

CHAPTER : II

RECONSTRUCTED TEXT - DATE

THE FOUR STYLISTIC FEATURES :

The text of the lost Devalasmṛti has been reconstructed, on the basis of quotations, available in the digests & commentaries on Dharmasāstra. The present reconstructed text contains - (1) The prose sūtras, along with corresponding verses, commenting upon them. (2) The prose sūtras, without such verses (3) The verses, like sūtras, with condensed matter & corresponding verses, explaining the condensed matter of the sūtra-form of verses (4) Other verses in general, similar to those of the matrical smṛtis.

POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONS & INTERPOLATIONS :

The present reconstructed text is not a work of one definite period. But the original text of Devala, has been inflated by several additions & interporations, at several successive periods. Hence it contains earlier & later strata. When even the standard Smṛtis, like those ^{of} Manu & Yajñavalkya are said¹ to have interpolations, it is quite natural that the present reconstructed text of the lost Devalasmṛti, should contain additions & interpolations.

THE EARLIEST STRATUM :

The portion of the text, having characteristics, of the sūtra-form, as mentioned in the points 1 to 3 above, represents the earliest stratum of the present text, *with* the help of several internal & external evidences, it was previously maintained² that Devala, belonged to the period, earlier than that of the Sāṅkhyakārikā (200 A.D.), & the Yogasūtra of Patañjali

(between 145 A.D. & 400 A.D.). The above-mentioned sūtra-form of portion of the present text can be believed to be belonging to the same period.

THE THREE SUCCESSIVE CHRONOLOGICAL STRATA :

The remaining portion of the text, can also be believed to have the following three successive chronological strata.

(1) The verses generally dealing with the smṛti-topics, except those, belonging to the portion, 2 & 3, mentioned below.

(2) The verses, dealing with the problem of persons, forcibly converted by Mlecchas (Mlecchitasuddhi-III.II).

(3) The verses from the prāyascitta section of Hemadri's Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi.

THE FIRST STRATUM :

(1) The metrical portion of the present text, falling in the Group 1, just mentioned, can be placed in the period between 400 A.D. to 600 A.D., for the following reasons.

(i) on the basis of the verses from Devala, on partition, inheritance & on women's right over strīdhana, cited in the Aparārka & the Smṛticandrikā, Mm.P.V.Kane³ thinks that Devala, the jurist, flourished about the same time, as the great jurists, Brhaspati (200 A.D. to 400 A.D.) of Kātyāyana (400 A.D. to 600 A.D.).

(2) The following Smṛtikāras are mentioned in this portion of the text - Aṅgiras, Atri, Āpastamba, Usanas, Kātyāyana, Gālava,

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Gobhila, Gautama, Jātūkarnya, Dakṣa, Nārada, Parāśara, Manu, Yama, Yājñavalkya, Likhita, Vasīṣṭha, Vākpati, Viṣṇu, Vyāsa, Śaṅkha, Saṁvarta & Hārīta. This may indicate the posterity of the present portion of the text to these Smṛtikāras & their works existing at that time.

(3) The following topics, referred to in the present text are noteworthy from the standpoint of chronological position of the present portion of the text. (i) References to vratas like - Hutaśanī, Gavām Kṛīdanam on Balipradā, ^{tipa}Nāgapañcamī, Ekādasī, (cf. verses - 852 to 871). (ii) Rites of Saṅkrānti (verses 819 to 825) etc. etc. These topics are not referred to or dealt with in the sūtra literature & the Manu & Yājñavalkya smṛtis. This suggests the posterity of this portion of the text to the above smṛtis.

THE SECOND STRATUM :

(2) The portion of the Mlecchitasuddhi (3.2), of the reconstructed text, is, in fact, the printed Devala-smṛti, with its verses, re-arranged. The problem of the date of this portion of the text, has been considered by the eminent scholars.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS :

(1) Dr. Bhabatosh Bhattacharya⁴ remarks that "this shows that this shorter Devalasmṛti of ninety verses is also not a very late work, having been quoted by sūlapāni of the 14th century".

(2) Mr. P.V. Kane⁵, on the authority of Sarvajñanārāyaṇa, who seems to quote these verses as of Devala, opines that "these

verses are certainly older than 1000 A.D."

(3) Dr.A.S.Altakar⁶ ascribes the printed Devalasmṛti to the "social thinker of Sindh which would place its composition in the ninth century at the earliest".

(4) Dr.S.V.Ketakar⁷ suggests that the probable period of the composition of the printed Devalasmṛti is about 732 A.D. He fixes this date, on consideration of the political condition in Sindh, during the eighth century & the events narrated in the Smṛti. It refers to the forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam in Sindh & Devala tries to tackle the problem of readmittance by purification of persons, troubled by the Mlecchas.

Thus the Mlecchitasuddhi (3.2) portion of the present text, may be placed in the 8th century A.D., as it seems to have connection with the social & political condition⁸ in Sindh, during that period.

THE THIRD & THE LATEST STRATUM :

(3) The verses from the prāyascitta section of Hemādri's Caturvarga cintāmani, seem to be of later period, for the following reasons :

(i) There is reference to the following authors & works in these verses : (A) Authors - Jātūkarnya (363), Vrddhamanu (366), Harihara (598), Gālava (744). (B) Works - Bhārdvājasūtram (1239), Skandapurāna (1745), Viṣṇusahas-ranāma (1929), Gajendra Moksa; This indicates the posterity of the present portion of the text to the above authors & works.

(ii) The following references are also noteworthy from the chronological standpoint. (1) Mention of Nāndīśrāddha (1034 & 1047) Punyāhavācana (1034), Aksarārambha (377). (2) Reference to Paurānic verse - Samastasampat etc. (1040). All these references also indicate composition of the present portion in a later period.

(iii) These verses are very much influenced by the Paurānic literature. The grammatical & metrical defects, the repetitions of certain words & phrases, references to mythological legends to extol certain topics, like dāna, krechra etc. the frequent use of such vocatives like rājendra, Rāma, rājan etc., the existence of conversational verses - all these factors⁹, uncommon to a smṛti but frequent in the Pauranic literature, reflect upon the Paurānic influence on this portion & indicate its composition in a later period.

But these verses are quoted as of Devala in the prāyascitta section of Hemādri's Caturvargacintāmani. Hence they can be placed in a period some centuries, earlier than 1300 A.D. (the period of Hemādri). Moreover, the dated work, (still in Manuscript form), namely the Parāskaragrhyakārikā¹⁰ of Renukācārya (composed in 1266 A.D.) mentions a view of Devala, which is found in the verse from the present portion of the text. This may reflect upon the fact that the verses, even from the prāyascitta section of Hemādri's Caturvargacintāmani, are earlier than 13th century A.D. & may be presumed to be some centuries earlier than that period.

CONCLUSION :

Thus the entire text belongs to the four different & successive chronological strata, with the earlier limit of at least first century A.D. (if not earlier still) & the later limit of 12th century A.D.

REFERENCES

- 1) H.D.S. - Vol.I, Pt.I, p.331 & 332 & 430.
- 2) Cf.Pt.I, Sect.I, Ch.II-D.
- 3) H.D.S.-Vol.I, Pt.I, p.284.
- 4) Studies in Dharmasāstra, p.9
- 5) H.D.S. Vol.II, Pt.I, p.380, n.928^c.
- 6) Lingat, Robert - The Classical Law of India, p.124.
He refers to Dr.A.S.Altekar's 'Sources of Hindu Dharma'
(P.19 - (Sholapur,1952) in the footnote (3)).
- 7) Mahārāstriya Jñanakōśa, Vibhāga 15(DA), p.156.
- 8) Cf.Pt.III,Ch.III for details.
- 9) Cf.for example R.T.Adhyāya III, Prakaraṇa I & III
- 10) Caturthe'hani yat proktam gamanam devalādibhih//
- Manuscript Acc.No.12092 in the Oriental Institute, Baroda,
Garbhādhānaprakaraṇa, F.no.3, verse 24. For this cf.
R.T. Sr.no.332.