

II-27. Uses of the Words from the Past

As the silversmith removes impurities from silver,
So does the wise man from himself
One by one, little by little, again and again.
Dhammpad

Unless written down, spoken words survive only as interpretations and traditions. The information and intellectual content of written word is at the roots of civilization. Such heritage provides insights into the thought processes communicated through language and preserved in the practices. Written words are valuable to understand formulation of ideas influenced by social concerns. Ancient pandulipis also provide insights into the technologies and arts. There is no standard way to handle and preserve all pandulipis under all conditions.

The Jain thought is empirical, secular, and practice-based. It builds shared knowledge (*vangmay*) with a belief that humans understand and respond to their experience. Knowledge based on shared experience has lasting value because the external (*pratyakch*) evidence ascertains the validity (*praman*) of cognition of the object of investigation (*pramey*). Evidence based conclusions are tentative (*syad*). Alternatives and possibilities (*anekant*) emerge in different contexts. Since the past practices (*achar*) are associated with the future outcomes, a code of conduct based on shared experiences include the observable, testable, and relevant (*hetu*) for the future outcome. Faith in ad hoc constructs is not testable and therefore it encourages reliance on non-existent, contradictory, and inconsistent world views. This is the crux of the material already made available of this site.

Relevance of ancient works emerges with use

After the death of Mahaveer (599-527 BCE) his disciples compiled and assembled the thoughts in 14 parts (Angs). Since the last two Angs are a matter of personal experience, the descendent group (*Mool Sangh*) was entrusted with the oral transmission of the means and thought to be preserved and to be developed with future experience. After 200 years the *Sangh* fragmented into at least two independent groups. The thought process also stagnated because none of the groups had adequate understanding of the entire material.

Whatever we know about these angas now is from the written material preserved after another 300 years when the writing technologies evolved. After 30 CE fragments of the orally communicated original work began to be collected and scribed. The work reassembled during the next 500 years is now generally known as the Jain *Agam*. There is disagreement about the integrity of the available *Agam* material. The Shvetamber tradition believes that the available *Agam* material from the first 11 Ang is reasonably complete. On the other hand, the Digamber scholars maintain that much if not all of the available *Agam* material has not retained its integrity, and thus the *agam vangmay* does not communicate the overall thought process or the way of reasoning. Based on my reading both of these assertions have merit and they are not mutually contradictory.

Hira Publications (www.Hira-pub.org) is dedicated to exploring the *agam* material. It is our hope that by bringing the *Agam* material in a modern form it is possible to find ways to reconstruct the thought and reasoning processes. Our current focus is on the Nay and Jeevatthan components of *itthivay*, the twelfth Ang. This clearly required departure from the literal

translation because we do not have a good grasp of way in which language was used millennia ago. We have relied on interpretive translation where continuity of thought is critical. We believe that the continuity of thought in the current Jain *vangmay* can be reconstructed from the material reassembled from wide ranging sources that trace their origins to the fragments of the orally transmitted earlier material. For example about 100 Agam works assembled before 800 CE are available now in printed form. They show a remarkable consistency of the basic ideas, concepts, and ways of reasoning.

These printed works assembled from the ancient *pandulipi* pandulipi are a tribute to the scholarship of the last couple of centuries. The printed material is assembled from the hand written copies of the earlier material which may have come orally or from the ancient pandulipis. The tradition of multiple pandulipis certainly saved the content from extinction however one can not be absolutely sure about the integrity of the material. The pandulipis often also contain *vachanika* or interpretation. In many pandulipies the ancient material is often clearly distinguishable. However limited understanding of the tradition compromises the *vachanika* material from individuals.

A large number of ancient pandulipi pandulipis of different periods remain to be carefully examined and evaluated. Just as we do not know how much of the original material is not available now, an unknown fraction of the agam material and its subsequent interpretations also remains buried in the pandulipi material that is stored away. Some of my personal observations and speculations on the subject include:

- a. **It is estimated that at the beginning of the 21st century as many as a million Jain pandulipis are available in over 5000 different collections.**
- b. **The number of pandulipis in existence now may be about 20% of the total ever scribed. Based on the rate of deterioration and loss of the existing pandulipis it appears that over 5 million pandulipis may have already disappeared. At this rate about half of the pandulipis in existence now are likely to be lost within the 100 years.**
- c. **My estimate is that the total number of the original Agam works is few a hundred. As far as I know the original pandulipis of any of the Agam works are not available now. Most of the available works are copies of copies.**
- d. **Much of the Agam work is cited and cross-referenced in the later works. Such references also suggest that scores of Agam works are not be available now.**
- e. **Printed Agam works have been reassembled by comparing copies (*pandulipies*) scribed during the last 500 years. These copies not only refer to other works but also contain text fragments of more ancient origins interspersed with commentaries and elaborations (*vachna, tika, bhasya, vyakhya*).**

Methods used to develop this survey

The current state of the Jain *pandulipies* found in many holdings is a cause for concern. Even if the material is preserved under best of conditions, it rarely made available to scholars. Awareness of this problem has significantly increased during the last century. My recent visit to several collections and libraries in

India suggests that for a variety of reasons the problem of preservation is likely to become more serious in the future if not already so. Besides the loss of scholarship and interest, many of the trusts which were set up to take care of the collections have fallen on hard times. The situation in the Government and University collections is equally dreadful and the physical neglect is even more apparent.

Over a period of the last 30 years I have talked to several hundred people entrusted with the care of pandulipis and elaboration of their content. Observations in this article are based on my personal conversations and visits with the care-takers of several hundred pandulipi collections in museums, archives, universities, institutes, temples, and personal holdings. The major conclusions in this draft are based on a month long trip in February 2007 to over 20 libraries where I talked with more than 50 individuals. Admittedly this is not a systematic scientific study. However my observations are independently and qualitatively corroborated through informal contacts. Quantitative observations are my guess-estimates. My observations and thoughts in this article are built on their candid responses that are invariably off the record.

Part I: Reasons to Preserve the Written Heritage

The tradition of making multiple hand-written copies of a work is possibly the single most important factor that preserved not only the ancient written material but also assured the continuity of Jain thought, practice, and the community. These pandulipis were placed in different locations to be shared by the community at large. This egalitarian practice facilitated wider scrutiny of the

information and thought for the future use and development. In this broad context the ancient pandulipis serve a variety of purposes:

- (1) It is the documented evidence of the survival, preservation, continuity, and growth of thought that goes back 5000 years but still followed by a thriving Jain community.
- (2) The ancient text contains words and citations of ancient origins. It is likely that some of the Prakrit Gatha and word constructs may date back to the Mool Sangh or earlier.
- (3) The pandulipi material has helped in establishing historicity of persons and events. The archival details from the ancient pandulipis corroborate and compliment the evidence from archaeological artifacts. Ancient pandulipis are useful as evidence to establish claims even in a modern court of law.
- (4) Ancient texts provide a basis for examining the meanings and associations of words and concepts. It permits study of word usage and how the interpretations of the underlying concepts have changed with time. For example, significant changes are apparent even by 200 CE due to the Sanskritization of the earlier Prakrit languages.
- (5) The content, explanations, and elaborations in the pandulipis provide insights into ways that facilitate development of new ideas and impact on future thought. Such changes chart the developments in the use of language to formulate and disseminate seminal ideas.
- (6) Comparisons of different copies of the same work provides a basis to identify errors and establish integrity of the text. Often the scribes were not familiar with the content or meaning of the work. Such mistakes are not uncommon even in the modern printed works.

- (7) The language of the content in an ancient pandulipi may be different than the language with which the script is now associated. For example, the historical reality of the migration of Bhadrabahu (ca 350 BCE) is the fact that the script of Dhavala pandulipis (ca 1050 CE in Moodbidri) is in Hale Kannad of South India, whereas the language of the content is the Prakrit from North India. Brahmi associated with the Prakrits was the script of Ashoka's edict (ca 250 BCE). Brahmi later evolved into the Nagari script which after the 12th century is also associated with Sanskrit and Hindi. The first written text in Sanskrit is found in Pallavi script on a stone inscription from the 5th century to commemorate king PurvVarma.
- (8) Ancient pandulipis are useful to study evolution of script and associated writing conventions to adequately express, present and communicate thoughts. Such features are of interest to trace evolution of abstract languages.
- (9) Writing technologies used for the preparation of a pandulipi provide insights into the use of the local resources to preserve thought as words. Thus technologies of ink, paper, and writing instruments have facilitated dissemination of thought by self-study. This is one of the first step towards egalitarian system of education.
- (10) Traditional methods for long term care and dissemination of written and printed materials provide insights into the effective means and practices for the preservation and care of the existing pandulipis in the local context.
- (11) Pandulipis are work of art. Availability of illuminated pandulipi pages in black market suggests theft and irreversible loss of pandulipis.

Finally as developed in the Jeevatthan and Nay material on this site, the basis for the continuity of the ancient thought is more effective and very impressive even in the context of the modern intellectual approach.

Preservation and use of word heritage

It is estimated that 1 to 2 million ancient Jain pandulipis are scattered over several thousand holdings each with scores to thousands of pandulipis in different degrees of deterioration. Very few of these are readily available for scholarly work. Even the larger collections in the Government institutes and museum holdings are not necessarily better preserved. In many case they are less adequately equipped to deal with the problem than was the case 50 years ago. Very few of these collections are adequately catalogued. A detailed catalogue of catalogues in the book form was published before 1960. At the very least it can be verified for the holding and placed on the internet. My spot checks suggest that as many as half of the pandulipis in existence now are not be adequately preserved to last another century.

Additional concerns about the accessibility and use of pandulipis in the public holdings include:

- 1.** As such the lifetime of the pandulipis, printed books, or microfilms is expected to be few hundred years under the best of conditions and if without any danger from fire, flood, theft, and neglect.
- 2.** Printed form facilitates dissemination and utilization of pandulipi material. For a variety of reasons quality and availability of the published versions varies widely. Virtually no library in the world, including the Library of US Congress, contains all the material published in Nagari. I doubt if any

library in India has all the material published in India. Also the major libraries in India do not participate in the international inter-library loan programs for printed books.

3. Scattered attempts have been made to microfilm pandulipis in some holdings. For example a couple decade ago an unknown amount of the material was microfilmed by the Department of Archives of the Government of India. These microfilms are not available through the interlibrary loan programs. Even the source libraries do not have the microfilms, nor do they know where and how to access these copies.

4. Very few of the pandulipi collections have catalogues. The person in-charge of the collections hardly ever responds to letters, phone calls, e-mails. The Indian University and Research institute libraries do not provide ready access to their pandulipi collections, nor is their access procedure standardized. During my personal visits to some of the well known libraries it took me up to several hours to locate a catalogued pandulipi. It is not uncommon to be told that it is not available. Chances of success appear to depend on who is answering the request. It is not uncommon to hear excuses like: *the material is not to be shown; it will require special permission which is not possible today; the material is handled by somebody who is on extended leave; the collection has been moved to another (unknown?) location; no facility is available for photocopying; camera-copies are not allowed. Five out of five times even the promised copies were not sent by mail even after the copying and mailing cost was paid in advance.*

Ideas to value with limited resources

In a real world resources are limited and priorities are weighed. Preservation and dissemination of ancient pandulipis is

unlikely to be a money-making enterprise. Even with unlimited amount of money one can not do anything without expertise, know-how and interest. Therefore one of the first useful steps would be make the material readily available to all those who can provide input and contribute to the effort. This can be done if the pandulipis are available in digital electronic form. Such copies can be used and disseminated without touching the originals ever after. Ready accessibility in electronic media will encourage participation of many more people who might be will do study the material in their spare time. Wide-ranging inputs are necessary from diverse areas of expertise to create value. With proper planning and foresight even modest resources can turn viable ideas into reality. The long term value of thought in written works is often goes unrecognized even by the experts.

Viable intellectual work evolves with diverse inputs from a broader base. Such shared knowledge also leads to unforeseen technologies, products, and solutions in different contexts. One way or the other all tangible enterprises conform to the conservation principle of Rishabhath: *Upmei va, vigmei va, dhruvei va*. Inputs and outputs are related no matter how, the public, private, and market inputs and outputs are included. The resources required to realize value of viable undertakings include:

1. Financial support to create infra-structure for life-long learning and education that supports a market for books and maintenance of dedicated libraries.
2. Products of technology are the products for trade. Just as thought begets other thoughts, existing technologies form the basis of the other emerging technologies. Such professional expertise to develop and implement technologies supports a vibrant tradition of thought.

3. An author or inventor provides knowledge and expertise. His vision and credibility assures integrity of the original intellectual work. It may or may not be appreciated in a market place, but integrity is absolutely required for the long term viability of thought. Intellectual preparation necessary to carry out credible work takes decades for which an author is rarely compensated. Those who have not been involved in creative work can hardly appreciate the contributions of an author, researcher, or inventor.
4. There are misconceptions about the role of an author. Independence of thought is a critical intellectual resource necessary to create value. Interference in the independence of an original work stifles creativity. Managers are supposed to be caretaker and facilitator, but they often overstep boundaries of their role and abilities.
5. Sponsors rarely understand the nature of investments in thought because the value of original creative work emerges decades and centuries later in unanticipated and unimagined ways. It is also misguided to consider an author's work as "the work for hire." It is unlike the work of a day laborer, editor, or a manager. Also creating value through intellectual enterprise is only indirectly related to a very long term return on the investment in the infrastructure and training.

Unfair practices stifle creativity. Beyond the survival needs, a sense of purpose and fair dealing encourages creativity that is at the heart of all works of lasting value. If an author is to be blamed for a poor and compromised work, credit is also due for a job that is well done. Personal satisfaction of an intellectual job is the real reward for an author who provides objective commitment and

intellectual input for the enterprise. Often it takes time to understand the importance of such contributions.

The value of a viable thought is in its usability. Also not all ideas are created equal. Viability or potential value of ideas is rarely obvious in the beginning. Resources can help in creating value by offering suitable environment where choices are made to including all those involved in bringing an idea to fruition.

Few are fortunate to be able to finance creative work with their own resources. Charity can only seed a project and distribute the risk inherent in pursuing a long term vision. Such resources provide living wages to people who have vision, make intellectual contributions, provide expertise, and develop technologies. In the long run only the market forces can assure long term economic viability of a social enterprise.

Recognition of intellectual work often comes from its usefulness. Some seek social honors and rewards that often bring wider social recognition and boost to ego associated with ones public standing. Also recognitions by those who can hardly appreciate intellectual contributions are often distorted by political considerations. As if in search of social recognition, many of the original works now in print have questionable levels of professional expertise, scholarship, and standards of linguistic proficiency. In general, traditional scholars are better prepared to handle such challenges. Modern university trained scholars rarely have a deeper understanding of the overall literature or the tradition to appreciate the structure of the content and context of the thought.

Increasingly one hears that “little will be missed if most of the Jain works that have come out of the Indian Universities are destroyed.” There may be some truth to it if one weighs their levels of originality, creativity and integrity. Here again originality of

thought is a key measure of any contribution. It is generally recognized that plagiarism is not uncommon. It is said that plagiarism is a form of flattery. However, it is disconcerting to see wide spread blatant plagiarism not only in reprints of the earlier works that do not acknowledge the original source but also in the Academic works. Many of the 'new' works are mere cut-and-past jobs with cosmetic changes. Such works often retain the mistakes of the previous versions and also introduce new. In other words, time, effort and resources are wasted. Such practices also create a wrong model that stifles originality without creating a useful product.

In short, suitable measures are needed to protect intellectual property. Responsibility accompanied by credit and acknowledgement is an integral part of the development of shared knowledge. Acknowledgements provide insight into the motives behind the work. Critical review by intellectual peers is necessary for responsibility, accountability and other forms of checks and balances. If personal biases can be controlled in a work, personal resources are more likely to assure independence of thought. Lack of measures and controls in the current environment makes it necessary to be aware of the nefarious influences from the competing faiths and beliefs that tend to distort or discredit a work by creating controversy where none exists. Such issues are best dealt with facts and in open.

The thought process behind the words from the past

The available ancient works are reassembled from scattered fragments from the original shurt tradition that is traceable to the Mool Sangh and before. Threads of continuity of thought about seminal concepts (literally the word *Sutr*) are apparent in these works. Greater appreciation of the meaning and significance of this

body of work in emerging situations requires deeper understanding of the ideas and thought in suitable linguistic and historical contexts. The current goal of Hira Publication is to reconstruct the itthivay (the 12th) Ang of Mahaveer (see Hira-pub.org) from Jeevatthan and Nay. Thus itthivay is about validated reality based perceptions that underlie decision making. Such methods without ad hoc assumptions have continuing relevance for the future irrespective of the emerging facts, assumptions, and beliefs. I believe that the thought process of itthivay can be reconstructed with reasonable certainty. This is because the deeper human concerns and methods that guide thought change little with time, place and even the social evolution. As the product of mind thought processes do not change, the basis for reasoning may appear to change.

Critical scrutiny is an integral part of validation. A thought is also validated by outcomes of its practice. A viable thought has a defined basis and a defined range of applicability. In particular, appreciation of thought that binds an entire body of work requires an understanding of its:

- Scope and roots
- Applications and uses
- Continuity in the related works
- Relationships as expressed in the ancient languages
- Practice in a social context.

Difficulties are anticipated in reconstructing the thought processes in ancient writings. Not only the linguistic nuances but the ancient methods of reasoning and scrutiny are also not well understood. The evolutionary nature of the language also interferes with the steps of reasoning because with time the assumptions and context change. To some extent the problem can

be overcome by careful examination of the historically related works in a tradition where an idea is sequentially elaborated and explored over centuries. This is certainly the cases with the available Nay works.

It is not uncommon to see reconstructions of the past based on untenable assumptions or extrapolated from the present. In the Western Academic circles there is a general misconception that the use of the Sanskrit preceded the Prakrit languages. Sanskrit as known now is mostly a written language formalized between 400 BCE to 400 CE for the use of scholars. The Prakrits are languages of common people with much more ancient origins. The Prakrits were in general use in the Ganga Valley long before the emergence of Vedant after 600 BC. The Sanskrit grammarian Panini lived in Kandahar around 400 BC who developed rigid rules for assembling words from their phonemic roots. Thus phonemic purification of Prakrit words into a Sanskritized word is more a matter of convention rather than the usage in practice. Obviously it would be of interest to know the nuances of the Prakrit words as they were used. This can only be done not by looking at single words but the word constructs as a whole.

Finally, it is also misleading to interpret Jain thought in terms of the current state of the Western logic, philosophy, and social experience. Therefore it is not surprising that the Western Academic works have failed to capture even the seminal trends of the Jain Vangmay, let alone the subtleties of the fundamentals of the thought process.

Part II: Written Words preserve the dynamics of the past

Before the evolution of the standard written script spoken words were destroyed as soon as spoken! The spoken words were transmitted through memorized text. Even 2500 years ago it was clearly realized that human recall is faulty and unreliable unless the material is also understood (see Gautam's Nyay Sutr on this site).

Communication through written words and symbols began about 2000 years ago in India, although the oldest surviving stone inscriptions are about 2300 years old. Most of the available Jain pandulipis are the originals or the copies made from the earlier pandulipis during the last 500 years. Wider use of the written medium required certain technological developments during the last 6000 years.

- Clay tablet are about 5000 years old (in Iraq and Syria).
- Word inscriptions on stone are less than 3000 years old in India.
- Text on skin and papyrus appeared about 2500 years ago in Middle East.
- Text on strips of birch bark, Tal-palm and bamboo strips appeared 2000 years ago in India.
- Text on paper came into general use about 1000 years ago.
- Printing press came into existence about 500 years ago.
- Telephone communication on wire is less than 150 years old.
- Radio and TV technologies for wireless communication are less than 100 old.
- Methods of electronic transfer and manipulation of text and numbers and cyber communication (computer, internet, CD) evolved in last 50 years.

The conceptual stage for each new development is set from the experiences of the preceding developments. New developments also adopt other emerging concepts, technologies, and needs. Thus the dawn of the cyber age required standardized symbolic language and script; spread of literacy facilitated by development of technologies for making paper, inks and printing methods; and developments in the concepts, theory and technologies of electronics and materials, and infrastructure for storage, transfer and retrieval of symbols at the speed of light over long distances at low cost.

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Also consider a major event that triggered the transition of Shrut text into the current Jain Vangmay ([See http://hira-pub.org/](http://hira-pub.org/)). About 2000 years ago Dharsen recognized the importance of committing the spoken words to the written form. As a direct result of his initiative Jeevatthan and parts of Shatkhandagam are still available in a pandulipi copy (from ca. 1060 AD) with Prakrit text scribed in old hale-Kannad on strips of palm-leaf. Over the next few centuries a large part of the fragmented Shrut material was also written down. Of course one can not ascertain the resemblance of the written material to its shrut origins. However, the written words unleashed creativity. The technology also took drudgery of memorization out of the learning and reasoning that encouraged thought communication. This is because:

- Interested individuals with initiative could learn without a personal teacher and contribute without a mediator.
- Copies could be placed in different locations where large number of people over long period of time could read the material at their own pace.
- Multiple pandulipis made by scribes is probably the single most important reason for the survival of the ancient works.

- Dispersal of such copies promoted a system of lifelong self-study through temple collections. It also encouraged exchange of ideas through *vachna*, discussion, elaboration, debate, discourse and critique of the content. Such steps are necessary for a viable tradition of reason and thought.
- Pandulipis promoted an egalitarian culture of thought through shared reasoning. This is in contrast to the practice of secretive access of pandulipis by select few, as was and still is prevalent in many cultures, that stagnate thought by making it an object of worship rather than to facilitates understanding and reason.

The *shrut* from the past would have been lost without committing it to written text. Of course, we do not know what fraction of the original ideas have found their way into any of the modern texts. I believe that it is possible to fill the perceived gaps in the underlying thought and reasoning in the available material. Over the centuries, concerns about use, dissemination and loss of written material have been resolved by ancient practices of making multiple copies kept at different places. We do not know how many of the copies have been lost or destroyed. My estimate is that more than half of the works available 1500 years ago have survived and are available in the pandulipi pandulipis.

Here are some criteria and suggestions for deciding what needs immediate attention, and what course of action can demonstrably provide best value:

1. Very few, if any, original pandulipis are available.
2. Most of the available pandulipis are copies made by different individuals at different times with varying degrees of explanatory and overlapping text.

3. It is certain that most of the available pandulipis were not copied from the same original. Scrutiny of such discrepancies could be informative.
4. Pandulipis were often copied by people familiar with the script but rarely understood the language or the content. In terms of what they transcribe, quality of the final presentation, and possibly for the careful preparation of the writing medium and ink the scribes or *lehiye* are well known for the fidelity of their work.
5. The scribe is rarely acknowledged by name. Also there is no standard record of the name and pedigree of a pandulipi. Often such information is ascertained by other independent means and cross-reference.
6. Physical transfer of the pandulipis has destroyed potential information that could be pieced together from the location where it was copied or first placed in use. Such difficulties are inherent in the archival collections which do not record information about the source of pandulipi. One can only assume that the pandulipis placed in a Jain temple less frequently moved.

Part III. Digitization and Electronic communication

Dissemination of written words and ideas in standardized text and translations has been greatly facilitated by the print medium. Such developments continue to play a critical role in the evolution of cultures. During the last few hundred years enormous wealth of printed material has become available at relatively modest cost. To varying degrees this material is available in libraries. On the other hand libraries are also facing a crisis about the storage, care and preservation of their holdings in print.

In recent years copying machines and internet search engines have further reduced the cost of preservation, storage, and transfer of the written and oral text. It appears that within a decade much of the printed material in English will be accessible anywhere in the world at any time via the internet. Imagine the time and cost saving, as well as the ease of locating and accessing the material from a cyber library. The fee structure is yet to be settled. A significant part of the material may be free but quality control of this material is even a greater problem than it was for the printed works. As in any market place, the buyer has to be beware.

With modest effort and motivation one can now delve into enormous wealth of ideas that are in print. As the saying goes, such means of word transfer *may bring a donkey to the water's edge, but can not make the donkey drink*. Viable ideas are disseminated through practice, and there is no substitute for practice with understanding. Judgment and care is always necessary to discard contradictory, inconsistent and irrelevant ideas that are not discriminated by faith.

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Dissemination, retrieval and manipulation of information in pandulipi would be greatly facilitated if their digital copies were made widely accessible. This can be done most readily on the internet. This approach offers a long term solution for the problem of preservation of the written word in its near-original form. Wider accessibility would unleash enormous creativity of the wide ranging readers. The digitized electronic image of a pandulipi is also well suited for the long term (virtually forever) preservation and wider dissemination virtually without vagaries of human involvement.

A high quality digital image of a pandulipi preserves the words for ever. Of course digitization does not damage or preserve the original pandulipi. Also the information inherent in the composition of the paper and ink is not preserved. On the other hand reduced handling of the original material improves chances of longer term survival. May be the future technologies will also address problems common to the current methods of archival restoration. The digitized pandulipi can be made available to the future scholars at cost. With the available technologies it is also possible to store virtually all known printed Jain works and pandulipi in the space of the wallet or small book size. These technologies would not only make a comprehensive library of the collected works available for local use, but their use would also circumvent many of the difficulties that one encounters now.

The written and printed books have changed the landscape of the ways in which we read and disseminate words that we consider venerable. With suitable precautions the same can be done for the wrongful use of the electronic medium including CD, VCR, and internet. Of course, the ultimate responsibility for the use or misuse of a work lies with the consumer who may or may not be the buyer.

The major advantage of a digital image is that it is preserved for ever. It can be readily reformatted to suit the various media in existence or as they become available in the futures. Thus it should be possible to preserve the work without touching the original pandulipi ever again. Electronic images are readily transferred by internet, which makes it possible to access the image simultaneously by geographically separated users. This could unleash enormous creativity by a broader segment of the readers. At present search and manipulation of the content is facilitated if the material is already transcribed, translated and interpreted in English.

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Hira Publications is interested in finding ways for electronic transfer of the ancient Jain works. It would help find ways to elaborate and facilitate use of the content in the emerging contexts. We suggest three major steps that would facilitate care, use, and dissemination of the digitized pandulipi material:

- A. Cataloguing of the material in the various holdings.** At present the difficulty in cataloging the material available in various holdings is that the owner or manager are not willing to share it or do not have resources to share relevant information. The problem is made worse by an initiative of the Government of India which has spawned a cottage industry of digital cataloguing. If the fate of the centralized library catalogue of the Government of India Institutions that was initiated over 20 years ago is in any indication, the catalogue of pandulipis has little chance of success.
- B. Preservation of digitized images.** Use of electronically digitized color copies of a page solves problems associated with repeated handling. It eliminates the chances of

deterioration by mishandling of the original pandulipi. Digital scanners are reliable for color fidelity, whereas the camera copies are more likely to be influenced by the lighting conditions. Digital copies can be preserved in diverse locations virtually for ever. Electronic copies of the high resolution color images can be distributed over internet at high speed and low cost. Setting up these technologies requires expertise. Certain choices may have to be made to decide which one of the millions of pandulipis are to be preserved in the electronic medium. The deciding criteria may include rarity, state of preservation, significance, and other local considerations. It is possible that such choices may not be as restrictive if cooperative mechanisms and modes could be agreed upon. Efficient use of resource requires pooling of the resources and division of responsibilities. Considering the state of the efforts sponsored by the Government or public charities, such mechanisms are unlikely to work on a large scale. We believe that Hira Publications can provide the centralized internet and storage expertise if complete digital copies of the works are provided by the holder of the pandulipis.

C. Dissemination and use. At some stage one may ask who are the potential users of the ancient pandulipis. The highest priority for Hira Publications is to develop and present the content of the seminal works in a modern script and in a form that facilitates further work. Fortunately, with a remarkable surge of scholarly interest in the early part of the 20th century, many of the major works are now available in the Nagari script. Jeevatthan and Jeevsamas Gatha as well as the Nay works or Gautam, Divakar,

Aklank and Manikyanandi are now available on www.hira-pub.org along with short interpretive translation in English. Analysis and elaboration of key ideas in the contemporary context is also presented in stand-alone essays.

We seek wider inputs and participation for such works with major themes with ancient origins.

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