

sage Sanatkumāra narrated the story. I will repeat the same.

*Sanatkumāra said:—*

6. O Vyāsa of great intellect, listen to the story of the moon-crested lord, how the annihilator of the universe burnt the three cities with a single arrow.

7. O great sage, when the Asura Tāraka was killed by Skanda, the son of Śiva, his three sons performed austerities.

8. The eldest of them was Tārakākṣa, the middle one Vidyunmālī and the youngest Kamalākṣa. All of them were of equal strength.

9. They were self-controlled, well prepared, disciplined, truthful, of steady mind, heroic and inimical to the gods.

10. Eschewing all enjoyments captivating the mind, they went to the cavern of the mountain Meru<sup>174</sup> and performed a wonderful penance.

11. The three sons of Tāraka eschewed all desires in the season of spring. They disdained music, the sound of instruments as well as jubilation and performed penances.

12. In the summer season they mastered sunshine. They lighted fires in all directions. Standing in their midst they performed sacrifice with great devotion for the attainment of success.

13. They lay unconscious in the blazing sunshine. During the rainy season, they fearlessly bore all the showers on their heads.

14-15. In the autumn they controlled their hunger and thirst. All good foodstuffs, steady, wholesome, and viscid, fruits, roots and beverages they distributed among the hungry. They themselves remained like stones.

16. In the early winter they remained on top of the mountain with fortitude, unsupported in any of the four quarters.

17. In the late winter they stayed under water or wore wet dripping silken cloth or allowed themselves to be covered with dew drops.

<sup>174</sup>. For the Mountain Meru, see Note 247 P. 310 and Note 64 P. 623.