The Theory of Meaning in the Jaina Philosophy of Language (11th–17th c. CE)

The problem of meaning is one of pivotal issues undertaken by philosophers living in different times and representing different systems of thought. What are words and sentences? What is the relationship between a word and an object or between a sentence and an event? Does a word refer to a concrete thing or to an image of this thing in mind? Is the meaning of a word context-dependent? Is the meaning of a sentence the sum of meanings of individual words? The Jainas, representatives of one of the oldest traditions in the world, have been trying to answer to these questions. They worked out the unique philosophy based on three pillars: harmlessness, abandoning possession and conviction that everything what exists has an infinite number of aspects.

The aim of the present project is to reconstruct the theory of meaning in the thought of two prominent Jaina philosophers Prabhācandra and Yaśovijaya, belonging to two different Jaina traditions (one of them was a Digambara, the second one – a Śvetāmbara) and separated in time with six centuries (Prabhācandra's output was the crowning of the 'golden' classical era, Yaśovijaya's one – the medieval phase of the imitative period).

As part of the project chiefly two Sanskrit texts significant for history of the Jaina philosophy will be translated: *Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa* by Prabhācandra (11th c. CE) and *Jaina-tarka-bhāṣā* by Yaśovijaya (17th c. CE).

Different issues connected with the meaning of words, sentences and larger linguistic wholes, developed in both treatises, will be analyzed in order to reconstruct views of both thinkers as well as to investigate the evolution of reflection on that subject. Analysis and interpretation of translated fragments will take into account the context of previous findings worked out in the Jaina thought (accomplishments of predecessors) and dialogue with representatives of other Indian philosophical schools (above all the Buddhists).

The results are intended to contribute to the research not only in the field of the Jaina philosophy of language or the Jaina philosophy as such, but also in the field of thought elaborated by different Indian philosophical systems. They may prove to be inspiring from the point of view of recent debates devoted to philosophical reflection on language and also from the point of view of cognitive science.

To achieve these objectives the philosophical methodology accepted in research on Sanskrit sources will be used.