

INTERNATIONAL MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Shāntinātha Charitra

(India)

2012-52

1.0 Summary:

The *Shāntinātha Charitra* is a text in Sanskrit written in Devanagari script. It describes the life and times of Shantinatha, the sixteenth Jain *Tirthankara*. This work was composed and written in the late fourteenth century 1396 C.E. (1453 Vikram Samvat). The author of the text is Acharya Ajitprabhasuri. It is written on handmade paper and contains 156 folios (312 pages) of text and illustrations. This unique manuscript contains as many as 10 images of scenes from the life of Shantinatha in the style of Jain paintings from Gujrat. It is an example of the finest expression in the art of miniature paintings in manuscripts. The ink used in the manuscript is gum lampblack and white paint made from mineral silver.

The text describes in detail the life and times of Shantinatha who was the sixteenth *Tirthankara* of Jainism. A *Tirthankara* is a human being, who in addition to achieving liberation and enlightenment through penance, becomes a role-model and leader for those seeking spiritual guidance. *Tirthankaras* revitalize Jain societies by organization of four fold Jain Order consisting of Sadhu(Monks), Sadhvi(nuns), male householder and female householder. According to Jain belief Shantinatha was born to King Viswasen Raja and Queen Achira Rani at Hastinapur in the Ikshvaku clan. He achieved liberation of soul which destroyed all of its Karmas.

This text is important for all peace lovers since it illustrates and describes importance of non-violence, compassion and friendship. It also emphasizes the importance and conservation of environment. *Shāntinātha Charitra* was donated to the L.D. Institute of Indology by Muni Shri Pujyavijayji (1895 to 1971) in the year 1961.

2.0 Nominator:

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization):

- i) Dr. J. B. Shah. M.A., Acharya, Ph.D.
Director, L. D. Institute of Indology
Near Gujarat University
Navarangpura
Ahmedabad 380 009
Email: jitendrabshah@yahoo.com
- ii) Dr. Balaji Ganorkar, M.A., Acharya, Ph.D.
L. D. Institute of Indology
Near Gujarat University
Navarangpura
Ahmedabad 380 009
Email: balajiganorkar@yahoo.co.in
- iii) Prof. Dipti S. Tripathi
Director
National Mission for Manuscripts
No. 11, Mansingh Road
New Delhi 110 001
Email: director.namami@nic.in
- iv) Ms. Roopa Srinivasan,
Director

Ministry of Culture
Government of India
Email: railwayroopa@hotmail.com

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage:

Dr. J. B. Shah and Dr. Balaji Ganorkar are directly or indirectly, involved in the maintenance, cataloguing and preservation of Manuscripts stored in Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology. Prof. Dipti S. Tripathi is the Director of National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM). NMM is identifying, documenting, preserving, digitizing and making accessible the manuscript heritage of the country. Ms. Roopa Srinivasan is the Director, Ministry of Culture, Government of India and is looking after the work related to the Memory of the World Register.

2.3. Contact Person (s):

- i) Dr. J.B. Shah
- ii) Prof. Dipti S. Tripathi
- iii) Ms. Roopa Srinivasan

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

- i) Dr. J. B. Shah
Director, L. D. Institute of Indology
Near Gujarat University, Navarangpura
Ahmedabad 380009
Phone: 079-26302462, Fax: 079 26307326
Email jitendrabshah@yahoo.com
- ii) Prof. Dipti S. Tripathi
Director, National Mission for Manuscripts
No. 11, Mansingh Road
New Delhi 110 001 (India)
Phone: 011 23383894, Fax: 011 23073340
Email director.namami@nic.in
- iii) Ms. Roopa Srinivasan
Director, Ministry of Culture
Room No. 320-'C' Wing
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi 110 001 (India)
Phone: 011-23381822, Fax: 011 23381822
Email railwayroopa@hotmail.com

3.0 Identity and Description of the Documentary Heritage

3.1 Name and Identification details of the items being nominated

Title: Shāntinātha Chāritra

Acc. Number: 21356

Material: Handmade paper

Script: Devanagari

Language: Sanskrit

Oldest Dated Manuscript: Scribed in 1453 Vikram Era and the story created in 1307 Vikram Era

Total No. of Manuscripts: 4 (Four) one original and three copies. These four Manuscripts of Shāntinātha Charitra are having historical, intellectual and

aesthetical significance. There is unique representation of the story of Shantinatha, a *Teerthankar* of Jain Religion with illustration.

3.4 History/Provenance

Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai (1894-1979), himself a devout Jain, had great respect and regard for Jain Monk Muni Shri Punyavijayji and was closely associated with him. Muni Shri expressed his wish to Sheth Kasturbhai on the urgent need for setting up an institution for the preservation of manuscripts and their use for research.

Sheth Kasturbhai, a man of rare foresight, with wide ranging interests and one who had been instrumental in promoting and setting up of numerous educational institutions in Gujarat, welcomed the proposal and thus Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology was established in the year 1957 A.D. .

The Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology has a rich collection of nearly 75,000 rare manuscripts including a substantial number received as gift for the purpose of preservation and custody. Many of these manuscripts are written on palm leaf, birch-bark (bhojpatra) and handmade paper. Some of the manuscripts are written in gold and silver inks and are full of multi-colour miniatures. Some manuscripts are illustrated through black and white sketches also. The collection covers a wide range of subjects such as the Vedas, the Agamas, Tantra, Jaina Religion & Philosophy, Systems of Indian Philosophy, Grammar, Prosody, Poetics, Lexicography, Medicine etc. These manuscripts are in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramśa, old Gujarati, Hindi and Rajasthani languages. A large number of these manuscripts are illustrated with multi-colours as well as black & white sketches.

Some of the important and rare manuscripts well preserved in the Institute are: Yajurveda, Tripurī Upaniṣad by Śaṅkarācārya, Bhāguri's Smṛti Samuccaya, Raṅgavijaya's Gurjaradeśa Rājamaṅśāvalī, Bauddhādīpañca-darśana, Rāmacandra's Mahāvīdyālaṅkāra, Rushidutta's Commentary on Tattvacintāmaṇi Cintāmaṇi-Subodhikā, Rājaśekhara's Nyāyakandalīpañjikā, Goṭikānta's Nyāyadīpa, Commentaries on Kumārasambhavam, Kirātārjunīyam, Raghuvamśam etc. Yavana-nāma-mālā of some Mantri's son, Himasāgar's Paścimadisā Chanda in Persian, Vilāsavatī Nāyikā, Rājīmatiprabandha, Nāyaka Vivekamañjarī, Sītā Carita, Yoganibandhana, Rāma Śataka, Haṁsanidāna, Sāgaracandrodaya, Phārasīprakāśa (Dictionary), etc.

Some rare, illustrated manuscripts in the Institute are: Śālihotrādi having 128 illustration of horses; Vyāyāmacintāmaṇi, illustrating different poses of physical exercises, Meghadūtam (only one such manuscript known up till now), Uttarādhyāyanasūtra, Upadeśamālā, Kalpasūtra, Kumārasambhavam, Gajastambha (having 42 illustrations of elephant), Bādaśāhīcitrāvalī, illustrating the Muslim Kings, Gajacakra-Ashvacakra, having 50 illustrations, Madhumālātī, Dholā-Māru having 65 illustrations, Gīta-Govinda, Tulsi Rāmāyaṇa etc.

4.0 Legal Information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (Name and contact details):

Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology
Near Gujarat University, Navarangpura
Ahmedabad 380009
Tel: 079-26302463, Fax: 079-26307326
Email ldindology@gmail.com Website: www.ldindology.org

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage:

Dr. J. B. Shah,
Director, L. D. Institute of Indology
Near Gujarat University, Navarangpura
Ahmedabad 380009
Email jitendrabshah@yahoo.com
Tel: 079-26302463, Fax: 079-26307326

4.3 Legal Status:

a. Category of ownership:

Public Trust: The Manuscripts are owned by Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology.

4.4 Accessibility:

The Manuscripts are accessible on written and approved request for consultation during the office hours of the Institute (Monday to Friday) and first and third Saturday from 10.30 to 17.00 hours except Sundays and holidays. Xerox or scanned copies of the Manuscripts may be procured on appropriate written request after paying necessary charges.

4.5 Copyright status

The author is long deceased and the copyright is vested with L.D. Institute of Indology.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity:

- i) This manuscript was donated by Late Muni Punyavijayji who in turn had inherited it through family line. Such hereditary manuscripts are genuine especially if they belong to Jain monks. The Jain monks and people are very upright and have high moral standards. They have been instrumental in creation of several manuscript repositories in the country. Muni Shri Punyavijayji was a Jain monk highly revered in his community and thus the authenticity of the manuscript is beyond doubt.
- ii) The paper and ink of the document are a proof of its authenticity.

5.2 World Significance, Uniqueness and Irreplaceability:

This Manuscript contains the story of *Tirthankar* Shantinatha. There is a universal message of friendship, global peace and unity with integrity in this narrative. It also describes historical facts and professes high moral and cultural values.

The Illustrations found in this manuscript are oldest specimens of miniature painting. These illustrations are beautifully drawn in multi-colour and are examples of a highly evolved style of painting.

As these illustrations are rarest of rare, their preservation and protection is necessary for humanity. These are the best and oldest examples of miniature paintings while the story itself is of lasting value to humankind.

5.3 Comparative Criteria

1. Time

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2. Place

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3. People

The proposed text *Shāntinātha Charitra* is important for the Jain people globally. It presents the life and times of one of the Jain *Tirthankaras*. He is revered as a liberated soul

in the Jain tradition. The text also presents the eternal human values of peace, nonviolence and brotherhood. This is of universal relevance for humankind.

4. Subject and Theme

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5. Form and Style

The form of presentation is aesthetically exquisite and very attractive. The text is in Sanskrit verse of high literary caliber.

6. Social/spiritual/community significance

The *Shāntinātha Charitra* is very important for the people of Jain faith, since it reflects the life of the 16th *Tirthankar*. It has to be noted that the *Tirthankaras* are venerated by the Jain community for their evolvment as liberated souls and their contribution to the development of Jain people and society.

6.0 Contextual Information

6.1 Rarity:

This is the oldest (1397 C.E.) example of Jain miniature painting available in a text.

6.2 Integrity:

The text of Shāntinātha Charitra is complete