

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(The friendship of Śiva and Kubera)

Brahmā said :—

1. In the Kalpa called Pādma, I created my mental son Pulastya whose son Viśravas begot the son Vaiśravaṇa.

2. He propitiated the three-eyed God Śiva, with a very severe penance and enjoyed the city of Alakā built by Viśvakṛt.

3. When that Kalpa was over and the Meghavāhana Kalpa had started, the son of Yajñadatta, Śrīda, performed a severe penance.

4-8. Realising the efficacy of devotion to Śiva accruing from the mere illumination (of his temple) with lamps, he reached Kāśī²²⁷ for the illumination of his thought. Under the lustre of the gems of the mind, he repeated the mantras of eleven Rudras with loyal devotion and unswerving concentration of the mind. He could realise his identity with Śiva. Then he performed very severe penance for two hundred thousand years—a penance which was enhanced by the fire of austerity, was free from incroachment of the firefly in the form of interference from lust and anger, was windless inasmuch as the breath was curbed and was pure in form with pure vision. He set up the liṅga of Śiva and worshipped it with flowers of good ideas and feelings. The penance was so severe that his body was reduced to skin and bones.

9-10. Then in the company of the Goddess Pārvatī, the lord Viśveśvara Himself addressed the devotee, the lord of Alakā, with a pleasant mind—the devotee who stood as a stump with mind concentrated on the liṅga:—"I am ready to grant you a boon. Choose it, O lord of Alakā".

11-13. The devotee opened his eyes and gazed at

227. Kāśikā or Kāśī, known as Vārāṇasī. Situated on the left bank of the Ganges, it was the capital of the country of the same name. It is, perhaps, the Kassida or Kassidia of Ptolemy, designated after Kāśirāja, one of the early progenitors of the lunar race who was succeeded by twenty descendants, including the famous Divodāsa who ruled and celebrated many horse-sacrifices here. The city is sacred to Śiva since Viśveśvara, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, is established here.