

II-24. Basis of the Discord in the Teamwork

.. to be damned to argue the same questions over and over and over and ..

- J. P. Sartre's characterization of Hell.

In 1938 Kakka had handed over the completed pandulipi of Satprarupana to the Uddharak Fund with the *greed and hope* that the collective and cooperative effort would yield a definitive work in a shorter period. In the back of his mind he had also considered the vicinity of Vardha to Amraoti, which was a center for Gandhian thought and the Non-cooperation movement. By mid-thirties he had started using hand-spun Khadi cloth and wore non-leather shoes.

As a full-time employee of the British Government at the King Edward College in Amraoti, Professor did his days work for a regular salary. In the afternoons and evenings the three colleagues sat down to review the daily progress. Of course, this was very inconvenient for Kakka. He had already put in 12-15 hours by then. With some grumbling Panditji accepted Kakka's work-schedule with rest in the afternoon. In return Kakka accepted Panditji's habit of chewing tobacco.

Rapid publication of the five volumes of Jeevatthan (over 2000 printed pages) during 1939 to 43 was possible because the content was already validated in terms of the linguistic and grammatical rules of ancient Prakrit. The text was laid down in well organized steps. Before coming to Amraoti, Kakka had also collected at least some of the background material and compiled it in a pandulipi form. There was unanimity about the objective.

The materials in hand had to be re-verified and integrated with other sources, and obtain inputs from others. Apparently, the individual efforts of the group complemented.

The press-copies of the pandulipis (still preserved) show that Kakka did more than 90% of the work for the first two volumes, and over 60% for the next three. Kakka's part required the grammar and Nay-based interpretation of the prakrit material in the context of the later secondary sources. It meant, among other things, aligning the syntax and comparison of the copies of copies to spot missing pieces. The language of the comments and notes had to be aligned with the derived later works including *Tilloypannati*, *Gommatsaar* and *Panchsangrah*.

Use and abuse of Anglicization and etymology

Upadhye helped with rules of etymology to set the historical context for Jeevatthan. The method has limitations. Over the last 2500 years the pandulipi text had undergone major transfers before the current form was scribed in hale-Kannad from a copy of Dhavala. It is not likely that some of the scribes did not understand the content, and possibly the language which has Prakrit and Sanskrit texts of different periods.

One can only imagine what effects such limitations may have had. For example consider Chandra as spelled in English. In Hindi it is Chandr for male and Chandra for female. This clearly influences gender, negation and other nuances included in compound words and word endings. Cultural context is also a major factor in concept rendering. Consider the ways in which the words, Mantra, Karma, Pundita, Guru are used in English. Such influences are particularly serious in the Indian works of the Western scholars. In the context of 18th and 19 century their yardstick was very limited. Even discounting the vagaries in the

work of the Jesuits, most Orientalists were guided by the ideas of Eurocentric rationality. Such influences are discernible even in the works of Harman Jacobi.

It is not trivial to get around such limitations to assign etymological origins to words that have passed through several renditions of written and spoken forms of the texts of different origins. Both, the Professor and Upadhye do not appear to be aware of such concerns. Traditionally such concerns are resolved on the basis of the context and intent of the content in relation to the extrapolations to more recent derived literature. Both Professor and Upadhye did not have such understanding.

Other restrictions also apply. Ability to speak a language fluently (polyglots or multilingual) does not confer the ability to understand the structure of the background phenomena and concept as a systematic process. A good driver does not have to know much about the automobile engine. On the other hand deeper purpose of language communication is to bring out a close relation between the foreground activities (symbol and word representation) and the background for thought to restore the content, context, and meaning.

Professor provided the input about the historical context for the presentation in the European scholarly format. With his flare for rhetoric, during his short tenure Panditji provided grammatical and linguistic nuances for the Sanskrit notes. Panditji and Devaki Nandan also verified the relationships to derived sources. The other name on the title page (Figure II-4 B) is A. N. Upadhye, an expert on the etymology of the Prakrit terms. He was consulted for the first 200 pages at the proof stage. The text had to be read to him because he did not know the Nagari script. Apparently this was still the case 40 years later. Recall that

etymology is about the linguistic roots and derivatives. It is certainly not about the precision of usage and meaning. Kakka's expertise and background remained indispensable for the Prakrit usage and nuances. The Abhidhan Rajendra Kosh used for this work was his personal copy purchased with the family gold.

Kaam mera, naam tera: Discord on Intellectual-credit

With the key insight published in a scholarly journal (Chapter I-20) and the Jeevatthan pandulipi in hand, by the end of 1938 the role of Kakka as a scholar was already established. Or at least he thought so. With his new colleagues in Amraoti there was no discord on the objective of bringing out a definitive work. In general, recognizing the nonviolence sensitivities explicit care was taken against the use of the animal parts at all stage of the production of the book. There were some sensibility issues, such as some of the Western-educated friends of Professor occasionally walked into the work place with their shoes on. In any case, well-wishes of the Jain community after the publication of the first volume meant more funds. Intellectual help also came from other sources, notably Nathuram Premi. By the time third volume was published, even the trustees of Moodbidri temple changed their minds. They provided access to the original transcribed copy in their possession. During 1942-43 and several times in later years Kakka spent months in Moodbidri to check the wording against the original pandulipi.

In intellectual matters freedom of thought is fundamental. It is not easy to maintain such independence in an environment of patronage and fragile egos. Not everybody is able to do such balancing act successfully and still carry out their work. Such a balance and sensitivity is also needed even in purely intellectual

and scholarly matter. Otherwise, a constructive discussion and relationship turns destructive.

Proper credit is a form of critical recognition of a scholar's responsibility for the originality, quality, and integrity of the work. Sometimes trappings of power that go with the social recognition take the upper hand. After all, the name in print helps in claiming degrees and jobs. It attracts unfair and unworthy claims. A strict and austere code of conduct of monks was possibly necessitated by such concerns. But it also keeps away many others who could contribute. Works of this magnitude are also beyond the abilities of a single person, including a monk. Even now many monks who have delved into the Shatkhandagam material credit Kakka for the breakthrough that led to the deeper understanding of the tradition. Over the years Kakka taught some of this material and its nuances to several aspiring monks.

The first major crack in the relations of Kakka with Professor developed on the issue of credits on the printed version of Satprarupana (Figure II-4A, B and C). Not only the agreement reached a few months before was not honored, but the problem was also not resolved later. Kakka left Amraoti as soon as the Jeevatthan part in the first six volumes of Shatkhandagam was complete. Based on the articles published at that time, in defense of his resignation Kakka clearly stated that not only the behavior but also the accusations and arguments of Professor are incongruent with facts within his own statements in the introduction. Kakka charged that the Professor's conduct amounted to a blatant breach of agreement if not outright dishonesty - even though Professor had a degree in Law.

"A breach of collegiality is unacceptable" Kakka wrote in a series of articles to the Jain community in defense of his decision to leave the Dhavla work incomplete. He wrote: "Even though

Professor has a L. L. B. degree in Law, his behavior during the whole episode is fundamentally contradictory (*mithya*). It is also incongruent with *nyay* - a term also used for evidence-based justice." At one stage some of the judicial friends of Professor came to "pressure" Kakka. Infuriated by that event, Kakka took a somewhat lower blow. In an article examining the concept of editorship, intellectual contribution, and the responsibility that goes with each, Kakka pointed out that during the thirties Professor "could not make progress on the Dhavla work based on his own abilities." Elsewhere Kakka concluded that certainly based on the quality and contributions of his own work Professor is not worthy of any intellectual credit. The letters that I found from Professor do not dispute any of the facts. He only asserts his credit was as a Mantri (secretary) and Managing Editor appointed by the Uddharak Fund. Sixty years later, I heard the same party-line from a descendent of the founder of the Fund.

It is noteworthy that Professor's style of legal briefs, a dialectic based on a polarized point of view, is apparent in most of his writings, ranging from scribbled notes to the more formal presentations. In polarizing a dialectic one presents only the facts that suit ones own purpose.

By some accounts, even decades later, *the practice of glorified editorship* initiated by Professor continues to have a detrimental effect on managing intellectual creativity. The model of claiming underserved credit, and glorification of the administrative responsibilities as an editor, has had a lasting detrimental effect on the originality in creative works. Creativity suffers if the credit and responsibility are separated to serve the interests of administrators, managers, publishers and sponsors. Matters are made worse if the Forward writers, peer-reviewers,

and the book-review process can not deal even with the known faults in the system.

Back as freelance

Recall that both Kakka and Panditji did not know English. During the celebration when the printed version was brought out for the first time for the public viewing, through their friends both learnt about the discrepancies on the cover pages of the 1939 printing (Figure II-4B and C). The work had progressed with the agreement that the three colleagues will be *Sah-sampadak* (equal co-editors). For them the term *sah-sampadak* has the same explicit meaning as *sah-paathi* (peers or pupils of the same grade in school). By all accounts Kakka did not take this breach by Professor lightly, especially when the promise to rectify the situation was not followed up even with the publication of the next four volumes. Kakka was not the one to dwell on lingering unpleasant issues underlying the unjustified '*kaam mera, naam tera*' (my-work-in-your-name) treatment through which credit is usurped unfairly. The dispute was never settled, not even after the issue was aired out in press. In spite of considerable public discussion the credit-grab and influence paddling continued for quite some time. By other accounts also Professor used positions of power as manager or managing editor to take credit for the work of others. Those who dissented were not to be published by certain influential publishing houses.

For sticking to the issue of intellectual credit for his work, Kakka paid heavy price during the next 20 years. Those were turbulent times. Recall that in 1944, the Second World War was in full rage. Jobs were scarce. Economic situation was precarious for all. It remained so for our family for the next fifteen years. It is not clear if Kakka ever got over the pain. He never mentioned it to

any of his children. I remember hearing from both of my parents: *Do not scrape the bottom of the cooking pot from which you serve. This way not only you avoid the grit and burnt food, but the guests will also not know how much you have.*

Burnt by the experience with the Uddharak Fund, and not to be cheated twice, Kaka decided to never work for an institution. He did all his later work free-lance. This did not earn him institutional support or recognition. He benefitted from many individuals who were willing to sponsor his work for the scholarship. It is a tribute to the tradition that scholarly work continues to be sponsored by individuals.

Certainly, my mother had not forgotten the Amraoti incidence even until her death in 1988. In 1987 she politely declined any connection whatsoever with a Foundation set up in Jabalpur in the name of Professor. In spite of his success and recognition a managing editor in the later years, Professor was not known for his integrity.

The problem of credit made worse in the reprint. In the 1973 reprint (Figure II-4D and E) of Satprarupana Professor did not honor his commitment. The problem is made worse in this reprint prepared by Professor just before his death. The reprint does not have the names of Kakka or Panditji. Other attempts to gloss over the facts of the original edition are also apparent in this reprint published with minor corrections based on comparisons with the original Moodbidri pandulipi. It is curious that in the second reprint A. N. Upadhye appears as a co-editor. This is even more puzzling because Kakka had seen him only a few months before in relation to the work on this reprint edition. After a protest letter from Kakka (Figure II-4F) the original inside-cover of volume II is published in the reprint of the second volume. The

original discrepancies still persisted in the English version of the cover and the dust jacket.

There is no doubt that Professor managed the Fund to the completion of its original mission. It appears even for the reprint Professor promoted the legal interpretation of intellectual work as "work for payment" or "work for hire." The fund had paid for the activities which for most part did not produce any useful results for 4 years. The publication work moved fast only after Kakka joined in the effort. Also the work progressed after the plan outlined by the Fund or its manager was abandoned. Myths to perpetuate Professor's contributions continued in a publication to celebrate his 100th birth anniversary. Such attempts to assign unwarranted and hijacked credits for the intellectual work distract potential scholars from an appreciation of the intellectual and creative input needed to carry out a significant body of work to create value.

Exploitation and influence peddling is affront to the creative process. Looking through the life-long contributions of all the players, as summarized in the biographical sketches at the end of this volume, it is apparent that the Professor's contributions have been mostly as a manager and advisor to facilitate the book production process. Managing editor is an appropriate characterization for such a role. Outside such roles, the Professor's main work is of setting historical context through compilation and comparisons of inscriptions.

The issue of credit is part of what is now called the intellectual property. For a cursory reader, the name on the cover page is the only connection to the effort behind the product. Even such credit means responsibility and priority that goes with the work. Without intellectual honesty and integrity, the drive and motivation for the creative processes would dry up. Current

situation on such issues in India has to change. Most countries now explicitly protect the intellectual property of creator, inventor, writer, or discoverer. It is not about just the legal protection accorded to the deep pockets of trusts, publishers, and their agents who share no liabilities resulting from the content.

Administrators of the community funds and social institutions could also learn from the accords and discords outlined above. Many of the problems are now routinely avoided through written contracts to safeguard credits. Remarkably, the modern standards for apportioning credits are not very different than the traditional methods going back centuries, i.e. to acknowledge sources, support, and other contributions while taking responsibility for the creative work as an author. The scholarly tradition is about open inquiry to examine possibilities, entertain viable points of views, and then leave room for doubt.

Proliferation of what can only be called as ‘fakes’. Publication of Dhavla did not cause major cracks within the lay and the intellectual community. Enthusiasm about bringing out the word heritage also unleashed a flurry of not-so-original works. Integrity of the intellectual processes depends on the independent peer review process and a strict code of conduct of the author, sponsor and the publisher. Forces of the market place backed by deep-pocket only encourage influence paddling.

As the old scholars die out, new scholars fill the gap. Their work depends on individual and public sponsorships. Government of India also has ‘projects’ whose motives are not clear. It may preserve the pandulipid legacy of words for somewhat longer, but certainly it is not to revitalize the tradition of thought. This kind of work is unlikely to be sustainable by the market forces alone.

The quality of a product suffers when people resort to unfair practices. It is now generally recognized that the checks and balances on the standards of scholarship are not functional in India. Breaches are blatant not only in theses and dissertations, but also in reprinted books that rarely acknowledge the original work. Such efforts may be sustained by charity with blind-faith. Can it create value for a viable tradition of thought?

Sometimes nothing is better than nonsense. Support for unworthy (*kupatr*) causes inflicts more damage than possible good it might do. Pressure on publishers and scholars supported by charities, under the guise of spreading the knowledge, has brought on a flurry of publications of dubious value. *To spread their gospel* some groups have resorted to providing cheap and free literature. Faced with space limitation and deteriorating condition of their holdings some temple libraries have removed the older works by newer books. It amounts to nothing less than book burning!

In closing, effective mechanisms are needed to identify and promote viable methods, insights, and interpretations of thought to maintain its viability. In such matters the market forces may be more preferable than a proliferation of hidden agendas supported by public or private charity. On a recent visit to the English countryside, I was told by the guide to have a good look at a church. Then he said, *this was the last new church building constructed in England, and that was in the late 17th century*. I am sure he was referring to other better ways of spending money and effort for the public good.

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