

For my own part I have no system and neither seek to enhance nor depreciate the worth of these Studies nor to exaggerate or detract from the antiquity of their origin. "Know them before you damn them" is the only answer to be made to present detractors. And I will do all I can to bring them acquainted with the subject on which they cannot now in common justice decide. I am quite satisfied that all the attempt hitherto made to modernise Hindu Literature and Science rest upon even a more groundless base than the extravagancies of the Kalpas and Yugas of the Hindus. Has any person read, I may even say, one of the eighteen Puranas which are to be brought down to such recent times. I should doubt it and I am quite confident that no Individual has investigated the whole of them. I will not assert that the Puranas are ancient works but I cannot attach any weight to the opinion of an individual who is of himself utterly unacquainted with their contents. Before people cavil they should read. — You will understand from the tenor of these remarks that I have received the 3d number of the Indische Bibliothek and that I allude to the opposition you indicate to the notions of very modern dates for Hindu compositions. I shall be very glad to see your further sentiments. I have not yet been able to form any definite opinion on the subject myself beyond a conviction that in the early ages of Christianity the polite Literature of the Hindus mainly flourished. As matter of mere conjecture I should place the Rámáyan before or about Alexanders invasion and the Mahábhárat at no remote period after it. The Puránas were subsequent to the latter and in their present form have a very wide range some portions being much more ancient than others. The hymns of the Vedas are the productions of a period long anterior to the Rámáyana. I trust however we shall be able to speak more confidently on these subjects hereafter. Under the encouragement of this Government I am engaged in preparing Indexes of the Puranas employing the joint agency of Pundit versed in Sanscrit and Bengalis well acquainted with English. We have thus completed Lists of the Contents of 12 entire Puranas and Lections and portions of the rest. We have also translated nearly the whole of the Ágnéya Purána or Agni Puran. It is rather a rough process but it will be sufficient to convey a general idea of the real character of these works. And will enable a Student to seize at once upon any subject he may wish to examine for himself. For the present the question of publication is not started, our labours remain in Manuscripts but a copy will be sent home to the Court of Directors who will probably allow general access to them. Copies here are to be deposited in the Libraries