

## JAINISM IN SOUTH INDIA

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In South India, Jainism is little more than a name. Even serious students of religion in India paid little attention to it. In a population of nearly 60 crores of people, Jainas may constitute nearly some 3 million people<sup>1</sup>. But the influence it wields, its contribution to the development of Indian culture, commerce and industry is out of proportion to their population. Jainological material is so rich and varied and so much extended in time it is impossible to write about it in few pages. Because of this limitation the paper will be simply a fringe study and a general survey.

In this brief paper an attempt is made to trace the rise of Jainism as religio-philosophical system, its contribution to Indian Philosophy, Religion, Metaphysics and Logic, Art and Architecture, languages and literatures, and also a brief summary of its history in Andhra Pradesh.

The Jainas claim hoary antiquity for their religion. Vishnu and Bhagavata Puranas also mention this fact. The tradition says that during the time of the Mahabharata War Jaina order was led by Neminatha, the 22nd Thirthankara and he belonged to Yadava family. The order gained strength during 8th century B. C., under Parsvanatha, the 23rd Thirthankara.

In Parsvanatha we have the first historical beginnings of Jainism. Mahavira was born in the middle of the 6th century B.C. It appears he was influenced to a great extent by Gosala and the followers of Ajivaka sect also. According to one tradition there were 5 heretical sects. They are :

1. Akriyavadins of Purana Kassapa,
2. Anuvadins of Pakuda Kaccayana,
3. Ajivakas of Makkhali Gosala,
4. The materialists of Ajita Kesa Kambalin, and
5. The sceptics of Sanjaya Belattiputta. (2)

All these systems including Buddhism and Jainism were considered as Non-Brahmanic or Sramanic systems. The common feature of these systems are :

1. They challenged the Vedas
2. Admitted all members to their community
3. Observed a set of ethical principles
4. Practiced detached life to get liberation
5. Accepted renunciation.

These sects indicate there were two trends of thought, Brahmanic and Non-Brahmanic even from earlier times and these two trends influenced Indian Philosophy and Religion equally.

The records of the Buddhists and Jainas about the philosophical ideas of those days are of great importance to the historian of religions. The similarity between some of those heretical doctrines of the one side, and Jaina or Buddhist ideas on the other, favours the assumption that the Buddha as well as Mahavira owed some of their conceptions to these very heretics.

## **Contribution to the development of Languages :**

The Jainas have played a very important role in the linguistic development of the country. Sanskrit has all along been the medium of sacred writings and preachings of the Brahmanas and Pali that of the Buddhists. But the Jainas utilized the prevailing language of the area for religious purposes. Thus they developed Prakrit and other regional languages.

Of late rich literature produced by the Jainas came to light. The literature in Apabhramsa is worth mentioning. This language is a link between the Sanskrit, Prakrit, the classical languages on the one hand and modern Indian languages on the other. It is surprising to note that the earliest literature in Kannada and Tamil is also of Jaina authorship.

## **Jaina Ethics :**

Contribution of Jaina ethics to Indian ethical theories is also note worthy. It is different from the Bhakti Marga of the Bhagvatas, Jnana Marga of the Vedantins and Karma Marga of the Mimamsakas. Jainism holds that all the three must coexist in a person, if he is to walk along the path of salvation. Taking the analogy of medicine, faith in its efficacy, knowledge of its use, and the actual taking of the medicine. All these three are essential to effect a cure. Similarly the suffering soul can be cured by Ratnatraya, the three principles of Right faith, Right knowledge and Right conduct. The doctrine of Ahimsa though found in the epics, was preached on extensive scale, by the Jainas and Buddhists. Ahimsa must be observed both by the saints and the laymen according to Jainas and Buddhists, where as in classical Hindu tradition it was meant only for the Sanyasis.

## **Metaphysics:**

The tenets of Jainism are not always easy to grasp mainly due to two reasons. Firstly on account of our relative unfamiliarity with the ancient background and secondly on account of highly complex and perplexing system of innumerable divisions and sub divisions in the Jaina order.

In metaphysics there is some general likeness between Sankhya and yoga on the one hand and Jainism on the other. Dualism of matter and Soul is accepted by all these systems. Souls are like substances like Monads and they are characterized by intelligence. The actual difference between the souls is caused by their connection with the matter. Jainas and Sankhyas believe matter to be of indefinite nature and it can become anything.

The summarize Jaina philosophy the living and the non-living, by coming into contact with each other forge certain energies which bring about birth, death and various experiences of life. This process could be stopped and energies already forged destroyed by a course of discipline leading to salvation. a close analysis leads to 7 propositions :

1. There is something called living,
2. Something called non-living,
3. The two come into contact with each other,
4. The contact leads to production,
5. This process of contact could be stopped,
6. The existing energies could be exhausted,
7. The salvation could be achieved.

These seven propositions are called seven tattvas or realities by the Jainas. "The first two great truths are that there is a jiva or soul and that there is an ajiva or non-soul. These two exhaust between them all that exists in the Universe.

## Contribution to Literature :

The contribution of the Jainas to Sanskrit and other Indian languages is noteworthy. Dr. Winterniz says that there was a close connection between Jain and post Vedic literature. The story of Jajali and Tuladhara (M. bh. XXII, 261-64) the fable of the Hunter and the pigeons (M. bh XXII, 143-49) and the legend of Mudgala in Mahabharata (V, 23-40) indicate this close relation<sup>3</sup>.

Prof. Hertel has shown that their contribution to narrative and story literature is much. He says that the Jainas have preserved much of Indian tales that otherwise would have been lost to us<sup>4</sup>. They have also compiled great collection of tales. Kathakosa by Subhasilagani, Kathankakosa by Jinesvara, Kathamahodadhi by somachandra (1448 A. D.) Katharatnakara by Hema Vijaya (1600 A. D.) are some of them.

They wrote many charitas and Prabhandas. The charitas are legendary biographies of the Thirthankaras, Chakravartins and Rishis. Prabhandas contain stories of famous monks and laymen of historical times. Sthaviravalicarita, Prabhandhacintamani of Merutunga and Prabandhakosa of Rajasekhara gives us a glimpse of the social and cultural history of those times.

Some of the novels are Somaraiccakaha of Dhanavala (romantic epic in Apabhramsa) and Somadeva Suri's (959 A. D.) Yasastilaka are of this type. It has also been shown by Prof, Hertel that the popular recessions of Pancatantra are the works of the Jainas. Dhananjaya Srutakirti wrote to prove his mastery in sleshas by writing Raghavapandaviya (1123-1140 A. D.)

The Jainas have some books written in drama style also. Mohaparakaya of Yasopala narrates the story of Kumarapala's conversion to Jainism. Many of the poetical works are written in the apabhramsa dialect. The Jainas also have lexicographical writings. Their contribution to grammar is also noteworthy. According to some scholars the grammatical writing Siddha-Hemachandra by Hemachandra is in many respects better than that of Panini's Grammar. The oldest Prakrit lexicon is the work of a Jaina scholar, Paiyalacchi Namamala of Dhanapala (972 A. D.)

Jaina's philosophical literature is rich. Umasvati whom Prof. Suali would place as early as 300 A. D., in his Tattvarthanthigama Sutra expounds the doctrine of categories and theory of Pramanas.

Siddhasena Divakara in his Nyayavatara wrote for the first time a treatise on the means of proof (pramana) and the methods (Naya) of comprehending things from particular stand points. Devasuri (1086-1169 A. D.) wrote Syadvada Ratnakara. Even in 17th century we have great logician in Yaso Vijaya Gani who wrote great number of works on Logic.

Another commendable thing is some of these Jaina philosophical works is their liberal attitude towards other religious beliefs. A study of Shaddarshanasamucchaya reveals this. They dealt about many of the sciences and even on politics Jaina contribution is noteworthy. Somadeva Suri, the author of Niti Vakyamrta can be compared well with the classical Indian Niti writers like Kautilya and Sukra.

## Arts and Architecture :

The Jaina have a due share in the development of Arts in the country. In honor of their saints they erected Stupas as the Buddhists with their accessories of stone railings, umbrellas, decorated gateways and pillars and statues. The Gomateswara statue at Sravana Belagola (10th Century), the colossal reliefs carved on the rock face near Gwalior (15th Century A. D.), the Hathi Gumphas in Orissa, Pava Puri, Rajagiri in Bihar, Girinar and Palitana in Kathiawar, possess temples and architectural monuments of different ages. The Jaina marble temples at Mount Abu in Rajasthan belonging to the eleventh century and later. carry to its highest perfection the Indian genius for the invention of graceful patterns and their application to the decoration of

Masonry.

## **Andhra's Contribution to Jainism :**

For the spread of Jainism the south played a vital role. We find evidence for it in Jaina literature. During the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (4th Century B. C.) Magadha was ravaged by a 12 year long famine. Some Jainas under the leadership of Bhadrabahu came to the South and by that time Jainism was a flourishing religion in the South.

In "Hari Bhadriya Vritti" it is written that the King of Kalinga who ruled during the time of Vardhamana Mahavira was a friend of Vardhamana's father and Mahavira came to Kalinga and preached his religion.

Dharmamrita, a classic of 12th century A. D., mentions that even during the times of 12th Thirthankara, Vasupujya Jainism was prevalent in the Andhra country. Tradition also says an Anga king come with his three sons to Vengi who later became Jainas and built a city known as Pratipalapura which is some where near modern Bhattiprolu.

The Jaina tradition also mentions that Asoka's grandson Samprati became a Svetambra Jaina and spread the religion in Kalinga. The Andhra and the Kalinga countries might have been strongholds of non-vedic religions for long, for Bodhayana says that whoever goes to Kinga must perform Prayschitta<sup>5</sup>.

During the regime of Kharavela (2nd century B. C.), Jainism spread into many regions of Northern Andhra and Orissa. The rock caves at Khandagiri and Udayagiri bear testimony to the same<sup>6</sup>. The Satavahana rulers of Pre-Christian era who ruled a vast territory which now comprises of Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka states were also influenced by Jainism. 'Kalakasuri prabandha' writes that one of the Satavahana rulers of Pratistanapura used to attend a Jaina monk's discourse.

## **JAINISM IN KARNATAKA**

Even before the reign of Chalukya king Pulakesi the (17th Century A. D.) Jainism was a dominant religion in the Karnataka. All the later kings like Vinayaditya, Vijayaditya helped Jaina saints in spreading their religion. During Vatapi Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas in whose kingdoms much of Andhra (mainly Rayalasemsa and Telangana regions) was a territory influenced by Jainism as these kings were great patrons of this religion.

During the Rashtrakuta king Nitya Varsha Indra Vallabha (915-927 A. D.) Bodhan was his capital and even now it is considered by the jainas as one of their Adima Thirthas. The famous Jaina Acharya Somadevasuri of that time wrote many books and spread the faith the Telangana region.

From 2nd century B. C. upto 800-900 A. D., there were no inscriptions bearing the dates of that period. It might be the period of Jaina decline in Kalinga and it was only during that period of Jaina decline in Kalinga and it was only during that period the Vedic and the Buddhistic religions began to flourish in Kalinga.

Tradition says that in a village known as Gangaperulu in Rayalasema, a Jaina monk known as Simhanandi Acharya lived. The princes who fled from a town known as Vijayapura in northern India, sought his protection and later founded the famous Ganga dynasty with is blessings. Excavations conducted at Danavulapadu in Cuddapah district revealed the extent of spread of Jainism in that area.

The founder of Eastern Chalukya dynasty Kubjavishnuvardhana (624-641 A. D.) was brother of Pulakesi II. During his period Vijayawada was a great Jaina centre. His Danasasana (762 A. D.) indicates that he was a great portion of Jaina religion.

Ramatirtham in Visakhapatnam district was both a Buddhist and Jaina Kshetra and now it is a famous Hindu Kshetra. Excavations at Penugonda in East Godavari district revealed that it was once a Jaina religious centre. At the time of Kullotunga Chola son of Raja Rajanarendra, Munugodu in Sattenapalli taluq was a Jaina kshetra. Another inscription of 1178 A.D., reveals that Bhogapuram in Visakhapatnam Dt. was having Jaina temples. In Nellore district upto 13th Century there were Jaina temples.

### **Spread of Saivism and Vaishnavism and decline of Jainism :**

During the 12th and 13th centuries Saivism began to spread in Andhra and there used to be religious debates over these religious faiths. There were many clashes between the followers of these faiths and of the Jaina Bastis (centres)<sup>7</sup> were destroyed by the Saivites. Panditaradhyacarita and Palkuriki Somanatha and Sivaratrimahatmya of Srinatha gives evidence to this fact.

It is a wonder that though Jainism was prevalent for more than 1500 years in Andhra only one book written a by a saint of this area is available now. It is Jinendra Kalyanabhyudaya by Appayacharya (1241 Saka era).

While Saivism became popular during Kalyaniya kings, Vaishnavism became popular during Vijayanagara kings. Spread of these religions led to the decline of the Jaina faith. But Jainas have their pilgrim even now. Kollipaka in Nalgonda district is jaina kshetra and Penugonda in Anantapur district is one of the Jaina Chaturdasa mahavidya sthams.

For an Archaeologist and epigraphist who wishes to study Jaina history Andhra provides a rich source<sup>8</sup> .

‘Padu’ were all Jaina villages. In many places in Andhra we find wells known as Jainabavulu. They are of a particular type of construction. They are covered by lids so that animals in the streets may not fall in the nights. Similarly in many villages we find idols called as ‘Sanyasi Demullu. All such villages were once Jaina villages. Many such villages are found in Coastal Andhra.

### **Its relevance :**

To understand Indian Philosophy and culture in broader perspective study of Jainism is essential. As Prof. Hopkins puts it, Jainism "represents a theological mean between Brahmanism and Buddhism"<sup>9</sup> . Then assuredly a serious study of Jainism becomes incumbent on all who may seek to understand aright either the early. Brahmanic ritual or the trenchant and for long effective Buddhist protest which that elaborate ritual evoked"<sup>10</sup> .

The interest of Jainism to the student of religion lies in the fact that it goes back to a very early period and to primitive currents of religious and metaphysical speculations, which also gave rise to the oldest Indian philosophies like Sankhya, Yoga and Buddhism. It also shares their theoretical pessimism and the practical ideal of liberation<sup>11</sup> .

Jaina approach to truth saying that it has many facts leads to relativism though not to pluralism. Their acceptance of the uniqueness of each soul and stress on individual effort to reach kaivalya makes it a humanistic religion. The ills of the 20th century are absolutism and ideological dogmatism. These attitudes will lead the world to catastrophe and more so in a nuclear age.

The Jainas say our affirmative predication is dependent on Svadraya, Svakshetra, Svakala and Svabhava. If it is paradravya, parakshetra, parakala and parabhava it can be negatively predicated. This approach to understand alien religions, cultures, political and social systems will lessen the tensions in the world and improve our quality of life and make this planet a better place to live. As Ratnasekhara in Sambodhasattari

says "No matter whether he is a Svetambara or a digambara, A Buddhist or a follower of any other creed, one who has realized the self sameness of the soul, I. e., looks on all creatures as his own self, attains salvation"<sup>12</sup> .

## **AVADHU ATMAJNAN MEN RAHANA**

Avadhu, live in the realization of soul never say anything to anyone

One who realizes the self, known all beliefs fighting

In the heats does not keep one-sidedness, sees tow-coloured wings

All sorrows and sickness end, becomes immortal and unchanging

Does not believe in muum and tuum breaks the worldly bondage

He keeps in his mind and soul the form which is invisible, incomparable, ultimate

He forsakes the pleasures of physical sight, with determination follows intuition

One thief is very active and militant he is found all over the world in sly

One has to keep vigilant and not permit him to enter the house secretly

One who leaves one and takes up the other only fans the fires of passion

Suri Rajendra's saying you ponder keep yourself on vigil, well-equipped.