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Textual Traditions and Religious Identities in the Pāñcarātra

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Abstract

In this thesis I provide a study of the distinct traditions within the Pāñcarātra, concentrating especially on the ways in which these traditions’ identities were formed by their textual allegiances. In Chapter One, I show that the so-called “three jewels” of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon were actually only considered as such by a minority of Pāñcarātrikas, and that this tradition arose much later than is commonly supposed. In Chapter Two I undertake a historical survey of the different groups within the Pāñcarātra as they are presented in the textual sources. In Chapter Three I argue that the tradition of the “three jewels” emerged within one of these groups, and that its eventual acceptance by other Pāñcarātrikas coincided with a decline in the “sectarianism” which had characterised relations between two Pāñcarātra traditions in particular. One of the outcomes of this decline, I argue, was the integration of previously distinct Pāñcarātrika identities, and the formation of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon. In Chapters Four and Five I undertake a closer historical analysis of these two major South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions, focussing especially on the ways in which they sought to establish their legitimacy through being connected with texts which were situated outside of the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus. As I show in a comparative study in Chapter Six, such strategies were also used by other Pāñcarātrikas who appealed to the authority of the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata. In Chapter Seven, I study the emergence of a distinct ‘Pāñcarātra’ identity in this text, and argue for its dependence on the appropriation and synthesis of other religious identities. In Chapters Eight and Nine, I address the merging of Pāñcarātrika identities in South India nearly a millennium later. Here I argue that we are now in a better position to explain the decline of the sectarian culture which had dominated certain South Indian Pāñcarātra contexts, and the question of why one of the two major South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions appears to have disappeared.
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### PART ONE

THE THREE JEWELS AND THE FORMATION OF THE PĀÑCARĀTRA CANON

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Introduction

i.) General introduction to the Pāñcarātra and previous scholarship thereon

‘Pāñcarātra’ or ‘Pāñcarātra’ is the name of a religious tradition which worships Viṣṇu, or a deity assimilated to Viṣṇu (especially Nārāyaṇa or Vāsudeva), as the highest god. The names pañcarātra/pāñcarātra are also used to refer to the large scriptural corpus consisting of anonymously authored works in Sanskrit, ordinarily called saṃhitā (“compendium”), that were produced by the followers of this tradition. Although the individual Saṃhitās cannot be dated with any precision, most of them appear to have been composed between the ninth and the fourteenth century of the Common Era. The earliest of the extant works were very probably written in North India, in and around Kashmir. The majority of the published works, however, are products of South India, and the period c. 1100-1400 CE. The Saṃhitās are written, for the most part, in the same metre as the Sanskrit epics and much Classical Sanskrit poetry, namely the 32-syllable anuṣṭubh śloka. They are structured in the form of a dialogue, normally between sages or between a sage and god, in which one interlocutor instructs another in matters relating to the initiation rites by which one becomes a member of the tradition, the preparation for and performance of the post-initiatory worship of Viṣṇu, the rewards that can accrue from such worship, and various theological and cosmological topics.

As is attested in the earliest textual sources which refer to the Pāñcarātra, including the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata, a seventh century stele inscription from Baset in Cambodia (K. 447), Śaṅkara’s Brahmāsūtrabhāṣya (on sūtra 2.2.42), and the earlier Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās themselves, pañcarātra (i.e. with a short first a) is the older of the two names. The derived term pāñcarātra, meaning “pertaining to or belonging to the Pāñcarātra”, is occasionally used to refer to the followers of the tradition (see e.g. Kumārila’s Tantravārttika,1 and Rāmakaṇṭha’s

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1 On sūtra 1.3.4 (328.16-17), Kumārila mentions “the treatises [which are a mixture] of dharma and adharma [that are] accepted by the Sāmkhyas, Yogas, Pāñcarātras, Pāśupatas, Buddhists and Jains” (sāmkhyayogapāñcarātrapāśupatasākya[nir]granthaparigrhitadharmanādharmanibandhanāni).
Nareśvaraparikṣāprakāśa 87.22ff), though these are far more commonly called pāñcarāṭrika or, less often, pāñcarātrin. In the later South Indian literature, however, pāñcarātra became an increasingly common way to refer to the tradition itself. This convention has continued down to modern times, and pāñcarātra is now the standard name for the tradition in scholarly literature. Accordingly, and in spite of its being frequently anachronistic, in the following I refer to the tradition as “Pāñcarātra” unless I am referring directly to a textual passage which uses the earlier designation.² The origins of the name are mysterious, and its original meaning has been subject to a wide variety of interpretations, both within the scriptural literature (see Smith 1980: 56-7), and among modern Indological studies (e.g. Schrader 1916: 24-6, van Buitenen 1962, Raghavan 1965, Neveil 1977: 8-10, Matsubara 1994: 123-27, Hudson 2002: 158-59), though none of these is wholly convincing.

The description of the Pāñcarātra as a “religious tradition” is itself not unproblematic. I refer here not so much to the qualifier “religious” which, as has been sufficiently demonstrated by a number of scholars (e.g. Halbfass 1988: 310-48, Hacker 1995), has no precise equivalent in Sanskrit, but rather to the term “tradition”. There are, indeed, a number of Sanskrit words which can be reasonably translated as “tradition” in this sense (e.g. āgama, āmnāya, paramparā, pāramparya, sampradāya), though in fact among these only āgama is regularly employed as a term of self-description by the authors of the Saṃhitās, principally to designate the scriptural corpus of the Pāñcarātra or a particular work within it. More commonly, the Pāñcarātra is characterised in its own literature as a teaching (upaniṣad, sāstra), a body of knowledge (jñāna), a system (tantra), a path (mārga), or a set of injunctions (vidhi, vidhāna). It is worth pointing out that while the noun tantra is frequently applied to the Pāñcarātra in the Saṃhitās, these texts rarely use the derived adjective tāntrika (“Tantric”, i.e. pertaining to the Tantra/s) when referring to their own rituals or adherents. In contrast, when the Pāñcarātra is characterised by outsiders, whether by its religious rivals (see e.g. Yāmuna’s Āgamaprāmānya 53.10-11) or, indeed, by

² I also follow the scholarly convention of referring to a person or group of persons who worship Viṣṇu or one of his manifestations as “Vaiṣṇava”, though this is, again, frequently an anachronism.
modern scholars, this term is used quite often. Modern scholars have described the Pāñcarātra variously, for example as a “cult” (Colas 1990, Matsubara 1994), a Vaiṣṇava and Tantric “sect” (Gupta 1991), “une école âgamique” (Colas 1995), and “[einer] wichtigen Strömung innerhalb der viṣṇuitischen Religion” (Bock-Raming 2002: 2).

The characterisation of the Pāñcarātra as a “religious tradition” is potentially problematic insofar as it can carry the implication that the Pāñcarātra is a single system of beliefs and practices, and that Pāñcarātrikas therefore share a single religious identity. However, even the most cursory reading of a number of Saṃhitās reveals a striking heterogeneity in their liturgical and theological material. In addition, a closer analysis of these works, as well as of other texts which refer to Pāñcarātrikas, shows that the Pāñcarātra consisted, very probably from its outset, of a diverse range of followers. Not uncommonly, one set of followers would distinguish themselves from another on the basis of their practices, their doctrines or their scriptural allegiance. In this thesis, I provide a historical study of the divisions within the Pāñcarātra as based on the available textual evidence. I show that scriptural allegiance became one of the crucial factors in distinguishing between distinct Pāñcarāтриka identities, and that the formation of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon involved precisely the renegotiation of such allegiances.

The first in-depth study of the distinct traditions within the Pāñcarātra was provided by Rastelli (2006). This lengthy German language volume concentrates primarily on the fourfold division of the Pāñcarātra as described in several South Indian texts dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is my hope that this thesis will add to Rastelli’s important study. Although previous scholarship on the Pāñcarātra paid little attention to its internal divisions, and therefore to the distinct religious identities of the authors of the extant Saṃhitās, there have nonetheless been several important studies of the Pāñcarātra over the past century. The first major scholarly work was F. Otto Schrader’s Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Samhitā (1916), which remains to this day a valuable introduction to the

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3 When applied to the Pāñcarātra by its rivals, the term “Tantric” carries the primary sense of “non-Vedic” (avaidika). In other words, the allegiance of Pāñcarātrikas is to the Tantras rather than the Vedas. See also Colas (1990) and Hüsken (2009: 47, 111).
theogonic and cosmological speculations found in the Saṃhitās, despite the fact that it foregrounds a somewhat atypical Pāñcarātra text. The same year saw the publication of the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā, critically edited by M. D. Ramanujacharya under Schrader’s supervision. The next significant volumes in Pāñcarātra studies were E. Krishnamacharya’s critical edition (based on South Indian manuscripts) of the Jayākhyasamhitā (1931), and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar’s edition and translation into English of the Paramasamhitā (1940). From the end of the 1960s, scholarship on the Pāñcarātra has gathered pace. Important early works during this period are H. Daniel Smith’s A Sourcebook of Vaiṣṇava Iconography According to Pāñcarātrāgama Texts (1969), and his indispensable two-volume A Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgama (1975; 1980), containing a chapter-by-chapter summary of over thirty published works, as well as several unpublished ones, and a comprehensive subject index. The chapters on the Pāñcarātra in Gonda’s Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit (1977) are heavily indebted to this study. Also from this period, Sanjukta Gupta’s translation into English of the Lakṣmītantra (1972) generated a greater interest in the Pāñcarātra among scholars, though its value to modern scholarship on this subject is somewhat limited by the fact that, like the focus of Schrader’s pioneering study, the Lakṣmītantra is an atypical Pāñcarātra text. Over the next two decades, Gupta produced several important articles, including a diachronic study of the role of initiation (dīkṣā) in Pāñcarātra scriptures (1983). V. Varadachari’s Āgamas and South Indian Vaiṣṇavism (1982) contains valuable information on a wide variety of texts, as does M. Matsubara’s Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and Early Vaiṣṇava Theology (1994), which can be viewed as a more comprehensive and up-to-date undertaking of Schrader’s project. No doubt a consequence of its being published by a small Indian publishing house, Varadachari’s book has not been cited much in subsequent scholarship, a fate that has also befallen, for similar reasons, H. Hikita’s very useful annotated translations (published separately in Japan from 1990) of most of the chapters of the Sātvataśaṃhitā.

In an important sense Hikita’s work on the Sātvataśaṃhitā represents a turning point in Pāñcarātra studies: the first closely annotated translation of a Pāñcarātra Saṃhitā which frequently cross-references other Pāñcarātra texts. Since then, the
Īśvarasāṁhitā has been critically edited and translated into English by M. A. Lakshmithathachar, with revisions by V. Varadachari (2009). Subsequent to Hikita’s work, scholarship on the Pāñcarātra has tended to focus on one text, or on certain chapters of a text, in particular. Thus, Flood (1992, 2000, 2006) has concentrated in several studies on particular chapters of the Jayākhyasāṁhitā. Hikita (2005) has written a lengthy article on the installation of divine images in the Sātvatasāṁhitā. Most prominently, Rastelli (1999, 2006) and Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003) have produced book-length studies on, respectively, philosophical-cum-theological beliefs in the Jayākhyasāṁhitā, representations of the Pāñcarātra in the Pārameśvarasāṁhitā, and the layered composition of the Paramasāṁhitā, though Rastelli (2006), especially, also incorporates detailed analysis of other Pāñcarātra texts. Both of these authors have also published important articles on subjects related to Pāñcarātra ritual. These studies fundamentally differ from the earlier works of, for instance, Schrader, Varadachari and Matsubara, all of which attempt to find commonalities among Pāñcarātra texts, and so reach general conclusions about “the Pāñcarātra tradition”. To be sure, studies on particular topics or themes within the Pāñcarātra corpus continue to be produced, as for example Sferra (1994), Bock-Raming (2002), and Rastelli (2002a), but these now tend to be the exception rather than the rule, and they ordinarily address more circumscribed subjects than e.g. Pāñcarātra “theology” or “philosophy”, as well as being generally sensitive to the heterogeneous contents of the Saṁhitās.

ii.) The role of scripture in the Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās

Over the past quarter of a century or so, several scholarly works in the field of Indian religions (see e.g. the contributions in Levering 1989, Timm 1992, and Patton 1994; see also Flood 1999, 2006, 2006a) have sought to redress a perceived imbalance in the broader discipline of “religious studies” – namely, the tendency among scholars to downplay the importance of scriptural traditions within religions, and of textual
studies within the academic study of religion. This tendency had, arguably, characterised a good deal of scholarship over the previous half century, and might itself be usefully interpreted as a corrective to the well-documented overemphasis on scriptural traditions that was initiated primarily by Protestant philologists during the nineteenth century. Timm (1992: 2) has summarised this initial shift in focus:

Stationing themselves within the discipline of the “history of religions,” scholars dissatisfied with the limitations of the “textual” approach to the study of religion shifted the primary focus onto the so-called primitive or archaic forms of religious expression, downplaying the importance of the scriptural and commentarial traditions in favor of uncovering foundational categories and motifs through which they hoped to reveal the universal patterns and qualities of human religious expression.

This particular approach to religion as a sui generis phenomenon has been adopted most prominently by scholars working in the field of the “phenomenology of religion”, most notably Gerardus van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade and their methodological heirs. However, as McCutcheon (1997: 1ff) has observed, the Schleiermacherian prioritisation of “inner” or “subjective” religious experience over “interpersonally available” historical data (texts, artefacts etc.) can by no means be limited, within the study of religion, to the phenomenologists. In his book Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion, Flood (1999: 47, 50) offers a critique of the ahistorical emphasis on “inner experience” and argues instead for a historicist approach to religions, understanding the latter primarily as “value-laden” and, re Lactantius, “binding” narratives and behaviours which are “articulated in texts” (my emphasis). Elsewhere, Flood (2006a: 52) takes the term “religion” to refer, par excellence, “to forms of human practice communally arrived at which are constrained by a text or group of texts set aside and regarded as sacred.”4 Addressing Indian textual history, Flood (2006: 49) highlights the significance of the “Tantric” traditions being scriptural, noting that “Tantric practices are always textually substantiated”, and that in the Tantric context “text is inseparable from tradition”. This last idea is helpfully conveyed by the fact that in the Tantric literature, the term

4 “Religion”, writes Flood (2006a: 52), can be taken “to refer prototypically to a historical tradition that is formed by text and continuously refers back to that text.”
tantra can mean both “text” and “tradition”, the latter being denoted, for instance, in the stock phrase asmin tantré (see Padoux 1998). In addition, just as the adjective “Vedic” (vaidika) designates first and foremost a textual tradition or orientation (rather than the derived sense marking a historical period), so too the term “Tantric” (tāntrika) refers to particular texts, to rites prescribed in these texts, and to identities constrained by them. It is notable that in the context of Tantric (as distinct from “Purānic”) Śaivism, as Hanneder (1998: 5) explains, the word śaiva does not denote “a worshipper of Śiva”, but rather one who follows a scripture that is taught by Śiva.

Turning to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, how is the role of scripture understood and articulated therein? Can a common understanding of the place and purpose of scripture be detected within this large and diverse body of literature? Is it possible, in other words, to speak of a Pāñcarātra attitude to scripture or are there, rather, a variety of attitudes, each of them peculiar to one or other text, tradition or historical period? First of all, it should be stated that the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus evolved over a long period of time. Over five hundred years separate the composition of the earliest Saṃhitās at our disposal from the composition of the most recent. Accordingly, it is obviously true that when the earliest works were written, a Pāñcarātra “scriptural corpus” did not exist as it did for the authors of the youngest texts. This is also true of the earliest of the published Saṃhitās, namely the Jayākhyasaṃhitā (JS), the Sātvatasāṃhitā (SS) and the Pauṣkarasaṃhitā (PauS). In these works there are not many clues, outside of clearly interpolated material, to an already existing Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition.

In the Jayākhyasaṃhitā (at 22.3a) we find a single, passing reference to the “Bhagavaddharma Tantras”, mentioned alongside “those who observe the [ritual teaching of the] five times” and, as we will see below, there are a number of verses in this work in which the teaching (śāstra) and those who know it are praised, but these

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5 I refer here to the Adhīkaḥ Pāṭhaḥ section of the JS, and to PauS 38.295-39.39 (on which see Smith 1975: 296).
6 The Sātvatasāṃhitā and the Pauṣkarasaṃhitā both provide notable exceptions: the former with its reference to “those who are learned in the Saṃhitās” (saṃhitāpāragāṇām, SS 20.4c) – the context suggests that this must be a reference to the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās; I discuss the relevant passage in the Pauṣkarasaṃhitā (41.77-97) below. It is also worth noting that if we discount the interpolated Adhīkaḥ Pāṭhaḥ section of the Jayākhyasaṃhitā, the three earliest of the published Saṃhitās contain no mention of each other.
instances provide scant evidence of a scriptural tradition peculiar to the Pāñcarātra. Indeed, it is telling that a “knower of the Śāstra” (śāstrajñā) is identified in the Jayākhyasamhitā as “a Vaiṣṇava who knows the Purāṇa, the Dharmaśāstras and the Vaiṣṇava legends (itihāsa), who listens to the doctrines of the Vedānta (i.e. the Upaniṣads) and also explains [their meaning], and who, after carefully discussing the import of [scriptural] statements belonging to lost traditions of recitation (pranaṣṭapāṭha) together with [other] knowers of that [import], tirelessly pieces together (saṃskaroti) a sacred text (āgama).” In this definition of a “knower of the Śāstra”, then, there is no mention of texts belonging specifically to the Pāñcarātra. Both the “knower of the Śāstra” and the collectively assembled “sacred text” or “scripture” (āgama) are located, rather, within a textual tradition that is smāṛta (in the sense of being based upon scriptural statements which are “remembered” rather than directly “heard”), and simply “Vaiṣṇava”.

The broadly Vaiṣṇava identity of the scriptural tradition acknowledged by the Jayākhyasamhitā is also apparent in the section which follows the identification of the “knower of the Śāstra”. This passage addresses the role of the śāstradhāraka, who is responsible for preserving and transmitting the scriptures:

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7 Both the Jayākhyasamhitā (elsewhere at 1.12 and 1.40ab) and the Pauṣkarasamhitā (30.38, 31.200) refer to their own tradition, on a couple of occasions, as Bhagavadhārma. The verse heading at JS 22.3 equates the Bhagavadhārma with the dharma of the Bhāgavatas, who are alternatively called ‘Vaiṣṇava’ in the same chapter (see 22.1, 56cd).

8 The compound pranaṣṭapāṭhavākyānām, and thus the verse in which it occurs, can be interpreted differently. See e.g. Colas (1995: 131 n. 37): “Ayant pratiqué la conjecture du sens correct des passages dont la leçon est corrompue, avec l’aide des connaisseurs de ces (textes), il perfectionne l’Āgama, avec zèle et sans se lasser”. Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 40) gives a similar reading.

9 JS 22.51c-53: puruṣaṁ dharmaśāstrāṇi itihāsāṇi ca vaiṣṇavān // vetti vedāntasiddhāntān śṛṇyād vyākaroti api / pranaṣṭapāṭhavākyānām kṛtvā vastuvicāraṇām // tajñāis saha prayatnād vai hy āgamaṁ saṃskaroti yah / atandritah sadā viḍḍhitāc taṁ śāstrajñām hi vaiṣṇavam //

10 See Pollock’s (1997: 408) summary of the śruti/smṛti distinction in “classical Sanskrit culture”: “In short, śruti means nothing other than “(Veda) actually now perceived aurally (in recitation), i.e. extant or available; smṛti, nothing other than “(Veda) that is remembered”, i.e., material, that having once been heard in recitation is inferentially recoverable from present reformulations (in language or practice), which once existed as part of a Vedic corpus.” Pollock (ibid.: 409) goes on to explain: “Early Mimamsā [as articulated in the Śābarabhāṣya and the Tantravārttikā] holds that the smṛtis are derived from Vedic recensions now forgotten or geographically or otherwise inaccessible to us; Nyāya [as articulated, for example, in Udayana’s Nyāyakusumānjali] reasons that these recensions must have actually disappeared.” On the basis of this description, it would appear that the Jayākhyasamhitā’s conception of “lost traditions of recitation” (pranaṣṭapāṭha) corresponds more closely to the Nyāyākya account.

11 The “knower of the Śāstra” (śāstrajñā) is also identified simply as a “Vaiṣṇava” at JS 1.58.
śraddhayā yah samuccitya yatra kutracid āgamaṁ / brahma dhyāyam tathā
paścāt sandhārayati yatnataḥ // pūjayat arghyaupādyaiś śāstrapiṭhaṁ
kramena tu / dadāti vaisṇavānāṁ ca gopayatya akṛtāmanām //
anyadarśanabhaktānāṁ viddhi tāṁ śāstradhārakam // – “Know that a
śāstradhāraka is one who, having faithfully assembled the scripture (āgama)
wherever it is [diversely found], then carefully retains it in his memory, [all the
while] meditating on brahma, and who worships the śāstrapiṭha in the
appropriate way with arghya and flowers etc., and who imparts [the scripture] to
Vaiṣṇavas, and conceals it from the unprepared devotees of other systems
darśana).” (JS 22.54-56b)

The idea that Vaiṣṇavas belong to the same “system”, or share a common “point
of view” (darśana, on this term see Halbfass 1988: 263-286) is echoed also in the
Sātvatasāṁhitā (22.26-27b). According to the 22nd chapter of the Jayākhyaśaṁhitā, in
which both of the above quoted passages are found, Vaiṣṇavas are born into a “great
lineage” (mahākula, JS 22.4d) whose members are devoted exclusively to the
Bhāgavata dharma and who, as mentioned above, observe the ritual teaching of the
“five times” (pañcakāla) and follow the Bhagavaddharma Tantras (JS 22.3). It is
notable that the devotees of Viṣṇu who adhere to the ritual system set forth in the
Jayākhyaśaṁhitā are most commonly referred to as vaisṇava, rather than as
pañcarātrika. Indeed, if we discount the colophons and the interpolated Adhikāḥ
Pāṭhaḥ section, it is striking how infrequently the terms pañcarātra and pañcarātrika
occur in the Jayākhyaśaṁhitā. As we will see repeatedly below, this is in stark
contrast to the later Saṁhitās, especially those composed in South India, and it
suggests that in the time and place of the composition of the Jayākhyaśaṁhitā, the
distinctions between Pāñcarātrikas and other Vaiṣṇavas were less clear than they
would later become.12 We might bear this in mind when we consider the idea of
“scripture” (āgama) or Śāstra in Pāñcarātra texts of this earlier period.

The passage describing the śāstradhāraka is also of particular interest in the
present context on account of its reference to the worship of the “seat” of Śāstras
(śāstrapiṭha). It is noteworthy that several Pāñcarātra works, including the
Jayākhyaśaṁhitā, the Sātvatasaṁhitā and the Pauṣkarasaṁhitā, refer to the worship
of texts in their written form, whether collectively, as part of a śāstrapiṭha, or

12 The Sātvatasaṁhitā, the Pauṣkarasaṁhitā and the Paramasaṁhitā (ParS) also address themselves
primarily to “Vaiṣṇavas” rather than to Pāñcarātrikas. See e.g. SS 12.170, 16.10, 19.2, 21.46ab; PauS
otherwise. The śastra piṭha mentioned here is the same as the vidyāpiṭha, the “seat of knowledge”, or in Brunner-Lachaux’s (1963: 226 n. 2) words the “throne of wisdom” (trône-de-sagesse), that is met with quite frequently in Śaiva literature. Indeed both the Jayākhyaśaṁhitā (21.23cd) and the Pauśkarasarṣamhitā (41.91, 97cd) refer to it also as the vidyāpiṭha. Of these two works, the Pauśkarasarṣamhitā (at 41.77-97) contains the much fuller description of the śastrapiṭha, and includes information on the texts that are to be worshipped there. In this account, the “entire collection of Pañcarātra [teachings], beginning with the Sadāgama” (I discuss the notion sadāgama below in Chapter Five) is included alongside the Vedas and their auxiliary “limbs” (vedāṅga), the Smṛtis and other “remembered” works (smṛtyantara), the Itihāsas, and works on philosophy and grammar. These texts are tied together with cord and placed in caskets on a metal yantra in a whitewashed stone sanctuary that is decorated with a portrait of the goddess Vāgīśvari holding a bundle of Śāstras (Pauś 41.80c-84). The adept then worships the manuscripts (pustaka) which are collectively called Viṣṇu’s “body of pure knowledge” (viśuddhajñānadeha, Pauś 41.88). The text says that Viṣṇu is to be worshipped in the form of the Vedas and Upaniṣads adorned with the Sadāgama etc. (i.e. the Pānca-rātra scriptures) and the divine Purāṇas etc. (bhagavatpurāṇādyā, Pauś 41.90). This seat of Śāstras (śastrapiṭha), or knowledge (vidyāpiṭha), is “made of the word-brahman” (śabdabrahmamayam), and it should be worshipped daily (Pauś 41.91).

As is indicated by the inclusion of works of philosophy and grammar, in this description of the śastrapiṭha the term śastra has a broader designation than “scripture” as is ordinarily understood. In the Pānca-rātra literature, the term śastra is

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13 As well as mentioning the śastrapiṭha (SS 25.377a), the Sātvatasaṁhitā also contains the injunction that “the teaching relating to the highest lord is not to be opened without being worshipped” (nāpujītām samudghātyām śāsanam pārameśvaram, SS 21.16ab). See also the precept for worshipping the “pure” and “divine” collection of scriptures (āgamasamcaya) at SS 20.13-14b. Elsewhere in the scriptural corpus, the worship of texts in their written form is prescribed, for example, in the Viṣvakesṇasaṁhitā (37.14cff), the Pārameśvarasaṁhitā (12.149c-150b) and the Īśvarasaṁhitā (14.225cff).

14 See for example Aghorāśivācārya’s Kriyākramadyotikā p.119-120 – information from Brunner-Lachaux (1963: 226-227) – the Tantrāloka (28.156b), and the Yogakhaṇḍa of the Manthānabhairavatantra (folio 86a) – information from Dyczkowski (1988: 158 n. 280). Dyczkowski writes here: “Vidyāpiṭha in the [Śaiva] Siddhānta refers to the Āgama in general viewed as an object of veneration. The worship of the sacred scripture is a way of worshipping Śiva.”

15 Pauś 41.78-79: parisūḍḍhān samuccitya pañcarātṛyasaṁcayān / sadāgāmādikān kṛṣṇān vedavedāṅgasamvyutān / smṛtisāmrtyantaropetān itihāsasaṁvittān / ānvikṣakāhīr vidyābhīs sajadākhyābhisaṁvṛtān /.
broadly used to denote any teaching which imparts sacred knowledge, which is to say knowledge that is ultimately derived from god. Of course this includes the Saṃhitās, which frequently refer to themselves as śāstra, but it is not limited to them. Thus, it is commonly said that the Pāṇcarāṭrika preceptor, i.e. the guru or ācārya, whose duty it is to reveal the Śāstra to other initiates (see e.g. JS 18.69-70, SS 22.15c-16b, Īśvarasamhitā 22.38ff), must be learned in other teachings in addition to the Saṃhitās. For this reason, in the following when I translate śāstra I do so with the word “teaching”, and I reserve the term “scripture” for the Sanskrit āgama which, as mentioned above, refers more narrowly to the Pāṇcarāṭra scriptural corpus or to a particular text within it.

Insofar as the worship of manuscripts does not appear to be confined to one particular Pāṇcarāṭra tradition, to one category of Pāṇcarāṭrika initiate, or to one historical period, this practice provides a good indication of the central importance of texts in the religious lives of Pāṇcarāṭrikas. This is also attested to by the prescriptions for the practice of textual study (svādhya, adhyayana), which we find throughout the literature. Listening to, contemplating (cintana), reciting, and expounding upon (vyākhyāna) texts is enjoined for all initiates (see e.g. JS 16.301-314b, SS 21.8). In the Pauṣkarasamhitā (41.61cd), some of the texts to be studied are named – the Rgveda, Śāmaveda and Itihāsa. In later works, such as the Pādmasamhitā (cp 13.66c-72b) and the Śrīprāśnasamhitā (17.55-57b), other texts are added to this list: the Purāṇas, the Dharmaśāstras, and texts of the Pāṇcarāṭra.

16 See e.g. JS 18.69-70, 33.86ab, SS 21.42, Śrīprāśnasamhitā 54.135ab, Īśvarasamhitā 25.217.
17 Gonda (1965: 240) has shown that the term guru has had, from the time of “the earliest texts” a much broader semantic range than has ācārya, primarily insofar as it has not always exclusively denoted a “spiritual teacher” but has also been applied to “other venerable or respectable persons, to father, mother, or any relative older than one’s self.” However, in the Pāṇcarāṭra Saṃhitās the terms guru and ācārya are usually synonymous (see e.g. JS 16.329, SS 20.2-3, Ahirbudhyasamhitā 15.44-45, Laksñmitantra 21.41. For exceptions, see e.g. JS 20.139c-140b, and Sanatkumārasamhitā Brahmārātra 5.14c-30b). In keeping with its traditionally more specific denotation, ācārya is usually the term used when the fourfold hierarchy of Pāṇcarāṭrika initiates is enumerated i.e. the series samayin, putraka, sādhaka and ācārya, though the terms guru and ācārya are also occasionally applied to this role (e.g. JS 16.329, Pauṣṣalikā 33.24, SS 20.2-3, 22.61c).
18 These normally include the Vedas and their auxiliary limbs (vedāṅga), and the Upaniṣads (vedānta). See e.g. Ahirbudhyasamhitā 20.1ff, Śrīprāśnasamhitā 16.1-12, Viśvāmitrasamhitā 3.2-6.
19 On occasion, the worship of texts is prescribed for a particular category of initiate (e.g. for the putraka at SS 20.13-14, or for the sādhaka at JS 17.33c-34 and Viṣvakṣenasamhitā 37.4c-15b), but elsewhere it is enjoined for the initiate in more general terms (e.g. SS 21.16ab, 25.377, and Pauṣṣalikā 41.77ff).
The centrality of the study of texts for Pāñcarātrikas is most clearly conveyed by the fact that this practice was enshrined in the daily routine of initiates known as the “five times” (pañcatāla). This consists of the performance of the following five ritual duties at five different times of the day: i.) “approaching” god (abhigamana) by means of mantra-repetition (japa) and the singing of hymns of praise (stotra). This is to be performed before sunrise, during the period known as brahmamuhūrta; ii.) Having arisen, the next period of the day (lasting one prahara, approximately three hours) is to be spent gathering the materials (such as flowers, fruits etc.) for worship. This duty is called upādāna (“acquiring” or “appropriating”); iii.) Then, worship of god (ijyā) is to be performed, for about four and a half hours according to the Jayākhyasamhitā (22.71c); iv.) This is followed by the study of texts (svādhyāya), which consists of listening to a recital, contemplating its meaning, and then reciting and expounding upon the text oneself. According to the Pauṣkarasamhitā, this lasts a further three hours (or one prahara); v.) Finally, at the end of the day, one should perform pūjā and follow this with meditation (yoga), which should then continue intermittently through the night. This description of the five duties at five times is a summary of passages in the Jayākhyasamhitā (22.64c-74b) and the Pauṣkarasamhitā (38.283-292), which offer very similar accounts. As Rastelli (2000a, 2006: 86-91) has shown, although neither of these texts nor the Śātvata samhitā place particular emphasis on this fivefold schema, and do not prescribe its performance for all initiates, in many of the later Saṃhitās, and in other works which describe Pāñcarātra rituals, the performance of these rites at the “five times” is shown to be incumbent upon all Pāñcarātrikas.

Thus, the study of texts, including those other than the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, became a daily duty for initiates. As we have seen above, Pāñcarātrikas were also enjoined to worship texts other than their own scriptures. How, then, do the Saṃhitās distinguish themselves from these other texts? As we will see repeatedly below, one of the most common ways in which the Pāñcarātra scriptures are distinguished from other Śāstras is that they alone are capable of conferring liberation from worldly suffering. The importance that the Saṃhitās accord themselves in the lives of initiates (śiṣya) is also evident from the passages, often found at the very end of a work, that
enumerate the merits which accrue from hearing the teaching (śravaṇaphala or phalaśruti). A few examples will suffice: “Should one who is a Vaiṣṇava of pure mind hear this Tantra, the sins he committed in former lifetimes will vanish… A man who dilligently reads this [Tantra], or who teaches it [to another], his sin perishes and [his] devotion is regarded as exceptional.”

“This Tantra bestows longevity and health, and increases fame, beauty and wealth. It destroys sins and is assuredly the means to yoga.”

“God is pleased with he who reads this [Tantra] with devotion. Liberation is in the palm of his hand, and he is freed from his sins.”

According to the Jayākhyasaṃhitā (1.57cd), the two goals of the initiate, namely liberation from saṃsāra (mokṣa) and worldly “enjoyments” (bhoga), are both “dependent upon Śāstra” (śāstrāyattā).

The Saṃhitās are accessible only to those who have undergone the ritual of initiation (dīkṣā) into the Pāñcarātra (see e.g. JS 33.86ab, SS 21.42), though not all texts agree upon whether all initiates are authorised to access them. Thus, the Sātvataśaṃhitā (22.15c-16) states that the lowest rank of initiate, the follower of the general observances (samayin), is eligible to learn the Śāstra from the preceptor (deśika), and to deliberate upon (vicārayati) its meaning, while the Sanatkumārasaṃhitā (Brahmarātra 5.120cd) describes Samayins as “not knowing the Tantras” (atantrajñā).

None

theless, the fact that initiation is required to access these texts distinguishes them from the other Śāstras mentioned above, which Pāñcarātrikas also study and worship. As we will see below, especially in Chapter Four, the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās commonly present themselves, like the Śaiva Tantras (see

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20 Paramasaṃhitā 31.66, 68: ya idaṃ śrṇuyāt tantrast vaśnavaḥ suddhamānasah / tasya pāpāni naśyantī jayantaraṇktāni ca / … / yaḥ paṭhed ādārād etat tat pāṭhayati vā naraḥ / tasyāpi pāpaṃ kṣaraṇī viśeṣā bhaktī śravate ītyate /.

21 Viṣvaksenasaṃhitā 8.7: āyur ārogyadaṃ nṛṇāṃ kṛitiśripuṣṭivardhanam (corr. kṛitiśriputra-vardhanam*) / pāpaśāyanaṃ mahāpurtiṃ yugasādhanaṃ eva ca / * This correction is suggested by the editor.

22 Bhārgavatantra 25.26c-27b: etad yaḥ paṭhate bhaktāyā tadāyā devaḥ prasūdayī / tasya muktih karaṇāl sa pāpebhyaḥ pramucyate /.

23 The fourfold hierarchy of initiates (samayin, putraka, sādhaka, ācārya) which is found in some but not all Pāñcarātra works, has been addressed by several scholars (e.g. Gupta 1983, Rastelli 2000, 2000a). Very often the descriptions of these categories of initiate in one text will conflict with those found in another. The classification is itself neither unique nor original to the Pāñcarātra, and is found more commonly in the Śaiva Tantras.
Sanderson 1988), as transmitting a higher, more specialised revelation for those who are already initiated into the Veda.

The ritual of initiation is led by the ācārya or guru, who uses a Saṃhitā as his guide. The initiate appears to have a special relationship with the text by which he joins the community of practitioners – according to the Jayākhyasamhitā (16.301), this is his “own Śāstra”, and he should protect it as if it were his own body (gopaniyaṃ svaśāstraṃ ca rakṣaniyaṃ śarīravat, JS 16.301cd). The Sātvatasamhitā (17.138) also recommends that one worships and protects (gopana) the scripture (āgama) by which one has commenced one’s religious practice. However, as Rastelli (1999: 31) has pointed out, the majority of the Jayākhyasamhitā, for instance, appears to be addressed primarily to the preceptor, with several chapters also clearly intended for the sādhaka, the category of initiate beneath the ācārya. Although it is not expressly stated, it may have been the case that only certain parts of this and other Saṃhitās were accessible to the other initiates.24 To be sure, the bulk of these texts have the function of manuals which are intended to guide the preceptor through the officiation of rituals. So far as the other participants in the ritual are concerned, it is the preceptor, rather than the text, which acts as the guide. Hence, in the context of the ritual, the guru or ācārya is truly the one who reveals the scripture, and in this sense he is akin to god (see e.g. JS 5.8d, 16.363, SS 17.128ab, 18.121cd, PauṣŚ 32.69, 33.24, Lakṣmītantra 21.41d, 23.4cd), and should be worshipped as god is worshipped (JS 21.76cd, SS 8.96cd, 20.33-34b, 40, PauṣŚ 30.213ab). In fact, according to the Jayākhyasamhitā, the guru is more important than both the Śāstra and god:

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\text{vibhoḥ śastraśya ca gurus tritayasya pūjanāt // phalaṃ bhavaty anuṇāṃ vai iha loke paratra ca / nārāyaṇah param brahma tajjñānaṇabhirgamyate // jñānasya sādhanam śāstraṃ tac chāstraṃ guruvaktraṃ / brahmaprāptir ato hetor guruvahīnā sadāiva hi // hetunā 'nena vai viprā guru gurbhāmaḥ śṛṣṭāḥ / yasmād devo jagannāthaḥ kṛtvā martyamayaṃ tanum // magnān uddhārate lokān kāruṇyac chāstrapāṇinā / tasmād bhūtīr gurau kāryā saṃsārabhayabhītaḥ // sāstrāṇjanena yo 'jñānaatimitraṃ vinipātayet / śāstrāṃ pāpaharaṃ pūṇyaṃ pavitraṃ bhogamokṣadam / śāntidam ca mahārtham ca vakti yas sa jagadguruḥ / – “From the worship of this triad of Lord, Śāstra and}
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24 Since some texts, as I have mentioned above, clearly grant other initiates access to the scriptures – for instance the Sātvatasamhitā calls the putraka a knower of the Śāstra (śāstraṇa) – this issue appears to be one on which we cannot reach general conclusions.
guru, the entire fruit comes into being both in this world and in the next life. Nārāyaṇa, the supreme brahman, is attained with this knowledge. Śastra is the means of accomplishing this knowledge, and Śastra is in the mouth of the guru. Hence, attainment of brahman is always dependent upon the guru as the cause, and on account of this, O Brahmins, the guru is considered to be the most important [of the triad]. Because God, the lord of the universe, after making a mortal body [for himself] out of compassion, lifts up people who are immersed [in the ocean of samsāra] with the hand of scripture, therefore devotion to the guru should be performed with fear and dread of samsāra. One who can dispel the darkness of ignorance with the ointment of the teaching, who proclaims the teaching that removes evil, and is meritorious, purifying, and granting of enjoyments and liberation, which bestows tranquility and is the highest teaching (mahārtham), he is a world-teacher (jagadguru).” (JS 1.60c-66b)

A similar hierarchy is present in the Sanatkumārasaṃhitā (SanS).25

We can conclude this short survey by noting that there are, then, a number of quite general statements that can reasonably be made concerning the role of scripture in the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. Pāñcarātrikas routinely worshipped the manuscripts of their own scriptures as well as other texts, while the practice of textual study (svādhīnyaya) became a daily duty incumbent upon all initiates. Initiation into the Pāñcarātra granted access to at least sections of the scriptural corpus, and Pāñcarātrikas were exhorted by the authors of the Saṃhitās to safeguard the text with which their own initiation was conducted. Large parts of the Saṃhitās are clearly intended to guide the preceptor through his officiation of rituals, and would thus be accessible to the other initiates through his mediation. Insofar as the preceptor is responsible for revealing these parts of the Saṃhitās to the other initiates, his role is akin to that of god, through whom the revelation of scripture first took place. Certain textual passages praise the guru above both scripture and god on the basis that without

25 SanS Brahmarātra 10.51-54: laukikām vaidikām cāpi tathādhīnyatmikām eva ca / trividham tat samuddhiṣṭam pradhānām cottaottaram // laukikām tv arthaśastrādi vaidikāṃ vedasanyutam / adhyātmajñānām anyac ca yogatantrādi kathayate // yogatantryaḥ sarvesaḥ viṣṇutantram anuttanam / viṣṇutantryaḥ sarvesaḥ pāñcarātraḥ viśiṣyate // pāñcarātre tathā mantraḥ mantraṃ Viṣṇuviṣṭyate / artheṣy apy upadeśasya ca nopadeśāt pariṣṭhaḥ tataḥ ॥. – “That [knowledge, vidyā] is threefold and is, in ascending order of importance, worldly, Vedic, and relating to the Self. ‘Worldly’ knowledge [is imparted in] the Arthaśāstra and so on, ‘Vedic’ knowledge is connected with the Vedas, and knowledge of the Self is discussed in such works as the Yoga Tantras. Among all Yoga Tantras, the Viṣṇu Tantra is supreme. The Pāñcarātra is best among all Viṣṇu Tantras, and in the Pāñcarātra it is the mantras [that are most important]. With regard to the mantras, the referent [i.e. the deity] is most important, and with regard to the referents, instruction [i.e. from a guru, is the most important element]. Thus, there is nothing higher than instruction.”
him, scripture, and therefore god, would remain inaccessible to the ordinary initiate. However, it is to be noted that this hierarchy is authoritative precisely because it is substantiated by scripture.

My reason for emphasising here the importance of scripture, and of texts generally, in the religious lives of Pāñcarātrikas is as follows. In this thesis I argue that from the study of these texts we can learn a great deal about the identities of those who authored and used them. The fact that the religious practices of Pāñcarātrikas are, to recall Flood’s words, “textually substantiated”, allows us to track the changes that the ritual repertoire of one particular Pāñcarātra tradition, or text, underwent. Such changes can teach us something about the traditions that used these texts. Not only this, Pāñcarātrika identities were established alongside the classification of Pāñcarātra texts, and their appeals to texts outside of the Pāñcarātra corpus. As I will show in the following, the most prominent division between separate Pāñcarātra traditions was demarcated precisely by their textual allegiance. Moreover, the subsequent emergence of a single, integrated Pāñcarātrika identity was fashioned alongside the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon.

**iii.) Sources and methods**

In S. Parampurushdas and S. Shrutiprakashdas’ *Catalogue of Pāñcarātra Samhitā* (2002), 460 Pāñcarātra titles are named, of which 313 are of texts which are listed or mentioned in the Samhitās, but of which there is otherwise no record. According to this catalogue, there are 147 extant Pāñcarātra works, of which 112 remain unpublished. Many of these are incomplete, and some exist only in fragmentary form. Of the 35 published Saṃhitās listed, the Agastyasamhitā is certainly not a Pāñcarātra text, as Smith (1975: 3-4) has already correctly pointed out, though it has been wrongly identified as one in the colophons of some of its South Indian manuscripts. Subsequent to the publication of this catalogue, the Prakāśasamhitā has been made available online by members of the now defunct Sansknet project, meaning that there
are at present 35 Pāñcarātra scriptural works published or otherwise readily accessible. For the following study I have consulted 21 of these, three of which, namely the late and thoroughly unrepresentative Jñānāmrtaśarasamhitā (also known as the Nārada Pāñcarātra), the Kāśyapasamhitā, and the aforementioned Prakāśasamhitā, I do not refer to again. In addition, I have made use of the two published commentaries on Pāñcarātra works, both written by the same author, the 19th century Śrīvaishṇava scholar Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa. These are the commentary on the Sātvatrasamhitā called the Sātvatatantrabhāṣya, and the commentary on the Īśvarasamhitā called the Sātvārthaprapakāśikā.

The study of the Pāñcarātra literature is still in its infancy, and several of the works which I have used for this thesis have received almost no prior scholarly attention. Those working on this large textual corpus are still mapping its territory, and this process will continue for some time. As I have mentioned above, most scholarship on the Pāñcarātra to date has paid little or no attention to its internal divisions, and thus to the particular religious identities of the authors of the available works. The study of Pāñcarātrika identities must, of course, be a comparative project. We cannot hope to learn much about the authors or the audience of a particular text by treating that text in isolation. Its methods of classification and its engagement with other texts, the ways in which it locates itself within a tradition, must be compared with the ways in which other texts address these same issues. This way we can form an overall picture, and notice recurrent themes and interesting irregularities. For this reason, it has seemed to me a necessity from the outset that this study must involve as many Pāñcarātra texts as I could reasonably hope to read within the allotted time. Forming an overview of the distinct Pāñcarātra traditions within which the scriptural works were composed and classified seems a more important task at this still relatively early stage in Pāñcarātra studies than undertaking to produce a critical edition of a single Pāñcarātra text. As Colas (2005) has argued, albeit with reference to Vaikhānasa works, unless a body of literature has been thoroughly mapped already, a critical edition is reliant upon there being other critical editions of other works in the same corpus. The unsatisfactory state of the current editions of two of the most important Pāñcarātra works, namely the Jayākhyasamhitā and the Pauṣkarasamhitā, suggests that there is much work to be done before a critical edition of a
representative Pāñcarātra scripture can be fruitfully undertaken. Although I would be hesitant to classify the Pāñcarātra scriptures simply as “ritual manuals”, in the manner that Colas (ibid.) describes the Vaikhānasa texts, I nonetheless share his doubts on the pressing need for an “optimal reading”, based on the study of several manuscripts, of one particular text of this sort. Like the Vaikhānasa works addressed by Colas, the Pāñcarātra scriptures are not literary works whose original form has been for the most part preserved. Rather, they are texts with multiple authors, one of the main purposes of which, as stated above, was to serve as a handbook for the preceptor officiating rituals. For these reasons, and for those related to time, I have not consulted manuscripts for this study.

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26 As I will have cause to mention again, the current edition of the Pauṣkarasamhitā is full of corrupt readings and missing portions. Krishnamacharya’s edition of the Jayākhyasamhitā is vastly superior to, say, Apte’s Pauṣkarasamhitā, but it is based on South Indian manuscripts of a relatively recent date.
PART ONE

THE THREE JEWELS AND THE FORMATION OF THE PĀṆCARĀTRA CANON

Introduction

My primary focus in these first three chapters is the idea that there are three Pāṅcarātra scriptures which have particular importance in the tradition. By concentrating on the formulations of this idea, I submit, we can learn something both about its origin, and about the different kinds of Pāṅcarātrika who made these formulations. In Chapter One I show that this idea appears to have been much less prevalent among Pāṅcarātrikas than is commonly supposed by modern Indologists. Indeed, it may well have been the case that certain members of the Pāṅcarātra rejected the idea of the supremacy of these three works. As I show in Chapter Two, numerous textual sources attest to the fact that there were distinct groups within the Pāṅcarātra from a time quite probably prior to the composition of the earliest extant Pāṅcarātra Saṃhitās. There is, however, little consistency in the accounts of the different Pāṅcarātra groups until around the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The more consistent accounts belong to works composed in South India from this date. Some of these works strongly indicate that there was, during this period, a sectarian animosity between two Pāṅcarātra groups in particular, and little agreement among their opposing members as to who had the authority to perform rites in the temple. In Chapter Three, I show that this climate of sectarianism gradually went into decline, possibly starting in the thirteenth century, and that it was replaced by a culture which made concerted attempts to integrate the distinct Pāṅcarātra traditions. One of the outcomes of this process was the formation of the Pāṅcarātra canon.
1. The Three Jewels (ratnatraya)

i. The Jayākhyasaṁhitā, the Sātvatasamhitā, and the Pauṣkarasaṁhitā

The Jayākhyasaṁhitā (JS), the Sātvatasamhitā (SS), and the Pauṣkarasaṁhitā (PauṣS) are assigned by modern scholars to the earliest stratum of extant Pāñcarātra scriptural literature. This earliest stratum has recently been enlarged with the discovery of several Pāñcarātra texts in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts. Four of these as yet unpublished works have been named by Alexis Sanderson (2009: 62ff) as the Svāyambhuvaṇcaratra, the Devamṛtapaṇcaratra, the Vāsudevakalpa of the Mahālakṣmīsaṁhitā, and the Jayottaratantra. They are currently being edited for publication by Diwakar Acharya (Acharya 2010). According to both Sanderson (2009, 2009b) and Acharya (2010), each of these recently discovered texts appear to be older than the JS, SS and PauṣS, which Sanderson (2009: 62ff) argues are unlikely to have been written before the middle of the ninth century. Sanderson arrives at this terminus post quem on the basis of several factors, the most decisive of which is that the JS and the SS teach the visualisation of a four-faced form of Vāsudeva, called Vaikuṇṭha in the JS (6.73c-74) and Śaktyātman or Śaktīśa in the SS (12.9-19). The earliest surviving stone and bronze sculptures depicting four-faced forms of Viṣṇu (an innovation on earlier three-faced depictions) can be dated to c. 850 CE, and are found almost exclusively in Kashmir (see also Sanderson 2005: 283-84). Moreover, all three Pāñcarātra works, according to Sanderson, incorporate ritual practices and terminology from sources belonging to a mature stage in the development of Śaiddhāntika Śaiva ritual (see also Sanderson 2001: 38 n. 50). On the basis of their

27 Of these, the Devamṛtapaṇcaratra is the only title that is unequivocally absent from later canonical lists. A ‘Svāyambhuva’ is included in the list of Pāñcarātra scriptures contained in the ādiṅśa (2.1-6) of the Hayaśirṣapaṇcaratra, also known as the Hayagrīvasaṁhitā, and in the very similar list contained in the Agnipurāṇa 39.1-5; a ‘Mahālakṣmī’ is named in lists of Pāñcarātra scriptures found in the Kapiṇḍa, Śrīpuruṣottama, Bhāradvāja, and Viśvāmitra Saṁhitās; and a ‘Jayottara’ is listed in the Viṣṇuṭantra, as well as in the Kapiṇḍa, Bhāradvāja, Pāṭha and Pārameśvara Saṁhitās, and in Vedāntadeśika’s Pauṣkarātraṇa (40.3-7), which gives a list parallel to that found in the Pāremeśvarasaṁhitā (at 10.376c-382b).
more “sophisticated” language and the fact that they have better assimilated material from Śaiva sources, Sanderson (2009: 68-9) believes that the SS and the PauṣṢ are probably the latest of the “early” Pāñcarātra works.

The conclusions arrived at by Sanderson with regard to the dating of our earliest Pāñcarātra scriptures represent a significant departure from previous scholarship on this subject which, as recently as 1994, favoured the much earlier date of c. 500 CE for the composition of the JS, SS and PauṣṢ (Matsubara 1994: 34). The allocation of this earlier date was largely based on the assumption that the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā, which itself refers to the JS and the SS, was known to the Kashmirian author Bhagavadutpala – an assumption which Sanderson (2001: 35-8) convincingly argues is unwarranted.

With regard to the provenance of the earliest works, Schrader (1916), Matsubara (1994), and Sanderson (2009, 2009b) agree upon a Kashmirian origin, while K. V. Soundara Rajan (1981), in a useful study of the JS’s 20th paṭala, argues that this chapter displays a knowledge of both Northern and Southern temple styles, and that the JS as a whole can therefore be assigned to Central India or the Upper Deccan, where both architectural forms were in concurrent use from an early period.

As I will demonstrate in later chapters, the present versions of the JS, SS and PauṣṢ all contain material which appears to have been interpolated in South India. In light of this, assigning these texts en bloc to one particular geographic region, or to one particular historical period, especially on the basis of a single, isolated passage or chapter, is surely a mistake. These are clearly not homogeneous, singly authored works, and it is hardly possible to retrieve the “original” Samhitās from the versions which have come down to us. Discrete passages and sometimes whole chapters have been added to these texts, and we must assume that the redactors responsible for these additions have also, on occasion, deleted passages from the older layers. Such a scenario would at least help to explain why the present versions of the SS and the PauṣṢ, in particular, contain large sections which appear to be so arbitrarily structured, and are so evidently incomplete.  

Owing to the heterogeneous authorship of these works, then, it is very difficult to establish a terminus ad quem for their composition. That both the JS and the SS are

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28 On the SS’s structure, and its likely added and missing portions, see especially Smith (1975: 534-35).
named as well as quoted by the Kashmirian author Bhagavadutpala tells us, at any rate, that these texts existed in Kashmir in some form during his lifetime. Although Bhagavadutpala’s dates are themselves far from certain, he is unlikely to have written his *Spandapradīpikā* (*SpPr*) before the middle of the tenth century, the period assigned to him by Dyczkowski (1994: 29). Bhagavadutpala quotes from the JS, which he also calls *Śrījayā* (*SpPr* 12.2) and simply *Jayā* (*SpPr* 35.24, 56.16), on four occasions, and in each instance the verses are found in the present edition of this text. We can be sure, then, that the older parts of the extant JS were composed before c. 950 CE, while the presumably youngest section of this text, as we will see below, was added during the second half of the fourteenth century. Meanwhile, the SS, or the *Śrīśāvatā* (*SpPr* 21.22) is quoted once by Bhagavadutpala, though only the first of the two ślokas quoted is found in the present version of the SS (at 18.128). As I will argue below, it is my opinion that the final two chapters (the 24th and 25th) of this work are a later addition to the text, though it is very difficult to say when this interpolation may have occurred. My own estimate is that it was not very late, and that if it can be shown to have taken place in South India, then it was very likely before the career of Rāmānuja, in other words before c. 1125 CE.²⁹

While it is possible that the PauṣS is also quoted by Bhagavadutpala (*SpPr* 3.17: "śrīpauṣkarāyāṁ hy uktam..."), it cannot be stated for certain that this *śrīpauṣkarā* refers to our text. Dyczkowski (1994: 295), however, favours this interpretation over that which puts forward the *Pauṣkarāgama*, a Śaiva work. The quoted verse is not found in the (incomplete) present versions of either text. Of the three works addressed here, i.e. the JS, SS and PauṣS, the PauṣS appears to contain the largest amount of interpolated material. Owing to the poor and incomplete state of the extant PauṣS, as reflected in Apte’s two-part (1991, 2006) Critical Edition, there has been very little serious scholarship on this work, and no sustained attempt to analyse and compare its heterogeneous contents.³⁰ Moreover, unless new manuscripts of the PauṣS come to

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²⁹ The traditional date of Rāmānuja’s death, 1137 CE, is now widely regarded - see Carman (1974: 27) and Young (2007: 236) - as 30 or 40 years too early.
³⁰ This is in contrast to the JS and the SS which, in recent years, have been the subject of, respectively, a detailed study by Rastelli (1999), and a partial translation by Hikita. Hikita has published separately his annotated translations of certain chapters of the SS, and several of these can be found in my bibliography.
light, it seems unlikely that such a project could be fruitfully undertaken at any time in the near future.\footnote{That is, given that research on the Pāñcarātra in general is still relatively young. There are many better preserved works among the published Pāñcarātra Samhitās, and most of these have not yet been studied in any detail.} In the absence of such a text-critical study, it makes little sense in my opinion to assign the present version of the PauṣS to an early date and a North Indian provenance for, as we will see in subsequent chapters, there are several clues that significant sections of it were composed in South India at a later date.

\textit{ii.) The three jewels}

General introductions to the Pāñcarātra literature commonly emphasise the exalted status of the JS, SS and PauṣS as the so-called “three jewels” (ratnatraya) of the scriptural corpus.\footnote{See e.g. Smith (1972: 43), Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 27), Hikita (2005: 167), Colas (2009: 155).} However, despite its ubiquity in oral traditions and in the secondary Indological literature, the claim that these three works are supreme in the Pāñcarātra canon is itself contained in only four of the 35 published Saṃhitās, namely the Pārameśvarasamhitā, the Īśvarasamhitā, the Śrīpraṇasamhitā, and a late, interpolated section of the JS entitled Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ. Further, as we will see below, only the latter among these works actually refers to the the JS, SS and PauṣS as the “three jewels”. Before proceeding to discuss ideas of textual hierarchy and canon in the Pāñcarātra literature in general, I will offer in this chapter a brief synopsis of the relevant passages from these four texts.

Among these, the Pārameśvarasamhitā (PārS) is likely the earliest.\footnote{For a chronology of these works see Matsubara (1994: 29-30) and Rastelli (2006: 52-4).} Rastelli (2006: 54, 98) cautiously assigns the composition of this work to the period 1100-1300 CE, favouring the earlier half of this time frame on account of the social and political upheavals which affected Śrīraṅgam, the PārS’s likely place of origin, throughout the thirteenth century. She also highlights the derivative nature of the text. The PārS incorporates passages from the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata, the
Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā, and the Pādmasaṃhitā (PādS)\textsuperscript{34} among others, and its author, or “compiler” as Rastelli proposes, clearly also had a close knowledge of each of the “three jewels”. Rastelli (2002: 9) writes: “[The] compiler of the PārS turns to all three of these Saṃhitās with each topic that is also dealt with in one or more of these texts and incorporates in some cases very long passages from them. Some chapters of the PārS consist almost entirely of passages adopted from these three texts.” While there are several apparently earlier Saṃhitās which reveal a close knowledge of one or other of the JS, SS and PauṣS, it would appear that the PārS is one of the earliest extant Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās to display a close knowledge of all three texts.

In the PārS’s opening chapter (adhyāya) the SS, PauṣS and JS are listed together and are said to confer both liberation and “enjoyments” (bhoga). This is in contradistinction to the “first teaching” (prathamaṃ śāstram), called here the “secret tradition” (rahasyāṃnāya), which grants liberation only.\textsuperscript{35} We are told elsewhere in the first chapter that the three Saṃhitās were revealed for the benefit of those who had, from the time of the Tretā Age (yuga), given up the “supreme dharma” (i.e. the secret tradition), which refers only to Vāsudeva, and replaced it with a “mixed dharma” (miśradharma), which refers to other deities and fulfills other desires (kāma).\textsuperscript{36} In the present age these people “long again for that abode [of Vāsudeva]”, and so the three Saṃhitās are revealed, which are accessible to members of each social class (varṇa), and which combine a concern with worldly enjoyments (bhoga) as contained in the “mixed dharma” with the Vāsudeva-oriented soteriology of the “supreme dharma”.\textsuperscript{37}

Elsewhere in the PārS, this supreme dharma or “secret tradition” is also variously

\textsuperscript{34} Although the PārS is included in the canonical list of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās contained in the PādS (jp 1.105b), this list is a late interpolation, and the PārS is likely the later text. See Rastelli (2006: 58-9).

\textsuperscript{35} PārS 1.16c-19b: śrutvaivaṃ prathamaṃ śāstram rahasyāṃnāyaṃsaṃhitāṃ // divyamantrakramopetaṃ mokṣaikapahalalakṣaṇam / bhūyāḥ samcoditāṃ tasmā tena lokahitaṁ // śrutvaṃ viṣtarataḥ śāstram bhogamokṣapradām hi yat / anuṣṭupchandobuddhena proktam bhagavatā svayam // sātvataṃ pāuṣkaraṇa caiva jayākhety evamādikam ।.

\textsuperscript{36} In other words, desires for enjoyments (bhoga) rather than for liberation. See PārS 1.75bcd: tatas tretāyaśadisyā / vikāravedalāḥ sarvatra devāntaragocarāḥ //; 1.79: tatas tretāyaśe sarve nānākāmasamanvitāḥ / vyāṃśīśayājino bhūtāḥ tyajyanty ādayaṃ sanātanam //; and 1.87 (see next note). The “changed Vedas” (vikāravedalāḥ) at 1.75c are to be understood as the same as the “mixed dharma” that is mentioned at 1.87b.

\textsuperscript{37} In addition to the verses in the previous note, see especially PārS 1.87-89: parityajaya paraṃ dharmaṃ miśradharmaṃ upasyaḥ / bhūyas tatpadakāṅkṣānāṃ sraddhaḥbaktī upesyām // anugrahārtham varṇānāṃ yogayatāyādyā ca / tathā janānāṃ sarveṣaṃ abhiṣṭaphalasiddhayā ca // sātvatādēṇi śāstrēṇi bhogamokṣapradāni ca / upadiṣya tu divyāṃ śāstroṇi tadāntaraṃ //.
called the “root-Veda” or the “original Veda” (*mūlaveda*, e.g. PārS 1.64b, 10.212c; *mūlaśruti*, PārS 1.63a), the foremost Bhāgavata *dharma* (PārS 1.78a), the *dharma* of the Ekāntins (*ekāntidharma*, PārS 1.60a), the original *dharma* (*prakṛtidharma*, PārS 1.41a, 74c), and the Ekāyanaveda (e.g. PārS 1.32c, 56c).

The SS, PauṣS and JS are also mentioned together at PārS 10.376cd, this time in the context of a classification of Pāñcarātra scriptures into three distinct groups, namely the celestial teachings (*divyaśāstra*), the teachings of sages (*munibhāṣitaśāstra*), and the teachings of men (*pauruṣaśāstra*). Although this classification is already present in the SS, a text which was known to the author/compiler of the PārS, the theory that the SS, PauṣS and JS alone among Pāñcarātra scriptures represent the *direct* revelation of God (*divyaśāstra*) is, as far as we can tell, here expressed for the first time. I will discuss this passage in detail below.

The author of the PārS directly relates his own text to this original revelation by claiming that it contains within itself the elucidation of the meaning of the PauṣS. Explaining the transmission of the teaching, Śaṇḍilya, the narrator of the PārS, says:

\[pārameśvaraśāstranāṃ sarvesāṃ munipuṅgava / sārabhūtaṃ viśeṣena pauskarāthropadakam / mūlavedānusāreṇa chandasānuṣṭubhena ca / lakṣagranthena sarvārthakriyājñānopalabhaye // sa me 'bravin mahāśāstram pāremeśvarasamāṇyā / // – “So as [for me] to attain knowledge, and the accomplishment of all [my] objectives, he [Śaṅkaraśāṇa] related to me the great teaching called Pārāmeśvara, which is in accordance with the root-Veda (*mūlaveda*), has anuṣṭubh as its metre, consists [originally] of one *lakh* of verses, which is, O best of sages, the true essence of all the teachings relating to the highest Lord (*pāremeśvarasāstranāṃ*), and which presents in particular the meaning of the Pauṣkara [Śaṁhitā].” (PārS 1.90-92b)

The *Īṣvarasaṁhitā* (*ĪS*) also contains substantial derivative portions, incorporating numerous passages from the SS (see Bock-Raming 2002: 352ff), and

38 For this classification see especially PārS 10.336-345, and the parallel verses at *ĪS* 1.54-63.
39 SS 22.52c-59b. Several of these verses, as Rastelli (2006: 108 n. 202) has shown, are included within a section of the tenth chapter of the PārS (10.347-374b). This whole section of the PārS is also included in the *ĪS* (23.4-31b).
40 See PārS 10.376c-377b: śātvatām pauṣkāram caiva jayākyam ca taṭhaiva ca // evamādini śāstraṇi divyāṁty avadhāraya // It should be pointed out that Rastelli (2006: 111ff) offers a different reading of the passage containing these verses. See my discussion “The Formation of the Pāñcarātra Canon” below.
also borrowing liberally from the Pārśa. Like the Pārśa, this text is included in the
canonical list of scriptures found in the PādS (jp 1.103d), but the Īṣa is certainly the
later text, probably not composed before the late thirteenth or fourteenth century
(Matsubara 1994: 28-31). Numerous passages in the first chapter of the Īṣa, a short
history of the “descent” or genealogy of the Pāṇcarātra scriptures (śāṭrāṭvātaraṇa),
contain material which is apparently drawn directly from the Pārṣa.41 The author refers
to the three texts SS, Pauṣa and JS again as the celestial (divya) teachings, which are
proclaimed by Hari in the anuṣṭubh metre, and are “in accordance with the root-
Veda”.42 A few lines later the text partially repeats itself with a verse, the first part of
which is the same as Pārṣa 10.376c-377b:

sātvatam pauskaram caiva jayākhyam ca tathaiva ca // evamādini diviyāni
śāstrāṇi hariṇā śvayam // mūlavedānusāreṇa proktāni hitakāmyāyā // – “Such
celestial teachings as the Śātvata, Pauṣaka and Jayākhyya were taught by [the
Lord] Hari himself, in accordance with the root-Veda, for the sake of the well-
being of others.” (Īṣa 64c-65)

The Īṣa goes on to liken the position of the three texts within the broader
literature to that of three mantras – the eight-syllabled (aṣṭākṣara), the twelve-
syllabled (dvādaśaṅkṣara) and the six-syllabled (ṣaḍaṅkṣara)43 - among all the mantras
of Viṣṇu: “And this triad Śātvata etc. is pervasive, O best of sages, as is the triad of
mantras aṣṭaṅkṣara etc., O learned ones.”44 How are we to understand the term vyāpaka

41 Parallel verses, containing a few minor changes, between the first chapter of the Īṣa and the Pārṣa: Īṣa
1.1 ← Pārṣa 1.1; Īṣa 1.2cd ← Pārṣa 1.3cd; Īṣa 1.3ab ← Pārṣa 1.4cd; Īṣa 1.12ab ← Pārṣa 1.25cd; Īṣa 1.16ab ←
Pārṣa 1.32ab; Īṣa 1.19 ← Pārṣa 1.57c-58b; Īṣa 1.20-21 ← Pārṣa 1.33-34; Īṣa 1.22c-28 ← Pārṣa 1.74c-80;
Īṣa 1.29c-35b ← Pārṣa 1.59-64; Īṣa 1.36b-38a ← Pārṣa 1.65b-67a; Īṣa 1.39b-40c ← Pārṣa 1.54c-56a; Īṣa
1.41-42 ← Pārṣa 1.72c-74b; Īṣa 1.43 ← Pārṣa 1.56c-57b; Īṣa 1.45c-47a ← Pārṣa 1.84c-86a; Īṣa 1.48-49 ←
Pārṣa 1.87-88; Īṣa 1.50ab ← Pārṣa 1.91ab; Īṣa 1.50cd ← Pārṣa 1.19ab; Īṣa 1.54-63 ← Pārṣa 10.336-345; Īṣa
1.64c-65a ← Pārṣa 10.376c-377a; Īṣa 1.70ab ← Pārṣa 1.90cd.

42 Īṣa 1.50-51a: mūlavedānusāreṇa chandasaṅuṣṭubhena ca // sātvatam pauskarāṇ caiva jayākhyety
evamādikām // divyaṃ sacchāśrayājanam…

43 These are, respectively, OM NAMO NĀRĀYĀNYA, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE
VĀSUDEVAYA, and OM VIṢNAVE NAMAH.

44 Īṣa 1.66: sātvatādyaṃ trikām caiva vyāpakam munisattamāḥ // yathā caṣṭaṅkarādinām
mantrānām tritayaṃ budhāḥ // Rastellī’s (1999a: 71) translation of this verse into German reads: “Und diese
Dreiheit Śātvata usw. ist umfassend, ihr besten Weisen, wie die Dreieinheit (d.h. die Silbe om) für Mantras
wie den Aṣṭaṅka[mantra] und die anderen, ihr Weisen.” This reading might be justified with recourse
to a passage in the SS (9.37-41b) in which the bīja and piṇḍa portions of a mantra are called
“pervading” (vyāpaka) in distinction to the saṃjñā and pada portions which are “pervaded” (vyāpya).
However, elsewhere in the Īṣa the aṣṭaṅka is named as one of three mantras which are themselves
in this context? In what sense are the three aforementioned mantras vyāpaka in their context? Elsewhere in the Ṣ we are provided with an explanation:

sādhāraṇās tv ime mantrās trayaḥ sarvāśu mūrtiṣu // anye tu manavas tattamūrtimītrarapaḥ hy atāḥ / vyāpakatityenārcyāḥ sarvā api ca mūrtayaḥ // mantrair anyais tu sampājīyās tattamūrtaya eva hi / tasmā sarvesu mantrēṣu vyāpaktitaṁ varam // – “These three mantras are applicable in [the worship of] all [divine] manifestations, while other formulas are only applicable to this or that particular manifestation. Indeed, all [divine] manifestations can be worshipped with the triad of pervasive [mantras], while particular [individual] manifestations are [also] worshipped with other mantras. Therefore, among all mantras the triad of pervasive [ones] is superior.” ((mb 23.53c-55b)

According to the author of this passage, then, the superiority of the “pervasive” or “comprehensive” mantras rests on their general applicability in Pāṅcarātra worship. This is in contrast to other mantras, which are applicable only in the worship of “this or that” (tattat) particular divine manifestation. By describing the SS, PauṣS and JS as “pervasive” in the manner of these mantras, the author is therefore expressing the idea that these three “celestial” scriptures have a general applicability in any context of Pāṅcarātra worship, and this is to be understood alongside the concomitant idea that the applicability of other scriptures is limited to their own specific contexts. “Context” here refers primarily to the temple in which a particular scripture is in use. When the author then admits that the SS, PauṣS and JS are linked with, respectively, Yādavācalī (Melkote), Śrīraṅgam and Hastiśaila (Kāṇḍimuram), he is able to provide this information having already established the fact that their use is not limited to these places.

called “pervasive” (vyāpaka): sarvesu viṣṇumantreṣu mantrāḥ syur vyāpakās trayaḥ / ādyam nārāyaṇāṣṭāрам dvitiyam dvādaśākṣaram // vāsudevaryo yogyindrās tato viṣṇusaḍāksaram 1. – “Among all the mantras of Viṣṇu, there are three pervasive mantras. The first has eight syllables and is of Nārāyaṇa, the second has twelve syllables and is of Vāsudeva, and then, most excellent Yogins, there is the six syllabled [mantra] of Viṣṇu” (mb 23.52-53b). We are subsequently told: trīṣaḥ āpy esu vyāpakās mantraḥ hy aṣṭākṣaraḥ ‘dhiḥkāḥ 1. – “Indeed, among these three pervasive [ones], the aṣṭākṣara mantra is superior” (mb 23.56ab). These three mantras are also considered together in the Lakṣmitantra at 24.68ff, where they are said to constitute three of the five vyāpaka mantras in the Pāṅcarātra (74cd).

45 mb 1.67: etat tantratrayoktena vidhinā yādavācalī / śrīrangeti hastīsaila ca kramāt sampājīyate hariḥ //. The later Adhīkha Pātha section of the JS (12c-13b) also associates these texts with these places: sāttatam yaduśailendre śrīrangeti pauskaram tathā // hastīsaila jayākhyām ca sāmrājyam adhitīśhati //
We also find in the ĪŚ (1.54-63) the same passage classifying Pāṇcarātra scriptures into three groups (divya, munibhāṣita, and paauruṣa) that is contained in the PāṛS (10.336-345), as well as the device of appending itself to one of the three jewels, in this case the SS, the meaning of which the ĪŚ (25.213b) claims to be “illuminating” (prakāśikā). In a passage which is similar to the aforementioned PāṛS 1.90, Nārada explains to the sages gathered at the Bādarī hermitage:

atas sāksād īśvaroktaśāastrānām dvijapuṅgavāh // sūrabhūtaṃ viśeṣena sātvatārthopapādakam / īśvarākyam idaṃ tantram sāksāt saṅkarṣapāc chrutam // sampravakṣyāmi... //. — “Therefore, O best among the twice-born, I will enunciate this tantra called Īṣvara, heard directly from Saṅkarṣaṇa, which is the true essence of the teachings which are directly revealed by God, and which presents in particular the meaning of the Sātvata [Saṃhitā].” (ĪŚ 1.69c-71a)

A ‘Śrīpraśna’ is also mentioned in the canonical list of the PāḍS (jp 1.101a) but, like both the PāṛS and the ĪŚ, the Śrīpraśnasamhitā (ŚrīprśS) is almost certainly later than the bulk of this text. The chronology proposed by Raghavan (1969) places it as roughly contemporary with the ĪŚ, with the ŚrīprśS likely to be the later of the two works. Like both the PāṛS and the ĪŚ, the ŚrīprśS contains substantial derivative portions. It reproduces a significant number of verses verbatim from the ‘Kriyāpāda’ section of the PāḍS, and also shares parallel verses with the SS and the ĪŚ (Padmanabhan 1969). In a similar manner to the PāṛS and the ĪŚ, the ŚrīprśS refers to the SS, PauṣS and JS as the celestial (divya) scriptures in a passage which contains strong echoes of PāṛS 1.77 and ĪŚ 1.25,⁴⁶ and which also refers to an original Pāṇcarātra teaching (śāstra) called the “root-Veda” (mūlaveda):

jagannālaṃ vāsudevaṃ mukhyataḥ pratipādayat // tac chāstraṃ mūla-vedākhyam ity api procyate budhaiḥ / adhyetṛbhedān āśrtya sāstram etat tridhā rame // sātvataṃ pauskaraṃ caiva jayākhyam ca bhaviṣyati / athaivaḥ saṃhitā divyāḥ vaidisyanti vipaścitaḥ //. — “The teaching is designated with the name mūlaveda by the learned because it primarily expounded upon Vāsudeva [who is] the root of the world. Owing to there being differences among students, I delight [in the fact that] this teaching will become threefold: Sātvata, Pauṣkara

⁴⁶ PāṛS 1.77: jagannālaṃsa devasya vāsudevasya mukhyataḥ / pratipādayatā siddhā mūlavedākhyatā dvija //; ĪŚ 1.25: jagannālaṃsa vedasya vāsudevasya mukhyataḥ / pratipādayatā siddhā mūlavedākhyatā dvijaḥ //.
and Jayākhyā. Thus the learned will say these Saṃhitās are celestial.” (ŚrīprśS 49.471c-473)

These verses articulate a rather different understanding, then, of the relation between the three celestial Saṃhitās and the original teaching. Where the Pārśa (1.87-89) and the ĪŚ (1.47-51) present the JS, SS and PauṣaŚ as combining the soteriology of the root-Veda with the granting of enjoyments (bhoga) as found in the “mixed dharma”, and as having been revealed by god for the benefit of those who had abandoned the former in favour of the latter, in this passage the ŚrīprśŚ presents the three celestial Saṃhitās as themselves distinct manifestations of the root-Veda.

The section of the JS entitled Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ (literally “additional text”) consists of 163 ślokas, which have been interpolated between the JS’s first and second chapters. The Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ offers the most substantial account of the “three jewels” theory, as well as an interesting and unique interpretation as to how the three texts relate to one another. The narrator explains:

\[
\text{pañcarātṛsya kṛtsnasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam}^{47} / \text{iti sarvatra vikhyātaṁ bhagavacchāstragauravam} // \text{sāttvam pauṣkaraṁ caiva jayākyam tantram uttaman} / \text{ratnārayam iti khyātam tadvīśeṣa ihoctye} // \text{sāram sāttvataśāstrasya rahasyam prājñasamprayogam} / \text{ratnārayam idāṁ sākṣād bhagavadvātāniśyrtam} // \text{pravartitaṁ tathaivedam anyānānadhikatavataḥ} / \text{anyānyāṁ tu tantrāṁ bhagavamukhanirgatam} // \text{sāraṁ samupajjīvyaiwa samāsavyāṣadhāraṇaḥ} // \text{vyākhyopabṛṇhaṁpananyāyād vṛdhitīṁ tathā} // \text{vyākhyānāmpananyāyaṁ gauravam sampratiṣṭhitam} \]. – “Nārāyaṇa himself is the proclaimer of the whole of the Pañcarātra. The venerability of the teaching of the Bhagavat is thus known everywhere. The Sāttvata, Pauṣkara and Jayākhyā are [collectively] the highest Tantra, called the “three jewels”. Its particularity is explained here. The essence of the Sāttvata teaching is a secret that is honoured by sages. This triad of jewels has come forth directly from the mouth of the Bhagavat, so indeed this [triad] is established as neither deficient nor excessive. After the tantras established themselves [out of] the essence emanating from the mouth of the Bhagavat, they supplemented (vyāpitīṁ, literally “perverted”) one another with a commentary (or “explanation”, vyākhyā), [that is] based upon a

\[^{47} \text{Cf. Mahābhārata (MBh) 12.337.63ab: pañcarātṛsya kṛtsnasya vettā tu bhagavān svayam l. In his Āgama-prāṁśa (128.4), Yāmuna quotes this verse (“Thus it is taught in the Mahābhārata…””, paṭhyate bhārata tathā) but in the version which is found in the main text above, i.e. in the opening verse of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ: pañcarātṛsya kṛtsnasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam. It is later quoted by Rāmānuja, alongside other passages from the MBh, in his Śrībhāṣya on sūtra 2.2.42 (334.1) and, later still, by Madhva in his commentary on the MBh, the Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirnaya (2.101ab). The Pāñcarātrarakṣā contains the verse at 43.9-10. Each of these works predates the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ (for the dating of which see below).} \]
principle of strengthening [the “essence” or “root text”], and in such a way [these
tantras can be characterised] by their possessing both brevity [i.e. in the form of
the root text], and detail [in the form of the commentary]. Indeed the venerability
of these [texts] is established on the grounds of [this combination of] commentary
and root [text].” (JS ap 1-6b)

As far as I am aware, this is the only passage in any extant Pāñcarātra text in
which the relationship between the “three jewels” is characterised in this way. As we
have seen above, the PārŚ, ĪŚ and ŚrīprŚ all indicate the common origin of the JS, SS
and PauŚ in their references to a “root-Veda”, or an “original Veda” (mūlaveda). That
which distinguishes the above account, however, is the idea that the three texts remain
interdependent even after they have emerged from the same source (here simply
“essence”, sāra), and that each of them supplements the other in the manner of root
text and commentary. Rastelli (1999: 54) explains their relation in this context thus:
“Jede Saṃhitā beinhaltet einen Teil der von Gott verkündeten Lehre, und zwar in der
Weise, dass eine die andere ergänzt bzw. eine den Stoff ausführlicher erklärt, welcher
in einer anderen nur kurz angerissen wird” (“Each Saṃhitā contains a part of God’s
teaching in such a way that one completes the other. Where one explains some
material in detail, in the other it will be described only briefly”). In other words, none
of these texts can be fully understood except when read in tandem with the others,
since the three taken together constitute a single teaching (śāstra). The narrator
himself explains this a few lines later:

mūlavākyānārāpatvād upajīvyān parasparam // tantratrayam idam vidyād
ekaśāstraṃ tathā budhaḥ l. – “Owing to the form of root [text] and commentary,
the three Tantras are mutually supportive, so the learned should know that this
[threefold Tantra] is a single teaching.” (JS ap 11c-12b)

The Adhikāḥ Pāṭhāḥ is also unique among the aforementioned Pāñcarātra works
in that it is the only one which actually contains the term ratnatraya. The prevalence
of this term in the secondary Indological literature therefore far outweighs its presence
in the Pāñcarātra scriptures themselves, where it occurs only in this late, interpolated
section of the JS. In fact, to my knowledge, the only other extant Sanskrit text of this
period which contains the term in reference to Pāñcarātra scriptures is the
Pāñcarātrarakṣā (PRR) of Veṅkaṭanātha - hereafter referred to as ‘Vedāntadeśika’, the honorific by which he is now more commonly known. Vedāntadeśika belonged, at that time, to the Śrīvaisṇava community at Śrīraṅgam. In the PRR, as in the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ, the renowned (prasiddha) scriptures called the “three jewels” are characterised by their having come forth directly from the mouth of God.  

The Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ and the PRR, the only two extant works which employ this term ratnatraya to describe Pāñcarātra scriptures, were in all likelihood both written during the fourteenth century, the former in Kāñcipuram and the latter in Śrīraṅgam. The Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ was written, at least partly, to eulogise the Varadarājasvāmin temple in Kāñcī (referred to as Hastiśaila throughout). The general date of its composition is provided by Rajan (1981: 27), whose fourteenth century estimate is based on the correlation of architectural descriptions contained in the text with historical data concerning the construction of the temple building. Meanwhile, although the PRR is likely to have been written during its author’s first stint as an ācārya at Śrīraṅgam, Vedāntadeśika (whose traditional dates are 1268-1369) did spend his formative years in Kāñcipuram, and his writings exerted considerable influence in this city during his lifetime as well as after his death (Raman 1975: 70ff, Hopkins 2002). It is not therefore wholly implausible to suggest that the author of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ might have been familiar with the PRR. At any rate, if Rajan is correct in identifying the gopura described in the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ with one added to the Varadarājasvāmin temple during the Vijayanagar period, it is fairly safe to assume that this interpolated section of the JS was composed during the second half of the

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48 PRR 47.6-7: yathoktaṃ sākṣād bhagavanmukhodgatatayā ratnatrayam iti prasiddheṣu jayākhya-śāttvatapauṣkareṣu…
49 In other words, during the period before the second sack of Śrīraṅgam by Muslim forces in 1323. See Singh (1958: 100), and Hari Rao (1976: 116-17).
50 Vedāntadeśika wrote a stotra, the Varadarājapaṇḍīcāsā, in praise of Lord Varadarāja at Kāñcī, and was intimately connected with this temple in his early years.
51 Of course this does not enable us to conclude that the author of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ directly borrowed from the PRR, for (an)other text/s no longer available to us may also have characterised the JS, SS and Pauṣ as ratnatraya. However, the influence of the teachings of Viśiṣṭādvaitavedānta are clearly discernible in the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ (see, for example, JS ap 109), and Vedāntadeśika was a very important figure in that milieu during this period.
fourteenth century, during the 1360s at the very earliest,\(^{52}\) and is therefore almost certainly later than the PRR.

This would mean of course that the composition of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* was also subsequent to that of the PārS and the ĪS. That the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* contains the claim, found in both the PārS and the ĪS, that these two texts serve to elucidate, respectively, the PauṣS and the SS, further bears witness to its later composition. The author of the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* tells us:

\[
\text{tantre 'py aṣṭottarasate parameśvarasamhitā // pauskarārthaviṃtyarthā vyākhyātupā 'vatāritā / sāttvatasya vivṛtyartham īśvaram tantram uttamanm //}
\]

\[
\text{jayākhyaśyasya tantrasya vyākhyānam pādnam ucyate /}.
\]

“Also, among the 108 tantras, the Parameśvarasamhitā was transmitted (avatāritā, literally “brought down”) in the form of a commentary (vyākhyā), [whose] purpose is the explanation of the meaning of the Pauśkara [Samhitā]. The Īśvara [Samhitā] is the highest tantra [whose] purpose is the explanation of the Sāttvata [Sanhitā]. The commentary on the Jayākhya Tantra is called the Pādma [Samhitā].” (JS ap 6c-8b)

Whilst the PārS and the ĪS, as we have established, themselves claim association with, respectively, the PauṣS and the SS, the *Pādmasamhitā* (PādS) does not link itself to the JS in the manner described above. Indeed, it is tempting to conclude that this single verse in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* has provided the basis for the claim, which has been perpetuated in a number of modern exegetical and scholarly works (e.g. Padmanabhan 1974: 29, Varadachari 1982: 287, Colas 2009: 155), that the PādS is “based on” or “derived from” the JS. This explanation appeals because although the ‘Jñānapāda’ section of the PādS appears to have incorporated several passages from the fourth chapter of the JS (Rastelli 1999a), in general the PādS owes little to the earlier work, and contains a wealth of information, especially on the subject of the construction of temples, which is wholly absent from the JS. It is indicative, indeed, that the JS’s 20th *paṭala*, wherein the majority of this work’s architectural detail is to

\(^{52}\) According to K.V. Raman (1975: 26) Kāñcī did not come under Vijayanagar dominance until the 1360s. The outer, western gopura of the Varadarājāsvāmin temple (i.e. that which Rajan identifies as being described in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*) is likely to have been built following Vijayanagar leader Kumāra Kampāna’s arrival in the city, sometime during, or shortly after, 1361. The earliest dateable inscription found on the plinth portion of the gopura belongs to Kampāna and is dated 1374. On this see Raman (ibid: 54).
be found, shares no significant data with the PādS, and describes a style of temple which is not referred to by the latter (see Rajan 1981). It is worth mentioning, in addition, that the status of the PādS as a “commentary” on the JS does not appear to have been accepted always by the traditions which have inherited and used these texts. For the nineteenth century Śrīvaśnavī author Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa writes in his commentary on the ĪS, the Sātvatārthaprakāśikā (SāPr), that in fact it is the Lakṣmītantra (LT) that is the commentary (vṛtti) on the JS, and that the PādS is only consulted by the priests of the Hastiśailanātha (i.e. Vādarājasvāmin) temple on those subjects (specifically “festivals etc.”) which the LT does not cover.53

In the context of the three jewels the PādS is important for its presentation of an alternative scriptural hierarchy, not found elsewhere in the extant literature. At the very end of this long text, we encounter the claim that there are “five jewels”, and these do not include the JS, SS or PauṣS:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tantrāṇāṃ caiva ratnāni pañcāhuh paramārṣayaḥ / pādmanāṃ sanatkumāraṃ ca} \\
\text{tathā paramasaṃhitā / padmodbhavam ca māhendraṃ kanva tantrāṃṛtāni ca} \\
\text{l.} – \text{“Eminent sages name five jewels among the tantras: Pādma, Sanatkumāra, Paramasaṃhitā, Padmodbhava and Māhendra are the} \\
\text{immortal tantras O Kaṇva.”} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(PādS cp 33.204-205b)

We are faced here, at least ostensibly, with a somewhat puzzling situation. Whilst the author of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ tells us that the PādS is a commentary on the JS, and is in use in the same temple in Kāṅcipuram as that text,54 the PādS itself does not include the JS in its list of “five jewels”, those scriptures which, we can presumably infer, the author of the above passage considered superior within his tradition. Leaving aside for the moment the question of why the author of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ might have made this claim on behalf of the PādS (I will discuss this question below), we must first attempt to explain why the JS is not included in this list.

53 SāPr on ĪS 1.64-67: idaṃ sāvatapauṣkarajayākhyatantratrayam… tīvarapārameśvaralakṣmītantrāḥkhyatantratrayam kramaṇa teṣām vṛttirūpam / tāteśvarapāremeśvaravarayor utsavādīnāṃ pauṣkalyam asti / lakṣmītantrre tu tān nāsti / atāḥ ‘anuktam anyato grāhyam’ ity uktaṁyā hastiśailanāṭhārcakaiḥ padmoktāṇāṃ utsavādyācārānāṃ parigrahaḥ kṛta iti… l.
54 On the JS’s and the PādS’s association with Kāṅci see JS ap 13.14b: hastīsaile jayākhyāṃ ca sāmrājąyaḥ adhitishthati / pādmatantram hastīsaile… / kāryakārī pracāryate l. On the JS’s association with Kāṅci at the time of the composition of the IS, see IS 1.67.
There are, on the face of it, at least two possible explanations for its omission. The first is simply that the composition of this portion of the PādS was complete before the idea of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS became current.\textsuperscript{55} Given that it appears quite probable that the PārS (the earliest extant text to list the JS, SS and PauṣS as the “celestial” scriptures) incorporated passages from the PādS and is therefore later than the bulk of that text, it is certainly a possibility that the composition of this section of the PādS predated the idea of the superiority of the three aforementioned scriptures. However, we can be certain that the PādS’s list of canonical scriptures (at \textit{jp} 1.99-114) was added to the main body of the text at a much later date (as can be inferred from the inclusion within the list of demonstrably later scriptures such as the ĪŚ and the ŚrīprśS), and this shows that additions were still being made to the PādS at a time when the theory of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS was already quite well established. Indeed, the fact that its list of “five jewels” occurs at the very end of the PādS might well suggest that this passage is itself a later addition.

The second possible explanation is that the author of the passage in question in the PādS belonged to a tradition within the Pāñcarātra which did not at that time accept the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS. The fact that the PādS describes itself as “celestial” (\textit{divyam}) at the beginning of the second chapter (\textit{jp} 2.3a) is perhaps worthy of note, though it was quite common for authors to present their texts in such terms, regardless of the tradition they belonged to. Be that as it may, the theory that the PādS did originate from a tradition within the Pāñcarātra which was distinct from the tradition to which at least the PārS and the ĪŚ belonged is a compelling one, and it is the subject of distinct traditions within the Pāñcarātra to which I shall turn next.

\textsuperscript{55} As is the case with much of the anonymous Pāñcarātra literature, the PādS is certainly not a homogeneous, singly authored work, and so it is difficult to establish its date and provenance. Rastelli (2003) claims that its date can be determined only in relation to other Samhitās, and places the bulk of its composition between that of the \textit{Paramasamhitā} (ParS), from which it borrows, and that of the PārS. Her suggestion that it is subsequent to the \textit{Ahirbudhyasamhitā} (AS) as well as to the lifetime of Rāmānuja would most likely place it towards the end of the twelfth century, or shortly thereafter.
iii.) Conclusions

The JS, SS and PauṣS appear to be the oldest of the published Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, though I will argue below that each of these works most likely achieved their present form at a later date in South India. With the recent discovery of several early Pāñcarātra works in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, we can be fairly certain, at any rate, that the JS, SS and PauṣS were not the earliest Pāñcarātra scriptures. Indeed, it is very likely that the scriptural literature of the Pāñcarātra is considerably older than the works which are currently available to us. A clue to this is contained in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya of Śaṅkara, generally assigned by modern scholars to the early eighth century (Suthren Hirst 2005: 13-26). In his comments on 2.2.45 (418.4-5), Śaṅkara quotes a statement which he believes shows the ‘Pañcarātra’ to be in conflict with the Veda. The statement reads “Not finding the supreme good in the four Vedas, Śaṅḍilya learnt this teaching” (caturṣu vedesu paraṃ śreyo ’labdhvā śaṅḍilya idaṃ śāstram adhigatavān). Śaṅkara does not name the source of this remark, and as far as I am aware it has not been found in any Pāñcarātra work. The fact that it is not in poetic metre strongly suggests that it is not a verbatim quote in any case. But we regularly find very similar sentiments expressed in the opening passages of the Saṃhitās, particularly in those which detail the “transmission of the teaching” (śāstrāvataraṇa etc.). The most plausible explanation for this reference is surely that such passages, and hence such scriptural works, were already in existence in Śaṅkara’s day.

As we have seen, the idea that the JS, SS and PauṣS are the supreme Pāñcarātra scriptures is only expressed in a small minority of Pāñcarātra texts, and these were all composed in South India during or after the twelfth century. It is possible that in South India by this time these three works were already the oldest extant Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, and that the high esteem in which they were held by certain Pāñcarāтриka authors is attributable in large part to this. That the Svāyambhuvaṇaiciinātra, the Mahālakṣmīsaṃhitā and the Jayottaratantra may be named in later canonical lists does not, of course, mean that they were still in use at that time.

It is striking that three of the four scriptural works which contain the idea of the JS’s, SS’s and PauṣS’s supremacy mention these texts alongside a “root-Veda”, or an
“original Veda” (*mūlaveda*), an apparently mythical Urtext which is distinguished from the Vedas primarily on account of its monotheism, and the fact that it enjoins the pursuit of a single goal, namely liberation (*mokṣa*). The Pārś and the ĪŚ present the JS, SS and PauṣS as having been revealed by god in the Kali Age, long after the Mūlaveda had been abandoned in favour of the “mixed dharma”. Alternatively, according to the ŚrīprśS, the JS, SS and PauṣS are themselves different versions of the Mūlaveda. These different versions are supposedly tailored to suit the varying abilities of students. The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ*, meanwhile, also presents the JS, SS and PauṣS as articulations of a single teaching, though in this instance they are said to collectively constitute this teaching, which means that they must be studied together. The divergent views on the relation between the JS, SS and PauṣS and the original teaching, and on the relation between the Saṃhitās themselves, most probably indicates that these ideas (of the three supreme Saṃhitās, and of a Pāñcarātra Urtext) were relatively new to these South Indian authors. The apparent lack of a canonical account of the history and status of these texts must have allowed these authors the possibility, however circumscribed, of participating in what Eric Hobsbawm (1992) has called “the invention of tradition”.

45
2. Divisions within the Pāñcarātra

i.) Different kinds of Pāñcarātrika

Before turning to the classifications of different Pāñcarātra groups contained in several South Indian works belonging to the same religious context as the tradition of the supremacy of the Jayākhyasamhitā (JS), Sātvatasyasamhitā (SS) and Pauskarasyasamhitā (PausS), it will be helpful here to summarise the additional textual evidence for there being distinct types of Pāñcarātrika. There are, from a period prior to our earliest Pāñcarātra scriptures, a number of textual sources which differentiate between Pāñcarātrikas and Bhāgavatas. I will refer to some of these below when I discuss Yāmuna’s Āgamaprāmāṇya. Before that, however, it is worth looking at one such source, namely Śaṅkara’s Brahmasūtrasabhāṣya (BSBh), in a little more detail. In his comments on sūtras 2.2.42 and 2.2.44, Śaṅkara appears to attribute different theological positions to the Bhāgavatas and “those who follow the teachings of the Pāñcarātra” (pañcarātrasiddhāntin). The position of the Bhāgavatas is described as follows:

bhagavān evaiko vāsudevo nirañjanajñānasvarūpāḥ paramārthatattvam; sa caturdhīmānāṁ pravibhajya pratiṣṭhitah – vāsudevavvāhūrūpāṇaḥ, saṃkarṣāṇavvēhūrūpāṇaḥ, pradyumnavaśāhūrūpāṇaḥ, aniruddhavvēhūrūpāṇaḥ ca; vāsudevo nāma paramārtham ucyate; saṃkarṣāno nāma jīvāḥ; pradyumna nāma mañāḥ; aniruddho nāma ahāṃkāraḥ; teśāṁ vāsudevah parā prakṛthiḥ, itare saṃkarṣaṇādayah kāryam; tam itthāṁbhūtaṁ paramesvaran bhagavantam abhigamanopādānejāśvādhyāyayogair varṣāṣataṁ iṣvā kṣīṇakleśo bhagavantam eva pratipadyata iti ī. – “The unique Bhagavat, Vāsudeva, whose essence is pure knowledge, is the supreme reality. After dividing himself, he is possessed of a fourfold form: the form[s] (vyūha) Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. It is said that the Supreme Self is called Vāsudeva, the individual self is called Saṃkarṣaṇa, the mind is called Pradyumna, and the act of self-formulation is called Aniruddha.” Of these, Vāsudeva is the supreme material

56 My translation of ahāṃkāra here as “the act of self-formulation” follows van Buitenen (1957). While the phrase may be somewhat cumbersome, it is preferable in this context to “ego” or “self-consciousness” etc., since in the scheme which identifies Aniruddha with the ahāṃkāra (MBh 12.326.37, 339.18ab), the former’s role as the world-creator is emphasised over any sort of
cause (prakṛti), and the others, Saṃkarṣaṇa and so on, are the effect. After worshipping the Bhagavat, the supreme Lord, who is of such a nature [as described here] for a thousand years by means of [the five rites] approaching god, gathering the materials for worship, worship, textual study and meditation, [one’s] pain will be diminished, and one will assuredly attain to the Bhagavat.” (BSBh 415.5-13)

The scheme outlined here, with the jīva, manas and ahamkāra personified by, respectively, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, is the same as that given in a passage of the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata (MBh 12.326.20-39). Śākara attributes it here to the Bhāgavatas, and in his commentary on 2.2.44, he suggests that those who follow the teachings of the Pañcarātra do not subscribe to this theory:

na caite saṃkarṣaṇādayo jīvādībhāvenābhīpreyante; kim tarhi, iśvarā evaite sarve jñānaśvāyaśaktibalavīryatejobhīr aśvāyā dharmair anvītā abhyapagamyante – vāsudeve evaite sarve nirdoṣā niradhīṣhānā niravadyāś ceti... / ... / na ca pañcarātrasiddhāntibhir vāsudevādīsu ekasmin sarvesu vā jñānaśvāyādītāratamakrtah kaścid bhedō 'bhupagamyate; vāsudeva eva hi sarve vyūhā nirvīṣeṣā iyante / – “And these [Vyūhas] Saṃkarṣaṇa and so on, are not thought of as really being the individual self etc. How [is it they are thought of] then? It is agreed that all these are lords, [who are] endowed with the lordly properties [omniscient] knowledge, sovereignty, power, strength, virility and splendour. They are all Vāsudevas, flawless, without substrate (i.e. cause?), and with no imperfections... / ... / And it is agreed upon by those who follow the teachings of the Pañcarātra that there is no distinction between Vāsudeva and the others, all of whom are identical, [and that none] is created either by the hierarchy [of the properties, omniscient] knowledge and sovereignty etc. Indeed, all the Vyūhas are accepted as Vāsudevas without any distinctions.” (BSBh 416.17-417.2, ... 417.15-18)

What are we to make of these passages? Some scholars (e.g. Colas 2011: 297) believe that Śākara is using the names ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pañcarātrasiddhāntin’ to refer to the same group. This position is perhaps based on the fact that the Bhāgavatas are described here as worshipping god in accordance with the “five times” (i.e. abhigamana etc.), a practice which is elsewhere expressly associated with the psychological principle. As van Buitenen shows, the creative function of the ahaṃkāra in the Mokṣadharmaparvan (as well as in the Sāṃkhyaśāstra) is continuous with older, mythical narratives wherein the primordial being combines and unites the principles of self-consciousness, self-formulation (ahaṃkāra, i.e. the exclamation aham!), and self- (and by extension, world-) creation.
Pāñcarātra. But this interpretation has the problem of explaining why it is, then, that the doctrines linked with these denominations are so clearly different. For the Bhāgavatas hold, according to Śaṅkara, that the Vyūhas Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are caused to become manifest by Vāsudeva, the “supreme cause” (parā prakṛtiḥ). This idea is compatible with the scheme of the successive emergence of these deities, and the principles (jīva, manas, ahamkāra) they personify, that is articulated in the Nārāyaṇīya. However, according to Śaṅkara, the Pañcarātrasiddhāntins reject this idea, and hold that there is no distinction whatsoever between the four Vyūhas. In the absence of any further textual support, it is difficult to arrive at any firm conclusions from the above passages. But at least we can affirm that, in Śaṅkara’s time, there appear to have been doctrinal disagreements among Vaiṣṇavas who adhered to the theology of the four differentiated forms of god (vyūha).

That there were philosophical disagreements among Pāñcarātrikas, and that these disagreements were relatively important in shaping distinct Pāñcarātrika identities is suggested elsewhere in medieval Sanskrit literature. In two recent publications, Alexis Sanderson (2007, 2009a) has drawn attention to several references to the ‘Pañcarātra’ tradition in Kashmirian works dating from the final centuries of the first millennium CE. For the present purposes, two of these works are of particular interest. The first is the Haravijaya, a Sanskrit court epic written by Rājānaka Rātnākara around 830 CE. In the 47th canto (sarga) of this work, during a hymn to the goddess Caṇḍī, two groups of Vaiṣṇavas are distinguished (at verses 55-56): the Ekāyanas, whom I will discuss below, and the followers of the teaching relating to Saṃkarṣaṇa (sāṃkarṣaṇa śāsana).

The second work, which is considerably more informative, is Bhaṭṭa Rāmakāntḥa’s Nareśvaraparikṣāprakāśa (NPP), a philosophical commentary on the c. seventh-eighth century Nareśvaraparikṣā of Sadyojyotis. The NPP was most probably written during the second half of the tenth century (Watson 2006). Here, two kinds of

57 See e.g. MBh 12.325.4/57-59, the seventh century stele inscription from Baset in Cambodia (K. 447, see Credès 1942: 193-95), and a Śaiva work called the Śrīkaṇṭhī or the Śrīkaṇṭhyasamhitā, at verses 51c-52 (Hanneder 1998: 244).

58 Sanderson (2009a: 110-11) points to references to the Pañcarātra in the Nīlmatatpurāṇa. The Nīlmatatpurāṇa may have been composed during the Kārkoṭa dynasty (c. 626-855 CE), but this is far from certain (ibid.).
Pāṇcarātras are named: the ‘Śaṅkaraṇapāṇcarātras’ and the ‘Śaṃhitāpāṇcarātras’. Sanderson (2009a: 108) thinks it very likely that these are the same groups distinguished by Ratnākara – in other words that the Śaṃhitāpāṇcarātras, presumably those who follow the Pāṇcarātra Saṃhitās, are the same group as the Ekāyanas. The two groups differ from each other, according to Rāmakaṇṭha, in their views on the individual self (jīva). On the one hand, the Śaṅkaraṇapāṇcarātras say that consciousness is merely a product of the “internal organ” (antaḥkaraṇacaitanikāḥ, NPP 87.22), by which is meant, presumably, the mental faculties manas, buddhi and ahaṅkāra. On the other, the Śaṃhitāpāṇcarātras, along with “the knowers of the Upaniṣads” who subscribe to the theory of the transformation of the original cause, say the following: “Individual selves are truly distinct [from the mental faculties] but they are non-pervasive (i.e. atomic), and they originate from the imperishable supreme cause, which is either the referent of the word brahman [for those who are learned in the Upaniṣads], or is called Nārāyaṇa [for the Śaṃhitāpāṇcarātras]. Like a pot, for example, [originates from clay and will eventually dissolve back into it, so] the independent natures [of individual selves] originate from and [will eventually] dissolve back into their own cause.”

In a later passage, Rāmakaṇṭha says that for those who know the Upaniṣads, and for Pāṇcarātras (presumably he is referring to both types of ‘Pāṇcarātra’ here), liberation (mukti) is the absorption of the individual selves into brahman (for the former), and into the supreme material cause (prakṛti) called Nārāyaṇa (for the latter).

Rāmakaṇṭha’s distinction between the Śaṅkaraṇapāṇcarātras and the Śaṃhitāpāṇcarātras offers an intriguing glimpse into an episode in the history of the Pāṇcarātra which is now almost completely lost to us. That distinct groups within the Pāṇcarātra should have held opposing views on the ontology of individual selves seems somewhat surprising given that in the Pāṇcarātra literature that is currently

59 On which see Śaṃkhyakārikā 23, 24, 27, and 33. In the Pāṇcarātra literature see e.g. Ahirbudhīnasamhitā 4.38, and Lakṣmitantra 7.30.
60 NPP 91.18ff: pariṇativedāntavidah saṃhitāpāṇcarātṛś cāhuḥ satyaḥ bhinnā eva jīvātmānah, te tu paramakaranād amaśvarād brahmapadavācyāt avyāpakā eva ghaṭādivat svakāraṇalayaśvabhāvāś cotpadyante iti.
61 NPP 106.5ff: esa ca prasango vedāntavidām pāṇcarātrānām ca samānah / tair api brahmaṇi nārāyaṇākhyāyām ca parasyāṃ prakṛtāu jīvātmānām layo muktir abhyupagatā yataḥ I.
available, such concerns do not figure prominently. Moreover, in the works by the Vedāntin defenders of Pāñcarātra orthodoxy, in the Vaikhānasa literature and, as we will see presently, in the Pāñcarātra scriptures, different types of Pāñcarātrikas are distinguished from one another not on account of opposing philosophical positions, but rather because of such factors as their different religious goals, liturgical practices, social class (varṇa), customs, everyday habits, and religious insignia.

In the Pāñcarātra works, there are several ways in which different types of worshipper are classified. Already in our earliest Saṃhitās, there are clear indications that important differences were recognised among devotees, and that one of the most basic distinctions, as attested to in the SS and the PauṣS, was that between those “with desires” (sakāma) and those “without desires” (akāma, niṣkāma). The former, inevitably, desire various mundane and heavenly rewards (see e.g. PauṣS 36.80-81, SS 24.432-433), while the latter seek liberation only (e.g. PauṣS 31.203, SS 18.51ab). According to these sources, the two types of worshipper participate alongside each other in the same rituals (PauṣS 31.201-227, SS 7.73), and both may be members of any of the four social classes (varṇa) (PauṣS 38.26ff, SS 7.43ab). In one place, the SS (7.37ff) reports that the devotees who seek liberation only perform divergent rites on different days of the month during the year-long vow (vrata) to worship the four forms of god, and that after the worship, the sakāma and the niṣkāma devotees give different gifts to Brahmīns (7.49c-51). Meanwhile, they perform the twelve-day vow (dvādaśāvṛata) in the same way, and it grants the same result to both (SS 7.73). Elsewhere (SS 19.84c-85), it is said that the “Heart mantra” is to be recited with a different ending depending on the goal of the initiate – svāhā for enjoyments (bhoga) and nāmas for liberation (mokṣa). The SS cites another example wherein the niṣkāma and the sakāma devotees worship the mantras of the “manifested deities” Colas (1990) has shown that a number of Vaikhānasa works adumbrate sub-groups within the Pāñcarātra. Among these, the Samārtarcanādhiṅkaraṇa (65.123-125) divides Pāñcarātrikas into āgneya vaiśṇavas and tāmasa vaiśṇavas, the former following the rites prescribed in the sūtra of Bodhāyana and others, the latter following those prescribed in the sūtra of Kātyāyana and others. The Samārtarcanādhiṅkaraṇa is almost certainly earlier than Yāmuna, and may be as early as the ninth century (see Colas 1996: 95). Other Vaikhānasa texts offering variant subdivisions include the Kriyādhiṅkāra, composed at the very latest during the thirteenth century, and possibly considerably earlier (ibid.), and the Anandaśaṃhitā, among the latest of the Vaikhānasa “medieval corpus”.

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63 In other words, the four Vyūhas Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha (SS 7.29-36).
(vibhavadevāḥ) in the same way, only the niṣkāma worshippers (called here “those who practise renunciation”, saṃnyāsakārin) abandon the inevitable fruits of this worship while the sakāma worshippers (or “those who desire the fruits”, phalārthin) accumulate them.\(^{64}\) A passage in the PauṣŚ (19.51-52b) locates this distinction firmly within orthodox tradition (smṛti) when it calls these contrasting methods, respectively, the way of “disengagement” or “abstention” (nivṛtti), and the way of “engagement” (pravṛtti), terms to which I shall return in Chapter Seven when I discuss the Nārāyaṇīya.\(^{65}\) This passage from the PauṣŚ is especially notable for its claim that those who seek only pleasures or “enjoyments” (bhoga) achieve success therein by means of “engagement”, but that once they are satiated by such pleasures, they practise “disengagement”.\(^{66}\)

In this last example from the PauṣŚ, the way of “disengagement” or desireless (niṣkāma) worship appears to be considered the higher practice for the more advanced initiates. It is striking that while both the SS and the PauṣŚ contain passages (as referred to above) in which sakāma and niṣkāma are presented as apparently equally legitimate modes of worship, the PauṣŚ also contains a number of passages wherein sakāma worship is condemned, or at the least considered very inferior. Two good examples of this are found in the 31\(^{st}\) chapter. In a verse (PauṣŚ 31.202c-203) I shall return to below when I discuss the Ekāyanas, sakāma worshippers are said to attain only meagre rewards (svalpaphala), in comparison to akāma worshippers who attain the world of Acyuta (acyutaloka). And before this we are told the following: “The omniscient abiding in the heart does not permit [worship that is performed with] desire. One who grants heaven to his devotees even when it is not asked for

\(^{64}\) SS 10.48-50b: saṃnyāsāṁ saṅcayāṁ vāpi kṛtvā saṃyak kṛtasya vai // mantramūpanukārīnyā mudraniyaṁ ca mudrayā // phalārthāṁ prasavāṁ yena na ti saṃnyāsakārinām // phalaparyavasānāṁ ca kālam āgamacoditām // haruṁ no yajyate yena siddhāṁ yais tu phalārthinām. See Hikita’s (1991) translation of this passage.

\(^{65}\) See Mānavadharmaśāstra 12.88-90, where it is said that there are two kinds of Vedic act: pravṛtta, which leads to increased happiness, and nivṛtta, which leads to supreme bliss (naiḥśreyasika). Action undertaken to satisfy desires here and in the next life is called pravṛtta, while action which is free from desire (niṣkāma) and is accompanied by knowledge is called nivṛtta.

\(^{66}\) PauṣŚ 19.51-52b: pravṛttiḥ ca nivṛttiḥ ca karma caitād dvīdhā ‘b āja // jayanti bhogaikaratāḥ pravṛttena tu karmanā // paritṛptāṁ tu sambhogaikāṁ nivṛttenācaranti ca //.
it that is not given by him? Therefore, one should abandon requests!"\(^{67}\) Such sentiments provide a striking contrast to other passages in the Pauṣ Ś (at e.g. 23.3-5, 31.227, 36.80-81, 38.26-28) which address sakāma and niṣkāma worshippers without favouring one kind over the other. They also contrast with the presentation of sakāma and niṣkāma worship in the SS, which does not contain a similar bias.\(^{68}\) It seems reasonable to assume that the passages in the Pauṣ Ś which favour niṣkāma over sakāma, and exhort the rejection of the latter, are the work of a different author from the passages in the same text wherein both approaches are presented as equally valid. Given that the SS does not contain condemnations of sakāma worship, and that this bias is also almost entirely absent from the JS,\(^{69}\) it is likely that the passages in the Pauṣ Ś which strongly favour niṣkāma worship are the work of a later redactor. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that it is in the later, South Indian Pāncarātra Saṃhitās, as we will see below, that worldly pleasures or enjoyments, and supernatural powers (i.e. bhogalsiddhi) are commonly treated as inferior or even as illegitimate religious goals.

Notwithstanding these presumably later additions to the Pauṣ Ś, there are many passages in this work, as there are also in the SS, wherein sakāma and niṣkāma worshippers are depicted as participating alongside each other in the same rites. In such cases it appears that there would have been no observable difference between the two kinds of worshipper. Both could belong to any of the four social classes (varṇa) and, as we have seen, it is indicated in the Pauṣ Ś that a worshipper may go from being sakāma to being niṣkāma purely according to his own inclinations. Judging by such passages, then, all initiates appear to have been eligible for either mode of worship. However, both the SS and the Pauṣ Ś elsewhere contain a classification of the different

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\(^{67}\) Pauṣ Ś 31.149c-150: kāṅkṣitaṁ nāujanāti sarvaṛjaḥ ī∂r dacye sthitah // aprārthito ’pi svargaṁ tu bhaktānāṁ yo dadāti ca / kim adeyaṁ hi tasyāti tasmād abhyarthanāṁ tyajet //.

\(^{68}\) The only exception I could find is at SS 19.146-147b, where it is said that during the liberating ascent of the individual self (jīva) through the six paths (adhvan), the same self becomes indifferent (virakta) to enjoyments (bhoga) such as miniaturisation (aṇiman) etc. Again, see Hikita’s (1993) translation of this passage.

\(^{69}\) An exception is at JS 5.11ff, where it is said that the worshipper of the mantra should not desire siddhis. The term siddhi here (at JS 5.11b) appears to be synonymous with bhoga (“enjoyment”), which is mentioned in the previous verse. This is a very unusual statement for the JS, which otherwise lists enjoyments (bhogalbhukti) and liberation (mokṣalmuktik) as equally valid achievements. Rastelli (2000: 372 n. 11) has identified this chapter of the JS, along with chapters 3 and 4, as comprising a textual unit which is separate from the rest of the JS.
kinds of devotee wherein eligibility for particular forms of worship is constrained by social class and religious identity. Both of these classifications adopt a fourfold model. I will discuss that found in the PauṣS below. In the SS, we read near the beginning of the second chapter:

In his gloss on these verses in his Sanskrit commentary on the SS, the Sātvatatantrabhāṣya (STBh), Alaśingabhaṭṭa draws attention to a very similar classification of initiates that is found in the Laksmitantra (LT). The major difference in the LT’s presentation is that there are only three categories of initiate: the experts in yoga who have the authority to worship the Supreme Self, those engaged in “mixed yoga” who worship the Vyūhas, and those “lacking in discrimination” who worship the Vibhava deities. In other words, the LT does not divide the “mixed worshippers”, as the SS does, into Brahmans on the one hand, and Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras on the other. The SS’s fourfold classification of initiates is itself mapped onto a threefold

\[\text{aṣṭāṅgayogasiddhānāṃ hṛdyāganiratātmanāṃ} \parallel \text{yoginām adhikāraḥ syād ekasmin hṛdayeśaye} \parallel \text{vyāmīśrayāgayuktānāṃ viprānāṃ vedavādināṃ} \parallel \text{samantraṃ tu caturvyūhe tv adhikāro na cānyathā} \parallel \text{trayānāṃ kṣatriyādīnāṃ prapannānāṃ ca tattvātah} \parallel \text{amantram adhikāras tu caturvyūhakriyākrame} \parallel \text{sakriye mantracakre tu vaibhaviye ’vivekināṃ} \parallel \text{mamātāsannirastānāṃ svakarmaniratātmanāṃ} \parallel \text{karmavānmanasaiḥ samyag bhaktānāṃ paramesvare} \parallel \text{caturṇāṃ adhikāro vai prāpte dīkṣākrame sati} /.

− “With regard to the one who dwells in the heart, the authority to worship this god is for yogins who are accomplished in the eight-limbed yoga, whose selves are intent upon internal worship (literally “the sacrifice in the heart”). Regarding the worship of the four Vyūhas with mantras, the authority is for none other than the Brahmins who are versed in the Vedas [and] are engaged in mixed worship. And for the [other] three [social classes] Kṣatriya and so on, who have truly taken refuge [with god], [their] authority is [also] in the series of rites relating to the worship of the four Vyūhas, but [they must perform these] without mantras. For the four [classes, Brahmin etc.] who are completely devoted to the supreme lord in action, speech and thought, [and] who are intent upon their own duties, but who lack discrimination [and] who have not cast off egotism, [their] authority, provided they have been properly initiated, is with regard to the mantras relating to the Vibhava manifestations, and the attendant rites.” (SS 2.7c-12b)

\[\text{saṃsiddhayogatattvānāṃ} \parallel \text{adhikāraḥ paramātmānām} \parallel \text{vyāmīśrayogayuktānāṃ madhyānāṃ vyākhāvāvane} \parallel \text{vaibhaviyādirūpeṣu vivekavidhurātmanāṃ} \parallel.

\[70\text{My interpretation of this last category of initiate is informed by Alaśingabhaṭṭa’s comments on these verses. For a quite different translation of SS 2.10c-12b, see Schrader (1916: 152).}\]

\[71\text{LT 11.48c-49: }\text{samsiddhayogatattvānāṃ (or susiddhayogatattvānāṃ, see Krishnamacharya 1959: 39) adhikāraḥ paramātmānām} \parallel \text{vyāmīśrayogayuktānāṃ madhyānāṃ vyākhāvāvane} \parallel \text{vaibhaviyādirūpeṣu vivekavidhurātmanāṃ} \parallel.\]
model of worship, i.e. of god’s para, vyūha and vibhava forms, which is referred to in the SS’s opening chapter (SS 1.23), which forms the organising structure for most of Chapters 2-12, and which is reflected in the three types of initiation (vibhava, vyūha and sūkṣmā dikṣā) that are introduced at SS 16.28c-29b.

There is no obvious correspondence between the SS’s fourfold classification of worshippers and that found in several South Indian works which I will address below. Nor, despite the rather awkward disparity between the four types of initiate and the three types of worship, is there any obvious indication, as far as I can see, that SS 2.7c-12b has been added to the text by a later redactor, though it is notable that the only other reference to “mixed worship” in the SS occurs in the final chapter (SS 25.289ab) which, I will argue below, is a later addition to the text. The prohibition against Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas worshipping the Vyūhas with mantras is particularly striking, especially in a supposedly “early” Saṃhitā. As we will see, this restrictive attitude towards social class is not found in the JS or the Pauṣ, and is more in keeping with the later South Indian works. That there are four types of initiate distinguished may itself be interpreted as an attempt to establish a classificatory method which is at least formally consistent with the Brahminical model of the four social classes (varṇa) and/or stages of life (āśrama).

Certainly, the typology of Vaiṣṇavas found in another scriptural work, the Sanatkumārasaṃhitā (SanS), very obviously represents a conscious effort to situate its own system (tantra) within the domain of Brahminical orthopraxy. It does this through applying a fourfold system of classification to the four traditional modes or stages of life (āśrama), namely that of the celibate student (brahmacārin), householder (grhaṣṭha), hermit or forest-dweller (vānaprasṭha), and mendicant or ascetic (bhikṣuka or yati in the SanS). This fourfold division of the four āśramas is formally consistent with the earliest extant classification of the four āśramas, which is found in both the Āṣramopaniṣad and the Vaikhānasadharmasūtra (Olivelle 1993: 165-166), though with three exceptions (Vaikhāna, Haṃsa and Paramahṃsa) the subdivisions are different in this case. The SanS, which may be one of our earliest South Indian Saṃhitās since it is quoted by Yāmuna in his Āgamanprāmāṇya (160.15ff), offers the
following classification of those who belong to the āśrama system and are initiated into the Viṣṇumāṇḍala (SanS *Brahmarātra* 5.4c-42):72

Celibate students are known as either Brahmācārin, Liṅgin, Śiṣya or Upāsaka. The Brahmācārī carries a staff, wears an antelope hide (*ajina*), is devoted to studying the Veda and worshipping god, eats unsalted food (*aṅkalavānanāśin*) and food acquired by begging (*bhaiṅśhāra*), and is moderate in his diet (*mitāśana*). He is always intent upon honouring his teacher (SanS *Brahmarātra* 5.7-8). The Liṅgin, after giving up his ritual duties (*karmāṇi saṃtyajya*, or his desires for the fruits thereof?), also eats moderately food that is acquired by begging. He bears the marks of the conch, discus, mace, bow, śṛīvatsa and Kaustubha gem, and worships either god (i.e. Viṣṇu) or Vainateya (Garuḍa) (5.9-10). The Śiṣya also begs for his food, eats moderately, serves his teacher, and worships Hari (5.11-12b). The Upāsaka performs his ablutions and worships god at dawn, noon and dusk, is devoted to mantra-repetition (*japa*), the fire-sacrifice (*homa*), study, and the eight-syllabled mantra, and honours his teacher (5.12c-14b).

Householders, the second stage of life, consist of Vratins, Gṛhasthas, Āḍhyas and Ācāryas. The Vratin fasts and performs vows (*vrata*), is devoted to worshipping, eats moderately and at night, only makes sexual advances on his wife at the times of the month when she is at her most fertile (*ṛtugāmin*), has his senses under control, and is devoted to the *mūlamantra* (5.15c-16). The Gṛhastha also fasts and performs vows, studies the Saṃhitās, and supports his students (5.17-18b). The Āḍhya (literally “wealthy”) is free from desire and anger, is devoted to his guests, whom he feeds, is happy, participates in religious festivals, and supports devotees (5.18c-20b). The Ācārya is learned in the rite of installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and in Vedic and Tantric worship (*yāge vaidikatānutrike*), is temperate, kind to his pupils, and is a knower and proclaimer of the Tantra (5.20c-22b).

Forest dwellers or hermits are also four: the Vaikhānasa, Tantrin, Guru and Niśkala. The Vaikhānasa eats unsalted food, has a wife and son, lives either at home

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72 Rastelli (2002a: 132), remarking on the central role of the maṇḍala in the SanS in general, notes the following: “In this text, ‘one should undergo the initiation’ is expressed by the phrase *praviṣed dikṣām cakramanḍale*, ‘one should attain the initiation in the *cakramanḍala,*’ which shows the centrality of the maṇḍala in the *dikṣā.*”
or in a hermitage (āśrama), is not lazy (atandrita), explicates the Saṃhitās, sleeps on the floor on an antelope hide, and is devoted to meditation (dhyāna) and knowledge (5.23c-25). The Tanrin lives outside of a village, worships god at dawn, noon and dusk, is devoted to the fire-sacrifice (homa) and the repetition of mantras (japa), though only of Tantric mantras, is clothed either in a garment made of bark (valkala) or in an antelope hide, sleeps on darbha grass, and is devoted to the eight-syllabled mantra (5.26-27). The Guru also wears either bark or an antelope hide, performs ablutions at dawn, noon and dusk, feeds on roots and fruits and has no fixed abode (aniyatāvāsa), frequents sacred bathing places (tīrtha), is devoted to meditation (dhyāna), is always worshipping Viṣṇu, and recites the twelve-syllabled mantra, knowing well the reality which it designates (5.28-30b). The Niśkala is clothed in the same way, is devoted to the eight-syllabled mantra, eats only at night (naktabhojin), is easily satisfied and free from envy, worships at dawn, noon and dusk, is indifferent to praise and blame, is dispassionate, and observes a vow of silence (maunin) (5.30c-33b).

Finally, the ascetic (yatī) is either a Haṃsa, Paramahaṃsa, Bhagavant or Prabhu. The Haṃsa wears the mark of the conch and discus, carries a single staff (ekadaṇḍin), is skilled in the ritual of the Tantras (tantrakarma), wears either red-brown garments (kāṣāya) or an antelope skin, and has the hair-tuft (śikhā) and the sacred thread (yajñopavīta) (5.34c-36b). The Paramahaṃsa lives alone, also carries a single staff and is skilled in the ritual of the Tantras, is devoted to meditation, knowledge and non-dual philosophy (advaita), has abandoned the hair-tuft and the sacred thread, and observes a vow of celibacy (5.36c-38). The Bhagavant bears the marks of conch and discus, and always carries a cushion made of grass (brasī), a shoulder pole (śikya), a gourd pitcher (kamanḍalu), the triple staff (tridaṇḍin), and the yogapaṭṭika cloth. He is devoted to Vāsudeva, and to the eight-syllabled mantra (5.39-40). Last of all, the Prabhu, like the Bhagavant, carries a triple staff and is devoted to the eight-syllabled mantra, and he also carries a Garuḍa banner (garuḍadhvaja), and worships god at dawn, noon and dusk (5.41-42).

The classification of the sixteen different types of initiated Vaiṣṇava summarised here is, as far as I am aware, not found in any other text. Needless to say, the fourfold
division of each āśrama is suspiciously neat, and its formal consistency with earlier classifications was very likely a more significant motivation to the author than was an accurate reflection of the reality of the situation. Nonetheless, there are several points of interest here. Firstly, the inclusion of the Vaikhānasas and the “single-staffed” Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas is especially notable. These are the only categories of āśramin in the SanS’s list which are also named in the previously mentioned Āśramopaniṣad and Vaikhānasadharmasūtra, and they are also the only types of Vaiṣṇava listed here of whom we can confidently say that they were very probably not initiated Pāñcarātrikas, despite their inclusion in the ‘Viṣṇumāṇḍala’. For in the previous chapter of the SanS (Brahmarātra 4.30-31), twice-born Vaikhānasas (vaikhānasā dvijāḥ) are explicitly contrasted with “initiates” (dīṣṭāḥ), while the Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas are clearly both Advaitins (though only the latter are explicitly described as such), as is indicated by the fact that they carry a “single staff” (see Olivelle 1993: 172). The inclusion of both of these groups in the Viṣṇumāṇḍala is very likely an attempt by the author of this passage to include and thereby subordinate members of other religious traditions within his own. The order in which the different types of Vaiṣṇava are named suggests an ascending hierarchy, and the Vaikhānasas are mentioned first among the hermits, while the Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas precede the “triple staffed” Bhagavant and Prabhu. However, their inclusion here also suggests that the boundaries between Vaiṣṇava traditions in this particular time and place may not have been as clear as is ordinarily supposed. Certainly, the verses referred to above in the SanS’s previous chapter illustrate that Vaikhānasas had a certain authority in the eyes of the authors of this work. For it is said there that they may be accepted as judges in a legal dispute (vyavahāra) when an initiate (dīṣṭa) is not available, and indeed that they are to be preferred in such circumstances over initiated students (brahmaçārin).\footnote{The passage in which these verses appear in the SanS is translated and discussed by Derrett (1978).}

It is certainly notable that the terms ‘Pañcarātra/Pañcarātrika’ do not feature in the SanS’s classification of the sixteen different types of Vaiṣṇava, and that aside from the references to the twelve-syllabled and eight-syllabled mantras, there is very little here that identifies these āśramins as belonging to the Pañcarātra in particular. In this
regard, it is especially striking that the Upāsaka, Tantrin, Guru, Niṣkāla and Prabhu are all described as worshipping god (and/or bathing) three times a day (trīsaṃdhyā), i.e. at dawn, noon, and dusk, while there is no mention of the worship at “five times” (pañcakāla) which, according to the textual sources, was to become such a characteristic Pāñcarātrika practice in South India. We may interpret the SanS’s classification of “initiates into the Viṣṇumaṇḍala”, perhaps, as an attempt to impose a cohesiveness and a systematicity onto diverse traditions of Vaiṣṇava worship, where in reality there was probably little of either.

The same can also presumably be said of the JS’s classification of fifteen different types of Vaiṣṇava. Unlike the SS and the PauṣS, the JS does not make the basic distinction between sakāma and niṣkāma worshippers, tending to view liberation and enjoyments (bhoga/bhukti) or perfections (siddhi) as simultaneously valid goals for the initiate (see e.g. JS 6.4, 8.2, 14.80, 16.4, 56-58b, 20.243ab, 31.44, 33.53). The SS (e.g. 19.4, 85c-86, 123) and the PauṣS (e.g. 29.61, 30.6, 32.126b-131) also refer to devotees who aspire to both goals. The absence of a distinction between sakāma and niṣkāma worshippers in the JS may indicate that this distinction was a later innovation.

In Chapters 20-22 of the JS, fifteen different types of Vaiṣṇava are named, classified into three groups of five. The first group consists of the Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānas, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin. These are described in the 22nd chapter as follows:

The Yati is a celibate ascetic who worships Viṣṇu alone in thought, word and deed. He sees Viṣṇu in all beings, and all beings in Viṣṇu. He obtains cooked food (siddhānma) from Brahmins without having to beg (ayācita). He has a shaved head and beard, wears a red-brown garment, carries only a staff, and is himself a Brahmin (JS 22.6-10). The Ekāntin, who is also a renunciant, but whose social class is not stated, I discuss at length in Chapter Eight. The Vaikhānasa is a propertied (parigrahavat) Brahmin who supports his family by begging from other Brahmins, and by wealth obtained without begging from Kṣatriyas and Vaiṣyas. He has matted hair (jaṭin), carries an umbrella (chatrin, though normally chattrin), and wears white (JS 22.13c-15b). In this description, the Vaikhānasa appears to inhabit a role which is somewhere between that of householder and renunciant, which may reflect an attempt by the author of these verses to present an account of Vaikhānasas which is consistent
with their status as hermits (vānaprastha) in older literature such as the Dharmasastra (see e.g. Colas 2003). The Karmasattvata, who is elsewhere called simply ‘Sātvata’ (JS 20.267c, 21.81a), is a Brahmin who supports his family by earning a livelihood (vr̥tti) performing rituals for a king (JS 22.15c-16). This identifies the Karmasattvatas as professional priests. We know from Yāmuna’s Āgama-prāmāṇya (e.g. 13.10-15.5), wherein ‘Sātvatas’ or ‘Sātvatas’ are accused of performing pūjā for a living (vr̥ttito devatāpūjā, 14.12), that in South India such persons were subject to severe criticism by certain “orthodox” opponents of the Pāñcarātra. The Śikhin, finally, is a Brahmin who worships Viṣṇu in his heart, performs the ritual for the ancestors, and is eligible for the four modes of life (cāturāśramya, JS 22.17-19b).

Before we move on to the next group of five Vaiṣṇavas in the JS, it is worth mentioning here the close similarity between the classificatory scheme just mentioned, and that found in the later Viṣṇusāṁhitā (ViṣṇuS). The ViṣṇuS, which I will discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters, is a South Indian Pāñcarātra scripture which may have been written as late as the fourteenth century (Unni 1991: 7-10). In the second chapter of this work, the following is declared: “Just as there are many different branches of the Veda tree, so it is recognised by sages that there are divisions within the Pāñcarātra. These [divisions] are distinguished from one another by their having different rituals and texts.” Thereupon the five divisions are named as Vaikhānasa, Sāttvata, Śikhin, Ekañtika and Mūlaka (ViṣṇuS 2.26cd). The separate divisions are presented here as “lineages” (gocarāḥ), and a lineage is said to be equivalent to a “family” or a “clan” (kulam, ViṣṇuS 2.25c). I comment further on this passage in the ViṣṇuS in Chapter Eight.

The second group of five Vaiṣṇavas listed in the JS (22.28-37) consists of the Āpta, the Añjalikārin, the Anāpta, the Ārambhina and the Saṃpravartin. At JS 22.28-34b, the Āptas are themselves subdivided into the Sāttvata (who worships god in accordance with the “five times”, pañca-kālyena), the Añjalikārin, and the Vipra (who performs the installation rites, pratiṣṭhā). However, elsewhere the Añjalikārin, who is

74 Yāmuna himself rejects this accusation and, as I will demonstrate shortly, does not differentiate between ‘Sātvatas’ and other ‘Bhāgavatas’ Brahmins.
75 ViṣṇuS 2.22-23b: yathā tu vedavṛkṣasya śākhāḥ bhedaḥ hy anekaśāḥ / taḥtaḥ bhedaḥ samākhyaśāḥ pañcarātrasya sūribhiḥ // kriyāpāṭhavisēsaḥ tu bhidyante te prthak prthak //.
described as abandoning the fruit of the ritual (saṃnyāsakarmayogena phalasampad vinaiva hi, JS 22.31ab) and as desiring liberation only, is listed as an independent Vaiṣṇava (JS 20.267a, 21.87a). The Anāpta is said to perform the ritual enjoined for Āptas, but without abandoning the duties appropriate to their social class (varṇadharma, JS 22.34c-35b) – in contrast to the Āptas, we must presume. The Ārāmbhin is described as worshipping in order to attain wealth (JS 22.35c-36b), and the Saṃpravartin as worshipping Hari “in the wrong way” (amārgena, JS 22.36c-37b).

In an earlier chapter (JS 20.265-270), each of these five (including the Añjalikārin) together with the five belonging to the first group (the Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānasa, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin) are called ‘Pāñcarātrika’, and are seated together during an installation rite and instructed to recite mantras belonging to the Ekāyana recension (sākhā). I will discuss this passage and its implications below.

Lastly, the JS’s third group of five Vaiṣṇavas consists of the Yogin, the Japaniṣṭha, the Tāpasa, the Śāstrajña and the Śāstradhāraka (JS 22.39-56). I have discussed the latter two already in the Introduction. The Yogin is said to think of god as located in his heart, and to practise samādhi and recite mantras in the temple (JS 22.39-41). The Japaniṣṭha, like the Yati, wears a red-brown garment and carries a staff, and also recites mantras or hymns of praise (stuti) in a low voice (upāṃśu) (JS 22.42-45b). The Tāpasa performs the Cāndrāyaṇa fast and various ablutions, and eats food acquired by begging, or else survives on milk, roots and fruits (JS 22.45c-51b). It is notable that the members of this last group of five do not participate along with the other ten types of Vaiṣṇava in the installation rite mentioned above (i.e. at JS 20.265-270). While the JS’s classificatory scheme in general seems, like the SanŚ’s, to be rather too symmetrically arranged to be genuinely descriptive, these last five form an especially disparate group. The presence of the Śāstrajña and the Śāstradhāraka as distinct types of Vaiṣṇava alongside e.g. the Yogin and the Tāpasa seems particularly arbitrary. Elsewhere in the JS (e.g. 1.58), we should note that “knower of the śāstra” is used, rather, as a general term of commendation, and that in the SS (17.138), for example, protecting the scripture (āgama) is incumbent upon all initiates.

It is highly significant that the Vaikhānasas are included here among the 15 kinds of Vaiṣṇava, for it indicates that these passages (i.e. JS 20.265-270, 21.76c-97,
22.1-81b) do not belong to the earliest portions of the JS which, as we have seen, appear to have been composed in either North India or the Upper Deccan. As far as we know, the Vaikhānasas were restricted to South India throughout the premodern period, which suggests that the composition of these passages also occurred in the south.\footnote{“[T]here is no textual or epigraphic evidence”, writes Willis (2009: 226), “to suggest that the Vaikhānasas ever lived in north India”. Colas (1996: 53 n. 1) addresses the question of the presence of the Vaikhānasas in the JS thus: “La présence des vaikhānasa, groupe social du sud sans doute, qu’elle décrit dans ses rituels ne dément-elle pas la thèse de son origine septentrionale… à moins d’admettre qui la version qui est entre nos mains est une “réédition” complète d’une version du nord”.} This hypothesis is supported by the fact that JS 22.3-5 introduces the diverse (vaiṣyamya) devotees as all performing the worship of god at the “five times” (pañcakālaniṣevin), which is then briefly described at JS 22.64c-74b. Elsewhere in the JS, as Rastelli (2000a: 108) has pointed out, the worship according to the “five times” hardly figures at all. Although this fact alone does not provide conclusive evidence that these passages were composed in South India, among the scriptural works it was certainly in the later southern Saṃhitās that the worship at the “five times” emerges as a central, characteristic feature of the Pāñcarātra liturgy.

It is very difficult to say when these passages may have been added to the JS. Although the JS’s first group of five Vaiṣṇavas is very similar to a classification of Pāñcarātrikas found in the ViṣṇuS, a late, South Indian work, its list of 15 types of Vaiṣṇava is not found elsewhere. I will argue in a later chapter that JS 20.265-270, at least, shares a number of features with interpolated sections of the SS and the PausŚ, and that the latter appear to be earlier than the more “sectarian” portions of texts such as the PādS and the PārS, which I will address shortly. Presumably JS 20.265-270 is the work of the same redactor/s as JS 21.76c-97, and JS 22. We can be sure, at any rate, that the majority of the descriptions of the different types of Pāñcarātrika or Vaiṣṇava which I have summarised in this section pre-dated Yāmuna, to whose Āgampṛamāṇya I now turn.\footnote{I am accepting Young’s (2007: 237) estimate for the lifetime of Yāmuna as c. 1050-1125 CE, with the AP being written “in the late eleventh or early twelfth century” (ibid: 260).}
ii.) Distinct Pāñcarātrika identities in the Āgamaprāmāṇya

It is clear that in his Āgamaprāmāṇya (ĀP) Yāmuna distinguishes between several types of Bhāgavata or ‘Sātvata’/‘Sāttvata’ (both spellings are used, the former more commonly) who accept the authority of the Pāñcarātra scriptures. The unsystematic manner in which these distinctions are made, however, means that the identity of each distinguishable “type” is not altogether obvious. Perhaps unsurprisingly, modern scholars have arrived at different interpretations with regard to precisely which distinct groups are recognised by Yāmuna. Neveel (1977: 30-37) contends that the ĀP distinguishes between four classes of Bhāgavata which he names as: (i) temple servants; (ii) professional temple priests (arcaka); (iii) Bhāgavata Brahmins who perform worship only for themselves, and who additionally perform “a distinctive series of forty sacraments (saṃskāras)... based upon the now lost but inferable Ekāyana Śākhā” (ibid.: 33); and (iv) Bhāgavata Brahmins who perform both Pāñcarātra and Vedic rites. Rastelli (2006) and Young (2007) concur that there are four distinct groups represented by Yāmuna, though each differ in their interpretations as to the identity of these groups.

The first of Neveel’s four “classes”, that of the “temple servants”, is described quite clearly in the ĀP (150.4ff). Members of this class, called vaiśyavrātyas by Yāmuna’s Mīmāṃsaka opponents, are uninitiated (and therefore ineligible for worshipping the Bhagavat directly) and are classed as ‘Bhāgavatas’ purely on account of their association, as servants and temple guards (prāśādapālaka), with the temple worship of Vāsudeva. Contra Rastelli, Young (2007: 241-242 n. 189) argues that members of Neveel’s second class, the “professional temple priests” who earn a living by performing sacrifices or worship for others, are one branch of the group of

78 In this work the terms ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Sātvata’ are usually synonymous, the notable exception to the rule being Yāmuna’s Mīmāṃsaka opponent’s reference to “the threefold doctrine (tridhā matam) – Bhākta, Bhāgavata and Sāttvata” at ĀP 54.3. When Yāmuna speaks “in his own voice” as it were, he treats both names as designating the same group - see for example ĀP 148.11, and 155.1-4. That both terms refer also to the ‘Pañcarātra’ can be inferred from ĀP 1.7-2.4 where Bhāgavata “doctrine” (matam) and “Pañcarātra tantra” are used interchangeably, and ĀP 7.1-2 and 170.13-171.4 where ‘Sātvata’ and ‘Pañcarātra’ are coterminous.

79 A vaiśyavrātya is one who has lost his status as a member of the Vaiśya class as a consequence of neglecting his Vaiśya duties. Manu (10.23) lists the Sātvatas among the offspring of vaiśyavrātyas.
Bhāgavata Brahmins whom Neveel distinguishes as his fourth class i.e. those that perform both Pāñcarātra and Vedic rites. This branch of Bhāgavata Brahmins are a class of professional priests, says Young, who belong to the Vājasaneyaśākhā. There also exists, according to Young’s reading of the ĀP, another branch of Bhāgavata Brahmins belonging to the Vājasaneyaśākhā who perform pūjā only for themselves. These represent Young’s third group. Her fourth consists of Ekāyanas who claim membership of a lost Vedic recension (śākhā), and who “have some temple involvement.”

Rastelli’s (2006: 219) interpretation of Yāmuna’s account is different again. Like Neveel, she distinguishes between the professional temple priests who have undergone dīkṣā and the Vājasaneyaśākhā Bhāgavata Brahmins who perform both Pāñcarātra and Vedic rites. Unlike Neveel, however, she does not interpret the ĀP as limiting members of the Ekāyanasākhā to the performance of svārthapūjā, or “worship for oneself”, i.e. the form of worship “whose fruit goes to the worshipper” (Brunner 1990: 6). And unlike Young, Rastelli does not identify either the svārthapūjakas or those who perform rituals for others (i.e. the professional temple priests who are called parārthapūjakas) solely with members of the Vājasaneyaśākhā.

On my own reading of the ĀP, Yāmuna clearly distinguishes between different types of Bhāgavata on three separate occasions. In the first instance, he distinguishes between the temple servants and the Bhāgavatas by whom “the group of actions are performed daily: “approaching” the god (abhigamana), the gathering of the materials for worship (upādāna), worship (literally “offering”, ījyā), the study of texts (svādhyāya), and meditation (yoga)” (ĀP 151.1-2). The Bhāgavatas who perform these daily duties connected with the five times (pañcakāla) are the Pāñcarātrika Brahmins who are the subject of Yāmuna’s defence in the ĀP. These are then subdivided by Yāmuna (at ĀP 154.11-155.2) into those who worship Hari for their profession (vṛtti) and those who perform pūjā only for themselves (svārtha). Then, at the end of the ĀP (169.3ff), Yāmuna again subdivides the pañcakālika Brahmins into those who follow the Vājasaneyaśākhā, and those who have abandoned
the dharma of the triple Veda (trayīdharma), and who perform the forty sacraments (saṃskāra) enjoined by the Ekāyanaśruti.80

Whilst the aforementioned scholars are surely right to highlight the “categorical” distinction between the professional temple priests and those who perform rituals only for themselves, I am hesitant in accepting Young’s proposal that Yāmuna represents both of these “groups” as belonging solely to the Vājasaneyasākhā. Although there are certain passages within the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās which would support identifying Yāmuna’s professional priests as Vājasaneyins,81 there also exist passages which should warn against any such easy identification.82 These ambiguities can possibly be ironed out with recourse to the chronology of the relevant literature, and also can be explained by the fact that we are clearly dealing with both “internal” and “external” descriptions among distinct Pāñcarātra traditions. We should hardly expect, for example, that a description of the Vājasaneyasākhā by an “external” Ekāyana author will completely coincide with an “internal” Vājasaneya self-description. However, more pertinent to my present purposes, irrespective of what is found in the broader Pāñcarātra literature, I can find no unequivocal suggestion in the ĀP that the professional priests belong only to the Vājasaneyasākhā. Indeed, beyond claiming that the professional priests he is defending are initiated Bhāgavata Brahmins (ĀP 154-158) whose “meagre livelihoods” (vṛttikarśītāḥ) lead them to “perform sacrifices professionally for eminent Vaiṣṇavas” (ĀP 155.3-4), Yāmuna gives no information

80 That followers of the Ekāyanaśākhā perform the pañcakālika rites is asserted at ĀP 170.3-6. Young (2007: 238-239) interprets ‘Ekāyana’ in this instance as denoting a “general orientation”, synonymous with the terms Bhāgavata and Pāñcarātra. I do not agree with this reading, but even if it is correct it would still mean that Yāmuna is including the Ekāyanas (i.e. as genuine Bhāgavatas) among the pañcakālika Bhāgavatas. It might be added that in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature, followers of both the Ekāyanaśākhā (see PārŚ 1.44ab; 9.48b; 10.252c, 287b-289; and the Bhārgavatantra 24.19) and the Vājasaneyasākhā (see PādŚ cp 21.13) are said to perform the pañcakālika rites.

81 Yāmuna claims (ĀP 156.6-158.3) that the professional priests in question have undergone the Pāñcarātraitra sacrament of initiation (dīkṣāsaṃskāra). In certain Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās (see Rastelli 2006: 193-195), though pointedly not in the ĀP, it is quite clearly stated that followers of the Ekāyanaśākhā do not undergo dīkṣā. In addition, elsewhere in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature (see, for instance, PādŚ cp 21.17c-21b) it is claimed that only Mantrāṣṭāntins (viz. followers of the Vājasaneyasākhā) are qualified to perform rituals “for the sake of others” (parārtha).

82 See, for instance, PādŚ cp 1.3-9; PārŚ 9.152-153b: iti svārthāvirodhena parārthādhiḥkṛtyasya tu / ekāyanaśya viduṣaḥ proktāḥ kālāḥ kramaṇa tu // tathā vai dīkṣātāpi Siddhāntaratacetasāḥ l; and also IS 21.511-512b: svārthāsāpi parārthasya pājyām adhikārīnaḥ / sāndilyādyanvayev jāta guror labdhaḥhiśecanaḥ // anye tu kevalaṁ svārthapājījānay adhikārīnaḥ l. The following section (IS 21.513-558) unambiguously locates the “lineage of Śāndilya etc.” within the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda.
whatsoever as to their identity.\textsuperscript{83} Further to this, I can see no suggestion, in either the ĀP or the Pāncarātra Saṃhitās, that those Bhāgavatas who Yāmuna claims “perform pūjā [only] for themselves” should be thought of as belonging only to the Vājasaneyaśākhā. Having asserted that there are Bhāgavatas who perform pūjā only for themselves at ĀP 155.2, Yāmuna then goes on to defend the professional priests, saying nothing more of the former group. When distinctions between the two śākhās are admitted at ĀP 169.3ff, Yāmuna mentions neither parārthapūjā nor svārthapūjā. It should, for the sake of clarity, be added here that the pañcakālika rites, performed by members of both recensions, are svārthapūjā.

I have dwelt on these issues because I think that to interpret Yāmuna as distinguishing between the Vājasaneyaśākhā and the Ekāyanaśākhā in such an explicit manner is to overlook the significant fact that it is only at the very end of the ĀP (at 169.3ff), in other words at a stage in the debate when the author is confident that his opponents have already been defeated, that he concedes for the first time that there are differences in the ritual practices adopted by the followers of the two śākhās. Until this point, although he has divided the pañcakālika Brahmins into parārthapūjakas and svārthapūjakas, Yāmuna has presented the Pāncarātra as very much a single and homogeneous ritualistic tradition. Thus we find references, for example, to “the path prescribed by the Pāncarātra system” (pañcarātratantravihitamārgeṇa, ĀP 139.6), and to “the sacrament of initiation established by the Pāncarātra” (pañcarātrasiddhadikṣāsaṃskāra, ĀP 158.1). Other than at ĀP 88.5ff, where the Ekāyanaśākhā is said to be in conformity with the Veda, each of the śākhās are mentioned only twice by Yāmuna prior to ĀP 169.3, and on both occasions it is their commonality, rather than their differences, that are highlighted. The passages in question read as follows:

\textsuperscript{83} Although at ĀP 169-170 the author distinguishes between the ritual practices of the Vājasaneyins and the Ekāyanas, he says nothing here which should exclude the Ekāyanas from acting as professional priests. It is true that at ĀP 170.6 the Ekāyanas are characterised as mumukṣus, but this need not disqualify them - on this point see e.g. IS 21.506-508 and, more generally, Brunner (1990), who provides a clear account of the distinctions between svārtha- and parārthapūjā. The same would apply of course if we accept Young’s (2007: 238-239) reading that ‘Ekāyana’ here denotes ‘Bhāgavata’ in general (and elsewhere, at ĀP 91.1-6, Yāmuna does imply that the Pāncarātra tradition in toto is concerned only with mokṣa).
Moreover, as to the argument [that the Pañcarātra is invalid] “because it is accepted by the Bhāgavatas”, well in that case the [scriptural] statements of the Vājasaneyaka and Ekāyana sākhās and [the means of knowledge] perception etc. are also invalid, because they are accepted [by the Bhāgavatas] too!” (ĀP 140.5-7)

And in this case also, when [people] see learned men who study the Vājasaneyaka and Ekāyana sākhās daily, who wear their clearly visible sacred threads, upper garments and hair-tufts, who teach and sacrifice and accept gifts, do they not consider them to be Brahmins? (ĀP 141.8-10)

If it is reasonable to interpret these representations of the Vājasaneyaka and Ekāyana sākhās as being deliberately general or, as it were, “non-sectarian”, we might also see evidence of this generalising tendency in Yāmuna’s presentation of ‘Sātvata’, ‘Pañcarātra’, and ‘Bhāgavata’ as synonymous terms. As Colas (2003: 234, 239) has demonstrated, in much of the earlier literature that is external (like the ĀP) to the Pañcarātra scriptural corpus, the terms ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pañcarātra’ in particular refer to distinguishable groups. A notable exception here is provided by Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s Āgamaḍambara (ĀḌ), written in Kashmir during the reign of Śaṅkaravarman (i.e. 883-902 CE). In this play, which also endeavours to defend the orthodoxy of the Pañcarātra, ‘Bhāgavata’ (ĀḌ 4.11), ‘Sātvata’ (ĀḌ 4.19) and ‘Pañcarātrika’ (ĀḌ 4.25) are all used interchangeably to refer to the same religious group (Dezső 2005: 197, 203).

I do not need to repeat here in detail the arguments of Colas (ibid.) and a number of other scholars (e.g. Inden 2000) – namely, that the term ‘Bhāgavata’ referred, at least during the period of the 5th - 6th centuries, primarily to “householder” or to

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84 This is the case in such diverse texts as Bāṇa’s Harṣacaritā (a seventh century work, the eighth chapter of which clearly presents Bhāgavatas and Pañcarātrikas as distinct groups), a ninth century Cambodian stele inscription at Prasat Komnap (K. 701, wherein ‘Bhāgavata’, ‘Pañcarātra’, and ‘Sātvata’ are named as three Vaiṣṇava denominations), and a number of circa tenth century Vaikhānasa texts (wherein ‘Bhāgavatas’ and ‘Pañcarātrikas’ are clearly set apart). This information is from Colas (2003). As Bakker (1997) and Willis (2009) have argued, the Sātvatas were themselves very likely a “strand” within a broader Bhāgavata cult, which points to the fact that the designation ‘Bhāgavata’ functioned as a general, overarching term as well as a specific one.
“aristocratic” Vaiṣṇavas who adhered to the Vedic sacrificial liturgy and were thus distinct from followers of the Pāṇcarātra tradition which, as depicted in the early (c. fourth-fifth century CE) Vaiṣṇava text the Nārāyaṇīya, tended to, in the words of Colas (2003: 234), “subordinate Vedic rituals to its own renunciative ideology”. If we concur with Inden’s (2000: 66) reading of the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa (VDhP), we might consider this work as perhaps one of the earliest extant texts to provide a precedent for Yāmuna’s strategy of collapsing the traditional distinctions between ‘Pāṇcarātrika’ and ‘Bhāgavata’. However the dating of the VDhP is notoriously difficult.86

Turning to the early Pāṇcarātra Saṃhitās themselves, the Bhāgavatas are barely mentioned at all in the JS, SS and PauṣS.87 However, two later works which are quoted by Yāmuna in his ĀP, namely the Paramasaṃhitā (ParS) and the SanS, do employ the designation ‘Bhāgavata’ to refer to followers of the Pāṇcarātra. In the case of the ParS, the majority of the passages in which the term ‘Bhāgavata’ is used to denote ‘Pāṇcarātrika’ belong to sections of the text which Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003) has identified as having been inserted or “re-worked” by a later redactor.88 However, in several instances, portions which apparently belong to the older “ritualistic corpus” also contain this use of the term ‘Bhāgavata’.89 Meanwhile the

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85 See Schreiner (1997a: 1) for these dates. According to Oberlies (1997: 86), the oldest sections of the Nārāyaṇīya (chapters 321-326) most likely belong to the period 200-300 CE. Hiltebeitel (2006), it should be noted, rejects these arguments and favours substantially earlier dates for the Nārāyaṇīya, and indeed the MBh as a whole.
86 See for example Shah (1958), Rocher (1986), and Lubotsky (1996). Both Kane (1962) and Inden (2000) put forward the conservative dates 600-1000 CE.
87 The term bhāgavata occurs three times in the PauṣS, at 8.136, 36.409, and 38.42, though there is no indication in any of these passages that it should be taken as synonymous with Pāṇcarātika. The term appears once in the JS in the verse-heading at 22.3, where the five kinds of Vaiṣṇava – Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānas, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin – are referred to as those who are “exclusively devoted to the Bhāgavata dharma”, and it does not occur at all in the SS.
88 Interpolated passages which equate ‘Bhāgavata’ with ‘Pāṇcarātrika’ include ParS 3.36, 38, 57, 69-70; 27.30; 30.71, 123. It is very difficult to say when these and other similar passages were added to the ParS.
89 The most striking of these is at ParS 4.57-58: etad vīravidhīr hy eṣaḥ sanātaneṣu śrīmad bhāgavatasya śucih // sarvapāpaviśuddhimāṇaḥ muktamārgaḥ prapadyate // labhate cepsitān kāmān Īhāmutra ca sarvaśaḥ // See also ParS 18.30, 19.53 and 25.23.
SanS unambiguously equates Bhāgavatas with Sāttvatas, Vaiṣṇavas and Pāṇcarātrakas.90

Why, specifically, should Yāmuna seek to present the designations ‘Pañcarātra’ and ‘Bhāgavata’ as synonymous? And why should the success of his defence of the Pāṇcarātra be facilitated by his description of it as a single, homogeneous ritualistic tradition? To answer these questions it is helpful to look at the Pādmasaṃhitā, a text which was composed in South India some time after the ĀP.91

iii.) The four Pāṇcarātra Siddhāntas according to the Pādmasaṃhitā

The Pādmasaṃhitā (PādS) attempts to clearly delineate the divisions within the Pāṇcarātra, while still preserving the “inclusivist” approach fostered by Yāmuna. It is one of several Saṃhitās which divides the Pāṇcarātra tradition into four ‘Siddhāntas’, the others being the PauṣS (38.293-307b), the Pārameśvarasaṃhitā (19.522-544), the Īśvarasaṃhitā (21.560-586), the Śrīpraśnasamaṃhitā (16.31c-35b), the Bhārgavatāntra (22.87-94b) and, according to Vedāntadesīka, the Hayagrīvasaṃhitā (see PRR 8.5-8), the Kālottara (PRR 31.14-18), and the Śrīkarasaṃhitā (PRR 30.18ff).92 Since Rastelli

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90 SanS Indrārātra 3.81c-82: kecit tān sāttvātān āhuḥ kecid bhāgavātān viduḥ // kecid ca vaiśnavān āhuḥ kecit tān pāṃcaraśtrakān / itī nāmā tu bhedena dīkṣitā vaiśnavāḥ smṛtāḥ //.

91 As outlined above, on the basis of Rastelli’s (2003) chronology, I place the PādS in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century at the latest.

92 Smith (1975: 296) convincingly suggests that the passage in the PausS which deals with the Siddhāntas is part of a later interpolation. Rastelli (2006: 190-191) suggests that we can assign its composition and inclusion within the PausS to a period prior to the composition of the PārS. The ‘Hayagrīvasaṃhitā’, quoted by Vedāntadesīka, is another name for the Hayāśīrṣapañcarātra (Schrader 1916: 11; Gonda 1977: 106). This work, which is not available to me, appears to have its origins in North India (Rastelli 2007: 190). Several scholars (e.g. Rajan 1981: 34) favour an early date, perhaps as early as the ninth century. However, since there is mention of the four Pāṭcarātra Siddhāntas in any other works dating from this period, or indeed from quite a lengthy period subsequent to this, we can suppose that this passage was also probably part of a later interpolation into the text. The ‘Kālottara’ referred to by Vedāntadesīka is listed by Parampushdas and Shrūtrprakāshdas (2002: 83), under “Unpublished Saṃhitās”, as the ’(Śrī) Kālottara-Saṃhitā’. Such a title does not appear in any “canonical” list given in a Saṃhitā. Each of the works listed above names the same four Pāṇcarātra Siddhāntas with the exceptions of the PauṣS (32.35b, 38.293c-294c) which calls what is elsewhere known as ‘Āgamasaṃhitā’ simply ‘Siddhānta’ and, according to Vedāntadesīka, the Śrīkarasaṃhitā. This latter work refers to the four Siddhāntas as the ‘Vedasiddhānta’, the ‘Divyasiddhānta’, the ‘Tantrasiddhānta’, and the ‘Pūrāṇasiddhānta’. As far as I am aware, such a classification is not found in
(2006) has provided a thorough description of the accounts of these Siddhāntas in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature, I will limit myself here to a discussion of those broadly “sectarian” or inclusivist portrayals of the Pāñcarātra in the PādS which I believe can contribute towards our understanding of the internal divisions in the Pāñcarātra as encountered and presented by Yāmuna.

In the opening adhyāya of the PādS, after a brief eulogy in which the Pāñcarātra’s place among other teachings (śāstra) is likened to the place of the Ganges among other sacred bathing places (tīrtha), and of Acyuta among other gods (PādS jp 1.63c-64b), and in which there are references to the injunctions (vidhī) “of the Pāñcarātra” (1.64c, 69a), and to the Pāñcarātra as a teaching which rescues one “from the ocean of existence” (bhavasāgarā) (1.75-76b), the author states the following:

\[ \text{ṛgādi samjñayā vedāsa caturdhā bhyidyate yathā} // \text{tadvat siddhāntabhedena pāñcarātram caturvīdham} / \text{ṛgādayo yathā caikāṃ bhyidyate bahusākhayā} // \text{tathā siddhāntam ekaikāṃ vakrubhedena bhyidyate} /. \ – \ “Just as the Veda is divided into four parts with the names Rc etc., so too is the Pāñcarātra fourfold, with separate Siddhāntas. And just as the Rc and others are divided into many branches, similarly each Siddhānta is divided by [its having] different speakers.” (PādS jp 1.76c-78b)

Here, then, we see an apparently early attempt to present the divisions within the Pāñcarātra as being homologous with the four Vedas.\(^93\) The term siddhānta which ordinarily means “settled opinion or doctrine” (Monier-Williams 2002: 1216) is explained in the PādS by means of a process of “semantic analysis” (nirvacana):

\[ \text{siddhāntam nāma cānvartham nirāhur iti paṇḍītāḥ} // \text{māṃṣādīśu sāstresu ye siddhārthā maniśināḥ} / \text{teśāṃ ante ‘dhikāro ’smin iti siddhāntasamjñitam} // \ – \ “Scholars have explained the name siddhānta in accordance with its meaning: herein lies the authority of those learned ones who, with regard to the ultimate (ante), have accomplished (siddha) their goal in teachings such as Māṃśā etc. Thus it is called siddhānta.” (PādS jp 1.78c-79)\(^94\)

any other extant work. A ‘Śrīkara’ is listed in the PādS (jp 1.102b), the Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā (2.18d and 24c), and, according to Schrader (1916: 11), the Viṣṇuśṭraṇa.

93 Vedāntadeśika would later use the same strategy in his PRR (e.g. 3.10-12), a text which quotes the PādS a number of times.

94 Verse 1.79 is repeated at PādS cp 19.110c-111b. There are similar explanations of the term siddhānta in both the PauṣŚ (38.305-307b) and the PārŚ (19.544).
PādS *jp* 1.80-82 names the four Siddhāntas as ‘Mantra’, ‘Āgama’, ‘Tantra’, and ‘Tanrāntara’. At *jp* 1.86cd, the PādS claims that it belongs to the Mantrasiddhānta. This Siddhānta, the author tells us elsewhere (*cp* 19.115d), is “foremost” (*agrimam*). Mantrasiddhāntins primarily worship a single form of god (*ekamūrti*, *jp* 1.80ab), which we are told (at *cp* 21.25c) is Vāsudeva. The author asserts (*cp* 21.28c-29) that Mantrasiddhāntins “should meditate on” or “visualise” (*dhyāyeyuh*, 29c) and honour Vāsudeva’s image (*bera*) with Vedic mantras (*trayīmantra*). The Vedic origin of the Mantrasiddhānta is described at PādS *cp* 21.2ff. Here we are told that a group of 8000 seers (*ṛṣi*), led by Aupagāyana and belonging to the Kāṇva and Mādhyandina recensions (i.e. of the Vājasaneya school) asked Brahmā for a means to liberation, and in response to this, Brahmā, “desiring to grant favours” (*anugrahakāmyayā*), initiated these seers into the Pañcarātra “by way of the Mantrasiddhānta” (PādS *cp* 21.7c-8).

Having been initiated into the *cakrāvārija manḍala* (also known as the *cakrābhja maṇḍala*), the *ṛṣis* are instructed to recite the Kāṇvī and Mādhyandanī recensions (*sākhā*), and to accompany the performance of Vedic rituals such as *somayāga* with visualisation on (*dhyāna*) and worship of the Lord (*bhagavat*) (PādS *cp* 21.10c-11b). The Mantrasiddhānta, “like the Veda”, teaches that performing the ritual as a duty (*kartavya*), in other words as something that is “without fruit”, leads to supreme bliss. We are told in the following verse that this (potentially) liberation-conferring ritual is “the worship of the Lord (*bhagavat*) according to the five times teaching” which is “to be performed either at home or in the temple”.

The author of the PādS then tells us that Mantrasiddhāntins are those who are born into the lineage (*vaṃśa*) of Bhagavat worshippers founded by these original Vājasaneyin seers, and that it is for this reason that they are called ‘Bhāgavatas’. Once these Bhāgavatas have themselves been properly initiated, they are also qualified to

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95 As Rastelli (2006: 224-225) shows, according to PārS 19.529-539 the Mantrasiddhāntins do not always worship god as a “single form”, they also worship him in his *vyūha* and *vibhava* forms. This is merely one example of conflicting (“internal”/“external”) descriptions across texts which belong to different Siddhāntas.

96 PādS *cp* 21.11c-12: *kartavyatvena vedoktaṁ iy evaṁ phalavārayitum // kartavyam iti kurvānaih karma niśreyasam param // prāpyate 'nena uṣmābhir mantrasiddhāntavartmanā // Cf. PauS 36.260c-261, wherein worshipping Viṣṇu “as a duty… [that is] without fruit” is associated, contrarily, with the Ekāyana Brahmīns (*vipra*).

97 PādS *cp* 21.13ac: *paṇcakālam yathāśāstraṁ [corr. yathāśāstra] grīhe vā mandire 'pi vā / bhagavatpūjanam kāryam… //*
perform the ritual worship of Viṣṇu in accordance with the “five times”. It is further stated (at cp 21.17c-21b) that only Bhāgavatas can perform worship for the sake of others (parārthhayajana), though this rule is then immediately revised to enable an initiated non-Bhāgavata to do so if commanded to by a Bhāgavata. It is notable that the author of this section of the PādS holds ‘Bhāgavatas’ in very high regard, and that in equating Bhāgavatas with Mantrasiddhāntins, he is equating them with Pāñcarātra Brahmins who also perform Vedic rites.

This account of the Mantrasiddhānta is followed by a description of the Āgamasiddhānta. We have been told previously (PādS jp 1.80cd, cp 19.116-117) that members of this Siddhānta favour worshipping the four forms (caturmārti) of god, namely the Vyūhas Vāsudeva and so on. The author of this section of the PādS clearly regards the Āgamasiddhānta as an inferior tradition, and its inferiority is conveyed by the fact that its members do not undergo initiation (dikṣā, see PādS cp 1.3-5b, 21.53), and are therefore not qualified to perform certain rites. These include the investiture of god’s icon with the sacred thread (pavitrāropana), and the rites relating to the construction of temples (karṣaṇādi) and the installation of divine images therein (pratiṣṭhā) (PādS cp 21.33-35b, 43-46). Tellingly, it is said that an Āgamasiddhāntin should ask a Brahmin who has been initiated into the Mantrasiddhānta to perform these latter rites. Unsurprisingly, as we will see below, Āgamasiddhāntins present a rather different picture, and claim that they are qualified to perform the rites relating to pavitrāropana and pratiṣṭhā.

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98 PādS cp 21.14-15: yāyam bhāgavatās tena jātā bhagavadarcanāt / bhagavadbhaktikaranād vamśa- jātāś caturmukha // nāmā bhāgavatāḥ santo dikṣayitvā yathāvidhī / yathoktaṁ karma kurvāṁ prāṇāvatīt paraṁ padam //. This understanding of the Bhāgavatas as belonging to a lineage that one is born into is also found in the Nārādyasaṃhitā at 11.24ab: bhagavadvamśajātāḥ ye te vai bhāgavatāḥ śmrtaḥ //.

99 This immediate revision possibly indicates that the second, more moderate “rule” was incorporated into the text at a later time.

100 See especially PādS cp 21.21c-22: bhagavan eva govinda sākṣād bhāgavatam smṛtaḥ // tam drṣṭvā vidyayā dhīnam api duśkrta-karīrnam / nirguṇam guṇinaṁ vāpi pratyuttiṣṭhyet kṛtānjaṁ //.

101 The PārS, which does not describe the initiation rite, also appears to confirm (at e.g. 9.187-190, 13.114c-115, 15.14c-20, 18.116-117) that Āgamasiddhāntins do not undergo dikṣā. This information is taken from Rastelli (2006: 193-195).

102 PādS cp 21.45: yāceta mantrasiddhānte dikṣitaṁ viprasattamam / pūjārtham ātmano bimbapratīṣṭhākaraṇādiṣu (corr. karanādiṣu) //.
Both passages that discuss the omission of *dīkṣā* refer to an ‘Ekāyana’; in the first instance to an *ekāyanam vedam* (PādS cp 1.3c), and in the second instance to an *ekāyanādhvan* (PādS cp 21.53d). This ‘Ekāyanaveda’ or “way of the Ekāyana” is the ritual teaching to which members of the Āgamasiddhānta adhere.\(^{103}\) However, despite the fact that his teaching bears the affix *veda*, according to the PādS (cp 21.37c-39b) the Pāncarātra ‘Ekāyana’ (this designation is shown to be synonymous with ‘Āgamasiddhāntin’ at PādS cp 21.47ab), in contrast to the Mantrasiddhāntin is not permitted to use Vedic mantras, and recites the *dvādasākṣara* mantra without the elements *bijā, śakti, anga, rṣi* and *chandas*.\(^{104}\) Further manifestly non-Vedic characteristics of this Siddhānta include the fact that its followers are not members of a Brahminical lineage (*gotra*, PādS cp 21.41ab), and that the “leading rite” or the “rite of guidance” (*nayakarman*) undertaken according to the *ekādhvan* is enjoined for all four *varṇas*, rather than only for the highest three (PādS cp 21.36c-37b). It is not clear what this *nayakarman* refers to, though it appears to be one of the life-cycle rites (*saṃskāra*) undertaken by Ekāyanas since it is mentioned in that context.\(^{105}\)

In spite of the clear deficiencies or limitations of the Ekāyana in the eyes of the more Veda-congruent Mantrasiddhāntin author of this section of the PādS, however, it is important to recognise that the followers of this “lesser” Siddhānta, and equally the followers of the other Siddhāntas, the Tantra and Tantrāntara, are accepted nonetheless as genuine Pāncarātrikas. The Tantrasiddhānta is described in the PādS as having several characteristics in common with the Āgamasiddhānta. For instance, it accepts members of all four social classes (PādS cp 21.55), and its adherents are said to have abandoned the Veda, and to perform the life-cycle rites (*saṃskāra*) in accordance with their own Tantra (PādS cp 21.56). Tantrasiddhāntins are said to

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\(^{103}\) PādS cp 21.36cd (→ BhT 24.19cd) refers to *ekādhvan* as the tradition according to which the *saṃskāras* are performed in the Āgamasiddhānta. It seems reasonable, in light of line 53cd referred to above, to take this as a synonym for *ekāyanādhvan*. At PādS cp 21.47ab it is stated: *ekāyanāś caturmūrtim pratidhiva samarcarēt*. – “The Ekāyana should worship having accepted the fourfold form”.

\(^{104}\) See the parallel verses at BhT 24.20, 26c-27b). As Hanneder (1997) and Rastelli (2006) have shown, these last two elements serve to make Tantric mantras seem more Vedic. The Mantrasiddhānta as presented in the PādS incorporate these elements, whereas the Āgamasiddhānta does not. Rastelli (2006: 208) writes, “Es paßt sehr gut zu der PādS, deren Anhänger sich selbst auf vedisch-orthodoxe Traditionen zurückführen und die ihr Ritual als visṇuitische Modifikation des vedisch-orthodoxen Rituals betrachten, daß sie die „vedischen“ und die „tantrischen“ Elemente eines Mantra lehrt.”

\(^{105}\) See the discussion of this verse in Rastelli (2006: 196-197).
worship nine forms of god (PādS cp 21.59-66). Members of the Tantrāntarasiddhānta, meanwhile, may also belong to any of the four social classes, and are said to worship images of god with three, four or more faces, surrounded by attendant deities (parivāra), and to perform the life-cycle rites in accordance with the Tantrāntara path (mārga) and the Veda (PādS cp 21.70-73b).

The four Siddhāntas, then, are accepted by the PādS as distinct branches of a single tradition. Consequently the many eulogies to the ‘Pañcarātra’ in general which are found throughout this work are not intended to honour merely the Mantrasiddhānta, rather they honour all four Siddhāntas together as the aggregate ‘Pañcarātra’. And, while, for instance, the Āgamasiddhāntin or Ekāyana is depicted as being prohibited from performing certain rites, he is nonetheless shown to perform the quintessentially Pañcarātrika rite of worshipping Viṣṇu in accordance with the five times (pañcakāla). Elsewhere in the PādS, we encounter the following emphatically inclusive statement:

\[
\text{sūriḥ suhṛd bhāgavataḥ sāttvataḥ pañcakālavīt // aikāntikas tanmayaś ca pañcarātrikā ity api / evamādibhir ākhyābhir ākhyeyah kamalāsana //} - “Sage, friend, Bhāgavata, Sāttvata, knower of the five times, Aikāntika, Tanmaya and also Pañcarātrika - [he] is called by names such as these, O Kamalāsana.” (PādS cp 2.87c-88)
\]

It is unlikely that the author of this verse is the same as the author of the descriptions of the Mantra and Āgama Siddhāntas summarised above, for there the designation ‘Bhāgavata’ clearly refers only to a follower of the Mantrasiddhānta, and not to Pañcarātrikas in general. The inclusivism conveyed in this verse may indicate its later composition for, as we will see below, such strategies are increasingly evident among the later scriptural works. This verse is of interest here because it includes the terms ‘Aikāntika’ and ‘Tanmaya’ as synonyms of ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pañcarātrika’. The term aikāntika is derived from the word ekānta which, along with its derivatives, is prominent in the Nārāyanīya and throughout much of the Pañcarātra scriptural

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\[106\] See PādS cp 21.34c-35b, and also the following verse 35c-36b: nirāśaiḥ karmasamnyāsakāribhir devapājanam // balādīmantrair acchidrapaṇcakālāparāyaṇaḥ //.

\[107\] Cf. Viśvāmitrasaṁhitā 9.89c-90: sa eva brāhmaṇo vidvān sa evāśrāminām varah // sa etair nāmabhīr vācyā ekānti pañcarātrikāḥ // sūrīr bhāgavataś caiva sāttvataḥ pañcakālīkaḥ //.
literature (see Matsubara 1994: 51-59). Scholars have long considered one such derivative, ekāntin, to mean something like “monotheist” in a Pāñcarātra context (e.g. ibid., and Gonda 1977) but, as we will see below, this term can also designate “one who has a single goal” viz. liberation. That the term aikāntika can similarly denote “liberation as the single goal” is indicated in the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā (5.22-23b), wherein the “Aikāntika path” (aikāntikaṃ mārgam) is said to lead to “the fruit” (phalam) of attaining to the Bhagavat (bhagavatprāpti). Although the PādS (cp 21.11c-12) claims that the way of the Mantrasiddhānta leads to “ultimate bliss” (niśśreyasam) and that its worship of god is “without [worldly] fruit” (phalavarjitam), the characteristic of having liberation as the only goal is far more commonly associated with the Āgamasiddhānta or Ekāyana tradition. This is attested to in the ĀP (170.3ff), the PādS (cp 21.35cd, 42), the PārS (10.145cd), the Hayasṛṣapañcarātra (HP) as quoted by Vedāntadesīka (PRR 8.5-8), and also the PRR (9.13-10.2) itself.

In other words, the reference to ‘Aikāntika’ in the passage quoted above (PādS cp 2.87c-88) very likely denotes a follower of the Ekāyana tradition. Moreover, we can assume that ‘Tanmaya’ is also used to denote a follower of this tradition, since elsewhere in the PādS’s Caryāpāda the Tanmayas are instructed to recite mantras belonging to the Ekāyana recension (śākhā), while the “most excellent knowers of mantras” recite from the four Vedas. The designation ‘Tanmaya’, meaning literally “[he who is] identical with that” or “[he who is] consisting of that”, is also used to refer to Ekāyanas in the SS (25.132) and the PauṣS (36.266b). In this passage of the PādS, then, as in Yāmuna’s ĀP, the Ekāyana is equated with the Brahmanical ‘Bhāgavata’. Similarly inclusivist tendencies are not infrequent in the PādS (and may belong, as I have suggested above, to later portions of the text). The tension between these passages and those more “sectarian” portions is resolved, in any case, through the presentation of a “fourfold” Pāñcarātra, conceived on the model of the Veda, in which all divisions and perceived hierarchies are ultimately transcended by the inclusive and uniquely Pāñcarātrika ritual act of Viṣṇu worship according to the “five times”.

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iv.) Conclusions

It will be useful, at this juncture, to tie together several summary conclusions from the foregoing. Firstly, the idea found in the PārS that three works, namely the SS, PauṣS and JS, are supreme among the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās is, in the context of the Pāñcarātra corpus in toto, a relatively late idea, probably no earlier than the twelfth century, and almost certainly originating in South India. The characterisation of these texts as the “three jewels” (ratnatraya) is later still, the earliest example being found in a work that is external to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, namely Vedāntadeśika’s PRR, composed in Śrīraṅgam during the first quarter of the fourteenth century. In addition, the absence in the earlier literature of the division of the Pāñcarātra tradition into four Siddhāntas\textsuperscript{109} suggests that this too is a relatively late innovation, and the earliest extant articulations of this theory succeed several other works which also recognise the existence of distinct groups within the Pāñcarātra.\textsuperscript{110} Among these we can list at least the Haravijaya, Bhaṭṭa Rāmakanṭha’s NPP, the SS, the SanS, the JS, a Vaikhānasa work called the Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa, and Yāmuna’s ĀP. The accounts of the different types of Vaiṣṇava or Pāñcarātriṇa contained in these texts are all markedly different from each other, but it is to be noted that none of them indicate that there was any sectarian animosity between these groups.

Yāmuna’s ĀP makes no reference to the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, and is certainly less “sectarian” in tone than sections of the PādS which I have addressed above. As Neevel (1977: 35-36) suggests, Yāmuna was very likely himself a member of a Pāñcarātra tradition that performed both Pāñcarātriṇa and Vedic rites. His inclusion of the followers of the Ekāyanaśākhā within the broad class of Bhāgavata Brahmins whom he is defending can possibly be explained by the fact that these Ekāyanas enjoyed a prominent position at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam.

\textsuperscript{109} This is based on the assumption that the passage dealing with the four Siddhāntas in the Hayagrīvasaṃhitā (or the Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra) that is quoted by Vedāntadeśika (PRR 8.5-8) was a late interpolation into that text.

\textsuperscript{110} The earliest extant “articulation” of the theory of four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas may well occur in the section of the PauṣS (38.295-39.39) which Smith (1975: 296) has identified as a late interpolation. Dating the inclusion of this section within the PauṣS is no easy task, but I am assuming that it came after Yāmuna’s composition of the ĀP on the basis that both events probably occurred in Śrīraṅgam, where the PauṣS was in use, and the ĀP makes no mention of the Siddhāntas.
at which Yāmuna was an ácārya.\textsuperscript{111} It is clear, at any rate, that Yāmuna did not oppose this tradition. He asserts that its members do not lose their Brahminical status through abandoning the dharma of the triple Veda and performing their own life-cycle rites (samśkāra),\textsuperscript{112} and we must assume that he accepted the “non-personal status” or “authorlessness” (apauruṣeyatvam) of the Ekāyanaśākhā, even if he did not, as some scholars have alleged, author the Kāśmirāgamantraprāmāṇya, in which this status is purportedly “treated at length.”\textsuperscript{113} We should also bear in mind that Yāmuna’s chief objective in the ĀP was not to provide a description of the distinguishable “groups” within the Pāṇcarātra, but to respond convincingly to a number of allegations cast against the orthopraxy of that tradition. By presenting the Pāṇcarātra as a homogeneous ritualistic tradition,\textsuperscript{114} and the designations ‘Bhāgavata’ and ‘Pāṇcarātra’ as synonymous, Yāmuna is thereby subsuming the least “orthoprax” Pāṇcarātrikas (i.e. the Ekāyanas) into the most orthoprax or Veda-congruent stream (the Vājasaneyins or Bhāgavatas) and, at least until the very end of the ĀP, presenting the latter group as representative of the Pāṇcarātra in general.

The objective of the author of the description of the Siddhāntas in the PādS is different. His delineation of the divisions within the Pāṇcarātra is accompanied by a warning against “mixing” (sāṅkaryasāṅkara) one Siddhānta with another.\textsuperscript{115} Rastelli (2006: 186-187) draws attention to the fact that the warnings against “mixing” Siddhāntas which are found in the 19th adhyāyas of both the PādS’s Caryaḍā and the PārS are contained within sections of these texts which deal primarily with the rites of reparation (prāyaścitta). Given that such rites are also prescribed, for instance, in the event of a tantrasāṅkarya i.e a “mixing” of systems, whether it be Vaikhānasa or Pāṣupata (PārS 19.520, 549), the term “sectarianism” does not seem too out of place in a discussion of the Pāṇcarātra Siddhāntas of this period. Indeed, the PādS (cp

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Rastelli (2006) has shown that the partially Ekāyana PauṣS was in use at this temple, and that the PārS, an Ekāyana work, was very probably composed here.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} ĀP 169.7-10: ye punaḥ sāvityaṇayaucanaprāapṛṛhitṛtyaśdharmentyōgena ekāyanaśrutivīhitān eva cattvāriṃśati saṃskārān kurvate te 'pi svasākṣāhgyaḥvyoktam arthaḥ yathāvad anutīṣṭhamānāh na sākāntarītyakarmānaunustiṣṭhānād brāhmaṇyāt prayavatan.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Yāmuna gives no clear indication in the ĀP that he authored this work. See ĀP 170.7-9: yathā ca ekāyanaśākhāyā apauruṣeyatvam tathā kāśmirāgamantraprāmāṇya eva prapañcit iti.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} See, for example, Yāmuna’s claim (at ĀP 115.8-116.1) that “ Mutual conflict between the [Pāṇcarātra] Tantras... does not exist” (parasparam pratiṣedhā tu... tantraprāmāṇaṁ nāṣy eva).
  \item \textsuperscript{115} See especially PādS jp 1.84-85, cp 19.123ff, and also cp 21.73ff.
\end{itemize}
19.125cff) explicitly states the equivalence between a *siddhāntasaṅkara* and a *tantrasaṅkara*.

However, as we have seen, the warning against the mixing of Siddhāntas (intended presumably solely for the benefit of Pāñcarātrika adepts), and the descriptions of the divisions themselves, are presented in the PādS as we now possess it alongside a number of passages (intended perhaps for the Pāñcarātra’s opponents as well), in which these divisions are transcended, and in which the Pāñcarātra is shown to be a single, homogeneous tradition in a manner comparable to the “tradition” of the Veda. Of course, this depiction of a unified tradition with distinct branches is able to account for internal inconsistencies in the scriptural literature. The depiction of unity is aided in the PādS, as it is in several later Saṃhitās, via the presentation of a “Pāñcarātra canon”, and it is this theme, alongside that of the classification of a hierarchy of scriptures, to which I turn next.
3. The Formation of the Pāñcarātra Canon

i.) Classifications of scripture in the Pārameśvarasamhita and the Pādmasamhitā

In this chapter I address the textual evidence which points to the formation of the Pāñcarātra canon as being the outcome of the decline of the sectarian culture I have referred to above. In this first part, I compare the Pārameśvarasamhita’s (PārS) relatively early attempt to establish a scriptural canon with the substantially different approach to canon-formation that is found in the PādS.

As we have seen in Chapter One, both the PārS and the Īśvarasamhita (ĪS) employ a classificatory scheme in which the Pāñcarātra scriptures are divided into three groups, namely the celestial teachings (divyaśāstra), the teachings of sages (munibhāṣīṣṭāśastra), and the teachings of men (pauruṣaśastra). An earlier formulation of this scheme can be found in the Sātvatasamhita (SS):

\[
tatra vai trividham vākyam divyaṃ ca munibhāṣitam / pauruṣaṃ cāravindākṣa
tadbhedam avadhāraya / yad arthādhyan asandigdham svaccham alpākṣaram
sthiram / tat pārameśvaram vākyam ājñāsiddham ca mokṣadham / praśaṃsakaṃ vai siddhānīṃ sampravartakam apy atha / sarveśam raṇjakam
gūḍhāṃ niścayikaraṇaṅkṣamam / munivākyam tu tad viddhi
caturvargaphalapradam / anarṣakharam asambhaddham alpārthaṃ
sādālaṁbaram / anirvāhakam ādyoker vākyam tat pauruṣaṃ sṛṣṭam / heyaṃ
cānarthasiddhānīṃ ākāraṃ naraṅkāvaham / prasiddhārthaṅuvādāṃ yat samgatārthaṃ vilākaṇam / api cet pauruṣaṃ vākyam grahyam tan
munivākyavat / evam ādeyavākyotthā āgamo yo mahāmate / sanmārgadarśaṅkāṃ kṛṣṇaṃ vidhīvadāṃ ca viddhi tan tāṃ /.
\]

—“There [i.e. in this system], there are three types of statement: [those which are] celestial, [those] spoken by sages, and [those with a] human origin, O Lotus-eyed one! Listen to the differences [between them]. That which is assuredly rich in significance (arthādhyaṃ), which is clear, succinct, and reliable, that is a statement of the highest Lord, which has attained [the status of] a command, and which bestows

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116 It is worth pointing out the similarity of this scheme with that of the threefold “stream” or “flow” (oghā) of gurus that is named in such Śaiva Kaula works as the Ciścinmataśarasamuccaya, the Kulārṇavatana, and in Maheśvarananda’s Mahārathaśārjāparimāla as the “celestial stream” (divyaugha), the “perfected stream” (siddhaugha) and the “human stream” (māṇavaugha). On the evidence of the relatively late composition of each of these works, it would appear that this Śaiva scheme postdates the threefold classification of texts found in the Pāñcarātra.
liberation. [That which] praises, as well as bestows, supernatural powers, which pleases everyone, which is esoteric (or “secretive”, gūḍham) [but is nonetheless] capable of evoking certainty (niścayiṇaṁ śaśaktam), know that as a statement of the sages, which grants the group of four [i.e. the puruṣārthas] as its fruit. [That which is] meaningless, incoherent, has little purpose, is verbose, and which does not follow (literally “is non-accomplishing of”, anirvāhakam) the original [i.e. celestial] proclamation, that statement is known as [being of] human [origin]. [Such statements amount to] the accumulation of worthless powers, and are to be avoided [as they lead to hell. [However], that which repeats well known axioms (artha), agrees in meaning [with the celestial statements], [and] has different attributes [to the aforementioned human statements], even if it is a human statement, is understood as being like a statement made by sages (munivākyavat). Thus, O wise one, know that scripture (āgama), which originates from statements which are appropriated [in this way], is an entire proclamation of law which reveals the correct path.” (SS 22.52c-59b)

In this context the designation “celestial” (divyam) indicates that the text is, quite literally, the “utterance” (or “statement”, vākyam) of God. The PārS informs us that the celestial teachings are “spoken” by Vāsudeva and then “circulated” by “[lesser gods] headed by Brahmā, Rudra and Indra”. The same verses are contained in the ĪŚ (1.54-55), and they are also alluded to in the Pāñcarātakṣa (PRR 39.8ff), wherein Vedāntadeśika affirms that divyam means “directly established by God” (sākṣād bhagavatpranītaḥ). In the PārS (10.339c-345b) and the ĪŚ (1.57c-63b), the second group of scriptures (munibhāśitasāstra) is divided into sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa works. This classification of texts according to the Śāṃkhyan theory of the three “strands” or dynamic tendencies (guṇa) inherent within the ground of materiality (prakṛti), is a strategy which is also encountered in the self-classification of certain Purāṇas. According to the PārS (10.338-340b) and the ĪŚ (1.56-58b), although sāttvika texts are communicated by lesser gods and sages, they are estabished in accordance with the content (arthajāla) that is learnt directly from Viśu (Puṇḍarīkākṣa). Vedāntadeśika reiterates that this category of teaching is founded on the “bare narrative” that is heard directly from God. The PārS (10.340c-344) teaches that a rājasa text is either partially based on this transmitted knowledge and

117 PārS 10.336-337: vāsudevena yat proktaṁ śāstraṁ bhagavatā svayam | anuṣṭupchandobandhena samāsavasavahedataṁ // tathaiva brahmrudrendrapramukhaṁ ca pravartitem | lokesv api ca divyesu tad divyam viddhi sattama //.
118 See for example Matsyapurāṇa 53.68-69 and Pādmapurāṇa 5.263.81-84 (information from Rocher 1986: 20).
119 PRR 39.13-14: sākṣād bhagavataḥ śrutārthamātrānibhandhanarūpaṁ śāstraṁ sāttvikam.
partially on the author's own understanding (svabuddhi), or it is a summary (śaṅkṣepa) of God’s teaching “by Brahmā etc.” (brahmaḥdibhiḥ), or it is a summary, written by sages, of God’s teaching as learnt from Brahmā etc. (brahmaḥdibhyāḥ). There are two distinct types of rājasa text, namely Pañcarātra and Vaikhānasa (see also ĪS 1.58c-62). A tāmasa text constitutes the thoughts (svavikalpa) of the sages alone (PārS 10.345ab, ĪS 1.63ab), while a pauruṣaśāstra is the creation of an ordinary person (manuja, PārS 10.345cd, ĪS 1.63cd).

Although the threefold (divya, munibhāṣita, pauruṣa) classification is already present in the SS, the PārS is, as far as I am aware, the only published Pañcarātra text which grades specific scriptures according to this hierarchy. As outlined above, the SS, Pauṣ Ś and JS are the “celestial” scriptures. Among those that are “spoken by sages”, the PārS counts itself alongside the Īśvarasamhitā,120 the Bharadvājasamhitā, the Saumantavī, the Vaihāyasamhitā, “the teaching that originated with the Citraśikhaṇḍins” (named by Vedāntadeśika as the Citraśikhaṇḍisamhitā at PRR 40.4), and the Jayottara as sāttvika texts.121 The Sanatkumāra, Padmodbhava, Satyā, Tejodraviṇa and Māyāvaibhavika are named as rājasa texts,122 and the Pañcapraśna, Śukapraśna and Tattvasāgarasamhitā as tāmasa texts.123 The “teachings of men” (pauruṣaśāstra) are not named. Meanwhile, it is said that a “mixing together” (sānkaryam) of these scriptures should be avoided (PārS 10.385cd, ĪS 23.33cd).

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120 As Smith (1975: 66) has pointed out, there is more than one Pañcarātra text with this name. The Īśvarasamhitā listed here is very unlikely to be the extant, published ĪS.

121 Rastelli (2006: 111) offers a variant reading of this passage, wherein the Īśvarasamhitā, Bharadvājasamhitā and Saumantavī are included as divya alongside the SS, Pauṣ Ś and JS, and the PārS is not included at all: “Höre: Sātvata, Pauṣkara und Jayākhya, (376cd) solchartige Śāstras sind göttlich (divya). Auch die Īśvarasamhitā, die Bharadvājasamhitā, (377) und die Saumantavī werden „vom höchsten Herrscher stammend“ (pārmeśvara) genannt.” My own reading is in agreement with that of Vedāntadeśika in his PRR (40.3-7): … sāttvatapauskarajayākhyādīni sātrāṇi divyāni ēśvarabhāravājasautantavapaśvaramśvaramahāyānasacitraśikhaṇḍisamhitājyottarādīni sāttvikāni sanatkumārapadmodbhavāśāñkānātejodraviṇamāyāvaibhavikādīni rājasāni pañcapraśna-śūkapraśnatauttvāsagārādīni tāmasāni…

122 It is worth pointing out that the first two of these rājasa texts are among the “five jewels” enumerated at the end of the Pād Ś (cp 33.204-205b) and discussed above.

What can this hierarchy of texts tell us about the attitude towards scriptural authority in the Pārśa? To what extent does this categorisation conform to the way in which the Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās are classified and enumerated in other Pāñcarātra works? To be sure, the threefold hierarchical scheme is borrowed from the SS, and was later incorporated from the Pārśa into the Īśa, but it is not found, as far as I am aware, in any other Pāñcarātra text. That the Pārśa grades specific scriptures according to this hierarchy is a significant development from the SS, which gives no obvious indication that it ranks itself among the “celestial” category. In a similar vein, the Pārśa’s characterisation of the JS is not derived from that work’s own self-description, for the present version of the JS, at least, contains a presentation of its own transmission which does not conform to the idea that it represents the direct revelation of God.124

As in the SS, the classificatory scheme in the Pārśa ostensibly grades a textual statement (vākya) according to the identity of its author, but this neat structure is then set aside with the allowance that a human statement can gain the status of one that is “spoken by sages” providing that its content conforms to that of the celestial statements.125 This allowance reveals two key features of this system of classification. Firstly, it is clear that we are not dealing here with either a “complete” or a “closed” canon of works, since it is admitted that the munibhāṣita category is open to additions.126 The “incompleteness” of the list of scriptures in the Pārśa is further

124 The opening paṭala of the JS begins with the sage Saṁvartaka approaching his father Aurva and asking him to tell of the means by which rebirth in saṁsāra can be avoided. In response, Aurva recites to Saṁvartaka a conversation between Nārada and God as he himself has heard it from Śaṇḍilya. However, Śaṇḍilya’s account of God’s teaching, learnt by Śaṇḍilya directly from Nārada, and repeated by Aurva to form the content of the Saṁhitā as we now possess it, is not a verbatim repetition of God’s utterances, but is rather an “abridgement” (saṁskiptam, JS 1.50a) of the same, in which only the “essence” (sārabhūtam) is selected for retelling (JS 1.74cd). Insofar as this abridgement has been performed by Śaṇḍilya himself, the dialogue between Nārada and God which begins at JS 2.31 and continues thereafter cannot be said to have been directly revealed by God. Indeed, according to its self-description as summarised here, the JS would fit better into the Pārśa’s category of munibhāṣita teachings of the rājaśa type.

125 Pārśa 10.373-374b: sātvikādikramāt teṣu saubhāvyahyā mahāmāte / prasiddhārthān upādāya saṅgaṭārthām vilakaṣanām // api cet pauruṣam vākyam tan munitvākyavat /. See also SS 22.57c-58b, on which this is based.

126 In this respect the delineation of the Pāñcarātra canon in the Pārśa does not conform to the somewhat limited definition of “canon” advanced by Jonathan Z. Smith in his influential essay Sacred Persistance: Towards a Redescription of Canon. Smith (1982: 48, 52) argues that “the element of
conveyed, as Rastelli (2006: 127) has pointed out, by the appendage of the terms “and so on, and so forth” (evamādīṇi, ityādīṇi) to the names of the Saṃhitās at each level of the hierarchy. This is the case even with the divyaśāstras, suggesting the belief that this category may also be added to at a future time. It is also demonstrated by the fact that no Vaikhānasas are named in the list of rājasas texts, despite the earlier claim that this category includes such works.

The second notable characteristic of this scheme which is highlighted by the admission that new texts can be included at the munibhāṣita level is that the divya texts are unambiguously posited as the standard by which all other texts must be measured. To acquire any sort of authority, a text which is not directly revealed by God must conform as closely as possible to the divyaśāstras, and if it in any way contradicts (virodhī) these, it should be rejected.127 This premise mirrors to some extent the vedamūlatva principle as articulated in the Pūrvaśāstras school and subsequently adopted by several South Indian Vedāntin thinkers.128 I shall comment further on the role of the vedamūlatva principle in the textual history of the Pāñcarātra in the following chapter.

The author of the PārŚ accentuates the hierarchical structure of the canon by imposing an additional hierarchy (in the form of sāttvika, rājasā and tāmasā) onto the level of the munibhāṣitasāstra. This strategy, an innovation from what is found in the SS, multiplies the number of levels which exist beneath the celestial teachings, the effect of which is that the authority of the latter is enhanced. The authority of the divyaśāstras is also seemingly emphasised in the PārŚ’s scheme via the author’s omitting the SS’s claim that the munibhāṣitasāstras grant the puruṣārthas as their fruit (phala) (SS 22.55cd). By omitting this verse, as Rastelli (2006: 109-110) has

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128 The similarity between the hierarchical system of the SS and the PārŚ and the vedamūlatva principle is also conveyed by Vedāntadeśīka, in his comments on SS 22.52c-58b. Vedāntadeśīka’s exegesis, which is later quoted approvingly by Alaśingabhaṭṭa in his STBh (522.4-6), is undoubtedly less restrictive than the PārŚ in its willingness to place the munibhāṣita statements alongside the divya, but the Mīmāṃsaka terminology is familiar: atra anirvāhakam ādyokeṭḥ iti divyamunibhāṣitayoh viruddhārthatvam ucyate (PRR 29.16-17).
observed, the author removes any reference to the *munibhāṣitaśāstras*’ capacity to confer *mokṣa*. In the PārS’s scheme the ability to confer *mokṣa* is expressly linked only with the *divyaśāstras* (see PārS 10.357ab). Can we infer from this that the *munibhāṣita* texts are being presented here as soteriologically ineffective, as the Vedas are presented in the PārS’s opening *adhyāya*? Quite possibly, although such an inference is not unproblematic, especially if we have concluded, contra Rastelli, that the PārS counts itself among this group of texts, albeit as belonging to the superior (i.e. *sāttvika*) class.129 Whilst the *rājasa* texts certainly appear to be restricted to the granting of supernatural powers (*siddhi*),130 the capacity of the *sāttvika* texts is not explicitly stated here, and so their status with regard to this matter remains unclear.

However, if we limit our efforts, as seems advisable in this instance, to attempting to understand in more general terms the significance of this classificatory scheme, several key features appear indubitable. Firstly, the *divyaśāstras* are to be regarded as being substantially different from all texts beneath them. While it is possible for new works to be *munivākyavat*, there is no such concept as *divyavākyavat*. The closest another text can come to the celestial teachings is to conform in its entirety with those direct utterances of God,131 and even then the capacity to grant *mokṣa* remains, *in this presentation*, exclusively associated with the celestial teachings. Secondly, the author of the PārS imposes a more limited capacity onto the *munibhāṣitaśāstras* than is present in the SS’s scheme. This is achieved not only by omitting the reference to the *puruṣārthas*, but also by the imposition of an internal hierarchy, so that, for instance, this level of text now incorporates works of the Vaikhānasa tradition, as well as (*tāmasa*) works which have no direct relation to god’s teaching.

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129 The author of this section of the PārS certainly doesn’t indicate that the PārS should be considered as *divyaśāstra*, and bearing in mind that large sections of this text are incorporated from the SS, PauṣS and JS, it does seem reasonable to view the PārS as conforming to its own description of the *sāttvika* type of *munibhāṣitaśāstra*.

130 The description of the *rājasa* category at PārS 10.361-367b begins: “[That which] praises, as well as bestows, supernatural powers…” (*prasāṃsakaṃ yat siddhīnāṃ sampravartakam apy atha*). This line is incorporated from SS 22.54cd, where it is applied to the *munivākyā* level in general.

131 Elsewhere the PārS presents itself as strictly conforming to the celestial teachings, though it does not make this claim in the passage under review.
The restrictive, exclusivist approach of the PārS becomes more evident when it is compared to the delineation of the Pānçcarātra canon that is contained in the PādS. As in the PārS, the ‘Pañcarātra’ teaching (śāstra) is presented in the PādS as being superior to the Vedas, which are depicted as being unable to lead one to liberation. Thus, in the PādS’s opening chapter (jp 1.92d-93b) we read that “the tree which possesses the Kalpasūtras [among its branches] delivers everything that is desired to those who desire, except for liberation” (kalpakadrumaḥ // arthibhyo vāñchitam sarvaṃ prayacchati gatiṃ vinā).

In contrast to the PārS, however, the author of this section of the PādS incorporates the claim relating to the puruṣārthas that is contained in the SS, and applies it to the Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition in general. Comparing the ‘Pañcarātra’ to the “tree which possesses the Kalpasūtras [among its branches]”, in other words the “Veda-tree”, we are told that “the teaching called Pañcarātra grants the group of four [i.e. the puruṣārthas] as its fruit” (pañcarātrakhyasāstraṃ tu caturvargaphalapradam, PādS jp 1.93cd).

Shortly before enumerating 108 Pāñcarātra scriptures, the PādS’s narrator Saṃvarta declares that “Nārāyaṇa himself is the proclaimer of all the Tantras” (tantrāṇāṃ caiva sarvesāṃ vaktā nārāyaṇāḥ svayam, PādS jp 1.88cd). This claim is also found in other South Indian Saṃhitās which contain extensive lists of Pāñcarātra works, such as the Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā (ViśS) and the Bhāradvājasaṃhitā. Such claims, of course, openly contradict the PārS’s assertion that only the three celestial scriptures are directly revealed by God. According to this section of the PādS, then, there is no hierarchy among the Pāñcarātra teachings, since all are revealed by God, and all grant the puruṣārthas. The much more inclusive nature of this portion of the PādS is perhaps best exemplified by the declaration, in the final verse of the PādS’s opening adhyāya, that “a person who regularly recites aloud the names of the Tantras

132 See also PādS jp 1.2-3b, where the seers (ṛṣi) complain to Kaṇva that they have studied the Vedas together with their auxiliary parts (sāṅgopāṅga), but that this has not led them to liberation (kaivalya).
133 See for example ViśS 2.14-15, where it stated that the Tantras are “heard from the mouth of Nārāyaṇa” (nārāyaṇamukhāc chrutvā, 14a), and ViśS 4.1ab: bhagavatparam ity uktām tantraṃ etat tvāyā guro ṣ; and the Bhāradvājasaṃhitā, which is not available to me, but is reported by Smith (1975: 321) to contain the claim (at 1.1-8a) that “the Pāñcarātra system… came directly from the mouth of Viṣṇu.”
is liberated from all evil, and attains eternal brahman.”¹³⁴ The Viś (2.33cd) contains a very similar claim: “One who knows these names of the Tantras is entitled to liberation” (etāni tantranāmāṇi yo jānāti sa muktibhāk).

What can the contrast between the two types of canonical classification found in the Pārś and the PādŚ teach us about the contexts from which these works emerged? Should the exclusivist attitude conveyed in the PārŚ be interpreted simply as being indicative of the Āgamasiddhāntins, who followed their own ritual system and claimed exclusive allegiance to the “original Veda”, in contrast to the Mantrasiddhāntins who performed both Pāñcarātrika and Vedic rites, and claimed that their texts were based on the Veda?¹³⁵ In other words, were such attitudes somehow “intrinsic” to these traditions’ self-understanding, or might they also reflect their respective historical circumstances? To be sure, it seems very probable that the canonical list of scriptures found in the PārŚ predates the PādŚ’s much more extensive list. But might geography, as well as chronology, have been a determining factor here? In other words, could the environments in which these texts were produced, Śrīraṅgam in the case of the PārŚ and Kāñcipuram in the case of the PādŚ, have been in any way relevant to the development of these contrasting ways of thinking about the Pāñcarātra scriptures?

Much has been written on the “cosmopolitanism” and “religious pluralism” of Kāñcī during the medieval period (e.g. Mumme 1988, Hopkins 2001). The former Pallava capital remained an important mercantile centre throughout the era of Cōḷa rule, and thereafter it continued to host, as it had for several centuries, diverse religious communities. Although by the time of the twelfth century the once substantial Buddhist presence appears to have considerably diminished (Monius 2001), significant Jain and Vaiṣṇava communities remained, even while they struggled to compete with Śaiva groups for social dominance and Cōḷa patronage (Champakalakshmi 1996). In addition, a number of separate, powerful Brahmical communities surrounded the city (Heitzman 2001), a consequence of royally instituted

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¹³⁴ PādŚ jp 1.116: tantrāṇāṁ nāmādheyaṁ yo nityāṁ paṭhate narah / sarvapāpavinirmukto yāti brahma sanātanam //.
¹³⁵ I undertake a fuller discussion of this last point below.
land grants (*brahmadeya*), while communities associated with competing philosophical traditions purportedly existed side by side in Kāñcī itself.\(^{136}\)

In comparison, Śrīraṅgam was a much smaller town with a decidedly less cosmopolitan atmosphere. The historian R. Champakalakshmi (1987: 99) describes Kāñcī as a “multi-temple centre” and contrasts it with Śrīraṅgam, an example of a “sacred centre which originated and evolved around a single cult centre”. Although the power and political influence of the ruling, Śaiva-oriented Cōḷas should not be underestimated,\(^{137}\) Śrīraṅgam was an overwhelmingly Vaiṣṇava town, dominated by the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple, a Vaiṣṇava equivalent in this respect to the Śaiva town of Cidambaram (ibid.). The main competition that the Pāñcarātra faced here was from the Vaikhānasa tradition. Hari Rao (1976) discusses how the *Kōyiloḷuku*, the Śrīraṅgam temple chronicle, describes in great detail the substitution, by Rāmānuja, of a Vaikhānasa-based system of temple-worship for one based on the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. However, this did not signal the end of this competitive rivalry, since from 1223-1225 CE, Śrīraṅgam was occupied by the Oḍḍas, the army of the Eastern Gaṅga King Anaṅgbhīma III, who reinstated Vaikhānasa ritual practices throughout the short period of their occupation (Spencer 1978: 18).

Bearing in mind that Rastelli assigns the composition of the PārS to a period subsequent to the career of Rāmānuja, and that she favours a date prior to the social and political upheavals which affected Śrīraṅgam during the thirteenth century, we might tentatively suppose that the PārS was partially, or even wholly, composed between these two events, in other words c. 1175-1223 CE. The fact that the Oḍḍas could reinstate a Vaikhānasa system of worship at least half a century after Rāmānuja’s own liturgical “reformation” suggests that this other Vaiṣṇava tradition must have maintained a relatively strong presence in Śrīraṅgam throughout this period. This may help to explain why the author of the section of the PārS addressed

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\(^{136}\) Both Mumme (1988: 8) and Hopkins (2001: 36) refer to the presence in Kāñcī, during Vedāntadesāka’s time, of *mathas* associated with Vedānta, Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā.

\(^{137}\) Heitzman (1997: 14) writes of the period: “There is little indication that religious institutions in receipt of gifts set themselves up as separate political or military powers; instead, religious institutions and brāhmaṇas remained everywhere dependent on a secular arm which took care of these activities.”
above felt the need to incorporate the Vaikhānasara tradition, at a lower level, within his own - an example of Paul Hacker’s (e.g. 1995) conception of Inklusivimus.¹³⁸

Employing a similar technique, the PādS (jp 1.47abc) asserts in its opening adhyāya that “There are six kinds of mutually contradictory Tantras which have you as their deity, O Śaṅkara” (satprakārāṇi tantrāṇi tvad daivatyāṇi śaṅkara / parasparaviruddhāṇi). At PādS jp 1.50-53, these six Tantras are shown to be Śaṅkhya, Yoga, Buddhism, Jainism, the Pāñcarātra and the Śaiva teachings (the latter being subdivided into Kāpāla, Śuddhaśaiva, and Pāṣupata). Each of these are said to be “established on earth” by the Bhagavat (PādS jp 1.48cd),¹³⁹ and the “unchecked” or “uncontrolled” emergence of the “other five” teachings is said to proceed “by Viṣṇu’s māyā” (vaiṣṇavyā māyayā loke praracanti nirānkuśāḥ, PādS jp 1.57ab). The very name ‘Pāñcarātra’ is explained on the basis of these other five teachings: “The five (pañca) other great teachings are like night (or ‘darkness’, rātrī) in the presence of that [i.e. Pāñcarātra]: [so] it comes forth into the world with that name.”¹⁴⁰

It is highly unlikely that religio-philosophical systems called ‘Śaṅkhya’ and ‘Yoga’ represented a significant challenge to the Pāñcarātra in twelfth and thirteenth century Kāṇḍīpuram. Rather, this list of teachings is much more likely to be a convenient shorthand for all of the religious paths alternative to the Pāñcarātra, with Śaṅkhya and Yoga retaining their older connotations of, respectively, knowledge-based and “action”-based soteriologies. Where the PārS incorporates the Vaikhānasara tradition within itself, then, the PādS appears to include and subordinate all religious traditions. I will discuss this strategy further in Chapter Six, in particular reference to the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā. Here it will suffice to ask: might such a religiously plural environment as Kāṇḍī encourage an inclusive attitude towards the scriptures of one’s

¹³⁸ See also Halbfass’ (1995) Introduction. Elsewhere, at PārS 19.549 (→ IS 21.586), the Vaikhānasara system (tantra) is explicitly denounced, alongsidewhat the of the “Śaiva Pāṣupatas”, as being contrary (viruddha) to the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas.

¹³⁹ Among these, the Buddhist and Jain teachings are attributed to the Bhagavat himself, who is “skillful in the concealment of knowledge” (jñānapahannavanieśaṁ), and who “assumes the form” (mūrtim samāsthāya) of these traditions’ teachers for his own purposes (PādS jp 1.51-52b).

¹⁴⁰ PādS jp 1.72: pañcaratāni sastrāṇi rātrī yan te mahānty api / tattannidhau samākhyaśau tena loke pravartate // Cf. ViśS 2.6: sāmkhya-yogādayaḥ pañca rātrāyante sya samānvidhau / tasmād vā pañcarārādhah procyate stārisamattaiḥ // – “The five [teachings] Śaṅkhya, Yoga etc. are eclipsed (rātrāyante) in the presence of this. Thus, the meaning of ‘Pañcarātra’ is explained by the best of sages.” Cf. also PauS 38.307c-308, wherein the “five nights” (pañcarātram) are Purāṇa, Veda, Vedānta, Śaṅkhya and Yoga.
own tradition? Certainly, the competition for the control of temples that the Pāñcarātra faced in Kāñcī would have been more formidable than in “single-cult centres” such as Śrīraṅgam and Melkote, the town in present day Karnataka with which the ĪS has been associated for much of its history. Such a competitive environment is hardly likely to inspire a restrictive or delimiting approach to what could reasonably be claimed as one’s own scriptural corpus. As Yāmuna demonstrates in his ĀP, a unified and coherent, albeit internally diverse “system” is better equipped to counter opposition than an assemblage of distinct groups or texts. And if the question is turned around the other way, perhaps the Āgamasiddhāntins in places such as Śrīraṅgam and Melkote had less reason to persuade outsiders of the magnitude of their own scriptural corpus, or of the essential unity of the broader tradition to which they belonged. Since these Āgamasiddhāntins had already explicitly rejected the Veda, there were presumably fewer outsiders who would consider accepting them anyway.141

The contrasts between Kāñcī and Śrīraṅgam which I have advanced here as being possibly relevant to differing methodological approaches towards Pāñcarātra canon-formation should not be taken too far, lest it be forgotten that both towns had close connections with each other throughout the medieval period and that, in addition to the Āgamasiddhāntins, Śrīraṅgam was also home to such influential figures as Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Vedāntadeśika, all of whom evince in their work, albeit in different ways, the kind of “inclusive” or “cosmopolitan” attitudes that I have been associating here with Kāñcī. Moreover, an explanatory model based purely on a sort of “geographical determinism” is, in this instance, almost certainly unsuitable. However, it should nonetheless be noted that Āgamasiddhāntins do appear to have congregated in smaller single-cult centres, while works such as the PādS and the Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ, whose authors alligned themselves with the Vedic tradition, and adopted a more inclusive approach to the Pāñcarātra scriptures, were products of a more cosmopolitan religious environment, in this case the multi-temple town of Kāñcī.

141 However, it should be noted that there were, according to the PādS, followers of the Vedas who joined the Ekāyana. PādS cp 21.54ab (→ BhT 24.26ab) reads: ekāyane praviṣṭānāṃ traividyānām ayaṃ kramaḥ l.
What can the classificatory innovations in such texts as the PādS and the PārS tell us about the Pāñcarātra traditions in South India? To what degree were these “canonical” schemes describing well-established exegetical principles and Pāñcarātrika identities, and to what degree were such systems modelled on the texts themselves? With regard to the four Siddhāntas the second question is very difficult to answer, though the Vaikhānasa literature, which contains various taxonomies of Pāñcarātra groups, may provide a clue that this system of classification did not long precede its earliest descriptions in the Pāñcarātra literature. For the earliest probable Vaikhānasa reference to the ‘Siddhānta’ system of classification occurs only in the Ānandasamhitā, which is among the latest of the Vaikhānasa “medieval corpus”. With regard to the organisation and classification of the Pāñcarātra scriptures, these processes are not yet evident in the earliest Pāñcarātra works, and the textual evidence suggests that they did not begin to gain importance until about the twelfth century, some time after Yāmuna’s composition of the ĀP. This is suggested by the fact that those works which classify and enumerate the Saṃhitās, such as the PādS and the PārS, do so as part of an overall attempt, that is absent in the earlier scriptures, to provide scriptural authority for a Pāñcarātra system of temple-worship. Although his modus operandi and his intended audience are clearly different, this is also one of Yāmuna’s main objectives in the ĀP. However, despite the fact that he names and quotes several Saṃhitās, Yāmuna does not refer to any scriptural system of text-classification, or to any “canonical” list, and this indicates that such strategies were indeed not yet “well-established” within the Pāñcarātra context.

142 See Colas (1990: 27), who reports that the Ānandasamhitā (8.23-24) describes the siddhānta of the avāntarasvāspaṇas (the Pāñcarātrikas) as “fourfold”, though it does not name the subdivisions.

143 However, as we will see below, a work external to the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, namely the Śaiva Śrīkaṇṭhit or Śrīkaṇṭhiyaśaṃhitā, contains what may be a pre-Yāmuna “canonical” list of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās.

144 In other words, the cataloguing of scriptures constitutes an attempt to distinguish those works prescribing rites for temple-worship which have scriptural authority from those which do not.
To reiterate, there was no single classificatory method employed by the Pāṅcarātra Saṃhitās, and so any discussion of a Pāṅcarātra “canon” needs to be prefaced with the caveat that what was “canonical” for one Pāṅcarātra tradition, for instance the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS, was, as we have seen above, not necessarily canonical for another.\footnote{145} Here it is worth recalling Michael Witzel’s (1997: 259-260) remarks on the development of the Vedic canon:

\begin{quote}
[O]riginally there was no canon of Vedic texts, no Vedic “Scripture”, but only a canon of texts accepted by each school… This means: all school texts taken together form the Vedic canon. It does not mean that all of these texts were accepted by all Brahmīns. A working definition, thus, may be: the Vedic canon consists of the sum of all those texts in Vedic Sanskrit that originated in and were used by the various Vedic schools (sākhās).
\end{quote}

While it is highly probable that the fourfold ‘Siddhānta’ system of classification within the Pāṅcarātra was a South Indian innovation which based itself upon the Vedic precedent, and which might be usefully interpreted therefore as presenting an ideal model rather than a purely descriptive account,\footnote{146} it is nonetheless evident that there were real divisions among Pāṅcarātrikas, that these divisions are likely to have preceeded the extant Pāṅcarātra scriptural literature,\footnote{147} and that, to paraphrase Witzel, not all Pāṅcarātra scriptures were “originally” considered “canonical” by all Pāṅcarātra groups. This is nowhere more evident than with regard to the “three jewels”.

\footnote{145} It also needs to be emphasised, when speaking of traditions within the Pāṅcarātra, that many of the texts at our disposal do not “belong” to one Siddhānta or another, but rather are composite entities which often appear to have undergone redactions, for example, by both Āgamasiddhāntins and Mantrasiddhāntins (or their “Veda-congruent” equivalents). An obvious example of this is the PauṣS, though the ĪŚ and the PādS also betray the influence of both Siddhāntas.

\footnote{146} To characterise the Siddhānta system of classification as in some sense normative (as opposed to “purely descriptive”) is not to deny that Pāṅcarātra groups may have been arranged according to this model during certain periods, at least in the eyes of some Pāṅcarātrikas. The delineations of the four Siddhāntas found in both the PādS and the PārS are certainly presented as “descriptive” accounts, and for instance the PādS, PārS and BhT all prescribe reparation rites (prāyaścitta) for those who have “mixed” ritual practices from different Siddhāntas. Elsewhere in the PādS (kp 24.6b), meanwhile, one of the essential characteristics of the ideal ācārya is said to be siddhāntabhедavid.

\footnote{147} As we have seen above, Rājnāka Ratnākara refers to distinct Pāṅcarātra groups in his Haravijaya, written in c. 830 CE. Śaṅkara also appears to recognise distinctions among groups which perform worship at the “five times” and which venerate the four Vyūha forms of god.
As we have seen, three of the four Pāñcarātra scriptures which claim the superiority of the JS, SS and PauṣS also mention a “root-Veda” or an “original Veda” (mūlaveda) within the same context. In each instance, this “original Veda” designates the so-called ‘Ekāyanaveda’, thus linking these passages, and therefore we must assume the “three jewels doctrine” itself, with the Pāñcarātra tradition that is referred to in the PādS and the PārS as the ‘Āgamasiddhānta’. As outlined above, the Āgamasiddhānta is variously characterised in the PādS by its allegiance to the Ekāyanaveda, by having liberation as its single goal, by prescribing its “leading rite” (nayakarma) for all four varṇas, by the fact that its members do not undergo dīkṣā, and by the fact that they do not use Vedic mantras and recite the dvādāśakṣara mantra without the Vedic elements rṣi and chandas. According to the ŚrīprśS (16.31c-34), the Āgamasiddhānta shares these last characteristics with both the Tantra and the Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, and it is exclusively members of the Mantrasiddhānta who are qualified to use Vedic mantras alongside those belonging to the ‘Ekāyana’. The PādS’s claim that the Āgamasiddhānta does not teach the rṣi and chandas elements of a mantra appears to be corroborated by both the PārS and the ĪS, neither of which teach these (Rastelli 2006: 208-209). In the absence of any conflicting evidence, then, this characteristic alone should make it relatively easy to distinguish textual sources belonging to the Āgamasiddhānta from those which belong to the Mantrasiddhānta, at least when we are considering those works which contain these classifications.

The type of Pāñcarātrika who adheres to the Mantrasiddhānta is commonly referred to as a “mixed worshipper” (vyāmiśrayājin) by Āgamasiddhāntin or

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148 See especially PārS 1.32c-33b: ity uttvādhyāpayām āsa vedam ekāyanābhidam // mūlabhātas tu mahaite vedavṛksasya yo mahān // – “Having spoken thus, he taught the Veda called Ekāyana, which is the main root of the great Veda-tree”; ĪS 1.19-20b (← PārS 1.57c-58b, 1.33ab); ĪS 1.24ab (← PārS 1.76ab): mahaite vedavṛksasya mūlabhāto mahān ayam // – “This [Ekāyanaveda] is the main root of the great Veda-tree”; ŚrīprśS 2.38ab: vedam ekāyanam nāma vedāntāṁ śrīrasi sthitam // – “The Veda named Ekāyana is situated at the head of the Vedas”.

149 I have referred to the claim that the SS, PauṣS and JS are the superior Pāñcarātra scriptures as the “three jewels doctrine” for ease of exposition, though it should not obscure the fact that these texts are not referred to as the “three jewels” in any extant Āgamasiddhānta source.
‘Ekāyana’ authors who consider such worshippers to be inferior. An example of this can be found in the Pauṣ Ś:

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\text{viprā ekāyāṇākhyā ye te bhaktās tatsvatoc 'cyute // ekāntināḥ suttāttvasthā deḥāntān nānyayājināḥ 1 kartavyatvena ye viṣṇum samyajanti phalaṁ vinā 1 prāppnouvanti ca deḥinte vāsudevatvam abjaja 1 vyāmiśrayājinaś cānve bhaktābhāsās tu te smṛtāḥ ll. – } \text{“Those Brahmīns that are called Ekāyanas are truly devotees of Acyuta. They who worship Viṣṇu as a duty [that is] without fruit, worshipping no other [god], are Ekāntins (“they have a single aim”) who [will] exist in their true state after death. [In other words] at death they attain the state of Vāsudeva, O Lotus-born! And the others are mixed sacrificers - they are considered to be devotees in appearance only.” (Pauṣ Ś 36.260c–262) }
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The division between those Vaiṣṇavas who “mix” a Pāñcarātrika system of image worship with elements taken from the Vedic liturgy, and those who typically “reject” or who are not “qualified for” the use of Vedic mantras and the institution of varṇa-based rules, appears to have been the most significant schism within the South Indian Pāñcarātra in the early centuries of the second millennium. The Bhārgavatantra (BhT 24.17–18) characterises these groups as, respectively, the “mixed” (miśra) and the “pure” (śuddha) Vaiṣṇavas. Representatives of these two Pāñcarātra traditions are contrasted with each other already in Yāmuna’s Āgama-prāmāṇya (ĀP) (169–171) and, as we have seen above, both traditions produced scriptural works which glorify their own tradition and undermine the other. Conversely, no extant work, as far as I am aware, identifies itself with the Tantra or Tatrāntara Siddhāntas. To the extent that these appear to have been the two most prominent types of Pāñcarātra in South India during the 12th–14th centuries, the descriptions of the ‘Āgamasiddhānta’ and the ‘Mantrasiddhānta’ contained in such texts as the Pāḍ Ś and the PārŚ appear to offer

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150 The designation “mixed worshipper” (vyāmiśrayājīn) does not only refer to worshippers who perform both Pāñcarātrika and Vedic rites. In the Pāḍ Ś, for instance, it is used more generally to denote all followers of the “mixed dharma” (miśradharma), which is the PārŚ’s name for the Vedas.
151 The “mixed” Vaiṣṇavas, who are described as traividya, are here associated with the aṣṭākṣara mantra, and the “pure” Vaiṣṇavas, who follow the Ekāyanaveda, with the dvādasākṣara mantra. Colas (1990: 26) reports that the Vaikhānasa work Kriyādhikāra also divides the Pāñcarātra into miśra and śuddha sub-groups and that, according to the Yajñādhitkāra, the latter has no vedamaryādā.
152 However, according to Vedāntadeśīka (PRR 30.18ff) the Śrīkasanamhitā associates itself with the ‘Purāṇasiddhānta’. The PRR (31.1–2) quotes this text thus: etat purāṇasiddhāntam śrīkaram ca viśesataḥ i idam śrīkarasamjñākhyaṁ bhogamokṣaphalapradām // Vedāntadeśīka (PRR 30.21–22 and 31.5–6) asserts that the name ‘Purāṇasiddhānta’ designates the ‘Tatrāntarasiddhānta’, and argues that it is precisely the Tatrāntarasiddhānta that is denoted by the particle ca in the above verse.
something of a valuable, albeit inevitably incomplete, Pāñcarātrika ethnography of this period.

It is notable that of the eight Pāñcarātra scriptures that contain, or are said to contain, a hierarchical description of the Siddhānta divisions, five of these place the Āgamasiddhānta at the top. These are the PauṣS, the PārS, the ĪS and, according to Vedāntadeśika, the HP and the Kālottara. Only the PādS, the BhT (whose account is clearly based on that of the PādS), and the later ŚrīprśS give the highest status to the Mantrasiddhānta. If we are to assume, as we surely must, that the fourfold Siddhānta system of classification developed within (or, in the other possible scenario, was first adopted by) one particular Pāñcarātra tradition (i.e. as opposed to the improbable scenario that it simultaneously emerged among distinct traditions), it would seem quite likely, then, that this particular tradition was that which identified itself, at least in certain works, as precisely the ‘Āgamasiddhānta’. This thesis, which is speculative, also appears to find support in the probable status of the PauṣS as the work which contains the earliest extant description of the Siddhānta divisions. For the passage in question (i.e. PauṣS 38.293-307b) gives precedence to the Āgama “called Siddhānta” (siddhāntasamjñam, 294c), which it lists alongside the Mantra, Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas. These verses were presumably authored by a member of the tradition which is elsewhere called ‘Āgamasiddhānta’. In addition, as we shall see in a later

\[\text{\footnotesize 153} \text{ The verses attributed to the HP or, as Vedāntadeśika names it, the ‘Hayagrīvasamhita’ in the PRR (8.5-8) read: āgamākhyam hi siddhāntam samkṣaikaphalapradam / manrasamjñam hi siddhāntaṃ siddhīṃkṣapradam nṛṇām / tantrasamjñam tu siddhāntam caturvargaphalapradam / tantrāntaram hi siddhāntaṃ vānchitārhapalapradam // – “The Siddhānta named Āgama grants liberation as its only fruit. The Siddhānta called Mantra grants to people liberation and magical powers (siddhī). The Siddhānta called Tantra grants the “group of four” (i.e. the puruṣārthas) as its fruit. The Tantrāntara Siddhānta grants as its fruit the “desired goal”.’ Vedāntadeśika (PRR 8.9) explains that the “desired goal” here indicates liberation (apavarga). The verses attributed to the Kālottara in the PRR (31.14-18) read: anekabhedabhinnam ca pāñcarātrākhyam āgamaṃ / pūrvaṃ āgamasiddhāntaṃ mantrākhyam tadanantarāṃ / tantram tantrāntaram ceti caturdha ṁparikṣitam // – “The tradition named Pañcarātra is split into various divisions (bheda). The first is the Āgama, and after that there is the one called Mantra, the Tantra, and the Tantrāntara. Thus it is said to be fourfold.”}
\[\text{\footnotesize 154} \text{ See BhT 22.87-93b, and BhT 24.19-20 (← PādS cp 21.36, 37cd, 38ab), BhT 24.25-27b (← PādS cp 21.53-54b, 38c-39b).}
\[\text{\footnotesize 155} \text{ See e.g. ŚrīprśS 16.32-34b: tantrāntare tv āgama ca siddhānte tantrasamjñikē / teṣu pājāpravṛtyām dīkṣā nirbhajasamjñikā / anyesām dīkṣākaraṇe tesām anādhi-kārtā / ato nirbīja ity uktā vidvadbhiḥ kamaleksaṇe / sabījaṃ mantrasiddhāntadīkṣākramam uḍīyate // – “For those engaged in worship according to the Tantrāntara, the Āgama and the Siddhānta called Tantra, the initiation is called ‘without seed’. For them there is no entitlement to perform the initiation of others. Thus it is called ‘without seed’ by the learned. O lotus-eyed. [Conversely] the method of initiation in the Mantrasiddhānta is called ‘with seed’.”}
chapter, it is the classification found in Āgamasiddhānta sources which is accepted as “canonical” by Vedāntadeśika in his PRR. Irrespective of its origin, we can be certain, at any rate, that the Siddhānta system of classification was adopted fairly quickly by at least some Pāñcarātrikas who also performed Vedic rites, as is proven by its presence in the PādS.

The textual evidence suggests that a similar process occurred with regard to the “three jewels”, though it appears to have taken considerably longer for this theory to have gained acceptance among the non-Āgamasiddhāntin Pāñcarātrikas. As stated above, three of the four extant works which contain a passage claiming the superiority of the JS, SS and PauṣS refer in the same instance to the ‘Ekāyanaveda’, thus linking these passages to the Āgamasiddhānta. However, whilst the PārS and the majority of the IS are undoubtedly authored by Āgamasiddhāntins, the third work which associates the “three jewels doctrine” with the ‘Ekāyanaveda’, namely the ŚrīprśS, is almost certainly primarily a work of the ‘Mantrasiddhānta’. This is evident not only from the fact that substantial portions of this text borrow from or are based upon the PādS, as Padmanabhan (1969) has shown, but also from its frequent use of Vedic mantras156 allied to its claim that among the four Siddhāntas it is only members of the Mantrasiddhānta who are entitled to use Vedic mantras alongside those belonging to the ‘Ekāyana’ (the term ‘Ekāyana’ being used here to refer to the Pāñcarātra in general).157 How, then, are we to interpret the inclusion of these ‘Ekāyana’ passages in the ŚrīprśS? It is worth our while to briefly address each of these.

In several places in the ŚrīprśS (e.g. at 2.38ff, 16.20 and 16.34), the terms ‘Ekāyana’ and ‘Ekāyanaveda’ are used to refer to the Pāñcarātra tradition and the Pāñcarātra teaching in general.158 On each of these occasions, the Vedas are referred to in the same verse - once in order to accord the Ekāyanaveda the higher authority (2.38ab: vedam ekāyanaṃ nāma vedānāṃ śirasi sthitam), and in the other two

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156 These are listed by Padmanabhan (1969) in the appendix to the ŚrīprśS.
157 ŚrīprśS 16.34: sabījaḥ mantrasiddhāntadīksākramam uḍīryate / caturvedoktam antrair ekāyanasthitaiḥ // – “[Conversely] the method of initiation in the Mantrasiddhānta is called ‘with seed’. [It is performed] with mantras enunciated in the four Vedas and with mantras contained in the Ekāyana.”
158 The “Veda named Ekāyana” is also mentioned at ŚrīprśS 23.185a, though in this instance its precise referent is not clear.
instances to place the Ekāyanaveda and the Vedas on an equal footing. In each of these examples, the idea of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ appears to be employed as a means of establishing the authority of the Pāñcarātra tradition, but only in the first instance (i.e. at ŚrīprśS 2.38ab) does the representation of the Ekāyanaveda conform to the characteristically Ekāyana view, which we have seen articulated in the PārS and the ĪS, that the Ekāyanaveda is superior to the Vedas. Such a claim is unlikely to have been authored by the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātrikas, at least according to the representation of these groups that we find in the PādS. In light of this, I propose that ŚrīprŚS 2.38ab, along with a number of other verses in the section 2.26-46b, have been borrowed by a Mantrasiddhāntin author from an Āgamasiddhānta source. This hypothesis is preferable to one which would have the whole passage borrowed from, or re-worked by, an Āgamasiddhāntin author or editor, since the description of the Pāñcarātra “duties” (kārya) at 2.43-46b includes initiation (dīkṣā) (45a) which, as we have seen, was not undergone in the Āgamasiddhānta according to a variety of sources. In addition to 2.38ab, I propose that the reference to the Ekāyanaveda as a nivṛttiśāstra at 2.32a, and the contrasting description at 2.26d of the three Vedas as advancing a path of ritual action (karmapravartinī) have also been borrowed from an Āgamasiddhānta source, since such terminology is key to Āgamasiddhāntin self-understanding in the PārS, and is quite distinct from the language used in “outsider” descriptions of the Ekāyana found, for example, in the PādS, from which the ŚrīprŚS borrows quite freely, and also the BhT. Other apparent borrowings from Āgamasiddhānta sources include the nirukti analysis of the name ‘Ekāyana’ at 2.39 (cf. PārS 1.57c-58b and ĪS 1.19), and the claim at 2.41c that the Pāñcarātra āśāstra is “eternal, like the Veda” (vedavan nityam).

159 See especially the Mantrasiddhāntin author’s description of the Āgamasiddhānta at PādS cp 21.30-54b.
160 On the use of this terminology in the PārS see Rastelli (2006: 163-166). Rastelli shows that the PārS borrows these terms from the Nārāyanīya, but modifies their meaning so that “pravṛtti ist eine (rituelle) Tätigkeit mit dem Zweck, die Erfüllung von Wünschen zu erlangen [und] nivṛtti ist eine (rituelle) Tätigkeit, die ohne jegliches Begehren durchgeführt wird…” (ibid: 166). Following the Nārāyanīya, PārS 1.45eff associates pravṛtti with the Vedas, and nivṛtti with its own teaching (which is, for the PārS, the Ekāyanaveda). The PādS (cp 19.117a, 21.35c), meanwhile, describes the “renunciation of action” (karmasamnyāsa) and the “desireless” (nirāśa) worship of god in the Āgamasiddhānta, but it does not favourably contrast these practices with those employed by followers of the Veda. See also BhT 24.19-27b.
In the 16th chapter of the ŚrīprśS, the term ‘Ekāyanaveda’ is used to refer to the Pāñcarātra teaching in general. The verse in question reads as follows:

\[
yathaiva karmakāndeṣu dīkṣoktā yāgasiddhayē / tathaivaikāyane vede pūjāyāgadisiddhayē \| - \text{“Just as initiation (dīkṣā) is spoken of [as necessary] for the performance of sacrifice in the ritual portions (karmakānda) [of the Veda], so too [it is spoken of as necessary] for the performance of worship and sacrifice etc. in the Ekāyanaveda.” (ŚrīprśS 16.20) }
\]

This verse, then, provides another instance (i.e. alongside ŚrīprśS 2.26-46b) in which an association is drawn between followers of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ and dīkṣā. As we have seen above, earlier works such as the PādŚ and the PārŚ indicate, contrarily, that followers of the Ekāyanaveda do not undergo dīkṣā. Of course, the passages from these works which address this issue, such as PādŚ cp 21.51-53 which explicitly states that “the way of the Ekāyana” (ekāyanādhvan) does not involve dīkṣā, do not use the designation ‘Ekāyana’ as a name for the Pāñcarātra in general, as is the case in the 16th chapter of the ŚrīprśS. As I have stated earlier, the above verse (ŚrīprśS 16.20) occurs in a passage which identifies the ŚrīprśS with the Mantrasiddhānta, and so this is quite a clear example, therefore, of a Mantrasiddhāntin incorporating the idea of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ into his own tradition’s self-understanding. The same process also appears to be at work at ŚrīprśS 49.471c-473, quoted above, which incorporates the presumably Āgamasiddhāntin claim regarding the superiority of the JS, SS and PauśŚ. Although we cannot be sure of the “sectarian” identity of the author of this passage, it is quite clear that these verses are borrowed from an Āgamasiddhānta source. This is evident not only from the fact that, as mentioned previously, they strongly echo PārŚ 1.77 and ĪŚ 1.25, but also from the fact that the section of the ŚrīprśS in which they are found is replete with borrowings from Āgamasiddhānta sources.\(^{161}\)

\(^{161}\) See for example: ŚrīprśS 49.446cd ↔ ĪŚ 19.103ab; ŚrīprśS 49.448cd ↔ ĪŚ 19.93ab; ŚrīprśS 49.454abc ↔ ĪŚ 19.100c-101a; ŚrīprśS 49.457a ↔ ĪŚ 19.104c; ŚrīprśS 49.464-466a ↔ PārŚ 19.496-498a ↔ ĪŚ 19.117c-119c; ŚrīprśS 49.475-476b ↔ PārŚ 15.928c-929 ↔ ĪŚ 19.67-68b; ŚrīprśS 49.476c-479b ↔ PārŚ 19.545-547 → ĪŚ 21.582c-584; ŚrīprśS 49.481-483b ↔ PārŚ 10.329-331b → ĪŚ 23.45c-47; ŚrīprśS 49.486abc ↔ ĪŚ 19.121abc; ŚrīprśS 49.487a ↔ ĪŚ 19.123a. It is possible, of course, that the ŚrīprśS borrowed these verses from another work. It should also be noted that close variants of PārŚ 19.545-548b and 10.329-333b are quoted by Vedāntadeśīka in his PRR (18.15ff; 40.8ff).
Why should the ŚrīprśŚ, a work which seems to have been authored by Mantrasiddhāntins, incorporate these passages extolling the Ekāyanaveda? It appears that by the time of the composition of this work, the Ekāyanaveda, or at least the idea of the Ekāyanaveda had, in certain contexts, acquired an authoritative status among the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātrikas. In Yāmuna’s ĀP, of course, we have already encountered an instance of a non-Āgamasiddhāntin (i.e. Yāmuna himself) accepting the validity of the Ekāyanaveda (or the ‘Ekāyanāsruti’), and it should be noted that Vedāntadeśika, whose PRR may well predate the ŚrīprśŚ, followed Yāmuna in this respect.\footnote{See, for example, PRR 4.5-18 (\textit{← ĀP 169.7-170.11}). The ŚrīprśŚ is not quoted by Vedāntadeśika, and thus may well succeed him.} Turning to the scriptural literature, this pattern is also evident in a section of the PādŚ which addresses the various pañcakāla observances incumbent upon the Pāñcarātrika initiate. In the passage (PādŚ \textit{cp} 13.66c-72b) which deals with the study of texts (svādhyāya), the initiate is instructed to study, alongside the various recensions of the three Vedas, the “original recension based on the Ekāyana” (mūlaśākhām ekāyanasamāśrayām). Although, again, the “sectarian” identity of the author of this passage is not absolutely clear,\footnote{There are passages in the PādŚ which do appear to have been authored by Āgamasiddhāntins, most notably in the first chapter of the Caryāpāda.} his allegiance to the three Vedas and the respectful reference, for example, to “experts in the six limbs [of the Veda]” most probably indicates a non-Āgamasiddhānta background.\footnote{See PādŚ \textit{cp} 13.67-70b: rcco yajñasyādiḥ vādhyāmānāya anekadhā \textit{←} sākhābhedaḥ mūlaśākhām ekāyanasamāśrayām \textit{←} trayāṇāyāṁ adhītyāṁ sukhāṁ samāhitāṁ \textit{←} anyais śārdham adhyāyaṁ śadaṁgeṣu ca kovidāṁ / adhyāpayaṁ vā śisyāṁ śāstrāṁ vividhāṁ ca \textit{←} itihāsapurāṇāṁ dharma-śāstraṁ vā punāḥ \textit{←}.} Certainly the remainder of this chapter exhibits the kind of Veda-congruent Vaiṣṇava devotionalism which is more representative of the Mantrasiddhānta.\footnote{See especially the injunction to perform the Vaiṣṇava ritual at home following the recitation of the \textit{Jitamtestotra}. This act completes the performance of the five “great sacrifices” (mahāyahāna), which should be undertaken according to one’s Grhyasūtra. PādŚ \textit{cp} 13.64 reads: \textit{tī vijñāya deveśaṁ vaiśvādevam svadhīmāṇaṁ / kuryāt paśca mahāyahānaṁ api grhyoktavartmanam \textit{←}. On the \textit{Jitamtestotra} see Colas (1996: 234-236) and Oberhammer (2007: 42-46).}

That the PādŚ should contain a passage wherein an apparently non-Āgamasiddhāntin author invokes the Ekāyanaveda might appear somewhat surprising given that in this work’s descriptions of the Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas (see especially PādŚ \textit{cp} 21.30-54b), the Ekāyanaveda is explicitly associated only with the
Āgamasiddhānta. We must assume that these two sections of the PādS do not share a common author, and that the summary of the pañcakāla duties in PādS cp 13 is in all likelihood the later contribution to the text. This is most likely the case because in the scriptural literature, the non-Āgamasiddhāntin incorporation of the idea of the Ekāyanaśāstra is a strategy which is found in the later works, including the ŚrīprasS, as we have just seen, and also the Śrīpuruṣottamasamhitā (ŚrīpurS), another work which probably postdates Vedāntadesika (Smith 1975: 274).

In the opening chapter of the ŚrīpurS, the sage Vasiṣṭha presents the designations ‘Pāñcarātra’, ‘Mūlaveda’, ‘Sāttvata’, ‘Tantra’, ‘Ekāyana’ and ‘Āgama’ as synonymous terms, and in explaining why each of these names is an appropriate designation for the Lord’s teaching (bhagavacchāstra), the author incorporates passages from both the PādS and the ĪS, including them alongside each other. In fact, much of the first chapter of the ŚrīpurS is an amalgam of verses borrowed from these two works. Indeed, I believe that we can interpret this section of the ŚrīpurS as a conscious attempt to accommodate forms of self-understanding found within the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra traditions, as represented in the PādS, with those found within the Ekāyana tradition, and articulated in the ĪS, so that both are included within a single, homogeneous Pāñcarātra “system” (tantran). Accordingly, as in the Adhikāha Pāṭhaḥ to which I shall turn shortly, there is no mention of distinct Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas in this work. However, the two contrasting Pāñcarātrika modes of self-description sit rather uneasily alongside each other in the ŚrīpurS. Thus, the Ekāyana claim that “this is the main root of the great Veda tree - the Re etc. are its trunk and

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166 ŚrīpurS 1.11ff. See also ŚrīpurS 22.57c-59b (← PādS cp 2.87c-88, quoted above): sa eva sāris suhrt sāttvataḥ pāñcarātravit // ekāntikas (ekāntikas) tanmayaś ca deśiko ākṣita 'rcakah / gurir bhāgavatas caiva pājakas sādhaka hariḥ // bhāṭārakādir ākhyāhir ākhyeyah kamalāsana 1.

167 ŚrīpurS 1.3cd ← PādS jp 1.14ab; ŚrīpurS 1.6cd ← PādS jp 1.32ab; ŚrīpurS 1.10cd ← ĪS 1.18cd; ŚrīpurS 1.12 ← ĪS 1.19 (← PārS 1.57c-58b); ŚrīpurS 1.14-15 ← ĪS 1.24-25 (cf. PārS 1.76-77); ŚrīpurS 1.18-19b ← PādS jp 1.63-64b; ŚrīpurS 1.25-26 ← PādS jp 1.90-91; ŚrīpurS 1.27ab ← PādS jp 1.96cd; ŚrīpurS 1.28-29 ← PādS jp 1.97-98. Additionally, the first chapter of the ŚrīpurS shares a noteworthy parallel verse, explaining the meaning of the term “Pāñcarātra”, with the Mārkaṇḍeyasamhitā (MārkS): ŚrīpurS 1.6c-7b ↔ MārkS 1.22c-23b. The MārkS may be more or less contemporary with the ŚrīpurS, though there are several clues that it is the earlier of the two works.

168 See ŚrīpurS 1.29ab: śātam ekam athaṣṭau ca tantre 'smin viditaṃ mayā ।. – “In this system (tantre 'smin), 108 [Tantras] are known by me.” Cf. PādS jp 1.98ab.
branches”.169 is included beside the PādS’s declaration that “this Tantra, rooted in śruti, is an authority like the Kalpasūtras. There is no teaching superior to the Veda”.170 I shall comment more on these opposing strategies in my discussion of the “original teaching” in the following chapters.

The only extant non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptural source that contains an original formulation of the “three jewels doctrine”, then, is the interpolated section of the JS entitled Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ. This fourteenth century work follows the PādS in invoking the memory of the sage Aupagāyana, said here to be a student (adhiyāna) of the Kāṇvī śākhā (JS ap 109ab) and it also prescribes the mixing (vimiśrita) of Vedic and celestial (divya) i.e. Pāṇcarātrika mantras (JS ap 118). Having declared that the Jayākhyā is superior among the “three jewels” (ratneṣu triṣv api śreṣṭhaṃ jayākhyam tantram ucyate, JS ap 108ab), Lord Varada (varadarāja), the narrator of this section, asserts:

\[ \text{jayākhyenātha pādmena tantroṣa sahitena vai} \ | \text{mūlavyākhyānarāpābhyaṃ samarcbayatu māṃ sadā} \ | \text{na tantrasāṅkarō doṣas tantrayor anayor iha} \ | \text{pādmena tantraḥ} \ | \text{Jayākhyāṃ tantram ucyate.} \]

Thus, the apparently Mantrasiddhāntin author of the Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ has found a way of incorporating the teaching of the “three jewels” whilst ensuring that the PādS, a work which belongs to the Mantrasiddhānta, is, practically speaking, as essential as those texts. Where the “mixing” of one Tantra with another is normally discouraged as a “defect” or a “fault” (doṣa), in this instance the defect is said to be that of following the JS without also following its “commentary”, the PādS. This case offers a good example, then, not to mention a more seamless process, of forming a single “Pāṇcarātra canon”, of bringing together “canonical” systems from distinct Pāṇcarātra traditions with the aim of subsuming them into a “single” tradition. This integrative strategy is a clear development from the Mantrasiddhāntin appropriation of the

169 ŚrīpurS 1.14: mahato vedavyākṣasya mūlabhūto mahan ayaṃ / ṛgāvyāḥ skandhabhūtāḥ te śākhābhūtāḥ ca yogināḥ /.

170 ŚrīpurS 1.26c-27a: śrutinālam idam tantrāṃ pramāṇam kalpasātravat / vedāc chāstraṃ param nāsti... /.
tradition of the Ekāyanaveda which we have met with in the ŚrīprśS. Indeed, unlike the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ and the ŚrīpurS, the ŚrīprśS contains no deliberate and sustained attempt to present the Pāncarātra as a single, homogeneous system. Thus, for instance, in the same passage that incorporates the “three jewels claim”, the ŚrīprśS advises against “mixing” the Siddhāntas. The more fully developed integrative approach of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ and the ŚrīpurS probably indicates that both of these works postdate the ŚrīprśS.

The inclusion of a canonical list of Pāncarātra scriptures, which is found at the end of the ŚrīpurS’s first chapter as well as in several other predominantly late works, including an interpolated section of the PādS, also derives from this same integrative strategy. In addition to the PādS, the South Indian Pāncarātra works which contain lists of Saṃhitās in their śastrāvatarana portions are the ŚrīpurS, the Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā (ViśS), the Kapiñjalasāṃhitā, the Bhāradvājasaṃhitā, the Mārkaṇḍeyasaṃhitā (MārkS), and the Viṣṇutantra. Each of these except for the Viṣṇutantra172 claim that there are at least 108 Tantras or Saṃhitās,173 but among them only the ViśS actually names 108.174 In this text we are told that the extent of the Pāncarātra Tantras amounts to “a thousand million verses (grantha)”, though this measure is said to increase and shorten in accordance with the course of the cosmic ages (yuga).175

Finally, I should mention a rather interesting list of Pāncarātra Saṃhitās, which may be relatively early, and is quite distinct in its content from other lists. I refer to that found in the Śaiva Śrīkaṇṭhī, also known as the Śrīkaṇṭhyasaṃhitā, a fragment of which was discovered by Alexis Sanderson in a manuscript of a Kashmirian ritual manual called the Nityādisaṃgraha. An unedited transcript of this fragment appears in the appendices of Hanneder (1998). The Śrīkaṇṭhī, which is quoted by Kṣemarāja (c.

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172 The Viṣṇutantra, a late, unpublished Pāncarātra text, lists 141 scriptures according to Schrader (1916: 5), and 154 scriptures according to Parampurushdas and Shrutiprakashdas (2002: 55).
173 As Schrader (1916) has pointed out, the number 108 should be read as symbolic, reflecting as it does numerical conventions such as the enumeration of 108 Upaniṣads.
174 The Kapiñjalasāṃhitā (1.14b-27) names 100 titles; in a very similar list (see Smith 1975), the Bhāradvājasaṃhitā (1.8b-22a) names 103; the ŚrīpurS (1.30-44a) names 105; the MārkS (1.43-59) names 91.
175 ViśS 2.34: eteṣāṃ granthasamkhya ca śatakotiśramūnatah / yugakramavāśād vipra vṛddhim hrāsaṃ ca gacchati //.
1000-1050), and was apparently known also to Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025), tells us that the Pāṇcarātra amounts to “a thousand million [ślokas]”, that there are 116 Saṃhitās in total, that they are spoken by Viṣṇu, and that they explicate the teaching of the five times (pañcakāla).176 It then names all 116 works (verses 53c-69). Among these, alongside familiar titles including the Pauṣkarī, Jayā, Padmodbhavā, Paramā, Sātvatā, Sanatkaumārikā, Mārkaṇḍeyā, and Viṣvaksenā, are a number of titles which do not feature in other lists of Pāṇcarātra scriptures. Such an extensive list of Pāṇcarātra scriptures appears to be unique in the North Indian literature. Although a list of Pāṇcarātra works is found also in the relatively early, and apparently North Indian Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra,177 in this work, and in the virtually identical list is contained in the Agnipurāṇa (39.2c-5), only 25 original Pañcarātra Tantras are admitted.178

There are, in my view, several features of the Śrīkaṭṭhī’s list which may cause us to doubt whether it is as old as other parts of this text. Firstly, as just mentioned, it is much more extensive than any other list to have emerged in a North Indian work. Secondly, the importance it assigns to the teaching of the “five times” in the Pāṇcarātra is rare in Kashmirian works of this period. The early Pāṇcarātra scriptures which appear to have been authored in Kashmir themselves do not assign an especially prominent place to this teaching (see Rastelli 2000a). Thirdly, the fact that the tradition is called here ‘Pāṇcarātra’, rather than ‘Pañcarātra’, is also very unusual. Although in South Indian works ‘Pāṇcarātra’ gradually became the standard name for the tradition, it is much more commonly referred to as ‘Pañcarātra’ in the earlier literature.179 Lastly, none of the recently discovered early Pāṇcarātra works, namely the Svāyambhuvapañcarātra, the Devamrtapañcarātra, the Mahālakṣmisamhitā, and the Jayottaratatantra, are named in the list. If Sanderson (2009) is correct in his

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176 Śrīkaṭṭhī 51c-52: śataśatipravistīrṇam pāṇcarātram pramūnataḥ // tatra bhedaśataṃ pūrṇam śodasaśādhikam eva ca / viṣṇuṇā kathitam deva pañcakālanidarśanaṃ //

177 On the provenance and probable date of this text see Gonda (1977: 55), Rajan (1981: 34), and Rastelli (2007: 190).

178 Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra ādikāṇḍa 2.1-10. This text is not available to me. See Smith (1975: 553) on the 25 original Tantras listed. Interestingly, neither the JS nor the SS feature among these.

179 The Svacchandatantra (5.44c) provides a notable exception here.
judgement that these works were composed in or around Kashmir before the middle of the tenth century, then we would surely expect their inclusion.

**iii.) Conclusions**

The canonical list of scriptures contained in the PārS is probably one of the earliest attempts in a South Indian Saṃhitā to enumerate and classify the Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus. It is directly based on the hierarchy of teachings found in the SS, and the fact that it grades specific scriptures according to this hierarchy suggests that it is not derived from another canonical list. It is almost certainly older than the lists of Saṃhitās contained in other South Indian texts such as the PādS and the ViśS. Compared to these later lists, the PārS’s list is very short, and the hierarchical scheme it employs has the effect of limiting the canon to only a handful of genuinely authoritative works. The tradition of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS very likely emerged within the Pāñcarātra tradition to which the authors of the PārS belonged, namely the Āgamasiddhānta. We know that these authors had the JS, SS and PauṣS in their possession, since they incorporated a good deal of material from all three works into the PārS. The fact that they present these three scriptures as being unique in their ability to confer mokṣa may indicate that these works were not, at that time, in the possession of the Āgamasiddhāntins’ main Pāñcarātriaka rivals. There is, as we have seen, no reason to believe that the authors of the PādS, for example, considered these works to be particularly important. Nonetheless, the idea of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS did later find its way into non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptures, as did also the idea of the Ekāyanaveda.

In the context of the ĀP I argued that Yāmuna’s acceptance of the validity and authority of the Ekāyanaveda may have been motivated by the prominence of Āgamasiddhāntins at the Ranganāthasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam, where Yāmuna was an ācārya. Can we advance similar explanations for the non-Āgamasiddhāntin acceptance of the Ekāyanaveda in such texts as the 13th chapter of the PādS’s
Caryāpāda and the ŚrīprśS? In other words, were these works also produced in environments in which the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas continued to exert a significant influence? This is a difficult question to answer at the present state of research, since the date and provenance of these texts is not clear. The relatively small literary output of the Āgamasiddhānta suggests that they were not numerically dominant, and the available evidence, as we have seen, suggests that they congregated in the relatively small Vaiṣṇava temple towns of Śrīraṅgam and Melkote. Nonetheless, we may provisionally assume that Āgamasiddhāntin influence within the Pāñcarātra extended beyond these places. I will come back to the question of why the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra works began incorporating apparently Āgamasiddhāntin ideas in Chapters Eight and Nine, once I have explored these separate traditions in greater depth. For the time being, a preliminary and partial explanation might usefully focus on the fact that it seems to have been the Āgamasiddhāntins who were initially responsible for the formation and classification of the Pāñcarātra canon.

The climate of intra-Pāñcarāтриka sectarianism attested to in such works as the PādS and the PārS appears, then, to have subsided, and been replaced by a culture wherein the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarāтриkas, as represented by such works as the PādS, the ŚrīpurS and the Adhikah Pāṭhaḥ, attempted to present a unified Pāñcarātra tradition. This is most clearly demonstrated in the extensive, non-hierarchical lists of Pāñcarātra scriptures referred to above. The attempt to integrate distinct Pāñcarātra traditions is observable already in Yāmuna’s ĀP, but in the scriptural literature it is only in evidence at a later time, most probably subsequent to the composition of the PārS. The passages I have addressed in the ŚrīprśS appear to indicate that the non-Āgamasiddhānta appropriation of the idea of the Ekāyanaveda, and of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣS, had already begun before the appearance, among the scriptural works, of conscious attempts, such as we find in the ŚrīpurS, to present a single, homogeneous Pāñcarātra system. Indeed, it may well be the case that by the time of the composition of the ŚrīpurS, the sectarian culture had already dissipated,

180 The ŚrīprśS’s likely chronological position between the ĨS and texts such as the ŚrīpurS and the Adhikah Pāṭhaḥ would place it most likely in the fourteenth century. Several commentators have linked the origin of the ŚrīprśS with Kumbakonam in present day Tamil Nadu, though this remains somewhat speculative (Raghavan 1969).
and that the “ecumenism” of this work reflected a new reality. It is certainly striking, as we will see in the following chapters, that the vast majority of the later Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās belong to the more Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra culture that is typified by the PādS, whereas the tradition that is represented in the PārS survives only in that work, in the ĪŚ, and in several apparently interpolated sections of earlier texts.
PART TWO

THE ORIGINAL TEACHING: LOCATING TEXTS AND TRADITIONS

Introduction

In her monograph on the Paramasamhitā, Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 37-41) asks a pertinent question: how were scriptural claims of divine authorship reconciled with the reality of the situation in which the scriptural texts were being re-worked by successive scholars? “How was such a process of re-working possible?” she asks. “How could a text which claims to be the faithful record of god’s revelation be subjected to such manipulation?” She finds her answer, at least with regard to the Paramasamhitā, in the text’s admission of multiple lines of transmission: “The admission that the text of a tradition is an intermediate transmission of the revelation opens up the possibility of re-working it”, she writes. “Therefore the attitude towards the text was very special: the text presented the revelation, but as a record of the revelation and not the revelation itself it could be subjected to change.”

Such an attitude towards the text is not, of course, unique to the Pāñcarātra. Epic and Purānic literature commonly presents itself also as an “intermediate transmission” in which a narrator, as distinct from the original author, recounts a story or sequence of events first heard elsewhere. Thus, in the opening adhyāya of the first book (ādiparvan) of the Sanskrit Mahābhārata (MBh) the bard Ugraśravas is presented as the epic’s narrator whilst its authorship is attributed to the seer (ṛṣi) Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.181 The same Vyāsa is also frequently credited with the

181 The problematic question of Vyāsa’s “authorship” in the MBh’s presentation of itself is addressed by Fitzgerald (2003), who discusses “how little the MBh itself seems to regard [Vyāsa as its author]” (ibid.: 817). However, as Fitzgerald points out in the same review, the Ugraśravas and Vaiśampāyana framing passages do present Vyāsa as the author, or at least the original reciter (MBh 1.1.9), of the MBh. See also, for example, MBh 1.1.19, 191, and 205.
composition of the Purāṇas, many of which are narrated by either Ugraśravas or his father Lomaharṣaṇa. Likewise, it is not Vālmīki, the author of the Rāmāyaṇa, who recites his own composition in the Sanskrit epic, but rather his pupils Lava and Kuśa, the twin sons of Rāma. This narrative technique whereby the original author of the text is distanced from its (re-)telling by a chain of transmission (paramparā or vamsa), is also used quite frequently in the Śaiva scriptural literature. Somewhat surprisingly, it is even encountered in an early Upaniṣad. It is a device which helps to establish the ancient pedigree of a text, and to ground it in a clearly delineated oral tradition, but it also establishes the text’s status as providing “a record of the revelation”, and as thereby being “subject to change”.

The Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās employ a variety of techniques to establish their own “intermediate” status. A common strategy, found also in the epic, Purānic and Śāstirc literature, involves the claim that the present form of the text is a condensation of its original form. Thus, in the opening chapter of the Jayākhyasamhitā (1.70-75), we are told that the current Saṃhitā comprises the essence (sāra) of an original teaching which ran to 15 million (sārdhakoṭi) ślokas. Likewise, in the opening chapter of the Pādmasamhitā (jp 1.31-34) we learn that the current Saṃhitā is a much shorter version of the 15 million ślokas taught to Brahmā by Keśava. In the Lakṣmītantra (44.52), Lakṣmī declares that the present version of the text is but the essence of the original Lakṣmītantra which consisted of a thousand million (śatakoṭi) ślokas. The Paramasamhitā (1.45c-47) also claims that its present form comprises merely the essence of its original form which consisted of “a hundred thousand chapters” (adhyāyalakṣam). Meanwhile, the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā (1.70c-73) contains the claim that it originally consisted of 240 adhyāyas before it was shortened to its present 60, while the 30-chapter Viṣṇusamhitā (1.50-52) declares that its original version

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182 See, for example, Bhāgavatapurāṇa 1.3.40-1; Viṣṇupurāṇa 3.6.15ff; Agnipurāṇa 271.11ff; and Vāyupurāṇa 61.55ff. Information from Rocher (1986: 45ff).
183 See, for instance, the Mālinīvijayottaratantra (1.1-14), the Svacchandatantra (SvT) (8.27ff), and the Parākhyatantra (3.1-6).
184 Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 2.6.1-3; 4.6.1-3; 6.5.1-4.
185 Doniger (1993a: 32) writes that “Epic and Purānic tradition (smṛti) defines itself by the chain of human memory, displaying each link as publicly as possible.”
186 See Pollock (1985: 512-513), who provides examples from the MBṣ (12.59.13ff), the Matsyapurāṇa (53.3-11), Vātsyāyana’s Kāmasūtra, the Mānasāra and the Carakasamhitā among others.
contained 108 chapters. In each instance this abridgement of the original teaching is presented as having taken place in order to benefit the recipients of the teaching.

In the following, I analyse the varying ways in which Pāṇcarātra authors derived the legitimacy of their own textual tradition from a text or a body of texts which, whether real or imagined, lay outside the canonical boundaries of that tradition. In other words, I shall be addressing Pāṇcarāтриka methods of appeal to transcendent textual sources. In particular, I intend to ask what such practices can tell us about the traditions in question. Why should one tradition favour this legitimating textual source over that one? In Chapter Four I address the idea that the Pāṇcarātra teachings are “rooted in the Veda” (vedamūlatva). The majority of South Indian texts at my disposal subscribe to this idea, and I present an overview of the methods used by these works in their attempts to locate themselves within a tradition which is continuous with that of the Veda. In contrast to these, certain other Pāṇcarātra texts, as we have seen above, make the claim that their scriptures are rooted in an original teaching called ‘Ekāyanaveda’. In Chapter Five I explore the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda, attempting to gather together textual clues as to the context of its emergence. Finally, in Chapter Six I address the idea of the original teaching found in the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā, and the ways in which this work legitimates the Pāṇcarātra tradition in toto by appeal to the Nārāyanīya.
4. The Pāñcarātra and the Veda

i.) Vedamūlatva

How do the Pāñcarātra scriptures define themselves in relation to the Veda? Are there common approaches to this question among those works which do not appeal to the Ekāyanaveda? And do largely earlier texts such as the Jayākhyasamhitā (JS), Sātvatasamhitā (SS) and Pauṣkarasamhitā (PauS) utilise similar methods to the Saṃhitās composed in South India? As we will see in the following, one of the most frequently used strategies in the later, South Indian works is the claim that the original form of the teaching upon which the present work is based is none other than the Veda itself. Of course, acceptance of this claim would satisfy the well-known Mīmāṃsaka criterion for a source of valid knowledge (pramāṇa) relating to dharma.

In his Tantravārttika (TV), on 1.3.4 (328.14ff), the sixth century187 Mīmāṃsaka philosopher Kumārila had employed the vedamūlatva principle to argue against the validity of the Pāñcarātras, whose treatises (nibandha) he grouped together with those of the Sāṃkhya, Yogas, Pāṣupata, Buddhists (śākya) and Jains (nirgrantha). Each of these Kumārila declared “contrary to the triple Veda” (trayīṇipaṇiti), and “not accepted by those who know the triple Veda” (etāni trayīṇīvidhīna parīrghitāni). Over a century later, the Pāñcarātra tradition’s non-conformity with the Veda was also affirmed by Śaṅkara. In his Brahmāsūtrakāṇḍa (BSBh) on 2.2.45 (418.1-5), Śaṅkara claims that there are a number of doctrinal issues on which the Pāñcarātra teaching is in conflict with the Veda (vedvīpratīṣedha).

According to currently accepted chronologies, both Kumārila and Śaṅkara lived long before the composition of our earliest Pāñcarātra scriptural sources. It is, for this reason alone, difficult to estimate the effect that these thinkers’ criticisms might have

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187 Vincent Eltschinger (2010) refers to Helmut Krasser’s forthcoming article “How to Teach a Buddhist Monk to Refute the Heretics? Bhāviveka’s relationship to Kumārila and Dhammadīrti”. In this article, Krasser places Kumārila in the sixth century. I am very grateful to Dr. Eltschinger for providing me with a copy of his own article.
had on Pāñcarātra traditions themselves. Having said this, it seems somehow unlikely that Śaṅkara’s rejection of the Pāñcarātra’s compatibility with the Veda would have significantly influenced developments within the Pāñcarātra, not least because it is based on a philosophical position and an interpretation of the Veda which our earliest Pāñcarātra authors do not appear to have shared.\(^\text{188}\) If the Pāñcarātrika response to Mīṃśaka criticism in later South India is anything to go by, however, it seems probable that Kumārila’s attack on the credibility of the Pāñcarātra would have elicited a more significant reaction. For Kumārila’s rejection of the Pāñcarātra’s validity is based not on a few metaphysical distinctions but, as with Yāmuna’s Mīṃśaka opponent in the Āgamaçarmacāṇya (ĀP), on their entire methodology, and on their sociocultural status, which Kumārila claims lies “outside the Veda” (vedabāhyah, TV 330.17).

As it stands, there is no evidence either way for a direct Pāñcarātrika response to Kumārila or to Śaṅkara. At any rate, as we will see shortly, these thinkers’ criticisms of the Pāñcarātra appear to have had little influence on the authors of the earliest Saṃhitās, who quite openly announce their own teachings’ superiority to the Veda.\(^\text{189}\) But we might tentatively suppose that certain formal features of the Pāñcarātra scriptural tradition – the terminology borrowed from Vedic ritual (yāga, ijuḥ, etc.), the fact that the works are written in Sanskrit, normally in the anuṣṭubh metre, that they are called saṃhitā – may have been motivated by a desire to counter the sort of attitude displayed by Kumārila. Of course, judging by the evidence provided in Yāmuna’s ĀP, and also in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s play Āgamaçambara (ĀḌ), these strategies were not wholly successful. In the latter (ĀḌ 4.3), for instance, a “Vedic officiant” (ṛtvik) names the Pāñcarātrikas alongside the Śaivas, Pāśupatas, Śāṅkhyaś, Buddhists (saugata) and Digambara Jains as members of “heterodox

\(^{188}\) The JS, SS and PauṣS are in no sense “philosophical” texts, and nor do they articulate a consistent metaphysics. However, each of them generally inclines more towards the position of “difference and non-difference” (bhedabheda), than towards Śaṅkara’s type of “non-dualism” (advaita). On Bhedabhedavāda in the JS see Rastelli (1999); in the SS, see below.

\(^{189}\) This apparent lack of influence is hardly surprising given the distance in time between these thinkers and the composition of the Saṃhitās. Inevitably, geography may also have been a factor. Śaṅkara was almost certainly from South India (Lorenzen 1983: 156). Kumārila was probably also from the south, though this is less certain (Taber 2007: 390). As I have stated above, the JS, SS and PauṣS were all probably initially composed in North India.
religions” (bāhyāgamā, Dezső 2005: 193), voicing his annoyance “that these Pāñcarātrikas Bhāgavatas should adopt brahminical manners” (ĀḌ 4.11, trans. Dezső 2005: 195). Several centuries after Kumārila, then, the Pāñcarātra continued to attract criticism from orthodox outsiders who saw themselves as the genuine representatives and custodians of Vedic tradition. But the very fact that Pāñcarātrikas could acquire the support of a non-Vaiṣṇava Brahmin such as Jayanta indicates, at least, that by the time of the composition of our earliest Saṃhitās, they had become, in Sanderson’s (1985: 208 n. 3) words, “well-connected”. Indeed, this is conveyed quite clearly in the ĀḌ itself, when the Vedic officiant grudgingly remarks that Queen Sugandhā is reported to be sympathetic (sānukrośā) towards the Bhāgavatas (i.e. the Pāñcarātrikas), and that a royal minister (rājapuruṣa) shows favour to them (ĀḌ 4.19).

Unfortunately, at present we know very little about the precise context in which the earliest Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās were written. Sanderson (2009: 58ff) has recently drawn attention to evidence suggesting that the Pāñcarātra received royal patronage during the Kārkoṭa dynasty (c. 626-855 CE) of Kashmir, and that it went into decline in that region shortly thereafter, as royal preference shifted to the Śaivism of the Mantramārga. According to Sanderson (ibid.: 61), it is highly probable that the Pāñcarātra produced its earliest extant works while “in the shadow of Śaivism”, and that these texts are “the product of a thorough reformation in which Vaiṣṇavas followed the example of the already flourishing Śaiva Mantramārga in order to provide themselves with a substantially new ritual system that would enable them to compete more effectively with their rivals.” Elsewhere, Sanderson (2005: 232 n. 3) notes that the most prominent among these rivals, namely the Śaiva Saiddhāntikas, “came to be widely accepted as co-religionists in traditional brahmanical circles”, and that this is attested to, for example, in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s Nyāyamaṇjarī. How did

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190 Dezső’s translation of the Vedic officiant’s complaints at ĀḌ 4.11 continues thus: “They [Pāñcarātrikas] mix with brahmins and have no scruples about using the form of greeting that only we may use to our equals. They recite the Pāñcarātra scriptures with a special pattern of accented syllables, as if they were taking the text of Veda as their example. “We are brahmins,” they say of themselves, and demand that others speak of them in the same way.”

191 Sugandhā, queen consort of the ruling Śaṅkaravarman, would later briefly become regent (904-906 CE), though I am not aware of any evidence that Pāñcarātrikas benefitted from this.
the Saiddhāntikas acquire this status? This is an important question for our own purposes since, as Jayanta and Yāmuna show, it is precisely this recognition that Pāñcarātrikas craved. If the Pāñcarātra remodelled itself in accordance with Šaiva norms, then, we can assume that their strategies coincided to some degree with those of the Saiddhāntikas. Here it is worth quoting Sanderson’s (2005: 231-232) summary of the latter:

[T]he Šaivism of the Mantramārga developed in practice a thorough accommodation of the brahmanical religion that it claimed to transcend, thus minimizing, even eliminating, the offense it gave as a tradition whose scriptures, like those of the Buddhists, were seen to be, and claimed to be, outside the corpus of the Vedas. These Šaivas were to accept that the brahmanical tradition alone was valid in the domain it claimed for itself and that they were bound to follow its prescriptions and incorporate its rituals beside their own wherever practicable.

With regard to the early Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, this method of accommodation is perhaps most strikingly evident in the inclusion in the daily liturgy of a fire-sacrifice based on the Vedic model (e.g. JS 15, SS 6.76-168b, PauṣS 28.1-29.61). Indeed, as Rastelli (2000a) has pointed out, there are numerous correspondences between the daily religious duties of Pāñcarātrikas, and those of the “orthoprax” Smārta householders. However, such methods of accommodation and appropriation do not, in the earlier works, represent an attempt to situate their own religious practices within the domain of Vedic ritualism. For there is, in addition, a large repertoire of supernumerary duties, the performance of which can lead to higher accomplishments than are available to those who practise only the Smārta rites. This idea is introduced at the very beginning of the JS, during the narration of the transmission of the teaching (śāstrāvataraṇa). Here, when the sage Saṃvartaka asks his father Aurva how rebirth in saṃsāra can be avoided, Aurva tells him that long ago, in the Kṛta Age, he had sought the same goal by practising austerities alongside sages learned in the Veda and its auxiliary disciplines (vedāṅga, JS 1.7). After many thousands of years of unproductive asceticism, a great voice had told them that performing sacrifices, studying the Veda, giving gifts, and undertaking various rites and vows such as the Cāndrāyana fast etc., would not lead to liberation from bondage, even
after ten million yugas, without knowledge of the supreme god (JS 1.8-16). This knowledge is made available in the following teaching.

The Veda’s inability to lead its practitioners towards liberation is also expressed in the śāstrāvataranā portions of later works, including the Paramasamhītat (ParS 1.3-4) and the Pādmasamhītat (PādS jpit 1.2-9). The primary purpose of this claim, no doubt, is that it serves as a justification for an additional system of rites, while at the same time conveying the superiority of the Pāñcarātra teaching. But the way in which the claim is articulated, which is fairly consistent across texts, also serves another important purpose. It conveys the notion that those who undertake initiation into the Pāñcarātra have already been initiated into the Veda, but have been unable to achieve their goal/s within that system. In this way, the Pāñcarātra is presented as an additional, higher teaching for Vedic initiates who desire additional and higher goals. The passage from the JS which I summarised above might not belong to the oldest parts of that text, but the general idea it expresses (if not its single-minded prioritisation of liberation over other accomplishments) can also be found, for example, in the SS. In the 21st chapter of this work, which is devoted to the general rules for initiates, it is announced that “the content (or ‘meaning’) of the teaching is revealed to devotees who have undergone initiation (dikṣā). And for the others, there is the Dharmaśāstra” (or, as Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa, the SS’s later commentator puts it “only the Dharmaśāstra”, kevaladharmaśāstram, STBh p. 509). The later Ahirbudhnyasamhītā (AS) even draws on orthodox Brahminical tradition to express a similar point. Here, it is said that the Vedic initiation (upanayana) represents a “second birth”, whereas initiation into the Pāñcarātra (yajñadikṣā) is the “third birth”.

The earliest of the published Saṃhitās situate themselves above the Veda. What is more, we can be certain that earlier Pāñcarātrikas, whose texts have not survived,
also held this position, for it is explicitly criticised by Śaṅkara in his BSBh.\textsuperscript{195} It is also, as we will see in Chapter Seven, continuous with methods of classification found in the younger parts of the \textit{Nārāyaṇīya}. Although the earliest Saṁhitās present themselves notionally as higher teachings for those who are already eligible for Vedic instruction, in reality, as we will see below, they appeal to a considerably broader social audience, and they do not claim to be “rooted in the Veda”. As far as I am aware, the earliest articulation of the idea that the Pāñcarātra is rooted in the Veda is contained in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s late ninth or early tenth century philosophical drama the ĀḌ. Here, the eminent Naiyāyika scholar known as Dhairyarāśī argues that “statements of the Pāñcarātra and other such [traditions] are valid \textit{(prāmāṇyaḥetuḥ)} because they are rooted in the Veda \textit{(vedamūla)}” (ĀḌ 4.147). In South India, this became a common theme. Yāmuna’s ĀP (e.g. 7.12-14) demonstrates clearly in its \textit{pūrva-pakṣa} section that the \textit{vedamūla} principle was, by this time, already well established within the Pāñcarātra. Yāmuna’s own response to his Mīmāṁsaka opponent’s denial that the Pāñcarātra is rooted in the Veda is as follows:

\begin{quote}
\textit{sa khalu bhagavān amoghasahajasamvedanasākṣādbhavadakhilavedarāśī}
viprakīrṇavividhāvidhyarthavādamantrātmakānekaśākhādhyayanadhāraṇādiṣv
adhīradhiyo bhaktān avalokya tadanukampaḥ laghungopāyena tadarthāṃ
saṃkṣiptyopadideśeti. – “The Lord, for whom the entire collection of the Vedas is immediately present on account of his innate and unerrering perception, upon seeing that his devotees were not sufficiently concentrated in their minds for studying and remembering the multiple recensions with their diverse and scattered injunctions, explanations and mantras, out of compassion [for his devotees] abridged its content in a succinct manner, and taught it thus.” (ĀP 102.6-9)
\end{quote}

Here, then, we see a clear articulation of what the Pāñcarātra’s being “rooted in the Veda” entails for Yāmuna. The singular Pāñcarātra teaching is a concise summary or “abridgement” of the vast and disordered collection of Vedic recensions (\textit{sākṣābh}). This abridgement has been authored by God, and elsewhere (e.g. ĀP 39.1-7, 60.5ff, 84.1-3) Yāmuna has already shown that Viṣṇu’s reliability is vouched for in

\textsuperscript{195} BSBh on 2.2.45 (418.4-5): \textit{vedavipratisedhaś ca bhavati – catuṣṇa veḍeṣu paraṃ śreyo ‘labdhvā śaṇḍilya idam śastras adhitagavān ityādvedanindādarsanāt /}. – “And there is conflict with the Veda, for it is seen that the Veda is censured is statements such as “Not finding the supreme good in the four Vedas, Śaṇḍilya learnt this teaching (i.e. Pañcarātra).”
the unauthored (apauruṣeya) Vedas themselves. This application of the vedamūlatva principle represents a significant development from formulations found in the Pūrvaṁāṃśā. In that tradition, the authority of “remembered” (smṛti) texts and practices which are “rooted in the Veda” is conferred by “texts inferentially proven to exist” i.e. “Vedic texts for one reason or another not accessible to us” (Pollock 1997: 404, 407). By contrast, Yāmuna’s Pāñcarātra is “rooted in the Veda” in the sense that it is a reformulation (by God, no less) not merely of various scattered injunctions (see ibid.: 409), or of a lost or otherwise inaccessible Vedic text or recension, but of “the entire Vedic corpus” (akhilavedarāśīḥ).

Turning to the Pāñcarātra scriptures themselves, we find the same idea in the opening chapter of the Viśvāmitrasaṁhitā (ViŚ), a presumably late, South Indian work which is not referred to by Vedāntadeśika, and so may well postdate him. Here, at ViŚ 1.73-79, we are told that the Vedas were a source of confusion and that to remedy this, Nārāyaṇa condensed their content, the resulting abridgement being the “knowledge called Pāñcarātra” (pañcarātrāhvayām jñānam), said to be the “absolute essence of the content (or ‘meaning’) of the Vedas” (vedārthasārasarvasvam). Of course, this idea that the Pāñcaratra teaching constitutes a condensed version or abridgement (saṁkṣepa) of the Vedas carries with it the implication that, being shorter and easier to understand, it is actually an improvement on these texts. As we have seen, it was precisely this implied claim that was offered as evidence for the Pāñcarātra tradition’s “non-Vedic” status by Śaṅkara in his BSBh (418.1-5, on 2.2.45). It is also directly referred to by Yāmuna’s imagined Mīmāṁsaka opponent in the ĀP (102.14ff).196 In fact, in the fourteenth century, Vedāntadeśika (e.g. PRR 25.8ff) was still having to defend the Pāñcarātra against the accusation that they censured the Veda, and considered their own system to be superior.

Of the works available to me, it is only among the later, post-Yāmuna Śaṅkhītās that we encounter evidence of the vedamūlatva principle being explicitly incorporated into modes of scriptural self-understanding.197 With the exception of the

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196 Yāmuna himself makes sure that he is not misunderstood on this point – for him the Pāñcarātra and the Veda are equally authoritative (pañcarātrasrutiḥ ekārthāyam eva pratīyate, ĀP 105.3).

197 However, a verse conveying the vedamūlatva principle which is quoted without attribution by Yāmuna at ĀP 102.11-12 is also quoted by Rāmānuja in his ŚrīBh (332.15-19) alongside verses from
ViśS, these Saṃhitās tend to utilise a considerably more moderate version of the *vedamālātva* idea – one that, at least ostensibly, reverses the notion that the Veda is inferior to the Pāñcarātra. Perhaps one of the earliest clear expressions of such an idea within the scriptural corpus is the declaration, found in both the PādS (*jp* 1.91cd) and the *Viṣvakṣenasamhitā* (ViṣS 8.5ab), that it is “rooted in śruti, and is an authority like the Kalpaśūtras” (*śrutimūlam idam tantram pramāṇam kalpasūtravat*).

As we have seen, the same verse is found in the later Śrīpuruṣottamaśaṃhitā (ŚrīpurS),198 and it also occurs in the presumably later Mārkaṇḍeyasaṃhitā (MārkS).199 The claim in each of these works that they are equivalent in status to the Kalpaśūtras is a rather humble retreat from earlier declarations (at e.g. PauṣS 38.307c-309) that the Pāñcarātra is superior to the Veda. These younger Saṃhitās most likely compare themselves to the late ancillary (*aṅga*) Vedic Śūtras on the solemn (*śrauta*) and domestic (*grhya*) rites, and the rules for proper behaviour (*dharma*), which were universally categorised as Smṛti texts by this period (Witzel 2003: 87), in order to convey the idea that they are merely “ritual handbooks” which represent no great challenge to Vedic orthopraxy – indeed, they are continuous with that orthopraxy.

A similar claim is found in the *Viṣṇusamhitā* (ViṣṇuS). N. P. Unni (1991: 7-10), in his long introduction to the printed edition of this text, suggests that the ViṣṇuS was authored by a Keralan Brahmin before, or during, the fourteenth century. He arrives at this *terminus ad quem* on the basis that the *Tantrasamuccaya*, which he says can be dated to the fourteenth century (though several scholars, see e.g. Ślączka 2010, in fact date it to the fifteenth), is indebted to the ViṣṇuS. The ViṣṇuS, which is strikingly “non-sectarian” in its outlook, calls itself a ‘Tantra’ (ViṣṇuS 2.1), which it

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198 ŚrīpurS 1.26cd. Here the verse appears to have been drawn directly from the PādS. Note, also, ŚrīpurS 1.27cd ↔ MārkS 1.42cd.

199 MārkS 1.38ab. In this instance too, the verse appears to have been borrowed directly from the PādS, since the ensuing verses are also contained in the earlier work (MārkS 1.39-42b ← PādS *jp* 1.93c-96). My assumption that the MārkS is later than the PādS is based upon the reasons articulated in Smith (1975: 328) and Gonda (1977: 106). The ViṣS, meanwhile, may be more or less contemporary with the PādS (Matsubara 1994: 35).
defines etymologically as “that by which all things are accomplished and people are protected from danger” (sarve 'thā yena tanyante trāyante ca bhayāj janāḥ, ViṣṇuS 2.10cd). According to ViṣṇuS 2.20, there are five subdivisions of ‘Tantra’, each distinguished from the other on the basis of their having different speakers (vakr̥).

The five distinct Tantras are named as Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Brāhma, Saura, and Kaumāra. The ViṣṇuŚ argues that “because it is rooted in the Veda, or rather in [the authority of] reliable persons (āpta), Tantra is an authoritative source of knowledge like the Purāṇas or like the statements of Manu and others.”

A few verses later, this position is explained when the ViṣṇuŚ adopts the Naiyāyika view (which is contrary to that held by Yāmuna) that the Veda, like the Tantra, is itself an authoritative source of knowledge because it derives from a reliable person (āptamūlātā, i.e. God). Because Viṣṇu is a teacher of dharma (dharmapravakṛt), we are told, what is said by him is akin to the statements of Manu (manuvākyavat, ViṣṇuŚ 2.21ab).

The ViṣṇuŚ is one of many late South Indian Pāñcarātra works which explicitly enjoin the concurrent use of “Vedic” (vaidika) and “Tantric” (tāntrika) mantras. Other scriptures which presumably belong to a similar period (i.e. 13th-14th centuries, or possibly even later), and which also enjoin what the Nāradīyasamhitā (NārŚ) calls “mixed worship” (miśrārcana, 2.63ab), include the ViśŚ, the Śrīprāṣṇasamhitā (ŚrīprŚ), and the ŚrīpurŚ. Among the apparently earlier (pre-Vedāntadeśika) South Indian works which openly prescribe a “mixed” (miśra, vyāmiśra) form of worship, we can count the PādŚ, the Bhāṛgavatāntra (BhT), the NārŚ, the Viṣvāksenasaṃhitā (ViṣŚ), the Lakṣmitāntra (LT), and the Sanatkumārasaṃhitā.

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200 ViṣṇuŚ 2.11c-12b: vedamūlatayā tantraṁ āptamūlatayāhavā // purāṇavat pramāṇaṁ syāt tathā manvādvākyavat //.
201 ViṣṇuŚ 2.19: āptaprotatayā tantraṁ pramāṇaṁ iti ye viduḥ / vedaprāmāyaṁ apy āhur āptamūlatayai va te //. The idea that the Vedas are adopted by Viṣṇu is, unsurprisingly, common in the later Pāñcarātra works. Elsewhere see e.g. ViśŚ 4.34.
202 See for example ViṣṇuŚ 4.18c-19, and 29.38-51b, 83.
203 See the list of Vedic mantras in the printed edition of the ViśŚ p. 298. At ViśŚ 6.2ff, knowledge of the rṣi and chandas elements (6.10ab) of the prāṇava mantra is declared to be a prerequisite for this mantra’s successful employment.
204 See e.g. ŚrīprŚ 16.34. For a list of the Vedic mantras used in the ŚrīprŚ, see Padmanabhan’s (1969) appendix to the printed edition of the text.
205 See e.g. ŚrīpurŚ 19.12c-13, 22.46ff and 24.41ff.
206 See e.g. BhT 24.17-18, 27ff.
207 See ViṣŚ 8.3c-6, 12.1ff, 13.1-12, 13.34ff, 20.343ff, 31.7-9, 39.316 etc.
208 See LT 11.49, and especially chapters 28-29 and 49-50. See also Gupta (2000: 391).
In the scriptural literature that is available to me, the claim that the Pāñcarātra teaching is “rooted in the Veda” is one that is made exclusively by Pāñcarātrikas who practise what they call “mixed worship”. As we have seen in previous chapters, the PādS claims that this kind of worship is restricted to Pāñcarātrikas who belong to the tradition called ‘Mantrasiddhānta’. Among later works, the BhT (22.88, 24.17-50), the ŚrīprśŚ (16.31c-34), and the MārkŚ all associate themselves with this tradition. In the following, I attempt a brief and, inevitably, preliminary overview of the ways in which Pāñcarātra texts authorising mixed worship attempted to present themselves as being in conformity with Vedic tradition, while nonetheless avoiding some of the restrictions which a genuine conformity would have entailed.

ii.) “Vedification” in the South Indian Pāñcarātra

In an article devoted to the referent of the term dharma in the Dharmasūtras, Albrecht Wezler (2004) explores the manner in which “the dharma of the Dharmaśāstra” is presented as having been “extracted” from the Veda. Addressing the opening two verses of the Gautamadharmasūtra (GDh), Wezler argues that there is a clear distinction presupposed between the Vedic dharma, on the one hand, and “the dharma of the Dharmaśāstra” on the other. It is the latter, says Wezler, to which Gautama refers in the phrase “the Veda is the root of dharma” (vedo dharmamūlam, GDh 1.1). According to Wezler, this statement, together with the second verse, which he translates as “and tradition as well as practice of those who know it (that is, the Veda), [are the root of dharma]”, is a clear sign of a process of “Vedification”, which he explains as meaning “in the first place the development of the vedamūlatva concept” (ibid.: 643-644).

209 See SanS Brahmātra 4.68c-73, Rṣirātra 5.30c-40b, 7.1-73, 9.7-10, 22-24 etc.
210 MārkŚ 1.26ab: tasya ayaṁ mantrasiddhānto mārkandaṇḍeyākhyāyā iritah // - “Among these [Saṁhitās], this which is named Mārkandaṇḍeya is said to be [a teaching of] the Mantrasiddhānta.”
“Vedification” is a useful term to apply to the processes at work in the South Indian Pāñcarātra scriptures which I have listed above. Inevitably, when applied to this much later literature, the concept of “Vedification” carries quite different implications from those intended by Wezler, for by the time of the composition of these works the term ‘Veda’ had a substantially broader scope of reference than in Gautama’s day. The enlargement of the Vedic canon in the intervening centuries was itself, of course, largely an outcome of the application of the vedamūlatva principle (see especially Halbfass 1991 and Pollock 1997). Needless to say, when I use Wezler’s term in reference to the Pāñcarātra, I do not mean to identify the ‘Veda’ of the Dharmasūtras with the broader body of texts and practices by means of which the authors of the later Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās attempted to establish the legitimacy of their tradition.

Of course, we can see processes of Vedification in operation already in the earliest Saṃhitās, especially in certain formal features of the texts themselves and also in their incorporation of Vedic rituals into the daily practice of initiates. However, as we have seen, these works (I am thinking specifically here of the JS, SS and PauṣS) do not establish their own authority on the grounds that they are “rooted in the Veda”. The Pāñcarātrika method of accommodating or appropriating Vedic practices was no doubt intended to enhance its credibility in the eyes of outsiders, and to present Pāñcarātrika forms of worship as continuous with the more orthoprax systems. But the texts themselves, in their narrative portions, do not locate their own tradition within the Veda, or even as based upon it, as the later Saṃhitās do. Rather, Vedic practice, on the rare occasions it is explicitly identified as such, is presented as preliminary to, and subordinate to, a higher system of Viṣṇu worship.

The idea that the Pāñcarātra way of worship is superior to the Veda because it is soteriologically effective is clearly present among the later South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions which enjoin “mixed worship”, and it can still be found in their scriptures. Thus, in the opening chapter of the PādS (jp 1.92d-93), in a verse referred to previously, it is expressly said that the Pañcarātra can grant liberation whereas the Veda (“the tree which possesses the Kalpasūtras”) cannot. However, this verse is followed very quickly by the qualifier “there is no teaching superior to the Veda”
Such proclamations of deference towards the Veda, which seem rather perfunctory at times, and may have been added later in the last case, can be found increasingly often in the younger works. For example, clear signs of Vedification are evident in the NārS, a work which is quoted by Vedāntadeśika, and which therefore very probably predates such scriptures as the ĪS, ŚrīprS, ViśS, MārkS, ViṣṇuS and ŚrīpurS. The NārS teaches that the Pāñcarātra mantras are themselves Vedic: “Those mantras which are revealed here in the Pañcarātra, they are all known to be Vedic. This secret called ‘Pāñcarātra’ is certainly Vedic, and the path of the Veda is manifested [here]”.

However, this verse occurs only very shortly after another in which the NārS rules that “whatever is not spoken of in detail [here], with regard to the [samskāras] beginning with the impregnation rite, that should always be performed by the wise according to the path which is taught in the Veda”. This clearly gives priority to the Pāñcarātra system, or to the NārS itself, since the earlier part of this chapter (NārS 29.1-36b) explains in detail how the life-cycle rites (samskāra) should be performed. Of course, the inclusion of such passages is itself a sign of Vedification, but the implicit instruction here is that the NārS’s injunctions should replace those of the Veda, and that the latter should be consulted only for additional information.

There are, to be sure, different degrees of Vedification. The Veda is frequently praised as the highest teaching in the late South Indian Pāñcarātra works, but often such claims appear to be doing little more than paying lip service or, as

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211 Vedāntadeśika cites a ‘Nāradiya’ on four occasions in his PRR. None of the verses quoted are found in the printed edition of the NārS, but on the first occasion (at PRR 16.19-20) the quoted verses are addressed to Gautama. Gautama is, along with Nārada, the principal interlocutor of the present version of the NārS. This makes it quite likely, then, that Vedāntadeśika had access to a different version of the same work.

212 NārS 29.39-40b: atra mantrās tu ye kecit pāñcarātre prakāṣitāḥ / te surve vaidikāḥ jñeyāḥ rahasyaṁ vaidikam tv idam // pāñcarātram iti khyātaṁ vedādhvaprakaṣṭkṛtam //.

213 NārS 29.36c-37b: niṣekādiśu sarvatra yad yad uktaṁ avistaram // vedoditena mārgena tat tat kāryaṁ viśeṣāṁ //.

214 Elsewhere, the NārS states that either the Vedic or the Pāñcarātrika life-cycle rites should be performed. NārS 11.81: niṣekādyāṁs tu samskārāṁ vaidikāṁs tu samacaret / pāñcarātroriṇīn vāpi evaṁ vamśair (corr. vamśer) anuṣṭhitān //.
Louis Renou (1960: 2) has characterised such conventions, as offering “un simple ‘coup de chapeau’ en passant”. A good example of such an attitude is found in the Viśīṣṭ (3.2-6b), where it is said that the Pāñcarātrika guru should be a Brahmin who is learned not only in the Vedas together with their auxiliary limbs (sāṅgavedavit), but also in the Nyāyaśāstra, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, and in the discipline of architecture, planning and construction (vāstuśāstra). There are many similar passages in other works, which I do not need to list here. But we also encounter what we might interpret as more “genuine” processes of Vedification. A good example of this can be found in the ViṣṇuS’s assertion that the initiate should always perform what is stipulated in the Dharmaśāstra in his own home, and that what is spoken of in the Tantras is in conformity with the laws relating to family (or clan, kula), social class (varṇa), and stage of life (āśrama).

Needless to say, this idea of the equivalence between Tantra and Dharmaśāstra, and the injunction for the initiate to adhere to the domestic rules of the latter, represents a somewhat radical revision of the SS’s earlier claim, referred to above, that the Dharmaśāstra is only for those who have not undergone initiation (dīkṣā). According to this prescription in the ViṣṇuS, then, initiation into the Pāñcarātra would not disturb one’s daily duties as a householder – a pledge which was no doubt intended to appeal to an audience who wished to maintain their Śaṅkara obligations.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of genuine Vedification is the gradual change in scriptural attitudes towards social class (varṇa). In the earliest of the published Saṁhitās, the JS, SS and PauṣŚ, there are several passages which attest to a relatively open, socially inclusive policy regarding initiation and participation in the post-initiatory rites. In all three texts, initiation is unambiguously open to members of all four varṇas as well as to women. The JS states that “the whole world should be initiated!” (dīkṣayen medinīṁ sarvam, JS 16.10a), and this is shown to include “pure-minded” (bhāvītātman) women and children (JS 16.2ab). In the case of women this appears to mean that they must be virgins (kanyakā, JS 16.59c), of whom it is said that they are only able to undergo the intitiation which grants “enjoyments” (bhoga).

215 ViṣṇuS 29.68: svagṛhye dharmaśāstre ca yaduktam tat sadācare // tantroktam aviruddham ca kulavarṇāśramānugam ///.
and “perfections” (siddhi, JS 16.82) i.e. not liberation. Eligibility for initiation does not extend to the offspring of pratiloma marriages, i.e. wherein the man is of a lower social class than the woman (JS 18.19ab). Regarding the role of preceptor (ācārya), the JS (18.5c-9) rules that he should be a Brahmin, but that in the absence of a Brahmin, a Kṣatriya is competent to initiate Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas and Śūdras, while in the absence of a Kṣatriya, a Vaishya may initiate Vaishyas and Śūdras. A Śūdra, meanwhile, may initiate other Śūdras. In the JS’s chapter on the rites of reparation (prāyaścitta), however, we meet with a more orthodox attitude towards social class. Here, for example, a reparation rite is enjoined if one has eaten food that has been touched by a village hog, a vulture, a jackal, a monkey, a cockerel or a Śūdra—the “leftovers” of any of these are considered “contaminated”. The same chapter prescribes the repetition of mantras (japa) as reparation for the intentional or unintentional killing of a woman, Śūdra or child (strīśūdrālayakān hatvā…, JS 25.108), and for entering the home of a Caṇḍāla, a washerman (rajaka) or a leather worker (carmakāra, JS 25.109c-112b).

The present versions of the SS and the PauṣS do not contain similar passages on the reparation rites. Nor do they state that a Śūdra may act as preceptor to other Śūdras, but both clearly state that initiation is open to members of all four varṇas (e.g. SS 16.17-22, 19.42-45, PauṣS 1.35ab, 38.72), and both allow that women can be initiated (SS 19.6, PauṣS 1.34-36). According to the SS (7.57-64), members of all varṇas who aspire to liberation only can perform the twelve year vow (dvādaśavārṣikavrata), though each varṇa must begin the vow at different times of the year. Regarding the rites of reparation (prāyaścitta), the SS (16.20-22) rules that the lower the varṇa of the initiate, the longer the rites must be performed in order to destroy whatever impurities (kalmaṣa) have accumulated. Elsewhere, it is mentioned that the different varṇas have their own mantras (svamantra, SS 18.9c-10b). However, all initiates (i.e. including Śūdras and women) appear to be eligible to

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216 JS 25.14-15: vidvarāhair atho grāhagomāyukakakṣaṁai / sansprṣṭam antyajanāpi śūdrādviṣeṣitaṁ / abhoyāmannaṁ tu vā bhuktvā sevitvā ’nyasṛṣṭram tu vā / snātvā bhuktvā tv ahorātram paṅcagavyaṁ samācared. II.

217 According to Manu (10.12, 16) a Caṇḍāla is the lowest Pratiloma i.e. the offspring of a Śūdra father and a Brahmin mother. He is, says Manu, “the worst of men” (adkhamo nrñāṁ, ibid.).

218 In the SS (19.6), as in the JS, these women must be “pure minded” or “devout” (bhāvītātman).
receive the sacred thread (*upavīta*) at the end of the *bhūtaśuddhi* rite (SS 19.51c-52b), and though Śūdras may not recite the mantric formulas *vaüşaṭ, svāḥā* and *vaṣaṭ*, they can achieve the same effect (*kārya*) by reciting *namah*. In an earlier chapter (SS 2.7c-12b), as we have seen above, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are prohibited from worshipping the Vyūhas with mantras. Meanwhile, the PauṣS (27.131c-132) endorses the use of mantras with the *praṇava* (*om*) by Śūdras, provided they are suitable (*yogyatāvasāt*), and by women, provided they are virtuous (*sadācāravasāt*). In another passage of the PauṣS, which is largely incomprehensible due to the corrupt and lacunose text, it is nonetheless possible to discern the claim that there is no fault (*doṣa*) accrued when Brahmins who are learned in the Veda eat food which has been offered in worship by Śūdras. In a later chapter, it is forbidden to give the food offered in worship (*naivedya*) to non-devotees (*abhakta*), “deniers” (*nāstika*), those of a wicked nature (*durātman*), women, Śūdras, animals and servants (PauṣS 31.197-199).

The JS and the PauṣS in particular contain passages which appear to express conflicting attitudes towards the Brahminical *varṇa* system. This is not especially surprising given that these are not homogeneous, singly authored works, but it is worth restating the presence of these inconsistencies in order to remind ourselves of the difficulty in speaking about these texts in “general” terms. Indeed, this is especially true of the JS and the PauṣS, both of which contain portions which appear to have been authored in South India, in a sociocultural context quite different from that of their presumably North Indian origins. It may be tentatively proposed that the more “orthodox” attitudes towards social class, such as those expressed in the passage from the PauṣS just referred to (i.e. PauṣS 31.197-199), and in the prescriptions for the reparation rites in JS 25, belong to the later portions of these works since, as we will see presently, such attitudes are found increasingly often in

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219 The *bhūtaśuddhi* rite consists of “the purification of the elements within the body [of the initiate]” (Flood 2006: 106). See also Flood (2000).

220 SS 19.54c-55b: *vaüşaṭsvāḥvaṣṭkāraṇaṁ tu pratikriyā // namaskāreṇa mantrāṇām kārye prāpte hy anugrahe ।.

221 PauṣS 27.695c-697b: *śrotiṣyāṁ dvijendrāṇāṁ tvadarthāśramavartināṁ // yadvad bhūtāṇāṁ dhaviṣ (corr. Apte dhavaṣ) śāḍrā na dōṣo jñānagauravāt // evam svabhāvadipītāṁ nirmalāṇāṁ sadaiva hi // na vai jātaṁ nāṃnairmalyāṁ (corr. Apte na nairmalyāṁ) bhavect chūḍrapurigrahāt ।.
the later, South Indian Saṃhitās. It is worth noting in this context that Smith (1975: 130) has drawn attention to another verse in the JS’s chapter on the reparation rites (JS 25.144) which, in his opinion, points to a South Indian provenance. Of course, palaeographic evidence would be required to conclusively determine whether sections of this chapter have indeed been inserted into older material.

In the South Indian works, then, there is a gradual but decisive shift in attitudes. The SanS, which may be one of the earliest extant South Indian scriptures since it is quoted by Yāmuna in his ĀP, 222 gives a good indication of this in the ninth chapter of the section called Indrarātra. Here, the following is said:

ācāryagrahane yogyās trayo varṇā dvijātayah / ācāryatvam na śūdrās tu labhate jātucit kvacit // catuṛṇām api varṇānām ācāryo brāhmaṇo bhavet / tadalābe kṣatriyas tu ācāryo vaiśyaśūdrayoh // brāhmaṇa-kṣatriyālābhe vaiśyāḥ syāc chāḍrajanmanah ।। – “The three twice-born social classes are eligible to take up [the position] of ācārya. Śūdras are not permitted [to take up] the position of ācārya under any circumstances. Of the four social classes, a Brahmin should [ideally] be the ācārya. In the absence of him [i.e. a Brahmin], a Kṣatriya [can be] the ācārya for Vaiśyas and Śūdras. In the absence of a Brahmin and a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya can be [the ācārya] for one who is born of Śūdras.” (SanS Indrarātra 9.13-15b)

This is very similar to the passage from the JS (18.5c-9) referred to above, except that here the SanS removes the right for Śūdras to act as preceptors for other Śūdras. Several verses later, the SanS restates this prohibition, but with an addenda:

brāhmaṇāc chāḍrajanmāṇāṃ jātāḥ śūdrotamas tu yah / śūdrāṇāṁ uttamaḥ so 'pi na cācāryatvam arhati // śūdrotamasya kāṇyāyaṁ brāhmaṇād yas tu jāyate / kalpavaiśyās tu proktu vaiśyakalpo na saṃśayāh // sarveṣām api śūdrāṇām sa cācāryo bhāviṣyati ।। – “One who is born of a daughter of a Śūdra, and a Brahmin, is the best of Śūdras. Even though he is the best of Śūdras, he is not able to be an ācārya. But one who is born of the daughter of [one who is] the best of Śūdras, and a Brahmin, he is called a Kalpavaiśya, and he is undoubtedly almost equal to a Vaiśya. He can be an ācārya to all Śūdras.” (SanS Indrarātra 9.24-26b)

Elsewhere, the SanS (Ṛṣirātra 5.30c-40b) prohibits Śūdras and women from entering into the manḍala (see Rastelli 2002a: 132-133), and warns that they should

222 See ĀP 161.6 quoting SanS Indrarātra 9.2ab, and ĀP 162.1-4 quoting SanS Indrarātra 1.10c-11, 10ab.
only be initiated at certain times of the year (SanS Indrarātra 4.9). Nonetheless, like the JS, SS and PauṣS, it does allow that they may be initiated. The acceptance of Śūdras, but with these sorts of qualifications and prohibitions, is common in the South Indian Pāñcarātra literature. Thus, the ViśS (3.17-18b) initially states that the initiate (śiṣya) should be born of a good family (praśastakula) belonging to the highest three social classes (varṇa), and should have studied the Vedas together with their auxiliary parts (sāṅga) etc. However, in a subsequent verse (ViśS 3.27) it is said that the guru, out of compassion (kṛpayā), should also accept as initiates women, Śūdras and (mixed class) Anulomas who are “endowed with noble qualities” (kalyāṇagunasaṃyutāḥ). In a later chapter, the ViśS rules that none of these persons should hear mantras containing the praṇava, or namaḥ, svāhā, ṛtuḥ, and phat etc., or Viṣṇu’s name with the dative ending. This contradicts the SS (19.54c-55b), of course, which rules that Śūdras may recite namaḥ, and the PauṣS (27.131c-132) which allows that women and Śūdras may recite oṃ. The PādS (cp 2.61c-64) contains a very similar proscription against women, Śūdras and Anulomas, as does the later ŚrīprśS (16.138c-141), which also prohibits Śūdras from receiving instruction in the method of the “five times” (gurūttamaḥ // paṇcakālavidhiḥ cāpi vinā śūḍram upādīṣet, ŚrīprŚS 16.137d-138b). In other instances, Śūdras are barred from performing fire-offerings (homa) (e.g. ParS 27.31, ViṣṇuS 2.9c-10b).

Insofar as it is possible to detect unidirectional trends in the large, and often internally inconsistent corpus of South Indian Pāñcarātra literature, then, we might provisionally conclude that there is a greater tendency among the later works towards Brahminical “orthodoxy” with regard to the question of social class (varṇa). Where the SanS, an apparently relatively early South Indian text, allows Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and ‘Kalpavaiśyas’ to perform limited duties as ācārya, for instance, the later NārS (11.21-35b) allows the Kṣatriya to act as guru, but states that only Brahmins may inhabit the higher role of ācārya. Śūdras, in this scheme, are unequivocally restricted

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223 ViśS 9.72-73: śūdrāṇāṃ ca tathā strīṇāṃ anulomabhuvām api / namaḥsvāhāhumphaḍādirahitaṃ praṇavena ca // varjitam viṣṇuṃāvaiva caturthyanam ca pāṭhayet / gīyatṛmin japahoman ca ādadyād brāhmaṇo manum //.

224 See also PādŚ kp 9.19, where it is said that women, Śūdras and Anulomas should worship silently (tūṣṇīm ādhaṇum ācare), which means without mantras (amantraka).
to the lowest level of initiate (samayin). Works which are still later, such as the MärkS (12.1), the ŚrīprśS (4.16-18) and the ŚrīpurS (2.4-8), meanwhile, dictate that only a Brahmin can be guru or acārya. We also find among many later Śaṃhitās an increased antipathy towards Śūdras and women, even when these persons are admitted still for initiation. In several, for example, a rite of purification, or literally “pacification” (śāntihoma), is prescribed in the event that the temple icon (bimba) has been touched by either (e.g. NārS 25.248c-249c, ViṣṇuS 28.22ff, ĪŚ 19.134-145b). Meanwhile the ŚrīprśS, in its chapter on the reparation rites, lists women and those who have not been initiated into the twice-born classes (anupaniita) alongside lepers (kuṣṭhin), people with tuberculosis (yakṣman), the mute (mākaka), those who are blind in one eye (kāṇa), those with missing limbs (aṅgahīna), Pratilomas, and the bastard offspring of adulterous women (kuṇḍa) and widows (golaka) (ŚrīprśS 49.168-169). However, it should be stated that not all of the later texts at my disposal contain such passages. For instance, the 26th chapter of the MärkS, which concentrates mostly on the required reparation rites for damaged temple icons, claims (at MärkS 26.29c-30) that these are defiled by contact with foreigners (mleccha), people with missing limbs (aṅgahīna) and dogs (śvāna), but it does not mention women or Śūdras (though admittedly there is a small portion of text missing at MärkS 26.30c). Likewise, the ŚrīpurS (30.38ff) prescribes a reparation rite in the event that the temple icon is touched by a Cāṇḍāla, a Śabara, or various animals, but it does not mention women and Śūdras.

Moreover, despite the apparent trend towards an increasingly conservative attitude towards women and Śūdras, I have only been able to find one instance where Śūdras are disqualified from initiation altogether. This occurs in the ViṣṇuS (29.2). Even the PādS, which explicitly characterises the Āgamasiddhānta (PādS cp 21.37-225)

225 The NārS (11.21-35b) names a hierarchy of seven initiates: samayin, diṣṭita, cakravartin, abhiṣikta, guru, acārya, and bhagavant. These are respectively identified with seven sacrificial ceremonies: yāga, stoma, mahāyāga, adhvara, sava, kratu, and haristoma. The NārS rules that the Brahmin is qualified to perform all seven sacrifices, the Kṣatriya the first five, the Vaiśya the first three, and the Śūdra only the first (i.e. yāga). Cf. SanS Indrarātra 4.53-55 and ViṣṇuS 29.2-4, both of which name the same sevenfold hierarchy of initiate and the corresponding sacrifices, but which do not add the detail concerning varṇa affiliation.

226 See Manu 3.174 for these definitions of kuṇḍa and golaka.

227 According to Monier-Williams (2002: 1052), ‘Śabara’ is the name of “a wild mountaineer tribe in the Deccan” which was “in later language applied to any savage or barbarian.”
40), the Tantrasiddhānta (PāḍS cp 21.55-56, 66ab), and the Tantrāntarasiddhānta (PāḍS cp 21.70c-73b) as each accepting members of all four varṇas, contains passages which show that the Mantrasiddhānta, its own tradition, did as well (e.g. PāḍS kp 1.15c-17b, cp 2.61c-64). To what, then, can we attribute this continued, albeit often reluctant, acceptance of Śūdras in particular?

Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 62) answers this question with reference to the ParS, but her answer can be applied to the broader context: “The possibility of acceptable Śūdras’ limited participation in the religious life seems to be one of the characteristic features of the ParS’s tradition. It could not accept the full participation of Śūdras, but faced by the political and economical influence of Śūdra devotees, it was obliged to accept them to some extent.” She elaborates on “the circumstances in which Pāñcarātra found itself in the south of India, where orthodox Brahmanism was exceptionally influential but where at the same time groups classified as Śūdras were not only numerically predominant but also in some cases, such as that of the Vellāla agriculturalists, a power element in a society active in the patronage of religion” (ibid.: 73). This latter phenomenon has been discussed by Burton Stein (1980: 241-253), who identifies processes of urbanisation in twelfth and thirteenth century South India as catalysts of a general increase in social mobility. According to Stein (2004: 86, 97), inscriptive evidence from this period attests to the fact that many Śūdras came to enjoy considerable “social power”, and that some Śūdra families, especially from the thirteenth century, “seem to have gained Kshatriya identification through their successful assumption of roles as warrior leaders”.

We might conclude, then, that there were political drawbacks to a thoroughgoing “Vedification” of Pāñcarātra traditions in South India. Although it is certainly not wise to take scriptural ordinances on their own as evidence of ethnographic realities, the extended passage in the SanS (Indrarātra 9.13-50b) which contains the verses on the ‘Kalpavaiśya’ which I have quoted above does appear to indicate an environment in which a high degree of social mobility was possible. The political advantages in continuing to accept Śūdras into the fold must have been substantial given that in other respects Pāñcarātrikas were increasingly keen to stress
the continuity of their own practices with those legitimated by Brahminical orthodoxy. In the sort of social environment described by Czerniak-Drożdżowicz and Stein, it is easy to imagine that there would have been significant advantages also in accepting, to repeat Sanderson’s (2005: 231-232) words, “that the brahmanical tradition alone was valid in the domain it claimed for itself”. Indeed, the SanS can be interpreted as articulating a similar idea, albeit with a final qualification:

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\text{vaidikaṃ tántriṇaṃ caiva tathā vaidikatántriṇam // trividhaṃ karma samproktaṃ pratiṣṭhārādhanādiṣu / vaidikaṃ brāhmaṇāṇāṃ tu rājñāṃ vaidikatántriṇam // tántriṇaṃ vaiśyasūduṛāṇāṃ sarvesāṃ tántriṇaṃ tu vā 1. – }
\]

“Ritual action concerning installation and worship etc. is declared to be threefold: Vedic, Tantric, and Vedic and Tantric. Vedic is for Brahmins, Vedic and Tantric is for kings, [and] Tantric is for Vaiśyas and Śūdras. But [in fact] Tantric is for everyone.” (SanS Brāmarātra 6.29c-31b)

228

The ViṣS, which contains the same verses (at 39.315-316), elsewhere states that “worship for oneself” should be either Vedic or Tantric, while “worship for others” should be either Tantric or “mixed” but never Vedic.229 By such means, the Pāncarātrikas who practised “mixed worship” gave themselves, at least theoretically, a distinct advantage over their Śmārtas rivals, and they did so while managing to maintain a veneer of orthodoxy. For, as is clearly attested in Yāmuna’s ĀP (e.g. 14.10ff), the professional priestly performance of worship “for others” (parārtha) was deeply frowned upon in orthodox Brahminical society, and indeed in that sphere entailed the loss of one’s Brahminical status. As is evident from these regulations in the SanS and the ViṣS, Pāncarātrikas were happy to accept that such restrictions were valid within the domain that imposed them, and of course these constraints, as well those which excluded Śūdras from the category of initiate, worked to their own advantage. For in an environment characterised by increasing social mobility and the rise to power of landowning communities considered by many not to belong to the twice-born classes, the authority and power of the domain that the orthodox

228 See alternative expressions of the same idea at SanS Brāmarātra 4.68c-73, and Rṣirātra 5.37-40, and 9.7-10, 22-24.

229 ViṣS 20.344-345: ātmārthāṃ vaidikenaiva tántriṇenaiva vā mune / parārthe tántriṇenaiva miśritāṃ vā hariṃ param // arcayet pārvavad dhīmān rājñā rāṣtrasya vardhanam / parārthe vaidikenaiva na kuryāt tu kathaṃcana ī.
Brahminical tradition claimed for itself would have been substantially diminished. In such a context, professional Pāñcarātrika ritualists were no doubt keenly aware of the advantages in limiting the degree to which their own tradition underwent Vedification.

### iii.) Conclusions

In this chapter I have attempted to give an overview of the ways in which authors of the Pāñcarātra scriptures associated their own tradition with that of the Veda. Needless to say, this is not intended to be an exhaustive account. As we have seen, the claim that the Pāñcarātra scriptures are “rooted in the Veda” (vedamūlatva) appears to have a long history, since it is mentioned already in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s ninth-tenth century ĀḌ. However, it is not included in the early Saṃhitās, and of the works available to me, its earliest articulation on behalf of the Pāñcarātra is in Yāmuna’s ĀP.

Numerous scriptural works postdating Yāmuna also contain this claim, and it can be found as well among the commentarial works of several of Yāmuna’s influential Vedāntin successors, including Rāmānuja (twelfth century) and Madhva (1238-1317). The latter’s formulation of the vedamūlatva principle appears to be indebted to Yāmuna, though the scope of its application is substantially broader (see Stoker 2004). In the later scriptural literature there is an increasing tendency to present the Pāñcarātra as conforming to orthodox norms, both in terms of its religious practice and in its attitudes towards social class. Hence, many later works restrict the participation of Śūdras, limiting their eligibility to the lower categories of initiate, and prohibiting them from reciting mantras. Some of these texts enjoin the performance of reparation rites in the event that the temple icon has been touched by a Śūdra. However, despite these restrictions, Pāñcarātra traditions of “mixed

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230 See Stein (1980: 233ff) on the increase in non-Brahmin participation in Tamil temples from the twelfth century.
worship” continued to initiate Śūdras, and in so doing very likely gave themselves an advantage over the more orthodox, and less flexible, Vaidika or Śmārtta ritualists. For, as we have seen, in South India during the period in which these texts were composed, powerful Śūdra communities were increasingly active in the patronage of religion.

That the authors of the South Indian Saṃhitās were more intent upon aligning themselves with Vedic tradition than were their North Indian predecessors can be partly explained, no doubt, by the influence of the Śrīvaishṇava tradition, and especially of Yāmuna and, from the twelfth century, Rāmānuja. Both of these influential thinkers lent their support to the Pāñcarātra – the former, as we have seen, in the ĀP, and the latter by the temple reforms he instituted at Śrīraṅgam and, if the hagiographies are to be believed, elsewhere in the south. While Yāmuna defended the Pāñcarātra against its orthodox opponents, and Rāmānuja favoured them over the more orthodox Vaikhānasa tradition, both were nonetheless themselves thoroughly grounded in orthodox Brahminical culture. We know that Rāmānuja, especially, was a traditionalist with regard to matters relating to social class (varṇa), holding, for example, that Śūdras should not be granted access to the knowledge contained in the Upaniṣads (Clooney 2002). Indeed, Rāmānuja’s own social identity, as a Śmārtta Brahmin from the Vaḍama sub-caste (Carman 1974: 28), shows us that worshippers from orthodox backgrounds were affiliating themselves with the Pāñcarātra during this period. There is, as far as I am aware, no way of knowing if the claims to membership within a Vedic lineage, such as we find in several Mantrasiddhānta texts including the PādS (cp 21.2ff), the Adhikah Pāṭhaḥ (109) and an interpolated section of the LT (41.67-78, see Rastelli 2006: 233), are genuine or not. Clearly not all Mantrasiddhāntins could claim this ancestry, and the right, therefore, to be called ‘Bhāgavata’ (see PādS cp 21.14-15). We can suppose, nonetheless, that among those who did, some came, like Rāmānuja, from Brahmimical families which were not, historically, associated with the Pāñcarātra. The processes of Vedification undergone by South Indian Pāñcarātra traditions of mixed worship may have been in large part instigated by these kinds of converts.
5. The Ekāyanaveda

i.) Descriptions of the Ekāyanaveda in the South Indian literature

I will begin this section with a brief summary of the descriptions of the Ekāyanaveda and its followers that are found in several South Indian works. Since some of these descriptions have been addressed above, and Rastelli (2006) has provided a thorough analysis of the material relating to the Ekāyanaveda in its most important testament, the Ṛṣabhaśvarasamhitā (PārS), I will limit myself here to some brief observations which I hope can provide a useful overview of the Pāñcarātrika tradition of the Ekāyanaveda in twelfth-fourteenth century South India. Subsequently, I will address the term ekāyana itself, and explore what the textual evidence can tell us about this Pāñcarātra tradition in earlier centuries.

Although the existence of an “unauthored” (apauruṣeya) Ekāyana scripture (ekāyanaśruti) belonging to a distinct Vedic recension (śākhā) is found already in Yāmuna’s (eleventh-twelfth century) Āgamaśravatā (ĀP), the earliest explicit references to an ‘Ekāyanaveda’ occur only in the later South Indian scriptural works, namely the PārS and the Pādmasamhitā (PādS). In these texts the Ekāyanaveda is described as the teaching (śāstra) to which one particular group of Pāñcarātrikas adhere. These Pāñcarātrikas are known as Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas. The PārS, which is undoubtedly a product of this tradition (Rastelli 2006), refers to the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda as the “good” or “true” tradition (sadāgama), and to the Ekāyanaveda itself as the Ekāntidharma (1.60a) and the “root-Veda” or the “original Veda” (mūlaveda). This latter name reflects the view that the actual Vedas are subordinate teachings. In contrast to the exoteric Vedas which enjoin the worship of multiple deities for various mundane and heavenly rewards, the PārS teaches that the Ekāyanaveda belongs to a “secret tradition” (rahasyāmnāya), whose members worship only Vāsudeva, especially in his fourfold form (caturātmya), and exclusively seek liberation from samsāra. This juxtaposition, wherein the Vedas are
presented as a means to achieving lesser rewards (*bhoga*), and the Ekāyana tradition is characterised as offering the sole means to the highest goal, can be found already in Yāmuna’s ĀP (170.3-7).

Also consistent with Yāmuna’s account is the PārS’s claim, later incorporated into the predominantly Ekāyana *Īśvarasamhitā* (ĪS), that the Ekāyanaveda does not have a “personal” (i.e. human or divine etc.) origin (*apauruṣeya*).\(^\text{231}\) That the Pāncarātra tradition which claimed allegiance to the Ekāyanaveda considered their foundational teaching to be “uncreated” or “authorless” is also affirmed in the only other extant Pāñcarātra scripture which contains the claim that the *Jayākhyasamhitā* (JS), *Sāvatrasamhitā* (SS), and *Pauṣkarasamhitā* (PauṣS) derive from the Ekāyanaveda, namely the *Śrīprasnasamhitā* (ŚrıprasŚS). In the second chapter of this work, the “Pañcarātra śāstra” is equated with “the Veda named Ekāyana” (2.38-41b) which is said to be “eternal, like the Veda” (*vedavan nityam*) (2.41c). This position very likely provides an example of Vedāntin theologians, such as Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, having directly influenced scriptural forms of self-presentation.

According to the PārS (1.67c-71), the Ekāyanaveda prescribes sacrifices such as the aśvamedha, and it contains all Vedic mantras, as well as teaching the 12 syllabled mantra (10.139). It is also said to be characterised by “abstention” or “disengagement” (*nivṛtti*). As Rastelli (2006: 161-168) shows, the author of the PārS borrows this term, alongside many other terms and motifs (the most telling of which is the designation ekāntidharma for the original teaching itself), from the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh), in a deliberate attempt to identify the Ekāyanaveda with the teaching given to Nārada in that text.

The PādS provides us with several descriptions of the Ekāyana tradition which are valuable because they can afford us some insight into how the Ekāyanas were…

\(^\text{231}\) PārS 19.524-526b (→ ĪS 21.561b-563): *ādyam nityoditavyahasthāpanādiprakāsakam / apauruṣeyam sadbhramavāsudevāhyayājīnām // lukṣyabhātām dvijendrāṇām hṛdīshtham adhikārīṇām / brahmopaniṣadākhyaṃ ca divyamantrakiṃyāvītaṃ // vivekādaṃ pariṣṭā param śāstrem anicchāto ‘pavargadām //. Rastelli (2006: 189) has shown that this passage in the PārS draws heavily on SS 2.4-7b, though the “supreme teaching” in the latter work is not said to be *apauruṣeya*, and nor, as Rastelli points out, is it described as being a *veda* of any sort. It is worth noting that in his commentary on SS 2.4-7b, Alaśingabhāṭṭa equates this “supreme śāstra” (param śāstram) with the ekāyanasruti, and claims that the SS is the “essence” of that (ekāyanasaṃrutē sārabhūtaṃ sātvatatantram upadeksyāmīty…).
regarded by certain other Pāñcarātrikas. Of course, we must treat the PādS’s descriptions of the Ekāyanas with a degree of caution, knowing as we do that they are the product of a tradition which apparently competed with the Ekāyanas for the control of public temples. With this in mind, we must pay particular attention to those descriptions of the Ekāyanas in the PādS which are consistent with those found in the PārS and the ĪS, and in portions of other texts, such as the PauṣŚ, which appear to have been authored by Ekāyanas, and consider these to be in general the more reliable. So, for instance, we have little reason to doubt the accuracy of the PādS’s (cp 21.30-32, 47ab) claim that the Ekāyanas worship the fourfold form of god (caturmūrti), since this is also attested to by the Ekāyanas. Also, the claim (cp 21.36cd) that Ekāyanas perform life-cycle rituals (saṃskāra) beginning with the impregnation rite (niṣeka) according to their own system rather than by one or other of the recognised Vedic śākhās, seems to be fairly uncontentious given that Yāmuna (ĀP 169.3ff) states the same, and that no Ekāyana text indicates otherwise.

We have to treat rather more cautiously the PādS’s (cp 21.53) claim that Ekāyanas do not need to undergo an initiation ceremony (dīkṣā), since this is not explicitly stated in the PārS or, as far as I am aware, in any other work. However, as Rastelli (2006: 193-195) points out, this ceremony is not described in the PārS, and in one passage from that text (PārS 13.114c-115) the devotee is promised a rebirth as an Ekāyana if he successfully performs his duties. The PauṣŚ also guarantees a superior rebirth as an Ekāyana, or a ‘Tanmaya’ (36.263c-266b), as reward for devotion to Nārāyaṇa via the performance of mantra-repetition (japa) and fire-offerings (homa). In addition, there is a further clue, albeit from outside the South Indian context, that the Ekāyana is a tradition or “lineage” that one is born into, for the Kashmirian Brahmin Vāmanadatta, author of the so-called Saṃvitprakāśa (SP), claims in the closing verses of each prakaraṇa of that work that he was born into the Ekāyana. So, we may choose to tentatively accept this claim, even if the PādS (cp

232 SP 1.137c-138b reads: ekāyane prasūtaṣya kaśmiśreṣu dvijātmanaḥ // kṛṣṇ vāmanadattasya seyaṁ bhagavadāśrayaḥ / - “Depending on the Lord, this is a work of Vāmanadatta, a Brahmin born in Kashmir into the Ekāyana [lineage].” Cf. SP 2.61, 3.60, 4.98, and 5.52. On the title of this work see Sanderson (2009a).
21.54ab) remarks elsewhere that adherents of the triple Veda can enter into the Ekāyana provided that they do not already belong to another Pāñcarātra Siddhānta.

With regard to other characterisations of the Ekāyanas which we find in the PādS, we enter more complex territory. For instance the claim (at cp 21.43-46) that Ekāyanas are not qualified to perform the rites related to the construction of temples and the installation (pratiṣṭhā) of divine images therein, is contradicted both by the PārS (15.14c-20 etc.) and by other works, as we will see below, but this does not necessarily mean that we can therefore dismiss the claim as false. For at the least, the presence of this claim in the PādS indicates that it was accepted by some Pāñcarātrikas. The same can be said for the PādS assertion that Ekāyanas (as “non-Bhāgavatas”, abhāgavata) are not permitted to perform worship for others (parārthayajana, PādS cp 21.17c-20b), which is contradicted at e.g. PārS 9.152 (see Rastelli 2006: 79), and that they cannot use Vedic mantras (PādS cp 1.37c-39b), which is also contradicted in several other works, as we will see below.

Lastly, we turn to the social organisation of the Ekāyana tradition in South India. The PādS (cp 21.39c-40) claims that the Ekāyanas admit members of all four varṇas. As far as I am aware this is not contradicted anywhere, and it is confirmed by the ĪS which states that the preceptor (ācārya) may be either Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya or Śūdra. As we will see below, the JS, SS and PauṣS also appear to confirm that Ekāyanas can belong to any of the four varṇas.

ii.) The term ekāyana and its earlier uses

Several modern scholars (e.g. Renou 1960: 8, Dyczkowski 1994: 293) have linked the Pāñcarātra tradition of the Ekāyanaveda to the ekāyana which is listed as a branch of knowledge in the Chāndogyopaniṣad (7.1.2-4). As has been demonstrated by its various interpretations, the meaning of the term ekāyana in this Upaniṣadic

233 ĪS 16.5-7b: brāhmaṇah kṣatriyo vaiśyaḥ śūdraḥ vā bhagavannayah / śraddhābhaktisamāyuktah sampannah śāntamānasah // āstikāḥ satyasandhaś ca sadācārasamanvitaḥ / ācāryaṃ varayet pārvaṃ bhagavacchāstrakovidam // tattvajñāṃ bhagavadbhaktam bhagavadvamśasambhavam /.
verse is not clear, though Śaṅkara’s understanding of it as “governance” or “statecraft” (nītiśāstra) is generally rejected by modern interpreters. Among recent translations, for instance, Roebuck (2003: 181, 424) follows Max Müller in taking ekāyana to denote “ethics” i.e. “the one way [to live]”, while Olivelle (1996: 156, 351) follows Faddegon (1926: 52) in understanding it to mean literally “the going by oneself”, and therefore as referring to “uninterrupted speech” or “the monologues” (contrasted with vākovākya, “dialogues”). Slaje (2009: 134, 188, 318), meanwhile, uniformly translates ekāyana simply with “Sammelpunkt”. The Pāñcarātrika explanation of the term ekāyana which is contained in both the PārS and the ĪS does not coincide with any of these readings. The explanation runs as follows: “There is no way other than this for going to liberation; therefore the wise say that [this] is called Ekāyana (i.e. ‘the only way’).”

This analysis of the term may rely in part upon Yāmuna’s characterisation of the pañcakāla rites enjoined by the Ekāyanaveda as the “single means” (ekopāya) to attain the Bhagavat. In addition, it appears that the wording in the PārS and the ĪS might have been borrowed from a version of the Puruṣasūkta which is contained in the Taittirīya recension of the Black Yajurveda, and which is quoted by Rāmānuja in his Śrībhāṣya on sūtra 2.2.35 (329.1-2). If this is true, it may point to the South Indian origin of the Pāñcarātrika idea that ekāyana means “the only way”.

There is no indication, at any rate, that the term ekāyana has this meaning in the earlier Pāñcarātra literature, or that other authors who wrote of Pāñcarātrika Ekāyanas understood the term to imply this claim. A brief survey of the use of the word in other literary contexts is helpful here, because it reveals a quite different meaning, and one which is perhaps closer to the original sense of ekāyana as used by Pāñcarātrikas. Firstly, the term is used in both the Chāndogyopanisad (7.4.2, 7.5.2) and in the Brhadāraṇyakopanisad to denote “meeting place”, “uniting point” or

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234 PārS 1.57c-58b → ĪS 1.19: mokṣāyaṇāya vai panthā etadanyo na vidyate / tasmād ekāyaṇāṃ nāma pravadantī maṃśināḥ //

235 Taittirīyāranyaka 3.12.7 (excerpt): nānyāḥ panthā ayaṇāya vidyate // See also Taittirīyāranyaka 3.13.1, and Śvetāśvataraopanisad 3.8d, 6.15d.

236 By the time of the composition of the earliest extant Pāñcarātra Samhitās (i.e. circa ninth century), the Taittirīya schools were found almost exclusively in the Dravidian South. See Renou (1947: 200-203) and Houben (1991: 36 n. 69).
“point of convergence”. Olivelle (1996: 29, 70-71) translates Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 2.4.11 and 4.5.12 as follows:

It is like this. As the ocean is the point of convergence (ekāyana) of all the waters, so the skin is the point of convergence of all the sensations of touch […] and speech (vāc) [is the point of convergence] of all the Vedas.

In other words, rather than denoting a “single” or “exclusive” path or way, in this instance ekāyana refers to a single point at which various paths converge. The sense of ekāyana as a single “end point” or “goal”, conveyed here especially in the example of the waters and the ocean, is brought out more fully in another branch of ancient Indian literature, namely the Pāli Nikāyas. In this context, Gethin (1992: 59-64) addresses the problem of the meaning of the term ekāyana in the expression ekāyana maggo which is applied to the “establishing of mindfulness” (satipatthāna). Noting that the common modern translation of ekāyana here as “the one (i.e. only) way” does not coincide with the interpretations provided in the Pāli commentaries, Gethin identifies two of the commentarial explanations as having particular importance. These are: 1.) “A path that is ekāyana is one that has to be travelled alone; one who is ‘alone’ is one who has left behind the crowd and withdrawn with a mind secluded from the objects of the senses”; and 2.) “A path that is ekāyana is one that goes to one place only, namely nibbāna”. The notion of “going to one” conveyed in the second explanation is also present, according to Gethin, in the only other occurrence of the expression ekāyana maggo in the four primary Nikāyas. This occurs in the Mahāsīhanādasutta, wherein ekāyanena maggena carries the sense of “a particular path that leads to a particular place - and that place only.”

Gethin goes on to note that the use of ekāyana in the first sense can also carry the broader meaning of “a place where only one goes”, thus conveying the idea of a “lonely” or “narrow” path.237 He reports that both senses of ekāyana distinguished here i.e. ekāyana as a solitary or “narrow” path or “a lonely place”, and ekāyana as a

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237 Primarily addressing Epic and Upaniṣadic literature, Gethin (1992: 61-62) writes: “As a noun, ekāyana is first of all a lonely place – a place where only one person goes.” As an adjective, meanwhile, ekāyana can also mean “narrow”, so that ekāyana mārgaḥ might refer to a path that is “only wide enough for one”.

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“going to one (place)”, can also be found in the MBh, respectively at 3.157.33 and 14.19.1. For the present purposes, I would like to draw attention to two passages in the epic which Gethin does not mention, but which appear be more relevant to a discussion of the Pāñcarātrika use of the word. The first occurs in the Nārāyaṇīya section. While Colas (2003: 234) is correct to note that the term ekāyana does not appear in the Nārāyaṇīya, both elements of the compound do occur in the same suggestive half-sūkha which attempts to explain the name Nārāyaṇa via a process of semantic analysis. The line reads as follows:

\[ \text{nārāṇām ayānaṃ khyātām ahām ekaḥ sanātanaḥ} \text{.} \quad \text{— “It is known that I am the single eternal goal of men.” (MBh 12.328.35ab)} \]

This explanation of Nārāyaṇa’s name is given by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna after the latter has asked for the etymologies (nirukta) of the various names by which Kṛṣṇa is known in the Vedas and Purāṇas (MBh 12.328.5-7). The second passage to which I would like to draw attention also occurs in a section of the MBh which has been identified by scholars as comprising a “textual unit” that has been inserted into the epic by redactors who are intent upon presenting a devotional theology in which Kṛṣṇa is identified with e.g. Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva as the supreme god (Malinar 2007: 35, Deshpande 1991). This section (MBh 5.65-69) also contains a list of the etymologies (nirvacana) of Kṛṣṇa’s names (5.68.3-14), including a variant on the verse quoted above, but the passage of relevance to the term ekāyana occurs in the preceding chapter. The passage (MBh 5.67.15-21), which I think is worth quoting in full, has been translated by van Buitenen (1978: 337-338) as follows:

\[ \text{Vyāsa said: There is this path of one direction (esa ekāyanaḥ panthā) by which the wise go forth; when one sees it one overcomes death; a great man does not attach himself.} \]
\[ \text{Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: Come, Saṃjaya, tell me the path where all danger ceases, by which I may reach Hṛṣīkeśa and attain ultimate peace.} \]
\[ \text{Saṃjaya said: One of unmade soul can never know Janārdana, whose soul is made. But the performance of one’s rites is not the way unless the senses are} \]

\[ 238 \text{The use of ekāyana with the sense of “a single goal” can also be found at MBh 7.21.26ab, where the Pāṇḍavas are said to be intent upon a single goal (i.e. victory in battle). This sense of the term, then, need not be limited to soteriological contexts.} \]
mastered. The single-minded relinquishment of one’s love for the objects of the excitable senses (indriyāṇāṃ udīrṇaṇāṃ kāmyatyāgo ‘pramādatāḥ), undistracted attention (apramāda), and avoidance of injury (aṃvinśā) are the womb of knowledge, there is no doubt. Be consistently and unwearingly in control of your senses, king, let your spirit not stray, but check it hither and yon. This mastering of the senses (indriyadāraṇa) the brahmins know as constant wisdom. This is the wisdom and the path by which the wise go forth. Men cannot reach Keśava with unbridled senses, king. The self-controlled man who is learned in the scriptures finds, by virtue of yoga, serenity in the truth.

If we return to the two explanations of the term ekāyana that Gethin identifies as the most important in the Pāli commentaries, we find that both senses – an ekāyana path is one that is travelled alone by one who has withdrawn his mind from the objects of the senses, and is one that leads only to liberation – are very much present in the above passage. Gethin’s concluding view that both of these senses of ekāyana should be relevant to our understanding of the use of the term “in the satipaṭṭhāna context” is, I believe, instructive for our inquiry into the meaning of the term within the context of the Pāncarātra Saṃhitās. For there, as we have seen, the Ekāyanas advocate the performance of one’s ritual duties alongside the renunciation of any personal desires, and they also consistently emphasise the fact that they seek liberation as the “only fruit”.

Certainly this latter characteristic is presented as the defining trait of the Ekāyanas in what may be the earliest extant reference to this tradition, at least under this name. This occurs in the Kashmirian courtly epic Haravijaya, written by Ratnākara in around 830 CE (Sanderson 2007 & 2009a). Sanderson has drawn attention to a verse in the 47th canto, addressed to the goddess Caṇḍī, wherein the author lists “the goal-states of all soteriologies as aspects or manifestations of the one Śaiva goddess” (ibid.: 107-108). The verse reads: “You, O goddess, are the unmanifest [material cause, i.e. prakṛti], said by Ekāyanas to be the universal cause in which the single fruit that is liberation [is attained]” (sādhāraṇā tvam apavargaphalaikahetur ekāyanair abhitā bhagavaty aliṅgā, Haravijaya 47.56cd).
iii.) The Ekāyanas in the JS, SS and PauṣS

Whether a text called ‘Ekāyanaveda’ ever existed has been debated by modern scholars, with Renou (1947: 205), for instance, claiming that the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda is a late invention, and Rastelli (e.g. 2008: 265) arguing that, nonetheless, a text or texts known as ‘Ekāyanaveda’ must have once been extant. In support of this, Rastelli points to the PārS’s (17.451c) prescription to recite the ekāyanī śākhā, and the JS’s (20.269cd-270a) prescription to recite mantras from the ekāyanīyaśākhā. To these we can perhaps add the PādS’s (cp 13.66c-70b) decree that the “original recension based on the Ekāyana” should be studied alongside the various recensions of the Rc, Yajus and Sāman. However, although there are a number of Pāncarātra works which refer to the Ekāyana as a Vedic śākhā, it should be noted that none of these aforementioned verses refer precisely to an ‘Ekāyanaveda’, and that if a text or texts bearing this name did once exist, it does not seem possible at present to identify it (or them) in any extant source. Certainly there is insufficient evidence to corroborate Krishnamacharya’s (1959: 5) suggestion that both the ‘Paṅcarātraśruti’ and the ‘Paṅcarātropaniṣad’ that are quoted by the Kashmirian author Bhagavadutpala in his Spandaprādiṣṭikā refer to the ‘Ekāyanaveda’. The claim made by Alasiṅgabhaṭṭa in his commentary on the ĪS, the Sātvatārthapraṅkāṣṭikā (SāPr), namely that the JS, SS and PauṣS constitute the “sūtras” of the “original Veda” (mūlaveda) (i.e. the Ekāyanaveda), is probably best interpreted as a late attempt to solve the puzzle we are presently addressing, but it indicates, at least, that this author did not think it likely that the Ekāyanaveda was ever a unique work. Much the same idea is contained, as we have seen in Chapter One, in the ŚrīprśS (49.471c-473).

What, then, is the origin of the idea of the Ekāyanaveda, and of the Ekāyana tradition as a Vedic śākhā? Inevitably, these questions are not easy to answer, but we might gain a better understanding by turning to the earliest of the published Saṃhitās, namely the JS, SS and PauṣS. Although none of these works refer to an Ekāyanaveda, each of them contain references to Ekāyana mantras or to “twice-

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239 SāPr on IS 1.64-67: idām sātvatapauṣkarajāyākhyatantartrayam mūlavedasya sūtrarūpam.
“(dvija) Ekāyanas or Ekāyana Brahmins (vipra), and the JS refers to an Ekāyana śākhā. By analysing these passages, then, we may hope to learn something of the Ekāyana tradition in the centuries preceding the composition of works such as the PādS and the PārS.

Of the earlier works, the JS will involve the shortest discussion, since a form of the term ekāyana occurs only twice in this text, and both instances belong to the same short passage (JS 20.265-270). The passage itself occurs within the context of the installation (pratiṣṭhā) of an image of Viṣṇu in a temple. Members of ten Vaiṣṇava denominations (named above in Chapter Two) are seated by the preceptor (ācārya) in the ordinal and cardinal directions and are instructed to recite “the supremely sacred mantras derived from the ekāyanīyasākhā.” It is notable that none of the denominations is named ekāyana, though one of them is called ekāntin, a name which the PārS and the ĪS, as well as the PauṣS as we will see below, occasionally use synonymously with ekāyana. All ten denominations are called ‘Pañcarātrika’, and the JS tells us that their members may belong to any of the four varṇas. As I have noted above, it is significant that the Vaikhānasas are included here among the Vaiṣṇava groups, for it indicates that this passage does not belong to the earliest portions of the JS, which appear to have been composed in either North India (Sanderson 2009: 61) or the upper Deccan (Rajan 1981: 34). As far as we know, the Vaikhānasas were restricted to South India throughout the premodern period, which suggests that the composition of this passage also occurred in the south.

I shall now turn to the SS. The majority of SS 24.282-25.294, wherein all this work’s references to the Ekāyanas are found, have been incorporated into the PārS.

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240 JS 20.265-270 (→ PārS 12.311c-317b): bhagavadbhāvino ye ca yatayah pāñcarātrikāḥ / caturbhir āptair viprādyair yuktāḥ tv śādiśi nyasat // ekāntinas tathā ’naptaīḥ (corr. ’ptaiś ca) yuktān āgneyadiggatān / niveśya vipra nairtyām bhaktān vaikhānasāṁ (corr. vaikhānasāṁ) saha // caturbhir añjaliṅkais tato vāyavyagocare / sārambhīnas sātvātāṁś ca tatākale bhagavanmayān // catvāro ’tā caturdikṣu yojjāś ca sikhino mune / teśaṁ caivaṁyāyītvāc catvāras tu pravartinaḥ // brāhmaṅāḥ kṣatriyāḥ vaivāḥ sādṛśāḥ ca munisattama / ekāyaniyāsākhottāṁ mantrān paramapāvanān // pāṭhayec ca yatīn āptān pārvān vai pāñcarātrikān / svānuṣṭhānaiḥ svakān mantrān japaṁ saṁśītavratāṁ // Both of the above emendations are suggested by the editor.
and the ĪŚ. Here, at least four Ekāyanas (24.302ab) are named among the professional assistants to an officiating temple priest or guru - they are literally “guardians of the image” (mūrtipa, 25.113d-114a, 255) - in a sequence of rites relating to the construction of a temple (24.282-433) and the installation (pratiṣṭhā) and worship of a divine image therein (25.39-260b). These Ekāyanas are said to be Brahmins (vipra, e.g. 24.287c, 25.118d). They receive instructions from the guru together with other professional assistants (25.106ab) who are also identified as Brahmins, and who are said to be specialists in one or other of the four Vedas (e.g. 24.291a, 25.157ab, 170b, 206ab etc.). These latter Brahmins are evidently also Pāncarātrakas, and they are explicitly identified as such for they are called bhagavanmaya (at 24.288b and 326b), which is a common way of referring to a Pāncarātrika adept both in the SS and in the broader scriptural literature. Although it is not precisely stated, they are presumably the same Brahmins that are described in the second chapter of the SS (2.8cd) as “adherents” or “proclaimers” of the Veda (vedavādin) who engage in “mixed sacrifices” (vyāmīśrayāga).

In these chapters, the Ekāyanas are distinguished from the other Brahminical assistants (mūrtipa) primarily on account of their textual expertise. For while the latter are specialists in the Vedic mantras, the Ekāyanas are “knowers of the Pañcarātra” (pañcarātraṇīṣ, 25.134c). Indeed, on two occasions they are referred to as simply ‘Pañcarātrakas’ in order to differentiate them from the Brahmins who recite from the Rgveda etc. (24.344-345, 25.145c-146). And at the beginning of the passage containing prescriptions for rites relating to the construction of the temple, the Ekāyanas are introduced as “Brahmins dedicated to the Sadāgama” (24.287cd). This latter term is given in the PauṣŚ (at e.g. 38.307c-309) as an alternative name for the ‘Pañcarātra’. I will discuss this passage in the PauṣŚ below, when I address this text directly.

241 Parallel passages between SS 24-25 and the PārŚ are listed in Rastelli (2006: 577-578). Regarding the ĪŚ, most of SS 24.282-433 is found at ĪŚ 16.93-104, and 139c-287. Most of SS 25.1-294 is contained in the 18th chapter of the ĪŚ, with the following exceptions: SS 25.64c-87b → ĪŚ 15.59c-61, 117-135; SS 25.260c-268c → ĪŚ 16.293c-301c; SS 25.271c-287b → ĪŚ 16.312c-328b.

242 In the SS see e.g. 6.74cd (and Alaśingabhatta’s commentary on this verse), 7.107c-109b, and 22.46. Elsewhere see e.g. JS 16.7-9, 18.6, and PauṣŚ 27.207cd, 32.88-89, 37.63cd etc.
Other names by which the Ekāyanas are known in this section of the SS include ‘Tajjña’ (25.124c) and ‘Tanmaya’ (25.132a). The latter is ordinarily found either as an adjective meaning “made of that” or “consisting of that”, or as the derivative abstract noun *tanmayatva*. It occurs in its adjectival form in several Upaniṣads, where it has generally been interpreted as denoting a doctrine of identity with *brahman* (“that”).\(^{243}\) Both forms are commonly found in the Śaiva scriptural literature as well as that of the Pāñcarātra.\(^{244}\) Its use as a proper noun, such as we find in SS 25, is much less common, at least in Pāñcarātra works, though it is notable that this form can be found also in an earlier chapter of the SS.\(^{245}\) At any rate, we can take both ‘Tajjña’ and ‘Tanmaya’ as honorifics, and in this respect there is little to differentiate such forms from the qualifier *bhagavanmaya* which is applied to the priestly assistants who specialise in the Vedic mantras.

What can we learn about the Ekāyanas from their role in the installation rites as related in the SS? A couple of points are worthy of note. Firstly, they appear to have a close association with the fourfold form of god (*caturvyūha*), for they represent these forms in the fire sacrifice (*havana*) during the installation of the pots (*kumbha*). Here it is said that the guru seats in the cardinal directions four Ekāyanas who bear the names “Vāsudeva and so on” (24.302ab). Later, they recite the *vyūhāmantra* (25.114) and the mantras of the four forms (*caturmūrti*, 25.242). Secondly, throughout the installation rites the Ekāyanas recite not only Pāñcarātra mantras but also Vedic mantras (e.g. at 24.333, 25.53-54b, 95c-96b, 113d-115b, 253-257b etc.).\(^{246}\) Of course, this prescription for Ekāyanas to recite Vedic mantras contradicts the aforementioned assertion contained in the PādS (*cp* 21.37c-39b) – namely, that the Ekāyanas do not recite Vedic mantras.

There is good reason to believe that chapters 24 and 25 are later additions to the SS, and that at least the final third of chapter 24 (24.282-433) and the bulk of chapter 25 were written together for inclusion within the text. There are several clues which point to the validity of these claims, and I will briefly enumerate them here. Firstly,

\(^{243}\) See for example Olivelle (1996: 262) and Radhakrishnan (1994: 683).
\(^{244}\) Some of the uses of these terms in the Pāñcarātra literature are discussed in Rastelli (2009).
\(^{245}\) See SS 7.69d, 77d, and 88a. As mentioned above, *tanmaya* can also be found as a proper noun designating the Ekāyanas at e.g. PausS 36.266b and PādS *cp* 11.243b).
\(^{246}\) These mantras are listed by Hikita (1995; 2005).
both chapters address the preparation for and performance of a temple-based parārthapūjā wherein professional priests officiate on behalf of a royal patron, here referred to simply as ārādhaka (e.g. at SS 24.239d, 281c; 25.105d, 119b). The royal patron’s “universal sovereignty” (he is considered, in this respect, akin to Vāsudeva) is hailed at the beginning of the 24th chapter. Conversely, the remainder of the SS is concerned not with the priestly performance of temple rituals for a fee-paying client (on which see e.g. SS 24.54, 25.259ab), but with the initiation ceremonies and, more extensively, the broad repertoire of “private” post-initiatory rites, in other words with worship “for onself” (svārthapūjā). This fact suggests that the final two chapters were simply appended to the text, and indeed the preceding chapters, which address the rules of conduct for initiates (21-22) and the selection of mantras for the vibhava forms of god (23), do not prepare the reader of the SS for this abrupt shift in focus. In addition, the naming of Ekāyanas, and the practice of explicitly identifying Vedic mantras by naming their source is absent from the remainder of the text.

Although we cannot be certain, it seems probable that at least the final third of chapter 24 (and possibly this chapter as a whole) together with 25.1-294 were written specifically for inclusion within the SS, rather than having been incorporated en bloc from another work. This is not to say, of course, that passages within this portion of text could not have been incorporated from other texts. Rather, this section of the text more generally seems to have been authored, or at least thoroughly revised, in order to be incorporated into the larger work. This is indicated by the fact that it remains consistent throughout with what Smith (1975: 515) calls the “narrative framework” of the SS i.e. the dialogue between Lord Viṣṇu (Bhagavat) and Saṅkarṣaṇa as related by Nārada. This is evident, for instance, in the frequent use of

247 SS 24.16c-17c: varṇāśramagurutvāc ca svāmitvād akhilasya ca // bhūtādidevarūpatvād uttamād yeṣu vastuṣu / nṛpaṣ… //. Elsewhere in the SS (e.g. at 5.98 and 7.77), the “first god” (ādideva) is identified as Vāsudeva.

248 The prayer to summon Viṣṇu into his four-faced material form at SS 25.119c-122 may well be drawn from an older source. Sanderson (2009a: 109) reports that these verses have been transmitted among Kashmirian Smārta Brahmins in modern times. Cf. the wording in this prayer with the description of the four-faced form of Śaktyātman or Śaktiśa at SS 12.9-19.
the vocative *lāṅgalin* (“possessor of the plough”) which is an epithet of Saṃkarṣaṇa.⁴⁴⁹

The question as to when these chapters may have been added to our text remains very difficult to answer. While it is certainly possible that this redaction occurred in South India, there is not, as far as I am aware, any obvious indication of this. For instance there is no evidence, as far as I can see, that the author’s worldview has been influenced by ideas which would come to be labelled as “differentiated non-dualism” (*viśiṣṭādvaita*). Indeed, the clearest articulation of a philosophical stance which we find in chapters 24 and 25 indicates that our author’s outlook is in keeping, rather, with the dominant philosophical mode of the remainder of the SS, namely that of “difference and non-difference” (*bhedābheda*). This suggests that if these chapters were added to our text in South India, this is likely to have happened before the career of Rāmānuja (twelfth century), who was to exert such a profound influence on the Pāñcarātra traditions of this region. Such a suggestion also appears to find support in the fact that the appended chapters contain numerous passages wherein the goal of acquiring “perfections” or supernatural powers (*siddhi*) and worldly “enjoyments” (*bhoga*) is presented as being compatible with, or even a legitimate alternative to, the pursuit of liberation from *saṃsāra* (*apavarga* or *mokṣa*).⁴⁵⁰ For in the bhakti-oriented climate which succeeded the rise to prominence of Tamil Śrīvaishṇava communities, these goals were increasingly subordinated to the idea of liberation as god’s gracious reward for an attitude of devotional surrender. The SS’s closing *phalaśruti* (25.379-384), wherein rewards are promised for those who conceal the preceding Saṃhitā from non-devotees who are desirous of *bhoga*, is undoubtedly a still later addition to the text.

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⁴⁴⁹ See e.g. SS 24.397d, 414d; 25.172d, 185b, 188d, 232b, 266b. Conversely, the presence of the vocative *lāṅgalin* in the numerous parallel passages contained in the IS, and at PārS 15.594b, help us to establish that these passages have been borrowed from elsewhere, since Saṃkarṣaṇa does not feature in the “narrative frameworks” of these texts.

⁴⁵⁰ See SS 25.148c-153. For examples of Bhedābhedavāda elsewhere in the SS see e.g. 2.72, 5.7-8, 5.81-82b, and 9.27. That said, as with the majority of Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, there is not one consistent philosophical “position” undergirding the SS’s accounts of god’s relationship to the world. For imagery clearly indebted to the doctrine of “non-dualism” (*advaita*), for instance, see SS 4.33-35b.

⁴⁵¹ See e.g. SS 24.408ab, 25.2-3b, 229cd, 288, 308ab, 357b. However see also 25.367cd, wherein supernatural pleasures (*bhoga*) are graded below existence in “the abode of Acyuta”. 
Lastly, it is notable that at the beginning of the final two chapters of the SS, it is claimed that members of all four varnas may perform the construction of a “mantra-made form of god” (mantramayaṃ vapuḥ, 24.2), and the ritual wherein mantras are fixed onto the icon (mantrabimbaniveśana, 25.1-2). These statements obviously refer to the prospective “worshipper” (ārādhaka) or “patron” of the rituals which are about to be addressed.

Finally, I turn to the PauṣS. Because this text is full of corrupted passages and missing portions and is, in its present state, even less of an homogeneous entity than is the SS, I will confine myself here to making some general observations on those passages which either directly or indirectly refer to the Ekāyanas. I have listed these observations separately in order to convey my opinion that the passages addressed should not necessarily be interpreted as belonging to a single authorial voice, or even to the perspective of a single Pāñcarātra tradition.

1. The first use of the term ekāyana in the PauṣS is worthy of note because it occurs in a verse which closely resembles a verse in the SS. In both texts these verses occur in the context of the performance of the śrāddha ritual, wherein the worshipper presents offerings to his deceased ancestors. In the passage in the SS (6.168c-169b), the worshipper welcomes four Pāñcarātrika Brahmins (to receive the offerings) who are described as “having attained their goal in the supreme reality” (… caturo viniveśyāsaneṣu ca // labdhalakṣāṇ pare tattve brāhmaṇān pāñcarātrikān //). In the PauṣS (27.166ab), the “worthy recipient” who has “attained his goal in the supreme reality” is a twice-born Ekāyana (labdhalakṣaṇ pare tattve pātram ekāyanaṃ dvijaṃ (corr. dvija) //).

2. Unlike the SS, the PauṣS contains several passages (e.g. 31.149-150b, 38.41-46, 272-273b) which bear witness to the type of Pāñcarātrika “sectarianism” which I have addressed in the previous chapter. In the following verses, the Ekāyanas are clearly described in opposition to the “mixed worshippers”. Part of this passage has been quoted above, I present a fuller version here:
Knowing thus [i.e. that Puruṣottama is the “inner ruler” (antaryāmin) of all gods], one should never perform mixed devotion. Indeed one who desires the supreme goal should avoid [that] with every effort. Those Brahmins that are called Ekāntins are truly devotees of Acyuta. They who worship Viṣṇu as a duty [that is] without (worldly) fruit, worshipping no other [god], are Ekāntins who [will] exist in their true state after death. [In other words] at death they attain the state of Vāsudeva, O Lotus-born! And the others are mixed worshippers - they are considered to be devotees in appearance only. Those Brahmins are [easily] recognised on account of their worshipping a multitude [of inferior gods] in various different ways.”

(36.259c-263b)

3. At Pauṣa 31.286ab it is also said that the Ekāntins (i.e. the Ekāyanas) do not desire worldly fruits – here they are called aphalārthin. We can suppose that it is they who are referred to when the text speaks of “devotees without desires” (akāma) earlier in the same chapter (31.203cd, 227cd). In these instances, and elsewhere (e.g. 36.80ab, 38.27ab), they are contrasted with devotees “with desires” (sakāma). At 31.202c-203a, it is stated that “[Rituals] such as the sacrifice are known to grant only meagre fruits to worshippers with desires, even if they grant heaven” (kratuvat svalpaphaladā svargadā yady api smṛtāḥ // sakāmānāṃ hi tatrāpi…). The worshippers without desires, meanwhile, are granted “the world of Acyuta” (acyutaloka, 203cd), or they are “united in the supreme self” (paramātmanī saṃyojyam, 227cd).

The mention of sacrifice (kratu) in the former instance would appear to identify the sakāma devotees with those “mixed worshippers” whose primary expertise lies in the Vedas (27.711ab). These Vaidikas/mixed worshippers are contrasted with the “Brahmins who worship no other [god]” (ananyayājin, 27.710c), or who “seek refuge in no other” (ananyāśaraṇa, 36.78a), and with Ekāntins who “know the Āgama” (āgamaśajña, 32.72cd). From these examples we can deduce the following: the Ekāyanas identify themselves as the legitimate heirs and custodians of the Pāṇcarātra scriptural tradition; they
worship Viṣṇu exclusively, and believe that non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrins worship other gods in addition to Viṣṇu; they worship god because they consider it to be their duty (kartavya), rather than as a means of satisfying desires, and they consider themselves unique in this respect; they believe that they attain a higher goal after death than the other devotees; they like to call themselves Ekāntins. I will discuss this last term in Chapters Seven and Eight.

4. As with South Indian Pāñcarātra works such as the PādS, the PārS and the ĪŚ etc., the PauṣŚ divides the Pāñcarātra tradition into four Siddhāntas (38.293c-303b). However, the PauṣŚ calls what is elsewhere known as the Āgamasiddhānta simply ‘Siddhānta’ (32.35b, 38.293c-294c). If this is accepted as the earliest extant account of the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, this may indicate that ‘Siddhānta’ was in fact the original, or at least an early name of the Āgamasiddhānta. If this is the case, we might reasonably ask: could there be a link between this tradition and the ‘Pañcarātrasiddhāntins’ spoken of by Śaṅkara several centuries earlier? Given the distance in time between Śaṅkara and the South Indian Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, it is unlikely that this question could be answered with any degree of certainty. However, it is worth restating the fact that Śaṅkara distinguishes between these Pañcarātrasiddhāntins and the ‘Bhāgavatas’, just as later scriptural works such as the PādS distinguish between Bhāgavatas and Āgamasiddhāntins. At any rate, the PauṣŚ (38.293c-294) states that this ‘Siddhānta’, wherein Brahmins worship god’s fourfold form “as a duty” (kartavyatva), is the first of the four Siddhāntas. Smith (1975: 296) suggests, quite correctly in my view, that this whole passage is an interpolation.

5. PauṣŚ 38.307c-309 claims that that which is known as ‘Pañcarātra’ is also called ‘Sadāgama’, the “good” or “true” tradition, and it describes it as the “root” or “foundation” (mūla) which is superior to Purāṇa, Veda, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya and Yoga on account of the fact that it reveals a superior fruit, i.e. the supreme brahman. PārS 10.244c-245c contains a portion of this short
passage, but in place of *pañcarātram iti smṛtam* (at PauṣS 38.308d) it has *ādyam vedaṃ sanātanam* (“the first eternal Veda”, PārS 10.244b), by which it means the Ekāyanaveda.

6. As with the SS, the PauṣS contains a short section (relative to the text as a whole) in which Ekāyana Brahmins (*vipra*) are named as participating in rites together with specialists in the four Vedas. This section of the PauṣS (chapter 42) also has the following points in common with the relevant passages of the SS: the Ekāyana/Vaidika participation occurs during the ritual of installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) related to the construction of a temple; the account occurs very near the end of the text (in the case of the PauṣS it forms the penultimate chapter); the Ekāyanas know the mantras of the fourfold form of god (*cāturātmya*) (42.31cd), and they are said to represent these forms in the ritual context (42.125ab); at the fire-sacrifice (*homa*) the Ekāyanas are seated in the cardinal directions, and the Vaidikas are seated in the ordinal directions (42.331-32); the Ekāyanas recite Vedic mantras (42.145c-147b, 180).

7. In the final chapter of the PauṣS (43.160cd), the devotees who worship no other god (*nānyayājin*), who are elsewhere called ‘Ekāyana’ and ‘Ekāntin’, are said to include Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.

8. Lastly, it is notable that in PauṣS 42 the preceptor is explicitly said to recite both Vedic and Pāñcarāтриka mantras (148-149b), and also Ekāyana mantras (188ab, 190cd).
iv.) Conclusions

Although there are references in the JS, SS and Pauṣ to Ekāyana mantras and to “twice born” (dvija) Ekāyanas and Ekāyana Brahmins (vipra), and despite there being an indubitable link between the Pāñcarātrika Ekāyana tradition and Kashmir, as well as a possible allusion to the idea of the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ in Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s ĀD,²⁵² the earliest clear Pāñcarātrika references to an ekāyanāśruti or an ekāyanaveda occur only in the later, South Indian works, namely the ĀP, the PādS and the PārS. Moreover, among the passages in the JS, SS and Pauṣ which refer to the Ekāyana recension and the Ekāyana Brahmins, those in the JS and SS are demonstrably later additions to these texts. We can be fairly sure that the passage in the JS which refers to mantras belonging to the Ekāyana śākhā is a product of South India, and it seems likely, owing to their many similarities, that SS 24-25 and Pauṣ 42 were composed in similar environments.

The only portions of the JS and the SS which refer to the Ekāyana śākhā, or to Ekāyana Brahmins, occur within the context of prescriptions for installation rites in public temples. The Pauṣ’s references to the Ekāyanas are more scattered, but Pauṣ 42 also depicts them as participating in temple rituals with non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas. Each of these text-portions (i.e. JS 20.265-270, SS 24-25 and Pauṣ 42) are bereft of any obvious indication of intra-Pāñcarātra sectarianism, and are thus at variance with other portions of the Pauṣ, as well as with portions of the PādS and PārS which have been addressed earlier, wherein Ekāyana and non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrins are very clearly at odds with one another. In the scriptural literature, references to an ‘Ekāyanaveda’ occur only in the latter context, which may indicate that this climate of sectarianism was already current in the time of Yāmuna, for he writes of an ekāyanāśruti, and describes the Ekāyana worship of god in accordance with the “five times” (pañcakāla) as the “single means” for attaining to the Bhagavat.

²⁵² At ĀD 4.139ab, the character known as Dairyarāśi refers to “the designation ‘Veda’ that people apply to the texts (vacana) of the Pañcarātra”. See Dezső (2005: 237).
The understanding of Ekāyana as meaning “the only way” also appears to have emerged during this period. This interpretation of the term appears to represent a significant revision of the original sense of ekāyana, which very likely denoted a “single goal”. The origins of the Pāñcarātrikā use of the term may go back to an explanation of the name Nārāyaṇa which is contained in the Nārāyaṇīya. The forthrightly exclusivist reading of ekāyana as “the only way” is, at any rate, very much at odds with the inclusive attitude displayed in the JS, wherein several distinct Vaiṣṇava denominations recite the Ekāyana mantras. Of course this scenario might not reflect the historical reality, but it can tell us something about the intentions of the author of this passage, which appear to be more consistent with the authors of the much later scriptural works such as the ŚrīprśŚ and the ŚrīpurŚ. In these texts, as we have seen, the term ekāyana is used to denote the Pāñcarātra in general, which also appears to be the case in JS 20.265-270. This may mean that this passage itself belongs to a much later period or, perhaps more likely, that the culture of Pāñcarātrikā sectarianism was both succeeded and preceded by more “inclusive” and cooperative intra-Pāñcarātra relations.

The question as to why a group of Pāñcarātrikās began to refer to an Ekāyanaveda, and to present the Ekāyana as the “only way” now needs to be asked. It seems probable that this question is linked also to why Pāñcarātrikā redactors decided to add passages to the SS and the PauśŚ in which Ekāyanas are shown to participate in public temple rites. These insertions were added, I propose, by authors who were eager to demonstrate that Ekāyanas were, contrary to what their rivals within the Pāñcarātra were claiming (at e.g. PādŚ cp 21.43-46), qualified to perform installation rites “for others” (parārtha), and that there was scriptural support for this. Moreover, the Ekāyanas considered themselves to be the “real” Pāñcarātrikās, and felt their status to be under threat on account of the fact that certain non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikās (the “mixed worshippers”) could claim association with the Veda. This may well have convinced the Ekāyanas to make a concerted effort to establish their own distinct religious identity, and to claim their own Veda.
6. The Pāṇcarātra Teaching and the Authority of the Nārāyaṇīya

i.) The Nārāyaṇīya in the transmission of the teaching (śāstrāvataraṇa)

In her illuminating work on the Paramasamhitā (ParS), Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003: 35) identifies two main layers of this text: i.) an older layer “representing what we may call a tantric way of thinking”, which she also refers to as “the ritualistic corpus”; and ii.) a younger layer representing “a more orthodox brahmanical and devotional attitude”. The latter, at least, was very probably composed in South India (ibid.: 147). Czerniak-Drożdżowicz notes that the account of the ParS’s revelation and transmission, which belongs to the younger layer of the text and which forms the “frame story” of its first and final chapters, explicitly connects the teaching of the ParS with that given in the Nārāyaṇīya. It does this in a number of ways, including setting the scene of the revelation in the same mythical place, namely White Island (śvetadvīpa). As has been mentioned above, we find the same strategy in the opening chapter of the Pārameśvarasamhitā, and it is also present in the śāstrāvataraṇa sections of other South Indian works, such as theĪśvarasamhitā, for example, and the Śrīprāṇasaṃhitā. Grünendahl (see especially 1989: 34ff) shows that such strategies are not limited to the Saṃhitās, for they can also be found, for example, in the Viṣṇudharmāḥ and the Viṣṇurahasya.

Allusions to the Nārāyaṇīya are so common in the Pāṇcarātra scriptural corpus that they cannot, it seems, tell us very much about the particular Pāṇcarāṭrika identities of the authors who make use of them. Both Ekāyana and non-Ekāyana authors connect their own texts to the Nārāyaṇīya. However, it is notable that, of the older Saṃhitās, the Sātvatasamhitā (SS) makes no reference to the Nārāyaṇīya in its brief opening chapter on the transmission of the teaching and that, indeed, the only obvious reference to it in the entire work is in the final chapter, where it is said that the temple (devatāyatana) is “equivalent to White Island” (śvetadvīpasamam, SS 25.310ab). As I have argued above, I strongly suspect this chapter to be a later
addition to the SS. In my view it was probably added in South India, though there is little internal evidence for this. It is also quite likely, in my view, that the opening chapter of the Jayākhyasamhitā (JS), the so-called “beginning of the teaching” (śāstrārambha), together with the first 30 verses of its second chapter, do not belong to the oldest layer of this text, though this is rather more difficult to establish. Before the interpolation of the Adhikāḥ Pāṭhāḥ, this section (JS 1.1-2.30), at any rate, clearly formed a textual unit. There are, as Grünendahl (1997: 363-364) has noted, a number of themes, stories, incidents, characters and geographical locations here which are clearly borrowed from the Nārāyanīya. One of my reasons for suspecting that this section of the JS may have been a later addition is that none of these (other than Nārada, who receives the teaching of which the JS is an abridgement) are referred to again, and nor is Śaṃḍilya, one of the main interlocutors in this extended passage. The Pauspārasamhitā, meanwhile, does not contain a history of the transmission of the teaching.

The appeals to the Nārāyanīya, which we find particularly in the South Indian scriptural literature, are motivated, undoubtedly, by the desire to locate these works within an ancient and authoritative tradition. In their quest to allign the Pañcarātra with orthodox Brahminical culture, the authors of the Saṃhitās were greatly helped by the fact that this section of the epic declares itself to be “the great secret teaching” (mahopaniṣadam), “spoken of as the Pañcarātra” (pañcarātrānuṣabdītam, MBh 12.326.100). This proclamation alone ensured that the name ‘Pañcarātra’ would always carry a certain prestige, and it is no surprise that several Saṃhitās also describe themselves as mahopaniṣad (e.g. PādS jp 1.28, 71 and in the colophons, PārS 10.141, 14.494, 15.987c-989, ĪS 18.514-515 etc.). As with the allusions to the Nārāyanīya in the śāstrāvataraṇa narratives, the employment in scriptural works of terms such as mahopaniṣad indicate that people reading and using these texts were familiar with the Nārāyanīya. Ordinarily, the authors of these allusions and references are simply “name-dropping”, rather than venturing to engage in any genuine way with the Nārāyanīya’s content. However, in this chapter I will be addressing a scriptural work of the Pañcarātra which refers to itself as mahopaniṣad,
but whose authors appear to be have been making a genuine attempt to continue, and
to bring up to date, the project undertaken by the authors of the  Nārāyaṇīya.

**ii. The original teaching according to the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā**

Into the reasonably tidy arrangement of, on the one hand, Pāṇcarātrikas who claim a
Vedic origin for their scriptures, who perform “mixed worship” and who, in some
works, refer to their own tradition as the Mantrasiddhānta, and on the other hand, the
Ekāyanas or Āgamasiddhāntins, who adhere to the Ekāyanaveda and who claim *this*
to be the original scripture from which both the Vedas and the Pāṇcarātra Samhitās
derive, we encounter the *Ahirbudhnyasamhitā* (AS). In this brief section, I provide a
summary of the AS’s own account of the “original teaching”, before addressing the
question of what this account might be able to tell us about the motivations of the
authors of this text, and the kind of Pāṇcarātra culture to which they belonged.

Among the published Saṃhitās, the AS is something of an oddity, though as we
will see below, it does share a number of traits with the *Lakṣmītantra*. Perhaps its
most striking feature is its relative lack of information on temple worship. Although
its 28th chapter describes the sequence for the rites of worship in the pillared hall of a
temple (*maṇḍapa*), and in several other chapters kings are exhorted to build temples
(e.g. AS 42.40c ff, 45.32c ff) and to worship (e.g. AS 29, 36.33c-49b) or to perform
other rites (e.g. AS 39.6ff) therein,253 the procedures for the construction of temples
and the installation and worship of images are only dealt with summarily in each of
these cases. In addition, only one of its sixty chapters is concerned with the initiation
rites (*dīkṣā*), while there is nothing said at all, for instance, on the rites of reparation
(*prāyaścitta*). As Schrader’s (1916) summary of the AS shows, much of this work is
taken up with theological and cosmological issues, with descriptions of mantras and

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253 Many chapters in the AS are addressed, either directly or indirectly (i.e. by way of mythical
narratives), to kings. See for example chapters 26, 29, 30, 36, 37, 39, 42, and 45-50.
yantras, and with eulogies to Sudarśana, Viṣṇu’s personified discus and the manifestation of his will (saṃkalpa, see e.g. AS 3.39ab).

Although it has probably received more scholarly attention than any other Pāñcarātra work, the date and provenance of the AS remain difficult to determine. In contrast to the conclusions drawn by earlier scholars such as Schrader (1916) and Matsubara (1994), both of whom suggested a very early (c. seventh-eighth century) date and a Kashmirian origin, recent scholarship has tended to favour a much later date (c. eleventh-thirteenth century) as well as a South Indian provenance.\(^{254}\) Rastelli (2005: 116) notes that both the PādS and the PārS borrow from the AS, and that the latter is therefore the earlier work. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the composition of the AS occurred only very shortly before that of the PādS, since neither text appears to have been written before the career of Rāmānuja.\(^{255}\) This would place the most likely date of AS’s composition somewhere between c. 1150-1200 CE, or shortly thereafter.\(^{256}\)

In view of its currently accepted South Indian provenance and its probable date, the contents of the AS are even more surprising. For in stark contrast to the works I

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\(^{254}\) On the question of the dating and provenance of the AS, see especially Begley (1973: 27-28) who writes: “The descriptions [of multi-armed forms of Sudarśana] are described in great detail in the Samhitā text [the AS]. The descriptions correspond closely to icons of a type not found before the thirteenth century, and then only in South India. These facts strongly suggest that the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā (and perhaps many other “early” works of the Pāñcarātra literary corpus) cannot be much earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth century, and that South India … is the most likely place of its composition.” Begley argues (ibid.: 28 n. 143), “[I]t seems indisputable… that the iconographic portions of the text must be approximately contemporaneous with the images described.” More recent scholarship includes that of Sanderson (2001: 35-38), who proposes that both the AS and the Lakṣmiṇātra postdate the Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya of the Kashmirian Śaiva scholar Kṣemarāja, who flourished c. 1000-1050. Sanderson also argues that both the AS’s and the LT’s interpretations of Yajurvedic mantras belonging to the Taîttrīya recension point to their South Indian origin. See also Bock-Raming (2002: 310-311, 349) who concurs with the conclusions drawn by Begley, and Rastelli (2005: 116) who writes: “The earliest absolutely datable text that quotes the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā is the Prapannaparājīta of Vātsyā Varadaguru, who was probably born between 1190-1200.”

\(^{255}\) Rastelli (2005) points out that the AS shows the influence of Viśiṣṭādvaitavedāntin ideas. If we discount the Nityagrantha, the traditional attribution of which to Rāmānuja has been challenged by several modern scholars, none of the works broadly accepted to have been composed by Rāmānuja refer to the AS. Bearing in mind the proximity of theological elements within the AS to elements of Rāmānuja’s own thought, and given Rāmānuja’s apparent familiarity with the Pāñcarātra literature, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, that the AS was not in circulation in South India during Rāmānuja’s time.

\(^{256}\) Peter Bisschop has informed me, in an email dated 17/04/2012, that the AS’s (42.35) reference to the worship of Viśveśvara by a king of Vārānasi cannot predate the twelfth century, since “the name of Viśveśvara as the central āṅga in Vārānasi is not attested before the twelfth century and represents a significant departure from the period preceding it.”
have addressed above which were also composed in South India during this period, not only does the AS largely disregard temple worship, it also gives no indication whatsoever of the intra-Pāñcarātra sectarianism we have encountered. It does not claim affiliation with any distinct Pāñcarātra tradition or ‘Siddhānta’, and nor, as far as I can tell, is there any other allusion or clue to internal divisions within the Pāñcarātra. There is no mention here, for example, of “mixed worshippers”, or of Ekāyanas or Ekāntins.257 This may indicate that the AS was composed before the ideas of the Ekāyanaveda and of the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas became current. However, given that the AS does not refer to any divisions within the Pāñcarātra, it is perhaps more likely that if its authors were aware of such divisions – and we can be certain, as we have seen, that they existed prior to the AS’s composition – then they chose to omit any reference to them.

Nevertheless, if we attempt to situate this work within the Pāñcarātrika environment mapped out in the presumably more or less contemporary PādS and PārS, it is immediately evident from the AS’s frequent use of Vedic mantras that we can locate it within the domain of hybrid Pāñcarātrika/Vaidika worship that is presented in those works as indicative of the ‘Mantrasiddhānta’.258 However, the AS does not claim a Vedic origin for the Pāñcarātra scriptures, as do other works which prescribe “mixed worship”. Rather, in a manner more similar to the self-descriptions found in the works connected to the Āgamasiddhānta (i.e. the PārS and the ĪS), the AS claims that the Vedas and the Pāñcarātra scriptures are in fact both derived from an earlier, original teaching. As will become clear in the following summary, the AS,

257 There is, however, an allusion to ‘Ekāyana’ at AS 54.5a. In a passage which praises the Nārasiṃha mantra by claiming it to be the foundational support (upajīvyatva) of the various teachings Sāmkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra, Vedānta and Pāśupata, the mantra is said to be “the single path” of the Sāttvas i.e. Pāñcarātrikas. The passage AS 54.4-5 reads as follows: sāṃkhyaṃ paramaṃ jñānam idam eva mahāmune / iyaṃ sopānabhāmiḥ sā yoginām niyatātmānām // tad etad ayaṇaṃ hy ekaṃ sāttvāṇāṃ mahātmanām / etat trayantasarvasvam etat pāśupataṃ matam // – “This [Nārasiṃha mantra] is assuredly the supreme knowledge of the Sāmkhyas, O great sage. This [highest] stage [reached] by the [eight] steps [see AS 31.16-32.76] of the self-disciplined Yogins. This, indeed, is that single path of the eminent Sāttvas. This is the entirety of Vedānta, this is the Pāśupata doctrine.”

258 On the AS’s use of Vedic mantras, see especially chapters 57-59. Elsewhere, the Kriyāsaktī of Viṣṇu is said to consist of both Vedic and Tantric mantras (AS 16.9-10b). See also the prescription for the “assignation of the [parts of the mantra] seer etc.” onto the initiate’s body (ṛṣyādīnyāsa) at AS 20.19c-20b. Hanneder (1997: 158) writes that “with the ṛṣyādīnyāsa Tantric mantras themselves are vedicized.”
like the Pārś, incorporates this idea of the original teaching from the Nārāyaṇīya, but it appears to utilise this teaching for different purposes.

In the seventh chapter of the AS we are told that the ancient Manus established a teaching (śāstra) following a “loss of knowledge” (jnānabhramśa) among a previously omniscient mankind. The path enjoined in this teaching is said to lead to the highest goal (AS 7.61c-63b). This account is inconsistent, however, with the much fuller description of the original teaching that is contained in the eleventh chapter. Here it is said that at the beginning of creation (ādīśarga) the sattva guṇa was predominant, but over the course of time the growth of rajas and tāmas led to the destruction of the sāttvic divine law (sāttvikī divyā māryādā) by assorted Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas (AS 11.4-8b). Śāstra is declared as one of the two means by which these enemies of dharma (dharmadveṣa) might be defeated, the other means being Viṣṇu’s array of weapons (śastrāstravyāha, AS 11.12c-13b). Accordingly, at that time the original teaching (ādīśāstra) appeared from the sky “like the sound of thunder” (nirghātaśabdadavat, AS 11.17ab). It is said that this single śāstra, teaching the true dharma, was born from the “will” or “desire” of Viṣṇu (viṣṇoḥ samkalpajāt). It was spoken by Saṃkarṣaṇa and consisted of a million chapters (niyutādhyāyaka) (AS 11.47c-9). It contained within itself the meaning or purport of all teachings (sarvasāstrārthagarbhatvā, AS 11.20), which, according to the passage that follows this claim (AS 11.20-48), include the Vedas (incorporating not only the four canonical Vedas, but also the six auxiliary “limbs”, vedāṅga), Itihāsa and Purāṇa, Śāṃkhya, Yoga and Pāśupata.

At first, the ancient progenitors of the human race (the Manus and Mānavas) and the earliest humans themselves all acted in accordance with this single śāstra to the satisfaction of the Lord (AS 11.49-50b). Then, owing to the deterioration of time

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259 Somewhat confusingly this “divine law” is called Vedic (vaidyka) in the verse heading to 11.8ab. This seems out of place given that the Vedas are yet to be “fashioned” (tatākṣa) (11.57c) from the original teaching (ādīśāstra).


261 The use of this metaphor to describe the origin of scripture also occurs in the Lākṣmītantra (4.17cd: sāstraṁ samkarṣanāṇād eva bhātī nirghātāsabdadavat), and may have been borrowed from a passage in the JS (1.76b-79), wherein the transformation (vikāra) of divine consciousness into scripture (sāstra), a process that is called śabdabrahman, is likened to a thunderstorm arising from a formless atmosphere (JS 1.76cd: amūrtād (corr. amārtītād) gaganād yadvat nirghāto jāyate svayam).
(kālavipāryāsa) brought about by the division of the Ages (yuga), at the start of the Tretā Age, when eminent Brahmins began desiring pleasures (kāma), the teaching took on a dull appearance (mandapracāra) (AS 50c-52b). At this time the original śāstra was divided into separate parts (aṃśa), with the sage Apāntaratapas fashioning the three Vedas, Kapila the Sāṃkhya śāstra, Hiranyagarbha the Yoga śāstra, Śiva the Pāṣupata teaching, and “Viṣṇu himself alone, having extracted the essence from that single divine teaching, created the true tradition (sadāgama), the system (tantra) called Pañcarātra, which describes his own nature as para, vyūha and vibhava, and which is characterised by having liberation as its only fruit.”

If we compare this characterisation of the original teaching with the account of the first teaching that is contained in the PārS, a few obvious differences emerge. Firstly, whilst the PārS repeatedly calls this original scripture the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ or ‘root-Veda’ (mūlaveda), the AS, in common with the Nārāyanīya, does not use the word veda in its description of the original teaching. Here it is referred to in decidedly neutral terms such as ādiśāstra, or simply śāstra, the scriptural designation ‘Veda’ remaining conventionally denotative of the body of literature comprising the four Vedas and their “auxiliary” and “subordinate” branches of learning (vedāṅga and upaveda). In the PārS’s account, the appropriation of the name ‘Veda’ is designed to convey the fact that the real Veda is precisely the ‘Ekāyanaveda’ and it is in such a context that the “conventional” Vedas are called the “changed Vedas” (vikāravedāḥ, PārS 1.75c). In keeping with this method of appropriation, as we have seen, the original teaching is not merely called ‘Veda’, it also takes on the characteristics of śruti as conceived in the Brahminical imaginaire. Thus, according to the PārS (19.524-526b), and to the ĪS (21.561b-563) which contains the same passage, the Ekāyanaveda does not have a personal (i.e. human or divine etc.) origin (apauruṣeya). It is, in other words, like the Veda in traditional Mīmāṁsaka hermeneutics, “authorless”.

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262 AS 11.62c-65b: sadāgamam ayât tasmāt kevalād divyaśāsanāt // nirmane sāram uddhṛtya svayāṁ viṣṇur asamkulaṁ // tat paravyāhāvibhavāvahāvādvirūpaṁ // pañcarātrāvahāvam tantram mokṣaikaphalalakṣanam // sudarśanāvahāvayo yo ’sau saṃkalpo vaiṣṇavah paraḥ // sa svayāṁ bibhide tena pañcadhā pañcavaktraγaḥ ।
In the AS’s account which I have summarised above, the original teaching is depicted, alongside Viṣṇu’s array of weapons, as having been brought into existence in order to defeat the enemies of dharma. Each of these “twofold means” is presented as being a manifestation of Viṣṇu’s will or desire (saṃkalpa). Elsewhere we are told that this saṃkalpa specifically denotes the “desire” or “intention” of brahman, equated here with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa (e.g. AS 3.41), to become manifest, as in the Upaniṣadic formula “May I become many” (bahu syām iti), which is articulated by brahman at AS 2.62cd. Accordingly, when the AS depicts the original teaching as being “born from the desire of Viṣṇu” (viṣṇoḥ saṃkalpajāt, AS 11.48), we may assume that this is to be understood as meaning that it is born from Viṣṇu’s desire to become manifest in order to defeat the enemies of dharma. In this way, the origin of the first teaching at the beginning of creation (ādisarga) is shown to have occurred as a personal response to a particular situation. In other words, the AS is not presenting the ādiśāstra here as something “uncreated” or “non-personal” (apauruṣeya), as the Ekāyanaveda is portrayed by Āgamasiddhāntin authors, since it is implicit in the apauruṣeyatva theory that scripture comes into being alongside time rather than within it.

Of course, insofar as the ādiśāstra is a manifestation of Viṣṇu’s saṃkalpa, it is to be understood also as a manifestation of a part of Viṣṇu himself, and in this sense it is, like god, both immanent in creation and transcendent to it. Accordingly, it is not said in the AS that Viṣṇu “composed” the ādiśāstra, rather the author employs a number of more or less synonymous adjectives, from the verbal roots ut + pat-, ud + i-, and ut + thā- (at, respectively, AS 11.13cd, 11.16ab, 11.18ab) which convey the sense “arising from”, “originating from” etc. It appears important to the author of this passage that, in keeping with the Pāṇcarātrika theological doctrine that Viṣṇu is a personal god, both immanent in creation and transcendent to it.

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263 See especially AS 11.12c-16b. Viṣṇu’s saṃkalpa plays a prominent role in the AS and, as mentioned above, is “personified” as Sudarśana. See e.g. AS 3.39ab, 5.7ab, 7.66cd, 10.41cd.
264 See e.g. Chāndogypaniṣad 6.2.3. This is quoted several times by Rāmānuja in his Śrībhāṣya. See especially, in his comments on sūtra 2.3.14 (339.6), the phrase bahu syām iti saṃkalpah.
265 However, in another passage in the AS the apauruṣeyatva theory does appear to be applied to scripture. At AS 55.16, Saṃkarṣaṇa is said to “vomit out” (udgirati) and then to “swallow up” (girati) the “pure teaching” (amalaṃ śāstram). When this is read in conjunction with AS 54.17cd (udgiraty akhilam viśvam udgirṇam grasati svayam), the emergence and disappearance of scripture appears to be parallel to the emergence and disappearance of the universe itself.
transcendent personal god, the teaching in its transcendent form remains itself resolutely tied to the personal. Thus the original teaching is said to be “eternally spoken by Kāmapāla (i.e. Viṣṇu)” (ayaṃ śāstraṃ... proktam kāmapāleṇa śāsvatam, AS 11.19).

Other notable differences between the PārS’s and the AS’s accounts of the original teaching include the fact that the designation “true tradition” (sadāgama) is given to the Pāñcarātra system (tantra) in the AS, whereas in the PārS it is given to the original teaching, the Ekāyanaveda. Similarly, in the AS, “having liberation as its only fruit” is said to be characteristic of the Pāñcarātra, whereas in the PārS (1.16c-19b) it is the Ekāyanaveda that is characterised in this way, while the Saṃhitās are said to bestow both liberation and enjoyments (bhoga). Certainly the overall impression is that the author of this passage in the AS is generally less concerned with praising the original teaching than is the author of the relevant passages in the PārS. Other than that which I have summarised, there is virtually nothing said about the particularity of the first teaching in the AS. There is no obvious desire to expressly link this teaching with the teaching which is described in the Nārāyaṇīya, as there is in the PārS. There is no mention of the Citraśikkhāndins, or of Śvetadvīpa or of King Vasu Uparicara in the context of the first teaching here, even though the latter two are mentioned elsewhere in the text. Rather, the author of this section of the AS is much more concerned with the five teachings that the original śāstra is divided into, namely the Vedas, Saṃkhya, Yoga, Pāśupata and Pāñcarātra.

These five systems are also listed together, along with the names of their promulgators, as the different fields of knowledge in the Nārāyaṇīya (MBh 12.337.60-63b). Just as the Nārāyaṇīya (MBh 12.330.30-31) declares that, for instance, Kapila and Hiranyagarbha are in fact names of Nārāyaṇa, so too in the second chapter of the AS, Kapila, Hiranyagarbha, Apāntaratapas and Śiva are all declared to be among the various names by which Nārāyaṇa is known.266 In the Nārāyaṇīya (MBh 12.337.63c-64b) it is said that Nārāyaṇa is the “culmination” or

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266 See AS 2.22 (on the equivalence of the “supreme brahman” and Nārāyaṇa), and 2.37-39 for these other names. It is notable in this context that when, in the eighth chapter, Nārada asks Ahirbudhnya why there are so many conflicting accounts of reality (tattva), one of the reasons which Ahirbudhnya gives is simply that people are ignorant of synonyms (aparyāyavid, AS 8.14ab).
“goal” (niṣṭhā) of each of these systems, and similarly the AS (12.54) states that Viṣṇu is their goal (niṣṭhā). In the Lakṣmītantra (LT), the Pāñcarātra scriptural work which appears to have the most in common with the AS, and which may belong to a similar period and region (see Gupta 2000: xxxvii), it is said that Lakṣmī is their goal:

\[\text{eśā sā paramā niṣṭhā sāṃkhya-nām viditātmmanām} // \text{eśā sā yogināṃ niṣṭhā yatra gatvā na śocatī} // \text{eśā pāśupati niṣṭhā saiśā vedavidāṃ gatiḥ} // \text{pañcarātrasya} \text{śrīnāṃ niṣṭhā sanātanī} // \text{– “She [Lakṣmī] is this supreme goal of the Sāṃkhya who know the Self. She is this goal of the Yogins, having arrived at which there is no suffering. She is this goal that is Pāśupati, this goal of those who know the Vedas, this eternal goal of the entire Pāñcarātra.”} \text{(LT I.4.1c-43b)}\]

Clearly both the AS and the LT are incorporating the Nārāyaṇīya teaching in this instance. However, both of these works seek to utilise this teaching not as a justification for an elitist identification with the ‘original Veda’, as does the Pārś, but rather as an authority which legitimates these five branches of knowledge, and inclusively integrates them into the Vaiṣṇava dharma. In the following, I undertake a fuller discussion of this method of inclusivism or syncretism that is found in the AS and the LT, and ask if it might tell us something about the context from which these works emerged.

iii. Syncretism and the five teachings

In the passages summarised above, both the AS and the LT adopt a position which is close to that which we find in the Nārāyaṇīya itself. In a verse which is subsequently quoted by both Yāmuna (ĀP 133.6-7) and Rāmānuja (see below), the Nārāyaṇīya presents the ‘Pañcarātra’ as a single inclusive system which contains the “Āraṇyaka of the Vedas”, Sāṃkhya and Yoga as “mutually complementary parts”. In a

\[\text{MBh 12.336.76abcd: evam ekāṃ sāṃkhya-yogaṃ vedāraṇyakam eva ca / parasparaṇāṇy etāni pañcarātram ca kathyate //} \]
sectarian religious context, this attitude of “inclusivism” or “tolerance” is normally associated, not unfairly, with the Śaiva tradition of the Mantramārga, and with works such as the Svacchandatantra, whose appeal that “one should not censure Sāmkhya, Yoga, the Pāṇcarātra and the Veda because they all originate from Śiva, and indeed [all] grant liberation as their fruit” was later quoted approvingly by Abhinavagupta in his Tantrāloka (TĀ). Such an approach stands in stark contrast to that adopted by Yāmuna in his ĀP, wherein the Śaiva scriptures (āgama), for example, are denounced as being “outside the Veda” (vedabāhyya), and the only motivation of Rudra, their author, is said to be that of “bewildering” those who are qualified for this “corruption” of the Vedic path.

Rāmānuja’s attitude towards the other traditions listed in the Nārāyaṇīya is more ambiguous. On occasion in his Śrībhāṣya, for example, Rāmānuja unequivocally rejects the world-view (darśana) of the Sāmkhyas, which he condemns as being “opposed to the Veda” (vipraṭiṣṭhiddhaṃ vedam, Śrībhāṣya on sūtra 2.2.9). He also lists Kapila among the teachers of false doctrines: “It is said that owing to their falsity and because they are outside the Veda, the doctrines of Kapila, Kaṇḍāda, the Buddha and the Arhat should be ignored by those who desire the highest good.” However, elsewhere Rāmānuja remarks that “the view of Kapila, although it is rejected as contrary to scripture and logic, is [nonetheless] accepted in part by Vaidikas, on account of such theories as the pre-existence of the effect in the cause.” Rāmānuja also has a rather ambiguous attitude towards the Pāṣupatas. In his comments on sūtras 2.2.35-38, which draw heavily on Yāmuna’s ĀP (91.14ff),

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268 See Granoff (1992: 287 n. 5), who writes: “On the basis of a limited acquaintance with the Pāṇcarātra, I would suspect that the tolerance for other groups displayed in the Northern Śaiva Tantras is not a feature of the Pāṇcarātra, which is far more typical of medieval Indian religion in its hostility to the scripture of other groups.”

269 Svacchandatantra 5.44c-45b: sāṃkhyaṃ yogam pāṇcarātraṃ vedāṃś caiva na nindayet // yataḥ śivodbhavaḥ sarve hy apavargaphalapradād /.

270 TĀ 35.36. Abhinavagupta (TĀ 35.30-37) argues that the single tradition called ‘Kula’ presents itself in various ways in accordance with the diversity among its followers.

271 ĀP 98.5-7: tathā tatraiva bhagavān rudraḥ prastutaśaiva dhyāgamānaṃ svayam eva vedabāhyatvaṃ vedamārgaprabhraṣṭaṇḍhikāritvaṃ tad vyāmohatkaprayojanatāṃ ca darśayati.

272 Śrībhāṣya on sūtra 2.2.35 (327.22-23): kapilakāṇḍaṇḍaśaṅkhyatāhityātām asāmañjaśyāt (corr. asāmanjasyaḥ) vedabāhyatvāc ca niśreyasārthibhir anādaranfyatvām uktam.

273 Śrībhāṣya on sūtra 2.2.16 (315.19-20): kapilapakṣasya śrutīyāyavirodhaparīktasyāppi satkāryavādādina kvacid amēśe vaidikaiḥ parigraho ’sti.
the doctrine of Paśupati (paśupatimata) is denounced as being contrary to the Veda (vedaviruddha, e.g. at Śrībhāṣya 329.11-12), and akin to the doctrines of Kapila and Kaṇḍa et al., insofar as it is false (asāmañjasya) and to be ignored (anādaraṇīya, Śrībhāṣya 327.23-328.1). Here, the followers of Paśupati are criticised both for their theological and soteriological teachings, and for their religious practices. However, in his comments on sūtra 2.2.42, wherein the validity of the Pañcarātra system (tantra) is argued for, and the Nārāyaṇīya appealed to on several occasions, Rāmānuja approaches the Paśupata, as well as Śaṅkhya and Yoga, with a different perspective.274 Thus, quoting the aforementioned MBh 12.336.76, Rāmānuja explains that Śaṅkhya, Yoga, the Vedas and the Ārṇyakas all constitute “the one Pañcarātra”, and that they are all devoted to propounding a single truth.275 Rāmānuja elaborates on this claim as follows:

sāṅkhyaoktaṁ pañcavimiśatattvāni, yogoktaṁ ca yamaniyamādyātmakaṁ yogam, vedoditakarmasvarūpāṁ anigkītya tattvānāṁ brahmātmakātvaṁ, yogasya ca brahmopāsanaaprakārtvaṁ karanāṁ ca tadārādhanañāpātāṁ abhidhāhiti, brahmañvarūpaṁ pratipādayantya āranyakāṁ / etad eva pariṇa brahmanā nārāyanaṇa svayam eva pañcaraṭratarante viśādikṛtam – iti / śārīrake ca sāṅkhyaoktatattvānām abrahmātmakātmanāṁ nirākṛtam; na svarūpaṁ / yogasvarūpaṁ āṃsita, karmasvarūpaṁ ca / atah ‘sāṅkhyaṁ yogah paṃcarātraṁ vedāḥ pāṣupatam tathā / ātmapramāṇāṁ etāni na hantavyāni hetubhiḥ’ iti tatadabhihitattat-svarūpamātraṁ anigkāryam; jinasugataḥbhīhitattattvavat sarvam na bahiṣkāryam ity ucyate /. – “Accepting the twenty-five principles spoken of in Śaṅkhya, the yoga consisting of restraint and piety etc. as spoken of in Yoga, and the forms of ritual taught in the Veda, the Ārṇyakas set forth the nature of brahman [as

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274 It is notable that in his remarks on sūtra 2.2.42, when commenting on MBh 12.326.100 (idda mahopaniṣaṭdham caturvedasamanvitam / sāmkhya-yogakṛtam tena pañcarātra-nuṣāḥdham), Rāmānuja identifies the terms ‘Śaṅkhya’ and ‘Yoga’ as referring to, respectively, the yoga of knowledge (jñāṇayoga) and the yoga of action (karmayoga). He cites the Bhagavadgītā (3.3cd) in support of this (Śrībhāṣya 333.11-12). Conversely, in his comments on sūtras 2.2.1-2.2.9, Rāmānuja explicitly identifies ‘Śaṅkhya’ with the Sāṃkhya-kārikā, from which he quotes a number of times. The question as to “which” Śaṅkhya Rāmānuja is referring in his commentary on 2.2.42 is beyond the scope of the present work, but suffice to say that it should not necessarily be assumed that he intends the ‘Śaṅkhya’ of the Sāṃkhya-kārikā and its commentaries.

275 Śrībhāṣya (334.16-18): sāṅkhyaṁ ca yogyas ca sāṅkhya-yogam, vedāś cāranyakāṁ ca vedāranyakam, pariṣparāṅgānaya etāni, ekatattvapratipādanaparatayaśākhābhūtāni ekam paṃcarātram iti kathaye. Note that Rāmānuja takes vedāranyakam here to be a samāhāradvaṁda compound. As is indicated in my above reading of MBh 12.336.76, I take vedāranyakam in the Nārāyaṇīya to be a taptāravṛṣa compound. This, I believe, is supported by MBh 12.331.2-3, where we find (at 3c) a reference to “the Ārṇyaka from the Vedas” (ārṇyakathām ca vedebhyāḥ). The context here implies that the Ārṇyaka is the best part of the Vedas.
follows]: they explain the principles [of Śāṅkhya] as having brahman as their nature, Yoga as a method of meditation upon brahman, and the rites [of the Veda] as consisting of the worship of that (i.e. brahman). This, indeed, has been explained by Nārāyaṇa, himself the supreme brahman, in the Pañcarātra system. In the Śārītrak (i.e. the Brahmaśūtra), the principles spoken of in Śāṅkhya are rejected only insofar as [they are] not [described as] having the nature of brahman. It is not [the principles which are rejected] per se. And in Yoga and Pāṇḍupata, it is the Lord’s being merely the instrumental cause [of creation], the contradictory notions regarding the true essence of the totality of existence, and the conduct outlawed by the Veda that are rejected. It is not [that] Yoga and Pāṇḍupata [are rejected] per se. Thus it is said, ‘Śāṅkhya, Yoga, Pañcarātra, the Vedas, and Pāṇḍupata: these are the valid means of knowledge with regard to ātman, and they cannot be destroyed by logical arguments.’ Therefore the bare essentials of each of the [world-views] set forth in these various [systems] are to be accepted. It is said [therefore] that not everything [in these systems] is to be rejected, as is the case with the [schemes of] reality set forth by the Jina and the Buddha.” (Śrībhāṣya 334.18-335.2)

It is worth quoting Rāmānuja in extenso on the subject of Śāṅkhya, Yoga and the Pāṇḍupata in order to highlight the differences between his own approach to these traditions and that which is found in the AS and the LT. Rāmānuja is especially critical of Śāṅkhya and the Pāṇḍupata, and is accepting of these traditions’ ontological and theological systems only when they are radically reinterpreted so as to conform to his own Vaiṣṇava Vedāntin outlook. As he says himself, “the reality of [each] principle such as pradhāna, puruṣa and paśupati that is taught in these systems is to be accepted only insofar as [that reality] is [recognised as] being identical with Nārāyaṇa, who is the supreme brahman known from the Vedānta.”

The claim in the Nārāyaṇīya, the AS and the LT that Nārāyaṇa or Lākṣmī is the culmination or goal (niṣṭhā) of each of these traditions is also, of course, a “sectarian” re-reading of other soteriological systems, and can be justly interpreted as an attempt to include and thereby subordinate these alternative paths within an all-encompassing Vaiṣṇava dharma. A very similar strategy, albeit one without any obvious link to the Nārāyaṇīya, can be found in a short passage of the JS. 277 It is

276 Śrībhāṣya on śūtra 2.2.42 (334.5-6): tattantrābhīhitapradhānapuruṣapāṇḍupatiprabhṛritatattvasya vedāntavedyaparabrahmabhūtanārāyaṇātmakatayaiva [corr. nārāyaṇātmakatayaiva] vastutvam abhyupagamanīyaṃ.

277 JS 4.114c-118b: anekāḥśī ca samjñāḥḥis tam avayyam upāsate // iśvaraḥ venai vipyendra pṛusatvena caiva hi / śivasāryātmakatenom samatvena tathaiva ca // aśṇyomātmakatenasabatvenāpi vai puṇaḥ / jyotijñānamātmakatvena kālavena ca nārada // jyāveṣṭrātmakatenabhūtātmatvena vai tathā / evam ekaḥ para devo nānāsahyātmarūpadhyā // nārāyaṇah paraṃ
notable that, unlike Rāmānuja, both the AS and the LT include Buddhist and Jain traditions, and also the Cārvākas or Lokāyatas within their inclusive framework:

sa eva sarvabhūtānām sraṣṭā pālayitāntaḥ / sa eva śivarūpeṇa śaivair ārādhyaṇa prabhūḥ / sa eva brahmaṇāpeṇa srjaty etac carācaram / sa eva pālayaty etad viśṇur bṛhatvā janārdanaḥ / sa eva rudraṇēpaṇa samharatya ahiṃsāṃ jāgat / buddhāmanā ca bauddhānām sa eva jāgati sthitāḥ // sa evāśāṃbaranām (corr. eva śāṃbaranām) ca nirāvaraṇarūpādhṛty / sa eva cārvākaṃate jineśvaravapurdharaḥ // sa eva yājñikanām ca yajñapurbasamajñakāh / mīmāṁsakāh ca evāyaṃ upāsyatvena codyate // kāpipẢhīḥ puruṣatvena sa evākhāyataḥ vibhuḥ /. – “He is the creator, protector and destroyer of all beings. The Lord is worshipped by Śaivas in the form of Śiva. In the form of Brahmā, he creates this world. As Viśṇu, Viśnu is world of word and referent is interwoven in her. It is always by means of her that I am named as the ultimate among the 36 [principles, tattva] by the Śaivas. Similarly, when the Saura mandala in the collection Rc, Yajus and Sāman is reflected upon, it is via her that I am the great queen, the supreme Trayā. It is via her that those who are versed in Lokāyatā discern [me] as a young woman possessing great wealth and endowed with great beauty. [It is via her that I] am meditated upon as [pure] contentless thought by

asyaṃ niṣṭhāya tattvajñā viśanti brahma manmayam / saśā tattvavidām mukhyaiḥ sāstre sāstre vicintyate // otaṃ protam amasyāṃ vai jagacchabdārthaṃ ayaṃ / anayaiva sadā sāmkhyaiḥ sāmkhyaiḥ 'haṃ sanātani / anayaiva samādhiśthaḥ samādhiyā samādhihā / abhidhiyā 'nayaivāhāṃ saivaḥ śattrimśadantimā // mahārājīḥ tathaivāhāṃ anayaiva trayī parā / ḍṛgauṣāṃasamghāte cintyate saure ca maṅdale // taruṇīṃ rūpasampannāṃ sarvāvayavasundarīm / anayaiva vyavasyaṃ lokāyatavicaṇṣaṇāḥ // kṣanabhangavidhānajñaśi cintyate nirviṣayā ca dhīḥ / ārhatāś caṃayaivāhāṃ yaksīnāmā sadoditā // – “To exist in this [supreme state, i.e. Tārīkā] the knowers of the truth enter brahma, consisting of me. She (Tārīkā) is discerned in all Śastras by the foremost among the learned. Verily, this world of word and referent is interwoven in her. It is always by means of her that I, the eternal one, am analytically reflected upon by the Sāmkhyas. It is by means of meditating on her that I am meditated upon by those who are absorbed in meditation. It is via her that I am named as the ultimate among the 36 [principles, tattva] by the Śaivas. Similarly, when the Saura mandala in the collection Rc, Yajus and Sāman is reflected upon, it is via her that I am the great queen, the supreme Trayā. It is via her that those who are versed in Lokāyatā discern [me] as a young woman possessing great wealth and endowed with great beauty. [It is via her that I] am meditated upon as [pure] contentless thought by

brahma niṣṭhā san brahmaṇedānām /. – “With multiple names one worships him, the immutable, O chief among Brahmins – as Īśvara and as Puruṣa, as both Śiva and Śūrya, and also as Soma. And again, as both Agni and Soma, and also as the Word. And as Knowledge, Light and Time, O Nārada, and also as Jīva and Kṣetra, and as the Self of [all] beings. Thus the single supreme god has a form that consists of manifold powers. Nārāyana, the supreme brahma, is the goal (niṣṭhā) of those who know the true brahma.”
those [Buddhists] who are learned in the rule of momentariness. And assuredly, it is via her that I am proclaimed with the name Yakṣī by the [Jain] Ārhatas.” (LT 25.39-44)

While these passages may be cited as good examples of “inclusivism” in Paul Hacker’s sense of the term,\(^{278}\) they cannot be said to be genuinely syncretistic. However, elsewhere in the AS and the LT, we do encounter genuine attempts to appropriate and integrate the four traditions (Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāśupata) listed alongside the Pañcarātra in the Nārāyaṇiya. As we have seen in previous chapters, it is not unusual for Pañcarātra scriptures to incorporate Vedic rites and mantras into their own rituals, as the AS and the LT do, as has been noted above. The AS’s (15.26ff) orthodox account of the four social classes (varṇa) and stages of life (āśrama) is not particularly striking either, for much the same reason. Nor is its decree that the initiate (śīrya) must be a member of the twice-born classes (AS 20.8d), or the LT’s (21.30d) assertion that the preceptor (ācārya) should be a Brahmin who is “thoroughly learned in the Veda” (vedapāragaḥ), though such restrictions may well support the argument that neither of these works are as old as was previously held. However, what is more striking is that both of these texts also openly appropriate, integrate and legitimate ideas and nomenclature from Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Śaiva sources.

Thus, the AS’s seventh chapter on the “impure creation” (śuddhetararāṣṭi) begins by acknowledging its reliance on the evolutionary scheme propounded by the Sāṃkhyaśāstra.\(^{279}\) In the same work, ‘Yoga’ is presented as commensurate with the “internal worship” or “sacrifice in the heart” (ḥṛdayāga, ḥṛdayārādhana, AS 31.2ff) that we find described in other Śaṅhitās. Here, in contrast to the act of “advancing” or “engaging” (pravartakakarman), which is said to lead to fruits such as heaven (svargādiphala), Yoga or internal worship is called nivartakakarman, the act of “turning away” or “disengaging”, and is said to lead to liberation (mokṣa) (AS 31.13-

\(^{278}\) For Hacker (1995: 244), “inclusivism” consists “in claiming for, and thus including in, one’s own religion what really belongs to an alien sect”. Halbfass (1995: 11) further characterises Hacker’s notion of inclusivism as “a subordinating identification of other teachings with parts or preliminary stages of one’s own religious system, which is thus presented as a superior structure”.

\(^{279}\) AS 7.1: anyūnānatiriktaṃ yad guṇasāmyaṃ tamomayaṃ / tat sāṃkhyaiv jagato mālaṃ prakṛtiś ceti kathyate ||.
14). The eight limbs (*aṣṭāṅga*) of Yoga, by which the individual self (*jīvātman*) achieves conjunction (*saṃyoga*) with the supreme self (*paramātman*) (AS 31.15), are then described in detail (AS 31.18-32.76). These are the same eight limbs we find enumerated in the *Yogasūtra*, though the descriptions of each one differ here. At the end of the AS, the author claims to have “reflected thoroughly on the methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga”. The LT, meanwhile, adopts a similar position with regard to these traditions, and frequently legitimates both as effective soteriological methods alongside the Pāṇcarātra and the Veda (e.g. LT 13.12-13b, 15.17, 17.9-13, 32.17).

Alexis Sanderson (2001: 35-38) has shown that both the AS and the LT also incorporate ideas and terminology from North Indian Śaiva scriptural sources. I do not need to repeat Sanderson’s findings here, or to list the substantial text-parallels he has found between the LT and several Kashmirian works. It is worth emphasising, however, that these processes of appropriation and inclusion are deliberately open in these works. For example, in the AS (14.14-20) we are told that at the beginning of creation, Viṣṇu’s discus-form Sudarśana manifests as five powers (*śakti*), one of which, namely the power of concealment (*tirodhāna*), causes the embodied selves (*jīva*) to be tainted by “three impurities” (*malatrayam*). As Schrader (1916: 115) has observed, these “three impurities” are not the same as those presented in a number of Śaiva scriptures, rather they bear a close resemblance to three of the five so-called “sheaths” (*kañcuka*) which are listed in several works of the Śaiva Mantramārga. However, it is notable that at AS 11.45ab the five powers (*śaktipañcaka*) and the three impurities (*malatraya*) are named together as doctrines of the Pāśupata.

Elsewhere, at the end of the presentation of the five teachings which have evolved out of the original teaching (*ādiśāstra*), it is said that Sudarśana, having divided himself into five, has “five faces” (*paṇcavaktragāḥ*). This is a very common epithet of Śiva. Though it is also applied to Viṣṇu elsewhere in the Pāṇcarātra

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280 AS 60.17ab: *sāṃkhya yogavidhir yatra kārtsnyena paricintyate*. Cf. the final śloka of the *Nārāyaṇiya* (MBh 12.339.21), in which Brahma claims to have answered the preceding questions in conformity with Sāṃkhya and Yoga: *etat te kathitaṃ putra yathāvad anuprcchataḥḥ / sāṃkhya jñāne tathā yoge yathāvad anuvrṇitam //*

281 The association of the doctrine of the “three impurities” with the Pāśupata is also made at AS 55.13-14.

282 AS 11.64c-65b: *sudarśanāhavyo yo ’saṃ saṃkalpo vaśnavaḥ paraḥ // sa svayaṃ bibhide tena paṇcadhā paṇcavaktragāḥ //*
literature, in these texts god is more frequently characterised as having four faces, corresponding to his four Vyūha forms. In another passage, the highest principles of the Pāśupata doctrine, as well as those of Śaṃkhya and Yoga, are said to be denoted by the praṇava oṁ, which refers at the same time to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (AS 51.39-42).

The AS, moreover, explicitly adverts to its syncretist agenda. In its opening chapter, the text describes itself as “a union of the different Siddhāntas embellished with the various [branches of] knowledge” (nānāsiddhāntasaṃbhedā nānāvidyopāśobhitā, AS 1.70ab). The term siddhānta is used in the AS to designate not the separate traditions within the Pāṇcarātra, on which this text says nothing, but rather the five traditions which are founded in the original teaching (ādiśāstra). At AS 15.6cd it is claimed that these five Siddhāntas are “highly esteemed by everyone” (sarvasaṃmatāḥ). In the preceding chapter, the paths (mārga) by which “the abode of Viṣṇu” (sthānam vaiṣṇavam) can be reached include Śaṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and the observance of “terrible austerities” (ugravratadharaḥ), which I take to mean the Pāśupata. These paths may be followed both on their own and conjointly (saṁhatair vighrītaścā) (AS 14.39-40). In its closing chapters, meanwhile, the AS describes itself as a “compendium” (saṁhitā), “immersed in the various Śāstras” (nānāśāstrāvagāhinī, AS 59.69cd), “consisting of Śaṃkhya and Yoga etc.” (saṁkhya-yogādisaṃnmitā, AS 59.70b), and as “the essence of the Tantras” (tantrasāra, AS 60.20cd).

Such pronouncements should not obscure the fact that the AS presents the Pāṇcarātra as being superior to the other four Śāstras. It speaks in one passage, for instance, of the possibility of the followers of the Vedas and Śaṃkhya etc. “ascending” (ārohanti), if they desire it, to the Sāttvata teaching (AS 15.21c-22b). In another passage, the Vedas, Śaṃkhya and Pāśupata are described as providing “mediate” (vyavadhānaṭaḥ, AS 13.17b) or “indirect” (parokṣam, AS 13.25c) knowledge (of god, and of the means to mokṣa), and this is contrasted with the “direct” (sākṣāt) knowledge provided by the Pāṇcarātra (AS 13.21c-22). And it is the Pāṇcarātra Śāstra alone among the five systems of knowledge that is said to contain

283 In the Nārāyaṇi (MBh 12.328.18c) Rudra is called ugravratadharaḥ.
the essence (sāra) of the original teaching (AS 11.62c-63b). However, on the cosmological plane the five teachings are situated at the same level, for they are the manifestations of “the word” (śabda), which in this text is presented, as Schrader (1916: 107-108) notes, as one of Sudarśana’s “regulative powers” (pramāṇa) (see e.g. AS 11.2), i.e. the means by which the periods between cosmic creation and dissolution are structured and maintained. In this context the AS calls the five teachings the “primordial elements” (etāni pañca sāstrāni mūlabhūtāni) which, by Viṣṇu’s will (saṃkalpa), are separated from each other in every Cosmic Age (yuga) (AS 12.49).

The LT does not present itself as a compendium of other Śāstras, or as encompassing the teachings of Veda, Śāṁkhya, Yoga and Pāṣupata in the consistent manner of the AS. Nonetheless, in addition to the verses quoted above wherein Lakṣmī is presented as the “goal” (niṣṭhā) of the five traditions (LT 1.41c-43b), we also find it said of “the yogin who is intent upon meditating on Tārikā”, that he is “eagerly engaged in the [Vedic] rites, he is a Śāṁkhya, a Yogan, a Sāttvata and a Pāṣupata.” And at the very end of the LT, it is determined that the one who is fit to receive the teaching must, among other accomplishments, know the method of Yoga together with its limbs (sāṅgayogavidhāna), the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, and the doctrine of Paśupati (LT 57.52c-53b).

Like the AS, the LT draws on the non-dual philosophy of Kashmirian Śaiva traditions, wherein “reality” is viewed as nothing but the unbounded, dynamic consciousness of Śiva. The AS and the LT’s markedly tolerant and inclusive approach to other religious systems can be seen in many ways as the inevitable consequence of such a philosophy, for all teachings must be admitted as ultimately deriving from the same source. Thus, the nominal inclusion, as we have seen, of even Buddhist, Jain and Cārvaka or Lokāyata traditions, and the LT’s claim, when speaking of Śāstra, that “the supreme good is accessible everywhere”:

284 LT 40.118-119a: evam yo vartate yogī tārikāmananodyataḥ // sa karmathāḥ sa vai śāmkhyaḥ sa yogī sa ca sāttvataḥ // sa ca pāṣupato jñeyaḥ... //

285 Non-Saiddhāntika Śaiva philosophers such as Abhinavagupta avoided the potential relativism of the claim that all Śāstras are valid because they are all manifestations of Śiva’s consciousness by employing a variety of arguments which attempted to justify the ordering of God’s revelation into a hierarchy (see e.g. Hanneder 1998). There is no such systematic presentation in the AS or the LT.
divyaśastraṇy adhīyita nigamāṁś caiva vaidikān / sarvān anucaret samyak siddhāntān atmāsiddhaye // alolupena cīttena rāgadveṣavivarjitaḥ / na nden manasa vācā śastraṇy uccāvacāṇy api // tāvan mātrārtham ādāyād yāvātā hy artha ātmanaḥ / bhūtānāṁ śreyase sarve sarvaśastraṇi tanvate // ... / ... // śrīmān nārāyaṇaḥ prokto vidhayaiva taṇārāyaṇaḥ / ahaṁ nārāyaṇaḥśāḥpi sarvaśāṇa sarvaśāṇaśiṇi // nidānajānā bhiṣakkaḷpā tattad gurvādirūpiṇi // pravartayaṁ śastraṇi tāni tāni tathā tathā // adhikārānurāpena pramāṇāni tathā tathā / ayaṁtaheyaṇa na kvaśiśastraṇa kimeṇa vidyate // sarvatra sulabhaṁ śreyah svalpaṁ vā yadi vā bahu / tathaḥ kāyro na videṣo yāvad artham upāśrayet // – “He (the adept) should study the celestial scriptures and the Vedic texts (nigama). He must follow all Siddhāntas perfectly in order to attain ātman. [This means] being free from attachment and aversion, and with his mind free from desire. He should neither mentally nor verbally condemn the Śastraṇas, whether high or low, [and] he should accept their content entirely inssofar as it is related to ātman. All Śastraṇas are deployed (tanvate) for the benefit of living beings... The venerable Nārāyaṇa is described [in them] in many different ways. Abiding in Nārāyaṇa, I am all-seeing and all-knowing, resembling a physician who knows the cause of diseases. Embodying this and that particular guru etc., I assuredly divulge the various different Śastraṇas [each of which] is a source of knowledge that is adapted to [one’s own particular] capacity. [Therefore] no Śastraṇa should ever be rejected completely. Whether it be abundant or scarce, the supreme good is accessible everywhere. Therefore, inssofar as one must take refuge in [one] teaching (artha), there should no contempt [for another teaching].” (LT 28.29-31, 33-36)

Although the AS and the LT are both very probably South Indian in origin, when formulating their understanding of Śastraṇa and locating their own texts within that compass, the authors of these works looked to the non-dualism of Kashmirian Śaiva philosophers rather than to the “differentiated non-dualism” of Rāmānuja and his Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. This is despite the fact that both works elsewhere show the influence of the latter (see especially AS 37.22-35b, as noted by Rastelli 2004, and LT 16.42-44, 17.38-64, 28.9-16). Indeed it is striking, and hardly coincidental, that these texts’ only references to the soteriological ineffectiveness of Śaṁkhya and Yoga occur among the passages just cited (i.e. AS 37.25-26, LT 17.49-50, 63) – in other words, alongside expressions of devotion which appear to bear the influence of Śrīvaiṣṇava thought.

Where, then, can we locate the syncretistic AS and LT within the textual history of the Pāñcarātra? Both works clearly borrow from the Nārāyaṇiṇya the device of integrating the four traditions Veda, Śaṁkhya, Yoga and Pāṣupata within a
Pāñcarātra framework. However, it is also evident that a syncretistic Pāñcarātra tradition existed in Kashmir before the composition of the AS and the LT, for it is represented there in the c. tenth century *Spandapradīpikā* (SpPr) of Bhagavadutpala. Like the AS and the LT, this work draws heavily on non-dual Śaiva philosophy, quoting profusely from Śaiva scriptural and post-scriptural works, as well as, for example, from Vāmanadatta’s *Samvitprakāśa*, several Pāñcarātra scriptures, the Upaniṣads, Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvanīyāloka*, Bhartṛhari, Nāgārjuna, Dignāga, and other unnamed Buddhist sources. Of more relevance, at least with regard to the AS, we find the five traditions of the *Nārāyaṇiya* listed together in another work composed in Kashmir, or in “the sphere of Kashmir’s cultural influence” (Sanderson 2009a: 105), towards the end of the first millennium, namely the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VDhP). In this work, Śāmkhya, Yoga, the Pāñcarātra, the Vedas and the Pāśupata are listed together as the five “doctrines” (*kṛtānta*) alongside, in one case fourteen (VDhP 1.74.32-35b), and in another case eighteen (VDhP 2.22.128-134b), traditional branches of knowledge (*vidyā*). In the verse following the first passage, the VDhP asserts that “the Dharmas of Viṣṇu (i.e. the *Viṣṇudharmāḥ*), together with their additions, have proclaimed this (i.e. the VDhP) to be the essence (i.e. of the fourteen branches of knowledge and the five doctrines)” (*sottarā vaiṣṇavā dharmās sāram etat prakīrtitam*, VDhP 1.74.35cd). In other words, the VDhP, like the AS, presents itself here as the summation of the entire available breadth of “authentic” knowledge, and this consists of the traditional branches of learning (*vidyā*, or elsewhere *vidyāsthāna*) together with Śāmkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra and Pāśupata. The AS (1.70ab), recall, claims to be a “union” of these teachings.

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286 Numerous passages from this work are also incorporated into the LT (see Sanderson 2001: 36 n. 46).

287 The SpPr, the printed edition of which runs only to 58 pages, quotes directly from other texts 222 times, with over 40 different works cited. Bhagavadutpala states in the introductory section that the philosophical viewpoint (*darśana*) of the *Spandakārikā*, on which he is commenting, is non-dual (*advaita*). This viewpoint is “its own system” (*idaṃ darśanaṃ svatantram*), writes Bhagavadutpala, and all Śastras which teach non-dualism conform with it (*sarvaśāstrasamudbhūtaṃ cādvaitapratipādakatvam nirbādham eva*, SpPr 6.10-11).

288 See Yāmuna’s, Rāmānuja’s, and Vedāntadeśika’s quotation of MBh 12.326.100cd at, respectively, ÆP 107.1-2, *Śrībhāṣya* 333.8-9, and PRR 2.8-10: *idaṃ mahopaniṣadām catuṛvedasamanvitam / sāmkhyayogakṛtāntena pañcarātrānuṣādhitam //*. MBh 12.326.100cd reads: *sāmkhyayogakṛtām tena pañcarātrānuṣādhitam //*.  

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In the second *khaṇḍa* of the VDhP, four subsidiary Vedas – Itihāsa (narratives which tell of “the way things were”), Dhanurveda (weaponry), Gandharva (music, dance and drama), and Āyurveda (medicine) – are added to the list of the fourteen *vidyās* (i.e. the four Vedas and six Vedāṅgas, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, Dharmaśāstra and Purāṇa), and named alongside the five “doctrines”. The same verses are contained in the *Agnipurāṇa* (219.57c-61), and their content is reflected in the 12th chapter of the AS, wherein the chief fields of enquiry and application of the five systems Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pañcarātra, and Pāṣupata are enumerated, and the Veda is shown to consist of 21 subdivisions (*bheda*). Here (at AS 12.6c-16), the disciplines of architecture, planning and construction (*vāstu*), governance (*daṇḍanīti*), and agriculture and commerce (*vārtā*, though normally *vārttā*) are added to the eighteen branches of knowledge named in the second *khaṇḍa* of the VDhP. The listing in the VDhp of the traditional branches of knowledge alongside the five systems named together in the *Nārāyaṇīya* may well be sufficiently broad in its scope to qualify as a relatively early formulation of the disciplines and traditions which would later collectively be called “Hinduism”. Although the AS’s syncretistic world-view, aiming to incorporate and encapsulate all traditions of “authentic knowledge”, is rare among the scriptural works of the Pāñcarātra, it is not unprecedented in Vaiṣṇava literature.

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289 VDhP 2.22.128-134b: mahendro malayaḥ sahyāḥ śuktimān ṛkṣavāṃs tathā // vindhyaś ca pāryātraś ca surva eva mahādharmāḥ // samāgamyābhisiṃcantu tvām adya vasudhāhipa // ṭṛyvedo’tha yajurvedaḥ sāmadeva tathaiva ca // atharvavedo vedāṁ tvām abhiśiṃcantu pārthiva // itihāśo dhanurvedo gandharvaś ca yussaṃjñītaḥ // vedopavedaś ca tathā vijayāya bhavantu te // śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṃ niruktaṃ jyotiṣaṅgatiḥ // chandoviccāśaṭhāni vijayaḥ prādīṛṣṭantu te // aṅgāni vedāṁ catvāro mīmāṃsā na vyāvistarāḥ // dharmaśāstraṃ purāṇaṃ ca vidyā etāś caturdāśa // sāṃkhyaṃ agnyaḥ pañcarātraṃ vedāḥ pāṣupataṃ tvā // krīḍantapaṭīcaḥ[cor. krīḍannapāṭīcaḥ] hy etac chāstraṃ vidhāhni ca // ।

290 According to Krishnamacharya (1986: 106), the editor of the revised edition of the AS, verses 15-16 are omitted in one manuscript. In these verses *vāstuveda, dhanurveda, gāndharva* and *āyurveda* are listed as four of the five Upavedas, and it is claimed that there are 21 divisions in total. These verses may be a later interpolation, and they pose something of a problem in that if there are indeed five Upavedas, then Itihāsa and Purāṇa (at 14a) must count together as one, but if this is the case then the AS only enumerates 20 divisions as opposed to 21. It is possible that a re-worker may have identified *arthaḥ* at AS 12.13a as referring to the *Arthaśāstra*. ।
iv.) Conclusions

It is not easy to locate the AS and the LT in relation to the other published Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. There are several clues, as Begley and Sanderson have shown, that both are South Indian in origin, but excepting their prescriptions for the recitation of Vedic and Pāñcarātrika mantras and, in the case of the AS especially, their pronounced leanings towards Brahminical orthodoxy, they are different in many respects to the South Indian scriptural works which I have addressed in previous chapters. Other than a clearly interpolated section of the LT (41.67-68), neither text gives any indication of the Pāñcarātrika sectarianism which appears to have dominated certain South Indian contexts in the 12th and 13th centuries. This may suggest that both works predate this period of sectarian hostility, or that they are products of an area which was not affected by it. It is notable that, in contrast to the majority of South Indian Saṃhitās at my disposal (e.g. the SanS, ViṣS, PādS, NārS, PārS, ĪS, and ViṣṇuS), neither the AS nor the LT make any reference to the Vaikhānasa tradition.

It may be tentatively proposed that both were composed in urban, cosmopolitan centres where the Pāñcarātra had some prominence. As mentioned above, many chapters of the AS are directly addressed to prospective royal patrons. The fact that neither work is particularly concerned with the details of temple ritual may indicate that other Pāñcarātra texts were in use alongside them. Interestingly, both have incorporated material and ideas from Kashmirian Śaiva sources (Sanderson 2001: 35-38) and in their metaphysical positions and their attitudes towards other teachings, appear to have been substantially influenced by Kashmirian literature.

The idea of the compatibility of the five teachings Pañcarātra, Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Pāṣupata is clearly incorporated from the Nārāyanīya. Like that text, both works aim to include, and thereby subordinate, the four latter teachings within a comprehensive Vaiṣṇava dharma. However, it is notable that the AS and the LT go, as it were, one step further than the Nārāyaṇīya in that they genuinely integrate Śaiva ideas into their syncretic world-view.
The AS’s presentation of the five teachings can, I believe, be interpreted as a conscious attempt to renew the integrative project undertaken by the authors of the Nārāyaṇīya, and to bring that project up to date. Hence, its descriptions of the five teachings do not rely on the Nārāyaṇīya’s reports of what were then apparently relatively loosely coordinated traditions. Rather, “Epic” Sāṃkhya and Yoga are replaced by the “Classical” systems, so that ‘Sāṃkhya’, for instance, is represented by the Saṣṭitantra (AS 12.18-31b), the lost, apparently systematic philosophical text (see Schrader 1916: 110-111) of which the Sāmkhyakārikā (72) claims to be a summary. ‘Yoga’ is Pātañjala Yoga (AS 31.18-32.76). Ideas associated with ‘Pāśupata’, as I have mentioned above, actually belong to the, by this time, more prominent Śaiva Siddhānta. ‘Veda’ now incorporates 21 branches of knowledge (vidyā).

What, then, of ‘Pañcarātra’ itself? Does the AS present a “Classical” model of this system, a comprehensive synthesis and summary of its diverse teachings, practices and religious identities? This is rather difficult to answer, since from our perspective, based on the available evidence in the other Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās, it most certainly does not. However, the AS does consistently present the Pāñcarātra as a single “system” (tantra) or “law” (dharma), and it also contains a short, systematic and rather esoteric summary (saṃkṣepa) of the Pāñcarātra, distinguishing between ten “collections [of teachings]” (saṃhitā). These are listed as follows: God (bhagavat), ritual (karma), knowledge (vidyā), time (kāla), duty (kartavya), special rites (vaiśeṣikī kriyā), restraining the mind and sense-faculties (saṃyama), contemplation (cintā), the “path” (mārga), and liberation (mokṣa) (AS 12.45-48). This is hardly a comprehensive “summary” of the Pāñcarātra tradition that is available to us through its scriptural literature. It is, though, comprehensive in another sense: it is general enough to be able to incorporate the methods of Veda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Pāśupata, and this is no doubt the author’s intention. For although “time” could probably be interpreted by the AS’s audience, if necessary, as referring to the Pāñcarātra teaching of the “five times” (as it is by Schrader), there is no terminology here which is peculiar to the Pāñcarātra. Unsurprisingly, we do not find similar summaries of the Pāñcarātra elsewhere in the scriptural works. Indeed,
the apparent originality of this presentation raises the question of the Pāñcarātra’s identity in the period and place of the AS’s composition. For the fact that its authors were free to present the Pāñcarātra in this way suggests that the identity of this tradition was, in that period and place, open to revision and reinvention.
PART THREE

MERGING IDENTITIES: INTEGRATING TRADITIONS

Introduction

At the end of the last chapter I suggested that, in the minds of the authors of the AS, the identity of the Pāñcarātra tradition was “open to revision and reinvention”. In the previous two chapters, I discussed similar processes of adaptation and innovation in the form of the “Vedification” of the Pāñcarātra, and the invention of the Ekāyanaveda. In each case I have focussed on these developments as they occurred in South India in the early centuries of the second millennium, undoubtedly a period of great growth and productivity for these traditions. However, as we have seen, the desire of Pāñcarātrikas to allign themselves with the Veda, and the appeal to the Nārāyaṇīya as a legitimating source for the establishment of a universal Vaiṣṇava religion, are evident already in North Indian literature of the preceding centuries. In each of the cases I have addressed in Part Two, Pāñcarātrika authors have attempted to construct or to reconstruct the identity of their own textual tradition by extending its canonical boundaries. Each of these attempts seeks legitimacy through identification with another textual tradition. Of the different authorities appealed to by Pāñcarātrikas, however, only the Nārāyaṇīya is innately responsive.

It is impossible to speak of the identity of the Pāñcarātra “tradition” without addressing the Nārāyaṇīya. What is the origin of ‘Pāñcarātra’ as a distinct religious identity? I undertake to answer this question in Chapter Seven, by focussing on the ‘Ekāntins’, the Nārāyaṇīya’s protagonists. The construction of a ‘Pāñcarātra’ identity in this text is dependent, I will argue, on the appropriation and synthesis of other religious identities. In South India between the 12th and 14th centuries, as I show in Chapter Eight, the Ekāntins came to be identified with one particular Pāñcarātra tradition. As this tradition adapted to a religious environment increasingly dominated
by the priestly performance of temple rituals for fee-paying clients, so the identity of these Ekāntins underwent significant changes. These developments bring us back to the theme we left behind in Chapter Three, namely the integration of distinct Pāñcarātrika identities, and the consequent formation of the Pāñcarātra canon. In Chapter Nine, I argue that we are now in a better position to attempt to explain the decline of the sectarian culture which dominated certain South Indian Pāñcarātra contexts, and the merging of identities which succeeded it.
7. The Ekāntins in the Nārāyanīya

i.) Setting the scene

As we have seen above, and will see again below, the Nārāyanīya (MBh 12.321-339) has played a crucial role in the self-understanding of later Pāñcarātra traditions. Within the last fifteen years or so, scholarship on this text has been dominated by the German language volume Nārāyanīya-Studien (1997), the outcome of a collaborative project undertaken by Reinhold Grünendahl, Angelika Malinar, Thomas Oberlies and Peter Schreiner. The contributions of these scholars are briefly summarised in an English language introduction to the volume by Schreiner (1997a), who writes near the beginning (ibid: 1):

Even the most cursory survey of the whole Nārāyanīya reveals that the text is divided into two parts (part A and part B, in our terminology). Part A comprises chapters 321-326 and is a complex sequence of emboxed narratives. Part B is a sequence of separate units only loosely connected. Redactional devices like the change of dialogue setting and cross references suggest that part B is later than part A… [As] a whole the text cannot have taken shape long before the final redaction of the Mahābhārata, i.e. before the 4th-5th century A.D.

The contributions of Oberlies (1997, 1997a, 1997b) to this volume identify the “emboxed narratives” which comprise the first six chapters as distinct textual units or “layers”, the composition of which can be arranged chronologically. The basic framework (Grundgerüst) of part A concerns Nārada’s journey to White Island (śvetadvīpa), his recitation of a stotra, and his subsequent vision of, and short conversation with, Nārāyaṇa. To this core narrative, other loosely connected tales and dialogues were subsequently added (Oberlies 1997: 87). Meanwhile, the lack of homogeneity in the following chapters (12.327-339), redacted after the completion of part A, and collectively referred to as part B, is demonstrated in one place or another in the essays of Grünendahl, Malinar and Schreiner.
This general picture of the *Nārāyaṇīya’s* heterogeneous composition has been subject to detailed criticism and rejection by Hiltebeitel (2006), who holds that the composition of the MBh as a whole occurred within “at most two generations sometime between 150 BCE and the year zero” (ibid: 227).\(^\text{291}\) I am not competent to enter into the debate, not least because I am not working from manuscript sources. However, on the basis that any scholar now working on the *Nārāyaṇīya* is obliged, at least implicitly, to “take sides”, as it were, in the following I shall explicitly accept the general conclusions relating to the text’s composition which are contained in *Nārāyaṇīya-Studien*. Accordingly, I adopt that work’s principal hermeneutical policy of separating chapters 321-326, henceforth “Part A”, from chapters 327-339, “Part B”. This approach to the text is preferable to Hiltebeitel’s, to my mind, because it can much more easily explain the *Nārāyaṇīya’s* numerous discontinuities, inconsistencies and contradictions, and its generally disjointed narrative. I am fundamentally in agreement with Schreiner’s (1997a: 15) description of the *Nārāyaṇīya* as a “puzzling labyrinth”, and some of these inconsistencies etc. will be addressed below.

Among the multiple characters, place names, themes and technical vocabularies which later Pāṇḍarātra authors appear to have borrowed from the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the vision of the idealised, prototypical Ekāntin worshippers has been one of the more persistent. But who are the Ekāntins in the *Nārāyaṇīya*? In his commentary on the MBh, called *Bhāratabhāvadīpa* (BhBhD), the seventeenth century Sanskrit scholar Nilakanṭha Caturdhara identified the Ekāntins as “devotees without desires” (*niṣkāmabhaktāḥ*).\(^\text{292}\) While this characterisation cannot be said to be inaccurate, as I will demonstrate below, it is certainly insufficient. Ekāntins are described and referred to in both parts of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, and a close analysis of the relevant passages reveals the emergence of a number of new ideas in the later portions of Part A, and in Part B. These concern both the practice of the Ekāntins, and the means by which they are distinguished from other worshippers. In Part B especially, the

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\(^{291}\) Hiltebeitel’s general position on the composition of the MBh has itself been subject to criticism by Fitzgerald (2003) among others.

\(^{292}\) BhBhD on MBh 12.336.3cd. In the “Bombay edition”, from which Nilakanṭha was working, this verse is found at 12.348.3cd.
Ekāntins are often described in purely abstract terms, as the perfect human beings. As Vaiśampāyana says to Janamejaya: “Persons that are Ekāntins are very rare, O King. If the world were filled with Ekāntins, O son of the Kurus, [who are] non-violent, know the Self, are intent upon the welfare of all beings, are free from actions motivated by desire, the Kṛta Age would be reached [again]!” However, the term ekāntin is also applied to particular persons, for example to the seer (ṛṣi) Nārada, whose story comprises the oldest text layer of Part A, and who is a prominent character in several chapters in Part B. Also present in both parts of the text are the fantastical “White Men”, the paradigmatic Ekāntins who inhabit White Island:

In the simplest terms, as expressed here and elsewhere (e.g. 337.67), Ekāntins are those who have attained the state of ekānta (ekāntabhāva). This is sometimes identified as a mental state (ekāntagatabuddhi, 326.96, 331.50). At 326.96 this mental state is declared to be a prerequisite for attaining a vision of god. The various descriptions and implications of the state of ekānta are the focus of my attention in the following part of this chapter, where I scrutinise the term ekānta itself. Thereafter, I address the “religious identity” of the Ekāntins, paying particular attention to the ways in which they are distinguished from other worshippers.

293 MBh 12.336.57e-58: ekāntino hi puruṣā durlabhā bahavo nrpa /// yady ekāntibhir ākīrṇam jagat syāt kurunandana /// ahūṃsakair ātmavidbhīḥ sarvabhūtaḥte rataiḥ /// bhavet kṛtayugaprāptir āśībkarmanavivarjītaḥ ///.
In the context of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, several modern scholars (e.g. Bhandarkar 1913: 6, Gonda 1977: 9, Matsubara 1994: 51ff) have understood the terms *ekānta* and *ekāntin* to denote primarily “monotheism”. However, although the exclusive worship of Hari-Nārāyaṇa, also called Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva, certainly appears to be one of the key meanings of *ekānta* and its related terms in several passages belonging to *Part B*, there is little justification for the claim that this is the primary sense of these terms throughout the *Nārāyaṇīya* as a whole. In the following I will argue that, as used in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the terms *ekānta* etc. are multivalent, and that the text itself quite explicitly invites this interpretation. It is worth noting here that I am in agreement on this issue, at least in principle, with Vedāntadesīka, who himself stressed the multiple meanings of the term *ekāntin*.294 In sorting through the various, and concurrent, senses of *ekānta* and its related terms in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, I will draw attention to three in particular, and argue that each of these can be more significant to a preliminary understanding of the identity of the Ekāntins than is the characteristic of monotheism. Only in certain portions of *Part B*, moreover, does “monotheism” (i.e. the worship of a Viṣṇu deity to the exclusion of other deities, Brahmā and Śiva in particular) appear to supplant one of the three senses that I call attention to.

It should be stated at the outset that I am not the first to question the validity of interpreting *ekānta* etc. in the *Nārāyaṇīya* as referring primarily to “monotheism”. Already in the middle of the nineteenth century, in his monumental *Indische Alterthumskunde* the Norwegian scholar Christian Lassen, a former student and colleague of August Wilhelm von Schlegel at the University of Bonn, rendered *ekāntagatabuddhi* (used to describe Nārada at MBh 12.326.96d) as “seinen Geist auf einen gewissen Gegenstand gerichtet hatte”, asserting in a footnote that the literal meaning of *ekānta* is “was einem einzigen Ausgang hat, also was sicher ist.” Lassen (1852: 1104 n. 5) concluded that *ekāntin* does not therefore mean “monotheist” (“Ekāntin bedeutet demnach nicht eigentlich Monotheist”). While I do not share

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294 PRR 139.4ff: ekatra anto niścayah prāpyatayā prāpakatayā ca... tatrāpy ananyopāyatvānanyapra-yojanatvayoh samuccayāt pārmyam / ananyapāyatvam ca ananyakāvatākatvatvaparyantam.
Lassen’s belief that we can do away with the sense of monotheism altogether, this is nonetheless an instructive reading. As with Vedântadesîka before him, Lassen finds in the term ekânta a reference to the means by which a certain goal is attained, and a reference to the nature of the goal itself. The latter, according to Lassen, is both singular and certain.

These represent, in my view, two of the primary senses of ekânta in the Nârâyaṇiya: the single-minded concentration on a Vaiṣṇava deity (normally called Hari or Nârâyaṇa), and the outcome (i.e. liberation, mokṣa) which is certain to ensue from such a practice. In the first of these senses, the term ekânta is similar in meaning, as Brockington (2003: 18) has observed, to the term ekâgra, which refers to “one-pointed” concentration. The adjectival compound ekâgra is used in several places in the MBh as “a general term of commendation” (ibid.), but it also occurs, especially in the Mokṣadharmaparvan, as the name for a technique adopted in meditation. Thus, at MBh 12.188.5, during an explanation of the fourfold “yoga of meditation” (dhyânayoga), we read, in the translation of Bronkhorst (1993: 68-69): “A sage, sitting like a piece of wood, bundling his senses together, should fix his mind [so that it becomes] one-pointed and held together as a result of recitation, on that”. Elsewhere, a description of the practice of yoga (yogakṛtya) contains a reference to performing “one-pointedness of the mind and senses” (manasaś cendriyāṇāṃ ca kṛtyaikāgryaṃ, MBh 12.232.13ab, see also 24c), while at MBh 12.294.8, meditation (dhyāna) is said to consist of one-pointedness of the mind (ekāgratā ca manasaḥ) and restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma). As well as being explicitly associated with the practice of yoga (see also 12.304.23, and Bhagavadgītā 6.12a) and meditation (dhyāna, see also 12.198.6), one-pointedness is also linked to

295 MBh 12.188.5: tatra svādhyāyasamśīṣṭam ekāgram dhārayen manah / piṇḍikṛtyendriyāgraṃam āśīnah kāśṭhavan munīḥ //. Cf. Wynne (2009: 189), working from the Bombay edition: “In those places, the silent sage should sit as still as a piece of wood and bring his sense faculties together. Then he should keep his mind one-pointed, and steeped in meditation (tatra dhyānaṃ samśīṣṭam ekāgram dhārayen manah).” Both Bronkhorst (1993: 70-71) and Wynne (2007: 29) note that the passage containing this verse borrows ideas and nomenclature from Buddhist accounts of the four dhyānas.

296 Ten chapters further on in the Mokṣadharmaparvan (12.304.8-10), the highest practice of yoga (yogakṛtya) is said to consist of “fixing the mind” (dhāranā) and restraining the breath (prāṇāyāma). It is likely that “one-pointedness” was understood, at least in some circles, in much the same way as “fixing the mind”. This is confirmed by the star passage *775 immediately following 12.304.9ab: ekāgratā ca manasaḥ prāṇāyāmas tathaiva ca 1.
the practice of “recitation” (svādhyāya at 12.188.5, japa at 12.192.16) and to asceticism (tapas, e.g. 3.246.25 and 12.242.4). In the Nārāyaṇīya, one-pointedness is also linked with japa (12.323.32, 325.2-3) and with tapas (327.41), and it is attributed to Nārada as he practises “all austerities” (sarvakṛcchradharaḥ, 325.2d) having arrived at White Island. In this latter passage, the description of Nārada shares several features with certain descriptions of the Ekāntin inhabitants of White Island, who also have “one-pointed minds” (ekāgramanastvena, 323.32e). Further on, it is said:

ime hy anindriyāhārā madbhaktāḥ candravarcasah / ekāgrāḥ cintayeyur mām
naiśāṃ vigho bhaved iti ॥ siddhā caite mahābhāgāḥ purā hy ekāntino
'bhandayā / tamorajinirmuktāḥ mām pravekṣayanty asaṃśayam ॥. – “These
[White Men] are without (i.e. they have transcended) the sense faculties and [the need for] food, are devoted to me, and are the colour of the moon. There should be no interruption for them – they should [be able to] direct their thoughts upon me one-pointedly. These perfected, illustrious beings became Ekāntins long ago. Freed from rajas and tamas, they will undoubtedly enter into me.” (MBh 12.326.18-19)

Ekāntins are repeatedly characterised by their intense, single-minded concentration. They are focussed on one object only. According to Vedāntadeśika (PRR 139.4), the anta in ekānta refers to a niścaya, a “definite ascertainment”, which is ekattra, “in one place”, or in other words, of one particular object. Nilakaṇṭha, meanwhile, in his commentary on the MBh, glosses ekāntagatabuddhibhiḥ (at MBh 12.331.50b) with avyabhicaritabuddhibhiḥ, literally “with undeviating minds”. In the opening chapter of the Nārāyaṇīya (12.321), the object of this concentrated attention is the inner self (antarātman) of all beings, called the knower of the field (kṣetrajña, 29ab), and Ekāntins are said to be “absorbed in that” (tadbhāvitā, 12.321.42ab). Elsewhere, they are described as being absorbed in brahman (brahmabhāva, 323.45d), and intensely concentrated (susamāhita, 326.116). More commonly, the object of their focussed attention is a personal god called Nārāyaṇa or Hari. It is, I

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297 One-pointedness (ekaggatālekāgratā) also has an important place in Buddhist meditation (see e.g. Cousins 1992) and in Pāññatā yoga (see especially Yogasūtra 3.11-12).
298 The star passage *813 immediately following 12.323.42ab articulates this well. The two half-ślokas 323.42ab-*813 together read: “By those men who are Ekāntins, knowers of the Five Times, yoked with supreme devotion, Hari is then worshipped in thought, word, and deed” (tair iṣṭaḥ pañcakālaajñair harir ekāntibhir naraḥ / bhaktyā paramayā yuktair manovākkarmabḥis tadā *).
propose, this intensely concentrated mental attitude which is referred to by the phrase ekāntabhāva (at e.g. 322.4d, 323.24c, and 326.116c). Those who have “attained the state of ekānta” (ekāntabhāvopagatā), we are told at 332.18, have minds that are concentrated and controlled, their senses are restrained, and they enter into Vāsudeva.299

This brings me to the second of the three primary senses of ekānta and related terms in the Nārāyaṇīya. As Lassen notes, the adjective ekānta also can also be used to describe something which has only one outcome (“Ausgang”) or “end” (i.e. anta). Lassen (1852: 1104 n. 5) remarks that this is the meaning of ekānta in the “Sāṃkhya system”, by which he no doubt means the tradition/s which composed, and later commented upon, the Sāṃkhya-kārikā (SK). In this work, the terms ekānta (SK 1) and aikāntika (SK 68) are found alongside, respectively, atyanta and ātyantika, the former terms denoting “certainty” and the latter terms “finality” or “permanence” (of the “isolation”, kaivalya, of puruṣa from prakṛti at SK 68).300 The two terms appear to be close enough in meaning in the SK so as to be virtually synonymous (see e.g. Larson 1969: 257, 280; Jacobsen 2002: 6, 275), a semantic feature which is also found, for instance, in the Bhagavadgītā (cf. 6.21a, 28d with 14.27d). This use of the word ekānta to denote a type of “certainty” echoes the primary sense of ekānta and its related terms in the philosophical literature: an argument that is aikāntika is one which leads to a single and therefore a certain or definite conclusion, while one which is anekānta or anaikāntika leads to more than one conclusion, and so is “inconclusive” or “uncertain” (Randle 1930: 192-194). Outside of the philosophical context, ekānta can also refer more generally to something which is “absolutely” or “exclusively” the case, and on several occasions in his translation of the first two books of the Śāntiparvan, Fitzgerald (2004) translates ekānta with these words.301

299 MBh 12.332.18: samāhitamanaskāś ca niyatāḥ samyatendriyāḥ / ekāntabhāvopagatā vāsudevaṁ viśānti te ॥.
300 In his Bhāṣya on the Sāṃkhya-kārikā, Gauḍapāda (p. 2) glosses ekānta with avaśyam, meaning “necessarily, inevitably, certainly, at all events, by all means” (Monier-Williams 2002: 104). In his Vṛtti on SK 68, the later commentator Māṭhara glosses aikāntikam with avaśyambhāvivatā, literally “because of it being necessarily the case”.
301 See Fitzgerald’s (2004) translations of e.g. MBh 12.13.8a, 19.18a, 81.10a, 128.15a, 137.24c.
In one place in the Nārāyaṇīya, we find the term ekāntitvam alongside atyanta,\textsuperscript{302} which may point to the validity of interpreting ekānta etc. as denoting, among other things, a kind of “certainty”. The kind of certainty that is applicable to Ekāntins regards their own liberation, which in this text commonly takes the form of entering into god.\textsuperscript{303} We are repeatedly told throughout the Nārāyaṇīya that Ekāntins, i.e. those who have attained the state of ekānta, are assured of entering into god, or of going to the “highest place” etc.\textsuperscript{304} On several occasions (e.g. at 12.326.19, translated above, and at 326.44), the liberation of the Ekāntins is referred to in the future tense, suggesting that the state of ekānta (ekāntabhāva) may represent a stage prior to final liberation. This would explain why the state of ekānta is so commonly referred to as something that is “attained”, “arrived at” or “entered into”.\textsuperscript{305} And if liberation is guaranteed to those who reach this stage, as is repeatedly stated, this would explain, for example, Nārada’s calling the “White Men” “awakened” (pratibuddha, 331.41c, 51b), and Yudhiṣṭhira’s referring to them as being already “liberated here” (vimuktā bhavantīha, 322.14a). As Schreiner (1997b: 178) observes, this may be an articulation of the idea that was later called “liberation while living” (jīvanmukti). At any rate, it is clear that, for the authors of the Nārāyaṇīya, Ekāntins have already undergone a significant transformation of some sort, and that this sets them apart from non-Ekāntins. This transformation is conveyed, metaphorically, by the extraordinary physical appearance of the inhabitants of White Island (described at e.g. 322.9-11) or, as in the following less dramatic example from the phalaśruti which closes Part A, by the fact that Ekāntins take on the colour or the “radiance” of the moon:

\[
\text{yaś cedāṃ paṭhate nityaṃ yaś cedāṃ śṛṇuyān narāḥ / ekāntabhāvopagata ekānte susamāhitaḥ // prāpya śvetaṃ mahādvipaṃ bhūtvā candraprabho narāḥ}
\]

\textsuperscript{302} MBh 12.334.1: “Having heard this speech proclaimed by Nara and Nārada, Nārada was completely devoted to god, and attained the status of an Ekāntin” (śrutvaitan nārado vākyām naraṇārdvyānītyaṃ / atyantabhaktimān deve ekāntitvam upayīvān //).

\textsuperscript{303} That “entering into god” signifies “liberation” is asserted at 12.326.24ab: yaṃ praviśya bhavantīha muktā vai dvjasattama //. See also the very similar 326.41ab, and elsewhere 327.6.

\textsuperscript{304} Indeed, mention of the Ekāntins is usually accompanied by this assertion. See e.g. MBh 12.321.41-42; 326.19; 326.44; 332.18; 336.3c-4; 336.69; 337.67.

\textsuperscript{305} The most common way to articulate this is with the term upagata (see MBh 12.323.24c, 326.116c, 332.18c, and 337.67c). Elsewhere, samāgata (323.49b) and upeyivas (334.1d) are also used.
A man who regularly recites and listens to this, in a solitary place, intensely concentrated, [by him] the state of ekānta is attained. After reaching the great White Island and having become a man with the radiance of the moon (i.e. a “White Man”), he shall undoubtedly enter into the thousand-rayed god.” (MBh 12.326.116-117)

This passage conveniently points to the third of what I am calling the three “primary senses” of ekānta while also conveying the two other senses that I have highlighted above. The use of the term ekānta to refer to a secluded or solitary place is common throughout the epic (see e.g. MBh 1.21.4c, 3.49.3a, 3.137.5a, 12.215.8d). Frequently, such places are inhabited by renunciates performing acts of asceticism (tapas) (e.g. MBh 1.32.4, 1.110.30-35, 1.208.16ff etc.). Indeed, on several occasions in the Śāntiparvan, the term ekāntasīlin, literally “practising a life of solitude”, implies precisely the practice of renunciation and tapas. In the Nārāyaṇīya, shortly after Nārada has listed his personal qualities and achievements (among which he counts ekāntabhāva, 12.322.3-4), the vantage point at the summit of Mount Meru from which he first sets eyes on White Island and its Ekāntin inhabitants is described as “secluded” (ekāntam, 322.7b). Given the prevalence of this use of ekānta in the MBh, and in the Śāntiparvan in particular, it seems reasonable to suggest that we should include this sense of the term and its implications in our preliminary understanding of the identity of the Ekāntins in the Nārāyaṇīya. After all, Ekāntins are repeatedly described as inhabiting a place (i.e. White Island) which is far removed from the ordinary world. As Nīlakanṭha emphasises in his commentary, Ekāntins have renounced all desires (e.g. 328.30, 336.27-29), though they remain desirous of liberation (336.67). They are called ascetics (yati, 336.79c), and are

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306 See MBh 12.9.4-11, where Yudhiṣṭhira describes the life he will live as a forest hermit. The key verses, for the present purposes, are translated by Fitzgerald (2004: 185) as follows: “Abandoning the way of life and the comforts of society, enduring tremendous ascetic observances, I shall live in the forest… Enduring cold, wind, and heat, tolerating hunger, thirst, and fatigue, I shall dry my body up with the heat of the ascetic practices that are prescribed… Living all alone (ekāntasīlin, 10a), reflecting upon matters… I will await the dissolution of this body.” See also 12.23.8-9b (ibid.: 214): “Asceticism, sacrifice, learning, begging alms, the restraint of the senses, meditation, a life of solitude (ekāntasīlatva), contentment, and making donations - all according to one’s ability – these actions are the approved means to complete perfection for brahmans.” Elsewhere, see 12.21.9, 12.288.29, and 12.304.12. With regard to this last verse, it should be noted that Hopkins (1901: 342) and Brockington (2003: 17) interpret ekāntasīlinā as, respectively, “devoted to one thing”, and “devoted to one purpose”.

See also MBh 14.19.14-30, wherein ekāntasīla is linked with the teaching or discipline of yoga (yogaśāstra).
characterised as having transcended the sense faculties and the need for food (322.9ab, 323.25cd). Närada, himself an Ekāntin, practises tapas or “austerities” (322.3b, 325.2d), and says that his vision of Nārāyaṇa is the “fruit” of these practices, alongside his restraint (yama) and piety (niyama) (326.15). On two occasions in later passages of Part A, and in several passages belonging to Part B, this renunciatory way of life is subsumed under the general category of “disengagement” or withdrawal from activity (nivṛtti). At 327.61-66, this practice of nivṛtti, literally “turning away” from action, is associated with the traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and with the teaching (śāstra) and dharma of liberation (mokṣa). It is contrasted here with the path of ritual action, namely pravṛtti, which is practised by those who “know the Veda”.

Of course, each of the three senses of ekānta which I have highlighted here are closely related to one another, and at times their connotations overlap. So, for instance, the first and third senses both point to the practice of asceticism, the first by drawing attention to a meditative technique which was apparently well-established within certain ascetic milieux, the latter by evoking the solitary environments in which such techniques were commonly practised. The first and second senses, meanwhile, could be said to be even closer in that they both ultimately concern Nārāyaṇa: in the first sense as the object of contemplation, and in the second sense as the certain “end” to which this contemplation leads. Needless to say, my reasons for distinguishing between senses in the above manner are purely expositional. They do not reflect a strict hermeneutical method, but are merely intended to highlight what I consider to be the most important connotations of the term we are presently occupied with. It should be noted here, before we move on, that the senses of ekānta listed above have much in common with those connected to the term ekāyana, as discussed in the last chapter.

307 MBh 12.326.63ab: “It is known that the supreme nivṛtti is the extinction of all duties” (nirvāṇaṁ sarvadharmāṇāṁ nivṛttiḥ paramā śrītā).
309 Among the meanings of ekānta given by Monier-Williams (2002: 230) we find “a lonely or retired or secret place”, “the only end or aim”, “devotion to one object”, “directed towards or devoted to only
I have referred above to the prospect of a “preliminary understanding” of the identity of the Ekāntins, which now needs to be explained. Each of the senses of the term ekānta to which I have drawn attention can be found in passages which Oberlies (1997, 1997a, 1997b) has identified as belonging to the older portions of Part A. Bearing in mind that the Nārāyanīya contains multiple “layers”, i.e. sections which have been added to the core narrative (concerning Nārada’s journey to White Island and his vision of god), we should expect to find a number of new ideas and new points of emphasis in these younger sections, and indeed we do. Nārada’s vision of Nārāyaṇa (described at 326.2-9), which belongs to the oldest layer of the text, appears to be the consequence of, or the reward for, his singing a hymn of praise (stotra) with his mind “one-pointed” (ekāgramanāḥ). Nārada has achieved this “one-pointedness” through performing japa and austerities alongside the White Men on White Island. In layers of the text added subsequently, the practices of japa, asceticism and one-pointedness are, in one place or another, all presented as being central to the Ekāntin worship of god, and the latter is repeatedly declared to be the prerequisite for a vision of god. However, in the later additions to Part A, and in Part B, there is increasingly less emphasis on the meditative and ascetic practices referred to above, and a much greater stress on the idea of gratifying god by means of bhakti.

Thus, in the story of King Vasu’s aśvamedha, Vasu is rewarded with a vision of the Bhagavat not because he is an Ekāntin, but because god is pleased that his sacrifice involved no animal slaughter (323.10-11). At the end of this section, Vasu affirms that it is possible to see god only as a consequence of his kindness (yasya prasādaṃ kurute sa vai taṃ draṣṭum arhati, 323.18ef). Meanwhile, one of the main
themes in the following tale of the brothers Ekata, Dvita and Trita (323.19-53), which appears to be among the later additions to Part A, is that asceticism (tapas) does not lead to a vision of god. The brothers practise traditional methods of asceticism for thousands of years in order to see Nārāyaṇa (323.19-21), but are subsequently told that it is not possible for a non-devotee (abhakta) to see him (323.48cd). The following verse appears to equate being a devotee with being an Ekāntin, and it is striking that earlier on in this section the White Men, the paradigmatic Ekāntins, are described as practising one-pointedness and japa (323.32), but not tapas. It should also be noted here that the White Men are depicted as worshipping god with heavenly flowers and herbs (puspāṇi... cauṣadhiḥ, 323.41cd), which represents a significant departure from the historically earlier descriptions of Ekāntin worship. This move away from asceticism is also evident in another of the apparently youngest portions of Part A. In a verse in the Nārāyaṇīya’s opening chapter, we are told that “to see [Nara and Nārāyaṇa] by means of asceticism and ardour is difficult even for the gods. [Only] he to whom they bestow kindness can see both gods.” The theme continues in a short passage in chapter 331. Here it is said that god is not seen by asceticism (tapasāpi na dṛśyo hi bhagavān, 331.12a), and that Nārada’s viewing of god on White Island was manifested, rather, in consequence of god’s kindness (devaprasādānugatam vyaktam tat tasya darśanam, 331.14ab).

This tendency away from asceticism and towards an emphasis on god’s kindness or favour (prasāda) is evident in sections of Part A which have been identified by the scholars of Nārāyaṇīya-Studien as being among the later additions to chapters 321-326. The trend coincides with an increasing emphasis on the reciprocal, loving relationship between god and his devotees, called bhakti. However, the practice of asceticism is not excluded from this new paradigm. Rather, its efficacy is reinterpreted within a bhakti framework which emphasises the greater

312 MBh 12.323.48c-49: na sa śakyo abhaktena draśṭum devaḥ kathāṃ cana // kāmāṁ kālena mahatā ekāntītvaṁ samāgatah / śakyo draśṭum sa bhagavān prabhāmaṇḍaladurdṛśaḥ //.
313 MBh 12.321.12: tapasā tejasā caiva durnirikṣau surair api / yasya prasādaṁ kurvāte sa devau draśṭum arhati //.
power of god’s benevolence. Two examples from Part B ably demonstrate this method. In the first, Vyāsa declares that he has practised very severe asceticism so that he might know the past, present and future. While practising these austerities on the shore of the Milk Ocean, he says, this knowledge relating to the three times was revealed to him by means of god’s kindness. In the second example, Rudra claims that his asceticism and study, or recitation of texts (svādhyāya), is prosperous only on account of god’s kindness. Passages such as these articulate a rejection of the idea that ascetic practices (and in the latter example, Vedic study) are intrinsically efficacious. According to this historically later view, then, any kind of religious achievement is ultimately dependent upon god rather than the worshipper. This is expressed very clearly in chapter 336: “The person who is seen by Nārāyaṇa shall be awakened. Thus, one is not awakened by one’s own desires, O king.” As Schreiner (1997b: 164-165) remarks, this represents a complete inversion of the older idea of the vision of god.

In the context of this kind of teaching, it was inevitable that meditative practices such as one-pointedness, which were previously considered to be themselves innately powerful, would be subordinated entirely to practices which aimed solely towards the gratification of god. It was, I propose, in this context that the term ekānta came to explicitly denote a monotheism. This sense is never explicit in Part A, wherein the Ekāntins are distinguished from non-Ekāntins primarily by their intensely concentrated (“one-pointed”) form of worship. In the story of Ekata, Dvita and Trita, for example, it is not indicated that the brothers fail to achieve a vision of god because they are not monotheists. However, the tale of Vasu’s liberation from a hole in the earth (324.17-38), which appears to have been added to

314 The notion of “renunciation” was also reinterpreted, along the lines of the teaching of renunciation in the Bhagavadgītā. This has already been adequately discussed in the secondary literature, see especially Malinar (1997).
315 MBh 12.327.21-23b: mayā hi sumahat tapaṁ tapaḥ paramadāruṇam / bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhavisyac ca jāntyām iti sattamaṁ / tasya me taptatapaso nirgrhitendriyaśya ca / nārāyaṇaprasādāṇa kṣīrodasyānukālataḥ / traṅgūlāṃ adām jñānaṁ prādurbhūtaṁ yathepsitam /.
316 MBh 12.338.16abc: tvatprasādāṇa bhagavan svādhyāyataparām mama / kuśalaṁ cāyayaṁ caiva... /.
317 MBh 12.336.70: nārāyanaṁ dṛṣṭaṁ ca pratibuddho bhavet pumān / evam aṭmecchayā rājan pratibuddho na jáyate /. See also 336.68, where the same sentiment is expressed.
318 Of course, such practices still were considered to be innately powerful by certain other religious groups.
Part A after the story of Ekata, Dvita and Trita (Oberlies 1997: 112), offers a striking prologue to ideas which will be taken up at greater length in Part B. For here (324.27-33), Vasu is liberated from the hole not by his own actions, but by the command of god, who is pleased (tuṣṭa) by Vasu’s constant worship (pūjā). As Grünendahl (2002: 327) notes, Vasu’s liberation “seems to have [been] regarded as a prototype of the god’s intervention on behalf of his devotees”. This passage is especially important to the present discussion since it contains the only explicit reference to “monotheism” in the whole of Part A. Although Vasu is never called an Ekāntin, he is referred to here as an ananyabhakta (324.29c), a “devotee of no other”.

It was, then, precisely in this bhakti context, wherein the devotee is liberated by god rather than by himself, that monotheism, or “exclusive devotion”, became one of the primary means by which to distinguish Ekāntins from other worshippers. This method of discrimination, which is new to Part B, is demonstrated quite clearly in a passage from chapter 328 (30-32d). Here it is said that for Ekāntins, the most excellent devotees, “there are no other gods” (ananyadevatāḥ), whereas inferior devotees worship Brahmā, Śiva and “other gods” (anyā devatāḥ). I discuss this passage in greater detail in the following section, the primary concern of which is this relation between Ekāntins and other worshippers.

 iii.) Sectarianism, syncretism, and the religious identity of the Ekāntins in Part B

Several modern scholars (e.g. Jaiswal 1967:40; Brockington 1998: 299) have claimed that the Ekāntins in the Nārāyaṇīya are devotees of Nārāyaṇa, and that they are to be distinguished on this basis from the followers of Vāsudeva, who are considered to be inferior. These two religious groupings, according to this theory, are thus depicted as two distinct Vaiṣṇava “sects”. This reading is based exclusively on the following passage:
The precise meaning of these verses is rather obscure, and hinges on how we interpret the reference to the “three paths” (gatayas tisro) which are not travelled by those who follow the ekántadharma. The syntax in the fourth verse, which contains this reference, is particularly puzzling. Following Nilakaṇṭha’s commentary,319 scholars including Ganguli (2000: 187), Jaiswal, Gonda (1970: 54), Brockington and Sutton (2000: 114) have interpreted these “three paths” as referring to three soteriological “stages” represented by the deified Vṛṣṇi heroes Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa. According to this interpretation, followers of Vāsudeva (referred to as Puruṣottama at 336.3b) must pass through each of these three deities before reaching the fourth deity (i.e. Vāsudeva), whereas Ekāntins go straight to “the immortal Hari” (i.e. Nārāyaṇa). It is quite easy to see how this interpretation has been arrived at, but it is beset with problems which I will address below.

The claim that gatayas tisro designates the deities Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa is no doubt based on the belief that this passage refers back to MBh 12.332.13-18. Certainly, the four verses translated above represent Janaṃeṣa’s summary of what he has learnt thus far, and so it is entirely appropriate that we should interpret them as referring to teachings which have already been articulated in earlier chapters of the Nārāyaṇīya. The only previous account of the Vṛṣṇi deities in a soteriological context occurs at 332.13-18. The passage reads as follows: the

319 BhBhD on 12.336.3-4: caturthyaṃ aniruddhapradyumnasamkarṣaṇān apekṣya caturthyaṃ vāsudevāḥkhyāyaṃ hariḥbaktānāṃ viśeṣam āha ekāntinas tv iti... (336.3) / gatayā gatiḥ aniruddhādīns trīṇ anupāsyaiva vāsudevam gacchatī arthaḥ (336.4) /.
liberation of those who are “free from merit and demerit” (puṇyāpāpāpavivarjitaḥ) begins with a journey towards the sun (āditya), which is called the gate (dvāra) (13). They are bodies burnt by the sun, these beings become invisible and infinitesimal (paramāṇu), and they enter the god (i.e. Āditya) in this form (14). Liberated from there, they stay in the body of Aniruddha, and then, having become manas, they enter into Pradyumna (15). Liberated from Pradyumna, these “most excellent Brahmins” (viprapraravārāḥ), the Sāṃkhyas together with the Bhāgavatas, then enter into Sāṃkarṣaṇa, the jīva (16). Then, having transcended the three guṇas, they enter into Vāsudeva, who is called the “knower of the field” (kṣetrajñam) (17).

Verse 18, which I have referred to above, asserts that, with their “minds concentrated and controlled, senses restrained, having attained the state of ekānta, they enter into Vāsudeva”. As Malinar (1997: 281) has pointed out, this last verse is at odds with the preceding verses, in which the liberated beings have already been divested of their bodies (sarvāṅga) and minds (manas). Hence, it is very probable that verses 13e-17 have been inserted into this passage, and that verse 18 originally immediately followed 13cd (ibid.). We must assume, of course, that this interpolation occurred prior to the composition of 336.1-4, if indeed the “three paths” mentioned there refer to Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sāṃkarṣaṇa.

There are, at the outset, at least two problems with the assumption that 336.1-4 refers back to 332.13-18. Firstly, 336.4, as we have established, refers to three paths (or “stages” if that interpretation is preferred), whereas at 332.13-18, the entrance of the liberated beings into Vāsudeva is preceded by their entrance into, and “liberation” from, four deities, namely Āditya, Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sāṃkarṣaṇa. Bakker (1997: 59-62) notes that in this account Āditya, the sun, takes the place of Sāmba, one of the original “five heroes” (pañcavīra) of the Vṛṣṇi clan.

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320 The description “free from merit and demerit” (puṇyāpāpāpavivarjita) is also used to refer to liberated beings who “enter into the thousand-rayed god” at MBh 12.327.5e-6.
who was subsequently expelled from the pantheon when Pāncarattra authors developed a theology of four differentiated forms of god (vyūha). Sāmba, observes Bakker, was closely related to the cult of the sun (Sūrya), both mythologically and iconographically. In other words, in the above account, which is not described or alluded to anywhere else in the Nārāyaṇīya, Āditya is almost certainly to be considered as much a “stage” in the process of ascent undertaken by liberated beings as are the other Vṛṣṇi deities. Of course, it could be argued that Sāmba or Āditya had already been dropped from the pantheon by the time 336.1-4 was composed, and that the devotee of Nārāyaṇa who authored these verses was aware of this, and adjusted the number accordingly. This, then, would be the only place in the text in which the entrance of liberated beings into Vāsudeva is represented as the fourth stage in a hierarchy of ascent. But this still leaves us with the following question: why did the author of 336.1-4 choose to refer only to “three paths” which are not travelled by Ekāntins? For if, as is alleged, these verses can be taken as evidence for an intravaishnav sectarianism, then surely there are four “paths” which Ekāntins do not travel, for they do not go to Vāsudeva either - they go to Hari or Nārāyaṇa.

This brings me to the second problem with the assumption that 336.1-4 refers back to 332.13-18. At verse 18, as we have seen, those who enter into Vāsudeva are said to have “attained the state of ekānta” (ekāntabhāvopaga). This is another way of saying that they are Ekāntins. According to the “sectarian” interpretation of 336.1-4, however, Ekāntins are devotees of Nārāyaṇa, and not of Vāsudeva. In other words, the very passage that 336.1-4 supposedly refers back to explicitly contradicts the idea that Ekāntins are to be distinguished from the followers of Vāsudeva. Moreover, if, as is alleged (for example by Jaiswal 1967: 40 n. 3), the “Supreme Person” (puruṣottama) is used exclusively as an epithet of Vāsudeva (and thus can only refer to him at 336.3b), then there are also other instances in the Nārāyaṇīya in which Ekāntins are identified as followers of this deity (e.g. 323.24, 336.66). However, it is not at all obvious that puruṣottama at 336.3b refers specifically to Vāsudeva. For, contrary to Jaiswal’s claim, elsewhere in the Nārāyaṇīya we find this honorific applied to, for instance, the ṛṣis Nara and Nārāyaṇa (puruṣottama, 331.29b), Hari (331.41d, 335.41b, 62d, 65d) and, later in chapter 336 itself, to the god Nārāyaṇa.
Indeed, the final section of the Nārāyaṇīya explicitly addresses the question (asked by Rudra at 338.23) “who is the Puruṣottama?” Brahmā’s answer is quite clear. The “Supreme Person” is Nārāyaṇa (339.14). Vāsudeva is not mentioned here, nor indeed anywhere else in the final four chapters (336-339) of the Nārāyaṇīya. Finally, it should be noted that if we assume that puruṣottama at 336.3b refers to Vāsudeva, then this would be the only passage in the whole of the Nārāyaṇīya in which Vāsudeva and Nārāyaṇa, or their respective devotees, are clearly distinguished from each other in such a manner.

In light of the above, we must conclude that the “sectarian” reading of 336.1-4 is unwarranted. It is far more likely that the “Supreme Person” in this passage refers to (Hari-)Nārāyaṇa, as is the case when the term puruṣottama is employed later on in the same chapter. This requires, then, that we take the enclitic particle tu at 336.3c to be emphatic rather than adversative, and that we interpret “the Supreme Person” and “the highest place” as referring to the same thing. Now we must address the question as to what is referred to by the “three paths” (gatayas tisro) at 336.4c. As mentioned above, much of the secondary literature on the Nārāyaṇīya follows Nīlakanṭha’s reading. Esnoul (1979: 197-198) does not appear to agree with this reading, but does not directly address the problem. Nor does the collaborative volume Nārāyaṇīya-Studien. Thus far, I have been able to find in the Indological literature only one alternative interpretation of these verses, which is that offered by Peter Hill. According to Hill (2001: 291), the ekāntadharma is the most excellent “since, without passing through the three stages (of life) they go (directly) to the immutable Hari.” We can presume that by “stages of life” here, Hill is referring to the āśramas in their “classical formulation” (Olivelle 1993: 131), i.e. as successive modes of life. I do not find this reading very convincing, for reasons which will become obvious shortly.

The passage in question (336.1-4) implies that there are four “paths” or “ways” (gati), and that among these the way of the Ekāntins is the most excellent. To my mind, the earlier teaching in the Nārāyaṇīya which this most closely resembles is that given at 12.328.30-32. Here, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that his devotees are of

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322 This is consistent with Esnoul’s (1979: 197-198) translation of these verses.
“four kinds” (caturvidhā). “Among these”, he continues, “the Ekāntins, [for whom] there are no other gods, are the most excellent. I alone am the way (gati) for them, the performers of actions not motivated by desire.” He goes on to say that the remaining three types of devotee desire the fruits of their actions, and that they are all destined to “sink down”. The following verse, which may have been added later, identifies these latter devotees with the worship of Brahmā, Śiva and “other gods”.323 Malinar (1997: 258-264) notes that this classification of four types of devotee is most likely borrowed from the Bhagavadgītā (7.16-17b),324 and that the immediate context of the above verses in MBh 12.328 – namely, a conversation between Krṣṇa and Arjuna which extols the merits of the renunciation of personal desires – contains obvious echoes of that text. Unlike in the Bhagavadgītā, the other three types of devotee are not explicitly named in MBh 12.328.

We return now to MBh 12.336.1-4. These verses also occur in a context which refers to the Bhagavadgītā (at 336.8).325 Indeed, Vaiśampāyana’s response to Janamejaya’s questions (at 336.6e-7b) includes the first reference to the conversation between Krṣṇa and Arjuna since the latter’s extended discussion (328.5-330.71), during which the classification of the four kinds of devotee was taught. Later in chapter 336, the Ekāntins are characterised, as at 328.30, by the fact that their actions are not motivated by desire (āśīḥkarmakīrṇā). That neither the three other kinds of devotee nor the three paths not travelled by Ekāntins are explicitly named may suggest that this fourfold classification is merely a formal model, authoritative because of its link to the teaching of the four kinds of devotee in the Bhagavadgītā. In other words, it is quite possible that the author of 336.1-4 had no particular “three paths” in mind when these verses were composed. However, it is also possible, in my opinion, that three other distinct “paths” were intended by the

323 MBh 12.328.30-32d: caturvidhā mama janā bhaktā evaṃ hi śrutam / teṣām ekāntināḥ Śreṣṭhās te caivānanyadevataḥ / abhā eva gatis teṣām nirāśīḥkarmakīrṇāṃ / III ye ca śīśās trayo bhaktāḥ phala-śīmā hi te matāḥ / sarve ca vasantadharmānāḥ pratibuddhas tu śreṣṭhābhāvāḥ / brahmānām śītānāmāḥ ca yās cānāya devataḥ śṛṣṭāḥ / prabhudhāvavāyāḥ sevante mām evaisyanti yat param / II.

324 Malinar’s (2007: 132) translation of these verses in the Bhagavadgītā reads as follows: “Four kinds of good men seek my love, Arjuna: the suffering (ārta), the seeker of knowledge (jñāsu), the seeker of wealth (arthaḥ), and the one who knows (me, jñānin), best of Bhāratas. Among them, the one who knows (me) is supreme since his devotion is exclusive and he is always self-controlled”.325 MBh 12.336.8: samupodheṣy anīkeṣu kurupāṇḍavayor mṛdhe / arjune vimanaske ca gītā bhagavatā svayam / II.
Yoga are here assimilated to those of Śākya which in the MBh, as Edgerton (1924) has shown, are nominally distinguished from each other, but treated as more or less the same.

To whom is Janamejaya referring when he speaks of those who follow the dharma of the ascetic? As we have seen above, in the first chapter of Part B of the Nārāyaṇīya, the dharma of the ascetic is called the nivṛttidharma, and it is associated with the traditions of Śāmkhya and Yoga. The nivṛttidharma is contrasted there with the dharma of pravṛtti, which is associated with the Veda (327.61-66). These three traditions (Śāmkhya, Yoga and Veda) are listed alongside each other again at the end of chapter 335, shortly before Janamejaya’s reference to the “three paths” not travelled by Ekāntins. Here it says that Hari is the “receptacle” (nīdiḥ) of the Vedas, and of asceticism (tapas), that he is “Śāmkhya” and “Yoga”. In the following verse, the Vedas are typified by “sacrifices” (yajñā) which have Nārāyaṇa as their nature. The same is then said of the path (gati) that is intent upon Nārāyaṇa, which is epitomised by asceticism (tapas). Though Śāmkhya and Yoga are not mentioned here a second time, they are clearly intended, for “the path intent upon Nārāyaṇa” refers to the nivṛttidharma, which is contrasted there with the dharma that is characterised by pravṛtti. Both dharmas have Nārāyaṇa as their nature.326 A few verses later, ascetics (yatī) who “know the Self” are identified as Śāmkhyas and Yogins.327 In this latter verse, as is common in the Nārāyaṇīya, Śāmkhya and Yoga are nominally distinguished from each other, but treated as more or less the same.328

326 MBh 335.74-77b: eṣa vedanidhiḥ śrīmān eṣa vai tapaso nīdiḥ / eṣa yogas ca śāmkhyas ca brahma caṃgraṃ harir vibhāh / nārāyaṇaparā vedā yajñā nārāyaṇātmakaḥ / tapo nārāyaṇaparam nārāyaṇaparā gatiḥ / nārāyaṇaparamaṃ satyam rtaṃ nārāyaṇātmakaṃ / nārāyaṇaparāḥ dharmāḥ pravṛttidurlabhah // pravṛttitilakaṇaḥ caiva dharmo nārāyaṇātmakaḥ //

327 MBh 12.335.85: śāmkhyānām yoginām cāpi yatīnām ātmavedinām / manaśitaṃ vijānāti keśavo na tu tasya te //

328 That they are both characterised as knowing the Self indicates that the soteriological procedures of Yoga are here assimilated to those of Śāmkhya which in the MBh, as Edgerton (1924) has shown,
For the present purposes, it is important to note that although the Nārāyaṇīya does not explicitly differentiate between Sāṃkhya and Yoga on matters of practice or doctrine, it nonetheless recognises them as two distinct ascetic traditions or “paths”.

Of course, the chief purpose of this passage at the end of chapter 335 is to assimilate and subordinate the three traditions called Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga to a supreme and all-encompassing theology of Nārāyaṇa. This method is already met with in late portions of Part A (326.64-65, 100-101b) and it can also be found in previous chapters in Part B (e.g. at 327.60-66, and 334.14-17). However, the most sustained attempt to articulate the inclusion of Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga within a single comprehensive dharma, which originates from Nārāyaṇa (336.10) and has Nārāyaṇa as its goal (niṣṭhā, 337.65), occurs in chapters 336-337. In chapter 336, this dharma, alternatively called ekānta (4a), sātvata (27ab, 31c, 78ab), and pañcarātra (76), is shown to contain within itself the seemingly antithetical paths represented by the Veda, on the one hand, and by Sāṃkhya and Yoga on the other. The question as to how (and why) Nārāyaṇa has established both the pravṛtti and the nivṛtti dharmas has already been answered in the opening chapter of Part B (327), but only now is the dharma of the Ekāntins explicitly shown to include and transcend these. Thus, for instance, we are told that it is with the ekāntadharma that Nārāyaṇa created the sacrifices to gods and ancestors (daivaṃ pitryam) (336.13def). The ekāntadharma is the same as (tulya) Sāṃkhya and Yoga (336.69ab). Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the “Āraṇyaka of the Vedas” (vedāraṇyaka) are mutually complementary parts (parasparāṅgāni) of the dharma of the Ekāntins, called in this instance pañcarātra.329 In chapter 337, in answer to Janamejaya’s question as to whether the branches of knowledge Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pañcarātra and the Āraṇyaka of the Vedas have the same goal, or different goals (1-2), Vaiśaṃpyāyana replies that according to tradition and knowledge, all branches of knowledge have Nārāyaṇa as their goal (63c-64b). He alone is the creator of the śāstras (65). ‘Pañcarātra’ here appears to be simply another name for the ekāntadharma since, unlike the other branches of

emphasises the soteriological method of knowledge. Elsewhere in the Mokṣadharmaparvan, the distinct tradition of Yoga is shown to favour the method of strength or power (bala). On this see Fitzgerald (forthcoming).

329 MBh 12.336.76: evam ekam sāṃkhya-yogam vedāraṇyakam eva ca / parasparaṅgāny etāni pañcarātram ca kathyate // eṣa ekāntināṃ dharma nārāyaṇaparātmakaḥ ///.
knowledge, it is proclaimed directly by Nārāyaṇa (60-63b), and it is said that “knowers of pañcarātra’ attain the state of ekānta (ekāntabhāva) and enter into Hari (67). Pointedly, the same is not said of experts in Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda, though the next verse (68) does affirm that each of these is eternal (sanātana).

On the basis of the exposition of the ekāntadharma in chapters 336-337, then, it seems reasonable to infer that the three “paths” not travelled by Ekāntins are precisely Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda. These do not lead to “the highest place”. It has already been stated that Nārāyaṇa, or the dharma of Nārāyaṇa, is “difficult to reach for those who are subject to rebirth” (punarāvṛttidurlabhah), by whom is meant the followers of the Veda and the path of ritual action (i.e. pravṛtti). Later in chapter 336, it will be claimed that Hari “does not look at” one who is born into the pravṛttidharma. Such a one is looked at, rather, by Brahmā (whose “glance” is not salvific). And in chapter 339, Brahmā will clearly state that the “supreme path” cannot be reached by the methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The author/s of chapters 336-337 nonetheless include these three paths within the fourth and highest path, the comprehensive dharma of the Ekāntins, also called ‘Pañcarātra’. This deliberately inclusivist or syncretist agenda, wherein other teachings or traditions are subsumed and subordinated, appears to belong to the later redactions of the Nārāyanīya since it is only evident in the supposedly youngest portions of Part A (as identified by Oberlies 1997a and 1997b), and in Part B.

In the remainder of this section, I will draw attention to the fact that a syncretist policy was applied not only to Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Veda, but also to what appear to have originally been distinct traditions of worship. For example, the denominations

330 MBh 12.337.67: pañcarātravidyo ye tu yathākramaparā rṣpa // ekāntabhāvopagatās te hariṁ pravisanti vai //.

331 As Schreiner (1997b: 162) notes, the inclusion of Pāśupata among the “other” branches of knowledge at 337.59 and 62 is obviously a later addition, since Janamejaya’s original question does not refer to this tradition.

332 See MBh 12.327.67ef: so haṁ kriyāvatāṁ panthāḥ punarāvṛttidurlabhah ///; and MBh 12.335.76c-77b, transliterated above.

333 MBh 336.71-72: rājasī tāmaṣa caiva vyāmśre prakṛti smṛte // tadātmakaṁ hi puruṣaṁ jāyamānaṁ viśāṁ pate /// pravṛttikākṣaṇair yuktam nāvekṣati hariṁ svayam /// paśyaty enaṁ jāyamānaṁ brahmā lokapitāṃmahah // rajasī tāmaṣa caiva mānuṣaṁ samabhīptam //.

334 MBh 12.339.7c-8b: sāṃkhyaṁ vidhiṁ caiva yo jena ca yathākramam // cintayāmi gatīṁ cāsyā na gatīṁ vedmi cottamāṁ //.
śātvata and bhāgavata are clearly not used in this text to refer to distinct “sects”.

Rather, they appear merely as alternative names for the followers of Nārāyaṇa. Moreover, as we will see, the authors of the Nārāyaṇīya make no attempt to explicitly subordinate the followers of Vāsudeva, for instance, to those of Nārāyaṇa. Rather, their equivalence, and indeed that of the gods themselves, is assumed. Thus, in the passage 328.16-29, the names Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa are used interchangeably to refer to the same god. This also occurs at 333.24-25. Elsewhere, at 331.9-11 the name Viṣṇu is used interchangeably with Vāsudeva, while at 335.87 it is said that Viṣṇu is called Vāsudeva because he is the abode of all beings (sarvabhūtakṛtavāsa).

In chapter 328, when Janamejaya asks for the various names by which Hari-Nārāyaṇa is known, Vaiśampāyana refers him to Hari/Keśava’s answer when asked the same question by Arjuna. Here we are told that Hari-Nārāyaṇa/Krṣṇa is called Vāsudeva because he is the abode of all beings (sarvabhūtādhibhāsa, 36cd), and that he is also called Viṣṇu among other names. The name Vāsudeva itself occurs on four separate occasions in Part B, and is used as follows: i.) as one of god’s various names, in the verse just referred to (328.36); ii.) as a name for Viṣṇu (335.87), as referred to above; iii.) at 331.9-11, wherein Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu are assimilated; and iv.) as the fifth and final deified Viṣṇi hero into whom the liberated “Sāmkhyas and Bhāgavatas” enter (332.13-18), as discussed earlier. In this last passage, as on other occasions, Vāsudeva’s name is explained etymologically – he is the abode of all (sarvāvāsa, 332.17e). He is, in addition, called here the knower of the field (kṣetrajña, 17d, f), a designation which is also applied to Vāsudeva in one of the apparently youngest passages of Part A (326.38) (discussed below), and which is elsewhere assigned to Nārāyaṇa (325.4/05, 327.67, 339.6), Hari (336.54), and Krṣṇa (330.9).

335 On the equivalence in the Nārāyaṇīya of the names sātvata and pañcarātra see Matsubara (1994: 59-60) and Oberlies (1997b: 150-151). That the term bhāgavata does not denote a separate “Vaiṣṇava sect” is apparent from the fact that the Bhāgavatas are shown to worship both Nārāyaṇa (MBh 12.327.2, 331.43) and Vāsudeva (332.16-18).

336 MBh 335.87: sarveṣaṁ āśrayo viṣṇur aśvāravām vidhim āsthitaḥ / sarvabhūtakṛtavāso vāsdeveti cocyte ॥.

337 MBh 12.331.9-11: na citram kṛtvāṁs tatra yad āryo me dhanaṁjayaḥ / vāsudevasahāyo yaḥ prāptavāṁ jayaṁ uttamaṁ ॥ na cāśya kim cid aprāpyaṁ manye lokeśv api tiṣṇa / trai lokyanātho viṣṇuḥ sa yasyāṁ sāhayaṁ takhā ॥ dhanyāś ca sarva evās brahmams te mama pūrvakāḥ / hitāya śreyase caiva yeṣāṁ āsīṁ jaṅjārdaṇaḥ ॥.
The infrequency with which Vāsudeva’s name is used in Part B is consistent with Part A, where it is found in only three separate passages, and implied in a fourth. In these it is used as follows: i.) as a name for Nārāyaṇa during Nārada’s stotra (325.4/130); ii.) as the name of the “twenty-fifth” principle (tattva), the “Self of the world” (lokasyātmā), the “Supreme Self” (paramātmā), the puruṣa who is seen by knowledge (jñāna), the Self of all beings, the knower of the field etc., in a passage (326.20-39) which, employing terminology usually associated with Sāmkhya, describes the reabsorption (pra-śī) of the five universal elements, and the successive emergence of the embodied self (jīva), the mind (manas) and the act of self-formulation (ahaṃkāra). The latter are personified as, respectively, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Oberlies (1997a) adjudges this passage to have been interpolated into chapter 326 at a late stage; iii.) Vāsudeva is not named in the verses 326.68-71d, but it is likely he who is referred to as the “fourth form” (mūrtiś caturthī) who created Saṃkarṣaṇa, who in turn begot Pradyumna, from whom is born Aniruddha, and then Brahmā; and iv.) during the paramparā which draws Part A to a close, it is said that this narrative is not to be given to one who is not a devotee of Vāsudeva.338 In the same passage, we are told that this “great Upaniṣad” has been sung by Nārāyaṇa (326.100-101b), and that Janārdana should be worshipped as the Supreme Person (puruṣottama, 326.119-120).

What can we infer from these infrequent references to Vāsudeva? Clearly, we must conclude that if the Nārāyaṇīya was at one time in the hands of “sectarian” followers of Vāsudeva, then they did not make very good use of it. It is much more likely, of course, that these eight passages (from Parts A and B) were included in the text by authors who also professed devotion to Nārāyaṇa.339 Since Nārāyaṇa is clearly the principal god in the Nārāyaṇīya, and since archaeological and inscriptional evidence (on which see e.g. Härtel 1987) tells us that the worship of Vāsudeva was not always linked to the worship of Nārāyaṇa, we must assume that

338 MBh 12.326.113: idam ākhyānam ārṣeyaṃ pāramparyāgatam nṛpa / nāvāsudevabhaktāya tvayā deyaṃ katham ca na //.
339 The only alternative, as I see it, would be to argue that the text passed from followers of Nārāyaṇa to followers of Vāsudeva, and then back to followers of Nārāyaṇa. The latter must have then either thoroughly revised it, removing most (but not all) of the references to Vāsudeva, or found a text where such references were so few and far between that they were not considered worthy of removal.
followers of Nārāyaṇa had adopted Vāsudeva into their own theology. They may have done this for purely “political” reasons, i.e. as a way of subordinating and dominating a rival “sect”. But the Nārāyaṇīya offers no evidence for this, and in fact points to another explanation. As we have seen above, the only “Vāsudeva passages” which do not merely assimilate this god to Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa are those which identify the four or five deified Vṛṣṇi heroes with a series of emergent ontological principles (326.35-39), which function also as successive cosmic realms or levels through which liberated beings ascend (332.13-18). We can presume, then, that it is these passages which are able to offer us a better idea as to why Vāsudeva was considered important and worthy of adoption. If this is the case, it is inevitable that Vāsudeva’s importance derived in some way from his association with Saṃkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

That these four “forms” (mūrti, 326.68a) were together considered important is proven by the fact that they are explicitly incorporated into the theology of Hari-Nārāyaṇa. This occurs at 336.51-56 and at 339.12, and 18-20. In the former passage, it is said that Hari is viewed as having one, two, three or four forms (vyūha). Strongly echoing the account of the “Vāsudeva passage” 326.20-39, outlined above, these four vyūhas are identified as the knower of the field (kṣetrajña, 336.54a), the embodied self (jīva, 336.54cd), the mind (manas, 336.55a), and the “agent, effect and cause” (kartā ca kāryaṃ kāraṇam, 336.56ab. Cf. 326.37). In the final chapter of the Nārāyaṇīya, meanwhile, Brahmā reveals that Nārāyaṇa has a “fourfold” form (339.12, 20), and that in his role as creator he is called ‘Aniruddha’ (339.18ab). Why, then, did Nārāyaṇa theologians consider it expedient to adopt these differentiated divine forms?

The answer must surely involve the ontological principles or “levels” with which they are identified. Elsewhere in the Mokṣadharmaapurva (e.g. 12.228, 291, 293-294), these principles (tattva) belong to the evolutionary cosmogony of Sāmkhya and Yoga. According to this cosmogony, the lower ontological principles emerge out of the higher ones (see e.g. 294.27-28). The Vṛṣṇi heroes might have

340 MBh 12.336.53: ekavyāvahābhāgo vā kva cid dvivyāhasamjñitaḥ / trivyāhaś cāpi saṃkhyaśa caturvyāhaś ca drśyate //. These are the only uses of the term vyūha in the Nārāyanīya.

341 Schreiner et al. (1997c: 413 n. 256) have pointed out that 339.20 itself echoes 336.56.
been considered particularly germane to such a process since Pradyumna and Aniruddha are, respectively, the son and grandson of Vāsudeva. By incorporating these successively lower forms of god into this evolutionary scheme, the author of 326.20-39 is able to include within it both a god who remains completely transcendent, and a creator god from whom the universe originates (i.e. Aniruddha, 326.37). This much has been stated by numerous scholars before me. But the divinisation of these levels is important to the soteriological process too. Fitzgerald (forthcoming) discusses the distinct soteriological methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, as described in the “text-pair” MBh 12.289-290. Adherents of the method of Yoga, Fitzgerald shows, attempt to forcibly ascend through the levels to mokṣa. The Sāṃkhyaś, meanwhile, claim that it is possible to attain mokṣa by way of “a comprehensive knowledge and understanding... [of] ever higher cosmic realities” (ibid: 298). The author of MBh 12.332.13-18 distinguishes the ekānta path from both of these. For here, the “Sāṃkhyaś together with the Bhāgavatas” do not liberate themselves either forcibly or by knowledge. Rather, each divinised realm that these beings pass through liberates them. In other words, by assigning the Vṛṣṇi deities to these levels, the author of this passage is able to illustrate the apparently new idea that the devotee is liberated not by himself but by god.

iv.) Conclusions

In a late addition to Part A of the Nārāyaṇīya, and in Part B, ‘Pañcarātra’ is named as the comprehensive Upaniṣad (326.100), or the dharma of the Ekāntins (336.76), both of which subsume the three traditions Veda, Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Already in the oldest parts of the text, Nārada is shown to combine the practice of Vedic recitation with ascetic and meditative techniques typical of the liberation-seeking Sāṃkhya and

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342 I am very grateful to Professor Fitzgerald for allowing me to read and refer to several of his as yet unpublished works.
Yoga paths. The attempt to formulate a soteriological method which incorporates japa, tapas and meditation (dhyāna) can be found also in an earlier section of the Mokṣadharmaparvan (MBh 12.189-193). The integration of the ways of nivṛtti and pravṛtti is also met with in a section of Part A of the Nārāyaṇīya which appears to belong to one of the earliest “layers” added to the core narrative, namely the account of the Śāstra promulgated by the Citraśikhaṇḍins. Here it is said that this teaching is the womb of pravṛtti and nivṛtti, and that it is possessed of the four Vedas. However, the notion of a teaching which is distinguished from Veda, Śāṃkhyya and Yoga, and yet incorporates them all, is only encountered in the Paramāpara which closes Part A, and, as we have seen, in Part B. Here, this dharma of the Ekāntins is named Pañcarātra.

Our earliest references, then, to a religious tradition called ‘Pañcarātra’ depict this tradition as one in which previously distinct religious identities are integrated under a new name. As we have seen, this ‘Pañcarātra’ incorporates not only Veda, Śāṃkhyya and Yoga, but also what were originally separate “Vaiṣṇava” traditions of worship, namely the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata. It is not at all easy to determine the “sectarian background” of the Nārāyaṇa theologians who introduce us to the Pañcarātra, but it is clear that those responsible for the composition of the oldest parts of the Nārāyaṇīya, who taught the Ekāntin worship of Nārāyaṇa and sought liberation from worldly existence, emerged from a religious culture which had much in common with that of Śāṃkhyya and Yoga. As I have shown above, the term ekānta appears to have originally been intimately connected with practices of renunciation, asceticism, and “one-pointed” meditation, all of which are shown to be central, in other sections of the Mokṣadharmaparvan, to the soteriological methods adopted by

343 See especially MBh 12.322.3ab: vedāḥ svadhītā mama lokanātha; taptam tapo… /; and MBh 12.325.2-3, discussed above.
344 MBh 12.322.37: pravṛttau ca nivṛttau ca yonir etad bhaviṣyati / rgyaḥṣāmabhīr juṣṭam athavāṅgisais tathā //.
345 MBh 12.326.100: idāṃ mahopaniṣadāṃ caturvedasamanvitam / śāṃkhyayogakṛtam tena pañcarātrāṇusabdhitam //.
346 I use the category “Vaiṣṇava” here in its modern, Indological sense. Bhāgavata and Sātvata are not called “Vaiṣṇava” in the Nārāyaṇīya.
Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Part A also contains other indications of the proximity between Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the imaginaire of the Nārāyaṇa theologians. As Malinar (1997: 254) points out, the seer Nārada, who flies to the summit of Mount Meru, is depicted as one who is well advanced in the practice of yoga. As discussed above, the apparently “Sāṃkhyan” cosmological scheme of the twenty-five ontological principles (tattva) is employed. The claim that the Self (ātman) can be seen by the yoga of knowledge (jñānayoga, 321.40, see also 326.23) is a clearly Sāṃkhyan idea. Indeed, such claims indicate that, insofar as the methods of Sāṃkhya and Yoga can be clearly distinguished from one another (as they are, for instance, at MBh 12.289-290), the soteriology of the Nārāyaṇīya is closer to that of Sāṃkhya. This is also evident in the description of the White Men as having transcended the sense faculties, and of the liberated beings at 332.13-18 as being divested of their minds and senses as they ascend through the levels. These accounts represent an idea key to Sāṃkhya soteriology, and are distinct from the Yoga path wherein liberated beings retain the use of their senses (MBh 12.289, see Fitzgerald: forthcoming).

That Sāṃkhya is not recognised as a soteriological method distinct from the methods employed by the Nārāyaṇīya’s chief protagonists prior to the latest additions to chapter 326 suggests, indeed, that the religious worldview of the Nārāyaṇa theologians responsible for Part A was closer to Sāṃkhya than it was to Vedic ritualism. This tendency is less apparent in Part B, wherein the attempt to construct a distinct religious identity around the idea of a superior and comprehensive ekāntadharma involves the reinterpretation of the notion of renunciation, as already articulated in the Bhagavadgītā. Thus, the “extinction of all duties” or the dharma of the ascetic is now considered alongside Vedic ritualism, and both are subordinated to the practice of constant devotion to Nārāyaṇa, otherwise called ekāntabhakti, which espouses only the renunciation of actions motivated by desire, or the “annihilation of cravings”, and aims only to please god.  

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347 On the importance of asceticism for Sāṃkhya methods, see e.g. MBh 12.231.5, 233.7, and 290.3, 60. As to Yoga see e.g. 12.228, 294.

348 The references to ekāntabhakti and to “cravings that are annihilated” are found at MBh 12.336.66-67: maniṣṭaṁ ca prāṇāśrayaṁ cintayaṁ puruṣottamaṁ / ekāntabhaktih satataṁ nārāyaṇaparāyaṇaḥ // maniṣṇo hi ye ke cid yatayo mokṣakāṅkṣaṁ // teṣaṁ vai chinnatṛṣṇānāṁ yogakṣemavah āryaḥ /.
8. The Ekāntins in the Pāñcarātra Literature

i.) The terms ekānta and ekāntin in the Pāñcarātra scriptures

In a contribution to the volume Nārāyaṇīya-Studien, Reinhold Grünendahl (1997) discusses the “profile of ideas” (Ideenprofil) which many later works borrow from the Nārāyaṇīya. In particular, he draws attention to a large number of parallel passages that the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa, the Viṣṇurahasya, and the Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa of the Skandapurāṇa349 share with the Nārāyaṇīya. In this later literature, as we would expect, events from Part A of the Nārāyaṇīya, such as Nārada’s journey to Mount Meru and his vision of White Island there, are retold from the bhakti perspective of Part B. In the following, I address the history of one of the most important borrowings from the Nārāyaṇīya in the Pāñcarātra scriptural literature, namely the descriptions of a class of worshipper called ‘Ekāntin’. Here too, as we will see, it is the perspective of Part B of the Nārāyaṇīya that shapes the religious identities of these “later” Ekāntins. I intend to ask here, in particular, what the appropriation of the idea of the Ekāntins in these scriptural works can tell us about the religious identities of the authors who take up the term, and the worshippers to whom it is applied. As in the last chapter, I begin by focussing on the employment of the word ekānta.

In the Jayākhyasamhitā (JS), the term ekānta is most frequently employed alongside the adjective nirjana or vijana (“deserted”) to refer to a secluded or solitary place which is to be inhabited by the sādhaka who aspires to achieve mastery of a mantra (mantrasiddhi).350 Elsewhere in the JS, we also find the term used in the sense of a “single aim” (3.18b), and in the adverbial sense of “absolutely”, as in the following instance: “Absolutely flawless knowledge, free from all limitations, arises

349 This is the Skandapurāṇa published by the Veṅkateśvara Press in 1910.
350 See e.g. JS 17.19c, 19.2a, 26.116b, 27.72c, 29.129b and 31.40c. On the concept mantrasiddhi see Rastelli (2000). In the same article Rastelli (ibid: 343) makes the important point that “the sādhaka does not live in seclusion in order to renounce the world but in order to gain powers to rule over it”.

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gradually for one who is yoked through the repeated practice of yoga”. It is striking that in the JS as well as in other scriptural works, the term ekānta is overwhelmingly found, even when it carries an apparently “neutral” meaning as in the verse just quoted, within contexts which are primarily concerned with the recitation of mantras (japa), or with meditation (dhyāna), asceticism or yoga. In this respect, one cannot fail to be reminded of the use of ekānta in the Mahābhārata (MBh), and especially in the Mokṣadharmaparvan. Most commonly in the JS the term occurs within the context of prescriptions for the repetition of mantras (japa), but it is also linked contextually with meditation (or “visualisation”, dhyāna, e.g. 10.2c, 31.40c) and with asceticism (27.72c).

Elsewhere among the scriptural works, the Paramasamanṭhī (ParS) and the Lākṣmītantra (LT) both use the word ekānta on a number of occasions, and in contexts consistent with its use in the MBh and the JS. In the ParS, for instance, we read as follows: “Having first restrained the senses via non-attachment, he whose attention is firm should steadily fix his mind upon the lord of the gods, his resolve one-pointed (ekāntaniścayaḥ).” “He should practise yoga”, the passage continues, “by which the god of gods is pleased” (ParS 10.24: yogam samabhyaṣet tena devadevaḥ prasīdati). A few verses later, it is said that the activity of the mind (cittavṛtti) should be brought under control “in a solitary place” (ekānte). Similar instructions for the practice of japa and meditation are found elsewhere in the ParS (e.g. 10.71, 11.24ab, 17.42cd, 27.35ab, 30.67cd). In the opening chapter of the LT, meanwhile, Śakra (Indra) is described as having attained the state of ekānta (ekāntabhāva, LT 1.54a) shortly after his ascetic practices directed towards Lākṣmī have been enumerated. Lākṣmī, in response, tells him “I am pleased by your very

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351 JS 5.2: sarvopādhivinirmuktaṁ jñānam ekāntanirmalam / utpadyate hi yuktasya yogābhyaśāt krameṇa tai //.
352 ParS 10.22: vairāgyenendriyany ādua nigṛhya dṛḍhamānasah / samaṁ dadhiṁ deveśe cittam ekāntanīścayayā //.
353 ParS 10.31: upakramair bahutaraiś cittavṛttiṁ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ / ānayed vaśam ekānte tvarayā na kadācana //.
354 LT 1.49-50: tatra divyaṁ tapas tepe bilvamālakīketanaḥ / ekapādausthiḥ maunī kāḍhabhūto 'nilāsanah // ārdhvadṛḍhāhahuvakraś ca niyato niyataṁavān / divyaṁ varṣasahasram vai tapas tepe suduṣcaram // – “There, his home at the base of a Bel tree, he practised divine asceticism. Standing completely motionless on one leg, silent, subsisting on the air alone, his face and arms raised to the sky, restrained, self-controlled, he practised very severe asceticism for a thousand divine years.”
strict asceticism” (prasannāsmitapasā tavasuvrata, 1.55ab), and she grants him a request, the consequence of which is the teaching which comprises the remainder of the text. Later in the LT, the term ekānta is used to refer to a “solitary place” which is suitable for the performance of japa (47.11ab), and to the “solitary life” (ekāntaśīla) appropriate to one who is devoted to the visualisation (dhyāna) and recitation (japa) of the jayāmantra (48.11-13).

Another example of the use of ekānta in the context of japa and dhyāna can be found in the opening verses of the final chapter of the Viṣṇusamhitā (ViṣṇuS). Here, we are introduced to the supreme Bhāgavata yoga, the highest good which has never before been heard by others.355 The passage reads as follows:

yuktāhāravihāras tu yuktaceṣṭāḥ samāhitaḥ / yoṣaṁ bhāgavatam nityam abhyasen nityātmavān // paśca-kāla-viśva-gaṇaḥ mitabhāśī mitāśānaḥ / kāmakaḥśād触发 ḍhaktaḥ samalośṭāṃmakāncanah // samayācārasamyukto japa-dhyānaparāyaṇah / ekānte viśvāte nivāte śabdavajjite // baddhā va ṣaṅgamaṁ mauni yoṣaṁ yājñīta yogavit //.

“His diet and lifestyle moderate, his movements curbed, concentrated, he [the devotee], disciplined and composed, should always practise the Bhāgavata yoga. Knowing the divisions of the five times, measured in his speech and diet, conquering desire and anger and so forth, the devotee [for whom] a lump of earth, a rock and gold are all the same, is wholly intent upon the recitation [of mantras] (japa) and meditation upon god (dhyāna), in accordance with established practice. Having assumed the yoga posture in a solitary (ekānte), deserted (vījane) place that is safe and quiet, the knower of yoga, remaining silent, should practise yoga.” (ViṣṇuS 3.2-5b)

Each of the scriptural works mentioned thus far in this section – the JS, the ParS, the LT and the ViṣṇuS – also contain descriptions of Ekāntins, or in the case of the ViṣṇuS, of Ekāntikas. In the ParS, these descriptions occur during the first and final chapters, both of which, as we have seen, have been identified by Czerniak-Drożdżowicz (2003) as having been added to the older “ritualistic corpus” of the text by later redactors. The descriptions in question (ParS 1.17-24 and 31.1-43) are

355 ViṣṇuS 30.1: atha vakṣyāmi samkṣepād yoṣam bhāgavatam param / yad anyair aśrutaṁ pūrvaṁ hitānāṁ paramaṁ hitam //. The second half- śloka finds a parallel at ParS 30.4cd, and indeed the 30th chapter of the ViṣṇuS shares a number of parallel verses with the 30th chapter of the ParS. The latter is also concerned with the practice of yoga within a bhakti framework which emphasises god’s kindness (anugṛha, prasāda). See e.g. ViṣṇuS 30.5ab ↔ ParS 30.6cd; ViṣṇuS 30.7cd ↔ ParS 30.11cd; ViṣṇuS 30.8c-13 ↔ ParS 30.14-18; ViṣṇuS 30.27-29b ↔ ParS 30.75-77b; ViṣṇuS 30.33c-36 ↔ ParS 30.93-96b; ViṣṇuS 30.39-42a ↔ ParS 30.100c-104a.
contained in passages which explicitly invoke the Nārāyaṇīya. Accordingly, the Ekāntins are described here in ways which echo accounts in the earlier text: they are “perfected beings” (siddhāḥ, ParS 1.22c, 31.13b-18a; cf. MBh 12.326.19a) wholly devoted to meditating only on the Supreme Person (puruṣottamam evaikam dhyāyantas tatparāyaṇāḥ, ParS 1.23cd). They are beyond dualities and without possessions (nirdvandvā nisparigrahāḥ, ParS 1.24b; cf. MBh 12.326.42b). They have subdued their sense faculties and are always engaged in meditation (paripakvāṣāyaś ca sarvadā dhyānataparāḥ, ParS 1.24cd). They live on White Island (śvetadvīpa, ParS 31.4c, 11), the “abode of yogins” (ParS 1.17d-18b), are “illustrious” (mahābhāgāḥ, ParS 31.4a; cf. MBh 12.326.19a), and are “intensely concentrated” (susamāhitāḥ, ParS 31.29d; cf. MBh 12.326.116d).

The description of Ekāntins in the LT (17.9-20) also contains echoes of the Nārāyaṇīya, as well as of another passage in the Mokṣadharmaparvan, even if it does not invoke the earlier text as explicitly as the ParS.357 There is no mention here, for example, of White Island. The LT equates Ekāntins with “perfected beings” (siddhāḥ, LT 17.10-11) who know thoroughly Veda and Vedānta (LT 17.10b), who are Sāṃkhyaśas learned in “enumerative knowledge” (saṃkhyā or saṃkhyāna, LT 17.11cd; cf. MBh 12.294.30cd), whose senses are withdrawn, who are conversant with the meditative techniques of fixing the mind (dhāraṇā) and visualisation (dhyāṇa), and who are concentrated (samāhitā) Yogas (LT 17.12).358 They persist “without food” (anāhārāḥ), are “illustrious” (mahābhāgāḥ), and they constantly behold Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa (LT 17.16c-17b).

In these passages from the ParS and the LT, the term ekāntin is used, as it is in the Nārāyaṇīya, to refer to the most accomplished worshippers, those who are uniquely capable of attaining the highest goal. The Ekāntins here are the perfect devotees, and as such, they are not intended to represent a specific “group” among the audience of these texts. Rather, the designation ekāntin represents an ideal, and

356 ParS 1.24: ekāntino mudā yuktā nirdvandvā nisparigrahāḥ / paripakvāṣāyaś ca sarvadā dhyānataparāḥ ll.
357 On the interpolated passage LT 41.67-78, which applies the honorific paramaikāntin to 800 sages (muni) learned in the Kāṇya and Mādhyandīna schools, see Rastelli (2006: 233-236).
358 This use of the terms sāṃkhyā and yoga as plural nouns referring to adherents of the “schools” Sāṃkhyā and Yoga is also found in the Mokṣadharmaparvan, see Fitzgerald (forthcoming).
one whose contours have been drawn already in the Nārāyaṇīya. In this sense these passages differ from those in the JS and the ViṣṇuS which, as we have seen in Chapter Two, use the terms ekāntin and ekāntika to designate one particular group of Vaiṣṇavas among others. In the JS, the Ekāntin is named as one of five distinct types of Vaiṣṇava, all of whom are “born into this great lineage of those devoted only to Nārāyaṇa” (nārāyaṇaikanisṭhānām ye ‘smin jātā mahākule, JS 22.4cd). Each of the five, named in JS 22 (6-19b) as Yati, Ekāntin, Vaikhānasa, Karmasāttvata and Śikhin, are said to observe the duties of the five times (pañcakāla, 22.3b). The same five types of Vaiṣṇava are listed together in the previous chapter (JS 21.78-81) as recipients of gifts at the end of the festival of the purifying threads (pavitrotsava).

In the description in JS 22, the Ekāntin is characterised as wandering, begging alms from Brahmins (literally “from those devoted to the six duties”), being respected or treated hospitably (satkṛta, by Brahmins?), being without possessions, worshipping god in accordance with the eight-limbed method, living alone with a pupil possessed of good qualities, being intent upon contemplation, and being a qualified Vaiṣṇava by virtue of his place in an order of succession (kulakrama) (i.e. rather than, presumably, via initiation).359 In the ViṣṇuS, as we have seen in Chapter Two, the Ekāntika is named as one of five Pañcarātra lineages (gocara) alongside the Vaiṣṇava, Sāttvata, Śikhin, and Mūlaka. The Ekāntika is described here as subsisting on begged alms, as serving the twice-born classes, and as worshipping god once a day.360 According to the Hārīṇī, the commentary on the ViṣṇuS authored by Nārāyaṇa, a Nambūtī Brahmin (Unni 1991: 12-13) who most likely lived in the

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359 JS 22.11-13b: bhṛntvā bhikṣām (corr. mikkṣām) ca satkarmanirātebhyas tu satkṛtām / aparigrahavān yo vai tāyā sampājyayet prabhum // pumān gopāram avyaktam aśtāṅgavidhinā mahat / guninā suhā śīyena vasaty eko vicārādiḥ // kulakramenaśādhiṣṭā sa ekāntīha vaiṣṇavāḥ // The “eight-limbed method” is described at JS 22.75c-80b as consisting of 1.) approaching god (abhigamana); 2.) worshipping with arghya and flowers etc. (bhoga); 3.) worshipping with honey, clarified butter, oil, sour milk (dadhi), or with an animal; 4.) worshipping with food (22.78b: annena pājanaṃ corr. antena pājanaṃ after Rastelli 2000a: 107 n. 24); 5.) the giving away of food which has been used in worship (sampradāna); 6.) the fire offering (vahnisamārpana); 7.) the offering to ancestors (pitrīga); and 8.) the final sacrifice (anuvāga), namely the offering of food into the internal fires which are one’s breaths (prāṇāgniḥavāna).

360 ViṣṇuS 2.32c-33b: suśrūṣānam dvijātiṁām bhiksāvarttyā ca vartanam // sakṛc cārādhamāṃ yeśāṃ te tathaikāntikāḥ smṛtaḥ //
the Ekāntikas are Śūdras, and theirs is the lowest of the five lineages (Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2010: 228-236). Although the ViṣṇuS itself does not explicitly make these claims, it appears to suggest the same by characterising Ekāntikas as serving the twice-born, while associating the Sāttvatas and Śikhins with, respectively, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas.  

What can we learn from these short descriptions of the Ekāntin and the Ekāntika in the JS and the ViṣṇuS? First of all, it should be noted that the two accounts may have been composed several centuries apart, though as we have seen, the passages in the JS which mention Ekāntins (JS 20.265-270, 21.78-81, 22.1ff) are unlikely to belong to the oldest portions of this text, since they list the Ekāntins alongside Vaikhānasas, who appear to have been restricted to South India in pre-modern times. This suggests that these passages were themselves composed and added to the JS in the south. In theory, then, the interval between the composition of the accounts in the JS and ViṣṇuS may be considerably shorter than might otherwise be assumed, given that the composition of the JS is normally assigned en bloc to North India or the upper Deccan during the ninth century. At any rate, the continuities between the JS’s Ekāntin and the ViṣṇuS’s Ekāntika are clear to see. Both are depicted as renunciants who support themselves by means of begging, and both accounts present the Ekāntin/Ekāntika as one of five named Vaiṣṇava lineages or groups alongside the Vaikhānas, the Śikhin and the Karmasāttvata or Sāttvata. With regard to the names of these other Vaiṣṇavas, the obvious discrepancy is between the JS’s yati and the ViṣṇuS’s mūlaka. It is notable, however, that these descriptions of the Yati and the Mūlaka contain some striking similarities: both

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361 Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz has kindly informed me by email (dated 10/12/2011) that in his introduction to The Tantrasamuccaya of Nārāyaṇa with the Commentary Vimarśinī of Śaṅkara (ed. T. Ganapati Śāstrī, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1989), N. P. Unni identifies the author of the Hārinti as a pupil of Śaṅkara, the fifteenth century commentator on the Tantrasamuccaya.

362 See ViṣṇuS 2.30ab, where Sāttvatas are said to support their families by means of livelihoods consonant with the Kṣatriya class (ksatravṛttyopapannena kutumbasya ca posaṇam), and 2.31c where Śikhins are said to support themselves by means of agriculture, trade and breeding cattle (ksivāṇiyagorakṣā).
receive means by which to live “without asking” (āyacita, JS 22.9b and ViṣṇuS 2.34c), and both worship god in thought, word and deed.⁶³

Indeed, there are a number of similarities between the fivefold classifications found in the JS and the ViṣṇuS, while the differences between the two accounts are equally illuminating. As stated above, in the ViṣṇuS the Ekāntikas are said to serve the twice-born, while the Śāttvatas are presented as Kṣatriyas, and the Śikhins as Vaiśyas. The Hārini commentary, meanwhile, identifies both the Vaikhānasas and the Mūlakas as Brahmīns (Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2010: 232, 234). Although the ViṣṇuS itself does not make this connection, it does describe the Vaikhānasas and Mūlakas in similar terms – both are said to support themselves “by unsolicited means” (ayācitopapannena, ViṣṇuS 2.28c, 34c). While it is not emphatic or indeed very clearly expressed, there is, at any rate, clearly a hierarchy at work in the ViṣṇuS’s fivefold classification, and the Ekāntikas, servants of the twice-born, are at the bottom of this hierarchy. Their lowly position here brings to mind the sectarianism which characterised certain South Indian Pāñcarātra contexts. Of course, within such contexts, it should not greatly surprise us that the ViṣṇuS should accord a low status to the Ekāntika for, as we have seen, the authors of this work clearly located themselves within a Pāñcarātra tradition which they considered to be “based on” or “rooted in” the Veda. Such traditions commonly distinguished themselves from those Pāñcarātrikas that appropriated the name ‘Ekāntin’ and called their own tradition the Āgamasiddhānta or Ekāyana. Whether the ViṣṇuS was itself composed in such a sectarian context is, however, rather difficult to affirm. It does not appear to associate itself with any one of the five Vaiśnava lineages, despite its avowal that one of the ways in which the lineages are distinguished from one another is the fact that they have different texts (pāṭhaviśeṣa, ViṣṇuS 2.23a). Nor does it include polemic against other Pañcarātra groups. But we can hypothesise that its depiction of the Ekāntika may at least contain echoes of an earlier (or perhaps of a geographically distant) sectarian animosity.

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⁶³ See JS 22.8ab: karaṇā manaśā vācā yajanty ekam adhokṣajam; and ViṣṇuS 2.34ab: arcanam devadevasya manovākkāyakarmabhiḥ.
How does the account in the JS compare? Like the ViṣṇuS, the JS incorporates membership of social class (*varṇa*) into its fivefold classification. According to its presentation, the Yatis (22.10c), Vaikhānasas (22.13c), Karmasāttvatas (22.16d) and Śikhins (22.18b) are all Brahmins, while the Ekāntins are not explicitly linked with any *varṇa*. Why should the author of this section of the JS make a point of identifying these other groups as Brahmins while saying nothing about the social class of Ekāntins? Of course, it may not have been the author’s intention to convey anything by this omission. However, when this is read alongside the ViṣṇuS’s account, it seems to suggest that in the presumably South Indian context in which these verses were written, the Vaiśṇavas who called themselves Ekāntin were not always considered by others to be Brahmins, or even members of the twice-born classes. Might these be the Pāncarātrikas who are identified as “non-Brahmins” by Yāmuna’s opponents in the Āgaprāmāṇya (e.g. ĀP 11.5ff)? This cannot be answered with any confidence, but perhaps the author of these verses in the JS was aware of a controversy regarding the social status of these ‘Ekāntins’, and therefore decided to omit any reference it. This is speculative, but we should note, at any rate, that the JS’s account of the Ekāntins is substantially more positive than that found in the ViṣṇuS. Where the latter has the Ekāntikas serving the twice-born (which would presumably include the other named Vaiśṇava lineages), in the JS the Ekāntins are respected renunciants who receive alms from Brahmins. We might construe these contrasting descriptions in the JS and the ViṣṇuS as themselves different interpretations of the Ekāntins’ apparent non-inclusion among the three highest classes: while the ViṣṇuS regards them as Śūdras, the authors of this section of the JS may consider them to exist outside of the *varṇa* system altogether. At the least, it seems safe to conclude that despite their differing views on the status of the Ekāntin or Ekāntika, neither the JS’s nor the ViṣṇuS’s accounts were authored by people who identified themselves as Ekāntin or Ekāntika.

It is precisely to the self-identifying Ekāntins in South India that I now turn. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the Āgamasiddhāntin or Ekāyana authors who contributed towards the composition of the *Pauṣkarasamhitā* (PauṣS), the *Pārameśvarasamhitā* (PārS) and the *Īśvarasamhitā* (ĪS) also called themselves
Ekāntins and, in reference to the Nārāyaṇīya, their religion the ekāntidharma (PārS 1.60a, ĪS 1.30c; cf. MBh 12.336.57a). They also, it should be noted, identified themselves as Brahmins (e.g. PauṣS 36.260c, 38.293c-294, PārS 13.56ab, 15.160ab, ĪS 18.230b). For these authors, the term ekāntin appears to denote both the “single goal” of liberation and monotheism (see especially PauṣS 36.259c-263b). Although, as we have seen, neither of these characteristics feature in the descriptions of Ekāntins and Ekāntikas in the JS and the ViṣṇuS, for Ekāntin authors they are two of the attributes which most crucially set them apart from non-Ekāntin Pāñcarātrikas (PauṣS 36.259c-263b, PārS 1.17b, 33cd, ĪS 1.22cd, 21.515cd). Among demonstrably South Indian texts, Yāmuna’s ĀP contains one of the earliest uses of the term ekāntin in reference to the Pāñcarātra. It is used in the sense of monotheism, here applied to Pāñcarātrikas in general, in order to distinguish them from “ordinary” (i.e. Smārta) Brahmins with their own “insignificant little gods”.

We find an echo of this at PauṣS 36.261-263b, which I have quoted earlier, where Ekāntins are said to worship no god other than Vāsudeva, in contrast to Pāñcarātrika Brahmins that are mixed worshippers (vyāmiśrayājin), who worship a multitude of inferior deities. On several occasions the PauṣS also juxtaposes the Ekāntins with devotees who desire worldly fruits. However, as we will see in the following section, a few scriptural passages indicate that the boundaries between the self-proclaimed ‘Ekāntins’ and the other Pāñcarātrikas became less clear over time.

### ii.) Becoming Ekāntin in South India

It is clear that, from the time of the composition of the Nārāyaṇīya, the word ekāntin has been used as a general term of commendation, as a means of conferring authority and expertise upon deserving persons, whether real or imagined. As we have seen in

364 ĀP 142.16-17: yadi paraṃ te paramapuruṣam evaśrīta ekāntinah, anye kṣudradāvātakāḥ sādharaṇā iti / See also the SanS (Ṛṣirātra 3.111cd), where ekāntacintanā is explained as “never thinking of another god” (deve nānyacintā kadācana). As we have seen, the SanS is quoted by Yāmuna, and so predates him.
several examples above, when the term is used in this “informal”, non-specific way, the passage in which it appears will often allude, either directly or indirectly, to the Nārāyaṇīya. The JS’s and the ViṣṇuS’s accounts of Ekāntins and Ekāntikas are different. They purport to offer factual descriptions of a particular class of Vaiṣṇava, and presumably because their primary aim is to describe rather than to praise, they make no appeals to the authority of the Nārāyaṇīya. Indeed, although the Ekāntin/Ekāntika depicted in these works is a renunciant, there is little to suggest that he is the same figure that we encounter in the Śāntiparvan. Contrarily, as we might expect, when ekāntin is used in this specifically descriptive or taxonomic sense but as a term of self-description, it suits the purposes of the authors to refer to the Nārāyaṇīya quite frequently, as is demonstrated especially in the opening chapters of the PārS and ĪS.

It is not always easy to determine whether ekāntin is being used as a general term of commendation or as a proper name labelling a specific religious identity. Āgamasiddhānta or Ekāyana scriptural sources, whose authors likely called themselves Ekāntin, on certain occasions also use the term in the former sense. Thus, when we read in the ĪS of “those illustrious Ekāntins, headed by Śaṭhakopapuraḥsaṁgītā, who have descended to the earth in order to restore mankind”, it is obvious that ekāntin is being used here as a straightforward honorific. The author is taking a term of commendation from his own religious culture and applying it retrospectively to a figure from the rather distant past, in this instance the famous ninth-tenth century Tamil devotional poet better known as Nammāḻvār. Although this affords us an insight into the esteem in which Nammāḻvār was held in certain Pāṇcarātrika circles perhaps nearly half a millennium after his death, I do not consider this to be an especially significant use of the word ekāntin. Similar examples may be found elsewhere. Sometimes, inevitably, the application of the term is rather more ambiguous. In these verses from the NārS, for instance, ekāntin is also seemingly being used as a general term of commendation, but the fact that it associates Ekāntins

365 ĪS 8.175c-176b: ekāntino mahābhāgāḥ śaṭhakopapuraḥsaṁgītā // kṣonyāṁ kṛtavatārā ye lokojjīvanahetunā ī.
with supernatural powers and “worldly” desires makes it rather more striking, as does its suggestion that one may become an Ekāntin quite easily:

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dvādaśyaṁ ca ivam eva hi // pāraṇaṁ yah prakurvita dīkṣitair vaiṣṇavaṁ saha // sa bhaved bhaktimāṁ viṣṇau tathākāntitvam āpunyāt // kaivalyām cāpunyāt paścāt nātra kāṛyā vicāraṇā // animādiṇāṁ vāpi kāṁkṣitān aihikāṁs tu vā //
\]
– “Whoever should break the fast along with initiated Vaiṣṇavas on the twelfth day [of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa], he is truly devoted to Viṣṇu and can therefore attain the status of an Ekāntin. And then he can attain perfect isolation (kaivalya), or else the supernatural powers such as miniaturisation etc., or indeed [whatever] worldly gains are desired. With regard to this matter, there need be no inquiry (i.e. it is clear).” (NārS 24.53d-55)

It is difficult to know whether to attach any significance to the use of the word *ekāntin* in this passage, though it seems unlikely that it is being used to refer to one particular group of Pāñcarātrikas. In the following I address a few passages from scriptural sources which I believe can tell us something interesting and significant about the particular group of South Indian Pāñcarātrikas who called themselves Ekāntins (and Āgamasiddhāntins and Ekāyanas). As we have seen, these Pāñcarātrikas present themselves as continuous with the Ekāntins of the Nārāyaṇīya. They identify their own ‘Veda’, the Ekāyanaveda, with the teaching given to Nārada in that work, and they characterise themselves as not “desiring” the fruits of their worship (*niṣkāma, aphaḷārthīn, nirāśīḥkarma* etc. See e.g. MBh 12.328.30f, 336.29d, PauṣS 31.286ab, PārS 1.35d, 25.55d). Moreover, as in the following verse from the PauṣS (31.149c-150), which I have quoted already in Chapter Two, they positively condemn the practice of worshipping god as a means of satisfying desires: “The omniscient abiding in the heart does not permit [worship that is performed with] desire. One who grants heaven to his devotees even when it is not asked for – what is it that is not given by him? Therefore, one should abandon requests!”

366 This is a reference to the eight classical *siddhis* alluded to at Yogasūtra 3.45, and elaborated in the commentaries. Here, as elsewhere in the Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās (e.g. JS 6.70c, SS 18.165ab), the word *guna* is used instead of *siddhi*. This practice is also quite common in the Śaiva scriptural literature (Mallinson 2011: 330 n. 16).

367 Elsewhere in the NārS, the word appears to be used merely as a general term of commendation. At NārS 25.388, for example, the Ekāntins are named as “the most excellent Bhāgavatās” (*bhāgavatottamāḥ*).
However, inevitably the South Indian Pāñcarātra ‘Ekāntins’ had to adapt to a religious environment which was substantially different from that which formed the background to the Nārāyanīya. For example, the yogic and ascetic frames of reference by means of which the identity of the Ekāntins was originally established had to be radically reinterpreted in order to remain applicable in these different circumstances. Of course, this process is encountered already in the later chapters of the Nārāyanīya itself, wherein “renunciation” is reinterpreted, as it is in the Bhagavadgītā, to mean the renunciation of actions motivated by desire. This understanding of renunciation is found also in the Pāñcarātra Śaṅhitās, as we will see in the following chapter. But the textual evidence suggests that South Indian Ekāntins also had to adapt to changing circumstances in South India. For example, there are indications, as demonstrated in this passage from the PausŚ, that they came to modify their position on worship undertaken in order to fulfill personal desires:

phalamālānnapratīṣṭhāṁ śṛṇu vakṣye phalārthāhinām / nānaddānāt paraṁ dānāṁ triṣu lokeṣu vidyate // sadyaḥprītikaraṁ ṛṣyaṁ pṛāṇaṁ prāṇināṁ api / utpatāv api saṃskāre rasam annasya kārītām // annād bhavaṁ bhūtāni tasmā sarvāṁ pratiṣṭhitam / tac ca pratiṣṭhitam yena tena sarvāṁ pratiṣṭhitam // putradāradaḥmahīn annair vṛtydhīṁ yāti kṣaṇāṁ kṣāṇām / prāṇṇoti paramāṁ pājām utkrṣṭebhyo mahattārām // hṛṣṭāḥ puṣṭas tato bhūtvā tṛptō bhavati sarvadā / bhuktvā bhogān suvipulāṇante nārāyaṇālayām // yāti candrapratikāsair vimānair devanirmaitāṁ / svargādau sarvaloke tu sthītvā kalpaśatāṁ bahūn // kālāṁ punar ihāyāṁ deśe sarvottāṁ sāḥ // satāṁ kule samāsādyā jannī jātī uttamaṁ mahat // jāyate rūpavān vāggni vidyājñānaparāyaṇāṁ / dvīṣaṭāṁ api sarveṣāṁ pūjāṁ priyātāras sadā // śīlāvān śauryasampanno dhṛtyutṣahasamāvataḥ / dvijādevaparo nityaṁ dātā bhūtāhitī rataḥ // ekāntī dharmaṁvātī vai nārāyaṇaparāyaṇāṁ / trīvagama akhilāṁ bhuktvā yathābhimatalaṁśaṇāṁ // jannāṁ(h)bhเยsīṁ tαṁ śubhaṁ karma kṛtvānāntaṁ puṇaṁ / jānāṁ āsādyate yena prayāti paramāṁ padam // – “Listen! I will explain the dedication (or consecration) of fruits, roots and [other] foods for those who desire the fruits [of worship, phalārthin]. In the three worlds there is no gift better than the gift of food. It immediately gives pleasure, [and] is appetising and restorative to beings. Even at the stage of preparation and dressing the tastiness of food is well-known! [All] living beings come into being from food. From that everything is founded, and by one who has dedicated that, by him everything is founded. As long as he lives in this world, [and] in the heavenly world called Brahma[loka], he [who dedicates food] may live without sickness and pain. By means of [donating] food, he reaches lasting prosperity, with sons, wives and wealth. He receives the greatest honour from eminent elders. The gods, seers and perfected beings always consider carefully the highest welfare for him, together with increased longevity. Thus, being joyful
and well-nourished, he is ever satisfied. Enjoying numerous pleasures, at death he goes to the abode of Nārāyaṇa by means of moon-like chariots made by the gods. Abiding in all worlds, beginning with heaven, for many hundreds of Kalpas, in the course of time he comes here again, to a supremely auspicious place. Achieving a birth in a respectable family, the most excellent birth, he is born with handsome form, eloquent, devoted to learning and knowledge. Ever more beloved, he is revered by all, even his enemies. Possessed of good character, might, constancy and strength, a donor (dātṛ) is always best among Brahmins, intent upon the welfare of beings. [He is] an Ekāntīn, a knower of dharma, wholly devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Thoroughly enjoying the group of three (i.e. the three puruṣārthas), possessed of the desired qualities, endlessly acting righteously through [numerous] lifetimes, knowledge is reached, by which he advances to the supreme abode.” (Pauṣ Ś 41.143-155)

There is no doubt that this passage has been inserted into the Pauṣ Ś, for the redactor responsible has made no effort to disguise the fact – the next verses follow on from those which precede this excerpt. Needless to say, the relevant idea expressed here, i.e. that one can become an Ekāntīn by means of making a donation to a temple, represents a radically different view of the Ekāntins from any we have encountered thus far. We are a long way here from the idealised depiction of the yogic-ascetic Ekāntins in the Nārāyaṇīya, and in later scriptural works such as the ParŚ and the LT. The fact that these verses are addressed to worshippers who desire fruits (phalārthiṇ) only serves to emphasise the dramatic nature of this shift in attitude, for elsewhere in the Pauṣ Ś, as we have seen, such worshippers are openly condemned.

My reason for proposing that this passage has been authored by a self-identifying Ekāntīn, and that the term ekāntin is thus significant in this context, is that the donor is promised a rebirth as an Ekāntīn, a reward which is hardly likely to have been offered by a non-Ekāntīn Pāncarātrīka, for whom the initiation rite (dīkṣā) establishes the candidate’s eligibility to join Viṣṇu in his “supreme abode” (see e.g. PādŚ cp 21.15, LT 41.5c-6, ŚrīprśŚ 16.18c-19). As we have seen, according to several sources the Ekāyana or Āgamasiddhānta is a tradition that one is born into, rather than one which is joined through initiation, so the promise of a rebirth as an Ekāntīn is, at least “officially”, the best offer that can be made to non-Āgamasiddhāntins. Elsewhere in the Pauṣ Ś we find similar expressions of the same idea. For instance, in a passage concerning the festival centred around the investiture
of god’s icon with the sacred thread (pavitrāropaṇa), it is said that a man (nara) who makes unending donations of cattle, land and gold (gobhūsuvāraṇa) on a daily basis (pratyaha) for as long as he lives, will attain the fruit (phala) of these donations “during a maximum lifespan” (paramāyuṣī), and will then journey to heaven (diva) “by means of moon-like carriages” (yānaiś candrapratikāsaiḥ) (PauṣS 30.174c-177).

Born again into an auspicious family, he will become devoted to Nārāyaṇa in thought, word and deed (karmaṇā manasā vācā nārāyaṇaparō bhavet, PauṣS 30.180cd), will live a long life free of sickness and sorrow (vyādhiśokavinirmukta), with sons and wives etc. (putradārādiṇa), and then will go to White Island (śvetadvīpa), where he will achieve identification with the supreme brahman (param brahmatvam āyāti) (PauṣS 30.178c-184b). Although there is no explicitly “sectarian” terminology employed in these verses, it is fairly certain that it has been authored by an Ekāyana or ‘Ekāntin’ for the same reasons I have put forward with regard to the passage regarding the donation of food: a worshipper who desires the “fruit” of worship cannot attain liberation in this lifetime. The best he can hope for in this regard is an auspicious rebirth as one who is completely devoted (“in thought, word and deed”) to Nārāyaṇa. Only then may he go to White Island.

In another passage of the PauṣS which conveys the same idea, the sectarian identity of the author is even more explicit. In this passage it is said that providing the “mixed worshipper” (vyāmiśrayājin) has undergone initiation and is completely devoted to Nārāyaṇa, to rituals such as mantra-repetition (japa) and the fire-sacrifice (homa), and to singing hymns of praise (stuti), “he can attain the world of Viṣṇu at death and, having obtained a superior rebirth, he may become, from [the time of his] childhood, O best among the twice-born, a Tanmaya, well-versed in the rituals of the Lord, and having him as his highest aim.”368 As we have seen, ‘Tanmaya’ is yet another name for ‘Ekāyana’, ‘Āgamasiddhāntin’ or, in the South Indian context, ‘Ekāntin’. These verses just referred to are indubitably the work of an Ekāyana author since they follow on from the passage addressed in previous chapters wherein Ekāyanas are hailed as ‘Ekāntins’, and mixed worshippers are called “devotees in

368 PauṣS 36.265-266b: dehānte vaiśnavam lokam prāmnayā punar eva hi / janma cāsādyā cokṛṣṭam abālyād dvajasaṭṭha // bhagavatkarmaniśnātaḥ taparas tanmaya bhavet //
appearance only”.

The following verse, meanwhile, states that “Not aiming at the fruit [of worship], even in times of distress, he will not attain a rebirth in this world after leaving his body, O Pauṣkara.”

The sectarian tenor of this passage as a whole, including its stated opposition to “mixed devotion” (PauṣS 36.259cd) and to worship undertaken in order to achieve a “fruit”, suggests to me that this was an earlier interpolation into the PauṣS than were the passages (i.e. PauṣS 41.143-155 and 30.174c-184b) quoted above on the donation of food, and “cattle, land and gold” to a temple. My reasons for believing this will become clear shortly.

As we seen in Chapter Five, there are a number of passages in the PauṣS which refer to “mixed worshippers” (vyāmiśrayājin). These worshippers are Pāñcarātrikas who do not belong to the Ekāyana tradition. They are described as Brahmins (PauṣS 36.263a), and they are depicted as having expertise in the Vedas (PauṣS 27.711ab, see also SS 2.8cd). They are contrasted on one occasion with Brahmins who are “exclusive” worshippers (ananyayājin, 27.110c), and on another with those who “seek refuge in no other” (ananyāśaraṇa, 36.78a). Elsewhere, in the earlier verses of the passage referred to above (PauṣS 36.259c-263b), the mixed worshippers are said to worship the retinue of subordinate deities (gaṇa), and they are contrasted here again with “exclusive” worshippers (nānyayājin) who are identified as Ekāyanas and are said to be Ekāntins. In this instance, as has just been restated, the mixed worshippers are denounced as “devotees in appearance only” (bhaktābhāṣāḥ), and it is said that one should never practise “mixed devotion” (bhaktisāṅkarya).

In a later chapter of the PauṣS, Pauṣkara asks God for a clarification with regard to the status of mixed worship, while pointing out that this has been repeatedly prohibited thus far.

God replies:

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satyam etan mahābuddhe yathā saicoditam tvayā // kintu kriyāntare prāpte na dośas tv adhikārinām / yasmāt sarvaparativāṇi hi teṣām asty acyutaṃ prati //
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369 The PārS, which was also authored by Ekāyanas, also promises rebirth as an Ekāyana to non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas who correctly perform their duties. The passage in question (PārS 13.114c-115) has been discussed by Rastelli (2006: 194).

370 PauṣS 36.266c-267b: nābhisandhāya ca phalam āpatkālagato ’pi vai // tyaktvā dehaṃ punarjanma nāpnychā dha pauṣkara 1.

371 PauṣS 38.47-48b: deva vyāmiśrayājitvam pratiśiddham punah punah // prāgaktāṇām ca yāgāṇaṃ draśṭum anyākṛtaṃ ca yat // tanmātrasaṃśayaṃ jātaṃ chettum arhasi sāmpratam 1.
What can we deduce from these verses? First of all, they have evidently been added to the PauṣS after the “sectarian” portions which forbid the practice of mixed worship, for they refer directly to these prohibitions. Since these sectarian portions were clearly authored by Ekāyanas, who called themselves Ekāntins and proclaimed themselves superior to mixed worshippers partly on account of their monotheism, we must assume either that a.) these verses were authored by a Pāñcarātrika who was himself a “mixed worshipper” as opposed to an Ekāyana, or that b.) they were authored by an Ekāyana, and therefore provide evidence that some Ekāyanas, at least, changed their attitude towards “mixed worship”. I propose that the second explanation is the correct one, for the passage in which these verses are found, concerned with the installation (pratiṣṭhā) of the image of god (bhagavadbimba) in a temple, is clearly the work of an Ekāyana author. This is evident from the fact that the “principal ordinance” (mukhyakalpaṃ, PauṣS 38.41b) for the installation is assigned to the knowers of the five times who are “exclusive” devotees (ananyāḥ, PauṣS 38.31a), who are devoted to the four Vyūhas and who peform the renunciation of actions (karmaṇām api saṃnyāsāṃ kurvanti, PauṣS 38.32), while the secondary or “alternative” ordinance (anukalpa) is to be performed by initiated twice-born Bhāgavatas who are “established in the dharma of the triple Veda” (trayādharmaṣṭhitaiḥ, PauṣS 38.41c-42). The former group clearly denotes the Ekāyanas, while the latter are the Pāñcarātrikas who are elsewhere referred to as “mixed worshippers”.

It could be argued that the verses which validate mixed worship were simply appended to this description of the principal and secondary rules for installation by a later redactor who was himself a mixed worshipper. In support of this, it could be pointed out that the PārS (19.299c-340) incorporates the passages PauṣS 38.26c-46
and 51-72b, but crucially not the verses we are presently addressing. Indeed, the omission of these verses in the PārS is interesting. However, in my view such a scenario is unlikely, both on account of the reference in these verses to the repeated prohibition of mixed worship, and because the following verses (i.e. PauṣS 38.51ff), which have been incorporated into the PārS, seamlessly continue the discussion. Moreover, the PārS itself attests to there being a certain lack of clarity on the issue of the participation of the Ekāyanas, or ‘Ekāntins’ as they are called here, in a practice which the PauṣS (36.262c-263b) presents as being a key characteristic of “mixed worship”, namely the worship of the subordinate deities (gañā) of Viṣṇu. The passage reads as follows:

vāstukṣetresāgaruḍadvāṃśicandrāpracāṇḍarakān // abhyarcīrglyādibhir devān prāśādāstāṃs ca pājāyet / prāśādē ‘tha caturdāve māṇḍape cetareṣu ca / dvārtraye ‘tha dhāṭāram vidhāṭāram jayaṃ tathā / vijayaṃ cāpi bhadrāṃ ca subhadraṃ ca ganeśvaram // yad angabhāvam abhyeti dvārsthīyāṃm devatāṃgaṇam / viṣvaksenāvasānaṃ ca narāṇām alpamedhasāṃ // jantor ekāntinas tad vai cītakhedākṛd arcanaṃ / viṃḥakṛt prakṛtasyāpi sīṣyāṇām tadanarcanam // atas tadanukampārtham devabhṛtyadhiyārcanam / bhaktiśraddhohjhitam caiva vihitam tv evam eva hi // ... / ... // etāvad arcanāt teśāṃ gūra ekāntinas tu vai / syād virodhanirūsas tu yato bhṛyas tu te hāreḥ // – “After worshipping Vāstu (or ‘Vāstviśa’ i.e. Vāstupuruṣa, the guardian deity of the temple), Kṣetreṣa, Garaḍa, Dvārśrī (also known as Dvāralaṃśī), Caṇḍa and Pracāṇḍa with arghya and so on, one should worship the temple gods in the temple, and the others in the pavilion at [each of] the four [entrance]-gates. Then, at the three gates [one should worship] Dvārī and Viṃḥā, and also Jaya and Viṃrāja, and Bhadrā and Subhadra, and the Lord of the Gaṇas (i.e. Viṣvaksena). Worship from (i.e. by)732 a man [who is] an Ekāntin which is directed towards the subordinate class of deities who form God’s retinue, beginning with the gatekeepers and ending with Viṣvaksena, causes distress to the minds of men who have little understanding. [But] not worshipping them, even if it is done [only] for (or by?) the pupils [of the priest], causes obstacles. Therefore, worship with [one’s] thought [directed upon] the [deities who are the] servants of god is enjoined in order to elicit their compassion, though [it should be done] without devotion and loyalty… Thus, from the worship of these [subordinate deities] by an Ekāntin guru, strife will be cast out, since they are the servants of Hari.” (PārS 6.125c-130, 132c-133b)

732 The use of the ablative/genitive case here (jantor ekāntinaḥ) seems strange. In his commentary on the IS, Alasāṅghaḥṭa is unsure of how to interpret this, and one of his suggestions is to take it as an ablative absolutive (lyable paṅcamī) – see Sāvatārthaprakāśikā on IS 4.3. However, this is not convincing.
It is very difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this passage, which is also found in the ĪS.\textsuperscript{373} I am unable to satisfactorily translate the verse and half-verse (6.131-132b) I have omitted, though their gist, I believe, is that the subordinate deities “mentally” (manasā) accept worship “even if it is given without respect” (dattam apy avahelayā), and that because they are (ultimately speaking) “made of Acyuta” (acyutamayāḥ), their minds are extensions of his.\textsuperscript{374} How are we to interpret the passage in general? It appears to indicate that Ekāntins were being criticised in some quarters for worshipping members of Viṣṇu’s entourage, such as Viṣvaksena, the gatekeepers to the temple, and other temple deities.\textsuperscript{375} Presumably, if such criticism genuinely existed, it was based on the notion that worshipping these subordinate deities violated the Ekāntins’ commitment to monotheism. It is to be noted that in his ĀP, Yāmuna also makes the point that the subordinate deities are, like the lord of Viṣṇu’s retinue (i.e. Viṣvaksena), “dependent upon Viṣṇu”.\textsuperscript{376} However, Yāmuna does not make this assertion in response to a specific criticism that Pāṇcarātikas worship Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities. Indeed, there is no indication in the ĀP that the Pāṇcarātra’s Mīmāṃsaka opponents were critical of this practice, or that they felt that it somehow compromised the ideal of monotheism. If the criticism of the Ekāntin worship of Viṣṇu’s entourage was not coming from orthodox outsiders, then, from where was it coming? This is a very difficult question to answer, but we should not overlook the possibility that such criticism may have come from other Ekāntins. The author’s strategy in the above passage is to legitimate the Ekāntin worship of the subordinate deities by providing scriptural authority for it, but he also attempts to minimise the “distress” that this may cause by emphasising that this worship is, and should be, performed without devotion, loyalty, and respect, and that, in any case, the subordinate deities are “made of Acyuta”, and so any charge of abandoning monotheism would not apply.

\textsuperscript{373} PārS 6.124c-126b → ĪS 3.100-101; PārS 6.128-133b → ĪS 4.2c-7.
\textsuperscript{374} PārS 6.131-132b: te tat prāṇīcyutaṁ prahvā dattam apy avahelayā / grhnanti manasā śreyāḥ paraṁ dhyātvā dhīyā hṛdi / yatāḥ sarve ‘cyutamāyās taccittāritmāṇasāḥ / Note that ĪS 4.5a reads te tat pāṇīcyutam prahvā.
\textsuperscript{375} On the mythical plane Cāndra, Pracāndra, Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ, Jaya, Vijaya, Bhadra and Subhadra are the gatekeepers of Vaikuṇṭha, Viṣṇu’s heaven.
\textsuperscript{376} ĀP 168 6-7: devatāgaṇaḥ // guṇabhūtaḥ śruto viṣṇor viṣṇupārīṣadeśāvāt /
Much of this is hypothetical, but when read in tandem with the Pauṣṭa’s legitimization of valid forms of “mixed worship” for those who are qualified, these verses in the Pāṛṣ and the Īś do appear to indicate that some Ekāntins (or Ekāyanas etc.) were participating in forms of worship, specifically in temples, that members of their tradition had previously condemned. However, that the Ekāntin worship of Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities appears to have attracted controversy is itself rather difficult to explain within the broader history of the Pāṇcarātra. For the Pāṇcarātrika worship of Viṣṇu’s divine retinue is enjoined throughout the scriptural literature, both in its oldest documents, and in South Indian works including the Pāṛṣ and the Īś themselves. The worship of Viṣvaṃbheṣaṇa, for example, is attested to with such frequency throughout the Saṃhitās that I do not need to cite individual instances here. How, then, can we explain the statement that the Ekāntin worship of such deities as Viṣvaṃbheṣaṇa “causes distress” to some people? If Ekāntins or Ekāyanas had only recently taken on the worship of Viṣvaṃbheṣaṇa et al., it implies that they had a very minimal role in the composition of the early Saṃhitās, and indeed the remainder of the scriptural corpus. Alternatively, it may be proposed that the “absolute monotheism” which rejected this sort of worship was itself only a recent phenomenon among Pāṇcarātrikas, and that it was, then, rather short-lived. In my view, the second explanation is more likely to be correct, for we do not find strictures against mixed worship in the JS, the SS, or the apparently older parts of the Pauṣṭa. It is only in those sections of the Pauṣṭa that were authored by Ekāyanas, which I propose were added to the text in South India, and in the Pāṛṣ and the Īś that we find such strictures.

This proposal is also consistent with my hypothesis that the sectarianism which characterised certain South Indian Pāṇcarātrika contexts was itself only relatively brief. It was, as I have suggested in Chapter Five, probably within such contexts that the Ekāyanas invented the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda and of the four distinct Pāṇcarātra Siddhāntas. If this is correct, it seems reasonable to suggest that the explicit self-identification of the Ekāyanas with the Ekāntins of the Nārāyaṇiya, and their concomitant “absolute monotheism” also originated during this period, and for similar reasons. Faced with competition for the control of temples and the
performance of rituals for fee-paying clients with other Pāñcarātrikas who claimed association with the Vedic tradition, the Ekāyanas sought to establish their own orthodox credentials. As we have seen in Chapter Five, the Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas had probably always been liberation-seekers (mumukṣu) who renounced personal desires (niśkāma etc), and they may have had genuine, albeit very distant, links to the religious culture represented in the Nārāyaṇīya. However, it appears to have been only in South India that the Ekāyanas began to explicitly represent themselves as Ekāntins. Admittedly, our information on the Kashmirian Ekāyanas is rather sparse, but there is no indication in the so-called Saṃvitprakāśa, for example, that the Ekāntins represented an important ideal to Vāmanadatta, its Ekāyana author.

iii.) Conclusions

Of the scriptural sources available to me which do not appear to have been authored by sectarian Pāñcarātrikas who called themselves ‘Ekāyana’, the JS, the ViṣṇuS, the ParS and the LT contain the most uses of the terms ekānta and ekātin. In the ParS and the LT, the designation ekātin is employed within mythical narratives to name the ideal devotees. In this sense, their use of the term is continuous with that found in the Nārāyaṇīya. Contrarily, the JS and the ViṣṇuS use the term to designate one particular class of Vaiṣṇava among others. The sections of the JS which describe Ekāntins are very likely South Indian in origin, as is the ViṣṇuS. The fact that they do not use the word ekātinlekkāntīka as a general term of commendation, but as a label for a specific religious identity may indicate that the relevant portions of these texts are later than the ParS and the LT, or that they were authored within a different South Indian context to those works. Both the JS and the ViṣṇuS present the Ekāntins or Ekāntikas as renunciants, and both hint that they do not belong to the twice-born social classes. Unfortunately, their descriptions are very brief, and they do not contain enough information to enable us to affirm that they are describing the Pāñcarātrikas who call themselves Ekāyanas or Āgamasiddhāntins.
The latter Pāñcarātrikas appropriated the name *ekāntin*, and very possibly the ideal of absolute monotheism alongside it. Numerous sections of the PauṣŚ were authored by Ekāyanas. The PauṣŚ clearly lacks homogeneity, and there are several clues, some of which I have pointed to in Chapter Five, that significant sections of it were composed in South India. Among these I would provisionally include the more explicitly “sectarian” portions of the text, which can be best explained in relation to the competition among distinct Pāñcarātra traditions for the control of public temples in South India. The other textual sources which most clearly indicate the existence of this religiously (and, inevitably, commercially) competitive environment, such as the PādŚ and the PārŚ, are demonstrably South Indian. Moreover, at least some of the passages in the PauṣŚ which suggest more cooperative relations between distinct Pāñcarātra traditions, including those which I have addressed above, appear to be even later additions to the text. This is evidently the case with the quoted passage authorising mixed worship “for those who are qualified”, and I propose also that the passages which promise a better rebirth to those who make generous donations to the temple (i.e. PauṣŚ 30.174c-184b, and 41.143-155) can be added to this later layer.

This means that we can provisionally distinguish at least three textual layers in the PauṣŚ: i.) the early layer/s wherein sakāma and niśkāma worshippers are addressed as apparent equals, as they are in the SS; ii.) the explicitly sectarian portions wherein, for example, mixed worshippers are denounced as “devotees in appearance only”, and worship motivated by personal desires is either condemned or prohibited; iii.) the later layer containing passages, addressed in this chapter, which indicate a change in attitude regarding mixed worship. A possible fourth layer is represented by the PauṣŚ’s 42nd chapter on the rites for installing a divine image in the temple (*pratiṣṭhā*), as discussed in Chapter Five. Here, Ekāyanas are shown to cooperate with Pāñcarātrika Brahmins who have expertise in the Vedas. Due to the similarity between the passages in this chapter and those found in the final two chapters of the SS, which appear to have been appended to that work, I consider it very likely that this chapter of the PauṣŚ is also an interpolation. Like SS 24-25, however, its composition must have preceded that of the PārŚ, which incorporates many of its verses. It is not clear to me whether the layer represented by PauṣŚ 42 is
coeval with layer three distinguished above, or whether it might be added between layers one and two.

The apparent Ekāyana appropriation of the religious identity of the Ekāntins of the Nārāyanīya, with their absolute monotheism, for example, and their absolute renunciation of personal desires, was no doubt limited by a religious environment that was dominated by the priestly performance of temple rituals for fee-paying clients. The passages in the PauṣS which promise rebirth as an Ekāntin to those who make donations to the temple show that, despite their professed ideals, Ekāyanas were active in advertising their ritual expertise to prospective patrons. The verses concerning the endowment of food (i.e. PauṣS 41.143-155) appear to be addressed specifically to royal patrons, since their description of a superior rebirth includes typically Kṣatriya qualities such as valour or might (śaurya), constancy or command (dhṛti), and power (utsāha), as well as a reference to “enemies” (dvīṣatām). In this sort of competitive environment, and indeed in an increasingly urbanised society, there would have been little place for the ideals of the “original” Ekāntins. The acceptance of worshippers who desire fruits (phalārthin) presumably became both a political and an economic necessity.
9. The Āgamasiddhānta in the Pāñcarātrarakṣā

i.) What became of the Āgamasiddhāntins?: A short summary

I have argued in the first three chapters that the idea of the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣŚ appears to have emerged, probably no earlier than the twelfth century, within the South Indian Pāñcarātra tradition which called itself the Āgamasiddhānta. This tradition associated itself with the so-called Ekāyanaveda, an apparently mythical Urtext which in reality may have been represented by the Jayākhyaśaṃhitā (JS), Sātvataśaṃhitā (SS) and Pauṣkarasaṃhitā (PauṣŚ). This is suggested, at least, by the Śrīprasnaśaṃhitā (ŚrīprśS 49.471c-473), and by the much later commentator Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa in his Sāvatārthaprakāśikā (on Īśvaraśaṃhitā 1.64-67). The idea of there being four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas may also have emerged among Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas, since its earliest articulation is probably that found in the PauṣŚ (38.293-307b), and the majority of extant lists of the four Siddhāntas name the Āgamasiddhānta as the highest of the four.

As we have seen, the supremacy of the JS, SS and PauṣŚ is also claimed in the ŚrīprśS, and in the interpolated section of the JS entitled Adhikāḥ Pāṭhaḥ, both of which were very likely authored by non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas. In addition, several non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptural sources contain the claim that there are four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, though inevitably in these instances the authors place their own tradition, namely the Mantrasiddhānta, at the top of the hierarchy. What is more, the idea of the Ekāyanaveda is itself found in several non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptural sources, such as the Pāḍmasaṃhitā (PāḍŚ cp 13.66c-72b), the ŚrīprśS (e.g. 16.20) and the Śrīpuruṣottamaśaṃhitā (ŚrīpurS 1.12). On these occasions, however, the term ‘Ekāyana’ refers to the Pāñcarātra tradition in general, rather than to the Āgamasiddhānta.

Among the published works available to me, the vast majority were authored by non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas. As I have shown in Chapter Four, the authors
of these works were generally increasingly keen to stress the continuity of their own practices with those legitimated by Brahminical orthodoxy, though at the same time they continued to advertise their ritual expertise to a wider social audience than was acceptable to those who upheld that orthodoxy. Of the works at my disposal, only the Pārameśvarasamhitā (PārS) and the Īśvarasamhitā (ĪS), together with parts of the PauṣS and the SS, were clearly authored by Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas. The parts of the PauṣS and the SS that appear to have been authored by Ekāyanas (the term ‘Āgamasiddhānta’ is not found in these works) were probably added to these texts in South India. Some of these sections of the PauṣS articulate a clearly sectarian agenda, condemning the practices of non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas and even questioning their status as genuine devotees. However, in other interpolated sections of the PauṣS, as we have seen in Chapter Eight, Ekāyana authors appear to sanction these very same practices.

We have here, then, rather a complex history. There are numerous sources, as I have shown in Chapter Two, which indicate that there were always distinct groups within the Pāñcarātra. This is not especially surprising in view of the fact that the Nārāyaṇīya, which contains the earliest extant references to a religious tradition called ‘Pāñcarātra’, presents this tradition as, from the outset, a synthesis of previously distinct religious identities and soteriological methods. However, there is no evidence prior to sources such as the PauṣS, the PādS and the PārS, that these distinct groups were in direct competition with one another for the control of temples, and that in consequence of this, were mutually opposed. This happened, I believe, in a relatively “orthodox” South Indian environment wherein those Pāñcarātrikas who could claim association, through membership of a gotra, with the Vedic tradition, were at a distinct advantage over those Pāñcarātrikas who could not. As I have argued in Chapter Five, the origin of the tradition of the Ekāyanaveda is probably best explained in reference to this environment.

The Āgamasiddhāntins who associated themselves with the Ekāyanaveda appear to have congregated in relatively small Vaiṣṇava centres such as Śrīraṅgam and Melkote. Based on the relative size of their literary output, we must assume that they represented a minority within the Pāñcarātra. Nonetheless, they appear to have
had a certain authority in the Pāñcarātra tradition. This is evident from the fact that apparently Āgamasiddhāntin ideas, such as the supremacy of the JS, SS, and PauṣŚ, and the existence of the Ekāyanaveda, found their way into non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptures. It is also evident, as we will see shortly, from the descriptions of the Āgamasiddhānta in Vedāntadeśīka’s *Pāñcarāṭrarakṣā* (PRR).

Among the Pāñcarātra scriptural works which probably postdate Vedāntadeśīka, only the ĪS, which incorporates a large amount of material from the PārŚ, seems to have been authored by Āgamasiddhāntins. In many of these late works, the Pāñcarātra is presented as a single system (*tantra*), and there is no mention of the distinct traditions or Siddhāntas. Several of these works, as we have seen in Chapter Three, contain extensive, non-hierarchical lists of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās. Thus, it appears that the culture of sectarianism within the Pāñcarātra subsided, and was replaced by one in which the non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas represented the tradition as a single integrated system. What, then, became of the Āgamasiddhāntins? In this short chapter, I address several passages from Vedāntadeśīka’s PRR which may provide some clues to the answer to this question.

**ii.) Vedāntadeśīka’s defence of the Āgamasiddhānta**

While the PārŚ and the *Kōyiloḷuku*, the Śrīraṅgam temple chronicle, provide ample evidence (see Rastelli 2006: 243-244) that the Ekāyanas were active in Śrīraṅgam in the 12th and (probably early) 13th centuries, there is not, to my knowledge, a comparable body of evidence which can demonstrate that they remained active there as late as the early fourteenth century i.e. when Vedāntadeśīka composed the PRR and was ācārya at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple. However, the PRR itself contains several passages which suggest that this very probably was the case. For it is difficult to overlook the fact that in his defence of the Pāñcarātra, Vedāntadeśīka lends his support in particular to the Āgamasiddhānta. Thus, in the opening section of the PRR’s first chapter, Vedāntadeśīka establishes that the Āgamasiddhānta is the
primary Siddhānta. In support of this he quotes (at PRR 6.4ff) PauṣS 38.293c-305, and (at 8.5-8) the Hayagrīvasaṃhitā (otherwise known as the Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra), both of which list the Āgamasiddhānta at the top of the Siddhānta hierarchy. Subsequently, at PRR 9.8-11, he quotes PādS cp 19.111c-113b, which lists the Mantrasiddhānta as the “first” Siddhānta, but in his succeeding commentary, Vedāntadeśika notes that this is a reversal of the sequence (vyutkrama) that is found in the PauṣS, and that this reversal is intended merely as a means of praising the Mantrasiddhānta.\(^\text{377}\) In other words, the hierarchy found in the PauṣS is the canonical one. As if to emphasise this, Vedāntadeśika then (falsely!) claims, at PRR 9.13-14, that the PādS itself acknowledges the “superiority” (atiśayaḥ) of the Āgamasiddhānta, and that this superiority is conveyed, according to the PādS, by the fact that the Āgamasiddhānta confers liberation alone.

These verses in the PRR are followed by a short quotation of PādS cp 19.117ab: “And in the Āgama [Siddhānta], wherein the renunciation of actions is described…” (karmanām api saṃnyāsāḥ kathyate yatra cāgame). Vedāntadeśika quotes this half-sūloka in order to issue an important corrective as to its meaning. The “renunciation of actions” mentioned here refers, in fact, to the renunciation of “actions motivated by desire” (kāmyakarma) which is performed in the Āgamasiddhānta, says Vedāntadeśika, in accordance with the teaching of “pure renunciation” (sāttvikatyāga) that is propounded in the 18th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā.\(^\text{378}\) In other words, according to Vedāntadeśika, Āgamasiddhāntins perform rituals relating to their own social class and stage of life etc. (svavarṇāśramādi), and also the daily and occasional rites prescribed in the Grhyasūtras of their own sākhā, but they renounce what the Bhagavadgītā calls the “fruits” of these actions.\(^\text{379}\) “Therefore”, concludes Vedāntadeśika, “it should not be


\(^{378}\) PRR 9.15-17: atra kāmyakaranām svārūpataḥ saṃnyāsaḥ. svavarṇāśramādiniyaṇātānām tu bhagavadgītāstādādhiyāyanirṇītapakāreṇa sāttvikatyāgaḥ. svaśākhāgrhyoktamaryādayā ca sarvatra nityānimitīkādirgrihāḥ.

\(^{379}\) See for example MBh 6.40.2: kāmyānām karmanāṁ nyāsaṃ saṃnyāsāṁ kavyayo viduḥ / sarvakarmaphalatyāgaṃ prāhus tyāgam vicakṣaṇāḥ īl.
erroneously thought that in the Āgamasiddhānta all actions are renounced, for there is a great variety of specific actions [performed therein].”

These verses are worth summarising because they strongly indicate that the Āgamasiddhānta was still a living tradition in the early part of the fourteenth century, when Vedāntadeśika composed the PRR. Moreover, this passage very much reads like a defence of the Āgamasiddhānta against a very specific accusation - namely, that of renouncing ritual action. Who, in the eyes of Vedāntadeśika, might have been “erroneously” suggesting that Āgamasiddhāntins do not engage in ritual action? Such an accusation is not, after all, included in the various objections against the Pāñcarātra which are listed in Yāmuna’s ĀP. First of all, it should be noted that Vedāntadeśika’s contention that Āgamasiddhāntins renounce only the desire which ordinarily motivates ritual action - i.e. they do not renounce ritual action itself - is supported by the PādS’s Caryāpāda, from which the above half-sloka is taken, as well as by several Āgamasiddhānta sources. Furthermore, it is significant that the PādS, like the PauṣS and the PārS, does actually on occasion refer to this renunciation of “desire” as simply the “renunciation of action” (karmasaṃnyāsa).

In other words, there is scriptural support for Vedāntadeśika’s aforementioned interpretation of PādS cp 19.117ab, not least in the PādS itself. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, then, this suggests that the accusation that Āgamasiddhāntins do not engage in ritual action might have come from somewhere other than the Mantrasiddhānta, the tradition to which the majority of the PādS belonged.

The most likely source of this criticism is perhaps the Vaikhānasā tradition. According to Gérard Colas (1990: 24-25), the Vaikhānasā Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa states that the Pāñcarātra “is esteemed by hermits (vanastha) and ascetics (yatin)”, and several other Vaikhānasā works cited by Colas also include the claim that (in Colas’ words) “while the Vaikhānasā cult is citadine, the Pāñcarātra is prescribed for

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380 PRR 9.17-10.1: ata āgamasiddhānte sarvakarmasvarūpayāga iti na bhramitavyam, karmaviṣeṣa-bhāyastvāt.

381 See for example PādS cp 21.34c-36, where Āgamasiddhāntins are said to be devoted to the pañcakāta ritual system, and to worship God “without desire” (nirāśa). Among Āgamasiddhānta sources, see for instance PauṣS 27.4 and 38.28c-32, and PārS 15.14c-18.

382 See for example PādS cp 21.35cd, PauṣS 38.32cd and PārS 15.16cd.
far away places, outside towns, on a hill or a mountain, near a river or an ocean, in forests”. Such descriptions of the Pāñcarātra as a renunciative tradition as opposed to an urban, temple-based cult must, of course, be assessed alongside the context from which they emerged. Elsewhere, Colas (1995: 117) addresses this issue when he writes of the opposition between “les deux écoles âgamiques, celles-ci s’affrontant pour obtenir le contrôle du rituel dans les temples de l’Inde du Sud” (“The two Āgamic schools [i.e. the Vaikhānasa and the Pāñcarātra] which clashed with one another in the attempt to gain control of ritual in the temples of South India”). Of particular relevance to the question we are addressing presently, Colas (ibid: 117-118) notes that : “À l’époque de Vedānta Deśika, les querelles entre les desservants de temple se réclament de l’une et de l’autre école âgamique vishnuite ne cessent de croître et de s’étendre avec la prolifération des temples publics” (“At the time of Vedanta Desika, the quarrels between the temple priests claiming [allegiance to] one or other Vaishnava Āgamic school continue to grow and expand with the proliferation of public temples”). Further on, moreover, Colas (ibid: 119) suggests that Vaikhānasa authors may have been directing their criticisms at one Pāñcarātra group in particular, namely those who had abandoned their Vedic sūtra. “C’est peut-être cette partie de l’école pāñcarātra”, writes Colas, “que les manuels des prêtres vaikhānasa visaient à stigmatiser” (“It is perhaps this branch of the Pāñcarātra school which the manuals of the Vaikhānasa priests aimed at stigmatising”).

If Colas is correct, it would seem quite likely, then, that in his PRR Vedāntadesīka is defending the Āgamasiddhānta against criticisms which were coming from within the Vaikhānasa tradition. After all, the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas are those Pāñcarātrikas who, according to both the ĀP (169.7ff) and the PRR (4.5ff), had “abandoned” the dharma of the triple Veda (trayīdhārma) in order to follow the Grhyasūtras of their “own śākhā”. In addition, when the PauṣŚ (27.637d) refers to “those who have abandoned mixed worship” (vyāmiśrādhanojjhitāh), we can assume that it is the Ekāyanas who are meant. Irrespective of the source of these criticisms, this discussion raises another possible explanation as to why Vedāntadesīka, who himself did not abandon allegiance to the “triple Veda” as the highest scriptural authority, might have sought to defend the
Āgamasiddhāntins, who had abandoned that allegiance. He may have sought to defend them not only because they held positions of influence at the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple in Śrīraṅgam, but also because they were the Pāncarātrikas who were especially subject to external criticism. Viewed in this way, the success of Vedāntadeśika’s *Defence of the Pāncarātra* would have rested in large part on the success of his defence of the Āgamasiddhānta. For if criticisms of the Āgamasiddhānta could be used to denounce the Pāncarātra in general, a successful defence of the latter could be built upon a persuasive vindication of the former.

If authors belonging to the Vaikhānasā tradition occasionally ignored the internal divisions within the Pāncarātra and resorted to branding the Pāncarātra in general as “non-Vedic” (*avaidika*), or as devoted only to the attainment of *mokṣa*, or as not concerned with temple worship etc., then Vedāntadeśika, like Yāmuna before him, also attempted to present a unified and coherent Pāncarātra “system”, adherence to which would not contravene allegiance to the Veda. On occasion, as we might expect, Vedāntadeśika’s presentation of a harmonious Pāncarātra system contains ideas drawn from distinct Pāncarātra traditions which seem to contradict one another. However, generally his account is quite consistent. Although the PRR, unlike Yāmuna’s ĀP, does contain a number of descriptions of the Siddhānta divisions, as well as passages drawn from the scriptural literature which warn against “mixing” the Siddhāntas, Vedāntadeśika also attempts to minimise the importance of any internal “conflict”. Having quoted the PādS’s (*cp* 19.113c-128b) account of the Siddhānta divisions, for example, he is keen to point out that its descriptions of the Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas are in agreement with those given in the PauṣS. “If there is sameness of meaning between the two texts”, says Vedāntadeśika, “then there is no contradiction” (*yadi dvayor granthayor aikārthyaṃ saṃbhavati tadā na virodhaḥ*, PRR 11.18-19). Moreover, as we have seen, in the presentation of the PRR

383 See Colas (1990) for a list of Vaikhānasā classifications of the Pāncarātra.
384 See especially PRR 21.7ff, which asserts the validity and authority of Pāncarātrika prescriptions for the installation and worship of the image of Viṣṇu when prescriptions for these rites are not contained in the Vedas (that is, other than for the Baudhāyana, Vaikhānasā and Śaunaka schools).
385 See for example PRR 3.7-12, wherein the Pāncarātra is alternatively called the “fifth Veda” and “the root of the great Veda-tree” – the latter description being borrowed from PārS 1.76ab.
the supremacy of the Āgamasiddhānta is not a “sectarian” issue, but one on which even the PādS, a work predominantly of the Mantrasiddhānta, is in agreement.

Indeed, it is precisely this depiction of a universally acknowledged hierarchy of Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas which is key to Vedāntadesiśka’s mitigating what is probably the most characteristic feature of Pāñcarātriaka “sectarianism”, namely the prohibition against the “mixing” of Siddhāntas. For it is in this context that he quotes, without attribution, a passage which claims that Pāñcarātrikas are not only qualified to perform the rites of their “own” Siddhānta, they are also eligible for the ritual systems (tantra) of those Siddhāntas which are “lower” than their own. Thus, since the Āgamasiddhānta is at the top of the hierarchy, its members are also entitled to worship according to the systems prescribed by the Mantra, Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas. A Mantrasiddhāntin, meanwhile, is also qualified for the Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, while a Tantrasiddhāntin is qualified in addition for the Tantrāntarasiddhānta. Likewise, members of each Siddhānta have the authority to worship in places which have been established by a Siddhānta “inferior” to their own. This means that, according to this account, Āgamasiddhāntins have the entitlement to worship in any Pāñcarātra temple, while Tantrāntarasiddhāntins appear to be restricted to worshipping in their own homes.386

How are we to interpret these claims, and the inclusion of this passage in the PRR? Vedāntadesiśka does not name the source of these verses, which is fairly unusual in this work, and I have been not been able to locate them in the scriptural literature. The most striking claim contained here is that members of the Āgamasiddhānta have the authority to perform all rites which are enjoined by the Mantrasiddhānta, the implication being that they can execute this entitlement without being guilty of “mixing Siddhāntas”, or of leaving their own Siddhānta and entering another. Vedāntadesiśka then quotes another unnamed source which reinforces this idea by

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386 PRR 13.9-14.4: punar apy uparyupari tantrasthitānām adho 'dhas tantrādikārītvam uktam –
tantrāntare tathā tantramantrasiddhāntavartmani (corr. tantra-mantra siddhāntavartmani) /
dikṣātām kramaṇāyavā hy uparyupari yogataḥ / anyesām adhikārāḥ syāt tattatsamskārāpiśvakam //
kāraṇāgamasiddhāntaniṣṭhaṇīnyais tribhīḥ sadā / arcanīyam athānāyāḥyaṁ mantrasiddhāntinā tathā //
pājānīyam athānyena tantrasiddhāntiṇīnānāṃ // svena tantrāntareṇaiva pājānīyam svake
greḥ // iti / atrāpy utkṛṣṭasiddhāntasthitenāpi apakṛṣṭasiddhāntasthānēṣu tattatsiddhānta-
prakāreṇaiva pājānīyatvam uktam.
stating that “if they are qualified for the principle [ordinance], [then] they are qualified for the secondary [ordinance]” (mukhyādkārīṇaḥ santi yadi gauṇādhikārīṇaḥ, PRR 14.6).

Could these unnamed sources possibly reflect and validate actual processes which were then taking place? In other words, were Āgamasiddhāntins affiliating themselves with the more Veda-congruent Pāncarātra traditions? We can be fairly sure that the latter had by this time become the more dominant, so a transition of this nature would certainly have been expedient. Can this help to explain why non-Āgamasiddhānta scriptures begin to incorporate Āgamasiddhāntin canonical systems, such as the idea of the Ekāyanaveda and the supremacy of the JS, SS and Pauṣś, within their own? And can it also help to explain the apparent disappearance of the Āgamasiddhānta, not only as a named Pāncarātra tradition, but also as a strand within the Pāncarātra whose representatives claimed the superiority of their own tradition over that of the Veda?

These questions are very difficult to answer at present, and new sources may come to light which cast doubt upon their validity. It should also be restated that Vedāntadesīka quotes these unnamed sources alongside passages from the PārS, for example, which explicitly prohibit the mixing of Siddhāntas (siddhāntasāṃkarya, see e.g. PRR 18.15-19.5, quoting PārS 19.545-548b). He also mentions that according to the PārS and the Kālottara, entering a superior Siddhānta by abandoning an inferior one is not a fault, whereas abandoning a superior ‘Tantra’ (i.e. Siddhānta) to enter a “low” or “debased” one is a fault, and is equivalent to a mixing of Tantras (i.e. separate ‘systems’). Nonetheless, the processes proposed above, wherein Āgamasiddhāntins take on the practices of the more Veda-congruent Pāncarātra traditions, could certainly help to explain how it was that the culture of Pāncarātriaka sectarianism gave way to the synthesis of previously distinct groups.

Such processes could also, of course, help to explain the content of some of the passages which I have addressed in Chapter Eight: the fact that Ekāyana authors of the Pauṣś changed their earlier position on “mixed worship”, for instance, and that they

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387 PRR 28.16-19: ... apakṛṣṭasiddhāntaparityāgenāpi utkṛṣṭasiddhāntapraveśanaṃ na dosāya; pratyuta guṇāyaiva; utkṛṣṭatantraparityāgena nīkṛṣṭatantrapraveśane samānatantrasaṃkare ca doṣa ity uktam.
began to address, and promise rewards to, worshippers who “desire fruits” (*phalārthin*); and also the verses in the PārS and the ĪS which authorise the worship, albeit “without devotion and loyalty”, of Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities, irrespective of the “distress” that this may cause to those “of little understanding”. It should also be borne in mind that reparation rites (*prāyaścitta*) were devised by the traditions which authored these texts in the event that a “mixing of Siddhāntas” or the abandoning of one Siddhānta for another should occur, and that the very existence of these rites suggests that such events *did* occur. Indeed, when taken together, these passages in the PauṣS, the PārS and the ĪS suggest that if Āgamasiddhāntins did begin to abandon their ideals and align themselves with more Veda-congruent patterns of worship, then this process began well before Vedāntadeśīka’s time. The fact that the Āgamsiddhānta is still referred to as a living tradition in the PRR, as it is also in presumably younger works such as the ĪS and the ŚrīprśS, indicates, of course, that it could not have reached its completion until a later date.

### iii.) Conclusions

Vedāntadeśīka’s defence of the Āgamasiddhānta appears to indicate that this tradition was especially subject to external criticism. This criticism may have come from within the Vaikhānasa tradition. We know that Vaikhānasas were present in Śrīraṅgam. In my view it is unlikely, however, that criticism from this source would have had a significant impact on the decline of the Āgamasiddhānta. If I am correct in proposing that the Āgamasiddhānta was integrated into other Pāncarātra traditions, then an important question remains. Why did this happen? Why, for example, did it not happen the other way round? The fact that Āgamasiddhāntins appear to have been a minority within the South Indian Pāncarātra may have been a partial cause of the direction that this integrative process appears to have taken, but it is not an explanation. Why, then, were Āgamasiddhāntins a minority?
The obvious answer to this question is one that I have mentioned already. Non-Āgamasiddhāntin Pāñcarātrikas held a distinct advantage over Āgamasiddhāntins in that they claimed membership within a genuine Vedic śākha. It is quite likely, as we have seen in Chapter Five, that some South Indian Pāñcarātrikas did genuinely come from orthodox Brahminical backgrounds. Yāmuna, recall, was prepared to vouch for the fact that the Pāñcarātrika Bhāgavatas belonged to the Vājasaneyasākha. Of course, Yāmuna also claims that the Ekāyanas belong to a Vedic śākha. However, owing to the fact that there was no record of such a Vedic school, it is considerably less likely that this claim would have been accepted by outsiders. Undoubtedly, if non-Āgamasiddhāntins could persuasively affiliate themselves with Vedic tradition, this would have made them more attractive in the eyes of prospective patrons. Moreover, in a commercially competitive environment wherein the ritual expertise of professional priests would have been shaped to a great extent by the needs of their clients, the Ekāyanas had given themselves a distinct disadvantage. For they could not promise these clients, as reward for loyalty and generous support, the attainment of liberation at death. The best they could offer them, soteriologically speaking, was rebirth as an Ekāyana.
I will conclude with a historically chronological summary of the findings of this thesis. I have shown that the earliest textual source which refers to a ‘Pañcarātra’ tradition, namely the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata, datable in its present form to the fourth or fifth century CE, presents the emergence of this tradition as the outcome of a process whereby previously distinct religious identities and soteriological methods were assimilated and subordinated to a devotional religion centred on Nārāyaṇa (Chapter Seven). Several centuries subsequent to the composition of the Nārāyaṇīya, numerous textual sources attest to there being distinct groups either “within” or related to a loosely organised Pañcarātra tradition. These sources include a number of Pañcarātra Saṃhitās dating from the ninth to eleventh centuries, in particular the Sātvasaṃhitā, the Jayākhyaśaṃhitā, the Pauṣkarasaṃhitā and the Sanatkumārasaṃhitā, in addition to several works external to the Pañcarātra scriptural corpus. Among the latter we can count Rājānaka Ratnākara’s ninth century Haravijaya and Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s tenth century Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa, both produced in Kashmir, as well as South Indian texts such as the ninth-tenth century Vaikhānasa Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa, and Yāmuna’s eleventh-twelfth century Āgamaprāmāṇya. In these works, Pañcarātra groups are distinguished from each other by a variety of means including philosophical doctrine, soteriology, ritual practice, social class, mode of living, and religious symbol. There is little consistency in the accounts of different Pañcarātra groups before the late eleventh or early twelfth century, at which time a number of descriptions of four Pañcarātra ‘Siddhāntas’ appear in several South Indian scriptural works. Some of these works, most notably the Pādmasaṃhitā and the Pārameśvarasaṃhitā, point to there being, during this period, a sectarian animosity between two Pañcarātra Siddhāntas in particular. These two Siddhāntas primarily distinguished themselves from one another on the basis of their scriptural allegiance (Chapter Two). The more textually prolific of these groups called itself ‘Mantrasiddhānta’ and claimed that its teachings were “rooted in the Veda” (vedamūlatā). The textual evidence suggests that this tradition was increasingly concerned with presenting itself as conforming to
orthodox norms, though it continued to address itself to a wider social audience than was acceptable to those who maintained those norms (Chapter Four). Authors belonging to the less textually prolific tradition, called ‘Āgamasiddhānta’, made the claim that their scriptures are rooted in an original teaching called ‘Ekāyanaveda’. The identity of this Ekāyanaveda is uncertain, though a later scriptural work, namely the (probably fourteenth century) Śrīpraśnasamhitā, assumes it to have been a collective label for the Jayākhyasamhitā, Sātvatasamhitā and Pauskarasamhitā. The twelfth-thirteenth century Pārameśvarasamhitā and the thirteenth-fourteenth century Īśvarasamhitā, both of which claim affiliation with the Ekāyanaveda, interpret ekāyana as meaning “the only way” (i.e. to liberation), though this is very likely a significant revision of the original sense of this term.

According to Mantrasiddhānta authors, members of the Āgamasiddhānta were not qualified to act as professional temple priests performing rituals on behalf of others, though Āgamasiddhāntins disputed this. Such disagreements point to the likelihood that these two Pāñcarātra traditions were in competition with each other for the control of temples in South India, a theory which also finds support in other textual passages (Chapter Five). However, this period of sectarian animosity, which was probably current for a period during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did not last long, and the main reason for this appears to have been that the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas could not compete effectively with their more orthodox rivals. This was, no doubt, primarily due to the fact that they could not claim affiliation with a genuine Vedic school (śākhā), and in the Śrīvaisnava-influenced orthodox religious environment of South India at this time were therefore less attractive than the Mantrasiddhāntins in the eyes of prospective patrons. However, another cause of the inability of Āgamasiddhāntins to compete effectively with their rivals may well have been self-inflicted. I refer here to the Āgamasiddhāntins’ understanding of their own tradition as one in which membership is conferred by birth rather than initiation. This meant that since the Āgamasiddhānta was, in their way of thinking, “the only way” to liberation (mokṣa), Āgamasiddhāntins could not promise the achievement of this goal to prospective patrons from outside their own tradition – they could only offer them the promise of
a rebirth within the Āgamasiddhānta. In this respect the Mantrasiddhāntins held a
distinct advantage since, for them, the ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*) was enough to
establish the patron’s eligibility to achieve liberation at death.

An apparent consequence of the greater resources available to the
Mantrasiddhānta in their efforts to attract royal patronage was that some members of
the Āgamasiddhānta began to incorporate into their repertoire the same ritual
practices that their Mantrasiddhāntin rivals engaged in – practices that their own
tradition (i.e. the Āgamasiddhānta) had previously condemned (Chapters Eight to
Nine). These included rituals granting rewards to those desirous of the “fruits” of
worship (*phalārthin*), as well as acts of “mixed worship” such as the worship of
Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities. By these means, the religious identities of these two
Pāñcarātra traditions began to merge. This gave rise to a culture which made a
concerted effort to integrate the distinct Pāñcarātra traditions. One of the outcomes of
this process, or a means by which it occurred, was the formation of the Pāñcarātra
.scriptural canon, a project which appears to have been especially important to the
composers and redactors of the Saṃhitās during the fourteenth century (Chapters
One and Three).

Insofar as is possible, I have attempted to locate Pāñcarātra texts within the
sociohistorical context summarised here, though it is clearly the case that not all such
works can be located there. I refer here in particular to the *Ahirbudhnyasamhitā* and
the *Lakṣmītantra*, neither of which appear to belong to the “sectarian” Pāñcarātra
culture within which many of the extant South Indian Saṃhitās were produced
(Chapter Six). Moreover, several texts appear to have been composed by members of
distinct Pāñcarātra traditions, and thus do not belong in their entirety to one *milieu* or
another. Thus, it is clear that portions of the *Pauṣkarasamhitā* were authored by
Ekāyanas, while other sections of this text were authored by other types of
Pāñcarātrika. Naturally, without paleographical support, any attempt to distinguish
between the historical layers of a text remains speculative, and any conclusions
arrived at must be tentative and open to revision. This is the position I take on my
own comments on the historical layers of the *Pauṣkarasamhitā*, a text which in its
present corrupt and fragmentary form can invite only tentative judgements, as well as on material I identify as having been interpolated into other texts.
### ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
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Young, Katherine K. (2007) “Brāhmaṇas, Pāñcarātrins, and the Formation of Śrī-
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