

REVIEW OF EARLY ASCETICISM IN INDIA: ĀJĪVIKISM AND JAINISM

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Piotr Balcerowicz. Early Asceticism in India. Ājīvikism and Jainism. 362p., 20 figures, 1 Table. London: Routledge, 2015 and New York, 2016. Hardbound. £ 90; \$ 95.

Herewith the Warsaw Indologist has after many preliminary studies given us a proper successor to Arthur Basham's up to now standard work on the Ājīvikas which to a greater extent uses data from Buddhist than from Jinist sources. The disparity seems to have been dispelled with this new book in which the author (hereinafter: PB) wishes to re-examine the relation between Pāsa ([U]pāśva[sena]; "Pārśva"), Vardhamāna Mahāvīra and Gosāla Mankhaliputta, the older leaders known of the religious traditions in question. In the absence of Ājīvika scriptures we depend for their doctrines on Jain and Buddhist references. Gosāla's father may have been an itinerant bard who stayed for some time in a cow shed of the Brahman Gobahula where Gosāla is said to have been born.

In a table (p. 36) PB clearly pictures the complex relations between Gosāla and Mahāvīra, in which the former in the early Jain community was an important teacher, even considered a *tīrthaṅkara* by his followers. Originally a disciple of Pāsa and wearing cloths and using an alms bowl Mahāvīra after meeting Gosāla adopted nudity and eating from his cupped hands. Further, the Jains probably borrowed the idea of social classes (in the form of *leśyās*), and astrology and fortune telling from the Ājīvikas with whom in the beginning they may have shared a corpus of authoritative texts, the Puvvas, of which tradition the non-canonical *Isibhāsiyāiṃ* perhaps became an offshoot (p. 78). These Puvvas may have contained the *Mahānimittas* of the Ājīvikas and were therefore probably forgotten deliberately.

PB also discusses several other beliefs and practices such as *sallekhaṇā*, determinism, *syād-vāda* / *anekānta-vāda*, the tripartite pattern of *jīva*, *a-jīva* and *jivājīva*, and the art of the Ājīvikas with many of his own photographs, and is certainly right in his last sentence: "Jainism and its contributions to Indian religious, ascetic and philosophical traditions would look quite different, had there not been Gosāla Mankhaliputta and the Ājīvikas."

As treated in detail by Basham PB says that he is only briefly outlining Gosāla's last days and delirium (p. 96). As to this the reader would have liked to see a discussion of Joy Manné's extensive statement of a shaman's marks, c.q. Gosāla's death of indigestion, in her interesting book *Was the Buddha a Shaman?* (p. 35), all the more because this work was

published in Warsaw, whereas no German university library possesses the item so far (the author has now recommended its purchase in Heidelberg, Würzburg and Bamberg). PB apparently did not know it. Manné l.c. does not refer to Gosāla despite his shamanist marks.

The book stands out by precise analysis, is very readable despite its many learned excursions, and has an extensive bibliography and index. The latter, however, is not very practical for items occurring on many pages such as Bhagavatī-sūtra, Buddhism, Gosāla, Mahāvīra, etc. Here the user wants a breakdown. On p. 359 the lemmata Śataśāstra-Śvetāmbara belong to p. 360 after Sarvārtha-siddhi.

An early Indian edition is a must for Jains with real interest in the history and contents of their religion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manné, Joy. *Was the Buddha a Shaman? A Study of the Shamanic Faculties Attributed to the Buddha in the Pali Canon and their Implications for our Understanding of Consciousness.* Warsaw: CreateSpace, 2012, p. 35.