

THE ANUTTARA UPAPATIKA SUTRA

Prof. K. H. Kamdar, M. A., Baroda

The Anuttaropapatika is the ninth Anga of the canonical literature of the Jains and it is the immediate successor of the Antakrita Dashanga Sutra. It has no pretension to a discussion of Jain philosophy. On the other hand it records the lives of thirty-three devoted disciples of Mahavira, the last and twenty-fourth Tirthankara. The contents of the Sutra are reported to have been delivered by Sudharma, Mahavira's fifth Ganadhara, to his inquisitive disciple, Jambu, at the Gunashila Chaitya in the city of Rajagriha, the capital of king Shrenika of Magadha or Bihar, Bimbisara of the Shishunaga dynasty. Sudharma was ordained as Anagara by Mahavira at the age of fifty. He remained as such for full thirty years and became Kevalin twelve years after Mahavira's death or Nirvana. He died at the age of one hundred years. By birth Sudharma was a Brahmin; his father's and mother's names were respectively Dhamilla and Bhadilla and he hailed from the Sannivesha of Kollaka.

The Sutra narrates in thirty-three lessons or Adhyayanas, the lives as monks of an equal number of persons. They practiced severe penance under Mahavira's permission and their souls were born as gods in the last Vimanas where they should live for thirty-two Sagaropamas. Then they should take birth as men in the Maha Videha from which they should attain complete liberation from re-birth. The vimanas are, according to Jain cosmology :-

Vijaya, Vaijayanta, Jayanta. Aparajit and Sarvartha Siddha. It is significant that Mahavira should have placed the destiny of his devoted Antevasis one step backward, in spite of the severest penance which they went through. They were not of the final stage in the cycle of life. Evidently he wanted to emphasize the superiority of knowledge-Jnana over penance. It should be remembered that the sutra refers to the thirty three persons as "Antevasis" The words were uttered by Mahavira's first and most devoted Ganadhara, Gautama who was eager to know the future destiny of each one of the great thirty-three souls. This is also significant. The monks studied at the feet of Mahavira and were his poets.

The actual text of the Sutra is extraordinarily brief, although it is divided into three Vargas, comprising respectively ten, thirteen and again ten lessons or studies. The result is that it avoids repetitions, and leaves the reader to gather information from the first lesson for all the remaining lessons. Being the ninth in order, the Sutra is anterior to Jnata, Bhagavati, etc. to which the reader is referred for the same subject.

Abhayadeva Suri of the Chandra Gachcha and the disciple of Jineshwar Suri wrote a Sanskrit commentary on this Sutra. It is incomplete in the sense that it does not explain or transliterate each sentence of the text. The text and the commentary were published by the Agamodaya Samiti of Surat in 1920 A. D. and by the Atmananda Sabha of Bhavnagar in 192 A. D. Gujarati translation also are available. The Jain Shastroddharaka Samiti of Rajkot published the text in 1948 A. D. with Gujarati and Hindi translations and a full Sanskrit commentary with orthodox annotations by Muni Ghisalalji. How modest as commentator and exigist Abhayadeva Suri was can be gathered from the following verses which he gave at the end of his commentaries on his and the Vipaka Sutras :-

(Original language words are missing)

Abhayadeva Suri was ordained a monk in Vikrama Samvat 1088 at the age of ten years and he died in

Vikram Samvat, 1135, at Kapadavanj, Khaira district, Gujarat. In the history of the exigesis of Jain Agamas, he is known as the exigist and commentator of nine angas. (Prabhavaka Charita 261-272 in Abhyadeva Prabandha).

Out of the thirty-three disciples referred to in the Sutra, twenty were princes of royal blood, sons of King Shrenika. Of these, seventeen were born of queen Dharini. Their names were

1. Jali,
2. Mayali,
3. Upajali,
4. Purushasena,
5. Varishena,
6. Dirghadanta,
7. Lashtadanta
8. Dirgha Sena,
9. Mahasena,
10. Gudhadanta,
11. Shuddhadanta,
12. Halla,
13. Druma,
14. Drumasena,
15. Mahadruma Sena,
16. Mahasinha sena and
17. Punya sena, of the remaining three sons of Shrenika, two princess-Vehalla and Vaihayasa were born of queen Chellana, while the last, the famous Abhaya, was born of queen Nanda.

The first seven sons of Dharini are mentioned in the first Varga while the remaining ten are mentioned in the second Varga. Queen Dharini thus presented to King Shrenika according to this description in all 17 sons. It will be seen that two of them bore a common name, Lashtadanta. May be, the king had two queens bearing a common name, that is Dharini. The Visheshya 'Danta', appears in four names. May be, it might refer to a physical deformity !!

The confusion in recording names is not improbable. It might have been committed when the contents of the Sutra were reduced to writing. Several hundred years after Sudharma co-ordinated them in the Sutra form.

A common name, in this instance again of a mother, but for different individuals occurs in this Sutra in the second and third Vargas or chapters. The common name is that of Bhadra a Sarthavahini-that is a woman who did prosperous business as leader of caravans. Ten different Bhadras happened to be the mothers of

1. Dhanna and
2. Sunakshatra of the city of Kakandi,
3. Rishidas
4. Pellaka
5. Vehalla of Rajagriha
6. Ramaputra
7. Chandrika of Saketa,
8. Prishtimatrika and
9. Pedhalaputra of Vanijyagrama
10. Pottilla of Hastinapura.

Between the lines we read fathers' name for Ramaputra and Pedhalaputra. This was very common in that age.

The Text records in the form of Sutra the institution of polygamy. Dhanna married thirty-two wives and the marriages were performed on the same day. His mother, Bhdara, had got built for him thirty-two well-furnished palatial quarters.

(Original language words are missing)

The prevalence of polygamy suggests that in the big cities and amongst the well-to-do castes of North India, specially amongst the Vaishyas and Khsatriyas, and even amongst the Brahmins the number of women was far greater than the number of men! Children born in affluent families were looked after by Dharti nurses according to their age. The festivities in connection with the admission of the devotees to the order of monks were often led by rulers of states, Jitashatru etc. Such leadership is assigned elsewhere to Shri Krishna of Dwarka. I may now refer to an important fact which has been recorded in the Sutra. We are told that each one of the thirty-three Antevasis, when he was that the end was fast impending of his earthly existence, thanks to the extremely severe penance which he had been practicing under Mahavira's permission, went to mount Vipula to go through the last stage of the penance namely. He was accompanied by senior monks who kept in attendance on him day and night. These Sthaviras kept to their duty till the penance was completed and the monk was dead. Then they prayed, recited the Navakkara mantra and descending on to the plains below, presented to Mahavira the pots (of wood) which were used by the deceased. Thus Mount Vipula near the city of Rajagriha was reserved for the performance of the last phase of the penance.

(Original language words are missing)

The Sutra pays the most eloquent tribute to the severity of Dhanna's penance. The entire narrative is exceedingly instructive on account of its rhapsody and rhetorics and the comparisons which are instituted by the narrator. I give the comparison for the readers' enlightenment. The exaggeration of the description deserves our sympathy.

Dhanna's limbs were so emaciated on account of the severity of his penance that his legs were like the bark of a dried up tree or shoes of wood or worn out footwear. The Toes and fingers of legs were like off-shoots of mung or adad removed from the main stalk. The waist was like that of a crow, a Kanka bird or a peahen. His knees were like those of a peahen, or Kali plant. The thigh was like the things mentioned above or it was like the stalk of a jujub plant, or Sami tree or like the legs of a camel or an old cow or bullock. The belly was like an empty leather-bag or Masaka, or a pot of wood to prepare bread. The ribs were like thin rods or leaves; or lines on mirrors or thin rods. The Chest was like a fan made of the leaves of a bamboo-tree. The arms were like dried-up roots of tree. His hands were like an Agasti shrub or dried up cow-dung, or dried up banyan leaves. The neck was like the neck of a water pot. The lips were like dried up pills. The tongue was like a dried up leaf of a banyan tree or palasha tree or an udumbara tree. The nose was like a piece of a mango fruit. The eyes were like holes of a lute or dim-morning stars. The ears were like leaves of root-shrubs like Mula, etc. His head was like the bark of cucumber fruit.

In brief Dhanna could sustain his physical frame only on account of his moral and spiritual greatness and his extra-ordinary power of self-control.

(Original language words are missing)

Eloquent as the description is, it is instructive in the use of words for birds, animals, trees, shrubs, etc., which are almost identical with what we find to this day in Gujarat and Rajasthan, as for instance, Challi, Sangliyai, Dhenik, Bori, Chagnika, Kundkia, Pesiyai, Mul, Galauie etc.

The conclusion is obvious. The redaction was in all probability made by persons who lived as monks in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

To conclude, a critical study of the extant texts of the Jain Sutras will reveal important features which are sure to throw fresh light on the society of the age of Mahavira and his immediate successors and on the subject of linguistics in medieval and pre-Muslim Gujarat and Rajasthan.

I may add that the Sthaviras came as the last-the junior-most, in the order of the Jaina church- (Original language words are missing)