Hindu Goddess Saraswati the Goddess of Wisdom

*Saraswati the goddess of knowledge, who is praised by the wise, who is the wife of the creator, may she reside on the tip of my tongue.*

Saraswati, goddess of knowledge and the arts, embodies the wisdom of Devi. She is the river of consciousness that enlivens creation; she is the dawn-goddess whose rays dispel the darkness of ignorance. Without her there is only chaos and confusion. To realize her one must go beyond the pleasures of the senses and rejoice in the serenity of the spirit. Saraswati wears neither jewels or paints herself with bright colors. The white sari she adorns reflects her essential purity, her rejection of all that is base and materialistic.

She transcends the cravings of the flesh and rejoices in the powers of the mind as the patron of pure wisdom. She embodies all that is pure and sublime in Nature.



The four Vedas, books of universal knowledge, were her offspring. Her mount, the swan, personifies pure knowledge and her herald, the peacock, is a symbol of the arts.

Schools and libraries are her temples; books, pens, all tools of the artist and musical instruments are the items used in puja to the enlightening goddess of wisdom.

**The Birth of Saraswati** In the beginning there was chaos. Everything existed in a formless, fluid state. "How do I bring order to this disorder?" wondered Brahma, the creator. "With Knowledge", said Devi. Heralded by a peacock, sacred books in one hand and a veena in the other dressed in white Devi emerged from Brahma's mouth riding a swan as the goddess Saraswati.

"Knowledge helps man find possibilities where once he saw problems." Said the goddess. Under her tutelage Brahma acquired the ability to sense, think, comprehend and communicate. He began looking upon chaos with eyes of wisdom and thus saw the beautiful potential that lay therein. From <http://www.lotussculpture.com/sarasvati.html>

## **Saraswati outside Nepal and India**



Balinese Hindu deity Saraswati (top)

### **Saraswati in Myanmar** In [Burma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar), the Shwezigon Mon Inscription dated to be of 1084 AD, near Bagan, recites the name Saraswati as follows,

"The wisdom of eloquence called Saraswati shall dwell in mouth of King Sri Tribhuwanadityadhammaraja at all times". – Translated by Than Tun[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-40)

In Buddhist arts of Myanmar, she is called *Thurathadi* (or Thayéthadi).[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-Seekins_2006-41):215 Students in Myanmar pray for her blessings before their exams.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-Seekins_2006-41):327 She is also believed to be, in Mahayana pantheon of Myanmar, the protector of Buddhist scriptures.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-42)

### **Saraswati in Japan [**Main article: [Benzaiten](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benzaiten)] The concept of Saraswati migrated from India, through China to Japan, where she appears as Benzaiten (弁財天).[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-43) Worship of Benzaiten arrived in Japan during the 6th through 8th centuries. She is often depicted holding a [*biwa*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biwa), a traditional Japanese lute musical instrument. She is enshrined on numerous locations throughout Japan such as the Kamakura's [Zeniarai Benzaiten Ugafuku Shrine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeniarai_Benzaiten_Ugafuku_Shrine) or Nagoya's [Kawahara Shrine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kawahara_Shrine);[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-44) the three biggest shrines in Japan in her honour are at the [Enoshima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoshima) Island in Sagami Bay, the [Chikubu Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chikubu_Island) in Lake Biwa, and the [Itsukushima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Itsukushima) Island in Seto Inland Sea.

### **Saraswati in Cambodia** Saraswati was honoured with invocations among Hindus of Angkorian [Cambodia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia), suggests a tenth-century and another eleventh-century inscription.[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-oww-45) She and Brahma are referred to in Cambodian epigraphy from the 7th century onwards, and she is praised by Khmer poets for being goddess of eloquence, writing and music. More offerings were made to her than to her husband Brahma. She is also referred to as *Vagisvari* and *Bharati* in Yasovarman era Khmer literature.[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-oww-45)

### **Saraswati in Thailand** In ancient Thai literature, Saraswati ([Thai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thai_language): สุรัสวดี; [rtgs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Thai_General_System_of_Transcription): *Suratsawadi*) is the goddess of speech and learning, and consort of Brahma.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-46) Over time, Hindu and Buddhist concepts on deities merged in Thailand. Icons of Saraswati with other deities of India are found in old Thai [*wats*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wat).[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-47) Amulets with Saraswati and a peacock are also found in Thailand.

### **Saraswati** in Indonesia Saraswati is an important goddess in Balinese Hinduism. She shares the same attributes and iconography as Saraswati in Hindu literature of India - in both places, she is the goddess of knowledge, creative arts, wisdom, language, learning and purity. In [Bali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bali), she is celebrated on Saraswati day, one of the main festivals for Hindus in Indonesia.[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-48)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-49) The day marks the close of 210-day year in the Pawukon calendar.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-msz-50)

On Saraswati day, people make offerings in the form of flowers in temples and to sacred texts. The day after Saraswati day, is *Banyu Pinaruh*, a day of cleansing. On this day, Hindus of Bali go to the sea, sacred waterfalls or river spots, offer prayers to Saraswati, and then rinse themselves in that water in the morning. Then they prepare a feast, such as the traditional *bebek betutu* and *nasi kuning*, that they share.[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-51)

The Saraswati Day festival has a long history in Bali.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-52) It has become more widespread in Hindu community of Indonesia in recent decades, and it is celebrated with theatre and dance performance.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati#cite_note-msz-50)

From Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati> [Note: I know Wikipedia isn’t always a reliable source of information, but this article looked very credible because of its careful citing of excellent sources.]