

MERUTUṄGA AND VIKRAMA


A.K.WARDER*

Merutuᅅga, after introductory verses, begins his *Prabandhacintāmaᅅi* (completed in 1306 A.D.) with Vikramārka or Vikrama or Vikramāditya (names used interchangeably). After a series of anecdotes, including his being consecrated king in Avanti, we read that the *saᅅvatsara* era of Vikramāditya has prevailed in the world since his death (C. H. Tawney's translation p.14). Merutuᅅga then gives many dates in years of Vikramāditya, beginning with that of Vanarāja Cāpotkaᅅa (V.S. 802, Tawney p.18). (Sātavāhana, however, though his brief story is placed immediately after that of Vikramāditya, but not connected with it, is not given any date.) The apparently chronological arrangement, with many precise V.S. dates, continues until the end of chapter IV, on Vastupāla, who is said to have begun a pilgrimage in V.S. 1277 (Tawney p. 157).

The last (fifth) chapter of Merutuᅅga is a miscellaneous supplement of mostly undated anecdotes not in chronological order (unplaceable, evidently, in chapters I to IV). But one date does appear, that of the destruction of Valabhī by the *mlecchas*, after they killed King Śīlāditya (*sic*). It is 375 years after Vikrama (Tawney p.176). This is most extraordinary, because it would correspond to about 316 A.D., long before the Arabs invaded Sindhu, let alone Saurāᅅtra (Merutuᅅga probably did not place this story in his chronological narrative precisely because it did not seem to fit; he apparently took the story from Jinabhadra II ---*Indian Kāvya Literature* Vol. VII §6918, from Jinavijaya). Tawney in a footnote on p. 175 notes the date from Miss Duff as 'probably 766 A.D.' for the overthrow of the Valabhī dynasty. Usually the event is

dated as c. 770 A.D. So the year 375 cannot be a V.S. date if counted from 58 B.C. However it fits perfectly if taken as a Vikramāditya Gupta date, i.e. a date after Candra II Gupta, known to have called himself Vikramāditya, usually supposed to have killed the Śaka about 395 A.D. ($395+375 = 770$, or $391+375 = 766$ for Miss Duff's date).

This is further confirmation, from a most unexpected source, of our conclusion given in *Indian Kāvya Literature* Vol. VI, pp. 54ff., that the era of 58 B.C., earlier called *kṛta* or *vikrama*, was, only after the 10th century A.D., confused with the date of Vikramāditya (Gupta). Thus the history of India came to be rewritten. The restoration of the true chronology shows that Vikramāditya fits just after the end of the *Purāṇa* lists of kings, i.e. after Pravīra (= Pravarasena I Vākāṭaka, Pargiter, *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p.50 and his introductory note on p.48; Pravīra is called son of Vindhyaśakti and followed by his own four sons ... among whom we know the empire was divided) and after unnamed Guptas (Pargiter p. 53 and his Introduction p. xii = Candra I). Equally Vikramāditya fits in Jaina tradition after the teachers of Hemacandra's *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*. Incidentally those who question the dating of Aśoka Maurya in the 3rd century B.C. may refer to *Indian Kāvya Literature* Vol. VII §7177 for the Chinese synchronisms which confirm it via the *Mahāvamśa*.

 A. K. WARDER
APT. 306,
2045 LAKESHORE BOULEVARD WEST
TORONTO M8V 2Z6,
CANADA