



A Study Of Digambara - Main Sect Of Jainism

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the growth and development of sects and various sub-sects in Jain tradition responded to the requirements and tendencies of different times the Jain texts like Bhagyavati, Visvasavyaka, Bhashya, and Sthanana, show that there were schisms in Mahavira. The first Bahurata schism is attributed to Jamali, the son in law of Mahaveera, the second Jivapradesha-Schism to Tisyagupta then schisms appeared in Jainism a few centuries after the Nirvana of Mahaveera.

According to Svetambara the Jain order was divided into two sects 609 years after the death of Mahaveera, by Sivabhuti, a resident of Rathavirapura, who was a disciple of Kancha. J. L. Jaini quotes: 'The division of the Jain community into the two sects of svtambara, "write-robed" and Digambar as "sky-robed" i.e. naked, took place according to their concurrent testimony, 609 years after Mahaveera i.e. about 80 A.D.

Basham, A.L. views that " Out of this migration arose the great schism of Jainism on a point of monastic discipline Bhadrabhanu, the elder of the community, who had led the emigrants and had insisted on the retention of the rule of nudity which Mahaveera had established. Stulabhadra, the leader of the monks who had remained in the north, allowed his followers to wear white garments owing to the hardships and confusion of the famine. Hence, arose the two sects of Jains, the Digambaras and the svtambaras the Schism did not become final until the 1st Century. A.D.

Belgaum region has given a special contribution for Jain munis Heritage. These Jain sages were encouraged religion and social epic with their self welfare. They developed Jain dynasty. So many Jain sages lived during the period of 3rd C.A.D. to 13th C.A.D. in Belgaum region.

THE MAIN TWO SECTS OF JAINISM

- I) DIGAMBARAS AND
- II) SVETAMBARAS

The earliest available literary reference to the Digambara tradition occur in the Brahatkatha-Koas of Harisena (932 A.D.) and while the earliest literary references to the svetambara tradition is in the Avasyaka Niriyakti of about 500 A.D. Thus the two sects adhering to two different views and having two different approaches in course of time into Jainakalpa and sthavirakalpa, the former being orthodox and the later being liberal.

The Uttaradyana XXIII depicts a situation in which the pupils of Parshwanatha and Mahaveera try to patch up some of the differences in their ascetic practices. These differences created schism and sects in the Jain tradition. Among Digambaras there were such Divisions as Sangha, gana, Gachcha, Anvaya, bali. This was because of differences in practices among groups of monks who lived and moved in different parts of the country. And while giving the particulars of a teacher the rule generally observed was to mention the sangha and its sub units.

The local Jains of the district are mostly Digambaras and the Svetambaras who are found in the urban areas mostly immigrants from Gujarat and Rajasthan. The famous Digambara Saints Sri Vidhyanand Swami and Yelacharya Muni belong to the Belgaum district.

SECTS OF THE DIGAMBARAS:

With the lapse of time new sects originated in the Digambaras and the Svetambaras. We shall first point out the sects of the Digambaras, and then pass on to the Svetambara ones.

The different sects of the Digambaras are:

1. Dravida Samgha,
2. Kastha Samgha,
3. Mathura Samgha,
4. Yapaniya Samgha,
5. Terapantha,
6. Bisapantha,
7. Amaiyapantha, and
8. Gumanapantha.

The details are as follows:

- 1) The Dravida Samgha, according to the *Darsanasara*, appeared in Vikrama 526 (469 A.D.) in Dravida country near Madras, and was started by Vajranandi, the disciple of Pujiyapada. Many great Acaryas like 3inasena (the author of the *Harivam.j'apurana*), Vadiraja etc. patronized this Samgha, but nothing is known regarding the rules of ascetic discipline prevalent in this Samgha.
- 2) In Vikrama 753 (696 A.D.) the Kasrha Samgha was founded by Kumarasenamuni. His disciples kept a broom consisting of cow's hair.
- 3) Two hundred years after the origin of Kashtra Samgha, i.e., in Vikrama 953 (896 A.D.) the Mathura Samgha was started in Madura in Southern India by Ramasena. The saints of this Samgha did not keep any broom. Acarya Amitagati belonged to this Samgha. NATHURAMJI PREMI remarks that Devasena, the author of the *Darjanasara*, unnecessarily and without any adequate reasons called these Samghas pseudo-Jaina.
- 4) We encounter the name of another Samgha known as Yapaniya Samgha, which was started by Srikala) at Kalyana after 205 years of Vikrama era (148 A.D.) The saints of the Yapaniya school practiced nudity like the Digambaras and believed in the liberation of women in conformity with the of vetambaras. Thus they may be called the reconcilers of the two major sects. Now a-days the followers of this Samgha are not visible.
- 5) In course of time the saints deviated from the prescribed path of ascetic discipline. They started such practices as were having no scriptural support. Such saints began to be called Bhattarakas.

MONKS OF DIGAMBARA

A group of three monks was called as gana: a band of seven monks was designated as gachcha: and the regular community of monks was known a sangha.

The following were the various sub-divisions referenced to in Epigraphs:

- **Sangha:** Mula-sangha, Dravila Sangha, Sri Mula sangha Nandi sangha.
- **Gana:** Desi gana, Bhlatkara gana, Kandurer gana, Belladu gana, Surusta gana, sena gna, kranur gana, kumudi gana, varsenana gana kumudi gana, punngavriksha mula gana, deva gana.
- **Gachcha:** Pustraka a gachcha, Kaurv gachcha, Hogari gachcha, Tintrini gachcha, Indravali gachcha, Meshapasana gachcha, Chitrkata gachcha, vakra gachcha.
- **Anvaya:** kondakanad anvaya, chandrikavala anvaya, chitrkata anvaya, mulasanga anvaya,, madurugau anvaya.
- **Bali:** Ingalesvara bali.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DIGAMBARAS AND THE SVETAMBARAS;

The following main differences exist between the Digambaras and the Svetambaras;

- 1 The Digambara believe that no original canonical text exists now. The Svetambaras still preserve a good number of original scriptures.
- 2 According to the Digambaras, the omniscient no longer takes any earthly food. The Svetambaras are not preparing to accept this conception.
- 3 The Digambaras strictly maintain that there can be no salvation without nakedness. Since women cannot go without cloths, they are said to be incapable of salvation.
- 4 The Digambara hold that Mahaveera was not married. The svetambaras reject this view. According to them , Mahaveera was married and he had a daughter.
- 5 The images of tirthankaras are not decorated at all by the Digambaras, whereas the Svetambaras profusely decorate them.

The two main Jaina sects, viz., the Svetambara and the Digambara, are divided in to a number of sub- sects. There are at present three important Svetambara sub-sects: Murthipujaka, Stanakavasi and Therapanti. The number of present important Digambara sub-sects is also three: Bisapanthi, Terahapanti and Teranapanthi. Murthipujakas worship images are tiethankaras etc. The Stanakavasi are non-worshippers. The Terapanthis are also not in favour of idol-worship. Their interpretation of non-violence (ahimsa) is slightly different from that of the other Jainas. The Bisapanthis use fruits, flowers, etc., in the idolatry ceremony, whereas the Tarahapanthis use only lifeless articles in it. The Taranapanthis worship scriptures in place of images. All these sub-sects have their own religious and other works in addition to the common. They have their own temples and other religious and cultural as well.

The great sects of Swetambaras and Digambaras are both divided into a number of schools, orders and smaller sects. The causes of their origin and the differences between the two are quite diverse. Only a few of them owe their origin to teachers whose views were different from those which were generally acknowledged. Many came into existence purely on account of the fact that the pupils of a teacher or the monks of a place came together who felt that they belonged together as one group with respect to one another. A number of Ganas "schools", Kulas "sub-classification of schools" and Sakhas "branches" are already mentioned in the Kalpasutra in which they were split. The number of Gachhas existing today is negligible.

SOME OF THE DIGAMBARA'S

Some of the digambara's are as follows:

1. **Bahubali (11th Century A.D.):** In Hooligram inscription, Bahubali has been described as '*Yapaneeyes (Nghe) Punastataca Charupaarge Kanchooru Vikhyatagane babhoovu. Pura muneendra bahavomahaa...Dai (Tai) ka simho muneeshro Bahubali babhoovah:* The Hooligrama inscription was written in the period of Tribhuvana Malla (Vikramaditya-VI) of Kalyani Chalukyas, in 1055 A.D. It is known that Bahubali was was a Digambara sage, in Hooli village belonging to Kanchoor Sangha of Yapaniya Sangha.
2. **Shubhachandra (11th Century A.D.):** Shubhachandra was also a Digambar sage, mentioned in the Hooligrama inscription. He was belonging to Kandoor Sangha of Yapaniya Sangha. In the inscription he has been described as '*Jayatu Shubhachandradevah: Kaamdoorgana Pundareekavana martaindaschand Tridand....Parago budhuvinuta Yapaniya Samgha Pratit Kandoorganaaabhi Chandramarendeekshitivale (Ll) Yam Pogalvinamumn tivettvro (Mouee) vi (De) vadivyamuneendra Rum.*
3. **Maladharisoori (11th Century A.D.):** Maladharisoori has a Digambar sage, has been mentioned in Belavadi inscription, of Bailhongal taluk, in the period of emperor Bhuvanaik Malladeva of Kalyani Chalukyas in 1075 A.D. Nayak Mudishetty was his disciple. He has donated land for Sahasrakoot Jinalaya, for the food of sages.
4. **Nagachandra (11th Century A.D.):** Nagachandra was a Digambar sage, in Belavadi village of Bailhongal taluka in the period of Emperor Bhuvanaik Malladev belonging to Kalyani Chalukyas in 1075 A.D. He has been described as '*Baantinoleno Divya Munigalpari Bhavise Nachandra Siddamntigam*'. He had been honoured as '*Siddantigal*'.
5. **Shubhachandra (11th Century A.D.) :** Shubhachandra was a Digambar Sage of Rayabhog, in 1100 A.D., also a teacher of Rajaditya who had written Mathematical epics

CONCLUSION

According to Digambara liberation it was impossible without complete non-attachment. But Svetambara believed that women can attain moksha because they believe that the 19th Tirthankara Mallinatha was a woman. The Digambaras, being more severe in their view of asceticism, differed from the Svetambaras in this and another important respect, viz., as regards their treatment of women. The Svetambaras admitted that women could attain salvation and hence allowed them to become nuns. There are rules in their sacred books for the guidance of nuns no less than for the monks. The fundamentals of moral discipline were the same for Digambara and Svetambara nuns. But the attitude of Digambara towards nuns was more strict than that of Svetambara.

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