

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN 'SRĪMĀLA PURĀNA

The 'Srimāla Purāna describes 'Srimālanagara as an abode of Brāhmanas. The Skanda Purāna¹ also testifies this fact. Dr.A.B.L.Awasthi identified Srimāla to Bhinmal and ^{noted} ~~described~~ it as a centre of Brāhmanas.² Hiouen Thsang says about the city Pilo-mo-lo and its citizens "They mostly are unbelievers³, a few are attached to the law of Buddha". N.L.Dey writes that Pilo-mo-lo was the present Bhinmal called 'Srimāla then.⁴

'Srimāla Purāna is a Tīrtha Mahātmya. All the Tīrthas are associated with one or the other God or Goddess. This Purāna gives elaborate religious details of deities at the different Tīrthas. They are the great Trinity: Brahmā, Visnu and Mahesa. No special sect like Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva or Sākata is emphasised in the Purāna. They are described without distinction or favour to any of them.

The Tīrtha Mahātmya starts from Chapter XIV and ends in Chapter LXIV. Nearly fifty tīrthas are described and the tīrthas are mostly ~~at~~ in honour of any one of the gods, the

1 Skanda Purāna, I.ii 2.87

2 A.B.L.Awasthi, Studies in Skanda Purāna, p.127

3 Beal Samuel, Hiouen Thsang- Chinese account of India, p.640-641

4 N.L.Dey, Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India, p.192-193

the great divine Trinity i.e. Brahmā, Visnu, Mahesa with their deities. A few are about Lord Sun, Vināyaka, Nāgas. The manner and way of worship with their legends are recorded. Chapters LXV and LXXI record the Vratas, Kathās and Kulācara or Sanskaras of the Śrīmāli brāhmanas. The method of accomplishing them is given. The Trinity-Devatās are recorded with different names at different Tīrthas because they are named according to their deeds. If Vanāyaka saved the cows he is named as Govatcalavināyaka, Śiva killed the daitya Tripura, so he is called Tripurārī Trambkeśvara and so on. The list prepared would show the different names of the same God with his Māhātmya and form.

The great Divine Trinity and their form of worship:

- A.1. Visnu: Worshipped in the form of Varāha in Varāhesyāma day temple; the best of worship was Ekādasi¹.
2. Visnu: Worshipped as KākaVaraha on the bank of Krisana Sarovara on Ekādasi².
- B. Mahesa in different forms:
 1. Tripurārī on the bank of Trambakesvara Sarovara in Brahmamuhurta that is in morning³
 2. Jayaśvara on the north bank of river Sravanti⁴
 3. Bhurbhuvēsa on Mount Saugandhika and in Śrīmāla City near Ksemankarī Hill⁵

1 Śrīmāla Purāna, XLVII 57-59

2 Ibid. XVI

3 Ibid. XIV 114

4 Ibid. XXX

5 Ibid. I 32

4. Isavareśvara and Gangeśvara on the bank of Kairat-Sarovara on the 14th day of every Paksa.¹
5. Kasyapeśvara² near Yaksakupa for worship to be free from the effects of a snake bite.
6. Durdhareśvara on Dādheli Steptwell near Yaksakupa.³
7. Candinātha or Candiśvara⁴ near Brahmakunda.
8. Valmikeśvara⁵ in the temple of Varāṇsyama.
9. Parasareśvara⁶ near the Sapatamātrika called as the tank of Mātrākipāla. The day of worship mentioned in Srimala Purana was the fourteenth day of Vaisakha Krisana Paksa.
10. Pratireśvara⁷ near Candinātha.

C. Brahmā: Was worshipped on Brahmasarovara.⁸

Other Gods:

1. Lord Sun: Was worshipped under the following names:

A. Jagatsvami⁹ B. Koṣikaditya¹⁰ C. Atmādhāra¹¹.

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1. Srīmāla Purāna, LX 28-31
 2. Ibid. XXII 60; XLI 19
 3. Ibid. XXXII 67
 4. Ibid. XXXVI 162
 5. Ibid. XLVIII 56-57
 6. Ibid. LXI 34-36
 7. Ibid. XL 11
 8. Ibid. XVII 50-53
 9. Ibid. XLIII, 1, 59-60
 10. Ibid. II 28-33 Adhi. 49
 11. Ibid. XLIV

Suryanarayana rātha yātra ceremony was performed in the month of Asvini. The temple of Jagatsvami¹ was totally ruined and new houses have been constructed since round about 1960. It was to the North of Candinātha Mahadeva.

2. Ganpati: Was worshipped in two forms:

- A. Govatsala Vināyaka² outside the temple of Candinātha
- B. Sidhivināyaka³ inside the temple of Candināth with its deity Sidhi.

Demi Gods:

- 1. ~~Naga Kankola in the temple of Mahesvara Mahadeva⁴~~
- 2. Naga Kankola is worshipped as Ksetrapāla on Yaksakupa near Vata, Ksani

Godesses of Divine Trinity:

- 1. Laksami: Laksami was worshipped under following forms:
 - A. Mahalakṣami was worshipped as Yogesvari⁵ on Trambaksarovara
 - B. Kamlālyā: In the old temple of Mahalakṣami Goddess Laksami was worshipped as Kamlā or Kamlālyā.⁶
 - C. Laksami⁷ in the Laksami temple in the city Bazara.
 - D. Sarvamanglā⁸: In the city Bazara in the above temple.
 - E. Menaksi: On Ambla Bāva mentioned as Ahalyā hridya kunda⁹.

- 1 A.M.J.Jackson, Bombay Gazetteer, Vol.I p.453 - only remained the soul source for this temple's knowledge.
- 2 Srīmāla Purāna, LVIII, 1, 29
- 3 Ibid. XXXIV, I, 42-46
- 4 Ibid. XXXIX 33-37
- 5 Ibid. VIII, 24-25
- 6 Ibid. LXII, 1, 65-70
- 7 Ibid. XLV, 67
- 8 Ibid. LIII, 30-32
- 9 Ibid. XLVI 24-32

2. Maheśvari¹ was worshipped with so many forms viz.
- A. Aryācandī^{1a} in Candināth temple
 - B. Bālagorī² on Bāla Samudra
 - C. Yogeśvari³ on Trambakasarovara
 - D. Canda Mundariyā⁴ in the temple of Candinātha
 - E. Camundā⁵ or Bakasthali Devi on Bakasarovara
 - F. Surabhimātā⁶ on Bakasarovara
 - G. Ksemankarī⁷ on Ksemankarī hill
 - H. Aristā⁸ ~~in the temple of Maheśvara~~ on Ambala Bāva
 - I. Nandari⁹ on the stepwell of Dādheḷi on the bank of Yaksakupa
 - J. Sidha Camundā¹⁰ on Bakasarovara
 - K. Bandhūdevī¹¹ on Saugandhika worshipped as Sundhāmātā

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- 1 Srīmāla Purāṇa, LVI 33-35
 - 1a Ibid. XXXV 1
 - 2 Ibid. LVII, 1, 61-64
 - 3 Ibid. XV I, 54-56
 - 4 Ibid. XXXV 2
 - 5 Ibid. XXIV, 1-2, 127
 - 6 Ibid. XXXVIII 6
 - 7 Ibid. XXXI, 1, 3, 67
 - 8 Ibid. LII 1, 34-35
 - 9 Ibid. LVI 24
 - 10 Ibid. LIX 1, 16-18
 - 11 Ibid. XXVII 1, 98

3. Sarasvatī and its forms:

- A. Ātmacandā¹ near the temple of Jāganāth Mahādeva, the temple is destroyed and built anew, it was near Brahmasāla².
- B. Dantā Devi³ on the same above mentioned ruins.

Demi Goddesses:

1. Vatayaksanī⁴: Ehotamata was worshipped as Vatyaksanī on the South bank of Yaksakupa.
2. Mukulnī⁵: Palavangi a messenger of Parvatī was worshipped on the hill of Ksemankari in Devi's temple.
3. Kharnanā⁶: The Devi came out of the rays of Sun and had its temple on Khāri Bāva, (Sarakupa).
4. Nāganī⁷: Kadru the mother of Nāgas was worshipped. The temple was in the heart of the city. The new temple is raised on the ruins of the old.

Days of worship:

The days for special worship of the different Gods and Goddesses were different, viz.:

1 Srimāla Purāna, L. 1

2 A.M.T.Jackson, Bombay Gazetteer, p.453 - The Brāhmasalas were destroyed by Ehillas and Brahmana came to Dholaka

3 Srimāla Purāna, XXV 1

4 Ibid. XX 1, 45

5 Ibid. XXIX 1, 88

6 Ibid. XXXIII 53

7 Ibid. XXVIII 1, 30-31

Illustration No.9
Jayasvara Mahadeva
Srimala Purana, XXX
Adesvara of Kori Village,
 between railway bridge
 and Raniwara, Bhinmal Road,
 Tehsil Bhinmal,
 Distt. Jalore, Rajasthan.



Illustration No.10
Isvaresvara Mahadeva
Isvaresvara of Gangesvara
 on Kairat Sarovara
Srimala Purana, XIX, LX
 (On the West bank of
 Karada tank, Bhinmal)

Illustration No.11

YAKSA

Yaksa on Yaksa Kupa

(On the North bank of
Jakopa Tank, Ehinmal)



Illustration No.12

Govaksa of Ksemankari
Temple

Śrīmala Purāṇa, XXIX

Sculpture of the Mandovara
of the Ksemakari Devi
Temple's back

Khimela, Khemali or

Ksemakari Devi on Sri or
Ksemankari Hill of Ehinmal

1. Viṣṇu (Varāha): Ekādasi of every Pakṣa
2. Mahesa: 14th day of Sukla Pakṣa
3. Brahmā: Ekama first day of every Pakṣa
4. Sun: 7th day of Āsvani Sukla Pakṣa
5. Camunda: 7th and 8th day of every Pakṣa
6. Mahālakṣmī: 8th day of Bhādra Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa

The Srīmala Purāṇa's author mentions in Adhīyāya LXXII that there were: (1) Gaṇpatis 1,000 (2) Kṣetrapāls 4,000 (3) Candī Devis 84 (4) Lingas of Mahādeva 11,000 (5) Temples 999 (6) Devī Durgā 18,000. The figures are exaggerated

VRATAS OF SRĪMALĪS:

For their own purification the Srimalis performed several Vratas while for the religious ceremonies of others they performed the reading of Kathās and also some other religious functions.

The following were some of the religious ceremonies of those times:

1. Mahālakṣmī Vrata¹: It was performed on the 8th day of Bhādra Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa. Mahālakṣmī was worshipped through a Aṣṭādala Padama (eight petalled lotus) on every leaf of the Padma there was a deity. The Padama may be prepared by Bilva Patras:
 - A. Devī Sata in the East
 - B. Devī Santa in Agnikona (South East)

1 Srīmala Purāṇa, LXV 4-27

- C. Devī Śilā in South
- D. Devī Viśalakṣi in Neritya (South West)
- E. Devī Lakṣmī in West
- F. Devī Kamalā in Vāyavya (North West)
- G. Devī Kaumārīkā in North
- H. Devī Vaisnavī in Isāna (North East)
- I. Nandana, Viṣṇu and Māhālakṣmī in the middle of the Padama.
- J. Gadhadhari Viṣṇu's ahvāna was done on the left side of the Padama and Kuṣumayudha on the right. The worship was done with singing and dancing through^{out} the night. It was performed for sixteen years. At the end of the last year the image of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa was gifted to a Brahmana.
2. Viṣṇu Durvāstmi¹ Vrata was performed on the 8th day of Bhadra Sukla Pakṣa.
3. Māhalya Srādha²: Was done in Bhadra Kṛisana Pakṣa. On this occasion a Yujna was performed to worship the Nāgas.
4. Vṛidhi Srādha³: It was performed to worship the Nāgas.

Other Samskara and customs: (Samskara after death)

1. Sapindi Karana⁴: It was done after the death of a person. According to Kokilmata the Parents of the woman performed it at their home after her death at her husbands house.
2. Kṣor Karana⁵ (Shaving of heads) was observed by males after the death of their relatives.

1 Sṛimāla Purāṇa, LXV 4-5

2 to 5 Ibid. LXXI 5-15

3. Dasāpinda Sradha¹ was observed after death.

Marriage ceremonies and marriage feasts:

1. Śrīmālī brāhmanas observed Astamangla² Vivāha as ordered by the Goddess Laksamī.
2. Laksamī³ was worshipped with five deities, Gori and others were worshiped on the first day of marriage.
3. Kuladipa Mahotsva⁴ was done before marriage.
4. Clothes used at the time of marriage were kept safe.⁵
5. The feasts of marriage:
 1. Asāsa⁶, Gorva⁷ and Kalevā⁸ were given as feast for marriage. Kalevā was given on the first day and Gorva on the last day.

Other functions and ceremonies:

1. Candisayatṛā⁹, Atmādhara ratha yātrā¹⁰ and Navarātri Mohotsva¹¹ were observed by all inhabitants of Śrīmāla.
On the Atmadhara ratha yātrā^{day} Śrīmālī brāhmanas dressed as Kirāta and rolled before the Lord Sun.
2. Pariksita Katha was read by the Śrīmālī brāhmana.¹²

1 to 3 Śrīmāla Purāna, LXXI 5-15

4 Ibid. LXIII 12-15

5 to 8 Ibid. LXXI 7-9

9 Ibid. XLVI 2

10 Ibid. XLIV 43

11 Ibid. LXXI 8-15

12 Ibid. LXVI 60-70

The Dharmasāstras, Vedas, Grammar and Jyotisa were studied.¹

1. Avatankas as Josi Candesa² denotes that they worked as Jyotisis.

2. Avatankas as Trivedi Salya³ means person who ran salas (schools).

3. Avtanka Avasthi Agnihotri⁴ Persons performing Yajna.

4. Vyas⁵ means Kathākars

Dave means one who is proficient in two Vedas and Trivedi in three Vedas⁶.

There were experts in the different sākhās of Vedas and śāstra as Mādhātī Sakha, and so on.⁷ Rig veda, Lāt yāni sūtra

Other religions: Jainism

The other religion dealt in Srīmāla Purāna is Jainism.

Gautama started this religion in Srīmāla⁸ because he was excommunicated by Srīmālī brāhmanas.⁹

1 Srīmāla Purāna, VII 2 and XLVII 9

2 Ibid. LXIX 1 Cakari

3 Ibid. LXIX 1st cankri and 7th cakri

4 Ibid. LXIX 5th and 6th cakri

5. Ibid. LXIX 8th cakri

6. Ibid. LXIX

7. Ibid. LXIX

8. Ibid. LXXIII

9 Ibid. LXXIII 36-78

The change of religion by Gautama stated religious conflict. It is given in the chapters LXXIII to LXXV. His wife Ahilya also changed her religion and was worshipped as Devi 'Arya' by Jains.¹

"Some inner conflicts as these arising from the membership in the church and in the business community form membership in primary groups and bureaucratic organizations, then this pattern of multiple group affiliation with conflicting interest and values can be profitably examined in terms of its functions significance for the structure of society,"² says Lewis A. Coser.

This is observed in the last Adhyayas LXXVII to LXXV. It started the downfall of the Brahmanical cult.³ The new sect divided the society in to two different religions.⁴

"The Jains reject the Vedas of the Brahmanas and do not observe Sradha for the propitiation of spirits of their ancestors and deceased relations". This general observation of Bannerman is found to be true also about Srimala.⁵ The Jains had their sangharama on the 10th gate in the East of the city.⁶

1 Srimala Purana, LXXIV 6-22

2 Lewis A. Coser, "The function of Social Conflict" pp.78

3. Srimala Purana, LXXIII 75-76, LXXIV 59-60

4 Ibid. LXXIV 57

5. A.D. Bannerman, I.C.S., Census of India, Vol. XXV, Rajputana, Part I, 1902 p.51

6 Srimala Purana, LXXIV 50

The speed of Jainism in Srimāla adversely affected their vriti (their earning in cash and kind from the people of Srimāla).

On complaints being lodged against the Jains to Goddess Lakshmi the following compromise was arrived at:

1. Jains would not criticise 'Srimāla Mahātmya'¹
2. They would not leave the religion of Lakṣmī and continue her worship to remain wealthy².
3. Vriti of Brahmanas would continue in Srimāla and the Brahmanas would worship Devī Ahilyā as Devī Āryā in Nandi Mukh Sradha at the time of marriage.³

The 'Srimāla Purāna recorded the sāstras and work of Gautama after the adoption of the Jain cult by the latter as follows:

1. Kalpasutra, 2. Bhagvatasutra, 3. Mahāvira Janam Sutra were written by Gautama.⁴

The works of Gautama as Jain Gandhara:

1. He divided Jain cult in 84 Gaccas and declared Tapagaṇḍa as prominent among them.⁵
2. He made six Ārās like Yuga of Hindus⁶.
3. He compiled the list of twenty-four Tīrthankaras.⁷

1 'Srimāla Mahātmya, LXXIII 85

2 Ibid. LXXIII 79-84

3 Ibid. LXXIII 116-118

4. Ibid. LXXIX 51-53

5 to 7 Ibid. LXXIX 54-55

Excepting the two religions - Jainism and Brahminism - no other religion is mentioned in the Purana. However, in the seventy-second chapter of Srimala Purana it is propessed that Kapila Muni would bring about a revival of Vaishnavism in Gujarat and thus reduce the influence of Jainism.¹

Other Sects.:

"There is one sanghama, with about a hundred priests, they are attached to the teaching of little vehicle (Hinayana)" says Hiouen Tsang.²

Srimala Purana is quite silent about this sect. There is the word 'Pakhandhi' used for the pig in Adhyaya of Kaka-Varaha,³ but it was not clear that Pakhandi means a Baudha. In Adhiyaya XXV Brahmaspati propogated the religion which followed the law of Ahimsa and wore Kaseyavastra. It is clear that the author tried to refer the Budha cult but he does not clearly mentioned the Budha religion.⁴

The above religious conflict disturbed the peace of Srimala and Laksami was taken to Patan by a Vaisya Sunanda in samvat 1203 Vaisakha Sukla Astami.⁵

1 Srimala Purana, LXXIII 14-15

2. Beal, Samuel Hiouen Tsang, Chinese Account of India, pp.640-641

3 Srimala Purana, XVI 1-31

4 Ibid. LXXV

5 Ibid. XXV 30-35

It is found that whole Purāna is composed to narrate the Brahmanical religion and to give the religious sanctity to its tirthas which start from chapter XIV and ends in chapter LXIV. In the list of the above fifty tirthas, it is found that the greatest number of the tirthas are of Yogesvari, called as MahaLaksami, Mahegvari and Maha Sarasvati also. The tirthas are 14 in number, out of which 11 are of Camunda and of Laksami and one of Sarasvati. The second number comes to the Tirthas of Mahadeva which is 10 only but Lord Visnu is worshipped only at two places in the form of Lord Varaha. The same number is of Lord Sun, and Vinayaka. As it is claimed as a pauranic fact that MahaLaksami, MahaKali and MahaSarasvati are originated by MahaLaksami.¹ So the greatest number of the tirthas of MahaLaksami i.e. all the deities of Trinity Devatas had made the author to compose the Purana of Devi Sri and narrated the Mahatmya of its city Srimala.

The second religious and social pattern of Srimali Castes which is noted is that the puranakara and the society of Srimala were not confined to a particular sect related to Siva or Visnu cult. They may be called 'Smārata' as they did not criticise any of the Lords or their deities in the Purana. It is found true upto this day. The Jains of

1 Dave Kanchiyalal Bhaishanker, Gujarata-nu-Murtividhana

Srimala (Bhinmal) are also catholic in their attitude and offer worship to God Vārahasyama and Goddess Laksami.

These facts seem to indicate that Srimala Purana not only glorifies 'Sri' in her different aspects but also her city Srimala.