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ANEKĀNTA AND THE CONCEPT OF ABSOLUTE IN JAINISM

Dr. Jagdish Prasad Jain 'Sadhak'

The Jaina doctrine of *anekānta* or "Jain Relativism" is described in several ways. In one sense, it signifies plurality of characteristics of a real or the object of knowledge, that it is concerned with the manifoldness or multi-faceted nature of reality, thereby drawing our attention to the fact that each object consists of many attributes, forms, relations, and modes. *Anekānta* has been translated and described by some scholars as "non-unequivocality" (F.W. Thomas) or "non-radicalism" (B.K. Matilal), but these terms are vague. S. Mookerjee has labelled it as "non-absolutism", but this term is also not acceptable, because it denies the possibility of the existence of any concept of "absolute" in Jainism. Moreover, even Mādhyamika philosophy of Buddhism can be described as "non-absolutism". Accordingly, Frank Van Den Bossche has used the terms "Jain Relativism" and "Dialectical Realism" for *anekānta*.¹

The most significant aspect or feature of *anekānta* is the reconciliation of apparently contradictory and mutually opposed characteristics coexisting in the same object, the harmonisation of conflicting views found among partial observations. In other words, contradictory characteristics or traits (*dharma*) coexist simultaneously in the same object as inalienable parts thereof. Existence is as much an inalienable part of the same object as non-existence and permanence is coexisting in the midst of change, and so on. Thus, the Jains accept the possibility of coexistence of contradictory attributes in one and the same thing.

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1. Frank Van Den Bossche, "Existence and Non-Existence in Haribhadra Suri's *Anekānta-jaya-patākā*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 23, 1995, p.431.

Amṛtacandra has defined *anekānta* in these words :

*yadeva tat tadeva atat, yadeva aikam tadeva anekam, yadeva sat tadeva asat, yadeva nityam tadeva anityam, ityeka-vastutva-niṣpādakam parasparaviruddha-śakti-dravya-prakāśam anekāntaḥ.*²

i.e. any real object in the world is identical and distinct, one and many, existent and non-existent, eternal and non-eternal and so on. Haribhadra Sūri has kept two of these four pairs of mutually contradictory traits, viz. existent and non-existent and eternal and non-eternal and added two pairs of universal and particular and describable and indescribable.³ Thus, *anekānta* highlights that any real object (*vastu*) possesses mutually contradictory traits, characteristics or modes coexisting simultaneously therein. In fact, these contradictory traits or modes forming an inalienable part of an object provide the true exposition of the reality.

Further clarifying this point, Akalaṅka has stated that *anekānta* means liquidation of one-sided assertions, such as *vastu* (any real object) is only existent or only non-existent, only eternal or only non-eternal.⁴ Samantabhadra has observed that the central theme or the core of the doctrine of *anekānta* is that a thing must be characterised by two mutually contradictory features. He points out that when various standpoints (*nayas*) are seen in terms of relativity and considered complementary to one another (*parasparāpekṣa*) they are *svaparopakariṇiḥ* (mutually supportive). But when they are considered from one-sided point of view, unrelated to or independent of one another, they become *sva-para-praṇāśinaḥ* (mutually destructive)⁵. In *Āptamīmāṃsā*, Samantabhadra categorically states

2. Amṛtacandra, *Samayasāra*, *Kalaśa* X. 247.

3. Bossche, n. 1, p. 429.

4. Akalaṅka, *Aṣṭaśatī*, cited in Udai Chandra Jain, "Anekant and Syadvada," in *Ahimsa International Silver Jubilee* issue (New Delhi, 1998), pp. 53-55.

5. D. K. Goyal, *The Path to Enlightenment: Svayambhu Stotra* by Samantabhadra (New Delhi : Radiant Publishers, 2000), Verse 61, Foreword by Jagdish Prasad Jain 'Sadhak,' p. xxx.

“*nirapekṣa-naya-mithyā*”, i. e. standpoints (*nayas*), which are one-sided and unrelated to one another, are false and faulty. But if the *nayas* (standpoints) are *sāpekṣa*, i.e. mutually accommodating and complementary to one another, they are, indeed, quite efficacious and useful in portraying the true nature of substance and hence are the most judicious and satisfying to all concerned in every way.⁶

Criticising the Jaina doctrine of Jain Relativism, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan states that relativism is, ultimately, inconceivable without an Absolute. A question, therefore, arises whether non-relational (*nirapekṣa*), unconditioned or absolute has any place in Jain philosophy or not. The answer is that while no *naya* (standpoint) including *śuddha-naya* (pure viewpoint) can be non-relational (*nirapekṣa*), the state of undifferentiated consciousness (*nirvikalpa upayoga*), the experience of super-sensuous state of Godhood (*sva-ātma-anubhūti*) or *śuddha-jñāyaka bhāva* (pure consciousness) is said to be *nirapekṣa*. The dynamic reality of the objective world or the temporal empirical existence is such that it can be expressed and communicated only by relative or conditional predication. As such each *naya* or proposition representing a particular viewpoint is expressive of a certain context and is concerned with a particular aspect of an object. Since it reveals only a part of the totality, it cannot be formulated or put in absolute terms.

But *paramātma svarūpa* (the perfect self, the supreme state of self-realisation) is considered absolute or transcendental in nature as it is quite beyond all relational aspects; it transcends all viewpoints or relational modes (*paṅkṣātikrānta*), and that which transcends all relational aspects or points of view (*paṅkṣa-atikrānta*) is said to be the establishment in one’s intrinsic nature, the essence of one’s own true self (*samayasāra*). One, who is absorbed in the intrinsic nature of his true self, knows the views described by different *nayas* (standpoints), but he is not enamoured of or wedded to anyone of them and hence neither accepts anyone of them nor rejects or denies the validity of the other.⁷

6. Samantabhadra, *Āptamīmāṃsā*, chapter X, verse 108.

7. Kundakunda, *Samayasāra*, *gāthās* 142, 144 and 143.

In twenty verses, Amṛtacandra discusses the contradictory traits or characteristics such as that the consciousness of *jīva* (self) is bound or not bound, permanent or impermanent, manifold or one, deluded or not so attached or non-attached, *kartā* (doer) and *bhoktā* (experiencer of one's actions) or not so, describable or not describable, etc. and states that one (*tattva-vedī*) who has realised the true nature of reality, i.e. the essence of one's true self, is not enamoured of or wedded to anyone of them; verily consciousness is always consciousness,⁸ i.e. it is beyond all those theses or aspects. "Those who abandon attachment or partiality of all theses or viewpoints and remain constantly established in their own intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*), whose psyche or consciousness (*chitta*) is pacified or quietened through breaking free from the net of *vikalpas* (mental vicissitudes and thought constructions), they drink ambrosia (nectar) of immortality."⁹

The splendour and bliss of the state of *paramātmā* (supreme soul) is super-sensuous, incomparable, infinite, indestructible, ineffable, and transcends all the similes of the world. As *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* states, in the state of perfect Self "all sounds recoil thence where speculation has no room nor does the mind penetrate there. . . he perceives, he knows, but there is no analogy; its essence is without form; there is no condition of the unconditioned"¹⁰.

It may be pointed out that of the five *jīva bhavas* (experiential or emotional states or psychic conditions of consciousness), whereas four of them, the rising (*audāyika*), subsidence (*aupaśamika*) annihilation (*kṣayika*) and mixed process of partly eradication and partly subsidence (*kṣayopāśamika*) are causally connected with or related to physical (*dravya*) karma or *karma-upādhis*, the *parināmika-bhava* (the fifth *bhava*) is the intrinsic and essential nature of the Self,

8. *Samayasāra Kalash*, verses 70-89 by Amṛtacandra.

9. *Samayasāra Kalash*, verse 69.

10. *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, 1-5-6-3-4 (p.52). Quoted in K.C. Sogani, *Ethical Doctrines in Jainism* (Sholapur, 1967), p. 205.

unconditioned by *karmas* (both physical and psychic). This last one is *nirupādhi* character; it is non-relational (*nirapekṣa*), having no causal connection with *samsāra* (world) or *mokṣa* (salvation); (*mokṣa* also is a contrivance or product of *karma-upādhi*, since, it has causal connection with *karmas*). It is *niṣkriya* (inactive) *bhava* and according to this *bhava* the *jīvas* may be said to have neither beginning nor end; as spiritual existences they are eternal. Neither are they created nor can they be destroyed.¹¹ Thus, while the first four *bhavas* are relational or related to *karma-upādhi*, the last *bhava* is non-relational (*nirapekṣa*), not related to anything and is unconditioned. It is against this background or the bedrock of this *param* (supreme), absolute, *pariṇāmika bhava* that the other *bhavas* work and the superstructure of Jain Relativism is built.

When the Self attains the state of *paramātmā* (supreme soul or the state of Godhood), the various relational aspects or viewpoints (*nayas*), the distinctions of comprehensive knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and particular viewpoints, and different ways of installing or placing things in words (*nikṣepa*), which are useful and necessary means of discussing and ascertaining the nature of reality of mundane existence have no relevance and as such all the dualities, contradictory traits, aspects or theses, etc. are set aside,¹² as they hinder the attainment of undifferentiated consciousness (*nirvikalpa upayoga*). Jaina concept of Absolute is an ever-present awareness of the “Absolute within”, awareness of divinity, the light within to realise Godhood, i.e. infinite knowledge, infinite bliss, etc. This Jaina concept of absolute, transcendental (*pakṣa-atikrānta*) Self, which transcends the empirical or conditioned state of the Self, seems much more convincing and realistic than the two extremes of Advaita Vedanta and Buddhism.

Vedanta reaches its absolute by assigning “unreality” to the forms of existence and knowledge, i.e. the objective reality of the world

11. Kundakunda, *Pañcastikāyasāra: The Building of Cosmos*, translation and commentary by A. Chakravartinayanara (Varanasi, 1975), *gāthā* 53, 56 and 58, pp.49 and 51-53.

12. *Samayasāra Kalash*, verse 9.

consisting of individual selves and material objects, all of which are said to be subsumed or sublated in one and only one "Absolute", the monistic unchanging reality, the Universal Cosmic *Brahman*. Such a concept or idea of an all encompassing Self, such as the *Vedantic Ātman* or *Brahman*, J. Krishnamurti observes, is "just another thought construction and another manifestation of illusion".¹³ The eternal reality of the metaphysical soul substance or *Brahman* of the Vedantin, G. Srinivasan points out, exists independently of any relation to temporal empirical existence and as such necessarily falls outside the scope of phenomenological analysis. The Jaina concept of the transcendental Self or pure consciousness, on the other hand, is to be regarded as "transcendence in immanence", to use G. Srinivasan's phraseology, and as such it is necessarily "related" [in temporal empirical existence] to the modes of intentional consciousness. It does not mean transcendence from one reality to another or from unreality to reality but from one poise of consciousness to another within a single realm of consciousness.¹⁴ Self-realization thus viewed is self-transcendence.

The Buddhist school of philosophy gradually drops the possible and even the conceivable characteristics of reality and reaches the void or *śūnya* as the absolute. Buddhism argues that when the idea of a real entity or being is dissected, it is found that it refers to nothing; it is like peeling off an onion layer after layer and finally nothing is found underneath. So in order to become free, one should get rid of the notion that one is a real being or a substantial self, that one can enter into relations with others and that one can possess this or that, and that one can become or has not become something else. Buddhism thus teaches the way to *nirvāṇa*¹⁵ or the experience of non-beingness in the absolute form, a non-relational (*nirapekṣa*) state of void or *śūnya*.

According to the concept of vacuity, void or *śūnya* of

13. See Hillary Rodrigues, *Krishnamurti's Insights* (Varanasi, 2001), p. 73.

14. G. Srinivasan, *Insights into Inward Consciousness* (New Delhi, 1994), p. 99.

15. K. Satchidananda Murty, *The Realm of Between: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Simla, 1973), p. 76.

Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika school of Buddhism, "Everything is by its nature empty." For instance, agent and action are mutually dependent, therefore their independent existence cannot be demonstrated. So Nāgārjuna says, all relations and the forms of existence ultimately lead to void. Void transcends all causal relationships and could be termed as ultimate reality. And this void is said to be unconditioned, one Absolute Reality.¹⁶ Obviously, clinging to emptiness or void of Buddhism is as much an illusion as treating the objective reality of the temporal empirical existence of subject and object as a dreamworld or an unreal world of Advaita Vadānta. The Jaina concept of the Absolute alone seems to be realistic.

16. Kailash Vajpeye, "Nagarjuna's Ultimate Reality = Void," *Times of India* (New Delhi), 11 September 2004

JAIN CULTURE AS DEPICTED IN THEIR FOLK LITERATURE

Dr S. P. Padma Prasad

Culture tells us what a person or a community is. It is the sumtotal of one's interests, behaviour, works etc.

Customs, beliefs and traditions are interrelated. Beliefs form the foundation for customs and when customs are transmitted from one generation to the other, then it is called tradition.

Every community has its own customs, beliefs and traditions. They constitute the major part of culture. They are very well expressed in the folk literature of that community. The Jains are not an exception.

This paper tries to outline Jain culture as depicted in the folk literature of Karnataka.

For the sake of understandable presentation this culture could be analysed at three different levels- i) Individual culture, ii) Religious culture and iii) Social culture.

i) Individual culture in Jainism :-

Attitudes, behaviour etc. developed in a person together constitute the individual culture of that person. Some part of this is usually common to all in a community. But other parts are salient to each person. As tastes and views differ, people differ (*'loko bhinna rucih.* i.e. the people have different tastes).

Hence the culture of a person expresses the culture of the community at large, and to some extent specific to such persons.

There are many folk songs which express this individual culture.

One folk song describes the curiosity of a boy in plucking flowers to worship the Jaina god.

My lad is naughtier than all
climbing the red champak tree ! plucking flowers
he made a bouquet for Jina!

This song expresses not only the devotion, dedication and eagerness of the boy towards worship, but also denotes another subtle point in the style of worship. He prepared a bouquet not a garland ! Garlands are put around the neck. In Jaina way of worship nothing should be put on the statue of Jina, as he is '*aparigrahī*' or '*possessor of nothing*'. So garland cannot be used. Instead a bouquet could be beautifully placed at the feet of the lord. In Kannada the actual original word here is '*chendu*' i.e. the ball. That could still be better placed in the space between two feet.

Treating saints with all devotion is another tradition in Indian culture. It is followed by the Jains also. Feeding saints, serving the saints etc. are called '*vaiyāvṛtya*' in Jaina philosophy. It is believed that if saints are fed at home, that home will be peaceful and gets prosperity. With all sincerity and eagerness, the Jain householders (*śrāvaka*) wait for the arrival of muni (saint of highest cadre), make arrangements to feed him. It is a matter of pride and satisfaction. A folk song gives the picture of preparation and process of feeding the saint.

'I have kept the seats washed
filtered warm water is ready
and flowers are brought to worship him !

'At whose home the saint is fed ?
At my brother's--who is great to the clan,
There goes the feeding of the saints'.

Feeding the Digambara saint is a delicate job. Nothing should happen to disturb his vows. Food should be absolutely clean and pure. It should be fully of non-violent category and of that nature. He takes food only once a day. Sometimes he takes food after fasting for 1-2 or 3 days or even more. Even then if he sees some dust or germ in the food, or hears an animal cry, etc., he gives up taking food. He doesn't take even water till his next feeding time. So feeding a Jina Digambara saint is a serious and cautious job which needs the following of so many subtle details. These folk songs have behind them that seriousness and dedication.

Wearing sandal paste on the head, neck, chest and arms are followed by one tradition of the Jains. They also wear the holy thread. It is explained in the folk verse like this :-

‘What to speak of the one going to temple,
Sandal paste on the forehead and chest,
He is going to temple with all cheers !’

Going to places of pilgrimage is another tradition followed by the Jains. The following folk verse describes the posture of a devotee who is climbing down the Shravana Belagola hill-

‘Who is that returning on the Belagola hill
The fatty one wearing the *dhoti*! He
Is returning after *darśana*’.

There is another custom among the Jains, specially those in north Karnataka that the Jain housewives should not wear new bangles on Friday. There is a song related to ‘bangle wearing by goddess Padmāvati’, in which she happens to face allegations for wearing bangles on Friday. The narrative song goes on describing that the goddess Padmāvati crushed the bangles, cursed the bangle seller, and then he pledged to observe certain vows throughout the life and then she blessed him to maintain his properties and peace in life. Even today, many Jain ladies do not wish to wear new bangles on Friday.

There are certain other beliefs related to listening and learning of songs. At the beginning of every long narrative folksongs prevailing among the Jains, these beliefs are expressed. These beliefs are the following.

- 1) “Nobody should go to sleep or doze while
Listening a song. That leads to utter sin”.
- 2) ‘If any body wishes to listen the song and requests
one who knows the song should not reject it.
That is the great sin”.
- 3) “If you know the meaning, tell as much as you can.
If you don’t know it, even then simply sit on the floor
And listen to the song”.

These beliefs have encouraged the tradition of passing the songs down to generations preserving them in their full form. Similar beliefs nurtured by Indians have helped to pass down Vedas, and Jaina Āgamas for thousands of years.

ii) Religious culture

Jaina texts prescribe that every householder should perform six duties every day. These six duties are—worshipping the god (*Devapūjā*), serving the saints, self-study (*Svādhyāya*), self-control, meditation and donating what one possesses (*Dāna*). This prescription has given room for so many traditions and customs. Jaina folk literature also reflects these traditions. A ‘dream song’ which is sung in the morning of the marriage day by grooms party, tells like this-

“O mother ! I dreamt in the early morning
That your son got up in the morning
Earlier than others and before the bud blossom,
Opens the door of Godroom on the upstairs and
Bowing to the god”.

Here, the tradition of bowing to god as soon as we get up from the bed is indicated. That too, he is the groom getting married after some hours !. Even on that busy and exiting day, he has not forgotten his duty of salution to god first.

Similarly, there are other folksongs which describe the glory of different worships saying that ‘Milky Abhiṣeka is going on in the temple and pappa is attending that’ etc. are also being sung. Their devotion to god is so much that a folkverse says ‘two parrots sitting on the green cocoanut tree, in front of the temple (*Basadi*) sing the song on lord Pārśvanātha.

The Jains have another religious custom, i.e. — taking food before sunset. This is for the reason that more micro-organisms are generated at night. With a view to minimise their victimization, preparation and consuming food at night is prohibited in Jainism for ages. This tradition is followed by all the Jains irrespective of their

economic status, living place etc. One folk song narrating this tradition this way tells-

‘Jains won’t take curds
till the rays of the morning sun
touch the temple door ! Even
the little son at home follows this vow !’

Here curds represent food.

‘Svādhyāya’ or studying the philosophical books is another rule which every Jain (whether householder or saint) has to follow. So, there is a custom in majority of the Jaina householders that any one in the house reads out a religious book every day to all in the house. A folk song sketches this situation like this-

‘O Thou, daughter of the honest ones
and daughter-in-law of moral ones,
bring and keep the light on the platform ! your hubby
reads śāstras till the morn !’

This verse expresses the seriousness with which the preparations were made for reading and also the seriousness with which that person reads.

Respecting and serving the monks is another custom followed by the Jains. Various folk songs describe this attitude and behaviour. Naming the children after the revered Guru is also there. A folk verse expresses this desire. A Jaina householder tells-

“Naming after the monk I respectfully call
O Guru of my household-keeping your name
I call my children respectfully !”

Naming the children after the family god, fore-fathers is a tradition followed by the Indians. The Jains also have the same custom.

Remembering and saluting god as we get up from the bed is a custom followed by all orthodox people in the world. The Jains also do it. In a folksong an ordinary woman tells that she becomes happy

on recalling Goddess Padmāvati and Jina Pārśvanātha while rising from the bed.

‘I recall pure charactered one in the morning
who wears the crystal jewel in her ears/Padmāvati
of Humcha, the pure one, is remembered by me !

“Don’t worry about the world while rising,
think of the temple O mother ! Be happy
on recalling Pārśva Jina as you rise !”

The Jains believe that only thing earned by rightful conduct stays in life. They wish only the energy and intellect bestowed by god, character and behaviour prescribed by saints, to stay firmly in their mind. A folk song expresses this wish -

“Energy bestowed by god, wisdom given by lord Nemi
vows and conduct prescribed by guru
let these go in our mind forever //”

The stress on behavioural pattern and character here, is nothing but self-control which is one of the six rules mandatorily to be followed by a Jaina householder.

Thus, folk songs in Kannada powerfully sketch various aspects of Jaina religious culture.

iii) Social Culture

The Jains are known for their tolerant cultured behaviour. Theirs is not an attacking nature, but adjustable one. Their principles of non-violence, no-enmity with anybody, possessing only essential things etc. have made them more polite and socialized. But at the same time they have also done heroic deeds and ruled over different provinces. This quality of leadership is still persisting among the Jains. But their culture, they are commanding respect from people. A folk song expresses this ability thus-

‘Why is the chariot of Goddess of Humcha stopped ?
 Because of the quarrel among the farmers
 My brother, the king is there to see the chariot runs.

The word ‘King’ here expresses only the commanding position of that person in that area.

Many legends (more than folk songs) describe the social culture of the Jains. They express both their soft and chivalrous nature. Story of Jinadattarāya tells us of his God-fearing, law-abiding nature. All legends or Jaina kings say that they were loving their subjects very much and ruling well. Similarly Jaina ministers like Cāmuṇḍarāya were not only good administrators but also interested in literature and fine arts. Stories about Attimambbe, a householder belonging to a royal family describe how she did so many useful works which helped thousands of people at that time.

Some stories tell about egoistic Jains. But they also tell how they met with ruin because of their defects.

Thus folk literature prevailing among the Jains effectively sketch their culture which is formed as a result of their beliefs, customs, traditions and philosophy. Jaina culture as depicted in their folk literature is a refined one, full of principles, devotion and flexible nature.

JAINISM IN BENGAL

Chitta Ranjan Pal

I

Jainism in Bengal during 10th century. A.D.

By the tenth century A.D. North India virtually shut her doors to the followers of Gautama Buddha. But the Buddhists had already broken new grounds in the dominions of the Pāla Kings in Bengal and Bihar¹ during the eighth century A.D. After the disappearance of Buddhism from the North, the Nirgranthas (Jainas) had got an opportunity to extend their influence there, but with the exception of gaining some stray foot-holds in one or two territories of the North, the Nirgranthas (Jainas) failed to utilize this opportunity to their favour. Instead of extending their influence to the North, they kept themselves busy in strengthening and consolidating their position in Western India², especially in Gujrat and Rajasthana.

Though the Nirgranthas (Jainas) failed to strengthen their position in Northern India, (it is the endeavour of the writer of this article to show that), they were able to retain their religious influence in and around their age-old strongholds in Bengal. Eclecticism as well as tolerance of the Pāla Kings was helpful for the undisturbed missionary activities of the Nirgrantha or the Jaina monks in Bengal. Needless to say, these traditional strong-holds of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) in Bengal were Koṭivarṣa - Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal), Samataṭa-Vaṅga (East Bengal) and Tāmralipti-Rāḍha (Western Bengal).

To prove the content of this article, the present writer is to rely upon the evidence culled out from the *Bṛhatkathākośa*, composed by Hariṣeṇasūri in 931 A.D.

The *Bṛhatkathākośa* reminds us of another *Bṛhatkathā* (now

-
1. The Age of Imperial Kanauj, ed. by R.C. Mazumder, p. 257
 2. *Ibid.*

lost) composed by Guṇāḍhya in Paisācī language wherefrom Hariṣeṇa had drawn the outlines of one or two of his narratives. He was also well-conversant with the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. But what is more important for us to note is the one hundred thirty first chapter, entitled “*Bhadrabāhu Kathānaka*” of Hariṣeṇa’s book. In this chapter, our author has disclosed the fact that Bhadrabāhu, the last Śrutakevalin was born at Kottapura, then known as Devakoṭṭa in the country of Puṇḍravardhana. In addition to this important piece of information, Hariṣeṇasūri focussed a flood of light on the multifaced genius and the missionary activities of this great pontiff of the Nirghanthas (Jainas).

There is no denying the fact that Bhadrabāhu is the greatest among the patriarchs who headed the Church of the Nirghanthas (Jainas) after the demise of Sudharmasvāmī, disciple of Mahāvīra.

Bhadrabāhu was a great scholar, having memoriter knowledge of all the canons of the Jainas. He was also a proselytizing genius who is said to have converted emperor Chadragupta Maurya to the religion of the Tīrthaṅkaras.

Bhadrabāhu’s pontificate is also remarkable for a chain of events which shaped the destiny of the Nirghanthas (Jainas). During his pontificate, at the advent of a dire famine in the country, he led a migration of twelve thousand monks along with his royal disciple Chadragupta Maurya to Karnātaka and this exodus paved the way for the expansion of the religion of the Nirgranthas to south India. At the same time it must not be forgotten that this exodus was one of the causes which accentuated the differences between the emigres (monks returned from the South) and the home-keeping brethren and in course of time the organisation of the Nirgranthas was bifurcated into two irreconcilable sects - Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras.

This migration to the South was also the starting point of the gradual losses of the memoriter knowledge of the scriptures of the Nirghanthas which continued for several centuries till the convocation of the Valabhi Council, held either in the middle of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th century A.D.

With the passage of time Bhadrabāhu grew to be a legendary figure on account of his encyclopaedic theological knowledge, saintly character and vigorous missionary activities. Many books - scriptural or theological, legal or astronomical have been attributed to his authorship.

In his celebrated book, *History of Indian Literature* Vol. II, Maurice Winternitz relates, "Tradition has it that he (Bhadrabāhu) was the last who knew the Puvvas..... and he is said to have extracted the third and the fourth Chedasūtras from the ninth puvva. Besides the Dasāo, the Nijjutis (Niryuktis), concise metrical explanations of certain parts of the canon, are also attributed to him"³

Prof. K.C. Lalwani in the preface of the *Kalpasūtra* (translated by him in English) states, "Sixth in the line downwards from Bhagavān Mahāvīra, Bhadrabāhu has been attributed with the authorship of many works. At least three or four Āgāmas are attributed directly to his pen, but his particular association with the Chedasūtras of which at least three are due to him. Of the three *Kalpasūtra* texts, he is said to have produced at least two, *Bṛhatkalpa* and *Pañcakalpa*."⁴

In her famous book, *The Heart of Jainism*, Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson says, "The Jainas credit him (Bhadrabāhu) with the authorship of the Niryuktis or the commentaries on the canonical books and a book on astronomy which is named after him, the *Bhadrabāhusaṁhitā*. He also wrote what the Śvetāmbara Jainas consider to be the holiest work, the *Upasarga-harastotra-kalpasūtra*."⁵

It is further to be noted that another Saṁhitā, work on the right of succession has been attributed to his name.

Some Western scholars, however, are of opinion that some of the books and commentaries which have been ascribed to Bhadrabāhu are not his compositions.

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3. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*. Vol II, p. 416 and p. 444 (MB edition)
 4. K. C. Lalwani, '*Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabāhusvāmī', p. XVIII.
 5. Mrs. S. Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism*, p. 70.

As regards the Niryuktis Hermann Jacobi states “The author of the Niryuktis, Bhadrabāhu is identified by the Jainas with the patriarch of that name who died 170 A.V. There can be no doubt that they are mistaken.”⁶ He further, states, “There are ten Sūtras, to which Bhadrabāhu, a late name sake of the sixth patriarch, has written Niryuktis.....”

Bhadrabāhu is universally believed to be the author of the *Kalpasātra*. The section II of this celebrated book is entitled Therāvali, which according to Jacobi, is the oldest list of the Patriarchs belonging to the Śvetāmbara community. This list “begins with Mahāvīra’s disciple Sudharman and ends with the 33rd patriarch Sandilya or Skandila. Of most particulars only the names and *gotras* are given, but there is also an expanded list from the 6th Bhadrabāhu down to the 14th Vajrasena, which adds more details”.⁷ As the Therāvali or the list of the patriarchs goes far beyond Bhadrabāhu, Prof. Winternitz comments, “it Therāvali) could not possibly have been written by him (Bhadrabāhu)”.⁸

Like the Śvetāmbaras, the Digambaras have their own *pattāvali* or the genealogical list. But the Digambara **line of patriarchs** is quite different from that of the Śvetāmbaras except that they agree in the names of the last Kevalin Jambūsvāmī and the last śrutakevalin Bhadrabāhu. As stated by R.P. Chanda, “A comparison of these two lists (Śvetāmbara and Digambara) makes it clear that the Bhadrabāhus of two lists are not identical.”⁹ The scene of action of the śrutakevalin Bhadrabāhu of the Śvetāmbaras was Pātaliputra and he is said to have retired to Nepal, whereas the scene of action of the śrutakevalin Bhadrabāhu of the Digambaras was Ujjainī and he is said to have retired to the South.

6. Pariśiṣṭaparvan ed by Hermann Jacobi, Introduction, p. VIII

7. The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VII, p. 465-67

8. A History of Indian Literature, Winternitz, p. 445.

9. R.P. Chanda, The Svethambara and the Digambara Image of Jainas.

Prof. Winternitz states that the Digambara tells us that there were two Bhadrabāhus, the first of whom died 165 years after the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra (i.e. 365 B.C.) and the second 515 years after the Nirvāṇa (i.e. 12 B.C.)¹⁰

On this question Dr. P.C. Bagehi has stated that the Digambara tradition speaks of a second Bhadrabāhu in the first century B.C. and this second Bhadrabāhu may be the author of the Niryuktis.¹¹

It is also to be noted that two Saṁhitās named after Bhadrabāhu have come down to us - one on astronomy and the other on the right of succession. The book on astronomy is popularly known as the *Bhadrabāhabī Saṁhitā* and the other works dealing with the law of succession is ordinarily known as *Bhadrabāhu Saṁhitā*. These two Saṁhitās have brought before us the problem of the existence of another Bhadrabāhu or the 3rd Bhadrabāhu. On this question Jacobi states, "If a recent Śvetāmbara tradition makes him (Bhadrabāhu), a brother of Varāhamihira, it refers to the author of Bhadrabāhu Saṁhitā a work on astronomy which is later than Varāhamihira. It is yet an entirely different Bhadrabāhu who wrote the Bhadrabāhu Saṁhitā work of the right of succession (J. L. Jaini has translated in English the book, as Jaina Law.)"

It is better not to discuss further the question, "who is who" as the issue has already been confused by contradictory evidence which is not helpful to come to any definite conclusion. Like V.A. Smith, Dr. Raychowdhury and other historians we may accept the late Digambara tradition that Bhadrabāhu, the 6th patriarch of the Jainas, preceptor of King Chandragupta Maurya led an exodus of thousands of Nirgrantha monks to Karnāṭaka on the advent of a dire famine in Magadha.

With the passage of time, the stature of this great scholar monk grew higher and higher and legend after legend began to grow round

10. Winternitz - A History of Indian Literature. Vol. II, p. 457.

11. A Comprehensive History of India. p. 662.

12. Winternitz - A History of Indian Literature. Vol. II, p. 457, p.n. 3

his name and many *caritas* or biographies were composed by his devoted followers for the preservation of his memory.

Among the biographies of the last śruta-kevalin Bhadrabāhu the earliest is the “*Bhadrabāhu Kathānuka*” which forms the one hundred thirty first chapter of *Bṛhatkathākoṣa* of Hariṣeṇa. Regarding Bhadrabāhu’s native place, parentage as well as his first acquaintance with the fourth śrutakevali of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) the account of Hariṣeṇa runs as follows : “There was a town named Koṭṭapura which is now known as Devakoṭṭa in Puṇḍravardhana country. King Padmaratha was the ruler of the realm. Somaśarmā, a brahmin proficient in four Vedas was the royal priest whose wife was Somaśrī - a beautiful lady. The Brahmin couple had a well-intentioned and good looking son named Bhadrabāhu. After his initiation to brahminhood, Bhadrabāhu was playing with his play-mates on the outskirts of Devakoṭṭa when Govardhana the fourth śrutakevalin happened to see him.” On seeing him Govardhana perceived that the boy was destined to be the last *śrutakevlin*, took care of him and made him his disciple with the consent of his parents. In course of time Govardhana ordained Bhadrabāhu to monkhood and made him the head of the church of the Nirgranthas (Jainas). The story of the parentage, early boyhood and ordination of Bhadrabāhu as narrated by Hariṣeṇa, more than a thousand years after the demise of the great patriarch possess little or no historical value but the story has a great significance of its own.

Before narrating this significance let us digress a little to peep into the mystrey of Jaina History of ancient Bengal. It is really a mystrey that the Jainas in their golden days in Bengal had no royal support behind them. During the Pre-Christian and early Christian centuries, the Nirgranthas (Jainas) in Bengal far out-distanced other religious sects like the Buddhists and Brahmanical Hindu sects in popularity. But no royal house stood for them. No votive or donative inscriptions of any royal dynasty have so far been discovered in Bengal. The sole epigraphic evidence that has come to light is the Pahadpur Inscription dated 478/79 A.D. which speaks of the private donation made by a Brahmin couple for the maintenance of a Jaina Vihāra at Vatagohali.

It is also very strange that the Jaina History of Bengal has been reconstructed solely from literary source, a sizeable portion of which has been gathered from the literature of the Buddhists - their opponents. But this single source material gradually grew scarce and ultimately dried up with the passage of time. The drying up of this source is instrumental in spreading a veil of darkness on the Jaina History of Bengal for a period of three centuries or more. But this veil was lifted up with the composition of *Bṛhatkathākoṣa* by Hariṣeṇa in the early tenth century A.D.

It is difficult to explain why did the author of *Bṛhatkathākoṣa* dive deep into the ocean of mythology and legends to bring to light the boyhood and parentage of their great pontiff and at the sametime did sing the glory of Koṭivarṣa and Puṇḍravardhana of ancient times? It is only to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the devotees of the great pontiff regarding the correct perspective of his pre-ordained life or is it the vigorous growth and enlargement of the Jaina monastic establishment in and around Puṇḍravardhana that led Hariṣeṇa to dwell upon such matter after the lapse of one thousand years or more? Answer to these questions would help the readers understand the importance inherent to the narrative of Hariṣeṇa Sūri.

It is to be noted that some eminent historians think that the story of Bhadrabāhu as told by Hariṣeṇa does not reveal any historical truth, but at the sametime they state that "...it perhaps indicates that North Bengal was an important centre of Jainism even in the 10th century A.D."¹³

It is an undeniable fact that Koṭivarṣa viṣaya and Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti (i.e. North Bengal) were never lost to the Jinas from the 5th / 4th century B.C. to the advent of the Turkish hordes in Bengal at the fag end of the 12th century A.D.

In the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Aśokāvadāna*, there is a legend which states that the Buddha, on an urgent request of Sumāgadhā, daughter of Anāthapindaka, the merchant disciple of the Buddha arrived at

13. R.C. Mazumder. History of Ancient Bengal, p. 522.

Puṇḍravardhana by an aerial route to rescue her father-in-law's family from the evil influence of the sky-clad Nirgranthas (Jainas) who were then most powerful in Puṇḍravardhan.¹⁴

It appears that from the 5th century B.C. two holy places of the Jainas got prominence, one situated at Puṇḍraparvata and the other at Koṭṭapura / Devakoṭṭa. Jinaprabha Sūri, a Jaina Ācārya belonging to the 14th century AD. had made mention of Puṇḍraparvata as a Jaina pilgrimage. It is also very interesting to note that the *Divyāvadāna* (2nd / 1st century B.C.) mentioned 'Puṇḍrākhyā Parvata' as the Eastern border of Buddhist 'majjima deśa'.¹⁵ Koṭṭapura / Devakoṭṭa probably came into prominence earlier than Puṇḍraparvata. Not only Hariṣeṇa but also Prabhācandra seem to have made mention of this holy place of the Jainas.

That Jainism was in a flourishing condition in Puṇḍravardhana in the 3rd century B.C. during the reign of Aśoka is evident from another legend embedded in the *Divyāvadāna*. This legend relates that the lay devotees of the Jaina community of Puṇḍravardhana had painted a picture which had shown the Buddha falling at the feet of Jina. Being enraged at this news Aśoka killed 18 thousand Ājīvikas in a day (In Chinese translation, in place of Ājīvikas, Nirgranthas have been mentioned).¹⁶

It is presumed that after his ordination to monkhood, Bhadrabāhu, being a native of Koṭṭavarṣa had left no stone unturned in making Puṇḍravardhana a citadel of Jainism.

This assumption may be substantiated by the fact that godāsa, one of the four chief disciples of Bhadrabāhu, had established a gaṇa or school named *godāsa gaṇa*. This gaṇa, in course of time, was ramified into four 'Śākhās' or branches of which two - Puṇḍravardhanīya and Koṭṭavarṣīya belonged to Varendri or North

14. R.L. Mitra. - Nepalese Buddhist Tradition, p. 237.

15. N. N. Dasgupta. Banglay Baudhadharma (in Bengali), p. 17.

16. R. C. Mazumder. History of Ancient Bengal, p. 26.

Bengal.¹⁷ Had not North Bengal been overwhelmingly dominated by the Nirgrathas in the 3rd century B.C. two independent śākhās or branches of the same sect would not have been established at a distance of only a few miles.

The Pahāḍapur inscription¹⁸ dated 478/79 A.D. proves the extraordinary popularity of the Nirgranthas or Jainas among the inhabitants of Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti. It seems that the respect which the Jaina monks earned for themselves, inspired the Brahmin couple of Vata gohali to donate lands for the maintenance of a Jaina Vihāra run by the Ācāryas attached to Pañcastūpanikāya of Kāsī (Banaras).

King Śāśāṅka of Gauḍa has been accused for persecuting both the Buddhists and the Jainas. However from a perusal of the evidence of *Āryamañjusrīmūlakalpa*, it seems that the torture and persecution suffered by the Jainas were more painful than that suffered by the Buddhists. Perhaps the numerical superiority of the Jainas to the Buddhist was the cause of heavier punishment for the Jainas.¹⁹

That the Jainas were numerically superior to the Buddhists in some kingdoms of Bengal is also attested by Hieu-en-Tsang who toured all over Bengal in the year 637 / 638 A.D. Regarding the numerical strength of the Jainas in two kingdoms - Samataṭa and Puṇḍavardhana, Hieu-en-Tsang observed that 'The Jainas were more numerous'²⁰ than the followers of the Buddha and the Brahmanical religion in Samataṭa and Puṇḍravardhana.

During the reign of the Pāla kings, the traditional Jain centre of Puṇḍavardhana grew more prosperous and spectacular as is evident from the discovery of several Jaina sculptures assigned by the experts to the 10th, 11th & 12th centuries.

The earliest Jaina sculpture, noticed by the historians in Bengal,

17. *Kalpasūtra*, translated by K. C. Lalwani, p. 140
18. Epigraphia Indica XX, p. 59
19. C.R. Pal, Śāśāṅka, the enemy and oppressor of Jainism, Jain Journal, Vol. XVI, No. 1
20. Watters, Yuan Chuwang, Vol - II.

was discovered at a village called Surohar in Dinajpur district now in Bangladesh. It is the figure of a seated R̥ṣabhanātha, the first Tīrthaṅkara of the Jainas carved in accordance with Pāla style of art of about 10th century A.D.²¹ Another R̥ṣabhanātha image has been collected from Mandoil, (not far from Rajshahi) in the *kāyotsarga mudrā* with graceful form but headless. It is now preserved in the Asutosh Museum. Another icon of R̥ṣabhanātha in *kāyotsarga mudrā* has been found at Bhelowa in Dinajpur district, now in Bangladesh. It is a beautiful specimen of Pāla iconographic art assigned to circa 11th century A.D.

One small *caumukha* shrine has been collected from Dolgaon in West Diajpur (W.B.) and now in the Asutosh museum. From the above mentioned place Mandoil, a beautiful iconographic specimen, i.e. the figure of the standing Sāntinātha, the 16th Tīrthaṅkara of the Jainas with his *lāñchan* carved on the pedestal has been discovered and the sculpture has been assigned to the 11th century A. D. on stylistic consideration.²²

Another Tīrthaṅkara image, may be of Candraprabha, standing in *kāyotsarga* style has been found from Govindapur in Dinajpur district which is also a beautiful specimen of Pāla sculpture assigned to the 10th century A.D. The head of this beautiful icon has been struck off, no body knows how. Two sculptures representing the images of Divine couple, may be the parents of Tīrthaṅkara collected from Deopara, Rajshahi, have been preserved at Varendra research museum. One of these sculptures has been assigned to the 10th century and the other to 12th century A.D. The discovery of these sculptures proves beyond doubt that Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti including the Koṭivarṣaviṣya had not lost its popularity and importance as the traditional strong-holds of Jainism during the reign of the Pāla kings.

In conclusion, it is to be stated that during the Pāla reign in Bengal, the religion of the Nirgranthas or Jainas did not suffer any decline. On the contrary, in the liberal and eclectic atmosphere created

21. K.K. Ganguly, Jainas Art in Bengal. Exhibition of Jainas Art Souvenir

22. P. C. Dasgupta - Jain Journal, Vol X. No. 4.

by tolerant Pāla Kings, the Nirgranthas (Jainas) improved their positions in their traditional strongholds. The numerous Jaina sculptures (belonging to the Pāla period of the 10th century) explored in North Bengal had not shown any signs of decay, rather the sculptures of this period had exhibited the signs of exuberance of youth and “lively idiom, rich in concentrated animation”.

Is it this efflorescence of the Jaina art, consequent upon the growth the Jaina organisation in the tenth century that prompted Hariṣeṇa to compose the fine biography of Bhadrabāhu, the 6th Jaina patriarch ?

II

Jainism in Bengal during the eleventh century A.D.

Advayavajra is one of the celebrated authors of Vajrayāna Buddhism. He is also known as Avadhūtī-pā. In Tibetan Tangyur many other epithets are given him, such as, Paṇḍita, Mahā Paṇḍita, Brāhmaṇa, Ācārya, Mahācārya, Avadhūta, Upādhyāya, Bāngālee etc.

“Advayavajra has about twentytwo (22) works translated in the Bstan-hgyur, but some of these works are also available in Sanskrit. Twentytwo (22) small Vajrayānist tracts of his are edited by H.P. Sastri in the Advayavajra Saṁgraha.”²³

In the above mentioned saṁgraha, there is a very small tract or treatise of only twenty (20) ślokas named *māyānirukti*. The colophon is silent about its author, but the Tibetan translation attributes its authorship to Advayavajra and translation to Upādhyāya Vajrapāṇi.

Though Advayavajra is a famous and celebrated Vajrayānist author, his date is difficult to ascertain and this difficulty has been made more complicated by the supposition of the existence of more than one Advayavajra.²⁴

Without entering into the controversy whether there was one or

23. R.C. Mazumder, History of Bengal, p. 406, f.n 158.

24. *Ibid.*

more than one Advayavajra, it is better to conclude that the Vajrayānist author Advayavajra flourished during the latter half of the Pāla period, more precisely during the 11th century A.D.²⁵

After a little digression, let us concentrate upon the subject-matter of “*māyānirukti*” to have a glimpse of the religious condition of that age.

In his introduction to *Advayavajra-saṅgraha*, H.P. Sastri states that he does not venture to give an English translation of the work for several reasons : because the readings in many places so hopelessly corrupt that nothing can be made out of it; the sentences are so elliptical that it is difficult to make a grammatical construction. H.P. Sastri further comments that Advayavajra himself hated diffuseness and was a lover of brevity and in making his works brief he had made them enigmatical.

In spite of all these difficulties, H.P. Sastri has rendered a great service to the students and scholars of Indology by writing the summary of each of the tracts or treatises included to the celebrated collection; *Advayavajra-saṅgraha*.

The central idea of *māyānirukti*, expounded by H.P. Sastri is as follows:

“It (*Māyānirukti*) treats of illusion and speaks of *māyā* as *magic*. Some consider it to be magic and some think it to be true. For the satisfaction of the illusions, the Yogin may enjoy all good things of the world which come to him of their own accord, because he enjoys them as *māyā*.”

“But a true Yogin should have the Earth for his bed, the quarters for his cloth and alms for his food. He should have forbearance for all phenomena because they are not produced and his benevolence should be perennial”

25. N.N. Dasgupta, *Banglay Bauddhatharma*. p. 74; B. Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography* p. 48

On a perusal of the contents of ‘*māyā nirukti*’ it seems that there were two types of Yogins or ascetics in Bengal at the time of Advayavajra - one type of Yogins or ascetics used to satisfy their sense-pleasures by the enjoyment of all good things of the world that would come to them automatically and the other type of Yogins or ascetics used to observe a very strict code of discipline in regard to food, drink, dress, bed etc. It seems that the number of the second class or category of monks sharply dwindled in the Buddhist monasteries when Vajrayāna and in its train *sahajayāna* firmly struck roots in the Buddhist Church.

As the attainment of the ‘Bodhicitta’, the state of “*mahāsūkha*” or supreme bliss, produced by the union of “*Prajñā*” and “*Upāya*” was accepted by the Vajrayānist and the Sahajayānist Buddhists as the “*summum bonnum*” of life, strict monastic discipline in regard to food, dress and bed gave way to sexo-yogic esoteric practices in almost all Buddhist monasteries or establishments.²⁶ Consequently within a short time, the number of true Yogins or ascetics who observed strict monastic discipline sharply fell or decreased and in course of time the true Yogins were extinct.

So at the time of depicting the portrait of a true Yogin or ascetic, Advayavajra had before his eyes the spectacle of an advanced Digambara-Nirgrantha monk.

From the time of the origin of their religion, the ‘Jina Kalpī or advanced Nirgrantha monks had to observe strict and stringent monastic codes for the attainment of liberation from the cycles of birth and rebirth.

In ‘*māyā nirukti*’, the criteria set for a true Yogin or ‘ascetic’ by Advayavajra are found in the following couplet.

“*mahī śayyā, diśo vāso bhikṣā bhaktam ca bhojanam/
ajāta dharmatā kṣāntiḥ kṛipāṇā bhagavāhini*”//

Does not this śloka bring to the mind’s eye of the reader the

26. S. B. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, p. 31 ff.

portrait of an advanced Digambara Nirgrantha ascetic who was enjoined by the scriptures to use the earth for his bed, quarters for his garment, and alms for his food ? As for other two qualities of a true ascetic, mention has been made of ‘*Kṣānti*’ or forbearance and ‘*Kṛpā*’ or benevolence/ kindness. Without the attainment of these two qualities none could be called an ascetic by the Digambara Jainas in ancient India.

The Nirgrantha ascetics since the inception of their religious organisation had to bear all sorts of natural and man-perpetrated cruelties upon them with equanimity and forgiveness.

The *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, one of the oldest scriptures of the Jainas, vividly describes how Mahāvīra was cruelly treated by the inhabitants of Vajjabhūmi of Rāḍha. Instead of keeping dogs off from Mahāvīra, the inhabitants of Vajjabhūmi set dogs on the monk and made dogs bite him. But Mahāvīra did not carry bamboo sticks like other monks to keep off dogs from biting. In the 3rd lesson, eleventh couplet of the same book, it is said, “When he (Mahāvīra) once (sat) without moving his body, they (the rude villagers) cut off his flesh, tore his hair under pain or covered him with dust”.²⁷

“The venerable one (Mahāvīra) who had abandoned the care of the body, bore pain, free from desire.”²⁸

Not only did Mahāvīra endure himself such cruelties, but he commanded his followers also to endure all troubles (*pariṣaha*) that are likely to beset them in their life as wandering mendicants.

It is also to be noted that one of the ten duties of a Jaina monk is to forgive the offenders. The Nirgrantha (Jaina) monk from the day of their ordination to monkhood “learn how to control anger and instead of giving way to wrath, practise the difficult duty of forgiveness and the monks are constantly reminded of how Mahāvīra forgave his enemies” and the monks are also advised to remember how “the venerable one once forgave a wicked cobra that bit him and preached to it the noble virtue of forgiveness”.²⁹

27. Hermann Jacobi. *Ācārāṅgasūtra*. SBE. Vol XXII

28. *Ibid.*

29. Mrs. S Stevenson, Heart of Jainism, p. 151 ff.

The quality of benevolence or kindness for all living beings whether men or beast is ingrained in the religion of the Nirgranthas. As the Nirgranthas believe in the potential equality of all Jīvas (souls), they refrain from hurting even an animalcule. On the other hand, they render all sorts of help for the protection of living creatures. It will not be out of place to mention that by the austerity called “*vaiyā-vacca*”, the Nirgranthas or Jainas render service to the poor, the helpless, the suffering by giving them food, water, shelter or clothing.³⁰

It is, therefore, evident from the discussion made above that at the time for depicting the characteristics of a true yogin or ascetic, Advayavajra had before him the model of an advanced Nirgrantha Digambara ascetic. And in the eleventh century A.D., perhaps, the Digambara ascetics were very numerous in North Bengal where at the Devikoṭa Vihāra, the author of “*māyānirukit*”, Advayavajra had his residence. The ruins of Devakoṭa/Devīkoṭa have been unearthed at Bangarh, eighteen miles away from Dinajpur.

Incidentally, it is to be mentioned that in the medieval times in Bengal some “Avadhūtīs” and Kāpālis” were known for their strict and hard hermit life. As, for example, the Avadhūtī Yogīs lived in forest under trees, begged alms for food, put on wornout rags (*jīrṇa cīvara*) and were averse to caste, scripture and pilgrimage³¹. But this description of the Avadhūtīs does not tally with that found in *māyānirukti*, because the Avadhūtīs wore worn out rags and all Avadhūtī ascetics did not live in forests, some of them lived in monasteries. As, for example, Avadhūtīpāda Advayavajra himself lived at Devikoṭa monastery.³² Probably, in the eleventh century A.D. when the tract or treatise *māyānirukti* was written, the Avadhūtīs were not yet organised into a sect and perhaps they were very few in number and not noticeable.

As regards the Kāpāli or Kāpālika Yogīs, it is said that they lived a nude life, besmeared their bodies with ashes, put on ‘bracelets

30. Mrs. S. Stevenson, Heart of Jainism, p. 167

31. N. R. Ray, *Bangalir Itihas*, Adiparba, p. 532

32. N. N. Dasgupta, *Banglay Baudhadharma*, p. 74

of bones' on their necks, wore earrings in ears, wore anklets set with small balls and beat damrus or small tabours etc.³³ This description of the Kāpāli Yogis is at variance with that found in '*māyānirukti*'.

So we may conclude without hesitation that Advayavajra in depicting the characteristics of true Yogīns or ascetics had before him the portrait of the 'Jinakalpī' or advanced Digambara ascetics who were well-known for their hard and strict monastic life and who were, perhaps, very numerous at "Devakoṭa/Devīkoṭa at Koṭivarṣa Viṣaya in the Bhukti of Puṇḍravandhana, (North Bengal) during the eleventh century A.D.

At the close of the discussion, three glaring truths have come out to light through the dark mazes of the Jaina-history of Bengal of the Pāla period.

The first truth is that the religion of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) was not on the verge of extinction in Bengal engulfed by the rising tide of Buddhism as stated by some scholars or historians of repute.

The second truth is that the religion of the Jainas or Nirgranthas was still a living religion in Bengal vigorous in its existence and their monks were indirectly admired even by their opponents for the strict monastic life led by them.

The third truth is that the Pāla Kings, who followed an eclectic religious policy, cannot be blamed for the disappearance of the Jainas or Nirgranthas from the Province of Bengal during the 12th or 13th century A.D. On the contrary, the liberal and generous religious policy of the Pāla Kings infused new strength and vigour to the Nirgrantha or Jaina community which found expression in the field of art and iconography that came to an abrupt end after the advent of the Turkish hordes in Bengal.

33. N. R. Ray, *Bangalir Itihas*, Adīparva, p. 541.

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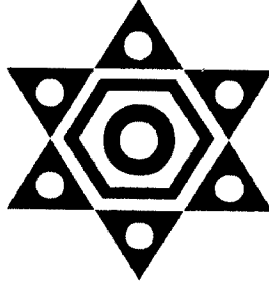
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