

declared to the Goddess by Śiva, the supreme soul, for rendering help to the worlds.

Śiva said :

4. O Śivā, Maheśāni, be pleased to hear the greatness of Rudrākṣa. I speak out love for you from a desire for the benefit of the devotees of Śiva.

5-7. O Maheśāni, formerly I had been performing penance for thousands of divine years. Although I had controlled it rigorously, my mind was in flutter. Out of sport, I being self-possessed just opened my eyes, O Goddess, from a desire of helping the worlds. Drops of tears fell from my beautiful half-closed eyes. From those tear-drops there cropped up the Rudrākṣa plants.

8. They became immobile. In order to bless the devotees they were given to the four Varṇas devoted to the worship of Viṣṇu

9-10. Rudrākṣas grown in Gauḍa<sup>165</sup> land became great favourites of Śiva. They were grown in Mathurā, Laṅkā, Ayodhyā, Malaya<sup>166</sup>, Sahya<sup>167</sup> mountain, Kāśī and other places. They are competent to break asunder the clustered sins unbearable to the others, as the sacred texts have declared.

11. At my bidding they were classified into Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. These Rudrākṣas are of auspicious nature.

12. The colours of the four types of Rudrākṣas are respectively white, red, yellow and black. All people shall wear the Rudrākṣa of their own Varṇa.

13. If they desire their benefit, namely worldly pleasures and salvation and if the devotees of Śiva wish to gratify Śiva they must wear the Rudrākṣa.

14. A Rudrākṣa of the size of an Emblic myrobalan

165. Gauḍa deśa, according to Skandapurāṇa, was the central part of Bengal extending from Vaṅga to the borders of Orissa :

वङ्गदेशं समारभ्य भुवनेशान्तगः शिवे ।

गौडदेशः समाख्यातः सर्वविद्याविशारदः ॥

166. Malaya : a mountain range on the west of Malabar, the western ghats, abounding in sandal trees.

167. Sahya : It is one of the seven principal ranges, the other six being Mahendra, Malaya, Sūktimat, Rikṣa, Vindhya and Pāripātra or Pāriyātra.