

Caitya Paripāṭī and Ahmedabad of Early 17th Century

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Introduction

In the search of Indian history and archaeology, the nineteenth century scholars like Alexander Cunningham used the Chinese records of Si-ju-ki by Juan Chuvang, a pilgrim to India. These records of *Tīrthayātrā* or *Caitya Paripāṭī* were pursued for the study of Buddhist settlements, but scepticism about Indian records of *Tīrthayātrā* was also known to exist.

Fortunately various studies of *Tīrthayātrā* records of *Paurāṇic* traditions have proved their value and are being used in the study of settlements. The *Tīrthas* noted in *Padmapurāṇa*, in Ahmedabad area proved that their record was factual with the use of old mythological symbols.

Encouraged by this experience of *Paurāṇic* record, it was thought to study some Jaina record for the city. Fortunately a good *caitya paripāṭī* written in *samvat* 1667, *Māgha* 5th, Sunday was available.

Caitya Paripāṭī

This *caitya paripāṭī* of Lalitasāgara, a disciple of Gayāsāgara Sūri is preserved in a manuscript in the L. D. Institute of Indology. The attention of the present author was drawn towards it by Laxamanabhai Bhojaka. He helped the author by transcribing the text and even identifying some places. This was a great help in the programme of the study of History of Ahmedabad, undertaken by the Department of History and Culture of Gujarat Vidyapith.

The present paper summarises the salient aspects of the work and some important results. The *caitya paripāṭī* of Lalitasāgara begins with salutation to Sarasvatī and the teacher and recommends *Caitya Vandanā* in the Jaina *prāsādas* of Ahmedabad.

The text begins with the Mahāvīra temple near Fatah Mehta Pole near Dhikva. This is the present Mahāvīra temple on Gandhi road near Patasānī Pole. Then different Jaina temples with the number of images are described.

While describing the location of these temples, the author clearly mentions that there were sixty temples in the city and twelve under ground temples. In the

suburban area the author notes thirty two temples, six underground ones and thirty eight *Bhuvanas*.

The areas in the city begin from the Mahāvīra temple noted above, and include Dosiwādā, Pataki Joga Gadhi, Hājā Patel nī Pole, Timla Pada, Pataka Raja Mehta, Saṅghavī Kalani Pole, Pataka Dhānā Suthar, Patak Jamalpur, Patak Devasi Saha, Panjarī pole, Patak Kothari, Patak Kṣetrapāla, Ghachī nī Pole, Patak Gajipur, Jalalpur.

The suburban areas are Asaul, Elampur, Navapura, Rajpur, Premapur, Sarangpur, Rupapari, Kalupur, Doshi Jasa nī Pole, Dhana Mehta nī Pole, Bibipur, Habadipur, Sakandrapur, Najampur, Baghinpur, Raktapur, Naroda.

The suburbs on the western side of Sabarmati are noted as Vadijapur, Kashampur, Usmanpur, Vajirpur, Shekhpur, Maedalpur, Kochab.

The text runs in fifty five units of Gujarati verse. The last verse is a colophon and gives the information about the author, the period of composition etc.

Comments

This is an important document for the study of the Jaina *Prāsādas*, icons in particular and the history of city in general. Significantly the Mahāvīra Prasad noted in the text exists at the place noted in the text. Its wooden structure was pulled down in the last decade of the 19th century and replaced by the present day stone temple. The stone work reflects the older wooden order, but raises also an issue of a possible renovation after the period of Jahāngīra, during whose rule the *Paripāṭī* is composed. Such examples could be multiplied but they are not discussed in this small paper due to the time factor.

The urban analysis on the basis of this *Paripāṭī* suggests the Jaina nuclei in the city and also suggests the main area of the city. The urban study of Ahmedabad indicates that the administrative and religious centre of *sultanas* extended from Bhadra to the Jami Mosque. The other areas like the old Ashawal and the newly developed places were to the east of Jami Mosque. This is amply supported by this *Paripāṭī*, which indicates that the nucleus of habitation specially of the Jains was in the area of Fatah Mehta Pole, Zawari nī Pole, Panjarā Pole, Dhānā suthār nī Pole, etc. The situation has not changed within last three hundred and eighty one years.

But, the suburban areas show continuity and change. Some suburbs like Vadaj, Usmanpur, Kocharab exist, but others like Kashimpur, Vajirpur have disap-

peared and new use of these areas have developed. Similarly some *Tīrthas* also have disappeared with the passage of time.

However, when a longer view of the growth of the Jaina *Tīrthas* is taken by the analysis of the new *Paripāṭī* and the building activity of the temples, the progress of Jaina *tīrthas* becomes clear.

In the Jaina *caitya paripāṭī* of *samvat* 2035 (1978 A. D.) one records 136 temples, 67 associated temples and 106 house temples. These figures show the rise of about three times within the period of Lalitsāgara and the present.

Conclusions

From the study of the *Paripāṭī* of Lalitsāgara as well as the *Sthala Puraṇas* like *Nagar Khand*, *Kaumārika Khand* etc., that deal with the *Tīrthas* of our country, it is clear that they preserve their tradition, history etc. When dated *Paripāṭīs* are considered as a source of history, they are as effective as the diaries of Chinese travellers and other travelogues. The difference being, the *Paripāṭī* gives detailed information of the *Tīrthas*. When the anonymous and undated literature of *Tīrthayātra* is used, it is also found to be equally effective after an analysis of its chronology on the basis of internal and external examination of the text.

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