

II-21. Kakka Takes the Challenge

Intellectual drive is of ones own calling.

- Kakka

The unauthorized copies of the Moodbidri pandulipi brought a renewed interest and awareness about the roots and contents of this irreplaceable heritage. In Indian mind older-is-better just as the bigger-is-better in American mind. Another issue lurked in the background. In spite of the verified claim of far more ancient physical and intellectual roots, even to this day the Arihant tradition is often considered a splinter branch of the Hinduism dominated by the Indo-Ary tradition. Against this backdrop, the availability of the Moodbidri pandulipi invigorated reexamination of the heritage.

Trustees of the Moodbidri temple, as well as many other groups, were initially opposed to any suggestion of publication of The Dhavla. On the other hand, availability of the unauthorized copies brought to the attention of many young scholars the challenge of understanding the content. They were also inspired by the influence of Gandhi who brought resurgence for all-things-Indian (*Bhartiy*). These young scholars, derogatorily called 'Babu Pandit' by the more traditional segment of the society, pressed on. Their concern was that unless the content suitably understood and elaborated the copies may also become the objects of blind worship, and possibly misinterpretations.

The basis for the Satprarupana text was established in an article published in 1938 (I-20). During 1923 to 1936 Kakka established these rules for the presentation of such material in a

modern form by systematically associating the content with other works. These and other insights played an important life-long role in bringing the 12th Ang (*itthivay*) material to the modern form. I recount some of his inspiring and instructive biographical encounters that have largely remained in the background.

In 1916, when Kakka was 12 years old, his older brother, back from a pilgrimage to Moodbidri, talked with enthusiasm about the need to understand the contents of the Moodbidri pandulipi. Again in 1923, as a student living in a hostel in Jabalpur, in a dream he saw himself studying the pandulipis. Next day, while cleaning his shared room, he found a couple of hand-written fragments on the floor under his bed. One of these, along with his dated note of December 23, 1923, is reproduced in Figure II-3. It is not clear how the fragments found their way to the hostel. However, it is certain that after 1916 the fragments of the 'copies of copies' were widely disseminated. From the script it appears that the fragment is in the handwriting of Sitaram Shastri. In 1926 Kakka was invited to Saharanpur for a series of lectures. There for the first time he met Sitaram Shastri who was transcribing the material in Nagari as Gajpati Shastri read the modern Kannad from the smuggled copy. The ensuing conversation made it clear to Kakka that it is absolutely necessary to learn Prakrit to fully appreciate the contents of the pandulipi. For several years Kakka learnt Prakrit on his own. In 1930-1931 he studied Prakrit from Bechar Das and later from Virbhadr in Beawar. He also learnt about usage of ancient Prakrit from the local Shvetambar monks. By 1932, he published an article on the Prakrit roots of many of the Sanskrit terms used in the ancient Digambar Jain writings.

In 1933 Kakka writes of another dream in which he was studying Dhavla. Coincidentally, only four days later, during an

unplanned visit to Jhalrapatan with Lal Chand, he was shown another copy of the Moodbidri pandulipi. In my opinion this visit was not so coincidental. It is quite likely that the trip was organized by Lal Chand to encourage Kakka to work on the translation. After this visit Kakka started keeping his own detailed copies and notes of the Moodbidri pandulipi and related material. Serious discrepancies began to surface from the comparison of the copies in Ajmer, Jhalrapapatan and Saharanpur.

The copies of copies that found their way into the various Temple libraries alarmed some and inspired others. A name-sake of Kakka, Professor Hiralal Jain whom I will call Professor, also traces his interest to seeing the Karanja copy in 1924. The Jain Sahitya Uddharak Fund was established in 1934 largely through a single donor. These funds were obtained by consented-hijacking of the funds earmarked by Luxmi Chand of Vidisha for a more ritualistic purpose. The mission of the Uddharak Fund was to bring out an authoritative printed Hindi version of The Dhavla. Professor was appointed the secretary (*mantri*, manager) of the fund. In 1935, Professor published a printed compendium of about 300 lines based on the JaiDhavla material. To put it politely, by all accounts it was not a success. At the very least, it was out of sequence and out of context. It was not an inspiring work, and certainly not the kind that would make anybody proud. After this experience Professor decided to build his career on his administrative skill.

A segment of the Jain community was very enthusiastic about the idea of publication of the Dhavla heritage in a modern form. At the same time, there were valid concerns about incompetent handling of the work that can only add to the confusion arising from the proliferation of incomplete copies.

After examining the material Professor had produced, the trustees of Moodbidri Temple again refused to authorize the use of their pandulipi. The community also advised the Professor to seek expert help and a wider feedback. The tenure of Banshidhar Jain with the Uddharak Fund lasted about a month. He left irritated by ill-conceived notions of the Manager. The legalistic style of Professor coupled with a lack of understanding of the nuances of traditional literature and scholarship did not sit well with most traditional scholars. His familiarity with English and the legal system have been useful in his role as a manager. However, the episode of premature publication, clash of egos, and a lack of the "people skills" of Professor became widely known in the intellectual circles.

Addressing concerns about the challenge of the Dhavla work at the Itarsi convention in December 1933, Kakka offered some suggestions. During 1934-1938 he continued to do his work in Ujjain with support of Lal Chand. The breakthrough from this work was published as a paper in 1938 (Chapter I-20). It shows that not only he had identified the historicity of the content of Satprarupana as the first part of the Jeevatthan but also established its connection with the later works. The Professor and A. N. Upadhye were on the editorial board of this journal. Therefore it is not a coincidence that after the publication of this paper the Professor renewed his efforts to bring Kakka to Uddharak Fund in Amraoti for the Dhavla work.

According to the Professor's remarks in the introduction published with Satprarupana in 1939 (Figure II-4A) little progress was made by the Fund in Amraoti until the effort was reorganized with the arrival of Kakka on January 1, 1939. At the insistence of Nathuram Premi, in spite of his best judgment Kakka decided to leave Ujjain. With him he also took complete drafts of the first

three volumes of Shatkhandagam, and a reasonably complete list of the Prakrit steps (*churni sutr*) for the next five chapters.

Before we go into the success of the publication effort, a detour is necessary to understand the gravity of the mission and the background work needed to establish the basic rules for successful handling of the ancient writings of this genera. During 1923-1936 Kakka developed the rules of translation from the ancient Prakrit. Now these rules are generally accepted for the modern versions of text of the genera. As a possible guide to the scholars as well as the layman, key conceptual break-through outlined in this short (9 pages) paper are worth perusal.

- 1.** The paper identifies the *Jeevatthan* (*Jeevasthan*) as the conceptual crux of The Dhavla.
- 2.** It compares the 175 steps of Satprarupana in Prakrit by Pushpadant (from the pandulipi) with the Sanskrit version found in *Sarvarthsiddhi* by Pujyapad (ca. 500 CE) and a commentary by Shrutsagar. The comparison establishes the precedence of the Prakrit work. The paper shows that Kakka had identified the beginning of the text, deciphered the sequence of steps and meaning of satprarupana as the first chapter of Jeevatthan. Two additional steps to the text were included after comparison with the Saharanpur copy.
- 3.** Besides establishing the style of numbering the steps, the paper clearly outlines the scope of Jeevatthan core.
- 4.** Several points of discord between the Prakrit and Sanskrit versions are noted. A point of particular interest is that the conception of "mixed knowledge" (*syad* or the knowledge with doubt) is absent in the Sanskrit version.
- 5.** This paper mentions the period of Pushpadant as 600 years after Mahaveer as confirmed by the later findings.

6. Origin of *dristi*, as the translation of *itthi*, occurred in the Sanskrit rendition.

At the end of the paper it is clearly stated that the content of the Jeevatthan was widely available before 500 CE. The content also showed that the heritage of Moodbidri pandulipi is in the tradition of the 12th Ang of itthivay. Finally it also showed that at least some of the later works may be based on the fragments of the body of the ancient work.

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