

Ayodhyā it supplies a detailed information. The genealogical records of this dynasty are arranged chapterwise in three groups : (1) from Manu to Satyavrata (ii) from Satyavrata to Sagara (iii) from Sagara to Sumitra. There is another sort of grouping also based on the sequence of time. The dynasties from Ikṣvāku to Marut belong to the past. The reigning period of Marut, father of Agnivarṇa, is called the present time when this purāṇa is said to have been written. The reigning period of the kings from Agnivarṇa to Sumitra is called the future time that presupposes the existence of this work.

The genealogical lists are interspersed with the deeds of some illustrious monarchs. For it is a characteristic of the Mahāpurāṇa to record the deeds of some famous kings. Usually the deeds comprise the personal history of the ruler but are sometimes related to the conditions of his reigning period. Śivapurāṇa is interested in the records of the solar dynasty of Ayodhyā and as such it recounts the deeds of some monarchs of that house. Of these Kuvalāśva-Dhundhumāra, Satyavrata-Triśaṅku and Sagara figure prominently. The accounts of Vikukṣi-Śaśāda, Bhagīratha, Niṣadha, Hiraṇyānābha and others occupy a secondary place.

The above analysis clearly demonstrates that Śivapurāṇa possesses the conventional characteristics of a Mahāpurāṇa in common with its other colleagues. These entitle it to the status of a great purāṇa. But its real greatness lies in expounding the philosophical background of Śiva ritual. The Purāṇa conceives Śiva as the eternal principle, the supreme god, the cosmic soul, the support of all existence. But the ignorant aspirant bound in the meshes of illusion goes in quest for knowledge and imagines that his lord has a personal form possessed of attri-

इक्ष्वाकुरम्बरीषश्च ययातिर्नहुषादयः ।
 पुण्यश्लोकाः श्रुता येऽत्र तेऽपि तद्वंशसम्भवाः ।
 अन्ये च राजर्षयो नानावीर्यसमन्विताः
 किं तैः फलमनुत्क्रान्तैरुक्तपूर्वैः पुरातनैः ।
 किं चेश्वरकथावृत्तौ यत्र तत्रान्यकीर्तनम् ।
 प्रसङ्गादीश्वरस्यैव प्रभावद्योतनादपि ।
 सर्गादयोऽपि कथिता इत्यलं तत्प्रविस्तरे ॥