

THE STHĀNĀNGASŪTRA
AN ENCYCLOPAEDIC TEXT OF THE ŚVETĀMBARA CANON¹

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The *Sthānāngasūtra*, or, as it is called in the original Prakrit, the *Ṭhāṇaṅgasutta*, was included by the Śvetāmbara-Jainas as the third of the eleven *aṅga*- texts into the canon of their holy books at a council held at Valabhī in the fifth century A.D.

Muni Jambūvijaya not only carried out a critical edition of the work in 1985, but in 2002-2003 he also signed for the publication of the voluminous Sanskrit-commentary, composed by Abhayadevasūri in the 11th century A.D. In 2004, an English translation in two volumes was published by Surendra Bothara. This is not a literal translation, but, to quote the editor Amar Munijī, "a free flowing translation". The interpretations of several of the *sūtras* are questionable, but, not only for those who do not know Prakrit and Sanskrit, the book is a very helpful tool to gain a first impression of the work. No critical study of the *Sthānāṅga* is available today. The first treatise on it was written by Albrecht Weber (1885: 267-277) in his "Ueber die heiligen Schriften der Jainas". Walther Schubring (1935) in his "Lehre der Jainas", Shantaram Bhalchandra Deo (1956) in his "History of Jaina Monachism" and other scholars eclectically exploited the text. Two books written in Indian languages are worth being mentioned here: Muni Nathmal's (1976), i.e. Ācārya Śrī Mahāprajñā's, translation into Hindi, and Dalsukh Mālvaṇiyā's (1955) detailed subject index to the text, written in Gujarātī.

The *Sthānāṅga* is subdivided into ten chapters, named *eka-sthānam*, *dvi-sthānam* and so on up to *daśa-sthānam*. In the critical edition the text comprises 783 *sūtras* of different length. Some consist of one, two or three words, others of extensive sections,

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nearly all of them composed in prose. As is generally the case with the texts of the canon, the language of the *Sthānāṅga* is Ardhamāgadhī.

As it is necessary to get a general idea of the contents of the work and to make clear the peculiar character of the text, I will give a few examples of the *sūtras* from each of the ten chapters. Three points should be taken into consideration:

First, the selected *sūtras* are not rendered literally, nor do I give a complete account of their contents.

Secondly, I give the numbers of the *sūtras* in pointed brackets.

Thirdly, if I quote a word from the text, I give the Sanskrit equivalents of the Prakrit words.

Chapter I (*eka-sthānam*)

Soul <2> harmful activity <3> activity <4> universe <5> in every body there is one soul <11> creation <14> destruction <15> rebirth <17> reasoning <20> death of beings who are in their last rebirth <27> knowledge, faith, conduct <35> sound, appearance, smell, taste, touch <38> killing of living beings, etc. (i.e. the five great vows of an ascetic); again: anger, etc. (i.e. here we learn of the four passions; *kaṣāya*) <39> descending world-period (*avasarpinī*), ascending world period (*utsarpinī*) <40> one group (*vargaṇā*) of infernal beings, one group of Asurakumāra-gods, and so on for all twenty-four categories of beings, including earth-bodied beings, water-bodied beings, etc. <41> one group of atoms occupying one space-point <43> one continent Jambūdvīpa <44> one Mahāvīra in this descending world-period <45> *sūtra* 47 gives the names of three constellations (*nakṣatra*) with one star only.

Chapter II (*dvi-sthānam*)

All that exists in the world falls under two categories: sentient or non sentient, mobile or immobile, liberated or non liberated, etc. <49> activity is of two kinds: of the soul or of non-soul, inspired by attachment or inspired by aversion, etc. <50> two kinds of renunciation of certain foods (*pratyākhyāna*): mentally or verbally, for a long period or for a short period <52> faith may be right or wrong <59> earth-bodied beings are minute or gross <63> bodies are on the movement to their next birth or in their present birth <65> an ascetic should be initiated while facing two directions: east and north <66> matter particles (*pudgala*) are of two kinds: a single atom or an aggregate of atoms <75>

equanimity (*sāmāyika*) is of two kinds: for householders and for ascetics <78> *sūtra* 80 gives the names of two areas in the continent Jambūdvīpa / *sūtras* 83 up to 91 give the names of two mountains, two rivers, two lakes etc. in Jambūdvīpa / two *gavyūta* is the height of humans in Jambūdvīpa during the epoch *suṣama-duḥsamā* of the ascending world period; their maximum life span is two *palyopamā* <92> while departing the body the soul touches it in some parts or in all parts (*deśena* or *sarveṇa*) <108> two kinds of anger: self-caused and not self-caused <111> two kinds of enlightenment: related to knowledge and related to faith <115> *sūtra* 119 gives the names of two Tīrthaṅkaras who had blue complexion / *sūtra* 121 gives the names of constellations with two stars.

Chapter III (*tri-sthānam*)

Three kinds of sexual acts of gods: they embrace their own goddesses, goddesses of other gods, different forms created from their own bodies <130> three kinds of activity (*yoga*): mental, vocal, physical <132> three ways how the soul acquires short life span *karman*: destroying life, telling a lie, giving impure food to ascetics <133> males are of three kinds: animals, humans, divine beings; the same holds good for females, but neuters (*napuṃsaka*) are either animals, humans or infernal beings <139> three kinds of wombs (*yonī*): cold, hot, a mixture of both; or: covered, open, a mixture of both <148> in both world-periods there live three kinds of eminent persons (*uttamapuruṣa*): Arhat, Cakravartin, Baladeva or Vasudeva <152> three colours of celestial vehicles (*vimāna*): black, blue, red <159> three kinds of men: good-minded, bad-minded, neither good-minded nor bad-minded <168> three kinds of men: upholder of the tradition (*sūtradhara*), upholder of wealth (*arthadhara*), upholder of both <177> three kinds of speech: truth, lie, meaningless <181> faith is right, wrong, a mixture of both; again: three kinds of story (*kathā*): relating to *artha*, relating to *dharma*, relating to *kāma* <194> time can be subdivided into past, present, future <197> *sūtra* 199 gives the names of three areas, three mountains etc. in Jambūdvīpa / three causes of an earthquake: in the hell Ratnaprabhā gross aggregates of matter are colliding, a certain *deva* moves up and down, a battle of certain gods <200> three parts of the body are inherited from father's side: bones, marrow, hair; three from mother's side: flesh, blood, brain <209> the Arhat Malli got tonsured along with 300 (i.e. three times one hundred) persons <230>.

Chapter IV (*catur-sthānam*)

In *sūtra* 181 (chapter III) we learn that speech is of three kinds: truth, lie, meaningless speech / in *sūtra* 238 it is stated that speech is of four kinds: truth, lie, a mixture of both, neither truth nor lie / a nun may keep four garments: one of two *hasta* length, two of three *hasta* length, one of four *hasta* length <246> four passions (*kaṣāya*): anger, conceit, deceit, greed <249> *sūtra* 253 gives a simile: fruit may be unripe and slightly sweet, unripe and very sweet, ripe and slightly sweet, ripe and very sweet. The same is true for men (Abhayadeva in his commentary states that we have to replace "ripe" by age or knowledge of the tradition, and "sweet" by virtues like tranquillity of mind. This means: men may be ripe with regard to age and very sweet with regard to tranquillity, etc.) / four causes of laughter: seeing, speaking, hearing, recalling (Abhayadeva in his commentary states: by funny gestures, by imitation of someone`s style of speech, by jokes, by remembering funny things) <269> four kinds of servants (*bhṛtaka*): day labourer, on travel, with a fixed-termed contract, for a specific task <271> four kinds of gossip (*vikathā*): about women, about food, about the country, about the king; again: four kinds of gossip about women: regarding their caste, family, appearance, adornments <282> monks and nuns who have a talk do not transgress the ascetic code (*atikramaṇa*) in case: they inquire for a path, show a path, offer food, help seeking alms <290> *sūtras* 300 up to 307 give the names of four gateways, islands, plateaus, areas, mountains, lakes in Jambūdvīpa / four kinds of austerity (*tapas*) of the Ājīvikas: severe austerity, terrible austerity, abstention from *rasa* (Abhayadeva in his commentary states: from "ghī", etc.), indifference to the taste of food <309> four kinds of brave men (*śurā*): brave in patience, in austerity, in charity, in war <317> four entities (*astikāya*) having an extension of innumerable space-points: *dharma* (medium of movement), *adharmā* (medium of rest), space, single soul <334> four kinds of "going forth from home" or "initiation" (*pravrajyā*): with mind fixed on livelihood, fixed on happiness in the next birth, fixed on both of them, with no wish at all but out of equanimity <355> the *saṅgha* (religious organisation) consists of four groups: male ascetics, female ascetics, laymen, laywomen <363>.

Chapter V (*pañca-sthānam*)

Five great vows for an ascetic (*mahāvratā*); again: five vows for a layman (*anuvratā*) <389> due to five causes a monk may be expelled from the *gaṇa*: he sows the seeds of

discord within the *kula* (i.e. a group of monks of one *ācārya*), within the *gaṇa*, he seeks to harm members of the *kula* or *gaṇa*, he resorts to fault-finding, he repeatedly gives rise to controversy <398> an *ācārya* may cause dispute (*vyudgraha*) in the *gaṇa* if he fails to properly: assert his commands, instruct about conduct, recite and teach the *sūtras*, take care of ailing ascetics, inform the *gaṇa* before he leaves for other places <399> *sūtra* 403 and 404 give the names of five goddesses, armies and commanders of gods / monks and nuns are not allowed to cross these five rivers more than two times or three times a month: Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarayū, Airāvātī, Mahī; again: it is allowed to cross these rivers out of five reasons: fear, famine, they are distressed (*pravyathate*), there is no other way because of a flood, disturbance created by inferior or dishonourable people (*anārya*) <412> five ways a woman can conceive without having intercourse with a man: she sits naked at a spot spoiled with semen, a piece of cloth with semen enters her *yoni*, she herself puts semen into her *yoni*, some other person puts semen into her *yoni*, while taking a bath in a pond semen enters her *yoni* <416> monks and nuns may study or meditate or sleep at the same place: if they stay in an inhabited area, there is only one *upāśraya* in town, they come to the abodes of Nāgakumāra-gods which are either empty or overcrowded, in case thieves are around and want to steal their robes, for the sake of protection in case sexually excited young men approach the nuns; again: a nude monk may stay with a dressed nun if no other *sādhu* is nearby and the monk is: distracted in mind (*kṣiptacitta*), is in a delirious state (*dr̥ptacitta*), is possessed by an evil spirit (*yakṣāviṣṭa*), he has gone crazy (*unmādaprāpta*), he has been initiated by female ascetics <417> an *ācārya* recites or explains *sūtras*: to teach the disciples the tradition, to encourage them to right conduct, to shed his *karman*-particles, because the disciples want to widen their knowledge, to keep the tradition intact (*avyavacchitti*) <467> *sūtra* 468 gives five colours of celestial vehicles (*vimāna*).

Chapter VI (*ṣaṭ-sthānam*)

A monk endowed with six qualities may get the position of a leader of a *gaṇa*: he is faithful, truthful, intelligent, scholarly, powerful, not quarrelsome (*alpādhikaraṇa*) <475> only few beings have command over these six supernatural powers (*ṛddhi*): turn soul into matter, matter into soul, speak truth and non-truth at the same time, suffer or not suffer *karman* at will, pierce atoms, go beyond the edge of *loka* <479> 6000 *dhanus* (i.e. six times 1000 *dhanus*) is the height of human beings in the *suṣama-suṣamā* epoch of the ascending world-period <493> a monk may take food for six reasons: to remove pain of

hunger, so that he can serve other ascetics, so that he can observe careful movement, so that he may follow the rules of ascetic discipline, for support of his life, so that he can contemplate about religion <500> *sūtra* 505 up to *sūtra* 509 and *sūtra* 515 up to *sūtra* 520 give the names of six goddesses, gods, hells, etc.<> / six seasons (*ṛtu*): first half of the rainy season (*prāvṛt*), second half of the rainy season (*varṣā*), autumn, winter, spring, hot season <523>.

Chapter VII (*sapta-sthānam*)

Seven kinds of birth (*yonī*): born from an egg, as a fetus without enveloping membrane, born with a placenta, out of liquids, out of sweat, by act of congealing, by bursting out of earth <543> seven kinds of gross air-bodied beings (*bādara-vāyukāyikā*): wind blowing from the east, west, south, north, upward wind (*ūrdhvavāyu*), downward wind (*adhovāyu*), wind from intermediate directions <547> seven clans: Kāśyapa, Gautama, Vatsa, Kutsa, Kauśika, Maṇḍava, Vāsiṣṭha <551> seven gems of a Cakravartin: disc, umbrella, hide of leather, staff, sword, jewel, cowrie shell <558> seven signs of the *duḥṣamā*-period: untimely rains, absence of rains at the usual time, worship of impious persons, no worship of pious persons, misbehaviour with persons of respect, mental affliction, hurting by speech (*vāgghata*) <559> seven causes of sudden death (*āyurbheda*): affection or fear, weapon, excess of food, pain, execution, touch (Abhayadeva in his commentary states: "bite of snake", etc.), suffocation <561> *sūtra* 582 gives the names of seven armies (*anīka*) and seven commanders of gods / *sūtra* 587 gives the names of the seven schisms (*nihnava*) which arose in the early history of the church, the names of the seven responsible *ācāryas* and the names of the cities where the schisms originated.

Chapter VIII (*aṣṭa-sthānam*)

Eight kinds of touch: hard, soft, heavy, light, cold, hot, smooth, coarse <599> eight kinds of signs or omens (*mahānimitta*): relating to earth (*bhauma*; Abhayadeva in his commentary states: earthquake etc.), sudden events or unexpected appearances (*utpāta*; Abhayadeva in his commentary states: *rudhiravṛṣṭi* - blood shower etc.), dreams, celestial phenomena (*antarikṣa*), body (*aṅga*; Abhayadeva in his commentary states: trembling, etc.), voice or tone (*svara*), marks or symbols (*lakṣaṇa*), signs or token (*vyañjana*; Abhayadeva in his commentary states: hair on the forehead, etc.) <608> eight inflections

of words (*vacana-vibhakti*): Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, etc. <609> eight branches of Āyurveda: treatment of children, treatment of bodily diseases, surgery related to eye, removal of any substance which has entered the body, doctrine of antidotes, treatment of mental diseases, doctrine of aphrodisiacs, doctrine of elixirs, alchemy <611> the first future Tīrthaṅkara will initiate eight kings <627> *sūtras* 631, 632, 635 up to 637 and 639 up to 644 give the names of eight islands and seas, state that the Jambū-tree is eight *yojana* tall, give the names of eight mountain-caves, areas, cities, goddesses, divine realms etc. / a maximum of eight Arhats, eight Cakravartins, eight Baladevas or eight Vasudevas did, do and will take birth in some specific areas in the continent Jambūdvīpa <638> the height of celestial vehicles in the heavenly abodes Mahāśukra and Sahasrāra is 800 (i.e. eight times 100) *yojana* <650> the minimum duration of the bondage of the *karman* responsible for male gender is eight years; the same period of time is stated for the *karman* responsible for fame (*yaśas*) <658>.

Chapter IX (*nava-sthānam*)

Nine kinds of restraints (*gupti*) for a monk who lives in chastity (*brahmacārya*): he stays in solitude, avoids: talking with women, sitting near women, looking at women, tasty food, excessive quantity of food, recalling pleasures enjoyed in the past, listening to flattering (*anupātin*) words, does not get attached to pleasures <663> nine causes of disease: sitting continuously, sitting in wrong posture, excessive sleeping, keeping awake too long, restraining bowel movement, restraining of passing urine, excessive travelling, wrong food, agitation <667> nine oozing apertures in the human body: two ears, two eyes, two holes in the nose, mouth, urethra, anus <675> eight topics of evil scriptures (*pāpa-śruta*): sudden events (Abhayadeva in his commentary states: "blood-shower", etc.), augury or omen, *mantra*, *ākhyāyikā* (perhaps: drama, etc.), Āyurveda, arts, architecture, *ajñāna* (Abhayadeva in his commentary states: secular scriptures as those dealing with dance or the Mahābhārata), preaching wrong faith <678> nine conditions for pure alms-seeking: a monk does not destroy living beings (*na hanati*), does not cause others to do so, does not approve of others doing so; he does not cook for himself (*na pacati*), does not cause others to do so, does not approve of others doing so; he does not buy food himself (*na krīṇāti*), does not cause others to do so, does not approve of others doing so <681>.

Chapter X (*daśa-sthānam*)

Ten characteristics of the Jain religion (*śramaṇa-dharma*): patience, liberation, honesty, kindness, humbleness, truth, self-discipline, austerity, detachment, chastity <712> ten times are prohibited for study with regard to the sky: comet, abnormal redness of horizon, rumbling, lightening, thunderstorm, *jūyaga* (?) (Abhayadeva in his commentary states: blending of the light of the setting sun with that of the moon), *yakṣādīpta* (?) (perhaps: glow caused by a demon), mist, fog, frost, raising of dust <714> *sūtras* 717 up to 725 give the names of ten rivers, cities, kings, mountains, etc. in Jambūdvīpa / ten causes of joy (*sukha*): health, long life, wealth, love, enjoyment, contentment, attainment (*asti*), irreproachable enjoyment (*śubhabhoga*), abandoning worldly life, to be free from troubles <737> ten causes of pain (*vedanā*) of infernal beings: cold, heat, hunger, thirst, itching, dependence, fear, grief, old age, disease <753> ten kinds of wishes: for happiness in this life, in the next life, in both of them, for long life, not to suffer agony, for love, enjoyment, wealth, respect, honour <759> characteristics of ten states (*avasthā*) of a 100 year old man: 1 up to 10 years: *bāla* - child; 10 up to 20 years: *krīḍā* - sport, play; 20 up to 30: *mandā* – (Abhayadeva in his commentary states:) slow in understanding or enjoying pleasures; 30 up to 40: *balā* - strength; 40 up to 50: *prajñā* - knowledge; 50 up to 60: *hāpanī* – (Abhayadeva in his commentary states:) growing weakness with regard to the sense-organs; 60 up to 70: *prapañcā* – (Abhayadeva in his commentary states:) displaying trembling and cough; 70 up to 80: *prāgbhārā* – (Abhayadeva in his commentary states:) to walk with a stoop; 80 up to 90: *muñmukhī* - wish for liberation or for end of life; 90 up to 100: *śayanī* - lying down <772>

This short summary of the contents of the *Sthānāṅga* gives us a fairly clear idea of the character of the text under discussion. Not only the main subjects of the Jaina religion in its broader sense are listed, but also many more aspects of the Jaina conception of the world. Besides terms such as soul, liberation, or *karman*, we also read of constellations, time-cycles, etc. As a matter of fact, the *Sthānāṅga* is a work of extreme heterogeneity. One cannot detect any logical order of the *sūtras* within the chapters. Right in the middle of *sūtras* whose topic is geography or music, we learn about medicine, *karman* particles, and so on. In this respect the *Sthānāṅga* bears a strong similarity to a notebook.

Because all topics, terms and things are thought of as fitting well with number one, number two, and so on, up to number ten, and because they are listed accordingly, the word "*sthāna*" in the titles of the ten chapters as well as in the title of our work means

"place". The *Sthānāṅgasūtra* is an *aṅga*-text in which "terms and things" are listed in their "right place".

At first glance, it seems to be a somewhat simple way of thinking that underlies the programme of the work. We cannot discern a basic idea which makes the list significant with regard to philosophical conceptions of life and the world. The *Sthānāṅga* obviously has nothing in common with the western medieval concept of a universe which is governed by the law of mathematics. It makes no attempt to combine mathematics with religion, an idea which, in Europe, goes back to Pythagorean and neo-Platonic number mysticism. An arrangement of such an encyclopaedic compilation either in alphabetical order or according to subject matter we take for granted today. As a consequence of the listing of the terms and things under numbers we notice certain disadvantages such as a lack of conceptual clarity and unavoidable repetition of words.

However, to do justice to the text we have to inquire why the *Sthānāṅga* was composed. In my opinion, the style and the contents of the text clearly indicate that the *Sthānāṅga* is nothing but a memory aid for an *ācārya*, so that he might not forget the varied subject matters he wants to teach. With this work he has a kind of guideline for his lessons at hand and can easily reply to questions asked by his disciples. If I am right, the *Sthānāṅga* contains exactly those subject matters, which had been most interesting to the scholarly monks in the first centuries A.D. And I think I can make the point that this text was definitely not meant to be studied by a younger monk for himself.

I would like to list four arguments to support my thesis:

First, we quite often read in a *sūtra*, subsequent to a statement, "*bhāṇiyavva*" - (this) has to be explained.

Secondly, in numerous places we find abbreviations to shorten the text. In these cases the word "*jāva*", which corresponds to our "*et cetera*", is used. Most certainly, only those who are experts on the subject matter in question can fill in the gaps.

Thirdly, in at least ten *sūtras* the meaning of a word is explained through application of the dialectical technique called "*nikṣepa*". But the view-points, from which the word is subject to explanation, are only listed, without any elaboration of details.

Fourthly, more than twenty outlines of similes are included in the text. Doubtlessly, they were incorporated to be used in sermons or lessons.

I have to say some words about Abhayadeva's Sanskrit commentary on the *Sthānāṅga*, which is indispensable for an understanding of the text. In it we do not only find the Sanskrit equivalents of the Prakrit words, but, what I consider more important,

explanations of those topics which are worded in this text in general terms but without any detailed information. In the colophon to his commentary, Abhayadeva mentions - besides the year of the completion of his work, i.e. 1063 A.D. - his assistant Yaśodevagaṇi, a group of scholarly monks under the leadership of Droṇācārya who did the proof-reading, the lack of any preliminary work and the difficulties resulting from the different versions of the text, its complex contents, and occasional disagreements with other scholars. In the introduction to his commentary he expressively states that before him nobody had commented upon the text: *Sthānāṅgaḥ pūrvapuruseṇa kenāpi kuto 'pi kāraṇād anumudritaḥ* [Jambūvijaya (2002: 2)]. According to this, no *bhāṣya*, *niryukti* or *cūrṇi* had ever been written on our text.

Abhayadeva, and in his succession all Jaina scholars to this very day, interpret the structure of the *Sthānāṅga* as a kind of demonstration of the so-called *naya*-theory. In this respect I cannot agree with them and I consider it a misjudgement of the simple character of this old text. I give an example to clarify this point:

It is common knowledge that the Jainas teach endlessly many, immaterial souls. Therefore, one is astonished to learn in chapter one, *sūtra* two, "*ege āyā*" (Sanskrit: *eka ātmā*) – "one soul". To this *sūtra*, as well as to all the other *sūtras* in chapter one which list abstract terms, Abhayadeva applies the second of the seven classical *nayas*, the *saṅgraha-naya*, i.e. the point of view, which considers only the general qualities of a thing and not the specific ones. This means, with regard to "*eka ātmā*" we should only think of the aspect "consciousness (*upayoga*)", which is present in all souls. In accordance to this statement, we read in all translations and interpretations of the second *sūtra*: "soul is one."

This interpretation may be consistent from a logical point of view. But we have to keep in mind that Abhayadeva wrote his commentary about 500 years after the compilation of the *Sthānāṅga*, at the time when the *naya*-method had gained a predominant status in Jaina philosophy. In my opinion there is no need to burden the text with such a complex underlying idea. I am certain that the *Sthānāṅga* was created as a rather simple textbook and not a unique philosophical treatise. Terms such as creation, destruction, reasoning, knowledge, liberation, etc., to which Abhayadeva's interpretation can be applied only with some difficulty, had to be included into the text, because otherwise the textbook would have been of no use at all to the *ācāryas*. Where, if not under number "one", could they possibly be subsumed? And why are they not analysed again in other places of our text taking into consideration the remaining six *nayas*?

In my opinion, "*eka ātmā*" does not mean "soul is one", because I do not take "*eka*" as a predicative adjective. In accordance with the name of the chapter, i.e. *ekasthānam*, and the general character of our text, as well as with those numerous expressions in the *Sthānāṅga*, in which we find the cardinal numbers employed attributively, we should interpret "*eka*" as conveying the sense of "*ekasmin sthāne*" - in place "one". If we leave out the adjective "*eka*", the term "*ātman*" alone serves its purpose. I think the cardinal number was added only to ensure the formal uniformity of the text. Presumably, it was also intended as an aid to learn the text by heart. If one thinks it inevitable to translate "*eka*" in the *sūtras* "*eka ātmā*", "*ekā kriyā*", "*ekā tarkā*", etc., I see no better solution than to render them as "one: soul", "one: activity", "one: reasoning", and so on.

Now, I will make some short remarks concerning the authorship of our text. The first *sūtra* in the *Sthānāṅga* goes as follows: *sūyaṃ me āusaṃ teṇaṃ Bhagavayā evam akkhāyaṃ* - I have heard, o Long-Lived one, that the Venerable (i.e. Mahāvīra) has said thus.

In accordance with the tradition, Abhayadeva understands this formula, which we find also in some other canonical texts, in the sense that the *gaṇadhara* Sudharman, the fifth direct disciple of Mahāvīra, has recited the *Sthānāṅga* to his disciple Jambūsvāmin. But, without any doubt, we are entitled to notice that the work is a compilation of older texts and that its composition can by no means go back to the times of Sudharman. I think, I don't have to argue in detail to support this statement. Scholars such as Johannes Bronkhorst (1993: 151-152) in his "Remarks on the History of Jaina Meditation" or Bansidhar Bhatt (1992: 42) in his "Study of the word: *nikṣepa*" have already demonstrated that the *sūtras* 247 and 374, which deal with meditation and music respectively, have been borrowed, though not verbally, from the canonical texts *Vyākhyāprajñapti* and *Rājaprasānīya*. I could easily add more examples of word for word borrowings, but confine myself to point out that all the topics mentioned in the *Sthānāṅga* are dealt with at length at several places in the Śvetāmbara canon.

Abhayadeva quotes [Jambūvijaya 2002: 2-3] the verses 582 and 583 from Haribhadrasūri's *Pañcavastuka*, dated 8th century A.D., where a time is set for the teaching of various texts to the disciples. With regard to our text they say that it is suitable to be studied by those ascetics, who have at least eight years standing in monkhood. Otherwise, faults would arise such as disobedience, etc. That this is a very old rule is confirmed by the *Vyavahāra*, a text which belongs to the group of the canonical *Chedasūtras*, which obviously was the source for Haribhadra. In the *Vyavahāra* (10, 20-

34) not only the same schedule is mentioned, but in addition to that it is stated that only a monk who knows the *Sthānāṅga* by heart may attain the position of an *ācārya*, which, as we know from other texts, entitles him to supervise the monks and nuns in regard to their conduct and study.

In this connection, I would like to refer to a most interesting information John Cort (2001: 330) has given about two modern curricula for Mūrtipūjaka-monks, dated 1912 and 1988. He says with regard to both of them: “[They are] noteworthy for the almost complete absence of texts of the Śvetāmbara canon. This tells that in fact the canon of early texts is not where the Jains themselves go to learn the intellectual and ritual fundamentals of their own tradition.”

This statement corresponds to what I have heard from an informant: Today, only few nuns and monks study the canonical texts thoroughly. This I consider a sad state of affairs. It is self-evident that the *Sthānāṅga* - as a textbook - cannot be of any importance for the Jaina ascetics nowadays. But I am convinced that for everybody, may he be interested in the history of the religion and literature of the Jainas or the intellectual history of India in general, the *Sthānāṅgasūtra* is worth reading.

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