HALÄYUDHANIBANDHA ON LEGAL PROCEDURE

By

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In two previous issues of this Journal (Vol. III, pp. 328-344, and Vol. IV, pp. 13-32) about a hundred fragments from Haläyudhanibandha have been collected on the subject of the vivādāpadas. To be complete, this list had to be supplemented by another series of fragments regarding vyāvahāra proper, i.e., legal procedure. The latter fragments have been brought together in the present paper.

As to the scope and structure of this collection of fragments the reader may be referred to the introductory notes in the said article on the vivādāpadas. A few additional remarks only will be necessary here.

First of all, in order to differentiate the present fragments from those on the vivādāpadas, they have been numbered with Roman numbers.

Secondly, one cannot fail to be struck by the absolute disproportion in the number of fragments on substantive law and adjective law, respectively. This may be due to various causes, but to a certain extent it must also be accounted for by the nature of the sources available in both cases:

1. The largest number of quotations on substantive law have been taken from CANDESA VRA's Vivādaratnakara, whereas its counterpart, the Vyāvahāraratnakara, could not be made use of for the quotations on adjective law.

2. VARDHAMĀNA'S Daṇḍaviveka, which also was an important source for the vivādāpadas, does not actually treat of legal procedure.
DISCOVERY OF THE GENUINE ĀGNEYA-PURĀNA

By

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It is well known that the present Āgni-purāṇa, which has been printed repeatedly in different parts of India, is a spurious work written about the ninth century A.D. Vallālasena said that this Purāṇa (as well as a few others) named by him was compiled by the Tantriks with a sectarian motive and was consequently rejected by him as apocryphal. With the spread of Tantricism this spurious work attained great popularity, and the genuine Āgneya-purāṇa had to save itself from extinction by assuming a different title, viz., ’Vahni-purāṇa’. As modern scholars did not know the real nature of this ’Vahni-purāṇa’ occurring in Manuscripts, they took it to be an Upapurāṇa of minor importance and believed that the genuine Āgneya-purāṇa had been lost for ever. Fortunately in 1951 I came across a wrongly described Ms. in the collection of the Asiatic Society (Calcutta) and found out that the earlier Āgneya-purāṇa was still surviving under the title ’Vahni-purāṇa’. Being sure of the identification I collected a few more MSS. of this work and began to prepare a critical edition of the same. I also contributed to “Our Heritage” (a half-yearly Bulletin of the Research Department, Sanskrit College, Calcutta) an extensive article covering more than one hundred typed pages in which I made a critical and intensive study of the various problems connected with this work. As this article is still awaiting publication, I deal in the following pages very briefly with the questions of the identification, present form, and date of the so-called Vahni-purāṇa mainly on the basis of the Asiatic Society Ms.

That the present Vahni-purāṇa is the same as the genuine Āgneya-purāṇa known to and used by the comparatively early authorities, can be established by a number of evidences, of which a few may be mentioned here. In the Ms.

1 See Dāna-sāgara (India Office Ms. No. 719), fol. 3b-4a—
tarkṣyaṁ puruṇam aparvaṁ brāhmaṁ āgneyam eva ca |
trayoviṁśati-sāhasrayam puruṇam api vaisñavam ||
śaṭ-sāhasra-mitaṁ liṅgaṁ puruṇam aparvaṁ tathā |
dikṣa-pratiṣṭhā-pāṣaṇḍa-mukti-ratna-pariṣaṇaṁ ||
mṛṣa-vamśanucaritaṁ koṣa-vyākaraṇādibhiḥ |
asāṅgata-kathā-bandha-paras-paśudhitaḥ ||
tan minaketanādīnāṁ bhaṇḍa-pāṣaṇḍa-liṅginām |
loka-vaṁśanām ālokya sarvam evaṁ (ṭ dhi)ritam ||
of the so-called Vahni-purāṇa the work has been called ‘Agni-saṃjñīta Purāṇa’ (and not ‘Vahni-saṃjñīta Purāṇa’ or ‘Vahni-purāṇa’) in the body of the text, and the title ‘Āgneya Purāṇa’ occurs in the final colophons as well as in the colophons of Chapters 1-3 and 64 of all the Mss. we have got in our possession. It is remarkable that, in spite of the occurrence of the title ‘Vahni-purāṇa’ in many of the chapter-colophons, even the scribes of these Mss. knew the work under the title ‘Agni-purāṇa’. This is shown by the occurrence of the syllables ‘अग्नि’,”, “अग्नि” or “अग्नि” (all being abbreviations for the name ‘आग्नि’ in the upper corner of the left margin of the second page of all the leaves of all the Mss.). Such traditional identity of the genuine Agneya-purāṇa and the Vahni-purāṇa explains why in some of the lists of eighteen principal Purāṇas the title ‘Vahni-purāṇa’, ‘Vahniya’ or ‘Vāhna’ is found to occur in place of ‘Agneya-purāṇa’ or ‘Āgneya’. In commenting on Bhāgavata-purāṇa xii. 13. 4-8 Śrīdharasvāmin, Vira-rāghavācārya, Vijaya-dhvaja-tirtha and Sukadeva take the name ‘Vāhna’ to mean the ‘Āgneya’ or ‘Agni-purāṇa’.

More definite evidence in favour of the identity of the so-called Vahni-purāṇa and the Agneya-purāṇa is adduced by those comparatively early Śrīṅg-writers who have named and drawn upon the Agneya-purāṇa in their commentaries and Nibandhas. It is remarkable that most of the numerous verses and extracts quoted from the ‘Āgneya-purāṇa’, ‘Āgneya’, or ‘Agni-purāṇa’ in the works of Vallālasena, Halāyudha, Hemādri, Caṇḍēśvara, Mādvācārya, Śūlapāni, Vidyāpāti Upaḍhyāya, Vācaspatimisrā, Gaṇapati, Govindānanda, Raghunandana, and many others, occur in the present Vahni-purāṇa but not in the printed Agni-purāṇa. It is true that a few of the verses quoted in some of the works of these writers are also found in the printed Agni-purāṇa, but this is due to the fact that this work retained some verses or groups of verses here and there from the genuine Agneya-purāṇa which it tried to replace by imitating its title, form and contents.

The Matsya and the Skanda-purāṇa describe the ‘Āgneya’ Purāṇa as follows:

“[The Purāṇa people call] ‘Āgneya’ which was spoken out by Agni to Vasiṣṭha in connection with the affairs of the Isāna-kalpa. This [Purāṇa] of 16,000 [Granthis or Ślokas] yields the fruits of all sacrifices to one who prepares a copy of it and gives it away in the prescribed manner in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa after furnishing it with a lotus made of gold and a cow made of sesamum.”

The Saura-purāṇa also says:

“The fruit of the Rājasūya sacrifice accrues eternally [to him who] chances to give the ‘Āgneya [Purāṇa]’ on the first lunar day to a Brahmin who maintains the sacred fire (āhitāgni).”

The Śiva-rāhasya-khaṇḍa (2. 34) of the Śaṅkara-saṃhitā of the Skanda-purāṇa declares the ‘Āgneya’ Purāṇa to be the only Purānic work in praise of Agni (agnier āgneyam ekakam). The Padma-purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa, includes the ‘Āgneya’ among the Tāmasa Purāṇas, and the Matsya and the Skanda-purāṇa inform us that the Tāmasa Purāṇas are those which glorify Agni or Śiva. From these statements of the different Purānic works we learn that the Agneya-purāṇa known to them praised Agni (the Fire-god) as the highest deity, dealt with the sacrificial rites and conduct of the Āhitāgni Brahmins, was concerned with the events of the Isāna-kalpa, had Agni and Vasiṣṭha as the principal interlocutors, and consisted of 16,000 Granthis or Ślokas. As the present Vahni-purāṇa contains some of these characteristics, and not all, and as the printed Agni-purāṇa also frequently calls itself ‘Āgneya Purāṇa’ in the body of its text and has Agni and Vasiṣṭha as the principal interlocutors, there arises serious doubt as to whether it is the Vahni-purāṇa or the present

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2 See Vahni-purāṇa, Chap. 1, verse 18 (śrotum icchāmahe tvatinā purāṇam agni-saṃjñītanam).

3 A complete list of these traced verses has been given in my article contributed to “Our Heritage”.

4 yaṃ tāddhānaṃ kalpaṃ vrīghtam adhikṛtya ca iva vasiṣṭhāiśinām proktam āgneyam tat prakāṣate pariḥkṣitā ca yo dadyāddhema-padma-samvanvitā mārgaśīrṣyāṃ vidhihānena tāla-dhenu-samvanvitā tac ca śoḍaśa-sahasram sarva-kratu-phala-pradānāḥ

Matsya-purāṇa (Ānandārama Press ed.) 53. 28-30a; and Skanda-purāṇa VII (Prabhāśa-khaṇḍa), i. 2. 47-48 (v. I. ‘Isāna-kalpasya’ in line 1, and ‘mārgaśīrṣe’ and ‘tāla-dhenu-yuṭaṃ tatha’ in line 4).

5 āgneyam pratipady eva pradayād āhitāṅgayayā rājasūyaśya yajñasya phalam bhaviṣyati śāsvatam iva Saura-purāṇa (Ānandārama Press ed.) 9. 25.

6 Eggeling, India Office Catalogue of Sanskrit Mss., VI, Nos. 367172, p. 1363.


8 Matsya-purāṇa 53. 68-69; and Skanda-purāṇa VII i. 2. 87-88.

The Skanda-purāṇa adds, in verse 89, that among the eighteen principal Purāṇas four are given to the praise of Viṣṇu, two each to that of Brahmā and Rāvi (the Sun), and the rest to that of Śiva (caturbhīṣh bhagavān viṣṇur dvābhāyām brahmā tatha raviḥ iva aṣṭāda-purāṇeṣu śeṣeṣu bhagavān śivaḥ iva).
and in all places and that it varied with the difference in time and locality. However, the mention of an extent of 12000 (Granthis or Ślokas) in the printed Agni-purāṇa is important in that this became the extent of the genuine Āgneya-purāṇa when the former was composed with an idea of replacing it by imitating its title, form and extent.

That a good number of chapters on sacrificial rituals and other matters characteristic of the early Purāṇas came to be lost from the so-called Vahni-purāṇa is shown by a Purānic work, published under the title ‘Nāndi-purāṇa,’ which claims to belong to the ‘Vahni-purāṇa’ and pretends to continue the conversation between Agni (or Valhi, the Fire-god) and Vasiṣṭha, who, as we have already seen, appear as interlocutors in the present Vahni-purāṇa (i.e. Āgneya-purāṇa) in its Vaiśnāvite form. At the very outset of this work Vasiṣṭha is found to request Valhi (the Fire-god) saying:

“bhagavan deva devāgra vibho dharmāi-kaśani tvat-prasādāc chrutāḥ sarve dharmā varṇāśramocaitāh kunda-ṁanda-pāda-vedinām prāmaṇaḥ ca yathā-śrutam | diśkāṁ yajñādiśkāṁ ca vaṣṭu-śāśra-nilūpaṇaṁ avatārān bhagavatās catuvrīśaṃ saṃśiptair mantra-diśkā-vidhiś cāpi saṃśiptair asa-सaṃyūtaṇaḥ catvāriśaṃ maṁtār śūrasya-soma-vanśādi-varpaṇam etad anyac ca bhagavan chṛutaṁ vistaraṁ mayaḥ adhunā śrotum icchāmi brahmānādyā śīrpaṇaṁ saṁśiptaṁ kathitaṁ yac ca purā hy etad tu vistaraṭ śrotum icchāmy ahāṃ vahne brūhi pralaya-kaśanam.”

(Nāndi-purāṇa, Chap. 1, verses 1-6a.)

From these words of Vasiṣṭha we learn that, besides giving a brief account of the universe, the Vahni-purāṇa (i.e. the Āgneya-purāṇa) dealt elaborately (vistaraṇam) with the entire duties of the different castes and orders of life, and also with the construction of sacrificial pits, pandals and altars, consecration for and preliminaries to Vedic sacrifices, various matters relating to the building of houses, the twenty-four incarnations of the Bhagavat (i.e. Agni, who is considered to be identical with Rudra-Siva), the forty-eight sacraments, the method of imparting initiatory Mantras, the accounts of the Solar, Lunar, and other dynasties, and so on (etad anyac ca). It should be mentioned here that in the Vahni-purāṇa (i.e. Āgneya-purāṇa) in its present form there are no chapters or verses on most of these topics; and this elimination was undoubtedly made by the Vaiṣṇavas not during their first recast of this work but in a subsequent one to which they must have subjected it in course of time.

As to the date of the present Vahni-purāṇa it may be said that this work, in its changed form, existed earlier than Vallālasena, the printed Agni-purāṇa (circa 8th century A.D.), and Malsya-purāṇa, Chap. 53 (which is to be dated
between 550 and 650 A.D. \(^9\) So, the Āgneya-\(pūrāṇa\) (i.e., the present \(Vahni-pūrāṇa\)) must have been recast by the Vaiśāṇavas not later than 500 A.D. As the \(Viṣṇu-dharma\), from which the \(Vahni-pūrāṇa\) has borrowed a large number of chapters, cannot be dated earlier than 200 A.D. and seems to have been written some time during the third century A.D., the date of the Vaiśāṇava recast of the present \(Vahni-pūrāṇa\) is to be placed between 300 and 500 A.D. From its mention of Rāšis, ‘Horā’, etc. and from the absence of Kālidāsa’s influence even in its Rāma legend it appears that the present \(Vahni-pūrāṇa\) was recast by the Vaiśāṇavas towards the beginning of the fifth century A.D. Thus, the \(Vahni-pūrāṇa\) in its original form must have been composed much earlier than the fourth century A.D.

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