

We have already examined the contents and the date of composition of this Purāṇa in a separate booklet entitled *Some Aspects of the Vāyu Purāṇa* published by the University of Madras, (in 1933). We shall for our present purpose touch upon the problem of its date.

As we shall show presently, some portions of the Purāṇa can go back to the fifth century B.C. and earlier, while other portions must have been added or revised at the end of the third or fourth centuries of the Christian era. We are told in the *Harshacarita* that Bāṇa attended the exposition of the Vāyu Purāṇa in his village. Bāṇa could not have lived later than 625 A.D. and therefore the Purāṇa was very much earlier. The epic Mahābhārata and its supplement Hari-vamśa definitely make mention of the Vāyu Purāṇa (III, 194, 15), and therefore it is reasonable to take that this Purāṇa is much anterior to the didactic epic. In its recommendation of particular modes of dancing accompanied by music to the ascetics as a means of attaining salvation, the Purāṇa is on a par with the Yājñyavalkya Smṛti where similar descriptions are found (III, 1, 13). According to the late Ganapati Sastri, the Law-book of Yājñyavalkya is much earlier than the *Kauṭalīya*, for which the generally accepted date is the 4th century B.C.

In the same way the Purāṇa nowhere makes mention of religious sects like Buddhism and Jainism which came to stay in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. The Purāṇa is further an ardent advocate of the ancient Yoga theory. In as much as its injunctions regarding the practice of Yoga can be traced to Chalcolithic period of Indian history, as evidenced by the statues of the proto-historic and pre-historic Indus valley sculptures, we can say that it is the oldest of the Purāṇas, though we cannot say that it is as ancient as the Indus valley culture.

A study of the religion and philosophy of the Purāṇa shows that the Purāṇa is a typical representative of the transformation of the old Yoga school incorporating into it