

tradition due to their strong desire for religious merit; behind him, (a man should remember) the chief meditating saints like Sanaka, desiring salvation through abstract meditation; (he should remember) on his left, yakṣas, siddhas, gandharvas, vidyādhara and cāraṇas with their beloveds and with kinnaras, so also the chiefs of celestial nymphs desiring (the fulfilment of) their desires through dancing, singing and sounds of musical instruments, who are white like a conch, the moon and the kunda (flower), who know all the Vedas, whose matted hair is tawny, like streaks of lightning, and remembering me (i.e. Nārada), Brahmā's son who desires spotless devotion to his feet, who has given up the company of any one else, who pleases (the lord) with charming modulations in the seven musical orders and the three gamuts endowed with qualities of various notes, should devoutly think of him.

57. The man, of a sharp and clear intellect, having thus meditated upon the son of Nanda, should again deliberately and devoutly worship him in his own body and outside with splendour. O best brāhmaṇas, I have told you all that was desired by you.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FOUR

Dialogue between Śambhu and Rāma

Om, salutation to Śrī Gaṇeśa.

The sages said:

1. O illustrious one, tell us again the wonderful account of Rāma, which is the all-in-all of Rāma's greatness and which gives delight to the devotees.

Sūta said:

2-6a. The wise son of Daśaratha, after having performed the excellent horse-sacrifice, engaged himself in the worldly deeds and in acts laid down in the sacred texts. Śaṅkara, the

magnanimous one, desiring to go to Ayodhyā, lived with Pārvati on the bank of Sarayū. Great-souled sages like Kaśyapa approached that Śaṅkara, of a universal form, and asked him of unlimited lustre. (They said :) “O best sage, wherefrom have you come with your wife? For what deed have you come with your wife? For what deed have you come here? Which country are you bent on going to?”

Śaṅkara said:

6b-12a. I am a brāhmaṇa named Śambhu and living on Himālaya. I am going to see Rāma; I have a great deed to do. That king interested in listening to the Purāṇas, invites (i.e. has invited) me. You too may come. Rāma will be glad.

Then all the sages and Śambhu went with a desire to see Rāma. Knowing them to have arrived, Vasiṣṭha informed Rāma. Then he with his family-priest (i.e. Vasiṣṭha) quickly came out (to meet them). Offering them materials of worship and water for washing their feet, he honoured all the sages. He who curbed his enemies, took them into the best mansion. Having given a seat to each one of them, the best among the Raghus, honoured the sages, seated them on the seats one by one with words of welcome. Pleasing them with sweet words, he said these words to them who were seated on the seats.

Śrī Rāma said:

12b-15a. Today my existence has become fruitful; today I have obtained the fruit of my penance. Today the time of obtaining the fruit of my practice of the lores has come. Today my dead ancestors are pleased; my kingdom has become fruitful today. My (good) conduct has become fruitful today; today my learning has become fruitful.

To king Rāma, having lotus-like eyes, who was speaking like this, the brāhmaṇas, Kaśyapa and others said:

The sages said:

15b-21. This brāhmaṇa is Śambhu who is conversant with all sacred texts, who knows the essential truth of the Vedas and

the Vedāṅgas, who is engaged in the good of all beings, who lives at Kailāsa, and who is always determined in (practising) penance, who is comparable to Brahmā in divine glory, who is the best of those who know the Vedas, who is comparable to Viṣṇu in his affection for brāhmaṇas, and to Śaṅkara in (showing) grace. Such is (this) very lustrous best brāhmaṇa Śambhu who knows the eighteen Purāṇas and who is well-versed in Mīmāṃsā¹ and Nyāya². Due to your great luck this best sage has come (here). This best sage invited by you, has come from Kailāsa, O lord. Therefore, O you descendant of Raghu, O illustrious one, ask him (about) the excellent account of the Purāṇas. We, desiring to hear (it), have today come (to you). The knowledge of a man who has mastered the Vedas and knows all sacred texts, but has not heard the Purāṇas, is not accurate.

Sūta said:

22. Thus addressed by the sages who had realized the truth, the best of the Raghus, eager to listen to the Purāṇas, got incomparable delight.

Śrī Rāma said:

23-26. O excellent, best sage, I desire to hear from you all that, viz. the varieties of the worship of the Phallus, the greatness of the Phallus, the greatness of the name of the great lord (Śiva), the importance of worship, the significance of salutation, the greatness of wisdom, the importance of offering water, so also of offering incense, O best one, so also of offering lamps, aloewood etc. and the importances of flowers, the account destroying sins

1. Mīmāṃsā—One of the six systems of Indian Philosophy. It was originally divided into two systems: the Pūrvamīmāṃsā and the Uttaramīmāṃsā. The former is said to be founded by Jaimini. The latter is ascribed to Bādarāyaṇa. The two systems have very little in common between them. The Pūrvamīmāṃsā, concerns itself chiefly with the correct interpretation of the ritualistic part of the Veda and the settlement of doubts in regard to Vedic texts. The Uttaramīmāṃsā, also called Brahmamīmāṃsā, deals mainly with the nature of Brahman or the Supreme Spirit.

2. Nyāya—A system of Indian Philosophy founded by Gautama, also known as Gotama and Akṣapāda. The system is primarily concerned with the conditions of correct thinking and with the means of gaining a true knowledge of reality.

from many tales and traditions, so also the four goals of human life, viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* and the means of (attaining) them.

Śambhu said:

27-33. O Rāma, Rāma, O you of great (i.e. mighty) arms, O Rāghava, you are meritorious, (since) though attached to (i.e. engaged in the administration of) the kingdom you have a liking for hearing the Purāṇas. O Rāma, it would be due to the service of the great and resorting to holy places. That is the tongue that would sing (the praise of) Śiva; that is the heart which is dedicated to him; those two hands alone that worship him, are fit to be praised. That body alone is best born among all existences which brightens with horripilation at the narration (of the virtues) of Viṣṇu. O great king, you are blessed since your mind has moved in (asking) questions about him.

Immediately thereafter couriers, hurrying and tired, came (there). The best among the Raghus took a letter from the hands of (one of) them, and read it. Rāma thought to his mind: 'How has it taken place?' Śambhu who was in the guise of a brāhmaṇa and accompanied by his wife, then asked Rāma: "O you descendant of Kakutstha, what are you thinking about when the sages are sitting in front of you?" Hearing his words, Rāma said to the best sages:

Śrī Rāma said:

34-41. Oh, how is it that Bibhiṣaṇa seeing the Phallus of Śiva, (called) Rāmeśvara and installed by me, is bound with chains by the crooked, wicked-minded Drāviḍas? Think about it with your (i.e. by applying your) mind.

Thinking (about it) the best sages were unable to know (it even) a little. They said to Rāma: "We do not know." Then Rāma said: "O best ones, having duly seen (i.e. looked into) a Purāṇa tell (me) all that. After that the cause of your ignorance may be considered. Which Purāṇa should be looked into; similarly which should be avoided; which verse is excellent; which is other than that; what kind of worshipper should be there and

for what kind of act; and on seeing (its) verdict (*obscure!*) as to how the worship should be done by devotees." Hearing these words of Rāma, those best brāhmaṇas spoke to Rāma whose mind was full of anxiety: "O Rāma, we shall not tell it. One who knows the Purāṇa, should look into it." Hearing that, Rāma, full of modesty, asked Śambhu; he too, who was very intelligent, hearing those words, said:

Śambhu said:

42-50a. A very intelligent man who lives by (expounding) the Purāṇas, who deserves honour, who has studied (the scriptures of) the branch of Veda to which he belongs, who is pure, who knows the essence of Mīmāṃsā, who is learned, who censures falsehood, who looks equally upon all gods, who loves Śiva, who mutters the Śatarudriya hymn, who maintains sacred fire, who is a great speaker, who is especially a follower of the Yajurveda, should worship the book (i.e. the text of the Purāṇa). The book is written on palm leaves, is auspicious and is written in the divine script (i.e. in Sanskrit). It is extensive as it is bound (together) and has at the same time the syllable 'Om' (at its beginning). At the end of the two vertical lines here would be the line being the first line of Om. Near it should be the letter 'a'. Beginning with the topmost part and hanging down it should have an angle. That which has a (vertical) line to the right (of the letter 'a'), should be known to be the letter 'ā'. The letter 'i' is known to have two dots and bent like (the figure) six. (Long) 'ī' is said to be (formed) by a line on the left top of it. Except Om, every letter has a line on its top. But on it there is a vertical line and at its end there is (the figure) like that of a sickle. That should be known as 'u'. (Long) 'ū' is formed by means of two (figures of) sickles. Bhāratī (i.e. Sarasvatī) has said that other letters are (to be formed) like these.

50b-54a. That Purāṇa which is written in this script alone, is praiseworthy. (The Purāṇas are:) Brahma, Padma, Vaiṣṇava, Mārtaṇḍa, (the one) narrated by Nārada, Mārkaṇḍeya, and Āgneya, Kaurma and Vāmana, Gāruḍa; Laiṅga (is also) said (to be one of them); Skānda, Mātsya, Nṛsimha; O Rāma, Kapila is also said to be (a Purāṇa); so also Varāha; Brahmavaivarta is recommended for omens; (and there are) Śiva, Bhāgavata,

Daurga (i.e. of Durgā), Bhaviṣyottara also known by the subtitle Bhaviṣya. One should avoid others.

54b-61a. Untying the (string of) the book (the reader) should put the hallowed book on a jewelled stool. He should put on washed garments; he should bathe and be pure; he should be without wrath and without distress; he should, having first worshipped his soul and having made a mental resolve, meditate upon the white (-complexioned) Sarasvatī, of a pleased face and holding a goad, a rosary, a noose and a book. The worshipper should begin the worship after first having duly meditated upon Śiva whose figure is (white) like the cow's milk, who has three eyes, whose vehicle is the bull (Nandī), whose face is smiling, who is tranquil, who has put on a white garment, who is fearless, whose both arms have been (tossed) up, who has a crown (on his head), whose right hand is put on the left, who gives boons, who is richly adorned with many jewels, whose half seat is occupied by (Pārvatī) the daughter of (the Himālaya) Mountain, whose lotus-like feet are being meditated upon by many chief sages, who is being praised by Vedas embodied, so also by Purāṇas, so also whose lotus-like feet are waited upon by all other people.

61b-64a. The consecration of the pitcher (should be done with the utterance of the hymn) *Āpo vā idam* ('This is water'). Having taken that water, he consecrates (the water) in the vessel. He, having (consecrated) himself, and having praised (Brahman) with the hymn *Tat sad Brahma*, should then invoke all the vessels. He should worship Sarasvatī with the Ṣoḍaśārcana (worshipping sixteen times) with the ṛc *Yad vāg*, or he should do it with the recital of the Puruṣa-sūkta (hymn), or with the Gāyatrī hymn.

64b-69. He should worship the Purāṇa by (first saying) 'Om, salutation to the lord, such and such Purāṇa (is being expounded).' With the recital of the hymn *Kāṇḍāt* he should bring dūrvā (grass) and worship it (saying:) 'Om, salutation to the respectable Dūrvā'. The worship should be done along with (that of) the guardians of the quarters. Then a (young) girl should be honoured. (She should be) auspicious and should be above five years but below ten years. She should not have attained puberty. He should carefully worship her with fragrant substance, flow-

ers, sacred rice grains, incense, lamp, tāmbūla and ornaments. The worshipper should make the young girl recite this hymn: 'Speak the truth, speak what is agreeable; O venerable Sarasvatī, salutation to you, salutation to you.'

70-75a. According to the meaning of the order of the (words of the) Gāyatrī (hymn) he should make her keep near the book two dūrvās, then under it with the ṛc *Sahasra paramā*. The wise one (i.e. the worshipper) should give three pairs of dūrvās into her hand; after that she should throw (i.e. put) three small sticks into the joints of the book. Throwing them (away), he should again give her (small sticks), saying *Śivābhyām namaḥ* ('salutation to Śivas'). The verse in between two leaves suggests the success in the work (to be undertaken). O Rāghava, if the verse would come to an end on the previous leaf, then he should read the verse on the next leaf, and having discerned it, should read it aloud. The wise one should read it slowly, and should explain it slowly. Here no hurry should be done, (as) Sarasvatī gets angry due to haste. The time should be the quarter of a ghaṭikā (i.e. twentyfour minutes); hurry would be said to be done (if less time than that is taken).

75b-79. One should not hasten the speaker known as the brāhmaṇa after Vyāsa. The speaker should discern the meaning in his mind; having discerned it, he should not say what is opposed to it, O Rāma. Leaving the verse, whether proper or improper (found) in the book, if the worshipper reads another verse, it should be known to be like that only; a discord is not recommended. That verse has appeared there due to luck (i.e. chance), and luck is more powerful (than anything else). Since in the hearing (i.e. the text) there is no fault of the brāhmaṇa (who reads it), so one should not wonder; the course of destiny is crooked.

80-84a. If there is a change in a letter due to water (etc.) on the leaf, he should discard that command, and should read another (verse). Then the third (verse) should be read, and then decision (about the meaning) should be taken. The five other than the class of letters beginning with 'pa' (i.e. labials) end without a visarga. A verse not containing a mark of praise is commended for omens. The wise should always avoid these in (i.e. while finding out) an omen: the beginning of a

chapter; its end; a useless leaf or script; repetition of what is (already) stated; double (i.e. repeated) mention; a burnt leaf; script that has disappeared; doubtful letters.

84b-86a. A question should be known to be of two types depending upon its two varieties: radiant and calm. The calm (-type) also should be known to be of two types: depending upon the development of creation or maintenance. There (i.e. out of these) the calm marked with the characteristics (noted) before is recommended. Certain varieties of acts useful for mortals are (now being) described.

86b-89a. Someone taking up the mission of someone (else) becomes the questioner (i.e. asks questions). When he asks a question, what does he remember? He again holds a leaf. A leaf there is recommended. Or if a reader somehow getting delighted, and being capable of (reading) it (sees a text) intent upon detachment or glorificatory, then that should be avoided and another auspicious for that matter (should be looked for).

89b-92. Such a question as 'A dead man grasps the meaning of words' conduces to inauspiciousness. The indication of success is desired in case of a question about discussion and victory. Creation is also here. There would be one who would praise. In case of its being cruel, the victory is due to trouble. When it is calm and mixed, one would be a best merchant through means. The description of a city etc. which is mediocre, may be excellent; so also in the description of the thoughts about Kali and in that of the element of love. In the consideration of the administration of kingdom the mark of it is auspicious.

93-101a. The wise ones (should tell) what is proper for whom after (due) consideration. In case of (something) to be done about praise and detachment destruction is enjoined. By means of an error the undertaking is a little (i.e. partially) accomplished, and the undertaker of it cannot go through it. O Rāma, in the consideration of peace the meaning of one thing would have another significance. There will be the end of a visarga and the inversion of the former part. If there is another significance at the end of a chapter or at the end of a section, then (it indicates) the destruction of the undertaking. Therefore, if somebody sneezes, or if the book drops down, or if someone is struck on the head etc. it is a dishonour to the speaker, and as a result the

omen perishes. Therefore, when such a fault (is noticed), the man should avoid that omen. If there is a simile, there would (just) be the semblance of the undertaking, but not in reality; in other cases progeny (is indicated); (reference to) creation is said to give a mediocre fruit. In the decision of a meritorious undertaking eulogy is excellent anywhere. Eulogy in case of a marriage, medicines, gifts, dealings, agriculture, if it is proper, incurs no fault in being narrated. In the case of that eulogy which is improper, the undertaking does not succeed.

101b-103a. When the meaning of a verse is not understood, or when it is disregarded in a Purāṇa etc., or when there is fleeing, or the advice about a country or about the possibility of a disease, or when there is (a mention about) an attack by a thief etc. then the undertaking would terribly perish, if the question is (of a) tranquil (nature). So say those who know the ancient (accounts).

Rāma said:

103b-105a. How will he who knows the meaning of the Purāṇas, when he is not told, or when he has not heard, explain the meaning to the listeners? The decision of this (should be made). (Please) illustrate it to me, and let the meaning also be thought over. O intelligent one, you please tell it even if it explains a part.

Śambhu said:

105b-111. The meaning of the verse: *Madhūni ca madhūnyutra madhurmadhubhujam madhuḥ; madhunā madhunādyartham viṣāṇi ca viṣāṇi ca* is unintelligible; it is not recommended in (finding out) an omen. So also the verse: *Ruti rute rute roraurīri rāraṁ rari-raram; evaṁ karoti śuddhātmā brāhmaṇo brahmaṇotiṭhiḥ*. This verse is intelligible in part (the latter half is intelligible: a pure-souled brāhmaṇa, the guest of Brahman, acts like this). (Therefore) it is not recommended in (finding out) an omen. O best of the Raghus, such and other verses occur in the Purāṇas. They have no explanation. Their text would be pre-eminent. How can the faultlessness of the speaker and the listener in the vows and restraints (be had)? How is it that the Purāṇas are not to be regarded like (i.e. on par with) the Vedas? The idea about the

meaning may be had on reciting it thrice and on thinking. The meaning of the verse, and the manner of acting (according to it) should be actually thought out. In this case the verse is (more) powerful; the manner of acting is inferior to it.

112-115a. If the leaf is useless, if the labour is fruitless, and if the leaf is burnt, then the undertaking would be lost. When the manner is hidden on the leaf, then there is lack of coordination in the undertaking. In case the leaf is withered, or if the writing on it has disappeared, then the destruction (of the undertaking) is said (to take place). In case the letters are wrong, the trouble taken is fruitless; (so also) in case of repetition or lack of agreement. If there is a comparison, the undertaking may or may not succeed. Or success may be delayed; so also when the letters are clear, there is a doubt about (the success of) the undertaking within days that are indicated.

115b-123. O king, an omen from a Purāṇa should not be seen every day. Similarly a man should not see a Purāṇa (for an omen) after he gets up after having eaten (food). Having performed worship on the night of the previous days or in the morning of the next day a man should see (the Purāṇa) for an omen, or should do so immediately (after the worship). He should tell about a special omen, particularly with reference to the manner (in which the act is to be conducted), in all auspicious deeds; the śrāddha offered to a dead person should be excluded. Inflicting a punishment, a curse, a change in the country, killing beings like demons and wicked beings is pure. Immediately after the burning of the dead body, there are spitting, vomiting, weeping, laughter, loathsomeness, pain, bad dreams, confusion etc. causing sins. So also covering with a garment, troubling, quarrel and death. Coming out of cruel (animals) and fear from the great (are there). All these and other manners should be avoided. When getting wealth is to be considered the royal creation is conducive to happiness. The rise of the Planets, the healing of diseases is also told here. What is the use of talking much here? That particular relation should be considered.

124-127. Of all the Purāṇas Skanda is recommended for this. Some choose Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa; others choose Rāmāyaṇa. There is no fault in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa like oaths etc. There are faults in Skanda and Rāmāyaṇa; but they are (on

a) small scale. But only a devotee of Viṣṇu and none else is able to worship it. If the worship takes place without (the worshipper being of) a good conduct, then inauspiciousness creeps in, and the omen is not successful, as a bull bound to a branch full of (i.e. allowing) all movements.

Sūta said:

128-129. Rāma who was thus advised by that brāhmaṇa Śambhu, proceeded to (find out) an omen in ascertaining (the condition of) Bibhiṣaṇa. Rāma said to Vasiṣṭha who knew the entire truth, who was proficient in (understanding the meaning of) the Purāṇas: “(Please) look into the Purāṇa”.

130-132. Vasiṣṭha also said to that Rāma: “O Rāma, I am not able to speak or look into (the Purāṇa) in the vicinity of this sage.” Then Rāma told Śambhu whose face was being observed by the sages: “You know the truth; you are proficient in (understanding the meaning of) the Purāṇas. So you may please tell me about the omen for my undertaking.” Saying, “All right”, Śambhu purified himself and became the worshipper.

133-136. Having worshipped the Skanda (Purāṇa) duly, he put the question: “Is my devotee Bibhiṣaṇa bound by a chain?” Then in three ways these three verses indicating that were seen. “Having bound the ocean, the best of Rāghavas checked the demons in the city (of Laṅkā). They, the best among those having gigantic bodies, went out of the city of Laṅkā to fight (with Rāma). The communities will have banners on their mansions. Brāhmaṇas will have Śiva as their emblem, and women will have their hair as the banners in Kaliyuga.”

137-138. Thus praised, the great lord Śiva said to your deities: “I shall free your wives restrained by the demon Malla.” Having observed three verses, he told about the certainty of (Bibhiṣaṇa’s) being bound. (He said to Rāma:) “O Rāma, he will be soon freed. There is no doubt about it.”

139-142. Having heard these words of that sage (Śambhu), Rāma, along with sages and monkeys, quickly went out to look for Bibhiṣaṇa. He quickly entered the city named Śrīraṅga. The kings that lived there worshipped Rāma. Rāma who was worshipped by them, asked them: “Where is Bibhiṣaṇa?” (They

replied:) “O god Śrī Rāma, we do not know this account”. The descendant of Kakutstha (i.e. Rāma) sent the monkeys in all directions. Then the best monkeys after having gone (and looked for him) did not at all see (i.e. find) him.

143-144. Then Rāma said to that sage Śambhu: “Tell me later.” Then that sage Śambhu accompanied by Rāma and followed by the sages, saying “show me” and (being told) “All right”, went to a hamlet of brāhmaṇas. The brāhmaṇas there when honoured and asked showed the demon bound with many chains in an underground chamber.

145-151. Then Rāma said: “O brāhmaṇas, what has he done?” They said: “(He has committed) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. An old brāhmaṇa, an excellent, religious, aged, slim brāhmaṇa stayed in a secluded place in a grove for meditation. Having gone there, Bibhiṣaṇa hurt him with his foot (i.e. kicked him). The brāhmaṇa too, who was very much bruised, could not move even a step. Though struck by us with fatal (weapons), the wicked Bibhiṣaṇa did not die. Therefore, O Rāma, slay this sinful one and be righteous”. Rāma who had suspicion, said to the brāhmaṇas: “Death is better for me (than killing my devotee). How can my devotee be killed by me? I have given him kingdom and long life. He will continue to be like that (i.e. continue to be a king and live long). Everywhere punishment is prescribed for the masters for the offence of (i.e. committed by) their servants.” Having heard (these) words of Rāma, the brāhmaṇas, through amazement, said these words:

The brāhmaṇas said:

152-154a. O Rāma, death of one bound with strips is not acceptable to the sages. Think along with the best sages like Vasiṣṭha as to what is beneficial.

The sages, asked by Rāma, told the expiation: “The (sin due to the) murder of a brāhmaṇa (committed) through ignorance, is removed by means of expiations. Thus murder (committed) through ignorance requires expiation.

154b-159. That Bibhiṣaṇa should give (to brāhmaṇas) three hundred and sixty cows.” Those brāhmaṇas who had bound (Bibhiṣaṇa) saying, “All right”, said to one another: “We shall

free that demon. Let him go through an expiation.” Having liberated the demon, the brāhmaṇas reported it to Rāma. Rāma also would not talk to him (but) said what was relevant: “Having bathed and having asked the angry sages, (and having) then (gone through) the expiation, the sinful demon may approach me.” Having heard these words of Rāma, the demon, united with the sin, went through the expiation as told by the sages, and went to Rāma. He, with his soul purified by means of expiation, bowed down to Rāma. In the assembly, Rāma, laughing (i.e. smiling) said these words to him.

Śrī Rāma said:

160-162a. O son of Pulastya, from today do whatever is beneficial after thinking (properly), since, O demon, this exertion on our part was due to you. Be kind everywhere, since you are my servant.

When Rāma had (thus) settled the matter, all the sages said: “How is it that ignorance quickly overtook us?”

Śambhu said:

162b. O brāhmaṇas, due to the contempt of brāhmaṇas (that took place). The ignorance will perish.

The sages said:

163. He was charming in Tretāyuga. The Purāṇas also were entire. How will this Bhārata be employed at the end of Dvāpara?

Sūta said:

164-170. The Purāṇas are just like that; they have the same names. Today even they are told by Vyāsa; it is not otherwise. Even today the same is the rule; (and the same is) the fruit of hearing the Purāṇa. Even Mahābhārata excels in (explaining) the omens. Having worshipped just one Ādiparvan, a man should take note of the decision. Or for the decision regarding a matter all the Parvans are recommended. In this case also all the characteristics of a verse etc. mentioned before are (applicable). A particular meaning from the connection of words in a sentence

may be had, or another purport (may be had) from verses. The import is to be grasped. The explanation of a matter etc. is to be done only from the meaning. Where a meaning is seen, (it should be understood that) the primary substance is narrated. Here the determination (of the significance) should be done from the meaning of words. Therefore, everywhere the wise should not take another meaning.¹

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIVE

The Importance of Sacred Ash

The sages said:

1. What did the illustrious Rāma do thereafter? What did the magnanimous sages do after that?

Sūta said:

2-9. When Rāmacandra was seated comfortably, (so also) Bibhīṣaṇa, the lord of monkeys, the best sages said to Śambhu: "Tell us a meritorious tale." Having heard their words, Śamkara said to Pārvatī: "This is the extremely beautiful house of a certain brāhmaṇa. It is adorned with a lovely garden, wells and creepers. It has (as it were) invited Cupid by means of the rows of humming bees. The sun is, as it were, proceeding to ascend to the mid-day position. We (shall) have bathed in the water of a beautiful well, and (shall have) put on fine garments. We (shall have) besmeared (our bodies with) thick, excellent sandal paste ground (i.e. mixed) with musk. We (shall) have firmly braided hair ornamented with the wreaths of the sallakī (flowers). Having tasted the tāmbūla that is large and dense and excellent and being glad and delighted, we shall remain comforting each other on a bed that is strewn in an auspicious house furnished with artificial jets, full of notes of peacocks along with sweet songs (sung) outside. If the face having a broad smile and red

1. Verses like 45ff. 74ff, 85ff, 91, 92, 108, 109ff. etc. are obscure.