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**JAIN BHAWAN**  
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# JAIN JOURNAL

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## JAINA DHARMA : A LITTLE KNOWN FAITH FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING AND ENRICHING LIFE

DR VINCENT SEKHAR

The primary aim in jotting down a few introductory notes on Jaina dharma is one of discovering *what is true and holy* (*Vatican II, Nostra Aetate 2*) in it for mutual enrichment. Reading and understanding life from a perspective other than our own does create a helpful atmosphere for Interreligious and cultural dialogue. The goal of life that we all cherish seems similar but the path that we undertake to achieve that goal varies. The religious consciousness of the Jains varies considerably from all other faiths, especially from the Semitic religions. The root of non-violence and renunciation in India could be traced to the Jaina and other Śramaṇa religious traditions of India. Rooted in Indian cultural ethos also means *sharing* their elements enshrined in the various ritualistic and faith traditions of India. Jaina way of life offers an opening for such an understanding and osmosis. By opening ourselves to such an osmosis 'we are opening ourselves to God' (*John Paul II in his address to the Pontifical Secretariat for Non-Christians, 28 April 1987, n. 38*) and to 'God's ongoing dialogue with humanity' (*GC 34, Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue, n. 133*). India has never been the same as it is claimed now. It was *Buddhist* and *Jain* at one time before it is called *Hindu* India. The following pages might evoke ideas similar to and/or different from one's own approaches and understanding of reality and life. But they are for our mutual enrichment.

*Dharma*, synonymous with English *Religion*, has two broad meanings in Jainism : one is generic in usage and the other, technical and specific to the use of the term. Dharma in technical sense is the basis for dynamism in life, helps movement or motion and, as such, it is opposed to *adharma*, stillness or rest. They are the media or the occasioning cause for motion and of rest respectively, just as water is

helpful for a fish to move about. No other system of thought in India has conceived these two terms in such a fashion as in Jaina system. It is possible that these two terms that signify *life* (movement) and *death* (stillness) have later acquired *moral* connotations.

The generic term Dharma has two levels of meaning : one is metaphysical and the other, ethical and moral. Our behaviour cannot be isolated from our vision about reality and truth (meta-physical belief). Ācārya Samantabhadra says that without knowing the *real* nature of things (which is permanency in transitoriness), all moral distinction between the antithesis of bondage and liberation, virtue and vice, heaven and hell, pleasure and pain will be blurred. The ultimate aim of logic and reasoning is the realization of this relation between metaphysics and ethics.

The Jaina *vision* and *way of life* brings about this relation between the two. It is the *vision* that gives purpose to one's life. Morality is that which unites all individuals as society. The *Tattvārthasūtra* (I,1), a major work accepted by all the sects in Jaina community, points out that Dharma constitutes *vision, knowledge, and conduct of life*. They are the *inseparable path* to liberation, just as adding goodness to faith, and knowledge to goodness in order to share in divine power and nature (2 Peter 1:5). This comprehensive and accommodative vision and the way has been lived and taught by the Jaina masters and seers (*Tīrthaṅkaras* and others), handed down by them to the posterity through scriptures and their traditions, and accepted by the Jaina community as normative to their life.

In order to understand the goal of life (liberation or *Mokṣa*, understood as perfect knowledge, faith, strength, and bliss) one has to be conversant with the *essence of reality*. The process of achievement of this goal, understood as the *Journey of the Soul towards its End*, is usually outlined in the seven fundamental principles (*sapta-tattva*). It could be described in a simple way. A conscious living being (*Jīva*) gets entangled and bound by the non-conscious matter (an *Ajīva*) through passionate activities of attachment and aversion. Subsequently, there is the inflow (*āsrava*) or accumulation of a subtle thing called *karma* and the consequent bondage (*bandha*) by such

karma. From now on, the process of liberation takes place. The living being, once bound, has to check the inflow (*saṁvara*) of karma through meritorious deeds like taking the vows and adhering to certain other virtuous actions. This leads the living being finally to the shedding (*nirjara*) of the entire karma by means of penance, etc. This complete annihilation of karma is described in several ways as *Mokṣa* or *Mukti* or liberation.

The conscious being Jīva or the Self is essentially a spiritual entity endowed with apprehension and knowledge. It is similar to the *temple of God and of the Spirit* (2Cor. 6:16). But unfortunately all are born in and under sin (original sin or the fruit of karma in the previous birth), and sin brought death along with it (*Rom. 5:12*). Sin and the consequent death of the soul are the results of our actions. Hence bound by karma (an equivalent to sin and death), the soul (*antarātmā*) remains co-extensive with the body (*bahirātmā*) and becomes the agent of action and the enjoyer of the fruit of its own actions. Jīva thus passes through births and deaths before it could achieve its final liberation, as though the dead will be raised to eternal life some day (*1 Cor. 15:20-22*). This happens not because of any external agency but by the individual's personal effort.

The traditional Jaina view does not accept *grace of God* or help from any external agency (as Christians believe : *the Lord will save his people - Psalms 34:22, saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus - Acts 15:11*) for achieving the final end. If at all there is, it is for the Jains only from a conventional or *practical* point-of-view and *not really*. Their *Tirthaṅkaras* are perfected beings and spiritual ideals, and as such they are only *pathfinders*. The Jaina invocation (the *Navkār* mantra) includes all such *pathfinders*, both transcendent and immanent deities, such as the masters and heads of the congregations (*ācāryas*), the spiritual teachers (*upādhyāyas*), and the spiritual practitioners in the universe (*sādhus*). Any one could achieve this goal by one's efforts.

There is a clear distinction between the empirical and the transcendental self. From the empirical point of view, the self (Jīva, which is purely spiritual) is associated with non-self (Ajīva or material), becomes the agent of actions, experiencing pain and pleasure. From the transcendental point of view the self is nothing to do with matter.



It is perfected with infinite knowledge, vision, strength and bliss, known as the four-fold perfection (*anantacatuṣṭaya*). The invaluable nature of Jīva (or life) is such that once it is lost there is nothing that one can give to regain it (*Mark 8:36-37*). What distinguishes the self (Jīva) from the non-self (Ajīva) is consciousness. Jīva is a representative term that embraces all types of living organisms in the universe, including elemental bodies, with one to six senses. That is the reason why the Jaina attitude towards and the practice of non-violence are not confined merely to the world of the *humans* but includes all forms of life.

Jaina philosophy expounds the reality and nature of sin; a rebellion against oneself one's true nature (in Christianity, it is a *rebellion against God - Deut 9:7*). Jīva (life), due to contact with Ajīva (non-life) is active. The very union of the two seems to take away one from the *Path*. It is due to the various activities (*yoga*) of the agent (living organism) the invisible and subtle karmic particles flow into the soul, blurring it or causing damage to its four-fold pure and perfect nature, just as the mirror is smeared by dust. This blurred state is called *bandha* and it is a beginningless relation between the soul and non-soul (including matter). The force that binds the soul with karma is the four basic passions (*kasāya*) namely, anger (*krodha*), pride (*mana*), deceit (*māyā*) and greed (*lobha*). Bondage due to passions leads one to births and rebirths. From the Jaina ethical point of view, it is wrongbelief (*mithyādarśana*), vow-lessness (*avirati*), negligence (*pramāda*), passion (*kasāya*) and activities (mental, vocal and physical activities- *yoga*) that cause the bondage. It is due to this sin of bondage the intangible pure soul gets obliterated and becomes tangible as humans, plants, animals, and the like.

The fundamental cause for misery and happiness is *karma* and *karma* can be meritorious or harmful. The former leads to happiness and the latter to misery. But an individual prefers good (*śubha*) to bad (*a-śubha*) actions from a *practical* (*vyavahārika*) point of view because good actions or being virtuous lead one to happiness and good reward. All evil doers will face punishment (*God's judgement of reward or punishment Romans 2:6-8; Psalms 28:4*). But the Jains believe, according to the *real* (*nīścaya*) point-of-view, that all activities whether

good or bad lead the person to bondage. Hence there is the need for *detachment* and to transcend both good as well as bad deeds. It is *karma* that determines the quality and the type of life in the series of births: knowledge, perception, feeling, family, body, etc.

But this does not deprive a person from *being free*. Law of Freedom is the *Law of the Spirit*. No one can take away this freedom from the human heart because it is this that sets a person free from sin and death (*Romans 8:2*). It is by one's free will and effort (*new karma*) that one could attain the goal of life. The Jaina masters have shown the *path of new karma* that puts a total stop to the damage done to the self by past acts. Liberation is the *state of being free* from all karma, but through a series of new efforts and discipline. Thus the power and the intensity of karma can be completely annihilated by oneself through a slow climbing of the ladder of several spiritual stages, known as the *pratimās and guṇasthānas*. Jaina religion is called sometimes the *Religion of Self-help*.

The principles that are discussed above are basic to Jaina Dharma. One needs to be conversant with this basic conception because everything for the Jains (*attitude and response to life and environment*) is founded on this. We could find similarities in concepts and in their explanations in other religious and philosophical traditions too. Discussing any theme in Indian systems might sound *philosophic*, but these basic principles have larger implications on life, the truth about pain, sorrow and suffering, sinfulness and injury to the self and others, knowledge and renunciation, etc.

The following are some of its implications for life :

- (1) Jīva, understood from its *real point of view* as pure and perfect, is the philosophical foundation and basis for equality and respect for *all* living beings. This truth is enshrined in the dictum, 'as the nature of this (i.e. man) is to be born and to grow old, so is the nature of that (i.e. plants) to be born and to grow old' (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 1.1.5.6). Non-violence and Vegetarianism have their roots in such as these sayings. The wickedness of the humans and of the earth in the Bible is traced to the spread of violence everywhere and all were evil in God's sight (*Genesis*

6:11, Ezekiel 8:17), and all human transactions led to violence and sin (Ezekiel 28:16). This is true until now. War and violence will remain until when humanity realizes this simple but basic truth about the *sacredness* of all living beings.

- (2) Every organic life is concerned about its liberation. Hence the *cause* of bondage and the *means* of liberation are *common* for all living beings. The world has to apprehend that sinful acts towards one another set a block to the achievement of such liberation. 'For the sake of the splendour, honour, glory of this life, for the sake of birth, death and final liberation, for the removal of pain, man acts sinfully towards earth, or causes others to act so, or allows others to act so. This deprives him of happiness and perfect wisdom' (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 1.1.2.3) and 'man that does not comprehend and renounce the cause of sin.....is born again and again in manifold births, experiences all painful feeling's (*Ibid*. 1.1.6.7).
- (3) The Jaina scriptures are particular in expounding the truth about suffering caused by selfishness and indiscriminate acts, the real causes of sin : 'The (living) world is afflicted, miserable, difficult to instruct and without discrimination. In this world full of pain, suffering caused by their different acts, see the benighted ones cause great pain' (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 1.1.2.1). The Jaina masters point out another truth about life: 'All beings are fond of life, (they) like pleasure, dislike pain, shuns destruction, like life, long to live. To all life is dear' (*Ibid*, 1.2.3.4). And hence if *himsā* is injurious and painful to one, the same will be painful to another because all beings hate pain. 'Know and realize that they all desire happiness. By hurting these beings, you harm your own soul.....' (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga* 1.7.1.2). Therefore one should not kill them (*Ibid*. 1.11.9). And this is the quintessence of *wisdom* (*Ibid*, 1.11.10), the *maxim* of general application (*Ibid*, 11.280). From a Christian perspective it might sound like this: God commanded the earth to produce all forms of life and it was done. And *God was pleased* with what he saw (*Genesis* 1:24-25). This is the basis for any *environmental theology*. Non-violence or non-injury to life is based on the *principle of*

*mutuality or reciprocity*: ‘As it would be unto thee, so it is with him whom thou intendest to kill....In the same way (it is with him) whom thou intendest to punish and to drive away’ (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.1.5.4-6). We all owe to the same source and to the same destiny.

- (4) Though life is dear to all living beings there cannot be *undue* attachment to it. Attachment to life sets a block to the goal to be achieved. Attachment to oneself provokes disregard and injury to others. The spirit of detachment or renunciation is the gateway to liberation: ‘Life is dear to many who own fields and houses. Having acquired dyed and coloured (clothes), jewels, earnings, gold, women, they become attached to these things. And a fool who longs for life and is worldly minded, laments that (for these worldly goals) penance, self restraint and control do not avail will ignorantly come to grief’ (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*. 1.2.3.3-5). Injury is caused by attachment and greed,. Hence non-attachement or non-grabbing (*aparigraha*) becomes a key (virtue) to liberation. Jaina spirituality and ethics points out repeatedly that any amount of gold will not satisfy a person who is greedy of riches and wealth. Violence and other sinful acts are born out of greed and it could destroy persons, their belongings, their identity and cultures. As property is an extension of a person, usurping it unjustly from the other would amount not only to hampering his/her growth but also denying oneself the means of liberation.
- (5) Comprehension of the truth about life, namely pain and sorrow, naturally leads one to renuciation: ‘the pain of mundane existence is observed so keenly and it is considered to be the true knowledge’ (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 1.2.6.2). The course of the world (regarding evil) is observed carefully and a truth is born out of experience, namely, ‘misery brings forth evil consequences’ (*Ibid*, 1.3.2.1) and one has to cease from violent acts. But it is impossible to shun birth and the subsequent pain and misery. And hence the *śramaṇa* religions (Jain, Buddhist) offer *religious life* or *a life of self-denial and renunciation* as the best alternative: ‘Perceiving the truth, they chose religious life with a desire of a pious end’ (*Ibid*. 1.5.5.1). ‘Knowing pain and

pleasure in all their variety and seeing his life not yet decline, a wise man should know 'that' to be the proper moment (for entering a religious life)' (*Ibid.* 1.2.1.5). Every religious history has gone through a transformation or passage of time (like the time of *St. Francis of Assisi* in Christian life history) considering poverty and simplicity of life as a real alternative to power, pomp and glory. It is a challenge even today.

- (6) The true path is the path of *knowledge*. It is being *mindful* of the processes of mental, vocal and bodily actions (namely *karma*), their root causes and their effects. Whether one is a religious or not, one should follow this path of knowledge. The truth about knowledge (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, 11.3.37) is that which finally leads one to the highest good, namely, liberation. This is similar to the *wisdom personified as God* in Christian tradition (*Proverbs* 1:20), characterized by sound judgement and intelligence, and apparent in the creative works of God (*Proverbs* 3:19). The *wise* are in the hands of God (*Eccl.* 9:1) and they have respect for wisdom and learning. And it is the *knowledge about the truth* that will set people free. Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition attaches much importance to *prajñā* or *Buddha's wisdom* and equates it to *Nirvāṇa*.
- (7) Since both good as well as bad actions are the cause for bondage, freedom from karma is possible by ceasing from activity (at the least, harmful to one's own and to others) and ceasing from passions. The discovering one is awakened and ceases to act...seeing that acts will bear fruit, the knower of the sacred lore parts from (karma) (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 1.1.4.3). Those who engage in works and are held in worldly bondage do not know the law, which leads to liberation (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga*. 1.10.16). The sinners cannot annihilate their works by new works; the pious annihilate the works by abstention from works (*Ibid.* 1.12.15). But complete renunciation of action is impractical, nay, impossible. *Bhagavad Gītā* says that at no time a person is inactive. Hence it would suggest a *disciplined* action for the *wise* (4.18-20), unattached to its fruits (2:47-48). One is not to get attached even to *worklessness*. Thus proposing a new trend

of thought Gītā worked through greater reconciliation between the *śramaṇa* and the *brāhmaṇa* traditions.

- (8) Despite this trend, the Jaina renouncer tradition insists on the complete abandonment of act as one of the ways to get rid of *karma*, the others being *carefulness* and resolving to tread the path of virtues *without passionate attachment*. Complete abandonment of action is considered even today and extreme form of Jaina asceticism, known as *holy death* or *Sallekhana*. The fourteenth and the last state in the spiritual ladder (*guṇasthānas*) is the status of a *perfected being abandoning action (a-yoga kevalin)*. Some of the rules for the Jaina monks and nuns pertaining to food, movement, etc. reflect an attitude of carefulness and detachment (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.7; II.1.7). But there are other instances where *pious acts* are exalted as means of attaining liberation: ‘Turning from worldly life they reach the goal by pious acts; by their pious acts they are directed towards (liberation) and they show the way to others’ (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga*. 1.15.10). But Jaina scriptures repeatedly point out that complete freedom is beyond good and bad acts.
- (9) As indicated earlier, Jainism is said to be the *Religion of Self-help or Self-will*: ‘Man, thou art thy own friend, why wishest thou for a friend beyond thyself’ (*Ācārāṅga*, 1.8.3.4). Each one has to exert oneself in the rule of truth in order to overcome the evil one: ‘Misery is produced by one’s own works, not by those of somebody else (viz. fate, creator etc.)’ (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, 1.12.11). ‘Mother, father, daughter-in-law, brother, wife and sons will not be able to help me, when I suffer from my own deeds’ (*Ibid*, 1.9.5, *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, 6.31) because ‘the doer of the acts must suffer for them’ (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, 1.9.4). Hence it becomes a challenge for the aspirant to overcome the power of karma by his or her own insight and pure conduct. ‘No one can escape the effects of their own actions’ (*Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, 4.3) because ‘the karma follows the doer’ (*Ibid*, 13.23). One has to reap the fruits of one’s own action. Every action has to be realized, and thus annihilated. The fruits that are not matured will stick to the person till they are matured. This is the logic

behind the whole theory of the cycle of births and deaths (*karma saṃsāra*). Jaina dharma, as a religion without a creator, redeemer God, places the entire *justification* on the individual, the doer and the enjoyer of the fruits of action. In this, even gods are not spared ! This is very different from the Semitic view, where God plays a vital role in the lives of people and saves them.'

- (10) *Mokṣa* or *Nirvāṇa* for the Jains is both immediate and eschatological: it is immediate in the sense that one can enjoy the fruits of complete annihilation of karma here and now. It is eschatological in the sense that the effort at annihilating karma is continued also in the future course of lives and events. In both ways *Nirvāṇa* is final and complete.

Every religious system has a way of understanding life and environment. *Karma* is the central theme for understanding *dharma* in all Indian religions. Hence *karma-saṃsāra* is part of India's cultural ethos. There could be, and there are reasons for focussing on karma in Indian situation. But the sprititual masters are aware of the freedom of the individual, the power of self-will and self-effort. Karma as a *logic of cause and effect* is not, therefore, entirely pessimistic. Those who are critical of karma do not see this logic. Self-determination and self-discipline too arise out of the same consciousness of karma (call for action) that once determined a person's life. All efforts are for the sake of achieving fresh results. Humanity's future rests on *New Karma* or selfless action.

## JAINA YAKṢĪ AMBIKĀ : BAHUPUTRIKĀ TO ŚAKTI

DR MARUTI NANDAN TIWARI

The popular worship of female principle as 'Mother', representing fertility cult, was adopted by the Jainas in the form of an early *yakṣī* Bahuputrikā (one having many children) who towards the close of 6th century A.D., was transformed into *yakṣī* Ambikā, the *Śāsanadevī* of 22nd Jina Neminātha or Ariṣṭanemi. Thus the Jaina Ambikā is a clear cut example of the assimilation of popular belief of the Mother goddess in Jaina worship to formulate the form of one of the most favoured *yakṣī* which is specifically shown with two sons. Her popularity doubtlessly was mainly due to her symbols of fertility such as a pair of sons, the *āmralumbi* (a bunch of mango fruits), and a mango tree and as a consequence, people propitiated her for begetting children. In one of the Jaina Tāntric passages (*Ambikā tāḍaṅka*, c. 13th century A.D.), it is clearly stated that, by the worship of Ambikā, the devotees are blessed with children (*putram labhate*). The association of lion as mount however is suggestive of Śakti aspect. The general assumption is that the Jaina Ambikā, also called as Ambā, Kūṣmāṇḍinī, Bālādevī is borrowed from the Brahmanical pantheon.

At a later stage between the 10th and 13th centuries A.D. some features of Śakti were also introduced in Jaina *yakṣī* Ambikā, as is evidenced by the details available in different iconographic texts wherein she is conceived with some such attributes as goad, noose, thunderbolt, *ghaṇṭā* (bell), sword and disc to manifest her Śakti or Power aspect. She was also endowed with such appellations and attributes, both in literature and art, which at once suggest her affinity with Brahmanic Durgā or Ambikā. Some of the *stotras* devoted to Ambikā in the *Bhairava-Padmāvatī-Kalpa* (11th century A.D.) bear testimony to this fact. The terrific form of Ambikā propitiated in a number of Tāntric rites such as *Śāntika*, *Pauṣṭika*, *Stambhana*, *Māraṇa* etc. are also enunciated in some of the *stutis* and the *stotras* given in the appendices of the *Bhairava-Padmāvatī-Kalpa*. Apart from the propitiatory rites, the gruesome rites were also accepted in the Tantric mode of her worship. The *Ambikā-devī-stuti* of Jineśvara-Sūri (c. 12th century A.D.) rightly invokes her as *Isaṇiṇanī* and *Isaṇat-svāminī*.



The earliest reference to Ambikā, is obtained in the Vṛtti of Jinabhadraṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa on his *Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya*. The earliest archaeological evidence also shows that Ambikā does not appear in Jaina worship prior to c. A.D. 550. The earliest known representation of Ambikā, both with the Jina (R̥ṣabhanātha) and in independent image is datable to late sixth century A.D. These figures are procured from Akoṭā (Vadodara, Gujarat). One of her early images was obtained from the Meguṭī temple (c. A.D. 634) at Aihole (Bijapur, Karnataka, now in Aihole Site Museum). In a unique image of Ambikā from Mathurā (c. 9th century A. D., now in Government Museum, Mathura, Acc. No. D7), the two-armed *yakṣī* is joined by Gaṇeśa and Vaiśravaṇa respectively on right and left flanks. The rendering of eight female figures on the pedestal perhaps suggests the presence of *Aṣṭamātrkas* (?).

After the ninth century A.D., Ambikā enjoyed still greater popularity as is evidenced by the innumerable instances of her rendering in sculpture and painting. It was during the 10th and the 13th centuries A.D. that the iconographic form of Ambikā witnessed several such additions which hint at the elevation of her status, sometimes equalling even to the Jinas, highest in Jaina worship.

In one of the instances from Khajurāho, datable to c. 11th century A.D. (Archaeological Museum, Khajurāho, Acc. No. 1608) Ambikā, like the Jinas, is joined by the figures of *yakṣa* and *yakṣī*. A nonpareil image of Ambikā from Patiāndāī (Satna, M.P.) assignable to c. 11th century A.D. (Allahabad Museum, Acc. No. 293), contains the figures of the remaining twenty-three *yakṣīs* along with their names inscribed below their figures in the *parikara* which perhaps suggest that Ambikā is represented here as the head of the group of the twenty-four *yakṣīs*.

In two examples reported from Darhat (Hamirpur, U.P.) and datable to c. 13th century A.D., Jaina Ambikā is surprisingly depicted with noose, *vajra-ghaṇṭā*, manuscript-cum-lotus and mirror (?). The forms of these images (in State Museum, Lucknow, Acc. No. G 3121 and 66/225), bear close affinity with Brahmanic Śivā who likewise rides a lion and holds a mirror in one of her hands. The noose and the *vajra-ghaṇṭā* are suggestive of the power aspect of Ambikā while

the manuscript represents her as *Amogha-vāgīśvarī* and *Sarasvatī* as mentioned in Jaina *stutis*.

Of several identical images, one four-armed image from Terḍal (Bijapur, Karnataka-12th century A.D.) represents Ambikā as carrying bunch of mangoes, goad, noose and fruit along with two sons standing nearby. It may be noted here in passing that the rendering of a goad and a noose in two upper hands with four-armed Ambikā is envisaged only by the Śvetāmbara texts.

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## MEAT EATING BY THE EARLY JAINS—A TRAGEDY OF LINGUISTICS

GP CAPT. V. K. JAIN

From time to time authors dealing with Jain texts and history, have raised the issue of meat eating by the early Jains. More specifically, the use of a meat preparation by Lord Mahāvīra to treat his sickness has been advanced as the primary evidence in this regard. In most cases the authors did not have the necessary cultural background to understand or appreciate the possibility of alternate meanings and near impossibility of their *prima facie* interpretation. The latest to join in this potpourri is the book titled *Holy Cow-Beef in Indian Dietary Tradition* which has once again raised the controversy about the Jains along with the controversy about beef eating by the Hindus. The book is not available for detailed study as its publication has been stayed by the courts. My discussions with the author and perusal of what has appeared in the press, indicates that the author has used certain previous source references to conclude that the early Jains were not so inhibited in taking meat or its preparations. He has used this as a convenient peg to support his main thesis although there is no apparent connection with the title of the book which concerns beef eating. He has reposed blind faith in his references. Perhaps he had neither the time nor the inclination to go into the depth of this matter. Had he done so, it would have revealed to him the basic infirmities in those sources.

A passage in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* (15/152) of the Jain canon has been the main and important quotation in this regard, although there are some minor references in the *Ācārāṅga*, *Daśavaikālikasūtra* and *Sūryaprajñapti* also. Some Western and Eastern scholars have translated the above passage and concluded that Mahāvīra, to overcome his illness, partook of a preparation made by cooking a cock killed by a cat. The text of his passage is as follows :-

*taṃ gacchaha ṇaṃ tumāṃ sīhā. Meṇḍhiyagāmaṃ nagaraṃ  
revatīe gāhāvatiṇīe gihe tattha ṇaṃ revatīe gāhāvatiṇīe mamaṃ aṭṭhāe  
duve kavoya sarīrā uvakkhaḍḍiyā tehiṃ no aṭṭho atthise anne pāriyāsīe  
majjārakaḍḍae kukkuḍamaṃsae tamāharāhi ee ṇaṃ aṭṭho.*

In this passage there are three main phrases which are the cause of confusion, misinterpretation and hence the controversy. These phrases are (1) *kavoya sarīrā* (2) *majjārakaḍae* (3) *kukkuḍa maṁsae*. On the first reading, these phrases loudly proclaim the animalistic context. This is superficial. As shall be seen later, at the time of compilation of this text, these words in Prakrit had the dominant meanings relating to plants.

There are a few things one has to keep in mind while examining the old texts. First and foremost, what was the meaning of these words at the time when the same were used. Unfortunately for Prakrit, (due to its receding into the background and Sanskrit gaining prominence) most people involved in understanding Prakrit, now or in medieval time, first looked for the Sanskritised form of the word e.g. *mārjāra* for *majjāra*. A number of times, the Sanskrit equivalent may not be valid to give the dominant meaning or usages of the word in old Prakrit. A further difficulty is caused because of one word having many meanings, most of them unrelated to each other. Complications are also caused by the same word acquiring a different meaning with the passage of time or the same word having different meanings in different geographical areas.

The passage from the *Bhavaīsutta* given above has been translated by some Western and Eastern scholars as follows “O Simha, go to Revati, wife of the chieftain in Mendhiyagram Nagar. She has cooked two pigeons for me. This is not required. For her use, she has cooked the meat of a cock killed by a cat”. That you bring”. After eating this preparation Mahāvīra regains health.

This interpretation is obnoxious to Jain sentiments, because it hits at the very roots of their religion and belief. The doctrine and practice of Ahimsā, in its minutest form, has been the hall-mark of Mahāvīra’s teaching. This is well-established not only by Jain Agamic literature but the literature of other communities, such as, Buddhist, Vedic etc. Any assertion implying the contrary, needs to be thoroughly studied and established, because of the great hurt it can cause to the sentiments of the Jains. Prof. Jha, the author of the above book, has chosen to present this contrary view although apparently it has no direct relationship with the title of the book “Meat eating etc.”

We hope he has done so unwittingly and not due to an overwhelming desire to prove his thesis by whatever means.

Coming back to the translation of the passage mentioned above by some of the Western and Eastern scholars on the animalistic lines, one is acutely made aware of the following shortcomings :-

- (a) Understanding the meaning of the original Prakrit words at the place and time of their use.
- (b) The social, moral, ethical and religious background of the community concerned.
- (c) Detailed analysis of linguistics involved.
- (d) The supporting text in the remaining text of the work.
- (e) The context in which the words are used.

We shall discuss them in detail on the above points as we proceed with the analysis of the issue further.

### Meaning of the original words

Without first going into the original meanings of the Prakrit words, let us look at the meanings of *kavoya*, *majjāra*, *kukkuḍa* and *māmsa* in their Sanskritised form of *kapota*, *mānjāra*, *kukkuṭa* and *māmsa*. Quite often the Āyurvedic usage of words is independent of the common usage of the same words - Āyurvedic dictionaries, various Nighaṇṭus, such as, Dhanvantari, Śāraṅgadharā, and Bhāvaprakāśa, Susrutasamhitā, Aṣṭāṅgasamgraha are a testimony to it. A common man would be quite surprised to learn that there are herbal plants named as Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Brahmā, Mahāmuni, Kapi (Monkey), Śaśa (Hare), Varāha (Boar) etc. In some areas even today “Kukkuḍa” is used for corn (Bhūṭṭā). Let us examine the offending words more closely, each of which has well-established and widely used herbal/plant meaning as per the Nighaṇṭus or the Āyurvedic dictionaries.

“*kavoya*” or *kapota* is used for the fruit of Parapat plant or for *kuṣmāṇḍa* (Petha). The *kayadeva* Nighaṇṭu describes the qualities of *kuṣmāṇḍa* as follows :-

*kuṣmāṇḍu śītaḥ prāṇaṁ svādu yorasam guru.....(peṭhā śītaḥ, pitta nāśak, jvāra, āma, daha ādi ko sānta karnevālā.*

The Śūsṛutasamhitā delineates the qualities of Parapat as *pārāpataṃ sumadhuraṃ rucayamatyagni vātanuta etc.*

“*majjāra*” or *mārjāra* also has a number of plant/herbal meanings, the prominent being lavang & rakta chitra. The Vaidyaka Shabda Sindhu describes the qualities of lavang as

*lavaṅga kaṭukaṃ tiktam laghu netrahitam himam/dīpanam, pācanam rucya kapha pittāmla nāsakṛta.*

Similarly, *Raja Nighaṇṭu* (6/46) gives the qualities of rakta citrak as

*kālo vyālah kālamūloḍadidīpyo mārjāro'gnidāhaka pāvakaśca citrāṅgoḍayaṃ raktacitro mahāṅgaḥ.*

Now let us look at the words *kukkuḍamaṃsaye*. The herbal/plant meanings of *kukkuḍa* include “the ‘*bijora*’ fruit and ‘*shitivara*’”. A synonym of *kukkuḍa* is “*sunishannaka*”. The *Bhāvaprakash* describes the same as follows :-

*kukkuḍa suniṣanne himagrāhī moha doṣa tryāpahaḥ avidāhī, laghu svādu kaśāyo rukṣa dīpana.*

The word *māṃsa* is extensively used in the Ayurveda for the pulp or flesh of fruits and vegetables.

### **The Background**

Now let us look at the back in which the controversial passage was used. Lord Mahāvīra was struck by the burning rays of ‘*tejoleshya*’ unleashed by *Goshālaka*. *Goshālaka* himself got incinerated by the heat but it left Mahāvīra also sick and afflicted by (i) *pitta jwar*; (ii) *rakta pitta* (iii) *dāh* & (iv) *rakta atisara*.

All these diseases and symptoms were caused by the intense radiation and resulted in fever, bleeding, dysentery, external and internal heat effects. Under the circumstances, what type of medicinal preparation could be useful to Mahāvīra ? In the Ayurvedic literature, the nature of meat and flesh is given as :

*snigdha, uṣṇa, śuṣka, makta, pitta janaka vātāharam etc.”*

It's obvious that such a recipe is totally contra-indicated and would aggravate the disease. The description of the nature and qualities

of herbs/plants given above fits in eminently with the symptoms. The preparation from these plants/herbs can be used effectively to combat the disease.

### Linguistics

Having examined the most appropriate meanings of the controversial words, let us see the structure of the passages more closely. First consider *mama aṭṭhāe duve kavoya sarīrā* ..... Revati had cooked it for Mahāvīra. The obvious implication, if we take the animalistic meaning of the word, is that it is a “meat-preparation” which Mahāvīra would be normally expected to consume. This hypothesis has to be immediately rejected in view of the overwhelming evidence. We have already mentioned that both Jain or other sources clearly establish that a regular consumption of meat is repugnant to Mahāvīra’s teaching and practice. Further the use of declination “*śarīra*” instead of “*śarīrāni*” indicates its use for a masculine subject (plant) and not a bird (feminine). If pigeons were intended, the use of word ‘*śarīra*’ (body) would in any case be superfluous. “*Kavoya*” would have been adequate. But if the fruit is intended, then the use of “*śarīta*” clearly becomes essential to distinguish it from the tree.

Let us examine -- ‘*majjāra kaḍae*. It looks incongruous (*kṛta*) in the sense of “killed”. However, in herbal preparations *kṛta* is often used to describe the medium of preparation or ingredients etc, such as *dadhikṛta*, *rājikṛta*. *majjāra kaḍae* would really mean “laced with cloves” or “processed with cloves.” This interpretation is strongly supported by the important absence of any word indicative of cooking. The phrase “*majjāra kaḍae kukkuḍa māmsae*” remains incomplete when given an animalistic meaning viz “meat of the cock killed by a cat” unless accompanied by a word similar to “*uvakkhaḍiya*”.

Similarly, when we examine the general social milieu, the religious and moral values of the followers of Mahāvīra and examine the balance text of the *Bhagavaīsutta*, there is no evidence to suggest that it is a meat preparation which Mahāvīra took to overcome his disease. Such a position is untenable in the wider context of the Jain canonical and other literature also.

One of the distinguished Jain Ācārya Shri Abhayadeva Sūri has written a commentary on the *Bhagavaīsutta* (1128 Vikram). His

commentary states that some people assign animalistic meaning to the words mentioned above ..... He states *duve kavoya.....ityādeḥ śrūyamāṇam evārthaṁ kecin manyate. anye tvāhuḥ kapotakaḥ pakṣi-viśeṣas tadvat yephale varṇa-sādharmānta-kāpote kuṣmāṇḍe.*

The mere fact that he chose to mention the bird aspect of *kapota* apart from herbal meaning is used by some critics to conclude that this version also enjoys the sanctity of the Jain Ācārya. Abhayadeva Sūrī in this text as well as in his commentary on the '*Sthānāṅga-sūtra*' has clearly chosen the herbal meaning. It is clear that he made a passing reference to the opposite view. He did not feel the need to refute it separately because of its basic untenability in the Jain context. He could probably never imagine that such words could cause doubts on the established Jain principles. By hind sight one can say that he should have foreseen the coming generations and refuted it separately and unequivocally.

One interesting feature of the controversy is that all the references/ sources quoted about meat eating concern the *Śvetāmbara* canonical literature. The fact that these are older texts lends credence to the theory that originally the words had only a herbal/plant meaning. Slowly the emphasis changed to animalistic meaning. The same were therefore not used by later Digambara or *Śvetāmbara* texts.

One interesting question that comes to my mind is that Mahāvīra who was considered as the apostle of Ahimsā and was believed to have preached and practised it in the minutest details, chose to use openly and prominently, such animal/bird name as pigeon/cock etc, for the medical preparation he wanted. In a similar situation any prudent man, even when forced by sickness to partake of meat-preparation, would use subtler language to get what he wanted without having to proclaim the ingredients of the position. The answer is obvious.

I earnestly hope that this unwarranted interpretation of Jain texts is not repeated. Jain academicians may ensure that the final authentic meaning of these words in Jain Agamic literature is appended to such literature so that as and when any scholar studies this literature, the authentic meaning of the words is available to him and he does not go astray.

Note : This paper is based mostly on a work by Pandit Hiralal Dugad.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Sthānāṅga-sūtra*-edited by Muni Jambū Vijaya with the commentary of Ācārya Abhayadevasūri, Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Mumbai- 400 036, A. D. 2002, pp 1-42 (in *Gujarātī*) + 43-48 (in Sanskrit) + 49-50 (in English) + 51-58 (contents) + 1-303 (Text) + 1-171 (*gāthāvivarāṇa*) + 1-40 (Appendices).

One of the finest specimens of modern scholarship in editing the Āgama text of the Jainas is the latest edition of Muni Jambū Vijayajī's text of the *Sthānāṅga-sūtra*. This edition was originally published by Mahāvīra Jain Vidyālaya, Mumbai, in 1985. The present edition is based on this edition with some changes here and there. Moreover, one palm-leaf manuscript found in the Bhandarkar Oriental Reserch Institute, Pune, was also consulted. This additional manuscript has helped to improve the original text of Mumbai. From that point of view, this edition can be regarded as the improved version of the previous edition. In this edition the Sanskrit commentary of Ācārya Abhayadeva-sūri composed in Vikrama-saṁvat 1120 is also given. In addition to that in order to understand the *gāthās* quoted in the commentary, Sumatikallola and Harsanandanagaṇī's *Gāthāvivarāṇa* composed in Vikrama-era 1705 is also incorporated. In short, this edition is quite scholastic and gives us lots of information which will surely enhance the quality of the edition.

Although Abhayadeva's commentary was published in the Āgama-saṁgraha from Benares in 1880 and by the Āgamodayasamiti, Bombay in 1918-1920, this edition has surpassed all the previous editions of the text. The printing and paper of the book are excellent and the type of the *Devanāgarī* character will sooth the eyes of the reader. Muni Jambūvijayajī is planning to complete the text in four parts. I can recommend the work to all lovers of Jain studies.

**Satya Ranjan Banerjee**

Hemacandra's *Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā* - edited by Nagin J. Shah with Sanskrit text in Roman script with English translation, Pt. Sukhlalji's extensive Introduction and philosophical notes, Gujarāt Vidyapīṭha, Ahmedabad 380 014, 2002, pp. xxxvi + 456, price Rs. 450.00.

The International Centre for Jaina Studies of Gujarat Vidyapīṭha, Ahmedabad, is to be thanked for publishing Hemacandra's *Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā*, a work on Jaina Logic, critically edited by Nagin J. Shah, a renowned and eminent Sanskrit scholar of Indian philosophy. The present volume contains the Sanskrit text of the *Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā* in Roman script printed here for the first time. The English translation of this book was done by Satkari Mookerjee in collaboration with Nathmal Tantia from the edition of Pandit Sukhlalji published in the

Singhi Jaina Granthamala (No. 9) in 1939 from Ahmedabad-Calcutta. Originally the English translation of Professors Mookerjee and Tania was published in Bhārati Mahāvidyālaya Publications Jaina Series (No.5) in 1946 from Calcutta. It was only the English translation, and no Sanskrit text was accompanied with it. It also contains the English translation of Pandit Sukhlalji's introduction and notes in Hindi (known as *Bhāṣā-tippaṇāṇi*) done by I. H. Jhaveri and K. K. Dixit which was originally published in Indian studies, Past and Present, vol II, No 2 and 3 edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyay which was issued as a separate book in the name of Advanced studies in Indian Logic and Metaphysics in 1961. Thus it should be regarded as a complete book on Hemacandra's *Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā* coupled with all possible good expositions written by the best scholars on the book.

**Satya Ranjan Banerjee**

*Āpta-mīmāṃsā* of Samantabhadra—text edited by Nagin J. Shah along with English translation, Introduction, notes and Akalaṅka's Sanskrit commentary *Aṣṭasatī*, Sanskrit-Sanskriti Granthamālā No. 7, B-14, Dev Darshan Flats, Nehru Nagar Char Rasta, Ambawati, Ahmedabad - 380 015, 1999, price 108.00.

Samantabhadra's book, *Āpta-mīmāṃsā*, is a mature contribution of a mature scholar, Nagin J. Shah, who has rendered a great valuable service to the scholars of Indian philosophy with particular reference to Jain logic. Nagin J. Shah has translated into English Samantabhadra's *Āpta-mīmāṃsā* (Critique of an Authority) along with Introduction, notes and Akalaṅka's Sanskrit commentary *Aṣṭasatī*. It goes without saying that the notes and comments of Nagin J. Shah have greatly enhanced the value of the book. In his Introduction several points have been elucidated. In his Foreword N. J. Shah has nicely summed up the basic contribution of Samantabhadra : "Samantabhadra laid a firm foundation of *Anekānta* logic and his *Āpta-mīmāṃsā* provided a model for subsequent authors for criticising onesided philosophical views." *Āpta-mīmāṃsā* has a good fortune of being commented upon by such stalwarts of *Anekānta* logic as Akalaṅka, Vidyānanda and Yaśovijaya. Akalaṅka's commentary called *Aṣṭasatī*, though elaborate enough, is not too elaborate to understand the philosophy of Samantabhadra. Hence it is included in the present work. It is not a word-by-word commentary on *Āpta-mīmāṃsā*. In this edition the editor has done his job well. This edition is recommended to the scholarly world.

**Satya Ranjan Banerjee**

## JAIN BHAWAN : ITS AIMS AND OBJECTS

Since the establishment of the Jain Bhawan in 1945 in the Burra Bazar area of Calcutta by eminent members of Jain Community, the Jain Bhawan has kept the stream of Jain philosophy and religion flowing steadily in eastern India for the last over fiftyeight years. The objectives of this institution are the following:

1. To establish the greatness of Jainism in the world rationally and to spread its glory in the light of new knowledge.
2. To develop intellectual, moral and literary pursuits in the society.
3. To impart lessons on Jainism among the people of the country.
4. To encourage research on Jain Religion and Philosophy.

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### 3. Library:

"Education and knowledge are at the core of all round the development of an individual. Hence the pursuit of these should be the sole aim of life". Keeping this philosophy in mind a library was established on the premises of the Bhawan, with more than 10,000 books on Jainism, its literature and philosophy and about 3,000 rare manuscripts, the library is truly a treasure trove. A list of such books and manuscripts can be obtained from the library.

### 4. Periodicals and Journals:

To keep the members abreast of contemporary thinking in the field of religion the library subscribes to about 100 (one hundred) quarterly, monthly and weekly periodicals from different parts of the world. These can be issued to members interested in the study of Jainism.

### 5. Journals:

Realising that there is a need for reasearch on Jainism and that scholarly knowledge needs to be made public, the Bhawan in its role as a research institution brings out three periodicals: *Jain Journal* in English, *Titthayara* in Hindi and *Śramaṇa* in Bengali. In 37 years of its publication, the *Jain Journal* has carved out a *niche* for itself in the field and has received universal acclaim. The Bengali journal *Śramaṇa*, which is being published for thirty year, has become a prominent channel for the spread of Jain philosophy in West Bengal. This is the only Journal in Bengali which deals exclusively with matters concerning any aspects of Jainism. Both the Journals are edited by a renowned

scholar Professor Dr Satya Ranjan Banerjee of Calcutta University. The *Jain Journal* and *Śramaṇa* for over thirty seven and thirty years respectively have proved beyond doubt that these Journals are in great demand for its quality and contents. The *Jain Journal* is highly acclaimed by foreign scholars. The same can be said about the Hindi journal *Titthayara* which is edited by Mrs Lata Bothra. In April this year it entered its 25th year of publication. Needless to say that these journals have played a key-role in propagating Jain literature and philosophy. Progressive in nature, these have crossed many milestones and are poised to cross many more.

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Prāśnottare Jaina-dharma (in Bengali) (Jain religion by questions and answers).

Weber's Sacred Literature of the Jains.

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