

Prof. (emer.) Bruno DAGENS
Université Paris III (France)

14th WSC, Section 4. Āgamas and Tantras

Abstract

The position of *Dīptāgama* in āgamic literature

The third and last volume of the critical edition of the *Dīptāgama* is to be released in 2009. That treatise is one of those āgamic texts of Śaivasiddhānta lineage which seem to be more or less forgotten nowadays even if in the past they have been deemed as reference works, at least on some topics, as is shown by the fact that they are often found quoted in manuals and compilations.

The *Dīptāgama* is comparatively a specialised treatise as emphasized by the subtitle “Treatise dealing with installations” (*pratiṣṭhāsāstra*), which appears in most of its chapter colophons. However when looking at its content, one may see that the topics dealt with go far beyond that of installation. The numerous chapters dealing with installation ceremonies are surrounded by as numerous others which put such ceremonies back in a much more general context. Thus, several chapters concern temple architecture or annual festivals, while one finds many specific presentations dealing with iconography, temple officiating priests, daily rites and all their aspects (fire-cult, etc.) and also various ceremonies, some being common place and others unusual; lastly the topic of “extraction of mantra” (*mantroddharaṇa*) is dealt with in more than one place, while the longest chapter of the work offers a detailed presentation of all the paraphernalia needed for carrying out rites and ceremonies.

The aim of the present paper is to set the *Dīptāgama* in relation to āgamic literature, regarding its contents and its possible date. The singularity of our text is, among other things, to give an important place to Vedic elements and that in various contexts (oblations, recitations diagrams). Besides it contains description of some ceremonies rarely dealt with in cognate literature like the rite for king’s protection or the midnight cult, to say nothing of a “leaf-cutting” (*patraccheda*) ritual: well known in other contexts, it seems here to be a unique example. About chronology, we shall put forward some details which allow proposing a comparatively precise bracket for the redaction of the core of the treatise, it being understood that in any case some adjustments and updating were done up to the 16th or 17th centuries.