



The Birth of Kumara (Clay Sanskrit Library)

Kalidasa

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This court epic describes events leading up to the birth of Kumára, the war god who will defeat the demon Táraka. The gods try to use Kama, the Indian Cupid, to make the ascetic god Shiva fall in love with the daughter of the Himalaya mountain. Kama fails, and is burnt to ashes by the angry Shiva. Then Parvati, the daughter of the mountain, herself turns to asceticism to win the husband she longs for. She is successful, and the climax of the poem is the marriage and lovemaking of Shiva and Parvati, parents of the universe.

The greatest long poem in classical Sanskrit, by the greatest poet of the language, Kali-dasa's **The Birth of Kumára** is not exactly a love story but a paradigm of inevitable union between male and female, played out on the immense scale of supreme divinity. In this court-epic, the events are described leading up to but not including the birth of Kumára, the war god destined to defeat the demon Táraka.

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