

**Merchants, Trade and Religion in Agrarian Society:
Gleanings from the *Vasudevahinçdi*
(c. 400 - 600 AD).**

**Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements -
for the award of the degree of**

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

ASHISH KUMAR



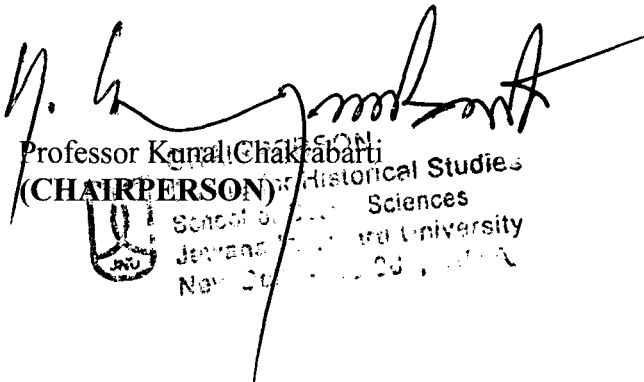
**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI- 110067
INDIA
2010**

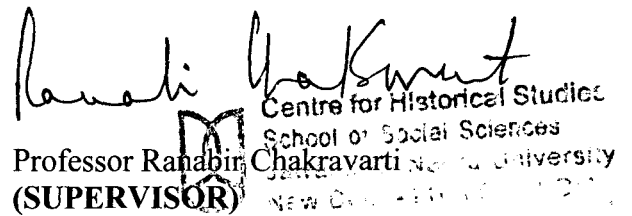


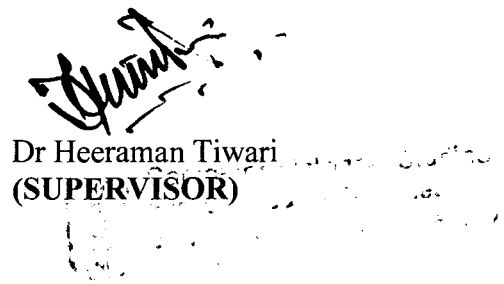
CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled “**Merchants, Trade and Religion in Agrarian Society: Gleanings from the Vasudevahindī (c. 400 – 600 AD)**”, submitted by **Ashish Kumar** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is entirely his own work and has not been considered for the award of any other degree either at this or any other university.

We recommend that the dissertation be forwarded to the examiner(s) for further evaluation.


Professor Kunal Chakravarti
(CHAIRPERSON)
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India


Professor Ranabir Chakravarti
(SUPERVISOR)
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India


Dr Heeraman Tiwari
(SUPERVISOR)
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

Contents

<i>Acknowledgement</i>	i
Introduction	1
Chapter: One	
Trends and Perspectives in Social and Economic History: A Retrospect	11
Chapter: Two	
Reading between the Lines: <i>Vasudevahiṇḍī</i> , a Non-Canonical Jaina Text	46
Chapter: Three	
Cities, Merchants and Landed Property	79
Conclusion	112
<i>Appendix</i>	119
<i>Bibliography</i>	121

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The toughest part of my dissertation, where I am required to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed in my research, is this section. It is toughest because sometime it is not possible to sum up the support and help people have provided over the period in few words. But still it is a task that I have to undertake. The first person who has played an important role in my research work is my supervisor Prof. Ranabir Chakravarti. He has always been there to help me out whenever I found myself confuse and stuck in the middle of my research. I still remember drinking those black teas at his house during the long discussions. Discussions on various topics with him have been inspiring and motivating to undertake new research targets. The support of Prof. Heeraman Tiwari, my co-supervisor, is also significant. I still remember when I was searching for one book and asked him to help me out. He immediately ordered for the purchase of that book. In last one year of my research he has always been there for discussions, and provided me with his views on various issues. Special thanks also goes to Prof. Kunal Chakrabarti, Prof. Kumkum Roy and other faculty members with whom I have discussed various topics related to my research over the period.

In a long list of friends there are some whose support can not be expressed in mere few words. One of such friends is Gagan Preet Singh. The research methodologies learnt from him has always helped me and in future also will play an important role in my research work. Deepak and Anupam are two important personalities who have inspired me to move on even during the time of crisis and troubles. Discussions with my room mate Kalai on various political and social issues have been enriching and helpful to develop an understanding about the world I am living in. Talking to Sharmistha, Sumati, Rubina, Rajani, Aarohi, Shabab, Usha, Varuni, Vaneesa, Sanjeev, Sunil, Riyaz, Guddu, Mantu, Rahul, Kartik, Chander, Praveen and Abhilash have been refreshing during the tense days of dissertation writing. I can not forget the discussions regarding the dissertation and on various other issues with Shaswati, Uma, Priyanaka, Anna, Mamata, Digvijay and Catlein who are also submitting their dissertation with me. Such discussions have been benefiting and helpful at many occasions at least in cheering up my sad and tense mood. The staff of DSA library JNU, Shri LalBahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidypeeth Viswavidyalya Library, BhogilallaharChand Jain Institute Library and Archaeological Survey of India Library deserve a special mention for their kind support in providing books and other facilities on time. Special thanks also goes to Mrs. Shashi Kapoor and Mr. Dharmendara, CHS office staff for helping me in getting my official paper work done on time.

All words are short and insufficient to mention the support provided by my parents, younger brother Vijay, Cousin Sanjeev, maternal uncles Kamal and Deepak, who always have encouraged me to pursue my dreams. Without mentioning the name of Benazir Rafiq this section will remain in-complete. More than a year friendship with her not only has helped me to come out of a narrow religious understanding but also realized me the importance of human values, ethics, morality and relations. The last but not least I am indebted to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who had taught us to question everything in the world and made us to dream to build a society free from all kinds of exploitation.

ASHISH KUMAR

Introduction

The “Text”! What does it mean? Is it simply a written narrative of a particular period which can or cannot be used for historical reconstruction of the past? Or, is it an inherent part of one or the other category, so watertight that it loses its importance if put out as assigned category (i.e. historical vis-à-vis non-historical)?

Studying a text in its literal form as a recorder of the past, as it is, has been questioned by scholars. Some have argued that rather than accepting literally and straightforwardly what is written as a gospel truth, one reads a text to understand the underlying perception of the author about the subject it deals with.¹ But one way or the other, this type of study remains confined only to the text and fails, sometimes, to go beyond the boundaries of literary study of the text. A text is a product of its age and even it deals with the themes or topics of earlier periods, historical importance as a source does not diminish. For

¹ See, Ramanujan (1999) and Chattopadhyaya (2003: 105- 134).

example, if *Rāmāyaṇa* were rewritten today, will it be irrelevant for the study of present just because the theme and the story material are of earlier centuries? Will its theme and story material for delegitimizing become the reason its importance as historical sources?

Certainly not! *Rāmāyaṇa* has been written hundreds of times, in different ages by different peoples, for different motives, even if the underlying purpose would have been religious.² Since, the theme as well as story material have been the same for such writings, the historical developments in contemporary epoch shaping the perception of the author become important besides the underlying perception of the author. Moreover, the way earlier theme(s) and story material have been reworked become the source of understanding the changes in a given time and space through a study of text in relation to other sources. The way author through the text reproduces (or in other words reflects at) its age, the age, to which the text belongs, also in a similar way shapes the perception of the author. Thus, the age gives a shape to the text on the one hand, and on the other, creates the conditions (ranging from social to political to economic to religious to cultural and so forth) for the very writing of the text. The Author is not “the” determining factor when it comes to writing a text. A deciding role is also played by the contemporary developments, of which the author, in one way or other, becomes a spokesperson conveying his perspective in a narrative form.

But this I am not denying the ability to take decision of the very agency, i.e. the author. What I am suggesting here is the importance of the contemporary age (witnessing

² See for discussion on various *Rāmāyaṇas*, their similarities and differences. Ramanujan (1997).

multiple developments in varying aspects of the life) for the better understanding of the text. The text therefore is a product of the interaction between the author and the contemporary period. Contextualization of the text thereby is crucially important for a better understanding of the past. Hence, the study of the text in relation to other sources is necessary. This is what I have attempted in my dissertation: contextualizing the text, *Vasudevahiṇḍi* (here after, *VH*) (The wonderings of Vasudeva) in its age by studying it in relation to other sources, i.e. inscriptions by and large. At the same time, by undertaking this exercise I have reflected upon the changes taking place in economy, polity, and religion with a special emphasis upon the role of merchants, trade and urban centers.

I

The text, *VH* in Maharashtri prakrit was written by Saṅghadāsgaṇi Vācaka and the credit to bring it to the attention of the scholars goes to L. Alsdorf in 1936.³ The date of the text is not clear and scholars have given varied dates to it ranging from 3rd to 6th century AD. Alsdorf suggests that the text is not later than the 6th century AD but he does not deny the possibility of its belonging to some earlier date. His argument is based on the study of *Āvaśyaka Cūrṇi* (c. 7th century AD) in which he finds the mentioning of *VH* at least thrice.⁴ Jagdishchandra Jain suggests a date not after the end of 3rd century AD because it contains the oldest version of Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* (Vimalasūri's *Paumacariya* dated the 3rd century AD).⁵ The fact already accepted is that *VH* has borrowed story material from

³ Alsdorf, (1936), Sternbach (1981).

⁴ *ibid*, (1936: 320).

⁵ Jain, (1977: 27-8).

earlier text *Bṛhatkathā*. Therefore one can not deny the possibility that the oldest version of *Rāmāyaṇa* story might have been taken from *Bṛhatkathā* by the author of *VH* without consulting the Jain *Rāmāyaṇa*. In this case our text is not necessarily belonged to the period before the date of Jain *Rāmāyaṇa* (c. 3rd century AD). Jamkhedkar⁶ assigns c. 6th century AD and Bhayani⁷ c. 5th century AD to *VH*. As far as my knowledge is concerned no conclusive evidence is available to give a definite date to our text, except for the fact that our text can not be dated after 7th century AD as shown by Alsdorf. Hence it is safe and quite logical to assign c. 6th century AD, the maximum possible date, to our text.

The text, the main source of my M. Phil dissertation, contains stories relating to ‘Vasudeva’, father of Kṛṣṇa (a Hinduised deity) and his adventures. Practically all the stories or chapters of the text are interwoven with sub-stories, stories within stories and various flashbacks. L. Alsdorf has shown that the *VH* is an old and detailed version of the lost ‘*Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya’; and it has been conclusively proven by exhaustive comparative study of Jagdishchandra Jain.⁸ Though Jainism favored abstinence from worldly pleasures, the stories in this work often revolve around the themes of ‘sensual pleasure’, ‘enthusiastic traders’ and ‘trading expeditions for wealth’. In other words, ‘Artha’ and ‘Kāma’ are the important themes of the text besides ‘Dharma’.⁹ If we look at

⁶ Jamkhedkar (1884: 8).

⁷ Bhayani, (1987: see preface).

⁸ Jain (1977).

⁹ The second part of the text is *Vasudevahiṇḍī: Madhyama Khaṇḍa* by Dharmasenagaṇi Mahattara (c. 7th century AD), but I have used largely the first part of the text for my M. Phil dissertation due to limited space and time, leaving a task of further exhaustive study of the text for future.

the literary tradition prevailing in ancient period, we find that ‘Artha’, ‘Kāma’, and ‘Dharma’ have always been an important part of it.

Here it is noticeable that Kāma in story writing tradition does not mean merely erotic enjoyment but as Daud Ali suggests, ‘...referred to pleasure both in general sense as the enjoyment of manifold sensual and esthetic pleasures, and specifically to erotic enjoyment.’ The royal court, denoting to ‘...the constellation of “urbane” classes which made up the ruling societies of early Indian polities...’ was the centre of the conceptualization of pleasure practices.¹⁰ This conceptualization increasingly became a part of early medieval religious practices with the emergence of temple institution where *deities* were enjoying wealth.¹¹ This increasing association of sacred with the material world was an important development of the period under study and finds its manifestation in urban landscape that increasingly became a converging point for sacred and material worlds as providing opportunities to the people to take part in both the activities. The detail discussion on this aspect I will take up in third chapter, and here it will suffice to say that this development became an important part of the contemporary literary tradition of which our text was a part.

¹⁰ Ali, (1996: 28).

¹¹ *ibid*, (1996:35-36). He argues that by the early medieval period the technologies of devotion drew many of the features and practices from the knowledge requisite at the early urbane court. The sixty-four auxiliary knowledge mentioned in Kāmasūtra – e.g. anointment, dressing, fixing crowns and chaplets, cultivation of plants, making of garlands, dancing, singing, painting and drawing etc- became part of the practice of honoring Viṣṇu and Śiva. *Ibid*, (1996: 159-60). See also, Ali, (2002) and (2003).

II

Romila Thapar uses the expression '*Threshold Times*', for the period from AD 300 to 700¹² and questions the notions of classicism and revival of Sanskrit culture associated with Gupta period. She suggests to study this period, not in isolation, but in relation to larger process of historical evolution and regional diversity. The period witnessed the transition from tribe to state polity, land grants and expansion of agriculture in new areas, and strengthening of Brahmanism particularly with the emergence of puranic deities and temples. These were the processes which according to her though developed in the '*threshold times*', became the characteristic features of the early medieval period. The similar argument is also proposed by B. D. Chattopadhyaya. The '*Threshold Times*' in a way represents a phase of transition when earlier form of life was transforming into a new form. Whether it was economy or society or polity a transition was taking place that became the defining feature of early medieval period.

One of the important developments of the period was the strengthening of Brahmanism and expansion of agricultural economy in hitherto tribal or forested areas. It was closely associated with the emergence of new polities from tribal background as suggested by B. D. Chattopadhyaya.¹³ The necessity of legitimization for new emerging polities on the one hand and the need of resources and patronage of Brāhmaṇas on the other hand created a mutual inter-dependence between them, and brought Brāhmaṇa ideologues in the service of these polities with obscure origins. But hardly scholars have addressed the

¹² Thapar, (2002)

¹³ Chattopadhyaya (1985), (1994).

issue of contestation between Brahmanism and heterodox sects like Jainism or Buddhism. Why did Jainism and Buddhism fail to tackle the challenge posed by Brahmanism? Another important question is what was the nature of contestation? Was it one sided or were these sects particularly Jainism (on which I will focus in my dissertation) were replying back? And if there was reply then what was the nature or form of it?

The expansion of agrarian economy during the period under study has been conceptualized by some scholars as resulting in the disappearance of trade and urban centers. Merchant has been assumed as a mere intermediary between the producer and the consumer on the one hand and as a homogenous entity on the other.¹⁴ Therefore, it is maintained that their engagement in other activities, e.g. cultivation etc, would result in their disengagement with trade and commerce.¹⁵ Such projection of merchant is intimately linked with the pre-conceived criteria of trade and merchant as being homogenous or monolithic activity as well as identity. Engagement in trading and commercial activities is one of the key aspects of being a merchant but it does not mean that he was confined to these activities merely.

¹⁴ V. K. Jain (1990: X) suggests: "The growth of commerce brought into prominence the merchants who acted as middlemen of exchange and distribution. They inserted themselves between producers and consumers, buying and selling the goods which were not the produce of their own labor."

¹⁵ In R. S. Sharma's (1980: 58), words, once "...they (merchants) were encumbered with the management of villages, they could not give sole attention to their trade and commerce... therefore (owing of land by them) show the feudalization of merchants by turning them into some kind of landed intermediaries."

So is the case with urban centers due to a pre-conceived dichotomy of settlement pattern, i.e. village vis-à-vis urban centre.¹⁶ Such dichotomy finds its manifestation in the assumption that merchants are emblematic of the cities, and therefore, have no connection with the countryside. But sources suggest a different picture. That not only highlights merchants association with landed property as managing the agriculture related works but also a change by the mid first millennium AD in their association with landed property as well as with the polities. The urban landscape displays functional heterogeneity by accommodating political, religious and commercial spaces; and how these spaces were interacting is something that I have attempted in my dissertation. The argument that the early medieval cities were simply the political or religious centers reduces the city landscape to a functional homogeneity, which I have questioned.

IV

I have studied the text, *VH*, in relation to other sources, particularly inscriptions, to understand the contemporary developments in a better way, a task so far not undertaken by any scholar who has studied and worked on *VH*. Inscriptions are "...the most ubiquitous class of text, as situation no doubt related to the durability of the granite (stone and copper plate) on which they are carved and to their demonstrative aspect. The latter is an important point, for stone inscriptions were in sense public documents visible to

¹⁶ Vijay Kumar Thakur (1983: 395) argues that in the feudal economy, the administrative centers of the feudatories and religious centers had hardly any in-built potentiality to grow into commercial centers, because in the contemporary economic set-up these were basically the epitome of regional exploitation. R. S. Sharma (1987: 177) says that rural seats of power became more important in early medieval India. And the village-mindedness, village manners, customs and practices became authoritative.

literate and illiterate observes alike, serving as public notices of intent.”¹⁷ These inscriptional sources provide valuable information regarding the expansion of agriculture, land grants and emergence of new polities on the one hand and the emergence of multiple cults and temple institution on the other hand, during the period under study. Therefore the study of the text, *VH*, in relation to inscriptions help us not only to contextualize it but also to understand how these two different types of sources had perceived as well as recorded the contemporary developments; and how the information provided by these sources were corresponding to each other.

The first chapter, ‘Trends and Perspectives in Social-Economic History: A Retrospect’, of the dissertation deals with the historical trends particularly related to socio-economic history in the subcontinent. The second chapter, ‘Reading between the Lines: *Vasudevahiṇḍī*, a Non-Canonical Jaina Text’, attempts to contextualize the text in its contemporary period, c. 400 to 600 AD by linking it with the varied developments taking place in the subcontinent in socio-economic-and-political spheres. It is argued that the text was not only a part of contemporary literary tradition but was also carrying anti-brahmanical attitude. This chapter will raise questions, i.e. why only Brāhmaṇas, not Buddhist and Jain monks, were given land grants in their individual capacity? Was there any ideological barrier? And, if there was/were any such barriers, then how one can understand such barriers in relation to Brahmanism? Related to this is the question how Jainism was responding to increasing popularity of Brahmanism?

¹⁷ Morrison, (1997: 219).

The third chapter, 'Cities, Merchants and Landed Property', highlights the functional heterogeneity of a city landscape as providing an arena of interaction to political, religious and commercial spaces. Here an emphasis is laid upon the role of merchants who were not only associated with the royal authorities, luxuries, religious activities but also were associated with landed property and agricultural activities. In this dissertation a number of questions have been raised and I have attempted to answer them on the basis of my study of the text, *VH* in relation to inscriptional sources. Due to limited time and space many of the issues may appear inadequately answered and explained; therefore, instead of calling this work as an end in itself, I am leaving the task of a detailed and intensive research for my future studies.

Chapter: One-
Trends and Perspectives in Social and Economic History:
A Retrospect

History is the long struggle of man, by the exercise of his reason, to understand his environment and to act upon it. – Carr, (2008: 134)

I

The systematic history writing in the Indian Subcontinent started with the coming of the Europeans, and since then, a long span of time has passed with the continuous changes in the approach, understanding and methods of writing history. History is not a static entity but, in E. H. Carr's words, is '...a constantly moving process with the historian moving

within it...'¹ It is in the end, a communication in which the historian as being a 'conscious mediator' makes choice² in selecting theme, sources, methods, theories and so forth. This consciousness of the historian is not out of the period or age he is living in. It is influenced, if not determined by the factors ranging from social to economic to political on the one hand and availability on the other, interpretation and reinterpretations of the sources. Therefore, inherently it is bound to change over the period, because every age rewrites its history as every generation, to deal with new issues, problems and questions, reanalyzes, reinterprets and thereby, renews its past.³

The systematic study of these changes, primarily based on historical literature is termed as 'Historiography'. It is noticeable here that historiography is not a '...history of historians...' as well as of '...the historical truth objectively considered...', instead, '...a history of history (writing) subjectively understood.'⁴ Historiographer is not only interested in various kind of histories, but also in '...what ideas, true or false, were at any time accepted and what pressure they exerted upon those who entertained them.'⁵ The Indian historiography has been conceptualized and framed by the scholars in various ways.⁶ But it is generally accepted that it started with the colonial writings with an

¹ Carr, (2008: 133).

² Chattopadhyaya, (2003:15).

³ Chattopadhyaya, (2009: XXIV).

⁴ Backer, (1938: 26).

⁵ *ibid*, (1938: 26).

⁶ For example: Sharma and Jha, (Mar. 1974). Jaiswal, (1979-80) talks about how over the period caste has been conceptualized, and argues to study it as a part of social institutions of early India that though have been articulated in ritual language but originated in and was sustained by secular and politico-economic factors. Chattopadhyaya, (1985). Chattopadhyaya, (1988-89). Sreedharan, (2004) talks about the

emphasis upon 'oriental despotism', 'changelessness', 'self sufficient village economy' and, 'religion based periodization'. The purpose behind it was to establish the view that it's only the external forces like the colonial rule that could change the centuries old face of change-less Indian society.⁷

This was followed by the 'Nationalist' writings, which conceptualized the ancient Indian history as a period of great Empires (e.g. Gupta's as a golden age) with the periods of dark ages and emphasized upon the great political achievements of individuals (e.g. Chandragupta Maurya, Aśoka and Samuṁdragupta). But their writings remained confined within the framework of colonial concepts (e.g. Āryan-Draavidian race) and frameworks (e.g. religion based periodization). One of the important features of nationalist writings was their attempt to prove the presence of modern concepts like imperialism, democracy, guild system etc, in ancient Indian society, in a much better form.⁸ And in this way, their

historiographic tradition from its beginning in Greco-roman to present times. But he also gives a considerable space to Indian historiographic tradition starting from colonial to present writings.

⁷ The first important history of India came from James Mill (*History of British India*, 1817), an official of the East India Company in London and the views proposed by Mill or inspired from his works were to become the base for the European understanding of the Indian civilization, in the following decades. Mill's predominant motive in writing the History was his desire to apply the utilitarian doctrine to the governance of India. He saw in the new Indian Empire fertile fields for utilitarian reforms towards which arguments were to be supplied by the deliberately attempted an evaluation in India. Sreedharan, (2004: 402-4). His views were shared by several British administrator-historians. The administrative scholars of the nineteenth century firmly believed that the British imperial administration could change the Indian socio-economic set-up by legislation. Sharma and Jha, (1974: 49). Their study of the Indian society and economy inspired Karl Marx, in what he called the Asiatic Mode of Production. The analyses of Karl Marx envisaged despotism and stagnancy as key characteristics which nullified movements towards change parallel to Europe. Thapar, (2002: 8).

⁸ For example: R. K. Mukherjee (1912) for the first time demonstrated the participation of Indian merchants in the overseas trade. But, he failed to distance completely from the European notions like,

works clearly show their Hindu bias and self glorification in order to prove that they are not less than their colonial masters.

The post second world war era was a period of great change throughout the world- emergence of third world, decolonization, American hegemony etc. A change increasingly became clear in history writings that now began to emphasize upon the social history outside the economic determinism as well as the dominance of political history. The increasing specialization and technicality in economic history with the growth of separate departments, '...the major questions of historical interpretations... (had) often abandoned...' by employing history merely '...as a testing ground for propositions.'⁹ But the change began to surface with the increasing realization to economic historians of post-1950s, that the '...factors outside economics also determine economic developments.'¹⁰

An emphasis was laid upon the interdisciplinary approach by employing anthropological, sociological, psychological etc., concepts to understand the past. At the same time social history '...turned its attention away from kings, politicians and parliaments and argued

religion based periodization, Hindu bias, and thereby, attempts to show Hindu imperialism- the Guptas and Harshavardhan in northern India and the Chalukyas and the Cholas in South-east Asia became the flag-bearers of Hindu Imperialism. R. C. Majumdar (1922) locates the origin of the corporations e.g. guilds (*śreni*) etc., in the practical necessities rather than in the religious and ritual functions. By equating ancient Indian '*śreni*' with European 'guilds' he attempts to show that the ancient Indians have developed the institutions equal to Europeans.

⁹ Jones, (1976: 299).

¹⁰ Hobsbawm, (1971: 24).

that other people also had a history.’¹¹ ‘Economic and Social history’ became an accepted phrase under the increasing Marxist influence. Now the analysis of social groups, defined by their position in the productive process and in the division of labor began to be studied. It does not mean that political scenario is completely forgotten. Since, as suggested by Theodore Zeldin, the Marxists are interested in the study of the relationship between economic organization and political power on the one hand and on the other, their impact through the exploitative and manipulative relations with the masses- workers and peasantry- on society, politics remained a part of social history but lost its primacy.¹²

The post-1950s brought a change as well as challenge to earlier approaches whether ‘imperialist’ or ‘nationalist’.¹³ Now the focus shifted from great achievements of ancient Indians to the marginalized sections of society i.e. *śūdras*, untouchables in relations to the changes in socio-economic-and-political institutions. The concept of Indian feudalism was theorized on the premises of agrarian expansion, emergence of castes, and the little or complete negation of trade and commercial activities. Another important change became visible in the idea of periodization, which was no more based on dynastic or political changes but on major socio-economic developments. These developments in western historical circles also became quite visible in the writings of Indian historians

¹¹ Zeldin (1976: 238).

¹² *ibid*, (1976: 238).

¹³ In 1950s onwards, there is a stark difference between ancient and medieval historiography on the one hand and modern historiography on the other. Where in ancient and medieval historiography the focus was on the themes like social formations, feudalism, question of socio-economic relations and questions of state formation, the modern Indian historiography was centered on nationalism, anti-colonialism and national movement. Sarkar, (2008: 36-7).

particularly those working on the 'feudalism concept' by analyzing the economic changes in relation to social developments in the early historical period.

D. D. Kosambi reanalyzed the Marxism and considered it as a tool/method of thinking rather a substitute of thinking. He argued that '*Society is held together by bonds of production*' therefore, socio-political developments should be studied within the changing material conditions.¹⁴ The concept of Indian feudalism argued by D. D. Kosambi was further refined by R. S. Sharma¹⁵ that generated an intense debate in the scholarly circles, and has dominated the Indian historiography for almost three decades. With the coming of Marxist approach an emphasis was laid upon the way economy functioned and instrumentalized by the elites (ranging from kings to feudal lords to intermediary landowners) in against of the masses (ranging from peasants to serfs) by linking it with the agricultural expansion as well as with the enserfment of the peasantry, restriction on mobility, heavy taxation, de-urbanization¹⁶ (paving the way for ruralization or localization particularly in terms of economic activities), lack of monetary system (due

¹⁴ D. D. Kosambi (1956) suggests two way process for the emergence of Indian feudalism: a) from above, when kings began to transfer their fiscal and administrative rights over land to their subordinate chiefs from the earlier centuries of Christian era onwards, and b) from below, when during Guptas and Harsha's period a class of landowners began to emerge within the villages between the state and peasantry.

¹⁵ In contrast to D. D. Kosambi, R. S. Sharma (1980) proposed a gradual and linear process. According to him feudalism in India emerged with the land grants to brāhmaṇas, temples and monasteries from the first century AD and multiplied by the Guptas when villages began to be granted to royal officials along with the fiscal and administrative rights with a complete control over the inhabitants. In subsequent writings he has linked the emergence of feudalism with the whole institution of representation, as manifesting feudal order, ranging from economic (in terms of agrarian basis) to social (in terms of caste) to religious (in terms of land grants- *brahmdeyā*, *devadāna* etc.) to artistic (in terms of art-architecture and patronage). Sharma, (2000).

¹⁶ See Sharma (1987).

to the decline of Indo-Roman trade) etc. Now the politics became secondary as the central stage of discourse is taken up by the socio-economic forces.¹⁷

The earlier notions like change-less-ness and oriental despotism proposed by colonial scholars, idea of golden age proposed by nationalist scholars were brought into question and critical analysis. The very concept of Indian feudalism made it clear that the society and economy was not stagnant and was changing over the period due to multiple reasons. It also put an end to the claim of a golden age by showing the exploitative nature of relations between or among the ruling elites or marginalized sections of society in the feudal mode of production. Though the work of Marxist scholars no doubt provided a new perspective to the Indian history, it remained dependent upon the European framework of periodization. The beginning of Indian feudalism is precisely conceived from the very period when Europe was moving from classical to feudal age. Moreover, a vast corpse of literary data was accumulated to postulate a pan-Indian model of socio-economic development, i.e. feudalism, without giving much attention to the regional variations.¹⁸

In this way one finds a significant change in the historical studies and understanding from colonial to nationalists to Marxists writings. But, here it's noticeable that when one talk about major historiographical trends following one after another it doesn't mean a linear

¹⁷ D. D. Kosambi (1956: 13) says that the king or their rule is not important but it's the people, use of plough, light or heavy, because the type of kingship, function of the property relations and surplus produced, depends upon the method of agriculture. Dynastic changes and vast religious upheavals are generally indicative of powerful changes in the productive basis.

¹⁸ See Chattopadhyaya, (1985) and (2003: 217-231).

progress as the coming of one trend marks the virtual end of another. Instead it means the earlier trend no more remains the dominating one and is replaced by the new trend by bringing new arguments and understandings that differ from the earlier historical writings. In this situation while the new trend becomes dominating the historical works may or may not be their based on earlier trend.¹⁹

II

E. J. Hobsbawm, while analyzing the emergence of social history in post-1950s, says that the social history (of beliefs, ideas, culture, social tensions, crisis etc) obliged to ‘...construct model that is to fit his partial and scattered data into coherent systems.’ But at the same time he points out the limitation of such models as being unable to explain the social realities at the time of ‘rapid and fundamental changes’ that put ‘the society far beyond the individual’s experience or even conceptual grasp.’²⁰ The 1980s marked a new phase in the history writing with an increase criticism of model making and undermining of political history on the one hand and on the other with an emphasis upon the linguistic approach.²¹ The earlier approach towards the politics as determined by the economy in relation to social forces was questioned by emphasizing the role of politics as equal to

¹⁹ For example, Nationalist trend is quite visible in Moti Chandra’s ‘*Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India*’ (English version of his book, ‘*Sārthavāha*’ in Hindi) that came in 1977 which was the period of post-1950s Marxist writings. His works deals particularly with the development of trade routes (internal as well as external) and the position of traders particularly ‘*Sārthavāha*’ (caravan trader/leader) in relation to the changing political backgrounds. The work not only talks about continuous trading activities from Indus civilization to 11th-12th centuries but also about Indian imperialism under the Cholas. See, *ibid*, (1977).

²⁰ Hobsbawm, (1971: 38).

²¹ Mayfield and Thorne, (1992).

socio-economic forces in the historical study. The proper understanding of language also became an important factor by pointing out the inadequacy of the present terms- urban centre, village, merchant etc- to explain the variations in their nature and types. The study of religion remained no more something confined to sacred realm and philosophy. Scholars started studying it as an important aspect of ancient Indian society in terms of its role, impact and relations with the contemporary socio-economic-and-political developments.

G. Childe's 'ten point formula' that he developed for pre-historical societies has been a guiding light for many writings on urbanization in ancient Indian subcontinent to differentiate between the urban center from the village settlement by making the two types as being two opposite poles. Scholars have used both textual and archaeological sources to study urbanization and trading activities. But often they have relied too much on either of the sources by undermining their use in relation to each other in their studies, hence, leading to somewhat misrepresentation of the facts.

A. Ghosh has assessed the archaeological data in relation to literary sources, on the early historic Indian cities by employing the model proposed by Gordon Childe in his work. He traces the emergence of full fledged urban centers from the c. 600 B C, the time Ganga valley witnessed the emergence of kingdoms (*janapadas* or *mahājanapadas*).²² But, G.

²² A. Ghosh, (1973). The debate related with the early historical urbanization in Ganga Valley revolves around to two stands. 1) The emergence of surplus not as a technical but social product. *ibid* (1973) and Sarao (1990). 2) The emergence of surplus as a result of iron technology making possible the clearing off the dense forests and intensive cultivation in Ganga Valley. Sharma, (1974). But now scholars don't see the

Erdosy has brought another picture of early historical cities into light that questions such view. On the basis of archaeological studies he postulates a contrary picture of the textual descriptions of lavish cities, that the first urban centers in Ganga valley differed little from the villages and lacked markets, workshops and building activities. According to him when NBPW was introduced in c. 600 BC, though may be fortification was there but the lavish cities were not present which only began to appear by the period of Maurya's in 3rd century BC.

K. T. S. Sarao on similar lines suggests that the developmental history of urban centers in early historic period may be divided into two categories: a) primary urban centers which were seats of political authorities, and b) secondary urban centers that emerged subsequently to meet the need of the primary urban centers. He questions the 'ten point formula of G. Childe' and argues that certain traits of urbanization suggested by Childe are not the cause but the consequence of the urbanization, e.g. writing, fortification, trade, monumental buildings, markets etc. He further suggests a link between varied forms, types and sizes of the settlements, and the variations in their functions. That further corresponds to the emergence of a more complex economy with a greater specialization contributing to the expansion of trade, emergence of market towns along the trade routes and so forth.²³

mere technological invention as a cause of urbanization, and consider it as being a much more complex phenomenon. For further discussion see, Basant (2009).

²³ Various forms of urban centers for example are: *nigama*, market town standing between *gāma* and *nagara*; *nagara*, urban settlement; *mūla-nagara*, primary city; *pura*, fortified town; *paṭṭana*, trading port-town; *puṣa-bhedanaṃ*, interior-port or a transportation settlement located at the bend or confluence of a river; *rājadhānī* or *rājadhanīyā*, the royal city or the capital city; *mahānagara*, metropolis. Sarao, (1990).

TH-19002

The idea of ecological determinism proposed by Makkhan Lal on the basis of a case study of Kanpur district has also been questioned. The concept of 'ecological determinism' means good-and-bad ecological conditions determines the settlement pattern therefore, ecologically less favorable areas are settled later and sparsely while the ecologically favorable areas show exactly the reverse.²⁴ G. Erdosy shows through his studies that Kausāmbī (an urban settlement) in Allahabad region along with its numerous subsidiary sites is located in the midst of ecologically unfavorable zone. The minor tributaries in the Allahabad region dry up during the summer which means water was not available easily. Instead of ecological reasons he argues that it was the proximity of the mineral (e.g. iron) resources in the Vindhyan hills as well as ability to control the traffic to and from this region which played important role in its development.²⁵ In this way he appears as suggesting the importance of human rather the ecological factors as being decisive when it comes to select a site for settlement.

Himanshu Prabha Ray discusses the trade and trading activities in early historical period between 100 BC and AD 300, and shows the presence of large Buddhist monasteries (Mathura, Sanchi, Bharut, Bandhogarh etc.) along the major trade routes. She suggests the dependence of these settlements upon the trade and commerce as being the crucial factor deciding their emergence as well as desertion. The Junar rock-cut caves were deserted (c.300 AD) as soon as the near by *Sopara* port on the west coast due to silting lost its commercial importance. Junar also provided the agricultural hinterland, according to her, to the ports of *Kalyan* and *Sopara* situated across the *Sahyadari* range on the west

²⁴ Lal, (1984).

²⁵ Erdosy, (1985).



coast.²⁶ The view proposed by H. P. Ray, on the basis of archaeological sources, regarding the decline of *Sopara* by 3rd century AD, is questioned by the literary and inscriptional sources that suggest a continuity of the port in the later centuries. The Christian topography (c. 600 AD, *Sibor* or *Chaul*) mentions it.²⁷ The 7th century Jātākamālā of Āryasura describes it as a port where the Buddha functioned as a master mariner capable of bringing in and taking out the ships (*āharaṇa* and *apaharaṇa*) from *Sopara*.²⁸ Alberuni mentions *Sopara* as *Soubarah*.²⁹ The *Khārēpāṭaṇ* inscription from the *Koṅakan* (c. 11th century AD) mentions it as *Sūparaka*.³⁰ Therefore, it is important to use both literary and archaeological sources in relation to each other in order to understand the past in better way. Too much reliance on either of the sources often leads to misinterpretation of the facts.

III

The 'model of Indian Feudalism' began to be questioned by 1980s onwards. Applicability of this model at pan-Indian level is contested through regional studies and new interpretations are proposed. Though, scholars like K. M. Shrimali continued to base their studies on the feudal model. He argues the virtual absence of monetary system, waning of urban centers, and decline of trade as giving way to the small-scale village settlements and to feudal polity under the Vākāṭakas. Though he acknowledges the

²⁶ Ray, (1989).

²⁷ Chakravarti, (1991: 163, foot note no. 13).

²⁸ Speyer (1971).

²⁹ Nairne, (2001: 4).

³⁰ Mirashi, (1977: 115-120).

presence of coins issued by Ikṣavākus who were their near contemporaries, and Viṣṇukundins, Nālas, and Nāgas, contemporaries, rejects the possibilities of circulation of these coins within the territories of Vākātakas.³¹ But, during the same period which Shrimali characterizes as witnessing the decline of trade and commerce, the trading port, Hathab (Astakapra of *Periplus*, c. 300 BC to 600 AD) in present day Gujarat, was flourishing on western coast. Excavations have yielded many iron objects from the site and on the basis of which it is suggested that it was a warehouse collecting iron objects from interiors and exporting to the west. More than three hundred terracotta sealing are found in one pocket near a warehouse with names of individuals further corroborating the presence of brisk trade.³²

Moreover, Shrimali identifies 134 villages or settlements on the basis of Vākātakas inscriptions, out of which some settlements (*Cārmāṅka* (settlement of leader worker), *Kāmsakāarakāgrāma* (settlement of bronze workers), *Suvarṇakāragrāma* (settlement of goldsmith), etc) indicate some urban traits.³³ But still he undermines the presence of trade while arguing the ruralization of the region. What is interesting here is to note that these settlements are mentioned either as grāma/ village or in association of villages in the inscriptions. Therefore instead of labeling them as full fledged urban centers or rural settlements one should understand them as settlements which were not simply rural or urban but one way or other linked with both agricultural as well as commercial activities. Such settlements in this way appear in B. D. Chattopadhyaya's words, as 'an extension of

³¹ Shrimali, (1987: 6).

³² Kumaran, Dwivedi and Jadhav, (2003-4).

³³ Shrimali, (1987: 28-29).

countryside'³⁴, the phenomenon which was one of the characteristics of early medieval period. Settlements like *Nīligrāma* (Nīlī = indigo) and *Lavaṇatailaka* (Lavaṇa =salt and tailaka= oil)³⁵ suggest their association possibly with the exchange of indigo or salt-oil, which are items of exchange.

It is also interesting to note that most of the Vākāṭaka inscriptions mention about the 'exemption from digging of salt' (*alavaṇakeṇṇakkhanaka*)³⁶ along with the land grant. It suggests that most of the villages possibly were engaged with salt making, thereby, exchange if we follow the opinion of D. D. Kosambi, who has argued that: "Most villages produce neither metals nor salt, two essentials that had mostly to be obtained by exchange, hence imply some commodity production."³⁷ In this way the possibility of exchange in necessities like salt in these villages one can not undermine, hence, the expansion of agriculture as indicated by Vākāṭaka inscriptions and rightly noted by Shrimali does not mean a virtual disappearance of commercial activities just because of the ruralization or expansion of agriculture in new areas. Instead, what is required here is to come out of the habit to look at the settlements in terms of two opposite and homogenous poles- urban and rural, in order to understand the complex nature of exchange activities during the period under study.

³⁴ Chattopadhyaya, (1994: 166).

³⁵ Shrimali, (1987: 11-22).

³⁶ *ibid*, (1987).

³⁷ Kosambi, (1956: 11).

B. D. Chattopadhyaya³⁸ criticizes the feudal concept that look at the agrarian expansion through land-grants in relation to disintegration of centralized state structure and decline of trade-urban centers across the subcontinent in the early medieval period. Contrary to feudal school's views, he sees the emergence of multiple regional polities as a transition from tribal polity to state polity which stimulated two processes: one, peasantization of tribe and caste formation, and second, cult appropriation and integration.

IV

V. K. Jain, like Shrimali, follows the feudal model and his work correspond to the framework proposed by feudal school that maintains c. 600 to 1000 AD as the period of Indian feudalism and the revival of trade and urban centers from about the 10th or 11th century onwards. He proposes the presence of multiple corporate bodies or guilds- *śreṇī* (a group of artisans and craftsmen), *pūga* (assembly of different castes and occupations persons dwelling at one place or village), *vrāta* (association of potters and the like), *naigama* (association of caravan merchants of different castes) and *samīgha* (corporation of different castes merchants professing same faith but inhabiting different places) - in western India, of both artisans and merchants, united for common purpose. In one of his footnote he supports the view proposed by D. D. Kosambi that there was a gradual predominance of merchant guilds (i.e. '*Vaṇiggrāma* or *Maṇiggrāma*') controlled by rich families over the older type of workers' *śreṇīs*. Such *śreṇīs* were formed, according to

³⁸ Chattopadhyaya, (1985) and (1994: 16).

him, by the *anāśrita* artisans (neither depending on feudal lords nor any other agency) who could indulge in trade and form guilds.³⁹

According to D. D. Kosambi the decline of foreign trade and administrative decentralization was intimately linked with the position of traders and trade. It resulted in state regulated and controlled trading activities by limiting the activities of traders to mediate between the producers (peasants, craftsmen etc.) and the consumers (feudal lords) in the early medieval period. He distinguishes between the earlier *śreṇis* (whose members, possibly, were engaged in cultivation, cattle herding and collectively engaged in other production such as that cloth, or indulge in trade, and take to arms as need) and *Vaṇiggrāma* (*Maṇiggrāma* in south) which according to him, was the association of merchants coming from rich families organized due to common interest instead of kinship ties. They were given royal charters with special immunities as well as with certain restrains and limitations by the political authorities.⁴⁰

No doubt *Vaṇiggrāma* (merchant guild) attained considerable prominence in the early medieval period in north as well as in south (as *Maṇiggrāma*), and its members were not associated with kinship ties. But it seems inappropriate to characterize it as a body exclusively of rich merchant families only. The *Three copper plates of the Toramaṇā*⁴¹ (c. 6th century AD) mentions about *Vaṇiggrāma* whose members assembled at Vadrāpālī, the administrative headquarter of *Śivabhāgapuraviṣaya*, to offer voluntary cesses on

³⁹ Jain, (1990: 227, footnote no.142).

⁴⁰ Kosambi, (1959).

⁴¹ Chakravarti, (2008).

certain commodities in favor of the Jayasvāmī (Viṣṇu). Not only the merchants coming from far distance places (*caturdiśābhyāgatakavaideśya*) e.g. *Daśapura* (Mandasor), *Kānyakubja* (Kanauj), *Ujjainī* (Ujjain) etc but also the local (*vāstavya*) merchants engaged in petty businesses and small-scale transactions⁴² were members of *Vaniggrāma*. It also included Brāhmaṇas (e.g. Bharāṇa Bhaṭṭīśa Śarmā, Agniśarmā etc.) and one member possibly of non-Indian origin (i.e. Gdusuyebhassam). This suggests that *Vaniggrāma* was not an association of only rich merchants or dominated by any caste or region specific merchant family or families. Another point which is also indicated by the copper plates of the Toramanā, is that the activities or decisions of *Vaniggrāma* were not controlled or interfered by the ruling authorities. The decision to make an endowment to the temple is taken collectively by the merchant (both coming from out side and local) and the document was signed at the house (*grhavāstuveti*) of a local merchant (*vāñijaka*) Ṣaṣṭī, who also donated his house to the temple.⁴³

D. D. Kosambi has based his argument primarily upon the study of the *Charter of Viṣṇusēṇa*⁴⁴, (592 AD), issued from *Lōhātā* or *lōhātaka-grāma*, and later, endorsed by another ruler (*sāmanta*), named Avanti, from Darapura (*Daśapura*) (605 AD). He argues that the rule and regulations were codified by the political authority to coerce the merchant guild to the state apparatus, thereby to control and restrict their activities. But

⁴² The local merchants are given the epithet *poṭṭalika-puttrāh*. The term *poṭṭalika* or *poṭalika* stands for a packet or bundle. The suffix- *puttrāh* would probably denote a small packet or bundle. The local dealers at Vadrāpālī therefore appear to have been petty traders engaged in small-scale retailing. *ibid*, (2008: 397) and Ray, (2008: 36).

⁴³ Chakravarti, (2008: 397).

⁴⁴ Sircar, (1953-54 a).

he misses the point that the ruler, Vishṇushēṇa, was approached by the merchants (*vaniggrama*) of Lōhāṭā with the request of being favoured with the ruler's *āchāra-sthiti-pātra* (rules and regulations) which they wanted to utilize in protecting and favoring their own people (*lōka- saṁgrah-ānugrahārtham*). Moreover, the rules and regulations which had been codified looks more like prevalent customary laws without much modification. The ruler also, in addition to these *āchāras* approved of other *āchāras*-that were handed down from ancient times.⁴⁵ It shows that the rule and regulations codified by the ruler were not the final statement but more like directions, besides which other customary rules could have been followed simultaneously. Therefore it was the convenience of the merchants rather than the ruling authority that led to the codification of such laws.

The *Three copper plates of the Toramanā* (regnal year 6) mentions about the donation by Ṣaṣṭī of his own house to the deity in the presence of the District chief. It also mentions a donation of a lake and a piece of land to the deity by a goldsmith.⁴⁶ The *Indor Plates of Pravarasēna- II* (c. 5th century AD) records a grant of half the village, sanctioned by the ruler, to Brāhmaṇas by a merchant named Candra, who purchased the land before donating from the royal authorities.⁴⁷ Here it is interesting to note that a later date inscription from Bhilsa (9th century AD) uses the expression, *Vaiśya-āgrahāra* for a grant of *vīthīs* (a stall or a shop in a market sometime attached to the residential house) by a

⁴⁵ *ibid*, (1953-54 a: 169).

⁴⁶ Mehta and Thakkar, (1978: 18).

⁴⁷ Mirashi, (1963: 38-42).

merchant named Haṭiāka, of the Pāravāda⁴⁸ community (*jāti*). It is mentioned that he purchased three *vīthīs* and than donated to the temple in perpetuity (*akshaya-nīvikā*). The rent of three *vīthīs* was expected to meet the expenses of the regular offerings (*niyata-bhōga*) to the god and goddesses of the temple.⁴⁹ Another inscription from Andhra Pradesh (c. 11th century AD) also talks about *Vaiśya-āgrahāra* but this time it is related to the grant of a village, Kuddam to Brāhmaṇas. The village was purchased by a merchant Mallaya-śrēṣṭhīn of Datta *gōtra* and of *vaiśya* community from the king named Anantavarman Vajrahastadēva. It is mentioned that he kept a part of the village consisted of a house-site, a garden-site and cultivable land producing paddy for himself and rest donated. Interestingly though it was a religious donation, still a fixed annual rent at concessional rate was to be given to the king.⁵⁰

These all above inscriptions show that the merchants were not only making grants either land or shops/houses but also doing it at their own independent level. Therefore, it

⁴⁸ The Pāravāda *Jātī* seems identical with Prāgvaṭas *Jātī* a merchant community spread in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Anita Sharma (1996: 42) through her studies shows their origin in Rajasthan, Śrimālā or Bhinmal town. Their earliest reference is found in the Indragadh Inscription of Nānnappa (AD 711) in the Mandasaur district, Madhya Pradesh. Later date inscriptions of 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries AD, show the spread of their lineage in different parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

⁴⁹ Sircar, (1953-54 b).

⁵⁰ Sircar, (1959-60). The text, *Lekhapaddhati* (models of written documents) contains two specimens of letters among others. One talks about a secret deal (*gupta paṭṭako yathā*) between the administrative department (*pañchakula*) and the Śrēṣṭhī Bahada. According to which a big spacious house in front of the temple was given on lease, and the merchant had to pay every year rent for it to the temple and for other miscellaneous expenses. Another letter talks about a deal (*uttarāksharāṇī yathā* or loan repayment) according to which four villages were given to a merchant. In return for this, he was required to pay fix amount to the royal treasury in three installments, to *pañchakula* as a reward, fix amount for auspicious occasions and miscellaneous expenses out of the income from these villages. Prasad, (2007: 76-79).

questions the very base of the model of feudalism that links the land grants with the urban decay and decline of trade in the subcontinent. It also questions the very argument that links the land grant with the political authorities and undermines the role of merchants as either being controlled by the political authorities or being disassociated from the trading activities due to the feudalization process. *Vaiśya-āgrahāras* appear as a landed property controlled or managed by the *vaiśyas*, thereby indicates to their close association with land or their interest in landed property.

Moreover, V. K. Jain, like other scholars of feudal school, appears as completely ignoring the new and significant phenomenon regarding the 'ascendancy of several local merchant lineages (*Prāgvaṭas*, *Śrīmālas*, *Oswāls* etc.) and of the expansion of their network(s)' of exchange, which was/were based on family ties or kinship connections, in early medieval period. This new development has been shown by B. D. Chattopadhyaya⁵¹ on the basis of his study of Rajasthan. He shows the emergence of several local merchant lineages (*Dhūsara*, *Dharkaṭa*, *Prāgvaṭa*, *Oisavāla* and *Śrīmāla*) and of the expansion of their network (in Rajasthan, Gujarat etc) in the post-9th century AD. With the emergence of local ruling lineages there also emerged various centers of exchange integrating the rural units of production and of commercial traffic. He proposed a crucial relationship between trade, urban centre and a stable political structure. According to him one of the reasons for the absence of large scale urban centers in the Ganga valley in early medieval period was the absence of well-knit kingdoms like early historic period. But in Rajasthan and

⁵¹ Chattopadhyaya, (1994: 16).

Gujarat for example situation was different and here, the presence of regional polities played important role in the emergence of urban centers during the same period.

He suggests the presence of various types of exchange or urban centers (*mandapikā, haṭṭa* etc.) many of which represent 'an extension of that of the countryside'. The important point related to such urban centers is their links with the rural hinterland and exchange of agricultural products (both food grains and commercial items). In this way he challenges the dichotomy- village vis-à-vis urban center, and argues the presence of a hierarchy of exchange or urban centers with varied socio-economic-and-political relations or networks.

V

One of the important developments during the post 1980's period was regarding the reading and understanding of the specific terms and categories, their interpretation, application and changes in their meaning over the period. Each and every term used in ancient Indian literature, whether brahmanical or Buddhist carries a time and space specific socio-economic-and-political value, interpretation and meaning. Therefore using present day terms like merchant or market or urban centre or village loosely overshadow their historical specificities that only can be understood by understanding their time and space specific value, interpretation and meaning within their historical context.

The term '*gahapati*, *set̥thi-gahapati*, *set̥thi*' has been analyzed by scholars. It has been brought into light that the emergence and changes in the application and meaning were corresponding to the socio-economic developments in the contemporary society. Richard Fick on the basis of Jātakas made clear for the first time that the term '*gahapati*' is a class or a special rank, not a caste, which etymologically means 'householder', and denotes generally 'a landlord' or 'merchant prince of high birth and wealth'.⁵² Ivo Fisher shows that the meaning of the term *Śreṣṭhin* was changing from Vedic literature ('the best') to Buddhist Jātakas ('agriculturists or *Set̥thi-gahapati*') to later date Sanskrit Buddhist literature ('manager and financier of commercial activities' and 'the holder of *Set̥thiḥhāna* or an office or official position rendered by the king') along with the socio-economic changes in society. Narendra Wagle has employed anthropological methods to show that *gahapati* as a group cut across the religious affiliations like Buddhism or Brahmanism⁵³ as appears from the term *Brāhmaṇa-gahapatis* used in canonical texts⁵⁴. Ranabir Chakravarti further analysis the term and shows that the '*gahapati*' was not simply an agriculturist householder but an exceptionally wealthy man having extensive resources derived from agriculture, trade and money-lending.⁵⁵

Kumkum Roy⁵⁶ suggests the intimate relation between the changes in material conditions and the changes in the meaning of specific terms over the period through the study of the term '*Śraiṣṭhya*' that was changing its meaning from Vedic to post Vedic brahmanical

⁵² Fick, (1920: 31-32 and 253-356).

⁵³ Wagle, (1995: 74).

⁵⁴ Chakravarti, (1996: 73).

⁵⁵ Chakravarti, (1996: 183-4).

⁵⁶ Roy, (1994 :30-77).

literature. In the beginning when the society was basically pastoral, the characteristics associated with the *Śraīṣṭhya* were like that of Indra, who was associated with frequent cattle-raids/plunders. But with the advent of sedentary settlement and agriculture activities along with the cattle rearing the notion of leadership was changed and the *Śraīṣṭhya* was linked with the Prajāpati who was associated with the creation and regeneration. It is also important to note that the *Śraīṣṭhya* was also linked with the *Jyaiṣṭha* that implies a difference between or among the brothers in particular and kinsfolk in general.⁵⁷ At a time when control over the resources (with the emergence of private property) was becoming important, the increasing importance of *Śraīṣṭhya* was legitimized through rituals so is the claim of *Śraīṣṭhya* as being *Jyaiṣṭha* over the resources.

Uma Chakravarti postulates that with the emergence of monarchy the notion of private property also developed in relation with the *gahapati* class as being the owner-cultivator as well as engaged in business transactions connected with the management and control over their property. She also brings out the difference between the brahmanical vis-à-vis Buddhist conceptualization of society. According to her where brahmanical literature propagate the fourfold divisions (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra) the Buddhist schematizes the Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa and Gahapati not in terms of *varṇa* or *jāti* but in context of *kula*, *kamma* and *shippa* as being either high or low.⁵⁸ She highlights how with the changing socio-economic spheres the position of *gahapati* was changing from the householders to owner-cultivators to the managers of agricultural as well as commercial

⁵⁷ *ibid*, (1994: 59-61).

⁵⁸ Chakravarti, (1996: 104).

tasks with the emergence of some of them as *seṭṭhi-gahapati* and *seṭṭhi* over the period.⁵⁹ In this way she suggests the links between the developments in trade, traders and urbanization with the agricultural expansion on the one hand, and with the changes in the social set-up as well as with the religious institutions on the other hand. Now the need for a higher social status and recognition as well as an ideological support and encouragement to the commercial activities by the Buddhism bring the *gahapatis*, *seṭṭhi-gahapatis* and *seṭṭhis* in a close relationship with the Buddhist saṅghas (monasteries) against that of Brahmanism.

Like *gahapati* and *seṭṭhi* other categories of merchants have also been analyzed. Ranabir Chakravarti argues that among varied categories of merchants *nauvittakas* (ship-owners) emerged by the 10th century AD. They had overseas commercial connections and were present at coastal region of western India. Some of them were also holding the administrative positions possibly due to their financial success in overseas trade. Another important feature which he mentions is the presence of Muslim (Arabs) ship-owning merchants as administrator in western India and trading relations between merchants professing different faiths.⁶⁰ He also argues that the history of trade and urban centers can not be de-linked from the agrarian sector as both mutually depend on each other, and questions the use of 'undifferentiated and blanket categories in conventional economic historiography' in relation to various types of market places and merchants.⁶¹ While he talks about the early medieval period he argues that the important aspect of the types of

⁵⁹ Chakravarti, (2006: 111).

⁶⁰ Chakravarti, (2000).

⁶¹ Chakravarti, (2002: 17).

exchange centers – *maṇḍapikā*, *haṭṭa*, *peṇṭha*- that emerged, was their links with the adjacent rural hinterland on the one hand and with the big urban centers on the other. Moreover, the products brought here were mostly agricultural products.⁶²

VI

In post-1980s particularly, Buddhism and its relations with the trade and trading communities became the focus of study in several historical writings. Himanshu Prabha Ray argues that since western Deccan due to its peculiar geographical and ecological conditions lacked suitable land for agricultural activities except in small niches near the river valleys, it was the trade (internal as well as external) and influence of Mauryan polity that stimulated the socio-economic-and-political changes here in the early centuries of Christian era.⁶³ Religion, particularly Buddhist monastic institutions, situated near the agricultural settlements and trading routes, played a crucial role, not only in legitimizing the social structural changes but also integrated both the scattered agricultural settlements and commercial centers.⁶⁴ Kathleen D. Morrison argues differently to study of the emergence of polity, trade and Buddhist monastic institutions in the western Deccan

⁶² The various terms for urban centers are: (*nagara* or *pura* (large urban centre), a *puṭabhedana* (literally, where boxes of commodities were unsealed), *nigama* (a market centre in between village and a city), *paṭṭanagāma*, *paṇyapattana/paṭṭinam*, *velākula* (a port), *maṇḍapikā* (present day *mandis* in north India), and *peṇṭhā/piṇṭhā/pemṭā* (modern *peṭh* in the Deccan and south India) etc. *ibid* (2002: 17-21). Terms for merchants are: *vaṇik* (merchant in general), *sārvabhāha* (caravan trader), *rājāśreṣṭhī* (royal merchant), rich ship owner (*nakhuda*), cattle, horse and elephant traders (*govāṇija*, *aśvavaṇija*, *kudiraiceṣṭi*) etc. *ibid*, (2002: 24-5).

⁶³ Ray, (1986: 200-202).

⁶⁴ *ibid*, (1986: 87 and 101). See also, Ray, (2000) for further discussion on the relationship between Buddhism and Trade.

within the long agricultural background that was present there from Chalcolithic to iron to megalithic phase and continued up to early Historic period.⁶⁵ But its noticeable here that this region though had witnessed sedentary agricultural communities but the agricultural base of these settlements was not sound enough and they experienced desertion quite often. Hence, the emergence of urban centers, polity, agricultural expansion and religious institutions in this region can not be attributed to any single factor but required to study within the situation where multiple developments were converging at one point.

Xinru Liu, through her study of Silk route, emphasizes an intimate relation between the expansion of Buddhism and trade in silk. With the emergence of Buddhist monasteries as the great consumer of luxurious items like silk and their participation in trade, there was a qualitative change in Buddhist ideology. Now they began to promise heaven and prosperity, instead of Nirvāṇa (salvation) in next birth in return of the merits earned by making donations to the monastery to its donors.⁶⁶ The changes in ideological grounds in Buddhist saṅgha are also highlighted by Gregory Schopen⁶⁷ thorough his study of the Sanskrit Mahāyāna Buddhist text- *Mūlasarvāstivādin-vinaya*, dated to early centuries of Christian era. He shows that by the first millennium AD Buddhist monasteries were

⁶⁵ Morrison, (1995).

⁶⁶ Liu, (1988: 101). From a Buddhist monastic site, Devnimori in Gujarat some Roman amphora shards has been found along with Red Polished Ware and some lesser fine ware. The interesting point is that the chemical analysis suggests that the material stored in the ware was wine. *ibid* (1988: 122). See also, Liu, (2007) to know about the trading relations between/ among China, Mediterranean world and Indian Subcontinent as well as the role of varied religions- Buddhism, Christianity, Islam etc., in this trading network.

⁶⁷ See, Schopen, (1994 b); (1999) and (2004).

engaging in variety of commercial activities ranging from money-lending to land ownership and trade. One point Schopen throughout his writings keep us reminding is that the formulation of such rule and regulations in monasteries were, a) in a response/negotiation with the brahmanical laws prevailed in the society or state ruled by brahmanical kings⁶⁸, and b) in a response to the desires of laities (including merchants, *gahapatis*, *setṭhis* etc.) who were making perpetual grants (*akṣaya-nīvī*, *akṣaya-nīvī-dharmena*) for the continuous performance of rituals in his/family name.⁶⁹

VII

Scholars have shown through their writings the fact that there are variations in the attitude of various religions towards the economic activities ranging from trade to agriculture. Balkrishna Govind Gokhale argues that there was somewhat hostile or unsympathetic attitude of brahmanical literature (*Dharmaśāstras*, *Arthaśāstra* etc.) for the merchant class, in against of a favorable and supportive attitude of the Heterodox (Buddhism and Jainism for example) sects for them.⁷⁰ Like Buddhism as shown above, Brahmanism and its relation with the contemporary socio-economic-and-political developments has been analyzed. Uma Chakravarti⁷¹ through her comparative study of Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa shows differences in their narrative-conceptualization corresponding to the differences between their contemporary socio-economic set ups.

⁶⁸ Schopen, (1995: 122-3), (2001: 107-8).

⁶⁹ Schopen, (1994 a).

⁷⁰ Gokhale, (1977).

⁷¹ Chakravarti, (2006: 253-74).

Both epics, as appears, have one of the important themes, i.e. 'question of property' and 'right to inheritance' around which all networks of relations within or beyond royal household seem to be formed. Whether it is Mahābhārata that revolves around the great fraternal war between Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, or Rāmāyaṇa where 'accession to the Ayodhya⁷²-thrown' brought a split in royal household, both, thus represent how the question of land and property gradually becoming the main concern of society. Mahābhārata appears more like capturing the first transitional movement of the Vedic tribes from west to further east (across the indo-Gangetic divide)⁷², while Rāmāyaṇa seems to be located in a social formation where agrarian economies, property structures, inheritance rules, marriage practices, social hierarchies and states were crystallizing as well as molding institutions and cultural practices.⁷³ She shows that though both the epics represent a contestation relating to the 'primogeniture' but where in Mahābhārata the issue was resolved through war; in Rāmāyaṇa the solution was sought in idealizing the family relations and duties of the members.

Suvira Jaiswal⁷⁴ through her studies postulates that the Vaiṣṇavism or Bhāgavatism emerged by incorporating as well as accommodating varied local or tribal cults like, *Nārāyaṇa* (a deity of Dravidian origin, associated with human sacrifice), *Saṅkarṣaṇa-Baladeva* (non-brahmanical agricultural divinity of *Vṛiṣṇi* tribe), *Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa* (non-Aryan genesis, associated with Abhira tribe) and *Śrī-Lakṣmī* (*Śrī* and *Lakṣmī* two non-Aryan goddesses associated with fertility cult). These local cults were associated with

⁷² *ibid*, (2006: 262).

⁷³ *ibid*, (2006: 265-6).

⁷⁴ Jaiswal, (1981: 32-115).

Vedic sun-god Viṣṇu in course of time who became the most important deity by the early centuries of Christian era. It's noticeable that all these local or tribal cults were in one way or other related with the agricultural communities. That indicates their incorporation and accommodation within Brahmanism in order to mobilize resources.

The first millennium AD, particularly the early medieval period, witnessed an important development in Brahmanism, i.e. emergence of puranic deities and bhaktism.⁷⁵ This development has been interpreted differently by scholars. It is linked with the emergence of feudalism by the scholars belonging to feudal school. It is argued that as the land grants made in peripheral or forested areas brought the Brāhmaṇas in contact with the tribal peoples a need to incorporate them became necessary in order to make available easy labor. It lead to the process of acculturation that resulted in the emergence of puranic deities- Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śāktism etc- by incorporating and brahmanizing the tribal cults and beliefs on the one hand and on the other emergence of temple worship and proliferation of castes and sub-castes. It is argued that there were two main reasons for granting land: a) due to the decline of trade and urban centers agriculture became the main sources of resources for state thus land grants were made to reclaim the virgin land, and b) land grants to Brāhmaṇas and temples brought legitimization and prestige to the

⁷⁵ Kunal Chakrabarti (2000: 3) points out that the purāṇas were composed by brāhmaṇas to tackle the widespread popularity of heterodox sects, particularly of Buddhism. Hence, it was necessary to wider the social base of Brahmanism, therefore, attempt were made to draw people from the non-brahmanical fold. Such attempts resulted in the creation of '...a composite, syncretic religious system which incorporated diverse rituals and beliefs without endangering the social supremacy of the brāhmaṇas.'

donor.⁷⁶ They seem to argue the presence of some sort of a contractual element in the land grants between the donee and donor, if the purpose was to provide resources to the state at a time when other sources were waning away, i.e. trade and commerce.

But B. D. Chattopadhyaya questions such argument and argues the absence of any contractual element in the system of early medieval land grants. He suggests understanding the emergence of puranic deities and bhaktism in relation to the system of land grants in the duality of the relationship between sacred realm and the temporal realm: the political authorities (temporal power) required 'legitimization' from 'spiritual' authority similarly 'spiritual' authority requires sustenance from temporal power. Therefore, assignments such as brahmadeyās and devadānas were not merely administrative but socio-religious necessities for the temporal power.⁷⁷ With this was related the emergence of temple worship and emergence of puranic pantheons.

VIII

Though close relations have been emphasized by the scholars, of trade with agriculture on the one hand and religion on the other (Buddhism and trade, between 300 BC-AD300; and Brahmanism and expansion of agriculture, during early medieval period). But less

⁷⁶ Nath, (2001). R. S. Sharma (2000: 456-7) argues that the idea of social inequality and landed hierarchy is articulated through the varied sizes of the images of the puranic deities- Śiva, Viṣṇu, Dūrgā etc- in temples along with their subordinate pantheons. In the Hindu Tantric pantheon old gods were given the subordinate positions as vassals, servants, doorkeepers etc, while Siva and Viṣṇu reflecting the new social relationship occupied the centre-stage.

⁷⁷ Chattopadhyaya, (1985).

attention has been given to analyze the reaction of other religions, particularly Jainism, towards the strengthening of Brahmanism (puranic Hinduism), as well as how such developments and reactions were linked with the contemporary socio-economic and political developments.

- Gulab Chandra Chaudhary has used Jain literature uncritically for the political history of western India.⁷⁸ So is the case with Jamkhedkar, who has used *VH*, in order to recreate a picture of society from c.6th to 9th centuries AD.⁷⁹ But, his study only revolves around this text and hardly talks about other aspects of society, politics and economy as reflected by other sources. For example, he does not address the views, i.e. development of feudalism, decline of trade or urban centers, emergence of regional polities etc, proposed by other scholars regarding multiple developments during the period under study. In this way this work neither engages with the larger debate nor contextualizes the text, i.e., *VH* in accordance with the multiple developments that were taking place in the subcontinent. Jagdish Chandra Jain has also used Jain literature for his study of ancient Indian history. Though his most of the works are confined to the literary study and less attention is given to contextualize the Jain sources in contemporary socio-economic and political developments, his major contribution is in bringing the almost neglected Jaina text, *VH*, into light through his comparative study.⁸⁰ He has also contributed various articles relating to *VH* as well as other themes related to Jainism.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Chaudhary, (1963).

⁷⁹ Jamkhedkar, (1984).

⁸⁰ Jain, (1977).

⁸¹ Jain, (1992). See also Bhattacharyya, (1994).

Padmanabh S. Jaini, through his studies, argues that the Jaina writers, in order to counter the spread of devotional movement (*Vaiṣṇavism*) and in order to keep the Jaina laity within Jaina-fold, have openly criticized the certain narratives of brahminical literature (particularly *purāṇas*).⁸² Jaini has talked about varied aspects and principles of Jainism and Jaina philosophy, e.g. Ahimsā, Karma, Rebirth, Spiritual liberation of Women, Popular Jainism etc, in detail. But his work mostly revolves around the textual studies or in other words he looked at Jainism through texts. On the contrary Paul Dundas attempts to analyze varied aspects of Jainism through textual as well as anthropological studies. He argues that Jainism, which hitherto has been studied as being a religion of ascetics primarily, is also a religion of lay-devotees shaping varied aspects of it through public display of their association in the form of temple buildings, participation in festivals, gift giving, pilgrimage etc.⁸³

Some scholars, though, have worked on the Jain reaction to contemporary socio-economic-and-political developments, but still the area is largely unexplored. Raj S. Gandhi argues that emergence of Jainism should not be seen as a “revolt” against Brahmanism as it had borrowed and modified a number of theoretical ideas of the later Vedic Hinduism, e.g. concept of *mokṣa* from Brahmanic asceticism, doctrine of *karma* from Upanishads and so forth. Jainism emerged at a time when socio-economic situation was changing with the emergence of *vaiśyas* as traders and desiring a higher status. Not only the higher status but ideological support to their activities was provided by Jainism

⁸² Jaini (1993: 207-8).

⁸³ Dundas, (2001), (2002). See also, Laidlaw (1995) who have studied the Svetambara Jain community in Gujarat.

that emphasized upon non-violence. And therefore, such developments compelled the Brahmanic Hinduism to accept the practice of 'non-vegetarianism' as a mark of high caste Hindu.⁸⁴ Smita Sahgal on the other hand, traces the changes in Jainism during the post-Mauryan period and early centuries of Christian era and attributes the following reasons for such changes: a) intense philosophical debates leading to ideological changes, b) concerns for laity leading to adoption for idol worship and emergence of pantheon deities; and c) Spirit of competition with other religions.⁸⁵ Phyllis Granoff by studying the Jaina concept "*chiṇḍikā*" means 'a temporary lapse in religious practice', i.e. due to a pressure by king, by peers, by physical pressure, by god or goddess and by unavoidable circumstances (e.g. lost in forest), suggests that the Jaina ideologues were making relaxations to the laities to keep them within the fold of Jainism.⁸⁶

IX

It's clear from above discussion that in Indian history writings, over the period, one finds varied conceptualizations of urban centre, merchants, trade and trading activities in particular and economy in general. Where in colonial, nationalist and post 1950s Marxist writings particularly dealing with the notion of 'Indian feudalism' the trade and traders are studied in very abstract ways by limiting their sphere of activities within a pre-conceived area as a mediator whose position in a society is determined by the producers

⁸⁴ Gandhi, (1977).

⁸⁵ Sahgal, (1994).

⁸⁶ Granoff, (1994).

on the one hand and consumers on the other under, one way or other, the supervision of the political authorities. The possibilities of their being a producer as well as consumer besides being a mediator have been undermined or not attempted to explore except stray indications in some works. The historical writings from 1980s onwards have brought range of new issues and aspects relating to urban centers, merchants, trade and trading activities. The blanket terms like merchant or city etc have been questioned and the terms mentioned in ancient literature are re-analyzed and interpreted to show the plurality as well as changes in the meaning and application. The notion of urbanization and urban center is further conceptualized by distancing it from the earlier cherished models and pre-conceived static criteria.

The varied aspects of inter-regional and intra-regional trading networks have been explored by understanding the role of religion and political authorities in such activities. Buddhism played a crucial role by providing ideological support to trade and traders on the one hand and on the other institutionalization of Buddhist monasteries provided much needed assistance to them. But in comparison to Buddhism and even Brahmanism (or Hinduism) the role of Jainism in ancient Indian socio-economic developments has not been much explored. Arguments have been made to show the presence of trade in agricultural products besides luxury commodities. The post-1980s historical writings have re-analyzed and re-interpreted the role of political authorities in relations to society and economy unlike earlier writings that confined them to dyanastic history, wars for territory and succession etc. The dichotomy of city and village is questioned by the scholars who now emphasizes upon the varied nature and types of city and villages.

Another aspect that becomes clear is the important relations of merchants with the landed property. In this way one can summarize the main thread of post 1980s historiography as emphasizing on plurality of themes that questions the monolithic meanings, aspects and interpretations of ancient India society, economy and polity.

Chapter: Two

Reading between the Lines: *Vasudevahiṇḍi*, a Non-Canonical

Jaina Text

Her soles, well-formed and reddish by nature, are praised by the interpreters of marks, her feet have red nails as do her fingers, circular in succession; her shanks are difficult to be clearly discriminated, and are thick, circular, tender, and endowed with concealed hair; she has fleshy, composed thighs resembling a plantain tree, and broad hips endowed with fleshy and firm buttocks; her navel curves to the right, her waist is beautiful with a fine row of black hair like the point of a sword, all measurable with a hand; she has fleshy, unraised breasts, brightened by a necklace, pleasing and well-united, and her creeper-like arms have concealed joints, are beautifully joined and lovely with ornaments; her palm lines have the marks of a fly-whisk, a fish, and an umbrella, her conch-like neck is beautiful with a jeweled necklace, her moon-like face as pleasing as the full moon itself, shining out from behind a mass of clouds; she has eyes with a reddish border, white middle and dark pupils, lips as charming as the bimba fruit, and

*well-formed ears fitted for the enjoyment of earrings; the bridge of her nose is commendably raised; she speaks sweet words pleasant to the ears and mind...*¹

The description of a female body and of sensual pleasure in Jaina literature is something that goes against the basic principles of Jainism. Because it completely denounces the worldly pleasures as well as emphasizes upon the extreme austerity. For a devout Jaina three commandments are extremely important: a) *ahimsā*- he shall not do violence to other living beings; b) *brahmacārya*- he shall not commit adultery; and c) *aparigrah*- he shall set a limit to his greed for worldly possessions.² But the non-canonical text like *VH* represent a genre in Jaina literature that revolves around the stories of 'love', 'sensual pleasures', 'heroism of Vasudeva against his enemies' and 'adventures of merchants for wealth' besides religious sermons interwoven. Such Jaina literature brings a question before us, and that is what made Jaina writers to write such literature that nothing but appears more like a compromise with the basic Jaina principles? To answer this we need to contextualize our text as a part of Jainism in particular, and of a literary tradition in general, within the socio-economic-and political background it was written.

I

The expansion of agriculture in new areas that hitherto had been away from any of the leading religious sects whether it had been Brahmanism or Buddhism or Jainism, posed a challenge to them as well as further intensified the contestation among them. The large

¹ Jain, (1977: 200).

² Gandhi, (1977: 254).

scale land grants around the third and the beginning of fourth century were in the areas- eastern part of Madhya Pradesh, in Vidarbha in Maharashtra, in Andhra Pradesh and northern Tamilnadu etc- outside the Ganga Valley.³ Hence, the changes and modifications in the existing religious structure became necessary to accommodate the people living and, customs and traditions prevailing in these new areas by inculcating a new philosophical and ideological edifice. This is because, in terms of Charles Drekmeir, society as a system has two functional requirements: a) adoption of ‘...the larger environment in which it exists...’ and modification of it ‘...in accordance with requirements of security and sustenance...’, and b) effective integration of ‘...the units of society to maintain its smooth and proper functioning.’⁴

The study of the inscriptions suggest broadly the presence of two types (particularly those which are religious in nature) of land-grants, a) to monasteries⁵ which owned and managed land in collectivity and b) to individual Brāhmaṇas, who owned and managed the land in their individual capacity. Neither a Buddhist nor a Jain monk is ever given a land in their individual capacity to manage or control it. Ideologically Brāhmaṇas were never forbidden from owning, enjoying and managing landed property. Moreover, they were allowed to adopt the occupation of lower *varṇas* during the time of crisis.⁶ But, both

³ Sharma, (2007: 65-66).

⁴ Drekmeir, (1962: 30).

⁵ Temples were also granted land for various expenses. But since the Brāhmaṇas were the intimate part of temple institution the nature of their relation with the granted property was different from the Buddhist or Jaina monks. Therefore here I am not including the temples in order to explain better the differences of Buddhist and Jaina monks/monasticism vis-à-vis Brāhmaṇa individuals.

⁶ The concept of Kali age began to be highlighted in Brahmanical literature (e.g. Purāṇas etc) by third and beginning of fourth centuries. It has been characterized as a period that would witness the inter-mixing of

Buddhist and Jain monks were not allowed to do so. They were strictly prohibited from owning property and getting directly engaged in production, at least in their individual capacity, as being a part of the monastic institution that depended upon the laity for sustenance and survival.

During the late first millennium BC and early first millennium AD, one of the important developments was the institutionalization of Buddhist as well as Jaina monasticism, at two levels: a) internal organization based on egalitarian principles and b) formation of external relations with the laity as well as interaction with the other sects and religions. One of the important functions of an institution is to be relational with the larger societal developments within which it is functioning and thereby to ‘...provide bonds or cement among particular patterns of social action(s)’.⁷ However, ‘...institutions rest on sanctions, and that these sanctions in turn dictate the behavior...’⁸, at least of those who are part of it. The rules and regulations- what is permissible and what is not- governing the life of a monks vis-à-vis the society as a whole, in fact confer a distinct identity to them by

varṇas or *varṇasaṃskara*, hostility between Śūdras and Brāhmaṇas, refusal of Vaiśyas to pay taxes and offer sacrifices, oppression of the people with taxes, widespread theft and robbery, insecurity of family and property, destruction of livelihood, growing importance of wealth over ritual status, and dominance of *mlecchas* princes. Such conceptualization of Kali age appears in Brahmanical literature precisely at the time when through land grants they were moving into forested and tribal regions. In R. S. Sharma’s view, Kali age indicates to the crisis situation in these peripheral regions which have never experienced the Brahmanical social systems hitherto. Sharma, (2007: 45-76). To cope with such crisis situation Brāhmaṇas had to create new ideological and philosophical tools legitimizing as well as giving flexibility to the activities (including occupation) of Brāhmaṇas.

⁷ Moore, (1961: 63).

⁸ Herskovits, (1961: 138).

establishing the ideal prototype for them to look upon or follow.⁹ Some of the characteristics attributed by such monastic rules and regulations defining a monk's life and behavior are: non-possession of property, disassociation with production and procreation activities, and strict practice of non-violence.

Both Buddhism and Jainism, unlike Brahmanism¹⁰, were intimately linked with the urban centers and merchant- craftsmen communities, with a less, if not complete neglect, of the rural population.¹¹ Their spread indicates their presence either near the urban centers or the trading routes.¹² Their association with urban centers and active participation in trading activities does not mean that they were not engaged in agricultural activities and land management. But whenever a land was granted to a monastery its purpose was to

⁹ Tyagi, (2007: 276).

¹⁰ The hostile attitude of Brāhmaṇas towards urban centers is clearly visible in Dharmasāstras. It is mentioned that one should avoid studying the Veda on a market road (*Āpastamba*). One who stays in town, whose body is covered and mouth and eyes are filled with dust in town is unable to obtain salvation (*Baudhāyana*). Study of Vedas should be interrupted in towns where a corpse lies or *caṇḍālas* stays (*Vasiṣṭha*). Recitation of Vedas is forbidden always in a town (*Gautama*). Ray, (2000: 109).

¹¹ Buddhist literature (Pāli Vinayas etc.) and number of inscriptions indicates a close relationship of *gahapati*s, wealthy land owners, with the Buddhism. They are often shown as having immense wealth living in cities or countryside, and were not like ordinary peasant. Uma Chakravarti (2006: 132) shows that not a single *gahapati* is mentioned as renouncing the world to join the *saṅgha* though we have reverences stating a few *vāṇijja* and *setṭhis* as joining the *saṅgha*. It was possibly because of their special association with the production and reproduction.

¹² See, Heitzman (1984) and Ray (1989). They have talked about the location of Buddhist monasteries along the trading routes and urban centers. As far as Jainism is concerned Padmanabh S. Jaini (2001: 278) and Paul Dundas (2002: 113) mention that though emerged in Ganga valley, the Jainas slowly moved away to various cities along the two great trading routes- one, that led to northwest, towards Delhi and Mathura, thence south west through Saurashtra and into Gujarat; and second, followed the east coast southward into Kalinga (modern Orissa), finally reaching to the Dravidian Lands around Madras and Mysore.

defray the various expenses of the institution¹³, while in the case of Brāhmaṇas the purpose appears to be to settle the Brāhmaṇa(s) in the region with a responsibility to initiate or further expand the agricultural activities.¹⁴ Noticeable here is the point that the land grants, whenever is given to the monastery, meant not to be enjoyed by an individual, but by the particular institution to which the land was given. Moreover, the land granted to the monasteries was, by an-large, in the areas where already sedentary agricultural communities and production activities had developed.¹⁵ Not in the forested or tribal regions hitherto away from sedentary-agricultural life style, where external and long term initiatives were required to start productive relations.

The primary reason of this appears to be the limitation of monks to engage in productive activities in their individual capacity as well as limitation of monastic institution to create

¹³ See, Bühler, (1877) and Bhandarkar, (1900-01) for example.

¹⁴ According to Arthaśāstra when a king desires to construct villages either on new site or on old ruins he should grant land to Brāhmaṇas, free from taxes. Chauhan, (1991-2: 153). See, inscriptions, Srinivasan, (1968); Diskalkar, (1931-32); Srinivasan, (1968); Hultzsch, (1911-12); Konow, (1911-12) and Bhandarkar (1911-12). These inscriptions either talk about grant of land to individual Brāhmaṇa or group of Brāhmaṇas, sometime with well or tank. Land grants along with the irrigation facilities were an important feature as it suggests initiatives on the part of the rulers to expand agriculture in new areas. B. D. Chattopadhyaya (1994: 38-56) has shown through his study of early medieval Rajasthan the co-relation between the irrigation organization (particularly through tanks or wells) and a general growth in agricultural production on the basis of inscriptional studies. See also, Datta (1991-2) who argues the importance of *vapis* or step-wells in Gujarat in the expansion of agriculture. The inscriptions of Vākāṭaka (c. AD 300 to 500) further show the granting of land to individual Brāhmaṇas in central India and northern Deccan to reclaim the forested or virgin land. Mishra, (2004), Shrimali (1987) and Nandi (1969).

¹⁵ Heitzman (1984: 124). Ram Bhushan Sing (1970: 175) while talking about the Jain monasteries in Karnataka suggests that possibly they got the granted land cultivated through peasants on the basis of lease/share or agricultural labors were employed for it. Since Jainas and Buddhist themselves could not engage in cultivation directly, they had to depend upon the peasantry or labor force which was ready to work in return of a share and so forth.

a social structure to accommodate such primitive or tribal communities by providing distinct identity outside the monastic institution. The very institution of monastery was like a parallel world based on more egalitarian principles vis-à-vis the outside world based on socio-economic hierarchies. The Buddhist saṅgha accepted though did not endorse such distinctions- between rich and poor, and between high and low families. It is also noticeable that the Buddhist saṅgha drew the bulk of supporters from high (*ucca kulas*) families not from the low families (*nica kula*).¹⁶ This in itself shows its limitation to work among those who are socially and economically low in hierarchy due to its essential reliance upon the well-off sections who were able to patronize the saṅgha. So is the case with the Jaina monasticism: not everyone was allowed to join particularly the low-castes.¹⁷ In addition to it the greater emphasis upon the non-violence also played important role in limiting their activities among the forested tribes engaged in hunting-gathering economy. Even, Buddha did not try to abolish the caste system or Brahmanical social structure and ‘...only those who joined the saṅgha were required to renounce conformity with the practices of society at large.’¹⁸ In this way ‘...the lay community (that) followed the precepts and doctrines of the saṅgha... (in) its daily life continued to be governed by the Brahmanical rituals.’¹⁹

¹⁶ Chakravarti, (2006: 131).

¹⁷ Dundas (2002: 154).

¹⁸ Ray, (1994: 132).

¹⁹ *ibid*, (1994: 132-3). On the basis of *Mulasarvāstivādā-vinaya* (early centuries of Christian era), Gregory Schopen (2001: 107-8) shows that almost everything in the *Mulasarvāstivādā-vinaya* and perhaps in other *vinayas* was concerned with building and maintaining an institution and therefore avoiding social criticism. However, number of rulings appears as accommodating and bringing the Buddhist monasticism into line with Brahmanical values and concerns. Xinru Liu (1988: 129) when discussing Fa- hsien, mentions about a Brāhmaṇa monk in Pataliputra, who “...maintained such a high standard that even after the king had held

The Jain community including both- lay and mendicants- refers to ‘...a group of people who have consciously undertaken to lead a way of life in accordance with the basic tenet of non-violence...’²⁰ From the earliest times, the four month enforced rain retreat leading to a temporary stay of monks/ascetics at one place was part of Buddhism and Jainism. It was based on the idea to avoid the destruction of living creatures during the monsoon, and precisely this made possible a regular contact with the laity that required some sort of a compromise on the part of ascetics.²¹ Most likely this provided the premise for the further development of a reciprocal relationship between the ascetic and lay-communities. According to Paul Dundas the Jaina scriptural commentaries and texts on monastic law of early medieval period have conceptualized two modes (*kalpa*) of monastic life: *jinakalpa*, the solitary and highly ascetic way of life vis-à-vis *sthavirakalpa*, (the way of the elders) monks living in groups. He further suggests that around the fifth century AD the *sthavirakalpa* mode of monastic life was accepted by the Śvetāmbara Jains.²² Its emergence is reflected by the books of monastic law, *chedasūtras*, and their commentaries, that introduce exceptions to general rules about ascetics’ behavior. Reasons are mentioned e.g. to avoid dangerous conditions in the surrounding world or to increase knowledge etc., permitting an ascetic to give up wandering life.²³ It was an important development as it shows the increasing realization on the part of the Jaina ascetics on the one hand to organize institutionally and on the other hand to create a

the monk’s hands in respect, the monk washed himself afterwards. This Buddhist priest had obviously (she says) adopted the Brahmanical conception of purity.”

²⁰ Jaini, (2000: 5).

²¹ Dundas, (2002: 173).

²² Dundas, (1997: 498).

²³ Jaini, (2002: 137).

relationship with the laity for their support. The Jaina teachers understood well that without the support of laity survival of monastic institution is not possible.

Jainism, unlike Buddhism, was able to provide a distinct identity to its followers. They showed their high regard for the lay path by producing numerous rules and regulations (called *śrāvakācāra*) for laity and their conduct- major or minor vows (*vratas*) ranging from refraining from partaking meat, alcohol, honey etc to refraining from causing injury to beings, from false speech, from theft, from illicit-sexual relations etc, to restricting one's activities to a specific area to fasting, performing charity and so forth.²⁴ Moreover, in Jain texts '...six modes of livelihood- government (*asi*), writing (*maṣi*), farming (*krṣi*), arts (*vidyā*), commerce (*vāṇijya*), and various crafts (*śilpa*) - have been designated as respectable by Jaina teachers.'²⁵ But in practice due to their strong emphasis upon non-violence, statecraft and agriculture have come to be regarded as less desirable occupations with a great importance attached to the trading activities.²⁶ In this way, these rules itself limited the membership to a limited section of the society, i.e. trading community, alienating the larger masses including peasantry as well as tribal population.

II

The increasing spread of Brahmanism in the subcontinent coincided with the emergence of several state-polities from tribal background in new areas. The precise reason for it

²⁴ Jaini, (2001: 187).

²⁵ *ibid*, (2001: 172).

²⁶ *ibid*, (2001: 172).

was its ability to evolve better socio-religious systems according to the changing material as well as political conditions. The immediate requirement for the emergence of new polities was: a) legitimization²⁷, b) introduction of peasant economy and, c) emergence of stratified society. This means complete internal transformation of tribal society.²⁸ The challenge, according to Vijay Nath, hence was twofold, one, ‘...deconstruction of their existent belief-system and then reconstruction in its place another system... more conducive to such a transition from a more predatory form of cultivation to field agriculture.’²⁹ The economic structure of a state not only requires a development in agriculture and commerce but also in social system. At this point where the transformation of cultivators into tax-paying peasantry becomes important, the integration of new elements and formation of distinct identities within a social hierarchy also becomes necessary.³⁰ This also means a modification and adjustment not only of internal but also external attitude of the religious institution to accommodate and co-opt the tribal population for its transformation. At this point, Jainas and Buddhists failed because they never had been able to evolve their own social structure outside the monastery. Buddhism and Jainism though were going through significant institutional and ideological changes but their association as well as reliance upon particular section of society for patronage limited their ability to work among the tribal population.

²⁷ Maitrakas made land grants to Brāhmaṇas, monasteries, and to temples that appears not only as an instrument for legitimization but also as a mean to convey the state authority. It also helped them to mobilize the resources from countryside. Moreover, their extensive genealogy recorded in land grant inscriptions seems as announcing repeatedly their status as ruler for social acceptability and respect within local society and outside. Prasad, (2007: 64).

²⁸ Sahu, (1985: 182).

²⁹ Nath, (2001: 28).

³⁰ Thapar, (2002: 795).

Brahmanism was able to fulfill these requirements in far more effective way, on the one hand to create mythical and partly real ruling lineages and on the other, by accommodating local or tribal cults, customs and beliefs within Brahmanical fold. The roots of this flexibility lied in a hierarchical social structure that denies the equality of men in theory as well as in practice. That enabled Brahmanism to accommodate divergent customs and beliefs as long as their practitioners could be fitted into the social hierarchy- *varṇa* and *jāti*- in which power and purity played a crucial role.³¹ When a tribe was brought into the fold of Brahmanical social structure, some leading families were accommodated in the higher castes of Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas while the majority of its members, not sharing identity and administrative or economic privileges, were given the *śūdra* status.³² The *vaṃśānucarita* section, recording the change in the form of genealogical patterns, of the early *purāṇas* clearly displays such changes from clan-based society to monarchies.³³ Here, the genealogies seem to be used as a mechanism to legitimize the claim of new-groups over political authority by linking their decent either with the mythical *sūryavaṃśa* (solar) or *candra**vaṃśa* (luner) group. In the *purāṇas* the genealogical pattern is recorded as beginning with the primeval man 'manu' whose origin is traced from the gods. It is maintained that during the period of seventh 'manu' a great flood occurred but with the divine help he was survived. His eldest son, *Ikṣvāku* gave birth to *sūryavaṃśa* lineage and his daughter, *Ilā* gave birth to *candra**vaṃśa* lineage.³⁴

³¹ Jaiswal, (1991: 21).

³² Jaiswal, (1979-80: 28).

³³ Thapar, (2002: 786).

³⁴ *ibid*, (2002: 787).

These changes were accompanied by the emergence of puranic pantheons, new form of worships, and changes in the concepts of *dānā* and *dakṣhinā*, different from Vedic rituals and sacrifices. The concept of *īśta* and *purta* was defined with an increasing emphasis upon the *purta* concept as available to all the sections of society irrespective of one's caste or *varṇa*. It is maintained that, whatever is offered in the three *śrauta* fires and the gifts made inside the *vedi* (in *śrauta* sacrifices) are called *īśta*. Unlike this, dedication of deep wells, oblong large wells and tanks, temples, distribution of food and maintaining public gardens- these are called *purta*.³⁵ The ideological changes (e.g. the puranic religion) introduced by Brahmanical ideologues were, unlike the Vedic religion with well-defined rituals and related exclusively to the upper castes, had a far wider appeal. Its accessibility lay in performing acts that required little investment- the giving of gifts however small, the keeping of fasts and vows, traveling collectively to places of pilgrimages and subscribing to local mythologies. This underlined the individual's participation in the religion, as well as the cohesion of a sect while members were chosen not necessarily by birth but by faith, even if it tended to remain somewhat closed.³⁶

Another important and far reaching change was in the position of Brāhmaṇas in relation to their occupation. Unlike the Dharmasāstras that prescribe receiving gifts, teaching the Vedas, and performing sacrifices as the ideal livelihood-means of Brāhmaṇas, the early medieval times gives a completely reverse picture. Now the high position was granted to the Brāhmaṇas controlling landed property and holding administrative or military posts, while those engaged in manual labor, officiating as priests at pilgrimage-places or in

³⁵ Kane, (1974: 842).

³⁶ Thapar, (2002: 318-319).

temples or for individuals, were graded low. Though they remained at higher position in comparison to other *varṇas* or castes but within Brāhmaṇa *varṇa* there was a clear distinction based on economic or occupational position among the Brāhmaṇas.³⁷ They were increasingly allowed to engage in the occupations of Kṣatriyas or Vaiśyas through ideological legitimization unlike Buddhist and Jain monks who were never allowed to do so.

Such changes in Brahmanism leading to the emergence of Hinduism had far-reaching consequences and the most important of these was the narrowing the gap between the Brahmanical systems and their tribal counterpart. Not only the tribal were assimilated within the Brahmanical-fold but also brought a change in tribal economy that became increasingly agricultural. At the same time the new form of socio-religious system was able to represent the political authority in more effective way through the mediation of Brāhmaṇa individuals in new areas and among new peoples.

III

It is noticeable that the contestation was not between Brahmanism on one hand and alliance of Buddhism and Jainism on the other. Rather all these were contesting as well as modifying often by incorporating and re-interpreting the ideas and concepts of others and of their own. The Jainas criticized the Buddhist monastic laws as being lax and corrupt,

³⁷ Jaiswal, (1979-80: 24-25).

particularly those related to diet, allowing its members to consume meat.³⁸ With the dwindling fortunes of Buddhism and increasing influence of Brahmanism by early medieval period onwards, the Jaina contestation with Brāhmanism was further intensified. A seventh century novel, 'Deeds of the Ten Princes' by Daṇḍin mentions about a Jaina monk, by birth a Brāhmaṇa, Virūpaka (ugly) lamenting on his past deeds. He, ruined by a courtesan, living as a Jaina monk in utter humiliation and misery, is shown as praising his Brāhmaṇa ancestors and Hindu scriptures.³⁹ This shows an attempt on the part of Brāhmaṇa ideologues to give a negative picture of Jainism. Later date Brahmanical texts portrayed Buddha and Ṛṣhbha as being the incarnations of Viṣṇu that put a question mark against the very foundations of the Buddhism and Jainism. Ṛṣhbha is shown (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa*) as being a minor incarnation of Viṣṇu, born to establish the *śramaṇa-dharma* of the naked ascetics.⁴⁰ Where Buddhists failed to counter it, Jainas through their long literary tradition were able to reply back.

The Jaina writers, in order to counter the spread of devotional movement (Vaiṣṇavism) and in order to keep the Jaina laity within Jaina-fold, have openly criticized the certain

³⁸ Dundas, (2002: 241).

³⁹ *ibid*, (2002: 1-3).

⁴⁰ Jaini, (2000: 325-332). The *Ādi-purāṇa* (c. 9th century AD) by Jinasena questions the divine origin of caste system. According to it in the beginning there were no castes and only at later stage with the discovery of new means of livelihood Ṛṣhbha, householder, created Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra classes. Later when he renounced the world only then he attained the status of a *tīrthaṅkara* therefore it is maintained that when he created these classes he was a householder. And Brāhmaṇa class was only created after Ṛṣhbha, by his son Bharata, who was a great king. Thus Brāhmaṇas as well as the caste system have no divine origin according to the text. Jaini (1993: 235). Possibly one of the reasons of showing Ṛṣhbha by Brāhmaṇa writers, as a minor incarnation of Viṣṇu not the Mahāvīra or any other *tīrthaṅkara*, was of his association with the creation of castes in Jaina literature.

narratives of brahminical literature (particularly *purāṇas*). Such movements were threatening to overwhelm the Jaina laity largely consisted of the rich merchant castes. Thus there was the increasing danger that they might return to the brahminic fold to which they belonged before their conversion to Jainism.⁴¹ It was a matter of great concerns for Jains, and led them to create new ways to mobilize as well as keep the lay-devotees within their fold, and hence resources available to them. The Jainas had had to mingle with the non-Jainas elements, and for this Jaina *ācāryas* had to devise a balance between two priorities. On the one hand they, according to Padmanabh S. Jaini, had to 'perpetuate an orthodoxy' regarding certain kind of behavior for monks as well as laity, and on the other hand, they need to initiate 'a fruitful intercourse with Hindu society' within which Jaina community had to function.⁴² It seems that they were able to maintain this balance by 'compromising often with heretical practices' while managing to retain the spirit of their own tradition.⁴³ It is well reflected by the Jaina literary tradition, particularly the non-canonical, that appears as a tool in the hand of Jaina teachers to compromise whenever required as well as concretize quite often their own traditions and beliefs.

The 'story telling' is a part of literary traditions coming down from ancient times to present day and have been appropriated and utilized by almost all the religions in varied ways to convey their religious sermons. The ancient Indian literatures ranging from Brahmanism/Hinduism to Buddhist to Jainism all are replete with such stories often using

⁴¹ Jaini, (1993: 207-8).

⁴² Jaini, (2001: 287).

⁴³ *ibid*, (2001: 287).

local or folk traditions as a story material. Folklores are the earliest form of romantic and imaginative, though unwritten literature of primitive people that includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, law, customs and other capabilities and habits of men as well as society.⁴⁴ Such tales had wider prevalence among the masses as being related to their day to day life therefore became the major source of story material for varied religions. The proponents of religions from the beginning understood well that the story method is an easiest and much influential technique to convey their complex, abstract thoughts and philosophical teachings to the wider masses in a most convenient and simple way.

The Jainas have always exhibited an eagerness to study and understand the various religions and their literature- philosophy, poetics, astrology and so forth- around them. In the words of Phyllis Granoff, their story literature as a whole is characterized by a plurality of styles and a freedom of invention ranging from simple folk-tales to religious sermons to courtly romances.⁴⁵ J. C. Jain points out the Brahmanical mythological stories differ from Jain stories as being exaggerated and endowed with fanciful ideas thereby remained more or less individual types. As far as Buddhist stories are concerned they always are interwoven with some aspect of Buddha's past life in order to create an impression of direct teaching unlike Jain stories that lacked such elements. The essential story element in Jain tales is the moral drawn only at the end.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Jain, (2001: 4957). The term '*Kathā*' in a sense of a story for the first time occurred in the '*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*'. Mudholkar, (2001: 3869).

⁴⁵ Granoff, (1993: 2).

⁴⁶ Jain, (1992: 12).

According to Jain story writers the stories are of four types: *Arthakathā* (stories related to wealth and prosperity), *Kāmakathā* (stories related to comfort, pleasure and romance), *Dhammākathā* (stories related to morals and duties) and *Miṣṛitakathā* or *Samkīrṇakathā* (stories that consisted of elements of all the previous types).⁴⁷ The best type of *kathā* (i.e. 'satkathā') has been defined as being based on three essential elements- *Dhammā*, *Kāma* and *Artha*- for the development of man and of social welfare. But a *kathā* that though consisted of the elements of *Kāma* and *Artha* but lacked *Dhammā* thereby corrupts the women, food, nation and society is called a 'vikathā'.⁴⁸

Dharmasenagaṇi Mahattara states that the people have often heard and are aware of the love tales connected with Ṇahuṣa, Nala, Dhundhumāra, Niṣadha, Purūavas, Māndhātṛ, Rāma, Rāvaṇa, Kauravas, Pāṇdavās, and Naravāhanadatta in the non-Jain tradition. As a result they have become fond of *Kāmakathā* and have lost taste for *Dharmakathā*. Therefore he is writing love tales imbued with moral lessons to discerning listeners because dharma is the source of *Kāma*.⁴⁹ Dharmasenagaṇi further gives a reason for using love stories is that, "As a physician administers his own nectar-like medicine to an unwilling patient under the pretext of giving the patient what he desires, so should a virtuous story be told under the pretext of a love story."⁵⁰ The Jain story writing tradition consisted of these three elements, therefore, was not something a unique or exclusively a Jain practice but was very much in conformity to the prevalent story telling traditions.

⁴⁷ Mudholkar, (2001: 3874).

⁴⁸ *ibid*, (2001: 3874).

⁴⁹ Bhayani and Shah, (1987: 6).

⁵⁰ Jain, (1992: 12).

It appears that the development of such technique or style of story writing evolved due to the concerns for the larger masses who could not be mobilize through abstract philosophical ideas and complex discourses. For such audience the medium of story was employed to convey the messages. Such development in the form of story writing indicates to a process of negotiation between the two parallel worlds of ascetic community and lay community depending on each other on the one hand and to a contestation with the Brahmanism/ Hinduism that was increasingly becoming popular among the people on the other. Jainism was/is never exclusively a sect of renouncers or ascetics, disassociated with the world completely. Renouncers, termed *sādhus* or *sādhvīs*, no doubt are important part of the sect but they are not the only factor defining Jainism. Equally important is the role of lay-devotees, termed *śrāvaks* and *śrāvikas*, who provided from the earliest beginning, the much needed material support to it. The ascetic community, aiming at nirvana, depends upon the laity for material support as being disassociated with the production activities, while the laity depends upon the latter for spiritual guidance and higher social status.⁵¹

IV

Unlike Buddhism, its contemporary sect, Jainism lacked imperial patronage, during its early phase, therefore making the role of laity far more important for the very existence

⁵¹ According to Paul Dundas, for Jaina laity, two things are important- religious giving and fasting- as being public undertakings. At one hand it provides prestige in outside world it has on the other hand spiritual dimension for inner purity. Dundas, (2001: 4937).

and sustenance of the sect.⁵² According to Paul Dundas, originating with the renunciatory path followed by *nirgrantha* (*niggaṇṭha*) ascetics and their lay supporters, Jainism continuously remained engaged between the Mauryan and Gupta periods in articulating itself even though without any extent imperial support.⁵³ At a time when both Buddhism (institutionalization of monasteries, concept of Bodhisattvas and heaven, multiple rituals, relics and idol worship etc) and Brahmanism (idol worship, emergence of puranic deities, new philosophical schools etc) going through changes Jainism was not something that remained immune of these. The Jaina inscriptions and images of *jinas* from Mathura make two things clear: a) the laity's making donations constituted people from various strata of society but majority of them were from merchant and artisanal-craftsmen groups; and b) presence of monastic institution and a close relationship between the laity and the Jaina teacher is indicated. Inscriptions clearly mention that quite often the donations were made at the insistence or persuasion of the Jaina teacher.⁵⁴

The image-inscriptions from Mathura further show the adoption of idol worship in Jainism with the emergence of Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras as the central deities accompanied by

⁵² The Ganga dynasty, (present day Karnataka) was established by a Digambara monk, named Simhanandi, who seems to have contrived to set up one Mādhava Konguṇivarma as the local ruler in AD 265. Śvetāmbaras though began to pursue royal favor around the beginning of Christian era, but the first Jaina ruler, Vanarāja with his political centre, Anahīlanagara, in western India came to power in about eight century AD only. Rāṣṭrakūṭas were Jains and Amoghavarṣa abdicated the throne around the 8th century AD to become a mendicant. Jaini, (2001: 279-283).

⁵³ Dundas, (2006: 405).

⁵⁴ The inscription no- XXI from Mathura, for example, mentions about a setting up of an image at the Voda Stūpa built by gods (*dānam pratimā vodde thupe devanimirte*) by a female lay-disciple (*srāvikāye*) at the advice of a preacher, Aya-Vṛidhahasti. Bühler, (1894: 204).

subsidiary pantheons, e.g. *nāgas*, *yakṣas* or *jakkhas* etc.⁵⁵ These evidences also suggest the presence of Jaina bhakti from the early centuries of Christian era that was an integral part of Jaina practice and doctrine as being based on the veneration of the living or deceased *jinas* or mendicants.⁵⁶ At the same time Jainas were also establishing relations with the *kṛṣṇa* cult as the *kṛṣṇa* being assimilated to the biography of the twenty second Tirthankara Nemi.⁵⁷ That continued to be a part of Jaina literary tradition in subsequent centuries. According to Smita Sahgal Mathura as being a centre of Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism, obviously have witnessed the tension among the followers of these sects. Hence if we locate the subordination of popular deities like *kṛṣṇa* and Balarāma by Jainism on the one hand and institutionalization of monasticism in relation to laity on the other, it appears more like an attempt to show one's superiority over the other as well as an attempt to counter the increasing influences of the other sects.⁵⁸ In subsequent centuries this contestation became more and more visible in both Brahmanical and Jain literature with an increasing claim of superiority over the other.

⁵⁵ The association of the Nāga with the Jain religion is reflected in the recognition given to the giant serpent- King Dharaṇendra as the protector of the twenty-third Tirthankara *Pārśvanātha*. Chattopadhyay, (1977: 49). Though the literary image of the yakṣī or yakṣas in ancient religious texts of the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jaina traditions is generally demonic but their sheer popularity among the masses led to their absorption into the dominating religious traditions as subordinate deities. Singh, (2004: 383).

⁵⁶ Cort, (2002: 81-83). He criticizes the view that link the emergence of Jaina bhakti as an influence of bhakti movement in Hinduism. According to him bhakti may well have developed within the context of the mendicant-based tradition (from *gurū-vandana*). The veneration of *jinas*, who have higher status among the Jainas due to their ability to establish a lineage of *jinas* and to attain liberation of souls, could provide suitable background for Jaina bhakti tradition.

⁵⁷ Dundas, (2006: 397).

⁵⁸ Sahgal, (1994: 228).

The text, *VH* clearly displays the elements of contestation on the one hand and attempts to follow the already established literary tradition on the other hand. At the same time it seems to cultivate adjustments and modifications regarding the well established Jaina concepts relating to the life of a laity particularly. The story is interwoven with the “Karma theory” and creates the image of Vasudeva as going through the hardships of life due to his bad or good karmas. The message here the author seems to convey is that even a virtuous man is bound to undergo trouble due to his previous Karmas; thus pleasure and happiness are not eternal. Hence, the idea or notion, i.e., Karma determines everything, demands to follow a right path. That is one of the central themes interwoven with frequent flashbacks or past life stories of the characters, which has been used as one of the way by author to convey the religious messages.⁵⁹

Karma theory has a powerful psychological impact upon the audience because it provides a reason as well as solution for the hardships or troubles to the people. Important aspect of karma theory is the definition of what is right and what is not. Jainism had created its own edifice of rights and wrongs, legal and illegal, and dharma and *adharmā* by making the question of violence vis-à-vis non-violence as a soul criterion.⁶⁰ The notion of

⁵⁹ ...*sayan kaṇakammāṇubhāva vīsum saghassa jīvassa pughaducariya-sukayavivāge dagham khettaṃ kālo bhāvo vā heū bhavai ‘animittaṃ na vipacchai kammaṃ’ ti. arihantā bhayavanto uvasamam pasansanti, taṃ jai si dukkāṇa mucchiukāmo vigayāmariso sārayasalilapasaṇa hiyayo hohi !* Muni, (1989: 276). It is due to one’s own *karmas* that the different substance (*dravya*), place (*kṣetra*), time (*kāla*) and nature (*bhāva*) act as causes in producing fruits of good or bad actions done previously by living beings; no karma produces fruits without a cause. Jain, (1977: 470).

⁶⁰ ...*caṇṇo puṇa jo hoi, so ihaloe garahio vghayāṇijjo ya diṭṭho, jīviyaṃ jīviūṇa teṇa rūdrabhāveṇa sampuppajittā asuhavero ṇaraya-tiriyavāse duhāṇi vivihāṇi aṇuhavai...* Muni, (1989: 276). ...One who is

ahimsa was adopted as a central point of kamma theory by the Jainism. It became so popular among the masses that even Brahmanism which propagated sacrifices as a mean to fulfill one's desire, had to acknowledge as well as accept it.

Therefore, it is quite puzzling to find association of Vasudeva with the violence acts, e.g. the fierce battles and killings⁶¹ in our text. It is because for a Jaina the *hiṃsā* or violence means inability to attain *mokṣa* which bind him more firmly in the grip of *saṃsāra*.⁶² It clearly indicates to some short of an adjustment made by the Jaina author to allow Vasudeva involve in violent acts if required. In this way the author seems to acknowledge the fact that not everyone is able to follow strictly the 'vow of non-violence' due to his/her occupations or circumstances. To address this issue they formulated their rules and regulations bit flexible for the masses. Jaina teachers conceptualized a difference between injurious activities totally forbidden (*jamkalpajā-hiṃsā* = intentional) and those activities that may be tolerated within strict guidelines (*ārambhajā-hiṃsā* = accidental or permissible due to occupation).⁶³ This point is clearly indicated by the story, in which Vasudeva's father-in-law, king Abhaggaseṇa was harassed by his elder brother Mehasēṇa in order to occupy Abhaggaseṇa's territory inherited from their deceased father. When Mehasēṇa attacked, Abhaggaseṇa approached Vasudeva for help, and Vasudeva then

violent is contemptible and suffers in this world, and leading a terrible life and acquiring vicious enmity, is born in hell or an animal where he undergoes manifold sufferings... Jain, (1977: 470).

⁶¹ The text *VH* mentions about involvement of Vasudeva in battles. One story mentions the killing of a man-eater though in self-defense by Vasudeva. Jain, (1977: 340).

⁶² Jaini, (2001: 167).

⁶³ *ibid*, (2001: 170-171).

defeated Mehasena in a fierce battle. The justification to the battle comes from Amsumanta (friend and brother-in-law of Vasudeva), who says:

Why showing decency to a person who violates the boundaries lay down by his father?

Preventing such violation is not against dharma or one's duty.⁶⁴

In another story Vasudeva mentions that:

One who kills one's enemy is the best, one who is killed with his enemy is the middle, and

one who is killed by his enemy is the lowest kind of person...⁶⁵

The text, *VH* clearly thus convey the idea that violence is permitted if a person protects his property or if he kills his enemy. Jaina teachers understood well that the laity, who is living in a society outside the monastic institution it, could not abdicate violence due to various reasons: occupational needs, resisting injustice and aggression, self-defense or

⁶⁴ ...*jo piukrayam majjāyam atikkamati tassa ko viṇao? Majjayamatikkamanto nivāriyavvo, na tattha dhammaviroho ti...* Muni, (1989: 206). Jagdishchandra Jain (1977: 362) translates it as: One violates the boundary laid down by his father does not deserve decency. The violation of the boundary must be prevented; there is nothing wrong in it. His translation misses the point that it is the idea of dharma that is justified. Dharma in this case is the protection of the boundaries laid down by one's father that possibly corresponds to inheritance laws though such laws are not clearly mentioned in the story. According to Spellman (1964: 98) dharma means virtue, right action, the law of nature, in accordance with universal truth, a code of customs or traditions, righteousness, the eternal, unchanging order of, law, and variations of all these. It has religious, political and social implications. It is a moral standard against which all else may be judged.

⁶⁵ Jain, (1977: 206). *jo sattum vivāṇei so uttamo, jo teṇa sahaṃ vivajjai so majjhimo, jo sattuna vivānijjai so adhamo...* Muni, (1989: 125).

purely defensive war. Thus violence was to be permitted though in a restricted way.⁶⁶ Jinabhadra (6th- 7th century AD) makes it clear that it is the intension not the action in itself that determines whether it is violent or not, hence, even the act of violence if not intentional does not amount to violence.⁶⁷ Therefore, a Jaina is allowed to continue with his occupation or job that involves acceptable violence and after completing his duty or job renounce the world to join the ascetic order in order to attain knowledge and salvation. This idea seems to be conveyed by the stories of kings who ruled for considerable periods and then renounced their kingdoms and worldly pleasures to become ascetics.⁶⁸

V

From the very beginning Jainism has questioned the higher status of Brāhmaṇas by upholding the Kṣatriyas at higher position. The story of the transfer of Mahāvīra's embryo from the womb of a Brāhmaṇa woman called Devānandā to that of Kṣatriyas woman Triśalā in Ācārāṅga and the Kalpasūtra de-valorizes the authority of the Brāhmaṇas.⁶⁹ And the frequent martial imagery of Jainism as well as stress on the crushing of spiritual enemies points possibly to the elements of Kṣatriyashood expected

⁶⁶ Jaini, (2001:171).

⁶⁷ Dundas, (2002: 162).

⁶⁸ King Saṃjaya, after listening religious sermons in the presence of Tīrthaṅkara Sayambhū felt disgusted and abandoned worldly pleasures and his kingdom as a straw struck to the edge of a garment. He renounced the world with his sons and practiced asceticism. Jain, (1977: 455). Similarly king Accimālī and later his son king Jalaṇavega renounced their kingdoms and joined ascetic orders. *ibid*, (1977: 202-3).

⁶⁹ Dundas, (2002: 26).

to be internalized though in different form in a monk.⁷⁰ The story of Vasudeva's previous life conveys the similar message that through austerity and Jaina path, instead of Brahmanism, one can be reborn as a beautiful person in his next life and enjoy all physical pleasures. In his previous life Vasudeva was a poor and ugly Brāhmaṇa, named, Nandiseṇa who lost his parents in his childhood; and was raised up by his maternal uncle. His uncle promised to marry one of his three daughters with him, but they all refused to marry. It made Nandiseṇa so disgusted that he attempted to commit suicide but failed. In the end he became a Jaina monk and performed severe austerities. Before his death he expressed a strong desire to be reborn handsome as a reward of his penitential acts so that he would be loved by women. He died and reborn in heaven and then again reborn as a Vasudeva.⁷¹ In this way the author makes the Brahmanism a fruitless religion as it failed to fulfill the desires of Vasudeva and Jainism as the only way to attain whatever a follower wishes in his life. Thus he declares dharma as the source of *Kāma* (worldly pleasures).

In order to show a lower position of Brahmanism in comparison with Jainism, the author of *VH* projects Brāhmaṇas as flesh eaters engaged in worthless rituals and practices. One story talks about a Brāhmaṇa Koṅkaṇa, who was engaged in the worship of a deity placed under *samī* tree; offered drinks to Brāhmaṇas and sacrificed goat in the honor of this deity. Due to his bad karma he reborn as a goat and was taken by his own son to sacrifice for the worship of same deity. When the son came to know about the truth through a

⁷⁰ *ibid*, (2002: 17).

⁷¹ Jain, (1977: 187-8).

Jaina monk he felt disgusted and became a follower of Jainism.⁷² The text, *VH*, attacks the very divine association of Vedas. It is mentioned that a female mendicant, sulsā, expert in grammar and sāmṅhya philosophy, got involved in a physical relationship with a monk Jannavakka (*Yājñavalkya*), a mendicant of triple staves. Sulsā became pregnant and a child was born, named, Pippalāda, whom she left. When child grew up and came to know about his parents he developed hatred for them and composed the Ahavveya or Atharvaveda. When Pippalāda met his parents he performed *mātumedha* and *pitumedha* sacrifice in which he sacrificed brutally his father and mother.⁷³ The hero, Vasudeva is mentioned as married a Brāhmaṇa girl after showing his expertise and knowledge of Vedas⁷⁴ that reflects a Jaina interpretation or definition of Vedas:

Q. Elders (brāhmaṇas) asked, what is the highest truth of Vedas?

A. Vasudeva replies, "According to the etymologists, the meaning of the root viya (Sanskrit vid) is to know. So which we know of the or by which we know or in which we know is called veda. Its highest truth is that it follows the correct meaning." (...nerūttiyā bhaṇṇati- viya jāṇe; tam viyanti, teṇa vā vidanti, tamhi va vidanti veṇo bhaṇṇati. Tassa parmattho avitahāṇuvāi attho tti).

Q. what is the ultimate result of Vedas ?

A. Knowledge (so vinnāṇa-phalaṃ tti)

Q. what is the result of knowledge?

⁷² *ibid*, (1977: 585-6).

⁷³ *ibid*, (1977: 674-7).

⁷⁴ Jain, (1977: 336-7) and Muni, (1989:194).

A. Indifference to worldly attachment (viraī phalaṁ ti)

Q. what is the result of indifference to worldly attachment?

A. self-restraint (sanjamaphalā)

Q. what is the result of self-restraint?

A. cessation of new karmas (aṅāsavaphalo)

Q. what is the result of the cessation of new karmas?

A. penance (tavophalo)

Q. what is the result of penance?

A. The partial destruction of karma (tavo nijjarā phalo)

Q. What is the result of the partial destruction of karmas?

A. perfect knowledge (kevalanāṅaphalā)

Q. what is the result of perfect knowledge?

A. the cessation of activities (akiriyāphalaṁ)

Q. what is the result of the cessation of activities?

A. the cessation of mind, speech and body (aaogaphalā)

Q. what is the result of the cessation of mind, body and speech?

A. It leads to uninterrupted happiness ending in achievement of salvation. (siddhigamaṇa pajjivasāṇaṃ avvābāhasuha phalā va ti).

Vedas are maintained by Brāhmaṇas as of divine origin but by showing the origin of Atharavaveda by a man who was responsible for the killing of his own mother and father, and by giving an alternative interpretation of Vedas, Jaina writer puts the question mark against the Brahmanism and Brāhmaṇa philosophy.

The main character, Vasudeva is shown often disguised as Brāhmaṇa⁷⁵ in the text. Through him the author of *VH* seems to give an alternative definition of Brāhmaṇa by basing it on a person's perfection in varied acts/arts⁷⁶ rather than on his birth because birth is determined by the karmas or actions. The text, *VH*, in this way, projects a Brāhmaṇa in two ways, a) those Brāhmaṇas engaged in sacrifices and false rituals, and b) those who are expert in varied arts and followers of Jainism. Thereby, projects the first category Brāhmaṇa in negative light while the second category is praised.

⁷⁵ Jain, (1977: 195, 210).

⁷⁶ ...As the rise of the sun covered with a mass of clouds, is known by the blooming of lotuses, similarly the best person is known by his actions... ibid, (1977: 357-8). ...*sūro ghaṇapaṇalacchāīyarassī vi ya paumākaraḥoṇa sūjjati uggato tti, tahō uttamo vi jaṇo ceṭṭhiṇa ṇajji...* Muni, (1989: 204).

When Aṃsumanta, disguised as Brāhmaṇa, was stopped from entering into a gambling house, because a Brāhmaṇa is not supposed to take part in gambling (*ibbhaputtā jūyaṃ, māhañāṇa kiṃ aigamoṇapayoyāṇa*), he replied that there is no wrong for an expert to see skill and human intelligence (*Kusalassa purisamativisesaṃ pāṇilāghavaṃ ca daṭṭhum na vīrūjjhati*).⁷⁷ Similarly when Vasudeva, disguised as Brāhmaṇa, was asked the use of archery and earning money to a Brāhmaṇa he replied that if one is expert in the things common to all people, no occupation is inconsistent (*savvamaṇuyasādhāraṇesu kusalassa pasango na virūjjhae*).⁷⁸ Both Aṃsumanta and Vasudeva, are born kṣatriyas but disguised as Brāhmaṇas while wondering different places. They are shown as having expertise in arts of varied kind that are not meant to be associated with Brāhmaṇas according to Brahmanical laws. But Jaina author by attaching such knowledge with Brāhmaṇas gives an alternative interpretation of being a Brāhmaṇa, based on the knowledge of or expertise in arts rather than based on birth.

VI

The Jaina writer of *VH* appears as providing a negative version of Brahmanism and its philosophy to the audience by questioning the very premises of it. The very belief and practice, according to Raj S. Gandhi, that plays an important role in social integration also becomes a source of social contentions (i.e. *varṇa-jāti* hierarchy). When such belief and practices are established as the *status symbols* collectively appropriated by a certain

⁷⁷ *ibid*, (1977: 374) and *ibid*, (1989: 210).

⁷⁸ *ibid*, (1977:354) and *ibid*, (1989: 203).

status group, they began to oppose the ideology of the other group aspiring for upward status mobility in a system of hierarchy within a given society. He further adds that among different avenues for upward social mobility, one of the ways, without demolishing the foundations of the basic system of hierarchy is, paradoxically, the imitation as well as adaptation of the beliefs and practices of the higher group by the lower one.⁷⁹ However, as suggested by Joseph J. Spengler, the role of the people, particularly the elites is also significant because the politico-economic developments in a given society is greatly affected by the dominant values, value-orientations and value-attitude, shaped by or shaped according to the decision making (regarding the use and distribution of resources) section(s) of the society.⁸⁰ In ancient Indian society this decision making group, by an large, consisted of the upper *varṇas* as well as materially well off sections most of the time coming from higher *varṇas*.

Therefore, the Jainas had had to acknowledge the presence of *varṇa-jāti* hierarchy in society because the larger audience they were addressing was still functioning within the Brahmanical order supported by numerous rulers over the period. It is because they were residing in a society largely Brahminical. Hence they could not avoid the structuring of that society, i.e., *varṇa-jāti* hierarchy. The author of *VH* clearly maintains such hierarchy in the text particularly when it comes to marriage.⁸¹ Our hero, Vasudeva, a Kṣatriya

⁷⁹ Gandhi, (1977: 248).

⁸⁰ Spengler, (1961: 30).

⁸¹ Brahmanical literature has conceptualized marriages into two groups, a) *anuloma*: upper *varṇa* male marrying a girl of lower *varṇa* girl. Brāhmaṇas were allowed to marry other three lower *varṇa* girls while Kṣatriya and Vaiśyas were prohibited; b) *pratiloma*: lower *varṇa* male marrying upper *varṇa* woman. It was strictly denied, and Gautama calls it as Dharmahīna. Jha (1969: 86-87).

(*khattiya*) disguising often as Brāhmaṇa (*māhaṇa*), mentioned as married to girls from all the four *varṇas*. Here it is interesting to note that he marries them either in the disguise of a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, never as a Vaiśya or Sūdra. The text also mentions that a Brāhmaṇa can have four wives- a Brāhmaṇa, a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya, and a Sūdra girl.⁸²

It clearly shows how the Jaina author was acknowledging the social norms regarding the marriage relations, based on *jāti* or *varṇa* status of the candidate, as propagated by the Brāhmaṇa-law givers. It appears that a Brāhmaṇa girl could marry to Brāhmaṇa man, Kṣatriya to Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya to Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya. Vasudeva when was approached by Hiraṇṇamatī with a marriage proposal of her daughter, Nīlajasā, he refused due to their low origin or caste. He says that the learned had approved of marriage relations between equal groups (*vaṇṇa*) and not un-equals (*gotta*) (*sarisavaṇṇasanbandham pasansanti paṇṇiyā, asamāṇagottarṇ na pasansanti*).⁸³

Then the mother replied that due to Jina Usabha their clan had attain victory and pure glory, and she is a wife of a ruler Pahasiyaseṇa and Nīlajasā is his daughter. But Vasudeva remained reluctant. Later he was abducted and taken to Pahasiyaseṇa's palace. There Vasudeva was convinced of their higher status attained even after low caste due to the Jina Usabha, and agreed to marry Nīlajasā.⁸⁴ It shows that though a high caste male can marry a low caste girl if she follows the right actions or conduct, but a low caste male can not do the same even if he follows right actions. It was, possibly, because the social

⁸² Jain, (1977: 211-2). ...*māhaṇassa kila cattāri bhaārīyāo-māhaṇī khattiṇī vaisī sudri tti...* Muni, (1989: 132).

⁸³ Muni, (1989: 156).

⁸⁴ Jain, (1977: 316-7).

norms were not much rigid for a high caste male marrying low caste girl but not at all flexible for a low caste male marrying high caste girl.

Noticeable here is the point that though the author of *VH* accepts the brahmancial social order he at the same time challenges it by showing Vasudeva as a future universal monarch⁸⁵ (*Cakravartīn*) of Bharatavārsa who married varied women of different royal families (including *vidyādhara*⁸⁶ princesses) besides marrying daughters of Brāhmaṇa (*Māhaṇa*), *Sāthavāha* and *Seṭṭhi*. He is also mentioned as marrying to *mātangilcāndali* girl (see Appendix). As we know that the marriage in ancient as well as medieval period was a social institution utilized to build political alliance and was an open avenue of economic exchange between the families. Moreover, wars were often concluded with the defeated house offering woman in marriage to the victorious party establishing the superiority of the groom's family.⁸⁷ So in the text the author also gives an idea of victory march of Vasudeva in the form of marriages. These marriages were not the easy task for our hero, but required him to display great courage, expertise, valor, good Karmas, and obviously devotion to Jinas at various stages of his journey that was full of adventure, troubles and hardships as well as pleasure, comforts and luxury. Hence, the idea of the universal monarch conceptualized by the author seems to be a person with all the three qualities:

⁸⁵ Vasudeva is called, *adṛbharahāhivapiyā* (father of the lord of half of Bharaha), *uttamapurisa... jo savijjāharam dāhiṇabharaham bhocchihti...* (excellent man who would enjoy the southern part of Bharaha along with the *vidyādharas*) and sovereign king (*cakkavattibhāriyā*). *ibid* (1977: 204, 302, 438) and Muni, (1980: 125, 153, 231).

⁸⁶ The *vidyādharas* or masters of magic art, according to Jainas are devotee of Jainism and residing in the Himalayas. They are having their own cities, kings and laws in Himalayas. They are also mentioned as having matrimonial relations with the human beings. ~~Muni~~ (1977: 28-9).

⁸⁷ Ali, (2002: 128).

Jain

Artha, Kāma and Dharma. At the same time the idea of universal victory was not merely a conquest of territory but of all *varṇas*, that makes the conqueror above the social hierarchy based on Brahmanical *varṇa-jāti* division.

It seems that our author, although writing according to the Brahminical social norms- possibly not to offend the audience – offers an alternative Jaina view by manipulating to the extent possible standard Jaina norms/practices. It is because the only way to counter such Brahminical structures was to re-define them in the manner which would conform to the Jaina practices.

Chapter: Three

Cities, Merchants and Landed Property

In the country of Kunāla there lived a merchant called Kāmadeva, an owner of many crores (aṇeyakoñṭhaṇavaī), honored by the citizens and who was as if another body of king Jiyasattu (jīyasattussa sarābhūo).

Once at the time of the first autumnal season... the merchant arrived at his own cow-pen (gokulāhigāranivṭo)...¹

Merchant as an individual as well as a group has been conceptualized as intimately associated with the trade and commerce as having no connection with the production activities- agriculture and cattle herding. But stories in *VH* indicate to completely a different picture. One story shows that a merchant (*seṭṭhi*) was not only very close to the

¹ Jain, (1977: 464-5) and, Muni (1989: 269). A story in *Jātaka* also indicates a close relation of *seṭṭhi* with the countryside. The story mentions about a *seṭṭhi* from Takkasilā in Gandhāra, who is called a '*seṭṭhi* whose wealth is in cattle' (*govittakaseṭṭhi*). Fisher, (2001: 171).

ruler but also owned the cow-pen in the countryside (see above quotation). A close study, of the ancient Indian literature as well as inscriptions question the traditional views about the merchant(s). Such views have undermined merchants' ability to manage agriculture-cattle herding and their ability to participate in varied socio-cultural activities besides being engaged in trade and commerce. So is the case with urban centers due to a pre-conceived dichotomy of settlement patten, i.e. village vis-à-vis urban centre.² Such dichotomy finds its manifestation in the assumption that merchants are emblematic of the cities, and therefore, have no connection with the countryside.

The existence of city is not something determined by its size or number of inhabitants. Instead it is its ability to organize various institutions ranging from political to religious to economic to cultural that differentiate it with the mere village.³ But at the same time cities were not isolated entities cut off from countryside. In fact a constant interaction was always present between these two different forms of human settlements. It is not a coherent unit of people merely, but a place of opportunities bringing at one place to people of varied stocks. Where on the one hand city is a big single unit, on the other hand it is a sum of many varied small units that altogether gives a specific nature to it.⁴

It is noticeable that as not all cities are associated with temples, not all temple-sites grow up into cities. Thereby, neither a city is a pre-condition for the emergence of a temple institution nor the presence of a temple is for the emergence of a city. It was the political

² See, Thakur (1983), Sharma (1987).

³ Mumford, (1961: 70-113).

⁴ Blumenfeld, (1949: 7-8).

authority that have played important role in the emergence of temple-city. Hence, instead of going into a debate of urbanization, types of urban centers and so forth, I will attempt to analyze the city landscape as an arena for political, religious and commercial, with an emphasis upon the role of merchants, interactions.

I

Literary sources often give a very idealized and repetitive picture of the cities, making the task of historians tough, if not impossible, for their study. To use such descriptions, as suggested by A. K. Ramanujan, in a literal straightforward way is nothing but to illustrate what we already know. Hence, the important point is the vision, the intuitive grasp, the perspective of the literary piece.⁵ To understand a city landscape and its relation with the countryside one need to look beyond such descriptions. The aspect of a city often highlighted by the scholar is the elements of heterogeneity. According to B. D. Chattopadhyaya the heterogeneity of a city corresponds to the 'city-ness' of it as being a point of convergence, access to opportunities, superiority of service(s), *goṣṭhī* (salon-like gatherings, providing access to community), questioning the validity of established norms, etc.⁶ Often the economic aspect- markets, merchants, craftsmen, varied occupations, sale-purchase, exchange, money etc- of a city has been the focus of scholars. To this other activities are depicted as merely having subordinated place.

⁵ Ramanujan, (1999: 52).

⁶ Chattopadhyaya, (2003: 105- 134).

It has been argued that by the early medieval times the cities were either political seats or religious centers. Hence, due to an absence of commercial activities as a result of virtual decline of trade and commerce, they were basically the epitome of regional exploitation.⁷ Such view undermines the presence of a relationship between or among commercial, religious and political spaces within a city. We need to understand that the emergence and increasing importance of religious space within an urban landscape was not at the expense of economic factors (i.e. trade, commerce, craft production, merchants etc.). Instead it was the requirement of the newly emerging polities, a) to legitimize its authority⁸, and b) to mobilize and redistribute the resources that made religious ideology as the focal point of urban growth.⁹ But this focal point was not autonomous in itself. In fact, it remained associated, if not dependent upon the political authorities that not only provided patronage but also protection to religious institutions as well as to those associated with it.¹⁰ Hence, city is ‘...a spatial manifestation of deeper societal processes that emerge from multiple levels of activities connected with production, exchange and exercise of power.’¹¹

⁷ Thakur, (1983: 395).

⁸ Chattopadhyaya, (2003: 153-171).

⁹ Champakalakshmi, (1996: 4).

¹⁰ According to Monica L. Smith (2006: 130) with the emergence of strong states in the early medieval period the relationship between political authorities and urban centers became increasingly codependent with an extension of state-level ruler’s authority to both ritual as well as urban organization. B. D. Chattopadhyaya argues the beginning of third phase of urbanization from early medieval period in the form of regional exchange centers which were more like an extension of the countryside. (1994: 166). It was the production and mobilization of agricultural items that generated as well as sustained these urban centers. Ibid, (1994: 178). The emergence of these urban centers was associated with the emergence of regional polities that were taking initiatives to expand agriculture as well as to mobilize resources to maintain their authority.

¹¹ Malekandathil, (2009: 13).

The political space of a city landscape, not necessarily means that every city is a capital city. Instead it means the presence of some form of an administrative structure linking the city with the larger political edifice of the state. Though, no doubt there were cities which were the seats of royal authority but those which were not, were also a part of larger administrative structure of the reigning political power. Hence, the point often undermined by the scholars is that the outward functional heterogeneity manifesting itself in varied aspects of city life, in fact, carries a thread of homogeneity inwardly, i.e. law and order. This system of protection from external as well as internal threats on the one hand and smooth functioning of various city-units on the other hand, was maintained by the institution of kingship. Without which the whole mechanism of city would have failed to keep the various elements attributing heterogeneity to it, intact.¹²

In a pre-modern society it was the monarchy that was responsible for providing protection by maintaining the law and order institution intact. The rulers were expected to maintain the *varṇāśramadharmā* as well as to rule according to the laws promulgated by the Brāhmaṇa law givers (e.g. *dharmasāstras*).¹³ Robbers, whether within a city or

¹² Mumford (1961: 63) says that though the power, cosmic or human, manifested in the city, was shaped and directed by the institution of law and order. It was the royal intervention that initiated the process of reconciliation and accommodation with the coming together of varied peoples, customs, cultures, languages etc., in city.

¹³ It is suggested by the Brāhmaṇa law givers that the laws of countries, castes and families could be followed if not in conflict with the sacred records. Cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders and artisans were also allowed to lay down their own laws but they should not be in conflict with sacred laws. Kautilya mentions the presence of four types of laws: *Dharma* (sacred laws), *Vyavhāra* (evidence), *Caritra* (custom), and *Rājaśāsana* (edicts of the king). It is mentioned by him that if any conflict arises in these laws the royal edicts would legitimately transcends Dharma. But in Brahmanical law books sacred laws are given pre-eminence upon the royal edicts. Spellman, (1964: 98-131). But in all cases it was the royal

outside the city, had been a menace to the society. In *VH*, one story mentions, that the city-dwellers of Ujjenī, distressed due to the activities of thieves, reported the matter to the king Jiyasattu, and requested for protection. King immediately called the city-guard and commanded to catch the thief within the period of seven days.¹⁴ The ruler was expected to keep them in check. The law and order institution was also required to ensure the smooth functioning of varied socio-economic activities including resolving family disputes.

The Property issues were often reported to the king for justice: a quarrel was resolved by the royal-court between two wives of a caravan leader after his death. Both were claiming the inheritance of his wealth as being the mother of his only son. The minister was entrusted with the task. He decided to cut the child into two pieces and divide the wealth into two parts for each wife. It was because it was tough to decide who the real mother was. The real mother was shocked and gave up her claim in order to save the life of her

authority which was expected to enforce or sanction the law whether it was sacred or customary. The *Yājñavalkya-saṃhitā* mentions that the guilds could lay down rules and regulations corresponding to the 'Articles of Associations'. There were officials, *Karya-chintakas*, who possessed executive authority over the members of the corporation, and could visit with punishment any one who disobeyed the rules and regulations of the guild. If there was a dissension between them and the general members, the king was to step in to resolve the matter. It further states that the rules and regulations of the corporation should be in accordance with the injunctions laid down by the king, which must be observed with care. Majumdar, (1922: 40-42).

¹⁴ The story also mentions about the books written on the thieves and their activities that the thieves roam about liquor shops, gambling houses, generally traceable in the stalls of confectionaries, house of female servants, in parks and gardens, watersheds and solitary temples. They wonder under the disguise of a drunken mendicant or a Brahman and are experts in various arts. Jain, (1977: 599-600). The caravan routes, going through forests were not safe as being infested with robbers. One story mentions about a robber, Ajuṇaya, the leader of the robbers who was living in a forest with his five hundred associates, plundering the caravans. Ibid, (1977: 604).

son. But the other woman did not show any sign of grief. The minister, after observing the reaction of both the women, gave the final order in favor of the lady who gave up her claim as being the real mother of the child.¹⁵ Another story in *VH* mentions about a property dispute between a pregnant wife of a deceased merchant and her brother-in-laws who were claiming the property of their deceased brother. The matter was reported in the king's court. King asked *set̥hi* Taraga to resolve the dispute. Taraga gave decision in favor of the lady if she would give birth to a boy. It was because a son is the legitimate heir of father's property. But if girl is born then mother will keep a part of the property and rest will be given to elder brothers of her husband.¹⁶ The *Viṣṇuśeṇa*'s charter also mentions about some seventy-two rules and regulations (*āchāras-sthiti-pātra*) enacted by the king, relating to agricultural produce, manufacturing and their trade at the insistence of merchant guild (*vaṇiggāmana*). Interestingly the ruler also approved, as mentioned in the inscription, the other prevailing rules (*āchāras*) that were handed down from ancient times.¹⁷

II

In the text *VH*, cities are often described as being beautiful with flowering trees giving fruits (*puppha-phala*) and shades (*chāyā*), possessing well-built lofty ramparts (*puravarām*), doors (*dvārā*) and equipped with extensive town-gates (*gouravarām*). Busy roads with the movements of a large number of chariots, market places crowded

¹⁵ *ibid*, (1977: 522-3).

¹⁶ Jain, (1977: 396), and Muni, (1989: 215-6).

¹⁷ Sircar, (1953-4: 163-181).

with very elegant persons coming from various places (*ṇāṇādesīyakayanevatthe purise*) and wearing various kinds of dresses (*vivihavesanarā*) were important part of city life. Markets were full of various cloths, ornaments and other commodities. They were noised by the activities of sellers, buyers and other curious persons (*vikkaiya-kaika-kouhalikajaṇasankulari*).¹⁸ It characterizes a city life as full of varied activities, and gives a very conventional and idealized picture of it. Hence, these descriptions found in ancient Indian literature that whether religious or secular, displays only an external aspect of a city landscape.

Not only this names of early historical cities e.g. Champā, Rājagṛiha and Kosāmbī etc are often employed even in the later date texts, of which *VH* was one. On the basis of which some scholars have rejected these texts as being irrelevant to study the early medieval period.¹⁹ But as have been already argued that like other texts, *VH* was a part of ancient Indian literary tradition, and though was using the earlier story material, its perspective, i.e., anti-brahmanical, was very much incongruence with the period it was written. Therefore, instead of looking at the idealized and repetitive descriptions of the city, one need to analyze the underlying perspective and conceptualization of the author regarding the city-space and its functioning in relation to the contemporary inscriptional sources. In

¹⁸ See, Jain, (1977: 309, 373, 402), and Muni, (1989: 155, 210, 218).

¹⁹ R. S. Sharma, (1987: 115-116). Scholars, particularly of the Indian feudalism school, have rejected some of the Jaina texts (e.g. *Samarāiccakahā*, *Kuvalayamālā* (AD seventh and eighth centuries etc.) as being historically irrelevant for the study of contemporary society, because they borrow story material from earlier sources. The *VH* is one of these texts. Though, studies have shown that certain sections of *VH* have been borrowed from earlier text, but it does not mean that the entire text was a replica of it. (see chapter First of the dissertation).

our text, city on the one hand is shown as a place of pleasure, prosperity and wealth, on the other it is shown as a landscape consisting of political, religious and commercial spaces with merchants often being the chief actors.

Merchants and their varied activities are the themes of stories in *VH*, conceptualized in a way that they appear as an attempt to idealize their worldly image and behavior. Merchants as an individual as well as a class were the chief donors forming the Jain lay community. Therefore, one finds a special space to merchants and their activities in Jain stories. The text, *VH* mentions that a person who can enjoy himself and at the same time can add to the wealth earned by his forefather is the best. One who does not let his forefather's wealth diminish is the middle, and one who exhausts all such wealth is the lowest.²⁰ The self-ability of a merchant to earn wealth and fame is always eulogized by the Jaina writers as a best quality through stories. The *Kuvalayamālākathā* talks about a merchant's son who begs leave from his father so that he can earn wealth. His father persuaded not to go, because they already have enough wealth that would last for generations. The son replied that this wealth does not belong to him. Therefore he wants to earn wealth by his own strength.²¹

Wealth (*artha*) was important as it was being the source of *kāma* on the one hand and *Dharma* on the other. The text, *Kuvalayamālākathā* maintains that without charity one is deprived of *Dharma* and without money (*artha*) one can not make charity as well as

²⁰ Jain, (1977: 167-8).

²¹ Jain, (1992: 25).

enjoy comforts and pleasures (*kāma*).²² Therefore, *artha* and *kāma* are related to dharma or in other words sacred is related to material. This relationship between the two opposite worlds is conceptualized through human agency –merchants and rulers- as taking part in both. The kings are often shown as enjoying their realm, wealth and authority, and then renouncing it all when realized the temporariness of this world. So is the depiction of merchants in varied stories. They are depicted as the carriers of religious ideas. One story mentions that once during a rainy season (*pāusakāle*) a merchant named Sāmidatta, resident of Candanapura, (*cāndaṇapuravāṇiyao*) arrived in a city from some other place (*videso āgato*). He preached the religion for a monk as well as a layman to Kamapadaga and her mother Aṇāgaseṇā, courtesans (*gaṇīya*).²³ Another story, in *VH*, of Cārudatta mentions that on a caravan tour the merchants decided to kill the goats. Cārudatta tried but failed to protect them. Then, he gave religious sermons to the goats.²⁴

A city landscape appears in *VH* as a converging point of sacred and material world through human agency. A story mentions that in the country of Aṅga there lived some cowherds with a number of cows and buffalos (*angājaṇavae govā pabhūyagomahisā parivasanti*). Once a cowherd loaded his cart with ghee and sold it in the city. There he saw men freely enjoying in the house of a courtesan (*gaṇīyahatṭe*). He reflected: what is the use of my wealth if I am unable to enjoy the young women of my choice (*teṇa chinttayam: majjha ya dhaṇeṇa kim jai evam na icchijajuvaisahio viharāmi?*).²⁵ It shows that how a person

²² *ibid*, (1992: 26).

²³ Jain, (1977: 496).

²⁴ *ibid*, (1977: 294).

²⁵ Jain, (1977: 567), and Muni (1989: 13).

coming from countryside visualizes the city on the one hand as a place to earn wealth through trade and on the other hand, as a place to enjoy one's wealth. City's conceptualization as a place to earn as well as enjoy one's wealth is reflected in varied stories, of which merchants were often the main characters, in our text. Merchants like other city-dwellers have been an intimate part of city life, earning as well as enjoying their wealth. Visiting a Courtesan (*gaṇiyā*) by kings, ministers and the sons of wealthy merchants (*mahādhaṇā rāyā' maccha-ibbhaputtā*),²⁶ spending huge money in gambling by rich ministers, priests, city-guards and police officers,²⁷ being expert in various arts of city dwellers and their taking part in city assemblies (*goṣṭh*),²⁸ were some of the features of city life as appears from our text. These activities were socially acceptable and even the parents encouraged their children to take part in them.

The story of Cārudatta mentions that Cārudatta's mother asked his friend to take him to the house of a courtesan (*gaṇyāghare*). When his friend hesitated then she said that it has always been a cause of worry to her, that how her son will be able to enjoy their wealth?

²⁶ *ibid*, (1977: 557), and *ibid*, (1989: 4). According to Sukumari Bhattacharji (1987: 33) the emergence of professional prostitution is linked to the socio-economic conditions, i.e. availability of surplus, breakdown of tribal society, emergence of extended or joint families and social subjugation of women. See also, Moti Chandra (1973) for a detailed study of courtesans in ancient India largely based on Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain literature.

²⁷ Jain, (1977: 445). ...*mahādhaṇā amacca-seṭṭhi-satthavāha-purohiya-talavara-daññāyagā maṇirayaṇa- suvaṇṇarāsīṃ raeūṇa jūyam ramanti...* Muni, (1989: 247).

²⁸ A story mentions about Dhammila son of *sāttavāha* Surindadattā. He was expert in seventy two arts and was sent by his mother to an assembly of young people (*laliyagoṭṭhīe*) to become an expert in the sport of love. Once the king Sattudamaṇa, held a dance program of a courtesan Vasantatilayā, and Dhammila was invited as a Judge. The assembly was attended by numerous city people. *ibid*, (1977: 582-84), and *ibid*, (1989: 27-8).

She says even if he destroys the wealth her desire will be fulfilled (“*vasaṇi attham viṇāsejja*”, *tī so maṇṇe mama chirachintī maṇo-raho ‘putto me atthaparibhotta kahaṃ hojja?’*). Cārudatta started staying in Vasantatilakā’s house, whose daily fee was one thousand (*dakkhiṇaṃ pi sahaṣsaṃ aṭṭhahiyam*) and on festive occasions the fee was hundred thousand and eight (*ūsavesu puṇa sayasaḥsaṃ aṭṭhasaḥsāhiyam*). The money was sent to the courtesan by Cārudatta’s mother (*ammāvisajjiyam*).²⁹ The socially accepted profession of courtesans is also suggested by the author of *VH* who has attributed their origin to the king Bharata (son of Ṛṣhbha). Once Bharata was gifted some girls by the subordinate rulers. But these girls, on the insistence of queen, were accommodated in outer chambers of the palace. King did not marry to these girls and they were given to different groups (*gaṇas*). This led to the emergence of courtesans (*gaṇikā*).³⁰ The marriage of Samba, son of Kṛiṣṇa, with Suhiraṇṇā, a courtesan’s daughter, further suggests the same point.³¹

Festivals and celebrations were part of city life and participated by city dwellers. The festivals often with religious connotation were the occasions when the whole city became one unit as was bringing various elements of city altogether at one place.³² Festivals organized in the honor of Jinas or other deities were also attended by King, members of royal families, ministers and other city dwellers including merchants. Singing, playing

²⁹ *ibid*, (1977: 259), and *ibid*, (1989: 141-2).

³⁰ Jain, (1977: 178-180).

³¹ *ibid*, (1977: 184).

³² See, Levy, (1997: 63). Through his anthropological study of a town Bhaktapur, Nepal, Kathmandu Valley, suggests that the town consisted of sacred and mundane or ordinary spaces. These spaces during a nine days long solar New Year festival get united.

musical instruments, dancing by professionals, enjoying fruits and drinks by the peoples were part of celebration.³³ In spring season, Vasudeva with his wife Gandharvaddattā, went to a temple of Arhat Vāsujja (*vāsupujjassa arahato āyatanam*), situated near a lake possibly near the city. They passed through the royal road (*rāyamaggeṇa*). They reached to the temple. It appears that some merchants were already present there. Vasudeva and his wife got down from the carriage not far from the merchants (*seṭṭhissa ṇāidūre avaiṇṇo pavahaṇāo*) already present near the lake. People had come there from different places (*tattha pahāṇo jaṇo kayapaṇivāo saṇṭhio tesu tesu pardesesu...*). Vasudeva and his wife rested there. Food and drinks were served (*aṇṇa-pāṇam*).³⁴

It is mentioned in one story that food and drinks were offered (*yaṇapauttabhatta*) at the shrines of a sylvan deity, situated near to an *asoka* garden (*asogavaṇam*), in the Kollaira city. The shrine was endowed with a pavilion where water was distributed free to the travelers.³⁵ The city landscape, in this way, was a converging point of the sacred and material worlds. On the one hand where city was inhabited by courtesans visited by various peoples, it also had temple-space³⁶ not merely meant for worship but also for

³³ Jain, (1977: 384-5). Daud Ali (2003) mentions about the role of Gardens (man-made-places) in the earlier cities as one of the important marker of urban life which was an essential component of the city landscape. By the Gupta times, the garden became a regular appurtenance of the urban city dweller's house, the king's palace-complex, as well as the individual houses of pre-eminent courtesans. Moreover, the artificial lakes, ponds and water channels were the important part of the early Indian gardens that provided the place to celebrate festivals and are also closely linked with the love and lovers in the literatures.

³⁴ Jain, (1977: 309-310), and Muni (1989: 155-6).

³⁵ *ibid*, (1977: 528), and *ibid*, (1989: 355).

³⁶ Temples were also a place that provided medical facilities to the people. Sanjali inscription of Toramanā mentions the presence of alms-house and hospital attached to the Viṣṇu temple providing recuperation

festivals and enjoyment. The point is also illustrated by the Mandasōr Inscription of Kumāragupta (I) and Bandhuvarmanā (5th century A.D.). The inscription records the construction/repair of a sun temple as well as talks about a couple engaged in sensual pleasures:

...In the season which is charming... when the falling of frost and snow is derided by the fast clasping of the massive, lovely and plump thighs, breasts and hips of the beloved women by young men, fallen into the power of sexual love. When... in this season when the massive breasts (of women) are worthy of enjoyment... this edifice (of sun temple) was consecrated with the performance of auspicious ceremonies...³⁷

This description of a couple indulged in sensual pleasure is mentioned in context of the Sun Temple's consecration indicating to an accepted association between the (direct or indirect) worldly affairs and sacred acts. Such development in ideological conception of sacred vis-à-vis material world was linked with a change by the mid-first millennium AD as suggested by Daud Ali, in the conception of kingship. Kingship that earlier was related to the notion of 'agonistic concepts' underlying the sacrifice as the feast (where king fed off the social order) now replaced by 'irenic ideas' in which the king 'fructified' and 'enjoyed' his realm.³⁸ This point is also apparent from varied stories in *VH* where

therapy and medical diet to mendicant, male and female retinue in the service of the deity, devotees, disciples, and the deserving people who have come to the rest house. Mehta, (1978: 18).

³⁷ Bhandarkar, (1981: 330-331).

³⁸ Ali (2003: 224). King Bandhuvarmanā who has conquered a vast realm, in inscription is described as an incarnation of Erotic Sentiment or a second God of Love. Bhandarkar, (1981: 330). This clearly supports the view postulated by Daud Ali.

Vasudeva, a devout Jaina-laity, is shown as a future universal monarch, indulging in sensual pleasures with varied women.

So is the case with sacred world where gifts of land, commodities and girls to the temples were in fact given to the god. Thereby, such gifts were meant to be enjoyed by the god. The idea of divine was now different from the earlier idea where sacrifice was central point: based on the destruction of commodities, animal wealth and agricultural produce. Now the idea of enjoying the wealth became important rather than their sacrifice, or in other words their destruction.³⁹

III

Romila Thapar mentions that if there were cases of diverse religious sects co-existing there were also situations of antagonism that interestingly began about the middle of the first millennium A.D. It gained momentum through the centuries until Buddhism eventually has almost disappeared and Jainism was limited to a few pockets. There were multiple reasons responsible for it: a) Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava sets which emerged in the peninsula were protest movements articulating a new social identity and this may have led to conflict, b) confrontations between Śramanas and Brāhmaṇas, and, c) 'competition for royal patronage' and 'for commercial power and patronage' etc.⁴⁰ Such situation of contestation is clearly displayed by the text, *VH* that as argued already, was a reply to

³⁹ See, Ali (1996), (2002).

⁴⁰ Thapar, (2002: 12-13). Almost all the above mentioned sects –Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Buddhism etc- were present at Daśapura region and no inscription give any indications of their being antagonistic to each other.

increasing Brahmanical influence in the society and polity. The text portrays Brahmanism in negative light to give a higher position to Jainism. The inscriptional sources, though scarce, also suggest the co-existence of multiple sects in city-landscape but whether they were contesting or not, is not clear. The capital city of Maitrakas, Valabhī had Buddhist monasteries which were built as well as endowed with gifts by the members of royal household besides others. It is mentioned that a monastery was present within Valabhī built by princess Duddā. Within the precinct of this monastery there was a monastery erected by Gohaka. It is interesting to note that though Maitrakas were devotee of Śiva they were making donations to Buddhist monasteries.⁴¹ Valabhī was also known as a place where third Jain council took place and Jaina canons were compiled in first half of 5th century AD.⁴²

The city of Daśapura witnessed a similar situation where varied sects were not only present but received endowments from royal family, state officials as well as common people. The inscriptions mention the presence of Śiva, Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Śakti temples and Buddhist monastery in Daśapura. Risthal inscription mentions the construction of Śiva, Kṛṣṇa temples besides of wells, assembly halls, monasteries, gardens (*sabhākūpamathārāmān*) and lakes (*bindusarasah, vibhīṣaṇasaras* etc.).⁴³ Bihar Kotra Inscription of Naravarman mentions the digging of a reservoir in the name of the *bhikshusaṃgha* of the four quarters for the quenching of thirst of all beings by some

⁴¹ Bühler, (1877: 9-21).

⁴² Dundas, (2002: 71).

⁴³ Saloman, (1989). It is also mentioned that the Aulikara ruler Prakāśadharman dedicated to lord Śiva (*vṛṣbhadvaja*) the fairest ladies of the harem of Toramanā whom he defeated in battle.

Vīrasēna.⁴⁴ The Mandasōr inscription of Kumāragupta (I) and Bandhuvarman⁴⁵, mentions the construction and repair of the Sun temple in Daśapura by guild of silk weavers. Moreover there is an inscription which records the involvement of the same family members in varied sects at the same time. The Gaṅgdhār stone inscription of Viśvavarman (423 AD) belongs partly to the Vaiṣṇava and partly to the Śakta or Tāntrik form of religion. It is mentioned that a certain Mayūrāksaka, a minister of Viśvavarman built a temple of Viṣṇu, and his son constructed the temple of divine mothers and a large drinking-well.⁴⁶ The presence of many and varied sects at the city ranging from Vaiṣṇavite to Śaivite to Sun cult to Śakti cult to Buddhist manifest the wide-scale heterogeneity not only in worship but also in the attitude of the people. Though how and what was the interactions and relationships between/among these sects is not much clear from the inscriptions. Possibly it was a cordial one otherwise the construction of temples or *stūpas* over the period within a same region might have not been done. But one also can not deny the fact that in comparison with Buddhist monastery Brahmanical sects were receiving the larger number of donations and favors from the donors. This development suggests possibly to the receding following of Buddhism due to the increasing influence of Brahmanism in the region.

⁴⁴ Chakravarti, (1941-42).

⁴⁵ Bhandarkar, (1981: 322-332).

⁴⁶ Chakraborti, (1978: 115-6 and 132).

IV

The association of political authorities with the sacred spaces is related to the need for constant validation of power, not only in areas where a community was passing from the pre-state to the state-society stage but even in established state societies.⁴⁷ The concept of legitimization was behind the gifts to gods or their representatives on earth, transferring a divine sanction and merit to the giver. It enhances sanctity to the claim to power of the temporal authorities, through public demonstration of such gift giving acts.⁴⁸ The legitimacy was derived by extending worldly patronage to the highest *varṇa*, i.e., Brāhmaṇa, monopolizing sacred knowledge and centers.⁴⁹ The association of the temporal with the sacred domain found its visible manifestation in the city landscape. The city, Vādrapālī (c. 6th century AD), was an administrative headquarters of Śivabhāgapuraviṣaya, besides being a sacred place. It was the seat of power of mahārāja Maṭṛadāsa-I, Bhūta and Maṭṛadāsa-II.⁵⁰ Another city, Daśapura, shows the similar characteristics. Its earliest mentioning is in the Nāsik inscription of the time of Nahapana (c. AD 119-24) which mentions Daśapura as a *tīrtha*. By the 5th century AD, the city emerged as a capital of Aulikara rulers as well as retained its sacred character.⁵¹ So is the case with Valabhī, a capital of Maitrakas that consisted of Buddhist monasteries. It was also a place where Jaina canons were compiled.

⁴⁷ Chattopadhyaya, (1994: 196-7).

⁴⁸ Heitzman, (1997: 1).

⁴⁹ Chattopadhyaya, (2003 c: 159).

⁵⁰ Chakravarti, (2008: 398).

⁵¹ Daśapura is also mentioned in *VH* as ruled by a king, named Amittadamaṇa. Jain (1977: 610).

Like political authorities, merchants have also made donations due to their own vested interests. According to Daud Ali prestige or reputation was their, Jain or Hindus alike, one of the main concerns as being the testing standard of a merchant's credit-worthy-ness and competent. It was based on public display of a correct behavior and actions, e.g., religious giving (*dāna*).⁵² At Vādrapālī *Vaṇiggrāma* (merchant organization) was functioning. Its members included local merchants as well as merchants coming from different places (e.g. Daśapura, Kanauj, Ujjainī etc). They all collectively signed a document recording donations to the Viṣṇu temple situated here. The document was written and signed by the merchants at the house of Śaṣṭhī who seems to be an important member of the guild.⁵³ As we know the temple is constructed by the mother of the king. It thereby, is possible that by making such donations, the merchants were securing the confidence and favor of the king, besides seeking prestige and higher social status.

Similarly, Mandasōr inscription of Kumāragupta (I) and Bandhuvarman mentions about the guild of silk weavers. They had migrated to Daśapura from Lāṭa and adopted varied occupations, i.e., astrology (*jyōtisham*), music, story telling (*vichitra-kathāvidah*), some engaged in religious discourses (*dharma-prasaṅga-parāyayaṇah*), writers, military art (archery) etc. Still they were together and participating in the construction of 'Sun temple' (436 AD) and in its repair-work (473 AD). This indicates to the continuous existence of the guild as well as presence of a liberal-space in the guild system (*śrēṇyā=śrēṇi*) as it allowed its members to adopt different occupations.⁵⁴ The purpose of

⁵² Dundas, (2001).

⁵³ Mehta (1978: 14-26).

⁵⁴ Fleet, (1970: 79-88), Bhandarkar, (1981: 322-332).

such religious act possibly was a necessity for social acceptance. It also appears as a mean to gain prestige in a new place where this guild was to settle down.

By the mid first millennium AD land grants became an important mean to provide resources to the non-productive religious institutions. Religious centers were the loci of lavish rituals. But they also reflect a wide range of other activities by bringing cultural and ideological developments of the era at one place. Not only were this in fact such centers existed through a network of linkages holding together the fabric of early medieval society.⁵⁵ Though inscriptions do not mention directly but the requirement of certain commodities and services made such sacred spaces to rely upon varied interest groups, such as, worshipers, ritual specialists, patrons, artisans, traders, builders, architects and so on.⁵⁶

Temples were granted cultivable land and the income was to be used for defraying varied temple expenses required for: the maintenance of temple staff, alms-houses, in some cases hospital attached to the temple, renovation and construction, commodities required for offerings e.g., perfume (*c̣haru?*), frankincense (*gandha?*), flowers-garland

⁵⁵ Chattopadhyaya, (2003: 162-5).

⁵⁶ See Ray, (2010: 3-4). Vatsabhaṭṭi, a Brāhmaṇa who composed the Mandasor inscription of Kumāragupta (I) and Bandhuvārmaṇ was the architect of the sun temple, and who at later date also supervised the repair of the same temple. Bhandarkar, (1981: 322-332). The inscription of Pratihāra Vatsarāja, (795 AD) also records an appointment of a Dēddaka, a notary of the merchants' guild as the artisan of the temple of the goddess Chaṇḍikā. Durgāditya was appointed as an architect (*sūtradhāra*), who had prepared a blue-print (*mūla-pāda*) of the shrine, along with a variety of fruit-yielding trees, well and garden. The inscription also mentions appointment of learned Śarvanandī to prepare the beautiful image of the goddess and Nāṇṇa as stone-cutter (*aśma-kuṭṭaka*). Ramesh (1975-6: 49-57).

(*puspamālya*), lamps (*dīpa*), oil (*tailā*), thatch (covering), anointments⁵⁷, medicines and clothes etc.⁵⁸ Many of the required commodities were to be traded from other places into the temple-complexes: at Vādrapālī the transaction of agricultural products (molasses (*guda*), paddy (*dhānya*), salt (*lavaṇa*), cotton (*kārpāsa*) etc.) was taking place, probably in bulk. Grains reached to the city by cart-loads, as appears from the expression *dhnāyaśakaṭa* and the use of donkey for transporting bulk items (*gardabha-bhāraka*).⁵⁹ Use of boats, wherever navigation was possible, is recorded for the transportation of metal, animals like buffaloes, camels, bulls, agricultural produces and by products like paddy, ginger, bamboos, wine, indigo etc.⁶⁰ Varied taxes were also levied on these commodities by state authorities.

V

Besides such sacred as well as political spaces – Valabhī, Vādrapālī and Daśapura- which were no doubt larger administrative units there were at local level smaller exchange centers like *peṅṭhās*. Inscription of Dharasena-II (252 GE= AD 571-2) records grant of a village (*Vaṭagrāma*) to a Brāhmaṇa, named Chhachchhara, located in Dīpanaka pēṭha and the Bilvakhāta *sthalī*.⁶¹ Another inscription of Dharasena-I (269 GE= AD 589-90) mentions the grant of a village, named Devabhadrapallikā, located in the Dhārākeṭha

⁵⁷ Mehta (1978: 14-26), Ray, (2000: 615-616), Chakrabarti, (2008: 395-399).

⁵⁸ Inscription of Dharasena-I records a grant of two villages to the monastery, named Sri Bappapada, situated in Valabhī, for defraying varied expenses that included besides other things, clothes and medicines for monks. Bühler, (1877).

⁵⁹ Chakravarti, (2008: 398).

⁶⁰ Sircar, (1953-54: 163-181).

⁶¹ Fleet, (1886: 187-8).

sthalī.⁶² It is on the basis of inscriptions and *Yaśastilakacampu* by Somadevasuri (10th century AD), Ranabir Chakravarti, postulates that *peṇṭhā* was a centre of commerce, besides an administrative unit between individual villages and a district.⁶³ *Peṇṭhā* in administrative tier, hence, stood above a cluster of individual villages but below *sthalī*. And, *Peṇṭhā* and *sthalī* both were included within the district (*viśāya*).⁶⁴ It suggests the presence of local level exchange centers linked with varied villages on the one hand and with the larger urban centers on the other. In this way they provided avenues for exchange through inter-regional as well as regional networks.

A story⁶⁵ mentions the presence of a royal road in a village, named *ayalaggāma* on which the shop of a caravan trader was situated (*rāyapahe ekkassa satthavāhassa āvṇam*). Now the question is why the author has used the term *gāmma* or village in context of a place where caravan trader(s?) was operating? It seems as suggested by Narendra Wagle that sometimes the term *gāma* continued to be used even after a village grew into an urban settlement. Hence the use of the term “*gāma*” may not necessarily mean a village especially when it forms part of the name as a whole.⁶⁶ The *vākāṭaka* inscriptions also suggest the location of villages on different *mārgas* indicating to their economic importance.⁶⁷ In *Vākāṭaka* inscriptions the name of some settlements- i.e. *Charmāṅka* (settlement of leader worker), *Kāmsakārakāgrāma* (settlement of bronze workers), and

⁶² Bühler, (1877: 10-12).

⁶³ Chakravarti, (2002: 207).

⁶⁴ *ibid*, (2002: 202, 206).

⁶⁵ Jain, (1977: 344) and Muni, (1989: 197).

⁶⁶ Wagle, (1995: 38).

⁶⁷ Mishra, (2004: 74).

Suvarṇakāragrāma (settlement of goldsmith), etc. – are mentioned. This suggests the presence of some urban traits (e.g. craft activities) in certain settlements which are mentioned as village or in association with villages.⁶⁸

The story of Cārudatta⁶⁹ in *VH*, further indicates to this point. Cārudatta was a son of a merchant, named Bhāṇū. He went to a village Disāsanvāha to do business. In the village Cārudatta saw the people occupied in their petty business, making profits by taking advantages of the opportunities at hand. The market places and parks made the village look like a city. (*passāmi ya kammantavāvāre gāme pauṭṭhie ya desa-kālanivvese vipaṇīe uvavaṇeṇa nayaramiva so gāmo lakkhijjati*). Cārudatta and his uncle entered a house situated at a divided street. They washed their feet at inconvenient place and went to the dining area where they had food, rich with the cow's milk which was easily available in the village. (*paviṭṭhā ya mo egam vibhanttaracchantaram geham. Visamāvakāse kayapāyasoyā bhoyaṇatthaṇe gāmvāsasulabham bhoyaṇam gorasabahulam bhuttā mo*). Later his uncle told to him that this village is at the crest of the country (*imo disāsanvāho gāmo kakuhabhūo jaṇavayassa*). His uncle told him about some good families in the village which were connected with his father's business (*iham ca te tāyassa kammantasambaddā atthi kuṇumbiṇo*).⁷⁰ Cārudatta started a business in cotton and cotton

⁶⁸ Shrimali, (1987: 28-29).

⁶⁹ Jain, (1977: 344) and Muni (1989: 175).

⁷⁰ This story informed about certain families (*kuṇumbino* or *kutumbika*) residing in village but also having commercial connections with the merchant situated in urban centre. Jataka stories mention *kutumbika* not only as a peasant producer but also as engaged in selling of crops, money lending and resident of urban centers. Chakravarti, (1996: 186).

threads (a cash crop) imported from different places⁷¹ (*savvavidesasanṭhiyam suttam rūo*) and set up a shop there. Such description indicates that this place, in spite of being mentioned as a village, was a converging point for traders.

The charter of Viṣṇuśeṇa⁷² gives a picture of a local level trade in agricultural products, by-products and cattle besides other commodities. It mentions the manufacturing of blue dye from indigo (*nīla*), distilling of wine (*surā* or *madya*), sugarcane-plantation (*ikśhu*), ginger plantation (*alla* or *ādraka*), manufacturing of oil (*yantra-kuṭi*), transportation through boat of metal (*bhāṇḍa-bhṛita-vahitrasya*), of buffaloes (*mahisha*) and camels (*ōshṭra*), of bulls (*balīvard*), of asses (*gardabha*), of paddy (*dhanyasya*), of cumin seed (*kaṇikkā*), of black mustard (*rājikā*), of coriander seed (*kustumbari*), of dried ginger sticks (*adraka*), of bamboos (*vaṃśa*) etc. The inscription also records varied taxes and fines levied on these commodities and on their trade. The important point noticeable is that the rule and regulations are enacted relating to agricultural produce, manufacturing and their trade at the insistence of merchant guild (*vaṇiggāmana*). Thereby it shows that merchants were interested in managing agriculture, manufacturing and trading in agricultural products.

⁷¹ Sanjali inscription of Toramanā (regnal year 3, c. AD 500-19), mentions about merchants local (*vāstavya*) and non-local ones who came from elsewhere in all directions (*caturdiśābhyāgatakavaiḍeśya*). Chakravarti, (2008: 396). It is generally assumed that the term 'vaiḍeśya' or 'vidēsāsa', means 'foreign countries' but the idea of 'nation' or 'foreign' is a modern construct therefore, use of such terms is inappropriate in context of pre-modern times.

⁷² Sircar, (1953-4a: 163-181).

In one story a market place is mentioned in the city, *Ilāvaddhaṇa*, where various commodities were exhibited: cloths made from the fibers of the *dugulla* plant, china silk (*cīṇamsuya*), cloth with the designs of flamingoes (*haṃsalakkhaṇa*), cloth made from cloth made from tussar (*kosijja*), cloth made of animal's fur (*migalomika*), blankets made of sheep hair (*amilākambala*), different kinds of ornaments made of gems, conch-shell, stone, coral, gold and silver (*maṇi-sankha-sila-ppavāla-kaṇaga-rayayamābharaṇavihāṇāṇi*), and perfumes pleasant to the nose and mind (*gandhangāṇi ghaṇa-maṇaharāṇi*).⁷³ Here interestingly several commodities are made of the agricultural or animal products. This indicates to the association of their production and trade with the countryside.⁷⁴ Hence, a city and a village appear as being reciprocal entities fulfilling each others needs. Villages were the part of a larger system of supply and demand. In this network merchants had played an important role as organizers as well as executioners. But merchant was not merely confined to the intermediary position. Instead, as appears from the sources, he in a way controlled the means of production, e.g. land.

⁷³ Jain, (1977: 402).

⁷⁴ Once a cowherd living in a village loaded his cart with ghee and proceeded to Campā city to sell out his ghee there (*ghayassa saganāṇi bhareūṇa canpaṃ gato. vikkīyam ghayam*). Jain, (1977: 567) and Muni (1989: 13). It is also mentioned that a gahapati residing in countryside loaded his cart with paddy (*dhaṇṇabhariyam*) and set out for city to trade. Ibid, (1977: 618), and ibid, (1989: 57).

VI

The text, *VH* has two stories about *gahavati* or *gahapati*, one was residing in countryside and another in city. The city based⁷⁵ *gahapati* married his son with the daughter of a caravan merchant of Kausāmbī. And the village based *gahapati*⁷⁶ is mentioned as engaged in the trade of rice that he loaded in his cart and set out for the city to trade. If we trace the history of the term *gahapati* and over the period changes in its meaning, then we find that being a *gahapati* depended upon person's material conditions. The category *gahapati* is more like a class or a social rank, and never has been used as a caste.⁷⁷ By Mauryan period the *gahapatis* had emerged as an extremely wealthy section of the society with vast landed properties requiring the labor of the *dāsā-karmakāras* to cultivate it.⁷⁸ At the same time, the peasant-type *gahapatis* disappeared and the men who worked on his fields using mainly family labor were no longer described as a *gahapati*.⁷⁹ Thereby, the term signifies an exalted epithet fit to be assumed by a man of vast wealth and social pre-eminence.⁸⁰ The increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of *gahapatis* and their involvement in commercial activities led to the emergence of *set̥hi-gahapatis* or *set̥his* or other ranks of merchants. According to Uma Chakravarti, the *gahapati* in a narrower sense is a term of description that stands for someone primarily based on land while the term *set̥hi-gahapati* is used for a person engaged in agriculture

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, (1977: 620) and, *ibid.*, (1989: 59).

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, (1977: 618) and, *ibid.*, (1989: 57).

⁷⁷ Fick, (1920: 253-6).

⁷⁸ Chakravarti, (2006:79).

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, (2006: 113).

⁸⁰ Chakravarti, (1996: 183-4).

as well as trading activities.⁸¹ Hence, the term has been used on the one hand in context of a rich peasant controlling large tracts of land and on the other hand in context of a rich merchant engaged in commercial activities.

The *VH* have several stories about *setthis* and their activities. They seem to represent persons residing in cities and having close relations with the royal authorities. They owned great wealth as well as hold a prestigious semi-official position. But such semi-official position does not mean that they were acting as the head of a guild.⁸² According to Ivo Fisher the services, mostly of private character than administrative, rendered to the king gave the position of *setthi* the significance of an office (*setthiṭṭhāna*). It was restricted only to the *setthis* living in town.⁸³ The view is also apparent from a story in *VH* that mentions the appointment of a *setthi*, Taraga, by the king to look into a property dispute in a merchant family.⁸⁴ The story does not clearly indicate to his holding of an administrative office. Instead he appears as being suitable in the eyes of the king to look into the dispute.⁸⁵ If seen this story in relation with the inscriptional sources it appears that there was a change by the mid-first millennium AD in the relations of leading

⁸¹ *ibid.*, (1996: 73-4).

⁸² Fisher, (2001: 196).

⁸³ *ibid.*, (2001).

⁸⁴ Jain, (1977: 396).

⁸⁵ It was not the rule that only a *setthi* would look into merchants' disputes. There is another story in *VH* in which a minister was appointed to solve a dispute regarding the property of a merchant. Jain, (1977: 522-3). It is not sure whether Taraga was holding an administrative position or not from the story. But still it is mentioned that when the *setthi* was asked to look into the dispute, he accepted the royal command. He had control over the city-spies. And he directed these spies to the merchant's house whose case was to be addressed (*teṇa nayaracāraniuttā purisā pesiyā ibbhagiham*). *Ibid.*, (1977: 396-7), and Muni, (1989: 216). See also, Singh (1983).

merchants with the political authority, resulting in their emergence as an administrative officials. Possibly this process was underway from earlier times, but it became more and more visible in inscriptional sources particularly in the early medieval period.

Inscriptions from Buddhist religious centre Kāṇherī, of earlier centuries of Christian era, record the owing of land by the merchants. Here donations refer to gifts of agricultural fields and money to the monastic establishment.⁸⁶ For example: One inscription from Kāṇherī records the dedication of a cave and a gift of a village, named 'Śakapadra' by a merchant of Chemuliya.⁸⁷ Another inscription (no. 1000) from Kāṇherī mentions about a donation of a cave (*lēṇa*), a cistern (*pōdhā*) and a village, Saphāū, by a merchant (*nēgama*), Isipāla (*Ṛishipāla*) son of a merchant Gōlaṇaka inhabitant of Kalyāṇa to Buddhist monks.⁸⁸ Inscription (no.1024) from Kāṇherī mentions about a lay devotee (*upāsaka*) Aparēṇu, son of Aṇada (*Ānanda*), a merchant residing at Kalyāṇa, who gifted a cave, hall (*kodhi*), money and the field of a half-*paṇa*-owner (*ādhapaṇakhetiya*) in a village.⁸⁹ Inscription of Mahārājā Svāṇṇidāsa (c. 4th century AD) records a brahmadeyā grant of field to a Brāhmaṇa by a merchant named Āryya (*aryya-vaṇijaka*) with the consent of the king.⁹⁰ These inscriptions of early centuries of Christian era indicate that the merchants owned land; and, the nature of their relation with the land was more in terms of managing agricultural activities.

⁸⁶ Ray, (1986: 82).

⁸⁷ Gokhale, (2008: 23). The name of the village, Śakapadra, seems that there has been a settlement of Śakas near Kāṇherī.

⁸⁸ Lüders, (1912: 104).

⁸⁹ *ibid*, (1912: 108).

⁹⁰ Majumdar, (1919-20: 290).

By the mid first millennium A.D. a change began to be visible. The inscriptional sources of this period are sketchy, and often do not directly give the information about the relation of merchants with the landed property. Therefore, it makes the task to trace such developments more tough, if not impossible. Mandasōr inscription of Yaśōdharman and Viṣṇuvardhana⁹¹ (AD 533-34) records the construction of a large well by a person named Daksha in memory of his deceased uncle Abhayadatta. Elder brother of Daksha, Dharmadōsha, and their deceased uncle Abhayadatta were the minister (*rājasthanīya*) of Viṣṇuvardhana. It is mentioned that Daksha's family belonged to a pure race of *naigamānām*. It means as suggested by D. C. Sircar⁹² (*naigam*=) inhabitant of a *nigama*, or in other words merchants. The five copper plate inscriptions from Damodarpur, (covering a period of 90 years, i.e. from A.D. 443-44 to 533-4), mention about *nagara-śrēṣṭhins* and *sārthavāhas*. They were part of local-administration of Kōṭivarsha *visāya*, and were handling, interestingly, the land-sale transactions.⁹³ The Viṣṇuśeṇa's charter further suggests that merchants (*vaṇiggāmēṇa*) were interested in managing agriculture, manufacturing and trading in agricultural products.⁹⁴ It appears, hence, that by the mid first millennium A.D. there were two important developments that may have been there already but became more and more visible in the subsequent centuries: a) emergence of merchants as administrative officials, and b) their involvement in

⁹¹ Fleet, (1970: 150-158).

⁹² Sircar, (1965: 414, footnote no.3).

⁹³ Basak, (1919-20: 113-145).

⁹⁴ Sircar, (1953-4 a: 163-181).

agricultural management, and manufacturing and trading of agricultural products and by-products.⁹⁵

VII

The Stories in *VH* talking about *setthi*s in all cases associate them with extreme wealth, higher social position, the urban centers and royal authorities.⁹⁶ The text also gives an

⁹⁵ Dudhpani Rock Inscription of Udayamāna (8th century) mentions about three merchant brothers- Udayamāna, Śrīdhautamāna and Ajitamāna- who went on business from Ayodhyā to Tāmalipti; and had made plenty of money. While coming back they came across a village, named Bhramaraśālmali, which was asked by the king to pay avalagaka (or *avalagana*) tax. The villagers approached the elder brother Udayamāna, for help, who paid the tax on the behalf of the villagers. Then he was, with the consent of the king, made the raja of the village. Later his brothers were also made the rājā of other two villages. Kielhorn, (1894: 343-47). Another inscription (893 AD) records a grant of village to a Sun temple by two Mahāsāmantas. Interesting point here to be noted is the presence of four merchants as a witness, besides four Brāhmaṇas and four mahattaras. Kielhorn, (1907-8: 2, 6). The Khārēpāṭaṇ record of 1084, mentions about Bhabana- *śrēṣṭhi* and his brother Dhanama- *śrēṣṭhi* sons of Durga- *śrēṣṭhi*. Interestingly Durga and Bhabana were *mahāpradhanas* (chief among the heads of the administrative departments?), and Dhanama was *mahāsāmdhivigrahika* (officer in charge of war and peace). This inscription shows not only a family of hereditary administrators but also that they were having *pravahanas* or coastal crafts engaged in trading. Chakravarti, (2000: 41-2). The biographies of Vastupāla and Tejahpāla, who were important and powerful ministers in the Caulukya kingdom in the first half of the 13th century, show the engagement of merchants with administrative offices. Vastupāla was a governor of Cambay port and put an end to piracy. Jain (1990: 237-8).

⁹⁶ The *setthi* Taraga is mentioned as living in a royal palace like house (*rāyabhavaṇasarisaṁ*) and visited by the king in the company of elderly people and the assembly members. Taraga's son-in-law was honored by the king by giving cloths and jewellery (*raṇṇā vi pūio mi vatthā- bharaṇehem*). Jain, (1977: 382-4) and Muni, (1989: 212).

impression that the position of a *seṭṭhi* or a *sāttavāha* is hereditary in nature.⁹⁷ But what if son of a *seṭṭhi* or *sāttavāha* lost all wealth and thereby prestige or change the profession, will he remain or become a *seṭṭhi* or *sāttavāha*?

The father of Cārudatta was a *seṭṭhi* but when he lost all his wealth he didn't inherit the *seṭṭhi*-ship, but in the story is addressed either by his name or *ibbhaputta* (son of a merchant). The term *ibbhaputta* is used for the son of a merchant as long as he establishes himself or earns wealth and prestige either through his own endeavors or through inheritance. But in both cases he is supposed to be engaged in related activities and maintain what he has earned or inherited. According to Yamazaki Gen 'ichi says, since *seṭṭhis* who resided in the cities made their fortunes mainly as merchants therefore, were often *vaṇikas* and *sāttavāhas*.⁹⁸ A son of a *seṭṭhi* can engage in other form of trade and business activities as appears from the story of Cārudatta.⁹⁹ He first started a business in a village by setting up a shop there, but when it was burnt down, he joined a caravan and set out for the country of Ukkala (Orissa). From there he went to Tāmralitti but on the way was looted by the robbers. Somehow he reached to Piyaṅgupaṭṭaṇa, where he met to a sea-faring merchant, named Surindadatta (*nāvāsanjatta*), who was sitting in his shop (*āvaṇe*). From there he went on a sea-voyage for trade. While coming back he met with a ship-wreck and lost everything. Again he joined a caravan and went to distant

⁹⁷ In the family of *seṭṭhi* Kāmadeva after eight generations another *seṭṭhi* with the same name was born who was close to the king (*eyam puṇa aṭṭhame purisajuge vattam. Tassa ya kāmadevassa vanes iyāṇim kāmadevo nāma seṭṭhi raṇṇo eṇiputtassa sarīrabhūo*). *ibid*, (1977: 473) and *ibid*, (1989: 279).

⁹⁸ Gen'ichi, (2005: 140).

⁹⁹ Jain, (1977: 225-307).

countries for trade; and in the end he became a *seṭṭhi* by earning great wealth and prestige.

One thing which appears quite clear is that it was basically the material wealth and prosperity that determined the status of a person as a *gahapati* or *sāttavāha* or *seṭṭhi* or so forth. His involvement in varied forms (as a financier, as a caravan trader etc) of commercial activities further shapes his identity in a given society. The profession is hereditary as long as the person is able to maintain or extent the wealth and prestige either earned or inherited. It shows that the identity- *gahapati*, *seṭṭhi*, *sāttavāha* etc.- of merchants was not confine to simply being a mediator between producers or consumers but it need to be understood in multiple aspects of it. Inscriptions further support this point. The Supia Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta, (AD 460-1) mentions about Kaivarti-*śrēṣṭhin* who had a son Hari-*śrēṣṭhin*, who in turn had three sons, viz. Śrīdatta, Varga and Chhandaka. It is interesting to note that, while the grand father and father were *śrēṣṭhins* none of the three brothers is called a *śrēṣṭhin*. Where Śrīdatta is mentioned as a *kutumbika* or husbandman, Varga is called a *grāmika* or village headman.¹⁰⁰ Mandasor inscription of Yasodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana¹⁰¹ (AD 533-34) mentions about Dharmadosha and his deceased uncle Abhayadatta who were holding administrative posts (*rājasthanīya*), even though coming from merchant family.¹⁰² Therefore, a person coming

¹⁰⁰ Sircar, (1959-60: 306-308).

¹⁰¹ Fleet, (1970: 150-158).

¹⁰² A later date inscription- inscription of Pratihāra Vatsarāja, (=795 AD) - records an appointment of a Dēddaka, a notary of the merchants' guild as the artisan of the temple of the goddess Chaṇḍikā. Ramesh (1975-6: 49-57). The Dudhpani Rock Inscription of Udayamana (8th century) similarly shows how merchant brothers became the head of the villages. Kielhorn (1894: 343-47).

from a merchant family is not necessarily become a merchant just because he belongs to that family but it's his association with a particular profession that defines his present identity. Such identity is subjected to change according to the changes in his profession.

Here it is needed to be kept in mind that there is a difference between a professional identity and a social identity.¹⁰³ Professional identity is based on the occupational activities of the person but the social identity is defined by the *varṇa-jāti* social system. Often merchants are associated with the Vaiśya *varṇa* but inscriptional sources clearly show that the profession of trade was not a monopoly of any particular *varṇa-jāti* group. Brāhmaṇas are also mentioned as *gahapati* (Brāhmaṇa-*gahapati* in Vinaya texts) and as merchants (in Sanjeli Copper plate inscriptions of Toramanā).¹⁰⁴ Like Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas are also mentioned as being merchants. The Indor Copper-Plate Inscription of Skandagupta (AD 465-6) records a perpetual endowment by a Brāhmaṇa to a temple constructed by Kṣatriyas merchants.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ According to Romila Thapar the status of elites is evaluated from two points- ritual status and actual status in terms of economic and political power. (1996: 113) Not all Brāhmaṇas were prosperous but indeed there were poor also. In this way even though their ritual status was higher their actual status was low. Hence, in Romila Thapar's words: "...the key to the understanding of the *Varṇa* system lies in not seeing it as a framework of hierarchical layers of social orders each fitting neatly below the other. It may be more meaningful to see it as a series of vertical parallels, each *Varṇa* (pure or mixed) as an independent entity with its own hierarchy based either on a tribal identity or an occupational identity. Furthermore, the *jāti* identity would be subsumed within this hierarchy." *ibid* (1996: 115).

¹⁰⁴ It is suggested by Harishchandra 'Satyarthi' (1970: 98) that possible those Brāhmaṇas who failed to earn their livelihood through their recognized traditional profession due to insufficient employment opportunities took up other professions. These Brāhmaṇas could not command as much respect as enjoyed by those engaged in their traditional profession.

¹⁰⁵ Fleet (1970: 68-72).

Conclusion

The emergence of new political powers in different regions, particularly from tribal background, created a need for legitimization.¹ At the same time transformation of tribal economy into agricultural economy and of society into a stratified society accompanied the changes in the political sphere, bringing in what B.D. Chattopadhyaya termed as the 'state society'. Brahmanism also played a role by creating and modifying its idea of social hierarchy. Incorporation of tribal population into brahmanical social structure, appropriation of tribal beliefs and deities, and ability of Brāhmaṇas to engage in land management and production,² were the developments which both Buddhism and Jainism failed to counter.

¹ Chattopadhyaya, (2003: 153-171).

² Nath, (2001), Sahu (1985), Jaiswal, (1979-80: 28).

The major drawback of both the monastic religions was their inability to create an alternative to brahmanical social structure. In fact, if we look at the history of these heterodox religions, we find that in spite of their severe criticism of brahmanical social system their followers largely remained part of it. It was only within the monastic institution where they were able to create their own system of living. Outside the monastic institution it was the brahmanical social structure based on *varṇa-jāti* hierarchy which was shaping and defining the social relations.³ Another major drawback of these heterodox sects was their reliance upon the particular section of society, i.e. merchant-artisan class. Greater emphasis on *ahiṃsa* by Jainas distanced them with the agricultural as well as the tribal groups.⁴ The ideological barrier making them unable to engage directly with the agriculture and production activities further made them unable to initiate a process of peasantization of tribal population.

No doubt there have been rulers who patronized Jainism (also Buddhism) but it was Brahmanism that was able to provide what the new polities with obscure origin required, i.e. mythical genealogies to legitimize their claim, peasantization of tribal population and direct engagement with production activities. The increasing number of land grants with fiscal-judicial rights to Brāhmaṇas in forested regions corroborates this as against the monasteries which were mostly granted land in already settled regions.

³ Ray, (1994: 132-3), Schopen (2001: 107-8), Liu (1988: 129).

⁴ Dundas, (2002: 172).

I

Contestation among varied sects has always been a part of society.⁵ The strengthening of Brahmanism, hence, was to invoke reactions from other sects, and where Jainism was able to challenge Buddhism failed in it. Our text, *VH*, reflects this challenge by giving alternative definitions to Brahmanism and its varied ideas. The author of *VH* gives a picture of two types of Brāhmaṇas, one, based on birth and engaged in sacrifices leading those to reborn in animal or other degenerated forms due to their bad karmas, and second, based on expertise in varied arts/acts. Vasudeva, often disguising as a Brāhmaṇa, is shown not only as an expert in the Vedas but also in various arts/acts not meant to be associated with a Brāhmaṇa. In this way the author makes the action rather the birth as a criterion of being a Brāhmaṇa. By attributing the sacrifice of mother and father to the origin of *Atharvaveda*, *VH* put a question mark against the divine origin of the Vedas. However, the alternative explanation is also provided by the text. That suggests salvation or *nirvaṇa* as being the aim of Vedas in against of brahmanical notion that associates attainment of material prosperity with the Vedas and Vedic sacrifices.

The very use of Hinduised deities like Vasudeva and his association with Jainism appears as an attempt to give an alternative picture to the masses for whom such literature was being written and among whom such deities were popular. The concern of Jain ideologues was not simply the increasing influence of Brahmanism but the laity, thereby, resources essential for the very survival of the sect (monastic institution as well). At the

⁵ Dundas, (2002: 241), Thapar, (2002: 12-13), Jaini, (2000: 325-332), Sahgal, (1994), Granoff, (1994).

same time outright rejection of Brahmanism and Hinduised deities which were deeply rooted among the masses would have alienated the larger section of society which was still a part of brahmanical social system. Therefore an alternative definition and Jaina version was to be developed on the one hand and on the other hand modifications were to be cultivated within the Jaina ideals.

Another important aspect of the text was the projection of Vasudeva as a *chakravartin* or universal monarch. The conceptualization of his victory in the form of marriage with girls coming across the *varṇa-jāti* hierarchy is also noticeable. It is because such conceptualization places Vasudeva as well as Jainism above the brahmanical social order. The use of romantic and sensual love stories in *VH* was an important feature of it. That was not something deviating from basic principals of Jainism but was due to the concerns of larger masses that were outside the Jaina-fold as well as accustomed to such stories. Artha, Kāma and Dharma were a part of ancient Indian literary tradition and a taste of it had been developed among the masses. Moreover, story telling was also an easy medium to convey the abstract philosophical messages to the masses.⁶ Hence *VH* was a part of this literary tradition in which romantic and sensual elements had become an important aspect. But the increasing association of material and sacred worlds was not merely a phenomenon of literature but was, in fact, a reflection of larger societal developments. The rulers were emerging as the enjoyer of their realm on the one hand and on the other

⁶ Mudholkar, (2001), Jain, (2001).

the deities were associated with lavish rituals, music-dance performances, temple institution and landed property.⁷

II

The city is conceptualized as a place where a person can earn wealth as well as enjoy his wealth. It was the city landscape which provided an arena of interaction to the material and scared world. The religious festivals are depicted in *VH* as providing an opportunity to the city dwellers to enjoy fruits, drinks, and music-dance performances. The important feature of city landscape appears to be its functional heterogeneity emerging out of an interaction of political, religious and commercial spaces. Here, the political institution, i.e. law and order, was crucial as providing an internal homogeneity to outside heterogeneity and keeping it intact. The religious institutions due to their requirement of varied products not locally available, and services brought them in relation to various merchant and artisanal groups. Sources clearly indicate to the increasing exchange of agricultural commodities and emergence of local exchange centers linked with villages on the one hand and with cities on the other. It questions the pre-conceived dichotomy of city versus village.

The much neglected aspect of merchants, i.e. their relations with the landed property, is highlighted in this dissertation, though not a detailed study is done due to limited space and time. The sources clearly indicate that they were the owners of landed property and

⁷ Ali, (1996: 35-36).

engaged in agricultural activities. The inscriptions from western India of earlier centuries of Christian era mention donation of land by the merchants to the monasteries. Later date inscriptions also mention about *Vaiśya-āgrahāra* that further corroborates their engagement in production. But the important development by the mid-first millennium AD onwards was the emergence of merchants, if not all then at least a considerable number of them, as administrative officials. That marks a change in their association with land. Where earlier their relation with the land was in terms of controlling and managing production besides their engagement in trade and commerce, now they appear as the administrator of land.

III

Here problematizing the concept of hereditary profession also becomes relevant. The emergence of merchants as administrative officials, engagement of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas in trade and commerce suggests that “hereditary” was not the inflexible and unsurmountable norm of society but was subjected to the individual’s decision and ability to continue the ancestral profession or not. The ‘*seṭṭhi*’ is a social position attributed to a rich and influential merchant, thereby carries a social value with it.⁸ It was not hereditary but required the son of *seṭṭhi* to maintain it through his own endeavors, and if he fails to do that he will not be attributed it. Hence the notion of hereditary had its own limitation, and was not something applicable to everyone and in every situation. No doubt the period under study, c. 400 to 600 AD had witnessed the transformation of certain professional

⁸ Chakravarti (1996: 183-4), Fisher (2001).

groups into distinct castes (e.g. leather workers, barbers, potters etc.), but a detailed discussion on such development is outside the scope of present study. Here it will be sufficient, therefore, to say that the notion of hereditariness needs to be theorized further, rather than using it as a universal phenomenon.

Appendix

Name of the girls whom Vasudeva married¹:

S. No.	Name of the Girls	Name of Father of the Girls	Epithets used for the father	Place
1.	Sāma and Vijaya	King Jiyasattu	<i>Rāiṇa</i> or <i>rājā</i>	Vijayakheṇam nayara (U.P.)
2.	Sāmālī	<i>Vidyādhara</i> King Asañivega	<i>Rāyā</i>	Kiṇṇaragīyam (in the southern region of <i>Veyaddha</i> ² mountain)
3.	Gandhavvadattā	<i>Vidyādhara</i> King Amiyagai, but adopted by Setṭhi Cārudatta	<i>Rāyā</i>	Cārudatta belonged to Campā city (Aṅga), & Amiyagai to Sivamandira (somewhere in <i>Veyaddha</i> mountain)
4.	Sāmā and Vijayā	Music teachers, Suggīva and Jasaggīva	-	Campā city (Aṅga)
5.	Nīlajasā (<i>mātangi</i> girl also mentioned as <i>cāndali</i>)	King Sīhadādha	<i>Rāyā</i>	Naliṇisabha city (<i>Veyaddha</i> mountain)
6.	Somasirī	Village headman Devadeva	<i>Gāmabhoyassa</i>	Girikūda village
7.	Mittasirī	Carvan trader Dhaṇamitta	<i>Sāthavaha</i>	Ayalaggāma
8.	Dhaṇasirī	Soma	<i>Māhaṇa</i>	Ayalaggāma
9.	Kavilā	King Kavila	<i>Rāyā</i>	Vedāsamapura (somewhere in eastern India. It is mentioned that in the court of Kavila a person was sent as an emissary from Kāmarūva ³)

¹ The list is based on Jagishchandra Jain's (1977) translation of *Vasudevahiṇḍī*.

² It is mentioned that this mountain divides Bharata into northern and southern regions. In each region there is a group of *vidyādhara*s who dwells in cities. Jain, (1977: 29, foot note 46). It appears to be the same as the Vindhyas.

³ It is interesting to note the reference to Kāmarūva which is Kāmarūpa. Jain, (1977: 346) The earliest epigraphic mention of Kāmarūpa comes in the fourth century Allahabad prasasti as an area of a frontier chief (*pratyanta nṛipati*). Fleet, (1970: 14) By sixth century it seems that it becomes a regular monarchical polity.

10.	Paumā	King Abhaggaseṇa	<i>Rāyā</i>	Jayapura city
11.	Āsaseṇā	King Mahaseṇa brother of Abhaggaseṇa	<i>Rāyā</i>	-
12.	Puṇḍā	King Suseṇa	<i>Rāyā</i>	Bhaddhilapuram (Varanasi)
13.	Rattavatī	Merchant Maṇohara	<i>Sāthavaha</i>	Ilāvaddhaṇa on the bank of Gangā
14.	Somasirī	King Somadeva	<i>Rāyā</i>	Mahāpura
15.	Vegavatī	<i>Vidyādhara</i> King Cittavega	<i>Rāyā</i>	Suvvaṇṇābha (in southern region of <i>Veyaddha</i> mountain)
16.	Mayaṇavegā	King Meghanāa	<i>Rāyā</i>	Ariṇṇajapura
17.	Bālacandā	King Candābha	<i>Rāyā</i>	Gangaṇavallaha
18.	Bandhumatī	Merchant Kāmadeva	<i>Seṭṭhi</i>	Kunala country (capital Sāvatti)
19.	Piyaṅgusundari	King Eṇputta	<i>Rāyā</i>	Sāvatti
20.	Keumatī	King Vacchilla and Sister of King Jiyasattu	<i>Rāyā</i>	Vasantapura
21.	Pabhāvati	King <i>Vidyādhara</i> Gandhāra	<i>Rāyā</i>	Pukhalavatī
22.	Bhaddamittā	King Poyaṇa	<i>Rāyā</i>	Poyaṇapura (near Godavari river)
23.	Saccarakkhiyā	Priest Soma by his Kshatriya wife Kundalayā	<i>Purohita</i> (progeny of <i>Pratiloma</i> marriage).	Poyaṇapura (near Godavari river)
24.	Paumāvati	King Paumaraha	<i>Rāyā</i>	Kollaira
25.	Paumasirī	King who had lost his kingdom and was taking refuge in forest	Raṇā or <i>Rāyā</i>	-
26.	Laliyasirī	Prostitute's Daughter	-	Kaṇṇapapura
27.	Rohiṇī	King Ruhira	<i>Rāyā</i>	Riṭṭapura
28.	Devakī	King Devaga	<i>Rāyā</i>	Mattikāvati

Bibliography

Abbreviations:

Epigraphica Indica- *EI*

Indian Antiquary- *IA*

Primary Sources:

Bhayani, H. C. and R. M. Shah, ed. (1987), *Dharmasenagaṇi Mahattara's Vasudevahimḍī: Madhyama Khaṇḍa: A Seventh Century Prakrit Recast of the Famous Bṛhatkathā Narrative- I*, L. D. Institute of Indology: Ahmedabad.

Jain, Jagdishchandra, (1977), *The Vasudevahiṇḍī: An Authentic Jain Version of the Bṛhatkathā*, L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad.

Muni, Caturvijay, and Punyavijay Muni, ed. (1989), *Vasudevahiṇḍī: Saṅghadāsgaṇi, Vācaka, A narrative text in archaic Prakrit*, Hasu Yagnik, Gandhinagar: Gujarat.

Prasad, Pushpa, (2007), *Lekhapaddhati: Documents of State and Everyday Life from Ancient and Early Medieval Gujarat, 9th to 15th centuries*, Oxford University Press: New Delhi.

Inscriptions:

Basak, Radhagovind, (1919-20), 'The Five Damaodarpur Copper-Plate Inscriptions of the Gupta Period', *E. I.* –XV, 113-145.

Bhandarkar, D. R., (1900-01), 'An inscription of Dantivarman', *E. I.* –VI, 285-294.

-(1981) *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of the early Gupta Kings- III*, Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi.

Bhandarkar, H. M., (1911-12), 'Navalakhi Plates of Siladitya- I', *E. I.* –XI, 174-180.

Bühler, E., (1877), 'Further Valabhī Grants', *I. A.* - VI, 9-16.

Bühler, G., (1894), 'Further Jaina Inscriptions From Mathura', *E. I.* Vol. II, 195-222.

- Chakravarti, S. N., (1941-42), 'Bihar Kotra Inscription of Naravarman's Time', *E. I.*-XXVI: 130-132.
- Diskalkar, D. B., (1931-32), 'Bhavanagar Plates of Dharasena-III', *E. I.* -XXI, 181-2.
- Fleet, J. F., (1886), 'A New Grant of Dharasena- II of Valabhī', *I. A.*- XV, 187-8.
- (1970) [(1888)], *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of the early Gupta Kings and their successors, -III*, Indological Book House, Varanasi (India).
- Hultzsch, E., (1911-12), 'Palitana Plates of Simhaditya', *E. I.* -XI, 16-20.
- Kielhorn, F., (1894), 'Dudhpani Rock Inscription of Udayamana', *E. I.* -II, 343-347.
- (1907-8), 'Plates of Balavarman', *E. I.* - IX, 4-6.
- Konow, Sten, (1911-12), 'Palitana Plates of Dhruvasena-I', *E. I.* -XI, 206.
- Lüders, H., (1912), 'Appendix: A List of Brāhmī Inscriptions from Earliest Times to About AD 400: With the Exception of those of Aśoka', *E. I.* - X, 1- 226.
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra, (1919-20), 'The Grant of Mahārājā Svāmidāsa', *E. I.* - XV, 280-291.
- Mehta, R. N. and A. M. Thakkar, (1978), *The M.S. University Copper Plates of Toramana*, M.S. University Archaeological Series 14, Vadodara.
- Mirashi, Vasudev Vishnu, (1963), *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum- V: Inscriptions of Vākātakas*, ASI.
- (1977), *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum- VI: Inscriptions of Śilāhāras*, ASI.
- Ramesh, K.V., and S.P. Tewari, (1975-6), 'An Inscription of Pratihāra Vatsarāja', *E.I.* - XLI, 49-57.
- Salomon, Richard., (1989) 'New inscriptional evidence for the history of the Aulikaras of Mandasor', *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 32(1), 1-36.
- Sircar, D. C., (1953-54 a), 'Charter of Vishṇushēṇa', *E. I.* - XXX: 163-181.
- (1953-54 b), 'Inscriptions from Bhilsa', *E. I.* - XXX: 210-215.
- (1959-60), 'Chikkalavalasa Plates of Vajrahasta- III', *E. I.* - XXXIII: 141-146.

Sircar, Dines Chandra., ed. (1965) *Select Inscriptions, Bearing on Indian History and Civilization volume-I: From the sixth century B.C. to the sixth Century A.D.*, University of Calcutta.

Srinivasan, P. R., (1968), 'Charter of Dharasena- II', *E. I.* -XXXVII: 1-8, 170-4.

-(1968), 'Charter of Dhruvasena- I', *E. I.* -XXXVII: 1-8, 167-170.

Secondary Sources:

Abraham, Meera, (1988), *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Manohar Publications: New Delhi.

Ali, Daud, (1996), *Regimes of Pleasure in Early India: A Genealogy of Practices at the Cola Court*, (a dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Division of the Social Sciences: supervision, Ronald Inden), Department of History: Chicago: Illinois.

-(2002), 'Anxieties of Attachment: The Dynamics of Courtship in Medieval India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 36: 1, 103-139.

-(2003), 'Garden in Early Indian Court Life', *Studies in History*, 19: 2, 221- 252.

Alsdorf, L., (1936), 'The Vasudevahindi, a Specimen of Archaic Jaina-Māhārāṣṭrī', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 8: 2/3, 319-333.

Basant, P. K., (2009), 'Ch. 6: Urbanism and Society in Early India', ed. B. D. Chattopadhyaya, *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization- II*: 5, Pearson Longman, 73-90.

Becker, Carl, (1938), 'What is Historiography?', *The American Historical Review*, 44: 1, 20-38.

Bhattacharji, Sukumari, (1987), 'Prostitution in Ancient India', *Social Scientists*, 15: 2, 32-61.

Bhattacharyya, N. N., ed. (1994), *Jainism and Prakrit in Ancient and Medieval India: Essays for Prof. Jagdish Chandra Jain*, Manohar: Delhi.

Blumenfeld, Hans, (1949), 'Theory of City Form: Past and Present', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 8:3-4, 7-16.

Carr, E. H., (2008) [(1961,)], *What is History?*, Penguin Books: Australia.

Chakraborti, Haripada, (1978), *India as reflected in the Inscriptions of the Gupta Period*, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd.

Chakravarti, Kunal, (2000), 'Cult Region: The purāṇas and the Making of the Cultural Territory of Bengal', *Studies in History*, 16: 1, 1-16.

Chakravarti, Ranabir, (1996), 'Kutumbikas of Early India', *Peasant in Indian History-I: Theoretical Issues and Structural Enquiries*, ed. Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aounshuman, Janaki Prakashan: Patna, 179-198.

-(2000), 'Nakhudas and Nauvittakas: Ship-owning Merchants in the West Coast of India (c. AD 1000-1500)', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 43: 1, 34-64.

-(2002), *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, Manohar: Delhi.

-(2008), 'Three Copper Plates of the Sixth Century AD: Glimpses of Socio-Economic and Cultural Life in Western India', *South Asian Archaeology 1999: Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists* ed. Ellen M. Raven, Egbert Forsten: Groningen, 395-399.

Chakravarti, Uma, (1996), *The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd.

-(2006), *Everyday Lives, Everyday Histories: Beyond the Kings and Brahmanas of 'Ancient' India*, Tulika Books: New Delhi.

Chandra, Moti, (1973), *The World of Courtesans*, Vikas Publishing House: Delhi.

-(1977), *Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India*, Abhinav Publication: New Delhi.

Chattopadhyay, Bhaskar, (1977), *Coins and Icons- A Study of Myths and Symbols in Indian Numismatic Art*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta.

Chattopadhyaya, B. D., (1985), 'Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India: Problems of Perspective', *Social Scientist*, 13: 6, 3-34.

-(1988-89), 'Trends of Research on Ancient Indian Economic History', *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, 18, 217-231.

-(1994), *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press.

-(2003), *Studying Early India: Archaeology, Texts, and Historical Issues*, Permanent Black.

Chattopadhyaya, B. D., ed., (2009), 'General Introduction', *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Vol. II, Part 5, Pearson Longman, xv-xxiv.

Chaudhary, Gulab Chandra, (1963), *Political History of Northern India: From Jain Sources (c. 650 AD to 13 AD)*, Sohanlal Jaindharma Pracharak Samiti: Amritsar, India.

Chauhan, Anil, and Md. M. Raheman, (1991-92), 'Land Grants in Inscriptions of the Early Deccan', *Indian History Congress*, 52nd Session, New Delhi, . 150-155.

Cort, John E., (2002), 'Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition: Understanding Devotional Religion in South Asia', *History of Religion*, 42:1, . 59-86.

Datta, Sanjukta, (1991-2), 'An Epigraphic Evidence of a Vapi in Seventh Century Saurashtra', *Indian History Congress*, 52nd session, 104-107.

Drekmeir, Charles, (1962), *Kingship and Community in Early India*, Stanford University Press: California.

Dundas, Paul, (1997), 'The Laicization of the Bondless Doctrine: A New Study of the Development of Early Jainism', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 25, 495-516.

-(2001), 'Practice of Jainism in Common Society', *Encyclopedia of Jainism-18*, ed. Narendra Kumar Singh, Indo-European Jain Religion Foundation: Delhi and Anmol Publisher: New Delhi, 4927-4956.

-(2002) [(1992)], *The Jains*, Routledge: London.

-(2006), 'Ch. 15- A Non-Imperial Religion? : Jainism in Its "Dark Age" ', *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, ed. Patrick Olivelle, Oxford University Press, 383-414.

Erdosy, George, (1985), 'The Origin of Cities in the Ganga Valley', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 28: 1, 81-109.

Fick, Richard, (1920), *The Social Organization in North-East India in Buddha's Time*, University of Calcutta.

Fisher, Ivo, (2001), 'The Problem of the *Setṭhi* in Buddhist *Jātakas*', *Trade and Traders in Early India*, ed. Ranabir Chakravarti, Oxford University, Press, 166-198.

Gandhi, Raj S., (1977), 'The Rise of Jainism and its Adoption by the *Vaiśyas* of India: A Case Study in Sanskritization and Status Mobility', *Social Compass*, 24: 2-3, 247-260.

Gen'ichi, Yamazaki, (2005), *The Structure of Ancient Indian Society: Theory and Reality of the Varna System*, Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko.

Ghosh, A., (1973), *The City in Early Historic India*, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies: Shimla.

Gokhale, Balakrishna Govind, (1977), 'The Merchant in Ancient India', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 97: 2, 125-130.

Gokhale, Shobhana, (2008), 'Lake Inscription from Kanheri', *Studies in Indian Epigraphy- I*, (republished set of 33 volumes) The Epigraphical Society of India: Mysore and Laxton Publishers: Delhi, 21-25.

Granoff, Phyllis, (1994), 'Being in the Minority: Medieval Jain Reactions to Other Religious Groups', *Jainism and Prākṛit in Ancient and Medieval India: Essays for Prof. Jagdish Chandra Jain*, ed. N. N. Bhattacharyya, Manohar, 241-266.

Granoff, Phyllis, ed. (1993), *The Clever Adulteress and Other Stories: A Treasury of Jaina Literature*, Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi.

Heitzman, James, (1984), 'Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire', *Studies in the Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology of South Asia*, ed. K. A. R. Kennedy and G. L. Possehl, Oxford and IBH, 121-137.

-(1997), *Gift of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State*, Oxford University Press.

Herskovits, Melville J., (1961), 'Ch.4- Economic Change and Cultural Dynamics', *Tradition, Values and Socio-Economic Development*, ed. Ralph Braibanti and Joseph J. Spengler, Duke University Press, 114-138.

Hobsbawm, E. J., (1971), 'From Social History to the History of Society', *Daedalus*, 100: 1, 20-45.

Jain, J. C, (1992), *Studies in Early Jainism: Selected Research Papers*, Navrang: New Delhi.

-(2001), Prakrit Jain Narrative Literature: Its Origin and Growth, *Encyclopedia of Jainism-* 18, ed. Narendra Kumar Singh, Indo-European Jain Research Foundation: Delhi and Anmol Publishers: New Delhi, 4957-4960.

Jain, V. K., (1990), *Trade and Traders in Western India: AD 1000-1300*, Munshiram Manoharlal Pvt. Ltd.

Jaini, Padmanabh S., (1993), 'Ch.9- Jaina Purāṇas: A Purāṇic Counter Tradition', *Purāṇa Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in Hindu and Jaina Texts*, ed. Wendy Doniger, Sri Satguru Publications: Delhi, 207-249.

-(2000), *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies*, Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi.

-(2001), [(1979)], *The Jain Path of Purification*, Motilal Banarasiidass: Delhi.

Jaiswal, Suvira, (1979-80), 'Studies in Early Indian Social History: Trends and Perspectives', *The Indian Historical Review*, 6: 1/2, 1-63.

-(1981), *The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism: Vaiṣṇavism from 200 BC to AD 500*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.

-(1991), 'Semitising Hinduism: Changing Paradigms of Brahmaical Integration', *Social Scientist*, 19: 12, 20- 32.

Jamkhedkar, A. P., (1984) *Vasudevahimḍī: A Cultural Study*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi.

Jha, V. N., (1969) 'Varṇasamkara in the Dharma Sūtras: Theory and Practice', *Indian History Congress*, 31st session, 85-98.

Jones, Gareth Stedman, (1976), 'From Historical Sociology to Theoretical History', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 23: 3, 295-305.

Kane, Pandurang Vaman, (1974), *History of Dharmasāstra: Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law*, -II: II, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

Kosambi, D. D., (1959), 'Indian Feudal Charter', *Jornal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2: 3, 297-328.

-(2008) [(1956)], *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Popular Prakashan: Bombay.

Kumaran, R. N., Manoj Kumar Dwivedi and Vilas D. Jadhav, (2003-4), 'Iron Objects from Hathab' *Purātattva*, 3, 91-96.

Laidlaw, James, (1995), *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy and Society among the Jainas*, Clarendon Press: Oxford New York.

Lal, Makkhan, (1984), *Settlement History and Rise of Civilization in Ganga- Yamuna Doab: from 1500 BC to 300 AD*, B. R. Publishing Corporation: Delhi.

Levy, Robert I., (1997), 'The Power of Space in Traditional Hindu City', *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 1: 1, 55-71.

Liu, Xinru, (1988), *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchange AD 1-600*, Oxford University Press: Delhi.

-(2007) [(1996)], *Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600-1200*, Oxford University Press: New Delhi.

Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra, (1922) [(1918)], *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, Calcutta University Press.

Malekandathil, Pius, (2009), 'City in Space and Mataphor: A Study on the Port-City of Goa, 1510-1700', *Studies in History*, 25:1, 13-38.

Mayfield, David, and Susan Thorne, (1992), 'Social History and its discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of language', *Social History*, 17: 2, 165-188.

Mishra, R. N., (2004) [(1997)], 'Ch. 2- Village Life and Settlements in the Light of Vākāṭaka Inscriptions', *Land Sytem and Rural Society in Early India*, ed. Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, Manohar: Delhi, 74- 80.

Moore, Wilbert E., (1961), 'Ch. 2- The Social Framework of Economic Development', *Tradition, Values and Socio-Economic Development*, ed. Ralph Braibanti and Joseph J. Spengler, Duke University Press, 57-82.

Morrison, Kathleen D., (1995) 'Trade, Urbanism and Agricultural Expansion: Buddhist Monastic Institutions and the state in the Early Historic Western Deccan', *World Archaeology*, 27: 2, 203-221.

-(1997) 'Inscriptions as Artifacts: Pre-colonial South India and the Analysis of Texts', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 4: 3/ 4, 215-327.

Mudholkar, V., (2001) 'Kathā literature: Nature and Growth', *Encyclopedia of Jainism, Encyclopedia of Jainism- 18*, ed. Narendra Kumar Singh, Indo-European Jain Research Foundation: Delhi and Anmol Publishers: New Delhi, 3869-3888.

Mukherjee, R. K., (1912), *Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-born Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indian*, Longman Green and Co.: London.

Mumford, Lewis, (1961), *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations and Its Prospects*, Penguin Books.

Nandi, R. N., (1969), 'Land-Grant, Colonization and Food Production: c. AD 600- 1000', *Indian History Congress, 31st session, Varanasi*, 117-119.

Nairne, Rev. Alexander Kyd, (2001) [(1894,)], *History of Konkon*, Asian Education Services: New Delhi.

Nath, Vijay, (2001), ‘Brahmanism’ to ‘Hinduism’: Negotiating the Myth of the Great Tradition’, *Social Scientist*, 29: 3 /4, 19-50.

Prasad, Rohit, (2007) *State and Economy in Western India: Gujarat During the first to the mid-seventh century AD*, (Dissertation submitted to JNU, Supervisor: Prof. Ranabir Chakravarti).

Ramanujan, A. K., (1997) [(1991)], ‘Ch. Two, Three Hundred *Rāmāyaṇas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation’, *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, ed. Paula Richman, Oxford University Press: Delhi, 22-49.

-(1999), ‘Ch. Three, Towards an Anthology of City Images’, *The collected essays of A.K. Ramanuja*, ed. Vinay Dharwadker, Oxford University Press, 52-72

Ray, Himanshu Prabha, (1986), *Monastery and Guild: Commerce under the Satavahanas*, Oxford University Press: Delhi.

-(1989), ‘Early Historical Trade: An Overview’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 26: 4, 437-457.

-(2000) [(1994)], *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Links of Early South Asia*, Oxford University Press: New Delhi.

Ray, Himanshu Prabha, ed. (2010), *Archaeology and Text: The Temple in South Asia*, Oxford University Press: New Delhi.

Ray, Krishnendu, (2008), ‘Looking into the resource base of an early sixth century AD Western Indian Temple Complex: Through Epigraphic Lenses’, *Studies in Indian Epigraphy: Journal of the Epigraphical Society in India*, XXXIII, 34-43.

Ray, Niharranjan, B. D. Chattopadhyaya, V. R. Mani and Ranabir Chakravarti, ed. (2000), *A Sourcebook of Indian Civilization*, Orient Longman.

Roy, Kumkum, (1994), ‘Chapter Two: The Significance of Śraīṣṭhya’, *The Emergence of Monarchy in North India Eight-Fourth Centuries BC: As Reflected in the Brahmanical Traditions*, Oxford University Press: Delhi, 30-77.

Sahgal, Smita, (1994), ‘Spread of Jinism in North India between circa 200 BC and circa AD 300’, *Jainism and Prākṛit in Ancient and Medieval India: Essays for Prof. Jagdish Chandra Jain Essays for Prof. Jagdish Chandra Jain*, ed. N. N. Bhattacharyya, Manohar, 205-232.

Sahu, Bhairabi Prasad, (1985), 'The Brahmanical Model Viewed as an Instrument of Socio-Cultural Change- An Autopsy', *Indian History Congress*, 46 session, Amritsar, 180-189.

Sarao, K. T. S., (1990) *Urban Centers and Urbanization as reflected in the Pāli Vinayas and Sutta pitakas*, Vidyanidhi Oriental Publishers and Booksellers: Delhi.

Sarkar, Sumit, (2008) [(1997)], 'The Many Worlds of Indian History', *Writing Social History*, Oxford University Press: Delhi, 1-49.

'Satyarthi', Harishchandra, (1970), 'Some Aspects of the Social Position of the Brahmanas during Post-Maurya Period: (c. 185 B.C.- 319 A.D.)', *Indian History Congress*, Vol. I, 32nd session, Jabalpur, 93-101.

Schopen, Gregory, (1994 a), 'Doing Business for the Lord: Lending on interest and written loan contract in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 114: 4, 527-554.

-(1994 b), 'Ritual Rights and Bones of Contention: More on Monastic Funeral and Relics in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 22, 31-80.

-(1995), 'Monastic Law Meets the Real World: A Monk's continuing right to inherit family Property in classical India', *History of Religion*, 35: 2, 101-123.

-(1999), 'The Bones of a Buddha and the Business of a Monk: Conservative Monastic Values in an Early Mahāyāna Polemical Tract', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 27, 279-324.

-(2001), 'Dead Monks and Debts: Some Provisions of a Buddhist Monastic Inheritance Law', *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 44, 99-148.

-(2004), *Buddhist Monks and Business*, University of Hawaii Press.

Sharma, Anita, (1996) *Trading Communities, Social Mobility and Religious Patronage: Aspects of Early Medieval Western India from 8th to the 15th century*, M. phil Dissertation, JNU/Centre for Historical Studies, (Supervisor: B. D. Chattopadhyaya).

Sharma, R. S., (1974) 'Review Article: Iron and Urbanization in the Ganga-Basin' *The Indian Historical Review*, 1: 1, 98-103.

-(1980) [(1965)], *Indian Feudalism c. AD 300-1200*, Macmillan.

-(1987), *Urban Decay in India (c. 300- c. 1000)*, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd.

-(2000), 'The Feudal Mind', *The Feudal Order: State, Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India*, ed. D. N. Jha, Manohar, 455-68.

-(2007), [(2001)] 'Ch. 2- The Kali Age: A Period of Social Crisis', *Early Medieval Indian Society: A Study in Feudalisation*, Orient Longman: India, 45-76.

Sharma, R. S., and D. N. Jha, (1974) 'The Economic History of India up to AD 1200: Trends and Prospects', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 17: 1, 48-80.

Shrimali, Krishna Mohan, (1987), *Agrarian Structure in Central India and the Northern Deccan (c. AD 300-500): A Study of Vākāṅka Inscriptions*, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub. Pvt. Ltd: Delhi.

Singh, Ram Bhushan, (1970), 'Economic Aspects of the Jain Monasteries in Karnataka c. AD 500- AD 1000', *Indian History Congress- I: 32nd session*, Jabalpur, . . 174-77.

Singh, Sheo Bahadur, (1983), 'Sreṣṭhin in Epigraphy', *Journal of the Epigraphic Society of India- X*, 104-107.

Singh, Upinder, (2004), 'Cult and Shrines in Early historical Mathura (c. 200 BC- AD 200)', *World Archaeology*, 36: 3, 378-398.

Smith, Monica L., (2006), 'The Archaeology of South Asian Cities', *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 14: 97-142.

Spellman, John W., (1964), *Political Theory of Ancient India: A Study of Kingship from the Earliest Times to circa A.D. 300*, Clarendon Press: Oxford.

Spengler, Joseph J., (1961), 'Ch. 1- Theory, Ideology, Non-Economic Values and Political-Economic Development', *Tradition, Values and Socio-Economic Development* ed. Ralph Braibanti and Joseph J. Spengler, Duke University Press, 3-56.

Speyer, J. S., (1971), *The Jātakamālā: Garland of Birth-Stories of Āryaśūra*, Motilal Banarasidas: Delhi.

Sreedharan, E., (2004), *A Textbook of Historiography: 500 BC to AD 2000*, Orient Longman.

Sternbach, Ludwik, (1981), (Review article) 'The Vasudevahiṇḍi: An Authentic Jain Version of the Bṛhatkathā by Jagdishchandra Jain', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 101: 4, 485-486.

Thakur, Vijay Kumar (1983), 'Towns in Early Medieval India', *Śrīnidhih: Perspective in Indian Archaeology, Art and Culture*, ed. K. R. Srinivasan, New Era Publication, Madras, 389-397.

Thapar, Romila, (1984), *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-first Millennium BC, in the Ganga Valley*, Oxford University, Press.

- (1996) [1979] 'Social Mobility in Ancient India with Special Reference to Elite Groups', *Ancient Indian Social History Some Interpretations*, Orient Longman: India, 109-136.

-(2000), *Cultural Past: Essays in Early Indian History*, Oxford University Press.

-(2002), *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books.

Tyagi, Jaya, (2007), 'Organized Household Production and the Emergence of the Sangha', *Studies in History*, 23: 2, 271-287.

Zeldin, Theodore, (1976), 'Social History and Total History', *Journal of Social History*, 10: 2, 237-245.