

# KALPA SUTRA AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

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The Kalpa sutra is the canonical text of the Shwetambara and one of the most famous, most fundamental Jain sacred texts written in the form of hymns. Jainism itself is a religious and ethical doctrine, namely the ancient Indian dharmic religion formed in the middle of the first millennium B.C. The relevance of this work lies in the fact that Kalpasutra is traditionally considered as a work of fiction, and not as a source, which is, in the view of the author of this work, fundamentally wrong.

**Key words:** Kalpa Sutra; historical source; Jains; Jina; Tirthankar; Mahajanapads; early Jain community.

The creation of the Kalpa Sutra is usually attributed to the monk Bhadrabah and dated by the second half of the III century A.D. This is largely due to the traditional belief that the Kalpa-sutra was created 150 years after Mahavira's nirvana. But it is more likely that the Kalpa-sutra in its modern form appeared in the first half of the V century A.D. during the reign of Dhruvasena I. Dhruvasena I was the third son of Bhatarka and the younger brother of Dronasimha. He reigned from 519–549 A.D. Many commentators on the Kalpa-sutra mention the first public reading of the source text, organised by the Jain Council in support of Dhruvasena on the loss of his son. The council was held in Vallabhi under the patronage of Devardhigani Kshamashraman when the texts were recorded. Certain dates of the councils are not mentioned in the texts before Jinaprabamuni's Sandehavisausadi (1307 A.D.).

In later commentaries on the Kalpa Sutra it is said that the last Vallabiya Council was held 980 or 993 years after the death (Nirvana) of the last Tirthankara Mahavir, the commentators were Vinayavijaya (1559), Dharmasagara (1571), Samaysundara (early XVII century), Lakshmivalayuha (1835).

Concerning the fact that Kalpa-sutra was created in the first half of the V century A.D. it is proved by the fact that the already mentioned Devardhigani Kshamashramana appears in the text of Kalpa-sutra, namely in the second part of the source («Sthaviravali»). It turns out that the text of Sthaviravali was not finally formed before the Third Jain Council in Vallabhi.

We should also mention the «Rules of Monastic Conduct» which are stylistically different from the «Life of Jin» and are definitely different works, so it can be argued that they were combined by different authors of the texts. According to the above, it is also possible to assume the place of creation of Kalpa-sutra up to the exact place (Vallabhi).

In favor of the version about the creation of the Kalpa Sutra in present Gujarat there are many facts first of all the prevalence of copies of Kalpa Sutra in Gujarat and secondly the origin of the tradition, the tradition of Paryushana (which came from Kalpa Sutra) started in the territory of Gujarat.

The source itself describes many unreal things, both giants and beings that lived for millions of years. As of today, the tirthankar who really existed are Mahavira and Parshva. Although there is some doubt about Parshwa, Parshwanatha is the earliest Jain tirthankara and is generally considered to be a historical figure. According to P. Dundas, Jain texts such as Section 31 of the Isibhasiyam provide indirect evidence that he lived in ancient India. Historians such as G. Jacobi have accepted him as a historical figure because his Chaturyama Dharma (Four Vows) is mentioned in Buddhist texts.

The Kalpa Sutra is one of the oldest sources describing the Jain community from ancient times. Describing the formation of the Jain community from the time of the first Tirthankara, while giving the exact numbers and composition of the Tirthankara community.

From the text of Kalpa Sutra one can trace the number and dynamics of Jain communities under Tirthankara: 1243000 in the community of 1<sup>st</sup> Tirthankara Rishabha, 563000 in the community of 22<sup>nd</sup> Tirthankara Nemi, 545000 in the community of 23<sup>rd</sup> Tirthankara Parshva (VII–VII centuries B.C.), and finally 527000 in the community of last Tirthankara Mahavira (V–IV centuries B.C.).

It is also possible to ascertain the locations of these communities from the Kalpa Sutra. The exact location of the communities is not stated, but most often the place where the tirthankar went into asceticism and attained enlightenment, or where he died (moksha) is stated. Most often it is the eastern part of modern Uttar Pradesh, southern Bihar, Jharkhand. Also of note is the part of the Sthaviravali which gives an exact list of the heads and their disciples in the Jain community.

Of particular importance are the «Rules of Monastic Conduct» which regulate the life of the community (especially the monastics) for the rainy season. These rules are textually attributed to the last tirthankara, namely Mahavira. This is significant because it was under Mahavira (VI–V centuries B.C.) that the rules of conduct in the Jain community finally took shape, and other sources besides the Kalpa-sutra, such as the Acharanga-sutra

(the oldest, linguistically speaking, agama written in Ardhimagadhi Prakrit) also attest to this.

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