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Holy Abodes of the Sramanas

A. EKAMBARANATHAN

M. SATYABHAMA

The earliest extant religious monuments in Tamilnadu are the natural caverns, which once served as the resorts of Jaina monks, found in some of the hills in Tirunelveli, Ramanad, Madurai, Pudukkottai, Trichy, South Arcot and North Arcot Districts. More than one hundred such abodes of the Sramanas, commonly known as *pallis*, have been brought to light so far. These caverns which are located at inaccessible heights and amidst picturesque surroundings contain stone beds with one side raised a little to serve as pillows. They also bear epigraphic records in Brahmi characters palaeographically assigned to a period from about the 2nd century B.C. to 3rd or 4th century A.D. Interestingly, the lithic records contain names of resident monks and the laity who caused to be made such 'holy residences'. The early resorts of the Jaina recluses found in Tamilnadu and their significance are described hereunder.

MADURAI DISTRICT

1. *Anaimalai* : Anaimalai is a village about five miles from Madurai and is considered to be one amongst the eight sacred Jaina hills in Tamilnadu by the Digambara sect. Not far from the top of the rock at Anaimalai is a cavern so naturally formed to afford shelter from sun and rain. It measures roughly 22' in length and 18' in breadth, while at the entrance its height is 3', but this diminishes as one goes interior. The cavern contains 3 double beds and one single bed which is slightly lower than the other and four other contiguous beds covered with earth. Eight other beds are found outside the cavern. The dimensions of the beds roughly vary from about 6' to 7' in length and 1½' to 2' in breadth. All are chiselled smooth with pillow lofts. Above the cave entrance, the overhanging rock is cut to a depth of 2' 3" in breadth and 15' in length. Below this drip-line cutting is a solitary Brahmi inscription datable to the first two centuries of the Christian era. It records that the stone beds found in the *palli* were the gift of one Nathan of Kunrattur and these were made for the merit of the monks Eri Aritan, Attuvay and Arattakayipan.¹

¹ *Annual Report on Epigraphy (ARE)*, 457/1906.

Though early Jaina vestiges in the form of stone beds and Brahmi inscription are found here, Anaimalai attained its height of glory mainly in the 9th century A.D. A number of stone sculptures representing Tirthankaras, Yakas and Yaksis were carved on the vertical surface of a rock nearby the cavern in the 9th century A.D. Some of them were made by lay devotees like Enadinadi, Saradan Ariyan of Venpurainadu, Koyyan . . . of the village Mallattirukai and Eviyampudi of Vettanjeri. These images were to be protected by the *karanattar* (accountants) of the village Porkodu and the revenue officials of Venbaikudi.²

Yet another sacred image was caused to be cut by the reputed preceptor Ajjanandi and the *sabhā* (village assembly) of Narasinghamangalam agreed to maintain and protect the image.³

An exquisite sculpture of a Yaksa next to the Tirthankara was made by a certain Cheduliyapandi of the village Peruvemarrur.⁴ Thus, pious devotees from several villages had contributed their mite in different ways to the Jaina establishments at Anaimalai particularly in the 9th century A.D.

2. *Arittapatti* : A village five miles from Melur on the way to Alagarkoil from Madurai, it is situated amongst bald rocky hills. Half a mile to the north-west of the village is a hillock called Kalinjmalai. On the eastern face of the hill is a cavern with a drip ledge cut into the outer face of the rock. On the brow of the cave is found a Brahmi inscription dated to 2nd-1st centuries B.C. It records that the cave was caused to be given by Chalivan Attananvoliyan of Nelveli.⁵ The place Nelveli of this record may be identified with Tirunelveli, a small town on the northern bank of the river Tamraparani.

Arittapatti continued to be a flourishing Jaina centre even in the 9th century A.D. as is attested to by an image of a seated Tirthankara, canopied by a triple umbrella over his head, carved on a boulder. The image was sculptured at the instance of the renowned preceptor Ajjanandi on behalf of the accountants of Nerkodu. The people of a village known as Vaniyakkudi agreed to protect the image. The hill at Arittapatti was by then called Tiruppinaianmalai.⁶

² *ARE*, 67-74/1905.

³ *South Indian Inscriptions (SII)*, Vol. XIV, No. 102.

⁴ *SII*, Vol. XIV, No. 103.

⁵ K. V. Raman and Y. Subbarayalu, "A new Tamil-Brahmi Inscription in Arittapatti", *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XLIX, 1971, pp. 229-232.

⁶ *Mukkudat*, July, 1975, pp. 13-14.

3. *Mangulam* : A village near Arittapatti, Mangulam is adjacent to a range of hills locally known as Kalugumalai. Atop the steep ascent of rocky slopes are five caverns with rock cut beds and Brahmi inscriptions. Four of these caverns are inscribed upon, while three of them have smoothly chiselled beds cut on the bottom rocks. The beds are generally found to run in different directions and are slightly bigger than those at Anaimalai. The overhanging boulder, inaccessible due to its height, bears the inscription in bold characters while in one instance (the lowermost cavern) the inscription is on another boulder, which incidentally forms the backwall of the northern portion. Unlike other caverns, this possesses an unsheltered, sandy courtyard, hence no beds are found here. The southern part of the cavern extends to a depth of 49' 5" between two boulders serving as walls. The curvaceous cavern is 58' in length and its height is roughly 11½' at the opening. On a platform are nearly thirty-one beds situated both inside and outside. In the last cavern is a centrally cut out bed on a higher level measuring 7' 8" by 5', which was probably meant for the chief among the Sramanas.

The cluster of caverns which formed the monastic establishment at Mangulam was presided over by a reputed monk called Kaninanta. Several stone beds were caused to be made in these caves by Kadalavaluti, an officer of the Pandya king Nedunjeliyan, Chatikan and Ilanchatikan, brother-in-law and nephew of the same king. Besides, the members of the merchant guild of Tiruvellarai also had evinced keen interest in this monastery and a lattice work to the abode of Kaninanta was provided by them.⁷ It is to be noted that the Mangulam inscriptions are the earliest epigraphs mentioning the name of the Pandyan king Nedunjeliyan, who figures prominently in some of the Sangam classics.

4. *Muttupatti* : Muttupatti is a hamlet of Vadapalangy in Madurai taluk. About two furlongs east of it is a huge overhanging boulder sheltering about 30 beds. The cavern measures 43' east to west, 26' deep on the eastern side and about 5' high. On the pillow side of 3 of the beds is a damaged Brahmi inscription and on the rounded margin of the sheltering rock are two others, better preserved. A detached boulder in this spacious cavern also contains a bed and a Brahmi inscription cut into it, but on a rather rude surface. There is a groove in the boulder to drain off rain water.

⁷ I. Mahadevan, *Corpus of Tamil-Brahmi Inscription*, Mangulam, Nos. 1-6.

The Brahmi records found in the caverns at Muttupatti are somewhat later than the other epigraphs from Mangulam, Arittapatti, Kongarpuliyankulam and Kilavalavu and are assigned to the first two centuries of the Christian era. One of them refers to a resident monk who was the son of Cattan Antai of Nagaperur. Another epigraph mentions that the cavern was inhabited by Caiyalan of Vintaiyur. The name Caiyalan, according to I. Mahadevan, denotes a person from Ceylon.⁸ If his view is acceptable, it would also bring to light the contact that existed between the Jainas of Ceylon and Tamilnadu in early historical times.

Around the 9th century A.D. two Tirthankara images were sculptured on a boulder nearby the caverns. The first image was consecrated in the name of the inhabitants of the village Kuyirkudi by the ascetic Kanakavira-Periyadigal who was the disciple of Gunasenadeva.⁹ The second image was caused to be cut by another recluse Maganandi who was the disciple of the great Acarya Kurandi Ashtopavasi.¹⁰ Thus it is obvious that Muttupatti continued to be an important centre of Jainism from the early centuries of the Christian era down to the 9th century A.D.

5. *Kongarpuliyankulam*: Near Kongarpuliyankulam which is nine miles south-west of Madurai is a bald rock with a narrow cleft in which are found six caverns. On the rounded edge of the roof in one of these caverns are found three Brahmi inscriptions in bold characters of 2nd century B.C. The inscriptions mention that Uparuvan, a lay devotee provided a canopy to the monastery, while Ceruatan plaited the fronds of the canopy. The same canopy was caused to be thatched by Peratan Pitan who was a native of Pakanur.¹¹ Thus the natural cavern had been provided with structural additions by the laity even in the 2nd century B.C. The next three caverns below this have six sets of beds generally without pillow lofts stretching north to south. However, only four are in good state of preservation. One of the caverns consist of ten beds, another of six, the third of eight, the fourth of four the fifth of three and in the sixth the beds are badly damaged. The average size of the beds vary from 8' x 1' 6" in the longest to 5' 7" x 1' 6" in the shortest.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Muttupatti, Nos. 1-3.

⁹ *ARE*, 61/1910.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62/1910.

¹¹ I. Mahadevan, *Op. cit.*, Konkarpuliyankulam, Nos. 1-3.

A nearby rock has a bold relief sculpture of a Tirthankara shown seated on *padmāsana*. The figure bears stylistic features of the 9th century A.D. Besides, an inscription incised below the image, palaeographically assigned to the same century, records that it was caused to be made at the instance of the revered monk Ajjanandi.¹²

6. *Tirupparankunram* : Rock cut beds are chiselled out on the western slope of a cavern on the Tirupparankunram hill near Madurai. There are six beds. Of these, four are small ones roughly equal in size and two slightly bigger. The latter lie spreading east to west and are mutilated on their pillow sides. The four smaller ones are cut one by the side of the other and are separated only by a very thin band of stone. They are too narrow even for a medium sized human to stretch freely. On the pillow side of the small beds are engraved four Brahmi inscriptions. A spacious vault measuring 56' in length north to south, 20' in depth and 5' 10" in height encompasses the remaining part of the cavern. One or two cell like holes in the overhanging rock may be intended to prevent exposure to wind and a few inches higher up the border of the sheltering rock and across its full breadth, the margin is chiselled off and cut into a narrow drain to carry off the water from the roof. A similar groove cut into the floor at the broad entrance may have likewise served to drain the water from the sloping rock on the southern side of the cavern. The existence of footholds leading to the cavern, the holes (at times square or round) cut deep into the rock by their sides were meant perhaps to receive poles which once supported a wooden railing. The perennial spring which is reached by a flight of crude steps only a few yards down the northern side of the cavern and the beds with smoothly dressed pillow lofts highlight their special use. A peculiar feature of this cavern is the presence of two low benches—one measuring 5' by 1' 9½" and the other 6' by 3'. On the northern side of the hill is a smaller cave with two beds, but without inscriptions.

There are four Brahmi inscriptions engraved on the pillow side of the stone beds. The first three records are much obliterated, however, in one of them the name of a person, Antuvan, finds place. Obviously, he could have been responsible for the cutting of the stone beds.¹³

The fourth inscription which is better preserved and ascribed to the 1st or 2nd century A.D. is important as it reveals the contact between

¹² *ARE*, 54/1910.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 140-142/1951-52.

Tamilnadu and the island of Lanka. It is stated that Polalaiyan of Erukkattur, a house holder from Ceylon (*Ilakkudumbikan*), was instrumental in creating rock cut beds in the cavern. The beds were caused to be cut at his instigation by Ay, Cayan and Naducatan who were probably stone masons.¹⁴ The cordial relations between the Jaina adherents of Ilam and Tamilnadu in the early centuries of the Christian era is thus apparent.

7. *Varicciyur* : Eight miles east of Madurai, is Vilattur to whose east is Varicciyur. Near this village is a hill consisting of three big rocks, which is said to belong to the village Kunnattur. The easternmost rock is Udayagiri and it contains a huge spacious cavern formed by the projection of the two sides of the rock. A number of beds have been cut into it, but are highly mutilated. An overhanging boulder at a height of 30' from the cavern is engraved with two Brahmi inscriptions. The inscriptions are very much obliterated, however, they appear to mention the cutting of stone beds in the cavern.¹⁵

8. *Alagarmalai* : Situated about twelve miles north-west of Madurai, it is adjacent to a range of hills of the same name. On this range between Alagarmalai and Kidaripatti is a huge cavern with beds. The way to the cavern appears to have been up a precipitous rock with narrow steps cut into at distances longer than in the case of the Tirupparankunram cavern. The cavern is a spacious hall fifty yards broad (thrice as big as Tirupparankunram) with an excellent spring in its right corner. Facing the south, it spreads east to west. The stone beds are many and of varying sizes scattered single and in groups over the whole surface of the cavern. The biggest measures 8' 7" by 3' 1" while the smallest is 6' 4" by 2' ¼". Neither are they cut deep into the rock nor are the pillow lofts appreciably raised. Stone beds are also reported to exist even below the surface of the spring. Holes for wooden posts by the side of the narrow steps are similar to the Tirupparankunram cavern. Bigger pits in the rock are believed to have been mortars used by resident mendicants for pounding their food grains. There are eight inscriptions, one of which is on the pillow side of a small bed. The rest are inscribed on the lower surface of the high overhanging rock (35' above) a little below the cutting on its margin which as in Tirupparankunram might have served to drain off water from the roof to the sides.

¹⁴ T. V. Mahalingam, *Early South Indian Palaeography*, pp. 251-255.

¹⁵ *ARE*, 38-A, B, C/1908.

As in other places, here also the Brahmi records bring to light names of persons who carved stone beds for the comfortable stay of the monks. Kaninakan and Kaninantan who were the sons of one Ravi, Atan—a gold merchant of Madurai, Vijakankatikan—a salt merchant, Nedumallan—a sugar merchant, Elacantan—an iron monger, Elavan Atan—a cloth merchant of Venpalli, Kalumaran and Tiyacantan were important among them. Besides, the names of a nun, Sapamita, and a monk, Kasyapan, also find place in the scriptal vestiges of the cave.¹⁶ The unflinching patronage extended by the merchant community to the Jaina institution at Alagarmalai is apparent from these label inscriptions.

A little below the cavern containing the stone beds is a huge boulder with a beautiful image of a seated Tirthankara. A Vatteluttu inscription of the 9th century A.D. inscribed by its side records that the work of having carved this sacred image was that of Sri Ajjanandi.¹⁷ This preceptor seems to have played a dominant role in the propagation of Jaina principles and during his sojourn to hill resorts, he had been instrumental in consecrating images of the Tirthankaras.

9. *Karungalakkudi* : Lying about eight miles to the north of Melur, Karungalakkudi boasts of natural caverns on the hillock locally known as Panca Pandavarkuttu. One of the caverns is formed by a boulder resting on and overhanging another. While the cavern containing the Brahmi inscription measures 33' east to west as well as north to south opening both on the southern and northern sides ; the other caverns have mutilated beds cut into the rocky floor. Higher up the hill are three more natural caverns with rows of beds cut into the floor.

The biggest cavern containing a short Brahmi inscription datable to the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. was the monastery presided over by a Muni Ariti who was a native of Elaiyur.¹⁸ The occurrence of a series of stone beds at Karungalakkudi would reveal that large number of monks inhabited the caverns even before the advent of the Christian era. Since the same place continued to enjoy religious importance in later times, the great Acarya Ajjanandi caused to be made an image of a Tirthankara on a boulder in the 9th century A.D.¹⁹ In fact, most of the early monasteries around Madurai had been provided with sculptural embellishments in the 9th and 10th centuries A.D.

¹⁶ I. Mahadevan, *Op. cit.*, Alagarmalai, Nos. 1-13.

¹⁷ *ARE*, 396/1954-55.

¹⁸ T. V. Mahalingam, *Op. cit.*, pp. 212-213.

¹⁹ *ARE*, 562/1911.

10. *Kilavalavu* : Kilavalavu is about six miles from Melur. About a mile south west of it is a hill with huge boulders with narrow bases gradually spreading as they rise into spacious tops. The boulder all round is chiselled wherever the slopes run into the concave portions of the rock and shelters below it a number of beds, the pillow lofts of which converge to the base of the boulder and thereby give to the latter the appearance of petals spreading evenly from the stem of a lotus flower. A Brahmi inscription is engraved directly below a chiselled portion of the rock. Similar boulders with numerous beds arranged in a circle round their narrow bases also exist in an adjoining hill and the openings all round are protected by pieces of piled up stone. The concentration of beds may probably indicate a heavy congregation of ascetics within a small radius.

A pious devotee Ilavan by name who was a native of Tondi was responsible for the cutting of stone beds in this monastery.²⁰

Subsequently in the 9th century, one Sankaran-Srivallavan caused an image of a Tirthankara to be cut on a nearby boulder and gave thirty sheep for a perpetual lamp to be lit in front of the image and also made an endowment for daily offerings. Two more images of Tirthankaras had been sculpted on the same rock by a monk Srilokabhanubhatara and a lay devotee Srikatti.²¹

11. *Vikkiramangalam* : Vikkiramangalam is a village near Solavandan. Nearby (about a mile away) is the Nagamalai range of hills wherein is a natural cavern facing south. The height of this cavern is not much except its entrance. The floor is rugged and sloping inwards. Narrow stone beds had been cut into the rock on the floor with low depression in two rows of four and eight respectively close to the uneven rocky walls on either side. In some cases a few beds have been partitioned off from each other by their ridges running the whole length of the beds. No pillow lofts are present, but on the pillow side are three Brahmi inscriptions. They contain names of persons such as Antaipikan, Kuviran and Cenkuviran who in all probability were instrumental in carving out the stone beds in the cavern. Of the three, Kuviran was a native of the village Petalai which remains unidentified.²² Cenkuviran appears to be

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 135/1903.

²¹ *SIJ*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 419, 420.

²² *ARE*, 621-623/1926.

a member of the family of Kuviran. The stone beds found at Vikkiramangalam are locally known as *undankal*, the exact meaning of which cannot be ascertained at the present state of our knowledge.

12. *Mettupatti* (Siddharmalai) : About a mile north of Mettupatti which is about six miles south of Nelakottai is a hill commonly called Siddharmalai. On the southern slope of the hill about half way down is a huge cavern measuring 297' in length and 6' 8" in height and has two rows of five beds, cut on the sloping rock each with a pillow loft. Brahmi inscriptions datable to the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. are engraved at the head side of the beds. Most of these label inscriptions refer to personal names such as Antai Ariti, Antai Iravatan, Antai Visuvan, Antai Sentan, Kavira Antai etc. As these names are prefixed with the epithet 'Antai' which means 'Holy Father', they may be taken to mean the names of resident monks of the monastery at Mettupatti. In one of the records, it is stated that the stone bed was the gift of the people of a place called Tidiyil. Very likely, it is the modern Tidiyan, a hamlet near Dindigul in Madurai district.²³

RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT

13. *Kunrakkudi* : Kunrakkudi, commonly known as Kunnakkudi, is a small village in Tiruppattur taluk of Ramanathapuram district and lies at a distance of about five miles from Karaikkudi town. The place derives its name from the small hillock found amidst the village. Three rock-cut shrines dedicated to Lord Siva are found at different levels of the hill, while on the top is a structural edifice enshrining Muruga. On the western side of the Muruga temple is a natural cavern with stone beds used by the Jaina mendicants in olden days. A little away from the cavern is a rock-cut well which must have supplied water to the resident monks.

Two fragmentary early inscriptions are engraved on the inner side of the overhanging rock of the cavern. The first inscription is written not only upside down, but also in the reverse form. One may find that the top portion of the alphabets is at the bottom while their base is at the top. Further, the letters are incised reverse as found in the matrix of seal.²⁴ It reads, 'Atancattan of Piyur' and possibly it may be taken to mean that Atanchattan was the resident monk of the cavern, who hailed

²³ T. V. Mahalingam, *Op. cit.*, pp. 258-266.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

from the village Upiyur. The second inscription is also very much mutilated, however, it informs that the stone bed was caused to be made by a person whose name is lost.²⁵

The cavern with stone beds and Brahmi inscription would bear testimony to the fact that in the 3rd-4th centuries A.D. the hillock was resorted to by Jaina recluses. Subsequently, Jainism lost its hold in this area, and in all probability, around the 8th century A.D. the Saiva rock-cut temples came into being. Thereafter, it became a stronghold of the Saivites, particularly famous for the worship of Lord Muruga.

TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

14. *Marugaltalai* : Situated about ten miles from Palayamkottai, Marugaltalai possesses a natural cavern on a low hill locally referred to as Puviludaiyarmalai. This small cavern is formed by two huge boulders one overhanging the other and about 4' or 5' below the top. The overhanging rock is chiselled to a length of about ten yards with seven beds at convenient places in different sections. At the right side of these is a Brahmi inscription. The cavern is 52' in length north to south and 8' deep. A drip ledge is cut on the overhanging rock so as to drain off rain water. The rock cut beds were here caused to be cut by Kasipan a member of the Velir clan. These beds, being rock-cut, are referred to as *kalkañchanam* in the inscription.²⁶

PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT

15. *Sittanavasal* : It is the most celebrated Jaina centre in Pudukkottai district. About nine and a half miles from Pudukkottai town is a small hamlet Sittanavasal. On the hill near the village at an inaccessible height is a natural cavern formed of a cleft which divides the overhanging top portion from the rocky floor below. The cavern is locally known as *ēladipāttam* on account of seven square holes used as 'steps' for reaching the cavern. Seventeen beds are chiselled in the cavern some of which are damaged, but all have pillow lofts. Round the top and left side of the largest bed is a Brahmi inscription.

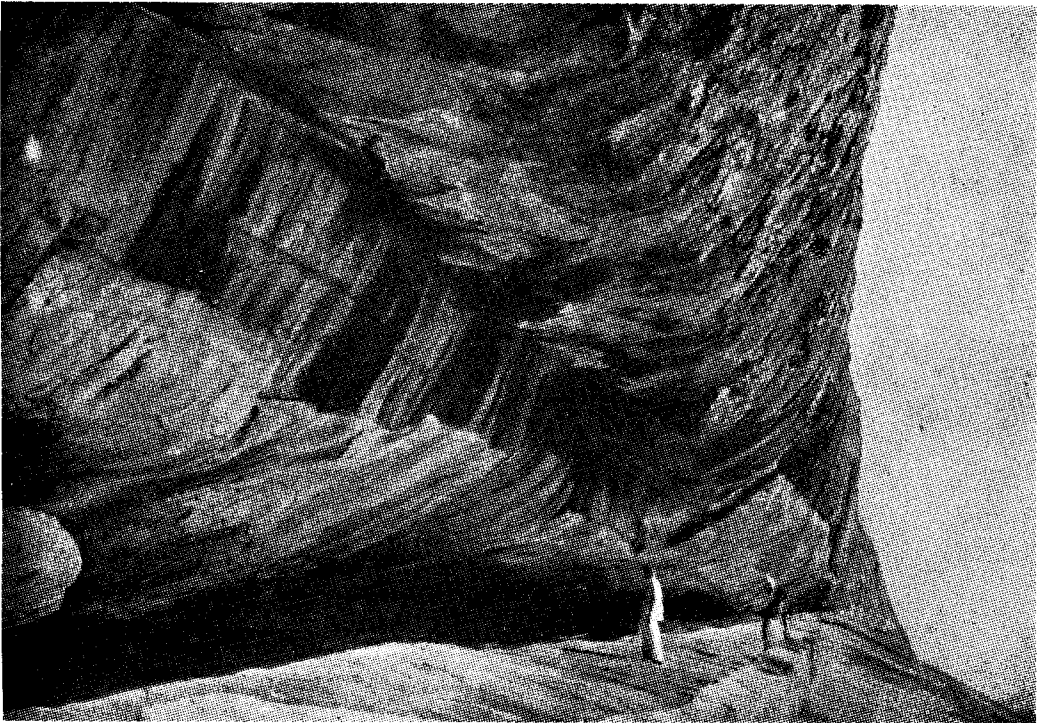
According to the inscription, the stone bed was caused to be made by Ilayar of the village Cirupavil for the monk Kavuti Iten who was born

²⁵ ARE, 44/1909.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 407/1906.



*General View of the Cavern Containing Inscriptions in Brahmi
Archchalur, Coimbatore*



Cavern Inhabited by Jaina Monks, Sittannavasal



Inscribed Rock-cut Bed, Sittannavasal

at Kumulur in Eruminadu.²⁷ The villages such as Cirupavil and Kumulur have not been identified. Eruminadu may be identical with Mahishamandala (Mysore region). If the identification is acceptable, it would reveal that some ascetics of the Jaina persuasion migrated to the extreme south from Karnataka to propagate the gospel of the Jina.

Sittanavasal continued to flourish as a stronghold of the Jaina sect from the 7th to the 9th century A.D. A rock cut temple dedicated to three Tirthankaras had been hewn out of the nearby hillock in the 7th century A.D. Subsequently, in the middle of the 9th century A.D., it was renovated and repaired by Ilangautaman, a well known Jaina teacher of Madurai during the reign of the Pandya king Srimara Srivallabha. Exquisite paintings depicting *samavasarana*, lotus tank, dancers etc., were executed on the ceiling of the *mandapa* and the corbels of the pillars.²⁸

Jaina ascetics like Sri Pirutivinachan, Tirunilan, Tiruppuranan, Tittaicharanan, Tiruchattan, Sri Purnachandran etc., were associated with this religious institution when Jainism was on its ascendancy at Sittanavasal.²⁹

TRICHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

16. *Pugalur* : Pugalur is a small village in Karur taluk where a low hill called *Arunattarmalai* contains caverns with rock-cut beds and pillow lofts. Engraved on these pillow lofts are Brahmi inscriptions. The first cavern was dedicated to the revered saint Senkasyapan of Yarrur and the beds therein were caused to be cut by the Prince Ilankatunko, the son of Perunkatunkon who was the son of the king Atancellirumporai, on becoming heir apparent.³⁰

It is of great interest to note that the inscription found on the first cave mentions the names of three members of the Irumporai family of the early Cera dynasty, referred to in *Patirruppattu* (Ten Idylls), one of the Sangam classics. It deserves special mention that though the Irumporai kings were not followers of the Jaina faith, the young prince Ilankatunko when anointed as the *yuvaraja*, dedicated the *palli* to the Jaina monk Senkasyapan.

²⁷ T. V. Mahalingam, *Op. cit.*, pp. 245-250.

²⁸ *SII*, Vol. XIV, No. 45.

²⁹ *ARE*, 325, 329, 330/1960-61.

³⁰ I. Mahadevan, *Op. cit.*, Pugalur, Nos. 1 and 2.

The other caves found at Pugalur also bear lithic records in Brahmi characters and they mention names of Jaina adherents who endowed stone beds. Kiran, Korran and Ori who were the sons of Pitantai of Nalliyur, Veniatan, Korrantai Ilavan, Ilankiran and Atti, a gold merchant from Karur find place in these records as donors of stone beds.³¹ The scriptal vestiges found in Pugalur are of a much developed variety and hence palaeographically ascribed to the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D.

About seven miles from Arunattar hill is the village of Ardhanari-palaiyam wherein are found five beds chiselled out of rock on a boulder. However, no Brahmi inscriptions are available.

COIMBATORE DISTRICT

17. *Araccalūr* : Lying on the Erode-Kangayam road, Araccalur is adjacent to a low lying hill called Nagamalai which possesses a natural cavern at a height of about 60' from the surrounding area. In this cavern are found stone beds with inscriptions.

One of the inscriptions reveal that these seven beds were caused to be cut by Tevan Cattan, a lapidarist. The remaining two inscriptions seem to have some connection with musical notes. One is a symmetrical *bandha* of five letters in each line, made up of three *akṣaras ta, ti, te*. The other is also a symmetrical *bandha* of five letters in each line, made up of three *akṣaras ki, ta, ti*.³² Perhaps, these two records may be considered the earliest musical inscriptions of Tamilnadu, while later ones are found in places like Kudumiyanmalai and Tirumayyam in Pudukkottai district.

NORTH ARCOT DISTRICT

18. *Mamandur* : Seven miles from Conjeevaram is Mamandur. About a furlong to the north of the Hindu rock-cut caves, half way up the hillock is a natural cavern formed by one boulder reclining over another, thus providing shelter beneath. A thin and shallow dripline cut into the overhanging rock provides shelter for habitation. A Brahmi inscription is found engraved on the brow of the boulder.

³¹ *ARE*, 346/1927-28.

³² *Ibid.*, 281, 282/1961-62.

Curiously enough, the inscription brings to light a hitherto unknown minor chieftain who ruled over the area around Mamandur in the 3rd-4th century A.D. He was Kaniman the chieftain who captured Tenur, and at whose instigation Ciru...van, the stone mason modelled the cavern.³³ The name of the mason is also read as calavan. Such a name appears to have been borne commonly by the Jainas. Evidently, the architect was a member of the Jaina community.³⁴

The early Jaina caverns in Tamilnadu are important for several reasons. They represent the earliest religious monuments in this region they contain the earliest epigraphic records in Brahmi characters assignable to a period from 2nd century B.C. to 3rd or 4th century A.D. and above all, the caverns provide authentic evidence of the spread of Jainism in Tamilnadu. The natural caves were made suitable for habitation by cutting stone beds in them. The beds were chiselled smooth with one side raised a little to serve as pillows. The overhanging rock was cut in the form of a drip ledge so as to prevent rain water flowing into the cave shelters.

The presence of a large number of stone beds in the caverns all over Tamilnadu would indicate an equal number of Jaina monks occupying these resorts. Inscriptions engraved therein provide the names of resident monks and some of the *srāvakas* who gifted the stone beds.

When Jainism gained popular support in Tamilnadu, some of the kings belonging to the Cera and Pandya dynasties and a few minor chieftains started extending their patronage to this sect. Lay devotees also began to endow Jaina monastic organisation. Moreover, the members of mercantile groups had also played a dominant role in the development of such institutions.

With the rapid spread of Jainism, there arose several settlements of the Jaina community in different parts of Tamilnadu. Though all those ancient centres are not known to us, Madurai, Tiruvellarai, Tondi, Petalai, Tidiyil, Elaiyur, Venpalli, Nagaperur, Patinur, Nelveli, Nalliyur, Karur, Yarrur, Pakanur and Kunrattur had been important settlements with a sizable Jaina population, which lent its support to the various monastic organisations.

³³ I. Mahadevan, *Op. cit.*, No. 1.

³⁴ T. V. Mahalingam, *Op. cit.*, pp. 289.

Jina Aristanemi, Beyond all Clay

LEONA SMITH KREMSEK

Clay jar.

...No matter the colours of dust and water
Moulded to shape this individual jar,
For the body-reality of all clay
To water and dust returns.

Yet within each jar, its own formless form.

...His, so dutiful to its original nature
That, when its earth-bound body crumpled,
From within soared His formless soul
To the dimension of total spiritual purity.

Cousin-brother to the blue Krsna.

...He heard wailing, the helpless and wretched
Food-animals doomed to be His wedding feast.
He freed them, then as a monk wandered He.
Enlightenment filled to the brim His mission.
Sayeth He : *Spare the sacrificial food-animals.*
Verily, harmlessness is the highest religion.

O Reader ! Ye are the clay

Moulded by your deeds in your former lives.
Ye have free-choice : rebirth as a flawed jar,
Or a path of harmlessness to all living beings
That leads ye nearer to this Jina Aristanemi.

Blessed Jina, in bliss

At the top of the universe,

Forever there, beyond all clay.

Some Remarks on the Analysis of the Sensuous Cognition (Mati-Jnana) Process*

(Tattvārthādhigamabhāṣya 1.15)

PIOTR BALCEROWICZ

In the *Tattvārthādhigamabhāṣya* commenting upon the *sūtra* 1.15, that deals with the successive stages of *mati-jñāna* (sensuous, perceptual cognition), we find a brief description of the cognitive process leading to the finally formed perceptual knowledge (or cognition : *mati-jñāna*) acquired with the help of the five senses and a quasi-sense organ or mind,¹ the four stages are namely : *avagraha* (perception, sensation), *ihā* (speculation, stage of hypotheses), *apāya*² (perceptual judgement) and *dhāraṇā* (retention, memorizing enabling future recollection). The method employed in the description of each stage by the author of the *T.S.Bh.*³ is twofold : insertion of synonyms of the technical terms concerned and a definition or a brief characteristic of a given step.

Thus the synonyms of the perceptual judgement, the third stage of the sensuous cognition, given in the *Bhāṣya* are as follows : *apāya*, *apagama*, *apanoda*, *apavyādha*, *apeta*, *apagata*, *apavidha* and *apanutta*. It is evident that we can group them in two sets, each of them numbering four synonyms, and—besides—one can group them into four pairs, each pair derived from the same root or derivative basis, namely : *apa√i*, *apa√gam*, *apa√nud*, *apa√vyādha*, all meaning etymologically “to destroy : to remove”. The four synonyms of the first division are formed with the help of *kṛt*-affixes⁴ denoting *nomena agenti* or abstract nouns, for instance :

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¹ *T. S.*, I. 14.

² or “*avaya*” which is rather a form of “*apaya*” inherited from the Prakrit.

³ The authorship of *T.S.Bh.* ascribed to Umasvati is still questionable ; vide Bronkhorst, *Chronology of the Tattvarthasutra*, Wienerzeitschrift, Band XXIX, 1986.

⁴ vide Kale, § 777 ff.

(a) 'apāya' is formed with the help of *ac*-suffix and therefore it means literally ; "going away ; destruction ; annihilation" (the Prakrit form 'avāya' having similar meaning) ;

(b) 'apagama', being formed with the *ap*-suffix forming abstract nouns, has therefore the meaning "going away ; departure ; destruction" (the Prakrit form has got similar meaning) ;

(c) 'apanoda' as well as 'apavyādha' take the *ghañ*-suffix⁵ and bear the meaning "removing ; taking away" (the Prakrit form 'avaṇoya' meaning "eliminating ; elimination") and "piercing ; removing ; removal" respectively.

Unlike the active meaning of the words belonging to the first group, the synonyms of the second division are Past Passive Participles, We can, therefore, ask why the author of the *Bhāṣya* has combined terms grammatically bearing opposite or rather contradictory meaning as synonyms ?

In the Jaina epistemology the terms under examination denote rather a cognitive process although their etymological meaning is slightly different. Apāya or perceptual judgement is defined in *Sarvārthasiddhi*⁶ as "comprehending of the true nature on account of the distinctive cognition (*nirjñāna*) of particular characteristics".⁷ A closer examination of the definition of the perceptual judgement (*apāya*) found in *T.S.Bh.* may lead us to the conclusion that the author upheld the opinion, quoted and criticized by Jinabhadra⁸ as well as by Yasovijaya,⁹ which regarded *apāya* as only excluding the non-existent characteristics:¹⁰

"The perceptual judgement is a removal of the mental process analysing the pros and cons (of the hypotheses dealing with) the real and the non-existing (qualities : the hypotheses that were formed previously at

⁵ see also "*Laghusiddhantakaumudi*", No. 905, 906 and 932.

⁶ *S. Si.*, I. 15.

⁷ compare N. Tatia, p. 41.

⁸ *Vibh.* 185 ; after N. Tatia, p. 41.

⁹ *J. T. Bh.*, I. (7). § 15.

¹⁰ vide N. Tatia, p. 41.

the stage of speculation or *ihā*) after perceiving an object.¹¹ It is, therefore, self-explanatory that—according to the author of the *T.S.Bh.*—in the *apāya* stage of the cognitive process the incorrect possibilities are excluded in the course of a deliberate inquiry and only the accurate hypothesis remains. We may also note that the opinion quoted by Yasovijaya in *Jaina-tarka-bhāṣā*¹² is testified positively by the set of synonyms, given in the *Bhāṣya* 1.15, related to *dhāraṇā* or retention of the resultant cognition.”¹³

Having taken into consideration that the synonyms of *apāya* of the second group are Past Passive Participles denoting a result of a cognitive operation indicated by the first division of the synonyms, i.e., they are to indicate the hypotheses excluded due to the examining process of *apāya*, we may state that to the author of the *Bhāṣya* the perceptual judgement (*apāya*) is not a mere process of negative analysis leading to a determinate judgement but it includes, as well, the result of such inquiry : the cognitive process and the final decision are inseparable. The above ascertainment is justified also by a statement found in the *Bhāṣya* commenting upon the *T.S.*, I.11 :

“Sensuous cognition is conditioned by a perceptual judgement and by actual substances.”¹⁴

¹¹ *T.S.Bh.* ; “*avagrहितe visaye samyag asamyag iti guna-dosa-vicaranadhyavasaya-panodo payah.*” ;

In this connection I would like to point out—in order of better understanding—another possibility of interpreting this passage according to which the opinion expressed in *T.S.Bh.* might be unanimous with the Agamic conception of *apaya* as well as with Jinabhadra’s statement concerning the nature of the perceptual judgement : “The perceptual judgement is—after perceiving an object—(threefold, namely) a speculation upon and apprehension of the correctness and the inaccuracy (of our earlier hypotheses) as well as removing the incorrect suggestions or doubts” ; but such construction is rather hardly tenable.

¹² *J. T. Bh.*, I, (7), § 15 ;

“*asadbhutartha-visesa-vyatirekavadharanam apayah, sadbhutartha-visesavadharanam ca dharana.*”

¹³ *T.S.Bh.*, I. 15 ;

“*dharana pratipattir avadharanam avasthanam niscayo, vagamah avabodha ityanarthataram.*”

¹⁴ *T. S. Bh.*, I. 11 ;

“*apaya-sad-dravyataya mati-jnanam.*”

We may thus conclude that, according to the *T.S. Bh.*, the cognitive process, namely the perceptual judgement (*apāya*) as well as the sensuous cognition (*mati-jñāna*), does not exist without its result in the form of a resultant judgement and, as such, the judgement is an inseparable and essential part of the cognitive process.

Besides, the author of the *Bhāṣya* can be reckoned a supporter of an opinion considering, on the one hand, the perceptual judgement as a negative process excluding non-existent particulars and, on the other hand, the retention (*dhāraṇā*) as a positive process determining the existent characteristics as well as the retaining of the resultant cognition enabling recollection, which distinguishes him from the Agamic tradition.

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Gleanings

THE LORD OF THE DESERT

Salman Rashid

The first time I saw it, five years ago, it had just received a fresh coat of whitewash and stood a brilliant white against the gray-brown repetend of sand dunes in the great Thar Desert of south-eastern Sind, about 25 kms north of Virawah. This time the whitewash was gone and, from a distance, the temple was barely discernible amid the sea of dunes. My heart skipped a beat until I spotted it.

As I got off the 'kekra' (World War II vintage trucks retrofitted with diesel engines to serve as buses in the desert) and made my way to the temple, I was joined by the old keeper. He had not changed much in five years, only his gray mountache was now dyed black. This time he again told me that the temple was consecrated almost 800 years ago, antedating the actual date of building by mere 200 years as against the exaggeration of thousands of years common to the illiterate of my country. Once again he insisted that it was a Hindu temple rather than Jain, this time I refrained from arguing the point.

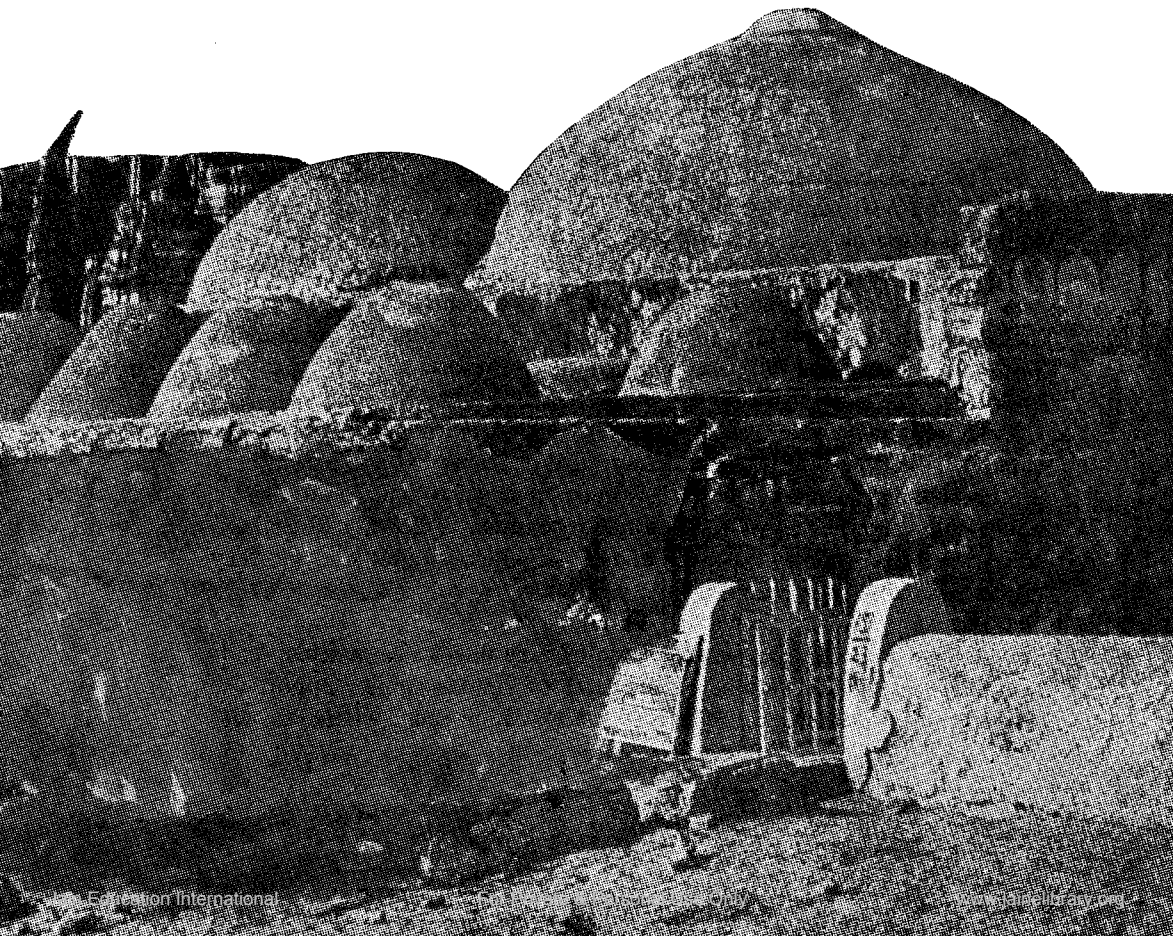
The temple, lying about a kilometre outside the Gori village, is aligned in a north-south direction and its entrance is afforded from the square portico at the northern end. At the southern end is the truncated stub of the beautifully ornate spire that characterises all Jain temples. It fell victim to the devastating earthquake of October 1898 and lack of resources prevented its rebuilding, a boon, perhaps, for modern workship would have raised no more than an eyesore.

The domed ceiling of the portico is adorned with beautiful, though slightly fading, paintings of some mythical pageantry of the past ; there are equestrian processions, stately women in royal coaches and elegant palanquins and be vies of dark-skinned beauties in flowing Rajasthani robes. My escort knew nothing of their significance and told me they depict past kings and queens.

A narrow door with jambs, made of very fine white marble, leads into the inner chamber where 20 pillars of similar stone support the domed roof. In the wings are 26 tiny cubicles 13 in each, where devotees

performed their genuflexions privately. Another narrow marble jambed door leads to a darkened room that was once the hallowed sanctum of Gorecha, the lord of the temple of Gori. As I stepped in the stench of guano hit me in the face and the supercilious perpetrators of this sacrilege began to flap about in the beam of my torch, squeaking in protest. The niche where the icon of Gorecha once stood was empty as it has been for almost 300 years now. A couple of oil lamps burned against the sooty wall gives the empty niche a dim, eerie glow. In the quietness of the gloaming light I heard the sound of bells and the chanting of Jain *mantras* that took place centuries ago.

Captain Raikes, Magistrate of the Thur and Parkur in the 1850, wrote in his memoir on the district that an image of the Jain god Paras-nath was purchased by Mejah Sha, a rich Wania, from a Turk in 1376 to be installed at Gori Temple and named Gorecha after it. This image, it is said, was studded with a large diamond between its eyebrows and two smaller ones on the breast. The value of these stones was supposed to be incalculable.



Another legend relates that about 600 years ago Manga Oswal, an affluent merchant of Pari Nagar, on business at Piran Patan was informed by an apparition of a priceless statue buried under a Muslim's property. After considerable effort, Oswal secured the idol and returned with it to Pari Nagar where the apparition appeared to him again and ordered him to put the image on a cart made of *neem* wood, drawn by two calves and go without looking after him. Thus Manga Oswal went until the cart broke down and the man fell asleep from exhaustion. The spirit appeared to him for the last time informing him that the image was now under the ground and that he was to build a temple on that spot.

These are the legends. History, though it is silent on the origin of the idol, however, records that in 1716 Sutojee Sodha, the Rajput ruler of



Virawah, confiscated the diamond-studded idol and took it to Virawah to exhibit it to rich Waniahs against heavy payments. Fairs were held at Virawah and Palanpur whenever assurance of sufficiently large payments could induce the Sodhas to remove the statue from its hiding place whose secret was zealously guarded and passed down the line from father to son.

In about 1830, the Talpur rulers of Sind made an incursion to Virawah, fired ostensibly by the iconoclastic fervour of Islam but overtly for the acquisition of the statue. Punjajee, the ruling Sodah, was captured and eventually done to death presumably for not revealing the secret of the hiding place. His death lent an immortal latency to the statue and to this day, it is said, the diamond studded image of Parasnath lies entombed somewhere in the wastelands around Virawah. But the faithful—mostly Hindus—still occasionally resort to Gori to pay homage to the Jain god and light incense and oil lamps in the empty niche for his appeasement.

There is only one daily visitor, the old keeper, who unfailingly lights the oil lamps, but he is convinced that Parasnath was a Hindu *swami* and not a Jain god.

from *The Telegraph*, June 4, 1989

Cultural Heritage of Bengal in Relation to Jainism

S. C. MUKHERJI

Jainism, which was preached by Parsvanatha and Mahavira in pre-Mauryan times, is still a living faith in India. It has considerably moulded the cultural progress in India. It is one of the earliest religious faiths of India—the history of the growth and development of which have been elaborately delineated in various religious texts and commentaries of the sect both in Prakrit and Sanskrit besides various other vernacular languages of India. The influences which this religious faith once exerted upon the populace of India, specially the Vaisya and Ksatriya communities, including royal personages are evidenced by the existence of numerous temples, rock-cut caves, votive shrines, illustrated manuscripts, images and reliefs of the Tirthankaras and their attending deities in bronze and stone in various places of the eastern, western and southern zones of India. Mathura and other places of northern India were also other important Jaina strongholds.

Jainism like Buddhism had its origin in eastern India—Vaisali in Bihar, but it had its influence felt in the neighbouring states of Bihar, viz., Bengal and Orissa. Places like Vaisali, Rajgir, Pareshnath hill (Sameta-sikhara) and Pavapuri in Bihar are hallowed with the memory of the principal Jaina Tirthankaras of which special mention may be made of Parsvanatha and Mahavira.

There are evidences to show that some of the royal personages of the Sisunaga dynasty like Bimbisara and Kunika-Ajatasatru were adherents of Jainism. On the evidence of the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela, the Kalingaraja, it is clear that at least one king of the Nandas was a staunch supporter of Jainism, who carried a Jina figure to his capital, while conquering Orissa, only to be brought by the great Kalinga king, mentioned above. The founder of the Maurya dynasty, king Chandragupta also embraced Jainism in the later years of his life and died as a member of the Jaina laity at Sravanabelgola in Mysore. Celebrated Bhadrabahu was the spiritual Guru of this great monarch.

While Buddhist preachers including the Buddha selected Kosala and Magadha as the respective regions for propagation of their religious

views, Vaisali and Bengal were chosen by Mahavira and his followers for the aforesaid purpose.

Mahavira, who was born at Kundagrama in the vicinity of Vaisalinagara, spent earlier part of his life in the towns and villages as well as in monastic recluses in hilly regions. We have it from some Jaina canonical texts, corroborated by Buddhist texts as well, that Mahavira personally visited the Radhadesa and possibly also Suhmadesa to its south in connection with his religious preachings. According to some sceptic scholars, the great Jaina preacher did not actually travel in Bengal. Now, let us examine the correctness of the latter view in the following paragraph.

According to the Jaina traditions, recorded in their canonical texts like the *Āyārāṅga Sutta*, *Kappa Sutta* and *Bhagavaī Sutta*, Mahavira came to Angadesa, Radhadesa and Suhmadesa and spent as many as 18 years in preaching his religious ideas. In Lesson 3, Lecture 8 of Book I of the *Āyārāṅga Sutta* (ed. Jacobi, Trans.) it is said that while travelling in the pathless country of the Ladhas (Radhas) in Vajjabhumi¹ and Subbhabhumi, Mahavira was encountered with various difficulties and oppressions for the people of the said tracts attacked him with sticks, made the dogs bite him and used abusive languages against him. Sometimes it was difficult for him in reaching a village. In the long run, however, Mahavira became victorious and brought many people of the Ladha country to his fold. It has further been recorded in the aforesaid text that the mendicants (Nirgranthas or Jainas) used to take rough food in Vajjabhumi and used to move about with long and strong poles in order to drive away the dogs so attacking. As to the presence of the Jaina medicants in that part of country in *circa* 3rd century B.C. (the date of the *Sūtra*) we may construe that either Jainism existed there before the arrival of Mahavira and he only increased the number of his followers, or the description had nothing to do with Mahavira's travel in that land and probably related to the treatment meted only to some Jaina monks at a subsequent period. While the former conclusion cannot be well-substantiated at the present stage of our knowledge, the latter view is unwarranted. To my mind it appears that the Jaina monks came to the Radha country even before the travel of Mahavira in Bengal, and he went there in order to strengthen the number of his adherents. Were the Jaina mendicants, mentioned above, the followers of *cāturyaṃa*

¹ The *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to a diamond mine in the Sarkar Madaran. Vajrabhumi means 'land of diamond'.

observance as preached and practised by Parsvanatha, for some Jaina followers of parts of the district of Hazaribagh, Ranchi and Manbhum were said to have practised the same even at the end of the 19th century A.D. The *Bhagavatī-sūtra* mentions that Mahavira once spent a rainy season at Paniyabhumi. The Jaina *Kalpasūtra* too records that the rainy season was spent by the great Jaina leader at Paniyabhumi (Paniyabhumi=*anārya deśavisesā*). This place was possibly inhabited by the merchant community (*panya-panīta-panīya*) and the place has been located by commentators in Vajrabhumi ('terrible indegenes') within Radha country. But, the point is where actually this region was located? According to some, it was equivalent to Birbhūm, while according to others it may conveniently be located either in Manbhum or in Dhalbhum or in Bankura. But it seems to me that the land comprised of stony or lateritic sterile and hard regions of West Bengal and the eastern escarpments of the Chotanagpur plateau bordering the former state, for the word Vajra means hard or sterile. It has perhaps nothing to do with Vraja or Vrajabhumi or Bajiraghara, as suggested by some. The district of Manbhum however, derives its name from the Manavarjakas or Manavarttikas, mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* (IX. 357), and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna* (LVII, 43). It may incidentally be mentioned that Manbhum, which lies to the east of the Chotanagpur Division of Bihar comprised a portion of the Jharkhand region, an indefinitely extensive area, coterminous with the 'Jungle Mahals' tracks. In the opinion of Col. Dalton, the great Anthropologist, the Jungle Mahals district of the 19th century was the land of the 'Bhumijas' and comprised of the district of Burdwan as well as parts of the district of Birbhūm, Bankura, Midnapur, Santal Parganas and the eastern districts of the Chotanagpur Division. As to the sterile character of Radha, comprising this Vajrabhumi, we have the evidence of epigraphic records and literature. The northern Radha, according to the *Bhuvaneśvara-Praśasti* of Bhatta Bhavadeva (circa 11th century A.D.) and the *Prabodha-candrodaya-nāṭaka* of Kṛṣṇa Misra, also of the same date, was a sterile or barren region, lacking in water and consisting of pathless tracks in jungles etc. Subbhabhumi has been identified by some with Singhbhūm, but the consensus of opinions would equate with ancient Suhma-desa comprising south-western part of Bengal.

Regarding Mahavira's travel in Radha it is further said in the Jaina *Kalpasūtra* that Vardhamana-Mahavira spent the first rainy season at Asthika-grama (Lec. V., Sec. 122), which according to its commentator was formerly known as Vardhamana. But, to my mind it appears that the commentary of the relevant passage in it has not been rightly interpreted, for it was the intention of the commentator to explain that the name of Asthikagrama was changed to Vardhamana, after the visit of

Mahavira in that region. Whatever that many be, the Jaina *Kalpasūtra*, in question, refers to a legend amounting for the change of the name, viz., one Yaksa Sulapani collected an enormous heap of bones of people on which a temple was built by the people. The place may be identified with modern Burdwan. There is a temple called Sat Deuliya at the village of Devliya, a Jaina settlement, not far away from Burdwan Town. It may incidentally be mentioned here that there are places called Hadai-pur and Yakher Danga in the district of Birbhum. It is related in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (a work of circa 11th century A.D.) that once a traveller from the town of Vardhamana reached the great forest of the Vindhyan system through the southern quarter perhaps via Bankura and Purulia. There was a Vardhamanavihara (a *stūpa*) at Tulaksetra, mentioned in one illustrated Buddhist manuscript of the Pala epoch. But it was located in Varendri, i.e. north Bengal. Vardhamana as a place-name was very familiar in Bengal (in Radha, Varendri and Samatata—Chittagong regions) and other states of India in ancient and medieval times.

It is held by scholars that before the coming of the Aryans, the Radhadesa was inhabited by the non-Aryan people, who spoke an unintelligible speech, i.e. not in an Indo-Aryan language. Major parts of eastern India was considered as Vratyadesa. Though Aryanization of Bengal began in circa 7th century B. C., there are scholars who think that the land was Aryanized by the Jaina preachers. As to the time and manner of the spread of Aryanism in Bengal scholars differ, but it seems true that Radha was Aryanized later than Pundrabhumi. According to the Ceylonese *Mahāvamsā*, reclamation of Radha was achieved by the semi-legendary king Vijaya of Vanga. This text has described Radha as being covered in jungles, infested by wild animals and inhabited by peoples with totemistic beliefs. Thus, we see that though the suggestion of the Aryanization of Bengal by the Jainas cannot be accepted as true, it is certain that both Aryans and non-Aryan monks often visited Radha or Suhma country in the 5th century B.C. and onwards.

From a critical analysis of the Jaina and Buddhist chronicles and canonical texts, it seems certain that Bengal (Pundravardhana, Radha and Suhma) was the sweet home of Jainism in the 4th-3rd century B.C. onwards until it was checked by the tide of the resurgent Buddhist and Brahmanical faiths in 8th century A.D., though it continued to remain as a living faith even few centuries after, not to be wiped out even in the present era.

The history of Jainism, which begins with the travels of Mahavira and other Nirgranthas (Jainas), culminated in the 3rd century B. C., when

the illustrious disciple of the famous Jaina religious leader Bhadravahu (a contemporary and religious Guru of Candragupta Maurya), a native of Bengal born at Devikota, Godasa (who seemed to have born in east Bengal) formed a sect of his own (Godasagana) in eastern India with four sub-sections or branches, viz. (a) Pundravardhaniya, (b) Kotivarsiya, (c) Tamraliptiya and (d) Dasi-Kharvatika. Each of these sects except the last one was associated with the well-known regions of Bengal, Dasi-Kharvatika² was possibly situated somewhere in the high tracts or lateritic terrains of West Bengal in Manbhum-Midnapore-Bankura zone. But, the influence which the Godasa-gana exerted upon the Jaina community cannot be assessed at present (cf. existence of Gowdas in Mysore), nor it is possible on our part to determine the importance of the Pancastupanikaya of the Vatagohali in Rajashahi apparently in the Kotivarsa region in Bengal, of the Gupta times.

On the evidence of a tradition, recorded in the Buddhist *Divyāvadāna* the Nigantha (=Nirgrantha or Jaina) sect was well established in Pundravardhana town, the members of which were massacred by the order of Asoka, the Maurya for allegedly having despoiled the picture of the Buddha. The Pundravardhaniya monks of the Nigantha order were also mentioned in the Buddhist *Vinaya* texts and in one of the descriptive labels of the Bharhut railings. One of the Jaina monks of Radha (Rara) caused the erection of Jaina image at Mathura (inscribed in the 2nd century A.D.). There was perhaps a dearth of Jaina inscriptions etc. in Bengal in the few centuries before and after Christ, due to the great massacre of the Jainas at the behest of Asoka. But a revival of Jainism can be noticed in the 5th century A.D., when a Brahmin couple donated land grants and made offerings at Vatagohali (Goalbhita) for the maintenance of a Jaina *vihāra* founded by Acarya Guhanandin of the 'Panca-stupanikaya' of Kasi or Navyavakasika. This information has been derived from the Paharpur copper-plate inscription dated in the G.E. 159, i.e. 478-79 A.D. The said *vihāra* is now occupied by the great Buddhist temple monastery at Paharpur. The plan of the Paharpur temple is of *Sarvatobhadra* type. It is suggested that the *Sarvatobhadra* type of architecture has been evolved by the Jainas, for the *caturmukha* or *caumukha* votive shrines of the Jainas tally well with the former type. K. N. Dikshit also has suggested as to the existence of an earlier *caturmukha* shrine in situ.

² Can it be equated with Karvata, mentioned in *Mahabharata* II 30 (Bhima's *digvijaya*)? Hunter's description of the Kharwars of Midnapur may answer to this question.

One monastic remain of the Jainas is said to have been found at Mainamati, now in Bangladesh. Few Jaina images, mostly fragmentary and appertaining to the Gupta and the post-Gupta times have also found in Bengal.

We have it from Hiuen-Tsang that Jainism was in a flourishing condition in Bengal when he visited parts of the east, north and south Bengal. He also noticed some Jaina temples and establishments therein, Even in the time of this great Chinese traveller, the Digambara Jainas outnumbered their rival sect.

With the revival of Brahmanical faiths and the royal patronage to Buddhism, Jainism went on waning in Bengal from 8th century onwards. But most of the images and temples, as found in Bengal, belong to 9th-10th century A.D. though some of them may belong to 11th-12th century A.D. Some Jaina shrines, mostly in a ruinous condition, have been noticed in the westernmost districts of West Bengal and the border-districts of Bihar. During the Pala-Sena times the Jainas in Bengal were mostly assimilated in the 'Avadhuta' sect—only to be revived after few centuries—chiefly due to religious zeal or the Jaina immigrants from western-India, some of whom, however, embraced Hinduism afterwards. The bulk of the Jaina religionists may now be found at Azimganj, Jiaganj, Berhampur, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Rampur Boalia, Lohardanga, Manbhum, Bally, Hooghly, Uttarpara and Calcutta. Most of them belonged to Marwar and Bikaner, who came to the aforesaid places for business purpose in or about the 18th century A.D. Most of the temples at Manbhum and Bankura were erected in the 9th-10th centuries. Dalton has attributed the erection of the temples to the Sravakas or Saraks (Jainas) of Manbhum, who came to Manbhum in connection with the working of the copper mines in the adjacent areas in Singhbhum. Like all colonists they followed the river courses and the remains of their temples may be on the banks of the Damodara, Kansavati and Suvarnakha. These temples, according to Dalton, belong to *circa* 14th century A. D. But after a detailed survey of the temples in the area, it has been seen that a bulk of them belonged to 9th-10th century A. D. while the other to 11th century A. D. and after. There is an inscribed image, belonging to the 'Nahar Collections', Calcutta, which is datable in the 15th century A. D. However, some of these temples were repaired or renovated by Akbar's General Man Singh in the 17th century A. D. Majority of the Jainas of Bengal belonged to the Digambara sect.

Most of the Jaina temples, as noticed in Bengal, have been found in the districts of Bankura and Manbhum. As regards temples in Bankura,

mention may be made of those at Harmashra, Bahulara, Kendua, Barkola, Paresnath, Ambikanagar, Citgiri, Dharapat, Biharinath Hill and Deulbhira which were evidently centres of Jainism. Temples of Saresvara and Sallesvara in the said district belong to the Jaina group. Architecturally, they belong to *circa* 10th century A.D. The District of Manbhum is also rich in Jaina antiquities. Large ruins of Jaina establishments and temples exist there in places like Charra, Sanka, Senera, Boram, Balarampur, Palma, Arsa, Deoli, Pakbira, Lathondungri and Dulmi. The temple at Rajpara-Organda, Dt. Midnapore, belonging to the medieval times, is also of Jaina character. There were perhaps more temples in Manbhum than in the rest of Bengal put together. The development of Jainism possibly centered round the valleys of Damodar, Kansavati and Suvarnarekha, which abounds in scores of Jaina shrines and *caityas* as well as images in stone of the Tirthankaras and Sasanadevatas, appertaining to Jaina hierarchy. In the following paragraphs the temples in the districts of Purulia (part of the Manbhum which has come to West Bengal and has become a separate district), Bankura and Burdwan are being described briefly locality-wise.

Deoli (Purulia)—This place, which is several miles to the south-west of Purulia town, was once a stronghold of the Jainas. The vestiges of the same consists of four stone temples in the four corners with a larger temple in the centre. In one of this *pañcāyatana* group is found the life-size image of Tirthankara Aranatha. Over the trefoil area round his head can be noticed the carved-out images of three Tirthankaras in each side in two rows. From Jorapukur, a place adjacent to Deoli, were found several images of Jaina hierarchy.

Pakbira (Purulia)—Several temples in brick and stone as also stone images of the Tirthankaras were found from this place, which is only few miles to the south-east of Purulia town. Images include those of Mahavira, Parsvanatha, Kunthunatha, Neminatha, Santinatha and Rsabhathana. Most of these images are now being housed in a shed, which possibly occupied the site of a stone temple. Particular mention may be made of one colossal stone image of Mahavira, locally known as 'Bhiram'. There is an inscription in the pedestal of the image written in the characters of the 9th-10th century A. D. i.e. the time of Pala suzerainty over Bengal. Some have characterised it as an image of Candraprabha. The name 'Bhiram' was probably derived from, the second part of the name Mahavira. The place-name Pakbira was also possibly derived from 'Mahavira' (Pakbira meaning the place of Bira, i.e. Mahavira). Some of the temples at Pakbira face to the west and south. The temple, which covers the shed, was once a stupendous temple and faced to the west.

Charra (Purulia)—This stronghold of Jainism once contained as many as seven temples of which two round temples now exist. Stone images and votive *caumukha* shrines representing the 24 Tirthankaras, have also been found from this place, which is only six miles to the north of Purulia.

Besides the aforesaid places there were other places of Jaina interest in the district of Purulia, viz. Sanka, Senera, Jhalda, Arsa and Balarampur.

In the district of Bankura also there were many Jaina temples, of which mention may be made of Bahulara, Ambikanagar, Citgiri Dharapat, Deulbhira, Barkola, Paresnath, Saresvar and Sallesvara.

Jaina temples have also been found at Deuliya in Burdwan. The Sundarbans area was possibly once an important centre of Jainism, as images of Tirthankaras have been from places like Nalgora, Chatrabhoga and Raipur. It is possible that 'Jatar Deul' in that region might have originally been a Jaina temple. Most of the aforesaid temples in Purulia were made of stone and consisted of a cella, vestibule portico, *maṇḍapa* and *ardha-maṇḍapa*. Stylistically, most of them belong to 5th-10th century A. D. Temple-building activities of the Jainas in Bengal were revived again in the 17th-18th century by the immigrant Jainas from Bikaner and Marwar, who built marvellous temples, chiefly in marble, in places like Berhampur, Azimganj and Calcutta, after a lull of about three centuries due to the inroads of Islam.

The sectarian rancour and animosity played not an insignificant part in converting Jaina establishments or shrines into corresponding Brahmanical and Buddhist norms and forms in subsequent years when Jainism became a spent force in Bengal.

As to the images³ in stone and bronze of the Jaina Tirthankaras and other accessory deities, special mention may be made of the images of Rsabhanatha from Bhadrakali in Hooghly, Mandoil in Rajshahi, Surohar in Dinajpur, Jhalda, Patamda, Sanka, Bharabhum, Pakbira in Purulia, Ambika, Ambikanagar, Barkola in Bankura, Rajpara in Midnapur, Adina in Maldah (inscribed in Arabic characters of the 14th century A.D.,

³ For a detailed description of the images of Jaina Church, please consult B.C. Bhattacharyas' *Jaina Iconography*.

image being a product of the 10th century A. D., name Adina has been derived from Adinatha); Santinatha from Rajpara in Midnapur, Ujani in Burdwan, Pakbira in Purulia, Ciada and Citgiri in Bankura; Parsvanatha from Deulbhira, Biharinath hill, Dharapat, Bahulara, Barkola and Ciada in Bankura, Pakbira, Baram and Lathondungri in Purulia, Kantabene and Nalgora in 24 Parganas, inscribed image (date Sam.1110) from Azimganj in Murshidabad; inscribed Vasupujya image in Rajasthan script from Sagardighi; Candraprabha from Pakbira, in Purulia; Aranatha from Deoli in Purulia; Neminatha from Malkah, Murshidabad and Pakbira; Ajitanatha from Barkola in Bankura and Pakbira in Purulia.

Images of Mahavira and the Sasanadevatas like Ambika or Amra or Kusmandini and Padmavati (Jaina prototype of Brahmanical Manasa and Buddhist Janguli) have been from several places in West Bengal. Of these, Ambika of Ambikanagar and Bankura, one such image in bronze from Nalgora in 24 Parganas, Padmavati from the same district (preserved in the State Arch. Gallery, West Bengal) as well as seated images of two Sasanadevatas (in one slab), probably identifiable with Ambika and Cakresvari with babies in their laps and the four Tirthankaras with their emblems carved in the pedestal from Natai in Midnapur and ascribable to c.9th century A. D. (also preserved in the State Arch. Gallery) are very interesting and unique of their kind. As inscribed image of Rsabhanatha, belonging to 10th-11th century A.D., refers to the gift of a certain lay Jaina worshipper (Sravaka) has recently been collected from the district of Purulia.

The Tirthankara images, as found in Bengal, are mostly in the *kāyotsarga* pose, and they generally belong to 10th-11th century A. D. Some 12th century Jaina images have also been found here. In the 'Nahar collection' there is a Jaina image, which is dated in the 15th century A.D. While some of these images are still to be found in Jaina centres in West Bengal, others are now being preserved in the Galleries of the Indian Museum, Varendra Research Society Museum, Vangiya Sahitya Parisad Museum, Archaeological Directorate of West Bengal and the Asutosh Museum. Besides Museums, there are some Private collections in West Bengal which are rich in Jaina antiquities.

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Late
Dr. Umakanta P. Shah

DILIP U. SHAH

Dr. Umakanta P. Shah was born on March 20, 1915 at Baroda. He left us in November 1988 at the age of 73 years.

Recently he was busy among many works of research, the publication of *Elements of Jaina Iconography*—a revised edition of his thesis which earned him degree of Ph.D from Bombay University in the year 1953.

He graduated from Bombay University in First class with Sanskrit and English in the year 1934. He obtained Master's degree from the same University with Sanskrit, English and Epigraphy in the year 1936. He obtained Post Graduate Diploma in Museology in 1954 from M.S. University of Baroda.

He joined Oriental Institute of M.S. University of Baroda in July 1954 as Deputy Director and retired in the year 1975.

He was appointed Head of The Ramayana Department of Oriental Institute and also General Editor of the Critical Edition of *Rāmāyana-Uttarākāṇḍa*.

His tenure with Oriental Institute brought to it international fame.

In the year 1974 he was appointed as Member of the Arts Purchase Committee of the National Museum, New Delhi, which he held till death. He was Editor of *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Calcutta from 1965 to 1968. He was a member of the Editorial Board of *Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery Journal*.

He was elected as President of Fine Arts and Technical Section of All India Oriental Conference held at Varanasi (Banaras) in 1968.

He was appointed Chairman of the Committee for Religious Records of the Indian Historical Commission upto 1983.

He was President of All India Association of Art Historians till his death.

He was invited to deliver lectures at University of Pennsylvania, New York, Cleveland in U.S.A. three times. He was also invited in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, Germany, England, Japan, etc.

He was the first scholar to undertake the study and research of Jaina Art and Iconography on scientific basis. He donated to Baroda Museum the hoard of Jaina bronzes he discovered at Akota and wrote a book on it. Among his hundreds of research articles and publications, books, etc. leading are *Sculptures from Samlaji and Roda, Gujarat, Treasures of Jain Bhaṇḍāras, A Rare Relief Sculpture from North Gujarat, Salakatanhtas and Lanka, New Documents of Jain Paintings* and so on. The list exceeds 200 in numbers.

In recognition of his research work and in appreciation of his total devotion to research, he was appointed Trustee in the Governing Boards of L.D. Institute, Ahmedabad and B.L. Foundation, Delhi.

He left behind hundreds of scholars all over the world as his intimate friends, a similar number of students over the entire world seeking his guidance in their research work.

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