

Jaina Studies

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRE OF JAINA STUDIES



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On the Cover

Seated Jina
Unknown artist, Madhya Pradesh or Gujarat
12th century, 1108 CE
Black stone
25 x 20 1/2 x 13in. (63.5 x 52.1 x 33cm)
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The Katherine
Kittredge McMillan Memorial Fund 98.211
Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art



Manuscript Collections of the Western and Central Indian Bhaṭṭārakas

Tillo Detige

Bhaṭṭāraka lineages proliferated throughout Western and Central India especially in the 15th and 16th centuries, and continued to flourish and multiply in the 17th to 18th centuries. Though by the 19th century they seem to have lost much of their influence, most lineages were discontinued only in 20th century. The age of the manuscripts in the collections (*bhaṇḍāra*) discussed here parallel the rising and declining fortunes of the *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages themselves. The majority date from the 16th to 18th centuries, less to the 15th and 19th centuries, and yet fewer earlier or later than that. The *bhaṭṭārakas'* *bhaṇḍāras* typically contained a broad range of texts, including various genres of literature, ritual and devotional compositions, philosophical works, texts on conduct, grammar and poetics, mathematical, astrological and ayurvedic works, and small numbers of non-Jaina texts.

The seats of most *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages are known to have shifted regularly between various cities and towns, presumably according to political conditions, or more directly following patterns of lay migration, which in turn depended on changing economic opportunities. From the colophons it is clear that many of the texts were composed, or copies made, at various consecutive seats or yet elsewhere. We can safely assume that when relocating their seats, *bhaṭṭārakas* often took along their manuscript collections or at least parts thereof.

Guṭakās or bound manuscripts make up an important part of most *bhaṭṭāraka bhaṇḍāras*. Often thought of as having been personal notebooks, *guṭakās* were typically anthologies of miscellaneous, short compositions ranging from devotional and ritual to philosophical texts, and sometimes included literature not found elsewhere. Though thus far little studied, they form a particularly interesting source for the study of the former usage of manuscripts, and of early modern Digambara renunciants' practices more broadly.

In an earlier issue of *Jaina Studies*, Balcerowicz (2015) reported on Digambara manuscript collections from across the length and breadth of India. The present article adds information on the manuscript libraries of some *bhaṭṭāraka* seats of Western and Central India visited by the author in the past years. I first report on a number of collections connected to the Mūlasaṅgha Balātkāraṅga, and then add shorter references to known Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha and Senagaṅga *bhaṇḍāras*. While a thorough study of the general contents of these libraries and a discussion of specifically noteworthy texts preserved therein lies beyond the scope of this report, it is hoped that sharing information on the collections' whereabouts will contribute to their further exploration.

Jaipur

Most *bhaṭṭāraka bhaṇḍāras* are still preserved in their traditional setting, at the *mandīras* where the last incumbents of the various lineages had their seats. A single exception is the Āmera śāstra-bhaṇḍāra in Jaipur, one of the best known and most regularly consulted Digambara manuscript collections in the region.¹ The nucleus of the current collection is the *bhaṇḍāra* of the former Mūlasaṅgha Balātkāraṅga branch referred to by Joharāpurakara (1958: 97-113) as the Dillī-Jayapuraśākhā, which before the foundation of Jaipur in 1727 was located at nearby Āmera. Apparently in the 1940s, after a period of neglect,² a collection of 1,600 (remaining?) manuscripts was brought to Jaipur from the former *bhaṭṭāraka* seat in Āmera, the Nemiṇātha Sāmvalajī Mandira. The manuscripts were first deposited for some years in a layman's house, then

1 Kāsalīvāla (1949) catalogues both the original *bhaṭṭārakīya bhaṇḍāra* of Āmera and the collection of the Mahāvīrajī. In Kragh (2013), the Āmera library stands as a case-study for 'localized literary history'.

2 See Kāsalīvāla (1949): a-ī; Kragh (2013: 20-1).



A *guṭakā* of the Āmera śāstra-bhaṇḍāra wrapped in protective cloth (*veṣṭāna*), with index card informing of the manuscript's general contents and the date of its preservative treatment. February 2013.

shifted to a dedicated building, the Mahāvīra Bhavana, where a research institute and a publishing house were established, the Jaina Vidyā Saṁsthāna. Manuscripts were brought over from the pilgrimage site Atīśaya Kṣetra Mahāvīrajī, the seat of the last Dillī-Jayapuraśākhā *bhaṭṭāraka* Candrakīrti (died 1968/9 CE), and added to the collection. In 1988, the collection and research institute shifted to the Digambara Jaina Nasiyām Bhaṭṭārakajī at Narayan Singh Circle (Detige, 2014), where the Apabhraṁśa Sāhitya Akādāmī was established, a centre of research and teaching on Apabhraṁśa, Prakrit, and Jainism directed by Kamalacanda Sogāṇī. For several years, plans have been underway for a new building with improved facilities a few miles further South in Mālavīya Nagara, and the relocation should be underway at the time of this publication. The collection has been further expanded with endowments from private collections, and is now nearing 6,000 manuscripts, including more than 700 *guṭakās*.³ Rarely available elsewhere, a handwritten catalogue volume of the *guṭakās* produced in the 20th century lists in detail their contents, disclosing this collection of *guṭakās* in its totality as a resource for the study of local literary history, practical or ritual canons, and book history.

Ajmer

Different paths of the development of Jaina manuscript libraries are exemplified by the *bhaṇḍāras* of the two *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages referred to in sum by Joharāpurakara (1958: 114-25) as the Balātkāragaṇa Nāgaurāśākhā, which ultimately settled in Ajmer and Nagaur respectively. The Ajmer lineage's last incumbent was Bhaṭṭāraka Harśakīrti, who was still active in the mid-20th century. The manuscript collection of this lineage is preserved at its former seat, the Digambara Jaina Mandira Baṛā Dhaṛā (Bābājī kā Mandira) in the Sarāvagī Mohallā neighborhood in Ajmer (26°27'30.6"N 74°37'50.3"E). *Bhaṇḍāras* kept at *mandiras* are typically managed by the elected temple trust. As is often the case elsewhere, the Ajmer collection has most recently been catalogued by a specialized outsider organization, in this case the Satśruta Prabhāvanā Trāṣṭa Bhāvanagara, referred to in short as the 'Bhāvnagarvāle'. Their catalogue contains over 2,000 loose folio manuscripts and 450 *guṭakās*. While modest in comparison to both the previous and the following *bhaṇḍāras* discussed here, this is a substantial collection in its own right, filling more than two cupboards (*alamārī*) with well-preserved bundles of manuscripts wrapped in the distinct red cloth.

Nagaur

The second Balātkāragaṇa Nāgaurāśākhā branch ended after the death of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti in 1966-7. Its vast manuscript collection is currently housed in an annex to the former seat, the Bīsapantha Baṛā Mandira in Nagaur (27°12'06.6"N 73°44'21.3"E). An



An opened manuscript *alamārī* in a side room of the Baṛā Dhaṛā Mandira, Ajmer. February 2013.

epigraph above the entrance indicates the repository was built by Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti in 1953, naming it the Bhaṭṭāraka Munīndrakīrti Digambara Jaina Sarasvatī Bhavana, apparently in homage to a late 19th-century predecessor. Before its split into the Ajmer and Nagaur branches, the Nāgaurāśākhā first had its main seat in Nagaur under two consecutive 17th-century incumbents. Before that and again afterwards, until it came to settle in Nagaur, the seat of the 'Nagaur' branch shifted between other towns in the Śākambharī region (Joharāpurakara, 1958: 124). Much of the collection of 15,000 manuscripts (P.C. Jain, 1981: xxv), amongst which more than a thousand *guṭakās* (P.C. Jain, 1985) can be expected to have been composed or copied elsewhere. In size, the Nagaur collection surpasses even the Āmera-śāstra *bhaṇḍāra*, and is particularly important for its rich collection of Apabhraṁśa texts. At the time of a visit to Nagaur in February 2013, I was only permitted 'darśana' of the manuscript *alamārīs* and a few bundles of manuscripts. The available catalogue volumes (P.C. Jain, 1981, 1985, 2009), however, show this *bhaṇḍāra* to be tantalizingly rich.

Īḍara

Another important Balātkāragaṇa collection was developed by the so-called Īḍaraśākhā (Joharāpurakara, 1958: 136-58), which together with its sister lineage the Bhānapuraśākhā (Ibid.: 161-8) was active in the Vāgaḍā

³ Personal communication, K. C. Sogāṇī, 25.11.2016.



Maṇḍapa of the Pārśvanātha Digambara Jaina Prācīna Jinālaya in Īḍara, still hosting the *grantha-bhaṇḍāra* of the eponymous Balātkāraḡaṇa Īḍaraśākhā. January 2014.

region. Īḍara was the seat of later-day incumbents of the former lineage, but it seems to have been based further North at first, in Sāgavāḍā in the 16th and 17th centuries and possibly in Udaipur in the early 18th century. The Īḍaraśākhā was discontinued at the turn of the 20th century, after the death of the lineage's last full *bhaṭṭāraka*, Kanakakīrti. At the Pārśvanātha Digambara Jaina Prācīna Jinālaya (23°50'52.9"N 73°00'04.7"E), the seat in Īḍara, the lineage's manuscript collection is preserved in a dedicated room named after its founder, the Bhaṭṭāraka Ācārya Sakalakīrti Prācīna Śrūta-bhaṇḍāra. According to the local caretakers, a substantial part of the collection was lost in previous decades, allegedly stolen. Yet the *bhaṇḍāra* remains an important one. A handwritten catalogue available onsite lists numerous compositions, possibly autographs, by the prolific litterateurs for which this Balātkāraḡaṇa lineage is reknown, *bhaṭṭārakas* as well as *brahmacārīs*.

Sonagiri

A *bhaṇḍāra* at the important Digambara pilgrimage hill (*siddha-kṣetra*) Sonagiri was formerly under the custody of the eponymous Mūlasaṅgha Balātkāraḡaṇa Sonagiriśākhā *bhaṭṭārakas* (Joharāpurakara, 1958: 233, 235). The lineage was originally connected at least as strongly to Gwalior, but later settled to the south in Sonagiri. It was discontinued, and in practical terms replaced by a lay trust, after the death in 1974 of Bhaṭṭāraka Candrabhūṣaṇa, the penultimate *bhaṭṭāraka* of West and Central India. At the central courtyard of the former *bhaṭṭāraka* seat, referred to as the Bhaṭṭāraka Koṭhī (*mandira* no. 8-9), a room is still marked as having formerly been the 'depository of handwritten scriptures' (*hastalikhita śāstra bhaṇḍāra*). By the time of my visit

(December 2013), the collection had been transferred to a more recent building across the road (*mandira* no. 11-12, 25°43'11.7"N 78°22'44.9"E), where *caraṇa-chatarīs* of four Sonagiri *bhaṭṭārakas* are also found. The collection had been catalogued earlier on, and a set of CD-roms was shown to me containing scans of several dozen rare, old, or otherwise noteworthy manuscripts. In its new location, however, the bundles had been placed out of order and no catalogue could be produced. Worst of all, many of the *alamārīs* did not close properly and were infested with bugs. Left without proper care, *bhaṇḍāras* may be lost within a short span of just a few years. Though precise information is missing, the collection I was able to only randomly consult comprised at least a few thousand manuscripts.

Kāraṅjā and Nagpur

Named after its seat at Kāraṅjā (Maharashtra), the Balātkāraḡaṇa Kāraṅjāśākhā saw its last incumbent in Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti, who died in 1916. Now managed by a few enthusiasts and local laymen, and containing over 1,100 paper and some 50 palm-leaf manuscripts, its *bhaṇḍāra* is still kept at the former seat, the Mūlasaṅgha Candranātha Svāmī Balātkāraḡaṇa Digambara Jaina Mandira (20°28'48.6"N 77°29'30.5"E). This collection's condition is superb, all manuscripts which I saw being unblemished copies. At the time of my visit acid-free inlay sheets had just been fitted between the folios of each manuscript to prevent the pages from sticking together over time. At the Pārśvaprabhu Digambara Jaina Moṭhe Mandira in the Lāḍapurā neighbourhood in nearby Nagpur (21°09'05.6"N 79°06'37.7"E), a temple connected to the same *bhaṭṭāraka* lineage, a modest manuscript library

is also found. This collection largely consists of more recent manuscripts, and has been catalogued by the Kundakunda Jñānapīṭha in Indore.

Further Balātkāragaṇa *bhaṇḍāras*

A small *bhaṇḍāra* at the Digambara Jaina Mandira in Aṭera (26°44'57.7"N 78°38'26.5"E) was probably related to the so-called Balātkāragaṇa Aṭeraśākhā. Nothing is known about its contents and about the (assumed) existence, current location, and fate of the manuscript collections of further Balātkāragaṇa lineages and sub-lineages, notably the two branches of the Sūrataśākhā and the sub-lineages of its earlier offspring, the Jerahaśākhā, which spread through Malwa.⁴

Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha and Senagaṇa collections

So far, I have discussed manuscript collections of Balātkāragaṇa lineages. I now turn to a more brief discussion of *bhaṇḍāras* of a few other *bhaṭṭāraka* traditions. Kārañjā, to start travelling North again from there, is known to have been home to no less than three *bhaṭṭāraka* seats (Detige, 2015). A substantial *bhaṇḍāra* is found at the Digambara Jaina Pārśvanātha Svāmī Senagaṇa Mandira, a seat of the Mūlasaṅgha Senagaṇa for several centuries, and the Senagaṇa's only branch in the region under discussion here. References are found to various Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha lineages at Kārañjā's Candranātha Svāmī Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha Digambara Jaina Mandira, yet it's manuscript library is more modest (Ibid.: 156-9).

A single manuscript *alamārī* is preserved at the Mahāvīra Svāmī Digambara Jaina Mandira in Aṅkleśvara (near Surat), a temple that was connected to the Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha Nandītaṭagaccha. A larger manuscript collection related to the Nandītaṭagaccha is found in Rṣabhadeva-Kesariyājī, an important pilgrimage site to the South of Udaipur. It is kept at the Bhaṭṭāraka Bhavana (24°04'36.5"N 73°41'27.6"E), the residence of Bhaṭṭāraka Yaśakīrti, who was also connected to Pratāpagaṛha and died in 1978 CE as the last *bhaṭṭāraka* North of the Godavari river. I could not consult the collection, but Kasliwal (1967: 116) reported it contains over a thousand manuscripts.

Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha Nandītaṭagaccha and Māthuragaccha lineages branched out across the region not unlike those of the Mūlasaṅgha Balātkāragaṇa. Their history, however, is still far less well documented, and accordingly less is known about the existence and location of further Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha *bhaṇḍāras*. It is possible that their collections never developed to the same extent as their Balātkāragaṇa counterparts, given that the Kāṣṭhāsaṅgha seats seem to have been relocated at least as frequently, and seemingly more widely, than those of the Balātkāragaṇa.

⁴ A *bhaṇḍāra* of the Sūrataśākhā might be among the twelve collections in Surat listed by Kasliwal (1967: 33-4), though most of these seem to be Śvetāmbara.

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All photos are by Tillo Detige.

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