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Did Halley's Comet Appeared on the Night of Mahavira's Nirvana ?

P. C. CHOPRA

“When beggers die there are no comets seen
The Heaven blazes forth on the death of prince.”

The poet laureate William Shakespeare used this adage in his famous work *Julius Ceaser*. Such adages or sayings come into vogue as a result of long drawn experience of a particular civilisation or civilisations lasting over hundreds of years. This famous saying proved correct at least in one case as far as my knowledge goes. A comet of unprecedented brilliance did appear in the night in which Lord Mahavira achieved salvation or *nirvāṇa*. This happened on the night of Kartik Kṛṣṇa Amavasya 526 B.C., when the moonless night was brilliantly lit by a comet. This led to the practice of celebrating *Dīpāvalī*—the festival of light—on that particular night. The celebration did continue in one form or other till this day, but the historical event behind the idea was altogether forgotten and no one remembers it any more.

In olden days particularly in India the unsolved mysteries of nature were accepted as acts of gods and the Jain scripture was no exception to this. This type of mysterious events when they are directly or indirectly connected with some great personalities find very ornamental and exaggerated description in the religious books giving entire credit to the person but not to the event. Ultimately the event is lost in the annals of the history. Exactly this had happened to the comet which appeared on the eventful night of Kartik Kṛṣṇa Amavasya of 526 B.C.

The only reference we find in this connection is in *Kalpa Sūtra* and *Bank Culiā*, the celebrated Jaina *Āgams*. The version of *Kalpa Sūtra* is as follows :

On the night Lord Mahavira was to achieve *nirvāṇa* a comet Bhasma Rasi Graha would appear on his birth *nakṣatra*. This would prove very ominous for his religion for a period of full two thousand years. At the end of 1990 years after the *nirvāṇa* another comet—*dhūmketu* would come on his birth *nakṣatra* which would also cast bad effect on his religion for another 333 years. Only after the expiry of this

period (combined) i.e. 2323 years, Jainism and its followers would again come into lime light.

The another story referring to this event appeared in the Treatise on *Kalpa Sūtra* which is as under :

Indra, the king of Gods, foresighting this event rushed to Lord Mahavira on that night and humbly prayed to him that a comet Bhasma Rasi Graha with very ominous effect would be appearing on his birth *nakṣtra* at the time of his *nirvāṇa*. To forestall the bad effect of the comet he prayed to Lord Mahavira to delay or to hasten a bit his departure. To this Lord Mahavira answered that though the Tirthankara are all powerful (omnipotent) they have no control over their death.

The version in *Bank Culiā*, composed by Yasobhadra Svami, was more or less the same as we have seen in *Kalpa Sūtra*.

Thereafter in the interval of more than 2000 years we do not find any mention of this historical event in any of the Jaina literature. While the Jaina scholars of mediaeval times (monks and others) had left no subject untouched one wonders how did this important event escaped their notice. And it is equally regrettable to note that none of the modern scholars has yet focussed their attention to this.

The reference in *Kalpa Sūtra* and *Bank Culiā* clearly depicts that a comet called Bhasma Rasi Graha appeared on the night of Lord Mahavira's *nirvāṇa*. What effect did it cast on his religion is purely a subject matter of Astrology. But our main and foremost object in this article is to find whether any comet as depicted earlier appeared on that celebrated night and if it did what was the nature of that comet.

What are the comets :

The comets are also the members of our solar family, like the sun, planets and their satellites. The planets and their satellites of our solar system are very well known to us and with the advancement of modern science and invention of sophisticated scientific instruments our knowledge about them is far more complete. Their sizes, composition, the orbits they revolve, even their day to day position in the sky are very exactly known to us, yet our knowledge about the other members of the solar family viz. comets is not so complete. The comets travel in very elongated paths (not circular as of planets) round the sun. The orbital period of the comets

around the sun are, though fixed which ranges from a few years to hundreds of years, yet very little is known about most of them. The scientists all over the world with the help of powerful telescopes and other instruments have been able to chart some 700 comets so far. The list mainly includes small comets. Some of them appear to be newly formed, while many old comets had disappeared or ceased to exist. This leads to the hypothesis that new comets are being created even this day in some unknown corner of the solar system. It is supposed that some part of the dust cloud which gave birth to our sun and planets billions of years ago still exists in its original form and revolves round the sun beyond the orbit of the remotest planet of the sun. Sometimes, due to some mysterious and unknown phenomenon, may be due to gravitational pull of the sun and planets, the dust cloud parts with some of its mass, which when comes nearer to the planetary system, takes the form of a comet and begins orbiting round the sun.

The comets generally have nucleus and a tail. The nucleus is made of solidified matter while the tail is purely composed of rarified gases. The tails of some of the comets extend to millions of kilometres. The comet with its nucleus and long tail appears like a brilliant star when it approaches its perihelion (the nearest point to the sun). At this time the tail of the comet is pushed further from the sun due to solar energy.

Halley's comet :

Among the comets we know more intimately, one is the Halley's comet. This comet was first discovered by Sir Edmund Halley in the year 1682 A.D. He took fancy of it and worked on it with zeal and enthusiasm. After prolonged study (during which he had opportunity to consult world famous scientist Sir Iazac Newton) he discovered that this comet was orbiting round the sun in every 76.1 year's period. Accordingly he predicted its next arrival in the year 1758. He also established by calculation that the comet which appeared in the year 1456, 1531, and 1608 was none else, than this very one. As per his prediction the comet did appear in the year 1758 and his discovery was universally acknowledged after his death. The comet was named after its discoverer as Halley's comet.

This particular comet is orbiting in an elongated orbit. Its remotest point (aphelion) is situated between the orbit of Pluto and Naptune some 496 crore kilometres away from the sun. When it comes near to the sun it passes between the sun and the orbit of the earth. At this time which comes every 76 years, it appears like a very bright star in the western sky after sun set or in the eastern sky before the sun rise when viewed from the earth. The sight is undoubtedly memorable one for those who study it

but for the general public it is a foreteller of calamity, war, epidemic and death of prominent persons. This myth is equally shared by east and west even to this date.

The ancient philosopher Plinny described a comet as of a particularly frightful body which could not be easily stoned. The people looked upon these occasional visitors to our sky with awe and wonder. Pope Calixtus III in the 15th Century ordered general prayer seeking deliverance from the comet. It was generally regarded as precursor of momentous events like war, invasion, death of prominent persons etc. William Shakespeare rightly referred to this popular superstition in queen Calphurnia's comment. About comets Swift remarked 'old men and comets have been reverred for the same reason, their long beards and pretences to forestall event's.'

In the east it is depicted as Bhasma Graha—one who brings destruction or disaster or *dhūmketu*—one with mysterious tail of smoke. The pandits of Astrology are always ready to predict ominous effects of such events. In this context the prediction of *Kalpa Sūtra* undoubtedly testified to the appearance of a comet of unprecedented brilliance which was acclaimed to be evil enough to cast bad effect for two millennium.

Talking about the Halley's comet, it last appeared in January 1910 and according to calculation it is to appear again in the year 1986 when it will come nearest to the sun and will be seen for some two-three hours after the sun set in the western sky or before the sun rise in the eastern sky. The American and Russian scientists have confirmed with the aid of gigantic telescopes that the Halley's comet is on its way and it is approaching the sun as per schedule. It is still thousands of millions of kilometers away from the earth, but its schedule is very precisely forecast. Very elaborate arrangements are being made for its thorough study all the world over. America, Russia, Japan and France are among the pioneers in this field. They propose to conduct some crucial experiments on it with the help of satellites and rockets. They hope to get the inside story of the origin of the solar system from these experiments.

The Halley's comet appears regularly after every 76.1 years. How many visits it had already completed is not exactly known. To the scientific world it had certainly completed 29 visits and will be appearing for the thirteenth time in 1986. Though its existence even before 240 B.C. is quite evident from unconfirmed sources, it still requires historical evidence to support this claim and here in this article we are able to establish with concrete proof its existence upto 526 B.C.

For the known history of the last 2500 years if we prepare a chart of the appearance of Halley's comet (according to calculations) it would be as under :

S. No. Years as per calculation Sighting confirmed in history

1.	1986 February (to be)	—
2.	1910 January	1910
3.	1833	1833
4.	1757	1758
5.	1681	1682
6.	1605	1607
7.	1529	1531
8.	1453 Pope Calixtus III	1456
9.	1377	—
10.	1301	1301
11.	1225	—
12.	1149	—
13.	1072	—
14.	996	—
15.	920	—
16.	844	—
17.	768	—
18.	692	—
19.	616	—
20.	540	—
21.	464	—
22.	388	—
23.	311	—
24.	235	—
25.	159	—
26.	83	—
27.	7	—
28.	69 B.C. Julius Ceaser's time	—
29.	145 „	—
30.	221 „	240 B.C. (Plinny's age)
31.	297 „	—
32.	373 „	—
33.	450 „	—
34.	526 „	526 November. The year of Mahavira Nirvana

The time of Halley's comet approaching its perihelien (nearest point to the sun) as arrived from calculation and shown in the chart is likely to differ from the time of its sighting from the earth. The reasons for the time lag are as under :

1. The earth itself rotates round the sun ;
2. The earth and the comet do not travel in the same plane ;
3. The direction of the rotation of the comet is opposite to that of the earth ;
4. The gravitational pull of some of the heavier planets would have affected the rotational period of the comet.

Yet the difference or time lag as stated above is not more than a few months only. As such it can be said with sufficient degree of certitude that the comet which appeared in the night of November 526 B.C. was none else than the well-known Halley's comet.

What is Bhasma Rasi Graha :

This comet has been named as Bhasma Rasi Graha in Jaina literature. Bhasma Rasi Graha is purely a Jaina mythological term and its reference is no where found even in the contemporary literature. The Jaina mythology enumerates 88 *grahas* or planets and each *graha* is taken as double. The names of 88 *grahas* are found in *Thānāṅga*, *Tiloyapaṇṇatti* and *Sūryapaṇṇatti*. Besides, the familiar names of Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn the other names in the list are quite unfamiliar to the modern age. Moreover, the lists in the above three *Āgamas* do not concur exactly. The names of Bhasma Rasi Graha and Bhasma Graha only appear in the list forming part of the *Thānāṅga* while other *Sūtras* give different names in their places. The name of *dhūmketu* also appear in all the three lists.

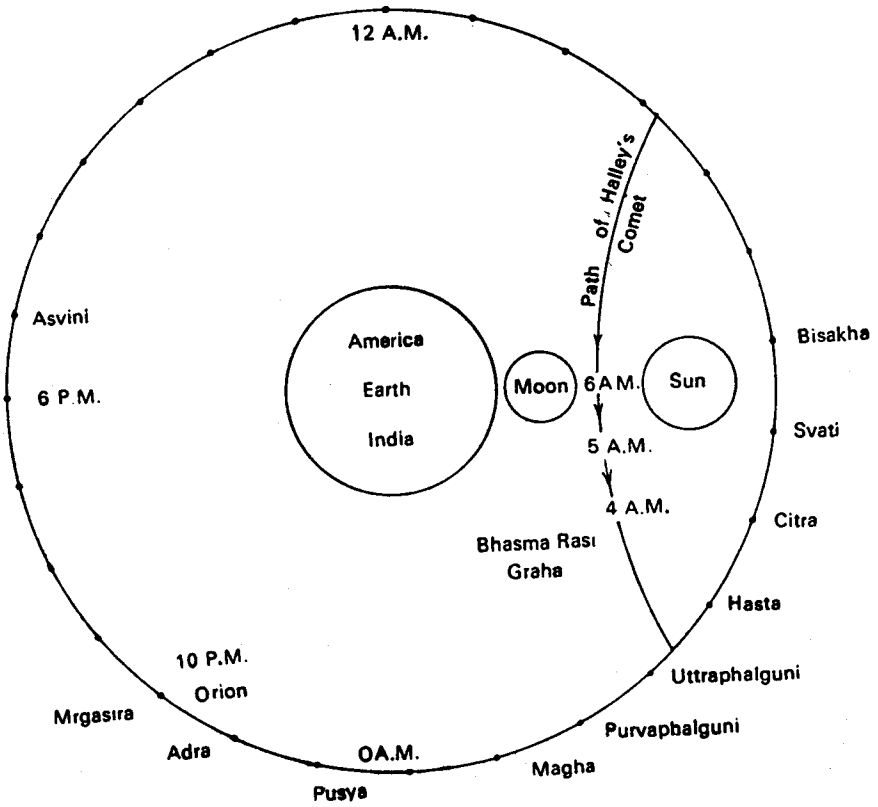
The probable reason for the different names in three Āgamas :

The inquisitiveness in human mind urged him since the inception to look into the night sky and study the stars round him. From his prolonged study and watching he could differentiate the innumerable stars into two categories. Stars which have no relative motion and stars which have relative motions. The first category is termed as *nakṣatras* while the latter

was defined as *grahas*. The *grahas* of olden times most probably includes planets, satellites and comets. The sun and moon were considered king of stars.

It is very likely that besides the five familiar *grahas* as stated earlier the rest of the list comprised of heavenly bodies belonging to the class of comets. The appearance of comets being rare phenomenons (not appearing regularly as other known *grahas* or planets) parallel studies in different places and at different times would have been carried out which resulted in different nomenclature. This is why different lists found their places in three *Āgamas* which were composed at different times. *Thānāṅga* being the oldest of the three and was composed not long after Lord Mahavira's *nirvāṇa*, certainly reflects the contemporary public opinion and therefore the name of Bhasma Rasi Graha rightly found its reference in *Kalpa Sūtra*. Whatever be the name it is a fact that a comet appeared in the night of Lord Mahavira's *nirvāṇa* and it was none other than Halley's comet.

Further more, if we probe deep into the subject, we find the short script of *Kalpa Sūtra* not only depicts the date of the appearance of the comet (Bhasma Rasi Graha) it precisely indicates the time of its sighting. The comet as per the original version of the *Kalpa Sūtra* appeared at the birth *nakṣatra* of Lord Mahavira. It is well-known among the followers of Mahavira that the birth *nakṣatra* of Mahavira was Uttara Phalguni in the Zodiac Constellation of Virgo (Kanya Rasi). From the same sources it is known that on the night of *nirvāṇa* the moon was in Svati *nakṣatra* in the constellation of Libra (Tula Rasi). The day being Amavasya—the moonless night—the sun and the moon were in the same *nakṣatra* i.e. Svati. From these datas it is easy to calculate that the Uttara Phalghuni *nakṣatra* appeared on the eastern horizon just two hours before the sun rise and simultaneously the comet appeared with it, (this comet travels in opposite direction to the direction of the earth's revolution), and precisely this should have been the time of *nirvāṇa*. It is more so because otherwise the Indra's prayer to Lord Mahavira to hasten a bit or to delay his departure (*nirvāṇa*) would lose all significance. While explaining *paccūsa-kāla samyamsi* of *Kalpa Sūtra* its commentary *Subodhikā* states that Mahavira entered *nirvāṇa* 4 hours before dawn (*caturghatikā va śeṣāyām rātrāyām*). But *Āgama Samavāyāṅga* states that it held at the end of the night (*antimarāyamsi*). This concurs exactly with the time we have arrived at by scientific and mathematical calculation i.e., 1½ hours before the sunrise. A sketch diagram given below will be able to show the position of different *nakṣatras* on that night and the sun, moon and the comet.



Yet there is another interesting feature of this comet. Our earth crosses the orbital plane of the Halley's comet twice in a year. This happens first in the month of May and second in the last week of October. During these crossings the earth experiences meteoritical showers. This is believed to be due to left out matter in the orbit by the comet during its previous visits. This matter is attracted or pulled by the earth's gravitation in the form of meteors. The May crossing takes place during day time as such the meteoritical shower is not visible by naked eyes, while the October crossing occurs during night time and the shower is quite visible to the naked eyes. This strange phenomenon which is scientifically called Orionid originate from a particular place in the sky which is called Orion *nakṣatra* in the constellation of Gemini (Mithun Rasi). The Orion (Mrgasira *nakṣatra*) appeared on the night of Amavasya just before mid-night.

Now let us again look to the story connected with the Lord Mahavira's *nirvāṇa*. It is said that gods celebrated the occasion by making divine

illumination in the sky and displaying divine fire works. The practice has since been followed by the followers of Mahavira upto this date by making illumination and using fire works in celebrating the festival of *Dīpāvalī*.

The *Dīpāvalī* or the day of Lord Mahavira's *nirvāṇa* generally falls in the month of November, but once in three years cycle it comes in the last week of October also. Suppose it so happened that Kartik Kṛṣṇa Amavasya 526 B.C. fell in the last week of October and there are evidences to support this belief and the Orioniod coincided with it, the meteoritical shower starting from the mid-night and lasting upto the day break played the role of 'heavenly fire works' and the appearance of a bright comet with its millions of kilometres long tail of 'divine light'. It was surely an unique and spectacular event to remember. This spectrum lasted right from mid-night to day-break. Probably this may be the reason of starting the *nirvāṇotsava* from mid-night.

From what we have discussed above the appearance of Halley's comet on the night of Lord Mahavira's *nirvāṇa* was not only a conjecture but a fact accomplished based on scientific and historical datas.

The Halley's comet is supposed to be in its infancy or it might have been its first ever visit in the year 526 B.C. (no earlier sighting was recorded so far) then its brilliance would have been much pronounced. Certainly it would have been a very romantic and awe stricken sight to watch and it was rightly dreaded by the people at large due to superstitions prevailing in the country.

Our readers will be fortunate enough to watch this long awaited sight in very near future just 13 months hence. It will be its 34th visit since its first ever historical sighting in the year 526 B.C., the origin of the Vir Nirvan Samvat.

Had Shakespeare been alive today he would have been much happier to learn about this historical discovery which establishes the truth of his famous 'adage' given in the beginning of this article.

An Obsolete Heretical Sect : Early History and Distribution in Eastern India

PRANABANANDA JASH

Though the Ajivika sect is entirely in an oblivious state in the map of modern Indian religious systems, its role during the first millenium B.C. in the history of heretical schools was unique as well as significant in many respects. Like two other contemporary heretical schools—Buddhism and Jainism, it emerged in the society with tremendous religious impact against the existing rites and rituals as well as metaphysical and cosmological affairs. It is, however, no wonder to note that almost all the *avaidika* teachers belonged to the same age and the same region and they responded and reacted in their respective ways which were more or less similar to the same stimuli due to stupendous socio-political and religious transformation. It is, thus, no wonder that the entire development of religion and philosophy in this period in the Gangetic Valley region, from Upanisadic gnosis to complete materialism, was but a reflection of the non-Aryan reaction to the Aryan sacrificial system and to the rigid Aryan social order of the four *varṇas*.¹ In course of time these two distinct dominant traditions gave rise to innumerable cross-currents, sometimes completely losing their separate identity, and at other times merging in a confluence, only to re-emerge again in a new form and dimension, and flow in opposite directions. The religious history of India is, in fact, the history of the mutual influence of these two great traditions that resulted in the transformation of the Vedic religion of the Indo-Aryans into modern Hinduism.

¹ *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 144. As regards the background to the conflict, it is stated in the *Pramanavartika-svavṛtti-tika* (ed. R. Sankrityayana, p. 617-618) :

The unquestioned authority of the *Vedas* ;
the belief in a world-creator ;
the quest for purification through ritual bathings ;
the arrogant division into castes ;
the practice of mortification to atone for sin ;
—these five are the marks of the crass stupidity of the witless men.

The word Ajivika seems to have derived from *ājīviya* which means one who follows some rules with regard to one's livelihood.² The Buddhist texts speak of *samyagājīva* as one of the eight paths to be followed by monks. It leads to presume that a class of mendicants who lived initially by a profession as a means of livelihood was gradually known as Ajiviya.

B.M. Barua suggests a broad connotation of the term. It "is used in Indian literature :

- (i) in its widest sense to denote the Parivrajakas or wanderers as distinguished from the Tapasas or hermits ;
- (ii) in its narrower sense to denote the religious orders represented by the five Tirthankaras, Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala and the rest, considered heretics by the Buddhists ; and
- (iii) in its narrowest sense to denote the disciples and followers of Makkhali or Mankhaliputta Gosala."³

The history of the Ajivikas is very much entangled with the contribution and doctrines of Gosala who is designated by the term Mankhaliputra, i.e. son of Mankhali. His name is spelt variously—Makkhali Gosala in Pali, Maskarin in Sanskrit, Mankhaliputra Gosala in Ardha-Magadhi, and Markali in Tamil.

The term *maṅkhalitva*, as applied to Gosala means the profession of exhibiting pictures for collecting alms.⁴ Hoernle placed much emphasis on the term Makkhali in connection with the origin of the Ajivikas. "It describes Gosala as having originally belonged to the Mankhali or

² Monier Williams, *Sanskrit English Dictionary*, p. 133. Hoernle (*ERE.*, i, p. 259) believes that the word Ajivaka or Ajivika is derived from the term *ajiva* which means 'the mode of life, or profession, of any particular class of people, whether they live as householders or as religious mendicants'. According to Lassen (*Indische Altertumskunde*, ii, p. 107, fn. 2) the etymological explanation of the term is to mean an ascetic who ate no living or animal food. Kern, on the other hand, suggests that the word may be derived from such phrase as *ajivat*, i.e. 'as long as live' (*Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien*, ii, p. 7, fn. 2).

³ *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, VIII, p.183.

⁴ *Bhagavati-sutra*, 15.1, 540-41 : *citta-phalagahatthagae mankhattanenam appanam...gamanugamam...* Buddhaghosha (*Sumangala - Vilasini*, I, pp.143 ff.) narrates that Gosala was born in a cow-shed (*go-sala*) of an affluent Brahmana called Gobahula in the village named Saravana. While explaining the term *makkhali* he says—*tata, ma khalih* (My dear man, take care lest you stumble), assumes that he was a servant of a wealthy person who warns him thus.

Maskarin class of religious mendicants.....The Maskarin, as a rule, led a solitary life and the adoption of this manner of life was open to very grave abuses. Hence some men of commanding personality conceived the task of regulating the tendency (to abuses).....by organizing the mendicants into communities governed by strict rules of conduct.”⁵

The Ajivikas emerged as an independent heretical sect in eastern India as early as the time of Buddha and Mahavira. The first Ajivika whom Buddha met and conversed was Upaka.⁶ It is stated that Buddha in course of his journey towards Sarnath (near Benaras, U.P.) for expressing his experience of ‘Release’ *vis-a-vis* preaching his *Dhamma* to the Pancavaggiya ascetics had come into contact with the noted Ajivika ascetic apparently near Gaya. Upaka is said to have encountered with the Buddha in connection with latter’s enlightenment as well as Buddha’s claim of Jina-hood.⁷

In fact, all these are in a conjectural stage. The history of the beginning of the Ajivikas like that of the Jainas is shrouded in many confusions and complications. Of course, a viable chronology of the history and development of the sect with considerable amount of certainty can be worked out after Gosala ; but the Pali texts never depict Gosala as the founder of the sect.⁸ Several teachers like Nanda Vaccha,⁹ Kisa Sankicca¹⁰ and Panduputta¹¹ are mentioned in the Pali canon and it appears that at least the first two were represented as important personalities in the field of contemporary religion and philosophy. Buddha¹² declares that although the Ajivikas had existed for a long time, they had only three reputed teachers, viz., Nanda Vaccha, Kisa Sankicca and Mokkhali Gosala. It

⁵ *ERE*, i, p. 260 ; Panini, *Astadhyayi*, IV.1, 154 ; Patanjali’s *Mahabhasya* (ed. Kielhorn), III.96.

⁶ G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, I, pp.179-80, 385 ff. ; *Majjhima-nikaya*, *Ariyapariyesana-sutta*, i, pp.160-75.

⁷ *Jataka*, 1.81 ; *Mahavagga* (trans. I.B. Horner), p.11.

⁸ In fact we have no textual evidences exclusively meant for this sect. Buddhist references to Gosala’s doctrine are sometimes confused, e.g., in *Anguttara-nikaya*, III. 383 his classifications are attributed to Purana and in *Majjhima-nikaya*, I. 513, part of his doctrines is combined with those of the Pakudha. B. M. Barua (*Journal of the Department of Letter*, II, pp.1-80) provides an exhaustive list of these sources and makes a comparison to these Buddhist references with those found in the Jaina texts in order to form an idea of the fundamentals of Gosalian dogmatics.

⁹ Malalasekera, *op. cit.*, II, p.14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 609.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 123.

¹² *Majjhima-nikaya*, *Sandaka-sutta*, no. 76 ; Malalasekera, *op. cit.*, II, p.14.

evidently shows that Ajivikism was an established and well organised school of philosophy at the time of Buddha, and Gosala was only one of the distinguished teachers of the school. His contribution towards the development of this religious sect and organisation and its philosophy made him reputed apparently to the extent of its founder.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the Ajivikas like the Tirthankara conception of the Jainas believe in a succession of ascetic teachers of the same order of Gosala who is the eighth Ajivika teacher. The *Bhagavati-sūtra*¹³ speaks of the following seven Ajivika teachers whose spiritual mantle had fallen upon his (Gosalaka's) shoulders :

- (1) Udai Kundiyananiya
- (2) Enejjaga (Skt. Rnanjaya)
- (3) Mallarama
- (4) Mandiya
- (5) Roha
- (6) Bharaddai (Skt. Bharadvaja)
- (7) Ajjuna Goyamaputta.

Due to paucity of any positive evidences it is rather hazardous to ascertain the historicity of the entire list of successive teachers of the Ajivika order prior to Gosala. And by the time of the Mauryas, as we shall see later on, it included in the catalogue of the well organised and matured religious systems in India.

Gosala is said to have born near Sravasti, and left home for some unknown reason and became a homeless wanderer. It appears from the *Bhagavati-sūtra* that Gosala in his early career accepted the professional life of his father and, at the same time, he developed some sort of repugnance against worldly life. In his first meeting with Mahavira in a weaver's workshop (*tantuvāyasaḷā*) at Nalanda, he already attained the third year of asceticism. Gosala was impressed with the power of asceticism of Mahavira and requested to allow him to be his pupil, but Mahavira did not at first oblige by initiating Gosala as his disciple. In his second thought Mahavira accepted Gosala's request at a place called Kollaga near Nalanda.¹⁴

¹³ *Bhagavati-sutra*, XV, su. 550, fol. 674.

¹⁴ For details, please see my forthcoming publication on *Some Aspects of Jainism in Eastern India*, appendix.

Gosala's career as a wanderer covers about twenty four years, of which the first six he spent at Paniyabhumi together with Mahavira. He parted company with the latter on account of doctrinal differences, and went to Sravasti, where he attained Jina-hood and became the leader of the Ajivika sect.¹⁵ The reason behind the separation of these two religious personalities represents two schools of ideas, although originally they belonged to the same group. Subsequently a bitter hostility developed between these two schools ; but in some cases of their doctrines and tenets they have many points in common. And there is no denying the fact that Jainism owed in many respects to the doctrines propounded by the Ajivika leader, Gosala.¹⁶

Gosala, like the Buddhists and the Jainas, formed an organised sect of religious body, a Sangha, with a corporate social life. The communal life of the Ajivikas is known from the *ājīviya-sabhā* at the town of Polasapura. The *Uvāsaga-dasāo*¹⁷ states that Gosala went to this *sabhā*, attended by the Ajiviya Sangha and surrendered his begging bowl (*bhaṇḍaganikkhevam karei*). Again, the term *ājīviya-seyyā* indicates the settlement of the Ajivikas in a monastery or *vihāra*.¹⁸ Due to the absence of any literature meant for the Ajivikas exclusively it is not possible to sketch any rules and regulations stipulated to the Ajivika monks during their stay in the *vihāra*. Still some ideas may be gathered from the scattered references to them in the Jaina and Buddhist texts. Regarding the induction into the Ajivika order an indication of the processes of initiation is stated in the *Tittira-Jātaka*.¹⁹ It speaks of an unfortunate false ascetic who was prosecuted in the lion's court by a tiger and who was described as one having "burnt his hand by grasping a lump."²⁰ It is explained in the commentary : "At the time of his going forth as an Ajivika his hands were burnt by grasping a heated lump" (*ājīvika-pabbajjam-pabbajjita-kāle uṇhapiṇḍa-patiggahaṇena hattha 'āpikir' assa daddhā*).²¹ An ascetic

¹⁵ *Bhagavati-sutra*, XV, su. 541, fol. 660-663.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, su. 542, fol. 664.

According to Jacobi (*Sacred Books of the East*, XLV, Introduction, pp. xxix-xxx) the Jainas borrowed the idea of *lesya* from the Ajivika conception of *abhijati*, or six classes of mankind, and 'altered it so as to bring it into harmony with the rest of their own doctrines'. For further elaboration, see P. Jash's article on Doctrines of an Obsolete Heretical Sect, *Jain Journal*, Calcutta, April 1983, pp. 135-139.

¹⁷ *Uvasaga-dasao* (ed. Hoernle), i. pp.105 ff.

¹⁸ *Vinaya*, iv, p. 223.

¹⁹ *Jātaka*, III, pp.536-543.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.541 : *hattha daddha pindapatigga-hanena*.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

Guna is described in the *Mahānārada-kassapa-jātaka*²² as “an ignorant, naked, wretched and blindly foolish Ajivika” (*ajānantam naggabhoggam nissirikam andha-bālam ājivikam*). The term ‘*nagga-bhoggam*’ is interpreted as ‘one whose goods are nakedness’ in the Dictionary of the Pali Text Society, but the word, as aptly suggested by A. L. Basham, would be taken to mean ‘one naked and crippled’.²³ The Ajivikas at the stage of initiation seem to have made themselves eligible to bear out these painful ordeals. One has to bear up all these intolerable and difficult practices before going to be accommodated in the organisation. Children and women were not debarred to get entry into the order provided they showed their forbearance in accepting various kinds and/or degrees of penances.

The Ajivikas performed several extremist type of austerities which sometimes lead to put an end of the life. The description of some of the horrible and rigid penances, like raising his hands high in the sunshine, rejection of six consecutive meals, living on mere beans or rice-gruel (*kulmāṣa*) and on one sip of water in the beginning of asceticism, were performed by Gosala for acquiring the power of fiery energy at the end of six months.²⁴

But the most interesting point as known from the *Tittira-jātaka*,²⁵ is the introduction of secret magical rites of a repulsive tantric type. A vivid description of the practice of mysterious secret rites of the Ajivikas is to be found in the *Vāyu-purāṇa*.²⁶

“Roads, rivers, fords, *caityas*, trees, highways—*piśācas* (goblins) have entered all these places. Those unrighteous people the Ajivas, as ordained by the gods, are the confusers of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, a people of workmen and craftsmen. Goblins are the divinities in their sacrifices, which they perform with wealth (stolen) from beings who resemble the immortals (i.e. brahmanas) and (gained by acting as) police spies, and with much other ill-gotten wealth, and with honey, meat, broth, ghee, sesamum, powder, wine, spirits, incense, greens, *kṛṣṭara* (boiled sesamum and rice), oil, fragrant grass (? *bhadra*), treacle, and porridge. The Lord Brahma

²² *Jataka*, vi, pp.219 ff.

²³ A. L. Basham, *History and Doctrines of the Ajivikas*, pp.104-105.

²⁴ *Bhagavati-sutra*, 15.1.543 ; in the *Lomahamsa-jataka* (i.p.390) the Ajivika asceticism is depicted by way of the description of the practice of severe penances by Bodhisattva born as an Ajivika.

²⁵ *Tittira Jataka*, III, pp.541-42.

²⁶ *Vāyu-purana*, 69, 284-88.

likewise appointed black garments, incense, and flowers to be the oblations of the goblins at the quarters of the moon.”

It may not be unlikely to presume that the Ajivas, i.e. the Ajivikas of the *Vāyu-purāṇa* belongs to a later stage, and, of course, not of the Buddhist or the Jaina references. This may have been the plight of the Ajivika community in north India during the Gupta period when ‘the sect itself continued to decline’.²⁷

While dealing with the distribution of Ajivikas in eastern India, it may be pointed out that since the days of its origin, its influence and spread on the upper Gangetic valley region centering round Sravasti is an established fact. Similarly, its later development and extension towards more easternly regions including the boundaries of lower Gangetic region is also an accepted view. By the time of Gosala the Ajivikas occupied a unique position in the Gangetic valley regions. Its history thus begins with the early part of the sixth century B.C., although B. M. Barua takes it back to the eighth or seventh century B.C.²⁸ The sect seems to have received royal patronage from the time of the Nandas whose power and splendour are attested by various sources,²⁹ and who were possibly the followers of the Ajivika sect. Mahapadma Nanda was a patron of Ajivikism and “the Ajivika community certainly existed in some strength in Magadha at the time, and received some patronage from the Mauryas, who were the successors of the Nandas...The reference in the *Bhagavati-sūtra* suggests that he may have given his special support to the Ajivika Sangha.”³⁰

The continuity of its spread outside the regions of its origin in the subsequent period is known from different sources.³¹ The *Divyāvadāna*³² and the *Mahāvamsa* commentary³³ speak of an Ajivika mendicant (a Parivrajaka) attached to the Maurya king Bindusara. His leaning

²⁷ A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, pp.162-63.

²⁸ B. M. Barua, *Ajivikas*, pp.9 ff.; G. Buhler is also of the opinion that the founder of the sect may be placed about 750 B.C.

²⁹ H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, pp.187 ff.

³⁰ A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p.145.

³¹ The *Mahāvamsa*, X, records that king Pandukabhaya of Ceylon, the grandfather of Asoka's contemporary Devanampiya Tissa, built ‘a house for Ajivikas’ (*ajivikanam geham*) at Anuradhapura. Similarly, the prevalence of the Ajivikas in Surattha (Surat in Gujarat) two hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvana* is known from a passage in the *Petavatthu* (iv.3, p.57).

³² *Divyavadana*, pp.370 ff.

³³ *Vamsattha-ppakasini*, i, p.190.

towards this religious system is strikingly attested by a classical reference too.³⁴ It is thus a fact to note that the Ajivikas were patronized by the court of Magadha even before the introduction of Asoka's policy of toleration.

The influence of the Ajivikas on the contemporary religious history is also recorded in the inscriptions of the great Maurya king, Asoka.³⁵ The Seventh Pillar Edict which was issued in the twenty-seventh year of Asoka's consecration, i.e. 237 B.C. describes the duties of the Dharma-mahamatras. These officers of public morals "were ordered...to busy themselves with the affairs of the Samgha; likewise others were ordered...to busy themselves also with the Brahmanas (and) Ajivikas; others were ordered...to busy themselves also with the Nirgranthas; others were ordered...to busy themselves also with various (other) sects; (thus) different Mahamatras (are busying themselves) specially with different (congregations)."³⁶ Various scholars like Buhler,³⁷ Hoernle,³⁸ D. R. Bhandarkar³⁹ have interpreted '*bābhanesu ā(j)ivikesu*' differently. Whatever might have been the interpretations of the term, one thing is very clear from the above mentioned Pillar Edict as pointed out by A. L. Basham—"The Seventh Pillar Edict also gives some indication of the influence of the Ajivikas at the time. The Ajivika Sangha appears as a fully developed religious community, on an equal footing with the two other non-brahmanic systems, and is not relegated to the last category of the 'various heretics'. It may be suggested that, since Asoka mentions the Ajivikas before the Nirgranthas, or Jainas, the former sect seemed to the king to be either more influential or more worthy of support than the latter."⁴⁰

In fact, the heyday of the Ajivikas during the time of pre-Maurya and the Maurya periods in Magadha and its neighbouring regions is known from the testimony of Asokan inscriptions as well as his successor Dasaratha in the Barabar⁴¹ and Nagarjuni cave inscriptions.⁴² In the Barabar Hill complex there are in all four caves, viz. Karna Chopar cave,

³⁴ *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, I, p.xxxv.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.131 ff.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.136; II, pp. 15-16.

³⁷ *Epigraphia Indica*, II, p.272.

³⁸ *ERE.*, i, p.267.

³⁹ *Indian Antiquary*, xli, pp.286-290.

⁴⁰ Basham, *op. cit.*, pp.149-150.

⁴¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, I, pp.181 ff.

⁴² *Indian Antiquary*, XX, pp.361 ff.

Sudama cave, Visvamitra cave and Lomas Rsi cave, of which three contain Asokan inscriptions, while the nearby Nagarjuni Hill contains three similar caves, viz. Vahiyaka cave, Gopika cave and Vadathika cave, for providing shelters to the Ajivika ascetics during the rainy season.⁴³

The prevalence of the sect in eastern India in the Christian era has hardly substantiated by any archaeological remains. It is rather difficult to speculate about the exact time and reasons for the total extinction of this faith from this part of the country. Occasional references to them are not wanting in Sanskrit literature of the later period, but these have hardly any positive bearings on the history and philosophy of the sect.

It is really curious to note that a sect, a leading representative of the heretical orders, that emerged with equal stronghold and wide influence like those of the Buddhists and the Jainas, did not survive or continue as an independent sect for long in the region of its origin. It is, however, not an easy task to ascertain the reason/reasons behind its oblivion from the stage of Indian religion. But it is certain that by the time of the *Vāyupurāṇa* the sect seemed to have 'struggling for survival as a sort of secret society'; and during the time of Varahamihira⁴⁴ the Ajivikas survived only as one of the seven classes of religious mendicants. According to P. C. Bagchi "the Ajivika sect had, by the time of Hiuen-Tsang, merged into the community of the Nirgranthas who were then numerous in Bengal. In any case, there is no evidence to prove the separate existence of the Ajivikas in Bengal."⁴⁵ The conjecture put forward by P. C. Bagchi seems to be possible as the emergence of the mystic saints and their religious communities like the Avadhutas, etc. in the mediaeval period bear ample resemblance in respect of activities and ritualistic performances with the naked Nirgrantha and the Ajivika ascetics.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.361-65 ; Basham, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-160.

⁴⁴ *Brhat-jataka*, xv.1.

⁴⁵ *History of Bengal* (Dacca University), p.411, fn.3.

A Caturvimasti-patta Metal Image from Bhagalpur

AJOY KUMAR SINHA

The Svetambara Jaina Temple, Campanagar¹ (a suburb of the Bhagalpur town) has a very good collection of metal images. The present author has selected a *caturvimṣati-paṭṭa* or *caubisī* made out of bronze for iconographic study. The *caturvimṣati-paṭṭas* have been treated as most auspicious and almost all Jaina temples contain it inside their sanctum. A devotee may keep such small metal shrine like image with them even during travels. It also simplifies the purpose of worshipping all the twenty four Jinas at one place.

The *caturvimṣati-paṭṭa* under discussion measures twentyseven centimetres in height and sixteen centimetres in width. It is inscribed on the back from which we know that it was installed in the samvat 1551 (A.D. 1494). The *mūlanāyaka* in this iconic representation is Bhagavan Adinatha, the first Jaina Tirthankara. He is seated in the centre on a cushion placed upon a lion-throne in *padmāsana* posture. He is in deep meditation. The *śrīvatsa* mark over his chest is very prominent. The entire representation is in the form of a shrine in whose central sanctum, Bhagavan Adinatha's figure has beautifully been casted by the master artists of mediaeval India. There are two standing Tirthankaras (in *kāyotsarga mudrā*) by the side of the *mūlanāyaka*. Further by the side of the *mūlanāyaka's* halo are two seated Tirthankaras also in deep meditation. The umbrella surmounting Bhagavan Adinatha is artistic. Two truncated elephants are shown on either side of the umbrella. In the lower frieze, Bhagavan Adinatha's *śāsanadevatā* and *śāsanadevī* have been depicted by whose sides we find the divine musicians and dancers. Just below this frieze, the *dharmacakra* (the wheel of Law) is beautifully curved. In the lowermost frieze, goddess Santidevi can be seen just in the middle of the *pañcaratha* pedestal. Two devotees, male and female, are standing on the either side in the *añjali-mudrā*. Remaining nineteen Tirthankaras have been arranged by the maker of this shrine in a very attractive manner. All of them are shown seated

¹ Sinha, Ajoy Kumar, 'Jaina Shrines in Bhagalpur', *Jaina Antiquary*, Vol. 36 No. 2 (Arrah, 1983), pp.22-23.



*Caubisi, Svetambar Jain Temple
Campanagar, Bhagalpur*

in *padmāsana* in the sanctum. The flywhisk bearers and *gajavyālas* are on the borders of this shrine. The upper portion forms a pyramidal design. Three *maṅgala-kalaśas* have been provided to give it an elegant form.

Stylistically, this *caturvīmśati-paṭṭa* may be compared with the *caturvīmśati-paṭṭas* of Bhagavan Santinatha from western India displayed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (U.S.A.)² and the Salar Jung Museum (Hyderabad).³ It slightly differs with each of them. The date of all the three *caturvīmśati-paṭṭas* are almost the same. They belonged to the second half of the fifteenth century A.D.

The present author thinks that the *caturvīmśati-paṭṭa* under discussion was brought to Bhagalpur from the western India by some Jaina devotee because of the great religious sanctity of this region.

² Ghosh, A., *The Jaina Art and Architecture*, Volume III (New Delhi, 1975), plate 334.

³ *Ibid.*, Plate 364 A.

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² Ghosh, A., *The Jaina Art and Architecture*, Volume III (New Delhi, 1975), plate 334.

³ *Ibid.*, Plate 364 A.

Dr. Jacobi and Vasicandanakappa

MUNI MAHENDRA KUMAR 'DVITIYA'

In connection with my work of editing the works of Jayacarya, the fourth pontiff of Jain Svetambar Terapanth Sect, I came across the use of phrase *vāsī-candaṇa-sāmya*.¹

I recalled that the same phrase had been used in the 19th chapter of the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, and therefore I referred to Dr. Jacobi's translation of the above canon.²

The 19th chapter of the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* depicts the story of Mrgaputra, a great Jaina ascetic. Mrgaputra was the son of the king Balabhadra and queen Mrga reigning from the beautiful town of Sugriva. On seeing an ascetic in the street, prince Mrgaputra recalled his past lives and found that he had been 'an ascetic' in one of his past lives. Soon he decided to renounce the worldly pleasures and practise asceticism. After a long discussion with his parents, he succeeded in getting their permission. Having renounced the worldly possessions he harnessed himself in the path of self-restraint.

The process of self-purification which is popularly known as *sādhana*, essentially requires the mind of the ascetic to be trained in such a way that in all favourable and unfavourable conditions 'equanimity' is fully preserved. Mrgaputra, the ascetic had achieved this state and this is described in the above *Sūtra*³ thus :

*lābhālābhe suhedukkhe jīvie maraṇe tahā/
samo nindāpasamsāsu tahā māṇāvamāṇao||
aṇissio iham loe paraloe aṇissio/
vāsīcandaṇakappo ya asaṇe aṇasaṇe tahā||*

¹ Jayacarya's *Chauvisi*, 1/4.

² *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV.

³ *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, XIV, v. 9092.

The eminent German scholar, Dr. Hermann Jacobi, who has translated the four Jaina canons⁴—The *Ācāraṅga Sūtra*, the *Kalpa Sūtra*, the *Sūtra-kṛtāṅga Sūtra* and the *Uttarādhayana Sūtra* into English has made the following translation of the above verses.⁵

“He had no interest in this world and no interest in the next world; he was indifferent to *unpleasant and pleasant things*, to eating and fasting.”

Dr. Jacobi also makes the following remark in the foot-note : “*vāṣī candana kappā*—The author of the *Avacūri* explains this phrase thus : ‘He did not like more a man who anoints himself with sandal than mason.’ Apparently he gives to *vāṣa* the meaning ‘dwelling’. But I think that the juxtaposition of *candana* calls for a word denoting a bad smelling substance perhaps ‘ordure’.”⁶

A close examination of the above quotation would show that both Dr. Jacobi and the author of *Avacūri*⁷ have misinterpreted the word *vāṣī*. By *vāṣī*, the author of *Avacūri* understands a mason or a place of dwelling deriving probably from the Sanskrit word *vāsa*, whereas Dr. Jacobi translates *vāṣī* as some ‘unpleasant thing’ or ‘a bad smelling substance’, perhaps ‘ordure’ (i.e. filth or dung).

⁴ *SBE.*, Vols. XXII, XLV.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. XLV, p.99.

⁶ *Ibid.* Vol. XLV, p.99.

⁷ Dr. Jacobi has not mentioned the name of the author of the *Avacūri*. In the introduction to his translations, describing the MS. of *Avacūri*, he writes, “But I have had at my disposal an illuminated old MS. of the *Avacūri*, belonging to the Strassburg University Library. This work is apparently an abstract from the *Vṛtti* of Santyācārya, as in a great many passages it almost verbally agrees with Devendra’s work (which is an abstract from Santyācārya’s *Vṛtti*)”—*S.B.E.*, Vol. XLV, introduction, pp. xl, xli.

Hari Damodar Velankar, who has composed an exhaustive register of the Jaina works and authors (in Sanskrit and Prakrit), mentions four different *avacūris* on the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* :

(1) Composed in Samvat 1441 by Jnanasagarasuri, pupil of Devasundarasuri, of the Tapa Gaccha.

(2) By Jnanasilagani (year not mentioned).

(3) By unknown author in Samvat 1488.

(4) By unknown author (year not mentioned).

(See *Jinaratna-kosa*, by H. D. Velankar, pub by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1944, pp. 44-45).

Velankar has also mentioned the names of places and libraries where MSS. are existing. But unfortunately, Strassburg is not mentioned with any of the above four *Avacūries*. It is therefore difficult to know the name of the author of the *Avacūri* used by Dr. Jacobi.

Before deliberating over the correct interpretation of the above phrase, we quote here from other *Sūtras* where the same phrase has been used.

The *Kalpa Sūtra* depicts the life of the 24th Tirthankara Lord Mahavira and also elucidates his *sādhana*. An excerpt from it is :⁸

se nam bhagavam vāsāvāsavajjam.....vāsīcandaṇasamāṇakappe samatiṇamaṇileṭṭhukamcaṇe samadukhasuhe.....

Dr. Jacobi translates this passage as follows :⁹

“The venerable one lived except in the rainy season, all the eight months of summer and winter in a village only five nights. He was indifferent to the smell of ordure and of sandal, to straw and jewels, dirt and gold, pleasure and pain.....”

Here also Dr. Jacobi translates the word “*vāsī*” by ‘smell of ordure’.

Now on the basis of some famous works, Jaina canons, commentaries on them and dictionaries and lexiconographies, we shall try to show that the interpretations made by Dr. Jacobi and the author of *Avacūri* (referred by him) are erroneous.

The Jaina canon *Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti Sūtra*, which is the sixth *Upāṅga*, supplies us with the most unequivocal interpretation of *vāsī-candaṇa-kappa* elucidating the *sādhana* of the first Tirthankara Rṣabhanatha. The above *Sūtra* mentions :¹⁰

usabhe arahā kosalie.....vāsītacchaṇe aduṭṭhe candaṇāṇulevaṇe aratte.....vihārāi

If the above text is compared with the passages quoted from the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* and *Kalpa Sūtra*, it will be found that the phrase *vāsī candaṇa kappo* or *vāsī candaṇa samāṇakappe* used in those canons is found here in an expanded form *vāsī tacchaṇe aduṭṭhe candaṇāṇulevaṇe aratte*, making the whole meaning unequivocal.

⁸ *Kalpa Sutra, Sutra* 119.

⁹ *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXII, p.262.

¹⁰ *Jambudvīpa Prajñapti Sutra, Vaksaskara II, Sutra* 31.

The above passage is explained by the Commentator Santicandra Vacakendra¹¹ thus :¹²

vāsyā—sūtradhāraśastraviśeṣeṇa yattakṣaṇam tvaca utkhananamtatrā-dviṣṭah adveṣavān candanānulepane 'raktah arāgavān

Thus according to the commentator, *vāśī* is a particular weapon or tool of a carpenter, *takṣaṇam* is slitting of the skin ; *adveṣṭah* means having no hatred ; *candana* is sandalwood ; *anulepane* means application on skin ; *araktah* is having no love.

Now the whole passage quoted above can be translated thus :

“Rṣabha, the conqueror of the internal enemies and the native of Kosala, lived having no hatred (towards one who) slit his skin with an adze and having no love (towards one who) applied the sandalwood...”

I have used here the word adze for *vāśī* which, according to the commentator, is ‘a particular tool of the carpenter’. In the following paragraphs we shall further discuss the usage of this word.

Mahābhārata is another important work which gives us a very clear usage of the same phrase. In this epic, at one place, Yudhisthira expresses his desire to become an ascetic giving up worldly pleasures. This excerpt is :¹³

*alābhe sati vā lābhe samadarśī mahātapāh/
na jīviṣuvatkīñcinma mumūrṣuvadācaran//
jīvitam maraṇam caiva nāvinandanca dviṣan/
vāsaikam takṣato bāhum candanenaikamukṣatah//
nākalyāṇam na kalyāṇam cintayannubhayostayoh//*

“I shall be equally disposed in gain and loss ; I shall not act like a person having a desire for living or dying ; I shall neither greet life or hate death ; if some one slits one of my arms with an adze and another

¹¹ Commentary called *Prameyaratnamanajusa* written by him in Vikram Samvat 1660 ; cf. *Jinaratna-kosa*, by H. D. Velankar, pub by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1944. p.131.

¹² *Jamyudvipa Prajñapti Sutra* (with commentary), pub by Seth Devchand Lalbhai Pustakodddhar Fund, Surat, 1920, II/31.

¹³ *Mahābhārata*, *Santi Parva*, XII-9-24, 25.

one anoints the other arm with the sandalwood, I shall neither wish the welfare (of the latter) nor calamity (of the former).”¹⁴

These two authoritative works *Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti Sūtra* and *Mahābhārata* explain the phrase *vāsī candana kappa* very clearly. It seems that this phraseology was quite popular in both cultures—the Hindu as well as the Jaina. The most astonishing element is that in both traditions the authoritative work use this phraseology to denote the highest state of equanimity of an ascetic. Though Dr. Jacobi’s translation expresses the same sense, it is clearly incorrect in the literal translation of the phrase.

After having cited such clear evidences, no more testimony is required to show that *vāsī* is neither a bad smelling substance nor ordure nor a place of dwelling but a tool of the carpenter particularly the adze. Still we would like to quote here some more commentators who have explained this controversial phrase.

(1) First of all we quote the famous commentator Laksmi Vallabh Suri who in his commentary to the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, interprets the text under discussion thus :¹⁵

punah kīḍṛṣah? anīṣṛito nīṣṛāhitah, kasyāpi sāhāyyam na vāncchati, tathā punariha loke rājyādibhoge tathā paraloke deva lokādisukhe ‘nīṣṛito nīṣṛām na vāncchate punah sa mṛgāputro vāsīcandanakalpah yadā kaścīd vāsyā—paraṣunā śarīram chinatti kaścīccandanena sarīramarcayati tadā tayloruparīsamānakalpah sadṛṣācārah tathā punaraśane āhāra karaṇe tathā ‘naśane ahārā’ karaṇe sadṛṣah

“Again how was he (Mrgaputra)? He desired no shelter nor protection from anyone and again he did not wish to take shelter under worldly lures of the kingdom in this world and the pleasures of heavens in the next world and again, he (i.e.) Mrgaputra was *vāsī candana kalpah* (i.e.) if some one would chop off the body with a hatchet *vāsī* (i.e. *paraṣu*) and some one else might anoint the body with sandalwood, he would have identical reactions for both of them ; and also he had the same feeling in feasting and fasting.”

¹⁴ cf. *Mahabharata*, tr and ed by Sripada Damodar Satvalekar, Svadhyay Mandal, Aundha, Dt. Satara, 1929, XII-9-24-25.

¹⁵ Dipika was written by him on *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, cf. H. D. Velankar, op. cit., 45. *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra Dipika*, pub by Hiralal Hansraj Jain Bhaskarodaya Printing Press, Jamnagar, p.726.

Thus according to the learned commentator, Mrgaputra had achieved that state of equanimity of mind that he would not dislike the person who would cut his body with the weapon like a hatchet nor he would appreciate the person who would anoint the body with sandalwood.

(2) Shanti Sagar,¹⁶ a commentator of the *Kalpa Sūtra*, in his commentary to the above quoted passage¹⁷ or the text contends :¹⁸

*vāsīcandaṇasamāṇakappe-kāṣṭhachedanopakaraṇavāsīcandanatulyayoh
chedakapūjakayo viṣaye samabhāvah*

Here also the commentator supports our interpretation by calling *vāsī*—a tool used in chopping off the wood. What he means is an adze or a chisel or a hatchet. He explains the whole phrase thus :

“The equanimity towards persons who are cutting and anointing (the body).”

(3) Another commentator of the *Kalpa Sūtra* Vinaya Vijaya¹⁹ in his commentary, explains the text thus :²⁰

*vāsī—sūtradhārasya kāṣṭhachedanopakaraṇam ; candanam—prasiddham,
tayordvayorviṣaye, samāṇakappe—samānakalpastulyādhyava-
sāyah*

Vinaya Vijaya too explains here *vāsī* as a tool of the carpenter used for cutting the wood, and by *samāṇa kappe* he understands ‘having equal considerations for both the events i.e. in the event of (being cut by) *vāsī* and that of (being smeared with) sandalwood.

(4) In yet another interesting commentary²¹ to the *Kalpa Sūtra* by Laxmi Vallabha, the same commentator quoted above (No. 1), a slightly different interpretation of the present phrase is found ; all the same the meaning of the *vāsī* remains unchanged.

¹⁶ A commentary called *Kaumudi* written by him in 1707 (Vik. Sam.), cf. Velankar, *op. cit.*, p.77.

¹⁷ *Kalpa Sutra*, Sutra 119.

¹⁸ *Kalpa Sutra* with *Kaumudi*, pub by Rishabhadev Kesrimal, Ratlam, 1936, Sutra 119.

¹⁹ *Subodhika Tika* written by him in V.S. 1696, cf. Velankar, *op. cit.*, p.77.

²⁰ *Kalpa Sutra Subodhika Tika*, pub by Atmanand Jain Sabha, Bhavnagar, 1915.

²¹ *Kalpadruma Kalika* composed by him during the time of Jina Saubhagya Suri (who became Suri in v. s. 1892), cf. Velankar, *op. cit.*, p.78.

Laxmi Vallabha Gani comments :²²

vāsīcandaṇasamāṇakappe—yathā parśunā candanavṛkṣaḥ chidyamānaḥ parśumukhaḥ surabhī karoti tathā bhagavānapi dukhadāyake'pi upa-kāram karoti athavā pūjake chedake ca ubhaorūpari samānakalpah

Here the commentator understands by *vāsī* a hatchet (i.e. *paraśu*), but suggests two meanings of the whole phrase :

- (a) Just as the tree of sandalwood on being cut by the hatchet perfumes the (edge) of the hatchet ; the venerable one blesses even the person causing pain to him.
- (b) The venerable one had the same outlook for the adorer and the cutter.

The first interpretation is made taking the phrase as a 'metaphor'. We come across instances in literary works where sandalwood metaphorically stands for an extremely kind man; all the same the non-metaphorical usage of the phrase in the original texts like *Jamūdvīpa Prajñapti Sūtra* and *Mahābhārata* compels us to reject the metaphorical interpretation. Even if we accept it, *vāsī* stands for a particular tool of the carpenter viz. an adze.

(5) The Jaina canon *Uvavāi Sūtra* (the first amongst the *Upāṅgas*) also makes use of the same phrase in describing the *sādhana* of the monks of Lord Mahavira. The original text is :²³

se ṇam bhagavanto.....vāsīcandaṇasamāṇakappā samaletṭṭhukamcaṇāviharanti

The eminent commentator Abhayadeva Suri in his *vṛtti* to the above *sūtra* explains the phrase thus :²⁴

vāsīcandanayoh pratītayorathavā vāsīcandane iva vāsīcandane apakāro-pakārakau tayoh samāno nirdeśarāgaivātsamah kalpo vikalpah samā-cāro vā yeṣāṃ te vāsīcandaṇasamānakalpah

²² *Kalpa Sutra with Kalpadruma Kalika*, pub by Velji Shivji, Bombay, 1918, p.136.

²³ *Uvavai Sutra with Abhaya Deva Suri's commentary*, pub by Rai Dhanpat Singh Bahadur, Calcutta, 1936, p.100.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.100.

“They (the monks of Mahavira) were *vāsī candana kalpāh* i.e. having completely abated hatred and love, they had equal consideration for the evil-doer as well as benefactor who were like *vāsī* and *candana* respectively.”

In his commentary, Abhayadeva Suri does not give the (literal) meaning of *vāsī* and *candana* but takes them metaphorically by equating the evil-doer with *vāsī* and a benefactor with *candana*. However, his interpretation implies that comprehending *vāsī* to be an instrument used in cutting, he equates it with an evil-door.

(6) An important Jain canon *Praśna Vyākaraṇa Sūtra*, the ninth *Aṅga* also gives us a clue to the right interpretation of the above phrase. In one place where a list of several weapons is given, *vāsī* is included in it. The original text runs thus :²⁵

puvvakammakaya samcayovatattā nirayaggi—mahaggi sampalittā... imehim vivihehim āyuehim kimte ? mogga-musumdhi-karakaya-satti ... khaggacāva - nārāya - kaṇaka - kappāṇi-vāsī-paraśu-dhanka nikkha, nimmala aṇṇehiya evamādiehim asubhehim veuvviehim paha-raṇasattehim aṇubaddha tivvaverā paroppara veyāṇam udirenti abhi-ḥaṇanta...

The above passage describes the sufferings of denizens of hell ; they (the denizens of hell) on account of their own bad activities take birth in hell and undergo various kinds of agonies. They give pains to each other by fighting with various weapons such as mace, a sort of missile, saw, lance, sword, bow, arrow, scissors, adze and hatchet etc.

This list contains the term *vāsī*. It should mean an adze, the instrument used by the carpenter for cutting the wood. The term *paraśu* used here with *vāsī* also denotes a tool of the carpenter, meaning an axe. *Vāsī*, therefore, should also mean adze or hatchet.

(7) The word *vāsī* is used in *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* also in another place. In a list of the insects possessing two sense-organs, an insect called *vāsīmuha* (skt. *vāsī-mukha*) is mentioned.²⁶ Almost all the commentators translate it as an insect possessing the mouth like an adze.²⁷ It is

²⁵ *Prasna Vyakarana Sutra, Asrava Dvara I, 1/5/4.*

²⁶ *kimino sumangala ceva alasa mayavahaya| vasimuha ya sippi ya samkha samkhanaga taha||*

—*Uttaradhyayana Sutra, 36/129*

²⁷ See for example, commentary by Laxmi Vallabha, p.1244.

surprising that Dr. Jacobi also translates here *vāsī* as an adze. Explaining the word *vāsīmukha*, he writes, “whose mouth is like a chisel or adze. There are many insects, e.g. the curculionidae which suit this description.”²⁸

Here Dr. Jacobi clearly translates *vāsī* as a chisel or an adze. According to him, this translation is based on the explanations given by the *Avacūri*.²⁹ Now a question may arise as to why Dr. Jacobi and the author of the *Avacūri* (to which he refers), despite their knowledge of the true meaning of the word *vāsī*, do not use it in explaining the phrase *vāsī-candana-kappo*. The reason probably seems to be that because the word *vāsī* used with *candana*, it might not have been possibly thought by them to comprehend the true meaning. Whatever the reason may be, it is certain that the word *vāsī* denotes the tool of a carpenter, viz. an adze.

The word *vāsī* has not only confused the commentators’ mind but also seems to have puzzled the lexicographers.

(1) The eminent western lexicographer and a great Sanskrit scholar, Arthur Anthony Macdonell, in his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*,³⁰ gives the word *vāsī* without giving its meaning and keeping the space blank. This shows that either the author is totally unaware of the meaning of this word or he is not certain about its correct meaning.

(2) The *Amarakoṣa*,³¹ one of the most standard lexicon in Sanskrit, also does not give any information about *vāsī*. *vāsī*, f.v.

(3) In the *Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi*,³² its author Hemacandracarya enumerates the synonyms of *vāsī* thus : *br̥kṣavit takṣaṇī vāsī*.

In his own commentary (*Svopajña Tikā*), Hemacandra gives the following etymology :³³ *vr̥kṣān bhinatti vr̥kṣabhīt/1/ takṣyate’nayā takṣaṇī/2/ vasati haste vāsīh, kṣr̥kṣuṭi (unā 619)/iti ṇidih dyām vāsī/3/*

²⁸ S.B.E., Vol. XLV, p.219, foot-note 4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.219, note 1.

³⁰ *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* with transliteration, accentuation and etymological analysis, throughout by Arthur Anthony Macdonell, pub by Oxford University Press, 1954, p.279.

³¹ *Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi*, Kanda III, v.581.

³² *Ibid.*, with *Svopajña Tika*, ed by Hargovind Das and Becharadas, pub by Nathalal Laxmichand Vakil, Bhavanagar, 1914, p.367.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.83.

Thus according to Hemacandra, *vāsī* means *vrkṣabhit* or *takṣaṇi*. *Vrkṣabhit* is etymologically explained as that which cuts the trees ; *takṣaṇi* as by which any thing is stripped off ; and *vāsī* as which resides in the hand. Again quoting the rule of grammar, the learned lexicographer proves its formation and shows that it is spelled as *vāsī* as well as *vāsi*. This etymological explanation makes it dead-sure that *vāsī* is a tool of carpenter used in cutting the wood.

(4) In another authoritative work on lexicography, Hemacandra mentions the word *vāsī* as a synonym of the word *mṛtsā*. The *Anekārtha Samgraha* giving the various meanings of *mṛtsā* states the following verse :

*śatapuṣpāmadhuryosca mṛtsā vāsī sumṛttikā/
raśaḥ svāde jāle vīrye sṛmgārādaḥ viśedraḥ||*

This verse states that the word *mṛtsā* is used in the sense of *vāsī* as well as *sumṛttikā*. Now, the commentator Mahendra Suri, pupil of the author, in his commentary called *Kairvākara Kaumudi* explains the word thus :³⁴

*vāsī takṣopakaranam sumṛttikāyām yathā/
niḥśalye saṃskṛte tatra mṛtsāracita vedikā||*

It means that *mṛtsā* and *vāsī* denote a tool for cutting the wood. The other meaning of *mṛtsā* is not useful for us here and therefore, we may omit its discussion.

(5) The modern lexicographer and a well-known scholar of Prakrit language, Pt. Hargovinddas T. Seth in his *Pāia-Sadda-Mahannavo*, a Prakrit Hindi Dictionary, mentions :³⁵ *vāsī, strī (vāsī skt) vasulā, bhaḍhai kā ek astra, na hi vāsivādḍhaiṇam iha abhedo kahamecidavi, Dharmasamgrahaṇī, 489/dekho vāsī.*

Again, explaining the meaning of *vāsī*, he writes :³⁶ *vāsī, strī (vāsī) vasulā, vaḍhai kā ek astra; (Paṇha 1,1; Pauma 14, 78; Kappa, Sur, 1, 28 Aupa.) vāsīmuha pu; (vāsīmukha) vasule ke tulya muhvālā ek taraha kā kīṭ dvīndriya jantu ki ek jāti, Uttarādhyayana, 36,129.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.83.

³⁵ *Paia Sadda Mahannavo* (A Comparative Prakrit-Hindi Dictionary with Sanskrit equivalents, quotations and complete references) by Pandit Hargovinddas T. Seth, pub by the author, Calcutta, 1928, p.949,

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.949.

Thus according to Pt. H. T. Seth *vāsī* and *vāsi*—both the words are of feminine gender and denote a tool of carpenter called *vasulā* in Hindi, meaning an adze.³⁷ He has quoted a verse from *Dharma Samgrāṇi*³⁸ which uses the word *vāsī* in the sense of an adze. Again, he has given references of several Prakrit works such as *Praśnavyākaraṇa*, *Paumcaria*,³⁹ *Kalpa Sūtra*, *Surasundaricaria*⁴⁰ and *Aupapātika Sūtra* making use of the word *vāsī* in the sense of an adze. Pt. H. T. Seth also mentions the word *vāsimuḥa* (skt. *vāsimukha*) used in *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.⁴¹ Here also, according to Seth, *vāsimukha* denotes an insect belonging to the class of beings possessing two sense-organs and having mouth like an adze.

(6) In masterpiece Sanskrit lexicon, *śabda-kalpadrūma* the word *vāsi* is explained as follows :⁴² *vāsī (strī) vāsayatīti vāsi attā| gauravādītvād dīp. takṣaṇi. vāisa iti khyātāstram iti trikāṇḍaśeṣah.*

vāsih (pum) (vasa nivase vasivapiyati sanīti) uṇā 4/124 iti ij. kuthāravedah vāisa iti bhāṣā. ityaṇāpi koṣah.

Here the lexicographer has etymologically derived *vāsī* in feminine gender from the verb *vāsayati* and given the Sanskrit synonym *takṣaṇī* and vernacular synonym *vāisa*. He has also explained the word *vāsī* in masculine gender deriving it from the verb *vas* (*vas*=to live): its meaning is given as *kuṭhārabhedah* i.e. a kind of hatchet. The vernacular meaning is given as above. The word *takṣaṇi* corresponds to the adze.

(7) The well-known modern lexicographer V. S. Apte has well-explained the word *vāsi* in his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. He

³⁷ Cf. Bhargava's *Standard Illustrated Anglo-Hindi Dictionary*, compiled by Prof. B.C. Pathak (11th Edition), pp.28. (See also the picture of adze given in it.)

³⁸ A prakrit work by Haribhadra Suri, pub by Devachand Lalbhai Pustakod-dhar Fund, Bombay, 1916, v. 489.

³⁹ It is to be remarked that *Paumcaria* by Vimal Suri is edited by Dr. H. Jacobi and pub by Jain Dharm Prasarak Sabha, Bhavnagar, 1914. See canto XIV, v.78.

⁴⁰ Also known as *Katha Surasundari*, a love story in Prakrit written by Dhanesvar Muni (V. S. 1905), ed by Muni Sri Rajvijay, pub by Jain Vīdha Sahitya Sastramata, Banaras, 1916, *paricheda* I, v.28.

⁴¹ *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, 36/129.

⁴² *Śabda-Kalpadrūma* by Sir Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur, pub by Motilal Banarasi Dass, Delhi, 1960, *kanda* IV, p.357.

observes :⁴³ “*vāsī* : m.f.=an adze, a small hatchet, chisel *vas-ij* (Un 4, 136). He also quotes the verse of *Mahābhārata*.⁴⁴

(8) Another *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* published from Oxford and compiled by an eminent lexicographer Sir Monier Williams, well explains the word *vāsī*. He writes :⁴⁵ “*vāsi*=*vāsi* or *vāsī*, f. a carpenter’s adze, L. (cf. *vāsī*).”

The lexicographer has rightly explained the words *vāsī* and *vāsi* both of feminine gender and both denoting the carpenter’s adze. But the abbreviation ‘L’, at the end of the explanation is erroneous. By ‘L’ the author means⁴⁶—lexicographers (i.e. a word or meaning of which although given in native lexicons, has not yet been met with in any published text). But as we have already seen authoritative texts such as *Mahābhārata* do use the word. It seems that the compiler of the Dictionary is not aware of this usage.

(9) An important *Prākṛit-Gujarati Dictionary*⁴⁷ composed by Sata-vadhani Muni Ratna Candra, also gives the same meaning. He writes :⁴⁸ *vāsī (strī) vāsī vānsalo, pharsī*.

The Gujarati word *vāṃsalo* or *pharāsī* denotes an adze. Muni Ratna Candra also gives the meaning of the whole phrase *vāsī candana kappa* as follows :⁴⁹

“He who maintains equal attitudes towards two persons, even though one cuts it with an adze and the other anoints it with the sandalwood.”

⁴³ *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by V. S. Apte, ed. by P.K. Gode and C.G. Karve, Prasad Prakashan, Poona 2, 1957; also cf. *The Students’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by V. S. Apte, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1959, p. 504.

⁴⁴ *jivitam maranam caiva nabhinandana caḍvīsan/
vasyaikam taksato bahum candanenaikamuttatah||*

—*Mahabharata* 12.9.25 ; 1.1115

⁴⁵ *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (etymologically and philologically arranged with special references to cognate Indo-European languages) by Sir Monier Williams, new edition greatly enlarged and improved with the collaboration of Prof. E. Leumann, and Prof. C. Capller, and other Scholars, (Oxford University Press, 1889), pub in India by Motilal Banarasidass, 1963, p. 948.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. XXXV.

⁴⁷ *Jainagamasabda Samgraha*, pub by Sanghvi Gulabchand Desaraj, Limbdi, Kathiawar, 1926.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 686.

⁴⁹ *vasicandanakappa (tri) (vasicandanakalpa), koi vasalathi chede ane koi candanthi lep kare to pan banne taraf samabhav rakhnar.*

(10) In the Jain encyclopaedia, *Abhidhāna Rājendra Koṣa*, the word *vāsī* is explained as follows :⁵⁰ *vāsī—vāsī (strī) vasulā iti khyāte lohakāropakaraṇaviśeṣe Ha 29 Aṣṭa/Acā/Jnā/*

The author of encyclopaedia clearly means by *vāsī* an adze, a particular tool of the blacksmith. Here, instead of calling it a tool of carpenter, he calls it a tool of blacksmith.

Further, Vijay Rajendra Suri elucidates the whole phrase *vāsī candana-kappa*, as follows :⁵¹

vāsīcandanakappa—vāsīcandanakalpa—pum. upakāryanupakāriṇorapī madhyaste Ava 5 a/ vāsīvavāsī—apakāri tām candanamiva duṣkṛtam takṣaṇahetu tayopakāratvena kalpayanti—manyante vāsī candana-kalpāh/ Ha / yadāh :

yo māmapakarotyēṣa tatvenopakarotyasaū/
śīrāmokṣādyupāyena kuryāṇa iva nīrūjam/|

atha vāsyāmapakāriṣyām candanasya kalpa ivaccheda iva ye upakāri tvena vartante te vāsīcandanakalpāh/āha cā :

apakārapare'pi pare kurvantyupakārameva himahāntah/
surabhīkaroti vāsīm malayajamapi takṣamāṇamapi/|

vāsyām va candanasyeva kalpa ācāro yeśām te tathā, atha vāsyām candanakalpaścandanatulyā ye te tathā/bhāvanā tu pratītaiva/Ha 29 Aṣṭa/Jnā/

Here the author of the encyclopaedia has quoted the *Hārībhadrīya Aṣṭaka*.⁵² The commentator presents several interpretations with different literal meanings. In this quotation, the word *vāsī* is throughout interpreted as an adze, but the word *kalpa* is interpreted variously.

Firstly, it is interpreted as a verb—*kalpanti* meaning *manyante* i.e. consider. The whole phrase is interpreted thus : As the sandalwood considers the adze a benefactor because of its own cutting by it (and thus

⁵⁰ *Abhidhāna-Rajendra* (Jain Encyclopaedia) Prakrit-Magadhi to Sanskrit, by Vijay Rajendra Suri, Ratlam, 1934, Vol. VI, p. 1108.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1108, 1109.

⁵² *Aṣṭaka-Prakarana* by Hārībhadrā with *Tīka* (commentary) in Sanskrit by Jīnēśvara Suri, pub by Mansukha Bhagubhai, Ahmedabad, V. S. 1908. The commentary is believed to be corrected by Abhayadeva Suri. Hence, the interpretation is identical to that of Abhayadeva Suri quoted before. Cf. *Jīnaratna-kosa* by H. D. Velankar, p.18.

getting an opportunity of spreading the perfume), they (who are *vāsī-candana-kalpāh*) consider the evil-doer their benefactor. Then quoting an apophthegm, it is said, "He who is doing my evil is, in reality, benefitting me, like curing a man by causing bleeding etc. (during a surgical operation)."

Secondly, *kalpa* is explained as *cheda* i.e. cutting. The whole phrase is explained thus : They who act beneficially towards the evil-doer like sandalwood on being cut by the adze. Again, another maxim is quoted. "Though the evil-doers do evil, the greatmen benefit them ; though being cut by an adze, the sandalwood perfumes it."

Thirdly, *kalpa* is interpreted as *ācāra* i.e. activity. Here *vāsī-candana-kalpāh* means they whose activity is like that of sandalwood towards the adze.

Lastly, the *kalpa* is interpreted as a synonymous of *tulya* i.e. similar; the whole phrase denoting, they who are like sandalwood towards the adze.

Thus the meaning of the phrase is made clear.

In the above quotation the word *kalpa* is interpreted variously, all the same, the meaning of the whole phrase practically remains unaltered. The interpretation is made by the commentators here is identical to the Abhayadeva Suri's interpretation quoted before. However, the word *vāsī* is understood to denote the adze throughout.

The commentators, who have elucidated the Jaina canonical literature in vernacular languages such as Hindi, Rajasthani, Gujrati, have almost unanimously made the same interpretation as has been made in *Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti*.

We quote here some of the important commentators :

The fourth Pontiff of Terapanth Srimad Jayācarya⁵³ in his poetical translation of *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* in Rajasthani explains the phrase thus :⁵⁴

⁵³ Jayacarya (V.S. 1860-1938) was a great scholar of Jaina canonical literature who translated poetically (in verse) several such canons including Bhagvati Sutra.

⁵⁴ *koik vasaulai karine chedai koik candane lipai|
e bihun upar bhava sarikha raga ru dvesa sujipai||*

—*Uttarādhyayana ki Joda*, 19/92

“Someone cuts him with adze and someone anoints him with the sandalwood ; then he has equal sentiment for both without having any love or hatred for either.”

Similarly, Amrita Candra Suri, in his translation of *Uvavāi Sūtra*,⁵⁵ Muni Hastimal in his translation of *Praśna Vyākaraṇa Sūtra*⁵⁶ and Muni Atmaram in the Hindi commentary to the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*⁵⁷ have interpreted it as above.

In one of the recent publications of the *Uvavāi Sūtra*, the translator has given several interpretations of *vāsī candana-kalpa*, as follows :⁵⁸

- (1) The sandalwood perfumes even the edge of the adze which cuts it, because it is the nature of the sandalwood to give scent ; in the same way to have an intention of doing benefit even to an evil-doer.
- (2) To show equal feelings towards an evil-doer acting like an adze as well as a benefactor giving coolness like sandalwood—to show neither hatred nor love.
- (3) To keep equanimity of mind towards a person causing pain by the weapon and the one anointing with sandalwood.

It should be observed here that in these interpretations, *vāsī* is throughout understood as ‘an adze’. The various interpretations seem to be based on different commentators. In the first two interpretations, the phrase is interpreted metaphorically, while the third one is literal explanation.

We come across the use of the words *vāsī* and *candana* in many non-canonical works. We quote here a few of them merely for an illustration.

- (1) Eminent litterateur Hemacandra elucidating the highest stage of equanimity observes :⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Uvavai Sūtra*, pub by Rai Dhanpat Singh Bahadur, Calcutta, 1936, p.100.

⁵⁶ *Praśna Vyākaraṇa Sūtra*, pub by Hastimal Surana, Pali, 1950, p. 42.

⁵⁷ *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, pub by Jain Sastra Mala Karyalaya, Lahore, 1934, Vol. II, 19/92.

⁵⁸ *Uvavai Sūtra*, tr by Muni Umesh Chandra ‘Anu’, published by A. B. Sadhumarg Jain Samskriti Rakshaka Samgha, Sallana (Madhya Pradesh), 1963, p.101.

⁵⁹ *Yogasāstra Prakāśa* by Hemacandra, pub by Jain Dharm Prasarak Sabha Bhavnagar, 1915, 4-54 (ii).

*goṣirṣacandanālepe vāsīchede ca bāhayoh/
abhinnā cittavṛttiscet tadā sāmyamanuttaram||*

“When a person’s mind is completely indifferent to his hands being smeared with sandalwood and cut with the adze, then there is the highest equanimity.”⁶⁰

This verse of Hemacandra gives an unequivocal explanation of the phrase under discussion.

(2) Another eminent expounder of Jainism Haribhadra Suri, in his commentary to the *Avaśyaka-Niryukti*⁶¹ explains as follows :⁶²

*jo candaneṇa bāhum ālipai vāsiṇā va tacchei/
sa thunai jo va nindai maharsiṇo tattha samabhāvo||*

“The great ascetics keep equanimity when one anoints the arm with sandalwood or cuts with the adze, and when one praises or abuses”.

(3) In his commentary to Yasovijayagani’s *Adhyātmasāra*,⁶³ commentator Gambhiravijayagani explains the phrase thus :⁶⁴

*vāścandanatulyatāh—vāsi kuthārikā, tayā sārīrasyacchedanam tathā
candanenārcanam tayorviṣaye tulyatā śokaharṣābhāvātsādṛśyam syat—
rāga dveṣayoravakāśā bhāvādityarthah.*

“*Vāsi* means *kuthārikā* i.e. a small axe (or an adze)—slitting of the body by it—and anointment with sandalwood—equality in the subject of these two—it is because of the absence of sadness and happiness that is because of the absence of possibility of love and hatred.”

⁶⁰ *Yogasāstra* of Hemchandra, ed and tr into German by E. Windisch, in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. XXVIII, p.185 ff, ch IV, v. 54 (ii).

⁶¹ *vasicandanakappo jo marane jivie ya samasanno/
dehe ya apadivaddho kausaggo havai tassa||*

—*Avasyaka Niryukti*, v. 1546.

⁶² *Avasyaka Niryukti* with Haribhadra’s commentary, pub by Agamodaya Samiti, Bombay, 1916-17, p. 799(i).

⁶³ *samataparipake syat visayagrahasunyata/
yatha visadayoganam vasicandanatulyata||*

Adhyatmasara by Yasovijayagani, pub by Jain Dharm Prasarak Sabha, Bhavnagar, 1915, 3/37.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.70.

(4) The *Subhāṣita-Ratna Bhāṇḍāgāra* or gems of sanskrit poetry, a collection of epigrammatic and instructive Sanskrit verses, supplies us some verses using the same metaphor of *vāsī* and *candana*.

A maxim quoted from Ravigupta reads :⁶⁵

*suṇano na yāti vikṛti parahitanirato vināsakālē'pi/
chede'pi candanataruh surabhayati mukham kuthārasya||*

"A gentleman who is always beneficial to others does not give up his gentleness even in the time of his catastrophe ; the sandalwood perfumes the edge of the axe in spite of being cut by it."

Another popular apophthegm collected in the above work is :⁶⁶

*cik ceṣṭitāni paraśo pariśocanīyavālapravāla malayādrirūha druhaste/
nirmiyamāna hṛdayopi mahānubhāvah sa tvanmukham punarabhīh
surabhī karoti||*

"O axe ! I hate your activities ! Your rancour of sandalwood is really a matter of anxiety, (for) that gentleman (i.e. sandalwood) in spite of his heart being lacerated by you, scents your mouth with his fragrance."

In both the above verses the sandalwood metaphorically represents a gentleman or a person of very kind nature. The metaphorical interpretations made by Abhayadeva Suri and others seem to base on such popular maxims. We come across such maxims even in vernacular languages.⁶⁷

Conclusion

In the Indian literature, the phrase *vāsī-candana-kappo* is used to illustrate the state of equanimity of an ascetic who has reached a very high stage of *sādhana*. There are four possible interpretations suggested by various scholars.

(1) It signifies a person indifferent to the smell of ordure (or any bad smelling substance) and the fragrance of sandalwood. (Interpretation made by Dr. Jacobi)

⁶⁵ *Subhasita Ratna Bhandagara*, selected and arranged by Kashinath Pandurang Parab, pub by Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay 1981 (3rd edition), p.71, v. 93.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.378, v. 48.

⁶⁷ See, for example, the verses of the popular poets such as Tulsidas and Sunderdas.

(2) The metaphorical interpretation : as the sandalwood, inspite of being cut by the adze, perfumes it ; in the same way, an ascetic benefits even his evil-doer. (Interpretation made in some popular maxims and accepted by Abhayadeva Suri)

(3) Another metaphorical interpretation : The phrase expresses a qualification of a person having equal attitude towards an evil-doer like the adze and benefactor like the sandalwood. (Alternative interpretation suggested by Abhayadeva Suri)

(4) The direct and literal interpretation : A person when being slit with the adze by one person and smeared with the sandalwood by the other one, holds same attitude (or indifference) towards both without showing hatred or love. (Interpretation based on the original texts such as *Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti Sūtra* and *Mahābhārata*⁶⁸ and accepted by the commentators such as Haribhadra Suri, Hemacandra and others)

After comparing the above four interpretations, we conclude that the last interpretation (No. 4) is the correct one, because the original texts like *Jambūdvīpa Prajñapti* and *Mahābhārata* have unequivocally used the phrase in this sense.

It seems that variance in the interpretations is created because of the succinct use of the phrase (in the form of *vāsī-candaṇa-kappo* or *vaśī-candaṇa-samāna kappo*) in the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, *Kalpa Sūtra*, *Uvavāi Sūtra*, *Haribhadriya Aṣṭaka* etc. The commentators who have made the 2nd and 3rd interpretations appear to be unaware of the expanded use of the phrase (in the form of—*vāsī tacchaye adeitthe, candaṇānulevaṇa aratte* or *vāsiyaika takṣṭbahuin candaṇenaikamulstah*) in the authoritative and original works such as *Jambūdvīpa-Prajñapti Sūtra* and *Mahābhārata*.

They have probably based their explanation on the popular apophthegms. Thus, though the interpretation No. 2 and No. 3 are not erroneous, they do not seem to represent the exact sense.

With due respect to Dr. Jacobi, we must conclude that in the absence of the knowledge of the usages of the phrase in the original sources, he failed to grasp the precise sense of the phrase.

⁶⁸ Haribhadra Suri seems to be well acquainted with the original meaning and hence, in his commentary to the *Avasyaka Niryukti* of Bhadrabahu, he has made the same interpretation as No. 4. But Abhayadeva Suri seems to be unaware of this usage, and hence, in his commentary to the *Uvavai Sutra* and *Haribhadriye Astake* (in which he has made corrections) he makes interpretation different from Haribhadra himself.

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