CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

The forgoing chapters, which discuss the characteristic features of Purāṇa literature in general and Bdp in particular, make it clear that this bulk of literature was always more a live institution than a fixed bulk of texts. It went on growing, revising and amplifying itself. This huge body of literature comprises that different types of texts such as Mahāpurāṇās, Upapurāṇās, Kulapurāṇas, Sthalapurāṇas, and Jaina Purāṇas. Though the term Purāṇa is seen referred to in Vedic texts, there are ample evidences to believe that they assumed the status of a separate class of literature only by the time of Daharmasūtras. These texts are formed through the technical process of Saṁhitākaraṇa, which means collation, collection or compilation of the matters centering round a common tradition. In Purāṇas this process was effected by compiling the four different literary units such as Ākhyāna, Upākhyāna, Gādhā and Kalpaśudhi. The Pañcalakṣaṇa scheme of definition which shows the surface layer of the semantic frame of these texts helped to accomplish their mission and vision to its full extent.

The Bdp which is 18th of the Mahāpurāṇas is one of the oldest text which follows the Pañcalakṣaṇa scheme fully. There are evidences to believe that its main body belongs to 4th century A.D.
The reference of Rādhās the wedded wife of Kṛṣṇa seen in this text proves that additions and adaptations have took place in it up to the 16th century A.D. The Lalitopākhyāna, though it is included in all the available editions now, clearly proves that it is a later addition. Several other texts like Keralamāḥātmya and Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa are traditionally considered to be the part of this text.

This Purāṇa, in its major portions, shows close affinity to Vap. In the Prakriyāpāda and Ānuṣaṅgapāda many portions are taken as such from Vap. Some portions are elaborated by adding stories from Mbh and Rāmāyaṇa. Still some other portions like land reclamation by PR and encounter between PR and Ganeśa seem to be taken from the popular traditions. The Genealogical data of the sages recounted in this Purāṇa has some peculiarities. A large portion containing 37 chapters that describes the exploits of PR, a descendant of Bhṛgu, is included in it. Some other variations like the shifting of the venue of Kārtavīrya incident etc are also effected here by the author. As regards the genealogical accounts of royal dynasties, Bdp, like all other Purāṇas, divides them into three faces: Dynasties before the Mbh war, contemporary dynasties and future dynasties. The lineage of Puru is not included in the ancient Indian dynasties.

The historians and scholars in the field of Puranology have
pointed out the importance of this bulk of literature in the field of the study of ancient and medieval social history of India. *Bdp* also gives some gleanings in this regard. As a text that had been subjected to additions and modifications up to the 16th century A. D, it presents the socio-cultural environment of ancient and medieval India to a large span of time.

The new findings that are evolved from the study can be summarized as follows:

1. Changing scenario in the nature and content of the Purāṇas is traced out.
2. The nature and content of Kulapurāṇas and Sthalapurāṇas are discussed and their importance in the study of Indian culture is pointed out.
3. The syntactic nature and the Pañcalakṣaṇa of Purāṇas are analyzed critically and their functions in the propagation of Purāṇic ideology are discussed.
4. An in-depth study of the textual material and content of the text is carried out basing on the different editions and translations of *Bdp*.
5. The genealogical data of sages recounted in the text is subjected to close analysis and their peculiarity in *Bdp* is traced out.
6. The origin and development of PR legend is discussed in detail. New episodes incorporated it and the objectives of their incorporations are
also subjected to study.

7. The Vaṃśānucarita section of Bdp has been subjected to a thorough analysis giving focus to the minor episodes and sub-stories which form the effective tools for the propagation of the Brahmaṇic ideas and ideals in Purāṇas.

8. Historical- social and cultural aspects gleaned in the Vaṃśa and Vaṃśānucarita portions of Bdp are traced out.

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