

enemy or cause him to fall in thousand pieces. O lord Śiva, please fulfil this desire of mine.

*Sanatkumāra said:—*

12. Becoming furious on hearing that, Śiva laughed boisterously and in a wonderful manner; Śiva the remover of the distress of devotees became very angry and said.

*Śiva said—*

13. Fie upon you, O haughty base Daitya, such a talk as this does not behove the son of Bali and a devotee.

14. Very soon, you will meet a terrible challenge to your bluff by fighting a great battle against person equal to me in strength. The battle will be sudden.

15. Therein your mountain-like hands will be cut off by weapons and missiles. They will fall off like reeds or stumps of plantain trees.

16-18. “O wicked soul, when this flagstaff of yours, with the emblem of a peacock with a human head, which is installed in your armoury, falls without being blown off by a gust of wind, you can decide within your mind that a terrible battle is at hand. Go to that terrible war accompanied by all your generals. Now return to your abode where Śiva is present.

19. O wicked one, you will see the great evil portents.” After saying this, the lord who is favourably disposed to the devotees and is the dispeller of pride stopped.

*Sanatkumāra said:—*

20. After hearing that, Bāṇa worshiped Śiva with palms joined in reverence in the form of buds and bowed to lord Śiva. He then went to his abode.

21. On being asked, the delighted Asura mentioned everything to Kumbhāṇḍa in the manner it had happened. The Asura Bāṇa awaited the particular conjunction of circumstances eagerly.

22. Once, by chance he saw the flagstaff broken and fallen. On seeing it, he was delighted and he set out for war.

23-24. He called together his entire army. He was