

## PREFACE

Worship of images or icons are recognized in Hindu religions. Vaiṣṇavism a religious sect of India mainly follow image worship, both at home and at temples.

As I am a post-graduate, who has studied Vaiṣṇavism from the Department of Vaiṣṇavism, University of Madras, my choice and interest fell on the systems that are adopted in the Vaiṣṇavite temples.

As regards the worship in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, there are two recognized schools viz., Vaikhānasa and *Pāñcarātra*, each one follows its own Āgama, a book of practice.

Many of the Vaiṣṇava temples in Tamil Nadu, especially follow the *Vaikhānasa* system. Once upon a time *Pāñcarātra* system was popular in the majority of the temples in South India. But, at present, a select temples at Melkote (Karnataka) Srirangam and Kanchipuram etc. follow this system. However, at present a select temple follow the *Pāñcarātra* system.

Vaiṣṇavism is one of the main religions of the Hindus and the *Pāñcarātra* is the ancient. Vaiṣṇavite sect. The influence of its tenets on later Vaiṣṇavism is important, but has not been thoroughly researched. The ritual worship described in the old *Pāñcarātra. Āgama*

texts is still performed today in many of the famous temples in South India and in some in the north. An analysis of their ritual, occultism and building of temples and images can be understood from the scientific study of these ancient *Pāñcarātra*, *Āgama* texts.

The accent of this thesis is on the study of the mode of worship and the initiation that makes one qualified to worship, according to some of the important texts in *Pāñcarātra* tradition.

Experts in this tradition have been consulted and the authoritative guidance helped me to build up this thesis.

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Chennai

*Shanta Srinivasan.*  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AhS	Ahīrbudhnyasaṁhitā
AnS	Aniruddhasaṁhitā
ASIV	Āgama and South Indian Vaiṣṇavisam
BĀU	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat
BSB	Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, Śaṅkara
BhP	Bhāgavatapurāṇa
ChU	Chāṇḍogyaopaniṣat
ĪS	Īśvarasaṁhitā
JS	Jayākhyasaṁhitā
KaṭhU	Kaṭhopaniṣat
LT	Lakṣmītantra
MBh	Mahābhārata
MuṇḍU	Muṇḍakopaniṣat
NāS	Nāradyasaṁhitā
PaS	Paramasaṁhitā
PauS	Pauṣkarasaṁhitā
PādS	Pādmasaṁhitā
PārS	Pārameśvarasaṁhitā
RV	Ṛgvedasaṁhitā
SA	Samurtarcanadhikaraṇa
SKS	Sanatkumārasaṁhitā
SS	Sāttvatasāṁhitā
ŚrīS	Śrīpraśnasaṁhitā
ŚBh	Śrībhāṣya, Rāmānuja
TĀ	Taittiryaṛaṇyaka
TB	Taittiryaḥbrāhmaṇa
ViṣS	Viṣṇusaṁhitā
ViśS	Viśvāmitrasaṁhitā