What were the contents of the Drṣṭivāda?

Jaina tradition is unanimous as to the complete and irretrievable loss of the twelfth Anga, the Drṣṭivāda, at an early date—yet it is able to furnish surprisingly exact and detailed particulars about its divisions, subdivisions, and contents. A good deal of these statements are obviously fictitious: nobody is likely to believe that e.g. the Nānappavāya-puṣva consisted of 9999999, or the Saccappavāya-puṣva of 10000006 (or 10000060) words. But even apart from such monstrosities, it is quite generally speaking the very exactness and detailedness of the statements concerning an avowedly long lost text that renders those statements suspicious; as A. Weber aptly put it as early as in 1883, “one can indeed give very rich details if one consults only one’s imagination”. Actually Western scholars have come to regard the tradition about the contents of the Drṣṭivāda as spurious in that sense that, though the (partly unintelligible) titles of some sections and sub-sections may be genuine, the lost Anga did not contain what is ascribed to it by the canonical table of contents and by the claims of a great number of most diverse texts and subjects to be derived from or based on the Drṣṭivāda; in the words of Schu-bring: ‘The 12th Anga, under the title of a ‘discourse on (heterodox) views’............., was an instruction to apology and quite naturally fitted closely in the doctrine laid down in Angas 1-11. In the course of time it was lost. Jacobi (SBE 22, XLV) explains this fact by saying that later generations thought the discourses of their early predecessors not to be important any longer. It is more likely that their preservation appeared to be undesirable since the study of such disputes was apt to arouse heretical thoughts and activities.”

The traditional claims to descent from the Drṣṭivāda include those of the (post canonical) Svetāmbar Karmagranthas and of their Digambar counterparts, the famous “Siddhānta” texts of Mudbidri, the Śakṭhaṅgagama and the Kasayaprabhāta. When

1) No less fantastic, completely unreal figures are given in Sāmavāyanga and Nandā, for the existing Angas 1-11.
2) Indische Studien vol. 16, p. 358.
3) The Doctrine of the Jainas, p. 75.
these texts were at last made accessible through the indefatigable endeavours of Hiralal Jain, they were hailed by him on the title-page of his first edition as “throwing light for the first time upon the only surviving pieces of the lost Drśṭivāda, the 12th Anga of the Jain canon.” His opinion is shared by another leading Jain scholar of India, A. N. Upadhye. In a paper read at the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists in Delhi and entitled “The problem of the Purvas : their relics traced”, he accepts the claim of the Mudbidri texts to be based on portions of the 2nd and 5th Purvas and ascribed the loss of these Purvas to the intricacy of their subjects: “The details contained in these works are highly elaborate and difficult and deal with the intricacies of the Karma doctrine...........Even from these relics, of which only one or two (allied) Mss. are preserved only in one locality, it can be justly surmised that such Purva texts were not studied on a very large scale, because they dealt with dry details of the Karma doctrine which were not of general interest and the study of which was even denied to many. In course of time the number of monks studying such texts gradually dwindled down; and when the Sangha pooled together the entire canonical literature, this minority of monks perhaps did not cooperate in this work with the result that even these relics of Purvas remained in isolation and were studied in a very small circle.”

I must confess that I am not convinced by these arguments. The very intricacy of the Mudbidri texts speaks against, not for their high antiquity. In contents and style, they are typical products of later scholasticism, far removed from the much simpler language and spirit of old canonical texts. 1 Further, though these Digambar Karman texts actually ceased to be studied in modern times and were kept secret, the same is by no means true of their counter-parts and very close relations, the Śvetāmbar Karman-grantas (which have actually a number of stanzas in common with them), they were always known and accessible and never ceased to be read and studied though they are certainly no less intricate and technical than the Mudbidri texts. The intricacy and technicality of these late scholastic works can have nothing to do with the early loss of the ancient Drśṭivāda.

That any real knowledge of the contents of the 12th Anga had vanished at a relatively early time is shown with particular clearness by a hitherto unnoticed passage of the Āvasyaka Cūrṇi, that extremely rich but as yet hardly tapped source of early medieval Jain scholarship. It seems interesting enough to be quoted in full and is offered here as a modest contribution to the Drśṭivāda problem. On p. 35 of the printed edition 1 we read :

1) For the contrast in style and spirit between old canonical and later scholastic texts of my “Ārya stanzas of the Uttarajjāhāy” (Academy of Mainz, 1966), p. 179 f., 184 ff.

2) Published by the sri Rsabhdevji Keśrimalji Śvetāmbar Samsthā Ratlām, Indore 1928.
What were the contents of the Drstivāda?

iyāniṃ angapavittham bāhiram co doṇ. vi bhaņaṃti angapavittham Āyāro jāva Dittivāno, aṅangapavittham Avassagam tav-vairittaṃ ca. Ā vasagam Sāmāya-mādi Paccakkhaṇa-pajjavasagaṃ; vairittaṃ kāliyam ukkāliyam ca. tattha ukkāliyam anegavīhaṃ, tam jaha : Dasa-vēyāliyam Kappiyākappiyam evem-ādi. kāliyam pi anegavīhaṃ tam jaha : Utaṇajhayanaṇi evam-ādi,


“Now will be taught Angapavista and (Anga) bahira. Angapavista is (the Angas from) Ācāra to Drstivāda; non-Angapavista is Āvaṣyaka and non-Āvaṣyaka. The Āvaṣyaka begins with the Sāmāya and ends with the Prāyatikhyāna; non-Āvaṣyaka is kālika (to be studied during regular study hours) and utkalika (to be studied outside regular study hours). Of these utkalika is a plurality (of texts) viz. Dasavaikālika, Kalpikākalpika and so on; kālika, too, is a plurality (of texts), viz. Uttaradhyāya etc.

Here the disciple raises the following objection: ‘The Drstivāde contains the totality of speech (i.e. all that has ever been, or can ever be, expressed in words), therefore it would have been appropriate (for the Jina) to teach that alone. The Ācārya answers ‘That is quite right; yet the rest (of the sacred texts, the śrutajñāna) is taught for the sake of the dull-headed, the short-lived, the women, etc. In this (enumeration), there are many dull-headed people who are unable to study the Drstivāda; of the short-lived, the life time would not suffice; and women are as a rule empty, given to haughtiness, sensual and inconstant; therefore the Pre-eminent Texts) such as Arunovavāya, Nisiha etc. and Drstivāda are withheld from them. Here ‘empty’ means: unable to interpret coherently; ‘given to haughtiness’ means: arrogant; ‘sensual’ means: unable to restrain sensual passions in connection with the Bhūtavāda; ‘inconstant means: fickle-minded; therefore they shall not not

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(1) Edition wro g: vaogatam (being the “takara”, ga misread for ma); cf. below the quotation from Visesavasyakabhsaya.
(2) Cf. Hemachandra’s rendering as atisayanty adhyayanani in his commentary on Visesavasyakabhsaya 552 quoted below.
(3) Bhūtavāya is one of ten names of the Dittihiva enumerated, Thananga sutra 742; Abhaya-deva explains very briefly: bhutaḥ, sadbhutah, padarthas, tesam vado Bhūtavā dah. If this explanation is correct, the title Bhūtavāda stresses the refutation of the heretical drstis exclusively named in the ordinary title Drstivāda. Cf. also the two longer explanation of Hemachandra ad Visesavasyakabhsya 551 quoted below.
profit from obtaining that (part of) śrūta-jñāna. For this reason the Pre-eminent Texts are forbidden to them."

The above passage is versified by Jina bhadra in the two stanzas Viśeṣa-
śyaka bhāṣya 551 f. and expatiated upon by Maladharī Hemacandra as follows:

............Pūrvaḥ abhidhiyante. teṣu ca niḥśeṣam api vāṃśayam avatarati;
ātaś caturdāśa-pūrvatmakaḥ dvādaśam evangam astu, kim śeṣaṅga-viracanena
angabāhyā-srūta-racanena vā? ity āsankyaḥ:
ji' va ya Bhūyāvā savvassa vaomayassa oyāro
nijīhaṇā, tahavi hu dummehe pappa itthi ya. 551
āsasa-viśeṣa-viśāya samagra-vastu-stomasya bhūtasya, sadbhūtasya, vādo,
bhanjanām, yatrasau Bhūtavādah; athāvā: anugata vyāvṛttapriśa-dharma-Kalāpan-
vitānām sabheda-prahedānām bhūtānām: praṇānām vādo yatrasau Bhūtavado,
Dṛṣṭivadāḥ, dirghatvām ca tākaraśyarsātvāt. tatra yady api Dṛṣṭivāde sarvaswayi
vāṃśayasyavatāro 'sti, tathāpi durmedhasām, tad-avādharaṇady-ayogānām manda-
matinām, tathā śravakadinām striṇam canugrahatham niryūhaṇā, viracana śeṣa-
śrutaṃyeti-
nanu striṇām Dṛṣṭivādā kim iti na diyate? ity āha:
tucchā gārava-bahula cal indiyā dubbala dhi'ī ya
iya aíses ' ajjhayaṇā Bhūyāvdo ya no 'cthiṇām. 552

yadi hi Dṛṣṭivadāḥ striyāḥ katham api diyeta, tādā tucchadi-svabhāvatayā
'ahō aham, yā Dṛṣṭivadām api pathāmi! ity evam garvadhīmāta-mānasasau puruṣa-
paridhava disv api prārvitaṃ vidhāya durgatim abhīgachet. ato niravādhi-krpa-nira-
niradhibhiḥ paranugrahā-pravṛttair bhagavadbhis tirthakrāit Uttānā-Samutthānā
srutadīny atisayanty adhyayanaṇi Dṛṣṭivadās ca striṇam nanu-jañataḥ. anugrahath-
ham punas tāsām api kincic chrutam deyam ity ekādasangadi-viracanam saphalam.

The passages quoted here might at first sight suggest that at the time of their
composition the Dṛṣṭivadā still was a regular object of study for able-minded males; a
more attentive reading will soon make it clear that on the contrary they merely testify
to a firmly established if somewhat naive belief that “the Dṛṣṭivadā contains every-
thing” a belief obviously betraying complete ignorance of the real contents of the
long-lost text and, on the other hand, conveniently permitting to derive from “the
Dṛṣṭivadā” or “the Purvaḥ” any text or subject which it was desired to invest with
canonical dignity. I know of no other passage where the universality of contents of
the Dṛṣṭivadā is claimed so openly and so bluntly. And this bluntness and naivety is
no doubt the reason why, significantly; the great Haribhadra in his Āvasyaka Tikā
omits our passage altogether: as in many other cases, he eliminates what he feels to
be obsolete or what does not come up to his more exacting standard of refined schol-
arship, he may also have been reluctant to reproduce the somewhat scathing remarks
about women. For the modern scholar, just what led him to reject the passage is
apt to enhance its interest.