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Tantric Yoga in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* of Hinduism and the *Jñānārṇava* of Jainism

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Abstract: This paper explores the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, one of the earliest expositions of what become Tantric themes in Hinduism, and the *Jñānārṇava*, which provides an early template for the practice of Jaina Tantra. The former text follows the traditional mapping of the five elements and correlative senses, linking earth to smell, water to taste, fire to form, air to touch, and space to hearing, in a sequence of ascent. In contrast, the Jaina practice relates earthy, lotus-like material to the earth, to be incinerated by fire, stirring up strong winds that involve vigorous breathing that bring pounding rains, washing away all karmic impurity and its residues, exposing one's true nature as a distinct liberated soul.

Keywords: *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*; *Jñānārṇava*; five elements; Jaina Tantra; Yoga; five senses; meditation

1. Microphase and Macrophase

From the time of the *Ṛg Veda* forward, Indian philosophy has posited an intimate relationship between the microphase and macrophase. According to the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, the eyes of a person reflect the sun and the moon; the breath correlates to the wind; human feet stand on the earth itself. In the Sāṃkhya and the Tantra philosophical schools, the five great elements (*mahābhūtas*) stand in reciprocity with five subtle elements (*tanmātras*), experienced through the organs of perception (*buddhīndriya*). Specifically, the earth (*pṛthivī*) reveals itself through the sense of smell (*gandha*) linked to the human nose (*nāsa*). Water (*jala/ap*) reveals itself through taste (*rasa*) found in the mouth (*mukha*). Fire (*agni/tejas*) reveals form (*rūpa*) experienced through the eyes (*akṣa*). Wind (*vāyu*) unveils touch (*sparsa*) known through the human organ of the skin (*tvac*). Space (*ākāśa*) contains all sound, (*śabda*) which is perceived through the ears (*karṇa*)¹. The outer world only emerges when the sense organs are directed by the mind to identify them as such. The particulars of physical reality obtain fruition only on contingency. Without the basic orientation and directionality and intentionality of the mind, no world can take shape. The world and consciousness exist in reciprocity.

In the discussion that follows, the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* has been chosen to represent some of the earliest systematic examples of elemental meditations from the Hindu tradition. These practices find fuller expression in various texts of Tantra from the seventh century forward that clearly influenced later Jain texts² and would make for excellent comparison in a future study.

¹ This chapter draws from material to be included in *Living Landscapes in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jaina Yogas*, Christopher Key Chapple, forthcoming. For recent studies of the elements in cross-cultural comparative perspective, see (Jakubczak et al. 2001; Nityananda and Herrmann 2005; Villasenor-Galarza 2012; Patrice 2015). See also (Kapila 1991; Vatsyayan and Saraswati 1995).

² These texts, which refer to categories of *piṇḍastha*, *padastha*, *rūpastha*, and *rūpatīta*, include the *Kulasāra* and the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* as well as the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*. See (Vasudeva 2004). See also (Sanderson 2015).

2. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa: An Early Template for Tantra

The Yoga of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (ca. 250 C.E. to 750 C.E.) as described in the 40th chapter represents an early description of themes that emerge in Tantra. This Yoga begins with the *mūla cakra* at the base of the spine and disappears at the seventh stage into supreme bliss:

16. Thinking about the highest Brahman,
having inclined the mind toward that goal,
the Yogi is always yoked by Yoga,
abstemious in regard to food
and in control of the senses.
17. One should hold seven subtle concentrations
in the head, starting with the earth.
The Yogi should hold to the earth
and enter its subtle quality.
18. [The Yogi] thinks on its expansive nature
and moves beyond its fragrance.
Likewise in regard to the subtle flavor in water
and the form [revealed by] fire.
19. This concentration extends similarly
to the touch of the wind.
In the subtle activity of the sky,
one moves beyond sound.

These verses specify the relationship between the five elements and the five senses. The earth links with fragrance, water with flavor, from the illumination of fire and light one perceives forms, wind allows touch, and one connects with sound through space.

20. Thus one enters all of the elements
of the mind through the mind.
Carrying this mental concentration,
the subtle mind is born.

The “sixth sense” is the mind, the organizer of all data, which allows various sensory input to be interpreted and processed.

21. The one who knows Yoga,
having associated the intellect (*buddhi*)
with those states of illumination
free of karmic residue (*sattva*)
renounces all that has been obtained
with an unsurpassed, super subtle intellect.

Above the mind, one moves into meditative states, “states of illumination free of karmic residue”. Loosely following the pattern outlined in the *Bhagavad Gītā* III: 42³ one moves beyond the senses, the mind, the “intellect” (*buddhi*), to the highest:

22. The knower of Yoga rises above these seven subtleties.
O Alarka, worldly existence is not known for that person
with this even minded wisdom.

³ They say the senses are high; the mind is higher than the senses; the intellect (*buddhi*) is higher than the mind; yet there is something even beyond (*paratas*) that.

With these seven concentrations,
 one possesses a subtle self.
 23. This person would stride with accomplishment
 beyond the seen and the unseen,
 beyond that which has been renounced,
 and that which has not yet been renounced.

Having mastered the seven preliminaries, one can move beyond all things, entering a state of freedom.

24. O King, even the one who experiences pleasure in the elements,
 having obtained even-mindedness in the midst of attachment,
 destroys [his attachment].
 25. Therefore, having known the various subtle attachments,
 the embodied one who renounces,
 would attain the next step.

Attaining the state of transcendence does not negate the presence of the senses and their contact with the elements. It does not negate the mind nor the intellect (*buddhi*) that determines the predilections within the mind. This state of transcendence allows one to renounce attachment yet remain even-minded.

26. O Parthiva, the one who gathers all seven subtleties and quells all these elements
 (earth/smell, water/taste, fire/sight, wind/touch, space/hearing, manas, buddhi,
 correlating to the seven cakras) frees the knower of true existence.
 27. The one who re-attaches to the senses perishes;
 he returns again to the human realm, O King.
 He separates from Brahman.
 28. Having gone beyond [or mastered]
 these seven concentrations,
 the Yogi attains whatever is desired.
 O Nareśvara, he becomes absorbed
 into any of the subtle elements.

Mastery over the senses, mind, and intellect allows one to attain what one seeks to attain without being brought down into the realm of attachment.

29. He becomes absorbed into gods, demons,
 celestial beings, serpents, and protective spirits,
 without becoming attached in any way.
 30–31. He obtains these eight powerful qualities, becoming
 minute, light, great, accomplished,
 powerful, lordly, magical, and self possessed
 leading to Nirvana.⁴

This list of accomplishments also appears in the *Yoga Sūtra* and other texts, though the Yoga system will claim that these powers are not a precondition for freedom and can become an impediment.

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* provides an early account of what later develops in the subtle body theories of Tantra. At the base of the body, one finds earth, associated with the Mūla Cakra at the very base of the spine in the area of the anus, and water, associated with the Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra in the realm of the genitals, named Liṅga for the male and Yoni for women. In the central part of the body, one finds

⁴ This translation by Christopher Key Chapple was completed in collaboration with Jodi Shaw, Christopher Miller, Griffin Guez, Amparo Denney, and Wijnanda Jacobi, using The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇam*, English translation according to F. Eden Pargiter, ed. with Sanskrit text and various notes (Shastri 2004).

the heat and fire of digestion in the abdomen, referred to as Nābhi (cognate with the word navel) or Maṇipūra, the city of jewels, indicating the internal organs. Above the belly, one finds the operations of the respiratory system, the lungs and heart, which connect with the element of air. Names for the heart *cakra* include Hṛdaya and Anāhata. The realm of space starts in what is later designated as the Viśuddha Cakra located in the throat and extends up into the head, the realm of discernment and eventually transcendence, associated with the Ājñā and Sahasrāra Cakras, respectively⁵.

In Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist narratives, the spiritual life unfolds as the adept moves the energy coiled at the bottom of the spine up through the realms of power and love into the realms of nonattachment and insight, culminating in freedom. The knots (*grantha*) of karma and *saṃskāra* and *vāsanā* impede an individual, keeping the energy in the lower realms. Through practices (*sādhana*) found in various forms of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jaina Yoga, one purifies the gross body which in turn purges the subtle body of its habitual impulses. With this release of tightly held patterns, one is able to ascend to the realm of the heart, gain discernment, and move toward freedom, a vertical rise from the lower realms of anus, genitals, and stomach to heart, throat, and forehead. Eventually one achieves a sense of bliss and freedom beyond even the confines of the human skull.

The Hindu and Buddhist practices of Yoga often follow this path of ascent: earth, water, fire, air, space, insight, and freedom, correlating with Mūla, Svādhiṣṭhāna, Nābhi, Hṛdaya, Viśuddha, Ājñā, and Sahasrāra. The Jaina practice of Śukla Piṇḍastha meditation, purification of materiality, follows a different course. Acknowledging the density of karma and associating it with the earthy, vegetative mass of a lotus, one invokes fire to incinerate the stuff of karma, air to serve as a bellows to beckon the monsoon, water to wash away any lingering impurities, allowing one to move into a space wherein one sees oneself as the self of a fully liberated being.

The yogic accomplishment of mastery over the elements (*bhūta-jaya*) entails a detailed training that focuses on the elements over a period of several months. In this regimen, one begins with concentration on the earth, moving toward an appreciation of the special relationship between the sense of smell residing in the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*) and the earth (*pṛthivī*). Moving up in subtlety, the practitioner then concentrates on the link between subtle taste (*rasa*) and water (*āp*); between visible form (*rūpa*) and light and heat (*tejas*); between touch (*sparśa*) and the wind (*vāyu*); and between sound (*śabda*) and space (*ākāśa*). Beginning with earth, the most gross aspect of manifestation, one progresses to the lightest. This insight into the relationship between the senses and the elements leads to an ability to acknowledge and withhold the outflow of the senses (*prapañca*). Through this mastery, one gains freedom from compulsive attachment; this lightness (*sattva*) ultimately leads to liberation (*mokṣa*).

When these centers are awakened, one then becomes open to an experience described by Mircea Eliade as “cosmicization”. Eliade writes that through the awakening of this *kuṇḍalinī* power, “Not only does the disciple identify himself with the cosmos; he also rediscovers the genesis and destruction of the universe in his own body” (Eliade 1958, p. 244). As Sanjukta Gupta has noted, the human body itself becomes identified with the powers of the universe.⁶ The Hindu goddess tradition is particularly associated with this religious insight. Katherine Harper writes that

...the body as the *imago mundi* has a sevenfold order that found its internal expression in the seven chakras of the body. Each of the seven chakras was envisioned or symbolized by a goddess (more specifically a Śakti) residing in a lotus... When the consciousness had traversed the seven-fold path of the chakras, *mokṣa* was achieved. (Harper 1989, p. 167)

The “metaphor” of the cosmic person in Hinduism, the *dharma-kāya* in Buddhism, and the *loka-kāya* in Jainism within the experiential meditative traditions of Yoga and Tantra become more than

⁵ For detailed explanations of several variant *cakra* systems, see *The Heart of the Yogini: The Yoginīhṛdaya, A Sanskrit Tantric Treatise* (Padoux and Jeanty 2013).

⁶ *Hindu Tantrism* (Gupta et al. 1971) as noted in *The Iconography of the Saptamatrikas: Seven Hindu Goddesses of Spiritual Transformation* (Harper 1989).

metaphors. The body itself, rather than being an impediment to liberation, becomes its very vehicle. By understanding the operations of first the gross and then the subtle body, and by plumbing the depths and heights of its various energy flows, the practitioner of *sādhana* enters into a mode of embodiment that both embraces and transcends the mundane.

3. Jainism: The Ācārāṅga Sūtra and the Jñānārṇava

The cosmology of the Jaina tradition also embraces the elements, but construes them in a markedly different manner. Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th and most recent Tirthankara or Great Teacher of this tradition, lived approximately 2500 years ago, contemporary with the Buddha. Rather than lauding the power and beauty of the earth writ large, he examined it in minute detail, developing the foundation for a powerful indigenous biology. The earliest surviving text of Jainism, the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, recounts Mahavira's grand experiment, which yields the following premises regarding nature and the universe: Life can be found in multiple forms, each charting its own course, energized by a life force (*jīva*) at its core and defined by the karmic particles that surround and constrict its innate energy, consciousness and bliss. According to Jainism, even clods of dirt, drops of water, bursts of flame, and gusts of wind are alive in their specificity. Each possess the sense of touch. Each exert their own will for a period of time before moving from one body to the next, perhaps from elemental form to microbial form to plant or animal or even human. This living universe is also an ethical universe. As we will see in the animal chapter, even animals can and do make ethical decisions that will determine future experience, life after life.

For Mahavira, this feeling universe moving toward compassion began with his careful observance of the natural world. "There are beings living in the earth, living in grass, living on leaves, living in wood, living in cowdung, living in dust-heaps" (Jacobi 1884, I:1:4:6, p. 8.) that merit protection. Rather than gazing on the goods of the earth with greed, Mahavira exhorts his followers to develop an affectionate eye, even toward a well formed tree: "These trees are noble, high and round, big; they have many branches, extended branches, they are very magnificent."⁷ Likewise, monks and nuns are advised to praise vegetables with their speech: "they are grown up, strong, excellent; they have spread their seed, they are full of sap"⁸ as well as food itself: "it is excellent, it is well seasoned, it is most delicious, it is most agreeable."⁹ With this attitude and approach of regarding the world born of the earth, a sense of compassion can arise. The hallmark of the Jain worldview may be summarized as follows: by developing sensitivity to the myriad beings within the world, the heart can incline toward protection rather than exploitation. By developing an attitude of care, one's own fettering karmas diminish, advancing one toward a state of moral and practical freedom.

Jainism has charted its own course since its inception, distinguishing itself from Buddhism by asserting the eternality of individual souls and from Hinduism's Advaita Vedānta by rejecting the existence of a singular unified consciousness. At the same time, it shared a common interest in technologies of worship and meditation, utilizing techniques common to all three traditions, including ritual worship (without animal sacrifice), and meditation, including visualization and recitation of mantra. Like the Buddhist and Yoga traditions, it incorporated elemental meditations into these practices, which find full expression in two texts: the *Jñānārṇava* of Subhacandra (ca. 11th century), and the *Yogaśāstra* of Hemacandra (ca. 1150). Select verses from the former text are quoted below, most of which appear verbatim in the *Yogaśāstra*. The *Jñānārṇava*'s author was a prominent philosopher within the Digambara or Sky Clad group, while Hemacandra represents the Svetambara or White Clad denomination, underscoring the universality of these meditation practices within Jaina communities.

⁷ *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, II:4:2:12, pp. 154–55.

⁸ *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, II:4:2:16, p. 155.

⁹ *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, II:4:2:6, p. 153.

The *Jñānārṇava* describes elemental meditations in two different chapters, and places the elements in two different sequences. Chapter 29 sets forth the four elements (earth, water, air, fire), four corresponding geometric forms (square, crescent, sphere, triangle), four colors (ochre, white, blue-black, yellow), and four mantras (*lam*, *vam*, *yam*, *ram*) to be performed. In Chapter 37, the order is altered: earth, fire, wind, water, and space. Both diverge from the standard order found in Buddhism and in Hindu Yoga texts, which proceed from earth to water to fire to air to space.

17. This *maḍala* of the four elements
is inconceivable and beyond characterization.
Through the concentration on the elements (Mahābhūta Dhāraṇā)
the perception of this by oneself can occur¹⁰.

This stanza exhorts the reader to focus attention on the elements in such a way that one becomes rendered speechless, no longer able to conceptualize or characterize them as merely physical objects. In the poetic journey that follows in this chapter of the *Jñānārṇava*, earth is linked to color, geometry, and mantra, demonstrating the innate complexity of the “great practice.”

18. The first element to be experienced
is the earth, followed by water.
From there one expands into the city of the wind,
all the way to the limits of the fire *maḍala*.

The order is similar to that found in the *Visuddhimagga* as indicated above and the *Markaṇḍeya Pūrāna* as described in the first chapter of this book. However, two profound differences must be noted. First, fire appears in the final position, moving air or wind to position three. Second, the fifth great element is not listed here, for reasons that will become clear as we move into the space chapter of this book.

19. (The earth) is to be internalized through the earth seed mantra (*lam*).
Equal in splendor to melted gold,
approached through the mark of the lightning bolt,
this city carries everything on its square.

This verse communicates details about how to proceed with building the meditative experience. It requires the utterance of a mantra, in the case of earth, the mantra *lam*. One is to visualize a golden color when meditating upon the earth, as well as the marker of lightning bolt and the geometric shape of a square.

Chapter 37 of the *Jñānārṇava* more explicit directions are given in terms of the technique and results of a slightly different meditative sequence. In this later section, the order of concentration on the elements is switched, with water rising to ascendancy as a culminating practice that cools the burning fires generated by the breathing practices that have eradicated karmas. Space enters the list, recognized as the container of the other four elements. One reconfigures the gaze upon the earth to visualize the earth as taking the shape of a lotus. The “stuff” of the earth becomes correlated with mountains seen in the distance at dusk. This meditation then promotes fires to burn, scorching the eight downward petals of the lotus that represent the eight Jaina karmas. The four negative karmas, to be purified and expelled through this practice, are karmas that (1) obstruct knowledge; (2) obstruct intuition; (3) obstruct energy; and (4) that cause delusional thinking and action. The four remaining categories of karma, which are also ultimately left behind; are (5) karmas that enable feeling; (6) lifespan; (7) physique; and (8) social status. This fire which is used to incinerate the karmic petals

¹⁰ The translations that follow are by the author, in consultation with Sanskrit seminar students. These students include Griffin Guez, Jodi Shaw, Wijnanda Jacobi, Natale Ferreira, and Amparo Denney. Griffin Guez rendered preferable translations for verses 37: 6, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31. Jodi Shaw’s translation has been used for 37:17. The translation is based on the Sanskrit edition included in (Jain 2011).

leads to effortful breathing that frees the practitioners from all constraints. The visualization on water leads to a reflection on the presence of the liberated soul and great teacher Mahāvīra, seen externally on his Lion Throne as well as internally within one's own body. As will be seen in the chapter on Space, this final meditation exercise reconfigures the space of personal identity as well as allows one to enter into an experience of the Siddha Loka, the realm of freedom that hovers at the top of the Jaina cosmosphere.

The following verses invoke the earth variously as a mountain, the filaments of a lotus, the color of melted gold, and the murmuring of all sixteen seed syllables:

37. 2. Those who are well controlled (*samyamis*)
and who are totally conscious overcome the snare of birth
using the five concentrations on substances.

These are to be known as explained below by the heroes.

3. (These substances) would be earth,
then fire, breath, and eventually water,
all contained within the form of space.

These are then to be understood in steps.

The above two verses introduce the order of the elements and state that the practice of meditating upon them must be followed in sequence. The phrase uses the term *samyama*, a technical term from the *Yoga Sūtra* to describe adepts in Yoga who have mastered the triple practices of concentration, meditation, and *samādhi*, the last three limbs of Yoga through which one gains mastery over the elements, the senses, and the mind.

5. The Yogi should move his or her well-formed focus
toward the middle of the thousand petaled lotus,
bringing to mind its blazing immeasurable splendor,
shining as brilliantly as melted gold.

6. Like filaments rising up in the lotus,
and like the brilliant mountains
that surround the earth,
(these experiences) delight the bee-like mind.

The visualization of the lotus, accompanied with the color of molten gold, seems to perhaps evoke the color of the sunrise, with the petals perhaps representing the reach of sunbeams at the start of the day.

7. (While gazing at these mountains)
one should focus on the crown of the lotus
as the golden heavenly Mount (Meru),
emitting a web of yellow light,
tinging the horizon in reddish brown.

8. One should think of oneself
seated comfortably and tranquil
(high on a white throne)
similar to the autumnal moon.

This verse directs the focus away from the splendid external landscape, asking the meditator to see oneself in the special position of sitting upon a throne (according to the commentary) and assuming a mood of ease, comfort, and tranquility. If the "autumnal moon" refers to the equinox that occurs each September, then the full moon would be setting to the west while the sun rises in the east.

9. Marked with qualities of abstinence, patience, and discipline,
free from attraction and aversion,
one cuts off the flow of karma
at its very origin.

That meditative state brings a state of equipoise, a moment where the haunting thoughts of the past and the anxious anticipation of the future are held in abeyance. One dwells in a state of moral purity.

10. Then, using the practice of meditation
on the lotus in the *maṇḍala* of the navel,
one focuses on the beautiful
uplifted sixteen petals.

With the mind calmed, one is able to bring the focus within the body upon the navel, the source of sound at the base of the diaphragm. In this relaxed and balanced mode, one turns to the array of sounds that may be emitted from the body.

11. One should reflect upon the vibration
of the great mantra at the crown of the lotus,
its petals nested within one another
as a glorious garland of (sixteen) syllables.
(From the commentary: a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, ḹ, e, ai, o, au, am, aḥ)

The sequential uttering of the sixteen syllables lifts the energy from the lower part of the abdomen to the crown of the head,

12. Through the murmuring of the sixteen seed mantras
comes a state of abeyance adorned with the emptying of sound.
(This experience is like) the glowing of a pendulous moon at its fullest,
its white face extending beauty (everywhere).

Like the classic Tantric image of the sun and moon flanking the minaret-like temple, this verse suggests that the chanting of mantra provides a moment of catharsis as beautiful as the full moon.

The luxuriant language from chapter 29 invites the reader to visualize the earth as suffused with a golden hue, murmuring the syllable *lam*. As its abstract representation, one contemplates the shape of a lightning bolt, inscribed upon a square. Chapter 37 adds a bodily interiorization of a 16 petal lotus, feeling it in a sense echoed by the density and immensity of a real and imagined mountain. The golden hued earth turns a reddish brown in this contemplative practice. This first installment connecting earth, a palette of yellow and brown, the lotus, the mountain, and the utterance of mantra within the human body links the concentration on elements with the transformation and elevation of consciousness.

4. Water in Jainism: Ācārāṅga and Tattvārtha Sūtras

The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* boldly proclaims: “there are living beings in water, many lives; of a truth, to the monks, water has been declared to be living matter.”¹¹ The author proclaims that one must recognize the life in water bodies and protect it. A person should drink only water that has been filtered to avoid harm to the more complex bacteria (*nigoda*) that resides in water. If one protects all forms of water, then one will earn “the splendor, honor, and glory of this life for the sake of . . . final liberation.”¹² The care taken to do no harm to water extends to the meager daily implements used by a monk or nun for survival. Clear instruction is given not to use one’s begging bowl until “the water has dried up and the moisture is gone”¹³. At the most minute level, this early text of Jainism accords water a special place in the ethical life of Jaina monks and nuns, requiring its constant and careful attention and protection.

¹¹ Jacobi, tr., *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, p. 6.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 170.

The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* specifies that water exists in three primary modes: souls that inhabit water as described in the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, bodies of water such as oceans and lakes and rivers, and heavenly beings associated with bodies of oceanic water. First, the text lists the three forms taken by souls that inhabit water bodies: snow, rain, and ice. Every water soul's body possesses the sense of touch. As an individual soul or life force (*jīva*) it may exist as a water body only a short time before taking a new form (Tatia 1994, pp. 33–63). However, the lifespan of a large body of water may be as long as seven thousand years (Śāntisūri 1950, p. 143).

In three ways, and in three realms, Jainism depicts water. First, particles of water are unique and distinct forms of life, potentially destined for future births in other bodies. As such, one seeks to protect water bodies in order to avoid the accretion of karma that can occlude one's own energy, consciousness, and bliss. In the aggregate, these life forms gather together to form the second expression of water, the flowing and still waters of rivers, lakes, and oceans. As a geological feature, water surrounds and in a sense supports the land and, in the case of mountain lakes, is contained by earth. Water takes a third form in the heavens. One might interpret descriptions of the oceanic youths as remarkable cloud formations that rise and swirl above and around the mountains, earning the rewards for a life lived in virtue. It must be remembered, however, that for Jainism the heavens are a temporary state, and that eventually one must descend from heaven to regain a human state, the only form through which one may find release and ascent to the Siddha Loka, the realm of freedom far above and beyond the hellish, earthly, and heavenly realms.

This brings us to the discussion of the Jaina Yogi and his or her relationship with the world of water. As we saw in the prior chapter, elemental meditations play an important role in the path toward freedom in the *Jñānārṇava* and the *Yoga Śāstra*. The ethical care accorded to water becomes transformed into an active embrace of the presence of water. Water here becomes a focus of meditation, wherein the practitioner regards the outer beauty of water as well as experiences its bodily presence.

The *Jñānārṇava* suggests that the Yogi contemplate the timelessness of waves within the ocean:

37.4. The Yogi, with equanimity while in the world,
focuses on the milky ocean.
The mist of each silent, peaceful wave
resembles a garland of pearls.

One can imagine the Yogi sitting on a hill above the ocean, watching the waves lap against the shore, mesmerized by their constancy and brightness.

The Yogi then turns his or her mental focus to the geometry, color, and mantra associated with water:

37.20. (Water), represented by the crescent moon,
is signified with the Varuṇa syllable (*vaṇi*).
Its pulsing sprinkles nectar.
This city of Varuṇa is the color of the moon (white).

The shape associated with water is the crescent, as if the moon itself holds water like a delicate, elongated vessel. Second, one murmurs the mantra *vaṇi* repeatedly, forming a wave of sound that connects one's attention with the vibratory qualities of water itself. This practice generates a sensation within the body of releasing a pulsation that "sprinkles nectar," a simultaneously metaphorical and emotional reference. Finally, one visualizes and associates water with the color white, similar to the waves one sees in the ocean. This concentration on water brings the mind to a place of focus and calm and allows for an elevated state of purification within the Jaina journey to freedom.

As noted above, the placement of water in the Jaina path of purification takes place with the coming of the rains after wind:

24. That virtuous soul should focus on the spectacle
in the western sky of dense clouds,

filled with moisture, rumbling lightning, and rainbows.

25. Then the ascetic should focus diligently
upon the unrelenting, tremendous rains,
each drop illuminated by lightning,
making them shine like large brilliant pearls.

26. Then the Yogi should meditate
on the beautiful water abode resembling a half moon
that causes the ocean to rise up,
overflowing into the face of the sky.

27. Once this inconceivable, powerful, divine
meditation on water has arisen,
the body purified from dust is born.

Water allows the quelling of karmas.

5. Fire in Jainism: The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* and the *Jñānārṇava*

Whereas the presence of fire in Hindu traditions marks the large Vedic rituals and the smaller temple and home *pūjās*, fire presents complications for the Jaina faith. Fire has great destructive power. Upon full initiation, Jaina monks and nuns are not allowed to kindle fire or to cook their own food. They generally refrain from participating in ceremonies that require the use of fire. To light a fire causes great disturbance. To snuff out a fire requires smothering its vital energy. The most nonviolent behavior would be to avoid fire whenever possible, though as we will see, the practice of inner purification (*tapas*) serves a central role in the dispersal of fettering karmas.

The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* warns that one should be mindful of fire, that if one “denies the world of fire-bodies, one denies the self; if one denies the self, one denies the world of fire-bodies.”¹⁴ The text states that one should not hurt others through the use of fire. Care is to be exerted not to do harm to fire nor to allow fire to harm others. The author notes that:

There are living beings living in the earth, living in the grass, living on leaves, living in wood, living in cowdung, living in dust-heaps . . . which, coming near fire, fall into it. [They are] touched by fire and shrivel up, lose their senses, and die there.¹⁵

The destructive power of fire must be avoided. “A wise person should not act sinfully [in regard to] fire, nor cause others to act so, nor allow others to act so. The one who knows the harm caused by fire is called a sage.”¹⁶ Great respect must be accorded to fire.

The *Jñānārṇava* takes a different approach to fire and sees it as a prime candidate for focus and purification. Chapter 29 describes the geometry, mantra, and color associated with fire:

29. 22. The fire *maṇḍala* is approached through the *svāstika* triangle
with the seed (*bīja*) mantra (*ram*),
shining like one hundred fires arising,
pulsing with awe-inspiring yellow.

The repetition of the mantra, accompanied with focus upon the color and form of fire results in a flow of positive sensation:

37. 13. From the murmuring (of that mantra *raṃ*)
one should then focus afterward

¹⁴ Jacobi, tr., *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, p. 7.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., adapted.

on the emerging gentle result,
an uninterrupted succession of endless pulsing fire.

This state of meditation undoubtedly is accompanied with a slowing of the breath and the generation of the brain wave state that indicates success in mastering the technique¹⁷. The next step indicates the distinctly Jaina mark of this practice:

14. By this, the eternal Jina (is visualized) within these flickering flames.
Then, when that fire burns continually,
one becomes steady,
situated in the white lotus of the heart.

In order to accomplish this pinnacle of freedom, one must first destroy all the fetters of karma, delineated in Jainism within eight groupings, and conceptualized in the form of a lotus. In this instance, one invokes the purifying powers of fire:

15. The eight upside down petals,
representing the eight kinds of karma,
are to be burnt completely by the fierce fire
that arises with the great mantra and meditation.

The four negative karmas, to be purified and expelled through this practice, are karmas that obstruct knowledge, that obstruct intuition, that obstruct energy, and that cause delusional thinking and action. The four remaining categories, which are also ultimately left behind, are karmas that enable feeling, lifespan, physique, and social status (Tatia 1994, pp. 33–63).

From an internal visualization, one turns to an external seeing of fire:

16. Then the triangular mandala of fire (is visualized)
outside of the body.
One should focus on those flickering flames
as if they are bioluminescence.

The *svāstika* represents the cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth in the realms of humans, gods, animals, and hell beings. It signals the possibility of release, of freedom from the karmic cycle. As related to fire, it works with mantra to advance one on the path toward great purification.

17. Marked by a svastika located at the edge,
the fire seed *bīja* is approached (with the syllable *ram*).
It is smokeless and glittering with gold
as it ascends in the rising wind.

The dramatic power of this combined application of focus on the triangular flames of fire and the mantra *ram* results in rapid progress in the eradication of karma:

18. The inner fire of the mantra burns
like a brush fire burns city after city,
running and resounding swiftly,
spreading radiance from its flames.

The end of the conflagration brings a state of peace, somewhat akin to the final peace found as the embers stop glowing on the funeral pyre.

¹⁷ See *Yoga Sūtra* I:31, I:34, and II:49–53.

19. This state reduces both body and lotus to ash.
 Burning itself out, the fire gently, softly
 goes into a state of peace.

This state does not end with empty finality, but with a glorious ascent to the realm of the Siddha Loka.

6. Air in Jainism: *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, *Jīva Vicāra Prakaraṇam*, and *Jñānārṇava*

The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* describes the presence of life within the air. In grand language the author proclaims, “for the sake of the splendor, honor, and glory of this life, for the sake of birth, death, and final liberation, for the removal of pain . . . if a man acts sinfully towards wind . . . this deprives him of happiness and perfect wisdom.”¹⁸ This first lecture of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* ends with the reminder that no person should act sinfully to any of the six kinds of lives, whether found in the earth, water, fire, plants, animals, or the air. Observant Jaina monks and nuns are not allowed to tread upon green grass or to shout loudly or to use a fan, or to kindle or extinguish a fire, out of concern not to disturb elemental or plant bodies.

The *Jīva Vicāra Prakaraṇam*, written by Śāntisūrīśvara in the 12th century, provides extensive details on the nature of life according to Jainism. In regard to the wind, it delineates winds that blow up, that blow down, that come from the mouth, that carry a “melodious humming tune,” that are dense and rarefied (Śāntisūrī 1950, pp. 33–34). The text also specifies the life-span not only of air bodies, but of all the elements:

The duration of life of the earth (an earth body) is twenty-two thousand years; that of the water-bodied souls is seven thousand years; that of the wind-bodied is three thousand years while that of the trees is ten thousand years and that of the fire is three days and three nights. (Śāntisūrī 1950, p. 142)

The text provides greater detail on specific forms of soil, stating that earth body life can exist for a thousand years in the desert, rich soil for twelve thousand years, with the hardest of stones lasting the maximum of twenty two thousand years ((Śāntisūrī 1950), p. 144). Following the same logic, life within a particular body of air might last as long as three thousand years, while most air bodies abide for a much shorter period.

Jainism distinguishes itself from Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta due to its staunch adherence to the teaching of the real presence of entities in the world. Souls exist, karmas exist, and through the practice of ethics, karmas, which are particular and real, can be expunged, leading to freedom. The path to this freedom taught in the *Jñānārṇava* and repeated in Hemacandra’s *Yogaśāstra* uses the same techniques found in the traditions of Tantra, which developed in both Buddhism and in Hinduism. As with the practices of the other elements, concentration on the wind is supported by a specific geometric mark, in this case a sphere, the color of bluish black, and the mantra *yam*.

29.21. The Vāyu *maṇḍala*, subtly marked,
 is approached by the wind syllable (*yam*).
 It glows like blue-black ointment,
 gathered into the shape of a perfect sphere.

The practice of focusing on the wind, according to the author, moves more quickly than the prior three and seems to favor people of a spiritual disposition.

29.23. Thus, in these (four practices)
 the wind moves quickly and incrementally.
 This is to be known at the right time
 by those devotional highest people

¹⁸ Jacobi, tr., *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, p. 13.

The 29th chapter of the *Jñānārṇava* describes concentration on the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. These take four corresponding geometric forms, the square, crescent, triangle, and sphere. Four colors are associated with these four: ochre, white, yellow, and blue-black, respectively. Four mantras correlate with the four elements, starting with *laṃ* and extending through *vaṃ* and *raṃ* to *yaṃ*.

Chapter 37 states that concentration on the wind allows one to travel widely, experience passion, and settle into calm:

22. In this state, one finds enjoyment in moving about the world
with one's countenance travelling with the wind,
wandering to the abodes of people,
settling down on the face of the earth.
23. With the powerful wind,
one can speedily rouse oneself up into passion.
Then, through firm, accomplished practice,
one can calm the breath (the inner wind).

As with the Buddhist and Hindu texts, the Jaina approach to wind, air, and breath interconnects.

The generation of strong breathing connects with the approach of the cleansing, cooling monsoon:

20. With great swiftness and great strength,
the Yogi meditates without interruption
on moving through the air
as if having entered the path of a sky chariot (*prāṇāyāma*).
21. Rallying an army of gods
by bellowing thirty breaths,
he holds in abeyance dense swarms (of karma)
as if dousing them in the mighty sea.
22. In this state, one finds enjoyment in moving about the world
with one's countenance travelling with the wind,
wandering to the abodes of people,
settling down on the face of the earth.
23. With the powerful wind,
one can speedily rouse oneself up into passion.
Then, through firm, accomplished practice,
one can calm the breath (the inner wind).

The arrival of the monsoon, as mentioned above, washes away all impurities, paving the way for the final ascent: complete identification with the pure soul, as symbolized generally by one or another of the great 24 Tīrthaṅkaras.

7. Space in Jainism

Jainism delineates space with great specificity. It describes the universe as bounded into the shape of a human person, with infernal regions below, planet earth in the middle, heavens above the earth, and, at the upper reaches of reality, a realm known as the Siddha Loka, a region wherein dwell all those who have been liberated from the shackles of bondage. Karma suffuses space, as do countless individual souls known as *jīvas*. Through willful ascent, these souls attempt to navigate and purge their psychological spaces and move toward freedom. In order to fully comprehend the Jaina ascent within space, its key principles and practices are outlined below to provide the context for the meditation on space found in the *Jñānārṇava* and the *Yogaśāstra*. This will include a description of Jaina temples, which, as with the Buddhist stupa, provide a visual reminder of one's emplacement within and possible transcendence of the realm of the five elements.

The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* of Umasvati, probably written in approximately 450 C.E., posits nine core principles of Jaina philosophy, summarized as follows:

1. Multiple forms of life or souls (*jīva*) have existed since beginningless time. These souls can never be created nor destroyed and will live forever, taking birth after birth.
2. These souls interact with four non-living forces (*ajīva*): matter /karma, time, space, and movement.
3. Purposeful actions committed by the soul cause an influx of karma (*āsrava*) that adheres to the soul, obscuring its innate energy, consciousness, and bliss.
4. These adhesions of karma result in the bondage (*bandha*) of the soul.
5. Karma may take auspicious (*puṇya*) forms.
6. Karmic particles can also be inauspicious (*pāpa*).
7. Through adherence to vows one can stop (*saṃvara*) the influx of 148 forms of karma.
8. This results in the sloughing off of karma (*nirjara*).
9. Once freed from all karma, one enters liberation/freedom (*mokṣa/nirvāṇa/kevala*).

In addition to these philosophical principles, the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* provides geographical and biological views of reality, delineating specific continents, multiple parallel universes, and historical epochs and eons. Life may take form in the space of hellish, earthly, or heavenly realms or, in the case of freedom from all karma, in the realm of transcendence. In the earthly realm, life may be elemental, microbial, vegetative, or locomotive. Life dwells in rocks, clods of earth, drops of water, flowing streams, radiant sunbeams, flickering flames, gusts of wind, viruses and bacteria, fungi and plants, as well as all manner of insects, fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals, including humans. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* places these souls into a hierarchy depending upon the number of senses carried. Elemental, microbial, and vegetative souls possess the sense of touch. Worms add the sense of taste. Crawling insects also possess smell. Flying insects add the ability to see. Higher level organisms as listed above can also hear and think.

Spiritual advancement takes place in Jainism within the space of a fourteen-fold path. Due to the density of past karmas, all individuals, including human beings, arrive in the world cloaked in ignorance, the first of fourteen rungs (*guṇasthāna*) of life's ladder. A moment of spontaneous awareness may occur, jolting an individual up to the fourth step, the state of insight and equanimity, through which one receives a glimpse of freedom. Many people forget about this experience, falling back to the second rung, or remember the experience fondly but neglect to take action and remain at the third level. Those who are moved by the momentary taste of freedom pledge to follow the five purifying vows listed above and advance to the fifth stage of the spiritual path. Following this experience of release, the soul then either falls back down into a deluded view, or takes up the resolve to change, to enter into a path of progressive purification.¹⁹

The status of the liberated soul remains the object of speculation. Umasvati states that the soul soars to the limits of the universe:

Omniscience arises when deluding karma is eliminated and as a result, knowledge-covering, intuition-covering and obstructed karma are eliminated (X:1).

There is no fresh bondage because the causes of bondage have been eliminated and all destructive karma have worn off (X:2).

The elimination of all types of karma is liberation (X:3).

When all karmic bondage is eliminated, the soul soars upward to the border of cosmic space (X:5).

... it is like castor seeds released from the pod

and like the flame of fire (X:7) (Tatia 1994, pp. 253–55)

¹⁹ For a full discussion of the Jaina spiritual path, see (Jaini 1979).

Padmanabh Jaini notes that “it must be borne in mind that any description of the perfected being, or of the infinite cognition and bliss which characterize him, is purely conventional. In reality such things, lying as they do beyond the space-time limitations of ordinary human consciousness, cannot be described at all.”²⁰ However, Paul Dundas, referring to the *Aupapatika*, an early Jain text, is careful to point out that Jainism does specify that the soul “rises . . . to the realm of the *siddhas*, the liberated *jivas* at the top of the universe where it will exist perpetually without any further rebirth in a disembodied and genderless state of perfect joy, energy, consciousness and knowledge” ((Dundas 2000), pp. 104–5). He also notes that the Jains are scrupulous in specifying that the individuality of the enlightened soul will continue. Jainism does not entail any sort of merging into a universal soul or state of oneness.

The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* describes the liberated soul as follows:

Not long nor small or round nor triangular
 nor quadrangular or circular;
 not black nor blue nor red nor green nor white;
 neither of good nor bad smell;
 not bitter nor pungent nor astringent nor sweet;
 neither rough nor soft; neither heavy nor light;
 neither cold nor hot; neither harsh nor smooth.
 The soul is without body, without rebirth,
 without contact (with karma),
 not feminine nor masculine nor neuter.
 The soul perceives and knows but there is no analogy
 (to describe the liberated soul).
 Its essence is without form.
 There is no condition of the unconditioned.²¹

This ascent results in an eternal state of freedom, an inconceivable yet compelling image. As we will see below, the *Jñānārṇava* and the *Yogaśāstra* state that what one encounters in the Siddha Loka will be none other than the presence of liberated souls identical in shape to those found in the many images of Jinas found in the Jaina temple. The temple in a sense moves its pilgrim physically and symbolically to another cosmic era, another *Yuga*, where it is possible to ascend to the state of perfect freedom, represented by the pillar of pride, Mt. Meru, the lofty point at the very top of the universe from which the liberated soul can survey the continued rounds of existence while not being tempted to fall from the abode of eternal consciousness, energy, and bliss.

According to Jainism, the cosmos takes the shape of the human body; the human body takes the shape of the cosmos in an interplay of microphase and macrophase. The lower realms of the body, burdened with karmas, hold the soul tightly within *samsāra*, the cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. Due to karmas committed in this life and prior lives, the individual soul must return again and again, moving from elemental and animal forms to human, hellish, and heavenly forms, depending on the nature of one’s deeds. Birth within the human body is a necessary precondition for undertaking the work of spiritual purification. The middle realms of the human body, a place of will and heat, allow for purification and taking up the vows that dispel karma: nonviolence, truthfulness, not stealing, sexual restraint, and non-possession. The upper realms of the body provide the clarity of heaven-like experiences. Purified senses and a calm mind can erase lifetimes of stress and karma.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 271.

²¹ Jacobi, tr., *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, I:V:6, p. 52.

8. Jainism and Tantra

Douglas R. Brooks has described Tantra as polythetic, holding multiple meanings depending upon context and practice (Brooks 1990, pp. 52–54, 72, 106, 227). Though associated with violative practices such as eating meat and fish, drinking alcohol, and engaging in sexual intercourse, not all forms of Tantra require such rituals, some choosing instead to emphasize the purification of the elements (*bhūta-śuddhi*) through the practice of the elemental concentrations (*panca-mahā-bhūta dhāraṇā*) as described in this book, combined with mantra recitation, attunement to color, and visualization. Without the encumbrance of secret practices, many Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains employ the techniques of Tantra regularly. In the words of Paul Dundas, “the possibility of using sanctified language of a general Tantric idiom . . . has never caused the Jains any difficulty, and in common with the Hindus and Buddhists they cultivated an elaborate science of mantra and yantra” (Dundas 2000, p. 232). As we have seen in the texts and temples we have surveyed and visited, establishing oneself within the geometry and sound and color of the elements results in states of transcendence and even bliss.

Christopher S. George, who studied for many years with Geshe Wangyal in New Jersey and with Padma Gylatsan and Mana Vajra Vajrācārya for six months in Nepal, notes that the practice of Tantra is not to annihilate the ego, but to transform the ego through overcoming ignorance of the many factors that shape it. This requires “the transformation of the mundane *ahaṃkāra* or “self-image” of the *sādhaka* or candidate into the transcendent self-image.” He goes on to write that “for the candidate who has effected this transformation, all his[er] actions become . . . pure and blameless acts . . . the world in which he[er] moves is none other than the Vajra-realm, transcending any notion of being or non-being.” This process involves three phases: construction of the *maṇḍala*, the palace wherein one re-designs the personality, the consecration of all actions according to religious precepts, and finally, the “dissolution of his[er] own self-image to rebirth in the form [of the divine],” at which point the candidate proclaims, “I am the perfected one!” (George 1973, pp. 5–6).

What does it mean to “construct a *maṇḍala*?” Our earlier translations of the *Jñānārṇava* discussed this practice in the context of the “*maṇḍala* of the four elements,” the fire *maṇḍala*, and meditating upon the solar plexus while intoning the sixteen syllable mantra. It might be surmised that any meditation process that seeks to transform one into a more worthy person involves some form of a *maṇḍala* practice.

One of the great ideals of Buddhist traditions is Avalokiteśvara, the Buddha who gazes downward with compassion. This form of the Buddha developed popularity during the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Many consider the Dalai Lama to be an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara. This Buddha is also known as the holder of great compassion (Mahākaraṇika) and the one who holds the white lotus (Padmapāṇi). The Tibetan name is Chenrizig. In China the gender of Avalokiteśvara changes to female and she is called Kuan-shih-yin or Kuan-yin. Her name in Japan is Kannon.

Janet Gyatso provides guidance in an introductory booklet on how to meditate upon Avalokiteśvara through the process of visualization. She writes:

The basic point of visualization is to transform one’s experienced reality, at least during the period of meditation. The idea is that the more mental time one spends visualizing Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, etc., the more the nature of one’s entire mental outlook will be benefitted. In addition, the power to visualize the whole universe as having become enlightened will greatly increase one’s power over one’s feelings, perceptions, and experiences in life [I]t is within our own power to become enlightened and thereby live in an enlightened world. (Gyatso 1980, p. 9)

She notes that some teachers advise fixing the gaze on only one part of the image to be visualized, and build out the memory field gradually. Other teachers advise staring at the whole image until the field becomes fixed and familiar and can be seen as if an old friend. She recommends the use of a 108 bead mala, noting that “Each bead may be considered a symbol of the deity upon whom one is

meditating, and the string running through them is a symbol of the consciousness of the Bodhisattva” (Gyatso 1980, p. 12).

Practices may also be found in the Tibetan tradition that directly correlate the four elements with forms of the goddess, mantras, and body parts. Nāgabodhi’s *Samāja-sādhana-vyavasthāli* states that the goddess “Moharati Locanā is the earth element, Dveṣarati Māmakī is water, Rāgarati Pāṇḍaravāsini is fire, Vajrarati Tārā is *rlung* (Tibetan for air or breath, *vāyu* and *prāṇa*)”. The Tibetan commentator Mkhas Grub then identifies Locanā with the genitalia, Tārā with the navel, Māmakī with the heart, and Pāṇḍaravāsini with the throat, proclaiming them to be the abodes of the earth, air, water, and fire energies, respectively. (Dachille 2016). Though the correlations vary from tradition to tradition, the Tantric method remains clear: linking body to the elements and to the larger cosmos.

In the Śaiva Trika system, one gradually blends visualization with mantra and ritual. Sthaneshwar Timalsina “identifies the body as the key constituent of the transformative practices of Tantric visualization.” The process of meditation develops a new source of identity; he notes that “This creation of an alternate paradigm aims to nullify habitually given mental patterns and allow the mind to not just be free from previous conditions but also from the conditions created during the meditative practice”. The practice of mantra “elevates language to a higher status than that of a merely descriptive mechanism” and one comes to regard “the body as temple and as the cosmos . . . [leading to] bliss and awareness . . . [allowing one to] alter the preconditioned mind by reprogramming it with new meaning to the body and language” (Timalsina 2015, p. 48). Timalsina summarizes the Tantric process into three major moves, common to all the texts we have studied. First, one employs the purification of the elements (*bhūtaśuddhi*) such as we have seen described in the *Dhātu Vibhaṅga*, the *Viśuddhi Magga*, the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, the *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā*, and the *Jñānārṇava*. He offers the following chart which more or less applies to the various systems we have explored:

<i>ha</i>	sky	circle	no color
<i>ya</i>	air	hexagon	smoky
<i>ra</i>	fire	triangle	red
<i>va</i>	water	half circle	white
<i>la</i>	earth	square	yellow

(Timalsina 2015, p. 40)

Second, he notes the importance of fire as the purifying agent, which we saw most poignantly in the *Jñānārṇava* where all the forms of karma, visualized as petals on a lotus, were mentally incinerated. Third, he emphasizes the physical, corporeal nature of this practice: “the body, in this visualization, transforms into a *maṇḍala*, a geometric design, allowing the subject to identify his/[her] body with what the *maṇḍala* represents” (Timalsina 2015, p. 71).²² For the Buddhist, one gains freedom through the emptiness (*śūnya*) of vast empty space (*ākāśa*). The Śaiva will encounter one or many of the forms of the goddess, as did Vasiṣṭha when he entered the cave. The practitioner of Sāṃkhya-Yoga will overcome the fetters of afflicted karma, moving into a state of abiding happiness. The Jaina, as we will see below in the *Jñānārṇava*, will come face to face with the liberated Jina and see that elevated person as no different from one’s own self.

9. The *Jñānārṇava* and the Culmination of Jaina Tantra

Chapter 37 of the *Jñānārṇava*, which appears in nearly identical form in Hemacandra’s *Yogaśāstra*, provides a distinctly Jaina approach to the processes of elemental purification and the transformation of self-identity. The standard Buddhist and Hindu construal of the elements follows the order of earth, water, fire, air, and space. The earliest record of this specific order appears in the *Dhātu Vibhaṅga*, a Buddhist text. The *Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, as quoted earlier, provides early correlations between elements and the body that later takes full blossom in Tantra. The *Jñānārṇava* follows an atypical ascent through

²² Timalsina also notes the correlation between the visualized body of Tantra and the habitual body of Merleau (p. 70).

the senses. Rather than proceeding from gross to subtle, with earth at the bottom, topped with water, fire, and air before reaching space, the Jaina rendering moves from earth to fire, from fire to air, and from air to water before reaching space.

One reconfigures the gaze upon the earth to visualize the earth as taking the shape of a lotus. The “stuff” of the earth becomes correlated with mountains seen in the distance at dusk. The meditator then visualizes fires scorching the eight downward petals of the lotus that represent the eight Jaina karmas. The four negative karmas, to be purified and expelled through this practice, obstruct knowledge, intuition, and energy, and cause delusional thinking and action. The four karmas that enable feeling, lifespan, physique, and social status must also go up in imaginal flames. The heat of this fire fans strong winds and effortful breathing that carry away the residues of smoke and ash and generate billowy clouds. Pelting rains wash away all the remnants of the burned karmas, and clear away all obstacles and constraints. The final visualization reveals purified space and the presence of the liberated soul and great teacher Mahāvīra. First, the meditator sees the outward form (*murthi*) of the Jina seated on a lion throne. Upon closer inspection, as with the moment of transformation mentioned above by George and Timalisina, one sees that one’s own self is not different from this vision of the perfected being. The goal has been achieved.

At the beginning of this meditation, one visualizes oneself as seated on a wonderful meditation throne:

- 37.8. One should think of oneself
seated comfortably and tranquil
(high on a white throne)
similar to the autumnal moon.
9. Marked with qualities of abstinence, patience, and discipline,
free from attraction and aversion,
one cuts off the flow of karma
at its very origin.

One visualizes the petals of an earthy lotus as one’s impedimental karmas. As we have seen above, one incinerates these petals, invoking fire. Next one breathes rhythmically thirty times to stir up rain-bearing winds. These monsoon-like rains sweep away the ash, cools the fires, and cleanse the earth. One sees oneself as not different from the liberated saint:

27. Once this inconceivable, powerful, divine
meditation on water has arisen,
the body purified from dust is born.
28. Then the accomplished one
ocuses on his omniscient soul,
liberated from the seven bodily constituents,
shining like the unblemished full moon.
29. His soul, joined with heavenly eminence,
is worshipped by demons, gods, and serpents alike,
possessing both beauty and power,
seated upon the lion’s throne (an allusion to Mahāvīra).
30. The Yogi should meditate on the self in one’s own body,
an embryo in the form of a person
whose karmas have been diminished without remainder,
trembling with immeasurable beauty.
31. The Yogi whose practice grows
to uninterrupted steadiness in Piṇḍastha Meditation
soon reaches unparalleled, auspicious bliss,
and is called the Noble One.

32. He meditates on the glistening whiteness
of the new nectar on the full moon,
experiencing a moment of blessed omniscience,
seated on the golden mountain peak,
free from all sensory outflows.
He meditates on the self and the universal form,
on the multitudes of teachers in the three realms,
as well as on the inconceivable Lord.

This meditation makes one similar to the Jina who has crossed the great water to the other shore. In this Tantric transformation, one uses visualization and mantra to incinerate impurities, obtaining the diamond-like body beyond the reach of all karmas.

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

Appendix A. *Jñānārṇava* Chapter 37

1. According to the auspicious radiant shining souls,
four concentrations are to be recognized:
firm in substance (*piṇḍastha*), firm in movement (*padastha*),
firm in form (*rūpastham*), and beyond form (*rūpavarjitam*).
2. Those who are well controlled (*samyamis*)
and who are totally conscious overcome the snare of birth
using the five concentrations on substances.
These are to be known as explained below by the heroes.
3. (These substances) would be earth,
then fire, breath, and eventually water,
all contained within the form of space.
These are then to be understood in steps.
4. The Yogi, with equanimity while in the world,
focuses on the milky ocean.
The mist of each silent, peaceful wave
resembles a garland of pearls.
5. The Yogi should move his or her well formed focus
toward the middle of the thousand petaled lotus,
bringing to mind its blazing immeasurable splendor,
shining as brilliantly as melted gold.²³
6. Like filaments rising up in the lotus,
and like the brilliant mountains
that surround the earth,
(these experiences) delight the bee-like mind.
7. (While gazing at these mountains)
one should focus on the crown of the lotus
as the golden heavenly Mount (Meru),
emitting a web of yellow light,
tinging the horizon in reddish brown.
8. One should think of oneself
seated comfortably and tranquil
(high on a white throne)

²³ This seems to refer to the sunrise. This verse was translated by Griffin Guez, as were verses 25, 26, 28, 29, and 31.

similar to the autumnal moon.

9. Marked with qualities of abstinence, patience, and discipline,
free from attraction and aversion,
one cuts off the flow of karma
at its very origin.

10. Then, using the practice of meditation
on the lotus in the *maṇḍala* of the navel,
one focuses on the beautiful
uplifted sixteen petals.

11. One should reflect upon the vibration
of the great mantra at the crown of the lotus,
its petals nested within one another
as a glorious garland of (sixteen) syllables.

(From the commentary: a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, ḹ, e, ai, o, au, aṃ aḥ)

12. Through the murmuring of the sixteen seed mantras
comes a state of abeyance adorned with the emptying of sound.
(This experience is like) the glowing of a pendulous moon at its fullest,
its white face extending beauty (everywhere).

13. From the murmuring (of that mantra *raṃ*)
one should then focus afterward
on the emerging gentle result,
an uninterrupted succession of endless pulsing fire.

14. By this, the eternal Jina (is visualized) within these flickering flames.
Then, when that fire burns continually,
one becomes steady,
situated in the white lotus of the heart.

15. The eight upside down petals,
representing the eight kinds of karma,
are to be burnt completely by the fierce fire
that arises with the great mantra and meditation.

16. Then the triangular mandala of fire (is visualized)
outside of the body.

One should focus on those flickering flames
as if they are bioluminescence.

17. Marked by a svastika located at the edge,
the fire seed *bīja* is approached (with the syllable *raṃ*).
It is smokeless and glittering with gold
as it ascends in the rising wind.²⁴

18. The inner fire of the mantra burns
like a brush fire burns city after city,
running and resounding swiftly,
spreading radiance from its flames.

19. This state reduces both body and lotus to ash.
Burning itself out, the fire gently, softly
goes into a state of peace.

20. With great swiftness and great strength,
the Yogi meditates without interruption

²⁴ This verse is translated by Jodi Shaw.

on moving through the air
as if having entered the path of a sky chariot (*prāṇāyāma*).

21. Rallying an army of gods
by bellowing thirty breaths,
he holds in abeyance dense swarms (of karma)
as if dousing them in the mighty sea.

22. In this state, one finds enjoyment in moving about the world
with one's countenance travelling with the wind,
wandering to the abodes of people,
settling down on the face of the earth.

23. With the powerful wind,
one can speedily rouse oneself up into passion.
Then, through firm, accomplished practice,
one can calm the breath (the inner wind).

24. That virtuous soul should focus on the spectacle
in the western sky of dense clouds,
filled with moisture, rumbling lightning, and rainbows.

25. Then the ascetic should focus diligently
upon the unrelenting, tremendous rains,
each drop illuminated by lightning,
making them shine like large brilliant pearls.

26. Then the Yogi should meditate
on the beautiful water abode resembling a half moon
that causes the ocean to rise up,
overflowing into the face of the sky.

27. Once this inconceivable, powerful, divine
meditation on water has arisen,
the body purified from dust is born.

28. Then the accomplished one
focuses on his omniscient soul,
liberated from the seven bodily constituents,
shining like the unblemished full moon.

29. His soul, joined with heavenly eminence,
is worshipped by demons, gods, and serpents alike,
possessing both beauty and power,
seated upon the lion's throne (an allusion to Mahāvīra).

30. The Yogi should meditate on the self in one's own body,
an embryo in the form of a person
whose karmas have been diminished without remainder,
trembling with immeasurable beauty.

31. The Yogi whose practice grows
to uninterrupted steadiness in Piṇḍastha Meditation
soon reaches unparalleled, auspicious bliss,
and is called the Noble One.

32. He meditates on the glistening whiteness
of the new nectar on the full moon,
experiencing a moment of blessed omniscience,
seated on the golden mountain peak,
free from all sensory outflows.
He meditates on the self and the universal form,

on the multitudes of teachers in the three realms,
as well as on the inconceivable Lord.

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