1.1 In the first part of this article, to be published in the Dr K. Kunjunni Raja Felicitation Volume, I have pointed out, among other things, that the explanation of parvatād āgamaḥ labdhvā bhāṣya-bṛjānusādibhīḥ // sa nīto bahu-bākhitvāh candrānāryādibhīḥ punah // given in Pundarīka's or Halārāja's Tīkā is contextually unjustifiable. In the present part I wish to analyse the Tīkā explanation further to establish its mythic character and to account for its acquisition of that character. This is how the Tīkā comments on the verse: atha kālāntareṇa candra-sāryādibhīr āgamaḥ labdhvā tena cūpya-bhūteṣa śakalāni bhāṣyāvasṭhitīṃ yāti nyāya-bijāni tān ṣunyataḥ vyākaranāgamaḥ punar api śphitatiḥ nītā ity abhidhātim āha [at this point 2.486 is cited] parvatāt tri-kūtaikā-dekavarti-tiṅgaṅa-dekād iti. tatra hy upala-tale rāvaṇa-vindicēta māla-bhūta-vyākaranāgamam tiṣṭhati. keṇacī ca brahma-rāgaśāntya [sa?] candrānārya-vasūrīta-guru-prabhūtināḥ dattā iti. tathā khalu yathāvad vyākaranāgaya sva-rūpah tata upalabhya, eka-tam ca sīyādhiḥ vyākhyāya [vyākaranāgama?] bahu-bākhitvāh nītā viṣtarānḥ prāpitā ity anuśrūyaḥ.1

2.1 The Tīkā shares the detail parvatāt with the verse. Its identification of parvata, no doubt based on the traditional information it had, is very plausible (see Part 3 of this article to be published in the near future). However, the association it displays with a mountain or hill seems to be different from the one which the author of the verse displays. The latter's phrase, dīkṣeṇātyēṣu granthamātrārya vyāvasāh, indicates that he looked upon parvata simply as a source or location of documents in which the vyākaranāgama was preserved; he does not seem to view, at least in verses 481-490, parvata as something in contact with the vyākaranāgama in a mysterious way — as having the presence of vyākaranāgama in a form inaccessible to ordinary men. However, this is precisely the way the Tīkā author looks upon parvata; in his view, parvata is a place of revelation. Now, this type of association with mountains or hills is not rare. There are several instances in religious literature of knowledge gained miraculously at elevated places, and I would be surprised if scholars of religion have not already
included elevated places among the locales of revelation and tried to explain why they figure so frequently in accounts of revelation. What is significant is that the knowledge gained thus is usually said to be fundamental (mula-bhuta) and is claimed to be the content of an original insight which subsequently suffered distortion. Probably the closest modern parallel to the terse narrative in the Tika is to be found in what has been written in the case of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon movement. Smith's story agrees with the one contained in the Tika in all the crucial structural elements - revelation on a hill or mountain, assistance by a super-human creature (angel, brahma-raksha), access to an otherwise invisible and long-lost ancient account written on a highly durable material (golden tablets in the case of Smith, upala-tala in the case of Candracaarya), and the claim made about the discovered account that it can lead people back to the true, original understanding.

2.2 We are told in the Tika that the mula-bhuta vyakaranagama remains or endures (tiyathati) on a rock surface. I have indicated above that in accounts of revelation the object which serves as the immediate source of knowledge is not rarely one which can be durable material for inscribing. This is only logical, given the situational elements that the knowledge to be discovered is lost for a long time and that revelations to persons far removed from each other (i.e. repeated revelations over long segments of time) are to be accounted for. However, there could be more to the appearance of the Tika detail than the structural strains in revelation stories or the activation of a particular mythic element. Influence of certain contemporary factors cannot be excluded from consideration:

(a) Ksema-raja, who was most probably only one generation removed from the author of the Tika, tells us in his Siva-suttra-umaranini that the Siva-sutras were revealed to Vasu-gupta on the Mahā-deva-girl after Siva advised him in a dream to acquire the secret doctrine [written (see note 3)] on a great rock (mahati bila-tala). The structural similarity of this story with the story recorded in the Tika or with the story of Joseph Smith is obvious. What is specifically interesting at this point is the tradition of Kashmir Saivism, with which the Tika author was in all probability familiar, contained a revelation account in which the matter to be revealed was available on a rock. The probability that this detail influenced the Tika author's or his predecessors' narrating of the account of Candracaarya is all the greater because the rock associated with Vasu-gupta is known as Shankrapala (= Shankarinpala); the word upala thus figures in the narrative of Vasu-gupta's extraordinary experience as well as in that of Candracaarya's. Also to be noted in this connection is the fact that the Tika, unlike verse 486, associated Vasu-rāta, whose name resembles the name Vasu-gupta, with the acquisition of the mula-bhuta agama. 7

(b) The tenth to twelfth centuries of the Christian era, in the atmosphere of which the Tika author probably lived (see note 4), seem to be marked in north India by considerable interest in rock and stone inscriptions. The Mahā-nātaka or Hanuman-nātaka is said to have been discovered on a rock surface during the reign (1011-55) of Bhoja (De 1959: 218-20). Historians like Kalhaṇa (twelfth century), as we learn from Raja-taranāini 1.15, evidently studied the edicts, grants, and inscriptions accessible to them. The enlightened Paramāra rulers apparently were so keenly aware of the loss of literature due to use of perishable writing materials that they got inscribed on stone slabs some of the appropriate literary creations of their times as well as some basic texts of śāstras such as the Maheśvara sūtras or Pratyāhāra sūtras (Bhatia 1967: 94, 320, 320 fn. 6, 324, 326, 340-41). It need not surprise us, therefore, if in this atmosphere the Tika author or those who preceded him in Bhartṛhari studies thought that if an agama had been preserved for a long time it must have been inscribed on a rock somewhere.

(c) Conceivably, by the end of the first millennium A.D., the knowledge of the scripts in which older inscriptions were written was lost to such an extent that a tendency to view them as containing secret, mysterious messages decipherable only in an extraordinary experience developed among the people. Such a tendency is very likely to make itself felt in the exegesis of 486 if the parvata mentioned in that verse was taken to be Śrī-parvata (see Part 3). Since Śrī-parvata is particularly famous for miracles and the presence of beings having extraordinary capacities, the then unintelligible inscriptions in its vicinity could have been viewed as mysterious writings of great antiquity and significance comprehensible only to those who possessed superhuman capacities of the mind.

2.3 Rāvana is the composer or author of the mula-bhuta vyakaranagama, according to the Tika. This detail is internally consistent in that it agrees with four other details:

(a) The agama was preserved in the South.

(b) It was discovered at Tri-kūṭa, a mountain or mountain range surrounding Rāvana's Laṅkā, as the sources recorded in part 3 has.

...
(c) It was available, most probably in an inscribed form, on a rock, in chiselling which the Rākṣasas associated with Rāvaṇa seem to have specialised.11

(d) It was delivered by a brahma-raktas, that is, by a being having genetic and scholastic affiliations with the brahmins but opposing in conduct, on account of uncontrollable pride and greed, the dharma of the brahmins.12 Rāvaṇa was the son of the brahmin Viśravas (Valmiki-Rāmāyaṇa 7, chapters 7 and 9). The tradition frequently speaks of him as a very learned individual (cf. Bhāsa’s Pratimā, Act 5). However, his deeds bore no relation to his lineage or learning.

2.4 The mention of Rāvaṇa is interesting also because it agrees with the attribution of many other works to Rāvaṇa. Sudhirakumāra Guptā (1967) has edited and translated into Hindi the fragments said to come from Rāvaṇa’s commentary on the Ṛgveda. Muni Jambūvijaya (1961: 150-1, 174; 1966: Prākātharām p. 20; 1976: 498-9), and Anantālal Thakur (1961: 12-4) have gathered much valuable information on the Kaṭandī, which was a bhāṣya or śīla, ascribed to Rāvaṇa in the Vaiṣṇīka system (cf. Potter 1977: 238-9); Matilal 1977: 60-2). Aufrecht (Catalogus Catalogorum pt. I p. 526) mentions a Śṛi-śiṅka-bhāṣya by Rāvaṇa, as well as works called Rāvaṇabhāṣit (or Chāllaṭārṇī; pt. I p. 526, pt. II p. 123) and Rāvaṇa-ṛṣita (pt. III p. 112). Three short texts relating to medicine, Kūmāra-tantra, Arka-prakāsha, and Nādi-parīkṣā, are also said to have been composed by Rāvaṇa (Pillai 1937: 171-8). The first is available in several languages, including Chinese and Arabic, while the last is published in many editions by the Chowkhandba Sanskrit Series Office (6th ed. 1976; Haridas Sanskrit Series no. 141) and Chowkhandba Orientalia (1st ed. 1975). A hymn to Śiva said to have been composed by Lāṇkhēvara (an epithet of Rāvaṇa) is published in Kāva-mālā pt. 1 (1866; 2nd ed. 1893). In short, there is a tendency in Sanskrit literature toward (a) confusing some historical authors named Rāvaṇa13 with the mythical Rāvaṇa of the Rāmāyaṇa fame and (b) attributing works in almost all branches of learning to Rāvaṇa. In the latter aspect, Rāvaṇa is almost a rival of Śiva, whose devotee he is said to be.

2.5 The Šīka cāracterisation of the āgama as māla-bhūta befits a way of thinking according to which things evolve and dissolve cyclically. I think it need not be established anew that a dominant tendency in Indian culture is to look upon the products or evolutes in various spheres as emerging and submerging in rotation. According to most schools of Indian philosophy, the universe arises, expands, dissolves, and returns to its original cause. According to more than one school, the Vedas appear from the pranava seed and eventually again become one with it. In the Šīka account, this sarga-sthiti-laya way of thinking has been brought to bear on the science of grammar. Grammar is viewed as a body of knowledge that develops from a perpetual subtle source, is thrown in a state of disarray, and can be reorganised through reference to the subtle source. The latter remains as a constant basis or blueprint in the background.

2.6 That a brahma-raktas was instrumental in imparting Rāvaṇa’s māla-bhūta vyākaranāgama to Čandrācārya is also an interesting detail. As indicated above, it agrees with Rāvaṇa’s description in literature as a fallen brahmin. What is more interesting is that at least one more grammarian is said to have become a ghost or spirit of similar sort. K.V. Abhyantr (1954) tells us that, according to a tradition current among Pāṇiniyas of the post-Siddhānta-kauṇḍī period, Ṣhaṭṭoṭi Dīksita became a brahma-samantha (Marathi equivalent of brahma-raktas) and instructed Ṣaṇendra-sarasvatī, so that the latter could write his Tattva-bodhi commentary. I shall have more to say on this point in Part 4, which will be devoted to a comparison of the Šīka account with other accounts of Čandra’s acquisition of the āgama.

2.7 Thus, once one realises that the event recorded in 2.486 has been mythologized by the time the Šīka was written, one sees a host of factors operating behind the words of the Šīka, and a fascinating web of mythological and historical strands emerges. It becomes apparent, as the word amūryāyate in the Šīka explanation indicates, that the author of the Šīka is not the ‘author’ of the story or myth narrated. To a large extent, if not exclusively, he merely connects his traditional information with the verse.

Notes

1. An English summary of the Šīka explanation is given in section 2.5 of the first part of this article. The aspects in which the Šīka explanation appears hazy and hesitant are clarified in a footnote to that section.
2. Although scores of narrations of Joseph Smith's acquisition of The Book of Mormon plates are available, the following two publications will furnish most of the necessary details in the clearest manner: (a) Donna Hill, Joseph Smith the first Mormon, Garden City (N.Y.): Doubleday and Company, 1977, pp. 70-97; (b) William Edwin Berrett, The restored church, Deseret Book Company, thirteenth edition, 1965, pp. 22-60.

3. The Titkā does not specify that the āgama was 'written', but that would be the natural implication of upata-tale tiṣṭhātī 'remains on the surface of a rock/stone'.

4. Kṣema-rāja was a disciple of Abhinava-gupta who, in turn, was a student of Indu-rāja, brother of Helā-rāja (most probably), whom I consider to be the probable author of the Titkā.

5. See Chatterji 1914: 26-31. The pictures of the Mahā-devagiri and the rock are given at the beginning of Chatterji 1911.

6. This detail is taken from Chatterji 1911, who is not responsible for the Sanskritised form Śāhkaropaṭa. Chatterji (1914: 26-31) adds that Kallāṭa, who was Vasu-gupta's disciple, can be said to corroborate the Śiva, Mahā-devagiri, and dream elements in Kṣema-rāja's account, but not the rock element, and that the tradition as recorded by Rāma-kantha, Utpala, and Bhāskara differs in that according to it Vasu-gupta received the doctrine from a siddha.

7. It is perhaps revealing that in Punyārāja's summary verses appended to the Titkā Candraśārya of 2.186 does not figure; only Vasarūta is mentioned: bhraṣṭayāṁyādyābārasya vatād-karana-gāṁthānāḥ / māla-bhūtān avāpyāthā paravatād āgamaṁ swayam // dārāya-vasarūtāna nyāya-mārgān vinītayā eā / praṇītā vidhivac odayānām vāyakaraṇagāṁthānām /


In Bhava-bhūti's Mālatī-mādhava (speech after 8.8, speech at the beginning of the ninth act, 9.53, 10.14), Kapālakundalā and Saudāmīni, who possess siddhis, are depicted as residing at Śrī-parvata. Jagaddhara, in his comment at the beginning of the ninth act of that play, observes: nāma-siddhi-sthānāvatra devatāmakaṭayā bhagavat-padaṁ śrī-parvata. The great siddha Nāgārjuna is associated with Śrī-parvata. Bu-ston (p. 132) speaks of Nāga-bodhi's residence at Śrī-parvata.

(b) General praise of Śrī-parvata as a place where religious or spiritual practices bear fruit easily is to be found in: Mahābhārata 3.83.16-17; Agni-purāṇa 113.3-7; Viṣṇu-smṛti 85.34; Sivaprasada 6.189-3.

(c) Other references to Śrī-parvata in Sanskrit texts known to me are: Suśruta-saṁhitā cikita section 29.27; Subandhu's Vāsava-dattā p. 100 (Vani Vilas edition, corresponding to p. 159 of Gray's edition); Brahmāṇḍa-mahā-purāṇa 1.16.22b-23a; Vāmanapūrana 45.92 (the last two according to Kirfel 1954:112).

(d) Inscriptional references to Śrī-parvata which indicate its fame as a holy place and which I have so far come across are: Chikkulla plates of Vikramendra-Varman II, ed. by F. Kielhorn, Epigrapha Indiae, vol. IV (1896-7) no. 25 p. 193; Inscriptions at Ablur, ed. by J.F. Fleet, ibid., vol. V (1898-9) no. 25, pp. 251, 259; Three western Ganga records in the Mysore Government Museum at Bangalore, ed. by J.F. Fleet, ibid., vol. VI (1900-01) no. 6 p. 51 fn. 4 (which, in turn, refers to an inscription of 1168 A.D. found at Balagāmi); Tālagaṇḍa pillar inscription of Kākusthavaran, ed. by F. Kielhorn, ibid., vol. VIII (1905-06) no. 5 p. 28 fn. 4; Tālagaṇḍa stone-pillar inscription of the time of Śānti-Varman (c. 455-70 A.D.), ed. by F. Kielhorn, ibid., vol. VIII (1905-06) pp. 31ff, reproduced in Sircar 1965: 474-9; Nāgārjunakonda inscription of Vīra-pūrṇa-datta (regnal year 14), ed. by J. Ph. Vogel, ibid., vol. XX p.22, reproduced in Sircar 1965: 235.

(e) If Śrī-parvata is taken as identical with Śrī-sāla, (see n. 10 below) add the following to the above references: Śākara, Yoga-tārāvallis verse 28; Ballāla, Sākha-prabandha p. 60 in Sādāśiva-Jātī Joshi's edition, Haridas Sanskrit Series no. 42, 1949; Padma-purāṇa, Uttara-khaman chapter 19/20; Revīs-mahātmva, chapter 20
10. Although Sanskrit authors as well as modern scholars have frequently identified Śrī-parvata with Śrī-sālī in Kurnool district, it seems more justifiable to hold that the primary association of the name Śrī-parvata was with the Nālmalai or Nāgārjunakonda area in Guntur/Guntoor district (see Part 3). Several inscriptions have been discovered in that area.

11. See Rāja-taraṅgini 4.503-10. As indirect evidence, see Vālmiki-rāmāyaṇa 7.7.21.

12. It is evident from the following statements that the term brahma-rākṣas or brahma-rākṣasa refers to those who bring harm to the brahmin way of life despite their association with brahminhood: Mahābhārata 2.11.68, 9.42.17, 13.92.12, 13.112.40-42, 13.133.61; Manu-smṛti 12.60; Yājñavalkya-smṛti 3.212; Agni-smṛta 371.35.

13. Rāvāna was the name of a king of Kashmir according to Kalhāna 1.193-5.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

For Vākyapadīya editions used in the preparation of this article, see my earlier publications. Details of publications are not given here also in the case of easily accessible works such as plays and purāṇas and well-known series such as Epigraphia Indica and Kavya-mālā. All references to the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are based on the critical editions published respectively from Poona and Baroda.


