

vamśa bears correspondence and similarity in some cases, and it has been said that the Vishṇu Purāṇa must be indebted to the Harivamśa giving a late date arbitrarily to the latter. Whatever be the similarity between the Harivamśa and the Vishṇu Purāṇa, it need not deter us from determining the date of the Vishṇu Purāṇa. The remarkable fact about this Purāṇa is that it is the work of a single hand, for it presents a single whole with a well prepared plan. In its historical portion the account of the Gupta dynasty is given, but this does not mean that the Purāṇa was composed then, but more material was added at that time.

Though the various Purāṇas existed, the late H. H. Wilson selected the Vishṇu Purāṇa for translation into English as it treats of the five specific topics or pañcalakshṇa, and as it was not sectarian in character. The Purāṇa itself is divided into six books, the first devoted to the primary and secondary creation, the second to the legend of Bharata, the third to a description of the leading institutions of the Hindus, the fourth to the kings of lunar and solar dynasties of India, the fifth to the life of Krishṇa, and the sixth to the dissolution of the world in both its major and minor cataclysms. We have been rather at length upon the material contained in each book of this Purāṇa to disillusion a section of the people who regard it as a Vaishṇava Purāṇa and consequently sectarian in character. But the fact is otherwise. Its teachings were not intended solely for the Vaishṇavas but appeal to all classes of people who regard the work as a sacred one expounding Vedic literature and Philosophy.

Another factor of much importance is that a student of this Purāṇa fails to notice the fasts and feasts, the ceremonials and ceremonies, festivities and sacrifices, all connected with the deity called Vishṇu. From the absence of these rituals one may infer that this Purāṇa was not intended for the propagation of only the Vaishṇava religion. What is more remarkable is even the sacred places, the places of