

## **A Short History of the Kathanka Literature of the Jainas and the Place of “Sekhasubhodaya” In Sanskrit Literature**

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### **Abstract**

The table in Sanskrit literature was balanced equally by characteristic and importance given to it. It is assumed that in its inception the artless tale must have been devoid of moral or other purpose. In the new form greatly influenced by Indian and western literature the didactic motive is expressly developed. The earliest text in such a form is Panchatantra of visnusarma that aimed at literary merit consisting of five books with a main story and tales inter-woven. A similar collection of fables is Hitopadesa of Narayana containing four books. The Brhmataha of Gunadhya in Paisehi, Prakrit, heads the literature of the tale.

Buddha and Jina are also serious to make themselves acquainted with the media of framing short stories to propagate their own canons. In Jina short stories Kalakacarya – Kathanaka, Katha-Ratnakara, pala –Gopala – Kathanaka and Dana-Kalpa –Drums of Jinakirti, Aghata-Kumara –Katha, Ambada-Charitra. Of Amara Suri, Ratnacuda-katha of jinana–Sagara. Suri Kathanaka of srikandra, Kathanaka – kosa of Jinesvara, Antara-Katha – Samgrah of Rajesekhara. Of subhasila. Ganin and so on and forth can be maintained in this context.

It is apparent from the former discussion that Jaina works are enriched with Kathanaka from that means a collection of short stories. On such a vast venue of Kathanaka literature that present text exhibits contain special interest which are novel and assure a different and unique dimension to the Research Scholars.

**Key word:-** Kalakacaryakathanaka, Uttamacharita-Kathanaka, Jinistic, Dialectal, Unjust, Prakrit, Biographical, Avahitta Language, Historicity enshrouded, Gossip, Antagonism, Apocryphal, Narration, Neighbourhood.

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE KATHANKA LITERATURE OF THE JAINAS AND THE PLACE OF “SEKHASUBHODAYA” IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE**

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The Kathanakas or little stories, so many of which were included in the commentaries, were frequently also written as independent works, and sometimes they were elaborated into ornate poems.

The Kaiakacary akath an aka which is generally recited by the monks at the end of the recital of the Kalpasutra, is a Prakrt poem in prose and verse. The narrative is probably based on an old tradition, and it is quite possible that it contains an historical nucleus. It is the story of the king's son Kaiaka who is converted to the Jaina religion and attains to the high degree of superior of the order.

Another work of unknown date is the Uttama(-Kumara) Caritra-Kathanaka, “The Story of the Life of (Prince) Most Excellent”. It is a fairy tale full of the most wonderful adventures, inserted into the frame-work of a Jinistic sermon. It is to be found in one prose-version and several metrical ones. The language is Sanskrit, but the occurrence of dialectal words proves that the work originated in Gujrat.

Another fairy tale named Papabuddhi-Dharmabuddhi- kathanaka, “The story of Evil-mind and Pious-mind” relates the incident of Evil-mind king and pious-mind minister. The date and the name of the author are not known.

In the Campakasresthi-Kathanaka of Jinakirti we have the fairy-tale of the lucky child who is saved from destruction by the fatal letter exchanged at the last moment. This is the tale widely known both in the East and in the West, with which we have become familiar to the Brahmanical and Buddhist literature and with which we thus meet among the Jainas also. It is written about the middle of the 15th century.<sup>1</sup> Another work of Jinakirti is the “Pala-Gopala-Kathanaka”, “The Story of Pala and Gopala”, a pious legend. The same Jinakirti is also the author of a didactic poem “Dana-Kalpa-Druma” in which the importance of almsgiving is presented and lavishly illustrated by means of stories.

The Aghata-Kumara-Katha, “the Story of Prince Aghata” is also based upon the fairy tale of the lucky child and the fatal letter which is exchanged. There are three different recensions of this pretty fairy tale, a longer and a shorter one in verse, and a prose version.

Next comes The Ambada-Caritra “The adventures of Ambada” by Amara-Suri, very phantastic magical fairy tale.

Another novel consisting of a frame-story and a few inserted stories is the Ratnacuda-Katha, “Story of Ratnacuda” by Jnanasagara Suri who lived in the middle and the second half of the 15th Century. The frame-story contains the witty and entertaining story of the city of rogues, Anitipura, in which King “Unjust” rules, whose prime minister is “Unwise” and whose court priest is “Restless” and in which only thieves, rogues and deceivers reside.

There is also a Katha-Kosa in Apabhramsa, containing 53 tales in an equal number of chapters by Sri candra who wrote either in the 10th or 12th Century A.D. and also a Kathanaka-Kosa written in 1092 A.D. by Jinesvara, the pupil of Vardhamana. In the 14th century Rajasekhara wrote his Antara-Katha-Samgraha, “Collection of various narratives”, a book of stories which he took mostly from earlier works, especially from the commentaries on the canonical texts.

The book Katha-Mahodadhi, “The great ocean of stories”,<sup>2</sup> compiled in the year 1448 by Somacandra, contains 157 stories partly in Prakrt, partly in Sanskrit with Prakrt verses.

In the year 1464 Subhasila Ganin, pupil of Laksmisagara Suri, wrote his Pancasati-Probodha-Sambandha “Book of 500 stories serving to awaken the Faith”. The same Subhasila Ganin also wrote Bharatadi-Katha<sup>3</sup> or Katha-kosa in the 1452 and several other narrative works.

In about 1530 Nemidatta wrote a book of narratives entitled Aradhana- Katha-Kosa. In 1600 Hemavijaya wrote his Katha-Ratnakara, “Ocean of Stories”, a book of 258 stories.

There are also many interesting stories in the Dharma-Kalpa-Druma, “The wishing-tree of religion”, a bulky- narrative work in Sanskrit verses, written by a certain Udayadharma in about 1450 A.D. or later.

Tales relating to Vikrama are found in Ananta's Viracarita and Sivadasa's Salivahanacarita,<sup>4</sup> in the anonymous Vikramodaya<sup>5</sup> in the Jain work Pancadandachatra-prabandha<sup>6</sup> and Nandisayagnika's Vikramakarita.<sup>7</sup>

Merutuhga's Prabandhacintamani<sup>8</sup> is a work of great historical importance. It was finished at a Wadwan on the Vaisakha full moon of Sam. 1362 (1306 A.D.) It is divided into five prakasas, and each prakasa into prabandhas. It begins with the story of Vikramaditya, the traditional founder of Sambat-era and ends with the tales of Laksmanasena, Umapatidhara and Bhatrhari. His Mahapurushacarita gives an account of some Jain saints.

Rajasekharasuri, the pupil of Tilaksuri was a Jain and he wrote Prabandhakosa, a collection of 24 stories in prose at Delhi under the patronage of Mahanasimha<sup>9</sup> in Sam. 1405 (1348 A.D.).

Hemacandra's Trisastisalapurushacarita and its supplement Parisistaparva contain much folk lore mythical and biographical.<sup>10</sup>

Prabhacandra's Prabhavakacarita, a collection of stories in verse, mostly biographical notices in 22 chapters, probably based on a similar work of Hemacandra was revised by Pradyumnasuri about 1250 A.D.

Somacandra, the pupil of Ratnasekhara of Tapa Gaccha, wrote his Kathamahodadhi, a collection of 126 Jain stories in 1504 (1448 A.D.) beginning with the story of Karpura-prakara.<sup>11</sup>

Bharatakadvatimsika contains 32 stories of Jain origin satirical of Brahmin usages.<sup>12</sup>

Jagannathamisra, the son of Laksmāna of Radhivamsa, lived about the 17th century A.D.<sup>13</sup> He wrote Kathaprakasa which contains interesting episodes and is a collection of tales taken from various sources.

Kathakosa<sup>14</sup> is another collection of twenty seven tales illustrating in simple prose the usual fruits of different actions of men, such as kindness, worship, anger, avarice etc.

In Citrasenapadmavatikatha,<sup>15</sup> a small poem, Rajavallabha pathaka, pupil of Mahimacandra of Malucandrasuri, gives the fable of Citrasena and Padmavati.

Kalikacaryakatha,<sup>16</sup> composed by Samayasundara pupil of Sakalacandra, in prose, gives the tale of Kalikacarya, a Jain Sthavira and narrates also the ancient tales of the establishment of the Vikrama and Saka era.

Kavikuniara's Rajasekharacaritra or Sabharanjanaprabandha is a poem inculcating morals by means of stories abridged from those which are said to have been originally related in the court of Rajasekhara and which were afterwards repeated by Rajasekhara to Subuddhi.<sup>17</sup>

Vidyapati, the son of Ganapati and grandson of Jayadatta, lived in the first half of the 15th Century A.D. In L.S. 291 (1410 A.D.) a copy of Kavyaprakasa was copied under Vidyapati's order and in L.S. 309 (1428 A.D.) Vidyapati himself copied Bhagavata Purana.<sup>18</sup>

His Kirtilata, a poem in Avahittha language mentions Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur (1401-1440 A.D.).<sup>19</sup> His Durgabhaktitarahgini<sup>20</sup> is a poem of one thousand verses on the ceremony of the autumnal worship of Durga famous in Eastern Bengal. It was written under the patronage of Dhirasimha (son of Narasimha) who was the ruling king in Mithila in L.S. 321 (1440 A.D.). Likhanavali is a Sanskrit work on forms of letter-writing composed under the patronage of Puraditya, a Jagirdar in North Mithila. Vidyapati's name is equally known by his two gazetteers in prose. Bhuparikrama and Purusapariksa. Bhuparikrama covers Balarama's journey round the earth, describing 56 countries and Purusapariksa, a collection of 44 stories contains moral or political tales for the instruction of children.

Ananda's Madhavan alakatha relates in prose the story of Madhavanala and Kamakandala.<sup>21</sup>

Srivarā's Kathakautuka gives the story of Yusuf and Zulaika from the well-known poem of Jaini, while Isabani-tikatha, a Sanskrit rendering of the Aesop's Fables of Narayana Balakrsna and Sulematcarita of Kalyanmalla narrating the story of Solomon and David from Old Testament<sup>22</sup> deserve mention.

Certain stories are found in both the versions viz. Prose and verse in Jaina literature. In prose Sri pala carita of Jayakirtisuri, Hiraprasna of Kirtivijayagani, Amaradattamitrānandacarita of Bhavacandrasuri, Cauryasi prabandha of Rajasekharasuri,

Phanadattacarita of Bhavacandra, Bhavanabhanukevalicaritra of Hamsagani, Rupasenacarita, Karnaugh atanakatha, Ratna/ekharacarita of Dayavardhanagani and in verse Ambalacaritar Uttarakumaracarita of Carucandra, Padma- carita. of Subhavardhana, Balabhadracarita of Subha vardhanagani, Vimalanathacarita of Jnanasagara, Vimalasahacarita of Indrahamsagani, Udayana-rajacarita of Mallisena, Vasuma- ticitrasena of Garigadhara Vijayacandracarita of Candraprabha Mahattara, Sahasankacarita of Mahesvara - all such books bear tradition of success in Sanskrit short stories in Jaina literature.

## **The place of the Sekasubhodaya in Sanskrit literature.**

Sekasubhodaya, celebrating the auspicious coming of a Muslim saint in a country which did not know Islam, is a first literary record in Bengal that purports to honour a Pir. The overall structure of the book extends the essence of historicity enshrouded by a few pseudo historical verses, some anecdotes, historical persons such as Laksmāna Sena, Umapatidhara, Govardhana Acarya, Halayudha Misra, Vijaya Sena, Ramapala, Dhoyi, Jayadeva etc. This book proves its gravity as it touches the materials of early Bengal history and culture with firm belief and undoubtedly preserves some old tradition and gossip about the- Hindu Kings - Paia and Sena ruling in Bengal before the coming of the Turks.

A containercontainer of miscellaneous stories that wererecurrent in the country reminds us some of the stories of Vetalapancavimsati and a few stories of some historical importance. The story of the mother losing her head on hearing good music goes back to the ninth century. The scene of a mother mistaking her child for the pitcher and dropping him in well is depicted in a panel of the ruined temple excavated at Paharpur in North Bengal, not far off from a historical site connected with the Sena kings

Having not been puffed up with much material for the text book variety of history, some incidents and references articulated breathe the spirit of genuine history. For instance Laksmāna Sena's antagonism to Muslims and his clash with the old minister Umapatidhara, though not mentioned in any records of Laksmāna Sena and his sons was a fact. There is little doubt that Laksmāna Sena had several armed conflicts and fights with the Muslim power which came into light by the eulogies of the two court poets of theking.<sup>23</sup>

Laksmāna Sena's hostile attitude to the Turks was detected from the present book where the seikh was told by the Great Person to go to the eastern country where the king was Laksmāna Sena who killed the Muslim that ventured there.<sup>24</sup>

Antagonism between king Laksmāna Sena and Umapatidhara, between the Queen Vallabha and the minister is the main note in many of the stories and anecdotes in Sekasubhodaya. The king was jealous of the minister as the latter had a skilled attendant like Madana. He was also ungracious to the minister on account of the latter's dislike for Vallabha. A story in Prabandhacintamani of Merutuhga relating to the antagonism between Laksmāna Sena and his senior ministerwho did not approve of the king's partiality for a low-caste concubine.

Besides the author Halayudha Misra and Umapatidhara, a few other persons belonged to the court of Laksmāna Sena such as Govardhana Acarya, Dhoyi, Jayadeva etc.

Govardhana Acarya who is called Jagadguru, appears as an upright, pious Brahman of somewhat irritable temper, while Dhoyi, an illiterate man coming to possess divine gift of high poetry obviously follows the tradition of stories concerning Valmiki and Kalidasa. The story of Jayadeva and his wife contesting Vudhana Misra is obviously apocryphal as Kapilendra of Orissa belonged to the 15th Century. This does not stand far from truth. It indicates that Jayadeva did not originally belong to the court of Laksmāna Sena and that he had first come there as an outsider. This had been supported by a verse by Jayadeva quoted in Sadukti-karnamṛta.

Apart from such historical persons another figure Garigo, the play actor deserves mention, but sincerely there was a historical person named Garigoka, a play-actor and also a poet of some sort and two of his verses are quoted in Sadukti-karnamṛta.<sup>25</sup> This chapter in Sekasubhodaya with his son Jaya, also a play actor Jayanta and the latter's wife Vidyutprabha are probably baseless pleasantries.

The author Halayudha Misra appears as a friend of the seikh in the opening chapter and reappears sporadically in the later chapters as a good and impartial man liked by the seikh enjoying the full confidence of the king and respected by the people.

The hero of the "Sekaślibhodaya" the seikh is not a historical person. The miracles of the saint, his adventures and his journeys are narrated in a style which recalls the mediaeval Mohammedan Person and Arab romance, as in the tales of Hatim Tayi and the of Four Dervishes. The contents are undoubtedly inspired by the rich arabesques of Mohammedan romance and hagiology, But the style of narration is based on that of India and from that aspect the book is a direct descendant of the Vetālapāncavimsatī, the Dvātrimsatputtalikā the Sukasaptatī and other similar medieval works. In fact, in it we find wedded the spirit of Hindu story-telling with Mohammedan romance.) As a collection of legends narrating the advent of Bengal of a miracle working Mohammedan preacher to whose memory an important mosque and shrine still stands, the work affords us a curious side light into the spread of Islam in Bengal, with hints as to its having penetrated inside the province even before the Turk had brought it as the faith of an iron-handed ruling class. The glimpses into Bengalee Hindu society, such as perhaps it was in the decadent days of inefficient rule immediately preceding the Turki raids and final conquest, are valuable indeed, as a document of Bengali sociology it is very important. This book also was regarded as an incontrovertible proof of the right of the mosque and shrine) and of its attendant priests to the rich lands it had been enjoying. It bears other value also as it used to be read out on solemn occasions to the pious pilgrims who were mostly the Mohammedan peasantry of the neighbourhood of Maldah and these people were Hindus in all, but name, among whom the traditions of the spacious days of the Hindu kings - The Great Palas and the Senas would linger and from whom in spite of their nominal adherence to Islam the Sanskrit learning and Sanskrit culture of the days of their ancestors still claimed homage.) And for the delectation of such an audience the work was composed by one, may be by one of them, whose knowledge of the Sanskrit language in which it was his ambition to compose was not of the best. He had a tolerably good Sanskrit vocabulary and even now in Bengal villages the tradition is to make the boys in the village school (both Hindus and Mohammedans) get the

Amarakosa by heart after some elementary knowledge of Bengali, together with a number of moral hemistichs attributed to Canakya.

**Footnote**

1. Cf. Klatta, Specimen of lit.bibl. Jaina onomasticon, P.15. Duff. P.254, Peterson, Report IV, P.XXXIII, and Heritel, Jinakirtis "Geschichte von Pala and Gopala", P.1 .
2. Cf. Weber . HSS. Verz. II.3.1101 ff, Peterson,3 reports 18f
3. Weber, I.C
4. CSC, (1896)No.145, JASB. Cat.28.43.
5. 10C, I.3960, Zacharise, KL. Sekeiften 152,166.
6. Ed.and Tr.ABA, (1877).
7. CC, I.757.MY8.292. Printed Madras.
8. PR. III.AP.226.
9. JBRAS.X.31.
- 10.Ed.H. Jacobi, Bib. Ind. Tr. J. Hertel. Leipzig and by Helen M. Johnson, Gos, Baroda, Keith, JRAS, (1908) 119, SL,204.
- 11.PR. III. 18,317,IV,CXXXIV.
- 12.Oxf. 155.
- 13.IO,948,1426.
- 14.CSC,(1909). NO.56
- 15.Ibid,No 58. PR, III. AP.215, IV ,LXXXIX
- 16.PR, III, 32. Jacodi, ZDMG, XXXIV, 266, NO 57(1910), 94.
- 17.DC, XI.8167.
- 18.India govt. MS. Fol. 117a. B. Chatterjee I.C.36.
- 19.PR, III. 18,317, IV, CXXXIV.
- 20.Oxf.155.
- 21.IO,948,1426
- 22.CSC,(1909).NO.56.
- 23.Ibid,No 58. PR. III. AP 215, IV IXXXIX
- 24.PR, III,32. Jacodi,ZDMG, XXXIV,266, NO.57(1910),94.
- 25.DC,XI.8167.
- 26.India Govt. MS. Fol,117a. B. Chatterjee 1. C.36
- 27.Elphinstone's History of India, (748-9).
- 28.CSC(1903), 445, CSC (1996), NO.29
- 29.Ed. By Pavolini, GSAI, XX11.313
- 30.DC, XXI,8150
- 31.Saduktikarnamrita. III.15.4, V.18.3
- 32.SSD.Ch. IX. Line, 18, P.48
- 33.Saduktikarnamrita – I. 10.5, IV.40.4

**Abriviation**

CC –Aufrecht’s Catelogus Catelogorum, pts. 1,2.3, Leipzig.

CSC – Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

EI –Epigrapia Indica.

DC – Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the oriental Manuscripts in India office, London by Eggeling.

PR –Peterson’s reports of the operations in search of Sanskrit MSS. in the Bombay Circle ( I to IV).

JBRAS –Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

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