

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Bharavi**  
**- poems -**

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# Bharavi(6th CE)

Bharavi (IAST: Bharavi, Sanskrit: ?????) (c. 6th century CE) was a Sanskrit poet known for his Mahakavya (epic), the Kiratarjuniya (Arjuna and the Mountain Man) in 18 cantos based on an episode from the Mahabharata.

## <b>Time and Place</b>

As with most Sanskrit poets, very few concrete details are available about Bharavi's life, and inferences must be made from references to him. A Chalukya inscription from 634 CE mentions him and [Kalidasa](http://www.poemhunter.com/kalidasa/) as famous poets of the past. In another inscription, the king Durvinita of the Western Ganga Dynasty mentions having written a commentary on the fifteenth canto of Bharavi's Kiratarjuniya. The Western Ganga Dynasty ruled from about the middle of the fourth century, and Durvinita is usually believed to have lived in the later half of the sixth century.

The poet Da??in, who was born in the middle of the seventh century, reports that his great-grandfather was a friend of Bharavi and was introduced by him to a king Vi??uvaradhana, before receiving patronage from Durvinita and King Simhavishnu of the Pallava dynasty. This is unlikely to be Vishnuvardhana II (673–682 CE) and is more likely to be Yasodharman Vishnuvardhana, placing Bharavi's floruit in c. 530–550 CE.

Bharavi probably belonged to Southern India. "Bharavi" means "lustre of the sun". It is reported that his original name was Damodara, although this may have been an error.

## <b>Work</b>

The Kiratarjuniya, an epic poem in eighteen cantos, is his only known work. It "is regarded to be the most powerful poem in the Sanskrit language". A. K. Warder considers it the "most perfect epic available to us", over Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita, noting his greater force of expression, with more concentration and polish in every detail. Despite using extremely difficult language and rejoicing in the finer points of Sanskrit grammar, he achieves conciseness and directness. His alliteration, "crisp texture of sound", and choice of metre closely correspond to the narrative.

His poetry is characterised by its intricate styles and ethereal expressions. Like

[Kalidasa](http://www.poemhunter.com/kalidasa/) for his similes (upama) and Da??in for his wordplay (padalalityam), Bharavi is known for his "weight of meaning" (arthagauravam). He influenced the 8th century CE poet Magha.

# Kiratarjuniya

Bharavi