

Daṇḍaka<sup>294</sup> forest where the lord of truthful stake and trans-action pointed to Satī the beauty of the surrounding nature.

23. There Śiva saw Rāma who was searching for Sītā who was deceitfully abducted by Rāvaṇa. Lakṣmaṇa too was there.

24. Due to the pangs of separation Rāma was crying out "Alas Sītā." He was pitiably lamenting and glancing here and there.

25. Rāma was yearning for her redemption. He was musing over her whereabouts. Due to adverse position of planets like Mars etc. he had become forlorn and shamelessly grief-stricken.

26. He was a heroic king of the solar race, son of Daśaratha, elder brother of Bharata. He had become cheerless and devoid of lustre.

27. The great liberal-minded lord Śiva who is Pūrṇakāma (one whose ambitions are fully realised) delightfully bowed to Rāma who was wandering in the forest in the company of Lakṣmaṇa and was in need of a favour.

28. "Be victorious" said Śiva who is favourably disposed to His devotees. While He was going elsewhere in the forest He revealed Himself to Rāma.

29. Satī was surprised at this charmingly strange sport of Śiva. She was deluded by Śiva's Māyā and spoke to Him.

*Satī said:—*

30. O lord, the lord of all, the Supreme Brahman, all the devas, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others serve Thee always.

31. Thou art worthy of being served and bowed to. Thou art worthy of being meditated upon always. Thou art known and realised only through the science of Meta-physics, after strenuous efforts. Thou art the great lord, the undecaying.

32. O lord, who are these two persons apparently grief-stricken from pangs of separation ? Though heroic

294. Daṇḍaka forest lay between the Narmadā and the Godāvarī. According to the Padmapurāṇa (V. 34, 5 14-50) it was named after the third son of King Ikṣvāku called Daṇḍa or Daṇḍaka. Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa describes it as 'a wilderness over which separate hermitages are scattered while wild beasts and Rākṣasas everywhere abound.'