Chapter VIII - Advent of Jainism.

There is a strong tradition that Jainism was developed by a succession of twenty-four Tirthankaras. If it contains any truth, the origin of Jainism is to be traced to the Vedic times. Some scholars even believe that the nude images discovered at Mahenjodaro are Jain. The Rgveda contains the name of Rsabha and Arishtamesi whereas the Vajurveda mentions Rsabha, Ajitanatha and Arishtamesi. Rsabha is the first of the Tirthankaras and the twenty-third, Parvamanatha is generally given the credit of being the real founder of Jainism. But Jacobi says that "There is nothing to prove that Parsva was the founder of Jainism. Jaina tradition is unanimous in making Rsabha the first Tirthankara as its founder and there may be something historical in the tradition." The last of the Tirthankaras, Vardhamana Mahavira was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha and the religion came to be known after one of his titles, Jina or the conqueror. The historicity of Parsva and Mahavira has been established, but the accounts of the other Tirthankaras read more like legends than history.

For a long time there was a controversy about the relationship between Jainism and Buddhism. Professors Weber and Lassen,

1. C.J. Shah, Jainism In North India, PP. 1-12.
3. S. Radhakrishnan, History of Indian Philosophy, I., P. 23.
regarded Jainism as an old branch of Buddhism. This prejudice has been cleared by Indologists like Jacobi, Buhler and Hoernle who successfully rehabilitated Jainism as one of the home religions of India. The most striking characteristic of Jainism is its severe asceticism, which is taken to be the early but violent reaction against the gross worldliness of the decadent Vedic ritualism. It is not improbable that the Buddha's rational "Mahajina Patipada" was only the result of his anxiety to avoid the above two extremities. Critics are of the view that the asceticism of Jainism was in tune with the general trend of the Indian spiritualist thought and practice of the age and hence before that great monk-monarch, Asoka, raised Buddhism to the proud position of an international religion, Jainism found favour in India with both the ruling families and the mass of people.

The traditional accounts of the Jains would have us believe that Jainism entered Andhra slightly earlier than Buddhism. In fact, the career of Jainism in Andhra was much longer though less spectacular than that of Buddhism. The Jains would not boast of a Dhanyakataka or a Sripurva in Andhra. Their settlements were humble and unostentatious. The Jains generally preferred as their habitations, probably because of their unsocial practice of nudity, secluded places like natural caves and caverns, which are difficult of approach. This tendency is in line with their belief in toil.

2. H. Jacobi, Jaina Sutras, B.S.E., XXII, Introduction, pp. XXII-XXVII.
3. Ibid., P. XXIX.
and hardship—greater the suffering to which the body is put, the nobler the soul becomes and nearer it goes to the final goal of emancipation. Even in the sculpture of the Jains, the same tendency is to be found. Their sculpture are stiff, almost lifeless and monotonously uniform. The rich varcity, vivacity and joy that characterise the Buddhist Art in Andhra are almost absent in the Jaina art and they reveal only a preparedness for death (Kayotsarga). In the words of H. Zimmer, "The Jaina art of all periods is characterised by a puppet-like stiffness, barrenness and rigidity. Sometimes it draws a certain vigour and vitality from its close kinship to popular art; its images often resemble the sati sh figu es of the primitive levels of population. Like their doctrines and life experience that it renders and interprets, it is archaic fundamentalist, inflexible—unsophisticate by any alleviating insight." — — 

Though it entered Andhradesa very early, Jains became popular only after the 7th century A.D. and held the ground till about the 13th century. Curiously enough it was a period of political disunity, and general confusion created by the invasions from the neighbouring states and atrocities of the invading foreign armies. Another interesting point to be noted is that Jainism was more predominant and survived for a longer time in the western parts of Andhra—Telangana and Rayalasima than in the coastal regions. In fact, during this period Rayalasima and Telangana

1. Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, i.e. 86.
were the worst sufferers. While the coastal region was occupied into the Vengi Calukyan kingdom, the above regions became centres of contention between the rival imperial powers of the South such as the Calukyas and Pallavas, the Rastrakutas and Pallavas, and the Western Calukyas and Colas and changed hands very frequently. Again the age of Jainism in Andhra appears to be one of economic distress. The merchant and artisan communities that vied with one another in patronising Buddhism do not figure prominently as patrons of Jainism. This may be partly due to the decline of trade and industry in the wake of the fall of Roman Empire, a fact that has been counted as one of the causes for the decline of Buddhism in Andhra. However Jainism was more fortunate than Buddhism in securing the patronage of many ruling families as the early Calukyas, Rastrakutas, Ganges and Nolamba Pallavas. Most of the inscriptions so far discovered record gifts made to the Jaina Church by princes, generals and royal ladies and rarely by private individuals. Even the Hindu reformers of this period, Kumarila and Sankara concentrated their attacks on Buddhism and almost spared Jainism, probably because the latter with its less-worldly attitude and with its loose-knit order and widely scattered settlements was looked down upon as an unworthy rival.

But with the establishment of the Kakatiya empire in the 13th century A.D., the situation underwent a change. Once again, Andhradesa was brought under a single canopy and the political unity created conditions congenial for economic prosperity and cultural development. It was in this period that Jainism declined and gradually disappeared.
DATE OF ARISEN.

There is both literary and epigraphical evidence as to the early advent of Jainism into Andhra. The Jaina literature which is noted for its historical value, contains many traditions about the early advent of Jainism into Andhra and South India in general. The latest discoveries in epigraphy and archaeology tend to support the evidence of the Jaina literature.

Scholars are of opinion that "Jainism is an imported religion for Andhra. The groups of monks diverging from a large centre like Sravane Belagola or accompanying kings in their conquests, are the sole carriers of the Jaina tradition as well as Dharma into Andhra- desa." This statement contains the hint that Jainism entered Andhra from Karnataka. In fact till very recently it was believed that the earliest epigraphical reference to the prevalence of Jainism was contained in the Musinikunda copper plates of the Eastern Calukyan king, Vismshvardhana III (A.D. 715-32). This record refers to the construction of a Jaina Basadi at Bezwada by Avanamahadevi queen of Kusavishvardhana (A.D. 634-41) and renews the grant originally made by her. Kubjavism came to Andhra as its ruler from Badami or Karnataka which at that time appears to have been a stronghold of Jainism. Let alone the literary tradition, there is epigraphical

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1. Vide supra; Sources.
5. Ibid. P. 57.
evidence to the prevalence of Jainism in Karnataka from the later part of the 6th century A.D. The famous Kadamba king Vrueswaravarman (A.D. 470-486) was a Jain and built and endowed liberally a Jaina temple in Palasika to the memory of his father, Santivarman. One of the generals of Pulakesin II by name Revikirti built the famous keguti Jaina temple at Aihole in A.D. 634. From the numerous Jaina documents it contains, Aihole appears to have been a great centre of Jainism in the time of the Early Calukyanas. Though her husband was an ardent Vaishika, Ayanasahadevi seems to have developed a liking for Jainism most probably in Karnataka and began to patronize that religion wherever she went. It was therefore concluded from this that Jainism was introduced into Andhra by the Calukyanas from Karnataka about the 7th century A.D.

Epigraphical Evidence.

But the recent discovery of an inscription of king Kharavela of Kalinga at Guntupalli in the West Godavari District near Allure, has revolutionised our view about the advent of Jainism into Andhra. It is well-known that Kharavela was for Jainism what Asoka had been for Buddhism. The provenance of his inscription at Guntupalli establishes the Jaina affiliations of the caves on the hill. Very recently Guntupalli is believed to have been a Buddhist Jirtha. In this connection may be recalled the remarks of J. Fleet, that the prejudice that all stupas and stone railings must necessarily be

2. B. Cousins, Chalukyan Architecture, PPs. 28-32.
3. B. Venkataramanayya, op. cit.
4. K. Subrahmanyam, Guntupalli Brahm inscription of Kharavela.
Buddhist has probably prevented the recognition of Jaina structures as such. Vincent Smith also observed that "In some cases, monuments which are really Jaina have been erroneously described as Buddhist". Another inscription in the characters of the 2nd century B.C., was found in the caves of Guntupalli. It records the construction of steps by a lady disciple of Suyananatha who was residing in the cave. The name Suyananatha sounds more like Jain rather than Buddhist. The inscriptions therefore, read together, make it clear that the caves of Guntupalli were Jain, they were excavated some time before the 2nd century B.C., and in them lived Jain preceptors like Suyananatha attracting pious devotees both men and women.

The Hathigumpha inscription of the same king Kharavela states that he brought back from Magadha the image of the Jina of Kalinga, which the Nanda king, evidently Mahapadmananda, had carried away as a trophy. This makes it clear that Jainism was prevalent in Kalinga as early as the 5th century B.C. Even at that early date images of Tirthankaras were made and worshipped in Kalinga. The Jina that was worshipped in Kalinga is believed to be Sitalanatha the 10th Tirthankara. He was born at Bhadalapura or Bhadrapura which is identified by some with Bhadracalam on the river Godavari, in the East Godavari District. As already pointed in the earlier chapters, Kalinga, in ancient times, included the east coast as far south as the mouth of

1. Imperial Gazetteer, II, P. iii.
3. R. Subrohtmyn, op. cit.
4. ASI, XX, P. 72 ff; Select Inscriptions, I, P. 206 ff.
5. ASI, XX, P. 86.
7. Ibid.
the Godavari and hence it is not unreasonable to conclude that the northern districts of Andhra felt the impact of Jainism as early as the age of the Bandas.

The evidence thus provided by the Bhatigumpha and the Gantupalli inscriptions makes three points clear:

1. The source of Andhra Jainism was not Karnataka but Kalinga.
2. Jainism entered Andhradesa not so late as the 7th century A.D., there are traces of its existence as early as the 6th century B.C.
3. Jainism does not appear to have been imported into Andhra by monks coming from great centres or by the invading kings. It is reasonable to assume that like Buddhism, its rival, Jainism slowly spread among the peoples taking advantage of the discontent prevalent towards the Vedic religion in the land.

The inscriptive evidence is strongly supported by the Jaina literary traditions.

Library Evidence.

1) According to the Jaina tradition, the first Tirthankara, Rṣabha had two sons, Bharata and Bahubali. It was from Bharata that, according to the Jains, the country came to be known as Bharatadesa. Bahubali was identical with Gomata and he established a kingdom with Patala as his capital. Patala is identified with Bodhan in the Visnukad district of Andhrapradesh. In fact Bodhan is an ancient place figuring even in Brahmanical literature. 1 It is described in

1. Vide supra. Land and People.
the Kannada writings of Pampa and Kumara Vyasa. The place contains many Jain antiquities including sculptures and inscriptions and according to a Sravna Belagola inscription there used to be at Bodhan an image of Bahubali or Gomata, 525 bows high and it inspired Samundaraya to make the image of Somaeswara at Sravna Belagola.

2) In his commentary on the Avasyakasutra, Haribhadra refers to Mahavira's visit to Kalinga. It is said that the king of Kalinga at that time was a friend of Mahavira's father, Siddhartha. Probably therefore Mahavira hoped that his doctrine would receive a warm welcome in Kalinga and decided to preach it there. He left Sravasti, visited Hathosisa, which had trade relations with Kalingadvipa; then he set out for Tosali from where he journeyed to Mosali. On his way back also, Mahavira visited Tosali.

It is already pointed out that Kalinga included the northern districts of Andhra on the east coast and Kalinganagara, the capital of Kalinga was situated in the Srikakulum district. A suggestion may be hazarded that Mosali of the Jaina literature was identical with Maisolia of the classical writers. Maisolia was located by them between the mouths of the rivers Godavari and Kroma and it was contiguous with Kalinga on the south-west.

Dr. Jayaswal infers from the 14th line of the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharovasa that Mahavira actually preached his Dharma from the Kumari Hill or Udayagiri in Kalinga.

1. P.B. Dasai, Jainism in South India, P. 102 and Note 4 on P. 103.
3. B.I., XX, P. 28, Note 1.
4. McGredde's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, P. 67-68.
3) The Dharmasastra of Nayasena gives an account of the kingdom of Pratipalapura in Vengi. According to it, in the time of Tirthankara Vasupujya, the Ikshvaku prince Vasodhara of Anga migrated to Vengi and established the kingdom of Pratipalapura. Harisena (A.D. 331-331) in his Brhatkathakosa, says that the city was Venyatapatapura and was situated in Kamarastra.

Pratipalapura is identified with modern Bhattiprolu. This identification is supported by Harisena's account as Bhattiprolu is on the river Krsnabeni and in Kamarastra. The region comprising Guntur, Narasaraopet, Tenali and Bapatla taluks of Guntur District and Markapuram Taluk of Kurnool District was known in olden days as Kamarastra.

4) The account that Chandragupta Maurya, during the last years of his reign, retired to Sravanabelagola in the company of his preceptor Bhadrabahu shows that by that time (c 300 B.C) the Jaina Tirthas in the South began to attract the faithful even from the North. This event namely the presence of the great teacher, Bhadrabahu and his royal disciple is taken to have rejuvenated Jainism in South India.

The Ceylonese chronicle Mahavamsa records that Jainism was prevalent in Ceylon during the 4th century B.C. Scholars believe that Jainism should have gone there from its South Indian centres.

2. Ibid. P. 8.
4. K. Iswara Dutt, Historical Geography of Andhra, P. 63.
5. Cambridge History of India, P. 167.
5) Samprati, the grandson and successor of Asoka was a great patron of Jainism. Subastin was his preceptor. Samprati is called "Jaina Asoka" in the Jaina literature, evidently because he did for Jainism what Asoka had done for Buddhism. The same source informs us that Samprati sent Jaina missionaries to all the Dravidian countries, among whom special mention is made of Andhra and Dravida.

We learn from the 13th Rock Edict of Asoka that the Andhras were within the Mauryan Empire and that they were following Buddhism. It is therefore evident that Samprati made special efforts to revive and reinvigorate Jainism in Andhra which suffered probably under Asoka.

Thus the evidence of inscriptions supported by literary traditions takes back the advent of Jainism into Andhradesa to almost the 6th century B.C.