

Reconsidering the Date of the Nirvāṇa of Lord Mahāvira

The Jaina writers usually, after equating their dating with the Śaka era, have concluded that after a period of 605 years and 5 months of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira, Śaka became king. (*Tiloyapaṇṇatti* 4 : 1499; *Paiṇṇayasuttāim* : I part : 1984 - *Titthogālīpaiṇṇayaṃ* : (623)).¹ On the basis of this postulate, even today, the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira is held to be 527 B.C. Among the modern Jaina writers, Pt. Jugal Kishore Mukhtar (1956 : 26-56), of the Digambara sect, and Muni Śrī Kalyana Vijaya (1966 : 159), of the Śvetāmbara sect, have also held 527 B.C. to be the year of the *Vira Nirvāṇa*. From about the 7th century A.D., with a few exceptions, this date has gained recognition. In the Śvetāmbara tradition, for the first time in the *Prakṛṇaka* entitled '*Titthogālī*,' (*paiṇṇayasuttāim* : I part : 1984 : *Titthogālī* 623) and in the Digambara tradition, for the first time in *Tiloyapaṇṇatti* (4 : 1499), it is clearly mentioned that 605 years and 5 months after the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira, Śaka became king. Both the texts were composed between 600 and 700 A.D. To the best of my knowledge, none of the earlier texts ever showed the difference between the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira and the Śaka era. But this much is definite that from about 600-700 A.D., it has been a common notion that the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira took place in the year 605 before Śaka. Prior to it, in the *Sthavirāvalī* of *Kalpasūtra* and in the *Vācaka* genealogy of the *Nandīsūtra*, the reference to the hierarchy of Mahāvira is found, but there is no mention of the chronology of the *Ācāryas* : therefore, it is difficult to fix a date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira on the basis of these texts. In the *Kalpasūtra* (Sūtra-147, p. 145) only this much is mentioned that now 980 years (according to another version 993 years) have passed since the *Vira Nirvāṇa*. This fact makes only this much clear that after 980 or 993 years of *Vira Nirvāṇa*, Ācārya Devarddhigaṇī Kṣamāśramaṇa finally edited this last exposition of the present Canon. Similarly, in *Sthānāṅga* (7 : 41), *Bhagavatisūtra* (9 : 222-229) and *Āvaśyaka Niryukti* (778-783),² alongwith the reference to Nihnavas, a reference to after how much time of Mahāvira's life-time and his *Nirvāṇa* were they prevalent is found. Here only there are some clues by comparing which with the external evidences of definite date, we can contemplate the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira.

There have been differences of opinion from the very beginning on the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira. Although, it has been clearly stated in *Tiloyapaṇṇatti*,³ a book recognised by the Digambara sect, that 605 years and 5 months after the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira, Śaka became the king, there are four different statements found in this book, which are as follows :

- i. 461 years after Vira Jinendra attained salvation, Śaka became the king.
- ii. 9785 years after Vira Bhagavān attained salvation, Śaka became the king.
- iii. 14793 years after Vira Bhagavān attained salvation, Śaka became the king.
- iv. 605 years and 5 months after Vira Jina attained salvation, Śaka became the king.

Besides this, in *Dhavalā*; (4 : 1 : 44 : p. 132-133)⁴, a commentary on *Śaṭkhaṇḍāgama*, there are three different statements as to after how many years of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira, Śaka (Śālivāhana Śaka) became the king :

- i. 605 years and 5 months after Vira Nirvāṇa.
- ii. 14793 years after Vira Nirvāṇa.
- iii. 7995 years and 5 months after Vira Nirvāṇa.

In Śvetāmbara tradition there are two clear opinions as to how much time after the *Nirvāṇa* of Lord Mahāvira Devarddhi's last assembly on Āgama was held. According to the first opinion, it was composed 980 years after the *Vira Nirvāṇa*, whereas according to the second it was composed 993 years after the event⁵.

It is significant also to note that in the Śvetāmbara tradition, there are two opinions regarding the date of Chandragupta Maurya's accession to the throne. According to the first, he ascended the throne⁶ in the year 215 of the *Vira Nirvāṇa*. However, in *Titthogālī Paiṇṇaya* only this much has been mentioned that (after *Vira Nirvāṇa*) the region of the Mauryas started 60 years after the Pālakas and 155 years

Paṭṭāvalī (p. 48) it is written that 155 years after the *Vīra Nirvāṇa* Candragupta became the king, (*Vīrāt 155 varṣe Candraguptonṛpaḥ*). According to this *Paṭṭāvalī*, the reign of Mauryan dynasty ended after 278 years of *Vīra Nirvāṇa*. Now the period of 189 B.C. as the end of the Mauryan dynasty can be justified only when the *Vīra Nirvāṇa* is accepted as to be 467 B.C. It is worth mentioning here, that the historians have accepted 187 B.C. to be the date of accession to the throne of Puṣyamitra. This second theory, presented by Hemacandra, is a hindrance in ascertaining the year 527 B.C. to be the year of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra.⁸ It is clear from these discussions that there has been a controversy regarding the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra even in ancient times.

Since the old internal evidences regarding the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra were not strong, the Western scholars on the basis of the external evidences alone, tried to ascertain the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra; and as a result many new theories came into light regarding the same. The following are the opinions of different scholars regarding the date of Mahāvīra's *Nirvāṇa* :

1. Hermann Jacobi⁹ (It is to be noted that initially Hermann Jacobi accepted the traditional date 527 B.C., but later on he changed his opinion), 476 B.C. He has accepted the reference found in the *Parīśiṣṭa Parva* of Hemacandra to be authentic which says that 155 years after the *Vīra Nirvāṇa* Candragupta Maurya ascended the throne, and he ascertained the date of Mahāvīra's *Nirvāṇa* on the basis of this reference only.

2. J. Charpentier¹⁰, 467 B.C., He followed the opinion of Hemacandra and ascertained that the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra as to be 155 Years before Chandragupta Maurya.

3. Pandit A. Shanti Raja Shastri¹¹, 663 B.C., He considered the Śaka Era to be the Vikrama Era and establish the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra as to be 605 years before the Vikrama Era.

4. Prof. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal,¹² 546 B.C., He has mentioned only the two traditions in his article "Identification of Kalki". He has not ascertained the date of Mahāvīra's *Nirvāṇa*. But at some other places he has considered 546 B.C. to be the date of Mahāvīra's *Nirvāṇa*, adding 18 years between Vikrama's birth and his accession to the throne (470+18) he fixes the date of Mahāvīra's *Nirvāṇa* as 488 years before Vikrama.

5. S.V. Venkateswara,¹³ 437 B.C., His assumption is based on the Anand Vikram Era. This Era came into vogue 90 years after the Vikrama Era.

6. Pandit Jugal Kishor Ji Mukhtar,¹⁴ 528 B.C. On the basis of various arguments, he has confirmed the traditional theory.

7. Muni Sri Kalyana Vijaya,¹⁵ 528 B.C., While confirming the traditional theory, he has tried to remove the inconsistencies of the theory.

8. Prof. P.H.L. Eggermont,¹⁶ 252 B.C., The basis of his argument is equating the incident of *Samghabheda* of Tiṣyagupta in the Jaina tradition, which took place during the life time of Mahāvīra in 16th year of his emancipation. With the incident of *Samghabheda* and the act of drying up of the Bodhi tree by Tiṣyarakṣita in the Buddha *Samgha*, which took place during the reign of Aśoka.

9. V.A. Smith¹⁷, 527 B.C., He has followed the generally accepted theory.

10. Prof. K.R. Norman¹⁸, About 400 B.C., Considering Bhadrabāhu to be Chandragupta's contemporary, he fixed the period of 5 earlier *Ācāryas* as 75 years, at an average of 15 years each, and thus fixed the date of Mahāvīra's *Nirvāṇa* as $320+75 = 395$ B.C.

In order to determine the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra, along with the Jaina literary sources we must also take into account the legendary and epigraphical evidence. We would follow the comparative method to decide which of the above-mentioned assumptions is authentic, and will give priority to the epigraphical evidences, as far as possible.

Ajātaśatru's accession to the throne Mahāvira's age must be about 50 years, because his *Nirvāṇa* is supposed to have taken place in the 22nd year of Ajātaśatru Kuṇika's rule. By deducting 22 years from his total age of 72 years, it is proved that at that time he was 50 years old (see *Vira Nirvāṇa Samvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā*, pp. 4-5). So far as Buddha's case is concerned, he attained his *Nirvāṇa* in the 8th year of Ajātaśatru's accession to the throne. This is the hypothesis of Buddhist writers. This hypothesis given rise to two facts. Firstly, when Mahāvira was 50 years old, Buddha was 72 (80-8), i.e. Buddha was 22 years older than Mahāvira. Secondly, Mahāvira's *Nirvāṇa* took place 14 years after Buddha's *Nirvāṇa* (22-8-14). It is worth mentioning here, that in the reference occurring in the *Dīghanikāya* (*Sāmaññaphalasutta* : 2 : 2 : 8), where Nirgrantha Jñāturputra and other five *Tīrthaṅkaras* have been called middle-aged, there is no mention of Gautama Buddha's age, but he must be 72 at that time because this event took place during the rule of Ajātaśatru Kuṇika and Buddha's *Nirvāṇa* took place in the 8th year of the rule of Ajātaśatru.

But contrary to the above-mentioned fact one finds another information in the *Dīghanikāya* that Mahāvira has attained *Nirvāṇa* during Buddha's life-time. The reference from the *Dīghanikāya* is as follows (*Pāsādikasutta* : 6 : 1 : 1)²⁰

"I heard this once that the Lord was residing in a palace built in the mango orchard of the Śākya known as *Vedhaññā* in Śākya (country).

At that time Niganṭha Nātaputta (*Tīrthaṅkara* Mahāvira) had recently died at Pāvā. A rift was created among the *Niganṭhas* after his death. They were divided into two groups and were fighting by using arrows of bitter words at one-another - "you don't know this *Dharmavinaya* (=Dharma), I know it. How can you know this *Dharma-vinaya*? you are wrong in ascertaining, (your understanding is wrong), I am rightly ascertained. My understandint is correct. My words are maningful and yours are meaningless. The things you should have told first you told in the end and vice-versa. Your contention is mindless and topsy-turvy. You presented your theory and withdrew. You try to save yourself from this allegation and if your have power, try to save yourself from this allegation and if you have power, try to resolve it. As if a war (-slaughtering) was going on among the *Niganṭhas*."

The house-holder disciples of the Niganṭha Nātaputta, wearing white dresses, also were getting indifferent,

distressed and alienated from the *Dharma* of *Niganṭha* which was not expressed properly (*durākhyāta*), not properly investigated (*duṣpravedita*), unable to redeem (*anairyāika*), unable to give peace (*ana-upāsama-Saṁvartanika*), not verified by any enlightened (*a-Samyak- Saṁbuddha-pravedita*) without foundation = a different *stūpa* and without a shelter."

Thus, we see that in the Tripiṭaka literature, on the one hand where Mahāvira has been described as middle-aged, on the otherhand, there is an information about the death of Mahāvira during the life-time of Buddha. Since, according to the sources based on Jaina literature, Mahāvira died at the age of 72, it is certain that both the facts cannot be true at the same time. Muni Kalyana Vijaya ji (*Vira Nirvāṇa Samvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā*, 1987, p. 12) has called the theory of Mahāvira *Nirvāṇa* during the life-time of Buddha as a mistaken concept. He maintains that the incident of Mahāvira's demise is not a reference to his real death, but to a hearsay. It is alos clearly mentioned in Jaina Agamic texts that 16 years before his *Nirvāṇa*, rumour of his death had spread, hearing which many Jaina *Śramaṇas* started shedding tears. Since the incident of the bitter-argument between Makkhaligōsāla, a former disciple of Mahāvira, and his other *Śramaṇa* disciples was linked with this rumour, the present reference from the *Dīghanikāya* about the dath of Mahāvira during the life time of Buddha is not to be taken as that of his real death, rather it indicated to the rumour of his death by burning fever caused by *Tejoleśyā*, hurled upon him by agitated and acutely jealous Makkhaligōsāla after dispute.

Buddha's *Nirvāṇa* must have taken place one year and few months after the rumour about Mahāvira's death, therefore, Buddha must have attained *Nirvāṇa* 14 years, 5 months and 15

While determining the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira, we would have to keep in our mind that the contemporaneity of Ācārya Bhadrabāhu and Sthūlibhadra with Mahāpadma Nanda and Chandragupta Maurya; of Ācārya Suhasti with Samprati; of Ārya Mañkṣu (Mangu), Ārya Nandila, Ārya Nāgahasti, Ārya Vṛddha and Ārya Kṛṣṇa with the period mentioned in their inscriptions and of Ārya Devarddhigaṇi kṣamāśramaṇa with king Dhruvasena of Valabhī, is not disturbed in any way. The historians have unanimously agreed that Chandragupta ruled from 317 B.C. to 297 B.C. (Majumdar : 1952 : p. 168; Tripathi : 1968 p. 139)., Therefore the same should be the period of Bhadrabāhu and Sthūlibhadra also. It is an undisputed fact that Chandragupta had wrested power from the Nandas and that Sthūlibhadra was the son of Śakṣāla, the minister of the last Nanda. Therefore, Sthūlibhadra must be the younger contemporary and Bhadrabāhu the older contemporary of Chandragupta. This statement that Chandragupta Maurya was initiated into Jaina religion, may or may not be accepted as authentic, still on the basis of the Jaina legends one must accept that both Bhadrabāhu and Sthūlibhadra were contemporary of Chandragupta. The main reason behind Sthūlibhadra's renunciation could be Mahāpadma Nanda's (the last ruler of the Nanda dynasty) misbehaviour with his father and ultimately his merciless assassination (*Titthogālīpāṇṇayanā* : 787 : *Pāṇṇayasuttāṇi* I part : 1984). Moreover, Sthūlibhadra was initiated by Sambhūtivijaya and not by Bhadrabāhu. At the time of first assembly on composition of Āgama held at Pāṭaliputra, instead of Bhadrabāhu or Sthūlibhadra, Sambhūtivijaya was the head, because only in that particular assembly it was decided that Bhadrabāhu will make Sthūlibhadra to study the Pūrva-texts. Therefore, it seems that the first assembly was held any time during the last phase of the Nanda rule. The period of the first assembly can be accepted as before 155 years of the Vira Nirvāṇa era. If we accept that both the traditional notions are correct and that Ācārya Bhadrabāhu remained Ācārya from Vira Nirvāṇa Saṁvat 157 to 170 and that Chandragupta Maurya was enthroned in 215 V.N., then the contemporaneity of the two is not proved. It concludes that Bhadrabāhu had already died 45 years before Chandragupta Maurya's accession. On this basis Sthūlibhadra does not even remain the junior contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya. Therefore we have to accept that Chandragupta Maurya was on throne 155 years after *Vira Nirvāṇa*. This date has been accepted by *Himvanta Sthavirāvali* (Muni Kalyana Vijaya : Vikram Era 1987 : p.

178)²² and *Parīṣiṣṭa Parva* (8 : 339) of Ācārya Hemacandra also. On this basis only the contemporaneity of Bhadrabāhu and Sthūlibhadra with Chandragupta Maurya can be also proved. Almost all the *Paṭṭāvalis* accept the period of Bhadrabāhu as an Ācārya to be 156-170 V.S. (*Paṭṭāvali Parāga Saṁgraha*, p. 166; *Vividhagacchīya Paṭṭāvali Saṁgraha* : I part : 1961 : pp. 15, 37, 48). In Digambara tradition also the total period of the three *Kevalis* and the five *Śrutakevalis* has been accepted as 162 years. Since Bhadrabāhu was the last *Śrutakevali*, according to the Digambara tradition his year of demise must be the year 162 of the Vira Nirvāṇa Saṁvat. Thus, despite the fact that there is a difference of 8 years regarding the period of demise of Bhadrabāhu as accepted by the two traditions, the contemporaneity of Bhadrabāhu and Chandragupta Maurya is fully justified. Muni Shri Kalyana Vijaya (*Śrī Paṭṭāvali Parāga Saṁgraha* : 1966 : 52; *Vira Nirvāṇa Saṁvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā* : p. 137)²³, in order to prove the contemporaneity of Bhadrabāhu and Chandragupta Maurya, accepted the period of Sambhūtivijaya as an Ācārya to be 60 years in place of 8 years. In this way, while accepting the date of the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvira as 527 B.C., he has tried to establish the contemporaneity of Bhadrabāhu and Chandragupta Maurya. But it is only his imagination (*Vira-Nirvāṇa Saṁvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā* - p. 137 & *Paṭṭāvali Parāga Saṁgraha* - p. 52)²⁴; there is no authentic proof available. All the Śvetāmbara *Paṭṭāvalis* accept the date of the demise of Bh

Nirvāṇa and that Vikramārka lived 410 years after the *Vīra Nirvāṇa* (see *Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṁvat aur Jaina Kāla-Gaṇanā*, p. 177). This also confirms the theory of accepting the date of Mahāvira's *Nirvāṇa* to be 467 B.C.

Again, in the Jain tradition the contemporaneity of Ārya Suhasti and the king Samprati is unanimously accepted. The historians have acknowledged the period of Samprati to be 231-221 B.C. (Tripathi : 1986 : p. 139)²⁵ According to the Jain *Paṭṭāvalis*, the period of Ārya Suhasti as *Yuga Pradhāna Ācārya* was 245-291 V.N.S. If we base our calculation on the assumption that *Vīra Nirvāṇa* took place in 527 B.C., we will have to accept that Ārya Suhasti became the *Yuga Pradhāna Ācārya* in 282 B.C. and died in 236 B.C. In this way, if we consider 527 B.C. to be the year of *Vīra Nirvāṇa*, then, in no way, the contemporaneity of Ārya Suhasti and the king Samprati could be established. But, if we accept 467 B.C. to be the year of *Vīra Nirvāṇa*, then the period of Ārya Suhasti as an *Ācārya* starts from 222 B.C. (467-245=222). On this basis the contemporaneity is established, but the reign of Samprati extends to only one year during the Ācaryaship of Ārya Suhasti. But Ārya Suhasti had come in contact with Samprati when he was a prince and the ruler of Avanti, and may be at that time Ārya Suhasti was an influential Muni in spite of not being a *Yuga Pradhāna Ācārya* of the *Samgha*. It is remarkable that Ārya Suhasti was initiated by Sthūlibhadra. According to the *Paṭṭāvalis*, Sthūlibhadra was initiated in 146 V.N.S. and died in 215 V.N.S. It can be derived from this fact that 9 years before Chandragupta Maurya's accession, and during the last Nanda king (Nava Nanda), Ārya Sthūlibhadra had already been initiated. If, according to the *Paṭṭāvalis*, the total life of Ārya Suhasti is considered to be 100 years and his age at the time of initiation to be 30 years, then he must have been initiated in 221 V.N.S. i.e. 246 B.C. (assuming the date of *Vīra Nirvāṇa* in 467 B.C.) It does prove the contemporaneity of Ārya Suhasti with Samprati, but then, there is a difference of 6 years, if he is accepted to have been initiated by Sthūlibhadra himself because 6 years before he got initiated, in 215 V.N.S., Sthūlibhadra has already died. It is also possible that Suhasti may have got initiated at the age of 23 or 24, and not at the age of 30. Even then, it is certain that on the basis of the references made in *Paṭṭāvalis*, the contemporaneity of Ārya Suhasti and Samprati is possible only by accepting the date of *Vīra Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C. This contemporaneity is not possible if the date of the Mahāvira *Nirvāṇa* is accepted as 527 B.C. or any other later date.

Thus, by accepting the date of the *Vīra Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C. the contemporaneity of Bhadrabāhu and Sthūlibhadra with Mahāpadma Nanda and Chandragupta Maurya and that of Ārya Suhasti with Samprati can be proved. All other alternatives fail to prove their contemporaneity. Therefore, in my opinion, it will be more appropriate and logical to accept 467 B.C. as the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira.

Now we shall consider the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira also on the basis of some of the inscriptions. Out of five names - Ārya Maṅgu, Ārya Nandil, Ārya Nāgahasti, Ārya Kṛṣṇa and Ārya Vṛddha, mentioned in Mathurā inscriptions (see *Jaina Śilālekha Saṁgraha*, articles 41, 54, 55, 56, 57 and 63) first three are found in *Nandisūtra Sthavirāvalī* (*Gāthā* : 27-29) and remaining four names are found in *Kalpasūtra*. According to the *Paṭṭāvalis*, the period of Ārya Maṅgu as a *Yugapradhāna Ācārya* is considered to be in between 451 and 470 V.N.S. (*Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṁvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā*, p. 112). On accepting the date of the *Vīra Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C. his period extends from 16 B.C. to 3 A.D. and if it is 527 B.C. his period extends from 76 B.C. to 57 B.C. Whereas, on the basis of the inscriptions (*Jaina Śilālekha Saṁgraha* article No. 54) his period stands as Śaka Saṁvat 52 (Haviṣka year 52), i.e. 130 A.D. In other words, while considering the period of Ārya Maṅgu as indicated by *Paṭṭāvalis* and inscriptions there is

of Ārya Maṅgu.

So far as Ārya Nandil is concerned, we find the reference to his name also in the *Nandisūtra*. In the *Nandisūtra Sthavirāvalī* (*Gāthā*, 27-29), his name appears before Ārya Nāgahastī and after Ārya Maṅgu. There is an inscription of Nandika (Nandil) of the Śāka Saṃvat 32 in the inscriptions of Mathurā (see *Jaina Śilālekha Saṃgraha*, article No. 41); in another inscription of the Śāka Saṃvat 93, the name is not clear, only 'Nādī is mentioned there. (see *Jaina Śilālekha Saṃgraha*, article No. 67). Ārya Nandil is referred to also in the *Prabandhakośa* and in some ancient *Paṭṭāvalis*, but since at no place there is any reference to his period, it is not possible to establish the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira on the basis of this inscriptional evidence.

Now let us consider Nāgahastī. Usually in all the *Paṭṭāvalis*, the date of the demise of Ārya Vajra, has been considered as 584 V.N.S. After Ārya Vajra, Ārya Rakṣita remained the *Yuga Pradhāna Ācārya* for 13 years, Puṣyamitra for 20 years and Vajrasena for 3 years, i.e. Vajrasena died in the year 620 V.N.S. In Merutunga's *Vicāraśreṇī*, the period of Ārya Nāgahastī as the *Yuga Pradhāna* has been accepted as continuing for 69 years, i.e. Nāgahastī was the *Yuga Pradhāna* from 621 to 690 V.N.S. (*Vira Nirvāṇa Saṃvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā*, p. 106 note). If Hastahastī of the Mathurā inscription is Nāgahastī, then he is also referred to as the *guru* of Māghahastī in the inscription of the Śāka Saṃvat 54, which establishes him of before 131 A.D.

If we accept the date of the *Vira Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C., then the period of his *Yuga Pradhānaship* extends between 154 and 223 A.D. According to the inscriptions he had a disciple in 132 A.D. yet one can be content by assuming that he must have initiated some one 22 years before being a *Yuga Pradhāna*. If we accept his life-span to be 100 years, he must have been 11 years old when he is supposed to have initiated Māghahastī. It seems almost impossible to believe that he was able to initiate somebody by his sermons at the age of 11 and that such an underage disciple was able to perform the *Mūrti-Pratiṣṭhā*. But if, on the basis of the traditional concept, we accept the *Vira Nirvāṇa* year to be before 605 of the Śāka Era or 52 B.C., then the references made in the *Paṭṭāvalis* tally the inscriptional evidences. On this basis his tenure of *Yuga Pradhānaship* extends from 16 to 85 of the Śāka Era, Māghahastī, one of his disciples was able to perform the *Mūrti-Pratiṣṭhā* by his sermons. Although common sense would hardly accept it as logical that his *Yuga Pradhānaship* extended for 69 years, yet because of

the fact that it considers the information given in the *Paṭṭāvalis* to be correct, this inscriptional evidence about Nāgahastī supports the date of *Vira Nirvāṇa* as 527 B.C.

Again, in one of the inscriptional sketches of Mathurā, Ārya Kṛṣṇa with that Ārya Kṛṣṇa mentioned after Śivabhūti in *Kalpasūtra Sthavirāvalī* (last part 4 :1), then his period on the basis of the *Paṭṭāvalis* and *Vīṣeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya* (*Gāthā* : 2552-2553), could be established around 609. V.N.S., because as a result of the dispute over clothes between the same Ārya Kṛṣṇa and Śivabhūti the Boṭika, Nihnava came into existence. The period of this dispute is fixed as 609 V.N.S. If we accept the *Vira Nirvāṇa* year to be 467, then the period of Ārya Kṛṣṇa is supposed to be as 609-467=142 A.D. This inscriptional sketch belongs to 95+78=173 A.D. Since Ārya Kṛṣṇa has been figured as a deity, it is natural that 20-25 years after his death, in 173 A.D., this sketch must have been made by some Ārya Arha, one of his follower disciples. In this way, this inscriptional evidence can maintain compatibility with other literary reference only when 467 B.C. is established as the year of the *Vira Nirvāṇa*. It is not possible to reconcile

The last evidence, on the basis of which the date of Mahāvira's *Nirvāṇa* can be established is king Dhruvasena's inscriptions and his period. According to the popular belief, after the Valabhī assembly, first time *Kalpasūtra* was recited before a congregation at Ānandpur (Vadanagar) in order to console the grieved King Dhruvasena on his son's death (*Śrīkalpasūtra* : 147 pp. 145, Vinaya Vijaya : Commentary : p. 15-16). The period of Valabhī assembly is fixed as 980-993 V.N.S. There are several inscriptions of Dhruvasena available. The period of Dhruvasena the first, is said to be from 525 to 550 A.D. (Parikh, Rasikalal : 1974 :40). If this event is related to the second year of his accession i.e. 526 A.D., then it is proved that Mahāvira's *Nirvāṇa* must have taken place in 993-526=467 B.C.

Thus atleast three of the six inscriptional evidences prove that the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira took place in 467 B.C. Whereas the two evidences may prove 527 B.C. as the period of *Vira Nirvāṇa*. But the dates based on the *Paṭṭāvalī* could be incorrect; therefore, they cannot be an obstacle in determining the date of the *Vira Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C. One of these inscriptions is not helpful in fixing the date. These discrepancies are there also because the authenticity of the periods of the *Ācāryas* given in the *Paṭṭāvalī* is doubtful and today, we have no grounds to remove these discrepancies. Still we derive from this discussion, that most of the textual and inscriptional evidences confirm the date of Mahāvira's *Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C. In that case, one will have to accept the date of the *Nirvāṇa* as 467 B.C. In that case, one will have to accept the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Buddha to be 483 B.C., which has been accepted by most of the western scholars, and only then it will be proved that about 15 years (14 years and 5 months) after the *Nirvāṇa* of Buddha the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira took place.

Notes :

1. a. *Nivvāṇe Virajīṇe chavvāsasadesu pañcavarisesuṃ. Paṇamāsesu gadesuṃ sañjādo saganio ahavā.*
b. *pañca ya māsā pañca ya vāsā chaceva hontivāsasayā pariṇivvuassārihato so uppanṇo sago rāmā.*
2. *Titthogālī Painṇayam, 623 bahuraya paesa avvattasamucchādugatiga abaddhiyā ceva. satte-e ṇiṇhagā khalu titthami u vaḍḍhamāṇassa, (778) bahuraya jamālipabhavā jīvapaesā ya tīsaguttāo avvattā āsadhao samuccheyā samittāo. (779). gangāo dokiriya chaluḡā terāsiyāṇa uppatti. therāya goṭṭhamāhila puṭṭhamabaddham parūvinti. (780)*

sāvattḥī usabhapuram seyaviyā mihilam ullugātiram. purimantaranji dasapura rahavīrapuram ca nagarāim (781)

coddasa solasa vāsā cauddasavīsuttarā ya donni sayā. aṭṭhāvīsā ya duve pañceva sayā u coyālā. (782)

pañca sayā calasīyā chaceva sayā nāvottarā hoti. nānupattiya duve uppanṇā viṇavveue sesā. (783)

3. *Virajīṇe siddhigade causadaigisattḥivāsaparimāṇe. kalammi adikkante uppanṇo ettha sakarāo. (461) ahavā vīre siddhe sahasaṇavakammi sagasayabbhahie.*

vāyanāntare puna ayaṃ tenaue saṃvacchare kālāṃ gacchai iha disai.

Śrī Kalpasūtra 147, p. 145.

6. *pālagaranno saṭṭhi paṇapaṇṇasayaṃ viyāṇa ṇaṇḍāṇaṃ maruyāṇaṃ aṭṭhasayaṃ tisā puna pusamitāṇaṃ.*
--*Titthogālī painṇayaṃ (Painṇaya Suttāim) 621*
When 60 pākaja + 155 Nandavanśa = 215 years had passed, the rule of the Maurya dynasty began.
7. a. *evenṃ ca Śrīmahāvira mūlervarṣaśate, pañcapanācāśadadhike candragupto ābhavannīpanā.*
-- *Parīṣiṣṭaparva-Hemacandra, sarga 8/339.*
b. *Laghuposālika paṭṭāvalī, Nāgapuriyatapāgaccha paṭṭāvalī* (ed. Jinvijaya 1961) and *Himavanta Therāvalī* also acknowledge that Chandragupta Maurya ascended to the throne 155 years after the *Vira Nirvāṇa*.
8. It is remarkable that the year of the *Vira Nirvāṇa* may be accepted as 527 B.C. only when Chandra Gupta Maurya's accession is accepted to have taken place in the year 215 of the *Vira Nirvāṇa* era. If the date of his accession is accepted to be the year 155 of the *Vira Nirvāṇa*, then we should accept 467 B.C. to be the date of the *Vira Nirvāṇa*.
9. Jacobi, H., *Parīṣiṣṭaparva* : year 1891 : P. introduction p. 5; He considers the reference of the *Parīṣiṣṭaparva* of Hemacandra to be authentic according to which 155 years after the *Vira Nirvāṇa*, Chandragupta Maurya's accession took place, and on this only basis he determined the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira.
10. Charpentier, 1992 : 13-16; He also based, his arguments on Hemacandra and considered that the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira took place 155 years before Chandragupta Maurya.
11. Shastri, A. Shantiraj : *Anekānta* 1941, Vol. 4, No. 10; He considered the Śaka Saṃvat to be the Vikram Saṃvat and accepted that 605 years before the Vikram Saṃvat Mahāvira attained *Nirvāṇa*.
12. Jayaswal, 1917 : 151-152; In his article entitled '*The Historical Position of Kalki and his Identification with Yaśodharman*', he has mentioned only two traditions. He made no mention of the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira.
13. Venkateshwar, 1917, p. 122-130; His opinion is based on the Anand Vikram Saṃvat. This was vague 10 years after the Vikram Saṃvat.
14. Mukhtar : 1956 : p. 26-56; On the basis of various arguments he confirmed the tradition accepted theory.

15. Muni Kalyana Vijaya : *Vikrama Saṃvat aur Jaina Kālagāṇanā*, 1987 : p. 149; while confirming the traditional accepted theory, he also tried to remove its inconsistencies.
16. Eggermont, P.H.L. He has given his arguments equating the very event of schism by Tiṣyagupta which took place during the 16th year of the attainment of Lord Mahāvira with the event of drying the Bodhi tree by Tiṣyagupta and event of schism in Buddha Order during the reign of Aśoka.
17. Smith : 1969 : 141 He accepted the common popular theory.
18. Narman, K.R. "Observation on the Dates of the Jina and Buddha" in Bechert, H. *The Dating of the Historical Buddha*, a Pt. I. p. 300-312 Gottingen.
19. *ajjataropikho rājāmacco rājānaṃ māgadhaṃ ajātasattum vedehiputtāṃ etadavoca "ayaṃ, deva, nigaṇṭho nāṭaputto saṅghi ceva gaṇi ca gaṇācariyo ca,*

Kunika and Udayi ruled for 60 years after the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvira and the Nandas ruled for 94 years there after, and accordingly Chandragupta Maurya's accession is said to be in 155 V.N.S.

23. Vikram Samvat 1987 : 137; Note that Muniji's effort to accept the period of Maurya to be 160 instead of 108, considering "*muriyāṇamaṭṭhasayaṁ*" as "*muriyāṇaṁ*"

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saṭṭhasayaṁ". is not a historical fact.

24. It should be noted that Muniji's effort to extend Sambhūtivijaya's period from 8 year to 60- years. and changing 108 year period of the Mauryas (this fact is supported by history) to 160. years is nothing but an effort to confirm his own hypothesis.

17. Norman K.R. "Observation on the Dates of the Jaina and Buddha" in Bechert, H. *The Dating of the Historical Buddha* Pt. I, p. 300-312, Göttingen.
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