THE *VYŪHA AS THE “STATE OF THE LORD”*  
(*BHAGAVADAVASTHĀ*):  
VEDĀNTIC INTERPRETATION OF PĀṆCARĀTRA  
DOCTRINES ACCORDING TO VEṆKAṬANĀTHA

Marcus Schmücker

The Sanskrit tradition of the Rāmānuja School finds its final development in the works of Veṇkaṭanāṭha. It must be said that there is no evidence of the early mutual influences between the Vedānta and the Pāṇcarātra in his work, but rather that with Veṇkaṭanāṭha’s works, the influence, acceptance, integration and acknowledgement of the Pāṇcarātra tradition into the Rāmānuja School has reached its culmination. No other representative of the Rāmānuja School used, as far as we can see, texts and topics of the Pāṇcarātra Saṃhitās in so many ways. In addition to the works devoted entirely to the exegesis of Pāṇcarātra Saṃhitās, evidence of the Pāṇcarātra tradition can also be found in every other work of Veṇkaṭanāṭha: in his works dealing with epistemological and theological topics, in his Kāvyā works, and even in his works written in Maṇipravāḷam.

Although Veṇkaṭanāṭha holds the Pāṇcarātra tradition to be self-evident and to be a completely integrated part of what we refer to as the Rāmānuja School, it is a legitimate question to ask what place Veṇkaṭanāṭha gives to the teachings of the Pāṇcarātra in his works in which the monistic concept of the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa plays a central role.

For the question of how Veṇkaṭanāṭha reflects on or is aware of the difference between the Pāṇcarātra tradition on the one hand and the Vedānta tradition on the other hand, it is instructive to look at the Tattvamuktākālāpa with Veṇkaṭanāṭha’s auto-commentary Sarvārthasiddhi and his Nyāyasiddhāṇjana – both important late works of theological and philosophical character. Here Veṇkaṭanāṭha’s obvious integration of Pāṇcarātra doctrines can be exemplified in the context of his central monistic concept of the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, whose relation to the universe is taught in the Rāmānuja School as the relation of the supporter (ādhāra) to the supported (ādheya), of the ruler (niyanta) to the ruled (niyamya), of the principal (śeṣīn) to the subordinate (śeṣa), of that which is characterized by a body (śarīrin) to the body itself, and as the relation of cause (kāraṇa) and effect (kārya).
According to Veṇkaṭanātha and his predecessors, the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa is exclusively identified with the one (eka) true brahman that is taught in the Vedāntic tradition.¹ Such an identification implies the meaning of one Absolute as the highest Being, beyond which – according to the central Advaitic doctrine of this tradition – no comparable second exists. Although one of the most important doctrines of the Pāṇcarātra tradition is the concept of vyūha, by which various divine manifestations of the highest God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa are meant, it is also a tradition with exclusively Him at the top, and one must ask how this vyūha concept was interpreted in the well-developed theological system of the theistic Vedāntic tradition.

In the context of Veṇkaṭanātha’s work, in which theological and philosophical argumentation finds its peak, one then may ask, what enables him to synthesize the basic Advaitic concept of one God with the Pāṇcarātra teachings of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa’s divine manifestations such as the vyūhas, the vyūhāntaras or the vibhavas? How is it possible for Veṇkaṭanātha to argue that Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa as the one highest Being can be accommodated with His numerous manifestations?

I.

When Veṇkaṭanātha refers to tenets of the Pāṇcarātra tradition in his Nyāyasiddhāṇjana he mentions either the tradition of the Pāṇcarātra² in general or refers specifically to later Saṃhitās such as the

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¹ Rāmānuja was the first to explicitly identify the neuter brahman with the personal God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa. He states in Śrībh I, 17,1: brahma-śabdena ca svabhāvato nirastanikhiladoṣo ’navadhikātiśayāsānkhṣeyyaka-lyāṅaguṇaganaḥ puruṣottamo ’bhidhiyate. “With the word brahman the highest Puruṣa is designated, who by his own nature is free from faults and who has innumerable auspicious qualities, which are unlimited and of excellence.” Cf. also the beginning passage of the section about God (iśvara-pariccheda) in Veṇkaṭanātha’s Nyāyasiddhāṇjana (NyS 225,6): advitiya-samābhidyadikaridiratravāsraṇād asāv ekāh. sa eva brahma. “He is the single one, because the Śruti state that He has no second [and] He is devoid of an equal and of a better. Only He is brahman.”

² See for example NyS 223,5, where Veṇkaṭanātha refers to the enumeration of the nityasūris in the Pāṇcarātra Saṃhitās: eteśāṃ nityasūrīnām ānantyāvāntarabhedādikaṇḍi śripāṇcarātrasaṃhitās vṛṣadam anusandheyam.
Ahirbudhnyasamhitā or the Lakṣmītantra. It is in fact striking that despite his rich knowledge of Pāṇcarātra Samhitās as is evident in his other works, in his Nyāyasiddhāñjana he quotes only these two Saṃhitās by name. In the fourth chapter of this work (NyS 394.4ff.), Venkaṭanātha gives a simple short outline of how he understands the different divine manifestations as taught in the Pāṇcarātra tradition. In this short summarizing passage he discusses the four vyūhas: Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. He explains their origin as a process of emanation that begins with Vāsudeva, with each preceding vyūha being the cause of the next and with the later three appearing (unmesa) with only two of the six original qualities. Venkaṭanātha says that the body of the highest vyūha, Vāsudeva, consists of six qualities that include knowledge (jñāna), potency (śakti), strength (bala), lordship (aiśvarya), energy (vīrya) and splendor (tejas). Saṃkarṣaṇa possesses strength (bala) in order to destroy the universe and knowledge (jñāna) in order to spread the śāstras. Pradyumna contains lordship (aiśvarya) in order to create the universe and energy (vīrya) in order to spread the dharma, and finally Aniruddha possesses potency (śakti) in order to maintain the universe and splendor (tejas) in order to spread the truth. Venkaṭanātha renders the description of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa’s divine manifestations as follows: “The vyūha has the form of Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Each preceding one is the cause of the following one. Among these, in Vāsudeva all six qualities like knowledge, etc. are revealed. In reference to the other three [deities] beginning with Saṃkarṣaṇa, four [qualities] are not manifested because three pairs of qualities proper for spreading the śāstras and for the periodical destruction of the universe, etc. become visible. All six qualities exist sure enough in every [vyūha].”

3 Venkaṭanātha’s quotations of the Lakṣmītantra (LT) in his NyS can be found in NyS 236; NyS 238 (quotation of LT 17.58); NyS 382; NyS 387; NyS 389 (quotation of LT 17.16); NyS 462. Quotations from the Ahirbudhnyasamhitā can be found in NyS 368 (quotation of AS 3.26); NyS 382; NyS 387 (quotation of AS 6.23); and NyS 488 (quotation of AS 3.2).

4 NyS 394.4-395.3: vāsudevasaṃkarṣaṇapradyumnāniruddhānuḥ vyūhāḥ. uttarottaraḥ pūrṇārvavakāraṇaḥ. tatra vāsudeve jñānādīguṇāḥ saḍ apy āvirbhūtāḥ. saṃkarṣaṇādīśu triṣu śāstrapravartanasaṃbhārādy-aupayikaguṇadvandvatrayonmeṣṇa catuṣkam anāvirbhūtam. sarve te sar-vatra santy eva.
According to the view of the Pāṇcarātra tradition, the origin of the vyūhas, to which Veṅkaṭanātha refers in this passage, means the emanation\(^5\) by which the highest God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa becomes one vyūha deity after another.\(^6\) The possibility that Veṅkaṭanātha refers here to the Āhīrbudhyasyaṁhitā’s description could be evidenced by his enumeration of both vibhavas and avatāras,\(^7\) who are further emanations of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa’s progression of manifestations and are mentioned in the next sentence (NyŚ 395,1-2): “Each individual [vyūha] has infinite subordinate avatāras. The various vibhavas [are thirty-nine] beginning with Padmanābha and the ten [avatāras] beginning with Matsya, etc.”\(^8\)

In the first sentence of this passage, Veṅkaṭanātha uses the term avāntarāvatāra not only to refer to the common list of Viṣṇu’s avatāras, but also to further emanations of the vyūhas such as the vyūhāntaras, which arise from each of the four vyūhas: Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava arise from Vāsudeva; Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdhana from Saṃkarṣaṇa; Trivikrama, Vāmana and Śrīdhara from Pradyumna; and Hṛṣīkeṣa, Padmanābha and Dāmodara from Aniruddha.

From this brief description of Veṅkaṭanātha’s summary of the origin of the vyūhas, vyūhāntaras and vibhavas, it is clear, based on his understanding of the Vedāntic concept of the oneness (ekatva) of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, that He must in fact be interpreted in relation to many deities. For, according the Pāṇcarātra view, Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa has different manifestations from which He is not defined as separated, but which He becomes one after another. Whereas according to

\(^5\) For a thorough analysis of the vyūha cosmogony of the Āhīrbudhyasyaṁhitā see BOCK-RAMING 2002: 18-56. For a discussion of the original meaning of vyūha as derived from the root vi-ūh, given by GONDA as: “ein wirkungsvolles Auseinanderschieben von Teilen eines zusammenhängenden Ganzen,” see ibid. 302.

\(^6\) Such a concept is for example expressed in AS 5.32c-44, where the highest God Viṣṇu is said to be successively becoming the four vyūhas.

\(^7\) Their enumeration and functions can for example be found in AS 5.50-57b. Thirty-nine vibhavas are mentioned here, the twelve avatāras included. According to BOCK-RAMING 2002: 168 the enumeration of vibhavas or vyūhāntaras can be traced from the Sāttvatasamhitā.

\(^8\) NyŚ 395,1-2: eşān ca pratyekam avāntarāvatārā anantāḥ. padmanābhamatsyādidasakādayo vibhavabhedāḥ.
the Vedāntic doctrine, God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa is the One without a comparable second, the teaching of His becoming something else implies a contradiction to His absoluteness and makes further conceptual reflection necessary.

In his Nyāyasiddhāṇjana, Veṅkaṭanātha presents important information about these vyūha, vyūhāntara and vibhava deities as well as the so-called “subtle” (sūkṣma) deity referred to as Vāsudeva. He tries to explain the relation between the highest God and His various divine manifestations by saying that all these divine beings are to be accepted as God’s own body (iśvaraśarīra). But even then the question arises in which way His own body is related to Himself. The following remarks will therefore try to outline the theoretical context in which Veṅkaṭanātha explains God’s relationship to His own body and they will attempt to clarify which role the “ontological difference,”10 as emphasized by OBERHAMMER, between God and what can be known as different from Him plays in this context. This difference is in fact denoted in Veṅkaṭanātha’s system as atyantabheda, “complete difference.” This is insofar a key-term for the theology of the Rāmānuja School as on one hand it affirms the absoluteness of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, but on the other hand makes His relation to the world thinkable without any contradiction. We will see that this key-term is complemented by another central term which describes the relation between God and that which is different from Him, namely aprthaksiddha, “not separately established.” Both key-terms, essential in Venkaṭanātha’s theological reflection, form the basis of the interpretation of vyūha manifestations as so-called “states of the Lord” (bhagavadavasthā). But to clarify which role these important terms play in Veṅkaṭanātha’s system and what his interpretation of the Pañcarātric emanation doctrine implies, I have to refer to his fundamental concept of underlying substance (dravya) and qualifying property (dharma) or state (avasthā).

9 NyS 236,28: iśvaraśarīre ca sūkṣmavuyāhavibhavādhidhēdāḥ śrimat-paṅcavrātrādibhiḥ prapañcitā avagantavyāḥ. “And in reference to God’s [eternal] body, the different [bodies] such as the subtle [body], the vyūhas, the vibhavas, which are taught by the scriptures of the Pañcarātra, etc., should be accepted.”

10 For a further explanation of this term see OBERHAMMER’s contribution in this volume, pp. 39f. For more details cf. OBERHAMMER 1999: 205f.
In Veṅkaṭanātha’s theoretical concept, the words “substance” (dravya) and “non-substance” (adravya) are key-terms. All entities can be identified either as a substance (dravya) or as a non-substance (adravya). Generally Veṅkaṭanātha mentions six fundamental substances. The first two are the highest self (paramātman), which is identified with the neuter brahman, i.e., the highest God (iśvara) Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, and the individual soul (jīvātman). Both substances are denoted as conscious (cit). The other four substances, called non-conscious (acit), are primary matter (prakṛti), God’s eternal divine manifestation (nityavibhūti), time (kāla) and God’s and the individual soul’s attributive knowledge (dharmanabḥūtajñāna).

These six substances can never appear as being without any characteristics (nirviśeṣa). According to Veṅkaṭanātha, we can therefore neither speak about the soul (jīvātman/paramātman) that has no attributes nor of material matter (prakṛti) that has no effects nor of time itself without qualifying it by special time units nor of attributive knowledge without characterizing it as a particular knowledge like perception (pratyakṣa), a wish (icchā) or inference (anumāna).

According to Veṅkaṭanātha, to be qualified by an attribute that cannot exist separately (aprthaksiddha) from its basic substance means that a substance always has different “states” (avasthā).

11 After stating at the beginning of the Nyāyasiddhāṇjana (NyS 7,1-8,1) that he will deal with objects of knowledge (prameya) in this work, Veṅkaṭanātha divides them into substances (dravya) and non-substances (adravya) with the following words: tadantargataṁ ca sarvaṁ dṛavyadṛavyātmanā vibhaktam. upādānāṃ dṛavyam. avasthāsraya upādānanam. atathābhūtam adravyam. “And everything included in it (i.e., the prameyas) is divided into substance and non-substance. Substance is the base. The base is that which is the substratum for the states. Non-substance is not [defined] like [a substance].”

12 In context of Rāmānuja’s usage the substance nityavibhūti is translated by CARMAN as the Lord’s “eternal realm” (CARMAN 1974: 142).

13 Veṅkaṭanātha explains the term avasthā for instance in his autocommentary, the Sarvārthasiddhi (SAS), on Tattvamuktākalāpa (TMK) 5.2 (683,8): āgantuko ’prthaksiddho dharma ’vasthā. “The state is a qualification that is added and that cannot be separately established.” See also the same sentence in NyS 357,5-6.
These states of a substance are also called “non-substance” (adravya). If, for example, an object has the colour (rupa) white (sita), its being white is its state. If water, silver or the moon is called “white,” the colour white is their state (avastha). The colour itself, independent of which colour is meant, is denoted by Venkataanatha as non-substance (adravya). Even though the colour white of water, silver or the moon is completely different (atyantabhinna) from the object itself, because the colour is a property and the water, etc. are its underlying substrate, we cannot say that these three substances are known without also knowing their whiteness. Thus, the colour white is inseparately connected to water, etc. In this analogy, every substance (dravya) that has been mentioned above cannot exist without having a specific state, i.e., its qualifying attribute with which the substance is necessarily connected. Otherwise no qualification could be accomplished. Nevertheless, it is never argued that the attributes/properties (dharma), i.e., the states (avastha) of a substance (dravya) are identical with their underlying substrate. They remain completely different (atyantabhinna). Thus the states of the substances can change, whereas the substances themselves endure eternally and stay unaffected by the modification of their states. Otherwise the substance would be changing just as its states (avastha) are.

14 The substances are also taught as qualifying one another. For this, the commentator of Venkataanatha’s Nyayasiddhanjana, Rangaramanuja, gives the clearest explanation of Venkataanatha’s reference to the criterias for the classification of substances, when he says: dharmabhutajnana jnatri-visesanatvam spastra. nityavibhuter vigrahamdirupenesvaravisesanatva ca spastra. kalaya bhogyahutamahadviparinimahetutaya bhogyapratvikvisesanatva ca spastra (NySV 38,7-8). “Attributive knowledge is evidently a qualifier of the knower. Eternal divine manifestation is evidently a qualifier of God, because it has the form of his body, etc. And time is a qualifier of material matter, which is to be enjoyed, because it is the cause of the modification that should be enjoyed, which starts with ‘the Great One’.”

15 For the definition of colour see NyS 469,7.

16 Venkataanatha differentiates between an essential property, i.e., properties that define the substance or the thing to qualify in its essence (svarupanirupakadharma) – in this case, it is the colour white – and a secondary property that qualifies something that is already qualified by an essential property (nirupitasvarupadharma).
For these substances the characteristic of this relationship that is implied – inseparability, but nevertheless difference – does not allow for the possibility of their being conjoined with their proper attributes by a connecting link. This means: they can only be inseparately related to each other because of the qualifying nature (svabhāva) of their appropriate attributes which Veṅkaṭanātha refers to as being “without any additional condition” (anupadhika). If the relationship (saṁbandha) between substance and attribute has its origin only in their essential nature (svabhāva), which is a qualifying nature, other means to explain their relation, as for example by the category of “inherence” (samavāya) as held in the view of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, are not required and are elaborately criticized by Veṅkaṭanātha. Founding their relationship on inherence after the relation has already been established by a qualifier is unnecessary and contradictory. This means that a substance does not become qualified by something binding a quality to it.

17 See TMK 5.2 where Veṅkaṭanātha explains in the second verse: dravyād atyantabhinnaṁ tv idam anupadhīkaṁ tad viśimsyāt svabhāvāt (…). “This [non-substance] that is completely different from the substance is without any additional condition and specifies that (i.e., the substance) by its own nature (…).”

18 See TMK 5.26; 127 (792-793).

19 Veṅkaṭanātha makes this evident in a section of the Sarvārthasiddhi (681,13-16) when he responds to his opponent, who holds inherence (samavāya) as a connecting link between two inseparable entities: aprthaksiddhaviśeṣaṅatvenopalabhyante dravyām praty adravyānī. anyathā bhava-tāpi katham avaśyam ekam aparāśritam evāvatiśṭhata ityādikam udghusya-te. ayam arthaḥ – bhavatā yaylor ayutasiddhyā samavāyaḥ kalpyate tayor ayutasiddhir eva saṁbandhaḥ, na punas tatkalanīyāḥ samavāyaḥ, kalpa-nāgauravāt; svāḥāvikāaprthaksiddhivyatirekenā samavāyasānapalambhāt. atah svabhāvād eva dravyādṛavyavor upaśleṣah. “In reference to a substance non-substances are known as qualifiers which are established separately from the substance. Otherwise, how is it possible that also you are proclaiming [a sentence] starting with the words: one [entity] resides as grounded on the other. The meaning is: Between which (i.e., substance and non-substance) you are accepting the inherence because of their being inseparately established, between these the relation exists only in their being inseparately established, [and] inherence in turn is not acceptable for them, because it is the more difficult assumption, and because one cannot perceive
ship called “inheritance” that surpasses the nature of the substance and that of its attribute and that is the sole cause of their connection.\(^{20}\)

We can now understand more precisely how Veṅkaṭanātha applies his concept of substance and state to the four other substances: the effects of primary matter (prakṛti) such as “the Great One” (mahat), the “I-principle” (ahamkāra), etc., are its states (avasthā) and cannot exist separately from it; the substance “time” (kāla) is the substrate of special time units, which include kṣaṇa, lava, nimeśa, and parārāḍha.\(^{21}\)

Valid means of knowledge such as perception (pratyakṣa) and inference (anumāna) are states of the substance “attributive knowledge” (dharmanabhūta jñāna) of the individual self; in the same way the individual soul cannot be disconnected from its attributive knowledge (dharmanabhūta jñāna). Veṅkaṭanātha even accepts a series of states for God’s “eternal divine manifestation” (nityavibhūti).

For his concept of the relationship between a substance and its states, it is important that the state of a substance itself, i.e., defined as non-substance, cannot in turn be qualified by another attribute.\(^{22}\)

Thus, before Veṅkaṭanātha starts to list what he defines as non-substance (adṛavya) in the sixth chapter of his Nyāyasiddhāṇjana, he states (NyS 442,1): “Non-substance is devoid of conjunction” (saṃyogarahitam adṛavyam) and he continues by explaining how substances are characterized by their states, i.e., the non-substances:

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\begin{align*}
\text{inherence as different from being established as naturally inseparate. Therefore substance and non-substance are connected only by their essential nature.} \\
\text{See also SAS 792,8-9 on TMK 5.126: aprthaksidhayos samavāyākhyam svarūpād adhiṅkam kalpyamānaṃ sambandham na pratyaksayāmah. “We do not perceive a relation called ‘inheritance’ which is accepted as being beyond the essential nature of two [things] that are [already] inseparately related.”} \\
\text{According to MONIER-WILLIAMS 1964, kṣaṇa means 30 kalās or 4 minutes; lava means a minute division of time, equal to a sixtieth of a twinkling, half a second, or a moment; nimeśa means a moment; parārāḍha means the number of mortal days corresponding to fifty years of a Brahmā’s life.} \\
\text{If the quality is again qualified by saṃyoga it cannot be defined as non-substance, because “having contact/conjunction” is the definition for a substance. See for example NyS 422,9f.}
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“And in regard [to the non-substance], there is a series of states characterized by similarity and dissimilarity [of the three guṇas] with respect to the triguṇa (i.e., the prakṛti); also with respect to time, [there is a series of states] beginning with kṣaṇa, lava, nimesa and ending with parārdha; [and] with respect to knowledge, [there is a series of states] such as of being perception, of being inference, of being verbal knowledge; even with respect to pure sattva, there is a certain [series of states] similar to that of triguṇa – thus innumerable modes are to be considered according to the means of valid knowledge.”

It is evident from this passage that according to Veṅkaṭanātha each substance that is mentioned is not only characterised by one but by several states. This is also expressed in other contexts by the term avasthāsantāna, i.e., “a series of states,” by which Veṅkaṭanātha means not only the states of prakṛti, kāla, dharmabhūtajñāna and the nityavibhūti that he mentions, but also other states that can qualify these substances.

III.

How Veṅkaṭanātha applies his fundamental concept of substance and state to the other substances that he mentions can be clarified by the substance “primary matter” (prakṛti) and his description

\[23\] NyS 443,1-3: tatra ca triguṇe sadṛśavisadrśarūpo ‘vasthāsantānah, kāle ‘pi kṣaṇalavanimesatvādiparārdhaparyantaḥ, buddhau pratyakṣatvānumititivaśrautatvādirūpah, śuddhasattve ‘pi kecit triguṇasamā ity anantapракāro yathāpramāṇam anusandheyah.

\[24\] For the other states that Veṅkaṭanātha mentions cf. the following long enumeration in NyS 443,3-444,1: tāni sattvarajastamāṃsi, śabdāyah pañca, saṃyogah, śaktiḥ iti daśatva. evaṃvidheṣy evādvrayeṣu gurutvadra-vatvasnehasamskārasaṅkhyaḥprātimañaprathtavibhāgaparavatvaratvākar-masāmānvasādṛśyavisēṣasamavāyābhāvavaiśiṣṭyādīnām yathāsaṃbhavam antarbhāvah. “They are only ten: sattva, rajas, tamas, the five [qualities] beginning with sound (śabda), contact (saṃyoga) and potency (śakti). These [ten] non-substances contain [all the other non-substances] such as weight (gurutva), fluidity (dravatva), viscosity (snehatva), latent impression (saṃskāra), number (saṃkhyā), size (parimāṇa), separateness (prthaktva), disjunction (vibhāga), remoteness (paratva), nearness (aparatva), action (karman), generality (sāmānya), similarity (sadrśya), qualifiedness (vaiśiṣṭya), etc.”
of its relationship to its various characteristic states: According to Veṅkaṭanātha, the substance “primary matter” (prakṛti) “is described as having a quality (guṇa) [called] rajas or having a quality (guṇa) [called] tamas or being able to become states such as ‘the Great One’ (mahat) and so on.” This means, that primary matter is the substrate for its effects such as “the Great One” (mahat) or the subsequent effects which become manifest through the inequality of the three guṇas. The entire prakṛti is pervaded by these three guṇas, which are well balanced at the time of their dissolution but which finally become uneven at the beginning of each new creation. Every effect arises through the inequality (viṣama) of the three guṇas, and each is said to be a state (avasthā) of primary matter. Thus primary matter can be described as transforming itself into many entities, and even if their effects are able to spread, etc. (parispandādi), it itself does not become separate or – as Veṅkaṭanātha states – is “without holes” (niścchidra); on the contrary, it pervades each of its own effects (svakāryavyāpaka), i.e., its own states. However, prakṛti itself and its states, though inseparable, remain different. Like every other substance it is characterized not only by one state, but rather can have several states that co-exist. If the creation starts with the inequality of the three guṇas, it is in fact said to be becoming another state by suppressing (upamardaka) an earlier one.

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25 For Veṅkaṭanātha’s differentiation between different types of guṇas see NyS 417,2: evam ca guneṣu kaśaś cid višesah, dravyātmakagunah, kevalagunāś ceti. pūrve jñānādayaḥ, uttare sattvarajastamasahprabhṛtayāḥ vaksyate. “And in this way there are some divisions among qualities: substantive qualities and pure qualities. The former are knowledge, etc.; the later are taught as sattva, rajas, tamas and so forth.”

26 NyS 40,3-4: tatra rajogunākatvatamogunākatvamahadādyavasthārhatvāni trigunalakṣaṇānī (…).

27 Cf. NyS 42,2: idam ca parispandādiyogyabhiṣṭendriyaparināma-daśāyām api niścchidram eva. tata eva hi svakāryavyāpakatvam. “And it [i.e., the triguna] is not torn asunder, even in the state of its modification into [four] gross elements (bhūta) or senses (indriya), which are able to spread, etc. Therefore it pervades all its effects.”

28 Any modification is described by Veṅkaṭanātha as a series of states. For example, if something comes into being it is in this sense only a succession of different states. This can be understood from NyS 357,6:
Perhaps from these few remarks it becomes clear that Veṅkaṭanātha’s explanation of the highest substance is analogue to the concept just described: the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa as the highest substance is the underlying substrate in relation to His body, which consists of the substances characterized above together with their states/attributes. Hence Veṅkaṭanātha depicts not only the five substances that are mentioned according to his substance-state model, but he interprets the highest substance, i.e., the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa in the same way: Just as a single substance is specified by its inseparable (aprthaksiddha) states, all the other substances together are defined as specifying Him. All the enumerated substances with their specific attributes shape His body (iśvaraśarīra) and exist thus inseparably from their highest substance.

On the basis of Veṅkaṭanātha’s concept of the relationship between a substance (dravya) and its states, it also becomes understandable how God can, despite His oneness (ekatva), be related to every entity: He is connected eternally to everything that shapes His

\[\text{viśeṣatas tūttarāvasthāviṣiṣṭasvarūpāpekṣayā tadanuṣṇanyatapūrvabhāvyavasthāviṣiṣṭam tad eva vastūpādānam, yathā ghaṭatvāvasthāviṣiṣṭamrd-dravyāpekṣayā pinḍatvāvasthāviṣiṣṭam tad eva dravyam.} \]

“Specifically the material cause refers to [an entity], itself qualified by each succeeding entity, [i.e.,] each entity is qualified by a state which corresponds to it and is always prior to it. For example, in relation to the substance clay which is qualified by the state of being a pot the very substance [clay] that is qualified by the state of being a lump [is the material cause].”

29 NyS 42,3-4: idam eva triguṇaṁ pūrvāvasthopamardakaśvasthābhedāc caturviṃśatis tattvāni, mūlaprakṛṭir mahāṁ ahaṁkāra indriyāṇy ekādaśa paṁca bhūtāni ceti. “And this triguṇa [i.e., the prakṛṭi] itself, because of the difference in its states (avasthā) that suppress (upamardaka) their preceding states, [modifies in] twenty-four principles, namely, the primordial cause (prakṛti), the Great One (mahat), the I-principle (ahaṁkāra), eleven senses (indriya), five subtle elements (tanmātra), and five gross elements (bhūta).”

30 For Veṅkaṭanātha’s discussion if the attributive knowledge (dharmanabhatajñāna) belongs to God’s body or not see NyS 166,5: iśvaratajñānā-vagyatiriktaṁ dravyaṁ šarīram.
body, although He Himself does not change nor is affected by the modification of other substances’ states. In the same way as the other substances, the relationship that is thus founded is not a relationship of inherence (samavāya), but is rather defined as a qualifying relationship of contact (samyoga) between Him as the underlying substance (dravya) and His states (avasthā).

In the beginning of the fifth chapter of the Tattvamuktākalāpa quoted above, which discusses non-substances (adravyapariccheda), Veṅkaṭanātha interprets the relationship between the Highest (para) and everything else (viśva) in the same manner in which he has characterized the relationship between the other substances and their states. Using the terminology of substance and non-substance (TMK 5.1), he states in the first part of the verse: “[Just as] all non-substances are seen in reference to their respective substances as being assigned to it and not established separately, in the same way [it is the case] for everything for the highest Being. There is no fault for His own nature, because of the restriction of the separation [of the non-substances from Him/His own nature].”

In contrast to the other substances mentioned, which are not characterized by their own body, that which Veṅkaṭanātha calls “everything” (viśva) in fact shapes God’s body. For the definition of the body, Veṅkaṭanātha follows the teaching of Rāmānuja. As a fourth definition, which results from the three definitions that he analyzed and discussed in earlier passages and which reflects Rāmānujas’s

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31 Also in this case the possibility of calling God all-pervasive is based on the concept of the non-substance “connection” (samyoga). A highest Being can only be established as being all-pervasive (vibhu) if it is in fact connected to every entity. In NyS 132.4, Veṅkaṭanātha writes: sarvamūrttasamyogitvam hi vibhutvam. tasmād antataḥ samyogalaksānam āṅgikāryam. […] “For all-pervasiveness is [defined as] being in contact with all embodied things; accordingly, in the end you have to accept at last [modification in the form] of contact.”


33 For a discussion of Rāmānuja’s and his followers’ definitions of God’s/brahman’s body see OBERHAMMER 1996: 92ff.
intention,\textsuperscript{34} he states that the qualifier of an intellectual being such as the highest self (paramātman), i.e., the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyana, forms His body.\textsuperscript{35}

The manner in which Veṅkaṭanātha classifies the different substances with their states/attributes is different from Rāmānuja’s concept of the body and is developed further in this context. Corresponding to the different kinds of substances that are related to God and their states, Veṅkaṭanātha divides God’s body into two types: one body is eternal (nityaśarīra), the other is not (anityaśarīra). The eternal body of God consists of four eternal substances which Veṅkaṭanātha characterizes as “having the nature of the substance which is characterized by the three guṇas (i.e., prakṛti), [and having the nature] of time, of the individual soul and of the eternal divine manifestation, etc.” (NyS 174,6-7: trigunadravyakālajīvābhāsrayādyātmakam).

Further he subdivides the non-eternal body into two types: one is formed by karman (karmakṛta), one is not (akarmakṛta). The non-eternal body that is not formed by karman is characterized as “having the form of ‘the Great One’ and so on” (NyS 175,1: mahadādirūpaṇ). The body formed by karman is again twofold. The passage (NyS 174,6-175,3) in which Veṅkaṭanātha lays out and exemplifies his systematic partition runs as follows: “[God’s] body is twofold: eternal and non-eternal. In reference to this [twofoldness of the body], God’s body consisting of the substance characterized by the three guṇas (i.e., the prakṛti), time, the individual soul, the eternal divine manifestation (śubhāśraya) and so on is the eternal one. (…) The non-eternal [body] is of two kinds: that which is not made by karman and that which is made by karman. The former [body] of God has the form of ‘the Great One’, etc. (…) The [body] that is made by karman is also of two kinds: that which is made by karman

\textsuperscript{34} Cf. NyS 158,5-165.

\textsuperscript{35} NyS 165,5: yasya cetanasya yadavastham aprthaksiddhaviśeṣaṇaṁ dravyam, tat tasya śarīram iti. yāvatsattam asambandhānarhatvam aprthaksiddhatvam. “For that spiritual being (i.e., God, the highest self) for which a substance exists, which is in a certain state and which is inseparably established as a qualifier, that [substance] is the body of that [spiritual] being. [Their] being established inseparably means the inability to be without relationship as long as one exists [together with the other].”
with the help of one’s own will and that which is made purely by karman. The former is [that] of such great sages such as Saubhari; the latter is [that] of lower beings.”

It can be seen that the relationship between a substance (dravya) and its state (avasthā) is represented here as being the relationship between God’s eternal body and His non-eternal body. Although the enumeration of that which belongs to the non-eternal body is abbreviated and unconduted, it is clear that according to Veṅkaṭaṅkātha the states mentioned that are free of karman but non-eternal build up the non-eternal body of God. Moreover the eternal and non-eternal body are directed by God’s eternal and non-eternal will.

In regard to Veṅkaṭaṅkātha’s listing of different states, we can assume that he refers not only to the twenty-three entities (tattva) taught as being states of primary matter, starting with the first effect “the Great One” (mahat) and ending with “earth” (prthivi), but also (with the word ādi) to, according to both commentators, to three of the vyūhas, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha – the exception is the divine manifestation Para-Vāsudeva as well as to their vyūhāntaras Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, etc., and to the large number of avatāras. They all are understood as being impermanent divine manifestations and primarily different states of a substance, namely, God’s eternal divine manifestation (nityavibhūti), but together they belong to God’s non-eternal body (anityaśarīra) which is not formed by karman and cannot exist separately (aprthaksiddha) from Him. The states of the nityavibhūti that belong to God’s non-eternal body are also evident from another passage of the Nyāyasiḍḍhāṇjana in

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36 NyS 174,6-175,3: tad etat śarīram dvividham – nityam anityaṇaḥ ceti. tatra nityam trigunadravyakālajīvāsubhāśrayādyātmakam iśvaraśarīram. (...) anityaṇaḥ ca dvividham – akarmakṛtaṇaḥ karmakṛtaṇaḥ ceti. prathamam iśvarasya mahadādirūpaṃ. (...) karmakṛtam api dvividham. svasaṅkalpasa- hakṛtakarmakṛtaṇaḥ kevalakarmakṛtaṇaḥ ceti. pūrvaḥ mahatāḥ saubhāṣrayaḥ mahatāḥ saubharipa-bhṛtināṃ. uttarāṇaḥ ca anyeṣaṁ kṣudrāṇaṃ.

37 The passage that both commentators point out is NyS 389,18: vigraha ca vyūhavibhavādayaḥ.

38 Because Para-Vāsudeva belongs to the “eternal body” (nityaśarīra) of God; cf. Raṅgarāmānūja’s explanation of śubhāśraya, NyS 174,10: śubhāśrayaḥ paravāsudevavigrahaḥ.
which Veṅkaṭanātha describes the eternal divine manifestation (nityavibhūti) as a place where things can change like flowers on trees or waves in rivers. They are produced (kṛtaka) and non-eternal (anītya). Having mentioned these products, he says that the vyūhas, etc., belong to the same category: “And in reference to [His non-eternal] body, there are [modifications] starting with [His divine manifestations like] the vyūhas and the vibhavas because only modifications that are caused by time and depend upon karman are denied regarding these [manifestations], but not also [those that depend] only on the will of God.”

Another example, in which Veṅkaṭanātha combines God’s oneness with different manifestations by interpreting them as His manifestations only, shows how he applies his concept of God’s states: Veṅkaṭanātha has formed his fundamental concept of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa as the highest God not only to accommodate the status and the variety of the vyūha and vibhava deities, but also to accommodate the Goddess Lakṣmī, who represents a complete and equal counterpart of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa Himsel. She is also taught as being embodied in diverse avatāras that represent Her divinity. The manifoldness of the vyūha and vibhava deities, with their different functions, becomes multiplied once more by Veṅkaṭanātha’s acceptance of the avatāras of the Goddess Lakṣmī. Each of Her avatāra represents a female divine manifestation that corresponds to each male manifestation.

In the context of Veṅkaṭanātha’s characterization of the Goddess Śrī, whose complex relationship to Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa is described as a permanent partnership (dāmpatyaṃ śāśvatam), said to be equal to Him in all relevant relations, he also discusses the avatāras and

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39 NyS 389,18-19: vigrahe ca vyūhavibhavādayaḥ. kālakṛtakarmādhi- naparināmamātram hi teṣu niṣedhyam, na tu bhagavatsaṅkalpaṃātram api.

40 She is said to be all-pervasive (vibhū) as He and is to be honoured by the same subordinated beings, the śeṣas who are serving Him. Avoiding that in the context of his theology the highest God becomes relativized by a feminine counterpart, Veṅkaṭanātha defines their exclusive relationship as śeṣaśeṣibhāva, as principal and subordinated. Thus Śrī is in the final sense not a completely equal Goddess, she relies on Him. Cf. for instance Raṅga-rāmānuja’s explanation of the term bhagavadavasthābheda quoted in NyS 363,5: lakṣmyā api bhagavadātmakatayā tadavasthātvād iti bhāvah.
The vyāha as the “State of the Lord”

refers to them, as in the case for God’s vyāhas, as states (avasthā) of the Lord: “The teachings of the different states [of the Lord] such as the vyāhas [also] refer to the embodiments, etc., [of Lakṣmī], because these [avatāras of Lakṣmī], although they reach the state of an effect on their own will or through the will of the Highest (i.e., the Lord), are different states of the Lord, because everything contains the Lord as its self.”

It is clear that Veṅkaṭanātha uses the term avasthā not only to describe the state of a single substance, but he assigns it also to the Lord (bhagavat) Himself, to explain that everything different from Him can specify Him. By declaring the divine manifestations such as the vyāhas as belonging to His non-eternal body and by characterizing them as His states (avasthā), they can be synthesized with the central concept of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa’s unchallenged absoluteness founded in His oneness.

Therefore, on the base of Veṅkaṭanātha’s fundamental concept of substance and states as well as his characterization of their relationship to the key-terms difference (atyantabhedā) and inseparability (apṛthakṣiddhī), it becomes clear how the Vedāntic tradition and the Pāṇcarātric concept of different manifestations of the God Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa can accommodate one another.

Further we can say that in Veṅkaṭanātha’s theological system, the vyāhas and their vyūhāntaras are above all states (avasthā) of the nityavibhūti, i.e., the eternal divine manifestation, which is categorized as being an eternal substance belonging to God’s eternal body (nityaśarīra) that is directed by His eternal will (icchā). His will can also be seen against the background of the state-substance concept: it represents a state of God’s attributive knowledge (dharmabhūtājñāna), whose all-pervasiveness (vibhu) is related to each state (avasthā) of the divine manifestation (nityavibhūti). The non-eternal states of His divine manifestation such as the vyāhas, which belong to His non-eternal body (anityaśarīra), are directed by God’s non-eternal will. But even with his categorization into different substances and non-substances, in his monistic view Veṅkaṭanātha maintains that Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa is an absolute being without any comparable sec-

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41 NYS 363,3-6: vyāhavadavasthābhedavādās tu avatārādiviśayāḥ, sarvasya bhagavadātmaḥkatenas tasya svecchayā parecchayā vā kāryadaśāpannasyāpi bhagavadavasthābhedatvāt.
ond. Insofar as he subsumes all the substances with their states under God’s body, being eternal and being non-eternal, he can apply the concept of substance and state. Taking into consideration His absoluteness, the vyūhas and his other divine manifestations can be described as His inseparable state (avasthā), which exists nevertheless in an “ontological difference” from Him.