

31. It is granted that you are an authority on virtue. We are not. But O Gaṇas, if this fellow has at least a bit of virtue to his credit, please let us hear the same”.

32. On hearing these words of Yama’s attendants, the attendants of Śiva remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva and spoke to them thus :—

Śiva’s attendants said :

33. “O Attendants of Yama, Śiva’s ideas of Dharma are very subtle. They can be observed only by persons of subtle and keen vision, not by people like you whose aim is only the gross exterior.

34. O Gaṇas, hear attentively what this son of Yajña-datta has done which has freed him from sins.

35. The shadow of the lamp was falling on the top of the liṅga and this brahmin prevented it by adding a wick to the lamp at night, cutting a piece from his lower cloth.

36. Another great merit he derived from listening to the names of Śiva, though casually, O attendants.

37. He witnessed the worship that was being performed duly by a devotee. He was observing a fast and his mind was concentrated too.

38. Let him go to Śivaloka along with us. As Śiva’s follower let him enjoy great pleasures there for sometime.

39. Then he will shake off his sins and become the king of Kaliṅga²²⁵ since he has indeed become a great favourite of Śiva.

40. Nothing else need be mentioned now. Let all of you, emissaries of Yama, return to your own world with contented minds.”

Brahmā said :—

41. O lordly sage, on hearing these words of Śiva’s attendants, the emissaries of Yama returned to Yama’s abode.

225. The Kaliṅga Deśa occupied the narrower eastern coastal plain from the delta of the Godāvarī to that of the Mahānadi river. It was probably one of the best-known regions of the south known to ancient Indian literature.