

Himācala bowed to them gladly and honoured them with devotion. He praised his own good fortune.

12. With the head bent down and palms joined in reverence, he eulogised them with great devotion. Himācala's hair stood on end and tears of love fell from his eyes.

13. O sage, after bowing to them, the delighted Himācala spoke thus to Viṣṇu and other gods.

*Himācala said:—*

14. Today my life has become fruitful. My good penance has become fruitful. Today my knowledge has become fruitful. Today my sacred rites have become fruitful.

15. I have become blessed today. My entire kingdom, my wife and family have become blessed. Everything has become blessed. There is no doubt about it.

16. Wherefore have all of you come in a body? Lovingly command me, considering me your own servant.

*Brahmā said:—*

17. On hearing these words of Himācala, Viṣṇu and other gods considered their affair fulfilled and were delighted. They spoke.

*Gods said:—*

18. "O Himācala of great intellect, please listen to our beneficent words. We shall gladly tell you why we have come.

19. O Himācala, the mother of the universe Umā, who was born as Dakṣa's daughter, became Rudra's wife and sported for a long time on the earth.

20. On being disrespected by her father, Sati remembered her vow, abandoned her body and returned to her own region.

21-22 O Himācala, this story is well known in the world. You too know it. If this takes place it will be an asset to all gods as well as to you. The gods too will be under your control."

*Brahmā said:—*

23. On hearing these words of Viṣṇu and others the