

Wisdom in Jain Tradition

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The Scope of the Paper :

The general theme of the seminar is “Wisdom in Indian Traditions”. An attempt has been made in this paper to locate the areas in Jaina tradition in which glimpses of wisdom are seen. Jainas have their own religion, history, literature, philosophy, code of conduct and art expression in the form of caves, temples, icons, inscriptions and beautiful paintings. To bring out the hidden wisdom of Jainas in all these areas of Jaina Studies is almost impossible. Therefore in this paper observations are presented with critical remarks mostly concerned to literature and philosophy.

The Scheme of the Paper :

The paper is divided into four main parts.

A] The place of wisdom in Jaina Epistemology.

B] Some noteworthy Jaina texts and their position in Indian Lākṣaṇic literature.

C] The hidden wisdom of Jaina scriptures.

D] Wisdom of Jaina tradition through ages -

(i) Cultural richness reflected in the Prakrit literature.

(ii) Social wisdom of Jainas in creating various thought-models.

Conclusive citation from Ācārāṅga - the oldest Jaina text.

A] The place of wisdom in Jaina Epistemology :

The relation of the knowledge with soul in Jainism is not like that in the system of the Naiyāyikās and Vaiśeṣikas. In Jainism knowledge is the essence, nature or chief characteristic of each individual soul (*ātman*, *jīva*). Knowledge is *sva-para-prakāśaka* viz. self-illuminating and illuminating the other. Instead of giving the definition of knowledge, Jaina scriptures and Tattvārthasūtra mention the five types of knowledge viz. Mati, Śruta, Avadhi, Manḥparyāya and Kevala. Matijñāna is empirical knowledge, commonly known as Indriyajñāna. It is cognition or perception gained through the sense-organs and mind. It is certainly limited. Śrutajñāna is articulate knowledge which is conceptualized through language. It can be compared with Śabdajñāna, Āgamajñāna or Scriptural knowledge. In the modern perspective it is applicable to all informative knowledge which is reliable and authentic. Other three varieties of knowledge are basically spiritual in nature.

Nandīsūtra, the last Ardhamāgadhī scripture (5th cen.A.D.) is entirely dedicated to Jaina epistemology. Nandikāra has rearranged the varieties of Jñāna and Pramāṇa in congruence with the contemporary Nyāya concepts. He created space for the concept of ‘fourfold buddhis’ mentioned in the scriptures like Nāyādharmakāhā. Today’s topic is ‘wisdom’. It is closely connected with ‘fourfold intellect’. Nandikāra designates it as the *āśrutaniḥśṛta* variety of Matijñāna i.e. sensory knowledge. Autpattikī Buddhi is inborn intellect, comparable to I.Q. at modern times. Vainayikī is the knowledge acquired through proper training or education which is imparted by an able *guru*. Karmajā is the skill acquired through rigorous practice. Pāriṇāmikī is the knowledge gathered through our life-long experiences and it grows in accordance with our age.

Thus the concept of ‘wisdom’ is connected with empirical knowledge (Mati) on one hand and with Śrutajñāna (articulate knowledge) on the other hand. According to Nandī, Jaina scriptures are Lokottara Śrutaś and treatises of non-Jainas are ‘Laukika Śrutās’. A long list of Mithyāśrutās is given in Nandī and Anuyogadvāra in which whole syllabus of contemporary formal education in India is reflected. In one of my research paper I have interpreted the 27 names of the non-Jaina texts which are noted down in Nandī. A curious person may go through it.

The last brilliant comment of Nandikāra might have inspired the Jaina writers to produce remarkable literature dedicated to technical and scientific subjects. The concept of ‘Caturvidha Buddhi’ and ‘Laukika Śruta’ are in true sense the well spring of the secular, non-religious literature of Jainas properly designated as ‘Lākṣaṇika Sāhitya’.

B] Some Noteworthy Jaina Texts and their Position in Indian Lākṣaṇika Literature :

Pārśvanātha Vidyāśrama Śodha Saṁsthāna, Vārāṇasī has published eight parts of the history of Jaina literature. In the fifth part, dedicated to Lākṣaṇika Sāhitya, total 27 subjects are covered. The list runs likewise - व्याकरण, कोश, अलंकार, छन्द, नाट्य, संगीत, कला, गणित, शकुन, निमित्त, स्वप्न, चूडामणि, सामुद्रिक, रमल, लक्षण, आय, अर्घ, कोष्ठक, आयुर्वेद, अर्थशास्त्र, नीतिशास्त्र, वास्तु-शिल्प, रत्नशास्त्र, मुद्राशास्त्र, धातुविज्ञान and प्राणिविज्ञान.

When we critically examine the 5th part of Jaina Lākṣaṇika Sāhitya we observe that -

- * The lists of books and subjects are unnecessarily lengthened.
- * Many of the names are copied from ‘Jina-ratna-kośa’ and ‘Jaina Granthāvali’ without any further search.
- * The subjects are conjunctured from the name by commonsense and a comment is passed that ‘यह ग्रन्थ देखने में नहीं आया है ।’
- * The manuscripts containing five-six folios are also noted down under the title ‘the book’.
- * There is a common practice of ancient literature to quote the names of Pūrvasūris. Sometimes names of their treatises are given. Actually they are not found in manuscript form. The description of such type of works is given in the above-mentioned fifth part.
- * All the *ṭīkāś*, *vṛttis*, *laghuvṛttis* and *avacūris* on the same work are separately counted. For the

sake of enumeration it is quite right, but the qualitative value is very meager. Thirteen commentaries on Kātantra Vyākaraṇa and twenty-three commentaries on Sārasvata Vyākaraṇa are written. Such works make the list quite sizable but due to repetition and imitation they are devoid of wisdom.

* The Real Contributions to the Lākṣaṇika Literature *

(i) About grammar, we can say that the Skt. grammars of Jainas are mostly commentarial and imitative. The originality of Pāṇinī, Kātyāyana and Patañjali is unbeatable. Prākṛtalakṣaṇa of the Jaina grammarian Caṇḍa is the first Prakrit grammar (2nd, 3rd cen.A.D.) which was followed and enlarged by Vararuci and Hemcandra. Haima-prakṛta-vyākaraṇa is studied by the students of Skt. and Prkt. The secular nature of the Apabhraṁśa *gāthās* is appreciated by Dr. Ghatage. Digambara Jaina sage Akalaṅka wrote grammar of Kannaḍa language in Skt. All the Prkt. grammars are written in Skt. because of the exactness and compactness of Skt. Around the fourth century A.D. Jainas started their writings in Skt. For them Skt. was a pan-Indian language of formal education. They never looked at Skt. as a sacred, pious language or the language of gods-Gīrvāṇavāṇi, because this concept does not suit to their philosophical and mythological framework.

Pārasīkabhāṣānuśāsana is written by Vikramasimha and Phārasī-dhāturūpāvalī was prepared by an anonymous Jaina writer. For details please see p.76 of the above-mentioned book.

(ii) About lexicons, it is observed that Nighaṇṭus and Niruktas are the source of inspirations for the lexical works of Jainas. The first metrical commentaries of Bhadrabāhu on prominent Jaina scriptures are called Niryuktis no doubt after the word 'Nirukta'. The worth-mentioning lexicons are Dhanapāla's Pāiyalacchīnāmamālā and the most celebrated Abhīdhānacintāmaṇināmamālā of Hemacandra. Abhīdhāna^o is the continuation of the famous Amarakośa with its own peculiarities. It contains hybrid Sanskrit words influenced by *deśī* and Apabhraṁśa words.

Deśīnāmamālā is the peak of wisdom and scholarship of Hemacandra. It will not be out of context to salute the wisdom of Pādalipta (1st-3rd cen.A.D.) who had prepared Deśīkośa nearly one thousand years before Hemacandra. Hem^o refers Pādalipta at the very outset of his DENAMā. The romantic poetic narrative of Pādalipta was Taraṅgavatīkathā, the first of its genre in Prakrit. Pādalipta's active participation in 'the making of Gāthāsaptasatī' is noteworthy.

A small manuscript having six folios is available at L.D.Institute, Ahmedabad. It is a small lexical work in Skt. and Persian. It is noted at the end that -

॥ इति श्री जैनधर्मीय श्री सोममन्त्रीश्वरात्मजविरचिता यवनीभाषायां तौरुष्कीनाममाला समाप्ता ॥

In nutshell, the lexical works of Jainas are important especially in the field of Prakrit.

(iii) In the field of Philosophy, except Vedānta, all the other Philosophies were systematized before Vācaka Umāsvatī wrote Tattvārthasūtra around 4th-5th cen.A.D. He was convinced that Jainas could no more ignore the pan-Indian scholarly language viz. Skt. He converted all the important

philosophical data which was available in Prakrit into Skt. aphorisms. Umāsvāti's *dārśanika* genius is unparalleled up till now.

(iv) 'Doctrine of Karman' is common to all Indian systems except Cārvakas. In Jaina philosophy, 'Theory of Karman' is the base, backbone and a strong link between philosophy and practical conduct. Jainas negated creator god and accepted the concept of beginningless and endless universe. As a corollary they methodically developed the Karma-doctrine with minute details and spiritual mysticism. Unlike its Brahmanic and Buddhist counterparts, Jainas' wisdom is seen in developing a full-fledged branch of Karma-literature.

(v) When we consider Dhyāna and Yoga, Jaina writers wrote their treatises on this subject from 5th cen.A.D. up to 14th cen.A.D. Among them, Pūjyapāda, Haribhadra, Śubhacandra and Hemcandra are prominent. The credit goes to Haribhadra to present Jaina thoughts on Yoga in altogether new manner, new classification and the spirit of synthesis with Brahmanic and Buddhist Yoga and Dhyāna. Recently, on the line of Vipāśyanā, some Jaina monks have developed the Jaina method of *sāadhanā* called Prekṣādhyāna.

(vi) The history of the study of Astrology starts from the canonical period in Jaina tradition. Four Ardhamāgadhī texts are important, viz. Sūryaprajñapti, Candraprajñapti, Jyotiṣkaraṇḍaka and Gaṇividya. According to Jaina mythology, Āryabhaṭṭa and Varāhamihira were brothers of the revered Jaina Ācārya Bhadrabāhu. The works of Haribhadra and Ṭhakkura Pheru are noteworthy. When we go through the whole long list of Astrological texts, we find that though some of them are published, still a huge corpus is laying in unedited form. It is very curious that majority of manuscripts are preserved in the collection of L.D.Institute, Ahmedabad. Though fortune-telling was totally negated for monks, still the branch of Astrological studies is really strong in Jaina tradition. It puts light on the academic interest of Jaina monks.

(vii) The same historical facts are true about the science of Nimitta (Prognostics). Ārya Kālaka, Bhadrabāhu and Dharasena possess the epithet 'Nimittavettā'. Jayapāhuḍa, Nimittasāstra, Aṅgavijjā and Riṭṭhasamuccaya are some of the names of published texts on Nimitta. The language of all these can be designated as Ārṣa Prakrit influenced by Śaurasenī. Most of the unpublished manuscripts are preserved in the Paṭana Grathabhāndāra, Gujraṭh.

(viii) In the field of Logic or Nyāya, Buddhists were the first who applied logical methods in debates. Brahmanical texts of Khaṇḍana-maṇḍana style were developed immediately after Buddhists. Jainas' entry in this field is a little later. Sanmati-tarka of Siddhasena is the only work in logic which is written in Prakrit (J.M.). Akalaṅka, Samantabhadra, Pūjyapādā, Haribhadra etc. developed a new method of Syadvāda and Saptabhaṅgī to refute others on the basis of the theory non-absolutism viz.

Anekāntavāda. Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā of Hemcandra, Syadvāda-mañjarī of Malliṣeṇa and Jaina Tarkabhāṣā of Yaśovijaya are the well reputed texts. Tarkabhāṣā is written in Navya-nyāya-style. Jainas' contribution to Indian logic is really praiseworthy.

(ix) It is the fashion of first decade of the third millennium to beat the drums of Jaina Āyurveda, very loudly. When we go through the contents of the Jaina works on Āyurveda, we realize that Caraka, Suśruta and Vāgbhata are still at the top. The Jaina author Ugrāditya (11th-12th cen.) wrote a really remarkable book titled Kalyāṇakāraka, strictly following the Jaina rules about food and medicine. The classification of diseases is new. Rest of the details can be found on p.231-232 of the above-mentioned book on Jaina Lākṣaṇika Sāhitya. One of the old manuscripts of the *āyurvedic* text Jatsundariprayogamālā is preserved in the BORI collection. It is heard that the text is on the way of publication.

Three stages about the use of Āyurveda are seen in Jaina literature. In the canonical period, total negation is found. In the commentarial period it is noted that a monk can use pure and acceptable (*prāsuka* and *eṣaṇīya*) medicine in exceptional situation. The third stage is seen in the books like Kalyāṇakāraka. At this stage Jainas produce books dedicated to this subject. These types of modifications and flexibility really exhibit the wisdom of Jainas through ages.

(x) When we think of ancient Indian mathematics, the works of Āryabhaṭṭa (4th cen.A.D.), Brahmagupta and Bhāskarācārya are the most revered ones. Actually speaking, the Numbers and Measurements of Time and Space play important roles in the canonical descriptions of Jaina Cosmology, doctrine of Karman and the life-spans of living-beings. Interested person may go through the appendices of Tattvārtha edited by Dr. Nathmal Tatia. Gaṇitānuyoga of Jainas includes the treatises describing geography, astronomy and astrology.

In Jaina tradition, independent book of mathematics is not found before Gaṇitasārasaṃgraha of Mahāvīracārya. It is noted down by the concerned scholars that in many respects, this book surpasses Brahmagupta and Bhāskarācārya, still very few people know about it. One scholar named Dr. Shah is busy in writing a book on Jaina Mathematics utilizing the library of BORI. I think L.D.Institute is going to publish it.

Another remarkable work on Maths is Gaṇitasārakaumudi of Ṭhakkura Pheru written in Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit. Pheru, a Śvetāmbara Jaina householder of fourteenth century was a treasurer at the court of Kutubuddin and Allauddin Khilji. He wrote small treatises on various scientific and technical subjects like metallurgy, numismatics, mathematics, gemology, architecture and astrology by using colloquial contemporary terminology. The book is published by Rajasthan Prachyavidya Pratishthan, Jodhpur. The name of the collection is Ratnaparīkṣādi-sapta-grantha-saṃgraha. Ṭhakkura Pheru's position is really really unique in the perspective of Lākṣaṇika literature.

(xi) Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, a proper combination of Politics. Economics and Ethics will remain always at the top in this particular field. Among the later versions of Arthaśārstra, Nītivākyaṃṛta of the

Jaina author Somadevasūri holds higher position, because of its secular attitude and classical Sanskrit style. We cannot forget Yaśastilakacampū of the same author which possesses a rich cultural data.

(xii) While considering the commentarial literature of Jainas, it will not be an exaggeration to say that one-third part of the whole bulk is merely commentarial. One thing is worth mentioning that these authors wrote commentaries on Jaina and non-Jaina works without any sectarian bias. Amitagati's Kāvya prakāśakhaṇḍana, Siddhacandraṇi's solitary commentary on Bānabhaṭṭa's Kādambarī and Cāritravardhana's commentaries on five famous Sanskrit epics - are some of the gems of the secular commentarial literature of Jainas. Namisādhu explains the word 'Sanskrit' and 'Prakrit' in a very naive manner in his commentary on Rudraṭa's Kāvyaśālikā (2.12)

Jainas' expertise in commentarial literature is in itself a subject of a big research project.

C] The Hidden Wisdom In Jaina Scriptures :

It is generally observed that certain Ardhamāgadhī and Śaurasenī texts, the seeds of many empirical sciences are found. Unfortunately the rich contents had not developed into a full-fledged branch of knowledge due to various religious and social reasons. All the post-canonical literature is written by monastic class. The religious history tells that in the course of time Jainism became more and more renunciative and *mokṣa*-centric. The religious conduct and spirituality prevailed over empirical knowledge and wisdom. Here, some of the important points incorporated in the scriptural texts are enumerated which certainly exhibit wisdom.

(i) The credit of ancient Indian atomism goes to the Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kaṇāda. Vārttikakāras and Vyākhyākāras developed the atomic theory very systematically. Some of the oldest Ardhamāgadhī and Śaurasenī canons had put forth some valuable thoughts about *matter* i.e. *pudgala* or *paramāṇu*. In the fifth chapter of Tattvārtha, atomism is summarized and systematized by Umāsvāti in 20 aphorisms. When we compare the Vaiśeṣika and Jaina Paramāṇuvādas, we have to admit that the Jaina thought is more deep, subtle and nearer to modern Physics.

(ii) Same is the case of biological sciences. Non-violence is the essence of Jainism. Ancient Prakrit texts and later Skt. texts of Jainas proclaim that there are innumerable species of living beings in the universe. Classification of living organisms based on (a) liberation, (b) movement, (c) mind, (d) destiny (*gati*), (e) bodily features, (f) sex, (g) place of birth and (h) types of birth is presented in the second chapter of Tattvārtha. If we reconsider the concept in the light of biological sciences, it certainly reveals the wisdom of Jaina Ācāryas. For example, the concept of *sammūrcchana* is comparable to asexual reproduction, grafting and cloning. Genetic properties and the rationale behind it can be searched in the detailed descriptions of Nāmakarman.

(iii) In almost all Jaina texts the sensitivity towards all bio-forms in the universe is enhanced. There is no exaggeration at all if we say that the intrinsic nature of Jainism is pro-environmental. The

Jaina thoughts fully support the preservation, conservation and the well-being of the surrounding world full of bio-forms from epistemological, religious, ethical and spiritual point of view. If we interpret the Jaina principle ‘परस्परोग्रहो जीवानाम्’ in the light of the commentaries on Tattvārtha (5.21) it goes nearer to the Darwinian expressions. Darwin says, “Life-process is a continuous chain of activities which is comprehensive, independent, interrelated, complimentary, reciprocal and collaborative.”

(iv) Anekāntavāda is the ‘Jaina theory of multiple facets of reality and truth.’ It is translated as ‘theory of non-absolutism’ or ‘the theory of relativity’. The theory of relativity was expounded by Albert Einstein. The scholar of Jainism Aidan Rankin has cited one quotation of Einstein in his book titled ‘The Jain Path : Ancient Wisdom for an Age of Anxiety.’ The citation goes likewise : “I do not know if there is rebirth or not. But if it is true, then I would like to be born in India as a Jain.”

DJ Wisdom of Jaina Tradition Through Ages:

In the conclusive part of this paper two more points are worth-mentioning.

(i) Cultural Richness Reflected in the Prakrit Literature :

The whole Prakrit literature written in the ancient and medieval period in general and the narrative literature in particular, we reveal that it provides a rich and variegated data of the contemporary Indian culture. The aspirations of common folk are reflected in the short stories, tales fables, allegories, examples and illustrations. The big narratives like Vasudevahindī, Samarāiccakahā, Kuvalayamālā etc. are really noteworthy. It is helpful for the better understanding of the behavioral patterns of classes and masses. Details are found about festivals and celebrations, fairs and pilgrims, religious and social ceremonies, customs and beliefs as well as rites and rituals. The Orientalists and Indologists have always fathomed the Prakrit literature for understanding the historical, geographical, political, economic and cultural conditions of Indian society.

(ii) Social Wisdom of Jainas in Creating Various Thought-models :

The Jainas possess a distinct religion, a separate Philosophy, a different ethical code, a set of particular beliefs, customs and manners and a vast literature of their own. They form a small minority at present and also in the past. Due to this fact, they have struggled a lot for identity crisis. For keeping the identity in fact, they have developed certain models or behavioral patterns of conflict resolution and peace which are congruent with the philosophical framework provided to them. Application of certain thought-models in one’s daily routine is not an easy task. It requires distinct social awareness and wisdom. Without going into details, here some models are noted down which show the social wisdom of Jainas. The models are likewise :

- (1) The comprehensive model of Anekāntavāda.
- (2) The model of suitable language.
- (3) The model of choosing less harmful.
- (4) The model of peaceful interaction with rulers.

(5) The model of adaption in mythology, art-expressions and social conditions.

For each of these points, 'n' numbers of examples can be given. Interested person may go through my research paper, titled, 'Models of Conflict-resolution and peace in Jainism.'

I conclude this paper with a citation from Ācārāṅga, in which the wisdom par-excellence is manifested.

“All breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away. This is the pure, unchangeable, eternal law which the clever ones who understand the world have proclaimed.” (Ācārāṅga (II) 4.1.1)

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