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# THE EVOLUTION OF DRAUPADĪ'S MARRIAGE IN THE JAINA TRADITION

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## *Abstract*

Many Jaina texts contain partial or complete versions of the story of the Pāṇḍavas, Kauravas, Kṛṣṇa, and Draupadī. These texts, both canonical and post-canonical, composed in Sanskrit, Prākṛit, and various vernaculars, were written in widely varying times and locations, and appear to represent a persistent Jaina Mahābhārata tradition. As a rule, these texts are little known outside the Jaina community, and have thus far received little attention from Mahābhārata scholars. The relationship between the Hindu and Jaina Mahābhārata traditions is complex, and is made particularly problematic by the uncertainty surrounding the origin of the Mahābhārata epic. Nevertheless, in order to investigate this relationship, the present article focuses upon one specific episode in the story of the Pāṇḍavas, viz. the marriage of Draupadī, and compares these episodes as found in four Śvetāmbara Jaina texts (one in Ardhamāgadhī and three in Sanskrit), four Digambara Jaina texts (all in Sanskrit), and the Sanskrit version of the (Hindu) critical edition. The Śvetāmbara versions of Draupadī's marriage are taken from the canonical Nāyādharmakāhāo (5<sup>th</sup> century CE or earlier), Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra (12<sup>th</sup> century CE), Devaprabhāsūri's Pāṇḍavacarita (13<sup>th</sup> century CE), and Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra (15<sup>th</sup> century CE). The four sources for the story of Draupadī's marriage in the Digambara tradition are Punṇāṭha Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa (8<sup>th</sup> century CE), Guṇabhadra's Uttarapurāṇa (9<sup>th</sup> century CE), Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa (mid 16<sup>th</sup> century CE), and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa (late 16<sup>th</sup> century CE). Two very interesting points emerge from this comparison, including distinct differences between the Śvetāmbara and Digambara versions on the one hand, and between the Hindu and Jaina versions on the other. First, there is the issue of polyandry: while all the Śvetāmbara versions unanimously describe Draupadī as marrying all five Pāṇḍava brothers (as she does in the Hindu version), the Digambara tradition strongly proclaims that Draupadī married Arjuna alone. Moving through our Jaina texts chronologically, this issue of polyandry takes on increasing importance, both within the Śvetāmbara tradition itself, and for Digambara attacks upon their Śvetāmbara rivals. As the story of Draupadī's marriage to five Pāṇḍavas is found in the Nāyādharmakāhāo, a Śvetāmbara canonical text, the Śvetāmbaras were forced to confront and explain, if not fully justify, the seemingly immoral marital arrangement. The Digambaras, unbound by the Śvetāmbara canon, were free to denounce this polyandry as being incompatible with virtue; interestingly, however, it was not the story of Draupadī's polyandry as described in the Hindu version but in the Śvetāmbara versions that was explicitly criticized by Digambara poets. Perhaps most interesting of all is the fact that the Śvetāmbara Jains did not, in the earlier two texts, even acknowledge that Draupadī's virtue as the wife of five men was in question. In fact, it may have been the progressively pointed criticism of the Digambaras that forced the Śvetāmbaras to increasingly and

explicitly justify her polyandry and her virtue. Second, both the Digambara and the Śvetāmbara versions increasingly added, modified or omitted certain details in the plot of the story to bring their versions into closer agreement with the Hindu version. This is especially true of the Śvetāmbara versions, which begin in the Nāyādharmakahāo with Draupadī willingly and self-consciously choosing all five Pāṇḍavas at her *svayamvara* (at which there was no archery contest), and end in Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra with her obtaining the five brothers due to a miraculously-expanding *svayamvara* garland intended merely for Arjuna (the winner of the archery contest). This change in plot appears designed to make Draupadī a victim of circumstances in her polyandrous marriage, as she is in the Hindu version, rather than as the self-conscious and willing instigator of the polyandry, as she is in the early Śvetāmbara versions. The extent to which the Hindu version of Draupadī's marriage was influenced by Jaina versions is uncertain, but it is clear that, in the Jaina community at least, there has been an ongoing history of interactions between Hindu, Śvetāmbara, and Digambara versions, stretching over a period of a thousand years or more.

# 1.

One of the most interesting and provocative episodes in the Indian epic Mahābhārata is the polyandrous marriage of princess Draupadī to the five Pāṇḍava brothers. Although this story is popularly associated with Hindu recensions of the Mahābhārata, versions of this particular episode are not restricted to the Hindu tradition. The Jains too, both Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, possess texts that include versions of the story of Draupadī's marriage. In what follows, I examine the plots of eight different Jaina versions of this unusual episode and compare them to one another and to the Hindu version as found in the critical edition of the Mahābhārata.<sup>1</sup> Using these comparisons, it will be demonstrated that Jaina versions of Draupadī's marriage gradually but continually evolved, over a period not less than a thousand years, from being distinctly Jaina in character to being an approximation of the Hindu version. This unmistakable evolution of an episode so central to the larger epic story<sup>2</sup> serves to support the

1 Henceforth referred to as the "Hindu version." All translations from the critical edition are taken from VAN BUITENEN (1973-78).

2 The polyandrous marriage between Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas is absolutely central to the Hindu Mahābhārata. At the first dicing match between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, Karna justifies the humiliation of Draupadī, which occurred at the hands of the Kauravas, by stating that her condition of having more than one husband meant that she was already a public woman (II.61.34-36). It was as a result of this humiliation of Draupadī that Bhīma predicted

supposition that Hindu and Jaina versions of the Mahābhārata story have consistently interacted over the centuries producing, at least in the Jaina tradition, a remarkably fluid text.

In the Hindu version of Draupadī's marriage, the very suggestion that Draupadī should marry more than one man was vexing to all who heard it. When King Drupada was informed by Yudhiṣṭhira, eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, that all five brothers intended to take Draupadī as their common wife, Drupada was dumbfounded. After all, as Drupada himself pointed out, "It is laid down that one man may have many queens, scion of Kuru, but *never* that one woman may have many men!" (I.187.26). Drupada refers to polyandry as "a breach of the Law that runs counter to Veda and world" (I.187.27), and even Kuntī, whose ill-conceived speech was the proximate cause of the proposed polyandry, described it as "an Unlaw such as never has been!" (I.182.5). However, weighing against the idea that Yudhiṣṭhira was suggesting an unlawful act was the fact that Yudhiṣṭhira himself was the very soul of righteousness, the son of Dharma, and generally considered incapable of any unlawful act. Thus, King Drupada found himself in a legal, not to say moral, quandary, and even his son Dhṛṣṭadyumna could merely comment that, "the Law is too subtle for us to know its course entirely! The likes of us cannot decide whether it is Law or a breach of Law." (I.188.11). However, before Drupada was forced to adjudicate the issue, the poet-sage Vyāsa arrived on the scene to convince Drupada that the proposed polyandrous marriage was both lawful and preordained.

In order to persuade King Drupada, Vyāsa related to him, in private, two stories describing how this polyandrous union, so seemingly unorthodox and contrary to *dharma*, was in fact desired and even designed by the gods. The first of these is known as the "Five Indras," and the second, a version of which had already been related by Vyāsa to the Pāṇḍavas earlier in the story, might be referred to as "Śiva's Boon."<sup>3</sup> Having heard these two stories from Vyāsa, it does not appear that Drupada was fully convinced that the polyandry was

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he would drink Duṣṣāsana's blood (II.61.45) and smash Duryodhana's thigh (II.63.11-15), both of which he later carries out. (IX.54ff)

3 The "Five Indras" story portrays the five Pāṇḍavas as being the incarnation of five Indras, while Draupadī is the incarnation of Śrī (I.189.1-40). The story of "Śiva's Boon" describes how, in a past life, Draupadī received a boon from Lord Śiva to obtain five husbands in her next life (I.157.5-15; I.189.41-45). This latter story, I have argued (GEEN 2001:170-243), is likely a Hinduized version of the story of Sukumārikā in the Śvetāmbara Jaina tradition.



dharmic,<sup>4</sup> but he was persuaded that Draupadī's marriage to the five Pāṇḍavas was ordained by the gods. Thus, he gave his consent and his blessing to the union, and the polyandrous marriage proceeded.

## 2.

While this version of events is well known throughout India, the details of the story of Draupadī's marriage in the Jaina tradition are unfamiliar to virtually all outside the Jaina community. As the various Jaina versions of this episode are clearly divided along sectarian lines, let us first consider those of the Śvetāmbara tradition. The Śvetāmbara versions of Draupadī's marriage examined here are taken from the following four texts: (i) the Nāyādhammakahāo (5<sup>th</sup> century CE or earlier); (ii) Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra (12<sup>th</sup> century CE); (iii) Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita (13<sup>th</sup> century CE); and (iv) Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra (15<sup>th</sup> century CE).

The Nāyādhammakahāo, being the 6<sup>th</sup> *aṅga* of the Śvetāmbara Jaina canon, is considered to preserve an ancient oral tradition later set down in writing in Ardhamāgadhī,<sup>5</sup> and unlike our other Jaina source texts cannot be assigned to any particular author. In terms of content, it may be classified under the genre of *dharmakathā* or narratives intended for edification. The Nāyādhammakahāo, containing approximately 6,000 *śloka*s divided into two books,<sup>6</sup> is by no means a Jaina Mahābhārata per se, nor an epic of any sort, but rather a collection of seemingly-unrelated stories of varying length dealing with the religious life. One of these stories, comprising the 16th chapter of Book I, is essentially a biography of Draupadī, though it also includes episodes from two of her past lives. In general, each story in the Nāyādhammakahāo is meant to contain some moral principle and to explicitly impart this moral at the end of the story. In some

4 Drupada declares, "As Śaṁkara has ordained it so/Whether lawful or lawless, I bear no guilt." (VAN BUITENEN 1973:375 [I.190.4])

5 Of the one Hindu, four Śvetāmbara and four Digambara texts examined in this paper, the Nāyādhammakahāo is the only one not composed in Sanskrit. This fact is in itself noteworthy, as even into the medieval period there were still debates within the Jaina community as to whether or not Sanskrit was an appropriate language for religious texts (see GRANOFF 1991).

6 The title Nāyā-dhamma-kahāo, referring to the two parts of the work, may be translated as Stories (*kahāo*) of Illuminating Examples (*nāyā*) and Righteousness (*dhamma*).

cases, however, including the case of Draupadī's biography, the explicit statement of the moral seems to be lacking. The story of Draupadī herself is mainly comprised of two episodes in her life: her marriage to the five Pāṇḍavas and her abduction by, and eventual rescue from, the wicked Padmanābha.<sup>7</sup>

The second Śvetāmbara source text is the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, or *Lives of the Sixty-three Illustrious (śalākā) Beings*, by Hemacandra.<sup>8</sup> This text falls into the Jaina literary category of *mahāpurāṇa*, and is the foremost example of the genre in the Śvetāmbara tradition.<sup>9</sup> It is comprised of 11 large books or *parvans*, and the story of Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas<sup>10</sup> is located in Book VIII, entitled the *Nemināthacaritra* or *The Life of Lord Nemi*. Helen Johnson's translation of Book VIII is over 300 pages long, and no more than a handful of pages is specifically devoted to Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas.<sup>11</sup> Thus, not even the *Nemināthacaritra*, let alone the entire *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, may be considered a Jaina *Mahābhārata* per se. Much of Book VIII is devoted to the deeds of Kṛṣṇa and his father Vasudeva, and thus, as Helen Johnson has rightly pointed out, this eighth book of the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra* "gives more space to Kṛṣṇa than to Neminātha himself and is, in fact, a Jain *Harivaṃśa*."<sup>12</sup> Though the story of Draupadī is quite brief in this text, it is located in the more

7 To my knowledge, this latter episode is nowhere found in any Hindu version of the *Mahābhārata*.

8 Hemacandra, born in Gujarāt 1088-9 CE, came under the patronage of the western Indian kings Jayasinha Siddharāja (c. 1094-1143 CE) and his nephew and successor Kumārapāla (c. 1143-1172 CE). Jayasinha appointed Hemacandra court scholar and annalist, and, when the throne passed to Kumārapāla, the new sovereign developed a close relationship with Hemacandra. According to Śvetāmbara tradition, Hemacandra converted Kumārapāla to Jainism, and from that time Kumārapāla established in Gujarāt a government run entirely upon Jaina principles (FYNES 1998:xi).

9 A *mahāpurāṇa* serves as a Jaina universal history, and uses prominent personages in the Jaina tradition as the focal points around which the history of the world is oriented. The 63 *śalākāpuruṣas* are subdivided into five categories: 24 Jaina *tīrthaṅkaras* or saviors of the present world age, 12 *cakravartins* or universal sovereigns, and 9 each of the *baladevas*, *vāsudevas*, and *prativāsudevas* (CORT 1993:206). The story of Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas takes place during the lifetime of the 22nd *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi, who is, according to Jaina tradition, a younger cousin of the *vāsudeva* Kṛṣṇa.

10 While the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas do wage battle against one another in the Svetāmbara versions, they do so in the context of the cosmically more-significant battle between the reigning *vāsudeva* and *prativāsudeva*, i.e. between Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha.

11 For the episode of Draupadī's marriage, see JOHNSON 1962:197-203.

12 JOHNSON 1962:xxviii.

familiar context of the Pāṇḍava-Kaurava struggle, unlike in the Nāyādhammakahāo where her biography was merely sandwiched between two entirely unrelated but religiously illuminating stories.

The third Śvetāmbara source text, i.e. Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, which was composed only about a century after Hemaçandra's Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra, constitutes a very different kind of text. The Pāṇḍavacarita, approximately 9,000 verses in 18 *sargas*, is neither a *mahāpurāṇa* nor even a *hari-vamśa*. It represents, in fact, the first (extant) attempt among either Śvetāmbara or Digambara Jainas to compose an extensive text devoted primarily to the story of the Pāṇḍavas.<sup>13</sup> For that reason it is both a landmark text in the Jaina tradition and the first Jaina text that actually conforms to what one might expect from the title Jaina Mahābhārata. However, neither the Nāyādhammakahāo nor the Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra had nearly enough detail regarding the Pāṇḍavas to be easily expanded into a 9,000-verse epic, and for this reason it is perhaps not surprising that Devaprabhasūri drew liberally from the most popular and easily accessible large-scale version of the story available to him, i.e. the Hindu Mahābhārata.

Little is known about the author of this text, though we know his approximate dates (c. mid-13<sup>th</sup> century), his ecclesiastical association (Harṣapurīya Gaccha) and the name of his master (Municandra) and disciple (Devānanda).<sup>14</sup> It would be interesting to understand his motive in writing the text, and why a full-blown version of the Pāṇḍavas' story was, for the first time, deemed desirable in the Jaina community.

The fourth Śvetāmbara source text is Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, which is embedded within his Śatruñjayakalpavṛtti, a commentary (i.e. *vṛtti*) on a text known as the Śatruñjayakalpa. The Śatruñjayakalpa is a 39-verse text, composed in Prākṛit, and attributed to Dharmaghoṣa.<sup>15</sup> The Śatruñjayakalpavṛtti, written in Sanskrit, is in excess of 10,000 verses, and is essentially a collection of stories depending from the thread of the 39 verses of the Śatruñjayakalpa. Specifically, his Pāṇḍavacaritra is hung on verse 25, which makes reference to the Pāṇḍavas erecting images of the Jinas on Mt. Śatruñjaya. In the context of the Śatruñjayakalpavṛtti, this version of the Pāṇḍavas' story is of considerable length (1,232 verses), though it is still only about one eighth the length of

13 Draupadī's *svayamvara* comprises the bulk of the fourth *sarga*.

14 KRISHNAMACHARIAR 1974:199.

15 I have not been able to find a date for this text.

Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita.<sup>16</sup> Śubhaśīla belonged to the Tapā Gaccha, and his teacher was Munisundarasūri.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.

It is neither feasible nor even desirable to include here complete translations of the story of Draupadī's marriage from four separate Śvetāmbara texts.<sup>18</sup> However, the basic outline of the story found in all of the Śvetāmbara texts is sufficiently distinct from the Hindu version that, at very least, a brief introduction is required in order to be properly oriented. For example, as is typical of Jaina narrative literature, we are presented in the Śvetāmbara texts not merely with the life of Draupadī herself, but also with the details of two of her past incarnations, i.e. as the brahmin woman Nāgaśrī and the merchant girl Sukumārikā.<sup>19</sup>

The details of Draupadī's life (and past lives) found in the Nāyādhammakahāo form, in many respects, the blueprint followed by the chronologically latter three texts.<sup>20</sup> However, the order of events in the Nāyādhammakahāo differs from the latter three texts in that it follows strict chronological order: we begin with Draupadī's past life as Nāgaśrī, move forward to her more recent incarnation as Sukumārikā, and then forward again to her incarnation as Draupadī. In the latter three Śvetāmbara texts, the order in which the three incarnations are presented is different: we are initially introduced to Draupadī, and the stories of her past incarnations as Nāgaśrī and Sukumārikā do not arise

16 For the episode of Draupadī's marriage, see ŚPC:27-28 (verses unnumbered).

17 VELANKAR 1944: 372. Further details regarding Śubhaśīla may be found in the introduction (by Dr. Shri Harivallabh C. BHAYANI, in Gujarati) to his Pañcaśatīprabandha, ed. Muni Shri Mrugendra MUNIJI, Surat: Suvasit Sahitya Prakashan, 1968.

18 Complete translations of all eight Jaina versions of Draupadī's wedding examined for this article are found in: N. V. VAIDYA 1940 (Nāyādhammakahāo); JOHNSON 1962 (Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra); JAINI 1997a, 1997b, 1999 (Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa); and GEEN 2001 (Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, Punnaṭa Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa, Guṇabhadra's Uttapurāṇa, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa).

19 Neither of these stories appears in explicit form in the Hindu version.

20 This is especially true of the Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra. As a general statement, it would be fair to say that Hemacandra did not much elaborate on or modify the details in the Nāyādhammakahāo, though both Devaprabhasūri and Śubhaśīla certainly did.

until the time of her *svayamvara*, where they are narrated as flashbacks, as it were, by a sage attempting to explain how Draupadī could have acquired five husbands.<sup>21</sup> For the sake of expediency and continuity, I will summarize the basic outline of the Śvetāmbara versions following the chronology of the latter three texts.

Thus, we begin with the birth of Draupadī. Having enjoyed a considerable sojourn in heaven as a celestial courtesan, the soul that once had been Nāgaśrī, and that later had been Sukumārikā, descended from heaven into the womb of Queen Culañī, wife of Drupada, King of Kāmpilyapura, and was born as a girl named Draupadī.<sup>22</sup> One day, years later, King Drupada looked at his daughter and was astonished to see that she had blossomed into a young woman of marriageable age. At his suggestion, a *svayamvara* was arranged where she would be able to find a suitable husband.

King Drupada dispatched his messengers to all of the important kingdoms to personally invite all the kings and princes to participate in his daughter's *svayamvara*, and in the meantime, Drupada had a huge wedding pavilion erected on the outskirts of his city. When King Pāṇḍu<sup>23</sup> and his sons, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva arrived, they were received by King Drupada and then took their place at the pavilion. Soon, Draupadī herself arrived at the *svayamvara* pavilion,<sup>24</sup> and the names of the many kings in attendance

- 21 The reason for this reordering of the stories is explained by the context in which the story is told. In the Nāyādhammakahāo, Draupadī's biography is entirely isolated from the general concerns of the larger Mahābhārata story as a whole, forming merely one of several chapters in a text where each chapter comprises a separate and unrelated morality tale. Here, there is no particular reason to relate the stories out of chronological order. In the latter three texts, however, Draupadī's story is given in the more usual context of the larger epic. Therefore, the latter three texts begin with the story of the Pāṇḍavas, introduce Draupadī as their immanent and collective wife, and only then, at her *svayamvara*, reveal the details of her past incarnations as Nāgaśrī and Sukumārikā.
- 22 Draupadī's birth and adolescence are only explicitly mentioned in the Nāyādhammakahāo. In the other three texts, we learn nothing about Draupadī until her father's messenger arrives at the royal court of Pāṇḍu to announce her upcoming *svayamvara*. In the Hindu version, Draupadī appears out of a sacrificial altar, and thus has no biological father or mother.
- 23 Notice, by the way, that King Pāṇḍu was alive. In the Hindu version, Pāṇḍu was long dead by the time of Draupadī's *svayamvara*.
- 24 In the Nāyādhammakahāo and Triṣaṣṭīśālākāpuruṣacaritra, Draupadī, in preparation for the *svayamvara*, bathed, donned fine garments, performed the appropriate rites, bowed down before the idols of the Jinas, and returned to the women's quarters to complete her adornment.



were announced to her. What occurs at this juncture depends upon the specific version of the story. In the two chronologically earlier Śvetāmbara texts, there was no archery contest at the *svayamvara*, and Draupadī actually chose for herself whom she would marry. In the two chronologically later texts, there was an archery contest and, as in the Hindu version, Arjuna won this contest.

The exact series of events leading to Draupadī's obtaining five husbands is one of the main points of evolution in the Śvetāmbara versions of the story and will be discussed in detail below. The reaction of the assembled audience to this unusual arrangement is also an interesting point in the evolution of the story, and it too will be discussed below. In any case, once it had been established that Draupadī was to marry all five Pāṇḍavas, an unnamed sage arrived to explain to the *svayamvara* guests how and why this polyandrous marriage had come about. In the process of explaining, the unnamed sage narrated two past-life stories of Draupadī.<sup>25</sup>

His narration begins with Draupadī's past life as the brahmin woman Nāgaśrī.<sup>26</sup> Once upon a time, in the city of Campā, there lived three brahmin brothers married to three brahmin wives, of whom one was named Nāgaśrī. One day, while Nāgaśrī was preparing the meal for the whole family, she made a gourd curry with a lot of rich spices and ghee. She then tasted a drop of the sauce and realized that the gourd she had used was rotten. She quickly hid the gourd from the others and prepared a fresh dish.

Meanwhile, a venerable Jaina monk named Dharmaghoṣa arrived with his disciples to set up camp just outside of Campā. One of his disciples, named Dharmaruci, came to the end of a particular fast and entered the city in search of alms. Dharmaruci happened upon the home of Nāgaśrī, who quickly filled his alms-bowl with the rotten curry she had kept hidden away. Dharmaruci returned to the park and showed the curry to his master Dharmaghoṣa who declared it to be a deadly poison. Instructed by Dharmaghoṣa, Dharmaruci took the curry to a barren spot to dispose of it. A drop of the curry fell onto the ground, and every one of the ants that ate from it died instantly. Realizing that the entire dish of

25 Because the Nāyādharmakāhāṇa's version has the stories of Nāgaśrī and Sukumārikā precede the story of Draupadī, there is no need for a flying ascetic to arrive and narrate Draupadī's past lives.

26 In many particulars, Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra differs from the earlier three texts, including the fact that he does not include the story of Nāgaśrī, but rather only includes Draupadī's past life as Sukumārikā.



curry would result in the death of untold numbers of living creatures, Dharmaruci, a good Jaina monk, simply ate it himself and died.

The master Dharmaghoṣa, learning of his disciple's death, somehow divined the whole story and related it to his remaining disciples. He specifically identified Nāgaśrī by name as the culprit. This story then spread to the inhabitants of Campā, and before long the news reached the ears of Nāgaśrī's husband and his brothers. Being outraged by her sin, the brothers drove Nāgaśrī from their home with violent abuse, which was repeated by everyone she met. Henceforth, Nāgaśrī, an entirely broken and ailing woman, maintained her miserable and ignominious life by begging for food wherever she could. Having died helpless and alone, she was reborn in the Sixth Hell. For many lifetimes to come, she alternated between rebirth among the lowly creatures on earth and in one or other of the Jaina hells.

After many births and rebirths, the soul that had been Nāgaśrī was eventually reborn in the very same city of Campā as Sukumārikā, daughter of a merchant. One day, a marriage proposal for Sukumārikā came to her father, and he accepted it on the condition that the newly married couple would reside in his home, rather than the boy's home. Soon, the boy, who was named Sāgara, was married to Sukumārikā. On their wedding night, Sāgara went to Sukumārikā's bed. However, when his body came in contact with hers, he experienced a painful sensation akin to the touch of burning charcoal. Disconcerted, he quietly slipped out while she was asleep and returned to his father's home. When Sukumārikā awoke to find her husband gone, she was greatly dejected.

Despite his pleas, Sukumārikā's father was unable to convince Sāgara to return, and thus he took his daughter on his lap and soothed her with a promise of finding her a new husband. One day, Sukumārikā's father spied a positively filthy beggar passing by. He brought this beggar into his house, had him fed and cleaned up, and offered him all manner of wealth and comfort if he would assent to marry Sukumārikā. The beggar readily agreed. However, this new husband, like the previous one, experienced the same painful, burning sensation from the touch of Sukumārikā's body. And, like her previous husband, this one too slipped out of the house at night and ran far away.<sup>27</sup> When her father heard this news, he realized that Sukumārikā must be suffering the effects of actions done

27 In Śubhaśīla's *Pāṇḍavacaritra*, we are merely informed that two other husbands were procured for Sukumārikā, and both of them left her in the same manner and for the same reason as the first. The story of the beggar is not found here.

in a past life. Thus, he suggested she abandon the idea of marriage and stay at home practicing acts of charity.

As it happened, Sukumārikā fed alms to some Jaina nuns, and after talking with them, asked to join their order.<sup>28</sup> One day, Sukumārikā decided to perform a particular austerity in a park on the outskirts of Campā. The nuns refused to give Sukumārikā their permission, saying that a nun ought to remain within the monastery when practicing austerities. Nevertheless, Sukumārikā went to the park.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, five men arrived at the park together with a courtesan. Seeing the courtesan pampered and fawned over by five men, Sukumārikā became envious. Remembering that her own pitiable predicament was due to her own past actions, she reckoned that the courtesan must have done something very good in her past life to warrant all this attention. Thus, Sukumārikā vowed (i.e. laid down a *nidāna*) that if anything good should come of her austerities, it should be that she too, in her next life, should enjoy the attentions of five men. Eventually, Sukumārikā died by fasting, though without confessing her sins. Upon her death, she was born as a celestial courtesan, and remained in that state for nine *palyopamas*. Finally, the soul that had been Nāgaśrī, and that had later been Sukumārikā, then descended again to earth into the womb of King Drupada's wife Culañī in Kāmpilyapura, and was named Draupadī.

When the unnamed sage had concluded this narration of the events in Draupadī's past lives leading to her acquiring five husbands, he said, "What is surprising in that?" Now, whether at this point in the story or just before the sage's narration began, a voice in the sky called out its approbation for the polyandrous match. The occurrence of this voice in the sky is another important point in the evolution of the story, and will be discussed in greater detail below. Finally, King Drupada saw his daughter Draupadī married to all five of the Pāṇḍavas.

Despite many variations, both great and small, among our four Śvetāmbara sources, they all follow the basic story as outlined above, and one may readily grasp the extent to which these Śvetāmbara versions are not simple variants of the more popular Hindu version, but rather represent a distinct recension of the episode.

28 In Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, we are merely told that Sukumārikā decided to become a nun out of disgust for worldly life.

29 In Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, it is said that Sukumārikā carried out extreme ascetic practices in a grove, but there is no indication that she was a rogue nun or that her practices were less than admirable.

## 4.

Prior to examining Jaina versions of Draupadī's marriage, I had certain expectations as to what I might find. It was my general supposition that the Jaina tradition was less tolerant of moral ambiguity than the Hindu tradition, and that their tendency to cleanse, or "normalize," morally questionable texts might be reflected in Jaina versions of the Draupadī's marriage.<sup>30</sup> It is ironic, then, that in the earliest extant story of Draupadī's marriage in a Jaina text, i.e. the *Nāyā-dhammakahāo*, Draupadī's polyandry seems to pass with only the slightest hint that there is something morally questionable going on. The events at her *svayamvara* proceed as follows:

Then princess Draupadī walking in the midst of those thousands of kings, and being (so to say) impelled by her former *Nidāna* (or sinful resolution), approached the five Pāṇḍavas, and encircled and wreathed those five Pāṇḍavas with the five-coloured wreath of flowers, and spoke thus: – "I have chosen these five Pāṇḍavas as my husbands". Then Vāsudeva, and all those many thousands of kings declared loudly: – "Well-chosen, indeed, by princess Draupadī," – and with these words they left the *Svayamvara*-pandal and repaired to their respective guest-houses (or camps).<sup>31</sup>

The only indication in this passage that Draupadī's actions were anything less than morally pure is the reference to her former *nidāna*, or sinful resolution, as the motivating factor in her choice of five husbands. But the story appears to gloss over this "sinful" motivation without much self-consciousness, and there is never any hint that Draupadī's polyandry put any of the characters in the story into a moral quandary.<sup>32</sup> In the Hindu version, as mentioned above, all of the characters (with the possible exception of Vyāsa) who heard the suggestion that Draupadī should marry all five Pāṇḍavas were greatly dismayed or at least befuddled. Furthermore, in the Hindu version, Draupadī herself played no active role in the decision, but rather was a helpless victim of the polyandry unintentionally instigated by Kuntī.

30 Both JAINI (1977; 1984) and BALBIR (1984) have discussed this sort of moral cleansing in various Jaina texts.

31 VAIDYA 1940:36-37.

32 The manner in which a Jaina audience might react to hearing this story is an entirely different matter. Nevertheless, the main characters in the story are considered to be good Jainas, and they display no negative reaction at all.

But here, in the earliest extant Jaina version, we see that Draupadī's intentional and self-conscious choice to marry all five Pāṇḍavas meets with not only the tacit but the explicit approval of all concerned. Because we, as the omniscient reader, have already been introduced earlier in the Nāyādhammakahāo to Draupadī's past lives, we at least are familiar with Sukumārikā's "sinful resolution" and thus understand Draupadī's unorthodox choice. But there is no reason to believe that Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva and the other kings present at Draupadī's *svayamvara* were privy to this information. Where, we might ask, is their sense of moral outrage? Evidently, attempting to distinguish between Hindu and Jaina versions of Draupadī's marriage on the simple basis of "tolerance of moral ambiguity" proves to be inadequate.

When we compare the account of Draupadī's marriage found in the Nāyādhammakahāo with the Hindu version, the differences seem to overwhelm the similarities. Of the four Śvetāmbara versions considered, the version in the Nāyādhammakahāo is not only the most ancient but is also the least similar to the Hindu version. The context in which the story of Draupadī is found in the Nāyādhammakahāo, as well as the order in which the stories of Nāgaśrī, Sukumārikā and Draupadī appear, give the impression of an absolutely normal, unremarkable Jaina *dharmakathā* narrative. In fact, if the names of Kṛṣṇa, Draupadī, and the Pāṇḍavas were changed, there would be little to distinguish this series of stories from any number of other Jaina stories. Interestingly, however, as we move chronologically through our four Śvetāmbara versions, we observe a progressive movement away from the unique qualities of the Nāyādhammakahāo's version toward a more recognizably Hindu version.<sup>33</sup>

One immediately-discernible difference between the version in the Nāyādhammakahāo and the Hindu version is the status of King Pāṇḍu. The tale about the sage's curse that prevented Pāṇḍu from fathering heirs (I.109.5ff), and which ultimately resulted in his death (I.116.6ff), is not found in the Nāyādhammakahāo, nor is its corollary: in the Nāyādhammakahāo, the Pāṇḍavas were the biological sons of Pāṇḍu, and not the progeny of the gods. In fact, not only was King Pāṇḍu alive at the time of Draupadī's *svayamvara*, but he, together with his five sons, arrived at Drupada's capital with the full pomp and ceremony

33 It is evident that the evolution of the story of Draupadī's marriage does not move in equal increments between each of our four Śvetāmbara texts; rather, the greatest change occurs between Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭīśālākāpuruṣacaritra* and Devaprabhasūri's *Pāṇḍavacarita*. Nevertheless, the evolution towards the Hindu version occurs to a greater or lesser extent in each of the texts evaluated.

suitable for kings and princes. The Pāṇḍavas, unlike in the Hindu version, did not arrive disguised as brahmins.

The version in the Nāyādharmakahāo also makes reference to the fact that Draupadī, while preparing herself to attend the *svayamvara*, went to the Hall that housed the images of the Jinas and ritually paid homage to them. Obviously, no such event is found in the Hindu version. Furthermore, in the Nāyādharmakahāo, the term *svayamvara*<sup>34</sup> seems to be used literally rather than ritually. Here there is no contest in which Draupadī is the prize. Here we do not find the other kings attempting the feat of archery and miserably failing. Here we do not find Arjuna, disguised as a brahmin, accomplishing the feat of archery to the shock and dismay of the audience. In fact, there is no archery contest at all; rather, Draupadī is merely introduced, as it were, to all the kings and princes in attendance at the *svayamvara*, and, seeing the Pāṇḍavas, she self-consciously chooses all five of them as her husbands. Thus, there is no strange set of circumstances, no strange twist of fate or slip of the tongue, and no miraculous event that results in Draupadī obtaining five husbands. She simply laid down a *nidāna* to have the attention of five men in her past life, and now she has laid claim them.

However, nothing in Nāyādharmakahāo's version of Draupadī's marriage is so startling as the fact that Draupadī's self-consciously-chosen polyandry meets with no hint of disapproval or even surprise, but rather is openly approved of by all in attendance. It is clear that, at least for the characters within the story, no justification for the polyandry was wanting, nor was any offered. Draupadī's status as a virtuous woman is nowhere raised. There is no explicit mention that she remained a virtuous woman despite having five husbands, but there is also no indication in the story that her virtuousness was ever in question.

Those elements of Draupadī's marriage in the Nāyādharmakahāo which distinguish it from the Hindu version are to a great extent mirrored in Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra*, despite the fact that the latter was composed at least 700, if not more than 1000, years after the account in the Nāyādharmakahāo. Nevertheless, the genre of text has changed, as has the context in which we find the story. The *Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra*, unlike the Nāyādharmakahāo, includes the story of Draupadī in a larger and somewhat more familiar context: here, the marriage of Draupadī is merely a small part of a

34 Literally, "[a ceremony at which a husband is] chosen by oneself."



much larger story in which Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas do battle with Jarāsandha and the Kauravas.<sup>35</sup>

In the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, Draupadī is again explicitly said to have offered up homage to the Jinas prior to attending her *svayamvara*. Also, once again, there is no feat of archery required at the *svayamvara*, and Hemacandra has Draupadī self-consciously and willfully choose the five Pāṇḍavas as her husbands: “She, enamored, threw the *svayamvara*-wreath around the necks of the five sons of Pāṇḍu at the same time.”<sup>36</sup> However, unlike the version in the *Nāyādharmakahāo*, the assembled kings, led by Vāsudeva, did show some surprise, if not dismay, at this turn of events:

The circle of kings was amazed, saying ‘What’s this?’ until a flying ascetic came there. The muni was asked by the kings, Kṛṣṇa, et cetera, “How can Draupadī have five husbands?” and he explained:

This state of having five husbands will result from karma acquired in a former birth. What is remarkable? The course of karma is unequal.<sup>37</sup>

The flying ascetic then proceeded to narrate Draupadī’s past lives as Nāgaśrī and Sukumārikā, much in the same way as, in the Hindu version, Vyāsa arrived on the scene to tell King Drupada the stories of the “Five Indras” and “Śiva’s Boon.”

The issue of Draupadī’s status as a virtuous woman is likewise not explicitly raised in this text. However, when the ascetic had completed narrating Draupadī’s past lives, an interesting event took place: “When [the stories of Nāgaśrī and Sukumārikā] had been told by the muni, there was a voice in the air saying, ‘Well done! Well done!’ Kṛṣṇa and the others said, ‘It is good that these husbands happened.’”<sup>38</sup> In this detail we get at least an inkling that the unsullied condition of Draupadī’s virtue is being vouchsafed by a voice on high.

The account of Draupadī’s marriage in *Devaprabhasūri’s Pāṇḍavacarita* is much longer than those in *Nāyādharmakahāo* and *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, but the differences between the accounts cannot be explained merely by the addition of new details. On the contrary, in several important instances, events that occur in the earlier texts are here described with very different details, and,

35 This is not yet the same context as in the Hindu *Mahābhārata*, but it is getting closer.

36 JOHNSON 1962:198.

37 JOHNSON 1962:198.

38 JOHNSON 1962:202.



on the whole, the story in Pāṇḍavacarita is aligned much more closely with the Hindu version.

For example, Devaprabhasūri omits any reference to Draupadī paying homage to the Jinas prior to attending her *svayamvara*. Furthermore, he introduces for the first time the familiar archery contest into Draupadī's *svayamvara*. The contest functions here in much the same way as it does in the Hindu version, in that the winner of the archery contest wins Draupadī as his bride. This represents a major innovation in the Śvetāmbara version of Draupadī's marriage, and obviously brings it into closer harmony with the Hindu version.<sup>39</sup> What had been, in the earlier texts, a literal *svayamvara* has now taken on the character of a typical Hindu epic *svayamvara*, where a bride is won rather than a husband chosen. And here, just as in the Hindu version, Arjuna won Draupadī by performing the feat of archery known as the *rādhāvedha*.

However, Arjuna's accomplishment of this feat did not occur after all the other kings and princes had tried and failed. In fact, there is no mention of anyone else making an attempt. Rather, while Draupadī's companion was in the process of naming and describing each of the assembled kings and princes, and just as she began to introduce Arjuna, he stepped right up to the bow, fired the arrow, and hit the target. But, similar to the Hindu account (I.179.15ff), a shower of flowers from heaven descended upon the victorious Arjuna and the other kings seemed to be visibly angry at Arjuna (presumably out of sheer jealousy).

In the context of this archery contest, in which Draupadī was a prize won by Arjuna, there was no opportunity for her purposefully and self-consciously to choose all five Pāṇḍavas as she did in the Nāyādharmakahāo and Triṣaṣṭi-śalākāpuruṣacaritra. Nevertheless, Devaprabhasūri made it clear that Draupadī wished to choose all five:

With a desire to choose all five, but anxious about the censure of the world, Draupadī tossed the bridegroom garland, obtained from the lotus hands of her servant, onto the shoulders of Arjuna,<sup>40</sup> but by a miracle, though only one, it appeared to the world to be around the necks of each one of them individually.<sup>41</sup>

39 And, for that matter, closer to the Digambara Jaina versions as well.

40 Literally, Kirīṭin.

41 DPC 4.312-313.

*varitukāmā pañcāpi lokanirvādaśaṅkitā |*  
*dauvārikīkarābjābhyām kaṇṭhapīṭhe kirīṭinaḥ ||*

Hence, in this case, Draupadī's polyandry was not self-consciously chosen, but rather was the result of a miracle. Even though it is stated that she wanted all five brothers, Draupadī has now been removed to some degree from the responsibility for the polyandry.

The disembodied voice from heaven described in the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra* is also found in the *Pāṇḍavacarita*, but in this text, the voice is somewhat more explicit. Instead of merely saying, "Well done Well done!" it declared: "The princess has made an excellent choice – Let there be no doubt!"<sup>42</sup>

The reaction of the assembled audience to the expanding-garland miracle is mixed, with King Drupada being filled with anxiety. In fact, this is the first time in our Śvetāmbara versions that genuine dismay is expressed at the thought of one woman marrying five men:

Just as King Drupada, filled with anxiety, was thinking: "I am not able to give a single daughter to those five men! In giving her, I will indeed put myself in a position to be derided by the sages. But [on the other hand], that bridegroom garland did flutter upon the necks of these five men. And from where did this divine voice arise? What will happen?", a certain wandering ascetic arrived by way of the sky.<sup>43</sup>

In a manner similar to the Hindu version, where Vyāsa allays the anxiety of Drupada with the stories of the "Five Indras" and "Śiva's Boon," here the wandering ascetic calms Drupada with the past-life stories of Draupadī as Nāgaśrī and Sukumārikā. Once again, the status of Draupadī's virtue in such a polyandrous union is not directly addressed, though we are, as usual, given no indication that the polyandry has stripped Draupadī of a speck of her virtue.

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*varamālām nicikṣepa sā tu divyānubhāvataḥ |*  
*lokaīḥ pratyekam ekāpi teṣāṃ kaṇṭheṣv adṛśyata ||*

42 DPC 4.314.

*uccacāra tatas tārā vyomni vāg aśarīriṇī |*  
*sādhu sādhu vṛtaṁ rājakanyayā mā sma śaṅkyatām ||*

43 DPC 4.318-20.

*pañcabhyas tanayām ekām nāmibhyo dātum utsahe |*  
*dadāno hi gamiṣyāmi sādḥūnām upahāsyatām ||*  
*varamālā ca pañcānām api kaṇṭhe luloṭha sā |*  
*divyavāk kveyam uttasthau tat kiṁ nāma bhaviṣyati ||*  
*iti cintāturo yāvad abhūd drupadabhūpatiḥ |*  
*cāraṇaśramaṇaḥ kaścit tāvad āgād divo 'dhvanā ||*

We now turn to the last of our four Śvetāmbara versions, Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra. Like Devaprabhasūri, Śubhaśīla refrains from any reference to Draupadī offering up praise to the Jinas in preparation for her *svayamvara*. It is difficult to surmise why this particular detail would be omitted by these two authors, unless we consider it a casualty of the general trend towards a decreasingly “Jaina” version of Draupadī's biography. In some respects, the reference to honouring the idols of the Jinas was one of the few unequivocally Jaina elements in the story.

Śubhaśīla also included the archery contest in his description of Draupadī's *svayamvara*. Furthermore, going beyond Devaprabhasūri, Śubhaśīla included the additional episode of the attempt and failure of the other kings to complete the required feat of archery, found in the Hindu version but not in any of the three earlier Śvetāmbara texts: “But, no matter which king lifted up the bow and firmly released an arrow, the result was an arrow burst into 100 pieces like so many pieces of rock.”<sup>44</sup> This event is also accompanied by a statement reminiscent of the Hindu version, in which, following their own failure, the other kings seemed amused at the idea of Arjuna's making an attempt at the feat of archery: “Then, while many kings were watching with amused looks, Arjuna (Phālguna) successfully hit the target ‘Rādhā’, according to the rules laid down in the *śāstras*.”<sup>45</sup>

This latter detail seemed quite at home in the Hindu version of Draupadī's marriage, but is somewhat out of place here. In the Hindu version of the story, after all the kings had failed to string the bow and hit the target, a man dressed as a brahmin stepped out from amongst the brahmins, and walked up to the bow. In this context, it would, of course, be natural for the mighty kings to be amused at the idea that a mere brahmin could prove successful at a feat of martial valour that not one of them could accomplish. All of these kings knew that Arjuna was a master archer; they simply didn't know this “brahmin” was actually Arjuna in disguise. However, in none of our four Śvetāmbara versions is Arjuna in disguise, and for that reason, the idea of the kings looking on amusedly at Arjuna making his attempt with the bow and arrow sits a little uncomfortably in

44 ŚPC:27 (verses unnumbered).

*tato yo yo nṛpaś cāpaṃ dhṛtvā 'muñcat śaraṃ dṛḍham |*  
*tasya tasya śaro jātaḥ śatakhāṇḍo 'śmakhaṇḍavat ||*

45 ŚPC:27 (verses unnumbered).

*tataḥ paśyatsu bhūpeṣu bhūriṣu smeritekṣaṇam |*  
*śāstroktavidhinā rādhāvedhaṃ sasādha phālgunaḥ ||*

this context. It suggests that this detail has been borrowed directly from the Hindu version, and somewhat clumsily transplanted into the Jaina text.

The circumstances resulting in Draupadī's obtaining five husbands are here also distinct. In the Nāyādharmakahāo and Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra, Draupadī simply walked up to the five Pāṇḍavas and chose them. In Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, in which there was an archery contest, we are told that Draupadī secretly desired all five Pāṇḍavas but decorously acquiesced to garlanding Arjuna alone. This was followed by the expanding-garland miracle, which supplied Draupadī with a polyandrous marriage without the necessity of her self-consciously bringing it about. In Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, Arjuna again won the archery contest and was showered with flowers from heaven while the gods cried "Jaya Jaya."<sup>46</sup> And, like Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, Draupadī walked up to Arjuna with the *svayamvara*-garland and tossed it over his head. However, Śubhaśīla says nothing at all about Draupadī secretly desiring all five Pāṇḍavas but fearing the censure of the world. The event is described as follows:

Just as the daughter of Drupada tossed the bridegroom garland onto the shoulders of Arjuna,<sup>47</sup> that excellent bridegroom garland assumed a five-fold form. Being tossed, it quickly fell onto the shoulders of the five [Pāṇḍava] brothers, and there was a voice in the sky proclaiming, "These five ought to be the husbands of Draupadī." When Draupadī tossed the bridegroom garland onto the shoulders of Arjuna, it fell *simultaneously* around the necks of the five brothers.<sup>48</sup>

Once again, a voice from heaven confirmed the correctness of Draupadī's "windfall."

As expected at this point, a flying ascetic then arrived on the scene. Having delivered a short discourse on the Jaina *dharma*, and upon being asked, the ascetic began narrating a past life of Draupadī in order to explain why the pre-

46 In Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, it was the crowd of people shouting "Jaya Jaya".

47 Literally, Pārtha.

48 ŚPC:27 (verses unnumbered).

*yāvad drupadabhūḥ pārthe kaṇṭhe 'kṣaipsīd varasrajam |*  
*tāvat sā varasṛgīātā pañcarūpadharā varā ||*  
*bhrātṛṇām api pañcānām kaṇṭhe sṛk sā 'patad drutam |*  
*draupadyāḥ patayaḥ pañcā 'mī syur vāṇyabhavac ca khe ||*  
*yadā tu draupadī pārthakaṇṭhe 'kṣaipsīd varasrajam |*  
*tadā patati pañcānām bhrātṛṇām yugapad gale ||*

sent polyandrous circumstances had arisen. However, unlike any of our previous Śvetāmbara texts, Śubhaśīla gives only the past life story of Sukumārikā, omitting completely the story of Nāgaśrī.

The issue of Draupadī's moral status in the face of her polyandry is addressed in this text in a way that had not been addressed in any of the other texts. When the ascetic had completed the story of Sukumārikā, despite the fact that a voice from heaven had already given its approbation immediately following the expanding-garland miracle, the voice in the sky spoke once more:

Then there was a heavenly voice in the sky that spoke thus: "Although there are five husbands, Draupadī is to be considered a virtuous woman," and henceforth her father rejoiced.<sup>49</sup>

This rather explicit and unequivocal statement seems designed to leave the characters in the story, as well as the reader or hearer of the story, in no doubt whatsoever: Draupadī has five husbands and Draupadī is a virtuous woman.

I find it notable that the Śvetāmbara Jainas, at least prior to Śubhaśīla, do not seem to know exactly what to say about the effect that Draupadī's polyandry has on her character. Their lack of interest in her moral status suggests to me that the story of Draupadī, including the bare "fact" of her polyandrous marriage to the Pāṇḍavas, must have been well established before it ever entered Jaina religious literature in the Nāyādhammakahāo. This supports WINTERNITZ's suggestion<sup>50</sup> that the story of Draupadī's polyandry is quite ancient, though in his case, he deduced this from the fact that even the ultra-conservative brahminical tradition seemed powerless to expunge Draupadī's rather outrageous polyandry from their scripture. Unfortunately, the Śvetāmbara texts never provide much information as to Draupadī's fate, and we cannot merely look to a future birth to discover what, if any, effect her polyandry had upon her *karma*. In the Nāyādhammakahāo, we are told:

Then the nun Draupadī studied the Eleven Āngas, beginning with Sāmāyika (i.e. Acārāṅga), with those Suvratā nuns for many years, and observing a mortification (fast) of one month, and having confessed and expiated her faults, and having died at the proper hour, was reborn

49 ŚPC:28 (verses unnumbered).

*saty eṣā draupadī pañca kānteṣu satsu vidyate |  
evaṃ vyomny abhavad divyāvāṇyato mumude pitā ||*

50 WINTERNITZ 1981:317n.



in the heaven Brahmaloka. There, the duration of life of some of the gods is ten Sāgaropamas.<sup>51</sup>

This is a rather uncertain end for Draupadī, especially in comparison to the destiny of each of the five Pāṇḍavas, i.e. full and complete emancipation.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, if there is here a moral to the story with regard to polyandry or *nidānas*, it is not at all clear what it might be. If one were to inquire of the text a straightforward question such as, “So, in the end, was Draupadī committing a sin when she married the five Pāṇḍavas, or was she still virtuous?,” the text does not seem to answer.<sup>53</sup> Clearly, in her incarnation as Sukumārikā, her desire for the attention of five men could not be considered anything but sinful, and Sukumārikā is described as living out her life as a rather degraded, rogue nun who died without confessing her sins.<sup>54</sup> But while her *nidāna* to have five men in a future birth may explain the polyandry of Draupadī, it hardly excuses it.

Nevertheless, until Śubhaśīla's *Pāṇḍavacaritra*, the Śvetāmbara texts never explicitly comment on Draupadī's moral character. Both Hemacandra and Devaprabhasūri leave Draupadī's moral status unstated. However, one gets the undeniable impression that Draupadī is meant to be considered virtuous,<sup>55</sup> and for that reason, perhaps the authors of the earlier three Śvetāmbara texts felt it wise not to delve too deeply into the propriety of Draupadī's unusual marital arrangement.

But by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Śubhaśīla felt compelled to address explicitly the fact that Draupadī was virtuous despite her polyandry, and he does so, it seems to me, using a particularly un-jainistic device; he establishes her virtue through the authority of a disembodied voice in the sky. It is apparent that, in the end, the Śvetāmbara Jainas end up justifying Draupadī's polyandry in much the same manner as the Hindus. That is, they imply that she is somehow a magical exception to the general rule, and while polyandry ought normally to be considered contrary to *dharma*, there are certain mysterious instances when it is not. In other words, Śubhaśīla abandons the typical Jaina argument that everything results from *karma* (and likewise every action must have its karmic consequences), in favour of a mysterious but absolutely authoritative voice in the

51 VAIDYA 1940:56.

52 VAIDYA 1940:56.

53 At least, not until Śubhaśīla's *Pāṇḍavacaritra*.

54 Though this is not found in Śubhaśīla's *Pāṇḍavacaritra*.

55 Almost as if her virtue is to be taken as an *a priori* fact.



sky. Draupadī's acquisition of five husbands was a result of *karma*,<sup>56</sup> but the polyandry itself seems to have no karmic repercussions.

With respect to Draupadī's moral status, it would be interesting to know why Śubhaśīla felt compelled to do what his predecessors had avoided, and in the second part of this paper, dealing with the Digambara versions of Draupadī's marriage, we may find that Śubhaśīla's inclusion of a passage explicitly identifying Draupadī as a virtuous woman may have been in response to pressure, not from the Hindus, but from his rivals amongst the Digambara Jainas.

## 5.

Digambara versions of Draupadī's marriage are, in several significant ways, quite different than either the Hindu or Śvetāmbara versions. Nevertheless, here too a discernible evolution from a more distinctly-Jaina to an increasingly-Hindu version of the story can be demonstrated. And, as just alluded to, there is another interesting phenomenon worthy of notice: the apparent textual interactions between the Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions.

In the Hindu and Śvetāmbara Jaina versions of Draupadī's story, it was her polyandrous marriage to the five Pāṇḍavas that was remarkable. In the Digambara Jaina versions, it is the complete absence of a polyandrous marriage

56 In the latter three Śvetāmbara versions, the flying ascetic who arrives on the scene of Draupadī's impending polyandry, in response to the question "How can Draupadī have five husbands?," always appeals to the force of *karma* (JOHNSON 1962:198, "This state of having five husbands will result from karma acquired in a former birth. What is remarkable? The course of karma is unequal."; DPC 4.325 "Five husbands were chosen by her due to a *nidāna* enunciated in her previous birth. Do not worry any more." (so 'bravīd etayā pūrvajanmopāttanidānaya | vṛtāḥ pañca dhavās tad bho kṛtaṁ mīmāṃsayānaya ||); DPC 4.386 "On account of her former *nidāna*, this one, fallen from a divine existence, became Draupadī (Kṛṣṇā), and these five eminent men are known to be her husbands. What is surprising in this?" (cyutābhavac ca kṛṣṇeyaṁ prācīnāc ca nidānataḥ | bhartāro jajñire mukhyāḥ pañcaite ko 'tra vismayah ||); ŚPC:28 (verses unnumbered) "As a result of the vow which she made in a previous life and which stated the object of her austerities, these five are now her husbands." (anayā prāgbhave cakre tapaso yan nidānakam | asyās tasyodayād āsan patayaḥ pañca sāmpratam ||). However, the fact that Draupadī obtained five men because she somewhat lasciviously thirsted for them in a past life hardly serves as a foundation for her virtue.

that arrests our attention. However, while no explicit polyandry is to be found in any of the Digambara versions, this did not preclude the Digambara poets from commenting upon the topic of polyandry. The Digambara authors were obviously well aware that both the Hindu and Śvetāmbara Jaina traditions maintained Draupadī's polyandrous marriage. This perceived abomination was used by them to display their own moral superiority, both through setting the record straight and preaching the mutual exclusivity of polyandry and virtue.

It is also interesting, from an historical perspective, that when the Digambara authors commented upon Draupadī's alleged polyandry, it was the Śvetāmbara, and not Hindu, version of events that they vilified, suggesting that their immediate concerns were not to rectify the errors in the Hindu version so much as to refute their Śvetāmbara rivals.<sup>57</sup> It has been suggested by P.S. JAINI that the polyandrous marriage of Draupadī sat well with no Jaina author, whether Digambara or Śvetāmbara.<sup>58</sup> The fact that the details of Draupadī's polyandrous marriage underwent continual modification in the Śvetāmbara tradition may or may not be evidence that they felt uncomfortable with it, but there is no specific evidence in any particular Śvetāmbara version that they openly disapproved of it. For the Digambaras, on the other hand, this polyandry served as a lightning rod for their condemnation of the moral status of the Śvetāmbaras. Thus, in the Digambara context, the treatment of Draupadī's marriage is not interesting in itself but for the polemical and theological statement it makes *vis-à-vis* the Hindu and especially the Śvetāmbara traditions.

As was evident above, the Śvetāmbara Jainas seemed to have had no scruples about modifying or even seemingly contradicting certain details of their most ancient and canonical version of Draupadī's marriage from the Nāyā-dhammakahāo, but they never denied the "fact" of Draupadī's polyandry. However, as the Digambara Jainas reject the authority of the Śvetāmbara canon, denouncing it as corrupt and degenerate, they were in no way compelled to maintain any allegiance to the canonical version of this episode. With the purported loss of the true canon, then, the Digambara Mahābhārata tradition is necessarily represented only in post-canonical purāṇic texts.

The four texts used as sources for the story of Draupadī's marriage in the Digambara tradition are: (i) Punṇāṭa Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa (8<sup>th</sup> century

57 The extent to which sectarian rivalries may have impacted the development of Jaina versions of the Mahābhārata has been discussed by JAINI (1984).

58 JAINI 1993:241.

CE); (ii) Guṇabhadra's Uttarapurāṇa (9<sup>th</sup> century) (iii) Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa (mid 16<sup>th</sup> century CE); and (iv) Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa (late 16<sup>th</sup> century CE).<sup>59</sup>

The Sanskrit Harivaṃśapurāṇa of Punnāṭha Jinasena,<sup>60</sup> completed in 783 CE in Gujarāt, is the earliest extant source representing, in any significant way, the Digambara Jaina Mahābhārata tradition.<sup>61</sup> The text is quite extensive, comprising almost 9,000 verses in 66 *sargas*. The genre of the Harivaṃśapurāṇa is given by its title: it is a *purāṇa* to the extent that it contains the history of some, but not all of the 63 *śalākāpuruṣas*, and a *harivaṃśa* in that it contains the biographies of Nemi, Kṛṣṇa, Jarāsandha, and the Pāṇḍavas.<sup>62</sup> It begins at the beginning of the present world age, and covers the lives of the Jaina saviors starting with the birth of 1st *tīrthaṅkara* Ṛṣabha and ending with the emancipation of the 22nd *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi.<sup>63</sup> The first seventeen *sargas* of the Harivaṃśapurāṇa cover events occurring during the tenure of the first twenty-one *tīrthaṅkaras*, leading up to the regime (*tīrtha* or *sāsana*) of Nemi, at which time the Yādava branch of the Hari dynasty came into existence. The arising of the Kuru lineage, including the birth of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, is not even mentioned until the 45th

59 While there is more than a seven-hundred-year gap between the former two and latter two texts, this does not represent any strong dividing line in terms of plot structure. Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, for example, occupies a sort of narrative, though not chronological, middle ground between the Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa.

60 The prefix "punnāṭha," which signifies his lineage, is used to distinguish him from another famous Digambara named Jinasena, author of the Ādipurāṇa.

61 There is a rather dubious attribution of an earlier Harivaṃśapurāṇa to Vimalasūri, author of the Paūmacariya, though if it ever existed, it is no longer extant. There is also an Apabhraṃśa work giving the complete biography of the 22nd *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi that was written between 756-783 CE by Svayambhu, and which was later developed into a Harivaṃśapurāṇa by Yaśaḥkīrti. (SUMITRA BAI and ZYDENBOS 1991:255).

62 With respect to the title of this work, it should be noted that in a Jaina context, *harivaṃśa* refers to the lineage of a *vidyādhara* prince named Hari, and is not, therefore, to be taken as a reference to Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa. Sumitra Bai explains thus: "In the Brahmanical version the Yaduvaṃśa is called the Harivaṃśa because Hari-Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa took birth in that lineage. It has in fact been a tradition in India to name a lineage after a person of historical achievements. It is strange that the Jaina authors name the lineage after someone of whom nothing is known but his name, whereas all the prominent characters like Nemi, Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva, Baladeva etc. are just the descendants of this Hari." (SUMITRA BAI and ZYDENBOS 1991:252.)

63 Also known by the names Ariṣṭanemi or Neminātha.

*sarga*.<sup>64</sup> Thus, like the Śvetāmbara Nāyādhammakahāo or Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣa-caritra above, it would be a mistake to conceive of the Harivaṃśapurāṇa as a Jaina Mahābhārata per se.

The source of our second Digambara version is Guṇabhadra's Uttara-purāṇa. Guṇabhadra was a disciple of the eminent 9<sup>th</sup> century south Indian Digambara poet and mendicant Jinasena,<sup>65</sup> who is purported to have been the teacher of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Amoghavarṣa I who ruled in the 9<sup>th</sup> century from the city of Mānyakheṭa in the Deccan (in modern Karṇāṭaka). This Jinasena began one of the most important and influential texts in the Digambara tradition, known as the Triṣaṣṭīlakṣaṇaśrīmahāpurāṇasaṅgraha, more commonly referred to by the abbreviated title Mahāpurāṇa. However, because Jinasena passed away having completed little more than the story of the first *tīrthaṅkara* Ṛṣabha (in 46 *adhyāyas*), the rest of the *purāṇa*, including the story of the 22<sup>nd</sup> *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi, was left for his disciple Guṇabhadra. The portion of the Mahāpurāṇa composed by Jinasena is referred to as the Ādipurāṇa, and the latter part, completed by Guṇabhadra in an additional 30 *adhyāyas*, is known as the Uttara-purāṇa.

Guṇabhadra makes no bones about the fact that he intended to keep his story of the Pāṇḍavas brief. At the outset of the story, he states, "Now, cognizant of the lifespan and the mental capacity of those who fear stories that are too long, only a very brief version of the sons of Pāṇḍu shall be narrated."<sup>66</sup> His account, from the beginning of the story of the Pāṇḍavas up to the end of Draupadī's marriage, spans only 16 verses.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, in a Digambara context, Guṇabhadra's version is remarkable for two other reasons: (i) past-life stories of both Draupadī and the Pāṇḍavas are introduced, and these stories, surprisingly, are merely modified forms of the past-life stories found in the Śvetāmbara versions to explain why Draupadī marries all five Pāṇḍava brothers; and (ii) it is actually left unusually vague as to whether or not Draupadī married Arjuna alone (as one would expect) or, possibly, all five Pāṇḍavas.

64 For the episode of Draupadī's marriage, see HVP 45.126-157.

65 This Jinasena is to be distinguished from his predecessor of the same name, Punṇāṭa Jināsena, who lived in Gujārāt and was the author of the Harivaṃśapurāṇa.

66 GUP 72.197.

*atra pāṇḍutanūjānām prapañco 'lpaḥ prabhāṣyate |*  
*granthavistarabhīrūṇām āyurmedhānurodhataḥ ||*

67 In fact, the story of the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī is only 75 verses from beginning to end (GUP 72.197-271).

The third Digambara source text is Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa. Like Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita in the Śvetāmbara tradition, this is the first important large-scale Digambara text to be devoted specifically to the story of the Pāṇḍavas, and may to that extent appropriately be considered a Jaina Mahābhārata. Śubhacandra succeeded his preceptor Vijayakīrti as head of the Mūlasaṅgha *maṭha* founded by Padmanandī. His Pāṇḍavapurāṇa was completed in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century CE at Śrīpura in Śākavāta, though his text was later revised by his pupil Śrīpāla.<sup>68</sup> The text, comprised of roughly 5,300 verses divided into 25 *parvans*, focuses primarily upon the story of the Pāṇḍavas, though the first six *parvans* include material on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> *tīrthaṅkaras* Śāntinātha and Kunthunātha, among others. In general, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa follows the story of the Pāṇḍavas found in Punnaṭa Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa, though it usually includes considerably more detail.<sup>69</sup>

The final Digambara source text is the Pāṇḍavapurāṇa of Vādicandra. Vādicandra was the direct disciple and brother of Prabhācandrasūri of the Mūlasaṅgha, Sarasvatī Gaccha, and he flourished in the area near Khambhat in southern Gujarāt. His Pāṇḍavapurāṇa was completed at Ghanaugha in 1598 CE, a mere half century after Śubhacandra had completed his text of the same name.<sup>70</sup> Comprising 2,750 verses divided into 18 *sargas*, this text is roughly half the length of Śubhacandra's text. Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa clearly shares much with Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, but, as will be evident from what follows below, it also contains a good deal of original material.

## 6.

The overall consistency of the various Śvetāmbara versions of Draupadī's marriage examined above made it possible to construct a single, reasonably representative Śvetāmbara version of the story. All of the versions tended to follow the same basic plotline, and differed either in minor details or in only a few important places in the plot. In the case of the Digambara Jaina versions, however, we are not so fortunate. The variations amongst the four Digambara

68 KRISHNAMACHARIAR 1974:33-34.

69 For the episode of Draupadī's marriage, see ŚPP 15:37-228.

70 KRISHNAMACHARIAR 1974:44.



versions are of sufficient extent to make it practically impossible to construct a single, reasonably representative version.

Instead, I will attempt to merely highlight certain aspects shared by most or all of the Digambara versions in order to highlight broad similarities and differences between the Digambara versions on the one hand, and both the Hindu and Śvetāmbara versions on the other. Despite the difficulty in neatly summarizing a typical Digambara plot for the story, it will become clear that the Digambara versions all share certain points that clearly distinguish them from the Hindu and Śvetāmbara versions. Because of its extreme brevity and its rather unusual characteristics, Guṇabharda's version of Draupadī's marriage will be considered separately, and in detail, below. For now, we will restrict ourselves to examining the Harivaṃśapurāṇa, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa.

Very briefly, most or all of the Digambara sources have the following points in common with the Hindu version: (i) King Pāṇḍu was dead long before Draupadī's *svayamvara*; (ii) the Pāṇḍavas were subsequently raised together with their cousins the Kauravas, led by Duryodhana, and instructed by Bhīṣma and Droṇa (iii) Duryodhana harboured animosity toward the Pāṇḍavas; (iv) this animosity resulted in Duryodhana's attempted assassination of the Pāṇḍavas in the lac-house; (v) having escaped the fire, the Pāṇḍavas and their mother Kuntī then wandered about the countryside incognito, disguised as brahmins; (vi) having wandered for sometime, they ended up in Drupada's city, where Draupadī's *svayamvara* was about to take place; (vii) at Draupadī's *svayamvara*, an archery contest was held; (viii) the Pāṇḍavas attended the *svayamvara* disguised as brahmins; (ix) the kings in attendance, including Duryodhana, were not able to accomplish the required feat of archery; (x) Arjuna, disguised as a brahmin, strung the bow and hit the target; and (xi) Draupadī approached Arjuna and garlanded him.

Now, lest the reader mistakenly believe that these Digambara versions are little more than a direct copy of the Hindu version up to this point in the story, let us consider some of the details that distinguish the Digambara versions. In the Digambara versions, it is true that King Pāṇḍu was dead at the time of Draupadī's *svayamvara*, but he did not die as a result of a sage's curse as in the Hindu version. Rather, both he and his wife Mādrī died a pious Jaina death by fasting. It is also true that Duryodhana had animosity towards his cousins, but the situation between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas was a bit more complicated, and for that matter, inconsistent among the Digambara versions. In the Hindu



version, the Kuru kingdom was in these early stages ruled by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. However, the Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa both describe that, prior to Draupadī's *svayamvara*, the Kuru kingdom had been divided into two equal parts, one for the Pāṇḍavas and one for the Kauravas. Not surprisingly, Duryodhana was embittered at the idea of half the kingdom going to the five Pāṇḍava brothers while the other half would have to be shared by himself and his ninety-nine brothers. In Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, however, there had been no splitting of the kingdom at this point in the story; rather, it is said that Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and Vidura simply and arbitrarily made Duryodhana the sole king. Both Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa tell us that, in harmony with the Hindu version, Duryodhana harboured animosity for the Pāṇḍavas because they always out-excelled the Kauravas in the martial training they received from Droṇa. Also similar to events found in the Hindu version, both Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa relate how Duryodhana's hatred and jealousy even resulted in his attempting to kill Bhīma by poisoning his food.<sup>71</sup>

The Digambara descriptions of the adventures had by the Pāṇḍavas and their mother Kuntī while wandering the countryside incognito disguised as brahmins are almost wholly Jaina in character, though there is some scattered but increasingly discernible influence of the Hindu version as the Digambara versions evolve. The circumstances that led the Pāṇḍavas to King Drupada's city are also distinctive. Having wandered for sometime, the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī agreed among themselves that they would return to Hāstinapura. To this point in the story, there had been no mention at all of King Drupada, his daughter Draupadī, or Draupadī's impending *svayamvara*. There was no indication given here that the Pāṇḍavas had ever heard of, let alone met, King Drupada, and no one (such as Vyāsa) implored the Pāṇḍavas to attend Draupadī's *svayamvara*. Rather, the Pāṇḍavas randomly decide to stop off in Drupada's capital on their way back to Hāstinapura.

Just prior to the *svayamvara* taking place, the Digambaras insert an episode entirely distinct to them. A certain *vidyādhara* king named Surendravardhana or Devendravardhana, who was looking for a suitable husband for his own daughter, gave a special divine bow named "Gāṇḍīva"<sup>72</sup> to King Drupada to use

71 This attempt to poison Bhīma is likewise found in the critical edition (I.119.39ff).

72 In the Hindu version, Gāṇḍīva was the name of a divine bow created by Brahmā and given to Arjuna by the god of fire sometime after the Pāṇḍavas had already married Draupadī.

in Druapadī's *svayamvara* with the idea that whoever won the archery contest would win both of their daughters. These details, which clearly distinguish the Digambara version of Draupadī's marriage from the Hindu version, should be sufficient to demonstrate that the Digambara version is hardly a direct copy of the Hindu version.

We now return to the story at the time of the garlanding of Arjuna by Draupadī. All of the Digambara versions are unanimous on this point: the flowers of the garland were blown by the wind and fell on all five of the Pāṇḍavas, though Draupadī only intended to garland Arjuna. There was, however, no miraculous interpretation of these events. Everyone directly concerned in the matter knew that Arjuna alone was the rightful husband of Draupadī. Next, some fools and scoundrels in the audience, either ignorantly or maliciously misinterpreting the gust of wind as meaningful, declared that Draupadī had chosen five men.

At this point, as if momentarily rejoining the Hindu version of events, the kings in attendance at the *svayamvara* became angry and a battle ensued. The details of the battle, however, are distinctly Digambara Jaina in character. In Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, Droṇa mentions to Duryodhana during the battle that it must surely be Arjuna, previously thought dead, who was their opponent. Likewise, these two texts declare that Arjuna recognized his master Droṇa and refused to fight him in battle. Eventually, the angry kings were repelled by the forces of King Drupada and the Pāṇḍavas-in-disguise. Then, Arjuna shot an arrow with a message attached to Droṇa, revealing their identity and explaining all that had happened since the fire in the lac-house. Everyone but Duryodhana was overjoyed to hear that the Pāṇḍavas were still alive. In Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa and Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, Kuntī openly reproached Duryodhana for trying to kill his cousins for the sake of material gain. Then, all the kings remained while Draupadī was married to Arjuna. Finally, all of the Digambara versions end with a discussion of liars and scoundrels that spread false rumors, and how wicked they are for doing so. This is clearly making reference to the "scandalous rumor" that Draupadī married five men, when in fact she only married Arjuna.

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(I.216.1-5). In neither the Hindu version nor the Śvetāmbara versions is the Gāṇḍīva bow involved in the archery challenge at Draupadī's *svayamvara*.

## 7.

Similar to the Śvetāmbara versions, the story of Draupadī's marriage in the Digambara tradition has evolved over the centuries, from Punnāṭa Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* to the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* of Vādicandra. It is unfortunate that our most ancient Digambara version is as recent as the 8th century, and it remains a mystery as to what sort of Mahābhārata tradition, if any, existed amongst the pre-8th century Digambara Jainas. Although the Digambaras claim that the true canon passed down by Mahāvīra and his immediate disciples was lost to posterity, and therefore reject the authenticity and authority of the Śvetāmbara canon, the exact moment in history when the literary traditions of the Digambaras and Śvetāmbars became completely separated is uncertain. According to Paul Dundas, "everything points to the existence of an original and ancient shared Jain textual tradition which gradually bifurcated."<sup>73</sup> In this context, there may not even have been a distinctive Digambara Mahābhārata tradition much before the 8th century.

Punnāṭa Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* lies chronologically halfway between the latest date for the *Nāyādhammakahāo* (i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) and Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra* (i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> century CE). It is an open question as to just how familiar Punnāṭa Jinasena was with the Śvetāmbara version of Draupadī's marriage in the canonical *Nāyādhammakahāo*. Given the fact that he lived in Gujarāt, which was a stronghold of Śvetāmbara Jainism, it may be safe to assume that his version self-consciously diverged from the Śvetāmbara Jaina version. Even Guṇabhadra's version of Draupadī's marriage in the *Uttarapurāṇa*,

73 DUNDAS 1992:70; It has been suggested that the final and hardened division between Digambaras and Śvetāmbars can be marked by the consolidation of the Śvetāmbara canon at the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE Council of Valabhi, at which there was no mention of naked monks at all. If this was the case, then it may be safe to assume that the final split was motivated as much by political considerations as it was by objections to the actual content of the canon. In other words, it may be safe to assume that the contents of the Śvetāmbara canon were, to a great extent, familiar and even acceptable to the Digambaras for centuries, and it would be interesting to know until what period the Digambaras would have claimed the story of Draupadī from the *Nāyādhammakahāo* as their own. Paul DUNDAS (1992:70) further states: "Little work has been done on Digambara attitudes, past and present, to the Shvetambara canon. Prominent Digambaras were certainly familiar with it and cite from it on occasion and, in the nineteenth century, Bühler describes how learned Digambaras whom he had encountered accepted the authority of some Shvetambara texts, while rejecting others."

which was composed presumably in South India approximately a century later than the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, demonstrates a familiarity with the Śvetāmbara version as made clear by his somewhat unusual use of the past-life stories of Draupadī as Nāgaśrī and Sukumārī (i.e. Sukumārikā).

In discussing the evolution of the Digambara versions, comparisons to both the Hindu and Śvetāmbara versions discussed above will be made in passing. It must be admitted that trying to coherently compare four Digambara versions of Draupadī's marriage with one Hindu and four Śvetāmbara versions presents an almost overwhelming challenge and at every moment threatens to degenerate into a rather maze-like discussion; nevertheless, the potential textual interactions between these three traditions are not likely to be demonstrated in any other fashion.

We begin with Punnāṭa Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*. The adventures that the Pāṇḍavas had while wandering incognito throughout the countryside after the incident at the lac-house and prior to Draupadī's *svayamvara* are quite different than in the Hindu version, and appear to have been influenced by the *Vasudevahiṇḍi*.<sup>74</sup> In other words, their adventures are not merely different from those of the Hindu version, but are linked to other famous Jaina story cycles. The manner and condition in which the Pāṇḍavas arrive at Draupadī's *svayamvara* is also unique to the Jaina story tradition, and includes the detail that both of Arjuna's two elder brothers, Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma, were married prior to Draupadī's *svayamvara*. This fact will have importance in what follows.

The seemingly random visit to Drupada's city on their way back to Hastināpura, without having had any prior knowledge of Drupada, Draupadī, or Mākandī city, is interesting. In many ways, it reduces the importance of the marriage of Arjuna and Draupadī to yet one more incognito adventure whereby one of the Pāṇḍavas obtains a wife.<sup>75</sup> This version of events in the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* is decidedly different from those of the Śvetāmbara texts, in which Pāṇḍu and his sons were explicitly invited via special messenger to attend Draupadī's *svayamvara*. It also differs from the Hindu account, in which the Pāṇḍavas were implored to go to Draupadī's *svayamvara* by Vyāsa (I.157.15).

74 According to Jagdishcandra JAIN (1977:25-28), the *Vasudevahiṇḍi* was composed in the 2nd or 3th century CE.

75 In their post lac-house adventures, and similar to the case of Vasudeva in the *Vasudevahiṇḍi*, most of the interactions the Pāṇḍavas have with the various people result in a marriage.

Interestingly, the 8<sup>th</sup> century *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, being the earliest of our Digambara versions, includes the archery contest at Draupadī's *svayamvara*, which was not found in the Śvetāmbara versions until Devaprabhasūri's 13th century *Pāṇḍavacarita*. The introduction of the *vidyādhara* Surendravardhana and his giving of the Gāṇḍīva bow to King Drupada are apparently distinctly Digambara in origin, and do not appear in either the Hindu or Śvetāmbara versions.

As in the Hindu version, the Pāṇḍavas here attended the *svayamvara* incognito, sitting with the brahmins and watching as the kings failed to perform the required feat of archery. Also similar to the Hindu version, Arjuna here steps up to the bow and performs the feat. Though he is in disguise, and those present at the *svayamvara* all thought him to have died in the fire at the lac-house, some people nevertheless wondered if this "brahmin" could be Arjuna. When Arjuna had won the contest, Draupadī proceeded to toss the *svayamvara*-garland around his neck, just as in the Hindu version and latter two Śvetāmbara versions. However, this is where the Digambaras make their major departure from both the Hindu and Śvetāmbara versions.

Let us first consider Draupadī's intentions at the garlanding ceremony. In the Hindu version, though Draupadī happily placed the garland around the neck of Arjuna-in-disguise, there was no indication that she recognized him as one of the Pāṇḍavas; furthermore, it is never explicitly stated that she desired even one, let alone all five Pāṇḍavas. In fact, despite it being her own *svayamvara*, Draupadī's wishes are, seemingly, entirely irrelevant. By contrast, we are informed by our Śvetāmbara texts<sup>76</sup> that Draupadī desired all five Pāṇḍavas. In the Digambara *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, it is implied that Draupadī specifically wanted Arjuna for her husband, though, because he was in disguise, we have no reason to believe that Draupadī recognized him during the *svayamvara*. Nevertheless, the text says: "Then Draupadī, *the bride of Arjuna by her own desire*, having approached [him] quickly, placed the garland on his charming neck with her own two lotus-hands."<sup>77</sup>

This brings us to the actual act of garlanding. In the Hindu version, no details are given at all, and we are left to assume that the garland fell gracefully

76 Excluding Śubhaśīla's *Pāṇḍavacaritra*.

77 HVP 45.135; *emphasis mine*.

*draupadī ca drutaṃ mālāṃ kandhare 'bhyetya bandhure |*  
*akarot karapadmābhyām arjunasya varecchayā ||*



upon the shoulders of Arjuna and that was that. The proximate cause of the polyandry in the Hindu version, i.e. Kuntī's (mis)speech, is still somewhat removed from this event. In contrast, the earlier two Śvetāmbara texts have Draupadī boldly garlanding all five Pāṇḍavas, and once again, that was that. In the latter two Śvetāmbara texts, Draupadī was said to have thrown the garland around the neck of Arjuna alone, but that, by a miracle, the garland expanded and fell on the shoulders of all five Pāṇḍavas.

Here in the Harivaṃśapurāṇa, something else is said to have happened: "Then, the garland expanded, and was suddenly wafted, by means of a gentle breeze, onto the bodies of the five [Pāṇḍavas] standing together."<sup>78</sup> This breeze, however, constituted no miracle for Punnāṭa Jinasena. On the contrary, the people at the *svayamvara* who interpreted this event as Draupadī's having chosen five men are described as ignorant: "The words of some of the trembling people, [who were] ignorant of what had happened, spread loudly: 'Five [men] were chosen by her!'"<sup>79</sup> At this point, having departed slightly from the Hindu version by reference to the "gentle breeze", we appear to again rejoin the Hindu version, whereby some of the kings are outraged at the outcome of the *svayamvara* and advance against Arjuna eager for battle. Like the Hindu version, the angry kings are beaten back by Arjuna and Bhīma, but *unlike* the Hindu version, the Pāṇḍavas then immediately reveal their true identity and reunite with their former companions, including Droṇa, Bhīṣma, and even Duryodhana.

Following the reunion, the Harivaṃśapurāṇa tells us that all the assembled kings remained to witness the marriage of Draupadī to her one and only rightful husband, Arjuna. It is of note in this text that, during the post-lac-house adventures of the Pāṇḍavas-in-disguise, both Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma, (Arjuna's elder brothers), were betrothed, thus leaving the younger Arjuna free to marry Draupadī without the complication of a younger brother marrying before an older one.<sup>80</sup>

78 HVP 45.136.

*viprakīrṇā tadā mālā sahasā sahavartinām |*  
*pañcānām api gātreṣu capalena nabhasvatā ||*

79 HVP 45.137.

*tataś capalalokasya tattvamūḍhasya kasyacit |*  
*vāco vicerur ity uccair vṛtāḥ pañcānayety api ||*

80 In the Hindu version, Yudhiṣṭhira was unwed at the time of Draupadī's *svayamvara*, and the social awkwardness of a younger brother marrying before his elder brother was sufficient to cause Arjuna great anxiety (I.182.8).

After describing how the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas returned to each rule one half of the Kuru kingdom, Punnāṭa Jinasena returned to issue of Draupadī's relations with the Pāṇḍavas. He says:

The two older [brothers, i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma] thought of Arjuna's wife Draupadī as their daughter-in-law, while the twins [i.e. Nakula and Sahadeva] served her as if she was their mother. She treated the older brothers as if they were her father-in-law, just like Pāṇḍu, and she behaved suitably to her younger brothers-in-law, restrained by her love for Arjuna.<sup>81</sup>

This statement is then followed by a short discourse on the ills of lying and spreading false rumours. That this discussion is directed at the "false rumour" of Draupadī's polyandry is not explicitly mentioned, but that this is the intention is utterly transparent. Punnāṭa Jinasena says, "Even ordinary people observe the rule that out of affection they may share their wealth but never their women. It is obvious that noble men would be even more scrupulous in this."<sup>82</sup>

It is quite interesting that Punnāṭa Jinasena, in his refutation of Draupadī's polyandry, does not seem to be refuting the Hindu version of events that led to Draupadī's polyandry, i.e. Kuntī's (mis)speech. Rather, he concerns himself with what appears to be the Śvetāmbara version (i.e. the miraculously expanding-garland).<sup>83</sup> However, among our four Śvetāmbara texts, this expanding-garland miracle story is not found until the 13<sup>th</sup> century Pāṇḍavacarita of Devaprabhasūri, composed roughly four centuries after the Harivaṃśapurāṇa. Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra, composed roughly three centuries later than the Harivaṃśapurāṇa, makes no mention whatsoever of a miraculously expanding-garland.

81 HVP 45.150-151.

*snuṣābuddhir abhūt tasyāṃ jyeṣṭhayor arjunastriyam |  
draupadyāṃ yamalasyāpi mātārīvānuvartanam ||  
tasyāḥ śvasurabuddhistu pāṇḍāv iva tayor abhūt |  
arjunapremasaṃruddham aucityaṃ devaradvaye ||*

82 HVP 45.154.

*prākṛtānām api prītyā samānadhanatā dhane |  
na strīṣu triṣu lokeṣu prasiddhānām kim ucyate ||*

83 JAINI (1999:277) made a similar observation with respect Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, i.e. that the Digambara author Vādicandra was refuting the Śvetāmbara version. However, though Vādicandra may be said to have been refuting earlier Śvetāmbara versions such as those found in Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita or Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, Punnāṭa Jinasena's text is still at least 400 years earlier than either of these.

Given this historical fact, there are several plausible explanations for how the story of the expanding garland spread and mutated between the Digambara and Śvetāmbara traditions; I will present the one that seems to me the most reasonable. We begin with the (Śvetāmbara) Nāyādhammakahāo's version, in which Draupadī places the garland over the shoulders of all five Pāṇḍavas and declares that she has chosen these five as her husbands. I assume that this version was known to the 8th century Digambara poet Punnāṭa Jinasena, and that he used it as his starting point.

Being a Digambara, and being free to reject as corrupt any part of the Śvetāmbara canon he chose, Punnāṭa Jinasena may have decided to accept the motif of the garland falling upon all of the Pāṇḍavas, but reject Draupadī's accompanying declaration, i.e. "I have chosen these five Pāṇḍavas as my husbands." Next, he decided to adopt the *svayamvara* archery contest as found in the Hindu version. Putting these events together, Punnāṭa Jinasena arranged that Arjuna alone was worthy of marrying Draupadī, and that while the flowers of the *svayamvara* garland did indeed land upon all of the Pāṇḍavas, this was merely the result of a meaningless gust of wind. In this way, Punnāṭa Jinasena bridged the Hindu version with that in the Nāyādhammakahāo, demonstrated that neither the Hindus nor Śvetāmbara Jinas had the story quite correct, and best of all, spared future Digambaras the dilemma of claiming that a woman with five husbands was virtuous.

When Hemacandra came to compose his 12th century version of Draupadī's marriage, I have no idea whether or not he was familiar with Punnāṭa Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa. Nevertheless, in composing the Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra, Hemacandra had a Herculean task before him, and the fact that he merely incorporated the details of Draupadī's marriage from the Nāyādhammakahāo is hardly surprising. After all, the marriage of Draupadī was hardly the foremost episode in the present world age. Unfortunately, however, this hardly solved the dilemma for future Śvetāmbaras.

Roughly a century later, the 13th century Śvetāmbara poet Devaprabhasūri came to compose a text that very much focused upon the Pāṇḍavas and their relationship to Draupadī. Once again, I do not know which texts Devaprabhasūri had read or which stories he had heard in preparation for his Pāṇḍavacarita, but it seems likely that, in addition to the versions in the Nāyādhammakahāo and Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra, he was familiar with the Hindu Mahābhārata and Punnāṭa Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa. In including the archery contest, he must have been familiar with at least one of the latter two works, and to suppose it

possible to live as a scholarly poet-monk in medieval India and have no knowledge of the Hindu Mahābhārata perhaps stretches credulity too far.

On the other hand, his scenario where Draupadī tosses the *svayamvara*-garland onto Arjuna alone, but the garland somehow ends up around all five Pāṇḍavas is exactly the same as in Punnāṭa Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*. The only difference between them is the interpretation. For the Digambaras, this scenario was caused by a harmless gust of wind, and Draupadī married Arjuna alone. For the Śvetāmbara poets Devaprabhasūri and Śubhaśīla, it constituted a miracle, and resulted in Draupadī's polyandrous marriage. That Devaprabhasūri would abandon the story as told in the Nāyādharmakāhā and by Hemacandra, and instead favour the Hindu and Digambara versions, is surprising, and will be discussed below.

Nevertheless, the final result of Devaprabhasūri's miraculously expanding garland is that Draupadī's culpability in the polyandrous marriage is noticeably lightened. Unlike Punnāṭa Jinasena, Devaprabhasūri did not have the luxury of dispensing entirely with the details of the Nāyādharmakāhā and Triṣaṣṭīśālākā-puruṣacaritra in order to secure Draupadī's virtue, but he has improved the situation, and it is not at all surprising that the 15th century Śvetāmbara poet Śubhaśīla followed his lead on this point. What is surprising is that it is unlikely that any of these developments in the Śvetāmbara versions would have occurred if not for the influence of Punnāṭa Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*.

Now, temporarily passing over Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa*, let us consider Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*. Though Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* diverges from the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* in many details, it is similar in basic plot. In fact, Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* has the following events in common with the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*: (i) the fire in the lac-house; (ii) the subsequent traveling of the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī incognito; (iii) their decision to journey back to Hastināpura; (iv) their visit to Mākandī city at the time of Draupadī's *svayamvara*; (v) the Gāṇḍīva bow obtained by King Drupada from the *vidyādhara* king; (vi) the attendance of the Pāṇḍavas incognito at the *svayamvara*; (vii) the archery contest; (viii) Arjuna's victory at the archery contest; (ix) Draupadī's attempt to garland Arjuna; (x) the garland being shaken by the wind and falling on all five Pāṇḍavas; (xi) ignorant people using this fact to declare Draupadī had chosen five men; (xii) the kings becoming angry; (xiii) Arjuna and Bhīma fighting off the kings; (xiv) Arjuna identifying himself and his companions to Droṇa etc; (xv) the happy reunion; and (xvi) Draupadī being married to Arjuna alone.

However, while the story in Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa is very similar in basic plot to Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa, it is also much more detailed, and it is interesting to note how many of the additional details are common to the Hindu version. For example, while the Pāṇḍavas' escape from Duryodhana's assassination attempt at the lac-house is found in both texts, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa includes a detail, mentioned in the Hindu version, that they were warned ahead of time about Duryodhana's plot by their uncle Vidura. Also, while the Harivaṃśapurāṇa mentions that the townspeople thought the Pāṇḍavas had perished in the flames, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa gives the additional details, also found in the Hindu version, that the corpses of a woman and her five sons were found in the aftermath of the fire, providing further "evidence" of the demise of the Pāṇḍavas.

The Harivaṃśapurāṇa mentions that Bhīma marries a woman named Hṛdayasundarī, daughter of king Simhaghoṣa in the lineage of Hiḍamba, which is clearly though only glancingly related to the episode in the Hindu version where Bhīma marries the demoness Hiḍimbā with whom he has a son named Ghaṭotkaca. However, in Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, Bhīma is said to have married a demoness named Hiḍimbā and to have had a son by her named Ghuṭuka. And again, in the Harivaṃśapurāṇa, we are not specifically told where the Pāṇḍavas resided while staying in Drupada's capital, but Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa informs us that, similar to the account in the Hindu version, the Pāṇḍavas took up residence in the house of a potter. The Harivaṃśapurāṇa does not make specific reference to the naming of the kings at the *svayamvara*, nor that it was Drupada's secret wish that his daughter marry Arjuna. Both of these details, found in the Hindu version, are included in Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa.

However, with regard to what occurred while Draupadī was placing the *svayamvara*-garland upon Arjuna, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa is in complete agreement with the Harivaṃśapurāṇa: "Then, due to the power of fate, the garland was shaken by the wind, fluttered about, and was scattered about the palanquin/couch of the five [Pāṇḍavas] who were all standing nearby."<sup>84</sup> In terms of countering the rumour that Draupadī married five men, Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa again mirrors the Harivaṃśapurāṇa: "On account of ignorance,

84 ŚPP 15.113.

*tadā daivavaśān mālā vāyunā calitā cala |*  
*pañcānām api paryaṅke vikīrṇā pārśvavartinām ||*



the following rumour got out: ‘Due to the ripening of actions in a past life, five men were chosen by her’; and villains proclaimed this aloud!”<sup>85</sup> This statement is rather more pointed than the one in the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*, where the foolish crowd merely declared that she has chosen five men. Here, clear reference is made to the *Śvetāmbara* version in which a *nidāna* was made by Draupadī in her past life as Sukumārikā, and is thus designed quite explicitly to refer to the *Śvetāmbaras* as ignorant fools.

As in the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*, Śubhacandra’s version refers to the kings in attendance at the *svayamvara* responding angrily to its outcome, but in Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, we are told why: it is because King Drupada allowed a brahmin to walk away with the prize. Once again, Śubhacandra’s version mirrors the Hindu version. During the battle that ensues, Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* adds yet another detail found in the Hindu version but not in the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*: Karṇa asks Arjuna-in-disguise if he is indeed Arjuna, and Arjuna denies his true identity.

When it comes to Draupadī’s status as a virtuous woman, Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, unlike the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*, is explicit in this regard:

Draupadī, who is completely pure, intent upon the gods and upon righteousness, possessed of moral conduct, and of shining beauty serves [one] man of the highest qualities, and indeed, not five! How could she if she is completely devoted to him, is regarded as being a virtuous woman, is said to be the first among faithful wives, and is the ornament of her family? Some crazy people say that Draupadī, of excellent moral conduct, having been subject to an oath, serves five men by the permission of her husband. How could those Pāṇḍavas, endowed with vast understanding, be devoted to [only] one? Even poor people have their own wives. If Draupadī should somehow be devoted to five [men], how could she maintain the title of ‘virtuous woman’? Having considered this matter in their minds, those whose understanding is pure and who possess excellent intelligence should demonstrate that she is completely pure. Thus, where will they go, those wicked people, intent upon their own opinions regarding her?<sup>86</sup>

85 ŚPP 15.114.

*lokoktir nirgatā mauḍhyād iyaṁ karmavipākataḥ |*  
*pañcānayā vṛtā martyā durjanās cety aghoṣayan ||*

86 ŚPP 15.225-227.

*yā saṁśuddhā vibudhaśubhadhiḥ śīlasaṁpatsametā*  
*dīpyadrūpā varaguṇanaram sevate pañca naiva |*  
*tatsaṁsaktā bhavati hi satī kathyate cet katham sā*  
*sādhvīnām vai prathamamuditā draupadī vaṁśabhūṣā ||*  
*kaścil loko vadati samado draupadī divyam āpya*  
*bhartā pañcāpy anumatigatā sevate yān suśilā |*

It is perhaps this type of statement that would have prompted the Śvetāmbara poet Śubhaśīla, in his Pāṇḍavacaritra, to include a voice from the heavens that proclaims that, despite having five husbands, Draupadī was a virtuous woman. Though Śubhacandra was writing this about 90 years after Subhaśīla, his assertion probably represents the position held by Digambaras virtually since the time of Jinasena. In any case, it is clear that when Śubhacandra dismisses the idea that Draupadī had multiple husbands, and specifically debunks the expanding-garland theory, it is the Śvetāmbara version, and not that of the Hindus, with which he is concerned. As far as I know, the notion that Draupadī's polyandry was caused by a miraculous expanding-garland is nowhere to be found in the Hindu tradition, nor is Kuntī's (mis)speech to be found in any Jaina text.

Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa was written less than 50 years after Śubhacandra's text of the same name, and one might wonder why Vādicandra felt that another Sanskrit Digambara version of the Pāṇḍavas' biography was needed, especially as Śubhacandra's text was well known and highly regarded.<sup>87</sup> However, as P.S. JAINI, the editor and translator of this text, points out, the answer to this question is not difficult to surmise: Vādicandra was engaged in sectarian disputes with the Hindus and, to a lesser extent, the Śvetāmbara Jainas. In general, Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa shares the same plot as the Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, though the details are often quite different. At present, however, we are mainly concerned with those details that display a likely influence of either the Hindu text or any of the Śvetāmbara versions. The impact of the Hindu version is of special interest, given the sectarian dispute in which Vādicandra was likely engaged.

Beginning with the episode of the fire in the lac-house, we find that Vādicandra has introduced the name of Śakuni, a well-known character from the Hindu version, though this is clearly not exactly the same character. In the Hindu account, Śakuni is Duryodhana's maternal uncle, who conspires with Duryodhana to bring about the downfall of the Pāṇḍavas. In Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, Śakuni is not a *kṣatriya*, but rather a brahmin, and is in fact Duryo-

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*ekāsaktā vipulamatayaḥ pāṇḍavās te katham syur dāridrāṇām  
bhavati vanitā bhinnabhinnā sadaiva ||  
pañcāsaktā katham api bhaved draupadī cet satītvam  
tasyāḥ syāt kiṃ vimalamatayaś ceti citte vicārya |  
tām saṃśuddhām sudhṛtidhiṣaṇāḥ sādhayantām vadanti  
evam tasyā nijamataratās te kva yāsyanti pāpāḥ||*

87 JAINI 1997a:91.

dhana's *purohita* i.e. domestic priest, though he certainly does conspire with Duryodhana against the Pāṇḍavas. In fact, it is said that the brahmin Śakuni himself set the lac-house ablaze.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Vādicandra introduces another well-known name from the Hindu version, Śikhaṇḍin, but again his Śikhaṇḍin is not exactly the same character as in Hindu version: here, Śikhaṇḍin is the name one of Drupada's two sons.

The name of Bhīma's son with the demoness Hiḍimbā is given by Vādicandra as Ghaṭotkaca, just as it is found in the Hindu version, and he also describes the Pāṇḍavas visiting a town called Ekacakrapura, an obvious reference to the Ekacakrā of the Hindu version. It is interesting that Vādicandra does not use the name Bhogavatī for Drupada's wife, as it is found in the Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, but rather uses the name Dṛḍharathā, suggesting a possible influence from Guṇabhadra's Uttarapurāṇa discussed below.

With respect to the bow used by the *svayamvara* contestants in the archery challenge, Vādicandra follows the Hindu version of events more closely than Punnāṭha Jinasena or Śubhacandra. In the Harivaṃśapurāṇa, the Gāṇḍīva bow was more or less unapproachable by anyone but Arjuna. In Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, the description of the bow and its effect on the kings who tried to approach it is quite detailed and extreme. The bow is described as being so fearsome that it actually killed many of the kings. In Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, however, we see the bow as simply stiff and difficult to manage. It appears that Vādicandra was normalizing, as it were, the more extravagant Digambara descriptions of the bow, and in the process bringing his account closer to the Hindu version.

When Arjuna accomplishes the required feat of archery in Vādicandra's version, things proceed very much as they do in the Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa: "As Draupadī, the daughter of Drupada, was throwing the wedding garland over the neck of Arjuna, it was blown by the wind and fell on all five Pāṇḍava brothers."<sup>89</sup> Despite the variations in detail between the three Digambara versions, they are remarkably consistent on this point. And, as usual, this event is followed by rumour-mongering: "At that, the evil kings,

88 Given Vādicandra's rivalry with the Hindus, this introduction of Śakuni should likely be viewed less as a covert influence of the Hindu version than as Vādicandra's explicit attempt to tell the "real story" which the Hindus have gotten wrong. The fact that Śakuni is now a brahmin may reflect Vādicandra's desire to slander the brahmins.

89 JAINI 1999:270 [6.170].

who had lost hope, said the following, 'All five have been wed by this woman.' And having spoken thus, the wicked ones jeered [at Arjuna]."<sup>90</sup>

A further apparent influence of the Hindu version on Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa can be seen in the manner in which the Kuru kingdom was divided between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. In the Harivaṃśapurāṇa and Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, the Kuru kingdom was split evenly between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas long before the incident at the lac-house or Draupadī's *svayamvara*. Vādicandra seems to follow the Hindu order of events by having the kingdom split between the two sets of cousins only after the *svayamvara* takes place and the true identity of the Pāṇḍavas-in-disguise is revealed.

Finally, Vādicandra, like Jinasena and Śubhacandra, comments on the rumour that Draupadī married five men. Of the three authors, however, Vādicandra is the most explicit about which story is being refuted, and, as JAINI points out, it is quite obviously not the Hindu version but rather the Śvetāmbara version as found in Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita and Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra. I quote the passage here from JAINI's translation:

Some deluded beings, however, prattled that Draupadī was the wife of five husbands. Their idea of a virtuous woman, as well as their daring, is extraordinary indeed. Some [Śvetāmbaras] have speculated that she came to have a relationship with the five brothers on account of craving for such a reward at the time of her death in the previous life. But indeed, this is not a proper causal connection. Such an argument has a fallacy called *sādhyaśādhana* (a proper means of establishing what is to be proved). According to them [the Śvetāmbara version], in her previous birth she was devoid of beauty, and she practiced severe penance [as a Jain nun]. One day she saw a most beautiful courtesan called Vasantasenā. She resolved that she would be as beautiful as that courtesan and would not have any sexual relationship with any other men. Because of that resolution, she has five husbands in this life. [They have further said] that in the case of Draupadī, in her present life, there is no flaw in her character since she had desired the five husbands in her previous life. But even such utterances are truly false and are devoid of all reasoning. If there was evil desire, then it would certainly result in her not being a virtuous woman. But in that case, you should not call her a *sādhvī* (a virtuous woman). But if she is virtuous, then how do you explain that (i.e., her having five husbands)?

Therefore, the words of the Digambaras should be trusted as true by those people who are true believers. And no other speech should be honored as truthful since it only spreads conflicting versions.<sup>91</sup>

90 JAINI 1999:270 [6.171].

91 JAINI 1999:276-277 [6.257-263].

This passage represents the clearest statement thus far regarding the Digambara position on the mutual exclusivity of polyandry and virtue. However, the Śvetāmbara version that Vādicandra briefly alludes to does not coincide with the Śvetāmbara story of Sukumārikā that is found in our texts, and actually seems rather garbled and nonsensical. For example, Vādicandra states that in her previous birth, Draupadī was devoid of beauty, and upon seeing the courtesan named Vasantasenā<sup>92</sup> it was the courtesan's beauty that she craved. In the Śvetāmbara versions examined above, Sukumārikā was described as already being beautiful. Furthermore, upon seeing the courtesan, it was the courtesan's five attendant males and not her beauty that caught Sukumārikā's attention. Somehow, Vādicandra arrives at her obtaining five husbands as a result of her desire to be beautiful.

Despite these irregularities, it is the Śvetāmbara version, rather than the Hindu version, to which Vādicandra awkwardly alludes. Why his version is so unusual is a mystery, unless he purposely garbled the story to further discredit the Śvetāmbaras. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact source for his story. In any case, it seems that Vādicandra was not engaged in sectarian disputes with the Hindus alone, but with the Śvetāmbara Jains as well.

## 8.

We must now consider the very interesting, if exceedingly brief, version of Draupadī's marriage in Guṇabhadra's Uttarapurāṇa. In some respects, Guṇabhadra's version coincides with the other Digambara versions discussed above. For example, prior to Draupadī's *svayamvara*, there is mention of the lac-house episode and that the Pāṇḍavas were thought to have perished in the flames. It might also be inferred from certain phrases that, having escaped the fire, they traveled incognito. However, Guṇabhadra's version is unique in several respects. One might think, for example, that in any version of Draupadī's marriage, whether Hindu or Jaina, the author would be absolutely unequivocal about whether or not Draupadī committed polyandry. In all of the Hindu and Śvetāmbara Jaina versions considered above, Draupadī certainly married five men, and in all the Digambara versions discussed above, Draupadī married Arjuna alone.

92 As opposed to the more usual name, Devadattā.



In Guṇabhadra's Uttarapurāṇa, however, the situation is murky. Initially, when King Drupada sees that his daughter Draupadī has reached marriageable age, he asks his ministers to whom she should be married. Their answer is, "She must be given to the fearsome Pāṇḍavas."<sup>93</sup> It would appear that the ministers were proposing a polyandrous union, though their suggestion could possibly be taken to mean that she should be given to one of the Pāṇḍavas. On the surface, it would also appear that they were advocating necromancy, as everyone, including King Drupada, believed the Pāṇḍavas to have perished in the lac-house. However, the ministers quickly explained that a spy had witnessed the Pāṇḍavas alive and well and taking part in political intrigue in another kingdom. The ministers told king Drupada that if he were to announce a *svayamvara* for his daughter Draupadī, the Pāṇḍavas would be sure to make an appearance. As the ministers predicted, the Pāṇḍavas did show up at the *svayamvara*. It is not clear how long they maintained their incognito status at the *svayamvara*, though it does appear that they were recognized more by their irrepressible behavior than their appearance.

It is also unclear in the Uttarapurāṇa whether or not there is an archery contest at Draupadī's *svayamvara*. Though Arjuna is said to have strung the bow and hit the "fish" target with an arrow, this event may or may not have been part of the *svayamvara* activities. It is somewhat removed from Draupadī's act of garlanding Arjuna at the *svayamvara*, where it appears that while she is being introduced to all the kings and princes in attendance, she simply places the *svayamvara*-garland around the neck of Arjuna.<sup>94</sup> Her choice, if indeed it was her choice, seemed to meet with general approval. These events are described as follows:

The identity of the Pāṇḍavas was made plain by Bhīma's sporting with the thrashing trunk of a rutting elephant, by Arjuna's (Pārtha's) boldness in stringing the bow and piercing of the fish-[target], and from the arrival of Nārada. When they had been recognized as present along with the honest, most worthy, and greatly honoured ones, that girl [Draupadī] entered the *svayamvara* pavilion bedecked with jewels. While the king's domestic priest named Siddhārtha was introducing, excluding [the Pāṇḍavas], each of the kings, together with their lineage, beauty, and qualities, [Draupadī] honoured Arjuna with a beautiful garland. The

93 GUP 72.200.

*iyam kanyeti samprṣṭā mantriṇo mantracarcayā |*  
*prābhāṣanta pracaṇḍebhyaḥ pāṇḍavebhyaḥ pradīyatām ||*

94 She does this in a manner similar to the accounts in the Śvetāmbara Nāyādharmakāhā and Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra, though in these latter texts she garlands all five Pāṇḍavas.

kings originating from noble families, beginning with Drupada, and those born in the Kuru lineage and still others, were satisfied, [thinking], “This is a suitable match.”<sup>95</sup>

The ease with which the assembled kings accepted Draupadī’s choice is reminiscent of the account in the (Śvetāmbara) Nāyādharmakahāṇa, though here Draupadī garlanded Arjuna alone rather than all five Pāṇḍavas. Since there is no mention whatsoever of some event, miraculous or otherwise, to bring about a polyandrous union, this passage would seem to indicate that Draupadī married Arjuna alone. But the next verse<sup>96</sup> describes the Pāṇḍavas as *saṃprāptakalyāṇāḥ*, which could be interpreted as, “by whom good fortune was obtained,” or “who had gotten married.” In other words, either it was to the benefit of the Pāṇḍavas as a whole that Arjuna married Draupadī, or they all married Draupadī. It is possible, therefore, but not certain that this adjective implies a polyandrous union. The following verse<sup>97</sup> makes reference to Arjuna fathering one child with his wife Subhadrā, and five children, one at a time, with Draupadī, though the verse is just sufficiently vague that, if one were determined, one could suggest that the five children of Draupadī were each fathered by a different Pāṇḍava.

Following the marriage episode is only a very brief description of the life of the Pāṇḍavas after they returned to their own city, and a simple enumeration of events, including the destruction of Dvārāvātī and the death of Kṛṣṇa. Upon the

95 GUP 72.207cd-212.

*tatra sarvamaḥīpālāḥ saṃprāpan pāṇḍaveṣu ca ||  
bhīmasya bhojanād gandhagajasya karatarjanāt |  
pārthasya matsyanirbhedāc cāparohaṇasāhasāt ||  
nārādāgamanāc cāpi lakṣyamāṇeṣu niścitam |  
saṃāgateṣu satsvarhan mahāpūjāpurassaram ||  
praviśya bhūṣitā ratnaiḥ sā svayaṃvaramaṇḍapam |  
bhūmipān kularūpādiguṇaiḥ siddhārthanāmani ||  
purodhasi kramāt sarvān kathayaty atilaṅghya tām |  
kanyā saṃbhāvayābhāsa mālayojjvalayā ‘rjunam ||  
drupadādyugraṇaṣṭhamahīśāḥ kuruvamśajāḥ |  
anye ‘pi cānurūpo ‘yamiti tuṣṭim saṃāgaman ||*

96 GUP 72.213.

*evam saṃprāptakalyāṇāḥ praviśya puram ātmanaḥ |  
gamayanti sma saukhyena kālaṃ dīrgham iva kṣaṇam ||*

97 GUP 72.214.

*tataḥ pārthāt subhadrāyām abhimanyur abhūtsutaḥ |  
draupadyām pañca pāñcālanāmāno ‘nvabhavan kramāt ||*

death of Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas decided to renounce their kingdom and journey to where Nemi was residing. Having arrived, they asked Nemi about their previous lives, and in response, Lord Nemi narrated the story of Nāgaśrī and Sukumārī.

The use of these past-life stories by Guṇabhadra is noteworthy, as he is the only Digambara author I have come across that does so. The stories themselves are sure to be very familiar to the Śvetāmbara Jainas, though Guṇabhadra does not, like the Śvetāmbaras, use these stories to justify Draupadī's polyandry. Even when he is done narrating the two stories, Draupadī's marital status is still vague.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, Guṇabhadra's text, so far as I can determine, is unique in the fact that it uses the past-life stories of Draupadī (as Nāgaśrī and Sukumārī) to connect the past lives of the Pāṇḍavas with those of Draupadī. Though the exact names of the characters vary somewhat, Guṇabhadra (through the mouth of Lord Nemi) informs us that the three brahmin brothers and their three brahmin wives in the story of Nāgaśrī were actually previous incarnations of the five Pāṇḍavas plus, as we already know, Draupadī. The three brahmin brothers were reincarnated, after some time spent in heaven, as Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, and Arjuna, and Nāgaśrī's co-wives were reborn as Nakula and Sahadeva. Though the Jaina tradition does contain past-life stories for the Pāṇḍavas, nowhere else to my knowledge are they said to have been characters in the story of Nāgaśrī.

It is obvious that Guṇabhadra's 9<sup>th</sup> century version was not heavily influenced by Punṇāṭa Jināsena's 8<sup>th</sup> century *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, nor does it appear to have been much of an influence upon the later 16<sup>th</sup> century *Pāṇḍavapurāṇas* of Śubhacandra and Vādicandra. However, it is interesting that small vestiges of Guṇabhadra's version emerge in Vādicandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, such as the use of the name Dṛḍharathā for Drupada's wife, as opposed to Bhogavatī in the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* and Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*.<sup>99</sup>

Suffice it to say that it seems that Guṇabhadra was drawing from a variety of sources for his very brief summary, and his version seems to represent an uneasy conflation of elements from versions in which Draupadī's polyandry occurs (i.e. the ministers' suggestion that she be given to the Pāṇḍavas, and the use of the stories of Nāgaśrī and Sukumārī) with versions in which it does not (i.e. she garlands Arjuna alone, there is no expanding-garland, and she is never

98 Actually, in the absence of further information, I believe we are compelled to assume that Draupadī married Arjuna alone.

99 Vādicandra actually quotes from the *Uttarapurāṇa*, and explicitly attributes the quotation to Guṇabhadra (JAINI 1997a:111 [1.52]), thus demonstrating that he was familiar with it.

explicitly said to have married all five Pāṇḍavas). This may suggest that Guṇabhadra was familiar with both versions and wished to include portions of both. In any case, it demonstrates the fluidity of our story among 9<sup>th</sup> century Digambaras.

## 9.

It is sometimes suggested that the medieval Jainas were interested in the “Hindu” epics as a matter of self-preservation. That is, they may have felt it prudent to provide their laity with popular stories equivalent to those of the Hindus lest the Hindu epics, left unrivalled, tempt members of the Jaina laity to convert to Hinduism.<sup>100</sup> Regardless of how threatening the Jainas may have found the Hindu epics, however, it is clear that the Jainas often were interested in using their own distinctive versions of the epics as vehicles to demonstrate their moral superiority. According to the medieval Jainas,<sup>101</sup> Hinduism was merely a corrupt and degenerate form of the religion propagated by the first *Jina* of the present world age, i.e. the Jaina religion propagated by Rṣabha. In this context, Jaina versions of the epics merely provided one more example of how the Hindus had gotten things wrong, and how once again they required the Jainas to set the record straight. However, while this description of Jaina attitudes towards their own versions of the epics is no doubt generally true, in the case of Draupadī’s marriage such explanations do not always suffice.

In the preliminary plot comparison of one Hindu, four Śvetāmbara, and four Digambara versions of Draupadī’s marriage presented above, two points emerged very clearly. First, the chronologically older Jaina versions of Draupadī’s marriage, and especially the canonical version in the *Nāyādhammakahāo*, are more distinctively Jaina in character than the later versions. Over a period not less than a thousand years, Jaina versions of this story (both Śvetāmbara and Digambara) gradually but continually became closer in form and detail to the Hindu version, which itself remained quite stable during this

100 This notion, of course, presupposes that the stories underlying the epics were originally Hindu and only later borrowed by the Jainas, which is not at all certain.

101 See, for example, JAINI’s (1977:331f) discussion of the relationship between the Hindu brahmins and the true “Jain Brahmin” in Jinasena’s 9th century *Ādipurāṇa*.

same period.<sup>102</sup> Second, regardless of how it changed, the story of Draupadī's marriage in the Jaina tradition was continually subject to alteration. This textual fluidity has important implications for understanding Jaina attitudes towards scripture and its mutability.

Demonstrating that the Jaina versions of Draupadī's marriage have become increasingly closer to the Hindu version over the centuries was a relatively easy if laborious task; discerning the reasons for this evolution is less easy. The motives of individual poets can rarely be known with any reasonable certainty, and often we have no clear idea of why a poet composed a particular work, let alone why he chose to add, alter, or omit this or that particular detail. Attempting to untangle those elements of a text that a poet included deliberately and consciously from those included unconsciously, or under the guidance of an *ācārya*, or at the behest of a powerful patron is often impossible. The reasons why successive Jaina poets felt the need or desire to alter the details of Draupadī's story remain speculative. And even if individual motives could be identified, it is not so easy to determine the extent to which the sentiments or worldview expressed by the poet reflect those of the society in which he lived.

There are, of course, any number of examples in Indian story literature of more-or-less similar versions of a story appearing in texts widely separated in time, space, and religious tradition. It is a commonplace phenomenon in India for even well known stories to be told differently in different written texts, to say nothing of the variations encountered in the oral tradition. For example, the story of Śakuntalā as presented by Kālidāsa in his *Abhijñānaśākuntala* is clearly different from the version found in the (Hindu) *Mahābhārata*, though the latter version surely must have been known to his educated audience. The character of Duryodhana, who is portrayed as an almost uniformly unsympathetic character in the *Mahābhārata*, is transformed into a noble and tragic figure in pseudo-Bhāsa's drama *Ūrubhaṅga*. Examples of such fluidity in Hindu literature abound. Even within the same text, two distinct versions of a story may be found, such as the story of the birth of Skanda in the *Mahābhārata*, where the father of Skanda is said to be Śiva in one version and Agni in another.<sup>103</sup>

102 In my doctoral thesis (GEEN 2001:73-94), I devoted an entire chapter to demonstrating that, with respect to the story of Draupadī's marriage, three medieval summaries of the Hindu *Mahābhārata* (i.e. the anonymous 10th century Indonesian *Mahābhārata*, Kṣemendra's 11th century *Bhāratamañjarī*, and Amaraśūri's 13th century *Bālābhārata*) did not significantly differ from the version in the critical edition.

103 O'FLAHERTY 1975:104-105.



Thus, that the story of Draupadī's marriage should differ somewhat from one text to the next is to be expected. After all, the story of Draupadī's marriage has been very popular in India, with varying versions found not only in the Hindu and Jaina, but also the Buddhist and Sikh traditions.<sup>104</sup> The Jaina versions, however, go beyond slight alterations in plot or the addition or omission of this or that plot detail, perhaps intended by the poet to lend some distinctiveness to his own particular version. We seem to see, in Devaprabhasūri's *Pāṇḍavacarita* for example, a learned and devout Jaina poet taking details explicitly stated in a (Śvetāmbara) Jaina canonical text and altering them to better align with the Hindu version. It must be emphasized, however, that the consistent pattern of movement closer to the Hindu text is best observed when all of the various versions are examined as a group, and obviously no one poet is responsible for this larger pattern.

Poetic license notwithstanding, there are certain differences between one version of a story and another that may be convincingly explained by resorting to theological or doctrinal differences between authors or traditions. This is most clearly seen in the fact that, flying in the face of both the Hindu and Śvetāmbara traditions, the Digambaras insist that Draupadī had only one husband, and that she could hardly have been virtuous if the situation had been otherwise. I assume that the Digambara version in which Draupadī marries Arjuna alone represents a conscious departure from the polyandrous version. In such cases, poets blatantly make an alteration in plot from an earlier version in an effort to "correct," or at least "improve," the story along doctrinal or moral lines. However, in the case of the Śvetāmbara poets, it appears that they were often "correcting" their own older, canonical version in favour of the Hindu version.

We may suggest several plausible reasons for this subtle hinduizing trend, found in both the Śvetāmbara and Digambara versions, but most clearly in the Śvetāmbara tradition. For example, it may be that the increasing popularity and ubiquity of the Hindu version of Draupadī's marriage made it ever more impractical, or even confusing to the audience, for the Jaina poets to maintain in their versions all of the distinctively Jaina features. Alternatively, certain aspects of the Hindu version may have so thoroughly permeated Jaina society that even the poets themselves were not entirely aware of the hinduizing influence they brought to the story. Or again, perhaps the Śvetāmbara poets became increasingly uncomfortable with Draupadī's conscious choice for a polyandrous union, and

104 See, for example, the Buddhist *Kuṇḍalajātaka* (KJ:132) or the Sikh VBG of Gurdas Bhalla.

considered the Hindu notion that Draupadī was the unwitting and innocent victim of polyandry more appealing. Whatever the case, it is still difficult to get past the fact that Śvetāmbara Jaina poets such as Devaprabhasūri and Śubhāśīla, both of whom must surely have been familiar with the Nāyādhammakahāo and Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra, openly chose to deviate from them in important ways. One might well ask, in the case of deviating from the Nāyādhammakahāo, whether this was not tantamount to “correcting” the words of Mahāvīra himself.<sup>105</sup>

With respect to the story of Draupadī's marriage, there are at least three plausible reasons why Devaprabhasūri, for example, might not have altered the details of the plot: (i) the stories found in the Nāyādhammakahāo, including the biography of Draupadī, are ostensibly the words of the Jina, and if there is thought to be any historical truth at all to the tales told by a Jina, surely the omniscient Jina must have gotten the details correct; (ii) in his Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra, the polymath and cultural icon Hemacandra, though writing in Sanskrit rather than Prākṛit, stuck very close to the canonical version of events as found in the Nāyādhammakahāo; and (iii) if Devaprabhasūri was at all aware of the Digambara version of Draupadī's marriage, then his inclusion of the archery contest at Draupadī's *svayamvara*, for example, was tantamount to declaring that both the Hindus and Digambaras had this aspect of the story correct while the Jina and Hemacandra got it wrong. That the Jina and Hemacandra both got something wrong was likely unthinkable to Devaprabhasūri. Therefore, in altering the details of the plot of Draupadī's marriage in ways that flatly contradict earlier versions, Devaprabhasūri seems to imply that the details of the plot of a story, even one found in the canon, are not in the least sacrosanct.

This raises questions about how the Śvetāmbara Jainas viewed the contents of their canon and the relationship between the content of the canon and the same or similar content contained in later, non-canonical texts. Generally speaking, it is reasonable to suppose that the degree of license a Jaina poet would take

105 In this context, we are concerned merely with the elements of the plot, though even translating the words of the Jina from Prākṛit into Sanskrit has serious implications. In the medieval biographies of Siddhasena, a brahmin converted to Jainism, we are told that the Jaina community was outraged at Siddhasena's offer to translate the Jaina scriptures from Ardhamāgadhī into Sanskrit. His offer was taken to suggest that the Jinas and their followers wrote their works in Ardhamāgadhī because they were unable to compose in Sanskrit, and such a suggestion was considered by the Jainas to constitute a grave offense requiring penance. See GRANOFF 1991:20ff.

when summarizing, restating, or retelling the contents of a story depends upon his assessment of the status and function of the original text as well as the newly produced work. This issue is especially important when dealing with canonical material in non-canonical works. In the context of the story of Draupadī's marriage, the degree of "poetic" license taken by the Śvetāmbara and Digambara poets was considerable, and issues regarding inherited scriptural authority arise. That is, we must consider to what extent a non-canonical version of a canonical story shares in the scriptural authority of the canon. If we consider the stories told in the *dharmakathā* portions of the Jaina literature, including the canon, to be merely intended to impart a particular lesson or moral, i.e. a truth communicated by the Jina to the monks or laity, then the truth value in a story like Draupadī's marriage does not lie in the details of the plot but in the message the story conveys. Thus, when Devaprabhasūri made his alterations to the plot of Draupadī's marriage, he might not have felt any obligation to be constrained by the details found in the Nāyādharmakahāo, nor need he to have felt any disloyalty to the Jina for altering his words.<sup>106</sup>

But here again, an obvious question arises: If it is the message conveyed by a *dharmakathā*-type story that is paramount, what exactly is the moral message being conveyed by the story of Draupadī's marriage? As mentioned above, the Nāyādharmakahāo contains a series of unrelated tales, usually with a moral explicitly stated at the end, designed for the education and instruction of the Jaina audience. However, the moral conveyed by Draupadī's biography is neither explicitly stated nor at all obvious. Does it teach the laity not to wish for sinful things? No; Draupadī is never criticized for her choice or circumstances. Does it teach the proverbial, "Be careful about what you wish for"? No; Draupadī does not seem to suffer at any time as a result of her state of polyandry. Does it teach that one might get what one wishes for, but that eventually one will have to pay the karmic debt for it? No; nowhere is there ever a hint that Draupadī is suffering, or ever will suffer, from any karmic repercussions of her polyandry. The complete lack of an obvious moral to the story may be the prime reason why the story of Draupadī's marriage underwent constant modification in

106 Whether or not there is any official declaration of such a policy in the Jaina tradition is unknown to me. However, Phyllis GRANOFF has brought to my attention a genre of late-medieval Jaina texts known generally as *praśnottaramālās* (i.e. Garlands of Questions and Answers) in which the Jainas attempt to resolve inconsistencies across various *māhātmya* and *carita* texts. The existence of such texts suggests that the Jainas themselves were hardly insensible to such apparent conflicts.

the Jaina tradition: perhaps the poets were hoping a moral to the story might emerge.

10.

Finally, I have been often curious about how any new and significantly different version of an otherwise well known story was received when it was first presented to the public in medieval India. What was the audience's response, for example, to Vādicandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, which differed in many significant ways from Śubhacandra's popular Pāṇḍavapurāṇa composed only 50 years earlier? Or, if someone familiar only with the Hindu version of Draupadī's marriage were to hear for the first time a Jaina version such as that in Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, how would she respond? There are very few accounts from medieval India that describe an audience's reaction to such obvious modifications, but fortunately one such story from the Jaina tradition does exist.<sup>107</sup>

Briefly, the story goes as follows: one day, some brahmins overheard Hemacandra describing how, at the end of their lives, the Pāṇḍavas became Jaina monks and attained liberation on Mt. Śatruñjaya. As this did not jibe with the Hindu account of the Pāṇḍavas going to Mt. Kedāra and worshipping Śiva, the brahmins went straight to King Jayasimha to decry Hemacandra as a slanderer and spreader of false teachings. The brahmins insisted that, as king, it was Jayasimha's duty to put an end to such wicked behavior. Jayasimha summoned Hemacandra and asked for an explanation. Hemacandra replied that his own version of the story had been passed down by the learned teachers of his tradition, while the version upheld by the brahmins was found in Vyāsa's Mahābhārata. Rather than suggesting that one version was right and the other wrong,

107 This story comes from JKP, 15; according to H. D. VELANKAR (1944:93), the JKB was "composed in Saṃ. 1492 by Jinamaṇḍanagaṇi, pupil of Somasundarasūri of the Tapā Gaccha." This is one of several Jaina texts with the Prefix "Kumārapāla," referring to King Kumārapāla of the Caulukya dynasty of Gujarāt (c. 1143-1172), patron of Hemacandra. A slightly longer variant of this story has been translated by P. S. JAINI (1993:246-9). His version comes from the PPC: 187-8, which, according to VELANKAR (1944:266), was composed in Saṃ. 1334. It is interesting that this story was considered worthy of retelling in the Jaina story compendiums.

Hemacandra merely suggested that maybe the Pāṇḍavas in his own version were not the same Pāṇḍavas as in Vyāsa's version.

When questioned by the king as to how there could be so many groups of Pāṇḍavas, Hemacandra quoted a verse he claimed to exist in Vyāsa's Mahābhārata.<sup>108</sup> The verse makes refer to a voice from the sky that cried out during the cremation of Bhīṣma, who had asked to be cremated on a spot never before used for such a purpose. The voice declared that, on that very spot, one hundred Bhīṣmas, three hundred Pāṇḍavas, a thousand Duryodhanas, and an incalculable number of Karna had already been cremated. Hemacandra then suggested that this verse, found in Vyāsa's own text, clearly implied multiple sets of Pāṇḍavas. Thus, Hemacandra's explanation was validated by Vyāsa himself. Not surprisingly, being a Jaina story, King Jayasinha sided with Hemacandra on this issue, and vilified the brahmins for their rash accusations. It is unlikely that the Jainas would suggest that we take each variant of the story of the Pāṇḍavas as referring to a separate and distinction group of Pāṇḍavas, but this was Hemacandra's answer, and it was good enough for King Jayasinha.<sup>109</sup> In any event, this story indicates that an audience might well have been surprised by some of our Jaina versions.

In many respects, and despite decades of excellent scholarship, the interactions between religious groups in India's medieval period are still somewhat murky. The evolution of the Jaina versions of Draupadī's marriage makes it fairly certain that the scholarly Jaina poets were acquainted with the Hindu Mahābhārata, and texts such as Haribhadra's Dhurtākhyāna also make it clear that the Jaina monks were familiar with the Hindu *purāṇas*. However, the extent to which we may extend this familiarity to the Jaina laity is uncertain. Likewise, it would be very interesting to know the extent to which Hindus took note of Jaina texts. P.S. JAINI has suggested that the authors of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa were responding to certain statements made in earlier Jaina texts such as Jinasena's Ādipurāṇa, though this is not at all certain.<sup>110</sup>

108 According to JAINI's (1993:248-249) reckoning, and much to his surprise, no such verse seems to exist in the Hindu tradition, perhaps implying that Hemacandra took advantage of the brahmins' ignorance of their own text.

109 Such a story may provide evidence that medieval Hindus were aware of the Jaina variants on their beloved Mahābhārata, though it is more likely that this tale was merely a creation of a Jaina poet, designed to demonstrate once again to his own laity the superiority of the Jainas over the brahmins.

110 JAINI 1977:332.



When viewed as merely the vicissitudes of a single episode within a much larger epic within a geographical region replete with narrative literature, the apparent process of hindufication undergone by successive Jaina versions of Draupadī's marriage may represent little more than an interesting and historical quirk of a highly unusual story. However, the sort of narrowly focused and directed investigation presented above is designed to contribute to a larger project, which seeks to more fully investigate the interactions between the Hindu, Śvetāmbara Jaina, and Digambara Jaina traditions. To this end, it will be important to continue examining popular narrative episodes found in both in Hindu and Jaina texts in order to discover what other patterns of textual interactions emerge.

## Abbreviations

- BORI Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona  
 BSOAS Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies  
 DPC Devaprabhasūri's Pāṇḍavacarita, ed. Paṇḍit Kedāranātha and Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Shāstrī Paṇashīkar. Kāvyaṃālā Series 93. Bombay: Nirṇaya-Sāgar Press, 1911  
 GUP Guṇabhadra's Uttarapurāṇa, ed. Patralal Jaina, Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevī Granthamālā 14, Bhiaraitya Jñānapīṭh Prakashan, 1944  
 HVP Harivaṃśapurāṇa of (Punnāṭa) Jinasena. ed. Paṇḍit Darbārīlāl. 2 vols. Bombay: Maṇikacanda Digambara Jaina Granthamālā, 1930-31.  
 IT Indologica Taurinensia  
 KJ Kuṇāljātaka. ed. and trans. W.B. Bollee. SBB Vol. XXVI. London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1970  
 JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society  
 JIP Journal of Indian Philosophy  
 JKP Jinamaṇḍana's Kumārapālaprabandha, Series No. 34. Bhavanagar: Jain Ātmānanda Sabhā, 1914  
 JOIB Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda  
 Mhbh Mahābhārata, crit. ed. V.S. Sukthankar u.a., Poona 1933-41 (BORI)  
 PPC Prabhācandra's Prabhāvakacarita, ed. Jinavijaya Muni, Singhi Jain Series, no. 13, 1940

- ŚPC Śubhaśīla's Pāṇḍavacaritra, In: Śatruñjayakalpavṛtti of Śubhaśīla, ed. Munirāja-Lābhasāgaragaṇi, Āgamoddhāragranthamālā 41<sup>st</sup> Ratnam. Ahmedabad: Āgamodhāra, 1969
- SBB Sacred Books of the Buddhists
- ŚPP Śubhacandra's Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, ed. Paṇḍit Jinadas Parshwanatha Shastri. Jīvarāj Jain Granthamālā 3. Sholapur: Jain Samskriti Samraksaka Samgha, 1980
- VBG Vaaran Bhai Gurdas, ed. G.K. Jaggi. Patiala: Punjabi University, 1987

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