

THE OTHER AGAMAS – VAIKHANASA, SAIVA AND SAKTA

THE VAIKHANASA AGAMAS

UNLIKE the Pancaratrins, the Vaikhanasas form only a minority, although they constitute an important sect among the Vaishnavas. The origin of the Vaikhanasa agama is attributed to VIKHANAS or BRAHMA himself who is said to have revealed the Sastra through his four disciples, ATRI, MARICI, KASYAPA and BHRIGU. Many of the Vaiṅkhaṇasa samhitas are printed by the Tirupathi temple authorities. A few are printed by the Vaikhanasa granthamala series, Madras. One is printed by the Trivandrum Sanskrit series No. 121. K. Sambasivasastri had edited a Vaikhanasa samhita attributed to Marici. Even Vedanta Desika has written a work on Vaikhanasa Agama.

It is said that at Vishnu's command Vikhanas came down to earth to originate worship of Vishnu in His Arca form (in the form of idols in temples). Brahma incarnated Himself as VIKHANAS in the Naimisharanya and then VISHNU Himself taught Brahma the mysteries of worship in the form of thirty two questions. Since God, the Bhagavan Himself taught this agama to Brahma first, Vishnu Himself is the originator of the Agama also as in the case of Pancaratra Agama. As it was Vikhanasa who gave this agama to the world directly through his four disciples or Maharshis, namely Atri, Marici, Kasyapa and Bhrighu, he is said to be the Pravartaka of this Agama and hence the agama is called after him.

There are four divisions in the Agama:

1. Samhita,
2. Adhikarana,
3. Tantra,
4. Khanda.

The following eight Agamas are said to have been given by Marici Maharshi, namely:

1. Jaya (Ādi). 2. Ananda, 3. Samjnana, 4. Vira
5. Vijaya, 6. Vijita, 7. Vimala, 8. Kalpa.

These eight are also called Samhitas.

The following ten as spelled out by Bhrigu Maharshi are called the Adhikaranas: namely:

1. Khila, 2. Khilādhikāra, 3. Purādhikāra,
4. Vāsādhikāra, 5. Arcādhikāra, 6. Mānādhikāra,
7. Kriyādhikāra, 8. Niruktādhikāra,
9. Prakirṇādhikāra, 10. Yajnādhikāra.

The following four spoken out by Atri Maharshi are called the Tantras : namely:

1. Pūrva tantra, 2. Vishnu tantra,
3. Uttara tantra, 4. Mahā tantra.

The following three Agama bhagas called KHĀNDA are said to have been given out by Kasyapa Maharshi: namely:

1. Satya khānda, 2. Karma khānda, 3. Jnāna khānda.

For all these, the Muladhara, the basic foundation is said to be the *Thirty Two Sutras* given out by Vaikhanasa Himself.

The Vaikhanasa Āgamādhikāris are also called by the name of 'GARBHA SRIVAISHNAVAS' and they require no initiation like the Saivites or the Pancarātrins. The Vaikhanasas claim that there were five million texts in support of their Agamas and they still believe that there are nearly fifty thousand texts in existence. 'Sri Lakshmi Visishtadvaita Darsana' - (Brahma Sutra) a Sariraka bhashya supports this claim and extols this Agama. Texts like - 'Daśavidha hetu nirupana'. 'Uttama - Brahma Vidyā' etc., champion the cause of Vaikhanasa Agama. As in other Vaishnava and Saiva Agamic texts, the Vaikhanasa Samhitas also explain and encourage temple art, architecture, installation