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ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN RELIGIONS AS REFLECTED BY NON-RELIGIOUS LITERATURE[1]

The form of the Aryan religion which we meet in the Rig-Veda differs greatly in many of its details from the common Indo-European religion, as far as this can be reconstructed on the basis of survivals in the religions of the various peoples of that family. Whether these non-Indo-European features are to be regarded as adoptions from the original pre-Aryan population of India or as developments of the Aryan heritage, seems still to be controversial. "Brahmanism" is often considered as descending directly from the Vedic religion and "Hinduism" again as a later form of Brahmanism. According to Monier-Williams, Brahmanism represents the "pantheistic" and Hinduism the "polytheistic aspect" of the Indian religion.

While the Indian religious and philosophical works provide vast quantities of information about all forms of the religion, this information is rather one-sided: in our terminology it would probably be defined as dogmatic-exegetic. The theologians and philosophers have tried to build up and expound systems. The historical point of view, viz., where and when the various dogmas have arisen and how they have then developed, is hardly ever taken into consideration. The chronology of the Indian religions has therefore been in general based on the chronological order of the literary sources presenting them, as far as this can be worked out.

Reformatory movements like Buddhism and Jainism can be dated with some certainty, but e.g. the disappearance of Buddhism from India is shrouded in mystery. Buddhism has been called "Indian Protestantism", but the Buddhist works seem to contain relatively little polemics against the then prevailing religion. On the other hand, it is rather unclear what was in fact the religion of the large masses of the population at any given moment of the historical development from the Vedic religion to Hinduism of today.

On the basis of the above considerations I have tried to look at these problems in the works which are not part of the traditional dogmatic-exegetic-apologetic literature. The "narrative" literature may to a relatively large extent reflect the everyday life and beliefs of the people among whom it was created. There are also, of course, commonplaces and literary reminiscences which cannot have the value of evidence.

The narrative elements play an important role even in the Buddhist canonical literature. It is interesting to see what picture they give of the popular religion as the setting of

[1] This paper was originally read at the Seminar on Aspects of Religion in South Asia, organized in May 1970 by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

the Buddha's teaching. Joseph Masson, in his study *La religion populaire dans le canon Bouddhique pali* (Bibliothèque du Muséon vol. 15, Louvain 1942), has described the contemporary Indian religion as reflected in the Hīnayāna canon. In Masson's opinion, among the gods of the *Kāmadhātu* the four *lokapālas* and the *tāvatiṁsa* gods were adopted from the "preceding" (I would say "surrounding") religion. The leader of the *tāvatiṁsa* is the old Aryan deity Indra-Śakra, in general called *Sakka*, while the leading god of the *Rūpadhātu* is Brahmā. On the other hand *Viṇhu* (Viṣṇu) and *Siva* (Śiva) seem not to be mentioned at all. In the Sanskrit Buddhist literature too, the leading gods are Śakra and Brahmā. While Brahmā Sahāpati is mentioned e.g. in the Mahāmāyūrī as being of equal status with the Buddhas, Viṣṇu and Śiva occur only as local tutelary deities, the former Dvārakāyām, the latter Śivapurādhāne.

Masson further points out that the gods of the *Arūpadhātu* as well as the division into three worlds seem to reflect a non-Buddhist tradition. As to Māra, Masson distinguishes a Brahmanical, a popular and a monastic Māra in the Buddhist tradition. It seems, however, that especially this chapter of Masson's work needs richer documentation from non-Buddhistic sources and a more detailed method of treatment.

Masson's studies have been supplemented by my pupil Mr. Harry Halén in an unpublished treatise on the pantheon of the Pāli Jātakas. The picture of the popular religion supplied by them is very similar to that of the canonical literature. Viṣṇu and Śiva are not mentioned at all. The theoretical supremacy of Brahmā over Śakra-Indra is well established, but Indra's heaven is much more important and popular than that of Brahmā or even the Nirvāṇa. Lesser Brahmaloka gods are mentioned only in the last, probably younger stories of the collection. The Gandharvas too occur only in the latter half of the corpus, the devaputras only in Nr. 297, and of the lokapālas only Vaiśravaṇa-Kuvera occurs more often in the Jātakas 1-545. Agni seems not to have been treated by Masson at all. He is referred to in the Jātakas 61, 144, 162, and 543, but in a very low position, to prove the uselessness of ritualism. Yama is described, in both the canon and in the Jātakas, as a background figure with few personal characteristics, although the description of the various hells has obviously very strongly inspired the authors. Even Māra is a colourless personality in the Jātakas, perhaps a theological rather than a popular figure. The most important and popular group of deities in the Jātakas as well are the tutelary spirits like yakṣas and nature spirits like the vṛkṣadevatās. In the latest Jātakas such gods as Varuṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Soma, Prajāpati, Sūrya, and Candra are also mentioned, Varuṇa even in speech of ordinary people.

The absence of Viṣṇu and Śiva from the divinities mentioned in the Buddhist literature seems to suggest that when Buddhism spread and Buddhist tradition — at first oral, then literary — was born, they were not popular in those parts of (Northern) India.

The pilgrims' tales form a very important group among the Buddhist sources, since they are clearly connected with a definite geographical and temporal background. Hsüan-tsang, who visited India about 630 A.D., was captured by robbers on the Ganges: "As the robbers were worshippers of Durgā, their practice was to find a good-looking man in autumn every year to be slaughtered as a sacrifice to the goddess so as to obtain her blessings" (*The Life of Hsuan-tsang*, compiled by Monk Hui-li, transl. by Li Yung-hsi,

Peking 1959, p. 85). The robbers planned to slaughter the Master, but naturally through his holiness he subdued and converted them. We thus have here dated evidence for the human sacrifices of the Kālī-worshippers.

The Buddhist literature is, of course, only relatively non-religious from the Hinduistic point of view. Information concerning the religion is, however, to be found even in Indian scientific literature.

The grammar of Pāṇini is no doubt the most important of all Indian scholarly works. Its exact date is not known, but the *consensus eruditorum* seems inclined to attribute it to the fourth century B.C. As shown by V. S. Agrawala (*India as Known to Pāṇini*, Varanasi 1963, p. 358ff.), Pāṇini's work reflects mainly the worship of Vedic deities with sacrifice and other rituals performed by various classes of priests. Among the post-Vedic deities mentioned by Pāṇini, Agrawala regards as most important the goddess Pārvatī, who is mentioned under four names, perhaps originating in various localities. Āditya, the Sun, as well as stars and certain words denoting time seem to have been raised to the status of deities. The Mahārāja is also mentioned as a devatā, and Agrawala connects this name with Vaiśravaṇa-Kuvera as the head of the four lokapālas. It might, however, be more probable that these details reflect old, i.e. pre-Aryan, popular beliefs adopted by the Aryans, and are not evidence of any totally new developments in the Aryan religion. Names like Viṣṇu, Śiva and Skanda seem not to be explicitly mentioned by Pāṇini but only by his commentators to illuminate certain sūtras (e.g. 5,3,99 and 6,3,26). How far any conclusions can be drawn *ex reticentia* in these cases is problematic. As pointed out by Agrawala and Ghurye (*Gods and Men*, Bombay 1962, p. 19), Pāṇini and Patañjali clearly show the worship of images. Names of several demons and yakṣas are also mentioned. Pāṇini also knows several types of ascetics and religious mendicants. These might even include heretics (e.g. the Ayaḥśūlikas and Maskarinparivrājakas) besides orthodox Brahmanical ascetics; *cīvara* (3,1,20) as a name of a monk's garment might refer to Buddhists; on the other hand the epithet *arhat* (3,2,133) seems not to have any clearly Buddhist meaning.

As to the mathematical literature, the works published and translated by Colebrooke (*Algebra with Arithmetic and Mensuration from the Sanscrit of Brahmagupta and Bhāscara*, transl. by Henry Thomas Colebrooke, London 1817) include a couple of examples illustrating the religious life. In Bhāskara's (born acc. to Renou in 1114 A.D.) *Līlāvatī* problem 52 is as follows: "Out of a heap of pure lotus flowers, a third part, a fifth and a sixth were offered to the gods Śiva, Viṣṇu and the Sun respectively; and a quarter was presented to Bhavānī. The remaining six lotuses were given to the venerable preceptor. Give the whole number of the flowers quickly." Problem 53 is also interesting: "A traveller on a pilgrimage gave half his money at Prayāga, two ninths of the remainder at Kāśī, a quarter of the residue in payment of taxes on the road; six tenths of what was left at Gayā; there remained sixty-three *niṣkas* with which he returned home. Tell me the amount of his original stock of money." We may deduce that above gods were the most popular and the route of the pilgrimage a favoured one at the time of Bhāskara.

Problem 120: "A person, having given four *drammas* to priests on the first day,

proceeded to distribute daily alms at a rate increasing by five a day. Say quickly how many were given by him in half a month." Problem 245 ends with the statement *trairāśikenaiva yad etad uktaṁ vyāptaṁ svabedhair hariṇeva viśvam*: "In like manner is all this, which has been before declared, pervaded by the rule of three with its variations, as the universe is by Hari"; the name of the deity might prove that the author was a Viṣṇuite. In problem 269 the number of the permutations of Śiva's 10 and Viṣṇu's 4 attributes is to be counted:

pāśāṅkuśahiḍamarūkakapālaśūlaiḥ
khatvāṅgaśaktiśaracāpayutair bhavanti
anyonyahastakalitaiḥ kati mūrttibhedāḥ
śambhohareriva gadārisarojaśaṅkhaiḥ.

"How many are the variations of form of the god Śambhu
by the exchange of his ten attributes held reciprocally in his several hands:
namely the rope, the elephant's hook, the serpent, the tabor, the skull, the trident,
the bedstead, the dagger, the arrow, and the bow;
as those of Hari by the exchange of the mace, the discus, the lotus, and the conch."

When discussing the mathematical qualities of zero in *Bījagaṇita* § 16 Bhāskara states: "In this quantity consisting of that which has cipher for its divisor, there is no alteration, though many be inserted or extracted; as no change takes place in the infinite and immutable God, at the period of the destruction or creation of worlds, though numerous orders of beings are absorbed or put forth." Bhāskara's invocation at the beginning of the *Bījagaṇita* is also worth study (Colebrooke p. 129f.):

> "I revere the unapparent primary matter, which the Sāṅkhyas declare to be productive of the intelligent principle, being directed to that production by the sentient being: for it is the sole element of all which is apparent. I adore the ruling power, which sages conversant with the nature of soul pronounce to be the cause of knowledge; being so explained by a holy person: for it is the one element of all which is apparent. I venerate the unapparent computation, which calculators affirm to be the means of comprehension, being expounded by a fit person: for it is the single element of all which is apparent."

The literary works which to our taste describe everyday life most closely are dramas and novels. In Indian dramatic literature, however, there are few plays which can be considered as directly reflecting the life of the middle and lower castes. Scholars like Lévi and Konow connect the birth of Indian drama with religious festivals, especially with those in honour of Indra (*dhvajamaha*). The banner of Indra (*jarjaram*) is compared with the maypole by Haraprasad Śastri, and it was also raised during dramatic performances.

In his *Nāṭyaśāstra* Bhārata connects the drama with Śiva. In the third chapter he describes the offerings to be made as well as the mantras to be uttered (73-74): "Having worshipped all gods in due order and offered *pūjā* to the *jarjaram* one should have the obstacles removed." The "due order" described in the verses 46-70 looks, however, strange, and it is probably a result of a mixture of several different traditions. The list of the deities begins with the triad Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu, then follow Indra, Skanda, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Siddhi, Medhā, Māruta, the Rākṣasas, Agni, Candra (Soma), Sūrya, the Lords of the Gaṇas — especially Nandīśvara (= Śiva) —, the Pitṛs and Bhūtas, Kāmapāla, the Gandharvas, Yama and Mitra, the Nāgas, Varuṇa, Garuḍa, Kuvera, the

mothers of the Nāṭya, the weapons of Rudra and Viṣṇu, Yama, the other gods. The Vedic gods are thus mixed very oddly with non-Vedic and minor deities. Many of the formulas of address seem to be of interest, as are also the offerings and mantras (75-87) addressed to the *jarjaram*. The latter is allegedly the banner of Indra, but its five joints are dedicated to Brahmā, Rudra-Śiva, Viṣṇu, Skanda, and the *pannagas*. The *jarjaram* itself is addressed as "the killer of foes" and as "born under Abhijit, the best of Asterisms".

As to the invocations or the auspicious beginnings of the dramas, Ghurye (p. 32) points out that an invocation is addressed to the author's patron deity or *iṣṭadevatā*, the deity of one's choice, as opposed to family deity or village and place deity. "Further it is to be addressed to the audience. The images of deities that these invocations convey are likely to evoke emotional responses from the elite and intermediate culture levels of the society, these being the main audience for the performances." Ghurye then presents an analysis of the invocations of several dramas and authors from this point of view.

In the sixth chapter of his dissertation *La Société dans le drama sanskrit* (Paris 1939) Akhtar Husain deals with the religion and beliefs reflected in the dramas. He, too, pays attention to the personal religious views of the authors themselves as far as they may be deduced from the invocations or from other available information.

In the works of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa the most generally worshipped gods are Viṣṇu, Śiva, Skanda and Durgā. Bhavabhūti was, according to Husain, a follower of the Taittirīya school of the Yajur-Veda, and supplies interesting information about the Kāpālikas. For example, his heroine Mālatī was kidnapped by the members of this sect and taken to a sanctuary of Kālī (Cāmuṇḍā) to be sacrificed like Hsüan-tsang (Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava* is referred to by Gonda in *Die Religionen Indiens* II 218 when treating the Kāpālikas).

Husain points out (p. 108) that Kālidāsa's dramas are characterized by belief in the omnipotence of fate. The misfortunes of all Kālidāsa's heroines are due to a curse. It might be said that the life of man was in Rig-Vedic times regarded as being governed by gods. Man was, however, able to influence the gods through the rituals. In later thought it was the man himself who governed his own life through his *karma*, or his deeds in previous reincarnations, and in the present he again prepared his future lives. Starting with the great epics, astrology appears as an essential part of the Indian religion, and at the same time we meet a belief in an almighty destiny. In the novels and dramas we see the life of man as depending on an impersonal fate, Daivam. *Māsa* 'month' and *Saṁvatsara* 'year' are referred to in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* as objects of divine worship. Later the highest god of the destiny divinities is *Kāla* 'time'.[2]

Husain's observation (p. 113) that the tolerance shown in many plays to the Buddhists directly reflects the adaptation of Buddhism to Hinduism seems to be of great importance. According to Husain situations like that described in the Mālatīmādhava where a former fellow-student of the minister Devarata is appointed by the king to arrange the marriage of his son, or the similar scenes in the plays of Harṣa, were possible only at a time when the differences between these beliefs were fading out and the Master himself

[2] See J. Scheftelowitz, Die Zeit als Schicksalsgottheit der indischen und iranischen Religion. (*Beiträge zur indischen Sprachwissenschaft und Religionsgeschichte* 4, Stuttgart 1929, p. 55).

was about to enter the Hinduistic pantheon.

Husain's opinion might, however, be based on an oversimplification of the problem. There seems to be evidence enough to show that the development of the relation of Buddhism and Hinduism has not proceeded directly from conflict to identity. R. W. Frazer (Hasting's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* 5 p. 23) states that "There is further internal evidence in the great classical Tamil romances — the *Manimekhalai* and *Śilappādikāram* — of the 2nd century that at that period Buddhists, Jainas and Śaivas lived in harmony, whereas the third great Tamil classic — the *Jīvaga Cintāmaṇi* of the 10th century —, gives evidence of the hostility of both Jainas and Śaivas to the Buddhist faith."

In the local and temporal setting of Bhāsa the Brahmans were according to Husain strongly anti-Buddhistic and anti-Jaina, whereas Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti reveal the greater tolerance of their time. Only Harṣa has been obviously inspired by Buddhist thinking, and he is even said to have been converted to Buddhism. But although in *Nāgānanda* he invokes the Buddha, it is in fact Gaurī who as a *dea ex machina* saves the hero. In Husain's opinion only the Buddhists presented by Harṣa in that play follow the high moral values taught by their Master. In most plays the Buddhists appear in a less favourable light.

Since Husain's study has by no means exhausted the rich material available, I present the actual situation in three plays of different types.

The most "dramatic" of the Indian plays, in the occidental sense of the word, is admittedly Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika*, dated between 4th and 7th centuries A.D. It is built on a sketch *Daridracārudatta* attributed to Bhāsa and dated by Konow in the second century A.D. While Śūdraka has expanded the sketch in many respects, there seems to be no essential change in the religious views referred to. *Mṛcchakaṭika* begins with a benediction upon the audience, in which Śiva is invoked. In the text itself, however, only the rogue of the play, Saṁsthānaka, invokes Śiva (I 41) in a parodized verse. The Brahman Śarvilaka mentions (IV 23) Śiva's head as the seat of the Moon, and voices off stage praise Śiva (X 45). Gaurī-Pārvatī is mentioned thrice: in the Prologue and then towards the end of the play in the speeches of the police officer Candanaka and of the headsman Goha, while the Brahman thief Śarvilaka invokes Skanda, the tutelary god of thieves. Skanda is mentioned as Kārttikeya in the victory hymn of the choir at the end of the play. The policeman also invokes the triad Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā together with the Moon and the Sun. Since so many of the male characters are Brahmans, Indra is mentioned about 10 times, though the occurrences might also be regarded as literary reminiscences, the rather conventional lines of the gambler (II 3) included. Of the same type is the occurrence of the Love God (IV 4), but a shrine of Kāma is also mentioned.

The most important religious ritual referred to in the play (already in Bhāsa's *Cārudatta*) is the *bali* sacrifice to the Mothers at a place where four roads meet (*catuṣpathe*, I 15-16), stated to be the constant duty of a householder. In a special study of this ritual (*JRAS* 1960, p. 17ff. and 135ff.), D. D. Kosambi shows the extraordinary importance of this detail in the plays of Bhāsa and Śūdraka. The ritual in question seems to have been

generally known, since none of the commentators has explained it. Kosambi further points out that "this particular ritual occurs nowhere in the brahmin scriptures otherwise so meticulous over every detail of any house-hold cult". The evidence he is able to quote is drawn from Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* and from the *Rājataraṅginī* etc. Kosambi thus shows impicitly the importance of the "worldly" sources for the study of Indian religion. The domestic offerings to the *gṛhadevatās* are eaten up by birds (IV); Brahmans occur officiating at sacrifices to the gods and the Manes (X 18). The prologue mentions King Śūdraka's *aśvamedha* which may be a really historical event.

The hero of the play, Cārudatta, is a paragon of the Brahmanic virtues (I 16). In conformity with traditional piety he says:

tapasā manasā vāgbhiḥ pūjitā balikarmabhiḥ
tuṣyanti śamināṁ nityaṁ devatāḥ kiṁ vicāritaiḥ.
"The gods feel ever glad content in the gifts, and the chastisement,
the meditations, and the prayers of those who banish worldly cares" (tr. Ryder).

In Bhāsa's text we find, corresponding to these verses:

bhaktyā tuṣyanti daivatāni
"the deities (≈ idols?) feel content in devotion (≈ worship?)

Even the Brahman thief says that one must not disregard the sacred wish of a cow and of a Brahman. A Brahman who has sinned shall be exiled but is permitted to take his property with him. The murder (VIII 23-25) is referred to as a sin, while a thief is only exercising his profession.

The reward of virtues as well as the punishment of sins is to be expected in the Other World. The wealthy house of Vasantasenā is compared by Maitreya to Indra's heaven and to the triple heaven and to Kuvera's palace. Even the headsman Goha's father had gone to heaven (X 33-34), where Goha also promises to send Cārudatta. More surprising still is that the Shampooer, after his conversion to Buddhism, is striving for heaven (VIII 1-3 and 45-46). In many of his speeches he propounds Buddhism, and at the end of the play he is appointed spiritual leader of the Buddhist monasteries of the country.

The Other World also implies reincarnation, the common dogma of Indian religions. In the play it is referred to in very vague terms. In the Prologue the stage director's wife says she is observing a fast for a handsome husband in her next incarnation. A Brahman "of our own sort" was according to her needed to officiate at the fast. The whole scene looks very much like a parody. The same feeling is present when the Vidūṣaka asks (IV 29) what penance is required of one who wants to be reborn as Vasantasenā's brother. The slave Sthāvaraka again abhors a sin in order not to buy further woe in his next incarnation (VIII 25), and the Courtier wishes that Vasantasenā be reborn in a house adorned by virtuous men. One gets the impression that in the opinion of the author it is virtuous life and not asceticism that guarantees a truly prosperous rebirth. This seems on the other hand to fit in very well with his open sympathy for Buddhism.

Somewhat surprising is Cārudatta's statement (VII 9-):

katham abhimukhamanābhyudayikaṁ śramaṇakadarśanam
"See! A Buddhist monk approaches, and the sight bodes ill."

There were other warning omens too: the twitching of a woman's right eye (VI) and a man's left eye (IX 10) was frightening, likewise the slip of a foot; the throbbing of the left arm, a raven screaming over one's head, a snake crossing one's path (IX 12-15) are all very bad omens.

The life of man is governed by destiny. It seems that references to destiny are more common in *Mṛcchakaṭika* than in *Cārudatta*, but that might be a mere accident. 'Fate' is designed by the words *kṛtānta*, *bhāgya* (Pl.), *vidhi*, while *vipatti* is expressly 'stern fate': it seems probable the other words also render various nuances of the concept. Typical expressions are e.g. Vasantasenā's words (VI) "Ah mighty Fate! (*bhagavankṛtānta*). The destinies of men, uncertain as the water-drops which fall upon a lotus-leaf, seem to thee but playthings" (tr. Ryder), and Cārudatta's (X 4-) *puruṣabhāgyānāmacintyāḥ khalu vyāpārāḥ* "incalculable are the ways of human destiny". The rogue of the play once uses the expression *daivayogena paśyāmi* 'fate decreed that I saw'.

The coming destinies of a man can be foretold by soothsayers and astrologers. A soothsayer having declared that the young herdsman Āryaka was to become king, king Pālaka arrested him (IV 24-25) but was of course not able to defy fate. When Āryaka succeeded in escaping, any citizen helping him was threatened by the police officer Candanaka in astrological terms (VI 9-10), which according to the commentators imply various kinds of distress: can we take it for granted that the spectators of the play were sufficiently well aware of the meaning of these expressions? On the other hand, the belief in demons plays hardly any role: Maitreya's reference to Rāvaṇa, the king of the *rākṣasas*, is chiefly a literary reminiscence, and so are the *apsarases* and *gandharvas* mentioned by Maitreya when visiting the house of Vasantasenā (IV). The stupid rogue is further the only one who believes in witches. The benevolent spirits *vanadevatās* are mentioned as eye-witnesses of the crime planned by the rogue Saṁsthānaka (VIII 24).

The *Mṛcchakaṭika* seems to reflect the religious situation and practices of a highly civilized urban population which respects traditional rituals and morality.

Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa* is a drama with a totally political plot, and is in many respects *sui generis* among the dramatic literature of India. Its author is regarded by Konow as a younger contemporary of Kālidāsa (5th c. A.D.). The play begins with an invocation to Śiva and ends with one to Viṣṇu. The verses recited by bards (III 20-21f.) also refer to Śiva and Viṣṇu in equal terms. The King mentions Śiva and Rudra (III 29) while Cāṇakya's agent Siddhārthaka praises Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa (VI 1). To compare a prince to Indra seems to be a literary commonplace. Gaurī is mentioned only in the initial benediction, Śrī-Lakṣmī as the goddess of sovereignty a couple of times (II 4. 13). Yama is mentioned as the mightiest among the gods (I 16-17) by a spy preaching Yama as a cover for his secret activities: *praṇamata Yamasya caraṇau kiṁ kāryaṁ devakair anyaiḥ*, and by the wife of the pearl-merchant Candanadāsa when her husband is going to be executed, as well as by Minister Rākṣasa on the same occasion (VII 5). The Moon, Rāhu and Ketu are referred to in the prologue, while the *rākṣasas* — as a play on the name of Minister Rākṣasa — and *piśācas* are mentioned only proverbially.

Astrologers are several times referred to as normal acquaintances of anyone. Cāṇakya's agent Jīvasiddhi or Induśarman, disguised as a *kṣapaṇaka* of "irrepulsive ap-

pearance" (*abībbhatsadarśana* IV 20) explains the heavenly presages to Rākṣasa who himself seems to know astrology. Brahmans and Vedic scholars are mentioned, but the Brahman Induśarman and other secret agents use the guise of a mendicant monk when entering the enemy headquarters. They utter holy verses (V 2):

arhataḥ praṇamāmo ye gambhīratayā buddheḥ |
lokottarair loke siddhaṁ mārgair gacchanti
"we bow to arhats who, with profound wisdom,
attain salvation in this world by paths of superlative excellence".

Rākṣasa praises (VII 6) his friend Candanadāsa for having eclipsed the achievements of the Buddhas by his deeds: *buddhānāmapi ceṣṭitaṁ sucaritaiḥ kliṣṭaṁ viśuddhāmanā*. The *trayaḥ śrāvakāḥ* mentioned by Candanadāsa (I 20,3) are by Dhruva rendered as "the three Bauddha laymen".

Rākṣasa, obviously a Brahman by caste, believes himself defiled by the touch of *chandālas* and warns his enemy Cāṇakya not to touch him (VII 9,3). Sacrificial implements are mentioned in Cāṇakya's house (III 15), while the fallen king Nanda is accused of bloody sacrifices (III 27). As to moral and virtues, in fact only the mythical example of Śibi is referred to (VI 18); sins seem not to be mentioned at all.

The hero of the play, Cāṇakya, attains his aims by the power of his superior intellect. His opponent Rākṣasa sees all his friends conquered and his plans turning against him, but explains all this as caused by cruel fate (*niyati, vidhi, daiva*) (II 5. 16,1. 16,49. 16,55. V 21. 23,4-5. VI 6-. 17), and his belief in this malevolent fate is cunningly strengthened by Jīrṇaviṣa-Virādhagupta, one of the secret agents of Cāṇakya, who II 21,19 also says "there is a Fate that safeguards one" (*rakṣati bhavitavyatā*). The king who by the support of Cāṇakya has won the realm also believes in fate (*daivam*), but Cāṇakya himself states (III 28) "Only the unknowing believe in Fate" (*daivam avidvāṁsaḥ pramāṇayanti*). His agent Bhāgurāyaṇa compares Cāṇakya's cunning methods to the myriad shaped ways of Fate (V 3): *citrākārā niyatiriva nītinayavidaḥ*. A person hit by averse destiny retires to the penance forest (II 15,2. IV 10,30-32) or commits suicide (VI 16-).

As to the life after death, Rākṣasa prays (II 6) that his lord king Nanda may in heaven see his enemies conquered: *devaḥ svargato'pi śatravavadhena ārādhitaḥ syād*. In II 20 the above *svargata* is repeated through *paralokagata*. In the *Mṛcchak.* X 29- Saṁsthānaka says "I have heard that a man who sees his enemy being killed is sure not to have sore eyes in his next birth". In the *Mudrārākṣasa* the dogma of rebirth seems to be referred to only in a cynical connection when describing a politician's change of side. This is said to cause the previous friends to be classed as enemies and the enemies as friends, and to wipe out the memory of relationships like those of a previous birth: *nītir nayati-asmṛta-pūrvavṛttaṁ janmāntaraṁ jīvita eva puṁsaḥ* (V 8).

It seems that in the *Mudrārākṣasa* the main persons are described as quite irreligious, following purely Machiavellian politics without any moral scruples. The appearance of a mendicant ascetic, *kṣapaṇaka liṅgadhārī*, was obviously generally esteemed, since it could be used as an effective disguise for a secret agent (I 14,19). The few references to religious concepts in the play seem to be mere conventional sayings — even

those used by the secret agents to show their creed (e.g. V 2 *arhataḥ praṇamāmaḥ*). This irreligiosity is obviously meant to reflect one side of the spirit taught by the *Arthaśāstra*. How far it might represent any reality in any Indian society?

In the *Kathāsaritsāgara* XX 134ff. it is told that in the Devadāru forest Śiva himself had assumed the appearance of a mendicant, with the intention of showing Umā that even ṛṣis do not possess self-restraint, being afraid that their wives would go astray. After the ṛṣis had cursed him, they discovered that "he was the ruling god that shakes the three worlds, and they fled to him for protection".

Rājaśekhara's *Karpūramañjarī* is one of the two known Indian plays written wholly in Prakrit (the other is Rudradāsa's *Candralekhā*, ed. by Upadhye, Bombay 1945). Rājaśekhara is thought to have flourished about 900 A.D. His play is praised by Winternitz (III 1 p. 268) as one of the very best comedies of Indian literature. A further special feature in it is that the religion described is Hinduistic Tantrism. Winternitz considers that the description of the Kaula sect is meant as a caricature, but this can hardly be true.

In my opinion there might be a connection between the religious views expressed in the play and its "vulgar" language. We can further see that e.g. Brahmans are mentioned only once (III 9) and in a rather disparaging connection. Indra is never referred to, and no more are the "Other World", Heaven, Hell or Rebirth; not even destiny seems to be mentioned. The goddesses Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī occur only in literary commonplaces. Viṣṇu and Brahmā are told to proclaim salvation through meditation, Vedic recitations and sacrificial performances, while the Kaulas attain salvation through eating flesh, drinking wine and enjoying women (I 22-24). The favoured deities are consequently Śiva and his consort as well as Kāma and Rati. The last named are closely connected with the plot of the play, viz. the love story of King Candapāla (the name suggests that he is a Śaiva) and of Princess Karpūramañjarī. This love affair ends in a wedding ceremony in a more or less improvised shrine of Cāmuṇḍā. Cāmuṇḍā represents the "terrible form" of Pārvatī. Two other feasts are described in the play: the swinging in front of the goddess Pārvatī (II 30) and the great Vaṭa-Sāvitrī festival (IV 10). Among the dancing performances of this festival the sixth item is the *śmaśānamiśācarīnṛtya*: "a group-dance in which the girls wear goblin-masks, hold offerings of human flesh in their hands and enact the weird cemetery scene, shouting frightful groans and shrieks" (Suru's Commentary p. 174). The demons themselves are, however, mentioned only in passing when Bhairavānanda, the *porte parole* of the Kaulas, boasts of his supernatural powers (I 25). His magical faculties are the backbone of the plot. There seems to be no real reference to astrological beliefs, e.g. the passages where the Moon is mentioned look rather like literary commonplaces.

The most interesting detail referring to the Śiva and Kālī mythology is told by Bhairavānanda (IV 19): "Victorious is Kālī, who in her House of Pleasure at the time of the universal destruction drinks the Demons' blood in the presence of Kāla in the cup of Brahmā's skull" (transl. by Suru p. 121). This obviously alludes to the myth told in the Kathāsaritsāgara II 13ff. (Tawney-Penzer I p. 9f.):

> "The adorable God was asked by Durgā: 'Whence, my lord, comes thy delight in skulls and burning places?'. He thereupon gave this answer: 'Long ago, when all things had been

> destroyed at the end of a kalpa, the Universe became water. I then cleft my thigh and let fall a drop of blood, that drop falling into the water turned into an egg, from that sprang the Supreme Soul (Pumān), the Disposer, from him proceeded Nature (Prakṛti), created by me for the purpose of further creation, and they created the other lords of created beings (Prajāpatis), and those in turn, the created beings, for which reason, my beloved, the Supreme Soul is called in the world the grand father. Having thus created the world, animate and inanimate, that spirit (= Brahmā) became arrogant: thereupon I cut off his head; then, through regret for what I had done, I undertook a difficult vow. So thus it comes to pass that I carry skulls in my hand, and love the places where corpses are burned. Moreover, this world, resembling a skull, rests in my hand; for the two skull-shaped halves of the egg before mentioned are called heaven and earth.' "

The creation story of the epics and purāṇas quoted by Jacobi (Hastings IV 158) is reminiscent upto a point of that above. The Veda says that Indra had killed a Brāhmaṇa and was bearing "the murder" in hand (Gonda I p. 39, II p. 59 Fn. 43, and 218 Fn. 18; seems not to mention the *Karpūramañjarī*). The Kathāsaritsāgara is about one century younger than the *Karpūramañjarī*. The complete background of the two versions would be extremely interesting to study, but it would obviously involve extensive knowledge of Kaula sources.

Like the drama, the narrative literature may be regarded as reflecting the reality surrounding its authors. I have analyzed the references to religious matters in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita*, dated towards the end of the seventh century A.D., as well as in the *Śukasaptati*, attributed in general to the eleventh century. The whole situation reflected in these works cannot be presented here but I may relate some interesting points. The *Daśakumāracarita* tells of the adventures of members of the top castes but the deity mentioned by far most often is Śiva, while e.g. Indra and other main Hinduistic gods occur in literary quotations and reminiscences. Both works discuss the rather immoral amorous escapades of the main gods.

The women described in both works worship Durgā under her various names. Because most of the characters in the *Śukasaptati* are women, Durgā-Kālī is practically the only deity really worshipped in it. An interesting story in *Daśakumāracarita* (I 57) is about the robbers (Kirātas) who plan to sacrifice a boy to Caṇḍikā: we have here the same ritual as was presented by Bhāsa in his Mālatīmādhava, and by Hsüan-tsang. We thus gain fixed points for the history of Kālī-worship, which according to newspaper accounts demands human offerings even today.

Another interesting point is the name Māra used of the Love God several times in the *pūrvapīṭhikā* (*Daśak.*), generally considered spurious. This seems to be a Buddhist expression. Masson points out (p. 110 of his above work) that in the Pāli sources (e.g. *SN* IV 91-93) "Māra est bien près de s'appeler Kāma". De la Vallée Poussin (Hastings VIII p. 406f.) explains how Māra assumed the rôle of the ruler of the world, since as god of death he is the god of rebirth: "Māra is Kāma, 'Desire', since desire is the raison d'être of birth and death... He embodies desire, the universal fetterer, the sensual life both here and in the other world." According to the *Daśarūpa* 2, 46 female ascetics (*liṅginī*) were in plays employed as messengers and may even speak Sanskrit (2, 97): they were thus not Buddhists. In *Daśakumāracarita* I 7,6 *bhikṣukī* is glossed *parivrājikā* (cf. Kauṭilya I 12,4 *parivrājikā...brāhmaṇī*: Kangle "apparently women of *Brāhmaṇa varṇa* alone could

become *parivrājikās.*" The commentaries *Cb* and *Cs* explain ibid. 5 *muṇḍā vṛṣalyaḥ* 'Buddhist nuns and Śūdra females', while Kangle translates, in my opinion more correctly, 'shaven nuns of heretical sects'). In *Śukas.* and *Daśak.* Digambara Jainas are described in a rather repulsive light: the commentators have also explained the *kṣapaṇakas* in question as being Buddhists, but I cannot agree with this, since they are expressly described as being naked.

Both works mention a lot of rituals, the details of which may at least in certain cases be of interest. In the *Daśakumāracarita* pilgrimages and bathing play an important rôle. Astrologers and other kinds of soothsayers are used to study the fate of men. Fate is the most important factor in life (*Śukas.* VI): *daivam eva hi nṛṇāṁ vṛddhau kṣaye kāraṇam.* Fate governs life in the other world as well. This may be either a rebirth or heaven or hell. The ascetic Marīci (*D.* VIII) explains that life in the forest is difficult, but its fruit is either final salvation (*apavarga*) or heaven (*svarga*). Anyone who fulfils the duties of his caste can easily attain heaven, while salvation is attainable through profound insight only.

The moral reflected in both works seems in general to be independent of any religious or philosophical authority. It represents a popular common sense: a benefit must be repaid with a benefit, an offence with an offence (see *Ś* XXIII). In *Daśakumāracarita* (XIII 13) the moral principle implying the conquest of the six enemies (*ariṣaḍvarga*) is mentioned but refuted by a Machiavellian rationalist. According to the dictionaries even this concept seems to be mentioned only in non-religious works — except perhaps the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.*

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The general impression created by the above works, which reflect different ages and different surroundings, seems to be that the "common people" in India have been little interested in striving for final emancipation. People that cared about the other world wanted nothing more than to make sure of a decent rebirth.

It goes without saying that we cannot expect any exhaustive description of the religious life in the milieu in question in any single work. Several incomplete accounts might however, when put together, be of considerable interest.