





SILVIA SCHWARZ LINDER  
THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL TEACHINGS  
OF THE PĀDMASAMĤITĀ

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN  
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE  
SITZUNGSBERICHTE, 853. BAND

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# The Philosophical and Theological Teachings of the Pādmasaṃhitā

Silvia Schwarz Linder

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- NM Nārāyaṇārya, *Nītimālā*, ed. with intr. and notes by R. Ramanujachari and K. Srinivasachari.
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- ŚruP Sudarśanasūri, *Śrutaprakāśikā* (See Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣyam*).
- ŚŚ (Vasugupta, *Śivasūtra*) *Śiva Sūtras / The Yoga of Supreme Identity*, text of the *Sūtras* and the commentary *vimarśinī* of Kṣemarāja, Engl. transl., intr., notes, running exposition, glossary and index by Jaideva Singh, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1979.

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#### Emendations to the quoted text of the PādS

The transliteration of the Sanskrit text of the PādS is based on the critical edition of the PādS by S. Padmanabhan (see Bibliography). Emendations to the text established by the editor are marked in this study as follows: if a variant reading indicated by the editor in his critical apparatus is adopted, then the manuscript abbreviation (such as śrī, ma, etc.) is quoted before the emended text; if the emendation is suggested by the author of the present study, then the emended text is simply preceded by em. An asterisk (\*) precedes the text to be emended and the emendations appear in brackets.





## INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (also known as *Pādmatantra*), a work of South Indian origin belonging to the Pāñcarātra. The latter is a Vaiṣṇava tantric religious tradition, the oldest known literary source for which is the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (not later than the IV-V century A. D.)<sup>1</sup> and the earliest literary and epigraphic references to which date back to the VII century A. D.<sup>2</sup> The authoritative scriptures of the Pāñcarātra, the so-called *saṃhitā*-s, form a vast corpus of works which were composed over the course of several centuries.

The earliest texts originated in North India, where a Kashmirian Pāñcarātra was connected with and influenced by the Śaiva Mantramārga<sup>3</sup>. In a recent study, Sanderson argues that, during the early medieval period, within the competition among the different religious traditions for royal patronage, Vaiṣṇavism underwent a process of reformation by which, following the model of the flourishing Śaivism of the Mantramārga, the Vaiṣṇava-s provided themselves with a new tantric ritual system that found expression in the Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s<sup>4</sup>. With regard to “the text-flow between the texts of Śaivism and those of the Pāñcarātra”, Sanderson shows how the early scriptures known as the three jewels of the Pāñcarātra, namely the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), *Sātvatasāṃhitā* (SS)

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<sup>1</sup> See Schreiner (ed.) 1997: 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Colas 2005: 240.

<sup>3</sup> For an outline of the history of this branch of Śaivism, see Sanderson 1988: 667ff.

<sup>4</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 61.

and *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS), had been influenced by the ritual system of the Śaiva Siddhānta, and he suggests that these works were composed not before 850 A. D.<sup>5</sup>; as for the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (AS) and the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT), he suggests that, on account of their being indebted to the doctrines of the Trika, these *saṃhitā*-s, of South Indian origin, must postdate the *Pratyabhijñārdaya* of Kṣemarāja (1000-1050)<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, according to Sanderson, this tradition of Śaiva-influenced Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s was “adapted in South India as the basis of texts such as the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS), *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS) and *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (PārS), whose purpose, absent in the earlier *Samhitās*, was to provide scriptural authority for a Pāñcarātrika system of temple-worship.”<sup>7</sup>

In its spread to the South, the Pāñcarātra flourished, producing the corpus of scriptures which includes the majority of the extant *saṃhitā*-s. If the texts of northern origin are affected by the Śaiva influence, the texts belonging to the South Indian tradition of Pāñcarātra show peculiar characteristics, determined by the complex relationships of mutual influences between the Pāñcarātra and both the Vaiṣṇava Brahmanic orthodoxy and the philosophy of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta<sup>8</sup>. While the impact of the Brahmanic way of thinking and living resulted in a process of domestication of the “wild” features of the tantric rituals handed down in the *saṃhitā*-s, the *bhakti* spirituality characterizing the religiosity of the southern Pāñcarātra may be attributed to the influence of the Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy. The enduring importance of the southern Pāñcarātra is shown by the fact that its *saṃhitā*-s are the primary sources of the living tradition which establishes, up to the present time, the ritual followed in several South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples.

<sup>5</sup> See Sanderson 2001: 38-39, note 50 and Sanderson 2009: 62, 66-69.

<sup>6</sup> See Sanderson 2001: 35-38 and Sanderson 2009: 70.

<sup>7</sup> Sanderson 2009: 61, note 64.

<sup>8</sup> With regard to the influence of the learned Vaiṣṇava Brahmanic orthodoxy on the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and on the religiosity of the Pāñcarātra of South Indian tradition, see Oberhammer 2007.

Presently, as research stands, an exhaustive history of the Pāñcarātra tradition remains to be written. Following the pioneering study by O. Schrader on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (1916), S. Gupta's translation of the *Lakṣmī Tantra* (1972) and the publication of the *Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgama* by H. D. Smith (1975, 1980), in the last decades several monographies and many articles have been published, enlarging and deepening scholarly knowledge of the Pāñcarātra textual tradition. The monographic studies which have appeared to date are: the works by M. Matsubara on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (1994), by M. Rastelli on the *Jayākhyaṃhitā* (1999), by A. Bock-Raming on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* and *Sātvatasamhitā* (SS) (2002), by M. Czerniac-Drożdżowicz on the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS) (2003) and by M. Rastelli on the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (2006). It is worth mentioning also the annotated translation of several chapters of the *Sātvatasamhitā* by H. Hikita (1990-1994)<sup>9</sup>. The scholarly work hitherto carried out has shown the importance of research on the Pāñcarātra sources for a better understanding of the history of the Vaiṣṇava religious traditions and philosophical schools in medieval India. The *saṃhitā*-s studied so far reveal great richness and variety in their respective theological and philosophical insights, teachings about the means of salvation and ritual systems, so that - as Rastelli has already remarked<sup>10</sup> - the study of each of these works sheds light on certain features of the multifaceted Pāñcarātra phenomenon. This work, insofar as it is the first monographic study of the PādS, aims to contribute to the research work-in-progress in the field of the South Indian Sanskrit textual tradition of Pāñcarātra.

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<sup>9</sup> The full references to these works are given in the Bibliography. For the bibliographical details of Hikita's translation of the SS, see Rastelli 1999: 16. With regard to the articles, only those referred to or quoted in the present study are mentioned in the Bibliography; therefore the latter does not provide a complete list of the publications about Pāñcarātra.

<sup>10</sup> See Rastelli 1999: 23-24.

*Period of Composition of the Pādmasaṃhitā*

The authoritativeness of the PādS among the *pāñcarātrin*-s has been strengthened by its being traditionally associated with the JS, one of the three jewels of the Pāñcarātra. As Smith has already remarked, up to the present time the PādS has been one of the most widely followed *saṃhitā*, a basic text in the training of the Pāñcarātra *arcaka*-s, as well as a guide for worship in several South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples<sup>11</sup>.

As for the other anonymous works forming the corpus of the Pāñcarātra literature, it is difficult to establish a precise date of composition for the PādS. A tentative relative chronology may be inferred by means of a historical-philological approach, assessing the relationships and mutual influences between the PādS and other Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, evaluating textual correspondences (i.e. parallel passages), comparable formulations and similar teachings. But, even if it is possible in this way to indicate a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the work, further problems arise with regard to the history of the text-transmission of the PādS; it is thus necessary to discuss the philological issues relating to the different layers of the text and the process of internal reworking, which so often characterizes the Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s.

The traditional association of the PādS with the JS is based on a passage of the *adhika pāṭha* (“additional text”)<sup>12</sup> of the first chapter of the JS, where the PādS is regarded as a comment, an explanation (*vyākhyāna*) of the JS. In this passage, the PārS is similarly linked

<sup>11</sup> See Smith 1975: 197.

<sup>12</sup> As stated by the editor of the JS, this text is not found in all the manuscripts of the JS; according to K. V. S. Rajan, it constitutes a later interpolation datable to the XIV century, whereas - as acknowledged by scholars - the date of composition of the JS is not later than the IX century (for further information and a discussion about the place of the *adhika pāṭha* in the JS, see Rastelli 1999: 25-27 and Rastelli 1999a: 52ff. For a discussion of the date of composition of the JS, according to the suggestions of K. V. S. Rajan, A. Sanderson and A. Bock-Raming, see Rastelli 2006: 50).

with the PauṣS and the ĪS with the SS<sup>13</sup>. But the import of this passage is rather limited. In fact - as observed by Rastelli<sup>14</sup> - in spite of the assertion contained in the *adhika pāṭha*, the PādS, PārS and ĪS cannot be considered as commentaries of the JS, PauṣS and SS, respectively, in the strict sense; in the case of JS and PādS, it is only possible to speak of an influence of the former on the latter, limited to specific topics. Furthermore - as remarked by Rastelli<sup>15</sup> - not only is there no explicit statement or evidence in the PādS corroborating its dependence on the JS, but on the contrary there is evidence against it. Firstly, in the PādS list of the five jewels of the Tantra-s - counting the *Pādma-*, *Sanatcumāra-*, *Parama-* *Padmodbhava-* and *Māhendra-saṃhitā-s* - the JS is not mentioned<sup>16</sup>; secondly, with regard to ritual and practical matters dealt with in the *yogapāda*, *kriyāpāda* and *caryāpāda*, the PādS proves to be independent from the JS; finally, the chief *mantra-s* taught in the two *saṃhitā-s* are different (namely, the *mūlamantra* [oṃ kṣīṃ kṣiḥ] in the JS and the *dvādaśākṣaramantra* [oṃ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya] in the PādS).

The results of the present study confirm that, while the JS is certainly to be considered as one of the sources which the author(s) of the PādS referred to, with regard to specific topics, yet it does not deserve a special or prominent place among the other sources of the PādS. Therefore the traditional association between the two *saṃhitā-s* is not justified from the point of view of textual criticism.

As far as the portions of the PādS discussed in this study are concerned, there are a number of Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā-s* which are to be considered, either as direct references on which the text of the PādS is based, or as sources which have inspired or influenced the

<sup>13</sup> See JS, *adhika pāṭha*, 6-8b: *vyākhyāmūlanāyenaśīṣāṃ gauravaṃ sampratiṣṭhitam tantrē'py aṣṭottaraśate pārameśvarasaṃhitā* || A6 *pauṣkarārthavivṛtṭyarthā vyākhyārūpāvatāritā sāttvatasya vivṛtṭyartham īśvaraṃ tantram uttamam* || A7 *jyākhyasyāsyā tantrasya vyākhyānaṃ pādman ucyate* | A8ab.

<sup>14</sup> See Rastelli 1999: 25 and note 8.

<sup>15</sup> See Rastelli 1999a: 55-56.

<sup>16</sup> See PādS, *cp*, 33, 204-205b: *tantrāṅgāni caiva ratnāni pañcāhuḥ paramarṣayaḥ | pādman sanatkumāraṃ ca tathā paramasaṃhitā* || 33.204 *padmodbhavaṃ ca māhendram kaṇva tantrāmṛtāni ca* | 33.205ab.

author(s) of the PādS in formulating their teachings about several matters. These sources are: the ParS, AS, JS, SS, and LT<sup>17</sup>. By acknowledging the dates of composition of these works suggested by scholars - namely: not before 850 A. D. for JS and SS, before 1000 A. D. for ParS<sup>18</sup> and after 1050 A. D. for AS and LT - the beginning of the XII century may be indicated as the earliest *terminus a quo* for the composition of the PādS, at least as far as the scrutinized portions of the work are concerned.

In Rastelli's monographic study of the PārS, in which the work is dated from 1100 to 1300 A. D.<sup>19</sup>, the author shows that the text was compiled by taking text-passages from several Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, among which the PādS was included<sup>20</sup>. On the basis of an examination of parallel passages dealing with the *pañcopaniṣad-mantra*, Rastelli argues that the PādS must be older than the PārS<sup>21</sup>. This is evidence that the PādS is at least earlier than the XIV century.

But a definite *terminus ante quem* is provided by Veṅkaṭanātha (1268-1369), who repeatedly quotes the PādS in his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*<sup>22</sup>. The number of quotations, all taken from the *caryāpāda*, shows that by the time of Veṅkaṭanātha, the PādS was considered an important and authoritative source for the Pāñcarātra ritual system.

<sup>17</sup> See the table of the sources of the PādS, below, p. 339.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the date of composition of the ParS, see Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2003: 28.

<sup>19</sup> See Rastelli 2006: 54.

<sup>20</sup> See *Ibidem*: 49. The passages of the PādS identified as sources of the PārS are indexed in *Ibidem*: 570-571.

<sup>21</sup> See *Ibidem*: 59.

<sup>22</sup> Examination of the text of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* reveals that the PādS is quoted in many places. In the edition of the PRR published in 1996, the quotations from the PādS, for which Veṅkaṭanātha himself gives the precise references, are found on the following pages: p. 9: PādS, *cp*, 19, 111c-113b and PādS, *cp*, 19, 117ab; p. 10-11: PādS, *cp*, 19, 113c-128b; p. 13: PādS, *cp*, 19, 131-132; p. 50: PādS, *cp*, 13, 1-6b; p. 98: PādS, *cp*, 13, 12c-16b; p. 102: PādS, *cp*, 13, 16c-19; p. 110: PādS, *cp*, 13, 23-28b; p. 126: PādS, *cp*, 13, 4c-5b and PādS, *cp*, 13, 28-30; p. 129: PādS, *cp*, 13, 31-34b; p. 164: PādS, *cp*, 13, 72c-77. Further references to the PādS are found in the Index of quotations (pp. 190-225).