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## *Contents*

<b>Observations on Gommata, Gommataraya and Gommatadeva</b>	<b>147</b>
<i>B. K. Khadabadi</i>	
<b>The Creators</b>	<b>152</b>
<i>Ashutosh Jindal</i>	
<b>Views of Jainism in Sikh Scriptures</b>	<b>153</b>
<i>Sushil Jain</i>	
<b>Power and Tranquility—A Profile of Jaina Martial-Class of Karnataka</b>	<b>178</b>
<i>Vasantha Kumarî</i>	
<b>Identification of Some Rsis as Depicted in Sutra Krtanga</b>	<b>185</b>
<i>Arun Pratap Singh</i>	
<b>Report on the First National Prakrit Conference, Bangalore</b>	<b>193</b>
<i>M. A. Jayachandra</i>	
<b>Plate</b>	
<b>First National Prakrit Conference</b>	<b>147</b>

# Observations on Gommata, Gommataraya and Gommatadeva\*

B. K. Khadabadi

A few decades ago a good number of scholars like M. G. Pai, S. C. Ghoshal, N. R. Premi etc. thought that Gommaṭa was another name of Bāhubalī, the son of Lord Ṛṣabha, and, hence, his colossus at Sravanabelagola got this name and the term (*gommaṭa*) was applied to several persons and things associated with it. Some scholars proposed interesting vocablēs like *manmatha* (cupid), *go* (speech) etc. from which the word *gommaṭa* was said to have been derived.<sup>1</sup> Later Dr. A. N. Upadhye put forth a theory<sup>2</sup> that *gom(m)ṭa* is not derived from any Sanskrit or Prakrit vocable, but is a local word found in slightly varied forms in Kannada, Telugu, Konkani and Marathi languages and used in the sense of good, handsome, benefactor etc.<sup>3</sup> He opined that Gommaṭa must have been a pet name of Cāmuṇḍarāya, which in course of time came to be applied to several things, including Bāhubalī's image, associated with him.<sup>4</sup> This theory, though not propounded on any contemporary evidence, but being most plausible was accepted by the majority of scholars in the field.

\*Revised version of the Paper presented at the Symposium on Gommatesvara, held at the University of Mysore, in January, 1981.

<sup>1</sup> Recently, in the Seminar on Lord Gommatesvara, held at Sravanabelagola in December, 1980, Dr. R. Hiremath suggested the following derivation : *Brahma* (great) > *Bomma* > *Gomma* > *Gommata*, the change *b* > *g* being on the analogy of *bombe* > *gombe* in Kannada.

<sup>2</sup> *Anekanta*, Vol, IV, 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> (i) In Marathi language *gomata* is still a living word. *The Maharashtra Sabdakosa*, Vol. III (Pune 1934), notes its meaning as follows : *gomata-tem*—sweet, beautiful, good, charming, of fair complexion.

(ii) Curiously enough, Kittel does not note it in his *Kannada Dictionary*. However he notes *gumma*, meaning devil.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note in this context that a small merchantile community named Kommatigas, found even today in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, are said to have been formerly devout followers of Lord Gommatesvara.

Dr. J. P. Jain in his recent paper, *Lord Gommaṭeśvara of Sravanabelagola*,<sup>5</sup> not only accepts Dr. A. N. Upadhye's above noted theory but also strengthens its plausibility and acceptability by discussing at length all the points—historical, inscriptional, literary etc., concerning the name<sup>6</sup> and the date<sup>7</sup> of the world-famous monolithic image of Lord Gommaṭeśvara.

But Dr. M. A. Dhakey in his paper, *The Belgolian Bāhubali and Western Indian Notices*,<sup>8</sup> observes as follows: "Some say that the colossal monolithic image on the Vindhyagiri (or Gommaṭagiri) was named 'Gommaṭeśvara' because Gommaṭa was the other name of Cāmuṇḍarāya, the Prime Minister of Gaṅga Rācamalla IV, who caused it to be carved. This suggestion does not seem to hold good since an inscription in Karnataka predating Cāmuṇḍarāya, mentions 'Gommaṭadeva' as a *sthāvara-tīrtha*."<sup>9</sup> He also adds a foot-note: No. 5: *Annual Report of the Archaeological Department, Mysore, 1914, p. 38*. The inscription dates from the time of Gaṅga Ereyā and hence early tenth century.<sup>10</sup>

I, who have a firm conviction of Dr. Upadhye's theory, after going through these two papers, had to have a pretty long search for the concerned Report and the Inscription, with a view to casting a first hand look into them. As these records are not easily available, I feel it proper to reproduce them here.

Following is the concerned Report

Ereyappa :

63. An inscription on a beam of the Gadde Basava temple at Chikka Hanasoge, Yeḍatore taluk, which is a Jaina epitaph (plate XI.2), refers incidentally to the reign of Ereyā, who is evidently the Gaṅga king Ereyappa. It opens with a verse in praise of a Jaina teacher, named Elācārya and tells us that he subsisted on water for one month

<sup>5</sup> *Gommatesvara Commemoration Volume*, Sravanabelagola,

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-44.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

and expired by *samādhi* and that *āṣṭopavāsa(da)* (one who fasts for eight days) Kalneledevar set up the *nisidhige* or tomb-stone for his Guru Elācārya. Then follow two verses in praise of Kalneledevar stating that when Ereya was ruling the sea-girt earth, receiving homage from the great *māṇḍalikas*, Kalneledevar received homage from all the world, and that of two kinds of *tīrthas*, namely, stationary and moving, Gommaṭadeva was the stationary *tīrtha* and Kalneledevar the moving *tīrtha*. The writer of the epitaph was Beldeva and the engraver Mallācāri. The date of the epitaph may be about 910. From *EC IV*, Yd.28 at the same village, we learn that, Elācārya was the disciple of Śrīdharadeva and belonged to *Desiga-gaṇa* and *Pustaka-gaccha*. A Kalnele Rāmacandradeva is mentioned in a later inscription, namely, *EC V*, Ag.96 of 1095 ; but he was of the *Sūrastha-gaṇa*.<sup>11</sup>

Following is the transcribed text of the concerned inscription in Kannada found at Chikka Hanasoge, Yeḍatore tāluk, Mysore District :

#### No. 84

On a beam of the Gadde Basava temple to the south of the village Chikka Hanseoge :

##### *Eastern Face*

bālo kāluri moṇ viyudvaśakarum kandarpparūpa-probhā  
 jālāmkr̥tarāge yunnati-vidūram bhīṣmaram saddayā  
 bhūlokodara-dāni yuddhata dhanum noṇ nekulam neṭṭanita  
 elācāryya-munīndrarādar adarim dāścāryya merum jagam  
 ondu tiṅgal pānamam bhāvisi samādhi-maraṇadinda māydu  
 nontu sadgatige sandar aṣṭopavāsade kalneleyadevar damma gurugal  
 elācāryya-devargge parokṣa-vinaya nisidhigeyam nirisidar

##### *Western Face*

eṛeyasamudra-veṣṭita-dharā-talamam pratipalisuttum  
 itta eṛega-mahāri-maṇḍalikarim besakeyye vilāsayolgeim

<sup>11</sup> *Archaeological Survey of Mysore, Annual Report for 1914, (1914/92), Ed. R. Narasimhachar.*

mereva karūranenisalālipori stita sandhyar indu vand  
 erega samantu kalneleya-devara pada-payoruhaṅgalol  
 sthāvāra-jaṅgama-tīrthaṁ  
 bhāvisi peldāgal orade gommaṭadovar  
 sthāvāra-tīrthaṁ kalneledevar bhūvalayadolage  
 jaṅgama-tīrthaṁ  
 beldevaṁ baredaṁ ilvede mallācāri,<sup>12</sup>

I had also, in the meanwhile, written to Dr. J. P. Jain (Lucknow) seeking some clarifications on this problem. He, in his letter (dated 30.4.1981), kindly drew my attention to the last passage on p.42 of his paper<sup>13</sup> and reiterated his views expressed in it. The following lines in the passage deserve special attention : "...There is nothing in the record to identify the first two or to fix its date. Yet presuming the ruler to be identical with Ereya, the Gaṅga king (C.907-913 A. D.), the date of the erection of the Gommaṭa image has been fixed as 907 A. D. Apart from the fact that this date is impossible for historical reasons, as discussed earlier, a ruler named Ereya, the father of Viṣṇu-wardhana Hoysala, and a Guru named Kalneledeva of Sūrastha-gaṇa are known to have belonged to about the end of the 11th century A.D. Hence in all probability the inscription in question belongs to that period and not to the beginning of the 10th century ..."

After carefully taking into consideration the relevant parts of these two papers of the two learned scholars and scrutinizing the concerned Report and the Inscription, I have to present the following observations :

A pet name is generally given in child-hood and this could be true of Cāmuṇḍarāya. Ācārya Nemicandra even recorded his former friend's and later pupils name as Gommaṭa and, Gommaṭarāya<sup>14</sup> etc. Then things associated with Gommaṭa or Gommaṭarāya were also called after his name : Gommaṭa-Jina, Gommaṭa-śilā, Gommaṭa-sutta or Gommaṭasāra and also Gommaṭeśa or Gommaṭadeva. On the other hand Bāhubalī, the aseetic Lord, could not have been called 'Gommaṭa' first

<sup>12</sup> *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. XIV, Mysore, 1943.

<sup>13</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Vide *Gommatasara, Karma-kanda*, Part II, V, 972, Lucknow, 1937.

and straightway, but Gommaṭeśa, Gommaṭadeva or Gommaṭasvāmī with his image in view as installed by Cāmuṇḍarāya. Then if we presume that the concerned inscription belongs to 910 A.D., we will have to say that it is referring to some other image of Bāhubalī as Gommaṭadeva'—the *sthāvāra-tīrtha*. But why should an inscription in Chikka Hanasoge near Mysore ever refer, in that context, to an image of Bahubalī at Bādāmi, Aihole or Ellorā,<sup>15</sup> if at all it was then called Gommaṭadeva? Moreover M.M.R. Narasimhachar in the concerned Report has rather inferred the date (910 A.D.) by distinguishing, on the strength of the '*gaṇa*' the Kelneledeva of this inscription (as of Desiga-*gaṇa* to which his Guru Elācārya belonged) from the Kalneledeva of a later (Ag. 96 of 1095 A.D.) inscription (of Sūrastha-*gaṇa*). In fact, neither Elācārya nor Kalneledeva is a proper name, but a designatory or descriptive one and, hence, is an uncertain means for identifying persons. So the Elācārya of Yd. 84 (*EC XIV*) could be different from the Elācārya of Yd. 28 (*EC IV*). Hence the date of the concerned inscription mentioning 'Gommaṭadeva' cannot be said to be 910 A.D. and predating Cāmuṇḍarāya.

<sup>15</sup> All these images of Bahubali were carved prior to 981 A.D. i.e., between 7th and 9th centuries A.D.

# The Creators

Ashutosh Jindal

Marble, sandalwood, brass,  
Onyx, ivory, cutglass,  
Sapphire, silver, gold —

We chiselled it,  
We crafted it,  
We polished it,

We annointed it,  
We adorned it,  
We adored it,

We bought it,  
We sold it,  
We re-sold it,

We gave the faceless — a face ;  
We gave the formless—a form ;  
We gave the nameless — a name :  
And we called it —GOD.

We made him our conscience-keeper ;  
We made him our confessional booth ;  
We made him the shoulder to weep on.

Aren't we great,  
Aren't we the Creators supreme.

Since we have done so much for Him,  
Can't we ask for a few favours in return !



# Views of Jainism in Sikh Scriptures

Sushil Jain

## *Abstract :*

This paper deals with the images of Jainism as noted in the writings of the first and last Gurus of the Sikhs, and in the biographical commentaries of the first Guru, popularly known as *Janam-sākhis*. Certain excerpts from the foreign writers of Sikhism are also included to emphasize the points made by the Gurus.

A description of Jaina religious philosophy and ethics, not common practices of the Jain monks, is also obtained from Sikh sources to emphasize how Jainism is currently understood by Sikh scholars.

## *Prologue :*

There are perhaps no other two religions of India so diametrically different from each other, in their approaches to God, as are Jainism and Sikhism.

Jains, for example, do not believe in a Creator-Destroyer God, whereas the Sikhs believe in One All-Powerful God.

Whereas the Jains believe in and practise *ahimsā* (non-injury to all living beings), the Sikh Gurus did not attach such a great importance to the concept of non-violence. In fact, some Sikh Gurus carried arms and participated in armed conflicts.

Whereas Lord Mahāvīra, the Jain Tīrthaṅkara, renounced the world and gave up the householder's life, the Sikh Gurus specifically honoured the householder's life.

Whereas Jain Sādhus and Sādhvis (monks and nuns) pull all hair

on their heads, devout Sikhs of the Khālsā are specifically enjoined *not* to cut or pull any hair from any part of their bodies.

It is, therefore, interesting to find out what one group (the Sikhs) thought of the other (the Jains) during the times of the Gurus. One way to obtain this impression is by studying and culling passages from the Sikh scriptures and from other literature related to the Sikhs

To the best of our knowledge, this kind of synthesis has not yet been attempted. This is the first effort. We have quoted heavily from the Sikh scriptures and other sources by and about Sikhs that contain passages about the Jains in order to make a point.

\* \* \*

The late fifteenth century was a turbulent period in the history of north India as indeed had been the preceding four centuries. The Muslims, who had begun to invade India in the eleventh century, had by now become controllers of large regions of the sub-continent through invasion and conquest.

The Hindu populace of India was dispirited and disillusioned at this time. There appeared to be no organized force, or ruler, strong enough to stand up against the forces of a militant religion bent upon imposing its views, values and religious philosophy on the inhabitants of north India. The Muslim rulers converted many Hindus (of all castes) to the Muslim faith by force or persuasion. Those who opposed them were slaughtered and decapitated.

The people of India at this time were very ritualistic and practised idol (object) worshipping. Islam brought a completely new concept of God (One Formless God) to north India. This concept was totally at odds with the tradition then prevailing in India. The Muslim invaders considered the worshipping of idols and keeping of images of gods and goddesses an anathema. These conflicting philosophies caused discord and disharmony among the two groups of people, *viz.* the invading Moslems and the indigenous populations of India.

It was a tragic period for the inhabitants of Industan (now called Hindustan by the Muslim rulers). Life was harsh and cruel for most Hindus. However, there was one benefit of this intercourse with a foreign people. Indians began to look upon their own religious practices with critical eyes. On the other hand, some Muslims also

began to look at their religion from a different angle. The two sides seemed to converge at one point. The Sufis, among the Moslems, and propagators of the *bhakti* movement, among the Hindus, tried to fuse the two contradicting philosophies, *i.e.*, of monotheistic Islam with that of the polytheistic Hinduism. Both of these groups tried to preach tolerance and love for God and humanity,

One of the major personalities of the time, Bābā Nānak, who was divinely possessed, was a follower of the *bhakti* school of thought. Nānak was born into a Hindu Kṣatri family of the Punjab. He noticed the anachronistic nature of his society which, he felt, had lost its ancient cultural values. Nānak criticized the prevailing Hindu customs of caste, idolatry and rituals. While pointing out the weaknesses of the religion in which he was born, he also criticized the excesses of the rulers in the name of religion. He had harsh words for all those who, instead of believing in *Sat Nām*, True Name, One God (*Ek Omkār*), perpetrated ill-will among men (and women) based on religion.

The Mughal ruler of Delhi, Bābur, was not very tolerant of Hindu religion or of Indians. He took Bābā Nānak captive. Bābā Nānak has observed the situation of those times as follows :

Now the armies of Bābur are spreading across the country. No one can eat in peace. How hard it is for the captives. The times of worship and prayer pass by unused. These Indian women have nowhere to sit and cook, to bathe or anoint themselves by putting the frontal mark on their foreheads. They never gave God a thought now they have no leisure in which to remember him. (*Ādi Granth*, p. 417, cited by McLeod 1978 : 139)

Then, he pleaded to his Lord :

Today Khurasan seems to be yours, Lord, why not India ? Why have you made that land yours and terrified this by the terrible threat of retribution ? Are you pitiless, Creator of all ? You have sent Yama [god of death] disguised as the Mughal. (*Ādi Granth*, p. 360 cited by McLeod 1978 : 139)

Bābā Nānak preached his message of love for One God far and wide. In the course of his travels he met all kinds of people and priests. The *Udāsīs* (travels) inform us of his world-wide travels. He

met the Shaikhs and the Ulamā of Islam, decorous Paṇḍits, the Vaiṣṇava Bairāgis, the Sannyāsis, the Sant-Bhagats and Yogis etc. It was during his travels that he came across Jain Sādhus (monks) and prevailed over them. He was quick to point out their *faux pas*. With his knowledge of the sacred texts of many religions he was able to convince others of their useless rituals, at least the ways in which he saw them. As Banerjee (1984 : 198) says, "In his [Nānak's] talks with Brāhmins, Yogis, Pirs, Jain ascetics and others he is never the inquirer or learner; he is always the teacher who points out mistakes and indicates 'the true way'." That Bābā Nānak was familiar with many Hindu scriptures is evidenced from the references to such scriptures in his writings. Grewal (1979 : 201-202) amplifies this point as follows :

Guru Nānak's compositions reveal his thorough familiarity with contemporary Hinduism and Islam. He refers quite frequently to the *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis*, the *Śāstras*, the *Purāṇas* and six schools of philosophy; he refers specifically to the *Vedānta* and alludes occasionally to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He talks of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa and he refers to Fārbatī, to Śiva and Śiva-Śakti, to gods of mythology and to incarnations of Viṣṇu; he refers to Gorakh and Machhandar, and to the Siddhas and the Nāthas. He mentions the four-fold 'blessings' of life : *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*; he refers to the three paths of salvation : *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti*. Not always explicit, but there are references to the Vaiṣṇavas the Śaivas and the Śāktas; also to Sannyāsis and Bairāgis; to the Paṇḍits and the Yogi, to Kṛṣṇāyits and Rāmāyits, and to the Jain monks.

In this paper, we will restrict our discussion to one such group of people that Bābā Nānak met. It was that of *Sarāugis* (Jain) monks. There are numerous references to Jain monks in the *Janam-sākhis*. (*Janam-sākhis* literally means "life stories" but, strictly speaking, they are not true biographies of Bābā Nānak. They were written a long time after Bābā Nānak's death. So there are many exaggerations and hyperbolic statements, but they still give us some idea of his life and times).

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of India. According to the Jain tradition it is timeless. The last of the Jain Tīrthaṅkaras, Lord Mahāvīra, was a contemporary of Buddha; however, Jain tradition puts him in a much earlier era. Jainism has maintained its separate identity from the Hindus through its Sādhus and Sādhvis (monks

and nuns, known as Yatis in Sikh scriptures ; in other accounts by the Sikhs, Yatis refer to the lay Jains), It is these monks that Bābā Nānak seems to have met and conversed with.

It would be useful to give here a short description of Jainism, its religious ideals and values. To do this, we have chosen to provide a description of Jainism. Dr. Surinder Sing Kohli, a Sikh scholar of repute and a writer of many books on Sikhism, states in his *Philosophy of Gura Nānak* (Chandigarh : Punjab University, 1980, pp, 97-100) :

Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthānkara, is considered as the founder of Jainism. He was a contemporary of Buddha, *i.e.*, he was born about two thousand years before the advent of Guru Nānak. The Jains of the early sixteenth century attracted the notice of the great Guru. He found them divided into two main sects, *i.e.* Svetāmbaras and Digambaras.<sup>1</sup> The former wore white clothes and the latter remained naked. The latter were very rigid in their practices. They used to rake up their night soil, breathe continuously, keep off from water, pluck their hair, drink impure water, and eat impure food obtained by begging. They always remained dirty and remorseful and did not attend congregations. They moved in a queue with cups hanging by their waist and dusters in their hands. They did all this because of *jīva*-mania. In order to save the minutest *jīvas* they passed very unhygienic lives. The Guru told them : "God kills *jīvas* and gives them life. None else can save them." Therefore he advised the Jain monks to desist from unhealthy practices.<sup>2</sup> The Digambaras maintained that women should not obtain liberation, but the Guru ridiculed this idea by saying that every human being attains unity with the Lord by following the path.

Jainism believes in the doctrines of *anekāntavāda* and *syādvāda*. The first is the doctrine of the manyness of reality and the second the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge. The doctrine of *anekāntavāda* manifests Jain metaphysics, according to which the two distinct realities of matter (*puḍgala*) and spirit (*jīva*) are split into innumerable atoms and souls respectively. The doctrine of *syādvāda* manifests Jain epistemology, according to which human knowledge and human judgments are all relative and limited. *Syādvāda* is also sometimes interpreted as the theory of probability.

Jainism believes in two categories *i.e.*, *jīva* and *ajīva*. *Ajīva* includes matter (*puḍgala*), space (*ākāsa*), motion (*dharma*), rest (*adharmā*) and time (*kāla*).

In Jainism liberation means the extinction of *karma*. The soul is bound when it unites with the karmic matter. The flow of the karmic particles towards the soul is called *āsraṇa* (flow). The soul is bound when these particles infiltrate into the soul. This state is called *bandha* (bondage). The karmic influx is stopped through right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. This state of stoppage is called *saṃvara*. After stoppage of the influx, the existing *karmas* are exhausted. This state is known as *nirjarā* (wearing out). With the exhaustion of the last particle of *karma*, the final state of *mokṣa* (liberation), is attained. The liberated soul becomes *kevala-jñāni* or omniscient. The above-mentioned five stages together with *jīva*, *ajīva*, virtue (*puṇya*) and vice (*pāpa*) constitute the nine categories of Jainism. The right faith, right knowledge and right conduct are called *tri-ratna* or the three Jewels of Jainism.

Jaina brotherhood is constituted of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. They all have a spiritual discipline, which is rigidly followed by monks and nuns. This discipline consists of five vows of *ahimsā* (non-injury through mind, speech and action), *satya* (truth), *asteyā* (not to steal), *brahmacarya* (abstention from self-indulgence) and *aparigraha* (renunciation). In the case of laymen, these vows are modified and liberalised.

A close study of the tenets of Jainism shows that it is an ethical religion. Its main aim is the liberation of the soul from the karmic matter, but the teachings of Guru Nānak take us to the spiritual domain, where we attain unity with Godhead. Jainism is a religion without God. This is the basic difference between Jainism and Sikhism. The religious practices of the Jains, as we have seen above, have been rejected by the Guru. For the Guru, liberation is merger in the Absolute, but in Jainism liberation is the extinction of *karma*.

Notes :

1. The words "Digambara" occurs in the verses of Guru Nānak.
2. *siru khohae piahi malvani...sat catte sir chai.* ( *Var Majh, śloka* 149-50 ).

Another insight into the Sikh view of Jainism can be obtained from *Sikhan de Raj di Vithiya* which has been translated by Major

Henry Court as *History of the Sikhs* (1888). This is an interesting book since it contains "narratives of the ten Gurus, history of the Sikhs from the rise of Mahārājā Ranjit Singh to the occupation of the Punjab by the English, a short resume of the customs, rites, songs, and proverbs of the Sikhs, and twenty discourses regarding the events in the life of Guru Nānak, taken from the *Janam sākhi*, or Life of Nānak."

The following selection comes from the chapter "Rites and Customs" of the various castes in Punjab, as seen by the author of the original work (date unknown). We offer this excerpt here as a comparison of the description of Jains as seen by the Sikhs and as portrayed in the Sikh texts or scriptures.

Both of these descriptions give an orthodox, stereotypical picture of the Jain sects ; the picture being described is not of the Jain laity but of the mendicants who live a very severe life. The Jains are commonly called Sarāugis. The text in Court's book is all in one paragraph, but we have divided it into shorter paragraphs for the sake of easy reading and understanding. The reference superscripts are the ones given by Court. They have been left intact in the quoted text :

Now, in this country, there are people called Sarāugis ; their account is as follows : they are called Jainis, that is to say, they follow the religion of the most holy man called Jin. These people pull out all the hair of their head every six months, and always fasten a strip of white cloth over their mouths<sup>104</sup> They carry with them a broom of white wool, which they, in their language, call *rajoharāṇa* ; and whenever they wish to sit down, they first clean the spot with the broom, so that no insect may come under them, and be killed. These people do not possess much goods, clothes, vessels, or money ; but are very great hermits and ascetics.

They keep very severe fasts, for often they do not bring food to their mouths for a month at a time ; when these people go to beg, then, taking into consideration matters which are very difficult to understand,<sup>105</sup> they take food ; and, although other people do not indulge in the custom of giving them bread and water (food), still the tradespeople, who are their disciples, and know all their customs, do service to them with great affection.

These people regard the slaying of an insect as a very serious crime,

and, from fear of killing an insect, they will not drink uncooked water, but if, by begging, they can anywhere get water that had been heated, or the water left over in vessels, in which people have cooked their food, they clear it and drink it, and satisfy themselves ; and they will not drink it, if they have to draw it themselves from a well or river.

From fear of killing an insect, they do not wear shoes on their feet or any cloth on their head ; and, as they have found out that animals die in water, for this reason they bathe very little, rather, on account of having to use water, they always keep their clothes soiled and their bodies dirty. What a wonderful thing is this, that, although these people perform such severe acts and hardships, still they do not believe in God !

Their belief is this, that all this world, from time everlasting, has gone on making and destroying itself, and there was no creator of it ; and what a wonderful thing is this also, that they regard no creator of this world or any giver of happiness and pain. Still according to their religion, they do service to, and worship, the twenty-four incarnations ; and among these twenty-four, one who is called Pārasnāth and his worship they regard as very profitable. These people, in their dialect, call these twenty-four incarnations, the Tīrthaṅkaras, and worship them in their homes, and some regard the worshipping of images as wrong.

There are two kinds of these Sarāugis ; one, those who wear a strip of cloth over their mouths, and pull out all the hair of their heads, and these are called Dhuṇḍiyās, and the other are those who do not wear the strip of cloth, and do not pull out the hair of their head ; and they are called Yatis.

Those, who are called Dhuṇḍiyās, they do not possess any houses or goods or money ; but the Yatis possess thousands of rupees and property and land, besides many other things. Although there is much difference between the conduct and habits and customs of the two, still their faith is one.

These people do not believe in the *Vedas* or *Purāṇas*, nor do they reverence the places of pilgrimage or fasts, laid down in any of the *Śāstras* · the religious work of these people also are not written in



Sanskrit, but in Prakrit, which is a very old language. Although the language is Prakrit, still the letters are not so, but they write all their religious books in the letters used in the *Śāstras*.

They do not marry, but their customs at death, in burning the dead body, are like those of other Hindus ; and if any married disciple becomes the follower of these people, he is called a Sarāugi.

Although Brāhmaṇs and Kṣātris, from associating with them, have begun somewhat to believe in the Sarāugi religion, still Bhabrās and Baniyās<sup>106</sup> chiefly follow this persuasion. Those Bhabrās and Baniyās, who belong to this denomination, although they wear the tuft of hair on their heads, at the same time do not wear the Brāhminical thread round their throat. These people do not hold funeral or marriage feasts, and do not perform any funeral obsequies, according to the rites of the *Vedas* or the *Purāṇas*.

This is the custom of these Sarāugis, that they may not undertake any business or traffic, in which there can be loss of life to any animal ; hence, when they undertake any traffic or sale, they only sell such precious, or dry, things in which no insect nor any animal can come ; accordingly, some of them are cloth merchants, and bankers, and some are pedlars, and many become braziers, and get their living in this way ; and they none of them sell any wet, greasy, or sweet things.

There is also another caste of Sarāugis, who are known by the name of Oswāls, but none of them are to be met with in the Punjab ; they principally live in the land of Marwar, that is to say in the neighbourhood of Bikaner, Jaipur, and Jodhpur. Although all the written codes of the Sarāugis, regarding religion, mercy, patience, and continence are very good, still, as they do not regard God as the Creator, for this reason, people regard them as infidels, and unbelievers. (pp. 111-113.)

#### Notes :

104. This is done to prevent their killing any animal or insect with their breath even, as they hold it, as the greatest sin, to kill any living thing.

105. That is to say, they ask if a person's family has already eaten, and if the reply is that they have, the Jainis will partake of their

food ; if not, they will not, lest one loaf should run short, and another cooking be therefore necessary, in which water, etc., would have to be used, and the lives of some insects be sacrificed, the sin of which, they consider, would attach to them.

106. The Bhabrās are of a Jain caste, chiefly engaged in traffic and the Baniyās are a Hindu caste, generally merchants.

The Sarāugi Baniyās do not regard the *Vedas* and *Śāstras*, or gods or goddesses, and forms and ordinances, set forth in them ; and the funeral obsequies which ought to be performed at the time of death, these they do not perform at all. For this reason, Vaiṣṇo Baniyās used not to intermarry with them, but in the present day, for sometime back, some have even begun to intermarry with them. (p. 104).

Macauliffe (1909, vol. 1, p. 150) tells us the story of Guru Nānak when he met a Jain priest named Narbhi who told him that he could hardly be pardoned because he [Nānak] had destroyed life and violated all rules of Nature. To which the Guru replied :

When the true Guru is merciful, faith's perfected.

When the true Guru is merciful, man shall never grieve.

The question we need to ask and explore here is : What was the state of Jain Dharma in the fifteenth century in Punjab that Bābā Nānak seems to have noticed ?

What comes to us from the Sikh literature of those times, and through the words of Bābā Nānak, is a description of the lifestyle and habits of the Jain Sādhus and not of the laity. But there is every reason to believe that there were many lay followers of Jain Dharma in the Punjab during the times of Bābā Nānak. These lay people did not live the austere life of Jain monks. Jain monks were present during the times of Akbar as well, who is said to have been cured of his illness by a Jain monk. Latif (1891 : 51) is of the opinion that most of the Jains belonged to the Vaiśya, or mercantile class, and were generally educated. Banarsi Das Jain (1954) tells us that a group of Jain pilgrims visited Kangra in the early fifteenth century. Grewal (1979 : 104-105) also reports the presence of a small Jain community during these times in these words :

It is very likely that the itinerant Jain monks had some following among the trading communities of the Punjab.<sup>2</sup> But the total number of Jains in the Punjab was probably quite negligible. Nevertheless the wandering Yatis attracted attention because of their outward appearance and peculiar practices. In the seventeenth century Sujan Rai noticed their conspicuous presence as well as their unpopularity among the Hindus. The chief characteristics of the Jain monks noted by Sujan Rai were their ascetical practices, their atheistic system of beliefs and their meticulousness about not injuring any living being.<sup>3</sup>

Notes :

2. According to H. A. Rose, nearly 99% of the Jains in the Punjab belonged to the trading classes : *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, p. 105. See also *Punjab : Notes & Queries*, I, No. 9, 121. Some Jaina monks established themselves in Lahore during the times of Akbar : Jain, Banarsi Das, "Jainism in the Punjab". But there is no reason to suppose that the Jain monks had no lay following in the Punjab before the sixteenth century.

3. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, 23.

A long way away from north India, the Jains were also quite influential in south India for considerable periods of time. Their influence was, however, checked by many Hindu forces, notably the Alvārs, who flourished in the seventh and twelfth centuries. Banerjee (1984 : 34-35) points out that the Alvārs "tried to evolve a form of Vaiṣṇava faith which could offer a powerful challenge to Buddhism, Jainism and Saivism ..The Alvārs played a crucial role, negatively in weakening Buddhism and Jainism, and positively in putting religious life in south India in a new mould."

In addition to the Alvārs, whose hymns were "compiled and arranged by Nāthmuni in the tenth century, [and] were collectively known as *Nalayira Prabandham*, which came to be considered as sacred as the *Vedas*", (*Ibid.*) there were other forces in Hinduism, like that of Rāmānuja of the Śāṅkara's doctrine. According to Banerjee, "in giving decadent Hinduism a new and more attractive shape, they [Rāmānuja and others] were defending it against all rivals—Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam." (*Ibid.*, p. 40)

The Jains were quite numerous in the South during the reigns of the Hoysala kings, especially in the state of Mysore until the times of Viṭṭala Deva, who seems to have repudiated his religion in favour of Vaiṣṇavism. Macauliffe describes this situation as follows in his section on the "Bhagats of the Granth Sāhib—Rāmānand" :

Rāmānuj himself, in order to escape from the fury of Krimi Kantha, took shelter in the court of Biṭṭa or Viṭṭala Deva, the Jain monarch of Dwarsamudra in the Maisur state, who reigned from A.D. 1104 to 1141.<sup>1</sup> After a controversy with Rāmānuj the king changed his faith and sought the protection of God and his teachings. Filled with new zeal he changed his name also to Viṣṇu Vardhana and set to work to convert his numerous subjects, who are stated to have been all of the Jain religion. Most of them were converted, but some fled, and the rest the monarch piously put to the sword. In A.D. 1117 the king erected the Belur temple in commemoration of his conversion to Vaiṣṇavism by Rāmānuj.

**Note :**

1. Biṭṭa Deva was king of the Hoysalas who lived on the west of the present Maisur state. Biṭṭa Deva's dynasty ruled Maisur from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. Their capital was Dwarsamudra, now called Halebid, in the Belur district. The Colas and their king lived to the east of the Hoysalas. The Hoysala kings were Jains up to the time of Biṭṭa Deva. —Rice's *Mysore*. (Quoted by Macauliffe, Vol. 1 : p. 97)

It is interesting to note here that while Buddhism, which was a considerable force and a state religion in various jurisdictions, disappeared from the Indian soil with the passage of time, Jainism kept its roots intact in many parts of India. As Thaper (1967 : 159) notes, "unlike Jainism, Buddhism had failed to maintain a distinct identity in the Punjab by the time of Guru Nānak. Hiuen Tsang had noticed several Buddhist monasteries in the Punjab. Buddhism, however, was very much on the decline and in actual practice compromised with the Brahmanical religion to such an extent that it could almost have been regarded as a sect of the latter". (cf. Grewal 1969 : 105)

Goswamy (1968 : 11) points out that though pockets of Tantric Buddhism could be found in the Punjab hills in the fifteenth century, in the plains it had suffered by then a dilution which was little short of disappearance. (Cited by Grewal 1969 : 105)

If this is the case, that Buddhism was not much of a force in the Punjab during the times of Bābā Nānak, did Buddhism have any influence on Bābā Nānak? There are certainly some references to Buddha in the *Japji* and it is known that Bābā Nānak visited Bodh Gayā, where Lord Buddha had achieved *nirvāṇa*. It has been suggested by some Sikh scholars (Surinder Singh Kohli, *A Critical Study of the Adi Granth*, 1961 : 248) that the Buddha is regarded in the *Adi Granth* as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. (also cf. Banerjee 1984 : 89)

There does not seem to be any criticism of Buddha's way in the Sikh scriptures, perhaps because it was not much of a force in the Punjab at that time. Hindus had absorbed Buddhism by claiming Buddha as one of the incarnations (*avatārs*) of Viṣṇu.

But Jainism did not suffer the same fate as Buddhism in Sikh literature. Banerjee (1984 : 89-90) tells us :

“It (Jainism) was a living faith in Rajputana and Gujarat, and from Guru Nānak's sharp criticism of Jain monks (probably of the Digambara sect) in *Var Majh* (Macauliffe, I, 150-152) it would appear that they were not unfamiliar figures in the Punjab. He condemns their unclean habits :

They have their hair plucked out, they drink dirty water,  
they beg and eat others' leavings ;

They spread out their ordure, they inhale its smell, they are  
shy to look at water ;

... ..

They are ever filthy day and night ; they have no sacrificial  
marks on their foreheads.

... ..

God hath ruined them : they go about despised ; their words  
are like curses.

The Guru condemns the Jain practice of *ahimsā* : he does not recognize man's responsibility for killing animals, for the role of destroyer belongs to God alone.

God killeth and restoreth animals to life ;  
none else may preserve them.

Although the Jains do not believe in God, they conform in many ways to Hindu customs. But there are inconsistencies in this conformity, as the Guru points out :

They give not their *deceased* relations lamps or perform their last rites, or place anywhere barley rolls and leaves for them. The sixty-eight places of pilgrimage grant them no access ; the Brāhman̄s will not eat their food.

There is no reference to the philosophical basis of Buddhism and Jainism in Guru Nānak's compositions, But he refers to the six systems of Hindu philosophy :

Six the systems, six their teachers,  
And six their different teachings ;  
The Lord of them all is the One Lord  
However various his aspects are.

(*Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* 1960 : 61)

The question that arises now, in one's mind, is : If Jains were not a formidable force in the Punjab of Bābā Nānak's times, why did the Guru show a great disdain towards monks ?

The most plausible answer is that the Guru equated Jainism with the life-style of its monks. But the common followers of Jainism did not live like that then or now. We are told by Macauliffe (1909, vol. 1 : 151) that Jains did not conform to many Hindu customs and the Guru criticized them for not being "consistent". But, comments Indubhusan Banerjee (1939 : 127), "this is more or less true of all sects that have arisen from within Hinduism including the followers of Guru should particularly select the Jains and censure them for non-observance of certain customs which he himself regarded of little or no consequence."

An American scholar, John Archer (1946), gives the following details of Bābā Nānak's meeting with Jain monks. It is possible to

find out from the following excerpts why Bābā Nānak said what he said about the Jains in his hymns :

On one of his longer journeys he (Nānak) had occasion to consider items of the Buddhist reformation, even though Buddhism was mostly a faint memory in the circumscribed locality of India in Nānak's day. Anyone brought up intelligently in the Hindu tradition, as Nānak was, somewhat loosely speaking, anyone who had any knowledge at all of the ancient Buddhist way, would think of it as *nāstik*, or "atheistic", in contrast with various *āstik*, or "theistic", theories among the Hindus. Perhaps the still more tangible reminder to Nānak of the older atheisms of his country were the Jains who flourished in goodly numbers, representing the Indian speculative tendency— or the tendency of Indian speculation —toward an atomistic, materialistic view of nature, in that older day. Every now and then attempts were made to revive and popularize one or another form of *nāstik* theory. Nānak may have encountered in upper India one of these which emphasized man's own self-reliance..." (*The Sikhs*, 1946 : 88)

Nānak found himself at variance also with Jains whom he met occasionally. They were the extreme ascetics of his time, although —or should we say because ? — they held a very realistic view of earth and life. Matter and mind, body and spirit were with them, also, co-eternal, somewhat as in philosophic Yoga. On this dual basis they were practical ascetics, prompted by a thoroughgoing animistic theory to exercise great care with respect to "life" in everything. No notion of "illusion" (*māyā*) minimized life's realities. In theory and in practice they emphasized *ahimsā*, shedding no blood and doing no injury wilfully to any living thing. Jains were not then very numerous, although their gospel had currency for two thousand years—there may have been a million of them, only a small percentage of who might be found on pilgrimage at any given time. Their temples stood widely distributed from Gujarat on the west of India to Bengal on the east, and in the Deccan; the most prominent were at Gīrnār and Śātrunjaya in Kathiawar, Ābū in Rajputana and Pārasnāth in Bihar. When Nānak passed judgment on the Jains, he charged them, for example, with being inconsistent : they would not inflict injury upon a living thing, but they could be stolidly indifferent to its pain and suffering ! They unsympathetically strained the quality of mercy. He accused them of having more concern for life than God himself had who "both killeth and restoreth" (but Jains, of course, had no

concern for God). He chided them for “plucking out their hair”, lest it harbor insects and threaten them with injury, and for “carrying brooms along to sweep their way,” lest they tread some life to death. And, said he, they “drink their water dirty”, fearing that to strain it might injure whatever life was in it, yet oblivious of the life they actually destroyed by drinking it. He deemed them an unprogressive sect, neither “Jogis, Jangams, Qzāis nor Mullās”, whose food Brāhmaṇs would not touch, whom Hindus generally would not recognize—for want of any *tilak* on their foreheads, possibly—and who were virtually denied access to “the sixty-eight” sites of Hindu pilgrimage. But now and then a Jain yielded to Nānak’s arguments and even sought to join his company, as he went about, including these Jain centers in his itinerary”.

(Archer, John Clark (1946), *The Sikhs*, pp. 97-98).

It is interesting and useful to compare Archer’s description with that of another western scholar, Macauliffe (1909), who states :

The Guru arrived at a Sarāuagi or Jain temple, which was much frequented. Narbhi, the Jain priest, went with his disciple to visit him. The Jains attach an exaggerated value to life in every form. The Jain priest heard that the Guru had not the same tender scruples on the subject, and began to catechize him. ‘Eatest thou old or new corn ? (that is, dost thou eat corn with worms in it or not ?)’ Drinkest thou cold water ; shakest thou the trees of the forest to eat their fruit ? Who is thy guru, and what power hath he to pardon thee since thou violatest all rules and destroyest life ?’

The Guru in reply uttered the following *pauri* :

When the True Guru is merciful, faith is perfected.

When the True Guru is merciful, man shall never grieve.

When the True Guru is merciful, man shall know no sorrow.

When the True Guru is merciful, man shall enjoy divine pleasure.

When the True Guru is merciful, what fear hath man of Death ?

When the True Guru is merciful, he ever bestoweth the nine  
treasures.<sup>3</sup>

When the Guru is merciful, man is absorbed in the True One.<sup>3</sup>



**Notes :**

2. *Nau nidhi*. This expression is used in the sacred writings of the Sikhs to denote unlimited wealth and prosperity. In the sacred books of the Hindus the expression has a more definite numerical signification.

3. *Majh ki War*.

After this the Guru launched out into a satire on the Jains :

They have their hair plucked out, they drink dirty water, they beg and eat others' leavings ;

They spread out their ordure, they inhale its smell, they are shy to look at water ;

They have their heads plucked like sheep ; the pluckers' hands are smeared with ashes —

They spoil the occupations of their parents ; their families weep and wail for them.

They give not their deceased relations lamps or perform their last rites, or place anywhere barley rolls and leaves for them.<sup>1</sup>

The sixty-eight places of pilgrimage grant them no access ; the Brāhman̄s will not eat their food.

They are ever filthy day and night ; they have no sacrificial marks on their foreheads.

They ever sit close as if they were at a wake, and they enter no assembly.

They hold cups in their hands ; they have brooms<sup>2</sup> by their sides ; they walk in single file.

They are not Jogis or Jangams, or Qāzis, or Mullās.

God hath ruined them ; they go about despised ; their words are like curses.

God killeth and restoreth animals to life ; none else may preserve them.

The Jains make not gifts or perform ablutions ; dust lighteth on their plucked heads.

From water gems arose when Meru was made the churning staff.<sup>3</sup>

The gods appointed the sixty-eight places of pilgrimages, and holy days were fixed accordingly by their orders.

Notes :

1. The Jains conform in many ways to Hindu customs. The Guru here censures them for not being altogether consistent.

2. To brush away insects and thus avoid treading on them.

3. According to the Hindus, Viṣṇu in his Kūrmāvatār assumed the shape of a tortoise which supported the mountain Mandara—in the Sikh writings called Meru—the Olympus of the Hindus, with which the gods churned the ocean. From the ocean were produced the fourteen gems or jewels here referred to. They are Lakṣmī (sic), wife of Viṣṇu, the moon, a white horse with seven heads, a holy physician, a prodigious elephant, the tree of plenty, the all-yielding cow, etc.

The Guru continued :

After ablution the Muhammadans pray ; after ablution the Hindus worship ; the wise ever bathe.

The dead and the living are purified when water is poured on their heads.

Nānak, they who pluck their heads are devils : these things<sup>1</sup> please them not.

When it raineth there is happiness ; animals then perform their functions.

When it raineth, there is corn, sugar-cane, and cotton, the clothing of all.

When it raineth, kine ever graze, and women churn their milk.

By the use of the clarified butter thus obtained burnt offerings and sacred feasts are celebrated, and worship is ever adorned.

All the Sikhs are rivers ; the Guru is the ocean, by bathing in which greatness is obtained.

If the Pluckheads bathe not, then a hundred handfuls of dust be on their skulls.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes :

1. That is, water and bathing.
2. *Majh ki War*.

Macauliffe further states, "the Jain priest asked the Guru why he travelled in the rainy season, when insects are abroad and there is danger of killing them under foot" to which the Guru replied as follows :

Nānak, if it rain in Sāwan, four species of animals have pleasure —  
Serpents, deer, fish, and sensualists who have women in their homes.  
Nānak, if it rain in Sāwan, there are four species of animals who feel discomfort —  
Cow's calves, the poor, travellers, and servants.

After hearing Bābā Nānak's reply, we are told by Macauliffe (1909 : 150-152) "the Jain priest went and fell at his feet and became a convert to his faith. On that occasion the Guru contemplated his hymn in the *Majh ki War*, and Saido and Ghebo wrote them down from his dictation."

There are other references to the practices of Jain monks, but not to their religion or philosophy, in the hymns of Guru Nānak. They have been translated by Macauliffe as follows :

Were I to dwell in the cavern of a golden mountain or in a pit of water ;

Were I to stand on my head, on earth or in the heavens ;

Were I to cover all my body with clothes,<sup>1</sup> and did I nothing but bathe ;

Were I to shout aloud the white, the red, the yellow, and the black Vedas ;<sup>2</sup>

Were I to remain dirty and filthy,<sup>3</sup> all this would be foolish and sinful.

Nānak, since I have pondered on the word, I am not, I was not, and shall not be.<sup>4</sup>

**Notes :**

1. This is done by a sect called the Kapriās, who cover even their faces.
2. As the Brāhmaṇs do.
3. The reference is to the Jains.
4. That is, I am totally absorbed in God. (p. 280)

There is no impurity in corn, there is no impurity in ablution ;<sup>1</sup>  
 There is no impurity in rain which falleth everywhere ;  
 There is no impurity in earth, there is no impurity in water ;  
 There is no impurity contained in air.

**Notes :**

1. As supposed by the Jains, who avoid water. (p. 372)

The above is supposed to have been addressed to a holy man called Thakur Das at Priyāg.

*Guru Gobind Singh and the Jains*

The Jains did not fare that well either in the eyes of the last Guru who was, of course, not a pacifist as was the first Guru. So, Guru Govind Singh's dislike of the Jains may be related to their deep respect for life, even the smallest living creature. Guru Govind Singh took arms and fought many wars, whereas Jains would do no such thing. He compares the vegetarians to a cow and an ox, and the celibate monks to eunuchs in his *kavitās* (verses 71-90) of *Dasam Granth*. As a matter of fact it is not only the Jains, but also various other sects of both Hindus and Muslims that are denounced for their rituals and the codes of conduct practised by them. For example, Guru Gobind Singh said :

Thou wanderest in the woods ? So do the deer.

Thou livest in silence ? So do the trees.

Thou art a celibate ? So are the eunuchs.

Thou wanderest barefooted ? So do the monkeys. (1) p. 47

Thou livest on milk ? So do the children in the world.

Thou livest on air ? So doth a serpent.

Thou livest on grass, vegetables, and desirest no wealth ?

So doth the cow, the ox . (2) p. 47

Don't the peacocks dance, and the frogs croak, and the clouds thunder ?

Don't the trees stand ever on one foot ?

Don't the Jains sweep the ground before putting their feet upon it ? (11) p. 50.

Moreover, as Jains are considered atheists, because the concept of Jain God (*Bhagavān*) is not understood by many God loving people of other religions, Guru Govind Singh did not see the Jains kindly. There is a reference to the Jains in the 'ten *swaiyyās*' of the *Dasam Granth*, which is translated as follows in *Thus Spake the Tenth Master* :

I've wandered through the world of the puritan Jains, and numberless Siddhas, Yogis and the celibates ;

And the brave demons, and the angels feasting on pure nectar, and the holy ones of various creeds :

I've seen the whole world of man but seen not a man of God, the life of all life.

Without a touch of His Loving-kindness and Grace, man is worth only but a trite !

(*Swaiyyā* Number 1, p. 41)

Macauliffe (1909 : 314) points out that some of these *sawaiyyās* "are also read in Abchalangar and other places while the Sikh baptismal water is being prepared. Several orthodox Sikhs say that these are the *sawaiyās* which ought always to be read at the baptism, and of this indeed there is internal evidence." Guru Gobind Singh has said :

He who repeateth night and day the name of Him whose enduring light is unquenchable, who bestoweth not a thought on any but the one God ;

Who hath full love and confidence in God, who putteth not faith even by mistake in fasting, or worshipping cemeteries, places of cremation, or Yogis' places of sepulture ;

Who only recognizeth the one God and not pilgrimages, alms, the non-destruction of life,<sup>1</sup> Hindu penances, or austerities ;

And in whose heart the light of the perfect One shineth, he is recognized as a pure member of the Khālsā.

Notes :

1. As practised by the Jains. (p. 314)

In his code for the Sikhs, called *Rahit Nāmā*, the last Guru made specific recommendations to his followers, the Khālsās, as follows :

Never to mix with the following five sects, namely, Dhirmalliyās, Ramraiās, Minās, Masands, and Sirgunms, and never to consort with these five.

The Sirgunms are those, who are called atheists, Sarāugis and Jains. (Court 1888 : 42).

Griffin (1892 : 60) also confirms that many sects were particularly accursed by the Khālsā for their beliefs and religious practices. He says :

The Muhammadans were especially held accursed, and the prohibition against Sikhs wearing a cap was to disassociate them from the Muhammadans even in dress. War with these enemies of the faith was enjoined and no quarter was to be given to them. Unorthodox Sikhs, Jains and Yogis, were also declared accursed.

These instructions, which are sincerely believed in by the Sikhs of the Khālsā sect, may not develop a proper understanding of present-day Jainism or other sects and religions criticized or commented upon by the Gurus. In fact, it is possible that some misunderstanding or hatred towards such minorities may develop in the minds of those who are not well-versed in comparative religious studies.

Criticism of or cynicism about other religions based on past per-

ceptions seems to be inappropriate in present times when much of the world is becoming multicultural. In a multicultural society such as ours we are supposed to develop respect and understanding of other religions, races, creeds and beliefs. Instead of repeating hatred towards others we must make efforts to develop love and understanding towards our fellow brothers and sisters. Things that might have been true four hundred years ago are not certainly true today. But if we are going to continue to repeat verses that are suggestive of past practices as true today, we may be guilty of discrimination and hatred towards other religions unwontingly.

Though the Sikh scriptures do not mention Jain Dharma directly, references are made in Sikh scriptures and other literature to a certain sect of Jain monks. It is their way of life and living that is ridiculed by Bābā Nānak, but unfortunately we do not get a good picture of the philosophical or ethical nature of Jain Dharma from these verses. So people who read the Sikh scriptures are being informed of an ancient and formidable religion in a very stereotypical fashion. Therefore, it is useful to read with interest and understanding the description of Jain Dharma (Jainism) as given by modern Sikh scholars, e.g., Surinder Singh Kohli, to gain insight into the background of this great religion. This can be found in an earlier section of this paper on pages 7-10 of this article.

#### *Epilogue :*

Many religions of the modern world are protest religions or reformations of formerly existing religions. In the context of India, giver of the world's many well-known religions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism) and not so well-known religionn (Jainism), we see many protest or reform religions or sects of the original Hinduism.

Two of the earliest reform religions that expressed themselves against the Hindu Brahmanic emphasis on caste, ritualism and human or animal sacrificial rites in the name of religion, are Buddhism and Jainism (though Jains consider theirs to be an eternal and universal religion).

The founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, and the last (twenty-fourth) Tīrthaṅkara of Jains, Lord Mahāvīra, are considered to be contemporaries by many historical accounts. While Buddhism flourished

for a certain time in India, and even become a state religion in certain locales for short durations, it was eventually absorbed into Hinduism in due time, and finally “driven out” of India.

On the other hand, Jainism, which never gained a wide-spread following, has nevertheless retained its original, ancient character even to this day. There are today some 6-8 million Jains in India, scattered all over the country, including the Punjab.

A religion of the Punjab, Sikhism, which took its roots in the late fifteenth century, is also one of those religions that began as a protest and as a reformist movement, against the then existing religious forces. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Sikh religious texts and accompanying literature should contain some criticism, even to the extent of ridicule, of various existing practices of other religions, viz., Hinduism, Islam and Jainism.

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# Power and Tranquility—a Profile of Jaina Martial Class of Karnataka

Vasantha Kumari

The hillock of Kaṭavapra region, which became a renowned Jaina Centre, is most popularly known to the Jaina Community as Śravaṇa-belagolā. It was the nucleus of Jaina ascetic activities as early as 3rd Century B. C. The highly moderate climate and the favourable physical feature of South India, and particularly of Karnataka was indeed found suitable for the ascetic activities, to lead the most useful life of their austerities. An atmosphere of harmony which prevailed in this part of India, encouraged them to undertake Jainising Campaign more actively. The local population living on varied tribal cults, were influenced in considerable numbers, under more progressive and humanistic frame-work of *ahimsā* cult. These events caused more significant political effects, and consequently two kingdoms emerged under Jaina auspices ; one was the Gaṅgas of Talakad and the second, the Hoysālas of Dwarasamudra. Together, their rule lasted for nearly one thousand years from 3rd Century A.D. to 14th Century A.D. More strikingly it was during this period that the military concept received great encouragement and was effectively put to action by the Jaina rulers without any inhibition. As such many excelled in their abilities as great military commanders, generals and warriors.

These two kingdoms which emerged in the southern region of Karnataka, were the master creations of the efforts and shrewd acts of eminent Jaina Ācāryas of the period. Simhanandī Ācārya while placing the crown of Gangavadi-96,000 on Didiga and Mahādeva, also introduced *sine-qua-non* changes as to add more vigour and strength to the newly established kingdom. This kingdom emerged, having victory as their motto in the battlefield, Jinendra as their god, and Jina Maṭha as their faith.

Simhanandī Ācārya having successfully played the role of king-maker, issued 'the moral-ethical code' and 'the charter of patriotism

and prowess', and told his proteges – "If you flee from the battlefield, then your race will go to ruin." This neo-military concept with all its spiritual sanction, provided moral strength to the followers of *ahimsā* cult to establish their high reputation as professional warriors in great numbers. Apparently, rulers with all their imperialistic policies still followed Jainism as their personal faith. The most important aspect of the history of this period lies in the fact that the followers of *ahimsā* cult established their organised leadership in the political, economic and cultural life in the southern region of Karnataka for nearly one thousand years.

'The charter of patriotism and prowess'— the significance of this lies in the fact that it was only a change introduced with regard to *ahimsā* in practice and not in theory. Without this change, Jainism would have remained merely as an impuissant or as an act of myth like a king without 'might' or a religion without 'many followers'. The political sovereignty of the Jaina rulers was thus made possible and military services and warrior profession received spiritual sanction. These changes helped the Jaina rulers to raise themselves to the trend of the period.

The Ācāryas also were successful in diverting the spiritual motivation of the people to Jaina faith in great numbers through royal support. When the rulers set an example by embracing Jainism as their personal faith, the wider application was undertaken without much efforts. The officials of the royal court and the subjects expressed their dedication to the crown in great numbers by voluntarily embracing Jainism as their personal faith.

In the early period of monarchical system, the law of righteousness was strictly adhered both by the rulers and the ruled. The military services of the people were supported by the imperialistic policies of their rulers. Thus the spiritual concept of *ahimsā*, the military concept of imperialism were amalgamated and the impossible was possibly achieved, which in fact led to the political and cultural matrix of Jainism in Karnataka.

Hundreds of lithical records, found in Karnataka, reveal how the Jaina rulers, and their generals pursued their military obligation in an excellent manner. The state religion during the period of the Gaṅgas of Talakad was Jainism. Karnataka, is an exception, for Jainism enjoyed the reputed status of official religion for hundreds of years.

The list of genealogy of the Gaṅgas of Talakad contains the name of twentyfive rulers, among them many professed Jainism as their personal faith, a few non-Jaina rulers too became patrons of Jainism. Avanīta (466-495 A.D.), Durvinīta (495-535 A.D.), Muskara (535-585 A.D.), Sivamara (679-725 A.D.), Nītirāga (853-869 A.D.), Racamalla (870-907 A.D.), Nītimārga II (907-919 A.D.), Narasimhadeva (919-925 A.D.), Racamalla III (925-935 A.D.), Bhutuga II (935-960 A.D.), Marasimha III (963-974 A.D.), Racamallā IV (974-985 A.D.), Rakkasa Gaṅga (985-1025 A.D.) etc., were some of the renowned rulers who were known for their excellent military activities. They are glorified with the epitome of prowessness as Raṇa Raṅga, Gaṅga Simha, Gaṅga Vajra, Nolambantaka etc. The Kuge, Brahmadeva pillar, set in memory of Marasimha III contains the details of his military achievements. Cāmuṇḍarāya, the Minister, and Commander-in-chief, under three successive rulers Marasimha III, Racamalla IV and Rakkasa Gaṅga was also bestowed with many military laurels like Samara-Dhurandhara, Raṇa-Raṅga-Simha, Vairikula-Kāladanḍa, Bhoja-Vikrama Cola Daṇḍa, Samara-Paraśurāma, etc. These titles happened to be the tributes attributed for having fought many victorious battles incessantly to protect the Gaṅga supremacy against the opponent aggressions.

For a ruler to exercise his political authority, the military abilities and the imperialistic policies were no doubt the qualifications of necessity in practical life. But their real motto was to seek peace and tranquility in the existing and also the above base life, Hence the rulers and the generals, and the elites alike were more actively involved in the religions activities as promoters of the faith. They adhered in thought, word and deed to the right faith, the right knowledge, the right conduct, *i.e.*, the realisation of purity of soul, perfect understanding of the *Āgamas* and perfect equanimity in conduct. As a matter of fact, most of the Jaina rulers, with all their military achievements, were tributed with religious appellations, Dharma Mahārājādhirāja, Satyavākya, Gaṅga Cūdāmaṇi, etc. implying their belief in the doctrines of Mahāvīra. The ruler Nītimārg opted for the most pious death. He invited death and died of *sallekhanā*. Marasimha is described in the lithic as 'one who was a very jewelled pitcher, where with to perpetually besprinkle Jinendra'. He died of *sallekhanā* in 974 A.D. at the feet of his preceptor Ajitasenācārya.

The most capable general of the period, Cāmuṇḍarāya also attained his immortal fame, due to his meritorious religious activities. He was bestowed with the highest Jaina epithets like Samyaktva Ratnākara, Satya Yudhiṣṭhira, Sacca Bhavana etc., qualifying his virtue, liberalism

and truthfulness. His greatest legacy is the erection of statue of Gommaṭeśvara, which is a unique masterpiece of sculpture. It is indeed a monumental evidence to the contemporary Jaina world that the religion of *ahimsā* had successfully, claimed the good-will of the people. The vibration of Cāmuṇḍarāya's benevolent ideals have spread far and wide.

With the decline of the Gaṅga regime by the end of 10th Century A.D., the power of the Jaina rulers was rejuvenated and it was undertaken by Ācārya Sudatta. Sudattācārya who had established his reputation in the Malnad region of south Mysore forests around Chikamagalore area helped the local energetic youth leader, Sāla, to organise the military strength and to establish his political leadership. The most popular traditional story tells that, the ruling family established by Sala with the help of Sudattācārya was called Hoysāla ; the name signifies the event of Sāla killing the tiger at the instruction of Sudattācārya. This particular event became the crest of this ruling power.

Many forest tribes of this area seems to have been brought under the religious structure of Jainism earlier to Sudattācārya. A lithical record of 10th Century A.D, reveals that one Vimalacandra Paṇḍitadeva, disciple of Mouni Bhaṭṭāraka and the preceptor of Iriva Bedenga (Calukyan ruler) died of *sallekhanā* rites, and attained *mukti* in the area of Soseuru, the home place of Sāla, the founder of the Hoysāla kingdom. Many records reveal in a fascinating style their political policy of '*duṣṭanigraha, śiṣṭa paripālanam*' and the deadly military actions undertaken to enforce the same in practice. They immortalised themselves by effective military actions. The utter defeat and humility suffered by Cola king Rajendra at the hands of Viṣṇuwardhana has been portrayed in the following way : (1108-1142 A.D.)

“The water of the river Cauvery became so polluted by the dead bodies of the Cola soldiers, that Rajendra Cola could not use the water.” The significant feature of this period is that, many families of Jaina elites produced hereditary soldiers and statesmen. Gaṅgarāja, the general of Viṣṇuwardhana, belonged to a family of hereditary soldiers and statesmen. His father Eca, was patronised by Nirupama Hoysāla. Gaṅgarāja's noble character and unrivalled skill in war was devoted to the services of Viṣṇuwardhana, and this brought him great fame. By the strength of his arms he shook the prowess of many contemporary powers such as Cola, Calukyas and he was ‘a milestone to traitors of his lord.’ Indeed he was a general of outstanding abilities.

Gaṅgarāja was the most prominent among the nine Jaina generals of Viṣṇuvardhana. The others were Boppa, Punisa, Baladeva, Mariyam, Bharata, Eca, Viṣṇu, and Hulla. Marching rapidly, taunting and making the enemies to lose courage, a last deluge to hostile enemies, bold in war, they attained peace and tranquility by punishing the wicked and by encouraging the good. Series of brilliant campaigns, no doubt, placed Karnataka army as the premier power of south India. They were the raiser up of the kingdom of Viṣṇuvardhana (1103-1155 A.D.).

Under Narasimha, Jaina general Devarāja, Hulla and Santiyanna, Iśvara, Camapati excelled as eminent commanders of the Hoysāla force. The most prominent Hulla was a general and the chief treasurer.

Under Ballala-II (1173-1220 A.D.) the military prestige of the Hoysālas rested to a very great extent on the prowess of the Jaina generals and ministers, Racimayya, Nāgadeva, Amrita, Ecana and Bucirāja. Under Ballala-III (1291-1343 A.D.) Keteya Daṇḍanāyaka was the prominent Jaina.

Thus, the most practical aspect of Jainism lies in the fact that, the apostles of *ahimsā* have been the rulers of vast territories, have fought battles, have vanquished armies and have founded empires. They have resisted invasions in which many have been killed, many have been wounded and destroyed.

But, at the same time they have cherished their feelings of deep faith for religion, and this gave them the feelings of real happiness. Thus the loyal soldiers were devout Jainas. They set the standard of morality. The standard of morality set by Gaṅgarāja is explained in this way :

To be false in speech,  
 To show fear in battle,  
 To be addicted to others' wives,  
 To give up refugees,  
 To leave suppliants unsatisfied,  
 Foresake those to whom he is bound  
 Live in treachery to his lord.

These are the seven hells according to Gaṅgarāja. He was the crest jewel of perfect faith in Jainism. Many Jaina temples were renovated, new ones were built, unbounded gifts were made. Enclosure was built around Gommaṭa statue at Śravaṇabelagolā.

Hulla, was another general who gained distinction of having served three successive Hoysāla rulers, Viṣṇuvardhana, Narasimha and Ballala-II. He took delight in restoring Jaina temples, holding assemblies for Jaina worship, making gifts and listening to the reading of the sacred *purāṇas*. He was bestowed with the title Samyaktva-Cūḍamaṇi.

Similar religious policies were followed by the other generals. However it should be noted that, more than the rulers, the generals and the elite class of the Jaina society in Karnataka during this period were more actively involved in the religious movements and they proved themselves to be the true believers and followers of Jaina faith.

Throughout the history of religious thought, in India and so much so in Karnataka, Jaina school has always upheld the doctrines of *ahimsā* predominantly. It is Jainism that had upheld unbounded compassion for the struggling humanity as a means to attain peace and tranquility.

The Jaina monuments in Karnataka which have survived the ravages of time are very few in number. But still, the monolithic statue of Gommaṭeśvara, group of temples at Śravaṇabelagolā, and other places, abundant literature and innumerable epigraphs are the proud records to cherish the great memory of Jaina heritage in Karnataka. It was in this part of India that 'Pichadvaja' enjoyed the highest reputation of political honour for many centuries. No wonder Karnataka is rightly considered the second-birth place of Jainism.

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# Identification of Some Rsis as Depicted in Sutrakrtanga

Arun Pratap Singh

The Sūtrakṛtāṅga, the second *Āṅga* literature, is one of the earliest Jaina texts. Its first part (*śrutaskandha*) is supposed to be compiled around 3rd Cent. B.C. It mainly discusses the philosophical views of the Jaina as well as of other schools of thought. The main theme of *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, as it seems, is to refute and condemn the opinions of heretical thoughts and then to confirm the doctrines of the Jinas. In the text we find the name of some Ṛṣis who seem to have been prominent thinkers of their time. *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* mentions the name of Nami, the king of Videha, Rāmaputta, Bahuka, Nārāyaṇa, Asita Devala, Dvaipāyana and Parāsara.<sup>1</sup> It is stated that these Ṛṣis attained liberation in spite of drinking cold water and taking seeds and sprouts. These Ṛṣis are mentioned as the non-Jaina thinkers, notwithstanding they are adorned with venerated words. Now, we have to see whether these thinkers are historical personages or merely legendary ones. In this article, I have endeavoured to identify them and to establish their historicity on the basis of the references given in Buddhist as well as in Vedic texts.

*Nami of Vedha*—Nami, as in Jaina texts, is known to the Buddhist and Vedic literatures as well. All sources introduce him as the ascetic king of Videha (Mithilā). *Jātaka* literature of Buddhist tradition and the *Uttarādhyayana*, one of the earliest Jaina texts, proclaim him as a Pratyeka Buddha. *Jātaka* tells a story that a hawk was flying with a piece of flesh. A vulture attacked him. The piece of flesh fell down which was seized upon by another bird but that bird was also attacked

<sup>1</sup> आहंसु महापुरिसा पुञ्चं तततवोधना उदएण सिद्धिभावन्ना तत्थ मंदो विसीयति अभुजिया नमी विदेही, रामयुत्ते या भुञ्जिआ बाहुए उदगं भोज्जा तद्वा नारायणे रिसी ओसिते देविले चेव दीवायण महारिसी पारासरे दगं भोज्जा बीशाणि हरियाणि य एते पुञ्चं महापुरिसा आहिता इह संमता भोज्जा बीओदं गं सिद्धा इति मेअमणुस्सुआ—*Sutrakrtanga*, 1/3/4/1-4 (ed. Amar Muni, Atma Jnan Pith, Manasa)

by another one. Perceiving this, the king felt that the holding of anything is painful. He abandoned everything and became a Pratyeka Buddha.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Uttarādhyayana* also he is said to have relinquished the kingdom (Mithilā) with all his kith and kins.<sup>3</sup> Nami, the Rājarṣi, as he is crowned with, is presented as a victor of all the bad intentions (*kasāyas*), like anger, pride, deceit and greed. The essence of his teaching is that a man should fight within himself and win all the *kasāyas* and sense-organs. Such a man would feel the true happiness. One who wins himself wins all.<sup>4</sup>

*Mahābhārata* mentions Nami as Nimi and puts him in the line of those kings and Ṛṣis who never tasted meat.<sup>5</sup> Another Nimi who was the son of Ṛṣi Dattātreya and was a great saint, is also referred to in the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>6</sup>

*Rāmaputta*—In some editions of the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, he is wrongly referred to as Rāmagutta (Rāmagupta), the emperor of Imperial Gupta Dynasty. If we accept it, we will be totally wrong. So far as we know about Emperor Rāmagupta he is presented nowhere as a liberated man. The error is most probably due to the scribe. Rāmaputta who is mentioned in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* was not an emperor but an Arhat-Ṛṣi about whom we have a lot of information from other sources.<sup>7</sup> Not only Jaina texts but also the Buddhist texts mention him in detail. His teachings prove that he was a great thinker of his time. The *Ṛṣibhāṣita* a Jaina text of about 4th Century B.C. contains his preachings in its 23rd chapter.<sup>8</sup> Besides the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*

2 *Pali Proper Names*, Part I, p. 573

3 मिहिलं सपुरजणवयं बलमोरोहं च परियणं सब्वं ।  
चिच्चा अभिणिकखन्तो एगन्तमहिट्ठिओ भयवं ॥

—*Uttarādhyayana Sutra*, 9/4 (ed. Sadhvi Chandana, Virayatan Prakashan, Agra 1972)

4 पंचिन्द्रियाणि कोहं माणं मायं तहेव लोहं च ।  
दुज्जयं चैव अपयाणं सब्वं अप्पे जिए जियं ॥

—*Ibid.*, 9/36

5 *Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva*, 115/65 (ed. Gita Press, Gorakhpur)

6 *Ibid.*, 91/5

7 See in detail, *Aspects of Jainology*, Vol. II, p. 8 (P.V.R.I., Varanasi)

8 *Rsibhasita*, Chapter 23 (Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur, 1988)

and the *Rṣibhāṣita*, Rāmaputta is mentioned in the *Sthānāṅga*<sup>9</sup> and in the *Anuttaropapātika*.<sup>10</sup> The *Anuttaropapātika* refers him as a contemporary of Lord Mahāvīra. In the *Rṣibhāṣita*, he is said to have preached about knowledge (*jñāna*), perception (*darśana*) and conduct (*cāritra*).<sup>11</sup> Rāmaputta also emphasises the ascetic process of eliminating the micro-particles of *karma*.

The earliest Buddhist texts describe him in detail. The Pāli *Tripiṭaka* give his full name as Uddaka Rāmaputta and inform us that he was older than the Buddha himself. When Gautama Buddha renounced the world in search of true knowledge, he became a disciple of Rāmaputta and received the knowledge of meditational process from him. After getting Omniscience the Buddha wanted to preach to him but by then, Rāmaputta was dead.<sup>12</sup>

Thus both the Jaina and the Buddhist traditions place him as a saint contemporary to Mahāvīra and the Buddha. He was a revered ascetic who was an expert in meditation.

*Bahuka*—Bahuka seems to have been the preacher of an independent Śramaṇa tradition. The *Rṣibhāṣita* contains his teachings.<sup>13</sup> Besides the *Rṣibhāṣita* and the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* he is mentioned in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga Cūrṇi* and in the commentary on *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* written by Silankācārya. The essence of his teaching is detachment from everything *i.e.*, from thirst (*trṣṇā*) and the world. According to Bahuka, one who is detached, alone can go on the path of liberation and contrary to this, attachment with any kind will lead to hell. Besides, he lays stress on pure thoughts which alone can be ethical. Bahuka has called himself to be free from attachment in the *Rṣibhāṣita*.<sup>14</sup>

Buddhist literature does not present him as Bahuka but as an Arhat named Bahiya Darucirīya.<sup>15</sup> In the *Anguttara Nikāya* Bahiya is said to be the foremost among those who instantly comprehend the truth.

9 *Sthānāṅga*, 755

10 *Anuttaropapātika*, 3/6

11 णाणेणं जाणिय दं सणेण पासिचा संजमेण संजमिय  
तवेण अट्ठविहकम्मरयमलं विधुणित विसोहिय ।  
— *Rṣibhāṣita*, Chapter 23

12 *Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, pp. 382-83

13 *Rṣibhāṣita*, Chapter 14

14 अकामए बाहुए—*Ibid*

15 *Pali Proper Names*, Vol. II, pp. 281-83

This Bahiya, according to Buddhist tradition is a disciple of Gautama, the Buddha, His teaching has a close resemblance with Buddhist teaching. The thirst, according to the Buddhist belief, is the root of all sorrows. And similarly, Bahuka's teaching, is also concerned with the elimination of thirst. We can not ignore this possibility that he might have been the disciple of the Buddha and if not he was much influenced by Buddhist philosophy. However, the *R̥ṣibhāṣita* contains the philosophy of Gautama, the Buddha and his many disciples.

Bahuka's name is not found in the Vedic texts, although a Ṛṣi named Bahuvrakta is mentioned in the Vedic literature. He is said to have propounded some of the *mantras* of the *Vedas*.<sup>16</sup> So we can not identify him with Ṛṣi Bahuka. We find many Bahukas in the *Mahābhārata*. But they can hardly be linked with Ṛṣi Bahuka of the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*. In the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* Māhāraj Nala is described as Bahuka when he was living in disguise with Ṛtuparna, the king of Ayodhyā.<sup>17</sup> A snake who was consigned to the flames in the *yajña* of Janmejaya, was also called Bahuka.<sup>18</sup>

*Nārāyaṇa* — Like Nami, Rāmaputta and Bahuka, Nārāyaṇa is also said to have drunk cold water and got liberation. Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa is given a respectable place in the *R̥ṣibhāṣita*.<sup>19</sup> The gist of his teaching is that a man should eradicate the root of anger. His similies are simple and truly reflect the nature of anger. He says that fire can be quenched but the fire of anger is difficult to be quenched. Fire destroys this life only but anger destroys many future lives. Fire burns a single person but anger burns the person himself as well as others. One should therefore try his best to control anger.

As regards the Vedic tradition, Nārāyaṇa is mentioned as God.<sup>20</sup> However, in the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* there is a reference to Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa who is stated to have practised penance for one thousand years in Badarikaśrama.<sup>21</sup> A saint named as Nārāyaṇa who was indulged in conversation with Nārada is also mentioned in the *Śānti Parva*.<sup>22</sup> It

16 *Vedic Kos*, p. 334

17 *Mahabharata, Vana Parva*, 66/20

18 *Ibid.*, *Adi Parva*, 157/13

19 *Rsibhasita*, Chapter 36

20 *Mahabharata Namanukramanika*, p. 175

21 *Mahabharata, Vana Parva*, 72/339

22 *Ibid.*, *Santi Parva*, 33/13-15

is important to note here that the tenth section of *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka* is known as *Nārāyaṇopaniṣad*.<sup>23</sup> This Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi of Vedic tradition may be compared with the Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi of the *Ṛṣibhāṣita* and the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*.

We could not trace however any Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi in the Buddhist literature.

*Asita Devala*—The information available in Jaina, Buddhist and Vedic texts indicate that Asita Devala was a great ascetic and thinker of his time. His preachings and his conversation with other thinkers are discussed in these texts. While *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* condemns him for his taking cold water, seeds and sprouts, he is placed in the list of those Ṛṣis who had got perfection, and even the *Ṛṣibhāṣita* eulogises him as Arhat Ṛṣi.

His teachings, as given in *Ṛṣibhāṣita*, are concerned with the abandonment of all desires, passions and attachment. A man who wants to be liberated should conquer anger and illusion. In nutshell, he preaches us to detach from passions, anger and deceit. To make his preachings understandable he uses similies. He says that ordinary fire can be extinguished but the fire of attachment is difficult to be extinguished.<sup>24</sup>

He is mentioned in the Buddhist tradition also. There is a whole chapter entitled *Assalayana Sutta* in *Majjhima Nikāya*, which illustrates his teachings. In this *sutta* he confutes the supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas and tries to shatter their vanity.<sup>25</sup> Asita Devala is also mentioned in *Indriya Jātaka* where he is named as Kāla Devala. According to this *Jātaka*, Devala had a younger brother named as Nārada who was also a famous saint. Asita Devala is presented here to have preached to Nārada the lesson of detachment from worldly bondage<sup>26</sup>

Asita Devala is well known to Vedic tradition. The *Mahābhārata* refers to him as a great ascetic who was a great expert in performing penance. Passions did not perturb him. He was free from anger and

23 *Vedic Kos*, p. 244

24 *Rsibhasita*, Chapter 3

25 *Majjhima Nikaya*, 2/5/3 (Mahabodhi Sabha, Saranath, Varanasi, 1964)

26 *Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, p. 210

happiness. Asita Devala, as *Mahābhārata* mentions him, is said to have held discussions on equanimity with old revered Ṛṣi Jaigisabhya. He says that a man should take insult as nectar, an honour as poison. As in Buddhist texts, he is associated with Ṛṣi Nārada in Vedic texts also. Preaching to Nārada he asks him to eliminate *pāpa* as well as *puṇya*. Only *Jñāna Yoga*, according to him should be followed.<sup>27</sup>

As *Mahābhārata* says, Asita Devala seem<sup>s</sup> to have been an old Ṛṣi—not only in age but also in penance. As Jaina tradition refers to him as a Ṛṣi who took seeds and sprouts and drank cold water, *Mahābhārata* also mentions him as a Risi who practised penance dwelling in house-hold life. Still he had been given the highest regard. He was a great ascetic and conqueror of passions. He had deep faith in religion and had equanimity with all.

The references prove him to be an historical person who was most probably prior to Mahāvīra and the Buddha.

*Dvaipāyana*—Dvaipāyana is mentioned in many texts of Jaina tradition such as *Ṛṣibhāṣita*,<sup>28</sup> *Samavāyaṅga*,<sup>29</sup> *Aupapātika*,<sup>30</sup> *Antakṛtdaśā*<sup>31</sup> and *Daśavaikālīka Cūrṇi*.<sup>32</sup> Besides *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* the *Ṛṣibhāṣita*, in its 14th chapter describes his teachings in detail. He preaches to destroy the desires because it is desire which leads a man to the path of sorrow. Desire, according to him, is the root cause of loss of everything. It is the cause of life and death. Without destroying desire one cannot conquer the passions. Lack of desire is the first step to the path of liberation.

He is known to Vedic tradition and has been mentioned in detail in *Mahābhārata*. He, the son of Maharṣi Parāsara was the celebrated author of Epic *Mahābhārata*.<sup>33</sup> His preaching on *mokṣa dharma* is to be found in detail in *Mahābhārata*. He is said to have won sex, anger,

27 *Mahabharata, Santi Parva, 229/5, 275/4-39*

28 *Rsibhasita, Chapter 40*

29 *Samavayanga Sutra, 159 (Prakirnaka)*

30 *Aupapatika Sutra, 38*

31 *Antakrtdasa, Part II*

32 *Dasavaikalika Curni, p. 41*

33 *Mahabharata, Adi Parva, 1/54, 55*

greed, infatuation, vanity and dreams. In the *Mauṣala Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* he is mentioned as the destroyer of city Dvārakā.<sup>34</sup>

He also enjoys a very significant place in the Buddhist tradition. A story of *Jātaka* is named on him as *Kaṅha Dipāyana Jātaka*. Although its story differs from that of *Ṛṣibhāṣita* and other Jaina works, as well as Vedic texts, but another *Jātaka* story may be compared with the description of Jaina and Vedic Texts. In this story he is mentioned as the destroyer of Dvārakā.<sup>35</sup> His association with the destruction of city Dvārakā is found in all sources which prove his historicity.

*Parāsara*—Parāsara is also said to have got emancipation inspite of taking cold water and seeds. He is known to Jaina texts as a non-Jaina ascetic. Buddhist texts also mention a scholar of Vedic tradition named Parāsariya who used to emphasise the subordination of senses. It is deliberated in detail in *Indiḃya Bhāvanā Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*.<sup>36</sup> We know another Parāsariya who was a Brāhmaṇa by birth and was the inhabitant of Rājagrha. He was an expert in the *Vedas*. He is said to have ordained in Buddhist Sangha at the time when Buddha visited Rājagrha and he became Arhat within a very short period.<sup>37</sup>

Vedic texts give us a lot of information about him. According to *Mahābhārata* he was the father of great ascetic Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, the legendary author of *Mahābhārata*.<sup>38</sup> Parāsara, as *Mahābhārata* informs us was the grandson of Ṛṣi Vaśiṣṭha. He is said to have stayed in the womb of his mother till 12 years practising the *Vedas*.<sup>39</sup> He was as *Mahābhārata* mentions, the worshiper of Lord Śiva. He tells his experiences about the devotion of Śiva to Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāndava.<sup>40</sup>

We have tried to identify the Ṛṣis mentioned in *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*. The references given in this text indicate that these thinkers belonged to non-Jaina tradition. Most of the Ṛṣis are referred to in *Ṛṣibhāṣita*

34 *Ibid.*, *Mausala Parva*, 1/19-21

35 *Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, p. 501-502

36 *Majjhima Nikaya*, 3/5/10

37 *Pali Proper Names*, Vol. II, p. 190

38 *Mahabharata, Adi Parva*, 63/84

39 *Ibid.*, *Adi Parva*, 177/3

40 *Ibid.*, *Anusasana Parva*, 18/40-45



which is one of the earliest Jaina texts, next only to the first *śrutskandha* of *Ācārāṅga*. These Ṛṣis are well described in Buddhist and Vedic texts also. These facts prove the historicity of these Ṛṣis.

On the question of their historicity, we have only texts and tradition as the sources. For their historicity, it is essential/indispensable that their names must have been mentioned in contemporary Indian literature. If we examine we find that their names are mentioned not only in Jaina but also in the Buddhist and Vedic texts. The teachings of these seers are, more or less, in the same line in all the traditions. For examples, Nami of Jaina and Buddhist tradition and Nimi of Vedic tradition are the same person and in all traditions he is called the ascetic king of Videha (Mithilā). So is the case with Ṛṣi Dvaipāyana. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana of *Mahābhārata* resemble Dipayana of Jaina and Buddhist texts. All tradition depict him as the destroyer of Dvārakā city. These facts lead to the historicity of these Ṛṣis. They might be said to have existed on this earth, most probably before or at the time of Lord Mahāvīra and the Buddha.

Certainly we have our own limitations. We have only textual sources. But when the text of one tradition coincides with the texts of other tradition, we, to some extent, are bound to accept the description as historical.

# Report on the First National Prakrit Conference, Bangalore

## *Prakrit Conference :*

The Prakrit Jnanabharthi Education Trust, Bangalore, has sponsored and organised the First National Prakrit Conference at Bangalore on 8th and 9th December, 1990. The Hon'ble Justice S. S. Venkataramaiah (Former Chief Justice of India) inaugurated the conference and said that Prakrit language and literature should be honoured and studied by the people of India for a proper knowledge of the culture and values of ancient time. Dr. A. M. Ghatge, eminent indologist, chaired the conference and explained the significance of Prakrit studies from the linguistic, literary and philosophical points of view. About 70 Prakrit writers, scholars, teachers, research-fellows and journalists assembled in this conference for the first time and papers were presented in Hindi, English and Kannada languages. Dr. Prem Suman Jain, Executive Director of the conference, explained the central idea and programme of the conference in his Prakrit speech. Swami Bhattaraka Charukeerthy, Shravanabelagola, Chairman of the Trust, released the souvenir '*Prakrit Bharati*' of the conference and the Managing Trustee Dr. Hampa Nagarajaiah welcomed the participants and guests in his scholarly Kannada and English speech. Shri D. Surendra Kumar Hegde inaugurated the Prakrit Book Exhibition arranged for this occasion,

## *Prakrit Awards :*

On the occasion of this conference the "*Prakrit Jnanabharthi Award 1990*" was presented by Shri D. Veerendra Hegde, Dharmadhikari of Dharmasthal, to the following 10 eminent Prakrit scholars : Dr. J. C. Jain, Pt. Dalsukh Malvania, Pt. Phoolchand Sidhantashastri, Dr. Nathmal Tatia, Dr. Raja Ram Jain, Dr. K. R. Chandra, Dr. B. K. Khadabadi, Dr. M. D. Vasanthraj, Dr. J. C. Sikdar and Dr. H. C. Bhayani. Swasti Shri Charukeerthi Bhattaraka presided over the award giving function and announced that this award will be presented every year to eminent Prakrit scholars.

*Prakrit Monographs :*

The following Prakrit monographs brought out by the Trust were released by eminent persons on this occasion—(1) Prakrit Sahitya Kaipidi (by Shubhachandra in Kannada), (2) Prakrit Sahitya ki Bhumika (by Dr. P. S. Jain), (3) Prakrit Praveshika (in Kannada), (4) Kundakunda Prashasti (edited by Dr. M. A. Jayachandra in Kannada) and conference special issue of '*Prakrit Vidya*' published by Prakrit Adhyayan Prasar Sansthan, Udaipur.

Valedictory speech was given by Shri M. Veeroppa Moily, Education Minister of Karnatak State, in which he assured that the required facilities would be given to Prakrit studies on par with other languages. Dr. R. P. Poddar, on behalf of the conference participants, presented the recommendations of the conference. The most important resolution of the conference was the recommendation to establish a National Prakrit Academy.

—Dr. M. A. Jayachandra  
*Conference Secretary*

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