

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 *sūtra* 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.¹ Moreover, it is generally believed that he was a

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, Gṛdhrapiccha or Mahāmāti) go against the tradition of the early epigraphic records.² The name Gṛdhrapiccha 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 *Tattvārtha-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 *Svopajña-bhāṣā*, as the Śvetāmbaras say, or whether Pūjyapāda'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 Suzuko 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 *upayoga*. To this may also be added an observation about the number and exact sequence of the basic Jaina categories (*tattva* / *padārtha*).³ In this paper I am concerned with only the first in which the terms *naya* and *syāt* play key roles. In other words what I am attempting here is to collect together the most significant references to *naya* 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.

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).

1. Kundakunda on *anekānta-vāda*

Three works by Kundakunda are especially praised as philosophical masterpieces: *Pañcāstikāya-samaya-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

*davvaṭṭhiṇa savvaṃ davvaṃ taṃ pajjayatṭhiṇa puṇo /
havadi ya aṇṇaṃ aṇaṇṇaṃ takkāle tammayattādo* // 22 //

[*dravyārthikena sarvaṃ dravyaṃ tat paryāyārthikena punaḥ /
bhavati cānyad anyat tat-kāle tan-mayavāt* // — 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 havadi avattavvaṃ idi puṇo davvaṃ /
pajjāyeṇa du keṇa vi tad ubhayam ādiṭṭham aṇṇaṃ vā* // 23 //

[*astīti ca nāstīti ca bhavaty avaktavyaṃ iti punar dravyaṃ /
paryāyeṇa tu kenāpi tad ubhayam ādiṣṭam anyad vā* // — 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 ṇatthi uhayam avattavvaṃ puṇo ya tattidayam /
davvaṃ khu sattabhaṃgam ādesa-vaseṇa sambhavadi* // 14 //

[*syād asti nāsty ubhayam avaktavyaṃ punaś ca tat-tritayaṃ /
dravyaṃ khalu sapta-bhaṅgam ādeśavaśeṇa sambhavati* // — 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

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.

indefinable; 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 *naya* 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-bhaṅgī*) 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 *naya* or *syāt* 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 *syāt* 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 *syād-vāda* as being 'implied'⁵ in TS 5.32 (or 5.31 in the Śvetāmbara version): *arpitānarpita-siddheḥ*—'[The contradictory characteristics are established] from different points of view'⁶ (*vide infra*, p. 29). In TS 1.33 (or 1.34 in the Śvetāmbara version) Umāsvāti mentions only the standpoints (*nyayas*), and they are not statements or assertions that may be made about an object of investigation, each of which is qualified by the word *syāt*. 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 *naya* in the canonical literature also refers to two other contexts, with reference to *vyavahāra-naya* and/or *niścaya-naya*,⁷ or to the two standpoints with reference to *dravya* and *parvāya* mentioned above. In other words, when dealing with the word *naya*, one has to distinguish three contexts in which it is used: (1) with reference to *dravya* and *parvāya*; (2) with reference to *vyavahāra-naya* and/or *niścaya-naya* (the

⁵ A.N. UPADHYE (1935: 83).

⁶ TATIA's (1994: 136) translation: 'The ungrasped [unnoticed] aspect of an object is attended by the grasped [noticed] one.'

⁷ See BHATT (1974).

latter being synonyms of the *suddha* or *paramārthika-naya*); and (3) with reference to *naya* 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

Pūjyapāda, 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 Pūjyapāda's commentary to TS 5.32(31) *arpitānarpita-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

⁸ He wrote the *Jainendra-vyākaraṇa* (JV). On p. 32 Nāthūrāmji Premī 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 Pūjyapāda 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 *syād-vāda* is regarded as being implicit in this *sūtra*, since Umāsvāti does not mention it anywhere in TS.

other designations. In the same manner, substance is permanent from the point of view of general properties. From the point of its specific modes it is not permanent. Hence there is no contradiction. These two, the general and the particular, somehow, are different as well as identical [*kathamcid bhedābhedaḥ*]. Thus these form the cause of worldly intercourse...

Although Pūjyapāda uses the word *anekānta* here in the commentary, the sevenfold statements with the word *syāt* are not given as we find them in Kundakunda. Even though it is important that the word is explicitly used, it is puzzling that he does not make any reference to the use of *syāt*. Pūjyapāda belongs to the Digambara tradition and certainly lived after Kundakunda whom all Digambaras revere profoundly. If indeed this *sūtra* of TS really 'implies' *syād-vāda*, one would have expected Pūjyapāda to have clinched the opportunity to mention the *sapta-bhaṅgī*, easily taking it over from Kundakunda (as he does so in the case of *dravyārthika-naya* and *pariyāyārthika-naya*, see n. 11).

With regard to the word *naya*, Pūjyapāda explains it in his commentary on TS in two places (TS 1.6 and in TS 1.33/34). TS 1.6 (p. 9) says: *pramāṇa-nayair adhigamaḥ*—'Knowledge [of the seven categories] is attained by means of *pramāṇa* and *naya*.' A part of his commentary to this *sūtra* reads in the translation of S.A. JAIN (1960: 10):

'...it has been said that "*pramāṇa* is a comprehensive view, whereas *naya* is a partial view." *Naya* is of two kinds, *dravyārthika* and *pariyāyārthika*. The former refers to the general attributes of a substance, and the latter to the constantly changing conditions or modes of a substance. *Bhāva nikṣepa* must be ascertained by the standpoint of modes, and the other three by the standpoint of substance.¹¹ For the latter refers to general characteristics. That which has the substance as its object is the standpoint of substance. That which has the mode as its object is the standpoint of modes. Both the substance and the mode are ascertained by *pramāṇa* (comprehensive knowledge).'

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

The other place where Pūjyapāda has to comment on *naya* 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 *nayas*, omitting *samabhirūḍha-naya* and *evam-bhūta-naya*. The Śvetāmbara version closes the chapter with *sūtra* 35, which, for the full understanding of *nayas* according to the Śvetāmbaras, has to be read together with 1.34 which merely enumerates the five *nayas*.¹² In the Digambara version Umāsvāti enumerates the seven *nayas* in TS 1.33: *naigama, saṅgraha, vyavahāra, rju-sūtra, śabda, samabhirūḍha, evam-bhūta*, namely, the standpoints which are generally discussed in Jainism.

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

'The general and specific definitions (*sāmānya-viśeṣa-lakṣaṇam*) of these [seven *nayas*] must be given. First the general definition. Objects possess many (*anekānta*) characteristics. *Naya* 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 naya*). *Pariyāya* means particular, an exception or exclusion. That which has these for its object is the standpoint of modifications (*pariyāyārthika naya*).

Their specific definitions are given now. The figurative standpoint (*naigama naya*) takes into account the purpose or intention of something which is not accomplished. ...'

The commentary then goes on to explain each of the *nayas*, 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 *naya* is used both with reference to *dravya* and *pariyāya* 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

¹² For the different traditions of the types of *nayas* see Pt. SUKHLALJI (1974: 56).

anekānta there is in Umāsvāti's commentary to the *sūtras* which Pūjyapāda commented on above.¹³

TS 5.32 (*arpitānarpita-siddheḥ*) corresponds to TS 5.31 of the Śvetāmbara version, for which SUKHLALJI (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 *arpaṇā* and *anarpaṇā*—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): *utpāda-vyaya-dhrauva-yuktaṁ sat*). In his commentary Umāsvāti 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 *arpita* 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*, *utpannāstika* and *pariyāstika*, viz. existence as a substance, as origination (i.e. as a particular object), and as a modification. Although Umāsvāti neither uses the word *naya* nor *anekānta* 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.

Umāsvāti'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 *ṇayas* (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).¹⁴ There is

¹³ I am consulting the following two editions of TS from the same publisher: *Sabhāṣya-tattvārthadhigama-sūtram* Rāyacandra Jaina Śāstramālā, published in śrīvīra-nirvāṇa-saṁvat 2432 (CE), and the one published in śrīvīra-nirvāṇa-saṁvat 2458 (CE 1932).

¹⁴ It is interesting to note that Pūjyapāda 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, Umāsvāti does not mention *dravyārthika-naya* and *pariyārthika-naya*, as Pūjyapāda does.

nothing else significant for the context under discussion here. In Umāsvāti's commentary to the *sūtra* mentioned above the word *anekānta* does not appear, although it seems easy to read this into it. Hence, although neither Kundakunda nor Umāsvāti uses the word *anekānta* explicitly, it is evident that the theory is implicit in their ideas.

4. Differences between Kundakunda and Umāsvāti

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

As for the word *anekānta* itself, in the sense in which it can be associated with the theory of manifoldness unique to the Jainas, it seems that Pūjyapāda 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 Akalaṅka's works.

In conclusion it is noteworthy to mention one more point of difference between Kundakunda and Umāsvāti, not directly related to *anekānta-vāda*, but significant because it concerns the enumeration of the basic categories in Jainism:¹⁵ in his PSSā 108 (and SSā 1.13) Kundakunda explicitly mentions *puṇya* and *pāpa* as the third and fourth *padārthas* (*jivājīva-puṇya-pāpāsrava-saṁvara-nirjarā-bandha-mokṣāḥ*). Umāsvāti enumerates not only seven of these, omitting *puṇya* and *pāpa*, but the sequence is slightly different in TS 1.4 (*jivājīvasrava-bandha-saṁvara-nirjarā-mokṣāḥ*): in the TS *bandha* is number four (after *āsrava*) and in PSSā 108 it is number eight (before the last, *mokṣa*). Here Umāsvāti's enumeration seems more logical if one takes into account the role of *karman* as soon as *jīva* becomes associated with *ajīva*. 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 *puṇya* and *pāpa* in the *sūtra* itself Umāsvāti leaves little room for the ethical role of these categories in the

¹⁵ 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 *āsrava*. 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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