In his "Studies in the Upa-purāṇas" Vol. I Dr. R. C. Hazra analyses the Narasimha Purāṇa and discusses its date. In addition to the published text (Gopal Narayana & Co., Bombay 2nd edition, 1911) he utilises a number of manuscripts of this text.

For fixing a date of this Purāṇa, Hazra takes into account the contents of the text, its indebtedness to some other texts, its citation in Smṛti-nivandhas and reference to this work by Alberuni. He holds it to be one of the oldest and most important of the extant Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas (pp. 219, 235).

Though in Ch. 36 of the Narasimha Purāṇa Markandeya promises to speak about the eleven incarnations of Viṣṇu viz., Matsya, Kurma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Parasurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalkin, in the following chapters (Chs. 37-57) he gives an account of ten incarnations except that of Buddha. So Prof. Hazra thinks, the only line "kalau prāpte yathā Budhho bhavet nārāyanah prabhuh" (Narasimha Purāṇa Ch. 36. 9a) is definitely spurious. As pointed out by Hazra (Studies in Upa-purāṇas Vol. I, p. 239) this line does not occur in most of the manuscripts of the Narasimha Purāṇa. The Narasimha Purāṇa knows the group of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu but is quite ignorant of the
Buddha incarnation. Buddha came to be regarded as an incarnation of Visnu towards 500 A.D.; so the date of Narasimha Purāṇa is to be placed not later than 500 A.D.

But this view is not tenable. As pointed out by Kane (H.D. Vol. V part II p.379ff) "It never occurred to Prof. Hazra that sectarian zeal of a bigoted Vaisnava might have never cared to give the life of Buddha who was but antagonistic to the caste system and the Vedas. He might have omitted the story of the life of Buddha even if it occurred in the manuscript from which he copied." Therefore Dr. Kane thinks that Narasimha Ch.36.9 is a genuine verse and enumerates Buddha as an 'avatāra' following the universal belief held in India at least from 9th or 10th century A.D.

This verse (Ch.36.9) is still capable of another interpretation. Excluding Buddha it is the stories of ten incarnations that lead a devotee to Visnu. A devotee may worship any one of these ten incarnations and finally may attain the highest abode of the Lord, but hardly any orthodox work would ever recommend the worship of Lord Buddha, therefore it is quite convincing that the story of Buddha's life has not been given at all or is purposely omitted.

Narasimha Purāṇa Ch.57.3 - Ch. 61 have textual similarities with Hārīta-Samhitā or Laghu - Hārīta -
In p. 260 Prof. Hazra raises a question as to whether it is the Hārita-Samhitā or Laghu-Hārita-Smrti which is incorporated in the present Narasimha Purāṇa Chs. 57-61 or these chapters of the Narasimha Purāṇa are given the character of an independent Smrti work under the title 'Hārita-Samhitā' or 'Laghu-Hārita-Smrti'. In his argument Hazra supports the latter view on the ground that none of the quotations made in their works by Viśvarūpa, Aparārka, Bhava Deva, Jimūtavahana, Devanabhatta and Aniruddhabhattachar from Hārita, Vṛddha-Hārita, Laghu-Hārita, Smrti.¹

Brhadharita and Svalpa-Harita is to be met within the so called Harita-Samhitā or Laghu-Harita-Smrti. Besides, some of the quotations made by Aparārka from Narasimha Purāna are traceable in Harita-Samhitā or Laghu-Harita-Smrti (vide Aparārka's commentary on Yajñavalkya Smrti pp. 79, 125, 153, 189, 365 = Harita Samhitā 3.12; 4. 13-20; 4. 60-61; 4. 71, 72a and 73a; 6. 11b-22). These show that the chapters now known as Harita-Samhitā or Laghu-Harita-Smrti—originally belonged to Narasimha Purāna (vide Hazra, Studies in Upa-purānas Vol. I, p.262).

But this view cannot be maintained. By various Dharmasūtrakāras Harita is often quoted as an authority. About the antiquity of this Smrti named after him (Harita-Samhitā or Laghu-Harita Smrti) it is believed that Harita originally wrote his law-treatise in prose. But the work is not available now and the extant one seems to be a metrical abridgement of the same. By tradition the metrical work is regarded as an authentic treatise on duties in general. The work consists of 7 chapters and contains one hundred and ninety four verses. (In Jivananda's collection Laghu-Harita-Smrti however contains 250 verses). We notice in the prefatory verses of this Smrti-text that the sages request Harita to describe the duties of various castes and orders; and accordingly on all these topics Harita gives his considered opinion. The style of this Smrti is lucid; and the
expressions are clear and distinct. There is thorough discussion on the daily routine of the Brahmacārin, the gṛhaustha, the vānaprastha and the sannyāsin. And in conclusion the seventh chapter deals with the essence of 'yoga'.

Our Narasimha Purāṇa reproduces the entire Hārīta-Samhitā or Laghu-Hārīta-Smṛti without any change just to suit its own theme. When king Sahasrāṇika asks the sage Mārkaṇḍeya to speak to him on the duties of four castes and orders of life, Mārkaṇḍeya goes on narrating what Hārīta in days of yore has propounded before the assembly of sages.

The Purāṇas are always in the habit of incorporating Smṛti passages in their texts. Since the Smṛti-text of Hārīta was very popular because it dealt with all the different aspects like statecraft, daily conduct etc., it is quite possible that the Narasimha Purāṇa has not been able to overcome the Hārīta-Smṛti. Therefore we are rather sure, the Narasimha Purāṇa has borrowed from the Smṛti-text of Hārīta which according to Kane contained verses long before the sixth century A.D. (H.D., Vol.I, part I, p.136).

The Matsya Purāṇa (Ch.53.59-62) refers to four Upa-purāṇas namely Narasimha, Nandi, Sāmba and Āditya. It speaks of Narasimha Upa-purāṇa containing 18,000 verses (tat caṣṭādaśasahasraṁ Nārasimham ihocyate - Ch.53.59). In his Nityācāra
Pradīpa (B.1. Edition) Vol. I, p.18 a later writer like Narasimha Vājapeyin patronised by the Gajapati king Mukundadeva of Orissa (1559-1568 A.D.) also says:

"Prasiddha Nārasimhasya aṣṭādaśa sahasra sāmkhya yadyapi nopalabhyyate, kīcchit kāla kramāt luptam iti pratibhāti."

Therefore it must be admitted that the present Narasimha Purāṇa is not the same old authentic text as referred to by Matsya or Vājapeyin. In 1030 A.D., in his work Alberuni refers to the Narasimha in the list of 18 Purāṇas mentioned by him, but because Alberuni is silent on the contents of Narasimha Purāṇa he refers to, it is difficult on our part to say as to the particular text he came across. It may be the old authentic text referred to by Matsya or it may be the text available at present. But we are sure on this point that by the 10th century A.D. Narasimha Purāṇa had attained wide popularity.

That there was an older text of Narasimha which was larger in extent than the edition available at present, is evident from the following observations:

In his Caturvarja Cintāmaṇi, Vrata-kanda Ch.13 (pp.41-49), Hemādri gives a long extract of 173 metrical lines on

Narasimha-Caturdasi Vrata culled from the Narasimha Purana.

In this extract asked by Prahlada as to how he became a devotee of the Lord, Nrsimha (the Man-lion form of Visnu) relates that in his previous birth Prahlada was the youngest son of Brahmin Susarman living in Avanti and was known by the name of Vasudeva. Unlike his other brothers, addicted to drinking and debauchery Vasudeva was in the habit of stealing gold just to satisfy his evil ends. Once with a prostitute - Vilasini he had a quarrel for which without taking anything he had to keep awake for the whole night. It was a coincidence that the particular night he fasted, was the night of Narasimha Caturdasi, and by virtue of the religious merit so acquired he was born as Prahlada, dear to the Lord. Then requested by Prahlada to give an account of the vrata, Lord Nrsimha gives a detailed exposition of the procedure of (observing) Nrsimha-Caturdasi- vrata.

In absence of this anecdote in the present text, it must be conceded that some other ancient version of Narasimha was the source of Hemadri (1270 A.D.).

Laksmidhara in his Krtya-Kalpataru (1125-1145 A.D.) many a time quotes from the Narasimha Purana. Krtya Kalpataru I. Brahmacarikanda quotes about 3 verses from Ch.59 of Narasimha whereas K. K. II. Grhasthakanda quotes

\[\text{3. K. K. I. Brahmacarikanda, \textit{\`{a}camana} p.127=Nar.P. Ch.58.74.} \text{ K.K.I. Brahmacarikanda, anadhy\={a}ya p.259= Nar.P. Ch.58.109-110.}\]
only one verse from the same chapter. The third kānda called Niyatakāla greatly borrows from Ch.58 of this Purāṇa and the number of verses taken amounts to 37. Besides the Niyatakālakānda (p.451) quotes 2 verses from Narasimha Ch.67 (verses 12-13). The Dānakānda of Kṛtya Kalpataru (pp.269-271) quotes about 14 verses which are found in Narasimha Ch.30.28-37, 40-42 and 44.

The sixth part Vratakānda (pp.84-87) quotes 20 verses from Narasimha Ch.25,2-21 whereas the same kānda borrows


   K. K. III. Niyatakālakānda prātah snāna p.78 = Nar. P. Ch.58.65-70.
   K. K. III. Niyatakālakānda, japavidhi p.91 = Nar. P. Ch.58.77, 85, 87-88.
   K. K. III. Niyatakālakānda, japavidhi p.107 = Nar. P. Ch.58.78b-82.
   K. K. III. Niyatakālakānda, tarpanavidhi p.140 = Nar. P. Ch.59.91b-93.

   Vaiśvādevādi
only six verses from Narasimha Ch.67. The eighth part Tīrtha-viveca-nāṇḍa (pp.173 & 251) takes 60 verses from the present Narasimha Purāṇa, almost all of which are found in Ch.65 (verses 2-30) and Ch.66 (verses 1-9, 20-40, 44). And Mokṣa-kāṇḍa, part XIV of Kalpataru quotes some 49 verses which can be traced in the Narasimha Chs.16, 53, 59, 60, 61 and 62.  

6. K. K. VI Vrata-kāṇḍa, p.3 = Nar. P. Ch.67.9.
K. K. VI Vrata-kāṇḍa, p.310 = Nar. P. Ch.67.7.
K. K. VI Vrata-kāṇḍa, p.369 = Nar. P. Ch.67.10-11.
K. K. VI Vrata-kāṇḍa, p.399 = Nar. P. Ch.67.5-6.

K. K. XIV Mokṣa-kāṇḍa, yatyaśrama; p.32 = Nar. P. Ch.53.36.
K. K. XIV Mokṣa-kāṇḍa, sannyāsavidhi, pp.30-40 = Nar. P. Ch.60.2-11.
K. K. XIV Mokṣa-kāṇḍa, yatidharma, pp.60-61 = Nar. P. Ch.60.12-17.
K. K. XIV Mokṣa-kāṇḍa, dhyeya-svarūpam, pp.194-196 = Nar. P. Ch.61.3-13, 22.
Besides Lakṣmīdhara refers to some other extracts as culled from Narasimha Purāna viz., K. K. I (Brahmacārikānda) p.259, III. (Miyatakālakānda), p.24, p.66 etc. but these passages are not found there in the present edition of the text. This shows that both Hemādri and Lakṣmīdhara had a much longer version before them than the present Purāna.

Narasimha Purāṇa Ch.64 deals with the anecdote of Pundarīka. On a comparison of this chapter with Padma Purāṇa VI, Uttarakhanda Ch.90, we notice that these two chapters are almost identical (vide Appendix pp.107-113).

In fixing the date of Padma, Uttarakhanda, Hazra limits the composition of this text between 900 and 1500 A.D. (Studies in the Purānic records..., p.126). Likewise Narasimha

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3. K. K. I Brahmacārikānda, anadhyāya p.259 -

'niyamānāṃ savam drṣṭvā mahīsthām vā dvijottama'.

K. K. III. Miyatakālakānda, prātaḥsāṅgāna p.24 -

'devakāryaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā....samācara'.

K. K. III. Miyatakālakānda, prātaḥsāṅgāna p.66 -

'nadyām sravatsu ca snāyat....'
Ch. 31 describes the story of Dhruva, which is, to a great extent, textually the same with Skanda, IV. Kāśīkhandā Chs. 19 and 20.99-102 (vide Appendix pp. 55-64). Skanda, Kāśīkhandā adopts ornate poetic style and is full of Śleṣa and Parisamkhya (24.8ff.). Kane is of opinion that Skanda Purāṇa is to be placed between 700-900 A.D. On the basis of the close identity of these two stories with that of Padma or Skanda, is it possible to assume that the Narasimha borrows from Padma or Skanda? Is it not possible, the Padma or Skanda borrowed their respective anecdote from the old authentic Narasimha where these anecdotes might have been present? Or is it not possible that the small tracts like the anecdotes of Satyavān-Sāvitrī, Hariścandra-Śaivyā or Dhruva and Pundarīka were floating among the masses and the redactors of the Purāṇas in course of expanding and enlarging their texts found it very convenient to incorporate these short tracts in their works. Therefore it is not desirable to put much weight on the identity of the stories common to the different Purāṇas.

Tulasi, the holy basil plant is held in high esteem by the Hindus. Its leaves are used for worshipping Viṣṇu, its twig is used as beads for counting the name of the lord.

A devout Hindu usually accepts it as his pious duty to plant a Tulasi in the courtyard; everyday he offers lamp, incense etc. in its honour. Apart from this daily worship, it is specially adored on the full-moon day of Kartika known as 'Rāsa Purnimā'.

We do not come across any account of Tulasi plant in early Purānic texts, we notice Tulasi legend in Brahma vaivarta Purāṇa (Prāktikhanda 2.13-22), Devī-Bhāgavata (IX. Chs. 15-25) and Sīva Purāṇa (2.5.27-41) where Tulasi has been deified and its association with Vaiṣṇavism is a much later development. Since the printed Marasimha text (Ch. 34.19, 23) speaks of utilising Tulasi plant in adoring Viṣṇu-Narasimha, it suggests a late date for this edition.

Raghavan draws the attention of scholars to some passages of Marasimha Purāṇa which have a bearing on its date. The date which he suggests greatly differs from the date fixed by Hazra. Raghavan takes into consideration

10. Tulasīkaraviraiśca... (Nar. P. Ch. 34.19)
Niśchidraih pujayet yastu tulasībhīh samanvitan /
Sarvanāpavinirmuktāh sarvabhūṣaṇabhusitāh //
(Nar. P. Ch. 34.23)
Marasimha Ch. 52.23-32 where Rāma sends Aṅgada, the son of Vālī as a last minute messenger to Rāvana. These lines constitute the dialogues between Rāma and Laksmana or Aṅgada; and they occur in the same sequence in the one-act-play called Dūtāṅgada of Subhata. In the concluding verses 56 though Subhata admits that he has utilised some verses of earlier poets, the connecting passages are his own composition. And we notice that the Narasimha Purāṇa Ch. 52.23-32 is a verbatim reproduction of the play Dūtāṅgada verses 4-10. Even the Narasimha Purāṇa does not drop the stage direction given in the play.

Now as the very prologue shows, Dūtāṅgada was staged at the court of Cālukya Tribhuvanapāla in honour of the former king Kumārapāla (1143-1171 A.D.). Besides in his Kṛti-Kaumūdi (Canto I.24) Someśvara (1st half of 13th cent. A.D.) highly admires Subhata for his happy and skillful combination of words (Subhatena padanyāsah). So Narasimha Purāṇa is not earlier than Dūtāṅgada of Subhata.

Thus we see that different chapters of Narasimha Purāṇa admit of different dates and from several considerations the present edition of the text may be assigned to about 10th century A.D.