Chapter-3: Introduction to Purāṇas

3.1. Major Purāṇas

The study of Yoga tenets in Purāṇas is mainly based upon eighteen major Purāṇas and some available minor Purāṇas. Hence in this chapter general introduction to Purāṇas is presented as collected from some standard works of earlier scholars like Prof. H.H.Wilson, R.C.Hazra, MM.P.V.Kane, Pt.Baladeva Upadhyaya, etc. The eighteen major Purāṇas are enumerated in the famous verse.

मद्यमं भद्रं स्वस्वस्वद्रं क्षणगुणिनि पुराणानि पृथक पृथक्।

1) Brahmapurāṇa:

The Brahmapurāṇa is the first of the eighteen Purāṇa. The Brahmapurāṇa may be regarded as the earliest of the series, at least in the estimation of the writers of the Purāṇa. According to Balambhaṭṭa, it is consequently known by the name of Ādi or First Purāṇa. It is said to contain 245 adhyāyas and twenty-five thousand verses. Dr.Wilson opines that the actual number is about seven thousand five hundred.

The verses of the Brahmapurāṇa, forming an address to Hari and Puruṣottama, clearly declare its sectarial character and indicate it to be a Vaiṣṇava work. It does not figure in the list of Vaiṣṇavapurāṇas as given by the Padmapurāṇa but is referred to in the Śākta class, in which the worship of Śakti, the personified female principle, is more particularly inculcated, and in which Rajas (passion) is predominant.

On being asked by the sages to narrate them an account of the origin, existence, and destruction of the universe, Lomaharṣaṇa Suta, reported the Brahmapurāṇa, like Brahma to Dakṣa and others. The first chapter of Purāṇa
describes the creation. It also states in brief the solar and the lunar dynasties. All these details occupy fifteen chapters. Next five chapters contain descriptions of the divisions of the earth and of the several dvīpas, of Pūtāla, of Hells, of the spheres above the earth, the size and distances of the planets and constellations and the influence of the sun and the moon in producing rain and fertility. Part of the twentieth chapter takes up the subject of Tīrthas or places of pilgrimage. Then follows a short-geographical description of Bhāratavarsa, its mountains, rivers, inhabitants and merits. Then are spread over in eight chapters which also contain the description of Utkala, of the origin of the twelve Ādityas, the story of Vaivāsvata’s birth from the Sun by his wife Sañjñā. The legends of the Pārvatī are described in great detail. It comprised many Tīrthas, as Viraja, Kapila and others. Next is described the Puruṣottamakṣetra. It is followed by an account of Indradyumna, king of Avantī who erected temple of Viṣṇu and installed the image of Jagannātha. The text then passes on to the story of Mārkaṇḍeya explaining the sanctity of the Puruṣottamakṣetra, called the lake of Mārkaṇḍeya. The merits of living and dying at this place are then expatiated upon. The subject matter of the chapters from the sixty-fifth to the eighty-sixth is the legends of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna and Anirudha.

A series of chapters then ensues on Śrūḍdhas or obsequial sacrifices, on ceremonial and moral observances, on the duties of the several castes, and on the merit of worshipping Viṣṇu on Ekādaśī. These subjects are dealt with in sixteen chapters. We then have a particular detail of the division of time, the duration and influence of four Yugas and the degeneracy of mankind in Kali age, and describes absolute and final destruction. Then commences a mention of Yoga by which final liberation is secured. Vyāsa describes means of obtaining emancipation with this view he gives a sketch of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy. After describing the
condition of the Sāttvikabhāva attained by these means, he becomes identified with Vāsudeva or Kṛṣṇa. The work ends with a panegyric upon itself. All classes of men can read it or hear it.

2) **Padmapurāṇa**

Always securing the second place in the enumeration of the Purāṇas, the *Padmapurāṇa* derived its name from an account of the period when the world was golden lotus (*Padma*). In respect of volume and size, it is only second to the *Skandapurāṇa*. It contains fifty-five thousand verses. The extant *Padmapurāṇa* which is the result of several recasts that have come down to us in two distinct recensions: (1) North Indian, (2) South Indian. The North Indian recension is considered older than the other recension. It contains five Khandas or books arranged in the following order- (1) *Ṣṛṣṭi* (2) *Bhūmi* (3) *Svarga* (4) *Pātāla* and (5) *Uttara*. The South Indian recension has been published by the Anandashrama and Venkateshvara Press. Both these editions are found to consist of six *Khaṇḍas*. The Anandashrama edition arranges these *Khaṇḍas* in the following order- (1) *Ādi* (2) *Bhūmi* (3) *Brahma* (4) *Pātāla* (5) *Ṣṛṣṭi* or *Prakriyā* and (6) *uttara*. The Veṅkateshvara arranges them as (1) *Ṣṛṣṭi* (2) *Bhūmi* (3) *Svarga* (4) *Brahma* (5) *Pātāla* and (6) *Uttara*. The *Ādikhaṇḍa* in the former edition is the same as the *Śvargakhaṇḍa* in the latter. These editions are spread over 628 chapters. The arrangement and titles of the *Khaṇḍa* in the Venkateshvara edition (now from Nag Publisher Delhi-7) are intended most probably for making the *Purāṇa* conform as far as possible to the old tradition.

We now take up the contents of the *Padmapurāṇa* as given by the Nag Publisher edition. The *Ṣṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* is really the first of the set. The *Purāṇa* commences with treatment of primary creation out of the cosmic egg. It contains
the story of Brahmu and Savitri. This story shows that the motive of the Brahmu worshippers was to revive Brahma cult which was in a decadence. Many of the worhsipers of Brahmu accepted Saivism, and the worship of the god was growing obsolete. This section is also called Pusharakhana as Brahmu performed the sacrifice at Puskara in Rajasthan. Some chapters of this khanja are Vaisnava and Saiva in character. Several chapters betray the influence of Tantrism.

Bhumikhana treats geography in 125 chapters. It is a book entirely of legends. These legends have been introduced in order to prove the sanctity of various holy places and show how Prahlada became a devotee of Vishnu and why a teacher, a father, or a chaste and devoted wife is called a Tirtha. In connection with these legends and glorifications the duties of Astras, gifts, duties of women, vows and holy places have been treated. The river Narmada which is also called Rev has been glorified more than once and declared to have a sanctifying power much greater than that of the Ganga, Sindhu etc.

The Svaragakhana is purely Vaisnava, begins with a short account of the creation of the universe. It then on to the geography of the earth, deals with the glories of various holy places and rivers and with a few chapter on Visnubhakti, and the duties of the members of the different castes in different stages of their life.

The Brahmakhana is related by Suta and Saunaka. It is a short one consisting of 26 chapters only. It is concerned with the description of Vaisnava feasts and festivals. Thus, it treats of the merits of besmear a Vishnu temple with cowdung and of burning of a lamp there at night, the observances during the month of Kartika, the Jayanuvrata etc. The merits of the observance of these festivals having illustrated with various stories. The churning of the ocean has been narrated in connection with the birthday festival of Radha.
The *Pâtâlalakhaṇḍa* begins with Śeṣa and Vātsyāyana as interlocutors, their interlocution being reported by Sūta to sages. Chapters 1-68 are avowedly related to Rāma. It deifies Rāma and conceives him as Viṣṇu incarnate. Sītā is identified with Lakṣmī. These chapters describe Rāma’s return from Laṅkā and celebration of the horse sacrifice. Chapters 69-99 deal with *Kṛṣṇacarita*. From chapter 100 to the end give an account of Rāma’s life after the horse sacrifice.

3) *Viṣṇupurāṇa*

The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is eminently *Vaiṣṇava* and considers Viṣṇu as the supreme being, Supreme Brahma and *Paramātmā*. It is a sectarian work, but of a much more sober character than such works generally possess and appropriates to legend and panegyric a comparatively in significant portion of its contents.

From the philosophical point of view, it stands next to the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* which is generally accorded the first place in philosophical works. Being the main source of the *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy, it has been profusely quoted as an authority and examples have been cited from it, by Ācārya Rāmānuja in his ‘Śrībhāṣya’.

The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is small in size but great in importance. It contains six *āṅkas* or books, divided into 126 *Adhyāyas* (chapters). According to the *Nāradīyapurāṇa*, it consists of 24000 verses but Ballalasena speaks of 23000 verses. The Present Viṣṇu contains only 6000 or 7000 verses. Three important commentaries of Śrīdhara’s *Śrīdharabhāṣya*, Viṣṇucita’s ‘*Viṣṇucitūyā*’ and Ratnagarbha’s *Vaiṣṇavākūtacakrīkā* have come down to us, All the other Purāṇa being compilations, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* can boast of its original character. It is the only Purāṇa which conforms to the five characteristics of the Purāṇas. Prof.Wilson assigns 10 Century A.D. as the probable date of this work, while Prof.Upadhyaya places it in 2 century B.C.
The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is supposed to be related by Parāśara, the grandson of Vasiṣṭha, to his disciple Maitreya.

The first book opens with the dialogue between Maitreya and Parāśara. He states himself to be the son of Śakti, the son of Vasiṣṭha. The first book mainly contains an account of creation. The second book consists of the usual account of the division of the earth into *Dvīpas*, and the formation of seven *Pātālas* and *Narka*, with the situation and course of the planets and the description of their several stars; that of sun is very fully and curiously detailed. The third book deals with the systematic classification of the contents of a *Purāṇa*, fourth, treats of reigns of the different Manus and their descendants. The remainder of the section is occupied with the detail of the duties of different tribes and orders and terminates with *Yama-Gītā*. The fourth book deals with the genealogies of the royal families, commencing with lineages of the sun and moon, and terminating with kings of the Kali age. The fifth book is appropriated to the history of Kṛṣṇa, although the story is told in the usual strain, yet there is peculiarity. He is only an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The last book of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, after describing the divisions of the time into *Kalpas*, etc. expatiates on the various pangs and directs mankind to only remedy for them, faith in Viṣṇu as the Supreme.

4) *Vāyuṇītāṇa*

The *Vayupurāṇa* has *Adhyāyas* 112 and 11000 verses. It is said to have four *khaṇḍas*, which are known as ‘*pāda*’.

1. *Prakriyāpāda*,
2. *Anuṣṭhapāda*,
3. *Upoddhātapāda*,
4. *Upasamhūrpāda*. 

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The *Purāṇa* includes description of Natural āśrama system; geography etc. there is a special description of Jambu and other islands (dvīpa). It has descriptions of branches of Vedas. Descriptions of Prajāpatiyās, Kāśyapīya Prajāśarga, Rṣiviniśa, Śṛūddha, music, old dynasties etc. It also includes information regarding praise of Paśupati in Śarvastava, devotion of Dakṣa for Lord Śiva is beautifully given in it.

The *Purāṇa* in which Vāyu has declared the laws of duty, in connection with the Śvetakalpa, and which comprises the Māhātmya of Rudra, is the Vāyavyapurāṇa; it contains twenty-four thousand verses. The Śiva or Śaiva puraṇa is, as above remarked, omitted in some of the lists; and in general, when that is the case, it is replaced by the Vāyu or Vāyaviya. When Śiva is specified, as in the Bhāgabata, then the Vāyu is omitted; intimating the possible identity of these two works. This, indeed, is confirmed by the Matsya, which describes the Vāyavyapurāṇa as characterized by its account of the greatness of Rudra or Śiva; and Balambhatṭa mentions, that the Vāyaviya is also called the Śiva, though according to some, the latter is the name of the Upapurāṇa. The Śaiva is considered to be an Upapurāṇa or minor Purāṇa.

The Vāyupurāṇa is narrated, by Sūta, to the Rṣis at Naimiśāranya, as it was formerly told, at the same place, to similar persons, by Vāyu. The last portion, the Upasamñāra describes briefly the future Manvāntaras, the measures of space and time, the end of the world, the efficacy of Yoga, and the glories of Śiva or the dwelling of the Śiva, with whom the Yogin is to be united. The Purāṇa concludes with a different history of the successive teachers of the Vāyupurāṇa, tracing them
from *Brahma* the *Vāyu*, from *Vāyu* to *Bṛhaspati*, and from him, through various deities and sages, to *Dvaipāyana* and *Sūta*.  

5) *Śrīmadbhāgavatapurāṇa*

The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is a work of great celebrity in India and exercises a more direct and powerful influence on the mind and thoughts of the people than perhaps any other of the Purāṇas. It ranks fifth in all the list of the Purāṇas except the *Padmapurāṇa* where it is given the eighteenth place. The work is divided into twelve *Skandhas* containing three hundred and thirty two chapters. It consists of eighteen thousand verses. Since it glorifies Bhāgavata or Viṣṇu so it is called *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.  

It is the very soul of the *Bhaktisūtra*. In order to explain the secret meaning of this work, every *Vaiṣṇava* school has given its own interpretation.

The *Bhāgavata* is communicated to the *Ṛṣis* at Naimiśārṇya by Sūta as usual, but he only repeats what was narrated by Sūta, the son of Vyāsa to Parīkṣita, the grandson of Arjuna, at the time of his death. It is in reply to Parīkṣita question, what a man should do who is about to die? He related this *Purāṇa* to him; for nothing secures final happiness so certainly as to die whilst the thoughts are wholly engrossed in Viṣṇu.

The narration starts with a cosmogony which is more largely intermixed with allegory and mysticism, and derives its tone more from the *Vedānta* than from the *Sankhya* philosophy. The doctrine of active creation by the Supreme as one with Vāsudeva is more distinctly asserted with a more decided enunciation of the effects being resolved into *Māyā* or illusion. Above forms the subject matter of the first

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17 Kewalia, M.L.; *The Science of Divinity (A digest of Srimad Bhagavatam)*, pp.11-16
two books of the Bhāgavata. In the third book the interlocutors are changed to Maitreya and Vidura. Maitreya again gives an account of the Srṣṭilīlā or sport of creation in a strain partly common to the Purāṇas. Again the narrator is changed to śeṣa. The creation of Brahmā is then described and the divisions of time are explained. A long account is given of the Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu, which is followed by the creation of the Prajāpatis and Svāyambhūva. The Manvantara of Svāyambhūva and multiplication of the patriarchal families are described in the fourth book. The tradition of Dhṛva, Veṇa, Prthu and other princes are the other subjects and are continued in the fifth book to that of the Bharata who obtained salvation. The remainder of this Skandha deals with the universe. The sixth Skandha contains a variety of legends of a miscellaneous description, intended to illustrate the merit of worshipping Viṣṇu.

The seventh book mostl occupied with the legend of Prahlāda. In the eighth, we have an account of the remaining manvantaras. The ninth book narrates the dynasties of the Vaivasvata Manvantara or the princess of the solar and lunar races to the time of Kṛṣṇa. The tenth book is characteristic part of this Purāṇa and the position upon which its popularity in founded. It is devoted entirely to the history of Kṛṣṇa. The eleventh book describes the destruction of the Yādavas and leaving the mortal world by Kṛṣṇa. Here Kṛṣṇa instructs Uddhava in the performance of Yoga. The twelfth book continues the lines of the kings of the Kali age prophetically to similar period as in the Viṣṇu. The Bhāgavatapurāṇa ends in a series of commendations of its own sanctity and efficacy to salvation (mokṣa).

The Bhāgavatapurāṇa is not only a philosophical gem but also a literary excellence. A variety of figures of speech and metres give added charm to its narratives.
6) Nāradīyapurāṇa

The Purāṇa narrated by the sage Nārada is called Nārada or Nāradīya Purāṇa. It contains twenty-five thousand verses and describes the duties which are to be observed in the Brhatkalpa. It is a compilation, intended to support the doctrines of Bhakti or faith in Viṣṇu, various prayers addressed to various incarnation of Viṣṇu are found in this work. It also contains different legends illustrative of the efficacy of devotion to Hari. The Purāṇa constitutes two parts- Pūravabhāga and Uttarabhāga. The first part of the work consists of 125 chapters and the second portion contains 82 chapters. The former is again divided into four subsections. In the Nāradapurāṇa we have the stories of Dhruta and Prahlāda; the latter told in the words of Viṣṇu, while the second portion of it is occupied with a legend of Mohini, the will born daughter of a king called Rukmāṅgada; beguiled by whom, the king offers to perform for her whatever she may desire. She calls upon him either or violate the rule of fasting on the eleventh day of the fortnight, a day sacred to Viṣṇu or to put his son to death; and he kills his son, as the lesser sin of the two. This shows the spirit of the Nāradapurāṇa.

The Nāradapurāṇa is purely a sectarian work lacking all the characteristics of the Mahāpurāṇa. It describes the Vaiṣṇava feasts and ceremonies illustrated by various legends and certain chapters on the glorification of Gaṅgā, the duties of castes and Āśramas, the funeral sacrifices and expiation and so forth. It is a work on Viṣṇubhakti which is said to have ten gradations, viz, Tamasadhama, Tamasamadhyama etc. This Bhakti is repeatedly declared by the Purāṇa to be the only means of salvation.
7) Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa

Ranking seventh in the list of Mahāpurāṇas, the Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa is one of the oldest and the most important of the extant Purāṇas. The Matsyapurāṇa declares that Purāṇa in which, commencing with the story of the birds that were acquainted with right and wrong, every thing is narrated by Mārkaṇḍeya, as it was explained by holy sages in reply to the question of the Muni, is called the Mārkaṇḍeya, containing nine thousand verses. This Purāṇa has a character different from that of all the others. Its leading feature is narrative; and it presents an uninterrupted succession of legends, most of which when ancient are embellished with new circumstances, and new parables, so far off from the spirit of the old, that they are disinterested creations of imagination, having no particular motive, being designed to recommend no special doctrine or observance. They are most probably for the greater part at least original; and the whole has been narrated in the compiler’s own manner; a manner superior to that of the Purāṇas in general, with exception of the Bhāgavata.

As noted above the Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa consists of nine thousand verses spread over one hundred and thirty seven cantos. The contents of the Purāṇa are clearly classified into three parts; the first part constituting cantos one to fortyfour. In these the sage Jaiminī is referred by Mārkaṇḍeya to the wise Birds and they directly explain to him the four questions and some connected matters that perplexed him. Though the Birds expound questions, poised by Jaiminī (Adhyāyas 10-44), yet the real speakers are Sumati, named Jāṭa and his father. The second part is formed by Adhyāyas 48-11 and 93-136. In these cantos the interlocutors are the sage Mārkaṇḍeya and his disciple Krauṣṭukī. The third portion is supposed to be formed by Adhyāyas 82-92. It contains Devṁāhātmya, in which the speaker is a
Ṛṣi named Medhas and which is only repeated by Mārkaṇḍeya. The concluding Adhyāyas (137) is a necessary corollary to the first part.

8) Agnipurāṇa

The Agnipurāṇa is eight in the list of the Purāṇas. As it originated as a composition in praise of Agni, so it is called the Agnipurāṇa. It is narrated as usual by his disciple Sūta, and received by him from the sage Vasiṣṭha, to whom it was communicated by Agni. According to its own declaration, it contains fourteen thousand verses. But the Bhāgavata and the Matsyapurāṇa give 15000 and 16000 respectively as the number of its verses. It actually contains 11457 verses. The Purāṇa is divided into 883 chapters, treating a variety of subjects. It claims to be an epitome of all branches of knowledge, classified into pariṣ and aparīṣ. Thus the compiler of the work intends to impart the essence of all the worldly as well as divine knowledge which may help the people to attain success in this life and salvation. It is a Vaiṣṇavapurāṇa because it incorporated the doctrines of the Pañcarātra, the Vedanta and the Gītā etc. It lays down stress on the worship of Kṛṣṇa as Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu. The Agnipurāṇa deals with the incarnations of Viṣṇu, the Māhātmayas of the sacred places, the astronomy or astrology, the politics, weaponry and archery, judicature, perusal of the Vedas, the gift making, the medicine, the mystic rites, poetry and rheoric, grammar etc. Of all the rivers the Ganges occupies attention of the Agnipurāṇa. A whole chapter is devoted to it, and besides being extolled everywhere it is declared to be capable of destroying all sins only if people remember it. Gayā is pronounced to be the best of all the places. The river Narmadā is described purifying an individual if he simply looks at it.
The Agnipurāṇa gives summaries of the stories of the Harivamśa, the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Vaiṣṇava and the Śaiva āgamas. It lays down the worship of Līṅga and several of the Tāntric forms of Durgā.

Many chapters of this Purāṇa deal with the description of Indian continent and other parts of the world, India and other geographical places. They are followed by chapters which dwell upon astrology, astronomy, palmistry and other branches of astrology leading to the king’s victory on the battlefield. Auspicious and inauspicious asterisms for perforating the ears of a child are also discussed.

The duties of the four Varnas, of the four orders, expiations, sacraments, vrats, gifts are discussed with great care. The Purāṇa treats at considerable length, and with many interesting particulars of the duties of princes, beginning with the ceremonies of their coronation, and comprehending their civil and military obligations. The importances of four expedients and of six measures of royal policy are given in full details. Next follow chapters on judicature. The genealogies of the Sun and Moon are detailed in several chapters.

Agnipurāṇa deals in chapter on medicine, with the treatment of individual, horses, animals. Its classification of diseases under four heads, physical, mental, accidental and natural is logical and scientific. It borrows its material on medicine from Suśruta and Caraka.

Chapters on grammar, phontics, lexicography, drama, figures of speech and metres are valuable for the students of language and literary criticism. Thus Agnipurāṇa presents an essence of all the branches of knowledge and is an encyclopaedia of all that existed.
9) Bhaviṣyapurāṇa

The Bhaviṣyapurāṇa is given an important place among the Major Purāṇas. The Matsyapurāṇa says, “The Purāṇa in which Brahma having described the greatness of the Sun, explained to Manu the existence of the Aghora Kalpa; that is called the Bhaviṣya; the stories being for the most part the events of a future period. It contains fourteen thousand five hundred verses”. This Purāṇa, as the name implies should be a book of prophecies foretelling what will be (Bhaviṣyati). It often contains a vitiated account of genealogies. The work is indebted to the Manusmṛti. The description of the creation as given in the work and which was used at other places also was borrowed from the Manusmṛti. A Major portion of the work is devoted to the description of religion, conduct, Varṇāśramadharma and so on.

The Bhaviṣyapurāṇa consists of hundred and twenty six short chapters. They are repeated by Sumantu, a king of the Pāṇḍu family. According to him it originated with Svayamabhū (Brahma). The first portion, indeed, treats creation; but it is little else than a transcript of the words of the first chapter of Manu. Religious rites and ceremonies cover the whole of the remaining portion. The ten sanīskāras, (sacraments), the performance of sandhyā, the reverence to be shown to a Gurū, the duties of the different Āśramas and castes, and a number of Vratas (observances of fasting) and the like, appropriate to different lunar days, are explained in detail. A few stories propound the series of precepts. The lengthy episode of the sage Chyavana as told in the Mahābhārata served as the basis of the one given in the work. Various types of snakes are described in connection with the Nāga-Paṇcami (a festival of serpents). They occupy about one third of the chapters, the remainder of them conform in subject to one of the topics referred to by the Matsyapurāṇa. They chiefly represent conversations between Krṣṇa, his son
Sāmba, who had become a leper by the curse of Durvasā, Vasishtha, Nārada and Vyāsa, upon the power and glory of the sun and the manner in which he is to be worshipped. The matter relating to the Magas, silent worshippers of the sun from Śākadvipa form a part of the last chapter of the work. The work is very important for knowing about the intricacies of the Sun worship and for the history of kings born in the Kali age.

10) **Brahmavaivartapurāṇa**

The Purāṇa which is related by Sāvāni to Nārada and contains the accounts of the greatness of Kṛṣṇa, with the occurrences of the Rathantara-kalpa, is called the Brahmanvaivarttapurāṇa, and contains eighteen thousand verses. The Brahmanvaivarttapurāṇa, as it now exists is narrated not by Sāvāni but the sage Nārāyaṇa, by whom it is communicated to Vyāsa: he teaches it to Sūta, and the latter repeats it to the sages at Naimisāraṇya.

The Purāṇa is perhaps the most decidedly sectarian work of the whole collection and has no other object than to recommend faith in Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. It records a great variety of legends of their glorification of which no traces can be found in any of the Purāṇas. It throws more light than any similar work upon the worship of the female principle or Prakṛti as well as of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.

The Brahmanvaivarttapurāṇa is divided into four Khanda the Brahmakanda, the Prakṛtikhaṇḍa, the Ganeśaṇaṇḍa and Kṛṣṇajainmakhaṇḍa treating separately of the nature and acts of the supreme; of the female personification of matter; of the birth and adventures of Ganeśa; and of the birth and actions of Kṛṣṇa. The Brahmakhaṇḍa consists of thirty chapters. It begins with the creation of the universe by Kṛṣṇa. Its sixteenth chapter deals with medicine of Ayurveda. The Prakṛtikhaṇḍa relates to Prakṛti, the passive agent in creation,
personified matter or the goddess nature. The Primeval Prakṛti resolved her self, by command of Kṛṣṇa into five primitive portions viz. Durgā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sāvitrī and Rādhā. In this section the episodes of Sāvitrī and Tulasī and Rādhā. In this section the episodes of Sāvitrī and Tulasī are given in great details. The Gaṇeśakhaṇḍa gives an account of the birth and action of the deity in a series of legends.

An account of the birth of Kārttikeya also finds a place in this portion. Here Gaṇeśa is described as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. The last section, the Kṛṣṇajanma- khaṇḍa is very voluminous, containing 132 chapters. It gives an account of Kṛṣṇa’s birth and his exploits as narrated by Nārāyaṇa to Nārada. According to this Purāṇa, the original cause of Kṛṣṇa incarnation was his love of Rādhā.

11) Liṅgapuruṣa:

The Purāṇa in which Maheśvara explained (the object of life) virtue, wealth, pleasure and final liberation at the end of the Agnikalpa, was called the Liṅgapuruṣa by Brahmā himself. It consists of eleven thousand verses.

It begins with an account of elemental and secondary creation, and of the patriarchal families, in which, however, Śiva takes the place of Viṣṇu as the indescribable cause of all objects. Brief account of Śiva’s incarnations and proceeding in different Kalpas next occur, offering no interest except as characteristic of sectarian notions. The appearance of the great fiery Liṅga takes place, in the interval of the creation, the separate Viṣṇu and Brahmā, who not only dispute the palm of supremacy, by fight for it, and put them both to shame; as after travelling upwards and downwards for a thousand years in each direction, neither could approach its termination. Upon the Liṅga sacred monosyllable Om is visible,
and the Vedas proceed from it by which Brahmā and Viṣṇu become enlightened and acknowledge and eulogise the superior might and glory of Śiva.

A notice of creation in the Padmakalpa then follows. Śiva repeats the story of incarnations, twenty-eight in number. The story of Dādhīci, a worshipper of Śiva is given to prove the superiority of Śiva over Viṣṇu. A description of the universe and of the regal dynasties of the Vaīṣṇava Manvantara to the time of Kṛṣṇa runs through a number of chapters. After this the work narrates legends and enjoins rites, prayers, for honouring Śiva under various forms. Although the Linga holds the prominent place amongst them, the spirit of worship is, a little influenced by the character of the type prevailing in the period. The Linga is twofold, external and internal. The ignorant who need a visible sign, worship Śiva through a mark or type, which is the proper meaning of the word Linga, of wood or stone; but the wise look upon these outward emblems as nothing and contemplate in their minds on the invisible indescribable type which is Śiva himself.

12) Varāhapurāṇa

The Varāhapurāṇa is twelfth in the list of the Purāṇas. It is narrated by Viṣṇu as Varāha, or the boar incarnation, to the personified Earth. It is a religious manual almost wholly occupied with the forms of prayer and tales for devotional observances, addressed to Viṣṇu; interspersed with legendary illustrations, most of which are peculiar to itself. Many of them, rather incompatibly with general scope of the compilation relate to the history of Śiva and Durgā. A considerable portion of the work is devoted to descriptions of various sacred places of Vaiṣṇava pilgrimage and one of Mathurā enters into a variety of particulars relating to the shrines of that city, constituting the Mātiurāmahātmya. In the sectarianism of the Varāhapurāṇa, there is no leaning to the particular adoration of Kṛṣṇa nor are the
Ratha-yátrā and Janmāśṭami included amongst the observances. Here great stress is laid upon the accounts of Svarga and Narka.

The extant Varāha is a comparatively late work. It is not the Varāhapuruṣa which the Matsya, the Skanda and the Agnipuruṣa noticed. According to the descriptions the older Varāhapuruṣa was declared by Viṣṇu and was connected with the Mānavakalpa, but in the extant Purāṇa, the boar himself is the narrator and there is no mention of the Mānavakalpa, Moreover, of the five characteristics of the Purāṇa, there is very little in it. Its account of creation bears the stamp of comparatively late age. The Manvantaras and the genealogies of kings and sages have been neglected. The Sūta reports the interlocution between the Boar and Earth abruptly and without any introduction.

The extant Varāhapuruṣa consists of four distinctive sections; 1. Chapters 1 to 112, 2. Chapt. 113-192, 3.chaps.113-212, 4.chaps.213-217. It contains 9654 verses. They are most probably the works of different hands hailing from different ages. In the first section Sūta is the reporter, and the interlocutors are the Boar and the Earth. It is primarily the work of Pañcarātras. Here the highest deity is Nārāyaṇa. It was written with a view to populrising the Pañcarātra system which was losing popular favour in Northern India. In the second section Sūta is the general reporter of what the Earth said to Sanatkumāra and others after she had been raised by the Boar. This section bears a distinct Bhāgavata stamp and is meant for guiding the Bhāgavatas especially in their religious observances. This part is named ‘Bhāgavacchāstra’ in the colophons of almost all the chapters and its contents are called ‘Bhāgavata-proktadharma’ or ‘Viṣṇu-proktadharma’. In the third section Sūta is the reporter as usual, the interlocutors being the king Janamejaya and the sage Vaisampāyana. It is named Dharmasamhitā and it constitutes distinct unit by itself. It deals with Karma-vipaka and the region of
Yama. The fourth section is related by the Sūta and the interlocutors are the Santatkumāra and Brahmā. This section in strictly Śaiva. It treats of the origin and glorification of Uttara Gokarna and other holy places in Nepal, which are sacred to Śiva, It also glorifies Śiva.

13) Skandapurāṇa

The name of the Skandapurāṇa is obviously derived from the story of Skanda, son of lord Śiva, narrated in the text of the extant Purāṇa. Skanda along with his other names like Śanmukha, Jayanta, Viśākha, Subrahmanya, and Mahāśena, is frequently referred to in the Sanskrit literature. These names suggest that he was the same god who later on becomes famous by the name of Kārttikeya. In the earlier stage of the development of Skanda cult, Skanda had no relation with Śiva. He was closely related with Agni and so sometimes mentioned as the son of Agni. From the stories regarding the birth and exploits of Skanda, occurring in the Rāmacarita and the Mahābhārata, it seems that he was already accepted as the son of Śiva. The Purāṇa had totally forgotten the relation that existed between Agni and Skanda.

The Purāṇa considers Skanda as the son of Śiva and Pārvatī. The story of Skanda formed a part of a big story along with that of Dakṣa-yajña-vidhvatīsa, Śiva-Pārvatī-Parṇaya, and Madana-dahana. The various forms of the story of Skanda’s birth as found in the Purānic literature can be divided into two categories. To first belong the stories describing his birth as an outcome of the search for a commander-in-chief for their army. In the second category fall the stories which describe the fear of gods on account of long love sports of Śiva and Pārvatī.
The Skandapurāṇa is usually assigned the thirteenth place in the list of the eighteen Purāṇas. The Venkateshvara edition of the Skandapurāṇa comprises of seven khaṇḍas (books) - Māheśvara, Vaiśañya, Brāhma, Kāśi, Avantya, Nāgara and Prabhāṣa. The Māheśvarakhaṇḍa also has Aruṇācalakhaṇḍa. The Aruṇācala is again classified into two portions purvārdha and Uttarārdha. The Viṣṇukhaṇḍa contains Mahātmyas of Veṅkaṭācala, Puruṣottamakṣetra, Badarikāśrama, Kārttika-māsa, Mārgaśīrṣa-māsa, Vaśākha-māsa, and Ayodhyā. The Brahma-khaṇḍa consists of Setumāhātmya, Dharmāranyakhaṇḍa and Uttarakhanda. The Kāśikhaṇḍa is in two parts called Purvārdha and Uttarārdha. The Āvantlyakhaṇḍa contains Avantīkṣetra-māhātmya, caturaśiti- Lingamāhātmya and Revākhaṇḍa. The Nāgarakhaṇḍa consists of Tīrthanāhātmya. The Prabhūsakhaṇḍa contains Prabhūsakṣetramāhātmya. Vastrāpathekṣetra-māhātmya, Arbudakhanda and Dvārikā-māhātmya.

The extant Skanda-purāṇa contains about 86000 verses. The division and sub-division of the work show that the Purāṇa grew up into a huge bulk with the addition of parts which could never come from the same hand or belong to the same age that the Khaṇḍas which now constitute the printed Skandapurāṇa.

The Skanda-purāṇa throws welcome light on society, religion, mythology, philosophy, education, iconography, geography, history and archaeology and statecraft. Each khaṇḍa of the Skandapurāṇa stands as an independent book in itself. The encyclopedic nature of the Skandapurāṇa makes it an indispensable guide for the students and scholars for the study of different facets of Indian culture.
14) Vāmanapurāṇa

In the list given in a number of the Purāṇas and in its own the Vāmanapurāṇa occupies the fourteenth place. It is named after Vāmana (the dwarf) the first human incarnation of Viṣṇu, earlier being the Varāha, Kūrma and Matsya. It is the only Purāṇa which gives a detailed and comprehensive account of the Avatāras wherefrom it obtains its designation along with a large number of topics, characteristics to the Purāṇas. The Vāmanapurāṇa consists only of 5813 verses and five prose pieces which are stotras. It is said that it contained two parts but we are left with extant Pūrvabhāga consisting of about 6000 verses only.¹⁸

The subject matter of this work is hinted at in its very beginning, where Nārada asks Pulastya about the assumption of the form of Vāmana by Viṣṇu, waging of war by Prahlāda, though a Bhāgavata, against gods acceptance of wifehood of Śiva by Sati, the daughter of Daksha, the glory of the places of pilgrimage, account of Dāna, vrata, upāsanā etc. This shows that though the Vāmanapurāṇa is originally a Vaiṣṇavapurāṇa, it gives equal reverence to Shaivism and other religious sects. The legends, stories and episodes in the Vāmanapurāṇa are interesting and didactic in character. Its glorification of the land, rivers, forests and īrīthas and connection with its glorification, legends of gods and demons have been narrated.

The extant Vāmana deals with Karmavipāka, the duties of castes and āśramas, general customs, cattles and roncattles, purification and impurity and Viṣṇu worship. It lacks, however, almost all the five themes characteristic of the older Mahāpurāṇas. The contents of the Purāṇa do not agree with the information regarding the Vāmanapurāṇa contained in the Matsya and the Skanda. According

¹⁸ Agrawala, Vasudeva.S.; Vamana Purana-A study, p.112
to these Purāṇas, that in which the four-faced god (Brahmā) taught the three objects of existence in connection with the greatness of Trivikrama, which treats, also Kūrma-kalpa and which consists of ten thousand verses, is called the Vāmanapurāṇa. There is no mention of the Kūrma-kalpa, nor is the Purāṇa said to have been narrated by Brahmā. On the other hand it is narrated by Pulastya to Nārada and not even by Lomaharṣana to sages of the Naimiśāraṇya, as is generally the case with the other Purāṇas. The Śaiva materials in the present Vāmana as contrasted with the title and contents given in the Matsya and the Skanda, show that the Purāṇa in its earlier form was a Vaiṣṇava work, and that it was later recast by the Śiva worshippers who changed the work with additions and alterations in such a way that very little of its earlier contents was retained.

The Vāmanas contains much material on geography, sociology, history culture and philosophy of ancient India. The Purāṇa exhibits a variety of metres and poetic embellishments.

15) Kūrmapurāṇa

The Purāṇa, in which Janārdana in the form of tortoise, in the regions under the earth, explained the objects of life, duty, wealth, pleasure, and liberation, in communication with Indradyumna and the Rṣis in the proximity of Śatikara, which refers to the Lakṣmi-kalpa and contains eighteen thousand verses is the Kūrmapurāṇa. But the number of verses, as given above by the Matsyapurāṇa does not tally with the number of verses found in the present Kūrmapurāṇa; which are six thousands. It seems that the Purāṇa had four Sanvhitās- (1) Brāhma (2) Bhūgavatī (3) Saurī (4) Vaiṣṇavī. Only Brahma-sanvhitā is available.

Śiva is described as the prominent god among the gods. It does not believe in any difference among Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. They are the three different
forms of Brahmā. It places a great stress upon the worship of Śakti. Thousand
names of Śakti are enumerated in this work. The importance of Śiva is emphasized
by the description of securing of Jāmbavaṭī by Krṣṇa through the grace of Śiva.

The Kurmapurāṇa comprises of two parts. The first part contains 52
chapters and the second part consists of 44 chapters. In the first part and account
of creation, of the Avatāras of Viṣṇu, of the solar and lunar dynasties of kings to the
time of Krṣṇa, of the universe, and of the manvantaras are given, in general, in a
summary manner. With these are bended hymns addressed to Maheśvara by
Brahmā and others; the defeat of Andhakāśura by Bhairava; the origin of four
Śaktis, Maheśvara, Śiva, Saṭṭ and Haimavatī from Śiva and other Śiva legends,
several chapters form a Kāśīmahātmya, a legend of Benaras.

In the Second part there are no legends. It is divided into two parts- the
Īśvara-Gītā and Vyāsa-Gītā. In the former the knowledge of god, that is, of Śiva
through contemplative devotion, is taught. In the latter the same object is enjoined
through works or observances of ceremonies and precepts of the Vedas.

16) Matsyapurāṇa

The Matsyapurāṇa is so named because the subject of the purāṇa was
communicated by Viṣṇu, in the form of Fish to Manu. It contains about 15000
verses divided into 219 chapters. The first subject is the creation, which is that of
Brahmā and the patriarchs. Some of the details are peculiar, especially those
relating to manes. The regal dynasties are next described. Then follow chapters on
the duties of different orders. It is in relation to those of the householder, in which
the duty of making gifts to Brahmans is recommended. It is meritorious to have
copies of Purāṇas and give these away at particular occasions. Special duties of the
householder, Vratas or occasional acts of picity are then described at considerable
length, with legendary illustrations. The account of the universe is given in the usual strain. Śaiva legends ensue; as the destruction of Tripurāsūra; the war of the gods with the Tāraka and the Daityas, and the consequent birth of Kārttikeya, with the various circumstances of Umā’s birth and marriage, the burning of Kāmadeva and other events involved in the narrative, the destruction of the Asura’s-māyā and Andhaka; the origin of the Matṛs and the like; interspersed with Vaiṣṇava legends of the Avatāras. Some Māhātmya are also introduced; one of which, the Narmadā-māhātmya contains some interesting particulars. There are various chapters on laws and morals and one which gives directions for building houses, and making images. We then have an account of the kings of future periods. The Matsyapurāṇa concludes with a chapter on gifts.

Thus the Matsyapurāṇa is a miscellaneous compilation, but includes in its contents the elements of a genuine Purāṇa. Although a Śaiva work, it is not exclusively so and it has no such sectarian rigidity as the Kūrma and Liṅga. It is a composition of considerable interest.

17) Garuḍapurāṇa

The Garuḍapurāṇa is enumerated in all the lists of the Purāṇas on account of its importance and popularity. The authors of digests and philosophical treatises quote extensively from the Garuḍapurāṇa. It is a Vaiṣṇavapurāṇa and it holds a unique place in this class of works. That Purāṇa which was told by the Garuḍa was called the Garuḍapurāṇa. It is also known by name Tārksya or Vainateya in the digests. There is nothing in this work to justify the name. The extant Garuḍapurāṇa is related by Sūta to the assembled sages. According to Matsya and Nāradapurāṇas, it consists of 1800 and 1900 verses respectively. But the recent edition of this work does not agree with the above statement of the Purāṇas. The
Venkateshvar edition of the Purāṇa contains two parts: 1. Pūrvakhāṇḍa of 240 chapters, 2. Uttarakhāṇḍa consisting of Pretakhāṇḍa or Dharmakhāṇḍa of 49 chapters and Brahmakhāṇḍa of 29 chapters. The greater part of this work is devoted to the description of creation, of vows, of self-restraint, of the Sun, to Śiva, to Viṣṇu, astronomy, astrology, palmistry, precious stones and medicine. It also throws light on the life after death, birth, Śrūddhas etc.

The Garuḍapurāṇa is more condensed than the Viṣṇu and the Bhāgavata-purāṇas. It gives an account of Purūravā, Aikṣvāku, Bṛhadhratha dynasties. Śūdraka and Āṇdhra and Gupta kings are mentioned among future rulers of the earth. It enumerates Lord Buddha as the twenty-first incarnation of the God. The vast nature of the subjects treated in this work, make it an encyclopaedia of knowledge. This is evident from the fact that it summarises the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and the Harivānśa. It frequently deals with the topics of the Dharmaśāstras. The account of the duties of the varṇas (chapters 93-106) as given in the Garuḍapurāṇa is actually based on a similar description found in the Yajñavalkyasūri. A gist of the Parāśara-smṛti is given in the 107th chapter of the work.

The first section of Uttarakhāṇḍa called the Pretakalpa or Dharma-khaṇḍa is meant for the performance of obsequial rites. It is generally recited during the mourning period so its importance is self-evident. The Brahmakhāṇḍa consisting of 29 chapters is found in the other editions of the Garuḍapurāṇa. The first chapter opens with three questions: “How firm devotion can be had towards Hari”. Sūta answered the question thus posed by Śaunaka by describing the procedure of saluting Hari, difference between Sattva, Rajas and Tamas classification of gods. The following chapters give an account of unity of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva activities of the God, birth of Brahmā, creation, important incarnations of Viṣṇu
and of Lakṣmī etc. The last chapter deals with Dharma, its origin from Brahmā, and real nature of the God.19

Thus it throws welcome light on different aspects of Indian life and works. The mention of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa and their worship renders the Grūḍapurāṇa more secular in approach than others of the class.

18) Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa

The Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa was revealed by Brahma. It describes the magnificence of the egg of Brahmā in twelve thousand verses. It also contains and account of the future Kalpas. As it is called the Vāyavīya Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa, so it seems that this work was originally a form of the Vāyupurāṇa. It is possible that the original Purāṇa is lost to us because the available manuscripts of the Purāṇa consist of a variety of khaṇḍas and Māhātmya, stotras and episodes professing to be derived from it. A version of this Purāṇa was published by Venkateshvara Press, Bombay, in 1906. The recension is divided into four pādas or sections. They are Prakriyā-pāda, Ānuṣaṅgākhya-pāda, Upodghāta and Upasamihāra.

In the Prakriyāpāda is given a detailed and interesting description of the geography of the universe. Many chapters are devoted to an account of the Jāmbu-dvīpa and its mountains, rivers etc. In several chapters, a description of the Bhudraśva, the Ketumāla the Candra-dvīpa, the Kuṣa-dvīpa, the Krauṇḍa-dvīpa, the Śāka-Dvīpa, the Puṣkara-dvīpa etc. Similarly, planets, constellations and Yugas are extensively dealt with in the Purāṇa. The third section of the work is very important from the point of history as it contains the history of the famous Kṣatriya dynasties of India.

19 Wilson, H.H.; The Metaphysics of Puranas,pp.-28
A well known work named the *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa*, which considers absolutism and *Rāma* worship as the chief means of salvation, formed a part of this *Purāṇa*. It is also divided into seven *khaṇḍas* bearing same names like the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Apparently, it is historical *kāvyya* but in reality it is a *Tantrika-bhakti* text. *Rāma* is identified with supreme being. The Naciketā episode also formed a part of it.20

3.2. Minor *Purāṇas*

**The *Upapurāṇa* literature and its Origin:**

The *Purāṇas* are generally considered to be eighteen in number. They are said to have five or even ten characteristics. Some of them like *Viṣṇupurāṇa* contain such characteristics, while *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is designated as *Mahāpurāṇa*, incorporating ten characteristics. Some *Purāṇas* are of encyclopedic in nature like the *Agni Purāṇa*. The *Purāṇas* like *Skanda* and *Padma* contain more information about *vratas* and *Sthala Māhātmyas*.

It is traditionally believed that the seers were not satisfied with these *Purāṇas* and they wanted to have still more information, hence the *Upapurāṇas* came into existence.

अन्यायाः राहिता: रावण: मारीचकापितादय: | सर्वत्र धर्मकथने कुस्तरलामर्ध्युपत्ते। | बृहदपरम. ७/२५/२७

अन्याय-युगपुराणमिनीमित: कवितानि तु। अष्टादशपुराणानि श्रुतवा संक्षेपलो दिष्टाः। | कौमी. ५/१/२६

अष्टादशपुराणानि श्रुतवा सत्यकृतसुतात्। अन्याय-युगपुराणानि मुनिमित: कवितानि तु। रक्षन्द: सुतसंहिताः। १/२२

सर्वेन प्रतिसर्वेन संशो मन्त्तरसागिं च। वंशातुचिरं चैव पुराणं पूजलक्षणम्। १२ ४

20 Singh, Nag Sharan, *An Introduction to Puranas*, pp.3-25
The word "Upa" means subsidiary or minor. It may also suggest the additional or supplementary character of these Upapurāṇas. The Upapurāṇas are generally enumerated to be eighteen in number and are listed in several lists found in different Upapurāṇas and other literature. Dr. R.C. Hazra has made an exhaustive study of most of such Upapurāṇas in his book of two volumes on Upapurāṇas. He has rightly remarked in his book. In these days when all Indologists are feeling the want of a true history of Indian life and thought of the past and our able antiquarians are directing their attention and energy towards its reconstruction, it is a matter of great surprise and disappointment that very little is known and still less has yet been said about those valuable records of Indian life and thought which are known as Upapurāṇas (secondary Purāṇas). He has then given a number of list of 'eighteen' Upapurāṇas collected from different sources. These lists supply us with the titles of many more Upapurāṇas than eighteen. It is to be noted that some are known in name only and some in quotations, while only a few are actually available. Moreover, besides the Upapurāṇas mentioned in these in these lists, there were many others, of which some are available in printed forms, some still exist in manuscripts, some are known only from references and quotations and some must have been lost altogether without leaving any trace of their existence. Still whatever is available is again valuable like the principal Purāṇas since this incorporate information about our religion, changing customs, Philosophy, Political organizations, Geography, Vāstu, Jyoatiṣa and many other branches of knowledge besides Yoga, the topic of our research. Though designated as Upapurāṇas, they may be later in date, but not less important in contents and number. On the basis of the verses of the Kürmapurāṇa which contain the list of

21 Tripathi, Kapildev, Parasaroppuranam, pp.13,25,24
'eighteen Upapurāṇa', are found quoted in Raghunända's Smṛti-tattva (1, pp.792-793), Mitra Miśra's Viṁatrodaya (Paśīhāṣa-prakāśa, pp.13-14), Hemādri’s Caturvarga-cintāmaṇī (1, pp.532-533, II, i, p.21), the Dānasāgara of Ballalaśena referring to the lists of Upapurāṇas. Dr. Hazra further observes that the date of formation of the group of 'eighteen' Upapurāṇas as found in the Kurmapurāṇa should be placed not later than 850 A.D. and the upper limit of this date seems to be supplied by Matsyapurāṇa-chap.53, which refers only to four Upapurāṇas viz. Narasimha purāṇa, Nandipurāṇa, Sāmbapurāṇa and Ādityapurāṇa, 'well-established in society', the date of formation of the group of eighteen should be placed approximately between 650 and 800 A.D. However, this can be applicable to all such Upapurāṇas, some of which may belong to later date.

The Matsyapurāṇa theory that the Upapurāṇas mere subsection (Upabheda) of the Purāṇas and that the works, 'different' (prthak) from the eighteen Purāṇas, are considered to have come out from one or other of these Purāṇa is partially admissible, since some works, traditionally considered to be attached to some, like the Skandapurāṇa- the encyclopedic one. These Upapurāṇas are also sometimes found to be written in the form as Purāṇas and write themselves to be Purāṇa in the colophons etc.

Regarding the contents of the Upapurāṇas, the Saurapurāṇa says, "A Purāṇa has five characteristics, viz., creation, re-creation, genealogy of gods-kings and sages, period of Manu, and History of royal dynasties and the families of sages. These are the characteristics of the Purāṇas such as the Brahma etc. These, again, are known to be the characteristics of the Upapurāṇas because of their supplementary character". Regarding the contents of these Upapurāṇas, it is to be noted that some of them contain five characteristics of the principal Purāṇas, while some of them are also Sectarian like the Ganesapurāṇa, Devapurāṇa, Paraśara-
purāṇa, Narasimhapurāṇa etc. Some of them are containing eulogy of a particular caste and the place of pilgrimage, river, mountain or the particular deity. These are sometimes called as Sthalapurāṇas, Jātipurāṇas or Māhātyas. Though of a very sectarian character, they are historically very important for the knowledge of the particular sect, chaste or pilgrimage place or deity of worship. Though some Upapurāṇas are considered to be of very early date, it is to be noted that these Sthalapurāṇas are of later date. The Dattapurāṇa is composed by Śvāmī Vāsudevānanda in the ninetenth century.

About the valuable material in the Upapurāṇas, Dr. Hazra has rightly remarked “the Upapurāṇas are of inestimable value from the point of view of the history of religion and culture, and on this head alone they deserve far more careful study than has been devoted to them. They not only mythology, its idol-worship, its theism and pantheism, its love of God, ethics, but also supply us with important information about the different branches of science and literature which were developed in ancient India and at the same time render us inestimable help in reconstructing some of those monumental works of the Sanskrit literature which have been lost for ever. In these respects the Upapurāṇas are sometimes more important than the Mahāpurāṇas. For our study also, it is to be found that the Upapurāṇas also have ample information on the Yoga and its several tenets.

1. Śivapurāṇa:

The Śivapurāṇa is related by Sanatkūmāra to Vyāsa and the sages at Naimiśāranya. It contains about 23000 stanzas.

The extant Śiva Purāṇa is a comparatively late work. It is rather a manual of prayers and rules for the Śiva-worshippers. Scholars are inclined to include it in the Upapurāṇas. It is mentioned by Alberuni and cited by Ballālasena the author of
Dānasīkara. It consists of seven Samhitās: 1. Vidyēśvara, 2. Rudra, 3. Śatarudra, 4. Kotirdra, 5. Umā, 6. Kailāsa, 7. Vāyavīya. The Rudra-saṁhitā contains five sections viz, Śrṣṭi, Satī, Pārvatī, Kumāra and Yuddha. The description given in the Pārvatī section of Rudra-saṁhitā is similar to that of the one given by the Kumārasamhitāvha. In the Śatarudra- saṁhitā of 42 chapters, an account of twelve Jotirlingas which are declared as the incarnation of Śiva, is given. The Kotirdra-saṁhitā of 35 chapters describe a thousand name of Śiva. The Kailāsa- saṁhitā of 12 chapters takes note of the circles of worship, mudrās and nyāsas. The Vidyēśvara- saṁhitā of 18 chapters contains the description of the origin of Linga, worship of Linga, creation of Linga, worship of Śiva by Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the Mahātmya of Śiva-kṣetra, the conduct of Brāhmaṇas, the glorification of Rudrākṣa etc. The Umāsaṁhitā contains an account of Umā’s penance, marriage etc. The last saṁhitā named Vāyavīya is divided into two parts: 1. Pūrvabhāga and 2. Uttarabhāga. The first and the second part of this saṁhitā contain 30 chapters each. The Venkateshvar edition of this Purāṇa contains only six saṁhitās-Vidyēśvara, Auma or Jnāna, Kailāsa, Vāyavīya, Dharma and Sanatkumāra. The Śivapurāṇa was written, probably, with a view to propagating the doctrines and tenets of the Śaivism.

2. Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa

The Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa is the most popular and most important of the extant Upapurāṇas. It is sometimes considered as a portion of the Garudapurāṇa. But it is more of an independent Upapurāṇa. Alberuni has referred many times by using the word is Viṣṇudharma.

The Purāṇa contains three Khaṇḍas. The first khaṇḍa of treatise consists of 269 chapters. Chapters 52-65 form the Śaṅkara Gītā. The first part deals with
general topics such as cosmogony, geography, astrology, time-cycle, genealogies, glorification (stotra), vows and observances, and funeral rites. The first three chapters describe process of creation. These chapters speak of the birth of Hiranyagarbha, Varūha etc. The next chapters 4-13 contain description of divisions of the earth and of several dvīpas of which it consists, of Pātāla or the regions under the earth, of spheres above earth. Most descriptions of the Jambudvīpa and Bhāratavarṣa with its mountains, rivers, cities are included in the geographical details. Chapter 13th gives an account of Ikṣvāku lineage (vaṁśa). Chapters: 14-56 contain episodes of Madhukāṭabha, Dhumdhumāra, Gaṅgāvataraṇa, Saśa, Rāma, etc., account of incarnations, such as Dattātreya, Varāha, Nṛsīṁha etc., description of the origin of Lakṣmī, Vaḍavāgni etc. Chapters 57-61 deal with fruits of fasting, fasting procedure and definition of Bhakti. Chapters 62-65 contain an account of material and time for sacrifice, time for self-study. Chapters from 66-82 consist of material mainly on the Manvantaras, Kalpas, Yugas etc. Chapters 83-107 contain a description of asterism and constellations. Next comes chapters 108-121 the description of lineage of Dakṣa, Bhṛgu, Aṅgūrasa, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Kaśyapa, Dharma etc. Chapters 124-136 deal with the episodes of Vāraṇaśi, origin of Maruts, Varāha etc. Chapters 137-144 are on funeral rites, their time and place. Chapters 145-156 deal with miscellaneous subjects like Viṣalaksana, Himālaya, etc. Chapter 157-164 are on Dvādaśīs such as Kāmadvādaśī, Tiladvādaśī etc. Chapters from 165-175 deal with glorification of Gāyatrī of giving of dīpa, uplepana, ananta and worship of month, constellations etc., episodes of Lalitā, Māndhūti, Śakra etc. Chapters 176-189 contain a description of Manvantaras. Chapters 190-269 take into account the description of Rāma, of sea, Viṣṇukavaca, of Viṣṇupaṇjara, of seasons etc.
The second khaṇḍa consists of 183 chapters mainly concerned with the principles of statecraft. It contains several chapters on medicine, warfare, astronomy and astrology etc. The Purāṇa treats many particulars, of the duties of the princes, beginning with the ceremonies of their coronation and comprehending their civil and military obligations. The glorification of king, characteristics of a king, weapons, omens and prognostications etc. are the subjects discussed in detail in several chapters. There are chapters 25-31 on the construction of fort, place, house etc. and also on their maintenance. Certain chapters 32-40 on the glorification of Brāhmaṇas, good and chaste women, worship of female deities, and Śāvitrī episode also occur in this part. There are chapters 63-60 on the treatment of horses, cows, elephants, men etc. A chapter 63 on eatables is also found in this Purāṇa. Chapters 69-79 on gift-making, judicature, expiations, Śrāddhas, purification of objects etc. are also available in this work. The duties and functions of the varṇas, mixed castes, emergency duties, business different lords, tīrthas, bathing time, worship of gods, hospitality sacraments etc. are dealt with in the remaining chapters.

The third khaṇḍa contains 355 chapters. Chapters 227-342 constitute the Hamsa-Gītā. This khaṇḍa deals with miscellaneous topics. It contains many chapters 1-98 on painting, iconography, sculpture, grammar, metrics, poetics, dance, music, architecture, and lexicography etc. It includes the erection of images or idols or Viṣṇu, Śiva etc. in various forms, of temples, houses etc. Next is the description of Pañcagavya-rite, the vehicles, garments of the gods, mantras and material for the worship of gods, madhuparka, construction of the main-gate, time and place for the worship of gods. Chapters 214-226 deal with the worship and the fruits of fasts, dialogue of Astāvakra etc. The Hamsagītā 227-342 speaks of Varnas, different orders, impurity procedure, purification of objects, edible and
non edible, the conduct, great sins, expiations, the fleetingness of Lakṣmī, demerits of arrogance, greed, anger, purity, demerits of impurity, telling lies, killing, the glorification of knowledge, Dharama, service of teacher, giving of girl in marriage etc. the Hariṣaṅgītā ends with a prayer to Viṣṇu. The chapters 343-355 give an account of kaśyapa, prayer of Viṣṇu by him, Stotra of Varuṇa by Vasu, Nārada's voyage of Śvetadvīpa, Stotra of Nārada etc.

The analysis of the contents of the Viṣṇudharamottarapurāṇa shows that the text owes much to the various branches of literature of early times and is specially indebted to the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Epics, Kalpasūtras, Smṛtis, Purāṇas, philosophical treatises, works on medicines grammatical and lexicographical texts.

3. Devībhūgavatapurāṇa:

The title of the work shows that it deals with the praise of Devī as the highest deity and the Energy, Śakti of all the gods and others. It contains 12 Skandhas divided into two halves of six Skandhas each and opens with a Devī-Gāyatrī: Sarvacaitanyarūpam tam ādyam vidyām ca dhīmahi Buddhīm yo naḥ pracodayet.

In the first Skandha, the first three chapters deal with the praise of Sūta by Śaunaka for having studied the eighteen Purāṇas from Vyāsa. It refers to the classification of all the Purāṇas and other Śāstras into three classes, viz. Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa. On the request of Śaunaka, Sūta narrated the fifth Purāṇa called 'Bhāgavata'. According to him Devī-bhāgavata contained 18000 verses divided in 318 chapters and 12 Skaṇḍhas. He then explained the five topics of this Purāṇa. In Sarga, Bhagavaṇī who, in her supreme (turiya) state, is 'nirguṇa', 'nitya', and 'Yoga-gamya', takes to the guṇas and manifests herself, for the sake of creation as Sāttviki, Rājasī and Tāmsī Śaktis in the forms of Mahālakṣmī, and
Mahākāli respectively, by *pratisarga* is meant the origin of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra for creation, preservation and destruction respectively, *vanśa* means the genealogies of the kings of the solar and lunar dynasties as well as those of *Hiranyakasipu* and others, *manvantara* involves the description of the periods of reign of different *Manus* and *Vanśānucarita* consists of the accounts of the descendants of these Manus. Sūta said that the twenty eighth Vyāsa wrote the *Śrīmad-bhāgavatapurāṇa* and taught it to his son Śuka who was born from an *arāṇī* and was indifferent to the world from his very birth. From 4-19 chapters Sūta narrates the story of Śuka. Last chapter deals with Śantanu's marriage with Satyavatī, birth of Vyāsa, and the birth of Citrāṅgada and Vicitravīrya, Citrāṅgada's death, and so on.

The second *Skandha* contains 12 chapters. It consists of birth of Matsyagandhā. Story of Parāśara his union with her, birth of Vyāsa, story of king Mahābhiṣa and Gaṅgā's union with Śantanu and the birth of eight Vasus as her sons, birth of Gāṅgeya, birth of Dṛṣṭarāṣṭra, Pāṇdu and Vidura, names of the wives and descendants of Pāṇḍavas extinction of Yādavas, story of the meeting of Kaśyapa and Takṣaka on their way to Paṅkṣita's residence, Janamejaya's accession to the throne, his marriage etc. Vyāsa's narration of the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* and worship of Devī and her praise.

The third *Skandha* contains 30 chapters dealing with Janamejaya's wish to know about Devī and her worship, Nārada's description of what he heard from Brahmā on the same topic, description of *Devī Śrī Bhuvanesvari* who is called *Kumārī, Mahāvidyā, mahāmāya, Purṇapракṛti*, Devī's transforming of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva into girls, Śiva's description of her own self, description of Nirguṇa Śakti and Nirguṇa Śiva who are but one, nature of the these *guṇas* and mode of
their operation, praise of Mahāsarasvāti, Mahālakṣmi and Mahākāli, story of Utaṭhya, summary of the story of the Rāmāyaṇa.

The fourth contains 25 chapters. It narrates the story of Janamejaya, Vyāsa, Kaśyapa's birth as Vāsudeva and Aditi's birth as Devakī, Cyavana, Prahlāda, Kāvyā, exploits of Krṣṇa and Balarāma, Story of Pradyumna etc. The fifth Skandha consists of 31 chapters. It deals with the description of Krṣṇa, Devī-māhātmya, story of the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha, story of Suratha and a Vaiśya who heard Devī's māhātmya and the method of Devī worship.

The sixth Skandha contains 31 chapters consisting of Tvaṣṭr's creation, Indra's killing of Viśvarūpa, Vṛtra's war against Indra, gods' eulogy of Devī, story of Nahuṣa, names of holy rivers, mountains, lakes and places which are sacred to Devī, nature and power of māyā and so on.

The seventh Skandha contains 40 chapters. It gives an account of origin of Brahmā, his worship of Mahādevī, Kaśyapa's descendants, Cyavana, Śaryātī, Vikuṣi, Māndhātā, Triśarka, Hariścandra, Devībuvaneśvarī, Dakṣa, Satī etc, method of outer Tāntric worship and origin of Lakṣmī and so on.

The eighth consists of 24 chapters. It treats of creation, Viṣṇu's incarnation of boar, Manu's sons and daughters, geography of earth's worship of Devī, movements of moon and other planets, hells, method of Devī worship.

The ninth Skandha consists of 50 chapters. It deals with description of Prakṛti, origin of universe from Krṣṇa, origin of Mahāvirāj from the egg, eulogy of Sarasvatī, story of the quarrel among Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā the wives of Viṣṇu, story of Gaṅgā, story of Tulasī, story of Sāvitrī, hells, story of Durvāsā etc.
The tenth contains 13 chapters. It describes the origin of Svāyambhuva Manu from Brahmā, other Manus, story of Sāvarṇī, Manu’s worship of Devī, names of the six sons of Vaivasvata Manu.

The eleventh contains 24 chapters dealing with sadācāra, method of bhūta śudhā, Tripurātra Pāṇāyatanampūjā, five great sacrifices, penances etc. The twelfth contains 14 chapters. It gives an account of Gāyatrī, glorification of Devī, indentification of Devī with Gāyatrī, story of Gautama, manidvīpa, praises of Devībhūgavata.

The above-mentioned contents clearly show that the Devī-Bhāgavata is avowedly a Śākta work. It conceives of central goddess called Devī Śrībhūvaneśvairī.

4. Ekāmrapurāṇa:

Like Nīlamatapurāṇa of Kashmir, the Ekāmrapurāṇa is regarded as an Upapurāṇa. It deals with the cultural history of Ekāmra-kṣetra, Bhuvanesvara and is regarded to be the earliest Sanskrit work for the reconstruction of the history of Bhubanesvara from 6th to 15th century A.D.

The Purāṇa contains 70 chapters and is divided in 5 Amśas (parts) comprising of 10, 22, 14, 16 and 6 chapters respectively and calls itself a Saṁhitā. The first part deals with the origin of creation through Śiva. The second deals with the myths relating to the origin of Tribhuvanesvara, Brahmaśvara, Bhāskaresvara, Yameśvara, Siddhesvara, Indresvara etc. The third describes the annihilation of two demons viz. Krī and Vāsa by Pārvātī, rise of ūrthas, procedure of worshipping a crore of Śivalingas is depicted. The last part deals with myths and Yātras. The Purāṇa aims at cultural synthesis and coexistence.

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5. Vāsukīpurāṇa

This Purāṇa is the literary representation of the Nāga cult striking a synthesis between Buddhist and Śaiva Schools. The author has tried to bridge the gulf between the Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas by propounding the doctrine of trinity.

It is also an attempt to synthesis the doctrine of Salvation as laid down in Buddhism and Śaivism and it lays emphasis on purity, renunciation and self study in thought, word and deed, while strengthening the precepts of Brahmanism. Thus the work represents the medieval values. Along with a synthetic attitude the Purāṇa prefers Pravṛtti-mārga in preference to Nirvṛtti-mārga.

6. Ādipurāṇa:

Vayu 104.7 mentions an Ādīka among the 18 principal Purāṇas (including the Brāhma). Alberuni’s list (which mixes up Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas) mentions an Ādipurāṇa. Ādipurāṇa is published by the Venkateshwara press in 29 chapters. Hazra in 'Studies &c.' vol.I,pp.279-303 deals at length with this and tries to establish that there was an earlier Ādipurāṇa of which no mss. are yet available (p.211) and holds that it is to be dated between 1203 to 1525 A.D. (Studies,p.28). Ādi and Ādyā mean the same thing. But Kullūka on Manu II.54 quotes some verses from Ādi which are ascribed to Brahmā by Gṛhasṭharatnākara p.314. The digests make a confusion between Ādi and Ādiyapurāṇa. vide Hazra in 'Studies' vol.I,pp.302-303. The printed one is a late compilation and none of the verses quoted by Lakṣmīdhara and Aparārka occur therein (vide 'Studies' vol.I,pp.286-289).
7. Ādityapurāṇa:

It is mentioned by Matsya 53.62 and Alberuni (Sachau I.pp.130,229,248). It is quoted by Kṛtyakalpataru on Rājadharmā (about 2 verses), Dāna (about 125), Śrāddha (about 20), Vrata or Vow (about 22), the Smṛticandrīkā quotes many verses on Āhñika and Śrāddha from both Ādi and Āditya and quotes both separately on 'śauca' on the same page (I.p.94). Aparārka also quotes many verses from both Ādi and Āditya. The Dānaśāgara quotes about forty verses from both the Ādi and Āditya Purāṇas.

8. Kālikāpurāṇa:

This is published an Upapurāṇa in 93 chapters by Venkateshwar Press, Bombay, vide Hazra in A.B.O.R.I. vol. xxii, pp.1-23. Sharma in I. H.Q. vol.23 pp.322-326 (holding that Kālikā was completed during the reign of King Dharmapāla of Kāmarūpa), Hazra distinguishes between an earlier version and the extant one and places the latter in the 10th or 11th century, on the words of Matsya 53.60-64 'tad-etebhyo vinirgatam', the Kalpataru explains 'vinirgatam' as 'udbhūtam' (sprung from) and gives the Kālikā as an illustration (Brahmacārī p.30) of an Upapurāṇa sprung from Mahāpurāṇas, the Kalpataru quotes from it about 100 verses on vrata, on dāna, 14 on gṛhasṭha, 12 on vyavahāra (witness and ordeals), 5 each on niyātanāla and ārtha and 2 on brahmacārin, Aparārka quotes it on pp.15, 226,377 (15 verses on marriage and house settlements for Brahmans), 924, the Smṛticandrīkā. II.p.442 quotes one verse from it. The Venkateshwarā edition mentions Viṣṇudharmottara in chapter 91.70 and 92.2, the extant Kālikā would have to be placed before 1000 A.D. Prof.A.N.Jani has edited Kālikāpurāṇa
which is a caste Purāṇa belonging to Gujarat and deling with the Kansara caste of Gujarat.22

9. Kalkīpurāṇa:

It is described by Hazra in 'Studies &c.' vol.I, pp.303-308. There are three editions, all from Calcutta, Hazra remarks that it is a late work not quoted by any writer (p.308) and that it is not to be placed later than the 18th century A.D.

10. Devīpurāṇa:

It is an Upapurāṇa vide Hazra in NIA vol.V, pp.2-20 (assigning it to the latter half of the 7th century A.D.). The Dānasāgara refused to utilize it, it is quoted by Bhujabala-nibandha (about 1040-50 A.D.) on how Saṅkāanti when occurring at different parts of the day affects different people. Kalpataru quotes Devīpurāṇa in several kaṅgas viz. about 210 verses in Rājadharma (88 verses on fortified capital), 37 verses on worship of Devī on raising a banner in honour of Devī, 10 verses on gāvotsarga on Kārtika-amāvāsyā &c., in Vratakāṇḍa about 80 verses on passage, 245 verses on dāna (such as 28 on Tīladhenu and Ghṛtadhenu pp.147-151, 56 verses on Vidyādāna pp.201-107, 98 verses on the construction of kūpa, vāpi, dīrghikā, etc. pp.289-299, 27 verses on laying out a park and planting tress pp. 300-303, 10 verses on building a rest-house for ascetics &c. pp.312-313, in Tīrthakāṇḍa 103 verses (20 verses on śrāddha at a ārthya without examining character and learning of brāhmaṇas), Niyatakālakāṇḍa quotes 30 verses, Brahmacārikāṇḍa quotes only a few, Gṛhasthakāṇḍa quotes 6 verses, Śrāddha-kāṇḍa p.21 34 verses (3 of which on qualifications of a sthāpaka are

22 Jani,Arunodaya Natvaralal; Kālikāpurāṇa, Kalikapurana Sansodhan board Adhyaksho, Vadodara, 1973
interesting, p.16), as they require that he should possess a knowledge of the Vāma and Dakṣiṇa paths, of the Maṭṭ-cult, of Pañcarātra and Śaiva sāstras.

The Devīpurāṇa is one of the most important of the Śākta Upapurāṇas. This purāṇa is edited by Dr. Pushpendra Kumar Sharma and is published by Shri Lalbahadur Shastri Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Newdelhi in 1976. It deals, in 128 chapters, mainly with the exploits and worship of Devī (the great goddess), who is incarnated in the Vindyas as a maiden mounted on a lion, and who, in spite of her independent existence as the 'Yoga-nindā' and the primal and pre-eminent Energy (ādyāparā śakti-7,20), is principally the Śakti (Energy) of Śiva, though also identified with the Śaktis of other gods as well as with the Maṭṭs and other female deities such as Umā, Dākṣāyaṇī, Kālī, Caṇḍī, etc. It also gives us important information about the different incarnations of Devī and her original nature and relationship with Śiva and other gods, about Śākta iconography and the Śākta vows and worship, about Śaivism (as related to Śāktism), Vaiśṇavism, Brahmaism and Gaṇapatyaism, about warfare as well as the construction of towns and forts and the means of their protection, about the different Vedic schools as well as the Upavedas, Āṅgas, Upāṅgas etc. about the science of medicine, about manuscripts—the method of copying, the script and materials to be used for the purpose, the characteristics of the scribes, and the method of making gifts of these, about holy places (in connection with which many countries and towns of historical interest have been named), about different kinds of gifts, about customs and usages, and so on.

11. Nandipurāṇa:

The Nandipurāṇa is Upapurāṇa vide Hazra on 'Bṛhan-nandikēśvara and Nandikēśvara' in Dr. B.C. Law Presentation Vol. part II, pp.415-419 and in JGJRI
vol. II, pp. 305-320; Prof. Rangaswami Aiyangar in NIA vol. IV, pp.157-161 on Nandipurāṇa (holds that the original Purāṇa is probably lost, that verses quoted from it by Lakṣmīdhara are almost all on gifts of various kinds. Kalpataru on dāna quotes over 200 verses from it on dāna (of which 140 are on Vidyādāna pp.207-222, 12 verses on Ārogyadāna, which provide for the establishment of an hospital with a physician knowing the eight aṅgas of Āyurveda and provided with drugs etc.) Aparārka, pp.396-403 quotes about 100 verses on Vidyādāna agreeing with those in Kalpataru and also quotes pp. 365-366, the same verses on Ārogyadāna, Kalpataru on Niyatakāla quotes 13 verses from this Purāṇa advocating total abstention from flesh-eating, p.323 and abstaining from flesh at least on the 4th, 8th, 12th, 14th and 15th tīthīs, on Śaṣṭaśīṭi and sun's passage from one rasi to another etc.

As this is one of the four Upapurāṇas expressly named by the Matsya, as Alberuni mentions a Nandapurāṇa which appears to be the same as Nandi and as it is largely quoted by Lakṣmīdhara, Aparārka and Dānasāgara, it is one of the earliest Upapurāṇas and may have been composed in the 8th or 9th century A.D.

12. Narasimhapurāṇa:

Prof. Dr. Siddheswar Jena has edited the Narastīti ārupūrṇam and is published by Nag Publishers, Delhi in 1987. This Purāṇa advocates the worship of Narasimha, hence is called Narasimhapurāṇa. This Upapurāṇa has been dealt with in Kalpataru on vrata quotes 29 verses from it (22 on Gaṅgācatūrthī pp.84-87 almost all of which are found in the current work, chap. 26.2-20), Kalpataru on Tīrthha quotes 66 verses from it, almost all of which are in chap. 65.2-31, 66.1-9, 20-45 of the current work, Kalpataru on Niyatakāla quotes 65 verses almost all of which are found in chap. 58, Kalpataru on Mokṣa quotes 57 verses, which can be
traced in chapters 17,58,59,60,61. The Dānakāṇḍa of kalpatarū quotes 13 verses (found in chap. 30.27ff.), and Brahmacārikāṇḍa quotes four verses, Aparārka quotes about 40 verses from Narasimha, of which 16 concern yati Dharma pp.951,965 from chap. 60 12ff., 17 verses deal p.140, with arghya to the Sun from 58.91-93 by the employment of the 16 verses of the Puruṣasūkta for Nyāśa on the different parts of the body and also the sixteen from chap. 62. 5-14 Upacāras from āvāhana (invoking to come) to visarjana (bidding adieu) in worship, 5 verses on Narasimha-pūjā with the mantra 'Om namo Nārāyanāya' 63.3 & 6. out of 3.5 verses on p.125 dealing with evening saundhyā and homa attributed to this Purāṇa two are the same as Dakṣa-sīrtī (II.28-29). Smṛticandrikā quotes 27 verses on Āhniika from Narasimha. It appears that both Kalpataru and Aparārka had a much longer version before them than the present Purāṇa. It may be noted that Kṣemaka, who was the last king of the Aila-varśa (acc. to Vāyu 99.432 and others), is described in the Narasimhapurāṇa chap.23, as the son of Naravāhana and grand son of the famous ancient couple Udayana and Vāsavadattā. The extant Purāṇa may be assigned to about 9th century A.D. Prof. Siddheswar Jena has edited and studied this Purāṇa in his book.\footnote{Jena Siddheswar,The Narasimha Puranam, Nag Publishers,Delhi7, 1987}

13. Brhaddevamapurāṇa:

This is Upapurāṇa, it is described by Hazra in Journal of University of Gauhati and 'Studies &c.' vol.I. pp. 115 and 277. It is a work of Maya of the 13th or 14th century A.D.

14. Sambapurāṇa:

This is Upapurāṇa published by Venkateshvara press. vide Hazra in 'Śambapurāṇa through the ages' in JASB vol. 18 (1952) pp.91-111, 'on Sambapurāṇa: a
Śaiva work' in ABORI vol. 36 (1955) pp.62-84 and 'Studies &c.' vol.I, pp.32-108. This Purāṇa is hardly ever quoted by early digests such as the Kalpataru, Aparārka or Samśītacandrikā. Only four verses from it are quoted by the Dāmaśāgara. Prof. Hazara's propositions that the Bhaviṣya pp.68-82, and Brahmapurāṇa (present) borrow from the Śāmba, are not at all acceptable to MM.P.V.Kane, particularly in view of Dr.Hazra's admission in 'studies &c.' vol.I. p.68, that the present Sāmbapurāṇa consists of different units belonging to different climes and ages. All that can be said positively is that a Purāṇa called Śāmba is mentioned by Alberuni in 1030 A.D. 24

15. Śivadharmapurāṇa:

This Upapurāṇa is described by Hazra in JGJRI vol. X.pp.1-20, Aparārka p.274, on Yājñavalkya I.193, quotes one verse from it which is a paraphrase of Yaj.

16. Saurapurāṇa:


17. Kriyāyogasūtra:

This work claims to belong to the Padmapurāṇa, its same as one of the Ḫaṇḍas of the latter and printed accordingly in the Venkatesvara(Edition). It begins like other independent Purāṇic works and styles itself 'Upapurāṇa' in its concluding verses and now here in the body of its text there is no reference to its connection with the Padmapurāṇa. The Nāradiyapurāṇa also, though giving the

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24 Kane, P.V.; History of Dharmasastra, vol.I, pp.887-912
names of Upapurāṇas does not mention the Kriyāyogasāra. It contains chap.1 to 26.

The Kriyāyogasāra begins with three verses containing salutations to Hari, Lord of Lakṣmī, who is said to have assumed various forms including that of Vyāsa, the author of the Purāṇas. In then states that once Sūta came with his pupils to Naimiśaranya where the sages were holding a meeting for the good of the world. One of these sages, Śaunaka by name, referred to the evils of the Kali age and requested Sūta to tell them how people could be highly devoted to Hari. Consequently, Sūta reported to the sages what Vyāsa had said to Jaimini on ‘Kriyāyogasāra’ (i.e. the essence of Yoga by work), which was furnished with various stories as well as with discourses on Nārāyaṇa.

The Kriyāyogasāra is not a very early work. Its quite familiar with the names of the zodiacal signs, praises the Tulasī plant on many occasions, mentions the Buddha incarnation in two places, and recommends the study of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. In chap. 17 it contains a story which is clearly an imitation of that of Bivamaṅgaḷa. Hence the Kriyāyogasāra cannot be dated earlier than 700 A.D. Again, a Ms of this work is dated 1556 śaka. Hence the Kriyāyogasāra must have been written at least two centuries earlier, i.e. not later than the eleventh century A.D.

A study of the Kriyāyogasāra shows that at the time of composition of this work there was a great spread of the ‘Pāṇḍya’ who disregarded Viṣṇu and encouraged people to neglect the Vedas and the Purāṇas, to disposses Brahmans of their landed property, to punish honest men, and to do various other acts of violence. It should be mentioned here that by the term ‘Pāṇḍya’ the Kriyāyogasāra means those people, especially the red-robbed Buddhists, who were
regardless of the Vedic injunctions and followed the non-Vedic rites and customs. As the spread of these Pāṣaṇḍas was unfavourable to the Varṇāśramadharma and Viṣṇu-worship, the Kriyāyogasāra advised people not even to speak with these ‘Pāṣaṇḍas’. It decried those who took beef, and preached the Vedic rites and lawful (dharmya). It should be noted that in trying to popularize his religious faith as well as to establish the Vedic rules of life and conduct, the author of the Kriyāyogasāra, like those of the Mahābhāgavata and the Brhadāranyakopanishad utilized the river Gaṅgā, which he regarded as much sacred as Viṣṇu. Although this river has played a very prominent part in the religious and cultural life of India, no importance was attached to it by the followers of the heresies. The authors of the Purāṇas spared no pains to establish the sanctity and divinity of this river and to connect it with the Vedic ideas on the one hand and their respective deities on the other.

18. Puruṣottama-purāṇa:

This Upapurāṇa has not yet been printed, we do not know of any other Ms of this Upapurāṇa, nor does its title occur in any of the lists of Upapurāṇas. It is only the Kālasāra of Gadādhara which ascribes a verse to the ‘Puruṣottama-purāṇa’. It contains the glorification of Puruṣottama-kṣetra (Puri) as well as with the method and praise of the worship of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Brahmā there. As this quoted verse, in which Kṛṣṇa himself seems to be the speaker, is found neither in the chapters on Puruṣottama-kṣetra of the present Brahmapurāṇa, the Puruṣottama-purāṇa drawn upon by Gadādhara must have been a distinct work. Gadādhara’s quotation from this work shows that it was written not later than 1200 A.D.
19. Brihannāradyāpurāṇa:

This work, which was printed on more occasions than one, can hardly claim to have had a very early origin. Yet it attained considerable popularity as an interesting hand book of religious and ethical value, and this is evident from the discovery of its Mss from different parts of India.

Being meant exclusively for the Vaiṣṇavas it begins with a salutation, in two verses, to Upeindra (Krsna) of Vrṇdāvana, who is said to be the original deity (ādi-deva) consisting of pure consciousness and also appearing in parts as Subhadrā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa and others for the sake of creation. Thus it contains chapter no.1 to 34 in which Nārada proclaims religious duties in the world as were connected with the Brhatkalpa and which contains 25000 verses is called "Nāradyā". In the chapter no.31 deal with the Final liberation (mokṣa) elaborately with Yoga consisting of Kriyā-Yoga and Jñāna-Yoga, of which the former requires the worship of all-pervading Viṣṇu in images forms the preliminary step to the realization of the god and is meant for ‘ignorant people, who always worship the Lord of the Universe in images of stone etc.” It takes jñāna to be the same as buddhi purified by the total destruction of sins by supreme faith (parā śraddhā) and extols Yoga saying that it is only the Yogins who acquire jñāna yielding Mokṣa. On the authority of the Atharvaveda it distinguishes Ātman (or Brahma) into Para and Apara, of which Para Ātman is beyond the Guṇas and Apara Ātman has Ahankāra and Yoga is said to be the perfect realization of the unity of Para and Apara Ātman.

Though being a comparatively late work and having its origin in a society which saw a great spread of Buddhism and Tāntricism, the Brhanāradyāpurāṇa is entirely free from Tāntric influence. It recommends the drawing of the
Sarvatobhadra-manḍala and its painting with various hues in certain religious rites but does not include the Tāntric Yantra among the mediums of worship, nor does it prescribe any Tāntric Mantra or symbol or recognize the authority of the Tāntric works. It perhaps for this reason that this work refers very often to the use and gift of betel-leaves and denounces the stealing of betelnuts and makes no mention of the rivers and holy places of Maya, Orrisa or Mithila.²⁵

20. Mahābhāgavata:

It is a famous Vaiṣṇava Mahāpurāṇa called Bhāgavata, which sometimes called ‘Mahābhāgavata’. It is an interesting Upapurāṇa dealing with the praise of Devī and her worship. Although it is a comparatively late work and is not mentioned in any of the Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas except the Brhaddharmapurāṇa it deserves to be studied for information about the contemporay state of religion and society in Maya, especially in its eastern part which was adjacent of Kamarūpa.

In the remaining chapters Śūta is found to reproduce the dialogue between Mahādeva and Nārada on the glory of Durgā in the same way as it was reported by Vyāsa to Jaimini. It is evident that the Mahābhāgavata advocates Śāktism. The Mahābhāgavata was written in Maya and most probably in its eastern part which was adjacent to Kamarūpa. According to this work, it is Kāli who is Param-Brahma as well as Parā Prakṛti. Though ‘sacīnāṁda-vigrāha’, ‘suddha-jānakamayi’, ‘nītya’ and ‘arūpa’, Kāli, as Prakṛti, assumed, for creation, the form of a young and beautiful female seated on a lion and having a collyrium-dark complexion, four hands, red eyes, disheveled hair, and the quarters as her clothes digambarā. She created a Puruṣa as an embodiment of the three guṇas and

²⁵ Hazra, R.C.; *Studies in the Upapuranas*, vol.1, pp. 8-28
contaminated into him a wish for creation. From the three guṇas, viz. Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, of this Puruṣa were born Subhadrā, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively. Prakṛti, on her part, divided herself into Māyā, Vidyā and paramā, and became Satī, Gaṅgā, Durgā, Sāvitri, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and others. Dr. Hansa Bhatt has made critical study of this Purāṇa in her published thesis.  

21. Dattatreypurāṇa:

The other Purāṇas are ascribed to Vyāsa but this Purāṇa is composed by P.P. Vasudevananda Sarasvati Maharaja in Pauranic style. Swamiji has written more then twelve books and two hundred stotras in Sanskrit and Marathi language. This Purāṇa contains description of the life and activities of the principle deity viz. Dattātreya the son of Atri and Anasūya, still the Purāṇa also contains all the five characteristics of a Purāṇa as is explained by Swamiji himself in his self composed commentary on the said work. There are like Rgveda, eight Aṣṭakas of sixtyfour Adhyāyas having three thousand five hundred verses and one lac twelve thousand letters. Two Aṣṭakas are having Jñānakāṇḍa, two Aṣṭakas karmakāṇḍa and four Aṣṭakas Upāsanākāṇḍa. There are several verses that incorporate Vedic mantras, the work exhibits the scholarship of this great saint. He was not only a great poet and Vedic scholar but also well versed in Sanskrit language and grammar. His style is exuberant with various Chandas and Alankāras. Besides different legends and stories about the lord Dattātreya. The Purāṇa contains exposition of religious and moral teaching. The work also gives us extensive useful exposition about Yoga and Yogāṇa.

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22. **Mudgalapurāṇa:**

The *Mudgalapurāṇa* is a religious text dedicated to the Lord Gañeṣa. It is an *Upapurāṇa* that includes many stories and ritualistic elements relating to Gañeṣa. The *Gañeṣapurāṇa* and the *Mudgalapurāṇa* are core texts for devotees of Gañeṣa, known as Gāṇapatyas. These are the only two Purāṇas that are exclusively dedicated to Gañeṣa. There is little agreement on the date of the *Mudgalapurāṇa*. R.C.Hazra suggested that the *Mudgalapurāṇa* is earlier than the *Gañeṣapurāṇa* which he dates between 1100 and 1400 A.D. Thapan (pp.30-33) reviews different views on the relative dating of these two works and notes that the *Mudgalapurāṇa*, like other Purāṇas, is a multi-laid work. She says that the kernel of the text must be old and that it must have continued to receive interpolations until the 17th and 18th centuries as the worship of Gañapatī became more important in certain regions. The eight incarnations of Gañeṣa are described. Like the *Gañeṣapurāṇa*, the *Mudgalapurāṇa* considers Gañeṣa to represent the ultimate reality of being. As such, Gañeṣa's manifestations are endless but eight of his incarnations are of most importance. The eight incarnations are introduced in *Mudgalapurāṇa*.1.17.24-28. The text is organized into sections for each of these incarnations. These are not the same as the four incarnations of Gañeṣa that are described in the *Gañeṣapurāṇa*.

The incarnation described in the *Mudgalapurāṇa* took place in different cosmic ages. The *Mudgalapurāṇa* uses these incarnations to express complex philosophical concepts associated with the progressive creation of the world. Each incarnation represents a stage of the absolute as it unfolds into creation. Along with the philosophy, typical Purāṇic themes of battles with demons provide much of the story line. The incarnations appear in the following order: 1.Vakrātundā. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Matsarāsura (envy, jealousy). His mount (vāhana) is a lion. 2.Ekadanta, the purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Madāsura (arrogance, conceit). His mount is a mouse. 3.Mahodara, The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Mohāsura (delusion, confusion). His mount is a mouse. 4.Gajavakra or Gajānana, The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Lobhāsura (greed). His mount is a mouse. 5.Lambodara; The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Krodhāsura (anger). His mount is a mouse. 6.Vikaṭa; The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Kāmāsura (lust). His mount is a
peacock. 7. Vighnarāja, The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Mamāsura (possessiveness). His mount is the celestial serpent Śeṣa. 8. Dhumravarna. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Abhimanāsura (pride, attachment). His mount is a horse.

23. Viṣṇudharmapurāṇa

It contains of more then 4000 verses in divided Chapters-1 to 105. It has very little of the principal characteristics of a Purāṇa, and although it deals exclusively with the religious rites and duties of the Vaiṣṇavas and consequently calls itself a Śāstra. Obviously the later Purāṇas turned into religious books, caring much more for religious matters than for accounts of ancient history.

The text of the Viṣṇudharma, that we find now in Mss, does not agree completely with those used by the commentators and Nibandha writers. A very large number of verses ascribed to the “Viṣṇudharma” in these works is not found in the present text of this work. Only 37 are traceable in the present text of the same, and among the verses ascribed to the ‘Viṣṇudharma’ in Aparāka’s commentary on the Yājñavalkya-smṛti, the number of those which are not traceable in the present Viṣṇudharma, is considerable. This large proportion of the untraceable verses indicates that a more extensive text of the Viṣṇudharma was once current in some parts of India.

As to the provenance of the present Viṣṇudharma it is very difficult to say anything definitely. From the facts that of the holy places viz. in chap.36 almost all belong to Northern India. and a large number to its western part, and that the small river Devikā has been mentioned on two occasions (in chapps. 32 and 36) and considered as much sacred as the Gaṅgā, Yamūnā etc., it appears that the Viṣṇudharma was written in the north-western part of Northern India.