

CHAPTER : II

DATE, HOME AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE IS.

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The IS. is a part of the Lalitopākhyāna (LP) which is one of the apocrypha of the Brahmāṇḍa Purāna. Since it is the apocrypha of the Brmḍ.P., the date of the Brmḍ.P. cannot be accepted as the date of either the LP. or the IS. Thus, it is very difficult to get the accurate date either of the LP. or the IS. But on the basis of some available sources an attempt can be made to find out the approximate period of the work in question.

It has been stated in the first Chapter that in the colophon of the IS. it is declared that the IS. forms a part of the LP., the date of the LP., therefore, would decide the date of the IS. The date of the LP. which consists of (1) the LP., (2) the IS. and (3) the LP. (Lalitā Trisatī), is fixed in successive stages by Dr.B.Datta, in his learned article¹.

Dr.B.Datta puts forth following arguments : (1) The LP. is not included in different editions of the Brmḍ.P. (viz. Bangabasi.ed., Javanese ed. etc.) and also it is not mentioned in any of the lists of content available in the different Purānas (like Agni, Matsya, Skanda and Śiva). This apparently shows that the LP. by the time of compilation of the lists did not either form a part of, or was added to the Brmḍ.P. But this is insufficient evidence to conclude that by the time the LP. was not composed as these editions are deficient in their complete volume².

(2) The posterior date of the LP. can be accepted as belonging to the Brmd.P., which is supplied by Bhāskararāya (Bh.). He frequently quotes from the LP. under the name of the Brmd.P.. This evidently proves that by the time of Bh. (1718 A.D.) the LP. formed an interal part of the Brmd.P.³

(3) Again the three works; the LP., the IS. and the IF., appear to have been composed in the following order.

(1) The LP. (2) the IS. and (3) the IF..As, the introductory verses of the IS. declare "Kathitaṃ lalitādevyāscaritaṃ parmādbhutaṃ...."⁴, which seems identical with the LP..Again the verses in the IF. "rahasyanāma sāhasraṃ api tvattah śrutaṃ mayā...."⁵, narrate that the IF. existed prior to the days of Śaṅkarācārya as it has been commented upon by him. Hence date of the LP., would be earlier than the 850 A.D., the date of Śaṅkara⁶. But this is possible only when we accept that Śaṅkara, the Vedāntin, is the same who wrote the commentary on the IF., with Śaṅkara who wrote the commentary on the Brahma-sūtras. But due to very great divergence in the treatment of the subject and the thought, the two authors appear not to be identical. Thus considering the above fact it appears that the date suggested above (i.e. 850 A.D.), cannot be the date of the LP..

(4) The 'Hayagrīva' Śākta Darśana and the 'Agastya Śakti Sūtras', which are assigned to Hayagrīva and Agastya respectively. As the LP. is a dialogue between them, it can be later than the former (i.e. LP.). Both the works (i.e. Ag. Sh. Su and H. Sā. D.) deal in ^{the} Sūtra form with the subjects common to the LP. and hence

both the works appear to be the works in the same line of tradition. They appear later than the LP. as they record LP.'s teaching in nutshell and also supply some philosophical details absent in the LP. These two (i.e. the LP. and the two sūtra works), seem to be identical as far as the ritualistic representations of ^{the} school are concerned. Again these two works appear to contain a summary of the principal tenets of the LP. in the Sūtra form.

Now though the "Hayagrīva Śākta Darśana" is assigned to a time before 8th century A.D. by Prof. Abhyankar, this date seems to be earlier as we find a reference to the Bhāgavata⁷ in the 'Agastya Śakti Sūtra'. Hence the date of the LP. should be yet later than the date of the Bhāgavata. The sūtras of Agastya are not posterior but earlier to Hayagrīva's Śākta Darśana as the Agastya Śakti Sūtra is more religious and the later is more philosophical in treatment. It is found that philosophical basis of a particular sect is always developed later than the sect which is established more after its rituals. Thus, Agastya Śakti Sūtra, the work dealing with religious aspect precedes the Hayagrīva Śākta Darśana.

Further the mention of Hayagrīva (i.e. Hayānana) as a teacher in Agastya Śakti Sūtras should not finally decide its date later than the Hayagrīva Śākta Darśana. Because Hayagrīva in the Agastya Śakti Sūtra is shown to be a teacher practising the philosophy of indifferentism⁸. Hence Hayagrīva of Śākta Darśana who is identified with Hayagrīva, the preacher of the LP. who was identical with Janārdana Viṣṇu need not be identical

with the former (i.e. Hayagrīva mentioned in Agastya Śakti Sūtra). Thus these two sūtras relate the tradition of the two locutors of the LP. Thus Agastya Śakti Sūtra appear to have been written after the narration of the LP. If this postulation is accepted then the date of the LP. need not be earlier than the 10th-11th cent. A.D., especially when a later date in view of the date of the Bhāgavata is possible for the Agastya Śakti Sūtra.

Dr. B. Datta also states some internal evidences for the date of the LP. They are as follows :

(1) The name Lalitā as also Tripurā occurs among the different names of Bhadrakālī⁹, who appeared before Rama Jamadagnya, while he was fighting with Her devotee Suchandra. The mention of the epithet Lalitā in this context makes upto surmise that the author of the Bhārgavopākhyāna was familiar with the LP. of Brmd.P. or was acquainted with the Lalitā cult. The chapter mentioning Lalitā in the Bhārgavopākhyāna was perhaps added to it only after the LP. was finally appended to and accepted as an integral part of the Brmd.P.

(2) The author of the LP. refers to the Candikā Saptasatī which should be identified with the Durgā Saptasati¹⁰ of Markd.P. This Devī Mahātmya is precisely dated to the 5th or 6th cent. A.D. by Hazra¹¹. Thus if both are identified, this could by far serve as the anterior date for the composition of the LP.

Further the number of vidyās referred to in the different texts of Tantras have the tendency of gradual increase in their number. Thus we find that the 'Nityāsodasikārnava'¹² mentions

eight vidyas and the 'Yoginī hr̥daya' makes the total nine. In Jñānārṇava¹³ the number is increased upto twelve vidyas. The LP. refers to ten vidyas and it should, on that score, be supposed to occupy a place between the Yoginīhr̥daya and the Jñānārṇava. But it is again difficult to date these two books. However the anterior date of the Yoginīhr̥daya would be fixed by the Nityāśodasīkārṇava, which is believed to be the forerunner of the Yoginī hr̥daya, as the former mentions one vidyā less than those mentioned in the latter. The Nityāśodasīkārṇava is dated 9th cent.A.D.¹⁴ The Yoginīhr̥daya on the whole is an ancient work and cannot be dated much later, approximately a century later, the Nityāśodasīkārṇava. The date of Jñānārṇava appears to be the 13th cent. A.D. to 15th Cent.A.D. Hence the date of the LP. falls somewhere between the 9th and the 12th cent.A.D. Gopinātha Kavirāja, too, assigns the same probable date to this work.

(4) Again, the LP. recounts the ten incarnations of Nārāyaṇa¹⁵ which are said to have come out of fingernails of Lalitā, to fight against those demons who were created by Bhaṇḍa. They are (1) Ādikarma, (2) Mahāvarāha, (3) Nṛsiṃha, (4) Vāmana, (5) Rāma-Jāmadagnya, (6) Rāma, - Dāśarathī, (7) Tālaṅka, (8) Vāsudeva, (9) Saṅkarasāna, (10) Pradyūma, (11) Aniruddha and (12) Kalakī. Though they number 12, they should be reaccounted as ten only after tradition. In that case we have to recount the Vāsudeva-Vyūha of last four as two only, by including the second and fourth into first and third.

Now this Vyūha theory of was actually promulgated by the Pāncarātra school of Vaiṣṇavāsm. It is not mentioned in the Viṣṇu

Purāna. First of all it is to be traced to Nārāyaṇīyopākhyāna of the Mahābhārata¹⁶ and is also mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāna¹⁷. Moreover, the Ahirbudhanya Sāhita clearly mentions the Vyūha-Theory with sectarian details¹⁸. According to Dr.K.D. Pandey the Vyūha-Theory appears to be a part of the Pañcarātra school and also accepted by the Purānas¹⁹.

Thus this theory seems to be fully developed by the time of the Ahirbudhanya Sāhita (8th cent.A.D.) and it could have been adopted a century or two later by different works of other cults. Thus the date of the LP. may coincide with the date of the Pañcarātra school i.e. 11th to 13th cent.A.D.

The most important evidence to assign LP. to 11th to 12th cent.A.D. is supplied by Dr.B.Datta is as follows :

(5) The LP. narrates that the gods prayed to the Goddess Lalitā to stay permanently at Kāncī. The Goddess agreed with alacrity to their proposal and three shrines were erected, for Brahmā and Sarasvatī to the South, for Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī to the North and Central being for Lalitā Mahesvara. Now if this event of erecting the temple for permanent stay of Lalitā at Kāncī is taken to be identical with the erection of an Amman shrine at Ekamreṣvara, the site of Kailāsanātha temple at Kāncī by Rajarāja, the cola emperor (985-1014 A.D.), then some precise date for the composition of the LP. can be determined and this also can further explain the purpose of the composition of this work. In this way, Dr.B.Datta assigns LP. to the 11th to 12th cent.A.D.

It has already been stated that the IS. forms an integral part of the LP.. Again, we find an internal evidence in the 4th chapter, V.v.20. There it is mentioned, "Tattu sahasranāmādhyaē vaksyāmi....". On the basis of all these arguments we can affirm that IS. formed an integral part of the LP. Thus the above date can be accepted as the date of IS. too.

Home and Authorship of the IS.

As far as the authorship of the IS. is concerned there is no direct evidence, But the detail study of the LP. and IS. leads us to conclude that the author of IS. belonged to Kāñcī.

The text of the LP. specifically records that the Upākhyāna was related by Hayagrīva to Agastya at Kāñcī²⁰. This shows that the author of the LP. was probably a permanent native of Kāñcī itself or else he had settled down there.

That he was the local man of Kāñcī is again pointed out by extra ordinary praise and respect that he showers on river kampa²¹.

On the basis of all such evidences it can be said that the author belonged to Kāñcī.

Further the detail study of the Ākhyāna as well as the IS. shows that the author was the master of poetic art and also an ardent devotee of the Goddess Lalitā. He has given detailed exposition of the Śrī Lalitā Cult. Moreover, in the IS. he has summarised almost all the fundamental doctrines of the Lalitā-cult (i.e. Śrīvidyā cult). In want of the internal evidence we can't express our decision about the authorship of the IS. But as the IS is an apocrypha of the LP. it can be surmised that the author

of the LP. may be some Śaṅkarācārya or his competent fellower at the Kāñcīpīṭha. There is a tradition to corroborate this conclusion. In the South there are three main Pīṭhas.

(1) The Goddess Kāmākṣī at Kāñcīpīṭha, who is called Mahārājñī or Rājarājesvarī.

(2) The Goddess Mīnākṣī at Madurā, who is called Mañṭrīnī or Śyāmālā.

(3) The Goddess Akhilāndeśvarī at Tiruvannaikkā who is called Daṇḍinī or Daṇḍanāthā.

Now the ear ornament (Tāṭaṅkas) of Akhilāndeśvarī is of a special significance as Ādi-Śaṅkara is known to have performed Tāṭaṅka Pratīṣṭhā with the Śrīcakra on it (Tāṭaṅka). Moreover, recently in 1909 A.D. H.H.Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī of Kāñcīkāmakoṭi-pīṭha had performed the Tāṭaṅka pratīṣṭhā again in connection with Mahākumbhābhiseka of Tiruvannaikka temple²².

This shows the connection of Kāñcīpīṭha with the cult of the Goddess Lalitā. Hence it will not be far from it to connect the authorship of the LP. and the IS. with the pontifs of this pīṭha.

REFERENCES

1. "The Date and Authorship of the Lalitopākhyānam", B.Datta, JGJKSV, Vol.XXXII, pp.451-467. His arguments are summarised and presented here.
2. Gonda, Purānam, II, p.266.
3. Vide, Bhāskararāya, ISNB, NSP, pp.29, 41, 42, 44, 46, 50, 69, 85, 97, 103, 107, 116, 123, 137, 162, 169..
He frequently quotes LP. under ^{the} Brahmanḍa P.
4. ISNB, NSP, V.1-8.
5. Vide, 'Śaṅkara Granthāvalih', Vol.9, Vānivilāsa Press, Lalitā-Trisatī-bhāṣya, pp.249-252.
6. Vide, Sudhakara Chattopadhyaya, TSAI, P. XV of the date of Śaṅkara.
7. Vide, Śākta Darśana of Hayagrīva, XV, 3(13).
8. Ibid., p.93, Agastya Śakti Sūtras, 95.
9. Brmd.P. III, 39 (41); cf. Kane, HDS, Vol.V, p.1042.
He maintains that the cult of Bhadrakālī is pretty old as Bhadrakālī occurs in SGS (SBE, Vol.XXIX, p.86).
10. Brmd.P., IV, 29 (37).
11. Hazra, SPR., p.12.

12. Nityāśoḍaśikārnava, Paṭala I, V.V.97, 98.
13. Jñānārnava, Paṭala XII.
14. Vrajavallabha Dvivedi, YIG, Vol.I, Nityāśoḍaśikārnava Upodghāta, p.8.
15. Brmd.P., I V, 29 (88-127).
16. Mbh. X, 40 (7,21): XII, 361 (22).
17. Bhp. III, 26 (21-30).
18. Ahirbudhanya Saṁhitā-V (21-23).
19. K.D.Pandey, Theory of Incarnation in mediaeval Indian literature an int̄pretation, Varanasi, p.376.
20. Brmd. P., IV, 5(8).
21. Cf. Purī Kāñcī Purī puṇyā nadī kampā nadī parā. Brmd.P. II, 40, 85.
22. Vide, The Voice of Śaṅkara, Vol.V, 4, Feb.1981, p.365.