

C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

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The Concept of Purāṇa

Like the concept of the scope of religion, the scope of Purāṇas also is all embracing. The ancient view of religion comprised life in its entirety, nothing was outside its ken, from the most mundane private acts, from the most usual social functions to the loftiest aspirations of the human spirit. The fourfold ends of Hindu life, like the four directions define the entire scope of the horizons of life, however, ever widening it may be:- Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha, and religion which mirrors life, concerns itself with all the four aspects treating none of them to be too mundane to be beneath its notice. This characteristic of religion to cover life in all its aspects is common really speaking, to all religions. This totalitarian trait may denote, perhaps an anxiety on the part of the law-givers of the age that the one engine of directing thought and conduct could brook no rival.

We thus find that all religions scriptures the Vedas, the Bible, the Quran, deal with all facets of life, and do not confine themselves to the spiritual metaphysical, or philosophical aspects only. Another explanation of the all embracing character of early religion may be, that life, initially, was much too simple, almost primitive, in content, in objects and in organisation, and the problems which it posed, were not sufficiently large in scale, to make them individual entities by themselves, but could only be the various facets of a single simple crying need - the need for cohesion and simple formulation of social ends and means. All religions, therefore, seem to start with the more commonly felt problems, the more socially shared difficulties, the bringing of organisation into the chaos and disorder by means of uniform codes of beliefs, conducts, and thought. The greatest of prophets have, therefore, functioned largely as great law-givers - Manu, Mohammad, Moses. Their concern is more to define and give shape to the various problems we now characterise as belonging to the spheres of social, economic and political organisation, and less with philosophical inquiry or spiritual quest. To these prophets, unlike the disturbing questionings of the Upanishadic seers, doubts do not trouble. The spiritual side of their religion, is revealed to them and they are full of a profound conviction, a deep rooted faith in the validity of the vision of their truth. They are strangers to the conflicts,

the struggles, the doubts, which the 'philosophers' had to go through. They do not doubt because they do not only believe in things, the word is given unto them. One cannot help feeling that their heaven, or after life, they promise fits in too well with the scheme of things they desire to prevail on earth, to be anything other than derived from it. This also accounts for the arbitrariness, the procrustean uniformity, and the amazing detail of the injunctions of old religions. Every act, however, wordly or ordinary, is accompanied by a rigorous ritual, whose baffling complexity is designed so much to concentrate all the energies of the mind on the problem of How as to nip the question why. It is also probable that the very arbitrariness, uniformity and complexity of early religions require a constant reference, by their very nature, to Divine sanction for their justification.

Religion, therefore, had to be totalitarian in early society, because religion was everything, and a substitute for everything, State, Society, Art, Prose, Poetry, Culture, Ceremony, Philosophy, Cosmology, History etc. The distinguishing feature of Hindu religion is that while other religions, with their gradual development, shed a large number of spheres which became entities by themselves, and whose separate existence, provided, of course, they did not directly or indirectly oppose the chief religious tenets, was not only tolerated but acknowledged by these religions. Amongst the

Hindus, none of these spheres even though developed in considerable complexity, could completely sever their integral connection with the main body of religious scriptures. In the West, from very early times, the doctrine of "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's" made for a distinction between what was the proper scope of religion and the scope for other sciences and arts. In India, however, all sciences and arts had always to pretend to a basically common religious content.

Even the most wordly treatises like the science of dancing or *kāmasāstra*, or the medicinal or surgical treatises of Charak and Sushruta had to adopt a religious cover. The umbilical chord of some mythological connection by means of any convenient fable kept all these various pursuits joined to the main spring of religion. The secret of this continued hold of religion on all aspects of life and thinking, may lie in Hindu religion itself being eclectic, accepting, and identifying with life as a whole, all inclusive, rather than exclusive, meaning all things to all men, providing within its wild fold, an outlet for every aspiration. The discipline of religion became a discipline of form rather than of content, and the extent ~~at~~ to which all development is consistent with the discipline of form, the former is accepted. This accounts for the long hold of religion on development in all spheres of

thought and activity. Soon, however, the development in various spheres started getting inhabited by the outward crust of observance of religious forms; for example, in another sphere much of the classical chastity of Sanskrit arts and literature may be attributed to the structure of Sanskrit Grammar, and the orthodox canyons. This gave a singular grace, dignity, beauty, precision and a sense of restrained power to best literature, architecture and sculpture of the age. However, soon the limit of utility of these restraints was reached. Thereafter, spontaneous and simple chastity of style were sacrificed for an over-cultivation of the ornamental, the flowery, to the extent of their being frightfully baroque^q and even grotesque, breaking the banks of all sense of function and becoming an end per se. It is likely that the identity of religion with life initially gave cohesion and flowering to life but after a certain stage constricted and inhabited life itself.

The function and place of Purāṇas in this scheme of things are, therefore, in essence, common. They consist of reiterating the fundamental canyons by which various classes in society had to be covered. They are, however, different from the Vedas and the Upanishads in their content. The Hindus have always regarded Truth as Eternal, Sanātana and all that the various sacred books or seers do or can do, is only

to reiterate this Eternal truth in various forms and shapes. This, however, is only the form of things. In actual fact, the Vedas and the Upanishads continually display an unfolding character. New truths are continually coming out. In India by tradition a novel doctrine has no chance unless it establishes some sort of derivative connection with some aspect of the commonly accepted doctrine. Nevertheless, the Vedas and the Upanishads are really speaking, presenting newer & newer doctrines under old names. The Purāṇas, though, a continuation of the same tradition, present a distinct stage. It may be stated, if such a large generalisation can be hazarded, that the Puranas are concerned more with consolidation than with fresh exploration and adventures of philosophical speculation, more to fix the central doctrines of Hinduism by these gathering, a definite shape, into the collective culture and memory of the race, the doctrines of *karma*, the transmigration of the soul, the fixed and functional-cum-hereditary structure of the four castes and the four Ashramas, the worship of the one God in many forms, certain social ideals of an ideal king, ideal husband, ideal wife, ideal Brahmin, ideal Kshatriya etc., more to, so to say, 'popularise' the philosophic conclusions of the Upanishadic age, to base a social, political and economic system on a basis which integrated the hierarchical varṇāśrama system with the most daring flights of philosophical speculation, more to, what in modern parlance may be termed as 'exten-

sion methods' of amazing imagination and ingenuity. If the basic objective of Hindu religion, can be said to produce a cohesion, an integration out of the fantastic welter of beliefs and religions in which the then India was split and to give it a body of beliefs where every tribe or group of people could recognize something of special appeal to it, in other words, if the body of works called Purāṇas (in which I think the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa can be legitimately included) has to be judged by its historical function of giving a cultural and religious unity to the region that was India by initiating an irresistible process of assimilation and integration, I dare say, that the role and achievements of the Purāṇas, on any examination, must be treated as stupendous, almost breath-taking in scale and certainly without parallel in world history. One may even go so far as to state that if the Vedas and Upanishads provided a common body of Philosophy which was shared by the intelligentia all over India, the Purāṇas gave a common body of myth, legend, fable and folk-lore shared by the laity throughout the country. If Sanskrit was the lingua-franca of India, if the Gītā or Upanishads constituted the common doctrine of the Hindus, the Purāṇas provided the common religious and cultural, no less than the spiritual, idiom in terms of which Indians all over India, thought, felt and acted.

Another aspect of the same achievement and historical function of the Purāṇas can be dealt with under the problem of

assimilation. As seems now to be fairly well established, there was a very rich and vital religious and cultural level which the Aryans met. The older belief that India presented a religious and cultural vacuum, in which the vast variety of tribes living in a semi-savage condition, in which religion had barely progressed beyond crude animism, and which presented nothing vital enough to withstand the vigorous, race & colour conscious, exclusive and proud Aryans had after the finds of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa given place to the conclusion that there was a vital Dravidian culture, with very advanced polity, society and economy, with its own highly complex culture and developed religion, not only capable of withstanding, but having, in fact, withstood for a fairly long period the aggressive incursion of the Aryan onslaught. No doubt, then, as now, India was too full of diversity to have a uniform cultural level, and there certainly were a vast variety of people with a vast variety of cultural and religious levels, from the most simple or savage to the most complex or sophisticated. The Aryans brought on this scene of welter, that was India, an onslaught that was characterised by a freshness, vitality, vig^uor, absolute faith in their own superiority of culture, a scorn for the natives of India endemic in most conquerors in history. The early Vedic Hymns show a very long period of internecine warfare to develop. This shows that the then native culture of India did not go down as the ancient scriptures, like all chronicles

of conquering peoples, would have us believing but put up a tough and long fight. It is well-known that there is a vast difference between the Vedic religion and the Hindu religion as it now is and this difference is a witness to the amazing influence that the indigenous religion and culture came to exercise on the Vedic religion. There are at least five prominent features of the Hindu religion which can be distinctly ascribed to the influence of the indigenous culture. These are: (a) the influence of forests (b) worship and temple (c) worship of a Mother goddess (d) worship of Śiva and Phallus and (e) worship of animals and trees. The gulf between the Vedic worship and the Purāṇic religions is a measure of the effort for assimilation.

All Purāṇas have, therefore, certain common characteristics of form, method of presentation, and content which can be attributed to this design or if not conscious at least a sub-conscious sense of function. Firstly, all Purāṇas are for the glorification of one or the other of the numerous deities. The deity thus specially extolled belongs to a Pantheon. The Pantheon, as such is opposed and in constant conflict with another Pantheon so to say, of Demons, Asuras, Rakshasas etc. The conflict between the God-Pantheon and the Devil-Pantheon is a common tradition in all Purāṇas. What is the distinguishing feature is the role that each Purāṇa assigns to its particular deity. The whole thing is strongly reminiscent of

the war histories and memories which followed in the wake of the conclusion of the 2nd World-War. Each of such war histories extolled the part played by a particular allied nation in the war. There was a common tradition of hostility towards the Axis, the body of events which constituted the subject of these histories were also common. The difference was in emphasis, a certain tendency of playing down the part played by nations other than one's own, a glorifying of the part played by one's own nation, and sometimes when some of the histories or memories centre history around this or that personality, the similiarity became rather striking. The second characteristic of all the Purāṇas, therefore, is that they share much common ground of the same body of historical or semi-historical events, or even if not historical there are certain events or incidents which there seems to be common consensus among all, are needed to be fixed in the common body of events or incidents. Thirdly, the scene of action is laid practically all over India, the sojourn of the heroes of the Purāṇas extend in all parts of India. Sometimes the main story concerns the plight of the Hero, the scenes of which are laid in all parts. Rāma goes from Ayodhyā to Ceylon. Krishna moves from Mathurā, Dwārikā to Kāmarup. In fact the Purāṇas on one pretext or another describe as many parts of India as possible. The fourth characteristic of the Purāṇas is that unlike the Upanishads their concern is not solely with the exposition of a philosophical

system, unlike the Epics their concern is not with following and developing the career of the hero, it is rather a combination of three-fold objectives-^{ideals} declaratives, narrative, imaginative. It is concerned with teaching what ought to be done and not to be done by various classes of persons. It is concerned also with narrating the conditions of things as they are. You get long and numerous chapters on the characteristics of peoples - their customs, manners, habits, beliefs. It is concerned with stories constituting characters and events and usually to support a moral. It is also concerned with the pure artistic gift of portrayal for portrayal's sake. These are passages of vivid description, of picturesque poetry, which have no function to play, no message to preach, other than being what they are, in their own light. Yet another characteristic is the portrayal of a lot of similar stuff in religious garbs. Law is both a Moral law as well as a Secular law & all transgression of it is sin, to be expiated by a suitable penalty which is both secular and religious. The consciousness of things wrong and the penalty thereof persist beyond this life just as there is a complex guided system of a variety of sins and the expiation thereof, there is also a guided system of rewards in this and other life, a variety of heavens and hells which, if anything, is more complex and diverse than life itself.

Let us now examine this aspect in further details as under.:-

1. Social Conditions - (a) The four Varnas:- The concept of the four varnas is devised to satisfy various objectives as below:-

- (i) Superiority of Aryan race, and ensuring to it a continued sphere of A domination in the two main determinants of power:- Sacred learning and Military strength.
- (ii) Acceptance of the indigenous peoples in the lower strata of the Varna hierarchy for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of a number of socially useful functions - Agriculture, Trades, Crafts, Servitude.
- (iii) Enabling the Aryans to exclude the non-assimilable classes like some of the Aboriginal tribes, by dividing the indigenous people in the two classes - assimilable who found a place in the social hierarchy as Vaishyas and Sūdras and this presented a stake to them to maintain this social order vis-a-vis the non-assimilable tribes who by the example of these castes, were encouraged to adopt a veneer of beliefs and practices acceptable to Hinduism. Within each caste, ascent and descent was, however, kept fairly fluid, and the phenomenon of rigid crystallization of sub-castes developed considerably later than the Purāṇic age.

Even inter-caste mobility was not totally unknown, but cannot be regarded as common either. The division in the four Varnas was functional, racial, as well as hereditary with a certain margin of mobility. Slavery in this system was recognised though, unlike the Romans, here this property was not held on a large scale.

(b) Marriage:- Like the Varnas, there were four Āśramas prescribed. It seems that in practice only the first two Brahmacharya and Grhastha were most actively practised. The begetting of a male progeny was not only meritorious from this worldly but also from other worldly point of view. Marriages also seem to be more governed by (a) The puberty of the girl, the age rules was more in terms of maximum than minimum. Apparently the Brahmacharya and the study stage for girls were consistently more restricted than boys. (b) Marriages were usually arranged by parents. (c) Marriages were more or less universal. (d) Marriages were within the same caste. (e) Marriages provided scope for what otherwise would be moral aberrations - ^{Paidāca,} Grāndharvya and Rākṣasa forms. The approach seems to be that the fact of married state validated its origins to a considerable extent.

(c) Position of Women:- (i) Female Education:- As has always been the case all over the world, except marriage,

motherhood and house-wifery, women did not have any other career open to them, & their education, such as it was, was also governed accordingly. The Vedic studies were denied. Girls of high families acquired sufficient proficiency in general learning. Vātsyāyana gives a long list of 64 subsidiary 'Anga-vidhāna' which includes, solving riddles, chanting recitations, completing unfinished verses, knowledge of lexicons and metres, sufficient education to frame the annual budget, singing and dancing.

It is a historical fact that except in very undeveloped or very developed societies, the environment does not favour the women to play any part other than that of mother-wife. In very primitive societies, woman has to contribute as much as man towards earning a livelihood. In intermediate stages, economy has not sufficiently developed and conditions are not sufficiently secure for women to play a large role, and man is most concerned to give the necessary security to the state against external threats. In very developed societies, where security has rendered the role of the Military castes minimum, women can come forward to play some part. In this respect Indian conditions have also to be compared with the then prevailing conditions in Greece, Europe etc. India shines by comparison.

The role assigned to Hindu wives is very lofty, but

from the heavy punishment prescribed for sexual transgression, it seems that such transgressions were not only far more frequent than is usually thought, but, it seems that the lot of women who did not adhere to the strict rules does not seem to have been happy. It seems polygamy was prevalent and was not confined to Kings alone. Adultery, according to the Smṛitis, is a lesser Sin, Upapātaka. From a large number of stories etc., in the Purāṇas, it seems it can be concluded that an unchaste wife was accepted provided she did the necessary penances prescribed and was genuinely obedient and repentant. Only in extreme cases, when she had committed adultery with a Sūdra or had borne a child or had attempted to kill her husband, was she abandoned altogether. Vasiṣṭha, Yājñavalkya, Vedāvyāsa, Atri and Devala declare that a woman becoming pregnant by connection with a man of another Varṇa remains impure till her delivery and next period when she regains her purity.

It must be said that the stern and rigid attitude displayed by Hindus in moral matters is a later growth.

Regarding the widows the position may be summed up as they were enjoined to lead a life of strict celibacy and self-restraint. The custom of Satī had started but was hedged in by numerous conditions and restrictions and was far from universally approved or adopted. Remarriage of widows was gradually coming

into disfavour but was not absolutely forbidden. Amar[^]Koṣha gives synonyms for Punarbhu¹"re-married widow".

There was a large class of Ganikās or courtesans who were accomplished and proficient in many arts and who formed sometimes honourable alliances resulting in marriage with citizens, vide Mṛcchakaṭika. There was also a large class of prostitutes in vogue.

Though, comparing favourably with conditions of women in other countries in the same period, the conditions and status of women can be said to have deteriorated compared to the earlier periods in India. Purdah had not yet come into vogue and women were not debarred from exercising public rights. Kātyāyana even gives a right to women to her property.

(d) Life of the people:- 1. Honesty, courage, love of learning and purity characterised the people. The standard of living was very high in the higher classes in aristocracy. There was a distinct urban culture, with palaces for kings and nobility and not inconsiderable mansions of the commercial classes. Śreṣṭhi also coming up. There were summer houses like Samudragrha and fountain houses Dhārāgrha. The Amarakośa gives a long list of ornaments. The clothing of the people was made of silk, muslin, calico, linen and fine wool of two varieties. There was also a very high standard of toilette and personal hygiene. Extensive use of tooth picks, various

recipes for dyeing hair, formulae for different kinds of incense, scented hair oil, hair lotions and other perfumes.. There is repeated reference to sandal juice, camphor and other unguents. The Lākāvatāra Sūtra gives a list of approved foods - Śālī rice, wheat and barley, pulses of three kinds, clarified butter, oils, melasses and raw and coarse sugar. People also took fish and meat and usually also liquor.

There was widespread belief in omens, portents and various superstitions. The well-to-do were supposed not only to be well-versed in the scriptures but also music and musical instruments. In the Purāṇic age, the ideal of a Nagarika who, besides his vocation, used to pursue a life of pleasure, of picnics, dance and music and *Goṣṭhi* is also evidenced.

The relations between teachers and pupils were most satisfactory. The greatest respect and obedience for the teacher, an undurating application to their studies, the concept of studies being both an imparting of learning as well as a training of character, a tender solicitude for the well-being of the scholars on the part of the gurus - these principles generally governed their relation. The syllabus however shows an excessive pre-occupation with scholastic pursuits and an inadequate training in vocational subjects. Study of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, Purāṇa, Nyāya mimāṃsā, Dharmasūtra, Dhanurveda, Gandharva veda, and Arthasāstra must have taxed the pupils sorely. The usual description of the syllabus leaves one with the impression that (a) it is based more^{or}

the principles of exhaustive enumeration of all known arts & sciences than on a practical programme of studies (b) either much of it was not of direct relevance to the life the pupil was called upon to lead and was, therefore, not taught or was unnecessarily taught as the education in important arts and crafts necessary for the development of the economy was considered to be outside the scope, and since these pursuits did not belong to the sphere of Brahmins and Kshatriyas and since the teachers were Brahmins, these arts and sciences were neglected. The evils of an ever-scholastic education without the advantages of similar studies, particularly scientific and vocational studies are a common feature of all educational systems of the age Eastern or Western.

Reading the Purāṇas brings home to one, not only the historical function of assimilation of indigenous peoples and cultures and foregoing a cohesive unity but also the fact that the approach of Hindu religion has been in harmony with the requirements of human nature. There is sometimes a tendency to regard religion as only a spiritual quest. Such exclusive interpretation of religion as "what an individual does with his solitariness", may be a good interpretation of philosophy but cannot be regarded as a faithful function of old religions. I am rather induced to feel that as etymologically explained", "Dharmaṃ dhārayate", religion's main function is to support first and then elevate and for this purpose it cannot only be

spiritual or intellectual or ceremonial or aesthetic but must satisfy all these ways. Huxley in his 'Ends and Means' has adopted the classification of Dr. William Sheldon-Somatonic (p.1-65-Ends & Means), Visceretonie and Ceretrotonic.

"Religion is, among many other things, a system of education by means of which human beings may train themselves, first ~~be~~ to make desireable changes in their own personalities and, at one remove in society and, in the second place, to heighten consciousness and so establish more adequate relations between themselves and the universe of which they are a part....significantly enough, most of the historical founders of religions and a majority of religious philosophers have been in agreement upon this matter. This conception is fundamental in Hinduism, Budhism, and in general in all Indian Philosophy. For the vulgar it provided ceremonial, marginally compulsive formulae, the worship of images, a calendar of holy days. To the few, it taught, through the mouth of the mystics that such external aids to devotion were strong fetters holding men back from enlightenment. In practice Christianity, like Hinduism or Budhism, is not one religion, but several religions, adapted to the needs of different types of human beings. A Christian Church is like a Hindu Temple. The eye is delighted by the same gaudy colours, /the same gesticulating statues, the nose inhales the same tripe like decorations, the same lea intoxicating smells, the ear, and along with it, the understanding, are lulled by the drone of the same incomprehensible

incantations, reused by the same loud, impressive music. At the other end of the scale, consider the chapel of a Cistercian Monastery and the meditation hall of a community of Len Buddhists. They are equally bare; aids to devotion (in other words, fetters holding back the soul from enlightenment) are conspicuously absent from either building. Here are two distinct religions for two distinct kinds of human beings. In consonance with this eternal truth, Hinduism has also prescribed the most lofty worship of the Absolute, and a most complicated structure of the aids to devotion".

"Rationalisations change and with them the rules of conduct based upon rationalisations. But what is rationalised does not change. At most a latent power is developed, the potential is made actual, a technique is discovered for realising and exploring faculties hitherto useless and unrealised. In their likenesses and unlikenesses the men of to-day resemble the men of past. There were introverts and extroverts in the time of Homer, intellectuals and intuitives, visualizers and non-visualizers just as they are now. And in all probability, the relative numbers of individuals belonging to various types have remained more or less constant throughout history. Neither the hereditary differences between men, nor the similarities, have greatly varied. What has varied has been the vehicles of thought and action by means of which the hereditarily constant differences and similarities have been

expressed. The form of institutions and philosophies may change, but the substance that underlies them remains indestructible because the nature of humanity remains unaltered."

Huxley then goes on to distinguish the varieties of surrogates "for religion, as Politics, Ritual, Art, Sex, Business and Cranks. In the old religions, room no doubt had to be made for all these and more". I have quoted Huxley extensively because he brings out the central idea that the essential problem faced by all religions is not only in substance the same, in terms of space as well as time, so that again in essence, the religions of the world are bound to be the same; across continents or across centuries, the same point has been again effectively brought out by Bernard Shaw in the "Androcles and the Lion". Here it has to be noted that Ferrorius a born fighter & Androcles a born lover of animals both are Christians and prepared to die in the name of Christianity. However, but let Shaw speak on this point. "All my anticate Christians the reader will notice, have different enthusiasms, which they accept as the same religion only because it involves them in a common opposition to the official religion and consequently in a common doom. Androcles is a humanitarian naturalist whose views surprise everybody. Ravinia, a clever and fearless free-thinker shocks the Panline, Ferrories who is comparatively stupid and conscience-ridden. Spenthos, the blackguardly devawhee, is represented as one of the typical

Christians of the period on the authority of St. Augustine, who seems to have come to the conclusions that most Christians were what we call the wrong uns".

The moral of all this is simply to show that it takes all sorts of to make the world, that religion must appeal to all sorts of men, and therefore, Purāṇas whose function is to make a universal appeal and to give a cohesive body of belief have diverse strands which would be incomprehensible if the function of the Purāṇas were to be forgotten.

Importance of Purāṇic Studies

Thus, as seen above, the range of themes dealt with in the Purāṇas is Kaleidiscopic, the documentation is far-reaching, bold and comprehensive, and hardly any aspect of Indian culture has remained outside its purview.¹ They constitute an important source of the cultural history of India as they throw a flood of light on the various aspects of the life and time. They occupy an important position broadly speaking between the vedic age and the period of classical literature. They have been influencing the life of the people throughout the centuries and are valuable as supplying the materials for the study of such diverse subjects as religion and philosophy, folklore and ethnology, literature and sciences, history and

1 Agrawal V.S.: Purāṇa Bulletin, Vol. 1, No.2, Editorial.

geography, Politics and Sociology."²

It was at the starting of the Indic studies in the last decades of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries that the Purāṇas were regarded as of no historical value on account of the confusion and conglomeration of legendary and historical events in the Purāṇas as also their peculiar ideas of 'ages' and 'cosmography'.³ But the help which col. Speke received in discovering the course of the river Nile in Nubia (Kusadwīpa) with the help of the Purāṇas⁴ and the pioneer studies by Wilson and Pargiter drew the attention of the scholars to this form of literature and they were considered to be valuable to the historian and to the antiquarian as sources of political history by reason of their genealogies. At all events they are of inestimable value from the point of view of the history of religion, and on account of that alone deserve for more careful study than has hitherto been devoted to them. They afford us far greater insight into all aspects and phases of Hinduism than any other works.⁵ They

2 Pusalkar A.D.: Studies in Epics & Purāṇas, P.XVIII; for the historical value of the Purāṇas, vide Ibid, PP.Ixvi-Ixviii; Dikshitar V.R.R., P.I, Vol.I, Introduction, PP.XXX ff.

3 Pusalkar A.D.: Presidential address, History section, Proceedings & Transactions of the AIOC xviii Session, Annamalainagar, December, 1955, Pt. 1, P.61.

4 Pusalkar A.D.: Op.Cit., P.61

5 Winternitz: A History of Indian Literature, Vol.1, P.524.

may be described as a popular encyclopaedia of ancient and medieval Hinduism, Religious, Philosophical, Historical, Personal, Social and Political.⁶

Further it is well-known that the Śūdras and women were not admitted to the Vedic studies, nor were they permitted to perform Vedic rites. This was, however, compensated by the Purāṇas which consisted in casting the metaphysical truths in the mould of suitable legends, aiming not at brevity but amplification, caring not so much for succinctness as for clarity and popular comprehension.⁷

Purāṇa: Meaning, Definition and Characteristics.

The etymology of the term Purāṇa is given in the Vāya Purāṇa meaning that which lives from ancient times.⁸ The Matsya also describes them as containing "records of past events"⁹. Therefore, originally in the times of the Brāhmaṇa literature, the term 'Purāṇa' signified 'ancient tale' or 'old narrative' but there was no Purāṇa literature as such in those ancient times.

The earliest references to the word 'Purāṇa' are found

⁶ Pargiter: ERE, Vol. X, P. 448

⁷ Agrawal V.S.: Op. Cit., P.118.

⁸ Yasmātpurāṇaḥ kṛtānāṁ purāṇāṁ tena hi smṛtam |
Nihuktamasya yo veda sarvapāpaiḥ phamucyate || Yāgy I. 20:

⁹ Purāṇamasya kalpasya Purāṇāni vidurbudhāḥ | Matsya 52. 63

in the Av. but it is doubtful whether the Purāṇas meant actual books at the time of the Av.¹⁰ The reference in the Chāndogya Upanishad indicates that the term 'Purāṇa' means a definite work¹¹ But the Sūtras refer to the existence of the real Purāṇas.

The classical definition of the Purāṇa mentions the following five characteristics; viz.: Sarga (creation), Pratisarga (dissolution & recreation), Vamśa (divine genealogies), Manvantara (ages of Manu) and Vamśyānucarita (genealogies of kings).¹² None of the existing Purāṇas completely answers the definition. Some contain much more than these while others scarcely touch these and deal with other topics, though one is happy to note that the Br. P. fulfills all the five characteristics, viz.: Sarga (adh.103); Pratisarga (Adhys.231-233), Vamśa & Vamśyānucarita (Adhys. 4,6-17), and Manvantara (Adh.5). Still it must be admitted that the Pañcalakṣaṇa occupies only a short part of the present Br. P. But the later additions such as Dāna (gifts), Vratas (religious observances), Tīrthas (sacred places), Śrāddha (rites in honour of the manes) etc.

10 *Rcaḥ sāmāni chandamāsi Purāṇam yaśaḥ sāha |*
ucchiṣṭhāññajñāsa sarve divi denā diviś'hitāḥ || Av.xi.7.4

11 *sa hovāca Rgveda Bhagavod'hyemi yasurvedam*
sāmavedam ātharvānam | caturtham itihāsa purāṇam
pañcamam vedānam vedam itī | chān.4p. vii.1.2

12 *sargas'ca pratisargas'ca vamśo manvantarāṇi ca |*
vamśyānucaritam caiva purāṇam pañcalakṣaṇam ||

forming the bulk of the contents of the present Br. P. were not covered by the above definition and in order to get over this difficulty, the Purāṇas themselves stated that the Pañcalaksana definition was intended merely for the upa-Purāṇa (minor Purāṇa) and the Mahā-Purāṇa has to satisfy the dasalak-sana definition, which includes these additional topics, viz. Vṛtti (means of livelihood), rakṣā (incarnations of Gods), Mukti (final emancipation), hetu (Śiva, unmanifest) and Apāśraya (Brahman)¹³. It should be noted that the Br.P. also treats of these topics but even this definition does not fully cover all the aspects of the Purāṇa. The Matsya Purāṇa provides a definition approaching nearer to the description of the extent Purāṇas. It states that besides the ten characteristics, the Purāṇas deal with the glorification of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Sūrya and Rudra as also with the dissolution and preservation of the world and with dharma (righteous conduct), artha (economics and polity), kama (erotics) and

13 sargo's yātha vibargaś'ca vṛtti rakṣāntarāṇi ca |
 vams'o vams'yaṇucaritam samsthā heturapāś'rayaḥ ||
 das'abhih lakṣaṇair'yuktam Purāṇam tadvidō viduḥ |
 kecitpañcavidham Brahman mahadalparyasthayaḥ ||

According to MM. H.P. Shastri, these ten characteristics are: creation, details of creation, duties of sentiment beings, Protection of devotees, ages of Manu, dynasties of kings & Rṁsis, career of individuals, dissolution of the world, cause of creation and Brahmā - Des.Cat. of Sanskrit MSS A.S.B., V. Intr., P. LXXVII.

mokṣa (emancipation)¹⁴ . It should be noted that even this comprehensive definition does not cover the topics like tīrthayātrā and others treated of in the Brahma and other Purāṇas. The Purāṇa tradition has all along been floating and dynamic ¹⁵ and we shall see in the second section of this chapter how the Br.P. was subjected to numerous revisions, additions and modifications.

Need for Critical Edition

In spite of the Purāṇas having been given their due place of honour in Hindu religious consciousness they did not receive that amount of reverent care and study. Although, complete vulgate editions of the Purāṇas have been published in Bengali, Telegu and Nāgarī characters, critical editions were lacking and there was no initiative in this matter for quite a long time.

The work of preparing a critical edition of the Mbh. undertaken by the Bhandarkar oriental research Institute some

14 Brahmanīṣṇvarkāṇḍrām māhātmyam bhuvanasya ca ;
sasamhārapradānām ca Purāṇe pañcanamake ||
Dharmas'cāsthas'ca kāmāś'ca mokṣas'ca naitra kīrtiyate |
sarveṣvāpi purāṇeṣu tadviṣuddham ca yatphalam || Mat 53.66-7

15 Pusalkar A.D.: EPZc and Purāṇic Studies, Introduction,
P. XLVII.

16 Chatterji Suniti Kumar - The Purāṇas, Projected Critical
editions by the Kashiraja Trust of Vārāṇasī - Purāṇa
Bulletin, Vol.1, No.1, P.15.

forty years ago is near completion. The Oriental Institute of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda is similarly working on a new and critical edition of the Rāmāyana. The University of Gujarat at Ahmedabad, is preparing a critical edition of the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata Purāṇa, in the same style, as the Māhābhārata of the Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona. It is gratifying to note that the Kasiraja trust of Vārāṇasī has undertaken the task of preparing critical editions of the Matsya-Purāṇa. In addition to the Matsya-Purāṇa, two more Mahā-Purāṇas, the Brahma and the Vāmana, have also been taken up for collation. Several mss. of these two Purāṇas have already been collated. Alphabetical Pada - index of the ślokaś of both these Purāṇas has already been prepared.¹⁷ It is needless to state that as the Br. P. has suffered through many additions and losses and as it seems to be a conglomeration of portions belonging to different periods and written by different hands, a critical edition of it is a long-felt desideratum.

The Br. P. as a Purāṇa, its Place etc.

According to the traditional view, there are eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas and eighteen upa-Purāṇas. Almost all the Purāṇas uniformly mention the eighteen Purāṇas in the same

¹⁷ Gupta Ananda Sharapa, Purāṇa Bulletin, Ibid, P. 20.

order viz.: Brahma, Padma, Viṣṇu, Vāya, Bhāgavata, Nāradya, Mārkaṇḍeya, Agni, Bhaviṣya, Brahmavaivarta, Varāha, Linga, Skanda, Vāmana, Kārma, Matsya, Garuḍa, and Brahmāṇḍa, The Br. P. thus tops the list and is generally recognised as an ādi-Purāṇa.

Viewing from the point of view of the Pañcalakṣaṇa-definition, the Purāṇas can be classified into earlier and later and as the Br. P. treats of many more topics in addition to the five it would be categorised under the section of the later Purāṇas.

According to the classificatory nomenclature based on the preferential treatment to Viṣṇu, Śiva and other deities the Purāṇas are respectively styled as Sāttvika, Tāmasa and Rājasa and according to the classification of the Padma-Purāṇa, the Br. P. is considered to be a Rājasa Purana.¹⁸ It should be classified that though according to this classification the Br. P. is a Rājasa Purana dedicated to Gods other than Viṣṇu and Śiva, the Br. P. in its present form is mainly a vaiṣṇavite work. According to the Matsya, the Sāttvika Purāṇas glorify Viṣṇu, the Rājasa Brahmā and Agni, the Tāmasa Śiva

18 Mātṛyam kauṣṭham tathā laṅgīyam śaivism skāṇḍam tathāiva
 Āgneyam ca śaṭetāni tāmasāni nibodha me |
 Vaiṣṇavam nāradyam ca tathā Bhāgavatam śubham ||
 Garuḍam ca tathā Pādmam Varāham śubhadarsanam |
 sāttvikāni Purāṇāni viṣṇeyāni śubhāni vai ||
 Brahmāṇḍam Brahmavaiivartam Mārkaṇḍeyam tathāiva ca |
 Bhaviṣyam Vāmanam Brahma Rājasāni nibodha me ||

Pad. P. Uttarakhaṇḍa 283.81-84

and those that glorify Sarasvatī and Pitṛas as saṁkīrṇa¹⁹
 Basing his division on later Tamil works, Dikshitar also
 classifies the Purāṇas into five groups viz.:²⁰

- (i) Brahma - Brahma and Padma
- (ii) Sūrya - Brahmavaivarta
- (iii) Agni - Agni
- (iv) Śiva - Śiva, Skanda, Liṅga, Kārma,
 Vāmana, Varāha, Bhaviṣya,
 Matsya, Mārkaṇḍeya and
 Brahmāṇḍa, and
- (v) Viṣṇu - Nārada, Bhāgavata, Garuḍa & Viṣṇu.

It should be stated here that though the Brahma-
 Purāṇa takes its name after Brahmā, it is because Brahmā is
 one of the main narrators of the Br. P. and not because Brahmā
 is eulogised in it. On the contrary the Br. P. provides some
 disgraceful stories about Brahmā. In the Śiva-rahasya
 Khanda of Saṁkara-Saṁhitā²¹ a classification of similar
 nature is given. It is added, however, that the Vishnuite
 Purāṇas teach the identity of Viṣṇu and Śiva and the Br. P.
 teaches the identity of Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu²² and this holds

19 sāttvikeṣu purāṇeṣu mahaṭmāmadhikam hareḥ |
 Rājaseṣu ca mahaṭmāmadhikam brahmanā viduḥ ||
 tadavadagneṣu mahaṭmāmadhikam tāmasiṣu śivasya ca |
 saṁkīrṇeṣu sarasvatyaḥ pitṛāṇāṁ ca nigadyate ||

Matsya 53. 68-69

20 IHQ, VIII, P. 766

21 Winternitz, Op.Cit., P. 572.

22 Shastri Hareprasad, JBoRS, XIV, PP.330-337.

true in case of the Br. P. which states that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are one (130.10).

Dr. Haraprasad Shastri divides the Purāṇas into six groups in accordance with the subject matter: (1) encyclopaedia group; (2) dealing with tīrthas and vratas; (3) that underwent two general revisions; (4) historical group; (5) sectarian works and (6) old Purāṇas revived out of existence,²³ and places the Br. P. in the third group. In the Purāṇas of the third group, the Kernel has been added to twice - at both the ends on each occasion. In the Br. P. Brahmā's interlocation with the Ṛṣis on the mountain is the real Purāṇa. That speech reported by Vyāsa with additions to the Ṛṣis in his hermitage is the second stage.²⁴

Over and above the traditional topics of the Purāṇa, the Br.P. contains chapters on Śrāddha, Dāna, Varṇāśramadharmas and a greater portion glorifies the sanctity of holy places. In fact, the tīrthamāhatmya occupies so major a portion of the Br.P. that it is generally recognised as a tīrtha-Purāṇa. Over and above this there are more than thirty adhyāyas devoted to Kṛṣṇa-caritra. Moreover, many of the Nibandhakāras have drawn upon the Dharmaśāstra material going under name of the Br. P. Whether the passages of the Br.P. quoted by various

24 Shastri Haraprasad, Op. Cit., For a detailed discussion of this topic, vide section II of this chapter.

Nibandhakāras occur in the present Br. P. or not constitute a study by itself.

The well-known dictum of the Puranic lore is contained in the line 'Itihāsapurāṇābhyāṃ Vedaṃ Samupaḅḥhayet'. It gives the key to understand the intimate relationship between the Purāṇas on the one hand and their sources, the vedas on the other. The Br. P. narrates many vaidika stories and genealogies. The Br. P. elaborates many Upākhyānas contained in the Rv., Aiteṛeya Brāhmaṇa, Sāṅkḥyana Br., Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and Bṛhaddevatā. The stories of Bali and Vāmana, Ahalyā, Purūravā-Urvasī episode, Hariścandra & Śunahśēpa, Kāṭha, Arṣṭi-sena, Devāpi, Vṛṣākapi, Saramā, Śaryāti, Kavaśailūṣa, Ātreya & Ātreyaī, Ajigarta, Angirasa, Śākalya, & Abhiṣṭuta are narrated in the Br. P.

The story of Hariścandra, Rohita and Śunahśēpa given in the Aitereya Br. (7.3) & Sāṅkḥyana Brāhmaṇa (15-17) is given with more details in the Br. P. In fact, the similarity which we find in the versions of the Ait. Br. and the Br. P. cannot be found to so great an extent in other works.

Thus the encyclopaedic character of the Br. P. proves that it occupies an important place in the Purāṇic literature and provides ample scope for a study from different points of view.

Date:

The problem of the date of the Purāṇas is very intriguing and controversial. No particular date or period can be assigned to a particular Purāṇa. There are two main difficulties in fixing the date of the Purāṇa: (i) The common chapters that are borrowed by the Purāṇa from earlier Purāṇas. (ii) Numerous additions and interpolations inserted in them.

The Br. P. also suffers from the same difficulties as it contains many chapters which correspond to those of the Purāṇas Vāyū, Mārkaṇḍeya, Viṣṇu, Harivaṃśa, Sāmba and Anuśāsana & Śānti Parvans of the Mahābhārata.²⁵ It is difficult to deduce conclusions as to who is the borrower in the absence of a complete collation of all the chapters from the different Purāṇas. Hence it is more difficult to fix the date of these chapters. (ii) The second difficulty in the Br. P. is regarding its additions and interpolations. The Gautamī-Māhātmya covering a long portion of hundred adhyāyas is a late ^{ad} edition as can be seen from a description of the MSS. given in the Ān. ed. ²⁶

It is a matter of common knowledge that there is not a single date in the Sanskrit chronology which is not or has not been disputed.²⁷ There are different opinions

²⁵ For a table of these common chapters vide section II of this chapter.

²⁶ For a description of these MSS. vide section II of this chapter.

²⁷ Growse F.S., Candā's mention of Śrī Harsa & Kālidāsa, IA., Vol. II (1873), P. 306.

regarding the date of the Br. P. among different scholars.

The Nārādīya P. gives a list of contents of the apocryphal Br. P. tallying with the contents of the Br. P. which shows that the Br. P. was compiled before the compilation of the Nārādīya P.²⁸ . The Nār. P. was written or

28 अक्षं पुराणं सग्राह्यं सर्वलोकहिताय च ।
 व्याख्यानं वेदविदुषां शम्भारच्यातं मद्भक्तिभक्त ॥
 तस्य सर्वपुराणाद्यं धर्मकोशार्थमोद्दिष्टम् ।
 नामान्वयात्तेतिहासोक्तं दशमोद्दिष्टमुच्यते ॥
 तत्पूर्वभागो —
 देवानामभ्युदयान्ध्रं युगोत्थानिप्रकीर्तितः ।
 प्रजापतीनाञ्च तथा दक्षादीनां मुनीश्वर ॥
 ततो लोकेश्वरश्चात्र मुख्यश्च परमात्मनः ।
 वंशानुकीर्तनं अक्षं मद्भक्तिप्रकाशिनम् ॥
 यत्रावलाहः कथितः परमानन्दरूपिणः ।
 श्रीप्रतोतमचन्द्रश्च यत्पुण्यद्वैतारिणः ॥
 ततश्च शोभनं चारुच कीर्तनं यत्र वर्णितम् ।
 कृष्णश्च जगदीशश्च चरितः कवमवापहम् ॥
 क्षीपानाञ्चैव सिन्धुनां वर्ष्मणां वीर्यशेषतः ।
 वर्णनं यत्र पातालस्वर्गाणाञ्च प्रदृश्यते ॥
 तस्मिन् शम्भारच्यातं मुख्यस्तुतिकथानकम् ।
 पार्वत्याश्च तथा जन्म विवाहश्च लिख्यते ॥
 दक्षाश्चान्नं ततः प्रोक्तमेकमक्षरैर्गवर्णनम् ।
 पूर्वभागोऽथमुदितः पुराणश्चाश्च आनन्द ॥
 तदुत्तरभागो —

अस्योत्तरविभागो नु पुराणोत्तमवर्णनम् ।
 विस्तरणं शम्भारच्यातं तीर्थयात्राविधानतः ॥
 अत्रैव कृष्णचरितं विस्तरात् समुद्दीरितम् ।
 वर्णनं यत्रलोकश्च पितृकाण्डविधिस्तथा ॥
 विष्णुधर्मयुगाश्चान्नं प्रलयश्च य वर्णनम् ॥
 वर्णाश्रमाणां धर्माश्च कीर्तितो यत्र विस्तरात् ।
 अक्षवादं समुद्देशः पुराणश्च य शासनम् ॥
 एतदक्षपुराणन्तु आगद्यसोमार्चनम् ।
 वर्णितं सर्वपापघ्नं सर्वसौख्यप्रदायकम् ॥ Nārādīya P. IV. 82 adh.

revised in its present form during the 8th or at least in the beginning of the ninth century A.D., therefore, the Br. P. which is mentioned in it must have existed before that century. Again a comparison of the Purusottamamāhātmya contained in the Br. P. and the Nār. P. shows that the latter has borrowed from the former. Again the Chapters 143-145 of the Anusāsana Parvan also correspond to the chapters 223-225 of the Br. P. and references from the Anusāsana Parvan, viz. idam caivāparam devi Brahmanā Samudāhrtam (143.16) & 'Pitāmahamukhotsrṣtam Pramānamiti me matih (143.18) suggest that the Anu. P. has borrowed from the Br. P.

The numerous quotations made by Jimūtavāhana, Aparārka, Haradatta, Devaṇabhaṭṭa, Kullūkabhaṭṭa, Madanpāla, Śrīdatta Upadhayāya, Candesaṅvara, Rudradatta and many others are not traceable in the present Br. P. which fact shows that it does not seem to have been composed or compiled earlier than the beginning of the tenth century A. D. And as Hemādri, Sūlapāṇi, Vācaspatimīśra, Govindānanda and Raghunandana quote verses from it, it cannot be later than 1200 A.D.²⁹ The Chapters 214-215 and Chapters 216-218 of the Br. P. cannot be later than 1500 A.D. because Govindānanda quotes verses from Chapters 216 & 218 in his Mānakriyākāṇḍī. Many other verses of these chapters are common to the original Br. P. because of

29 Hazra R.C., Purāṇic Records on Hindu rites and customs, PP. 146-152.

the numerous quotations made by Madhavācārya only a few are found in the chapters 214, 215 & 217 of the present Br. P. As none of the quotations made by him on general customs, impurity, funeral sacrifices and penance is found in the present Br. P. though it contains chapters on most of these topics, it is certain that Mādhava used the original Brahma Purāṇa and not the present apocryphal one. The chapters 219-222 should be dated earlier than 1200 A.D. because Govindānanda quotes numerous verses from chapters 219-221 in his *catur śrāddhakriyā-kaumudī* and Hemādri draws upon these chapters in his *caturvargacintāmaṇi*. Thus from the point of view of the various quotations made by different Nibandhakāras, it can be surmised that the Br. P. was compiled between the 10th and the 12th centuries.

As regards the Kṛṣṇa-caritra, Durgasankara sastri opines that the Kṛṣṇa-caritra of the Br. P. shows an intermediate stage and is later than the Harivaṃśa and earlier than the Viṣṇu.³⁰

The problem of fixing the date of chapters describing the holy places in Orissa is rather difficult. In the 176th adhyāya, the greatness of Anantvāsudeva is described. Even at present the temple of Ananta-Vāsudeva exists in Bhuvaneśvara at Orissa. The great Bengali Pandit Bhavadēvabhāṭṭa constructed it in the 11th century. It is surprising to note that

³⁰ Shastri Durgasankara, Purāṇa Vivecana (in Guj.), P. 135.

though the Br. P. describes the creation & greatness of the idol of Anantavāsudeva, it does not refer to its temple. If that temple had been constructed at the time of the compilation of the Br. P., its reference would have been given in it. This shows that the compilation of the Br. P. took place before 11th century.³¹ It is worthy of note that the kalpataru composed about 1110-1120 A.D. does not describe the Puruṣottamatīrtha in its tīrtha-kāṇḍa though it speaks of a few little known tīrthas like Lohārgala, stutasvāmin & kokāmukha.

According to Rajendralal Mitra the oldest temple in Puri is that of Alabūkeśvara built by Lalitendu Kesari (623-677 A.D.), the builder of the tower of Bhuvaneśvara. The next oldest is Mārkaṇḍeśvara and next comes the great temple of Jagannātha.³² According to Manmohan Chakravarti the temple of Jagannātha was built about 1085-1090 A.D. by king Codaganga.³³ Sarkar D.C.³⁴ points out that the celebrated Uriya chronicle Madlā Pāñji attributes the construction of Puruṣottama Jagannātha not to codaganga but to his great grandson Anangabhīma III who also installed an image of Puruṣottama in a temple at Vārāṇasī-Cuttack which was decorated by Sultan Firoz Shah³⁵. Mitra³⁶ and Hunter³⁷ note that Anangabhīma

31 Nagendranath Basu, Visvakosā. (in Hindi), P. 681.

32 Mitra Rajendralal, Antiquities of Orissa, Vol. II., P. 112.

33 J.A.S.B. Vol. 67 for 1898, Part I, PP. 328-331, JASB, Vol. LXXII, 1903, P. 110

34 'God Puruṣottama at Puri - J.O.R., Madras, Vol. 17, PP. 209-215.

35 Elliot & Powson - 'History of India', Vol. III, PP. 312-315.

36 Mitra R., Op.Cit., PP. 109-110.

37 Hunter, Orissa, Vol. 1, PP. 100-102.

wanted to eclipse the grand tower of Bhuvanēśvara and renovated the temple of Jagannātha in sake 1119 (i.e. 1198 A.D.). We cannot put much stress on these suppositions because it is not known definitely that there was no Viṣṇu temple at Purī before the time of Anantavarman Codaganga. The chapters on Purīśottama-kṣetra cannot be later than the middle of the 12th century because many of these are drawn upon by Vācaspati Miśra in his tīrthacintāmaṇi, by śālapāṇi in his dolayātrāviveka and Rāsayātrāviveka and by Hemādri in his caturvargacintāmaṇi. As to the upper limit of these chapters it should be stated that they could not have been earlier than the end of the ninth century A.D. because there is mention of śiva-temple at the side of the Mārkaṇḍeya-lake which was built in 800 A.D. by kuṇḍala-kesarin, king of Orissa. From the mention of sun-temple at Koṇārka in Br. P. (28. 46-7), it may appear that those chapters are later than 1240 A.D. as the sun-temple at Koṇārka was built between 1240 & 1251 A.D. by Narasimhadeva I.³⁸

From the examination of the dates of these various temples it seems probable that these chapters were compiled between ninth and twelfth centuries.

There are other sources of finding the date too. In records of the land-grants verses are quoted which according to Pargiter occur only in the Padma (33. 26-30), Bhaviṣya (10. 164.22

³⁸ Hazra R.C., Op. Cit., PP. 152-154.

and Br. P. (155-59) and hence he concludes that these Purāṇas in which they are found existed before, and even long before the end of the fifth century.³⁹ It is more probable, however, that the verses both in the inscriptions and in the Purāṇas were taken from earlier Dharmaśāstras.⁴⁰ Fleet believes that chronological deductions could be made from the fact that in some of the Purāṇas⁴¹, the planets beginning with the sun are enumerated in the same order in which they appear in the days of the week, which points to the period after 600 A.D.⁴² However, any arguments of this nature are conclusive only for isolated chapters and not for complete Purāṇa texts.⁴³ The enumeration of the castes and tribes of India and surrounding countries may also lead to important results regarding chronology. Thus in the Br. P. (19 18) the Pārasikas are mentioned as an important people. It is well-known that the Persians rose in power in 222 A.D. and continued to rule in middle east till they were over-thrown in a single battle in 634 near Bagdad by the Mohammadans. They often came in contact with India and Kālidāsa in his Raghuvamśa finds them in the neighbourhood of Aparānta, i.e. Gujarat and Sindhu and Kālidāsa's age is the second half of the fifth and the first half of the sixth centuries (450 to 550). Supposing Śata mentions them at that time the speeches of Vyāsa would be earlier.

39 Pargiter F.E., JRAS., 1912, PP.248-255, and AIHT, P.49

40 Keith JRAS, 1912, P. 756.

41 Br. P. 23. 5-10

42 JRAS., 1912, PP. 1046-1053.

43 Winternitz, History of Indian Literature, P. 526.

Brahmā's speech begins with a more elaborate description of the nations and tribes in the 27th chapter, verses 44 & 64, and among them he mentions sakas, Yavanas & Pahlavas and Noldke says, when these are mentioned together in any Sanskrit work the presumption is that it is written between the 2nd century B.C. and the 2nd century A.D., when these nations played an important part in the history of the middle east. In that case Brahmā's speech should be placed in these centuries, i.e. before the speeches of Lomaharṣaṇa. But we are in a position to fix the time of Brahmā's speech more precisely. The sakas are placed in the speech in the Deccan, the words used are Dakṣiṇāpatha and Dakṣiṇātya, and we know, the Khahratas who were sakas, ruled the country around Nasik where they have left many inscriptions which are placed by scholars during this long period, by some in the end of the 2nd century B.C. and by others in the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. So Brahmā's speech may be placed during the period of Indian history when the three Brāhmaṇa dynasties of śūngas, Kāṇvas and śātakarṇis held their sway. Dr. Haraprasad shastri prefers the early part of this period as Pāradas and Pahlavas are both mentioned in the speech and Pārada is the earlier and pahlava is the later name of parthians in Sanskrit.⁴⁴

The Gautamī-Māhātmya (chapters 70-175) is a distinct work by itself and it was attached to the Br.P. later than the chapters on Orissa, for the Nāradiya P. (I. 92) which gives

⁴⁴ Shastri Haraprasad, A. Des., Cat. of sans. mss., A.S.B., V, Introduction, PP. XCiii ff.

the contents of the present Br. P. including the m̄ahātmyas of Puruṣottamakṣetra and Ekāmraṣetra does not mention the Gautamīm̄ahātmya.⁴⁵ In the first century the śātavāhana kings ruled in Deccan. The kings Puṣyamī , Uṣavadāta and Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi and other kings got the epithets like 'dviṣavarakūṭumbavivardhana', 'Brahmanya' and others. From the inscriptions obtained of that period, it seems that some tīrthas like "Rāmātīrtha' etc. had become famous. It can be easily inferred that together with the rise of the Brāhmaṇadharma, the various tīrthas must have come into existence and the various tīrtham̄ahātmyas must have been compiled in order to eulogise the tīrthas. The name of one of the śātavāhana queens was "Gautamī" and some of the kings also became famous as 'Gautamīputra". It is not improbable that the paurāṇika Brahmins favouring Rupaka style must have given the name Gautamī-m̄ahātmya to the eulogy of the river Godāvarī⁴⁶. Dr. Hazra believes that the Gautamī-m̄ahātmya does not seem to have been earlier than the tenth century A.D. and adds that as no other has been found to draw upon this m̄ahātmya, it is impossible to say anything definitely.⁴⁷

The mention of incarnations is considered to be one of the criteria of deciding the age. As regards the mention of incarnations, the position of the Br. P. is rather strange. In it the earlier and later stages are mixed up. Upto the

45 Hazra R.C., Op. Cit., P. 155.

46 Vasu Nagendranath, Viśvakosa (in Hindi), Vol.13, PP. 681 ff.

47 Hazra R.C. Op. Cit., P. 155.

adh. 212, there is a mention of four incarnations, viz. Varāha, Vāmana, Nṛsiṃha and Kṛṣṇa. In the Rāma story, Rāma is described as the son of king Dāśaratha but he is there not called an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Then from the adh. 180-212 the Kṛṣṇa-caritra is described exactly like the Viṣṇu P. and in the adh. 213, the incarnation of paṣṅkara, Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, Dattātr̥ya, Jāmadagnya, Rāma, Dāśarathā, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Kalkin are mentioned. Buddha's name does not appear nor the names of the fish and the tortoise but Dattātreya and Lotus appear instead of them. This list is given in the interlockation between Vyāsa and the Rsis at the kuruksetra which is something like a commentary on the speeches of Brahmā, i.e. in the second stage of the development of the Br. P. The origin of the list of ten incarnations now current can be traced to kṣemendra in 11th century in the same order and to the viṣṇupura cards with slight variations in the order in the end of the 7th and beginning of the 8th century. But here is a list of nine incarnations with no Buddha in it and no tortoise. It must be several centuries older.^{47a}

Shri Kale M. R. in his introduction to the edition of Kumārasambhava states that the account of the Kumārasambhava closely follows that of the śivapurāṇa and kālidāsa seems to have drawn considerably upon the original both in points of fact and language. In a few places he follows the Br. P. and

^{47a} Shastri Haraprasad, Op.Cit., PP. xciii.

the kālīkā P. but later on changes his opinion and states that a great poet like kālīdāsa is not likely to borrow either the exact language or the ideas of such Purāṇas.

There are many similarities: e.g. kumārasambhava 4.4 runs parallel to Matsya 164.256 and Br.P. 38.8. All these three works use the word 'vilalāpa'. Again the stories of Dakṣa insulting Satī, Satī giving up her body and taking birth at Himālaya's house - are available in the present Br. P. and the kumārasambhava I.21 is similar to vāyā 30. 50-55 and Br.P. 34. 20-25. But the Brahma P. differs from the kumārasambhava in the adhs. 34-38. Thus Kāmādeva is burnt after siva's marriage and as a result of the bewailings of Ratī, the boon of the rebirth of kāmādeva as kṛṣṇa's son is granted by lord siva (38. 10-11). The story of the Br. P. here seems to be later than vāyā-purāṇa and older than Matsya-Purāṇa.

The Brahmapurāṇic list of Rāma's ancestors, viz. Rama - Dāsaratha - Aja - Raghu - Dilīpa - agrees with that of kālīdāsa. The drama 'Pratīmā' of Bhāsa also gives the same list.

After analysing the various parts of the Br. P. Dr. Hazra has come to the following conclusions regarding the date of the Br. P.

The date of composition or
rather compilation of the
Br. P.

between 900 & 1200 A.D.

Ch. 25

Spurious

Chs. 28 (1-8), 42 (35 to the end) 43-69, 70 (1-11), 176-177	(Between 900 & 1150 A.D.) Earlier than the chs.of the next group.
Ch.28 (9 to the end) Chs.29-41 & Ch. 42 (1-34)	C. between 950 & 1200 A.D.
Chs. 214-218	Not later than 1500 A.D. probably the same date as that of the composition of the present Br.
Chs. 219-222 Chs. 223-231	Earlier than 1200 A.D. Not Not known definitely. May have come from the same date as that of compilation of the present Brahma.
Chs. 70-175	Not known. Probably not earli- er than the 10th century A.D. ⁴⁸

From the above discussion, it is clear that it is difficult to assign a general date to the Br.P. because the analysis shows that different portions of the Br. P. belong to different periods and thus the date of the Br. P. will have to be spread over a very long period. Prof. V.R.R. Dikshitar⁴⁹ surmises that "the composition of the Purāṇas is to be spread over a long time covering several centuries from the epoch of the age of the Guptas and later. The Purāṇas then constitute a work of various periods in succession. For example one and the same Purāṇa may have been spread up over a long period of some centuries. The kernel of the Purāṇa may have been born in

48 Hazra R.C., Op. Cit., PP. 186-187.

49 Dikshitar V.R.R., P I, Vol. 1, Introduction, PP.xvi-xvii.

the earlier times, and its contents could be amplified in the course of the following centuries.

Thus the major portion of the Br. P. seems to have been compiled between the period of ninth and twelfth centuries though some portions, as stated above, belong to an earlier period.

Home

As regards the place of composition of the Br. P., it should be stated that just as the whole Br. P. does not seem to have been composed by one hand and in one period similarly it does not seem to have been composed at one place.

The then busy centres of religious activities were perhaps the locale of the purāṇa compilations. The chief places of pilgrimage were often thronged by a large number of people from all parts of India and were the best venue for the propagation of this literature. From the detailed glorification of certain places, we may venture to conjecture that a particular version of the Purāṇa sprang up in that centre.⁵⁰

Many chapters of the Br. P. as stated above, correspond to those of the other Purāṇa, therefore, the place of the composition of those chapters could be decided along with the decision of the place of composition of those other Purāṇas. From among the remaining chapters it is clear that the

50 Dikshitar V.R.R., Op.Cit., Vol.I, Introduction, P. XV.

Gautamīmahātmya was composed by somebody living about the river Godāvarī, since it betrays close acquaintance with the minor tīrthas situated on the bank of the river Godāvarī. Similarly the chs. 28-70 and 176-178 on the holy places of Orissa also form one group and seem to have been composed by one who is well acquainted with Orissa. Chapter 25 gives a long list of the names of holy places chiefly of northern India. Though, it mentions the viraja-kṣetra and the Indradymna - saras; the names of Puruṣottama-kṣetra and Ekāmra-kṣetra are conspicuous by their absence. Moreover, this chapter is wholly unconnected with those preceding and following it. So it seems to have been interpolated by someone living outside Orissa.⁵¹ The remaining chapters are not important from the point of view of fixing the place of composition in as much as they deal with the general religious topics like karmā-vipāka (216-218, 223-225), Hells (214-215), worship of Viṣṇu (226-229), accounts of the dvāpara and the future ages (231), there are verses forming introduction of some topics (l. 1-20), 26, 27, 1-10, 235) and forming the concluding chapter of the whole Purāṇa (245).

In chapter 27.43, it is stated that the place to the north of Sahya where flows the Godāvarī is the most charming place in the whole world. This is in the beginning of Brahmā's speech and it shows his predilection of that spot. The work

⁵¹ Hazra R.C., Op. Cit., P. 152.

may have been written here.

Saura-Purāṇa, an Upa-Purāṇa of the Br.P.

The Saura-Purāṇa containing 3899 śloka⁵²s claims to be a supplement of the Brahma-Purāṇa⁵³. It states that the Brahma P. is the first among the Purāṇas containing ten thousand śloka⁵⁴s and telling many holy stories (Saura P. 9.6). One who gives Brahma-Purāṇa in dāna becomes great in the Brahmalo⁵⁵ka after getting freedom from all the sins.

The Saura-Purāṇa is of great value as regards the knowledge of śaivism, especially of the līṅga-cult and its main purpose is to glorify god śiva. Thus from the point of view of contents, there does not seem to be any resemblance between the Saura P. and the present Br. P.

The Br. P. itself is considered to be an Upapurāṇa by Dr. Hazra⁵⁴ basing his belief on the information of Narasiṃha vajapeyīn, a Nibandha⁵⁵-writer of Orissa. But with due deference to Dr. Hazra, it should be said that the Br. P., as stated above, fulfills all the requirements of a mahapurāṇa and there is no reason for its being considered to be an upapurāṇa. Moreover, the Br.P. is never mentioned in the

52 An. ed.

53 idaṃ brahmapurāṇasya khilaṃ sauramanuttamaṃ
Saṃhitādvayasamyaktam Puṇyam śivakathāśrayam "
Saura, P. 9.13

54 Hazra R.C., Op.Cit., P.146.

55 Vajapeyīn Narasiṃha - *
brahmapurāṇam ca kalpatarau yad-vākyaṇyādr̥tani, tad vyati-
riktam brahmapurāṇam Puruṣottama-māhātmyopabṛ̥hitam hemādṛy-
-ādinibandha-parigṛ̥hitam śiṣṭa - parigrahād̥eva Pramāṇam,
tad apy upapurāṇāntaragatam eva" - Nīṭacārapradīpa, P.19.

list of the upapurāṇas, and is always considered to be a mahāpurāṇa.

Section II

After viewing the concept of the Purāṇa in general and the place of the Br.P. in particular, let us now examine the Br. P. from the point of view of its form.

The formal study of the Br.P. leads us to two extremely opposite possibilities: (i) of its being so bulky that it appears to be a conglomeration of the Mahāpurāṇa and upapurāṇa and (ii) of its being so small as to become only a handbook dealing with religion in its original form and later on becoming a collection of other chapters borrowed from different sources. Thus this bi-dimensional form of the Br.P. has made itself quite problematic and hence it needs careful consideration. Therefore, an attempt is made in this section to examine formally the whole of the material prevalent under the name of the Brahma P. and to furnish a framework including the nature and description of the Br.P. so as to help in understanding it in a better way from the literal point of view and to provide a critical estimation of the contents of the Br.P.

The material available at present under the name of the Br. P. is available in three forms: (1) In the form of printed editions (2) In the form of information gathered from

the catalogues and (3) In the form of quotations in different works.

(1) In the form of printed editions: At present four editions are available of the Br.P., viz. (a) The Ānandāśrama edition, (b) The Vaṅgavāsī edition, (c) The Venkatesvara edition, (d) The Gurumandala series edition. (a) The Ānandāśrama edition on which the present study is based consists of 245 adhyāyas and it is prepared from six mss., viz. ka, kha, ga, gha, na and ca⁵⁶. The ms. 'ka' contains all the adhyāyas, the ms. 'kha' and 'ga' omit the Gautamīmāhātmya whereas the mss. 'na' and 'ca' contain only the Gautamīmāhātmya. Again the mss. 'ka' and 'kha' join the first and the second adhyāyas of the Ān. ed.; the ms. 'ka' misses the first 10 ślokas of the 70th adhyāya, the mss. 'ka' and 'ga' omit the nineteenth adhyāya. The ms. 'ga' adds many ślokas in adh. 13 and omits 191. 27-33, the ms. 'gha' begins the Gautamīmāhātmya with the Maṅgala ślokas and the mss. 'gha' and 'ca' miss the ślokas 81-85 of the adh. 85. These are the major peculiarities of each ms. The variant readings and minor peculiarities of every ms. have been noted in the footnotes of the Ān. ed. But as they are too numerous to be noted here they are not taken into consideration. Moreover, they are more useful in the preparation of the critical edition of the Br. P. (b) The vaṅgavāsī press edition (Calcutta): is chapter by chapter the same as the Ān. ed. There are occasional variations in readings and numbers of verses in the

⁵⁶ For details regarding their complete names, vide abbreviations.

corresponding chapters, but these variations are not important and many for our purpose. (c) The venkaṭeśvara steam press edition is available in two forms: (i) It contains the whole Brahma-Purāṇa but instead of the Gautamī-māhātmya after the adh. 69 as given in the Ān. ed., it occurs at the end⁵⁷.

(ii) The other edition of the venkaṭeśvara steam press contains only the Gautamī-māhātmya. It ~~contains~~ consists of one hundred and five adhyāyas and resembles to a great extent to the Ān. ed. The following are its main peculiarities. It joins the adhs. 76 & 77 of the Ān. ed. into one and forms the 7th adh. Again after the^{Adhs.} 107.46, 108-82 and 108.118 of the Ān. ed., the venk. ed. adds many slokas after^{Adhs.} 38.21, 38.87^a and 38.125 respectively. Besides these, there are many other minor differences which should be carefully considered at the time of preparing a critical edition of the Br. P.

(d) The Gurumaṇḍala series, Calcutta, seems to have an intention of publishing the Br. P. into various parts. The first part consisting of 57 adhyāyas is out and follows the Ān.ed. chapter by chapter, and from the table of contents given at the beginning of this edition, it seems that the 8 version of the Br. P. that would be contained in the succeeding parts would also be the same as that contained in the Ān. ed. After discussing the information gathered from various editions, now let us discuss the information regarding the Br. P. from the catalogues of Mss.

(2) Information gathered from the catalogues:

According to the catalogues catalogonon by Theodor Aufreeht, the various mss. of the Brahma Purāṇa contain the following topics.:-

- (i) R̥ṣipañcamīvrata
- (ii) Kālahastīmāhātmya
- (iii) Kodaṇḍamandana
- (iv) Campāsaṣṭhivratākathā
- (v) Nāsikopākhyāna or Naciketopākhyāna
- (vi) Prayāgemahātmya
- (vii) Kṣetrakhaṇḍe Mallārimāhātmya
- (viii) Māyāpurīmāhātmya
- (ix) Rāmasahasranāma
- (x) Lalitākhaṇḍe
- (xi) Lalitopākhyāna
- (xii) Venkaṭagirimāhātmya
- (xiii) Sarasvatīstotra
- (xiv) Hastigirimāhātmya
- (xv) Janmāṣṭamīvrata
- (xvi) Buddhāṣṭamīvrata
- (xvii) Manimandapamāhātmya
- (xviii) Lakṣmīsahasranāma
- (xix) Surjācandravratākathā
- (xx) Hastigirimāhātmya
- (xxi) Godāvarīmāhātmya.

- (xxii) Gautamīgaṅgāmahatmya
- (xxiii) Gautamīmāhātmya
- (xxiv) Puruṣottamāmāhātmya
- (xxv) Karmavipakasaṃhitā
- (xxvi) Mārtandamāhātmya
- (xxvii) Bhāratavarṣavivarana

The first twenty topics are not met with in the present Brahma P. whereas some of the topics resembling serial Nos. XXI to XXVII are found in the present Brahma Purāṇa.

R.L.Mitra describes a Br. P. which consists of two khaṇḍas, Pūrva and Uttara, and is quite different from our present Brahma-Purāṇa. As it mentions the history of Rādhā, her worship, Tulasī's marriage with śaṅkha-cūḍa, the history of Mānasā etc., it must be a very late work.⁵⁸

According to Shri Haraprasad Shastri, the Br. P. in catalogue No. 3450 seems to be a different recension from that of the Ān. edition. The Gautamīmāhātmya is not there and the last chapters on Sāṃkhya and yoga with the interlocation between Vasiṣṭha and Karāḷajanaka are not there. Ch. 19 of the Ān. ed. has become Ch. 17 in the end.

The next number begins as usual but ends with the end of kṛṣṇa-caritra, the 212th chapter of the Ānandāśrama edition.

There are three other compilations called -

⁵⁸ Mitra, a catalogue of Sanskrit mss. in the Library of His Highness The Maharaja of Bikaner, PP. 187-9.

Buddhāṣṭamīvrata (No.3452), Mārgaśīrṣaekādasīvrata (No.3453) and Kārtikamāhātmya (No. 3453^a) which though not found in the An. ed. are said to draw its authority from the Br. P.^{58a}

The descriptive catalogue of the Sanskrit mss. in the Tanjore Maharaja Sartoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tanjore informs us that the Br. P. was printed at Bombay in 1906; and at cidambaram with a translation by V.S.Venkatarama Shastri in 1908. Moreover, the Prayāgmāhātmya, Śrīmaṣṇamāhātmya and Hastigirimāhātmya also form a part of it.

In some mss. the māhātmya of the sacred river Balajā occurs as the uttarakhanda of the Br. P.⁵⁹

The present study does not aim at representing an exhaustive examination of all the mss., firstly, because the whole information regarding all the mss. is not at the disposal of the present writer and moreover it is not necessary also. But this material shows that a critical edition of the Br. P. is a highly felt necessity as it would decide whether all these māhātmyas and other topics belonged to the original Purāṇa or not.

After collecting the information regarding the Br. P. from various catalogues, let us now see as to what information could be gathered about the Br.P. from the various nibandha works.

58^a Haraprasad Shastri, a descriptive catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts.

59 Winternitz, Op. Cit., PP. 533 f.

(3) Information in the form of quotations in different works: Almost all the Nibandha writers have professionally drawn upon the Br. P. which was, therefore, one of the most authoritative works in the whole range of Purāṇic literature. The following Nibandhakāras provide quotations from the Br. P.

- (i) Sūlapāṇi's Delaṣyātrāviveka & Rāsayātrāviveka
- (ii) Vācaspatimisra's Tattvacintāmaṇi
- (iii) Govindānanda's Dānakriyākaumudī & Srāddhakriyākaumudī
- (iv) Raghunandana's smṛtitattva & yātrātattva.
- (v) Hemādri's catārvargacintāmaṇi
- (vi) Nīlakaṇṭhabhaṭṭa's Mayūkha
- (vii) Mādhavācārya
- (viii) Jīmātavāhāna
- (ix) Aparārka
- (x) Haradatta's commentary of the Gautamadharmasūtra
- (xi) Aniruddhabhaṭṭa
- (xii) Ballālasena
- (xiii) Kullūkabhaṭṭa
- (xiv) Madanpāla
- (xv) Sādatta Upādhyāya
- (xvi) Caṇḍeśvara
- (xvii) Rudradhara
- (xviii) Narasiṃha Vajapeyin's Nityācārapradīpa
- (xix) Lakṣmīdharabhaṭṭa's kṛtyakalpataru.

Some of the verses quoted in the ^{works} form 1-vii are traceable in the present Br. P. whereas those quoted in works from viii-xx are not traceable in the present Br. P. 60

The quotations made by the Nibandha writers show that it was a rich store of smṛti materials. The multifarious smṛti topics dealt with in this Purāṇa, appear to have been the following.:- (a) The duties of the Āśramas, (b) General customs and daily duties (Āhnikā), (c) Eatables and non-eatables, (d) Rules of diet, (e) Purification of things, (f) Purification of the body, (g) Funeral sacrifices, (h) Impurity, (i) Bath, (j) Gifts, (k) Duties of women, (l) Different kinds of sins, (m) Penances, (n) vows (vrata), (o) Observances in the different months (māsa-karya), (p) Śrāddhas, and though many of the verses are not common, the present Br.P. also is an encyclopaedia work containing most of the above smṛti-topics. Thus we see that a vast material goes under the name of the Br.P. most of which is not available in the present form which creates doubts regarding the authenticity of the present Brahma-Purāṇa, raises problems as to whether the Br. P. which contained all that material and which is now not available is some work completely different from the present one, whether there is some connection between the two or whether they are two completely independent works and it also leads to the necessity of a careful scrutiny of the Brahma P. in its present form. When the Br. P. is viewed in its present form, it seems that

60 For the details regarding the traceable & untraceable verses, vide appendix No. XII

most of its chapters have been borrowed from various other works; and there is only a small portion which it can claim as its own. It is a conglomeration of chapters mainly corresponding to those of the Viṣṇu P., Mārkaṇḍeya P., Sāmba P., Vāyā P., Harivaṃśa and the Anuśāsana and the Śānti Parvans of the Mahābhārata, as the following list will show:

Br.P. 1 (verses 21-30)	= vis. I, 2, 1-8	
1 (verses 31 to the end)	= HV I, 19 to the end	
2-5	= " I, 2-7	
6-8	= " I, 9-15	
9	= " I, 25	
10	= I, 26 (verses 1-11 & 48-49) and I, 27.	
11-17	= " I, 28-39	
18 (except verses 1-6)		= viṣ. II., 2-7 & 9
19-24		
27 (verses 10 to the end)	= Mark. 57 (except verses 1b, 50-52a & 64b) ⁶¹	
29 (except verses 1-2, 6b 7a, 9b, & 25b)		= Sāmba Ch. 38 (except verses 1-2, 34a & 53b)
30 verses 2b-21		= Sāmba ch.2, verses 2a and 3-21.
30 verses 22-23a, 24-42a, 44		= Sāmba ch.4, verses 3-18, and 20, 24.
30 verses 45, 60a, 62-65 75a, 76-86, 88-92	 	= Sāmba ch.5, verses 1-20, 21b- 23a, Sāmba 24-30, 31b-39
31 verses 1-14a		= Sāmba ch.8, verses 1-13,
31 verses 14b-27		= Sāmba ch.9, verses 1-13a & 14

⁶¹ Hazra R.C., Op. Cit., P. 147.

- Ch.31, verses 29b-38 = Sāmba ch.25, verses 3b-12
- Ch.32, verses 50-54
55b-67a, 68a, 69-73
75a(Partly), 76-79, &
81
I I I I I
= Sāmba 11, verses 1b, 2a, 3b-5a,
= 9-11, 12b, 16a, 19-31, 32a
(Partly), 34b-38, 41
- Ch.32, Verses 89a, 90-92
93b-94, 95b-105, 106-
108
I I I I I
= Sāmba ch.12, verses 5a, 9a,
= 11-20, 22-26, 11, verses 42-43;
12, verse 27.
- Ch.33, verses 1-22a, & 23-31 = Sāmba ch.14, verses 1, 4-17a,
18-24a and 26-34 62
- Ch. 39-40 = vā 30 (verses 7a to the end)
- Brahma - P. 70, 12 to chap. 175 deal with Gautamīmahatmya
which constituted an independent work by itself.
- Br. 179 (except verses ~~1-10 & 66-75~~) = HV I, 40, 8
I, 40, 8_A to the end (except 1-10
and ~~66-75~~) verses 41b-43a, 46b, 56a, 64 and 66a).
- Br. 180, 1-5 (except 3a) = Mārka. 4, 36-40a
- 180, 6-13 = Viṣ. I, 2, 1-8.
- 180, 14 to the end
(except 29-38 & 42a) I I = Mārka. 4, 40b to the end
- 181, (5 ff) - 212 = Viṣ. V, 1 to the end (except
V, 1, 1-11)
- 2 13, 3-9 = HV, I, 40, 1-7
- 213, 10 to the end
(except 216-22a, 131a,
164 & 171) I I I I I = HV, I, 41 (except 12b-c, 15b
19, 21a, 22b, 28c, 49b, 55, 58a,
59, 83a, 11b, 138, 151b, 161-163
and 165-169).

Br. 217 has many verses in common with Mārka. 15.

220, 22-29	=	Mārka. 32. 1-8
220, 33-42	=	" 33, 8b to the end.
220, 69-82a	=	" 30, 12 to the end (except 19b)
220, 82b-99	=	" 31, 1-8
220, 101b	=	" 31, 23b
220, 102a	=	" 31, 25a
220, 105-110a	=	" 32, 28-37
221, 1-109a (except 59b, 77b, 84 and 85b)	=	" 34 (except 17b, 30b, 42b, 68-69a, 74a, 76b-77, 81a, 85b, 88-90a, 92a, 93 and 102-103a).
221, 109b-165a	=	" 35 (except 8b, 33b and 55a)
222, 1-21	=	vis. III, 8, 20, to the end
222, 22 to the end (except verses 51-52)	=	vis. III, 9
223-225	=	Anusāsana Parva adh. 143-145.
230, 1 to the end	=	Vis. VI, 1-2
232, 1 to the end	=	Vis. VI, 3
233, 1 to the end	=	" VI, 4 (except 15b & 49b)

234 (except 69b)	= VI, 5 (except 52-54, 69-78a and 81a) ⁶³
236	= Mbh. (cr.ed.) XII (Sānti Parvan) 231, 232
236	= Mbh. 233
236	= " 238, 239, 240
237	= " 241, 242, 266
238	= " 289
239	= " 290
240	= " 291
241	= " 292
242	= " 293, 294
243	= " 295
244	= " 296 ⁶⁴
& Br.P. 39	= " 274
40	= " 274

If these chapters are left out of **consideration**, those which remain, untraced are unimportant and insignificant in

⁶³ Hazra R.C., Purāṇic Records on Hindu rites and customs, PP. 147-148.

⁶⁴ Br.236-245 on Sāṃkhya & Yoga were traced by F. Otto Schrader in the Sānti Parvan of the Mbh. and published in the Indian Culture (vol. II, 1935-36, PP. 592-3).

number. They are as follows:⁶⁵

Br. 1 (verses 1-20)	=	Introductory verses
18 (verses 1-6)	=	Enumeration of the topics treated of in chaps. 1-17.
25	=	Names of holy places
26 27 (1-10)	I I	= For introducing ch. 27 on Geography
28-38 41-70 (1-11) 176-178	I I I	= Gods & holy places in Orissa.
214-225	=	on hells.
216-217 (Partly) 218	I I	= On the result of actions done, Karma-vipāka
219,220 (verses 1-21, 30-32,43-68,100-101a, 102b-104, 120b-212)	I I I	On Śrāddha
226 -229		On the worship of Viṣṇu
231	I I	Accounts of the Dvāpara & Future ages

Thus from this point of view the bulk of the Br.P. seems to be very small. As regards the common chapters it is difficult to deduce the conclusions regarding which are the original but as Dr. Hazra says, the quotations made by the early

⁶⁵ Hazra R.C., Op. Cit., P. 150.

authors from the Mārkaṇḍeya, Viṣṇu, and Vāya P. show that the chapters borrowed by the Br. P. have been occurring in these Purāṇas from a time earlier than that of the compilation of the present Brāhma P. As to the chapters common to the Vāya, a comparison of them Harivaṃśa and Brāhma⁶⁶ Purāṇas/proves the indebtedness of the Brāhma P. to Harivaṃśa. As to the chapters common to the Br. P. and the Mbh. the priority of those of the latter is unquestionable.⁶⁷ A comparison of the chs. 29-30 of the Br.P. to the corresponding chapters of the Sāmba P. shows that the Br. P. is the borrower.⁶⁸

Description of the Present Br. P.

Thus viewed from the above point of view the bulk of the original Br.P. appears to be too small but as the present thesis is based on the whole text with all its borrowed and non-borrowed chapters, as available in the Ān. ed., an effort has been made here to describe the whole of the Br. P. from its formal point of view. The present Br. P. (Ān.ed.) contains two hundred and forty five adhyāyas containing in all thirteen thousand seven hundred and eighty three slokas. From the point of view of simple description, the Br. P. can be

66 Vā 62,72b-98, HV 1,2,7-27 & Br. 2,7-28a; vā 62,99-193,HV,I, 4,26 ff. to I, 6,44a, & Br. 4,19-110. Vā 63, I-11, HV I, 44b-54 & Br 4, 111-122

67 Hazra R.C., Op.Cit., PP. 149-150

68 For details vide Hazra R.C.; Studies in upapurāṇas, P.83.

divided into many units based on different considerations but here we propose to divide the Br. P. into three units, viz. (a) division according to form i.e. no. of ślokas, (b) division according to the interlocutors, & (c) division according to the contents.

(a) The division according to form consists in dividing the Br. P. into various units according to the number of ślokas contained in various chapters. From this point of view, the Br. P. can be divided into four units: (i) those adhyāyas having more than two hundred ślokas, (ii) those having more than hundred ślokas, (iii) those having ślokas in between thirty and hundred and (iv) those having ślokas less than thirty in number. In the first unit, viz. those having more than two hundred ślokas, there are four adhyāyas.⁶⁹ These adhyāyas contain genealogies, story of Dadhīci and Rāma and śrāddhakalpa. From the scanty number that this unit possesses, it can be concluded that the style of lengthy adhyāyas is not the general trend of the Br. P. (ii) Those having more than hundred ślokas: In all there are nineteen adhyāyas having more than hundred ślokas.⁷⁰ Sometimes the adhyāyas become long because one/containing two independent topics requiring separate adhyāyas are treated under one adhyāya. Thus the adhyāya 221 which ought to be completed at 109a is

69 viz. A. 13 = S'l. 213, 110 = S'l 229; 220 = 212; 123 = 217.

70 viz. adh. 3 = S'l 156; 4 = 122; 7 = 109, 32 = 109, 34 = 104, 36 = 135, 40 = 137, 108 = 123, 122 = 105, 124 = 140, 129=137, 178 = 194, 213 = 171, 214=128, 215=142, 217=118, 219=116, 221=170, 239=112.

completed after S'l 170 because the s'lokas 109b-170 which treat the independent topic of 'eatables' and which should form a separate adhyāya is also included within itself. And we see that the same topics when treated in the Mārka. P.

(Benaras ed.) form two separate adhyāyas, viz. adhs. 31 & 32.

(iii) Those having slokas between thirty and one hundred .

In all there are one hundred and fifty six adhyāyas having slokas numbering between thirty and one hundred.⁷¹ (iv) Those having slokas less than thirty in number. The remaining unit consists of adhyāyas having less than thirty slokas.

There are sixty two such adhyāyas.⁷² The longest adhyāya is hundred and tenth containing two hundred twenty nine slokas and the shortest adhyāya is one hundred and thirty second containing nine slokas. There are two adhyāyas which have been given the same number, viz. 225. From the above analysis, it

71 viz. adh. 1=53, 2=57, 5=64, 6=54, 8=95, 9=36, 10=68, 11=61, 12=51, 14=57, 15=62, 16=59, 17=40, 18=62, 20=99, 21=77, 22=80, 23=44, 25=86, 26=37, 27=80, 28=65, 29=61, 30=92, 31=39, 33=49, 35=64, 37=30, 38=40, 39=87, 41=93, 42=49, 43=88, 44=79, 45=89, 46=30, 47=98, 49=71, 50=59, 51=71, 53=43, 55=35, 56=74, 57=61, 58=77, 59=91, 60=65, 61=57, 65=99, 67=81, 68=77, 69=43, 70=41, 71=42, 72=36, 73=69, 74=88, 75=50, 78=77, 80=93, 86=50, 87=70, 89=47, 90=36, 92=49, 94=50, 95=32, 97=33, 100=31, 104=90, 105=30, 106=58, 107=69, 109=51, 111=86, 125=56, 126=40, 127=64, 128=84, 129=137, 130=34, 131=57, 136=43, 137=41, 138=41, 140=39, 141=30, 146=45, 152=42, 154=34, 157=31, 158=40, 159=49, 161=78, 162=33, 163=53, 164=54, 165=48, 167=33, 168=38, 169=49, 170=89, 171=48, 173=39, 174=33, 175=90, 176=63, 177=30, 179=75, 180=42, 181=53, 182=32, 184=60, 185=56, 187=61, 188=49, 189=58, 190=48, 191=33, 192=86, 193=90, 194=32, 196=45, 200=30, 202=35, 203=73, 206=50, 207=43, 208=39, 210=58, 212=95, 216=89, 218=32, 222=56, 223=65, 224=56, 225=63, 225=67, 226=50, 228=88, 230=93, 231=40, 232=49, 233=70, 234=30, 235=68, 236=89, 237=57, 238=62, 240=57, 241=58, 242=90, 243=48, 244=53, 245=40.

72 viz. adh. 29=S'l 29, 48=12, 52=19, 54=25, 62=23, 63=22, 64=20, 66=23, 76=22, 77=15, 79=21, 81=22, 82=16, 83=29, 84=20, 85=25, 88=26, 91=12, 93=27, 96=27, 98=22, 99=12, 101=20, 103=12, 105=30, 112=28, 113=28, 114=25, 115=20, 116=25, 117=20, 118=32, 119=20, 120=18, 121=16, 132=9, 134=16, 139=20, 142=14, 143=17, 144=27, 145=14, 147=23, 148=27, 149=19, 150=23, 151=29, 153=16, 155=14, 156=11, 160=22, 166=12, 172=20, 183=11, 186=13, 179=20, 199=12, 201=28, 204=18, 205=22, 209=23, 211=12.

can be said that the Br. P. is not very particular about preserving a uniformity as regards the general size of every adhyāya. As viewed above, it has different adhyāyas covering the range from a small number like nine to a big one of two hundred and twenty nine ślokas. Again the examination from the formal point of view does not throw important light for our study but as the study of form i.e. number of ślokas contained in every adhyāya is the most objective way of the whole study, a study of the units from the point of view of form had been undertaken above.

(b) Division according to interlocutors: After discussing the division of the Br. P. according to form, we now come to the second point of view which consists in dividing the Br. P. according to its interlocutors. Generally, we see that the conversational style is employed in almost all the Purāṇas, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyana and other works of a similar nature. In fact, the conversational style dates back to the dialogue hymns of the Rv. We see that some Purāṇas like Agni, Mārkaṇḍeya, Brahmā, and others take their names after the name of their main narrator. Though, Brahmā is the main narrator in the Br. P., he is not the only narrator; there are others like Lomaharṣaṇa, Vyāsa and some completely independent like Maheswara and Vasiṣṭha. In the following pages the details regarding these differences would be noted while discussing the units from the point of view of interlocutors but an inference might be made that as the Br.P.

takes its name after Brahmā, the original Purana might have consisted of only that portion which is narrated by Brahmā.

According to the Matsya, Skanda and Agni Purāṇa, Brahma and Marīci are the interlocutors in the original (or rather earlier) Br. P.⁷³, but in the present Brahma P. we find different interlocutors. The Br. P. itself states that originally the Br. P. was narrated by Brahmā to Dakṣa and others.⁷⁴ Prof. Wilson states that the Br. P. which is related to Dakṣa and that which was related to Marīci cannot be one and the same. But the present Br. P. states that Brahmā and Marīci and other sages are the interlocutors of this Purāṇa⁷⁵ From the point of view of interlocutors, the Br. P. can be divided into following three units:

- (i) Lomaharṣaṇa and Munis: 1-26, 245.
- (ii) Brahmā and Munis: 27-176.
- (iii) Vyāsa and Munis: 178-244.

As Lomaharṣaṇa starts the narration of the Br.P. and ends it he ~~xxx~~ should be said to be the principal narrator. But if viewed from the quantitative point of view, Brahmā occupies the position as the narrator for a major portion of

73 Brahmaṇābhihitam Pūrvam Yāvanmātram maricaye |
Brāhmaṇam Tridaśasāhasram Purāṇam Parikirtiyate "
Mat. 53. 126-139
Skanda vii. 1.2-28, Agni 272-1.

74 Kathayāmi Yathāpūrvam Dakṣādyaṛmunisattamāḥ |
Prṣṭah provāca Bhagavānabjayoniḥ Pitāmahaḥ "Br.P. I.33.

75 Marīcādyaṣṭadā devaṃ prāṇipatyapitāmahaḥ |
Imamarthamrāvarāḥ Prapacchuh Pitaraṃ dvijāḥ "26.25.
Vide Bāṣu ^{na gēnra} ~~Viśva-kṛta~~, Viśva-kṛta, vol. 13, p. 642, the
An. ed. reads Bhṛgu in place of Marīci.

the Br. P. Moreover, as the Br. P. takes its name after Brahmā, he should be considered as the main narrator. Though, it remains a problem as to whether Lomaharṣana is the main narrator, still it does not set aside the claim of Vyāsa who is also among the important narrators of the Br. P. It is Vyāsa who narrates the whole kṛṣṇa-caritra, which is manifestly earlier than the Gautamī-māhātmya narrated by Brahma. Again it seems that the portion narrated by Lomaharṣana is incorporated in the Br. P. later on to give it a Purāṇic form consisting of the five traditional characteristics and a fitting homogeneous conclusion. Again whenever one unit is completed and another begins, the adhyāya which forms the joining link contains some peculiarities. Thus the adh. 26 which completes the unit of Lomaharṣana and Munis introduces Vyāsa who introduces Brahmā and thus the adh. 26 forms the introduction to the second unit consisting of the adhyāyas, viz. 27-176 narrated by Brahmā to the Munis, there are some adhyāyas which offer peculiarities. Thus in the adh. 41 Vyāsa comes to join the link of the preceding portion and the succeeding portion narrated by Brahmā. If the intervention of Vyasa were absent the chapter would be abrupt having no connection either with the preceding or the succeeding chapters and to join this link the name of Vyāsa is already referred to in the adh. 40.135. The same is the case with adh. 177. Upto the adh. 176 the unit of Brahmā and Munis continues and the unit of Vyāsa and Munis begins from adh.178, thus adh. 177.29, which forms introduction to the joining link

of the two units, introduces Vyāsa, the adh. 178 contains both Vyasa and Brahmā as narrators, adh. 179 again introduces the long-forgotten Lomaharsana in order to remind us of his existence and from the adh. 180, the regular narration of Vyāsa starts. Even in the unit consisting of Vyāsa's narration, there are two sub-units, viz. one consisting of the adhs. 223-225 wherein Vyāsa introduces the background and the dialogue between Mahesvara and Umā follows. The second sub-unit consists of the dialogue between Vasiṣṭha and Kārālanaka contained in the adhyayas, viz. 240-244 wherein also Vyāsa in the beginning forms the introduction. As stated before, the chs. 235-244 of the Br. P. are borrowed from the Sāntiparva of the Mahābhārata. These chapters are in the Br.P. contained in a single dialogue between the Munis and Vyāsa, whereas in the Sāntiparva, we find instead Suka and Vyāsa, Suka and Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma. This explains the omission in the Purāṇa of stanzas 4 & 5 of Sāntiparva 291 (cr.ed), as these refer to the death of Bhīma who (and not Vyāsa) is addressed there.⁷⁶ Besides these throughout the Br.P. there are numerous indirect speakers as the characters of the stories narrated by the main narrator are introduced to speak for themselves. The same style is adopted in the other Purāṇas also.

In order to have a clear idea of the above mentioned units, study of each unit should be made independently.

76 F. Otto Schrader, Op.Cit., P.591.

(i) Lomaharṣaṇa and Munis: This unit consists of twenty-six adhyāyas where Lomaharṣaṇa is the narrator and the sages are the inquirers. Such regular chapters where Lomaharṣaṇa & Munis both are present and the whole of the chapter consists of reply to the query made by Munis are not many in number. In all there are nine adhyāyas, viz. 1,3,5,13,18,23, 25,26,245. Ch. 1 being introductory starts with the benediction and description of the Naimiṣāranya where Lomaharṣaṇa starts telling the Purāṇa. There are chapters where one of the parties to the dialogue is not present and they are in a way appended to the preceding chapters, i.e. to say in some chapters the Munis put forth some query the reply of which is given in more than one succeeding chapters. The chapters which come in regular order without break in the unit of the appended chapters again form a unit by themselves. If such a unit is preceded by a regular chapter it becomes a part of the preceding one but if that unit is preceded by an irregular one, the case becomes problematic. The main portion of this unit consists of appended chapters which are sixteen in number, viz. 2,7-12, 14-17, 19-24,

In this unit, the topics are few but important requiring more than one adhyāyas and therefore this unit consists of chapters which are in the nature of 'appendix'. The problems raised by the Munis are so big that they require more than one adhyāyas, therefore the queries are few but the replies contain

more adhyāyas and hence this unit consists of the adhyāyas which for a major portion are of an appended nature.

However, there are two chapters, viz. 4 and 6 which are irregular in the sense that they start abruptly without inquiry.

The colophons also are of different styles. Some mention interlocutors and some do not. Among those which mention the interlocutors there are some colophons which are consistent i.e. the interlocutors mentioned in the colophon and those mentioned in the adhyāyas tally whereas there are others which are inconsistent, i.e. the colophon mentions interlocutors other than those mentioned in the adhyāyas.

In this unit, there are two adhyāyas, viz. 26 and 245 which mention the interlocutors. The others, however, do not mention them. The colophons of the first twenty five adhyāyas do not mention the interlocutors. Among the two adhyāyas, viz. 26 and 245, which mention the interlocutors, the adh. 245 is consistent whereas the adh. 26 needs special consideration on account of the place it occupies in the Purāṇa. Thus the general style of the colophon of this unit is the non-mention of interlocutors in the colophon.

In the first unit consisting of the first twenty-five adhyāyas, Lomaharṣana is the narrator and the Munis are the listeners. From the adh. twenty seven the narrator changes

Brahmā takes the seat of Lomaharṣaṇa. Here the adh. 26 occupies the position of a joining link. Therefore, the adh. 26 starts by a regular query from the Munis answered by Lomaharṣaṇa who introduces Vyāsa and who in his turn transfers the whole burden to Brahmā. Thus herein Brahmā is introduced and a background is prepared for the unit in which Brahmā is to act as a narrator. Thus the adh. 26 due to its peculiar position contains three narrators, viz. Lomaharṣaṇa, Vyāsa and Brahmā. Lomaharṣaṇa now retreats, Vyāsa disappears to take main part later on after introducing Brahmā and Brahmā starts the succeeding narration.

(ii) Brahmā and Munis: The main query in this unit is regarding the tīrthas and therefore the whole unit describes various tīrthas. It is the biggest unit of 151 adhyāyas and justifies the name Brahma-Purāṇa taken after the narrator Brahmā. The regular chapters as defined above are twenty three, viz. 29-33, 38, 45, 46, 48, 65, 67, 68, 71, 73-77, 79, 80, 175-176 in which the Munis uniformly ask a question and Brahmā replies to them. The chapters which have an 'appended' form, as described above, are ninety five, viz. 27-28, 35-38, 40, 42, -44, 47, 49-51, 53-64, 66, 72, 78, 80-174. The appended chapters of this unit differ from those of the previous one in the sense that in the appended chapters of the previous unit, viz. of Lomaharṣaṇa and Munis, the chapters are interrelated in content on account of which they are said to be appended to the preceding regular chapter while here, i.e. in the second unit, we have such chapters and also others which are

not interrelated in content, vide chapters 80-174. Though, the unit consisting of these adhyāyas forms a part of the appended chapters, they are not interrelated from the point of view of contents in as much as though all of them treat of the tīrthas, every adhyāya treats of a tīrtha independently.

There are, however, six chapters which do not come under any scheme referred to above, viz. 34, 41, 52, 70, 170, 177.

The chapter 34 starts abruptly with the story of śiva and becomes the base for three succeeding chapters. Similarly the chapter has little connection with the preceding chapter and Brahmā narrates it without any inquiry. As regards the ch.41, all the three main narrators, viz. Lomaharṣana, Vyāsa and Brahmā gather together in this unit. From the point of view of interlocutors chapter forty-one is exactly similar to the adhyāya twenty-seven in as much as in both the adhyāyas all the interlocutors introduce the narration in the same order. As a big section on the greatness of the river/^{Godāvarī} starts from the adh.70, there is some discrepancy regarding the interlocutors in the adh. 70. Here the account which Brahmā had originally related to Nārada is again reproduced and therefore instead of the Munis, Nārada remains as an inquirer in the following adhyāyas, viz. 70-79 and from the adh. 80 onwards Brahmā alone continues the narration, but at the end, i.e. in the adh. 175 Nārada again resumes his position and concludes the Gautamīnāthātmya and in the adh.176 again the Munis resume the position of inquirers

and Nārada disappears.

The dialogue style of the Br. P. is of course, very clear in this unit yet the colophons do not always mention them. The adhyāyas in which the colophons mention the interlocutors are 64, viz. 27-75, 78, 93, 95, 103-106, 108, 112, 124, 141, 175-177 and the colophons which do not mention the interlocutors are 86, viz. 76, 77, 79-92, 94, 96-99, 101, 102, 107, 109-111, 113, 123, 125-140, 142-174. Among the colophons which mention the interlocutors there are twenty seven which are consistent, i.e. they mention the same interlocutors among whom the dialogue takes place. These consistent colophons are 27-34, 38, 39, 41, 43, 45, 46, 48, 51, 58-60, 63, 65, 66-69, 175, 176. The remaining thirty seven, viz. 35-37, 40, 42, 44, 47, 49, 50, 52-57, 61, 62, 64, 70, 71-75, 78, 93, 95, 100, 103-106, 108, 112, 124, 141, 177. Among these there are thirty colophons, viz. 35-37, 40, 42, 47, 59, 50, 52-57, 61, 62, 64, 72, 93, 95, 100, 103-106, 108, 112 and 124 which mention 'Svayambhvarṣisamvāda' though Brahmā alone continues the discourse. The six adhyāyas viz. 70, 71, 73-75, 78 mention 'Svayambhvarṣisamvāda' though Brahmā and Nārada are the interlocutors in the regular narration. In the adhyāya 177 Brahmā narrates and Vyāsa is introduced but the colophon states that the narration took place between 'Brahmā' and 'Rṣis'. The adhs. 76 and 77 do not mention the interlocutors though the preceding and succeeding chapters mention the interlocutors. The peculiarity to be noted is that most of the colophons are inconsistent. In the

adh. 175, Nārada who had ceased to take part after the adh. 79 again comes up and the colophon mentions him. In adh. 176, the Munis rejoin and the colophon is consistent.

(iii) Vyāsa and Munis:- There are sixty eight chapters in this unit, viz. 178-244. The regular chapters as defined above are 27, viz. 200, 207, 208, 213-226, 228-230, 234-239 and 242. The appended chapters are 41, viz. 178, 180-199, 201-206, 209-212, 221, 225 (II), 227, 231-233, 240, 241, 243 and 244. There are two irregular chapters, viz. 179 and 234.

This unit starts with the adh. 178 which is in an ~~append~~ appended form being connected with adh. 177 which constitutes the last adhyāya of the preceding unit. Vyāsa is introduced in the adh. 177 and starts his main narration from adh. 178.

As regards the irregular chapters, viz. 179 and 234, the adh. 179 forms a joining link between the Puruṣottamakṣetra and kṛṣṇa-caritra and forms the introduction of kṛṣṇa-caritra and though there is no occasion to introduce Lomaharṣaṇa, he is introduced unnecessarily. The same is the case of the adh. 234.

On viewing the unit from the point of view of colophons, there are thirty two adhyāyas which mention the interlocutors. They are 178-180, 211, 214-225, 225 (II), 227, 229-231, 233-236, 238, 240, 242-244. The remaining five adhyāyas, viz. 178, 179, 211, 233 and 241 are inconsistent. Even though,

Vyāsa starts the main narration from adh. 178, the colophon continues to mention 'Svayambhvarṣiṣaṁvāda' and the same is the case of the adh. 179. The adhyāyas 211-233 and 241 are inconsistent because though both the interlocutors are mentioned in the colophons, the adhyāyas mention only the narrator. It seems that all the ancient Purāṇas were revised at some time with the idea that Vyāsa was the writer of all the eighteen Purāṇas and in this revision Lomahaṛṣaṇa, The Sūta, has been brought in the beginning and at end. As regards other debatable points of this unit, vide the beginning of the discussion of the classification based on the interlocutors.

There is a major difference between the unit formed according to the number of ślokas and the unit formed according to the interlocutors in as much as the first one forms an independent unit complete in itself having almost no connection with that formed according to the contents whereas the unit based on the interlocutors provides a close relationship with that based on the contents of the Br. P. in as much as the speakers differ as the subject of discussion changes and this leads us to the discussion of units based on the division of the contents of the Br. P. wherein would be discussed in details the discrepancies regarding the story link and other matters.

From the point of view of contents, the Br. P. has been divided into the following six units: viz. (1) Pañcalakṣaṇas

(ii) Geography (iii) Holy places in Orissa (iv) Gautamī-māhātmya (v) kṛṣṇa-caritra and (vi) Religion and philosophy. These units are formed according to the broad outline, though, the details in the contents may vary. As regards the details of contents vide Ch. II, entitled 'Summary of the Contents of the Br. P.'

Apart from the subjects they treat the units based on contents provide many problems which need special study. Thus there are some stories which are repeated and the versions then are modified. Again there are some adhyāyas which though treating of the same story are divided. Sometimes in continuation of one story, other irrelevant stories are inserted. The chronological order is also sometimes lost sight of, i.e. the event which happens afterwards is stated first and vice versa. There are some adhyāyas, which differ completely from the general style. Most of the colophons mention the contents and are consistent but some of the adhyāyas treat of matters either more or less than what are stated in the colophon.

(i) Pañcalakṣaṇas

This unit consists of twenty adhyāyas, viz. 1-17, and 231-233. Its main topic is to treat the five main characteristics of the Purāṇa, viz. Sarga, Pratisarga, Vamśa, Vamśānucaritṛa, and Manvantara. The adhs. one to three treat of Sarga, the adhs. 231-233 of Pratisarga, the adhs. 4, 6-17 of Vamśa and Vamśānucaritṛa. Both these characteristics are not

treated separately but are joined together; and the adh. 5 treats of the Manvantaras.

These chapters, as stated above, are borrowed from Harivaṃśa and Viṣṇu-Purāṇa. Only the first twenty verses of the first adhyāya and the adh. 231 belong to the Br. P. itself. As regards the adh. 1, it has been observed that the first twenty introductory verses are added by the compiler himself, the verses 21-30 are similar to those of Viṣṇu I. 2.1-8 and the verses 31 to the end are similar to HV I.18.19 to the end. It seems more likely that all the three, viz. Brahma, Hari and Viṣṇu have borrowed from one source.

Again it seems that the five main characteristics which originally constituted the whole contents of a Purāṇa are not given much importance in the Br. P. i.e. the Br. P. does not possess the nature of the Purāṇa as it was originally believed to be but it furnishes a later phase in as much as the topics other than these five Lakṣaṇas, viz. tīrthamāhātmya, worship of Gods, śrāddha, etc. are dealt with at a greater length whereas the Pañcalakṣaṇas are dealt with very shortly.

This unit comes under two units when viewed from the point of view of the narrators. The adhs. 1-17 come under the narration of Lomahaṇṣa whereas the adhyāyas 231-233 are narrated by Vyāsa.

The first two adhyāyas need not have been divided as

the *śṛṣṭīkathana* continues. The Mss. 'ka' and 'ga' do not divide the chapter into two parts. As regards repetitions the story of Dakṣa having many daughters is given in the adh. 2 and 3 but in the adhs. 2.46-49, the exact number of the daughters is not given whereas in adh. 3.25, Dakṣa is said to have sixty daughters. Moreover, the story of Dakṣa having sons is added (3.11 ff.). Again, the story of Prthu which is given in short in the adh. 2, 20-25 is given at length in the adh. 4, thus making the *adhyāya* completely independent. It gives all the details about Prthu and adds the story of milching the earth. The case of adh. 4 appears to be strange in as much as the story of Prthu given in the adh. 2 need not have been repeated in the adh. 4. The adh. 3 is a continuation of the adh. 2 but the adh. 4 has no connection with the adh. 3. Again the *māhātmya* at the end of the adh. 4 also shows that it is an independent *adhyāya* by itself. Moreover, the adh. 4 provides chronological disorder too. Thus it begins with the story of ~~the~~ how Prthu was assigned the kingdom of the world by Prajāpati but in the verse 19, the Munis unnecessarily raise a question and want to know more about Prthu's birth and how he milched the earth thus raising occasion for the narration of the *adhyāya*. Again in the adh. 2.51-53, the Munis raise some questions the answers of which are not given anywhere and the reply of Lomaharṣaṇa which follows these questions does not at all pertain to the questions. The Satyavrata story is narrated

in adh. 7 and adh. 8 and the division of the two adhyāyas in the continuation of the story seems to be unnecessary.

Again the story of the city Vārāṇasī being burnt by the curse of the Sage Nikumbha is given in the adh.11.40-54 and is again repeated in adh. 13. 80-85. As regards the repetitions in genealogies, refer to the Ch. XII entitled 'Dynastic data'.

The story of Jahnu's drinking the water of the river Ganges given in the adh. 10. 15-20 is again repeated in adh. 13. 80-85. The story of Kālayavana's birth at the end of the adh. 14 seems to be irrelevant and here some ślokas which form the connecting link between the previous portion consisting of the genealogies and this portion seem to be missing. The ślokas 48-56 cannot be easily explained and the ślokas 46b-47a do not fit in with the previous ślokas.

The story of Syamantaka jewel given in the adh.16-17 though in continuation of the genealogy of Soma-vamśa seems to start abruptly. The Br. P. starts the kṛṣṇa-caritra with the birth of kṛṣṇa in the later part of the Br.P., viz.in adhs. 180-212 but here kṛṣṇa is represented as a grown-up man hence the chronological order is not paid any attention. As regards the Syamantaka story, though, it is believed to have been borrowed from Harivamśa it seems more to follow in its version the Vayu (96.11 ff). As regards the colophons of this unit it should be stated that the adh. 1 being introductory does not mention the contents in its colophon whereas all other colophons are

consistent from the point of view of contents whereas the adhyāyas 4, 6, 9, 14 and 17 narrate more than what is indicated in the colophon.

(ii) Geography

This unit consists of ten adhyāyas, viz. 18-27. In it the description of the whole world together with its oceans and continents, of the Pātālas, hells and the other three worlds viz. Bhūh, Bhuvah and Svah, of Jambūdvīpa, Bhāratavarṣa and its tīrthas is given. The Purāṇas served an important function in providing geographical information by describing the greatness of various holy places. The Br. P. describes the Bhuvankośa but does not follow the kūrma-vibhāga system as is given by the Mark. P. and others. These chapters are mainly borrowed from Viṣṇu and Mārkaṇḍeya as stated above.

The adh. 19 in this unit describes the Jambūdvīpa and seems to interrupt the lengthy description of geography by its shortness. Moreover, it is missing in mss. 'ka' and 'ga' which give a more emphatic reason for its being added afterwards. Again the adh. 25 gives a long list of the names of holy places and is wholly unconnected with those preceding and following it. The chapter 26 is meant for serving as an introduction to ch. 27 dealing with the geography of India. It, therefore, seems to have been written at the time when ch. 27 was borrowed from the Mark. P. In short, the adhs. 18-27 do not contain any story element but only describes the geographical aspect as

is the general style of the Purāṇas.

The main narrator of this unit is Lomaharsana (18.25) though from adh. 26 Brahmā takes the place of Lomaharsana. As regards the colophons it should be stated that there is no discrepancy except in the adh. 22 in which even though the colophon states 'Pātālanarakā-nukīrtanam' as the contents, still it treats of hells alone, the Pātālas being already treated of in the adh. 26.

(iii) Holy places in Orissa

This unit consists of thirty six adhyāyas, viz. 28-70 and 176-178 and describes the holy places in Orissa. According to Dr. Hazra it should be divided into four groups:

- (i) Chs. 28 (1-8), 42 (35 to the end), 44-69, 70 (1-11) and 176-178 on Puruṣottama-kṣetra or Purī sacred to Viṣṇu.
- (ii) Chs. 28 (9 ff.)- 33 on Konārka sacred to the sun-God.
- (iii) Chs. 34-41 on Ekāmra-kṣetra or Bhuvanesvara sacred to śiva and
- (iv) ch. 42 (1-34) on Virajakṣetra or Jājpore sacred to Devī.

Hunter in the history of Orissa describes it as

follows: "Orissa is divided into four greater regions of pilgrimage. From the moment the pilgrim passes the Naitaranī river on the high road forty miles north-east of Cuttack, he trades on holy ground. Behind him lies the secular world, with its cares for the things of this life, before him is the promised land, which he has been taught to regard as a place of preparation for heaven. On the southern side of the river rises shrine after shrine to śiva, the all-destroyer. To the south-east is the region of pilgrimage sacred to the sun, now scarcely with its matchless ruins looking down in desolate beauties across the Bay of Bengal. To the south-west is the region of pilgrimage dedicated to śiva, with its city of temples, which once clustered, according to native tradition, to the number of 7000 around the sacred lake. Beyond this, nearly due south, is the region of pilgrimage beloved of Viṣṇu, known to every Hamlet throughout India, and to every civilised nation on earth, as the abode of Jagannātha, the lord of world."⁷⁷ The description of Orissa given in the Br. P. tallies with the above description.

It should be noted that the Br. P. refers to the pool of Mārkaṇḍeya (56.73), the vata tree (60.18), the sea (60.10), the Indradyumna pool (63.2-5), the idols of kṛṣṇa, Saṁkarsana and Subhadra (57.22,23,58), Gundicayatra (ch.66), Purusottamakṣetra (177.16,17,24,25) the special Snana festival

⁷⁷ Hunter, History of Orissa, Vol. 1, P. 82.

of Jagannātha on the full moon day of Jyestha (ch.65), Konārka (ch.28), Daman^{at}mañjike (28.53), Ekāmraka (34.40), (41.11), Bindusaras (41.53), Sivakṣetra (41.93), Kapilatīrtha (41.91), Virajakṣetra (42.1-12), Vaitarani river (42.4), the eight tīrthas, viz. Kāpila, Gograha, Soma, Ālābu, Mrtyuñjaya, Kroḍa-tīrtha, Vāsuka and Siddhakeśvara (42.6,7), Virajā mātā (42.1,11), Pañcatīrtha (43.12), (63.1), (61.63-71), Jagannātha (42.37), Utkalakṣetra (42.44-49), king Indradyumna (43.89), Nyagrodha (45.53), story of Indranīla, idol of lord Puruṣottama covered with sand and shrubs (45.71-89), Indradyumnasaras (51.29), Nṛsiṃha-worship (A.58), Mārkaṇḍeyavata (60.11), Dolayātrā (63.18), and Acyutamandira (63.21). All these references are important and significant for the history and religious sanctity of Orissa. Moreover, the story regarding the idols of kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Subhadrā are also important for the traditional history of Orissa.⁷⁸

Again the Br. P. states that the holy Puruṣottama-kṣetra forbids all the wranglings between śaivas and Bhagavatas.⁷⁹ In the description of Jagannātha temple, a cakra is mentioned and the Br. P. also refers to it.⁸⁰

78 For the different versions of this story, vide Sandesara B.J. - Jagannāthapurī and Orissa - (in Guj.), PP.36 ff.

79 Br. P. 56.64-66 & 69-70.

80 51.70-71, cf. also Nāradya P. (Uttara) 55.10-11.

Regarding the adhyāyas 27-43 describing the Sun-worship Dr. Hazra states that the chapters on Sun-worship of the Br.P. are borrowed from the Sāmba-Purāṇa. That most of the verses of the adhs. 29-33 of the Br. P. originally belonged to some other source is proved according to him by the fact that though in the Br. P. (28.5) Brahmā begins, at the request of the sages to describe the place of Koṇāditya or Koṇārka situated in Utkala (or ~~ed~~dradeśa) on the northern shore of the salt-ocean, in chs. 29-33 he is found to describe Mitravana situated on the bank of the candrasarit mostly in the same verses as found in the Sāmba P. and the Bhaviṣya P. no mention being made by him of Koṇāditya, utkala or of the ocean in these chapters.

The story element again starts in the adh. 32. Here Aditi, Dakṣa's daughter prays for a son and thus in connection with Sūrya-worship, the link of the genealogy of Dakṣa's family is established.

The story of Surya-samjna given in the adh.6 is again repeated in the adh.32-48. It is again repeated in the adh.89, the name Samjñā is changed to Uṣā and the names Viṣṭi and Tāpī are added in the progeny of Sun. The minor variations in the stories are not very important.

After treating the Sūrya-worship in the adhs.28-33, the story of siva is introduced in the adh.34 all of a sudden its having no connection with the adh. 33. The case of the

siva story appears strange as it is narrated without any inquiry on the part of Munis but the case becomes explicable when the underlying purpose i.e. to describe the Bhuvaneśvara or Ekāmra-kṣetra among the sacred places of Orissa is taken into consideration. In the adh. 34. 27-33 the story of Dakṣa's birth is given which was narrated in the adh. 2. 34-47, the difference being that here it is said that Dakṣa was reborn as a result of lord siva's curse whereas the story of the curse is not given in the adh. 2. Moreover, here, i.e. in the adh. 34.39 the self born body of Dakṣa in his previous birth is referred to.

The adhyāyas 176 and the following are connected with the adh. 69 as they treat of one and the same topic, viz. holy places in Orissa but they seem to be wrongly separated by the Gautamī-māhātmya inserted between them.

The adhyāyas 176 containing the greatness of Vāsudeva and the adh. 177 containing the greatness of Puruṣottamakṣetra seem to be added afterwards. The story of Kanḍu in the adh. 178 seems to have been added later than Chs. 176-177⁸¹. This story is told by Vyāsa, whereas in all other chapters in Orissa, Brahmā is the speaker. Moreover, the story ~~is~~ is inserted all

81 The charming legend of the Sage Kanḍu is printed in Lassen's 'Anthologia Sanskritica' translated into German by A.W.V. Schlegel, Indische Bibliothek, I, 1822, P. 257 ff. and into French by A.L. Chezy in JAI, 1822, P. 2 ff. The legend is also related in Viṣṇu P. I, 15 - Winternitz, History of Indian Literature, P. 534.

on a sudden without any previous hint, the connecting link being provided by the statement that the sage Kaṇḍu lived at the Puruṣottamakṣetra (1 78. 1,2).

As regards the narrators, it should be stated that all the chapters of this unit except the adh. 178 are narrated by Brahmā whereas Vyāsa is the narrator in the adh.178. Again from the point of view of contents, all the colophons are consistent except the colophon of the adh. 34 which does not mention the contents.

(iv) Gautamī-māhātmya

This unit consists of one hundred and five adhyāyas, viz.70-175, all of them eulogising various holy places situated on the bank of the river Godāvarī. It forms an independent book (Pustakam) by itself. Its style also differs from the general style of the Br. P. In each of its adhyāyas, it takes up one tīrtha and relates the story of the origin of the name given to the tīrtha, after that its importance is described and the merit of visiting it is given at the end. This is the general style of this unit though there are variations.

The idea of visiting tīrthas was not prevalent in the vedic period but it came into existence in the time after the ups. on account of the idea that it was very important for man to visit the holy places, The necessity of eulogising the sanctity of the holy places came into existence. This may be

compared to modern propaganda for tourism. Thus the Mbh. devotes a great portion to the description of tīrthas though it seems to have been added afterwards. In the Br.P., the five chief characteristics of the Purāṇa are dealt with very shortly and mainly it is a tīrtha-Purāṇa.

Apart from eulogising the religious sanctity of the river Godāvarī, the Gautamī-māhātmya is important from the geographical point of view in as much as it furnishes accurate information regarding the area of the river Godāvarī.

That Gautamī-māhātmya is a distinct work by itself is further proved by the fact that the general topics dealt with in Purāṇa, viz. genealogies, creation, dissolution and recreation, the dharmas of varṇa and Āśrama, śrāddha etc. are dealt with before and after the Gautamī-māhātmya.

It is called a highly meritorious Purāṇa declared by Brahmā (Br.P.175.78,87). The place which it occupies in the Br.P. was not meant for it because it divides the chapters on Puruṣottamkṣetra-māhātmya. The way in which ch.176 opens shows that it immediately followed ch.69. Moreover, in ch.176, there is no hint from which we may conclude that the māhātmya was there. In Br. 179,2 the sages refer to Bhāratavarṣa (ch.27) and Puruṣottamakṣetra of which, they say, Vyāsa told them elaborately, but they do not mention the Gautamī-māhātmya which also precedes ch. 179 in our edition. In the venk. ed. it is placed at the end. This māhātmya was attached to the

Br. P. later than the chapters on Orissa, for the Nārādiya P. (I.92), which gives the contents to the present Br.P., including the māhātmyas of Puruṣottama-kṣetra and Ekāmra-kṣetra, does not mention the Gautamī-mahatmya.⁸²

It has its own beginning and its own end. Even after the colophons, the An. ed. separately mentions the numbers of the adhyāyas of the Gautamī-māhātmya. Again as stated above, some mss. like 'ka' contain the whole of the Br. P. whereas the mss. like 'kha' and 'ga' do not contain the Gautamī-māhātmya whereas the mss. 'gha', 'na' and 'caṅ' contain only the Gautamī-māhātmya. We get separate edition of the Br. P. containing only the Gautamī-māhātmya also. All these tend to show that though the Gautamī-māhātmya was a part of the Br. P., it constituted an independent unit by itself. Even so there are discrepancies in it.

Now let us discuss the various points which show irregularities in the story-contents. The adh. 70 forms introduction to the Gautamī-māhātmya. The ms. 'gha' starts the Gautamī-māhātmya with the Maṅgalaslokaś. The adhyāyas 35-36 and 71-72 though containing the stories of Umā-sīva differ in details. In the adh. 35 after relating the story of Dakṣayajñavidhvansa in the cākṣuṣa manvantara, the story of Umā's birth is related but here Umā takes birth not because the Gods were confronted by the danger of Tāraka but because

to get a child was very necessary for one's own good. Moreover, the etymology of the name 'Umā' and the story of how Śiva tests Umā's love for him are given. Further, here the danger of Tāraka is not related. On the contrary, Śiva comes to Pārvatī on his own account and asks her to marry him. Also, Kāmadeva disturbs śiva after his marriage. Ratī is said to be present at the time of Kāmadahana and she asks a boon from Lord Śiva for the rebirth of Kāmadeva.

The same story of śiva and Pārvatī is related in the adh. 71 but the details vary. The Dakṣayajñavidhvaṃsa is not mentioned, the gods request Himavān to give birth to Umā because they were confronted by the danger of Tāraka. The story regarding the etymology of Umā etc. is not given. It is said that Umā practices penance for śiva, but śiva himself never appears before Umā to test her affection as was the case in the first account. On the other hand Kāmadeva and the spring season disturb his penance and Kāmadeva is burnt on that account. Ratī is not mentioned here. This difference shows that the Gautamī-māhātmya ~~clearly~~ clearly differs from the Br.P. This account resembles that of the Kumārasaṃbhava, Rati being added there. Here Pārvatī is not called Umā but she is called Gaurī. The svayamvara of Pārvatī is not mentioned but the marriage of Pārvatī with śiva is arranged. Here too Brahmā performs the marriage rites but the disgraceful story regarding the creation of Vālakhilyas from Brahmā which was not given in

the first account, is introduced here to connect it somehow with the Godāvarī-mahātmya.

In the adh. 8, 53-74 the story regarding the birth of the 60,000 sons of Sagara and their death at being sighted by Kapila is related. The same story is given in adh.78 but the details vary. The story regarding their birth is not different. Moreover, here it is stated that the horse of Hayamedha was carried away by Indra (78-13) but it was tied near Kapila by the demons with an idea that the Gods might be destroyed by Kapila's wrath. In adh. 8.55, Kapila is said to be lord Viṣṇu himself whereas here it is said that in olden times Kapila had helped the gods. He wanted to rest and asked for a proper place and the gods advised him to go to Rasātala; so at the time of Sagara's Asvamedha, Kapila was sleeping in the Rasātala (A similar story regarding king Much^akunda is given in the Br.P. in the adh. 96). In both the adhyāyas it is said that the sons of Sagara were burnt by the lustre emanating from Kapila's eye who was sleeping there but in the adh. 78.21, it is said that the divine speech declared that the horse was in the Rasātala. Moreover, they thought twice before disturbing Kapila but being too proud of their kṣātradharmā, they kicked him and were burnt by him. In the adh. 8, Pañcajana is said to be the remaining child whereas in the adh.78, Asamañja is said to be the remaining child. The story of king Bhagīratha etc. given in the adh. 78 is not referred to in the adh.8, there the main purpose being to count the descendants whereas

here the main purpose is to eulogise the river Godāvarī.

There are cases of chronological disorder too. Thus after dealing with the deeds of Kārtikeya in the adh. 81, the adh. 82 relates the birth of Kārtikeya. Thus it seems that in narrating the Gautamī-māhātmya, the author has not laid much emphasis on the systematic chronological order but he has either narrated the stories according to the order of tīrthas or according to some other order. Again in the adh. 113, it is said that lord Śiva destroyed the fifth head of Brahmā and in the adh. 135 it is said that lord Brahmā spoke a lie with his fifth head.

The anecdote regarding the paring of sun's lustre given in the adh. 6 and the adh. 32 is ~~given~~ again repeated in the adh. 89. The name of Saṃjñā is changed to Usa and the names Tapī and Viṣṭi are also mentioned among the names of children.

The story of Purūravā's birth given in the adh. 7 is again repeated in the adh. 108 but here instead of Ila changing into king Sudyumna afterwards (as was the case in adh. 7), King Ila is changed to Ilā and the episode of Umāvana is introduced.

The story of Satī and Dakṣa's sacrifice, its destruction and Dakṣa's prayer in honour of lord Śiva etc. given in the adh. 34-35 is again repeated in the adh. 109. The general style of both the adhyāyas differs.

The story of the birth of Maruts given at the end of the adh. 3 is again repeated in the adh. 124 but here it is said that Indra cut the embryo of Diti on the advice of the demon Maya.

The story of Kāmadahana given in the adh. 71 is again repeated in the adh. 128 but in the adh. 71 the Gods send Kāmadeva in order to disturb lord Śiva so that he might marry Pārvatī but in the adh. 128, it is stated that when the Gods were confronted by the danger from Tāraka, Śiva and Pārvatī were already married and the Gods send Agni only to report to lord Śiva about the fear of the demon Tārka^a and incidentally the semen of lord siva falls in Agni and Kārtikeya is born. This shows that the Gautamī-māhātmya itself is not homogeneous.

The story of king Prthu's milching the earth given in the adh. 4 is again repeated in the adh. 141 but here the details of milching process are not given.

The story of Yayāti's enjoying the youth of his son Puru given in the adh. 12 is again repeated in the adh. 146 but here it is given in order to eulogise the river Gautamī.

The story of Sunahsepa given in the adh. 104 is again in the adh. 150 but there it was told with reference to Rohita whereas in the adh. 150, the details regarding Rohita etc. are not given but the story is independently developed in order to eulogise the Paisācatirtha. The story of Hariscandra given in

the adh, 104 follows the account of the Aitareya Brahmana.

The story of Soma abducting Tārā given in the adh.9 is again repeated in the adh. 152 but here the story of Brahmā's intervention is not given and the birth of Budha is also not mentioned. On the contrary Brhaspati purifies Tārā by the water of the river Ganges and curses Candra to become crooked.

The story of Rāma is given in a scattered form in the adhs. 123, 153, 157, 176 but it is given in order to eulogise the river Gautamī.

The account of Brahmā's creation given in the adh.1 is again repeated in the adh. 161.

The ślokas 110, 101, 102 & 143. 13,14 are similar and are composed by one hand.

The story of the river Ganges being brought down on the earth by the sage Gautama in the adh. 74, 75 is again repeated in the adh. 175 but in the adh. 175 Vināyaka attaching false blame to the sage Gautama is not given.

In the Gautamī-māhātmya also the adhs. 104, 108, 110-111, 122-124, 128 and 129 differ from the general style and are much longer.

The ending portion of the Gautamī-māhātmya also proves that it was a separate piece independent of the Br.P.

because if it were a part of the Br. P. its eulogy need not have been separately mentioned but would have been included together with the end of the Br.P.

As regards the colophons it should be stated that all the colophons are consistent but the colophons of the adhs. 76 and 77 do not mention the contents.

The extent of the Br.P. is said to be 10,000 ślokas by the majority of the Purāṇas. But the Matsya P. says that it extends to 13,000 ślokas and the Devībhāgavata 14,000. The majority of the Puranas do not think that the Gautamī-mahatmya in 106 chs. and 4,000 ślokas is a part of the Br.P. The Narada P. which gives the table of contents of all the 'eighteen great Puranas says that the Br. P. consists of ten thousand slokas and has two parts and in the table no mention is made of any topic treated of in the Gautamī-māhātmya which divides the rest of the Purāṇa into two parts on account of the place it occupies in the Br.P. The Ān. ed. of the Br.P. with Gautamī-māhātmya counts the ślokas to 13,783 which when reduced to the standard of 32 syllables would make it a little more than 14,000 ślokas.

Leaving aside the Gautamī-māhātmya the Br.P. naturally falls into two parts; the first containing 69 adhyāyas and the second seventy one but the Nārada-purana says that the story of Rāma is to be found in the first part and the sanctity of Puruṣottamakṣetra in the second. But in the Ān. ed. the story

of Rāma is found in a scattered way as mentioned above. So there seems to have been some revision, since the Nārada-Purāṇa was written.

(v) Kṛṣṇa-caritra

The Br. P. refers to kṛṣṇa's birth in the genealogical chapters and the syamantaka-jewel story is also referred to but the regular kṛṣṇa-caritra describing his life from birth to death is given in the adhs. 180-212. From the position which the kṛṣṇa-caritra occupies in the Br.P., it seems that it is somewhat superfluous. But it seems that the kṛṣṇa-caritra was introduced in the Purāṇa, when kṛṣṇa worship was widely prevalent.

The story of kṛṣṇa is given in details in Harivaṃśa, Brahma-Purāṇa, Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, Bhāgavata and Brahmavaivarta and in others it is given in short. Some of the portions of kṛṣṇa-caritra are also narrated in the Mahābhārata. The Harivaṃśa, Brahma-Purāṇa and Viṣṇu-Purāṇa are very similar and it is difficult to opine as to which version is earlier in the absence of a complete collation of all the adhyayas of kṛṣṇa-caritra in all the three Purāṇas. The story of Syamantaka jewel is given in details in the Vāyu P. (A.96) and Matsya (A.46). Moreover, the stories of Kamsa killing the sons of Devaki and kṛṣṇa killing Kamsa, Śālva, Dvivida, Ariṣṭa, Vṛṣabha, Pūtana, Kesi, Kuvalāyāpīḍa, Narkā and

Kālayavana and cutting the hands of Bāṇa (A.98) are given in the Vāyu P. It should be noted that all these stories are dealt with at length in the Br.P. also. The Bhāgavata seems mainly to follow the Viṣṇu P. but many new things are introduced in it, viz. killing of Tṛṇāvarta, kṛṣṇa's showing the whole world to Yaśodā in his mouth, kṛṣṇa carrying away the clothes of Gopis, Saṅkhacūḍa capturing the women of Vraja, etc. In the Brahmavaivarta great emphasis is placed on Rādhā-worship.

Regarding the adhyāyas 179,180 it seems that after the Gautamī-mahātmya, the author wanted to start the kṛṣṇa-story. Before that he connects the Puruṣottama with this portion. But after joining this link he seems to find it difficult to introduce the kṛṣṇa-caritra without any occasion and therefore tries to bring forth the subject of lord Viṣṇu in some way as to form an introduction to the kṛṣṇa-caritra.

The style of kṛṣṇa-caritra in the Br.P. remains uniform and the account is narrated by Vyāsa. The colophons of this unit are consistent except the colophons of the adhyāyas 195, 199 and 204 which do not mention the contents.

(vi) Religion and Philosophy

This unit consists of 30 adhyāyas, viz. 213-230 & 234-245 dealing with topics of religious and philosophical nature.

After the kṛṣṇa-caritra nothing remains to be said and

therefore the Br. P. starts at random to describe various matters. Thus it describes the incarnations of Viṣṇu (A.213), Yama and his hells (As. 214-215), Dharma (A.216), evolutionary rebirths (A.217), Dāna of food (A.219), śrāddha (A.220), Sada-cāra (A.221), Varṇāśramadharma (A.222), Karmavipāka (223-225), worship of Viṣṇu (226-229), Bhaviṣyakathana (A.229,230), Philosophy (234-244) and importance of the Br. P. (A.245).

From the above analysis we can see that thus a great variety of subjects is dealt with in this unit. As regards the colophons, it should be stated that all the colophons are consistent except those of the adhyāyas 226, 236 and 241-243 which do not mention the contents.

Thus, as discussed above, the Br.P. seems to be a conglomeration of the Mahāpurāṇa and upapurāṇa. All the material going under the name of the Br.P. is not found in the present Br.P. and as stated above; there seems to be three distinct layers. Brahmā's interlocation with the Ṛsis on the mountain Meru (Chs. 26-178) is with additions reported by Vyāsa to another set of Ṛsis at Kurukṣetra (179 to 245) and the whole is repeated with fresh additions by Lomaharṣaṇa to the Ṛsis at the Naimiṣa forest. The beginning and end seem to have been added to give a Purāṇic form to the Br. P. The kṛṣṇa-caritra is added at the time when kṛṣṇa-worship was widely prevalent and it is worthy of note that Vyāsa is the main narrator of Kṛṣṇa-

caritra. Each layer has its own discrepancies and as can be seen from the examination of colophons all the units are not added at one and the same time.