BHATŘHARI AND DIŃNÅGA *

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The date of the great grammarian Bhartṛhari, author of the Vākyapadiya, which is regarded as a landmark in the literary history of India in as much as it forms the basis for determining the dates of several sankrit authors,¹ has been determined so far on the statements of Itsing in his, “Record of Buddhist religion”. The Chinese traveller has recorded that Bhartṛhari was a great grammarian, whose fame had spread all over India, that he was the author of the three works Vākyapadiya, the-commentary on the Mahābhāṣya and another work, Peina, (which may perhaps be the Prakirna Kanda or the third and last chapter of the Vākyapadiya), and that he died in about 650 A.D. i.e., forty years before the date of his record.² The accuracy with which Itsing has reported other contemporary events as well as about the extent of the Vākyapadiya itself has led scholars to assign Bhartṛhari to the seventh century A.D.

But new evidences which have come to light, completely falsify the statement of Itsing and push back the date of Bhartṛhari to the 5th century A.D.³

In the second Kānda of the Vākyapadiya, while describing how the science of grammar, which had been almost extinct, was restored and propagated by the great grammarians, Chandra and Vasurāṭa, Punyarāja, the commentator of the Vākyapadiya, mentions several times Vasurāṭa as the teacher of Bhartṛhari.⁴ In the Karika 490 of the Vākyapadiya⁵ Bhartṛhari himself seems to refer to his teacher Vasurāṭa by, ‘Guruṇa’ as is evident from the words

“‘The most important of all the dates given by I-tsing are those of Bhartṛhari, Jayāditya, and their contemporaries. They serve as a rallying-point for a number of literary men belonging to what I called the ‘Renaissance period of Sanskrit literature.’”

³ See—I-tsing and Bhartṛhari’s Vākyapadiya ; By Dr. C. Kunhan Raja contributed to the Krishnaswamy Iyengar Memorial Volume. (pp. 285-298).

⁴ See the comment of Puṇyarāja on Kārikā 486 of Kānda II :— न तेनावस्मधुरोर्स्तन्मवन्तो-वंचुराताद्य : कस्तिविव भाष्यार्पणविवध्वित्र्निमित्तमेवकं भवति। See Ibid II. 489 —
केन्द्रिष्य बहुर्स्तानीय बन्धावर्यस्तर्गुरुमुन्तीयान दत्त इति। तैः बलु यथावतु व्यक्तरणयं व्यक्तस्य स्वस्यं ततु उपस्य सत्तां व निष्याणं व्यक्तायां बहुखास्तिवं नीती विस्तरं प्राप्ति इत्यनुसूतते।

⁵ cf. II. 490b :—ग्रन्थोत्पु वधायमिवधायमसस्यः।

* Read at the 15th Session of the All India Oriental Conference.
of Punyarāja prefaced to the verse.⁶ Again a Jaina writer Simhasūrgani, who may be assigned to the beginning of the 6th century A.D., in his unpublished work, Nayacakratiṣṭha,⁷ a commentary on the Nayacakra of Mallavadin the senior,⁸ which is not now extent, mentions, twice in his work, Vasurāta as the Upādhyāya of Bhrāṭhari.⁹ This confirms the statement of Punyarāja and establishes that Vasurāta was a great grammarian of the day under whom Bhrāṭhari studied and that Bhrāṭhari often held views quite different from those of his master.

According to Paramārtha, Vasurāta was a brahmin and brother-in-law of Balāditya, a pupil of Vasubandhu.¹⁰ He was well-versed in grammar. He defeated Vasubandhu, through the intervention of Chandra, another great grammarian. This means that Vasurāta, Chandra, and Vasubandhu should be regarded as contemporaries and Bhrāṭhari, the pupil of Vasurāta, assigned to the 5th century A.D.

Another important piece of evidence, which I have discovered in my study of the Pramāṇa Samuccaya of Diṇṇaga, lends support to this view. In the fifth chapter of this work, which is devoted to the exposition of the Apoha theory of Diṇṇaga, the following two Karikas are found, which may be rendered into Sanskrit¹¹ as given below.

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Thigs-pa-daṅ. ni. tshogs. pa-yi,
chu. sog. rnam. la. rjod byed-ni l
graṅs daṅ. tshad. daṅ. dbyibs. rnam l
ltos. pa. med. par. I jug. par. byed l
deyibs. daṅ. kha. dog. yan. lag. rnam
khya. par. can. la. gaṅ. I jug. pa.
de. yi. yantag. la sgra-ni
rah tu. I jug. la. dun. asma yin.
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⁶ cf.: Ibid — अच बद्विन्ते योगलो विवाखं तन्त्रविष्टता वसुरात्सुरणा मण्यामयायम् संज्ञाय वासुल्यान्त्रनारिकोन्तो विश्वसुरात्सुय्यायम् श्रीशुभाभुद्विद्धिमयायम्
⁷ I am deeply grateful to Sri Jambu Vijayawami, Talegan — (Poona) for kindly lending a manuscript copy of this important work for my study.
⁸ Mallavādī, author of Dwājasāranaṇaṇayacakra should be distinguished from another Jaina writer of the same name who is the author of Nyayabindutika-Tippani.
⁹ cf. Nayacakratiṣṭha, folio 272a—
सौभाज्यक्षेप्यपरिचारी वाह्यान्त्रविष्टत्य इति भुव्यस्वामिदिग्यम्। वसुरात्स्य सर्वहृत्यप्राप्तः
¹¹ The two कारिकाः may be restored into Sanskrit as:—
1) छत्री समुदाये च वाहकः सर्वालिकः संज्ञावर्णस्यानालिकायेः प्रकटनेत।
2) संज्ञावर्णविवर्माविविष्टेः योष्टमः प्रकटद्वये प्रवृत्तिस्थलम्यः।
They are only Tibetan renderings of the two Kārikās occurring in the second Kāṇḍa of the Vākyapadiya of Bhartṛhari. This means that either Diṁnāga took the Kārikās from Bhartṛhari’s work or both Diṁnāga and Bhartṛhari took them from quite a different work. But there is no evidence to support the latter alternative. We learn from Jinendra-Buddhi, author of Viśālāmalaṭīkā on the Pramāṇa Samuccayavṛtti of Diṁnāga, that Diṁnāga is here referring to the views of Bhartṛhari. This evidently supports the former alternative that Diṁnāga is quoting from Bhartṛhari.

Now if Diṁnāga, a famous Buddhist logician of the 5th century A.D. quotes from the Vākyapadiya, how can we assign Bhartṛhari to the 7th century A.D.? We have only to conclude that Bhartṛhari, the author of the Vākyapadiya lived in the 5th century A.D. and that the statement of Itsing that Bhartṛhari died some forty years before the date of his record is incorrect.


\[\text{\textsuperscript{13} cf. Viśālāmalaṭīkā: Mdo. re folio 33lb. line 6ff: Kha. cig. tu gtsos. bor. cha tshas rnam la. 'jug. te 1 bha. rite. ha. ris. yis smras. pa 1 cha. sogs. rnam la zes pai sogs pai sgras. sa la. sogs pa. yoṅs su gzun ño. 1 के की ले अध्यात्मिक योग नवते। समुद्रिनां उपर्यु परित्यागितां च विविधवेदना परिप्रेक्ष्यः।}\]