

over the sense-organs. They are considered one hundred and twelve in number by the learned.

57. Thus I have mentioned the characteristic features of the incarnations from Manu to Kṛṣṇa in the twenty-eighth recurring cycles of the Yoga in order.

58. The classification of the Vedas was the characteristic sign of the Kalpa when Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana became the chief redactor.

59. After saying this and blessing Brahmā, the great lord of the gods glanced at him again and vanished there itself.

## CHAPTER SIX

*(The incarnation of Nandiśvara)*

*Sanatkumāra said :—*

1. O lord, how did you happen to be born of Mahādeva and gain access to Śiva I wish to hear. Please narrate everything in detail.

*Nandiśvara said :—*

2. O sage Sanatkumāra, O omniscient one, listen with attention as to how I was born of Mahādeva and how I gained access to Śiva.

3-4. Urged eagerly by the manes who desired their uplift Śilāda piously thought of raising them up. He was therefore desirous of a progeny. For that he of great potentiality performed a penance with his drooping eyes. He had the same activities as the sages. He went to Śivaloka.

5. That sage Śilāda performed a severe penance with Indra in view, for a long time. His mind was steady and he was stead-fast in his activities.

6. Indra was delighted at his penance. He, the lord of gods, went to him in order to grant him the boon.

7. Indra lovingly spoke to Śilāda—“O excellent sage, O sinless one, I am delighted with you. Therefore choose your boons.”

8. Bowing to the lord of the gods and eulogising him with holy hymns, Śilāda, the most excellent sage, told him with palms joined in reverence.

*Śilāda said* :—

9. O lord of gods, O Indra, if you are pleased with me, I wish to have a son of holy rites free of death and not born of a womb.

*Indra said* :—

10. O desirer of a son, I can give you only a son born of a womb and sure to die. I cannot give it to you otherwise. There are no persons who can escape death.

11. I shall not give you a son devoid of death and not born of a womb. O great sage, even lord Viṣṇu and Brahmā die. Not to speak of others then ?

12. Even these two, born of Śiva, the destroyer of the Tripuras, die. The extent of their longevity has been mentioned separately in the sacred lore.

13. Hence O great brahmin, abandon your desire of deathless son who is not born of a womb. Accept a son befitting your mortal nature.

14. But if Śiva, the lord of the gods, becomes delighted, even an immortal son not born of a womb, though hard to get, may be obtained.

15. Neither I, nor lord Viṣṇu, nor Brahmā, O, great sage, can give an immortal son not born of a womb.

16. Propitiate lord Śiva therefore, for the fulfilment of your desire for such a son. The great lord of all is very powerful. He will give you a son.

*Nandiśvara said* :—

17. O sage, after speaking thus to the great brahmin and blessing him, the compassionate lord of the gods returned to his region surrounded by the gods.

18. When the granter of boons, the thousand-eyed lord Indra had gone away, Śilāda propitiated lord Śiva. He delighted Śiva by means of his penance.

19. As the brahmin was engrossed in penance day and night, a thousand divine years elapsed like a moment.

20-21. His body was covered with anthill. He was surrounded by a hundred thousand worms, with pointed beaks, as hard as adamant and other types of blood-sucking insects all round. He remained in the cavity with his flesh and blood drained up. He was left with a bare skeleton. The excellent sage Śilāda was reduced to such a state.

22. The delighted lord showed him his divine body endowed with all divine qualities and inaccessible to people of crooked intellect.

23. As he continued the penance for a thousand divine years, the trident-bearing lord of all the gods spoke to him "I am here, the granter of boons."

24. The great sage Śilāda engrossed in the great trance did not hear those words of Śiva who is subservient to the devotees.

25. Only when the great sage was touched by the slayer of the Tripuras did he leave off his penance.

26. O sage, on seeing Śiva accompanied by Pārvati after opening his eyes, he immediately bowed to him and fell at his feet with joy.

27. The delighted Śilāda, drooping down his shoulders, with palms joined in reverence eulogised lord Śiva with words choked with pleasure.

28. Then the delighted lord of gods, the three-eyed deity told the great sage "I am the granter of boons."

29. O intelligent one, what shall be done with this penance? I shall give you a son who will be omniscient and a master of all sacred lore.

30. On hearing that, the sage Śilāda bowed to the moon-crested lord and spoke in words choked with pleasure.

*Śilāda said :—*

31. O lord Śiva, if you are delighted, if you are ready to grant boons, I wish for a son equal to you, devoid of death and not born of a womb.

*Nandiśvara said :—*

32. When thus requested by him, the three-eyed lord Śiva delightedly replied to the excellent sage Śilāda.

*Śiva said* :—

33. O brahmin, O sage, formerly I have been propitiated by means of penance by Brahmā, by sages and by leading gods and urged to take an incarnation.

34. O sage, I shall become your son by the name of Nandin. I shall not be born of a womb. Thus you shall be my father, of me who am the father of the worlds.

*Nandiśvara said* :—

35. After addressing these words to the sage who stood waiting after bowing, the merciful lord Śiva gave him his directions and vanished there itself along with Pārvatī.

36. After lord Śiva had disappeared, the great sage Śilāda returned to his hermitage and mentioned the tidings to the sages.

37. After a short while, my father, the foremost among those who knew the sacrificial rites, ordered for the construction of the sacrificial altar for the performance of sacrifice.

38. But before the beginning of sacrifice I was born as Śiva's son at his bidding, with a lustre as brilliant as the fire at the end of a Yuga.

39. Then Puṣkarāvartaka<sup>21</sup> and other clouds showered. When I was born as the son of Śilāda, the Kinnaras, Siddhas, Sādhyas and other beings walked through the sky and the great sages made showers of flowers all round.

40. Then Brahmā and other gods together with their wives, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Parvatī came there lovingly.

41. There was great jubilation. The celestial damsels danced. After honouring me all of them delightedly eulogised my phallic image.

42. After praising Śilāda and eulogising Śiva and Pārvatī by reciting good hymns all of them returned to their respective abodes. Śiva and Śivā, the lord and goddess of all, went away too.

43-44. On seeing me the boy with three eyes, four arms and lustre like that of Yama, sun and fire and clad in matted hair and coronet, Śilāda was highly delighted. I was

21. For Puṣkara, Āvartaka etc. see P. 365. note.

in the form of Rudra in every respect with the trident and other weapons. He bowed to me lovingly.

*Śilāda said* :—

45. O lord of gods, since I have been delighted by you, you will be named Nandin. Hence I bow to you, bliss (incarnate), the lord of the universe.

*Nandiśvara said* :—

46. My delighted father after bowing to the great lord returned to his hut with me, as pleased as an indigent person who had struck a treasure-trove.

47. O great sage, when I reached the hut I cast off my divine form and assumed the human one.

48. After seeing me assuming human form, my father, honoured by the world, was distressed and so lamented surrounded by his own people.

49. The son of Śālankāyana Śilāda fond of his son performed all the post-natal<sup>22</sup> rites for me.

50. Within five years my father taught me all the Vedas with their Aṅgas and Upāṅgas as well as other sacred texts.

51. When I completed the age of seven, the two sages Mitra and Varuṇa came to the hermitage at the bidding of the lord in order to see me.

52. Duly welcomed by the sage and seated on their seats, the great sages of noble soul looked at me again and again and said.

*Mitra and Varuṇa said* :—

53. O dear sage, although he has mastered the sacred lore, your son Nandin will be short-lived I do not see his life for more than a year from now.

54. When the brahmins said this, Śilāda fond of his son was much distressed. He lamented loudly after embracing me.

55. On seeing my father and grand-father fallen like

22. Jātakarma etc are sacraments essential for the material and spiritual growth of the child. For details see Hindu Saṁskāra.

a dead body I spoke after remembering the lotus-like feet of Śiva with a delightful mind.

56. "O father, what is your distress for which you tremble and cry? I wish to know correctly whence this misery has come to you?"

*The father said :—*

57. O son, I am much distressed at the thought of your early death. Who can remove my misery? I shall indeed seek refuge in him.

*The son said :—*

58-59. Even if the gods, demons, Yama or Kāla were to be angry with me or even if it be any other person, I will not be short-lived. Do not be grieved. O father, I speak the truth, I take a vow unto you.

*The father said :—*

60. What is your penance? What is your knowledge? What is your Yoga? Who is your lord? Whereby O son, you propose to ward off my terrible misery?

*The son said :—*

61. O father, I shall deceive death by means of my penance, not learning. By worshipping great god, I will conquer death, not otherwise.

*Nandiśvara said :—*

62. O sage, after saying this and bowing at his feet and circumambulating my father I went to the excellent forest.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

(The coronation and the nuptials of Nandiśvara)

*Nandiśvara said* :—

1. O sage, after going there and staying in an isolated place with a steady mind I performed a severe penance very difficult even for good sages.

2-3. Meditating in the lotus-like cavity of the heart the lord Tryambaka, Sadāśiva with five faces,<sup>23</sup> ten arms and three eyes and quiet in features I performed the repetition of Rudra Japa. I was in great meditation on the northern bank of the river. My mind was concentrated and I had pure thoughts.

4. Delighted with that Japa, lord Śiva, accompanied by Pārvatī and bedecked with the crescent moon, said :—

*Śiva said* :—

5. “O Śailādi (son of Śilāda) I have been pleased by this penance of yours. O intelligent one, you have performed the penance very well. Tell me what you desire. I am here the granter of boons.”

6. When thus addressed by the lord I bowed to his feet with my head and eulogised lord Śiva, the destroyer of the sorrow of old age.

7-8. I was endowed with great devotion. My eyes were filled with tears. I fell prostrate at his feet with my head resting there. Lord Śiva, the destroyer of great distress, lifted me up and stroked me with his hands. The bull-bannered lord clasped me with his hands and stood face to face with me.

9. Glancing at the leaders of the Gaṇas and the goddess, the daughter of Himavat, the lord of the worlds, looked at me with sympathy and spoke.

10. “Dear Nandin, O intelligent one, wherefore can you be afraid of death? The two brahmins were sent by me alone. There is no doubt. You are equal to me.

11. You will be free from death and old age. You

23. On the five-faced form of Śiva see P. 34 note

will not be unhappy. You will for ever be the leader of the Gaṇas. You will be unchanging and unwasting. You will be loved by all in the company of your father and friends.

12. You will gain strength from me. You will always be at my sides. You will be for ever my favourite. Due to my favour you will have neither birth, nor death, nor old age."

*Nandiśvara said :—*

13. After saying thus, the store-house of mercy took off his own lotus-garland round his head and tied it round my neck immediately.

14. O brahmin, as soon as that garland adorned my neck I became three-eyed and ten-armed like a second Śiva.

15. Then, taking me by the hand, lord Śiva said—"Tell me, what excellent boon shall I grant you?"

16. Then he took the water from his matted hair, water as pure as necklace, and said "Be Nandin." Then the bull-bannered lord let off the water.

17. Then five auspicious rivers flowed. They had pure water. They were very rapid. They were beautiful and divine in form.

18. The five rivers<sup>24</sup> are glorified thus—Jaṭodakā, Trisrotas, Vṛṣadhvani, Svarṇodakā and Jambunadī.

19. O sage, this basin called Pañcanada is a very auspicious spot of Śiva. It is near Japeśvara and is very holy.

20. He who goes to the holy centre of Pañcanada, takes his bath there, performs the Japa of the lord of lords and worships him, certainly attains the Sāyujya of Śiva.

31. Then Śiva said to Pārvatī "I am going to coronate Nandin and proclaim him as the lord of Gaṇas. O unchanging goddess, what do you think?"

24. This group of five rivers is mythical. It is not appropriate to identify the Trisrotas of this group with the Tecsta in North Bengal and the Jambu with the Jambu of mount Abu. For the Purāṇa speaks of the group of five rivers forming a confluence near Japeśvara. The Tecsta and the Jambu meet nowhere and cannot be held identical with the Trisrotas and the Jambu that have entered into this group.

*Pārvatī said :—*

22. O lord of gods, it behoves you to give that to Nandin. O lord, Śailādi is my most beloved son.

*Nandiśvara said :—*

23. Then Śiva the independent lord, the Supreme deity, the bestower of everything and favourably disposed towards his devotees remembered his excellent leaders of Gaṇas.

24. Even as they were remembered, all the leading Gaṇas of Rudra came there. They were countless. They had the shape of Śiva. They were highly delighted.

25. Those leading Gaṇas bowed to lord Śiva and the goddess Pārvatī with joined palms and drooping shoulders. The powerful Gaṇas spoke.

*The leading Gaṇas said :—*

26. O great lord, the destroyer of Tripuras, why are we called ? Please command us, O bestower of wishes. We are your servants and we have come here.

27. Shall we dry up the oceans ? Shall we kill Yama with his servants ? Shall we slay great death or the aged Brahmā especially ?

28. Shall we bind Indra with all the gods or Viṣṇu with all his Pārṣadas and bring them here ? Or the Daityas and Dānavas ?

29. To whom shall we cause great and terrible distress at your behest ? O lord, who is to be extremely jubilant to-day for the increase of all cherished desires ?

*Nandiśvara said :—*

30. On hearing these heroic words of the Gaṇas the great lord spoke after praising them.

*Śiva said :—*

31. Nandiśvara is my son. He is the lord of lords. He is the favourite leader of my Gaṇas. Let my behest be carried out by you.

32. All of you, crown him lovingly as your leader and resort of all my Gaṇas. From today onwards, Nandiśvara is your lord.