

I told Devī your message and she only laughed. She said that Śumbha and Niśumbha might be mighty lords but only those who defeated her could marry her.” Enraged at this arrogance of Kātyāyanī, Śumbha sent Dhūmrākṣa to drag Kātyāyanī down to him. Dhūmrākṣa with six Akṣauhiṇīs of soldiers went to the seat of Kātyāyanī and challenged her to a fight. Devī stepped down from her seat and stood before Dhūmrākṣa and the latter leaped forward to catch hold of her. But Dhūmrākṣa was burnt to death by the huṁkāra fire of the goddess. Not only that, the huṁkāra sound reached the ears of Śumbha. Śumbha felt small by this prowess of the Devī but his rage increased. Śumbha then sent Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa and the great demon Ruru also with an army of a hundred crores of demons to face Devī Kauśikī. When the enemies reached Vindhya the bhūtas of Devī made loud and shrill noises. The lion of Kātyāyanī roared and she leaped into the midst of the army sword in hand. Lakhs and lakhs of asuras fell dead by the sword of the goddess. Devī once opened her mouth and lakhs of asuras entered it and then she shut her mouth keeping in her stomach the asuras till they all died. Devī beat the demon Ruru to death. Devī plucked her matted hair and struck it on the ground and from there arose the fierce form of Cāmuṇḍī. Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa fled but Cāmuṇḍī followed them to Pātāla and catching hold of them chopped off their heads and presented them to Kātyāyanī. Then Devī, Cāmuṇḍī and the bhūtas together tore to pieces all the remaining asuras and stored them all in their stomachs. Hearing this Śumbha’s rage knew no bounds and he started with an army of thirty crores of men. The army swept on like an ocean and finding it moving forward Cāmuṇḍī roared. Kātyāyanī made a sound like a lion’s roar. Brahmāṇī holding high the dagger jumped down to fight. Māheśvarī with snakes and the spike, with the three eyes open got down in fits of anger. Kaumārī with the javelin hanging round her waist and bright eyes entered the field. Vaiṣṇavī swinging her sword and whirling the mace with many weapons rushed to the field. Vārāhī breaking open the earth with its tusk and bearing a large wooden pestle came to fight. Indrāṇī with diamond on her sides came to fight. Nārasimhī brushing the manes on her breast, shaking the stars and whirling the planets and making a fierce appearance came to the field. (Cāmuṇḍī, Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī and Nārasimhī are the different forms of Kātyāyanī. They are called Saptamātṛs (seven mothers). These saptamātṛs were born when Kātyāyanī in her wrath beat the earth with her matted hair). Cāmuṇḍī roared. The world became dark. Hearing the roar Śiva descended to the field. The Asuras surrounded the Devī again. But they all fell dead with blood flowing in a stream. The dead bodies of the asuras became heaped up and in despair Śumbha and Niśumbha wept. Seeing that, Raktabīja got angry and rushed at Devī. The Saptamātṛs shouted and Cāmuṇḍī opened her mouth. The lower jaw of Cāmuṇḍī touched Pātāla when she opened her mouth from the sky. Raktabīja, wounded and bleeding by a dagger stroke of Cāmuṇḍī, fell into the mouth of Cāmuṇḍī and disappeared. Then Niśumbha interfered and the fight became one between Niśumbha and Devī. The fat and sturdy hands of Niśumbha and the mace he was carrying fell by an arrow sent by Devī. Then Devī struck him with

her spike and Niśumbha was killed. Both Śumbha and Niśumbha who came to wreak vengeance on her were thus killed. (See under Laṅkālakṣmī to know how Pārvatī became Laṅkālakṣmī).

5) *Pārvatī takes the forms of Elephant and monkey.* Śiva and Pārvatī went about enjoying amorous sports in the forests. Śiva turned himself into a tusker and Pārvatī became a she-elephant then. Gaṇapati was born as a result of that sport. Śiva became a monkey and Pārvatī became his mate and Hanūmān was born as a result of that sport. (See under Gaṇapati and Hanūmān).

6) *Pārvatī became Sītā.* This happened when Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa along with Sītā were in the forests. One day Sītā went to the Godāvarī river nearby to bring water to the āśrama and she stayed for some time watching two swans playing in the midst of lotuses in the lake there. Hearing a sound she looked into the river and saw Śrī Rāma bathing there. She was surprised. When she left the āśrama Rāma was sitting there. At the same time another thing happened in the āśrama. Śrī Rāma found Sītā coming to him and when he arose to receive her the figure disappeared. Then Śrī Rāma found bathing by Sītādevī also disappeared. When an astonished Sītā reached the āśrama she found an equally astonished Śrī Rāma sitting there. They then told each other their experiences and Śrī Rāma on meditation understood that in the guise of Rāma and Sītā Śiva and Pārvatī had come from Kailāsa to know about the welfare of the princes in exile.

7) *Pārvatī, Vihūṇḍa and Jalandhara.* See under those names.

8) *Other details.*

(i) Pārvatī shines in the court of Brahmā. (Śloka 41, Chapter 11, Sabhā Parva).

(ii) When the Pāṇḍavas were in exile Pārvatī guarded Arjuna always. (Vana Parva, Chapter 37, Śloka 38).

(iii) Once Pārvatī appeared in person and blessed Dharmaputra. (Chapter 6, Virāṭa Parva).

(iv) Once Śrī Kṛṣṇa pleased Pārvatī and she granted Kṛṣṇa boons. The first was that he would have sixteen thousand wives. The next was a beautiful form for Kṛṣṇa and the next was love of his relatives. Another boon was that Kṛṣṇa would have the prosperity to be able to give food for seven thousand travellers daily. (Śloka 7, Chapter 15, Anuśāsana Parva).

(v) It was because of a curse of Pārvatī that devas do not get sons by their own wives. There is the following story behind that.

Śiva and Pārvatī went to the Himālayas after their marriage and started living there. Śiva and Pārvatī were so much engrossed in their amorous sport that they were oblivious of the happenings outside. After a long time when their sport continued without a break the devas went in and informed Śiva that the whole universe was trembling by their sport and if Śiva produced a son the world would be incapable of bearing it and so he should withdraw from the act of producing a child. Śiva agreed and drew his virile strength upwards. Pārvatī did not like that and she cursed the devas that they would never have sons of their own wives. (Chapter 84, Anuśāsana Parva).

(vi) Pārvatī once taught Gaṅgādevī the duties of women. (Śloka 33, Chapter 146, Anuśāsana Parva).

(vii) Pārvatī resides in the mount of Muñjavān in Kailāsa with Parameśiva. There is a mount called