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Jain Acharyas: Illuminating the Path
of Wisdom and Harmony in a Modern World



Kundakunda Āchārya:
His Names and His Era



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Jain Acharyas: Illuminating the Path of Wisdom and Harmony in a Modern World | Prof. Sejal Shah (Ph.D.)

Acharya, a Sanskrit term meaning "one who teaches by their conduct," refers to a teacher who leads by example. This term is commonly used to describe teachers, gurus of yoga, instructors, sect leaders, or learned individuals in various Indian religions. The interpretation of Acharya varies slightly depending on whether it is used in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, or yoga. The Jain *Acharyas*, revered scholars and thinkers within the Jain tradition, have long been known for their profound insights into the nature of both the living and non-living world. Through a systematic and rigorous approach to study, these *Acharyas* have delved deep into the realms of philosophy, science, and spirituality. Their era predates modern scientific advancements, yet their contributions remain highly relevant and influential. In this article, we will explore the extensive studies conducted by the Jain *Acharyas*, shedding light on their unique perspectives and methodologies in understanding the intricacies of the world around us.

The purpose of studying Acharya was to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of studying Jain research, committing to Jain philosophy, and adopting a Jain academic approach.

Jain Avenue Magazine has dedicated this special issue to Jain Acharyas with the goal of showcasing their discipline and commitment towards Jain studies.

Unfortunately, the dissemination of this knowledge is currently ineffective, and its significance is not adequately highlighted in literature or history. Therefore, it is crucial to spread the contributions of our Acharyas to the world.

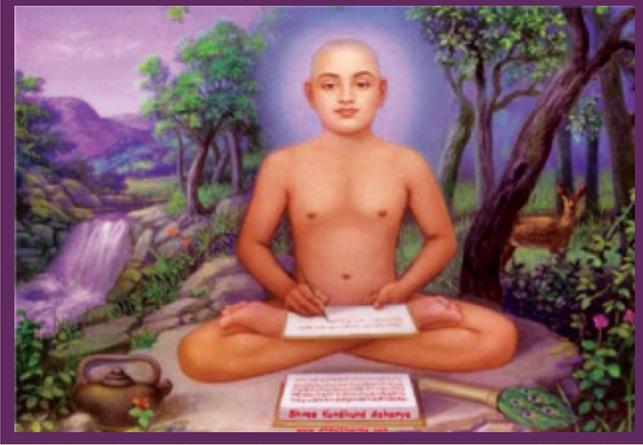
The research conducted by Jain Acharyas has had a profound impact on modern understanding of the world. Their systematic approach to studying the intricacies of existence has provided invaluable insights into the interconnections of all beings.

The Jain Acharyas, revered scholars in the Jain tradition, have a rich history of delving into both philosophy and science. Their teachings encompass deep wisdom and a blend of spiritual insight with intellectual rigor. One of the hallmarks of Jain *Acharyas* is their meticulous and systematic approach to studying the world around them. Through structured methodologies and keen observation, they have unraveled profound truths about existence.

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Kundakunda Āchārya: His Names and His Era

| Dhruti Ghiya Rathi



Various names assigned to the highly venerated Āchārya Kundakunda have always been intriguing to a reader, as to the cause of associating so many names to one person? Could there be a possibility that we are mixing personalities? What other references are available to corroborate the traditional view?

In Prakrit, he is known as *KondaKundai*. *Konda*, per some authors is his place of origin and hence the name *Kunda* (flower) from *Konda*. Earlier scholars list his other names as *Padmānandi*, *Vakragriva*, *Griddhra Pinchchha* and *Elāchāraya*. Widely accepted to be from the southern India, evidence from the south should be given more importance.

In Karnataka, Jainism is credited with the development of its literature and language. Jain inscriptions found at *Sravan Belgolā*, Karnataka are written in old Kannada,

pronounced as *Hāle Gannadā*.

Prakrit author Kundakunda of 84 *Pāhuds* (gifts), propounded the knowledge of *Shrutakevali* and *Jinendra*.

Unfortunately, only a few are currently available. His *Samaysār* contains the path to liberation for a monk and is the most revered text for Digambar.

Multiple Names of Kundakunda

Digambar Pattāvali C mentions the above five names of Kundakunda in a footnote based on an unidentified source, possibly from Nagaur. Jaysen Āchārya (12th c.CE), Shrutagar, Chakravarti, and most scholars reiterate these names. However, this view is negated by several inscriptions at *Sravan Belgolā* as interpreted by Rice (ASI Mysore). It is interesting to read the content therein, of which two are contemporary to Jaysen's period as shown below:

Inscription 40 (12th c CE)

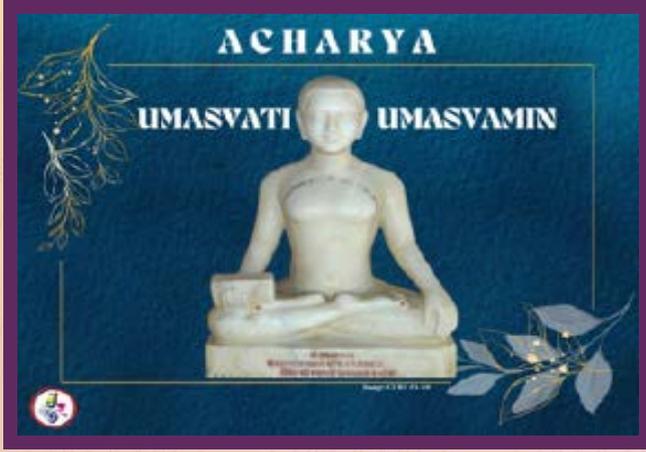
Praise Tirthankaras ending with Mahāvira. Praise of Gautama, in whose line arose the Sruta-kēvali Bhaddrabāhu. His disciple was Chandra-Gupta, whose glory was such that his gana of munis was worshipped by the forest deities.

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Dhruti is a New Jersey-based MBA, SAP and FJAS professional. A Pathshala and guest lecturer for Jainism at VCU University and High schools, she has spoken at Comparative Religion Conference, Religious Baccalaureates and Rotary Club in Richmond, VA. Involved with Jainism-Says-Blogspot, she researches Jain Iconography, Epigraphy, Historical and Numismatic references in Jain literature overlooked by historians, and on the applications of Jain principles. Dhruti's research was presented at the Dating of Mahavir Nirvana Symposium by ISJS.

Acharya Umasvati – Umasvamin | Kishor B. Shah

In the annals of Jainism, one of earliest and the most renowned and revered Acharya and author of the Jain philosophy is known to Svetambara Jains as **Umasvati** and to Digambara Jains as **Umasvamin** or **Umasvami**. His seminal work - **Tattvartha Sutra** represents the epitome of Jain philosophy and enjoys the same status among Jains as say the Bible for Christians, the Quran for Muslims, the Gita for Hindus, or the Vedanta Sutra in Vendanta philosophy.

In addition, and more importantly, Tattvartha Sutra has a unique place because it is recognised as an authoritative pro-canonical work both by the Svetambara and Digambara sects, though in slightly different recensions. The Digambaras do not consider the Svetambara canonical scriptures to be authentic and vice versa.

Svetambaras also denote the work as *Tattvarth-adhigama -sutra* (“manual for knowledge of true nature of things or realities) and regard it with a sense of sacredness and reverence. Digambaras often refer the work as *Moksh-Shastra* (“tenets of salvation”) and consider it a sacred Agam. The commentary under the title of *Sarvarthasiddhi*, written by Pujyapada in the 6th century CE, is treated as an Agam in the Digambara tradition.

Although both sects claim that Umasvati, or Umasvamin, belongs to their respective traditions, not much is known about the details of his life with absolute certainty. Prof. Sagarmal Jain states that “as the Svetambara – Digambara schism had not become pronounced by that time, it is fruitless to argue whether Umasvati was from Svetambara or Digambara or the Yapaniya tradition. However, it is certain that he was not from the cloth less tradition of the south, which later came to be known as the Digambara tradition.”

In Digambara folklore, Umasvamin is described as being especially “particular about the protection of living beings” and thus takes to carrying a ‘piccha’ (whisk broom) of vulture feathers with himself and is universally known as “*Grdhrapicchacarya*” – “the teacher who goes around with vulture feathers.”

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Kishor B. Shah

Kishor is resident in UK and a Banker. He has served the Oshwal Association of UK as Trustee, Area Secretary, Editor of Oshwal News and Web Chairperson developing and successfully launching a new website. He is very passionate about Jainism and has produced Jain Exhibitions, Jain Calendars in English, Insights Magazines and written various articles on Jainism, for the Jain Community. Kishor was part of the team that worked for nearly two years on Jainpedia V2.0, which was officially launched in April 2022 and is involved in the continuing development of the site. He is the Regional Editor of UK for Jain Avenue Magazine (jainavenue.org).

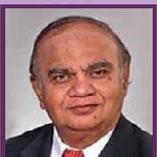
Acharya Shri Hemchandracharyaji | Dilip V. Shah

Kali Kal Sarvagn Shri Hemchandracharya is a much-revered Acharya for the Jains. His essential bio is well known. Born in 1089 on *Kartiki Purnima*, in Dhandhuka (present day Khambhat), Gujarat to businessman Chach and his wife Pahini Devi, and was named Changdev. Before the birth of Changdev, the parents had an occasion to visit Acharya Shri Devchandrasuri. In giving his blessings, Acharyashri made a profound prediction – their future son is destined to be a great proponent of Jain Dharma. When Changdev was just 5-year-old, Acharya Shri Devchandrasuriji was again visiting Dhandhuka and Pahini Devi took him to the *Upashraya* to pay their respect. The playful child separated himself and ran towards the

sacred bench- *Paat* - reserved for Acharyashri and sat on it. Observing this, Acharya shri reminded Pahini Devi of his earlier statement that her son was going to be a great Jain Acharya who will be an exponent of Jain Dharma. He asked that she hand over the child to them so he could be trained to achieve his brilliant and manifest destiny. After some hesitation, she handed over her son to Acharyashri. Thus, a pious journey began for Changdev. He received *Diksha* at the age of 9 and was given a new name - Somdev. After intense studying, at age 17, Devchandrasuriji bestowed upon him a new title, and a new name: Acharya Hemchandracharya.

As a Jain Acharya, he was not just influential in reviving the Jain religion in his era but had a profound influence on the history of Gujarat. He was a discreet advisor in statecraft to two kings – Siddharaj Jaisinh and later, King Kumarpal. His indulgence in statecraft was limited to propagating Jain teachings and Jain culture. But he was respectful to the followers of other religions.

King Siddharaj once asked Acharya Shri “Which religion can lead a person to Moksh?” he gave answer not by referring to Jain Dharma but by quoting from *Bramhan Puran*.

**Dilip V. Shah**

Dilip V. Shah is a past JAINA President, recipient of JAINA RATNA award.

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Ācārya Haribhadra Suri | Dr. Arihant Kumar Jain



Jainism is one of the ancient Indian religions, where numerous great Ācāryas have significantly contributed to its rich philosophical heritage and have made important contributions in carrying forward the rich knowledge tradition of Jain Philosophy. Among these revered figures, Ācārya Haribhadra Suri stands out as a profound scholar, spiritual guide, and prolific writer whose works continue to inspire and enlighten generations. Most historians believe that his time was after or around 650 AD (due to his familiarity with 'Dharmakirti').

In his writings, he identifies himself as Jinabhadra of the Vidyadhara Kula and a student of Jinadatta.

He was a great, philosopher, doxographer, and prolific author with a powerful personality, had written many books in Sanskrit and Prakrit. His versatile scholarship, unmatched knowledge, acute critical faculty, and mastery of language have earned him a distinguished place in the history of Indian literature. The 1444 books deemed to have been written by him are regarded as the most valuable treasure of knowledge of the Jain religion. He was the first commentator of the Agamas (Jain canonical literature) and through his books, he blazed a new trail in meditation.

His life was unusual and extraordinary. He was the family priest of King Jitari of Chittor. Besides being an authority on the Vedant and Darshanshastra (Jain Philosophy) he possessed a thorough knowledge of 14 faculties of studies. In his own times, there was nobody in the entire country to challenge and defeat him in debate and discussions.

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Dr. Arihant Kumar Jain is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Studies in Jainism, K. J. Somaiya Institute of Dharma Studies, Somaiya Vidyavihar University, Mumbai. He is the founding Editor of 'The Prakrit Times International eNewsletter' for the promotion and propagation of the oldest Prakrit language and literature globally, as well as he is also an Associate Editor of Jain Avenue Web Magazine (jainavenue.org). He has five books to his credit so far, out of which he is the author of three and editor of two. He has represented Jainism at an International Conference held in Colombo (Srilanka). He has directed a documentary film depicting the historical and archaeological importance of Sravanabelagola (Karnataka), which has been screened in a couple of National and International film festivals. He was honored with the 'National Gaurav Award 2023' and 'Charukeerthi Bhattaraka Swami Shriphal Patrakarita Award 2024' for his innovative contributions.

There's a Cow in the Room | Dr. Sailesh Rao (Founder of Climate Healers)

Today, I want to rebel with you against false orthodoxy by speaking on bovine matters. I mean, of course, cows. Yes, there is a Cow in the Room and not everyone can see it. The orthodoxy, the herd opinion, is that animal agriculture has little to do with climate change. I believe that is very wrong. I believe that based on the data. I am an environmentalist by occupation, but a systems engineer by profession. I invented the protocol for transforming early analogue internet connections to more robust digital connections while accelerating their speed tenfold. Still today, any data accessed on the internet is likely passed through a device implementing this protocol.

Veganism is defined as a “philosophy and way of living that seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.” The proposition asks

that people choose to Go Vegan, not Be Vegan, implying that this is a journey, not a destination. I highly recommend this journey on ethical, health and environmental grounds. I will now focus on the environmental reasons to Go Vegan. It is undeniable that human civilization has adversely impacted life-support systems on the planet.

Scientists have identified **Nine Planetary boundaries** that we must stay within for the sustainability of life on Earth. At the moment, we have transgressed six of them and any one of these transgressions could end life as we know it. The good news is that when we Go Vegan, we help resolve all *six of them*. That's the power we have as individuals to reverse our existential crisis. Animal agriculture is the leading cause of ecological destruction because it uses 37% of the ice-free land area of the planet just to graze animals. Animal agriculture is the only major activity in which we destroy forests and replace them, not with other trees for timber or paper, but with grass, which drastically reduces the diversity of life that the land can support. Animal agriculture is the primary reason why humans have reduced the number of trees on the planet by half, from 6 trillion to 3 trillion, over the past 10,000 years.

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Dr. Sailesh Rao | Founder of Climate Healers

<https://climatehealers.org/sailesh-rao/>



Singapore Jain Religious Society

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Singapore Jain Religious Society

Introduction

Jains have settled in Singapore since the beginning of 20th Century. The Singapore Jain Religious Society was registered in 1972 and our Jain elders secured its current premises in 1978. The location has since been renovated a number of times and in the year 2009, a murti of Lord Mahavir was consecrated at the premises. The Jain Center is unique in the world, as it has progressed with the times in accommodating all the different Jain sects in the same premises, keeping to fundamental principles of Jainism. The Society maintains its prime objective a preserving Jain unity in Singapore. Jainism was officially accepted and became the 10th

religion to join the Inter Religious Organization (IRO) in 2006. Being a member of IRO raised awareness of Jainism in Singapore. Jain community in Singapore is a strong community of over 1000+ families. SJRS has various sub-groups formed for effective participation in religious activities throughout the year such as *Jainshala*, Young Jains of Singapore (YJS), Ladies Wing, Commit and *Swadhaya* team. Astrologers predict that the Year of the Dragon will **bring some kind of positive change for every individual**. And indeed, that was the feeling which each attendee at the **SJRS CNY *Shibir* 2024** felt at the end of the 2 ½ -day specially curated program running over the Singapore Chinese New Year break.

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Parul Kothary

Parul Kothary is a banker by profession and part of the SJRS extended management committee supporting their various initiatives.



Spicy Masala Makhana

Recipe of the Month

by

Nidhi Nahata

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JAINISM SIMPLIFIED

A Video Series by

Rahul Kapoor Jain

Mindset Coach and Motivational
Speaker

नाणदंसणसंपण्णं, संजमे य तवे रयं ।
एवंगुणसमाउत्तं, संजयं साहुमालवे ॥

Samaṇasuttaṃ 339

Originally Collected from Daśvaikālika – 7/49

A saint who is endowed with the attributes of knowledge, faith, and conduct, who is fully engaged in the righteous activities of restraint and penance, a person possessing such qualities should be called a saint. The characteristics of saints have been presented in this verse.

What this means is that one does not become a saint merely by donning the garb of a saint, but one who is equipped with the right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct; and fully engaged in restraint and penance, having such worthy qualities, that ascetic person should be called a saint. And a person who does not have the above qualities should never be called a saint.

He is just a disguised person.

Compiled and deliberated by

Dr. Arihant Kumar Jain

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