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A FEW PARALLELS IN JAIN AND BUDDHIST WORKS

BY

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The two canons, of the Buddhists in Pāli and of the Jains in Ardha-Māgadhī, present us with a few interesting parallels worth consideration. The study of such parallels is interesting both for its own sake and for the light it throws on the problem of the relation in which these two religions stand with each other. The real explanation of the similarity found therein, whether it is a case of borrowing or one of common inheritance or even one of accidental coincidence, is to be decided in each particular case by considerations of its individual peculiarities. And as such their examination will help us in forming an idea about the exact relation in which these religions stand, particularly in their literary traditions.

Both the religions, Buddhism and Jainism, arose in the same country of Magadha and at about the same time. As such they partook of the same surroundings which goes a long way in determining many of their common features. But besides this general similarity of spirit and form which can be explained as due to the influence of the time-spirit we find something more to think of in the present case. The canons of both these religions show similarity not only in the general moral and disciplinary tone due mainly to the fact that they embody the same general principles of ethics which are common to both these religions which is in its turn due to the circumstance of their birth and early growth, but also in matters of composition and wording which requires something more to explain them. They raise the important question of borrowings and the authentic nature of one tradition as against the other and the question of their respective age.

Even though it is now admitted on all hands that Jainism as a religion arose a few decades earlier than Buddhism, or even

a few centuries before it, if we accept the view that not only Pārśva was a historical person but that the traditional date of his birth and death is equally trustworthy, a fact not beyond reasonable doubt; the question of the formation of the two canons of these two religions stands on a very different footing, and is in no way connected with it. It is yet very difficult to believe that the present Ardha-Māgadhī canon, which tradition itself admits to have suffered much recasting and reduction, and which has the still greater disadvantage of being repudiated by the whole of the Digambara community of the Jains, can be reasonably attributed to a period to which the Pāli canon of the Buddhist is attributed at the latest.¹ It is true that the Pāli tradition also shows us the Buddhist canon as going through the similar stages of redactions at various stages of its history, but their last council falls in the reign of king Aśoka in the third century B. C.² while the last council of the Jains comes in the fifth century A. D. in the days of the kings of Valabhi.³ So if we are to believe in these traditions alone it is clear that the Pāli canon will have to be put much earlier than the Ardha-Māgadhī one.

This problem of the relative priority of the two canons is further rendered more difficult and complicated by the supposition of an Ardha-Māgadhī canon earlier than the present one, and a similar canon of the Buddhist which again according to Lüders will have to be supposed to be written in old Ardha-Māgadhī.⁴ All such speculations have no doubt some indications in the present canons themselves and can on that account be said to rest on facts. In the case of the Jain canon we even possess an outline of the older canon preserved to us with more or less accuracy, while it will be very unwise to put down the whole of the Pāli canon at the time of Aśoka. But it is equally true that it is not possible now to separate them from their later

¹ Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*. Ch. i. pp. 15-24.

² Cp. Rhys Davids. *Buddhism its History and Literature* pp. 187-195. Winternitz, *His. Ind. Lit.* Vol. II, pp. 4-5; Kern. *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 103ff.

³ Charpentier. Introduction to his edition of the *Uttarādhyaṇa*, pp.15-16.

⁴ *Bruchstücke Buddhistischen Dramen. Einleitung.*

additions with anything like certainty. For the present purpose then of comparing a few parallel passages from the two canons it is better to set them aside and to start without the supposition of earlier works not to be found to day, even though the parallels themselves are adduced to prove their existence.

To begin with, we have a number of stories common to the two canons which we take for consideration. Of all the works of the Jain canon the Uttarādhyayana is the most important as it preserves many interesting stories and parables which are also to be met with in various works of the Buddhist. Here we meet the story¹ of the two persons called Citra and Sambhūta who were fast friends at the beginning and wandered a series of lives together but at the end suffered very different fates because of their characters. This story is also found in the Jātaka collections in the Citta-Sambhūta-Jātaka.² As pointed out by Dr. J. Charpentier the two chapters show similarity not only in the general outline of the story and its main incidents but even in the verses found in them which are common to both the books. The story in the Uttarādhyayana is in verses only while the one found in the Jātaka books is in mixed verse and prose as usual. This fact along with the fact that the Gāthās of the Jātaka are decidedly older than the prose which is very late as can be seen both on linguistic and logical grounds would lead us to suppose that the story as preserved in the Uttarādhyayana is the older of the two. But the Jain version says nothing of the earlier lives of these two friends which are however referred to in their conversation.³ The Jātaka gives us all the details about this earlier part of the story which cannot be regarded as a later modification of it or an addition to it. So also we have a few cases in which the order of the verses in the Jātaka books appears more in accord with the general trend of the story than the one found in the Jain version. This is to be explained on the supposition that the Jain version has suffered in its arrangement while the Jātaka books were more fortunate in having a commentary which numbered its verses very early and arranged them rigidly which has saved it from

¹ Ch. XIII, pp. 115-119.

² No. 498, Fausbøll, Vo. II V, pp. 390-400.

³ Ch. XIII, Vs. 5-7.

any further change. On the other hand the Jain version also lost the earlier part of the story which is preserved to us in the prose of the Jātakas even though it is put down much later than the writing of the chapter in the Uttarādhyayana.

Another story common to these two works is that of Isukāra¹ in the Uttarādhyayana and the Hatthipārajāta² in the Jātaka books. The story relates that a king and his preceptor had no son, but with the help of a tree-spirit the Purohita was able to obtain four sons who were all religious-minded. To test their zeal in the matters of religion and to know for certain whether they will live in the worldly life or not both the king and the Purohita approached them in the garbs of monks and found that all of them turned out monks. This led the wife of the Purohita and and himself to take up to asceticism and consequently the king and the queen also do the same thing. In this case it will be seen that the story of the Jātaka books is fuller and gives many details about the birth of the four sons of the Purohita which are wanting in the chapter of the Jain work. There the story begins abruptly with the statement that all the characters in the story were born in the same town descending from their heavenly abode. Another difference between the two versions is about the number of the sons the Purohita had, they are four in the Jātaka while only two in the Uttarādhyayana chapter. This fact again is made use of in the Jātaka books to give rise to four different occasions for the renouncing of this world by the four sons and taking to ascetic life, which is occasioned by seeing the king and the Purohita in the garbs of a monk, and the repetition of the same situation for four times. In the story as preserved in the Uttarādhyayana there appears to exist no relation between the Purohita and the king, while in the Jātaka they are represented as consulting each other and plotting together to test the sons of the Purohita as to their intention of becoming monk. In the version of the Jains it appears that when all the members of the family of the Purohita took to monkhood, the king came in the possession of their property according to the rule of the Dharmasāstras. This occasioned a complete change in the mind of the queen who turns her mind to nunhood and also advises the king to the same

¹ Ch. XIV, pp. 119-125.

² No. 509, pp. 473-490. Vol. IV.

⁴ [*Annals*, B. O. R. I.]

effect. This fact appears to be more natural and appropriate than the one found in the *Jātaka* books. Considering further, facts like the story of the four sons acting exactly like each other, their long-drawn moralising, the improbable story of the spirit in the tree in the beginning which is pleased to give four sons to the Purohita alone and not a single one to the king who was in greater need of an heir, and the curious relation between the king and the Purohita, it is clear that the Jain version is not only earlier but is better preserved and the more interesting of the two.

The story of a low-caste man attaining to a high position and showing the ill-founded faith of the Brahmins in their idea of greatness in birth is found in the *Hariēsijjam*¹ of the *Uttarādhyayana* and the *Mātāṅgajātaka*² of the Buddhists. The two stories shew a good deal of divergence in all matters except the central idea of the approach of the *Cāṇḍāla* to the feast of the Brahmins the wrong treatment given to him by the priest in one case and by his own son in the other, the sound beating they receive at the hands of the demi-gods who attend on the *Mātāṅga*, the approach of the woman the daughter of the king of *Pāñcāla* in case of the Jain version and of a merchant in case of the Buddhist version, her revealing the greatness of the *Mātāṅga*, and the recovery of the Brahmins from the illness. And it is interesting to note that this part of the story is to be found in the verses which are common to both the versions to a great extent. The Jain version adds little to the body of the text but the commentator³ gives us the back-ground of the whole story. He relates how the daughter of the king of the country of *Pāñcāla* went to a temple and saw there the *Cāṇḍāla* whom she abhorred. But a spirit possessed her and to get her out of its clutches the king became ready to give her to the same low-caste man. But the sage refused to marry as its being against his monkhood. Now once he goes to the sacrificial ground of the Purohita of the king where he is refused food. And there the story begins in the *Uttarādhyayana*. The story in the *Jātaka* is much more complicated and expanded. There also the daughter of a rich merchant

¹ Ch. XII, pp. 109-115.

² No. 497, Vol. IV, pp. 375-389.

³ Cp. the commentaries of *Śāntyācārya* and *Devendra*.

meets a Mātāṅga and feels disgusted at his sight. The man is beaten by her servants. But he goes to the house of the merchant and lies at the door until he is given the same daughter in marriage which is done at his persistence. A son is born to them, but in the mean time he becomes a sage and to confer prosperity on his wife makes the people believe that she is the wife of the great Brahmā. While the son grows old and is worshipped by all the people, the main incidents of the story happen. From this the Jātaka proceeds to give another story of the same Mātāṅga only because it also deals with the same theme. Otherwise it has no connection with the main story. A comparison of the two versions will make it clear that the Buddhist story is much more elaborate and of mixed motifs. The Jain version, on the other hand is much more simple and to the point. But there is one consideration which should lead us to think that the Jain version is the older of the two. On a careful reading of the Buddhist story it is seen that the attitude behind it is much more haughty and full of bitter feelings than the one which accentuated the writer of the Jain version. This can be seen in the facts like the plain deception of the Brahmans and the administration of the food as a cure for the beating. This must have also led the writer to include the other story in the same Jātaka. And such an attitude must have arisen in later times as the effect of sectarian bias. The original motive of writing such stories appears to be to show the hollow foundation of the greatness claimed by the Brahmans on account of birth alone. And this is clearly seen in the Jain version and in a much more humane and sympathetic form.

Another book of stories in the Jain canon is the sixth Aṅga called the Jñātādharmakathā. Here also we meet with a few parallels in the Buddhist works. The illustration of the tortoise¹ in it has a clear parallel in the Saṃyutta-Nikāya II² which by the nature of the case appears to be a very ancient simile developed into an illustration and used by both the religions for the specific purpose of moralising on the control of the senses. The story³ of the two brothers going on a voyage and suffering

¹ Ch. 4th.

² Cp. Oldenberg, Buddha, p. 313.

³ Jñātādharmakathā, Ch. 9th.

a good deal at the hands of the deity on the Ratnadvīpa who killed so many ship-wrecked people and the winged horse who helped them in flying from that island, and the fall of one of the two brothers because of the temptations of that Yakṣiṇī has a parallel in Valāhassa-Jātaka¹ where the part of the winged horse is played by the compassionate Bodhisatta.

Of greater importance is the story in the chapter of this book called the Amaraṅkā² which related the Jain version of the Brahmanic epic of the Kuru family considerably changed and modified to suit the Jain religion. In tracing the early life of Draupadī we find a very curious story of a girl called Sukumārā which has a very distinct parallel in the story of Isidāsī³ in the Therī-Gāthā. The story tells of a girl who sinned in giving bad food to a monk, and as a result of which she was born in her next birth with an unpleasant touch of her body. She was married to a son of a merchant but in the very next day of their marriage he ran off to avoid her unpleasant touch. She returned back to her father's house where her father married her a second time with a monk who had come to his house to beg food. He also ran off the next day and the girl disgusted at her life took to the life of a nun. The Buddhist story of the unhappy girl is materially the same. The form in which the story is found in the Jain version is fragmentary and incomplete and is relegated to the back-ground, showing great inferiority to the other version in the Therī-Gāthā which is more complete and better told. But against the natural supposition of regarding the Buddhist version as earlier on account of its artistic superiority we have many textual indications in the Pāli version itself which go to prove a very different result. As remarked by Mrs. Rhys Davids⁴ the whole spirit of the poem is non-Buddhistic and shows many traces of Jain tendency of valuing mortification and penance as more important. To add to this, we find such a technical term as Nirjarā⁵ used in the poem, and the

1 No. 196, Cp. Winternitz, op. cit. p. 131.

2 Jñāt. Ch. 16th.

3 Ed. by Müller, Verses 400-447, pp. 260-271.

4 In the introduction of her Psalms of the Sisters, P. T. S.

5 V. 431.

name of the teacher of the unhappy girl is given as Jinadattā¹ not without significance. So it is more than probable that the writer of the Pāli poem had before him some Jain version of the story even though it may not be identical with the very meagre survival of it in the sixth Aṅga of the Ardha-Māgadhi canon. The Pāli tradition itself admits that the present poem in the Therī-Gāthā is much later than the bulk of the work and was introduced into the collection by the Saṃgītikāras.

Two other stories in the Jāntādharma-kathā have parallels in the anecdotes told by Buddhagoṣa in his Visuddhi-Magga. Considering the nature of his work and his usual method of relating stories from earlier literature we can fairly suppose that the present two stories are also drawn by him from the canon or possibly from the older Aṭṭhakathās in Ceylon. This is more probable as he omits all details and satisfies himself with a bare reference which shows that the stories were very famous and already known to his readers. The story² of the merchant becoming a frog because of his falling away from the right path to which he was first introduced and his consequent liberation is told in the Visuddhi-Magga without the previous life of the merchant, while the cause of his death is different in the two versions. In the Jain version³ the frog is trampled down by the hoof of Śrenikā's horse, while in the Buddhist story a cowherd kills the frog with a stick. The second parallel⁴ is not so marked as Buddhagoṣa only gives a passing remark about the central idea of the story without adding details. But the idea and the statement is so queer and out of the way that we are forced to think that there must be a story behind it. The Jain work⁵ relates the story in full. It tells us that a merchant was pursuing a thief who had carried away his daughter. But before he was able to catch hold of him the thief killed the girl and escaped. Now the father and his sons who were pursuing him found themselves in a thick forest without food. So to save themselves they ate

¹ V. 427.

² Ed. Mrs. Rhys Davids, P. T. S. Vol. I, p. 208.

³ Jñāt. Ch. 13th.

⁴ Visuddhi-Magga. Vol. I, p. 347.

⁵ Jñāt, Cb. 18th.

the flesh of the girl and in this manner came safe to their own town. Buddhagosa makes the father to eat the flesh of the son instead of the daughter.

Besides these parallels in story and fable, we find similarities in the two canons about some important philosophical discussions. The most important among them is dialogue in the *Rayapase-niyam*¹ and the *Pāyāsi Suttanta*² in the *Digha-Nikaya*. Similarities in wording and similes and expressions leave no doubt as regards their mutual relation. Either both must have followed very closely a common source or one must have made a considerable use of the other. The Jain version as found in the second *Upāṅga* forms the central theme of the work. It turns on the point of the existence of the soul independent of the body in which it is embodied. Kesi the follower of Lord Pārśva tries to prove the soul as existing and refutes the arguments of king Paēsi who is a follower of the heretical teacher Ajita Kesakambali. The Pāli version makes the king bear the name Pāyāsi who holds conversation with Kumāra Kassapa who is also shown triumphant in refuting the arguments of the king. Some scholars are inclined to think that the Jain version is the later of the two, but without sufficient reasons³. On the contrary there are a few facts which point unmistakably to the conclusion that the Jain version is the older of the two. The vehement denial of the soul which is the main function of this story is a little inconsistent with the general spirit of Buddhism. Herein Buddhism agrees more with the views of the king than his opponent who is shown as successful in both the versions. According to the Buddhist tradition itself the present Sutta is not of equal age with the others of the same collection. It is even admitted that the real name of the king was Paēsi and not Pāyāsi which is an unmistakable sign of the authentic nature of the Jain tradition as against the Buddhist version. On the other hand the Jain version is shown to be contemporaneous with Mahāvīra as Kesi the disciple of Pārśva is shown in other works⁴ to hold conversation with

¹ Ed. by Dr. Vaidya, Poona, 1934.

² Ed. P. T. S. No. 23, Vol. II, pp. 316-358.

³ Cp. B. C. Law. *A History of Pāli Literature*, 1933. Vol. I, p. 109.

⁴ Cp. *Uttar*. Ch. 23rd.

Gotama the chief disciple of Lord Mahāvīra. So here also we will have to admit that the Jain version of the dialogue is of better authenticity and we can go so far as to assert that it was the Jains who first tried to refute this doctrine of Ajita as being the exact contradictory position of their own theory of the existence of the soul. The Buddhist took this refutation bodily from them even though a little inconsistent with their own vehement denial of a soul.

Another philosophical discussion common to the two literatures is that about the refutation of the philosophy of Gosāla. In the Jain works we find it stated in the *Upāsagadasāo*¹ and the *Bhagavati*² while in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*³ of the *Dīgha-Nikāya* is found a summary of his views. The life story of Gosāla as found in the *Bhagavati Sūtra* is not to be met with in the Buddhist works. But the statement of his doctrines is common to both of them in a very similar phraseology. It is just possible that both of them were copying from the works of that sect. But the other alternative is more probable. It can very easily be seen that Gosāla was more intimately connected with Jainism than with Buddhism, even though it is very difficult to decide the exact relation in which he stood. But in view of the fact that his doctrines are taken by him from the *Pūrvas* and his claim to be the last prophet of Jainism it appears that he represented another line of the school of *Pārśva* while Mahāvīra succeeded in asserting himself as the true continuer of the orthodox line. So it is more probable that the Jain version had better chances of giving the views of the school of Gosāla in a more authentic form than its rival religion Buddhism.

Apart from these similarities extending over a long incident we have a good many verses⁴ in common in the works of

¹ Ed. by Dr. Vaidya, Poona, 1930. Chs. 6 and 7.

² *Uvās* pp. 139-192.

³ Ed. P. T. S. Vol. I, pp. 47-86.

⁴ I give below the common verses from *Uttarādhyayana* and *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* as far as I am able to detect. *Utta.* I, 17. *Therī-Gāthā.* 247; II, 3. *Theriga.* 243; II, 24-25. *Suttanipāta.* 932; III, 17. *Sn.* 769; IV, I. *Dhp.* 182; IV, 3. *Thera-Gā.* 786; V. 21. *Dhp.* 141; VII, 13. *Sn.* 927; IX, 34. *Dhp.* 103; 44. *Dhp.* 70; 48-49. *Māra-Saṅy.* 11, 10, 6; X, 28. *Dhp.* 285; XXV, 16. *Sn.* 268;

these two religions. Particularly the Uttarādhyayana and the Sūtrakṛtāṅga show many verses in common with the various books of the Pāli canon like the Dhammapada the Thera and Therī-Gāthās the Suttanipāta and stray verses from the Nikāyas. Dr. Winternitz¹ has suggested the solution of such similar verses in the supposition that there existed before both these canons a floating mass of poetry dealing with ascetic life and ideals which was incorporated in the works of both these religions.

17. Sn. 136; 31. Dhp. 264; XXVII, 8. Thera-Gā. 976. Sūtrak. I, 1, 1, 3. Sn. 394; I, 2, 1, 2. Sn. 578; I, 2, 1, 15. Saṃyutta-Nikāya. IX, 1; I, 2, 2, 11. Thera-Ga. 1053; I, 2, 2, 15. Dhp. 378; I, 2, 2, 17. Sn. 810; I, 3, 2, 21. Thera-Ga. 1154; I, 3, 4, 7. Therī-Ga. 508; I, 3, 4, 8. Dhp. 245; I, 5, 2, Dhp. 307; I, 7, 15-16. Therī-Ga. 241-244; I, 7, 25. Dhp. 325; I, 8, 7. Dhp. 5; I, 8, 19. Sn. 400; etc.

¹ Hist. Ind. Lit. Vol. II, P. 121, p. 125 etc.