

first section, brings before us doctrines and characters of an after age to which no allusion is made in the body of the Purāṇa. In this interpolation Bengal manuscripts concur with the Maithila. But the simplicity of the Bengal interpolater, not sufficiently drilled in the manœuvres of Mithilá, betrays the secret. The introductory interpolation was evidently made without advertence to the conclusion. The winged sages and Jaimini were brought in for the purpose of broaching the doctrine of the quadruple form of Vāsudeva, and for pacifying the Brahminical conscience still smarting under the polyandry of Draupadī, and the outrageous conduct of Balarāma. The interpolaters however forgot to wind up the conclusion consistently with their introduction. The birds are the living speakers, according to that introduction, and Jaimini the auditor. To make the interpolation complete and consistent, the birds and Jaimini ought to take leave of us when the curtain drops. Of them, however, there is no trace in Bengal manuscripts at the end.

The Maithila writers afterwards discovered and rectified the error, in the supplement of which we have spoken. But the omission in Bengal manuscripts, while it testifies to their comparative purity, opens our eyes to the whole interpolation. We are thereby emboldened to hazard the assertion that the Purāṇa, or compilation of legends, which has become noted under the name of Mārcaṇḍeya commenced originally at chapter 45, where Mārcaṇḍeya himself appears as the living speaker, and extends to chapter 137, where that living speaker removes from our sight. The first two sections, where the birds are the speakers and Jaimini the auditor, are interpolations, like the Devī-Máhātmya.