

10. He had observed fast on the Śivarātri²²³ day. In order to worship lord Śiva, he was on his way, along with his kinsmen and was carrying different sorts of delightful offerings.

11. The devotee entered the temple of Śiva where he worshipped Him in the prescribed manner with sincere devotion.

12. The brahmin boy, son of Yajñadatta, devoid of his mother and dismissed by his father, was very hungry by this time. He inhaled the sweet fragrance of the sweet puddings and followed the devotee.

13. "If fortunately these devotees of Śiva go to sleep after offering the eatables to Śiva, I shall eat these vast varieties of puddings and sweets in the night".

14. With this hope he sat at the threshold of the temple of Śiva watching the great worship by the devotee.

15. When the worship was over, the songs and dances of prayer were duly concluded, the devotees lay down and began to sleep. Immediately the young man entered the sanctum sanctorum of Śiva in order to steal the eatables left there.

16. The lamp was burning very dimly. Hence in order to see the puddings clearly he tore a piece of cloth from his lower garment and put that piece in the lamp as a wick thus making the lamp give a good light.

17. Yajñadatta's son gleefully took plenty of the sweets offered as eatables to Lord Śiva by the devotees.

18. With sweets in his hands he came out hurriedly. In his hurry he stamped on some person lying there who woke up immediately.

19. "Who is that? Who is running away so fast? Catch him." So shouted the man who woke up in a voice hoarse with fear.

20. The brahmin boy (Guṇanidhi) who ran for life be-

223. Śivarātri : Śiva's Night. It is a popular fast and festival held in honour of Śiva on the 14th of the dark half of the month Māgha or January-February with many solemn ceremonies observed during the day and night. In Tāntric literature it is called Kālarātri, one of the three sacred nights, the other two being Mahārātri and Moharātri.