

Article

Holding Out for a Husband ‘Til the End of the Fast: Wifehood, Widowhood, and Female Renunciation in Two Jain *Mahābhārata* Adaptations

Simon Winant 

Department of Languages and Cultures, Ghent University, 9000 Ghent, Belgium; simon.winant@ugent.be

Abstract: Among the Dharmic religious traditions, Jainism is unique for its continuous tradition of female monastics. Jain monastic women have made up a large part of Jain communities up to this day. Naturally, their prominent position in Jain society is reflected in the countless depictions of Jain nuns (*āryikā/sādhvī*) in Jain narrative literature. However, despite Jain narratives sometimes extolling renunciation as an alternative, often even superior, ideal to wifehood, there remains a fundamental tension between the ideologies of normative Jain wifehood and renunciation as well as the question of widowhood. In this article, I explore how two Digambara Sanskrit texts deal with the question of premature widowhood and renunciation in their adaptation of the *Mahābhārata* narrative. Whereas Jināsena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* (783 CE) stress the value of *pativratā*-ideology as an appropriate response for prematurely widowed young Jain women, Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (1552 CE) adapts the exact same episodes, but introduces an explicit ambivalence towards the idea of young Jain women renouncing to become Jain nuns. By comparing these two Digambara adaptations, I wish to show how Digambara Jain narratives in Sanskrit dealt with the same tension between Jain wifehood and renunciation hitherto mostly discussed with reference to Jain narratives in the vernacular.

Keywords: Jainism; Sanskrit; *Mahābhārata*; narrative; gender



Academic Editor: Jeffery D. Long

Received: 31 December 2024

Revised: 12 February 2025

Accepted: 27 February 2025

Published: 2 March 2025

Citation: Winant, Simon. 2025. Holding Out for a Husband ‘Til the End of the Fast: Wifehood, Widowhood, and Female Renunciation in Two Jain *Mahābhārata* Adaptations. *Religions* 16: 314. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16030314>

Copyright: © 2025 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

For over two millennia, Jainism has stood out among the religious traditions on the Indian subcontinent for its large number of female ascetics. While female ascetics are certainly not unheard of in Hindu traditions, female renouncers in Hindu traditions have been far and few between, often portrayed as transgressive figures, whereas Buddhist nuns have virtually disappeared in India itself. By contrast, Jainism has enjoyed an uninterrupted tradition of women forsaking worldly life to join the monastic ranks up to the present day. There is even reason to believe that female Jain ascetics have often outnumbered male Jain ascetics. The *Kalpasūtra*, a text held in high regard in Śvetāmbara Jainism, states that the Jain monastic community at the time of Mahāvīra’s passing consisted of 36,000 female monastics and only 14,000 male monastics.¹ Modern demographic censuses clearly illustrate how female monastics significantly outnumber male monastics in the Śvetāmbara branch.² However, the considerable presence of Jain female ascetics among monastic ranks has not always translated into a privileged position and institutional power. Many of the Śvetāmbara canonical texts and their later commentaries have often explicitly stated that a male renouncer is to be regarded as senior to a female renouncer, regardless of their actual monastic seniority in years.³

Ideas regarding the superiority of male ascetics even lie at the very heart of the historical split of Jainism into its two major branches, Śvetāmbara Jainism and Digambara Jainism. Whereas the former tradition came to regard the nudity that the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* practiced as an obsolete practice in this current age, Digambara Jainism insisted upon the nakedness for male monastics.⁴ Deeming nakedness an unacceptable practice for women, Digambara Jainism categorically denied the possibility of women attaining liberation in their current birth. As the late Padmanabh Jaini put it in *Gender and Salvation*, a seminal work that traced the history of Jain philosophical debate about whether women can or cannot attain *mokṣa*:

This injunction [that women were not to practice nudity] effectively barred women from ever renouncing all “possessions” and, accordingly, from attaining *mokṣa* in that life. Female mendicants, although called noble or venerable ladies (*āryikās* or *sādhvī*), were technically not considered mendicants at all but simply celibate, albeit spiritually advanced, laywomen (*utkrṣṭa-śrāvikā*). (Jaini 1992, p. 3)

Besides the monastics, male and female, Jain communities are, of course, made up of lay people as well. Naturally, female lay people play an important role in Jain communities, and over the centuries, a normative ideal of Jain wifehood has emerged. In *Heroic Wives: rituals, stories and the virtues of Jain wifehood*, Whitney Kelting has explored the various ways present-day Śvetāmbara Jain women negotiate the fundamental tension between wifehood and the path of renunciation (*mokṣamārga*) in their personal life through ritual and narrative.

While many of the Jain *satī*-narratives that circulate in present-day Śvetāmbara communities, Kelting notes, more often than not end with their female protagonists renouncing the world, most of these *satī*-narratives—which usually derive from early canonical scriptures in Prakrit and have been later retold in various languages by male scholar-monks in North India over the last millennium—have mostly promoted an ideal of wifely fidelity rather than renunciation. In this article, I wish to show how the tension between wifehood and the path of renunciation (*mokṣamārga*), which Kelting discusses with reference to *satī*-narratives as told by and to Śvetāmbara Jain women, is handled in two Digambara Jain adaptations of the *Mahābhārata*-narrative in Sanskrit. In doing so, I wish to touch on a relatively underexplored aspect of Digambara texts: the portrayal of female renunciators⁵ in Digambara narratives in Sanskrit.

Through a comparative reading, I will show how Jinasena Punnāṭa and Śubhacandra, both Digambara Jain monastic authors, deal with the contrasting Jain ideologies of virtuous wifehood and renunciation over three consecutive episodes, episodes unique to the tradition of Digambara Jain *Mahābhārata* adaptations. In the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* (783 CE), Jinasena Punnāṭa narrates how the eldest Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira encounters several young women before he eventually marries them. Several of these young women mistakenly believe themselves widowed and respond in different ways to their premature widowhood. By contrast, in the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (1552 CE) by Śubhacandra⁶, we find the same episodes from Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, but these episodes are imbued with a tangible ambivalence towards the idea of young women actively renouncing and portray marriage as the more preferable path.

First, I will examine some of the ideologies underpinning Jain womanhood outlined by Whitney Kelting in *Heroic Wives*, as they directly pertain to the episodes mentioned above and provide a framework to understand them. I will then explore the three consecutive episodes in Jinasena Punnāṭa’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, all of which appear to be creative inventions of Jinasena, before moving on to Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*.

2. Ideologies of Jain Womanhood: *Pativrata*, *Saubhāgya*, *Satī*, and *Mokṣamārga*

In her 2009 monograph, *Heroic Wives: rituals, stories and the virtues of Jain wifehood*, Whitney Kelting explores the rituals practiced by modern-day Jain lay women as well as the stories retold over the centuries to circumscribe the ideal behaviour of Jain lay women. Kelting distinguishes between three overlapping concepts underlying Jain wifehood: *pativrata*, *saubhāgya*, and *satī* (Kelting 2009, pp. 16–26). Although none of these three concepts are unique to Jain ideologies of wifehood and are more commonly associated with Hindu traditions, the third concept of *satī* has a distinct meaning in Jain discursive contexts. The first concept is *pativrata*, which literally means ‘a woman sworn to the husband’ or ‘faithful wife’, and refers to an ideology of absolute devotion and conjugal faithfulness a wife owes her husband. This fidelity entails an absolute chastity before marriage as well as sexual fidelity that extends beyond the death of one’s husband.⁷ The second concept, *saubhāgya*, is closely related to *pativrata* and refers to the good fortune (*saubhāgya*) a married wife enjoys on account of having a living husband. She is possessed of good fortune and is hence a *saubhāgyavatī*. Conversely, a woman who does not have a living husband cannot be considered *saubhāgyavatī*. Hence, widowhood is understood as a loss of this auspicious good fortune. As per Kelting, “the ideologies of *pativrata* and *saubhāgya* create a crisis for those wives who are widowed, which can be resolved either through austerity, or rarely (and prohibited for Jains), one’s death [. . .] (Kelting 2009, p. 19).

This brings us to the last concept, *satī*, infamously conflated with the practice of widow immolation by British colonial writers, even though Brahminical texts almost exclusively refer to the actual practice of widow burning with the following Sanskrit terms: *anugamana* (going after), *sahagamana* (going with), *anumaraṇa* (dying after) and *anvārohaṇa* (mounting after).⁸

The actual concept of *satī*—the word itself means ‘virtuous woman’ in Sanskrit—refers to an exemplary woman of firm moral fibre. While in some parts of Hindu traditions, women have been praised and labelled *satī* for ascending the funeral pyre upon their husband’s death, Jains have generally rejected the practice of *sahagamana* because of the violence involved in the act. Unlike the more widespread and, for the lack of a better word, Hindu conception of *satī*, *satīs* in the Jain context are not necessarily married wives. In Śvetāmbara Jainism, a tradition of set of telling the stories of sixteen *satīs* emerged, likely sometime before the fifteenth century of the common era.⁹ Among these sixteen *satīs*, we find famous pan-Indian characters such as Sīta, Draupadī, and Damayantī, all three famously married. Some of the *satīs* unique to Jain narrative, like Candanabālā and Rājīmātī, never marry and take initiation (*dīkṣā*) to become Jain nuns at a young age. As a result, these Jain *satīs*, who are praised in popular hymns and appear over and over in narratives, embody two distinct and mutually exclusive paths available to Jain women: marriage, with all its reproductive duties, as well as total renunciation as a nun. Although married Jain *satīs* eventually renounce and take initiation, this is presented as an act undertaken at towards the very end of one’s life (See Kelting 2006, pp. 183–85). There is a tension between the ideal of wifehood and the soteriological goal of striving towards liberation (*mokṣamārga*), but the narratives ultimately present this tension as resolvable, since married Jain women can always renounce towards the very end of their lives.

Taking an anthropological approach, Kelting explores how *pativrata* and *saubhāgya* ideologies underlie the fasting practices of Jain laywomen, which, even though similar in practice to the fasting undertaken by Jain monastics, also serve the this-worldly purposes of securing a good husband or protecting their husband. Kelting looks at vernacular *satī*-narratives and how modern-day Jain women in Śvetāmbara communities retell these stories.

Interestingly, *pativratā* and *saubhāgya* ideologies as well as their tension with *mokṣamārga* ideology are also operative in Digambara narratives in Sanskrit written centuries earlier.

In comparing three consecutive episodes from Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* (783 CE) with Śubhacandra's adaptation of these episodes in the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (1552 CE), I will show how the aforementioned Jain ideologies of virtuous womanhood manifest with their tension of *pativratā* and *saubhāgya* on one end, and *mokṣamārga* on the other end, in these Digambara Jain Sanskrit narratives. Yet even in this limited selection of the same basic narrative, there are significant differences.

3. Kusumakomalā, Vasantasundarī, and the Eleven Young Women in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*

Jinasena Punṇāṭa was arguably the first Jain author to compose a Sanskrit work belonging to the genre Western scholars have often called Jain Universal Histories.¹⁰ As huge, sprawling literary compositions written in Sanskrit or Prakrit, Jain Universal Histories narrate the Jain conception of history through the biographies of 63 exemplary individuals, among whom we find the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras*.¹¹ With his *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, Jinasena Punṇāṭa, a native of Saurāṣṭra-peninsula, wrote a voluminous work of over 9000 verses which, in addition to giving a rundown of Jain history from the very ancestors of the first *tīrthaṅkara*, Ṛṣabha, up to Mahāvīra's attainment of *mokṣa*, is remarkable for being the first Jain Sanskrit work to include an entire *Mahābhārata* narrative. Since Jains claim that the famous Kṛṣṇa and the five Pāṇḍavas from the *Mahābhārata* are cousins of the twenty-second *tīrthaṅkara*, Nemi, Jinasena included a subnarrative describing the famous conflict between the Pāṇḍavas supported by Kṛṣṇa against the Kauravas within the biography of Nemi. The struggle between the two rival sets of cousins over the throne of Hastināpura occupies only a small part in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, being utterly dwarfed by the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa.¹² In his version of the *Mahābhārata*-narrative, Jinasena often reimagines parts of narrative and its characters in accordance with Jain values.¹³

While the Sanskrit epic of the *Mahābhārata* is known for its vast size, numerous embedded narratives, and countless narrative digressions, the main narrative throughline of the *Mahābhārata* is the succession struggle between the five Pāṇḍava brothers and their cousins, the Kauravas. Who will rule the kingdom of the Kurus: the righteous eldest Pāṇḍava, Yudhiṣṭhira, or the power-hungry, conniving eldest Kaurava, Duryodhana? Over and over in the *Mahābhārata*, Duryodhana tries to eliminate his Pāṇḍava cousins through treacherous means. One of Duryodhana's first attempts to kill the Pāṇḍavas—a scheme that took place before the more well-known game of dice that resulted in the Pāṇḍavas' thirteen-year exile—is the House of Lacquer (*Lākṣagrha* or *jātugrha*). Duryodhana had a palace made out of highly combustible materials built, and invited the Pāṇḍavas and their mother, Kuntī, to stay there, intending to set the palace on fire one night when the unsuspecting Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī were asleep. Fortunately, the Pāṇḍavas caught wind of Duryodhana's scheme and planned an escape; they pretended to be unaware of the plot and dug an underground tunnel during their stay in the House of Lacquer. The very night Duryodhana had the palace set on fire, the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī escaped through the tunnel.¹⁴ After this assassination attempt, the Pāṇḍavas travelled incognito, letting the outside world believe that they perished in the fire so as to avoid any further assassination attempts in the near future.

It is Jinasena's adaptation of the Pāṇḍavas' travels after they escape the House of Lacquer I am concerned with here. In the 45th *sarga* of his *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, Jinasena introduces several episodes of his own invention after the Pāṇḍavas' escape. All of the episodes I will discuss follow a similar narrative pattern: the Pāṇḍavas visit a certain town incognito where they are met with a warm welcome, and Yudhiṣṭhira interacts with

one or more young women of marriageable age. Each episode highlights Yudhiṣṭhira's eligibility as a potential groom, dangling the possibility of his marrying the young women but ultimately deferring the marriage until a later point.

The first episode describes how the Pāṇḍavas, after having escaped the Lacquer house and having changed their clothes, head eastwards until they arrive in the city of Kauśika, ruled by King Varṇa and Queen Prabhāvatī. Their daughter, princess Kusumakomalā, hears of their arrival and goes out to see the Pāṇḍavas:

At the sight of prince Yudhiṣṭhira, the moon incarnate, the virtuous and beautiful lady blossomed like a pool of night-lotuses. She thought to herself, "this one will have a beautiful wife; may this excellent groom have me in this birth!" Recognising her intentions, he [Yudhiṣṭhira] was seized by love. He showed his hope to marry her by a signal and left. Looking forward to meeting him again, she spent her time with pastimes befitting unmarried young women [*kanyā*].¹⁵

Here, Yudhiṣṭhira shows his intention to marry her, but the marriage is deferred until some unspecified future moment. Note the use of the Sanskrit word *kanyā* used to describe the unspecified pastimes Kusumakomalā pursues after Yudhiṣṭhira has left; it clearly shows the marriage is yet to take place.

In this next episode about Yudhiṣṭhira's encounter with a young woman, the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī, having disguised themselves in ascetic garb (*tāpasaveṣeṇa* HVP 45.69), arrive in an *āśrama* in the Śleśmāntaka forest. The narrator then mentions how a certain princess Vasantasundarī, daughter of King Vindhyasena and Queen Narmadā, practices asceticism among the ascetics of the *āśrama*. Interestingly, Jināsena's narrative here describes the ascetics and their *āśrama* in rather generic and, for the lack of a better word, non-denominational terms; the Sanskrit term used to refer to these ascetics is *tāpasa*, literally "practiser of *tapas*", a term whose etymology and significance I will elaborate on later. Moreover, this episode neither uses the terms most commonly used in Jain narrative literature to refer to Jain monastics, such *muni* or *sādhu*, nor does this episode describe the young Vasantasundarī as a Jain nun. Rather, Vasantasundarī is described as a highly attractive young woman, in spite of her ascetic efforts:

Wearing a gown of *dukūla* cloth and matted hair, she looked noble, beautiful, and lovely, like a branch of a banyan tree granting soft shade. That female ascetic [*tāpasī*] stole one's heart with her moon-like face, her lips, her wide eyes that reached up to her ears, and her full hips and breasts.¹⁶

In fact, Jināsena's narrative even describes the reason for Vasantasundarī's unusual choice to practice austerities before giving her physical description:

Formerly she had been chosen by her elders to be given to Yudhiṣṭhira. When she heard the news about the fire [the burning of the Lacquer House], she blamed herself for her past actions [in a former birth]. Wishing to see that husband in the next birth, she began to practice asceticism in that *āśrama* full of ascetics.¹⁷

Being a good hostess, Vasantasundarī receives the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī in the *āśrama*. Intrigued by the young woman's decision to become an ascetic at such a young age, Kuntī asks Vasantasundarī why she pursues asceticism. Repeating what had already been established by the narrator, Vasantasundarī explains that her relatives had intended to marry her to Yudhiṣṭhira, but after she had heard that Yudhiṣṭhira had perished together with his brothers in the Lacquer House, she decided to renounce the world:

Due to my inauspicious merit, I heard from people about his [having perished] along with his brothers and mother, rumours which I cannot even bear to call to

mind. It is proper to follow that husband who burned to his death in the very same way, but unable to do so, I practice austerities.¹⁸

Here, Vasantasundarī invokes the infamous practice of widows following their deceased husband on the funeral pyre, and which has mistakenly been called *satī*. Here, in the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, Vasantasundarī chooses to practice ‘austerities’ after considering but ultimately deciding against self-immolation. The exact Sanskrit term Vasantasundarī uses to describe her austerities is significant: *tāpasye*, a causative verbal form derived from the Sanskrit verbal root $\sqrt{\text{tap}}$, the very root from which the term *tāpas* (asceticism) is derived. The literal and original meaning of this root is “to give out heat, to be hot”, which in later language came to signify ascetic practices in a general sense. Cultivating an inner heat, an inner fire is the underlying metaphor for *tapas* and ascetic practices in general. Hence, Vasantasundarī’s statement *tāpasye* alludes to this metaphor; instead of immolating herself in the literal sense, she figuratively immolates herself by practicing asceticism. After Vasantasundarī has explained herself, Kuntī, mother of Yudhiṣṭhira, congratulates the young woman:

Upon hearing those words, that kind woman [Kuntī] said to her future daughter-in-law, “You have done well to preserve your life, my dear [. . .]. Keep living for the sake of good fortune, fortunate girl, for as I tell you, you will meet with good things in your life even though you practice austerities”.¹⁹

The fact that it is Kuntī who congratulate Vasantasundarī here is significant. In Hindu traditions as well as in Jain tradition, Kuntī enjoys an exalted position as an especially virtuous wife. She is often listed among the *pañcakanyā*, five women revered for their fidelity.²⁰ Similarly, Śvetāmbara Jains came to include Kuntī as one of *satīs* when this set of sixteen *satīs* crystallised and began to circulate in their hymns (Kelting 2006, pp. 181–90). In the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa, Kuntī is known as the senior wife of Pāṇḍu who, even though initially she volunteered to do so, did not join Pāṇḍu on the funeral pyre after his death. Instead, it is Mādrī, Pāṇḍu’s junior wife, who followed her husband on the funeral pyre.²¹ Admittedly, Jināsena changes the passing of Pāṇḍu and Mādrī in his *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*: the Jain author mentions how they went to heaven in accordance with the teachings of Jainism, probably implying that Pāṇḍu and Mādrī both died by fasting until death in the Jain practice of *sallekhanā*.²² Nevertheless, readers (or listeners), whether they were Jain or not, probably would have been aware of Kuntī being the woman who ultimately did not ascend her husband’s funeral pyre; at any rate, Jināsena certainly would have known. As such, to have Kuntī be the one to praise Vasantasundarī for not immolating herself can be taken as an intertextual comment on how Vasantasundarī made the sensible choice. The very fact that Kuntī does not speak or meaningfully interact with Kusumakomalā in the previous episode, nor with the eleven young women in the next episode I will discuss, is telling.

After Kuntī’s praise, the disguised Yudhiṣṭhira chimes in to explain about Jain doctrine to the young woman. Yudhiṣṭhira lecturing Vasantasundarī about Jain lay vows such as *aṇuvratas*, *śīlavratas*, and *guṇavratas*²³ seems to suggest that Vasantasundarī pursues “generic” asceticism, the asceticism various characters ranging from human beings to supernatural creatures pursue in pursuit of a boon throughout Indic narratives, rather than actually having become an initiated Jain female mendicant. After all, the *aṇuvratas*, literally ‘minor vows’, are explicitly conceived of as lesser versions of the five *mahāvratas* undertaken by mendicants. Surely, if Vasantasundarī had been pursuing the path of a Jain mendicant, a path by its very nature stricter than that of the lay person, this would not be new knowledge to be imparted to her by a lay Jain person such as Yudhiṣṭhira in this narrative.

Before the episode of Vasantasundarī concludes, Vasantasundarī begins to wonder to herself whether the men lecturing her on Jain lay ethics could be Yudhiṣṭhira:

“Could this compassionate man marked with signs of royalty, accompanied by his mother, who is instructing me be Yudhiṣṭhira? May that husband, who is ever truthful and diligent, live here [iha] unharmed through my considerable merit and asceticism”. When they [the Pāṇḍavas] wanted to depart, they were honoured with the appropriate goodbye “may we meet again”. They left and she [Vasantasundarī] stayed behind, full of hope.²⁴

The above verses are interesting for two reasons. First and foremost, Vasantasundarī shifts the intention behind her ascetic practices. Initially, she turned to asceticism to attain the same husband in the next birth. This initial motivation, while rooted in *pativrata*-ideology, i.e., wifely fidelity to one’s husband beyond the husband’s life, more or less agrees with, or at least does not stray too far from the “official” Jain doctrinal understanding of *karma* that “actions of one person can[not] affect the karmic status of another”. Vasantasundarī hopes that her asceticism will affect her next rebirth; her soul will shed and/or acquire the karma that could cause her soul to reborn as the future wife of her formerly betrothed. However, upon learning that Yudhiṣṭhira might very well still be alive, Vasantasundarī hopes that her asceticism will affect her husband, another person, “here”, i.e., in this lifetime, as the Sanskrit word *iha* suggests; she hopes he will live free from harm (*jīvyād anāhatir*). Here, we appear to find an instance of the paradox John Cort pointed out, the paradox he described as “the paradox of the simultaneous existence in Jainism of a doctrine that denies the possibility of merit transfer, and practices that assume just such a transfer” (Cort 2003, p. 145). John Cort noted how donative inscriptions, mortuary rituals, narrative literature, and interviews with modern-day Jains regularly contradicted the “the truism of Jain scholarship [...] that the Jains do not believe that the actions of one person can affect the karmic status of another” (Cort 2003, pp. 130–42). In a similar vein, Kelting explored in *Heroic Wives* how contemporary Śvetāmbara lay women undertake *saubhāgya*-fasts not just for mokṣa-oriented purposes but also for the benefit of their husbands.²⁵ Here, in Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, an eighth-century Digambara narrative in Sanskrit, we are met with another instance of the idea that asceticism can also transfer merit unto another person.

The second reason why I bring up the concluding verses of the Vasantasundarī episode is because of the episode ending on positive note; Vasantasundarī remains hopeful. By contrast, Śubhacandra’s adaptation of the same episode, which I will discuss later, ends on a much less positive note with some notable implications.

The next episode of Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* I will discuss takes places after the Pāṇḍavas have defeated this a man-eating demon called Bhṛṅga. Disguised as Brahmins, they arrive in the city of Triśṛṅga. This city’s ruler, Pracaṇḍavāhana, has ten beautiful and accomplished daughters called Guṇaprabhā, Suprabhā, Hrī, Śrī, Rati, Padmā, Indīvara, Viśvā, Caryā, and Aśokā. Just like Vasantasundarī earlier, these ten young women were to marry Yudhiṣṭhira:

All of them were formerly promised to Yudhiṣṭhira, but upon receiving the news about him, they remained firm in [practising] the *aṇuvratas*.²⁶

Besides these ten princesses, another young woman called Nayanasundarī, daughter of the prominent merchant Priyamitra, was also supposed to marry Yudhiṣṭhira until she heard about his fiery demise. When the Pāṇḍavas are given a warm welcome in Triśṛṅga, King Pracaṇḍavāhana and the merchant Priyamitra, though they do not recognise Yudhiṣṭhira, take special notice of him:

The king and his wife, as well as the rich man, all able to recognise a great man, wished to give their daughters to the eldest son of Kuntī. They [the daughters],

however, due to their firm mental resolve, still considered him [Yudhiṣṭhira] as their husband even though he had gone to the next world, and did not want that Brahmin.²⁷

Steadfast in their fidelity to the man whom they never even got to marry, the eleven young women refuse Yudhiṣṭhira, whom they fail to recognise. In the immediate next verse, the Pāṇḍavas travel to Campapurī. Dangling the possibility of these young women eventually marrying Yudhiṣṭhira, the narrative leaves this thread unresolved for more than forty verses.

First, Jinasena describes how the second eldest Pāṇḍava Bhīma marries two young women during their travels and how the middle Pāṇḍava Arjuna wins the hand of Draupadī in marriage by performing an archery feat impossible for other suitors.²⁸ It is not until the Pāṇḍavas, having revealed themselves, receive one half of the kingdom, divided between them and the Kauravas, that Jinasena picks up this narrative thread:

Bhīmasena, busy with marriage tasks, brought back the young maidens from before, and made them marry the eldest [Yudhiṣṭhira], making those women, eligible by their very nature, happy.²⁹

What to make of these three consecutive episodes about Yudhiṣṭhira meeting several young women whom he eventually marries? The two last episodes of Vasantasundarī and the eleven young women, clearly foreground the virtue of the *pativrata*, the faithful wife whose fidelity extends even beyond her husband's death.

Taking all three episodes as whole, however, I argue that Jinasena is making an additional, more subtle point beyond just extolling *pativrata*-ideology. These three consecutive episodes circumscribe a range of acceptable roles for young Jain women according to their societal status, but “place a premium on” wifedom, so to speak.

In the first episode, Kusumakomalā is implied to be younger than the women of the two other episodes. Unlike the other young women, Kusumakomalā is not yet promised to any future groom. There seems to be no family expectation of her marrying anyone at this point of her life. Moreover, the narrative neither mentions the burning of the Lacquer House nor the question of Yudhiṣṭhira's identity here; Kusumakomalā is not presented as a prematurely bereaved widow. Hence, there is no tangible reason for her to practice asceticism like Vasantasundarī does. After Yudhiṣṭhira has made his unspoken agreement, not communicated to anyone but Kusumakomalā, to marry her at some point in the future and has left the city of Kauśika, Kusumakomalā is described as spending her time with pastime (*vinoda*) befitting young unmarried women. She is not yet burdened with the societal expectations of Jain wifedom, but is rewarded with marriage in the end anyway.

By contrast, in the second episode, Vasantasundarī was already promised to Yudhiṣṭhira. There is a family expectation, made explicit in the narrative, to marry and take up the societal role of wife. However, when Vasantasundarī hears about the burning of the Lacquer House, she believes herself a widow. In accordance with general Jain doctrine, the narrative presents asceticism as an option preferable to *sahamaraṇa*, i.e., following one's husband on the funeral pyre. Vasantasundarī's choice to pursue asceticism instead of *sahamaraṇa* as well as her fidelity to her deceased husband eventually yield reward in the shape of marriage.

Similarly, the eleven young women were also promised to Yudhiṣṭhira and believe themselves widows upon hearing about the Lacquer House. Instead of turning to the strict asceticism practiced by Vasantasundarī, the eleven young women remain lay people who practice the lesser vows (*aṇuvrata*). Even when given societal sanction to remarry, even when their parents want them to marry the Brahmin, who is Yudhiṣṭhira in disguise, the eleven young women refuse, insisting upon remaining faithful to their dead husband. For

their adherence to Jain lay ideals and posthumous faithfulness, the eleven young women, too, are rewarded with marriage with their chosen husband in the end.

To conclude, Jinasena contrasts Kusumakomalī, who has yet to take up the role of wife in the eyes of society, with Vasantasundarī and the eleven young women, who have, to some extent, already crossed a societal threshold, no longer considering themselves ‘not-wives’. The Jain author presents *sahamaraṇa* as a choice to be rejected, and Vasantasundarī and the eleven young women ‘perform’ widowhood by turning to asceticism or by explicitly rejecting a second suitor respectively. So much for Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*.

4. Kamalā, Vasantasenā, and the Eleven Young Women in Śubhacandra’s Pāṇḍavapurāṇa

In this section, I turn to Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (1552 CE) and his adaptation of the three episodes about the same young women Yudhiṣṭhira encounters after escaping the Lacquer House³⁰. Śubhacandra was a Digambara author active in Vāgaḍa region, a region that comprises parts of the modern-day state of Rājasthān as well as parts of modern-day Gujarāt. He is notable for being a *bhaṭṭāraka*, a type of a clothed Digambara monastic, and would have interacted a great deal with the lay community as a consequence.³¹ Besides his monastic occupation, Śubhacandra was also known for his prolific literary output, composing both in Sanskrit as well as in Old Hindi.

Over twenty works have been attributed to him.³² His most influential work, or at least the work that has attracted the most scholarly scrutiny up to this day, is arguably the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (1552 CE). True to its title, the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* is an adaptation of the *Mahābhārata*-narrative. Unlike Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, in which the *Mahābhārata*-narrative is but a small subnarrative, Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* devotes over two thirds of its 5301 śloka to the exploits of the Pāṇḍavas. In 20th-century scholarship, the work has mostly been discussed with respect to its polemical frame narrative. Following a commonly used trope specific to Jain literature, the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*’s frame narrative starts with Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth jina, giving a sermon and thereupon being questioned by king Śreṇika about the far-fetched and scandalous aspects found in the Sanskrit epics and *purāṇas* as told by Hindu communities. After listening to these ‘false’ accounts replete with sordid details that are intended to cast a bad light on the people who tell these versions, Mahāvīra then asks his pupil Indrabhūti Gautama to tell the real, i.e., the Jain version of these stories to Śreṇika.³³ Leaving aside the polemical frame narrative, I will now turn to Śubhacandra’s adaptation of the three episodes from Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*.

After the twelfth *parvan* of Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, which features the episodes of the House of Lacquer and the Pāṇḍavas’ escape, the thirteenth *parvan* is entirely devoted to Śubhacandra’s adaptation of the three episodes invented by Jinasena Punṇāṭa. Although some of the character names differ slightly from those found in Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, they are essentially still the same characters. What is different in Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* is his inclusion of a clear ambivalence towards young women taking initiation as Jain nuns (*dīkṣā*). As I will discuss, several of the young women express the explicit desire to renounce the world to become Jain nuns in Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*. In this narrative, however, unlike most Jain narratives, in which the decision to renounce is usually portrayed as highly commendable, several characters try to dissuade the Vasantasenā and the eleven young women from renouncing.

The thirteenth *parvan* begins with the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī disguising themselves as Brahmins before travelling to the city of Kauśika. Just like in Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, we are introduced to the rulers of Kauśika: King Varṇa and his wife, named Prabhākari here instead of Prabhāvatī. Their daughter also bears a different name in the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*; she is called Kamalā instead of Kusumakomalā. The changes do not just stop there:

Śubhacandra frames the encounter between Kamalā and Yudhiṣṭhira somewhat differently and also infuses the entire episode with *śṛṅgāra*-adjacent literary tropes. One day, during an excursion with friends through a pleasure garden, Kamalā sees a Jain temple³⁴ devoted to the Jina Candraprabha and is suddenly struck by the urge to visit the temple by herself.

As it so happens, the Pāṇḍavas are nearby and enter the temple before Kamalā does:

When she felt the desire to go there to worship the Jinas, the Pāṇḍavas reached the Jain temple. Upon seeing the temple of Candraprabha, they bathed themselves with strained water [i.e., water that is made free of any possible living beings]. They then entered the temple, uttering the words “nissahi”.³⁵

Śubhacandra then not only describes Kamalā’s beauty as she enters the temple but her piety in worshipping the Jinas as well:

The girdle slipped from her full hips as she entered the temple, walking slowly with a gait that surpassed the Elephant’s Gait. She venerated the deities represented by effigies according to the proper rites. [...] Then she adorned the lotus feet of the jina with *mandāra*, *mallikā*, *kamra*, *ketakī*, *kundara*, *lotus* and *campaka* flowers. After she had worshipped the Jina with enough incense to cover the whole world and numerous fruits, she went out. There, she saw the pure and supreme Pāṇḍavas.³⁶

Upon seeing Yudhiṣṭhira, Kamalā is instantly smitten and wonders whether this man is a deity rather than a human mortal. The young woman is so besotted that she is frozen on the spot, unable to go home by herself!

Her friends managed to carry her back to her house with great effort. There, she pined away as she neither ate, spoke nor laughed for even a moment. One moment she was pondering, another moment she cried, feeling dejected. Then, she slept, got up, and after standing up, fell down laughing; When her mother saw her beautiful daughter in such state, close to death, she asked her daughter and learned what the problem was.³⁷

After this brief description of Kamalā’s *viraha*, Queen Prabhākari promptly informs her husband, King Varṇa, who then has the Pāṇḍavas summoned to his palace. After receiving them with honours, King Varṇa asks Yudhiṣṭhira to marry his daughter:

Then he [the king] asked the son of Dharma about marriage. He gladly gave his pure daughter Kamalā to him [in marriage]. He [Yudhiṣṭhira] then enjoyed the excellent pleasures of love with her. So did he spend some days there along with Kuntī and his brothers.³⁸

Unlike in Jinasena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, there is no private understanding between Yudhiṣṭhira and Kamalā of eventually marrying in the future. Instead, the marriage, fully sanctioned by Kamalā’s parents, takes place with no delay; even its consummation is made explicit. In fact, king Varṇa does not even know who his son-in-law truly is, for he only asks Yudhiṣṭhira about his identity well after the marriage:

One day Varṇa asked Dharma’s son, “Listen now sir, who are you? Who is she [Kuntī]? From where have they [the four other Pāṇḍavas] come?” The king [Yudhiṣṭhira] replied, “Varṇa, listen to our curious tale. We are the sons of Pāṇḍu whom the Kauravas burnt. We escaped from the house”.³⁹

After explaining his familial ties to the future *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Yudhiṣṭhira states his intention to visit them in Dvāravātī and departs from Kauśika together with his brothers and mother, leaving his newly-wed wife Kamalā behind. Eventually, the Pāṇḍavas and Kuntī arrive in the Puṇyadruma forest. There, they visit all the Jain temples they encounter and listen to a lecture by a Jain muni.

It is here that we find Śubhacandra's version of the Vasantasundarī-episode. After the *muni*'s lecture, the Pāṇḍavas encounter a Jain nun. While her sons are busy paying their respects to the nun, Kuntī notices a young woman nearby engaged in 'studying letters' (*śikṣamāṇā_akṣarāṇi*; PP 13.63), i.e., the graphemic symbols that make up the basis of the Indic script. To Kuntī's surprise, her body is emaciated like the body of an ascetic. Intrigued by this young woman, Kuntī asks the Jain nun about the young woman:

"Why does this maiden practice austerities as a good woman engaged in pious actions and calmly observing *dharmadhyāna* (pious meditation)? Indifference to the world does not happen without cause in that rough age of youth, when the body is driven by passion. Why does she, firm of mind, wear a red robe? Why does she dwell in the forest by your side without having taken *dīkṣā*?"⁴⁰

Note how the narrative explicitly mentions that even though the young woman is practicing asceticism, she has not been initiated (*dīkṣā*) as a Jain nun. Before the Jain nun answers Kuntī's questions, Yudhiṣṭhira and the young woman are making eyes at each other:

She [the girl] kept looking at Yudhiṣṭhira with innocent glances. He too noticed her and kept looking at her lotus-like face. Through furtive glances she showed her intention to the king; he, in turn, showed her his intention with a look.⁴¹

Obliging Kuntī's request, the Jain nun then begins to tell about the young woman and the reasons behind her renunciation. The young woman turns out to be the daughter of King Vindhyaśena, ruler of Kauśāmbī, and is the same character as the one in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*. Again, there is a name change in Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*: she is called Vasantasenā instead of Vasantasundarī. The nun goes on to describe how King Vindhyaśena had intended to marry Vasantasenā to Yudhiṣṭhira. Unfortunately, when news got out that the Pāṇḍavas all perished in the lacquer house, Vasantasenā was distraught and decided that if she could not marry Yudhiṣṭhira, she would not marry at all. It is here at this point that Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* introduces noticeable differences from Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*. Vasantasenā's turn towards asceticism, while still partly motivated by *pativratā*-ideology, is much more rooted in the *mokṣamārga*-ideology, as these verses suggest:

Upon reflecting this for a long time, clever as she was, she came to the conclusion: "I will marry no other man but Yudhiṣṭhira. But since he was burned to death, I will practice the harshest austerities so that I do not obtain that karma which is reviled by all, birth upon birth".⁴²

Unlike Vasantasundarī in Jinasena's narrative, Vasantasenā does not practice austerities with the express wish to see her husband in the next birth, but rather to shed karma. Furthermore, Vasantasenā wants to become a Jain nun, as her desire for initiation (*dīkṣā*) clearly shows. However, her family explicitly disapproves of her decision to take *dīkṣā*:

When her father and the others found out she was eager to take initiation, they were filled with grief and tried to reason with that noble-minded girl fearful of saṃsāra [*saṃvega-saṃpannām*] [. . .] "If you wish for initiation [*dīkṣā*], be firm for a while and listen carefully with attentive ears in the presence of a Jain nun. Through your virtue, this obstacle will someday disappear. Such an auspicious person [like Yudhiṣṭhira] is not born to be short-lived. Be firm [*sthirā*] and when he turns out to be alive, you will reach him and attain marital bliss, otherwise [i.e., if Yudhiṣṭhira turns out to be dead] you should take initiation as you want".⁴³

Clearly, Vasantasenā's parents prefer she marry rather than take initiation as a Jain nun. Note that the narrative describe Vasantasenā as *saṃvega-saṃpannā*, which I have translated as "fearful of saṃsāra" in light of how Digambara Śrāvākācāra authors have defined the

term.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the initial misgivings of Vasantasenā's parents, Vasantasenā's efforts are positively commented upon by the Jain nun at whose side the young woman is practising asceticism:

Now, she is staying firm [*sthirā*], practicing bodily mortification in my presence. Striving to exercise self-control, she has given up choice food. The slender girl has practiced arduous austerities in the *kāyotsarga*-position. She has been well-behaved and her virtue effortlessly shines through. She has listened to the auspicious teaching to acquire the purifying *siddhāntas*.⁴⁵

When the conversation between Kuntī and the Jain nun comes to a close, Vasantasenā takes notice of Kuntī and begins to wonder if this woman and her five sons could be Kuntī and the five Pāṇḍavas, who were supposed to have perished in the fire. She turns to Kuntī and asks who she is. Still safeguarding her identity and that of her sons, Kuntī tells Vasantasenā that they are Brahmins. Just like Vasantasenā's relatives earlier, Kuntī then tries to convince Vasantasenā to give up on *dīkṣā*:

Pursue pure virtue while you live. Abandon this desire to renounce! Be steadfast in the householder's vow! Someday they [the Pāṇḍavas] will live again because of your merit. Not even the gods are able to kill such men!⁴⁶

However, her words fail to persuade Vasantasenā; the young woman remains engaged in asceticism. Unlike the parting between the Pāṇḍavas and Vasantasundarī in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, the parting between the Pāṇḍavas and Vasantasenā in Śubhacandra's narrative is not described as a happy occasion:

When the girl heard this [Kuntī's statements], she became pale and dejected. Vindhyasena's daughter was tormented by mournful meditation. She restrained her mind, as difficult to restrain as a ruttish elephant leader of a pack, and engaged in asceticism, scorning the karma acquired in a former birth.⁴⁷

Indeed, it seems the narrative, in addition to the parental objection and Kuntī's attempt to dissuade her, goes even one step further to suggest that Vasantasenā's insistence on renunciation is ultimately misguided: she abandons the meditational practice of *dharmadhyāna*⁴⁸ and instead lapses to *ārtādhyāna*. As meditational practice, *ārtādhyāna* is characterised by a sorrowful disposition. Out of the four types of meditations under the type of *dhyāna* described in Jain texts, i.e., *ārtādhyāna* (sorrowful meditation), *raudradhyāna* (wrathful meditation), *dharmadhyāna* (pious meditation), and *śukladhyāna* (blissful meditation), *ārtādhyāna* and *raudradhyāna* are regarded as inauspicious since both of them are characterised by the practitioner dwelling on negative feelings. Consequently, the practitioner lacks true detachment from the world.⁴⁹

Unable to convince Vasantasenā, Kuntī follows her sons as they continue their travels. Now we turn to Śubhacandra's adaptation of the episode of the eleven young women as the Pāṇḍavas arrive in the city of Triśṅga. The narrative introduces Triśṅga's ruler, called Caṇḍavāhana in the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* rather than Pracaṇḍavāhana. Just like in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, King Caṇḍavāhana has ten daughters: Guṇaprabhā, Suprabhā, Hrī, Śrī, Rati, Padmā, Indīvara, Viśvā, Āścaryā, and Aśokā. After consulting an astrologer about suitable husbands for his daughters, Caṇḍavāhana intends to marry them all to Yudhiṣṭhira. The merchant Priyāmitra of Triśṅga also intends to marry his daughter Nayanāsundarī to Yudhiṣṭhira. Unfortunately, the news that Yudhiṣṭhira has died in the Lacquer House reaches them not long after. Grieved by their promised husband's passing, the young women take to fasting:

When she [Nayanāsundarī] too heard of his burning to death, she became dejected. Together with them [the 10 princesses] they all began to practice *dharmadhyāna*,

having devoted themselves to vows. [...] Those sweet-voiced women remained steadfast with equanimity at all times while they practiced arduous fasting.⁵⁰

The eleven young women meditate, focusing on *dharmadhyāna* rather than the spiritually inferior *ārtadhyāna*. Vasantasena turned to. One day, the young women set out for a Jain temple in the forest to practice the *proṣadha*-fast:

Sometime on the fourteenth [day of a fortnight] they took to staying in a Jain temple in the forest, having taken up the *proṣadha* fast of twice a [day of] eight watches. [...] They all spent the night telling each other stories about the Jinas and the cakravartins, and at dawn they performed *sāmāyika*.⁵¹

Here, Śubhacandra references a particular lay ritual practice described in many *śrāvākācāras*, i.e., treatises on Jain lay conduct: *posaha* in Prakrit derived from Sanskrit *upavasatha*, which was later erroneously resanskritised as *pauṣadha*, *poṣadha*, or *proṣadha*. The former two resanskritisations are generally used interchangeably in Śvetāmbara *śrāvākācāras*; Digambara *śrāvākācāras* almost exclusively use the last term.⁵² Perhaps unsurprising for a Digambara author, Śubhacandra uses *proṣadha* here. The description of the *proṣadha*-fast undertaken by the eleven young women agrees with many of the fast's features as detailed in Digambara *śrāvākācāras*. For instance, the fast should last for forty-eight hours, or two days, i.e., two times eight watches. The fourteenth day (*caturdaśī*) is one of the four days in a month on which a lay person can undertake a *proṣadha*, besides the *aṣṭamī*, *pūrṇimā*, and *amāvāsī*. Similarly, the Digambara *śrāvākācāra* authors Pūjyapada and Cāmuṇḍarāya recommend a temple as one of the possible locations where to perform the fast. Furthermore, some *śrāvākācāras* even mention "that the primary aim of the p[ro]ṣadhōpavāsa is to enable *sāmāyika*-ritual" (Williams 1963, pp. 142–46).

The mention of the *sāmāyika*-ritual is not incidental and carries some significance here, as I will explain. The term *sāmāyika* is used in two different, albeit not entirely unrelated, senses: either as a single vow of restraint taken by mendicants, or as a ritual aimed undertaken by mendicants and lay persons. It is the latter sense that is of concern here. As a ritual, *sāmāyika* entails an effort to detach the senses from external objects and to become one with the Self in the process. While some of the details involved in the ritual differ along different Jain traditions, all agree that one renounces all harmful activity, even down to harming the tiniest life organisms, whilst meditating. In doing so, "a lay person becomes like mendicant" (Wiley 2004, pp. 184–85). Williams put even more strongly:

The aspirant [who] perform[s] the *sāmāyika* [...], as the commentators [of *śrāvākācāras*] never tire of repeating, [is] temporarily assimilate[d] [...] to the status of ascetic. (Williams 1963, p. 175)

As such, one can view a lay person who has just performed a *sāmāyika* as occupying this quasi-liminal position between a lay person and a mendicant. Hence, it is not a coincidence that right after the *sāmāyika*-ritual, the eldest princess Guṇaprabhā speaks up to announce that she and all the other young women, should keep on practicing *tapas* at the side of a *muni* after donating to him. Guṇaprabhā then launches into an extensive lament about womanhood:

What's more, womanhood is a reprehensible stage caused by bad karma. As soon as she is born, a daughter means trouble for her father. When she is growing up, she makes her father worry about the search for a husband, When she is married, she makes him worry about her husband, taking away [his] comfort. Sometimes a husband is wicked, addicted to vices, bone idle, a liar, negligent because of his constant gambling, ill, poor, coveting other women, unjust, a slave to his anger, or extremely foolish. If a woman has such a bad husband because of her bad karma, then who knows the sorrow it could cause her?⁵³

Guṇaprabhā does not just stop there; she also deplores the possibility of having to share a husband with another woman⁵⁴, pregnancy, the pain of childbirth, and widowhood. Guṇaprabhā singles out the latter in particular:

When [her] husband has died, there is even such a thing as widowhood for women. Who is able to describe that sorrow that comes from being born a young woman? Deprived of marriage, we have become widows. Cursed be womanhood with its worldly pleasure we have enjoyed. Listen, what's more, it is because of a husband's kindness that women's desires related to Law, Profit and Love are fulfilled, for everything depends on a woman's husband.⁵⁵

She then concludes by announcing her intention to strive for liberation, which requires a male rebirth according to Digambara doctrine:

"Through meditation on virtue, self-control and right belief, we will leave the confused female sex, and after we have obtained manhood, we will attain liberation!" After hearing her words, another woman spoke up praise of initiation (*dīkṣā*), "What you said is true, and there is more on this matter! Listen, my friend!"⁵⁶

The other young woman, who remains unnamed but who is supposed to represent the collective voice of the ten other young women, continues to describe the wretched condition of widowhood:

A widowed woman never shines in society, just like an ignorant man or a lustful ascetic never does. Widows have shame applied to their eyes as kohl and they chew betel leaf. No adornment becomes her but white clothes. When her husband has died, a young woman should practice self-control or she should quickly burn the body along with the cause through *tapas*.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, a Jain *muni* called Damitāri enters the Jain temple where the eleven young women are staying. They immediately go up to the *muni* to pay him homage. After bowing down to his feet, the young women voice their desire to renounce the world:

The maidens said to the Lord among yogis, who shone through his yoga, "Take pity and grant us initiation (*pravrajyā*), Pure-minded one". They told the lord among munis about the Pāṇḍavas and what had happened to them, "Oh lord, when a husband has been burnt to death, initiation (*dīkṣā*) will be auspicious for us".⁵⁸

Damitāri, blessed with clairvoyance through his asceticism, bids them to wait just an instant, for the five Pāṇḍavas are about to appear! At that very moment, the five Pāṇḍavas enter the Jain temple and, after worshipping the jina images there, pay their respects to Damitāri. The eleven young women are ecstatic upon seeing Yudhiṣṭhira. As soon as king Caṇḍavāhana learns about the arrival of the Pāṇḍavas, he rushes to the Jain temple as well. There, he first worships the jina images and bows down to Damitāri before inviting the Pāṇḍavas back to his capital. It is not long until Caṇḍavāhana asks Yudhiṣṭhira to marry his daughters. The eldest Pāṇḍava agrees, and all the young women—one of whom even lamented the very idea of having to share a husband with another woman—receive their happily ever after:

Because of his merit, Yudhiṣṭhira married these modest women under the sound of auspicious music. Those maidens went up to the king [i.e., Yudhiṣṭhira] and shone next to him, as if they were the wishing creepers on the wishing tree granting every wish.⁵⁹

The thirteenth *parvan* of the Pāṇḍavapurāṇa wraps up with Yudhiṣṭhira's marriage. However, since the Pāṇḍavas are still trying to avoid drawing the attention of the Kauravas,

they continue their travels. What about Vasantasenā? Did Śubhacandra forget about her? Not at all. In the beginning of the sixteenth *parvan* of the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, when the Pāṇḍavas have come out of hiding after Arjuna's marriage to Draupadī and have been given back their share of the kingdom, Śubhacandra reveals the fate of Vasantasenā:

All the princesses whom Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma had married in each town were brought back [to Indraprastha]. Yudhiṣṭhira also brought back the excellent daughter of Vindhyasena from Kauśambī and married her.⁶⁰

Thus concludes the narrative thread of these episodes in Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*. While Śubhacandra's eventual resolution of all these episodes is similar enough to Jinasena's version in that all the young women end up marrying Yudhiṣṭhira, each episode deviates from Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* in some way or another.

In the first episode, Kamalā of the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* is explicitly described as a pious yet passionate Jain laywoman. Her piety is illustrated by her visit to the Jain temple during her outing with her friends and extensive worship at the temple. However, her immediate reaction upon meeting Yudhiṣṭhira decidedly is not one of equanimity, the state a spiritually advanced Jain layperson should aspire to. Instead, she is consumed by passionate desire for this man. When her parents learn about her pitiable condition and the reason behind it, i.e., romantic desire for a particular man, they immediately invite Yudhiṣṭhira, a newly arrived stranger whose true identity is still unknown to them, and quickly marry Kamalā off to him. Unlike in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, where the decision to marry is an unspoken but mutual understanding between Kusumakomalī and Yudhiṣṭhira, Śubhacandra introduces the explicit intervention and parental approval which make the match happen. Unlike in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, where their future marriage is an unresolved plot thread left hanging for over a hundred verses, Śubhacandra resolves this episode by having Kamalā immediately marry Yudhiṣṭhira and having the couple consummate their marriage. Whereas the point in Jinasena's version could be paraphrased as "good things come to those who wait", Śubhacandra's version implies that there is nothing objectionable in marrying as soon as possible, as long as the parents give their sanction.

Just like in the previous episode with Kamalā, the element of parental sanction is also present in Śubhacandra's next episode about Vasantasenā. Or, to be more precise, the lack thereof. Unlike Vasantasundarī in Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, whose decision to practice tapas as this "generic ascetic" as a demonstration of her *pativratā* is positively commented upon by Kuntī, Vasantasenā's explicit desire for initiation as a Jain nun (*dīkṣā*) is met with some disapproval. Her parents are grieved to learn about her desire to renounce and although they allow her to learn in the presence of a Jain nun, they still urge her not to take initiation to become a Jain nun just yet. Moreover, Kuntī unsuccessfully tries to dissuade Vasantasenā from taking initiation. Interestingly enough, as the only young woman to insist upon asceticism in the face of open discouragement, she is the last one to marry Yudhiṣṭhira out of all the young women. Her marriage with Yudhiṣṭhira is only described three *parvans* later, after hundreds upon hundreds of verses. This stands in stark contrast with Kamalā in the previous episode, to whom Śubhacandra immediately grants marriage. It is almost as if Vasantasenā's insistence on asceticism after her parents and Kuntī have both tried to dissuade her is "punished" by having to wait the longest out of all the young women to marry Yudhiṣṭhira.

When it comes to the third episode with the eleven young women, Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* neither mentions any desire to take initiation nor any intense despair on the part of the eleven young women. They are aggrieved, sure, but they are content to stick to the *aṇuvratas* of lay people. By contrast, Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* introduces their explicit desire to take *dīkṣā* as well as their intense anguish at their premature widowhood. Although the parents of the eleven young women do not express any disapproval⁶¹,

the *muni* Damitāri does not grant the young women initiation, but instead asks them to wait just a moment for the Pāṇḍavas. As a symbol representing male monastic authority, Damitāri implicitly refuses what is ultimately an earnest request to pursue the ultimate soteriological goal of Jainism: liberation from rebirth. Remember, Guṇaprabhā, the eldest of the young women, openly stated earlier that she—and by extension, the other young women as well—wishes for initiation so she can attain a male rebirth, an obligatory *saṃsāric* stop for women according to Digambara doctrine, to then directly pursue liberation. She does not express any desire for material gain or societal status in the next life as a man; she does not even express the desire to perform *pativratā* by attaining a rebirth in which she marries Yudhiṣṭhira—or his future birth, for that matter. Nevertheless, Damitāri deems marriage to be the preferable option for the young women.

5. Conclusions

This comparative reading of two sets of consecutive episodes from two Digambara Jain *Mahābhārata* adaptations reveals some noticeable differences. Even though these two sets of episodes are ultimately resolved in a similar way, i.e., the young women all marry Yudhiṣṭhira, they carry different thematic messages. Jināsena’s *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* thematises how patience and faithfulness to one’s intended husband—even before the actual marriage has taken place—unexpectedly reward the young women with their desired groom. In these episodes, Jināsena is not really contrasting Jain wifedom with *mokṣamārga* so much as he is stressing *pativratā*-ideology. If a young Jain woman adheres strongly enough to *pativratā*, she can overcome her (perceived) loss of *saubhāgya*. Vasantasundarī never really pursues *tapas* in function of *mokṣamārga*-ideology; she pursues *tapas* in the hope of attaining her promised husband in the next birth. When she suspects Yudhiṣṭhira is still alive, the object of her *tapas* shifts to maintaining her *saubhāgya* in the form of Yudhiṣṭhira’s well-being. The eleven young women remain lay people and refuse to marry an actual suitor, even when their parents want them to marry him. *Pativratā* is the point.

Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, by contrast, thematises the intense passion a young woman can feel, the despair young women feel at becoming widows, and the ambivalence authoritative people feel at their choice to seek initiation as Jain nuns. Here, due to the explicit introduction of *dīkṣā*, nunhood, and the prospect of liberation, Śubhacandra actually contrasts Jain wifedom and *mokṣamārga*, highlighting the tension between these mutually exclusive paths. Although the tension is there—at least in the two latter episodes—Śubhacandra chooses to resolve the tension by putting “a premium” on wifedom.

Unlike the more level-headed and patient Kusumakomalā who can “arrange” her future marriage all by herself with mere glances, Śubhacandra’s Kamalā is so overwhelmed by emotions that her parents have to broker the marriage on her behalf. Even though Śubhacandra’s Vasantasenā is earnest and capable in her efforts to practice asceticism in her quest for *dīkṣā*, the sight of a particularly excellent and attractive man, who just so happens to be Yudhiṣṭhira in disguise, can still distract her. The eleven young women manage to scrupulously perform a *proṣadha*-fast and a *sāmāyika*-ritual, yet their intention to strive for *mokṣa* is juxtaposed with extensive laments about the sorry lot that is womanhood and the wretched position of widows in society. In the latter two episodes, one could argue Vasantasenā’s and the eleven women’s desire for *dīkṣā* is to be interpreted as an overhasty dereliction of their *pativratā*-duties. Oh ye of little *śraddhā*!

What to make of Śubhacandra’s adaptational choices here? When one reads these episodes in isolation, it would not be unreasonable, indeed even easy to think that Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* portrays a woman’s desire to practice asceticism as somewhat mutually exclusive with her *pativratā*-duties; it would be easy to assume Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* portrays widowhood as this nigh-insurmountable obstacle for women.

However, when one looks at Śubhacandra's portrayal of Kuntī and Mādri, co-wives of king Pāṇḍu and arguably the two most famous widows from the *Mahābhārata*⁶², and his portrayal of Rājīmatī, the bride abandoned by the Jina Nemi, in his *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, a more complicated picture emerges. I will first discuss Madri⁶³ and Kuntī, whose reactions and subsequent life choices upon becoming widowed do not neatly dovetail with female asceticism being at odds with *pativratā*, or with widowhood being a social death, respectively.

In the ninth parvan of Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, Pāṇḍu sets out together with Madri on a pleasure trip. As Indian kings in Sanskrit narrative are wont to do, Pāṇḍu, contrary to the Jain vow of *ahiṃsā*, goes out hunting and kills a deer with his bow and arrow. That very instant, a divine voice chastises Pāṇḍu for killing an innocent deer, reminding of his kingly duty to protect all living creatures. This event brings about a profound feeling of *vairāgya* in Pāṇḍu. After listening to the lecture of muni called Suvrata, Pāṇḍu announces his desire to renounce from the world, leaving the kingdom in the hands of the next generation. Eventually, after successfully performing *sallekhanā*, Pāṇḍu becomes a god in *Saudharma* heaven (PP 9.27–155).

Interestingly, Madri's reaction to Pāṇḍu's decision to fast to death is to follow him in his endeavour. The narrative is not entirely clear whether she is pursuing *sallekhanā* alongside Pāṇḍu or whether she is practicing *sallekhanā* after Pāṇḍu's death. Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* first describes Pāṇḍu's retreat into forest, his practicing of *sallekhanā*, and attainment of godhood upon his death in quite some detail before the narrative even turns to Madri's reaction. What is more relevant is that Madri's decision to pursue *sallekhanā* is explicitly framed as inspired by love for her husband as well as by genuine *vairāgya*:

Out of love for her husband and out of indifference to worldly pleasures, good-minded Madri set her mind on *saṃnyāsa* along with her husband. She then entrusted both of her sons and the burdens of the house to Kuntī. Even though people tried to stop her, she set out, her heart set on *saṃnyāsa*. She sat down on the banks of the Gaṅgā, having given up food and drink. There, she practiced worship, *tapas*, Right Belief, Right Knowledge, and Right Behaviour. [...] Her body, with all its senses stilled, withered away. Her breaths went together with her pure-souled husband. Through her virtuous actions, she attained the first heaven. For when piety is about to yield result, is it any surprise that one finds heaven?⁶⁴

Granted, Madri's pursuit of *sallekhanā* is clearly not an instance of taking *dīkṣā* and becoming a Jain nun; the term *saṃnyāsa*, which generally denotes the fourth stage of closely associated with the fourth stage of the Hindu *āśrama* system, suggests as much. Nevertheless, Madri's practice is very much Jain in its philosophical underpinnings, for she practices asceticism based on the Jain *ratnatraya* of Right Belief, Right Knowledge, and Right Behaviour.

Kuntī, on the other hand, is the widow who remains behind with the children. Her initial reaction is indeed one of intense grief and her long laments echo those of the eleven young women in some respects:

Upon learning of her husband's death, Kuntī was overwhelmed by grief and went there [to the bank of the Gaṅgā], weeping and giving voice to her sorrow. She began to pull out her own hairs and tore off the golden necklace beset with jewels and pearls from her bosom. Pained by grief and completely at loss what to do, she broke off one bracelet from her wrist with her hand, and began to lament, " [...] Without you [Pāṇḍu], the palace is empty all around and does not shine. I am at loss what to do. Without you, I am stunned by grief. [...] Without you, husband, people will not value me, withered as I am, just like they do not value a

pond that is dried up. Without a husband, a good woman finds no joy anywhere, for she is just like a necklace without its major gem, oh lord!”⁶⁵

However, despite her intense sorrow at becoming a widow, Kuntī does not consider taking up *dīkṣā* until the very end of the Pāṇḍavapurāṇa. She takes care of her sons and accompanies them during their first exile. Furthermore, the narrative does not portray her as lesser for remaining in the world as a widow. It is only after the battle of Kurukṣetra, after the Pāṇḍavas have entrusted the kingdom to Parīkṣit and have *dīkṣā* themselves, that Kuntī takes *dīkṣā*:

After pulling out her hair, Kuntī, along with Subhadrā and Draupadī, took up the ultimate self-control in the presence of āryikā Rājimatī⁶⁶

This brings us to Śubhacandra’s portrayal of Rājimatī, whom the Digambara author seems to be completely uninterested in as a character, only mentioning her in a handful of verses.⁶⁷ Śubhacandra does not describe Rājimatī’s emotional response at being abandoned by Nemi at all. Even though she ends up taking *dīkṣā* and becoming an *āryikā*, this is narratively presented as a fait accompli; the reader, or listener for that matter, is not privy to her emotional journey from abandoned bride to a Jain nun. Kelting describes how some of the portrayals of Rājimatī and her own feeling towards being left at the proverbial altar vary from being a “vomited bride” in the Śvetāmbara *Uttarādhayayana Sūtra* to being the devoted lover found in medieval vernacular poetry of the *bārahmāsa* and *phāgu* genres (2009, pp. 113–19). Neither of these portrayals of Rājimatī quite seem to fit this 16th-century Digambara author’s portrayal of Rājimatī in his Sanskrit composition. In fact, in nearly half of the verses that mention Rājimatī, Śubhacandra only mentions Rājimatī in order to describe Nemi in quasi-stavans.⁶⁸

When one considers the portrayal of the more well-known female characters like Kuntī, Madrī, and Rājimatī and their responses to widowhood or their decision to take *dīkṣā* in Śubhacandra’s Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, the Digambara author seems to suggest that practicing asceticism or striving for *dīkṣā* with *mokṣamārga*-intent should not be the go-to response for young women who find themselves widowed. In Śubhacandra’s Pāṇḍavapurāṇa, it seems women should be at least partly motivated by *pativratā* when they want to practice asceticism or strive for *dīkṣā*: Madrī and Rājimatī follow their husband—would-be husband in the latter’s case—into *sallekhanā* and *dīkṣā*, respectively. It would be interesting to see if other Digambara narratives thematise and differentiate between female desire to renounce with *mokṣamārga*-intent and female desire to renounce with *pativratā*-intent, regardless of whether these works were composed in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhraṃśa, Braj, Kannaḍa, etc.

Funding: This research was funded by FWO, grant number 1145922N.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analysed in this study.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Abbreviations

HVP	<i>Harivaṃśapurāṇa</i> of Jinasena
KS	<i>Kalpasūtra</i> of Bhadrabāhu
MBh	<i>Mahābhārata</i> of Vyāsa
PP	<i>Pāṇḍavapurāṇa</i> of Śubhacandra

Notes

- ¹ *Teṇaṃ kālēṇa teṇaṃ samaeṇaṃ samaṇassa bhagavao mahāvīrassa iṇḍabhūi-pāmokkhāo coddasa samaṇsāhassīoukkosiyā samaṇasampayā hotthā | Samaṇassa ṇaṃ bhagavao mahāvīrassa gajjacaṇḍanaṇāpāmokkhāo chattīsāṃ ajjijyāsāhassīo ukkosiyā gajjijyāsampayā hotthā | KS 134–35 |. (Bhadrabāhu 1999).*

- 2 Demographic censuses taken between 1978 and 1999 show Śvetāmbara female ascetics outnumbering their male counterparts almost four to one. In the *Mūrtipūjaka* sect, the largest Śvetāmbara sect known for its image worship, female ascetics make up 78.24% of the monastic population. In the *Sthānakvāsī* and *Terāpanth* sects, known for their aniconic tendencies, female ascetics make up 83.55% and 78.92% of the monastic population in their respective sects. However, in the other major branch of Jainism, the Digambara tradition which prescribes nudity for the male ascetics, we see the inverse: here the Digambara male monastics outnumber the female monastics roughly two to one. See Flügel (2006, pp. 360–64).
- 3 Mirroring the Buddhist practice of female renunciators being obliged to pay homage to male renunciators, female renunciators, according to Śvetāmbara monastic regulations, have to do the very same thing to demonstrate their subordinate status compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, whereas male renunciators were supervised by two male authority figures, female Jain renunciators were supervised by two male authorities and one female superior. (See Jyväsjärvi Stuart 2020, para. 24–27).
- 4 Early Śvetāmbara texts makes occasional reference to the nudity practiced by Mahāvīra and his disciples, but some excerpts do make mention of male monastics wearing clothes at certain occasions. To resolve any possible contradictions, Śvetāmbaras conceptualised a distinction between the *jinakalpa*, the extreme asceticism including nudity practiced by Mahāvīra and his contemporaries, and the *sthavirakalpa*, the less stringent asceticism that is more suitable in this corrupt era. (See Dundas 1992, pp. 41–43).
- 5 Compared to the Śvetāmbara canonical texts, Digambara Āgamas provide little in the way of historical information about how female renunciators were to live and how they fit into Digambara monastic structures, apart from their subordinate position to male monastics. The inscriptional evidence is more forthcoming with historical information about Digambara female renunciators: inscriptions in Karnataka between the 8th and 15th century, regularly mention female renunciators, referring to them as *āryikās* or *kantis*. (See Jyväsjärvi Stuart 2020, para. 32–36).
- 6 Not to be confused with the 11th-century Jain philosopher Śubhacandra to whom the *Jñānārṇava*, a Jain treatise on meditational practice, is attributed. For the philosophically inclined reader who really wants to know more about this particular Śubhacandra, (see Hooper 2020, pp. 1–427).
- 7 *Pativrata* as an ideology of normative wifely conduct utterly pervades the Sanskrit epics of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. For an insightful analysis of all the aspects and methods that constitute *pativrata* as a whole in the *Mahābhārata*, see Arti Dhand's *Woman as Fire, Woman as Sage: Sexual Ideology in the Mahābhārata* (Dhand 2008, pp. 160–80).
- 8 David Brick discusses these five terms (*anugamana*, *sahagamana*, *anumaraṇa*, *sahamaraṇa*, *anvārohaṇa*) in his article “The Dharmaśāstric Debate on Widow-Burning”. Through a diachronic analysis of the exegetical arguments pro and contra widow burning in commentaries on Dharmaśāstras, Brick shows that the later Brahminical commentaries contain fewer and fewer objections against the practice (Brick 2010, pp. 203–23). Pages upon pages have been written about widow burning and the British discourse surrounding *suttee*, both as an admirable practice well as an abhorrent one that was invoked to justify British colonial interventions. In this article, I am mostly concerned with how Jain wifely ideologies manifest in narratives composed before British colonial rule, so I will limit my discussion to what is actually relevant for this article. If the reader wants to read more about widow burning in the British colonial context and contemporary debates informed by a postcolonial approach, I direct the reader to Andreas Major's *Sati: A Historical Anthology* (Major 2007) and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's *Real & Imagined Women* (Rajan 1993).
- 9 Kelting's article *Thinking Collectively About Jain Satīs: The uses of Jain satī name lists* discusses four texts, the most important of which arguably being the *Brāhmī Candanbālikā* and *Soḷ Satī nī Stuti*, which give lists of the *satīs* and which have remained popular in Tapā Gacch circles up to this day. However, Kelting notes how these texts are hard to precisely date: “At best one can say that all these texts date from at latest the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century, but the BC [Brāhmī Candanbālikā] and the BS [Bharahesara nī Sajjāy] may be even older” (Kelting 2006, p. 186). Hence, on the basis of the available evidence, the codification of the list of sixteen *satīs* likely occurred sometime around the fourteenth century of the common era.
- 10 John Cort discusses the genre in all its particularities and how German Indologists such as Alsdorf and Schubring, inspired by the ideas of 19th-century German historians, came to use the term to refer to these Jain texts. Although Cort stresses that the German idea of *Universalgeschichte* does not completely map onto this Jain genre, he grants that the use of Universal History captures the “totalizing intent behind [these] Jain histor[ies] extremely well” (Cort 1995, pp. 474–80).
- 11 Among these sixty-three illustrious beings, referred to as *śālākāpuruṣas* or *mahāpuruṣas*, literally ‘great men’ in Sanskrit, we find, as mentioned above, the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* as well as twelve *cakravartins*, and nine triads of a *Baladeva*-type, a *Vāsudeva*-type, and a *Prativāsudeva*-type. The *Baladeva* and *Vāsudeva* are born as two (half-)brothers; the gentler *Baladeva* is destined to attain heaven due to his exemplary virtue as a Jain paragon, whereas his younger brother, the *Vāsudeva*, is destined to attain a rebirth in hell for slaying their nemesis, the *Prativāsudeva*. As the very names *Baladeva*, *Vāsudeva*, and *Prativāsudeva* suggest, these inclusion of these characters and their narrative function within Jain texts seem to have historically developed out of Jain engagement with the popular characters of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, Baladeva, Jarāsaṃdha. By slotting characters into these recurring triads, Jains were able to incorporate the characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* into the biographies of the *tīrthaṅkaras*. (See Geen 2011, pp. 69–70).

- 12 For a short yet comprehensive summary of Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, (see [De Clercq 2008](#), pp. 400–5).
- 13 A rather remarkable instance of Jinasena's insistent attempts to "Jainify" characters from the *Mahābhārata* is found in 46th sarga of the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*. There, the infamous Kīcaka is redeemed rather than killed after his attempt to molest Draupadī. After receiving a thorough beating from Bhīma, Kīcaka is spared by the Pāṇḍava, who is more merciful in this adaptation, and renounces the world to become a Jain monk. This rather unusual take on the episode of Kīcaka is later taken up again by the 15th-century Gwalior-based Jain poet Rāidhū in his *Apabhramśa* adaptation of Jinasena's work. Just like the episodes of Śubhacandra that derive from Jinasena discussed in this article, Rāidhū's indebtedness is testament to Jinasena's long-lasting influence. For an in-depth discussion of Rāidhū's adaptation of the Kīcaka-episode, (see [De Clercq and Winant 2021](#), pp. 213–35). The episode of the House of Lacquer described above is found in the Ādiparvan (MBh.I.130–137).
- 14 *Yudhiṣṭhirakumārendudārśanena sudarśanā | kanyākumudvatī dhanyā vikāsam agamat param | | acintayad asau tasya bhāvinī priyabhāminī | iha janmani me bhūyād ayam eva paro varaḥ | | jñātāvabhiprāyam asyāḥ saṃjātapremabandhanaḥ | āśābandham pradarśyāgāt saṃjñayaiva kara-grahe | | pratīkṣamāṇayā tasya tayā bhūyāḥ samāgamam | nīyate sma vinodaiḥ svaiḥ kālāḥ kanyājanocitaiḥ | | HVP 45.63–66 | | All subsequent translations from Sanskrit into English, unless specified otherwise, are my own. (Jinasena 2004).*
- 15 *Udārarūpalāvaṇyā dukūlapaṭasāṭikā | jaṭilā vaṭasāḥkeva snigdhaḥchāyā vyarājata | | ākarṇāyatanetrābhyāṃ svadhareṇa mukhendunā | jaghanastanabhāreṇa mano haratī tāpasī | | HVP 45.73–74 | |*
- 16 *Yudhiṣṭhirāya sā dattā puraiva gurubhir varā | dagdhavārtām upaśrutya ninditasvapurākṛtā | | janmāntare'pi kārīkṣantī tasya kāntasya dārśanam | tapaś caritum ārabdhā tatra sā tāpasāsrame | | HVP 45.71–72 | |*
- 17 *Samātrbhrātrkasyāsyā madapūṇyaprabhāvataḥ | śrutvā vārtā janebhyo yā na smartum api śakyate | | dāhaduḥkhamṛtam kāntaṃ yuktam tenaiva vartmanā | anumartum tu tāpasye śaktihīnatayā sthitā | | HVP 45.81–82 | |*
- 18 *niśamyeti vacaḥ saumya sā jagau bhāvinīm snuṣām | kṛtam bhadram tvayā bhadre kurvantyā prāṇarakṣaṇam | | [...] | kalyāṇahetave prāṇāḥ kalyāṇī mama vākyataḥ | tapasyantyāpi dhāryantām jīvanti bhadram āpsyasi | | HVP 45.83, 85 | |*
- 19 In his book *Pancha-Kanya: the Five Virgins of the Indian epics. A quest in Search of Meaning*, Pradip Bhattacharya discusses the *pañcakanyā* in great detail. Note however that this list of five women is not always fixed: Ahalyā, Draupadī, Tārā and Mandodarī usually are always mentioned, whereas the fifth can either be Sītā or Kuntī. Bhattacharya also explains the curious choice for the word *kanyā*, given that Ahalyā, Draupadī and Kuntī have sexual relations that are, to put it euphemistically, unconventional in the eyes of normative Brahminical texts ([Bhattacharya 2000](#), pp. 13–45).
- 20 For the episode, see Ādiparvan (I.116). ([Vyāsa 1974](#)) ([Śubhacandra and Doṣī 1954](#)).
- 21 *Pāṇḍau svarge gate devyāṃ madryāṃ ca jinaḍharmataḥ | | Pāṇḍavā dhārtarāṣṭrāś ca rājye'bhūvan virodhinaḥ | | HVP 45.39 | | The practice of *sallekhanā*, fasting to death, has been described as a particularly virtuous way to die in Digambara Jain texts. The *Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra* of Ācārya Samantabhadra, a *śrāvākācāra* text which prescribes the ideal conduct for lay Jains, sanctions this practice and even uses the word *dharma*, mentioned in the Sanskrit verse above, to refer to *sallekhanā*. See the following verses from the *Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra*: *kharapānahāpanām api kṛtvā kṛtvopavāsam api śakyā | | [...] pūjārthajñaiśvaryair balapari-janakāmabhogbhūyiṣṭhaiḥ | atīṣayitabhuvanamadbhutamabhyudam phalati sadharmāḥ | | RŚ 6.127, 135 | |* Thereafter, abandoning even hot water he should, to the extent of his strength, observe fasting and give up his body while contemplating in every possible way on the sacred mantra that makes obeisance to the five Supreme Beings [...] Merit earned through the adoption of pious **dharma** (read *sallekhanā*) accords fruits including strength, attendants, family and enjoyment, also status wealth, supreme dominion, and boons like heavenly abode that are amazing to the world and in themselves. Translation from Sanskrit into English by Vijay K. Jain ([Samantabhadra 2016](#), pp. 207, 220).*
- 22 *Tadevānvavadat Pāṇḍoḥ prathamā tanayo yataḥ | Dharmāṃ cākathayad yuktam aṇuśīlaguṇavratāiḥ | | HVP 45.86 | |* Already in the *Upāsakadaśāḥ*, a canonical Śvetāmbara text prescribing ideal lay conduct, the *aṇuvratas* are listed. The names of the *aṇuvratas* are identical to those of the *mahāvratas* (*ahiṃsā, satya, asteya, brahmacārya, aparigraha*) and, perhaps unsurprisingly, the main difference between the *aṇuvratas* and *mahāvratas* is one of degree: the mendicants are supposed to observe *ahiṃsā, satya, asteya, brahmacārya, aparigraha* to the strictest degree, compared the more lenient *aṇuvrata*-counterparts lay people are supposed to observe. Digambara *śrāvākācāras* also include the exact same set of *aṇuvratas*. I myself I am somewhat puzzled by the reference to the *śīla* in the verse above, since Jain *śrāvākācāras* tend to discuss *śikṣāvratas* rather than *śīlavratas* as one of this expansion upon *aṇuvratas* beside the *guṇāvratas*. At any rate, for the reader interested in the intricacies of the *guṇāvratas* and the *śikṣāvratas*, which often vary somewhat depending on the precise sectarian affiliation, I invite the reader to peruse the extended discussion of the *vratas* as found in *śrāvākācāras* in *Jain Yoga: a survey of the medieval Śrāvākācāras* by Richard Williams ([Williams 1963](#), pp. 55–166).
- 23 *rājalakṣaṇayuktāḥ sa kiṃ syād eṣa Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ | samātrko'nuśāstīha māmātīva kṛpānvaitaḥ | | sarvathā mama puṇyena ganyena tapasāpi ca | satyasandhaḥ priyo jīvyād anāhatir ihodyamī | | yiyāsavaḥ tu yuktānām punardarśanaṃ astv iti | sammānitāḥ priyālāpair ayur asthāc ca sāsayaḥ | | HVP 45.88–90 | |*
- 24 Kelting discusses the Navpad Olī fast and the Rohiṇī fast in particular, and how Jain women in Pune practising these fasts as "strategies for bridging the gap between the expectation that women will perform rituals for the benefits of their husbands and the understanding within Jain doctrine of one's ultimate karmic responsibility and the inability to transfer merit" ([Kelting 2009](#), pp. 47–54).

- 26 Yudhiṣṭhirāya tāḥ sarvāḥ pūrvam eva niveditāḥ | labdhvā tasyānyathā vārttām aṇuvratadharāḥ sthitāḥ | | HVP 45.100 | | .
- 27 rājā sabhārya ibhyaś ca mahāpuruṣavedināu | Kuntīputrāya tāḥ kanyā jyāyase dātum icchataḥ | | Tās tu niścintacittatvād anyalokagato'pi
- 28 hi | Sa eṣa patir asmākaṁ iti necchanti taṁ dvijaṁ | | HVP 45.103–104 | | .
- Digambara authors took serious issue with the polyandrous marriage of Draupadī with the five Pāṇḍavas as found throughout “Hindu” versions and Śvetāmbara adaptations of the Mahābhārata. As a result, Digambara *Mahābhārata* adaptations uniformly depict Draupadī as solely married to Arjuna and even criticised their Śvetāmbara counterparts for adhering for the dominant depiction of Draupadī as polyandrous. Jonathan Geen discusses several depictions of Draupadī’s marriage throughout Jain adaptations in his Ph.D. dissertation (Geen 2001, pp. 1–581).
- 29 Ānāyānāyavartto'sau jyeṣṭhaṁ kanyāḥ purātanaḥ | vivāhya sukhitāś cakre Bhimaseno nijocitāḥ | | HVP. 45.149 | | .
- 30 It seems to me that for his adaptation of these particular episodes, Śubhacandra probably based himself on an earlier work by the 15th-century Digambara Jain author Brahma Jinadāsa rather than directly drawing on Jinasena’s *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*. However, I have opted to limit myself to a comparison between Jinasena Punnaṭa and Śubhacandra because, as is the case for many of Brahma Jinadāsa’s surviving works, Brahma Jinadāsa’s *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* exists only in manuscript form and has yet to appear in a printed critical edition. At any rate, Brahma Jinadāsa’s *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* seems to be a direct adaptation of Jinasena’s *Harivaṁśapurāṇa*, probably being a distillation of Jinasena’s work into a Nemi-biography, whereas Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (1552 CE), true to its title, focuses on the Pāṇḍava-narrative. Gregory Clines discusses some of Brahma Jinadāsa’s Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* adaptations in ‘Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* Narratives: Moral Vision and Literary Innovation’ (Clines 2022), and lists several manuscripts of Brahma Jinadāsa’s works in his primary sources (Clines 2022, p. 155).
- 31 While Digambara Jainism is popularly known for its naked male ascetics, these naked munis were by no means the only kind of Digambara male monastics. From the thirteenth century, or maybe even earlier, a particular type of Digambara male monastics came into being, the *bhaṭṭārakas*. These *bhaṭṭārakas* functioned as community-facing monastics who wore clothes and who were not obliged to take up the peripatetic lifestyle of the nude *munis*. Besides responsibilities such as the installation of icons and organising pilgrimages, they oversaw large parts of literary production within Digambara communities. For an exhaustive exploration of the role *bhaṭṭārakas* played in Digambara Jain communities in the Western and Central regions of North India from the inception of the Delhi Sultanate up to the early twentieth century, I refer the reader to Tillo Detige’s PhD dissertation (Detige 2024, pp. 1–528). Regarding Śubhacandra’s literary output, Kasliwal lists thirty-one works attributed to Śubhacandra. (Kasliwal 1967, pp. 24–26, 97).
- 32 Kasliwal lists thirty-one works attributed to Śubhacandra. (Kasliwal 1967, pp. 24–26, 97).
- 33 For a more extensive discussion of the use of the polemical frame narrative in Śubhacandra’s *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa*, (see Jaini 1984, pp. 108–15).
- 34 Śubhacandra seems to introduce the element of the Jain temple as a site of piety in his adaptation of the three episodes. The details of their worship as well the lectures given by munis in temple are described in detail, whereas the Jain temple is notably absent in Jinasena’s original three episodes.
- 35 tasyā jīgamiṣā tatra vanditum śrījineśvarān | abhūt tāvāt samāpas te Pāṇḍavas jīnamandiram | | drṣṭvā Cāndraprabhaṁ caityaṁ snātvā te
- 36 prāsukair jalaiḥ | nissahīti padaṁ prāptāḥ paṭhanto vivīśur gr̥ham | | PP 13.12–13 | | .
- skhalantī sā nītabasya bhāreṇa kaṭimekheḷam | dadhānā mandasagatyā jayanti dantiṇigatim | | jinendrabhavanasyāntaḥ sā praviśya sukhon-
- 37 natā | vavande vidhinā devān pratikṛtyā samāsthitān | | [. .] mandāramallikākamraketakikundarapaṇkajaiḥ | campakaraś carcate smāsau
- 38 jinendrapadapaṇkajam | | dhūpair dhūpitadikcakraiḥ phalaiḥ pravipulair jīnam | saṁpūjya nirgatādrākṣī Pāṇḍavān pāvanānparān | | PP 13.20–21, 23–24 | | .
- 39 sakṣībhir vāhyamānā sā samāpa sadanaṁ haṭhāt | sālāsā tatra no bhuṅkte na vakti hasati kṣaṇāt | | īkṣate kṣaṇataḥ khinnā roditi
- 40 svapiti svayam | uttiṣṭhate svayaṁ sthitvā hasitvā patati svayam | | īdrṣām sudṛṣīm mārāvasthāsamasthāyiniṁ sutām | mātā saṁvīkṣya
- 41 prapracchājñāsīt tacceṣṭitaṁ tadā | | PP 13.29–31 | | .
- 42 tato'sau dharmaputraṁ taṁ saṁprārthayārthasamanvitām | sutām tasmai dadau prītyā kamalām vidhināmalām | | tataḥ so'pi tayā sākāṁ bheje
- 43 bhogān subhāsurān | dināni katicit tatra sthitāḥ Kuntīyā svabāndhavaiḥ | | PP 13.34–35 | | .
- 44 ekadā dharmaputraṁ taṁ varṇo'prākṣīc chr̥ṇu prabho | kas tvam kaiśa narā ete kuto'tra samāgatāḥ | | samākarnya nr̥po'vādīd varṇākarnaya
- 45 kautukam | vayaṁ Pāṇḍusutā dagdhāḥ kauravair nirgatā gr̥hāt | | PP 13.36–37 | | .
- 46 dharmadhyānadharā dhīrā dhurīṇā dharmakarmasu | tapas tapati satsādhvī kanyeyaṁ kena hetunā | | hetuṁ vinā na vairāgyaṁ jāyate
- 47 viśame pare | yauvane vayasī sphāre kāmēna kalitāṅgake | | raktāmbaradharā kena hetunā vanavāsiniḥ | dikṣāṁ vinā bhavatpārśve tiṣṭhati
- 48 sthīramānasā | | PP 13.65–67 | | .
- 49 akṣūṇenekṣaṇenāsau vīkṣamāṇā Yudhiṣṭhiram | tasthau tenāpi saṁvīkṣya paśyatā tanmukhāmbujam | | kaṭākṣakṣepataḥ sāpi datte sma
- 50 nijamānasam | bhūpāyēkṣaṇataḥ so'pi dadau tasyai svamānasam | | PP 13.69–70 | | .
- 51 Anayeti ciraṁ citte tantitaṁ caturecchayā | Yudhiṣṭhiram vinā nāthaṁ na kariṣye param naram | | ayaṁ dagdhas tatas tūrṇam kariṣye
- 52 paramaṁ tapaḥ | yato nāpnomi karmaitan nindyaṁ sarvair bhavē bhavē | | PP 13.79–80 | | .
- 53 dikṣodyatāṁ samāvīkṣya pitṛādyā duḥkhapūritāḥ | enāṁ saṁvegasaṁpannāṁ bodhayām āsur unnatām | | [. .] samīhase ca ceddikṣāṁ
- kiyatkālam sthīrā bhava | kṣāntikābhyarṇatas tūrṇam suśrutīm śṛṇu sarvadā | | vṛṣatas tava nirvighnaḥ kadācit sa bhaviṣyati | | īdrṣaḥ

khalu suśreyān svalpāyur na prajāyate | sati jīvati tasmiṃś ca tenopayamamaṅgalam | prāpya saukhyaṃ samāsādyā sthīrā bhava suvāsini | athānyathā pravrajyāṃ tām grhṇīyāḥ prārthiteti ca [...] | PP 13.81, 84–87ab | .

44 The Digambara authors Pūjyapada (5–6th century) and Āśādhara (12th–13th century) define *saṃvega* as “the ever-present fear of the cycle of transmigration” and “the fear of the unstable saṃsāra which brings sickness and sorrow and sudden calamity” respectively. The famous Hemacandra, a well-known Śvetāmbara author, describes *saṃvega* as a desire for *mokṣa* (Williams 1963, p. 42). At any rate, whatever personal definition of *saṃvega* Śubhacandra might have had in mind, the term clearly is at the very least *mokṣamārga*-adjacent.

45 [...] | *sthīrā sthitā mamābhyarṇe kurvantī tanuśoṣaṇam | eṣā saṃyamam icchantī rasatyāgavidhāyini | kāyotsargakarā tanvī cakāra durdharaṃ tapaḥ | | lasaccālasalīlādhyā sucārucaritā cīram | śuddhasiddhāntasaṃsiddhyai śuśrāvaiśā śubhaṃ śrutam | | PP 13.87cd–89 | .*

46 *śuddhaṃ dhāraya śīlaṃ tvaṃ yāvay jīvam ca jīvanam | pravrajyāśāṃ parityajya sthīrā bhava grhivrate | | kadācit tava puṇyena te bhaviṣyanti jīvaṇaḥ | tādrśāṃ maraṇam kartuṃ na kṣamante surā api | | PP 13.96–97 | .*

47 *iti śrutvā tadā kanyā gatacchāyā viṣaṇṇadhiḥ | ārtadhyānena saṃtaptā vindhyasenasutābhavat | | manomattagajendraṃ sā niruddhya ca duruttaram | tapasyantī tapasthitau nindantī karma prakṛtam | | PP 13.98–99 | .*

48 When Kuntī first asks the Jain nun about Vasantasena, she describes to the young woman as “observing dharmadhyāna” (*dharmadhyānadharā* PP 13.65).

49 For an in-depth discussion of the different types of Jain *Dhyāna*-practices with references to Jain scriptural as well as philosophical texts, (see Jain 2023, pp. 15–20).

50 *sāpi taddahanaṃ śrutvā khinnā tābhiḥ samaṃ sthitā | dharmadhyānaratāḥ sarvā babhūvur vratatatparāḥ | | [...] sarvaparvasu tāḥ prītā upavāsaṃ suduṣkaram | kurvantyo’sthuḥ sthīrā bhāvaiḥ svabhāvamadhurā girā | | PP 13.113, 116 | .*

51 *Ekadā tās caturdaśyāṃ proṣadhaṃ dvyasṭayāmakam | | grhītvā śrījināgāre vanasthe vidadhuḥ sthitim | | [...] Jinacakrānarendrāṇaṃ tāḥ kathāḥ kathanodyatāḥ | nīśāṃ nītvā prage sarvāś cakruḥ sāmāyikīm kriyām | | PP 13.116, 118 | .*

52 For an in-depth exploration of the attestations of these three different Sanskritisations throughout Śvetāmbara and Digambara *śrāvākācāras*, (see Hotta 2017, pp. 1–17). Hotta suggests out that Williams, author of *Jaina Yoga: a survey of the medieval śrāvākācāras* (Williams 1963), is perhaps overstating concluding that the variant *poṣadha* enjoys the most currency in *śrāvākācāras*, whereas in actuality, it is *proṣadha* which is most often attested throughout *śrāvākācāras*. However, Hotta does point out that this might be due to the larger number of extant Digambara *śrāvākācāras* compared to Śvetāmbara *śrāvākācāras* (Hotta 2017, p. 12).

53 *punaḥ strīvaṃ bhaven nindyaṃ duṣkarmayogataḥ | jātamaṭrā tu pitṛṇāṃ putrī duḥkhāya kalpate | | vardhamānā pitur datte varānveśaṇasaṃ bhavām | cintāṃ vivāhitā sāpi patijāṃ śarmahārīṇīm | | kadācīd ced varo duṣṭo vyasanī vā kriyātigaḥ | mṛṣāvāg vinayātīto dūrodararataḥ sadā | | sarogo vibhāvātītaḥ paranāriṣu lampaṭaḥ | anyāyī krodhasambaddho dharmatīto’tidurmatīḥ | | idṛśāś ced durācāraḥ strīyā duḥkarmapākataḥ | tasyā duḥkhāya jāyeta tadduḥkhaṃ ko’tra vetty aho | | PP 13.123–127 | .*

54 The incongruity between these eleven young women all being betrothed to Yudhiṣṭhira and Guṇaprabhā’s complaints about polygyny being this hurtful practice women have to endure is not lost on me.

55 *mmṛte bhartari vaidhavyaṃ tādrśaṃ tadapi strīyāḥ | yuvatījanmajaṃ duḥkhaṃ gaditum kaḥ kṣamo bhavet | | vivāhavidhisantyaktā vayaṃ vaidhavyam āgataḥ | dhik strīvaṃ bhavabhogair naḥ kṛtam anyac ca śrūyatām | | bhartuḥ prasādataḥ strīṇāṃ sapalāḥ syur manorathāḥ | | dharmārthakāmajāḥ sarvaṃ bhartradhīnaṃ yataḥ strīyāḥ | | PP 13.131–133 | .*

56 *śilasamyamasamyaktvadhyānaiḥ strīliṅgam ākulam | hatvā naratvamāsādyā muktiṃ yāsyāma ity alam | | tadvācam aparā śrutvovāca dīkṣāpraśamsinī | taduktāṃ satyam evātra kiṃ cānyac chrūyatāṃ sakhi | | PP 13.135–136 | .*

57 *vidhavā strī sabhāmadhye śobhate na kadācana | avivekī yathā martyo vātha lobhākulo yatīḥ | | vidhavānāṃ trapākāryaṇjanaṃ tāmbūlabhākṣaṇam | śvetavāso vinā nānyadbhūśāvac chobhate śubham | | mṛte gate’thavā patyau yuvatī saṃyamam śrayet | | tapasā nirdaheḍ dehaṃ karaṇāni ca satvaram | | PP 13.138–140 | .*

58 *kanyā akathayan svāmin yogindraṃ yogabhāskaram | kṛpāṃ kṛtvā pravrajyāṃ no yaccha svacchamanomala | | avadaṃs tā yathā vṛttaṃ munīndraṃ Pāṇḍavodbhavam | jvalite bhartari śreṣṭhāsmākam dīkṣā śubhāvahā | | PP 13.144–145 | .*

59 *Yudhiṣṭhiras tu puṇyena samāpa pāṇipīḍanam | pratīpadarśinīnāṃ vai tāsāṃ maṅgalanīsvanaiḥ | | tāḥ kanyā nṛpatiṃ prāpya pārśvasthāś cātirejire | kalpavallyo yathā kalpapādapaṃ kalpitārthadam | | PP 13.163–164 | .*

60 *Yudhiṣṭhireṇa Bhīmeṇa yāś ca pūrvam pure pure | pariṇītāḥ samānītā rājyaputryas tadākhilāḥ | | kauśambyāś ca samānīya Vindhyasenasutām parām | | tayā Yudhiṣṭhiraḥ prāpa paramaṃ pāṇipīḍanam | | PP 16.9–10 | .*

61 Admittedly, while there is no mention of outright disapproval, the parents of the eleven young women are less than thrilled at the prospect of their daughters being widowed: Knowing the workings of the human heart, the king and the merchant as well as their wives were ready to give them [their daughters] to him [Yudhiṣṭhira], [but instead] were burdened with sorrows here on earth. *rājā śreṣṭhī sabhāryau tau puruṣāntaravedinau | tās taṃ dātum samudyuktāu kṣitau duḥkhabharaiḥ sthitau | | PP 13.114 |* Please note that I am aware and in abject horror of Śubhacandra’s use of the accusative *taṃ* to mark an indirect object here; “to give them to him” was the only translation that made sense in this context.

62 Of course, the *Mahābhārata* as a narrative abounds in female characters who find themselves widowed for all kinds of reasons, ranging from sheer bad luck to losing their husband on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. As the two mothers of the protagonists who find themselves widowed because of what is ultimately a freak accident—Pāṇḍu sexually approaches Mādrī and dies because of

the curse he obtained when he killed a seer and his wife (MBh I. 109–116)—, their widowhood is a more defining trait of their characters compared to some of the other widowed characters.

⁶³ Śubhacandra consistently uses the name “Madrī”, with a short ‘a’ in its first syllable, instead of ‘Mādrī’ as found in the *Mahābhārata*. Hence, I will use the name Madrī from now on to refer to Śubhacandra’s version of Madrī.

⁶⁴ *Atha Madrī dhavasnehād viraktā bhavabhogataḥ | bhartrā sākāṃ susaṃnyāse matiṃ tene sumānasā | | kuntyāḥ sutau samarpyāsau veśmabhāraṃ viśeṣataḥ | saṃnyāsaṃ kartukāmāsau vāritāpi vinīrgatā | | gaṅgātāṣṭhithiṃ tene saṃnyāsāhārapānakam | sā dṛṣṭijñānacāritratapa-ārādhanāṃ [sic] vyadhāt | | [. . .] aṅgaṃ bhaṅgaṃ gataṃ tasyāḥ stimitendriyaśrayaḥ | avaso’pi gatāḥ sārddham dhavena dhavalātmanā | | tatraiva prathame kalpe sodapādi śubhāśrayāt | puṇyaṃ pacelimaṃ ced dhi kā vārtā nākaśaṇṇidheḥ | | PP 9.156–158, 160–161 | | .*

⁶⁵ *atha Kuntī śucākrāntā jñātvā mṛtyuṃ maheśinaḥ | vilapallapanā tatra gatvā sā vilalāpa ca | | luñcayanti nijān keśāṃs troḍayanti nijorasaḥ | maṇimuktāphalopetaṃ hāraṃ hāṭakasaṃbhavam | | kaṅkaṇam karaghātena kṛntanti karataḥ śucā | vilalāpeti duḥkhārtā kartavyarahitā ca sā | | [. . .] tvayā vinādyā sarvatra śūnyaṃ veśma na śobhate | ahaṃ kartavyamūdhā mūḍhaduḥkhā tvayā vinā | | [. . .] virasāṃ tvāṃ vinā deva mānayanti na jātucit | janā māṃ surasair muktāṃ sarasīm iva sadrasām | | vineśena varā nārī ratiṃ na labhate kvacit | maṇinā hi vinirmuktā yathā hāralatā vibho | | PP 9.162–164, 170, 178–179 | | I have left out some of the verses, because most of them are repetitive in content: they convey the same idea, i.e., a woman is nothing without her husband, but invoke different similes to state this sentiment.*

⁶⁶ *Rājimatyāryikābhyarṇe Kuntī hitvā sukuntalān | Subhadrāyā ca Draupadyā saṃyamam param agrahīt | | PP 25.14 | | .*

⁶⁷ This verse mentions how Kṛṣṇa asks Rājimatī, daughter of King Ugrasena with Jayāvatī, to marry Nemi. Ugrasenanarendrasya Jayāvatyāś ca dehaḥ | Rājimatīm yayāce sa [Kṛṣṇa] nemipāñigrahecchayā | | PP 22.41 | | .

⁶⁸ May the great Nemi, who is like the felly in [the wheel of] the most excellent chariot, [. . .] who has left lovely Rājimatī and who has taken dīkṣā, shine seated on the summit of Mount Gīrnār. *muktvārājyaṃ Sunemir varavṛṣasurathe nemivan [. . .] ramya-Rājimatīm yaḥ | hitvā dīkṣāṃ prapade, [. . .] girivaraśikhare saṃsthito bhātu bhavyaḥ | | PP 22.100 | | And Salutations to you, who has endless knowledge, who is pure and wise, you who in your youth has abandoned Rājimatī, who resembles the newly risen sun, whose face is round like the moon, who is slender and possessed of an attractive body, who is a mine of virtues, blameless, full of *rasa*, marked by lakhs of lucky marks. Who is able to describe your qualities here in the three worlds?” so did the resplendent royals praise him in the royal hall. *Namo’ anantasubodhāya viśuddhāya buddhāye te | tvayā Rājimatī tyaktā bālye bālārkaśaṇṇibhā | | Pūrṇacandrānanā tanvī ratirūpa guṇākara | | nirdoṣā rasasaṃpūrṇā lakṣalakṣanalakṣitā | | Kas te deva guṇān vaktum samartho’tra jagattraye | iti stutvā sthitāḥ sabhyāḥ sabhāyām bhāsvārā nṛpāḥ | | PP 23.49–52 | | .**

References

- Bhadrabāhu, Lalwani. 1999. *Kalpa Sūtra of Bhadrabāhu Svāmī*. Translated by Kastur Chand Lalwani. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Bhattacharya, Pradip. 2000. Panchakanya: Women of Substance. *Journal of South Asian Literature* 35: 13–56.
- Brick, David. 2010. The Dharmaśāstric debate on widow-burning. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130: 203–23.
- Clines, Gregory M. 2022. *Jain Rāmāyaṇa Narratives: Moral Vision and Literary Innovation*. London: Routledge.
- Cort, John E. 1995. Genres of Jain history. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 23: 469–506. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Cort, John E. 2003. Doing for others: Merit transfer and Karma mobility in Jainism. In *Jainism and Early Buddhism: Essays in Honor of Padmanabh S. Jaini*. Edited by Olle Qvarnström. Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, pp. 129–49.
- De Clercq, Eva. 2008. The Jaina Harivaṃśa and Mahābhārata Tradition: A Preliminary Survey. In *Parallels and Comparisons in the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas, Proceedings of the Fourth Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas*. Edited by Petteri Koskikallio. Zagreb: Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, pp. 399–421.
- De Clercq, Eva, and Simon Winant. 2021. The Fate of Kīcaka in Two Jain Apabhramsha Mahābhāratas. In *Many Mahābhāratas*. Edited by Nell Shapiro Hawley, Sohini Sarah Pillai and Paula Richman. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 213–35.
- Detige, Tillo. 2024. *Eternal Salutations: Memorials of Digambara Jaina Ascetic Lineages from Western India*. Ph.D. dissertation, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany.
- Dhand, Arti. 2008. *Woman as Fire, Woman as Sage: Sexual Ideology in the Mahābhārata*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Dundas, Paul. 1992. *The Jains*. London: Routledge.
- Flügel, Peter. 2006. Demographic trends in Jaina monasticism. In *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues*. Edited by Peter Flügel. London: Routledge, pp. 312–98.
- Geen, Jonathan. 2001. The Marriage of Draupadī in the Hindu and Jaina *Mahābhārata*. Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada.
- Geen, Jonathan. 2011. Fair Trade and Reversal of Fortune: Kṛṣṇa and Mahāvīra in the Hindu and Jaina Traditions. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79: 58–89. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hooper, Giles Ross. 2020. A Study of the “Twelve Reflections” (*dvādaśa bhāvanāḥ*) as Depicted by the Eleventh-century Jain Digambara Scholar Ācārya Śubhacandra in his “Ocean of Knowledge” (*Jñānārṇava*) and an Analysis of his Contribution to the Development of Jain Meditation Practice. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

- Hotta, Kazuyoshi. 2017. On Corresponding Sanskrit Words for the Prakrit Term Posaha: With Special Reference to Śrāvākācāra Texts. *International Journal of Jaina Studies* 13: 1–17.
- Jain, Parveen. 2023. Jain Yoga and Dhyāna: From Contemplative Introspection to Blissful Meditation. In *Contemplative Studies & Jainism*. Edited by Purushottama Bilimoria, Cogen Bohanec and Rita D. Sherma. London: Routledge, pp. 22–37.
- Jaini, Padmanabh S. 1984. Mahābhārata motifs in the Jaina Pāṇḍava-Purāṇa. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47: 108–15. [CrossRef]
- Jaini, Padmanabh S. 1992. *Gender and Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Jinasena, Acharya. 2004. *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa of Ācārya Jinasena*. Edited by Pannalal Jain. New Delhi: Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha.
- Jyväsjarvi Stuart, Mari. 2020. Female Renouncers: Premodern Perspectives. In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Jainism Online*. Leiden: Brill. Available online: <https://ixtheo.de/Record/1837650101> (accessed on 4 February 2025). [CrossRef]
- Kasliwal, Keshav. 1967. *Rājasthān ke Jain Sant: Vyaktitva evaṃ Kṛtitva*. Jayapura: Jaina A. Kṣetra Śrīmahāvīrjī.
- Kelting, Mary Whitney. 2006. Thinking Collectively about Jain Satīs: The uses of Jain Satī name lists. In *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues*. Edited by Peter Flügel. London: Routledge, pp. 181–207.
- Kelting, Mary Whitney. 2009. *Heroic Wives: Rituals, Stories, and the Virtues of Jain Wifedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Major, Andreas. 2007. *Sati: A Historical Anthology*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Rajan, Rajeswari Sunder. 1993. *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Samantabhadra, Ācārya. 2016. *Ācārya Samantabhadra's Ratnakaraṇḍaka-śrāvākācāra—The Jewel-Casket of Householder's Conduct*. Translated by Vijay K. Jain. Dehradun: Vikalp Printers.
- Śubhacandra, Jinadāsaśāstriṇā Pāṭhāntareṇa, and Jīvarāja Gautamacamda Doṣī. 1954. *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa: Jainacaritaviṣayakaḥ Saṃskṛtapadya-Granthaḥ*. Edited by Jinadāsa Pārśvanātha Phaḍakule. Solapur: Jaina Saṃskṛti Saṃrakṣaka Saṅgha.
- Vyāsa. 1974. *The Mahābhārata, Volume 1: The Book of the Beginning*. Translated by Johannes Adrianus Bernardus van Buitenen. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wiley, Kristi L. 2004. *Historical Dictionary of Jainism*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- Williams, Richard. 1963. *Jaina Yoga: A Survey of the Medieval Śrāvākācāras*. London: Oxford University Press.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.