

## Fitting Into 'Order': The Brahmanical World View, the Puranas and After

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**Abstract:** Spread of Brahmanism and consolidating its hold were the main purposes of almost all the Puranas composed in Bengal. Not just the Puranas, but other Smriti texts carrying forward the legacy of the Puranas also zealously went on with this task, particularly in the face of emerging newer challenges. Hence they sought to reorganize the religion and society of Bengal in a new way. The various myths ingeniously crafted provide a snippet to the social organization of Bengal during this time. This paper shall seek to investigate the Brahmanal view of what was perceived as chaos and how 'order' was established through the various Brahmanical agencies like Puranas and myriad Smriti texts. However before foray is made into understanding how this process was initiated, it is imperative to understand the popular perception on Brahmanas and Brahmanism.

**Keywords:** Brahmanism, Purana, Smritis, Kulajis, jati

**Received :** 17 October 2022

**Revised :** 20 November 2022

**Accepted :** 25 November 2022

**Published :** 29 December 2022

### TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Kar, R. 2022. Fitting Into 'Order': The Brahmanical World View, the Pura After. *South Asian History, Culture and Archaeology*, 2: 2, pp. 295-302.

## Introduction

There is absolutely no uncertainty regarding the fact that the Brahmanas came from outside of Bengal. Apart from the inscriptions, the arrival of the Brahmanas in Bengal is also chronicled by a particular genre of literature called the kulaji texts that deal with the history of the brahmanas and some other principal castes of Bengal. Though these texts belong to the medieval and early modern period this paper draws their references at the very onset of the discussion as they too deal in detail with the process of brahmanisation in Bengal dating back to very early times. These texts have been found to be written both in Sanskrit and Bengali. Many Kulasastras were discovered by N.N Vasu. It was from there that debates and discussions started centering around the kulaji texts. Though many historians like Akshay Kumar Maitra, Rakhaldas Bandopadhyay and Ramaprasad Chanda have refused to accept these texts as historical documents, that however did not deter Vasu to use them as sources and compose several historical works based on these. His views found supporters in Harasprasad Shastri and Dinesh Chandra

Sen. There are many texts by the name of Kulasashtra. These were composed at different places and time by a special category of brahmanas who bore the title of Ghatak and passed from one generation to the next. However as it was passed down, there were frequent alterations and emendations made to the original texts. Not just new names and genealogies were fabricated, but many a time mistakes were made while copying from the old texts. Sometimes new stories were concocted by the ghatakas who being lured by their patrons did not hesitate to glorify or malign characters as per the vested interests. So these texts cannot be relied upon blindly. (Majumder, 1973: 117-135)

The main content of these texts is how the King of Gauḍa, Adisura, brought five brahmanas from Kanyakubja or Kanauj for a special task, after the completion of which the brahmanas returned to their homeland. However they were not accepted there as it was supposed that staying at Gaur had contaminated them, since Bengal was not considered a land fit for the inhabitation of brahmanas. As a result these brahmanas returned to Gaur and Adisura gladly settled them in lands donated by him. The five kayastha servants who had come with these brahmanas also settled in Gaur. There are different views as to why Adisura brought brahmanas from Kanauj, but the most popular tale associated with it is recounts that Adisura's queen who was also the princess of Kanyakubja, wanted to perform the Chandrayanavrata and since the brahmanas of Bengal were lacking in Vedic knowledge, Adisura requested his father-in-law Chandraketu, who was the king of Kanauj to send him five brahmanas so that the queen's vrata can be officiated. Another view states that the king of Kanyakubja was Birsingha who did not grant Adisura's request of sending five brahmanas versed in Vedas to Gaur, leading Adisura declare war on Birsingha. However in this war Adisura resorted to treachery and sent seven hundred brahmanas from Bengal to Kanyakubja mounted on bulls to wage war against the king. He knew it very well that the ruler of Kanyakubja, having full devotion to brahmanas and cows would rather accept defeat than thinking of resisting them. Adisura's plan worked, the king did not fight and accepting Adisura's request sent five brahmanas versed in Vedas to Gaur. In some of the Kulaji texts, Adisura is stated to have adopted this tactic after being defeated once by the king of Kanyakubja. (Majumder, 1973: 41-43)

Although there is no evidence to prove the historicity of Adisura and this legend despite attempts made by some scholars like Nagendrana Basu, Lalmohan Vidyanidhi and others, the relevance of these texts is not lost. As Kunal Chakravarti states that the Kulaji texts highlight something more significant. He clearly states that the debate on whether Adisura was a historical reality does not concern him, however kulinism which is traced from this legend deserves special notice in this case. Here lies the importance of kulaji texts, because in these we find a practice that was a part of the social reality of Bengal for many years to come. In many instances there have been incidents whereby non-kulinabrahmanas sought to improve their status by marrying off their daughters to kulina men without caring the least about the compatibility of such matches. There was no restriction imposed on the number of wives a kulinabrahmana could have, as a result for many kulina it became means to earn their livelihood. Here lies the importance of these texts. (Chakrabarti, 2001: 118-121). Tracing the origin of kulinism, the Rarhiyakulajis state that the descendents of the five brahmanas brought by Adisura shot up to fifty nine during the reign of his grandson, Kshitisura. Each was given a village to reside in and thus originated the gami of the Rarhiyabrahmanas and each brahmana and his descendents were known by the name of the village in which they lived. It became their gami and later developed into a surname, like those who resided in Mukhati village had Mukhatigami, and had the surname Mukhati or Mukhopadhyaya by adding the suffix upadhyaya meaning teacher to the village name. The surnames of Chattopadhyaya, Bandopadhyaya, all originated in the same fashion. Kshitisura's son, Dharasura further divided the Radhiyabrahmanas into three grades; MukhyaKulina, GaunaKulina and Srotriya.

According to the VarendraKulajis, however, Vallalasena was the founder of kulinism. According to VacaspatiMisra, Ballalasena put forth nine virtues as the criterion and only those who possessed all of these qualities were assigned the rank of kulina. ( Majumder, 1971: 475-476). Therefore though the kulaji texts are full of inconsistencies and cannot be put to use for constructing history, there lies inherent in it some sort of popular memory that hints at the the social construction of the period and we cannot refute this popular memory completely. Once the Brahmanas were endowed with secure rights in land as well to propagate Brahmanical ideals regarding religious and social disciplines, the Puranas too came to play a critical role in achieving these objectives.

Especially interesting in this context are the two late Puranas, the Brahmavaivarta and the Brihaddharma, which show how Brahmanism in the final attempt to consolidate its position sought to reorganize the varna-jati structure. The Puranic references are also consonant with inscriptional evidences of this period. As it is shown by these sources that the most noticeable feature of this period is the near absence of actual references of varna scheme. The only varna category that is constant in the land grants is the Brahmana varna. The intervening varnas of Kshatriyas and Vaishya are absent, while the rest being clubbed under the Sudra varna. It is in this context of the inapplicability of the theoretical varna order in the society of Bengal, that the concept of jati becomes of paramount importance. ( Ray, 1359 BS: 209-260; Majumdar, 2015: 11-27) As NayanjotLahiri states that jatis were the professional or occupational groups which may have come under the rubric of the theoretical varna scheme but at the same time it also often worked against what is normally understood as the required varna duties. (Lahiri,1991: 511) This will be clear once one looks at the case of Kayastha and Vaidya who though were clubbed under the Shudra varna, in terms of social prestige they came only after the Brahmanas of Bengal. By the medieval period with the Muslim conquest and its consequent proselytizing mission Brahmanism also could not let go of its power and sought to rearrange the varna-jati structure with new found enthusiasm.. The two late Puranas, the Brahmavaivarta and the Brihaddharmaperhaps for this reason deal elaborately with the varna-jati phenomenon. The BrihaddharmaPurana enumerates thirty-six castes while the Brahmavaivarta doubles it and takes it upto seventy two. That the advent of Islam led to further profusion is made clear by the BrahmavaivartaPurana's mention of the Jola caste, which it says, is produced by the union of a Mleccha man and a Kuvinda girl (Tarkaratna, 1332 BS: 1.10.121).The Brihaddharma Purana while explaining the origin of jatis cites the story of Vena, who prohibited the practice of Varnashramadharma and forced the four varnas to cohabit amongst themselves in natural as well as reverse order leading to the creation of a large number of mixed castes; this was further carried forth on Vena's insistence among the mixed castes as well leading to further multiplication of jatis. (Tarkaratna, 1314 BS:II.13).

The Brihaddharma classifies the jatis, thus originated into three categories. According to it, the mixed castes which originated from the four principal castes are clubbed under Uttama Sankara, Madhyama Sankara and Adhama Sankara. The three fold classification of jatis is also followed in the Brahmavaivarta Purana, but instead of Uttama Samkara, Madhyama Samkara and Adhama Samkara it names them as Sat Shudras, Asat Shudras and Antyajas and enumerates a total of seventy two jātis. That many occupational groups or shrenis have been categorized into jatis is evident in these Purana, who were constantly looked down upon by the Brahmana law givers. However despite being snubbed by the Brahmanas, there are evidences in the text itself which show that some of the occupational groups enjoyed a superior position previously, for instance Chitrakar, Makakar, Kangshakar, Shankhakar, Kumbhakar, Tantubaya, Shutraddhar, Karmakar and Swarnakar. The Brahmavaivarta Purana states that they were born as a result of union between Visvakarma and the celestial nymph, Ghritachi when they were born on earth as a result of mutual curses. Together they formed the nabasakha or

the nine craftsman guilds, However the kamsakar, the chitrakar and swarnakar invited brahmanical rage and consequently were degraded in status. The Brihaddharma Purana too mentions Gandhika or Gandhavamik, Sankhavanik who probably formed separate guilds of their own. With expanding trade relations and specialized crafts, guilds grew more compact in organization and since these guilds followed the rules of hereditary membership along with rules of interdining and intermarriages within themselves, they gradually got the character of real castes. However as their role in economy lessened, it became easier for the Brahmanas to degrade them to a lower rank. A consonance of this statement can be found in Anandabhata's Ballalacharita which shows how the Suvarnavanik lost their erstwhile superior position. The story says, that once in the Sena kingdom, lived a rich merchant named Ballabhananda. Ballalaseana, the Sena king borrowed one crore Niska from him to fight against the king of Udantapura. Despite repeated failures, he wanted to make one last attempt to defeat him and sent for one and a half crore suvarna mudra from the merchant. Ballabhananda agreed, but in return demanded for himself the revenue generated from Harikela. This infuriated Ballalaseana. He took away all the wealth of the mercantile community and oppressed them in many ways. In the meantime the king also came to know that the mercantile community had declined a royal invitation because they were not ready to be seated together with the Sat Sudra at the feast. He was further informed, that the leader of the mercantile community, Ballabhananda was conspiring against him with the Pala king of Magadha, who also happened to be Ballabhananda's son-in-law. This infuriated Ballalaseana, he brought the community of Suvarnavanik down to the position of the Sudras and also declared that if any brahmana officiated in any of their ceremonies or impart knowledge to them, they would also be degraded. The mercantile community also decided to strike back and with their money they brought all the servants to their sides. Ballalaseana sensing the trouble improved the social position of the Kaivarta, malakar, kumbhakar and karmakar were brought to the status of sat sudra and the prohibited the suvarnavaniks to wear the sacred thread. (Ray, 1359 BS: 211-213; Tarkaratna, 1332 BS: I.X.15-23)

In the Brhaddharma and the Brahmavaivarta Puranas also the Suvarnavanika is reduced to the position of madhyamasamkara or asatsudra but other groups like Sankhavanik and Gandhavanik are included in the Uttamasamkara or the sat sudra category, highlighting the decline of importance of Suvarnavanik in respect to other mercantile communities. That the Suvarnavanik's degradation was a later phenomenon is evident from a passage of the Brahmavaivarta Purana which states that along with Gopa, castes like Bhilla, Modak, Kuvar, Tamboli, Swarnakar are clubbed under Satsudra. Then it goes on to mention Swarnakar as one of the nine sons of Visvakarma and Ghritachi who incurred brahmanical curse and fell from their pedestal along with the Sutradhar and Chitrakara. The story hints at a later decline of the status of Swarnakar which is also represented in Ballalacarita as discussed above and also in the Brihaddharma Purana, where Swarnakara too does not come under the category of Uttamasamkara but are termed as madhyamasamkara. However while the Brahmavaivarta terms the Swarnakara as Sat sudra in the beginning who later lost their position owing to brahmanical wrath, in the Brihaddharma, Swarnakara was always considered the Madhyamasamkara. Thus while a fall from an erstwhile superior status is hinted at the Brahmavaivarta, this is not the case of the Brhaddharma, suggesting that Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa was perhaps a witness of the time in which the Swarnakara enjoyed a comparatively better position. Just as the story of Visvakarma and Ghritachi forms the crux around which the origin of the Jatis revolve in the Brahmavaivarta Purana, in the Brihaddharma it is Vena who is held responsible for the origin of mixed castes. According to this Purana it was Vena who deviated from the path of the varnashramadharma and forced the four varnas to cohabit amongst themselves in natural as well as in reverse order, leading to the creation of a large number of mixed castes. The mixed castes that came forth further cohabited amongst themselves, resulting in further

multiplication of jatis. In this way originated the mixed castes as this Purana states.( Tarkaratna, 1332 BS: 13.28-39 )

M.N Srinivas was against the Indological representation of caste as varna, because he felt that it gave a distorted view of the Indian reality. As one looks at the Bengal scenario, the relevance of Srinivas's statement cannot be ignored. Srinivas had pointed out how the varna model produced a wrong and distorted image of caste and how he deemed it necessary to be freed from the varna model if one wished to understand the caste system.( Beteille, 1996: 16).Srinivas's argument seems to completely resonate with the conditions prevalent in Bengal in the early medieval times which is evident in our two Puranas. The presence of innumerable social groups defies the varna order and hence comes to fore the theory of jatis, who though tenuously cling to the varna order, is in fact more apt in dealing with the social realities. As Andre Beteille states that Srinivas's impatience with the varna model was a response to the dominance in Indian writing about society of what he called the 'book view' which he was eager to replace with the 'field view'. He pointed out that the way people actually live is very different from how they are supposed to live, and that the sociologists should concentrate on the former and not the latter. This was true of the Indian village community, the Indian joint family and of course, also of caste. However at the same time, people have some conception about how they should live and hence though Srinivas thought otherwise, it would be a mistake to ignore how people think they ought to live and focus only on how they live. Hence Beteille says, no matter how we argue, we cannot turn our back on the book-view of the Indian society. (Beteille,1996: 16). This is where the Puranic formulation assumes importance and it seems plausible that both the Brahmavaivarta and the Brhaddharma Puranas actually combine what Srinivas calls 'book view' with the field 'view'. The presence of innumerable social groups in Bengal led these Puranas concoct stories for their origin so that their origin can be explained within the traditional varna order.

The Puranas composed to accommodate the local traditions with the brahmanical beliefs could never hence ignore what Srinivas calls the 'field view'. As it is known to all that Bengal did not have the two intervening varnas of Ksatriya and Vaishya and apart from the brahmanas, all other groups were considered as Shudras. However since Shudras were amalgamation of various jātis, they were variously placed in the social scale. Next to brahmanas therefore came the Vaidyas and Karan-kayastha who enjoyed considerable social prestige in Bengal, their 'Shudra' status notwithstanding. The officials designated kayastha or karana-kayastha held important administrative posts and is well attested in epigraphic record. Gradually from the ninth-tenth centuries this professional designation turned to caste designation. (Ray,1359 BS: 290-292; Indane, 1971: 54-56).The Brahmavaivarta and the Brhaddharma Puranas in explaining the origin of the karana-kayastha caste states that this caste was born of Vaisya father and Sudra mother (Tarkaratna, 1332 BS:I.10.15; Tarkaratna, 1314 BS: III.13.32),and it was the brahmanas who designated them to be scribes. The BrihaddharmaPurana states that with the end of Vena, righteousness came to prevail once Prithu ascended the throne. As soon as Prithu became the king, he put an end to the further multiplication of mixed castes and asked the brahmanas to determine their varna and vritti or profession. The Brahmanas on their part brought all these castes under the banner of Snudras and asked them to choose their profession according to their capacity. It was further stated by the brahmanas that they would get their names according to the profession they opted for themselves. The Karanas were the first to approach and requested the Brahmanas to make them as they deserved to be. Seeing them so modest and humble Prithu categorized them as Sacchudra and they were assigned to work for the state as well as be scribes. ( Tarkaratna, 1314: III. 14. 24-26).The Vaidyas form another important caste of Bengal. Vaidya as a separate caste features in the BrahmavaivartaPurana and is referred to as an offspring of Asvinikumar



from a Brahmin woman (Tarkaratna, 1332 BS: I.10.125-134) but in the Brhaddharma Vaidya does not feature as a distinct caste, rather in this Purana it is stated that it was the Ambastha caste who were transformed to Vaidyas or physicians by the brahmanas.

According to both the Brahmavaivarta and the BrhaddharmaPuranas, Ambastha was born because of the union of a Shudra woman and a brahmana man but while the BrihaddharmaPurana makes no distinction between the Ambastha and the Vaidyas, the BrahmavaivartaPurana clearly maintains the distinction between the Ambasthas and Vaidyas and mentions the latter as a subcaste, The BrihaddharmaPurana states that it was the brahmanas who elevated the Ambastha to the rank of the vaidyas. This was done by performing samkara or purificatory rites after which they were named as Vaidyas by the brahmanas and handed over the Ayurveda, asking them to follow the course of Shudras in their daily life and be devoted only to the study of Ayurveda. They should not try to read the Puranas, because they are not suitable for them. They were also asked to follow the profession of Vaishyas in the manufacture and distribution of medicines. In this way their vocation was decided which they were to follow hereditarily. (Tarkaratna, 1332 BS: I.10; Tarkaratna, 1332 BS: III.13-33, 40-50). It seems that Vaidyas too were occupational castes, who later were transformed to a jatilike various other occupational groups. The BrihaddharmaPurana did not bother to construct a separate story for the origin of the Vaidyas but chose to club it with Ambastha, however the BrahmavaivartaPurana perhaps owing to its continuation even after the BrihaddharmaPurana concocted a separate story for the origin of this caste and since Vaidyas were medical practitioners, the composers pertinently traced their origin to Asvinikumar, the celestial brothers associated with medicine. It seems that it took a long time for the Vaidyas to emerge as a distinct identity, whose vocation decided the caste, because the writer of a medical treatise Sabdapradip, who also happened to be a Rajavaidya or royal physician identified himself not as a Vaidya but as Karananvay or someone belonging to the family of Karana, whose father and grandfather too followed the profession of a physician. This shows that the emergence of a distinct group called Vaidya was a much later phenomenon. However despite their predominance in the social life of Bengal, like kayasthas they too were clubbed as Shudras by the brahmanas who never intended to share their power with anybody and by proclaiming clearly in these Puranas that it was the Brahmanas who decided the rank and vocation of all the social groups, the brahmanical hold over the various jātis were further sought to be consolidated.

However at the same time it is also to be remembered that caste system in Bengal was not as rigorous as it was in the heartland of Brahmanism, the northern India. Brahmanism in Bengal had a tough road to tread, because it had to compete with other organized religions like Jainism and more importantly Buddhism that gave Brahmanism tough fight, especially under the Palas between the eighth and the twelfth centuries, the kambojas in northern and eastern Bengal in the tenth century and the Chandras in eastern and southern Bengal between the tenth and the eleventh centuries. It was only under the Senas and Varmans that Brahmanism finally managed to gain a foothold in Bengal, though the influence of Brahmanism could already be felt from the post-Gupta period onwards as Brahmanism had already realized by then that if it had to survive in Bengal and outwit Buddhism, it had to work out a compromise with the local traditions. This was done through a composition of a large number of Puranas. What one needs to keep in mind, as Sekhar Bandopadhyaya points out is that the Bengali society was never so rigidly structured or hopelessly immobile, as was textualised by some of the conservative medieval smritikaras. He cites from the Chandimangalakavya where he shows how the Chandalas, or the proverbial outcastes in the Brahmanical society, are described in this kavya as rightful dwellers of the city, they were not treated as antyebasi or those who lived outside or at the edges of human habitation as enjoined by Manu. He cites Niharranjan Ray who too had shown that

since the Gupta period, with the expansion of agriculture, the linkages between caste and class became more visible, with those providing physical labour losing status to those who refrained from it, but controlled land, like the Brahmana, Kayastha and Vaidya, the three traditional higher castes of Bengal. (Bandopadhyaya, 2004: 18-20). Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal too had shown how castes emerged in Bengal as a result of occupational specialization, and not ritual differentiation. He argues pre-colonial Bengal was such a society that permitted occupational mobility in keeping with the changes of the opportunity structure. (Sanyal, 1981:18-19). It seems that this argument to some extent explains the situation as represented by these two late Puranas where one's position in the social hierarchy is determined by one's occupation, for instance that of the Karana, Vaidya, Tantuvaya, Gandhavanik, Taksan, Rajaka and so on. This was also the theory of Nesfield, who too believed that occupation was the sole basis of caste. The ranking of any caste as high or low depended whether the occupation followed by the caste belonged to an advanced or background stage of culture. Thus the castes following the most primitive occupations like hunting, fishing are regarded as the lowest, while the highest caste was of those who were priests and teachers. (Dutta, 1931:2). However the case was not so simple in Bengal.

Occupation alone could not determine one's rank in the social order. Had it been so Kumbhakar, Kamsakar, Sankhakar and Swarnakar would have occupied the same rank in social hierarchy but while the first three occupied the rank of Satsudra or UttamaSamkara, the last were relegated to the rank of MadhyamaSamkara or Asat Sudra in these Puranas, suggesting that it was not just occupation, but the group's role in economic affairs that decided their position. However the position did not always remain fixed, just as there was debasement of Suvarnavanik, the opposite also held true for some castes, for example, the kaivartas whom the BrahmavaivartaPurana mentions to have been born from the union of Vaishya mother and kshatriya father, place them with the Asat Sudras. (Tarkaratna: 1332 BS: 1.10.107-113). In the Gautama and YagnavalkaSmṛti the Mahishyas are stated to have originated in such a way, it is not known how the BrahmavaivartaPurana came upon this explanation regarding the birth of the Kaivartajāti, since such story about the birth of the kaivartajāti does not feature in any of the contemporary texts, not even the BrihadharmaPurana. Though the BrahmavaivartaPurana traces the emergence of kaivartas in same manner as that of the Mahishyas, the vocation of the kaivarta does not match with that of the Mahishyas who were agriculturalists, but they followed the profession of Dhibar or fishermen. In the twelfth century Bhabadeva Bhatta placed the kaivarta in the Antyaja category, while the Brihadharmathough not mentioning the kaivartas directly put the Dhibar or fishermen (the profession of the kaivartas) in the category of MadhyamaSamkara and the BrahmavaivartaPurana also states that the kaivartas are indeed Asatsudras. (Ray, 1359 BS: 322). This suggests an improvement in the status of kaivarta, from antyaja they were raised to Asatsudra or madhayamasamkara group. That the kaivartas improved their position in Brahmanical hierarchy can also be gleaned from Ballalacharita mentioned above, which stated that when the Suvarnavaniks using their wealth won over the royal servants to their side, Ballalaseana raised them to jalacharaniyasociety, so that they could serve the higher castes at such desperate times. Though the Brahmavaivarta does not go to the extent of elevating them to the rank of clean Sudras, it nevertheless placed them with asatsudras which were definitely an elevation from the antyaja caste of Bhavadeva Bhatta.

Though the origin of the kaivartas matches with that of the Mahishyas, nowhere in the Puranas do we find mention of the latter, but it seems that since the BrahmavaivartaPurana in delineating the emergence of Kaivartas used the same story as was prevalent for the Mahishyas, in later times the identity of kaivarta and Mahishya got fused. Gradually kaivartas were divided into two groups, one group continued to follow its old vocation of fishing, while other took to cultivation and came to be identified as Mahishya (Ray, 1359 BS: 271, 322). Actually material prosperity and higher ritual rank

went together and the linkages between caste, class and power were being established in Bengal since the Gupta times. With the expansion of agriculture, groups involved in social production, providing physical labour or doing menial jobs began to lose in ritual status to the intelligentsia. By intelligentsia it is meant not only the brahmanas, but also the Kayasthas and Vaidyas who also enjoyed great social prestige in Bengal. (Bandopadhyaya, 2004: 46-47). However despite the prestige enjoyed by the Kayasthas and Vaidyas, they were not given a superior varna status and had to be content in remaining Shudra as prescribed by Brahmanism.

It is by now clear that in the name of establishing order the brahmanas were actually intent on establishing their sole hegemony in this region and this objective of theirs were realized to a large extent by the co-option of local traditions, yet the act of co-option itself conceals an element of domination that the Brahmanas succeeded in imposing on the local communities, who without much resistance were incorporated in the newly designed social structure. The Puranas certainly served the purpose of imposing discipline on disparate communities. The other side of the coin was the legitimization of the Brahmana's power. The Bengal Puranas authored as they were by the Brahmanas emphatically placed them in a superior social position, that was reflected in other Smriti compositions as well. As the cultural superiority of the Brahmanas was accepted by the local communities, the power was comfortably appropriated by the Brahmanas.

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