

**UCDAVIS**  
Religious Studies

Tuesday, February 13  
6:00pm – 7:00pm  
Andrews Conference Room

## The Mohini Jain Presidential Chair in Jain Studies Inaugural Lecture Series

### WHAT A COMPARISON OF THE EARLY ACCOUNTS OF MAHĀVĪRA'S RENUNCIATION CAN TELL US ABOUT JAINA RELIGIOUS HISTORY

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Schubring 1935 § 17: 31 writes: "For our knowledge of Mahāvīra's personality we have as ancient coherent sources the Uvahānasūya Āyār. I 9, then Āyār. II 15 (the Bhāvaṇā) and basing upon it Jinac. 1-148, finally Āv. 458ff. A number of detailed traits is rendered by Vy." The comparison of depictions of Mahāvīra's *nikkhamana* in Āyāra ii.15, Jīnacariya 94, 110-116 and Āvassaya-nijjutti 458ff. demonstrates, amongst other things, that the oldest surviving narratives on Mahāvīra's renunciation appear to be altogether retrospective constructions of late-canonical origin based on fluid legendary accounts rather than on corroborated facts. In regard to the degree of completeness of the life-story a rearrangement of the hypothetical sequence of the three main accounts of Mahāvīra's in the form ĀvN, Āyāra, and Jīnacariya is justified. A full life-story of Mahāvīra, including the arrangements of his funeral, can only be found in much later texts, such as Hemacandra's Triṣaṣṭīśālākāpuruṣacaritra, a fact which supports the hypothesis. Further conclusions can be drawn from the divergent depictions of Mahāvīra's renunciation in the old texts and comparison with subsequent Jaina ceremonies of ordination.

Dr Peter Flügel (PhD University of Mainz, Germany 1993) is Reader in the Study of Religions and Founding Chair of the *Centre of Jaina Studies* at the Department of History, Religions and Philosophies in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. He has published extensively on the history, anthropology and sociology of contemporary Jain schools and sects, Jain *stapas*, Jaina-Vaiṣṇava syncretism, and on the social and legal history of the Jain tradition. He is the convener of the Annual Jaina Studies Workshops at SOAS, editor of the *International Journal of Jain Studies* <https://www.soas.ac.uk/jainastudies/>, co-editor of *Jaina Studies - Newsletter of the Centre of Jaina Studies*, and series editor of *Routledge Advances in Jaina Studies*, *Jaina Studies* (Harrassowitz).

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