

22. Even as she jumped into the fire, it became as cool as sandal paste due to her ascetic power.

23. The brahmin stopped her standing on her way as she was trying to go away and asked her laughingly.

*The Brahmin said :—*

24. O gentle lady, I cannot understand anything. Your penance is wonderful. Your body is not charred by the fire. Still your desire remains unsatiated so far.

25. O gentle lady, let me know about your desire; I am a brahmin who can bestow pleasure upon everyone.

26. Please tell me everything truly and methodically. Since we have become friends nothing should be kept a secret from me.

27. I wish to ask you now. O gentle lady, whom do you wish to have as your husband? It is in you that the fruit of penance is seen.

28. If your penance is for others or for the supreme object, wherefore should you perform it at all? You had a jewel in your hand, you cast it off and have taken up a base metal instead.

29. Why have you rendered your beauty in vain by taking recourse to this penance that eschewing different sorts of fine clothes hide is worn by you.

30. Hence tell me the reason, truthfully, for this penance. Let me, a great brahmin, be pleased on hearing the same.

*Brahmā said :—*

31. Thus asked by him, Pārvatī urged her maid. She of good rites made everything narrated to him through her maid.

32. Induced by Pārvatī, her bosom friend Vijayā who knew all about her good rites spoke to the ascetic.

*The maid said:—*

33. O saintly sir, listen. I shall recount the story of Pārvatī as well as the reason for penance, if you wish to hear.

34. This my friend is the daughter of Himācala, lord