CHAPTER VII

REFERENCES TO SARASVATI BY SOME CLASSICAL WRITERS
REFERENCES TO SARASVATĪ BY SOME CLASSICAL WRITERS

Sarasvatī has also been popular with the classical writers. We are here studying the allusions made to her by important writers only.

1. Kālidāsa

Kālidāsa refers to Sarasvatī many times in his Rāchhuvamsa, Kumārasambhava, Vikramorvasīva, Mālavikāgnimitra, Abhijñānasākuntala
and Rachadūta. He mentions her name with different connotations.

(1) Sarasvatī as synonymous with speech (vānī):

In the classical period, Sarasvatī has been conceived chiefly as a goddess of learning and has been completely identified with speech. Taking Sarasvatī as speech, Kālidāsa writes: "uccaśāra puras tasya gūḍhārupā sarasvatī". ¹ "iti dehaṃvaktaye sthitāṃ ratim ākāśabhāvā sarasvatī". ² "yadā madāndo na gatān nyavartatā 'mbarat tadā 'bhūn marutāṃ sarasvatī". ³ "ācamyā 'dīrayāmasa sītā satyāṃ sarasvatīm". ⁴

---

1 RV., XV.46.
2 KS., IV.39.
3 Ibid., XV.32.
4 RV., XV.60.
"sarasvatī śrutimahātī mahīyatām", 1 and "mayi tasya svuṛtta vartate laghusandesa padā sarasvatī". 2

Elsewhere, he has taken Sarasvatī as a goddess representing the entire literature, with twofold division into Sanskrit and Prākṛta:

"dvīdhā prayuktena ca vāṁmayena sarasvatī tām mithunam munēva
samskārapūtena varam vareṇyam vadhūm sukhagrāhyanibandhanena ||" 3

Here Sarasvatī is presented as praising Śiva and Pārvatī through Sanskrita and Prākṛta. In the classical age, we do not find any distinction between Bhāratī and Sarasvatī. Bhāratī, too, stands for speech (vāṇī). 4

(ii) Relation of Sarasvatī with Music:

Being the patroness deity of all the arts and sciences, Sarasvatī has been judiciously associated with music, the most enchanting of all the arts. She has been considered the source of music or song.

In the Ṛgveda, Sarasvatī is said to be at the root of the praise of Raghu sung by bards:

"parikalpitāṃśamīdhyā kāle kāle ca bandīṣu
stutyaṁ stutibhir arthyābhir upatasthe sarasvatī ||" 5 6

She has also been described as the teacher of music. In order to

1 AS., VII. 35.
2 RV., VIII. 77.
3 ES., VII.90.
4 Ibid., VI. 79.
5 John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
6 RV., IV. 6.
learn the art from her, one is to worship her: "suṣṭhu bhodī bhaṇādi. bho gaṇadāsa, saṅgītapadam lambha sarassāle uvāṣaṇamodāṇam khādamānassā kīm de mukhanigheṇa vivādeṇa".¹

(iii) Sarasvatī as a poetess:

Kālidāsa speaks of Sarasvatī as a poetess also. He mentions a drama called Lakṣmi-Svayamvara, which was composed by Sarasvatī herself: "gālava: na jāne āraḥdī na vatti. tassīsam vā sarasālkīdākavvabandhe lacchīsaāmware tesu tesu rasantaresu tammāi ēsi".²

(iv) Sarasvatī as a river:

There are only a few instances in Kālidāsa's works speaking of Sarasvatī as a river. Kālidāsa describes this river as flowing underground:

"nīdhānagarbhām āva sāgarāṃbarām samīṃ āva 'bhyaṅtaralīnapāvakaṁ | | nadīṃ āva 'ntahṣaṭṭilāṃ sarasvatīṃ nrpaḥ sasatvām mahīśām anāṅya āmāṇya".³

In the Meghadūta, he describes the Sarasvatī river as flowing in the Brahmāvartta janaṭāda somewhere near Kanakhala.⁴ That he attaches much importance to this river is evident enough from the fact that he

---

1 MM., I, p. 275, lines 14-15, Sanskrit: "suṣṭhu bhagavatī bhaṇādi. bho gaṇadāsa, saṅgītapadam labdhvā sarasvatyupāyamodakān khādetaḥ kīm te mukhanigheṇa vivādeṇa".

2 VU., III, p. 192, lines 4-5, Sanskrit: "gālava: na jāne āraḥdīta na vā iti. tassāṃ punah sarasvatīkṛta-kāvyabandhe lakṣmīsvayaṃvare tesu tesu rasantaresu tammāi ēsi".

3 RV., III.9.

4 MD., I.52-54.
asks the cloud to sanctify itself by drinking its waters:

"hitvā hālām abhimatarasāṁ revatillocanānākāṁ
bandhuprītyā samaravimukho lāṅgalī yāḥ sīgeva

kṛtvā tāsāṁ abhir gamam apām saumya! sārasvatānām
antah sūddhas tvam api bhavitā varnamātreṇa kṛṣṇah \"\"1

Here, this river has not been described as flowing underground. As the text suggests, its course is treated as manifest. He accepts the meeting together of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā at Prayāg and the Sarasvati is shown absent there.2

2. Asvaghosa:

(i) It has already been pointed out how the knowledge of the Vedas was lost and how the son of Sarasvatī kept it preserved during the period of drought and later on, when the drought was over, he taught the Vedas to the Brāhmaṇas, who resorted to him in order to study them.3 Asvaghosa

1 MD., I.53.
2 Cf. RV., XIII. 54-58.
3 See supra., pp. 193-195.
alludes to this event in the *Buddhacarita* as follows:

"sārasvatē 'pi jagāda naśtām vedām punar ayaṃ dadrsur ma pūrve ।
yväses tathānām bahudhā cakāra na yaṃ vasisthāh kṛtavām asaktāh ।"

His *Saundarananda* also refers to this event as:

"tathā 'agirā rāgaritacetāh sarasvatī(?) brahmastutah sīṣeve
dāravato yatra suto 'sya jajñe naśtasya vedasya punah pravakta ॥"

3. **Bhāravi:**

*Bhāravi*, in his *Kīrātārjuna*, refers to her under the names of *Sarasvati* as well as *Bhārati* only at a few places; but both the names imply the sense of speech (vāni): The references run as under:

"viviktavarnābharaṇā sukhasrutih
prasadāyantā hrdayāy api dvisām ।
pravarttate nā 'krtapuṇyakaranām
prasannagambhirapada sarasvatī ॥"

The poet here, discloses the nature of *Sarasvati* (vāni) through such adjectives of *Sarasvati* as 'viviktavarnābharaṇā', who has distinct letters (varnas) as her adornments; 'sukhasrutih', who is pleasing to ears; and 'prasadāyantā hrdayāy api dvisām', who is capable of pleasing even the hearts of enemies. He again speaks of her as 'prasannagambhirapadā' having words containing lucidity and profundity (of

1 PC., I. 42.
2 *Sauk.*, VII.31.
3 *Ka.*, XIV. 3.
The name Bharati has also been employed for Sarasvatī to convey the same sense. A couple of instances will make it clear:

"Iyam īṣṭauṇāya rocatāṁ
rucirārthā bhavate 'pi bhāratī
nenau vaktvīśesaniśprhā
gunāghṛhyā vacane vipaścitaḥ II"²

Here, from "rocatām rucirārthā bhavate 'pi bhāratī", it is obvious that Bharatī denotes speech. The same sense is conveyed by the word in the following:

"samasya sampedayatā gunair imān
tvayā samāropitabhārai bhāratīṁ
pragalbham ātmā dhuri dhuryya! vāgminēm
vanecarena 'pi satā 'dhiropitah II"³

4. Māgha:

Māgha has also alluded to Sarasvatī at some places. At one place, he refers to her in the sense of an interior court (Sabhābhyantara):

"dyotitā 'atahsabhaiḥ kundakudmalāgradataḥ smitaḥ!
napite 'va 'bhavat tasya sūdhvarṇā sarasvatī II"⁴

---

1 Mallinātha explains it as: "prasannāni vācakāni gambhirāṇi artha-
gurūni ca pedeṇi suptiśeṣantarpān! yasyāh sā. anyatra tu prasannā
vimalā gambhirapadā alasacaraṇā sarasvatī vāk. girvāgvaṇī sarasvatī
'ty amaraḥ".

2 KA., II.5.

3 Ibid., XIV. 6.

4 SV., II.7.
The word Sarasvati stands for the interior court of Hari. He uses the word Bhāratī in order to denote the sense of speech:

"bhāratīm āhitabharām athā 'nuddhatam uddhavah |
tathyām utathyānujavaj jagāčī āgre gāndāgraēm"

He appears to point to the Sarasvati river also when he refers to the ocean as Sarasvān:

"samam samantato rājām āpatantIr anākīhi |
kārṣānaḥ prayagrahId ekāḥ sarasvān īva nimagāh"

5. Śrī-Harṣa:
Śrī-Harṣa, in his Naisadhiyacarita, refers to Sarasvati in different contexts.

(i) Sarasvati as a river:
Śrī-Harṣa uses the word Sarasvati for the river in general in the following:

"disi disi girigravanah svāṁ vamantu sarasvatīm |
tulayatu mithas tāṁ āpatasphuradīvanidambaram |
sa param aparāḥ kṣīrodavan yaṇī 'yaṁ udīryate |
mathitum amrām khedacchedi pramanamodanan"

Here, the first line of the verse "disi disi girigravanah svāṁ vamantu sarasvatīm", means 'let the mountain-stones flow their river (sarasvatīm) in all directions: In the following verse, he points to the Sarasvati river:
- 205 -

"bhramami te bhaumi! sarasvatirasapravahacresu nipatya katyadah 
trapam apakrya manok kuru sphutom krtarthaniyah kotamah surottama

There is pun on the expression "sarasvatirasapravahacresu". 
Here Sarasvatī stands for speech (Vāk) as well as the river of the name 
and in general as well. Elsewhere, Sarasvatī stands both as a river and 
as a goddess. In reference to Varuna, she stands for the Sarasvati river 
and in reference to Nala, for goddess Sarasvatī.

(ii) Sarasvati as playing an important role in marriage:

We have observed earlier that Sarasvati was worshipped by persons 
who wanted progeny. She was worshipped by a bride, too; but in such a 
context, her relationship with marriage has not been brought out in clear 
terms. In the later literature, she has acquired an important place in 
this ceremony. The Gṛhya-Sūtras expressly mention her in the context of 
mariage. She was invoked at the marriage rites.

So even before the classical period, she had entered the domestic 
life. Śrī-Harsha entrusts the duty of a go-between and match-maker to her, 
and assigns to her the active role in the svayamvara of Damayanti or the 
command of Viṣnu.

1 NM., IX.51.
2 Ibid., XIII.24.
3 See supra., pp. 66-67.
4 See supra., p. 124.
5 Max Müller, op.cit., Vol.XXIX (Delhi, 1967), p. 283; Vol. XXX, 
(Delhi, 1967), p. 189.
6 NM., X.70 ff.
Sarasvatī as the patron-deity of Kashmir:

The residents of Kashmir recognise Sarasvatī under the name of Saradā as their guardian-deity. Sarasvatī under the name of Saradā is thought to live corporally in Kashmir and the Naiṣadhacarita of Sri-Harsa won the credit of being a poem endowed with profound learning and literary merits only after being recognised so by her.

6. Bhavabhūti:

Sarasvatī and Vāk have been taken to be synonymous with each other.

Vāk, like Sarasvatī, has been used to denote the goddess of speech (Vāgdevī).

Bhavabhūti speaks of the goddess of speech as Vāk:

"idam kavibhyah pūrvebhya namovākam praśasmahe
vindema devatōm vācam amṛtām ātmanāḥ kalām ||" 3

At another place, he tells us of himself as highly favoured by Vāk (Sarasvatī):

"yam brahmāṇam iyaṃ devī vāg vasye 'va 'nuvartate
uttaram rāmacaritaṃ tatprāṇitam prayokṣyate ||" 4

He also refers to Vāk as Sarasvatī herself, who produces learning (vidyā):

"vidyāṃ vāg iva yāṃ asūta." 5

7. Dāndin:

In the very beginning of the Kavyādarsa, Dāndin refers to

\[2\] Nī., XVI.130; also cf. Pt. Sri Haragavinda Sāstrī’s introduction of the Naiṣadhamahākavya, Part I (Vārāṇasī, 1954), pp. 5-6.
\[3\] I.1.
\[4\] Ibid., I.2.
\[5\] Ibid., IV.6.
Sarasvatī. He points to two facts concerning her. He states that she is, as it were, the she-swan resting in the lotus-forest of the mouth of Brahmā, and is all white (sarvasuklā):

"caturmukhamukhāṃmbhejavanahamsavadhūr mamā |
mānase ramatām nityām sarvasuklā sarasvatī \|" 1

The conception of Sarasvatī as residing in the mouth of Brahmā leads us to think that she as Vāk took birth from the mouth of Brahmā. 2 Whiteness has been taken as the colour of knowledge (jñāna) that being light pure and simple (jyotisvarūpā) and to conceive Sarasvatī as all white is to take to be all knowledge. Dandin himself describes Vāk as 'the light' called 'śabda' (śabdāhvyam jyotih) and states that unless this light illuminates the three worlds, it is nothing but all darkness:

"idam andham tamah kṛtsnam jāyeta bhuvanatrayam |
yadi śabdāhvyam jyotir āsamsāram na dipyate \|" 3

8. Subandhu:

For classical Sanskrit poets, Sarasvatī has frequently been a subject of eulogy and invocation. They bestowed high reverence on her; for she was the only goddess, who invokes wisdom and eloquence in them. 4 It is generally believed that for poets the grace of Sarasvatī is indispensable. If they are not favoured with her grace, their mind and fancy cannot penetrate into, and visualise the objects of description and

1 Kā., I.1.
2 Cf. Bhāp., III.12.26; see also supra., pp. 171-172.
3 Kā., I.4; also cf. ibid., I.3, 5, for the usefulness of Vāk.
present them in their poetry as actually existing before one's eyes, 
may as more pleasing than they are experienced in the actual world. 
Subandhu points to this fact in the following:

"karabadarasādṛśam akhilam bhuvanatalam yatprasadātah kavyah |
pasyanti sūkṣmamatayah sā jayati sarasvatī devī //" ¹

He speaks of himself as graced by Sarasvatī. ² He takes Sarasvatī 
not only as a goddess but also as speech (vālmīki sarasvatīm 
iva darsite 'kṣākuvamśām", ³ "... ākāsas sarasvatī samudacarat". ⁴

9. Bāṇa Bhāṭṭa:

Bāṇa offers us with more material regarding Sarasvatī than any 
other classical writer. In the Harsacaritā ⁵ while tracing his lineage to 
Sarasvatī, he describes her in detail how his family was descended from her. 
In the Kādambarī, he tells us that his family was favoured by Sarasvatī and 
was devoted to learning from the very beginning. ⁶

(1) The relation of Bāṇa’s family with Sarasvatī:

Bāṇa describes his family in the Harsacaritā as well as in the 
Kādambarī. According to the latter, in the family of Vātsyāyana, there 
took birth Kubera, ⁷ from Kubera, Arthapati, ⁸ from Arthapati, Citrabhānu ⁹

¹ Vide HC., introductory verse 1
² Ibid., introductory verse 13, "sarasvatīdattavaraprasādōḥ...
³ Ibid., p. 218, lines -1-2.
⁴ Ibid., p. 245, lines 1-2.
⁵ Vide HC., I.61 ff.
⁷ Ibid., 10.
⁸ Ibid., 13.
⁹ Ibid., 16.
and from Citrabhānu, Bāṇa. But the Harṣacarita furnishes a more detailed account of Bāṇa's family. According to it, there was a Brahmin born in the family of Bhārgava, who got Vatsa as his son by his wife called Aksamālā.

From this Vatsa, there proceeded a great family wherein sage Vātsyāyana took birth. After a considerable lapse of time, Kubera took birth in this family, who had four sons namely Acyuta, Isāna, Hara and Pāśupata. Of them, Pāśupata had Arthapati as his son, who had eleven sons namely Bhṛgu, Rama, Śuci, Kavi, Mahīdatta, Dharma, Jātavedas, Citrabhānu, Tryakṣa, Mahīdatta and Visvarūpa. It was Citrabhānu, who was Bāṇa's father.

This family of Bāṇa, was highly graced by Sarasvatī, which is obvious from a few evidences. Bāṇa writes that his ancestor Kubera was earnestly devoted to the Vedas, sacrifice and the other Sāstras and Sarasvatī always resided in his mouth. He was a great performer of the sacrifices and Sarasvatī herself took it as pleasure to wipe out the beads of perspiration caused during their performance. Actually Sarasvatī represents the Vedas, all type of learning, art, science, etc. As learning was flourishing at the hands of the forefathers of Bāṇa, he rightly says that they were especially favoured by Sarasvatī.

1 Ibid., 19.
2 Ibid., p. 62, lines 1-6.
3 Ibid., p. 63, lines 1-17.
4 Ibid., p. 65, lines 1-11.
5 Ibid., introductory verse 11.
6 Ibid., introductory verse 19.
7 Supra., pp. 171-172.
8 John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
Vatsa, the progenitor of Bana’s family, was the cousin of Sarasvata, the son of Dadhica and Sarasvatī. They were born simultaneously, the former to Akṣamālā and the latter to Sarasvatī. Sarasvata was blessed by his mother Sarasvatī with the knowledge of all the sāstras and other branches of knowledge along with the esoteric meanings of the Vedas. Consequently, when Sarasvata grew up, all the blessings of his mother got themselves manifest in Sarasvata automatically. He and Vatsa were not only cousins; but also bosom-friends. He, therefore, infused the entire learning into Vatsa.

Thus, Bana’s family was from the very beginning blessed with learning, its progenitor being in close relation with the son of Sarasvatī herself. His family is duly praised for its profound learning. We have already noted the close relation of the Sarasvata Brāhmaṇas with Sarasvata.

(ii) Bana’s version of the legend of Sarasvatī:

Bana establishes matrimonial relation between Sarasvatī and Dadhica. The latter is described as the son of Cyavana rṣi and Sukanyā.

---

1 Ht., I, p. 61, line 1–p. 62, line 6.
2 Ibid., I, p. 61, lines 2–4, "...samyaksarabhasyāḥ sarve vedāḥ sarvāṇi ca sāstrāṇi sakalās ca kalā mat prabhāvāt svayam āvīrdbhavi-ṣyanti iti varam adāt".
3 Ibid., I, p. 62, lines 7–9, "atha sārasvato mātur mahīṁmā yauvanā-rambha eva āvīrdbhutāvāsvidyāsambhūras tasmin savayasi bhṛtāri prayaśas prāpanāme suhṛdi vo vāṃmayasy samastam eva saṃcārayāmāsa".
4 Cf. Ibid., p. 63, lines 1–17; Kṣd., introductory verses. 10–19.
5 See supra., pp. 103–105.
the daughter of King Saryāta. The father of Dadhica, was a rṣi and has been described as practising penance at a distance of four miles from the Sona.  

It is from this Dadhica that Sarasvata, the causin of Vatsa, the progenitor of the family of Bāṇa, was born.

The legend concerning Sarasvāti in the Harṣacarita, as follows.

Sarasvāti was the daughter of Brahmā, residing in the heaven (Brahmaloka). Once while Brahmā was sitting encircled by gods and the discussion on a certain vidyā was going on, there arose a controversy owing to the difference of opinion. Meanwhile, Durvāsā quarrelled with another rṣi called Upamanyu, and overpowered by the furious rath over the latter, he struck a discordant note of the Sāman. After hearing it all held their tongues; but Sarasvāti could not restrain herself from laughing at him for the wrong. Seeing Sarasvāti laughing at him, Durvāsā punished her with the curse to descend to the earth. Here Durvāsā does not specify the period of curse. Brahmā came forward with a word of consolation to his daughter and limited the curse of Sarasvāti to live on the earth only up to the birth of a son.

The following day of the curse, Sarasvāti, accompanied by Sāvitri,

---

1 HC., p. 41, lines 9-25, "... nījatejahprasaraṇaplaṣtalomnaś cyavanasya bahirvṛttijīvitam dadhico nāma tanayah, janany āpy asya ... saryātasya suṭā ... sukanyā nāma ... itas ca gavyutimātram īva pāreṣonam tasya bhagavataś cyavanasya ... cyāvanam nāma caitrarathakalpaṁ kānanam nivāsaḥ".
2 Ibid., p. 61, line 1–p. 62, line 6.
3 Ibid., p. 10, lines, 1-8.
4 Ibid., p. 11, line 1–p. 12, line 14.
5 Ibid., p.18, lines, 2-3, "durvinite, vyapanayāmi te vidyājanitām unmātāt imām, adhāstād gaccha martyalokam".
6 Ibid., p. 19, lines 12-15, "...vatse sarasvati, viśādam mā gāh... ātmajamukhakamāvalokanāvadhīś ca te śāpo 'yām bhaviṣyati' iti".
set out for the earth. Following the path of Mandakini, she got down to the earth and according to the advice of Sävitri, settled down on the western bank of the Śoṇa, also called Hiranyavāha. At the bank of the Śoṇa, they began to pass their days with their daily duties.

One day, Dadhīca, who was born at the house of his maternal grandfather and who had attained youthhood, was going to his father's hermitage. While on his way, he chanced to come to the abode of Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī. He saw Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī and later on set out for his father's hermitage. After some days, Dadhīca sent his messenger called Mālatī to Sarasvatī to communicate his love-message to her. Afterwards this acquaintance resulted in the establishment of conjugal relation. Dadhīca spent the period of more than a year like a day in the company of Sarasvatī, residing at the bank of the Śoṇa. Sarasvatī conceived and in due course of time, gave birth to Sārāsvata. After the birth of Sārāsvata, she returned to the 'heaven; for Brahmā had limited the curse of Durvāsā to live on the earth till the birth of a son. But when Dadhīca was separated from Sarasvatī, he found it difficult to maintain the worldly life and, therefore, resigning worldly affairs he returned to the forest to lead an ascetic life.

---

1 Ibid., p. 28, lines 4-14.
2 Ibid., p. 29, line 1 - p. 30, line 17.
3 Ibid., p. 30, line 17 ff.
5 Ibid., p. 51, line 1 - p. 56, line 23.
6 Ibid., p. 58, line 1 - p. 60, line 12.
7 Ibid., p. 61, lines 1-5.
8 Ibid., p. 19, lines 14-15.
9 Ibid., p. 61, line 5 - p. 62, line 3, "gatāyām ca tasyām dadhīco 'pi hṛdaye hṛādīnaye 'vā 'bhihato ... virahāturas tapase vanam agāt".
and Dadhīca as put forth by Bāna.

(iii) **Probable source of the legend:**

This legend does not find any parallel in the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas. Bāna appears to have taken the legend from the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas and to have developed and connected it with his family in his own way.

(a) **Sarasvatī-legend in the Mahābhārata:**

We have already observed that Sarasvatī had a son called Sārasvata. This Sārasvata preserved the knowledge of the Vedas during the period of drought and when the drought was over, he imparted it to 60,000 Brāhmaṇas, who flocked to him for gaining it.¹ Bāna seems to have taken the theme of the legend and have moulded it according to his purpose. Bāna makes Sārasvata to transfer to Vatsa the entire knowledge, given to him by his mother Sarasvatī.² and this knowledge was enhanced with the advancement of the family of Vatsa.³

(b) **Sarasvatī-legend in the Purāṇas:**

It is also feasible that Bāna is indebted to a certain extent to the Purāṇas. In some of the Purāṇas, there are clear references to Sārasvata, as being the son of Sarasvatī from Dadhīca. The Vāyu-Purāṇa states:

1 Supra., pp. 193-195.
2 EC., p. 61, line 1-p. 62, line 6.
3 Ibid., p. 63 ff; also cf. Kād., introductory verses 10-19.
"sārasvataḥ sarasvatyāṁ dadhiçaco 'padadyate".1

Similarly, the Brahmanda-Purana reads: "sārasvataḥ sarasvatyāṁ dadhi-
casyo 'padadyat".2

The parentage of Sarasvatī in Bāṇa's version of the legend is the
same as the one found in the above Purāṇas. But in spite of this, there
is a little discrepancy. Bāṇa, in his Harṣacarita, takes Dadhīca to be
the son of a rśī called Čyavana;3 but the Purāṇas are silent over parentage.

The descendence of Sarasvatī either as a river or as a goddess to the earth
has been admitted differently at different places. The coming down of
the Sarasvatī river on the earth has similitude in the Ganga's bringing to
the earth by Bhagīratha. Similarly, in the Skanda-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī has
been described to have been asked by God Viṣṇu to descend on the earth
in order to subdue the marine fire of the oceans.4 According to another
account, she was cursed by Ganga, one of the wives of Hari, to became a
river and to go down to the earth.5 Bāṇa makes Sarasvatī descend on the
earth owing to the curse of Durvāsa6 and describes her to be the wife of
a mortal man called Dadhīca.7 He describes Sarasvatī as residing on the
bank of the Sona,8 a fact which is found in the Bhāgyata-Purāṇa.9

1 VP., LXV.91.
2 BP., i11.1.94
3 HC., p. 41, lines 6-10.
4 SkP., VII. 33.13-15.
5 See supra., pp. 178-179.
6 HC., p. 10, line 1 - p.18, line 4.
7 Ibid., p. 60, lines 1-12.
8 Ibid., p. 29, line 1- p.30, line 17.
9 BhāP., V.19.18.
In the Kavyamimansa, Rajasekhara describes beautifully the birth of Sarasvata from Sarasvatī. He holds Sarasvata as Kavyapuruṣa and presents Sāhityavidyā as his bride (vadhū). The details run as under.

(1) Kavyapuruṣa and Sāhityavidyāvadhū:

Sarasvatī resided on the earth. When she had the desire for a son, she went to the Himalayas to practise penance. As a result, Brahmā pleased with her and granted a son.¹ In course of time, Sarasvatī gave birth to Kavyapuruṣa.² Once when she had gone for taking a bath in the celestial Ganges leaving the child on a certain slab of stone lying under a tree,³ it was brought as an orphan to the hermitage of sage Uśanas.⁴ When Sarasvatī returned, she could not find her son there. She came across sage Vālmiki, who took her to the hermitage of sage Uśanas,⁵ where she found her son.⁶

Once in the heaven, there arose a certain controversy between sages and gods over Śrutī and Brahmā appointed Sarasvatī as the judge. So Sarasvatī left the earth and went to the heaven leaving her child on the earth.⁷ The departure of his mother disappointed Sarasvata and in utter despair, he left the home. The son of Gaurī, an affectionate friend of Sarasvata

---

¹ K., III, p. 13, lines 6-7.
² Ibid., III, p. 13, lines 8-9.
³ Ibid., III, p. 15, lines 2-3.
⁴ Ibid., III, p. 15, lines 4-6.
⁵ Ibid., III, p. 16, lines 1-3.
⁶ Ibid., III, p. 16, lines 4-5.
⁷ Ibid., III, p. 17, lines 3-6.
(Kavyapuruśa), followed him; but he was detained with words of consolation by Gaurī, who created Sāhityavidyāvadhū and ordered her to follow her lawful husband and bring him back. Sāhityavidyā, the bride of Kavyapuruśa, accompanied by sages, followed her husband.¹ Sārasvata (Kavyapuruśa), thus, accompanied by Sāhityavidyāvadhū, visited various Deśas and at last reached Vatsagulma Nagar in Vidarbha Deśa, where he married Sāhityavidyāvadhū by the Gāndharva style.² The bridegroom and the bride, once again, started on their journey from there, visited various places and finally returned to their mother-in-laws Gaurī and Sarasvatī, who were sitting together on the Himālayas.³

(ii) The source of the theme:

The episode of Sārasvata as detailed above appears to have been taken up from the Mahābhārata ⁴ and the Purāṇas ⁵ as well as from Bāṇa's Harśacarita, though Bājaśekhara has introduced various novel features in it. In the Harśacarita, Bāṇa has taken Sārasvata to the son of Sarasvatī by Dadhīca. Sarasvatī was at first living in the heaven; but owing to the curse of Durvāśī on her, she had to come down to the earth until a son was born to her.⁶ The next day of the curse, she left the heaven, came down to the earth along with Sāvitrī ⁷ and started living at the banks of

¹ Ibid., III, p. 17, lines 7-14.
² Ibid., III, p. 18, line 1 - p.22, line 11.
⁴ Vide supra., pp 193-194.
⁵ Vide supra., pp. 194-195.
⁶ DC., I, p. 16, lines 2-3.
⁷ Ibid., I, p. 28, lines 4-14.
the Sona river. She was married to Dadhica. After giving birth to Sarasvata, she returned to the heaven in accordance with the instruction of Brahma. Radhakshara has introduced various changes in the legend by his fertile imagination. According to him, Sarasvati lives on the earth. She gives birth to Kavyapuruṣa by the grace of Brahma, who, thus, comes forth as her husband; while Bana takes him to be her father. According to the Kavyamimanaśā, Sarasvati is called to work as a judge on the occasion of controversy between sages and gods in the heaven. It describes her to have returned to her son, while in the Harṣacarita, she is described differently. According to it, Sarasvati, in the heaven, does not play any vital role in the discussion among Prajāpatīs - Manu, Dakṣa, Cākṣuṣa, Saptarṣiṣ and Mahārṣiṣ along with Brahma in chair. She only laughs at Durvāṣa at his discordant Sāmagāna. She leaves her husband Dadhica and her son Sarasvata for ever; and never comes back to meet them again.

Besides, the Rgveda and the Viśvaśīya Rāmāyaṇa have also influenced Rājāśekhara to some extent.

Rājāśekhara through his unique method of interpretation, here, gives a brief and judicious account of the origin of Kāvyas. He assigns

1 Ibid., I, p. 29, line 1—p. 30, line 17.
2 Ibid., I, p. 19, lines 14-15; p. 61, lines 1-5.
3 III, p. 13, lines 6-7, "purā purṇānāṃ sarasvatī tuṣāragirvam tapasyāmāśa. pritena manasaḥ tam vīrañciḥ provāca - putram te sṛjāmi".
4 HC., I, p. 19, lines 12-13, "vatve sarasvatī").
5 III, p. 17, lines 3-4, "ekadā tu brahmarṣi-bṛndāraśayoh śrutiśivāde dākṣīnayavān devala svayambhūs tām imām nirṇetrim uddīṣa").
7 HC., I, p. 10, lines 1-6.
8 Ibid., I, p. 11, line 1 - p. 12, line 14.
9 Ibid., I, p. 61, line 1 - p. 62, line 6.
10 RV., IV, 58.3.
11 VBB., II, 15.
divinity to its birth, for it took birth from Sarasvatī and Brahmā. The attachment of divinity to it, is further endorsed by the fact that Sarasvatī is also not a mortal one. She is the goddess of speech (Vēgdevī) 2, who holds high office in the heaven. 3

Rājaśekhara’s version of the episode of Sārasvata is allegorical and philosophical. To him, Sārasvata, the son of Sarasvatī, is none other than poetry (kāvya), conceived by him as a man (puruṣa) with literature (sāhityāvidyā) as his bride (vādhu).

Poetry is, thus, the chosen and beloved groom of literature.

(iii) Sarasvatī as a river:

Rājaśekhara describes India as divided into five parts - 'Pūrvadesā' (vārāṇasyāḥ purtaḥ pūrvasaḥ); 4 'Dakṣināpatha' (māhiṃṣatyaḥ parato dakṣinā-pathaḥ); 5 'Pasćādeśa' (devasahāyaḥ parataḥ pasćādeśaḥ); 6 'Uttarāpatha' (prthūdakāt parataḥ uttarāpathaḥ); 7 and 'Madhyadesa' (teśām madhye madhyadesa). 8 He describes these Deśas along with their janapadas, mountains, rivers, etc.

1 [Note.] III, p. 13, lines 6-7.
2 Ibid., III, p. 16, line 1, "tatas ca vinivētā vēgdevī tatra putram spasyantī madhyehṛdayam cakranda".
3 Ibid., III, p. 17, lines 3-6.
4 Ibid., XVII, p. 226, lines 4-8.
5 Ibid., XVII, p. 226, lines 9-14.
6 Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 1-4.
7 Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 5-10.
8 Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 11-12.
In this context, we find the mention of the two Sarasvatī rivers, which undoubtedly, belong to the two different Deśas. One of them is mentioned to flow in the Paścāddesa along with such rivers as Svabhrajā, Vārtagāhā, Mahī, Hiśimbā, etc. The other is mentioned to flow in the Uttarāpatha along with the rivers Gāṅgā, Sīndhu, Sātadru, Candrabhāga, Yamunā, Irāvatī, Vitastā, Vipāśā, Kuhū, Devikā, etc.

It is not very difficult to locate these two Sarasvatī rivers. The Sarasvati of the Uttarāpatha explicitly stands for the Rgvedic Sarasvati of the northern India and that of the Paścāddesa, for the Sarasvati of the western India shooting from the Aravalli range.

11. Bhartrhari:

In the classical age, Sarasvati is thought to represent science (vidyā) in general like tapas, dāna, śīla, guṇa and dharma serving as an adornment to human being. It is only vidyā, which differentiates him from the animal. Bhartrhari conveys the same idea through the following verse of his Mītisātaka:

1. Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 3-4.
   "sarasvatīsvabhrajāvārtagāhāmahihiśimbādyā nadyāh"

2. Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 8-9.
   "gāṅgāsindhusarasvatīsātadrucandrabhāgāyamunarāvatiāvītastāvīpāśākūhū- devikādyā nadyāh".


4. The Imperial Gazetteer of India., Vol. XXII, p. 97.
   "Saraswati(2). - A small but holy river of Western India, rising at the south-west end of the Aravalli range near the shrine of Ambā Bhavānī, and flowing south-westwards for about 110 miles, through the lands of Pātānpur, Bādhānāpur, Mahī Kantha, and Baroda, and past the ancient cities of Pātan, Anhilvāda, and Sīdpur, into the lesser Bann of Cutch, near Anvarpur. West of Pātan its course is underground for some miles, and its stream is small, except in the rains. The river is visited by Hindus, especially those who have lost their mothers. Sīdpur is considered an especially appropriate place at which to perform rites in honour of a deceased mother".
Sāhitya and Sāngita are two of the arts, patronised by Sarasvati. One who is deprived of them, is, in fact, an animal. In the following verse, the qualities of a human being are enlisted:

"yesām na vidyā tapo na dānam jñānam na śīlām na guno na dharmaḥ

The poets of high merit, blessed by Sarasvati, are said to have acquired sweet speech from all śāstras, to be able to impart instruction to disciples, and to win honour from the kings even:

"śāstropaskṛtaśabdasundaragirah śiyāpraydeyā gamā

The wealth of vidyā surpasses all types of wealth; because it is not stolen by thieves; bestows welfare; though spent, goes on increasing incessantly; and lasts for ever.

It is rightly observed that the ornament of speech (vāgbhusana) is the best of all ornaments, as other ornaments are perishable, while it lasts

1 NS., 12.
2 Supra., pp. 172-176, 190-200.
3 NS., 13.
4 Ibid., 15.
5 Ibid., 16.
for ever. It is the speech (vāṇī) alone, which truly embellishes a man.¹

Vidyā is the real nature of a human being and does him every
good.²

12. Mahākavi Bilhana:

Bilhana, the great Kashmirian poet refers to Sarasvatī several
times in his Vikramāṇkadevakaṭarita. She has been mentioned under her
different names such as Sarasvatī, Śaradā, Bhāratī and Vāddevī in different
contexts.

(i) Sarasvatī as speech:

The use of the word as synonymous with speech, occurs several
times.³ The same is the case with the word Bhāratī.⁴

(ii) Sarasvatī as the goddess of poetry and eloquence:

It is by Sarasvatī, the supreme goddess of poetry and eloquence
that a poet composes the poems of high order or a man attains the power

¹ Ibid., 19.
"keyūrāṇi na bhūṣayanti puruṣām ṛāra na candrojjvalā
na snānaṁ na vīlopanam na kuśumam na "laṅkṛta mūrdhaṁjarāḥ
vāṇyaṁ samalaṅkaroti puruṣam yā sāmkr̥tā dhāryate
kṣiyante khalu bhūṣāṇāṁ, satataṁ vāgbhūṣaṇāṁ bhūṣāṇāṁ ||

² Cf. ibid., 20.
"vidyā nāṁ narasya rūpam adhikam pracchannañgaṁ dhanam
vidyā bhogakāṁ yaśasukhaṁ vidyā gūr̥unāṁ gūruḥ!
vidyā bandhujano videśaṁgane vídyā paraṁ devatā
vidyā rājaśu pūjyate na tu dhanām vídyāvīhināḥ pasuḥ ||

³ VDC., I.9.
"anabhṛavṛṣṭih śravaṇāṁṛtasya sarasvatīvibhramajamabhūmih"

⁴ Ibid., V.30.
"vyājāhāra daśanāṁśupallava - nyastakomalapādaṁ sarasvatim"

(Contd.)
of effective speech.\(^1\) Bilhana appears to hold the same view when he describes Sarasvatī as the goddess of poetry and eloquence.\(^2\) The great poets are poets by birth and not by attempt. Poets as such are thought to be the offsprings of mother Sarasvatī. The eminent poet Bilhana who boasts of himself to be the greatest poet, is highly favoured by Sarasvatī, the mother of the great poets:

"vidvattāyāh sa khalu śikharaṃ prāpa yasye 'ṣṭarāmo
gyeṣṭho bhrātā kṣitipatisatāsthānāllāvatamsah\
vaktre kāvyāṁrtarasabharāsvādasaktair yadiye
drṣṭā devī sukaviṃjananī sā prapālike 'va ||"\(^3\)

(iii) The abode of Śāradā:

The residents of Kashmir hold Śāradā to be the patroness deity of their country.\(^4\) Bilhana says that Śāradā's abode is Pravarapura situated

(contd from p.222)

\(\text{Ibid.},\ II.49.
"
"kadācid ākarmayati śma bhāratīṃ prabhātāpūjāyamye nabhaścarim"

\(\text{Ibid.},\ V.50.
"
"yat kṛtam kim api tena lajjayā bhāratī katham api pravartate"

1 \(\text{Ibid.},\ I.21.
"
"sahodaraḥ kuṇkumakesarānāṃ bhavanti nunaṃ kavitāvilāśāḥ\na śāradādesām apasya drṣṭas teṣāṃ yad anyatra mayā prarohah ||"

2 Cf. \(\text{Ibid.},\ III.19.
"
"lavanyalabdhhāhir alabdham eva bhūpālakanyāmadhupān—ganābhīḥ\nkavitvavakītrvaphalā cucumba sarasvatī tasya mukhāravindam ||"

3 \(\text{Ibid.},\ XVIII.84.

4 James Hastings, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 808.
on the bank of the Madhumati river on Mt. Kailasa. She is said to have
favoured this Pravarapura by her learning:

*dhatte yasyah sphatikasatibh kantibhih ksalyantyakah
sthitya gaurigurur api gigir nunam uccaih siramsi
gangospardhoddhuramadhumatiisaikatottamsahamsi
vidyarakshadhikrtam akarat sa svayan sarada yat \"\"

Prevarapura, the original abode of Sarada (Sarasvati) has exhibited
various wonders. Women have attained command over speech both in Sanskrit
and Prakirt as if they were their mother-tongues:

*brumah sarasvatakubhuvah kim nidheh kautukanam
tasya 'nekadbhatunakathakirnakaranamrtasya
yatram strianam apim aparam janasbhagavadd eva
pratyavasaam vilasati vah sankrtam prakrtam ca \"\"

(iv) *Some other allusion to Sarasvati*: At one place, Bilhana describes Sarasvati as playing on vina:

*sarasvati yad vadanesu nityam abhahi vinaam iva vadeyanti*3

Elsewhere, she is referred to as the Vagdevata,4 having the swan
(hamsa) as her vehicle,5 bearing white pearl-necklace (haralatam ivo
'jjalā)'6 and white garment.7

---

1 VDC., XVIII.5.
2 Ibid., XVIII.6.
3 Ibid., I.10.
4 Ibid., XVIII.60,83.
5 Ibid., XII.47,49.
6 Ibid., II.28.
7 Ibid., III.33.

"akarnya karntapateh sakhetam ittham vacah pratysavadat kumarah
sarasvatiloladukulkntam prakasayen dantamsayukhalekhom \"\"
13. Kalhana:

In his Rājatarangini, Kalhana mentions Sarasvatī several times under the names of Sarasvatī as well as Sāradā. While giving a historical account of Kashmir, he states that on the Mt. of Bheça in Kashmir, there is a pond in which Sarasvatī still resides in the form of a swan:

"devī bheḍagīreḥ śrīge gāṅodbhedaśucau svayamānānā māhānaraśāyate yatra hamsarūpā Sarasvatī ||"¹

The Purāṇas provide a swan (hamsa) to her as her vehicle.² This conception evolved towards her identification with the swan and then she herself came to be conceived as a swan (hamsarūpā). For Kashmir has been the seat of learning for centuries, Sarasvatī has been judiciously thought to live there. Kalhana says that at the mere sight of goddess Sāradā there, one gets instantaneously the speech used by poets:

"ālokya śāradām devīm yatra samprāpyate kṣanātā taraṅginī madhumatī vānī ca kavisevītā ||"³

Another verse speaks of her as the goddess of speech (Vāgdevī):

"dvijas tayor nāyakākhyo gaurīśāorasadmanoḥ |
cāturvidyāh kṛtas tena vāgdevīkulamanandiram ||"⁴

¹ RT., I.35.
² Supra., pp.162-166.
³ RT., I.37.
⁴ Ibid., V.159.