

S Y N O P S I S

Statement - I

How the Present work tends to the General Advancement of knowledge.

The Purāṇa-Literature caters for the religious needs of the underprivileged who do not have an access to the study of the vedas. It was so important that it was styled the "fifth Veda". There are two classes of Purāṇas viz. Mahāpurāṇas and Upapurāṇas, each traditionally numbered eighteen. The Liṅga Purāṇa (LP) is one of the Mahāpurāṇas.

The LP. adds to the importance and glory of Lord Śiva. Whatever functions and powers of Lord Viṣṇu are sung in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, the same of Lord Śiva are sung in the Śaiveite Purāṇas. Just as there is a description of twentyfour incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, there is a mention of twentyeight incarnations of Lord Śiva in the Liṅga Purāṇa. Moreover, as the title runs, it has abundant material on the Liṅga-worship, which thereby amply brings, out its importance in the history of ^{the} Saivism.

The LP is also a main work of the Liṅgāyāta school. In this Purāṇa we get the description of Yogamārga, Mūrtipūjā, Sivadiḁṣā, Mantramāhātaya, Liṅga-Mahimā, etc. Over and above this,

it has some chapters on some important aspects of Tantrasāstra.

It is needless to say that the Purāṇa contains rich cultural data of significance. N. Gangadharan has discussed some topics in the "Līṅga-Purāṇa - A Study" , but the cultural data enshrined in the LP. e.g. society, 'saivism, etc. are not discussed by him. Thus there is left ample scope to study this Purāṇa and it is therefore that from all these perspectives the Purāṇa is selected for study here for the first time.

The brief summary of the thesis attached herewith will show how the present study tends to add to the advancement of knowledge.

Statement - II

Source, Indebtedness and Originality

In the preparation of the present work, I have fully drawn upon all the available works, in print and in manuscript. I have acknowledged them at proper places in the Thesis.

I have studied the text and the relevant literature and have tried to express my own views after a critical study.

Chapter : I

Prologue

The following topics are discussed in this Chapter :

1. Importance of the Purāṇas.
2. Vocable "Purāṇa" and classification of the Purāṇas,
and the Liṅga Purāṇa (=LP).
3. Extent of the LP.
4. Title.
5. Author of the LP.
6. Spurious portions in the Purāṇa.
7. Influence of the LP. on later works.
8. Date.
9. The LP. as a Purāṇa, its place, etc.
10. The commentator.

Chapter : II

Society

The following topics are discussed in this Chapter in various sections :

Section I : Social Organisation

- (1) Varna and Jāti.
- (2) Varna system : Brāhmanas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.
- (3) Āśrama system : The stage of a student, the stage of a house-holder, the stage of a forest-hermit, the stage of an ascetic.

Section II : Marriage

- (1) Form of Marriage.
- (2) Marriage-rites, celebration of marriage.

Section III : Family

- (1) Family, status and position of the father.
- (2) Thoughts on conception and birth of a child.
- (3) Status and position of the son.
- (4) Husband and wife.
- (5) Father and Son.
- (6) Mores of relation of the daughter-in-law and parents-in-law and other relations.

Section IV : Position of Women

- (1) Choice of the mate.
- (2) Woman as wife.
- (3) Woman as mother.
- (4) Woman and religion.
- (5) Women not to be killed.

Section V : Social Religious Life

- (1) Food and Drinks.
- (2) Dress and Decorations.
- (3) Customs and Conventions.
- (4) Daily and Periodical duties and ceremonies
(Āhnikā and Ācāra).
- (5) Rules of Purification.
- (6) Supersitions and Beliefs.
- (7) Pastimes.
- (8) Measurement of time.

Chapter : III

Religion

The following topics are discussed in this Chapter in various sections :

Section I : Śaivism

- (1) Bird's eye view : Origin and development of Śiva-worship from the vedic period upto the 12th cent. A.D.
- (2) Meaning of Śivaliṅga.
- (3) Schools of Śaivism.
- (4) Lord Śiva : The following topics are discussed under this head :

Lord Śiva, his eight forms, description of the wives and the children of the eight bodies ; Tāṇḍava dance of Śiva ; Somāskanda, Numerous Rudras; the forms associated with the destruction of the demons; forms representing Śiva as transcending Time and Death; other forms of Śiva (Guhāvāsin, Lakulīṣa) ; Worship of lord Śiva; Mental worship; Temple-worship; Materials of worship; Worship in Maṇḍalas; Śiva's grace.

- (5) Liṅga (Phallus) worship : The following topics are discussed under this head :

Liṅga : Origin of the concept and worship ; The concept of Liṅga as found in the LP; The Purāṇic legends on the origin of the

Liṅga-worship.

Section II : Religious Practices

- (1) Vratas.
- (2) The different penances and practices : Jayābhiseka.
- (3) Dīkṣā in Śiva-worship.
- (4) Dāna.
- (5) Devatā-Pratiṣṭhā.
- (6) Liṅga-Pratiṣṭhā ; Installation of Aghoreśa.
- (7) Places of Pilgrimage.

Section III : Philosophy

- (1) Śiva as a metaphysical entity.
- (2) Account of World creation.
- (3) Yoga-philosophy.
- (4) Pāsupata-yoga : Paśu, Pāśa, Pāsupata.
- (5) Means of Liberation : Jñāna and Bhakti.
- (6) Eschatology, doctrine of transmigration, Heaven and Hell.

