Kundakunda and Umāsvāti on Anekānta-vāda

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The two revered thinkers Kundakunda and Umāsvāti in Jainism are unique figures in the sense that both have laid the foundation for most of the issues that have emerged gradually in the history of Jaina philosophy. There is no doubt that in several cases the source of their ideas are taken from the canonical literature, e.g., the emphasis on ahimsā and the view of different standpoints from which an object of inquiry may be undertaken. However, it is well-known that Mahāvīra’s philosophical ideas in the canonical literature are scattered all over and one needs to read a vast amount of material to extract the essence of his teaching. Moreover, one needs a fine sieve to filter out the crucially significant philosophical issues from among long and repeated descriptions of rules for ascetics and the Jaina religious code of conduct in general. These two thinkers have done this for us, each in his own way, whilst at the same time indirectly telling us how they understand Mahāvīra’s teaching.

One of the significant differences between the two is that Kundakunda wrote in Prakrit and Umāsvāti in Sanskrit. This is significant for two reasons: on the one hand, Kundakunda has clearly shown how the Prakrit language can also be used for philosophical ideas (and not only for beautiful Prakrit poetry) and Umāsvāti, on the other hand, was the first Jaina thinker to have written a philosophical work in the sûtra style. It is unfortunate that we hardly have any biographical information about these two giants in Jainism and hence we do not know when exactly they lived.

If, however, recent research is correct then Kundakunda lived in the second or third century CE and this would make him the first significant and independent thinker of the post-canonical period whose views are accepted as representing the essence of Jaina thought. Moreover, it is generally believed that he was a

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1 See A.N. Upadhye (1935: 5), who first published his views in 1935. His dating of Kundakunda was, however, not left uncontested, especially by contemporary Śvetāmbara scholars and there ensued a great deal of debate regarding this early date. See Dhaky (1991: 193) where he also suggests that Kundakunda’s date ‘can only be the latter half of the 8th cent. CE.’ See also Johnson (1995: 95): ‘early fifth century or later,’ and its review by Dundas (1997: especially 507 f.).
pioneering Digambara thinker who probably lived in the South, with appreciation for his views also coming from the Śvetāmbaras. It seems certain that he was also known as Padmanandin. A.N. UPADHYE has shown that possibly apart from the name Elācārya, all the other names ascribed to Kundakunda or Padmanandin (Vakragrīva, Gṛhadaripiccha or Mahāmati) go against the tradition of the early epigraphic records. The name Gṛhadaripiccha erroneously used for him since about the fourteenth century has led to confusion because this name is also an alias for Umāsvāti.

Umāsvāti, on the other hand, is said to have lived in the North. His dates vary from the second to the fifth centuries CE with recent preference for the fourth or fifth centuries. Also in his case biographical details are scanty and both the sects of Jainism claim him as one of their own (with the Digambaras also calling him Umāsvāmin), and both regard his work, in traditional Indian manner, as an authority on Jaina thought. His name too is indelible in history of Jaina philosophy, especially for the pioneering work of the now famous Tatvārtha-sūtra (TS). If there is anything anyone knows about Jaina philosophy then it is certainly from this work. The problem concerning the first commentary on TS seems to be irreconcilable, namely whether Umāsvāti wrote an auto-commentary, the Svapajña-bhāṣa, as the Śvetāmbaras say, or whether Pujyapāda’s Sarvārtha-siddhi (“Attainment of the Meaning of Everything”) is the first commentary, as the Digambaras say, written in the fifth or sixth century. In any case both commentaries are available and the comment by Suzzuko Ohira (1982: 42) is relevant here: ‘The prime contribution of the Sarvārtha-siddhi is that it revised and improved the Bhāṣya by way of clearly elucidating its general contents in the current language and concept of the time.’

There are at least three crucial areas in Jaina thought for which a comparison of the views of Kundakunda and Umāsvāti may be fruitfully undertaken: anekānta-vāda, pramāṇa and upāyoga. To this may also be added an observation about the number and exact sequence of the basic Jaina categories (tattva / padārtha). In this paper I am concerned with only the first in which the terms nava and syāt play key roles. In other words what I am attempting here is to collect together the most significant references to nava and/or syāt that can be found in the important works of these two thinkers and to compare the ways in which they use (or do not use) them.

1. Kundakunda on anekānta-vāda

Three works by Kundakunda are especially praised as philosophical masterpieces: Pañcāstikāya-samāya-sāra (PSSā), Pravacana-sāra (PSā), and Samaya-sāra (SSā). These works are all in Prakrit and they contain not only one of the earliest interpretations of syād-vāda but also give one a good impression of how the Prakrit language was used to express philosophical ideas. For his ideas related to anekānta-vāda reference will be made only to Kundakunda’s PSā and PSSā.

In PSā 2.22–23 Kundakunda says:4

davvatātiḥena savavam dāvavam taṁ pājayaṭṭhiḥena puṇo /
navadī ya anānma anānma kākālī tahmayatiśi // 22 //

[dravyārthikena sarvavam dāvavam tat paryārthikena puṇah /
bhavati cāṇyad anayat taṁ-kāle tan-māyatiśi // — p. 144]

‘All substances are non-different from the substantial view-point, but again they are different from the modificational view-point, because of the individual modification pervading it for the time being’ [p. 394].

atthi tti ya ṇatthi ya havadī avattavavam idi puṇo dāvavam /
pajayāna du kena vi taid ubhayam adityham anayam vi // 23 //

[asttī ca nāśī ca bhavatī avattavavam iti punar dāvavam /
paryayena tu kānpi taid ubhayam adityam anyad vi // — p. 146]

‘According to some modification or the other it is stated that a substance exists, does not exist, is indescribable, is both or otherwise’ [p. 394].

The last point is repeated in Kundakunda’s PSSā 14:

siya atthi nātthi uhayam avattavavam puṇo ya tattvadīhavat dāvavam khu satathāhānā́ duṣaṇa-saṃbhavati //14 //

[svād asti nātyi ubhayam avattavavam puṇaḥ ca tattvadīham i

dravavam kuлатu saptapabhāṅgam adāśvaśeṣaṁ saṃbhavati // — p. 9]

‘According as Dravya is viewed from different aspects of reasoning it may be described in the following propositions: 1) Perhaps it is; 2) Perhaps it is not; 3) Perhaps it is both (is and is not); 4) Perhaps it is

2 See UPADHYE (1935: 5) where he draws his conclusions after discussing the various names.
3 I have hinted at this in the conclusion below. A slightly more detailed account, using the same biographical information given above, can be found in SONI (2001).
4 For both texts I am supplying the Prakrit text, with the Sanskrit translation (in brackets) from the commentary by Amṛtacandra (tenth century), with UPADHYE’S English translation.
indefiable; 5) Perhaps it is and is indefinable; and 6) Perhaps it is not and is indefinable; and 7) Perhaps it is and is not and is indefinable’ [p. 9].

Although Kundakunda does not use the word anekānta-vāda, two points are noteworthy here: the word nava is used with reference to an object depending on the standpoint which emphasises it as a substance (dravya) or a mode (parvāya). Secondly, Kundakunda explicitly mentions the sevenfold predication (saptā-bhaṅgi) in PSSā 14, and again in PSSā 72 where it is stated that the soul (jīva) ‘is capable of admitting the sevenfold predication’ (p. 61), namely that the soul is capable of grasping the nature of an object in all its aspects at once. On the basis of what Kundakunda says above, it cannot be decided whether nava or sūtra has priority. Hence, it seems they would have to be taken together, as the one being implicit in the other.

2. Umāsvāti on anekānta-vāda

It is noteworthy that although the word sūtra appears in the canonical literature, and Kundakunda uses it too, it does not feature in the first Sanskrit work presenting Jaina philosophy in the traditional sūtra style, namely, in TS. Commentators to TS regard svād-vāda as being ‘implied’ in TS 5.32 (or 5.31 in the Śvetāmbara version): arpitānarpaṭa-siddheḥ—[The contradictory characteristics are established] from different points of view6 (vide infra, p. 29). In TS 1.33 (or 1.34 in the Śvetāmbara version) Umāsvāti mentions only the standpoints (navas), and they are not statements or assertions that may be made about an object of investigation, each of which is qualified by the word sūtra. They are the standpoints which reflect the common or non-distinguished (naigama), general or collective (saṅgraha), practical (vyavahāra), etc., positions from which an object may be ascertained. The word nava in the canonical literature also refers to two other contexts, with reference to vyavahāra-nava and/or niścaya-nava,7 or to the two standpoints with reference to dravya and paryāya mentioned above. In other words, when dealing with the word nava, one has to distinguish three contexts in which it is used: (1) with reference to dravya and paryāya; (2) with reference to vyavahāra-nava and/or niścaya-nava (the

latter being synonyms of the sūtra or paramārthika-nava); and (3) with reference to nava in the context of naigama, saṅgraha, etc.

In order to better understand the difference between Kundakunda and Umāsvāti on anekānta-vāda we have also to take recourse to the commentaries on TS, because the sūtra alone is too brief for any comparison.

3. Anekānta-vāda in two Commentaries on TS

Pujyapāda, also called Devanandin, is generally believed to have belonged to the fifth or sixth century and to have been a renowned grammarian.8 His philosophically celebrated work is the Sarvārtha-siddhi which is—for the Digambaras—the first commentary on TS. The following are references to the problem under discussion, taken from S.A. Jain’s translation of the work.9 S.A. JAIN (1960: 157–158) translates Pujyapāda’s commentary to TS 5.32(31) arpitānarpaṭa-siddheḥ—[The contradictory characteristics are established] from different points of view’in the following way10:

‘Substances are characterised by an infinite number of attributes [anekāntātmakasya vastunah]. For the sake of use or need, prominence is given to certain characteristics of a substance from one point of view. And prominence is not given to other characteristics, as these are of no use or need at the time. Thus even the existing attributes are not expressed, as these are of secondary importance (anarpita). There is no contradiction in what is established by these two points of view. For instance, there is no contradiction in the same person Devadatta being a father, a son, a nephew and so on. For the points of view are different. From the point of view of his son he is a father, and from the point of view of his father he is a son. Similarly with regard to his

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7 See Bhattacharya (1974).
8 He wrote the Jainendra-vvākarana (JV). On p. 32 Nāthūrāmi Premi comes to the conclusion that ‘Samantabhadra and Devanandi belong to the sixth century and were contemporaries.’
9 For the Sanskrit text see the reference given under SSI. In some cases I am supplying the Sanskrit words in square brackets from the Sanskrit original. All references to Pujyapāda are from S.A. Jain’s translation of TS which he supplies.
10 Here the key word to be noticed is anekānta—it has already been stated that svād-vāda is regarded as being implicit in this sūtra, since Umāsvāti does not mention it anywhere in TS.
The other place where Pūjyapāda has to comment on nāya is at TS 1.33. In the Digambara version this closes the first chapter of TS, whereas it represents TS 1.34 of the Śvetāmbara version, with the difference that the Śvetāmbara version has only the first five nāyas, omitting samabhīrūḍha-nāya and evam-bhūta-nāya. The Śvetāmbara version closes the chapter with sūtra 35, which, for the full understanding of nāyas according to the Śvetāmbaras, has to be read together with 1.34 which merely enumerates the five nāyas.12 In the Digambara version Umāsvāti enumerates the seven nāyas in TS 1.33: naigama, saṅgraha, vyavahāra, tuj-sūtra, śābda, samabhīrūḍha, evam-bhūta, namely, the standpoints which are generally discussed in Jainism.

Referring to TS 1.33, where the seven nāyas are enumerated, Pūjyapāda says, see Jain (1960: 41 f.):

The general and specific definitions (sāmānaya-viśeṣa-laksānam) of these [seven nāyas] must be given. First the general definition. Objects possess many (anekānta) characteristics. Nāya is the device which is capable of determining truly one of the several characteristics of an object (without contradiction) from a particular point of view. It is of two kinds, namely statements which refer to general attributes of a substance and those which refer to the constantly changing conditions or modes of a substance. Dravya means general or common, a general rule or conformity. That which has these for its object is the general standpoint (dravyārthika nāya). Paryāya means particular, an exception or exclusion. That which has these for its object is the standpoint of modifications (paryāyārthika nāya). Their specific definitions are given now. The figurative standpoint (naigama nāya) takes into account the purpose or intention of something which is not accomplished. . . .

The commentary then goes on to explain each of the nāyas, and thereby ends the chapter. From this it seems that Pūjyapāda is the only one who uses the word anekānta with a clear hint of the sense in which the term came to be applied as a synonym for the Jaina approach with its epistemological significance. The word nāya is used both with reference to dravya and paryāya and with reference to the seven beginning with naigama, saṅgraha, etc.

As already stated, the Śvetāmbaras believe that Umāsvāti himself wrote a commentary to his TS and it is now necessary to see what, if any, reference to

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11 This refers to the previous sūtra, TS 1.5: nāma-sthāpanā-dravya-bhāvatas tan-nyāsah—‘These [categories, jīva, etc., given in TS 1.4] are installed (in four ways) by name, representation, substance (potentially) and actual state. Nyāsa is a synonym for nīkṣepa, which is a typical Jaina way of presenting a topic of discussion. Bhāva is a synonym for parvāya which refers to the object as it is at a particular moment, i.e. the mode or modification (parvāya) taken on by a particular substance (dravya).

12 For the different traditions of the types of nāyas see Pt. Sukhlalji (1974: 56).
anjeñānta there is in Umāśvāti’s commentary to the sūtras which Pūjayapāda commented on above.\footnote{I am consulting the following two editions of TS from the same publisher: Sabhaśya-tattvārthāhdigama-sūtram Rāyacandra Jaina Sāstramālā, published in śrīvira-nirvāpa-saṁvat 2432 (CE), and the one published in śrīvira-nirvāpa-saṁvat 2458 (CE 1932).}

TS 5.32 (arpitānarita-siddheḥ) corresponds to TS 5.31 of the Śvetāmbara version, for which SUKHLALI (1974: 211, 212) gives two interpretative translations: ‘Each thing is possessed of a number of properties; for as viewed from the standpoint adopted and as viewed from another standpoint it proves to be something self-contradictory’ and ‘Each thing is liable to be a subject matter of usage in various ways; for usage is accounted for on the basis of arpana and anarpāna—that is, on the basis of a consideration of chief or subordinate status depending on the desire of the speaker concerned.’ The context here is existence (sat) which has already been defined as being characterised by origination, destruction (or disappearance) and permanence (TS 5.30(29): uṣpāda-vyaya-dhṛautva-yuktaṁ sat). In his commentary Umāśvāti begins by saying that there are three kinds of existence, namely, as characterised in the sūtra, all of which are eternal in so far as they occur continually. Each of these may be established through arpitita or anarpita, which he equates with the practical (vyavahārika) and the non-practical (avyavahārika). The commentary continues with an explanation of what existence means on the basis of this classification, in which he mentions, for example, dravyāstika, utpānnaśtika and paryāvāstika, viz. existence as a substance, as origination (i.e. as a particular object), and as a modification. Although Umāśvāti neither uses the word nava nor anjeñānta here, it is clear that the idea is intended, namely, that the nature of an object or existence as such can be ascertained depending on the standpoint from which one approaches the subject, i.e. on the basis of what is given a primary or secondary significance.

Umāśvāti’s commentary on TS 1.6 is relatively short, in which pramāṇa is said to be of two kinds, indirect (parokṣa) and direct (pratyakṣa) and that the navas (seven for the Digambaras and five for the Śvetāmbaras), such as naigama, etc., will be discussed later, i.e. in TS 1.33 (34 in the Śvetāmbara version, see above).\footnote{It is interesting to note that Pūjayapāda says the following about pramāṇa at TS 1.6 (tr. JAIN 1960: 10): ‘Pramāṇa is of two kinds, namely for oneself (svārtha) and for others (parārtha). All kinds of knowledge except scriptural constitute pramāṇa for oneself. But scriptural knowledge is of two kinds, namely for oneself and for others.’ Moreover, Umāśvāti does not mention dravvārthika-nava and paryāvrthika-nava, as Pūjayapāda does.}

The significant difference between these two thinkers lies in detail: (1) Kundakunda explicitly uses the word svāt in the context of the five statements given in PSā 2.23 and seven in PSSā 14 above (p. 27 ff.) that can be made about an entity, and Umāśvāti on the other hand, does not use the word svāt; (2) the word nava is used in different contexts by them: Kundakunda uses nay in reference only to dravya and paryāya in the stanzas considered above (and these are also used by Pūjayapāda in his Sarvārtha-siddhi on TS 1.6), whereas Umāśvāti uses it in the context of the well-known navas (naigama, etc., either 7 or 5). In the context of pramāṇa in TS 1.6 there is no reference to dravya nor paryāya in Umāśvāti’s commentary, although it is found in Pūjayapāda’s Sarvārtha-siddhi.

As for the word anjeñānta itself, in the sense in which it can be associated with the theory of manifoldness unique to the Jaina’s, it seems that Pūjayapāda was the first person to explicitly use it. By the eighth century, however, the theory was undoubtedly already established in this sense, as is evident in Akalanka’s works.

In conclusion it is noteworthy to mention one more point of difference between Kundakunda and Umāśvāti, not directly related to anjeñānta-āvāda, but significant because it concerns the enumeration of the basic categories in Jainism: in his PSSā 108 (and SSā 1.13) Kundakunda explicitly mentions punya and pāpa as the third and fourth padartha (jīvājīva-punya-pāpa-samvarā-nirjarā-bandhamokṣaḥ). Umāśvāti enumerates not only seven of these, omitting punya and pāpa, but the sequence is slightly different in TS 1.4 (jīvājīvāsraṇa-bandha-samvarā-nirjarā-mokṣāḥ): in the TS bandha is number four (after āsraṇa) and in PSSā 108 it is number eight (before the last, mokṣa). Here Umāśvāti’s enumeration seems more logical if one takes into account the role of karman as soon as jīva becomes associated with ājīva. The association is responsible for an inflow of matter which then binds the soul (the karman can be stopped and gradually completely obliterated). On the other hand, without explicitly mentioning punya and pāpa in the sūtra itself Umāśvāti leaves little room for the ethical role of these categories in the

\footnote{See footnote 3 above.}
context of the ascetic discipline. Perhaps Umāsvāti does not mention karman explicitly in the sūtra, because it may be regarded as being implicit in āsraya. But then these would be implicit also in Kundakunda’s gāthā, who also does not mention karman explicitly, but instead puṇya and pāpa. Furthermore, Kundakunda mentions bandha and mokṣa together at the end, one after the other in that sequence, perhaps in order to highlight the soul’s liberation from the bondage of karman, i.e. to emphasise that without bandha there cannot be mokṣa.

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