Some Notes on *Brahmacarya* in Jainism

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0. Introduction

In Jain tradition, the most basic vows undertaken by monks and nuns are called *mahāvratas* ("great vows"), which are accepted as fundamental to Mahāvīra’s teaching by both main sects of Jainism: Digambara and Śvetāmbara. The *mahāvratas* are: (1) *ahimsā* (not killing any living beings), (2) *satya* (speaking the truth), (3) *asteya* (not taking what is not given), (4) *brahmacarya* (renunciation of all sexual activity), and (5) *aparigraha* (detachment from possessions). Of these, the first vow, that is, *ahimsā* is principal and is the basis of all other vows. 1) It is not too much to say that every other vow is a restatement in different terms of the content of *ahimsā*.

In general, Jainas maintain that it is *pramāda* (carelessness) or *pramattayoga* (careless activity) that leads a person to *himsā* (violence), and hence, *anrta* (falsehood) and all other transgressions of the vows are also under its influence. It is interesting to note, however, that Yaśobhadra and Siddhasenagani, Śvetāmbara commentators of the *Tattvārthaśūtra* (TAS), regard *abrahma* (sexual activity) as exceptional and are of the opinion that all transgressions of the vows, but except for *abrahma*, should be associated with *pramāda*. This is a quite different attitude from that of Digambara commentators, such as Pujyapāda, who make no exception for any vows.

The purpose of this paper is to show how the difference of opinion arises between Digambara and Śvetāmbara commentators of the TAS concerning *abrahma*.

1. Definitions of *Mahāvratas* in the TAS

Let us first confirm the definitions of *mahāvratas* in the TAS.

TAS (Ś) (D) 7.1:

*himsānṛtasteyābrahmāparigraheḥbhyo viratir vratam //*

--- 1106 ---

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To refrain from (i) himsā (violation), (ii) anṛta (falsehood), (iii) steya (stealing), (iv) abrahma (sexual activity), and (v) parigraha (possessiveness)—that is the vow (vrata).

TAS (S) 7.8; (D) 7.13:

pramattayogāt prañavyaparoṇaṁ himsā //

Taking life away due to carelessness (literally, activity of the careless) is (i) himsā (violation).

TAS (S) 7.9; (D) 7.14:

asadabhidhānām anṛta //

To say what is not true is (ii) anṛta (falsehood).

TAS (S) 7.10; (D) 7.15:

adattādānam steya //

To take what is not given is (iii) steya (stealing).

TAS (S) 7.11; (D) 7.16:

maithunam abrahma //

The act of sexual intercourse constitutes (iv) abrahma (sexual activity).

TAS (S) 7.12; (D) 7.17:

mūrcchā parigrahab //

The attachment for possession constitutes (v) parigraha (possessiveness).

What is important here is the qualifier pramattayogāt (“due to carelessness”), which is underlined, in the definition of himsā. Pujyapāda, a Digambara commentator of TAS, explains this usage of the qualifier as follows:

SAS 271, 8–9 (on himsā):

‘pramattayogāt’ iti viśeṣāṇaṁ kevalaṁ prañavyaparoṇaṁ nādharmaṇīti jñāpanārtham.

The qualifier pramattayogāt (“due to carelessness”) is added to make known that it is not that only the act of taking life leads a person into adharma.

As Pujyapāda points out, it is to be noticed that in Jain tradition it is not the case that every act of killing a living being comes under restraint as himsā. The problem is whether a person in such a situation is careless or not. Sometimes it happens that even a very careful person takes a life away as an inevitable accident. In this case, according to Jainas, he is not accused of his transgression of ahimsā. In short, the qualifier pramattayogāt in the definition of himsā is for setting up exceptions to the rule.

2. “Pramattayogāt” in the Digambara Tradition

The Digambara sect traditionally holds that this qualifier pramattayogāt is connected not only to the definition of himsā, but also to those of other transgressions. For example, Pujyapāda says:
Some Notes on Brahmacarya in Jainism (H. KOBAYASHI)

SAS 273, 3–4 (on steyā):
athava' pramattayogā ity anuvartate, pramattayogād adattādānāṃ yat tat steyam ity ucyate.
Or rather, the qualifier pramattayogā is supplied [here to the definition of steyā]. It is said that to take what is not given due to carelessness is steyā.

SAS 273, 11–12 (on abrahma):
api ca 'pramattayogā ity anuvartate, tena stripuṃsamanīthunaviṣayam ratisukhārtham cēṣṭītam maithunam iti gṛhyate, na sarvam.

In addition, the qualifier pramattayogā is supplied [here to the definition of abrahma]. Accordingly, sexual intercourse is understood as an act for the purpose of pleasure in relation to sexual desire of men and women, but not as each and every act.

SAS 274, 14–275, 12 (on parigraha):
'pramattayogā ity anuvartate, tato jñānadarśanacārtirtravato 'pramattasya mohābhāvān na mūrcchāstīti nisparigrahatvam siddham.

The qualifier pramattayogā is supplied [here to the definition of parigraha]. Therefore, a careful person (apramatta), who possesses [right] knowledge, [right] faith, and [right] conduct, does not have any attachment (mūrcchā), because of the absence of ignorance (moha). Thus, it is established that he is free from possessiveness, [though he possesses right knowledge, and so forth].

As underlined in the above, Pūjyapāda clearly indicates to supply the qualifier pramattayogā to each definition of steyā, abrahma, and parigraha. Although he does not refers to the definition of anrta in this respect, it is obvious from the passage below that he considers anrta as that which is connected with hiṃsā.

SAS 272, 11 (on anrta):
tasmād dhīṃśākaram vaco 'nṛtam iti niśceyam.
Therefore, it is to be established that anṛta is speech which brings about hiṃsā.

Moreover, Vidyānandin, another commentator of the Digambara sect, following Pūjyapāda’s interpretation, clearly mentions the qualifier pramattayogā in the definition of anṛta:

TAŚV 462, 19 (on anṛta):
tenedam uttam bhavati pramattayogād asadabhidhānāṃ yat tad anṛtam iti.
Thus this is what is meant: To say what is not true due to carelessness is anṛta.

From what has been seen above, it can be said that, in the Digambara tradition, the qualifier pramattayogā in the definition of hiṃsā is thought to be applicable to each definition of all other transgressions also.2)

3. "Pramattayogā" in the Śvetāmbara Tradition

However, unlike the Digambaras, the Śvetāmbara commentators insist that the qualifier
pramattayogā is not applicable to the definition of abrahamā.\(^\text{3)}\) Yaśobhadra, as well as Siddhasenagani, say the following:

\[\text{TAS} \bar{T} \text{(Y) 320, 12–321, 3 = \text{TAS} \bar{T} \text{(S) 78, 19–28 (on abrahamā):}}\]

\[\text{āgamās tu dravyakṣetrakālabhāvabhedā caturdhā ... bhāvo hi rāgadivesaparināmā ātmana ity atah pramattayogād iti atrānuvartamānām api (; -mānāpi \text{TAS} \bar{T} \text{(Y)}) nopaivyāye, yatprāmattayogasa yat parināmānām api pramattaya sattā sathābhāve sati karmabandhābhāvāh tatra pramattayogāgraṇānam arthevat bhavati, pramattasya karmabandho nāpramattasyetī, prānātipātavat, iha punā rāgadivesānvayavicchedāt sarvāsvavasthāsū maithunāśevinaḥ karmabandha iti /}\n
On the other hand, the Āgama says that [sexual intercourse (maithuna)] is of four types: a substance-type (dravya), a space-type (kṣetra), a time-type (kāla), and a condition-type (bhāva) ... Indeed, the condition-type of maithuna is a modification (parināma) of the self (ātman) into attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa). Therefore, the qualifier pramattayogā is not applicable even when it is supplied here. The expression pramattayoga becomes meaningful only when there exists a person who is never careless even in such a condition [maithuna] and no karmic bondage (karmabandha) happens to him or her. It is such that, as in the case of taking life away (i.e., himsā), karmic bondage happens [only] to the careless (pramatta), not to the careful (apramatta). In the case of [maithuna], however, nobody can avoid being followed by attachment and aversion. Therefore, in any situation, karmic bondage happens to a person who indulges in sexual intercourse (maithuna).

The point is that, in the case of sexual activity, it makes no difference whether a person is careless or not. For nobody, according to Yaśobhadra, when engaged in sexual activity, can be free from attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa). That is to say, unlike the case of himsā, and so forth, there is no exception in the case of abrahamā.

But why do the Śvetāmbaras treat it as special? Yaśobhadra quotes a textual source of this view from the Brhatkalpabhāṣya (BKBh), one of the most important commentaries on Jaina monastic codes in the Śvetāmbara tradition:

\[\text{BKBh 4944 (= NiBh 364):}}\]

\[kāmam sarvapadesu vi, usṣaggavātadhammatā juttā /}\n
\[mottum mehunābhāvām (BKBh; mehunādhammaṃ NiBh), na vinā so rāgadosehiṃ //}\n
\[\text{[kāmam sarvapadesvi api utsargāpavādaharmatā yuktā /}}\]

\[\text{muktvā maithunabhāvānam na vinā sa rāgadvesau //]}\]

This is what we long for (kāma). It is reasonable to suppose that every rule, [whether it is mūlaguna or uttaraśaṇa], has both characteristics of being the general (utsarga) and the exceptional (apavāda). Even so, still this is except for a condition of maithuna [that is, indulgence in sexual activity]. The condition of maithuna cannot exist without attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa).\(^\text{4)}\)

In the passage quoted above, it is explained that, since maithuna, sexual activity, is inevita-
bly followed by attachment and aversion, there is no exception in the case of maithuna, though, basically, every religious commandment has two faces: one is as prohibition as the general rule and the other as permission as the exception. The Śvetāmbaras, commenting on abrahma, rigidly have in mind this exegetical tradition of the Chedasūtras, which mostly focus on matters of ascetic rules. This is why the difference of opinion arises between Digambara and Śvetāmbara commentators of the TAS concerning abrahma.

To be sure, pramāda/pramattayoga (carelessness) can be a primary cause of all transgressions including abrahma. However, when it acquired the role as a kind of criterion for judging whether a person is guilty or not, it seemed unnecessary to take it into consideration with respect to abrahma, which is essentially sinful for Jaina ascetics.

4. Conclusion

There is a difference in opinion between Digambara and Śvetāmbara commentators of the TAS about how to treat the qualifier pramattayogāt (“due to carelessness”) in the definition of himsā: The former regards it to be applicable to each definition of all other transgressions, that is, anṛta, steya, abrahma, and parigraha; while the latter makes an exception for abrahma.

The Śvetāmbara interpretation of the definition of abrahma strictly reflected the view that any sexual activity cannot exist without attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa), which is found in the Chedasūtras belonging to the Śvetāmbara sect, such as the BK Bh.

In my previous paper (Kobayashi 2011), I have shown by dealing with the etymological interpretation of the word styaṇarddhī/styaṇagṛḍḍhi (“sleepwalking”) that, unlike the Digambaras, the Śvetāmbara commentators of the TAS are under strong influence of the Chedasūtras. The same tendency can be seen here also.

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Notes
1) See, for example, SAS 265, 1–2: tatra ahimsāvratam ādau kriyate pradhānatvāt, satyādīni hi tatparipālanārthāni sasyasya vṛtiparikṣepavat.
2) See also Amṛtacandra’s PASU 99: sarvasmnin apy asmin pramattayogaikahetukathanam yat / anṛtavacane ’pi tasman niyatam himsā samavasarati //
3) The Śvetāmbara commentators also hold that the qualifier pramattayogāt should be supplied to
Some Notes on *Brahmacarya* in Jainism (H. Kobayashi)

(47)

each definition of three transgressions other than *abraham*,. See TAS(T)(Y) 313, 11 = TAS(T)(S) 72, 19–20 (on anrta): pramattayogād ity anvavartate; TAS(T)(Y) 317, 9 = TAS(T)(S) 76, 2 (on steya): pramattayogād ity anvavartate; TAS(T)(Y) 322, 11 = TAS(T)(S) 80, 7 (on parigraha): atra pramatta-
yogād ity anvavartate,

4) See BKBH 4944: kāmaṇḍ anumatam idam asmākaml—sarvesv api padeśa mūloṭṭara-γuṇārūpeṣu
utsarga-pavādadharmatā yuktā utsargaḥ pratiṣedhah aparavādaḥ anujñā taddharmatā tallakṣanatā
sarvesv api padeśa yuṣyate, tathāpi nuktvā maithunabhāvam abrahmāsveṇam, tatra utsargadharmatāva
ghaṭate nāpavādadharmatā, kimartham ity āha—asau maithunabhāvo rāgadeveśabhyyām vinā
na bhavati, ato dvīṭyapade ‘pi na tatrāpṛṣyaścītīti hṛdayam. See also NiVC 364: kāmaṇḍ savagāhā,
kāmaśabadhā icchārthe anumātārthe ca, iha tu anumātārthe drastavyaḥ. savapayāṇi mūlutaara-
ṇi, avissadda avadhārane, tesu ussaggava-vāṭa dhammavya juttā. ussaggo padiseho. avavāto anunāṣa
dhammatā lakkhaṇāt, jujuṭe ghaṭatety arthah, sauccaṃ savvesv mūlagunauṛtararagunapadesv ussa-
ggaavavāṭrayakkaṇṭam jujati tahāvī mottum parityajya mehuṇaṃ jummaṃ, tassa ṛha-vo mehuṇabhā-
vo ambabhāvāveta arthah. kimartham, ucyate, na vinā rāgadeveśabhyyām so mehuṇabhāvo bhavatity
arthah, rāgadeveśādisambhave saty api sanyamajjvitād niṃmitam āsescanānaṃ svalpaprāyaścītta ity āha.

5) For the Chedasūtras, see Jaini 2001: 62–64.

Abbreviations

**BKB**
Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya (Saṅghadāsa). Willem B, Bolleć, ed, Bhadrabāhu Bṛhat-kalpa-

**BKBHV**
Vṛtti on Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya (Kṣemakirtī). Caturavijaya and Punyavijaya, eds, Shavira-
Āryabhadraḥbāhusvāmiprinatavopajāniruyktay-uptetam Bṛhat Kalpasūtram / Śrīsaṅghe-
dāśaṅkikṣaṃsāraṇasaṅkaliṭaḥbhaṣyopabṛmhitām / Jaināgama-Prakarāṇāidyavaka-granthātigūḍhārtha-prakataṇa-praṇuṣṭākāvīdvāsasamupalabdhā-Samarthaṭākāśāśayikāyā-
tibhīṣh Śrīmaṇḍhīr Malayagiristhitābhaddhāvāṭhāpyānī-Prārabdhyā Yṛddhāpālaṅkātapāgacchāyāh
Śrīkṣemakirya āryāyīḥ Pūrṇikṛtayā ca Vṛtyā Śamaṇakah / Vol. 5. Śri Āṭmānanda

**NiBh**
Niśithabhāṣya. Amarchand Ji, ed, Nishitha Sutram (*With Bhashya*). Part 1, Varanasi: 

**NiVC**
Viśeṣacārṇī on Niśithabhāṣya (Jinadāsa). See NiBh.

**PASU**
Puṣṭrāthsiddhyupāya (Amṛtacandra). Ajit Prasada, ed, Purushartha-Siddhyupaya
(Jaina-Pravachana-Rahasya-Kosha). The Sacred Books of the Jainas, vol. 4. Lucknow: 
The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1933.

**SAS**

**TAS (D)**
Tattvārthasūtra (Umaśvātī). Digambara recension. See SAS.

**TAS (Ś)**
Tattvārthasūtra (Umaśvātī), Śvetāmbara recension, Pt, Kuṭbacandra, ed, Sahāṣyatat-tattvārthādigamasūtra. Śrīmādṛjacakandrajainasastramāla, 3rd ed. Agasa: Śri Pramaṇaruta

— 1111 —
Some Notes on Brahmacarya in Jainism (H. Kobayashi)


Bibliography

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