have some enmity with your master that you are forcing him to fight with me.”

Hearing these words of the Yavana king his minister said – “Oh king, you are not aware of Pārśvanātha's greatness. Indra too bows down to his strength; hence it is for everybody's well-being that we all take refuge in Pārśvanātha.” The minister's self-beneficial teaching had an impact on the Yavana king and reaching Pārśvanātha, he sought forgiveness. Pārśvanātha too gave him freedom from fear and respectfully bade him farewell. At the same time the king of Kuśasthala Prasenajita came with his daughter Prabhāvatī and said – “In the same way as you have protected us and our kingdom on our request, please heed the prayers of my daughter and myself and marrying her, do us a favour.” Pārśvanātha said – “Oh king! I came here based on my respected father's permission to protect your kingdom, not to marry your daughter. Hence do not request me at this time in vain.” Saying so Pārśvanātha returned to Varanasi with his army.

Prasenajita too took his daughter and came to Varanasi with Pārśva. He said to king Aśvasena – “Please be kind enough to accept my daughter for prince Pārśvakumāra.” King Aśvasena called Pārśva and told him – “Prince! Prasenajita's daughter Prabhāvatī is endowed with all qualities; we would also like that you accept her as your wife.” Unable to put off his father's request, in order to destroy the enjoyment karmas, Pārśvakumāra married Prabhāvatī.

Differences of opinion on the question of marriage

There is difference of opinion regarding Pārśvanātha being married. There is description of the marriage of Lord Pārśva in Triṣaṣṭi śalākā puruṣacaritra and Caupanna Mahāpurisa cariyam, but not in Tiloyapaṇṇattī, Padmacaritra, Uttarapurāṇa, Mahāpurāṇa and Pārśvacarita of Vādirāja. There is a description of the marriage after the submission of the Yavana king in Devabhadra's Pāsanāha Cariyam and Triṣaṣṭi śalākā puruṣacaritra. Padmakīrti does take up the marriage issue but does not describe the marriage taking place. There is no mention of marriage in the basic āgamas Samavāyaṅga and Kalpasūtra. The main tenets of Śvetāmbara and Digambara tradition mention that Vāsupūjya, Mallī, Nemi, Pārśva and Mahāvīra Tīrthaṅkara became renouncers at adolescence and the remaining 19 ruled over kingdoms. Based on this the Digambara tradition considers him unmarried. According to the ācāryas of the Śvetāmbara tradition adolescence here means the stage of being a crown prince. Among those who believe Pārśva to be married say that based on his father's request, despite having married, he remained aloof from enjoyment of pleasures and despite being young and able he did not accept kingship. This is why he is called prince. But other ācāryas believe that because he did not marry he is hailed as a prince. This is the root cause of the difference of opinion. Śabdaratnakoṣa and Vaijayanti also take 'kumāra' to mean prince.

Redemption of Nāga (Serpent)

One day Pārśvanātha was watching the splendour of Vārāṇasīpurī when he saw many people going out of the city carrying with them material for ablutions and prayers. On enquiry he came to know that a great ascetic called Kamaṭha was observing the paṃcāgni fire ritual in the garden outside the city and people were going to pay obeisance to him. Out of curiosity the prince too went to see the ascetic. He saw that the ascetic painted with ash was worshipping the big fire. All around him were intense flames and over his head was the intense heat of the summer sun. His blood-shot eyes in the midst of his long locks of hair made the ascetic look fearsome. Crowds of people would come, lay flowers and garlands at his feet, take sacred ash and leave, considering themselves blessed. Through his clairvoyant knowledge, Pārśvakumāra realized that a serpent (according to Uttarapurāṇa serpent couple) on one of those logs

of wood was burning in the fire. The prince's heart filled with compassion. He told ascetic Kamaṭha – “Compassion is the basis of religion. How is it possible to be compassionate through burning of a ritual fire? For by burning the fire so many living beings are killed/destroyed.” Enraged with anger, the ascetic started fuming at the words of Pārśva – “Prince! What do you know about religion? Your work is to take pleasure with elephants and horses. It is ascetics like us who know the essence of religion. Can you tell me which living being is burning in this fire?” The prince ordered his attendants to remove a burning log of wood from the ritual fire and carefully tore it open when a burning snake emerged. Seeing the snake suffer in pain Pārśvanātha recited the navakāra mantra and made the snake observe paccakhāṇa to free them from cruel and inauspicious meditation, thereby enabling the snake to complete his life in pure feeling. The snake died and was born as Indra called Dharaṇendra in the realm of serpent-gods. The people present there started praising freely the knowledge and sense of discrimination of Pārśvanātha. The ascetic's respect declined. He was filled with envy for Pārśvakumāra. In the end, completing his time in ignorant penance, he became a god named Meghamālī among the demon princes.

Detachment and Initiation

There are three categories of people who gained knowledge in this world – self-taught / knowing, taught / instructed by others and taught by the enlightened. Tīrthaṅkara are counted among the self-knowing / self-taught. They do not become detached gaining knowledge from anyone else. Pārśvanātha was detached till 30 years, despite staying as a householder; he did not become attached to it. Considering the karma of enjoyments to be diminishing and decaying, Pārśva decided to accept self-restraint and as per norms the lokāntika gods requested him to propound the religious tīrtha. Accordingly, Pārśvanātha donated gold coins for a year and on the eleventh day of the dark fortnight of Pauṣa month at the Āśramapada mountain in Varanasi, amidst a huge gathering of people, under the Aśoka tree, removed all his clothes and ornaments on his own and five fistfuls of hair and with a three-day fast without water, under the Viśākhā constellation, became a monk along with 300 others, and at that very moment he obtained the fourth type of knowledge namely telepathy (manaḥ paryavajñāna). The next day, leaving Āśramapada he reached Kopakaṭaka where he broke his fast at the

householder Dhanya's house with rice pudding. The gods showered five auspicious things expressing the glory of Giving / charity. Ācārya Guṇabhadra in his Uttarapurāṇa mentions the fast-breaking as having occurred at the house of Dhanya, the king of Gulmakheṭa. Padmakīrti mentions his being initiated with eight fasts, instead of the aṣṭamatapa fast, which is noteworthy.

After taking initiation the Lord decided that during his mendicancy period at eth time penance he will remain in meditation and in this time he shall not have any attachment to his body and shall bear with all calamities.

Spiritual endeavour and calamities

Leaving Varanasi the Lord reached Śivapurī city and as per his resolve, stood in meditation in Kauśāmba forest. There, reminded of his past birth, Dharaṇendra arrived and to protect him from the sun, made an umbrella over him. Since then that place became known as 'Ahicchatra'. Again, wandering, the Lord reached a hermitage. Since it was evening he stood there under a Banyan tree in relaxation (kāyotsarga) posture. Suddenly, Kamaṭha, cognizing through his knowledge of the Lord standing in kāyotsarga posture, appeared in the form of Meghamālī demon to take revenge. With lot of anger remembering his past life, he gave the Lord all kinds of pain taking the forms of a lion, tiger, elephant, poisonous snake, scorpion and snake. Then he tried to frighten the Lord taking the form of a fearsome ghoul. But Lord Pārśvanātha remained unshaken like a mountain. Seeing his deeds failing, Meghamālī started torrential rains through the power of his vaikriyalabdhi. It started to rain with thunder and lightning. Scared, the creatures of the forest started running helter-skelter. The entire forest was filled with water. The water level rose and covered the Lord's knees, waist, and then his neck and started to reach nose, but Pārśvanātha's meditation was not disturbed. The Lord's body was about to drown in water when Dharaṇendra's throne shook. Through his clairvoyance he saw Pārśvanātha's condition and created a lotus with a long stalk and making a seven-hooded serpent umbrella over his head protecting him from water beneath and rains above.

Having a detached attitude, Lord Pārśvanātha showed equanimity towards both Kamaṭha asura's creation of calamities as well as Dharaṇendra's devotion. But understanding Meghamālī, Dharaṇendra said – “Oh fool! Who are you trying to cause pain to with your calamities? Disrespecting and disrupting the peace of such a great soul is as painful as stamping on fire. He will not be affected at all; instead, your feet will burn. You will be destroyed. The Lord himself is an epitome of compassion, he will not do anything, and will bear it all peacefully, but I cannot remain peaceful too long.” Meghamālī was scared on hearing Dharaṇendra's words. He also experienced the Lord's endless forbearance and immediately gathered up all illusory tricks. He begged forgiveness at Pārśvanātha's feet and went back to his place. Dharaṇendra prayed to the Lord and moved towards his place. Gaining victory over the calamities, the Lord continued to observe penance. Moving around many places, Lord Pārśvanātha reached Āśramapada garden in Varanasi and completed 83 nights as a mendicant.

Omniscience and Sermon

Lord Pārśvanātha's mendicancy time-period was of 83 days. On the 84th day, he stood in meditation observing a fast(aṣṭamatapa) in Āśramapada garden under the Ghātakī tree. He conquered all the obscuring karmas by destroying his deluding karma in the second stage of deep meditation and became omniscient. The day he attained omniscience it was the fourth day of the dark fortnight of the Caitra month with moon conjunct with the constellation Viśākhā. Gods and Indras expressed delight over the attainment of omniscience of Lord Pārśvanātha and created the holy congregation (samavaśaraṇa).

In his first sermon the Lord said – “Life is empty and meaningless without religion. Hence practise religion. Breaking of bondage and the bondage of karma is only possible by following the spiritual path. The path to liberation from the bondage is right knowledge, right belief and right conduct, which is two kinds – the śruta and caritra (scripture and practice / conduct). The right conduct is of two kinds that of the householder and of the mendicant. To observe these as per one's capability and gaining the ultimate truth is the ultimate and essential objective of humankind.”

The Lord's first sermon was very effective. Hearing the Lord's speech, king Aśvasena became detached and leaving his kingdom to his son, became a mendicant. Queen Vāmādevī and Prabhāvātī and many other women too accepted initiation. Vaidika scholars like Śubhadatta, too, became initiates with the Lord and obtaining the tripadī knowledge from the Lord they got to know the fourteen pūrvas and became gaṇadharas. This way the Lord established the four-fold order and became a Tīrthaṅkara.

Pārśva's principal disciples (Gaṇadharas)

The 'Śrī Pāsanāha Cariyaṃ' gives the following description of Lord Pārśvanātha's gaṇadharas:-

1. **Śubhadatta:** He was the first gaṇadharas of Lord Pārśvanātha. He was the resident of Kṣemapurī city. His father's name was Dhanya and mother's name was Līlāvātī. He became a śrāvaka under monk Saṃbhūta. After the death of his parents he became disinclined. He heard the sermon of Lord Pārśvanātha at Āśramapada garden at the 1st samavaśaraṇa and became a mendicant and the first Gaṇadhara.
2. **Āryaghoṣa:** He was Pārśvanātha's second Gaṇadhara. He was a resident of Rājagrha and a minister's son. He was also present at the Lord's first samavaśaraṇa and after being initiated, became the second Gaṇadhara.
3. **Vaśiṣṭha:** He was the Lord's third Gaṇadhara. He was the son of the king Mahendra of Kampilapura. He came to the Lord's first samavaśaraṇa and being initiated there, became the third Gaṇadhara.
4. **Āryabrahma:** Āryabrahma was the son of the Surapura king Kanakaketu. His mother's name was Śāntimatī. Hearing about the Lord's omniscience he came there and listening to the sermon, became a mendicant and the fourth Gaṇadhara.
5. **Soma:** Soma was the son of king of Kṣitipratiṣṭhita, Mahīdhara and queen Revatī. His wife's name was Campakamālā. He also had a son who died at the age of four. His wife was sick, too and died. After these two deaths he became detached. Inspired by the Lord's discourse he accepted the path of restraint and became the fifth Gaṇadhara.

6. **Ārya Śrīdhara:** He was Pārśvanātha's sixth Gaṇadhara. His father's name was Nāgabala and mother's name was Mahāsundarī. He got married to king Prasenajita's daughter Rājamatī. Remembering his past birth and the untimely death of his younger brother became the prime reasons for his taking initiation.
7. **Vārisena:** The seventh Gaṇadhara of Lord Pārśvanātha, Vārisena was the resident of Mithilā. Yaśodharā and Namirājā were his parents. His values of the past birth were so strong that since his childhood his mind was attracted towards mendicancy. With the permission of his parents he went to Lord Pārśvanātha's samavaśaraṇa with other prince friends of his and impressed by the sermon, took initiation and became a Gaṇadhara.
8. **Bhadrayaśa:** Bhadrayaśa was the eighth Gaṇadhara of The Lord. His father was Samarasimha and mother Padmā. In a garden named Mattakuṃja he saw a man wrapped in pointed nails. When Bhadrayaśa removed the nails from his body he got to know that his brother had done this on account of a past life's enmity. Seeing the selfishness of this world his mind became detached from the world. With many of his friends he accepted initiation from Lord Pārśvanātha and became a Gaṇadhara.
9. **Jaya and Vijaya:** Both of them were residents of Śrāvastī and were brothers. Both loved each other. Once they dreamt that they have a very short life. Feeling disenchanted with life, they came to the Lord to accept mendicancy and taking initiation, became gaṇadharas.

Āvaśyakaniryukti and Tiloyapaṇṇatī mention these ten gaṇadharas, whereas Samavāyāṅga and KalpaSūtra mention only eight gaṇadharas of Pārśvanātha. Clarifying this difference the commentator of KalpaSūtra, VinayaVijaya has written that Jaya-Vijaya were two gaṇadharas of short life-spans hence mentioning only eight gaṇadharas is considered correct.

Pārśvanātha's Cāturyāma Religion

The initiation that Lord Pārśvanātha gave into the religion based on scripture and conduct aiming at sincere and prudent people is known as Cāturyāma-dharma or four fold vows. Yama means supressing – to put an end to the bondage of soul through four ways, that is to say, to keep it restrained and orderly is the essence of Cāturyāma-dharma. These four

yamas were in the form of vows forever, viz: 1 To give up all kinds of violence, 2 To give up falsehood and untruth, 3 Not to accept that is not given i.e. stealing, 4 To sacrifice, renounce. In these four vows there is no place for brahmacharya (celibacy). The reason being, that Pārśvanātha's ascetics were well aware, hence considering a woman to be part of the renouncing act, they used to consider woman to be inferred when speaking of renunciation (parigraha) as bahiddhādāna means giving (up) of an external object.

This Cāturyāma-dharma emerged long before the Vedas and Upaniṣadas in the Śramaṇatradition. Scholar in history Dharmānanda Kauśāmbī too accepts this.

Wandering and propagation of Religion

There is no clear reference as to which places Lord Pārśvanātha visited after attaining omniscience and where did he stay during the rainy season halts (cāturmāsa) but based on available historical material it is believed that he traveled from Kāśī-Kauśala up to Nepal. South Karnataka, Koṃkaṇa, Pallava and Draviḍa, etc, at that time were considered as non-Ārya regions; however Pārśvanātha and the Śramaṇa monks of his time had gone there too. Śākyabhūmi was part of Nepal; Pārśva's followers were present there too. The great Buddha's uncle was himself a follower of Pārśvanātha which was only possible if the Lord had wandered in the Śākya land. Lord Pārśvanātha wandered across several regions for around 70 years and propagated Jain religion. In Raṃchī and Mānabhūmi districts of Bihāra thousands of people worship Pārśvanātha even today and are termed 'sarāka' (śrāvaka) and consider him their cult-god. It has been proved through research that once Pārśvanātha walked from Tāmralipti to 'Kopaṭaka'. Because he accepted food there it became known as 'Dhanyakaṭaka'. This belief is still intact in these places.

The Historicity of Lord Pārśvanātha

Based on historical facts, it had been established that Lord Pārśvanātha was a historical person without doubt. Not just Jain literature but Buddhist literature too proves the historicity of Lord Pārśvanātha. Proving the existence of a nirgrantha tradition prior to the Buddha, based on Buddhist literary sources, Dr. Hermann Jacobi writes that the

Buddhist extensively refer to nirgranthas in their literature, even in the Tripiṭakas. From that it can be deduced that the Buddhist considered the nirgrantha tradition as a significant one. In the Mahāsimhanāda Sūtra in Majjhima-nikāya, describing his severe penance the Buddha refers to four kinds of penance. These four are also part of the nirgrantha tradition. Lord Mahāvīra too followed them and it was essential for other nirgranthas to follow them as well. Ajātaśatru in the Dīrgha-nikāya refers to Lord Mahāvīra and his disciples as followers of the Cāturyāma. From the point of view of Jain literature it is totally confirmed that Lord Mahāvīra's and his disciples' tradition was that of the five major vows (mahāvratas) and calling them as Cāturyāma indicates that the Buddhist bhikṣus were aware of the tradition of Pārśvanātha and considered Mahāvīra's tradition similar. The Cāturyāma tradition prior to the Buddha is the legacy of Lord Pārśvanātha. This proves Pārśvanātha's historicity before the Buddha. The Ārya Aṣṭāṅgika mārga propounded by Bodhisatva also includes parts of the Cāturyāma, which is a Śramaṇa tradition.

The Congregation of Pārśvanātha

The following were part of Lord Pārśvanātha's congregation: 8 gaṇadhara including Śubhadatta and 8 gaṇas, 1000 omniscient, 750 having knowledge of mental modes (maṇaḥ paryavajñānī), 1400 with clairvoyant knowledge (avadhijñānī), 350 fourteen pūrvadhara, 600 debaters of philosophy (vādī), 1200 anuttaropātika monks, 16000 monks, including Āryadina, etc, 38000 female monks including Puṣpacūlā, etc, 164000 votaries including Sunanda and 327000 female votaries including Nandinī, etc. 1000 monks gained enlightenment in Lord Pārśvanātha's period. Apart from this, crores of men and women became the Lord's devotees with right perception.

Liberation (Parinirvāṇa)

After wandering as an omniscient for a little less than 70 years, the Lord sensed the end of his life-span. So he went to Sammetaśikhara from Varanasi through Āmalakappā and observing fast for a month along with 33 monks, went into the third and fourth stages of pure meditation (Śukla-dhyāna). Then he became enlightened, emancipated and liberated on the 8th day of the bright fortnight of Śravaṇa month when moon was conjunct with the Viśākhā constellation.

The Śramaṇa Tradition and Pārśvanātha

The Śramaṇa tradition is a very ancient Indian tradition. Ones who observe penance from mind and senses are called Śramaṇas. The Jain scriptures mention five types of Śramaṇas – Nirgranthas, Śākya, Tāpasa, Geruā and Ājīvaka. The Jain Śramaṇas are called nirgranthas. The foundation of the Śramaṇa tradition was laid in the time of Vṛṣabhanātha. The term Śramaṇa is used in texts like Vṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣada, Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa and Śrīmadbhāgavata, etc. The Tripiṭakas mention the word nirgrantha at various places. This goes to show that the nirgrantha tradition was prevalent even before the time of the Buddha. In the Anuttara-nikāya Śākya named ‘Bappa’ is referred to as a nirgrantha votary; he was the Buddha’s paternal uncle. This shows that before the Buddha’s time there was propagation of the nirgrantha religion in the Śākya country. The Buddha was a contemporary of Mahāvīra; hence it is proved that the propagation of the nirgrantha religion happened in the time of the predecessor Tīrthaṅkara of Mahāvīra, Pārśvanātha. Actually, the nirgrantha religion started even before Pārśvanātha’s time. There is no basis for considering Pārśvanātha to be the founder of the Jain religion. Lord Vṛṣabhanātha is considered by all Jains to be the first Tīrthaṅkara and founder of Jain religion of the present time cycle which means there must be some historical basis and proof for this. Dr. Radhakrishnan too opined that the Jain religion had existed long before Varddhamāna Mahāvīra and Pārśvanātha.

The Widespread impact of Lord Pārśvanātha

The three streams of compassion, sweetness and peace used to flow in the speech of Lord Pārśvanātha. Asceticism as the tradition of was prevalent in his time; but common people thought of asceticism as inflicting pain to the body. With his knowledge and detached teachings the Lord showed people the true form of asceticism. The teachings of famous sages of the time such as Pippalāda, Bhāradvāja, Naciketā, Ajita Keśakambata, etc reflect the teachings of the Lord. The influence of Pārśva’s teachings seemed to have spread even in other countries outside India. Among these the Greek philosopher Pythagoras may be mentioned, who used to believe in rebirth of the soul and the karma principle. He used to speak against flesh eating and used to consider many vegetables inedible.

From the life-story of the Buddha it may be stated that he was deeply influenced by the thoughts and conduct of Pārśva. Buddha's paternal uncle was also a follower of Pārśvanātha. The Cāturyāma idea of the nirgranthas seems to have had an influence on Buddha himself, because later on he founded his aṣṭāṃikga mārḡa (the eightfold path) which includes Cāturyāma. It is said that not only was there an impact of the Jain religion on Buddha's thoughts but after becoming a mendicant he spent six years of his life as a Jain monk. Pārśvanātha's speech and teachings influenced many kings and royal families of his time. There were many royal families in Pārśvanātha's time where he was considered their family deity. Most vārtya kṣatriyas of central and eastern regions were followers of the Jain religion. At that time in many parts of the country, especially in southern India strong Nāga clans emerged who had Pārśvanātha as their cult deity. Among the powerful Vajjī gaṇa of Videha and Vaiśālī, too, the religion of Pārśvanātha was popular. It is said that the king of Kalimḡa and Pāṃcāla were also influenced by the teachings of Pārśvanātha.

Pārśvanātha's disciples in Jyotirmaṇḍala

In the Nirayāvalikā Sūtra, in the first and second chapters of the third section named Puṣpitā, there is, respectively, description of Indra, moon and sun of the astrologers and that of planets such as śukra, etc, which is as follows:-

Once when Lord Mahāvīra was staying at a garden named Guṇaśīlaka in Rājagṛha, the Indra of Jyotirmaṇḍala, 'Candra' (moon) came to see the Lord at his samavaśaraṇa. In order to make an impression of the Jina order he made groups of gods and goddesses to appear there through his celestial power of vaikriyalabdhi and also presented many beautiful and attractive shows there in front of the four-fold order to impress them, and returned to his place. The Gaṇadhara Gautama asked Mahāvīra – "Lord! Who was this god Candra in his past life and how did he obtain these powers?"

Mahāvīra replied – "Long ago there was a gāthāpati named Aṃgati in Śrāvastī city who was wealthy and respected by kings and subjects alike. Once, Lord Pārśvanātha came to Śrāvastī. Aṃgati too went to the Lord's samavaśaraṇa along with a huge group of people and listening to the

Lord's sermon, became disenchanted with the world and became a mendicant. Aṅgati observed severe penance. He completely followed the basic tenets of restraint but accepted impure food and water and did not repent doing so. Thus in the end, completing his life with a fast of 15 days, he became the Indra of Jyotirmaṇḍala. He has got these attributes on account of his penance and restraint." On being asked by Gautama Gaṇadhara the Lord further said – "When he completes his time, Candra will be born in MahāVideha and shall become emancipated, enlightened and liberated."

Similarly, once when Lord Mahāvīra arrived at the Guṇaśīlaka caitya (hall with auspicious emblems) in Rājagṛha, Sūrya too came to the Lord's samavaśaraṇa. Sūrya too showed extraordinary spectacles and returned to his abode. When Gaṇadhara Gautama questioned about Surya's past life, the Lord said – "The gāthāpatiof Śrāvastī, Supratiṣṭha, was a wealthy, magnanimous and respected and famous person. He went to the sermon of Lord Pārśvanātha and took initiation. He too did severe penance, followed the basic virtues fully, but neglected the secondary virtues and did not repent and completing his life observing pious death code (samlekhanā), became the god Sūrya. After completing his life in the realm of gods he will be born in MahāVideha and shall become enlightened observing austerities.

In the same way, god Śukra too came for the Lord's samavaśaraṇa and showing awesome spectacles through his vaikriyalabdhi, saluting the Lord, returned to his abode. Sensing Gaṇadhara Gautama's curiosity, Mahāvīra said – "In his past life he was a learned Vaidika scholar, Brahmin Somila who used to live in Varanasi. When Lord Pārśvanātha came to Varanasi's Āmraśāla forest, Somil too went there. He asked the Lord many questions and happy with their answers, became a votary (śrāvaka) of the Lord. In time, on account of seeing a false monk and emergence of falsehood (mithyā) the thought occurred to him that if numerous gardens were made it would be good and he made many gardens. Then philosophical thinking led him to a strong feeling of becoming an ascetic. Handing over the family's responsibilities to his eldest son, he renounced. As an ascetic Somila started observing many fasts and started wandering, regularly facing the sun in penance. While staying up one night a thought occurred to him to move towards the

north; to locking his mouth in wooden ring to remain silent and go on walking and wherever he was tired or fall, to remain there.

As per the resolve, early in the morning he started northwards and reached under an Aśoka tree by afternoon. He put his wooden waterpot down, and after ablutions, etc, became silent again locking his mouth in wooden ring. In the middle of the night some god told him – “Somila, your penance is not right.” But Somila paid no attention. The god repeated the same statement twice or thrice and went away. Somila continued to walk northwards. In the afternoon he would rest under the shade of a tree and in the night stand silent by locking his mouth in a wooden ring. Again the same god would appear and say – “Somila, your asceticism is not correct.” When Somila would remain silent, paying no attention, the god would go away. On the fifth day Somila completed his daily ablutions and stood silent as before under a wild fig tree. In the night the god repeated the same words. When he said it a third time, Somila broke his silence and said – “Dear god! What is lacking in my asceticism?”

The god said – “Somila, you had accepted the votary conduct of 12 vows under arihanta Pārśva. Giving that up, you have become a mendicant, this is incorrect asceticism. If you again accept the 12 vows of a votary your mendicancy will turn unto a good mendicancy.” The god left. As per the god’s words, Somila again accepted the votary conduct and started moving about observing different kinds of fasts. In the end, affecting his soul with saṃlekhanā of 15 days, without being critical of the past bad deeds, completing his life span, he became the great planet god Śukra. Because of severe penance and observing the Śramaṇa tradition, he attained these accomplishments. When he completes his term as a god he will be born in MahāVideha and becoming a mendicant, shall destroy all his karmas and attain nirvāṇa.”

Somila keeping his mouth tied up in wooden ring and observe silence calls for analysis and some research. There is no other religion except Jainism which has the practice of keeping the mouth covered. Reference in Nirayāvalikā to Somila keeping his mouth tied up proves that in ancient times in non-Jain traditions too, there was the practice of tying up (covering) the mouth and that even in Pārśvanātha’s time there was the

practice of covering up the mouth or else the god would have advised Somila to stop that practice.

Female-monk in the form of Goddess Bahuputrikā of Pārśvanātha's congregation

Following is the description in relation to Bahuputrikā goddess in the Nirayāvalikā Sūtra's third section and fourth chapter:-

The prosperous goddess of Saudharma kalpa, Bahuputrikā, came to the samavaśaraṇa of Lord Mahāvīra in Guṇaśilaka garden in Rājagṛha city. After listening to the sermon, saluting the Lord, that goddess produced an amazing spectacle spreading her right hand and producing 108 young gods and by spreading her left hand and bringing forth 108 young boys and girls of different age-groups. Then she left to her place. Gaṇadhara Gautama asked Lord Mahāvīra – “Lord, who is this goddess? What was she in her past life and how did she get such accomplishments?” The Lord said – “An exceedingly prosperous caravaner named Bhadra used to reside in Varanasi. His wife Subhadrā was very beautiful and chaste but she had no children. She used to waste herself in sorrow and worry, considering herself unfortunate on being childless. One day, a mendicant disciple of Lord Pārśva, Āryā Suvratā came to Subhadrā's house along with other female-monks in the course of seeking food offerings. Subhadrā gave them respect and looked after them and sought their help telling them of her being childless. The Āryā said – “goddess, we are not even allowed to think on those matters, but if you wish we can tell you about the religion of detachment which ends all sorrows.” When Subhadrā agreed the Āryā, explaining to her the vexation with worldly enjoyments, told her of the importance of the path of renunciation.”

“Subhadrā felt very happy. She became a female-votary and later a female-monk. After becoming a female-monk the Āryā Subhadrā would play with people's children and this way satisfy her desire for children. Female monk Suvratā explained to her that her behaviour was against the conduct of female-monks, but her behaviour did not change, and in the end she left for another place. There, independently being lax, she observed the mendicant's conduct and in the end observed samlekhanā for a month and a half and completing her life, became goddess Bahuputrikā in the Saudharma kalpa.

In response to Gautama's question the Lord further said that "after leaving Saudharmakalpa Bahuputrikā will be born as a Brahmin's daughter Somā in the surrounding areas of Vimala in Bhārata. She will be married to her maternal uncle's son, Rāṣṭrakūṭa. From Rāṣṭrakūṭa she will beget twins every year and for 16 years she will become the mother of 32 children. Bringing them up, listening to their wails and cries, she will consider herself unfortunate. In time, she will go to a female-monk named Suvratā and renouncing, shall observe severe penance and after one month of samlekhanā, completing her life, will become a god like Śakra, Indra, etc. After completing her time in the abode of gods she will be born as a human being and, observing penance and austerities, will attain nirvāṇa."

Some female-monks of Lord Pārśvanātha

Based on references in Nirayāvalikā and Jñātādharma Sūtras we get to know that, influenced by the teachings of Lord Pārśvanātha, at different times, 216 old and decrepit unmarried women took initiation by the Lord. These accounts tell us about the impact of Lord Pārśvanātha on the social situation and his popularity, and the reasons for the use of the adjective "Puruṣādānīya" with his name become clear. Hence those accounts are presented here in brief. There are totally 10 chapters in the fourth section of Nirayāvalikā called Puṣpacūlikā.

In the first chapter there is a description of Śrīdevī, that once goddess Śrīdevī also went to the samavaśaraṇa of the Lord Mahāvīra in Guṇaśilaka garden of Rājagṛha; saluting the Lord, she presented an extremely charming and excellent dance through her high quality vaikriyalabdhi. After she left, in response to Gaṇadhara Gautama's curiosity, the Lord, giving her past life introduction, said – "A prosperous gāthāpati named Sudarśana used to live in Rājagṛha city when Jitaśatru ruled there. His wife's name was Priyā and his only daughter was named Bhūtā. Bhūtā could not get married and she became old and decrepit. Once Puruṣādānīya, or arihanta Pārśvanātha arrived in Rājagṛha. Taking permission from her parents Bhūtā too went to the Lord's samavaśaraṇa. Becoming disinterested in worldly affairs after hearing the Lord's sermon she sought permission from her parents to take initiation. Happily gāthāpati organised the initiation ceremony and went to the Lord to present his daughter as his disciple. On acceptance by

the Lord, Bhūtā removed her ornaments and went to female-monk Puṣpacūlā to be initiated as a female monk. After becoming a monk Bhūtā became a śarīrabākuśikā (taking special care of purifying and cleaning the external body). Female monk Puṣpacūlā explained to her that this conduct is inappropriate for a female-monk, but Bhūtā did not listen to her and instead went to be alone to a different place. Continuing her conduct as before, she affected her soul through various kinds of penance and in the end completing her life in saṃlekhanā, without being critical of her laxity, she became a goddess in Saudharmakalpa's śrī Avatamsaka vimāna and obtained this prosperity. After completing one palyopama years in the realm of gods she will be born in MahāVideha and shall become enlightened, emancipated and liberated.

There are descriptions similar to that of Śrīdevī, of nine other goddesses such as Dhī, Kīrti, Buddhi, Lakṣmī, Ilādevī, Surādevī, Rasadevī and Gandhadevī in the remaining nine chapters.

In the same way in the tenth section of the second Śrutaskandha of Jñātādharma Sūtra there is description of 206 old and decrepit unmarried women being initiated by the Lord Pārśvanātha. In the first section there are stories of five foremost queens, including Kālīdevī, of Camarendra. At first Kālīdevī paid respect to Lord Mahāvīra, seeing him seated at Rājagṛha, and just like Sūryābha showed a dance performance with her gods and goddesses using her vaikriyalabdhi and returned to her place. When Gaṇadhara Gautama asked the Lord, he gave her past life story, saying that in a city named Āmalakalpā the gāthāpati Kāla and his wife Kālaśrī gave birth to a daughter, Kālī. She remained unmarried till old age; hence she was called an old-old calibate woman, or Junnā-Junnūkumārī. When Lord Pārśvanātha arrived in Āmalakalpā, Kālī went for the samavaśaraṇa and hearing his sermon, became detached with the world. With her parents' permission, she renounced and she was sent to female monk Puṣpacūlā as a disciple. Female monk Kālī, while studying the eleven Aṃgas, and purifying her soul through various austerities, wandered about, but she used to pay special attention to her bodily cleanliness and cleanliness of the place she would stay at. Puṣpacūlā told her this was inappropriate for a monk, but she paid no attention and went to a separate place to be on her own and wander. Observing the vows for years, completing her life through saṃlekhanā of a fortnight, she became one of the foremost queens, Kālī of Camarendra, in Camaracaṃcācapital.

After leaving Camaracaṃcā, she will be born in Mahāvideha and attain liberation. The remaining four, Rātri, Rajanī, Vidyuta and Medhā goddesses mentioned in this section were also daughters of laity. They did not get married till a very old age. Feeling disenchanted with the world after hearing the sermon of Lord Pārśvanātha, they became female-monks, observed various kinds of austerities and fasts and because of their lax behaviour they stayed independently and in the end after saṃlekhanā became foremost queens of Camarendra. They will complete their time and be born in MahāVideha and shall attain liberation.

In the second section of the second Śrutaskandha gives five foremost queens – Śumbhā, Niśumbhā, Raṃbhā, Nirāṃbhā and Bhadatā of Balindra who were unmarried daughters same names of five laity gāthāpati copules in Sāvattihī city. In the third section, six each foremost queens of nine Dakṣiṇendras for a total of 54 foremost queens were unmarried daughters of nine lay- laity gāthāpati couples of similar names in Varanasi in their past lives. And, taking initiation from the Lord Pārśvanātha became a part of the female monk-order. They remained unmarried all their lives and on the arrival of Lord Pārśvanātha in Campā city, took initiation under the female monk Suvratā. They practised restraint for many years observing fasts, etc and in the end through saṃlekhanā they completed their lives and became the foremost queens of Uttarendras. There is a description of the 32 foremost princesses of Vyāmtarendras in the fifth section. These 32 were daughters of laity of Nāgapura, who remained unmarried, in their past lives. When they became old Lord Pārśvanātha arrived at Nāgapura. They too reached the samavaśaraṇa and became female-monks under female-monk Suvratā. They practised restraint for many years, observed severe penance, but due to laxity in conduct without repenting it completed their life in saṃlekhanā and became queens of Dakṣiṇendras. In the sixth section we find accounts of the 32 goddesses of Vyāmtaras who in their past lives were daughters of laity in Sāketapura who also took initiation inspired by the sermon of Lord Pārśvanātha. Observing austerities for many years, due to laxity on conduct, they wandered alone without being critical of their laxity, and completing their life-span with saṃlekhanā, became the foremost queens of 32 Uttarendras including Mahākāla, etc. In the seventh section there is reference to four queens of Surya who in their past lives were daughters of the laity of Ārakḥapurī. In the eighth

section is a description of four queens of Candra who in their past lives were daughters of laity of Mathurā. In the ninth section are accounts of eight foremost queens of Saudharma Indras who were daughters in their past lives of the laity of Hastināpura, Kampilapura and Sāketapura. In the tenth section there is description of eight foremost queens of Īśāna Indras who were daughters of the lay-couples of Varanasi, Rājagṛha and Kauśāmbī. In this way, all the 201 goddesses described in sections two up to the tenth were in their respective past lives unmarried for life, and in very old age they all became female-monks taking initiation from Lord Pārśvanātha, inspired by his sermon. Having gained knowledge of the eleven Aṅgas, they observed many kinds of penance, yet because of laxity on conduct, became independent of the female-monk order, wandering about, and in the end completed their life-spans observing saṃlekhanā and became queens of the Indras, Sūrya, Candra, etc.

Lord Pārśvanātha's Indelible Influence

Although there may be similarity among Tīrthaṃkara in terms of their knowledge, renunciation, and other qualities of the soul, it is possible that perhaps there was something special about Lord Pārśvanātha considering his popularity. We find form the Jain stutis, stotras, mantras, etc that among the 24 Tīrthaṃkara, the number of stutis available in connection with Lord Pārśvanātha are not available for the other Tīrthaṃkaras. Based on the poetry literature (kāvyas, mahākāvyas), stotras, life-stories of Lord Pārśvanātha, filled with feelings of devotion and glorification written by various scholars and great men found in various volumes; and on the grand artistic symbols, huge temples, etc, we can say that the religious minded Jain community has always shown devotion and grateful to him. In the scriptures (āgamas) we find use of the adjective 'arahā' for many Tīrthaṃkara, such as 'Mallīarahā', 'Nemiarahā', etc, but when Pārśvanātha is introduced the term 'Puruṣādānīya' is used. 'Puruṣādānīya' means respected among men. This goes to prove that even in the time of the āgamas there was special significance attached to Lord Pārśvanātha for him to be introduced as 'Puruṣādānīya'. In the same way as the term 'Samaṇebhagavaṃ Mahāvīre' is used with Mahāvīra on account of his special kinds of penance, there must certainly be a significant reason for using the term 'Puruṣādānīya' with Pārśvanātha.

One of the main reasons for this seems to be the impact of Lord Pārśvanātha on the former lives of the 220 gods and goddesses. A large gathering of people from various places at Lord Mahāvīra's samavaśaraṇa watched for real the prosperous display of spectacles by those gods and goddess and, hearing the description of their past lives from the knower of the three time cycles, Lord Mahāvīra, they understood that all of them were part of the entourage of Lord Pārśvanātha, which must certainly have caused them to feel tremendous devotion and undying faith in Lord Pārśvanātha.

We find out from the accounts of these old unmarried women that certain circumstances of the time made it difficult for women from even prosperous families to find suitable grooms and turning their insipid and hopeless lives towards the firm path of spiritual practices the Lord indeed gave a respite to the society. Those unmarried old women definitely attained godly prosperity by the grace of Pārśvanātha. The society of that time, knowing all this, must have certainly become indebted and devoted to him.

In his childhood the Lord helped Prasenajita and liberated the Anārya king of Kaliṅga who took refuge in the Lord and got inspired by his teachings. After attaining omniscience the Lord wandered to Anārya place as well and made innumerable people in these places part of his religious order. It seems it is because of these specialties and reasons that Lord Pārśvanātha became influential, popular and respected among people of both Anārya and Ārya regions and came to be called 'Puruṣādānīya'.

The ācārya tradition under Lord Pārśvanātha

According to general norms, in the time period between the time-period of nirvāṇa of one Tīrthaṅkara and rejuvenating of the religious order by another Tīrthaṅkara, the previous Tīrthaṅkara's religious order and ācārya tradition continues. There were numerous ācāryas even before the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara but there being no substantive information regarding them they have not been highlighted. But there is substantive information available regarding the ācāryas of Lord Pārśvanātha. Prior to the time-period of Lord Mahāvīra, there is only an interval of 250 years. According to Kalpasūtra until the time of the fourth epochal person (ācārya) after liberation of Lord Pārśvanātha, all ācāryas are believed to

have attained liberation. Hence historically speaking it is important and apt to mention that ācārya tradition. Based on the Upakeśagaccha Caritāvalī, Lord Pārśvanātha tradition's ācārya lineage is described below:-

1. Ārya Śubhadatta: Ārya Śubhadatta was the Lord's first principal disciple (paṭṭadhara Gaṇadhara). He graced the status of ācārya for 24 years after the nirvāṇa of the Lord and managing the four-fold order with great skill, gave religious discourses. Thereafter, appointing Ārya Haridatta as his successor, he attained liberation.
2. Ārya Haridatta: Before becoming the second paṭṭadhara of Lord Pārśvanātha tradition, Haridatta was earlier the leader of 500 dacoits. Once Gaṇadhara Śubhadatta had to stay at a forest along with his 500 disciples. At that time, Haridatta reached there with the aim of looting them with his 500 associates. Here, instead of wealth, Haridatta and his friends gained religious sermon from the monk, inspired by which he immediately became his disciple along with all his friends and in future he himself became a leader of monks and a leader of religion. On account of his sharp intellect he began to be rated among the best scholars of the eleven Aṃgas. Ācārya Haridatta propagated the religion for 70 years and appointing SamudraSūri his successor, became eligible for nirvāṇa in Pārśva nirvāṇa samvata 94. Ācārya Haridatta was a highly influential ācārya of his time. He defeated in religious debate at a royal hall Lauhityācārya, the fanatic supporter and propagator of the opinion that violence in Vaidika religion is not violence and established the dictum "*ahiṃsā paramo dharma*" (non-violence is the supreme religion). Lauhityācārya took initiation along with his one thousand disciples and with his permission propagated the religion of ahiṃsā in the south.
3. Ārya SamudraSūri: Ārya SamudraSūri became the third pontiff (paṭṭadhara)ācārya of Lord Pārśvanātha tradition. He gave service to the Jina order from Pārśva-samvata 94 to 166. He was a knower of the fourteen Pūrvas and a staunch opponent of the violence incurred in sacrificial rituals. One of his disciples, Videśīmuni once reached Ujjayinī. Videśīmuni was a true follower of Ārya SamudraSūri and an excellent scholar. It is said that on account of Videśīmuni's religious discourse the king of

Ujjayinī took initiation into the Śramaṇa order along with his wife and son Keśī. The young monk Keśī not only had the knowledge of his past life but was also well-versed in scriptures. In time, he defeated the propagator of sacrificial rituals, Mukuṃda ācārya in a religious debate. Sensing his last day's Ācārya SamudraSūri gave the ācārya position to Keśī and attained nirvāṇa destroying all his karmas in Pārśva-samvata 166.

4. Ārya KeśīŚramaṇa: The fourth epochal-ācārya of Lord Pārśvanātha's tradition was Ārya KeśīŚramaṇa. Ārya KeśīŚramaṇa was a young monk who held the knowledge of the fourteen pūrvas, and of four types of knowledge completely (i.e. mati, śruti and avadhijñāna and manah paryavajñāna). With great competence he brought together the Śramaṇa order and made them firm and sent monks in 9 batches of five each under the leadership of scholar monks in different far-flung places and he himself stayed in Madhya Pradeśa with one thousand monks while propagating and propounding the Jain religion. He was ācārya from Pārśva-samvata 166 to 250, i.e. 84 years and in the end making Svayaṃprabha Sūri his successor, attained liberation.

Through his religious teachings he converted king Pradeśī of Śvetāmbikā from a firm atheist to a believer. As a result king Pradeśī accepted the lay-person's conduct and setting aside one-fourth of his kingdom's wealth for charities, giving up worldly pleasures, got immersed in observing chaṭṭhabhakta fasts. Seeing her husband's disinclination towards kingly duties queen Sūrikāntā desired to make her son the king and on the day of her husband's fast breaking, gave him poisonous food. The moment Pradeśī felt the effects of the poison he learnt of all this but without any resistance or ill-feelings, giving up his life in meditation, became a god Sūryābha in Saudharma-kalpa with extraordinary powers.

We find two monks by name Keśī in the scriptures. One is KeśīŚramaṇa who gave a religious teaching to king Pradeśī and the other, Keśīkumāra, who accepted the five mahāvratas of the Cāturyāma tradition in Śrāvasthī city, after the debate with Gautama the second Gaṇadhara. This question is open to debate as to who was the fourth epochal-ācārya of Lord Pārśvanātha's tradition? Ācārya RajendraSūri gives an introduction to

Keśī Śramaṇa in two places in his Abhidhāna Rājendra Koṣa, but has expressed both Keśīs to be one and the same while mentioning the debate of KeśīŚramaṇa with Gaṇadhara Gautama. The same is the case with Upakeśagaccha Paṭṭāvalī and the Gujarātī text, ‘History of the Jain Traditions’. It is a different matter that some people consider him the son of king JayaSena and some consider him the son of a nirgrantha. As against this, in the text ‘History of Pārśvanātha’s Tradition’, there are no two separate introductions to both of them but there is acceptance of the two being different people.

The fact is that Ācārya Keśī and Keśīkumāra are two separate people. The fourth paṭṭadhara of Lord Pārśvanātha, Ācārya Keśī, who is considered the preceptor of the king Pradeśī, existed in the time period Pārśva nirvāṇa samvata 166 to 250, until the time of Mahāvīra’s mendicancy, according to the Upakeśagaccha Paṭṭāvalī. In contrast, the debate between Keśīkumāra Śramaṇa of Śrāvastī city happens 15 years after Mahāvīra became an omniscient; hence the two are different people. Further, the Keśī who gave a religious discourse to king Pradeśī is said to possess four kinds of knowledge, whereas the Keśī who had a debate with Gautama in Śrāvastī is said to have possessed three kinds of knowledge. In this sense, it does not seem proper in any way to think that the possessor of four kinds of knowledge KeśīŚramaṇa who was of the time of Mahāvīra’s mendicancy period could have met Keśī, the possessor of three kinds of knowledge fifteen years after Mahāvīra became an omniscient. The above facts unquestionably prove that Keśīśramaṇa Ācārya and Keśīkumāra were not one and the same but two different people. One attained nirvāṇa during the time period of Pārśvanātha while the other attained nirvāṇa during Mahāvīra’s time period, after accepting the Cāturyāma tradition and the Śramaṇa conduct comprising the five mahāvratas following the debate with Gaṇadhara Gautama.

Lord Śrī Mahāvīra

The 24th and the latest Tīrthaṅkara of Jain religion, Lord Mahāvīra, was a great religious leader to establish Jain doctrine. Not only this, he was also a revolutionary social reformer, symbol of world friendship, well-wisher of all living being; and a true guide showing people the expansive path towards true equality, equanimity, non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-attachment thereby leading the human beings in firmly following the path towards immortality. With a divine call of “*savve jīvāvi icchaṃti jīvuṃna marijjium*”, (all living beings desire to live and not death) he not only taught a lesson of non-violence, compassion and love to humankind but also to animals, birds and the entire eco system. He freed countless living beings of their fear by inspiring people to protest against the condemnable custom of animal sacrifice in the name of religion in sacrificial rituals (*yajña*). He not only tried to uplift humanity that had fallen into the abyss of falsity, false pride, dogmatism and casteism but through the divine light of his knowledge inspired human society, which was moving towards destruction, to walk the path of right knowledge, right belief and right conduct. Bearing with the worst calamities and ordeals with extraordinary bravery, supreme courage, unshakeable firmness, unfathomable intensity, he established an unprecedented example of perseverance, forgiveness and compassion.

Lord Mahāvīra's time-period is considered as the 6th century BCE that has special significance not only in the cultural and religious history of India but of the world. This was the time when along with Mahāvīra, Mahātmā Buddha, taught about ahiṃsā, and started a religious and cultural revolution. Similarly LaoTse and Confucius in China, Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, etc in Greece; started religious and cultural revolutions in their own regions during this period. Opposing dogmatism and blind beliefs, these great men inspired people to move in the right direction and showed them the path towards right thinking. All these people were epochal in the right sense of term and for several epochs; the extensive paths they showed will throw light on the life-paths of people. Lord Mahāvīra has the highest, most important and respected place among the epochal men mentioned above.

Condition of the country in the time of Mahāvīra

250 years after Lord Pārśvanātha Lord Śrī Mahāvīra emerged as a Tīrthaṅkara in India. At that time, the condition of the country and various societies in it had degenerated significantly. Like in the times of Pārśva, popular interest in austerities, restraint and religion, had declined. Pompous display in the name of religion was widespread. The śramaṇa tradition was being oppressed continuously by the increasing influence of Brhminical culture. Sacrifice and ritualism started being considered as the only form of religion. Sacrificial fires not only used purified butter but also ahiṃsā. Violence inherent in Vaidika sacrifices was considered not violence but ahiṃsā (non-violence). Caste-order and layering of castes as high—low was rampant resulting in depriving majority of people (termed as lower caste) of socio-religious freedom and benefits. Sensitivity of the rich people towards the poor was declining. Women's condition was worse; they had no freedom and were considered as slaves.

Politically it was a chaotic period. There was no steadiness or uniformity between different kingdoms. The Licchavī republic was the strongest among the republics of that time. Vaiśālī was its capital and king Ceṭaka was the chief. Mahāvīra's mother, Triśālā was his sister. Kāśī and Kauśala were also part of this republic. Apart from the Licchavī republic the Śākya republic was especially significant and had a great influence. Its capital was Kapilavastu. King Śuddhodhana was its chief. Gautama Buddha was his son. There were also other smaller republics such as Malla, Kola, Āmlakampā, Pippalivana, etc. There were also independent kingdoms such as Magadha, north Kauśala, Avanti, Kalīṅga, etc. There were friendly relations between these kingdoms but the conditions of the lower castes were pitiable and worrisome in all of these. The Brahmincaste were dominant, people were suffering in grief. These conditions influenced the religious atmosphere as well. People seemed less inclined towards religion. Obtaining heaven became the aim of religious practice and not liberation. The śramaṇa order was continuously on the decline. While there were protests against sacrificial violence and propagation of ahiṃsā, substantial power and cooperation in these was found wanting. It was in these difficult circumstances that Lord Mahāvīra was born to show the true path for the benefit of people.

Past Lives of Lord Mahāvīra

According to the Jain scripture, every soul has the ability to become the supreme soul. Through special deeds and conduct; some souls are born and become a Tīrthaṅkara or a Jina thereby attaining liberation (Godhood). Since liberated souls (popularly referred as God-like or Bhagavāna or Siddha), being free of karmas are not born in human form again, they do not come down. Thus, it is possible for each human being to rise higher in status and ultimately attain liberation. Thus, Jain religion is not about avatāras (various forms of reincarnations of god in human form) but about rising higher (transcendence). Lord Mahāvīra's soul in the past life as Nayasāra sowed seeds of good deeds and cultivating the same successively, obtained the Tīrthaṅkara status, which is described below:-

Once upon a time, the village overseer Nayasāra went to collect wood from the forest. When he sat down to eat in the afternoon he saw a monk who had lost his way and come there. He gave faultless food and water to that hungry and thirsty monk and gave him correct directions. The monk too gave religious teachings to Nayasāra and told him the path to self-progress. As a result, Nayasāra obtained right belief and he limited his worldly existences. His various births are indicated below:

Birth

- 2nd Heavenly being in Saudharma-kalpa
- 3rd Maṛīci, the son of king Bharata
- 4th Heavenly being in Brahmaloaka
- 5th Brahmin Kauśika
- 6th Brahmin Puṣyamitra
- 7th Heavenly being Saudharma
- 8th Agnidyota
- 9th Heavenly being in the second kalpa
- 10th BrahminAgnibhūti
- 11th Heavenly being Sanatkumāra
- 12th Bhāradvāja
- 13th Heavenly being in Mahendrakalpa
- 14th Brahmin Sthāvāra
- 15th Heavenly being in Brahmakalpa

- 16th Prince Viśākhabhūti son of Viśvabhūti
 17th Heavenly being Mahāśukra
 18th Vasudeva Triprṣṭa
 19th As Triprṣṭa having accumulated bad karmas, born as a 7th hell-inhabitant
 20th He was a lion
 21st A hell inhabitant in fourth hell
 22nd Priyamitra (Poṭṭila) cakravartī,
 23rd Heavenly being in Mahāśukrakalpa
 24th King Nandana he obtained the Tīrthaṅkara gotra.
 25th Heavenly being of the Puṣpottaravimāna in Prāṇata heaven
 26th According to the Samavāyāṅgasūtra, Nandana's soul entered Devānandā's womb.

Hariṇaigameṣī (heavenly being) transferred this fetus of 26th birth from the womb of Devānandā to that of Triśalā and he was born as Varddhamāna, which is considered his twenty-seventh birth. Thus, conception in two wombs is considered two separate births.

In the Digambara tradition, Lord Mahāvīra had 33 births. Despite this, both traditions seem dissimilar in terms of number of past lives and names therein, an important fact is unanimously agreed upon that after endless cycle of births with the obtaining of right belief and through destruction of karmas Nayasāra's soul became firm on the path of rise and self progress. By binding himself to bad karmas he had to wander through several births and in the end, as Nandana with best thinking, reflection and feelings and the highest quality of sacrifice, penance, restraint, detachment, devotion he obtained the highest Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma.

The Lord obtained the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma in the birth of king Nandana; that past birth is briefly described as under:

In his twenty-fourth birth Lord Mahāvīra was king Nandana. The son of king Jitaśatru of Chatrā city, Nandana renounced royal splendour inspired by the sermon of Poṭṭilācārya and took initiation and in a life of restraint for one-lakh years, he observed constant fasts, totaling eleven lakh, and sixty thousand māsa- khamaṇa fasts. The fast-breaking time was totally three thousand three hundred and thirty three months and twenty-nine days. Because of arihanta devotion of twenty instruments he

obtained the Tīrthaṃkara nāmakarma and in the end, completing his life in meditative state after two months of fast, he became a god of the Puṣpottara vimāna in Prāṇata heaven.

The auspicious events (kalyāṇakas) of Lord Mahāvīra' life

The five kalyāṇakas of Lord Mahāvīra happened under the constellation Uttarāfālgunī. Under the Uttarāfālgunī constellation, leaving the tenth heaven, he entered the womb of Devānandā. It was under the same Uttarāfālgunī constellation that his fetus was transferred from Devānandā's womb to that of Triśalā. Mahāvīra was born under Uttarāfālgunī constellation. It was under Uttarāfālgunī constellation that by plucking his hair, he became a mendicant and under the same constellation, he attained pure intuition and pure knowledge together. Lord Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa under the Svāti constellation.

Exit and entering the womb

Three time-periods (Āraka) of the present avasarpinīcycle had passed and approximately 76 years were remaining for the fourth Āraka. On the sixth day of the bright fortnight of the Āṣāḍha month with moon being conjunct with Uttarāfālgunī constellation, king Nandana's soul left tenth heaven and entered the womb of Devānandā, wife of the BrahminṚṣabhadatta, a resident of the vicinity of Kuṇḍapura in Videha kingdom. In a half –asleep, half –awake state Devānandā saw the fourteen auspicious dreams. She told her husband Ṛṣabhadatta of these dreams. Hearing the description of the dreams Ṛṣabhadatta said – “you will get a righteous son, who will be a scholar of Vedas when he grows up and shall be valorous and brave.” The mother started protecting her womb happily.

Stealing of the womb

When the king of god's Śakrendra saw the 24thTīrthaṃkara Lord Mahāvīra's soul enter the womb of the Brahmin woman, he thought – “It has been a tradition since long that Tīrthaṃkara are always born in influential, heroic clans. Yet, because of older karmas Lord Mahāvīra has entered the womb of Brahmin Devānandā, which is an impossible and amazing thing. It is my duty that I transfer him to a pure clan.” He duly

instructed the god Hariṇaigameṣī. Hariṇaigameṣī god went to the Brahminvillage and putting Devānandā to deep sleep without giving her any trouble or pain took Mahāvīra's fetus in his palm and placed him in the womb of queen Triśalāthus transferring the fetus in Triśalā's womb from Devānandā's. This way, after staying for 82 nights in Devānandā's womb on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of Aśvina month, Lord Mahāvīra entered the womb of Triśalā.

Discussion on the transfer of womb

The event of exchange of womb, while it is amazing, is not impossible. Considering this incident debatable the Digambara tradition has given it up altogether. However, there is clear description of this in the basic Sūtras and tīkā Cūrṇis of the Śvetāmbara tradition. The Śvetāmbaraācāryas believe that the stealing of the womb of Tīrthaṅkara may be an uncommon feat but not an impossible one. The 83rd samāvāya of the Samavāyāṅga Sūtra describes the womb-change. In the fifth place in Sthānāṅgasūtra there is clear description of the womb-change while mentioning the five kalyāṅakas of Lord Mahāvīra in the Uttarāfālgunī constellation. The Sthānāṅgasūtra mentions ten extraordinary events, among which the womb-change occupies the second place. The ten extraordinary events are as follows”-

1. **Calamities:** - At the samavaśaraṇa of Lord Mahāvīra Gośālaka turned to ashes the monk Sarvānubhūti and Sunakṣatra through fire and started hurling fire at the Lord. This was the first extraordinary event
2. **Womb-stealing:** - Tīrthaṅkara's wombs are not transferred but Lord Mahāvīra's was transferred, which is the second extraordinary event.
3. **Woman-** Tīrthaṅkara:- Usually only men attain the Tīrthaṅkara status but in the present avasarpīṇī cycle, the 19th Tīrthaṅkara Mallinātha was in the form of Mallī, who was a woman. This is also an extraordinary event.
4. **An Unimpressive Council:-** Usually the Tīrthaṅkara's first sermon is influential and hearing it people accept the path of restraint, but Lord Mahāvīra's first sermon was unimpressive, nobody took initiation; this is also an extraordinary event

5. **Kṛṣṇa's arrival at Amarakamkā:-** To find out about Draupadī Kṛṣṇa went to Amarakamkā in Dhatakīkhaṇḍa and conversed with Vasudeva Kapila through the conch. Usually cakravartīs and Vasudevas do not go outside their boundaries but Kṛṣṇa did, which is also an extraordinary event.
6. **The Descending of Candra and Sūrya:** - Gods like Sūrya, Candra, etc come to see the Lord but not in their own palaces (vimāna). But in Kauśāmbī at the samavaśaraṇa, the gods like Candra, Sūrya came to see the Lord Mahāvīra in their own respective vimānas, which is an extraordinary event.
7. **Harivaṃśa clan origins (the twins going to hell):-** On seeing the twins Hari and Hariṇī leading their lives happily; their past life enemy, who was a heavenly being in that life, remembered his animosity and using his powers he reduced their age and bodily stature and sent them to Campā city where people were in search of a new king. They made these two the king and queen. Because of bad company they both started indulging in bad habits and both went to hell. Twins (yugalika) do not go to hell but Hari and Hariṇī went there which is an extraordinary event. These twins gave rise to the Harivaṃśa clan.
8. **Rise of Camara:** - The soul of ascetic Pūraṇa was born as king of Asuras (Camarendra). He saw that above him was Śakrendra, of the realm of gods seated on a throne and enjoying pleasures. Out of envy, he wished to produce obstacles in the happiness of Śakra. Taking refuge in Lord Mahāvīra's congregation, he created havoc in Saudharma-kalpa. Angry with this Śakra threw a thunderbolt at him. Afraid, Camarendra fell at the Lord's feet. When Śakrendra learnt that Camarendra is at the Lord's feet taking refuge he came with great speed and holding his thunderbolt, saved Camarendra and forgave him. It is an extraordinary event for Camarendra to take refuge in Arihanta and go to Saudharma realm of gods.
9. **108 monks with supreme body (avagāhanā) attaining liberation (Siddha) together:** According to norms there should be only two Siddha as with supreme body. But there was Lord Vṛṣabhanātha with 500 dhanuṣa avagāhanā and 108 souls including his sons, etc who became Siddha as all at the same time. This is an extraordinary event.

10. **Praying to the unrestrained Ones:** Usually the ones practicing total self-restraint are worthy of veneration. But in the time-period of the ninth Tīrthaṅkara Suvidhinātha in the absence of monks and female-monks the unrestrained were offered prayers to. This is an extraordinary event.

Many things mentioned in Indian literature, such as transfer of a fetus, are considered unbelievable but in the scientific age ever new discoveries have shown these things in reality. An extraordinary event has been published in 'Jīvana Vijñāna' (vol. 43) brought out by the Gujarat Vernacular Society that an American doctor had to operate upon a pregnant woman's stomach. So that doctor first tore open the stomach of a pregnant goat and placed the fetus in her womb in a box powered by electricity and placed the woman's fetus into the womb of the goat. After finishing the surgery of the woman, he removed the fetus from the goat, placed it again in the woman's womb, and replaced the goat's fetus back in its womb. Later both the lamb and the human child the goat and the woman gave birth to were healthy and natural siblings.

Entry into Triśalā's womb

When Hariṇaigameṣī transferred Mahāvīra's soul from Devānandā's womb to that of Triśalā's with the permission of Indra, Devānandā saw the fourteen dreams exiting from her mouth. She woke up and started to cry saying someone has stolen her womb. At the same time on the night of the thirteenth day of the Aśvina month with moon, being conjunct with Uttarāḥṣṭak constellation Triśla saw the fourteen auspicious dreams. The dream interpreters said – "such dreams are only seen by the mothers of Tīrthaṅkara and cakravartīs. Hence queen Triśalā shall beget a fortunate son who will either be a Tīrthaṅkara or a cakravartī when he grows up." King Siddhārtha and queen Triśalā were very happy to hear these words. Queen Triśalā started taking care of her womb and completed her pregnancy period happily.

Entry into the womb and birth

Through his avadhijñāna (clairvoyance), the Lord saw that his mother is experiencing pain with his turning around in the womb, hence he stopped moving which made Triśalā worried and thought – "perhaps my child has withered in the womb." With this news Triśalā, the king and their

family were full of sorrow. When the Lord realised this again with his clairvoyance, he resumed his movement, which made his mother happy. Seeing his mother so happy while in the womb he resolved – “as long as my parents are alive I shall not remove my hair and renounce.”

The pregnancy period ended in a good atmosphere and on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of Caitra month during the midnight hour under Uttarāṅgunī constellation queen Triśalā gave birth to a son. Gods showered the five auspicious things from the skies. There was an atmosphere of divine light and peace all over the world. 56 Dikkumārīs (nymphs) and 64 Devendras celebrated the auspicious birth festival of the Lord. King Siddhārtha too freed the prisoners and gave charities with a free hand. All across the kingdom, people celebrated Lord’s birth with great happiness and gaiety for ten days and in an atmosphere of endless happiness and fervour.

Naming Ceremony

After ten days celebration of the birth of his son; on the twelfth day king Siddhārtha called his family and friends for the naming ceremony. At that time those people said – “ever since this child entered his mother’s womb we have had abundance of richness-wealth and progress by leaps and bounds. Hence the child should appropriately be named Varddhamāna.” People gave calls of joy. Impressed by the brave acts of his since childhood, gods named him as Mahāvīra. He was also called ‘Samaṇa’ as he easily gained good knowledge, gods named him Mahāvīra on seeing his extraordinary bravery and on account of his practice of renunciation and difficult austerities he was called ‘Śramaṇa’ in the scriptures.

Birthplace and Parents

There is difference of opinion among scholars about the birthplace of Mahāvīra. Some people consider Vaiśālī his birthplace while some others say it is ‘Kuṇḍanapura’, and yet others believe it to be ‘Kṣatriyakuṇḍa’. At the same time, some people consider the Lord’s birthplace as situated in Magadha and some say it was Videha. Ācārāṅga and Kalpasūtra consider Mahāvīra as the resident of Videha. The Digambara tradition, too, agrees with this opinion. They consider Kuṇḍapura-Kṣatriyakuṇḍa as part of Videha. Monk Kalyāṇavijaya considers Kuṇḍapura a suburb of

Vaiśālī whereas Vijayendrasūri considers it to have been an independent city. Similarly, some use the term Bārhmīṇakuṇḍa and Kṣatriyakuṇḍa as suburbs of Kuṇḍapura. Both these place, despite being in the form of settlements, existed so close to each other, that they were considered to be near Kuṇḍapura. The ninth section of BhagavatīSūtra gives a clearer picture. There we find reference to Kṣatriyakuṇḍa towards the west of Bārhmīṇakuṇḍa village and a Bahuśāla caitya located in the midst of the two, thus:- Once, Lord Mahāvīra came to Bahuśāla caitya in Bārhmīṇakuṇḍa. When the information reached the people of Kṣatriyakuṇḍa they came there to pay obeisance to him. Prince Jamālī too reached the Bahuśāla caitya in Bārhmīṇakuṇḍa, passing through Kṣatriyakuṇḍa, where Lord Mahāvīra was visiting. There is reference to five hundred Kṣatriya princes taking initiation along with him.

Actually, there is no basic difference between the two places as the northern part of Kuṇḍapura is also called Kṣatriyakuṇḍa and the southern part is called Bārhmīṇakuṇḍa. Ācārāṅga states that there is the vicinity of Bārhmīṇakuṇḍa in the south and that of Kuṇḍapura the north in Kṣatriyakuṇḍa. Jñāṭṭ, meaning, Kṣatriya used to stay in Kuṇḍapura. Being a settlement of ‘jñāṭṭka’ the Buddhist texts called it jñāṭṭgrāma. The location of ‘jñāṭṭka’ is between Vaiśālī and Kotigrāma within Vajjideśa. Vaiśālī is today popular as Vaniyā Vasāḍha in the Muzaffarpur division (Tirhut) of Bihāra. It is said that Vāsukuṇḍa near Vasāḍha was where ancient Kuṇḍapura existed. It becomes clear from the above-mentioned evidences and historical sources that Lord Mahāvīra was born in Kuṇḍapura of Vaiśālī near Kṣatriyakuṇḍa. This Kuṇḍapura was not a suburb of Vaiśālī but an independent city.

Lord Mahāvīra’s father was the jñāṭṭ, or kṣatriya king Siddhārtha and his mother was Triśālā. Scriptures refer to Lord Mahāvīra as belonging to a great royal family. Kalpasūtra too says – *“taeṇaṃ se siddhi rāyā”*. In this context, it does not seem right that some scholars believe that Siddhārtha was not a king but a kṣatriya vassal or chief. The objection of Dr. Heornle and Jacobi to Siddhārtha being considered a king has only one reason; namely, he did not have any special honours or distinction when compared to the king Ceṭaka of Vaiśālī. However, he was a king, or else how would Ceṭaka’s sister be married to him? Thus, there is no doubt he was a king except the argument of him being a minor or a big king. Siddhārtha was the father of Lord Mahāvīra, there is no doubt about that;

the doubt exists only on whether he was a king. However, it can for sure that he was definitely a king even if he was not as well known as king Ceṭaka of Vaiśālī was. Kalpasūtra and Ācārāṅga give three names for Siddhārtha, including Śreyāṃsa and Yaśasvī while Triśalā has two other names, Videhadinnā and Priyakāriṇī.

An Incident in childhood

Five able midwives took care of child Mahāvīra. Mahāvīra grew up with the love and care of these five midwives and his mother Triśalā and comforts suitable for a prince. Child Mahāvīra's child games are not only charming but strength giving as well.

Once child Mahāvīra was playing in the garden with his friends a game called 'Saṃkulī'. He was then around 8 years old. Seeing his courage and fearlessness Indra told the gods – "Child Mahāvīra is so brave that let alone men, even gods cannot defeat him." One god did not agree with Indra. He wanted to test Mahāvīra and taking the form of a snake, went and hid by the bark of that same tree that Mahāvīra had climbed. Other children became scared seeing the snake on that tree and started running. However, the snake could not scare Mahāvīra at all. Stopping all his friends, he said – "Why are you all running away? This small creature cannot trouble us at all. Let us take it and throw it somewhere far." Hearing Mahāvīra's words the boys said – "Mahāvīra, do not even try to touch it, men die if they are bitten by it." Without fear, Mahāvīra held the snake, like a rope, in his left hand and threw it.

Thereafter the children started playing the tiṃdusaka game. In a game two boys run together to touch a tree and the one who touches it first returns to the starting place climbing atop the other's back. The god too entered the game taking the form of a boy. Mahāvīra continuously defeated many boys in this game and once he got the chance to run with that god. The god lost and started to walk back with Mahāvīra on his back. To frighten Mahāvīra the god assumed a giant and fearsome form. The boys got scared but Mahāvīra did not lose his courage. He understood this was some illusory being which has come to test him. Sitting on his back he gave the god such a boxing that his body became dwarfish. The god sought forgiveness from Mahāvīra and said – "Indra was right – you are not just brave but exceedingly so."

Mahāvīra was a Tīrthaṅkara and a Tīrthaṅkara's strength is incomparable with anyone. The small finger of a Tīrthaṅkara has infinitely more times the strength of a god, demon, men, Indra, cakravartīs, etc. Their strength comes from accumulated deeds of many births. When Mahāvīra became eligible for education, seeing an auspicious occasion his parents sent him to a teacher. When king of gods Indra found this out he thought what would this ordinary teacher teach the receptacle of three kinds of knowledge? Thinking thus Indra took the form of an old Brahminscholar and appeared before the teacher. He asked Mahāvīra many scholarly questions. Mahāvīra gave comprehensive and appropriate answers to all of them which surprised the teacher and the others present there. The Brahminscholar too raised some doubts before Mahāvīra and getting right answers became speechless. Then the old Brahmin said – “Oh teacher, present before you as a student is not any ordinary child but a great man who is an ocean of knowledge and well-versed in scriptures. Taking all the answers of Mahāvīra the old Brahmin wrote ‘Aindra Vyākaraṇa’.

Marriage with Yaśodā

When Mahāvīra attained youth, his parents placed a marriage proposal in front of him. Though Mahāvīra was detached from sensual pleasures, he had resolved in his mother's womb, seeing her delight, that so long as his parents were alive he would not take initiation. In the same way, for the happiness of his parents and to complete his karmas of enjoyment (bhoga) he ultimately agreed to get married and was married at an auspicious time to Yaśodā, daughter of the chief of Vasamtapura, Samaravīra, endowed with all good qualities. There is reference to Mahāvīra's wedding in all the Śvetāmbara texts such as Ācārāṅga, Kalpasūtra, Āvaśyakaniryukti, etc but the Digambara scriptures do not agree with this. In those texts while you find reference to the parents' request for Mahāvīra to marry, proposals of many kings who offered their daughters and request for Jitaśatru's daughter Yaśoda, there is no mention of the marriage-taking place. The basic reason for this is the use of the term ‘kumāra’ and difference of opinion about its meaning. Both traditions accept that Vāsupūjya, Mallī, Neminātha, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra renounced at a young age. ‘Kumāra’ means both ‘unmarried’ and ‘crown prince’. In the Digambara texts such as Tiloyapaṇṇatī, Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Padmapurāṇa, these five Tīrthaṅkara are said to be ‘kumāra’ and the rest are said to have ruled. Lokaprakśa mentions that

Mallī and Neminātha did not have any enjoyment karmas left; hence, they did not marry and took initiation without having married. The term kumāra does not just mean unmarried, but also prince and crown prince. Hence in Āvaśyakaniryukti Dīpikā, because of his not being crowned king, he is considered to have renounced in his young age.

Demise of Parents

Mahāvīra's parents were followers of the śramaṇa tradition. After practising the householder's conduct for many years, when they sensed the end of their time, they repented their bad deeds for purifying their souls, with the arihanta, Siddha and soul as witnesses. They duly accepted condoning of the bad deeds sitting on a fast with raw coconut and giving up four kinds of food. Observing a fast, completing their lifetime in saṃlekhanā they emerged as gods in Acyuta kalpa in the 12th heaven. After sojourn in heaven, they are born in MahāVideha. They attain enlightenment thereafter.

Towards renunciation

With the demise of his parents, Mahāvīra's resolve in the womb had been realised. He was 28 years old at that time. Then he expressed his desire to take initiation to his elder brother, Nandīvardhana and others. Brother Nandīvardhana said, "We are yet to emerge from the mourning for father and mother. Please hold on for some time, and then renounce." Through his clairvoyance, sensing it was not the right time, he said – "Alright, but until when do I wait?" His family members said – "At least for two years." Mahāvīra agreed, but said – "In this time I shall eat as per my wish." People agreed happily. After this, for some two years or more, Mahāvīra remained at home with a feeling of detachment, but he gave up accepting unfiltered water and dinner after sunset. He observed celibacy. He used to wash his feet too with faultless water, used to sleep on the floor and used to maintain equanimity, giving up anger. Staying this way for a year, the Lord started the yearlong act of giving (varṣīdāna). He used to donate one crore eight lakh gold coins everyday. On completing 30 years of age, Mahāvīra's desire was successful. At that time as per norms, the lokāntika gods requested Mahāvīra – "Lord! Take initiation; establish the religious order for the benefit of all living beings."

Lord Mahāvīra started preparations for the initiation, taking permission from his brother Nandivardhan and paternal uncle, Supārśva. Nandivardhana ordered his family members to keep ready 1000 gold and bronze urns for the Lord's departure ceremony. According to the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, learning of the Lord's departure ceremony, four kinds of gods and goddesses reached the vicinity of Kṣatriyakuṇḍa in their respective vimānas filled with gold and riches. There they created a throne with their celestial powers. Everybody seated Mahāvīra on the throne facing east. They oiled his body with scented oil and bathed him in pure water. They dried his body with a scented ochre-coloured towel and applied goṣīrṣa sandal on him. Then they made him wear light and valuable clothes and ornaments. Decorating him like a kalpavṛkṣa tree, they seated him on the Candraprabhā palanquin. Men, gods, Indras lifted the palanquin. There were horses on both sides in front of the Lord's palanquin and elephants behind it. King Nandivardhana, astride an elephant, was moving behind Mahāvīra along with his four-fold army. This way, surrounded by a vast human crowd, passing through the central part of Kṣatriyakuṇḍa, the Lord came to the jñāt-khaṇḍa garden and alighted from the palanquin under the Aśoka tree. Removing his ornaments and clothes, he also removed five fistfuls of hair.

Initiation

The Lord took initiation with a fast without water on the tenth day of the dark fortnight of Mṛgaśira under Uttarāṅgunī constellation. Bowing down to the Siddhas in front of the huge gathering of gods and men he resolved – “*savvaṃ me akaraṇijjaṃ pavvaṃ kammaṃ*” – from now on all bad deeds are for me undoable. The Lord accepted the right conduct – “*karemi sāmāiyaṃ savvaṃ sāvajjaṃ joggaṃ paccakkhāmi*” – from today I give up all sāvadya karmas from three karaṇas and three yogas.” When the Lord took this oath, all the people gathered became still, as if panting. Mahāvīra was moving on the thorny path, leaving everything. The moment he accepted the spiritual conduct, he attained telepathic knowledge (manaḥ paryavajñāna). Thus, Mahāvīra began to know the inner feelings of all living beings.

Lord's Resolution and Wandering

After everybody left, the Lord took the following resolution – “From today till the next 12 years, until the time that I gain omniscience, I shall

live as a renouncer of all attachment to the body. Hence in this period, I shall bear with equanimity all the calamities, pains that may come through gods, human beings or beings of hell.” After this, the Lord moved from there. Many ācāryas believe that when the Lord began to wander after initiation, a Brahmin, who was unable to be present at the time of the year-long giving, accosted him on the way. Seeing his pitiable state the Lord tore the divine-cloth (devadūṣya) on his shoulder into half and gave it to him. The Ācārāṅga and Kalpasūtra mention the devadūṣya falling off after 13 months but basically in Kalpasūtra or any other text there is no mention of him tearing his cloth and giving it. Of course, in the Cūrṇi and commentary (Tīkā) etc, there is reference to donation of the half cloth to a Brahmin.

First calamity and fast-breaking (pāraṇā)

At the time when the Lord was standing in meditation outside Kurmarāgrāma, a herdsman came there with his oxen. He left them close to Mahāvīra to graze and went to a village nearby to milk the cows. After sometime when the herdsman returned, not finding his oxen, he asked Mahāvīra for their whereabouts. When Mahāvīra, deep in meditation, did not reply, he went looking for them. All night he kept searching for them. By coincidence, the oxen returned and sat next to Mahāvīra. The sad herdsman was returning empty-handed next morning when, seeing those oxen sitting next to Mahāvīra, he got very angry, Thinking Mahāvīra to be a thief, he went to hit him with a rope. Seeing this, Indra appeared at once and saved Mahāvīra from this trouble.

After this incident, Indra requested the Lord to allow him to serve him. The Lord said – “arhantas do not take anybody’s help for Siddhi or to attain pure knowledge but attain them on their own strength.” Yet for his satisfaction, Indra, to prevent deathly calamities, appointed a vyāṃtara god, Siddhārtha, to be at the Lord’s service, and saluting the Lord, left.

The next day the Lord left from there and reached the vicinity of Kollāga. There he broke his first fast at the home of a Brahmin named Bahula, with rice mixed with clarified butter and sugar. The sky resounded with the echo of “*aho dānam, aho dānam*”. The gods showered the five auspicious things to express the glory of the giving.

Austerities of Lord Mahāvīra

Ācārāṃgasūtra and Kalpasūtra state that after initiation Lord Mahāvīra retained nothing with him barring the devadūṣya. For around 13 years that cloth remained on his shoulder, and after it fell off and the Lord remained totally naked. During his mendicancy period, he would stay at either a poor person's hut or a rest house for travelers, etc. He always kept his hands hanging on the sides. He would not bend his arms even in extreme winter months. When all others would try to protect themselves in winter, Lord Mahāvīra would stand naked. Apart from winter, summer he had to bear with many kinds of harsh feelings on the skin through bites of mosquitoes, etc. The place fo stay was also filled with different kinds of difficulties and bites of poisonous creatures like scorpions, snakes, crows, hawks were also borne by him. Sometimes wicked people used to beat him up or abuse him, women and children would tease him or make fun, but in the midst of all those difficulties, and calamities, the Lord used to remain meditative with equanimity in a pure and peaceful manner and would not bring to mind any sense of hurt /pain.

If there was reason to leave a place he would do so quietly. The Lord never slept during his mendicancy period; he remained in deep meditation in kāyotsarga posture. While wandering he would not look ahead or behind nor on his sides, and would not even speak to anyone. Being in equanimity in all circumstances, he would seek alms from different homes and would not differentiate between a palace, a hut, or a rich or poor person. Whatever food he received, be it fresh or stale, etc, he would accept without bias, but he would not partake of faulty food. Mahāvīra's dispassionate attitude towards his body was extraordinary. He was not only apathetic to cold and heat but to sickness also. He would not even seek to brush off anything from the body nor would he scratch. Rising above passion towards the body while being in the body, he went beyond the corporeal existence. He did not even wink at the most difficult bodily pain nor did not attempt to cure it by any means. Actually, it is hard to find an example anywhere else of this kind of incomparable forbearance in austerity and equanimity in every situation.

The First year of spiritual-exertion

After leaving Kollāga, the Lord reached the Morāka province. The chief of the hermitage there was a friend of king Siddhārtha. He welcomed

Mahāvīra and requested him to stay there. Mahāvīra stayed there for one night and when he was ready to leave the next day the chief requested him to stay there in the monsoon period. After wandering about nearby the Lord returned for the monsoon stay to that hermitage and started living in a small hut there. Mahāvīra had feelings of compassion and friendship for every living being. Because of a famine, cows started coming close to the huts in the hermitage and grazing there on the grass. Other ascetics used to chase them away but Mahāvīra would keep standing in meditation with a feeling of detachment. He had neither any love for the chief of the hermitage nor the hermitage itself, nor hatred for the cows. Dispassionate towards all, he remained meditative day and night.

Some ascetics complained to the chief of the hermitage about this attitude of Mahāvīra's. Advising him sweetly the chief said – It is a happy and contented thing for you to remain meditative continuously, but you could perhaps see to it that there is no destruction caused by the animals to this hermitage?" Mahāvīra understood the point. He thought, is the objective of leaving royal palaces and staying in a hut to be more concerned about a non-conscious hut in place of conscious animals? Thinking thus, after spending the monsoon period there he left that place quietly. He made certain resolves in his mind, namely, "I shall not stay in a loveless place, shall always remain meditative, shall not speak with anyone, shall stay silent, shall accept food only in my hands, and shall not show courtesies to householders." There is no reference to these resolves in basic scriptures, but in the Tīrthaṅkara tradition, they remain silent during mendicancy.

The calamity caused by a Yakṣa; falling asleep and dream

After leaving the hermitage, Mahāvīra left for Asthigrāma. It was evening by the time he reached there. In search of a lonely spot, he sought permission to stay at Yakṣa Śūlāpaṇi's shrine outside the city. In the evening, the priest Indraśarmā came there to offer prayers. After prayers, he asked all the travelers to leave the place. He told Mahāvīra, too, but he was silent and in meditation. Indraśarmā said – "King, a Yakṣa stays here who is rude. He does not let anyone stay here at night." However, Mahāvīra remained unmoved. He therefore thought it appropriate, to stay there to face the ordeal and assist in Yakṣa'

awakening. He remained meditative. Finally, Indraśarmā too, left. When it was became dark in the night the Yakṣa appeared. Seeing the Lord in meditation, he said – “It seems like he does not know of my heroism.” He laughed. The whole forest shook but Mahāvīra was unaffected. Taking the form of an elephant and a ghou, he tried to scare Mahāvīra in many ways but the Lord did not get agitated. Then the Yakṣa created frightening pain in the Lord’s eyes, ears, nose, head, teeth, nails and his back, but Mahāvīra showed no signs of response. Ultimately, accepting defeat, the Yakṣa fell at the Lord’s feet and begged forgiveness and left. At the end of the night, the Yakṣa’s calamities ended. In the Bhagavatī Śataka 16, topic 6, there is reference to a dream on the last night the mendicancy period. Some part of the night remained when Mahāvīra fell asleep for a short while and he saw the following ten dreams:-

1. He struck a tree demon with his hands
2. A white cuckoo (Koyala) came to serve
3. He saw a strange coloured cuckoo in front of him
4. He saw two brilliantly-lit gem garlands
5. He saw herd of white cattle standing beside him
6. He saw a pond with lotus blossoms
7. He saw himself swimming across the ocean using his arms
8. He saw a Sun with thousand rays lighting up the world
9. He saw his beryl-like entrails from his intestines enveloping the Mānuṣottara mountain
10. He saw himself ascending the Merū

The Lord woke up the moment he saw the dreams. The Lord was standing in meditation when through the brightness of the daybreak he had fallen asleep for a moment. During his mendicancy period this was the first and last time that he fell asleep.

The Interpretation of the dreams

A soothsayer named Utpala lived in that village. He was a śramaṇa from the first Pārśvanātha tradition but on some account, had given up mendicancy. When he heard about Mahāvīra staying at the Yakṣa’s shrine, his heart skipped a beat, expecting some catastrophe. When he saw the Lord in meditation there, he was very happy. He expressed the following thoughts to the Lord about the dreams of the night before-

1. Beating up the ghouls means that you will destroy your deluding karma
2. Seeing a white cuckoo (Koyala) indicates you will enter into deep meditation
3. Seeing a strange coloured cuckoo means you will give a sermon filled with multi-faceted knowledge
4. The soothsayer could not interpret the meanings of the two gem-studded garlands
5. Seeing herd of white cattle means you will establish the four-fold order
6. Seeing a pond of lotus blossoms means you will be served by four kinds of gods
7. Seeing yourself swimming across the ocean means you will cross the ocean of the world
8. Seeing the world lit up by the thousand rays of the sun means you will attain pure knowledge and instruct others
9. Seeing your entrails enveloping the Mānuṣottara mountain means your fame will spread across the world of people
10. Seeing yourself ascend the Merū mountain means you will give a sermon seated on the throne

About the brilliant garlands, the Lord said they meant the two forms of religion, namely, that of mendicants, and that of householders. Everybody was delighted to hear the meaning of the dreams. During a year's stay at Asthigrāma the Lord did not face any calamities. Peacefully he observed 8 times fasts of a fortnight each and completed his first year of stay.

The Second year of spiritual-exertion

After completing the year-long stay at Asthigrāma, Mahāvīra moved towards Morāka province on the first day of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa. Reaching Morāka, he entered a garden. A heretic named Acchaṃdaka used to live there, who used to make a living out of astrology. The god Siddhārtha told people in Morāka village – “This mendicant is the receptacle of three kinds of knowledge and knows of the past, present and future.” Not just that, he also brought to light the bad deeds of Acchaṃdaka that turned out to be true. As a result, his influence declined. On the other end, impressed by the Lord's penance, more and more people started coming to him. Acchaṃdaka was worried seeing

this. He went to the Lord and prayed – “Lord, you are detached and all-powerful. My livelihood has suffered because of your stay here. Please have mercy on me and go elsewhere.” The Lord understood the meaning and pain of Acchaṃḍaka and left that place, moving towards north Vācālā. On the way to Vācālā, by the banks of the Suvarṇakūlā, the Lord’s devadūṣya got stuck in the thorns and fell off; the Lord turned back to see if the devadūṣya had not fallen off in the wrong place. When he saw the cloth stuck in the thorns, he realised that the disciples will obtain the cloth easily. Giving up the cloth, the Lord became naked and remained without a cloth (acela) throughout his life. With the desire to obtain the devadūṣya, a Brahmin acquaintance of king Siddhārtha who was following the Lord took the cloth and went home.

Awakening of Caṇḍakauśika

Moving towards north Vācālā the Lord reached a hermitage named Kanakhamala. There were two paths to go to north Vācālā from that hermitage; One through the hermitage, and the other from the outside. The Lord took the straight path. Reaching some distance, he came across two herdsmen. They told the Lord – “There is a forest ahead on this path where lives a dreaded viper named Caṇḍakauśika who just looks at the travelers with his poisonous eyes and reduces them to ashes. It would be better if you took the other path.” The Lord thought – “Caṇḍakauśika is a magnificent being, hence through awakening he will certainly gain knowledge” and he moved on that same path with the intention of redeeming Caṇḍakauśika.

In his past life, Caṇḍakauśika was an ascetic. One day, to break his fast, he left with his disciple for alms. Suddenly a frog was crushed under the monk’s feet on the way. Seeing this the disciple said – “Oh teacher, crushed by your feet the frog is dead.” The monk said nothing. The disciple thought that the teacher would repent for this in the evening at the time of ritual confession (pratikramaṇa). But when the monk did not repent for this bad deed in the evening the disciple again reminded him of the death of the female frog and asked him to repent. The monk got angry with the disciple reminding him repeatedly to repent and went to kill the disciple. In a fit of anger, he hit himself against a pole and died at once. After death, he became a jyotiṣkagod.

Completing his life there, he was born as the son of the chief ascetic of the Kanakhamala hermitage named Kauśika. He was of a violent temperament since childhood, so was called Caṇḍakauśika. Later, Caṇḍakauśika became the chief ascetic of the hermitage. He was so deeply attached to the forest surrofemale-monkding that hermitage that he would not let anyone pick a fruit from there; hence, people left that hermitage to live elsewhere. Once, the princes of a nearby city destroyed the forest. When Caṇḍakauśika learnt of it, he ran behind them with his axe to hit them. In anger, he fell into a pit and the axe severed his head. Caṇḍakauśika died at once. Because of the past life deeds, he began to protect that same forest in a rage. Roaming around day and night Caṇḍakauśika would turn to ashes with his poison even animals and birds wandering in the forest. Fearing Caṇḍakauśika people stopped going to that forest.

In order to redeem Caṇḍakauśika through his awakening, Lord Mahāvīra entered that forest fearlessly. There he stood meditating. Seeing him, Caṇḍakauśika started hissing, watching him with angry eyes. However, Lord Mahāvīra was unaffected. Seeing this Caṇḍakauśika got angrier and he bit his feet with his poisonous teeth. The Lord stood unagitated. Instead of blood, milk started flowing from his feet. He did not show any anger towards him. Surprised, Caṇḍakauśika kept staring at the Lord without blinking an eyelid. All his anger died down. Seeing Caṇḍakauśika calm down the Lord went into meditation and said – “Oh Caṇḍakauśika! Calm down! Arise! Because of the past life karmas you are a snake, be cautious at least now, otherwise you will have to wander about in bad circumstances.” Hearing the Lord’s words, Caṇḍakauśika’s realized his inner self. His mind was aglow with the light of discrimination. Remembering his past lives, he made a resolve in his mind – “I shall not trouble anyone anymore, nor will I eat anything.” He went into his bill. The Lord too, left.

Caṇḍa stopped coming out of his bill. There was peace in the forest. People started to pray to Caṇḍa. They would pour milk, sugar and vermilion powder, flowers, etc. Caṇḍa would not even touch them, hence, attracted by them, ants gathered there. Caṇḍa was so still with his hood upright as if he was lifeless. Gradually, the ants started to bite him, enveloping him, but Caṇḍa remained unshaken, bearing with all the pain with equanimity and completing his life in pure feeling, he obtained to the eighth heaven.

Wandering and a boat ride

After redeeming Caṇḍakaśika, wandering, the Lord reached Vācālā. There he broke his fifteen-days' fast by accepting rice pudding from Nāgasena. Leaving from there, he reached Śvetāmbikā city, where the king Pradeśī gave him a respectful welcome and honours. Leaving Śvetāmbikā city, the Lord moved towards Surabhipura. River Gaṃgā came mid-way. The Lord had to sit on a boat to cross Gaṃgā. The moment the boat moved, an owl sitting on the right side, hooted. Hearing the owl's hoot the soothsayer Khemila, sitting in the boat, said – "A great trouble is expected, but on account of the strong good deeds of this Lord nothing untoward will happen." After going a little further, the boat got stuck in a whirlpool due to a strong windstorm. The passengers were worried, but the Lord sat fearlessly and unmoved, in meditation. The storm subsided after a while and the boat reached the riverbank. In his previous life as Tripṛṣṭa, the lion in the he had killed, his Lion) soul in the form of god Sudaṃṣṭra, out of enmity, caused the windstorm in the river. When Mahāvīra crossed Gaṃgā, two Nāga princes Kambala and Śambala served the Lord to get over this calamity.

The Interpretation of Puṣya

Alighting from the boat the Lord reached the vicinity of 'Sthūṇāka'. There he stood in meditation at a place. Seeing the Lord's footprints, a soothsayer in that village named Puṣya said – "A person of these footprints must be a cakravartī. Perhaps on account of a difficult situation he is wandering alone, let me go help him." Thinking thus, following the footprints he came to the Lord. Seeing a monk in the place of an emperor or prince, he was surprised as to how could a person, with all the qualities of a cakravartī, is a monk? Are the scriptures wrong? At that point Devendra appeared and said – "This is not an ordinary person; he is a great dharma-cakravartī (a spiritual emperor) who is venerated by gods and Indras alike." The soothsayer saluted the Lord and left.

The entry of Gośālaka in the Lord's service

Wandering this way, the Lord reached Rājagṛha and came to a shed in Nālandā for the rainy season halt. The Lord's broke his first month fast at merchant Vijaya's house. There was a divine sound in the sky with a show of five auspicious things. With a pure feeling, the merchant Vijaya

left this world and became a resident of the realm of gods. Everywhere in Rājagrha people spoke of the layman Vijaya. Maṃkhaliputra Gośālaka was also on rainy season halt at this time. Gośālaka saw the glory of the Lord's penance and went to him. During the rainy season halt, the Lord had begun to practise month-long fasts. He broke his second months fast at the house of votary Ānanda. The third month's fast breaking took place at śravaka Sunanda's house with rice pudding.

On the full moon day of Kārtika month, on the way to seeking alms, Gośālaka asked the Lord – “What will I get in alms today?” Siddhārtha said – “You will get stale rice with millet, sour buttermilk and a fake rupee.” To disprove the Lord's speech Gośālaka went to richest homes but he did not get anything there. In the end at an ironsmith's house, he got sour buttermilk, stale rice and fake one rupee. This made such an impression on Gośālaka's mind that he became a fatalist. Bhagavatī Sūtra does not refer to this aspect.

After the cāturmāsaperiod, the Lord left Nālandā and broke his last monthly fast at the home of 'BahulaBrahmin' near Kollāga. When the Lord left Nālandā, Gośālaka had gone out seeking alms. On return to the weaver's shed, he did not see the Lord. He gave his clothes, pitcher, painting, etc to the Brahmins and, shaving his head, went in search of the Lord and reached Kollāga. When he heard of Bahula Brahmin's alms giving from people, he knew this was the effect of the Lord's penance. He saw the Lord outside Kollāga at Praṇīta-bhūmi. Delighted, he paid obeisance to the Lord and said – “From today, you are my religious teacher and I am your disciple.” After a lot of pleading, knowing the future, the Lord accepted Gośālaka's plea. Gośālaka stayed with the Lord for six years.

The third year of mendicancy

Leaving Kollāga, the Lord went towards Svarṇakhala with Gośālaka. They saw some herdsmen on the way, cooking rice pudding. Gośālaka's mind was on the rice pudding. He told the Lord – “Lord, if we stay a while we can have the rice pudding and leave.” Siddhārtha Deva, i.e. Mahāvīra said – “The rice pudding will fall to the ground even before it is cooked as the pot will break.” Gośālaka alerted the herdsmen and stopped for the rice pudding, but the Lord moved on. Despite all care, the

pot broke when the rice pudding was boiling over and the pudding fell on the soil. With a small face, Gośālaka joined the Lord.

Thereafter, the Lord reached the ‘Brahmin village’ divided into two parts in the name of the important persons there, ‘Nanda’ and ‘Upananda’, as Nandapāṭaka and Upanandpāṭaka. Lord Mahāvīra went to Nandapāṭaka for alms to Nanda’s house. There he got curd rice. Gośālaka went to Upananda’s house at Upanandapāṭaka and received stale food at the hands of the house cleaner, which he refused. At this, Upananda told the house cleaner, “If he does not accept alms throw it on his head.” The house cleaner did just that and angered Gośālaka, who cursed the householders, and left. According to the Āvaśyakacūrṇi, Gośālaka cursed them that a fire may burn Upananda’s house. With the effort of the penance, to prove his words, he took help from the vyaṃtaragods to burn Upananda’s house to prove the effect of his curse.

After leaving the Brahmin village the Lord came to Campā and there completed his third monsoon stay. At that time, the Lord observed a two-month fast and observed different postures (āsanās) and meditation practices. His first two months fast breaking happened in Campā and the second two-month fast was broken outside Campā.

The 4th year of spiritual-exertion

Leaving Aṃga country’s Campā city the Lord reached the province of Kālāya. There at an abandoned house, the Lord became meditative but Gośālaka started to tease, and make fun with a maidservant at the house entrance. The maidservant went and complained to the village headman and the headman’s son Puruṣasiṃha beat up Gośālaka. From Kālāya, the Lord went to PuttaKālāya. There too while the Lord became meditative at a lonely place Gośālaka did some or the other mischief and ended up being a target of people’s wrath. They left PuttaKālāya and went to Kumāraka. There in a beautiful garden, Campaka, the Lord entered into meditation. The disciple ācārya of Pārśvanātha, Municandra, was staying with his disciples there at a shed of a potter named Kūpanātha. He had made a disciple the head monk and accepted the jinakalpa (conduct like Mahāvīra’s).

When Gośālaka went on his own for alms, he saw the Pārśva tradition monks wearing colourful robes. Out of inquisitiveness Gośālaka asked

them – “Who are you?” They replied – “We are Śramaṇa nirgranthas of the Pārśvanātha tradition.” To this, Gośālaka said – “Strange! You people are wearing these colourful robes, and have vessels and yet you call yourselves nirgranthas. The true nirgrantha is my teacher, who is the epitome of sacrifice and penance. The Pārśva tradition monks said – “Just like you your ācārya too must have accepted nakedness.” To this an angry Gośālaka retorted – “You people criticise my teacher; your rest house will burn to ashes.” Gośālaka returned to Campaka garden and told the Lord everything. Siddhārtha Deva said – “Gośālaka! Those are Pārśvanātha tradition’s disciple monks. Glory of monks’ penance does not consist in cursing or burning down resting places.”

Ācārya Muni Candra went into meditation standing outside the monastery. At midnight, the potter Kūpanaya returned to his home after getting drunk with his friends and thinking the meditative monk to be a thief, strangled him with both his hands. Despite unbearable pain, the monk maintained calm. Being in deep meditation with a sense of equanimity, he attained omniscience and *nirvāṇa*. The gods showered flowers expressing the glory of omniscience. Seeing the arrival of gods, Gośālaka said to the Lord – “It looks like their resting place is burning.” Siddhārtha Deva said – “No, Ācārya Muni Candra has attained omniscience; hence gods are expressing its glory.” Gośālaka woke the disciples of Muni Candra up. Believing their ācārya to be dead they began to repent. Referring to this incident Ācārya Hemacandra writes that Muni Candra at that time attained clairvoyance and he went to heaven.

After leaving Kumāraka, the Lord arrived near Corāka. The place was infested with the activities of thief and robbers. So the guards were very attentive and so wanted to know his introduction, the Lord remained silent because of his vow. The guards thought he was some thief or spy, so capturing him they gave him all kinds of pain. When the word reached the soothsayer Utpala’s sisters, Somā and Jayantī, they came there and released the Lord. Realising the Lord’s identity, the guards begged for forgiveness for their mistake. From there the Lord left for Pṛṣṭhacampā and spent his fourth rainy season halt there. In this time he observed four months of fast and went into meditation in different forms in kāyotsarga. After completing his penance, he broke his fast at a place outside Campā.

The 5th year of mendicancy

After completing the monsoon stay at Pṛṣṭhacampā, the Lord arrived at Kayamaṅgalā. There, at a temple of a heretic named ‘Daridrathera’, he stood meditating in kāyotsarga posture. Leaving Kayamaṅgalā, he arrived at Sāvattihī, and stood in meditation outside the city. It was biting cold in winter. Yet, not caring about the cold, the Lord remained in meditation through the night. Gośālaka could not bear the cold and kept shivering through the night. There at a temple festival men and women kept dancing through the night. Gośālaka made fun – “what kind of religion is this, where men and women shamelessly dance together?” People threw him out. Seeing him shiver in cold outside they invited him inside again thinking of him Lord’s disciple and turned the volume of their music louder so that they do not hear his utterances. He was thus, thrown out and taken in the congregation many times. In the morning, Mahāvīra left for Śrāvastī. There, based on a soothsayer’s advice, a laywoman, for protection of her son, cooked rice pudding for a month during her pregnancy and with the intention of giving it to an ascetic, gave it to Gośālaka. Despite Siddhārtha Deva’s warning to be careful, Gośālaka ate that pudding. However, after this incident, he became a total fatalist.

After leaving Śrāvastī, the Lord arrived at ‘Haleduga’. He stayed a night there. Other travelers too were staying there that night. To protect themselves from the cold they lit a fire and left without putting it off in the morning. Mahāvīra burnt his feet because of dry grass catching fire. In the afternoon after completing his meditation, the Lord moved ahead and reached Āvarta via Nāmaṅgalā. There he became meditative at the temple of Baladeva. Gośālaka used to tease and taunt people and fall into all kinds of trouble. After leaving Āvarta, passing through many places, he reached the vicinity of Caurāka habitat. There Gośālaka got beaten up on account of his misdeeds. Angrily he said – “People have troubled me needlessly; with the purity of my teacher’s penance, may the sacrificial hall get burnt.” By coincidence, the hall caught fire.

After moving ahead, they reached ‘Kalambukā’, where the rulers of the mountainous region were two brothers, Megha and Kālahastī. Incidentally, Kālahastī met Mahāvīra. He asked him, “Who are you?” When the Lord said nothing, Kālahastī beat him up, yet he kept quiet. Kālahastī sent him to Megha; Megha had seen him earlier at Kuṇḍagrāma. Hence, he recognised him and sought forgiveness for his

brother's mistake. After this incident the Lord thought, 'I must destroy many of my karmas now. Keeping on finding some known person, everywhere, will delay destruction of my karmas. Hence I must wander in Anārya (not knowledgeable) and unknown places.' Thinking thus, he decided to go to Lāḍha (Rāḍha) country, considered as Anārya where no monk or ascetic would even imagine going. There were two divisions of Lāḍha country – north and south, or Vajra and Śubhra. The river Ajaya used to flow in between. Ārya Sudharmā's Ācārāṅga Sūtra describes, the fearsome, thrilling calamities there as follows:-

In Lāḍha country, there were no suitable places to stay for the Lord. Even tasteless, minimal food used to come about with great difficulty. Dogs would come running from afar to bite, but there were none to stop them. In fact, people would mostly provoke them further. All those of an insensitive attitude used to walk about holding sticks. However, the Lord used to wander uninhibited. He used to be polite even towards the mean people. His intention was to destroy karmas – he used to gladly bear with people's abuses and obstacles in the path, and stay happy. He would not let any violent thought enter his mind for anyone. Sometimes he would have to spend nights in frightful forests. Sometimes people would not let him enter into villages and force him to move on. Without reason they would attack him and laugh at him and would give him many kinds of troubles, like throwing sand on him, lift him and throw him to the ground like a ball and would cause injury to his body parts. What one means to say is that the Lord was thus given many kinds of unbearable and unimaginable troubles, which he faced peacefully, being steady in spiritual path of restraint. Staying in the Anārya region, bearing with many calamities, he destroyed much karma. He was re-entering the Anārya region after leaving the Ārya country when he met two thieves on the borders who were going to steal in the non-Anārya region. Considering it ominous to see him on the way, they attacked him with their weapons. Indra himself appeared, saved him, and chased away the thieves. Reaching the Ārya region the Lord reached the Malaya country and stayed during that year's monsoons in Bhaddila city. Being meditative in different postures, the Lord observed four months of fast and on completion of the rainy season, breaking his fast outside the city, he moved towards 'Kadalī Samāgama' and 'Jambū Saṃḍa'.

6th Year of mendicancy

From ‘Kadalī Samāgama’ and ‘Jambū Saṃḍa’ the Lord arrived near ‘Tambāya’. At that time the elder monk of the Pārśva tradition, Nandiṣeṇa, was staying there. Gośālaka argued with him, too. From ‘Tambāya’ the Lord went to ‘Kūviya’ where he was arrested due to the suspicion of his being a spy. There, two female-monks named Vijayā and Pragalbhā told people about the Lord and said he was the great ūrthaṃkara Mahāvīra and if Indra finds out, he would punish them. Both of them had been Pārśvanātha’s disciples. Listening to them people freed the Lord and sought his forgiveness. From there the Lord moved on to Vaiśālī. Gośālaka expressed desire to wander alone and gaining acceptance from Siddhārtha Deva moved towards Rājagṛha. Reaching Vaiśālī, the Lord took permission to stay in the ironsmith’s workshop and meditated there. A worker of the workshop was not attending work because of his illness. The next day of the Lord’s arrival there, he came to work and seeing the Lord there, thinking it to be inauspicious, attempted to attack him. However, by divine grace, his raised hands remained stuck in that position and he stood like a statue. Leaving Vaiśālī, the Lord arrived in the province of Grāmaka and became meditative at the place of the Yakṣa Vibhelaka. Inspired by the penitent life of the Lord the Yakṣa too started singing his praises.

Leaving Grāmaka the Lord arrived at the beautiful garden, ‘Śālīśīrṣa’. It was the chilly winter month of Māgha. People were shivering in their warm clothes within their homes, while at the same time the Lord was standing in meditation, naked. When the vyaṃtara named Kaṭapūtanā saw the Lord in meditation, he was reminded of a past life enmity. Taking the form of a female-monk, with her open hair standing on the Lord’s shoulders, she started showering rain like a cloud and created gale too. Biting cold, gale and rains and yet the Lord remained steady in meditation and he obtained the unique clairvoyant knowledge – he could see the entire world. Seeing the Lord’s equanimity, his capacity and forbearance, Kaṭapūtanā felt tired, defeated and seeking forgiveness for her behaviour, left. The Lord arrived at Bhadrīkā city on leaving ‘Śālīśīrṣa’. There he spent the sixth rainy season observing four months of fast and meditation. At the end of the rainy season, the Lord broke his fast outside the city and left for Magadha.

The 7th Year of mendicancy

Wandering across different parts of Magadha, the Lord practised the seventh year of austerity without calamities for eight months. He reached the Ālambhiyā city for the monsoon stay and observing four months fast, completed his cāturmāsa meditation breaking his fast outside the city he stayed in the Vasudeva temple in ‘Kaṃḍ gā’ and in Baladeva temple ‘Bhaddaṇā’ he reached Bahusāla village and there in a Sāla forest, he became meditative. There a demoness named Śālārya produced many calamities but could not disturb the Lord and in the end begged forgiveness and left.

8th Year of mendicancy

Leaving Bhaddaṇā the Lord arrived at Lohārgalā. The local authorities questioned him as he entered Lohārgalā. As Lord maintained silence and feeling suspicious, people took him to the king Jitaśatru. The soothsayer of Asthika village was present there saluted the Lord and introduced him to all. King Jitaśatru too prayed to him and after due respects, bade him farewell. From there the Lord moved to Purimatāla and stood in meditation at the ‘Śakaṭamukha’ garden outside the city. From there, passing through ‘Unnāga’ and ‘Gobhūmi’, he arrived at Rājagṛha. There he spent the eighth monsoon retreat and observed fasts of four months and due austerities and completion of the cāturmāsa fast, broke his fast outside the city and moved ahead.

The 9th Year of mendicancy

After leaving Rājagṛha, the Lord thought again that truly, it is possible to annihilate karmas only in Anārya region. Thinking thus, he again left for the Anārya Lāḍha and Śubhrabhūmi. People there were insensitive, cruel and without compassion. Hence, the Lord bore with different troubles with equanimity. When he did not get the right place, he completed the monsoon time in ruins, under trees, or simply wandering about. This way, wandering in Anārya region, the Lord re-entered the Ārya region.

The 10th Year of mendicancy

From the Anārya region the Lord was going to ‘Siddhārthapura’ and from there to ‘Kūrmagrāma’ and Gośālaka was with him, too. On the

way when he saw a sesame plant with seven flowers, he asked the Lord – “Lord! Will this plant beget fruits?” The Lord said – “Yes, the plant will bear fruits and all the seven flowers’ life will emerge from this one seed-pod.” To falsify the Lord’s words, Gośālaka stopped for a moment, uprooted that plant, and threw it far away. By coincidence, within minutes, it rained there and the uprooted sesame plant stood up again. From there the Lord reached Kūrmagrāma. There an ascetic named ‘Vaiśyāyana’ was standing outside the village facing the sun with both his hands raised upwards in penance. Due to the heat, lice were coming out from his long locks and falling to the ground and the ascetic was again placing them back on his hair. When Gośālaka saw this, he asked the ascetic – “Are you an ascetic or a home of lice?” The ascetic remained quiet. When Gośālaka kept questioning him persistently, the ascetic got angry and spewed hot flash at him. Gośālaka ran in fear and fell at the Lord’s feet. Out of compassion, the Lord doused the fire with a cool flash and saved Gośālaka.

After sometime, the Lord again left for Siddhārthapura. Reaching the sesame field, Gośālaka remembered the old question. He asked the Lord, “Lord, what happened to your prediction?” The Lord said, “That plant you see is the one you uprooted and threw.” Gośālaka was not ready to believe the Lord. He went to that sesame plant and when he broke the pod, seven sesame fruits came out. With this incidence, he became a confirmed fatalist. From there Gośālaka left Lord’s company and began to think of starting his own sect.

From Siddhārthapura, the Lord reached Vaiśālī. There outside the city he stood in meditation at a spot. Boys passing by, thinking him to be a demon started troubling him. By coincidence, king Siddhārtha’s close friend Śaṃkha - bhūpati was passing through that place. He sent the boys away explaining to them, and paid obeisance to the Lord. From there the Lord reached ‘Vāṇiyagrāma’. On the way, to cross the river Gaṃḍakī, he had to sit on a boat. When the boatman asked for a fee, the Lord remained silent. Angry, the boatman made him stand on hot sand. Incidentally, Citra, the son of king Śaṃkha’s sister, came that way. Explaining to the boatman, he released the Lord. At Vāṇiyagrāma, a monk named Ānanda of the Pārśvanātha tradition had attained clairvoyant knowledge. He used to do penance facing the sun and observing fasts. Seeing the Lord he paid obeisance to him and said –

“Your body and soul are firm like thunderbolt. You bear with equanimity the most difficult of ordeals. You will soon attain omniscience.”

The 11th Year of mendicancy

From Sāvattī the Lord left for Sānulaṭṭhiya. There he did the Bhadra, Mahābhadra and Sarvatobhadra penance and continuous fast for 16 days. In the bhadra penance, for the first two days, a person meditates in the east, south, west and north directions, respectively, four times a day. Observing the two days of fast without breaking it, he took the mahābhadra penance. Therein, in the same sequence, he meditated in each direction, day and night. This way, after 16 days of fast, he completed the three kinds of meditation. After completing the three kinds of meditation, the Lord reached the house of householder Ananda. At that time, his maidservant, Bahulā had come out to throw leftovers of food after cleaning the utensils. Seeing the Lord, she asked – “What do you want, oh Lord?” Mahāvīra extended his palms. The maid gave the leftover food to the Lord with great devotion. Considering it faultless, the Lord broke his fast with it. The gods showered the five auspicious things and through the glory of the giving, released the maid from her servitude.

From there the Lord proceeded to Dṛḍhabhūmi. Outside the city, in the caitya named Polāsa, was a garden named ‘Poḍhāla’. There, observing a fast, the Lord bent his body slightly and fixing his gaze on a gross object, he became meditative. Seated amidst gods and goddesses the king of gods, Indra, saw the Lord in meditation and saluting him, said – “So unique is the courage and resolve of Varddhamāna Mahāvīra that let alone men, even gods cannot disturb him from his penance.” Everyone was happy with Devendra’s words, except a god named Saṃgama. He went to the Lord with the intention of disturbing Lord’s penance. Accordingly he created a web of calamities. First he caused pain in the entire body of Lord, created an apocalyptic shower of sand, caused pain to his body with ants, scorpion, snake, etc. When nothing affected the Lord due calamities he produced; he created enchanting seductive scenes and then tried to agitate the mind with pitiable sights. However, Lord remained firm and steady like the Sumeru Mountain in meditation. Saṃgama produced 20 kinds of unbearable calamities of different kinds in one night – even showing the Lord’s parents, Siddhārtha and Triśalā crying in pain, tried to seduce through beautiful apsarās and in the form

of a god, he also allured him with heaven or mokṣa. Finally, when he was unsuccessful, Saṃgama began to think of other means.

The Lord, completing his meditation, left for Bālukā. From Bālukā he arrived at places such as Suyoga, Succhetā, Malabha, Hastiśīrṣa, etc. Saṃgama created calamities at every place. At ‘Tosaligrāma’ and ‘Mosaligrāma’ in the disguise of an ascetic, he would steal and when caught, would accuse the Lord, calling him his teacher. The magician Mahābhūtila in Tosali village and a regional official in Mosali village introduced the Lord and saved him.

Again coming to Tosali, he stole some weapons and hid them beside the Lord who was in meditation. He returned to steal more, when he was caught stealing. He accused his teacher for making him steal. As the Lord had the weapons lying around him, the kingdom sentenced the Lord to be hanged until death. However, the rope used for hanging Lord used to snap as and when it was used to hang the Lord. Ultimately, the officials left the Lord considering him a great man. Even in Siddhārthapura, Saṃgama got the Lord caught on false accusation of theft, where a horse trader freed the Lord.

At Vraja village there being a festival, rice pudding was prepared in all homes, and wherever the Lord went for alms, Saṃgama made the food unworthy. Realising it to be a calamity created by Saṃgama, the Lord left and remained meditating outside the village. This way, for six months Saṃgama gave the Lord countless ordeals and the Lord did not get agitated. Saṃgama lost his patience and feeling defeated, he went to the Lord and said –“Lord! Whatever Devendra said about you is true. You are firm in your resolve. Please forgive my crimes. Now you may go for alms. There will be no more calamities.” The Lord said – “I accept penance and alms from my own will.” I do not expect anybody’s assurance.” The next day completing his six months of penance the Lord went to the same village to the home of an old woman named ‘Vassapālaka” and broke his fast with rice pudding. The five auspicious things appeared to express glory of the giving. This was the Lord’s long penance with calamities.

Description relating to Saṃgama god is available in Āvaśyakaniryuktī, Malayavṛtti and Āvaśyakacūrṇī. Even after continuous intense calamities

when Saṃgama saw the Lord would not be disturbed in anyway, he apologized in Vrajaṛāma and returned to Saudharma abode of gods. There the gods turned against him and expelled him from the realm of gods. With this example of Saṃgama ordinary people can understand that on account of his misdeeds if a god too had to reap its fruits, where does an ordinary person stand who purposefully causes harm to others?

Moving from Vraja village to Ālaṃbhiyā, Śvetāmbikā, Sāvattihī, Kauśāmbī, Rājagṛha, Vārāṇasī, Mithilā, etc, the Lord arrived at Vaiśālī. Outside the city at the Baladeva temple in the Samara garden, accepting four-months fast, he became meditative and completed the rainy season halt there.

The feeling of Jīrṇa Seṭha

A devout votary named Jinadatta used to live in Vaiśālī. Because of poor economic condition, his house had become old and people started calling him Jīrṇa Seṭha. He had the knowledge of oceans. He went to study the footprints of the Lord to the garden and seeing a meditating Lord there, was very happy. Every day, he would go to the Lord and request him to take food offerings. Despite his continuous effort for four months, he did not succeed in fulfilling his desire. After completion of the cāturmāsa the Lord left for alms and went to the house of Abhinava śreṣṭhi (merchant) whose original name was 'Pūrṇa'. Seeing the Lord the śreṣṭhi ordered his maidservant to give a spoonful of pulse. The Lord broke his four months fast with it. There was a shower of five auspicious things accompanied by divine sounds. There Jīrṇa Seṭha was waiting for the Lord to come to break his fast. He was at the pinnacle of his feeling. At that time, he heard the divine sounds. Dying with that right feeling, Jīrṇa Seṭha went to the 12th heaven. Had he not heard the divine sounds for a moment, or two, he would have attained omniscience due to his firm resolve and penance.

The 12th Year of mendicancy

Completing the rainy season halt, the Lord reached 'Sunsumārapura'. Here Bhūtānaṃda came and enquired after the Lord's well-being and said –“In some time you will attain pure intuition and pure knowledge.” Hearing Bhūtānaṃda's words, the Lord remained silent. The BhagavatīSūtra describes in detail the calamities of Camarendra in

Sunsumārapura, as follows:- The Lord said – “At the time when I had spent 11 years of mendicancy, breaking fasts regularly, I reached Sunsumārapura’s forest stretch and focusing my gaze on a stone I became meditative under an Aśoka tree. At that time, the soul of an ascetic Pūraṇa of Camaracaṃcā had become an Indra. There through his clairvoyant knowledge he saw Śakrendra seated on a throne enjoying divine pleasures. He became envious. With the idea of destroying Śakrendra’s splendour, he came to me and said – “Lord, I want to take refuge in you and make the Indra Śakra corrupt with his splendour.” After this taking a celestial body from me, he went to Saudharma realm of gods and started saying unpleasant things to Śakrendra. The king of gods, Indra, in anger hurled his thunderbolt at Camarendra. Seeing that, the demonking Camara, started running and fell at my feet. After releasing the thunderbolt, Indra thought Camara on his own does not have the courage to insult me; perhaps he has somebody’s assistance in this. Through his avadhijñāna when he found out Camara has taken refuge in me, with great speed he held his thunderbolt four aṅgula and left Camarendra and.”

From Sunsumārapura the Lord reached Bhojapura, Nandigrāma and Medhiyāgrāma. From Medhiyāgrāma he reached Kauśāmbī and on the first day of the dark fortnight of Pauṣa month he took the following vows:

“1 In substance it should be uḍada-dāla pods; 2 Should be at the corner of a winnowing basket; 3 In terms of place, should be in the middle of the threshold; 4 In terms of time the time for giving alms should have passed; 5 In terms of existence, a princess should have become a slave girl; 6 With chained feet; 7 Should be with shaven head; 8 Should have tears in her eyes; 10 She should have observed a fast. If I get alms from a person of this kind, I shall accept it, not otherwise.”

With this resolve, Mahāvīra would go everyday seeking alms; people would come with eagerness and hope to give. Mahāvīra would return without accepting anything due to the resolve being not fulfilled. Four months passed off this way without his accepting alms. All over the city people expressed surprise at this. Once, the Lord went to the minister of Kauśāmbī, Sugupta’s house. The minister’s wife, Naṃdā, a pious devotee, went with great devotion to give alms, but Mahāvīra went away without accepting anything thereby making her unhappy.

Five months and twenty-five days had passed after the Lord had taken his vow. Incidentally, one day the Lord went to ‘Dhannā’ nobility (śreṣṭhi)’s house for alms where the princess Candanā was waiting for the arrival of her guest, hungry, thirsty for three days, with uḍada-dāla pods in a winnowing basket. The śreṣṭhi’s wife Mūlā had shaved off her hair and tied her feet in chains, imprisoning her. Seeing the Lord arriving Candanā was delighted. Her heart blossomed like lotus but when the Lord started to go away seeing something amiss, tear drops fell from Candanā’s eyes. The Lord’s vow was fulfilled He accepted alms from princess Candanā’s hands. Candanā’s chains on her hands and feet turned into ornaments. The sky echoed with drum sounds with the shower of the five auspicious things. Candanā’s anxiety-ridden mind, face and the place lit up like the moon. After five months and twenty-five days, the Lord broke his fast.

After leaving Kauśāmbī, the Lord arrived at Campā city after passing through the villages Sumaṅgala, Suchettā, Pālaka etc. After four months fast, he completed the 12th cāturmāsaat the sacrificial hall of the Brahmin Svātidatta. Impressed by the Lord’s austerity two Yakṣas, Pūrṇabhadra and Maṇibhadra used to come every night to be at the service of the Lord. Seeing this, Svātidatta thought he must be an important and knowledgeable person. He came to the Lord and said –“Lord, what is soul?” The Lord said –“The literal meaning of ‘I’ is soul, that is, soul is different from the body parts. It is devoid of any form, taste, smell, etc. Its quality is consciousness. Being formless, acquiring the senses cannot take it.” Svātidatta asked again – “Is knowledge the other name of soul?” The Lord replied –“knowledge is the extraordinary quality of soul and the soul is the source / basis of knowledge. Being made of qualities, the soul is considered knowledge.” Svātidatta was very pleased with the answers to his questions.

The 13th Year of Mendicancy

Leaving that place the Lord arrived at Jaṃbhiyagrāma After staying there for sometime the Lord went to Chammāṇi village passing through Medhiyāgrāma and became meditative outside the village. A herdsman came there in the evening and leaving his cattle beside the Lord, went to the village on some work. On his return, he did not see his oxen and he questioned Mahāvīra, but he was silent. Angry due to his silence, the

herdsman inserted reeds of a grass named ‘Kāmsa’ in both ears of Mahāvīra and with a stone, hammered it into the ears completely. The Lord considered the intense pain from this as a past life karma and bore it quietly. Leaving Chammāṇi the Lord arrived at “Meḍhiyāgrāma” and went for alms to a vaiśya ‘Siddhārtha’s house. At that time, Siddhārtha was talking to his physician friend ‘Kharaka’. When Kharaka saw the Lord’s facial features, he knew there is some sharp thing inside his body. He told Siddhārtha and they requested the Lord to stay a while but the Lord did not stop. From there he went out of the village and again became meditative in a garden. After a while, Siddhārtha and Kharaka reached the garden with medicines. They massaged the Lord’s body with oil and with the help of pincers, extracted the reeds from the ears. The moment the blood-ridden reeds came out of the Lord’s ears he gave a cry, the echoes of which reverberated throughout the garden. After that, the physician Kharaka applied the ointment samrohaṇa on the wound and after paying obeisance to the Lord, both friends left. It is said that during his mendicancy period, the Lord bore with many ordeals and calamities but the ordeal of removing the nail-like reeds from the ears was the most painful of all. Bearing with all these ordeals with equanimity, the Lord destroyed a great amount of karmas. Strangely, the herdsmen caused the first and the last calamities faced by the Lord.

During twelve-and-a-half years of mendicancy period, the Lord accepted food only for 349 days. He fasted without water for the rest of the days.

Omniscience and First Sermon

In the middle of the 13th year on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha month in the afternoon, the Lord was in meditation under a Śala tree in the Jīrṇa garden by the banks of the river Jṛmbhikā outside the village Jṛmbhikā. At that time, ascending the accelerated path of annihilating the obscuring karmas (kṣapakaśreṇī) with a fast without water and in the second stage of pure (Śukla) meditation; the Lord destroyed the four obscuring karmas, namely, deluding, intuition obscuring, knowledge obscuring and interference producing under Uttarāḥḷgunī constellation, and achieve pure intuition and pure knowledge i.e. became an Arhanta and omniscient.

The moment the Lord attained omniscient, the gods showered five auspicious things to express the glory of knowledge. The gods created a beautiful, grand holy religious hall (samavaśaraṇa). Even knowing that there was none present to accept doctrine, the Lord gave his sermon for sometime, which is termed as unimpressive. As per tradition, the Tīrthamkara's first sermon is never wasted. Accordingly, this unprecedented incident is considered extraordinary. Ācārya Guṇacandra in his 'Mahāvīra Cariyam', while accepting the presence of people in the Lord's first samavaśaraṇa, calls it unimpressive. But highly acclaimed scholars like Ācārya Śīlāṅka and ancient ācāryas in their 'Cauvanna Mahāpurisa Cariyam' do not even mention the unimpressive council and say that first sermon of Lord Mahāvīra on the banks of river R̥jubālukā had scholars like Indrabhūti, etc present with their respective disciples. The Lord cleared their doubts and taking initiation at the Lord's feet, they became his gaṇadharas.

The Religious gathering of the lord (Samavaśaraṇa) at Madhyamāpāvā

From J̥m̥bhikā the Lord arrived at 'Madhyamāpāvā'. There Ārya Somila was organising a grand sacrificial ritual to which several great scholars were invited. At the other end, on the arrival of the Lord the gods glorified the Lord with the mahāpratihāryas (great auspicious entities) under the Aśoka tree and erected a grand samavaśaraṇa. There, in a gathering of gods-demons and humans the Lord sat on a high throne and started his sermon in a deep and serious voice using Ardhamāgadhī language. Gods and goddesses arrived at the samavaśaraṇa from the sky route. The scholars at Somil's sacrificaila ritual thought the gods were coming for the ritual but when the gods went ahead, they were surprised. When scholar Indrabhūti found out that the gods are going to Mahāvīra's samavaśaraṇa, he too, with the intention of testing Lord Mahāvīra's knowledge, and to defeat him in a debate on the meaning of scriptures, went there with his 500 students. Indrabhūti was greatly impressed seeing the brilliant aura around Mahāvīra's face and the great auspicious things (mahāpratihāryas). When Mahāvīra addressed him as Indrabhūti Gautama, he was surprised. However, in his mind he thought 'I will consider him all-knowing only when he clears the doubt in my mind.' Understanding Gautama's mind, Mahāvīra said – "Gautama! You are doubtful since a long time about the question of soul." Indrabhūti

consented and said, “The śrutis say that consciousness arises out of the five elements and again merges into them; hence existence of other world (beyond this life) is not possible. Then, how is a distinct identity of a person (puruṣa) separate from the earth and other elements possible?” The Lord said – “Indrabhūti! Your doubt arises from a difference of meaning. Actually, the wealth of knowledge does not mean that consciousness is born out of the elements, but different forms of knowledge. There are always new forms of knowledge produced in the soul and the past knowledge blends with it. In the same way, the meaning of ‘bhūta’ (elements) is not the five elements, as earth etc, but all objects both the inanimate and the animate matter that we know. The previous form of knowledge becomes redundant in a person when subsequent better forms of knowledge emerge.” The meaningful answer of Lord Mahāvīra cleared Indrabhūti’s doubt. Along with his disciples, he became the Lord’s principal disciple. This same Indrabhūti became popular later on as Gautama (his family name) in Mahāvīra’s period.

The belief in Digambara tradition

According to the Digambara tradition when Lord Mahāvīra attained pure knowledge the gods showered the five auspicious things and instructed by Indra; Kubera created samavaśaraṇa on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha month. Lord Mahāvīra entered the samavaśaraṇa from the eastern entrance and sat on the high pedestal. The gods and Indras sat on their respective seats to hear the Lord’s sermon, but the Lord kept silent. After waiting for many days, Indra was worried as to what could be the reason. Through clairvoyant knowledge, he understood that there are no gaṇadharas in the council. When Indra searched for a suitable person, he remembered the scholar Indrabhūti. Disguised, Indra went to Indrabhūti and said – “my teacher has taken a vow of silence these days. I want you to explain to me the meaning of a story.” Indrabhūti told him, “I shall only explain to you the meaning if after that you will become my disciple.” Indra in disguise as an ascetic readily agreed.

Indrabhūti got perplexed hearing the tale. The term ‘chajjīvaṇikāyā’ used intrigue in him. The subject of existence of soul filled his mind with doubt. After sometime he said –“then take me to your teacher. I will explain the meaning of this narrative only in front of him.” Indra was

happy in achieving his objective and took Indrabhūti with him, to Lord's samavaśaraṇa.

The moment he saw Indrabhūti the Lord addressing him by his name and gotra said, "Come, Gautama Indrabhūti! Your mind has doubts about the existence of the soul. The one within you which is thinking thus is the soul. There has never been a lack of that soul nor will there be, that is, this soul is permanent." Hearing a solution to his doubt from the Lord, without even expressing it, Indrabhūti, overwhelmed by devotion and faith, fell prostrate at the Lord's feet. He took initiation as the Lord's first disciple. This way, finding a purpose in Gautama Indrabhūti, Lord Mahāvīra gave his first sermon of 66 days after attaining omniscience starting on the first day of the dark fortnight of Śrāvaṇa month.

Founding the Tīrtha (religious order /creed/tradition)

Following Indrabhūti, ten more scholars took initiation from Lord Mahāvīra. The Lord imparted them the tripadī (i.e. three words aphorism) knowledge of "*uppaneī vā, vīgameī vā, dhuveivā*" i.e. reality is with origination-destruction and permanence simultaneously. Based on this tripadī knowledge Indrabhūti and other scholars produced the twelve Aṅgas known as Dwādaśāṅgi and incorporating the fourteen prior canons (pūrvas) in Dṛṣṭivāda and became gaṇadhara. Four thousand four hundred disciples of these scholars also took initiation on that day. Princess Candanabālā was the first female disciple female-monk in the Lord's congregation. Śaṃkha and others accepted the layman's conduct while Sulasā and others, the laywomen's conduct. This way, giving instructions on scripture and conduct, Lord Mahāvīra established the four-fold order of monks (male and female) and laymen-laywomen and became a Tīrthaṅkara. After founding the tīrtha the Lord returned once more to Rājagṛha from 'Madhyamāpāvā' and completed the rainy season halt of that year there.

The 1st Year as omniscient (Kevalī)

In those days in Rājagṛha, there were many householders of the Pārśva tradition. The Lord resided in the Guṇaśīla caitya there. When king Śreṇika heard the news of the Lord's arrival, he came to be present at the Lord's service with his family members. The Lord gave a sermon at the

gathering. Impressed, Śreṇika accepted right belief; and alongwith Abhayakumāra and others became votaries (*śrāvakas*). Prince Meghākumāra and Nandiṣeṇa accepted initiation into monkhood.

Nandiṣeṇa's initiation is described as follows: - Listening to the Lord Mahāvīra's sermon Nandiṣeṇa desired to take initiation. A god said, from the sky, "Right now your layman's karma is strong, so stay at home for some more time." However, the prince paid no heed and took initiation at the Lord's feet. He gained knowledge from the elder monks and started observing different kinds of austerities. Again, the god said, "Nandiṣeṇa, your enjoyment (*vedanīya*) karmas still remain. You cannot attain salvation without fulfilling those." This time too Nandiṣeṇa paid no attention. Once, he went alone seeking alms; and by coincidence, reached the home of a courtesan. When he spoke of religious benefits, the courtesan said, "Here we only speak of material benefits" and she smiled. Nandiṣeṇa did not like that woman smiling and filling the place with gems using a straw, said, "Take this, material gain" and left.

The courtesan was amazed to see the pile of gems and ran behind Nandiṣeṇa saying –"Oh my beloved, where are you going leaving me alone? I shall give up my life if you leave." Because of the courtesan's loving request and emergence of the enjoyment karma he agreed to stay and said –"But I shall accept food only after awakening knowledge of ten people each day. The day something is found wanting in this, I shall return to my teachers." The courtesan agreed to this condition and Nandiṣeṇa started staying there. Observing his vow, he would give awakening knowledge to ten people everyday and send them for initiation to the Lord. One day he could only inspire nine people to take initiation into the spiritual path and the courtesan kept inviting him repeatedly to eat. Ultimately, when she went to call him personally, Nandiṣeṇa said –"Okay, the tenth person for today is I." Saying so, he left the courtesan's house and immersed himself in austerities at the feet of the Lord. Lord completed 13th rainy season halt at Rājagṛha.

Note: A year's completion of mendicancy is after initiation (*Mārgaśīrṣa* 10) to the full moon day of the bright fortnight of *Kārtika* and the New Year starts from *Mārgaśīrṣa* again. After omniscience, too the same calculation has been followed, whereas omniscience happened on the 11th

day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha which comes six months after Mārgaśīrṣa.

2nd Year as omniscient

Completing the rainy period stay at Rājagrha, the Lord moved towards Videha. He arrived at ‘Brāhmaṇakuṇḍa’ and stayed at Bahusāla caitya. Scholar Ṛṣabhadatta had come to pay respects with his wife Devānandā. Seeing the Lord, Devānandā’s heart was filled with love. She became joyous and overwhelmed and tears started flowing from her eyes while milk oozed from her breasts. Gautama was astonished to see this and asked the Lord – “Lord! Who is this?” The Lord said – “Gautama, she is my mother and due to love for her son, she is excited.” Thereafter, hearing the Lord’s speech at the samavaśaraṇa Ṛṣabhadatta and Devānandā took initiation and studying the 11 Aṅgas, observed years of austerities and penance and attained mokṣa.

Adjacent to Brāhmaṇakuṇḍa was Kṣatriyakuṇḍa. There prince Jamālī along with five hundred other princes took initiation. His wife, Priyadarśanā, who was Lord’s daughter, also took initiation with one thousand women. The Lord spent that monsoon in Vaiśālī.

The 3rd Year as Kevalī

Leaving Vaiśālī the Lord arrived at the capital city of Vatsadeśa Kauśāmbī, and sat in the Candrāvatarāṇa caitya. The grandson of king Sahasrānīka used to rule over Kauśāmbī. His name was Udāyana; he was the son of Śatānīka. His mother’s name was Mṛgāvātī who was the daughter of king Ceṭaka of Vaiśālī. There used to live a Śramaṇa follower by name Jayaṃtī, Sahasrānīka’s daughter, or Śatānīka’s sister, the aunt of Udāyana. Learning of the arrival of the Lord, Udāyana, along with his mother Mṛgāvātī and aunt Jayaṃtī arrived at the service of the Lord. Jayaṃtī heard the Lord’s discourse and asked questions, given here briefly:-

Jayaṃtī’s first question was –“How does a soul get heavy or light?” In reply the Lord said –“A soul immersed in 18 sins, becomes heavy and keeps wandering in the world through endless time. A soul becomes light by getting rid of these sins and crosses the ocean of the world.” Jayaṃtī’s

second question was –“Does a soul have a natural eligibility to attain mokṣa or as a causal one?” The Lord said – “The eligibility for mokṣa is a natural inclination not causal.” Jayamṭī’s next question was – “Will all the Siddhas attain mokṣa?” The Lord said –“Yes, all the righteous souls will attain mokṣa.” The fourth question was –“When all such souls attain mokṣa would the world be devoid of great souls?” The Lord’s answer was –“No, soul is immortal; even if the Siddha souls will remain liberated always yet the world will not be devoid of righteous souls.” To Jayamṭī’s other question the Lord said it is better for the unrighteous people and the people who preach unrighteous things to remain asleep; when they are asleep, unrighteousness will not prosper in the world. The Lord also said that goodness or wrongfulness of power, wealth, and material depends on their good use or bad use. Happy with the Lord’s skillful answers to her questions, Jayamṭī accepted the path of restraint and self-redemption and welfare of others.

From Kauśāmbī the Lord arrived at Śrāvastī. There Sumanobhadra and Supratīṣṭha took initiation. They attained liberation in time after excellent austerities. From there the Lord arrived at Vāṇijyagrāma where he awakened householder Anaṃda and initiated him into the householder’s conduct and completed his rainy season stay there.

The 4th Year as Kevalī

After the end of the monsoons, the Lord moved from Vāṇijyagrāma to Magadha and stayed at ‘Guṇaśīla’ caitya in Rājagṛha. Śālibhadra, son of a merchant, used to stay there. Śālibhadra’s father was Gobhadra, a resident of the abode of gods. Out of love for Śālibhadra, he used to bring clothes, ornaments and food from the heaven for his son and his wives. Śālibhadra’s mother Bhadrā was so magnanimous she would give the gem-studded blankets that even king Śreṇika could not buy to her daughters-in-law to wipe their feet. Even king Śreṇika was amazed at Bhadrā’s magnanimity. He reached Bhadrā’s house. He was amazed to see Śālibhadra’s wealth. When Bhadrā called Śālibhadra to meet the king he said –“What is the necessity for me to come and meet? Whatever is valuable, see it and keep it in the godown.” To this the mother said –“This is not a thing that can be bought; this is our Lord (nātha).” Hearing the word ‘nātha’ Śālibhadra was surprised. “So there is some Lord over me as well. And I must do some good deed to release

myself from his servitude.” As advised by his mother he gradually took to the path of renunciation and started leaving one wife of his each day.

When Śālibhadra’s sister Subhadrā praised her brother in front of her husband Dhannā Seṭha he said –“If he wants to leave why he doesn’t leave it all at once? Leaving one by one is cowardice.” Subhadrā said – “Easier said than done.” Hearing this Dhannā got up at once and taking Śālibhadra with him, both took initiation at the Lord’s feet. After practising different austerities, they became gods in Sarvārthasiddha vimāna. This way, giving initiation in conduct to many people the Lord completed his rainy season halt in Rājagṛha.

The 5th Year as Kevalī

Completing the monsoon period in Rājagṛha, the Lord went to Campā and stayed at Pūrṇabhadra there. Hearing news of his arrival there, the king of the city, Datta, came with his family. Prince ‘Mahācandra’ awoke on hearing the Lord’s sermon. He became a votary. After sometime on the Lord’s arrival again he renounced everything and became a monk. After sometime, the Lord arrived at Vītabhaya city after leaving Campā. The king Udāyana there was a śrāvaka observing the vows and used to stay awake in the night in his armoury. On the way to Vītabhaya, the monks had to face many difficulties because of the heat. There was no habitation anywhere nearby. It was impossible to find food or water. On the way, they came across caravans loaded with sesame. The caravaners stopped their caravans and seeing the monks, requested them to partake of the sesame. Knowing that the sesame is pure without any living beings (acitta) the Lord stopped the monks from accepting it. The water at a nearby pond was also acitta, so the Lord did not permit them to quench their thirst with it. The Lord thought if the soulless grains and water is accepted easily, in future the practice of accepting the unacceptable will develop and there will not be any control over the monk tradition. Hence even if it is faultless, for a mendicant, accepting something against the social custom is wrong. At the time of leaving Vītabhaya city, king Udāyana served the Lord and many took the path of renunciation. From there the Lord arrived at Vāṇijyagrāma and spent the rainy season there.

The 6th Year as Kevalī

Completing his monsoon stay at Vāṇijyagrāma the Lord proceeded to Vārāṇasī and stayed at ‘Koṣṭhaka caitya’. There he gave a sermon to the people present, inspired by which the father of Cullinī, his wife Śyāmā and Surādeva and his wife Dhanyā became votaries. Later on, they were counted amongst the foremost śrāvakas of the Lord. From Vārāṇasī, the Lord arrived in Ālaṃbhiyā and stayed with disciples in Śaṃkhanāda garden. The king of Ālaṃbhiyā, Jitaśatru, came to the Lord. Near the Śaṃkhanāda garden, there was a place of a renouncer named Pudgala, who was a veritable scholar of the Vedas andśāstras. He had attained vibhaṅga (skewed) knowledge by observing fasts and penance enabling him used to know the situation till Brahmaloaka. Once out of ignorance he opined that the age of gods is between ten thousand years to ten sāgaras and he had propagated this opinion everywhere. This view reached Gautama during his wandering for alms and he told the Lord about this. The Lord said –“No, the best age is up to 33 sāgaras.” When Pudgala learnt this, he came to the Lord for clarification. On listening to the sermon of the Lord, He got enlightenment; and taking initiation from the Lord, observing penance and restraint, he attained liberation.

During this period, Culaśataka also became a votary. After passing through various places in Ālaṃbhiyā a, the Lord reached Rājagṛha. There Maṃkāī, Kiṃkama, Arjunamālī and Kāśyapa were initiated into monkhood by him. Householder Varadatta too accepted restraint and attained liberation after 12 years of austerities. He had his rainy halt in Rājagṛha. Nandana also took intiation here.

The 7th Year as Kevalī

Sensing opportunities, Lord Mahāvīra remained in Rājagṛha after the end of the rainy season. Once, king Śreṇika was with the Lord when a leper came and sat there. Suddenly, the Lord sneezed. The leper said –“die soon.” Then Śreṇika sneezed and he said –“live long”. When Abhayakumāra sneezed, he said, “Live or die”. When Kālaśaukarika sneezed he said, “Neither live nor die.” This way, he said different things when different people sneezed. However, Śreṇika was angry at the use of the word ‘die’ for the Lord. Even before anyone reacted, the leper vanished. Addressing Śreṇika’s curiosity, the Lord said –“O king! This

man is not a leper, but a god in this disguise. He said, “Die soon” to me, implying “attain salvation soon”. To you he said, “Live long”, which means, there is happiness in this life; live it as later there is sorrow and the path to hell is open for you. For Abhaya both are alike; there is no joy here or after death in his next birth as well. Kālaśaukarika is bad both ways – neither joy in living, nor any use in dying, that is why he said, “Neither live nor die.”

Hearing that the path to hell is open, Śreṇika asked the Lord – “What is the way to save me from the sorrow of hell?” The Lord said – “If you can prevent butcher Kālaśaukarika from killing, or can get the Brahmin woman Kapilā to donate, you can be released from going to hell.” Śreṇika tried his best. However, he did not succeed’ either in making butcher leave his killing profession or to make Brahmin woman become of charitable disposition. Seeing Śreṇika defeated and sad, the Lord said – “Do not worry; you will be a Tīrthaṅkara in future.” After sometime Śreṇika made an announcement that, whosoever wants to take initiation from the Lord was free to do so. All help would be extended to that person’s dependents who would be well looked after by him. Many householders, 23 princes and 13 queens, encouraged by the announcement, took initiation. Ascetic Ārdraka too, came to the Lord. The Lord spent that rainy season halt too in Rājagṛha.

The 8th year as Kevalī

After the rainy season halt, spending a little more time in Rājagṛha, the Lord arrived at Kauśāmbī. Attracted by the beauty of Mṛgāvātī of Kauśāmbī, the king of Ujjayinī, Caṇḍapadyota, wanted to make her his queen. Therefore, he had surrounded Kauśāmbī as after the death of her husband and her son Udāyana being very young, Mṛgāvātī was ruling the kingdom. Hearing the Lord’s arrival, she went to listen to his sermon and, ready to renounce asked Caṇḍapadyota present there to give her permission. In a full assembly, helpless, not only did Caṇḍapadyota gave her permission, but got the Lord to give her initiation in the assembly with great pomp and show. With intelligence, Mṛgāvātī protected her chastity and followed the right path. The Lord completed that cāturmāsa Vaiśālī.

The 9th Year as Kevalī

Completing the rainy season halt in Vaiśālī, the Lord came to ‘Kākaṃdī’, passing through Mithilā, and stayed at Sahasrāmra garden. On the news of the Lord’s arrival, king Jitaśatru came to offer his service. The merchant Bhadrā’s son, Dhanyakumāra, too, reached there. Listening to the Lord’s sermon, he gave up his vast wealth and prosperity and took initiation. Accepting initiation, he took an oath in front of the Lord –“All my life I will wander observing fasts and shall only break my fast with food free from living beings.” This way, through severe penance he made his body emaciated. Dhanyakumāra’s penance and austerities were so lofty that Lord Mahāvīra praised him for being the one observing the most difficult penance among his 14,000 monks. In nine months of mendicancy, monk Dhanya completed his life observing a fast and became a god in the Sarvārthasiddhi vimāna. ‘Sunakṣatrumāra’ too went to Sarvārthasiddhi in this manner after initiation. After leaving Kākaṃdī, the Lord, passing through Kampilapura and Polāsapura, arrived at Vaṇiyagrāma. At Kampilapura, Kuṇḍkaulika accepted the śrāvakaconduct and ‘Saddālputra’ in Polāsapur accepted the 12 vows. Leaving Vāṇijyagrāma the Lord arrived ta Vaiśālī and completed the rainy season halt there.

The 10th Year as Kevalī

After the rainy season, the Lord reached Rājagṛha through Magadha. There, Mahāśataka gāthāpatiaccepted the vows of a votary. An elder monk from Pārśva’s tradition, too, came to the Lord’s samavaśaraṇa; and getting clarifications for his doubts from the Lord, was very happy. He said Lord Mahāvīra is omniscient. He accepted the five major vows (mahāvratas) from the Lord. There, in reply to some questions of Rohaka monk, the Lord said, “The question of existence of the world, the other world, living-non-living, egg and hen their pre-post discussions is an immortal one (infinite regress). In fact, there is no normative order in these, as this is an eternal tradition. In the same way, the existence of all matter in the world is interdependent.” Addressing Gautama’s inquisitiveness the Lord said, “The conditions and arrangements of the world are of eight types. These are; air on the basis of sky, water on the basis of air, earth on water; living beings on earth, non-living beings on living beings, different forms of life on basis of karmas and modes of

souls, adoption of mind and speech particles and souls adopting different modes due to karmas. He spent rainy season haltat Rājagṛha.

The 11th Year as Kevalī

Leaving Rājagṛha, the Lord reached Kṛtaṅgalā-Kayaṅgalā where the samavaśaraṇa was held at the ‘Chatrapalāśa’ garden. At that time, a renouncer named Skamḍaka used to live in Śrāvastī city near Kṛtaṅgalā. He was the disciple of ‘Gardabhāla’ and well-versed in Vedas and Vedāṅgas. Once he met a nirgrantha named Piṅgala. Piṅgala asked Skamḍaka –“O Magadha! Can you tell me if the world, soul, Siddhi and Siddhas are with an end or without an end? What kind of death enhances or reduces a soul?” Skamḍaka thought a lot but could not get the answer. He learnt that the Lord had arrived at ‘Chatrapalāśa’, so he thought, why not get the solution to this from him, and he went to Kaytaṅgalā.

There the Lord told Gautama, “Your past acquaintance, a mendicant Skamḍaka will come here in a while.” Gautama was curious and asked –“Lord, will Skamḍaka become your disciple?” The Lord said –“Yes, today Skamḍaka will become my disciple.” Skamḍaka came there. Gautama welcomed him and asked –“Skamḍaka, did you come here because the nirgrantha Piṅgala asked you something you could not find an answer for?” Surprised, Skamḍaka said –“Gautama, May I ask you as to who told you my secret thought?” When Gautama introduced him to the Lord’s omniscience, Skamḍaka devotedly saluted the Lord. He then placed his problem in front of the Lord. The Lord said –“Skamḍaka, the world is of four kinds – substance (dravya), place (kṣetra), time (kāla) and modes or thoughts (bhāva). In some way the world is with an end and in another, endless, without an end. It is the same for soul, Siddhi and Siddha. As far as dying is concerned, there are two kinds of deaths; death as a child/fool (bāla) and death of a knowledgeable one (pañḍita). Death as a child enhances the transmigration cycle (saṃsārā) while the death of a knowledgeable one or death in samādhi (meditation) reduces transmigration cycle. Dying in ignorance, unmeditative, on account of anger, greed, lust, etc is a childhood death.”

Skamḍaka was very happy with the knowledgeable solutions given by the Lord. He expressed desire to be a mendicant. Knowing him to be a suitable person the Lord gave him initiation. Skamḍaka became a monk.

For 12 years, he seriously observed the conduct of a monk and affected his soul through various austerities and died on the Vipula Mountain in meditative state. The Lord reached Vāñijyagrāma passing through Sāvathī, from Kaytaṃgalā.

The 12th Year as Kevalī

At the end of the monsoon period the Lord left Vāñijyagrāma and came to the Bahuśāla caitya in Brāhmiṇakuṇḍa. Jamālī, the heretic had sought permission in this very place from the Lord to wander separately and when he was silent he left with five hundred monks to wander independently. The Lord arrived at Kauśāmbī while going towards Vatsadeśa. At Kauśāmbī, Candra and Sūrya had come for venerating the Lord in their own vimānas, which is an extraordinary event. From Kauśāmbī the Lord reached Rājagṛha and stayed at Guṇaśīla caitya. The Lord's monsoon stay of the year was at Rājagṛha. In that same year his disciples, 'Vehāsa' and 'Abhaya' became gods after their fast unto death on Vipula Mountain.

The 13th Year as Kevalī

Leaving Rājagṛha the Lord reached Campā and stayed at Pūrṇabhadrā garden. Kauṇika used to rule Campā at that time. Kauṇika had made systematic arrangements to stay abreast of the Lord's well-being and news of his leaving. He used to have his food after he got the above news of the Lord. On the news of arrival of the Lord, Kauṇika went to pay obeisance to the Lord with pomp and show. The Lord gave his sermon. Many householders became monks. Prominent among them were the ten grandsons of Śreṇika. Jinapālita, etc also became Śramaṇas and a famous trader like Pālita became a votary and the Lord completed his rainy season haltthere.

The 14th Year as Kevalī

From Campā the Lord left for Videha. At Kākandī city, the householder 'Khemaka' and 'Dhṛtidhara' took initiation and observing restraint and austerities for 16 years, in the end both became enlightened at the Vipula hill. Wandering, the Lord reached Mithilā and stayed there for the rainy season. Completing that, passing through Aṃgadeśa, the Lord reached

Campā city and addressed the samavaśaraṇa at Pūrṇabhadra caitya. At that time, there was a war going on in Vaiśālī. Queens of the royal family and ordinary people came to offer worship. At the end of his sermon, the 10 queens, including Kālī, Sukālī, etc, asked the Lord about the well-being of their sons gone to war. Hearing about the death of their sons from the Lord, Kālī and other queens developed detachment, taking permission of Kauṇika, they accepted initiation. All the queens studied the 11 Aṃgas under the Āryikā Candanā and observed many austerities and in the end, observing a fast, meditating, ended all pain and attained nirvāṇa.

15th Year as Kevalī

Through Vaiśālī, the Lord moved to Śrāvastī. There, Halla and Vihalla, Kauṇika's brothers, accepted initiation into monkhood and practiced severe penance for self-purification. Reaching Śrāvastī, the Lord stayed at Koṣṭhaka caitya. Maṃkhaliputra Gośālaka too, was in Śrāvastī at that time. He was propagating the 'Ājīvaka' sect and he called himself a Tīrthaṃkara. The word had spread in Śrāvastī that two Tīrthaṃkara were present there. Gautama wanted to know the truth from the Lord. The Lord gave a complete account of Gośālaka and said Gośālaka was not a 'Jina' but a psuedo Jina. When Gośālaka heard this, he was very angry. He was speaking angrily with his fellow Ājīvakas when the Lord's disciple Ānaṃda was passing by. When Gośālaka saw him, he called him and said –“Ānaṃda, my spiritual teacher Śramaṇa Mahāvīra has attained an excellent status and he is honoured by gods and men, but if he says anything about me it will not be good; I shall turn him into ashes with my power.”

On hearing this, innocent Ānaṃda became sad and got worried. He told everything to the Lord and asked him – “Lord, does Gośālaka have so much power that he can turn a Tīrthaṃkara into ashes?” The Lord said – “Gośālaka certainly has that much power that he can reduce an ordinary to ashes but he cannot burn an Arihanta; but yes, he can produce difficulties and pain. Hence, please alert Gautama and other detached persons (nirgranthas). Gośālaka can come here any moment. He is angry due to hatred; hence do not respond to anything he says. There is no need to indulge in religious debate with him or to give him religious inspiration.”

The Lord was just saying this to the monks when Gośālaka reached the garden with his disciples and said –“Kāśyapa, you say Maṃkhaliputra Gośālaka is your disciple. That is true, but that disciple of yours died and has become a god. I am from the Kauṇḍinyāyana gotra. I have Gośālaka’s body because it is capable of bearing with ordeals. This is my seventh entry into a body.” Hearing Gośālaka’s words, the Lord said –“Gośālaka, since you are caught, you are weaving a web of words. However, this is not right. You are Gośālaka and no one else but him. There is no need to make these false utterances.” Gośālaka was very angry hearing the Lord’s clear speech and started blabbering nonsense. He also abused the Lord.

The words of Gośālaka did not affect the Lord. Other monks too remained silence as per the Lord’s orders, but the heretic ‘Sarvānubhūti’ could not contain him. He told Gośālaka –“Gośālaka, it is not right for a mendicant like you to behave so inappropriately in spite of having been initiated by the Lord. Do not take refuge in unwise action in anger.” Gośālaka was furious to hear Sarvānubhūti’s words. He hurled a hot flash in anger, which reduced Sarvānubhūti to ashes. Like Sarvānubhūti, the monk ‘Sunakṣatra’ too could not tolerate this. He, too, tried to explain to Gośālaka. In turn, Gośālaka hurled another hot flash. While its impact was not as powerful, but with fearsome pain, he came and prayed to the Lord, and with repentance again accepting the major vows, seeking forgiveness from all, ended his life in meditation.

In the end Mahāvīra himself tried to advise Gośālaka bit, but it had an opposite effect on Gośālaka and he hurled another hot flash at Mahāvīra. It did not burn Mahāvīra’s body but circumambulated him and leapt back at Gośālaka and burning him, went into his body. Gośālaka started to feel pain in his body, yet he said to the Lord –“Kāśyapa! Today you were saved, but with the impact of my hot flash, within six months of your mendicancy period, you will die.” The Lord said –“I shall wander as a Tīrthaṃkara for 16 years now³ but you, pained by your own hot flash, will be rid of your body within seven nights.”

³ In contrast to the “Note” given in the 1st year as *kevalī*, this is the 14th year of the *kevalī*-caryā. Hence, the reference to wandering for 16 years is correct, but this is the 27th year after initiation and 57th year of his life.

By using the hot flash repeatedly, Gośālaka became lack-lustre and the energy of his penance became deadly for him. By using the hot flash against the Lord, he had rendered himself corrupt and power-less. With the Lord's permission, the nirgranthas made him speechless with their questions. He was disappointed with his defeat. To cool down the hot flashes he began to drink water and pour water over his head.

Gośālaka told his elder monks of Ājīvaka cult that after his death his body should be bathed in scented water, decked in valuable ornaments and taken in procession with honour and let it be announced that Gośālaka was the 24th Tīrthaṅkara jina and he became enlightened, emancipated and liberated. Suddenly on the 7th night, his eyes became clear and pure. His illusion had disappeared. In his mind he came to repent that despite being a non-jina, he was claiming to be a jina. It was wrong on his part to attack the Śramaṇa monks and hate his spiritual teacher. Lord Mahāvīra is the true jina and Tīrthaṅkara. He at ~~one~~ once called all the monks and said –“Whatever I said about myself are all false. I am not a jina. Hence when I die, as a mark of repentance, spit on me thrice and tying my feet with a rope, drag my body through the streets of Śrāvastī, declaring that Gośālaka was not a jina, Mahāvīra is the jina.” He made them take an oath to this effect and died on the seventh night. When he died, the monks thought to do as told would demean them. Hence, to protect themselves from the fault of having disrespected the instructions, together they counseled with each other and at Gośālaka's residence they instructed the potter, Halahal, to recreate the scene of Śrāvastī there, and after taking the body around thrice, they took out a procession and respectfully completed Gośālaka's last rites.

The Lord's Cure

Reaching Medhiyāgrāma the Lord sat on a stone on the ground in the 'Sāla Koṣṭhaka caitya' outside the village. At that time, the Lord experienced extreme pain in his body due to Gośālaka's hot flash attack. He also developed blood dysentery. The Lord bore them peacefully. At that time, a noble-looking disciple of the Lord, Sīhāmuni, was in Māluyākaccha. Observing a fast, he was meditating when he sensed in his mind that his spiritual teacher has developed a big illness and if he dies in this state, people will think he died during monkhood. With this thought, Sīhā started crying and wailing. When the Lord sensed this state of Sīhā, he called and said –“There is no need to be sad over imagining

that something sad is to happen to me. I do have pain from Gośālaka's attack, but I am not going to die. I shall wander as a jina for fifteen-and-a-half years now. Go to the śrāvaka 'Revatī's house in Meḍhiyāgrāma; do not bring the food kept for me, but bring stale citron fruit, which is appropriate to cure the disease."

Sīhā was very happy to hear this and immediately went to Revatī's house in Meḍhiyāgrāma. Consuming the citron fruit brought from Revatī's house, the Lord's pain subsided and within a few days he became as brilliant as before. There was a wave of cheer in human and divine worlds with the Lord regaining health. Revatī too obtained to the life of a god and later earned the Tīrthaṅkara nāmakarma because of this charity with pure feeling.

Demise of Sarvānubhūti, etc

One day, Gautama asked the Lord –“Lord, what will be the status of your congregational disciple Sarvānubhūti, who has been burnt to ashes by Gośālaka's hot flash?” The Lord replied –“Sarvānubhūti has been reborn as a heavenly being with life span of eighteen sāgara in the eighth heaven and exiting from there, he will be born in MahāVideha where he will attain emancipation, enlightenment and liberation.” Gautama then asked –“Where did Gośālaka go after death?” The Lord said that due to the pure thought at the end hour, he has been reborn in the 12th heaven as a god of 22-sāgara life span. From there, continuously wandering through hell and netherworld, facing sorrow, he will obtain right perception. In the end, observing restraint, he will attain omniscience (kevalajñāna) and destroying his karmas, shall put an end to all his sorrow.”

Leaving Meḍhiyāgrāma the Lord reached Mithilā and completed rainy season halt there. In that very year, Jamālī monk had an argument with the Lord and the female-monk Sudarśanā, having being awakened by the potter ḍhaṅka, rejoined the Lord's congregation.

16th Year as Kevalī

Completing the rainy season halt in Mithilā, the Lord went to Hastināpura. At that time, Gautama, along with a few monks, arrived at the Koṣṭhaka garden in Śrāvastī. Outside the city, the monk of Pārśva's tradition, Keśikumāra, was staying with his group of monks in the

Tīṃduka garden. He had three kinds of knowledge – mati, śruti and avadhi. At that point, two groups of Śramaṇa monks were in Śrāvastī and there was some difference in the clothes and thoughts of the two. Hence, it was natural for people to have suspicions as to why there is difference between the two sects of the same religion. If one propounds Cāturyāma why does the other paṃcavratīs? One’s practice is nudity, while the other’s is with clothes. Why such difference in practice when the aim is common? Keśī and Gautama felt they should come together and have mutual discussions to remove doubts in the minds of Śramaṇas and śrāvakas. Keeping in mind the age and loftiness of Keśīkumāra, Gautama took his disciples to Tīṃduka forest. Keśīkumāra duly welcomed and honoured Gautama. Thousands of people, apart from disciples of the respective monks, had gathered to see and hear this extraordinary discussion of two respected monks. Keśīkumāra said to Gautama –“Oh fortunate one! We are fortunate that you have come here with your monks. I would like to clarify some of my doubts from you. My first doubt is that Lord Pārśvanātha spoke of Cāturyāma dharma, whereas Mahāvīra speaks of paṃcamahāvratas. What is the reason behind this?” Gautama said –“Religious concepts are presented in accordance with the nature of knowledge prevalent in people at that time. At the time of the first Tīrthaṃkara, people were simple and unawakened and in the time of the last Tīrthaṃkara Mahāvīra, people are skewed and unawakened / unconscious. It was difficult for people to understand in those days and today it is difficult for people to observe the vows. Hence, to clarify vows of both times, the paṃcamahāvratas are established. In the time of the middle Tīrthaṃkara people were straightforward and intelligent. Understanding the instructions easily, they used to observe them too as easily; hence the middle 22 Tīrthaṃkara taught the Cāturyāma dharma.”

Keśīkumāra was satisfied with Gautama’s response. He posed a second question –“Varddhamāna Mahāvīra speaks of acelaka (nude) conduct while Lord Pārśvanātha spoke of a single upper cloth, why is that?” Gautama replied that mode of dressing is important for people to know. Mode of dress is extraneous; it can change. In fact, in the practise to attain mokṣa, knowledge, perception and conduct are eternal, which never change. The exterior form, while being necessary, is secondary in importance; the primary and most important is the internal concept, which is the same for both Lord Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra.

Śramaṇa Keśīkumāra was very happy with similar answers to his his 12 other questions by Gautama and saluting Gautama, along with his disciples, he accepted Lord Mahāvīra's paṃcamahāvratas from him.

The philosophical conversation of Keśī and Gautama had a great impact on the people gathered there. This union of the knowledgeable was the topic of discussion for a long time in Śrāvastī and resulted in great change in people's attitude and behaviour.

Then Mahāvīra arrived in Hastināpura via Kurū republic and sat in Sahasrāmavana. King Śīva ruled over Hastināpura then. By nature, he was a contented, emotional and religious person. Once he woke up from sleep in the night and thought, "I am happy in everyway. I am progressing in terms of wealth, food-stock, friends, treasure, etc. yet it is not nice to spend a lifetime over the deposits of enjoyment and wealth. I should do something for my future. It would be good if I crown prince Śīvabhadrā as king tomorrow at sunrise and become a mendicant. In the morning, he became initiated as an ascetic and decided that he would continuously observe fasts and would wander keeping both his hands raised upwards, facing the Sun.

This way, he became a princely sage (rājarṣi). On the day he broke his fast; he would duly construct a ritual platform, make a ritual fire and after sacrifice and prayers to guest, have his food. This way, doing penance facing the Sun for a long time, Sage Śīva obtained ruptured knowledge. He started seeing and knowing matters across the seven seas. He was happy with an accomplishment of his and started saying that he had attained pure knowledge from his peance that nothing exists beyond the seven seas and seven islands. When Indrabhūti heard this, he asked the Lord. The Lord said –"No, on the earth there are innumerable islands and seas." When people heard about the question and answer session of Gautama and Lord Mahāvīra, they started discussing about sage Śīva and Mahāvīra's statements. There were doubts in sage Śīva's mind and in this state of indecisiveness; he lost his ruptured knowledge. He thought –"Perhaps, something was lacking in my knowledge. Mahāvīra must be right." Leaving the hermitage, he reached Sahasrāmavana, and paying obescience to Mahāvīra, sat at an appropriate place. When the Lord completed his sermon he pleaded –"Lord, please give me initiation into your nirgrantha order." With the Lord's acceptance, he renounced the

sage's attire and practices and taking five fistfuls of hair, took the five mahāvratas. He observed several austerities after becoming a nirgrantha, studied the 11 Aṅgas and in the end, destroying all karmas, attained nirvāṇa.

After sometime, the Lord reached Vāṅjyagrāma touching Mokā city from Hastināpura and stayed for the rainy season there. In this time, among the ones who became mendicants, Poṭṭila's name is worthy of mention.

17th Year as Kevalī

At the end of the rainy season, the Lord moved from Videha to Magadha and reaching Rājagṛha, had a samavaśaraṇa at Guṇaśīla caitya. In that year, many monks observed fasts unto death at Vipula hill in Rājagṛha, fulfilling their spiritual duties. The Lord spent that rainy season in Rājagṛha.

18th Year as Kevalī

Completing the cāturmāsa Rājagṛha, the Lord left for Campā and became seated in Pṛṣṭhacampā on its western part. Hearing news of the Lord's arrival, the king of Campā, Śāla, and his brother, prince Mahāśāla, came to listen to the Lord's sermon and took initiation. From Pṛṣṭhacampā, the Lord reached the Pūrṇabhadra caitya in Campā. Kāmadeva, follower of Śramaṇas, was also present at the samavaśaraṇa. After his sermon, the Lord told the nirgrantha monks that despite being in the householder's life, Kāmadeva has borne all calamities with equanimity. All monks should take inspiration from him. The monks-female-monks accepted this with respect.

Leaving Campā, the Lord reached Daśārṇapura. The king there was great devotee of the Lord. He went to offer his respects with his four-fold army with great pomp and show. On the way, he felt pride wondering about others being present there with as much prosperity as him. At that time he saw the king of gods, Indra, alighting from the sky and seeing his prosperity, his pride was shattered. However, to protect his honour, he immediately took initiation and became part of the mendicants' order. Indra, who had come there with his riches to shatter his pride, felt ashamed seeing this courage of Daśārṇabhadra, and venerating him, returned to his place.

Leaving Daśārṇapura, the Lord arrived at Vāṇijyagrāma, after passing through Videha. SomilaBrahmin, a Vaidika scholar reached with his students to see the Lord and while standing, inquired him about different types of journey (vihāra) like yāpanīya, avyābādha and prāsuka. When he could not succeed in making the Lord answer-less to these questions, he asked some strange questions relating to the edible and inedible. After getting answers to even those questions, in order to test further Mahāvīra's knowledge of facts, he asked some theoretical questions. Getting appropriate responses from the Lord, Somila was very impressed and he faithfully accepted the householder's vows from the Lord and ending his life in meditation went to heaven. The Lord completed his cāturmāsa Vāṇijyagrāma.

19th Year as Kevalī

After completing the rainy season, wandering through Sāketa, Sāvattihī, etc in Kauśala country, the Lord arrived at Pāṃcāla and stayed at Sahasrāmravana of Kampilapura. A Brahmin named Ambaḍa used to stay there. He was a renouncer and had 700 disciples with him. When he saw Mahāvīra's life of penance, and heard his sermons inspiring disenchantment, he became a follower of Jainism along with his disciples and in the mode of a mendicant, practised the set of restraints ordained for a householder. One day, during his begging tour, Gautama heard that the ascetic Ambaḍa accepts food from 700 households at the same time. He shared his inquisitiveness with the Lord, who said –“Ambaḍa is a respectable and humble renouncer. He has attained vīryalabdhi, vaikriyalabdhi and avadhijñāna because of long fasts and focused meditation. Hence, in 700 body forms he acquires simultaneously, is seen going to seven hundred homes at the same time. This Ambaḍa has knowledge of soul and non-soul; a follower of Śramaṇatradition, he will not accept mendicancy.”

Talking about Ambaḍa's wandering practice the Lord said he sacrificed basic violence, untruth and does not take anything that has not been given and is a celibate and contented. While wandering, barring water that passes by on the way, he does not take water from river, well or pond by jumping into them. He does not ride on vehicles and walks on foot. He does not see arousing performances, nor does he indulge in gossip. He neither touches green vegetables, nor tears them. As for

vessels, he only uses a gourd, wooden vessel or an earthen pot, not one made of any metal. He does not wear anything apart from an ochre robe; does not wear any ornaments apart from purifying copper. He does not use anything on the body except soil from Gaṃgā. He drinks only filtered water and that too, given by another. After spending many years in austerities ascetic Ambaḍa will ultimately give up food for a month and after death, will be born as a prosperous god in Brahmaloḁa heaven. Leaving Kampilapura the Lord arrived at Vaiṣālī where he spent the rainy season.

20th Year as Kevalī

At the end of the rainy season, wandering through many places the Lord again came to Vāṇijyagrāma. When he was giving a sermon at the Dūtipalāśa caitya, there a monk of the Pārśva tradition, Gāṃgeya came to attend. He asked many questions to the Lord after the sermon and happy with those answers, told him, “you are omniscient, all- knowing.” He accepted the Lord’s five mahāvratas and became part of his Śramaṇa order. From there the Lord arrived at Vaiṣālī and completed cāturmāsathere.

21st Year as Kevalī

Completing the rainy season, the Lord left Vaiṣālī for Magadha and reaching Rājagṛha, went to the Guṇaśīla garden. Many monks of other tīrthas used to stay near that garden. They used to have discussions among each other from time to time. Usually, in these debates, they used to praise their own thoughts and condemn the other’s. Gautama heard them and placed his questions to the Lord. To one of those questions the Lord said that living being (jīva) and soul are one, not separate.

One day, outside the hermitage near the garden, some monks were discussing about paṃcāstikāyas, when a śrāvaka named Madduka passed by. Some tairthikas including Kālodāyī saw him and said Madduka has good knowledge about Mahāvīra’s doctrine, why do not we seek his opinion. Thus, they called Madduka and asked him many questions relating to paṃcāstikāyas. The tairthikas were speechless listening to Madduka’s concepts and arguments. When Madduka went to see the Lord, the Lord praised him. Gautama was highly impressed seeing Madduka’s ability and remarkable qualities. After he left, he asked the

Lord –“Lord! Will śrāvaka Madduka become a monk?” The Lord said – “No, he will remain a householder and complete his life with piety and become a god in the Aruṇābha vimāna. Again in a rebirth as a human being, he will take to the path of restraint and become enlightened, emancipated and liberated.” The Lord completed that rainy season halt (cāturmāsa) at Rājagṛha.

22nd Year as Kevalī

Leaving Rājagṛha, wandering through many places the Lord again returned to Rājagṛha and stayed at Guṇaśīla caitya. Once when Indrabhūti was returning to Guṇaśīla caitya after taking alms he met two tairthikas Kālodāyī and Sailodāyī on the way. They said it would be good if you can explain to us the correct essence of the paṃcāstikāya, such as dharmāstikāya, etc, that your teacher, the spiritual preceptor, kṣatriya-son Mahāvīra propounds. Gautama said, in brief –“We do not talk of the non-existents as the existents and the existents as the non-existents. With particular reflection you will understand the secret.” Saying this, Gautama moved ahead, without resolving his problem. Therefore, he too followed Gautama to the Lord. The Lord explained to him about paṃcāstikāya and seeing an appropriate moment gave a sermon, inspired by which Kālodāyī took initiation into the nirgrantha order and became a monk and after studying the 11 Aṅgas in sequential order, he became an expert in the secret of discourse.

To the northeast of Rājagṛha was the city Nālandā. Once, the Lord was sitting in the garden Hastigrāma near a hall named Śeṣa-dravikā. There a monk of the Pārśva tradition, Peḍhālaputra Udaka met Indrabhūti. To resolving a query by Udaka with regard to the vow of non-killing, Indrabhūti said that the one who gives up violence on mobile living beings (or a being with one or two senses) is giving up violence on that being in the present. It is not important; whether it was an immobile being (plants, etc) or a mobile being in the past. Violence on that is prohibited against the mobile living beings in the present existence. A renouncer’s objective is with the present state of being; what was in the past, or will be in the future, only the knowledgeable can know it. Hence, they who observe the vows taken but are unable to totally give up violence and accept the monk’s conduct, have a good outcome. Thus, a

follower of the Śramaṇa tradition, who has given up violence on mobile beings, does not break his vows by violence on immobile beings.

This way with other analyses with appropriate substantiation, Gautama cleared the doubts of Udaka Peḍhāla. He was leaving when Gautama said, “Udaka, you know that hearing religious speech from a non-violent (māhaṇa) monk, the person who has gained knowledge bestows respect on him.” Udaka understood Gautama’s hint and he not only expressed complete faith in Gautama, but also accepted the five mahāvratas at the feet Lord Mahāvīra and became part of his monk order. The Lord spent that year’s cāturmāsa Nālandā.

23rd Year as Kevalī

At the end of the rainy season, moving from Nālandā the Lord reached Vāṇijyagrāma in Videha, which was famous in those days for trade. A prominent trader named Sudarśana lived there. The Lord was staying Dūtipalāśa caitya. There were scores of people waiting to see the Lord. Sudarśana came there. After people left, Sudarśana asked the Lord about ‘time cycles’. Explaining to him about the palyopama time the Lord narrated to him his past life account. On hearing this, Sudarśana recollected his past life. At that very moment he accepted initiation. Then he studied, respectively, the 11 Aṅgas and 14 pūrvas and observed the Śramaṇa vows for 12 years, and destroying his karmas, in the end, attained nirvāṇa.

Once Gautama was returning from his alms-seeking stroll to the ‘Dūtipalāśa’ caitya when, on the way, he heard of the acceptance of a fast by the householder Ānaṃda. He thought Ānaṃda is Lord’s devoted disciple, has started to observe a fast. Therefore, I must see him; and he went to Kollāga nearby. Ānaṃda was delighted to see Gautama. He saluted him and after sometime, said –“Lord! Can a householder attain avadhijñāna remaining at home?” Gautama said –“yes.” Ānaṃda said –“I too have attained avadhijñāna; I know, and am seeing, forms and objects upto the Culla Himavaṃta mountain to the north, up to 500 – 500 yojanas of the Salt Ocean, above until Sauddharma realm of gods and below until the Lolaccua hell.”

Gautama said –“A householder attains avadhijñāna but to this extent; you should repent your false statement.” To this, Ānaṃda said –“I am speaking the truth. Perhaps you should repent.” Gautama had doubt in his mind and approached the Lord at once. The Lord said –“No, whatever Ānaṃda said was right; hence you must repent your false opinion.” Hearing the Lord, without breaking his fast, Gautama went to Ānaṃda and accepting his folly, sought forgiveness. From there, wandering, the Lord reached Vaiśālī, and stayed there during the rains.

24th Year as Kevalī

After the cāturmāsa at Vaiśālī, the Lord moved to Sāketa in Kauśala land. A famous śrāvaka, Jinadeva, wandering, came to ‘Koṭvarṣa’ city. Kirātarāja belonged to the local Mleccha lineage lived there. Jinadeva, who had come for trade, gave him different kinds of gems. Seeing them Kirātarāja said – “Where are these produced?” Jinadeva said –“our country is a veritable mine of these gems.” Kirātarāja said –“With the permission of your king, take me too to your country so I can see your country and its gems.” Making all arrangements for the journey, Jinadeva brought Kirātarāja along with him to stay in his house. At that time, Lord Mahāvīra reached Sāketa. Seeing a crowd Kirātarāja enquired – “Where are people going in such large numbers?” Jinadeva said –“King, a great owner, and trader of gems has arrived; people are going to see him.” Saying, “then even I must go”, Kirātarāja accompanied Jinadeva to Mahāvīra’s assembly. Seeing Mahāvīra’s throne and umbrella above, Kirātarāja was amazed. He saluted the Lord and asked him about his gems. The Lord said –“There are two types of gems –material gem and psychic (bhāva) gem. Again, there are three types of bhāva gems – darśana (intuition), jñāna (knowledge) and caritra (conduct). These three are such powerful gems that they not only increase the fame of the one that wears them but also improve his this-worldly and other-worldly state. Material (dravya) gems have a limited effect; they only bring joy in the present, but the bhāva gems give joy for several births and lead to the true destination.” Hearing this, Kirātarāja was happy and said – “Lord, then give me the bhāva gems.” The Lord got him a whiskbroom and mouth cloth (mukha vāstrikā), which Kirātarāja accepted and became part of the Lord’s monk order.

Leaving Sāketa the Lord went to Kampilapura in Pāṃcāla region. From there, wandering through Sūrasena, Mathurā, Naṃdīpura, etc, he came to Videha and spent the rainy season in Mithilā.

25th Year as Kevalī

At the end of the rainy season, the Lord left for Magadha. Giving sermons on the nirgranthatradition in various places, he arrived at Rājagṛha and sat in Guṇaśīla caitya. It was here that Gatiprapāta text was composed. One monk, Kālodāyī, asked the Lord that how does a person on his own do karmas that beget bad results. The Lord said, in the same way as immersed in the taste of impure food a person does not pay attention to its consequences, similarly, while doing something that gives momentary happiness and charm, a person forgets that its consequences will be bad later on. Naturally, Kālodāyī asked, “in this state, how does a person do good deeds?” The Lord said –“A person has medicine which is bitter with the thought that it will be beneficial to the body. In the beginning, the attitude to do good deeds develops from inducement. Then, seeing its result being happy, people naturally start doing it.”

Kālodāyī’s second question concerned violence that where one person makes a fire and the other douses it, which among these two commits greater violence and becomes a sinner. The Lord said –“The one who douses the fire does more violence on the fire; he destroys it. However, in dousing it, prevents and stops violence on the earth, water, air, the vegetable kingdom and mobile beings. Whereas the one producing the fire gives life to the fire, hence from fire it gets violence on other living beings. Thus, if we see carefully, the one who produces fire does greater violence than the one who douses it and as a result, obtains sin.”

Happy with the Lord’s answers Kālodāyī attained nirvāṇa in the end observing various kinds of penance and fast unto death. Gaṇadhara Prabhāsa too observed a one month fast in that year and attained nirvāṇa and the Lord completed his cāturmāsa there.

26th Year as Kevalī

At the completion of the rainy season, the Lord gave sermons at various places and returned to Rājagṛha’s Guṇaśīla caitya. In this year,

Acalabhrātā and Metārya gaṇadhara attained nirvāṇa with a one-month fast unto death (samādhi).

27th Year as Kevalī

Leaving Nālandā the Lord moved towards Videha and wandering, sat at Maṇibhadra caitya in Mithilā. King Jitaśatru came there. The Lord gave sermon to a large gathering. Indrabhūti and other monk disciples asked questions regarding the Sun's movement in the orbit, expanse of the rays of the Sun and shadow, the waxing and waning of the Moon, the reasons for planetary oppression, birth of a meteor, beginning of an era, etc. The Lord spent that year's cāturmāsa Mithilā.

28th Year as Kevalī

At the end of the rainy season halt, he wandered across places in Videha and gave initiation to many devotees into the Śramaṇa tradition as well as inspired many great people towards the śrāvaka tradition. Incidentally, the Lord spent cāturmāsa of that year in Mithilā.

29th Year as Kevalī

At the end of the rainy season, the Lord left Mithilā for Magadha and reaching Rājagṛha, sat in Guṇaśīla garden. At that time the śrāvaka of Magadha, Mahāśataka, was observing the last fast. Because of the purity of his perseverance during his fasting, he attained avadhijñāna and he was able to see far off places in four directions. One of his wives was Revatī whose character and behaviour was altogether different from that of Mahāśataka. She was unhappy with Mahāśataka's spiritual practice. One day, unaware, she reached the spot where Mahāśataka engrossed in austerity, reaching there, she started shouting angrily, leaving her hair open, like a hysterical person, and acting in an uncivilised manner. Mahāśataka was peaceful for a very long time but in the end he felt sorry for Revatī's behaviour and suddenly said –“Revatī, your uncivilised behaviour is not good. The result of this karma of yours will not be good. You will die in seven days and go to the first hell.” Revatī was frightened on hearing Mahāśataka's words. Ultimately, just as Mahāśataka had said, she died and went to the first hell.

‘Mahāśataka was a dear śrāvaka of the Lord. He learnt of Mahāśataka’s mental state and asked Gautama to go to Mahāśataka’s fasting hall and tell him his behaviour with Revatī was not right; hence, he must repent. As per the Lord’s instructions, Mahāśataka repented and purified himself. The Lord’s disciples and Gaṇadharas Agnibhūti and Vāyubhūti attained nirvāṇa with a fast unto death (samādhi). This year, the Lord was spent cāturmāsa at Rājagṛha.

The 30th Year as Kevalī

After the cāturmāsa, too, the Lord stayed back at Rājagṛha for sometime. At that time, his gaṇadharas, Avyakta, Maṃḍita and Akāṃpita attained nirvāṇa after month-long fasts each at Guṇaśīla garden. Leaving Rājagṛha, the Lord arrived at the hall of scribes of king Hastipāla at Pāvāpurī. The gathering immediately became a samavaśaraṇa. Addressing a huge gathering of people, the Lord said that life is dear to all living beings and so is happy and sweet behaviour. On the contrary, nobody likes death, sorrow and rude behaviour. A person should behave with others just as he would like others to behave with him. This is the basic idea of humanity and the foundation of religion. After the crowd left, king Puṇyapāla told the Lord –“Lord, in the last moments of yesterday night I saw eight things in the form of an elephant, money, kṣīrataru, a crow, lion, lotus, seed and pitcher. I am afraid if this dream is an ominous sign of an inauspicious event.”

Lord Mahāvīra told king Puṇyapāla –“Oh king, this dream indicates the future. Elephant in the dream indicates that in future even wise Śramaṇa adherents will live like an elephant in rut moment of wealthy, prosperous householder’s life. Even in the most frightening difficult situations, they will not think of renouncing. Those who will take the path of restraint giving up their homes will also give up restraint or will not practise restraint well under influence of bad company. There will be very few who will follow with firmness the path of restraint.”

“Seeing a monkey in the dream indicates that in future even great leaders of the congregation will be fickle in nature; they will be less courageous and will be negligent. They will not only disregard religion but also dishonour it. The few and far-between people who will behave righteously and observe the vows will be laughed at.”

“Kṣīrataru (Pāpala tree) in a dream indicates that in future fraudulent namesake monks will surround votaries who will donate with a wicked feeling. These people will consider monks of pure conduct as lax and the fox-like lax ones as ones of pure conduct.”

“Seeing a cow in a dream indicates that in future most monks and ascetics, opposing the norm, taking refuge in various fake sects, will keep changing the sect. Cawing like crows, these people will consider it their duty to condemn righteous people through perverse arguments.”

“Seeing a lion in distress indicates that the brilliant, renunciation-oriented Jain religion will become weak in future. Turning away from the preside of the religion, people will show respect to false monks in disguise.”

“Seeing a lotus in a dream indicates that in future by virtue of bad company pure people will also turn away from the righteous path and turn towards bad deeds and behaviour.”

“Seeing a seed in the dream indicates that in future people will leave out those who are worthy of being given to, and give alms to the unworthy in the same way as a farmer sows a good seed in barren land and tries to grow bad seeds on fertile land.”

“Oh king, in the end you saw a pitcher which says that in future there will be very few monks with qualities of penance, sacrifice, compassion, etc. Further, there will be pretentious monks of lax conduct in large numbers. Householders will not be able to distinguish between them and shall behave similarly with both kinds of monks.”

King Puṇyapāla developed detachment on hearing the results of his dreams. He accepted the path of restraint at the feet of the Lord and through right austerities, destroying all karmas, and attained nirvāṇa.

Description of Kālacakra (cycle of time)

One day Lord Mahāvīra’s first Gaṇḍhara Indrabhūti Gautama expressed curiosity about kālacakra. The Lord said –“Time cycle (kālacakra) has two main parts, avasarpīṇī (regressive half-cycle) and utsarpīṇī

(progressive half-cycle). Consistently regressive half cycle is avasarpinī and consistently progressing half cycle is utsarpinī. Every cycle is of ten koḍākoḍī sāgaras. Thus, one kālacakra is of 20 koḍ ākoḍāgaras.

The regressive time cycle of avasarpinī consists of six parts. Every part is called Āraka. The names of six Ārakas or Āras are as follows:-

1.	Suṣamā- Suṣama	Happy-happy
2.	Suṣama	Happy
3.	Suṣamā-Duṣama	Happy unhappy
4.	Duṣamā-Suṣama	Unhappy happy
5.	duṣama	Unhappy
6.	Duṣamā- duṣama	Unhappy unhappy

“The first Āraka is completely happy. This Āraka is of four-koḍ ākoḍī sāgara. At the beginning of this Āraka, a human life span is of three palyopama, height 3 miles, and body has 256 ribs. The body consists of the best bones and bolt muscles in perfect symmetry all over. In this period, the mother gives birth at the same time to a son and daughter twins (yugala) who at an appropriate time spend lives as husband and wife. People of this age have divine beauty; they are gentle, soft-spoken, and simple-minded and eat leaves, fruits and flowers. They feel hungry once in three days. The taste of the earth in this time is like sugar Candy. In that time, the atmosphere is exceedingly beautiful and charming, happy, peaceful and joyous. People of that time do not have to make efforts for livelihood because ten kinds of kalpavṛkṣa fulfill all their needs. When the twins’ lifespan has six months remaining of it, they give birth to twin son and daughter. The parents look after the twin borns for 49 days, the twin youth live together and roam freely. On completion of three palyopama years, one of them sneezes and the other yawns and they end their lives to be born to gods. There are six kinds of humans in the 1st Āraka.

“The second Āraka called Suṣamā is of three koḍ ākoḍāgaras. In this, in contrast to the first Āraka the qualities of colour, smell, taste and touch are far less pleasant. In the initial stage of this Āraka, the age is two palyopama, height 2 miles and ribs are 128. The body consists of best bones and is in symmetry all over. They feel hungry once in two days. The taste of the earth declines to become similar to sugar. Even in this

Āraka, ten kinds of kalpavṛkṣa fulfill all human needs. Just as in the first Āraka when the yugalinis have six months to live, they give birth to a son and daughter twins, who start their married life independently after brought up by their parents. At the end of their lives these twins too sneeze, yawn, and dying become gods. There are four kinds of human beings in this Āraka.”

“The Suṣamā-duṣama Āraka is of 2 koḍ ākoḍāgaras. When compared to the second Ārā, in this, there is degeneration to a large extent in colour, smell, taste and touch. In the beginning of this Ārā, the life-span is 1 palyopama, height 2000 dhanuṣa and ribs are 64 in number. The body consists of the best bones and muscles, in perfect symmetry all over. They feel hungry on alternate days. The kalpavṛkṣa also fulfill their needs. They also do not have to make effort to earn their livelihoods. Hence, this era is also an era of enjoyment (bhoga). Six months before death the female twin gives birth to son-daughter twins who are looked after by the parents for 79 days and then they roam about freely. In the end they sneeze and yawn and after death become gods.”

“This situation continues till two-thirds part of the time cycle. Due to speedy changes in the last part (approximately a crore pūrvas) human beings, have six kinds of body build-up, symmetry, and different dhanuṣa height, age lower number of years and at the maximum innumerable years. All human beings do not go to heaven after death; but go to hell, netherworld, human womb and some on gods’ realms, or the process of attaining mokṣa begins. When the eighth part of one palyopama remains of the third part of this cycle, 15 kulakaras are born successively in Bharata. Kalpavṛkṣa reduce in numbers as well as turn weak. This results in scarcity of things needed for living causing enmity and contests between people. Kulakaras try to keep people in control.”

“When 84 lakh pūrvas, three years and eight-and-a-half months remained of this avasarpīṇī half cycle, Vṛṣabhanātha was born, who became the first king and first Tīrthaṅkara. Administering for 63 lakh pūrvas, Vṛṣabhanātha taught the humans of the time asi (art of government / military occupation), masi (writing) and kṛṣi (farming) and other skills and arts and changed the world from the world of enjoyment (bhoga bhūmi) to that of action (karma bhūmi). He founded the first tīrtha of the avasarpīṇī half cycle. It was in this Āraka that we had the first

Tīrthaṃkara and the first cakravartī. Three years and eight-and-a-half months remained for the third ārā to end when Lord Vṛṣabhanātha attained nirvāṇa.”

“The fourth ārā named Duṣamā-Suṣamais of 42 thousand years less one koḍ ākoḍāgara years. In contrast to the third Āraka, in this there is rise in the sense of colour, smell, taste and touch and decline to a large extent in strength, heroism, action, human form and bravery, etc. There are six kinds of body structure of humans and different dhanuṣa height and time-span is of minimum antarmuhūrta and maximum pūrvakoṭi. After dying, they go to five different kinds of destinations. In this Āraka there are 23 Tīrthaṃkara, 11 Cakravartīs, 9 Baladevas, 9 Vasudevas and 9 prati Vasudevas.”

In the presence of the Tīrthaṃkara the country is beautiful, prosperous and has abundant food and wealth. The ācāryas of that time reflect the brilliance of deep knowledge. Just seeing them gives a feeling of contentment and peace and their speech produces joy in people. Parents are full of loving tenderness comparable to gods. Subjects are truthful, respectful, faithful to religion / righteousness, of pure hearts, and ones who honour and pay obeisance to teachers like gods. In the time of the Tīrthaṃkara, knowledge, science, good behaviour, clan honour and pride are of the highest order. Kings are inclined towards sacrifice and are the foremost devotees of the renouncer Lord.”

“Introducing the extreme situation in the fifth Āraka the Lord said – “Three years, eight months and fifteen days after my mokṣa will commence the fifth Ārā named duṣama, which will have a time span of 21 thousand years. My religious rule will continue till the last day of the fifth Ārā. But the moment the fifth Ārā begins, degeneration of colour, smell, taste, touch will happen alongside successive destruction of religion / righteousness, character, truth, peace, right belief, good behaviour, good knowledge, courage, bravery, compassion, sacrifice, vows, etc and in their place bad qualities will keep accumulating. Villages will seem fearsome like graveyards and cities will seem like a playground of ghouls. Kings will bring pain like the god of death Yamarāja and subjects will be timid like slaves. All over there will be the rule of ‘Matsyarājya’ that is, there will be a tradition of putting an end to those smaller than one. There will develop the tendency of looting and

usurping by the authorities and there will be disorder everywhere. Situation in every country and state will be uncertain. It will be common to find disturbances at home, and even family members will have a sense of mutual mistrust. People will behave like enemies to others instead of being cooperative and helping. People will develop feelings of disrespect and disregard for teachers instead of devotion and faith. Teachers too, instead of imparting knowledge and righteous teachings will, by their own uncontrolled behaviour, produce feelings in their students of independence and self-praise which will lead to a sense of vanity even in religious matters. There will be a sense of disobedience in place of love between father and son. Women will have less of modesty; at the same time their interest in fun and laughter, amorous play and garrulousness will increase, and as a result, seeing god will only be a matter of mere talk.”

“By the time the fifth ārā ends, the monk-female-monk and layman-laywoman order will almost die out. At the end of the fifth ārā there will only remain the four-fold order of Duḥ prasaha ācārya, female-monk Falguśrī, votaries Nāgila and Satyaśrī. Vimalavāhana will be the last king of Bhārata and the last minister, Sumukha. Human being’s body will be two-hands of height, and the life span will be twenty years. The greatest fast will be that of belā (ṣaṣṭhabhakta). Ācārya Duḥ prasaha will instruct the four-fold order until the end. In the end when he will tell them that the saṃgha (order) is no more; he will be excommunicated from the order. He will remain a householder for twelve years and after being a monk for eight years, observing a fast unto death completing his life will become a god in Saudharmakalpa. On the day of the end of the fifth Āraka Gaṇadharmā, cāritradharma and rājadharmā (duties of a ruler) and fire (agni) will be lost from their roots in Bharata region.”

“After the end of the fifth Āraka, will commence the sixth; named Duṣamā- Duṣama. Its time-span is 29,000 years and in this time destruction will be at its prime. There will be havoc, fear and chaos in all ten directions. There will always be fearsome storms and winds of great speed blowing everything away. Because of these winds, the whole atmosphere will be filled with dust envelop in darkness. Due to the impact of the time, there will be an unimaginable increase in the Sun’s heat and the Moon’s coolness. There will be untimely rains and leaving the high mountains the earth will gradually be still. The earth will burn like fire because of the heat. People will not be able to work nor even

move. In this *ārā* the human body will just be one hand high and life-span will be between 16 to 20 years. There will be numerous boys and girls in a family and people will have no love for any other apart from their own families. People will forever be worried about their own families. People will be very ugly, harsh, and shameless, immersed in squabbles and bad deeds, disrespecting, unwise, suffering from different kinds of diseases, lacking in brilliance, stuck in bad qualities of illusion and passion and will be indulgent in bad habits. There will be many more numbers of disabled people. The expanse and depth of Gaṅgā and Siṃdhu rivers will reduce phenomenally; there will be less water and fish and tortoises will be many more in number which will be consumed as food. After death people will be born in hell and nether realms.”

Utsarpiṇī kāla cycle

“After the end of the Duṣamā– Duṣama half cycle of the avasarpīṇī cycle, a progressive half cycle called utsarpīṇī will arise. Just like the avasarpīṇī utsarpīṇī too will have six Ārakas – in the reverse. That is, the first Āraka will be Duṣamā– Duṣama and the last, or sixth will be Suṣamā–Suṣama. The first *ārā* of utsarpīṇī cycle will be of 21 thousand years and the situation will be similar to the one in the sixth *āra* of avasarpīṇī (regressive) half cycle. The only difference is that in utsarpīṇī the situation will progressively improve.”

At the end of the first Āraka the second Āraka Duṣama will commence which will last for 21 thousand years. In this time, there will be a good time right from the beginning. A cloud by name Puṣkara Saṃvartaka will shower torrential rains for seven days all over Bharata land. The heat of the earth will cool down and different kinds of grains and medicines will grow. This way for seven days, each Puṣkara Megha, KṣīraMegha, GhṛtaMegha, AmṛtaMegha and RasaMegha will send torrential rains, making the dry earth cool, content, and lush green. People hidden inside caves will come out again and seeing the lush green earth, will begin reconstruction of a new life. They will give up flesh eating and become vegetarians. They will construct a society on a new foundation and successively there will be progress in knowledge, science, arts, crafts, etc.”

“The 21 thousand years of the second Āraka too will end and the third Āraka, named Duṣamā-Suṣamawill begin which will be 42 thousand years less of one koḍ ākoḍāgaras. After three years, eight-and-a-half months of the third Āraka is over, the first Tīrthaṅkara of the utsarpiṇī half cycle will be born. In this Āraka there will be altogether 23 Tīrthaṅkara, 11 cakravartīs, 9 baladevas, 9 Vasudevas and 9 pratiVasudevas. In this time, the situation will be same as that of the Duṣamā-Suṣamaof the avasarpiṇī half cycle. The only difference is that here the situation will be progressively good.”

“The fourth ārā of utsarpiṇī, named Suṣamā-Duṣamawill be of 2 koḍ ākoḍāgaras. The 24thTīrthaṅkara and 12th cakravartī will be born at the beginning of this time. After a little more than one crore pūrvas is over in this Āraka, kalpavṛkṣa will come into being and Bharata will again become a bhoga (enjoyment) land.”

The fifth, Suṣama, and the sixth, Suṣamā-Suṣama, of the utsarpiṇī, will have conditions similar to the first two ārās of the avasarpiṇī half cycle. Combining the six-six Ārakas of the avasarpiṇī and utsarpiṇī, that is, altogether 20 koḍ ākoḍāgaras of the 12 Ārakas, make one Kālacakra.”

Gautama asked the Lord – “What will be the main events after your nirvāṇa?” The Lord replied – “Three years and eight-and-a-half months after I attain mokṣa the fifth ārā named duḥ sāma will commence. After 64 years the last kevalī, Jambū, will attain liberation. At that time manaḥ pasryavajñāna, parama avadhijñāna, pulākabdhī, Āhāraka śarīra, kṣapakaśreṇī, upāsama śreṇī, jinakalpa, parihāra viṣuddhi, sūkṣmasaṃparāya, yathākhyātacaritra, pure knowledge and multigamana – all these twelve will be uprooted from Bharata.”

“After my nirvāṇa in my time period until the end of the fifth ārā there will be 2004 ācāryas of the era. The first among them will be Ārya Sudharmā and the last, Duḥ prasaha.”

“170 years after my nirvāṇa, after Ācārya Bhadrabāhu ascends the heaven, the last four pūrvas, symmetrical body, well built bones and muscles, and mahāprāṇadhyāna will vanish from Bharata.”

“After 500 years, in Ācārya Āryavajra’s time, the tenth pūrva and first saṃhanana-catuṣka will end.”

“470 years after my nirvāṇa there will be a king named Vikramāditya, who will be a good person, a golden man, and will rule continuously over the earth under his saṃvat.”

453 years after my nirvāṇa there will be a Kālakācārya who will end the kingdom of Gardabhilla.”

“Many monks will be like buffoons who will spend their time in self-praise and condemning others. Nobody will talk about those with phenomenal strength of the self and those without strength of self will be worshipped.”

Hearing this description from the Lord many great souls including Hastipāla became nirgrantha monk. In that year, there was vast propagation of the nirgrantha sermon. In the fourth month of the cāturmāsa on the new moon day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month in the early morning time at the ‘scribes assembly’ the Lord gave his last sermon. Nine Licchavis of Kāśī, Kauśala, nine Mallas and 18 gaṇarājās (Chiefs of republics) were also present there.

Liberation of the Lord (Parinirvāṇa)

Lord Mahāvīra’s parinirvāṇa took place on the new moon day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month. On that day, observing a fast (bele) the Lord kept giving his sermon for 16 hours (prahara). In this sermon, the Lord explained the 55 of puṇyaphala and 55 of the pāpaphala vipāka, which is popular as ‘Sukha vipāka’ and ‘Duḥkha vipāka’ divisions of the ‘VipākaSūtra’. He also spoke of unnumbered 36 chapters of vyākaraṇa, which is popular as ‘UttarādhyayanaSūtra’. While mentioning the 37th chapter on Marudevī the Lord became still in paryamkāsana. He respectively blocked the activity of the mind and speech, then maintaining the subtle activity of the body; he blocked the coarse activity of the body. In the third stage of deep meditation he stopped the minute activities of the speech and mind and reached the fourth stage of meditation stopping all action and reaching there, and had time enough to

utter the words a, I, u, ṛ, lṛ, and destroying all the aghātikarmas, became enlightened, emancipated and liberated .

Sensing his nirvāṇa time approaching the Lord had sent his first Gaṇadhara Indrabhūti Gautama to arouse through discourse the Brahmin named Devaśarmā. When he got news in the middle of the night about the Lord's nirvāṇa, he was very unhappy. Lovelorn, Gautama was wailing when suddenly his inner voice said – “Gautama! What kind of love is this? The Lord has renounced all; love for him is nothing other than passion. You should follow the Lord.” With this thought, the flow of his thinking changed and at the end of the night Gautama, destroying his ghātikarmas, obtained the immortal glow of pure knowledge and himself became the seer of three worlds.

There is a story as, “Once Gautama was sad seeing monks younger than him attaining nirvāṇa asked Lord as to why he has not yet attained pure knowledge?” Sensing his worry Lord Mahāvīra said to Guatama – “Gautama, you have intense love for me. Actually, the two of us have been together for many births. After completing our life span here, we shall reach the same place and yet not separate. Your love for me is an obstacle in the path of your attaining pure knowledge. The moment this love decreases you will attain pure knowledge.”

After nirvāṇa, Lord's dead body was taken to the funeral pyre on a palanquin. There, on a funeral pyre made of gośīrṣa sandal, constructed by the gods, the Lord's body was placed. Agnikumāra lit the pyre and with scented substances directed by the wind, the Lord's body was set to flames. Then Meghakumāra doused the fire with a shower of rain. At the time of nirvāṇa the present 18 kings of the republics observed the fast in the fasting hall on the amāvasyā (darkmoon night) day. Sensing that the Lord has attained nirvāṇa, as a symbol of knowledge, lights were lit in every home in every village and city, which later on began to be observed on the new moon night of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month in the form of Dīpāvalī.

Lord Mahāvīra's Life-span

Śramaṇa Lord Mahāvīra stayed as a householder for nearly 30 years and 7 months. He observed austerity for 12 years, 5 months and 15 days and

wandered as a kevalī for 29 years, 5 months and 20 days. Thus, at the age of 72 years, 6 months and 16 days the Lord attained mokṣa (360 days of ṛtuvarṣa). In the scriptures, his mendicancy period be 12 years and 13 pakṣa (ṛtu months 12 years, 11 pakṣa) is indicated.

Lord Mahāvīra's Cāturmāsa (rainy season halts)

Śramaṇa Mahāvīra spent his first single cāturmāsa at Asthigrāma; three at Campā and Pṛṣṭhacampā; twelve at Vaiśālī and Vāṇijyagrāma; fourteen at Rājagṛha and Nālandā; six at Mithilā city; two at Bhaddīla; one each at Ālaṃbhika and Śrāvastī; three in Anārya Vajrabhūmi; one last single cāturmāsa at Pāvāpurī. Thus, the Lord spent a total of 42 cāturmāsa.

The Congregation of Lord Mahāvīra

The following was the congregation of Lord Mahāvīra:-11 Gaṇadharas including Gautama Indrabhūti, and 9 Gaṇas 700 kevalīs, 500 maṇḥ paryavajñānīs, 1300 avadhijñānīs, 300 fourteen pūrvadhārīs, 400 vādīs, 700 vaikriyalabdhidharīs, 800 anuttaropapātika monks, 14000 monks, 36000 female-monks, 159000 laymen, 318000 laywomen and, apart from these, lakhs of devotees of the Lord. 700 monks and 1400 female-monks attained nirvāṇa during Lord Mahāvīra's time.

Introduction to the Gaṇadharas

Śramaṇa Lord Mahāvīra's congregation had 11 gaṇadharas. All these were Brahmin householders from different places. On the invitation of Madhyamapāvā's Somila all these people had come with their respective disciples to attend the sacrificial ritual. Upon attaining pure knowledge Lord Mahāvīra arrived at Pāvāpurī. All these Brahmins attended the Lord's samavaśaraṇa along with their disciples there and impressed by his knowledge, took initiation along with their respective disciples on the 11th day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśākha month. Attaining the knowledge of the tripadīs they wrote the fourteen pūrvas and became gaṇadharas. Their brief introduction is as follows:-

1. **Indrabhūti:** The first Gaṇadhara Indrabhūti was the son of Vasubhūti of the Gautama gotra, a resident of 'Gobara' within

the Magadha country. His mother's name was Pṛthvī. He was a scholar of Veda and Vedānta and used to teach 500 students. Obtaining the answer to the problem of soul from Mahāvīra he became a monk along with his 500 students. He was 50 years old at the time of initiation. He was of a polite nature and a great observer of penance. He attained pure knowledge immediately after the nirvāṇa of the Lord. After wandering for 30 years as mendicant, he wandered as a kevalī only for 12 years. Completing 92 years of age, observing a month's fast at Guṇaśīla caitya, he attained nirvāṇa.

2. **Agnibhūti:** The second Gaṇadhara Agnibhūti was the middle brother of Indrabhūti. After getting the answer for his doubt on 'Puruṣādvaitya' from Lord Mahāvīra, he along with his 500 students, at the age of 46, accepted the mendicant conduct. Wandering as a mendicant for 12 years, he attained pure knowledge. Being a kevalī for 16 years, during the Lord's lifetime he attained liberation after observing a month's fast at Guṇaśīla caitya.
3. **Vāyubhūti:** The third Gaṇadhara Vāyubhūti was the younger brother of Indrabhūti and Agnibhūti. Getting an awakening discourse on the soul outside of the elements from the Lord, he gave up his thinking of soul and body being one and the same (tājīva taccharīra) and along with his 500 students, took initiation from the Lord. He was then 42 years old. After ten years of mendicancy, he attained pure knowledge and for 18 years wandered as a kevalī. Two years before the nirvāṇa of the Lord at the age of 70, he observed a month's fast at Guṇaśīla caitya and attained liberation.
4. **Ārya Vyakta:** The fourth Gaṇadhara Ārya Vyakta was a Brahmin belonging to the Kollāga province and of Bhāradwāja gotra. His mother's name was Vārūṇī and father's name was Dhanamitra. His belief was that the whole world is an illusion and only Brahma is the truth. Impressed by Lord Mahāvīra's sermon he along with his 500 students took initiation as a mendicant at the age of 50. After 11 years as a mendicant, he attained pure knowledge. He remained a kevalī for 18 years. In

the Lord's lifetime after one month's, fast he attained liberation at the age of 80 at Guṇaśīla caitya.

5. **Sudharmā:** Sudharmā was a Brahmin from Kollāga province and of Agniveśyāyana gotra. His mother's name was Bhaddilā and father's name was Dhammila. On the subject of births, obtaining the clarifications from the Lord, he took initiation along with 500 students. He became the fifth Gaṇadhara and later on, the successor ācārya. He managed the congregation for 20 years after Lord's nirvāṇa. He completed 100 years of age and attained mokṣa at Rājagṛha. In his lifetime, he spent 50 years as a householder, 42 years as a mendicant and 8 years as a kevalī, propagating the Śramaṇa tradition.
6. **Maṇḍita:** He was the sixth Gaṇadhara of the Lord's congregation. He was a Brahmin of the Vaśiṣṭha gotra and a resident of the Maurya province. His father's name was Dhanadeva and his mother's name was Vijayādevī. Obtaining clarifications for his doubt regarding the relationship between the soul and the world, impressed, he along with his 350 students took initiation. He was 53 years old at that time. After observing the mendicant's vows for 14 years, he attained pure knowledge at the age of 67 and after being a kevalī for 16 years, observing a fast, he attained liberation at the Guṇaśīla caitya during the lifetime of the Lord at the age of 83 years.
7. **Mauryaputra:** A Brahmin of the Kāśyapa gotra from the Mauryan province, Mauryaputra was the seventh Gaṇadhara of the Lord. His father's name was Maurya and mother's name was Vijayādevī. Impressed by the Lord's answer to his doubt about gods and the realm of gods, Mauryaputra along with his 350 students took to mendicancy. Remaining a mendicant for 14 years he attained pure knowledge from penance at the age of 79. Then, wandering as a kevalī for 16 years, he fasted unto death attaining nirvāṇa during the lifetime of the Lord at the age of 95.
8. **Akampita:** A resident of Mithilā and a Brahmin of the Gautama gotra, Akampita was the eighth Gaṇadhara of the Lord. His mother's name was Jayantī and his father's name was Deva. The

Lord cleared his doubt about hell and life in hell and he, along with his 300 disciples, took initiation into the Śramaṇa path. At that time, Akampita was 48 years old. After wandering as a mendicant for nine years, he attained pure knowledge at the age of 57. Being a kevalī for 21 years, and observing a fast for a month, he attained nirvāṇa during the Lord's lifetime at Guṇaśīla caitya at the age of 78.

9. **Acalabhrātā:** A resident of Kauśala, hailing from the Hārīta gotra, Acalabhrātā was the Lord's ninth Gaṇadhara. His mother's name was Nandā and his father's name was Vasu. At the age of 46 he along with his 300 disciples attended the Lord's samavaśaraṇa, and obtaining a satisfying reply from the Lord to his question on bad and good deeds, he accepted initiation. After observing severe penance and mediating he attained pure knowledge at the age of 58 years. After that, for 14 years, he wandered as a mendicant and at the age of 72, after a month-long fast, he attained nirvāṇa at the Guṇaśīla caitya.
10. **Metārya:** The tenth Gaṇadhara Metārya was a resident of Tuṃḡika province in Vatsadeśa and was a Brahmin of Kauṇḍinya gotra. His mother's name was Varūṇādevī and his father's name was Datta. He had a doubt about rebirth. Impressed by Lord Mahāvīra's answer, he, along with his 300 disciples, took initiation at the age of 36 years. He spent 10 years as a mendicant and attained pure knowledge. After remaining a kevalī for 16 years, he attained nirvāṇa at Guṇaśīla caitya in the lifetime of the Lord at the age of 62.
11. **Prabhāsa:** The eleventh Gaṇadhara Prabhāsa was a resident of Rājagṛha and a Brahmin of Kauṇḍinya gotra. His mother's name was Atibhadrā and his father's name was Bala. Mahāvīra replied to his question on liberation in such a manner that he became Mahāvīra's disciple along with his 300 students. At that time, Prabhāsa was only 16 years old. After 8 years, he attained pure knowledge and thereafter, remaining a kevalī for 16 years. At the age of 40 observing a month-long fast, he attained nirvāṇa at Guṇaśīla caitya. Prabhāsa is the only Gaṇadhara who took initiation at such a young age and attained pure knowledge.

All these Gaṇadhara were Brahmins by caste and Vedic scholars. After taking initiation, they all studied the 11 Aṅgas. Hence, all of them had the knowledge of the 14 pūrvas and possessed special attainments (labdhis).

Introduction of Gautama etc in the Digambara tradition

In the Digambara tradition, Maṇḍalācārya Dharmacandra in his text, “GautamaCaritra” introduces Lord Mahāvīra’s first three gaṇadhara which, in brief, is as follows:-

A scholar named Śāṇḍilya used to stay in Brāhmaṇanagara in the Magadha region. He had two wives – Sthaṇḍilā and Kesarī. One day, in the last part of the night Sthaṇḍilā saw auspicious dreams and a god came into her womb, after completing his time in the fifth heaven. After nine months, Sthaṇḍilā gave birth to a beautiful son who was great and of good deeds. The scholars predicted that this boy will possess knowledge of all the scriptures and his fame will spread across the earth. The parents named him ‘Indrabhūti’. This boy later became Lord Mahāvīra’s first Gaṇadhara and became famous as Gautama.

After sometime, another god completed his time in the fifth heaven and entered into Sthaṇḍilā’s womb. Upon completion of the pregnancy, she gave birth to a very beautiful and charismatic son. The parents named him Gārgya and he later on became famous as the Lord’s second Gaṇadhara Agnibhūti.

After some time Śāṇḍilya’s second wife also became pregnant with a god from the fifth heaven who entered her womb and in time she gave birth to a son. Śāṇḍilya named this son of his Bhārgava who went on to become a scholar like his two brothers and also took initiation and became Lord Mahāvīra’s third Gaṇadhara popularly known as Vāyubhūti.

Maṇḍita and Maurya: Clarification

There is an opinion among some past and present scholars that Lord Mahāvīra’s sixth Gaṇadhara, Maṇḍita and seventh, Maurya, were brothers. Vijayādevī was their mother. Dhanadeva was Ārya Maṇḍita’s

father. Sometime after Maṇḍita's birth Dhanadeva died so Vijayādevī married Dhanadeva's maternal cousin, Maurya and through Maurya she had a son who was named Mauryaputra. Muni Ratnavijaya, agreeing with this opinion, writes in his Sthavirāvalī, Vol. 1, that widow-remarriage was allowed in those days. Actually, names of both gaṇadharas' mothers being similar, has given rise to this false opinion. However, the SamavāyāṅgaSūtra gives some important facts about these two gaṇadharas, a study of which proves that the above opinion is not correct. SamavāyāṅgaSūtra states that Maṇḍita's total age 83 years and about him it clearly states that he attained liberation after observing the Śramaṇa vows for 30 years. Hence, when he took initiation from Lord Mahāvīra he was 53 years old. The same SamavāyāṅgaSūtra states that Mauryaputra took initiation at the age of 65. It is also a fact that all the 11 gaṇadharas took initiation under Lord Mahāvīra on the same day. In this context, how is it possible that while taking initiation on the same day one brother is 53 years old and the younger brother, 65 years old; that is the younger brother is older than the elder one by 12 years? Muni Ratnaprabhavijaya himself writes in Sthavirāvalī that at the time of initiation Maṇḍita was 53 years old and Mauryaputra 65 years old. All these evidences prove that the belief of these two being brothers is mere imagination which became popular because of their mothers' names being the same.

Lord Mahāvīra's first female disciple: Candanabālā

The much loved and doted on daughter of the king Dadhivāhana of Campā city and queen Dhāriṇī, Vasumatī grew up to be Candanabālā, the first female disciple of Lord Mahāvīra and the head preceptor of the order of female-monks. Female-monk Candanabālā's life story is briefly presented here:

Dadhivāhana was the king of Campā. His queen's name was Dhāriṇī. His only daughter Vasumatī was extremely beautiful, well behaved and endowed with all good qualities. There was peace and happiness in king Dadhivāhana's kingdom. There was mutual love and warmth among the family members. At that time, Śātānīka ruled over Kauśāmbī. For some reason and altercation occurred between Śātānīka and Dadhivāhana and out of envy Śātānīka conspired to attack Campā to destroy it. He suddenly got information that it was time for attacking Campā and he

should start with his army at once. The moment he got the news, he started for Campā via water route with a large army. His army reached Campā and surrounded Campā from all sides. With this unexpected event, the king and subjects of Campā were in a daze. King Dadhivāhana was unable to meet that army without any assistance. Hence, he ordered his ministers to leave Campā through secret pathways to the forest.

On the second day, Śatānīka ordered his soldiers to break the domes of Campā and start looting it. The soldiers started the destruction. A soldier made Queen Dhāriṇī and princess Vasumatī prisoners. He took them in his chariot outside the city towards Kauśāmbī. Seeing the beauty of the queen the soldier said – “While looting Campā, getting this beautiful queen I have gained everything. The moment I reach Kauśāmbī I shall marry her.”

Hearing these words of the soldier the queen was enraged with disgust. She was greatly hurt to be hearing these words from an ordinary soldier, being the queen of the king of Campā. She began to fear attack on her chastity. She took her tongue out from her mouth with her hand and with the other hit her jaws hard. She died at once and fell in the chariot. With Dhāriṇī’s sudden death, the soldier felt sadness and guilt on his mistake. He feared that the innocent girl would follow suit, so he spoke kind words to Vasumatī to reassure her. The moment he reached Kauśāmbī, he asked her to stand on the street corner to sell her.

Merchant Dhanāvaha of Kauśāmbī saw the girl standing for sale. He was a very generous and religious-minded person. Seeing the girl he realised she must be from a superior class and separated from her parents. Giving a hefty amount, he bought the girl and brought her home. With lot of love, he asked her name and her parents’ name but she did not open her mouth. In the end, handing her over to his wife he said – “It seems she is not from an ordinary family; love her as your own daughter.” The merchant’s wife Mūlā brought her up like her own daughter. The girl mixed well with Dhanāvaha’s family. She had won everyone’s hearts with her soft-spoken nature, good behaviour and politeness. Seeing her complexion soft as sandal and her polite demeanour, the merchant’s family named her Candanā.

As Candanā grew up she became more beautiful and one day it so happened that seeing her immense beauty Mūlā became envious and suspicious. She thought – “I hope my husband does not marry her, attracted to her; in that case I will be done for. Before the ‘daughter’ gets the feeling of a wife in his mind, it is better to get her out of the way forever.” During this period, Dhanāvaha went out of town for some days. Mūlā called over a barber and shaved off Candanā’s hair. Then, chaining her hands and feet, shut her up in the godown. She also warned everybody to keep the matter secret.

For three days, Candanā was hungry and thirsty. The moment the merchant got back, he asked about Candanā. Seeing every servant quiet, he got a suspicion. He screamed in anger at them to tell him the truth. An old servant took some courage and told him everything. Opening the doors of the godown, the merchant started crying seeing her state. Seeing Candanā’s face pale on account of hunger and thirst he ran towards the kitchen, and not finding anything else, brought some soaked urd dal in a winnowing basket for her, saying – “my daughter, satisfy your hunger with this; till I return with an ironsmith.”

In spite of dying of hunger, Candanā thought – “Am I so unfortunate that I will have to eat without feeding a guest?” She looked at the door for a guest, when she saw a mendicant at the door with the brilliance of a crore rays of the Sun, with a brilliantly lit face and beautiful, well built body. She had tears of joy in her eyes. Her face lit up like the moon on a full moon night in winter and she brought the winnowing basket in her hands. With difficulty she came out at the threshold, her feet chained, and politely requested the guest – “Lord, although these urd dal is not suitable, please accept them, doing this helpless woman a favour.”

For a moment, the guest saw everything carefully. Seeing the guest leave, Candanā cried out – ‘what can be more unfortunate that a kalpa tree is returning from my home?’ Tears fell from her eyes. The guest immediately extended his hands. Delighted Candanā gave him all the uḍada dāla in the winnowing basket on his palms.

That guest was none other than Lord Mahāvīra who was seeking alms having taken a specific resolve, for five months and twenty-five days. Seeing all his conditions met, he accepted alms from Candanā. The

moment the urd dal fell into his palms the divine echoes of ‘mahādāna – mahādāna’ resounded and the gods showered the five auspicious things. The gods showered twelve-and-a-half crores of gold coins at Dhanāvaha’s house. A huge crowd gathered to see this divine event and praised Candanā’s luck. Within moments, Candanā’s head was full of hair. Her chains turned into gold ornaments. Indra and the gods came there.

Kauśāmbī’s king Śātānīka, his queen Mṛgāvātī and others came to Dhanāvaha’s house. Dadhivāhana’s bodyguard was also with them; king Śātānīka brought him as a prisoner. The moment he saw Candanā he recognised her and started crying. When Śātānīka and Mṛgāvātī found out that Candanā was Dadhivāhana’s daughter Vasumatī, Mṛgāvātī embraced her niece. Indra told Śātānīka – “When Lord Mahāvīra will become a kevalī, Candanā will be his first female disciple and in this body, shall attain nirvāṇa.”

With lot of love king Śātānīka and Mṛgāvātī brought Candanā to their palace. Candanā was well aware of her past life. Staying in palaces she spent her life disenchanted and with a feeling of renunciation. Soon the day came when the Lord attained pure knowledge. Candanā took initiation from the Lord, became his first female disciple and the first head of the female-monk order established by the Lord. Managing the order, observing many kinds of severe penance and in the end destroying all her karmas Candanā attained nirvāṇa.

Lord Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra: Differences between the two Orders

The first Tīrthaṅkara Vṛṣabhanātha taught the five mahāvratas. After him, 22 Tīrthaṅkara from Ajitanātha to Pārśvanātha gave teachings on Cāturyāma tradition. They spoke of non-violence, truth, and non-stealing, and renouncing external things, as the four vows for life called yama, religion. After Pārśvanātha, when it was Mahāvīra’s time, he taught non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and aparigraha in the form of five mahāvratas. With the difference in the nature of the vows, the obvious question is, why so.

Religious teachers /rejuvenators preach religious concepts in accordance with the knowledge of the people of that time. People were simple and unaware in the time of the first Tīrthaṅkara and those in the time of Mahāvīra are skewed and unaware. The people in Vṛṣabhanātha's time had difficulty in understanding, while in Mahāvīra's times people have difficulty in following the vows. Hence making the vows more specific, he spoke of the mahāvratas. The people in the time of the middle Tīrthaṅkara were simple and intelligent. They understood the teachings easily and followed them easily as well hence the middle Tīrthaṅkara propagated the Cāturyāma religion.

Celibacy and aparigraha (non-possession) as told by Mahāvīra is mentioned only to make it clearer. In one way even a woman is brought into the parameters of parigraha. Hence even if there is difference in the number, there is no fundamental difference between the two traditions.

Caritra (Practice / conduct)

At the time of Lord Pārśvanātha, the monks were given the equanimous conduct (avoiding falws in the practice) 'sāmāyika cāritra', whereas Lord Mahāvīra started the tradition of seeking reinitiating (rectifying flaws in the practice) conduct 'chedopasthāpanīya' as well. The distinction of cāritra as done in chedopasthāpanīya was not necessary for the astute followers in the time of Pārśvanātha, hence he had the doctrine of undivided sāmāyika caritra. It is clear based on the reference in Bhagavatī Sūtra that monks who followed Cāturyāma tenets their caritra was termed sāmāyika and when that tradition was transformed to make way for the five vows (pañcayāma), their doctrine was called chedopasthāpanīya (returning to right path after correction for a mistake).

Both traditions were followed in Lord Mahāvīra's time. For short-term he gave importance to sāmāyika caritra and for long-term chedopasthāpanīya caritra. Mahāvīra also propounded, apart from these vows, not eating after dark, as a vrata.

The second difference between Lord Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra is the concept of sacela-acela (with robe, without robe). Pārśvanātha's tradition accepts monks using robe, but Mahāvīra taught the practice of nakedness. Here acelaka meant not total renunciation of robes, but those

with less value, worn out clothes. All Śramaṇas keep rajoharaṇa (whiskbroom) and mukhavastrikā (mouth-cloth). Hence, linguists say acelaka are of two types – sacelaka and acelaka. Tīrthaṅkara are acelaka. After the devadūṣya falls off, they remain without clothes. However, all the rest Jina monks, etc are called sacelakas. At the very least, they have the practice of whiskbroom and mouth-cloth. In the same way, the monk who is devoid of delusions but with few clothes i.e. acela is also a monk.

Sapatikramaṇa (Ritualised Confession) tradition

In the time of the first and last Tīrthaṅkara, there is the norm of pratikramaṇa (ritualised confession) both during evolving times (ubhayakāla) as well as at the time of committing a flaw by way of observing restriction during walking (īryāpatha) or begging rounds (seeking alms/bhikṣā) etc are forms of immediate pratikramaṇa. That is, Lord Mahāvīra has instructed that pratikramaṇa is inevitable whether or not there is fault / imperfection (doṣa). Whereas in the time of the 22 Tīrthaṅkara from Ajitanātha to Pārśvanātha the moment there is a fault / imperfection there was an immediate purification act (śuddhi), hence they did not have the concept of evolving times pratikramaṇa as a rule.

Sthitalkalpa

At the time of the 1st and the last Tīrthaṅkara all (code of conduct) kalpas are essential, hence they are called Sthitalkalpa. Whereas for the remaining 22 Tīrthaṅkara there are believed to be four Sthitalkalpas and six asthitalkalpas. For the monks of Lord Mahāvīra, māsakalpa i.e. the monks and female-monks should not remain at a place beyond a month without a reason. Today those monks and female-monks for no reason at all, in the name of religious propagation, remain at the same place; this is not according to the scriptural norms.

Heretics of Lord Mahāvīra Jamāli

There were seven heretics in the time-period of Lord Mahāvīra, out of whom two were during his lifetime, Jamāli and Tiṣyaguṇḍa. Jamāli was the Lord's nephew; and being the husband of the Lord's only daughter, Priyadarśanā, was his son-in-law. He took initiation from Śramaṇa Lord

Mahāvīra and after the Lord became a kevalī, he became famous as the first heretic as follows:-

A few years after initiation Jamāli sought permission from the Lord to wander independently. The Lord did not reply. Considering his silence to be acceptance, Jamāli and five hundred monks started wandering independently. Wandering through various places, he came to Sāvattthī and stayed there at Koṣṭhaka garden. After some days, he got a burning sensation in his body. It was impossible for him to keep sitting. He asked his monks to prepare a bed to observe the pious death (saṃthārā) so that he may lie down. They were doing so when Jamāli reflected in his mind that Lord Mahāvīra who calls the one who starts moving as in motion (calamāna calita), and theof starting an activity as acting is false. I can see here that during the process of making the bed, the bed is not ready, so even the movement is unmoved. He explained his new understanding to the monks. Many of them liked him and reposed faith in him. However, others tried to explain to Jamāli unsuccessfully, left him and returned to Mahāvīra.

Hearing the news of Jamāli’s illness Priyadarśanā too came there. She was staying at the house of Mahāvīra’s ardent devotee, Dhamka, the potter. Because of love for Jamāli, Priyadarśanā accepted his opinion and started trying to make Dhamka to be his follower. Dhamka said to her, “We know only this much that renunciation cannot be false and he decided to explain to Priyadarśanā.” One day when Priyadarśanā was reading scriptures at Dhamka’s workshop, Dhamka carefully lit a spark on the border of her saree. The female-monk said –“Śrāvaka, you have burnt my saree.” Dhamka said –“No, only the borders are burning. According to your teacher, that which is burning cannot be called burnt.” Hearing Dhamka’s words, Priyadarśanā became aware. She repented her mistake saying, “*mithyā me duṣkṛtaṃ bhavatu.*” Thereafter, she returned with her disciples to Lord Mahāvīra. This way, one after the other all his disciples left Jamāli, yet he was adamant. He used to popularise himself as *kevalī*. Lord Mahāvīra and Gautama both tried but it did not have any effect on him. Dying without repentance, he died and became a ‘kilviṣī’ god.

Heretic Tiṣyagupta

16 years after Lord Mahāvīra's pure knowledge came another heretic named Tiṣyagupta. He was the disciple of caturdaśa-pūrva-jñānī (knower of the fourteen pūrvas) Vasu. Once, Ācārya Vasu was sitting in Guṇaśīla caitya in Rājagṛha. Reading about self-slander Tiṣyagupta came to a view that a sentient being cannot be of one space-point (pradeśa), not even those with two, three or with numerable space points. A sentient being (jīva) has to have innumerable space-points as jīvas are equivalent to cosmos (lokākāśa) and only in its last pradeśa only sentient-beingness exists. The teacher tried to explain to Tiṣyagupta but when his viewpoint did not change, he expelled Tiṣyagupta from the congregation. Wandering independently, Tiṣyagupta reached Āmalakalpā city and stayed at Āmrasālavana. A śrāvaka named Mitraśrī used to live there. He sought a way to explain to Tiṣyagupta. He called Tiṣyagupta home one day to give him food. When he came, Mitraśrī welcomed him with honour, got many things as food offerings, and gave only the last grain of each one of those to Tiṣyagupta. Seeing this, Tiṣyagupta said –“Oh *śrāvaka*, are you making fun of me?” The śrāvaka said –“Lord, according to you only the last pradeśa has jīva, then how have I erred? If you do not consider even one grain as complete then your doctrine is false.” Inspired by the votary Tiṣyagupta understood his mistake. Mitraśrī gave him complete honour and alms and sending him back to his teacher, assisted in purifying his spiritual path.

Mahāvīra and Gośālaka

Mahāvīra and Gośālaka had a long connection. According to Jain scriptures being a disciple of the Lord, Gośālaka continued to behave like his strong adversary also. The Lord introduced him as his bad disciple. Bhagavatī Sūtra gives a clear female-monkciation on Gośālaka's name. It is said here that in the past there was a clan of Maṃkhas, the people of which clan used to earn a living from showing a painting of a certain god. Gośālaka's father belonged to this Maṃkha clan and his mother's named was Bhadrā. When Gośālaka's mother was pregnant with him and when his time of birth was approaching, Maṃkhalī was staying at the village Saravala at the cowshed (gośālā) of the Brahmin Gobahula. So he was named as Gośālaka. Thus, his full name was Maṃkhaliputra Gośālaka and when he grew up, he used to carry a painting in his hands

for earning a livelihood. The complete introduction to Gośālaka's life history is available in Ācārya Guṇacandra's 'Mahāvīra Cariyaṃ', which is presented briefly:

In Silindha, province of Uttarāpatha there lived a village headman named Keśava. His wife was Śivā. They had a son whom they named Maṃkha. When Maṃkha grew up, he went one day with his father to the lake for a bath. There he saw a pair of geese indulging in loveplay. At that time, a hunter stuck an arrow into the female goose, which started fluttering in pain. Seeing her suffer, out of sorrow, the male goose gave up his life. Seeing the plight of the goose pair, Maṃkha fell unconscious on the ground. Keśava was worried seeing his son. When Maṃkha regained consciousness, Keśava asked him the reason for his fainting. Maṃkha told him of the incident and said seeing the geese he was reminded of his past life, where he was killed with his partner goose and have now been born to him.

Keśava brought Maṃkha home, reassuring him, yet even at home that Maṃkha was always in thoughts. He was treated with many remedies; even many tāmtrikas were called, but all was in vain. One day an elderly person suggested that a painting depicting his past life story of the geese shown to him. Let Maṃkha take the painting around and show it to people. Perhaps doing so someone would remember the past life and he might get his wife of the past life and attain peace. Keśava did as told and Maṃkha started wandering with that painting.

People would see that painting and sometimes ask him about it, and he would narrate the whole account. Wandering this way, Maṃkha reached Campā city. His journey was over and he had no means to sustain himself, so he made that painting his means of sustenance and singing songs, started seeking alms.

An extraordinarily lazy man named Maṃkhalī lived in the same city. He was always looking for a convenient way to sustain himself. One day, he met Maṃkha; he got hold of him, and started serving him, learnt some songs from him. Later on when Maṃkha died, he took all his details, and prepared the same kind of painting and went to his house. He took his wife along as well and like Maṃkha, started making a living showing the painting around. Wherever he went people would follow him, shouting,

“Maṃkha has come, Maṃkha has come”. Gradually, he became popular as Maṃkha’. Wandering, suddenly Maṃkha reached Saravaṇa village and stayed at Gobahula Brahmin’s house where his wife Subhadrā gave birth to a son named as Gośālaka.

By nature, Gośālaka was wicked. He would not obey his parents and would misbehave with people. When his mother would say –“I bore you for nine months in my womb and brought you up with love, yet you do not listen to me”, he would retort, “Mother, come into my stomach I will hold you there twice as long.” People kept distance from him due to his bad behaviour. Once he fought with his parents and taking their means of livelihood, taking the painting, went off alone and wandering, reached the place where Lord Mahāvīra was staying for cāturmāsa during the second year of his mendicancy at Nālandā outside Rājagṛha. At that same time, Gośālaka came there with his painting. He decided to spend the cāturmāsa there. Lord Mahāvīra broke his first months fast at ‘Vijaya’ gāthāpati’s house. The gods showered five auspicious things to express glory of the alms giving. Maṃkhaliputra Gośālaka was amazed seeing this. Approaching Lord Mahāvīra and saluting him, he said –“Lord, from today I am your disciple and you are my ācārya.” Allow me to be at your feet and serve you.” The Lord stayed quiet.

The Lord had gone out seeking alms when Gośālaka was not around and when he returned there, not finding the Lord, he was very sad. He looked for him in the entire Rājagṛha but could not find him. In the end, tired, Gośālaka left for Kollāga province. Hearing news from people about the showering of five auspicious things at the house of ‘Bahula’ Gośālaka was certain the Lord was residing thereabouts.

Approaching the Lord and paying obeisance to him he said –“I cannot be without you for a moment. I have placed myself at your feet. I have said earlier I am your disciple and you are my spiritual teacher.” The Lord saw Gośālaka’s faithful mind and placed ‘so be it’ insignia on his request. After the Lord accepted him, Gośālaka spent more than six years wandered as a disciple with the Lord. Once obtaining the art of producing hot flash from the Lord, he separated from him and became a strong proponent of fatalism. After sometime, he also got disciples and followers and started calling himself Jina and a kevalī.

Ājīvaka and Ājīvakaism

Gośālaka's tradition is popular as Ājīvaka tradition. Followers of this tradition observe various kinds of penance and meditation. However, they believed in soul, nirvāṇa and self-suffering, yet they were staunch fatalists. In their opinion, human endeavour does not get any work done. Whatever be the other reasons for the name 'Ājīvaka', one of the reasons is also 'Ājīvaka', livelihood. According to Jain āgama, Bhagavatī, Gośālaka followed the doctrine of logic / reasoning. The Ājīvaka used to accumulate pleasurable things using this knowledge. This way, they managed their living easily. This is why in the Jain scriptures this sect is called as Ājīvaka and liṃga-jīvī.

According to Majjhimanikāya, just like the nirgranthas, the Ājīvaka too had tough norms of living. Their alms seeking practice praised as Ājīvaka monks used to take alms from alternate homes or sometimes from one out of three homes. Just like the six karmic stains, Gośālaka propounded six abhijātis (divisions) with names such as black, blue etc. Giving a brief introduction of Ājīvaka followers, Bhagavatī states that Gośālaka's followers consider; Arihanta as God; serve their parents; not consume fruits like the wild fig, fruit of the banyan tree, jujube, fig fruit, pilaṃkhu, etc; would neither emboss on oxen nor pierce their ears or nose; and would not do any business where there is violence on mobile beings.

The Founder of Ājīvaka Sect

Many to date consider Gośālaka as the founder of the Ājīvaka sect. According to Jain scriptures, Gośālaka was the proponent of fatalism and main teacher of the Ājīvaka tradition, but there is no mention anywhere of him being its founder. In the Buddhist, text Dīrghanikāya and Majjhimanikāya we find names of 'Kissa Saṃkicca' and 'Nandavaccha', apart from Gośālaka among the Ājīvaka leaders, who were Ājīvaka monks before Gośālaka. Perhaps after accepting the Ājīvaka sect, knowing Gośālaka as one with miraculous powers (labdhidhārī) and with knowledge of fatalism, they made him the leader of the Ājīvaka order. There being no clear account of the founding of the Ājīvaka sect, Udāyī Kuṇḍiyāyana who existed 133 years prior to Gośālaka's death is believed as the founder of the Ājīvaka order.

The ĀjīvakaAttire

There is no reference to the attire of the Ājīvaka. The Buddhist scriptures refer to the Ājīvaka monks as being naked and use the term *acelaka* for them. Mahāvīra seems to have inspired Gośālaka for nudity, because he was clothed when he came to the place where Mahāvīra was staying in Nālandā. In the ‘Dīrghanikāya’, Kāśyapa and in the ‘Majjhimanikāya’ ‘Saccaka’ speak of the following conduct of the Ājīvaka – “They renounce all clothes, stay away from civilised manners and eat food in their hands, etc.”

‘Majjhimanikāya’ refers to the Ājīvaka ways – “They do not listen to those who wait for them to take alms; they do not accept food made for them; do not take food from the vessel it has been cooked in; they do not take food kept within the threshold, pounded in a mortar or cooked on fire; they observe various fasts.”

This kind of practice is unique to nirgranthas. It is clear that Mahāvīra inspired Gośālaka. Based on similarities between the Ājīvaka and the nirgranthas, some scholars think that both their practices are similar, but in fact, there is a fundamental difference between the two. The difference between Ājīvaka as and nirgranthas is in not just in accepting certain kinds of food. The nirgrantha tradition prohibits even touching of certain kinds of food and vegetables, whereas the Ājīvaka tradition allows, partaking of vegetables, fruits, seeds and clear water.

Gośālaka in Digamabara Tradition

Digambara tradition states Gośālaka as Mahāvīra’s disciple, but introduced as a monk of the Pārśvanātha tradition. Maskarī Gośālaka was present in Mahāvīra’s first sermon. However, Mahāvīra did not deliver his sermon and he left, angry. Some say that he wished to be a gaṇadhara, but when he did not get that status, he separated and became the leader of the Ājīvaka tradition at Sāvathī and started calling himself a Tīrthaṅkara. The source of Ājīvaka tradition lies in the Śramaṇa tradition. The main difference between Ājīvaka and Śramaṇas is that Ājīvaka use their knowledge for their sustenance, prohibited in the Śramaṇa tradition. Ājīvaka belonged to the Pārśvanātha tradition primarily. Fatalists are termed as ‘Pāsaththa’ in the Sūtrakṛtāṅga. For this

reason, too, some connect Ājīvaka to Pārśvanātha's tradition. The Saṃskṛta form of 'Pāsaththa' is 'Pārśvastha'. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate to identify it with the Pārśvanātha tradition. By the way, Pāsaththa can mean ascetics of any tradition as it means 'to stay close' to a good doctrine like knowledge etc. Ājīvaka are Pāsaththa as they keep three kinds of knowledge close to them. Hence, it is not right to link Ājīvaka Gośālaka to Pārśvanātha tradition. According to facts in Jain āgamas, it is more appropriate to consider him related to Mahāvīra's tradition.

Religious Traditions in Mahāvīra's Times

During Mahāvīra's time, religious traditions were basically of four types, namely, based on Action (Kriyāvādī); based on non-action (Akriyāvādī); based on ignorance (Ajñānavādī); and based on modesty /veneration (vinayavādī)

1. **Kriyāvādī:** They consider an intrinsic relationship between soul and action. Their opinion is that without a doer there are no good and evil acts. They consider nine substances including soul, etc as independent existences. Their 180 sub-divisions are as follows. Nine basic elements i.e. Being / soul; non-being (non-soul); meritorious deeds (puṇya); demeritorious deeds (pāpa); kārmika influx (āsrava); karmic binding (bandha); stoppage of karmas (saṃvara); dissociation from karmas (nirjarā) and; mokṣa (liberation). Each basic element four sub-types namely self (svataḥ), by others (parataḥ), eternal (nitya) and transitory (anitya) with further sub-division of each sub element with respect to time, god, soul, fate, and destiny; giving a total of 180 sub-divisions.

2. **Akriyāvādī:** They believe that an action cannot be meritorious (puṇya) etc because action is performed on inert /steady substance and it is destroyed the moment it is born. Due to this, there is no still / unmovng substance in this world. They do not believe in soul either. They have 84 categories as follows. Seven basic elements, namely, living beings/ non living being; kārmika influx; stoppage of karmas; dissociation form karmas; binding karmas; mokṣa and each having seven categories; sva and para

and their categories and six sub category of the 14 namely, kāla (time) ; god; soul; destiny; character for a total of 84. Since they do not accept existence of soul, they do not have the eternal and transitory states in their doctrine.

3. **Ajñānavādī:** They opine that knowledge leads to arguments, because nobody has complete knowledge and half-baked knowledge often gives rise to different sects. Hence gaining knowledge is useless. Ignorance will save the world. They have 67 categories, namely, nine basic elements each with seven sub classification i.e. existence; non-existence; true existence; unworthy utterance; truthful utterance; untruthful utterance; true-truthful utterance. Multiplying the seven there are 63 and then putting together origination and in four states like existence etc together constitute 67 divisions.
4. **Vinayavādī:** One who is humble is vinayavādī. They do not have separate scriptures, etc. They only believe in mokṣa. They have 32 divisions -: god; king; yati (teacher); jñāti (intelligent or wise); elder monk; Adhama; mother; and father. Be courteous to all of these from mind, speech and body and give them due charity keeping in mind place and time. This way, multiplying 8 by 4 they have 32 categories.

Bimbasāra-Śreṇika

King Śreṇika Bimbasāra or Bhambhāsāra of the Śīsunāga clan was a famous and brave king. He belonged to Vāhika clan as he hailed from Vāhika country. Śreṇika was the king of Magadha and one of the prominent king-followers of Mahāvīra. His father Prasenajita was a devotee of Pārśvanātha and a votary with right perception. Some texts in Jain literary tradition say that he dissociated himself from the Jain religion for sometime even though he was a born Jain.

According to Jain āgamas Daśāśruta-skandha, Śreṇika was very happy to hear news of the Lord's arrival in Rājagṛha. He went with his queen Celanā to be of service to the Lord. Hearing his sermon, inspired by his renunciation and detachment, he accepted the Jain religion with pure feeling. He obtained right knowledge on Jain religion.

King Śreṇika had deep faith in the nirgrantha path. In the context of Meghākumāra's initiation, he said that only the nirgrantha religion is true, the best, complete, liberating and of good logic and is incomparable. In the first year after attaining omniscience when Lord Mahāvīra came to Rājagrha, King Śreṇika became a Jain again.

Later, his son, Kūṇika, along with his friends, imprisoned Śreṇika and became king. Kūṇika caused troubles to his father in many ways. One day, when queen Celanā told Kūṇika about his father's love for him, he repented his mistake. In an emotional outburst, he went with an axe to untie his father Śreṇika's chains. To protect his son from the sin of killing his father, Śreṇika consumed poison on his finger ring and after death, due to bidding of bad karma, went to the first hell. In his lifetime, Śreṇika had been devoted to Mahāvīra's religion. As a result, he attained the Tīrthaṅkara gotra. After exiting from hell, he will be the first Tīrthaṅkara of the next 24 Tīrthaṅkara and like Mahāvīra, shall give religious sermons.

King Ceṭaka

Just like Śreṇika king Ceṭaka was also a firm follower of Jain religion. Āvaśyakacūrṇi calls him a vratādharī śrāvaka (votary). He was a devotee of Lord Mahāvīra, and by relation, was his maternal uncle. He was a Haihaya clan chief of the Vaiśālī republic. He was a great warrior, able ruler and supporter of justice. Because of this he had to wage a fierce war with Kūṇika and in the end, with the fall of Vaiśālī, disenchanted, he observed the pious death and became a god in the next life.

Ajātaśatru Kūṇika

Kūṇika has an important place among the devotee-kings of Lord Mahāvīra. King Śreṇika was his father and his mother was queen Celanā. The mother saw a dream of a lion. During pregnancy, she had a whim to eat the heart of king Śreṇika. With the cleverness of Abhayakumāra king Śreṇika fulfilled her whim, but seeing her child having such feelings in her womb, she was very unhappy. She attempted to abort the child but was unsuccessful. When he was born, she threw him in a dustbin where a cock bit his thumb finger and a fungus developed. The child started crying and Śreṇika removed the fungal matter by sucking it out with his

mouth and cured the thumb. He was named Kūṇika due to the injury on the thumb. As he grew up Kūṇika started nursing feelings of being a king. Taking some of his brothers along with him, he imprisoned Śreṇika and became king. He repented later after his mother spoke to him. He went with an axe to break his father's chains. Śreṇika thought he is coming to kill him. To save his son from the sin of killing his own father, Śreṇika ate the poison from his finger ring and died.

Kūṇika became very unhappy with all this and leaving Rājagṛha, he made Campā the capital of Magadha and stayed there. Mother Celanā's upbringing and values produced in him deep faith in Lord Mahāvīra. He had a separate division, which followed up on news of Mahāvīra's wandering and everyday activities. Once when Mahāvīra arrived in the garden in Campā he went to him along with his family members. Kūṇika was overwhelmed when he heard the Lord's nectar-like speech and paying obeisance to him, returned to his palace. He was brave and bright right from the beginning. Defeating many enemies during his reign he became known as Ajātaśatru.

Kūṇika's attack on Vaiśālī

Kūṇika was the son of Rājagṛha's king Śreṇika and queen Celanā. King Śreṇika had two other sons, Halla and Vihalla.⁴ Nirayāvalikā talks only of Vihalla. Śreṇika had presented them the best elephant of the time called Secanaka, and an invaluable necklace gifted by a god. Hearing the praises of those two the queen of Kūṇika, Padmāvati was adamant that she wanted them. Kūṇika did not consider it right to take away those gifts of his father to his own brothers, but bowing to female obstinacy he asked Halla and Vihalla for those two things. The two brothers said, "Since their father had gifted them, they had the right over them." Yet if king of Campā Kūṇika wants them, he should give them half his kingdom in return. Kūṇika did not accept his brothers' demand. With this, fearing an attack, Halla and Vihalla rode on the elephant, wearing the necklace, went to their maternal uncle Ceṭaka in Vaiśālī.

Hearing this, Kūṇika became very angry. He sent a messenger to king Ceṭaka to return the elephant and necklace along with Halla and Vihalla to him. King Ceṭaka replied that both brothers are seeking refuge with him so he would not send them in a helpless state to Kūṇika. However, if the king of Campā so wishes, he may give them half his kingdom and take the elephant and necklace. Angry with Ceṭaka's reply Kūṇika attacked Vaiśālī with his army and armies of his ten brothers. Ceṭaka too came to the battlefield with the armies of Kauśala and Kaśī. At the end of the first day general of Kūṇika's army Kālakumāra, moved his elephant towards king Ceṭaka and invited him for a duel. With a smile of acceptance, Ceṭaka asked his elephant rider to take the elephant towards Kālakumāra. There was a vast difference in the age of the two. Respecting his maternal grandfather Kālakumāra said – "Ārya, you attack first." Ceṭaka said – "No, you must attack first; it is Ceṭaka's resolve not to attack a person who has not attacked him first."

With his full strength, Kālakumāra released his arrow aiming at Ceṭaka's forehead. Surprising everyone Ceṭaka released his bow shaped like a crescent moon at Kālakumāra, cutting his arrow in two and said – "Prince, if you want to save your life from this old man, leave the battle

⁴ Niryaivalika only mentions Vihalla Kumara

field, or else...” He released an arrow at Kālakumāra. All attempts to protect him failed and Kālakumāra died on his elephant.

After Kālakumāra, the remaining nine brothers too died at the hands of Ceṭaka. Kūṇika finally resorted to divine powers. He meditated on Śakrendra observing a two-day fast. Because of his past life good deeds and friendship, both Indras came to Kūṇika. Kūṇika said – “Ceṭaka has killed my ten brothers with his arrows. I have taken an oath that I shall destroy Vaiśālī and make donkeys to pull the plough over the land there; else, I shall take my life by jumping off the Uttuṃga mountain peak. Hence you show a way to end Ceṭaka’s life.” Devarāja Śakra said – “I cannot kill Ceṭaka who is the Lord’s follower and of my own religion, but I can protect you from his arrows.” Saying this, he gave Kūṇika impregnable armour. Camarendra too was an ascetic friend of Kūṇika’s in his last birth. He gave Kūṇika the knowledge of making and using an airborne weapon called ‘Mahāśilā Kaṃṭaka’ and a destructive weapon called ‘Rathamūsala.’ Thus helped by gods, Kūṇika jumped into the battlefield the next day with double enthusiasm.

Ceṭaka moved his elephant towards him. He released his arrow, from his bow at Kūṇika. That arrow broke into pieces hitting against the armour provided by Śakra. Seeing his arrow fail, the truthful Ceṭaka could not release a second arrow. Kūṇika now used the ‘Mahāśilā Kaṃṭaka’ weapon. With the use of this weapon whatever arms were hurled at the Vaiśālī army made of wood, leaf, iron, etc, they would turn out to be deadlier than attack with huge rocks. Soon 84 lakh soldiers of Vaiśālī died. That day’s war became famous as the ‘Mahāśilā Kaṃṭaka Saṃgrāma (war)’.

Kūṇika came the next day with his destructive weapon, the ‘Rathamūsala’. Ceṭaka released an arrow at Kūṇika that fell to pieces hitting against the armour. Ceṭaka did not use any other weapon again that day following his resolve. The iron Rathamūsala weapon pounced at the army of Ceṭaka, without anyone releasing it, without a vehicle, like dark clouds with the speed of light. The implements attached to it on their own started attacking. With their stormy speed, there was human killing in all directions. The battlefield resembled a quicksand of blood and human corpses and nobody got a chance to use their weapons. The Vaiśālī republic’s armies started to retreat in fear and returned to their

own cities. Ninty three lakh soldiers died on that one day. Seeing no way out king Ceṭaka returned to Vaiśālī with his remaining few soldiers. Kūṇika surrounded Vaiśālī on all sides.

We find out from Jain āgamas and texts that Kūṇika surrounded Vaiśālī for a long time. Halla and Vihalla for their part would come out at night on their elephant and killing Kūṇika's soldiers, return. This went on for long resulting in heavy loss and Kūṇika became worried.

Kūṇika thought of many ways to break through the domes but did not succeed. Ultimately, through an unseen power he found out that a Śramaṇa mendicant named Kūlavālaka can enter Vaiśālī and help him pass through. Kūṇika took the help of the famous courtesan of Vaiśālī, Māgadhikā, who seduced Kūlavālaka and made him accept to help in breaking through into Vaiśālī.

He also found a trick to stop the destruction by Halla and Vihalla at night. In their path a deep pit was dug; filled with burning splinters the pit was covered. Halla and Vihalla came out at night but through its knowledge, the elephant sensed danger ahead and stopped short of the pit. Thinking the elephant to be timid Halla and Vihalla forced it to move ahead. Seeing no other way Secanaka put the brothers down and he jumped into the pit and burnt to ashes. The brothers understood everything, were repentant, and became disgusted with life. The Jinaśāsana goddess Rakṣikā took them to Lord Mahāvīra, and they took initiation into mendicancy.

Kūlavālaka took the disguise of a soothsayer and entered Vaiśālī easily. He found out that because of a grand stūpa for Lord Munisuvratanātha, Vaiśālī was impregnable. When Kūlavālaka was thus roaming around like a soothsayer some subjects asked him with inquisitiveness – “Lord, when will we be free from this barricade?” Seeing the apt moment Kūlavālaka said – “Until this stūpa stands here this will continue. This stūpa is the reason for this inauspiciousness.” People started to break the stūpa and within minutes, the stūpa disappeared. Kūlavālaka indicated to Kūṇika, and in the night, Kūṇika attacked Vaiśālī breaking through the fortress. Hearing this king Ceṭaka gave up his life observing a fast and became a god in heaven. Kūṇika got the land of Vaiśālī tilled by donkeys and fulfilling his oath returned to Campā.

He started considering himself unconquerable with this ‘Mahāsīlā Kamṭaka’ and ‘Rathamūsala’ weapons and desired to become a cakravartī. Lord Mahāvīra was staying in Campā’s Pūrṇabhadra caitya. He went there and said – “Lord, will I become the victor of the six divisions of Bharataa and become a cakravartī?” The Lord said – “No, there are only 12 cakravartīs in the present avasarpīṇī half-cycle. It is impossible for you to be one.” He then asked – “What are the indicators of a cakravartī?” The Lord said – “They had fourteen divine jewels such as cakra, etc. Kūṇika found out all about the jewels from the Lord and returned to his palace.

He had full faith in the Lord but at the same time, he had also seen the amazing miracles of his weapons. He got jewels made from the artisans and with fasts, etc, and all the weapons, he left for establishing rule over the six divisions. He reached Timisraa cave after conquering many kingdoms and attacked its doors, after observing a fast. The doorkeeper of the cave asked – “Who is it?” Kūṇika replied – “Cakravartī Aśokacandra.” The doorkeeper said – “Impossible! Twelve cakravartīs have already existed.” Kūṇika replied – “I am the thirteenth.” Angry at this the doorkeeper god fumed and Kūṇika was burnt to ashes. After dying, he went to the sixth hell. In spite of being a devotee of Lord Mahāvīra, on account his selfishness and greed, he skipped the path and went to doom.

Kūṇika remained Lord Mahāvīra’s devotee and follower throughout his life. Though Dr. Smith writes that the Buddhists and Jains both call Ajātaśatru their follower but the claim of the Jains is stronger. Kūṇika’s real name was Aśokacandra or Emperor Aśoka.

King Udāyana

Among the foremost of devotees and followers of Lord Mahāvīra, such as Śreṇika, Kūṇika, Cetaka, King Udāyana also belong this category. He was a popular king of Siṃdhu-Sauvīra kingdom. The capital of this kingdom was Vītabhaya city, which was large, beautiful and prosperous in everyway. Prabhāvatī was the queen King Udāyana Abhīcakumāra was their son. Udāyana’s nephew Keśīkumāra too used to live with him. King Udāyana had great faith in the words of Lord Mahāvīra. He was a 12-vowsfollower of Mahāvīra. Once king Udāyana was in his fasting

hall, fasting and deep in spiritual contemplation, when a feeling emerged in him – “Those people are blessed who have seen the *Śramaṇa* Mahāvīra, listen to him and, serving him, do good. When will I get such a golden opportunity?”

The next day, leaving Campā city, the Lord arrived at the Mṛgavana garden in Vītabhaya city. On knowing this, Udāyana was beyond himself with joy hearing and saw his dream come true. Getting up from his throne, with intense feeling, he prayed to the Lord and reached the garden with his family members and others. The detached sermon of the Lord had such an impact on Udāyana that he requested the Lord – “I want to take initiation, handing over my kingdom to my son Abhīcikumāra.” The Lord said – “Do not delay doing the work that gives you happiness”.

Feeling very happy, king Udāyana was returning to his palace. On the way a thought occurred to him – “If I hand over this kingdom, which I am giving up for it being a cause for great sorrow, to my son as a successor, if he becomes attached to it he will expand his worldly attachment. Hence let me give it to my nephew, Keśīkumāra, in place of my son.” Accordingly, he made Keśīkumāra the successor of his vast kingdom and became a monk taking initiation from Lord Mahāvīra.

Being denied his paternal rights to the kingdom by his father, Abhīcikumāra felt deeply wounded, yet he obeyed every word of his father and peacefully went to Campā to the emperor of Magadha, Kūṇika. His father’s act pained him for long like a thorn. In spite of being a dedicated devotee of Lord Mahāvīra, he did not even salute his father, monk Udāyana in his lifetime, and keeping this resentment in his mind, observing the śrāvaka conduct, completing his life with a month’s saṃlekhanā, without repenting the bad feeling towards his father, he became a demon god, Asurakumāra. On completing his life span as Asurakumāra; he will be born in MahāVideha and shall attain enlightenment, emancipation and liberation.

Mahaśramaṇa Udāyana, after initiation, studied the eleven Aṃgas and became immersed in observing severe penance, etc. to annihilate all his karmas. Because of different kinds of intense penance, his body had

become mere bones and because of limited food, a severe disease affected his body. On request by physicians, he began to consume curd.

Once, wandering alone, Udāyana reached Vītabhaya city. When the minister found out, with a bad feeling, he told the king Keśī – “Sage Udāyana is coming again to take his kingdom. Hence killing him immediately is better for us.” Keśī immediately did not agree with the minister, but the minister continuously explained to him he agreed with the plan of giving Udāyana poisonous food. Upon his orders poisonous curd, brought by a herds woman, was given to Udāyana, eating which, within a while of the poison having its effect, sage Udāyana became alert and accepting that food with equanimity, ascending the kṣapakaśreṇī through deep meditation, he attained pure knowledge and after a half month’s saṃlekhanā, obtained nirvāṇa.

This sage Udāyana is the last king who attained mokṣa following sermons of Lord Mahāvīra.

Some memorable moments of Lord Mahāvīra

Once, Lord Mahāvīra was seated in the garden named Manoramā in Pottanapura city. The king of that city, Prasannacandra, impressed by the Lord’s detachment inspiring sermon, took initiation and learning under elder monks, became well versed in the Sūtras. After sometime, the Lord left Pottanapura and came to Rājagṛha. Monk Prasannacandra was also with him. At Rājagṛha, a little distance away from the Lord, he stood at one place in meditation. By coincidence, going to serve the Lord, king Śreṇika passed that way and saw him standing on one leg, meditating. After paying obeisance to the Lord he said – “Lord, the monk who is meditating on the way, if he dies now, what destination he will reach?” The Lord said – “The seventh hell.”

Śreṇika was surprised that even a monk doing great penance can go to hell. After sometime, out of curiosity, he asked that question again. Lord Mahāvīra said – “If he dies now, he will be a god in the SarvarthaSiddhi vimāna.” Hearing this, Śreṇika was even more perplexed. Clearing his doubt the Lord said – “Oh king! When you asked the first time, the meditating monk was indulging in a mental battle with his opponent monks and during the time of your second question, repenting for his

error, he had ascended the height of lofty thoughts. That is why the answer for the two questions is so different.”

Upon Śreṇika’s request the Lord further said –“The meditating monk overheard the conversation of two army generals, Sumukha and Durmukha. He learnt that his minister and an enemy king might be possibly dethroning his son to whom he handed over his kingdom to become a monk. Angry, giving in to love for his son, he was battling in his mind with the minister and the enemy king. In the fearsome time of these results, you asked the question so I said he would go the seventh hell. But after sometime when he realised he is but a monk and what is his business with kingdom and thrones, and repenting, he took to lofty thoughts, hence I said he would attain to Sarvārthasiddhi vimāna.”

Lord Mahāvīra was explaining to Śreṇika the secret of his statement when the skies resounded with divine sounds. The Lord told Śreṇika – “That same monk, Prasannacandra, who became eligible for the SarvarthSiddhi vimāna, in the second stage of his deep meditation, ascended the vimalasreni, and destroying, at the same time, his obscuring karmas, has attained pure intuition and pure knowledge. To express the glory of that, the gods are beating the drums.” Śreṇika was pleased in his mind to see the Lord’s omniscience.

Once, Lord Mahāvīra was staying in Rājagṛha’s garden. A person came to Mahāvīra at that time and falling at his feet, said – “Lord! Your sermon is like crossing the worldly ocean. Once I had the opportunity to hear your speech and your teachings at that time saved me from trouble. Today I wish to benefit from your speech.” Thus, with a firm resolve, he heard the Lord’s sermon, hearing which he felt guilt for his past actions. With folded hands, he requested the Lord – “Lord! My past life is full of misdeeds. Can I get a place at your feet to purify it? Can a thief and a perpetrator of atrocities obtain Śramaṇa dharma? Hearing that person’s pure words, the Lord said – “Rohineya! True repentance clears the blackness of sin. All your impurities have burnt to ashes by the self-criticism. Hence you have become eligible for the Śramaṇa status.”

Soon the infamous thief Rohineya became a monk and went far ahead because of his penance and good deeds. It is true, after all, that the

detachment-inspiring sermons of the Lord can turn a thief into a pious soul.

Abhayakumāra in the precincts of Rājagṛha

The king of Rājagṛha, Śreṇika and his family were the best devotees of Lord Mahāvīra. This minister Abhayakumāra contributed towards bringing them this credit. Abhayakumāra was also Śreṇika's son, born to his queen Nanda. Abhayakumāra saved Śreṇika many times from political troubles.

Once Ujjayinī's king Caṇḍapradhyot attacked Rājagṛha along with many other kings. Abhayakumāra showed such intelligence that Caṇḍapradhyot went back in fear. Where the enemy camp was about to be housed, Abhayakumāra got gold coins to be placed there in pits. When Caṇḍapradhyota surrounded Rājagṛha, Abhayakumāra sent word to him saying the kings who have come with him have actually joined hands with king Śreṇika and that they plan to make him prisoner of Śreṇika. In return for this Śreṇika has given them lots of money, which has been placed in pits under your camp. The moment he heard this Caṇḍapradhyota got the place dug up and found the gold coins. Out of fear, he at once returned to Ujjayinī.

A woodcutter of Rajgrhi, Drumaka, took initiation from Ārya Sudharmā. When Drumaka used to go seeking alms, people would make fun of him and say – “Here comes the great renouncer, See what a great wealth he has sacrificed.” Drumaka was very unhappy with this behaviour of people and told this to Ārya Sudharmā. To cure Drumaka's disgust, Ārya Sudharmā decided to leave from that place the next day. When Abhayakumāra learnt of this he requested Ārya Sudharmā to change his decision and placed a crore each of gold coins in a heap in the city, and announced that whosoever leaves his wife, fire and water for life may take these three crore gold coins. When nobody was prepared Abhayakumāra said – “See this Drumaka is such a great renouncer. For a lifetime he has sacrificed woman, fire and fresh water.” Because of this cleverness of Abhayakumāra, people's taunts at Drumaka ended.

When Lord Mahāvīra arrived at Rājagṛha, Abhayakumāra too came there to listen to his sermon. At the end of the sermon, Abhayakumāra asked the Lord – “Lord, who will be the last king to attain mokṣa in your

time?” The Lord replied – “Vītabhaya’s king Udāyana, who is a monk with me; he will be the last king to gain mokṣa.” Abhayakumāra thought, ‘if I take initiation after becoming a king, the path to mokṣa will be closed for me. It will be better if I take initiation while I am a prince. When he placed this thought before Śreṇika he said – “Child! It is my time to take initiation; you must take over the kingdom.” When Abhayakumāra made a special request Śreṇika said – “the day I become angry with you for some reason and ask you to go away from here and do not show me your face even by mistake, that day you can renounce.

After sometime, Lord Mahāvīra again arrived at Rājagṛha. It was extreme winter. One day Śreṇika went for a stroll with his queen Celanā. Returning in the evening on the way they saw a monk in meditation. Suddenly the queen woke up in the night and remembering that monk and suddenly she said – “Ah! What must he be doing?” hearing this, the king developed suspicion towards the queen and in the morning he instructed Abhayakumāra – “Burn Celanā’s palace, it is infested with bad conduct.” Abhayakumāra took Celanā out of the palace and burnt it.

There Śreṇika asked the Lord about the behaviour and conduct of the queen, to which Lord Mahāvīra said – “Your Celanā and other queens are faultless and of chaste character.” Hearing this praise for his queens Śreṇika began to repent having given those orders and fearing that no harm may happen, returned to the palace. Seeing Abhayakumāra on the way he asked – “What happened to the palace?” Abhaya said – “As per your instructions it has been burnt.” Hearing this, the king was very sad and said – “You did not do the right thing. Despite my orders you should have used your intelligence and obeyed the orders after stalling it for sometime.” To this Abhaya replied – “You should not have given those orders without thinking.”

The king was very angry due to persistent arguments with Abhayakumāra and with his own evil orders, He suddenly said – “go away from here, and do not show me your face again.” Abhaya was waiting for this. He left at once and accepted initiation at the Lord’s feet. King Śreṇika returned to the palace and seeing everyone safe was sad again for giving hasty orders. He felt he had lost a clever son and an able minister. He went at once to Lord Mahāvīra but Abhayakumāra initiated

already. Observing with purity the monk conduct muni Abhayakumāra became ahamindragod named Vijaya in the Anuttaravimāna.

Nirvāṇa from a historical Point of View

Lord Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa in 527 B.C. Evidence for this is available in good amount in all the ancient and modern scriptures of the Jain tradition. The strong evidence is completely unambiguous based on which this time has been calculated. Still, modern historians and researchers have from time to time given different viewpoints on this matter. We shall briefly review these now.

The name of Herman Jacobi is prominent among those scholars. Based on all these evidences he compared the nirvāṇa of Lord Mahāvīra and Buddha and concluded that Buddha was younger than Mahāvīra. After careful study of Dr. Jacobi's evidences, scholars have opined that it is not correct to take Dr. Jacobi's conclusion to be the final one. According to Ācārya Hemacandra Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa was in 527 B.C. Dr. K. P. Jaiswal states that Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa account in Buddhist āgamas do not agree with historical facts. He considers Mahāvīra's nirvāṇato have occurred prior to Buddha. Dr. Rādhākumuda Mukharjī and investigator of archaeology, muni Jinvijaya, according to Dr. K. P. Jaiswal's opinion, he accepts Lord Mahāvīra to be older. In the same way, Dr. Hasle talks of Buddha's nirvāṇa as having taken place five years after Mahāvīra. According to him, Buddha was born three years before Mahāvīra. According to muni Kalyāṇavijaya Buddha's nirvāṇa took place in 542 BC (in May) and Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa in 528 BC (November); thus Buddha had attained nirvāṇa 15 years before Mahāvīra. He also places Lord Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa in 527 BC, which is also in accordance with the tradition and evidence as well. Srī Vijayendra Sūrī's 'Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra' also uses different evidences and places Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa in 527 BC.

Buddhist Pitakas perhaps give real and clear evidence about Lord Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa. In those, Buddha speaks of Anaṃda's and Cunda speaks of Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa. Where the question of Lord Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa before Buddha is concerned, we should not doubt it because there is no opposing reference in the Jain āgamas for this. According to muni Nagarāja, there are many accounts in Buddhist texts to prove

Mahāvīra's seniority in age, in which Buddha himself accepts that he is younger. For example: Lord Buddha was once wandering in Śrāvastī in Jettavana of the orphan Pindik when king Prasenajita had asked him in some context, 'you are young in age and renounced recently, then how can you say that you have seen samyaka sambodhi?' To this Buddha said – "Fire, snake, kṣatriya and monk should not be insulted by calling them young." This is the strongest evidence for Buddha being the younger one among the spiritual ācāryas and leaders of his time. Seeing all this there should be no doubt about Mahāvīra's seniority in age and nirvāṇa before Buddha. In the same way, keeping in mind both traditional and historical points of view and evidence, his nirvāṇa took place in 527 BC.

Candragupta's ascension to the throne (BC 322 which according to Jain tradition) is considered to be another evidence historically i.e. 215 years after Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa. Ascension of Avanti and this is another historical fact that Candragupta established his kingdom ten years after ascending the throne. Thus, $322-10=312+215=527$, that is, according to the Jain time count, too, when Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa occurred in 527 B.C.

The strongest and universally accepted evidence to prove unambiguously 527 BC to be the nirvāṇa year is also this, which has been unanimously accepted by ancient Digamabara and Śvetāmbara Ācāryas – that is the beginning of the Śaka era, 605 years and 5 months after Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa. In this way, BC 527 is the historically proven and accepted time.

Historical Analysis of Lord Mahāvīra and Buddha's Nirvāṇa

Lord Mahāvīra and Buddha were contemporaries; hence, in deciding the nirvāṇa time of both, scholars have discussed it together, considering the intrinsic connection between their times. It is a different matter that instead of solving the problem, it has made it more complicated. India's accomplished historian, Paṇḍita Gaurīshaṃkara Hīrāchaṃḍa Ojhā, while discussing 'Buddha Nirvāṇa Samvat', writes that there is no decision on which year Buddha attained nirvāṇa. In Lamkā, Burmā (Myanmar) and Śyāma, Buddha's nirvāṇa is believed to have taken place in 544 BC as also the Āsāma royal teachers believe. According to Chinese traveler Fa Hien it happened around 1097 BC and Hiuen Tsang, within 4th century BC. Some other historians say between 4th century BC and 5th century BC. Muni Kalyāṇavijaya has tried to make it clear on his part that Lord

Buddha was 22 years older than Lord Mahāvīra was and Lord Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa 15 years after Buddha's nirvāṇa. This way, Buddha's nirvāṇa is in 542 BC. Without getting into an analysis of scholars' opinions here, we wish to present just facts and evidences so that we get the exact year of nirvāṇa.

It may be noted that we have to take a decision on an event that occurred approximately 2500 years ago. It is well-known that at that time Sanātana, Jain and Buddhist religions were the main ones which are existent even today. There is no description on Buddha's life in Jain āgamas. The description in Buddhist scriptures and texts about Buddha's nirvāṇa are so mutually contradictory that not one of them we cannot consider correct. In this situation, it becomes necessary to search for material in Sanātana religion's ancient literature. Fortunately, there is a śloka in the Sanātana religion's Srīmadbhāgavatapurāṇa (in its first skandha), which throws light on Buddha. This śloka means that during kalayuga in Magadha (Bihāra) to seduce demons, the enemies of gods, you will be the avatāra of Buddha, son of Aṃjanī (Āṃjanī).

In Buddha's context, the author of this text refers to the brave king of the time, 'Aṃjan'. According to Buddha-related descriptions, Śuddhodana is Buddha's father; hence, according to the śloka there is no scope for considering Aṃjan to be Buddha's father. Actually, the author of Bhāgavata means to say that Buddha was the son of the king Aṃjana's daughter Aṃjani. This is a really new but historical fact that Lord Buddha was king Aṃjana's grandson. The śloka mentions Aṃjana's daughter Aṃjani in the same way as Janaka's daughter is Jānakī, and Maithila's daughter is Maithilī. The Burmese tradition proves that Buddha's maternal grandfather Aṃjana was a Śākya kṣatriya who started his own era named Ītajānā. In Burmese language, Ītajānā means Aṃjana. According to Ītajānā era, Buddha's nirvāṇa happened in 148 on Vaiśākha month's full moon day on a Tuesday, which is equivalent to 502 BC, April 15, Tuesday.

To solve this problem there is a Ślokain Vāyupurāṇa in which is mentioned a king named Pradhyota who will be seated on the throne of Avaṃti after his father Munika will get will get the king murdered and bringing all ministers under his control, will rule for 23 years. According to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Buddha and Caṃdapradhyota were

born on the same day, as Buddha became enlightened. All historians unanimously accept this fact that at the time of enlightenment, Buddha was 35 years old. This means that Pradyot too became king of Avanti at the age of 35. According to the śloka in Vāyupurāṇa, Pradyot ruled for 23 years and after him, his son, Pālaka, became the king, and on that day, Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa. Thus strong evidence from Sanātana, Jain and Buddhist beliefs prove that on the day Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa at the age of 72, Pradyota died at age of 58 and Buddha too was 58 years old on that day. With this it is proved that Buddha's year of birth was 14 years after the birth of Mahāvīra and nirvāṇa 22 years after that of Mahāvīra.

According to Āvaśyakacūrṇī, when Mahāvīra turned 28, his parents died. According to the authors of the cūrṇī, at the time of death of king Siddhārtha and Triślā Devī, Pradyota was 14 years old. Accordingly, we prove the nirvāṇa year of Mahāvīra as 527 BC. Mahāvīra was born in 599 BC and Buddha was born in 585 BC. Combining all these facts together, we can conclude that Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa in 527 BC and Buddha, 22 years after that, in 505 BC.

In Aśokan edicts, no. 256, which is considered indicative of Buddha's nirvāṇa year, proves that Buddha's nirvāṇa took place in 505 BC. Many scholars based on this number in the edict, believe that when these edicts composed, after 256 years of Buddha's nirvāṇa. According to historians, Aśoka was coronated king in 269 BC. Eight years after coronation, he gained victory over Kalimṅga, where, seeing the cruel human killing, he became disgusted with war and became a follower of Buddhism. On his part, he put all energy into propagation of Buddhism. As a result, Buddhism spread not only in India but also in many countries abroad, attaining the peaks of progress after he started issuing the edicts. In all these perhaps 10-12 years were spent, hence these edicts were commissioned in the 20th year of the coronation, 249 BC, when 256 years had passed after Buddha's nirvāṇa. According to this calculation, Buddha attained nirvāṇa in 505 BC and corresponds with reference in Vāyupurāṇa to Pradyota's reign. Based on all these indisputable facts, we can say that Lord Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa in 527 BC and Buddha in 505 BC.

Place of nirvāṇa

According to Jain belief, Lord Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa place is Pāvāpurī near Rājagṛha in Patna district, where grand temples have made it a Jain pilgrimage centre. However, historians do not seem to agree with this. The reason being that when Mahāvīra attained nirvāṇa at that time there were 18 chiefs of republics of Mallas and Licchavis present there. This is only possible to have taken place in north Bihar's Pāvāpurī because all these republics were in Bihar. South Bihar's Pāvā was in their enemy land. Dr. Jacobi too, based on descriptions in Buddhist scriptures, concedes that Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa place Pāvā was in Śākya land. Rāhula Saṃkṛityāyana too, confirms this. Nāthūrāma Premī also expresses the same opinion. According to him, Lord Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa took place at the northern side of Gaṃgā in Pāvā city, which is in present Gorakhpura district, in a village popular as Pupahara.
