

Jainism In Jayantabhaṭṭa's Āgamaḍambara

ANANTALAL THAKUR

THE *Āgamaḍambara* is a four-act play written in Sanskrit and Prākṛit 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 *Nyāyamañjarī*, residing in a prison cell as he himself states in the following verse :

राज्ञा तु गह्वरेऽस्मिन्नशब्दके बन्धने विनिहितोऽहम् ।

ग्रन्थरचनाकुतुकादिह हि वासरा गमिताः ॥

The *Nyāyamañjarī* deals with different schools of philosophy, in their theoretical aspects—logical, ontological and epistemological, including also ethical. The *Āgamaḍambara* 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 *Varṇāśrama-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 Jains. The royal proclamation in the *Āgamaḍambara* attests this :

येऽत्रानादिजगत्प्रवाहपतिता नानागमाः साधव-

स्ते तिष्ठन्तु यथास्थिताः स्वसमयाविष्टाश्चरन्तः क्रियाः ।

ये तु प्रस्तुतधर्मेविप्लवकृतः पापास्तपोऽपायिन-

स्ते चेदाशु न यान्ति घातयति तान् दस्यूनिव क्षमापतिः ॥ III. 1.

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 पशुपतिः कपिलोऽथ विष्णुः

संकर्षणो जिनमुनिः सुगतो मनुर्वा ।

संज्ञाः परं पृथगिमास्तनवोऽपि काम-

मव्याकृते तु परमात्मनि नास्ति भेदः ॥ IV. 57.

Jayanta harps on the same view when he says

नानाविधैरागममार्गभेदै-

रादिश्यमाना बहवोऽभ्युपायाः ।

एकत्र ते श्रेयसि संपतन्ति

सिन्धौ प्रवाहा इव जाह्नवीयाः ॥ 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 Śrāvakas of his time. In the *praveśaka* of the second act of the drama we find that a Mīmāṃsaka named Śaṅkarṣaṇa (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.

Śaṅkarṣaṇa 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*). Saṅkarṣaṇa began the conversation by paying high tributes to the Jaina ideal of asceticism :

न हिंसा नासत्यं न गृहवनवासव्यसनिता
न सक्तिर्व्यापारे क्वचिदपि भवानन्तरफले ।
तपश्चेदं तीव्रं व्रतनियमसंवाधमनघं
ग्रहीतव्या कान्या सरणिरिह संसारतरणे ॥ II. 7.

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

एको भावः सर्वभावस्वभावः
सर्वे भावा एकभावस्वभावाः ।
एको भावस्तत्त्वतो येन दृष्टः
सर्वे भावास्तत्त्वतस्तेन दृष्टाः ॥ II. 8.

which has its root in the *sūtra* जे एगं जाणइ से सब्ब जाणइ of the *Ācārāṅga*, the first book of the Jaina canon. This is criticized by Saṅkarṣaṇa in a superfluous manner. The Ācārya 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 Mimāṃsaka.

Then enters an ascetic clad in red robe and uttering eulogy of the Āgamas 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.

वेयंता दुत्तरंता तइकहियकहा वित्थरा संकुलत्था
अय्येहि तत्थ चिंतीयदि गहणगदी अत्थि नत्थीति अप्पा ।
दूरे तिड्डंतु ते मे परिहरिदुमिदं घोरसंसारदुक्खं
संक्खित्तं णिम्मलत्थं जिणमुणिभणिदं आगमं आहरम्हा ॥ 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 सत्तूण रासीओ (heaps of barley powder), तेह्लवडिया (jars full of oils), कंजिय कुम्भीओ (sour gruel in pitchers), गूळक्क्या (heaps of molasses) and तेह्लपक्काण भक्खाण पक्वया (piles of food prepared in oil), all of these are acceptable to Jaina monks. Saṅkarṣaṇa 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

further points to his own sandals made of dry leaves. The ascetic makes hurry in order to attend the feast. Sankarṣaṇa 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—अम्हाणं अ सुगदो जिणगुरु । किं च जिणगुरु सुगदो होदि । He then points to different sects of the Jaina monks assembled there in thousands. The sects are enumerated and their distinguishing characteristics are mentioned as follows :

अहो भद्दा आरहदा । भाविअप्पा (?) आरहदा । के वि दियंवरा, के वि रुक्खविदलमेत्तवसणा,
के वि रत्तवासा के वि सेयवडा । पेक्ख दाव इदो इमे निहयलुंचणपसंगलक्खिजंतलोममूलवि-
अलंतपविरलत्तणुअसोणिअकणा दियंवरा । इदो खु इमे बत्तुलवसूरचच्चिजन्तकोमलवक्कलंचला
चीरवसणा । इदो खु इमे तक्खलपक्ककंदूउद्धरिअसरावसरिसवण्णवसणा अ वह्मआरिणो
तवोहणा ।.....

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 Jains in Kashmir as found in a pre-Kalhana 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 *Bhikṣābhujah*—those that live on alms. The references to the *anekānta* doctrine, *tapas* and *niyamas* and also 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 *Āgamaḍambara* 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 Ācārya 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.