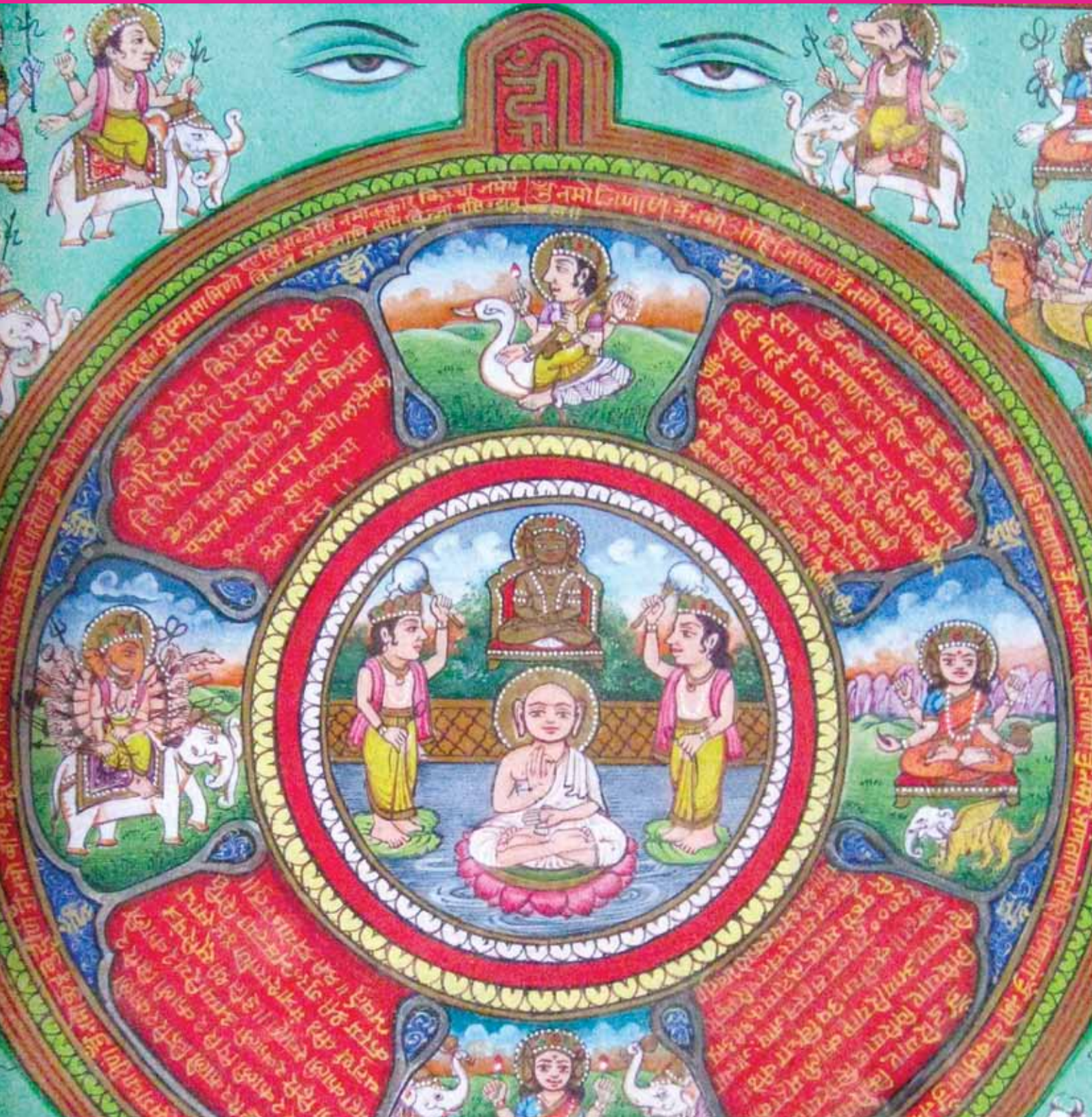


# Jaina Studies

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRE OF JAINA STUDIES





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# Jaina Studies

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*Sūrimantrapāṭa* of the Tapā Gaccha, Mumbai.  
(Photo: Ellen Gough, July 2013.).



## Dharma in Jainism: Workshop at Manipal University

Tillo Detige

Calendared auspiciously in the days leading up to the *pūrṇimā* of the month of Māgha, full moon day of 2-3 February 2015, a two-day workshop on Jainism took place at the Centre for Philosophy and Humanities (MCPH) at Manipal University in Karnataka, India. It was organised by Professors Sundar Sarukkai and Meera Baidur, both of Manipal University, which generously funded and hosted the workshop, and by Dr Jayandra Soni of Innsbruck University. Twelve speakers from India and abroad were invited to speak on a Jain-related theme of their choice. The conference was well attended by local researchers and students, and participants who had come from further afield. Allotting a full hour to each speaker, the workshop allowed for detailed presentations, sustained reflection and both extensive and intensive discussions.

Meera Baidur inaugurated the conference, noting that the meeting was specifically designed to bring together scholars working in various disciplines of the field of Jaina Studies. The event indeed brought to the limelight a wide array of aspects of Jaina dharma, with individual contributions focussing on subjects ranging from cosmology and mathematics to ontology and metaphysics, and from logic and ethics to literature and ritual. As such, the workshop gave the students of the MCPH and other participants a thorough introduction to the teachings and practices of Jainism, and a broad overview of the various disciplines practiced in the field of Jaina Studies.

Nalini Joshi (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune) opened the proceedings with a paper titled “Interpretation of the *Mudrarākṣasa* from the Jaina Perspective.” She pointed out the Jaina elements in Viśākhadatta’s Sanskrit drama (7th–8th century CE), revolving around the historical personalities of Candragupta Maurya and Cāṇakya. She also highlighted the lack of attention paid to the Cāṇakya-Candragupta narratives found in the *Āvaśyaka-* and *Niśītha-cūrṇis*.

The presence of H.H. Cārukīrti Bhaṭṭāraka of the Jaina *maṭha* at nearby Mūḍabidri graced the start of the conference. With his multilingual and learned discussion of “Karma in Jainism,” the Bhaṭṭāraka effaced in a wonderful manner the distinction between conference papers and traditional teachings (*pravacan*).

With specific reference to Hariḥhadra’s treatise, Meera Baidur (Manipal University) introduced the intricacies of Jaina cosmology in her paper “Geography and Place in Jaina Dharma: A Discussion on *Jambūdvīpasamgrahaṇī*.” By connecting Jaina cosmology with Jainism’s soteriological concerns, she restored place as a central element of Jaina dharma. While it is an individual’s karma that determines the location of rebirth, and the latter in turn determines the possibilities of further progress on the path of liberation, knowledge of one’s cosmological location also helps and motivates one to make further advances.



Meera Baidur (Manipal University)

The polyvalence of the term “dharma” was pointed out by Jayendra Soni (University of Innsbruck) in his paper “Jaina Dharma of Beings and Things.” Soni pointed out that beings and things (*jīva* and *ajīva*) should be seen in the context of substance, quality and mode/modification (*dravya*, *guṇa* and *pariyāya*) to account for the changes they undergo without losing their intrinsic nature.

Luitgard Soni (Innsbruck) presented her research on the “Jaina Dharma of Dying and Death,” with particular reference to the *Bhagavati-Ārādhana* written in Śaurāṣeṇī Prakrit by the Digambara Śivārya. Reiterating the view that in the Jaina literature “on fasting unto death” the Jaina doctrine is reviewed as a consequence of its underlying metaphysics, Soni connected the Jaina methods and concepts of dying a good death with the Jaina views of body, soul, karma, rebirth and liberation.

Jagat Ram Bhattacharyya (Śāntiniketan) took up Jainism’s crucial moral guideline of *aparigraha* (non-possession) and discussed its practical application for both mendicants and lay people in his paper “Theory and Practice of *aparigraha* in Jainism with special reference to the Jain Canons.” Quoting from several canonical works, he showed its historical development, also discussing how the 22 *tīrthaṅkaras* preceding Mahāvīra taught four rather than five great vows (*mahāvratas*), subsuming *aparigraha* and celibacy under one single vow (called *bahiddhādāna viramana*).

Opening the second day of the workshop, Anupam Jain (Sanwer, Indore) gave a comprehensive overview of “The Role of Mathematics in Jainism.” He showed mathematics to be crucial for fields like cosmography, karmic theory, logic and astrological calculations of the auspicious moment for events like *dīkṣā* and *pratiṣṭhā*. His presentation also included an overview of Jaina mathematical works, among others Ācārya Mahāvīra’s (814-877 CE) *Gaṇitasārasamgraha* and Paṇḍita Ṭoḍaramala’s (1720-1767 CE) *Gommatasāra Samyakjñānacandrikā*.

Sundar Sarukkai (Manipal University) discussed the “Moral Implications of Jaina Logic.” Many modern

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theories of morality are built on specific assumptions concerning the relation between ethics and rationality, claiming that binary logical structures enable moral judgements to become more universal and objective. The multi-valued logic of Jainism, however, goes hand in hand with a “situated,” contextual ethics. In this context, Sarukkai also proposed an alternative understanding of (ethical) rationality, one that conceptualizes rational decision making as a process rather than a purely content-based event.

Shubhachandra Jain (Emeritus, Mysore University) discussed the singularly central aspect of Jaina dharma in his paper “The Jaina Concept of *Himsā* and *Ahimsā*.” Premising his discussion on the view that for a clear understanding of the importance of *ahimsā* one should also understand the nature of *himsā*, he discussed the various types of violence as distinguished in Jainism. These depend, among other factors, on the intentionality of the act of violence and the object to which it is directed. Violence, according to Jaina teachings, also encompasses “*sva-himsā*,” violence towards oneself, for example when engaging in passions like anger and greed.

Next, Godavarisha Mishra (Madras University) presented the Digambara writer Ācārya Kundakunda in his presentation: “Reconciling the Differences: Kundakunda and Restructuring Jaina Dharma.” Mishra presented Kundakunda’s work as a conscious attempt to formalize and unify the thought of earlier Jaina philosophers. Special reference was made to the *Samayasāra*, which was highlighted for its comprehensive treatment of the self.

Priti Shubhachandra (Mysore University) discussed “Anti *Yajña* Representations in Kannada Jaina Literature.” The opposition to Vedic sacrificial rituals of course relates directly to the central Jaina concept of *ahimsā*. Taking stock of Guṇabhadra’s narration of the origin of *himsā-yajña* in his Uttara Purāna, Shubhachandra then analysed and discussed the various narratives about violent sacrifices found in Cāmuṇḍarāya’s *Cāmuṇḍarāya Purāna* and Nāgacandra’s *Pampa Rāmāyaṇa*.

In his presentation “Ritual, Devotion and Liberation:



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Sundar Sarukkai (Manipal University)

the Case of the Digambara Bhaṭṭārakas,” the present writer (Ghent University) highlighted the importance and function of Jaina ritual and devotion as irreplaceable epistemological and soteriological tools, arguing for a reappraisal of these practices as “technologies of the self.”

Apart from the valuable presentations, it was the impeccable organisation, the delightful campus of the MCPH and the wonderful facilities and hospitality offered by Manipal University that contributed to making the workshop a grand success. The MA and PhD students of the MCPH, acting as the many helping hands of the organisers, also formed the heart of the proceedings. Their critical questions, vivid remarks and profound reflections demonstrated their earnest inquiring minds as well as the high standard of the centre’s educational programme.

*Tillo Detige* is currently conducting doctoral research on Digambara history at Ghent University, aided by a scholarship granted by the Research Foundation Flanders.



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