



The Asian Thinker

A Quarterly Bilingual Peer-Reviewed Journal for Social Sciences and Humanities

Year-7 Volume: IV (Special), October-December, 2025

Issue-28 ISSN: 2582-1296 (Online)

Website: www.theasianthinker.com

Email: asianthinkerjournal@gmail.com

7. THE GREATNESS OF PARVATI IN KUMARASAMBHAVAM

Dr.C.YOGAMBAL

Assistant professor, Head Department of Sanskrit,
Shrimathi Devkunvar Nanalal Bhatt Vaishnav College for Women
Chromepet, Chennai
Mail ID: yogambal1981@gmail.com

Abstract

In Kumarasambhavam, Kalidasa portrays Parvati as a paragon of strength, devotion, and transformative love, positioning her as one of the most powerful female figures in Hindu mythology. Born as the daughter of Himavan and Mena, Parvati's character embodies both beauty and resilience, reflecting the ideal qualities of a devoted lover. Her unwavering commitment to Lord Shiva, characterized by her rigorous ascetic practices and profound determination, showcases her as a symbol of ideal devotion and spiritual strength.

Parvati's journey from a sheltered princess to a formidable ascetic highlights her inner fortitude and determination. She undertakes intense penance, defying societal norms, to win Shiva's heart, illustrating the theme of love as a powerful force that transcends physical and spiritual boundaries. Her dedication and sacrifices not only demonstrate her love for Shiva but also signify the essential role of feminine energy in the cosmic order.

Kalidasa's use of vivid imagery and poetic devices enhances Parvati's greatness, presenting her as both a nurturing figure and a fierce warrior. Her character embodies the duality of strength and tenderness, emphasizing that true love requires resilience and sacrifice. The culmination of her efforts in winning Shiva not only leads to their divine union but also underscores the idea that love can conquer even the most formidable obstacles.

*Through Parvati's character, **Kumarasambhavam** elevates the feminine experience, celebrating the divine feminine's role in maintaining cosmic balance. Kalidasa's portrayal serves as an enduring testament to the power of love and devotion, making Parvati a timeless symbol of strength, resilience, and the transformative nature of true affection. This representation continues to resonate in contemporary interpretations of female strength within the broader context of literature and spirituality.*

KEYWORDS:

Parvati's Determination, Divine origins, Powerful penance, Destruction of Manmatha, Divine Marriage, Kalidasa style and imagery



INTRODUCTION:

There are hundreds of languages in the world. However, great and classical literature which people in all countries need to read is found only in a few languages. One such great language is Sanskrit. In the fourth century, or earlier, King Vikramaditya gathered to his court the navaratna or nine jewels of Indian culture. Pre-eminent among these was Kalidasa, the Sanskrit poet and dramatist.

The exact details of Kalidasa's birth and early life are largely obscure, as there are few historical records documenting his life. However, various legends and scholarly interpretations provide some insights into his background.

Birth and Early Life of Kalidasa

1. Birthplace: Kalidasa is often thought to have been born in or around Ujjain, a city in present-day Madhya Pradesh, India. Some sources suggest other locations, but Ujjain remains the most commonly accepted birthplace.
2. Lineage and Early Life: Many legends depict him as coming from a humble background. Some tales suggest he may have been an uneducated man or a simple villager who gained divine inspiration. This narrative emphasizes his transformation into a great poet, often highlighting the idea of a "divine gift" rather than formal training.
3. Legend of Transformation: One popular legend tells of Kalidasa being chosen by the goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge and arts. In this tale, he was initially a dull-witted person who, through a divine encounter, gained extraordinary literary talents.
4. Education: While specific details about his education are lacking, it is believed that Kalidasa received training in Sanskrit literature, grammar, and the arts, allowing him to develop his exceptional poetic skills.

Adult Life

- Courtier: Kalidasa is often associated with the court of King Vikramaditya, a legendary ruler of the Gupta dynasty. His works suggest he enjoyed patronage and recognition at the royal court, contributing to the flourishing of arts and culture during that period.
- Influence of Nature and Culture: Living in a culturally rich environment, surrounded by natural beauty, likely influenced his poetry and plays, leading to his deep appreciation for nature and human emotions.
- **An inscription, discovered most recently, in 1964, establishes his birth in Ujjayini and shows him as a contemporary of King Vikramaditya, who was obviously Chandragupta Vikramaditya.**

His creative genius made him greatest writer in Sanskrit and one of the world's literary immortals. His plays and poetry are primarily based on the Hindu Puranas. His portrayals are



vivid and heart- warming; his word power is unique. His writings touchingly show up a noble, meaningful mode of life for the people to pursue. His works are an intellectual treat to thinkers and common readers alike.

KALIDASA'S WORKS:

Mahakavyas:

- ❖ Raghuvamsam
- ❖ Kumarasambhavam

Dramas:

- ❖ Malavikaagnimithram
- ❖ Vikramorvasiyam
- ❖ Sakuntalam

Khandakavyas

- ❖ Rithusamharam
- ❖ Meghadutam

Now in this Paper we will analyze the greatness of Parvati dealt in Kumarasambhavam," an epic poem by Kalidasa, narrates the story of the birth of Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati. The poem unfolds in two main parts:

1. **Shiva's Asceticism:** The first part focuses on Lord Shiva's intense penance and his separation from Parvati, who is deeply in love with him. Despite her beauty and devotion, Shiva remains absorbed in meditation, unaware of her affection.
2. **Parvati's Determination:** The second part highlights Parvati's determination to win Shiva's love. She undertakes rigorous ascetic practices to prove her devotion. Moved by her dedication, Shiva eventually concedes, leading to their union.

The poem explores themes of love, devotion, and the balance between asceticism and worldly attachment. It's celebrated for its rich imagery, lyrical beauty, and philosophical depth, illustrating the divine relationship between the deities and the interplay of cosmic forces.

GIST OF KUMARASAMBAVAM:

अस्युत्तरस्यां दिशिदेवतात्मा हिमालयोनाम नगाधिराजः।

पूर्वापरौ तोयनिधी विगाहस्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः ॥ 1-1

Kumarasambhavam is, of course, the more familiar story of Sati being reborn as Parvati, performing tapasya and marrying Shiva, leading to the birth of Kumara (Skanda), who delivers the gods from the demon Taraka. There are manuscripts with 17 sargas. But some of these sargas are by later poets and inferior. Scholars agree only the first eight sargas are by Kalidasa himself.



The majority of chapters have vast details about the love and romance between Siva and Parvati. It is said that a powerful demon named Tarakasur was blessed that none except the child of Lord Shiva could kill him. However, Siva had curtailed the desire for love by intense meditation. Due to the great efforts of Parvati and through much penance, she won the love of Lord Siva.

Kumārasambhava literally means "Birth of Kumara". This epic of seventeen cantos entails Shringara Rasa, the rasa of love, romance, and eroticism, more than Vira rasa (the rasa of heroism). Consequently, Siva and Parvati's son Murugan was born to restore the glory of Indra, the king of Gods.

Structure

The poem is divided into **17 cantos** and is written in a lyrical style, showcasing Kalidasa's mastery of language and meter.

Key Themes

1. **Love and Devotion:** The central theme revolves around the intense love between Parvati and Shiva. Parvati's unwavering devotion and determination to win Shiva's heart highlight the power of love.
2. **Asceticism vs. Worldly Life:** The contrast between Shiva's ascetic lifestyle and Parvati's desire for companionship reflects the tension between renunciation and the pleasures of love.
3. **Divine Union:** The eventual union of Shiva and Parvati symbolizes the merging of the spiritual and material worlds, portraying a holistic view of existence.

Plot Summary

1. **Shiva's Penance:** The poem begins with Shiva immersed in deep meditation on Mount Kailash, indifferent to worldly affairs. His asceticism is profound, and the gods fear that his detachment will lead to chaos in the universe.
2. **Parvati's Birth and Devotion:** Parvati is introduced as the daughter of the mountain king, Himavan. She is born with a divine purpose—to unite with Shiva. Enamored by his prowess, she resolves to attain him through devotion.
3. **Parvati's Ascetic Practices:** To win Shiva, Parvati undergoes severe penance and ascetic practices, braving the elements and demonstrating her commitment. Her struggles draw the attention of the gods, who recognize her as a worthy partner for Shiva.
4. **The Intervention of Kamadeva:** The god of love, Kamadeva, is sent by the gods to awaken Shiva's interest in Parvati. He disrupts Shiva's meditation, leading to a fierce encounter where Shiva opens his third eye, threatening Kamadeva.
5. **Shiva's Transformation:** Impressed by Parvati's strength and commitment, Shiva finally accepts her love. The union is celebrated as a cosmic event, leading to the birth of Kartikeya, the god of war.

Style and Imagery



Kalidasa employs vivid descriptions and metaphors throughout the poem. Nature plays a significant role, with detailed depictions of landscapes, seasons, and celestial phenomena, enhancing the emotional landscape of the characters.

BIRTH OF PARVATI:

Thaarakasura, a mighty and ambitious young asura, undertook severe penance to appease Brahma, and when the god appeared before him, he asked for immortality. Brahma refused saying that He couldn't bestow any of His creations with immortality. The asura thought for a while for a method to circumvent Brahma's constraint and implicitly obtain what he sought. He thought of Siva, the God of Destruction, and how His wife Sati had burned herself alive, following which the god had reverted to asceticism, not likely to enter matrimony again anytime soon, if at all. "Then let death come to me only at the hands of Siva's son, and none else, Brahma." The Creator accepted his demand and blessed him with the boon he asked for.

In accordance with her promise to Siva, Sati was reborn to a father she could respect. She was born as the daughter of Himavat, a great king in the Himalaya mountains, and his wife, the lovely Menaka. Parvata is one of the Sanskrit words for "mountain"; "Parvati" derives her name from being the daughter of king Himavan (also called Himavat, Parvat) Mena. The couple named their daughter Parvati- girl of the mountain. She grew up to become an immensely beautiful young woman.

Kumarasambhavam, the birth of Parvati is beautifully narrated, highlighting her divine origins and purpose.

Summary of Parvati's Birth

1. **Divine Origins:** Parvati is the daughter of Himavan, the king of the mountains, and his queen, Mena. She is considered a reincarnation of Sati, Shiva's first wife, who had sacrificed herself due to her father's disdain for Shiva.
2. **Purpose of Birth:** Her birth is destined to fulfill a cosmic purpose—to unite with Shiva and give birth to Kartikeya, the god of war. This union is essential for restoring balance in the universe, as the gods are threatened by the demon Taraka, who can only be defeated by Shiva's son.
3. **Early Life:** As Parvati grows, her beauty and virtues blossom, and she becomes deeply devoted to Lord Shiva. Despite her royal upbringing, she yearns for the ascetic god, who remains distant in his meditation on Mount Kailash.
4. **Determination:** Recognizing her divine mission, Parvati resolves to win Shiva's love through intense penance and devotion, setting the stage for the central themes of love and determination that unfold in the poem.

This section of **Kumarasambhavam** emphasizes Parvati's purity, strength, and unwavering commitment, showcasing her as a powerful figure in the narrative.



YOUNG LIFE OF PARVATI:

तां पार्वतीत्याभिजनेन नाम्ना बन्धुप्रियां बन्धुजनो जुहाव।

उमेति मात्रा तपसो निषिद्धा पश्चादुमाख्यां सुमुखी जगाम॥1- 26

As a dear child of kith and kin she was affectionately called by her patrilineal name Parvati for she is the daughter of a Parvata raja; when her mother trying to dissuade this girl with a delicate lineament from high asceticism addressed her as u mA, meaning "oh, girl, don't do it"; later this sobriquet remained her proper name Parvati = parva Tasyaapatya.

She grew up to become an immensely beautiful young woman, and when she attained marriageable age, Himavat invited Narada, the Wandering Sage, to his palace to suggest a suitable groom for his daughter. One look at Parvati and Narada saw that she was none other than Sati reborn. He knew, then, that it was her fate to marry Siva.

"Himavat, your daughter is destined to become the wife of the great Siva Himself. You are indeed blessed for you shall have Mahadeva as your son-in-law. May Narayana's grace be on you!". Narada said thus and left the palace. Himavat pondered over Narada's words. Siva, abandoning His abode at Mount Kailasa, had come to settle in a grove not very far from Himavat's own palace. The king had spotted the Destroyer, rapt in meditation, on numerous occasions. The story of Sati's demise and Siva's fierce rage and, subsequently, grief was known to Himavat. He wondered how he would approach Siva to seek His hand for his daughter, lost as He was in penance. Then, he came up with an idea.

"Parvati, my daughter, have you ever wondered if the great ascetic dwelling close to our estate requires help with His daily activities? It is a thing of great piety to serve a man so devoted. Even a life spent in the service of a great sage is holy. I recommend that you attend to Siva everyday and win His heart through seva, through selfless service. "Thus said the King Himavat.

SERVICE RENDERED BY PARVATI:

Parvati was only too glad to obey and she began attending to Siva's small day to day needs like cleaning his prayer spot and fetching flowers and grass for his prayers. The Siva took no more than a passing notice of this new attendant and raised no objection to her service, as long as she did not disturb Him, which she never did. Parvati gradually fell in love with the ascetic she served day in and day out, neglecting the luxuries her palace had to offer. She disregarded all exhaustion or fatigue and tirelessly waited on Siva. Siva, once very pleased with her service, remarked that it would be a fortunate man who would take Parvati as his wife and blessed her saying that such a husband would love none but her. Parvati smiled and, in her mind, she was overjoyed.



GRIEF OF RATI AND DESTRUCTION OF MANMATHA:

शिरीषपुष्पाधिकसौकुमार्यो बाहू तदीयाविति मे वितर्कः।

पराजितेनापि कृतौ हरस्य यौ कण्ठपाशौ मकरध्वजेन॥ 1- 41

If an eligible young man is living a carefree life, the elders will say: "tie some girl round his neck; then he will come to path..." to keep a tight rein on his unmarried life. So, manmatha used her arms as shackle round the neck of Shiva to bring him round to married life.

Meanwhile, Thaarakasura, emboldened by his boon from Brahma had attacked Indra's Heaven and deposed the god king, taking the throne for himself. He treated the devas as his slaves, manhandled the apsaras, overindulged in the pleasures Heaven had to offer. He had come to regard himself as the god of gods and decreed that none but him be worshiped in the world. He saw to it that all worshipers of any other god were slain. Indra, fearing that Thaarakasura's tragedy would continue forever lest Siva marry Parvati and beget a son, went to Manmathan, the god of love and desire. He requested that god to expedite Siva and Parvati's courtship so that the son born to them would rid the gods of the menace of Thaarakasura. Manmathan happily agreed and manifested near the grove where Siva meditated. He saw to it that Parvati was also around, and then, nocked a floral arrow to his sugarcane-bow. He drew the bee-bowstring, uttered an incantation that empowered his dart to arouse desire in its target and fired. Siva opened His eyes and beheld the beautiful Parvati, standing meekly before Him, her head bowed in respect. For the first time, He noticed how exquisitely beautiful she was. Parvati looked up to see that Siva had opened His eyes and when she looked at His eyes, she found hers being caressed by them. She lowered her eyes immediately, blushing furiously. However, Siva soon regained Himself and realized that He had been acted upon by some force. His rage, at this realization, was great. He deduced that it could have been the work of none other than the mischievous Manmathan and with the fiery gaze of the third eye on His forehead, Siva reduced Manmathan to ashes. On seeing her husband being turned into ashes she, the Rati also decided to give up herself. But she heard a golden voice of God that on the day of marriage of the Divine couple, Manmatha would come back. On hearing this her mind convinced. Then, without so much as looking at Parvati, Siva got up and left that grove.

PARVATI'S POWERFUL PENANCE:

A heartbroken Parvati went back home and wept to her parents. Their consolations did nothing to soothe her grief and she decided that she would take the route of penance to win His hand, when the path of seva had taken her to no end. Renouncing home and luxury, she cast away her



ornaments and regal garments, donned the garb of an ascetic and meditated on nothing but the Siva. She stood in an icy lake, drawing warmth only from the love in her heart. She gave up all food, subsisting on nothing more than air. Sages who saw her marveled at her devotion and named her Aparna- she of the unbroken fast. Her harsh austerities only enhanced her beauty, embellishing her with radiance.

BLISSFUL OCCASION:

One day a young yogi came to her and asked her who she was and why she punished herself with austerities. One of Parvati's friends, ever present by her, answered the yogi. He laughed mockingly. "Surely that is a lie! A beauty like you cannot try so hard to attain anything, for you are meant to be attained yourself! And why for that mendicant Siva? He is not worthy of any girl, leave alone one as gorgeous as you. Who knows where he was born or to whom? He smears his face and body with ash regularly. Snakes deck his uncouth body and stinking hides of tigers 'clothe' it. His hair is unkempt and matted. His own father-in-law, the great ruler Daksha, could not tolerate him. I ask you again, lovely lady, why him? Why not open your eyes and explore other options?" and he smirked, attempting to make naughty eyes at her. That, adding to his slight of Siva, angered Parvati so much that she was beyond responding to the yogi. She just turned in anger to go away, not wishing to share any space with the detestable man. However, to her utter shock and rage, the man held her arm! She turned back in fury, only to discover Siva, and not the yogi, smiling at her. She at once understood that it was all Siva's way of testing her devotion and decided to take the game forward her own way. "You shall have to ask my father for my hand in marriage if you wish to marry me, Lord Siva".

MARRIAGE OF SIVA AND PARVATI:

She at once understood that it was all Siva's way of testing her devotion and decided to take the game forward her own way. "You shall have to ask my father for my hand in marriage if you wish to marry me, Lord Siva"

Siva laughed and told her He would do as she wished. Then, accompanied by the Saptarshis, the Seven Sages, He went to the palace of the king Himavat and asked for Parvati's hand in marriage. The king was overjoyed and the wedding took place, attended by all the gods and sages of the time.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, **Kumarasambhavam** by Kalidasa is a profound exploration of love, devotion, and the interplay between the spiritual and material realms. Through the enchanting narrative of Shiva and Parvati, Kalidasa weaves a tapestry of emotions that transcends time, reflecting the complexities of human relationships and divine purpose. The poem not only celebrates the power of unwavering devotion and the triumph of love over adversity but also illustrates the balance between asceticism and worldly desires. Kalidasa's rich imagery, lyrical beauty, and



The Asian Thinker

A Quarterly Bilingual Peer-Reviewed Journal for Social Sciences and Humanities

Year-7 Volume: IV (Special), October-December, 2025

Issue-28 ISSN: 2582-1296 (Online)

Website: www.theasianthinker.com

Email: asianthinkerjournal@gmail.com

philosophical depth resonate deeply, making **Kumarasambhavam** a timeless masterpiece that continues to inspire and captivate readers, affirming the eternal significance of love and the divine union it fosters.

In conclusion, **Kumarasambhavam** stands as a supreme work in Kalidasa's oeuvre, distinguishing itself through its intricate exploration of love, devotion, and cosmic themes. While other notable works, such as **Sakuntalam** and **Meghadutam**, also delve into profound emotional landscapes and human experiences, **Kumarasambhavam** elevates these themes to a divine plane by intertwining the narrative of Shiva and Parvati.

In **Sakuntalam**, Kalidasa masterfully captures the nuances of romantic love and destiny, yet it remains rooted in human experience. **Meghadutam**, with its poignant portrayal of longing and separation, showcases the beauty of nature and emotion but lacks the overarching cosmic significance found in **Kumarasambhavam**.

The epic's rich allegorical layers and philosophical insights elevate it beyond mere storytelling, inviting readers to contemplate the nature of existence, love, and the divine. Thus, **Kumarasambhavam** not only encapsulates Kalidasa's literary genius but also asserts its position as a pinnacle of Sanskrit literature, embodying the harmonious blend of human emotion and divine purpose that continues to resonate with audiences across generations.

In **Kumarasambhavam**, the marriage of Shiva and Parvati is a pivotal moment that symbolizes the union of the divine and the earthly, encapsulating themes of love, devotion, and cosmic harmony.

REFERENCES:

1. Kalidasa His art and culture by Ram Gopal .edition 1984.published by NaurangRai ,concept pushing company.
2. Kalidasa, Date , Life , works by Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi and Narayan RaghunathNavlekar. Edition 1962. Published by The SahityaAkademi,New Delhi.
3. The Kumarasambhava of Kalidasa by Suryakanta. Edition 1926 . published by SahityaAkademi , New Delhi.
4. Kumarasambhava of Kalidasa by V.Sri. Venkata ragavacaryar Edition 1982. Published by Lifco Publishers.The Little Flower Company,Chennai.