

## Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa and his Rājavārttika: An Example of Textual Transmission in the Digambara Philosophical Commentary Tradition

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It is a truth universally acknowledged that the trajectory of the formation and development of philosophical thought in the territory of the Indian subcontinent had quite a particular vector. Classical Indian philosophy (both orthodox, i.e. Brahmanical, and non-orthodox, i.e. Śramaṇical),<sup>1</sup> in its evolution has followed the same paradigm. Initially the texts of basic *sūtras* (or *kārikās*) were compiled with the title of the schools – *Mīmāṃsā-sūtras*, *Vedānta-sūtras*, *Vaiśeṣika-sūtras*, *Nyāya-sūtras* and so on.<sup>2</sup> *Sūtras* have formulated the basic statements of the school in a very laconic, lapidary form, containing for the most part the nominative constructions, which facilitate the memorization of the text. These texts played the role of the Credo for Christianity, which included a compressed form of the doctrine of the tradition, or in modern terms - is a kind of ‘cheat sheets’. Only if he was educated in this particular school student, an adept was able to understand correctly and extract the meaning laid down in the *sūtras* and only under the guidance of knowledgeable teachers and mentors. Then the next step was the commentary on the *sūtras* called *bhāṣya* or *vṛtti*. These texts interpreted certain concepts and ideas selected by the commentators. Further, sub-commentaries (commentaries on commentary) usually called *vārttikas* were written. They involved a much more extensive material for interpretation, often containing the explanation of very delicate and controversial issues which were not reflected in the *sūtras*, and which were slightly touched in the first basic commentary. In this particular genre of subcommentary, we can see quite clearly “dialogical” character of the Indian philosophical culture,<sup>3</sup> because subcommentaries included large polemical passages, demonstrating erudition of their authors concerning other schools and in-

<sup>1</sup> Under these already well-established terms in the field of Indology are referred on one hand the schools which accept the Vedas as an instrument of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vedānta*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Nyāya* and *Yoga*, and on the other hand the school wherein the divine authority of this corpus of texts is not recognized – *Buddhism*, *Jainism*, *Ājīvika*, *Cārvāka*.

<sup>2</sup> There is one exception in the case of *Sāṅkhya*, the role of the basic text having been played by *Īśvarakṛṣṇa*'s *Sāṅkhyakārikā* (5<sup>th</sup> century CE).

<sup>3</sup> More details see in Shokhin 1994 & 2007.

depth knowledge and understanding of the teachings of their own traditions. Further philosophical creativity within the school was continued in the form of comments on various commentaries (including the primary ones) or on the basic *sūtras*. These commentaries of the “third level” have received the titles *dīpika*, *ṭīka* etc. Later exegetes, relying on the text of the *sūtras* or basic review, began to create a compressed version of the main ideas and principles of their school. This genre was called *nibandha*.

The time of basic *sūtras* of the Indian philosophical schools is limited very roughly between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, the time of primary *bhāṣyas*, about the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. However, if we consider the situation with Vedānta around the text of *Vedānta-sūtras* (or *Brahma-sūtras*) in connection with the emergence of the schools of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva and so on, we will have to consider the upper boundary of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But it is a specific situation in the case of Vedānta.

From the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, the era of subcommentaries has started and it will continue until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the truly original and productive time of the most important philosophical texts in India ends in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After that period started an era of secondary texts merely imitating previous works. From the theoretical point of view these later commentaries just repeated the ideas and concepts of previous authors which fact indicated the decline of the authentic Indian philosophical tradition. It will be no exaggeration to say that the true heyday of Indian philosophy was the period of writing of *bhāṣyas*, *vṛttis* and the first *vārttikas*, since the authors of this kind of literature have made the most important contribution to the formulation and development of the main philosophical issues. In the history of Jain philosophy in general and Digambara in particular, one of the key figures was Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa (8<sup>th</sup> century CE) or Akalaṅkadeva, whose name is associated with a new epistemological turn in Jain philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> One of the latest articles by Piotr Balcerowicz is devoted to this subject: Balcerowicz P. “Siddhasena Mahāmati and Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa: A revolution in Jaina epistemology” in *Companion to Classical Indian Philosophy*, ed. by M. Kapstein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (in press) and also in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, November 2016, Volume 44, Issue 5, C. 993–1039. I have downloaded this article from Balcerowicz’s website [http://www.balcerowicz.eu/indology/Jaina\\_epistemology.pdf](http://www.balcerowicz.eu/indology/Jaina_epistemology.pdf) (date of access - 21.01.2017). However, as it is clear from the title of the article, the Polish scholar calls the contribution of Akalaṅka ‘revolution’ and not ‘turn’ as I do.

### Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa and his place in the history of Digambara tradition

It is quite a typical situation with a biography (or rather hagiography) of teachers of ancient and medieval India, about whom we are not able to say anything for sure. And this statement could be applied to the Digambara thinker too. He is known under the names Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa, Akalaṅkadeva, Bhaṭṭākalaṅka or even just Akalaṅka<sup>5</sup>. But unlike his predecessors', the lifetime of Akalaṅka is not a subject of bitter disputes and discussions among Indologists and historians whose professional field is ancient India or Jainism. All of them consider Akalaṅka as belonging to the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> Some scholars even give the precise dates of 720-780.<sup>7</sup>

The first mention of Akalaṅka's name in South Indian epigraphy is dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century: it is the earliest inscription in the Kannāḍa language of Melukaḍa Vanti, Kaḍavanni (1060 CE), which refers to Mahideva Bhaṭṭāra as the disciple of Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa of Devagaṇa; then there are four inscriptions dated 1077 from different places in Karnataka in Kannāḍa and Sanskrit; 13 inscriptions of 12<sup>th</sup> century and three inscriptions of 14<sup>th</sup> century, 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century. All these epigraphic data mention Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa's name in one way or another. The exception is the inscription of the Pārśvanātha temple (1128 CE), where not only the Digambara teacher's name is mentioned, but which also refers to the dispute between Akalaṅka and Buddhists (see below).

The earliest Akalaṅka's biography is contained in a prose work of Prabhācandra (980-1065) under the title *Kathākośa* ("Collection of Stories")<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that the late South Indian epigraphy of Karnataka mentions several persons named Akalaṅka and Bhaṭṭācārya. They all became famous as experts in Jain doctrine. Indian historians tried to differentiate them marking as Akalaṅka I, Akalaṅka II, Akalaṅka-grammarian, etc. (Desai 1957: 125, 129, 132).

<sup>6</sup> It is a rare case of complete unanimity of Indian and European scholars. The main contribution to the clarification of this date has been made by the authoritative editor and publisher of the major works of Akalaṅka Mahendra Kumār Jain. In particular, as regards the issue of the lifetime of the famous Digambara teachers see the Introduction by M. K. Jain for publication *Siddhiviniścaya* (Siddhiviniścaya 1959: 55-62).

<sup>7</sup> The same date as the life time of Akalaṅka is indicated by P. Balcerowicz in the article cited above as well as by the most authoritative source on this subject, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* (Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies X, 2007: 265).

<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy that Hariṣeṇa who wrote at an earlier date (853 g. the Śaka era, i.e. 931 CE) an essay with the same title (*Kathā-kośa*, or *Bṛhatkathā-kośa*) Hariṣeṇa, which narrates the "history" of Jainism and contains the biographies of previous

which was compiled in the reign of king Jayasimhadeva (1055 CE). Later this text was shifted into a poetic form by Brahmanemidatta/ Nemidatta with some modifications.

According to Prabhācandra and Nemidatta there was a minister of king Śubhatuṅga of Mānyakheta<sup>9</sup> called Puruṣottama who had two sons, Akalaṅka and Nikalaṅka. Once both the brothers accompanied their parents on their way to temple on the occasion of Aṣṭāhnikā festival. On this auspicious day, the parents took the vow of celibacy and initiated the boys also to the same. At the prime of their youth the brothers decided not to marry in conformity to the vow taken. Although the father persuaded them that vow was meant only for eight days, but the boys made it a life-long vow. So they devoted their time to studying the scriptures. They joined the Buddha-*maṭha* in disguise in order to study. The tutor while teaching the Diṅnāga's attack on *anekānta* could not make out the text due to some mistake and he suspended the class that day. The next day, he found the text corrected, which made him suspect that a Jaina student must be among his pupils. In order to find out such a student he ordered his disciples to cross over the Jina's idol. Akalaṅka saved himself from this critical test by putting on a thread over the idol. One night the teacher threw a bag of bronze vessels over the top floor where the students were sleeping with the result that all of them woke up uttering the respective names of their deities. At this time, Akalaṅka uttered *ṇamo arihaṅtāṇam*; this was enough to single out the 'culprit'. Both the brothers were arrested and kept prisoners in the top floor of the *maṭha*, but they jumped down with the help of an umbrella and escaped. On the way Nikalaṅka implored his brother to escape by hiding in the tank nearby so that he may not be caught by the enemies, as he deemed his brother's life more important than his own. Nikalaṅka was slain by the horsemen. Akalaṅka after the completion of his studies took the renunciation; he became a great debater and impressed the royal courts by his orations at several places and thus influenced the public with the Jina's teaching. Once he went to the Ratnasañcayapura in Kaliṅgadeśa. There the queen Madanasundarī, the wife of king Himaśītala, thought of the Jaina procession of chariots of Aṣṭāhnikā. But the Buddhist teacher Saṅgaśrī came

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Digambara teachers is absolutely silent about Akalaṅka, despite the extreme significance of the latter's contribution to the history of the Digambara community.

<sup>9</sup> Mānyakheta is the ancient name of the Malkhed city situated on the banks of Kagina River in Sedam Taluk of Gulbarga District, Karnataka. Mānyakheta was the capital of Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty (753-982) whose rājas were connected with local Jain communities (Nagarajaiah 2010). According to the legend, this city was the centre of Devasaṅgha and that is why Akalaṅka is considered as affiliated with this particular saṅgha (Desai 1957: 194; Chavan 2005: 72-73).

forward and interrupted the procession by challenging any Jaina teacher to come forward and defeat him so that the procession could proceed. At last Akalañka accepted the challenge and defeated the Buddhist. The Akalañka's success naturally led to the spread of Jainism.<sup>10</sup>

From the colophon of the *Tattvārtharājavārttika* (hereinafter – TRv), his main subcommentary on *Tattvārthādhigama-sūtra/Tattvārtha-sūtra* of Umāsvāmī/Umāsvāti (ca 3-4 CE) we can guess that Akalañka was rāja Laghu Havva's son. In the *praśasti* of the first *adhyāya* it is said (TRv 2004: 99):

*jyāc cīram akalañkabrahmā laghuhavva-nṛpati-vara-tanayaḥ|*  
*anavarata-nikhīla-vidvaj-jana-nuta-vidyaḥ praśasta-jana-hṛdyah||*

Let long live Akalañka - Brahma, the eldest son of the king Laghu Havva |  
[whose] continuous knowledge is recognized by all scholars, delighting the  
hearts of the people||

In later sources like *Akalañkacarite*,<sup>11</sup> it is mentioned that in 700 Vikrama Samvat (634 CE) there was a great discussion between Akalañka and the Buddhists (Jain 2005: 112). According to Indian scholar N. Shah “he belonged to Mānyakheṭa... and he was the son of Puruṣottama, a minister of Śubhatuṅga of Mānyakheṭa” (Shah 1967: 38).<sup>12</sup> But another Indian historian, H. Nagarajaiah, gives five versions from different Jain sources: 1) Akalañka was “the son of Śubhatuṅga alias Kṛṣṇarāja I (753-775). It is said that Akalañka and Niṣkalañka were sons of Śubhatuṅga, and Akalañka, elder of the two sons, renounced the life of palace and accepted the monkhood. 2) Puruṣottama and Padmāvati were the parents of Akalañka, Puruṣottama who was a minister of Śubhatuṅga. 3) Malliṣeṇa's *praśasti* inscription of Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa states that Akalañka was prestigious scholar in the court of Sāhasatuṅga: “there was no other grandeur king like Kṛṣṇarāja alias Sāhasatuṅga on earth”. 4) He belonged to the village Karandai (TN: Cheyyar Tk) where a debate between Buddhist and Jains was held. The presiding deity Dharumādevī (Ambikā) helped Akalañka to win the debate. 5) Akalañka was a priest at Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa from where he proceeded to the court of Himaśītala, a Pallava king of Kāncī, and drove the Bauddha disputants to Kandy of Ceylon” (Nagarajaiah 2010: 93). Unfortunately, H. Nagarajaiah has not given the references on his sources where all this information was taken from, but further he emphasizes that scholars have agreed on one

<sup>10</sup> *Siddhiviniścaya* 1959: 26-25.

<sup>11</sup> A work in Kannada language, written in 1800 by Candrasāgara Varṇi (Jain 2005: 147).

<sup>12</sup> Apparently, N. Shah's statement is based on *Akalañka-carite*.

point: Akalaṅka was a native of Mānyakheṭa and he lived during the reign of Sāhasatuṅga Dantidurga Khadgāvaloka (742-756), Śubhatuṅga Kṛṣṇa-I Akālavaraṣa (756-773) and his son Prabhūtavarṣa Govinda II Vikramāvaloka (773-780) (Ibid, 93-94).

The story about Akalaṅka's victorious debate with Buddhist has been mentioned in a late inscription (n<sup>o</sup> 54 in Pārśvanātha-basti<sup>13</sup>) from Śravaṇa-beḷagoḷa dated 1128 CE and in connection with this event the names of kings Himaśītala and Sāhasatuṅga are mentioned too (Rice 1889: 136). The Digambara teacher's victory is associated with vanquishing of Tārā,<sup>14</sup> "secretly born in earthen pot (*ghaṭa kuṭī*)". The inscription of Pārśvanātha-basti is quite lengthy, and the glorification of the greatness and knowledge of Akalaṅka (called Devākalaṅka) takes a substantial place in it. However, his exact name is mentioned in only one passage on the North face of the inscription (Rice 1889: 44-45, 136):

*yas saptati-mahāvādān jigāyānyānathā mitān |*  
*Brahma-kakṣorcchitas so 'rcyo māheśvara-muniśvaraḥ ||*  
*Tārā tena vinirjītāghaṭa-kuṭī guḍhāvatārā samam |*  
*Bauddhair yyodhr̥ta-pīḍa-pīḍita-kudṛg devār̥tha-sevāñjaliḥ ||*  
*prāyaścittam avāṅghri vārija-rajās-snānam ca yasyācarat |*  
*doṣānām Sugatas sa kasya viṣayo Devākalaṅkaḥ kṛtī ||*

He who overcame in seventy discussions which had been otherwise settled, revered in the assembly of Brahma, that Maheśvara muni is worthy of reverence.

He by whom Tārā, secretly born in the earthen pot, was vanquished together with Bauddhas; troubler of the false professors; doing reverence only to the gods;

he who forced Sugata as penance for his faults to perform ablution with the pollen of his lotus feet; such was Devākalaṅka pandita, to whom is he not worthy?

The inscription does not explain what is meant when talking about Tārā. This allusion takes place in Jain subsequent hagiographic tradition, in Devacandra's *Rājāvali-kathe*<sup>15</sup> (1838 CE), *Akalaṅka-carite* (1800 CE), *Akalaṅka-stotra* and so on. In *Rājāvali-kathe* is it told that during the time

<sup>13</sup> Basti/ basadi is a South Indian (mostly in Karnataka) name for Jain temples. In the North of India the standard name in Hindi is mandir.

<sup>14</sup> Tārā - lit. "Savior". She is a female deity of the Buddhist Pantheon, who embodies the boundless mercy and compassion. The cult of Tārā originated in India, probably in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE. The veneration of this goddess was widespread in Tantric Buddhism.

<sup>15</sup> It is a text in prose devoted to the history of the Jain tradition in South India written by Devacandra for a Princess of Mysore (Rice 1921: 25, 93).

when Buddhists had completely suppressed Jains in Kāñcī, a Jaina brahman (*arhad dvija*) named Jinadāsa and his wife, Jinamatī had two sons – Akalañka and Niḥkalañka. Since there was no one who could educate the young men, their father decided to secretly send them to Buddhist teacher Bhagavaddāsa, who had five hundred disciples in his *maṭha*. According to one version of this narrative, the young men made such rapid usual progress in their study that their guru's suspicions were aroused and he resolved to find out who they were. One night while the boys were asleep he placed a tooth on their chests, when they instantly sprang up ejaculating “Jina siddha!” and thus betrayed that they were Jains. Another version claims that on one occasion when their guru had to leave them for a while, they managed to insert into the manuscript book from which the guru was teaching them the words that *samyagdarśanajñāna* was the *mokṣamārga*. The *guru* on discovering the interpolation became aware that they were Jains. On both accounts their death was resolved upon so they fled to escape. Niḥkalañka allowed himself to be caught and slain in order that his brother might have time to get beyond his pursuers. So he did, being aided by some washer men who hid him under a bundle of clothes and having taken the *dikṣā*, became the head of the Deśi-gaṇa and was in Sudhāpura, Sode in North Karnataka. After some time when Akalañka has been enthroned in Sudhāpura scholars of various sects having suffered defeat in debates with Buddhists, came to him and asked him to encounter the Buddhist. The Buddhists in Kāñcī induced the ruler Himaśītala to organize the dispute between them and the Digambara teacher to put an end for all to the Jains. The Buddhists have made special preparation to this event – they placed an earthen pot of *toddy* (the intoxicating fermented juice of palmyra palm) behind a screen or curtain and having summoned into it their goddess Tārā (this is what the inscription refers to), caused her to reply seriatim to all the arguments advanced by Akalañka. According to different version this debate lasted seven or seventeen days during which Akalañka gained no advantage. He began to feel anxiety as to the results, when Kūṣmāṇḍinī<sup>16</sup> appeared to him in a dream and told him that if he put his questions in a different order he would be able to win. He followed the advice next day and the goddess in the pot was unable to answer. So the victory was declared for the Jains. Akalañka then tore away the curtain, kicked over the pot with his left foot and smashed it. The result of the whole matter was that the king was disgusted at finding out the tricks the Buddhist relied on, and also witnessing how an elephant which got loose trampled on the Buddhist books but raised

<sup>16</sup> Kūṣmāṇḍinī – in Digambara tradition the goddess, *yakṣī* of 22<sup>nd</sup> *tīrthāṅkara* Neminātha and a guardian deity of Śravaṇabelagoḷa, where she is represented in anthropomorphic forms in several temples (Wiley 2006: 126).



the Jaina ones with its trunk and placed them on its head, ordered all the Buddhists to be ground in the oil-mills. But at the intercession of Akalaṅka, instead of putting them to death, he consented to banish them to a distant country, and so they were all transported to Kandy in Ceylon<sup>17</sup>.

Obviously “developing” the detail mentioned in the epigraphy, the subsequent Jain hagiography has built a whole story of unworthy Buddhists who, despite all their tantric skills (the story of the creation of the pot and the invocation of Tārā in it), suffered a humiliating defeat and even would be disappeared totally, if the Digambara teacher would not have interceded out of mercy.

Legends, like the above mentioned ones from Digambara the *Collections of stories* by Prabhācandra and Devacandra, can also be found in Śvetāmbara writings of the same genre – prākṛta *Kathāvali* of Bhadreśvara Sūri (12<sup>th</sup> century), *Prabhāvakaṅkarita* of Prabhācandra Sūri (1277) and *Prabandhakośa* or *Caturviṃśatiprabandha* of Rājaśekhara Sūri (1348). Only in the place of Akalaṅka appears a śvetāmbara thinker – the encyclopedist Haribhadra and his two students, Jinabhadra and Vīrabhadra, the scene – Chittor<sup>18</sup> in the first case, and Haṃsa and Paramahaṃsa in the second and third. In the texts of Candraprabha Sūri and Rājaśekhara Sūri there are also episodes with the secret training in a Buddhist monastery, the escape, the dispute with the Buddhists, Tārā’s ‘help’ from the pot (probably all-jain version of deus ex machina – dea ex urna). The main opponents in all cases were also the Buddha’s followers.<sup>19</sup>

It is quite evident that the version of *Rājāvali-kathe* is a eulogy to Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa, written with the genre and stylistic features of the era and not related to the actual history of the Digambara teacher’s life.

Since the late South Indian epigraphy (from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards) testifies to the existence of several Jain teachers with names ‘Akalaṅka’ and ‘Bhaṭṭākalaṅka’, who was the leader of the Jain *saṅghas* and had patrons belonging to royal dynasties, it is quite possible that hagiographic literature about Akalaṅka, which refers to the period not earlier than the beginning of

<sup>17</sup> The whole story with more details in Kannaḍa is presented in (Rice 1889: 46).

<sup>18</sup> Chittor – modern Chittorgarh, a city-fortress in the Northwest of India, Rajasthan. From 8<sup>th</sup> till 16<sup>th</sup> centuries it was the capital of the state of Mewar and the Rajput stronghold of the Sisodia clan. Famous śvetāmbara teacher Haribhadra was associated with this place.

<sup>19</sup> The short analysis of these stories is in *Siddhiviniścaya* (1959: 27-28).



the 19<sup>th</sup> century, created a generalized collective image of the famous teacher, incorporating significantly redesigned from different narratives. However, the authors of these texts did it quite skillfully – by interweaving into the plot a previously known information (for example, controversy with the Buddhist authors that really could be and probably was a purely matter of fiction) and decorating the narrative by peculiar details of the secret training of a Buddhist mentor (otherwise how else could he be so well-versed in Buddhist philosophy and logic?!) and victorious debates (seven or seventy - here the number does not matter) with the Buddha's followers. After all, his "life stories" do not say that Akalaṅka participated in the debate with Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, etc. His main opponents in the logical texts, obviously, were the Buddhists, and that was reflected in his hagiography. These two key circumstances – belonging to South India (Karnataka) and his polemics with Buddhist authors, in particular, Dharmakīrti, constitute a frame, which contributes to the fragile construction of the biography of the Digambara philosopher.

The problem of Akalaṅka's criticism of Dharmakīrti is the subject of a special monograph by the Indian scholar N. Shah (Shah 1967), where this question is discussed on the basis of the analysis of the main works by the Digambara thinker, so there is no need to pay special attention to it here.<sup>20</sup> But it is worth to note Shah's remarks that despite all the sarcasm, sometimes turning into outright satire against the Buddhists, "Akalaṅka imbibes the method, style and spirit of Dharmakīrti" (Shah 1967: 39). Since we can't rely on hagiographic literature because of the nature of this genre, nor on epigraphic mentions of Akalaṅka since they are not earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the only reasonable valid approach to determine the time of his life is only one based on his works. And this approach allows us quite confidently to attribute Akalaṅka to the period "after Dharmakīrti".<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> More recently P. Balcerowicz has devoted to this issue a very informative article entitled "Pramāṇa and Language. A Dispute between Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti and Akalaṅka" (Balcerowicz 2005).

<sup>21</sup> This problem was raised in the discussion during the International Workshop "The constitution of a literary legacy and the tradition of patronage in Jainism", hosted and organized by Jean Moulin Lyon 3 University, Institute of Philosophical Research Lyon 3, which was held 14-17 of September 2016. P. Balcerowicz himself has demonstrated the fruits of this approach in the article "On the relative chronology of Dharmakīrti Samantabhadra", where he proposes, on the basis of the textual analysis of the works of three authors, Samantabhadra, Pūjyapāda Devanandin and Dharmakīrti, a new date of life for everyone. So unlike E. Frauwallner who assigned to Dharmakīrti the dates of 600-660, the Polish scholar accordingly locates the lifetime of the Buddhist philosopher within 550-610, that of Pūjyapāda within 540-600, and that of Samantabhadra within 530-590 (Balcerowicz 2014).

Akalaṅka became famous primarily as a logician. His writings on epistemological problems are: *Laghīyastraya* (“Three light [chapters]”) — namely *Pramāṇa-praveśa* (“Introduction to [the doctrine of] instruments of valid cognition”), *Naya-praveśa* (“Introduction to [the doctrine of] view-points”) and *Pravacana-praveśa* (“Introduction to the Doctrine”) —, *Nyāya-viniścaya* (“An Enquiry on Logic”), *Siddhi-viniścaya* (“An Enquiry on proof”), *Pramāṇa-saṅgraha* (“A Compendium of instruments of valid cognition”), *Pramāṇa-ratna-pradīpa* (“The light of the Jewel of instruments of valid cognition”), *Nyāya-cūlikā* (“A Summary of Logic”), a small philosophical poem *Svarūpasambodhana* (“The Awakening of One’s Own Nature) and *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa* (“Characterization of the instruments of valid cognition”). The last text is not published, despite the fact that there are a significant number of manuscripts in the Jain libraries (bhaṇḍāras). Two Akalaṅka’s works, *Pramāṇaratna-pradīpa* and *Nyāya-cūlikā*, are considered nowadays lost.

The Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa’s contribution in Jain philosophy is not confined by treatises on the theory of knowledge. He is also the author of two commentaries, one of which represents the pinnacle of exegetical activity in Digambara tradition: *Tattvārtha-rājavārttika* (“The Royal commentary on *Tattvārtha-[Sūtra]*”) and the second one is a brief explanation on the Samantabhadra’s essay *Āpta-mīmāṃsā* (“Examination on obtained [knowledge]”)<sup>22</sup> named *Aṣṭaśatī* (“Eight hundred [statements]”). Despite the importance of the works of the Digambara teacher for the history of Jainism, most part of them were not translated into European languages. There is an exception in the case of *Svarūpasambodhana* (Goyal 2005; Zheleznova 2012: 395-396), the translation into English of three chapters (second, fifth and eighth)<sup>23</sup> of *Tattvārtha-rājavārttika* (hereinafter – TRv) and summaries of some Akalaṅka’s text in Potter (2007: 266-421).

The TRv, representing the genre of *vārttika*, incorporates the most part of the first Digambara commentary on Umāsvāti’s treatise named *Sarvārtha-*

<sup>22</sup> To define the Samantabhadra’s lifetime is a serious problem in studying the history of Jain philosophy. There are lots of controversy among experts on Jainism, which is quite typical situation for the on the early period of Jainism. Some scholars define it from 5<sup>th</sup> century up to 7<sup>th</sup> century as probable dates (Potter 2007: 139-140). The recent study on this topic belongs to P. Balcerowicz, who attributes it to 530-590 (Balcerowicz 2014).

<sup>23</sup> It was done by N.L. Jain as three separate brochures titled “Biology in Jaina Treatise on Reals” (PV Series 120) (Jain 1999); “Jaina World on Non-living” (PV Series 131) (Jain 2000) and “Jaina Karmology” (PV Series 109) (Jain 1998) respectively.

*siddhi* by Pūjyapāda (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). The text of Pūjyapāda is written in the *vṛtti*'s form so it constitutes the first level of commenting which gives the canonical form of the *sūtras* of the basic text, i.e. *Tattvārtha-sūtra*.

Akalaṅka's text is a wonderful example of philosophical commentary which includes every characteristic distinguishing the proper exegetical work. Generally speaking about the purpose of commenting (*vyākhyāna*) in Sanskrit literature (including the philosophical commentary), it has been said that there are 5 main services of it: 1) *padaccheda* — word-division, separation of the words of the text which means the resolution of external *sandhi*; 2) *padārthokti* — stating the meaning of the words, the giving of synonyms, paraphrases, definitions, and examples; 3) *vigraha* — analysis of grammatical complexes (i.e., of nominal compounds and of derived stems); 4) *vākyayojanā* — construing the sentences, indicating the construction of the text breaking them down into their constituent elements; and at least, 5) *ākṣepasamādhāna* — the answering of objections: this part of a commentary is concerned with the ideas contained in the original text rather than with its words (Tubb and Boose 2007: 3-5).

All these functions or services are presented in *vṛtti* type of the commentary literature but the last one in reduced form. The *vṛtti* is a highly scholastic and concise style of philosophical commentary literature. Its characteristic features are the extraction and clarification of the meaning of the *sūtras* in the conceptual structure of *Sarvārthasiddhi*. This text does not content a lot of concepts of rival philosophical systems but they are presented inside the commentary to some extent. The fifth one in more elaborate form is presented in *vārttika* style. Apparently, *ākṣepasamādhāna* is crucial precisely for the *vārttika*. The debates with different schools and theoretical positions both within the tradition and external to it, are presented in the text of the class *vārttika* (this word means 'an extended/a lengthy commentary'), or subcommentary in its complete and very sophisticated form. The subcommentary, being quite an extensive and elaborate form of writing, represents the higher level of a commentary work, which main aim is to unpack or decompress (according to the expression of J. Ganery) the text and the first level of commentary being commented on. According to J. Ganery the "*vārttika* stands for a critical engagement with the ideas so elaborated, including processes of defense, revision and adjudication" (Ganery 2011: 105). At the same time, this type of commentary on philosophical subjects lets the author of the commentary develop the main ideas of his doctrine.

So the TRv is precisely this type of text. From the textual point of view TRv includes the full text of *Tattvārtha-sūtra* of Umāsvāti because the Akalaṅka's commentary is the exegesis of this particular *sūtra* in the first place. And it absorbs almost (but not completely) the main *vṛtti*, i.e., *Sarvārthasiddhi*. The structure of the TRv implies scrupulous explanation not only the basic *sūtras* (in this case, the main statement which is marked by a number), but also already made interpretations expressed in the form of propositions, defined in the tradition by the term *vārttika* and also marked with numbers. In other words, these *vārttikas* are the sentences from *Sarvārthasiddhi*. And Akalaṅka's commentary is built according to them par excellence. Actually, TVR is the assemblage of such *vārttikas* with explanations. Besides, the propositions of the opponents taken in the form of a question together with Akalaṅka's response can play the role of *vārttika*. After a brief formulation of question and answer the author gives a more detailed explanation with examples.

One of the main strong foes in the philosophical battlefield whose ideas and concepts Akalaṅka tries to refute is the representatives of the Vaiśeṣika school. Quite a substantial part of the objections are conducted on behalf of the followers of Kaṇāda and Praśastapāda. The text of the *Vaiśeṣikasūtras* is cited regularly (for example – TRv 1.1.14; 1.2.19; 1.9.11, 2.8.24 and so on)<sup>24</sup>. The second significant opposing camp consists of Buddhists, among which we can surely identify abhidharmists-vaibhāṣikas – in TRv Akalaṅka quotes Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (TRv 1.9.10, 1.12.11, 5.19.32). He also takes into account the views of the followers of the late *yogācāra* school, whose ideas converge with *sautrāntikas*, – Dharmakīrti and Dīnāga. Their works also are quoted by Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa – TRv 1.12.6 and 1.4.15 respectively. In defending the Jain philosophical doctrine, the Digambara commentator demonstrates textual knowledge of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhyakārikā* (TRv 1.14; 1.1.43) with commentary of Gauḍa-pāda (TRv 1.1.43) and *Nyāyasūtras* by Gautama Akṣapāda (TRv 1.12.6; 1.20.15). Although the traditions of *vedānta* do not take the significant place in the TRv, some citations from *Puruṣasūkta* of *Ṛgveda* (TRv 1.2.24), *Bhagavadgītā* (TRv 1.22.4), Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapādiya* (TRv 1.12.15) and *Mīmāṃsādarśana* (TRv 1.12.6) are presented in the text.

The vast majority of the texts of other philosophical schools of India is cited in the most theoretically loaded first and partly second *adhyāya*,

<sup>24</sup> The first number is the number of *adhyāya*, second – *sūtra*, and third – *vārttika*. All the examples are taken from the first *adhyāya* because it is a most polemical part of the commentary and all the citations are almost presented here.

where the author discusses the basic Jain ontological and epistemological concepts and ideas. Due to the fact that the first *adhyāya* represents not only a high level of philosophical reflection, but also the amount of text, it is divided into five parts, called *āhnika* (lit. ‘daily portion’). Such divisions are not found elsewhere in the text.

Scholastic Sanskrit<sup>25</sup> is characterized by strong stylistic features, but despite being determined by its belonging to the commentary genre, TRv is nonetheless an original work. It is on one hand very comprehensive, with a broad scope of exegesis, but also very detailed on the other hand. The main purpose of the commentator is to unfold meanings, which in the opinion of the commentator is laid down in the *sūtras*, to give the etymology of the term used in the basic *sūtras*, to explain the legitimacy of its use and to answer possible objections from opponents, — not only the real ones (Vaiśeṣikas, Buddhists, etc.), but even a virtual antagonist whose views are difficult (if not impossible) to correlate with any of the existing at those time philosophical schools. The introduction of the rivalry positions (*pūrva-pakṣa*) occurs in the TRv text by the means of certain linguistic markers, namely:

1) through the use of interrogative particle *cet* at the end of a sentence that is found as in *vārttika* and also in commentary on it. It means ‘if’ and could be translated in the context of opponents’ view as ‘is it not?’, which lets us understand that this particular word is a marker of the objection. For example:

TRv 1.9.5: *matijñānaprasaṅga iti cet; na; apekṣāmātratvāt* | 5 |

The reduction to absurdity of sensual knowledge [arises], is it not? No, it is due only to the correlation.

TRv 1.9.28: *ihādīprasaṅga iti cet; na; avagr̥hītāmātraviṣayavāt* | 28 |

The reduction to absurdity of effort and other [forms of sensual knowledge arises], is it not? No, because [its] object [is something] perceived.

2) in the interpretation of *vārttika* the introduction of the opponents’ position is carried out in three types of phrases:

- a) *syād etat* – lit. “it is possible [that]”;
- b) *syān matam* – “[it is] a possible idea/thought”;
- c) *syād ārekā* – lit. “possible doubt [that]”;
- d) *atha matam etat* – lit. “then, this idea/thought”;
- e) *syād ākūtam* – lit. “[it is] a possible intention”.

<sup>25</sup> On characteristics of Scholastic Sanskrit see Tubb and Boose 2007.

The option c) is found only in comments on the first *adhyāya* and only in a few places, whereas the first two (a, b) are everywhere. The fourth one (d) appears very rarely – TRv 2.8.16; 2.8.24; and the fifth (e) – in TRv 2.8.27.

TRv 1.9.5 *syād etat – manaḥparyayañjñānaṃ matijñānaṃ prāpnoti* |

[Objection:] it is possible that telepathy-knowledge is sensual knowledge.

TRv 1.1.5: *syād ārekā – jñānadarśanayor ātmadravyād anyatvam* |

[Objection:] the possible doubt is that knowledge and vision are not different from the substance of the soul.

TRv 1.5.12: *syān matam – nāmasthāpanayor ekatvam* |

[Objection:] the possible idea [that there is] a unity between name and representation.

TRv 2.8.24: *atha matam etat – amūrtir ātmā karmaṇapudgalair nābhibhūyate tatas tatpariṇāmābhāva iti* |

[Objection:] then this idea — the karmic substance does not subordinate the incorporeal *ātman* is, so it cannot be changed.

TRv 2.8.27: *syād ākūtam – cakṣurādīnām karaṇānām vyāmohakāraṇaṃ madyaṃ pṛthvyādibhūtaprasādātmakatvāt indriyāṇām nātmaguṇasya amūrti-  
tvād iti* |

[Objection:] [it is] a possible intention [according to which] intoxicating liquor causes distortion of vision and other senses due to the fact that the senses (*indriyas*) are composed of earth and other elements, and not because of incorporeality of their own qualities.

3) the process of commenting on possible questions and small objections is also marked by words as vocative particle, implying perplexity *nanu* which could be translated “but” or “however”; *nanu ca* – “and however” or “and yet”; *atrāha* – “here it has been said”; *āha* – “it has been said”; *atrocyate* – “here it says”.

4) the theoretical statements of other schools are often opened by such phrases as: *kaścid āha* – “somebody has said”; *anye manyante* – “others claim”; *aparā āhuḥ* – “others have said”.

Response to the objection of the opponent and the resolution of doubts (*uttara-pakṣa*) are given by expressions *tan na* – “it is not [so]” or *naiṣa doṣah* – “[there is] no such mistake”. Typically, the answer to the simple question, expressed with the help of question words such as *kim*, is marked by the verb *ucyate* – “it says”. In the case when the explanation for *vārttika* the position of the opponent is introduced by the above-mentioned phrases starting with the word *syāt*, Akalaṅka follows a very rigid scheme: first is a *pūrva-pakṣa*, and in a somewhat more expanded form than in the *vārttika*, then a brief answer *tanna* is given, which is followed by the question *kim kāraṇam?* – “by which reason?”, after that Akalaṅka cites again the short answer from *vārttika* and writes a detailed reply and resolution of the Jaina

*siddhānta* to the whole objection. Sometimes one or two small questions arise to clarify the explanations. For example – TRv 5.2.9:

*guṇasadrāvo dravyamiti cet; na; ekānte doṣopapatteḥ* |9| *syād etad – guṇasadrāvo dravyamityetallakṣaṇamanavadyam | guṇaiḥ sadrūyate prāpyate guṇānvā sadravati prāpnoti iti dravyamiti; tanna; kiṃ kāraṇam? ekānte doṣopapatteḥ | katham iti cet? ucyate – guṇebhyo dravyam anyadvā syād ananyadvā? yadyananyataḥ kartṛkarmabhedābhāvāt nirdeśo nopapadyate | api ca, ekāntānanyatve hi guṇā eva vā syuḥ, dravyameva vā | yadi guṇā eva; dravyābhāve tadavinābhāvinā guṇānāmapī nirādhāratvādabhāvaḥ syāt | atha dravyam eva; evam api alakṣaṇatvāt kharaviṣṇānavakalpanā dravyasya syāt | athānanyatva grhyeta evam apy ekāntena pṛthagbhāve svarūpaśunyatva syāt | abhyupagamyocyate guṇaiḥ sadrūyate dravyam iti lakṣaṇam nopapadyate; guṇānā niṣkriyatve dravya pratyābhimukhena dravaṇābhāvāt | “dig- kālāvākāśam ca kriyāvadbhyo vaidharmyāt niṣkriyāṇi etena karmāṇi guṇāś ca vyākhyātāḥ niḥkriyāḥ” | iti vacanāt | guṇān sadravati iti ca lakṣaṇa nopapadyate niḥkriyadravyānā guṇān prati dravaṇābhāvāt |*

**Substance is an asylum for the attributes,<sup>26</sup> is it not? No, because from one-sidedness there will be mistake**|9|. [Objection:] it is possible that it must be understood that substance is an asylum for the attributes; substance is something which is approached and taken by attributes or which the attributes approach and obtain. [Reply:] it is not so. [Question:] by which reason? [Reply:] because if it will be taken **from one-sidedness there will be mistake**. [Question:] how will it be? [Reply:] it is said that this question arises – is substance different from the attributes or identical to them? If it is identical so this notion will not be possible because of the absence of difference between the agent and the action. And also the question arises – from one-sidedness it is possible only either substance exists or attributes do. If only attributes exist then, in the case of the absence of substance, the attributes become not possible because of the absence of substratum, even inseparably connected attributes. If only substance exists, then also because of the absence of its characteristics the substance becomes imaginary, like horns of a donkey. After that if the difference will be taken from one-sidedness – then in the case of separate existence its own nature becomes empty. With the acceptance of the assumption that substance is approached by the attributes its characteristics will not be possible, because of impossibility to approach the substance in the case of inactivity of the attributes. Because it is stated [in Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra 5.2.21-22:] “direction, time and space are inactive because of the dissimilarity with the active reality, so the deeds/actions and the attributes are explained as inactive”. So the characteristic that the attributes approach the substance is not possible because of the impossibility of the approaching the substance of the inactive attributes.

<sup>26</sup> Patañjali, *Mahābhāṣya*, 5.1.119.



In the process of commenting on *vārttikas* Akalaṅka while resolving doubts considers different logical alternatives and their possible consequences in order to demonstrate the correctness and logical validity of his own, i.e., Jain, positions. The reader should get the impression that the ideas defended by the author of the text are the only true and reasonable ones: they are not only confirmed by the experience of direct perception of *tīrthaṅkaras* and based on their Scriptures (*āgama*), but indispensably emerged from the properly structured reasoning, which means – provable by logical inference.

A most part of the views of philosophical opponents which are referred to by Akalaṅka, expresses ideas and concepts of the doctrine of particular really existed schools. However, there are some conceptions which are extremely difficult to attribute to any school, if it is possible at all. It looks like that some of them rather virtual than real. So in that case this question arises: “What is the purpose of giving arguments of non-existent positions and refuting them if they were philosophically and historically irrelevant?” The possible answer may be that from one side it is an exercise of logic to explicit all the logical consequences of the statements, accepted by Jainas in general and Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa in particular. On the other side, this strategy shows the very intellectual brilliancy of his own, i.e. Jain, Doctrine. If the controversies with representatives of Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya, Sāṅkhya etc. that are unfolded in the commentary demonstrate the needs to answer and theoretically competent rebuff to Jainas’ ideological rivals – and this was the urgent challenge facing philosophers who were followers of *tīrthaṅkaras* – , the objections of the virtual opponents fulfill a slightly different function – to demonstrate exegetical skills of the author of TRv and the superiority of the Jain doctrine.

In TRv there are some objections which refer to the grammatical tradition of India. Most of them deal with *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (“The Eight Books”) of Pāṇini (5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE) and *Mahābhāṣya* (“The Great Commentary”) of Patañjali (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE). Akalaṅka from the possible opponents’ side cites the rules of these treatises, which, at first glance, are refuting the teachings of Jain tradition, represented by the TS (TRv 1.5.29, 1.5.35, 2.9.3, 2.18, 2.20.2, 5.26.5 and so on). In this case, the Digambara teacher demonstrates that the rule either does not apply in this case, or is misinterpreted. To substantiate his own position in disputes of a grammatical nature, to support his way of reading of the *sūtras* and to explain the meaning and etymology of the word from the text of TS, Akalaṅka appeals to another grammatical treatise, which was compiled in Digambara tradition and belonged to Pūjyapāda Devanandin – *Jainendra-vyākaraṇa* (“Grammar

of the Jaina Lord”). However, this does not mean that Akalaṅka also always opposes the tradition of Pāṇini, Patañjali and Pūjyapāda. He also refers quite often to the rules provided by the *Mahābhāṣya* when justifying his views – for example, TRv 1.5.28, 1.6.1, 2.2.1, 2.14.4, 3.18.4., 3.21.2, 3.23.1, 4.4.3, 5.1.6, 5.14.1.

The author of TRv in support of the statements expressed in *vārttika* (the textual source for most of which is *Sarvārthasiddhi*), and to illustrate his own ideas uses the treatises already widely circulating in Digambara community of South India of that period. In the first place, there is the *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama* (“Scripture in Six Parts” written in Jain Prākṛt version of *śaurasenī*)<sup>27</sup>, treatises of Corpus Cundacundae<sup>28</sup> and Samantabhadra’s *Yuktyanuśāsana*. Besides, Akalaṅka quotes different texts which cannot be identified at this stage of our knowledge of Jain literature.

It is obvious that the Digambara commentator of TS was familiar with the text of the autocommentary known as *Svopajñābhāṣya*, and representing the Śvetāmbara version of the basic treatise. In the TRv 5.25.5, 5.37.3, 5.42.3 he quotes Śvetāmbara commentary on behalf of the opponent and refutes his reading and interpretation of the basic *sūtras* as unfounded.

Akalaṅka’s deep and broad familiarity with the teachings of other schools of Indian philosophy, his understanding of the intricacies and nuances of grammar, the talent of the debater and the ability to build a reasoned logical refutation of alternative views and positions allowed him to create a great philosophical text, clearly demonstrating a high level of theoretical reflection among Mahāvīra’s followers. Akalaṅka presented a sample of philosophical commentary in Sanskrit, standing exegetical line of “continuity” from *Sarvārthasiddhi* of Pūjyapāda to the commentary of the third level – Vidyānandin’s *Tattvārthaslokavārttika* (9<sup>th</sup> century CE), which

<sup>27</sup> *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama* (Prākṛit – Chakkhaṇḍāgama) – a canonical text on karma theory in Digambara tradition. It is an oldest Scripture. According to the legend this treatise is based on oral teaching of monk Dharasena, who has flourished 683 years after Mahāvīra’s death (137 CE). He had remembered some portion of ancient scriptures called *pūrvas* which was preserved in 12<sup>th</sup> *aṅga*, the *Dr̥ṣṭivāda*. Given that all this knowledge would be lost, he imparted his knowledge to two monks named Puṣpadanta and Bhūtabali. They committed his teaching to writing form. There is an extant commentary titled *Dhavalā* on the first five chapters of *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*. It was completed in 816 CE. Till the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama* was not very widely circulated among Jainas (Wiley 2006: 195-196).

<sup>28</sup> Under the title Corpus Cundacundae I unite all the texts which are attributed to the famous Digambara philosopher Kundakunda no matter who was the real author of the texts. For more detail about it see Zheleznova 2005.

is a culmination of Digambara commentary tradition. In this text Akalaṅka's statements have the status (along with the Pūjyapāda's ones) will perform the role of interpreting *vārttikas*. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the TRv represents the pinnacle of philosophical thought as inside the Digambara branch as well in Jainism in general. In that sense Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa's TRv is a good example of textual transmission in the philosophical commentary tradition of Digambara Jainism.



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