CHAPTER V

THE DATE OF THE BHADDEVIJATĀ

After having decided the probable authorship of the Brhaddevatara, an attempt to fix the chronology of this work can be made. For this purpose, there are some internal and external pieces of evidence which can help us in assigning a probable date to the author of the BD. The ED. is well acquainted with the Nirukta of Yāska and the Āśvalayana Grhya Sūtra because in this work, the name of Yāska is mentioned twenty times and Āśvalayana's name is also mentioned once.

In chapter II the relationship between the Nirukta and the BD. has already been discussed. In this chapter all those passages will be examined in which Yāska's name is mentioned. All those slokas where Yāska's name is mentioned can be classified into the following four categories:

(1) The passages in which Yāska's name is mentioned in context of defining some object and for controverting Yāska's views to defend Sākalya's view;

(2) The passages where Yāska's views are cited in the context of identifying some deities;

(3) The passages dealing with the exposition of the deities of controversial hymns and mantras of the Ṛgveda;

(4) The passages where Yāska's name is mentioned for deciding whether the hymn in question is a dialogue or an itihaśa.

At first Yāska's name is mentioned in the work in connection with the origin of names. Here Yāska's name is
mentioned along with Gargya and Rathitara. According to both of these scholars, there are four bases of naming things viz. benediction (asis), diversity of objects (arthavairunya), speech (vacah) and action (karmanah). But this view is not found in the extant Nirukta.

Then the BD. mentions the name of Yaska in context of identifying Sunasira. Yaska's view is cited along with the view of Sakapuni. The BD. identifies Sunasira with Vayu and Surya and the same view is found in the Nirukta but the BD. says that according to Yaska, Indra is Sunasira and according to Sakapuni, Surya and Indra are called Sunasira. This view is not found in the extant Nirukta. The BD. mentions the name of Yaska while identifying Pancajanas. It says that according to Yaska and Aupamanyava, the Gandharvas, the Pitrs, the Devas, the Asuras, the Yaksas and the Rakshas are called Pancajanas. But in the Nirukta the Gandharvas, the Pitrs, the Devas, the Asuras and the Rakshas are said to be Pancajanas. This view is attributed to Aupamanyava and Sakapuni by the Nirukta.

Then 'sunaaka controverts the view of Yaska saying that the latter has explained purusadah as purusandana by dividing one word into two. Yaska is further criticized by the BD. for taking two words i.e. masyakta as one. Moreover Yaska's dropping the word sanitur in the RV. III. 31.2 (karbhan sanitur nidhanam) is pointed out by the BD. These points are already discussed in the chapter II.
While defining the Visvadeva hymns the BD. says that according to Yāska and Śāntilya "any hymn or mantra in which a combination of many deities appears should be considered as the Visvadeva hymn or mantra." Then the name of Yāska is mentioned by the BD. in connection with the hymns addressed to the river Sarasvati. It says that according to Yāska this river is praised in the following hymns RV. II. 41.6; VII. 36.2; III. 23.4; VII. 21.18; X. 64.9; VI. 52.6 and VI. 61.2. The BD. accepts the view that in the above-mentioned six verses the Sarasvati is praised. But this view is not traceable in the extant Nirukta.

When comes the category of those passages in which Yāska’s name is mentioned in connection with specifying the deities of some controversial mantras of the Rigveda. While enumerating the deities of the RV. I. 19 the BD. says that according to Yāska middle Agni is praised here along with the Maruts but according to the BD. the terrestrial Agni is praised here. Then Yāska’s name is mentioned along with Kāthakya and Bhāgari in connection with ascertaining the deities of the Rigveda I. 28. 1-4. According to Yāska Indrolukhalas are praised in these four mantras. Further, his name is mentioned while specifying the deity of the Rigveda I. 46.4. According to Yāska, Aditya is praised here but the BD. says that the Asvins are praised in the RV. I. 46-47. Then the BD. cites the view of Yāska according to which Indra is predominantly praised in the RV. I. 136.6, whereas in the view of the author of the BD. Indrāparvata are praised in this mantra. Then the name of Yāska is mentioned in the BD., in connection with
the deity praised in the Rigveda I. 182.6. The ED. says that according to Yāska, Agni is praised here as Aditi. While dealing with the deities of the Rigveda V.42.14 the ED. says that according to Yāska, Sāunaka, Sakapūni, Gālava and Bhāguri Ilāspati, or Parjanya, or Agni, or Pūsan, or Indra or Vaśvānara is praised in this mantra. But this view is not found in the extant Nirukta. When Yāska’s view is quoted by the BD. according to which the visvedevas are praised in the Rigveda VII. 65. 10-12. It further mentions the name of Yāska along with Sāunaka and Gālava and says that in the view of these teachers Savitṛ is praised in the Rigveda X. 36.14. This idea is not found in the Nirukta. In connection with the deities praised in the RV. X. 53.6 the ED. says that according to Yāska Anumati is praised here. The last view of Yāska cited by the ED. in this context is that in Yāska’s view Indra and Agni are lauded in the RV. X. 161 but according to the author of the BD. Prajāpati is praised in this hymn.

In the last category, there are four verses in the ED. which deal with ascertaining whether the hymn in question is a dialogue or a legend. The first passage of this kind contained in the ED. says that according to Yāska and Bhāguri the RV.VIII.91 is a legend but according to Sāunaka this hymn is addressed to Indra. Then Yāska’s name is further mentioned in connection with ascertaining the type of the RV. X. 17. According to Yāska this hymn is a legend of Vivasvat and Tvaṣṭr and Saranyu is the deity of the first couplet of this hymn. Further Yāska’s view is cited by the BD. saying that RV. X. 98 is a reciprocal
narrative (äkhyana) in connection with a summon (ävahana) but according to Yāśka this hymn is a dialogue and Sāunaka's view is that this hymn is a legend. Besides this there are so many passages which are borrowed by the BD. from the N. All these passages are discussed in the chapter II. So it is clear that Yāśka is certainly anterior to the BD.

The Āśvalāyana G.S. is also anterior to the BD. because the BD. cites the name of Āśvalāyana. The author of the BD. says that according to Āśvalāyana in the RV. IV. 31.15. Sūrya is praised. This statement is found in the Gṛhya śūtra of Āśvalāyana. This statement and Sadgurūśva's view makes it evident that the author of the Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Śūtra and the author of the BD. were contemporary. Sāunaka, the author of the BD. who was a teacher of Āśvalāyana would have mentioned the name of his pupil for popularising the composition of Āśvalāyana. But all this depends upon the authenticity of this verse because in some mss. of the BD. this verse is not found.

These were the pieces of internal evidence, now some of external evidence which can help us in ascertaining the date of the BD. First of all Āśvalāyana mentions the name of Sāunaka in context of some rituals both in the Gṛhya as well as in the Śrauta Śūtra of Āśvalāyana. Also at the end of his Gṛhyaśūtra he pays homage to Sāunaka. This shows that the opinion of Sāunaka was highly valued by the author of the Āśvalāyana Śūtras. According to Dr. Ram Copal all this lends
support to the traditional view which regards Āśvalāyana as a student of Saunaka. The same tradition holds the view that Saunaka, who was the teacher of Āśvalāyana is the author of the BD. But the view of Sadgurudisya, treating Āśvalāyana as contemporary of Saunaka does not appear very relevant in this case because it cannot be claimed with any certainty that the author of the BD. is the same Saunaka who was the teacher of Āśvalāyana as we have discussed that several works composed by different authors at different times are ascribed to Saunaka. Therefore, the only certain fact is that the BD. is later than the Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra.

Now the relationship between the BD. and Kātyāyana’s the Sarvā. can help us in the same direction. As I have already discussed in chapter III that the BD. and the Sarvā. have got intimate relationship. Macdonell, who edited the BD. and the Sarvā. with the commentary of Sadgurudisya, says that the Sarvā. borrowed several passages from the BD. Although the former is a sutra work yet fifteen anustup pādas, which are borrowed from the BD. are embedded in it’s text. Besides this about seventy five other passages of the BD. are borrowed by the Sarvā. and are reproduced in it, after slight modifications. In some passages some particles are omitted, whereas in some others some words are transposed and in some passages some words are substituted by another words. 27 Macdonell concludes that at least thirty ślokas of the BD. can unmistakeably traced in the Sarvā. Then the wording of all that matter which deals with the deities of the Rigveda is based on the text of the BD. 28
Though in chapter III the relationship between the BD. and the Sarvā. has been discussed in detail yet I shall give a brief summary of the subject matter shared by both of these works. The subject-matter of the passages borrowed by the Sarvā. from the BD. can be divided in to following categories: First, the definition of a deity, second, definition of a seer, third, number of deities, fourth, legends concerning the origin of some Rigvedic hymns and the enumeration of the deities of the Rigveda. Regarding the definition of a deity and a seer the Sarvā. very briefly says 'yaśya vākyam sa riṣi va tanasvata sa devatā'. Whereas, in the BD. it has been given in detail.

Then the BD. says that there are only three deities in the same way the Sarvā. says that there are only three deities. But soon after the tripartite division of deities the Sarvā. comes at monotheism and says that there is only one God, who is Sūrya. The same way is adopted by the BD. regarding the number of deities. As far as the legends are concerned, the BD. and the Sarvā. have fifteen legends in common. The major difference in narration is that the BD. narrates these legends in detail whereas the Sarvā. narrates by these legends very briefly. Moreover, the legends narrated by the Sarvā. are near to the epic style but in the BD. their form is pure vedic. As far as the enumeration of deities is concerned the Sarvā. follows the BD. However, in some cases it differs from the BD.

Now the passages common in the BD. AND Sarvā in the Sarvā. can also be borrowed by the former from the latter. But on three
grounds this view can be refuted, these grounds are: had the BD. borrowed this much matter from the Sarvā. it might have mentioned the name of Kātyāyana. Because when the BD. borrows any passage from the N. it ascribes the view to the original author. Moreover, when some controversy is there, the author of the BD. states the views of different teachers and mentions their names along with their views. (It can be seen in this very chapter in the discussion of the BD. and its relationship with Yāska). But Kātyāyana's name is nowhere mentioned in the BD.

Even in so many cases the BD. and the Sarvā. give different opinions regarding the deities praised in some controversial hymns. The second thing is that the language of the BD. is nearer to the Vedic language because it has so many Vedic peculiarities but the language of the Sarvā. has comparatively less Vedic peculiarities. The third thing is that had the BD. not been composed before the Sarvā. The expression and the language of the Sarvā. might have been influenced by the N. because the Sarvā. is not at all, an independent work, it is definitely influenced by the BD. Whether the language or the expression or the ideas are concerned it is highly indebted to the BD. Had the BD. not been composed before the Sarvā. it might have had a lot of matter and language common with the N. but it is not. The language of the BD. is comparatively nearer to the language of the N. than that of the Sarvā. So at any rate the Sarvā. is not inferior to the BD. Here one important point is that Kātyāyana, the author of the Sarvā. is not identical.
with the author of the Vārttikas on Pāṇini’s Astādhyāyī. Katyāyana, the author of the Sarvā, is anterior to Pāṇini. This view has been given by Macdonell. This famous Vedic scholar finds some Vedic peculiarities in the language of the Sarvā. Particularly the adjectives derived from the Devata-dvandva compounds such as nāśanaṅka, dyāvārythiyau, mitrāvarunau, indraṅgi, etc. On these grounds Macdonell places Sarvā, prior to Pāṇini. Moreover, priority of Katyāyana’s Sarvā, to Pāṇini is accepted by almost all the authorities of the subject. So Katyāyana is anterior to Pāṇini.

In this way we can fix the relative chronology of the Bṛhādāraṇyaka to some important works of the Vedaṅga period in the following order: the Nirukta, the Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra, the Bṛhādāraṇyaka, and the Pāṇinian Grammar. It is, however, a very difficult task to assign an exact date to the Bṛhādāraṇyaka, because there are so many conflicting views of the scholars in determining the date of Yāska, Āśvalāyana, Katyāyana and Pāṇini.

For assigning an approximate date to the Bṛhādāraṇyaka, Pāṇini’s date must be known to us. But it is again a controversial issue. So many Indologists have given divergent views on this issue as we see that there is a difference of three centuries between two groups of renowned scholars. First group is of Prof. R.G. Bhandarkar, Coldstucker, Belvalkar and Pathak, who places Pāṇini 7th century BC. The second group is of Prof. Lassen, Bohtlingk, Keith, and Cardona are the scholars of the second group who place Pāṇini in the 4th century BC. Dr. V.S. Agrawala places Pāṇini in the
middle of the 5th century BC. But famous Vedic scholar Prof. Ram Gopal places him in the second half of the 6th century BC. In his thesis "India as known to Panini" Dr. Agrawala says that Panini was well acquainted with the Buddha, so he can be placed after the Buddha. But this view is criticized by Prof. Ram Gopal in his thesis and this Vedic scholar has placed Panini before the Buddha. Panini's date at about 600-550 BC. is more evident and hence is acceptable. An approximate date of Panini can help us in fixing the probable date of Katyayana. In this respect two works can help us. First is Dr. Ram Gopal's work "India of Vedic Kalpasutra," and the other is Macdonell's, "the Brhaddevata." Both the above mentioned authors are of the view that Katyayana, the author of the Sarva, is probably the same author who composed the Katyayana's Srauta Sutra. The Katyayana's Srauta Sutra is placed by Dr. Ram Gopal in the middle of the Sutra period, which is '500-600 BC.' and hence Katyayana can be placed at about 650-600 BC. Macdonell in his edition of the Brdh, accepts an interval of about 50 years between Panini and Katyayana. So if we place Katyayana during the above mentioned period, it also accords well with the view of Macdonell. Similarly the same scholar has separated Katyayana from the author of the Brdh. by 50 years. If Katyayana is placed at about 650-600 then the Brdh. can be safely placed between 650-700 BC. It is discussed above that the author of the Brdh. can be placed between Asvalayana and Katyayana. The sutras of Asvalayana are placed by Dr. Ram Gopal
in the first stratum of the Sūtra period and the BD. can also be placed in the same category of Sūtra literature. The Sūtras of this category can be placed between 800-650 BC., so to assign a date at about 700-650 BC. to the BD. is neither improbable nor fantastic. Macdonell's view, who places the BD. at about 400 BC. is itself contradictory because in his revised estimate, he places Pāṇini at about 450 BC. and hence according to his view Kātyāyana can be placed at about 500 BC. Then how he places the BD. at about 400 BC. So the BD. can be placed at about 700-650 BC.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. BD. I. 26-27.
2. BD. V. 8.
3. N. IX. 40.
4. BD. VII. 69.
5. N. III. 8.
6. BD. II. 111.
7. BD. II. 112.
8. BD. II. 113.
10. BD. II. 137.
11. BD. III. 76.
12. BD. III. 100.
13. BD. III. 112.
15. BD. IV. 18.
16. BD. V. 40.
17. BD. VI. 87.
18. BD. VII. 38.
19. BD. VII. 93.
20. BD. VIII. 65. cf. BD. VIII. 64.
22. BD. VII. 7.
23. BD. VII. 183.
24. BD. IV. 139. cf. AV. G.S. II. 6, 12.


27. BD. pp. XXI-XXIV.

28. Ibid.

29. Sarva. Mac. ed. p. VII.


31. BD. p. XXVII.


33. V.S. Agarwala, India as Known to Panini.

34. Prof. Ram Gopal, India as Vedikalpatastras, pp. 84-90.