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(Paramappapayāsu)

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Joindu, Ācārya: **Paramātmaprakāśa**. (Paramappapayāsu). Hindi transl. by Jaykumar Jalaj. Mumbai: Hindi Granth Karyalay 2007. 72 S. 8° = Pandit Nathuram Premi Research Series, 9. Brosch. Rs 60,00. ISBN 978-81-88769-09-4.

Bspr. von Jérôme Petit, Paris.

Paramātmaprakāśa “Light on the Supreme Self” (henceforth PP), is a very popular text of Jain mysticism, composed by Joindu/Yogindu probably during the sixth century AD. It expounds the different aspects of the self as seen by Jain doctrine, and the way to realise it. The popularity of the text has been assured by the author’s use of Apabhraṃśa, which was more accessible than Sanskrit or Prakrit at that time. Diachronically, Apabhraṃśa found a place between Prakrit and pre-modern Indo-Aryan languages like old Hindi, old Gujarati, etc.¹ The Apabhraṃśa title of the book is *Paramappapayāsu* with the characteristic final *-u* of this multi-faceted language under which we have to consider many languages used to compose popular poetry between the fifth and fifteenth centuries. Instead of

¹ It has been described by Hemacandra (1088–1172) in the eighth section, devoted to Prakrit languages, of his *Siddhahemacandra*, a grammar written for the Gujarati king Siddharāja. See Richard Pischel: *Comparative Grammar of the Prakrit Languages*. Translated from the German [of 1900] by Subhadra Jha. Delhi: Motilal Banarasisdass 1957; and, P. L. Vaidya (ed.): *Prakrit Grammar. The Eighth Adhyāya of Siddha-hemaśabdānuśāsana (Hemacandra’s Prakrit Grammar) with his Own Commentary, Prakāśkā*. Revised edition (Bombay Sanskrit Series 60.) Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1956.



gāthā metres used in Prakrit works, Apabhraṃśa introduced metrical forms that have been appreciated in pre-modern poetry, like *dohā*, *caupaī*, *soraṭha* etc., in which the PP is mostly composed. The second reason of its popularity is a Braj Bhāṣā rendering by Daulatārāma Kāsalīvāla (1692–1772) of a Sanskrit commentary written by Brahmadeva (approx. 13th century). This kind of vernacular translation, fashionable in the Jain milieu, had assured the popularity of many philosophical texts composed in Prakrit or Sanskrit by making accessible to a large audience a concise work written in a scholarly language. In the case of the PP, we can add a third reason to explain its popularity: the text is written in a quite easy and vivid style, with a successive number of repetitions in the verses themselves, or between verses, with the syntax system of concatenation assuring helpful mnemonic tools.

The PP was edited along with the *Yogasāra*, another small text of Joindu on the same topics, by A. N. Upadhye (1906–1975) in 1937, together with Brahmadeva’s commentary, a modern Hindi translation of Daulatārāma’s rendering, and a critical introduction of a hundred pages. This edition is a referential book, both due to the quality of the work and the intellectual acumen of the study.² It has been published by the Shrimad Rajachandra Ashram in Agas with several reprints (the latest known in 2000). Instead of the 386 pages and the critical apparatus of that publication, the work presented here can be utilised at any moment of every-day life. It is a booklet of 72 pages, well-printed with a clear typographical font, a short introduction by the translator, and an index of the verses. The title page mentions that the text is “edited” by Manish Modi, though we would rather have expected the term “prepared” or “published” – also a very noble term in the transmission process of knowledge – since editing an ancient text needs manuscript references. In the last decade, without stinting on his energy, Manish Modi has published several texts of the Jain Digambara philosophical tradition such as Kundakunda’s *Aṭṭhapāhuḍa* or Pūjyapāda’s *Samādhitantra*, which both had influenced Joindu. These publications are given with Hindi translations by Jaykumar Jalaj, making ancient texts accessible to a modern readership in India and abroad.

The PP is traditionally edited in two chapters (*adhyāya*-), one of 126 verses (118 + 8), the other of 219 verses (214 + 5), taking into account the “interpolatory verses” (Upadhye), for a total of 345 verses (332 + 13). The present edition gives 337 verses in one single chapter. The text depicts a discussion between Bhaṭṭa Prabhākara

and his teacher Yogīndu, the former questioning the latter on the real nature of the self (*ātman*-). Yogīndu starts to explain that the self is of three kinds: external (*bahis*-), internal (*antara*-), and supreme (*parama*-). These aspects give an idea of the path to liberation: one should renounce the external self to realise the supreme self by knowing the internal self. The main exercise consists in separating the sphere of the body from the sphere of the soul, which is an embodiment of knowledge, free from karman. The difficulty is that the soul is a substance, and as such it was born with qualities (*guṇa*-) and undergoes modifications (*pariyāya*-). It has only two qualities: vision (*darśana*-) and knowledge (*jñāna*-). The modifications are caused by karmic associations, so they are real from a conventional point of view (*vyavahāranaya*-) only. From an absolute point of view (*niścayanaya*-) “the Ātman simply sees and knows: Ātman does not bring about bondage and liberation which are caused by Karman for him” (Upadhye: 34). These two points of view are developed to a large extent in Kundakunda’s *Samayasāra*, an important work which founded the basis of Jain mysticism. Joindu probably knew this text, by the reference he made to the same topics, but neither he himself nor his commentators quote Kundakunda a single time. In the same way that Kundakunda invited readers not to follow the Three Jewels of Jainism (right faith, knowledge, and conduct), but to prefer the search for the supreme self, Joindu invited his pupil not to look for merits (here PP 183; Upadhye 2,60): merits will bring wealth, wealth leads to pride, and pride to demerits! “So, may there be no merit to us” (*tā punṇa amha mā hou*), said Joindu to Bhaṭṭa Prabhākara. This kind of contradiction to common sense is a hallmark of mysticism which invites one to contemplate the real nature of the self, rather than to indulge oneself with external religious practice. It reminds one of the famous *Samayasāra* verse (146) in which Kundakunda says that a chain binds a man, whether it be made of gold or of iron. This philosophical Jain tradition is also influenced by the Upaniṣadic world, as shown by the vocabulary used to describe the soul (*ātman*-, etc.) and the clear and concise exposition of the goal to attain (*siddhi*-, the realisation).

In the short introduction of the present book (pp. 5–8), Jaykumar Jalaj reminds us, following Upadhye, of the influence of Kundakunda’s *Mokkhapāhuḍa* and Pūjyapāda’s *Samādhitantra*. He mentions the fact that Joindu has been quoted in Hemacandra’s Prakrit grammar in the Apabhraṃśa section. Jalaj describes this language as the natural (*sahaj*), personal (*ātmiya*) and flexible (*lacīlī*) language of the people; “it spreads like the wind” (*vah to havā kī tarah bah’ī hai*, p. 5). Nothing is said about the number of verses and the decision to gather the two chapters in one. Further, the reader, even if he be a busy layman, could need some bibliographical references in order to go further if the text speaks significantly to him. As Indic texts are generally not stable, the list of verse beginnings at the end of the book (pp. 67–72) is very helpful.

² A French translation was made by Colette Caillat and Nalini Balbir: *Lumière de l’Absolu*. (Rivages poche, Petite bibliothèque 281.) Paris: Payot & Rivages 1999. Besides, two papers were published: a French translation of the *Yogasāra* (Colette Caillat: “Le *Yogasāra* de Yogīndu”, *Bulletin d’Études Indiennes* 16 {1998}: 233–247), and a transcription, together with a detailed glossary, of both texts (Nalini Balbir: “Glossaire du *Parāmāmaprakāśa* et du *Yogasāra*”, *Ibid.*: 249–318).

The translation of Jaykumar Jalaj is sometimes more a ‘rendering’ cum commentary than a pure translation, which is actually useful because the edition contains no footnotes and no Sanskrit chāyā, the reason being, in the words of Jalaj, that Apabhraṃśa is close (*naz'dīkī*) to Hindi. For example, when Joindu says “three wise men” (*tiṅṅi muṅi*), Jalaj adds “i.e. the masters, the teachers, and the ascetics” (*yānī ācāryaṃ, upādhyāyaṃ aur sādhuṃ ne*). In the first verse, the author says “I bowed to them”; Jalaj adds “Me, Yogīndradeva, I bow to them”, while the name of the author is actually revealed only in verse 7. Where Joindu gives the negative definition of the self with the repetitive use of the negative particle *na* (PP 19–22), Jalaj gives a positive sentence with “different from (the list)” (*se pare*) which is less powerful. Sometimes the translation is very good, following the original while remaining accessible, like in verse 22 where the translator follows the repetition of the negative particle, or in verse 15 with the repetition of the verb *cuk'nā* expressing the completeness of something: “One who has completely freed himself from karmans, who has completely abandoned substances other [than the self], like the body etc., and who has completely realised the self rich in omniscience, that one is the supreme self” (*jo karmoṃ se mukt ho cukā hai, deh ādi par-dravyaṃ ko chor' cukā hai aur keval jñān se sampann ātmā ko up'labdh kar cukā hai, vah par'mātmā hai*). When the translator avoids the repetition, the text loses its power: in verse 24, the repetition of the key-word *keval* has been replaced by other words like *suddh* and *anant* which do not have the same meaning or the same impact on the reader. In the same verse, he translates the word *viriu* (skt. *vīrya-*), the masculine force par excellence, by the word *śakti*, which is the feminine aspect of the force. Another important detail is the translation of verse 58 which describes the soul and its qualities: *guṇa puṇu dāmsaṇu nāṇu* (“and its qualities are vision and knowledge”) is translated by *darśan, jñān ādi us dravya ke guṇ haiṃ* (“the qualities of that substance are vision, knowledge etc.”); the term *ādi* (“etc.”) is inconvenient because the soul has only two qualities (vision and knowledge), which is of primary importance in this case. A few verses later (64), Jalaj translates *appā dekkhai muṇai* by *ātmā sirph dekh'tī aur jān'tī hai* (“the soul only sees and knows”), restoring accuracy.

As we see, the translation says more than the original, including commentaries which are sometimes useful considering the concise nature of the text. But the slight technical level of this work and its easiness, pointed out by Jalaj also (*āsānī*), invites translators to follow as closely as possible the peculiar rhythm of the verses. Apart from these considerations, Jalaj’s translation is also clear and accessible, and the Nāthūrām Premī Research Series – named after the great Jain scholar who edited and published many Jain works – would not be complete without the publication of the *Paramātmaprakāśa* (the *Yogasāra* has also been published in 2007 with a Hindi translation by the same Jaykumar Jalaj), so we are glad to see it joining Kundakunda and Pūjyapāda in the diffusion of these important and potent texts among Hindi speakers. We hope that Jalaj’s translation will provide the same popularity to Joindu in our times as Daulatarāma’s rendering in his times.

