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Absolute and Conventional Points of View in Jainism: A Historical Perspective

Jérôme Petit

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Buddhist and Jaina Studies

Proceedings of the Conference in Lumbini,
February 2013



Edited by

J. Soni, M. Pahlke and C. Cüppers

LUMBINI INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Lumbini

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Foreword

The idea to hold such a unique conference at the special place of Lumbini originally came from Dr Christoph Cüppers when in 2010 my wife and I visited LIRI, the Lumbini International Research Institute, of which he is the Director, and now ably assisted by Dr Michael Pahlke. It was presented spontaneously with the seriousness that goes with it. Added to the magnanimous local hospitality offered to all the participants were also educational excursions to Kapilavastu, Gotihawa, Niglihawa, Kudan, the Sacred Garden Monasteries of Lumbini, with a guided tour of the Māyā Devī Temple as another highlight.

The call for participation was deliberately not restrictive so as to open the meeting to contributions with a wide variety of possible research areas. The ideal was a presentation on a theme allowing for comparison between Buddhism and Jainism, but the possibility of presenting a topic on either of the two alone or including Brahmanism as well, was left open.

The outcome was that sixteen experts from, Austria, France, Germany, India, Japan, Thailand, the UK and the USA came to Lumbini with their latest findings and research. The serene atmosphere of LIRI and Lumbini right from our arrival on the 11th till our departure on 16th February 2013 was most conducive to the presentations and deliberations.

As the table of contents indicates, the three major areas were Art and Architecture, Literature and Textual Studies, and Philosophy. The contributions revealed, among many other things: 1. that a comparison of the early art and architecture of the Jainas and Buddhists in India show a number of significant and interesting parallels; that these contain historical evidences depicting their statuses at a given time in history; and that even if their meanings have changed, their 'original' intent can be exposed. 2. a study of Buddhist and Jaina literature, either in comparison or of texts individually, can bring out more clearly 'the imagery at work in them', often leading to 'improved interpretations' of difficult passages; that texts

can clearly show comparable meditative practices regarding the elements like earth and water; a study of texts also reveals the role of monks and laity in the care of the sick, apart from insights into esoteric ritual practice. 3. a study of philosophical texts reveals significant insights into what constitutes reality, including the nature of the self; of specific aspects of Indian epistemology and logic, including modern interpretations of Buddhism and the Jaina points of view.

The discussions after each presentation were intensive and many new insights came to light in the spontaneity of such collegial dialogues. Comparative studies especially between Buddhism and Jainism are few and far between and our discussions made it evident that such initiatives can indeed be fruitful. It was obvious during our deliberations that such a meeting of experts has much to offer in terms of the development of ideas in India, becoming clearer by way of comparing all three indigenous traditions as well. Indeed, to ignore any single school of thought makes any study of the indigenous Indian traditions partial, if not incomplete. Several articles here in this volume highlight this point.

Soon after the conference a report on the sixteen presentations was published in *Jaina Studies, Newsletter of the Centre of Jaina Studies, SOAS* (London), in its issue number 8, March 2013, pp. 21–23, by Luitgard Soni, entitled “The Buddhist and Jaina Studies Conference in Lumbini, Nepal”. The online version is available here: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/jainastudies/newsletter/file83045.pdf>. The photographs interspersed in between short descriptions of the presentations give a glimpse of our delightful stay in Lumbini.

Each paper in this volume begins with an abstract, providing quick access into their contents.

It remains only to add, on behalf of all the participants as well, our sincere appreciation for the cordiality and collegiality of Drs Cüppers and Pahlke, including their friendly staff at LIRI, for making the conference the wonderful success it turned out to be (it was dubbed the ‘LIRI Experience’). Above all, thanks go to LIRI for also publishing these proceedings in their prestigious series.

J. Soni

Innsbruck, June 2014.

Absolute and Conventional Points of View in Jainism: A Historical Perspective

Jérôme Petit

Abstract

The pan-Indian distinction between two points of view on reality is to be found in Jainism, mainly in the teaching of the Digambara philosopher Kundakunda. In his *Samaya-sāra*, he invites us to search for the real nature of the self, instead of climbing the different scales elaborated in the Jain doctrine in order to help the adept to progress on the path of liberation. The former means follows an absolute point of view (*nīścaya-naya*), the latter a conventional point of view (*vyavahāra-naya*) where religious rituals are important. Kundakunda started a lineage of Jain philosophers, reformists and poets inspired by his thought. From Yogīndu in the sixth century to Rājacandra in the late nineteenth century, the distinction between these two points of view is essential but it is marked by an evolution: if Kundakunda employed an ironic tone to describe the conventional aspects of the religion, Rājacandra said that both are useful to help the voluntary adept. Between those two authors, the “nīścayic literature” written for monks had been read by Jain laymen who tried to concentrate their thoughts on the pure self while continuing to assure their daily life with the “vyavahāric aspects” of the doctrine. The tension between the two points of view is particularly obvious in the texts which emerged from the Adhyātma, a seventeenth-century movement of Jain laymen. The crossroad represented by the authors inspired by this movement, like Banārasīdās (1586–1643), Dyānatrāy (1676–1726), Paṇḍit Ṭoḍaramal (1720–1767) or Paṇḍit Daulatrām (1798–1866) will help us to understand how the *naya* concept evolved in a historical perspective. See the illustration at the end of this paper.

The idea of a twofold level of reality is a pan-Indian topic. The Vedānta made a clear difference between the karmic path (*karma-mārga*) and the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*). Nāgārjuna and Mādhyamika Buddhism reaffirmed the difference between a conventional truth (*vyavahārika-satya*) and an absolute truth (*paramārthika-satya*). In the field of Jain philosophy, the distinction between two points of view is to be found mainly in the teaching of the Digambara philosopher Kundakunda (c. fourth century).¹ In his *Samaya-sāra*

¹ The dates of Kundakunda are not exactly known (ranging from the second to the eighth centuries) and are subject to several discussions. See e.g. Upadhye 2000, p. 10; Dhaky 1991, pp. 187–206; Dundas 2002, p. 107; Malvania and Soni 2007, p. 93.

(‘Essence of the Self’) he invites us to search for the real nature of the self, namely to follow an absolute point of view (*niścaya-naya*), instead of climbing different scales prepared by the Jain doctrine in order to help the adept to enter in the race for liberation, that is to follow a conventional point of view (*vyavahāra-naya*) in which religious rituals are important.

An illustration taken from a popular edition of Daulatrām’s *Chahadhāla* (at the end of the paper below), the path of realisation (*śiva-mārga*) is divided into a conventional path (*vyavahāra-mārga*) with rituals and temples, and an absolute path (*niścaya-mārga*) going directly to the self. An interesting thing to note here is that the conventional path goes back, as if the adept is being invited afterwards to follow the absolute path, the only one which leads to liberation directly. In fact, Kundakunda says in the *Samaya-sāra* that both points of view are useful: as a stranger cannot understand what is being told without the help of a translation, the conventional point of view helps to understand correctly the absolute point of view.² But just before making this remark, Kundakunda had affirmed that the Three Jewels, whose place is central in Jain faith, are definitively on the conventional side.³ They can help the adept to confirm his faith, but from the absolute point of view the Three Jewels are nothing but the self.⁴ The ultimate goal (*paramārtha*, *bhūtārtha*), is the only subject of interest for the absolute or pure point of view.⁵ By using the term “pure” (*śuddha*) Kundakunda focusses on the innate purity of the self: the soul (*jīva*) is not to be mistaken for the sphere of the non-self (*ajīva*).

In a Vedāntic manner, Kundakunda also avoids any false appropriation: it is wrong to say “this belongs to me” or “I am angry” because the self is pure, one, made up of perception and knowledge only. The self is especially different from cognition (*upayoga*) which appears to be a stumbling block that one should overcome.⁶ Another striking point is the operation of the psychic

² *jaha ṇavi sakkam aṇajjo aṇajja-bhāsaṃ viṇā u gāheduṃ / taha vavahāreṇa viṇā paramatthuvadesaṇam asakkaṃ // (Samaya-sāra 8).*

³ *vavahāreṇ’ uvadissadi ṇāṇissa caritta-daṃsaṇaṃ ṇāṇaṃ / ṇavi ṇāṇaṃ ṇa carittaṃ ṇa daṃsaṇaṃ jāṇago suddho // (Samaya-sāra 7).*

⁴ *daṃsaṇa-ṇāṇa-carittāṇi sevidavvāṇi sāhuṇā ṇiccaṃ / tāṇi puṇa jāṇa tiṇṇi vi appāṇaṃ ceva ṇicchayado // (Samaya-sāra 16).*

⁵ *vavahāro ‘bhūdattho bhūdattho desido du suddha-ṇao / bhūdattham assido khalu sammādiṭṭhi havadi jīvo // (Samaya-sāra 11).*

⁶ *ṇatthi mama dhamma ādī bujjhadi uvaoga eva aham ekko / taṃ dhamma-ṇimmamattaṃ samayaṃ viyāṇayā vinti // aham ekko khalu suddho daṃsaṇa-ṇāṇamaio sadārūvī / ṇavi atthi majjha kiṃcivi aṇṇaṃ paramāṇumittaṃ pi // (Samaya-sāra 37–38).*

(*bhāva*) and emotional (*adhyavasāna*) states, like anger, etc. which are presented from a conventional point of view to be the self.⁷ From the absolute point of view, those states exist because of a transformation of karmic materials (*pudgala-dravya-pariṇāma*), but they are totally different from the self, which is one and pure.

The interesting point in our context is the negative description given by Kundakunda in which he exposes what the self is not.⁸ And, especially, the self does not accept any graduation (*sthāna*). Kundakunda confines in this way any spiritual ladders or stages to the field of the conventional point of view. “The states, from colours to stages of qualities, belong to the soul from a conventional point of view. No states exist from an absolute point of view”.⁹ Stages of qualities and other spiritual ladders, nevertheless, will have a real interest in the tradition constituted by the thought of the *Samaya-sāra*. Indeed, Kundakunda’s work is very powerful and had an important impact on the Jain lay society. Bansidhar Bhatt considers the tradition lead by this philosophy to be a “*Samaya-sāra* mysticism”.¹⁰ Other scholars call it the “Digambara mystical tradition” and put together Digambara authors, philosophers, poets and reformists who claim Kundakunda’s lineage.¹¹ If ancient authors like Yogīndu (c. 6th century)¹² make a clear difference between the two points of view and see the world and the soul only from an absolute point of view, the literature emerging in the pre-modern period puts a little conventional water in the absolute wine.

The well-known poet and merchant Banārasīdās (1586–1643) is perhaps a good example to demonstrate the idea. Here is a layman who needs to work on the marketplace to feed his family and who is deeply interested in the realisation of the soul. He discovered the “*Samaya-sāra* mysticism” in reading a Hindi rendering “for beginners” (*Bālabodha-vacanikā*) of a Sanskrit commentary. Let us describe quickly the transmission chain. In the 10th century, Amṛtacandra wrote a Sanskrit commentary on the *Samaya-sāra* entitled *Ātma-*

⁷ *emeva ya vavahāro ajjhasasāñādi-aṇṇa-bhāvānaṃ / jīvo tti kado sutte tatth’ ekko ñicchido jīvo // (Samaya-sāra 48/2.10).*

⁸ See stanzas 49-56/2.11–18, especially stanza 53/2.15: *jīvassa natthi keī jogga-tṭhāṇā ṇa bandha-tṭhāṇā vā / ṇeva ya udaya-tṭhāṇā ṇo maggaṇa-tṭhāṇayā keī //*

⁹ *vavahārena du ede jīvassa havanti vaṇṇamādiyā / guṇaṭṭhāṇantā bhāvā ṇa du keī ñicchaya-ṇayassa // (Samaya-sāra 56/2.18).*

¹⁰ Bhatt 1994, pp. 431–462.

¹¹ Dundas 2002, p. 107, and Cort 2001.

¹² Yogīndu 1937 and 1999.

khyāti in which he composed 278 additional stanzas in the pure *kāvya* style. Those stanzas had been separated to form an independent book known as *Samaya-sāra-kalaśa* ('Vases Containing the Essence of the Self'). These *kalaśa* found a great popularity in Jain literary circles and were "translated" into Hindi (namely into the *Ḍhūṇḍārī* language spoken in Rajasthan) by Rājamalla Pāṇḍe in the 16th century. This rendering is at the basis of the creation of a religious movement known as *Adhyātma*, alive in the 16th and 17th centuries in different urban centres in North India. Banārasīdās belonged to the *ādhyātmi* group of Agra and became one of its important members. As we will see, there are two different periods in his reflections. Firstly, approaching *Samaya-sāra* philosophy had been a great shock for Banārasīdās who began to follow a non-conformist attitude lead by his false perception of the absolute point of view. Far from rituals but also far from the purity of the soul, he confessed in his autobiography that he stood like "a camel fart" which never goes up nor down.¹³

His agitated and revolutionary behaviour found an end when he heard about the stages of qualities (*guṇa-sthāna*) as exposed in Nemicandra's *Gommaṭa-sāra* (10th century). The *Adhyātma* group of Agra invited a "paṇḍit", Rūpacand by name, to give a series of lectures on this text which focuses particularly on the *guṇa-sthāna* theory. Banārasīdās discovered that every soul has a place in the course for liberation and has the possibility to progress by climbing the steps proposed to the laymen. The ladder has fourteen steps, from delusion to omniscience, that is to say from non-Jain laity to Jain sainthood, including the taking of vows by Jain layman and monks. After having studied the *Gommaṭa-sāra*, Banārasīdās could rewrite a commentary/composition on the *Samaya-sāra* entitled *Samaya-sāra-nāṭaka* ('Drama on the Essence of the Self'). He also wrote about fifty independent texts, collected together after his death under the title *Banārasīvilāsa*. In this anthology, we can find texts inspired by both "points of view", poems for *pūjā*, on the one hand, and short treatises, on the other hand. Those poem-treatises focused on single topics, like karma, soul or meditation, that remind us of Kundakunda's "*Pāhuḍa*" (Skt *Prābhṛta*, 'Offering') works. Karma is logically at the heart of many poems. It is the greatest enemy to fight. Banārasīdās follows Kundakunda's lesson on it and sings in the *Mokṣapaṭṭī* (the 'Ladder to Liberation'):

¹³ *taba Banārasī bāñcai nitta / bhāśā aratha bicārai citta // pāvai nehīm adhyātama peca / mānai bāhija kiriā heca // (Ardhakathānaka 594).*

“Between auspicious karma and inauspicious karma there is only suffering, this distinction is not accurate. The action of knowledge produces no fault, here is the palace of liberation”.¹⁴ Again in the *Adhyātmabattīsī* (‘Thirty-two Stanzas on Supreme Self’): “The manifestation of good karma and bad karma is present in the four destinies. It makes us look outside, where there is no path to liberation”.¹⁵ The *Adhyātmabattīsī* largely focusses on the “Kundakundian vision” of the self directly inspired by the *Samaya-sāra*, namely as a substance (*dravya*) which has qualities (*guṇa*) and modifications (*pariyāya*): “Qualities of the self and modifications of the self, here is the field of knowledge. Qualities of the non-self and modifications of the non-self, here is the rumble of the field of karma”.¹⁶

We can see that the vocabulary employed is not exactly the same: “*jīva*” or “*ātman*” became “*nija*”, the reflexive article in Hindi (as *ātman* is the reflexive article in Sanskrit), “*parātman*” is reduced to “*para*” (‘other than the self’). The question of the points of view is also treated. For example, in the *Śivapaccīsī* (‘Twenty-five Stanzas on Realisation’) we can read:

The soul is not different from the absolute. This thing that is called soul is the absolute. People who have a conventional point of view call it “soul” but those who have reached the ultimate step of the *guṇa-sthāna* say that the soul is the real nature of the absolute.¹⁷

This kind of stanza with a so-called “niścayic” accent is not rare in Banārasī-dās’s work. Nevertheless, we also read:

The soul, limited to oneness from an absolute point of view, has fourteen divisions from a conventional point of view: if a cloth is naturally white, it becomes of many kinds by its association with colours”.¹⁸

Banārasīdās is very conscious of his lay situation. In a poem entitled *Adhyātma Gīta* (a ‘Spiritual Song’), he signed off as “*vyavahāra Banārasī*”, which leaves no doubt about the manner in which he perceived himself. If he tried

¹⁴ *punya pāpa vica kheda hai, yaha bheda na bhallā / jñāna kriyā niraḍoṣa hai, jaham mokha mahallā // (Mokṣapaīḍī 20).*

¹⁵ *udaya sukarma kukarma ke, rulai caturgati māhiṃ / nirakhai vāhija-drṣṭi soṃ, taham śiva-māraṅga nāhiṃ // (Adhyātmabattīsī 21).*

¹⁶ *nija guṇa nija parajāya meṃ, jñāna-cakra kī bhūmi / para-guṇa para parajāya soṃ, karma-cakra kī dhūmi // (Adhyātmabattīsī 16).*

¹⁷ *jīva aura śiva aura na hoī, soī jīva-vastu śiva soī / jīva nāma kahiye vyavahārī, śiva-svarūpa nihacai guṇadhārī // (Śivapaccīsī 4).*

¹⁸ *niyata eka vivahāra saum, jīva caturdasa bheda / raṅga joga bahu vidhi bhayau, ज्याम पाठा sahaja supheda // (Samaya-sāra-nāṭaka 13.7).*

all his life to aim at the absolute point of view, he knows that his lay condition and his temperament do not allow him to see the world from this side and obliges him to keep an ordinary and conventional life. Banārasīdās is at the crossroads between the two points of view, and between the *Samaya-sāra* philosophy and the *Gommaṭa-sāra* theories. This balance will stay in the mind of the authors of the same lineage.

The poet Dyānatrāy (1676–1726) is known to have composed poems to be recited during *pūjā* rituals. The divinity he sang, as John Cort pointed out, is sometimes praised for its shape (*saguna* poetry) and sometimes as an illustration of the inner self (*nirguna* poetry). We can say in the present context that on the one hand he wrote “conventional” poetry and, on the another, “absolute” poetry. But what is more interesting in Dyānatrāy work is that he indeed wrote a didactic poem called *Carcā-śataka* (‘A Hundred Verses on Discussions’). The term “*carcā*” was employed by the Adhyātma groups to refer to the assemblies during which members discussed spiritual matters. Composed in Brajbhāṣā in the second half of the 17th century, this text gives almost all elements of the Jain doctrine in detail. If Dyānatrāy does not use the term “*guṇa-sthāna*”, it appears very clearly that the *guṇa-sthāna* theory is the heart of his text. He organises it in a progression and he gives the name, the duration and the intensity of all karmic matters that fall during the progression. In that sense, besides writing “*Samaya-sāra nirguna* poetry”, Dyānatrāy also wrote a kind of compendium directly inspired by the *Gommaṭa-sāra*.

After him, the great Paṇḍit Ṭoḍaramal (1720–1767), who gave the intellectual basis to the Terāpantha Digambara sect, composed a poem for the *Gommaṭa-sāra*, called the *Gommaṭa-sāra-pūjā* to make sure that we are on the “conventional” side. More than a poet, Ṭoḍaramal is a scholar skilled in Sanskrit and Prakrit, who could read ancient literature. He was born in Jaipur where he stayed all his life. He was particularly inspired by the reflexions of the Adhyātma groups particularly active in the Jaipur-Delhi-Agra region. His major work is the *Mokṣamārga-prakāśaka* (‘Illuminator of the Path to Liberation’), a long text in Ḍhūṇḍārī prose divided into nine chapters. The seventh chapter deals specially with the difference between the two points of view and its misunderstanding. Indeed Ṭoḍaramal denounces people who speak of the *nīścaya-naya* as if they had reached the *siddhahood* while they are engaged in mundane life. He points out some misunderstood examples like comparing

omniscience to the sun covered by the clouds represented by karma. Omniscience must not be understood as if it has always been there: one should not wait for the wind but should fight for omniscience and destroy the karma-clouds in order to realise it. In this chapter, Ṭoḍaramal quotes the *Samaya-sāra* and the *Samaya-sāra-kalaśa* very often. Kundakunda had already warned against the false way of practising religion: one should practise religion to destroy karma, not to reap the fruits of a good action.¹⁹ This is maybe one of Kundakunda's greatest lessons: auspicious karma binds the soul as inauspicious karma does, illustrated by the famous comparison saying that "a chain made of gold chains a man like one made of iron".²⁰

Ṭoḍaramal represents a kind of apogee in the intellectual reflection on the two points of view. During the 19th century, we see a renewed success of the philosophical poetry written for the sake of the laity. Paṇḍit Daulatrām (1798-1866) is one the most representative poets of this period. He wrote in Hindi a famous poem called *Chahaḍhāla* ('Six Chapters', or 'Six Shields [Against Karma]'). The third chapter (the illustration of which is given in the present paper) describes the true religion, the true path to follow in order to realise the pure self. In the first stanza Daulatrām says that this path is composed of the Three Jewels and can be crossed in two ways (*du-bheda*), one absolute (*niścaya*), whose goal is the truth (*satya*), and one conventional (*vyavahāra*) which is the cause (*kāraṇa*) of the previous. It is interesting to note that Daulatrām does not use the term "*naya*" but the term "*bheda*" (again in 6, 14). The question is not what philosophical vision to have but how to live the religious life. From the philosophical abstractions of the *naya* theory, Daulatrām draws attention to a more concrete manner when thinking of daily religious life. Two manners are also articulated, one being the cause of the other. It means that we should not cross the *niścaya-mārga* without having crossed previously the *vyavahāra-mārga*. The first is described in the three first stanzas,²¹ the second is the subject of almost the entire chapter. Daulat-

¹⁹ *evaṃ vavahāra-ṇao paisiddho jāṇa ṇicchaya-ṇayeṇa / ṇicchaya-ṇayāssidā puṇa muṇiṇo pāv-anti ṇivvāṇaṃ // (Samaya-sāra 272/8.36). (...) saddahadi ya pattedi ya rocedi ya taha puṇo ya phāsedī / dhammaṃ bhoga-ṇimittaṃ ṇa hu so kamma-kkhaya-ṇimittaṃ // (Samaya-sāra 275/8.39). See also Samaya-sāra 61-68/2.23-30; 349-364/10.42-57.*

²⁰ *sovaṇṇiyaṃ pi ṇiyalaṃ bandhadi kālāyasaṃ pi jaha purisaṃ / bandhadi evaṃ jīvaṃ suham asuḥaṃ vā kadaṃ kammaṃ // (Samaya-sāra 146/4.2).*

²¹ *para dravyana taiṃ bhinna āpa meṃ, ruci samyakatva bhalā hai / āpa rūpa ko jāna pano so, samyagjāna kalā jai // āpa rūpa meṃ līna rahe, thira samyakcarita soī / aba vyavahāra mokha maga suniye, hetu niyata ko hoī // (Chahaḍhāla 3.2).*

rām and his time focus on the manner to live the *dharma*. He is also an interesting case because his poem mixes *Samaya-sāra* philosophy of the self and the idea of a spiritual progression that reminds one of the organisation of the *guṇa-sthāna*. The term *guṇa-sthāna* in fact never appears in the poem, so it seems that the idea of a progression is now included in the “Jain subconscious”, if we may say so.

The last Jain poet we want to evoke here is the singular figure of Śrīmad Rājacandra (1867–1901). Known for the influence he had on Mahātmā Gandhi, another famous Gujarati, especially in the philosophy of non-violence, Rājacandra had a very short life. He was a gifted young boy with special memory capacities and a profound interest in religious life. He spent many hours in Vaiṣṇava *āśramas* (his father was a Vaiṣṇava merchant) and also in Jain *upāśrayas* (his mother was a Śvetāmbara), he dedicated all his life to the realisation of the inner purity of the self. He never wanted to become a monk but always preferred to stay in lay, mundane life, seen as a much harder way to realise the self. Rājacandra got married at the age of 21 and had four children. He was also a famous and respected jeweller. But the only thing that really counted for him was his inner religious life. He imposed on himself very hard fasts and spent much time in reading Jain philosophical literature and meditating on the Jain perception of the self. Rājacandra died at the young age of 33 and left behind him a group of disciples who founded the “Rāj Bhakta Mārg” to honour his memory and to follow his philosophy of life.²² The Jainism he proposed is a Jainism “without monk”,²³ easily exportable outside India. Indeed, the “Shrimad Rajchandra Mission” has now several centres around the world, like the USA, Canada, the UK and East Africa.

Rājacandra never explicitly quotes Kundakunda but the influence of the latter is quite obvious in his work. He wrote many letters, a treatise at the age of sixteen entitled *Mokṣamālā*, and a poem in 142 verses, the *Ātmasiddhi* (the ‘Realisation of the Self’), which is regarded as his major work. The title of the poem, its form as a dialogue between a guru and a disciple and its composition in couplets easy to memorise, bring it closer to philosophical literature such as the *Samaya-sāra*. Rājacandra mentions six points that he wants to discuss: 1. the self exists, 2. the self is eternal, 3. the self is the agent of its own karmic production, 4. the self is the enjoyer of that production, 5. liberation

²² Salter 2006a and 2006b (pp. 241–262).

²³ Dundas 1999, pp. 19–35.

does exist and 6. true religion is the instrument of liberation. Before entering in these philosophical aspects, Rājacandra tries to determine the figure of the true ‘seeker of the self’ (*ātmārthī*) whom he opposes to the figure of the devout person attached to rituals and ceremonies. In his effort, we can see clearly the difference made by him between the two ways of living a religious life, one absolute and the other conventional. Rājacandra warns the false seeker of the self who adopts the absolute point of view only in words: in doing so he will miss both the true conventional religious life and the true absolute religious life, so he will let slip the instruments of liberation.²⁴ Rājacandra proposes two new things in our study. The first one is to live an absolute religious life within the course of the conventional daily life.²⁵ In order to succeed in this method, he invites the seeker to be helped by a “true guru” (*sad-guru*) who is described as a person of knowledge, away from the outside insignias of so-called “gurus”.

We have seen authors from the time of Banārasīdās putting conventional aspects into the absolute theory, or rather putting absolute elements in their conventional life. The fact is now really obvious and clearly expressed. Kundakunda stressed having a pure and absolute point of view on the inner purity of the self and to fight against karma which blocks off this purity. At the end of the nineteenth century, Jain religious-minded laymen try to do their best to see the self in that way but need the help of a guru and the “crutch” of the conventional point of view. Rājacandra concludes his treatise by saying that it does not deal only with the absolute point of view and not only with the conventional point of view, but with both together.²⁶

As we have seen in this quick highlight of the “Digambara mystical tradition”, the literary works that emerged from this lineage are beyond all sectarian considerations. The conversion (if it is necessary) is not toward Digambara Jainism but rather toward the *Samaya-sāra* or Kundakunda philosophical approach to the self. The great scholar A. N. Upadhye (1906-1975), in his introduction to the edition of Yodīndu’s *Paramātmaprakāśa*, said that “discussions are not at all sectarian”. And if Banārasīdās had been involved in

²⁴ *athavā niścaya-naya grahe, mātra śabda nī māṃya / lope sad-vyavahāra ne, sādhana-rahita thāya // (Ātmasiddhi 29).*

²⁵ *eka hoyā traṇa kāla māṃ, paramārtha no pantha / prere te paramārtha ne, te vyavahāra samanta // (Ātmasiddhi 36).*

²⁶ *naya niścaya ekānta thī, ā māṃ nathī kahela / ekānte vyavahāra nahīm, banne sātha rahela // (Ātmasiddhi 132).*

a controversy with Śvetāmbara monks like Yaśovijaya and Meghavijaya, this happened after his death. The controversy was engaged somehow to put an end to the Adhyātma movement in North India (and it succeeded!), but the questions raised by the ādhyātmika authors are more asked to engage the self in the course of liberation than to engage controversies. The self is not Digambara, neither Śvetāmbara, nor Śaiva, nor Vaiṣṇava, if we may so say after Yogīndu. One of the most interesting things here is perhaps the place taken by the *Gommaṭa-sāra* and how it is articulated with the *Samaya-sāra*. Both texts together bring to volunteers a perfect knowledge of the two ‘paths’, the absolute and the conventional, which give a kind of comfort to the laymen who need stability in daily life and want to reach the highest level of spirituality in their religious life.

The absolute point of view is a source of inspiration when one has poetical skills (like Banārasīdās), a topic of study when one has intellectual skills (like Ṭoḍaramal), an invitation to live a different life (like Daulatrām) by using Kundakunda’s teachings and by progressing through spiritual stages. On the one hand, the *Samaya-sāra* indicates an absolute toward which one is invited to go. On the other, the *Gommaṭa-sāra* shows that in every ‘mystical’ path there are some ‘technical’ steps, surely less immediate (but more inviting to the common people), to attain the same goal — the realisation of the self. The high technical level of the *Gommaṭa-sāra* maybe attributed to a lack of interest in the *guṇa-sthāna* theory. We have seen to what extent a poet like Dyānatrāy had brought *guṇa-sthāna* to a saturation point, and we have also seen how the *Samaya-sāra* philosophy resonates in Rājacandra’s work, in a religion kept away from rituals and turned to the self. This is surely how Jainism wins the heart of religious-minded people and how it has access to a form of universalism.



Illustration of the third chapter of Daulatrām's *Chahaḍhāla* (Delhi: Vimal Granthamālā Prakāśan, 2007). In order to cross the path of realisation (*śiva-mārga*), one should cross over the conventional path (*vyavahāra-mārga*) on the right, or/then the absolute path (*nīścaya-mārga*) on the left.

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