

about His various activities. Please tell us about the birth of Umā and her marriage too, O lord.

19. Their domestic life and their divine sports shall also be narrated to us. O sinless one, please tell us all about it and anything else that shall be told.

*Vyāsa said :—*

20. Being thus requested Sūta was delighted. Remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva he replied to the sages.

*Sūta said :—*

21. O lordly sages, what you have asked for is very nice. You are all blessed inasmuch as your minds are drawn towards Sadāśiva's anecdotes.

22. Like the holy waters of the Gaṅgā the inquiry into the anecdotes of Sadāśiva sanctifies the three persons : the narrator, the inquirer and the hearer.

23. O brahmins, except for the slayer of animals, who can be averse to hear the narrative of the attributes of Śiva, that highly delights three types of people always ?

24. When it is being recited by persons who have no attachment or desire, it is verily an antidote for all ailments of worldly existence, for it is highly delightful to the ear and the heart while at the same time it bestows all objects.

25. O brahmins, I shall explain Śiva's sports in the light of your enquiry as far as my intelligence enables me to do so. Please listen respectfully.

26. Induced by lord Viṣṇu, a manifestation of Śiva, Nārada had also put the same question to his father Brahmā as you are asking me now.

27. On hearing the words of his son, Brahmā, a devotee of Śiva, was delighted in his mind. Out of love he sang the glory of Śiva heightening the pleasure of the excellent sage (Nārada).

*Vyāsa said :—*

28. The learned brahmins, on hearing the words of Sūta became eager to know more of that conversation and so asked him.