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Guys Who Bond

Fraternal Love in Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*¹

ABSTRACT: This article investigates Ācārya Hemacandra's 12th-century Sanskrit *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* ("The Lives of the Sixty-Three Illustrious Men," *TŚPC*) to understand how Jain authors depict fraternal love as a durable and covert fetter to the world of transmigratory rebirth and re-death (*saṃsāra*). By examining the stories of the half-brother *baladevas* and *vāsudevas* in the *TŚPC*, the article identifies three consequentially negative characteristics of fraternal relationships: youthful intimacy, inseparability, and emotional turmoil resulting from the relationship's dissolution. Finally, the article examines how the figure of the dispassionate Jina in the *TŚPC* exemplifies the proper orientation towards brothers.

KEYWORDS: fraternal love, Jain *mahāpurāṇa*, Sanskrit narrative, *baladeva* and *vāsudeva*, Hemacandra, *śalākāpuruṣa*, *saṃsāra*

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This article examines how fraternal love is crafted and deployed in Jain Sanskrit narrative literature as a fetter that binds individuals in the world of perpetual rebirth and re-death (*saṃsāra*). Specifically, it examines Ācārya Hemacandra's (1088–1172 CE) 12th-century *mahāpurāṇa*² (great narrative) titled *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* ("The Lives of the Sixty-Three Illustrious Men," hereafter *TŚPC*).³ Interest in examining the durability of fraternal love as a transmutatory bond focuses attention on a repeating set of archetypal characters in the *TŚPC*, and in Jain *mahāpurāṇas* more broadly. This is the relationship between the *baladeva* and *vāsudeva*, royal half-brothers integrated into the larger Jain *mahāpurāṇa* schema of the sixty-three illustrious men (*śalākāpuruṣa*) in Jain universal history.⁴ *Baladevas* are "righteous Jinas who stick firmly to the central Jaina ethical principle of *ahiṃsā*, nonviolence," while their half-brothers, the *vāsudevas*, "engage in war and kill their enemies, the Prativāsudevas, for which they are reborn in hell" (Cort 1993: 199). Much of the violent work that the *vāsudeva* performs is in service to his older half-brother, the *baladeva*, and thus allows the *baladeva* to pursue a life of personal nonviolence and eventually attain liberation (*mokṣa*) from the world of *saṃsāra*.

Nine sets of *baladevas*, *vāsudevas*, and *prativāsudevas* had become standard in Jain *purāṇic* literature by the 12th century, and Hemacandra includes these nine in the *TŚPC*.⁵ There is, though, great disparity in the degree to which the stories of each set are fleshed out. The two most detailed stories are those of Rāma (*baladeva*) and Lakṣmaṇa (*vāsudeva*), the protagonists of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic tradition, and Balabhadra (*baladeva*) and Kṛṣṇa (*vāsudeva*), the main

² A Jain *mahāpurāṇa* narrates the stories of all sixty-three illustrious men in Jain universal history. These include the twenty-four Jinas, twelve *cakravartins*, nine *baladevas*, nine *vāsudevas*, and nine *prativāsudevas*. This is in contrast to Jain *purāṇas* that tell the stories of one or only a select few of these illustrious men.

³ For more on Hemacandra's biography, see Bühler 1936 and Quarnström 2002: 1–5.

⁴ See Cort 1993 and 1995.

⁵ For a table providing all nine sets of *baladevas*, *vāsudevas*, and *prativāsudevas*—though with slightly different names—see Cort 1993: 206.

characters in the Jain *Harivaṃśa* and *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* narrative traditions that tell, in full or in part, Jain versions of the *Mahābhārata*.⁶ The biographies of the other seven tripartite sets are shorter and skimpier in detail, though they all speak to the strength and durability of unchecked fraternal love, as well as the emotional turmoil that emerges upon the dissolution of the fraternal relationship.

This article proceeds in four sections. In the first I discuss trends in extant scholarship concerning familial relationships as depicted in Jain narrative literature. I focus here on two relationships that have to date received the most scholarly attention: sexual lovers and the relationship of mother and child. In section two, I demonstrate how Hemacandra constructs fraternal bonds between *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*, specifically focusing on the brothers' youthful intimacy, inseparability, and the *baladeva*'s emotionally tumultuous response to the *vāsudeva*'s death. In section three I contrast Hemacandra's depiction of fraternal relationships between *baladevas* and *vāsudevas* with the relationship between Jinās and their siblings, highlighting how the Jina demonstrates a placid detachment from *all* familial relationships, including those with their siblings. Finally, in the fourth section I conclude by explaining how the novel structure of the *TŚPC*, in comparison to the structures of earlier *mahāpurāṇas*, encourages a comparative reading of the lives of the *baladevas* and *vāsudevas* with the lives of the Jinās.

Familial relationships in Jain literature

The fact that familial relationships have long served as particularly strong bonds to continued existence in the world of transmigration has not gone unnoticed by scholars of Jain narrative. Phyllis Granoff, for instance, has remarked that "vivid descriptions of love's power to

⁶ For more on Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* narratives, see Clines 2019a, 2019b, 2021, and 2022; De Clercq 2001, 2005, 2008a, 2016, and 2018; Kulkarni 1990; and Plau 2018, 2019a, and 2019b. For *Harivaṃśa* and *Pāṇḍavapurāṇas*, see Clines 2020; De Clercq 2008b; De Clercq and Winant 2021; Geen 2001 and 2008; and Jaini 2000.

delude are meant to instruct us further to view all of our ties of affection as dangerous entrapments” (Granoff 1998: 12). Two specific relationships in Jain narrative have served as the primary foci of analysis. The first is sexual relationships, both inside and outside of marriage. Warnings against sexual entanglements—almost always from a male perspective—are traceable back to the earliest strata of the Śvetāmbara scriptural canon.⁷ The first book of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* (3rd–2nd centuries BCE),⁸ for instance, says of the intrinsic, dangerously alluring nature of women: “The world is greatly troubled by women. [Men] forsooth say, ‘These are the vessels (of happiness).’ But this leads them to pain, to delusion, to death, to hell, to birth as hell-beings or brute beasts” (Jacobi 1994: 21f.). Similarly, in his *Sarvārthasiddhi* (5th–6th c. CE)—a commentary on Umāsvāti’s *Tattvārthasūtra*—the Digambara author Pūjyapāda Devanandi praises the practice of celibacy, which:

[...] promotes the virtues of non-violence, truth, and so on, while copulation augments their opposites because it is bound to involve killing mobile and immobile beings, speaking falsely, committing (*sic*) theft and indulging in possessiveness. (Umāsvāti 2011: 175)

The fact that discussions of the dangers of sexual relationships feature prominently in both Jain canonical and post-canonical literature is understandable. Sexuality *uniquely* opens one up to the possibility of committing acts of violence. Even if violence is *not* the eventual endpoint, though, sexuality and loving affection still trap *jīvas* within *saṃsāra*, sometimes continually bound to each other. As Naomi Appleton comments when discussing the multi-life story of

⁷ Śvetāmbara—literally “white-clad,” from the simple white robes worn by renunciates—refers to the larger of the two major Jain sects. The other is the smaller Digambara sect. Digambara literally means “sky-clad,” i.e., “naked,” in reference to the fact that male renunciates forego wearing clothes as a testament to their giving up all worldly possessions. For more, including the origins of the sectarian split and the persistent disagreements between Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, see Dundas 2002: 45–59.

⁸ For more on the dating of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, see Dundas 2002: 23.

the first Jina, Ṛṣabha: “When narratives contain characters who are repeatedly bound together in birth after birth, the reason for this bondage is often mutual affection” (Appleton 2014: 140). Complete celibacy is, therefore, a necessary component of monastic renunciation, focused as it is on ending the influx of new karma towards the *jīva* and burning away karma that is already bound to it. Further, as Sherry E. Fohr notes, this monastic celibacy also requires consistent individual and community-wide regulation (Fohr 2017 [2006]).

The second important relationship foregrounded in analyses of Jain literature is that between mother and child. While some narratives, Granoff points out, encourage the reader “to sympathize with the plight of the mother who must give up her child” to renunciation, others highlight the fact that “as powerful as they are, even ties like those that bind mother and child are not entirely benign” (Granoff 1998: 8). Indeed, the emotional attachments that undergird both sexual relationships and those between mothers and children are durable and can lead to dangerous and violent outbursts when tested.

The story of the monk Sukośala highlights this fact.⁹ The tale begins with Sukośala's father, King Kīrtidhara, taking renunciation and wandering as an ascetic. He eventually returns to his former home, when his abandoned wife Sahadevī, still angry at her husband and worried that her son may want to join his father as a monk, orders that Kīrtidhara be driven from the house:

Chase away this monk who cares nothing for the sanctity of the family, before the innocent, tender young prince, beloved of all, naturally soft-hearted, sees him. And if ever I see any other naked ascetics here in this house, then I shall punish you all, O doorkeepers, mark my words! (Granoff 1998: 50)

⁹ For a complete translation of this story, found in Raviṣeṇa's 7th-century Sanskrit *Padmapurāṇa* (“The Deeds of Padma”), see Granoff 1998: 49–56. For additional examples of both relationships as represented in Jain narrative literature, see the stories of Ādrakumāra, Vajrasvāmin, and Celanā in Granoff 1998, and Hardy's (1993) translation and discussion of the story of Yaśodhara from the *Bṛhatkathākośa*. Beyond the study of Jains, Ohnuma (2012) has investigated maternal imagery and its relationship with entrapment in *saṃsāra* in Buddhist sources.

In response, the city guards not only expel Kīrtidhara from the household but go one step further and banish *all* monks from the city. Sukośala, however, hears of his father's renunciation and subsequent mistreatment by his mother and, consequently, affirms to take up renunciation himself. He joins his father as a monk, and Sahadevī dies harboring animosity towards both her son and her former husband. She is reborn a tigress, who one day happens upon Kīrtidhara and Sukośala meditating in the forest:

The tigress [...] saw them and was filled with anger; she shook her mane that was wild and red like blood. Her face was made hideous by her huge fangs and her red eyes sent out sparks; her tail curled high above her head and she tore the earth with her claws as she walked. Looking like death incarnate, she let out a deep growl [...]. She looked like the midday sun as she advanced to pounce with all her might on Sukośala. (Granoff 1998: 55–56)

Sukośala and his father remain committed to their meditation, and the tigress who was formerly Sahadevī rips Sukośala's body apart with her fangs and claws before eating him feet first. The moral of the story is then explained:

See [...] what delusion can cause a person to do; the mother devours her beloved son, limb by limb. What can be more painful than to see how relatives, deluded by things that have happened in a past birth, become cruel enemies? (Granoff 1998: 56)

Thus, the story of the monk Sukośala brings into bold relief the delusory nature of the relationships between lovers and those between mother and child. It further highlights how that delusion can not only keep one ensnared in the world of *samsāra*, but also lead to the performance of violence that drags one deeper into the quagmire of rebirth and re-death.

Strategies of fraternal entanglement

Ample work has thus been done explicating the dangers of both sexual and filial relationships *vis-à-vis* continued ensnarement in *samsāra*. What will become clear in the following pages, though, is that the fraternal relationship is, first, equally potent in its ability to ensnare an individual, and, second, covert and surreptitious in its working.¹⁰

One of the clearest ways in which Hemacandra constructs fraternal love as a fetter binding one to worldly existence is through an invariable youthful intimacy and inseparability shared between the *baladeva* and the *vāsudeva*. Unlike with sexual relationships and that of mother and son, where there are clear events or triggers that signify the beginning of each relationship—e.g., the first sight of a lover, in the case of the former relationship, and birth, in the case of the latter—the close bond of fraternal relationships in the *TŚPC* is always already present. Take, for instance, the following description of the childhood of Vijaya and Dvipṛṣṭha, the second *baladeva* and *vāsudeva*, respectively:

Five nurses, each with her own responsibilities, cared for [Dvipṛṣṭha], like young ascetic women caring for an *aśoka* tree that had sprouted in their courtyard. He ran and jumped, proceeding at will and lively as quicksilver, and the nurses were unable to catch hold of him. [Dvipṛṣṭha] grew up, openly affectionate towards his father, mother, and older brother. Vijaya frequently carried him lovingly on his own hip, back, chest, or shoulders, as if he were the boy's sixth nurse. Impelled by affection, Dvipṛṣṭha mimicked his brother's every move: how he stood, walked, slept, ate, and drank. At the appropriate age and compelled by their father's unerring command, the two brothers easily

¹⁰ Sarah Pierce Taylor is also undertaking important research on familial ties in Jain narrative literature, including fraternal bonds. I point the reader towards her March 2022(a) talk at Columbia University's Seminar on South Asia titled "Family Ties: A Jain Philosophy of Emotion and the Production of Karmic Families," and her August 2022(b) Davis, CA conference presentation titled "Family Ties: A Jain Theory of Emotion."

mastered all of the relevant arts with the help of a teacher. One fair and one dark, the brothers resembled an ocean of milk and an ocean of salt, the depths of which were as-yet unplumbed. (*TŚPC* IV.2.209–215)¹¹

The passage shows Vijaya and Dviprṣṭha to be inseparable. Though technically Vijaya is born first, the two brothers are a unified team, complementing each other even in their very physicality. This is a consistent theme among descriptions of *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*. Indeed, in the story of Nandana and Datta—the seventh *baladeva* and *vāsudeva* pair—Hemacandra is explicit in saying that while Nandana is *technically* older than Datta, the two act as they grow up “as if they are the same age” (*savayaskāv iva jyeṣṭhakaniṣṭhāv pi ceratuḥ*, *TŚPC* VI.5.22cd).

We see a similar account in the description of Suprabha and Puruṣottama, the fourth *baladeva* and *vāsudeva*:

Wearing blue and yellow garments, with palm-tree and *garuḍa* birds adorning their banners, respectively, long-armed, the two brothers, affectionate companions, resembled twins. They learned all of the arts with aid from a teacher; such is the power of former births of noble persons. Other soldiers were unable to endure even a playful blow from either of the brothers [...]. They, strong as a mighty wind, gradually attained their youth, like the pleasure-grove of *śrīs* purifying the body. (*TŚPC* IV.4.111–114)¹²

¹¹ *aṅgaṇaudbhūtakaṅkellim iva tāpasayoṣitaḥ | pañcabhiḥ karmabhiḥ pañca dhātryas taṃ paryalālayan || dhāvantam ullalantam vā dhātryas taṃ svairacāriṇam | pariplavam pāradavann ādātum pāṇinā ‘śakan || pitur mātur jyāyasaś ca bhrātuh saha mudā ‘nvaham | darśayann antaram svasya dvitīyoḥ vavṛdhe hariḥ | kaṭyām hr̥di ca prṣṭe ca skandhadeśe ca taṃ muhuḥ | vijayo dhārayāmāsa dhātrī ṣaṣṭhīva sauhr̥dāt || avatasthau yathau śīśye nyaṣīdad bubhuje papau | dviprṣṭho ‘py anuvijayaṃ snehakārmaṇyantritah || nimittikṛtya cācāryam alaṅghyāt pitṛśāsanāt | kālē kalā jagratur līlayā śrīśārṅgiṇo || alabdhmadhyau dhavalaśyāmalau tau sahodarau | kṣīrodalavaṇāmbhodhī ivā ‘bhātām vapurbhṛtau ||*

¹² *nīlapūtāmbarau tālatārkyaketū mahābhujau | tau abhātām saha carau prītyā yugmabhāvaviva || nimittikṛtya cācāryam sarvā jagratur kalāḥ | pūrvajanmaprabhāvo ‘yam tādrśam hi mahātmanām || krīḍāghātam api taylor nāsa-hantāpare bhātāḥ | sprśann api gajo hanti jighrann api ca pannagah || līlāvanam iva kṣīṇām tau krameṇāṅgapāvanam | yauvanam ca prapedāte balena pavanopamau ||*

Similarly, in the story of Sudarśana and Puruṣaśimha—the fifth *baladeva* and *vāsudeva*, respectively—Hemacandra highlights the brothers' intimacy by comparing them to the Aśvin gods, who are not only full brothers (whereas Sudarśana and Puruṣaśimha are only half-brothers) but, in fact, twins.¹³

The story of Kṛṣṇa and Balabhadra—the ninth and final *baladeva* and *vāsudeva* of the present world age—differs in some respects from other *baladeva/vāsudeva* relationships. Kṛṣṇa, after being placed under Nanda and Yaśodā's protective care,¹⁴ spends at least part of his childhood without his half-brother, Balabhadra, by his side. The wicked siblings Śakuni and Pūtanā, for instance, meet their ends while attempting to murder Kṛṣṇa before he and Balabhadra meet. Unlike in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (X.6), though, where Kṛṣṇa himself kills the demons who threaten him, in Hemacandra's text it is the infant Kṛṣṇa's protector deities who perform the necessary acts of violence: "Śakuni, standing on a cart, cried out sharply to Kṛṣṇa, standing below, and Pūtanā thrust her poison-smeared breast into Kṛṣṇa's mouth. Instantly, the deities attending on Kṛṣṇa struck both women with the cart and killed them" (*TŚPC* VIII.5.125–126).¹⁵

¹³ The Aśvins ("Horsemen") are present in the Ṛg Veda, where they are twin progeny of the sun god Vivasvan and the goddess Saranyu. The Aśvins are divine helpers, "given credit for accomplishing many acts of benefit to mankind" (O'Flaherty 1981: 177). The Aśvins are also the divine fathers—through the boon given to their mother, Kuntī—of the twins Nakula and Sahadeva in Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata*. Jain authors who composed their own versions of the Pāṇḍava story largely deny this idea, arguing instead that Nakula and Sahadeva—as well as the other three Pāṇḍava brothers—were simply fathered by Paṇḍu.

¹⁴ Kṛṣṇa's birth mother is Devakī, but she directs her husband to take Kṛṣṇa to Nanda's house in the countryside out of fear that Kāṁsa will kill the baby Kṛṣṇa, as he had her previous sons.

¹⁵ *śakuniḥ śakaṭaṃ cakre kṛṣṇopari kuṭasvarā | viśalīptaṃ pūtanā tu stanam kṛṣṇānane 'kṣipat || kṛṣṇasānnidhyakāriṇyo devatās tatksaṇād api | tenaiva śakaṭenobhe te prahr̥tya vyapādayat ||*

Johnson (2013: 120), seemingly following the commentarial tradition, reads 125ab to mean that Śakuni is standing on the cart, above Kṛṣṇa. It is also possible,

When Kṛṣṇa and Balabhadra do meet, though, the bond immediately formed resembles those between other *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*:

The two handsome boys, ten bows in height, played together, watched by wide-eyed milkmaids who were neglecting their duties. At Balabhadra's side, Kṛṣṇa studied archery and the other appropriate arts, always assisted by the local cowherds. Sometimes as friends and other times as teacher and pupil, [the two brothers], inseparable even for a moment, busied themselves in various ways. (*TŚPC* VIII.5.152–154)¹⁶

The brothers thus settle quickly into the type of complementary relationship already seen between the other pairs of *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa and Balabhadra spend eleven years of their childhood together, sporting in the countryside (*TŚPC* VIII.5.169).¹⁷

In at least one story, that of Sudarśana and Puruṣasiṃha, Hemacandra further crystalizes the half-brothers' bond by having them endure together the sorrow of losing their parents. Seemingly without cause, the brothers' father, King Śiva, is taken one day by severe fever. Queen Amma, Puruṣasiṃha's mother, is unable to bear the news or contemplate life as a widow. The queen immolates herself on a makeshift funeral pyre before her husband has even died. Disconsolate, Puruṣasiṃha returns to King Śiva's bedside. Later that evening, King Śiva also dies.

During this time, Sudarśana has been away from the palace, quelling a border insurgency on the outskirts of the kingdom. Puruṣasiṃha sends word of their father's death and subsequent cremation, and Sudarśana immediately returns home. The brothers

though, to read the passage as: “Śakuni, letting out a caustic scream, held (literally, “made”) the cart above Kṛṣṇa.”

¹⁶ *tau dvau daśadhanuṣṭuṅgau remāte sundarākṛtī | nīrnimeṣaṃ vīkṣyamānau gopībhir muktakarmabhiḥ || kṛṣṇo 'dhyaiṣṭa dhanurvedam anyā apy akhilāḥ kalāḥ | rāmasya pārśve gopopanītopakaraṇaḥ sadā || kadācit suhṛdau bhūtvā śiṣyācāryau kadāpi tau | vividhaṃ viciceṣṭāte kṣaṇam apy aviyoḡinau ||*

¹⁷ *evaṃ ca kṛḍatos tatra gopayo rāmakṛṣṇayoh | ekādaśa samā jagmuḥ suṣamākālavat sukham ||*

support each other in their mourning before regaining their composure. Eventually, they together face and neutralize the threat of Niśumbha, the *prativāsudeva* of the particular story.

Finally, the *baladeva*'s reaction to the death of his half-brother serves as a testament to the strength of the brothers' bond. All of the stories of the brothers in the *TŚPC* speak of the devastating effect of the *vāsudeva*'s death on the *baladeva*'s emotional stability. Whereas in the story of Sukośala, examined above, the breaking of familial relationships leads to violence, in the case of the *baladeva*, the reader is presented with immense, debilitating grief. In many of the stories, Hemacandra presents a formulaic description of the *baladeva*'s mourning. In the story of Vijaya and Dvipṛṣṭha, for instance, the reader is presented with the following narration after Dvipṛṣṭha's death:

[Vijaya], who lived for a total of 7.5 million years,¹⁸ persisted alone, confused by love for his brother. Because of his brother's death, and recalling the words of the sage Vāsupūjya, Vijaya became even more firm in his disaffection for worldly existence. He took the vow of renunciation at the lotus-feet of Vijayasūri, died at the correct time, and reached the bliss that is final liberation. (*TŚPC* IV.2.368–369)¹⁹

The reader encounters a similar description of *baladeva* Sudarśana's reaction to his brother Puruṣasiṃha's death:

Then, that *baladeva*, though overcome by affection for his brother, endured the rest of his life without him, and lived for a total of 1.7 million years.²⁰ Sudarśana, helpless from the raw grief that stemmed from witnessing [Puruṣasiṃha's] death, took the vow of renunciation

¹⁸ Literally, "one crore, less one-fourth years" (*pādonakoṭihāyana*).

¹⁹ *balabhadro 'pi pādonakoṭihāyanajīvitah | tasthau kathañcid ekākī svabhrātṛsnehamohitah || śrīvāsupūjyavacanasmaraṇena bandhumṛtyā ca gāḍhataṃ eva bhavād viraktaḥ | āttavrato vijayasūripadābjamūle kāle vipadya ca śivam vijayo jagāma ||*

²⁰ Literally, "17 lakhs" (*saptadaśābdalakṣa*).

in the presence of the *sādhū* Kīrti. At the end of his life, he attained liberation. (*TSPC* IV.5.367–368)²¹

Here, an examination of Hemacandra’s specific diction highlights the degree to which Sudarśana has lost his senses. What I translate above as “overcome [...] by affection for his brother” is the Sanskrit compound *bhrāṭṛsnehavaśaṃvada*, where *bhrāṭṛsneha* conventionally means affection for, or love for (*sneha*), one’s brother (*bhrāṭṛ*). *Vaśaṃvada* can mean simply “addicted to” or “overcome with,” but it also has connotations of involuntary servitude and a loss of freedom. Indeed, the 1899 *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary* provides a primary definition of “submissive to the will of another, obedient, compliant.”²² Thus, Sudarśana is submissive to his own affection for his brother, compliant to the grief that emerges from the fact that the object of his affection is gone. This further aligns with his description in the next verse as being “helpless” (*vi-vaśa*).

Other stories in the *TSPC* expand on these formulaic descriptions. After receiving news of the death of Triprṣṭha, for instance, Hemacandra provides the following description of *baladeva* Acala’s reaction:

After he had held the funeral [for his brother], Acala, remembering his brother, frequently cried, thus resembling a raincloud in the month of Śravaṇa. He no longer took pleasure in the ephemeral world. He viewed pleasure gardens as if they were dangerous, dark forests. His own palace he saw as if it were a cremation ground. Delightful ponds and rivers to him resembled house drains. Family gatherings felt to him

²¹ *tato balaḥ saptadaśābdalakṣyāyur vinā ‘nujam | kathaṇcid jīvitaṃ dadhre bhrāṭṛsnehavaśaṃvadaḥ || drāk sudarśanabhṛto ‘ntadarśanād ārdrasokavivaśaḥ sudarśanaḥ | kīrtisādhunikāṇe ‘grahīd vrataṃ pūritāyur apunarbhavaṃ yayau ||*

²² <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/2020/web/web/tc/indexcaller.php?key=dhrai&filter=SktDevaUnicode&translit=HK> (accessed on 10.07.2021). Printed book, p. 929.

like gatherings of enemies. He lived like a fish [gasping for air] in little water. (*TŚPC* IV.1.899–901)²³

Here, Hemacandra provides the reader with a powerful description of Acala's life after his brother's death. The *baladeva*'s entire worldview is turned upside down. Things that once brought him pleasure now disgust and repel him; he is left, metaphorically at least, gasping and helpless.

In the story of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa we see a similar account of Rāma's overwhelming grief at the death of his brother. Lakṣmaṇa's death is brought about by two gods testing the bond between him and Rāma. Using magical powers, they show Lakṣmaṇa an illusory image of the household's women lamenting Rāma's death. Seeing this, Lakṣmaṇa is overcome by grief and immediately dies, still seated in his throne. Subsequently, Rāma's two sons, Lavana and Aṅkuśa, decide to take up the life of renunciation, but Rāma himself is overcome with grief. When members of the court suggest that Lakṣmaṇa's funerary rituals be performed, Rāma becomes enraged:

Rāma, angered by their speech, said with trembling lips: "Surely my brother lives! What is this speech of yours, o villainous people? I should perform *your* funeral rites, and those of your brothers, complete with burning fire! Let my brother be long-lived! Brother! Brother! Dear Lakṣmaṇa, speak up quickly! Surely these are the machinations of wicked people! Why do you torment me for so long? What is more, it is not proper for you to be angry with me in front of these vile people!" Saying this, Rāma placed Lakṣmaṇa's body on his shoulder and went away.

Sometimes, Rāma brought Lakṣmaṇa's body to the bathhouse, bathed the corpse and himself, and then anointed the body with unguents with his own hands. Sometimes, he had lavish meals prepared and set before his dead brother. Sometimes, he sat Lakṣmaṇa's body on

²³ *kṛtaurdhvadehiko bhrātuḥ smaraṇena muhurmuḥuḥ | mumoca locanair vāri śrāvaṇāmbhodavad balaḥ || mahātavyām ivodyāne śmaśāna iva veśmani | gṛhasrotaḥsv iva kṛḍāsaraḥsrotasvinīṣv api || api bandhusamājeṣu vairivṛndeṣv ivānīṣam | na ratim balabhadro 'gād alpavāriṇi matsyavat ||*

his own lap and kissed Lakṣmaṇa's head repeatedly. Sometimes, he tucked the corpse into bed. Rāma talked with Lakṣmaṇa's lifeless body, providing answers to his own questions. Sometimes, like a masseur, he massaged his brother's corpse with his own hands. Six months passed as Rāma, his responsibilities abandoned, performed such acts of delusion, driven mad by affection for his brother. (*TŚPC* VII.10.145–153)²⁴

Like Vijaya and Sudarśana, discussed earlier, Rāma eventually overcomes his debilitating grief and reorients his life toward renunciation and ascetic practice as a monk. Indeed, all of the *baladevas* in Hemacandra's *TŚPC* do so. It is that very grief of being left alone after a brother's death that serves as the motivation for taking up the strenuous life of a mendicant.²⁵ Each *baladeva*, in turn, attains liberation from the world of *saṃsāra* upon their own death. This fact is itself a final testament to the strength of fraternal love as a fetter to continued existence in *saṃsāra*. It is *never possible* for the *vāsudeva* to conceive of taking up a life of mendicancy and, further, it is *only possible* for the *baladeva* to turn towards renunciation after the fraternal bond is broken. The cleaving of the bond is *necessary* for the *baladeva* to commit to ascetic practice and eventual attainment of *mokṣa*.

²⁴ *ity uktyā kupito rāmas tān ūce vidhutādharah | jīvatyēṣa hi me bhrātā kim idaṃ vo vacaḥ khalāḥ || sarveṣāṃ vaḥ sabandhūnām jvalane dāhapūrvakam | mṛtakāryaṃ vidhātavyaṃ dīrghāyuh stān mamā 'nujaḥ || bhrātār bhrātār brūhi śīghraṃ vatsa lakṣmaṇa nanv ayam | durjanānām praveśo 'sti kiṃ khedayasi mām ciraṃ || yad vā khalasamakṣaṃ na vatsa kopas tavocitaḥ | ity uktvā 'se tam āropya yayāvan yatra rāghavaḥ || nītvā snānagrhe rāmaḥ kadā 'py asnapayat svayam | tataś ca tam svahastena vililepa vilepanaiḥ || ānāyya divyabhojyāni pūrayitvā ca bhājanam | kadācit tasya purato mumoca svayam eva ca || kadā 'py āropayad anke nīje 'cumbacchiro muhuḥ | kadā 'py asvāpayat talpe vāsasā 'cchādite svayam || kadā 'pi svayam ābhāṣya svayaṃ sma pratibhāṣate | svayaṃ saṃvāhakībhūya mamarda ca kadācana || ityādi ceṣṭā vikalāḥ snehonmattasya kurvataḥ | yayū rāmasya ṣaṇmāsā vismṛtāśeṣakarmanāḥ||*

²⁵ For a fuller examination of this, see Clines 2021.

The Jina and his brother

If, in the *TŚPC*, the *baladevas* and *vāsudevas* represent fraternal relationships that contribute to continued existence in the world of *samsāra*, it is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the figure of the dispassionate Jina that exemplifies the proper orientation towards brothers.²⁶ The final fordmaker of the current world age, Mahāvīra, for instance, has two older siblings: a brother, Nandivardhana, and a sister, Sudarśanā. Hemacandra, though, does not go into detail about the relationship between Mahāvīra and his siblings. For instance, in the short narrative span in which Hemacandra details Mahāvīra's childhood, the siblings do not play much of a role. Hemacandra mentions that, as a child, Mahāvīra "play[ed] suitable games with princes his own age," but does not mention Nandivardhana or Sudarśanā as part of that group, perhaps because they are both older (*TŚPC* X.2.103).²⁷ Certainly, the reader does not get the sense of inseparability that Hemacandra cultivated in his descriptions of the relationships between the *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*. The single place in the story where Nandivardhana plays a major role is after the death of the siblings' parents, when Mahāvīra has committed himself to renounce the world and become a wandering ascetic:

Nandivardhana, instructed by the Svāmin [Mahāvīra], composed himself and requested that the Lord [Mahāvīra] ascend to the ancestral throne. When Mahāvīra, afraid of continued existence, did not take possession of the kingdom, though, Nandivardhana was made king by ministerial dictum. Mahāvīra, eager to take on a life of mendicancy, went to leave his brother. But Nandivardhana, his voice choked by grief, said: "Brother, today our parents have gone beyond but are not forgotten. All of the kingdom, myself included, are filled with grief.

²⁶ The first Jina, Ṛṣbha (also called Ādinātha, "The First Lord") has a twin sister named Sumaṅgalā, whom he later marries.

²⁷ *rājaputraiḥ savayobhiḥ samam nyūnāśṭavatsarah | vayo 'nurūpakrīḍābhiḥ so 'nyadā krīḍitum yayau ||*

Will you pour acid on my wound by leaving me?” (*TŚPC* X.2.161–165)²⁸

Out of regard for his brother, Mahāvīra spends another year as a householder. After that year, though, Nandivardhana gives Mahāvīra permission to leave the palace behind and take up life as a mendicant. To mark the occurrence, he commands that a grand palanquin be built to convey Mahāvīra to a fantastic garden outside the city; this despite his being “consumed by grief, like the moon is consumed by Rāhu, at being separated from his brother” (*TŚPC* X.2.171ab).²⁹ This is the last the reader sees of Nandivardhana.

Finally, we can look also to the life of the second Jina, Ajitanātha. Here, we expand the focus of inquiry a bit, for Ajitanātha does not have a brother, but rather a close cousin, Sagara, alongside whom he grows up. What is clear, though, is that Hemacandra’s description of the relationship between Ajitanātha and Sagara closely aligns with the language he uses to describe biological brothers elsewhere in the *TŚPC*, at least at first: the two are inseparable as children, running about at will. However, as the two grow up, their relationship changes. While Ajitanātha, by nature of his being a Jina, has innate mastery of all of the arts and sciences appropriate for a prince, Sagara is provided with the best teachers and quickly matures into a competent statesman. Ajitanātha, in fact, *becomes* one of those teachers:

Sagara, after studying the appropriate manuals day after day, reported to Lord Ajita, like a minister reports [to his superior] about his duties. The intelligent Sagara asked the Master about any doubts left unex-

²⁸ *svāminā bodhitaś caivaṃ svastho ‘bhūn nandivardhanaḥ | pitryaṃ rājyaṃ alaṅkartuṃ so ‘bhyarthayata ca prabhum || pitryaṃ rājyaṃ yadā vīro bhavadvigno na śiśriye | rājā cakre tadā ‘mātyaiḥ sāgrahair nandivardhanaḥ || cirepsitapari-vrajyāgrahaṇāyātha sādaraḥ | āpapracche mahāvīro bhrātaraṃ nandivardhanam || śokaskhalitavāg nandivardhano ‘py abhyadhād iti | adyāpi pitarau bhrātaraḥ gacchato viśṛjya na hi || sarvo ‘py aham ivā ‘dyāpi svajānaḥ śokapūritaḥ | kṣate kṣāraṃ nikṣipasi svavīryena kiṃ mayi ||*

²⁹ *bhrātūr virahaduḥkhena rāhuṇendur ivā ‘kulaḥ |*

plained by his teachers [...]. Like the moon disperses darkness with its luminous rays, Lord Ajita quickly dispersed those doubts with his intelligence, scriptural exegesis, and clairvoyant knowledge. (*TŚPC* II.3.45–47)³⁰

Ajitanātha eventually ascends to the throne of the kingdom after his father, King Jitaśatru, takes initiation as a Jain mendicant. His rule is, of course, successful, but his innate desire for renunciation eventually propels him to follow in his father's footsteps. He renounces the throne and leaves the kingdom to his cousin, Sagara, who is inconsolable:

Sagara, his face dark and shedding tears like a raincloud, replied: "Have I shown, o Lord, a lack of devotion to you in some way, for which you've now decided that I be separated from you? Even if that is the case, it is no reason for such a punishment! A child who fails to show proper respect should not be abandoned, but rather taught propriety by those who deserve respect. What good is a tree, as lofty as the clouds, if it gives no shade? Or a darkened cloud if it gives no rain? Or a lofty mountain if it has no waterfalls? Or a shapely body if it does not possess beauty? Or a blooming flower if it gives no fragrance? What use do I have to rule the kingdom if it is without you?" (*TŚPC* II.3.143–148)³¹

Ajitanātha's response to Sagara's disconsolation is twofold. First, he of course proceeds with his decision to leave behind the

³⁰ *pāṭham pāṭham ca sāstrāṇi sagaro 'pi dine dine | svaniyogaṃ niyogivā 'jiteśāya vyajijñapat || upādhyāyēnā 'py abhagnān saṃśayān sagaraḥ sudhīḥ | papraccha svāmināṃ [nābhinandanāṃ bharateśavat] || matiśrutāvadhiññānair ajitasvāmī api drutam | ciccheda tasya sandehāṃs tamāṃs ivendur aṃsubhiḥ ||*

³¹ *ityukto 'jitanāthēna śyāmāśyo 'śrūṇi pātayan | ekaikabinduvarṣiva vāridaḥ sagaro 'bravīt | abhaktiḥ kiṃ mayā deva vidadhe devapādāyoh | ātmano mām prthak kartum adya yenaivam ādiśaḥ || abhaktir vā 'stu vihitā nā 'prasādāya sā 'pi hi | pūjyair abhakto 'pi śiśuḥ śiśyate na tu hīyate || kiṃ nāmā 'bhraṃlihenā 'pi chāyā-hīnena śākhinā | kiṃ vā samunnatenā 'pi vṛṣṭihīnena vārmucā || kiṃ vā nirjara-hīnena tuṅgenā 'pi mahībhṛtā | kiṃ vā lāvaṇyahīnena surūpenā 'pi varṣmaṇā || kiṃ vā gandhavihīnena puṣpeṇā 'pi vikāsinā | anena tvadvihīnena rājyenā 'pi hi kiṃ mama ||*

kingdom; he does not allow his cousin's sorrow to stand in the way of pursuing the life of a detached renunciate. Second, though, he specifically encourages Sagara to take initiation *at the appropriate time*, explaining: "Persistence in acquiring self-restraint is certainly appropriate, dear one! However, your karma, which will result in the experience of pleasure, has not yet come to fruition. When you have consumed that karma that has pleasure as its fruit, as I have, then you should take the vow which is most effective to achieving liberation" (*TŚPC* II.3.157–158).³²

What we see in Hemacandra's biographies of Mahāvīra and Ajitanātha are thus "fraternal" relationships quite different from those of the *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*. Mahāvīra never seems particularly close to his brother or sister, and while he does put off his own renunciation by a year out of deference to Nandivardhana, it is clear that the older brother is more emotionally attached to Mahāvīra than vice versa. In Ajitanātha's case, while he and his cousin are close as children, that relationship evolves into something better resembling the relationship of teacher and student and, subsequently, king and minister. The brothers lose their specifically *fraternal* closeness as the two grow up, a fact Hemacandra highlights in the example given above with Ajitanātha's use of *vatsa*, a term of affection usually used to address a son or young boy. This relational shift, it seems, makes it easier for Ajitanātha to eventually give up the kingdom and, again, Sagara is the more despondent of the two in the face of the dissolution of the relationship. Both Jinas display the detachment and dispassion (*vairāgya*) towards their "brothers" that is required for renunciation.

Conclusion

This article has examined how Ācārya Hemacandra, in the *TŚPC*, constructs fraternal love as a powerful yet surreptitious fetter binding

³² *yukta evā 'graho vatsa saṃyamagrahaṇaṃ prati | kintu bhogaphalaṃ karma kṣīyate 'dyāpi te na hi || bhuktvā bhogaphalaṃ karmāham iva tvam api svayam | mokṣasya sādhatamaṃ grhṇīyāḥ samaye vratam ||*

individuals to the world of *saṃsāra*. In the life stories of the *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*, Hemacandra portrays the bond of brotherly affection as uniquely durable because it is unintrusive and, seemingly, always already present. This fact not only leads to intense suffering when death invariably severs that bond, but subsequently also serves as the motivation for the remaining brother to seek liberation from *saṃsāra*. At the same time, the stories of the emotionally detached Jinas present a way of avoiding suffering altogether.

This brings us, though, to a fundamental question on the *TŚPC* specifically, and on Jain *mahāpurāṇas* more broadly: what is the overall goal of a work like the *TŚPC*?³³ Christine Chojnacki has argued that the *TŚPC* is a work of creative doctrinal systematization and that, to accomplish this, Hemacandra “tightens the organization of his work around the 24 Jinas” in comparison to earlier *mahāpurāṇas* (Chojnacki 2022: 92). By, first, integrating the lives of the other illustrious men into the biographies of their temporally-coinciding Jina and,³⁴ second, by making the Jinas the primary purveyors of authentic dharma through their extended sermons, Hemacandra focuses the many biographies within the *TŚPC* around

³³ In contrast to this question, much recent scholarship that touches upon Jain *mahāpurāṇas* has either taken characters from the literary tradition and compared them to their Brahminical literary counterparts (see, for instance, Appleton 2017 and Geen 2009 and 2011) or examined the texts in the context of performance, looking at how discreet stories from a *mahāpurāṇa* are woven into monastic sermons (*pravacana*, *vyākhyāna*) for the Jain laity (Cort 1993: 202–204). Anne E. Monius, drawing on analysis of Jinasena and Guṇabhadra's *Mahāpurāṇa*, has further enticingly pointed out that Jain *purāṇas* are invested in detailing the Jain idea of cosmic time and the possibilities of human existence within degenerative (*avasaraṇiṇī*) and regenerative (*utsarpiṇī*) phases (Monius 2009: 222f.). Finally, and importantly, John E. Cort reminds us that Jain *mahāpurāṇas* are also, simultaneously, Jain sectarian histories (Cort 1995: 479).

³⁴ This is specifically contrasted with Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa* and Śīlaṅka's *Cauppannamahāpurisacariya*, both of which “present successively the Jinas and the other illustrious men” (Chojnacki 2022: 92).

those of the 24 Jinas (ibid.: 92f).³⁵ Following Chojnacki here, I argue that by placing the biographies of the *baladevas* and *vāsudevas* within those of the Jinas, Hemacandra also encourages the reader to compare their respective behavior and attitude towards each other and the world of *saṃsāra*, generally. Thus, the structure of the *TŚPC* itself encourages one to read comparatively across these different character archetypes. In our specific case, a comparative reading of the fraternal relationships of *baladevas* and *vāsudevas*, on the one hand, alongside the Jinas and their siblings, on the other, illuminates the fact that suffering emerges from emotional entanglements of all kinds and, thus, demonstrates the real danger of not working to cultivate the emotional detachment toward *all relationships* that is necessary to avoid suffering.

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³⁵ Chojnacki continues to argue that Hemacandra wrote the *TŚPC* “partly to educate King Kumārapāla,” and that the text as a whole “highlights the edification of the laity” (ibid.: 23f).

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