Reconsidering the Date of the Nirvāṇa of Lord Mahāvīra

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 Mahāvīra, Śaka became king. (Tiloyapannati 4 : 1499; Paṁṇayasuttātim : 1 part : 1984 - Tiththagālipaṁṇayaṁ : (623)). On the basis of this postulate, even today, the date of the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra 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 Śri 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 Prakramaṇa entitled 'Tiththagāli', (paṁṇayasuttātim : 1 part : 1984 : Tiththagāli 623) and in the Digambara tradition, for the first time in Tiloyapannati (4 : 1499), it is clearly mentioned that 605 years and 5 months after the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra, 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 Mahāvīra 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 Mahāvīra took place in the year 605 before Śaka. Prior to it, in the Sthavirāvali of Kalpasūtra and in the Vācaka genealogy of the Nandisūtra, the reference to the hierarchy of Mahāvīra 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 Mahāvīra 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 Devarddhigani Kṣamāśramaṇa finally edited this last exposition of the present Canon. Similarly, in Sthānāṅga (7 : 41), Bhagavatisūtra (9 : 222-229) and Āvaśyaka Niryukti (778-783), along with the reference to Nihnavas, a reference to how much time of Mahāvīra'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 Mahāvīra.

There have been differences of opinion from the very beginning on the date of Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra. Although, it has been clearly stated in Tiloyapannati, a book recognised by the Digambara sect, that 605 years and 5 months after the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra, 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 Dhavālā (4 : 1 : 44 : p. 132-133), a commentary on Satkhandāgama, there are three different statements as to after how many years of the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra, 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 Mahāvīra Devarddhī'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 event.

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 throne in the year 215 of the Vira Nirvāṇa. However, in Tiththagāli Paṁṇaya only this much has been mentioned that (after Vira Nirvāṇa) the region of the Mauryas started 60 years after the Pālakas and 155 years after the Nandas (Paṁṇayasuttātim I part : 1984, Tiththagāli Paṁṇayaṁ : 621), whereas according to the second opinion of Hemacandra (Pariśiṣṭa Parva : 8 339), he ascended the throne 155 years after Vira Nirvāṇa. Similarly, in Laghuposālik Paṭṭāvali (p. 37) it is written that 155 years after Vira Nirvāṇa Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne. Also, in Nagapuriya Tapāgaccha
Paṭṭāvalī (p. 48) it is written that 155 years after the Vīra Nirvāṇa Candragupta became the king, (Vṛat 155 varṣe Candraguptonaṇṭh). 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 Pusyamitra. 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. 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 chaged his opinion), 476 B.C. He has accepted the reference found in the Pariśiṣṭa 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 Kalkī". 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 Vikarma'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 Saṅghabheda of Tisyagupta in the Jaina tradition, which took place during the life time of Mahāvīra in 16th year of his emancipation. With the incident of Saṅghabheda and the act of drying up of the Bodhi tree by Tisyarakṣita in the Buddha Saṅgha, which took place during the reign of Aśoka.

9. V.A. Smith,17, 527 B.C., He has followed the generally accepted theory.

10. Prof. K.R. Norman,18, About 400 B.C., Considering Bhadrabāhu to be Chandragupta's contemporary, he fixed the period of 5 earlier Acāryas 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.

Among the contemporaries of Lord Mahāvīra, the names of Lord Buddha, Bimbisāra-Śrenika and Ajātaśatru are well-known. The Buddhist sources give more information about them than the Jaina sources. The study of Jaina sources also does not give rise to any doubt about their contemporaneity The Jaina Āgamas are mostly silent about Buddha's Life-history, but there are ample references to the contemporary presence of Mahāvīra and Buddha in the Baudhā Tripitaka literature. Here we shall take only two of the references. In the first reference there is a mention of the event of Dīghanikāya (Sāmīñaphalasutta : 2 : 1 : 7) in which Ajātaśatru meets many of his contemporary religious heads. In this reference, the chief minister of Ajātaśatru talks about Nirgrantha Jñātārputra like this: "Master, this Nirgranta Jñātārputra, is the master of the sect as well as the monastery, teacher of the sect, a scholar, and a renowned Tirthakara, he is admired by many and respectable gentleman. He has been a long wandering mendicant (Parivrājaka) and is middle-aged". It can be derived from this statement that at the time of
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 Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṅvat aur Jainā 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 Jñātputra and other five Tīrthankaras 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 Śākyas known as Vedhaññā in Śākya (country).

At that time Niganṭha Nāṭaputta (Tīrthankara Mahāvira) had recently died at Pāvā. A rift was created among the Niganthas 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 Dhamma (=Dharmavinaya), I know it. How can you know this Dharmavinaya? 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 Niganthas."

The house-holder disciples of the Niganṭha Nāṭaputta, wearing white dresses, also were getting indifferent, distressed and alienated from the Dharma of Nigantha which was not expressed properly (durākhyāta), not properly investigated (duspravedita), unable to redeem (anairyāka), unable to give peace (ana-upaśama-Saṅvartanika), not verified by any enlightened (a-Samyak- Saṅbuddha-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 other hand, 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 (Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṅvat aur Jainā 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 also clearly mentioned in Jaina Agamic texts that 16 years before his Nirvāṇa, rumour of his death had spread, hearing which many Jaina Śrāmanas started shedding tears. Since the incident of the bitter argument between Makkhaligosāla, a former disciple of Mahāvira, and his other Śrāmana disciples was linked with this rumour, the present reference from the Dīghanikāya about the death 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 Tejolesyā, hurled upon him by agitated and acutely jealous Makkhaligosāla 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 days before Mahāvira's Nirvāṇa.

Since Buddha's Nirvāṇa took place in the 8th year of Ajātaśatru Kuṇika's accession to the throne, Mahāvira's Nirvāṇa must have taken place in the 22nd year of his accession. Vīra Nirvāṇa must have taken place in the 22nd year of his accession (Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṅvat aur Jainā Kāla Gaṇanā, p. 4). Therefore, it is certain that Mahāvira's Nirvāṇa took place 14 years after the Nirvāṇa of Buddha. The fixation of the date of Buddha's Nirvāṇa would definitely influence the date of Mahāvira's Nirvāṇa. First of all we shall fix the date of Mahāvira on the basis of the Jaina sources and inscriptions and then we will find out what should be the date of Buddha's Nirvāṇa and whether it is supported by the other sources.
While determining the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra, we would have to keep in mind that the contemporaneity of Ācārya Bhadrabāhu and Sthūlibhadra with Mahāpadma Nanda and Chandragupta Maurya; of Ācārya Suhasti with Samprati; of Ārya Mañcūṣu (Mangū), Ārya Nandila, Ārya Nāgahasti, Ārya Vṛdhha and Ārya Krṣna with the period mentioned in their inscriptions and of Ārya Devaruddhigani kṣamāśramaṇa with king Dhrusvasena of Valabhi, 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 Bhdrabahu and Sthūlibhadra also. It is an undisputed fact that Chandragupta had wrested power from the Nandas and that Sthūlibhadra was the son of Sakślā, the minister of the last Nanda. Therefore, Sthūlibhadra must be the younger contemporary and Bhdrabahu the older contemporary of Chandragupta. This statement that Chandragupta Maurya was initiated into Jainism by the father and ultimately his merciless assassination (Tīṭhogaḷī Paiṇṇayam : 787 : Paiṇṇayasutattām I part : 1984). Moreover, Sthūlibhadra was initiated by Sambhuśīvijaya and not by Bhdrabahu. At the time of the first assembly on composition of Āgama held at Paṭaliputra, instead of Bhdrabahu or Sthūlibhadra, Sambhuśīvijaya was the head, because only in that particular assembly it was decided that Bhdrabahu will make Sthūlibhadra to study the Purvā-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 Vīra Nirvāṇa era. If we accept that both the traditional notions are correct and that Ācārya Bhdrabahu remained Ācārya from Vīra Nirvāṇa Samvat 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 Bhdrabahu 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 Vīra Nirvāṇa. This date has been accepted by *Himvana Sthaviravali* (Muni Kalyana Vijaya : Vikramīra 1987 : p. 178) and *Pariśīta Parva* (8 : 339) of Ācārya Hemacandra also. On this basis only the contemporaneity of Bhdrabahu and Sthūlibhadra with Chandragupta Maurya can be also proved. Almost all the *Paṭṭavali* accept the period of Bhdrabahu as an Ācārya to be 156-170 V.S. (*Paṭṭavalī Parāga Saṅgraha*, p. 166; *Vividhagacchīya Paṭṭavali Saṅgraha* : I part : 1961 : pp. 15, 37, 48). In Digambara tradition also the total period of the three *Kevalis* and the five *Srūtakēvalis* has been accepted as 162 years. Since Bhdrabahu was the last *Srūtakēvali*, according to the Digambara tradition his year of demise must be the year 162 of the Vīra Nirvāṇa Samvat. Thus, despite the fact that there is a difference of 8 years regarding the period of demise of Bhdrabahu as accepted by the two traditions, the contemporaneity of Bhdrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya is fully justified. Muni Shri Kalyana Vijaya (*Śrī Paṭṭavali Parāga Saṅgraha* : 1966 : 52; *Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṁvat aur Jaina Kalā Ganaṇā* : p. 137) in order to prove the contemporaneity of Bhdrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya, accepted the period of Sambhuśīvijaya as an Ācārya to be 60 years in place of 8 years. In this way, while accepting the date of the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra as 527 B.C., he has tried to establish the contemporaneity of Bhdrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya. But it is only his imagination (*Vīra-Nirvāṇa Saṁvat aur Jaina Kalā Ganaṇā* : p. 137 & *Paṭṭavali Parāga Saṅgraha* - p. 52) there is no authentic proof available. All the Śvetāmbara *Paṭṭavalis* accept the date of the demise of Bhdrabahu to be the year 170 V.N.S. Also, in Tīṭhogaḷī it has been indicated that the decay of the knowledge of the fourteen Pūrvas started in the year 170 V.N.S. Bhdrabahu was only the last of the 14 Pūrvaśaras. Thus, according to both of the traditions - Śvetāmbara and Digambara, the date of demise of Bhdrabahu stands as 170 and 162 of V.N.S. respectively.

On the basis of this fact, the contemporaneity of Bhdrabahu and Sthūlibhadra with the last Nanda and Chandragupta Maurya can be proved only if the date of *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra is accepted as 410 years before V.S. or in the year 467 B.C. The other alternatives do not prove the contemporaneity of Bhdrabahu and Sthūlibhadra with the last king of the Nanda dynasty and Chandragupta Maurya. In Tīṭhogaḷī Paiṇṇayam (783-794) also the contemporaneity of Sthūlibhadra and the king Nanda has been described. Thus on the basis of these facts it appears more logical to accept the date of the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra as 467 B.C. *Himvana Sthaviravali* also mentions that Chandragupta was enthroned in 155 years after the *Vīra Nirvāṇa*. 
Nirvāṇa and that Vikramārka lived 410 years after the Vīra Nirvāṇa (see Vīra Nirvāṇa Sarīvat aur Jaina Kāla-Gaṇanā, p. 177). This also confirms the theory of accepting the date of Mahāvīra’s Nirvāṇa to be 467 B.C.

Again, in the Jaina 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)\textsuperscript{25} According to the Jaina 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 inspite of not being a Yuga Pradhāna Ācārya of the Satīgha. 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 Mahāvīra 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 Mahāvīra.

Now we shall consider the date of the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra also on the basis of some of the inscriptions. Out of five names - Ārya Māngu, Ārya Nandil, Ārya Nāgahasti, Ārya Krṣṇa and Ārya Vṛdhā, mentioned in Mathurā inscriptions (see Jaina Śilālekhā Sarīvatra, articles 41, 54, 55, 56, 57 and 63) first three are found in Nandisūtra Sthāvīravālī (Gāthā : 27-29) and remaining four names are found in Kelpasūtra. According to the Paṭṭāvalis, the period of Ārya Māngu as a Yuga-pradhāna Ācārya is considered to be in between 451 and 470 V.N.S. (Vīra Nirvāṇa Sarīvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā, p. 112). On acceptance of the date of the Vīra Nirvāṇa Sarīvat 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 Śilālekhā Sarīvatra article No. 54) his period stands as Śaka Sarīvat 52 (Haviṣka year 52), i.e. 130 A.D. In other words, while considering the period of Ārya Māngu as indicated by Paṭṭāvalis and inscriptions there is a difference of 200 years if the date of Vīra Nirvāṇa is accepted as 527 B.C. and if it is 467 B.C. there is a difference of 127 years.

In several Paṭṭāvalis, even the name of Ārya Māngu, is not mentioned. Therefore, the theories, concerning his period, based on the Paṭṭāvalis are not authentic. Moreover, the only one Paṭṭāvali called Nandisūtra Sthāvīravālī, which mentions Ārya Māngu, does not indicate the teacher-taught (Guru-śisya) tradition. Therefore, there are chances of the omission of certain names which has been confirmed by Muni Kalyana Vijayaji himself (Vīra Nirvāṇa sarīvat aur Jaina kāla Gaṇanā, pp. 121 & 131). Thus it is not possible to establish the date of the Mahāvīra’s Nirvāṇa on the basis of the inscripational evidences related to Ārya Māngu, because on this basis neither the traditional belief in the date of Mahāvīra’s Nirvāṇa as 527 B.C. nor the scholars’ opinion, as 467 B.C., could be proved correct. On equating the Paṭṭāvalis with the inscriptions, the date of Vīra Nirvāṇa falls around 360 B.C. The reason of this uncertainty is the presence of various wrong conceptions regarding the period
of Ārya Maṅgu.

So far as Ārya Nandil is concerned, we find the reference to his name also in the Nandisūtra. In the Nandisūtra Sthīvarvālī (Gāthā, 27-29), his name appears before Ārya Nāgahasti and after Ārya Maṅgu. There is an inscription of Nandika (Nandil) of the Śaka Šarīvat 32 in the inscriptions of Mathurā (see Jaina Śilālekha Sarīgraha, article No. 41); in another inscription of the Śaka Šarīvat 93, the name is not clear, only 'Nadi is mentioned there. (see Jaina Śilālekha Sarīgraha, article No. 67). Ārya Nandil is referred to also in the Prabandhakośa and in some ancient Paṭṭāvalīs, 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 Nāgahasti. Usually in all the Paṭṭāvalīs, the date of the demise of Ārya Vajra, has been considered as 584 V. N. S. After Ārya Vajra, Ārya Raksīta remained the Yuga Pradhāna Ācārya for 13 years, Pusyamitra for 20 years and Vrajasa for 3 years, i.e. Vrajasa died in the year 620 V. N. S. In Merutunga’s Vicāraśreni, the period of Ārya Nāgahasti as the Yuga Pradhāna has been accepted as continuing for 69 years, i.e. Nāgahasti was the Yuga Pradhāna from 621 to 690 V. N. S. (Vira Nirvāṇa Šarīvat aur Jaina Kāla Gaṇanā, p. 106 note). If Hastahasti of the Mathurā inscription is Nāgahasti, then he is also referred to as the guru of Māghahasti in the inscription of the Śaka Šarīvat 54, which establishes him of before 131 A.D.

It 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 Māghahasti. 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 Śaka Era or 52 B.C., then the references made in the Paṭṭāvalī tally the inscriptional evidences. On this basis his tenure of Yuga Pradhānaship extends from 16 to 85 of the Śaka Era, Māghahasti, 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 Paṭṭāvalī to be correct, this inscriptional evidence about Nāgahasti 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 Sthīvarvālī (last part 4:1), then his period on the basis of the Paṭṭāvalīs and Viśeśaṇayakabhāṣya (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, Nihnav 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 it with any other alternatives.

In the Mathurā inscriptions (Jaina Śilālekha Sarīgraha: article no. 56 & 59), the name of Ārya Vṛddhahasti is related with two inscriptions. One is from Śaka Era 60 (Huviśka year 60) and the other from 79 of the same. According to th Christian era, these inscriptions belong to 138 and 157 A.D. respectively. If he is the Ārya Vṛddha of the Kalpasūtra Sthīvarvālī and the Vṛddhadeva of the Paṭṭāvalīs (Vividha Gacchiya Pattāvalī Sarīgraha : p. 17), then according to the Paṭṭāvalīs, he was led to perform Mūrti Pratiṣṭhā in Kamātaka in the year 695 V. N. S. If we accept 467 B. C. to be the year of the Vira Nirvāṇa, then this period can be fixed at 695-467=228 A.D. whereas the inscriptional evidences are from 138 and 157 A.D. But, if according to the traditional concept the date of the Vira Nirvāṇa is accepted as 527 B.C. then his period is to be fixed at 695-527=168 A.D. Therefore, on accepting 527 B. C. to be the Vira Nirvāṇa year, the equation between this inscriptional evidence and the Paṭṭāvalī based evidence is found to the matching well. On assuming 25 years to be the average period of tenure of each Ācārya, his period should be around 625 V. N. S. because Vṛddha occupies the 25th place in Paṭṭāvalī. Thus his time can be fixed as 625-467=158 A.D. which also proves the 467 B.C. as the period of Vira Nirvāṇa.
The last evidence, on the basis of which the date of Mahāvīra's Nirvāṇa can be established is king Dhrusena's inscriptions and his period. According to the popular belief, after the Valabhi assembly, first time Kalpasūtra was recited before a congregation at Ānandpur (Vadanagar) in order to console the grieved King Dhrusena on his son's death (Śrīkalpasūtra: 147 pp. 145, Vinaya Vijaya: Commentary: p. 15-16). The period of Valabhi assembly is fixed as 980-993 V.N.S. There are several inscriptions of Dhrusena available. The priod of Dhrusena 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 Mahāvīra'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 Mahāvīra took place in 467 B.C. Whereas the two evidences may prove 527 B.C. as the period of Vīra Nirvāṇa. But the dates based on the Paṭṭāvali could be incorrect; therefore, they cannot be an obstacle in determining the date of the Vīra 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 Paṭṭāvali 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 Mahāvīra'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 Mahāvīra took place.

Notes:
b. paṅca ya māsā paṅca ya vāsā chaceva hontivāsasāyā pariṁnivuassāhito so uppaṅnō sago rāmā.

2. bahuraya paesa avvattasamuccādugatika abaddhiyāceva. sate-e nhagā khalu itthāmi u vaḍhamānāssa, (778) bahuraya jamalipabhadvā jīvapaesa ya tisagutta vaavatā asadha samuccheyā samittāo. (779).

gangāgo dokirīyā chalugā terпыīyān āppattī. therīyā goṭṭhamāhīla puṭṭhamabaddham parūviṃti. (780) sāvatthī usabhāpurāṃ seyaviyā mihilaṃ ullugātirā. purimantaranji dasapura rahavīrapurāna ca nagaraṃ (781) coddasa solasa vāsā cauddasavisuttarā ya donī sayā. aṭṭhāvisā ya duve paṅceva sayā u cōyālā. (782) paṅca sayā calasiyā chaceve sayā nāvottarā hoti. nāupattiya duve uppaṅṇā viṇavveuc scēsā. (783)


pāṭhāntaraṃ. coddasahassasagasyate naudivāsakālavicc Chad. (19793) viresarasiddhido uppaṅno ahavā. 1498. pāṭhāntaraṃ.

nīvāṇe virajīne chhavīsadesu paṅcavariseru. panamāsesu (Y. 605, M.5) gadesu saṁjādo saṅgā jó ahavā. 1499.

pāṭhāntaraṃ. Tiloyapaṇṇaatī - section 4, 1496 - 1499.

4. avanidesu paṅcamāṣaḥ sāyij apoṇcutterachassadavāśāṃ havaṇṭi asio virajīnindurajavānagaddivāsāyo jāva sagakālasā ṣadhi hodi tāvaṇiyakālo. kudo? (605) edarāhā kāle saṅgārindukālāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmāmां
vāyanāntare puna ayam tenae satīvacchare kālaṁ grāchā iha disai.

Śrī Kalpasūtra 147, p. 145.

6. pālagaranno satthi panapañjanayā vīyāna nandanāṁ maruyānāṁ aṭṭhasaṁyāṁ tisā puna puṣamittānāṁ.

-- Tīthogālī pānṇaṁyanā (Pāṇṇāya Suttāṁ) 621
When 60 pākajī + 155 Nandavanā = 215 years had passed, the rule of the Maurya dynasty began.

7. a. evan ca Śrimahāvīra mūlervarṣaṁate, pañcapañcāśadadhike candragupto abhavanṟphāṁ.


b. Laghupalika paṭṭāvalī, Nāgapuriyatapañcachā paṭṭāvalī (ed. Jinvijaya 1961) and Himavanta Therāvali also acknowledge that Chandragupta Maurya ascended to the throne 155 years after the Vīra Nirvāṇa.

8. It is remarkable that the year of the Vīra 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 Vīra Nirvāṇa era. It the date of his accession is accepted to be the year 155 of the Vīra Nirvāṇa, then we should accept 467 B.C. to be the year of the Vīra Nirvāṇa.

9. Jacob, H., Pariśīṭaparva : year 1891 : P. introduction p. 5; He considers the reference of the Pariśīṭaparva of Hemacandra to be authentic according to which 155 years after the Vīra Nirvāṇa. Chandragupta Maurya's accession took place, and on this only basis he determined the date of the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra.

10. Charpentier, 1992 : 13-16; He also based, his arguments on Hemacandra and considered that the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra took place 155 years before Chandragupta Maurya.

11. Shastri, A. Shantiraj : Anēkānta 1941, Vol. 4, No. 10; He considered the Śaka Sānīvat to be the Vikram Sānīvat and accepted that 605 years before the Vikram Sānīvat Mahāvīra 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 Mahāvīra.

13. Venkateshwar, 1917, p. 122-130; His opinion is based on the Anand Vikram Sānīvat. This was is vague 10 years after the Vikram Sānīvat.

14. Mukhtar : 1956 : p. 26-56; On the basis of various arguments he confirmed the traditon accepted theory.

15. Muni Kalyana Vijaya : Vikrama Sānīvat aur Jaina Kālaganānā, 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 Mahāvīra 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 : 14] He accepted the common popular theory.


21. It is noteworthy that almost all the Śvetāmbara Paṭṭāvalīs mention the ame period.

22. It is noteworthy that the original Ms. of the Himavanta-asthavirāvalī is not available after its Gujarati translation; its Gujarati translation by Pradit Hiralal Hansraj of Jamnagar, is the only base, It shows that
Kuṇika and Udayi ruled for 60 years after the Nīrṇaṇa of Mahāvira and the Nandas ruled for 94 years thereafter, and accordingly Chandragupta Maurya’s accession is said to be in 155 V.N.S.

23. Vikram Saṃvat 1987 : 137; Note that Muniji’s effort to accept the period of Maurya to be 160 instea of 108, considering "muriyāṇamaṭṭhasayāṁ" as "muriyāṇaṁ-saṭṭhasayāṁ", 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.

References:

15. Naṃsūtra (Sthāvatāvali), Ed. Madhukar Muni, Shri Agm Prakashan Samiti, Beawar, (Rajasthan).