In 1160 CE, in Anahillavāda Pattaṅga, the capital of the Caulukyan empire of Gujarat, the great Śvetāmbara Jain mendicant Ācārya Hemacandraśūri administered the twelve vows (vrata) of a Jain layman to the emperor Kumaṟapāla. Kumaṟapāla was the most important ruler outside of Karnataka ever formally to become a Jain, and the 29 years of his reign, from 1143 to 1172 CE, represent a highwater mark of Jain political influence in Gujarat.

Soon after Kumaṟapāla’s ‘conversion,’ he requested that his guru Hemacandra write for him a manual on how to be a good Jain layman. Such manuals had been written before. The earliest description of the ideal layman is in the seventh of the atigas of the Śvetāmbaras, the Uvāṣadgasāsāṅa, or “Ten Chapters on Exemplary Laymen” (see Hoernle 1885—90). The earliest Śvetāmbara text devoted exclusively to description of lay practice was the Śrāvakaprajñapti of Vācaka Umāsvāti, written probably in the 5th century CE. Manuals of lay behavior, called grdvakacitra, continue to be written today. The manual composed by Hemacandra, the Yogaśāstra, proved to be a watershed in this tradition, as Hemacandra skillfully synthesized the existing traditions and set the pattern for all subsequent Śvetāmbara manuals.

THE MAḤĀŚRĀVĀKA ACCORDING TO HEMACANDRA

As properly befits an encyclopedic work such as the Yogaśāstra, one actually finds several descriptions of the ideal Jain layman, with only a minimal linkage among them. Thus one finds a list of the 35 qualities (guna) of a layman (śrāvaka), the 12 vows (vrtta) of a layman, the definition of an exceptional layman (maḥāśrāvaka) and the seven fields (kṣetra) in which he strews the seeds of gifting (dāna), the daily routine (dinacāryā) of such a maḥāśrāvaka, and the eleven stages (pratimā) towards perfection of a lay disciple (upāsaka).

Underlying all of these descriptions is a common model for the
path to liberation, the *mokṣa-mārga* of the Jains (or, as Padmanabh Jaini has paraphrased it, with a slightly Buddhist flavor, the 'Jaina path of purification.') Richard Burghart (1983: 643) has pointed out that the ideology of a "path which releases them from the transient world" is the hallmark of all the renunciant ascetic traditions of South Asia. At its simplest, this path for the Jain is defined as the three jewels (*ratnātraya*) of Jainism, correct faith, correct understanding, and correct conduct. For example, the first *sūtra* of the c. 5th c. CE *Tattvārtha Sūtra* of Umāsvāti (see Sukhlalji 1974), a text studied by both the Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, reads, "The path to liberation consists of correct faith, understanding, and conduct."4 Correct faith is the minimum requirement for being a Jain; without it one is not even a Jain. Correct understanding encompasses the elaborate world of Jain epistemology, ontology, and cosmology. Correct conduct, what one actually does about all this, is what concerns us here. For the Jain mendicant, correct conduct is constituted by renunciation and asceticism, and is modeled as a 14-rung ladder, the 14 *guṇasthānas*, leading from non-Jain ignorance to enlightenment and liberation. This model was primarily conceived of in terms of the mendicant. When the mendicants took to theorizing about the role of the laity, they naturally tried to fit the laity into this path model, either by describing lay life as a low, preliminary stage, or else by constructing a separate path.6

Let me here describe briefly the different definitions given by Hemacandra, before analyzing the underlying model. At the end of the first chapter of the *Yogaśāstra*, in which he praises Mahāvīra and outlines the three jewels, Hemacandra in ten linked verses and commentary on them, gives a list of the qualities (*guṇa*) of the householder (*grhastra*) who is qualified to practice dharma (*dharmaḥ dikāri*), i.e., who is qualified to be a lay Jain.7 There is nothing specifically Jain about this list, although in his explication Hemacandra gives many of the virtues a distinctly Jain flavor. The qualities advocated by Hemacandra could be found in the general ethical prescriptions for the householder in any religious tradition; it is a list of the qualities of a householder, not of the qualities specific to a Jain.

The ideal layman should have acquired his wealth by honest means, not by cheating, fraud, or theft. He praises and associates with people