

city of Prayāga,²⁷ a great holy centre, the path that leads to Brahmalo²⁸.

3. On hearing that a sacrifice was being performed there, the disciple of Vyāsa, the great sage Sūta, an excellent scholar in the Purāṇas, arrived there to see the sages.

4. The sages were delighted on seeing him and received him with due hospitality and adoration.

5. The due adoration being completed, the noble sages, being highly pleased, addressed him in all humility with their palms joined in reverence.

6. O Romaharṣaṇa,²⁹ the omniscient, by thy weighty fortune, the entire Purāṇic lore, pregnant in its meaningful content, has been secured by thee from Vyāsa.

7. Hence thou art the receptacle of wonder-inspiring stories, even as the vast ocean is the storehouse of gems of great worth.

8. There is nothing in the three worlds that is not known to thee, of the past, present and the future.

9. It is our great fortune that thou thyself hast come to pay a visit to us. Hence it is not proper on thy part to return without doing us a favour.

10. It is true that we have already listened to the explanation of the auspicious and the inauspicious. But we are not content. We yearn to hear more and more.

11. Now, O Sūta of good mentality, we have only one point to be clarified. If thou dost desire to bless us, please explain the same, though it be the secret of secrets.

12. At the advent of the terrible age of Kali men have become devoid of merits. They are engaged in evil ways of life. They have turned their faces from truthful avocations.

27. Prayāga is a celebrated place of pilgrimage at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna in the Naimiṣa forest (Śp.VS. I. 4). It is situated on the northern bank of the Ganges (Sk. II. ii. 12. 36). The name 'Prayāga' is recorded by Hwen Tshang in the seventh century and is as old as the reign of Aśoka who set up the stone pillar about 235 B. C. The Gupta emperors regarded the confluence at Prayāga as the visible symbol of Madhyadeśa.

28. Brahmalo²⁸, also called Satyaloka, is the abode of Brahmā.

29. Romaharṣaṇa or Lomaharṣaṇa was one of the five disciples (the other four being Paila, Vaiśampāyana, Jaimini and Sumantu) to whom Vyāsa taught the Purāṇa which he constructed out of ancient material. Pargiter : *AIHT*. Ch. II.