



A STUDY ON MANUSCRIPT OF VEDĀRTHASĀRASAṄGRAHA

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Abstract

The Article in Sanskrit, entitled '*Vedārthasārasaṅgraha* - A study is a critical study on *Vedārthasārasaṅgraha* (VSS) of Brahmānandabhārati (BB). VSS is a *Śaivatantra* work written by BB. This is a work of compilation type in which various topics related to *Śaivatantra* are seen described. Even though the title is VSS, it describes the topics related to *Śaivatantra* or *Śaivāgama*. Scope of this subject is to explain the tenets and rituals of *Śaivatantra*. The edition of VSS is done based on an old edition of VSS and the Manuscript (Ms) or Transcript (Ts) of the text in various Ms Libraries. The text is also named *Puruṣārthaprabodha* (PP). The text contains three Amśas, with four Adhyāyas in Amśa I and six Adhyāyas each in Amśa II and III. The text has three Amśas with more than one thousand verses in each.

VSS, otherwise known as PP, is a work on *Śaivatantra* dealing with different aspects of Śaiva worship like wearing of Rudrākṣa, smearing the body with Bhasma, worship of Liṅga and other different rituals related to Śaiva worship. This is a work of compilation type in which various topics from other Tantric works related to Śiva worship and other works on *Tantra* and philosophy are seen described. Thus this cannot be taken fully as an independent work. Still, the work is very important in its study related to the Tantric cult of India. Thus many works and authors are found quoted in VSS, most of them not mention in the original source or author which true the fact that VSS is a compilation work.

KEY WORDS

Vedārthasārasaṅgraha (VSS), *Puruṣārthaprabodha* (PP), Brahmānandabhārati (BB), *Śaivatantra*, Vedatantra, Manuscript(Ms), Transcript(Ts).

INTRODUCTION

Tantra is an important system of Indian philosophy and its close affinity to the *Vedas* is apparent. The *Tantra* scriptures themselves contain references to its Vedic origin. In its subsequent development, however, *Tantra* shows a more pronounced influence of the *Upaniṣads*, as well as of *Yoga* and the *Purāṇas*. The ritualistic worship of modern Hinduism has been greatly collared by *Tantra*, and this fact is particularly noticeable in Bengal, Kashmir, Gujarat, and Kerala.

The *Śaivatantra* tradition has a long history for pre - Vedic time up to the present time. It had its development all over India. Different sects and branches of Śaivism began prominent and popular in India in its different stages of development among them, *Kāśmir Śaivism*, especially Karma, Tula and Pratyabhijña branches are important taking into account their idealistic stand points. Equally important is the *Siddhāntaśaivism* of South India with its philosophical base. Other than these, many sects in Śaivism like *Vīraśaivism*, *Pāśupata* system etc. also developed. Thus this Śaiva tradition especially its ritualistic Tāntric streams is very rich in India the study and research on which has much scope and importance.

Vedārthasārasaṅgraha (VSS) is Śaivatantra work written by Brahmānandabhārati (BB). This is a work of compilation type in which various topics related to Śaivatantra are seen described. The following old edition and Manuscript (MS) / Transcript (TS) of the work were located by the present researcher.

SOURCE OF THE TEXT MATERIAL

The edition of VSS is done based on an old edition of VSS and the Manuscript (Ms) or Transcript (Ts) of the text in various Ms Libraries. The following old edition and Ms / Ts of the work were located by the present researcher. First of all an old edition of VSS was located by the present researcher in the library of Ecole française d'Extreme - Orient (EFEO), Pondicherry. It is edited and published from Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu in 1907. The work is in Grantha Script in dummy 1/8 size. There are 312 pages in the work printed on both sides. Pages are very old and brittle. Some corners and parts of the pages are missing. Still most of the portion of the text is readable and is used in the edition presented along with this thesis. The title of the work is given in the edition as *PP*. But the text is famous as *VSS* also. The present researcher could locate one Ms of the work at the Manuscript Library of Brahmāsvam Maṭham, Thrissur and one Ts at the Manuscript Library, Thripunithura. The editor of the Chidambaram text has not made use of both the Ms and Ts mentioned here.

In the Ts of the work no.266 located at Thripunithura, the name *VSS* is given. In the CE, though the name *PP* is given in the title page, in the colophons of each Adhyāya of each Amśa, both the names *PP* and *VSS* are given. The text contains three Amśas with more than one thousand verses in each Amśa. The first Amśa contains more than thousand ślokas divided into four Adhyāyas. It has the names of the Adhyāyas at the end of each Adhyāya as found in the colophons and the number of verses in each of them.

The name given for the major division of *VSS* or *PP* in the text is *Amśa*. Thus the work contains three *Amśas*. Each *Amśa* is again divided into *Adhyāyas*. The whole text is in verse form in different metres. Thus there are totally 1321 stanzas in *Amśa* I, 1990 stanzas in *Amśa* II and 1546 stanzas in *Amśa* III. In this way the work contains 4857 stanzas in total in the three *Amśas*.

At present the Manuscripts (Mss) of the Brahmasvam Maṭham and Naduvil Maṭham, Thrissur, are collected and preserved together in the Ms Library of Brahmasvam Maṭham, Thrissur. The numbers of the Mss of the text preserved in the Maṭhas are not correlating with the numbers of them given in the *New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC)*. Some new numbers are seen given in the Mss kept in the Brahmasvam Maṭham now. Also the present researcher could locate only one Ms of the text in the present collection of Mss of Brahmasvam Maṭham, Thrissur, the number of which is given as 154 now.

The CE of the work is referred to in *NCC*. Vol. XII¹. But the Ts of work located by the researcher at Mss Library, Government Sanskrit College, Thripunithura is not at all referred to anywhere or in any Catalogues. So there is relevance and importance for including the edition of the text.

The length and width of the folios of the Ms at Brahmasvam Maṭham, Trissur is 14” and 2.25” respectively. The Ms is written in old Malayalam Script. There are total 165 folios in the Ms. There are average nine lines in a page and average 48 letters in each line. The text is written on both sides of the folios. The Ms is almost in good condition and the characters are written legibly in old Malayalam Script. The colophon in the beginning of the work, in the end of each *Amśas* and in the concluding part of the third *Amśa* show that the work is *VSS* or *PP* written by BB.

The Ts of the work located at Tripunithura is numbered as 266 in the list of Mss/ Transcripts library. It is a paper Ts in Malayalam character written on both sides neatly. The size of Ts is 8X12”. There are totally 557 pages in the Ts with an average of 18 lines on a page and 16 words in a line. In most pages, the Ts is in fairly good and readable condition. The name of the person who copied the Ts from the Ms is recorded as K. Ramavarma Thirumulpad and the name of the person who compared the Ts with the Ms is recorded as K. A. Mukundaśāstri. In the Ts of Trippunithura and in the Ms of Brahmasvam Maṭham, Trissur, in some places, there are some lacunae.

Author

The author of *VSS* is BB. It is clear from the colophons given at the end of the *Adhyāyas* of the work, that the scholar named Brahmanandabhārati is the author of the work. It is also clear that he was a Sanyāsin. The name of the author and the name of the work are repeatedly given in the colophons at the end of each *Adhyāya* of each *Amśa* of the work almost in a similar way. The name Saraswati is given instead of Bhārati, both of which, it appears, are used as synonyms. Thus, in the colophons at the end of the first *Adhyāya* of every *Amśa*, the name is given as Brahmanandasaraswati. Thus in more places, the name BB is seen. This may be the reason why the name BB is given in the beginning of the Chidambaram text as the name of the author. In almost all the colophons mentioned above, the

¹ *NCC* Vol. XII, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1968, p.135b

name of the preceptor of the author is given as Rāmarājasaraswatimuni. It is also stated in the colophons that the author has composed the work inspired by the god Śiva. Ullūr S. Parameswara Iyer has referred to the name Brahmanandan in *Kerala Sahitya Caritram (KSC)* and has suggested the date of Brahmānandan between 1500 and 1600 AD².

In the work *Advaitavedāntasāhityaitihāsakośa (AVSK)* edited by Tangaswāmiśarma, BB is referred to as serial number 134³. There it is stated that he is the disciple of Ānandatīrta, Vidyāraṇya and Rāmanadabhārati⁴. He has written a commentary on *Dṛgdrśyaviveka*, independent work *PP* and the *Tīkā* on *Prapañcasāra*. His date is given as 14th C AD⁵. In the forward to *Dṛgdrśyaviveka*, Dr. V. Subrahmaṇya Iyer also speaks of BB as having written a commentary on that text⁶.

In the same work, in another context, as serial number 335, a philosopher in the name Brahmānadasaraswati is referred to. There it is stated that he is the disciple of Sadāśivatīrtha and Rāmarājasaraswati. *Puruṣārthabodha* is referred to as his work along with other works like *Śivagītāvyākhyā* and *Prabodhaśataka*⁷.

Though both BB and Brahmānadasaraswati are referred to in different contexts separately, it seems that both are one and the same author because *Puruṣārthabodha* is given as his work in all contexts.

According to *NCC* Vol. XV.p.97a⁸, BB is a disciple of one Rāmānada and Ānandabhārati. It is also stated there that Rāmānada is otherwise known as Bhāratīrtha, supposed to be the preceptor of BB. Rāmānada might have accepted the name Bhāratīrtha after he became a Saint. Four works, *PP*, commentary on *Dṛgdrśyaviveka*, sub commentary on the commentary of Śankarācārya on *Viṣṇusahasranāma*⁹ and the independent work *Śivaprasādamāhātmyam* are given in *NCC* as composed by BB.¹⁰

According to *NCC*, in the work *PP* supposed to be written by BB, this Scholar and Saint Rāmarājasaraswati is referred to as his preceptor¹¹. Rāmarājasaraswati is referred to as the preceptor of BB in *VSS* or *PP* also. So it can be concluded that BB, the author of *VSS* or *PP* and the author of the four works mentioned above, are one and the same.

Date of the author

Śrī Ullūr S. Parameswara Iyer suggests the date of BB as 16th C AD¹². According to *NCC*, Vol IX¹³, BB in his commentary on *Dṛgdrśyaviveka* has quoted Lakṣmīdhara and hence he could not have flourished later than 17th C AD¹⁴. BB also refers to Bhāratīrtha,

² For details vide *KSC*, Vol II, Kerala University Publication, 1964, pp.304ff

³ Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1980, P.368

⁴ *NCC* XV, Ed., Siniruddhadash, Kumarapuram Kunjunniraja, Venkatarama Ragavan, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 2007, p.97a and Vol IX, P.97a, 1977

⁵ *AVSK*, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1980. P.368

⁶ *Dṛg-drśyaviveka*, V. Subrahmanya Iyer, Sreeramakrishnasrama, Mysore, 1931, p.xiv (Introduction).

⁷ *AVSK*, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1980. p.430

⁸ *NCC* Vol XV, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 2007.

⁹ *The Viṣṇusahasranāma with the Bhashya of Srisankaracharya*, R. Ananthakrishna Sastry, 1927, pp. vii, viii (Preface)

¹⁰ *NCC* Vol XXVIII, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 2013, p.15a

¹¹ *NCC* Vol XII Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1968, p. 135b

¹² Vide *KSC* Vol II, Kerala University publication, 1964, pp. 306ff and *KSC*, Vol I pp.126ff.

¹³ *NCC*, Vol IX, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1977, p. 97a

Guru of Śrī Vidyāraṇya, who lived towards the close 14th C AD¹⁵. In the work, *AVSK* also, the date of BB is given as 14thC AD¹⁶. No other details are available to fix the date BB exactly. There is confusion regarding the names of preceptors of BB given in different sources referred to above. In *AVSK*, Vidyāraṇya is given as a preceptor of BB¹⁷. In *NCC* Vol IX, Vidyāraṇya is referred to as the disciple of Bhāratīrta¹⁸. This point has to be investigated further. But it can be seen that Rāmarājasaraswati has been referred to as the preceptor of BB in *AVSK*, *NCC* Vols XII, XV and IX and in *VSS*. With the support of all these facts it can be concluded that BB and Brahmānandasaraswati are identical and his date is about 14thC AD.

Regarding the native place of author, there is the mention of Māḷavaḷḷīgrama, the Village Māḷavaḷḷī on the banks of the river Aghanāśī, at the end of the text in the concluding verses of *Amśa* III:

“Māḷavaḷḷīyabhidhe grāme śiṣṭabhūsurabhūṣite
aghanāśuttaratate stitvā dṛṣṭimanohare .”

This may be the Sanskritised form of some village in Kerala or Tamil Nadu or Andhrapradesh or Telungana which could not be definitely located by the present researcher. The references to the river Aghanāśī, which may be the river Pāpanāśinī (Agha means Pāpa), points to the possibility of the place being situated on the banks of the river with that name that flows near the temple at Tirunelly at Vayanad in Kerala. But no place or Village in the name Māḷavaḷḷī or similar to that could be located in or near Vayanad. Anyhow, further research and enquiry to locate the place is yet to be done.

As mentioned earlier, the present scholar could locate the work *VSS* by Brahmānandabhārati at the Library of EFEO, Pondichery. It is also referred to in *NCC* (Vols. IX, XII, XV, XXVIII, XXXI) being published from the Madras University. In *VSS*, it is noted that BB is the disciple of Rāmānanda and Ānandabhārati. Some of the works of BB are also referred to in *NCC*. Scholars and historians of Kerala Sanskrit Literature like Vaṭakumkūr Rājarājavarma, K. Kuñjunṇirāja and Dr. S. Venkaṭasubrahmaṇya Iyar have not noted about the work or author anywhere.¹⁹ Though Ullūr has referred to the Scholar Brahmānandan, it is not sure that he is identical with BB, author of *VSS*. It can only be said with all possibilities that the author was a Sanyāsin of Naḍuvil Maṭham, Thrissur.²⁰

Content of *VSS*

¹⁴ *Advaitamakaranda* of Lakṣmīdhara with Sanskrit commentary by Sṛisvayamprakāśayati, <https://archive.org/details/advaitamakaranda>, p. iv (Introduction)

¹⁵ *NCC*, Vol IX, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1977, p. 97a

¹⁶ Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1980, p.368

¹⁷ *AVSK*, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1980, p.368

¹⁸ *NCC* Vol IX, Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras, 1977, p.97a

¹⁹ *Keralīyasamskṛtasāhityacaritram*, (6 Vols), Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, 1997. The *Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, Madras University Sanskrit Series No. 23, 1958 (1980 Second Edition), *Kerala Sanskrit Literature - A Bibliography*, Department of Sanskrit, University of Kerala, Trivandram, 1976.

²⁰ For details vide *KSC* Vol. II, pp. 304ff

The first Adhyāya of Prathamāmsā called Vedotkarṣopadeśa consists of 539 Ślokas. The first Adhyāya describes about the greatness of Veda. Here the praise of Veda is actually the praise of the greatness of Śiva. This Adhyāya also consists of the topics nāma, sthāna, arccanā, and anugraha of Lord Śiva.

The second Adhyāya named Paramādvaitavedārthopadeśa consists of 296 ślokas. This Adhyāya starts by praising the Supreme being Lord Śiva. It is stated here that Lord Mahesvaran is powerful enough to describe Vedārtha which is Paramādvaita itself.

The third Adhyāya named Paramaśivotkarṣopadeśa consists of 317 Ślokas. Worship of the Lord who is the god, who is the originator of everything, who blesses all and who is the husband of Umā, is described here.

Fourth Adhyāya named Paramaśivasādhāraṇamūrtyulkarṣopadeśa consists of 169 ślokas. Here it is described that Veda glorifies Lord Siva worshipped by everyone who is the absolute in the form of idol.

The first Adhyāya of the second Amśa called Śivotkarṣopadeśa consists of 147 Ślokas. Here the greatness and special features of the names of Lord Śiva like Śivarudramahādeva, Brahmeśa, Paramaśiva and Lokamahāśṅkara are also described.

The second Adhyāya named Śivakṣetrolkarṣopadeśa consists of 193 Ślokas. This Adhyāya briefly describes the greatness of the holy places like Kāśī where god Śiva resides.

Third Adhyāya named Śivapūjāmāhātmya consists of 307 Ślokas. This Adhyāya briefly describes the ceremonies and different rituals related to Lord Śiva, as daily rituals, rituals for the fulfilment of desires, for removal of fear and the performance of Agni ceremony for Lord Śiva.

Fourth Adhyāya of the second Amśa named Śivapūjāvidhāna consists of 236 Ślokas. Worship of the Lord Śiva who is the medic of sick' in the world is the main content of this Adhyāya.

Fifth Adhyāya of the second Amśa called Pūjāvidhāna consists of 770 Ślokas. This Adhyāya describes the method of worship of Rudra. Worship of Rudra by women is also described here. Method of Viṣṇupūjā for Nārāyaṇa and Śivapūja for Lord Śiva is also described in this chapter. In this Adhyāya one can see that Lord Śiva is worshiped in the form of liṅga consecrated in Sālagrāmaśilā.

Sixth Adhyāya of Amśa II, named Śivaprasādamāhātmya consists of 337 Ślokas. Here the greatness of the blessings of Lord Śiva, husband of Pārvatī, is described. It is stated that eternal bliss is got by the blessing of the Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva always is pleased by Pūjādravyas. The god of universe blesses the one who pleases him by rituals and ceremonies. By worship of Lord Śiva and by giving food and drink to him, one gets free from all sins. There is no doubt that he who gives food for the Lord Śiva in the form of Śreṣṭhaliṅga, will acquire ultimate knowledge.

First Adhyāya named Guṇirudrotkarṣopadeśa of Amśa III, consists of 286 Ślokas. It deals with the form of Rudra of Lord Śiva. Lord Viṣṇu in the form of Trimūrti is emphasized in many works related to Vaiṣṇava Literature. Lord Śiva, among Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, is more emphasised than the others in this text as well as in other works related to Śaivatantra.

Second and third Adhyāyas of third Amśa called Bhasmadhāraṇamahātmyam briefly describe the glory of Bhasmadhāraṇa. Both of them together consist of 601 Ślokas. Tripuṇḍradhāraṇa and Tripuṇḍradhūḷana are described in this context. When the three lines using Bhasma are drawn, all sins will be destroyed. The idol of the god will be holy when we spread Bhasma over it.

Fourth Adhyāya of third Amśa named Śrautapāśupatākhyāgravratānuṣṭānavidhi consists of 300 Ślokas. Here Pāśupatavratam is described in detail. Lord Śiva is worshiped by observing Pāśupatavratam. The ceremony is performed by chanting Praṇavamāntra. Pāśupatavratam is usually observed in the evening.

Fifth Adhyāya of Amśa III, named Savidhānarudrākṣamāhātmya consists of 180 Ślokas. In *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*, it is stated that ultimate knowledge is achieved by wearing Rudrākṣa. Here worship of Śiva wearing Rudrākṣa is detailed at length. By wearing Rudrākṣa one gets Śivajñānam. Face of Rudrākṣa is called as Bhrahmabhindurudra. Rudrākṣa liberates us from all bonds.

Sixth Adhyāya of Amśa III, named Sarvamārgaprāmānyanirṇaya consists of 179 Ślokas. Here it is stressed that Lord Śiva in *Śruti*, *Smṛti*, *Purāṇa* and *Itihāsa* is the one who is described as the maker of all paths of knowledge and Śiva is the Lord or ruler of all paths. All *Śāstras* in the world are created by Śambhu.

Conclusion

The foregoing chapters discuss the importance of Śaivatantra tradition in Sanskrit and this special feature of the text VSS. The root meaning of the word Tantra; division of *Tantra* traditions; difference between Tantric and Vedic traditions; God Śiva in Vedic, Tantric and Purāṇic Literature; Schools of Śaivism like Kālamukhas, Kāpālikas, Kāśmīr Śaivism, Pāśupata cult, Siddhānta Śaivism and Vīraśaivism and their tenets; Doctrines Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita and Ṣaḍstala in Śaivism; Liṅga worship in Śaivatantra; Śaivatantra Literature in Kerala and Gods and the mode of worship in the Śaivatantra tradition of Kerala.

The text material, author and date of VSS or *PP* is dealt with in detail in Chapter II. The present Scholar was able to procure one old printed edition of VSS published from Chidambaram in 1907 in Granta Script, from the Library of EFEO, Pondicherry. No other printed edition of VSS could be located. The Chidambaram edition is very old and brittle in some pages. Six or seven Mss of VSS are referred to in Chidambaram edition based on which the edition is produced. On further enquiry, the present scholar one of VSS in Vaṭakkemaṭham Brahmasvam Library Thrissur and one Transcript (Ts) in the Manuscript Library of Govt. Sanskrit College Thripunithura. This Ms and Ts are not referred in the Chidambaram edition. VSS contains three Amśas with four Adhyāyas in Amśa I and six Adhyāyas in Amśa II and III. Each Amśas contain more than thousand verses.

VSS represent the face of the development of *Tantra* when it had its synthesis with Vedic tradition, which can be called *Vedatantra*. This aspect of VSS is discussed in the Chapters along with the topics 'authority of Veda' as explained in VSS; *Upaniṣad* quoted in VSS and *Tantra* works, *Samhitas*, *Āgamas*, *Purāṇas* and works on *Darśanas* quoted in VSS. Rituals related to Śiva worship like smearing of Bhasma and wearing of Rudrākṣa explained in VSS. Śaivatantra philosophy of VSS; Ṛṣi's, spiritual teacher and scholar quoted verses in VSS are discussed detail.

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