MONKS, MONARCHS AND MATERIALISTS

Review:


The work by Willem B. Bollée presents a critical edition and richly annotated English translation (pp. 15–221) of ‘The Story of Paesi’ (Pkt.: Paesi-kahānayañi, Skt.: Pradeśi-kathānaka), which forms the kernel of the Jaina canonical book of ‘King’s questions’ (Pkt.: Rāyapaseñiya, Skt.: Rājapraṣṇī?, RP), §§ 667[47]–817[84]). A version of an ancient philosophical dialogue between a materialist governor and a philosophically inclined monk is here preserved in the Ardha-māgadhī Prakrit. The edition is supplemented with a ‘Glossary of selected words’ (223–305), ‘Index rerum’ (pp. 307–316), list of quotations (p. 317); an ‘Appendix’ contains a relevant extract of Haribhadra’s Samarāiceca-kahā 164, 18 ff.

The title of the second supplementary book of the Jaina Canon (Pkt.: uvaṅga, Skt.: upāṅga), from which the philosophical dialogue stems, is in itself problematic and has several variants (Pkt.: Rāyapaseñiya / Rārayapasenañāyani / Rāyapaseñātiya / Rāyappaseñātiya / Rāyappaseñājī / Rāyapaseñjī / Rāyapaseñī; sanskritised: Rājapraṣṇī / Rājapraṣī / Rājapraṣīya-sūtra). Accordingly, the understanding of the title meaning can vary, e.g. Rāyapaseñājī (derived from the causative form) would mean: ‘what has been prompted by king’s question’ (i.e. ‘Replies to royal questions’), or Rāyapaseñājī—‘the contents of the king’s questions’. One of the sanskritisations, Rājapraṣṇī, would imply: ‘A book of king’s questions’ (from rājapraṣānāh). It has been suggested by Leumann (1883: 2), Leumann (1885: 536) and Bollée (p. 9) that the title may reflect the king Paesi’s name: the early Pkt. title may thus have been Rāyapaseñiya (Skt.: Rājapraṣṇīya), transformed into Rāyapaseñiya in later Prakrit; thus, the title was subsequently contaminated under the influence of the popular Buddhist Pāli legend of the king Pasenadi (Pkt.: Pasenai, Skt.: Prasenajit), whose vassal was Pāyāsi (vide infra). However, it seems that that 2pasēniya of the title may
be directly related to Pkt.: pasīna < Skt.: praśna (similar to the Mīlinda-paraśa), a hint to which is found in RP § 719: no atthāṁ heūṁ pasīnāṁ kāraṇāṁ vāgaranāṁ pucchaṁ.

The whole book of RP bears its title after the central dialogue contained in its two chapters, known as Paesi-kahāṇayāṁ. The Solar Deity Sūriyābha (Skt.: Sūryābha) pays homage to Mahāvīra and, along with his retinue, stages a dance performance. Subsequently, Mahāvīra replies to a number of questions asked by his close disciple Goyama (Skt.: Gautama), who wishes to know who Sūriyābha was in his previous birth. We learn that he was a wicked materialist acting against the moral law (Pkt.: ahammia / adhammiya, s. adharmika), called Paesi / Paesi, which is sanskritised in commentaries as Pradeśīn. In the sequel, we also learn of governor Paesi’s encounter with a prince-monk Kesī / Kesī (Skt.: Keśī), a follower of Passa / Pāsa (Skt.: Pāśva), the 23rd tīrthāṅkāra.

Kesi is apparently of aristocratic birth, as well; this is suggested by his appellation kumāra-samāne: ‘prince-ascetic’; an alternative understanding ‘young ascetic’ or ‘a monk initiated in his childhood’ seems less plausible in view of the fact that he address rāja Paesi by his name (see RP 737 ff.) and treats him as equal by birth (cf. BOLLÉE, p. 45–46). Further, his noble birth is indicated in the text (RP 686: jāisampanne kula-sampanne). He is the same monk that features in a conversation with Mahāvīra’s disciple Goyama in Uttar 23 (that Goyama can hardly be the same person as Goyama of RP who asks Mahāvīra about Kesī’s previous births). All the most important features also match: he is known as Pāśva’s follower (Uttar 23.1), is surrounded by numerous disciples, is called ‘prince-ascetic’ (23.2: kesī kumāra-samāne) and is, as it is emphasised, possessed of two kinds of supernatural knowledge: testimonial cognition and clairvoyance (Uttar 23.3: ohi-nāṇa-sue = RP 746).

As if incidentally, or rather: entangled in the course of events by virtue of his charioteer Citta, Paesi – while strolling in a park – comes across a Jaina monk, who gives a sermon to his followers. The governor, whose Weltanschauung is laconically described by the Jainas as ‘the doctrine [maintaining that] the soul is the same as the body’ (taj-jīva-tac-charīra-vāda), questions the monk’s claim that the soul exists and that there is life after death. In a animated dispute, he attempts to demonstrate that neither empirical observation nor conducted experiments allow to acquiesce to the Jaina teaching that ‘the soul is not the same as the body, that it is not the case that the soul is the same as the body’ (RP 748–750: anno jīvo annam sarīraṁ;
no: taṁ jīvo taṁ sarīraṁ). His ascetic interlocutor endeavours to establish the Jaina thesis with counter-comparisons, applying the reasoning per analogiam and pointing to contrary tests, whereas Paesi gives account of a number of drastic experiments he has carried out himself in the search of the soul in the material body.

A turning point in the discussion when Paesi finally gives in is not a solid piece of evidence, a rational device or logical argumentation on the part of the Jaina monk, but rather his psychological stratagem: Kesi rebukes Paesi for his inappropriate behaviour towards (viz. the criticism against) such a respected monk as Kesi is (this is not even the censure of Paesi's experiments that involved torture and murder); Paesi's main vice is that not only does he not yield, having been insulted by the monk as 'more brainless than a thickhead' (RP 765: mūḍhatarāṁ … tucchatarāo), but he is audacious enough to continue to disagree. In response, reprimanded by the monk, plagued with remorses and eventually convinced of his own error, Paesi renounces his materialistic convictions, adopts the Jaina faith and becomes a lay follower. Kesi gains victory in the debate not through his rigid logic and well-founded argument, but by virtue of verbal aggression and by taking recourse to social etiquette which he claims Paesi has apparently abused by not accepting the teaching of a learned monk: in his view, a criticism directed against a spiritual guide must necessarily be symptomatic of haughtiness, moral frailty and contempt for the whole monastic order. The implication is that the line of reasoning and evidence presented by a morally inferior disputant such as Paesi cannot be by definition correct (we find a interesting parallel in the encounter, as described in mediaeval prabandhas, between the erudite Siddhasena Divākara and the old Jaina monk Vṛddhavādin, who appeals to commonplace thinking and likewise bases his final argument on moral-religious principles in order to defeat Siddhasena; cf. Granoff (1989–1990)).

The Jaina dialogue offers a parallel, albeit not too close, to a less consistent and shorter conversation between the Buddhist monk Kassapa (Skt.: Kaśyapa), designated kumāra (which might similarly suggest his princely birth) and the local administrator Pāyāsi, as recorded in the Dīgha-nikāya 23, 319.12 ff. and known as the Pāyāsi-sutta. A brief comparison of these two accounts is offered by Bollée (p. 2 ff.), following Leumann (1885: 469 ff.). To a certain degree both versions contain the same elements and line of argumentation. The similarity is, however, largely structural and does not pertain to the linguistic or terminological layers, which is the reason
to maintain that the Jainas did not borrow the story from the Buddhists or vice versa. Thus, both versions probably go back to some common source, the core of which might perhaps date to, or even predate, missionary activities of Mahāvīra and the historical beginnings Buddhism in the fifth century BCE, viz. the times of the formation period of both religions.

In the Buddhist version, maintaining that 'there is no hereafter, there is no being born spontaneously (viz. no divinite being and no inhabitant of hell), neither good nor bad deeds have any consequence' (iti pi n' atthi para-loko, n' atthi sattā opapātikā, n' atthi sukaṭa-dukkatānaṁ kammānaṁ phalaṁ vipako ti), Pāyāsi provokes monk Kassapa to engage in a longer dispute, in the course of which the monk attempts to refute the materialist thesis by citing a number of contrary evidence; clearly, his main point differs from that of Paesi (vide supra). Pāyāsi’s thesis echoes verbatim that of Ajita Kesakambala (Skt.: Ajita Keśakambalin) known from (Sūmaṇṇa-phala-sutta 23 (Dīgha-nikāya 2.23: n' atthi sukaṭa-dukkatānaṁ kammānaṁ phalaṁ vipako, ... n' atthiparo loko, ... n' atthi sattā opapātikā).

We have no information as regards the historical authenticity and identity of Paesi, occurring in the Jaina legend. Due to dearth of any counter-argument, it is hard to either reject or fully accept his historicity. He may have been a district governor or a local administrator around the times of Mahāvīra. Occasionally, and the first to suggest it was WEBER (1883–85: 382 ff.), he has been identified with Pasenadi (Skt.: Prasenajit), the ruler of Kosala, or with Pasenadi’s vassal Pāyāsi, mentioned in the Pāli Canon. The suggestion does not seem implausible, however solid grounds for its acceptance are still missing.

BOLLEÉ (e.g. p. 8, 22) expresses his doubt whether indeed Pkt. ‘Paesi’ and the name of his Pāli counterpart ‘Pāyāsi’ have genuine Skt. equivalents, being probably desī words. Indeed, it may be extremely difficult to find a common etymological denominator for both Paesi and Pāyāsi, despite apparent similarity. Whereas a genuine Sanskrit equivalent for ‘Pāyāsi’ seems unlikely, I see no real reason to reject the sanskritised version ‘Pradeśin’. What might perhaps be problematic can be its accurate original meaning. Following the interpretation of Malayagiri-sūri’s RPṬ 115b.5, TRIPATHI (1936: 56) and BOLLEÉ (p. 22) render it as ‘king of a province’, ‘ruler’ and ‘prince’ respectively, which would make perfect sense provided we took pradeśa to mean ‘province’ or ‘district’ of a kingdom.
However, still another (perhaps even more plausible) interpretation of ‘Paesi’ might be to relate it to the verb paesei (= pradeśayati), meaning either ‘to point out, indicate, make known’ or ‘to urge, incite’, as attested e.g. in OBh 64 (paesesuṇ, see Vol. 2, p. 89: ...gomuttaiva-daddāhaitsu bhunje ahavā paesesuṇ), and also paesaya (= pradeśakā). Thus ‘Paesi’ could mean either (1) ‘inciter’, i.e. someone who provokes a discussion or urges the monk Kesi to engage in a dispute, or (2) ‘fault-finder’, viz. ‘some who indicates’ inconsistencies in the Jaina doctrine that ‘the soul is not the same as the body’ (anno jīvo annam sārīrani). That meaning would be in keeping with the immediate setting and circumstances of the dialogue. However, there is an interesting hint found in the Artha-śāstra, where pradeśā belongs to the technical terminology of king’s statecraft and politics in the meaning: ‘news received from informants as the indication of some event’, viz. ‘collected information’, ‘gathered evidence’, ‘intelligence’, as in the examples: ‘In conformity with this indication (with this intelligence collected from his informants), the king should inform the customs inspector about the size of the caravan in order to display his own infinite knowledge’ (AŚ 2.21.28: tena pradeśena rājā śulkađhyakṣasya sārtha-pramāṇam upa-dīset sarvajñātava-khyāpāpanārthanam) and ‘In conformity with this indication (having this intelligence collected from his informants), the king should appeal to the citizens and country people’ (AŚ 5.2.33: etena pradeśena rājā paurajāna-padān bhikṣeta). All these semantic shades would imply: ‘the one who points out’ in the sense of ‘someone who makes use of background information (intelligence)’ or of ‘someone who has the collected evidence at his disposal’. In any case it does appear that ‘Paesi’ was not the original proper name of the local governor, and it was coined as an epithet, whereas his real historical name remains obscure.

Further (p. 8), BOLLÉE suggests that both Paesi and Pāyāsi might perhaps have had a common historical source in Occidental world: ‘The experimental search for the soul seems to be expected rather from a Greek than from an Indian. Could, therefore, a foreign name be hidden behind deśī words Paesi and Pāyāsi of whom a common etymology seems difficult?’ It seems that the ground for this supposition is the conviction that the Indian mind was more prone to the observation of the world than to carrying experiments. Indeed, the accounts of experiments in India are relatively rare but not absolutely uncommon, as is confirmed by early accounts of experiments e.g. with salt, described in BĀU 2.4.12 and ChU 6.13.1–3 (cf. also H.W. BODEWITZ (1991/92)). Another noteworthy example is found in
ChU 6.12.1–2, which describes the process of cutting a banyan fruit into pieces in the search for the soul: upon finding only the seeds inside, these are cut up into bits, which are further cut into smaller pieces, with no soul to be seen. This Upaniṣadic experiment is very similar to the one described in RP 764(71), with the only difference that in RP it is a thief, instead of a banyan fruit, that is subjected to the cruel experiment. The obvious background for such a search (both meticulous and atrocious) for the soul in RP are numerous passages found in the early Upaniṣads, such as: ‘this soul that is deep in my heart’ (ChU 3.14.2: ēṣa ma ātmāntar-hṛdaye), or ‘The soul, smaller than the smallest thing, greater than greatest thing, is hidden in the heart of a living being’ (ŚvU 3.20: anor antyan mahato maññan ātmā guhāyāṁ nihito ‘syā jantoḥ), or presented in the famous discussion between Vidagdha Śākalya and Yājñavalkya in BĀU 3.9.1–26. In view of such a strong background belief that the soul is located somewhere deep in the heart of a living being, an obvious response of an adharmika materialist would be to carry out the search for the soul exactly in the manner presented ChU 6.12.1–2 or in RP 764(71), and one does not have to assume any non-Indian (especially Greek) origin for this legend.

The dialogue between Paesi and Kesi in the extant form is also one of the oldest accounts of the materialist doctrine, once fairly widespread in India. Although it is a valuable source that offers an insight into the ancient Indian materialist philosophy, one should bear in mind that it presents the doctrine in a distorted fashion, from the viewpoint of its staunch opponents.

The dialogue is not without a literary value in its own right, distinguished by a fairly coherent rhetorical structure and a good dramatic composition, terminating in a climactic finale slightly more demanding than a Holly-Bollywood happy end (RP 778[79]–796[81]): having lost interest in mundane pleasures and having embarked on the pious path, Paesi is offered poisoned food by his wife Śūryakantā (Skt.: Śūryakantā) alias Dhārini, who feels abandoned and neglected, and seizes the opportunity to grasp power.

Despite its importance for the study of early Indian materialism, the dialogue between Paesi and Kesi remains unknown to the authors and editors of the important monograph on Indian materialism: Cārvāka/Lokāyata. An Anthology of Source Materials and Some Recent Studies (ed. Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Delhi 1990), although they do include a translation of the Buddhist version of the dialogue: Pāyāsi-suttanta.
It is actually disregarded by most historians of Indian philosophy to date.

In addition, ‘The Story of Paesi’ is of much interest to a Jaina specialist, inasmuch as it contains an account of the ‘the moral teaching of the fourfold restrain’ (Pkt.: cāujjāma-dhamma; Skt.: cāturyāma-dharma; Pāli: cātu-yāma-samvara), the gist of Pārśvanātha’s ancient doctrine.

Furthermore, the abundance of detail of everyday life and customs, the description of birth rites, customary rituals as well as the classification of skills and arts, characterisation of social strata etc. make the Paesi-kahāṇayāni an important source of information for the sociologist of ancient India.

Since no satisfactory dictionary of Prakrits exists and the Ardha-māgadhī vocabulary has not been properly catalogued so far, BOLLÉE’s principle – as it is the case with his other publications – to add a lexicographic index with Sanskrit equivalents and to supplement the translation with ample philological explanations and references to Jaina Prakrit works as well as Buddhist and Brahmanic sources proves very useful also here.

BOLLÉE proposes a new etymology of Pāsa / Passa and suggests ‘(U)pāśva(sena)’ (pp. 273, 275), which is – in his opinion – ‘wrongly sanskritized as Pārśva’ (p. 273). The support and indication of such a derivation (p. 273) would be the name of Pārśvanātha’s father: Aśvasena / Assasena, as it is mentioned in some biographical accounts of his life (e.g. in the Kalpa-sūtra). Despite the initial attractiveness of BOLLÉE’s suggestion, it is difficult to account for the loss of the initial U- in *Upāśvasena (the name is not attested in textual sources), as well as to explain why -sena would altogether have disappeared in *‘Pāśva’, although it was preserved in ‘Aśvasena’. Furthermore, Pāsa’s biographical accounts in which the names of his parents (Assasena and Pkt. Vāmā / Skt. Vārmā, or Varmilā) occur – and are said to belong to the Iksvāku dynasty, as did most other tīrthaṁkāras – are in themselves dubious. We cannot even be sure of these names, insofar as another strand of tradition preserved in the Mahā-purāṇa (MP) indicates different names: here Pārśva’s parents are called Viśvasena and Brāhmī (which is just descriptive term, not a proper name). The life of Pāsa always follows a certain standardised and highly artificial pattern, which is basically the same for 22 tīrthaṁkāras (the exceptions being Rājāsabha and Mahāvīra). Thus, the names Assasena and Vāmā appear to be as imaginary as are the names of other 21 tīrthaṁkāras’ parents.
Assasena is nowhere found in historical or legendary accounts as the ruler of Vāraṇāsī where Pāsa is said to have been born, nor is his wife. Incidentally, Assasena’s name does occur in the Ādi-parvan of the Mahā-bhārata as the name of... a serpent companion of the Nāga king Takṣaka. Since the historicity of Assasena is highly debatable, the suggested name of *Upāśvasena, which was to be associated with his father’s name, also turns out to be questionable.

On the other hand, the traditional sanskritisation of passa < pārśva, even though it might seem semantically slightly awkward, is well attested both in Prakrit (cf. Pischel (1981: §§ 87, 315)) and Pāli sources, esp. in the sense of ‘side’ / ‘mountain slope’, related to Vedic pārśu ‘rib’. What was the actual meaning of ‘Pāsa’ (Pārśva) and how it was given to the 23rd tirthaṅkāra is a different matter. There is no doubt that the legends that relate the name Pārśva to a black snake which his mother saw at her side at night are secondary and should be classified as ad hoc justifications that are supposed to explain the link between Pārśva and the folk cult of snakes and the Nāgas with which Pārśva seems to have been associated from a very early date, and the symbol of which was his serpent protector Dharaṇendra. The places Pārśva is said to have visited in his ascetic itinerary are mostly related to the north-eastern part of India (east Bihar and west Bengal), viz. the territories where the Manasā serpent cult was (and is still) thriving. This may suggest some local, and perhaps non-Āryan tradition with which Pārśva was ethnically associated and in which initially his cult developed.

Perhaps it was for this reason and because of Āśvasena’s relation with the Nāgas, as indicated in the Ādi-parvan, that the name ‘Āśvasena’ was secondarily selected as the one of Pārśva’s father.

Perhaps Pārśva was initially related to pārśuḥ, not in the sense of ‘rib’ or ‘curved knife, sickle’ (e.g. RV 1.105.8, 10.33.2; cf. Mayrhofer (1953–1980: 2. vol., p. 229)), but rather in the sense of ‘Pārśuḥ’ as associated with some tribal/ethnic group? We come across occasional mention of such a group in Vedic passages (RV 10.86.23, AV 20.126.23), which refer to ‘a human woman called Parsu who simultaneously gave birth to twenty sons’ (pārśur ha nāma mānavi sākāṁ sasūva vinśatim); her unusual fertility and human character is juxtaposed here with divine character of Indra’s wife Indrāṇī, and may be an echo of some ethnic non-Āryan group. Another such tribal unit of warriors called ‘Pārśavā’ was known to Pāṇini who likewise derived their name from parśu (Pāṇi 5.3.117); these ‘people of Parśu’ were so called probably less because of their
mythic ancestor Paršu, but rather because of curved knives or sabres they may have used as warriors (occasional identification of this group with Persians lacks solid basis). We have no evidence that would help us establish the link between the tīrthāmkāra Pāsa with these particular tribal 'peoples of Paršu', however, it is not impossible that originally the 23rd tīrthāmkāra was a member of a similar tribal unit of north-eastern India that its name derived either from (1) some mythical forefather Pārśuḥ or from (2) a mountainous locality where this group lived, especially in view of a particular meaning of pārśva / passa: 'side, hill slope' (cf. Turner (1966): '8118 pārśva Pa. passa- "side, mountainslope")'.

The Prakrit text of 'The Story of Paesi' is based on the comparison of seven editions. One of the editions (RP₁) which were not used by Bollée contains some additional minor variæ lectiones.

Although the English translation is very faithful and the interpretation of dubious passages is well-grounded, there are still some improvements to be made. Below I give a handful of such minor suggestions (underlined are phrases in doubt) by way of example:

(1) § 754: the expression avauḍa-bandhana-baddham Bollée sanskritises as apāvrta[kα]-bandhana-baddham and renders: ['my city guards brought me a thief, (his hands) tied behind his neck'. Suggested: apakṛta-bandhana-baddham 'my city guards brought me a thief], painfully tied with fetters as punishment'; see the expression apakāra in the Artha-śāstra = 'suffering, pain, injury' (§ 5.6.6, 7.1.7) and in the technical meaning of 'punishment' (§§ 2.22.15, 6.1.6.), and apakārin = 'wrong-doer / criminal' (§§ 3.16.04, 3.19.18, 7.6.32). Skt. apāvrta would rather correspond to Pkt. avāuda.

(2) § 754: Unclear saloddām (in the apparatus) Bollée sanskritises as sa-lot(r)a (p. 299), although in the main text he prefers a less common lectio: sahōḍham = '[with] stolen goods' (p. 113), 'with thief's booty' (p. 116). Saloddām and sahōḍham are practically synonymous, but it is perhaps better to relate sa-lotdam to Skt. saluptam = 'along with what has been robbed'.

(3) § 758: Imprecise is the rendering of the phrase laṅghana-pavaṇa-jaina-vāyāma-samathē, about which Bollée himself had some doubts: 'who is a long and a high jumper (?) as well as a runner and an able gymnast'. Better: 'dextrous/skilful in jumping, swimming, running and wrestling' (laṅghana-plavana-javana-vāyāma-samartha), in short: 'accomplished in tetrathlon'.
(4) §§ 758, 759, 760(69), 761: niṃa-sippōvagae (Skt.: nipuṇa-
śīlpōpagata) = 'competent in the arts and crafts'. Suggested:
‘who has mastered skill arts (sc. arts that require much
dexterity').

(5) § 763: jīvassā a-guru-lahuttanī paducca jīvantassa vā tulyassa
muyassa vā tulyassa n'attī kei ānatto vā jāvā lāhuyattā vā. In the
translation the syntactic relation is rendered inaccurately: 'there
is no difference [nor distinction nor inferior condition nor
smaller size nor greater] or lesser weight in heavi ness or
lightness – of this soul when a man is weighed alive or dead'.
Rather, the phrase jīvassā a-guru-lahuttanī paducca (Skt.: aguru-
laghutvamī pratīṭya) introduces causal justification: 'in depen-
dence on / following from the absence of heavi ness and light-
ness', which is just a paraphrase of a causal subordinate clause:
insofar as the soul is neither heavy nor light'. Thus, preferably:
'Insofar as the soul is neither heavy nor light, there is no differ-
eence between it being weighted alive or it being weighted
dead, . . . or lesser weight.'

(6) §§ 765, 774: Doubtful is the translation of the phrase: tīse
agāṃyāae chinnāvāye dīha-m-addhāe adāvie: ['these men went to
a certain spot) in that forest, where there were no villages nor
settlements and where one could take long walks' (p. 133) or
'forest without villages or settlements, a long way off'. BOLLÉE
seems to translate the expression chinnāvāya as 'nor settlements'.
Even (mistakenly) granting that āvāya (sanskritised as āpāta,
p. 233, 251) means 'settlement', the phrase chinnāvāya would
mean: 'where settlements have been cut out (sc. established) [in
the forest]', i.e. where forest has been cleared out for settlements;
that would be exactly the opposite meaning to the one intended
by BOLLÉE! However, āvāya can also be related to āpāda
('arriving at; approach; [way of] access') < āṅpad ('go near,
approach, enter into'), hence chinnāvāya should here corre-
spond to chinnāpāde. Still, its meaning remains slightly equiv-
ocal: either ['these men went to a certain spot in that forest. . .
where the access road [to this spot] ended (lit. “was cut”). or
[. . . in that forest. . .] where passages were cut across’. Also
the compound dīha-m-addhāe (Skt.: dīrgadhāvan) is rendered in-
accurately ('where one could take long walks'). It is a typical
bahu-vrihi compound describing the forest 'the paths/ways of
which are long'. Accordingly, I would suggest the following: 'in
that forest, where there were no villages, where passages were cut across and long paths [ran].

(7) § 767, 751: Likewise, the same phrase sūlāie vā egāhace kūḍāhace jīvīyāo va-varovaejīa/varovijījai is translated slightly differently in its two occurrences: ‘I would have him impaled ... and have him deprived of his life’ (§ 751[168] pp. 101/103) and: ‘is impaled or at once deprived of his life’ (§ 767[184] pp. 136–137). In Bollée’s rendering the underlined expression is missing. It is derived from the verb āvhan ‘to strike’ to kill: eka + āhatya and kūṭa + āhatya (‘having pierced with one [sharp end], spiked with a prong’). Thus, suggested: ‘I would have him impaled, by having [him] pierced with one [sharp end], having [him] spiked with a prong... and have him deprived of his life’.

(8) § 769: Bollée leaves out the sentence: Evām-evā tumāṁ pi vavahāri no c'eva ṇaṁ tumāṁ, Paesī, a-vavahāri. – ‘In exactly this manner also you are socially engaged, certainly it is not the case that you, Paesi, are not socially engaged’.

The above are just minor suggestions of what I hope could be slight improvements in cases which are indeed extremely problematic and the interpretations of much later Sanskrit commentators often rather clouded the matter, instead of throwing some light on Prakrit expressions.

A very good idea was to supplement ‘The Story of Paesi’ with the edition of Prakrit text and English translation of another dialogue devoted to the subject of the (non-)existence of the soul and afterlife in the Appendix (pp. 357–368). This is a discourse between a materialist Pingakesa, called a nihilist (nāhiya-vāt), and a Jaina monk Vijayasimha, that is included in the religious poem Samarāicca-kahā of Haribhadra-sūri (d.c. 800). Also this dispute remains practically unknown to the Occidental student of Indian philosophy.

The disturbing feature in the book is the abundance of stray hyphens, a result of final re-formatting of the book before the actual process of printing, which is the fault of the publisher alone, not of the author.

The book is a well-researched contribution to the study of the philosophy, especially materialist thought, and society of ancient India. In addition, in view extensive philological elucidation and methodical glossary of Prakrit terms, Bollée’s book may serve as a good companion or practical introduction to the Ardha-māgadhī Prakrit.
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