Narratives as a medium for appealing to the royal court: A look into the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā

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Introduction

There is ample evidence that Tantric communities not only strived to establish close relationships to rulers in order to gain support and patronage, they were also quite successful in doing so.¹ This is true also with regard to the Pāñcarātra tradition: here we can clearly observe a development from individual ritual worship for personal purposes in the earlier extant authoritative texts to emphasis on public temple worship for the sake of kings and the kingdom in the later texts from about the eleventh century onwards.² I will not, however, speak directly about this phenomenon here, but will rather examine a Śaṃhitā, as the authoritative texts of the Pāñcarātra are called, that is quite peculiar in many aspects, namely, the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā (AS).

The AS is one of the best-known Pāñcarātra Śaṃhitās in the West,³ mainly because of its comparatively extensive philosophical, theological and cosmological passages. It is less known, however, for its comprehensive sections dealing with rituals, mantras, yantras, and other matters expounding the ritual worship of Sudarśana, the discus of Viṣṇu in an anthropomorphic form with a varying number of arms. Ritual worship of Sudarśana is performed mainly for the purposes of a king, as, for example, for military purposes (see also BIANCHINI in this volume). It is neither a personal ritual performed indi-

¹ See, e.g., SANDERSON 2004 and 2009.
² For a more detailed exposition of this development, see RASTELLI 2006: 91–98.
³ The first monograph about the Pāñcarātra in a western language, published in English by SCHRADER in 1916, is devoted to the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā. Another monograph on the same was published by MATSUBARA in 1994. There are also several shorter studies dealing with this text by other authors, the majority by BOCK-RAMING (1987, 1992, 2002).
vidually nor a public ritual, and usually it is performed not by the king himself, but by his personal priest (*purohita, purodhas*).

This means that the AS is a text that was composed, at least from its ritual point of view, for kingly purposes – more precisely, for personal priests in the office of a king – or to try to convince a king of the usefulness of employing such priests. One means of convincing a ruler to employ a personal priest for the worship of Sudarśana was to include narratives. Indeed, a comparably large number of narratives can be found in the AS. This paper will focus on these narratives and what they can tell us beyond the stories they report.

**The historical background of the *Ahirbudhṇyasaṃhitā***

When was the AS composed? Most of the Pāńcarātra Samhitās are compiled texts. Again and again parts of them were revised, complemented, and perhaps abbreviated. This makes dating them extremely difficult since different passages can have different dates of composition. The AS has also been partly compiled from various sources. However, it has an overall systematic structure, which gives the impression of it having been reworked by a single final redactor, who gave the text a homogeneous appearance, at least superficially.

Today, scholars date the AS to between the eleventh and thirteenth century. One of the reasons for this is the heavy influence of Śaiva traditions visible in the text. According to Alexis Sanderson, it must have been composed after Kṛṣṇaśaṅkarāja (1000–1050 CE) since it shows influences from him as well as other Kashmirian Śaiva sources. According to BEGLEY (1973: 27f.), the AS cannot have been composed much earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth century for iconographical reasons: there is no evidence of images of Sudarśana in the form described in the AS before the thirteenth century.

Both scholars agree that the AS was composed in South India. The reason SANDERSON gives are the Yajurveda mantras found in chapter 58 of the AS, which are presented in the version of the Vedic branch of the Taittiriyas, which is prevalent in South India. BEGLEY’s (ibid.) argument is

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4 See, e.g., the analysis of AS 5 by BOCK-RAMING (2002: 21–56), in which he demonstrates that the text of this chapter is based on various sources.

5 See also BOCK-RAMING 2002: 183f.

6 SANDERSON 2001: 36–38. See also SANDERSON 1990: 34, where he suggests the eleventh century as the date of the AS’s composition.

7 SANDERSON 2001: 38. See BOCK-RAMING 1992: 82–85 for a detailed argumen-
that idols of Sudarśana in the form described in the AS appear only in South India.\textsuperscript{8}

South India of the thirteenth century experienced a great deal of political turmoil. It was the period of the decline of the Cōḷas and the revival of the Pāṇḍyas. Struggles between the two dynasties gave opportunities to other major and minor rulers, such as the Hoysalas, the Cēras, the Kākaṭīyas, the Eastern Gaṅgas of Orissa, and the Telugu-Çōḍas, for gaining power through interventions and shifting alliances.\textsuperscript{9}

Inscriptions from, for example, the Raṇganāthasvāmī Temple in Śrīraṅgam and the Varadarājāsvāmī Temple in Kāṇcī show that the Cōḷas, Pāṇḍyas, and Hoysalas, although being Śaivas or preferring Śaivism, often generously supported Vaiṣṇava temples as well. Also local rulers such as the Telugu-Çōḍas, who nominally acknowledged the overlordship of the Cōḷas, were influential and supported Vaiṣṇava temples. Further, these inscriptions frequently mention commanders and generals from the Hoysala army visiting the temples and giving donations.\textsuperscript{10} This means that on the one hand the Vaiṣṇava temples faced continually changing rulers who supported them but often actually preferred Śaiva traditions. On the other hand, the presence of military forces and their importance in deciding the shifting powers was something that probably could not be ignored in daily life. Against this background, it is no surprise that a text like the AS might emerge, a text that propagates the worship of Viṣṇu’s discus for kingly and above all military purposes and, while explicitly teaching Vaiṣṇavism, is not particularly ill-disposed towards Śaivism.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{8} Apart from the AS there is also other evidence that Sudarśana worship was popular in South India in the thirteenth century. Veṇkaṭanātha, who is traditionally dated to 1270–1369 and who knew the AS (see RASTELLI 2006: 51), composed two Stotras to Sudarśana (BEGLEY 1973: 30–32). An inscription at the Raṇganāthasvāmī Temple in Śrīraṅgam dated to about 1274 records a donation to Sudarśana (ibid.: 69f.).

\textsuperscript{9} For a detailed description of the political situation in South India at that time, see NILAKANTHA SASTRI 1955: 365–444.


\textsuperscript{11} Apart from the use of the Kashmirian Śaiva sources mentioned above, there are several other indications of Śaiva influence in the AS; see, e.g., RASTELLI 2018.
The narratives of the AS

The AS contains many stories that in style and content remind one of Purāṇic and epic narratives. The Saṃhitā starts with the śāstrāvatāra story, the story of the “descent of the teaching” in chapter 1, which is characteristic of almost all Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās (and also of Śaiva Tantras). There are several cosmological accounts, of which some have a narrative character (e.g., AS 11), and there is also a version of the story about the demons Madhu und Kaitabha.

There are ten stories which I would like to examine in this paper. In these stories kings are the main protagonists. In nine of these stories, certain kings are in various forms of distress and finally receive a solution to their problem in the form of the six-syllable sudarśanamantra. In the tenth story, a king behaves badly and is punished by being destroyed by Sudarśana. In eight of the nine stories just mentioned, the king receives the sudarśanamantra from or with the help of a personal royal priest (purohita). It is often not the king who then performs a ritual with this mantra, but the purohita, who performs it for the king’s sake. Only one of these nine stories is antithetical: here, instead of a purohita, the king receives the sudarśanamantra with the help of the deity Kubera and from the goddess Mahālakṣmī. And in the story of the badly behaving king, no purohita appears at all. We will see that this is also significant with regard to the role of purohitas in the AS.

Thus, these stories have several similarities, in the sense that most of them have comparable structures and almost all illustrate the eminent importance of purohitas for kings. The function of most of them seems clear: they demonstrate that in any sort of difficulty in which a king might find himself, alone the purohita can help by using only a particular mantra, the sudarśanamantra as taught by the AS. Thus, they pave the way to the royal

13 AS 41. See Bock 1987.
14 The wording of the six-syllable sudarśanamantra is sahasrāra hum phaṭ (AS 18.34–39b).
15 This story appears in the context of repelling such an enemy, concretely, the repelling of malevolent magic (abhicāra) (AS 42.8–40b), since the malicious king produces a female demon (kṛtyā) in order to destroy Kṛṣṇa; see below. Thus, it is also a story about solving a problem by means of Sudarśana.
16 For a translation of this story and a detailed study of its function in the AS, see Rastelli 2015.
court for purohitas and strengthen their position there. What is special and important in these stories with regard to the topic of this volume is that they do not concern a standard Atharvavedic purohita trying to gain ground at the royal court, but a purohita who has, albeit strongly affiliated with the Atharvaveda, a Pāñcarātric background. Can these narratives provide evidence about the process of the Pāñcarātrins trying to approach the royal courts and the methods they chose for this purpose? Might they even provide evidence about the composer of the AS, about the Pāñcarātric purohitas, who were the primary target audience of his text, or about the rulers at that time, who can be seen as a kind of secondary target audience?

Let us look at the narratives more closely. Briefly, their contents are as follows:19

AS 33.24–100: King Maṇiśekhara, son of Durdharaṇa and grandson of Pramaganda, reigns in Naicāśaṅkha according to the dharma, i.e., the socio-religious order as taught in the Brahmanical scriptures. However, a demon (mahāsura) called Vikaṭākṣa and his offspring torment his kingdom and the whole universe. Since the demon cannot be easily defeated because of a boon that he has received from Brahmā, Maṇiśekhara asks his personal priest Kratu for a solution. Kratu tells him that the demon can only be conquered by Viṣṇu and advises him to take refuge with the god bearing the form of a discus, i.e., Sudarśana. Maṇiśekhara and Kratu go to the sage Durvāsas, whom they ask for a means for obtaining Sudarśana. Durvāsas gives them the six-syllable sudarśanamantra. He says that by means of this mantra and with the help of the personal priest, the king can achieve everything he desires. Then Durvāsas tells them that God is present in the form of Sudarśana in Śālagrāma on the bank of the river Sarasvati20. Maṇiśekhara and Kratu then proceed to Śālagrāma. Maṇiśekhara has Kratu worship God in the form of the discus for a month. Then Sudarśana with eight arms appears, kills the demon, and disappears. Maṇiśekhara reigns again.

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17 Personal priests of kings were traditionally Atharvavedins (SANDERSON 2007: 204–208), whose magic, healing, and invocation rituals were particularly suitable for kingly needs, even if this was sometimes only an ideal (WITZEL 1986: 47f.).
18 On the strong position of the Atharvaveda in the AS, see RASTELLI 2018.
19 For a more detailed description of the contents of the narratives, see SCHRADER 1916: 132–141.
20 Actually, the famous place called Śālagrāma is not situated on the river Sarasvati, but is the source of the river Gaṇḍakī, see, e.g., MANI 1975 s.v. śālagrāma.
AS 42.40c–82: Śrutakīrti, king of Saurāṣṭra who reigns in Bhadraśālā and worships Sudarśana, wishes to conquer the world of the Gandharvas. However, this is not as easy as he thinks. He approaches his personal priest, who advises him to take refuge with Sudarśana. He should visualise Sudarśana with 64 arms in a big discus (cakra) with 64 spokes and recite his mantra. In addition, the priest teaches the king all weapon mantras (astra-mantra). By this means, Śrutakīrti is able to win the battle, whereupon he returns to Bhadraśālā. Amazed by the power of Sudarśana, he asks his personal priest if he could also reach liberation from transmigration with the help of Sudarśana. The answer is positive, and the king, worshipping the sixty-four-armed Sudarśana every day, finally reaches the supreme abode (parama pada).

AS 43.21c–44.56: Indra, the king of the gods, is tormented by a demon (dānava) called Jalāṃdhara. He consults the Maruts, and Vāyu advises him to send Bṛhaspati (who is the purohita of the gods; see SØRENSEN 1904 s.v. Bṛhaspati) to Śaṅkara (i.e., Śiva) to ask for help. Bṛhaspati is sent to the Kailāsa mountain, where he meets and praises Śaṅkara. Then he tells Śaṅkara about Indra’s problem. Śaṅkara agrees to kill the demon by means of the sudarśanamantra. Bṛhaspati asks for the mantra and Śaṅkara gives it to him. Having gone to the Himalaya, Bṛhaspati recites the mantra and causes Sudarśana to appear. Sudarśana teaches him about his various forms. About Indra nothing more is reported.

AS 45: Kuśadhvaja, king of the Janakas, is afflicted by a “great delusion” (mahāmoha) that causes bodily pain and disturbs his memory. Initially he ignores his affliction, but then, when it torments him more and more, he approaches his family preceptor (kulaguru) Yājñavalkya to in-

21 Jalāṃdhara is a demon that appears in the myth of Śiva as Jalāṃdhara-saṃhāramūrti. In this myth, the demon Jalāṃdhara is killed by means of the discus Sudarśana, which, in some versions of the myth, is later given to Viṣṇu; see GILLET 2010: 210–221.

22 In Yoga and Sāṅkhya, mahāmoha is one of five types of “unreal cognition” (viparyaya) (see, e.g., Yogabhāṣya ad Yogasūtra 1.8, Gauḍapāda’s commentary ad Sāṅkhyaśāstra 47). In AS 14.15c–17, mahāmoha is a term for the nigrāhasakti deluding the individual soul (jīva). Here, in AS 45, it is described as a kind of illness.

23 In this paper I do not differentiate between gurus and purohitas, since I do not find that the AS differentiates clearly between the functions of the two. In the stories presented here, gurus and purohitas have the same function. Also in the following passage describing a purohita, no clear distinction between the office of a purohita and a guru is made: “Listen, if the king cannot perform [a ritual], a skilful personal priest should perform [it]. Only he is the king’s entire property in effecting invisible
quire about the cause of this mahāmoha and its remedy. Yājñavalkya tells him that the mahāmoha is the result of a crime (pāpa): in former times, Kuśadhvaja had killed a virtuous king outside of a battle. Yājñavalkya proposes “mastering”24 Sudaśana, because by means of his power the mahāmoha will be destroyed. Kuśadhvaja has a pavilion (mandapa) constructed on the bank of the river Sarasvatī, in which Yājñavalkya performs a ritual in order to pacify (śāntika karman) the prārabdhā karman, i.e., the

24 Here the word sādhana is used (AS 45.32: tatsādhane yatnam kuruṣva, “make an effort with regard to his sādhanā”). sādhana is a religious practice by which a deity is worshipped and thereby subdued or “mastered,” in the sense that as a result the deity is at the devotee’s command. See for this practice RASTELLI 2000.
karman that is already active in the present life and has caused the mahāmoha in this case.

The following five stories in the AS should be considered a cohesive group. They are introduced in AS 48.3–8 by mentioning five kings who have reached their respective goals by means of a throne (āsana), a ring (āṅguliya), a mirror (darpana), a banner (dhvaja), and a canopy (viṭāna).

AS 48.9–50b: King Muktāpiḍa, son of Śuśravas, does not care for his kingdom but is only interested in women and drinking alcohol. As a consequence, his subjects fall from the dharma and demons overcome the kingdom. But the king still does not care. His ministers consult the personal priest (purodhas) and conclude that only the personal priest can help. He produces a throne that is furnished with a yantra25 (of Sudarśana) according to the method of Vasīṣṭha and has the king sit on it. What follows in the text is a detailed prescription for a ritual serving various purposes.26 After this ritual having been performed for a mere month, the story ends with all of the kingdom’s enemies being destroyed by diseases and the earth again coming under the control of the king. Whether the king’s desire for women and alcohol also disappears is not mentioned.

AS 48.50c–64b: In the town of Viśālā, a bodiless voice from the sky speaks to the mother of the virtuous King Viśāla, telling her that her son will die within four days. When she tells this to her son, he asks her not to be afraid and goes to the hermitage of Pulaha, who is a purohita. Having listened to the story of the incident, Pulaha gives Viśāla a ring bearing the yantra of Sudarśana. When the servants of Death (here called Kāla) come to take Viśāla’s life, they are unable to come near him. Various weapons emerge from the discus and chase them away. Both the gods and Kāla are astonished that Viśāla has successfully conquered death.27

AS 48.64c–109: One day, Sumati, son of King Sunīti of Śṛṅgāra, goes to a grove to hunt. In the grove he meets a charming young woman. Passionate about her, he becomes bewildered. The woman takes him to her home and later to the Nāga world. Having reached Bhogavati, the capital of the Nāga world, she gives Sumati to Anaṅgamaṇjarī, daughter of the Nāga King Vāsuki. Anaṅgamaṇjarī wants to marry him, and also the amazed Sumati is ready to marry the beautiful princess. In the meantime, Sunīti’s

25 yantras usually consist of diagram-like drawings and mantras made present in them; see, e.g., RASTELLI 2003: 142ff. and especially for the sudarśanayantra pp. 148–151.

26 This passage gives the impression of being a foreign body in the text.

27 For a translation of this and the next story, see BIANCHINI 2015: 67–71.
father misses his son and asks his ministers to find him. Spies and messengers search for Sunīti but are unable to find him. The king is inconsolable and no longer eats or sleeps because of his sorrow. Then the king’s personal priest (purohita) goes to his guru Kaṇva, who lives on the banks of the river Tamasā. Having heard the story, Kaṇva immerses himself in yoga, sees what has happened, and relates it to the purohita. He says that only by means of the power of Sudarśana it will be possible to bring Sunīti back, namely, with a mirror furnished with a sudarśanamahāyantra. The purohita goes back to the king and tells him everything. The king produces a mirror in the prescribed manner, places it on a chariot, and drives to the entrance of a cave that he has been able to find with the help of the mirror. He enters the Nāga world and fetches his son (magically?). Sumati and his wife come, the king lifts them into the chariot and wants to return with them to his own town. Vāsuki, the father of the princess, is angry about this and, supported by his army of snakes, asks the king to stop. The king asks the mirror to kill the snake army. Two weapons come forth from the mirror, one that puts the snake army to sleep and one that starts to burn the Nāga town. Seeing this, Vāsuki begs for pardon, gives the king jewels, the princess, and other Nāga women, asks him to withdraw the weapons and to go. The king agrees and goes home with his son, the Nāga women, and the jewels.

AS 49: King Citraśekhara, son of Uparicara, reigns in the town of Bhadravāṭī on the banks of the Sarasvatī. In former times, Uparicara, who had received a divine flying chariot from Indra, killed the demon Śaṅkukaṇa, who wanted to rob the chariot. After the death of Uparicara, Śaṅku-kaṇa’s son Amarṣaṇa wishes to avenge his father and beleaguers Citraśekhara’s army and town. His aim is to kill Citraśekhara and to capture the divine chariot. A long-lasting battle between the two armies begins, but Citraśekhara is unable to defeat the demon. Reflecting on a solution, he thinks that he will only be able to gain victory with the help of Śiva’s (mahādeva) grace. He decides to please him by means of mortifications (tapas) and leaves for Mount Kailāsa by means of the divine chariot, which he has inherited from his father. However, the chariot stops above Mount Mandara. Surprised, Citraśekhara walks around on the peak of the mountain. He meets a beautiful young man who turns out to be Kubera. Citraśekhara tells him everything that had happened, whereupon Kubera tells him that Mount Mandara is the abode of the almighty goddess Mahālakṣmī. It was she who stopped the movement of his chariot. Kubera tells Citraśekhara that he will receive all that he desires after seeing her. Kubera disappears, but one of his servants appears. The servant spends the night
with Citraśekhara and explains how to proceed towards where Mahālakṣāmi lives. Having arrived there, Citraśekhara enters a gorgeous palace. In the centre of the palace he meets the magnificent Mahālakṣāmi. He sings a long hymn of praise, which is composed in various meters. Having heard the hymn, Mahālakṣāmi graciously tells him that she will fulfil his wishes. Citraśekhara tells her about his problems and she gives him a banner with the yantra of Sudarśana, telling him that she protects all who have taken refuge with her by means of Sudarśana’s power. Citraśekhara goes back to the battle and kills the demon.

AS 50: This story is about King Kīrtimālin, the son of King Bhadraśṛṅga, in Viṣālā. Roaming once through his kingdom in the darkness in order to hear the conversations of the people, he meets a Brahmin who is immersed in yoga meditation on Sudarśana. The king desires to ask the Brahmin who he is, where he comes from, etc., but, being in deep meditation, the Brahmin does not notice the king and thus does not reply. The angry king wants to seize him, but the only result is that he is paralysed by the Brahmin’s power. Surprised, he pays obeisance from all sides and appeases him with praises. Being appeased, the Brahmin awakes and tells the king about a place called Sālagrāma, where God Viṣṇu is present in the form of the discus. There he has mastered all sādhanas (see n. 24) by means of the power of Sudarśana, and now he is on the way to Puṣkara. The king pays homage to the Brahmin and conveys him to a Viṣṇu temple. The next day, when the Brahmin wants to leave for Puṣkara, the king asks him how he might achieve happiness (sukha), also hereafter. The Brahmin teaches him the six-syllabled sudarśanamantra and other mantras belonging to it, such as weapon mantras, as well as its visualisation (dhyāna), worship, and yantra. The king wishes to give many gifts to the Brahmin, but the Brahmin refuses to accept them. The king insists on giving them to him, and finally they agree on the king giving them to other Brahmins. From that time onwards, the king reigns according to the dharma. One day he asks his ministers which countries, kings, etc. are under his control. They answer that the whole earth is under his control, but that the deities, Gandharvas, Asuras, and Nāgas do not serve him. Hearing this, Kīrtimālin also wants to conquer all these beings and asks his ministers for advice. They tell him that he will be able to conquer them easily because of his immense valour and because he has obtained divine weapons from the Brahmin. Subsequently, Kīrtimālin conquers the Nāga world as well as the Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, and Vidyādharas. His next aim is to conquer the deities. He thus sends a Gandharva messenger named Manojva to In-
dra to ask him to send him the elephant Airāvata, his thunderbolt (vajra), and other things. Indra, confronted with this demand, laughs and tells the messenger that he will send Airāvata and the thunderbolt. The other things should be fetched by Kīrtimālin himself. Indra sends Airāvata and the thunderbolt, which arrive at Kīrtimālin’s fortress and invisibly kill his army. This sudden death causes confusion. Kīrtimālin calls his personal priest (purodhas) and asks for advice. Reflecting upon what has happened, the personal priest assumes that it was caused by the anger of the deities. At that moment, the messenger arrives and confirms this assumption. The king consults the personal priest to find a means of revenge, whereupon he sends one of his divine weapons forth, which paralyses Airāvata and the thunderbolt. Indra is angry and sends his dreadful army to Kīrtimālin’s town. Seeing this, Kīrtimālin comes out of the town together with his army. In a first battle, the deities win. Being angry, Kīrtimālin sends further divine weapons forth, but Indra is able to ward them off. Kīrtimālin remembers that he has a chariot among the weapon mantras from the Brahmin. He has such a chariot produced (by the personal priest). It is endowed with the sudarśanamahāyantra and a canopy. Then he sits down in the shade of the canopy and casts a viṣṇucakra, another weapon received from the Brahmin (see AS 34.14c–16), which kills the deities. The angry Indra also casts various weapons and finally his thunderbolt, but all these weapons disappear in the viṣṇucakra. Indra is surprised. He meets Kīrtimālin and asks why his weapons are now successful. Kīrtimālin explains that this success is due to the canopy. Indra and Kīrtimālin become friends.

AS 42.35–40b: The king of Vāraṇaṣi called Kāśīrāja worships Viśveśvara Mahādeva and produces a female demon (kṛtyā) in order to destroy Krṣṇa.

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28 These last two sentences are my interpretation of AS 50.112c–113: “Then Kīrtimālin, having become despondent, remembered the chariot that he has received from the Brahmin. Then he had it made in that way [as taught by the Brahmin (?)], bound by the sudarśanamahāyantra and equipped with a canopy.” (tata nirvedam āpannah kīrtimālī dvijottamāt || 112 labdhaṁ vimānaṁ sasmāra tat tathākārayat tataḥ | sudarśanamahāyantrayantritaṁ savitāṇakam || 113). These sentences are not easy to understand. No chariot was mentioned in the story before; AS 50.29–31 states that the king receives various mantras from the Brahmin. Indeed, AS 40.61ab mentions a chariot (vimāna) among the many weapons that are forms of God, as taught by the AS. Thus, we can conclude that the chariot given to the king by the Brahmin is in the form of a weapon mantra. This could explain why a chariot that the king has already received has yet to be produced, in the sense that it could have been produced through a quasi-magic ritual by using the appropriate mantra. SCHRADER (1916: 140) understands this passage in a similar way.
The female demon goes to Dvārakā to find Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa becomes aware that the flying demon is approaching, he casts Sudarśana. The female demon flees, but the discus kills her and destroys Kāśiśrāja and his town.

Names, places, and motives

In the following section I would like to examine the persons, places, and motives that appear in the stories (see also the table on pp. 360f.). Can we derive any information from them?

Let us first look at the names of the kings in the stories. Several of the kings’ names are well-known from Vedic, epic, and Purāṇic Sanskrit literature. The names Pramaganda, the grandfather of the main character Maṇiśekhara in the story in AS 33.24–100, and Naicāśākha appear in a Rgvedic hymn, namely, in RV III.53.14. Here they seem to have a negative connotation. Indra is asked to bring the property of Prāmaganda and to subdue Naicāśākhá.29 According to Śāyaṇa’s commentary ad loc., Pramaganda is the name of an offspring of Maganda, who was a usurer. Naicāśākha, according to Śāyaṇa, is the property of outcast (patita) people.30 In the introduction to his Ṛgvedabhāṣya, Śāyaṇa simply states that Naicāśākha is a town and Pramaganda a king,31 which agrees with the story in the AS.

The main character of the story, Maṇiśekhara, is described in a fairly positive way.32 However, being the child of a usurer and related to outcast

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29 RV III.53.14: kīṃ te keṣvantī kīkāteṣu gāvo nāśirām duhrē nā tapanti gharmām | ā no bhara prāmagandasya vēdo naicāśākhāṃ maghavan randhayā nah || “What do the cows do for you among the Kīkātas? They do not milk out the milk mixture; they do not heat the gharma[=hot]-drink. Bring here to us the possessions of Pramaganda. Make the descendant of Nicāśākha subject to us, bounteous one.” (Translation JAMISON & BRERETON 2014: 539).

30 RV Bh vol. 2, p. 435,1–6. In this interpretation, Śāyaṇa follows Yāska’s Nirukta 6.32, from which he also quotes in the subsequent passage (see also CHARPENTIER 1930: 336).

31 RV Bh vol. 1, p. 6,7f.: “In the same way the non-eternal meanings ‘that which is called naicāśākha is a town, that which is called pramaganda is a king’ are handed down.” (tathā naicāśākhāṃ nāma nagaram pramagando nāma rājā ity ete ‘rthā antyā āmnāth.) CHARPENTIER (1930: 336) sees a contradiction between the two statements of Śāyaṇa. I think that this is not necessarily a contradiction: also an offspring of a usurer could perhaps be a king, and a town could perhaps also be seen as a kind of property.

32 AS 33.27–28b: “When this aforementioned Maṇiśekhara had passed the first
people is perhaps a kind of karmic explanation of why a virtuous king is tormented by a demon.  

Indra is the king of the gods and well-known (e.g., SØRENSEN 1904 s.v. Indra).  

Kuśadhvaja, the king of the Janakas in the story in AS 45, is known from the Rāmāyaṇa. He is the brother of King Janaka (Rām 1.69.1–2). Another link to King Janaka is found in his kulaguru Yājñavalkya, who is Janaka’s teacher in the Brhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad (e.g., BĀU 3.1.1–2).  

King Viśāla from the story in AS 48.50c–64b and his town Viśālā are mentioned in the Mahābhārata and in the Rāmāyaṇa. The father of King Citraśekhara, the main character of the story in AS 49, Uparicara, is well-known from the Mahābhārata (SØRENSEN 1904 s.v. Uparicara).  

The name Muktāpiṭa, appearing in the story in AS 48.9–50b, is mentioned in the Kashmirian chronicle Rājatarāṅgini. SCHRADE (1916: 96f.) takes this fact as evidence for the Kashmirian origin of the AS. According to BOCK-RAMING (2002: 20, n. 6), Muktāpiṭa was the fifth ruler of the Karkoṭa dynasty (699–736 CE) in the Rājatarāṅgini. It is unclear, however, if the king’s name in the story is really inspired by the name of the Kashmirian king.  

Versions of the story about the Kāśīrāja who worships Viśveśvara in Vārāṇaśī appear in Viṣṇupurāṇa 5.34 ≈ Brahmapurāṇa 207, Padmapurāṇa uttarakhaṇḍa 278, and Bhāgavatapurāṇa 10.66.  

*state [of human life, i.e., childhood], he was a hero who had a charming appearance, had obtained knowledge, [and] had subdued [his] enemies. When the illustrious one had reached manhood, he found a wife [called] Prāśi. (so ’py avasthām atikramya prathamāṃ maṇiśekharah | ramanīyakṛtiḥ sūrah prāpta vidyāḥ paramtapah || 27 samprāptayaunanaḥ śrīmān prācīṃ bhārayāṁ avindata |).  


34 According to Rām 1.46.11, Viśāla is the son of Ikṣvāku and Alambuśa; in Rām 1.44.8–12 his town Viśālā is mentioned. In MBh 3.88.22–23 Viśālā is identified with Badarī.  

35 This story could provide evidence for dating this passage of the AS. According to Peter Bisschop, a reference to the worship of Viśveśvara by a king in Vārāṇaśī cannot be earlier than the twelfth century, since “the name of Viśveśvara as the central liṅga in Vārāṇaśī is not attested before the twelfth century and represents a significant departure from the period preceding it” (personal information from Peter Bisschop to Robert Leach; see LEACH 2012: 156, n. 256). See also GUTSCHOW 1994: 194f. In the Purāṇa versions of the story, the deity is not called Viśveśvara but Maheśvara.
The names of kings I have not yet been able to locate in Sanskrit literature are Śrutakṛiti, king of Saurāṣṭra (AS 42.40c–82), Sunīti (AS 48.64c–109), and Kṛtimālin (AS 50).

Let us now look at the names of the purohitas. Insofar as they are mentioned, they are all famous sages who are also well-known from the epics and Purāṇas. For example, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha (see n. 36), and Pulaha are sons of Brahmā. Durvāsas is a son of Śiva, born of his anger. Bṛhaspati is the purohita of the deities. Yājñavalkya was already mentioned above. He is also a well-known rṣi in the epics and the Purāṇas. Kaṇva is a rṣi that is known already in the Ṛgveda (he composed its eighth maṇḍala) as well as in the epics and Purāṇas.

An interesting case, as already mentioned, is the story in AS 42.35–40b. This story presents no purohita, and thus it seems irrelevant with regard to the role of purohitas, all the more so since it follows a different scheme than the others. In this story, the king is punished rather than saved by means of Sudarśana. However, the non-appearance of a purohita is striking if we compare this story with its Purānic versions previously mentioned. In the Purāṇas, it is the son of a Kāśīrāja who worships Śiva because he desires a means for revenging his father, who has been killed by Kṛṣṇa. In all three versions of the Purāṇas, the son worships Śiva together with a purohita. It could be by chance that the purohita does not appear in the

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36 The stories AS 42.40c–82, 48.9–50b, and 50 do not mention the names of the purohitas. However, AS 48.16 mentions that the purohita uses a method taught by Vasiṣṭha (vasiṣṭhoktena mārgena), meaning that he stands in the tradition of Vasiṣṭha, who was the family priest of various kings, among others of the family of Ikṣvāku, see MONIER-WILLIAMS 1899 s.v. Vasiṣṭha. On the story AS 42.35–40b, see below.

37 See, e.g., MANI 1975 s.v. Durvāsas. Durvāsas also appears in the sāstrāvatāra story in AS 1.

38 For references to these sages in the MBh, see SÖRENSEN 1904 s.v. their names. For Yājñavalkya in a Purāṇa, see, e.g., AgniPur 16.8; for Kaṇva in a Purāṇa, see, e.g., BrahmaPur 26.10.

39 The Purāṇas also report the prelude to this story: Paunḍraka Vāsudeva erroneously considers himself to be the god Vāsudeva and requests Kṛṣṇa, the actual god Vāsudeva, to give up his claim. In response, Paunḍraka Vāsudeva and his ally, the king of Kāśī (in the Padmapurāṇa Paunḍraka, Vāsudeva, and the Kāśīrāja are one and the same person), are killed by Kṛṣṇa.

40 ViṣṇuPur 5.34.29 (= BrahmaPur 207.29): “Having learned that he has been killed by Vāsudeva, his son consequently pleased Śāṅkara together with a personal priest.” (jñātvā taṁ vāsudevena hatatā tasya sutas tataḥ | purohitena sahitā toṣayāṁ
AS’s version, since it is a rather abridged version of the story. Given the general importance of purohitas in the AS, however, the purohita may also have been omitted from the story on purpose. In the Purānic versions, the purohita appears in a bad light. He helps a king who wishes to kill Krṣṇa and, above all, he does not succeed. It is possible that the AS’s redactor did not want to present purohitas in this role and thus omitted the personal priest in this story.

Now let us examine the places mentioned in the stories. The place mentioned most often, namely three times, is the river Sarasvatī. Twice it is the place where Sudarśana should be worshipped: in AS 33.87 Sālagrāma is considered to be located on its banks, and in AS 45.37 a pavilion (mandapa) for the worship of Sudarśana is constructed on its banks. In AS 49.2 Bhadravāṭi, the town reigned by King Citraśekhara, is situated on a bank of the Sarasvatī.

Two places are mentioned twice, Viśālā and Sālagrāma. Viśālā is Bādarī (see n. 34), the well-known site, especially for a Pāṇcarātra, of Nara’s and Nārāyaṇa’s hermitage in the Nārāyaṇīya. In the AS, it is the town that is ruled by the Kings Viśālā (AS 48.50) and Kṛttimālin (AS 50.2).

Sālagrāma is one of the few places mentioned in the narratives that is described in more detail. This is the case in both passages in which it is mentioned. Sālagrāma or Sālagrāma is a place actually located on the river Gaṇḍakī, not the Sarasvatī. Unusual black stones, also called sālagrāma,

āṣa śaṁkaram ||). PadmaPur uttarakhaṇḍa 278.15: “Having heard that his father has been killed by the Venerable Vāsudeva, Paṇḍraka’s son, called Daṇḍapāṇi, commanded by [his] mother Mṛtyu [and] requested by his personal priest, worshipped Śaṅkara by means of a sacrifice devoted to Maheśvara.” (tasya paṇḍrakasya suto dāṇḍapāṇiṁ iññiṇi vāsudevena bhagavatā nihaṁ saṃvataraṇaṃ śrutvā mātrā mṛtyunā śaṁdīṣṭaḥ saṃvataraṇaṃ śrupurohitenaḥbhīyukto maheśvareṇa krutunā śaṁkaram iññi.) BhāgPur 10.66.27–28: “Having performed the cremation ceremony for the ruler, his son Sudakṣiṇa, having himself in view: ‘I will revenge [my] father by killing his murderer,’ worshipped Maheśvara together with [his] preceptor in supreme concentration.” (sudakṣiṇas tasya sutaḥ kṛtā śaṁstāḥvīdhiṃ pateh | nihaṁ pitarhantaraṇaḥ vāsyaṁ apaṃcitāḥ pitau || ity āmānaḥbhisandhaḥya sopādhyāyo maheśvaram | sudakṣiṇo ‘rcayāṁ āṣa paramena saḥādhīnā ||).  

41 See n. 20.

42 The Nārāyaṇīya is not only the earliest extant Pāṇcarātra text, but it also had a strong influence on the Pāṇcarātra Saṁhitās, especially in their narrative passages, which borrow many motives from it; see GRÜNENDAHL 1997: 362–370 and, with a focus on the Pārameśvarasaṁhitā, RASTELLI 2006: 161–168.
are found there. Containing a fossil ammonite, they are considered parts of the discus Sudarśana and thus are sacred. This explains why Sālagrāma is important for the AS. Everything present in Sālagrāma, including plants and stones, is considered to be marked by the discus:

Having assumed the form of a boar in the boar-kalpa, the venerable one, the supreme person, pulled the earth out of the ocean. Then the goddess Earth, who was exceedingly exulted, spoke to the God (78c–79): “In order to rejoice those who are fond [of you], you should dwell in a territory on the earth forever, O lord of the world, after having obtained a dear body.” (80) Thenceforth Keśava, to whom the goddess had spoken in this way, dwelled in the auspicious territory of the earth called Sālagrāma (81) with the body of Sudarśana, the glorious one, the venerable one, the one who is kind to [his] worshippers. Because of the majesty of the place, because of the compassion for [his] worshippers, [and] because of the request of the earth, Hari is always present there even today. The austerity that is performed in this place is multiplied thousandfold.

(82–83) Human beings, animals, insects, and birds that die in this place are without doubt marked by the conch and the discus. (84) The venerable one, the lotus-eyed one who bears the body of Sudarśana is always present there, an ocean of good, auspicious qualities. (85) The human beings, deities, animals, trees, and mountains who live at his place are all marked by the seal of the discus. (86) The unsurpassed place of Viṣṇu is called Sālagrāma. There the lord of the world in the form of the discus is always present. There everything that is immovable and moving is marked by the discus.

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33.78c–86: vāraḥaṁ rūpaṁ āśthāya bhagavāṁ purusottamaṁ || 78 ujjhāra bhuvaṁ kalpaṁ vārahe salīlāṁ tataḥ || tadāha paramāpṛitā devaṁ devī vasumādharaṁ || 79 priyārthaṁ anuraktānāṁ sādā bhūmanḍale tvayā || varitavyāṁ jagannātha priyāṁ tataṁ upeyaṁ || 80 evam uktas tavā devīyā tadā prabhṛtī Keśavaḥ || sālagrāmāḥvaye punye nyavaṣan manḍale bhuvaḥ || 81 sudarśanavapuṛuḥ śrīmāṁ bhagavaṁ bhaṭṭavaṁśalaḥ || advāpi deśaṁāḥāmyāṁ bhaktāṅāṁ anukampayā || 82 bhuvaḥ prāṛthana-yā tatra niyaṁ saṁmihito harih || atra taptam tapo yat tat sahasraguṇitaṁ bhavet || 83 manusyāṁ paśavas tatra kṛimayāṁ ca pāṭitrīnaḥ || ye mrtha śaṅkha-cakrāṅkāṁ te bhavanti na saṁśayā || 84 bhagavāṁ puṇḍarīkākṣaṁ sudarśanavarpurāḥ || saṁmihatā sādā tatra samapalagunārnohaṁ || 85 tadāśeṣavāino māryāṁ surās tiṁyāca eva ca || taraṁśa cācalāṁ sarve cakramudrāṅkitaṁ tadā || 86.
(19c–20) There, by merely entering [it], creatures are free of any blemish. There those who have given up their body reach supreme extinction (*nirvāṇa*). (21) A Brahmin who is born at that place is approved by the learned, by means of Sudarśana’s power he has accomplished all *sādhana*. (22)

Other places mentioned in the AS’s narratives include a second sacred place, namely Puṣkara, to which the Brahmin coming from Sālagrāma wanders (AS 50.23 and 26); the Himālaya, where Bṛhaspati recites the *sudarśanamantra* (AS 44.20); the river Tamasā (AS 44.80); the town Bhadravāṭi of King Citraśekhara on the banks of the Sarasvatī (AS 49.2). Some places belong to beings other than humans, such as Svāstika, the town of the Gandharvas (AS 42.46–50); the mountain Kailāsa, where Śiva resides (AS 43.21, 32–33); and Bhogavatī, the town of the Nāgas (AS 48.70, 83, 97). The town Śṛṅgāra of King Sunēti, whose son falls in love with the Nāga princess, seems to bear a symbolic name rather than that of a real place, since *śṛṅgāra* means “sexual passion.”

In conclusion, it is striking that all places, as far as they can be identified, are located in the northern part of India. As far as we can see, no place in South India is mentioned, although the current view is that the AS was redacted in the south. Not surprising is that several places that are considered sacred because of the presence of Viṣṇu or one of his forms are mentioned, including Badarī, Sālagrāma, and Puṣkara. Most of the places mentioned are known from the epics or Purāṇas.

At the end of this section, let us look at the problems the kings of the stories suffer from. Most often mentioned, namely in four stories, is the problem of demons beleaguering and tormenting the king and his kingdom that cannot be conquered by ordinary military means. If one considers

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45 See n. 24.

46 AS 50.19c–22: *sālagrāma iti khyātaṁ viṣṇusthānam anuttamam || 19 nityam saṁnīhitas tatra cakrārupiḥ jagatpatih || tatra cakrāṅkitaṁ sarvaṁ sīhāvaram jāṅgamca yat || 20 tatra praveśamātreṇa jāntavo vītakalmaśāḥ || tatra tyaktāsārās tu yānti nirvāṇam uttaman || 21 tasmin deśe samutpanno brāhmaṇah śiṣṭasammataḥ || sudarśanaprabhāvena saṁhitākhaśīdādhanah || 22.

47 The river Tamasā is also mentioned in the epics; see MANI 1975 s.v.

48 This problem appears in the stories told in AS 33.24–100, 43.21c–44.56, 48.9–50b (here the reason for the invasion of demons is the carelessness of the king), and 49.
these demons not real demons but demonised enemies and their troops, this
was indeed one of the main problems faced by kings, especially if we
consider the situation in South India in the thirteenth century (see above). This
thus fits the ritual repertoire that is offered by the AS, because here too, the
focus is on rituals for victory in battle (BIANCHINI 2015: 49–55, 60–62).

The other main aim of kings, mentioned in two stories, is not unrelated,
since it is the counterpart of defence against enemies, namely, the conquest
of further territories. Other problems and aims, each mentioned once, are
mental illness caused by a crime committed in a previous life (AS 45); the
threat of death (AS 48.50–64b); the kidnapping of a prince (AS 48.64c–
109); and liberation from transmigration (AS 42.40c–82). All of these were
probably dangers or aims that were really feared or striven for by kings,
indeed, in some cases not only by kings, but all human beings.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the AS, its narratives, and the historical circumstances of its
origin, has led me to the following thoughts:

1) Why did the AS’s redactor choose narratives as a means for convinc-
ing kings of the usefulness of worshipping Sudarśana?
The AS’s redactor, if indeed he was a single person, was deeply learned.
Just a few examples: He knew the philosophies of Kashmirian Śaivism and
of the Rāmānuja school, philosophical concepts of language, classical Yo-
ga, the Vedas, and, especially, the Atharvaveda. He knew the Purāṇas and
the epics and could imitate their literary style in a masterly way. The rich
contents of the AS demonstrate to us that its redactor did not include narr-
atives because he could not master more sophisticated texts. He chose narr-
atives for two reasons: First, kings would certainly be more easily convinced
by the practical usefulness of particular rituals than by philosophical or
theological reflections. In order to communicate the use of, for example, a

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49 See the stories of AS 42.40c–82 and AS 50. Compare AS 29, which gives
prescriptions for rituals for the purpose of the conquest of further territories,
including the upper world (ūrdhvaloka) and the world of the Nāgas (nāgaloka).
50 For the influence of Kashmirian Śaivism on the AS, see SANDERSON 2001: 36–
38; for the influence of the Rāmānuja school, see, e.g., the mention of the concept of
śeṣa and śeṣin in AS 52.6, which is a characteristic thought of this tradition (see
CARMAN 1974: 147–157); for that of Yoga, see AS 31–32; for the influence of the
Athravavedic tradition, see RASTELLI 2018.
ritual for military purposes, a narrative would be much more appropriate than a theoretical tract. Secondly, narratives with a simple structure and entertainment value were an eligible means by which the author of the AS could approach kings, who were not unlearned persons but certainly more familiar with the Purānic and epic literature and their style than with philosophical or ritual texts.

2) What strategies are used in the narratives and for what purpose?
The main characters of the stories, mainly kings and personal priests, are often well-known persons from the epics and Purāṇas. The same is true of the places mentioned in the narratives. This means that the audience of the narratives most likely already knew these names and places before hearing the story itself. The listeners considered them historical persons and real existing places, since from the traditional Indian point of view the Purāṇas and epics were considered historical documents, describing events, places, and persons that once really existed.

One is more willing to believe a story about a person or a place that is familiar than a story about persons or places one has never heard of. Thus, to tell a story about characters or places that the audience is already familiar with increases its credibility. It improves the chances that the story will also be considered a report of a historical event. This is probably one reason the redactor of these narratives mentions particularly well-known persons and places.

In addition, using the names of famous persons achieves a further effect. The many famous kings who solved their problems by worshipping Sudarśana represent a very distinguished circle. The narratives insinuate to any ruling king that by worshipping Sudarśana he could also belong to this illustrious group. The same is true for the purohita. By relating a story like this, a purohita places himself into a row of famous sages, whereby he presents himself as being like one of them.

3) The AS is currently considered to have been redacted in South India. Nevertheless, the places mentioned in the narratives are located in India’s northern region. One reason could be the one just mentioned: these are places known from the epics and Purāṇas, which increase the credibility of the story. However, a place in South India well-known to a southern king would fulfil the same function.

So there may be other reasons: Was this part of the AS perhaps composed in the north rather than in the south? However, the mere reference to places in the north is not sufficient evidence for this conclusion. Perhaps it
is precisely the emphasis on places in North India, especially sites that are classical places of Viṣṇu worship, which points to the fact that the AS was composed in South India. Did the AS’s redactor emulate the North Indian traditions because he considered them an ideal? Or was it a wish of the kings at that time to take North India as an example, a wish that the AS’s redactor tried to fulfil? Did the southern kings feel inadequate in comparison to kings in the north, wanting to be like them? Or were southern courts generally oriented to the North Indian religious and literary traditions, with the AS’s redactor reflecting this orientation? There is inscriptive evidence that Sanskrit learning was highly valued in medieval South India. Inscriptions report on the promotion of, for example, Vedic schools, settlements for Brahmins, libraries, and other educational centres, and on the recitation of the Mahābhārata (MADHAVAN 2013: 105–139). Perhaps places known from Sanskrit literature received the same esteem as Sanskrit literature itself.

4) It is not possible to identify a particular historical king for whom the AS was composed. Indeed, it is probable that the redactor of the AS did not aim at a particular historical person. Considering the political situation in South India in the thirteenth century, a period when the ruling king could change any day, it would not have been wise to focus on a particular king. Thus, the target of the AS, that is, the target of the purohitas who acted according to the AS, were probably rulers in general. Their political distress at the time may have been considered an exceptional chance for promoting the Pāñcarātra.
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**Yogasūtra** (YSū) of Patañjali

**Rāmāyaṇa** (Rām)

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**Secondary Literature**


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<td>Višāla</td>
<td>Viśāla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS 48.64c–109</td>
<td>Sunīti</td>
<td>Śṛṅgāra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS 49</td>
<td>Citraśekhara, son of Uparicara</td>
<td>Bhadraśṛṅga, Sarasvatī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS 50</td>
<td>Kīrtimālin, son of Bhadraśṛṅga</td>
<td>Viśāla, Sālagrāma, Puṣkara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS 42.35–40b</td>
<td>Kāśirāja</td>
<td>Vārāṇasī, Dvārakā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Name(s) of helper(s)</td>
<td>Solution to problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demon Vikṣakṣa and his offspring torment all beings</td>
<td><em>purodhas</em> Kratu, Durvāsas</td>
<td><em>sudarśananamantra</em>, worship of Sudarśana in Śālagrāma for one month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king wants to conquer the Gandharva world and be liberated from transmigration</td>
<td><em>purodhas</em> (no name mentioned)</td>
<td>visualization of the 62-armed Sudarśana, recitation of his mantra and ritual worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indra is tormented by the demon Jalaṃdhara</td>
<td>Brhaspati</td>
<td>Śiva promises to kill the demon by means of the <em>sudarśananamantra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king is tormented by mahāmoha</td>
<td><em>kūlaguru</em> Yāñavalkya</td>
<td><em>śādhanā</em> of Sudarśana in order to destroy <em>prārabdha karman</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demons bring the kingdom under their control because it is neglected by the king</td>
<td><em>purodhas</em></td>
<td>a throne (<em>āsana</em>) with Sudarśana’s <em>yantra</em> in which the king is seated, performance of a ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king will die within four days</td>
<td><em>purohita</em> Pulaha</td>
<td>a ring (<em>āṅgulīya</em>) with Sudarśana’s <em>yantra</em> chases death’s servants away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son is kidnapped and taken to the Nāga world</td>
<td><em>purohita</em>; his guru Kaṇva</td>
<td>a mirror helps find the Nāga world and conquer the Nāga king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demon Amaraśana cannot be conquered by the king</td>
<td>Kubera, Mahālakṣmī</td>
<td>a banner that helps kill the demon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kṛtimālin cannot conquer Indra</td>
<td>brahmin, <em>purodhas</em></td>
<td>a canopy with Sudarśana’s <em>yantra</em> helps conquer Indra and gain his friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Kāśīrāja attacks Kṛṣṇa by means of a kṛtyā</td>
<td>no helpers mentioned</td>
<td>Sudarśana kills the kṛtyā and the Kāśīrāja, and destroys his town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>