SYNOPSIS

Statement - I

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

The Purana-Literature caters for the religious needs of the underprivileged who do not have an access to the study of the Vedas. It was so important that it was styled the "fifth Veda". There are two classes of Puranas viz. Mahapuranas and Upapuranas, each traditionally numbered eighteen. The Linga Purana (LP) is one of the Mahapuranas.

The LP adds to the importance and glory of Lord Siva. Whatever functions and powers of Lord Visnu are sung in the Vaisnava Puranas, the same of Lord Siva are sung in the Saiveite Puranas. Just as there is a description of twentyfour incarnations of Lord Visnu in the Vaisnava Puranas, there is a mention of twentyeight incarnations of Lord Siva in the Linga Purana. Moreover, as the title runs, it has abundant material on the Linga-worship, which thereby amply brings out its importance in the history of Saivism.

The LP is also a main work of the Lingayata school. In this Purana we get the description of Yogamarga, Murtipujä, Sivadiksa, Mantramahatmya, Linga-Mahima, etc. Over and above this,
it has some chapters on some important aspects of Tantrasāstra.

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

The brief summary of the thesis attached herewith will show how the present study tends to add to the advancement of knowledge.
In the preparation of the present work, I have fully drawn upon all the available works, in print and in manuscript. I have acknowledged them at proper places in the Thesis.

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

Prologue:

The following topics are discussed in this Chapter:

1. Importance of the Purānas.
3. Extent of the LP.
4. Title.
5. Author of the LP.
7. Influence of the LP. on later works.
8. Date.
9. The LP. as a Purāṇa, its place, etc.
10. The commentator.
Chapter : II

Society

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

Section I : Social Organisation

(1) Varna and Jati.

(2) Varna system : Brāhmaṇas, śatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.

(3) Āśrama system : The stage of a student, the stage of a house-holder, the stage of a forest-hermit, the stage of an ascetic.

Section II : Marriage

(1) Form of Marriage.

(2) Marriage-rites, celebration of marriage.

Section III : Family

(1) Family, status and position of the father.

(2) Thoughts on conception and birth of a child.

(3) Status and position of the son.

(4) Husband and wife.

(5) Father and Son.

(6) Mores of relation of the daughter-in-law and parents-in-law and other relations.
Section IV: Position of Women

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

Section V: Social Religious Life

(1) Food and Drinks.
(2) Dress and Decorations.
(3) Customs and Conventions.
(5) Rules of Purification.
(6) Supersitions and Beliefs.
(7) Pastimes.
(8) Measurement of time.
Chapter: III

Religion

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

Section I: Saivism

(1) Bird's eye view: Origin and development of Siva-worship from the Vedic period up to the 12th cent. A.D.

(2) Meaning of Sivalinga.

(3) Schools of Saivism.

(4) Lord Siva: The following topics are discussed under this head:

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

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

Līṅga: Origin of the concept and worship; The concept of Līṅga as found in the LP; The Purānic legends on the origin of the
Lingga-worship.

Section II: Religious Practices

(1) Vratas.

(2) The different penances and practices: Jayābhiseka.

(3) Dīksa in Siva-worship.

(4) Dana.

(5) Devata-Pratisthā.

(6) Linga-Pratisthā; Installation of Aghoresa.

(7) Places of Pilgrimage.

Section III: Philosophy

(1) Siva as a metaphysical entity.

(2) Account of World creation.

(3) Yoga-philosophy.

(4) Pasupata-yoga: Pasu, Pasa, Pasupata.

(5) Means of Liberation: Jhāna and Bhakti.

(6) Eschatology, doctrine of transmigration, Heaven and Hell.
Chapter : IV

Mythology

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

Section I: Lord Siva's family

Parvatī, Vināyaka, Kartikeya, Sivaganas or attendants of Śiva, Virabhadra, other Siva-ganas.

Section II

Brahma, Viśnu, Sūrya, Gayatri and Alaksmī.

Section III

Myths and Legends.

Appendices:

(1) Brief synopsis of the LP.

(2) Comparison of ŚSN (Sivasahasranāma), with the epithets of Rudra in the Vājasneyī Sahhitā XVI.

(3) Editions, Translations and Manuscripts.

(4) Stotras in the LP.

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