



# INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR JAIN STUDIES

## PROPOSED

### TWO DAYS NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

### PREVALENCE OF SHRAMAN & VEDIC TRADITION DURING 3000-1000 BC

#### **Preamble for the seminar**

Philosophers and scientists all over the world had been debating about the origin of the universe with particular reference to the humanity and civilization. Jain cosmology texts claim that the cosmos was there, is there, and will be there forever; only its contents change from time to time. Consequently, the universe has no beginning and will never come to an end. Whether it is universe or supra-universe, both are eternal and exit simultaneously. They are devoid of priority and posteriority. An interesting discussion regarding beginning period of the universe and that of the supra-universe also took place between Lord Mahavira and the ascetic Arya Roha. Arya Roha asked:

“Was the cosmos, O Lord, in existence before the trans-cosmos or the trans-cosmos was before the cosmos?”

“O, Roha! The cosmos and the trans-cosmos were both before as well as after-both are eternal’ there is no temporal sequence.”

The concept of time cycles and its division into waxing and waning happiness of Jains is based on this concept of time and cosmos. The Indic cosmology and timeline is considered by some as the closest to modern scientific timelines and even more which might indicate that the Big Bang is not the beginning of everything, but just the start of the present cycle preceded by an infinite number of universes and to be followed by another infinite number of universes.

The Rig Veda also questions the origin of the cosmos in: "Neither being (*sat*) nor non-being (*asat*) was as yet. What was concealed? And where? And in whose protection? Who really knows? Who can declare it? When was it born, and when came this creation?" The Rig Veda's view of the cosmos also sees one true divine principle self-projecting as the divine word, *Vaak*, 'birthing' the cosmos that we know, from the monistic Hiranyagarbha or Golden Womb. The universe is considered to constantly expand since creation and disappear into a thin haze after billions of years. An alternate view is that the universe begins to contract after reaching its maximum expansion limits until it disappears into a fraction of a millimetre. The creation begins anew after billions of years (Solar years) of non-existence. So the universe and beings existing on earth from beginning-less time, keep on evolving continuously.

Famous historians Dr. Heyden & H G Wales proposed the following sequence of development of the universe and our civilization with some differences about the duration of each period.

1. Palaeozoic Period: 300 to 150 million years ago. Simple forms of Vegetation and basic forms of animals etc inferred to exist on earth during this period which later developed into air; water and earth based living beings. Geography of the universe was like 2.5 continents (*Adhaidweep* in Jainism).
2. Mesozoic Period: 150 to 40 million years ago. Drastic changes in geography and existence of vegetation and living beings took place during this period.



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3. Canazoic Period: 40 to 0.6 million years ago. Most of the geography as we know today took form during this period. Remains of animals, vegetation and some human beings exist even today from that period.
4. Beginning of mankind: There is a big question about the place and time of the beginning of human beings on the earth. From the above and other analyses, it seems that India must be as a place where the beginning of mankind and its further evolution took place. The development of mankind can be categorized in different periods as follows:
  - i. The Pre-stone age: 10 million to 0.6 million years BC. Dead bodies in *k yotsarga* can be traced.
  - ii. Post stone period: 06-million to 15000 years BC. During this period 4-5 ice storms occurred. Their implements for daily use were far superior to of the Pre-stone era. Some archaeological findings lead one to infer existence of some mystic, spiritual traditions towards the end i.e. 40-15000 years ago. These communities were like *kulkars* and/nomad roaming/ living as communities. This seems like the later part of third epoch in Jainism.
  - iii. Towards the end of this period, perhaps estimated from 20000-8000BC, is seen as the beginning of civilisation and termed as Neo-Stone age. Civilization made rapid strides during this period with development of agricultural civilizations.

The first three periods are similar to the 1<sup>st</sup>, second and 3<sup>rd</sup> epochs ( *r* ) in Jain philosophy which terms these as happy-happy, happy and happy-unhappy epochs. The 4<sup>th</sup> time period indicated above seem to be similar to the description of later part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch in Jainism and the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> epoch where the scarcity of natural resources or enhanced inquisitiveness of men necessitated him to look beyond the mundane life of just caring for food and the present life. This development of mankind supports the fact that for a rich culture and civilization to thrive, it is essential that should not be constantly struggling for life and privation. As per Jains this is the beginning of *Karmabh mi* and end of *Bhogabh mi* or land of sheer enjoyment only.

### The Indian Cultural scene 8000-20000BC

India is said to be the land of *munis* and *rishis* i.e. people who were inquisitives, experimented with their thoughts to establish the ways and means to be happier forever till they came to some definitive and demonstrable conclusions. The *rama* a along with Pre Vedic traditions were likely to be co-existing since the beginning of the Indian history (8000-20000BC). The *rama* ic philosophy was systematized, starting from Jain T rtha kara Lord *abhadeva* and continuing to Mah v ra. In Vedic text *Padmapurana*, there is mention that the name of austerity (*tapa*) is called *rama*.

*parityajya n po rajya rama o j yate mah n/  
tapas prapya sambandha tapo hi ramamucyate// Padmapurana, 6,212*

So those people who left their auspicious kingdom and performed *tapa* were *rama* a. The cultural map of India is based on anthropological and archaeological studies that shows the situation of man in India when the first steps for cultural development were taking place. The human being in India can be divided in three distinct categories, namely:

#### 1. M nava:

Their area of existence is represented by green called *Madhyade a*. These were the people residing in North Indian Ganga-Yamuna plains extending up to Magadh. These people were peace loving, vegetarian, believers in the existence of soul and rebirth, spiritual and perhaps worshipper of images. They were nonviolent and practised detachment from worldly affairs.



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Later on they started calling themselves as Aryans also. Manus and Kulkars belong to this grouping. *din tha aka abhadeva* (founder of Jainism, first of the twenty-four T rtha karas or "ford-makers", teachers who established the Jain teachings in the present time cycle) was born in this group (approx 8-20000BC). Bhagavat Purana mentions *abha* as the eighth Avatar of Vishnu of the twenty-two incarnations. (Matchett, Freda (2001). The most important lesson he taught mankind was that material possessions cause envy and unhappiness. In Vedic tradition *abha* appeared in the womb of Marudevi, the wife of King Nabhi. The King underwent many severe austerities and penance to please Vishnu to get a son like Vishnu. Vishnu accepted his plea and thus appeared as *abha*, son of King Nabhi and Marudevi.

### 2. Vidhy dharas:

Their area of existence was mainly the hills of North South and West (shown in pink) and gradually spread in other areas as well. They were skilled persons in arts and crafts and were less spiritual than *M nava* whom they considered as their spiritual leaders. They became the forerunners/leaders of skills and science and had interactions (marriages, spirituality etc) with *M navas*. *N ga*, *V nara*, *Yak a* clans belong to this group who were later called as *Dravids* also.

### 3. Nomads:

They were a breakaway group of *M navas* who took to nomadic life engaging themselves in breeding animals and moving away in Northern and western hills towards western Asia and beyond. They adopted the customs of places where they went, were meat eaters and worshipper of various extraordinary spiritual powers of gods. Some of them did return to India as well later. Perhaps origin of Vedic Aryas relate to *M navas* who as Nomads drifted to western Asia and returned from Iran etc. with significant cultural effects inherited from there. The beginning of Vedic ricchas/mantras is dated as 1200-1000 BC by Max Mueller while Jacobi dates them to 6000-4000BC. Majority of Indology scholars dated them to 2000-1000BC. Vedics adopted *Br hmi-lipi* of *rama* as as well as included *Ardh M gadhi* partially as the language of Vedas. They started growing in influence numerically and geographically by being cosy with *M navs* and *Vidhy dhars* limiting *rama* as to Anga, Magadh and north east Uttar Pradesh. This is evident from *Rama* being worshipped by both but with different traits and Muni Suvrata of *rama* as being associated with *Rama* era. Similarly *Krishna* is associated in Vedic culture while his first cousin *Ari a Nemi* is 22<sup>nd</sup> T rtha kara of *rama* as.

The impact and effect of T rtha kara *Nemin tha* was felt not only in India but also abroad. *Krnal Tad* wrote in his book '*Rajasthan*': "I feel that in ancient period there were four Buddhas or enlighten persons, first is T rtha kara *din tha* or *abhadeva* and second is T rtha kara *Nemin tha* and this *Nemin tha* was also called as the first *Odin* of *Scandanavia* and first *Pho* in *Chinese*." Historicity of 23<sup>rd</sup> T rtha kara *P r van tha* is now well established in 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Prof. Anand Sharma of University of New Foundland, Canada in his paper on Deciphering the Indus Valley Script and Solution of the Brahui Problem says "Indus Valley Civilization flourished during the period of 3<sup>rd</sup> T rtha kara (*Sambhavan tha*) to 9<sup>th</sup> T rtha kara (*Pu padantan tha*).

The Aryan arrived during the time of 10<sup>th</sup> T rtha kara and complete Aryanization of India to the place at the time of 19<sup>th</sup> T rtha kara (*Mallin tha*) further. Based on this, we may mention of 20<sup>th</sup> Jain T rtha kara Muni Suvrata may be reality to Vedic time.



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Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual, that takes its origin in life and enters back into life after passing through various schools. The *Puranic* literature contains the truth dressed up as myths and stories to suit the weak understanding of the majority. The founders of philosophy in India strive for a socio-spiritual reformation of the country making religion not as dogmatic but as rational synthesis which keeps on gathering and assimilating new conceptions. It is experiential in nature by keeping pace with the progress of thought. Mr. Havell observes 'In India, religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life'.

While we are keenly alive to the immense importance of historical perspective, we regret that on account of the almost entire neglect of the chronological sequences of the writing it is not possible for us to determine exactly the relative dates of the system. So unhistorical, or perhaps so ultra-philosophical, was the nature of the ancient Indian that we know more about the philosophies than about the philosophers.

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The proposed seminar will seek to establish the two cultures, namely Rama as and Vedic during the period 3000BC-1000BC, as the period from 1000BC onwards seems to be fairly well established with 23<sup>rd</sup> T rtha kara P r van tha (9<sup>th</sup> Century BCE). The period 3000-1000BCE has some prominent religious leaders from both traditions, namely

- Lord Rama and 20<sup>th</sup> T rtha kara Muni Suvrata
- Lord Krishna and 22<sup>nd</sup> T rtha kara Nemin tha (Ari a Nemi)

The Vedic Period (2000BC-500BC) covers the age of the settlement of the Aryan and gradual expansion and spread of the Aryan culture and civilization. It was the time which witnesses the rise of the forest universities, idealism being extended into mantras, hymns, and Upni adas. The views put forwards in this age are not philosophical in the technical sense of the term. It is the age of grouping, where superstition and thought are yet in conflict. It seems that the period saw an intense impact of Rama a philosophy (especially spirituality and knowledge) as this was the period of Ved nta i.e. Upni adas or the *Jñ nayoga* compared to just Bhakti yoga or Karmayoga. During this period we also find emergence of Nemin tha, the 22<sup>nd</sup> T rtha kara (born in Shauripur UP) and P r van tha, the 23<sup>rd</sup> T rtha kara of Jains in and around Ganges (born in Varanasi).

Lord Rama as Padma and Lord Krishna as Hari are discussed in ample details in Jain story and canonical texts, though with variants as per their philosophy. Similarly Arista Nemi is discussed in Mahabharat along with his impact on Nonviolence.

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