

must also mention Willibald Kirfel, a German Orientalist who has written the *Purāṇa Pañchalakṣhaṇa*; it is another successful attempt to prove that the five topics dealt with in a *Purāṇa* are not born of fictitious imagination but a representation of the evolution of the universe treated earlier in Vedic literature. In this volume (*Das Purana Pañchalakshana*, 1927) all relevant common passages are collected together.

Among the early Indologists it was Lassen who critically examined the application of the epithet *Pañchalakṣhaṇa* to the extant *Purāṇas* (*Indische Alterthumskunde*, Vol. I, p. 499). No doubt the five topics of a *Purāṇa* are not to be found in all the *Purāṇas*; but that they deal with these topics in one way or other is a fact beyond dispute. Ancient lexicographers like Amarasimha attribute the five characteristics to a *Purāṇa* treatise. These five characteristics are: (1) *Sarga* or primary creation, (2) *Pratisarga*, secondary creation, (3) *Vamśa* or genealogy of gods and patriarchs, (4) *Manvantara* or epochs of Manu, (5) *Vamśānu-charita*, or history of kings of solar and lunar races and their descendants. A close study of *Purāṇa* literature shows that the *Purāṇas* as a whole deal with the evolution of the Universe, recreation of the Universe from the constituent elements, genealogies of gods and seers, groups of great ages included in aeons (*Kalpa*) and the history of royal families of the *Kali* age.

Recently, Indian scholars in the different Universities have been taking a keen interest in *Purāṇic* literature and reconstructing the history of ancient India and the chronology of its kings with *Purāṇic* data. In fact the *Purāṇas* have now come to stay as one of the principal sources of information for ancient Indian history. The growing interest in the study of *Purāṇic* literature points to the need for a critical edition of all the eighteen *Mahāpurāṇas* which should form the basis for an authoritative index of all the *Purāṇas*.