

PREFACE

The Kālikāpurāṇa has been more or less notorious for a long time, being identified with the human sacrifices described in one of its chapters, which was published in translation as early as 1799. Little is known, however, of the ritual performances of which those sensational rites only form a minor part. It seemed useful to place these rites in the proper context by means of a translation of the whole fragment about worship included in this Purāṇa, thus adding a valuable piece of work to ritualistic literature, of which the disclosure, as far as the later forms of Hinduism are concerned, has only begun.

Unlike myths and stories, of which the Kālikāpurāṇa also offers many interesting examples, rituals are hard to summarize. Their meaning can only become clear through a full valuation of the details. Accordingly it was indispensable to give a complete translation of this part of the work. The difficulties, owing to the absence of a critical edition, were reduced as much as possible by the consultation of three manuscripts besides the two existing printed editions.

For practical reasons the translation of the ritual fragment of the Kālikāpurāṇa will be published in two volumes. The first comprises chapters 54-69, after which a logical caesura can be made, together with a general introduction. In the second volume, shortly to be published, the remaining part, chapters 70-80, will be preceded by a study of the iconographical evidence found in this Purāṇa.

In cases where the Sanskrit formula is too short for a readable reproduction in English one or more words have been put between brackets; they are to be read as forming a part of the sentence; a few times a name of a deity or a term has been added between the same brackets, when further explanation appeared necessary.

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