

11. Then at my bidding in the capacity of the main priest, Śivā and Śiva duly and with great delight performed the circumambulation of the sacred fire.²⁷⁰

12. O excellent brahmin, then wonderfully great festivities were conducted with beatings of drums and playings on musical instruments accompanied by songs and dances pleasing everyone.

13. Then a surprisingly strange event occurred there. Dear one, listen to it. I shall tell you.

14. Śiva's power of illusion is inscrutable. The whole universe, the mobile or immobile, is deluded by it, Devas and Asuras.

15. Formerly I wished to delude Śiva by deceitful means. But now Śiva Himself has deluded me by means of His divine sports.

16. If a man wishes evil of others, he himself becomes the victim of the same. There is no doubt about it. Realising this, no man shall wish evil of anyone else.

17. O sage, while going round the fire, the feet of Satī protruded out of the cloth that covered them. I looked at them.

18. My mind being afflicted by love I stared at the limbs of Satī. O excellent brahmin, I was deluded by Śiva's Māyā.

19. The more I stared at the beautiful limbs of Satī eagerly the more I became thrilled like a love-afflicted man.

20. Staring thus at the chaste daughter of Dakṣa and being afflicted by the cupid, O sage, I craved to see her face.

21. Since she was bashful in the presence of Śiva I could not see her face. She did not show out her face on account of shyness.

22. Then I began to consider proper means whereby

270. The circumambulation of the fire by the bride and the bridegroom is one of the rites in the Vedic nuptial ceremony. The bride and the bridegroom go round the fire while the husband recites the following formula : 'To thee they have in the beginning carried round Sūryā with the bridal procession. Mayest thou give back, Agni, to the husband the wife together with offsprings.' The fire plays an important role in the performance of Vedic Saṃskāras. See H.S. P. 219.