Jainism In Jayantabhaṭṭa’s
Agamaḍambara

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The Agamaḍambara is a four-act play written in Sanskrit and Prākrit in a number of dialects. Its author is the famous Nyāya thinker Jayantabhaṭṭa who flourished in the ninth century A.D. and composed his magnum opus, the Nyāyamaṅjarī, residing in a prison cell as he himself states in the following verse:

राजा तु गहरेरसिद्धशास्त्रांके कथने विनिहितोऽहम्।
प्रणयर्वप्पजुतकाविर्द हि वासरा गमिताः।

The Nyāyamaṅjarī deals with different schools of philosophy, in their theoretical aspects—logical, ontological and epistemological, including also ethical. The Agamaḍambara is his next work which deals with the practical religious life of various sects in vogue during his time. King Śaṅkaravarman (885–902 A.D.) of Kashmir was his patron. The king took cognizance of the degeneration of some of the religious sects and took steps to chastise them. Bhaṭṭa Jayanta was of much help to him in this. Śaṅkaravarman’s royal epithet as Varnāśrama-dharmamaryādācārya is symptomatic of the fact that he re-established the Vedic tradition after purging the unorthodox-heretical elements that corrupted the life of the people of Kashmir. It will be interesting to note that according to the wise counsel of Bhaṭṭa Jayanta the king accepted the validity of all the Āgamas including those of the Jainas. The royal proclamation in the Agamaḍambara attests this:
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In the Āgamaḍambara the author depicts some of the salient features of the religious practices of the Buddhists, Jainas, Śaivas, Cārvākas and Sāttvata-Vaiṣṇavas. Of course, his delineations are not always correct and sometimes also a bit distorted. But, on the whole, they are realistic and give a concrete picture of the religious life of Kashmir of his time. The overall attitude of the author appears to be reformative and he takes a world view when he asserts a common thread of truth running through the conflicting views in the following verse:

एकः शिवः पञ्चवतः कविलोधव विद्यृः
संकर्षणो जिनमुनिः सुगो हरिषवी
संसारं परं गुर्गविस्मादनवोदिपि कामेन
मव्याकुटे तु परमात्मनि नासिकिव भ्रेतं || IV. 57.

Jayanta harps on the same view when he says

नानाविषेषायमामामामेवेदे
राधिश्यमाना वहुविवेदेश्वरा यायाम
एकं ते श्रेयसंस्कृतुपत्वि
सिन्धौ प्रवर्त्तिहूँ इव जावाहीपी || IV. 54.

The above strengthens the belief that Śaṅkaravarman’s royal policy of accepting all the ancient Āgamas as valid was highly influenced by this liberal attitude of the philosopher-politician of his court.

Our main interest in this paper is to present Jayanta's view on the life of the Jaina monks, nuns and Srāvakas of his time. In the praveśaka of the second act of the drama we find that a Mimāṁsaka named Śaṅkarāśaṇa (who was later on appointed superintendent of religious affairs of the state) has deputed an urchin to report about the presence of the Jaina Ācārya, Jinarakṣita by name, who was in all probability a historical figure contemporary to our author. The boy goes to the Jaina monastery and finds a state of affairs which is not elevating. He actively associates himself with the affairs, makes fun with the Jaina ascetic, nervous due to his moral weakness, and is offered some bribe before he departs.

Śaṅkarāśaṇa now comes to Jinarakṣita who was surrounded by his disciples under a pipal tree. The Ācārya was explaining the necessity
of the study of the Jaina scripture and mortification of the flesh by the
observance of austerities and vows (tapas and niyamas). Sañkarṣaṇa
began the conversation by paying high tributes to the Jaina ideal of
asceticism:

_n hṛṣyā nākāyā n yuddhavālasyavani_
_n sakñyāpārā kānchādi māyanārakṣe |
tapasyēṃ tīṃṃa śrītīnyatāmavādahmaṃ_
prāhītāvya kānyā sarangirhī sangharṣe || II. 7._

On his enquiry, the Acārya introduces the topic of anekānta as the most
popular subject of discussion and quotes the verse:

_एको भावः सवाभावस्वाभः_
_वेदे भावः एकभावस्वाभः ||
_एको भावस्वाभः वेदे भावास्वाभः द्वादशः || II. 8._

which has its root in the sūtra जे एग जाग्न से सव जाग्न of the Acārānga, the
first book of the Jaina canon. This is criticized by Sañkarṣaṇa in a
superfluous manner. The Acārya does not want to prolong the
disputation and goes away under the pretext of attending his monastic
duties.

The hermitage and its peaceful surroundings attract the
Mimāṁsaka.

Then enters an ascetic clad in red robe and uttering eulogy of
the Agamas propounded by the Jainas, which are described as terse
and excellent in sense as opposed to the Vedānta and the Vedas which
are elaborate, confused and difficult to understand.

_वेंचता दुस्तरत्वा तस्क्षिण्यकहा विश्वा संकुश्या_
_अन्यष्टि तथा बिवेदीयदं गुणगदी अति नश्वरी अपया ||
_दूरे तिरंगु ते से परिहर्लितिं वेदेस्वारदुक्तः_
_संभिकतथा गिमलवत्य निर्माणिनां भागमं आहर्मह || II. 15._

On being questioned the ascetic says that he has come to attend
a feast arranged in the hermitage of Jinarakṣita by a liberal Jaina
Śrāvaka. The ascetic enumerates the menu of the feast which included
स्तूृण रासीो (heaps of barley powder), तेलपिव्वा (jars full of oils), कंजिय
कुम्मीो (sour gruel in pitchers), गुरूधुः (heaps of molasses) and तेलपिव्वा
भक्षण पंचव्या (piles of food prepared in oil), all of these are acceptable
to Jaina monks. Sañkarṣaṇa enquires why there is absence of
milk-products like curd and ghee? The reply comes that anything
connected with a living organism is prohibited to a Jaina ascetic. He
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further points to his own sandals made of dry leaves. The ascetic makes hurry in order to attend the feast. Sāṅkarṣaṇa follows a few steps to have a glimpse at the big assembly. The ascetic gives a confused reply to the query about their accepting the authority of the Buddha—अभ्यर्थण अ सुरारे निस्थगुरु विचारे होड़ि।। He then points to different sects of the Jaina monks assembled ther in thousands. The sects are enumerated and their distinguishing characteristics are mentioned as follows:

अहो मद्य भारहदा। भावबन्धा (व) भारहदा। के वि दिवंतवा, के वि सत्तपीत्रमेचवस्थण, के वि रत्तुतसा के वि सत्तपीत्रव। पेन्दा दात हेरे इमे निम्नसिखनस्वतंत्रितोहुभुमि-अंतात्सिद्धभागस्वाभिविधप्रणिश। विवंतव। हेरे खु इमे वनवस्यसूचिजनतोमहत्वकांचला चीरस्वण। हेरे खु इमे तमलपकानूढ़श्रवरास्वस्वाभिवष्टवणवण। अ वाहस्वार्णियो तवोहु।......

Well-behaved indeed are the Jaina monks! They have cultured their mind indeed! Some of them are sky-clad, some are clad in dry leaves only, some again are clothed in red robes. Look at these sky-clad monks with bodies marked with drops of blood owing to cruel tearing off of hairs from the body. Look again at others clad in dry but soft leaves coloured with round vasūra. Here are again ascetics who are clad in red robes resembling the blazing earthen disk just taken out of the kiln.

This description of the practices and doctrines of the Jainas in Kashmir as found in a pre-Kalhaṇa text is important from various points of view. There appears to be a confusion between the Jaina and the Buddhist practices. It is only the Buddhists who are allowed to partake of the food prepared for them. We do not find any reference from other sources to Jaina monks joining a feast. Jayanta himself refers to the Jaina monks as Bhikṣābhujāḥ—those that live on alms. The references to the anekāṇta doctrine, tapas and niyamas and all:o Digambara and Śvetāmbara sects are correct though the details are not always verifiable. Jainism does not seem to be a flourishing religion in Kashmir in the days of Jayantabhaṭṭa though thousands of Jaina ascetics are stated assembled in the Āśrama. Rather the picture drawn in the Agamaṇḍambara points to the fact that it has degenerated and lost much of its moral strength in the then Kashmir. Jayanta pays respects to the Jaina ideals and individuals like Acārya Jinarakṣita. But the other side of the picture represented by the incident of the Kṣapaṇaka and the Kṣapaṇikā points to a serious weakness in the society. The Buddhist receives more attention of the author. But Jainism commands more respect.