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CHAPTER : III

RECONSTRUCTED TEXT - HOME

INTRODUCTORY :

The smṛti-quotations, ascribed to Devala, occurring in the digests & commentaries on Dharmaśāstra are compiled & arranged in the present Reconstructed Text. The problem of the home of Devala, the author of quotations of the present Reconstructed Text is considered here with the help of external & internal evidences.

(1) EXTERNAL EVIDENCE :

(1) In the Mahābhārata, Devala is mentioned among the sages, fit to be always remembered (nityasmaranīya), that belonged the Northern Direction¹.

(2) In the Mahābhārata, Devala is also mentioned to be living at the Ādityatīrtha,² on the bank of river Sarasvatī.

Thus according to the Mahābhārata, North India, was the home of Devala.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES :

(1) The chapter on Tīrthayātrā (III.5) of the Reconstructed Text is full of references to various sacred places. Both Northern & Southern sacred places, are referred to in it. But the references to the places from North India are frequent in the other chapters of the text. This may suggest close acquaintance or familiarity of the author with the North India.

(2) The method of reckoning months is of two kinds. (A) Months, ending on the full moon day (pūrnimānta), (B) Months, ending on the new moon day (ātmanta).

The former is prevalent in the North India, even to-day, while the latter is still prevalent in the South India. Devala follows the Northern method of reckoning months, as he explains³ that the rainy season (technically known as cāturmāsya) is for four months, starting from the month of Śrāvana. This is quite correct, in accordance with the method of reckoning months, ending on the full-moon day & not in accordance with the method of reckoning months, ending on new-moon day. Hence according to the pūrnimānta kind of reckoning, the month of Āśāḍha would end on the full-moon day of it, & from the next day the month of Śrāvana will begin.

Mm.P.V.Kane mentions that "the months in the North-West India, were pūrnimānta, in the Kharosthi records, drawn up in Kaniska's era⁴."

Thus the above evidences would suggest Devala, the author of the text to be belonging to the North.

(3) But the chapter on purification of Hindus, troubled by the Mlecchas (Mlecchitasuddhi-III.II) explicitly mentions that sages approached Devala, who was sitting at east on the bank of Sindhu⁵. The word Sindhu has two meanings (1) ocean (2) the river Indus. Of these, the former meaning has no significance & ~~relevance~~ in the present context. The chapter is concerned with the problem of readmittance by purification of persons, kidnapped

& troubled by the Mlecchas. The problem was pertinent in the North-West of India, where the river Sindhu flows. This part had to face, relating more trouble of repeated foreign invasions, for a considerable period, than the South and the North-East of India. Hence the meaning of the river 'Indus' would be preferable in the present context.

But the river Indus flows through a large portion of North India. It starts from the Manasa lake of the Himalayas & enters the ocean on the west-coast near Karañchi. There are also other tributary rivers, along with Sindhu in the upper part of it, but in Sindh, Sindhu river alone is flowing. The Sindh country, itself might also have received the name Sindh, due to the river Sindhu, alone, flowing through it. Hence the phrase 'Sindhutīre' suggests the bank of river Sindhu in Sindh country.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS :

Mm.P.V.Kane⁶ has remarked that, "Moslems first attacked India, in the 8th century, from the direction of the province of Sindh. This invasion led to the enslavement & forcible conversion of many people. It appears that Devala & other Smṛtikāras tackled with the problem of taking back such people".

Dr.A.S.Altekar⁷ ascribes the printed Devalasmṛti to the 'social thinker of Sindh'.

Dr.S.V.Ketakar⁸ connects the printed Devalasmṛti, with the social & political condition in Sindh, during 8th century A.D. Dāhīra, a Hindu king was ruling over Sindh. But the Muslim king, Muhammada

Kasama, defeated him in a war & there was thus the rule of Muslims in about 712 A.D. Evidently, the Hindus living there, were very much troubled & forcibly converted to Islam, by Muslims. After about 20 years, the Rajaputas were successful in defeating & driving away the Muslims. Devala, the social reformer of Sindh, tried to solve the problem of re-admittance of Hindus, converted & troubled by the Mlecchas. He advocated that the person, having association with the Mlecchas, even for 20 years, can be purified by explanations, but beyond that limit, there is no means of purification. This statement also corroborates the above history, narrated by Dr. Ketakar.

CONCLUSION :

The home of Devala, the author of the reconstructed text, is definitely the North India. He might be living at the Ādityatīrtha, on the bank of river Sarasvatī. But the chapter on Mlecchitasuddhi was definitely ordained by Devala, sitting at ease on the bank of river Sindhu.

Thus it can be definitely maintained that North India was the home of Devala & the present reconstructed text.

REFERENCES

- 1) Uttarām disāmāsritya ya edhante nibodha t̄an/
.....
Svetaketuh kohalasca vipulo devalastathā//
- Mbh. Anu.165/43-45 (Cr.ed.13/151/
36-38).
- 2) (A) Tasminstīrthe sarasvatyāḥ sive punye parantapa/
- Mbh. Śalya.49/21(Cr.ed.9/48/20)
(B) Tasmimeva tu dharmātmā vasati sma tapodhanah/
garhasthyam dharmamāsthāya hyasito devalah purā//
- Mbh.Śalya.50/1(Cr.ed.9/49/1)
- 3) Cf.R.T., Sr.nos.266-268.
- 4) H.D.S. - Vol.III, p.905, n.1766.
- 5) Cf.R.T.,Sr.no.1813.
- 6) H.D.S.- Vol.II, Pt.I, p.389.
- 7) Altekar, A.S. - "Sources of Hindu Dharma" p.19(Sholapur,1952)
the footnote(3) - as mentioned by Robert Lingat - The Classical
Law of India, p.124.
- 8) Mahārāstriya Jñānakosa - Vibhāga 15(Da), p.156.