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

DR VINCENT SEKHAR

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

Dharma, synonymous with English Religion, has two broad meanings in Jainism: one is generic in usage and the other, technical and specific to the use of the term. Dharma in technical sense is the basis for dynamism in life, helps movement or motion and, as such, it is opposed to adharma, stillness or rest. They are the media or the occasioning cause for motion and of rest respectively, just as water is
helpful for a fish to move about. No other system of thought in India has conceived these two terms in such a fashion as in Jaina system. It is possible that these two terms that signify life (movement) and death (stillness) have later acquired moral connotations.

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

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

In order to understand the goal of life (liberation or Mokṣa, understood as perfect knowledge, faith, strength, and bliss) one has to be conversant with the essence of reality. The process of achievement of this goal, understood as the Journey of the Soul towards its End, is usually outlined in the seven fundamental principles (saptatattva). It could be described in a simple way. A conscious living being (Jīva) gets entangled and bound by the non-conscious matter (an Ajīva) through passionate activities of attachment and aversion. Subsequently, there is the inflow (āsrava) or accumulation of a subtle thing called karma and the consequent bondage (bandha) by such
karma. From now on, the process of liberation takes place. The living being, once bound, has to check the inflow (saṃvara) of karma through meritorious deeds like taking the vows and adhering to certain other virtuous actions. This leads the living being finally to the shedding (nirjara) of the entire karma by means of penance, etc. This complete annihilation of karma is described in several ways as Mokṣa or Mukti or liberation.

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

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

There is a clear distinction between the empirical and the transcendental self. From the empirical point of view, the self (Jīva, which is purely spiritual) is associated with non-self (Ajīva or material), becomes the agent of actions, experiencing pain and pleasure. From the transcendental point of view the self is nothing to do with matter.
It is perfected with infinite knowledge, vision, strength and bliss, known as the four-fold perfection (*anantacatusṭaya*). The invaluable nature of Jīva (or life) is such that once it is lost there is nothing that one can give to regain it (*Mark 8:36-37*). What distinguishes the self (Jīva) from the non-self (Ajīva) is consciousness. Jīva is a representative term that embraces all types of living organisms in the universe, including elemental bodies, with one to six senses. That is the reason why the Jaina attitude towards and the practice of non-violence are not confined merely to the world of the humans but includes all forms of life.

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

The fundamental cause for misery and happiness is *karma* and *karma* can be meritorious or harmful. The former leads to happiness and the latter to misery. But an individual prefers good (*subha*) to bad (*a-subha*) actions from a practical (*vyavahārika*) point of view because good actions or being virtuous lead one to happiness and good reward. All evil doers will face punishment (*God’s judgement of reward or punishment Romans 2:6-8; Psalms 28:4*). But the Jains believe, according to the real (*niścaya*) point-of-view, that all activities whether
good or bad lead the person to bondage. Hence there is the need for 
detachment and to transcend both good as well as bad deeds. It is 
karma that determines the quality and the type of life in the series of 
births: knowledge, perception, feeling, family, body, etc.

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

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

The following are some of its implications for life:

1. Jīva, understood from its real point of view as pure and perfect, 
is the philosophical foundation and basis for equality and respect 
for all living beings. This truth is enshrined in the dictum, ‘as 
the nature of this (i.e. man) is to be born and to grow old, so is 
the nature of that (i.e. plants) to be born and to grow old’ 
(Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.1.5.6). Non-violence and Vegetarianism 
have their roots in such as these sayings. The wickedness of the 
humans and of the earth in the Bible is traced to the spread of 
violence everywhere and all were evil in God’s sight (Genesis
6:11, Ezekiel 8:17), and all human transactions led to violence and sin (Ezekiel 28:16). This is true until now. War and violence will remain until when humanity realizes this simple but basic truth about the sacredness of all living beings.

(2) Every organic life is concerned about its liberation. Hence the cause of bondage and the means of liberation are common for all living beings. The world has to apprehend that sinful acts towards one another set a block to the achievement of such liberation. ‘For the sake of the splendour, honour, glory of this life, for the sake of birth, death and final liberation, for the removal of pain, man acts sinfully towards earth, or causes others to act so, or allows others to act so. This deprives him of happiness and perfect wisdom’ (Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.1.2.3) and ‘man that does not comprehend and renounce the cause of sin.....is born again and again in manifold births, experiences all painful feeling’s (Ibid. 1.1.6.7).

(3) The Jaina scriptures are particular is expounding the truth about suffering caused by selfishness and indiscriminate acts, the real causes of sin: ‘The (living) world is afflicted, miserable, difficult to instruct and without discrimination. In this world full of pain, suffering caused by their different acts, see the benighted ones cause great pain’ (Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.1.2.1). The Jaina masters point out another truth about life: ‘All beings are fond of life, (they) like pleasure, dislike pain, shuns destruction, like life, long to live. To all life is dear’ (Ibid, 1.2.3.4). And hence if himsā is injurious and painful to one, the same will be painful to another because all beings hate pain. ‘Know and realize that they all desire happiness. By hurting these beings, you harm your own soul.....’ (Sūtrakṛtāṅga 1.7.1.2). Therefore one should not kill them (Ibid. 1.11.9). And this is the quintessence of wisdom (Ibid, 1.11.10), the maxix of general application (Ibid, 11.280). From a Christian perspective it might sound like this: God commanded the earth to produce all forms of life and it was done. And God was pleased with what he saw (Genesis 1:24-25). This is the basis for any environmental theology. Non-violence or non-injury to life is based on the principle of
mutuality or reciprocity: ‘As it would be unto thee, so it is with
him whom thou intendest to kill....In the same way (it is with
him) whom thou intendest to punish and to drive away’
(Ācārāṅga Sūtra 1.1.5.4-6). We all owe to the same source and
to the same destiny.

(4) Though life is dear to all living beings there cannot be undue
attachment to it. Attachment to life sets a block to the goal to be
achieved. Attachment to oneself provokes disregard and injury
to others. The spirit of detachment or renunciation is the gateway
to liberation: ‘Life is dear to many who own fields and houses.
Having acquired dyed and coloured (clothes), jewels, earnings,
gold, women, they become attached to these things. And a fool
who longs for life and is worldly minded, laments that (for these
worldly goals) penance, self restraint and control do not avail
will ignorantly come to grief’ (Ācārāṅga Sūtra. 1.2.3.3-5). Injury
is caused by attachment and greed,. Hence non-attachment or
non-grabbing (aparigraha) becomes a key (virtue) to liberation.
Jaina spirituality and ethics points out repeatedly that any amount
of gold will not satisfy a person who is greedy of riches and
wealth. Violence and other sinful acts are born out of greed and
it could destroy persons, their belongings, their identity and
cultures. As property is an extension of a person, usurping it
unjustly from the other would amount not only to hampering
his/her growth but also denying oneself the means of liberation.

(5) Comprehension of the truth about life, namely pain and sorrow,
naturally leads one to renunciation: ‘the pain of mundane
existence is observed so keenly and it is considered to be the
true knowledge’ (Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.2.6.2). The course of
the world (regarding evil) is observed carefully and a truth is born
out of experience, namely, ‘misery brings forth evil
consequences’ (Ibid, 1.3.2.1) and one has to cease from violent
acts. But it is impossible to shun birth and the subsequent pain
and misery. And hence the śramaṇa religions (Jain, Buddhist)
offer religious life or a life of self-denial and renunciation as the
best alternative: ‘Perceiving the truth, they chose religious life
with a desire of a pious end’ (Ibid. 1.5.5.1). ‘Knowing pain and
pleasure in all their variety and seeing his life not yet decline, a wise man should know 'that' to be the proper moment (for entering a religious life) (Ibid. 1.2.1.5). Every religious history has gone through a transformation or passage of time (like the time of St. Francis of Assisi in Christian life history) considering poverty and simplicity of life as a real alternative to power, pomp and glory, It is a challenge even today.

(6) The true path is the path of knowledge. It is being mindful of the processes of mental, vocal and bodily actions (namely karma), their root causes and their effects. Whether one is a religious or not, one should follow this path of knowledge. The truth about knowledge (Sūtrakṛtāṅga, 11.3.37) is that which finally leads one to the highest good, namely, liberation. This is similar to the wisdom personified as God in Christian tradition (Proverbs 1:20), characterized by sound judgement and intelligence, and apparent in the creative works of God (Proverbs 3:19). The wise are in the hands of God (Eccl. 9:1) and they have respect for wisdom and learning. And it is the knowledge about the truth that will set people free. Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition attaches much importance to prajñā or Budhha's wisdom and equates it to Nirvāṇa.

(7) Since both good as well as bad actions are the cause for bondage, freedom from karma is possible by ceasing from activity (at the least, harmful to one's own and to others) and ceasing from passions. The discovering one is awakened and ceases to act...seeing that acts will bear fruit, the knower of the sacred lore parts from (karma) (Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.1.4.3). Those who engage in works and are held in worldly bondage do not know the law, which leads to liberation (Sūtrakṛtāṅga. 1.10.16). The sinners cannot annihilate their works by new works; the pious annihilate the works by abstention from works (Ibid. 1.12.15). But complete renunciation of action is impractical, nay, impossible. Bhagavad Gītā says that at no time a person is inactive. Hence it would suggest a disciplined action for the wise (4.18-20), unattached to its fruits (2:47-48). One is not to get attached even to worklessness. Thus proposing a new trend
of thought Gītā worked through greater reconciliation between the śramaṇa and the brāhmaṇa traditions.

(8) Despite this trend, the Jaina renouncer tradition insists on the complete abandonment of act as one of the ways to get rid of karma, the others being carefulness and resolving to tread the path of virtues without passionate attachment. Complete abandonment of action is considered even today and extreme form of Jaina asceticism, known as holy death or Sallekhana. The fourteenth and the last state in the spiritual ladder (guṇasthānas) is the status of a perfected being abandoning action (a-yoga kevalin). Some of the rules for the Jaina monks and nuns pertaining to food, movement, etc. reflect an attitude of carefulness and detachment (Ācārāṅga Sūtra 1.7; II.1.7). But there are other instances where pious acts are exalted as means of attaining liberation: ‘Turning from worldly life they reach the goal by pious acts; by their pious acts they are directed towards (liberation) and they show the way to others’ (Sūtrakṛtānga. I.15.10). But Jaina scriptures repeatedly point out that complete freedom is beyond good and bad acts.

(9) As indicated earlier, Jainism is said to be the Religion of Self-help or Self-will: ‘Man, thou are thy own friend, why wishest though for a friend beyond thyself’ (Ācārāṅga, I.8.3.4). Each one has to exert oneself in the rule of truth in order to overcome the evil one: ‘Misery is produced by one’s own works, not by those of somebody else (viz. fate, creator etc.)’ (Sūtrakṛtānga, I.12.11). ‘Mother, father, daughter-in-law, brother, wife and sons will not be able to help me, when I suffer from any own deeds’ (Ibid, 1.9.5, Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 6.31) because ‘the doer of the acts must suffer for them’ (Sūtrakṛtānga, 1.9.4). Hence it becomes a challenge for the aspirant to overcome the power of karma by his or her own insight and pure conduct. ‘No one can escape the effects of their own actions’ (Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 4.3) because ‘the karma follows the doer’ (Ibid, 13.23). One has to reap the fruits of one’s own action. Every action has to be realized, and thus annihilated. The fruits that are not matured will stick to the person till they are matured. This is the logic
behind the whole theory of the cycle of births and deaths (*karma saṁsāra*). Jaina dharma, as a religion without a creator, redeemer God, places the entire *justification* on the individual, the doer and the enjoyer of the fruits of action. In this, even gods are not spared! This is very different from the Semitic view, where God plays a vital role in the lives of people and saves them.’

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

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

DR MARUTI NANDAN TIWARI

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

At a later stage between the 10th and 13th centuries A.D. some features of Śakti were also introduced in Jaina yakṣī Ambikā, as is evidenced by the details available in different iconographic texts wherein she is conceived with some such attributes as goad, noose, thunderbolt, ghaṇṭā (bell), sword and disc to manifest her Śakti or Power aspect. She was also endowed with such appellations and attributes, both in literature and art, which at once suggest her affinity with Brahmanic Durgā or Ambikā. Some of the stotras devoted to Ambikā in the Bhairava-Padmāvatī-Kalpa (11th century A.D.) bear testimony to this fact. The terrific form of Ambikā propitiated in a number of Tāntric rites such as Śāntika, Pauṣṭika, Stambhana, Māraṇa etc. are also enunciated in some of the stutis and the stotras given in the appendices of the Bhairava-Padmāvatī-Kalpa. Apart from the propitiatory rites, the gruesome rites were also accepted in the Tantric mode of her worship. The Ambikā-devi-stuti of Jineśvara-Sūri (c. 12th century A.D.) rightly invokes her as Ṭaṅgiyāsamāṇī and Ṭaṅgā-tvāmīnī.
The earliest reference to Ambikā, is obtained in the Vṛtti of Jinabhadragnaṁ Kṣamāśramaṇa on his Viśeśāvaśyaka-bhāṣya. The earliest archaeological evidence also shows that Ambikā does not appear in Jaina worship prior to c. A.D. 550. The earliest known representation of Ambikā, both with the Jina (Rśabhanātha) and in independent image is datable to late sixth century A.D. These figures are procured from Akoṭā (Vadodara, Gujarat). One of her early images was obtained from the Meguṭī temple (c. A.D. 634) at Aihole (Bijapur, Karnataka, now in Aihole Site Museum). In a unique image of Ambikā from Mathurā (c. 9th century A. D., now in Government Museum, Mathura, Acc. No. D7), the two-armed yakṣī is joined by Gaṇeśa and Vaiśravaṇa respectively on right and left flanks. The rendering of eight female figures on the pedestal perhaps suggests the presence of Aṣṭamārakas (?).

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

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

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

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

**References:**

MEAT EATING BY THE EARLY JAINS–A TRAGEDY OF LINGUISTICS

GP CAPT. V. K. JAIN

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

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

tam gacchaha nām tumam sihā. Menḍhiyagāmām nagaram revatīg gāhāvatīnie gihe tattha nām revatīg gāhāvatīnie mamam aṭṭhāe duve kavoya sarirā uvakkhadiyā tehin no aṭṭho atthise anne pāriyāsīe majjārakaḍae kukkuḍamamsae tamāharāhi ee nām aṭṭho.
In this passage there are three main phrases which are the cause of confusion, misinterpretation and hence the controversy. These phrases are (1) kavoya sarirā (2) mājjārakaḍae (3) kukkuḍa maṁsaes. On the first reading, these phrases loudly proclaim the animalistic context. This is superficial. As shall be seen later, at the time of compilation of this text, these words in Prakrit had the dominant meanings relating to plants.

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

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

This interpretation is obnoxious to Jain sentiments, because it hits at the very roots of their religion and belief. The doctrine and practice of Ahimsā, in its minutest form, has been the hall-mark of Mahāvīra's teaching. This is well-established not only by Jain Agamic literature but the literature of other communities, such as, Buddhist, Vedic etc. Any assertion implying the contrary, needs to be thoroughly studied and established, because of the great hurt it can cause to the sentiments of the Jains. Prof. Jha, the author of the above book, has chosen to present this contrary view although apparently it has no direct relationship with the title of the book "Beef eating etc."
We hope he has done so unwittingly and not due to an overwhelming desire to prove his thesis by whatever means.

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

(a) Understanding the meaning of the original Prakrit words at the place and time of their use.

(b) The social, moral, ethical and religious background of the community concerned.

(c) Detailed analysis of linguistics involved.

(d) The supporting text in the remaining text of the work.

(e) The context in which the words are used.

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

**Meaning of the original words**

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

“kavoya” or kapota is used for the fruit of Parapat plant or for kuśmāṇḍa (Petha). The kayaadeva Nighantu describes the qualities of kuśmāṇḍa as follows :-

kuśmāṇḍu śītalam vṛṣyaṁ svādu vorasam guru......(pethā śītal, pitta nāśak, jvara, āma, daha ādi ko sānta karnevālā.
The Śuśrutaśāṁhitā delineates the qualities of Parapat as pārāpataṁ sumadhuraṁ rucayamatyagni vātanuta etc.

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

lavaṅga kaṭukaniṁ tiktaṁ laghu netrahitam himam/dipanam, pācanaṁ rucya kapha pittāmla nāśakṛta.

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

kālo vyālāḥ kālamūḍadadiipyo māṛjāro ‘gnidāhaka pāvakaśca citrāṅgoḍayaṁ raktacitra mahāṅgah.

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

kukkuḍa sunishanne himagrāhī moha doṣa tryāpahāḥ avidāhī, laghu svādu kaśāyo rukṣa dipana.

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

The Background

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

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

snigdha, uṣṇa, śuṣka, makta, pitta janaka vātāhuraṁ etc.”

It’s obvious that such a recipe is totally contra-indicated and would aggravate the disease. The description of the nature and qualities
of herbs/plants given above fits in eminently with the symptoms. The preparation from these plants/herbs can be used effectively to combat the disease.

**Linguistics**

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

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

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

One of the distinguished Jain Ācārya Shri Abhayadeva Sūri has written a commentary on the *Bhagavaisutta* (1128 Vikram). His
commentary states that some people assign animalistic meaning to the words mentioned above ....... He states duve kavoya......itiyādeh śruyênāṇam evārthaṁ kecin manyate. anye tvāhuḥ kapotakah paksi-visēṣas tadvat yephale varṇa-sādharmānta-kāpote kuśmāṅde.

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

Satya Ranjan Banerjee


The International Centre for Jain Studies of Gujarat Vidyapitha, Ahmedabad, is to be thanked for publishing Hemacandra’s Pramāṇa-mīmāṁsā, a work on Jain Logic, critically edited by Nagin J. Shah, a renowned and eminent Sanskrit scholar of Indian philosophy. The present volume contains the Sanskrit text of the Pramāṇa-mīmāṁsā in Roman script printed here for the first time. The English translation of this book was done by Satkari Mookerjee in collaboration with Nathmal Tantia from the edition of Pandit Sukhlalji published in the
Singhi Jaina Granthamala (No. 9) in 1939 from Ahmedabad-Calcutta. Originally the English translation of Professors Mookerjee and Tantia was published in Bhāratī Mahāvidyālaya Publications Jaina Series (No.5) in 1946 from Calcutta. It was only the English translation, and no Sanskrit text was accompanied with it. It also contains the English translation of Pandit Sukhlalji’s introduction and notes in Hindi (known as Bhāṣā-tippaṇāṇi) done by I. H. Jhaferi and K. K. Dixit which was originally published in Indian studies, Past and Present, vol II, No 2 and 3 edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyay which was issued as a separate book in the name of Advanced studies in Indian Logic and Metaphysics in 1961. Thus it should be regarded as a complete book on Hemacandra’s Pramāṇa-mīmāṁsā coupled with all possible good expositions written by the best scholars on the book.

Satya Ranjan Banerjee


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

Satya Ranjan Banerjee
JAIN BHAWAN : ITS AIMS AND OBJECTS

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

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

To achieve these goals, the Jain Bhawan runs the following programmes in various fields.

1. School:
   To spread the light of education the Bhawan runs a school, the Jain Shikshalaya, which imparts education to students in accordance with the syllabi prescribed by the West Bengal Board. Moral education forms a necessary part of the curricula followed by the school. It has on its roll about 550 students and 25 teachers.

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   Accepting the demands of the modern times and the need to equip the students to face the world suitably, it conducts vocational and physical activity classes. Classes on traditional crafts like tailoring, stitching and embroidery and other fine arts along with Judo, Karate and Yoga are run throughout the year, not just for its own students, but for outsiders as well. They are very popular amongst the ladies of Burra Bazar of Calcutta.

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

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

5. Journals:
   Realising that there is a need for research on Jainism and that scholarly knowledge needs to be made public, the Bhawan in its role as a research institution brings out three periodicals: Jain Journal in English, Tithayara in Hindi and Śramana in Bengali. In 37 years of its publication, the Jain Journal has carved out a niche for itself in the field and has received universal acclaim. The Bengali journal Śramana, which is being published for thirty year, has become a prominent channel for the spread of Jain philosophy in West Bengal. This is the only Journal in Bengali which deals exclusively with matters concerning any aspects of Jainism. Both the Journals are edited by a renowned
scholar Professor Dr Satya Ranjan Banerjee of Calcutta University. The Jain Journal and Śramana for over thirty seven and thirty years respectively have proved beyond doubt that these Journals are in great demand for its quality and contents. The Jain Journal is highly acclaimed by foreign scholars. The same can be said about the Hindi journal Titthayara which is edited by Mrs Lata Bothra. In April this year it entered its 25th year of publication. Needless to say that these journals have played a key-role in propagating Jain literature and philosophy. Progressive in nature, these have crossed many milestones and are poised to cross many more.

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The Bhawan organises seminars and symposia on Jain philosophy, literature and the Jain way of life, from time to time. Eminent scholars, laureates, professors etc. are invited to enlighten the audience with their discourse. Exchange of ideas, news and views are the integral parts of such programmes.

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The Bhawan also grants scholarships to the researchers of Jain philosophy apart from the above mentioned academic and scholastic activities.

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- Weber’s Sacred Literature of the Jains.
- Jainism in Different States of India.
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9. A Computer Centre:
To achieve a self-reliance in the field of education, a Computer training centre was opened at the Jain Bhawan in February 1998. This important and welcome step will enable us to establish links with the best educational and cultural organisations of the world. With the help of e-mail, internet and website, we can help propagate Jainism throughout the world. Communications with other similar organisations will enrich our own knowledge. Besides the knowledge of programming and graphics, this computer training will equip our students to shape their tomorrows.

10. Research:
It is, in fact, a premiere institution for research in Prakrit and Jainism, and it satisfies the thirst of many researchers. To promote the study of Jainism in this country, the Jain Bhawan runs a research centre in the name of Jainology and Prakrit Research Institute and encourages students to do research on any aspects of Jainism.

In a society infested with contradictions and violence, the Jain Bhawan acts as a philosopher and guide and shows the right path.

Friends, you are now aware of the functions of this prestigious institution and its noble intentions. We, therefore, request you to encourage us heartily in our creative and scholastic endeavours. We do hope that you will continue to lend us your generous support as you have been doing for a long time.
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