JK LAKSHMIPAT UNIVERSITY
Institute of Design
NAAC 'A' Grade Accredited

CONCEPT DESIGN FOR SAMAVASARAN MUSEUM

Designing a museum experience highlighting the life stories of Lord Mahavir

VOL. 1 of 1

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Programme :
Bachelor of Design (B.Des)
Integrated COmmunicated Design

THE GRADUATION PROJECT 2025

The Evaluation Jury has recommended **Arjodeep Dasgupta** for graduation from **Institute of Design, JK LAKSHMIPAT UNIVERSITY** with specialization in **Integrated Communication Design**

Herewith, for the project titled **"Concept Design for Samavasaran Museum"** on fulfillment of requirements by

Jury Chairman _____ _____

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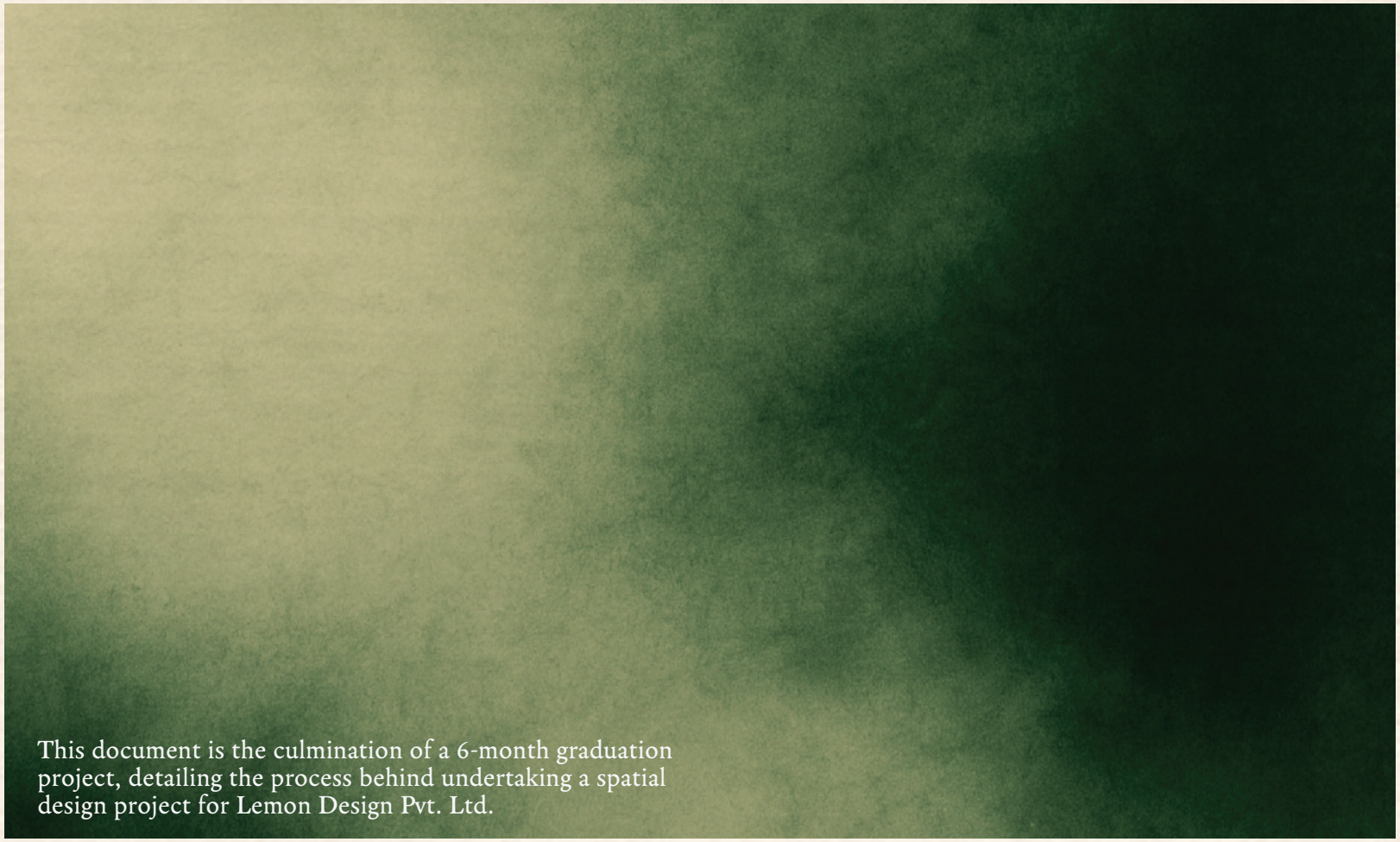
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Designing a museum experience highlighting
the life stories of Lord Mahavir.

SAMAVASARAN.



This document is the culmination of a 6-month graduation project, detailing the process behind undertaking a spatial design project for Lemon Design Pvt. Ltd.

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PROLOGUE

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude towards Jk Lakshmipat University, for providing me with the space and means to learn and grow in the field of design. Every single opportunity and challenge that I have have come across in the last four years in the institute of design, have all played an invaluable role in my path towards understanding my role and identity as a designer.

I would like to offer my thanks to Suranjana Satwalekar, my faculty mentor for her role in guiding me through this project. Her feedback was crucial in helping me bridge the gap between what I've learnt in the educational space, and applying it within the industry.

I would also like to offer my thanks to Wasim Khan, my industry mentor for the opportunities to discuss my ideas and approach to the project. It was always interesting to learn and recieve insights on various aspects of the process from a perspective that would normally be difficult to observe from a classroom only.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for Lemon Design, for providing me with a warm and welcoming atmosphere to to work in. All of my colleagues have been very open and willing to discuss my ideas and share feedback, as well as provide me with opportunities to learn from other projects as well.









About JKLU

It would be very difficult(and daunting) to think about where I would be without all of the experiences and opportunities that I have come across during my four years in JK Laksmipat University. Making the “jump” from Bangalore to all the way north in Jaipur should have by no means be an easy task. However, right from the days of online classes, the Institute of Design had presented me with the most welcoming and helpful of atmosphere to grow in.

That very same welcoming space gave me the courage to push forward and interact with people, take part in events and in general take on any opportunity that would come my way. I will always be grateful for the role this academic journey has played, not just in my growth as a designer but also as an impact on my entire outlook and approach towards life.

Prologue

About Me

One of the key aspects that drew me to pursue design was the variety in perpectives one can approach a problem from. It would be very rare to see 2 people in the class come up with like-for-like approaches to an assignment or a project.The excitement behind what solutions one can think up of, and what direction do other people take, is something that keeps the pursuit of design always something to look forward to.

At the same time, it was also interesting to see that regardless of the medium or approach, every task/solution followed a structured design process at its core. Understanding this process seems to alleviate a lot of confusion around the task at hand, while still giving the freedom to explore varied approaches. It is also built in a way that seems to provide one with the ability to “step back” and objectively analyse the approach taken.

I think it is these two aspects that have stuck with me all these years, as a reason for exploring this field; from the foundation years all the way to this graduation project. While it is difficult to think what tasks or projects I’ll be taking on in the future, I believe these two objectives will always be at its core: to understand the process behind approaching the problem and the diversity in perspectives on the solution itself.



This document made me realise that I need more pictures of myself.

About my Mentors



Prof. Suranjana Satwalekar holds 18 years of teaching and practice at NID along with professional practice and service as jury and reviewer for several Design schools all over India. She has a professional career spanning over three decades that includes teaching and practice in exhibition/ museum design, photography, as well as audio visuals and design for television.

Her guidance during this project was extremely helpful in critically evaluating not just my ideas, but the also the methods and approach I am taking during the process.



An Exhibition Design graduate from the NID (Ahmedabad), **Wasim Khan** is a director at Lemon Design, a 20 yr old premier cross-disciplinary design studio, with over 120 global clients. With over 23 years of professional experience he has been designing and managing the design of a plethora of multi-sensorial interactive & narrative spaces like museums, thematic exhibitions, experience centres, branded environments, retail & hospitality spaces, as well as art installations and scenography.

My interactions with Wasim really helped give insight into feedback that aligned more with industry principles. It was also very helpful to understand how the design process gets translated to the spatial design context, as well as the various nuances in the process unique to this space.

Prologue

Synopsis

The project focused on creating a concept for a spatial experience; documenting the life of Lord Mahavir. Content would cover his early royal life, the mendicant period of his journey as well as his exploit after attaining keval gnan.

Research on this project started with documenting stories of Mahavir chronologically in a timeline. This was followed with interpeting the stories and data through various visualisation techniques, to find potential narrative structure. These structures focused on various perspectives, such as companion stories, learnings from each story, etc.

A second stage of research focused on museological studies, and the structure of biographic/spiritual museums. A number of case studies were analysed, both through secondary research and field visits, in order to understand how stories are structured in the spatial context.

The next step was to consolidate chosen story points into a finalised experience, visualised through experience journeys and narrative matrices.

The journey was then mapped out within the space, along with demarcating zones and entry/exit points. This was then followed up with iterating on modes of representation that suit the joruney.

The final versions then had to be modeled and rendered out, along with creating a comprehensive communication strategy for information in each section.


Defining the Objective
Key Issues
BRIEF

Defining the objective

There are 3 considerations to keep in mind when trying to further define the brief given to me. Answering these questions help provide further context to the task at hand

Who is This About?

Samavasarana primarily deals with the story of Mahavir, the last of the 24 Tirthankaras in Jain mythos, and widely believed to be the founder of the religion. Teaching a doctrine of austerity, Mahavira advocated nonviolence (ahimsa) in all circumstances and the acceptance of the mahavratas, the five “great vows” of renunciation.

What am I trying to show?

This experience will cover the entire life-story of Mahavir, starting from his royal origins to his journey as a mendicant, and his actions post attaining *kevala jñāna* (omniscience), as well as the various connections and relations he built right up till his death.

Who is this experience for?

Samavasarana will cater to multiple types of visitors, ranging from devout followers to general tourists. The expectations and exisiting knowledge of each type will play a key role in how the space and content will be structured and delivered.

The next pages will go into detail about each of these questions, and help with establishing the foundation upon which the research processes and conceptual/development stages have been carried out.



Defining the objective

Who is this about?

Mahavira (599-527 BC) was the 24th and last Jainist Tirthankara. People call Lord Mahavira by different names such as Vira or Viraprabhu, Sanmati, Vardhamana, Ativira and Gnatputra. When it comes to the values of Jainism, Lord Mahavira plays a important role, as he was the one to establish the ethics that are ruling the whole Jain community today.

Apart from establishing the religious doctrines, Mahavira has been recorded to have held close connections with several prominent individuals from the period, ranging from scholars and commoners to famous members of royalty like King Bimbsara.

This project is an exploration of this individual's life, his actions and achivements, his relations and the legacy he left behind. It attempts to portray the stories about him in a manner that almost 'humanises' the individual, while maintaining respect for his spiritual significance.



Mahavir depicted in the Padmasana position; source: Dada Bhagwan Foundation.

Defining the objective

What am I trying to show?

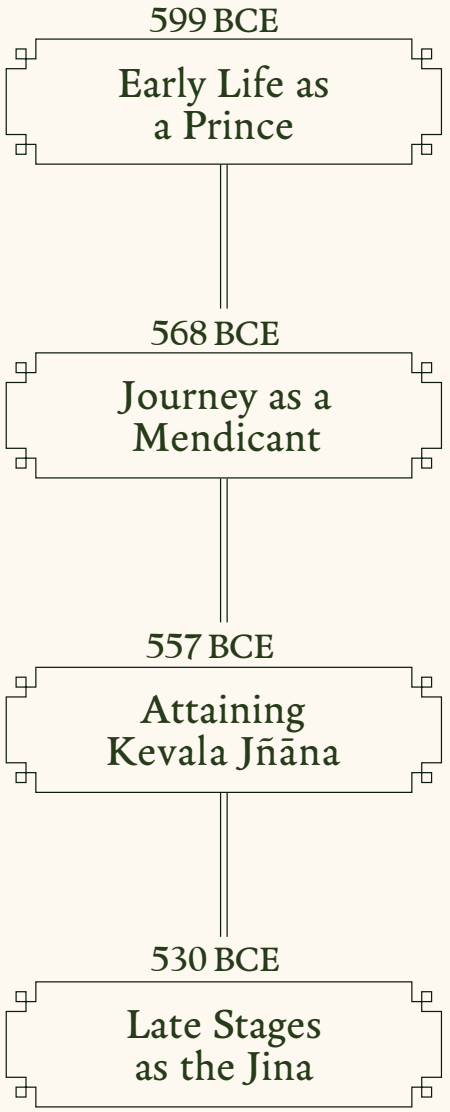
An important distinction to be made about this experience, is that the primary focus is on Mahavir the individual, not the religion he founded. While his actions in founding and propagating its beliefs are very important to the story, the various events and journeys that shaped Mahavir are equally crucial to the experience.

One might say that the unique aspect of this space is the attention it gives to those stages of his life that are not relatively well documented outside of books and old texts. Understanding the life of Mahavir in its entirety, involves learning about the early stages of his life as well.

Therefore, one of the key tasks in this project will be to find the right balance and give the sufficient amount of time and attention to all stages of his life, such that the viewer leaves with a more holistic understanding of the individual.



Birth of Prince Vardhaman, celebrated by the arrival of celestial beings; source: Dada Bhagwan Foundation.



Defining the objective

Whom is this experience for?

Samavasrana will aim to cater for primarily 3 different types of visitors.

Tourists & General Public; people who are not affiliated with the religion and are looking to visit the space for entertainment purposes. May possess surface level general knowledge about Mahavir and the religion.

Lay faith people; disciples who practise the religion but have not necessarily undergone initiation to be part of the clergy/priesthood. Consists of families/individuals who follow jainism and have knowledge of traditional customs and stories, but may not be to the extent or the detail in which the experience will attempt to present it.

Monks and Priests; followers who are more closely connected to the religion both spiritually and in terms of knowledge about stories and customs. Consists of those people who may have already consumed the information shown through other forms of media, and are looking for sources of value addition to their knowledge.

The level of knowledge each category has prior to entering the space, as well as their expectations from the experience will play a role in determining the modes of representation used and the curation of content in Mahavir's story.


Methodology
Data Collection
Timeline
Case Studies
Data Interpretation
RESEARCH

Methodology

Research for the project has been carried out in two distinct phases: one focusing on understanding the subject material and one focusing on understanding the dynamics of religious/spiritual museums.



The next section will begin to break down the processes and methods used during this research stage. Wherein Phase 1 tries to craft a narrative experience from his life story, Phase 2 will focus on applying said experience into the context of spiritual and biographic museums

Methodology

Establishing Sources

Secondary research on the individual was done through 3 different channels of content. This way, any piece of information would be cross checked across the 3 platforms for better accuracy and validity.

Moreover, each source specialises in one aspect of the story that the others might not be as in-depth on.

I **Old texts and books** on Jain traditions and mythos. such as *Jain Dharma Ka Maulik Itihas.* These specialise in providing deeper and more accurate with information on old traditions and behaviour within Jain sects. Refering to these helped understand what were the reactions and perceptions of the common populace towards Mahavir and his followers.

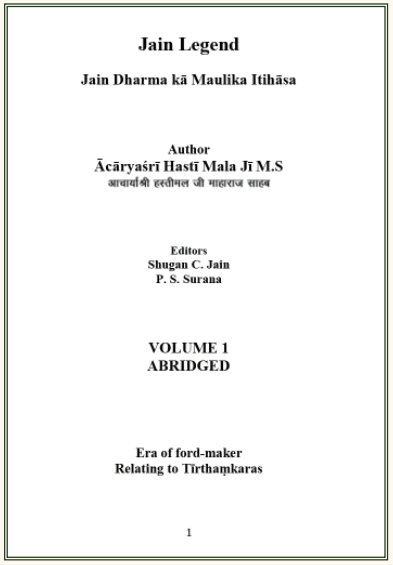
II **Online Databases** like the Encyclopædia Britannica, which usually are the most accurate with dates of specific events. Also useful in learning about the state of the world during various stages of Mahavir's life, providing some more context to his journeys and trials.

III **Records and stories** from religious foundations/organisations like the *Dada Bhagwan Foundation.* Provides a good mix of stories about Mahavir, rooted in both fantasy and reality. While it may not always be historically accurate, the presentation of content is a good reference for how people envision and percieve Mahavir today.

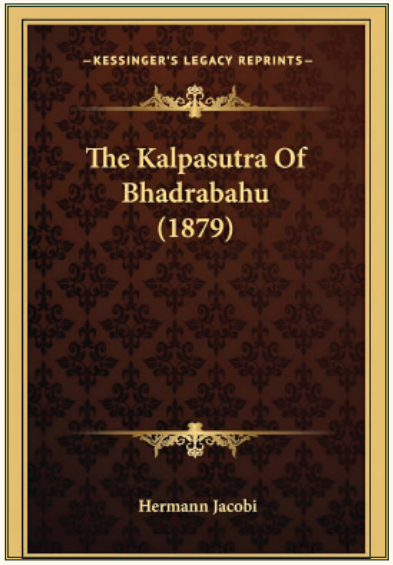
Methodology

Key Reading Material

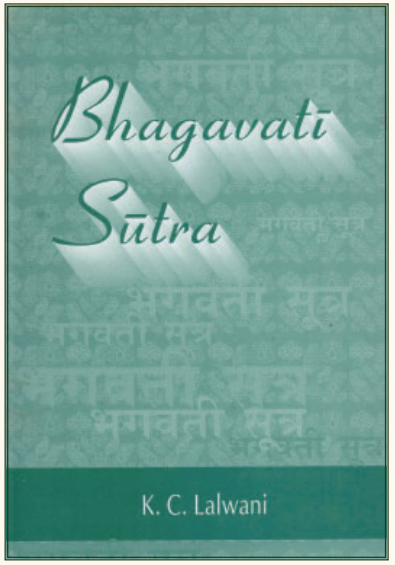
These 3 texts are a good starting point for learning about Mahavir and the Jain religion in general, covering topics ranging from the fundmentals of Jain Belief through the Panchvratas, to year-wise breakdown of every tirthankar's life and their contributions.



Jain Legend provides an abridged summary of Jain history with special focus on the 24 tirthankaras. Provides an year-wise summary for their lives

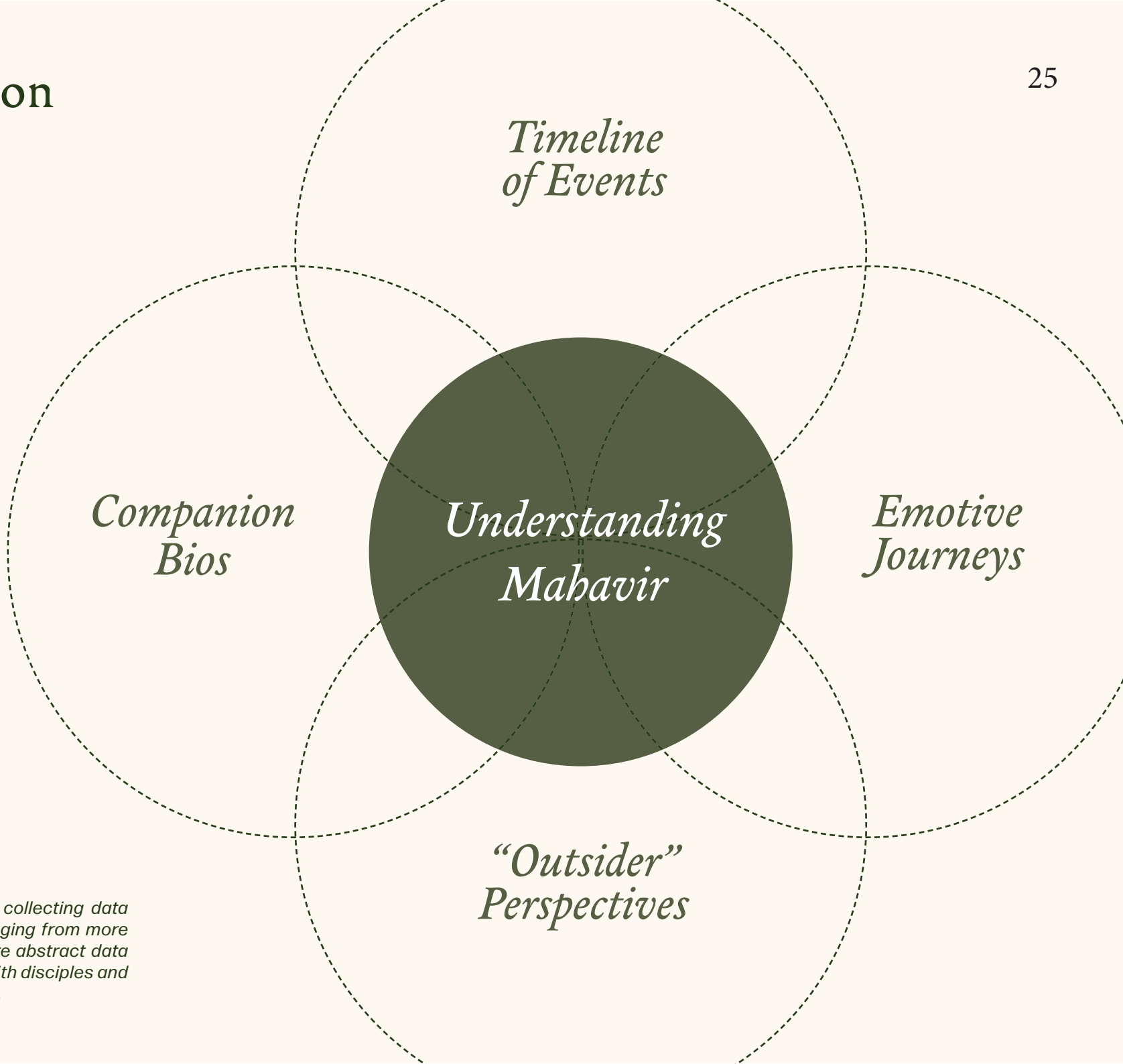


Secondary research on the individual was done through 3 different channels of content. This way, any piece of information would be cross checked across the 3 platforms for better accuracy and validity.



Bhagavati Sutra is a record of conversations between Mahavira and his chief disciple, Indrabhuti. Gives context on the type of and content of sermons given by the last of the Tirthankars.

Data Collection



Research on Mahavir will involve collecting data on multiple aspects of his life, ranging from more tangible data like timelines to more abstract data on his personality, his behaviour with disciples and the common perception of him etc.

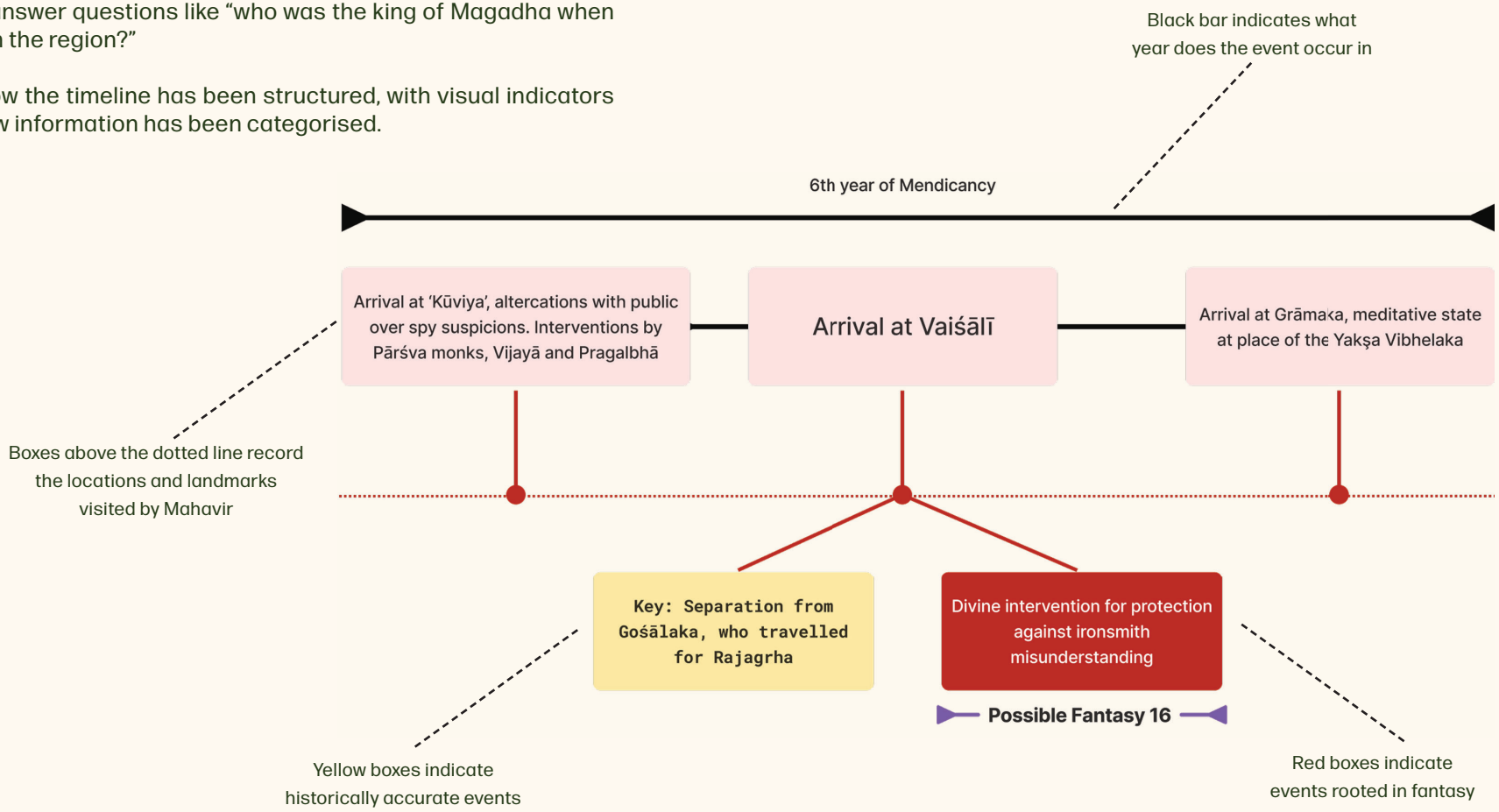
Data Collection

Creating a Timeline

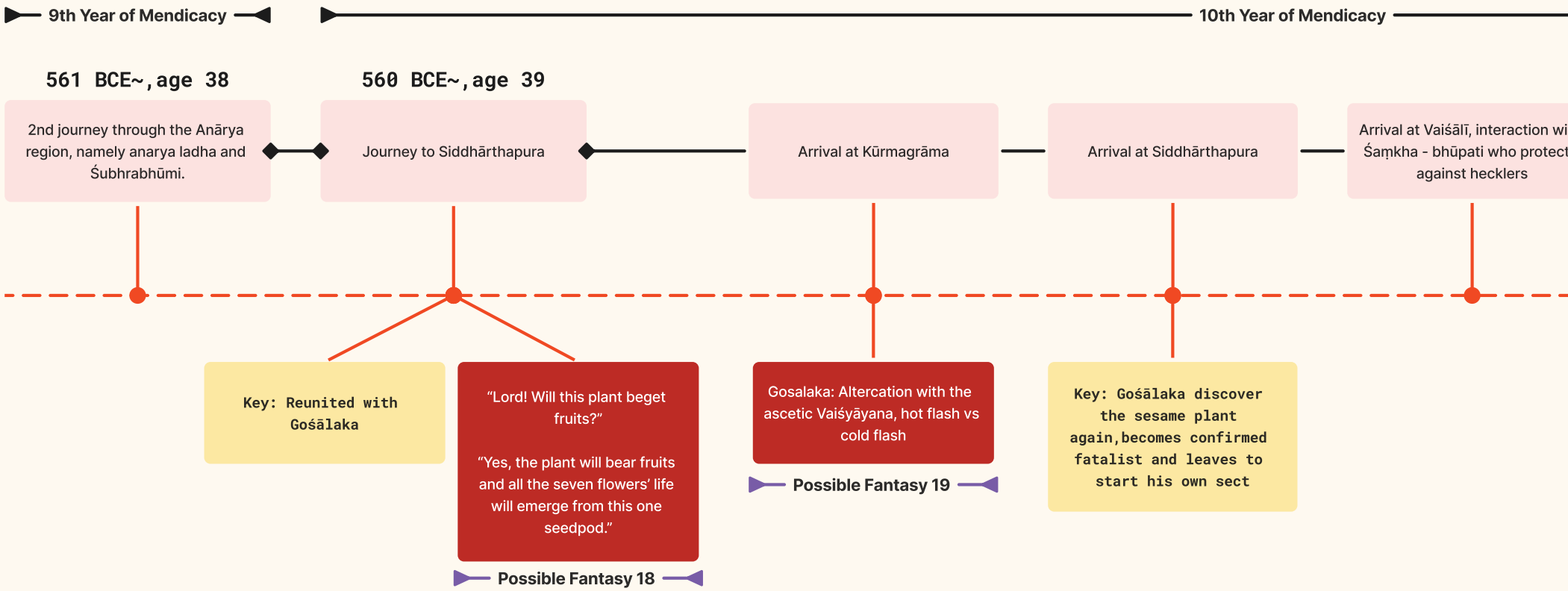
Born in 599 BCE, Mahavir lived and spread his doctrine till the ripe old age of 70. Mapping a timeline of his life right from his birth helped in broadly dividing the years into “periods” based on key events.

It also helps in cross-referencing his actions/situation with other historical events of that time, and helps answer questions like “who was the king of Magadha when Mahavir passed through the region?”

This is an example of how the timeline has been structured, with visual indicators for interpretation for how information has been categorised.

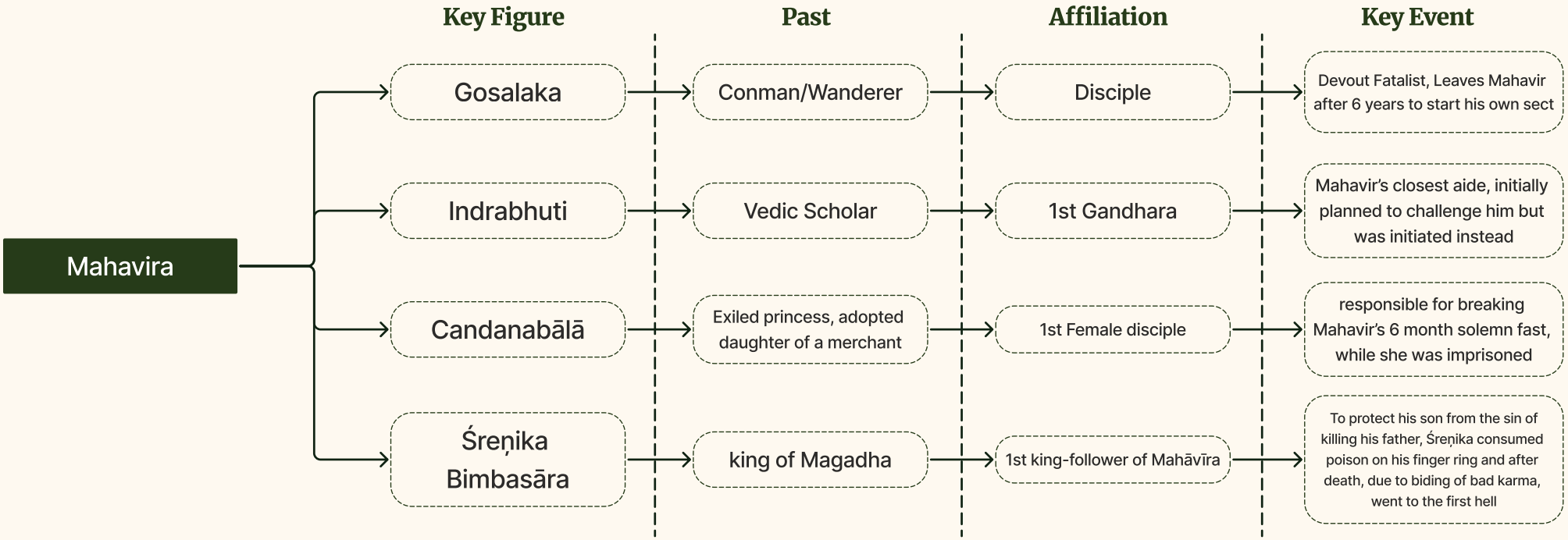


Data Collection



This format was then used to document all 70 years of Mahavir's life, giving focus on documenting the various events he experienced and the trials he had to overcome. Categorising these story points will help in identifying which events we deem to be "essential" to his journey, and will be used as the framework in the spatial experience.

Data Collection



Companion Highlights

An interesting way to analyse Mahavir is to look at the various interactions and connections he made throughout his journeys.

Research shows that the list of key companions in this story displays rich diversity in their backgrounds, motives and influence.

Despite the differences in backgrounds, the common thread between all of these companions has the impact Mahavir has had on their lives and actions.

Data Collection

The stories of these “companion” characters, and the subsequent interactions with Mahavir within them can be further broken down to to understand their significance and impact on Mahavir’s journey.

The goal here is to use these stories and identify if there is scope for them to be converted into content to be used in the experience. These stories could be shown as part of a larger setting, or could even be used as a foundation for an entire section of the experience itself.

As such, another round of questioning is done to help categorize these events. These help understand the variety in takeaways from each of these stories, and which combination of them fits into the desired narrative structure



Mahavir’s encounter with Chandkaushik in the forest; source: Dada Bhagwan Foundation.

When did this happen?

Identify its occurence on the chronological timeline, and try to match/compare with the “stage” of life Mahavir was in. For example, does this event happen while Mahavir was still Prince Vardhaman, or while he had already set out on his mendicant journey?

How did Mahavir get involved?

Understand how Mahavir fits into these events, and in what capacity. Does he play an active role in influencing the story, or does the character use Mahavir as a source of hope/inspiration in doing something? To build upon this, can we see his involvement as a source for a “moral of the story” message, something the viewer can take away from the experience?

What was the cause?

Understand the background of the character and how this event takes place. What is the motive behind the people involved? More importantly, does this story take a large amount of time/information to establish the context? This is done in order to see how would explaining this story fit into the overall experience, and whether it will take away too much time and attention from other stories.

How did this impact the character?

Identify the status of the character post event. Is there a noticeable change in behaviour, values or their “fate”? Do they continue to play a role in Mahavir’s journey in any capacity whatsoever? Moreover, Is the change induced through Mahavir something that the viewer would appreciate and relate to?

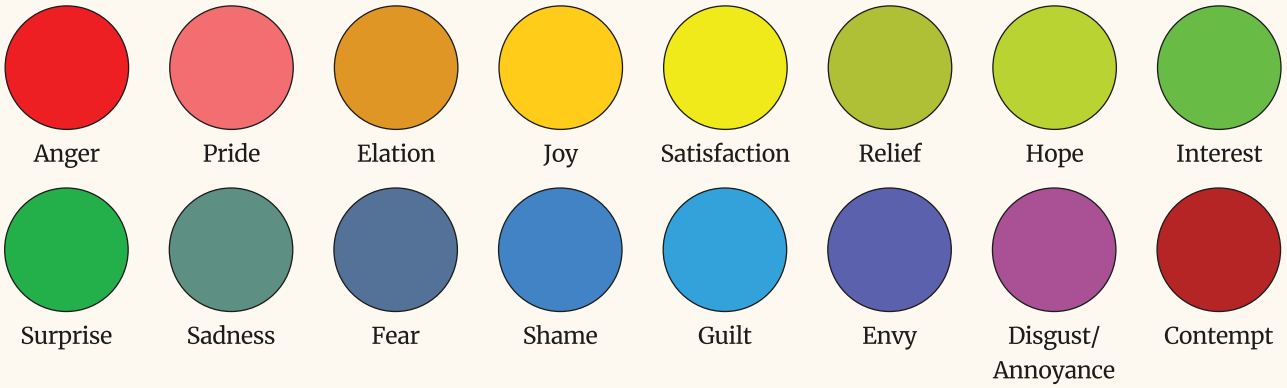
Data Collection

Emotive Journeys

Another direction taken while analysing the character involves mapping emotional states across key events, either about Mahavir himself or about his companions and people impacted by him. While this process is partly speculative in nature, it will help in mapping out the desired feelings one wants to invoke in the viewer of these stories as well.It tries to answer the question, *"What should the viewer feel at this point in the story?"*

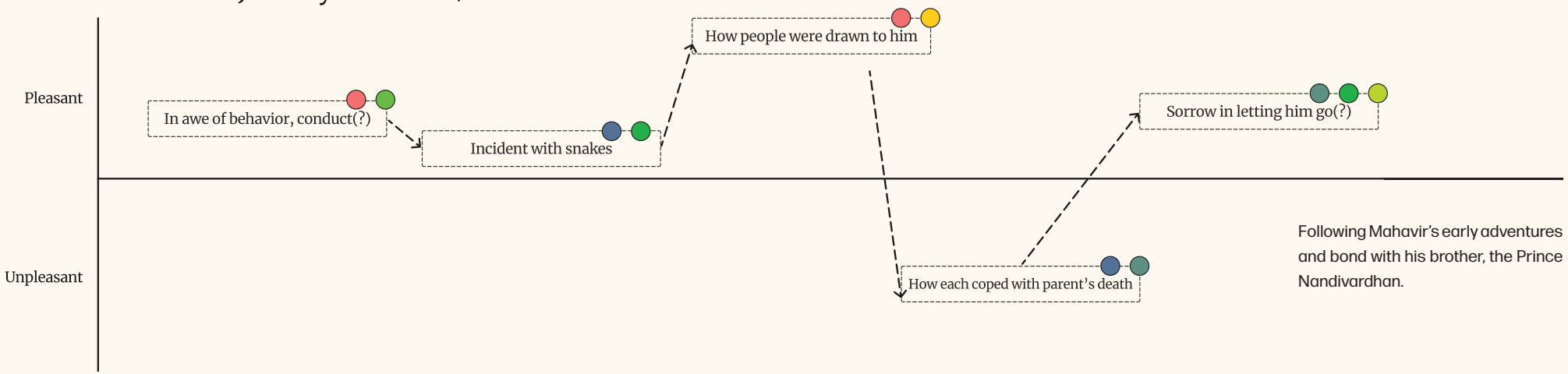
Representing abstract values like this in a statistical format involves creating guides for interpretation, and cover two categories of information. Each emotion observed in these stories has been allocated an identifier. The next step was to map these both in order of appearence, and in terms of whether it is relatively "pleasant" or "unpleasant" for the viewer/character.

This exercise helps in documenting and categorising content that has potential for being translated to a spatial context. The following pages show some examples of stories that have been visualised in this format.



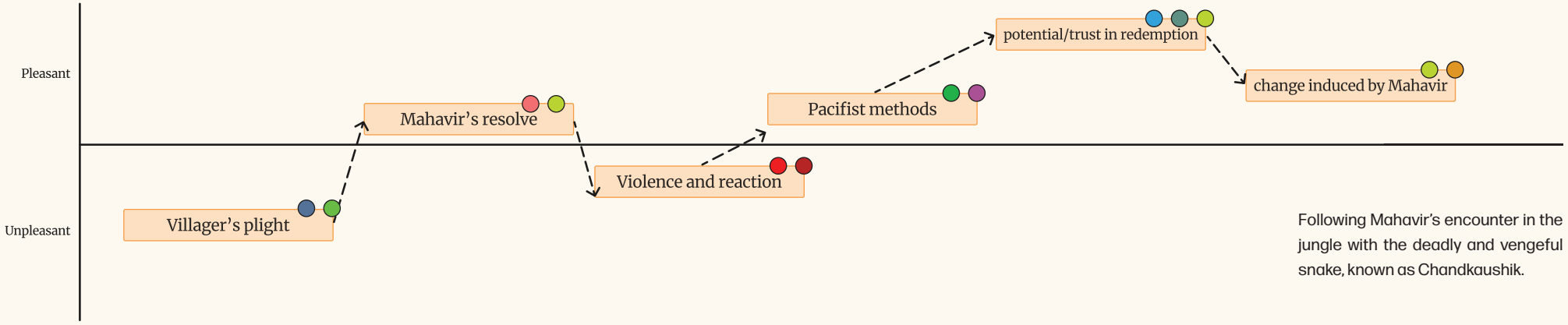
Data Collection

Emotive Journey- Mahavir|Nandivardhan



Following Mahavir's early adventures and bond with his brother, the Prince Nandivardhan.

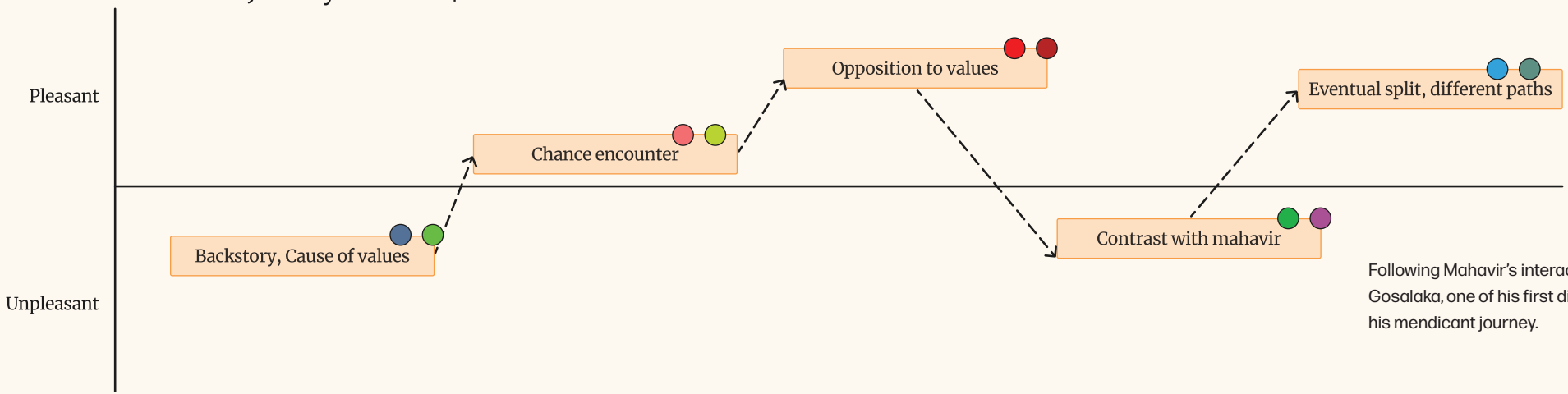
Emotive Journey- Mahavir|Chandkaushik



Following Mahavir's encounter in the jungle with the deadly and vengeful snake, known as Chandkaushik.

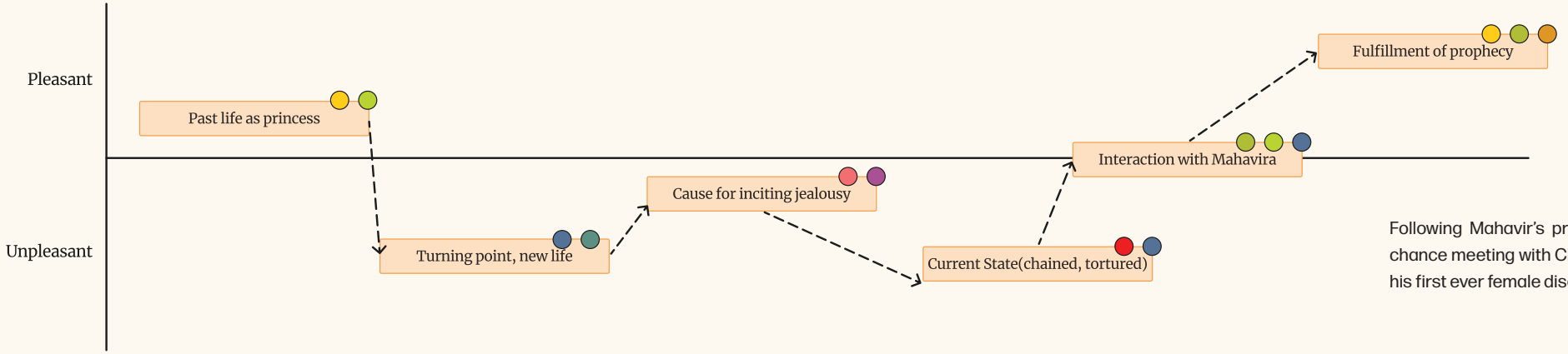
Data Collection

Emotive Journey- Mahavir|Gosalaka



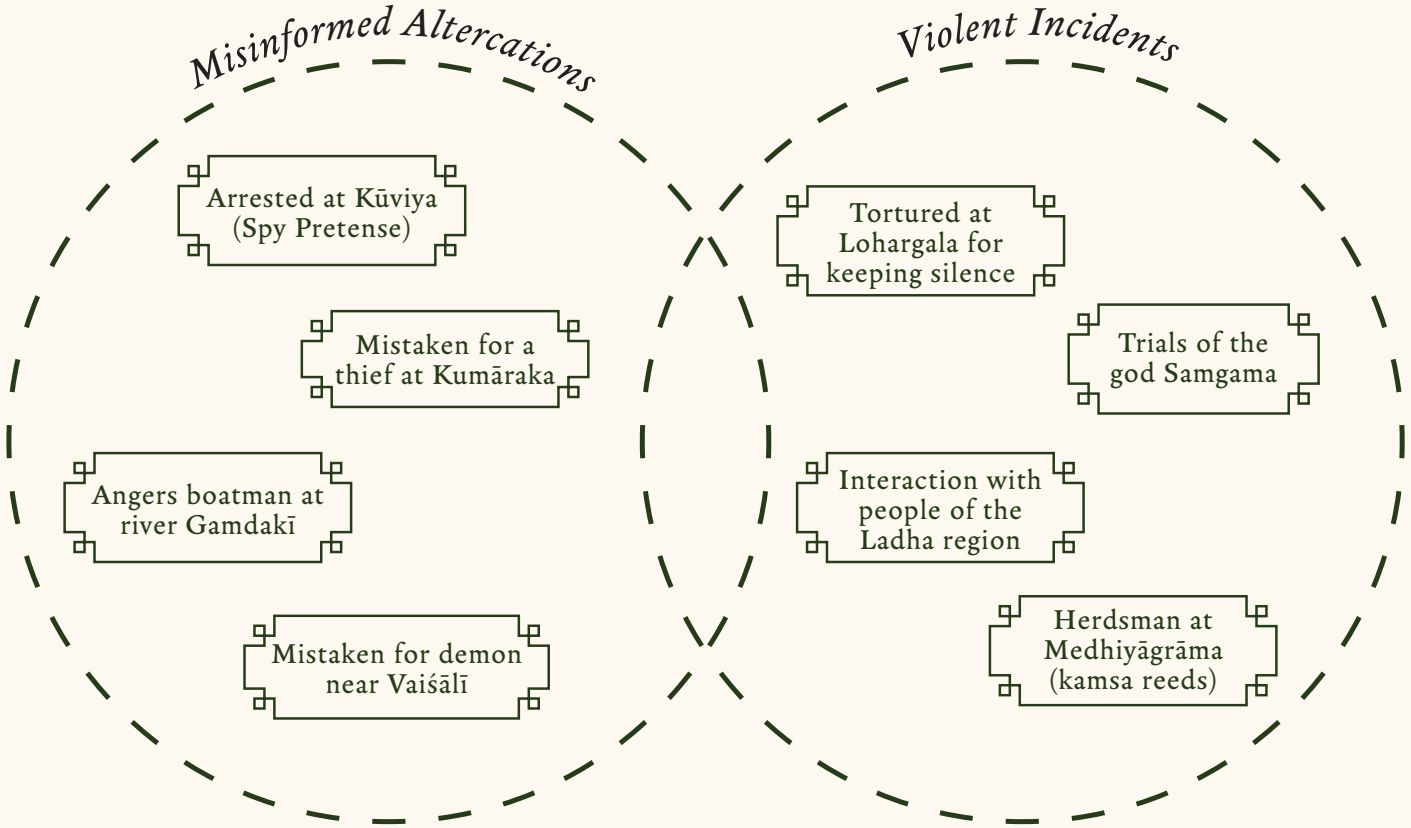
Following Mahavir's interactions with Gosalaka, one of his first disciples on his mendicant journey.

Emotive Journey- Mahavir|Chandanabala



Following Mahavir's prohpectic and chance meeting with Chandanabala, his first ever female disciple

Data Collection



"Outsider" Interactions

Mahavir's path to attain keval gnan was not an easy one. Throughout his mendicant journey, there have been numerous documented reports of how people percieved and treated him as he passed through their land.

These incidents provide an interesting insight into how the evolution of people's attitudes and reception to his teachings took place.

Categorising these events will help in identifying the ones most relevant to story this experience is trying to tell. For example, the tale of Chandkaushik is an important point in Mahavir's journey; as it highlights the potential for redmeption from even the darkest of places.

Common Themes in Encounters

Stories on Mahavir and his encounters with people during his mendicant journey often followed a similar pattern of events. How these interactions played out can provide an unique insight into how his behaviour would be percieved amongst the people of that time.

One of the chief causes for this continued abuse was the fact that Mahavir never strayed from him. His stoic like behaviour during this mendicancy period, despite being a testament to his commitment, had also become a target for others to exploit. The lack of reactions from him in response to the various acts of violence would only incited further responses.

However, what stands out even more in these stories is how that very same stoic attitude prevails in the end, and the antagonists in these stories are eventually won over by his devotion. Whether it was the god Sangama, the deadly serpent Chandkaushik, or even just regular villagefolk, everyone eventually learns the wrong of their ways and sets out on the path of forgiveness and redemption.



Mahavir's behaviour while walking through forests and villages often drew much hatred and violence from their inhabitants, who would often mock and hurt Mahavir due to his continued lack of reactions. Image source: Dada Bhagwan Foundation.

"Rising above passion towards the body while being in the body, he went beyond the corporeal existence. He did not even wink at the most difficult bodily pain nor did not attempt to cure it by any means."

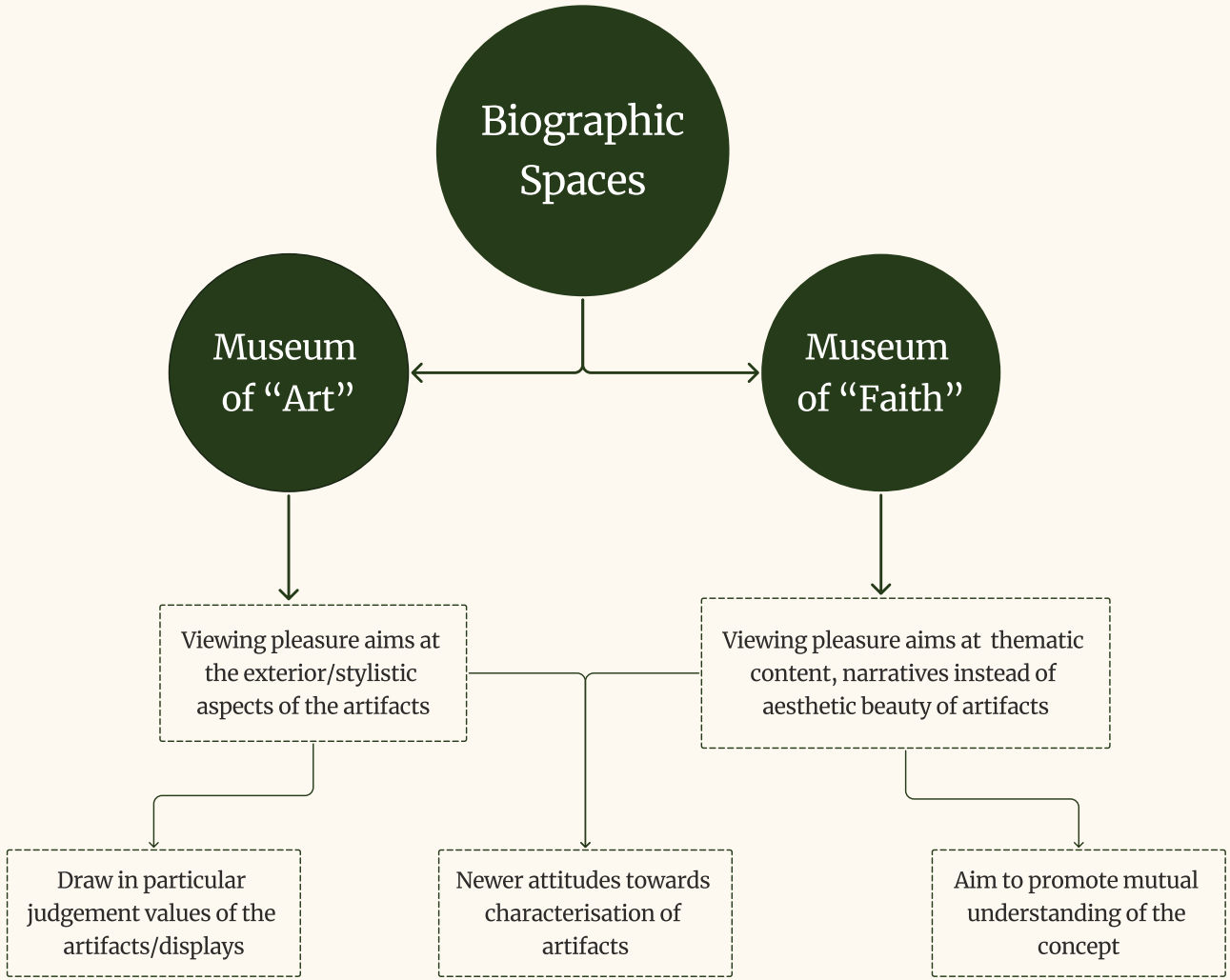
Jain Legend, Volume 1

Analysing Biographic Spaces

With research on the subject matter out of the way, the next step in this process is to understand the dynamics on Museums that speak on the biography of individuals.

Research on this topic was carried out through a combination of field visits to various museums in and around the city of Pune, along with analysing case studies and exhibits of museums from other parts of the country.

Before setting out on this task, however, it was important to understand what are the key differences in biographic museums, and where would our project fall into. Broadly speaking, these spaces can be categorized in the following manner:

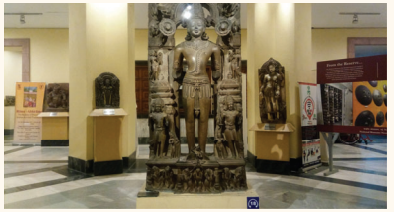


Case Studies

Museums of "Art"

While it may not really be applicable in the context of this project, These set of museums provide good insight into how spaces can be crafted to ensure the artifacts of the individual remain in the spotlight and are the main attraction of the experience.



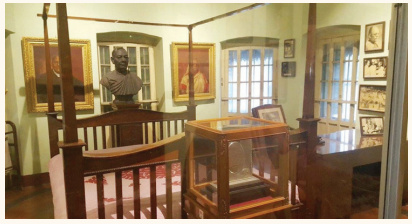






National Museum,
New Delhi





Netaji Bhawan,
Kolkata

Case Studies

Museums of "Faith"

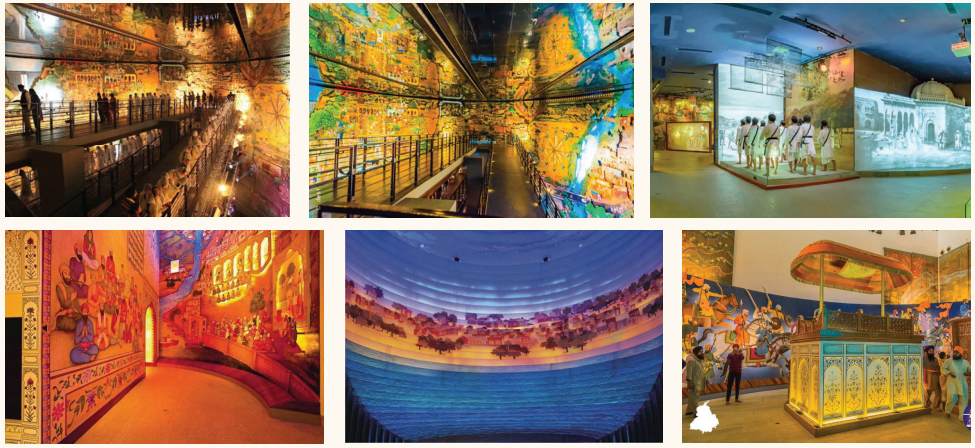
In the context of spaces where artifacts of the individual is not available, the thematic representation of the space as well as the different modes of narration used become the key drawing factor. This is especially true when dealing with spiritual figures like Mahavir, who would not have any artifacts available for show.

By establishing "faith" based museums as the direction for this project, the next step in this processis to decide and classify the modes of experience planned for the story.

There are several different but equally viable methods available for depicting stories in this spatial context. For the story of Mahavir, a combination of two approaches will be used.



Museum of the Bible, Washington DC



Khalsa credit pending

Case Studies

Modes of Experience- Narrative

Prioritising the crafting of an over-arching narrative structure in the experience, this method would break down sections based on key moments/breaks in the story.

The primary method of displaying content is through detailed infographics and similar displays, through a combination of texts, visuals and even audio guides.







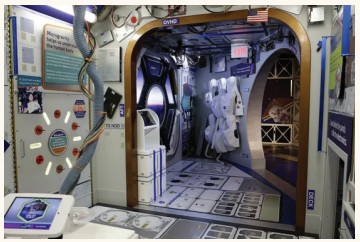

Modes of Experience- Thematic

The story is experienced through a group of fragmented “sections”; each focusing on a specific subject, object, or idea.

The visual treatment of each section is determined by its content, and often tries to imitate the the emotion/ feeling it is trying to convey. In some cases, it can also be replicating set spaces from the story.







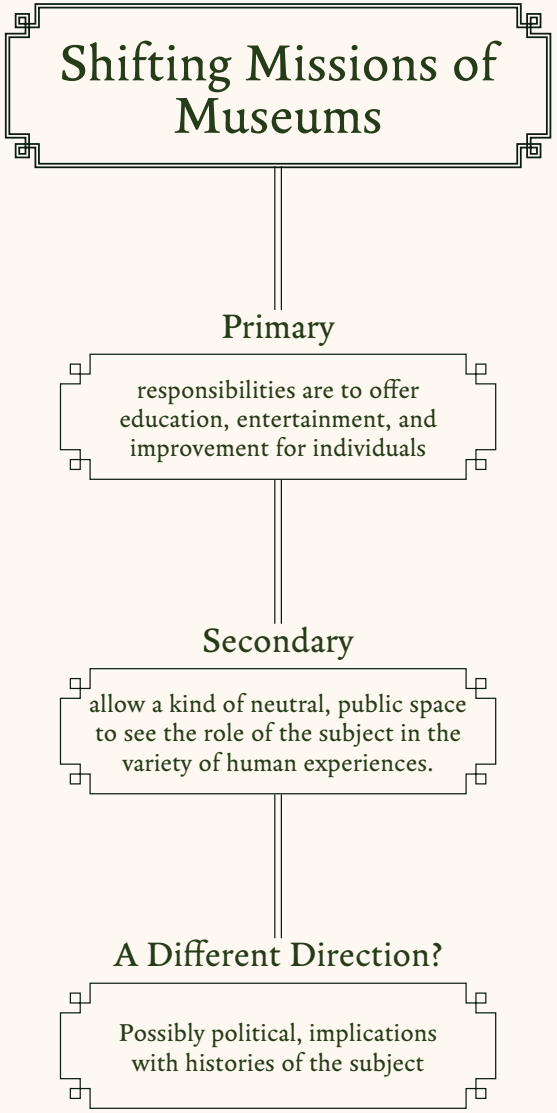

Case Studies

Establishing Key Purpose

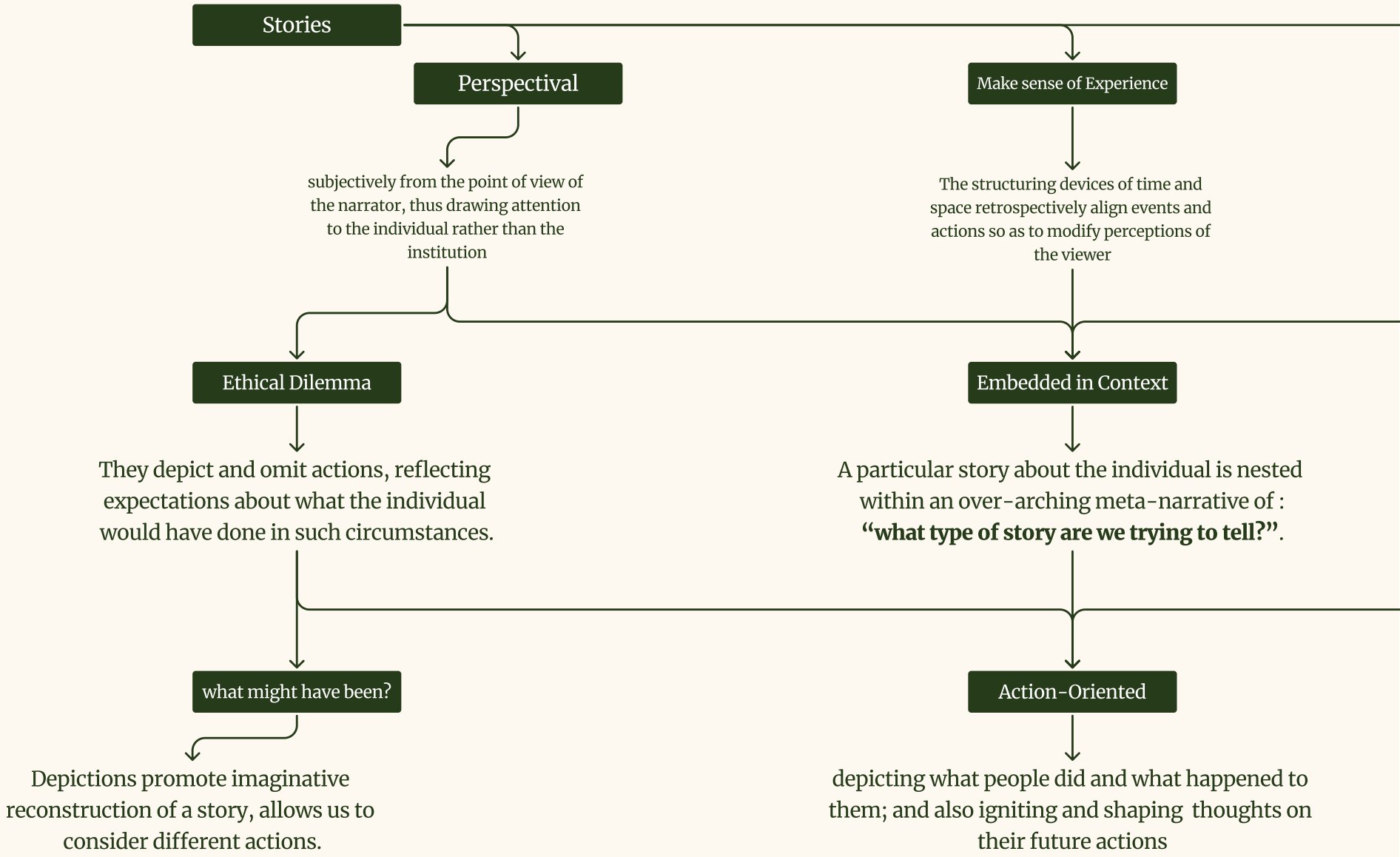
The key objective behind narrating these stories in a spatial context varies as well. Initially, the primary purpose can seen as creating Repositories for personal/state collections; but in cases of biographic/ spiritual experiences the message can be multi-layered.

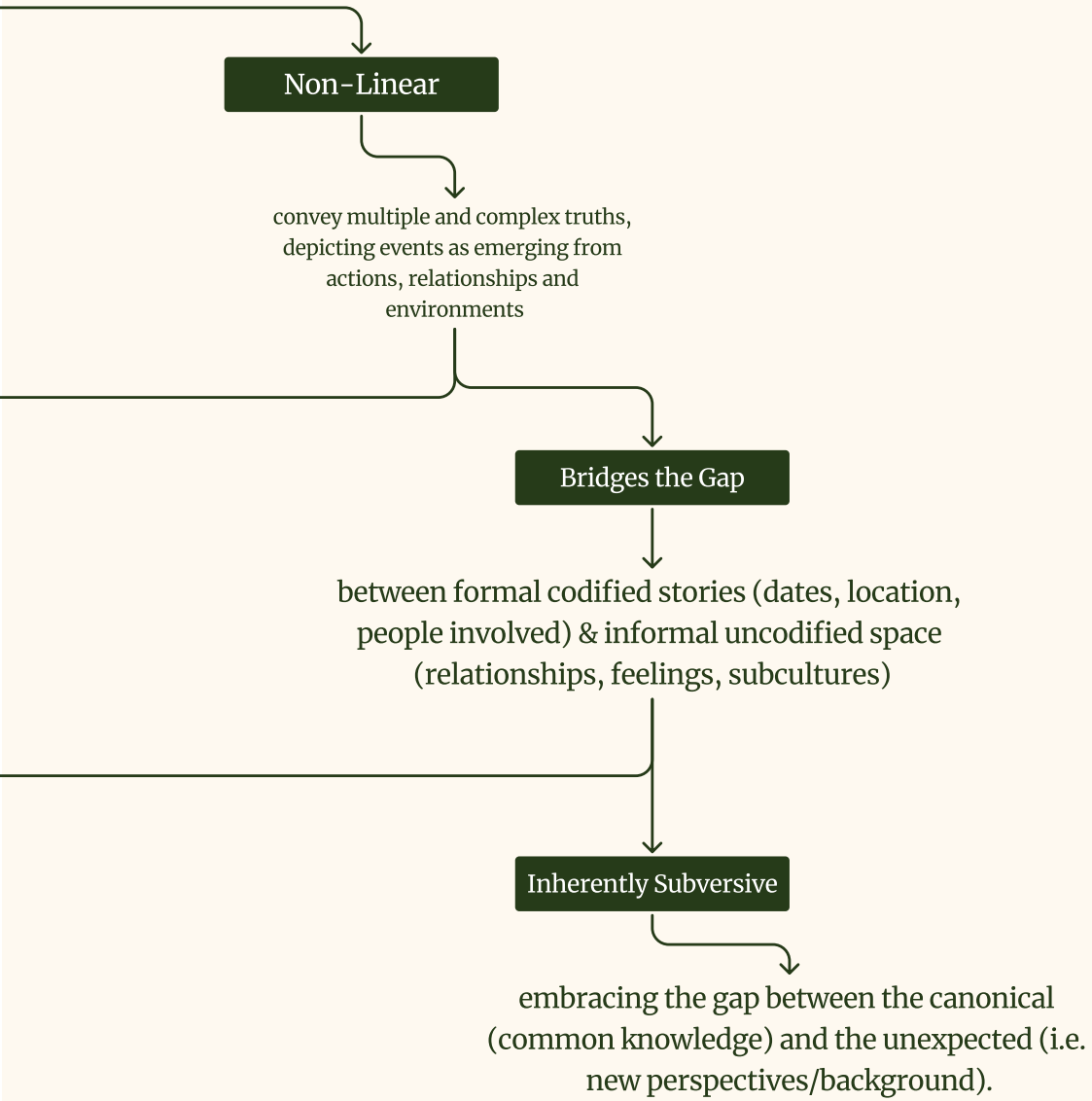
In the context of this project, it was important to understand what type of image does the brief want to display of Mahavir. There is a certain sense of responsibility to then be able to put forward that very same image in a manner that viewers have very concrete takeaways/impressions after the experience, that align with the original objective.

One of the key objectives also involved displaying a combination of stories that include both historically accurate events as well as fantastical events that may not be entirely true. A balance had to be ensured wherein the retelling of these events is done so in as factual of a manner as possible, leaving room for public impressions without any induced bias.



Interpretation





Identifying Story Structures

Building upon the objective of matching the experience narrative with the project's intended message, there were multiple "checks" ; or approches to start identifying story points from.

Creating this visual guide helps craft the story in a more structured manner. One key application of this would be that, dividing the experience into physical sections also meant dividing the story into multiple "arcs". Following this guide helps ensure that each arc can can stand on its own as an experience with sufficient time in the spotlight, while still remainning nested within the larger over-arching narrative of the experience.

This exercise also provides useful insights into how other experiences may craft and "alter" stories for the spatial context. One of the larger benefits in these spaces is the ability to now depict the story in the 3d context, suddenly adding more possible layers for judgement and expectations.

From a narrative point of view, this can take multiple directions. The story might be crafted to be more "Action Oriented", focusing on present tense retelling of events while inciting speculation on future actions. It could also be presented in a "Non-Linear" fashion, breaking away from the traditional story structures and taking on a completely different categorisation of arcs.

It was important to understand these structures early on in the project, as dealing with a spiritual figure like Mahavir meant considering the already existing expectations and impressions of some of the key viewers, which is closely intertwined with the religion itself.

Interpretation

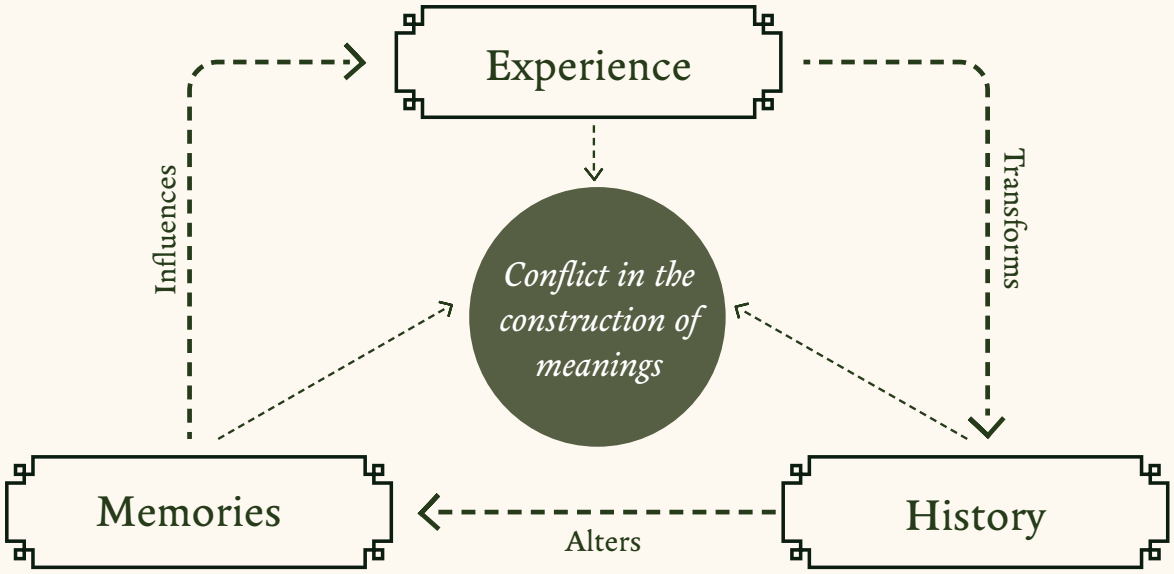
Modes of Meaning-Making

One of the key consequenses of these experiences, is how the impressions/perceptions of the stories are alltered based on what the viewer sees.

There is a certain behavioural trend observed in such situations, wherein the experiences molded by the spaces go on to influence the viewer's understanding of how history took place.

If not taken into consideration for each narrative point, there is a risk of imposing undesired impressions upon viewers, which will then go on to affect proceeding sections and the experience as a whole.

Similarly, being able to consciously use this phenomenon can help promote the desired to reactions for the way the narrative is structured in this spatial context. Moreover, it will help maintain consistency in the character's depictionand the traits we decide to display.



"History is thus selected, constructed and transmitted by museums and then, in the process of being experienced by visitors, it is transformed into something else – their own understanding of the past, a type of 'historical sense' that is independent of the ideal"

Museums, Memory and History, Graham Black


Key Issues
Key Takeaways
Dual Layer Storytelling
Journey Mapping
Experience Journey
NARRATIVE

Key Issues

Discrepancy in Mahavir's birth in the timeline

Before setting out to finalise the narrative structure for the experience, there were 2 key concerns that needed to be addressed with regards to historical accuracy and presentation of beliefs.

Although tradition dictates that Mahavira was born about 599 bce, many scholars believe this date to be as much as 100 years early, in that Mahavira probably lived at about the same time as the Buddha, whose traditional birth date has also been reassessed

It is uncertain when Mahavira was born and when he died. One view is that Mahavira was born in 540 BCE and died in 443 BCE. According to Buddhist and Jain texts, Buddha and Mahavira are believed to have been contemporaries which is supported by much ancient Buddhist literature.

Implications

A discrepancy of 30-100 years would imply Mahavir never met some of the historical figures mentioned in his story, such as King Śreṇika(Bimbisara). These figures were involved in some very important life events with Mahavir. As such, their absence from the actual timeline would imply that those stories/events did not take place at all.

Measures Taken

To ensure consistency in chronology of the events, It has been decided that the dates of key events will be taken relative to Mahavir's date of birth as recorded within The Encyclopedia Britannica. While there may still be doubts about historical accuracy of events, using comparatively credible sources like this can help ensure the narrative structure does not fall under factual inaccuracy.



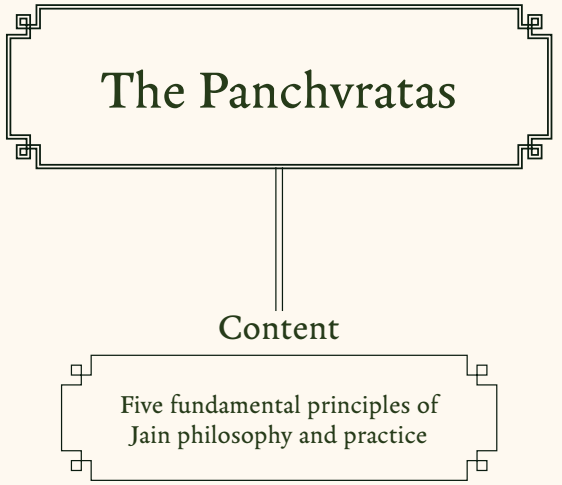
Necklace depicting Buddha's tale of the twin miracle, a contest in which Mahavir was said to have participated too. Artifacts like these help futher determine the exact timeline of Mahavir, relative to other events. Image Source: Tombrembo, Wikipedia

Key Issues

Presentation of moral science over philosophy

There is a clear distinction between canonical events and storied rooted in fantasy, with different accounts of the same events existing within the Shvetambara and Digambara traditions. How do we differentiate between the principles of his teachings?

While the core details of Mahavira's life as a historical figure, including his time period (6th-5th century BCE), renunciation of worldly possessions, emphasis on non-violence (ahimsa), and teachings on asceticism are now generally considered to be historically accurate, some aspects of his life story, particularly miraculous events and specific details of his early life, may be embellished or vary depending on the Jain sect.

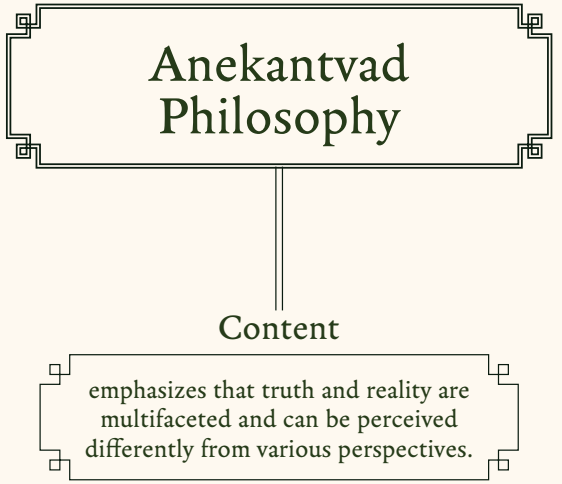


Implications

The lack of concrete categorisation of Mahavir's teachings can lead to a rather fragmented retelling of his story and accomplishments, given how they are the basis of all his actions. It becomes difficult to decipher whether the learnings we display are those propagated by Mahavir, or those developed over the years by the Jain religion. Given the fact that this experience focuses on the former, it is important that clear dinstinctions are made of what takeaways we want to show.

Measures Taken

Mahavir's learnings have been categorised into two groups: Those related to the establishment of the Panchvratas, and those related to his philosophy of Anekantavad; i.e multiple perspective to the truth. Most of the information given will be derivative of these 2 categories, in the sense that they can be traced back to these basic concepts.



Key Takeaways

There are 3 key objectives that the experience needs to accomplish in the form of takeaways. This needs to be considered right from the narrative stage itself.

Establish clear story framework

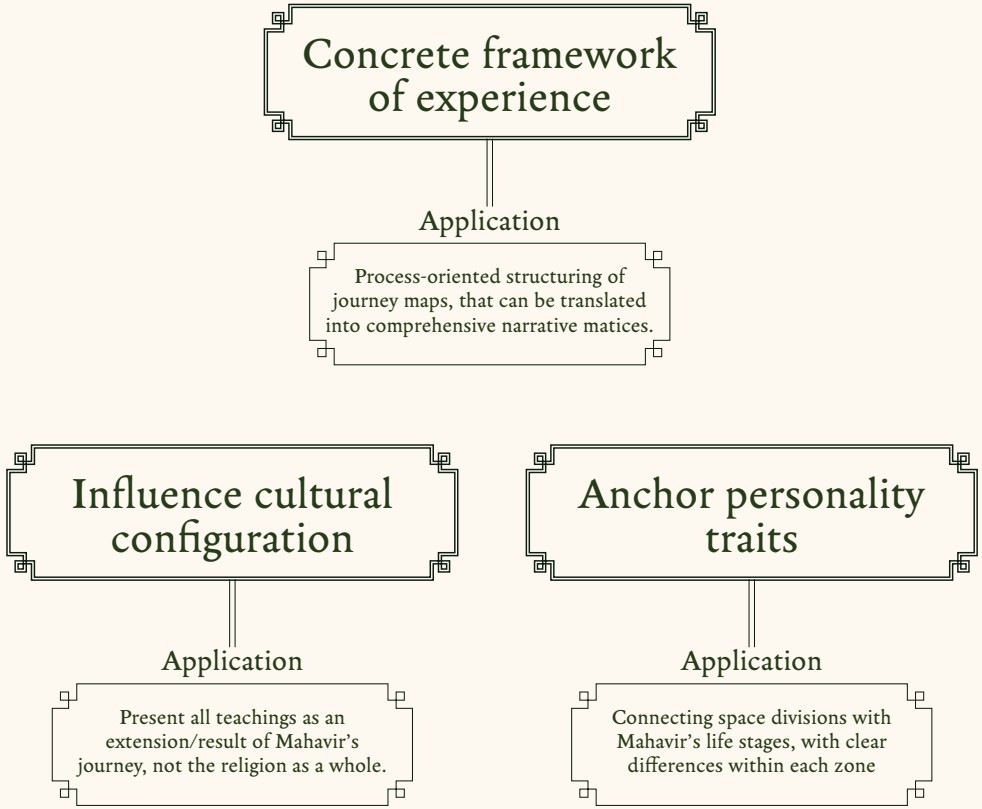
Creating clear distinguishable experience sections that staisfy the story structure criterias previously established. Should be structured in a way that the framework can be interpeted on its own, even outside the spatial context.

"Influence" cultural configuration

One way to analyse the effects of this space, is to analyse how the impressions and perceptions of the viewer changes post experience. Do they see the subject matter in new light? This has to be achieved by creating a tangible landscape that provides the self with a new degree of cultural configuration.

"Anchor" fragmented personalities

Historical records will provide numerous depictions and impressions of Mahavir, which contributes to a rather fluid and fragmentary personality. The task of deciphering this as a viewer needs to be made easier, possibly by "anchoring" its reasoning behing established core values like the philospophy of Anekantavad.



Dual Layer Storytelling



Recognition, Validation

Value Addition, Unique Proposition

Catering for multiple demographics

One of the more unique approaches taken in this project will be to approach story points from multiple layers. Considering the variety in the viewer groups, it is essential that every viewer manages to get some takeaway from the experience. This can be done by identifying aspects of story points that viewers may be familiar with, and layering it with additional information or perspectives to the event.

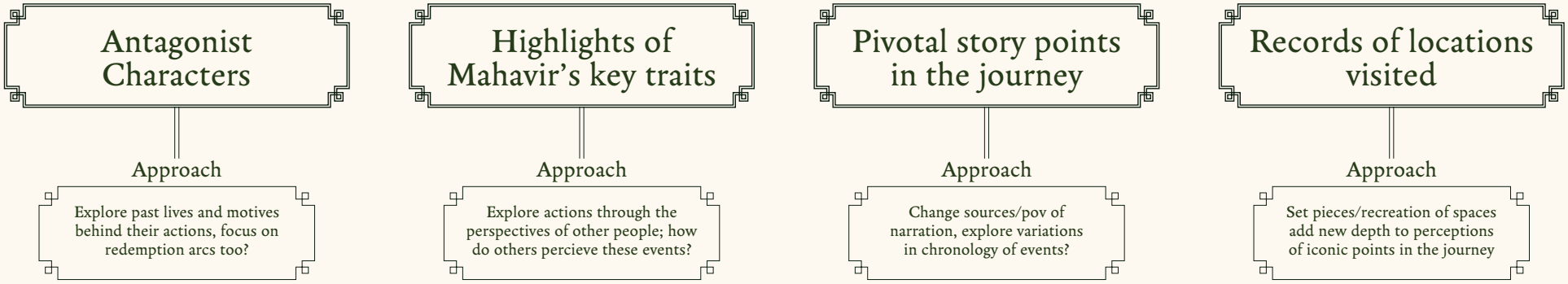
Dual Layer Storytelling

How does it work?

Any character/story follows a similar template/guide on how to expand upon the informations and add more depth to it. Let's understand how this multi-layered approach to the story will work in the spatial context, with some examples.

The early stages of Mahavir's life as Prince Vardhaman and his experience in a royal lifestyle has been well documented. An interesting way of adding a new layer to this story, is to explore the spaces within which his behaviour and qualities begin to stand out from the rest. This is especially interesting when seen in contrast to his brother, Prince Nandivardhana.

Another interesting case is that of Chandkaushik. The fearsome snake is famously documented as one of Mahavir's first trials in his mendicant journey, and is usually associated with the fear/terror he caused amongst the local people. But what if the story we try to present focuses on the motive and background of this character as well? Exploring the events that lead to the creation of this monster adds a new layer of information depth to the character, and in turn the experience as well.



Journey Mapping

Journey type iterations

With the parameters now set in place, it was time to start developing possible journey maps for the experience. A journey map in this stage of the process helps to translate story structures into actual zones, which will then serve as foundation for creating a narrative matrix.

There were three key iteration developed for the space, each focusing on one key aspect/takeaway from the journey.

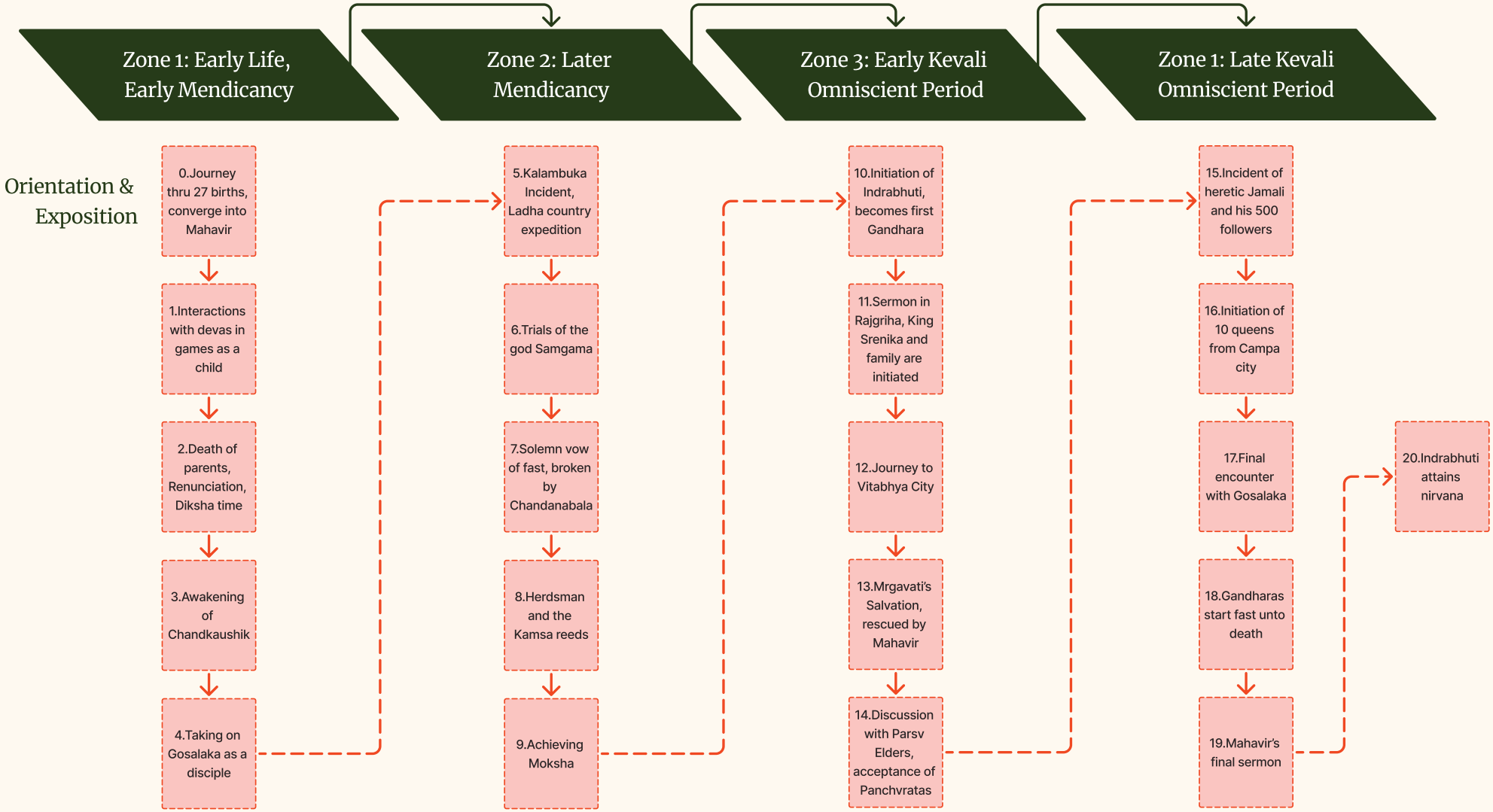
Type A: Recognition and Validation, Value addition to the existing/norm perceptions of his life

Type B: 'Moral of the story' linked to his adventures, focus on the moral science aspect

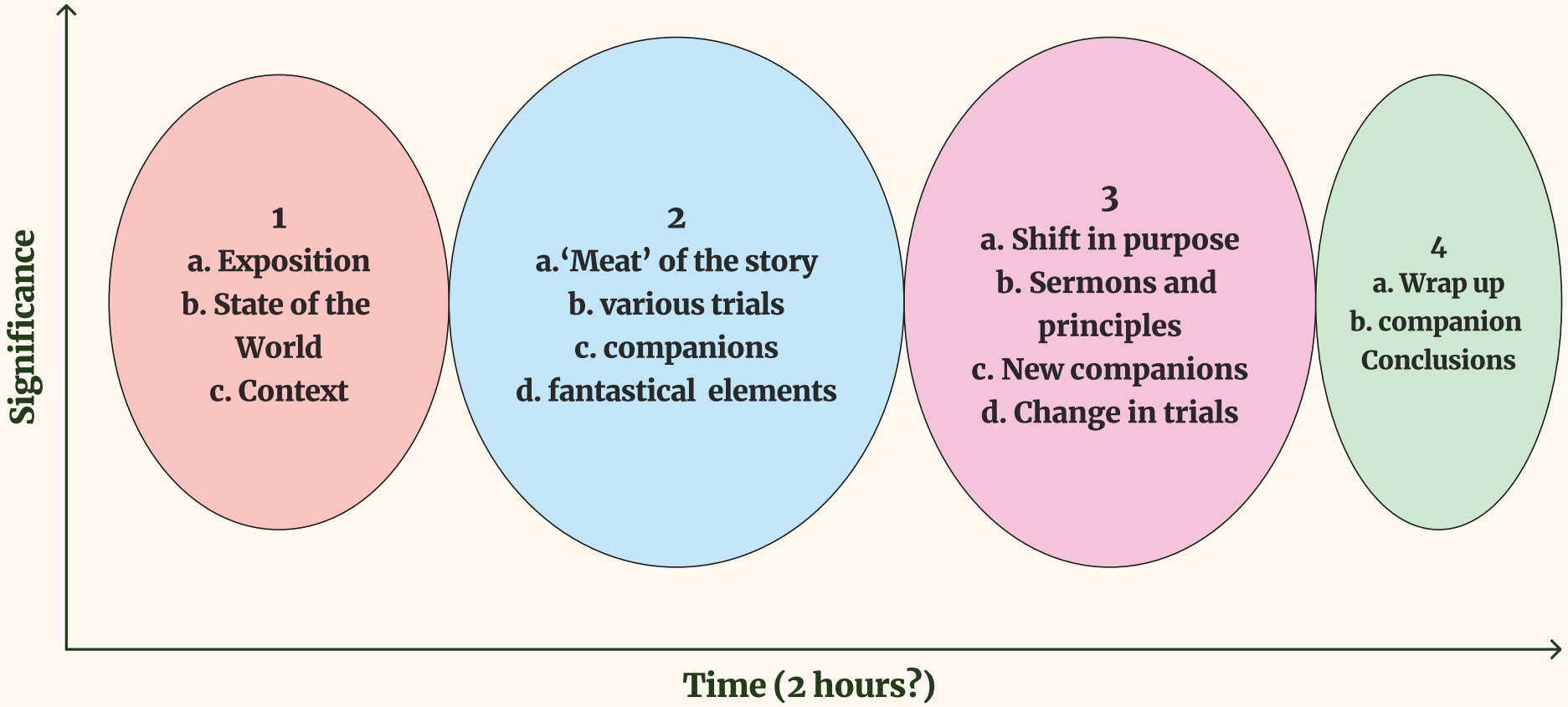
Type C: What has/can Mahavir done for us/companions, and what we must do to emulate behavior; how relations shape our lives

Journey Mapping

Type A- Variant 1



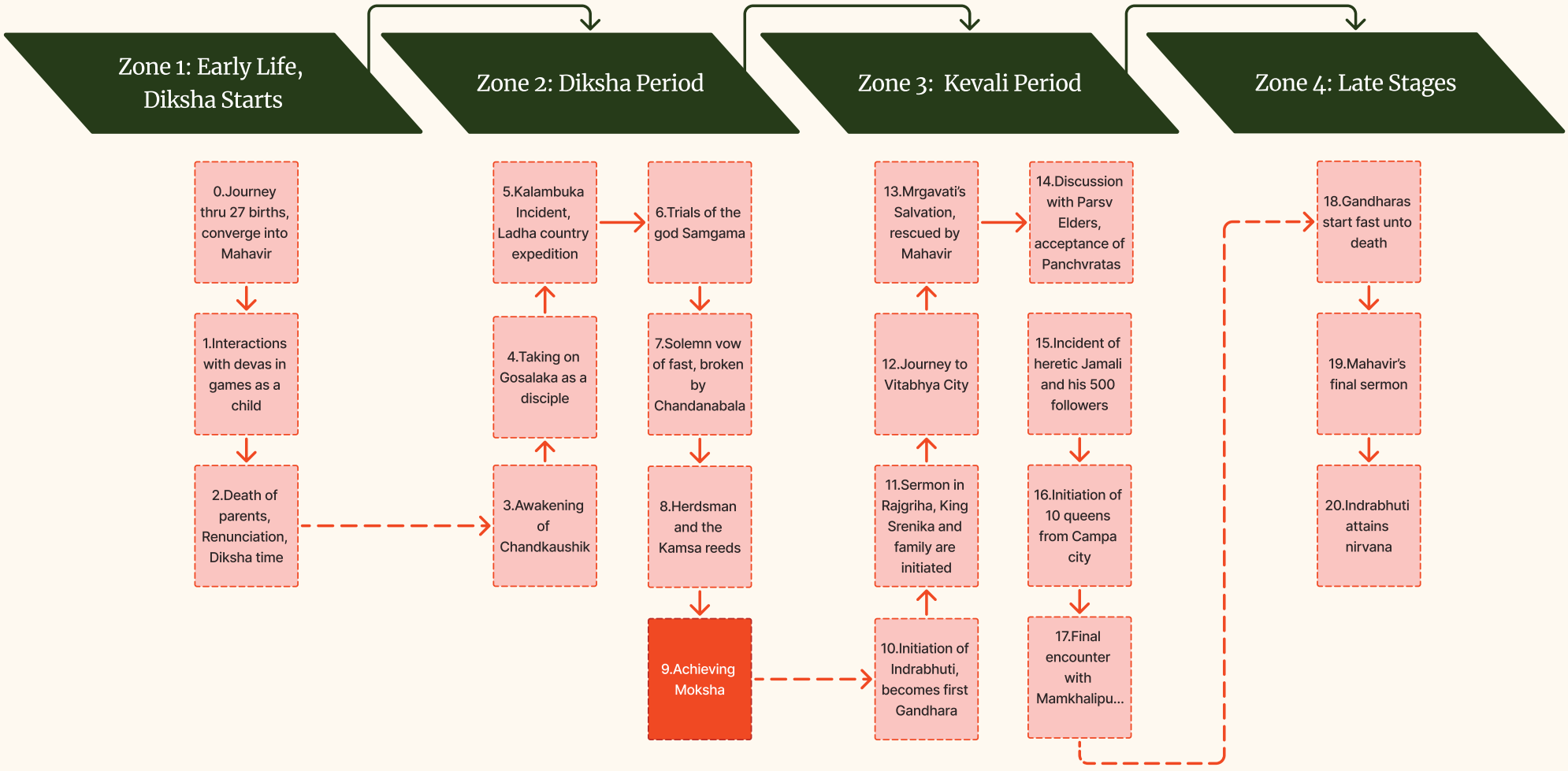
Journey Mapping



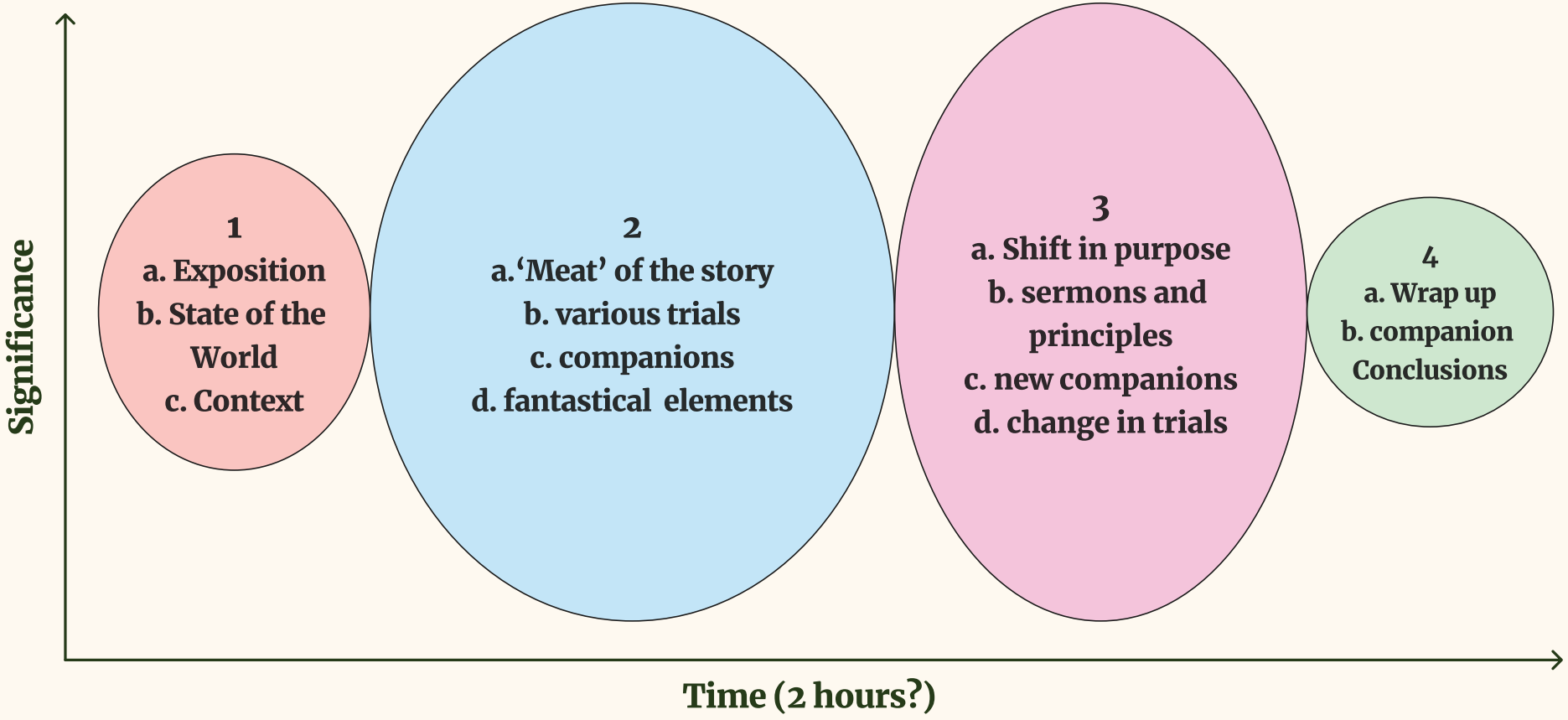
Type A focuses on condensing down the entire life of Mahavir into 21 key story points that mark significant changes in his life. These are then zoned out by by larger categories, which are based off his mendicant and kevali periods. Here, the division of events is such that no single zone is particularly more significant than the other in terms of content. The bigger difference in the amount of time alloted for each section, with 2 and 3 particularly making up the larger portion of the experience.

Journey Mapping

Type A- Variant 2



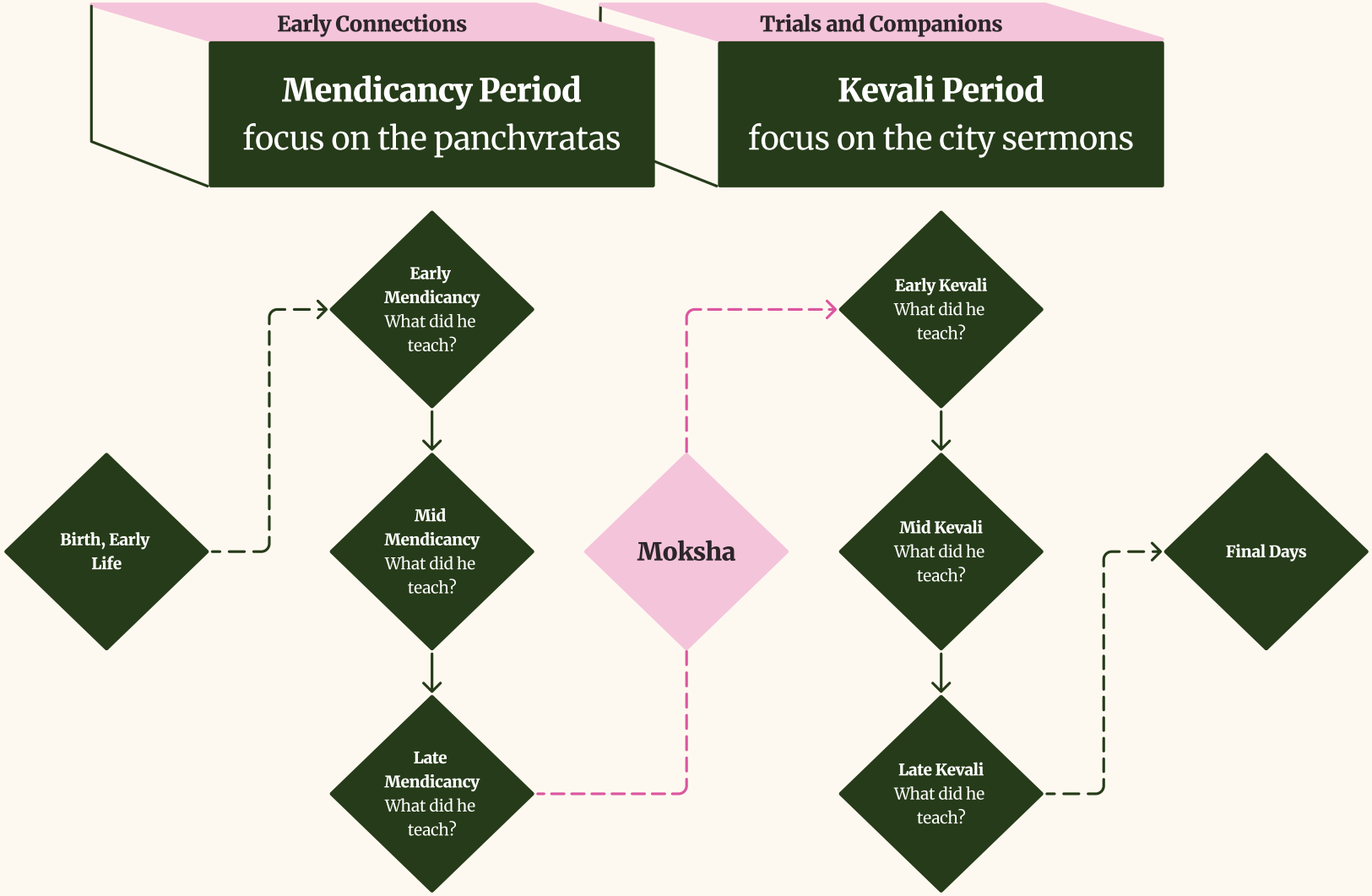
Journey Mapping



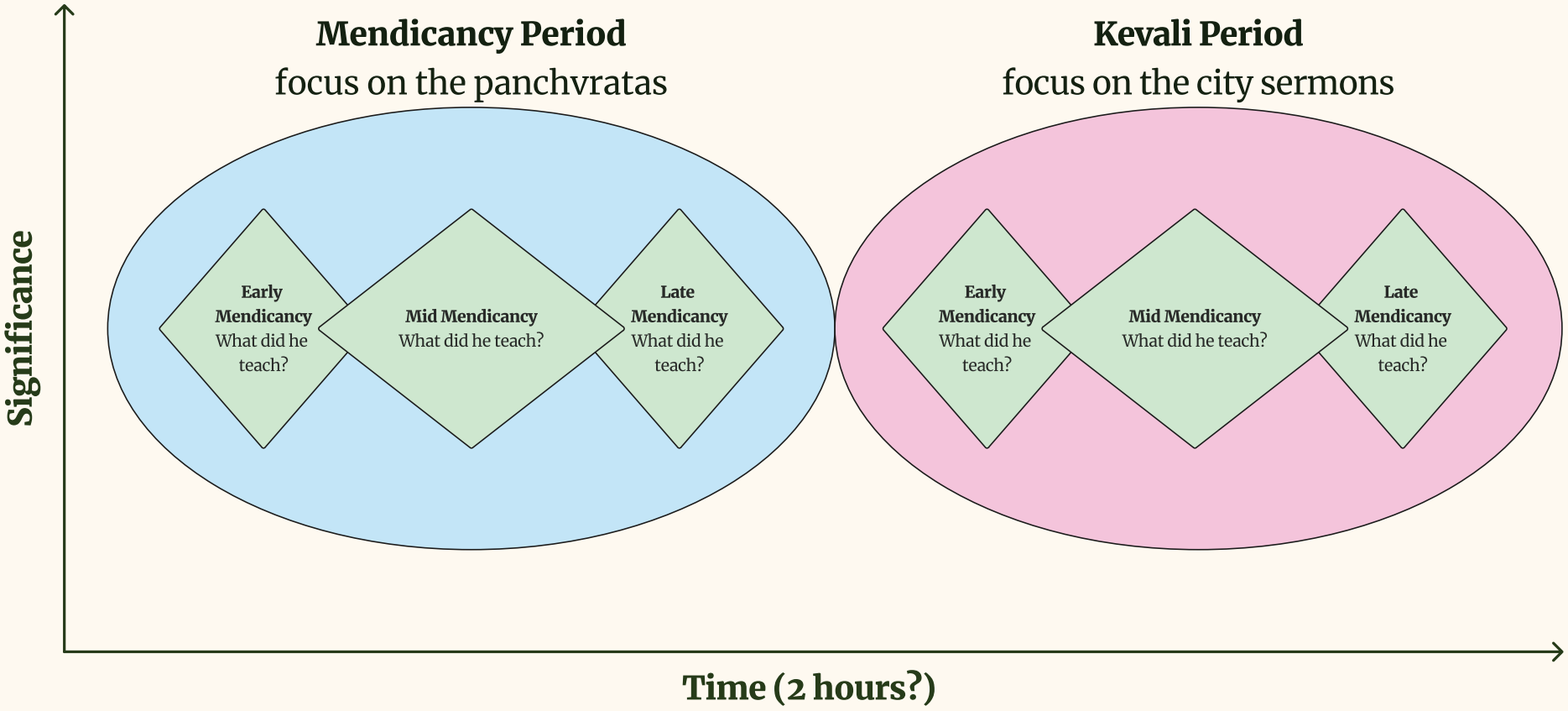
This approach relooks at the type A division from the perspectives of companions instead. It builds upon the question, "How do others see Mahavir?", and tries to answer it by relooking stories from new perspectives. Having a narrator who is closely connected to the events also helps in "humanising" the journey and making the depicted perceptions of Mahavir more relatable.

Journey Mapping

Type B



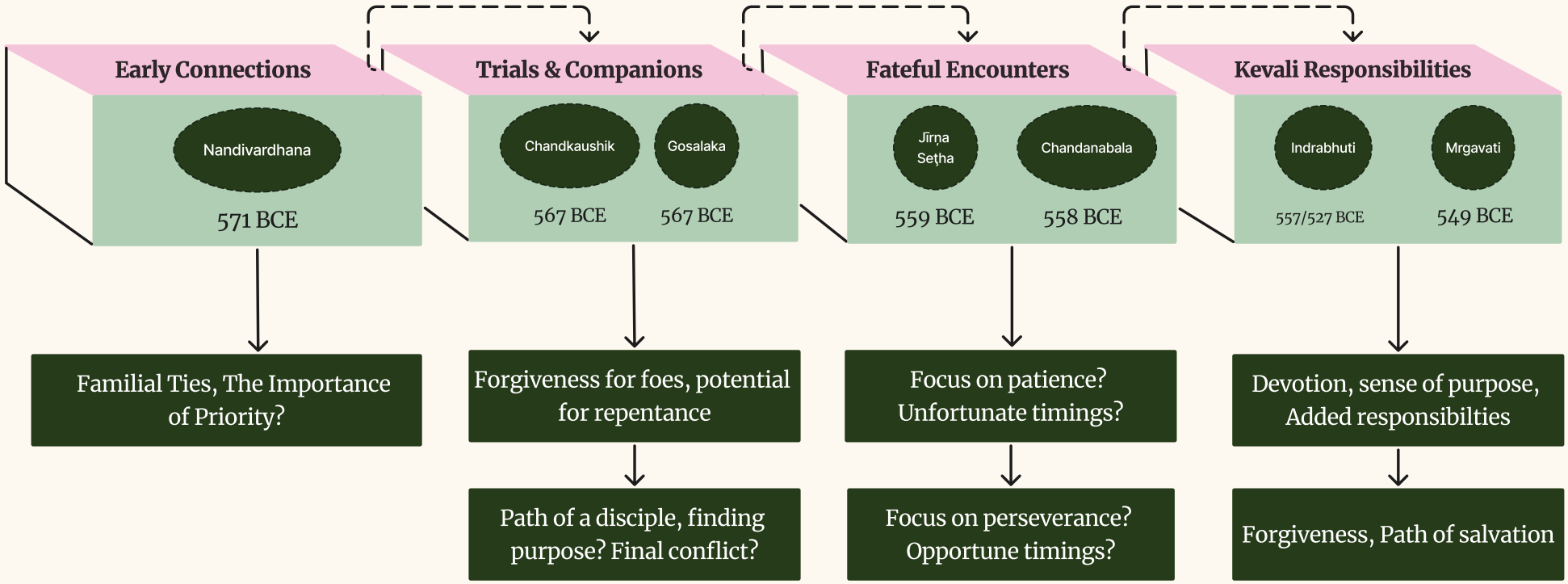
Journey Mapping



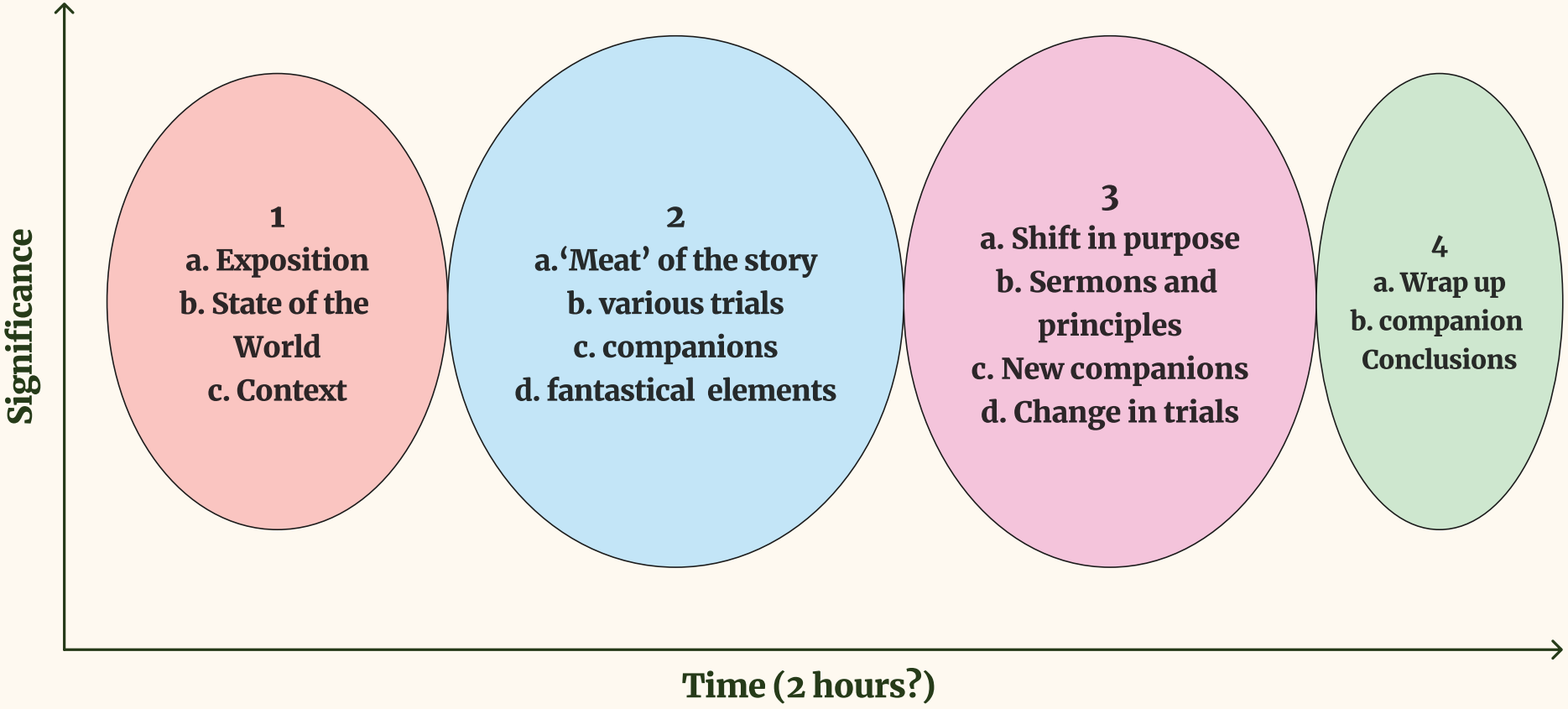
Type B focuses on highlighting the teachings/morals learnt from each story point, and uses each key learnings as checkpoints within the experience. There are two primary zones only, but contain sizeable sub-sections each focusing on one takeaway. While this method does provide more focus and clarity on actual takeaways from the experience, it does run the risk of taking too much attention away from the Mahavir himself.

Journey Mapping

Type C



Journey Mapping



This variation reworks the type A structure by moving the spotlight from the events to the people and companions associated with it instead. It is an attempt at understanding Mahavir from the perspective of others closely connected to his journeys, and by extension provide a more humanising perception of the individual. The zoning structure largely remains the same, with the only changes coming in the form of zones being categorised by the individuals asscociated with that phase of his life.

Experience Journey

Zone 1: Early Connections

Zone 2: Trials & Companions

Nandivardhana

Chandkaushik

Gosalaka

Orientation? Waiting?

Vision of the 13 dreams, prelude to a great life(?)

Focus: Exploits as a child

Nandivardhana's Perspective

Death of Parents, effects

In awe of behavior, conduct(?)

Incident with snakes

How people were drawn to him

How each coped with death

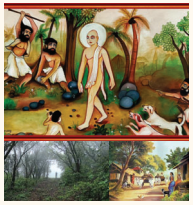
Sorrow in letting him go(?)



Start, Royal Life

Setting Shift

Diksha Begins



Diksha, journey through the wilds

Chandkaushik's Perspective

Change of Heart, Mahavir's Role

Villager's plight

Mahavir's resolve

Violence and reaction

Pacifist methods

potential/trust in redemption

change induced by Mahavir

Focus: Exp in different settings

Gosalaka's Perspective

Self-Growth, setting out

Backstory, Cause of values

Chance encounter

Opposition to values

Contrast with mahavir

Eventual split, different paths

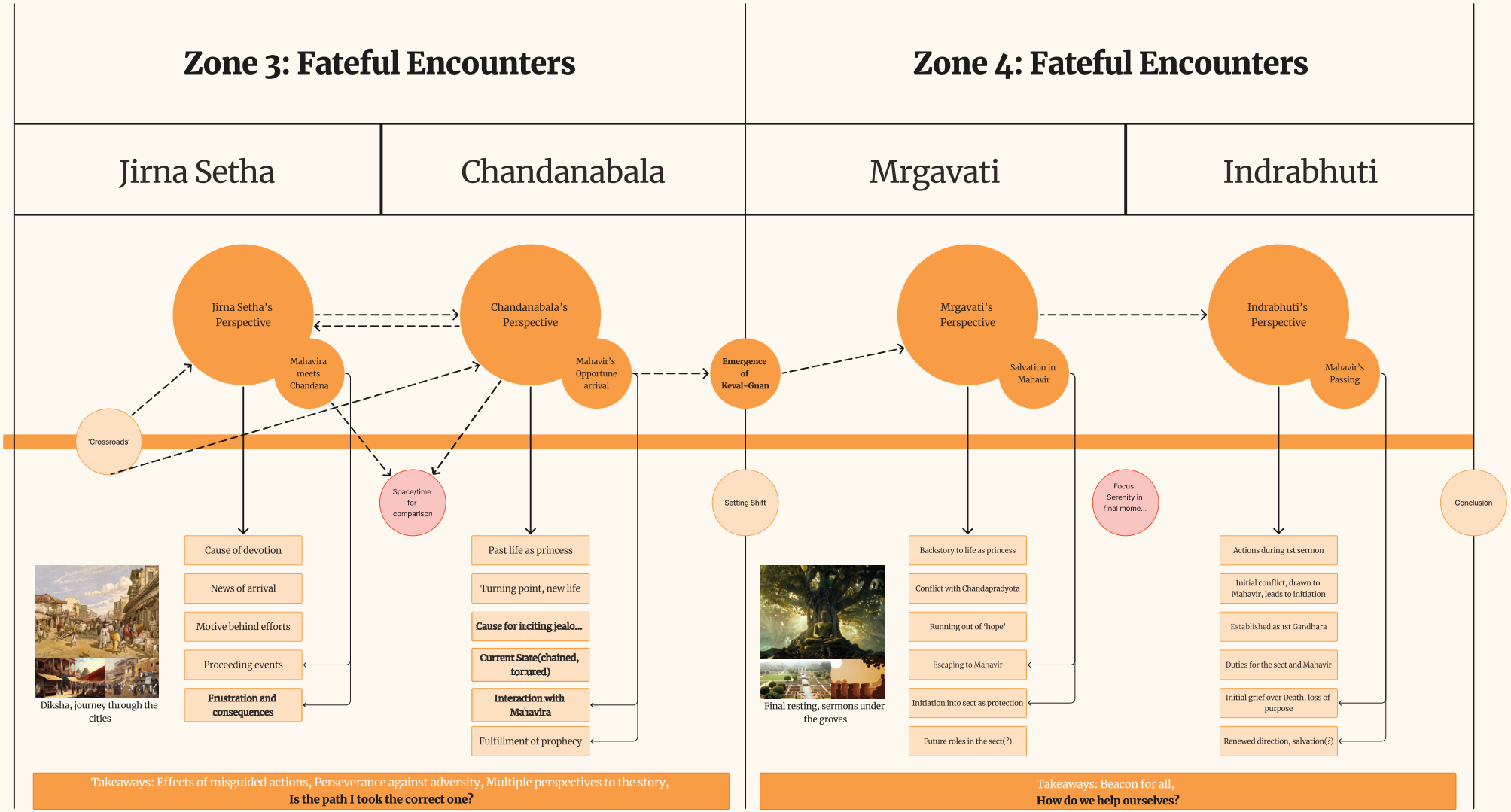
Fame begins to spread

Setting Shift

Takeaways: Taste of what's next, Curiosity of the world's reaction, Fascination with behavior,
How do you find the strength?

Takeaways: Conflict over ideologies, Self-reflect on values, Influence on self-identity,
How do I accept other's values?

Experience Journey



Taking forward the type C variation and building upon it, an early experience journey is created in order to start linking story points between the various zones. These links will serve as the path to be taken in this experience, indicating the order of story points as well. Demarcations have been added to indicate points where the setting changes to the next zone, and spaces within them that serve a key focus/function.

Experience Journey

Narrative Matrix

Finally, the story structure culminates in the form of a narrative matrix, which finally starts linking the content to desired modes of representation. This acts as a guide for future conceptualisation, lisitng down intended takeaways and interation methods as well. It provides a lot of clarity on how individual sections will work and how they will fit into the larger context of Mahavir's story.

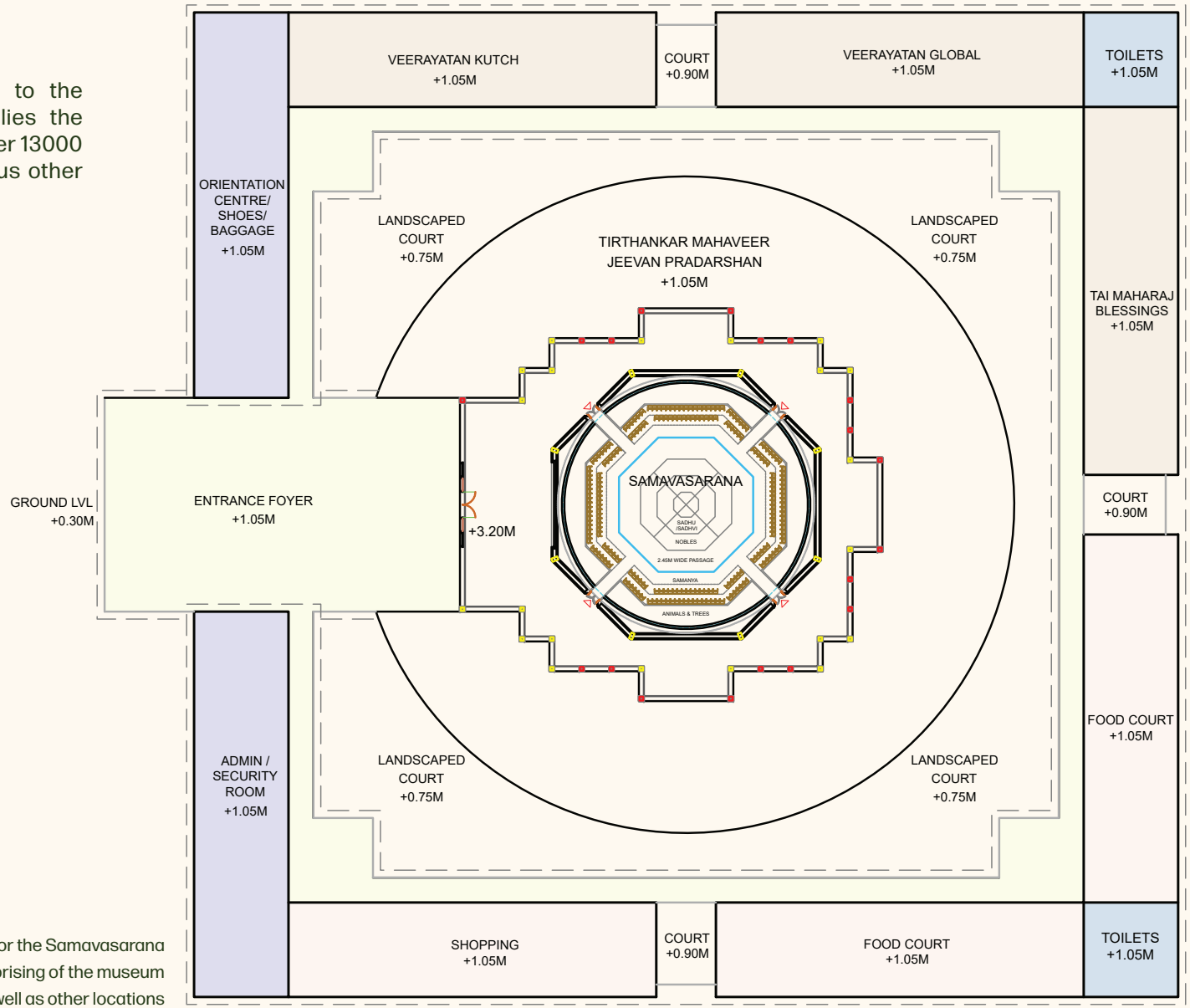
Sections/ Companions	Significance	Content	Mode of Representation	Visitor Experience	Visitor Experience (Emotive)	Intended Interaction	Quality of Space
Nandivardhana	**Final Connection(one of) to his past life, fulfilling his wishes signifies the last act of detachment from what holds him back; ie duties/responsibilities**	Depiction of past life 'artifacts', organic/inorganic, that anchored him from setting out. Also focusing on his actions within the family	"Palatial" set piece with recreations of sites frequented by young Vardhaman	Settling in, exposed to context of the world and journey	Curious, Awed, Neutral, Interested	**Collective:** help each other understand the state of the world in which Mahavir decides to set out, and his prior anchors	Direct, palatial, open to navigate
Chandkaushik	**One of the first encounters of a 'violent' nature, which showed his commitment to his non-violent values; also shows how someone like Chandkaushik too has scope for redemption**	Background on the snake, Mahavir's cause for intervention, following actions, act of forgiveness? path of repentance?	Dense forest path with wall graphics and interactive displays; coupled with "hero room" for chandkaushik	Identifying malignant figure, exposure to causality behind actions, room for sympathy, scope for redemption; left to ponder upon relation to their own possible actions	Empathetic, Guilt, Hopeful	**Individual:** Ponder upon how your own actions have scope for repentance?	Imposing, Constrictive, Dark and anxious
Gosalaka	**Essentially the first of his disciples, someone who was drawn to Mahavir's principles but had his own perspectives on those values as well**	Insight into his character, contrast with Mahavir, how he perceived the principles, how he deviated and created his own sect	Continuation of previous path, which leads into a more civilized/clean city space with similar displays and hero room	Think a lot and fit what they've seen into their own existing ideologies- does it also contrast with that of Mahavir's?	Conflicted, Introspect, Challenge other/oneself	**Pairs/Small Groups:** Discuss with each other how your interpretation of the same values may be differing from someone else	"Civilised", organised, contrasting previous path
Jīrṇa Seṭha	**Depicts how even months of ardent devotion was undone by a single moment of inopportune coincidence; contrast to next section**	**Insight into devotion and cause behind it, how important was Mahavir in his life, and how luck(?) played a role in who Mahavir took alms from**	**Dome-like space for back and forth conversations between city-folk and Mahavir, viewers as audience**	frustration? angst over lack of benefit? aware of the imp. of primary goal behind any action	'heavy heart', saddened, contemplative(what went wrong?), misguided objectives	**Individual:** internalize(?) the frustration in the missed opportunity, and understand what exactly went wrong	Towering, Focused, Relaxed, Comforting
Chandanabala	**Perseverance through numerous struggles is directly rewarded by Mahavir, who bought hope through one chance encounter**	Past life as Princess Vasumatī, injustice suffered, how she met the conditions leading to salvation, how she accepted initiation	Same representation as above space, to be used as a site for comparison of stories	inspired by perseverance and its reward, challenged to walk he same path	Inspired, Satisfied, Reverence?, Hopeful?	**Groups:** callback to the previous section and discuss the contrast between the two scenarios, what is Mahavir's role?	Towering, Focused, Relaxed, Comforting
Mrgavati	**Depicting Mahavir as a final beacon of support? Signifies how walking the same path(disciple) is an answer to worldly problems?**	Status as princess, conflict with chandpradyota, events leading to initiation, relation and interactions with candanabala?	Towering artifacts that act as links between people moving into celestial space and the stories they leave behind.	recognition of status, Mrgavati's resolve, Mahavir's ability to help people of any status/class with any problem,	Hopeful, Elated, Relief?	**Individual:** Ponder upon what is expected from us when it comes to following the values; How can we help Mahavir help us?	Relief, spacious, reflective, imposing
Indrabhuti	Closest companion to Mahavir, depicting of how their strong bonds and his loyalty was eventually rewarded, but only due to the efforts that Indrabhuti himself put in.	Past status, initial perception of Mahavir, prompt initiation, content on his level of devotion, duties, reactions to key events including death of Mahavir	Same representation as above space, to be used as a site for comparison of stories	inspired by the degree of devotion, ability to stay true to the path, Ponder upon variety of discussions between the two;	Bittersweet(?), Curious, Inspired, Food for thought(?)	**Individual:** ""Take in" the bond between Leader and disciple? Finish the story without anyone else's thoughts in your mind?	Relief, spacious, reflective, imposing


Zoning Layouts
Communication Strategy
Set Direction
Key Changes
EXPLORATION

Zoning Layouts

Analyzing the space

Samavasarana is a larger space dedicated to the depiction of Jain beliefs, within which also lies the museum space on Mahavir's journey. Spread over 13000 square meters of space, the site houses various other facilities apart from the experience.



Site plan for the Samavasarana space, comprising of the museum zone as well as other locations

Zoning Layouts

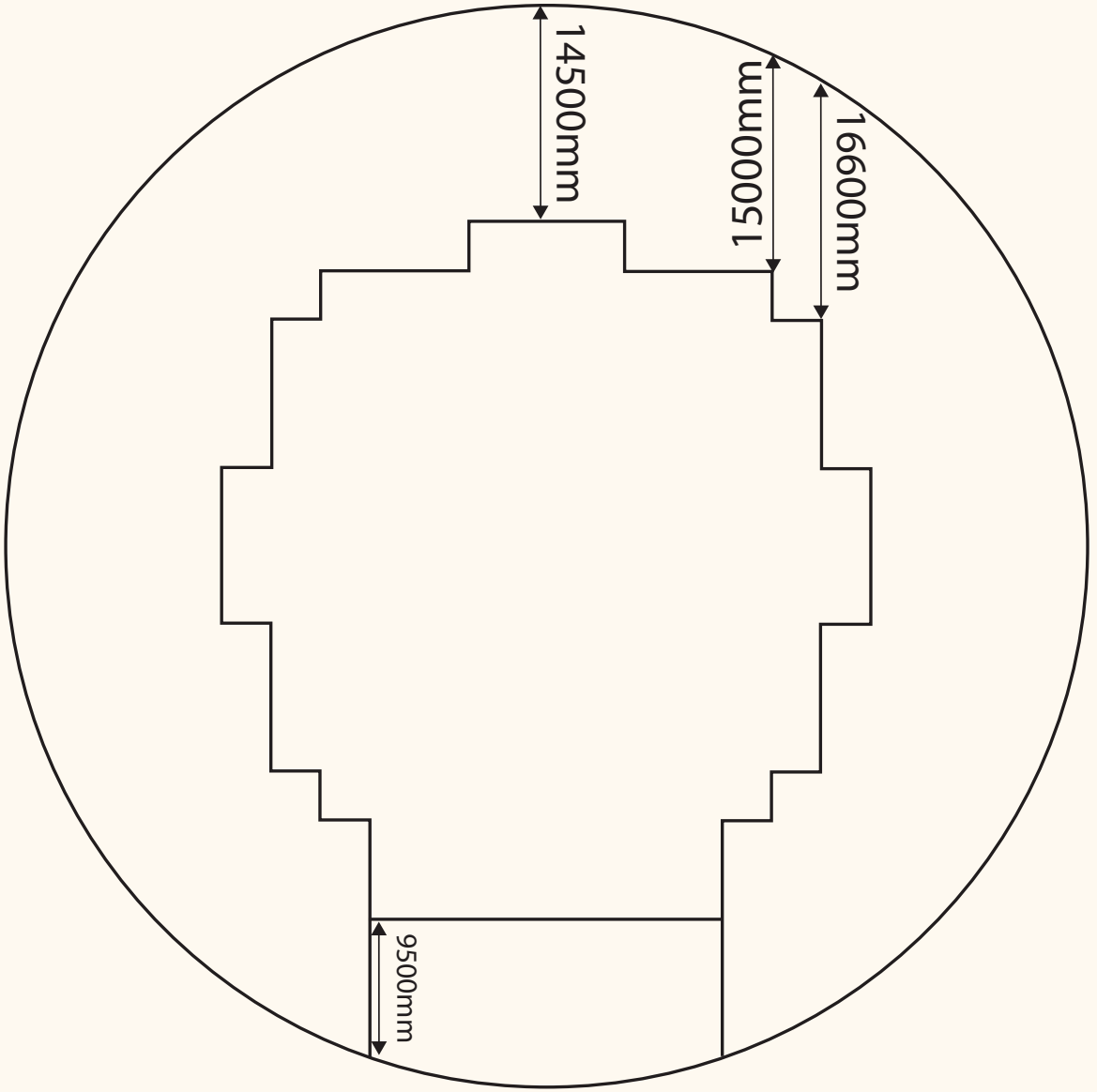
Designated space

The experience takes place in this zone on the periphery of the central assembly area, and is spread out over 2700 square meters of space. The first step in this stage is to start understanding the dimensions and creating zones accordingly.

As mentioned previously, the creation of zones/sections is determined by the categorisation made in the narrative structure of the experience.

However, there was another level of nuance that had to be considered in this process; i.e the standardised dimensions for pathways, viewing distances, walking space etc. that exists in museum spaces.

As such, a new level of challenge was introduced wherein the conceptual structures of the experience would now also have to fit in with realistic limitations of the zones.

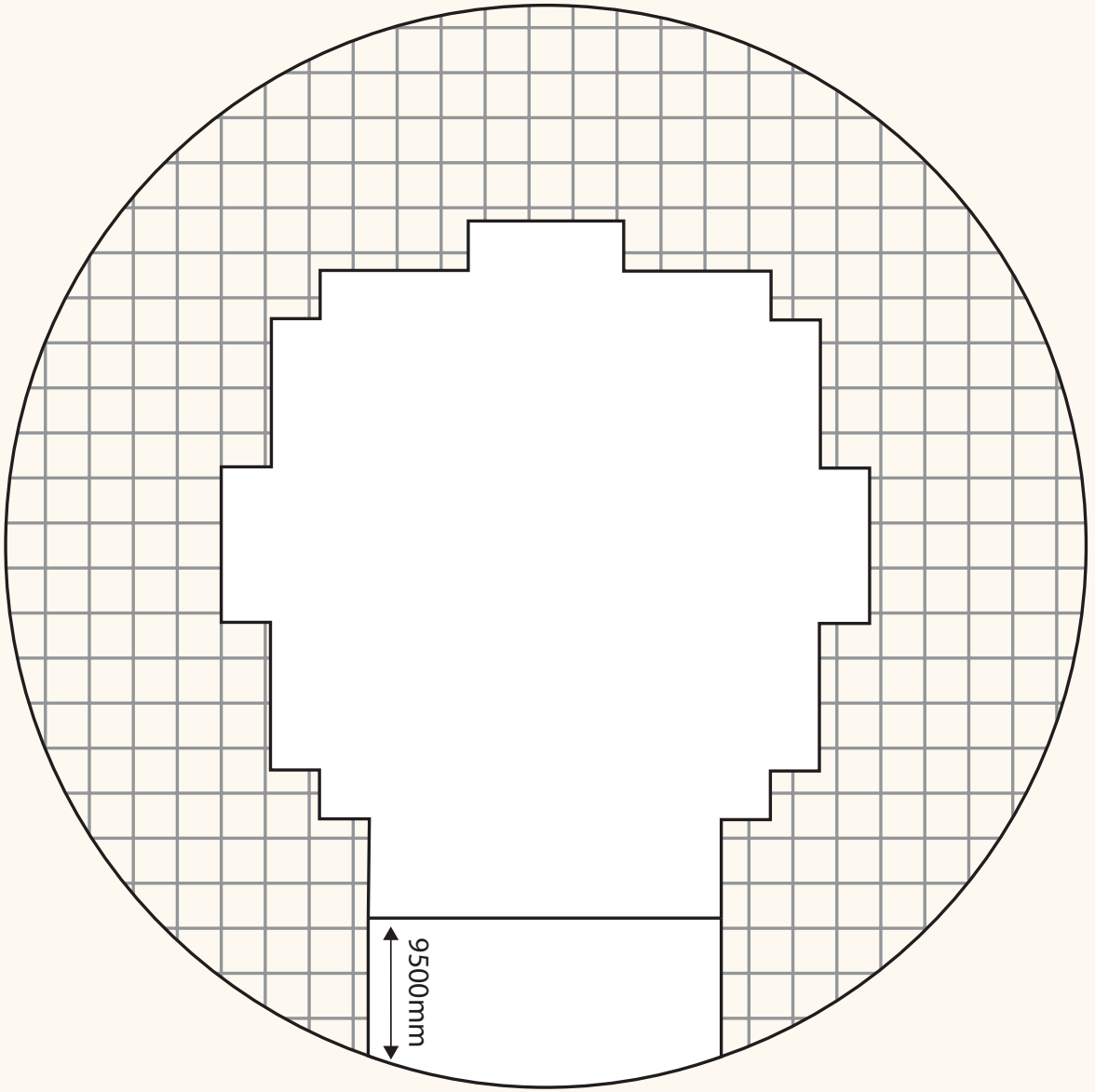


Zoning Layouts

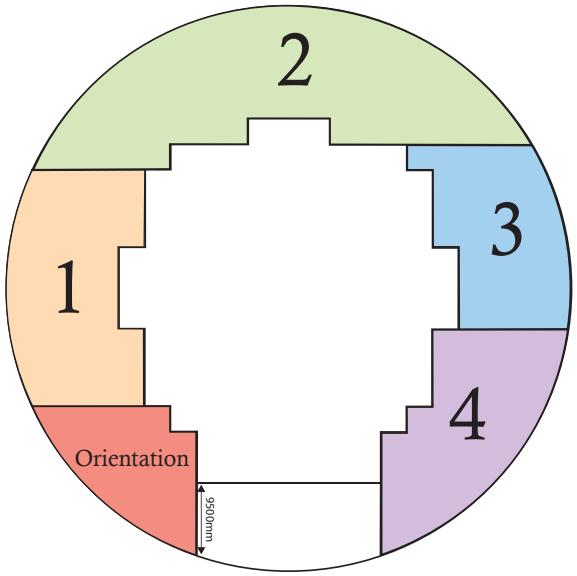
Zoning by Dimension

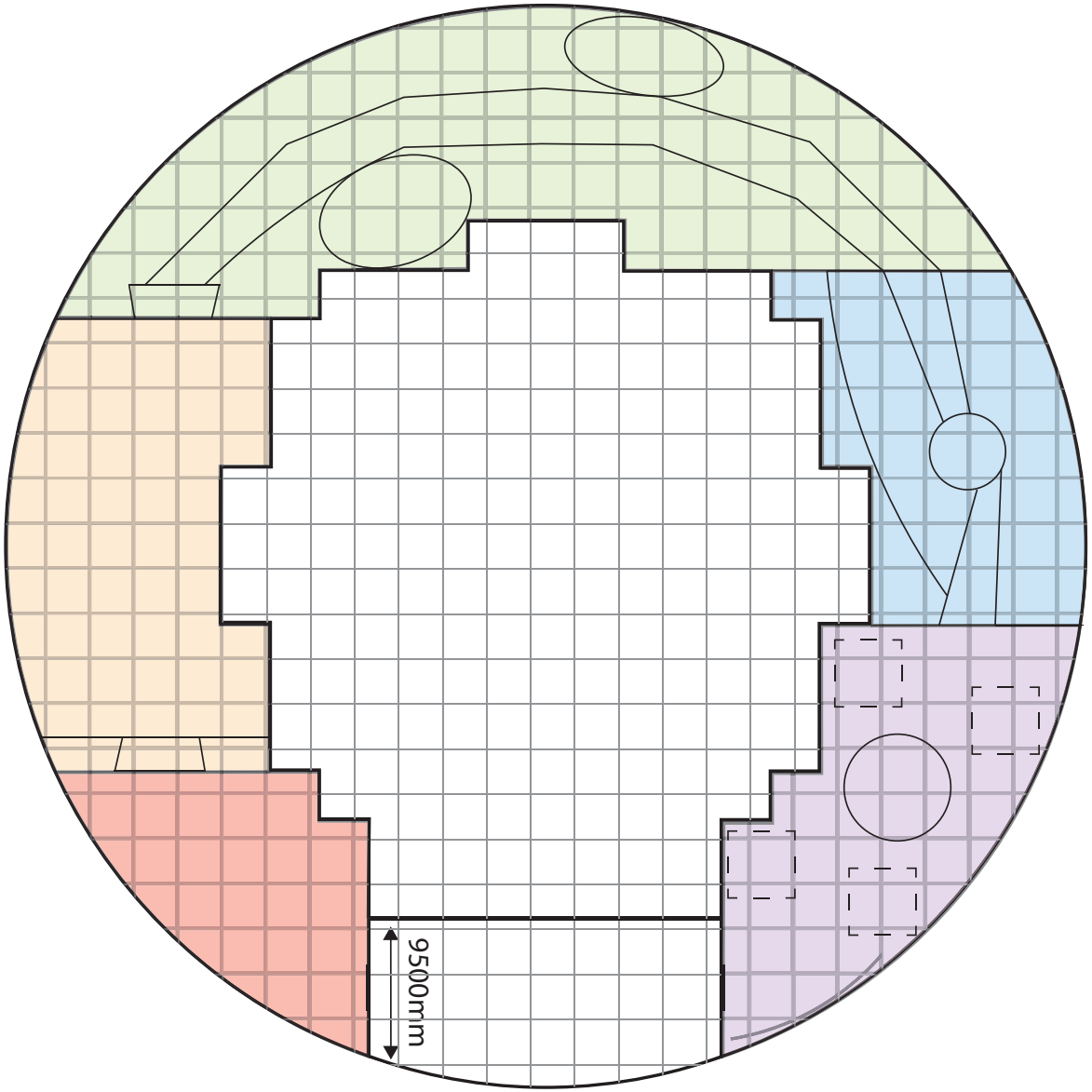
Breaking down the designated space on a scale grid is done to start mapping out sections accurately.

Grid Scale: 1:3



Zoning Layouts





Scale: 1:3

Communication Strategy

Defining modes

Now that the zones have been allocated within the space, it is time to start giving form to the various modes of communication between the space and the viewer. In this project, there are broadly three levels of communication.

Type A: Interpersonal communication/interpretation of displays/artifacts.

Type B: Supervision and communication of instructions through a “guide”.

Type C: Overarching companion narrator for each section in the experience.

While the first level of communication is self-explanatory, the following levels need to be expanded upon and given a tangible framework to follow. This will provide clarity on how information reaches the audience, and in what format/order.

Communication Strategy

Framework for guide functions

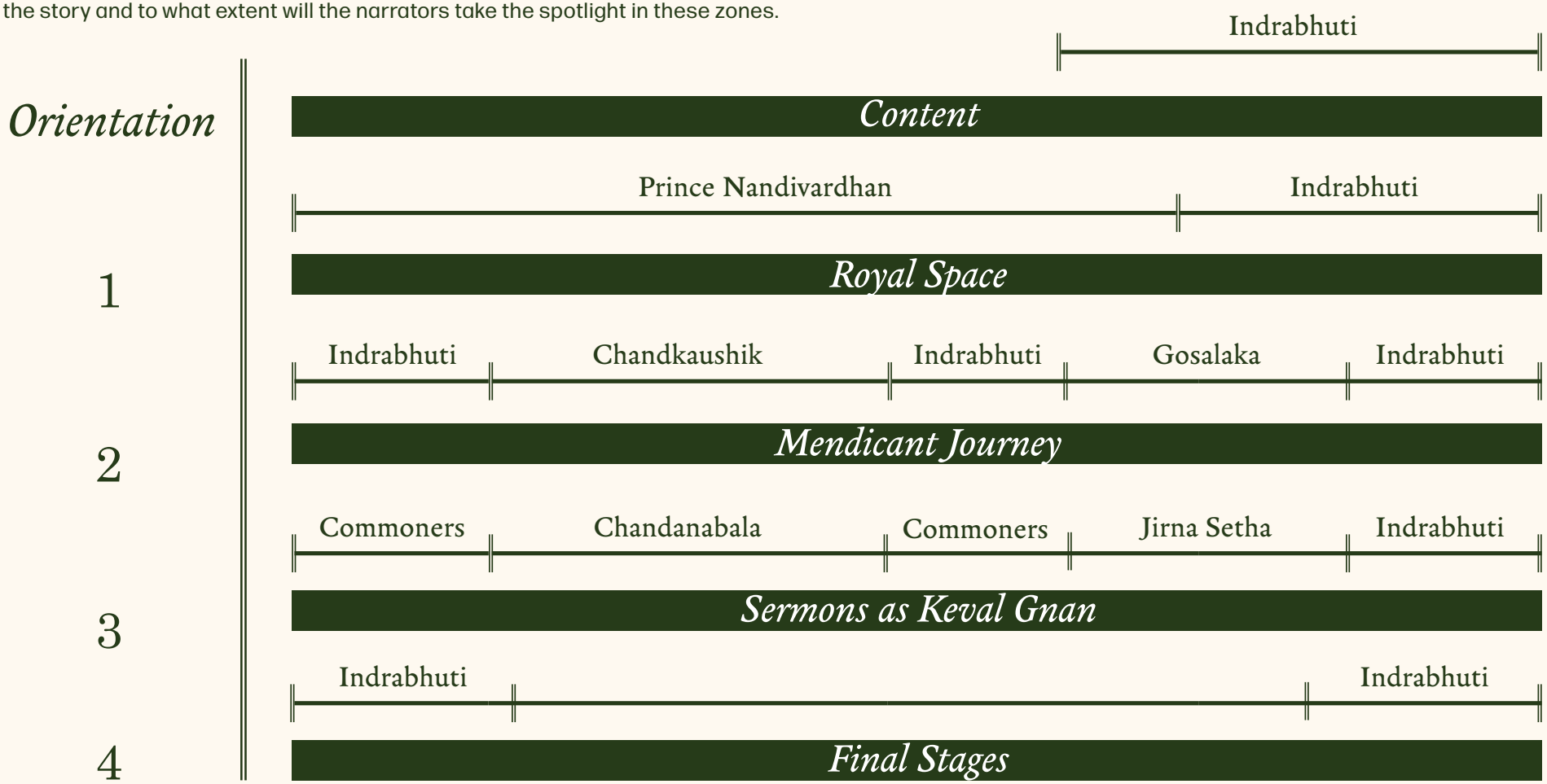
The intended flow of visitors will be done in batches of 12-14 people, who will be led through the space by a guide. The functions of the guide needs to be elaborated upon for each zone, focusing on numerous parameters.

Zone	Key Function	Instructions	Key Concerns	Degree of Interaction	Focus on Time?
Orientation	Overseeing all of the different interactions between viewers and artifacts of the 14 dreams.	Explain the significance of the dreams, function of the artifact, and how to interact with them	Looking after the issues of tampering with the artifact, ensuring all artifacts are visited	Addressing the group as a whole, relaying information on when main experience will start	Focusing on when to let this batch start the journey, and how much time alloted for each of the artifact
1	Guiding the batch through the palace and visiting each set piece within	Explain the context of the palace, brief information on Mahavir's early mannerisms	Ensuring each viewer is within appropriate viewing distance, no stragglers left behind	During narration, only interacting if viewers start to block views/ might tamper with props	Giving appropriate time for each set within the palace
2	Guiding through twisted paths of the zone, while pointing out points of interaction/displays	Passively giving directions to follow, while explaining and pointing towards hero rooms in the zone	Making sure people dont miss out on hero rooms, or interact too closely with set props	Passive in nature, letting people find out content on their own but occasionally prompting to move along the path	Ensuring consistent pace is maintained within the path, and within hero rooms as well
3	Explain the significance of the central icon and its interaction with other artifacts	Indicate space within which to stand, and let narration take over	Making sure the views arent obstructed, hands are within the railing space	Minimal once narration starts, except for addressing the key concerns	Narration will dictate the time, so only focus is on moving to next zone accordingly
4	Overseeing the concluding artifacts of the journey and how viewers interact with them.	Basic instructions on how to interact with the artifacts	Looking after the issues of tampering with the artifact, ensuring all artifacts are visited	Addressing the group as a collective, providing concluding information	Not much focus at the end of the journey, but ensuring the batch leaves all at once.

Communication Strategy

Narrator's input schedule

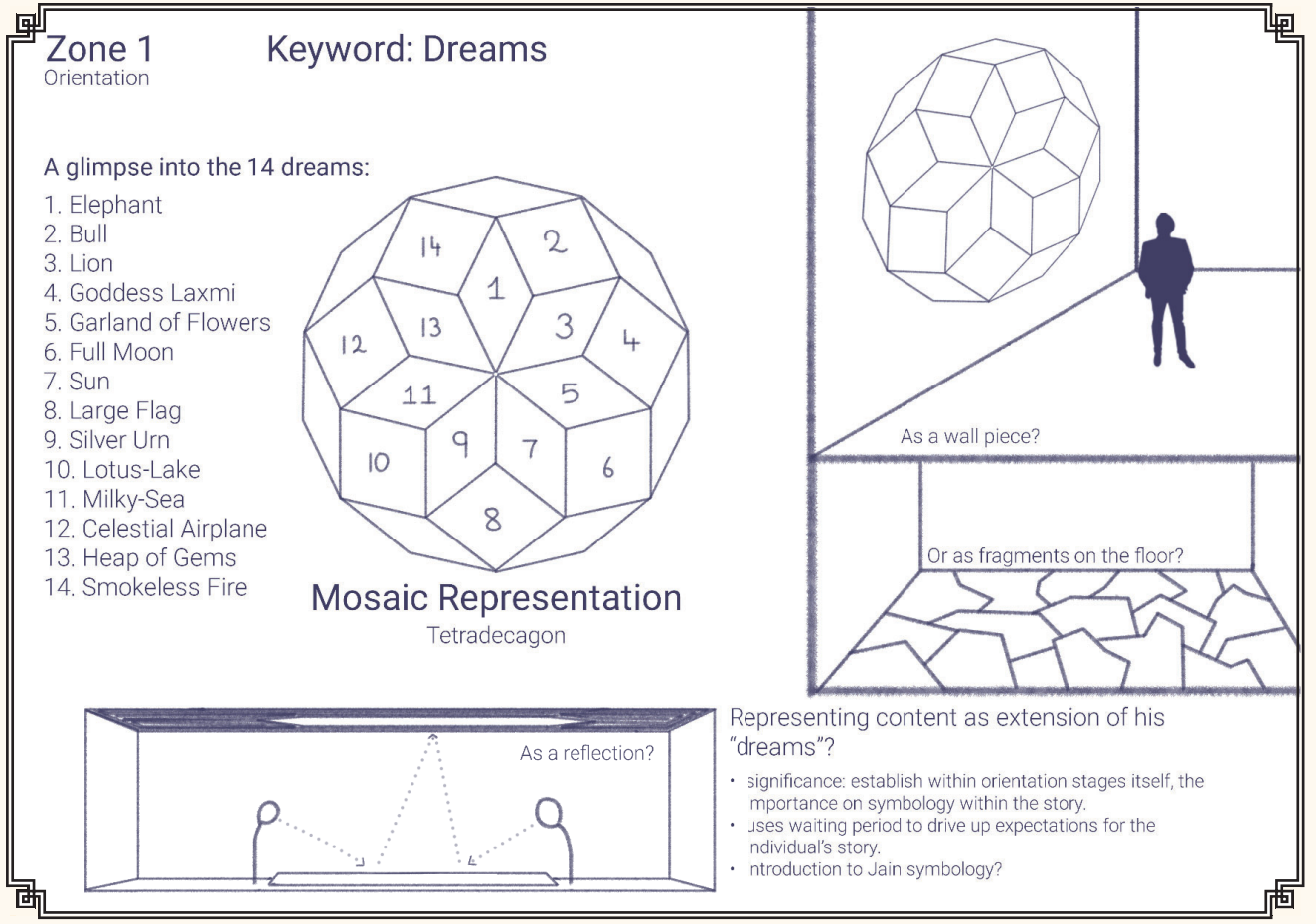
One of the key attraction of this experience is the narration of events by companions from the story itself. Ranging from Indrabhuti to Chandanabala, every key companion mentioned gets to narrate their perspectives and impresssions of Mahavir and his journey. A similar schedule to that of a guide needed to be created, to indicate at what points in the story and to what extent will the narrators take the spotlight in these zones.



Set Direction

Initial Explorations

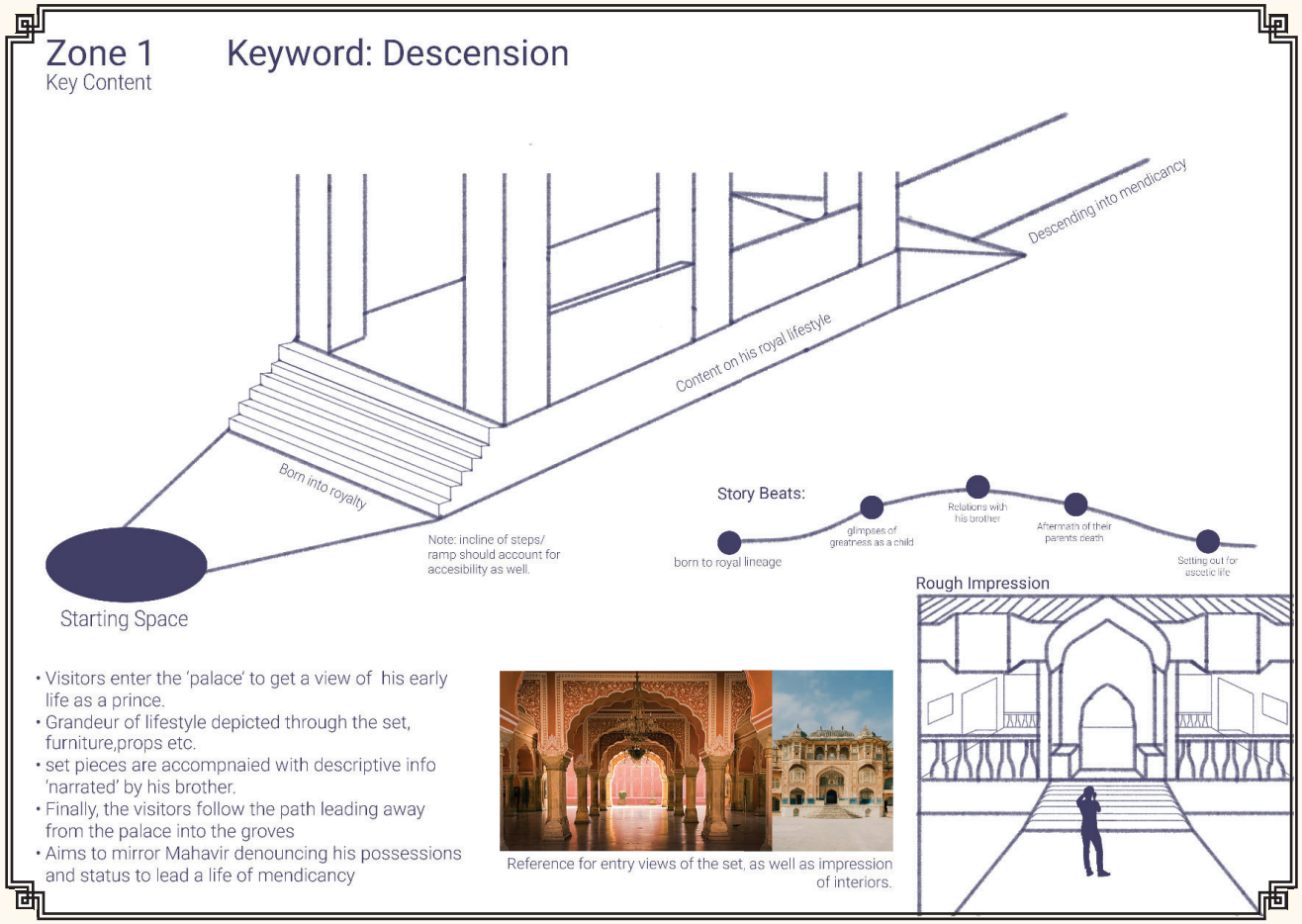
Looking for options on how content can be represented in the various zones was done initially without keeping physical restraint of space in mind. This approach obviously led to some challenges in translating these ideas into the 3d space, but still made for a good framework for what each section is trying to be, and how they will stand apart from each other.



Set Direction

Zone One

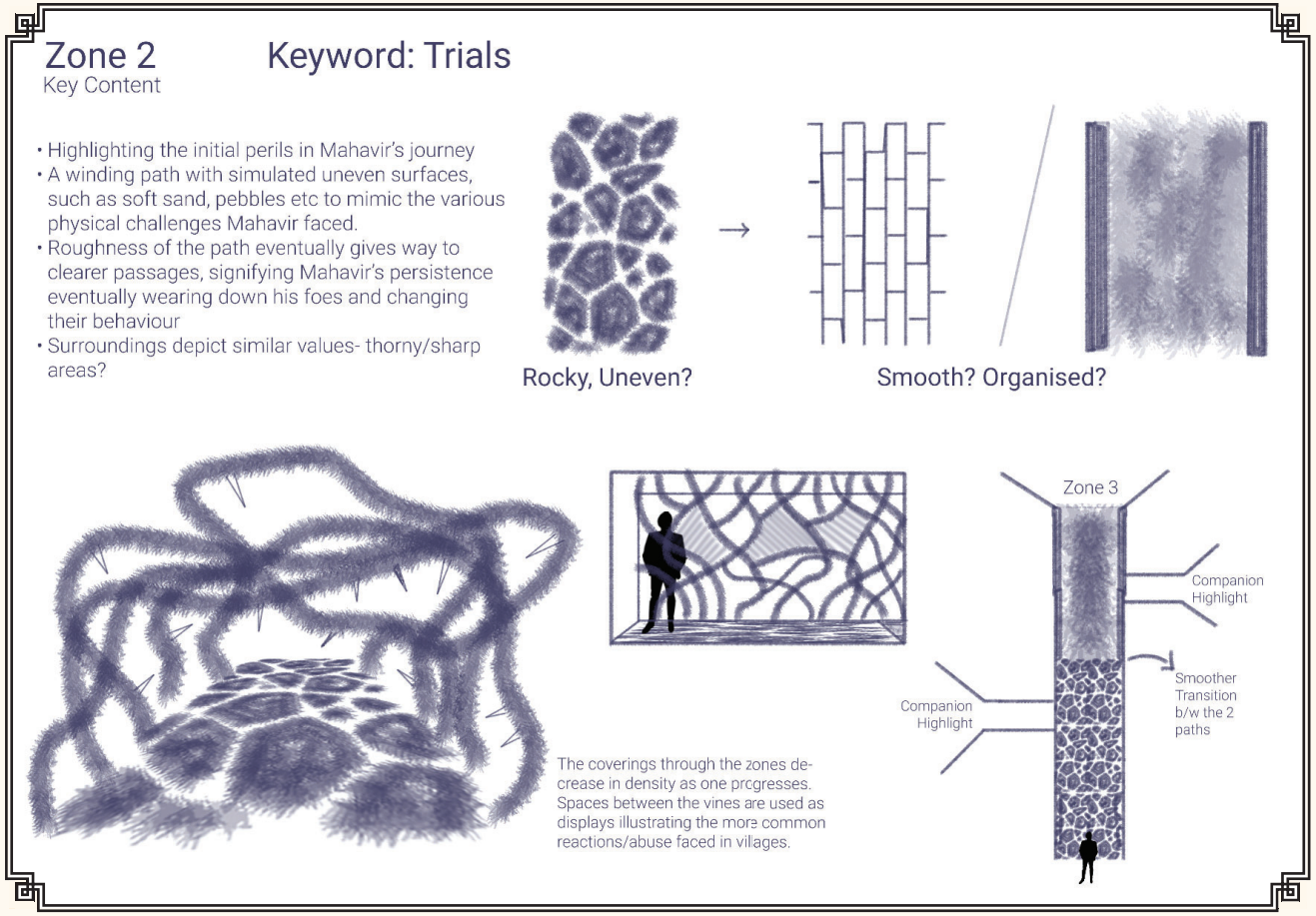
The first zone plays with the idea of Mahavir giving up a life of luxury and comfort, to set out on a journey towards keval gnan. The act of ascension and descension would be physically represented in the movement itself, as the main content is at an elevated height.



Set Direction

Zone Two

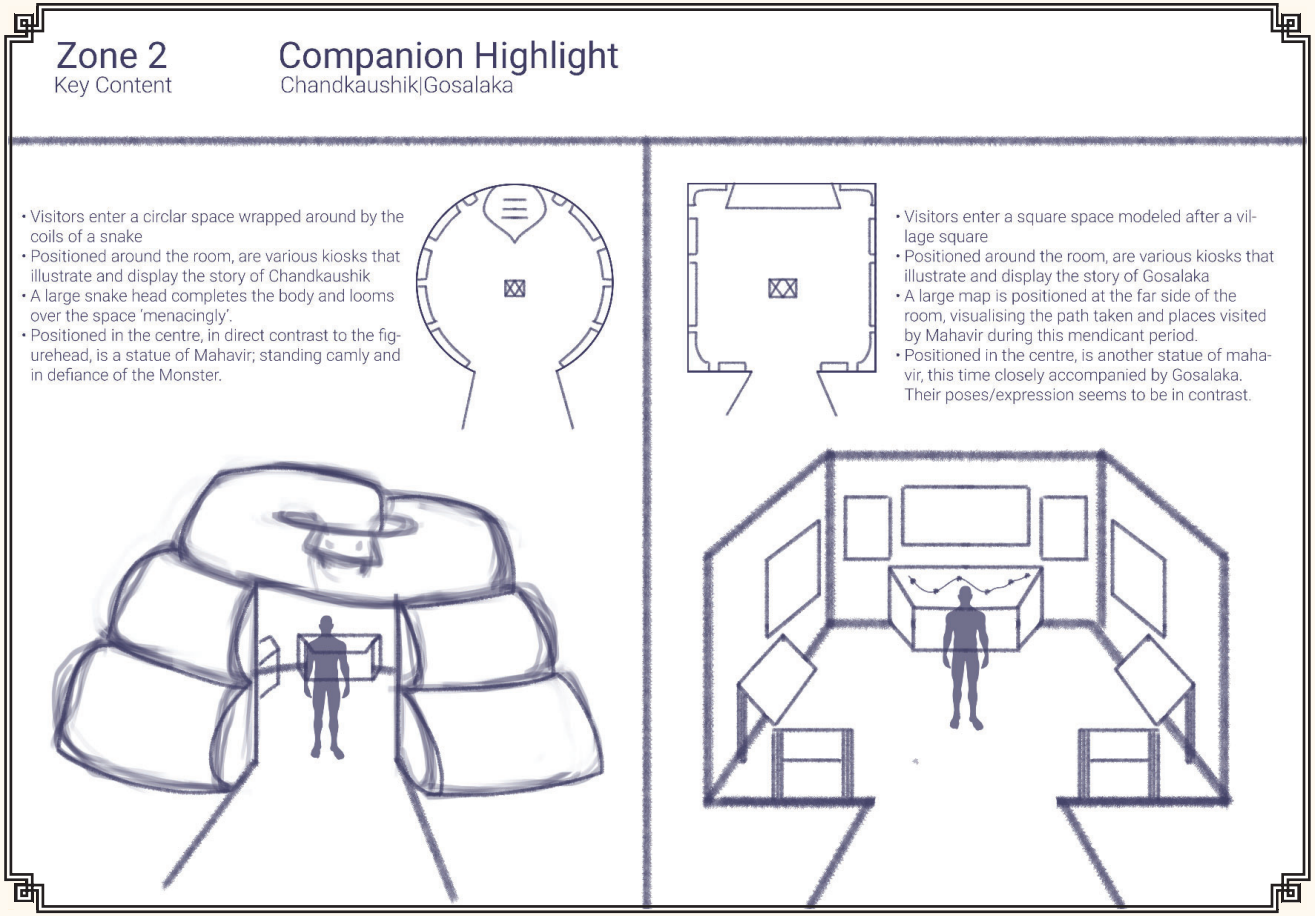
zone two would be simulating the perils on the mendicant journey of Mahavir, both in terms of stories shown and the material treatment of the space. This would then be contrasted by moving into a more civilised path, indicating his journeys within towns and cities.



Set Direction

Zone Two- Hero Rooms

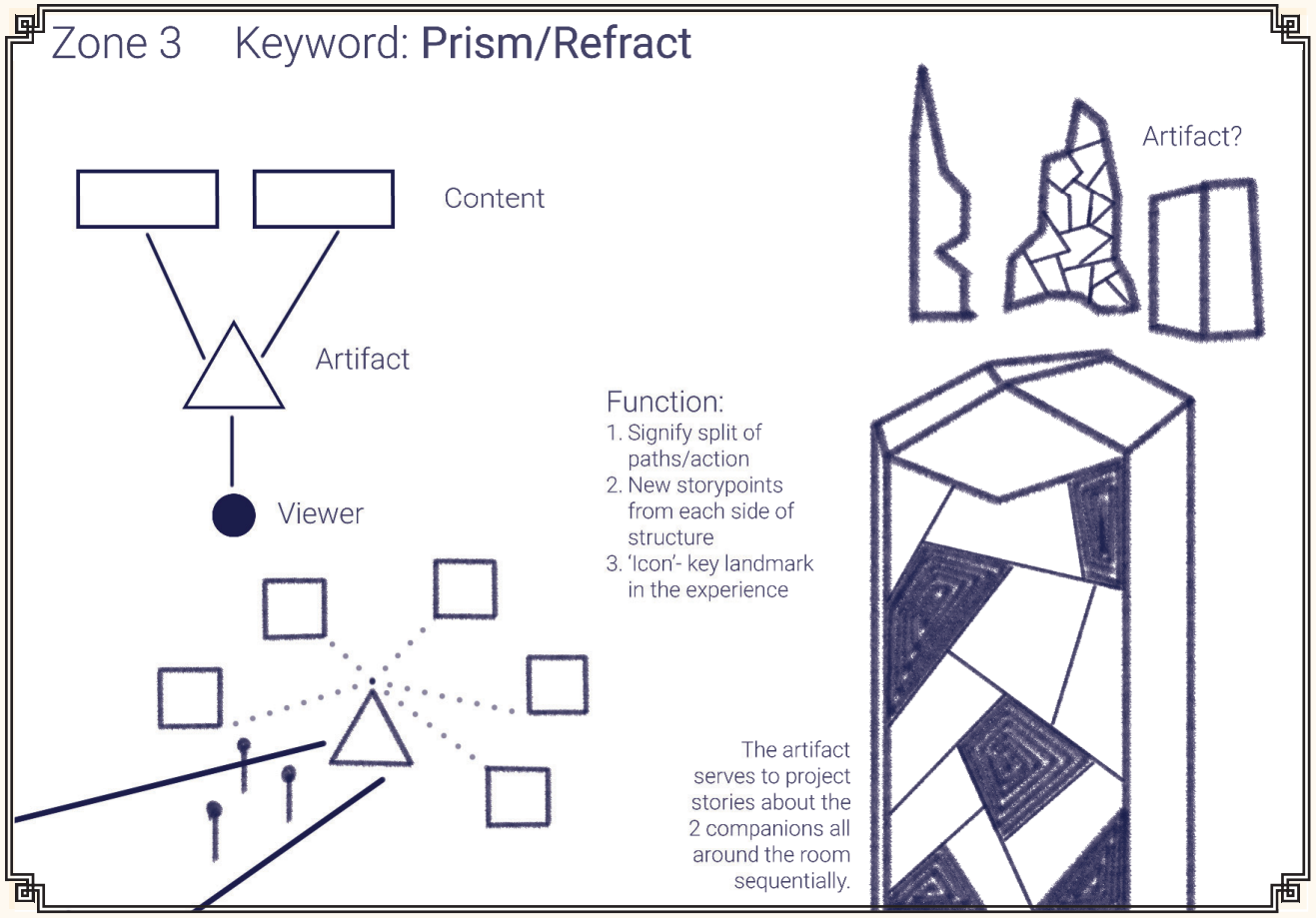
this zone also had the additional aspect of hero rooms, spaces that focused on the story of two key companion. each room would visually match the the path it is on, but still be distinct from the rest of the zone.



Set Direction

Zone Three

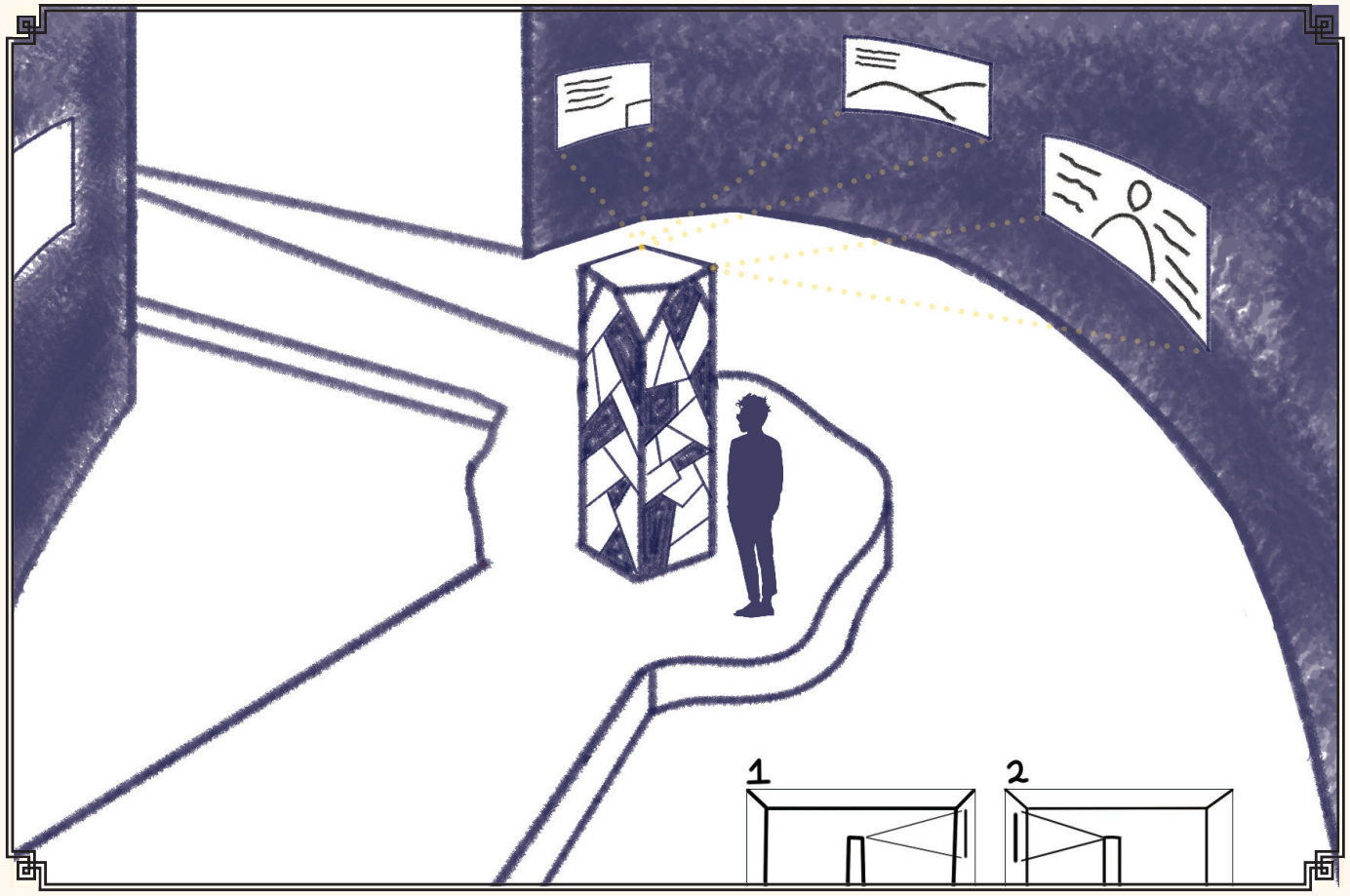
They key point of focus in zone 3 would be a central landmark, metaphorically representing Mahavir himself. The landmark would act as a focal point of conversations with cityfolk and commoners, who would be depicted in miniature cityscapes.



Set Direction

Zone Three

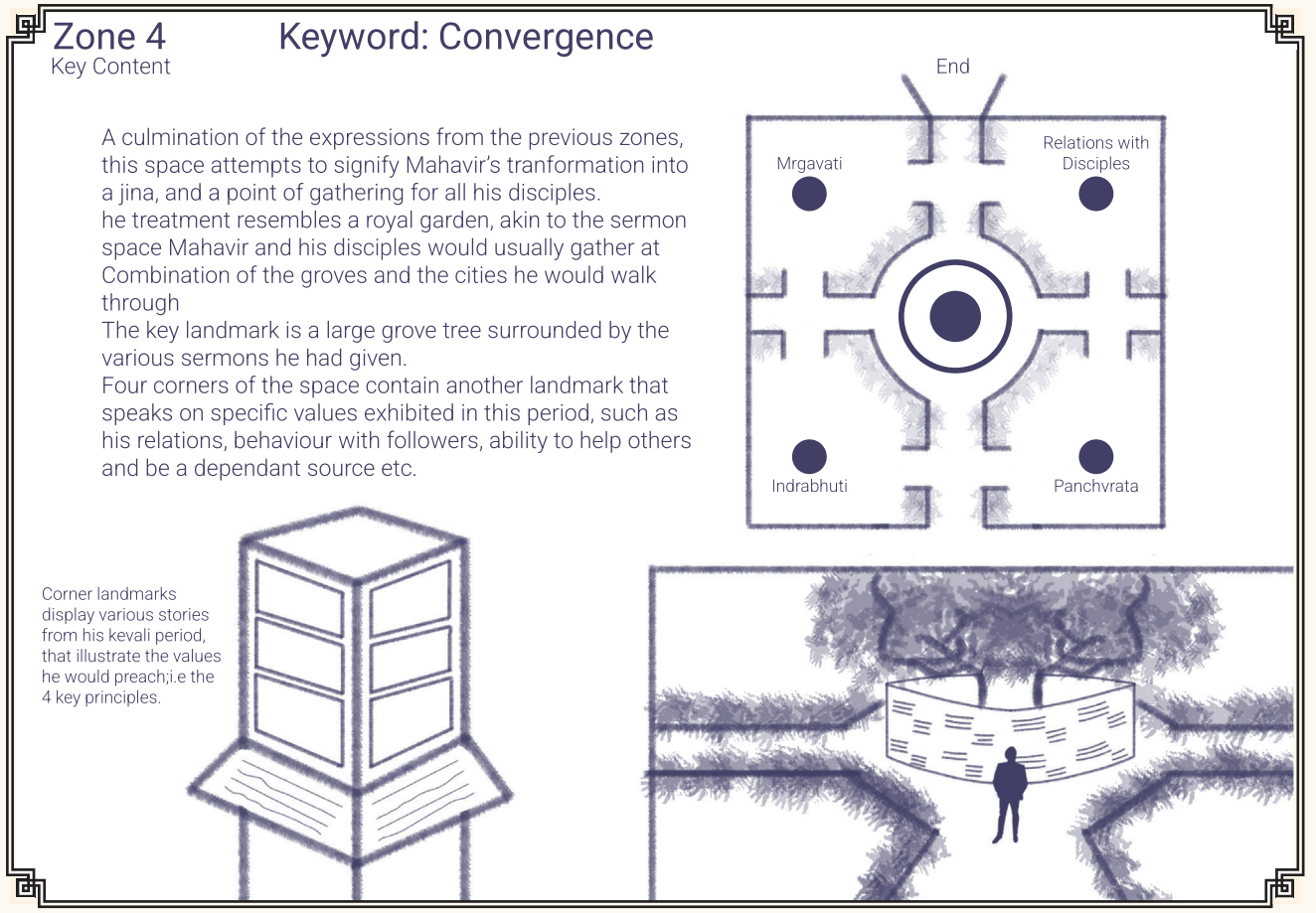
The entire space could work with projection and light fixture to show motion in communication, along with depicting a traditional scene of gurus seated on raised platforms and giving sermons.



Set Direction

Zone Four

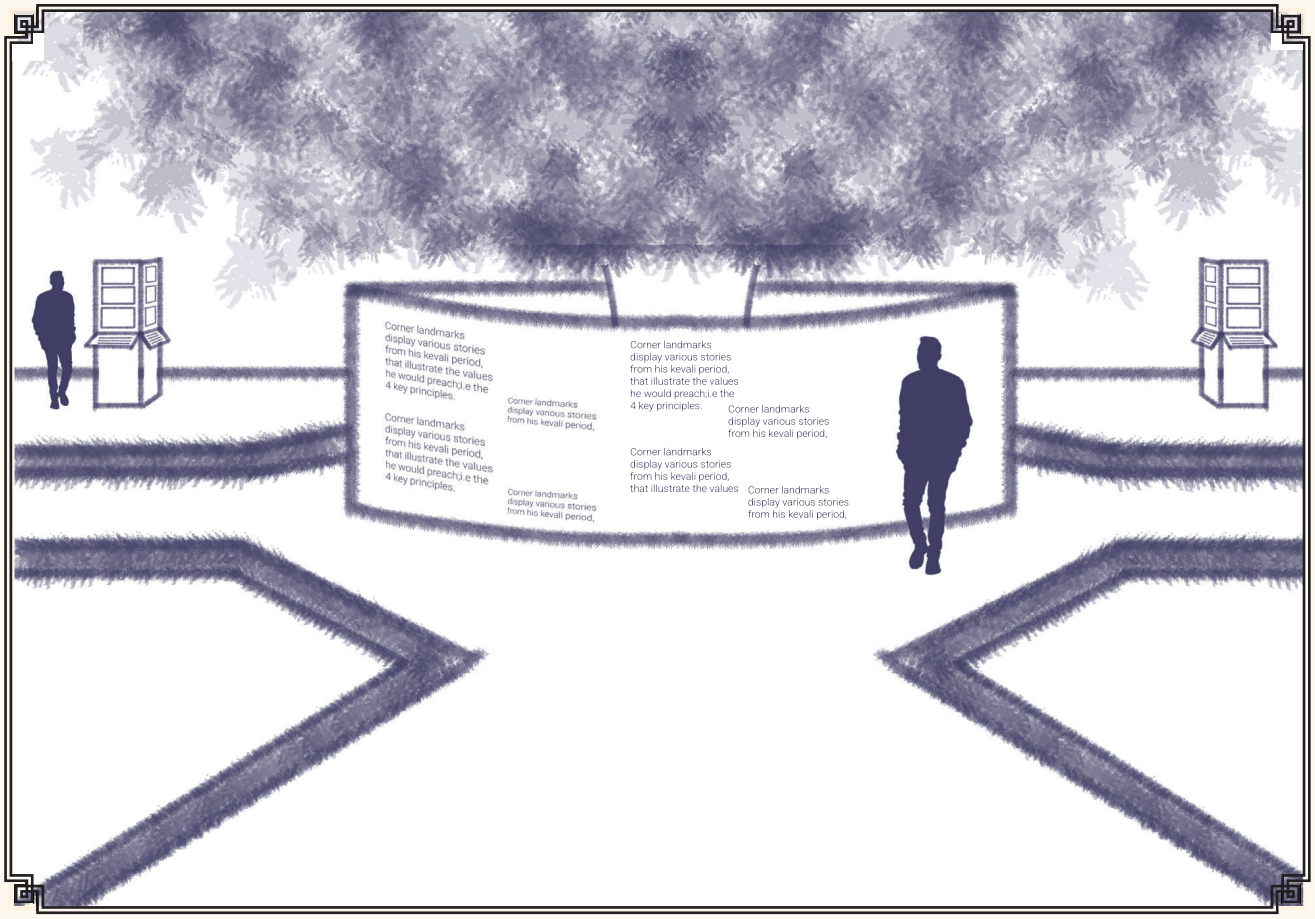
This zone would change the most drastically in the end product comapred to the rest, but the core concept remained the same- comapnions and key figures leave behind their stories on obelisks as they pass onto the celestial space. the central area would denote the same function for Mahavir, except his stories would be documented in the form of conversations between him and Indrabhuti.



Set Direction

Zone Four

Earlier concepts envisioned this space as a royal garden, but this became an example of how it doesnt translate to the real space too well. This is mainly due to the fact that the zone has an irregular shape, and so the symmetry of a royal garden would be lost.



Key Changes

Addressing changes in story framework

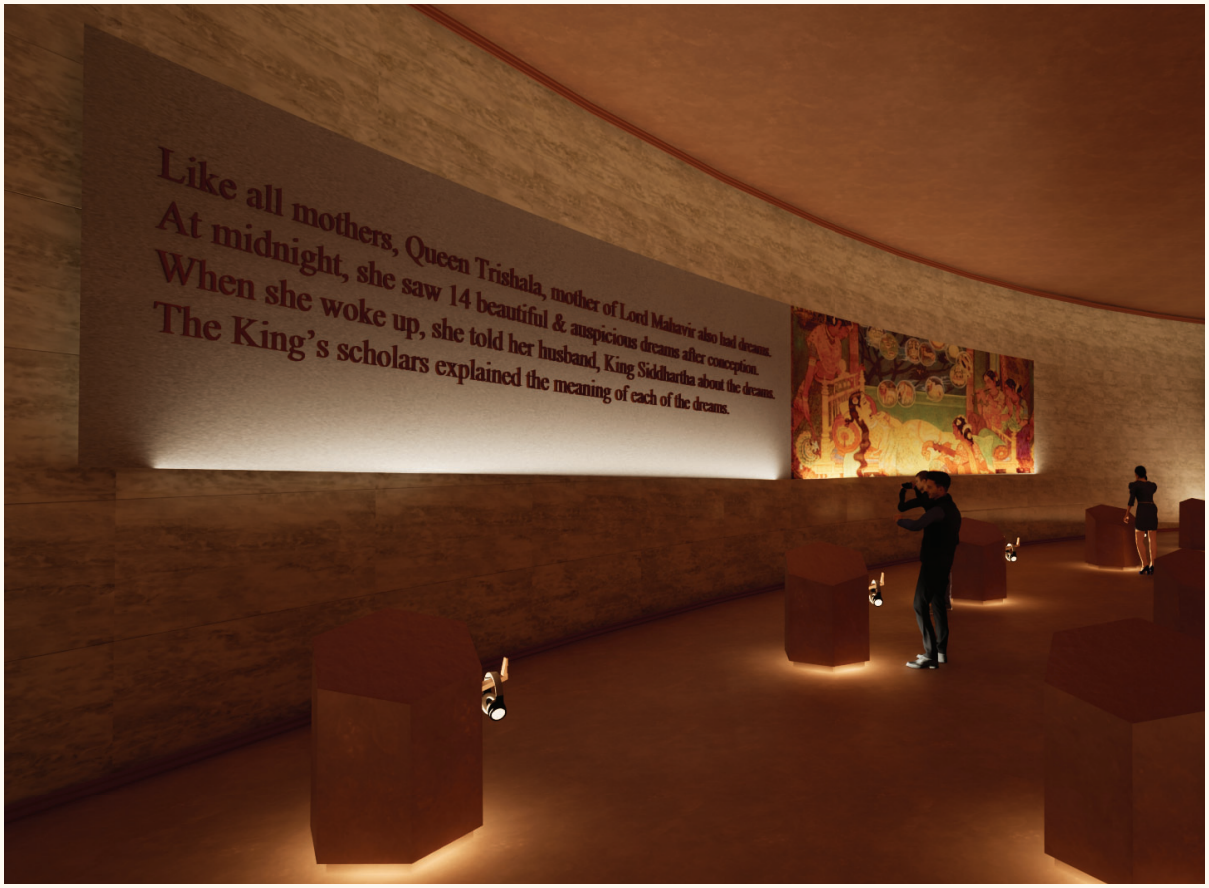
Before moving on to the final visualisation, there were a new conclusive set of considerations that arose after the conceptual spaces.

The first concern is the possibility of comapnion stories overshadowing Mahavir himself. with a lot of the representation being focused around the perspective of the comapions, it was important to strike the correct balance in who gets the spotlight and for how long. Thus changes would have to be made to ensure Mahavir still emains the primary focus of the experience.

The second concern comes in the form of a lack of established communication systems, both within and across zones. A process similar to the narrative matrix would have to be taken to create stategies for how certain modes of communication work, such as the roles of a guide for batches and schedule for narrators in each space. This would help bring clarity on how exactly information is being conveyed.


Representation
Key Detail
Key Considerations
VISUALISATION

Orientation- Representation



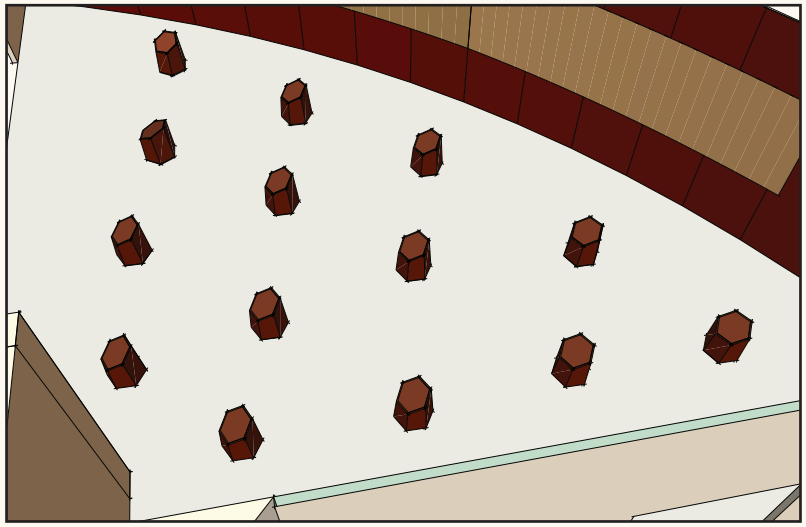




Insight into the 14 dreams

The birth of Mahavir had been prophesied to his mother in the form of dreams containing 14 sacred icons of Jain symbology. The orientation space uses this event as an intorduction to the character, showing how he was destined for greatness since before birth. Each icon refers to one trait of Mahavir, and has been presented in the form of 14 “dream obelisks” scattered round the space. Viewers understand the context through the large artwork in the room, and proceed to interact with each obelisk to learn about its significance. The batch spends time here until the nararator’s voice prompts to start the main experience.

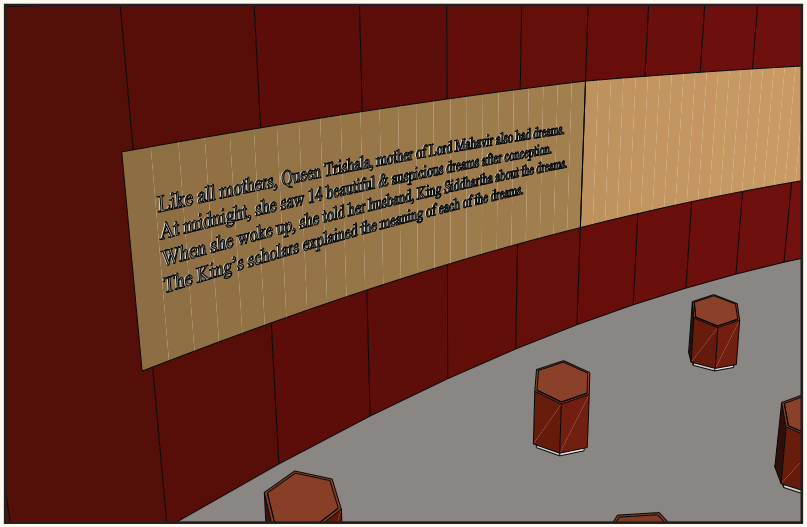
Orientation- Key Details



Aerial view of how the obelisks are arranged within the space.



The space is softly illuminated from the ground up, to give an impression of a dreamy, floaty atmosphere



The large artwork within the space is supported with introductory text that explains the event, but also serves as an intro to Mahavir himself.



Material treatment of the space is such that all walls (except for the plauque bearing one) seem to blend into each other.

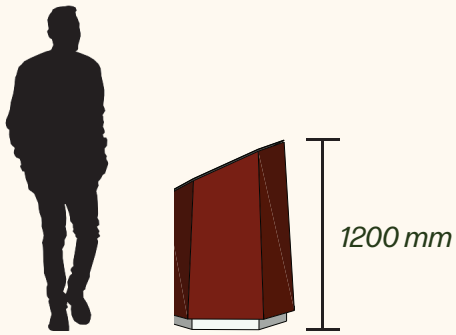
Orientation- Key Details

Dream Obelisks

The main attraction of this space, these obelisks serve the role of a visual icon as well as a source of information on the topic of Jain symbology.

Communication is carried out through two different mediums. While the top face will work as a plaque with artwork and textual information, it is also supplemented by audio through headphones that speak about the icons in detail.

Similar to the treatment done for the walls of this zone, the obelisks is softly illuminated from the bottom in a manner that gives the impression of a levitating object. This is all done in a attempt to match the dreamy perceptions asociated with this story, while still maintaining a similar style with the overall visual language.





Zone One- Representation







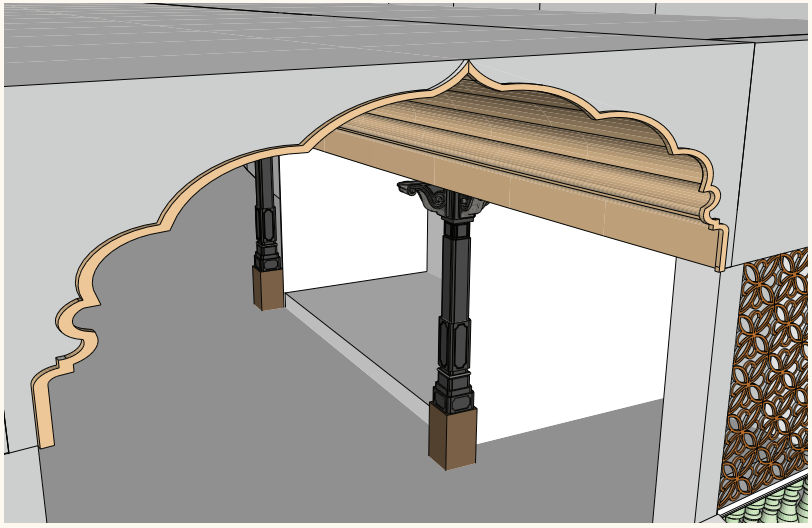
Insight into early life

A winding path takes our viewer throgh key points in Mahavir's early life as Prince Vardhaman, as narrated by his brother Prince Nandivardhan. The space contains numerous smaller sets pieces that have a story connected to them, or are used to conver general impressions. For example, the first site is that of Mahavir in his cradle, and how everyone from royalty to commoners alike reacted to his birth. This portion of the journey ends with the death of their parents, and Mahavir's decision to leave his family for a life of mendicancy.

Zone One- Key Detail



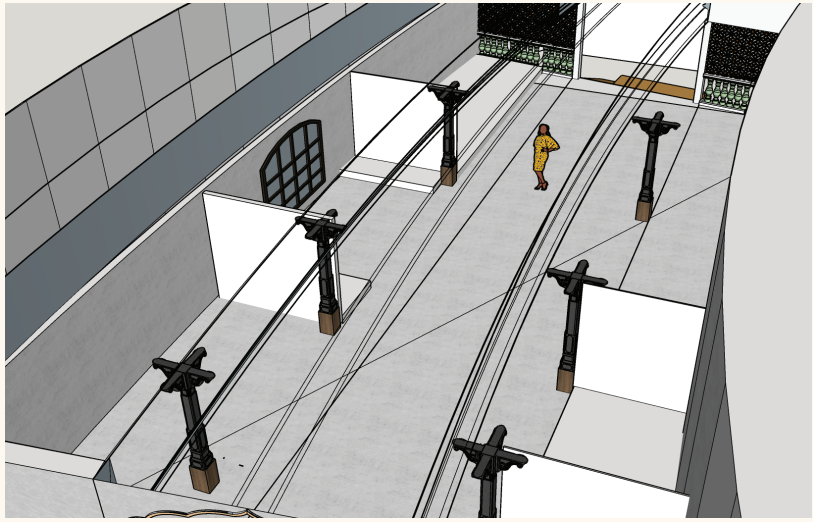
Viewers are escorted through replica sets from Mahavir's life through the use of spoitlights and narrator/guide instructions.



The curving arch is one of the key identifiers of the space, whose curvature also serves as a gentle guide for which direction to follow.



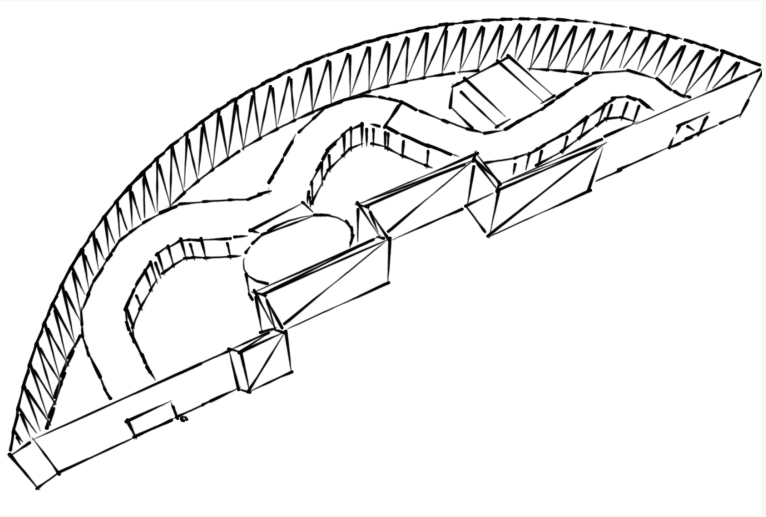
Another mode of display is through projection of stories. Here, Mahavir's actions as a child are projected to appear as being seen from a window.



Material treatment of the space is such that all walls (except for the plauque bearing one) seem to blend into each other.

Zone Two- Representation







Trials in the mendicant journey

This section takes the viewer through a long and curving pathway that mimics the travels of Mahavir through the various jungles, towns and villages during his mendicant phase. The walk also leads to 2 hero rooms, each documenting the stories of Chandkaushik and Gosalaka. Through a combination of dense foliage and uncertainty about what lies ahead in the path, the experience attempts to instill feelings of constraint and doubt, but uses Mahavir as inspiration for keeping on moving forward.

Zone Two- Key Detail



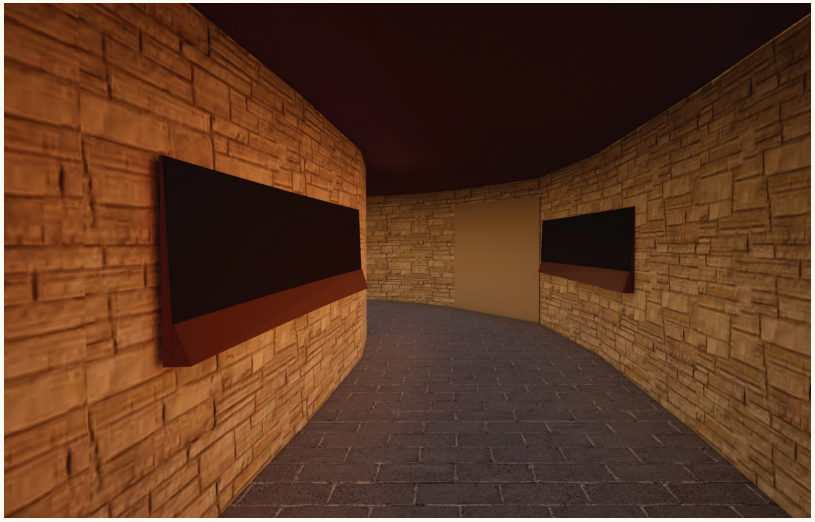
primary methods of communication are through touchscreen video displays and larger infrographic artworks, coupled with the zone narration.



New spaces are zoned off by large curtains, similar to traditional stand-ins for doors in houses. It also acts as a visual barrier for the city section.



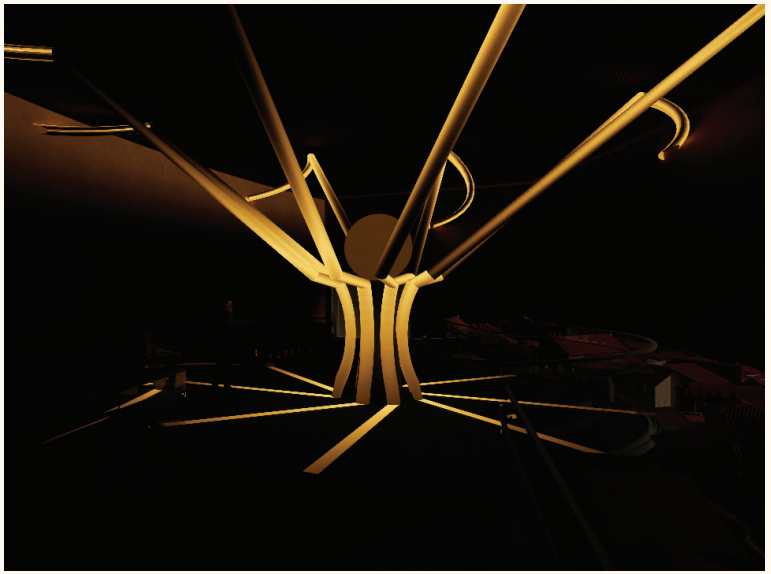
The hero rooms serve as isolated spaces for the companion story, and visually represented by referencing the characters themselves.

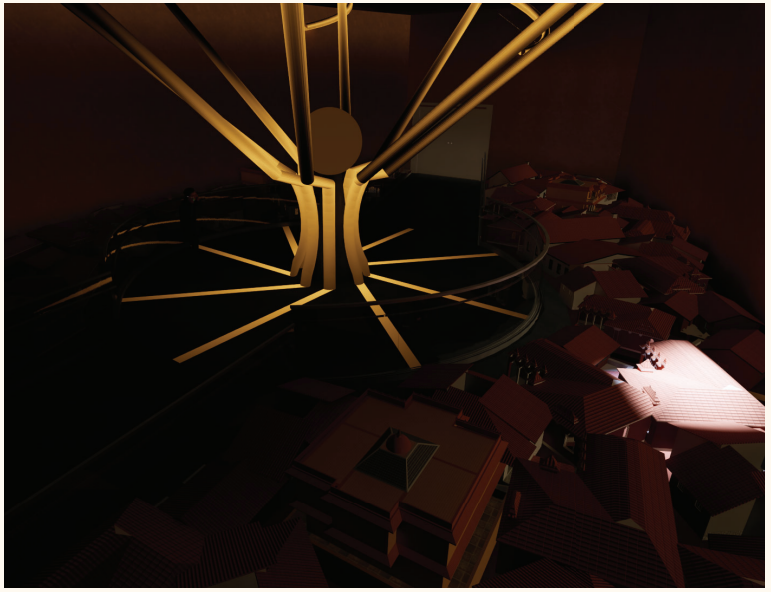


The city section follows the same display methods, but is visually represented in a manner that contrasts the previous jungle sections.

Zone Three- Representation



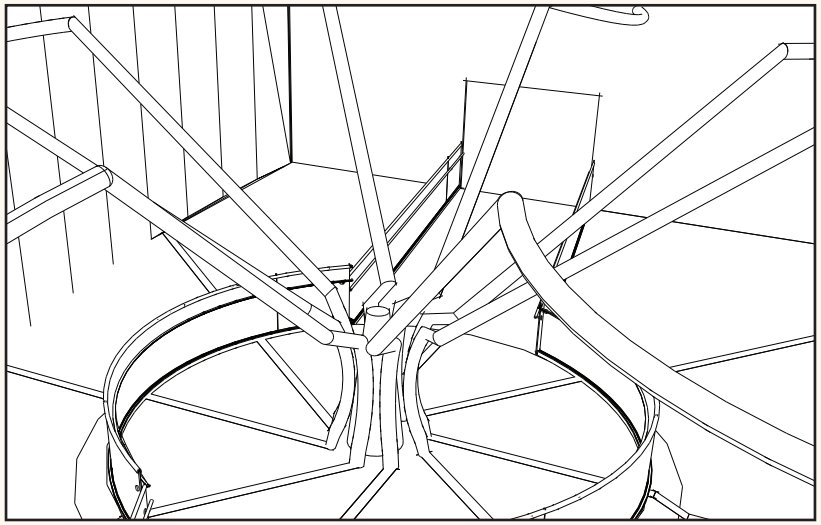




The role of the Keval Gnan

Regardless of the city, the arrival of Mahavir always drew great crowds to his sermons. This space attempts to capture his presence as the focal point of discussions related to his Jain philosophy. Visitors gather in the center of room, surrounded by a miniature replica of an indian city; with a large light-emitting structure in the middle of the platform. It simulates the action of people asking Mahavir question/guidance towards various topics, and how his responses would reach out to everyone in the crowd. It is in this space that the role of the narrator becomes most crucial.

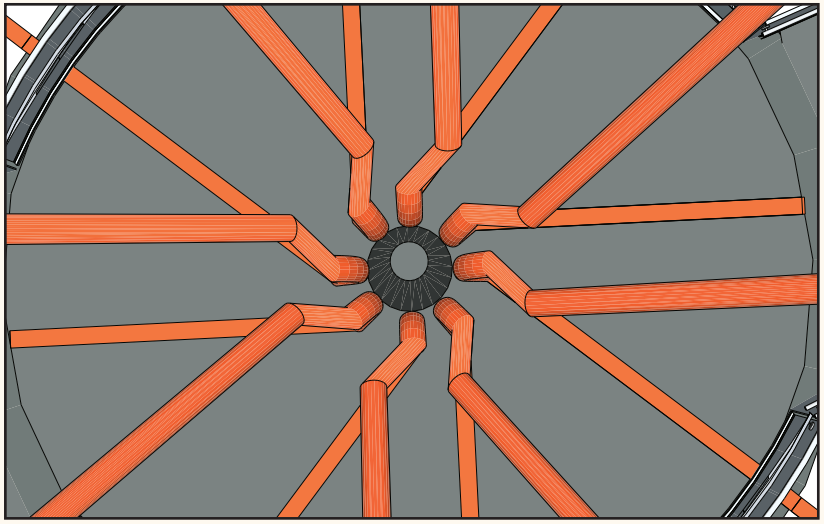
Zone Three- Key Detail



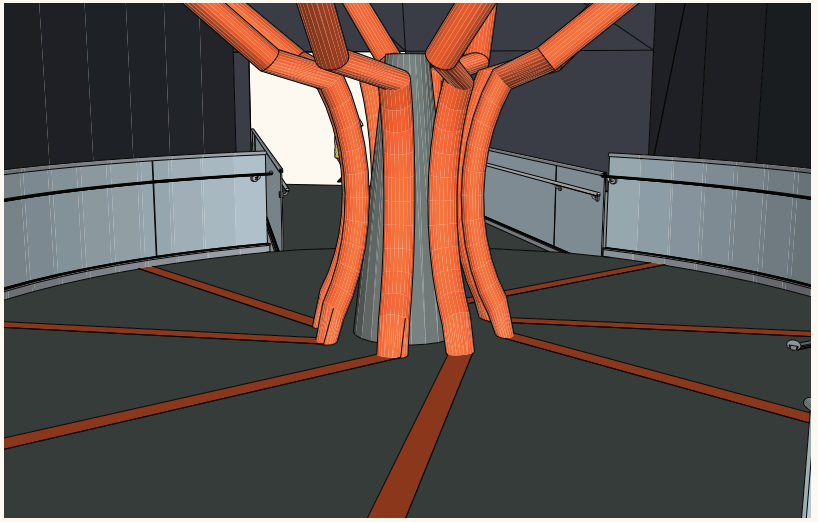
The form of the platform mimics the feeling of being under a banyan tree attending sermons, with Mahavir represented by the central form.



The use of spotlights is essential in this space, for directing the viewer's attention to the source of narration/conversation.



The Primary relation of the icon is to that of a banyan tree, & also mimicking the form of rays of the sun; another symbol associated with Mahavir.



The "roots" of the banyan tree also serve as an indicator for how Mahavir's teachings reache dout towards all directions possible.

Zone Three- Key Detail

Narration Sequence

Zone three uses a combination of lighting with narrators to simulate conversations between Mahavir and his attendee. It follows a simple question-answer format that provides insight into key philosophies and stories, such as that of Chandanabala and Jirna Setha. The working of the sequence is as follows:

A track light system, operated by the guide, illuminates a single house within the space. This prop is also the source of a narrator, who appears to be asking a question to Mahavir.

1



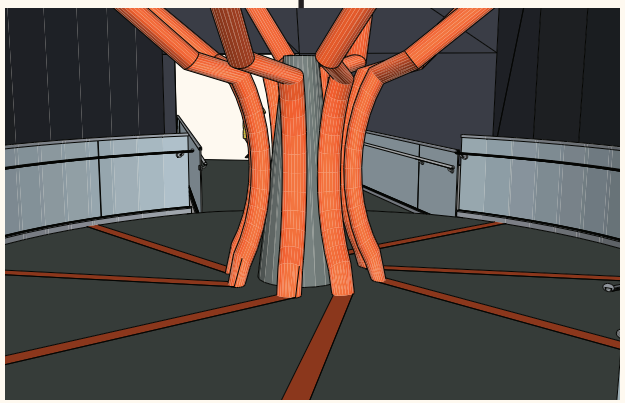
The recieval and response to questions is shown once again as as a combination Mahavir's narration, combined with the pulsating lights of the tree structure that blink in sync with the narration. This is done to give the impression that the central structure is Mahavir himself, conversing in gardens and groves.

2

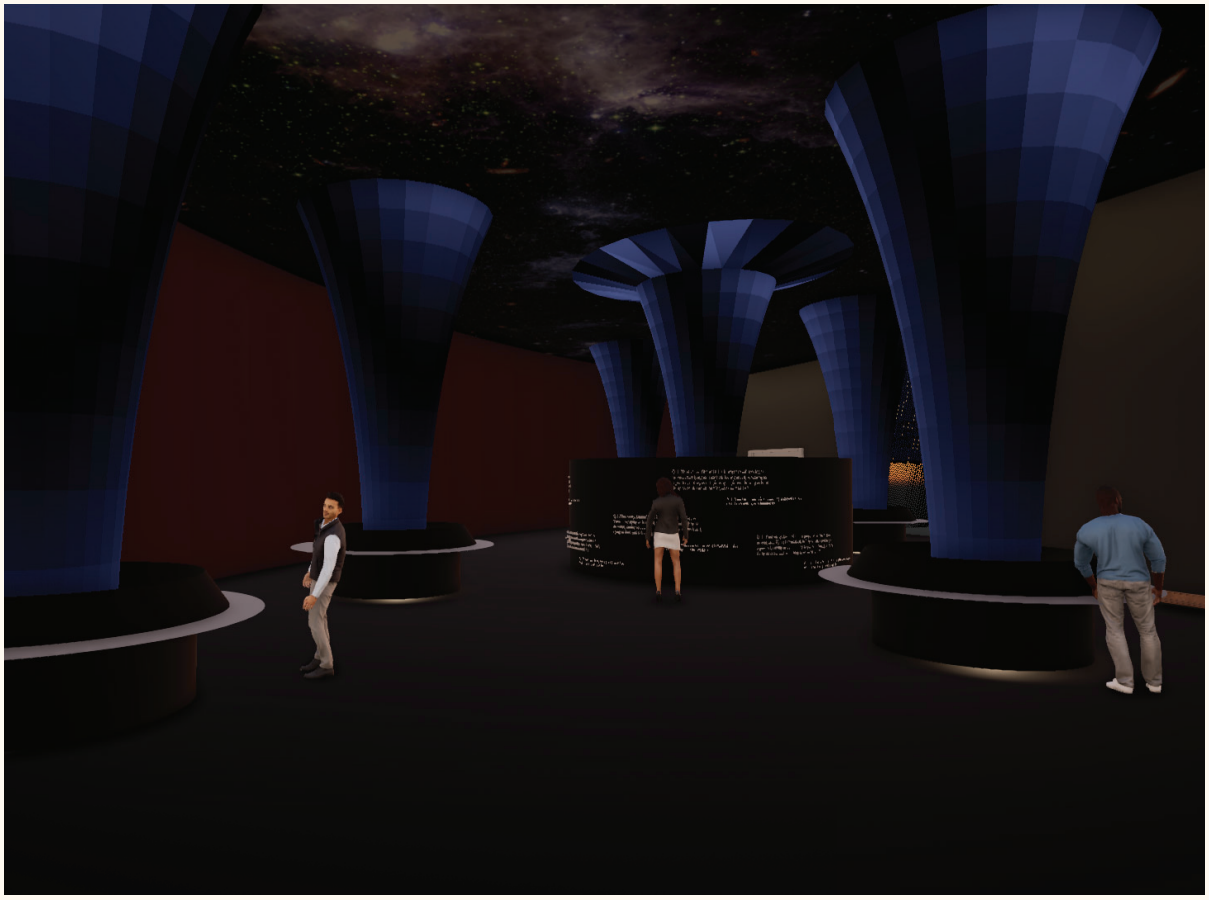


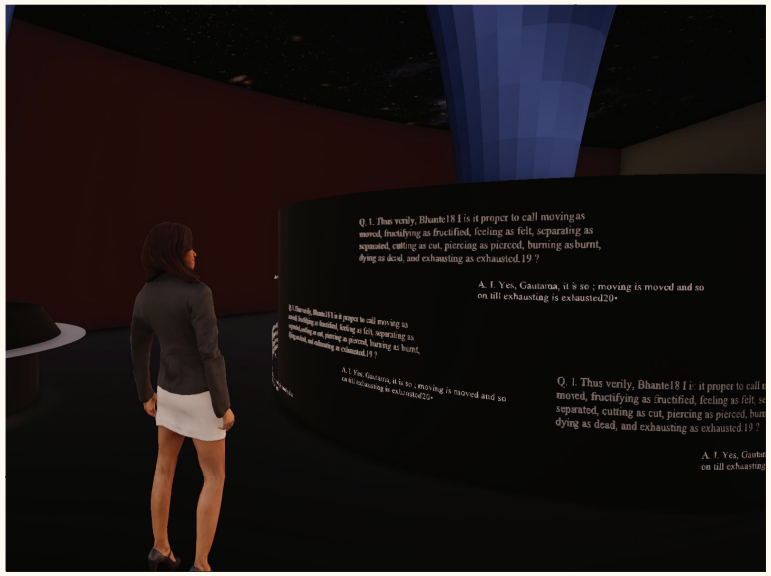
The light strips running along the platform and over the viewer's heads also pulsate light outwards towards the house, in an attempt to show information visually reaching all households and individuals.

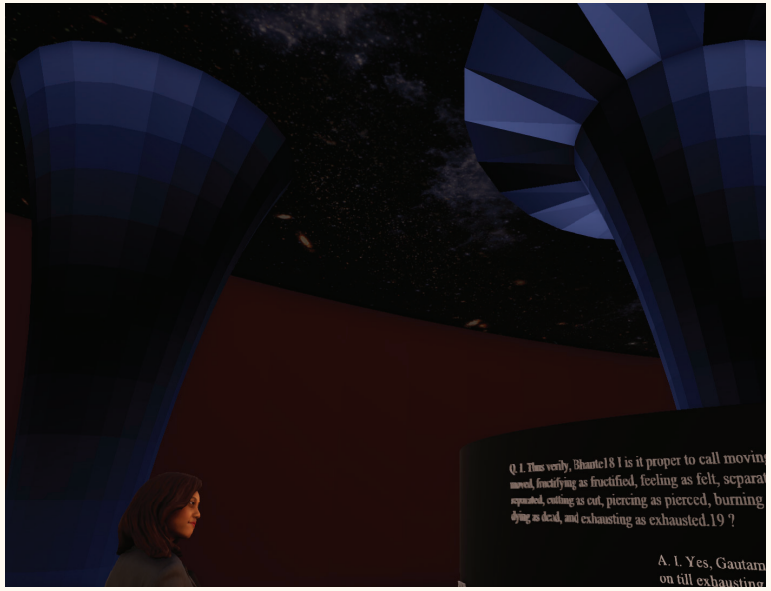
3



Zone Four- Representation







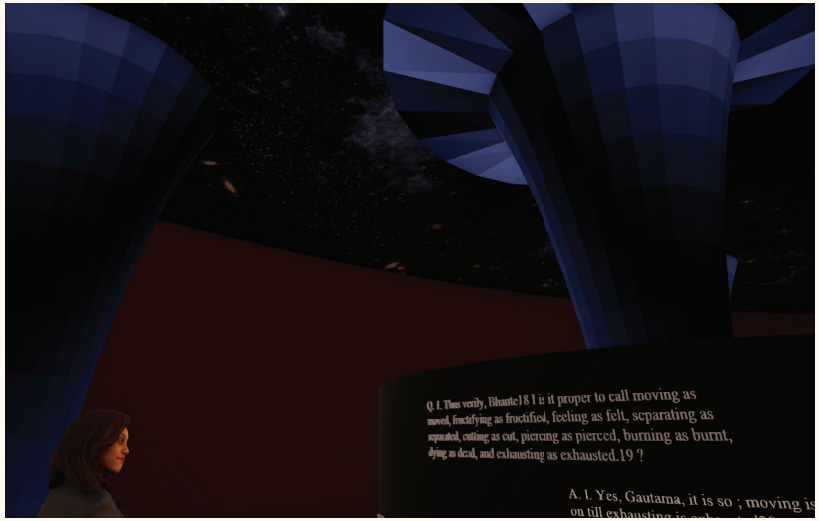
Memories of the final days

There are a lot of takeaways people can associate with Mahavir, but perhaps the most relevant one is how his teachings live on in those who come after. This section expands upon that thought by documenting the final days of his life, as narrated by Indrabhuti. It emphasises on the fact despite his death and ascension into the celestial space, Mahavir continues to live on through all those who accepted his beliefs and chose to live a better life because of it. It leaves the viewer with a final thought, on who exactly is the torchbearer of his ideals.

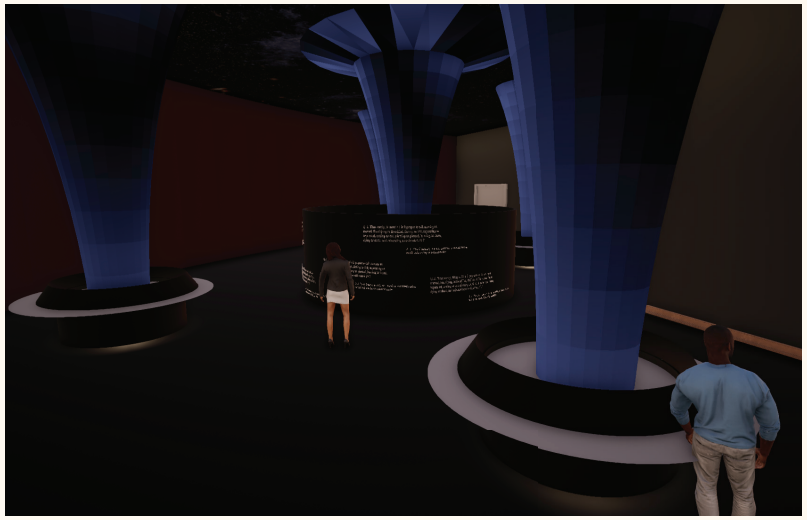
Zone Four- Key Detail



One of the main attractions is the central ring, inscribed with numerous conversations between Mahavir and Indrabhuti.



The pulsating light pillars serve to show the movement of people's souls into the celestial space, leaving behind only the beliefs and ideals.



The disk displays around the central ring convey information on the final thoughts of his key followers, before they passed away.



The final view of the space is that of a mirror, inscribed with a question on who now should carry the ideas and philosophies of Lord Mahavir.

Key Considerations

Signifers/Icons in each space

One of the methods used to increase recall ability of the spaces, was to associate each zone with a certain icon artifact. This could be a functional display, material treatment of a zone, or even something purely visual-driven. These icons serve as anchors their respective zones, and as a differentiator between what each zone stood for.

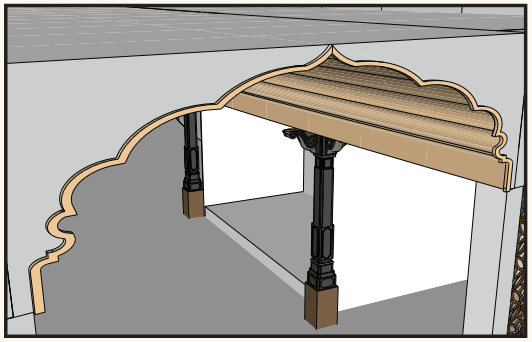
1



Orientation

The dream obelisks work as the primary mode of interaction in the space, while having a distinct visual treatment to it. Both of these together should help make this exhibit the first thing one thinks of about this zone.

2



Zone One

The winding arch serves as a guide for the flow of movement within the space, while its more organic form helps it stand out from the more geometrically demarcarted displays within the zone.

3



Zone Two

this space has a rather different approach to this concept of signifiers, since despite the presence of key content in hero rooms, probably the most memorable aspect of the zone will be the experience of walking through long curving paths surrounded by dense foliage. The feelings that this space tried to convey through the walk will be the first association people make with it, before connecting it with the content.

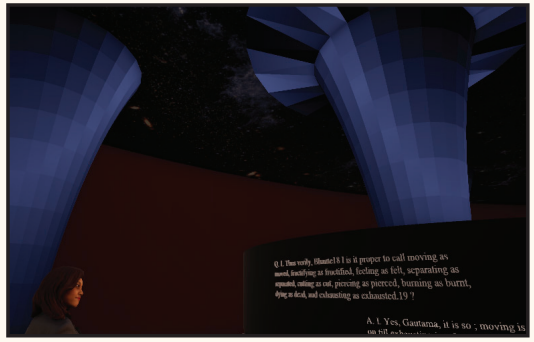
4



Zone Three

Both literally and metaphorically, the central aspect of this zone remains the large light sculpture. Its visual presence with the arrangement of branches/roots and the movement of light along them, coupled with its significance to the role and responsibilites of Mahavir; would make it a key point in the whole experience.

5



Zone Four

The final zone has been all about what do people leave behind to remember them with once they pass away, and the light pillars present a visual demonstration of the concept. The supposed ascension of people through these pillars into the celestial space along with their stories and belief left behind in the form of the disk displays provides a simple and memorable way to connect to this zone.

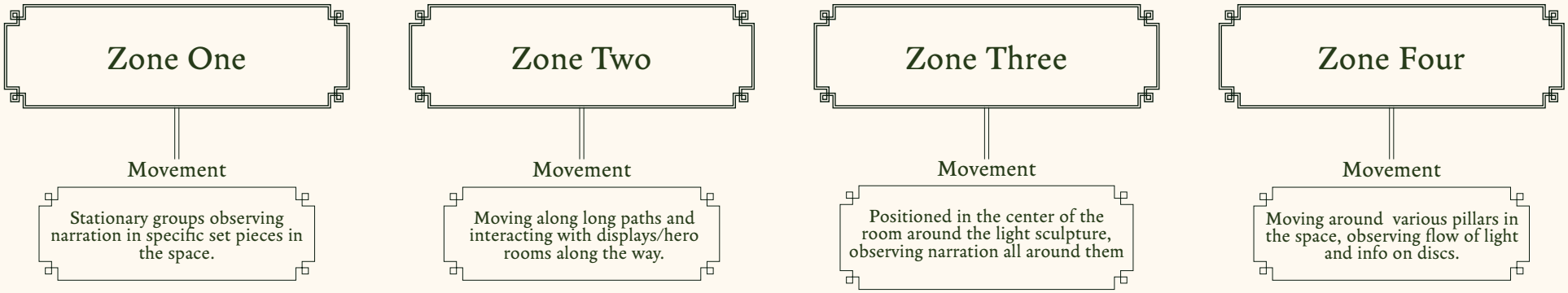
Key Considerations

Breaks in modes of representation

To reduce instances of monotony in how one experiences content in each zone. the primary method of interaction and path movement had been alternatively switched. This means that if one zone focused on displaying content to stationary groups, the next one will encourage them to move around in the space instead.

This approach comes from the observation of how this monotony in content delivery can start making all zones blend into each other, making it unable to grasp what exactly was the significance/content of each space.

At the same time, it runs the risk of experiences/key takeaways becoming too spread out, and the viewer may become unable to relate content with experiences of previous zones. As such, it must be done in a manner that maintains consistency in visual language and narrative structure, the latter being accomplished by the presence of key narrators within the spaces.





Learnings & Reflections
Bibliography
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EPILOGUE

Learnings & Reflections

How do I feel?

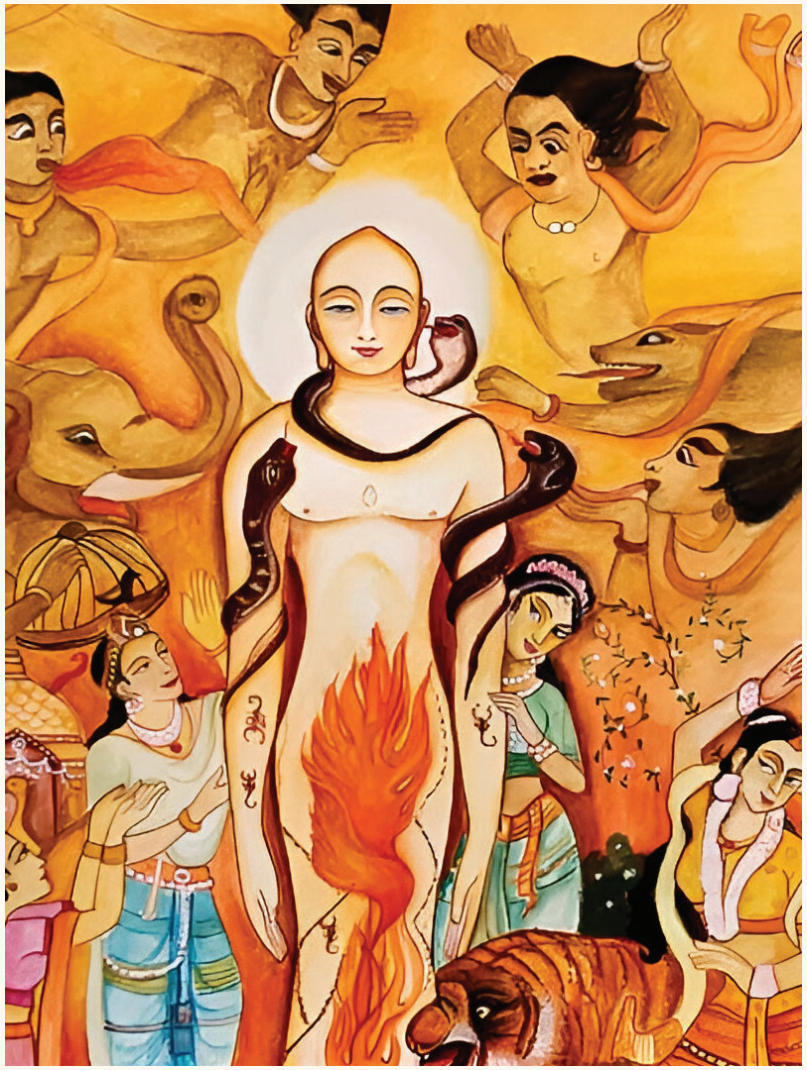
A key objective for any project I get to work on has been to understand the processes behind every task involved. It was important for me to focus on doing things in a way that is not defined by being simply “correct”, but rather by being the most “holistic” approach to a task; a method that covers all aspects, considerations and challenges. I knew that prioritizing this objective for every stage in the design process would be very helpful to build upon in proceeding stages as well, along with making it all the more exciting to work on.

Looking back on the past few months, I feel that I have made significant progress towards this goal. Being able to approach my work in a structured manner removed a lot of the anxiety and intimidation I had begun to associate with taking on an industry project, and let me focus on what really mattered- design that caters to the needs of the viewer as a whole.

Respect for the subject matter

One of the more daunting aspects of the project was having to work on an Individual like Lord Mahavir, who holds a lot of importance in a lots of people’s hearts. How does one do justice to the story of such an individual?

What really helped was being able to read other texts on Mahavir, and what did he mean to everyone. One of the key takeaways from any of his stories was how he would be remembered by the people for his actions, teachings and beliefs. It was that very same connecction between the companions and Mahavir that i felt was the perfect thing to highlight in this experience. Knowing how much he meant to everyone played a key role in developing a narrative structure that does its best at paying respect to his deeds and teachings.



The trials of Lord Sangama was a pivotal point in the story, where the full extent of Mahavir’s committment to the path of enlightenment was shown. Stories like these were a display of how important of an impact the narration of his traits have on people.

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Strategy in narrative structures

An important consideration that kept coming up throughout the project was to have a detailed communication strategy behind every aspect of the experience.

For example, It was not enough to simply designate a guide system for batches in the space. I had to understand and elaborate upon what exactly would be their roles and responsibilities in each zone. How would they interact with the viewer? Do they give instructions? What behaviour should they look out for in each zone? Can they help provide further context to a display?

Being able to come up with a strucuted guide for this aspect really helped bring a lot of clarity for myself and for what I'm trying to show in the space. This approach had to be taken for all other tasks as well, ranging from Narrator sequences to experience journeys to individual display interaction methods, and much more.

What's next?

As always, reflecting on the process makes one realise there is scope for imrpovement in various aspects. The challenge of converting a narrative structure into the spatial context was a big learning experience for me, and introduced me to nunaces in spatial design that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. What may appear as an engaging plot point in isolation, may not translate well when you add consideration about physical space, duration of experience, relevance to the overall narrative journey etc.

Another key aspect was to understand the balance of attention between Mahavir and the modes of representation. While approaching the story from the companin's perspective added an interesting new layer, it was important to ensure their narration and experience does not overhadow that of Mahavir himself. This was one of those challenges that provided valuable experience for future projects as well.



Mahavir meditating in the traditional cow-milking posture, on the eve of attaining the kval-gnan and ascending to his role of a Tirthankar.

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Softwares Used

Figjam
Reseach Compilation,
Data Interpretation

AutoCad 2025
Reading Layouts
Space Zoning

Sketchup Pro
3d Visualisation
Modeling

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