

The Jaina And Non-Jaina Versions Of The Popular Tale Of Candana-Malayagiri From Prakrit And Other Early Literary Sources

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THE tale of Naravikrama appears in the Fourth Prastāva of Guṇacandra's Prakrit work "*Mahāvīracariya*" composed in V. S. 1139 (= 1083 A.D.). It is about the troubles of Prince Naravikrama, his wife and their two sons who are separated from each other. After much suffering and hardship all the members of the family are happily re-united. During this period of their calamities Naravikrama's wife Śilavati's character is also tested. In the end both of them renounce the world.

This very tale has subsequently become greatly popular under the title : The Story of Candana and Malayāgiri (which are but changed names of Naravikrama and Śilavati).

In the present paper six different versions, five Jaina and one non-Jaina, of the story are studied comparatively. The earliest of the known versions was by Bhadrāsena (about 1619 A.D.) and the latest by Śāmala (later part of the 18th century A.D.) The paper also points out that apart from variations regarding the extent, treatment, poetic merits etc., there are distinct diversions in the central motivations of the narrative. Incidentally, the growth and development of the story has also been examined.

G.J.V. 15

OUTLINE OF THE STORY IN THE MAHAVIRACARIYA

Prince Naravikrama, the son of King Narasimha of Jayanti Nagari, married Princess Śilavatī the daughter of King Devasena of Harśapura. Once he saved the life of a pregnant lady from the enraged royal elephant Jaya Kuñjara by killing it. Angered by the death of his favourite and auspicious elephant the king banished the prince from his kingdom. Śilavatī followed her husband undeterred by his persuasion to go to her father's kingdom.

Naravikrama leaves his father's capital Jayantinagari, and goes to Syandanapura along with his wife Śilavatī and two sons, Kusumaśekhara and Vijayaśekhara. In Syandanapura the whole family works as servants of a Mālī or gardener called Pāṭala. Naravikrama and Śilavatī had to gather flowers from the garden and weave garlands. Śilavatī, again, had to go to the street with the Mālī's wife to sell them.

Once when she was selling flower-wreaths a very wealthy sea-trader (Vahānavatī) named Dehilla was attracted towards her. Every day he used to buy wreaths from her and tried to create a very good impression on her. One day he asked her to deliver garlands on the sea-shore from where he was to sail for far-away countries. When Śilavatī went there he kidnapped her and sailed off.

Naravikrama, with his two sons, came on the bank of the river in search of his wife. Keeping his two sons awaiting he left for the other bank in search of Śilavatī.

When he reached half-way in the river, he was suddenly dragged by the powerful current of the flooded waters. He was, however, saved by a log of wood and ultimately reached the outskirts of the Jayavardhananagara. Kirtivarmā the king of the city, had died all of a sudden without an heir to the throne and the ministers of the kingdom were out to elect a new king with the help of a devine elephant. The elephant spotted Naravikrama and garlanded him. According to the customs they made him their king.

Naravikrama was, nevertheless, very unhappy because of the separation from his wife and two young sons. He was advised by a holy Jaina monk to perform religious duties, so that he could be reunited with his family.

The waiting sons of Naravikrama were found and reared up by a shepherd who was quite friendly with the kings of Jayavardhananagara. When he came to visit the king along with his two adopted

sons, Naravikrama immediately recognised them. Thus, the two sons and the father were united after a great deal of hardship and anxiety.

Dehilla, the wealthy sea-trader, after kidnapping Śilavatī in his ship tried very much to win her over both with persuasions and by torture. But Śilavatī, true to her name, did not yield to his evil desires. As if angered by the evil designs of Dehilla his ship was caught in a storm by the goddess of the sea. The power of her chastity was unassailable and a heavenly voice, *Ākāśavāṇī*, warned him with dire consequences if he continued to harass Śilavatī. Dehilla came to his senses and the storm subsided. He begged the good lady's pardon and promised to set her free.

On its long sea-journey Dehilla's ship anchored at Jayavardhananagara, the capital of Naravikrama. Dehilla went to Naravikrama to pay his homage. Naravikrama liked his company and wanted him to stay at his palace. At Dehilla's request the king sent his two sons to guard his ship, where they met their mother.

Thus, all the four of them were happily reunited and Naravikrama punished Dehilla.

Because of such momentous results Naravikrama was much impressed by the greatness of the Jaina Dharma and became all the more religious-minded.

King Narasimha, Naravikrama's father, came to know of his son's adventures and immediately sent for him. Naravikrama, after making over his throne to his sons, went to Jayantīnagarī. Narasimha took *pravrajyā* and Naravikrama succeeded him.

After years of just and benevolent rule Naravikrama also took *pravrajyā* along with his wife and attained the position of a god (*deva*) in the 'Mahendra Svarga'.

The Purpose of the Story :

The narrator of this episode in the Fourth Prastāva of the *Mahāvīracariya* lays a special stress on the *Pūrva-Karma-Phala-Paripāka*. The calamities that befall a man's life are nothing but fruits of his own past deeds. These can be undone by his faith in the Jaina Dharma.

Along with this central purpose of the story, the author also aims to praise the importance of feminine chastity. Here, even the goddess of the sea comes to the rescue of the princess, and paves the way for her ultimate reunion with her family. We may point out that

in all the subsequent Jaina versions of the Naravikrama-story, we find the self-same motivations of the all-powerful law of *Karma* and the glorification of *Śīla*.

THE SUBSEQUENT VERSIONS :

As observed at the outset, we come across many Jaina versions of this story with *Śīla* or chastity of character and glorification of the Jaina Dharma as its ultimate ends.

Dr. B. J. Sandesara has truthfully described seven early Gujarati Jaina versions of this story on the basis of the notes given in Shri Mohanlal Dalichand Desai's monumental work *Jaina Gurjara Kavio*. He has also noted the oldest version of Bhadrāsena—a Jaina Muni—who composed it in V. S. 1675 (i. e. 1619 A. D.) Shri Sarabhai Navab has published this version with some introductory notes in the *Ācārya Ānandaśaṅkara Dhruva Smāraka Grantha*. The language of Bhadrāsena's story is an early form of Vṛāja Bhāṣā.

The respective authors of the above-mentioned Jaina versions are *Jina Harśa* (V. S. 1704), *Sumati Haṁsa* (V. S. 1711), *Ajita Canda* (V. S. 1736), *Jina Harśa* (V. S. 1745), *Yaśovardhana* (V. S. 1747), *Catura* (V. S. 1771) and *Kesara* (V. S. 1776).

Besides the Prākṛit version and those noted by Dr. Sandesara several other Jaina versions of the story are also known.

The lone non-Jaina example is that of the famous medieval Gujarati poet Sāmal (later half of the 18th cent). His version has primarily a narrative interest. The purpose of his story is neither religious nor explicitly didactic. He has no doubt contributed, to a great extent, towards giving the story a wide-spread popularity.

The present writer has examined from a comparative point of view the following versions of the narrative under consideration besides the Prākṛit and the Sāmal Versions :

1. "Candana-Miliyāgiri Caupāi."
(MS. B. V. B. 57) of *Jina Harśa*.
Date of composition : V. S. 1704.
2. "Candana Miliyāgiri Rāso."
(MS. B. V. B. 58) of Rāma Muni.
Date of composition : V. S. 1711.
3. "Candana Malayagari Varta."
(MS. B. V. B. 59) of Bhadrāsena,
Date of composition : V. S. 1675.

4. "Candana Rājā Caupai."
(MS. B. V. B. 60) of Hiraviśāla-Śiṣya.
Date of Composition : V. S. 1620.
5. "Candana-Malayāgiri-nī-Copai".
(Of Pandita Kṣema Harśa)

The last one is published but details regarding publishers, date of publication etc. are not available. Date of composition is also not available.

Sāmala's version too, known as "Candana and Malayāgiri" is not a separate, self-contained composition but it is one of the stories (No. 8) of his story-cycle "Madāpaciśi", which in its turn is a part of his famous Vikrama-Cycle of legends called *Siṃhāsana Batriśi*. In what follows, these different versions are compared from the point of view of their incidents and characters, which would incidentally also show, how the original Prākṛit story fared in its later recountings.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STORY : MODIFICATION OF INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS

In the Naravikrama-story, his banishment was the direct result his killing of the king's favourite and auspicious elephant Jaya-kuñjara, while in Bhadrāsena's "Candana-Malayāgiri-Vārta" or "Caupai" the cause of the king (here, Candana) leaving his kingdom is altogether different. The calamities that fell upon Candana are ascribed to the vagaries of Fate. One night Candana's family deity—'Kula-Devatā'—warned him of his immediately impending calamities. So Candana left his kingdom instantly along with his wife and two sons, Sāyara and Nira.

The change found for the first time in Bhadrāsena had come to stay and in the subsequent Jaina versions this initial episode is narrated practically in the same way.

In Sāmala Bhaṭṭa's story this initial story-motif receives a further modification and thereby it becomes dramatic. The warning to the king came in the mid-night, not in a dream but in reality. And the warning agency was not a dream-character, the *Kula-Devatā*, but some mysterious voice actually heard. The voice spoke aloud :

"Shall I fall on you.....When shall I fall on you—now or later ?"

("Padū ?....Padū?....." etc.)

The king in turn asked it to fall immediately. He wanted to brave it now, rather than to face it in his old age.

The adverse fate does strike him. The king is defeated by a neighbouring King Puṇḍarika and he has to run away with his wife and two sons. The calamities also were lying in wait.

Now we can trace the roots of this motif in the *Prabandha-Cintāmani* of Merutuṅga (13th cent.) in its 'Suvarṇa-Puruṣa Siddhi Prabandha' which forms a section of the 'Vikramārka Prabandha' (Chapters 3-7, First Ullāsa). In the 'Suvarṇa-Puruṣa Siddhi Prabandha' it is related that a wealthy merchant built a palace for himself. He spent a good deal of amount in its construction. During the construction and at the time of occupying his new building, he performed all the required religious rites. Yet on the very first night of occupation he was terribly frightened by a mysterious voice telling him "I am falling!". The wealthy merchant requested the unknown voice not to fall on him and ran away, that very moment, from his newly built mansion. Next day he told this story to King Vikrama, who after carefully hearing his plight purchased his house outright and went to sleep in it that very night. He also heard the same voice : "I am falling!".

The brave king told the 'Voice' to fall immediately. At that very moment a 'Golden statue'—'*Suvarṇa-Puruṣa*', the fruit of constructing the building in keeping with all the auspicious Muhūrtas and rites—fell. Thus the great king Vikrama got the title "*Suvarṇa-Puruṣa*", which always became whole, notwithstanding cutting it out in slices.

There is another point also in which Śāmala's version differs from all of the earlier versions. The sea-trader Dehilla, of Guṇacandra, Bhadrāsena and others, is substituted in Śāmala by a land-route-trader—a Vanjārā, called Narapat—and as compared to Dehilla he is depicted a better man.

A Vanjārā is a well-known and familiar figure in the Gujarati folk-tales. He also appears in several other stories of Śāmala mostly by the proper name Lākhā Vanjārā. He is a representative of the Vanjārā community—a very efficient merchant, very rich, and one who travels from place to place all over the country. He is generally a good man ready to perform benevolent deeds for the people. In Gujarat we find many wells, 'Vāvas', tanks and ponds associated with

his name. His is a 'common' rather than a 'proper' noun. Narapat Vanjārā is a character moulded in the same pattern.

Malayāgiri is not harassed but helped by Narpata Vanjārā. This character of a typical Vanjārā—mostly by the name of Lākhā Vanjārā—is also a very interesting subject for the folk-tale study. We find the same romantic character in the well-known stories like Nemivijaya's *Śilavatī-no-rās*; Samala's *Bhadrā Bhāmini* and *Madana-Mohanā* etc. There are other innumerable short episodes which bring out the different facets of this lovable and famous Vanjārā's character.

One significant point regarding all the versions is that all of them contain a key couplet which can be said to be a sort of the summing up of the story. In the non-Prākṛit Versions the trenchant *Duhā* couplet on the adversity of Fate is as follows :

“ किहां चंदन, किहां मलयागिरि, किहां सायर, किहां नीर
जिम जिम पडइ अत्र्यडी, तिम तिम लहइ सरिर । ”

In Guṇacandra's story too we find a Gāthā with a similar purport. There, Naravikrama, after losing his wife and sons says :

कह नियनयरश्चाओ ? कहेत्थ वासो ? कहि गया मज्जा ?
कह पुत्तेहि विओगो ? कह वा नइवेगहणं च ? ।

—P. 100, महावीरचरियं

(Devchand Lālbhai Granthamālā, No. 75)

But the concept, “ किहां चंदन ? किहां मलयागिरि ? ” etc., figures characteristically in many a medieval folk-tales and hence on account of it the “ Naravikrama-Candana-Story ” can be reasonably suspected of having a folk-tale origin and not an out-right creation of Guṇa candra.

This finds a support from the fact that the *Duhā*, “ किहां चंदन ? किहां मलयागिरि ? ” appears also in Karmaṇa's *Śitā-Haraṇa* (V. S. 1526—A.D. 1470) with a very slight difference. It also shows that this story might have been very much in vogue amongst the people much before either Karmaṇa or Bhadrāsena.

In all the versions of the story the small family of four—Candana Malayāgiri and their two sons Sāyara and Nira—are separated from each other; and they drift apart due to the vagaries of the Fate and the viles of man.

Similar separation and reunion of near and dear ones due to the evil working of Fate and man is quite familiar to us from numerous medieval tales. Even the Puranic tales of Hariścandra-Tārāmati and Nala-Damayantī can be easily recalled in this context.

From this comparison and citing of parallels and from the persistent popularity of the story over centuries it is quite likely that Guṇacandra might not have been its originator. He might have only adapted it from the stream of folk-tales, current in his times, and modified it, especially in its beginning and end, to suit his purpose.

