

Now speak about the greatness of Earthen phallic image of Śiva which is far superior to all others.

Sūta said :—

3. O sages, please listen all of you with great devotion and respect. Now I am going to speak on the greatness of earthly phallic image of Śiva.

4. The Earthly phallic image of Śiva is the most excellent of all such images of Śiva. Many brahmins have achieved great things by worshipping it.

5. O brahmins, Hari, Brahmā, Prajāpati and other sages have attained all they desired by worshipping this Earthly phallic image.

6. Devas, Asuras, men, Gandharvas, serpents, Rākṣasas and many others have attained greatness after worshipping it.

7. The phallic emblem of Śiva made of precious gems was considered the best in the Kṛta age; of pure gold in the Dvāpara; of mercury in the Tretā and of earth in the Kali age.

8. Among the eight⁸⁹ cosmic bodies of Śiva, the Earthen body is the best. Since it is not worshipped by any one else O Brāhmaṇas! it yields great benefit.

9. Just as Śiva is the oldest and the most excellent of all deities, so also his earthly phallic image is the most excellent of all.

10. Just as the celestial river Gaṅgā is the oldest and the most excellent of all rivers, so also is the earthen phallic image of Śiva the most excellent of all.

11. Just as the Praṇava is considered the greatest of all mantras, so also the earthen phallic image of Śiva that is worthy to be worshipped, is the most excellent of all.

12. Just as the brahmin is spoken of as the most excel-

89. ŚB (6.1. 3. 1-18) gives the following version of the eight forms of Śiva : “When the life-principle became manifest it had no name, so it cried. Prajāpati asked the reason and being informed that the child wanted a name, first gave him the name Rudra, then Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Aśani, Bhava, Mahādeva and Iśāna. This was the conception from which the purāṇa writers developed the Aṣṭamūrti conception of Śiva. The fact is that the eight forms of Śiva symbolise the five gross material elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), two opposite principles of Prāṇa and Apāna (heat and cold represented by the sun and the moon) and the principle of mind (मनस) which is the eighth.