

THE DATE OF VIDYĀNANDA : LITERARY AND EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

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Vidyānanda, and Māṇikyanandi (of the *Parīkṣāmukha* fame), the pontiffs of the Southern Church, alongwith Siddharṣi (active c. A. D. 880-920)¹ of the Northern Church, belong to the last batch of the great epistemologists within the ambit of the Brhad-Nirgrantha tradition. Vidyānanda's known works, some of which are famous, are the *Tattvārtha-śloka-vārttika*², the *Aṣṭasahasrī*³, the *Yuktyanuśāsanālaṅkāra*⁴, the *Vidyānanda-mahodaya*⁵, the *Āpta-parīkṣā*⁶, the *Pramāṇa-parīkṣā*⁷, the *Patra-parīkṣā*⁸, the *Śatyaśāsana-parīkṣā*⁹, and the *Śrīpura-Pārśvanātha-stotra*¹⁰. The writers of this century had for long been placing him between the last quarter of the eighth and the first quarter of the ninth century A. D. and thus to the pre-medieval times. While late K. B. Pathak is one of the earliest to situate him in c. A. D. 816, but without producing much supporting evidence, it was Darbarilal Kothiya who collected much of the vital evidence which had bearing on the issue and presented it in his "Introduction" in Hindi to Vidyānanda's *Āpta-parīkṣā* where he almost convincingly fixed his date to c. A. D. 775-840¹¹. Kothiya's main points (which incidentally includes, according to his method of investigation, an observation that Vidyānanda did not anywhere refute Vācaspati Miśra, the famous mid 9th century scholiast and commentator of the works belonging to various *darśanas*) had been summarized by Gokul Chandra Jain in his "Introduction" in Hindi to the *Satyaśāsan[a] Parīkṣā*, pp. 29-31. Nathmal Tatiya, in his prefatory paper, "A compendium of Vidyānanda's *Satyaśāsana-parīkṣā*" to the *Satyaśāsan[a] Parīkṣā* edited by Jain, had, however, pointed out that Vidyānanda, in the *Satyaśāsana-parīkṣā*, had in point of fact quoted an inaugural verse from the *Bhāmātī-ṭīkā* on the *Nyāya-vārttika* of Udyotakara (c. 6th-7th cent. A. D.) as cited by Vācaspati Miśra, and also had drawn attention to a reference by Vidyānanda to Miśra himself at another place there as "*Nyāyavārttikakāra*"¹². Seemingly based on the indicators in Tatiya's prefatory, Jain, in his aforementioned "Introduction," cited the relevant verse and the phrase from Vidyānanda, which went against Kothiya's assertion that Vidyānanda did not refute Vācaspati Miśra¹³. Vidyānanda, on this showing, has to be placed some time after A. D. 850. Since the style of writing of Vidyānanda (as of Siddharṣi's) and also the phrasing, choice of words, as well as approach betray the colour and flavour of medievalism, further doubts arise about his so far conceded early date.

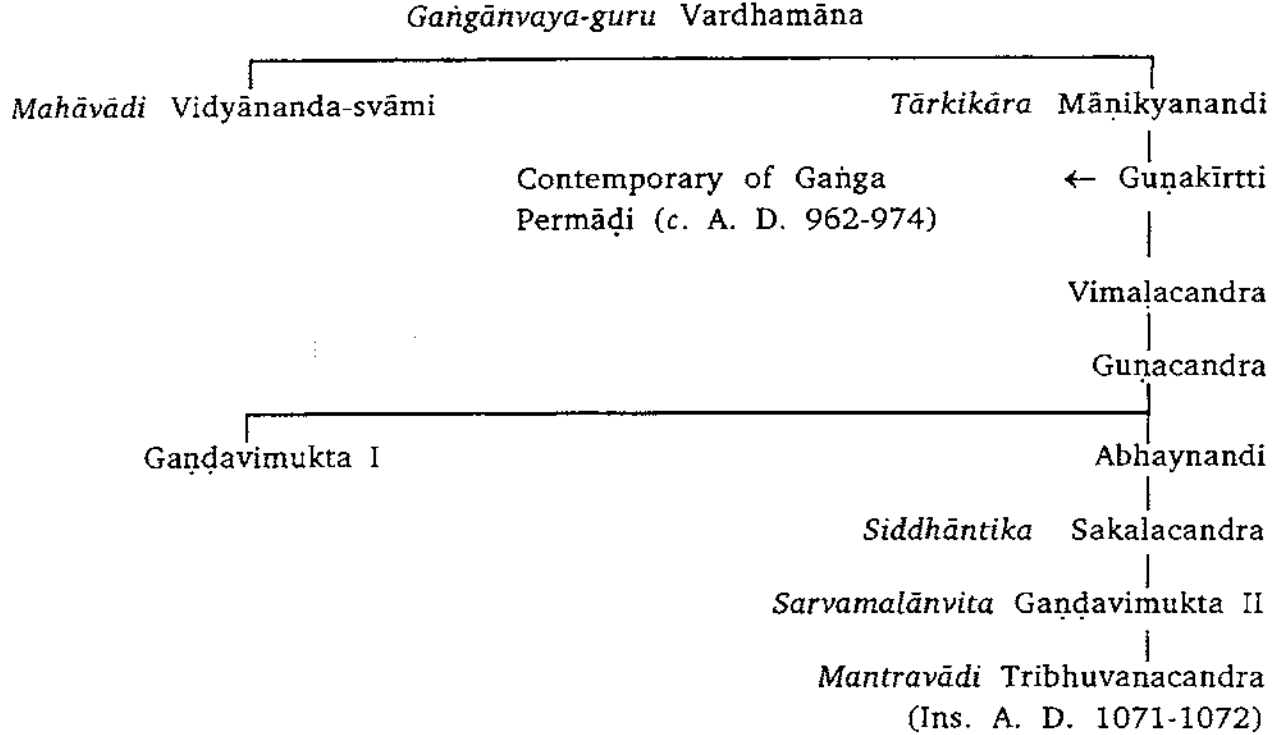
In point of fact, the suspicion is well-founded as will now be shown. For determining Vidyānanda's more precise date, a re-engraved copy in c. mid 12th century of an earlier inscription of ś.s.993/A. D. 1071-1072 from Gāvarvāḍ (medieval Gāvarivāḍa) in Karnataka¹⁴ is very helpful. In this inscription, the donee is a Digambara Jaina divine Tribhuvanacandra whose hagiological history is given, and therein Vidyānanda finds a mention as a confrère of Māṇikyanandi. (See the Table appended at the paper's end.)

The inscription gives one information which is crucial in determining Vidyānanda's date. It states that Gaṅga Permāḍi (Satyavākya Permāṇaḍi *alias* Mārasimha II (who is not the Gaṅga prince Satyavākya Rācamalla II), founded a Jaina temple at Anṇigere (Annigeri) in memory of his father Gaṅga Būtuga II (and this is not Būtuga I as Kothiya had determined, or surmised or may be had depended on some other earlier scholar's determination) and handed it over to Guṇakīrtti, the disciple of Māṇikyanandi; and Māṇikyanandi has been mentioned there as a confrère, possibly senior, of Vidyānanda. The known dates, according to the available inscriptions, of Gaṅga Permāḍi fall between c. A. D. 962 and 974. The Anṇigere temple, therefore, may plausibly have been founded and made over to Guṇakīrtti during those years. Assuming that Guṇakīrtti's guru Māṇikyanandi by that date was not alive and Guṇakīrtti himself was fairly advanced in age, the date of Māṇikyanandi, and hence of Vidyānanda, can be broadly bracketed between A. D. 900-950 or about 100-125 years posterior to what had been surmised by Kothiya and the writers before¹⁵ and after him. In this connection Barnnet's remarks are worth noting. "One is tempted to identify this pair of scholars with the famous Vidyānanda-Pātrakesari and the latter's disciple Māṇikyanandi, who wrote the *Parīkshā-Mukha* and its commentary *Pramēya-chandrikā*. But Mr. Pathak has shown reasons for believing that Vidyānanda-Pātrakēsari is referred to in the preface of Jinasēna's *Ādi-purāṇa*, and that the former was an older contemporary of Māṇikyanandi, the author of *Parīkshā-mukha*; and Jinasēna's latest date is Śaka 820 (J.B.B.R.S. 1892, p. 219 ff.) Now the Māṇikyanandi of our inscription must have been living shortly before Śaka 890, since his disciple Guṇakīrtti was contemporary with the Gaṅga Permāḍi, hence the gap between the two dates cannot be bridged over."¹⁶

But Jinasena in the *Ādipurāṇa* (c. A. D. 830-839) referred to Pātrakesari and not to Vidyānanda: For Vidyānanda and Pātrakesari, though for long confounded, are not the same persons. Pātrakesari is an earlier Digambara epistemologist who flourished some time in the seventh century as was conclusively proven by Jugalkishor Mukhtar¹⁷. Also, Māṇakyanandi was not the disciple but, as has been shown, the confrère of Vidyānanda as is clear from the Gāvarvāḍ inscription. And the temporal bracket of the concerned Gaṅga Permāḍi's activities is c. A. D. 962-974. The epithets *mahāvādī* (the great dialectician) for Vidyānanda and *tārkikārka* (the sun among logicians) for Māṇikyanandi used in the inscription, leave no doubt that no other Vidyānanda and Māṇikyanandi but those two illustrious epistemologists are implicit in that context. Likewise, this is the only inscription which mentions these two notable figures. Also, the divine Tribhuvanacandra's claim of succession from those two illustrious pontiffs does neither seem spurious nor a pretence. No attempt at appropriation of these great names by way of establishing a glorious lineage for himself can be smelled in the draft; or else, some other wellknown names such as Samantabhadra, Pātrakesarī, Devanandi, and Akalaṅkadēva could as well have figured. The hagiography has all the

appearance of being unambiguous and hence of indubitable genuineness. The temporal bracket of Vidyānanda, on this showing, can now firmly be ascertained to have been between A. D. 900 and 950 as noted earlier in the discussion¹⁸.

Mūla Saṅgha-Nandi Saṅgha (Vaḷgāra-gaṇa)



ANNOTATIONS :

1. Siddharṣi's most famous works are the *Upamitibhavaṇaprapaṇcā-kathā* (Sanskrit) (A. D. 905) and his commentary in Sanskrit (c. A. D. 900) on the *Upadeśamālā* of Saṅghadāsa gaṇī (c. mid 6th cent. A. D.). Recently, I have shown that the *Nyāyāvatāra*, a famous *dvātrimśikā* in Sanskrit on the Nirgrantha *pramāṇaśāstra*, is not the work of Siddhasena Divākara (c. A. D. 400-444) as had been held by many but of Siddharṣi: (Cf. "The Date and Authorship of *Nyāyāvatāra*", *Nirgrantha I*, Ahmedabad 1996.) Also may be added the *Śakrastava* as Siddharṣi's work, though hitherto steadfastly, insistently, but wrongly attributed to Siddhasena Divākara.
2. This is a further commentary on the southern adoption of the *Tattvārthādhigama-sūtra* of Umāsvāti (c. A. D. 350-375), the latter work is called the *Tattvārtha-sūtra* in the fold of the Digambara Jaina sect.
3. This is an enlarged commentary incorporating the *Aṣṭaśatī* of Bhaṭṭa Akalaṅkadeva (active c. A. D. 730-780) on the *Āptamīmāṃsā* of Samantabhadra (c. A. D. 575-625).
4. The work is a commentary on the *Yuktyanuśāsana* of Samantabhadra.
5. Vidyānanda has referred to this work in his *Tattvārtha-śloka-vārttika* and in

the *Aṣṭasahasrī*. The work till now is unavailable.

6. The work has been inspired by the inaugural verse of the *Sarvārthasiddhi-ṭīkā* on the *Tattvārtha-sūtra* by Pūjyapāda Devanandi (active c. A. D. 635-680).
7. Probably inspired by Akalaṅkadeva's *Pramāṇa-saṅgraha* as well as plausibly some other works of a few preceding authors.
8. It embodies a critical analysis on the characteristics of 'patra'.
9. The work compares the epistemological stands of other philosophical schools with that of the Nirgrantha. Ed. Gokul Chandra Jain, JMJGSG No. 30, Calcutta-Varanasi-Delhi 1964. The information in annotations 1-9, 11, and 12 in this paper has been abstracted from Gokul Chandra's "Introduction" in Hindi of the selfsame work, pp. 32-34.
10. This is a hymn addressed to Jina Pārśva of Śrīpura, the latter place was a *tīrtha* in that period, situated as it probably was somewhere in Karnataka.
11. Cf. G. C. Jain, "Introduction" to SSP.
12. Tatia, "A Compendium," p. 13.
13. Jain, p. 8. There is also other evidence inside Vidyānanda's work. For example his citing from Sūreśvara Miśra's *Sambandha-vārttika*. Sūreśvarācārya was the principal disciple of Śaṅkarācārya whose traditional date is A. D. 780-812. The reference to 'Satyavākyadhīpa' in some of the Vidyānanda's works had been taken by Kothiya (and possibly by Pathak) as Gaṅga Rācamalla Satyavākya, the nephew and successor of Gaṅga Śivamāra I (Jain, "Introduction," p.31.) However, "Satyavākya" was also the title of Gaṅga Permānaḍi (Mārasimha II) (c. A. D. 963-974), son of Gaṅga Būtuga II. And it is he who is implied in the context under discussion.
14. Cf. L. D. Barnett, "Two inscriptions from Gawarwad and Annigeri of the Reign of Somesvara II : Saka 993 and 994," *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, 1919-20, pp. 337-348.
15. Cf. Mahendrakumar Jain, "2. The Authors, T. Vidyānanda ;," *Siddhivinishchaya-tika of Shri Anantaviryacharya, the commentary on Siddhivinishchaya and its Vritti of Bhatta Akalanka Deva*, 7 Jnānapītha Murtidivī Jain, Granthamālā, SG 22, V.S. 2015 (A. D. 1959), pp. 49, 50. Pt. Jugal Kishor Mukhtar also believed Vidyānanda to be of ninth century. (Cf. "Svāmī Pātrakesarī aur Vidyānanda," *Jaina Sāhitya aur Itihāsa par Viśada Prakāśa*, (Hindi). Calcutta 1965, p. 652.
16. Cf. Barnett, pp.338, *infra* 2.
17. Cf. "Swāmī Pātrakesarī," *Jaina Sāhitya aur Itihāsa*. pp.637-667.
18. Vidyadhara Johrapurkar, in his "Introduction", summarizes the content of the Gāvarvāda inscription but offers no comment on the implications which have a vital bearing on the date of Vidyānanda as also of Māṇikyanandi. (Cf. *Jaina Śilālekha Saṅgraha*, MDJG No. 48, Varanasi V. N. 2491/A. D.1964, pp. 10, 11.)