

the asuras found the fight against Śiva very tough and smelt defeat. He decided to cheat Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva, to compensate for his defeat in the battle-field and so making an asura named Śumbha as the chief, he left for Kailāsa. Śumbha became a māyā Jalandhara and continued the fight.

Taking another asura named Durvāraṇa, Jalandhara went to a cave in Kailāsa and there changed himself into an exact replica of Śiva. He made Durvāraṇa look like Nandikeśa.

Then they went to the top of the mountain where Pārvatī and her companions were staying. Śiva approached Pārvatī on the shoulders of Nandikeśa with wounds all over his body and blood oozing from them. Pārvatī seeing Śiva thus, with tears rolling down her cheeks asked him, "Oh, Lord of the gods what happened to your lordship? Who defeated you in the battle? Why do you weep like a low-bred man?" Māyāśiva took from his body all his ornaments like Vāsuki and gave them to the companions of Pārvatī. When Pārvatī saw the heads of Gaṇapati and Subrahmaṇya in the hands of her husband she cried in bitterness. Śiva told her that all his pārśadas like Maṇibhadra, Virabhadra, Puṣpadanta, Damana, Dhūmatāmra and Kūsmāṇḍa were killed in the battle. Caṇḍī, Bhṛṅgī, Kirīṭī, Mahākāla, Śrīkhalī, Caṇḍīśa and Guptanetra were all killed. Māyāśiva told her that he had picked up the heads of Gaṇapati and Subrahmaṇya found lying in the battle-field. He requested Pārvatī to console him by embracing him. Pārvatī resented the request. She said, "What you say is unfit for the situation. Sexual enjoyment is forbidden in times of misery, fear, meditation, vomiting fever, performing offering to the manes, journey, royal visits, marriage festivities and in the presence of elders and teachers. Why do you make this request to me when I am mourning the death of my sons?"

Pretending to be grief-stricken Māyāśiva said "She who does not give sexual pleasure to a man in distress would go to hell. I have no pārśadas now. I have lost my sons also. I lost my house. Now you also hate me. I am going to my cave. Let me end my life there. Come on, Nandikeśa, Vajra, we will go.

Hearing this Pārvatī went near him.

At this time there happened a few bad omens in the ocean of milk where Viṣṇu was residing, and calling Garuḍa to his side Viṣṇu asked him to go and enquire about the battle that was going on between the devas and asuras. To prevent him from being deceived by the magic of the asuras Viṣṇu dropped into the mouth of Garuḍa a pill of great potency. Garuḍa reached the battlefield very soon but could not find anything out of the way and so flew to Kailāsa. He did not see Pārvatī first but hearing a noise from somewhere else peeped in and saw Māyāśiva. Garuḍa could understand him because of the power of the pill and so flew swiftly back to Mahāviṣṇu and told him what he saw.

Mahāviṣṇu knew that Pārvatī had been deceived by Jalandhara. So he decided to cheat Vṛndā, wife of Jalandhara. Mahāviṣṇu filled with amorous desires, avoiding Mahālakṣmī, covering his head with a yellow scarf and taking the figure of another person by his yogic powers stepped out of his abode taking Ananta for his company. He went to Durgākānana the abode of Vṛndā. They constructed an āśrama there and the wild animals like the lion, tiger, bear and monkey

became their disciples taking human form. Then Viṣṇu created mental agony in Vṛndā to attract her to his āśrama. Vṛndā started getting hot and her maids fanned her continuously and anointed her with sandal-wood paste. She thought of her husband in the battle-field and often fainted. She had a very bad dream. She saw her husband Jalandhara lying wounded on his head, ears and nose, with his body smeared with ashes and his eyes pecked by vultures. She saw Kālī, with her hair lying loose, her face reddened with blood, with a skull in her hand dancing before the body of her husband before starting to eat it. At this moment she was awakened by the music of the Māgadhas and loud chanting of family praises by Kimpuruṣas. She at once stopped the music and prayers and paid them off. Then she sent word for pandits to explain the dream she saw. The Pandits said "Devī, this appears to be a dream giving unimaginable fear. To calm the fear give as gifts to brahmins, diamonds, garments, cows and elephants." Then the brahmin pandits sprinkled on her, water made potent by mantras. There was no waning of the fever. Dismissing the pandits, queen Vṛndā went and sat alone upstairs. She felt the whole palace burning and by the craft employed by Viṣṇu she found living inside the palace unbearable.

She got out of the palace and boarding a chariot drawn by mares she went to her play-garden. The sight of the garden filled with beautiful flowers and celestial maidens where no one else but pleasing breeze could enter made her remember her husband. She then brooded on how to find out Jalandhara, and there also she did not get peace of mind. So she accompanied by her maids started for another garden. That garden gave a ghastly sight with huge trees standing crowded interspersed with black rocks and the place resounding with the roars of lions and tigers. Vṛndā got frightened and she hastened to say "Smaradūtī, I feel frightened. Please drive back the chariot home."

Hearing this Smaradūtī said, "Oh, Devī, I do not know the place. I do not understand the directions also. To which direction am I to drive? The horses look tired. There is no way here. Anyhow let it go as directed by God. If we stay here we will be eaten by man-eaters."

So saying the maid drove the chariot and soon they reached a forest more grisly than the former. It was a forest where great yogins lived. There was no light there neither water nor wind. No sound came. Even the sounds of the bells on the horses and the chariot stopped. Vṛndā moaned, "Where are we to go now, maid! There is no peace of mind for me anywhere in this world."

Smaradūtī looking ahead cried, "Look Devī, there is a great black mountain in front of us. The horses refuse to move, for they are afraid of it."

Cold with fear the queen stood up from the chariot and keeping her hands on the pearl necklace on her breast jumped out of the chariot. Then a very fierce demon came towards them. He was yellow in colour with three legs, five hands, seven eyes and ears like a tiger's and the shoulders and chin like those of a lion. It was a horrible sight and Vṛndā hid her eyes with her hands and trembled like a plantain leaf. The maid jumping out of the chariot cried aloud "Oh, my queen, help me. This demon is going to eat me." The demon approaching