

## P R E F A C E

Sanskrit language now indisputably occupies the stage of sanctity among the languages used the world over. It has the innumerable branches of knowledge that are so varied, rich imaginative and delightful that these can only be tasted but not studied in detail in a single effort. Therefore how could it be possible for me to do full justice to so classic creation like Lalitā-sahasranāma (LS), magnum opus of an anonymus writer. However I have made a sincere and humble attempt to justify the place of the LS. in Tantric branch of Sanskrit literature. I feel embarrassed like Kalidasa who has said in the Raghuvamśa 'नितीर्षुर्वृत्तरं मोहादुदुपेनाऽस्मि साकारम् ॥'

The LS. occupies prominent and unique place in the field of the Tantric literature. It has a special aura in its form as it incorporates the major significant tenets which are embodied in the vast bulk of the Tantric literature. Moreover it spells its own class as steadfast as the North Star, among the copious Sahasranāmas. It is mainly due to its rare qualities such as lucidity, clarity, elucidation etc. To crest it all the one thousand names in the text contain within themselves the fundamentals of the Śākta Philosophy.

The LS. as it portrays almost all the fundamental principles of the Śakti-Cult is the gem in Tantrasāstra. Though it is written with a special reference to the slaying of Bhandāsura,

the demon, it possesses various epithets of the Goddess Lalitā which have secret doctrines underlying the Tantras. They elaborate various aspects of the Goddess such as Nirguna, Saguna, Parāśakti, Kundalinī and others.

The importance of the study lies in the fact that the IS. though commented upon by Bhāskararāya has escaped the analytical and critical pen of scholars. The study, as the title signifies, is made in the light of the Saubhāgya-bhāskara the versatile commentary on the IS, and needless to say that it is the study of the IS. and not of the Saubhāgya-Bhāskara.

The study is presented in five Chapters and five appendices. Chapter-I deals with the origin and development of Sahasranāma literature and the importance of the IS. Chapter-II focuses on the date, home and authorship of the IS. Chapter-III is the textual study of one thousand names of the Goddess Lalitā, in which thousand names are interpreted and explained with dissolution of compounds after Bhāskararāya. In Chapter-IV the critical and analytical study of the thousand names is attempted. Chapter-V explains in the form of conclusion, the significance and place of the IS. in the Tantric and Sahasranāma literature and points out the literary beauties of the IS.

The study ends with five appendices : Appendix-I is the text of the IS. in its original form in Sanskrit. Appendix-II lists of alphabetically the thousand names of the Goddess. Appendix-III shades light on the life of Bhāskararāya, the commentator on the IS., Appendix-IV discusses date of Bh. and presents works of Bh., Appendix-V enlists the works and authors

quoted by Bh. and deals with Bh.'s erudition in brief. The thesis ends with a bibliography.

In the present work the references to the numerous books which are either quoted by Bhāskararāya or which are referred to by me during the course of my study are enlisted at the end of each chapter.

Some of the quotations given by Bh. could not be identified. I have tried to identify majority of the quotations from the work on Tantras. The quotations from the Purānas could not be identified to the fullest satisfaction due to extreme shortage of time on my part. This labourious and time consuming task is kept for the future. I have remained satisfied by mentioning all the unidentified quotations by giving reference to the page number of the ISNB, NSP ed. Bombay 1919 which I have followed through out my study.

Again, the complete hand-written script of the IS. in its original form in Sanskrit is given in the Appendix-I, so that it could be referred to for ready reference.

The book named 'Lalitāsahasranāma' (Yoga Annotation) by T.V. Ramanaiyah is an attempt to interpret the IS. from the Yoga point of view. But in most of the cases his interpretations are far-fetched and unconvincing. Hence they are not mentioned in the present work.

Now, looking to the time consumed I feel that the present work could not have been completed, had it not been for the help of many to whom I am indebted. To name a few:

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Baroda,

- Labhashankar M. Joshi

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