

## PREFACE

This is the first part of the Padma Purāṇa in English translation and the thirty-ninth volume in the series on *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology*. It comprises the first thirty-three chapters of the first section called *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* or the *Section on Creation* of the Purāṇa which is very huge in size. This Purāṇa, as it appears in the Venkaṭeśvara edition which this translation follows, consists of seven big sections or Khaṇḍas, namely, Sṛṣṭi, Bhūmi, Svarga, Brahma, Pātāla, Uttara and Kriyāyogasāra and is said to contain 55000 verses, though the actual number is much less. The translation of the whole Purāṇa is planned to run into as many as ten volumes of the present size and may take some years for its completion.

The Padma Purāṇa takes its name after the Primordial Lotus from which god Brahmā, the Creator, was born. Dr. Deshpande has given a brief Khaṇḍa-wise summary of the Purāṇa in his Introduction which appears in this volume. As the 'Contents' show, the reader will find herein and enjoy some very interesting accounts and stories, such as that of the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons, the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice by god Śiva, the chopping-off of Brahmā's fifth head by the same god, the drinking-up of the ocean by the sage Agastya and so on. A very amusing story appears in Chapter 13, of how Brhaspati, the preceptor of gods, impersonates Śukra, the preceptor of demons, and how he corrupts and demoralizes the latter by preaching heretical doctrines to them with a view to make the gods who were very often defeated by the demons in war, victorious over them. A good portion of this Part is also devoted to the glorification of Puṣkara as a sacred place of pilgrimage. A number of fasts and vows are recommended and the merits of observing the same are described in detail.

The project of this series was envisaged in 1970 by the late Lala Sundar Lal Jain of Messrs. Motilal Banarsidass. Thirty-nine volumes of the series including the present one have so far been published and others are in progress. Complete sets of

eleven major Purāṇas, viz. *Agni*, *Bhāgavata*, *Brahma*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Garuḍa*, *Kūrma*, *Līṅga*, *Nārada*, *Śiva*, *Varāha* and *Vāyu* are already available, many of which have been reprinted over and over again.

It is our pleasant duty to put on record our sincere thanks to Dr. R.N. Dandekar and the UNESCO authorities for their kind encouragement and valuable help which render this work more useful than it would otherwise have been. We are extremely grateful to Dr. N.A. Deshpande for translating the text. We are also thankful to all those who have been helpful in our project.

—*Editor*