

SILVER JUBILEE PUBLICATION SERIES-7

# INTRODUCTION TO PURĀNAS

(THE LIGHT HOUSE OF INDIAN CULTURE)



**Prof. Pushpendra Shastri**



**RASHTRIYA SANSKRIT SANSTHAN**

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## CONTENTS

Introduction	i
1. The Mahā Purāṇas	1
2. The contents and brief description of the Purāṇas	49
3. The main tenets and the ethics of the Purāṇas	162

Of the other royal families, the extant Purāṇas contain very incomplete and inaccurate accounts.

Besides the genealogies of kings of the 'past', which ended either with the *Mahābhārata* war or, about a century later, with the reign of Adhisīmakṛṣṇa, some of the extant Purāṇas give, in the form of prophecies, a number of lists of kings of the 'future' *kaliyuga*; and in their accounts of such future kings the *Vāyu*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Viṣṇu*, *Matsya*, and *Bhāgavata* include, with the mention of the durations of rules of the different kings, a few dynasties of the historical period, viz. the Śīsunāgas, Nandas, Mauryas, Śuṅgas, Kāṇvas, Āndhras, and Guptas, all so well known in Indian history. The ancestors of these dynasties, except the Gupta dynasty, which has not been mentioned in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, are followed by the enumeration of a series of other dynasties, mostly of low and barbarian origin viz. Ābhīras, Garbāhīlas, śakas, Yavanas, Tusaras, Hūṇas, etc. which were contemporaneous with the former. After mentioning all these lines of kings, the Mahā Purāṇas give a dreary description of the social condition in northern India, which was consequent upon the foreign invasions and the spread of the non-Brāhmaṇical and anti-Brāhmaṇical religious systems. F.E. Pargiter has critically examined the texts of the five Mahā Purāṇas mentioned above and shown their importance in reconstructing the history of these dynasties.

Although as the evidence of the Vedic, Buddhistic, and other works as well as of the inscriptions shows, there can be little doubt the fact that ancient Indian historical tradition, as now found recorded in the Mahā Purāṇas, was in its





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