

## New Evidence for the Dating and Religious Practices of Pāśupatas

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There are very few instances of mentioning of the Pāśupatas in early datable materials, inscriptions or texts. So I want to draw attention to two passing references to Pāśupata ascetics: one in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and another in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Since both these texts are of relatively early date, any information from them is important.

In the same text, Vasubandhu also criticises a position which holds Īśvara to be the cause (*kāraṇa*) of everything. He concludes his criticism of these Īśvarakāraṇavādins quoting ironically a verse of theirs about Rudra. This verse is fortunately found now incorporated in the *Mahābhārata* in two places, in a group of few verses which explains Śiva's certain epithets and this way describe him. I will also have some remarks on those *Mahābhārata* verses.

Moreover, with the discovery of the *Pāśupatavidhis* of Gārgya, the understanding of Religious Practices of Pāśupatas is widened. I will discuss ritualistic contents of these texts, and briefly state the problems involved in interpretation of these texts.