

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introductory :

There is a class of Indian literature called "Purāṇa" which contains rich materials reflecting various aspects of Indian culture. R.C. Hazra writes, "The extant Purāṇas presents a very rich collection of materials for the study of the development of Hindu rites and customs during the centuries intervening between Yājñavalkya and the Smṛti-Nibandhas. During this long period, the Hindu society passed through numerous vicissitudes, so much so that in many respects the Hindu rites and customs as found in the Nibandhas, differ from those in the Codes of Manu and Yājñavalkya. Hence, the study of the Purāṇas is of immense importance for a clear understanding of the whole course of the development."¹ They are next in importance only to the Vedas and therefore they are said to be the fifth Veda. They claim for themselves an equal antiquity and sanctity with the Vedas.² The DP. (III.19) states that from the Vedas

¹ Hazra R.C., Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, Preface, p.I.

² Pusalkar A.D., Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas, p.22.

and their auxiliaries emerge the Purāṇas. They cover so vast a subject that they are considered to be "a 'popular encyclopaedia of ancient and medieval Hinduism, religious, philosophical, historical, personal, social and political."³ The study of the Purāṇas helps in understanding clearly the meaning of the Vedas. "It is now becoming increasingly clear that the meaning of the Vedas was clearly comprehended by those who were attempting its re-statement in the pattern of the Purāṇic style", writes V.S. Agrawala.⁴

The term "Purāṇa" is used in India for^a long time in the sense of "ancient story". The term is loosely used to denote Itihāsa, which also narrates the old story. The Indians have used the terms Purāṇa, Ākhyāna and Itihāsa in a loose way and often they are used as synonyms.⁵

³•Pargiter F.E., "Purāṇas", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. X, p. 448.

⁴•Agrawala V.S., Vāmana Purāṇa - A Study, Intro., p.IX.

⁵•Winternitz M., A History of Indian literature, p.311; for the etymology of the word "purāṇa" vide Kane P.V. HDS. Vol. V, part II, pp. 855-6; and for the discussion on the terms "Purāṇa, Itihāsa and Ākhyāna" vide Gupta Anand Swarup, "Purāṇa, Itihāsa and Ākhyāna", Purāṇa, Vol.VI, No.2, July, 1964, pp.451ff.

According to traditional views, there are two classes of the Purāṇas, viz. the Mahāpurāṇa and the Upapurāṇa, each of which numbers eighteen.⁶ Over and above this, there is a class of Indian literature of the same character, which gives, in particular, the ancient stories accounting for the origin of certain castes. B.J. Sandesara and R.N.Mehta are inclined to classify them as Caste-Purāṇas.⁷ "These Purāṇas occasionally claim to be the part of some Mahāpurāṇas; but often stand in their own right as Purāṇas."⁸ Numerous castes in Gujarat have their own Purāṇas. The following is a small list of the caste Purāṇas : Dharmāranya for Modha Brahmins and Banias, Srīmālāpurāṇa for Śrīmālī Brahmins and Banias, Nagarkhanda for Nāgars, Anāvila Purāṇa for Anāvila Brahmins, Vāyu Purāṇa for Vāyadā Brahmins and Banias, Kālikā Purāṇa for Coppersmiths, Nāpitapurāṇa for the caste of barbers,⁹ Vāḷakhilyapurāṇa for Jharola Brahmins and Banias,

⁶ For the list of the Mahāpurāṇas vide Pusalkar A.D., Op.cit., p.25; vide also Kane P.V., HDS. Vol.V, Part II, p.831.

A.D.Pusalkar admits that there is no uniformity in the enumeration of the Upapurāṇas (Op.cit., p.25). According to R.C. Hazra, there are more than a hundred Upapurāṇas. (vide his introduction to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa tr. by H.H. Wilson, p.(a); Cf. also Hazra R.C., Studies in the Upapurāṇas, Vol. I, pp.2ff.).

⁷ Mallapurāṇa ed. by B.J. Sandesara and R.N.Mehta, GOS No.144, Intro., p.2.

⁸ Ibid., Intro., p.2.

⁹ Ibid., Intro., p.2, fn.3.

Sācīhara-māhātmya for Sācorā Brahmins, Siddhavaṭīkāmāhātmya for Dīśādīsāval Brahmins and Banias, Koṭayarkamāhātmya for Khadāyatā Brahmins and Banias, Brahmakṣetramāhātmya for Khedaṭval Brahmins, Kaṇḍulapurāṇa for Kaṇḍol caste, and Ekaliṅgamāhātmya for Mevādā caste.¹⁰

Considering their extent and the lack of room for them amongst the Mahāpurāṇas, the caste-Purāṇas may be classed with the Upapurāṇas so as not to violate the traditional view that accepts the existence of only two classes of the Purāṇas, viz. the Mahāpurāṇas and the Upapurāṇas; the former number eighteen; and the latter, more than a hundred, according to R.C. Hazra.

The importance of the study of the Upapurāṇas, especially the caste-Purāṇas :

It seems that A.D. Pusalkar is not prepared to accept the importance of the Upapurāṇas when he says that "There is a very little of historical value in the Upa-purāṇas."¹¹

¹⁰. Dave K.B., "Gujarāṭnā Jñātipurāṇo tathā tīrthamāhātmye", Swādhyāya, Vol.5, 1967-68, p.88. For brief accounts regarding some of these Purāṇas, Tīrthamāhātmyas and the castes connected with them vide Ibid. pp. 90ff.

¹¹. Pusalkar A.D., Op. cit., p. 25.

R.C. Hazra, however, points out "that the Upapurāṇas are rich as much in number as in content, that some of them are much earlier than many of the so called Mahāpurāṇas, and that, like the extant Mahāpurāṇas, they are of capital importance not only for the study of the social and religious institutions of the Hindus from the pre-Gupta period downward but also for varied information of literary, historical, geographical, and cultural interest."¹² The importance of the Upapurāṇas is brought out by M. Winternitz when he states that "The Upapurāṇas..... do not in general differ essentially from the Purāṇas except in as much as they are even more exclusively adopted to suit the purpose of local cult and the religious need of separate sect."¹³ P.V. Kane also reiterates that the Upapurāṇas 'that have already been published "do not differ much in the matter of subjects from some of the principal Purāṇas."¹⁴ It is, therefore, needless to say how important the study of the Upapurāṇas should be and it is 'erroneous', as R.C. Hazra puts it, to believe that the Upapurāṇas are 'later and inferior works' and 'scarcely deserve any serious attention.'¹⁵

¹². Hazra R.C., Op. cit., Vol.I, Preface, p.iii.

¹³. Winternitz M., A History of Indian Literature, p.579.

¹⁴. Kane P.V., HDS., Vol.V, Part II, p.834.

¹⁵. Hazra R.C., Op. cit., Vol.I, Preface, p.iii.

Some of the caste Purāṇas give not only the stories accounting for the origin of certain castes but also, like major Purāṇas, data concerning religion, customs, beliefs, society, political conditions, history, art, geography etc. It is, therefore, self-evident that what is applicable to the Mahāpurāṇas and Upapurāṇas should also be to the caste-Purāṇas, i.e. their study is of immense importance to understand clearly various aspects of Indian culture and trace its development as well as the local history and culture.

It is regrettable that the caste-Purāṇas hardly attract the interest of scholars. Very few of them were taken up for critical study. Veena Das has studied collectively the caste-Purāṇas in her thesis entitled "A Sociological Investigation of the Caste Purāṇas of Gujarat", submitted to Delhi University in 1971 for Ph.D. degree. B.N. Parmar has studied ^{Critically his} Śrīmālā-Purāṇa in thesis entitled "Cultural and Critical Study of Śrīmālā-Purāṇa" submitted to the M.S. University in 1969 also for Ph.D. degree.

Dharmāranya Purāṇa : It is the caste-Purāṇa of Mōḍha Brahmins and Banias. It consists of 69 chapters and the metres used therein are Anuṣṭup, Upendravajrā, Vasanta-tilakā and Śārdūlavikrīḍita. It was first published and translated into Gujarati by Prānhashankar Jayashankar Pathak in 1924. According to the colophon at the end of each chapter, it claims to be the part of Pātālakhanda of the Padma Purāṇa, but the printed Padma Purāṇa which is available does not contain Dharmāranya in the Pātālakhanda nor in other Khandas. This claim seems to suggest that the DP. was composed after the Padma Purāṇa had been established as it is in the present printed form. The Padma Purāṇa is published by Ānandāśrama and Venkateśvara Press. In both these editions it has six Khandas, viz. (1) Ādi, (2) Bhūmi, (3) Brahma, (4) Pātāla, (5) Śrṣṭi (also called Prakriyā) and (6) Uttara in the Anss ed., and (1) Śrṣṭi, (2) Bhūmi, (3) Svarga, (4) Brahma, (5) Pātāla and (6) Uttara in the Venk. ed.¹⁶ All the Khandas are not later than 1400 A.D.¹⁷ The date of the DP. is some what later than

¹⁶. Vide Hazra R.C., Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, pp. 107-8. There is also the Padma Purāṇa edited by Pandit Śrīrām Sarma Ācārya and it is published in 1968 by Saṁskṛiti Saṁsthān, Khvājā Kutāb (Veda Nagar) Bareilly. It is incomplete.

¹⁷. Hazra R.C., Ibid. pp. 181 ff; for the discussion on the dates of Pātāla Khanda vide also Chatterji Asoke, "The Position and Antiquity of the Pātāla-Khanda of the Padma Purāṇa", Purāṇa, Vol. II, Nos. 1-2, July, 1960, pp. 52 ff.

this. The Padma Purāṇa is believed to have been composed in Western India, Maharastra or Rajputana in particular.¹⁸ Hence, it must have exerted its great influence on the people of this part of India, so much so that it tempted the author of the DP. to claim the DP. to be the part of the Purāṇa with the objective of raising its importance and of vesting it with the authority equal to the Purāṇa.

The DP. records the fall of Moheraka; it is, therefore, quite certain that it was not composed at Moheraka (=Modhera), because after the fall of the city the Brahmins residing there must have left the city. Even now-a-days there is not a Moḍha Brahmin at Modhera. J.N. Trivedi opines that the DP. seems to have been composed in some habitat on the bank of the Sābarmatī.¹⁹

"The Purāṇas may be classified into several categories, viz. (1) encyclopaedic like the Agni, Garuḍa and Nāradiya, (2) those mainly dealing with tīrthas such as Padma, Skanda and Bhaviṣya, (3) sectarian, such as Liṅga, Vāmana, Mārkaṇḍeya, (4) historical such as Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa."²⁰ Of these, the DP. may fall under the categories 2 and 4.

¹⁸Chatterji Asoka, Ibid., p.60.

¹⁹Trivedi J.N., "Dharmāranyanā Pañcāvan Gāmo", Swādhyāya, Vol.II, 1964-65, p.25.

²⁰Kane P.V., HDS., Vol.V, Part II, p.842.

Date of the DP. : The DP. (LXVIII) contains the account of Ala-ud-din's invasion of Gujarat which took place in 1297-98 A.D. and the fall of Patan and Modhera was brought about by this invasion.²¹ This helps ^{us} to assign, with great certainty, the DP. to the date not before this date. Now let us survey the view of some scholars regarding the date of the DP.

On the above-mentioned ground K.B.Dave is of the opinion that the DP. was composed in the end of the 14th century or in the beginning of the 15th century²² whereas J.N. Trivedi opines that it was composed in the 14th century.²³ B.J. Sandesara and R.N. Mehta date the DP. in 15th century.²⁴ The above-mentioned dating is further

²¹•The earlier chronological order of some personages and important events in the DP. is as under :

- (1) Āmarāja : date ranging from about 725-834 A.D. (Vide Ch.II).
- (2) Vanarāja : date ranging from about 746-796 A.D. (Vide Ch. VIII).
- (3) Sūrya temple was probably built in 1026-27 A.D. (Vide Ch.VII).
- (4) King Kumārāpāla : date ranging from 1133-1174 A.D. (Vide Ch.VIII).
- (5) The first temple of the goddess Bahucarāji was built in 1152 A.D. (Vide Ch.VII).

²²•Dave K.B., Op. cit., p.92.

²³•Trivedi J.N., Op. cit. p.24.

²⁴•Sandesara B.J. and Mehta R.N., Op. cit., p.7.

supported by the fact that some historical accounts appearing in the DP. seem to follow that of Vicāraśreṇī (1344 A.D.)²⁵ or Merutuṅga, e.g. the inclusion of Cāmuṇḍa-rāja in the Cāvaḍā dynasty and the betrayal of Mādhava, as discussed in ch.VIII.

The stress on the worship of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, as discussed in ch. V, however, seems to push forward the date of the DP. to the 16th century, considering the dates of the respective propounders of the two sects, viz. Vallabhācārya (1473-1532 A.D.²⁶ or 1479-1531 A.D.²⁷) and Rāmānanda (from 13th century - 1470 A.D.²⁸).

Dharmāranya Purāṇa and Pañcalakṣaṇa :

Most of the Purāṇas declare that a Purāṇa should treat of five subjects : original creation (sarga), dissolution and recreation (pratisarga), the periods of

²⁵•See ch.VIII under "Cāmuṇḍa".

²⁶•Shah J.G., Shri Vallabhācārya his Philosophy and Religion, pp.4 and 52.

²⁷•Marratia M.I., The Philosophy of Vallabhācārya, p.8; see also ch.V. under "Avatāras of Viṣṇu".

²⁸•See ch. V. under "Rāma-worship".

thé Manus (manvantara), ancient genealogies (vaṁśa), and accounts of persons mentioned in the genealogies (vaṁśānucarita).²⁹ Because of the five subjects being treated in the Purāṇa, the word "Pañcalakṣaṇa (having five characteristic subjects)" was sometimes used as a synonym of a Purāṇa.³⁰ It is interesting to note that the Dharmāranya Purāṇa, though a minor Purāṇa, fulfils the Pañcalakṣaṇa. For example sarga is dealt with in chs. III. 9 ff. - IV.56; pratisarga, in chs. LXIII.33 ff- LXIV.54; manvantara, in ch. LXIII.20 ff.; vaṁśa and vaṁśānucarita, in chs. I. 9 ff., XXX. 7 ff. and LXVI. 37 ff. These subjects are dealt with in this thesis at their proper places. About the Pañcalakṣaṇa P.V. Kane makes the following remarks :

"From the definition given in the Purāṇa and the Amarakośa it does not at all follow that those five topics alone were the constituent parts of the very ancient Purāṇas, as Kirfel holds. What could be said at the most is that five were the distinctive topics that differentiated the Purāṇas class of works from other branches of literature and probably cognate works called Itihāsa or it may be that the five are generalized as an ideal for Purāṇas and that the very early representatives of this class (that existed before Ap.Dh.S.) had not these five as characteristics." 31

cf.

²⁹ Sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca /
vaṁśānucaritaṁ caiva purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇam //

³⁰ Pargiter F.E., Op. cit., p.449; Kane P.V., HDS., Vol.V, Part II, pp.838-9; Pusalkar A.D., Op. cit., p.23.

³¹ Kane P.V., HDS., Vol.V, Part II, p.841.

In order to draw a demarcationline clearly between the Upapurāṇas and the Mahāpurāṇas, some Purāṇas mention the former as treating of five subjects mentioned above; and the latter as treating of ten subjects, i.e. in addition to the five subjects mentioned above the following five subjects, viz. vṛtti (means of livelihood) rakṣā (incarnations of gods), mukti (final emancipation), hetu (jīva, unmanifest) and apāśraya (Brahman) are treated.³²

It is seen that the DP. fulfils the Pañcalakṣaṇa; it, therefore, deserves to be called an "Upapurāṇa" over and above a "caste-Purāṇa".

Dharmāranya Purāṇa and Dharmāranya Māhātmya :

There is a work called Dharmāranya Māhātmya (=DM) which is a part of the SKP. Brahmakhaṇḍa. It consists of 40 chapters. The extant printed SKP. of the Veṅkatesvara Press contains this portion. The DM. is also published independently with Gujarati translation by Manikyarām Durlabharām Śāstrī.³³

³². Vide Pusalkar A.D., Op. cit., p.24 and Kantawala S.G., "The Purāṇas and Epics as Sources of Religious, Social and Cultural History of India", The Journal of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vol.XIX, No.1, April 1970, p.49.

³³. Dave K.B., Op. cit., p.91. There are works kindred to the DP. called "Modha Purāṇa" and another version of "Dharmāranya Māhātmya". The former consisting of 36 chapters, belongs to Pātālakhanda of the SKP. It is published and translated into Gujarati by Vaidya Manekrām Durlabharām Shāstrī in 1914. The latter,

After examining the contents of both the DP. and the DM., one finds that there are many stories which are common to both. The DP. distinctly differs from the DM. Only in that it contains historical accounts of Gujarat from the foundation of Patan by Vanarāja upto the fall of Patan and Modhera at the hands of Muslims. K.B. Dave dates the DM. not later than 8th century³⁴ but this date requires reconsideration, as the reference to the king Kumārpāla in chs. 36 and 38 may lead one to assign this Purāṇa to a much later date, i.e. not before 1143-44 - 1173-74 A.D. (the date of the king Kumārapāla³⁵). Considering the subject-matters in both the works, one feels that the DP. is the result of the improvement upon the DM. This may be one of the reasons why the author of the DP. claims it to be the part of the Padma Purāṇa instead of the Skanda Purāṇa in accordance with general tendency of claiming a work to be part of the SKP., in order to avoid rivalry between the two works.

consisting of 10 chapters, which forms the first part of the whole work, belongs to Dharmāranyakhaṇḍa of the SKP. It was published by Popatlal Hāmsarāj Sheth of Jamnagar.

³⁴. Dave K.B., Op. cit., p. 90.

³⁵. For the date vide Bühler G., "Eleven Land-Grants of the Chalukyas of Anhilwad, A Contribution to the History of Gujarat", Indian Antiquary, July, 1877, p.213.