

crescent-shaped tips, arrows with prolonged iron pikes, tortoise-shaped heads with blazing steel pointed hooks, sharp spear, axes, iron clubs of diverse sorts, iron balls, rocks, branches of trees and various divine missiles. Vīraka was attacked with these weapons and he fainted at the entrance to the cavern. His body was pierced by the sharp weapons hurled by the Daityas. The various weapons barred the entrance to the cave.

22-23. Vīraka was covered by the weapons and could not be extricated. The goddess Pārvatī was afraid at the sight. From within the cave she remembered Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

24. Thus remembered by the goddess, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and others assumed female forms and came there.³⁰³

25. Sages of great dignity, Siddhas, Nāgas and Guhyakas became women and entered the cavern where Pārvatī was staying.

26-27. Since it was not customary to enter the harem of kings they assumed female form of wonderful features and entered the cavern of Pārvatī for heroic activities.

28. Thundering sounds of clouds, as at the end of a Kalpa, were produced by these thousands of women. Drums were beaten and conches were blown.

29. Meanwhile Vīraka of wonderfully fierce valour regained his consciousness and stood up. He seized the weapons of the warriors and hit the Daityas with them.

30. Brāhmī stood opposed to the Daityas with the staff in her hand. Gaurī became very furious. Nārāyaṇī held conch, mace, sword, discus and bow in her hands.

31. Bīḍaujaṣī set out holding the thunderbolt and the handle of the ploughshare in her hand. Her complexion was golden. The sky constituted her forelocks. In her fierce velocity thousands of streams of current were let loose.

32. The goddess of thousand eyes, fought steadily in war, undaunted and invincible with hundreds of Daityas.

303. The Śakti or Energy of a god is represented as his female counterpart. Each energy is personified and functions individually. The Purāṇas depict the gods and their Energies fighting against the Asuras. In fact the god and his Energy are identical. There is no characteristic mark distinguishing the two.