

ŚIVA MAHĀPURĀṆA

Śivapurāṇa-māhātmya

**Śiva Mahāpurāṇa**  
by *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa*

“Śiva Mahāpurāṇa” by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

This work may be distributed and/or modified under the conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0](#) License.

The electronic version was generated from sources marked up in [L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X](#). PDF document was typeset using [Xe<sub>L</sub>L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X](#) from [T<sub>E</sub>XLive](#). The base font used for Latin script was [Adobe Devanagari](#), designed by Fiona Ross, Robert Slimbach, and Tim Holloway for Adobe Originals.

# Contents

Introduction to Śivamahāpurāṇa	i
1 Greatness of Śivapurāṇa	1
2 The liberation of Devarāja	7
3 Cañculā's disillusion and detachment	11
4 Cañculā's salvation	15
5 Binduga's salvation	19
6 Rules for listening to Śivapurāṇa	25
7 The rite of listening to Śivapurāṇa: Injunctions and prohibitions	31

# Introduction to Śivamahāpurāṇa

The *purāṇa* is a class of literature that treats of ancient religion, philosophy, history, sociology, politics and other subjects. It is an encyclopaedia of various branches of knowledge and ancient wisdom. It has been defined as a class of literature that contains material on the topics of Creation, Dissolution of Manus, Ages of Manus, Genealogies and the History of glorious kings. For dealing primarily with these subjects it has been called *Pañcalakṣaṇa*<sup>1</sup> —a title that was incorporated in the *purāṇas*<sup>2</sup> themselves and had become popular by the fifth century BCE, for it was included by Amarasiṃha in his lexicon *Amarakoṣa*<sup>3</sup>. But as the process of interpolation continued, the *Pañcalakṣaṇa* definition was found inadequate. The Purāṇic redactors adopted a *Daśalakṣaṇa* definition that suited the contemporary text. Still the dynamic forces were at work and the process of insertion, modification and abridgement went on and it was soon discovered that the *Daśalakṣaṇa* definition too fell short of an actual fact. It was found that the contained certain aspects that were not covered by any of the five or ten characteristics. Besides some of the characteristics covered by the *Pañcalakṣaṇa* or *Daśalakṣaṇa* definition were not found in certain.

In fact the *purāṇa* as a class represents the different phases and aspects of life of diverse ages. It is impossible to adopt a standard definition for the class of literary composition that contains heterogeneous phases and aspects. Moreover, a definition framed on the numerical basis of points is bound to be imperfect.

The are divided into two classes—the *mahāpurāṇas* and the *Upapurāṇas*<sup>4</sup>. Each class consists of eighteen. Thus the number of the is thirty-six. The *Mahāpurāṇas* are classified into different categories — Vaiṣṇava, Brāhma, Śaiva *etc.* in proportion as they accord preferential treatment to Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva and others. *Śivapurāṇa*, as its title signifies is a *śaiva purāṇa*. It derives its designation from the fact that it eulogises the glory and greatness of Śiva, describes the ritual and philosophical principles of Śiva cult, embodies descriptions, sermons and dissertations on the greatness of his divinity, recounts his emblems, attributes, exploits and incarnations, narrates legends on the origin and importance of his phallic image and dwells upon the merit of

---

<sup>1</sup> For details see Kirfel: *Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa*

<sup>2</sup> *Śiva-purāṇa*; *Vāyu-purāṇa* 1.1.41; *Kūrma* 1.1.12; *Varāha* 2.4; *Matsya* 53.65; *Vāyu* 4.10-11; *Bhaviṣya* 1.2.4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Pusalker: *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas*: Intro. p.23

<sup>4</sup> For details see R.C Hazra. *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, 2 Vols.

installing and consecrating that image. In brief, *Śiva-purāṇa* is a sacred treatise of Śiva's legends and ritual.

The extant text of *Śivapurāṇa* is arranged into seven *saṃhitās* designated as *Vidyēśvara*, *Rudra*, *Śatarudra*, *Koṭīrudra*, *Umā*, *Kailāsa* and *Vāyaviya*. The second of these, *Rudrasaṃhitā*, is divided into five sections, viz. Creation, the narrative of Satī, the biography of Pārvatī, the birth and adventures of Kumāra and Śiva's battles. The seventh *saṃhitā*—*Vāyaviya*—has two parts (*Pūrvabhāga* and *Uttarabhāga*). It is called *Vāyaviya*, for though it was recited by the Sūta at the Naimiṣa forest, it was originally proclaimed by Vāyu at the advent of Śvetakalpa.

According to the records of the *Vāyaviya*, the original *Śivapurāṇa* consisted of twelve *sāṃhitās*. That is to say, in addition to the extant seven there were five more *saṃhitās* viz. *Vaināyaka*, *Mātr*, *Rudraikādaśa*, *Sahasrakoṭi* and *Dharma*. The complete group of twelve *saṃhitās* comprised one hundred thousand *ślokas*. But five of the group were dropped in the course of reconstruction and abridgement of the. The extant *Śivapurāṇa* is an abridged edition and comprises twenty-four thousand *ślokas*. The redaction was made by the sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa himself<sup>5</sup>.

As previously stated, the *mahāpurāṇas* are eighteen in number. The Puranic scholars are agreed upon the authenticity of the seventeen *mahāpurāṇas* but in regard to the eighteenth there is a difference of opinion. Most of the include *Śivapurāṇa* in the list while a few others substitute Vāyu for Śiva. The substitution of either was inevitable, for the traditional number had to be maintained. Therefore some voted in favour of Śiva, some in favour of Vāyu. Neither of the parties could agree which of the two was actually a *mahāpurāṇa*.

Now let us examine if any solution could at all be possible. We know that *Śivapurāṇa* is divided into seven *saṃhitā*-s, one of which is the *Vāyaviya*. We have the testimony of *Śivapurāṇa* itself that the original *Śivapurāṇa* consisting of one hundred thousand *ślokas* was abridged into twenty-four thousand *ślokas*. On the strength of this evidence it cannot be unreasonable to suppose that there was a *proto-Śivapurāṇa* and a *proto-Vāyaviya*. It is not unlikely that there was a close affinity between the extant *Vāyupurāṇa* and the *proto-Vāyaviya* or that the extant *Vāyupurāṇa* is a recension of the *proto-Vāyaviya* and thus a part of *Śivapurāṇa* itself. Solution lies in assuming identically of the two on the basis of this suggestion, not in accepting the one and rejecting the other.

*Śivapurāṇa* has all the characteristics of a *mahāpurāṇa*. According to the ancients, a *mahāpurāṇa* contained five main characteristics<sup>6</sup> that concerned either early religion or traditional history. Of these the origin of the universe (*sarga*) is an important feature of every religion. As a *mahāpurāṇa* and a sacred work of Śiva cult, *Śivapurāṇa* possesses this important trait. It discusses the origin of the universe which it traces to Śiva, the eternal god who though devoid

<sup>5</sup>The above records of the *Vāyaviya Saṃhitā* are found in the *Vidyēśvara Saṃhitā* also. (*Vājasaneyisaṃhitā* (of *Śuklayajurveda*) 2.49-63). The two accounts are similar and confirm each other.

<sup>6</sup>These are *sarga*, *pratisarga*, *vaṃśa*, *manvantara*, and *vaṃśānucarita*

of attributes has still an inherent Energy which manifests itself in the form of three principles—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* personified as the three deities Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra. The three have their respective energies called Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Kālī, in collaboration with whom they create, maintain and dissolve the universe <sup>7</sup>.

According to this account, the work of creation is entrusted to Brahmā who creates the cosmic egg consisting of twenty-four principles. The cosmic egg is insentient at first but when Viṣṇu pervades it, it goes in motion. Then different kinds of creation are evolved out of it.

*Śivapurāṇa* classifies creation in three categories: primary, secondary and primary-secondary. The three categories are arranged as follow:

1. Primary
  - Intellect and Ego
  - Subtle elements
  - Five organs of action and five organs of knowledge, *manas*
2. Secondary
  - Insentient objects
  - Animals
  - Divine beings
  - Human beings
  - Sentient feelings
3. Primary-Secondary
  - Mind-born sons of Brahma

According to *Śivapurāṇa*, the ninefold creation was unable to proceed on the work of creation. The mind-born sons of Brahmā refused to obey the creator and remained celibate. Then out of his body Brahmā produced eleven sons: Marīci from the eyes, Bhṛgu from the heart, Aṅgiras from the head, Pulaha, Pulastya, Vasiṣṭha, Kratu from his breath, Atri from his ears, Nārada from his lap and Kardama from his shadow. When still the creation made no progress, Brahmā divided himself into two—one half in the form of a woman and the other half in the form of a man. In that half form of a woman he created a couple—Svāyambhuva Manu and Satarūpā who complied with the wishes of the creator and began the work of creation.

After all, the creation of the universe is not a permanent feature, for all creations end in dissolutions which in turn give place to re-creation. The description of this process constitutes one of the five main features of a *mahāpurāṇa*. *Śivapurāṇa*<sup>8</sup> takes up this topic but withholds details.

The process of dissolution is complicated, for several dissolutions occur before the universe is completely dissolved. As the relate, a creation lasts for a day of Brahmā equal to the age of fourteen *manvantaras*. At the end of each *manvantara*, there occurs a dissolution. Thus a day of

---

<sup>7</sup>*Rudrasaṃhitā* 1.16.46,48

<sup>8</sup>*Vāyaviya* 1.11

Brahmā contains fourteen dissolutions. But these are partial dissolutions. At the end of fourteen *manvantaras*, equal to a day of Brahmā that lasts for a *kalpa* there occurs a great dissolution. Thus during the life of the creator several creations and dissolutions take place. There occurs a complete dissolution when the creator has completed his life-time. The elements are dissolved and merged into the body of the creator. The creator takes rest for some time and then starts the process of recreating the Universe. Thus we have a series of dissolutions and re-creations succeeding each other.

The description of the ages of Manus (*manvantaras*) is another characteristic of a *mahāpurāṇa*. *Śivapurāṇa* mentions fourteen Manus by name. They are Svāyambhuva, Svārociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata, Cākṣuṣa, Vaivasvata, Śāvarṇi, Raucya, Brahma-Śāvarṇi, Dharma-Śāvarṇi, Rudra-Śāvarṇi, Deva-Śāvarṇi, Indra-Śāvarṇi. Each *manvantara* comprises 306,720,000 human years or 1/14<sup>th</sup> day of Brahmā. The fourteen *manvantaras* make up one whole day of Brahmā. Each of the fourteen *manvantaras* is presided over by its own gods, seers and kings. This scheme of Creation and Dissolution repeats itself from one age of Manu to another and is described in all the *mahāpurāṇas*. *Śivapurāṇa* is no exception to the rule.

In the *Pañcalakṣaṇa* character of the *mahāpurāṇa*, genealogies and deeds of glorious kings play an important part. The Sūta-s were the custodians of genealogical records which they learnt by rote and which they recited at sessional sacrifices in exchange for the gifts they obtained from their patrons. But in the course of oral transmission from one generation to another some interpolations entered in these records. There were traditional variations too, for different versions existed in different families of the Sūta-s. When the records were incorporated in the, the interpolations and the traditional variations also settled therein. This explains the difference that exists in the genealogical records of the.

Pargiter<sup>9</sup> has prepared a list of royal genealogies on the consensus of versions occurring in the *purāṇas*. On comparing this list with that of *Śivapurāṇa* we find a marked difference. By way of illustration: (i) Pargiter's list of Ayodhyā dynasty places Kākutstha as the direct descendant of Vikukṣi-Śaśāda while in *Śivapurāṇa* Kākutstha is the immediate descendant of Ayodha who is not mentioned in Pargiter's list. (ii) Arinābha of *Śivapurāṇa* is substituted by Anenas in Pargiter. (iii) After Purukutsa Pargiter mentions Trasadasyu, Sambhūta, Anaraṇya, Trasadaśva, Haryaśva, Vasumanas and Tridhanvan. These names are omitted in *Śivapurāṇa* which mentions Trayyāruṇi as the immediate descendant of Purukutsa. *Śivapurāṇa* mentions Anaraṇya, Muṇdidruha and Niṣadha after Sarvakarman or Śarvaśarman while these are omitted in Pargiter. Instead Pargiter mentions a series of eleven kings who are not found in *Śivapurāṇa* at all.

With these variations, *Śivapurāṇa* proceeds with the statement of genealogies and deeds of glorious monarchs. But the statements are meagre, for *Śivapurāṇa* is not interested in furnishing details. Still in regard to the solar dynasty of Ayodhyā it supplies a detailed information. The genealogical records of this dynasty are arranged chapterwise in three groups: (i) from Manu

<sup>9</sup>'Ancient Indian Historical Tradition' (Pargiter) pp. 144-149

to Satyavrata (ii) from Satyavrata to Sagara (iii) from Sagara to Sumitra. There is another sort of grouping also based on the sequence of time. The dynasties from Ikṣvāku to Marut belong to the past. The reigning period of Marut, father of Agnivarṇa, is called the present time when this *purāṇa* is said to have been written. The reigning period of the kings from Agnivarṇa to Sumitra is called the future time that presupposes the existence of this work.

The genealogical lists are interspersed with the deeds of some illustrious monarchs. For it is a characteristic of the *mahāpurāṇa* to record the deeds of some famous kings. Usually the deeds comprise the personal history of the ruler but are sometimes related to the conditions of his reigning period. *Śivapurāṇa* is interested in the records of the solar dynasty of Ayodhyā and as such it recounts the deeds of some monarchs of that house. Of these Kuvalāśva-Dhundhumāra, Satyavrata-Triśaṅku and Sagara figure prominently. The accounts of Vikukṣi-Śaśāda, Bhagīratha, Niṣadha, Hiraṇyanābha and others occupy a secondary place.

The above analysis clearly demonstrates that *Śivapurāṇa* possesses the conventional characteristics of a *mahāpurāṇa* in common with its other colleagues. These entitle it to the status of a great *purāṇa*. But its real greatness lies in expounding the philosophical background of Śiva ritual. The *purāṇa* conceives Śiva as the eternal principle, the supreme god, the cosmic soul, the support of all existence. But the ignorant aspirant bound in the meshes of illusion goes in quest for knowledge and imagines that his lord has a personal form possessed of attributes distinct from his self, who in moments of distress responds to his prayers and bestows grace. The devotee, then aspires for spiritual enlightenment and takes to ritual for selfpurification. *Śivapurāṇa* enjoins several rites of worship and acts of homage, comprising a series of physical and spiritual practices in accompaniment with the *tantra*, *yantra* and *mantra* appliances. He starts with the threefold devotion *viz.* hearing, glorifying and deliberating the attributes of God—a process that requires, according to *Śivapurāṇa*, the same steady attention as in the sexual intercourse. In this connexion *Rudrasaṃhitā* mentions eight means for attaining mental concentration and spiritual enlightenment. Further the aspirant is asked to control the six *cakra*-s located in the spinal canal called *sūṣumnā* that lies between *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*—two of the vessels of the body. That is possible only by taking recourse to the means of knowledge, by the purification of six pathways, the performance of traditional rites and yogic practices. The aspirant has to pass through this series of activities before he reaches another state of experience wherein he finds a perfect accord between his own self and his personal deity, yet there is an awareness of separateness from his deity till he reaches the last state of experience wherein all distinctions are obliterated and his self unites with his godhead.



# Chapter 1

## Greatness of Śivapurāṇa

Śaunaka<sup>1</sup> said:

1. O Sūta of great intellect, O my lord, the knower of all philosophical principles, please narrate to me the essence of the *purāṇas* in detail.
2. How do good conduct, good devotion and power of discrimination flourish? How are base feelings dispelled by good men?
3. In this terrible Kali age all living beings have almost become demoniac in character. What is the effective mode of remedying the same?
4. Now tell me about the greatest means to achieve the most perfect weal, the holiest of the holy modes.
5. What is that, the practice of which particularly purifies the soul? What is that which enables a man of unsullied mind to attain Śiva?

Sūta<sup>2</sup> said:

6. O foremost among sages, you are blessed indeed as you are desirous of hearing. Hence I shall ponder over the greatest of the Sacred lore intelligently and tell you.
7. O dear, listen to that divine panacea evolved out of all religious tenets, heightening true devotion and conducive to the pleasure of Śiva.

---

<sup>1</sup>Śaunaka was the chief of the sages at the great sacrifice in Naimiṣa forest to whom the *Mahābhārata* and the *purāṇas* were recited by the Sūta in the reign of Adhisīmākṣṇa, the great-grandson of Janamejaya and the sixth in generation from Arjuna in the Paurava line. *Vāyu-purāṇa* 1.12; 99, 255-8; *Padma* 1.1.19

<sup>2</sup>The Sūtas (*Vāyu-purāṇa* 1.32-3; *Padma* 1.1.27-28) preserved the genealogies of Gods, sages, and glorious monarchs as well as the traditions of great men. The Sūta here is not a caste that is described by Manu (X.11.17) as the offspring of a *kṣatriya* father and *brahman* mother. He is a venerable *brāhmaṇa* who has preserved ballads, songs, genealogies of Gods, sages and glorious Kings. See Pargiter: *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* Ch. II; also Pusalkar: *Studies in Epics and Purāṇas of India*, Intro. p29. He is described as the disciple of Vyāsa.

8. It is destructive of the great fear of the Python of Kāla (Death). O sage, it is the noble *Śiva Purāṇa*<sup>3</sup> formerly narrated by Śiva Himself.
9. For the benefit of the people in the age of Kali, the sage Vyāsa<sup>4</sup> has abridged it out of great respect for the sage Sanatkumāra<sup>5</sup> on being instructed by him.
10. O sage, there is nothing other than *Śiva Purāṇa* for the purification of the mind especially of the people of the Kali age<sup>6</sup>.
11. It is only the intelligent and the highly fortunate man who has accumulated great merits in his previous birth who will be drawn towards it.
12. This *Śivapurāṇa* is the greatest and the noblest of the sacred lore. It is the form of Śiva and as such is to be served and realised in this world.
13. By reading this and listening to it the good man becomes very pious. By all means he instantly attains Śiva's region.
14. Hence every endeavour of men to read this is desirable. Loving care to listen to it yields all desired results.
15. By listening to this *purāṇa* of Śiva a man becomes sinless. After enjoying all extensive worldly pleasures he will attain the region of Śiva.
16. Merely by listening to the story of Śiva a man secures that merit which results from the performance of *rājasūya*<sup>7</sup> and a hundred *agniṣṭomas*<sup>8</sup>.
- I 7. O sage, those who listen to *Śivapurāṇa* the noblest of Sacred lore, cease to be mere human beings. They must be undoubtedly considered as manifestations of Rudra, a form of Śiva.
18. Sages consider the dust in the feet of those who habitually listen to that *purāṇa* and recite it, on a par with holy centres.
19. May those who wish to attain the seat of salvation, listen always to the holy *Śivapurāṇa* with great devotion.

---

<sup>3</sup>For the nomenclature and authenticity of this *purāṇa* see Introduction.

<sup>4</sup>According to the Pauranic tradition, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, the son of Satyawatī, composed the eighteen *purāṇas* or superintended their compilation. *Matsyapurāṇa* 53-70.

<sup>5</sup>The *purāṇas* were first compiled by Brahmā (*Vāyu-purāṇa* 1.60-61). Sanatkumāra, a son of Brahmā (SP 1.4.8-9; 1.5.17) inherited them from his father and imparted them to Vyāsa who in turn abridged them in 18 compendiums.

<sup>6</sup>The beginning of the Kali age has been discussed by Dr. Fleet (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain)*, 1911, pp. 479, 675, 686) and he has pointed out that it began on the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa died, which the chronology of the Mahābhārata places, as he shows, some twenty years after the great battle and that it was then that Yudhiṣṭhira abdicated and Parikṣit began to reign. Pargiter: *Dynasties of the Kali Age*. Intro. p.X.

<sup>7</sup>*Rajasūya* is a great sacrifice performed by a universal monarch (in which the tributary princes also take part) at the time of his coronation as a mark of his undisputed sovereignty.

<sup>8</sup>*Agniṣṭoma* is a sacrificial rite extending over several days in spring and forming an essential part of the *jyotiṣṭoma*.

20. O noblest among sages, if he is unable to listen to it always, let him hear it for a short while every day with his mind fully controlled.
21. If any one is unable to listen to it every day, O sage, let him listen to *Śivapurāṇa* in the holy months.
22. Those who listen to that *purāṇa* even for a *muhūrta* (48 minutes), half that period, one fourth of that period or even for a moment will not suffer from mishaps.
23. O lord of sages, the man who listens to that *purāṇa* crosses the ocean of worldly existence after burning the great forest of *karma* (binding actions).
24. O sage, the merit that accrues from all gifts and all Sacrifices becomes stabilised after listening to *Śivapurāṇa*.
25. Particularly in the age of Kali there is no greater virtue conducive to the achievement of liberation by men, O sage, than listening to *Śivapurāṇa*.
26. There is no doubt in this that, listening to the *purāṇa* and reciting the names of Śiva is as efficacious as the *kalpa* tree<sup>9</sup> in yielding one's desires.
27. For the benefit of the evil-minded persons of the Kali age, bereft of virtuous conduct, Lord Śiva has produced the nectar in the form of *Śivapurāṇa*.
28. A single man, the man who drinks nectar, becomes immortal and unageing. But the nectar of the divine story of Śiva, if drunk, makes the whole family immortal and unageing.
29. The sanctifying story of *Śivapurāṇa* must always be resorted to, definitely so.
30. Merely by listening to *Śivapurāṇa* (if such good results) what am I to say about the result when Śiva abides in the heart?
31. This work consists of twenty-four thousand verses divided into seven *saṃhitās* (compendiums). The three kinds of Devotion [(1) by meditation, (2) recital of prayer and (3) acts of worship and service] are fully explained in it. It must be listened to with great respect.
32. The first compendium is called *Vidyēśvara saṃhitā*, the second is *Rudrasaṃhitā*, the third is *Śata-Rudrā* and the fourth is *Koṭi-Rudrā*.
33. The fifth compendium is called *Umāsaṃhitā*, the sixth is *Kailāsaṃhitā* and the seventh is *Vāyavīyā*. Thus, there are seven *saṃhitās* in this *purāṇa*.
34. This divine *purāṇa* of seven *saṃhitās* and called after Śiva stands on an equal footing with Brahman (*i.e.*, Vedic texts) and accords an achievement that is superior to everything else.
35. He who reads the entire *Śivapurāṇa* without omitting any of the seven *saṃhitās* can be called a *jīvanmukta* (a living liberated soul).

---

<sup>9</sup>*Kalpadruma* is a tree supposed to grant all desires.

36. O sage, the ignorant man is tossed about in the ocean of worldly existence till the excellent *Śivapurāṇa* reaches his ears.
37. Of what avail is listening to many sacred texts and other confounding *Purāṇas*? The *Śivapurāṇa* alone loudly proclaims (its readiness) to grant salvation.
38. The house where the discourse on this *Śivapurāṇa* is held becomes a holy centre. It destroys the sins of the inmates of the house.
39. Thousands of horse-sacrifices<sup>10</sup> and hundreds of *vājapeya*<sup>11</sup> sacrifices do not merit even a sixteenth part of *Śivapurāṇa*.
40. O best of sages, a sinner is called a sinner till the moment he hears *Śivapurāṇa* with great devotion.
41. The holy rivers, Gaṅgā and others, the seven sacred cities<sup>12</sup> and Gayā can never be equal to *Śivapurāṇa*.
42. If one wishes for the greatest of goals (Liberation) one shall recite at least a stanza or even half of it from *Śivapurāṇa*.
43. He who constantly listens to *Śivapurāṇa* fully comprehending its meaning or simply reads it with devotion is undoubtedly a meritorious soul.
44. Lord Maheśāna (Śiva) is extremely pleased with the sensible man who listens to *Śivapurāṇa* when death is imminent. Lord Śiva accords him a seat in his own region.
45. He who adores this *Śivapurāṇa* with great devotion enjoys in the world all desired objects and attains Śivaloka.
46. Never slack in his devotion to the *Śivapurāṇa* he who keeps this work well wrapped in a silk cloth, will ever be happy.
47. The holy *Śivapurāṇa*, the sole possession of a devotee of Śiva, should assiduously be resorted to by a person who desires for happiness here and hereafter.
48. The holy *Śivapurāṇa* that accords the four aims of life (virtue, wealth, love and salvation) must be heard and read with great devotion always.
49. The *Śivapurāṇa*, the greatest harbinger of the perfect welfare among the Vedas, Itihāsas and other sacred texts must be thoroughly understood by those who seek salvation.

---

<sup>10</sup>In Vedic times the *aśvamedha* sacrifice was performed by kings desirous of offspring but subsequently it was performed by them for the achievement of universal supremacy. A horse was turned loose to wander at will for a year, attended by a guardian; when the horse entered a foreign country, the ruler was bound either to submit or to fight. In this way the horse returned at the end of a year, the guardian obtaining or enforcing the submission of princes whom he brought in this train. After the successful return of the horse, the horse was sacrificed amidst great rejoicings. It is said that the horse was sometimes not immolated but kept bound during the ceremony.

<sup>11</sup>*Vājapeya* is one of the seven forms of the *soma*-sacrifice offered by kings or *brāhmanas* aspiring to the highest position, and preceding the *rājasūya* and the *brhaspatisava*.

<sup>12</sup>The seven sacred cities of the Hindus are Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyā, Kāśī, Kāñcī, Āvantikā and Dvārikā.

50. This *Śivapurāṇa* is the greatest resort of the knowers of Ātman (Spiritual Seekers) for ever; it is the noblest object worthy of adoration of good men; it suppresses the three types of distresses (*i.e.*, physical illness, extraneous attacks and divine calamities); it accords happiness always; and it is very pleasing to all *devas* led by Brahmā, Hari and Īśa.

51. With the mind extremely delighted I bow unto *Śivapurāṇa* for ever. May Śiva be pleased and bestow on me a devotion to His feet.



## Chapter 2

### The liberation of Devarāja

Śaunaka said:

1. O Sūta, thou art the most blessed and the most fortunate knower of the greatest Truth. Thou hast narrated to us, out of great compassion, this divine wonderful tale.
2. This wonderful narrative that destroys hosts of sins, purifies the mind, and propitiates Lord Śiva has been heard by us.
3. Thanks to thy compassion we have decisively realised that there is nothing so fine and nice as this tale.
4. Who are those among sinners in the Kali age who get sanctified by this story? Please enlighten us. Make the whole world gratified.

Sūta said:

5. Men who habitually commit sins, wicked persons indulging in vicious activities and persons of lecherous disposition become pure hereby.
6. This is a great *jñānayajña* (sacrificial rite of wisdom); it yields worldly enjoyment as well as salvation; it dispels all sins and delights Śiva.
7. Men overwhelmed by the thirst of covetousness, those devoid of truthfulness, those who decry even their parents, haughty vain fellows and persons prone to violent activities become sanctified by this.
8. Those who never practise the duties of their *varṇas* and *āśramas* and those of malicious temperament become sanctified thanks to the *jñānayajña* even in the Kali age.
9. Those who habitually practise deception and those who are ruthless and of cruel disposition are sanctified by this *jñānayajña* even in the Kali age.
10. Those who misappropriate the wealth of brahmins and thereby nourish themselves and those who indulge in heinous crimes of adultery become sanctified by this *jñānayajña* even in the Kali age.

11. Those who always indulge in sinful actions and those who are roguish persons of wicked mind become sanctified by this *jñānayaajña* even in the Kali age.
12. Men of unclean habits and wicked minds, men who know no peace and men who swallow temple and trust properties become sanctified by this *jñānayaajña* even in the Kali age.
13. The merit accruing from this *purāṇa* destroys great sins, yields worldly enjoyments and salvation and delights Lord Śiva.
14. In this context an ancient anecdote is cited as an example, the mere hearing of which, removes all sins utterly.
15. In the city of Kirātas there lived a brahmin extremely poor and deficient in (brahmanical) knowledge. He used to sell various kinds of beverage and was averse to the worship of gods or to virtuous activities.
16. He never practised the daily *sandhyā* prayers or ablutions. His practice resembled a *vaiśya*'s mode of living. He never hesitated to deceive credulous persons. His name was Devarāja.
17. Either by killing or by using various deceitful means he used to rob brahmins, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras and others.
18. Thus by foul means much wealth was later accumulated by him. But the sinner that he was, not even the slightest part of his wealth was utilised in virtuous acts.
19. Once that brahmin went to a lake to take his bath. There he saw a harlot called Śobhāvatī and was much agitated at her sight.
20. The beautiful woman was extremely delighted on coming to know that a rich brahmin had become her willing slave. The brahmin's heart was filled with love due to her pleasant talk.
21. He decided to make her his wife and she consented to have him as her husband. Thus in mutual love they sported for a long time.
22. Sitting, lying, eating, drinking and playing together they were not at all different from any other wedded couple.
23. Dissuaded again and again by his mother, father, first wife and others though he was, he never paid heed to their words but continued his sinful activities.
24. Once he became so enraged as to kill his mother, father and wedded wife at dead of night while they were asleep and took possession of their wealth.
25. Enamoured of the courtesan he handed over to her his own wealth and also the wealth that he looted from his father, mother and first wife.
26. In the company of this harlot he used to eat all sorts of forbidden food, became an addict to wine and spirituous liquors and partook of his food from the same plate as his concubine.
27. Once, by chance, he came to the city of Pratiṣṭhāna. He saw a Śiva temple where saintly men had congregated.



28. During his stay there, he was afflicted by an acute fever. He heard the discourse on Śiva conducted by a brahmin.
29. The brahmin Devarāja suffering from fever died at the end of a month. He was bound with nooses by Yama's attendants and forcibly taken to Yama's city.
- 30-33. In the mean while Śiva's attendants dressed in white, smeared with ashes all over the body, wearing garlands of Rudrākṣa and wielding tridents in their hands started furiously from Śivaloka and reached Yama's city. They threatened the attendants of Yama (the God of death) and thrashed them. Releasing Devarāja from their clutches they seated in a wonderful aerial chariot. When they were about to start to Kailāsa a great tumult arose in the middle of Yama's city on hearing which Dharmarāja (the God of Death) himself came out of his palace.
34. On seeing the four messengers who appeared like replicas of Rudra Himself, Dharmarāja the knower of virtues honoured them in accordance with the custom.
35. Yama came to know of everything through his vision of wisdom. Out of fear he did not question the noble attendants of Śiva.
36. Being duly honoured and adored by Yama, they went to Kailāsa and handed over the brahmin to Śiva, the very ocean of mercy and to the divine mother Pārvatī.
37. Blessed indeed is the story of Śivapurāṇa, the holiest of holy stories, a mere hearing of which qualifies even the greatest sinner for salvation.
38. The great seat of Sadāśiva is the greatest abode and the noblest of positions which Vedic scholars have extolled as stationed above all *lokas* (worlds).
- 39-40. Devarāja the base brahmin, addicted to wine, enamoured of a vile harlot, slayer of his own father, mother and wife and who out of greed for money had killed many brahmins, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras and others became a liberated soul instantaneously on reaching that supreme *Loka*.



## Chapter 3

### Cañculā's disillusion and detachment

Śaunaka said:

1. O Sūta of great intellect, thou art extremely blessed and omniscient. By thy favour I am gratified to satiety again and again.
2. My mind rejoices much on hearing this old anecdote. Please narrate another story equally increasing devotion to Śiva.
3. Nowhere in the world are those who drink nectar honoured with liberation. But in regard to the nectar of the story of Śiva it is different. When drunk, it straightway accords salvation.
4. Thou art blessed, blessed indeed. Blessed, blessed is the story of Śiva on hearing which a man attains Śivaloka.

Sūta said:

5. O Śaunaka, please listen I shall tell you, though it is a great secret, since you are the foremost among Vedic scholars and a leading devotee of Śiva.
6. There is a seaside village Bāṣkala<sup>1</sup> where sinful people bereft of Vedic virtue reside.
7. They are wicked debauchees with deceptive means of livelihood, atheists, farmers bearing weapons and adulterous rogues.
8. They know not anything about true knowledge, detachment or true virtue. They are brutish in their mental make-up and take a great deal of interest in listening to evil gossips and slander.
9. People of different castes are equally roguish never paying attention to their duties. Always drawn to worldly pleasures they are ever engrossed in one evil action or another.
10. All the women too are equally crooked, whorish and sinful. Evil-tempered, loose in morals they are devoid of good behaviour and disciplined life.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bāṣkala-grāma: Cf. *Skanda-purāṇa* 3.111.32.50. It has not been possible to identify and locate this village.

11. In the village Bāṣkala peopled by wicked people, there was a base brahmin called Binduga.

12. He was a wicked sinner traversing evil paths. Although he had a beautiful wife he was enamoured of a prostitute. His passion for her completely upset his mind.

13. He forsook his devoted wife Cañculā and indulged in sexual dalliance with the prostitute overwhelmed by Cupid's arrows.

14. Many years thus elapsed without any abatement in his evil action. Afraid of violating her chastity Cañculā, though smitten by Cupid bore her distress (calmly for a short while).

15. But later on as her youthful health and boisterous virility increased, Cupid's onslaught became extremely unbearable for her and she ceased from strictly adhering to her virtuous conduct.

16. Unknown to her husband she began to indulge in sexual intercourse with her sinful paramour at night. Fallen thus from *sāttvic* virtues she went ahead along her evil ways.

17. O sage, once he saw his wife amorously indulging in sexual intercourse with her paramour at night.

18. Seeing his wife thus defiled by the paramour at night he furiously rushed at them.

19. When the roguish deceitful paramour knew that the wicked Binduga had returned to the house he fled from the scene immediately.

20. The wicked Binduga caught hold of his wife and with threats and abuses fisted her again and again.

21. The whorish wicked woman Cañculā thus beaten by her husband became infuriated and spoke to her wicked husband.

Cañculā said:

22. Foul-minded that you are, you indulge in sexual intercourse with the harlot every day. You have discarded me your wife, ever ready to serve you with my youthful body.

23. I am a youthful maiden endowed with beauty and mentally agitated by lust. Tell me what other course can I take when I am denied the amorous sport with my husband.

24. I am very beautiful and agitated with flush of fresh youth. Deprived of sexual intercourse with you I am extremely distressed. How can I bear the pangs of passion?

Sūta said:

25. That base brahmin Binduga, when addressed thus by his wife, foolish and averse to his own duties said to her.

Binduga said:

26. True indeed is what you have said with your mind agitated by passion. Please listen, my dear wife, I shall tell you something that will be of benefit to you. You need not be afraid.

27. You go ahead with your sexual sports with any number of paramours. No fear need enter your mind. Extract as much of wealth as you can from them and give them enough sexual pleasure.

28. You must hand over all the amount to me. You know that I am enamoured of my concubine. Thus our mutual interests will be assured.

Sūta said:

29. His wife Cañculā on hearing these words of her husband became extremely delighted and assented to his vicious proposal.

30. Having thus entered into their nefarious mutual contract the two wicked persons—the husband and the wife—fearlessly went ahead with their evil actions.

31. A great deal of time was thus wasted by the foolish couple indulging in their vicious activities.

32. The wicked Binduga, the brahmin with a *śūdra* woman for his concubine, died after some years and fell into Hell.

33. The foolish fellow endured distress and torture in Hell for many days. He then became a ghost in the Vindhya mountain range continuing to be terribly sinful.

34-35. After the death of her husband the wicked Binduga, the woman Cañculā continued to stay in her house with her sons. The woman foolishly continued her amorous dalliance with her paramours till she no longer retained her youthful charms.

36. Due to divine intercession it chanced that on an auspicious occasion she happened to go to the Gokarṇa<sup>2</sup> temple in the company of her kinsmen.

37. Casually moving about here and there with her kinsmen she happened to take her bath in a holy pond as a normal routine affair.

38. In a certain temple a scholar of divine wisdom was conducting a discourse on the holy *Śivapurāṇa* story some of which she happened to hear.

39-40. The portion that fell on her ears was the context in which it was said that the servants of Yama would introduce a red hot iron into the vaginal passage of women who indulge in sexual intercourse with their paramours. This narrative made by the Paurāṇika to increase detachment, made the woman tremble with fear.

41. At the end of the discourse when all the people dispersed, the terrified woman approached the scholarly brahmin and spoke to him in confidence.

Cañculā said:

---

<sup>2</sup>Gokarṇa: lit. 'cow's ear'. It is a place of pilgrimage sacred to Śiva, on the west coast, near Mangalore. It has the temple of Mahādeva, supposed to have been established by Rāvaṇa.

42. O noble sir, please listen to the ignoble activities which I performed without knowing my real duties. O lord, on hearing the same you will please take pity on me and lift me up.
43. O lord, with a mind utterly deluded I have committed very great sin. Blinded by lust I spent the whole of my youth in incontinent prostitution.
44. Today on hearing your learned discourse abounding in the sentiments of non-attachment I have become extremely terrified and I tremble much.
45. Fie upon me, the foolish sinner of a woman deluded by lust, censurable, clinging to worldly pleasures and averse to my own duties.
46. Unknowingly a great sin that produces excessive distress has been committed by me for a fleeting glimpse of an evanescent pleasure, a criminal action.
47. Alas, I do not know which terrible goal this will lead me to. My mind has always been turned to evil ways. Which wise man will come to my succour there?
48. At the time of death how shall I face the terrible messengers of Yama? How shall I feel when they tie nooses forcibly round my neck?
49. How shall I endure in Hell the mincing of my body to pieces? How shall I endure the special torture that is excessively painful?
50. I bewail my lot. How can I peacefully proceed with the activity of my sense-organs during the day? Agitated with misery how shall I get peaceful sleep during the night?
51. Alas! I am undone! I am burnt down! My heart is torn to pieces! I am doomed in every respect. I am a sinner of all sorts.
52. O adverse Fate! it was you who directed my mind along evil lines. With a hateful stubbornness you made me commit great sins. I was led astray from the path of my duty that would have bestowed all happiness.
53. O Brahmin, my present pain is millions of times more than that of a man stuck to the stake or hurled from a high mountain-top.
54. My sin is so great that it cannot be washed away even if I take ablutions in the Gaṅgā for a hundred years or even if I perform a hundred sacrifices.
55. What shall I do? Where shall I go? Whom shall I resort to? I am falling into the ocean of Hell. Who can save me in this world?
56. O noble sir, thou art my preceptor. Thou art my mother. Thou art my father. I seek refuge in Thee. I am in a pitiable plight. Lift me; lift me.

Sūta said:

The intelligent brahmin mercifully lifted up Cañculā who had become disgusted (with worldly affairs) and had fallen at his feet. That brahmin then spoke (as follows).

## Chapter 4

### Cañculā's salvation

The Brahmin said:

- 1-2. O Brahmin lady, fortunately you have realised at the proper time on hearing the story of *Śivapurāṇa* that is conducive to non-attachment. Do not be afraid. Seek refuge in Śiva. All sins perish instantaneously by Śiva's grace.
3. I shall explain to you that great object attached to the glorification of Śiva whereby your course hereafter will be pleasant always.
4. It is by listening to the excellent story that your mind has now turned to the pure path of repentance and detachment towards worldly pleasures.
5. Repentance is the only way of acquittance for all sinners. Sainly men have extolled it as the only way of expiation for all sins.
6. Purity can be realised by repentance alone. If the sinner expiates in the manner advised by saintly men it removes all sins.
7. After due expiation he becomes free from fear. By repentance he attains salvation undoubtedly.
8. The mental purity that one derives on hearing the story of *Śivapurāṇa* cannot be gained by any other means.
9. As a mirror becomes free from dirt on being wiped with a cloth, so is the mind undoubtedly purified by listening to this story.
10. Accompanied by Ambā, Śiva stays in the minds of pure men. The sanctified soul thereupon attains the region of Śiva and Ambā.
11. Hence this story is the means of realising the fourfold aim of life. It is for this that Mahādeva earnestly created this.
12. Listening to the story of Pārvatī's consort (Śiva) brings about steady contemplation. Contemplation leads to perfect knowledge which certainly brings in salvation.

13. A person who listens to the story in this birth though he be unable to meditate, realises the same in the next birth after which he reaches the goal of Śiva.
14. Many repentant sinners have meditated upon Śiva after hearing this story and have achieved salvation.
15. Listening to the excellent story is the cause of beatitude for all men. Properly entertained, it dispels the ailment of worldly bondage.
16. Listening to the story of Śiva, constant meditations thereon and repeated musings certainly purify the mind.
17. That (the purity of the mind) leads the meditator to a devotion of Maheśa and his two sons (Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya). With their blessings one undoubtedly attains liberation.
18. A person devoid of that devotion with his mind entangled in the bondage of ignorance is a brute. He can never be liberated from the worldly bondage.
19. Hence O Brahmin lady, you turn away from worldly pleasures. Listen to the sanctifying story of Śiva with devotion.
20. Your mind, as you listen to the excellent story of Śiva, the Supreme Soul, will become pure and thereafter you will realise liberation.
21. Liberation is assured in this very birth to a person who meditates on the lotus-like feet of Śiva, with a pure mind. Truth, I am saying the truth.

Sūta said:

22. After saying this, that excellent brahmin with his mind melting with pity ceased talking and turned his attention to the meditation on Śiva with the purity of the Soul.
23. The wife of Binduga, called Cañculā, when thus addressed by the brahmin, became delighted and her eyes brimmed with tears.
24. With great delight in her heart she fell at the brahmin's feet. Cañculā with her palms joined together said "I am blessed".
25. Afterwards she rose up with great mental agitation. With her hands joined together, her words faltering in excitement, the woman of good intellect in her detached mood said to the brahmin, the great devotee of Siva.

Cañculā said:

26. O my lord, great brahmin devotee of Śiva, you are blessed. You are endowed with the vision of Truth. You are devoted to rendering help to others. You are to be described among great saintly men.
- 27-28. O saintly one, I am about to fall into the ocean of Hell. Save me. I am now faithfully eager to listen to the *purāṇa*. On hearing its excellent story I became detached from worldly pleasures.



Sūta said:

29. So saying with reverence she got the blessings of the brahmin. Desirous of hearing the *purāṇa* she stayed there rendering service to him.
30. The intelligent brahmin devotee narrated the Purāṇic story to the woman on the spot.
31. In this manner she listened to the excellent story of *Śivapurāṇa* in that holy centre from that excellent brahmin.
32. On hearing that excellent story that heightened devotion, knowledge and detachment and yielded liberation, she became greatly blessed.
33. Favoured by the good preceptor she quickly gained purity of mind. By the blessings of Śiva she could meditate on Śiva's forms and features.
34. Thus, resorting to the good preceptor, her mind was drawn towards Śiva. She constantly meditated on the sentient blissful body of Śiva.
- 35-36. She wore barks of trees and had her hair matted. She smeared ashes over her body. She wore garlands of *rudrākṣa* beads. Every day she took her ablutions in the sacred water. She regularly repeated Śiva's names. She regulated her speech and diet. She propitiated Lord Śiva in the manner advised by the preceptor.
37. O Śaunaka, thus for a long time Cañculā continued her meditation on Lord Siva.
38. When the stipulated period was over, Cañculā in her practice of the three-fold<sup>1</sup> devotion cast-off her body without any difficulty.
39. The divine aerial chariot shining in brilliant colours, sent by Tripurārī<sup>2</sup> (Śiva) Himself, accompanied by His attendants, arrived there quickly.
40. With her dirt and sin removed she mounted the aerial chariot and was immediately taken to Śiva's city by the lord's noble attendants.
41. She assumed a divine form. Her limbs were divine in their features. She assumed the form of Gaurī with the crescent moon as her coronet and divine ornaments shining brilliantly.
42. She saw the three-eyed Mahādeva, the eternal, being served devotedly by Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods.
43. He had the brilliance of ten million suns and was reverently served by Gaṇeśa, Bhṛṅgi, Nandīśa, Vīrabhadreśvara and others.
44. His neck had a blue hue; he had five faces, three eyes, the crescent moon as crest-ornament and his left side was apportioned to Gaurī who had the brilliance of lightning.

---

<sup>1</sup>The three kinds of devotion are: (1) the devotion of hearing (*śravaṇa*), (2) of glorifying (*kīrtana*) and (3) of deliberating (*manana*) the attributes of God. *Śiva-purāṇa* (*Vidyeshvara-saṃhitā*) 3.21-25

<sup>2</sup>Śiva is called Tripurārī, the slayer of Tripura, for he killed the demon Tripura who presided over three cities of gold, silver and iron in the sky, air and earth built for demons by Maya.

45. He was white in complexion like camphor and wore all ornaments. Besmeared with white ashes all over the body and clad in white cloth he shone brilliantly.
46. The woman Cañculā became highly delighted on seeing Śaṅkara. In her flutter of delight she bowed again and again to Him.
47. She joined her palms in reverence with great pleasure, love and humility. In her great delight she shed tears of joy and had feelings of horripilation.
48. With sympathy she was allowed to approach Pārvatī and Śaṅkara who gracefully looked at her.
49. Cañculā, the beloved wife of Binduga, thus attained a divine form and was blessed with divine pleasures and made a chaperon by Pārvatī.
50. In that permanent abode of excellent bliss and sublime lustre she acquired a permanent residence and unobstructed pleasure.

## Chapter 5

### Binduga's salvation

Śaunaka said:

1-2. O Sūta, the fortunate Sūta, thou art blessed with thy mind engrossed in Śiva. The story that thou hast narrated to us is wonderful and conducive to the increase of devotion. What did the woman Cañculā do after obtaining her salvation? O intelligent one, please tell me in detail the story of her husband too.

Sūta said:

3. Once she approached goddess Umā Pārvatī<sup>1</sup>. She bowed and offered prayers to her with palms joined in her flutter of delight.

Cañculā said:

4. O mother of Skanda, daughter of mountain, Thou art always served by men. O beloved of Śiva, the bestower of all pleasures, having the form of Supreme Brahman,

5. Thou art worthy of being served by Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others. Thou art both endowed with and devoid of attributes. Thou art the subtle primordial Prakṛti, with Existence, Knowledge and Bliss for thy forms.

6. Thou createst, maintainest and annihilatest. Thou hast the three Guṇas. Thou art the refuge of the three types of divine beings. Thou sustainest Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa.

Sūta said:

7. Offering thus her prayers to the Goddess, Cañculā who had attained salvation ceased to talk with shoulders stooping and eyes brimming with tears of love.

8. Pārvatī, the beloved of Śiva, ever favouring her devotees, was greatly moved by pity and said to Cañculā lovingly.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pārvatī is the daughter of Himālaya and the wife of Śiva. In the cult of *śakti* and *tantras*, she has been identified with *prakṛti* itself. Almost all the *purāṇas* speak of her as *prakṛti* and her three *guṇas sattva, rajas* and *tamas* are the three Gods: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva

Pārvatī said:

9. O Cañculā, my friend, I am pleased to hear your prayer. O beautiful woman, what is the boon you crave from me? Tell me. There is nothing that I cannot give you.

Sūta said:

10. Thus urged by Girijā, Cañculā bowed to her. She asked her, bending her head and joining her palms together with great devotion.

Cañculā said:

11. O Celestial Girijā, I do not know where my husband is at present, nor where he is to go. O benignant favourite of the distressed, please make such arrangements as would enable me to join him.

12. O great goddess Maheśānī, my husband had a *śūdra* woman as his concubine. He died before me. I do not know what befell that sinner.

Sūta said:

13. On hearing these words of Cañculā Pārvatī, the daughter of Himālaya, who is fond of justice, replied lovingly.

Girijā said:

14. O daughter, your wicked sinful husband Binduga, the foolish wretch enamoured of prostitutes has been to hell after his death.

15. He underwent the various tortures of hell for many years and has now become a *piśāca* due to the residue of sins, in the Vindhya mountains.

16. Even now that wicked fellow is undergoing various painful tortures. He, in the form of a *piśāca*, has only wind for his diet and is suffering from all sorts of miseries.

Sūta said:

17. On hearing these words of Gaurī, Cañculā of auspicious rites was overwhelmed by the pain at the news of her husband's distress.

18. She somehow steadied her mind, bowed to Maheśvari and with a worried heart asked the goddess.

Cañculā said:

19. O Maheśvarī, O great goddess, be kind to me. Please redeem my husband, a wicked perpetrator of evil actions though he be.

20. What is the means by which my husband, the sinful wretch of crooked intellect, can attain salvation. O goddess, obeisance to Thee. Please explain to me.

Sūta said:

21. On hearing these words of the woman, Pārvatī, favourably disposed to her devotees, replied to her chaperon Cañculā, delighted in her heart.

Pārvatī said:

22. If your husband were to hear the holy story of Śiva, he shall surmount the misery entirely and attain salvation.

23. On hearing these words of Gaurī, little short of nectar, she bent her shoulders, joined her palms and bowed repeatedly with great devotion.

24. She requested the goddess to provide an opportunity for her husband to hear the story for quelling his sins and gaining redemption.

Sūta said:

25. Gaurī, the beloved of Śiva, on being frequently requested by the woman, took pity on her, (making it clear thereby that) she was favourably disposed to her devotees.

26. Lovingly she sent for the Gandharva king Tumburu who used to sing songs of praise of Śiva. The daughter of Himalaya said thus to him.

Girijā said:

27. O Tumburu, the favourite of Śiva, ever ready to do as I wish, blessedness be thine. Accompany this lady immediately to Vindhya mountain.

28. There is an awfully terrible *piśāca* there. I shall tell you all his antecedents. You will be interested to know the same.

29. This *piśāca* had been a brahmin in his previous birth. Then he was the husband of this woman who is my chaperon now. He was very wicked and had a *śudra* concubine.

30. He was impure, never caring for the daily performance of ablutions and *sandhyā* prayers. His mind was ever vitiated by anger. He ate all sorts of foul things. He quarrelled with good men and whatever he undertook had been bad.

31. He was violent in his ways, bearing weapons and oppressing poor people cruelly. He used to take food with his left hand. He used to commit arson in other people's house.

32. He was friendly with *cāṇḍālas*. Every day he took delight in the company of prostitutes forsaking his own wife. The roguish sinner took delight in associating with the wicked.

33. In evil association with harlots he destroyed all his merits. Besides, coveting more and more wealth, he made his own wife a fearless sharer of her paramours' beds.

34. His evil ways continued till the last moments of his life and when he died he went to Yama's city, the terrible place where sinners reap the fruits of their misdeeds.

35. After undergoing the tortures of many hells, the wicked wretch is now roaming in the Vindhya mountain as a roguish sinful *piśāca*.

36. Narrate the holy sanctifying tale of sacred *Śivapurāṇa*, that quells all sins, in front of him.

37. Immediately after hearing the great story of *Śivapurāṇa* his soul will be cleared of sins and he will cast off his ghosthood.

38. I order you to set that Binduga free from the miserable plight of *piśāca* and bring him in the aerial chariot in the presence of lord Śiva.

Sūta said:

39. Commanded thus by Pārvatī, Tumburu, the lord of Gandharvas, was much delighted and thought within himself how fortunate he was.

40-41. Tumburu, the comrade of Nārada, went to the Vindhya mountain seated in the aerial chariot in the company of Cañculā, the sinless woman and saw the *piśāca* laughing, crying and loudly shouting by turns. His body was very huge, his jaws were immensely large and his form was very crooked.

42. The powerful Tumburu, the singer of the excellent songs of praise of Śiva, forcefully caught hold of the terrible *piśāca* by means of nooses.

43. Thereafter, for the sake of the discourse on *Śivapurāṇa*, Tumburu made elaborate festive arrangements.

44-45. There was much talk and discussion among the people of all the worlds “Oh, Tumburu has gone to the Vindhya<sup>2</sup> mountain at the suggestion of Goddess, to narrate the story of *Śivapurāṇa* to redeem the *piśāca*.” The divine sages too hastened to the place for listening to the same.

46. The wonderful congregation of those who assembled there, reverently eager to listen to *Śivapurāṇa*, was very auspicious.

47. They bound the *piśāca* with nooses and compelled him to sit there. With the lute in his hands, Tumburu began to sing the story of Gaurī’s consort.

48. Starting with the first *saṃhitā* (compendium) and ending with the seventh one he clearly expounded the whole of *Śivapurāṇa* along with its *Māhātmya* (greatness).

49. On hearing the *Śivapurāṇa* consisting of seven compendiums with great reverence all the listeners deemed themselves highly blessed.

50. The *piśāca* too, on hearing the holy *Śivapurāṇa*, cast-off all his sins and discarded his ghostly body.

51. He assumed the divine form of the three-eyed moon-crested God (Śiva), white in complexion, clad in white cloth, with the body illuminated and embellished by all ornaments.

---

<sup>2</sup>It is a range of mountains which stretches across India and divides Madhyadeśa or Middle Land from the south. It is one of the seven Kulaparvatas and is personified in the *purāṇas*.

52. Taking up the divine body, the glorious Binduga accompanied by his wife sang the story of Pārvatī's consort.
53. On seeing his wife thus, all the divine sages had a welcome surprise and were highly delighted in their minds.
54. Gratified on hearing the wonderful story of Śiva they returned to their respective abodes delightedly glorifying Śiva.
55. Binduga in his divine form ascended the aerial chariot with great pleasure. High up in the sky, with his wife at his side he shone brilliantly.
56. Singing the pleasing attributes of Śiva he hastened to Śiva's region accompanied by Tumburu and his own wife.
57. Binduga was welcomed by Śiva and Pārvatī and was lovingly made their attendant. His wife became the chaperon of Girijā.
58. In that permanent abode of excellent bliss and sublime lustre he acquired an unassailable residence and unobstructed pleasure.
59. Thus I have narrated this holy anecdote that removes sins, is highly delightful to Śiva and Pārvatī in pure and heightening devotion.
60. He who listens to this account with devotion and recites this piously shall enjoy immense pleasures and obtain liberation.





## Chapter 6

### Rules for listening to Śivapurāṇa

Śaunaka said:

1-2. O Sūta, O highly intelligent disciple of Vyāsa, obeisance to thee. Thou art blessed and the foremost among Śiva's devotees. Thy attributes are highly praiseworthy. Please tell me about the rules for listening to *Śivapurāṇa* whereby the listener shall obtain all excellent fruits.

Sūta said:

3. O sage Śaunaka, I shall tell you the rules for listening to *Śivapurāṇa* so that the entire fruit may be derived by their observance.

4. The householder must invite an astrologer and propitiate him to fix an auspicious day for the beginning, so that it may conclude without obstacles in the middle.

5. News must be circulated in different localities that the auspicious discourse is to take place and all who seek welfare must be present.

6. Women, *śūdra* and others who are far removed from holy discourses and stay away from singing glories of Śiva shall attend this discourse whence they may have some enlightenment.

7. Wherever there are devotees of Śiva, eager to listen to the songs of praise in the neighbourhood, they must also be invited with due reverence.

8. Thus there shall be a great festive gathering of saintly men at the discourse of *Śivapurāṇa*, a wonderful congregation.

9. With devotion, may all of you be pleased to join us for imbibing the sweet juice of *Śivapurāṇa*, with due reverence.

10. If you do not have sufficient leisure, please grace the assembly at least for a day. By all means, do come, even for a short stay or a while.

11. Thus all should be invited humbly. Those who come should be hospitably received in all respects.

12. An excellent spot for the discourse on *Śivapurāṇa* must be selected in a temple of Śiva, or in a holy centre or in a park or in a private house.
13. The ground must be scrubbed, cleaned and smeared with cow-dung. It must be decorated with metallic materials attended with all festivities. The whole arrangement must be divinely exquisite and pleasing to diverse tastes.
14. All the rubbish must be removed and all unnecessary things must be hidden in a corner away from the public view.
15. A high platform must be constructed, richly decorated with stumps of plantain trees. The whole place should be covered with a canopy. Fruits and flowers should be profusely used.
16. Flags and banners should be hoisted in the four quarters. They should be neatly arranged to be pleasing to everyone.
17. A seat must be assigned to Śiva, the Supreme soul. A comfortable seat shall be assigned to the orator.
18. Good places shall be reserved for the regular listeners as befitting their position. O sage, for the other casual visitors, seats with ordinary comfort shall be set apart.
19. People must be in as pleasant a mood as on marriage occasions: all worldly worries and anxieties must be avoided.
20. The discourser faces the north and the listeners the east. There is no fear of the criss-crossings of the feet.
21. Or the discourser faces the east as the worshipper or let the discourser and the recipient face each other.
22. As long as he is seated in the seat of the discourser, the Purāṇist does not bow to any one before the conclusion of the discourse.
23. Whether he is a boy or a youth, an old man, an indigent person, or a weakling, the scholar well-versed in the *purāṇa* is worthy of honour from all those who seek merit.
24. Never shall anyone show demeaning disrespect towards a Purāṇa-scholar, the speech from whose mouth is no less than the divine cow Kāmadhenu for all persons.
25. Either as the cause of birth or of attributes there are many who may be termed “Guru” (Elder, preceptor). Among them the Purāṇic scholar is the greatest Guru.
26. Who can be a greater Guru than the person who bestows the highest salvation on those who are disheartened due to the millions of births?
27. The person who undertakes to conduct a discourse on this sanctifying tale shall be well-versed in *purāṇas*, pure, skilful, quiet, free from malice, saintly, sympathetic and eloquent.

28. The intelligent discourser shall start the narration of the story of *Śivapurāṇa* at sunrise and continue it for two and a half *praharas* ( $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3 = 7\frac{1}{2}$  Hrs) earnestly.
29. This story shall not be narrated before rogues, wicked persons of crooked professions and those bent on conquering others in disputes and arguments.
30. The discourse on this holy story shall not be conducted in a place infested by wicked men, or surrounded by thieves or in the house of a rogue.
31. The orator shall have an interval of a *muhūrta* (forty-eight minutes) at midday for the sake of answering calls of nature.
32. The discourser must have his share on the day previous to the discourse so that his vow be maintained. During the days of discourse he shall perform all his daily routine (*sandhyā etc.*) briefly.
33. Another scholar equally well-versed in *purāṇas* should be sitting near the discourser to help him. He must be competent to clear doubts and eager to enlighten the people.
34. In order to ward off obstacles to the discourse, Gaṇanātha<sup>1</sup> should be worshipped. The lord of the story Śiva and the book, *Śivapurāṇa*, too must be worshipped with piety.
35. The story of *Śivapurāṇa* must be listened to with careful attention. The recipient must be intelligent, pure in mind, delighted at the heart and a follower of conventions.
36. If either the discourser or the recipient indulges in too many extraneous activities, is a victim of any of the six base feelings of lust, anger *etc.*,<sup>2</sup> is enamoured of women or is a heretic he cannot gain any merit.
37. Casting off the worries of worldly affairs and those of wealth, house and sons if any one of pure mind concentrates his attention on the discourse he will secure the excellent fruit.
38. The recipients who are endowed with faith and piety, do not eagerly pursue other activities and are unruffled, pure and restrained in speech derive great merit.
39. Base men of impious nature who listen to this holy story do not have any special merit derived out of it. They will have misery in every birth.
40. Those who do not honour this *purāṇa* with presents according to their capacity are fools. Even if they listen to the story they will not be sanctified. They will become indigent.
41. Those who walk out of congregation in the middle of the discourse will have the adverse effect: they will face the destruction of their wives and wealth in the midst of enjoyment.

---

<sup>1</sup>Gaṇanātha: It is an epithet of Śiva and also of Gaṇeśa. But as the worship of Śiva is mentioned separately in the following line of this verse, the term Gaṇanātha here signifies Gaṇeśa, the son of Śiva and Pārvatī (See v. 54 of this chapter). He is invariably propitiated at the beginning of any important undertaking.

<sup>2</sup>*Ṣaḍvikāras*: Six causes of perturbation are the following: lust (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), pride (*mada*), delusion (*moha*), envy (*matsara*).

42. The sons and descendants of the people who attend the discourse with turbaned head, become sinners defiling the whole race.
43. The attendants of Yama in hell force the people who chewed betel leaves while attending the discourse, to eat their own faeces.
44. Those who listen to the story seated on a more elevated seat fall into hell and after undergoing the tortures there are reborn as crows.
45. Those who listen to this auspicious story seated in the *vīra* pose<sup>3</sup> fall into hell and after undergoing the tortures of hell are reborn as poisonous plants.
46. Those who listen to the story without bowing to the discourser at first fall into hell and after undergoing the tortures of hell are reborn as Arjuna trees.
47. Those who, not being sick, listen to the story lying down, fall into hell and are reborn as pythons *etc.*
48. Those who listen to the story seated on the same level as the discourser become as sinful as the defiler of the preceptor's bed and fall into hell.
49. Those who speak ill of the discourser or of this sacred story are born as dogs and lead miserable lives in hundred births.
50. Those who begin to argue and dispute while the discourse is being held fall into hell and after undergoing the tortures there are reborn as donkeys.
51. Those who never listen to this sanctifying story fall into hell. After experiencing the tortures there they are reborn as wild boars.
52. The rogues who create hindrances even as the discourse is being held fall into hell. After undergoing the tortures there for millions of years they are reborn as village-boars.
53. Realising all these, the listener shall always be pure, devoted to the discourser and intelligent enough to listen to the story with devotion.
54. For warding off obstacles to the discourse Lord Gaṇeśa should be worshipped at first. Every day at the end of the discourse he shall briefly perform expiatory rites (for omissions and commissions).
55. He shall worship the nine planets<sup>4</sup> and the deities in the "Sarvatobhadra" array. He shall worship the book according to the rites of Śiva's adoration.
56. At the conclusion of the worship he shall offer prayer to the book identified directly with Śiva, humbly and piously joining his palms in reverence.
57. (The Prayer) "Thou art the visible Maheśvara Śrīmat Śivapurāṇa. Thou hast been accepted by me for listening purpose. Be thou pleased with me.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Vīrāsana* also called *Paryāṅka bandha*. It is a particular kind of posture practised by ascetics in meditation setting on the hams.

<sup>4</sup> Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu.

58. This wish of mine must be fulfilled by Thee. May this narration of the story be concluded without obstacles.
59. I am immersed in the middle of the ocean of worldly existence. Please lift me up from it, miserable wretch that I am, with my limbs caught in by the crocodiles of Karman (Action): O Śaṅkara, I am Thy slave.”
60. The householder shall thus pray to *Śivapurāṇa* identified directly with Śiva, in words evoking pity. Then he shall begin the worship of the discourser.
61. He shall adore the discourser too in the same manner as in the rite of the worship of Śiva and propitiate him with flowers, cloths, ornaments, incense, lamps *etc.*
62. In the presence of the discourser he shall take vow and observe all restraints with a pure mind and the same shall be maintained till the conclusion to the extent of his capacity.
63. “O Thou, the foremost of discourses, identified with Vyāsa, well-versed in the sacred literature of Śiva, please remove my ignorance through the light of this story.”
64. He shall invite five brahmins (if he can) or at least a brahmin for repeating *śiva pañcārṇa mantra*<sup>5</sup>.
65. Thus O sage, I have told you the rules of listening to the story with devotion as well as those of governing the pious recipients. What else do you wish to hear?

---

<sup>5</sup> *Pañcārṇa mantra*: “*namaḥ śivāya*.” This mantra, consisting of five letters in Devanāgarī script, is dedicated to Śiva.



## Chapter 7

### The rite of listening to Śivapurāṇa: Injunctions and prohibitions

Śaunaka said:

1-2. O Sūta, Sūta of great intellect, thou art foremost among devotees of Śiva and the most blessed. Thou hast narrated this wonderfully auspicious story, O sage, please tell me the rules governing those who perform the rite of listening to *Śivapurāṇa*, for the benefit of the whole world.

Sūta said:

3. O Śaunaka, listen with devotion to the rules governing those persons. If you hear the excellent story with due observance of the rules, the fruit is excellent and there is no obstacle in the achievement of the fruit.

4. Persons devoid of initiation are not entitled to listen to the story. Hence those who wish to listen must take initiation, O sage, from the discourser.

5. The devotee who takes up this rite shall take his daily meal only at the end of the daily discourse. He must observe *brahmacarya* (celibacy) during those days. He must lie on the ground and take food only in the *patrāvallī* (a number of leaves stitched together to serve the purpose of a plate).

6. The man who has the strength in abundance shall observe fast till the conclusion of the whole *purāṇa* and listen to the excellent *Śivapurāṇa* with great devotion and purity.

7. He may drink only milk or ghee throughout and listen to the story with pleasure. He may live on fruit diet or take a single meal or even eschew that and proceed with the listening rite.

8. Or he may take *haviṣyānna* (cooked rice soaked in ghee and sacrificially offered) once a day and maintain the rite. The diet part is according to convenience and comfort but the listening shall be strictly maintained.

9. If there is more facility in hearing let the devotee take food. If observing fast causes hindrance to listening to the story it is not to be recommended.
- 10-12. The householder taking the rite shall avoid heavy indigestible pulses like Niṣpāva, Masūrikā *etc.*, stale food, defiled food, brinjals, gourds, radish, pumpkins, cocoa-nuts, garlic, onion, asafoetida, intoxicating beverages and all kinds of meat.
13. He shall avoid the six base feelings of lust, anger *etc.*, he shall not despise brahmins and bear ill will towards chaste ladies and good men.
14. He shall not look at women in their menstrual period. He shall not converse with fallen people, nor talk to haters of brahmins or unbelievers in the Vedas.
15. The house-holder shall practise and strictly adhere to truthfulness, purity, mercy, restraint in speech, straightforwardness, humility, liberalmindedness and other virtues.
16. The householder may listen to the story with any specific desire cherished in his mind or absolutely free from any desire. If he has any desire it will be fulfilled; if he is free from desire he shall attain salvation.
17. An indigent person, a consumptive, a sinner, an unfortunate person and a person having no child shall hear this excellent story.
18. The seven types of wicked women like *kā kavandhyā* (a woman having a single child) and those suffering from miscarriages shall hear this story.
19. Whether women or men, all must hear the story of *Śivapurāṇa*, O sage, in the manner prescribed.
20. The days of discourse on *Śivapurāṇa* must be considered very excellent, even on a par with millions of sacrifices.
21. Gifts duly bestowed on these excellent days, even though they may not be much in quantity, yield everlasting benefit.
22. Observing the rites thus, and listening to the great story the flourishing house-holder shall delightedly perform the *udyāpana* rite (at the end of completion).
23. This *udyāpana* rite is on a par with the *caturdaśī* rite (observed on the fourteenth day of the lunar month). Rich men who wish to secure the fruits thereof must perform it likewise.
24. Indigent devotees usually do not and need not perform the *udyāpana* rite. They are sanctified by the listening alone. Pious devotees of Śiva are free from desires.
25. After the festive celebration of the sacrifice of the discourse on *Śivapurāṇa* is thus concluded, the listeners shall perform the worship.
26. O sage, due worship must be performed in front of the book in the manner of the worship of Śiva.
27. A fine new cloth to cover the book and a strong silken cord to tie it up must be given.



28. Those who give silken cord and new cloth for the book of *purāṇa* become *yogins* endowed with knowledge in every birth they take.
29. Many kinds of valuable objects, cloth, ornaments, vessels and much wealth in particular should be given to the discourses.
- 30-31. Those who give carpets, deer skins, cloth, elevated couches and planks to keep the volume of *purāṇa* on, attain heaven, enjoy all desirable pleasures, stay in Brahmā's region for the duration of a *kalpa* and finally attain Śiva's region.
- 32-33. After performing the worship of the book as stipulated, O foremost among sages, and also that of the discourses with great eclat, the scholar who had been appointed assistant should be duly honoured in the same manner but with a smaller sum of money.
34. Food and monetary gifts and other things must be given to the brahmin visitors. A great festival must be celebrated with vocal and instrumental music and performance of dances.
35. The listener shall gradually become detached and especially on the next day, O sage, the holy *gitā* narrated by Śiva to Rāmacandra must be read.
36. If the listener is a householder he must perform *homa* with pure *havis* (holy ghee) for tranquillising the rite.
37. The *homa* must be performed with *Rudrasaṃhitā* or with each verse of *Gāyatrī*, for in fact, this *purāṇa* is identical with it,
38. or with the *mūlamantra* of Śiva of five syllables. If he is incompetent to perform *homa* let him give the ghee offering to a brahmin.
39. In order to suppress the defects of deficiency and excess he shall either read or listen with devotion to the thousand names of Śiva.
40. Undoubtedly, thus, every thing shall be fruitful and the fruit too shall be excellent since there is no greater in the three worlds than this.
41. He shall feed eleven brahmins with honey and milk puddings. He must give them *dakṣiṇā* also to complete the rite.
- 42-44. If he is competent, O sage, he must make an image of a lion with three *palas* of gold and either engrave the name of this *purāṇa* on it or affix a label with the name written on it. He must worship his preceptor of great restraint with the gifts of cloth, ornaments, scents, *etc.*, and hand them over to him for propitiating Śiva.
45. O Śaunaka, by the power of this gift and of the *purāṇa* he shall secure the blessings of Śiva and be freed from the bondage of worldly existence.
46. If these rites are performed, the *Śivapurāṇa* shall yield entire fruit, enjoyment of worldly pleasures and salvation.
47. Thus I have narrated to you the greatness of *Śivapurāṇa* that bestows every cherished desire. What else do you wish to hear?

48. The *Śivapurāṇa* holds the mark of distinction among all *purāṇas*. It is highly pleasing to Śiva. It wards off the ailment of worldly existence.

49. Those who are always engaged in the meditation of Śiva, those whose tongue adores the attributes of Śiva, and those whose ears listen to the story of Śiva, cross the ocean of worldly existence.

50. I seek refuge in Śiva the great, of infinite thickset bliss, Śiva whose form is unaffected by all the three *guṇas*, Śiva who manifests Himself within and without this world, within and without the mind, Śiva whose form is variously evolved by mental ideas and verbal expressions.