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## “GIVE AWAY VIOLENCE, PRESERVE LIFE” : CONTEMPORARY CALL OF THE ŚRAMAᅇA RELIGIONS

VINCENT SEKHAR, S.J.

### 1. Introduction

Religion gives meaning to society. It operates from ultimate perspectives, in terms of end or goal of life. It does not provide merely an abstract creed as a set of beliefs, but offers at the level of behaviour certain ethical principles through which the believing community seeks to reach the proposed goals. It is the task of religion to orient the whole of life, the common good of humanity, etc.

Religion and society shape each other in history. Society, its cultural and other changes might affect the external structure of any Religion. There might be adaptations, even renewals. For instance, religions like Buddhism and Christianity had adapted local cultural and traditional elements. But this does not mean that the basic outlook of Buddhism or Christianity has changed due to changes in cultures and traditions. The central figures of these religions, their worship, adherence to their precepts, etc. have by and large remained the same in history. It is such ‘changeless’ elements that offer ‘newness’ to life everywhere.

There is a basic ethos in Śramaᅇa culture and thought. Buddhism may not believe in a permanent substance called Ātman, but it believes in *karma* and rebirth, the ills of the world and of the human beings, their remedy, etc. In the same way, Jaina Dharma upholds the sanctity of life and urges its promotion and protection. These Śramaᅇa traditions are realistic about the existence of misery and its root cause, propound a path of purification and deliverance from all that is evil and all that is limiting.

These Śramaᅇa religions have recourse to conduct as the major means of liberation. Of all moral principles, *Ahiᅇsā* or non-injury to

life is the focal point round which the whole gamut of religion and philosophy is built. Without this there is no life, no existence. In other words, it is this moral principle of Ahimsā that describes briefly these Śramaṇa religions—Jainism is sometimes called ‘the Religion of Ahimsā. It is Ahimsā that guides both at the level of conduct as well as ideas and reflection. Down the centuries, Ahimsā has acquired new meanings, particularly in the social and political planes. Persons like M. K. Gandhi have translated this concept into every sphere of life.

The Śramaṇa religions believe that it is hiṃsā or injury to life, which is the root cause of all ills in this world. Hence they offer Ahimsā as the method and means to revert this situation. The following pages roughly portray the ugly situation life is drawn into, and how the Śramaṇa religions offer a suitable remedy to such a situation.

## **2. The ugly face of the human situation**

The human predicament especially in India can be broadly characterized by inequality, poverty and religious and cultural (ethnic, lingual...) fundamentalism. The caste discrimination is a strong impediment to the development of the individual and society. The prevailing injustice in the agricultural sector in land ownership and illiteracy, the degrading economic scene, the problem of inflation, inequality in income distribution, Black money, the social injustices done to women and children, the dowry system, child labour, juvenile delinquency, gender discrimination in family and society and many others are basically the outcome of inequality both at the conceptual as well as at the actual levels.

### ***2.1 Poverty and inequality***

What gives a low profile and an unstable condition to an individual is the thought that one is poor. Not only that poverty affects the development of personality it also leads, because of inadequate resources, to illness, mobility and mortality. The culture of poverty suffocates the breath of hope and confidence in living. The economically poor realize a sense of the improbability of achieving success in terms of values and goals of the larger society.

Inequality, caste discrimination and poverty give birth to categories like the untouchables and the evil called untouchability. In the words of M.K. Gandhi : Socially, they (the untouchables) are lepers, economically they are worse than slaves. Religiously they are denied entrance to places we miscall ‘houses of God’. They are denied the

use, on the same terms as the caste Hindus, of public roads, public schools, public hospitals, public wells, public taps, public parks and the like. In some cases their approach within the measured distance is a social crime, and in some other rare enough cases their very sight is an offence. They are relegated for their residence to the worst quarters of cities and villages where they practically get no social service. Caste Hindu lawyers and doctors will not serve them as they do other members of society. Brahmans will not officiate at their religious function.<sup>1</sup>

To abolish this inhuman practice, the Government had given a number of provisions in the Constitutions and had undertaken necessary steps.<sup>2</sup> For instance, the abolition of untouchability (article 17, constitution of India); appointment of a minister in charge of the scheduled castes in some states (article 164); reservation of seats in the Lokasabhā (article 330) and in the Legislative Assembly in every state and union territory (article 332); safeguards for the claims of the member of scheduled castes while making appointments to the Central and State Government jobs (article 335); appointment of a special officer to take care of the interests of the scheduled castes (article 338) and in pursuance of these provisions, the parliament and the State Legislatures have enacted numerous laws but India has suffered, to this day, blame from global community.

## ***2.2. The environmental degradation***

Another area of concern is the environment and the people who are affected by it directly. Nature and humans are so close to each other for mutual existence and sustenance. Only by acting on nature can man develop his drives and abilities. Humans appropriate more and more of nature making it the object of their knowing, feeling and acting, by adapting objects of nature to satisfy their various needs. They transform it into material inorganic body that is to say, nature excluding the human body itself. To say that humans live from nature means that nature is their body with which they remain in a continuous interchange in order not to die.<sup>3</sup>

But the growing menace of pollution of nature is like stripping the mother goddess naked and insulting her. For instance, the spoiling of water resources like rivers, ponds, lakes and even oceans and the

1. M.K. Gandhi, Harijan, 1954, p. 9-10.
2. Walter Fernandes, (ed.) Inequality, its base and search for solutions, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1986, p. 93.
3. S. Kappan, –Marxian Atheism, Bangalore, 1983, p. 57-58.

poisoning of the atmosphere with chemicals because of the high concentration of industries and factories, the throwing out of the garbage and solid wastes anywhere at people's convenience, the high level noise specially in urban areas that harms the human nervous system, the petrol and diesel fumes from vehicles which affect even some sensitive plants like tobacco, potato and some cereal crops and certain flowers etc. are but some of the results of the pollution menace.<sup>4</sup> Such pollution harm life in general.

The problem that the environmental science faces today is the preservation of its forest assets. Deforestation is not merely an ecological problem but a problem of human beings. The human element gives meaning to ecology and the environmental question becomes relevant to society only when it is viewed in relation to the people who are affected by it.<sup>5</sup> The environmental destruction has led to the intensification of poverty and destitution of the forest dwellers by way of non-availability of food, fuel, fodder, fertilizer and construction material, non-availability of medical herbs etc. An increase in the reserve forests that cater to the needs of industry has deprived the forest dwellers very much. And those who are displaced and uprooted from their homeland due to natural calamity and planned destruction of forests.

While the social cost in such a despicable condition is being ignored, the material side of the scene is still worse, namely, floods, droughts, sedimentation and other forms of ecological damage like soil erosion, wind and water erosion etc. Food and droughts follow as a natural consequence to soil erosion since water does not seep into the soil and the ground water level goes down. Increased salutation and rise in the level of rivers, reservoirs and dams results in the reduction both with capacity of the dam to hold back heavy flood waters and in its irrigation potential. A result of the salutation of the major dams is floods that ravage the country every year.<sup>6</sup>

### ***2.3 Problem of fundamentalism***

One of the foremost problems that India faces today is religious fundamentalism. Basically fundamentalism is a nature in attitude. We often do not know the faiths of other believes and their practices. This type of ignorance sometimes leads us to petty quarrels, fights and other harmful relationships. At times it takes the form of a tolerance

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4. N. Seshagiri, – Pollution, National Book Trust, India, 1982, p. 6-11.
  5. Walter Fernandez, *ibid.* p. 57.
  6. *Ibid.*, p. 66-68.

which almost negates the other or, at the most, have nothing to do with the other. Such an attitude does not lead one to a healthy encounter. It sabotages seriousness in mutual learning and relationship. To the extent one affirms one's own faith or ideology to be the only truth there is not much of an opening to healthy encounters. Fundamentalism is a form of closure. The eyes are turned inside and there is a refusal to see the world at large.

Prof. Amaladoss<sup>7</sup> points out that fundamentalism can go to the extent of creating a state religion. It is seen wide spread in the world today. While fundamentalism often refers to religious fundamentalism, it is also seen in other spheres of life like politics where political ideologies do not make easy way to encounter the rest. Today inter-religious or even inter-political dialogue is useful and necessary not merely to come to know the other better and to dispel prejudices, etc. but also for a healthy collaboration between religious communities and political parties in order to promote common humanity based on justice and freedom.

### 3. Evil and its root cause

Indian philosophical and religious traditions have reflected on the causes of such a situation and have also offered suitable remedies. Nirvāṇa or Mokṣa is a stage of life where one experiences cessation from pain, from birth, from ignorance, from karma, etc. Religious scriptures affirm that liberation is a state of good after overcoming evil. Now one cannot find solution to evil unless one is aware of the root cause for it.

The root cause of all evil according to Jaina and Buddhist traditions is violence to life (*hiṃsā*). According to the Jaina tradition, ignorance (*abodhi*) and carelessness (*pramāda*) cause violence. Ignorance is with respect to right knowledge, right vision and right conduct and carelessness is by way of certain types of activities, like alcohol, sensual pleasures, the passions, sleep and unprofitable conversation.<sup>8</sup> Hence Mahāvīra, the propagator of Jainism, preached discrimination (*viveka*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*).

Buddhism too acknowledges that it is the passionate heart, which is the primary cause of evil. Many Buddhist schools of thought like

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7. M. Amaladoss, Making all things new (Mission in Dialogue), Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 1990, pp. 140-41.
  8. R. Williams, Jaina Yoga, London Oriental Series, 14, London, 1963, p. 230-231.

the Therāvādins, Sarvāstivādins and the Yogācāra school term these following six as the morally defiling passions (*kīlesa*) : greed (*lobha*), hatred (*doṣa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*mana*), speculative views or heresy (*ditṭhi*) and doubt or uncertainty (*vicikicchā*). To these are usually added mental idleness (*thina*), boastfulness (*iddhacca*), shamelessness (*ahirika*) and hardness of heart (*anottappa*).<sup>9</sup> Milindapanha too confirms this.<sup>10</sup> All these amount to a foundational cause known in Buddhist term as desire (*trṣṇā*) and, in Jaina traditions, passion (*kaṣāya*).

Indian philosophical and religious traditions assert that the root cause of all evil is the desire to be and the desire to have. Having weighed life experiences, the Śramaṇa sages have come to the conclusion that the outcome of all existence is pain and suffering. Hence Nirvāṇa or Mokṣa would primarily mean cessation from all suffering. Early Buddhist and Jaina traditions, therefore, sought to practise good conduct and penance in order to achieve this goal. The personal effort in achieving this end is seen in the Hīnayāna ideal of the Arhat, which later got developed into a collective social meaning found in the Bodhisattva ideal in the Mahāyāna tradition. But it has often remained primarily a personal endeavour in both these traditions.

The root of desire is again traced to egotism or *Ahambhāva* or the I-ness. This attitude expresses itself in acts of violence in order to gratify oneself, such as, act of grabbing, retaining, etc. In Jaina tradition, the intrinsic nature or *svabhāva* of the Soul (*Ātman* or *Jīva*) is pure consciousness and it has nothing to do with all others like egotism, desire, passions, activities, relations, etc. and they are extraneous to it.<sup>11</sup> And hence realization of the true self is not possible without abstinence from all passions and, subsequently, from all forms of violence. We could see this type of extreme ascetic life in a Jaina monk. In the Buddhist tradition, Buddha chose a middle path by avoiding both extremes of luxury and austerity. A Bodhisattva takes hardships upon himself (an act of self-suffering and infliction of violence to oneself) in order to remove the pain and ensure salvation to others.<sup>12</sup> Both the systems recognize *himsā* or injury to life as the ultimate

9. S.N. Dasgupta, —A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, p. 100.

10. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 36, Part II, IV. 5. 17.

11. *Samayasāra*, Ācārya Kundakunda, Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha Prakasan, Vira Samvat 2497 : 1971, Verses 2-3, 38.

12. *Tathāgataguhyā Sūtra, Sikṣāsamuccaya*, P.L. Vaidhya, Ed. The Mithila Institute of post Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, Darbhanga, 1961, p. 274.



cause of all evils and hence lay stress on personal and collective morality to overcome it.

Suffering, pain, etc. are forms of violence. Inequality results in caste/class discrimination, unequal income distribution, environmental disasters and ecological imbalances. All these are but a few manifestations of violence to life (*Jīva hiṃsā*). Jaina metaphysics believes in the pluralism and equality of *Jīva*.<sup>13</sup> Life may show itself in a variety of forms. But life-as-such is the same in each living being. The plurality of *Jīva* manifests itself in many spheres of life. But the individuality of a being, be it a plant, or an animal or a human being or a higher spirit has to be acknowledged and respected. The intrinsic capacity or value of life (*Jīva*) is beyond bounds. The Jaina system proclaims that any form of violence done to any living organism is ultimately violence done to oneself.

### 3.1 The phenomenon called 'violence'

The *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, one of the earliest Jaina Canons, expounds the phenomenon of violence in these terms : 'the (living) world is afflicted, miserable, difficult to instruct and without discrimination. In this world full of pain, suffering by their different acts, see the benighted ones cause great pain.'<sup>14</sup> The very first sermon of Buddha in the deer park has all the elements of *maitrī* and *karuṇā*<sup>15</sup> and at the same time the 4 Noble Truths lay stress on pain and suffering as results of violence.

Prof. Dasgupta contends that both Jainism and Buddhism appear to have arisen out of a reaction against the sacrificial discipline of the Brāhmaṇas marked by a strong aversion to the taking of animal life and against the practice of animal sacrifice.<sup>16</sup> Whatever may be the context in which these traditions evolved, the phenomenon of violence and the consequent stress on *Ahiṃsā* have been the hallmark of their attitude, religiosity and moral life down the centuries.

### 3.2 Meaning of violence

Violence is understood as malevolence, hatred vengeance, enmity, murder, injury, war, cruelty, barbarity, torture, deception, rape,

13. *Tattvārthasūtra*, Vācaka Umāsvāti, Comm. by Sanghvi Sukhlal, Tr. by K.K. Dixit, L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1974, 5. 2-3.
14. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22, *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, I. 1.2.1.
15. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 13, *Vinaya* Part I, p. 91ff.
16. S.N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, p. 208.

exploitation and so on. The *Prāśnavyākaraṇa*<sup>17</sup> gives nearly thirty Prakrit equivalents or synonyms to the word *hiṃsā*. Of these the following are considered important : destruction of life forces (*prāṇavadha*), carelessness (*asaṃjamo*), wheel of birth and death (*parabhavasamkamakarao*) and that which makes one devoid of virtues (*Guṇānāṃ Virahaṇa*). *Hiṃsā* is the destruction of life forces caused by carelessness actuated by passion like attachment and aversion.<sup>18</sup> It destroys goodness and purity of the soul. In Buddhist tradition, destroying life intentionally is termed as violence.<sup>19</sup> In other places<sup>20</sup>, it is understood as cruelty, harming (killing), hurting, etc.

### 3.3. Aspects of violence

*Hiṃsā* is both mental and physical in Jaina tradition. *Hiṃsā* does not depend on acts alone. The law of love will be broken by the absence of compassion shown when a person is carried away by anger. Hence a distinction has to be made between the intention to hurt (*bhāva hiṃsā*) and the actual hurt (*dravya hiṃsā*).<sup>21</sup> Violence is committed when either the inner self of a being (*bhāvaprāṇa*) or the outer vehicle of it, namely, the body (*dravyaprāṇa*) is in anyway hurt.<sup>22</sup> If one acts carelessly moved by passion, *hiṃsā* is certainly present whether a living being is killed or not.<sup>23</sup>

In the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*<sup>24</sup> there is a long discussion between Sudharmā and Jambūsvāmī as regards the judgement of an act whether it is violent or not. It finally concludes that there is sin though [the preceptor of an action] does not possess sinful thoughts, speeches etc. And those creatures such as the earth-bodied, etc. which have no development or mature reason nor consciousness nor intellect, nor mind, nor speech (those which lack judgement) are still full of hostility and wrong against all sorts of living beings. Thus even senseless beings are reckoned instrumental in bringing about slaughter of living beings.<sup>25</sup>

17. *Prāśnavyākaraṇa, Prathamaśrutaskandha, Āśravadvāra*, Ch. I, Sūtra 2, in Early Jainism by K.K. Dixit, L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1978.
18. *Tattvārthasūtra*, Ibid., 7.8.
19. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 13, *Vinaya* Part I, p. 235.
20. *Dhammapada*, 129-130, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 10, Part I.
21. *Tattvārthasūtra*, *ibid.* 7, 8.
22. H. Bhattacharya, Sri Mahavira Commemoration Volume I, Article on "Jaina view of Ahimsā", p. 161-162.
23. Jaina Gazette, Vol. 26, p. 77.
24. *Śūtrakṛtāṅga*, 2.4.2, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 45.
25. *Ibid.*, 2.4. 9-10.

It may look irrational and unjust to think how these senseless beings are led to violent deeds. But the Jaina spiritual masters say that with regard to the six types of living beings, from earth-bodied (one sensed) to human beings (with the internal organ as the sixth sense), Soul or Jīva is the same. It is this self due to wrong belief (*mithyādr̥ṣṭi*) that commits sin of violence or does cruelty to other creatures.<sup>26</sup>

Buddhist tradition pays greater attention to the intention of the doer. It posits five necessary conditions in the crime of killing : the knowledge that life exists, the assurance that a living being is present, the intention to take life, some actions must take place and some movements towards that action, the life must actually be taken.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. Justification of violence to the self

##### 4.1. *Self-suffering, Self-mortification, self-purification, self-restraint in religion*

There are debates whether one is allowed to take one's life in the process of saving oneself or others. In other words, how are self-mortification, self-persecution and the like are justified? Can a person harm himself/herself or others to safeguard one's own interests?

We see in the Brāhmanic tradition the sacrifice of animals, birds, etc. in order to obtain wealth and prosperity to the owner of the sacrifice or the *yajamāna*. Sacrifice of these birds and animals were justified by stating that the victims will enjoy a better status in the life to come.<sup>28</sup> L.C. Burman argues against this contention saying that the same soul works in all and it is sinful to kill any kind of animal at any time and at any place : Śruti does not set down injunctions to kill. Self-protection is the aim of every creature and Ātman has no narrow domains. It is all and everywhere.<sup>29</sup> It is this sacrificial attitude of the Brāhmaṇas that led Hemacandra to call the Law of Manu as '*hiṃsā śāstra*' or the Law of Violence.<sup>30</sup> The Jaina Ācāryas, particularly Amṛtacandra and Amitagati, maintain absolute Ahimsā and preach that it is wrong to kill even destructive animals.<sup>31</sup>

26. *Ibid.*, 2.4.3.

27. Narada Thera, A Manual of Buddhism, A text book of Buddhism for the SSC, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1951, p. 81.

31. *Purusārthasiddhyupāya*, 79-89, Amṛtacandra, Sacred Books of the Jainas, Vol. 4, P.S.V. Ed. Ajit Prasada, The Central Jain Publishing House, Lucknow, 1933.

Self-mortification is usually understood as inflicting pain upon oneself. But in a religious and ethical sense it does not result in pain. It is rather the joy of offering oneself in sacrificial service. To an observer the act might evoke sympathy, etc. but the motivation offers tremendous satisfaction and joy to the one who is involved in such a practice.

In Buddhist tradition, there are examples of self-sacrificial attitude in a Bodhisattva. According to *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and certain other Mahāyāna texts, a Bodhisattva shows compassion or *karuṇā* by resolving to suffer the torments and agonies of the dreadful purgatories during innumerable aeons, if need be, in order to lead all beings to perfect enlightenment.<sup>32</sup> The story of Pūrṇa in the *Samyutta Nikāya* explains to what extent forbearance of an individual can go.<sup>33</sup> A Bodhisattva is the greatest forgiver and embodiment of forbearance. Even if his body is destroyed and cut into hundred pieces with swords and spears he does not conceive any anger against his cruel persecutors.<sup>34</sup>

Jaina moral tradition upholds a practice called Sallekhanā. This vow is taken with the objective to fulfill what is known as *samādhi maraṇa* or peaceful passing away, *sannyāsa maraṇa* or disease in asceticism, *pāṇḍitya maraṇa* or the wise man's demise. This practice has been frankly recognised as religious self-purification and it is highly commended for both the laity and the monks. It is described at length in the first aṅga of the *Ācārāṅgasūtra* (i. vii. 6ff) and its preliminaries are described in detail in the *Āurapaccakkhāṇa*, the *Samṭhārā*, the *Mahāpaccakkhāṇa* and the *Candavejjhaya*, the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th of the *Paṭṭhas*. Jaina tradition also gives a list of those who took to Sallekhanā : Tirthankara Pārśva and Ariṣṭanemi<sup>35</sup>, monk Khandage<sup>36</sup>, Layman Ambada<sup>37</sup> and all those celebrated in the *Uvāsagadasāo*. From middle age till recent years this practice of extreme asceticism is seen:

32. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, P.L. Vaidhya, edn. The Mithila Institute of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, Darbhanga, 1961, p. 148.

33. *Samyutta Nikāya*, C.A.F. Rhys Davids and F.L. Woodward, The Book of the Kindred Sayings, Vol. 1-5, London, 1917-1930, Vol. 4, p. 60.

34. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *ibid.*, p. 103.

35. *Kalpasūtra*, 168, 182, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22.

36. *Bhagavatisūtra*, Comm. Abhayadeva, Bombay-Ahmedabad, Vik. Sam. 1974-1988, p. 300.

37. *Ovavaiya Sutta*, 100.

Hemacandra in 1172 A.D., King Kumārapāla<sup>38</sup>, a monk at Ahmedabad<sup>39</sup> and a nun at Rajkot and so on.

A Jaina monk undertakes this extreme form of self-mortification when he suffers from a fatal disease or when he is unable to follow the rules of his Order<sup>40</sup> or when he is faced with obstacles to follow his religion. The *Purusārthasiddhyupāya* claims that Sallekhanā is not suicide because the passions are attenuated. But he who acts with full of passion is guilty of suicide. There are five desires that are fatal at the time of Sallekhanā : desire to live, desire to die, attachment to friends, recollection of pleasures and desire for future pleasures.<sup>41</sup> It is almost killing of activity in oneself besides the abnegation of desires.

Extremism is not accepted in Buddhism as it chooses the middle path for its goal. Hence suicide is condemned without qualification : A monk who preaches suicide, who tells man, 'Do away with this wretched life, full of suffering and sin; death is better' in fact preaches murder, is a murderer, is no longer a monk.<sup>42</sup> Buddhists object to thirst for non-existence (*vibhāvatrṣṇā*) as they object to thirst for existence (*bhāvatrṣṇā*). A saint must abide in indifference without caring for life, without caring for death. He will not commit suicide in order to reach Nirvāṇa sooner. Is not suicide a desperate act of disgust and desire—disgust with existence and desire for rest? The pilgrim I-tsing says that Indian Buddhists abstain from suicide and, in general, from self-torture.<sup>43</sup>

But there are number of stories<sup>44</sup> to show that suicide in certain cases may be the actual cause of or occasion for the attainment of Arhatship, one step lower than the ideal of Buddhahood, although in certain other cases it may be pre-mature and sinful. The Mahāyāna Buddhism praises suicide as self-surrender and worship. The

38. S. Bühler, *Über das Leben Jaina Monches Hemacandra*, Vienna, 1889, p. 50f.

39. for 41 days, 1921 A.D.

40. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 4, p. 484, ed. James Hastings, Clark T and T Publication.

41. *Purusārthasiddhyupāya*, *ibid.* p. 177-178.

42. *Parajika* III, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 13, p. 4.

43. J. Thakkasu, *Tr. A Record of Buddhist Religion*, Oxford, 1896, p. 197ff.

44. Story of Siha (*Therigāthā*, 77); of Sappadasa (*Theragāthā*, 408); of Vakkali (*Theragāthā*, 350); of Godhika (*Kathāvattu*, 1.2); also Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 35, p. 273ff.

Bodhisattva of the past practised in that way<sup>45</sup> any heroic deed (*duhkara*), for instance, in the ancient Buddhist canon *Cariyapitaka*, *Jātaka*.

Religious suicide is approved in India. But it is significant to note that it has been in the case of men who have lived a full life and acquired a high measure of power. Suicide in other cases has never been authorized; rather it has been strongly condemned. In Buddhism as well as in every Indian system (except Cārvāka) it is held that suicide results in another life still burdened with the consequences of the individual's previous *karma*.

#### 4.2. Duty and promotion of social good

Apart from religious suicide and self-mortification that are justified on religious grounds, both Buddhism and Jainism seek justification for violence in certain other cases. Although Jainism is absolute about non-injury to life and living beings, it prescribes a practical way of life to the laity who engage daily in unavoidable injuries to living beings because of duty and responsibility.

To ascertain the truth that absolute non-injury is the only requirement for Mokṣa, Jaina tradition believes that as long as one engages oneself in worldly life one cannot attain salvation. Hence one has to become a monk for sometime in life or aspire to religious life in order to practise Ahimsā in a more perfect manner. History reveals that there had been Jaina kings, generals and soldiers who, by duty, had to engage themselves in political wars. But the Jaina Ācāryas do not call them heretics (*mithyādṛṣṭi*) because of blood they shed during wars.<sup>46</sup>

Such illustrations as these show that unavoidable circumstances and duty consciousness make allowance for violence. While the Jains profess that there is no *hiṃsā*, which has purely pleasant and agreeable consequences<sup>47</sup> they also concede to certain activities of the laity performed by way of duty (for instance, punishment), etc. Buddhism considers *daṇḍa* or punishment as unattached violence. The crime includes both punishment of criminals and waging a righteous war.

45. Story of the future Śākyamuni giving his body to feed a starving tigress, *Jātakamālā*, 1, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. 1.

46. Example of Chandragupta Maurya (4 cent. B. C.); Kumārapāla, King of Gujarat (12 cent. A.D.), *Jaina Gazette*, Vol. 12, p. 266.

47. *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, *ibid.*, 1.4.2.6.

In Buddhism, a Bodhisattva can kill a person who intends to murder a monk or his own parents : 'it does not matter if I suffer in purgatory for this sin but I must save this misguided creature from such a fate.'<sup>48</sup> Harsh speech is sometimes permissible to a Bodhisattva : 'he may speak harshly in order to retain foolish persons from evil actions.'<sup>49</sup>

While Buddhism is more liberal in its understanding of *himsā*, Jainism holds on to its ideal way. For instance, it condemns Euthanasia or mercy killing. The *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya* warns against wielding a weapon in the false belief that those living in great pain ought quickly to be released from their misery. Even those who are suffering should not be killed.<sup>50</sup>

Generally violence is not justified except as a necessary evil, an evil done out of love, piety, pity or duty, and this is the most controversial part of the doctrine of *Ahimsā*. Questions are asked as to when violence is justified and in what forms and to what extent.<sup>51</sup> There can be situations in which the use of violence alone can set the process of transformation in motion. What is important is not to know whether violence is required or not, but to know whether violence is necessary at all and whether it is oriented towards positive, meaningful changes in the social order or whether its objectives tend toward its total destruction.

For instance, to fight against unjust authority, to participate in military or revolutionary violence in order to attain social just objectives, etc. is not condemned. To refuse to take relevant action while injustice does its work and subsequently the poor die of hunger is one way of promoting the unjust system. It is often violence of the oppressor that prompts counter violence of the oppressed. Although debatable, today in practical circumstances, it is violence that assures the defence of the poor and it is violence that stands in the face of exploitation, coercion and oppression by the rich and the powerful. Today people realize that poverty is not a result of fate, but the result of forms of social and economic oppression. Anything that tends to perpetuate poverty or to divert forces that should be devoted to this collective struggle against oppression is treason to the poor. Jacques Ellul says that remaining silent or passive in the face of evil reinforces evil.<sup>52</sup>

48. Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., London, 1932, p. 208.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

50. *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya*, *ibid.*, 85.

51. *Ahimsā Voice*, January 1990, p. 33.

52. Jacques Ellul, *ibid.*, p. 33-34.

Indian history, even until Gandhi<sup>53</sup>, has accepted violence as a means to promote social good. The *Mahābhārata* says that there are two things : 'abstention from injury and injury done with righteous motives. Of these two, that which brings in righteousness is preferable. There is neither act that is entirely pure nor any that is entirely simple. In all acts, right or wrong, something of both prevails.'<sup>54</sup> Violence as such is ethically bad, but in life one has to consider the whole situation before deciding whether the use of violence is justified as a mixed good. The whole situation may not be dominated by one, single ethical principle.<sup>55</sup>

## 5. Countering the many faces of violence : The Śramaṇa-call to Life.

### 5.1. Social inequality and caste discrimination

Śramaṇa culture is said to be a reaction to the Brāhmaṇical system of social stratification and to the authority of the Vedas. Dharmakīrti

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53. For Gandhi 'to cause pain or wish ill to or take the life of any being out of anger or a selfish intent is Himsā. On the other hand, after a calm and clear judgement to kill or to cause pain to a living being with a view to its spiritual or physical benefit from a pure, selfless intent may be the purest form of Ahimsā....the final test to its violence or non-violence is after all the intent underlying the act' (Young India, 4.10, 1928, published in book form by Tagore and Co., Madras, 1972). As such, killing is not himsā when life is destroyed for the sake of those whose life is taken (Sharma: Gandhi as a Political Thinker, Indian Press, Allahabad, First impression, p. 52); Violence is admissible to Gandhi, (i) if non-violence would cause the sacrifice of some other values of great worth like honour of women, freedom and honour of the nation, overall strength and growth of the race, or survival of democracy was at stake (N.K. Bose : Selections from Gandhi, p. 155, 156, 168, 170), (ii) if a sufficient number of people were not ready and could not be persuaded to believe in and practice true Satyāgraha, violent struggles for just causes would be justified (ibid. p. 169, 174), (iii) if there is a little prospect of the conversion of the oppressor to the course of justice through Satyāgraha, the victims must defend themselves violently [The heart of the doctrine of Non-violence is the principle of 'universal convertibility' i.e. the belief that all evil-doers, anywhere and in all circumstances, can be persuaded to give up their course of evil if their victims practise Satyāgraha] (N.K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, pp. 159, 175-177).
54. Mahābhārata, Śāntiparvan, 15.48-50, Ādi to Bhīṣma parvans, ed. V.S. Sukthankar and others, Pune, 1927; Ed. T.R. Krishnamacharya and T.R. Vyasaacharya (Kumbakonam edn.), 6 Volumes, Bombay, 1906.
55. Tahtinen Unto, Non-violence as an Ethical Principle, Turku, 1964, p. 66.



says that there are five sins or folly of those who have lost their intelligence : belief in the validity of the Vedas, belief in a creator, expecting ethical merit from ablutions, pride of caste and engaging in violence to be rid of sin.<sup>56</sup> All these five elements are linked to the Brāhmaṇical system of life and society.

The social system was such that the Brāhmaṇas as priestly community occupied the prime place of honour, were propitiated and consulted not merely in religious matters but also on every aspect of social and political life. Their authority was the authority of the Vedas. Their sanctity was the sanctity of the various gods. Their honour was the propitiation of these gods by way of gifts and sacrifices. Until post-Vedic period, Sannyāsa was not considered as the last stage of life and everyone who wanted to renounce this world had to go through the other stages of life. *Gr̥hastha dharma* or the householder's life was considered meritorious and significant. Only certain types of people were admitted to Holy Orders of priesthood and women could not have access to it. Similarly, recitation of the Vedic texts was restricted only to the Brāhmaṇas and no outcast was accepted to the learning and life of a Brahmachārin.

It is during the post-Vedic time (the time of the *Upaniṣads* and the great Epics) we see a drastic change in the thinking pattern. The Śramaṇas must have made a significant influence on the Brāhmaṇic society and its traditional ideals. For instance, there is a reversal in the traditional understanding of a Brāhmaṇa. In the new definition, there are five requisities for being regarded as a Brāhmaṇa : *Varṇa (ubhato sujato hoti)*, *Jāti (avikkitto anupakutto jātivādena)*, *Mantra (ajjhayako hoti mantradharo)*, *śīla* and *pāṇḍitya*. But what really makes a person Brāhmaṇa is conduct and learning.<sup>57</sup>

The *Vajrasūci Upaniṣad*<sup>58</sup> traces the source of Brāhmaṇhood to the purity of heart. In the *Mahābhārata*<sup>59</sup>, king Yudhiṣṭhira is asked, 'who, O king, is a Brāhmaṇa ?' The answer is 'a Brāhmaṇa is one who evinces the truth, liberality, forbearance, virtue, mildness, austerity and pity. Anyone who possesses these qualities should be called a Brāhmaṇa; anyone bereft of these should be called a Śūdra.' It is no

56. Dharmakīrti's Verse.

57. *Dhammapada*, 396-423, *ibid.*, p. 91ff.

58. *Vajrasūci Upaniṣad*, 9, Vasudev Laxman Shastri Pansikar, One Hundred and Eight Upaniṣads, Pub. Pandurang Jawaji, Bombay, 1925; T.R. Ayyangar Srinivasa, The Samanya Vedanta Upaniṣad, p. 422-425.

59. *Mahābhārata*, Ajāgaraparvan in Vanaparvan.

more by birth that someone claims to be Brāhmaṇa, but by austerities (*tapas*) and good conduct (*cāritra*). Viśvāmitra, a kṣatriya, claims the birth and rights of a Brāhmaṇa by austerities.<sup>60</sup> The Jaina canon asserts that it is by one's deed that one becomes a Brāhmaṇa : one does not become a Śramaṇa by tonsure, nor a Brāhmaṇa by the sacred syllable Om, nor a Muni by living in the woods, nor a Tāpasa by wearing clothes of *kuśa* grass and a bark. One becomes a Śramaṇa by equanimity; Brāhmaṇa by chastity, a Muni by knowledge and a Tāpasa by penance.<sup>61</sup> Anti-caste attitude is noticed in the legend of Harikeśa Bala in one of the early Jain canons, *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra*.<sup>62</sup>

There are instances of declaration that the status of Kṣatriya was higher than that of the Brāhmaṇa.<sup>63</sup> The Kṣatriyas placed themselves in a superior position decrying the caste hierarchy, in favour of spiritual learning and achievement : *khattiyo settho jane tasmim ye gottapatisārino/vijjacaraṇa sampanno so settiho deva manuse ti* (Among those who claim a lineage or gotra, the Kṣatriya has a superiority. However, the person who has learning and character is superior to men as well as gods).

To a question relating to gotra Buddha answered Sundarika, a Brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja gotra : 'I am not a Brāhmaṇa, or the son of a king or a vessa; having taken a gotra that of common people, I wander about in the world, without possessions, meditating. Clad in the Sanghāti, I wander about houseless with my hair shaven, tranquil, and not consorting with men in this world. Inopportunist O Brāhman, does thou make enquiry of my gotra.'<sup>64</sup> Implicit in the words of Buddha is that ascetic life itself becomes a protest against the tyranny of caste. An ascetic surpasses caste, and other such institution of mundane life. He is casteless, not because he is below caste but because he is above it. An ascetic is free from the bondage and artificial restrictions of society, which an ordinary man might not transgress.

The Śramaṇa movement was a threat to class/caste division and Brāhmaṇa supremacy. It was originally a monastic structure. The Sangha or the Holy Order admitted all types of people, even outcasts

60. The rivalry between the two great Orders or castes : the story of Vaśiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra in the Mahābhārata, Adiparvan, 6638f.

61. *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra*, 25.31-32, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 45, p. 130-140.

62. *Ibid.*, 12.

63. *Kalpasūtra*, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22, Part I, pp. 225-226.

64. *Sutta Nipāta*, 3.4, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 10, pp. 74-75.

and women.<sup>65</sup> This was not possible in the Brāhmaṇic set up. Even the administration of the Saṅgha was similar to the tribal organisation. Democratic form of government was followed especially with regard to admission into the Order, regular meetings and consultations, authority and accountability among the residents, general governing of the Body, etc.<sup>66</sup> All these were prompted by the belief in social equality and understanding of hierarchy on the basis of conduct and experience.

### 5.2. Accumulation of wealth and private ownership

The attitude towards wealth and riches among the Śramaṇas was highly contemptuous. They were well aware of the transient nature of things, of the harm these riches did to the moral progress of human persons : 'great wealth and women, a family and exquisite pleasures— for such things people practice austerities. All this you may have for your asking. What avail riches for the practice of religion, what a family, what pleasures? We shall become Śramaṇas possessed of many virtues and wander about collecting alms.<sup>67</sup> In the *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra* there is a dialogue between a father and his sons. The father tells his sons, 'the study of the Vedas will not save you; the feeding of the Brāhmaṇas will lead you from dreaminess to darkness and the birth of sons will not save you...pleasures bring only a moment's happiness, but suffering for a very long time, intense suffering, but slight happiness, they are an obstacle to the liberation from existence and are a very mine of evils.'<sup>68</sup> Finally the father persuades his sons to embrace the life of renunciation: 'my sons, after you have studied the Vedas and fed the priests, after you have placed your own sons at the head of your house and after you have enjoyed life together with your wives, then you may depart to the woods as praiseworthy sages.'<sup>69</sup>

One of the major ethical principles of the Jains is *Aparigraha*, literally meaning non-grabbing. The metaphor generally refers to non-accumulation of wealth and simplicity of life. Several instances in the Jaina canon point out to the deadly nature of wealth persuading the believer to follow the course of religious mendicancy. Every attachment is a cause of sin<sup>70</sup>, an accumulation of *karma* for which one has to

65. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, National book Trust, India, 1971, p. 92.

66. Rahul Sāṅkṛityāyan, ed. pp. 25-29.

67. *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra*, *ibid.*, 14.16-17.

68. *ibid.*, 14.12-13.

69. *Ibid.*, 14.9.

70. *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, *ibid.*, 1.3.2.13.

reap the consequences. They call for subduing desire by desirelessness<sup>71</sup>, giving up the world<sup>72</sup>, his possessions and relations and all undertakings and become a wanderer and homeless without worldly interests.<sup>73</sup> A Muni is said to be the one who knows the doctrine of sin, who knows the time, the occasion, the conduct, the religious precept and disowns all things as not required for religious purposes.<sup>74</sup> In him there is no worldly desires and attachment.

The *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra* describes a conversation between King Nami and the god of gods Śakra, in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa. Śakra asks King Nami, 'Your place is on fire, why do you not look after your seraglio?' To this the king replies, 'Happy are we, happy we live, we who call nothing our own; when Mithila is on fire, nothing is burnt that belongs to me. To a monk who has left his sons and wives and who has ceased to act, nothing pleasant can occur, nor anything unpleasant. There is much happiness for the sage, for the houseless monk, who is free from all ties, and knows himself to be single and unconnected (with the rest of the world).'<sup>75</sup>

Ideas cherished by such mendicants give us a different perspective to the understanding of wealth and the rich blessings of the world. Such an attitude towards wealth keeps Religion as priority and religious living as the sure means to attain the goal of life. 'Making faith his fortress, penance and self-control the bolt (of its gate), patience its strong wall... making zeal his bar, its string carefulness in walking (*iriyā*) and its top (where the string is fastened content, he should bend (this bow) with Truth, piercing with the arrow, penance, (the foe's) mail, karma (in this way) a sage will be the victor in battle and get rid of the saṃsāra.'<sup>76</sup>

From the Śramaṇa perspective, wealth cannot give what is necessary to man : 'If there were numberless mountains of gold and silver, as big as Kailāsa, they would not satisfy a greedy person; for his activity is boundless like space.'<sup>77</sup> 'Wealth cannot really save me : It is only a fool who thinks that his wealth, cattle and relations will save him; they him or he them. But they are no help, no protection.'<sup>78</sup> Fourteenth chapter of the *Uttarādhyayana* describes how two sons took refuge in the path of the Jina. As the father discourages and

71. Walter Fernandez, *ibid.*, p. 18.

72. *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, *ibid.*, 1.2.2.1.

76. *Ibid.* 9.20-22.

77. *Ibid.*, 9. 48.

78. *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, *ibid.* 1.2.3.16.

dissuades his sons from a life of austerities, the sons reply to him, 'if the whole world and all treasures were yours you would still not be satisfied, nor would all this be able to save you. Whenever you die, O King, and leave all pleasant things behind, the law alone and nothing else in this world, will save you a monarch.'<sup>79</sup>

It is easier for a monk to lead a life with frugal means. The life style of a mendicant provides austerity measures. An individual may be weak and slip back into his old ways<sup>80</sup> but by assisting one another the mendicants would strengthen one another's efforts. The mendicants' way of life has provided rules for begging food, clothes, couch, bowl and it also regulates the possession of a mendicant.<sup>81</sup> A householder, on the other hand, is in the midst of a world with vast differences in attitude and behaviour. When the worldly ways pose a challenge to a life of Dharma and Mokṣa, a householder is at a loss to balance between needs and wants, between extremes of life.

### 5.3 Attachment and dominence

The word *Parigraha* refers to possession and private ownership. *Aparigraha* is an attitude of detachment, and in the economic realm it may mean non-obsession with material things or, simply, non-possession. *Aparigraha*, besides being a *vrata* or vow, is an attitude toward life and specifically toward the material universe. Implicit in the vow is the great reverence to the autonomy of the material universe. What we call wealth, possessions and the pleasures, etc. are strictly outside one's self. They may be meant for oneself but does not really belong to the self. This basic understanding comes from the idea that *Jīva* or the self is identical only with consciousness and all others like pleasures, activity, etc. are extraneous to it. This is the quintessence of Jaina philosophy. Hence, in order to attain the objective of life, namely, the realization of the true self devoid of all that is extraneous to it, *Aparigraha* or the vow of detachment and non-possession is proposed. *Aparigraha* clarifies the vision regarding the true nature of the self and, at the same time, to respect the autonomy of the material universe.

A question arises whether it is really possible for embodied beings to be detached from the empirical world. Jaina tradition says that it is

79. *Uttarādhyāyana-sūtra*, ibid. 14. 39-40.

80. Paul Carus, ibid. Ch. 17, verse 2.

82. *Daśavaikālikasūtra*, 6.20, Ārya Sayyambhava, tr. and notes by K.C. Lalwani, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1973.

possible from an absolute, ideal attitudinal or niścaya point of view. Whereas from an actual, practical or *vyavahāra* point of view, one cannot be without the material universe, because the embodied being itself is a combination of mind and body, spirit and flesh. And one has an intimate relationship with the material universe. But this relationship could be one of domination or of mutual collaboration and the Jaina visionary would prefer the latter. In domination one is a slave to the passions and in collaboration there could be the attitude of detachment and healthy indifference. Thus *Aparigraha* helps one to achieve this mental equanimity and allows a sort of ownership achieved not by grabbing the material possession or by fighting for it but through a detached acceptance and use of the same. Any possession out of greed and other passions would come under violence to the material world, in other words, *dravya hiṃsā*.

Amitagati<sup>82</sup> points out that violence is committed for the sake of accumulation of wealth or possession. Hence a householder should constantly try to limit his activity to obtain possessions. Ownership can have two results : attachment and aversion. The former manifests itself as a tendency to accumulate wealth by possessing, garbing, etc. and the latter in the form of violence. Ownership is in possession of land, house, jewels, money, livestock, servants and other luxury items.<sup>83</sup> Attachment to wealth and a desire to accumulate it are seen when one is found extremely sad at a loss incurred in some transaction, or in hoarding grains and other items to sell them at a higher price or at a later date, overloading animals and extracting more work from servants, etc.<sup>84</sup> *Parigraha* is evident when one takes things that are not one's own or when not given<sup>85</sup>, when dealing with illicit business<sup>86</sup>, indulging in adulteration, use of false weights and measures<sup>87</sup> and writing false statements or forgery, etc.<sup>88</sup>

Jaina ethical literature elaborately deals with the way one has to acquire the means of livelihood. In order to be detached, one has to

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83. *Cārītrasāra* by Cāmuṇḍarāya, Māṇikacandra Digambara Jaina Granthamālā, No. 9, Bombay, 1917, p. 12.
84. *Ratnakaraṇḍakaśrāvākācāra*, 62 by Ācārya Samantabhadra, with Comm. of Prabhācandra, Māṇikacandra Digambara Jaina Granthmālā, No. 24, Bombay, 1926.
85. *Ibid.*, 57.
86. Pūjyapāda on *Tattvārthasūtra*, 7.27, *Sarvārthasiddhi*, Tr. Reality, S.A. Jain, Viraseva Sangha, Calcutta, 1960.
87. *Tattvārthasūtra*, *ibid.* 7.22; *Ratnakaraṇḍakaśrāvākācāra*, 58.
88. *Upāsakadaśaṅga*, 1.46, with Comm. of Abhayadeva, ed. with tr. by Hoernle, Bibliotheca Indica, No. 105, Calcutta, 1890.

keep a check on oneself mainly in the way one acquires wealth and other possessions. Firstly, the Jaina householder chooses a profession that involves least violence to sub-human beings<sup>89</sup> and he does least violence to his partners in business, his servants, the customers, etc.<sup>90</sup> Secondly, he takes to *Dig vrata*, literally meaning control of directions. This vow restricts one's movements minimizing greed and violence. It limits one's freedom of movement by climbing, ascending mountains, descending into the well or underground, storehouse etc., entering a cave, etc.<sup>91</sup> *Desavakaikavrata* limits the extent of territory for movements and objects of senses.<sup>92</sup>

Thirdly, the Jaina householder takes to *Bhogopabhogaparimāṇa vrata*, which puts a limit to the use of objects in order to minimize attachment to them. They include meat and honey, intoxicants, ginger, faddish, carrot, butter, unsuitable means of conveyance or unsuitable ornaments, the use of bizarre dresses.<sup>93</sup> The householder should avoid the use of five *udumbara* fruits<sup>94</sup> and abandon the use of non-sentient but life-substances like roots, fruits, seeds, etc. without boiling them.<sup>95</sup> Finally a Jain householder is expected to fast on *aṣṭamī*, *caturdaśī* and *puṇimā*.<sup>96</sup> Āśādhara, Vasunandin, Amṛtacandra and others have prescribed the procedure for fasting<sup>97</sup>, meditation, study of scriptures, worship of Jina, saluting and feeding the *sādhus*, vigilance in conduct and thinking of *anupreṣās* or themes of contemplation, etc.<sup>98</sup> Such a

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89. Fifteen forbidden trades are listed in *Sāgaradharmāmṛta* of Āśādhara, see R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga*, London, 1963, p. 117-121.

90. There is a general impression that the Jains, being a business community, have an objective of accumulating wealth by any means. There are several ideas and values in Jaina ethics to show that they are consistent with the spirit of capitalism (Arvind K. Agarwal, 'Jaina Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism—A Critical Reappraisal of Weber' in *Ideal, Ideology and Practice, Studies in Jainism*, ed. N.K. Singhi, Printwell Publishers, Jaipur, 1987, p. 199-202; also see another article in the same book 'Jainism and its perversion in actual practice' by Tarachand Gangwal, p. 124-136).

91. *Tattvārthasūtra*, *ibid.* 7.25.

92. *Kārtikeyānupreṣā*, 367 by Swāmī Kārikeya, Comm. by Śubhacandra, ed. A.N. Upadhye, Agas, 1960.

93. *Sāgaradharmāmṛta*, *ibid.*, 5.15-17.

94. *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya*, *ibid.* 61.

95. *Kārtikeyānupreṣā*, *ibid.* 379.

96. Siddhasena on *Tattvārthasūtra*, 7.16, Surat, 1930.

97. *Sāgaradharmāmṛta*, *ibid.* 5.36-38.

98. *Ibid.* 5.36-38.

means of livelihood according to the tenets of religion not only prepares a Jaina householder mentally with attitudes of detachment, but also externally curtails him from hoarding.<sup>99</sup>

A significant practice among the Jaina householders, which further helps in minimizing attachment to the material universe, is gift offering or *Dāna*. It is popular among the Buddhists as well. In the absence of this practice no ascetics can survive and consequently there could be no transmission of their sacred doctrine. *Dāna* as understood in its largest sense includes the giving of one's daughter and the transmission of property to one's heirs, the exercise of charity, the construction of temples and community institutions such as common kitchen or *poṣadhaśāla*, or even the performance of *pūjā* viewed as the giving of flowers, incense, flag staff and similar offerings.

Generally ascetics are given food and drink, clothes, blankets, bedding and other necessary accessories. Ahara, abhaya, śāstra and bhaiṣajya are the four types of gift-offering made to the ascetics. Ācārya Vasunandin says that in any act of gift-offering five factors have to be considered : the recipient (*pātra*), the giver (*dātr*), the thing given (*dātavya*, *dravya*), the manner of giving (*dānavidhi*) and the result of giving (*dāna phala*).<sup>100</sup> Like other meritorious acts, it can contribute to the extinction of *karma* or to the amassing meritorious *karma* or may find requital in the present life.

Ācārya Hemacandra proposes a scheme wherein illustrious disciples sow their wealth on the seven fields with compassion for those in great misery.<sup>101</sup> They are :

- i. Jaina images : wealth is spent on them by setting them up, by performing the eight-fold *pūjā*, by taking them in procession through the city, by adorning them with jewels, and fine clothes;
- ii. Jaina temples : wealth is spent on building new domes and for old ones to be restored;

99. 'The ideal of *Aparigraha* (non-possession of wealth) is an underlying tenet for the simplistic, austere life of a Jain householder which provides ample empirical and logical evidence that the earning of profits is not for the sake of non-productive consumption but for reinvestment. This tenet also explains the large scale philanthropic activity done by such the miniscule Jaina community in Indian society', Idea, Ideology and practice, ed. 'N.K. Singhi, p. 200.

100. Jnanapitha Murtidevi Jaina Granthamala, Prakrit Series No. 3, p. 200.

101. *Yogaśāstra* of Hemacandra, iii, 120.



- iii. Jaina scriptures: wealth is spent on copying the sacred texts and giving them to learned monks for writing commentaries;
- iv. Monks : wealth is spent on alms giving and for taking care of the monks;
- v. Nuns : wealth is spent on alms giving and for taking care of the nuns;
- vi. Layman : wealth is spent on inviting the co-religionist to birth and marriage festivals, distributing food, betel, clothes and ornaments to them, constructing public *posadhasālās* and other buildings for them, and encouraging them in religious duties. Charity is to be extended to all those who have fallen into evil circumstances; and,
- vii. Lay women : all the duties under the last head apply equally to women.

Hemacandra goes on to say that an illustrious householder (*mahāsāvaka*) should use his wealth indiscriminately to assist all who are in misery or poverty, or those who are blind, deaf, crippled or sick etc.<sup>102</sup> Such sowing of one's substance is to be made with limitless compassion.

For a Buddhist lay person practice of generosity has been cast in certain routine forms since earliest days of Buddhism. It consists largely in remunerating the monk's services to villagers. Thus a lay person gains merit by giving food, robes, money (often to the head of monasteries for the community's needs) to monks or, sometimes, land or materials or labour for building a new monastery or Vihāra.<sup>103</sup>

Both Jaina and Buddhist traditions have given much importance to gift-offering, an act of sharing of one's substance or wealth. It only shows the rational understanding of the concept of Jīva as entirely different from the material (*Ajīva*) and the earnestness of the Jaina believer to realise the real self, the ultimate objective of life.

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- 102. It is important to note that Jaina householders pay attention to this aspect of gift offering or Dāna and we could see in any Indian city and elsewhere hospitals, community halls, etc. for public consumption. Social service and welfare has become one of the key notes of Jaina morality.
  - 103. Anāthapiṇḍikā, a man of unmeasured wealth was called the supporter of orphans and the friend of the poor, offers Jetavana and Viśākhā, a wealthy woman, offers Pubbarama or Eastern Garden, Paul Carus, *ibid.*, Ch. 24 and 25.

## 6. Conclusion

As contemporary India is going through a slow process of development and growth, the land and its people encounter different forms of violence in different spheres of life. Cultural and religious fundamentalism, inequality and social dominance and subjugation between ethnic and linguistic groups, economic imbalance and unequal distribution of wealth, environmental degradation and so on seem to tear the social fabric of India and tarnish the life-style of its people. While different social and political forces are at work to redeem a situation such as this, religious and spiritual resources offer permanent solutions to the contemporary evils in society.

The Śramaṇa religions like Jainism and Buddhism propose their basic ethical principles like non-injury to life and detachment in procuring and use of wealth, etc. as the only source of remedy. The simple life-style and the generous attitude prompted by their sages and spiritual masters is a sure step to meet the challenges of the contemporary world of consumerism and hoarding mentality. Ultimately it is violence done to life out of greed and other passions that causes conflicts among individuals and communities. Even more harm is done to life at the level of attitude. Violence to human and environmental life is prominently seen as life is categorized as high and low, and subsequently treating humans and others as lesser beings. It is the same narrow attitude that prompts people to violence in the use of language, that lodges people in a ghetto world, that refuses to allow changes, accommodations in one's own thinking and behaviour.

Jaina and Buddhist attitude to life prompts a *dhārmic* way of life which, in general, promises to preserve and to promote life with dignity and freedom. This prompting could be a happy lead to cross over a life of sorrow and danger in contemporary India, if only the call of the Śramaṇas could be meaningfully heard.

## JAINISM UNDER CĀLUKYAS OF KALYĀṆA

DR. HAMPANAGARAJIAH

The age of imparial Cālukya rule was a period of intense political, cultural, literary and socio-religious activities in Karnataka. They extended the empire of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas that they inherited, covering the border areas of the present day states of Andhra Pradesh, Mahārāṣṭra, and the north-eastern belt. The long and active rule of the members of Cālukya dynasty between 973 and 1186 C.E., had made significant contribution. Numerically speaking the largest number of inscriptions are of the Cālukya monarchs. Tailapa-II, his sons, grand sons and the successive rulers expanded the kingdom in all directions, establishing political stability. Karnataka witnessed highest number of Dukes and governors during this aeon.

From Tailapa downwards upto *mallikāmōda* Jagadēkamalla Jayasimha, all the early monarchs were Jains, according to available inscriptions. "(Jainism) covered many parts of Karnataka and exercised such a powerful influence among its inhabitants that it enjoyed for sometime the privilege of almost universal doctrine. During the sway of the Gaṅgas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in particular, until the advent of later Cālukyas, Jainism played the conspicuous role of a state religion. Jainism has contributed immensely to political history and cultural dimensions of Karnāṭaka, particularly its literary eminence and architectural grandeur" [A History of Karnataka, p. 301].

The above observation is vouched by a number of contemporary charters. The Cālukya dynasty was highly indebted to a particular Jaina family of the noble lady Attimabbe. Her father Mallapa, her uncle Punnamayya, her husband Nāgadēva and her son Anṇigadeva – were the illustrious generals in the army of Tailapa. They fought bravely and in the process Nāgadēva and Punnamayya lost their lives on the battle field, the latter on the banks of river Kāveri, on the extreme south. Guṇḍamayya and Abhavamalla, brothers of Attimabbe also joined the army and enhanced the glory of the family. Dallapa, father-in-law of Attimabbe was the chief minister, chief of army and chief of the royal records. Thus, an entire family assisted the kingdom for generations with their gallantry and dedication.

Nāgamayya, supermo of Puṅganūr in Veṅgideśa gave away gifts and encouraged Jainism. His sons, Mallapa and Punnamayya were

devout Jains, noted scholars and connoisseurs of art and literature. When Jinacandra, preceptor of their family and ascetic of great fame, passed away, Mallapa and his brother commissioned poet Ponna (C.E. 965) to author *Śāntipurāṇa*, biography of Tīrthaṅkara, for the merit of monk Jinacandra.

Attimabbe strictly adhered to the principles enunciated in the gospel of Jina. She helped the scholars, creative writers, singers—both vocal (*gāyaka*) and instrumental (*vādaka*), story tellers, reciters, dancers, actors, soldiers, the destitute and orphans. She founded an amazing figure of 1501 Jaina temples and distributed 1500 images of Jinas, 1500 gold coated glittering lamps, 1500 festoon, 1500 gong and bells to ring while worshipping the god and 1500 *mandāsanas*, wooden chests for placing Jina-*pratimās*. She got 1000 copies of *Śāntipurāṇa* re-copied on palm-leaf and distributed freely to the householders. She also patronised Ranna (C.E. 993) a major poet of the period who composed *Ajitapurāṇa*, biography of Ajitanātha Tīrthaṅkara. Thus she earned the title of '*Dāna-Cintāmaṇi-Attimabbe*' from the Calukya emperor.

Tailapa (973-97) was the lay votary of the adept Jinacandra-muni and his son Satyāśraya Iṛivabedaṅga (997-1008) was a lay pupil of Vimalacandra paṇḍitadeva. Uninterrupted assistance continued during the reign of these two emperors, father and son, who evinced personal interest. After usurping the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom and establishing his own dynasty, Tailapa and his son continued Maḷkhēḍ as their residence and Jaina officers, who were under the hegemony of their predecessor's rule, in different cadre and hierarchy were continued to serve the new monarchy. Surprisingly most of the crucial and consequential bureaucracy had Jainas. Besides, the Cālukyas had emerged to the Imperial status with the support of Jaina community and Jaina friars. Śāntivarma, one of the governors of Tailapa, founded a Jina sanctuary at Saundatti and dedicated it to Bāhubali Bhaṭṭāraka, in C.E. 980. At Muḷgunda, Kereyamma a subordinate, erected a monolith *mānastambha* in front of Jaina shrine, in C.E. 977. King Tailapa, while camping at Rodda, near Pavaḡada, in C.E. 992, granted land, completely exempted from all taxes, to the Jaina temples of Kogaḷi and the endowment was entrusted to Gaṇadhara Bhaṭṭāraka, chief of the Kogaḷi diocese.

Tailapa honoured Ranna, poet-laureate and polyhistor, with the title of '*kavi-cakravarti*' (poet-emperor) and presented him with '*Madanāvātāra*' a parasol of rarity. Till then such a unique distinction was awarded only to Puṇiseya Maruḷadēva the Gaṅga prince, son of Būtuga and son-in-law of Kṛṣṇa-III, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa sovereign; again, all the three of them being Jainas.

Ranna (C. 950-1010 C.E), a versifier of eminence, was more than a match to any lyricist of the Cālukya dynasty. Ranna, started as a soldier in the army of the Gaṅgas, rose to high rank by the favour of Cāmuṇḍarāya, shifted his allegiance to Cālukyas. After attempting composing inscriptions, and two poems *Paraśurāma-carite* and *Cakrēśvara-carite*, are not extant. Of the surviving works, *Ajitampurāṇa* (C.E. 993) and *Sāhasa-Bhīma-Vijaya* olim *Gadāyuddha* are considered as the best poems of this time.

King Satyāśraya, educated under Jaina pontiff, profusely showered favours on Jaina community. During his period Jainism held its sway over the elite and the common folk alike. A post-obitum slab was set up at Aṅgaḍi, for the memory of his Jaina teacher in C.E. 990. Satyāśraya endowed Brahma-Jinālaya with *Cakravarti-datti* and a golden *kalāśa*, at Lakkuṇḍi built by the celebrated Attimabbe as her 1501th Jaina temple that she alone had commissioned, in the year C.E. 1107-08. Ranna had authored an epigraph, his last work with which he has bid good bye to his magic wand of creative genius.

Satyāśraya's daughter Mahādevī was the queen consort of Iṛiva-Noḷambādhiraḷa-Ghaṭeyaṅkakāra, a dedicated Jaina, who had endowed the Jaina house of worship at Maravoḷal. Satyāśraya had expressed his deference to the venerable Jaina nun Nāyibbarasi-*abbegaḷ*, *Jaina-dharma-samuddharaṇe*, a saviour of Jaina faith. During his reign, Rācaṭūri Jogasāmi has caused to be made a Jina image and a house of prayer at Rāghava Puram (Andhra).

A pillar at Cilūr (A.P. : Hyderabad Dt) records a grant of land made by *Daṇḍanāyaka* Padmanābhāiah, a general of Vikramāditya-V, to the Aṅṅal-Atisāya-Pārśvadeva of Indra-jinālaya attached (*prati-baddha*) to the Antara-Vasadi of Cilakūru. Aṅṅal is a Draviḍian word, equivalent to Sanskrit *Arhat*. *Atisāya* implies an extraordinary glory phenomena of the image of Pārśva. The nomen Indra-jinālaya clearly suggests that the Jaina shrine was a creation by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor Indra-II or Indra-III.

After Vikramāditya-V, (1008-14) Ayyana-II (1014-15) also generously contributed to the upkeep of Jaina *basadis*. Jainism blossomed to its best during the government of Jagadekamalla Jayasimha (1015-42). He had two typical Jaina cognomen of *Mallikāmoda*, delectable like Jasmine, and *Vādiraja* Jagadekamalla, a pupil of Jaina ācārya. He founded a Jaina shrine at Maski (Raichur Dt) named after him as Jagadekamalla-Jinālaya.

One of the earliest of the inscriptions of the period of Jayasimha,

dated C.E. 1015 is from Koḍakaṇi, a famous Jaina centre where Nemiseṭṭi of Nunnavamśa commissioned a Jaina shrine. Jayasimha founded another Jaina temple dedicated Sāntinātha Jina at Baḷḷigave and the grants he had made were again renewed by Vikramāditya-VI in C.E. 1068, at the time of his elder brother's coronation. Āyca Gāvunḍa, for the merit of his spouse Kancikabbe, built a *basadi* at Hosūr (Gadag Dt) in C.E. 1028. Jaina temple and cloister of Jaina monks at Marōḷa (Bijapur Dt, Hungund tk) thrived in this time with a number of Jaina ascetics actively preaching the tenets of their creed; gifts of land to the Jaina temple here is recorded in an inscription of C.E. 1028.

Sōmaladevi, daughter of Jayasimha and Akkādevi, sister of Jayasimha favoured Jainism. Aggalayya was a famous Jaina physician of the kingdom. He had the titles of *Vaidya-ratnākara*, an ocean of medicine, and *Prāṇācārya*, master of the (human) soul, and elevated to the status of royal physician. At the request of Aggalayya, wizard of *Āyurveda sāstra*, Jagadekamalla made a gift to two Jaina temples of Buddhasēna-Jinālaya at Muccananapalli and Vaidyaratnākara-Jainālaya at Ikkuriki (A.P. Nalgonḍa Dt). Jayasimha who certainly professed Jainism gave an added impetus to the cause of Nirgrantha creed.

Trailokyamalla [1042-68] continued backing Jainism. Akkādevi gifted land to a Jinālaya at Arasibīdi (Vikramapura) for the maintenance of the establishment and of the attached monks and nuns, in C.E. 1047, grants were given to another Jinālaya in C.E. 1044, and to Baḷḷigāve *basadi* in 1048. Baladeva, minister for war and peace, gave an estate to Nayasēna-I, a Jaina monk, as trustee for the supply of food to the Jaina-*āyatana* at Muḷgund in 1053. Lakṣma-nṛpa, Duke of Banavāsi-12,000, granted estates to the Jaina temple at Aṇṇigere, which was later renewed by general Rācidēva. About a dozen lithic records establish that Trailokyamalla was more auspicious to Jaina church. Śrīdharadeva authored *Jātakatilaka*, a work on Astrology.

During the period of Bhuvanaikamalla (1068-75) all the conditions were propitious to a smooth sailing for Jainism. Lakṣma-nṛpa again continued to help it to bloom without let at Aṇṇigere, Puligere and other holy places.

Tribhuvanamalla, who had Vikramāditya-VI as his first name succeeded Bhuvanaikamalla, and alone ruled for over half a century (1076-1126). That was the best of prosperous years for Jaina community. Never before or after, Jaina society flourished without hindrance for such a long period under one particular king. The only

parallel example would be of Amōghavarṣa. Like him, Vikramāditya was also born and bred, educated in a Jaina atmosphere, moulded in the Jaina crucible. Scores of charters speak of his and his vassals very many consistent gifts and endowments to the Jaina sanctuaries and monasteries. Hundreds of new *basadis* were commissioned and many more renovated. Jaina monks and nuns were respected everywhere.

Enthusiastic Jaina pious votaries expanded their wealth on *basadis*, tanks, reservoirs, channels, feeding houses and digging wells. In their frenzy for glory, Jains had built too many temples, far larger when compared to their smaller ratio of population. Perhaps at a later stage they realised that their ancestors had spent too much of wealth and energy on places of prayer. *Basadis* constructed, north to south and east to west, marked an effective penetration of Jaina activities in Cālukyan territory.

The Cālukya rulers gave a distinct character to Jaina art and architecture. The temples and caves of this period are in fact a precursor to a distinct Jaina style that was translated into a more elaborate, impressive and integrated style during the later periods of the Hoysaḷas, where it reached its zenith in the decorative element.

Towards the closing decades of the Cālukyas, things did not move well with Jainism. It was desperately struggling against hostile forces. Jainism was hardly able to establish structures of the size and splendour of the period of the Gaṅgas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, and even the Cālukyas upto 1184. They could at best safeguard their cultural inheritance. Therefore, they tried to repair and restore the disintegrated structures.

The Yāpanīya sangha, a Jaina sect, flourished during these years and it deserved foremost attention. It followed the middle path of bridging the gulf between the two extremes of the Digambara and Śvetāmbara sect, within the orbit of Jaina philosophy and code of conduct, especially regarding the issue of nudity. 'Yāpanīyas went naked in the forest but wore a single piece of clothing when in populated areas. They recognised the authenticity of the Śvetāmbara scriptures, and they propounded two doctrines traditionally acceptable only to Śvetāmbaras; that women can attain salvation and that the omniscient being partakes of food' [Jaini, P.S. : 1979 : 15]

Since the Yāpanīya sangha suggested a compromise and a reformation, it faced formidable challenge. Even the slightest departure is censured by traditionally conservative forces. But, those who were

receptive to new ideas, warmly welcomed Yāpanīya. The Yāpanīya sangha started its chapter in Karnataka at Kalyāṇa olim Basavakalyāṇa (Bidar Dt), in C.E. 159, and by fifth century it had assumed the vulnerable position of receiving royal reception by way of frequent endowments from the Early Kadambas of Banavāsi. Later on, the Yāpanīyas took virtually every sphere of life by storm.

By the time of the Cālukyās, the Yāpanīya sangha had prospered so rapidly that it had reached its apex. The Cālukyās respected and encouraged all sects, but the Yāpanīyas seemed to have received more attention.

After the sustained royal patronage of banavāsi Kadambas, the Yāpanīya sangha never looked back. It grew from strength to strength upto the period of Kalacuris and Cālukyās. The period between 980 and 1180 C.E. was the golden age of Yāpanīya sangha; that was the best of time, and the year after 1184 was the worst of time for them.

“Male and female ascetics of Yāpanīya sangha had their listeners and adherents, from the king to common citizen. Festivals and modes of worship, pilgrimage centres were common to Digambara tradition. Yāpanīya pontiffs and high ranking teachers with their amazing achievements and mastery in the realms of philosophy, logic, grammar, yoga, spirituality, literature, medicine and other akin branches of knowledge, have been revered most by one and all, Jains and non-Jains alike. Many epigraphs mention Yāpanīya preceptors and their pupil of three to four generations. Thus, a systematic and authenticated genealogy of the illuminating personality of Yāpanīya ācāryās can easily be traced. There were many noted centres of this sect during the Cālukyā age” [Kamala Hampana : 1995. 30-31]

The Yāpanīyas transmitted a very rich Nirgrantha cultural tradition exercising their sway for over eight hundred years in Karnataka. Like their predecessors, the Cālukyās widened unstinted patronage to Jainism : “The Yāpanīyas seem to have eventually merged into the larger Digambara community by which they were surrounded, their tendencies toward a more ecumenical Jainism died with them” [Jaini, : 15]

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## THE RĀṢṬRAKŪṬAS AND JAINISM

PROF. KAMALA HAMPANA

After vanquishing the Cālukyās of Bādāmi (Vātāpi) the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the greatest of India's imperial dynasties, founded a great kingdom, vaster than any before their times, which included most of *Dakṣiṇāpatha*. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa era ushered in the golden age of Jaina renaissance in all walks of life. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom was so enormous that it was considered as one of the four major kingdoms in the world, according to Suleman (A.D. 851), the famous Arabbi traveller.

The powerful Dantidurga had conquered the shaky Cālukyās and invading northern India had seized Avanti, assumed the imperial title of Rājaparamēśvara in A.D. 753. Kṛṣṇarāja-I (C.E. 758-72) succeeded his uncle Dantidurga, sealed the fate of the Cālukyās and started constructing Ellora temple. Reputed Jaina logician Bhaṭṭa-Akalaṅkadeva lived as a contemporary to these two monarchs. According to Peterson, Akalaṅkadeva and his brother Niṣkalaṅka were the sons of Śubhatunga *alias* Kṛṣṇarāja-I, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor. Akalaṅka has been regarded as the founder of the medieval school of logic. He confuted the Buddhists at the court of Himaśitala in Kānci in C.E. 788. It is also believed that he studied at Sravaṇabeḷagoḷa and became a monk at Maleyūr, also known as Kanakagiri (Mysore Dt).

The dialectician Akalaṅkadēva has a number of works to his credit, prominent among them being 1. *Tattva-ratna-rāja-vārtika*, a commentary on the *Tattvārtha-sūtra* of pontiff Umāsvāmi, 2. *Siddhiviniścaya*, 3. *Laghīyastrayi*, 4. *Aṣṭaśati*, the earliest commentary on the *Āptamimāmsā* (Dēvāgama-stōtra) of Samantabhadradeva (7th cent. A.D.), and other works on Jaina epistemology and logic.

The Malliṣeṇa-Praśasti of Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa mentions Akalaṅkadēva as a prestigious dialectic disputant at the court of Sāhasatunga Dantidurga. It states that there was no other grandeur king like Kṛṣṇarāja on earth and no other erudite scholar like Akalaṅka. He remained a popular poet and his works are highly venerated.

Vidyānanda *alias* Pātrakēśarin wrote *Āpta-mimāmsālaṅkāra* (*Aṣṭa-sahasri*), an exhaustive commentary on the *Āpta-mimāmsā* of Samantabhadradēva. Vidyānanda has followed *Aṣṭaśati* of Akalaṅkadeva as his guide. The illustrious Jaina connoisseur

Kaviparamēṣṭhī completed his *magnum opus* called *Vāgartha-Samgrana* or *Gadya-kathā*, the earliest Mahāpurāṇa in Sanskrit.

Subhatuṅga Indra, father of Dantidurga, governor of Lāṭa, constructed Śubhatuṅga-*Vasati*, a Jaina temple in Vāṭagrāmapura (Vāṭana-gara, Vāḍnēr in Nasik Dt). Two of the greatest Jaina savants of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa age, Svāmi Virasēnācārya of Pañcastūpānvaya and his adroit pupil Jinasenācārya lived at this Vāṭanagara monastery.

Puṣpadanta and Bhūtabali (circa 5th cent. A.D.) had compiled the traditional canonical and primordial Prakrit text *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*. Scriptures require the skills of interpreters. Virasēnācārya, proficient in *āgamas* launched his voluminous commentary of 72,000 verses on the *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama* during the rule of Jagattunga-Govinda-III. Though, Virasēna could not complete his work, and wrote 20,000 verses, it did cover an important section of the vast lore of Jaina *āgama*. He completed this *Dhavalā* in 816-17 A.D. when Amōghavarṣa-I (C.E. 814-77) was on the Rāṣṭrakūṭa throne. Because he commenced the commentary during the reign of Govinda, who had the title of Tribhuvana-Dhavalā, Virasena christened it as *Dhavalā*.

Jinasenācārya-II, scholar pupil of Virasēna, and a grand disciple of Āryanandi, continued the commentary from where his guru had left incomplete and merrily completed it in A.D. 837-38. He named it after his king disciple Nṛpatuṅga Amōghavarṣa who had the title of *Atisaya-Dhavalā*.

Jinasenācārya-I belonged to *Punnāṭa-samgha*, an ancient Jina congregation in Karnataka. He wrote his *mahā-kāvya* *Harivamsapurāṇa* and completed it in A.D. 784. It is one of the early Jaina creative works in Sanskrit that inspired the later Jaina writers to compose in Sanskrit also, in addition to Prakrit. Jinasena-II, versatile in Prakrit and Sanskrit, wrote *Pārsvābhyudaya-kāvya*, much earlier in A.D. 782, completed *Jaya-Davalā* in A.D. 837-38 composing 40,000 verses to his preceptor's 20,000. By far the most widely and the most influential of his works in *Ādipurāṇa*. Dexterous Jinasenācārya started composing *Ādipurāṇa*, but when the work had progressed to 10,380 verses, he passed away.

Ācārya Guṇabhadra, poet-scholar and pupil of Jinasena, continued, in all earnestness, the incomplete work of his preceptor and added, 1,620 ślōkas to *Ādipurāṇa* (*Pūrvapurāṇa*), first part of *Mahāpurāṇa*. Guṇabhadrācārya successfully completed the second part of *Mahāpurāṇa* called *Uttapurāṇa* by composing another 9,500 verses (C. 850 A.D.) Thus, *Mahāpurāṇa*, containing 20,000 verses, is a

significant *Mahā-kāvya* which has been the source for all Kannada Jaina *Purānas*. *Ātmānu-śāsana* is another philosophical work of Ācārya Guṇabhadra, who was also a preceptor to Kṛṣṇa-II, son of Amōghavarṣa. Jinasena's greatest gifts were poetry and commentary in both of which he displayed such remarkable sensibility that makes it difficult to judge in which he excelled better. Ādipurāṇa is relevant to contemporary times, steeped in material acquisitions and blind to the voice of the spirit.

The period of Amōghavarṣa is considered as the Augustan age of Jaina literature. Mahāvīrācārya, a skilled mathematician and court-poet, states in his *Garita-sāra-samgraha* that the subjects under the rule of Amōghavarṣa were happy and the land yielded plenty of grain, 'may the kingdom of Amoghavarṣa, the follower of Jainism', ever increase far and wide.

Grammarians Pālyakīrti Śākaṭāyana, also a court poet of Amōghavarṣa, wrote his famous grammar *Śākaṭāyana* along with auto commentary *Amōgha-Vṛtti*, named after the monarch. This work is a vivid example of the Jaina school of grammar.

Śrīvijaya was another Jaina author and poet-laureate in the court of Amōghavarṣa. He wrote *kavirāja mārga*, a treatise on Indian poetics, at the instance of his master. Śrīvijaya heralded a new era of practically opening the flood gate for a rich harvest of Kannada literature in all genre. In the context of Karnataka, *Ḳavirājamārga*, poet's avenue, was the first grammar, first treatise on poetics and prosody, first work to speak of Karnataka's boundary, people and the dialects of Kannada language, and it has some other firsts to its credit.

Śrīvijaya also wrote *Candraprabhapurāṇa* and *Raghuwamsapurāṇa* based on the material from Kaviparameṣṭhi's *Vāgartha Samgraha* (C. 8th cent. A.D.), a biography in Sanskrit of 63 great men of Jaina mythology. Śrīvijaya, a trend setter, was the earliest to depart from the traditional tract of writing commentaries as his predecessors did. He preferred to deviate and compose creative works of eminence. *Candraprabhapurāṇa*, on the life of Candraprabha, the eighth Tīrthaṅkara, is the first Jaina purāṇa in Kannada language. Similarly *Raghuwamśa purāṇa* is the earliest poem in Kannada on the theme of the Rāmāyaṇa. Probably, Śrīvijaya has identified Amoghavarṣa with Rāma, and *Raghuwamśa* with Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty. The verses on the theme of the Rāmāyaṇa quoted in *Kavirājamārga* are evidently from this work.

Poet Asaga (C. 9th cent. A.D.), another noted Jaina genius during

the Rāṣṭrakūṭa time and a contemporary writer of Śrīvijaya, Śākaṭāyana, Mahāvīrācārya and Guṇabhadraācārya, has composed a good number of Jaina purāṇas in Sanskrit. *Candraprabha-purāṇam*, *Śāntipurāṇam* and *Vardhamāna-purāṇam* are his famous *kāvya*s. According to the statement of Jayakīrti's *Chandōnusāsana* (A.D. 935), a Sanskrit work dealing with Kannada metres, Asaga has written five Kannada *kāvya*s of which *Kumāra-sambhava* was celebrated.

Motivating spirit of Jaina literature under Rāṣṭrakūṭas has been both spiritual and secular. Jains from time immemorial have nurtured refined tastes and tendencies conducive to the development of art, architecture, medicine, grammar and literature. Ugrāditya (A.D. 770-840), a pupil of Śrīnandi and a confrere of Lalitakīrti Ācārya, composed his *Kalyāṇa-kāraka*, a medical work, at Ramagiri, the modern Rāmakoṇḍa (Andhra Pradesh : Viśākapaṭṇam Dt). Ugrāditya, famed Jaina ascetic, visited the court of Amoghavarṣa where he delivered a discourse on meatless diet and advocated vegetarianism for a healthy and spiritual progress.

Nṛpatuṅga Amōghavarṣa, Jaina Aśoka of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire, a pupil of exalted Jinasēnācārya-II, was a faithful follower of Jainism. "The king Amōghavarṣa remembered himself to have been purified that day when the lustre of the gems was heightened in consequence of his diadem becoming reddish by the dust-pollen of Jinasēna's foot-lotuses appearing in the stream of waterlike lustre flowing from the collection of the brilliant rays of his nails" [*Uttarapurāṇa*]. Amōghavarṣa, having bowed to Vardhamāna Jina, wrote *Praśnōttara-ratna-mālikā* in Sanskrit.

Nṛpatuṅga-Amōghavarṣa-I, was a tiny tot and a precious child of 14 years when he ascended the throne of an imperial dynasty. Having grown and nurtured in the learned Jaina *maṭha*, he was sensitive and sagacious, but pious, possessing an independent spirit. He had appointed Guṇabhadra as the preceptor for his son Kṛṣṇa-I. Amōghavarṣa was the originator of the ritual of the Jaina monasteries at Banavāsī. The *Gaṇita-sāra-saṃgraha*, a work of his protege, graphically describes his initiation to Jainism.

Amoghavarṣa shines like a polar star on the firmament of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom. He had a long innings of over three score and more years, sufficient to irk his son Kṛṣṇa. The prince could not wait any more to succeed to the throne, lost his patience and came out openly claiming his legitimate right to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa *simhāsana*. For an aged father this was too much to swallow. Paradoxically, for the over grown and long awaited son, this was the question of now or

never. Thus, peculiar situation of the prince revolting against the crown would have been fatal to Amoghavarṣa, but for the timely intervention of Baṅkēya of Cellakētana family, Jaina dynasty, who stood firm by the king like Olympus. Baṅkēya alias Baṅkarāja, with his political wisdom tactfully handled the aggravated and complex situation, bridged the gulf and saved the prestige of both the king and prince. Baṅkēya, Duke of Banavasi, was amply rewarded by the overwhelmed emperor who showered bounties. The modern Bankāpura town in Dharwar District was named after *Vira*-Baṅkēya. Lokaṭe alias Lōkāditya, son of Baṅkēya, was made the governor of that provine. During Lōkāditya's time, ācārya Guṇabhadra completed the last cantos of *Mahāpurāṇa*, at Bankāpura in the year A.D. 897.

Since he was deeply interested in Jainism Amōghavarṣa formally renounced the Rāṣṭrakūṭa throne and took to practising the tenets of Jainism. His son Śubhatuṅga Kṛṣṇa-II Akālavarṣa was trained under the guidance of ācārya Guṇabhadra. Thus, Nṛpatuṅga Amoghavarṣa and Kṛṣṇa, the father and son, were the disciple of Jinasena and Guṇabhadra, *guru* and *śiṣya*. Kṛṣṇa-II also extended his patronage to Jainism.

Jaina writers continued to flood the early phase of Rāṣṭrakūṭa period. Māṅikyanandin wrote *Parikṣāmukha* on which a commentary was written by his follower Prabhācandra, called *Pramēya-kamala-mārtanḍa*. Prabhācandra also wrote another commentary on Akalaṅka's *Laghiya-straya*, called *Nyāya-kumuda-Candrodaya*. Later Indranandi (C.E. 930) produced *Samayabhūṣana*, *Śrīvatāra*, *Nītisāra* and *Jvālinikalpa*. Indranandi was the preceptor of Ponna (C.E. 965), a major Kannada poet of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period. Indranandi has recorded some of the orthodox and heterodox Jaina schools and sects in his *Nītisāra*.

Again during the reign of Kṛṣṇa-III (A.D. 938-968), the last recognised emperor of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty, Jainism reached greater heights expanding on all fronts. Sōmadevasūri was the distinguished productive writer of the age. He was a monk disciple of Nēmadēva of Dēva-samgha, a cohort of Mūlasamgha, the original congregation. Sōmadevasūri composed *Yaśas-tilaka-campū* in A.D. 959-60, the date synchronising with the then Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor's victorious camp at Mēlpāṭi. Kṛṣṇa-III, repulsing the Pāṇḍyas, the Simhaḷa, the Auca and the Cērama, had camped at Mēlpāṭi. Vāgarāja alias Baddega, elder son of Arikesari-II, a feudatory of Kṛṣṇa-III and king of Vēmulaṅga branch of Cālukyās, had patronised the work of *Yaśastilakacampū*, an unmatched classic of its type, composed in Sanskrit. It can be compared with the *Kādambarī* or *Tilak-Maṅjarī*. Sōmadevasūri has also authored

another important work *Niti-Vākyāmr̥ta* which is on a par with Kautilya's *Artha-śāstra*.

Along with Sanskrit, Prakrit also flourished under the patronage of Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarchs. Most illustrious writers in Apabhraṃśa like Svayambhū and Tribhuvana-Svayambhū wrote the major works in Prakrit literature. *Kavirāja*, king of poets, Svayambhū, son of Padminī and Mārutadēva had two consorts, Amṛtāmbā and Ādityāmbā. In his brief biographical note he introduces himself as being physically weak and ugly with a flat nose. Whatever be that, his works are of very high quality. His patron was Dhanañjaya. He belonged to Āpuli-samgha. In the period of Subhatunga Kṛṣṇa-I, Akālavarṣa he wrote two works, *Pauma-Cariu* (Sk. *Padma-Carita*) and *Rit̥tha-nemi-cariu* (*Harivamśa purāṇa*). He wrote upto 82 chapters and later his son, Tribhuvana-Svayambhū completed the remaining last eight chapters of *Harivamśapurāṇa*. *Svayambhū-Candas*, another work of Svayambhū, deals with various metres employed in Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa *kāvya*s. Tribhuvana-Svayambhū lived during the time of Prabhutavarṣa Govinda-II (A.D. 773-80).

Perhaps the greatest of Apabhraṃśa literature, Puṣpadanta flourished during the age of Kṛṣṇa-III. *Mahākavi* Puṣpadanta has written three *kāvya*s : 1. *Tisaṭ̥hi-Mahāpurisa-Guṇāṅkārū* (Sk. *Triṣaṣṭi-Mahāpuruṣa-Guṇāṅkārah*). 2. *Jasa-hara-cariu* (Sk. *Yaśodhara-carita*) and 3. *Nāyakumāra-cariu* (Sk. *Nāgakumāra-carita*). Of the three, the first one is an epic, dealing with the lives of Tirthaṅkaras, Cakravartis, Baladēvas, Vāsudēva and Prati-Vāsudevas. *Jasahara-cariu* deals with most popular Jaina narrative theme of king Yaśodhara and his queen Amṛtamati. The story of *Nāyakumara-cariu* extols the merit of *śruta-paṅcamī*. Puṣpadanta is credited with lucid and mellifluous style that has contributed to the glory of Prakrit literature. He has carved a *niche* in the hall of fame.

Nemicandra-Siddhānta-Cakravarti, abbot of Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa monastery and preceptor of Cāmuṇḍarāya, minister and general of the Gaṅga kings. His felicitous approach and mastery in Jaina canonical knowledge is transparent in his Prakrit works. Thus, he was able to give the very quintessence of Jaina philosophy to his pupil Cāmuṇḍarāya, crystallizing it in his *Gommaṭa-sāra* containing two books, *Jivakāṇḍa* and *Karmakāṇḍa*. This work is based on both *Śaṭkhaṇḍāgama* and *Dhavalā* commentaries. Of Nemicandrācārya's other works, *Dravya-samgraha* deals with the *Jiva* and *ajiva* concept. His *gāthas* reflect an extraordinary grip over Prakrit language, and thus form a solid contribution to the Prakrit lore.

During the Rāṣṭrakūṭa period Kannada language and literature received greater impetus. The earliest extant Kannada work, *Ārādhana-Kaṃāṭa-Tikā*, also known as *Vaḍḍārādhane* was authored by a great Jaina saint called Bhrājiṣṇu. (circa 800 A.D.). It is a commentary on Śivakoṭi ācārya's Prakrit work *Ārādhāna*, a treatise on the varieties of death. Bhrājiṣṇu's proficiency in Kannada, Prakrit and Sanskrit languages is remarkable. He quotes profusely from a number of Prakrit and Sanskrit texts. His work in Kannada prose stands unique in its narrative style. The *Ārādhana-kaṃāṭa-Tikā* contains 19 short stories, each glorifying the virtues and special features of Jaina monkhood and nunhood. The work is a mixture of sage and prophet.

Pampa, Ponna and Ranna, considered as '*Jina-samaya-dīpakas*' and '*ratnatrayas*', took Kannada to a literary level not previously achieved. Of the trio, Ponna was a poet laureate in the court of Kṛṣṇa-III who conferred the title of '*kavi-cakravarti*' on Ponna. Pampa (A.D. 941) had his laureateship in the court of Arikesari-II, king of Vemulavāḍa branch of Cālukyas and a feudatory of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa. Pampa and Ranna started their carrier as soldiers and ended up as great epic writers of the age.

Pampa, the greatest of Kannada poets, has composed two epics in campū style, immortalising Kannada language. In *Vikramārjuna Vijaya*, he has freely rendered the story of Vyāsa Bhārata, in 14 cantos. Identifying Arikesari, his patron, with Arjuna of the *Mahābhārata*, and making him the hero of the epic is a special feature and an innovation of the poet. Similarly, Pampa has abridged the story of Rṣabha in 16 cantos in his *Ādipurāṇa*, borrowing the theme from Jinasēna's work of the same title. His inimitable style is a happy blend of Sanskrit and Kannada. Pampa has been a model and a source of inspiration for many a poet. Pampa has translated the magic of Vyasa's Sanskrit into the magic of Kannada language. It is impossible to read even a page of the poem without being stirred in the depths of our consciousness. The verses are of freshing beauty and edifying.

Ponna, another celebrity of the epoch making age of Rāṣṭrakūṭas, has written *Bhuvanaika-Rāmābhijudaya* a *laukika kāvya* and *Śāntipurāṇa*, an *āgamika kāvya*. Emperor Kṛṣṇa and two brothers of a Jaina family of warriors, Mallapa and Punnamayya, were his patrons. Ponna was a direct disciple of Indranandi, a Jaina patriraḥ in Mānyakhēṭa.

Cāmuṇḍarāya, one of the greatest patrons of Jainism, took up the cause of his faith only towards the last decade of his life. Till then, he spent most of his time on the battle field, participating in a number of



successful wars in favour of his over-lords, the Gaṅgas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. But when he and his immediate masters, the Gaṅga chiefs, could not save the sudden collapse of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty, Camuṇḍarāya wisely bid adieu to political life and turned all his faculties towards religious life. He befriended Ranna, a famous litterateur of his times, and translated, in an abridged form, the entire *Mahāpurāṇa* of Jinasēna and Guṇabhadra. He completed *Triṣaṣṭi-Lakṣaṇa-Mahāpurāṇa*, also known as *Cāmuṇḍarāyapurāṇa* in A.D. 978. He has also written *Cāritrasāra* in Sanskrit and *Vira-mārtaṇḍi* in Kannada, but the latter work is not extant.

Cāmuṇḍarāya was a follower of Ajitasenācārya and Nemicandrācārya, two eminent ascetics of his time. He had two other aliases of Rāya and Aṇṇa. He constructed a huge and magnificent Jaina temple on the smaller hill at Śravaṇabelagoḷa which was named after him as Cāmuṇḍarāya *basadi*. But the greatest feat of his life's achievement is the commissioning of 58' huge monolith colossal of Bāhubali on the crest of bigger hill at Sravaṇabelagoḷa in A.D. 981, which has been rightly considered as one of the wonders of the world. This heralded a new trend in Jaina art and architecture.

The history of Jainism of Rāṣṭrakūṭa period will not be complete without reference to the Gaṅgas, who ably and faithfully assisted their overlords. Though they had crossed swords initially, they soon realised the importance of moving together to foster the greater interest of the state. They had a common faith to serve. Because of their joint efforts, Jainism attained the status of a state religion. With their marriage alliances, men and women of both the houses liberally patronised Jaina temples and monasteries throughout the kingdom. In the hours of political crisis they stood by each other, even at the cost of their precious lives. Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Būtuga, his sons, daughters and four wives all extended maximum support to the glory of *Jinadharmā* by constructing Jaina temples at different places like Aṇṇigere, Puligere (Lakṣmēśvara), Naregal, Koppaḷa, Hungunda, Kōgaḷi and Sravaṇabelagoḷa.

Rāṣṭrakūṭa Śubhatuṅga Indra, father of Dantidurga, had built Śubhatuṅga Jinālaya in Vāḍnēr in Nāsik Dt. Amōghavarṣa founded Amōghavasati *Jainmandir* at Candanapuri (Nasik Dt) for which later in A.D. 915, Indra-III donated two villages. Amoghavarṣa also granted a village and lands for the Jaina temple at Koṇṇur (Dharwar Dt) constructed by Bankēya in A.D. 860 and a grant of land for the Nāgula-basadi to its ācārya Nāganandī. *Mahāsāmanta* Prithvirāja founded a Jinendra *bhavana* at Savadatti (Belgaum Dt) during the rule of Kṛṣṇa-

II, in 875-76 A.D. Biṭṭayya, a noble person, constructed a Jaina church at Bandalike (Shimonga Dt) in A.D. 902, for which Lōkaṭeyarasa, governor of Banavāsi under emperor Kṛṣṇa-II. Nāgayya constructed a Jaina temple in A.D. 925 at Asundi (Gadag Dt) and the chief abbey of Dhōra-Jinālaya of Baṅkāpura (Dharwar Dt) diocese was administering this basadi also.

Mahāsāmanta Śrīvijaya built a Jaina temple at Mānyapura (Bangalore Dt) and prince Raṇāvaloka Sauca Kambadeva donated Pēruvviyūr village in A.D. 802. *Vijaya-vasati* Jinālaya at Talakāḍu was so famous that the preceptor Vardhamāna guru received a grant Vadanaguppe village. Jālamaṅgala town was donated by Jagattuṅga-Govindarāja-III for the maintenance of the Jaina temple in Sāligrāma in A.D. 813. Śamkaragaṇḍa built Jaina temples at Koppala and Andhra-deśa. Jainism continued to be a paramount religion of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire with the flag of Ahimsā fluttering a top Jaina places of worship at Malkhēḍ, Lakṣmeśvar, Hombuja, Śravaṇabeḷagola and a number of places in Andhra-deśa, Mahārāṣṭra, Tamilnāḍu and Gaṅgavāḍi, the homeland of Jaina creed. Mārasimha accepted *sallekhanā* at Baṅkāpura and died in A.D. 974. Indra-IV, the last emperor of Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty, also ended his life at Śravaṇabeḷagola by the rite of *sallekhanā* in A.D. 982.

The Rāṣṭrakūṭa patronised Jaina literature in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Kannada languages, founded and endowed Jaina temples and *maṭhas*, revered the Jaina monks and nuns and encouraged Jaina art and architecture to reach its climax.

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## NEWS ON JAINISM AROUND THE WORLD

### Spiritual Affinities in Rishabha & Shiva

Like Buddha who founded Buddhism, Mahavira was not the arch-founder of Jainism. According to the Jaina scriptural tradition there have been twenty three tīrthaṅkaras before Mahāvīra who propounded Jainism from time to time.

Dr S Radhakrishnan says that “The Bhagavata Purana endorses the view that Rishabha was the founder of Jainism. There is evidence to show that so far back as the first century B.C. there were people who worshipped Rishabhadeva, the first tīrthaṅkara. There is no doubt that Jainism prevailed even before Vardhamāna Mahāvīra or Pārśvanātha. The Yajurveda mentions the names of three tīrthaṅkaras—Rishabha, Ajitanatha, and Arishtanemi.”

The idea of Rishabha tīrthaṅkaras being an epoch-making man is found deep-rooted in the Jaina scriptures. He was the son of the fourteenth kulakara or manu, known as nabhi. He is also known as Adinatha. Rishabha inaugurated the karmabhoomi and pioneered human civilisation and culture.

Rishabha was the first preacher of the *ahimsa dharma*, the first tīrthaṅkara or ford-maker to mokṣa according to Jaina path of purification and liberation. He attained nirvāṇa on the summit of Mount Kailasa in Tibet. The point to be noted is that there is a consistent tradition found in the Jaina religious literature and also in Hindu purāṇas from earliest times of invoking Rishabha Deva as Rudra or Shiva. The following stanza in *Shiva Purana* brings out clearly this association meaning : *Rishabhadeva, Jaineshwara, the omniscient and the all pervasive incarnated himself on the magnificent Kailasa, Asthapada mountain.*

*It is the definite opinion of Sir John Marshall that the Vedic arya adopted Shiva worship (Shiva-Pashupati-Rudra) from Indus valley culture. It is significant as suggested by various scholars that the nude standing images in the Indus valley in a typical Jaina ascetic yogic pose—Kāyotsarga—abandonment of the body in meditation—bear a striking resemblance to the oldest Jaina sculpture and further that there is a link between the Indus bull-seals and the bull insignia, lanchhana of Rishabha.*

From Vedic times to the present Rudra or Shiva and Rishabha has been considered usually as alternate names or designations which are Digambara, Digvāsa, Tapomaya, Charukeshha, Shanta, Akshobhya, Ahimsa, Jnani, Kapardi, Jati. These are such attributes as become perfectly applicable in their meaning to Rishabha Tirthankara. His nudity, matted hair is well-known. The characteristic mark of Shankara is found in Jaina creations and images known as Triratna, which is found clearly marked in the cave of Saratakhavela at Udaigiri in Orissa. It is found marked on the palms of the ancient images of Rishabha and other Tirthankaras.

The arch-form of this mark is found in the form of tri-horn on the Indus valley seal images. It should not be surprising if the same mark evolved later as a phase of moon. Om, svastikā and the cross of Christianity as well as the moon and star of Islam, as noted by the eminent Jaina scholar Dr Hiralal Jain.

The disciples of Shiva are collectively called Gaṇa, whose leader is called Gaṇapati and Gaṇesh. The group of munis established by Rishabha is also called Gaṇa and its leader, his chief disciple, is called Gaṇadhara. The tradition of Gaṇa and Gaṇadhara is found unbroken till the last tīrthānkara Mahāvīra.

Rishabha occupies a very important place in the Shaiva sect. In *Linga Purana* he is described as a king revered all the kshatriyas and in *Vayu Purana* he is described as the ancestor of all the kshatriya kings — *sarva-kshatrasya purvajah*. Such parallels and spiritual affinities since prehistoric times between Rishabha and Shiva show unmistakably that new Jainism and its first propounder have been the precursor of the later Shaiva doctrine.

The most notable example of the fusion and synthesis of not only the Jaina, Shaiva, but also the Brahmanic, Vedic, Buddhist and other Indian philosophies is found in the great Himalayan centre of pilgrimage, Badrinatha or Badri Vishala. In the Badri Vishala temple in the daily worship the following stotra is recited : "One who is honoured as Shaiva by the Shivas, as Brahma by the Vedantins, as Buddha by the Buddhists, as the Cause by the Naiyayikas, Arhan by the Jainas, Karma by the Mimansakas, such god of the three worlds may grant us our longed for fruits. This illustrates how the Badrinath embodies the true secular synthesis of the India.

From the The Times of India,  
New Delhi, December 30, 1999 by Bal Palit.

## Below Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri lies an ancient Jain City

It was a jungle on December 7, 1999. That was a day before the surveyor from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) identified the mound near the fort of Fatehpur Sikri and ordered the felling of trees.

And within a fortnight, the ASI team laid open the superstructure of an 11th century Jain temple, just half a km away from Mughal Emperor Akbar's famous fort complex.

"There was habitation and it was destroyed. The divine images were broken and scattered helter-skelter by the latter-day invaders," is how ASI Director General Ajay Shankar briefly put it.

While digging out the trenches at the site, the ASI team came upon one of the richest archaeological caches found since the glorious days of Sir John Marshall.

"Dumped one upon the other, it seemed the sculptures were just waiting for us to bring them out into the open," said 26-year-old archaeologist from Orissa, Arakhita Pradhan. In fact, the *Indian Express* team which visited the site saw sculptures of Jain Tirthankaras and carved red-stone potteries, still half-buried between the layers of earth.

Not one or two. But at least 34 exquisite sculptures, of various sizes—small, medium and one big—have already been retrieved by the ASI team from a 250-sq yard plot at Bir Chha-bili-ka-Tilla in Sikri village. And these findings have pushed back the antiquity of Fatehpur Sikri to 2nd Century AD.

"We've found branded redstone potteries, ornamented with mica dust, from the Gupta period. And the most remarkable thing about these sculptures is that they have inscriptions on them making their dates indisputable," said R K Dikshit, assistant conservator, in charge of the Fatehpur Sikri.

Most breathtaking of the entire lot was, of course, the six-foot-high partly broken, *tribhanga* Saraswati from the Jain pantheon. Of a rare beauty, it was found in a face-down position.

"It was dug out on January 20. It's changed the entire worth of the site," said Dharamvir Sharma, ASI's superintending archaeologist who is responsible for initiating the excavation.

The excavation, according to Sharma, shows that Fatehpur Sikri was a pre-Mughal city with temples around its periphery. "But we are

yet to ascertain when they were demolished," he said, clearly voicing the premise of his project but hedging on whether it was the Mughals or a Hindu invader of a previous period who was responsible for the wide-scale destruction.

Says historian Harbans Mukhia, who specialises on Medieval India and plans to take a trip to the site : "I'm not surprised by the findings. Medieval society worked in a different manner. Demolitions in that age were conducted as an act of conquest or as an act of rebuilding. One needs to see them in the right perspective."

The excavation at Bir Chha-bili-ka-Tilla is fascinating for more reasons. It shows layers of civilizational deposits, beginning from 2nd Century A.D. (a medium-sized redstone figure of Ambika with an infant Ganesha on her lap and Kartikeya on right side) to 9-10th Century Jain sculptures (a Saraswati from the Gurjar Pratihara dynasty).

However, more than the unique Saraswati (incidentally, dressed only in ornaments) is the 60-cm redstone *kund* in which 23 of the other sculptures were found dumped, including a black marble Tirthankara.

"We just picked them up one by one. Obviously, they were disposed of in a hurry," a woman archaeologist from Manipur at the site pointed out, as she brushed away the fine dust accumulated on the ancient structure.

From The New Indian Express,  
Chennai, Wednesday, February 16, 2000  
by Santwana Bhattacharya.



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