

A City of Two Tales: Structure of Causality in Jain and Hindu Accounts of the Destruction of Dvārakā and the Death of Kṛṣṇa

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Introduction

Jain accounts of the story of Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas differ considerably from Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* (henceforth also MBhV). The aim of this paper is to highlight and discuss the differences between the two narrative traditions in their accounts of the destruction of the Yādava city, Dvārakā, and the death of its king and hero, Kṛṣṇa.¹ My focus will be on understanding how the Jain and Hindu traditions rationalise these events. In order to do this, I analyse how these two events are recounted in the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* by Jinasena Punnāṭa (8th c. CE, henceforth also HPJ) and the *Triṣaṣṭīśālākāpuruṣacaritamahākāvya* by Hemacandra (12th c. CE, henceforth also TŚC) and compare that to the MBhV.² As we will see, all three texts provide a layered causal account of these events by distinguishing between intermediate causes, which are instrumental behind their occurrence but do not ultimately explain the reason why they had to occur, and primary causes that illuminate

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¹ See Jaini 1993: 227–229 for a summary of one of the Jain versions of this episode. Also, Dvārakā is referred to as Dvārikā(purī) or Dvāravatī in Sanskrit texts, as Bāravatī or Bāravai in Prakrit texts, and as Dārāvai in Puṣpadanta's *Mahāpurāṇu* (see the appendix for the Prakrit and Apabhramsha versions). Kṛṣṇa is also known by several different names and epithets throughout these texts; all these names have been translated here as “Kṛṣṇa” for readers' convenience.

² In the Jain narrative tradition, texts that are based on Kṛṣṇa and the story of the *Mahābhārata* are known by different names, the most common among these being the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*. Also see footnote 15 below.

the latter point. However, the texts show interesting similarities and differences in what these intermediate and primary causes are, and a close study of them reveals how the plasticity of the mythical material of the *Mahābhārata* allowed for the articulation of different philosophical positions to explain the same or similar outcomes.

In the Jain tradition, perhaps the earliest reference to the fall of Dvārakā occurs in the eighth *aṅga* of the Śvetāmbara canon—the *Antagaḍadasāo*—which likely took its final form at the Śvetāmbara council held at Vallabhi in the fifth century CE (Cort 1993: 191). In the fifth chapter of the *Antagaḍadasāo*, we are told that the twenty-second *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi foretold the following when Kṛṣṇa questioned him on what would happen during the month he, Kṛṣṇa, would die:

Verily, Kaṇhe, thou shalt be sent forth by thy mother and father's behest from the city of Bāravaī when it shall be consumed by reason of strong waters, fire, and the wrath of Divāyaṇe; together with Rāme and Baladeve thou shalt set forth toward the southern ocean unto Paṇḍu-mahurā, unto the five Paṇḍaves, sons of King Paṇḍu, whose chief is Juhiṭṭhile; and in the Kosamba forest, underneath a goodly nyagrodha-tree, upon a daīs of earthen blocks, thy body covered with a yellow robe, thou shalt be wounded in the left foot by a sharp arrow shot by Jarākumāre from his bow. So shalt thou come to death in thy death-month and be reborn as a hell-dweller in a flaming hell in the third earth, Vāluypabbhā.³

When Kṛṣṇa became downcast on hearing this, Nemi consoled him by telling him about his future rebirth as “the twelfth Saint, Amame” (Barnett 1907: 82).⁴ This conversation is followed by several Dvārakā residents seeking initiation into the Jain monastic order.⁵ It is to be noted that while Nemi foretells the doom of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa in

³ Translation by Barnett (1907: 81). The original is in Ardhamagadhi. “Juhiṭṭhile” is Prakrit for Yudhiṣṭhira. I am uncertain about some aspects of this translation. Barnett translates *suraggiḍivāyaṇakovanidaddhāe* as “when it [Dvārakā] shall be consumed by reason of strong waters, fire, and the wrath of Divāyaṇe”, however, it can also be rendered as “when Dvārakā shall be consumed by the wrath of *sura agnikumāra* Divāyaṇe.” The word *sura* is a synonym for *deva*, and so *suraggi* could be a reference to *deva agnikumāra*, also see footnotes 20 and 22 below. Also, in Barnett's translation Rāma and Baladeva appear to be two different people while the original reads *Rāmeṇaṃ Baladeveṇaṃ saddhiṃ* which can be translated as “with Rāma Baladeva,” that is, just Balarāma.

⁴ In Jainism, it is said that Kṛṣṇa will be one of the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* in the next *utsarpiṇī* that will follow the current *avasarpiṇī*.

⁵ An account of the destruction of the Yādava city also occurs in Devendra's commentary on the *Uttarajjhayanāsutta*, probably written during the eleventh century CE. This is a complete account starting from the predictions made by Nemi and ending with the penances of Balarāma. In essence, it is close to the other two Śvetāmbara accounts I discuss in this paper. It was translated from Prakrit into German by Jacobi (see Jacobi 1888). According to Winternitz, this Devendra was probably the same as the one who wrote a *Mahāvīracariyam* in Prakrit (Winternitz 2018 [1908]: 490).

the *Antagaḍadasāo*, how these events actually manifest is not recounted in this text.

Padmanabh S. Jaini (1993)'s comparative analysis of the Hindu and Jain accounts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* is a landmark essay on the difference between the Jain and Hindu versions of the two texts and is the starting point for this comparative analysis. Furthermore, John E. Cort (1993) and Eva De Clercq (2008)'s studies provide useful detailed introductions to Jain *purāṇas* and *Harivaṃśa* texts. De Clercq in particular summarises the accounts given in the various Jain *Harivaṃśa* texts and discusses the possible causes behind the variations we find in them. However, as this chapter focuses on a particular episode, the differences unearthed here are more detailed.

Furthermore, these differences are analysed at the level of the two distinct types of causalities mentioned earlier. To anticipate the main conclusions of the paper, at the level of instrumentality, we find that curses play an important part in the MBhV, but they do not appear in the two Jain texts. The latter instead foreground the ill effects of drinking wine.⁶ Coming to primary causes, all three texts use similar philosophical concepts, such as karma, *bhavitavyatā*, or *kālavāda* to different degrees to articulate the ultimate cause behind these events. Karma or the law of karma is the oft-quoted worldview that "one reaps the results of one's actions." As is well known, this view is the central pillar of Jain philosophical thought that is invoked at several places in the two Jain texts, and it is also found in the MBhV.⁷ *Bhavitavyatā* means something akin to "destiny" or "fate": that which necessarily must come true or happen, and it is interesting to see the differences across these three texts in terms of how they invoke this idea. The final concept or law that occurs in these texts is *kālavāda*—the idea that "time cooks all creatures, and time crushes them" (Shulman 2001: 26). As many scholars have argued, the role of time is a major theme of the MBhV.⁸ In addition to these three concepts, the MBhV also seems to suggest that these events were a part of Kṛṣṇa's plan; so, divine orchestration is another possible primary cause.

⁶ As we will see later, wine is mentioned in the MBhV too, but comparatively less attention is given to it.

⁷ See Schreiner 2017 for instances of the occurrence of the concept of karma in the MBhV; Schreiner also presents an interesting methodology for studying this topic more systematically throughout the text. Also, a distinction must be made between karma as the doctrine of action (propounded most famously in the *Bhagavadgītā*) and the law of karma meant here.

⁸ See Hudson 2013: 156–157 where she also cites Luis González-Reimann and Alf Hiltebeitel's views on this doctrine.

These concepts do overlap to some degree; for instance, one could argue that whatever the law of karma dictates must come to pass, and, thus, there is destiny built into this form of reasoning. Similarly, the distinction between time and fate can be a slippery one, and often *kāla* is used in both senses. But each of these concepts can also be used independently to account for the events under discussion.

It is often the case that different characters articulate different positions at different points in these texts. This could be somewhat unsettling if we come with the expectation that these texts should only put forth a single position. For example, at some places in the MBhV, Kṛṣṇa is conceived of as an all-powerful God-like being (or beings) who can direct the course of worldly events. However, if there is a divine “in-charge” of this kind, then what is the domain of operation of the law of karma or that of destiny? Does he/she set these laws into motion?⁹ How we understand this contradiction in the case of MBhV depends partly on whether or not we regard it as a unitary text, and if we do so, whether we consider, as Emily Hudson (2013: 22) has argued, that leaving such “riddles” unresolved is part of the design of the text. This is also supported by the fact that the MBhV itself presents several points of view on karma ranging from fatalism to the glory of action and following one’s own dharma. These points will be discussed in more detail in section five.

Throughout the paper my approach is primarily comparative—my aim is not to determine whether the Jain accounts of Kṛṣṇa predate their Hindu counterparts or vice-versa¹⁰ or to perform an in-depth analysis of the concept of karma. Rather I attempt to do a close reading of the two events that are the focus of this study to understand how they are structured differently (or similarly) across the three texts.¹¹ I start my analysis in the second section with a summary of the account of the destruction of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa as given in the HPJ. In the following section, I examine how the version in the TŚC differs from the HPJ. The fourth section is a summary of the salient differences between the Jain versions and the MBhV. As we will see, these are quite striking both in the chronology of various sub-events and in their details.

⁹ There have been innumerable studies on karma over the years, and of these, Reichenbach’s in particular presents important arguments on the contradictions that result from believing in both karma and in the existence of a theistic administrator. See Reichenbach 1989.

¹⁰ For a summary of different views, see Vemsani 2022: 181–182. Also see Geen 2009: 92–97, for a discussion on how the Hindu and Jain *Mahābhārata* traditions may have influenced each other.

¹¹ All translations in the paper are my own unless indicated otherwise.

In section five, I look at how the Jain versions and the MBhV justify or explain the destruction of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa. Here, I first give reasons to support my position that we should understand the causal structure as consisting of two kinds of causes. Subsequently, I look at the differences between the Jain accounts and the MBhV in terms of causality. I conclude with my main findings in section six.¹²

Jinasena's Harivaṃśapurāṇa

Chronologically, Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* (HPJ), comprising nearly 10,000 verses, is the oldest available Jain text that recounts the "complete" story of Kṛṣṇa and the other characters of the *Mahābhārata* (De Clercq 2008: 400).¹³ Written in Sanskrit, Jinasena's *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* was completed in 783 CE. Jinasena belonged to a Digambara sect known as Punṇāṭa which was originally from Karnataka but later moved to Saurāṣṭra (Jain 2003: 11–12).

Since Jinasena's version is much shorter than the MBhV whose critical edition has about 75,000 verses, this in itself gives us an idea of the relative importance of the *Mahābhārata* story in the Jain and Hindu traditions. In the former, it is subsumed under Jain universal history that comprises the life stories of sixty-three great men of Jainism told against the backdrop of Jain cosmology.¹⁴ In contrast to this, the MBhV is encyclopedic in nature and is itself often regarded as the fifth Veda (Shulman 2001: 26; Hudson 2013: 21).

While Kṛṣṇa is regarded as a *śālākāpuruṣa* in the Jain canon, it is Nemi, the twenty-second *tīrthaṅkara* and a cousin to Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, who attains omniscience and surpasses both in spiritual attain-

¹² Since there are other Jain texts that narrate these events, I also looked at two other Jain versions as recounted in the *Caṭṭhaṇṇamahāpurīṣacariya* by Śīlāṅka and the *Mahāpurāṇu* by Puṣpadanta just to see how they differ overall from the HPJ and the TŚC. My findings on these are in the appendix.

¹³ Also see Cort 1993: 191. While it is believed that Vimalasūri also wrote a Jain version of the Kṛṣṇa story in parallel to his Jain *Rāmāyaṇa*, no manuscripts of this text have come to light so far. Also, I have used the term *Harivaṃśa* as a shorthand for "Kṛṣṇa and the other characters of the *Mahābhārata*" at some places in this paper; although this is not an entirely accurate usage as there are characters mentioned who do not belong to *Harivaṃśa*, I think it preserves the original focus of the earlier layer of Jain narrative texts that pivoted around the story of Kṛṣṇa and were less concerned with the *Mahābhārata* war.

¹⁴ Also see Cort 1995 for an introduction to Jain universal history.

ment.¹⁵ In all the Jain texts I surveyed,¹⁶ Nemi foretells the destruction of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa. In the HPJ, Balarāma asks the omniscient Nemi for three very specific predictions:

1. When will Dvārakā—a creation of Kubera—get destroyed; would it sink into the ocean of its own accord or will something or someone else be the cause?
2. When will Kṛṣṇa, like all other living beings, meet his end?
3. When will I—one who loves Kṛṣṇa dearly—find relief from the grief of losing him?¹⁷

Nemi foretells that:

Rāma! This city will be burnt by the sage Dvaipāyanakumāra out of anger in twelve years, with alcohol being the cause. And in the end, Jaratkumāra would also attain to cause-hood (would be the cause) in the death of long-lived Kṛṣṇa when the latter would be sleeping in the Kauśāmba forest.¹⁸

He then answers Balarāma's question about the period of his mourning as follows:

Then that would be the cause for your attainment to austerity, you who would be (or “are”) afraid of the ways of the world and would attain to Brahmaloaka.¹⁹

Hearing this ominous prediction, Jaratkumāra, who was Balarāma's and Kṛṣṇa's half-brother, and Dvaipāyanakumāra, who was Balarāma's maternal uncle, both left Dvārakā to avoid becoming the causes or *hetus* of such destructive events. While Jaratkumāra started wandering in the forest, Dvaipāyanakumāra decided to practice austerities for a period of twelve years. Both, however, were unsuccessful in their attempts.

¹⁵ Because of the pre-eminence of the story of Nemi in Jain *Harivaṃśapurāṇas*, they are often also known as *Nemicarita*.

¹⁶ See Table 1 in the appendix for the list of Jain texts mentioned in this paper. In addition to these, I also consulted the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* by Śubhacandra (16th c. CE) and the *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* by Vādicandra (end of 16th or early 17th c. CE).

¹⁷ Points (a), (b), and (c) above have been paraphrased from HPJ 61.18–21. Also, see Sumitra Bai and Zydenbos 1991: 261. According to Sumitra Bai, these questions seem “too artificial to be original”, and Balarāma's foreknowledge of events such as the sinking of the city of Dvārakā and the killing of Kṛṣṇa points to the existence of a prior version of the story. But as we have seen above, this prior version need not necessarily be a Hindu one as the fall of Dvārakā is also mentioned in the *Antagaḍadasāo*.

¹⁸ *puriyaṃ dvādaśe varṣe Rāma madyena hetunā
Dvaipāyanakumāreṇa muninā dhakṣyate ruṣā.
Kauśāmbavanasuptasya Kṛṣṇasya paramāyusaḥ
prānte Jaratkumāro'pi saṃhāre hetutām vrajet.* (HPJ 61.23–24)

¹⁹ *bhavato'pi tapaḥprāptis tannimittāt tadā bhavet
bhavapaddhatibhūtasya brahmalokopapādināḥ.* (HPJ 61.27)

Dvaipāyanakumāra miscalculated the duration of his *tapas* and arrived in the vicinity of Dvārakā before the completion of the predicted twelve years. There he was harassed and beaten by a group of Yādava princes who were drunk on old wine—the same wine that the people of Dvārakā had discarded at Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's behest after hearing Nemi's cataclysmic predictions.

Interestingly, the Yādava princes had recognised Dvaipāyanakumāra as the one who would be responsible for Dvārakā's doom, but drunk as they were, they decided to pre-empt the impending disaster by giving him a thrashing. Dvaipāyanakumāra, enraged by this treatment, resolved to burn down the city of Dvārakā. He was so furious that even Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa could not dissuade him from annihilating Dvārakā and its residents; in the end, he only made an exception for the two brothers (HPJ 61.28–66).

As the doom of Dvārakā approached, Dvaipāyanakumāra turned into a spirit that eventually burnt down the city.²⁰ The fire he ignited was so relentless that all efforts of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa to douse it were foiled, and in the end, they were not even able to save their own parents. Ultimately, just the two of them survived, and they started journeying towards Mathurā, the city of the Pāṇḍavas (HPJ 61.67–89; 62.4). They encountered some travails along their way, including a confrontation with the army of a kingdom called Hastavapra (referred to as Hastakalpa in the TŚC). When they reached Kauśāmbī (or Kauśāmba) forest, it was time for Nemi's second prediction to come true: Kṛṣṇa was not able to walk any further in the scorching heat and asked Balarāma to fetch him some water while he himself lay down under the shade of a tree. Balarāma promptly departed to find some water to drink, and in the meanwhile Jaratkumāra, who was now a hunter, came to that part of the forest where Kṛṣṇa was resting. Kṛṣṇa's body was covered by forest foliage, and Jaratkumāra mistook a piece of his clothing fluttering in the wind for a deer's ear. Thus mistaken, he shot an arrow at the sleeping Kṛṣṇa, who instantly woke up in pain and commanded his assailant to identify himself. Then, as Jaratkumāra realised what he had done, he grieved deeply, but it was too late. Kṛṣṇa's end had come, and he instructed Jaratkumāra to take his jewel, the *kaustubhamāṇi*, to the Pāṇḍavas and give them the news about the burning of Dvārakā and his own demise. On Jaratkumāra's departure, Kṛṣṇa embraced his fate peacefully while reflecting on the qualities of Neminātha (HPJ 62.1–68).

²⁰ The word used is *deva* and is probably a reference to Agnikumāras (a class of *bhavanavāsins*, the lowest species of *devas*, in the Jain cosmology) that are mentioned in this context in the TŚC. Also see footnote 22 below.

This, in a nutshell, is the account of Dvārakā's destruction and Kṛṣṇa's death as recounted in the HPJ.

Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritamahākāvya

Hemacandra was a Śvetāmbara monk who was born in Gujarat in the twelfth century CE. A highly erudite scholar, Hemacandra not only composed the TŚC, which recounts the biographies of all sixty-three Jain *śālākāpuruṣas* ("divine or great men"), but also texts on grammar and philosophy among other subjects. His account of the *Harivaṃśa* comprises the eighth *parvan* of the TŚC that has around 4,000 verses (De Clercq 2008: 411).

Hemacandra's account in the TŚC of the events that unfolded in Dvārakā leading up to Kṛṣṇa's death is also quite detailed and occupies 164 verses. While largely agreeing with Jināsena's narrative, it adds its own twists. In terms of the plot, the two most interesting differences are that, firstly, in the TŚC, Kṛṣṇa, and not Balarāma, asks Nemi about his end and that of Dvārakā. This is similar to the account in the *Antagaḍadasāo* mentioned in the introduction; secondly, unlike the HPJ, in the TŚC the Yādava princes found the abandoned wine not after eleven years but within a few days after the prediction, and then Dvaipāyana, who was meditating nearby, was harassed by them. On coming to know of this, Kṛṣṇa attempted to pacify Dvaipāyana, but failing to do so, he ultimately sought guidance from Nemi, who informed him that "In the twelfth year Dvaipāyana will burn this Dvārakā" (Johnson 1962: 297).²¹ On hearing this, many Dvārakā folk took refuge with Nemi, while the rest were exhorted by Kṛṣṇa to be steadfast in dharma to avoid their impending doom. Then, Hemacandra relates:

Dvaipāyana was born amongst the Agnikumāras after his death; [in his new birth] he remembered his past acrimony and came to Dvārakā. There Dvaipāyana as an *asura* saw that all the people were engaged in the fourth, sixth and eighth (Jain

²¹ Also, Dvaipāyanakumāra who burns down Dvārakā is not identified as Balarāma's uncle in the TŚC; rather, he is Vyāsa himself who is also known as Dvaipāyana and is the son of sage Parāśara, conceived on an island in the river Yamunā with a woman from a "low family"—most likely a reference to Satyāvatī. See TŚC 11.3–6. The Blessed one said, "In a hermitage outside Śauryapura there was a well-known leading ascetic, named Parāśara. He went to an island in the Yamunā and enjoyed a girl of low family; and a son was born to them named Dvaipāyana." Translation taken from Johnson 1962: 294.

observances or fasts?) and were attached to the worship of *devas*.²² Unable to destroy them because of the effect of dharma (their religious observances), the evil-minded Dvaipāyana stayed there for eleven years looking for flaws. When the twelfth year came, the people thought that because of the austerities, the wretched Dvaipāyana has been destroyed and conquered, and they became delighted. They drank wine and ate meat at will and were bent on rejoicing. Dvaipāyana, who knew [their] omission, now seized the opportunity.²³

Also, while the events leading up to Kṛṣṇa's death are broadly similar in both the Jain texts, the portrayal of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa differs (Vemsani 2022: 182).²⁴ In Jinasena's version, both seem better acquainted with Jain philosophy and are far more devout. For instance, as Balarāma was leaving a thirsty Kṛṣṇa behind to fetch water for him, his parting words in the HPJ were as follows:

Dear one! I will bring cool water and give that to you to drink; till then you endure the thirst with the water of the remembrance of the Jina. This water drives away thirst only for a short while, [but] the water of the remembrance of the Jina destroys it (the thirst) from the root when drunk. You sit here in the cool shade of this tree; I will get you cool water from the abode of coolness (=a lake).²⁵

In contrast to these words steeped in devotion, Hemacandra portrays a more circumspect Balarāma who even prays to forest nymphs to protect Kṛṣṇa:

Balabhadra (Balarāma) said, "Brother! I will go for water, you sit here resting, vigilant under the tree." Putting his feet on his knees (sitting cross-legged), and

²² Johnson (1962: 297) translates this as: "Asura Dvaipāyana saw all the people there observing fasts of one, two, three, et cetera days." The term *deva* most likely refers to the enlightened beings venerated in Jainism. It would be interesting to see if the term changed its significance between the centuries that passed between Jinasena (see footnote 20 for his usage of *deva*) and Hemacandra.

²³ *mṛtvā Dvaipāyano'py agnikumāreṣūdapadyata
sasmāra pūrvavairam ca dvārakām ājagāma ca.
caturthaṣaṣṭhāṣṭamādirataṃ tatṛākhilam janam
devapūjāprasaktaṃ cāpaśyad Dvaipāyanāsuraḥ.
dharmaprabhāvatat tatropasargaṃ kartum akṣamaḥ
chidrāny anveṣayan so'sthād varṣāny ekādaśogradhīḥ.
prāpte'bde dvādaśe loko dadhyau yat tapasāmunā
bhraṣṭo Dvaipāyano naṣṭo jitaś ceti ramāmahe.
rantum pravṛttā te svairam madyapā māṃsakhādinaḥ
lebhe'vakāṣam chidrajñas tadā Dvaipāyano'pi hi. (TŚC 11.57–61)*

²⁴ In the context of Balarāma's portrayal, Vemsani is of the opinion that the TŚC account is more influenced by Hindu stories compared to the HPJ.

²⁵ *tāta śītalam āniya pānīyam pāyayāmy aham
tvam jinasmarāṇāmbhobhis tāvat tṛṣṇāṃ vimardaya.
nirasayati payas tṛṣṇāṃ stokām velām idaṃ punaḥ
jinasmarāṇapānīyam pītam tām mūlato'syati.
chāyāyām asya vṛkṣasya śītalāyām ihāsyatām
ānayāmi jalam te'ham śītalam śītalāśayāt. (HPJ 62.23–25)*

covering himself with a yellow cloth, the fatigued Hari slept at the base of a tree on the path. Then again Rāma said, "O brother, dear to me as my life! I will be back in a moment, till then you should be vigilant." And then looking up he said, "O forest nymphs! My younger brother is in your care, this beloved of the world should be protected."²⁶

Similarly, the dying Kṛṣṇa in the TŚC only says, "Fate (what is to be) cannot be overcome either by you or me," to console his remorseful brother Jaratkumāra;²⁷ however, at this juncture in the HPJ, Kṛṣṇa cites the law of karma. These different articulations of causality will be discussed in more detail in section five.

Part of the differences between these two texts could be attributed to the fact that the HPJ is a Digambara version of the *Mahābhārata*, while the TŚC is a Śvetāmbara one, but as De Clercq (2008: 417) points out, there are differences between *Harivaṃśapurāṇas* belonging to the same sect as well. One must also note that these two texts not only belong to two different sects within Jainism but also to slightly different genres—the HPJ is a *purāṇa* while the TŚC is a *carita* and a *mahākāvya* (epic poem). According to Cort, Digambaras preferred the term *purāṇa*, while the Śvetāmbaras gave preference to *caritra* for naming texts that contain biographies of the great men of Jainism.²⁸ The term *caritra*, like *carita*, means "history, biography, accounts, adventures, etc." Cort (1995: 478, 488) further remarks that *caritas* as a genre "tended to blend" with *mahākāvyas* or epic poems—the latter were also used to recount the exploits of one's gurus and/or patrons. Being a *purāṇa*, the HPJ delves into concepts of Jain cosmology and soteriology in some detail, while the TŚC's focus is on recounting the past and current lives (*caritas*)

²⁶ *babhāṣe Balabhadro'pi yāsyāmi bhrātār ambhase
viśrāmyann atra tiṣṭha tvam apramattas taros tale.
pādaṃ jānūpari nyasya svaṃ ca pītena vāsasā
prachādyādhvataror mūle supto nidrāṃ yayau Hariḥ.
punar apy avadaḍ Rāmo he bhrātāḥ prāṇavallabha
yāvad āyāmy ahaṃ tāvad apramatto bhavēḥ kṣaṇam.
unmukhibhūya cāvocaḍ vanadevyo mamānujaḥ
yuṣmākaṃ śaraṇe'sty eṣa trātavyo viśvavallabhaḥ.* (TŚC 11.125–128)

Johnson (1962: 302) translates *viśvavallabhaḥ* as "dearer than the whole world."
²⁷ *na tvayā na mayā vāpi laṅghyate bhavitavyatā* (TŚC 11.148). Interestingly, in the TŚC, Kṛṣṇa was not equally forgiving towards Dvaipāyanakumāra; he meditated thus as he was dying, "From birth I was never defeated by any one, man or god. I was reduced to such a state first by Dvaipāyana. Even with so much time elapsed, if I should see him, I would get up and kill him, myself. What does he amount to? Who would be able to protect him?" (Johnson 1962: 304–305). This shows that the characters within a narrative may not fully appreciate the difference between instrumental and primary causes—this lack of sound understanding leads to the further generation of karma.

²⁸ However, both traditions used both these terms.

of the great men of Jainism. This narrative focus of the latter can also explain some of the differences between the two accounts. However, more detailed studies are needed of both texts of other Jain *purāṇas* and *caritas* to understand how the difference between these two genres impacts their narratives.

Despite these dissimilarities, the two texts follow the main plot outline that is also common across other Jain accounts of these events: the prediction of Dvārakā's and Kṛṣṇa's ends by Nemi, the wasted efforts of the major parties involved to avert their collective and individual fates, and finally, the predicted events coming to pass. Both the texts also inform us about Kṛṣṇa's whereabouts after his death: he went to the third *adholoka* (lower world), Vālukāprabhā, due to the force of his karma, and was predicted to be born as a Jain *tīrthankara* in the next cosmic time cycle.

Salient Differences between the Jain Versions and Mbhv

While in both the Jain and Hindu accounts, the story of the destruction of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa comes towards the end of the respective narratives, the two accounts differ considerably in some significant respects.²⁹ I list the main differences in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, the chronology of events in the Jain and Hindu versions is significantly different.³⁰ In Vyāsa's narrative, when Kṛṣṇa realised through several ill omens that the end of the Yādava clan was near, he took some of them, mainly the warriors, to Prabhāsa for pilgrimage. In Prabhāsa, an argument ensued within the group that had gotten drunk on wine, and they ended up killing each other; only Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa survived this mutual slaughter. While Kṛṣṇa was part of this conflict, Balarāma appears to have left the scene when it started. After this incident, Kṛṣṇa visited his father Vasudeva at Dvārakā and informed him that his time had come, and that the city too would be drowned in the sea. However, this did not imply a complete annihilation of all residents of Dvārakā as according to the foretelling of Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna would come before that to take the remaining residents with him. With these final words to

²⁹ In both narrative traditions, these two events are followed by the renunciation of the Pāṇḍavas. While in the HPJ the Pāṇḍavas renounce the world under the tutelage of Nemi, in the TŚC, they fast unto death upon hearing of the passing of Nemi. In the MBhV on the other hand, the Pāṇḍavas undertake what Christopher R. Austin (2008: 286) describes as a "self-imposed death by walking."

³⁰ Also refer to Figures 1 and 2 below.

Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa departed looking for Balarāma. As he had foretold, the people who were left behind in Dvārakā were ultimately rescued by Arjuna who took them to safety with him, after which the city was engulfed by the sea.³¹ It is interesting to note here that in the MBhV, Dvārakā is not burnt by fire, it just drowns in the sea. Also, while in the MBhV, the death of the Yādavas warriors in Prabhāsa and the drowning of Dvārakā appear to be distinct events that are only temporally related, the Jain versions link the two together—the Yādavas left in Dvārakā (except Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and those who took renunciation) were killed in the fire that also consumed the whole city. We also find no reference to Yādava princes fighting amongst themselves in the Jain texts, while that is the main event that leads to their demise in the MBhV.

Secondly, while in the HPJ, Kṛṣṇa died first leaving a mourning Balarāma behind, in Vyāsa's version, Balarāma left his body first and re-emerged as Ananta Śeṣanāga in front of Kṛṣṇa before the latter died and appeared in his divine form (MBhV 16.5.12–13, 19–25).³²

Thirdly, in the Jain versions, Jaratkumāra, who killed Kṛṣṇa, was Balarāma's and Kṛṣṇa's half-brother. In Vyāsa's account, however, Kṛṣṇa's killer was a fierce hunter called Jarā, and he was not related to Kṛṣṇa.³³ Jarā, on realising that he had killed Kṛṣṇa, was struck by guilt and fear, but Kṛṣṇa consoled him with a few words, and made his transition with

³¹ But Arjuna's rescue attempt was not without incident. Arjuna and the remaining inhabitants and soldiers of Dvārakā were attacked on the way by a band of robbers. In the battle that ensued, the otherwise invincible Arjuna suffered a bout of amnesia and was unable to recall his divine weapons (which was later seen as a sign of the Pāṇḍava era approaching its end), and as a result, a few Yādava women were abducted. See MBhV 16.8.45–65.

³² It is interesting to note that some Jain texts include another post-death encounter between Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, perhaps to explain how people started worshipping the duo. After Kṛṣṇa's death, Balarāma entered a phase of denial and carried the dead body of Kṛṣṇa everywhere with him till he was brought to his senses by his brother-cum-charioteer-turned-God Siddhārtha. He then performed the last rites for Kṛṣṇa, became an ascetic, and after many years of penance ascended to Brahmāloka. Once there, he tried to rescue Kṛṣṇa from *adholoka*, but failing at that, was asked by Kṛṣṇa to go back to Bharataḥṣetra and show his (Kṛṣṇa's) form to the people "carrying disc, bow, conch, and club, wearing yellow clothes, with a Tārṅṣya banner" (TŚC, translation by Johnson 1962: 311). Kṛṣṇa also asked Balarāma to show himself to the people carrying his usual symbols such as the plough. This inspired the people of *Bharataḥṣetra* to build temples to honour the two heroes. Also see De Clercq 2008: 412, who makes the same point.

³³ Vyāsa does not go into the details of who Jarā was, but it seems that later a new story appeared to fill this gap according to which Jarā was a reincarnation of Vālin, the *vānara* king who was slain by Rāma, not in direct combat, but from behind a tree like a hunter. I could not trace the source of this story. Elsewhere, Jarā is often also symbolically explained as "old age."

equanimity, emerging as his divine cosmic form with the gods hailing him. Also, unlike the Jain texts where Jaratkumāra was the envoy who carried the news of the Yādava doom to the Pāṇḍavas, Jarā was given no such commission by Kṛṣṇa—the latter had already entrusted his charioteer Dārukā to deliver the news to the Pāṇḍavas.

Fourthly, while a number of Yādava family members survived these disastrous events according to both the Hindu and Jain accounts, the details differ widely between them. As mentioned above, in the MBhV, Arjuna took the Yādavas that were left behind in Dvārakā with him; in contrast to this, in the Jain versions only those Yādavas who took *dikṣā* in the Jain ascetic order, either before Nemi's catastrophic predictions for the Yādavas or afterwards, survived, while the remaining died in the fire that consumed Dvārakā.

Finally, in the MBhV, Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's father, Vasudeva, who had stayed back at Dvārakā, resolved to renounce eating and to end his life in this manner after the deaths of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. However, he passed away by some yogic technique soon after this vow, and his four grieving wives committed sati (MBhV 16.8.15–25). In the Jain versions, on the other hand, Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's parents died in the great fire that engulfed the whole of Dvārakā.³⁴

As we can see, the account in the MBhV differs considerably from the Jain version in the HPJ. Most of this contrast could reflect the fact that the Jain poets probably had access to another set of stories pertaining to Kṛṣṇa.³⁵ At some places, the differences between the Hindu and Jain versions are significant in terms of what happens, for example, in the MBhV, Balarāma dies right after the fight in Prabhāsa whereas in the Jain versions he outlives Kṛṣṇa. But as we saw with the Dvārakā and Kṛṣṇa episodes above, it is often also the case that the events that unfold are similar, however, they come to pass differently. I explore this in greater detail in the following section.

Structure of Causality

In the first part of this section, I show that in both the Jain versions and the MBhV, the structure of causality behind the end of Dvārakā and

³⁴ In the HPJ 61.91, Jināsena mentions that when the fire engulfed Dvārakā, many Yādavas, including Vasudeva, fasted till death (*prāyopagamaṇaṁ prāptāḥ*) and attained heaven. In the TŚC 11.84–87, Balarāma's and Kṛṣṇa's parents seek refuge in the teachings of the Arhats before their death.

³⁵ See De Clercq 2008: 418–419 for a survey of scholarly opinion on this.

Kṛṣṇa is layered; that is, there are intermediate causes or triggers (the "how") that link the primary cause (the "why") and the actualisation of the events themselves. After this, I discuss the differences between the Jain versions and the MBhV in terms of the intermediate and primary causes.

As we saw above, in both the Jain versions, wine is portrayed as the means that led to the destruction of the Yādavas and their city, while for Kṛṣṇa's death, the instrumentality is localised in Jaratkumāra. However, both these means are the answer to the "how" question in these texts. Kṛṣṇa in the TŚC asked *dvārakāyā yadūnām ca mama syāt kṣayaḥ katham*, "How will the destruction of Dvārakā, the Yadus, and me happen?" (TŚC 11.2). We know that this *katham* is not meant in the meaning of *why* because Nemi described *how* these events would unfold, and at two separate places in the text, destiny or fate is resorted to in order to rationalise these events: firstly, by Balarāma when he says to Kṛṣṇa, after the latter was unsuccessful in his attempt to dissuade Dvaipāyana, *bhrātar na nāśo bhāvivastunaḥ*, "Brother, there is no elimination of that which is to happen;"³⁶ secondly, as we saw earlier, by Kṛṣṇa when he consoles Jaratkumāra.

In the HPJ, when Balarāma queried Nemi in a similar fashion, he stated his understanding of the primary cause in his questions as follows, "Things that are created/made are perishable," in the context of Dvārakā, and, "The death of all living things that are born is certain," regarding Kṛṣṇa's death (HPJ 61.23–24).³⁷ This parallels the doctrine of time or *kālavāda*, however, here time is not described as actively devouring created things or beings.

Later, while consoling Jaratkumāra, Kṛṣṇa becomes a mouthpiece for the law of karma:

The good-hearted Kṛṣṇa says to him (Jaratkumāra) who was lamenting in this way,³⁸ "O Supreme King! Quit this grieving, all beings suffer the (results of) their own deeds. Whether it is happiness or sorrow, who gives (these) to whom in the course of the world? In truth our deeds are our karma, whether it is a friend, or not a friend."³⁹

³⁶ Johnson (1962: 296) renders this as: "There is no escape from the future event, brother."

³⁷ Also, interestingly, in these verses, the instrumentality of both wine and Jaratkumāra is glossed by the term *hetu*, which means both "cause" and "source/origin." In the TŚC, Kṛṣṇa uses the term *mūla* for wine's role in their destruction *madyamūlo hy anarthaḥ syād iti*, "this calamity will originate from wine" (See TŚC 11.11 and Johnson 1962: 294).

³⁸ The preceding lines quote Jaratkumāra's words full of grief and confusion.

³⁹ *ityādi pralapann uktaḥ Kṛṣṇenāsau sucetasā pralāpaṃ tyaja Rājendra kṛtsnaṃ svakṛtabhug jagat.*

Thus, we can see that in both the Jain texts there is a clear distinction made between *how* and *why* these two events unfold. The differences between the primary causes pointed out by Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa indicate that, as in real life, the characters within a narrative may not always rationalise events in the same way.⁴⁰ Narrative texts can accommodate differing philosophical positions, and if the narrator wishes to, he/she can step outside the narrative frame and outline his/her own philosophy. The narrator of the HPJ resorts to this device at the end of chapter 61 that describes the burning of Dvārakā. After pontificating at some length on how a person who wishes harm for someone else harms himself/herself, the narrator concludes with the thought that Dvaipāyana being blinded by anger⁴¹ and being under the influence of *vidhi*⁴² destroyed Dvārakā in six months. The term *vidhi* means both "law" and "fate," and it is unclear what is meant in this case. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the law of karma is clear in the narrator's exegesis.

This distinction between intermediate and primary causes in the MBhV is comparatively less clear, but a case can be made for it. First off, we are told in *Mausalaparva* (the book that recounts the death of the Yādavas and the drowning of Dvārakā) by Kṛṣṇa himself that Gāndhārī, in the grief of losing her sons, had cursed the Yādava clan to be destroyed. Kṛṣṇa says:

That has now come to pass which Gāndhārī, who was greatly distressed by the grief of (the loss of) her sons and whose kinsmen had been killed, had said out of pain.⁴³

Here Kṛṣṇa was referring to his long conversation with Gāndhārī in the *Strīparva* where she lamented the death of her sons and other heroes during the great battle at Kurukṣetra and spoke movingly about the grief of the women who had lost their husbands and sons. Holding Kṛṣṇa responsible for not playing his part adequately, she cursed him that after thirty-six years, his clan would be destroyed through infighting and that Kṛṣṇa himself would die alone in a forest. On hearing this curse, Kṛṣṇa responded that this was how the Yādavas of the Vṛṣṇi clan were meant to meet their end,⁴⁴ and that he himself was the destroyer of the Yādavas,

*sukhaṃ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṃ datte kaḥ kasya saṃśṛtau
mitraṃ vā yadi vāmitraḥ svakṛtaṃ karma tattvataḥ.* (HPJ 62.50–51)

⁴⁰ It is perhaps possible to explain both *kālavāda* and *bhavitavyatā* as results of the law of karma, but I have not attempted to do so here because the accounts in these texts do not seem to dwell on this inconsistency.

⁴¹ *krodhāndhena*. See HPJ 61.108.

⁴² *vidhivaśena*. *Ibid.*

⁴³ *putraśokābhisamṛtā Gāndhārī hatabāndhavā
yad anuvyājahārātā tad idaṃ samupāgatam.* (MBhV 16.3.19)

⁴⁴ Vṛṣṇi was a sub-clan of the Yādavas to which Kṛṣṇa belonged.

who were otherwise invincible and would be killed only upon fighting with each other (MBhV 11.25.37–45).

Gāndhārī's curse was only one trigger for the chain of destructive events that unfolded in Dvārakā; the other more immediate trigger was the prophecy (or curse?) of the sages Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva, and Nārada who were angered by a prank of the impish Yādava princes. The latter dressed Sāmba, one of Kṛṣṇa's sons with his wife Jāmbavatī, as a pregnant woman and asked the sages if Sāmba would have a son or not. The sages, who could see through their mischief, prophesied that a big club (*musala*) will be "born" out of Sāmba, and this club would be the end of the Yādavas.⁴⁵ When Kṛṣṇa came to know of this, he remarked that whatever the sages had said would come to pass. Sāmba, as predicted, gave birth to a club, and the people of Dvārakā, realising that their end was near, gave up the production and drinking of wine much like in the HPJ and the TŚC.

Thus, in Vyāsa's account the most immediate cause for the destruction of the Yādavas is the sages' prophecy made in anger which can be seen as a kind of a curse, which itself came after the curse of Gāndhārī. However, we can say that these two curses should be regarded as intermediate causes or triggers and not the primary cause because elsewhere in the text we find that two primary causes articulated: Kṛṣṇa's design and fate.⁴⁶ These are discussed below.

As mentioned above, on hearing Gāndhārī's curse Kṛṣṇa proclaimed that he himself was the destroyer of the Vṛṣṇis; his exact words in the

⁴⁵ An account of the destruction of the Yādava clan occurs in the Buddhist *Jātakas* as well. In the Ghata-Jātaka, we are told that the Yādava princes test the divine vision of an ascetic called Kaṇhadīpāyana by asking him what a young man dressed as a pregnant woman would bear (that is, whether (s)he would bear a boy or a girl). On being questioned thus, the ascetic foresaw how the Yādavas would be killed because of the acacia wood that would be borne by this young man, and how he himself would die that very day. Then, whatever he foresaw came to pass: he was killed by the princes and later the Yādavas also slaughtered each other. Thus, the *Jātaka* account has similarities to both the MBhV and the Jain version; however, there is no mention of Kaṇhadīpāyana getting angry or cursing the princes. See Rouse 1901: 56.

⁴⁶ Apart from these, there is also an emphasis on the role of time, most clearly in the frame narrative. For instance, when Vaiśampāyana is questioned by Janamejaya about the destruction of the Yādavas, the former remarks as follows: *anyonyam musalais te tu nijaghnuḥ kālacoditāḥ*, "they, impelled by time, killed each other with clubs." Later Vaiśampāyana describes how *kāla*, "time" or "death," embodied in a fierce form, roamed the streets of the city. Also, when Kṛṣṇa, on reading the portents, understood that it was time for Gāndhārī's curse to take effect, Vaiśampāyana tells us that he wanted to make her words come true and so asked everyone to gather and leave for pilgrimage. However, it is unclear whether time is imagined as acting independently here or set into motion due to the curses.

epic were, "No one other than me is the destroyer of the Vṛṣṇicakra."⁴⁷ However, does this mean he was a wilful party in the destruction of his clan, or did he say it out of guilt, knowing that his actions would ultimately lead to this disastrous outcome? The epic at this point does not give any further clarification, but we are told that Kṛṣṇa smiled when he heard Gāndhārī's curse, which makes the former interpretation more likely. Also, in another part of the epic, the *Āśramavāsikaparva*, Vyāsa tells Gāndhārī the "divine histories and purposes of all characters of the story" (Woods 2001: 36). So, what befell the Yādavas could be seen as being part of a divine plan.

However, in the *Mausalaparva* when Arjuna, despondent after the death of Kṛṣṇa, approaches Vyāsa for some solace, the latter tells him that he should not grieve for the Yādavas, because what happened to them was *meant to be*—*bhavitavyatā* (MBhV 16.9.26).⁴⁸ But he also adds that if Kṛṣṇa had wished, he could have overturned the curse, but he chose not to (MBhV 16.9.27).⁴⁹ Vyāsa then makes some remarks on the ineluctability of *kāla*, a word that can mean both "time" and "fate."⁵⁰

Thus, the text seems to offer divergent points of view. It is not entirely clear if Kṛṣṇa was above fate and was able to direct the course of events if he so wished to, or if he himself was governed by it.

There can be three ways in which one can explain this inconsistency depending on how we view the MBhV as a text and what philosophical conclusions we try to draw from it. Firstly, if we think of it as a work that came together over a period of time in layers at the hands of different composers, then it is possible that Vyāsa's varied explanations in the *Āśramavāsikaparva* and the *Mausalaparva* could have resulted due to this process. However, in contrast to this, if we view the text as a unitary whole, as Shulman and Hudson encourage us to do, then this inconsistency can be seen as part of the overall design of the text as it likes to leave such questions unresolved (Hudson 2013).

⁴⁷ *saṃhartā Vṛṣṇicakrasya nānyo mad vidyate* (MBhV 11.25.44.1).

⁴⁸ Also, one can't help but notice the similarities between Vyāsa and Nemi's role as a counsellor for the Yādavas and the Kurus.

⁴⁹ The word *upekṣita* (overlooked, neglected, disregarded) is used in this context to describe Kṛṣṇa's stance towards the fate of the Vṛṣṇis. Gāndhārī uses the same word to describe Kṛṣṇa's treatment of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas in MBhV 11.25.36.

⁵⁰ In the Gita Press edition, two additional verses have been included from the southern recension. In these verses, Vyāsa mentions that the Yādavas were incarnations of different gods and some of their women were incarnations of celestial nymphs or *apsaras*, and this explains why they all died along with Kṛṣṇa. However, these verses do not appear in the critical edition.

Finally, we can also try and resolve the inconsistency by arguing that believing in the ineluctability of fate does not preclude the possibility of it being orchestrated by Kṛṣṇa because, as Woods (2001: 6) argues, Kṛṣṇa is portrayed as embodying fate and directing the course of the world in the MBhV.⁵¹ But even if we do not equate *bhavitavyatā* with Kṛṣṇa, the fact that even in the *Mausalaparva*, Vyāsa points out that Kṛṣṇa could have turned things around suggests that even in this part of the MBhV, Kṛṣṇa appears to have the ability to meddle with fate. Thus, while the two curses set a sequence of disastrous events into motion for the Yādavas, it appears that ultimately the text views Kṛṣṇa as their divine orchestrator.⁵²

Coming to the differences between the Jain texts and the MBhV, first of all, in contrast to Kṛṣṇa's agency in the MBhV, Nemi's predictions regarding the future are only that—his foreknowledge of what would come to pass because of his omniscience. He did not himself orchestrate this doom. The future, though known to him due to his faculty of *avadhijñāna*, is not controlled by him in Jain cosmology. He is only a witness of all the events he foresees.⁵³

Also, in contrast to Vyāsa's narrative, curses do not play a pivotal role in the Jain versions. There is no mention of Gāndhārī's curse in the context of the Yādavas' destruction, and Dvaipāyanakumāra actually

⁵¹ Woods makes a distinction between *daiva*—"unconscious motivations" that thwart "cherished hopes and plans" and *Daiva*—something "that governs the course of things as a whole, including human society and the microcosmos of embodied existence," but generally translates both terms as "destiny, fate." He also talks about how there is constant tension in the epic between individual initiative or *puruṣakāra* and destiny or "higher purpose" or *Daiva*, which is both a major driver and a source of frustration in the lives of the different characters of the MBhV. See Woods 2001: 6, 143, 149, 201.

⁵² Especially if we take into account the omitted verses mentioned in footnote 50. Also, this conclusion is made based on an analysis of two specific episodes, and thus, cannot be generalised across the whole text. However, hopefully, this close reading illustrates that considerations of causality are quite involved even at such a granular level, and so, any attempt to make generalisable conclusions for the text as a whole is bound to be a much more difficult endeavour.

⁵³ See Glasenapp 1999: 241, who remarks, "In contrast to most other religions, the Jains deny most definitely the existence of an imperishable, all-mighty highest 'Lord' (Īśvara) who creates the universe, rules it, and when he likes destroys it." Thus, there is no room or need for an all-powerful and omniscient God or *īśvara*-like figure in Jain cosmology. Also see Jain 2017 (2007): 12–13 on *jīnas*: *jo ātmā mokṣa prāpta karke lok ke śikhar par virājmān hokar anant sukh bhog rahī hai, ve hī jain dharma ke anusār īśvar, bhagvān, siddha ādi nāmo se jāne jāte hāi. ye kiśī bhī kārya ke kartā yā hartā nahī hāi apitu mātra gyātā va dṛṣṭā hāi.* (Translation: According to Jainism, the souls which have obtained release and are (now) partaking in endless bliss having become established at the summit of the world, these are known as *īśvar, bhagvān, siddha* and so on. They are not the doer or the destroyer of any deed, but rather, they are only a knower and a witness.)

turns into a spirit and destroys the city rather than just cursing it as the sages did in Vyāsa's account.⁵⁴ Thus, in the Jain versions, there is no evident causal link, in the form of Gāndhārī's curse, between the carnage that took place during the *Mahābhārata* war and the Yādava doom that followed it several years later.

In place of curses, often past lives are used to explain current life experiences in Jain narrative texts. For instance, in the TŚC, when Kṛṣṇa regrets not taking initiation with Nemi, the latter tells him that his fate was sealed by a *nidāna*: a word with many different meanings, but in this context, most likely referring to "a cause that leads to rebirths," often a desire or an attachment.⁵⁵ Nemi says, "Viṣṇus, having created impediment(s) through *nidāna*, do not renounce the world."⁵⁶ "Viṣṇus" in the plural is a reference to the fact that Kṛṣṇa has lived other lives. As opposed to this, mention of past lives in Hindu narratives is comparatively limited. It is usually the deeds in one's current life itself that could lead to a situation where one could get cursed.⁵⁷ These curses generally play a pivotal role in the structuring of Hindu narratives, and they usually take effect without the direct involvement of the person pronouncing the curse.

⁵⁴ There is an interesting parallel here between the TŚC and the MBhV: The TŚC describes how Dvaipāyana turned into a spirit roamed the city accompanied by "witches, ghouls, vampires, etc." (Johnson 1962: 298). While in the MBhV, it was *kāla*, or "time" itself (or even "death"), that took on an embodied form and wandered in the streets.

⁵⁵ See Fujinaga 2017. Barnett (1907: 80) describes *nidāna* as "vindictive motives" or "hopes of future sensual enjoyments" that inspire some to perform austerities. According to Barnett, Dīvāyaṇa "performed severe penances, ending with his death, in order thereby to obtain the power to avenge himself in a future birth." In the TŚC, Dvaipāyana says to Kṛṣṇa, "Beaten by your sons, I have made a *nidāna*—to burn Dvārakā with its people" (Johnson 1962: 296).

⁵⁶ *na śārṅgiṇaḥ pravajanti nidānena kṛtārgalāḥ* (TŚC 11.49).

⁵⁷ How curses (and boons) fit into the workings of karma is a matter of some debate (cf. Goldman 1985 and Arya 1972). While Goldman is of the opinion that "the convention of the curse is nothing but a dramatic personalisation of the idea of karma", Arya argues that the two are mutually inconsistent. Also see Reichenbach 1989: 146–147. While generally in Hindu narratives, we see curses playing a more predominant role in orchestrating misfortune in an erring individual's life, the doctrine of karma, in the sense of partaking fruits of one's past-life deeds—and not just of the current life—is also mentioned in several places. For instance, in the *Bhagavadgītā*, we find Kṛṣṇa telling Arjuna in the context of a "failed" yogi that, "When one has reached the worlds of virtuous action, and has dwelt for endless years, one who is lost to *yoga* is then born again in the home of the pure and illustrious. Or one exists in a family of intelligent practitioners of *yoga* – a birth like this is surely very hard to reach in this world. [...] One is carried by the practice of an earlier life, even against one's will," from Book 6 of the *Bhagavadgītā*, translation by Patton 2008: 140–141.

Another interesting point of departure in the Jain texts is the distinction between collective and individual fate and the possibility of avoiding the former. For instance, in the TŚC, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa's parents lament as follows on being stuck inside the burning Dvārakā, "We, bereft of good fortune, did not take initiation at Śrī Nemi's feet. Now we shall experience the fruit of our actions" (Johnson 1962: 299). They seem to be comparing their lot with that of those Yādavas who had taken renunciation under the guidance of Nemi. Thus, while collectively the Yādavas were doomed, there was scope for individual salvation in the Jain versions. In the MBhV, on the other hand, there is no discussion on why the Yādavas who were rescued (partly unsuccessfully) by Arjuna deserved to survive as opposed to others who had perished. In fact, in a way, their death was part of the divine plan.⁵⁸

Conclusion

As we have seen, the dissimilarities between the Jain accounts of the destruction of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa and that of the MBhV are quite significant. In this paper, by looking closely at how these events are recounted in two Jain versions and the MBhV, I have argued that the differences lie not just in what happened according to these texts, but also in how it happened and how it is explained or justified.

Structurally, the Jain accounts of the fall of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa agree with the MBhV at two levels: the lowermost narrative level that basically consists of the destruction of the city and the Yādava clan, and at the overarching level of causality where we see a distinction being made between the primary cause or reason behind these events and the immediate causes or triggers. However, in between these two levels, we see these texts introducing their own twists and details, some of which help to further the philosophical and religious ideas behind them. For the MBhV, this to an extent is the elevation of Kṛṣṇa to an all-powerful God-like figure whose divine scheme consisted of incarnating on the

⁵⁸ Only Uddhava's case can be regarded as the exception to this. Furthermore, it is interesting that in the MBhV, no actual reason is spelled out for the drowning of Dvārakā. The curses only extended to Yādavas' doom, but what exactly was the reason for the city itself to sink below the waves is not clear from this part of the MBhV. It was perhaps self-evident that the city was created by Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*, and so, it had to go back to where it came from, that is, the sea after Kṛṣṇa's death. This is more clearly stated in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* where Kṛṣṇa instructs his charioteer Dāruka to inform the Yādavas left at Dvārakā that "no one should remain in Dwarka...for when I leave this world the city of the Yadus will sink beneath the waves" (Menon 2012: 1382).

earth along with various other gods to uphold dharma. On the other hand, in the Jain texts, the inexorable laws of the universe are disembodied, and future events are only known to the omniscient Jina and not controlled by him. This, therefore, is another example of how the Jains and Hindus incorporated mythological (and perhaps semi-historical?) events of great significance within their narrative traditions and recounted them through their respective ideological lenses.⁵⁹



Figure 1: The sequence of main events leading up to the drowning of Dvārakā in the MBhV

⁵⁹ Some historians now believe that some of the events described in the *Mahābhārata* may have a historical basis. See Kulke and Rothermund 2016: 45–47.



Figure 2: The sequence of main events leading up to the destruction of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa in the HPJ

Abbreviations

b. = before

MBhV = The *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa

HPJ = *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* of Jinasena Punnāṭha

CMC = *Caūpaṇṇamahāpurisacariya* of Śīlāṅka

MPP = *Mahāpurāṇu* of Puṣpadanta

TŚC = *Triṣaṣṭīśālākāpuruṣacaritamahākāvya* of Hemacandra

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Appendix

In this appendix, I present my findings on a comparative analysis of four Jain versions of the two events studied in this paper: the fall of Dvārakā and the death of Kṛṣṇa. The texts included are the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* by Jinasena Punnaṭa (8th c. CE, HPJ), the *Caṭṭapaṇṇamahāpurisacariya* by Śīlāṅka (9th c. CE, CMC), the *Mahāpurāṇu* by Puṣpadanta (10th c. CE, MPP), and the *Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritamahākāvya* by Hemacandra (12th c. CE, TŚC). I have already talked about the HPJ and the TŚC above. In the following paragraphs, I introduce the other two texts. After this I compare the Digambara and the Śvetāmbara versions to each other and collate the main findings at the end of the appendix.

Among the Śvetāmbaras, the first account of the *Harivaṃśa* is found in Śīlāṅka's *Caṭṭapaṇṇamahāpurisacariya* (CMC). Although the CMC predates the TŚC, the latter is the best-known of all the Śvetāmbara versions of the lives of the Jain great men, and hence, I decided to include that in the main body of the paper.

Śīlāṅka was a Śvetāmbara mendicant from Gujarat.⁶⁰ The stories pertaining to the *Harivaṃśa* are told in chapters 49, 50, and 51 of the CMC, and this whole account is much more detailed than his account of the *Rāmāyaṇa*: the former extends over thirty pages in the edition I consulted while the latter is summed up in just two pages. According to De Clercq (2008: 410), this Prakrit text is a “kāvyā in prose interspersed with verse.” Thus, in terms of form, the most noticeable peculiarity of the CMC is that it is in versified prose while the other Jain texts that I looked at in detail are in verse. However, within Prakrit literature itself, its prose form is not anomalous as Prakrit abounds in stories composed in prose.⁶¹

The final text included in this comparative analysis is Puṣpadanta’s *Mahāpurāṇu* (MPP), written in Apabhramsha and completed in 965 CE. Puṣpadanta was a Digambara ascetic and composed his literary works under the patronage of a Rāṣṭrakūṭa minister named Bharata (De Clercq 2008: 410). Being a *mahāpurāṇa*, it contains the accounts of all the sixty-three Jain great men. The stories of the *Harivaṃśa* are told from *sandhis* 81 to 92. In terms of form, it is an Apabhramsha *sandhibandha kāvyā*—a style used for “larger poems of epic and Purāṇic proportions” (Bhayani 1989: 16).

The main criteria behind the choice of these texts were: (i) having more than one text each from the Digambara and Śvetāmbara traditions for the sake of drawing comparisons within the same sect; (ii) including texts that are best-known or best-established within the tradition; and (iii) having texts in languages other than Sanskrit to see how these events are portrayed there.

Table 1: Jain texts mentioned or analysed in this study

Text	Composer	Sect	Period	Language
<i>Antagaḍadasāo</i>	-	Śvetāmbara	b. 5th c. CE	Prakrit
<i>Harivaṃśapurāṇa</i>	Jinasena Punnāṭa	Digambara	8th c. CE	Sanskrit
<i>Uttarapurāṇa</i> ⁶²	Guṇabhadra	Digambara	9th c. CE	Sanskrit
<i>Caū- paṇṇamahāpurisacariya</i>	Śīlāṅka	Śvetāmbara	9th c. CE	Prakrit

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ See Jain 1971 for a survey of narrative literature in Prakrit.

⁶² This text is cited in this appendix.

<i>Riṭṭhaṇemicariu</i> ⁶³	Svayambhūdeva ⁶⁴	Yāpanīya-saṅgha	9 th – 10 th c. CE	Apabhramsha
<i>Mahāpurāṇu</i>	Puṣpadanta	Digambara	10 th c. CE	Apabhramsha
Devendra's commentary on the <i>Uttarajjhāyanasutta</i> ⁶⁵	Devendra	Śvetāmbara	11 th c. CE	Prakrit
<i>Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacarita-mahākāvya</i>	Hemacandra	Śvetāmbara	12 th c. CE	Sanskrit

The Digambara versions

Although the HPJ and the MPP are both Digambara versions, they differ quite remarkably from each other.⁶⁶

1. The first main difference is the length of the narrative itself. For instance, the account of the burning of Dvārakā is condensed into half a *sandhi* in the MPP, and thus, it omits several details like Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's attempts to pacify Dīvāyaṇa and the account of the death of their parents. Balarāma's anguish at the death of Kṛṣṇa is more elaborate—occupying about a *sandhi* and a half—but again the description of his overcoming this grief is condensed into half a *sandhi*.
2. The framing of this episode is also starkly different in the two versions. In the HPJ, the predictions about Dvārakā and Kṛṣṇa are preceded by the account of the death of Devakī's eighth son Gajakumāra. After this, HPJ's account progresses uninterrupted till the initiation of Balarāma into the Jain ascetic order. In the MPP on the other hand, a condensed background of the Pāṇḍavas is interspersed between the predictions and the actual burning of Dvārakā. Puṣpadanta evidently follows Guṇabhadra in this choice of framing, but while the latter had included the account of the Pāṇḍavas at this point for the ease of young readers,⁶⁷ Puṣpadanta makes Balarāma ask Nemi about the

⁶³ This text is mentioned later in footnote 78.

⁶⁴ Svayambhūdeva's son, Tribhuvana, composed *sandhis* 100 to 104 after his father's death; *sandhis* 105 to 112 were added by Yaśaḥkīrti in the fifteenth century. See De Clercq 2008: 408.

⁶⁵ See footnote 5.

⁶⁶ The *Mahāpurāṇu* is close to Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāṇa*, and the latter is "evidently not based on the HPJ" (see De Clercq 2008: 405, 410).

⁶⁷ *granthavistarabhīrūṇaṃ āyurmedhānurodhataḥ* (Uttarapurāṇa 72.197, Jain 2000: 420).

Pāṇḍavas, thus weaving the Pāṇḍava account a little more fully into the narrative.⁶⁸

3. We are told in the MPP that after the prophecy, Kṛṣṇa obtained Nemi's *darśana* and performed some *vejjavaccu*—the practice of serving the ascetics by providing them with some medicines and treatments.⁶⁹ This detail is not mentioned in the HPJ.
4. As Puṣpadanta's account is quite condensed, it is difficult to make specific comments about the portrayal of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa around the time of Kṛṣṇa's death.

The Śvetāmbara versions

Even though the TŚC and the CMC are both Śvetāmbara texts, there are again considerable differences between them.⁷⁰ The following points are noteworthy:

1. While in the TŚC it is Kṛṣṇa who asked Nemi for the predictions regarding himself and Dvārakā, as in the *Antagaḍadasāo*, the CMC aligns with the HPJ in that these questions were asked by Balarāma and not Kṛṣṇa. This small difference is another example of the observation made by Bruhn that the CMC in several places “departs from the Śvetāmbara-tradition and follows one (or several) of the Digambara-versions” (Bhojak 1961: 12). However, he cautions us against taking this to mean that some Śvetāmbara versions are based on Digambara ones. According to him both Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras follow a common tradition which itself was not monolithic but consisted of several sources (Bhojak 1961: 10, 12). Also, while Balarāma did ask Nemi questions about the end of Dvārakā and Kṛṣṇa in the CMC, his questions were much simpler and did not contain the philosophical understanding that he demonstrates in the HPJ.

In the HPJ, Balarāma asks:

In how many days will this Dvārikāpurī which was created by Vaiśravaṇa be destroyed, (as) all things created are transitory⁷¹...

⁶⁸ However, there seems to be a jump in Puṣpadanta's narrative at this point as Balarāma supposedly asks Nemi about the Pāṇḍavas while they are in the Pallava country and not in Dvārakā. One will have to read the whole *Mahāpurāṇu* to understand how the narrative is structured and in which places Balarāma speaks to Nemi.

⁶⁹ *Mahumahaṇem puṇu saṃsārahara jīnavaradaṃsaṇu laddhaiṃ; vejjavaccu kayaiṃ Govindeṃ* (Vaidya and Jain 1999: 237).

⁷⁰ For a more elaborate list of differences, see Klaus Bruhn's introduction to the CMC in Bhojak 1961: 11.

⁷¹ *nātha Vaiśravaṇeneyaṃ nirmitā Dvārikāpurī*

in Kṛṣṇa's time of death who will attain to causehood (who will be the cause), [as] the death of all living beings that are born is fixed/predetermined?⁷²

While in the CMC, Balrāma only says:

Oh Lord! In how much time will this city be destroyed? And by whom will be (the end of) Kṛṣṇa?⁷³

2. In the CMC, the name of the sage who burns down Dvārakā is given as Dīvāyaṇa—Prakrit for the Sanskrit Dvaipāyana—and his identity is not fully established.⁷⁴ In the TŚC, this sage is identified as Vyāsa. However, as in the TŚC, in the CMC as well the abandoned wine was found by the princes shortly after the prediction made by Nemi, and the sage Dīvāyaṇa was assaulted by them when they were intoxicated on this wine. Dīvāyaṇa died soon after this attack, remerged as *aggikumāra* (*agnikumāra* in Sanskrit), and stayed hidden in Dvārakā for eleven years waiting for an opportunity to strike.
 3. The CMC does not report any conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Nemi after Dīvāyaṇa's vow to burn down Dvārakā becomes known.
 4. The portrayal of Balarāma in the CMC, though close to TŚC, appears to have greater emotional depth.⁷⁵ In the CMC, Balarāma, while leaving to fetch water for Kṛṣṇa, gave the following advice to the latter:
...you should not grieve in your heart even a bit, you should not think of the family members, you should not despair, you should take recourse to patience, you should defy disaster, you should make this heart as hard as a thunderbolt...⁷⁶
- Right after this, as in the TŚC, Balarāma also asked the forest goddesses to protect Kṛṣṇa in his absence.

kiyatānehasānto'syāḥ kṛtakā hi vinaśvarāḥ. (HPJ 61.18)

⁷² *svāntakāle nimittatvaṃ ko vā Kṛṣṇasya yāsyati.*

jātānāṃ hi samastānāṃ jīvānāṃ niyatā mṛtiḥ. (HPJ 61.20)

⁷³ *Bhagavaṃ! keccirāu kālāo imie ṇayyarie avasāṇaṃ bhavissāi? kuo vā sayāsāo Vāsudevassa ya?* (Bhojak 1961: 198)

⁷⁴ This observation is based on my reading of only this episode and not of the whole text. However, in the index of proper names in Bhojak (1961: 341), Dīvāyaṇa is only identified as a *ṛṣi* and according to this index, he is mentioned only in this particular episode and not elsewhere in the text.

⁷⁵ Bruhn also drew attention to the “psychological interest of the author” by remarking that “Śilāṅka's *psychological* approach makes itself felt as a tendency to describe in very detailed manner the reaction of the individual to his experiences and to preface the decisions of the heroes with lengthy deliberations and exhortations.” See Bhojak 1961: 18.

⁷⁶ *...ṇa ya tumae maṇayaṃ pi cittakheo kāyavvo, ṇa sumariyavvaṃ bandhavāṇaṃ, ṇa kāyavvo visāo, avalambiyavvaṃ dhirattaṇaṃ, avamaṇṇiyavvā āvayā, kāyavvaṃ kulisakaḍhiṇaṃ va hiyayaṇaṃ...* (Bhojak 1961: 200)

Kṛṣṇa's words to Jaratkumāra are also somewhat different, perhaps an indication of the fact that while the broad contours of the episode were the same in the two texts, the composers had some leeway to portray the characters in the light they wanted to. While in the TŚC, Kṛṣṇa's only real consolation to Jaratkumāra was that "fate (what is to be) cannot be overcome either by you or me," in the CMC, Kṛṣṇa observed:

Disasters are easily encountered, (but) wealth with difficulty; (there is) a lot of sorrow, (but) only a little happiness, separations fall to one's lot, but union(s) with dear ones lie afar.⁷⁷

The conversation between the two is also longer in the CMC in which Kṛṣṇa describes to Jaratkumāra how Dvārakā was destroyed.

Summary of main differences:

Table 2: Main differences between the Jain texts

	HPJ	CMC	MPP	TŚC
1. Who asks for the prophecy?	Balarāma	Balarāma	Balarāma	Kṛṣṇa
2. Who was Dvaipāyana-kumāra?	Balarāma's maternal uncle.	A sage, but his exact identity is unclear from the episode.	A sage, but his exact identity is unclear from the episode.	Vyāsa
3. When was the abandoned wine found by the princes?	Close to the end of 12 years.	Soon after the prophecy.	Close to the end of 12 years.	Soon after the prophecy.
4. Did Kṛṣṇa have a conversation with Nemi after failing to placate Dvaipāyana?	No	No	No	Yes
5. How are Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa portrayed?	Quite devout.	Less devout; more melodramatic, especially Balarāma.	Difficult to say as the account is quite short.	Less devout.

The five points of difference listed above likely do not stem from the same cause. For instance, point five above regarding the difference in the portrayal of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa is probably just a reflection of the

⁷⁷ *sulahāo āvayāo, dullahāo sampayāo, vahūyaṃ dukkhaṃ, thevayaṃ sukkhaṃ, nivaḍantiṇo vīoyā, dūravattiṇo piyajaṇasamāgamā* (Bhojak 1961: 201). It is probably an adage as Bhojak places it within quotes.

different artistic, scholarly, psychological, and/or devotional leanings of the composers. However, the first point about the prophecy raises an important question: did Hemacandra deliberately make the decision to have Kṛṣṇa ask Nemi for the prophecy to align his account with that of the *Antagaḍadasāo*? In other words, was he self-consciously going back to the partial mention of this episode in the Śvetāmbara canon? The same question can be asked for point four as well. However, it is difficult to answer it definitively without looking at all the other *Harivaṃśapurāṇas* that preceded Hemacandra's TSC⁷⁸ and studying other episodes. Similarly, the exact significance of the differences noted under points two and three above needs further research. A detailed study could be done just on the portrayal of Dvaipāyanakumāra in Jain narrative texts.

⁷⁸ In the *Uttarapurāṇa* and *Riṭṭhaṇemicariu* as well, it was Balarāma who asked Nemi for the prophecy. So, it does seem that on this particular point, Hemacandra was departing from the narrative that had become established in the *Harivaṃśa* tradition across different sects.

