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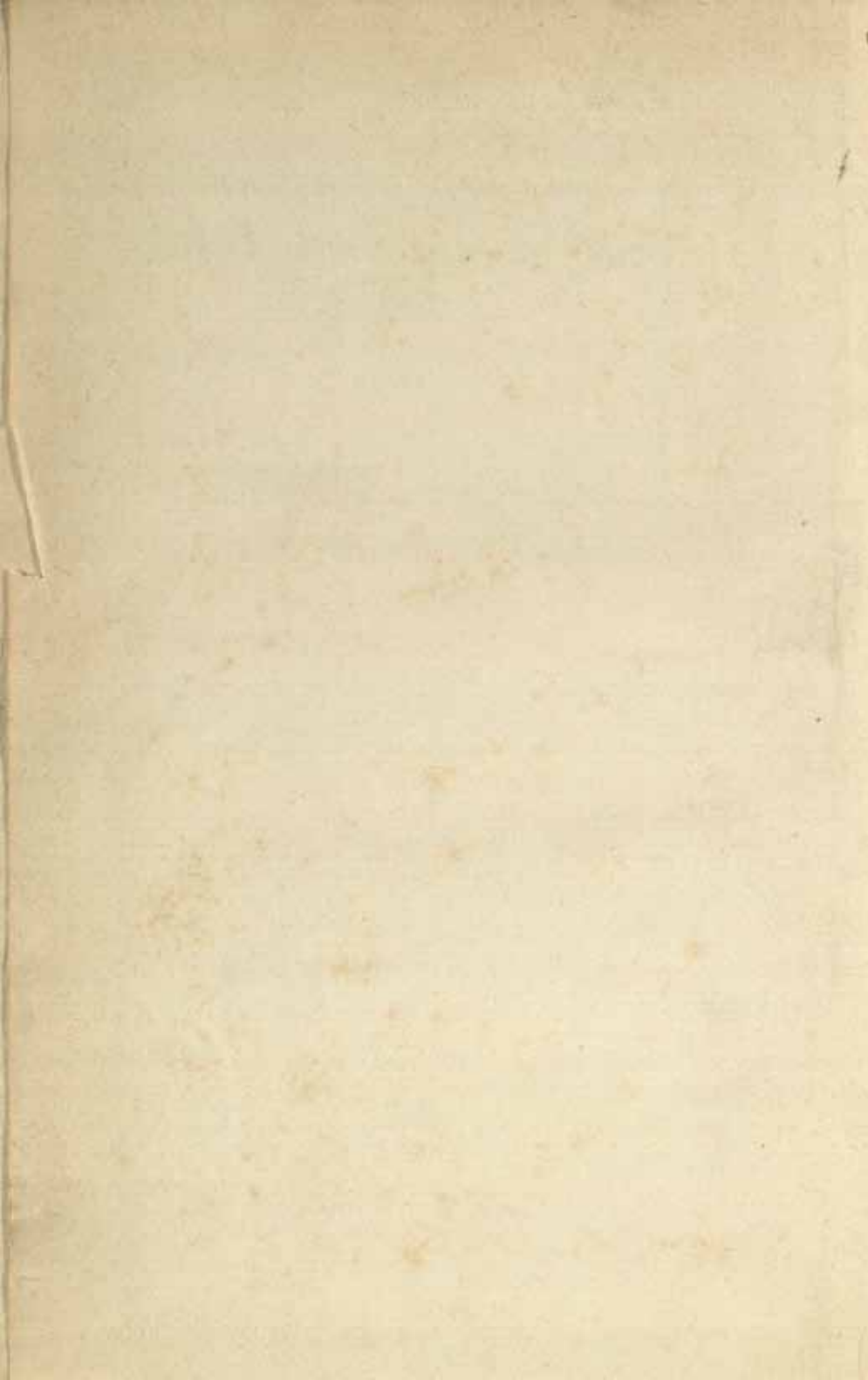
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# FRESH LIGHT ON KĀLIDĀSA'S MEGHADŪTA

BY  
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29580

Foreword  
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Truth of any kind breeds ever new and better truth.—Carlyle.



KALIDASA SANSHODHAN MANDAL, POONA



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*Published by : S. S. OKE, Kalidasa Sanshodhan Mandal, 239 Budhwar  
Peth, Paranjpe Road, Poona 2. Printed by : USHA J. NAGPURKAR,  
Shri Mudran Mandir, 341 & 580 Sadashiv Peth, Poona 2, India.*

## FOREWORD

Ever since Kālidāsa came to be known to the West by the edition of the *Rtusamhāra* published by William Jones from Calcutta in 1792, several western scholars and critics got interested in Kālidāsa and his works, and there has been a continuous flow of books, monographs and articles, in English and continental languages, dealing with the textual and several other aspects of the Kālidāsa problem. This is supplemented by an equally enormous mass of material, produced in India, both in English and in regional languages, since the last century after the western methods of research were introduced here. Despite such a huge material, most of the intriguing and baffling problems concerning Kālidāsa and his works have defied all attempts at solution, and still await further research though much ground has been covered during all this time.

Some problems, such as the ascription of Nalodaya, Rākṣasa-kāvya, Nītitsāra and similar other works to Kālidāsa have been conclusively solved, but the date and place of birth of the celebrated poet and dramatist are still in dispute. The discussions about the extent of the Raghuvamśa, Kumārasambhava and Meghadūta and about Kālidāsa's authorship of the *Rtusamhāra* also have not yielded any definite result. Of the various problems in the Meghadūta that of the location of Rāmagiri has engaged the attention of several scholars. None of the theories so far advanced with regard to the diverse problems indicated above are final, and in the absence of further and more definite material it is not possible to reach any convincing conclusions. The problem of the identification of Rāmagiri in the Meghadūta is one that has of late assumed the proportions of a vigorous controversy without leading to an incontrovertible solution.

FRESH LIGHT ON KĀLIDĀSA'S MEGHADŪTA by Shri V. K. Paranjpe is an attempt, among other things, to locate Rāmagiri in Eastern India. The object of the author in writing the book is to establish (i) the identity of Kālidāsa's Rāmagiri with Ramgarh in Madhya Pradesh; (ii) the Rāma story as the

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main source of Kālidāsa for his Meghadūta and his heavy indebtedness to Valmiki in several particulars; and (iii) the location of Pañcavaṭi and Citrakūṭa respectively at Bhadrachalam near Rajamahendry and the southeastern part of the present Madhya Pradesh. He has also advanced certain interesting suggestions regarding date and provenance of Kālidāsa. Shri Paranjpe has ransacked literary works—Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain, popular traditions, Gazetteers, Archaeological and epigraphical reports, historical works and other sources in order to collect material in support of his theses. He has also consulted several MSS in the collection of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and has carefully studied the views of the commentators of the Meghadūta. Nine tables given in the Appendix as also the maps and illustrations will facilitate the understanding of the author's arguments. Successful advocate that he is, Shri Paranjpe has argued his case skilfully marshalling a mass of evidence in its favour, and has presented it with vigour. He has considered the problems in a scientific manner and his views merit a careful consideration by competent scholars.

The book bears ample testimony to the tremendous labour spent by Shri Paranjpe in its preparation, to highly interesting and original manner in which he has presented the material, and also the creditable manner in which he has performed his work. He deserves to be complimented on the production of such a fine work which is, indeed, a valuable addition to the books on the subject, and which no student of Kālidāsa can afford to ignore.

A. D. Pusalker



For the text and order of the verses in the Meghadūta in this book, we have followed Sahitya Academy's Critical edition by Dr. S. K. De ( First Edition 1957 ).

## ABBREVIATIONS

K	Kālidāsa.	A. S. I.	Archaeological Survey of India.
Y	Yakṣa.	Apte	V. S. Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary.
R	Rāmāgiri hill.	V	Vallabhadeva.
A	Āmrakūṭa.	S	Sarasvatī Tīrtha.
N	Narmada.	C	Caritravardhana.
U	Ujjayini.	St	Sthiradeva.
Ci, Chi	Citrakūṭa hill.	D	Dakṣiṇāvarta Nātha.
D forest	Danḍakāranya forest.	M	Mallinātha.
Me	Meghadūta.	P	Pūrṇa Sarasvatī
Rts	Rtusamhāra.	B	Bharat Mallika.
Raghu	Raghuvamśa.	Su	Sumati Vijaya.
Ks	Kumārasambhava.	Mg	Mahimasinhagaṇi.
Vi	Vikramorvaśīya	L	Lakṣmī-nivāsa.
Śa	Abhijñāna Śākuntala.	J	Janārdana or Janārdana Vyāsa.
Mālavikā	Mālavikāgnimitra.	MS	Megharāja Śādhu, Megharāja or Megharāja Gaṇi.
Rāmāyana	Rāmāyana of Valmiki (Nirnaya Sagar Edition)	Saro	Sāroddhārini
Ayo.	Ayodhya Kāṇḍa.	Ram	Rāmanātha Tarkālaṁ-kāra.
Ki	Kiṣkindhā ..	T	Tibetan translation.
M. Bh.	Mahābhārata.	EW	Edition by H.H. Wilson ( Calcutta, 1813 )
K. P.	Kāvya Prakāśa.		
Pt	Patañjali.		

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My thanks are particularly due to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, for making readily available to me the old manuscripts of the Meghadūta in their possession. I must also thank Dr. P. L. Vaidya, who sent to me from Baroda, the rare extracts from the manuscript copy of the Commentary by Janardana or Janardana Vyasa. Prof. M. L. Chandratreya has obliged me by discussing and clarifying the astronomical argument in the treatise. The inspiration to bring out the English edition of my original thesis in Marathi came largely from Dr. P. K. Gode, Dr. R. N. Dandekar, Prin. N. G. Suru and Shri D. V. Jogalekar, as also from Kalidāsa Sanshodhan Mandal of Poona, and its enthusiastic members. I must particularly mention here the invaluable aid from Shri Shankarrao Oke (the present Publisher.) A lover of Sanskrit and a student of Sanskrit Grammar, he took keen interest in the present research, ever since its inception. Discussions with him were not only delightful, but they often helped to clarify the subject in hand. My friend Shri R. A. Nadkarni, Advocate Poona, was kind enough to go through portions of the manuscript and offered important suggestions. Shri S. D. Ghorpadkar gladly bore the brunt of copying, comparing, preparing the press-copy and index. My friend Shri G. N. Shrigondekar had willingly undertaken to read the proofs; but unfortunately, sudden illness prevented him from seeing the job through. Many more printing errors would have been eliminated, had his expert eye been available throughout the work. The 'Shri Mudran Mandir' Press wholeheartedly co-operated in spite of many difficulties. I also take this opportunity to thank the numerous friends (many of them not even previously acquainted), who after reading my thesis in Marathi communicated to me their agreement, approval or appreciation as regards my humble effort in the field. The author is grateful to all those, who were helpful in one way or the other. I cannot fail to express the deep sense of gratitude, under which Dr. A. D. Pusalker has laid me by writing the foreword within a short time in spite of other pressing duties.

I must not end this note without mentioning the debt, although indirect, which I owe to my grandfather, the late Prof. Shivarampant Paranjpe, at whose feet I learned. Though a Sanskrit scholar of repute, he took leading and active part in politics. He was an accomplished orator and writer of his times—unrivalled in rhetorical eloquence, as also in wielding a powerful pen. The patriot suffered, braved British jails, but to the last moment, put the cause of liberation of his country before everything else. From his preoccupations however, he did manage to snatch an hour, off and on, to coach his young grandson. I still remember how he made me learn by heart some of the beautiful verses in the Meghaduta (as also other Sanskrit and English classics)—which have ever since become with me an asset and a source of joy for ever. He taught me Sanskrit, and much more. I believe that his blessings have made me what I am.

31st July 1960  
1126 Budhwar,  
Paranjpe Road, Poona 2.

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V. K. P.



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# The Two Routes Meet



Ramgadh in Madhya Pradesh is the meeting point of the two routes—Rāma's Vanavāsa route and the route of the cloud.

Hence, Ramgadh = Rāmagiri (= Citrakūṭa)

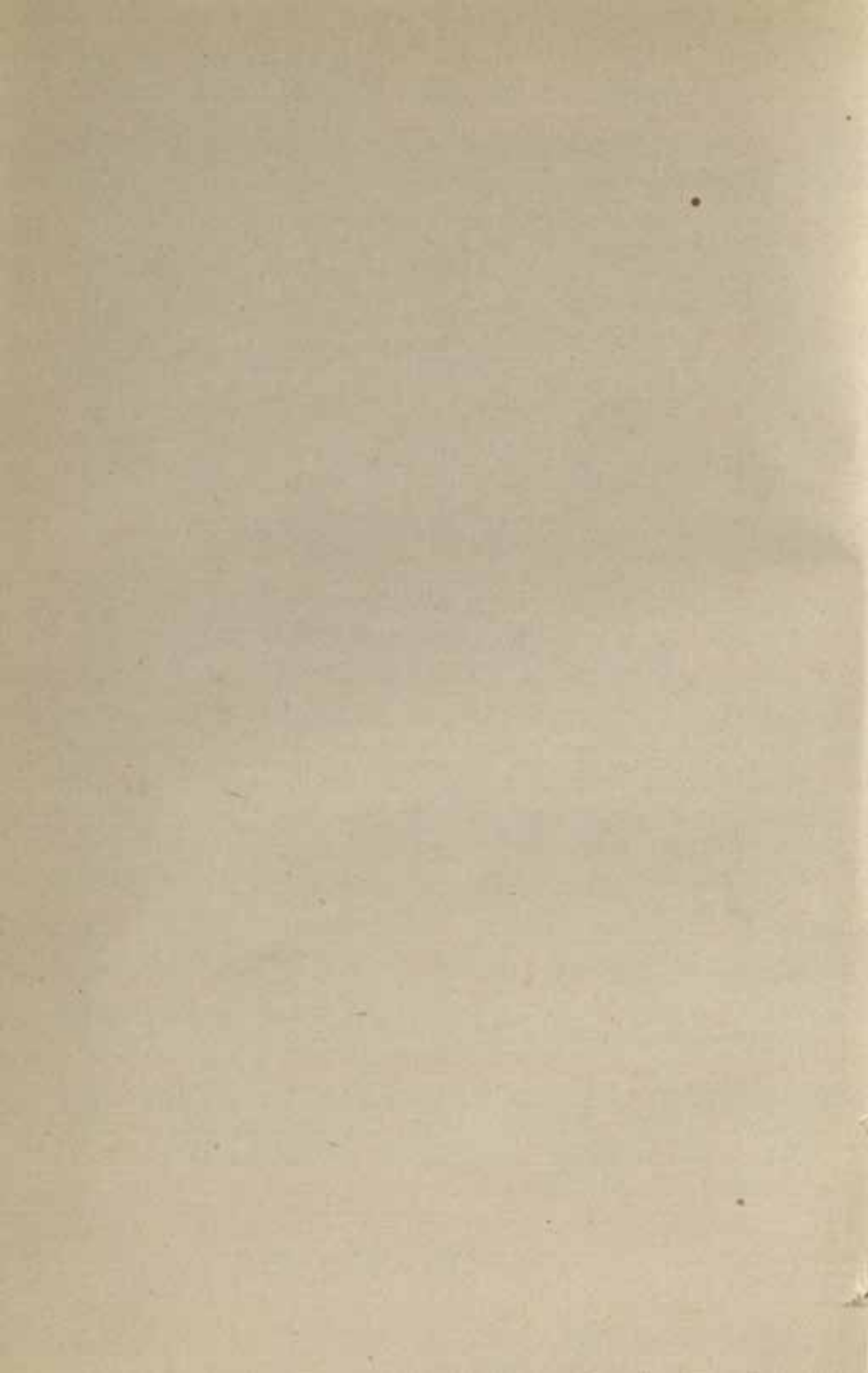
Rāma's route is shown by arrow-heads, and the Meghadūta route by a series of clouds.

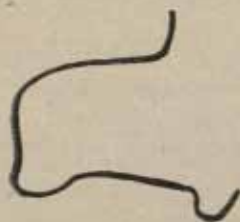




To all those  
who gave new light







FRESH  
LIGHT  
ON  
KĀLIDĀSA'S  
MEGHADŪTA





## INTRODUCTION

It may be stated at the outset, that the somewhat presumptuous title of the book should be understood to represent only an humble attempt or study, made by the author for finding an answer to some of the undecided problems in Kalidasa's Meghaduta. The object of the present treatise is fourfold :

- (1) To offer the correct interpretation for the first time of certain crucial passages bearing on the topography in the Meghaduta.
- (2) To establish the identity of Kalidasa's Ramagiri with Ramgadh in Madhya pradesh and also to point out the exact geographical places mentioned therein; to trace the route of the cloud-messenger ( from Ramgiri to Ujjayini) and thus bring to light the correct topographical back-ground in the Meghaduta, and further to show how its knowledge is essential to the literary appreciation of the poem as well.
- (3) To point out that Rama story was the main source of Kalidasa for his Meghaduta, and that Valmiki's epic therefore serves as a master key for the purpose of solving what otherwise appear to be some of the baffling problems in Kalidasa's poem.
- (4) To find out the correct historical Vanavasa route of Rama, as known in ancient times, which in other words means, to fix the location of the famous Panchavati, and the

Dandakaaranya Forest. ( It will be shown how the route of the cloud and the Vanavasa route of Rama meet and thus corroborate each other).

Unfortunately unknown remains the past of the most celebrated poet of India. To obtain even a glimpse of it, is an eagerly awaited joy for his admirers. The investigations of the author, therefore, seek to throw fresh light from a new angle and in a new manner on the famous Meghaduta, particularly with regard to the nature, origin and development of its theme and story. The historical and topographical back-ground of the poem is attempted to be unfolded with the help of fresh evidence, internal and external. Much of the material, proof, and perspective presented in the book is mostly new and constitutes a consistent presentation, made for the first time. Although the book contains some argument meant for an advanced student of Sanskrit and its classical works, as also some of it for the specialists in Indology, Archaeology and allied subjects, the bulk of the book, and the general discussion of the topics are addressed to the general reader. The author will feel amply rewarded if his effort is found fruitful, and if it can serve the purpose, for which it is undertaken.

A remarkable literary work

Well did Chezy say that if all other works of Kalidasa were to be extinct and if only Meghaduta were to remain, Kalidasa's reputation as a poet would not suffer a bit. The pithy observation of the French orientalist, however, does not bring out fully the real merit and importance of the celebrated poem and the place it occupies in Sanskrit literature. The converse proposition probably would do it more successfully. If all the other works of our poet remain but Meghaduta is lost, the flight of his imaginative power would certainly fall short of the Himalayan heights which are reached in Meghaduta. Sanskrit poetry will suffer



from such a loss, as much as will Kalidasa himself. Meghaduta lost will be somewhat like paradise lost to the lovers and lovers of erotic poetry. The pathetic-romantic love-lyric is unique and inimitable in many respects, although attempts have repeatedly been made in the past to imitate it, though with scant success. Meghaduta is certainly not the *magnum opus* of the poet. But it would undoubtedly vie merrily with his other formidable works, if not for supremacy at least for bold imagination and exquisite execution. No doubt there are in the field great masters like Vyasa and Valmiki with their monumental epics describing war or god-ward devotion, to thrill and ennoble us. Even so, Kalidasa, the richly favoured child of the Muse, does occupy a place of his own. In certain respects he is unique and even unsurpassable. The role of a love-lyric too cannot be under-rated. The emotion and joy of love has ever been the earliest and most persistent of the higher joys of life. Byron said significantly—

Devotion wafts the mind above,  
But heaven itself descends in love.

The poet of love, who sings of its highest moods and phases, is perhaps the greatest benefactor of humanity.

The Meghaduta probably represents the first revolutionary departure of its kind from the epic form then current. The brevity of Kalidasa's Meghaduta is indeed the soul and source of its unfading charm and amazing popularity. Its simultaneous appeal to head and heart is no less responsible for the unfailing grip, which the cloud-messenger continues to exercise, ever since it was set on flight centuries ago, by the wings of his imagination. Mr. Ryder rightly points out :

“Poetical fluency is not rare; intellectual grasp is not very uncommon; but the combination has not been found perhaps more than a dozen times since the world began.... It might even be said that those rare and



happy centuries that see a man as great as Homer or Virgil or Kalidasa, or Shakespeare, partake in that one man of a renaissance."

The Meghaduta of Kalidasa is a peculiar product wherein the genius of the poet has welded together, with remarkable subtlety, what are supposed to be rather discordant and incompatible elements—the subjective and objective, the imaginative and the imaginary, the real and mythical. Perhaps the charm is augmented, because it thus represents a perfect blend of the real and ideal or of fact and fable. For a proper understanding and appraisal of the poem, we must endeavour to distinguish and separate the one from the other. In the Meghaduta, the presence of that indefinable self of Kalidasa, the unmistakeable imprint of his personality as much as of the times, which he represented and lived in, are easily discernable. Behind the words, one can almost see and feel the hand of the master at work. It has originated a distinct and new *genre* of the literary composition. In touch, texture, and treatment, this unique literary piece is peculiarly Kalidasan, as much as it is Indian. *Le style c'est homme* is certainly a sound dictum, but in the field of art, the style can also be said to be the expression of Racial as much as Individual personality. The poem is accused by some as suffering from certain shortcomings. Tastes may differ. And tests may differ too. Probably no fixed standard or objective tests can be set up, which may be applicable for all times and for all people. If any one does not appreciate any of the poetical devices in Me. ( e. g. like the employment of a cloud as a messenger to one's beloved ) they must be treated, to say the least, as vagaries of genius. If faults they are, they are of the kind referred to by Goldsmith:

"There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue".<sup>1</sup>

---

1 The Good natured Man Act I, Scene 1.

Especially in the realm of poetry, personification is a recognised means of producing great artistic effects. Further, as Shakespeare says—the lover, the lunatic and the poet are of imagination all compact. There is no violation of artistic truth in the central idea of the Meghaduta.

It must be remembered that every work of art is a particular case and must be judged on its own. "Every composition contains within itself the rules by which it should be criticised, or as Manzoni himself more carefully puts 'offers to anyone who wishes to examine it the principles necessary to form a judgment of it.'<sup>1</sup> Our poet himself inserts an important hint in V. 5<sup>2</sup>, as to the perspective from which his poem is to be viewed and appreciated. We have to read the Meghaduta through the eyes of a longing lover like the Yaksha in the poem, who is almost beside himself due to grief of separation.<sup>3</sup>

It is said that even Homer nods. But sometimes who nods is the critic and not Homer. Anyway even the defects of the great have their own grandeur about them, and to use Kalidasa's own simile, they are like spots on the moon which perhaps enhance her charm and loveliness.<sup>4</sup> The truest test of great literature is the extent, to which it enraptures and elevates us by its magic. The merger or rather the transformation of our lower self into a higher self, which the poets seek to bring about, is perhaps the greatest secret of their art. That is the reason of their lasting fame. That is why Valmiki, Kalidasa, Sapho,

1 Principles of literary Criticism by Prof. Abercrombie, p. 152.

2 इत्यौत्सुक्यात् अपरिगणयन् गुह्यकस्तं ययाचे  
कामार्ता हि प्रकृतिकृपणाश्चेतनाचेतनेषु

3 The incident in the story of Majnu may also serve us in the literary field as illustrative of the importance and necessity of the perspective or subjective out-look. When repeatedly told that Laila is not so charming and beautiful, Majnu is reported to have said वचधमे मज्नु बायद दीद. 'You have to look at her through Majnu's eyes.'

4 एको हि दोषो गुणसन्निपाते निमज्जतीन्दोः किरणेष्विवाकः Ks I. 3

Dante, Petrarch, and Shakespeare are still read and remembered, while other more brave and august reputations have long faded or vanished.

“ Princes and captains leave a little dust,  
And Kings a dubious legend of their reign,  
The swords of Caesars they are less than rust,  
The poet doth remain ”.

And Kalidasa has remained. He stands out even to-day not only as an out-standing genius in the field of Sanskrit literature, but also as a glorious symbol and representative of everything that was high and noble in the ancient Hindu life, art and culture. Meghaduta, the love-lyric of Kalidasa, will doubtless continue to shine in the future, as it has done in the past, like a bright little star in the firmament of Sanskrit poetry, to be gazed at and admired with wondering eyes by the lovers and devotees of literature, for its small size but great lustre.

### The Riddles in Meghaduta

But we are not concerned here (at least directly) with the literary appreciation of the poem itself. The present treatise proceeds to deal with some of its knotty yet interesting problems or what may be called the mysteries of Meghaduta, and their possible solution. Here are some of them :

Is K's Meghaduta an independent literary creation, all his own ? What is the source of his inspiration ? Did any similar incident in the life of the poet himself, like the separation from his wife, suggest or provoke this out-burst of emotion and passionate longing ? How did he hit upon its central idea, or the device of sending a friendly cloud with a message ? Where did K bring the theme from ? Who is this Yaksha, kept studiously anonymous ? How does he appear on the scene all of a sudden, as if from thin air, rather unconnected and unannounced ? How was he



born in K's imagination? Why of all the places should The Ramagiri be chosen as the venue? Why did K connect that hill rather abruptly and seemingly without any reason or relevance with Janakatanaya and Rama's peregrinations? Is the place mythical or is it identical with Ramtek near Nagpur? If not, which then is the real Ramtek? Is R hill identical with Rama's Chitrakut, as asserted by the ancient commentators of Me. and denied by their modern counterparts? Which is the correct route of the cloud as out-lined by Kalidasa? What made him choose the route, he did? What led K to conceive and execute this literary master-piece? Why was the lyric chosen or invented as a medium, when epic was the order of the day? When and where was this charming little piece composed? What inspired him to do so? What was the occasion, object or motive?

These are some of the riddles unsolved, or not convincingly solved so far, and they have remained among the challenges to a research student of K's works. While attempting the task, the author seeks to draw certain conclusions, which may be summed up and enumerated as follows:—

1 Ramtek near Nagpur is not the R of K described in his Me.

2 R is not a mythical or imaginary place. R of Kalidasa represents a historical hill, which is as real as any other place and which K knew well. It can be none other than the present Ramgadh hill in M. P.

3 The route of the cloud as visualised by K in Me proceeded from Ramgadh hill to the famous mountain of Amarkantak, but after a small south-ward detour in between; and then to Bhilsa (Vidisha) and Ujjayini i. e. towards the west, all along the northern bank of the Narmada.

4 The present Ramgadh hill was in ancient times known as Chitrakut—as it is called so even to-day by

the local inhabitants—and was supposed to be the historical halting place of Rama and Sita during their banishment. K coined and used the new word Ramagiri to denote that hill in Mahakoshal, which was already widely known as once inhabited by Rama.

5 The prevailing notions about the location of Panchavati at Nasik and the Dandakaranya forest on the western coast are incorrect and unfounded. The ancients took Rama's Panchavati to be at Bhadrachalam near Rajmahendri on the East Godavari, and the famous Dandakaranya comprised roughly the south-eastern part of M. P. i. e. to say the districts of Chhattisgad, Bilaspur etc.

6 Rama's forest route was directly to the south from Prayag (Allahabad) to Bhadrachalam; Ramgadh alias Chitrakut hill fell on this way and was supposed to be a halting place in Rama's journey through the D forest.

7 Rama story was the main source of K for his Me. He appears to have borrowed not only the central device from the similar episode in Ramayan viz. the embassy of Hanuman to Sita, but many of the details, descriptions, and even incidents, (as also the chief characters) from Valmiki's epic. Y is practically Rama in disguise. K's picture of Y is suggested and drawn from that of the emotional Rama-in-separation, as delineated by the author of the Ramayan.

8 The route described in Me particularly from R to U represents very probably the land-route of those days: K knew this part too well. Kalidasa's original home was in Mahakosal and very probably in the vicinity of Amarkantak i. e. to say somewhere in the region around Ratanpur in the modern Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh.

It will be seen, even at this stage, how all these propositions stand interconnected. But in the following pages they are sought to be proved independently of each other. Each one of them corroborates



the other or others. They make up a homogeneous whole and form a sort of chain, which for that very reason becomes all the more unassailable.

The main purpose of the present treatise

The solution of the problems or riddles referred to above is to be sought, not so much for its own sake, as because it may enable us to appreciate Kalidasa's poem fully, more perfectly and perhaps just in the way in which the poet himself expected us to do it. It is often thought, that the problems of the nature indicated above are idle and at best can only be of academic interest and, therefore, have nothing to do with the literary appreciation of the poem itself. But this viewpoint is neither fair nor scientific. Before proceeding to appreciate or criticise a literary piece, particularly of a lyrical romantic type, it is essential to bear in mind the ideal dictum of Manzoni<sup>1</sup>: Every composition contains within itself the rules or principles by which it should be criticised. These principles as Prof. Abercrombie says, may be obtained by asking three questions: What was the author's intention? Was the intention reasonable? Has the author carried it out? In other words: *Discover* the purpose; *judge* its worth; *criticise* the technique.<sup>2</sup>

But how are we to gather the intentions of the author? For that purpose we have to turn to his technique, which is the only reliable medium through which he could convey them. The reason why any work of art exists at all and is worth our study is that it was the only way in which the author could truly give us his intentions. This is the more so in the case of masters of diction like Kalidasa. Thus the inten-

1 Preface to his poem, *Il conte di Carmagnola*.

2 The method advocated by Manzoni for literary appreciation is well worth comparing with the method of the Mimamsakas for deducing the aim, object or intention of a treatise:

उपक्रमोपसंहारी अभ्यासोऽपूर्वता फलम्  
अर्थवादोपपत्ति च लिङ्गं तात्पर्यनिर्णये



tion of the author explains his technique whereas the technique throws searching light on his intentions. The real question therefore, is, *How* has he carried out his intentions? But the critic cannot adequately investigate this question without first comprehending the general nature and function of the technique, employed by the author.

Every work of art (especially literary art) is a particular case and must be judged on its merits. The Meghaduta of Kalidasa is all the more and peculiarly so. Any attempt, therefore, of its literary appreciation or criticism demands on the part of the critic that he be pre-equipped with the solution, in so far as it is practicable, of the three fundamental questions raised above. The problems like identification of the places are to be investigated not so much for their own sake as that it may ultimately help and guide us in the task of correctly appraising Kalidasa's work, as also because it may prove useful in discovering new bits of information respecting the illustrious author. The present enquiry is intended to enable us to gather, as nearly as possible, the intention of our author in composing his Meghaduta and the mode in which he gives effect to it in his work. The upshot of our investigation in the form of answers to the three important queries mentioned above may be noted in brief as hereunder :

- 1 The author of the Meghaduta certainly intended to present a picture universally true, at once realistic and idealized cleverly conceived and combined into one, of a lover-in-separation and his mental anguish, emotions and moods during the helpless period of separation.

He derived his inspiration from Valmiki's epic, for the central theme and its development as also for many a detail. In choosing the route of the cloud-messenger, Kalidasa wanted to take and utilise the opportunity to describe the route and places particularly from Ramgadh to Ujjayini, which he intimately knew and loved so well for one reason or another.

2 The purpose or the literary motif viz. to sing of the highest moods of love was certainly laudable and one of universal appeal.

After all the theme of the poem is not so much of a sensual or sensuous character, as it appears to be. The picture presented is one of ideal love of an ideal couple. No doubt the erotic sentiment is depicted with great relish and subtlety. But that is done to describe the intensity of emotions and loyal love of the spouses. True love awakens, or is experienced during separation—and not in union. This is the quintessence, the psychological truth, which the poet presents to us in a nut-shell in the pen-ultimate verse—

स्नेहानाहुः किमपि विरहे ध्वंसिनस्ते त्वभोगात्  
इष्टे वस्तुन्युपचितरसाः प्रेमराशीभवन्ति

when we read Kalidasa's love-lyric, we are reminded of John Donne's love-song, the closing lines of which run thus :

*If our two loves be one, or, thou and I  
Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die.*

3 In the light of the intention of the author as stated above, the poet's skill and technique can now be readily seen in their proper perspective. The poet has cleverly utilised and transformed the characters and situations from Valmiki's Ramayana transforming them as it were by his poetical magic so as to suit the needs of his work. The minute, faithful and graphic description of places from Ramgadh to Ujjayini is a very significant pointer. The order and direction of the places in between are mentioned with mathematical precision and can be verified even to-day, as shown in the present thesis. The geographical position, among other things, unmistakably, points at the reality of Ramagiri (= Ramgadh) and negatives the suggestion about the possibility of a 'poetic verisimilitude'. Except the last place (the mythical Alaka) which was of course deliberately so chosen



for the purposes of the story, all other places are real.

It is to be emphasised here that the poet's descriptions of the places from Ramgadh to Ujjayini are rather **imaginative** and not **imaginary**. In other words, he often used his imagination or creative faculty or descriptive power only to depict the reality as best as it could be done in a poem. The attempt of the poet was to reproduce in words, as nearly as possible if he could, the actual scenes from nature as he knew or saw them before his eyes. The descriptions derive a special charm, because they represent an imaginative reconstruction of nature (hence artistic) and that again through the eyes of a longing lover.

The present research and its back-ground

In the month of June about three years ago—the time actually coincided with the beginning of Asadha—I hunted out, for a stray reference, an old dusty copy of the Meghaduta from my neglected shelves. As luck would have it, however, while searching for a small quotation, I was to strike upon something much more valuable. I stumbled on the expression Ramagiri and the question of its probable location arrested my attention. The search was then transformed into a research. I soon found myself in the grip of an intriguing problem which was to engage my attention and occupy all my leisure for some months thereafter. Thus, while I was burning midnight oil, it was a refreshing experience to find corroborations coming my way one after another, in support of the working hypothesis, which I had tentatively formulated as a basis to work upon. Nothing could be more thrilling to a research student than to hit upon in his quest what he searched for, and that too, just where he expected to find it. Personally, my joy knew no bounds when I could 'see' that K's famous Ramagiri was none other than the lofty Ramgadh hill in M. P. After a brief period which was necessary for self-clarification I decided to publish the results of my investi-

gation, which I did in July 1958 in my Marathi work *Meghadutavar Nava Prakash*. Favourable reviews began to appear in the press. However, I was on the look-out for adverse criticism, as I was more eager to know what could be urged against my view. I gave patient consideration to every such point raised as was worthy of attention. I also now devoted myself to the finding out of a few missing links or gaps, which for various reasons I had left untouched so far. I was fortunate enough to come across more material and additional proofs (particularly as regards the situation of the Mala land adjoining Ramagiri.) I soon found that my previous conclusions in the Marathi work remained not only unshaken, but on the contrary, stood on a firmer footing and in fact strengthened all the more, as the result of my subsequent researches. The present treatise is the outcome of my labours extending over more than two years, which I consider to be fully compensated, in view of the re-assuring results which I could get at almost every step of the enquiry. This refreshing experience pleasantly reminded me of Kalidasa's own observation—कलेशः फलेन हि पुनर्नवतां विधत्ते ।

The present thesis was first published in Marathi about two years ago. The publication, as was expected, at once aroused considerable interest and curiosity and provoked a prolonged discussion of the subject in the Marathi press. There were different reactions in different circles. The orthodox scholarship, unwilling to be dislodged from old positions, demurred. In certain other quarters, the long standing and perhaps wishful prejudice in favour of Ramtek near Nagpur, stood in the way. Yet others, though open minded, were chary of openly accepting the new conclusions thus gained from fresh investigations of the problem, perhaps because it was thought a little too hasty or premature to pronounce an unequivocal verdict on the question. The present thesis, therefore, is now being published in English with a view to place it before the wider world of Sanskritists, Indologists, and



lovers of Kalidasa, outside Maharashtra and abroad. It must be mentioned here, however, that the thesis certainly achieved its purpose and has already met with a partial success. The consensus of opinion amongst scholars in Maharashtra has now definitely turned against the Ramtek hypothesis, although some of them have not yet made up their mind about the Ramgadh identification.

In the meanwhile, the main attack comes from Mahamahopadhyaya Prof. Mirashi of Nagpur, the energetic protagonist of the Ramtek theory. He has published a book-let 'in Marathi intended to refute my thesis about Ramgadh and to meet my arguments directed against Ramtek. The learned professor, however, still prefers to stick to most of his old arguments and theories and repeats them although they had been shown to be indefensible. Repetition or persistence undoubtedly has its advantages. But it has its limits also. The collapsing Ramtek can no longer be propped up or revived by misconceived reasoning, oft-repeated.

In my former work it was necessary to meet the Ramtek case at length. That elaborate discussion is, however, curtailed in the present book, as it has already served its purpose. Prof. Mirashi's arguments in favour of Ramtek, however, are dealt with and answered in brief in Ch. VIII, just to the extent to which it appeared necessary to show how Ramtek identification is now out of question. It was also thought that to concentrate now mainly on establishing Ramgadh would be a more sound and scientific approach—more appropriate for the simple reason that that in itself would constitute the best answer to the Ramtek claim, even as in the case of a claimant-impostor, the best refutation of his claim would be to produce the real heir.

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1. "Meghadutatil Ramagiri Arthat Ramtek" by Prof. V. V. Mirashi, (Pages 128).

## The Method of Approach

It would not be out of place here to set out how and by what stages I finally arrived at my conclusions, or in other words, what was my thought process during the research. That will enable the reader to grasp in advance, the nature and significance of the various propositions sought to be proved, their interconnection and even interdependance, the logical chain which they form and consequently the evidentiary value which they derive therefrom. A brief outline, therefore, of the clues or the steps by which I gradually worked my way to the final solution of the Ramagiri problem is being tendered here at some length not only with a view to afford a glimpse of the inner working of the author's mind, but because it may provide the impartial reader with the means to judge, not only the correctness of the propositions, but also the scientific nature of the proofs and the method of approach as well.

### 1

According to the description in Meghaduta, R was tall, imposing, having a lofty towering peak

१ आदिलष्टमानं

२ तुंगं शैलं

३ अद्रेः शृंगं हरति पवनः etc.

Moreover K places it on the Vanavasa route of Rama and Sita i. e. to say in the Dandakaranya forest :

रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं

जनकतनयास्तनपुण्योदकेषु

Now the Ramtek hill obviously does not answer to the description. It falls far short of the picture. Ramtek is a small, dwarfish, unassuming hill (height from the ground not more than 500 ft) and moreover a flat-topped one, without a peak, river or rivulet. Secondly, Ramtek near Nagpur, being in Vidarbha could not be in the Dandakaranya forest. It can



hardly calim any connection with the ( known ) vanavasa route of Rama. There is no tradition to that effect either. Thirdly, in order to suit Amarkantak, Wilson had suggested the rout of the cloud as proceeding from Ramtek to that place, but the eastward rout is nowhere hinted in Meghduta ! Amarkantak is actually to the east of Ramtek, and K never suggested any eastward journey. If Amarkantak is a correct location for Amrakuta ( which it is, as will be shown later on ), the Ramtek-Amarkantak journey is wrong, unwarranted and could not be intended by the poet.

∴ *Ramtek is out of consideration.*

## 2

Ramtek thus stood negatived. But then, where to find R ? I started from the other end. Now three stations intervened between Vidisha ( Bhilsa ) and R (1) Scattered Rewa river-V. 19, (2) Amrakut mountain, V-17 and (3) Mala tract V. 14. If these three places or any of them could be fixed, R would be wellnigh in sight.

Amrakuta is generally identified with Amarkantak. But this identification was questioned by some scholars, and further there was no sound reasoning advanced in its favour, except the striking similarity between the two words, which of course has its own significance. From the description of *vishirna* or scattered Reva V. 19, I could fix Amarkantak (the river Reva or Narmada could not be scattered during rainy season anywhere else) except on the western slopes of the mountain in Amarkantak range.<sup>1</sup>)

The fixation of A led to two positions—

1. Ramtek was put out of question.
2. R was to be searched now in the vicinity of Amarkantak, but obviously to the east of Narmada. Now Amarkantak stands immediately to the west or north-west of Chhattisgad.

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1. For amplification of this point see under V. 19 Ch. 1,

Hence, R must be located in that area.

∴ R must be somewhere in eastern Chhattisgad.

### 3

When once it was fixed that R could be looked for only in Chhattisgad, the area of search for the exact location of R was considerably minimised. But how was a particular hill to be fixed up as R in that part i. e. Chhattisgad, which abounded in hills? The task at first appeared to be futile, like searching a needle in a haystack. I started looking for other clues, when the following brief note in Prof. K. B. Pathak's second edition arrested my attention—

“Ramagiri is identified by Ml. and Vl. with Chittrakut. But Wilson says that the mountain here alluded to by the poet is Ramtek “The hill of Rama”, which is situated a short distance to the north of Nagpur. But recent archaeological explorations point to Ramgadhi hill in the Central provinces<sup>1</sup> as the place intended by the poet, owing to its extreme proximity to Amrakuta or Amarakantaka, the source of the Narmada river (See Modern Review, October 1915 pp. 379 to 386)”.

After this I simply could not rest till I could procure the article in Modern Review. It was by the famous Bengalee artist Mr. Asit Haldar, who was summoned from Calcutta to join the archaeological expedition to Ramgadhi conducted by Govt., in order to copy out the fresco-paintings from what are known as Jogimara caves on its top. The paintings are very ancient, supposed to be 4900 years old. There is an ancient temple on the top containing the image of Rama and Sita and also natural caves after the names of Rama, Laxman and Sita. Tradition says that they lived here during their banishment. The description of the hill which Mr. Haldar gave in this article admira-

<sup>1</sup> Ramgadhi hill, formerly in central provinces is now included in the newly created state of Madhya Pradesh, with Bhopal as its capital.



bly suited the R hill of Me. I then looked up other sources for corroboration. (Chhattisgad Gazetteer, Sir W. Hunter's work, A. S. I. XIII etc). These gave the description of Ramgadh much the same as that given by Halдар. That convinced me about Ramgadh and more so because it was situated exactly about 75 miles to the east of Amarkantak, i. e. to say in eastern Chhattisgad.

Ramgadh hill in Chhattisgad now became a strong and reasonable probability.

#### 4

There was another loose end. Why did the ancient commentators like Vallabhadeva (10th century) say that R was Chitrakut? Obviously R could not be the present Chitrakut (near Kamtanath in Bundelkhand). Begler's theory was that Ramgadh must be the ancient Chitrakut of Rama and that the present Chitrakut is a faked one. K's own description of Chitrakut in Raghu XIII goes to support this. At first, I was inclined to believe that Beglar must be right. But the distance of Chi. hill, as given in Ramayan, from Prayag or Allahabad did not tally and appeared to be an obstacle in the way of this identification.

It may be that R was K's Chitrakut, known as such in his times. But there does not appear any other source available so far to verify whether R was looked upon by K as Chitrakut or not. I however discovered sound reasons to believe that Ramgadh must have had Chitrakut as its ancient name, perhaps before it came to be called as Ramagiri. I learnt, that curiously enough, Ramgadh is still called Chitrakut and the supposition of the local inhabitants is that it was one of the halting places of the banished Rama. Prof. A. V. Pandya, who recently paid a visit to Ramgadh informs me that Ramgadh is still called Chitrakut and probably because it had a peak ( *kuta* ) in which there were painted pictures ( *chitra* ) since hoary antiquity.

Ramgadh must have been known formerly as Chitrakut, as it is known as such even to-day.

This identical name might be responsible for subsequently inducing the belief that it was the famous Chi. of Rama. K might have entertained this belief or notion like and along with the people of his times. But as nothing definite can be said about it, it does not carry us very far.

## 5

But apart from the fact whether R is Chi. or not, it was pretty certain that R was in Dandakaranya. For Chi. was undoubtedly in the forest D. Vallabhdeva and others who said that R = Chi. obviously meant the same thing. Sthiradeva (11th century) and others actually observe in so many words : रामगिरिः दंडकान्तः प्रसिद्धः । The text of Me. itself, as pointed out above, unmistakably hints at the same thing.

∴ R, whether Chitrakut or not, was in Dandakaranya i. e. on the Vanavasa route of Rama.

## 6

This conclusion naturally led to the next step or stage in the enquiry : Where was Dandakaranya situated ? And which was the route of Rama and Sita ( of course upto Panchavati on Godavari), especially according to K ? The solution of this question was sure to indicate the location of K's Ramagiri. I therefore looked up all the references and sources available bearing on this point.

Starting right from Ramayan, I found that there was hardly anything in the ancient literature to suggest or justify the present notion about Rama's Panchavati near Nasik. Extreme west was not the direction of Rama's route. It was southward i. e. from Prayag to Bhadrachalam, on the east Godavari. Rama's route described by K appeared to point in the same direction. So also the tradition prevails that

Chhattisgad once formed part of the Dandakaranya forest.

It became clear, that roughly speaking, R must be placed on a line joining Prayag with Bhadrachalam—at such a point as the topographical picture in Meghaduta would require. In other words Ramagiri must be located where the two routes—the route of the cloud and the route of Rama—meet (see our map).

The point, where these two routes meet, could only be in Chhattisgad, i. e. to the east of the Narmada. Therefore, Ramgad hill in Chhattisgad (M.P.) was the Ramagiri of Kalidasa.

## 7

Kalidasa often follows and even draws upon Valmiki's Ramayan. As for his Meghaduta, our poet has heavily borrowed from the said source, not only the theme and the central idea, but also incidents and descriptions from Valmiki's epic. (see Ch. 2). Further it can be seen from K's Raghuvansha that the various halting places in Rama's journey during exile are just the same as those described in Ramayan. Thus, K's Dandakaranya forest and the route of Rama could not be very different than those of Valmiki.

Which then are the hill and *ashramas* to which K referred in his opening verse? There could be no doubt that K had in view some particular hill in between Prayag and Bhadrachalam, supposed to have been surrounded by *ashramas* (hermitages) of sages, and which was associated in his mind with the residence of Rama and Sita, in accordance with the notion or tradition, then prevalent.

From Ramayan and even K's Raghuvansha (Cantos XII and XIII), it is clear that such a site could only be one, where Rama is said to have lived with Sita in the various *ashramas* or habitations of the sages like Sutikshna, Sharabhang etc., before he went to Agastya's ashrama and thereafter to Panchavati.



It is now evident that this site must be somewhere midway between Prayag and Bhadra. As such, it can be none other than the Chhattisgad region itself.

K is referring to a hill in Chhattisgad round about which were situated, according to his notion, the *ashramas* of Sharabhanga, Sutikshna and others.

## 8

Last but the most important step for me was to find out the correct direction of the cloud's journey as contemplated by the poet himself, especially in its initial stage. A strong prejudice which had almost ossified into a rigid conviction that the journey of the cloud was northward from R ruled the field. Wilson and others who followed in his wake, all along suggested and maintained that the Mala and Narmada must be to the north of R. They were obviously misled into that belief relying, as they did, upon उदङ्मुख (udan-mukha v. 14), which expression appeared to indicate a journey to the north.

I could now see that as R was Ramgadh in M. P. the expression could never mean a northward journey. Then I realised and found out from further investigation that *udanmukha* in the line उत्पतोदङ्मुखः सः etc. could never signify a horizontal direction but only indicated an upward movement. But to carry conviction and take the matter beyond doubt some more tangible proof of this proposition was necessary. And fortunately I got ample of it. I struck upon the passages in the ancient commentaries of Vallabh and Sthiradeva specifically asserting that *utpata* means only 'rise upward'. Further on, to my great joy I soon found them expressly stating that the Mala table land was to the south of R and not to the north. Thus was the whole confusion cleared up ! This final confirmation completely ruled out the initial northward journey from R, which was based on a misconception about the meaning of *udanmukha*. It was clear now that the journey of the cloud was, at the start, a little



towards the south, thereafter to the west and *then wheeling back again* to the north in order to reach Amrakuta. That is to say R was to the east of A. Ramgadh is exactly so situated in relation to Amarkantak. Thus the complication stood straightened out. The whole thing which appeared to be a knotty and baffling problem, now looked so simple, natural, consistent and convincing.

Thus, Mala land was located to the south of R.

Mala, again, lay to the south of A, i. e. Amarkantak.

∴ R is none other than Ramgadh in Madhya Pradesh.

## 9

In the end, I considered the view held by some people, that R is a mythical hill. Now after the emergence of Ramagadh on the scene, the 'mythical hill' theory loses much of its force. For one thing, Ramgadh not only answers amazingly well to the poet's description in Me. but also fits equally well in the topographical picture of the poem. We can now plot the desired point, almost as accurately as we do in geometry. Secondly K connects the hill with real places like Amarkantak, Vidisha, Ujjayini and so forth. (For fuller treatment of this topic, see ch. VIII).

Therefore, Ramagiri is not mythical, but is as real as any other place described in Me.—except the last one, Alaka.

It will be seen from the foregoing how in searching for R, some allied questions had to be investigated like those concerning the location of Dandakaranya and Rama's route etc. The route of the cloud and the Vanavasa route of Rama now confirm the correctness of each other. The Ramgadh identification will have to be considered hereafter as a new and additional proof of the fact that Rama's Vanavasa route as was then understood lay from Ayodhya to East Godavari via Ramgadh in Madhya Pradesh.

This is in short the outline of my effort for the search of Kalidasa's Ramgiri. The task took me

almost two long years. It was like embarking on an uncharted sea or rather incorrectly charted sea, which is often more embarrassing. During the voyage, there was at times much despair and disappointment, occasionally inducing a desire to abandon the venture. But, at intervals, a 'lighthouse', often emerged from the dark to indicate the promised land ahead. I persisted. In the end I had good reason to feel rewarded.

### Identification of places essential for Literary Appreciation

The question of identification of places has another aspect which is equally worthy of attention. It is sometimes urged<sup>1</sup> that the question of finding out the correct places and the route of the cloud is one of historical or geographical rather than literary interest, and at the most has only an indirect bearing on the appreciation of the poem itself. It is also often stressed that the character of the poem is predominantly imaginary<sup>2</sup>. The correctness of this view-point can well now be called in question. It may have had its own justification before, but it is hardly maintainable now, when it can be shown, as demonstrated in the present thesis, that the places mentioned in *Me.* can be identified almost with a mathematical precision, and what is more, such identification helps us in the literary appreciation of the poem also. Nothing would be farther from truth than to say that a poet necessarily, or at least often, revels or indulges in pure fantasies, or at best, in verisimilitudes. In fact, nobody can describe or present a picture of anything, which is totally outside the scope of human experience. Even instances of the wildest imagination and most fanciful narrations have their roots in reality or realism. It must not be forgotten that ultimately the foundation of any poetical inspiration or expression is experience. This led Plato to believe imitation to be

1. Dey's Introduction.

2. Ibid.

the connection between poetry and nature—which proposition however does not take into account the characteristic quality and energy of poetry as well as the 'creative' role of the poet himself. To use the Vedantic terminology, an artist is 'free' as well as 'bound' at one and the same time. In other words, he is only free subject to certain limitations. The liberty or licence granted to poets (निरंकुशाः कवयः) may well be exercised in other respects but certainly not where well known geographical positions are to be described as such.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of art or literature has ever been to express, to convey, to communicate. If we endeavour to trace the origin and growth of poetry, we find that Vedic hymns were more direct, more simple, more close to nature. Then started the gradual expansion of the 'creative' or 'imaginative' role of poet. He began to embellish, exaggerate, transform, imagine. But even then he dared not and did not cut away from the moorings of realism. It is interesting to observe in this connection the history of the words कल्प, कल्प, कल्पन<sup>2</sup> etc.—which now usually denote imagination or imaginative process, in the sense of conceiving or describing

1 The above analysis is universally true and can apply to all literatures for all times. In English literature, identification of places does occupy a place in the field of literary criticism. Novels of Scott, Hardy and others are believed to contain faithful and accurate pen-pictures of the land-scape and historical places. There was a controversy as to which locality represented the 'Deserted Village' of Goldsmith. Attempts are often made to find out which places Wordsworth described in his poetic compositions.

2 The following meanings are given from Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary:

कल्प—To prepare, arrange, make ready, fit out. To believe, consider, imagine, think.

कल्प—A termination added to nouns and adjectives in the sense of 'a little less than' 'almost like,' 'nearly equal to,' [denoting similarity with a degree of inferiority]

कल्पनं—1 Forming, fashioning, arranging. 2 Performing, effecting, doing.

See प्रति + भा and प्रतिभा also. Similarly the English words imagine, imaginative, imaginary etc., may also be looked up and compared. It is important to bear in mind that they are formed from the original word *image*.



something which is unreal. But their original meaning was different or rather the opposite, viz. to fashion, form create, produce, effect (e. g. घाता...यथापूर्वं अकल्पयत्).

No doubt there was a tendency among ancient poets to exaggerate. But exaggeration is a different thing from distortion, which they never did, at least consciously. The presentation of the fantastic or unreal was never looked upon as the best form of poetry. What contributed to the excellence of a poetic composition, was mainly *Rasa* (sentiment). This could be achieved better by keeping closer to the real or natural than flying away from it. In descriptions, even as in the case of sentiment, Kalidasa usually suggests more than what he expresses. He appears to achieve maximum results with minimum of words and effort. He knew that for attaining literary excellence or producing artistic effects the manner of expression was more important than matter. Hence whatever he invented was more often in relation to the former than the latter. He knew and demonstrated that 'true' descriptions of nature became much more charming and appealing than those purely imaginary or invented. It would not be proper to regard or start with the presumption that K has invented the place, Ramagiri, and is offering to us an equally invented description of it. We must properly consider and weigh the fact, that he has connected the hill with the other well-known geographical places, right up to the Himalayas thus linking up together serially and artistically the famous and familiar localities of the times. It must not be forgotten also that he was addressing the poem to his contemporary readers, who were bound to know the whole topography under reference.

The topographical word-pictures, drawn in Meghaduta are representations of scenes from nature, such as they actually existed in nature. They are as faithful and accurate as they could be in a literary work. It is emphatically to be pointed out in this



connection that the merit of the poet here lies not in providing fanciful or imaginary pictures of scenic beauty but rather in presenting pen-pictures of a series of scenes from Nature as they actually existed on the route chosen. The idea was not merely to decorate the poetic composition with 'beautiful' descriptions imagined or invented at will, but the poet was rather out to depict, as accurately and graphically as he could, the actual scenes, as he had seen them and the actual route as he had known it. And the poet has performed this fete so fondly, faithfully and exquisitely that the reader can almost see and experience those scenes standing before his mental vision in all their beauty, grandeur and reality. In fact, many of the descriptions appear to be so attractive and beautiful, probably because they are genuine and pertain to scenes actually witnessed and experienced by the poet on occasions when he happened to roam through these parts during his wide travels.

The one thing that must not be lost sight of is that Kalidasa was, in the first instance, addressing the work to his contemporary readers. Now, is it likely or possible that Kalidasa would give incorrect, perverted or thoughtlessly composed descriptions of places which everybody knew so well in those days? Could he have thought that the absurd descriptions or garbled topography would pass unnoticed or even if noticed it did not matter? On the other hand, is it not more probable that he attempted to describe the well-known route and the places in his days, with an accuracy which would evoke admiration and approval from the contemporary audiences? One can imagine how people in K's times knowing or visiting places like Ramgadh, Amarkantak, the scattered Rewa, Vidisha, Ujjayini etc. must have immensely enjoyed the apt, accurate and appealing description of those places in his Meghaduta. Perhaps, they realised for the first time that the description of actual familiar places could become so lovely and attractive.

It must be remembered, however, that poets in faithfully portraying the scenes from Nature are yet not like photographers or landscape-painters, who at best may offer us mechanical or 'still' portraits. The literary artists have their own way of doing it. They include or omit at will such of the details as would serve their purpose. The aspect, the perspective, the stand point, purpose or the angle of vision is all their own. They do draw and delineate from Nature as from life, but only so much as would serve their end.<sup>1</sup> In fact that is the key of their art and greatness. They do the trick with a few bold, direct, suggestive and well-calculated strokes. Their pen-pictures 'live', throb with life and energy and are more dynamic and representative of reality than if they were to be mere mechanical copies of nature. As Mr. Rydar rightly says about Kalidasa :

"Rarely has a man walked our earth who observed the phenomena of living nature as accurately as he, though his accuracy was of a poet, not that of a scientist."

Kalidasa has described with telling effect the famous and wellknown sights of nature by selecting and working upon this most striking, unmistakable and distinguishing features. As Arobindo says :

In continuous gift of seizing an object and creating it to eye, he has no rival in literature.

This is the reason why the identification of places in Me is not only possible but becomes delightful and desirable. One of the objects of the present treatise is to show how the descriptions in Me. unmistakably

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1 If poetry merely mirrored nature, it could give us no more than nature gives us ; but the fact is, that we enjoy poetry precisely because it gives us something which nature does not give us. . . . We do not want a transcription from nature since we have the original always before us ; we want an imaginative reconstruction of the possibilities of nature. —Principles of literary criticism by Prof. Abarcrombie P. 81 & 86.



point at the sights newly suggested. It will be realised, therefore, it is hoped, that to have a correct idea about the topography is not only helpful for the better understanding of a poem like Meghaduta, but in an important sense, essential for its literary appreciation as well. It is certainly not the poet's job to give correct geographical details. That Kalidasa does not harm the topography and in fact faithfully reproduces it, even when the literary flourishes and embellishments were his chief preoccupation, must be regarded as one of the unique and admirable features of his poetic art which deserves a special study. Nothing can be more interesting or even educative than to compare the two things the actual scene from Nature and its pen-picture by the poet. For one thing, the instruction such study may provide, is invaluable. Secondly, Kalidasa is noted for his similes. Thus the use of a simile as also its appreciation requires and presupposes the knowledge of two things the *upamana* as well as the *upameya*. It is obvious, therefore, that before we can aspire to enjoy the beauty of Kalidasa's simile which is recognised as his special and chief merit, we must get to know exactly the thing compared as also the thing compared with. This is a duty which every serious student of K. owes to the great poet even if not to himself. A comparative study and a fairly correct idea, on the part of the reader, of both the things equated with each other in a simile are essential, without which much of its appeal or charm is likely to go in vain and unappreciated. The poet's purpose could be fulfilled only if we understand and grasp to its fullest extent all that he wanted to convey or suggest by his imagery. Some of Kalidasa's wonderful similes would go home only if and when, we can grasp the full significance and propriety of the comparison offered by the poet; for that purpose it is essential to know the objects represented by the *upameya* as well as the *upamana*. To give a typical instance from the Meghaduta itself, we may turn to verse 19 :



रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलविषमे विध्यपादे विशीर्णां  
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमंगे गजस्य

The famous river Rewa is to be described. How will it appear to the cloud, when the river flows down the slopes of the Vindhya mountain or its adjacent foothills (विध्यपादे<sup>1</sup>) in the rainy season? Obviously during the rains, there could not be only one single stream of the river, but so many of them will be formed while coming down the slopes to the foot of the hill (naturally) to combine only thereafter into one big stream. These various streams of the river flowing on the side of the mountain or spreading over it are likened to painted streaks on the body of an elephant. The comparison suggested in this simile is like this:

Vindhya mountain or its adjacent hill.	= An Elephant. <sup>2</sup>
Sides or slopes of the hill.	= Body of the elephant.
Flowing streams of the river Rewa.	= Painted streaks (for decoration on the elephant's body).

Anyone who has witnessed during rains the scene of a hill, covered or strewn all over with foaming streams of water gushing down its slopes, as also a huge elephant with its sides or back painted over with streaks forming a decorative design can alone appreciate this apt simile of Kalidasa, to its fullest extent,

Incidentally it may be noted that this peculiar description of 'the scattered Rewa on the hill' can apply to no other place but the western slopes of Amarkantak (the Amrakut of Me), over which the Rewa descends down into the plains of Malwa. Many

1 पादाः प्रत्यन्तपर्वताः । —Amarakosha and other ancient lexicons.

2 In his similes K often compares a mountain to an elephant and vice versa.

of the translators and critics have taken the scene to the *plains* lying at the foot of the Vindhya mountain. But the plain ground, however undulating, could not appear as an *elepahnt*, and clearly the river on plain ground could not be much 'scattered' or 'shattered' or 'parted into many streamlets' as it would be *on* the hill itself. If however we know, as we now do, that the Amrakut of Kalidasa represents the modern Amarkantak or one of its peaks and that by Vindhya-pad hill K means the westernmost slopes of Amarkantak, then alone we can get at the correct and implied meaning of the verse and in that case alone can we experience and enjoy the charm of the apt simile to its fullest extent. The issue of identification of places is thus not idle, scholastic or dry but is a vital one and often bearing directly on the question of literary appreciation itself of the poem. It hardly needs be emphasised now, that the joy of reading the Me. may be much more heightened with the adequate understanding of its geographical background or setting rather than without it. The character of the poem is 'imaginery,' only in the sense that all poetic compositions are imaginary. But it is certainly not so if the word is meant to suggest that the geographical places mentioned therein or their descriptions are fanciful i. e. unreal and purely invented. As for the descriptive part, K has offered us beautiful pen-pictures of the actual places, which everybody knew in those days and which anybody can verify even to-day. As for the theme itself, we shall see in Ch. VI how the poet is deeply indebted to the Ramayan in that respect. The skill and ingenuity of the poet thus will be seen to lie not in 'imagining' but arranging his matter. The character of the poem, therefore, is at best predominantly *imaginative* and not imaginary.

### The Origin of the Ramtek Theory

It would be interesting and in a way useful to observe how and why the Ramtek theory originated and continued to hold the field thereafter upto now.



The ball was no doubt set rolling by H. H. Wilson, who published his *editio princeps* of the Meghaduta in 1813. But it appears that he in his own turn depended for his authority on the previous article of an anonymous writer, which had appeared in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1806. This is what he observes on page 1 of his book—

“An account of a journey from Mirzapur to Nagpur, however, in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1806, has determined the situation of the scene of the present poem, to be in the vicinity of the latter city (i. e. Ramtek near Nagpur).”

I, therefore, turned to and looked up the original source. The narrative<sup>1</sup> of the journey undertaken in 1798-9 is written by a member of the Asiatic Society, ‘eminent for his extensive acquirements in every branch of oriental literature and science.’ There is no means now to ascertain the name of the writer who chose to remain anonymous<sup>2</sup> but this is what he wrote :—

“We proceeded to Ramtek, the Ramagiri of the Indian theogenies. Here Rama with his wife Sita and brother Laxman halted in their way from Ayodhya toward the southern promontary ... The ground is more truly classic as the spot which the anonymous author (!) of Meghaduta chose for the scene of his poem. A celestical spirit of an inferior order, banished upon earth, and separated from a beloved wife, makes this hill his abode; and here he vents to a passing cloud, his tender regrets and amorous impatience” —p. 27.

1 The narrative appears under the caption Miscellaneous Tracts, pp. 1 to 43 of the Volume referred to above.

2 The writer however appears to be a European, looking to the prefatory note by the Editor, which runs thus : A narrative of a journey from Mirzapur to Nagpure, by a route never before travelled by any European, in 1798-9.



Thus Wilson appears to have taken his cue from this anonymous eminent member of the Asiatic society, who, however, has not adduced any reasons which made him think that Ramtek was the Ramgiri of Me. Now let us look into the reasoning of Wilson himself. In his metrical translation, he renders the crucial line in V. 14 thus :

स्थानात् अस्मात् सरसनिचुलात् उत्पतोदङ्मुखः वं

Rise from these streams and seek the upper sky.

Then to the north with daring pinions fly;<sup>1</sup>

But in his "Annotations" respecting this verse at p. 18, Wilson comments on the direction of the cloud, as follows—

"In the first instance we have here his direction due north from the mountain of Ramagiri."

Then again, curiously enough, immediately after this ( at page 20 ) Wilson observes thus :—

"A reference to the map will show that it was necessary for the cloud to begin the tour by travelling towards the east in order to get round the lofty hills, (i. e. Amarkantak ) which in a manner form the eastern boundary of the Vindhya chain. It would otherwise have been requisite to have taken it across the most inaccessible part of those mountains, where the poet could not have accompanied<sup>2</sup> it and which would also have offended some peculiar notions enter-

1 The reader can easily perceive that this translation is rather free and is neither literal nor faithful. It departs from the text in many respects. But we are concerned here only, with the question of 'flying northward' of the cloud.

2 Wilson here appears to suggest that the poet has described in Me. the scenes and sights, which he must have personally witnessed. In other words the cloud's route corresponded with the land route of those times. If that is what he means, his line of reasoning is perfectly correct.

tained by the Hindus of the Vindhya Hill, as we shall again have occasion to remark."<sup>1</sup>

Thus Wilson is found to prescribe two contradictory directions at the same time for the cloud—which is an anomalous position indeed. Regarding Amarkantak as the Amrakut, as he did, he was constrained to take the cloud towards the east. But there is no warrant for it as the eastward direction is nowhere mentioned in the Meghaduta! As a matter of fact, the poem expressly asks the cloud to go to the west after ascending the Mala land. It is obvious that if Amarkantak is accepted, it destroys Ramtek. Probably that is the reason why Prof. Mirashi, the ardent supporter of the Ramtek hypothesis, tries to reject Amarkantak. But it is the other way round. It will be shown that Amarkantak is the correct place and (therefore) Ramtek is to be rejected. Now, the 'northward journey in the first instance' suggested by Wilson for the first time and supported by Mirashi (among others) is equally wrong and was never intended by the poet. Wilson's notion of the northward journey was obviously based on the misunderstood phrase *udanmukha* (उदङ्मुख), which however could only mean turning one's face to the north and *not* the actual journey in that direction. But once introduced, the interpretation of the northward journey gained considerable ground and was generally accepted by all those who came after Wilson, so much so, that nobody ever thought of suspecting or challenging its correctness. Consequently, due to constant repetition of the widely accepted interpretation, a rigid notion was formed that the Ramagiri must be located to the South of the river Narmada (and also Amarkantak) and that any other place, which is not so, must be ruled out as an utter impossibility.

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1 I looked up Wilson's edition, but I could not find his remarks, which he promises here to offer. It would be interesting as also useful to know what 'peculiar notions' the Hindus of the Vindhya hills entertain about crossing that mountain.



## Mala to the South explodes Ramtek and the 'Northward Journey'

Now the Ramgadh hill in Madhya Pradesh roughly speaking lies to the east of Amarkantak, and the river Narmada. This was the main and in fact the only objection which was levelled against my Ramgadh thesis in Marathi. The hold of the उदङ्मुख interpretation was so strong that even sympathetic critics felt that its situation to the east was a great hurdle in the way of Ramgadh. I wondered what more evidence; I could get to fight the 'northward journey' interpretation, which had taken deep root, but which I felt was wrong and unfounded. It struck me that the location of the Mala land which was the next station of the cloud's journey after Ramagiri, if correctly spotted out, would clinch the matter and could finally decide this issue. I, therefore, set myself about the task of exploring the enigmatic Mala land or rather the direction in which it lay. To my great joy and surprise as already stated, I found that the Mala kshetra was to the *south* of Ramagiri! All the ancient commentators from the 9th century onwards have expressly mentioned that the Malakshetra lay to the south of Ramagiri (See Ch. I). Not only that, but curiously enough, the oldest texts of the Megha-duta so far available in point of time viz. Vallabh's text, as also that of Sthiradev, with a small deviation of one syllable, read the crucial line of V. 16 thus:

सद्यः सीरोत्कण्ठसुरभिश्चेत्तमाह्वय मालं  
किञ्चित् पश्चात् प्रवलय गतिं भूय एवोत्तरेण

In effect it means that after traversing Mala, wheel back again towards north. The word *pravayaya*—प्रवलय—means turn round about i. e. wheel back again to the north and thus the lines quoted clearly presuppose that Mala was to the south. For a detailed discussion of this topic (see Ch. I and III). If the next station in the journey viz. Mala was to the south, the cloud was obviously not to proceed in a north-



ward direction. With Mala to the south, there is an end of the present उदङ्मुख interpretation and the northward journey. Similarly not only Ramtek but any other place to the south of the Narmada must now be ruled out. It may also be pointed out here that on examining all available ancient Sanskrit commentaries, it is found that the word *udanmukha* (उदङ्मुख) is nowhere interpreted to mean *actual* going to the north. The expression was never understood in that sense and it never signified a northward journey to the ancient generations of readers and pandits, until Wilson suggested it in 1813 in his *editio princeps*.

Thus uptil now as the tacit presumption that the Mala land as also the cloud's journey was to the north of R, ruled the field; and hence the discovery of R became a pretty difficult and intriguing problem. Amarkantak (Amarkut) evidently did not suit Ramtek, while those who approved Amarkantak could not reconcile it with the northward journey! Thus the search for R represented a merry-go-round which could not carry us any further. This was the reason why, uptil now any place whatsoever, put forward as Ramagiri, either Ramtek or any other for the matter of that, fell short and could not adequately or even broadly satisfy the topographical requirements in Me. Perhaps this position induced some scholars to adopt a rather naive and comfortable view that after all K's poem was a lyrical fantasy and that his Ramgiri was therefore mythical. But now it may be seen how the discovery of the Mala to the south of R changes the whole position, hits Ramtek, simplifies the whole problem and establishes Ramagadh.

### The Nature of Evidence

The evidence adduced in the present treatise is mostly linguistic, as we can hardly expect much of other type of evidence in a subject like this. But that does not minimise its importance in any way. The internal evidence is afforded by the text of the poem

itself and it should be considered as of primary importance, coming as it does from the pen of the poet himself. If then, it is found to stand the other scientific tests as well, which it will be shown it does, there appears to be no reason why it should not be relied upon for proof of what it purports to signify, especially when clarity, consistency and sustained accuracy are counted among the recognised traits of our poet. External evidence is also available in the form of various ancient commentaries, both critical and erudite, dating right from the 10th century. This type of evidence though secondary, is no doubt valuable if used judiciously for guidance and corroboration, as it would enable us to see how and in which light Kalidasa's Meghaduta was understood and interpreted since remote times. The Ramayan of Valmiki, from which K has borrowed a good deal for his work, is also used by us for clarification as well as corroboration of certain points. Archaeological evidence is cited in so far as it is available. Next in importance would come the evidence of tradition which, though not awlays dependable, is not without its own importance. It is often useful as a pointer and confirming factor. Last but not the least must be mentioned the proof we can get by actually verifying the places menioned. In other words, if the locations in question described by K are shown to correspond totally or convincingly enough with the geographical places, in existence even today, then this coincidence can well be taken as indicative of their correct identity rather than as mere accident. It is to be shown presently that that is exactly the case as regards the places referred to in the Meghaduta.

To go to the text, is perhaps the best and the recognised scientific method, both modern and ancient, in the process of formulating any thesis to be based upon it, as the text constitutes the most important and internal evidence. It reflects and retains within itself the true intention of the writer and very much



so in the case of a small-sized compact poem, which the Meghaduta is. Like any other text, the Me., when rightly approached and interpreted, can be made to reveal its own meaning, implied as well as expressed. Here we are only concerned to see and find out what it has to convey as regards the topics under investigation. While Kalidasa's original is primary evidence, its glosses, translations, commentaries and criticisms—of which there is no end—are at best outside aids amounting to secondary testimonia. This type of evidence, however, has its own importance and as stated above must be considered for what it is worth.

Fortunately for us, the text problem is already tackled by the Sahitya Academy's critical edition, edited by the distinguished scholar Dr. S. K. De. The edition is prepared after a scrutiny of all available material in the form of various editions, translations, commentaries and even manuscripts, the list of which extends over several pages. Any one can be easily convinced, that the text it has finally adopted cannot be much different from Kalidasa's original, at least in substance if not also in exact expressions. Even the cautious editor observes with a certain amount of confidence that "...the variations so far found are not greatly important, and do not, on the whole, seem to affect very much the poet's own text in its pristine form."

We must note one more circumstance in this connection. None of the verses used by us for the proof of our thesis is suspect and none has ever been questioned as spurious or interpolated. It may also be stated here that we have used and relied upon the text adopted by De's critical edition, although there is good reason to doubt De's readings in two or three places (VV. 2, 16 and 19). We have shown how alternative readings in the above mentioned verses are not only better fitting but appear to be the original ones of K himself. We are sticking to De's text, though the other readings would suit us much better. One



such case deserves special mention and that is as regards an important verse, No. 16, which deals with the question of the direction, which the cloud is supposed to follow immediately after taking its leave of Ramagiri (the line in question being किञ्चित् पश्चात् द्रव्य लघुगतिर्भूय एवं तत्रेण as per De's text). Now there is quite a number of very interesting variations or different readings in this line. However, it is as interesting as it is remarkable to find that all the diverse readings from this line, despite the different interpretations of the words therein, tend to express almost the same meaning (A full discussion of how and why they arose and what they hint at, will follow in our comments under V. 16 in Ch. I). Of course, for our thesis we need rely and have actually relied on De's standard text of this line, as stated above. It may be pointed out here, however, that the oldest *pathantara* (पाठान्तर) in the present line, viz. प्रवलय गति for द्रव्य लघुगति: can be shown—even demonstrably—to be the correct and original version, which, if accepted, would still more strengthen our case for Ramgadh, and in fact would at once establish it almost beyond a shadow of doubt.

The other two instances प्रथम-प्रथम in V. 2 and विकीर्ण in V. 19 may be mentioned in this connection. Of course, the choice of either of the readings in both the places would not make any difference with us, so far as our main arguments and conclusions are concerned. But the latter in both the cases can be shown to be not only more appropriate, but most probably to be the original version of the poet himself. Especially in the former case, it will be shown in due course, that the version प्रथमदिवसे in stanza 2 is almost a certainty. We are only remotely and indirectly concerned with the readings प्रथम and विकीर्ण. But Vallabha's reading प्रवलय गति is far more significant and even crucial to our thesis. For, if accepted, it at once becomes textual evidence coming from Kalidasa himself and would directly establish Mala to the south and consequentially the identity of Ramagiri with Ramgadh.

## Text and its Interpretation

Thus it will be realised that, the problem of fixing the text of the Meghaduta is, to some extent, directly connected with the problem of its interpretation. Any critical edition, for its final findings, must not rest satisfied only with a scrutiny and sifting of the various text traditions available. Because even then, its job is yet incomplete and one-sided. To look into the meanings of all available readings is equally important and essential, before any phrase is judged and finally adopted to the exclusion of others. A reading, howsoever authentic, attractive or appropriate it may appear to be to us, may yet be totally wrong i. e. unoriginal and must be rejected, if it obviously goes against the context or certain established positions known from other sources. The whole point is that we have to go back and catch hold of the expressions used by the poet himself, which *he* thought best or proper and not those which subsequent critics or we think best to day. In reconstituting the text, therefore, the meaning-method cannot be underrated or bypassed without incurring the risk of foregoing one of the surest tests available for the task. Particularly when in doubt or difficulty, as in a game of Bridge, this method may well serve as trumps. It will often do the 'trick.' The word is important because, and only in so far as, it embodies the meaning and reveals it. Language is rightly said to be a vehicle of thought, without which it will be like a body without soul. The word and the meaning are thus inextricably intermixed with one another and Kalidasa himself has emphasised this inseparable union of speech and thought in the very opening words of his Raghuvamsha, वागर्थाविव संयुक्ता etc.

There appear, therefore, to be two methods open for getting at the original version of the text—external and internal or textual and interpretative, if we may call them so. The former may supply all possible variants, from which the ultimate choice is



to be made and may even indicate or propose a solution. But it is certainly for the latter to accept or reject it after applying its own tests. The final choice must depend on their mutual agreement. Thus if both the two methods are employed in unison, then alone can the mark be hit as nearly as possible. In view of the necessity and advisability of looking into the meaning of the available readings in the poem, the process of reconstructing the original text calls for a correct interpretation thereof.

Every word or phrase employed in a poem has, as in a cross-word puzzle, checks and counter-checks; and the more so in the case of accomplished writers, especially those like Kalidasa, who have composed and left voluminous works behind them. As a result, even a minor subsequent interference with their original has only a slight chance to escape unnoticed or unsuspected. Even the innocent and common words, when used by the masters, become conscious instruments in their hands and acquiring an individuality of their own as it were, begin to speak out as they never did before. Their word and construction, just like their ideas and ways of expression, appear to have a stamp of their own and also a peculiar flavour, indefinable but such as could hardly be found in those of others. In his work, the poet is even like a thief, who leaves behind him sure traces of his identity and authorship—the skill, the intelligence, the *modus operandi* and the like, which are sure to betray him. And of this Kalidasa is a typical instance in point. The genuineness or otherwise, therefore, of any passage contained in his work, or even a phrase and its use, can in a fair degree be easily sensed, examined and judged by being compared and checked with the rest of his work.

There is quite a mass of critical and explanatory literature on Meghaduta in the form of numerous commentaries, adaptations, translations and criticisms, dating at least from the 10th century down to



the modern times—which fact shows the extreme popularity, the poem has enjoyed all along, inspite of the lapse of centuries in between. It makes one feel, that in former times a literateur or a scholiast probably did not feel quite satisfied or rewarded unless he tackled the famous Meghaduta in one way or the other, just as a more seriously minded pandit did not, unless he could bring himself to write on the Bhagavat Gita. It must be said however, that most of the ancient commentaries did not do their job with an eye to the historic worth of Kalidasa's work or either with a view to find out and place before their readers its historical or geographical back-ground, obviously because they purported not to be concerned with it and probably because it was thought that a literary dissertation did not call for it. Of course, there are a few brilliant exceptions amongst the old critics, where we come across such glimpses, which although tantalisingly faint and fleeting, occasionally prove to be of great utility. In some places, they are found to contain a small but very valuable clue which may at once illuminate a knotty point, clear up the confusion and simplify a menacing problem. Generally speaking, however, the ancient commentaries are found to be lacking in that historical sense or scientific perspective, which the modern critics have learnt to use. The historical reason for the absence of such outlook in the ancients, may be that the times did not need it yet. The human race or society often appears to invent and develop things or faculties only when they find further progress impossible without it. Necessity has very often been the mother of invention. The first dawnings of the historical sense or outlook, like any other human faculty, on the mental horizon of men could be expected only when its need was keenly felt and the social conditions became ripe for its rise and development. It is no wonder therefore that most of the ancient commentaries on the Meghaduta are not known for their historical acumen or accuracy, at least to the extent to which we wish they had possessed.

Many of them have often made the poet conform to their own ideas or notions about what was correct or incorrect, probable or improbable, proper or improper. In many cases, especially later ones, they seem to have incorporated in their work, explanations and propositions, often drawing upon their own theories or fancies as also upon the doubtful strength of the traditional prejudices, and more often following mechanically in the footsteps of their predecessors. These are some of the causes responsible for some of the mistaken notions, wrong readings and misleading interpretations which come to stay. With the passage of time, some of them grow stronger, have a tendency to stick and run a career, brief or long, until they can be shown to conflict with proved facts or probabilities, after which they perish. Under the circumstances, it is evident, that the word coming from an authority, howsoever ancient or respected, must not be taken at its face-value or blindly accepted without verifying it by a comparative check-up. From the old commentaries at least some instances of unwarranted propositions and arbitrary interpretations concerning the original text can be singled out, as will be shown later on, almost with a reasonable certainty—detectable again because they are misfits and are found at variance either with the trend of the text or the otherwise established positions, or the other known works of the poet himself.

Although the task of interpreting the text in the case of the Meghaduta can be said to be comparatively easier than that of grappling with the still older and stiffer ancient literatures like Indian scriptures, yet the task is not altogether free from its own difficulties and riddles, though we are concerned here only with such of them as bear on the subject of our enquiry. For one thing, except garbled traditional accounts that have come down to us, we can have no reliable information about the author or his poem in question. Secondly, the Sanskrit language with its peculiar



mould, usages and words capable of conveying a multiplicity of meanings, is so vague and elastic that it can be made to yield almost any sense which the interpreter desires to extract therefrom. Thus have appeared the various and varying explanations or interpretations of the same passages, from different critics at different times, representing the sense which they thought the text conveyed. But in spite of all this, it is however not impossible to get at the correct and original meaning of the text passages bearing on the issues in question, if we tackle the problem methodically and in a scientific way.

For the purpose of scientific interpretation of the text, the synthesis of the recognised principles or rules<sup>1</sup> to be used in our work, may be given as follows :

1. As in law, the fundamental rule of interpretation is that a text is to be expounded "according to the intent of them that made it."

2. If the wording is in itself precise and unambiguous, nothing more is necessary than to expound those words in their natural and ordinary sense, the words themselves in such case best declaring the intention of the writer. No need or question of interpretation arises in such a case. *Absoluta sententia expositore non indeget.*

3. The most elementary rule of construction is that it is to be assumed that the words and phrases are to be given their natural and ordinary meaning, unless there is reason to believe that they are used in their technical meaning. "The safer and more correct course of dealing with a question of construction is to take the words themselves and arrive, if possible, at their meaning without, in the first place taking outside aids".

4. The phrases and sentences are to be construed according to the rules of grammar.

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1. The general rules given above have their counterparts in our ancient Mimamsa works on interpretation in what are called (1) the principle of Shruti (2) that of Linga (3) that of Vakya, and (4) that of Prakarana.



It is not allowable to depart from the presumptions contained in 3 and 4 where the language admits of only one meaning and no other. Nor should any departure be made from them, though the language under consideration is susceptible of another meaning, unless adequate grounds are found out to show that the literal interpretation does not give, or fit in with, the intention of the author.

5. To arrive at the real meaning, it is always necessary to get an exact conception of the aim, scope and object of the whole text.

6. The literal construction can be departed from, only when adequate grounds are found either in the history or background of the text, or in the context, or in the propositions which would result from the literal construction, for concluding that the ordinary and natural meaning does not give out the real intention of the text-writer.

7. The construction is to be made of all the parts together, and not of one part only by itself.

The true meaning of any passage is that, which ( being permissible ) best harmonises with the subject and with every other passage of the text in question.

The interpreter should so far put himself in the position of those, whose words he is interpreting, as to be able to see what those words relate to and signify.

It is hardly necessary to say, that to achieve our purpose the above rules or method of interpretation can be used with advantage all the more in dealing with the text of a master of words and narration like K, who is known for his brevity, precision, consistency, clarity, and accuracy of detail.

### Ancient Commentaries and their Value

There can be no doubt that the commentaries on the Meghaduta, especially the more ancient ones, will be of great use to us in our task of its interpret-

ation. They may serve us at times, as lamp-posts on a dark night do a confounded traveller. While admitting their unique value and incomparable utility, it must not be forgotten that they cannot have the authority possessed by the text itself, which they comment upon, for reasons already stated and discussed. With regard to the interpretation of a particular passage, word or phrase, no commentary, howsoever ancient or learned, is sacrosanct. We have therefore to consider and consult each of these commentaries critically and carefully, not on the ground of subjective preference, nor from the stand point that they exhibit an amount of learning or ingenuity, nor again simply because they are ancient enough, but on the sound footing of how far they in their exposition conform to the letter and spirit of the text itself. The interpretation offered by a critic of any passage may be the best proof of what *he* thought the poet meant by it, and not necessarily of what the poet himself meant thereby. Of the old commentaries, I tried to look up and have actually studied as many of them as became available (many of them are unpublished and are preserved in the form of old manuscripts in the archives of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona). I found that in the matter of comments, in many places, the later commentators have oftentimes followed the more ancient, who were pioneers in the field. The result is that, generally speaking, there is not much additional advantage to be gained from the perusal of commentaries comparatively later in date. Incidentally one important fact may be noticed here. The numerous commentators of the *Maghaduta* belong to different times and different parts of the country. Many of them as stated above, did refer to or borrow from their predecessors. As regards certain passages contradictory views, different explanations and a variety of readings are in evidence at least from the 10th century and very probably were in existence even earlier. And yet in the matter of interpretation no fixed territorial traditions or schools as such are



recognisable (such as Northern and Southern etc. as in the case of epics like Mahabharata or Ramayana). Each commentaor that way was independent and appears to have advocated or adopted a view or interpretation which appealed to him.

The most ancient amongst them, therefore, being nearer to the time of the poet are comparatively more reliable and, when judiciously used, they can and do extend a helping hand to a confused interpreter and at times provide correct pointers in crucial questions. While, as a general rule of guidance, an ancient critic is to be preferred to a later one just as a critical and informative scholar to an ingenuous and parading pandit, each instance more or less shall have to be judged on its own merits. The surest safeguard for us however will be their adherence and faithfulness to the text, which they are out to explain. Any explanation of any critic, violating the text or coming in conflict either with the context or with the established positions cannot be given much weight irrespective of his ancient date, authority or reputation.

The following rules may be formulated for the use of the commentaries :

(1) The older and more ancient of the commentators being nearer to the times of the poet should generally be deemed to be more dependable, unless he or they are found from the rest of his work or for other reasons, not so reliable.

(2) The elucidation, emendation or explanation of any particular passage by any commentator, howsoever learned or old must be rejected, if it is found to suggest something thereby which is directly or indirectly against what is expressed or implied by the text itself.

In other words, no construction against the natural text meaning is allowable, except for strong reasons.

(3) If the meaning which appears to flow naturally from the literal construction of the text and



which is corroborated by the commentaries or many of them, then that meaning should be considered as correct and almost irrefutable.

(4) Where the text is silent or is not explicit, preference may be given in the following order:

- A. Unanimity of views.
- B. Original agreement between commentators i. e. agreement of their views independently expressed of each other.
- C. Agreement of the majority.

(5) In the case of a particular point, where some or many of the commentaries agree with each other, while the rest of them are silent about it, then this position may be considered almost on a par with the case of unanimity of views.

For the purpose of the present treatise, we have observed the above rules.

The commentators whose works<sup>1</sup> we have consulted and used for our treatise are listed hereunder. The important extracts therefrom pertaining to the portions of the text in question have been given in Ch. I, wherein we have discussed them for the purpose of interpretation of the verses (seventeen in all) on which we rely.

Commentator	Period	Provenance
Vallabhadeva	First half of 10th century.	Kashmir.
Sthiradeva.	10th century.	—
Saraswati Tirtha.	1242 A. D.	Andhra

1. We have consulted all such commentaries as became available to us (either printed or in manuscript form) with the result, that out of the total number so far discovered, only a very few remain unconsulted and that too because they are not printed and their manuscripts are in far away places. Some are preserved in the libraries in foreign countries. It may easily be seen, however, that these commentaries are comparatively of a later date and a perusal thereof is not likely to add very much to our knowledge or affect our conclusions.

Commentator	Period	Provenance
Charitravardhana	1172-1385.	Kharatara gaccha
	10th century	
Dakshinavarta Nath.	13th century	—
Mallinatha.	14th century	—
Purna Saraswati.	14th century	—
Bharat Mallika.	17th „	Bengal
Sanatana Goswami.	1190-1550	—
Sumati Vijaya.	17th century	—
Mahimasinhagani.	1637 A. D.	—
Lakshmi-nivasa.	About 1458	—
Janardana or	1192-1485	—
Janardana Vyasa.		
Megharaj Sadhu.	1172-1304 A. D.	—
Saroddharini.	1561 A. D.	—
Ramnatha Tarka-	—	—
lankara.		

### Conclusions

In short, broadly speaking, the present work is an attempt to spot-light the poet's art of description as also the correct topographical background of the poem and secondly to establish their interconnection and even interdependence. Each serves the other, in its own turn, and it is hardly possible to understand or appreciate the one fully, without adequately comprehending the other. No attempt at study or even a purely literary criticism can be said to be adequate or complete, unless it takes into account the geography or the localities referred to and fondly described by the poet therein. To sum up, the present treatise seeks to prove the following propositions for the first time :

(1) The initial northward journey of the cloud from Ramagiri, presumed and taken for granted uptil now, was a wrong notion and hence must be corrected. (The deceptive word उदङ्मुख-udanmukha-was mainly

responsible for this misconception). The cloud's journey, as contemplated in the Meghaduta, is first to the south—then a little to the west—and then back again to the north. This instruction as to the direction (v. 16) is meant to apply to the part of journey from R to Amrakut only.

(2) The identity of Amrakut with Amarkantak is established by new proofs.

(3) The site of Rewa falls ( विन्ध्यपादे विन्धीर्णा रेवा ) is fixed on the slopes of the Amarkantak hill.

(4) Mala kshetra, the enigmatic and puzzling locality uptil now, is located to the south and not to the north of Ramagiri. The discovery of this missing link strongly confirms, amongst other things, the identity of the Ramgadh hill.

(5) We must turn to Valmiki's Ramayana for clues to solve some of the riddles in K's Meghaduta. Rama's route and the route of the cloud are found to meet near Ramgadh. Hence the identity of Ramgadh with Ramagiri serves as a link which goes to corroborate both the routes mentioned above.

The identity of K's Ramagiri and its fixation in Chhattisgad shall have to be considered now as a strong, dependable and additional proof of the ancient Vanavasa route of Rama, as propounded by us in the present treatise viz. from Ayodhya to Bhadra. on the east Godavari.

(6) Kalidasa described in his Meghaduta the Ramgadh hill, which was known in his times as the Chitrakuta hill for two reasons : because it contained ancient coloured paintings and because it was also supposed to have been associated with Rama's sojourn during his exile.

(7) Ramagiri, Chitrakut and the Rikshavil hill represent one and the same mountain viz. the present Ramgadh hill in M. P.



(8) Rama episode was K's main source and basis for his Yaksha story.

(9) K exhibits an amazing accuracy in his descriptions of nature; the scenes presented in Me. (R to U) are not imaginary but real.

(10) The question of identification of the places can no longer be regarded merely as an idle question, providing at best only an intellectual exercise for the geography-minded scholars. Such identification is helpful, essential and even inevitable to a certain extent for the proper understanding of the poem (as also of the poet himself).

(11) Mahakosal (present Ohhattisgad) was Kalidasa's original home.

It may be seen how, most of the propositions set out above confirm, and are confirmed by, the Ramgadh-Ramagiri identity as also our poet's indebtedness to the Ramayana for his Meghaduta. In fact, each of them corroborates, and is corroborated by, the other. The various propositions even go to form a sort of logical chain—which fact may be considered to give an additional strength to the thesis as a whole. An attempt however is made to prove each of the propositions independently of others.

As for the fixation of Ramgadh, in particular, it should be remembered that we mainly depend upon the internal evidence (i. e. Kalidasa's text) which is set out and discussed in Ch. I and III. The additional points made out in subsequent chapters (about Chitrakuta, Riksha-vil and so on) are secondary or confirmatory proofs. Of course interesting and useful by themselves, they are tendered mainly to support or reinforce the conclusions, already established.

As for the provenance of the poet, we have submitted our proofs and reasoning in Ch. VII. We have shown how the poet betrays his love and partiality for

the Vindhyan hills and Vindhyan region, i. e. to say Mahakosal and Malwa. He must have migrated from the former to the latter.

To put succinctly and present in a nut-shell the results or upshot of our investigation, the following verses, composed by us, are being tendered hereunder, which may serve the purpose in view :

निर्माय यक्षं खलु रामकल्पं<sup>1</sup>  
 स वर्णयिष्यन्नथ जन्मभूमिम्<sup>2</sup> ।  
 उन्मादशृङ्गारविलापरम्यं  
 चकार मेघं किल कालिदासः ॥  
 प्रतिक्षणं यन्नवरूपशोभं  
 स्फुरत्प्रभावर्णविशेषकान्तम् ।  
 काव्यं न तत् कीर्तिकरं नु शाश्वतं  
 स्वीयं जयस्तंभमसौ<sup>3</sup> बबन्ध ॥

We can now say that our poet's object in composing his Meghaduta was twofold :

(1) To present, on the one hand, a pathetic-romantic picture of a person, love-lorn and far-flung from his home and wife—the picture being modelled after that of the great Rama, as delineated in Valmiki's epic.

(2) To offer and record faithful yet fitting and artistic descriptions of familiar places and localities,

1 The Yaksha was fashioned or conjured up out of Valmiki's Rama-in-separation ( Vide Ch. VI ).

2 The poet' purpose was to describe the familiar localities in Malwa and Mahakosal, which was his home-province ( Vide Ch. VII ).

3 The idea expressed here is that in composing his Meghaduta, K did not only construct ( and leave behind ) a charming literary work, but has constructed thereby his own permanent monument as it were, to bear testimony to the amazing poetical talents and powers which he possessed. The epithets नवरूपशोभं and स्फुरत्प्रभावर्णविशेषकान्तम् as also कीर्तिकरं and शाश्वतं may with propriety be construed alternately, with काव्यं as well as जयस्तंभं. वर्णं is o be taken in the sense of words in the former case and colours in the latter.

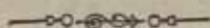
both from his home-province as also from the region which he subsequently adopted as his own in later life viz. the Mala desha, Mahakosal and Malwa.

Thus does Kalidas's composition contain and represent, as stated at the beginning, a perfect blend of the subjective and objective, real and mythical, imaginative and imaginary or of fact and fable. The question as to *how* he did it, is mixed up with *why* he did it. The present treatise attempts at the elucidation of both the aspects and their interplay.

In many places in the book, Sanskrit verses and passages quoted in original, are printed in Devanagari script, as it was felt necessary and desirable to do so. But mostly, and especially in important places, particular care is taken to offer transliteration to enable those, not acquainted with the Devanagari script, to follow the book. The presentation of the subject matter may occasionally be found to involve some repetition, which, however, was rather unavoidable as the topics under discussion, being closely interconnected, often overlapped each other. The author craves indulgence for any such faults as may have crept in, either inadvertently or otherwise.

Although the proof submitted for the various propositions, especially that for the fixation of Ram-gadh, is convincing enough—as convincing as it can be from the sources available today—and although the conclusions are drawn and presented not without a critical, scientific and dispassionate analysis of the evidence, the author believes that the final verdict and confirmation must come from the authorities in the field. In the meanwhile, to express his own attitude about it, the author can do no better than quote the words of the poet himself—

आ परितोषात् विदुषां न साधु मन्ये प्रयोगविज्ञानम् ।





## CHAPTER I

### THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE

एकः शब्दः सम्यक् ज्ञातः सम्यक् युक्तः

स्वर्गे लोके कामधुक् भवति<sup>1</sup> ।—Pāṇini

Intrinsic evidence being of first rate importance, it would be essential in the first instance, to correctly interpret and grasp the import of the verses in Meghadūta which bear directly on the subject of our enquiry. We therefore propose to set out and discuss in the opening Chapter seventeen<sup>2</sup> verses, germane to our discussion and mostly taken out of the first twenty five. We have to focus our attention in particular on five of them, viz. verses Nos. 1, 12, 14, 16 and 19 which are the most important and crucial and on which we chiefly rely for the proof of our main thesis.

They will be shown to contain in themselves unmistakable clues about the identity of Rāmagiri and Āmrakūṭa with Rāmagadh and Amarakaptaka respectively. Below each verse quoted, we have noted relevant extracts from ancient commentaries right from Vallabhadeva ( 10th century ), particularly quoting from all available commentaries where the meaning of a verse or a portion thereof is ambiguous, disputed or variously interpreted. Although De's text ( Sahitya Academy's critical edition ) is followed throughout and relied upon by us, we have recorded such of the alternative readings (in vv. 2, 16 and 19) which we are inclined to prefer and think to be original for reasons discussed thereunder. English translation is supplied from Prof. Pathak's edition (1914), of course after making, in a few places, such changes as were

1. Even a single word, when exactly or properly understood and used becomes highly efficacious to a person ( lit. like a fabulous cow, yielding all desires in this world as also in the next. )

2. Nos. 1, 2, 4, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 27, 57, 58, 98 & 107.

necessary to make in the light of the present research. Thereafter, we have offered our comments explaining as to how and why the pertinent verses should now be understood and interpreted, as they are in the present treatise. At the end of the Chapter is annexed a table, noting the meanings of such important words ( occurring in our 17 verses ) which particularly require to be correctly interpreted. We have also noted therein references showing how and in which sense K uses those words elsewhere.

The following principles must guide us in our task of interpretation of the text :

1. We have to gather what meaning the poet **then** had in his mind and must not accept one because it is prevalent or traditional, or because it may appeal to us **today** as best, plausible or more attractive.

2. Similarly, in falling back for aid on the ancient commentaries, the guiding principle must be the same : Does the critic, ancient or modern, faithfully explain or expound the author's intention, which he wanted to convey by his text ?

3. The context would be all important. We must reject any suggestion or interpretation which is inconsistent or conflicting with the positions taken up by the poet elsewhere i. e. in his other works and particularly in Me. itself.

4. In determining the meaning of a particular word, there can be no safer guide than to see how and in which sense the poet uses it elsewhere in a similar context. Where an ambiguous or disputed passage is to be interpreted, a similar method can be employed with advantage. Here K's similes come to our help. K appears to be particularly fond of certain typical scenes from nature ( as also of certain ideas ) and is repeatedly seen to describe them by employing much the same imagery, often couched in identical or similar expressions. In such cases, the diligent as also the delightful comparison of parallelisms can and does reveal to us the exact meaning of a desired passage with as much certainty as can be expected under the circumstances.

Thus on a proper and scientific interpretation of the pertinent verses from Kalidasa's text with the help of the ancient commentaries judiciously used, we can draw the following conclusions.

They are being set out here, rather in advance, in order to pre-intimate the reader about what the text in question is to be read for :

1. That the Rāmagiri hill was in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest, i. e. to say on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma and Sītā.

2. That R was one of the places, according to the belief of K, where Rāma resided along with Sītā during their exile. The place was known for it in those times.

3. That R was a lofty and imposing mountain : It had a towering peak, thick forest, river or spring and mineral wet paints.

4. That by the name Rāmagiri, the starting point of the journey in Me., K referred to the Rāmgadh hill in M. P.

5. That K's Māla Kṣetra was to the south of Rāmagiri and that it can be none other than the Malda region around Ratanpur.

6. That the contemplated journey of the cloud from R was not northward.

7. That the direction in V. 16 ( किञ्चित् पश्चात् etc. ) viz. first to the south — then a little to the west — and then wheeling back again to the north, is *only* meant to cover the first stage of the journey i. e. from Rāmagiri to Āmrakūṭa.

8. That the direction of the intended journey from Āmrakūṭa to Vidiśa and further on upto Ujjayinī is westward and thereafter northward up to Brahmāvarta ( Kurukṣetra ); then it is towards the east up to the foot of the Himālayas, and then finally it is to become northward again i. e. while ascending the Himālayas right up to Mt. Kailāsa.

9. The shattered or the scattered Revā is a typical scene from the rainy season on the Vindhya hill; Mountain A with its Revā falls is none other than Amarakapṭaka, where the river Revā (=Narmadā) takes its rise.

10. That the route described in Me. probably represents the land-route in K's days—particularly from Rāmgadh to Ujjayinī.

11. That K's rainy season ( just as of the Rāmāyaṇa ) started in the month of Śrāvaṇa and not Āṣāḍha; Y saw the cloud on the *last* day of Āṣāḍha ( प्रशमदिवसे ) and not on the first



day of that month. [ This is intended to show that K who fashioned his Y after Rāma-in-separation on Mount Prasravana, has also borrowed the exact point of time viz. the advent of the rainy season for the outburst of grief on the part of his lonely Yakṣa at Rāmagiri ].

Now, let us turn to our text :

|

कश्चित्कान्ताविरहगुरुणा स्वाधिकारप्रमत्तः  
शापेनास्तंगमितमहिमा वर्षभोग्येण भर्तुः ।  
यक्षश्चक्रे जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु  
स्निग्धच्छायातरुषु वसति रामगिर्याश्रमेषु ॥

V. कश्चित् यक्षः पुण्यजनः रामगिर्याश्रमेषु चित्रकूटाचलतपोवनेषु वसति चक्रे व्याधात् । ... रामाद्रि अतः स आययौ । कीदृशेषु आश्रमेषु ? जनकतनयास्नान-पुण्योदकेषु सीतामजनपावित्रतोयेषु ' यदध्यासितमर्हद्भिः तदि तीर्थं प्रचक्षते ' । ... रामगिरिः चित्रकूटः न तु कथ्यमूकः । तत्र सीतायाः वासाभावात् ।

St. रामगिरिः दण्डकान्तप्रसिद्धः ।

C. रामेण दाशरथिना उपलक्षितो गिरिः चित्रकूटः पर्वतः तस्य आश्रमाः मुनिगृहाः ।

Su. रामगिर्याश्रमेषु चित्रकूटनामगिरितपोवनेषु । श्रीरामचन्द्रेण आश्रितो गिरिः रामगिरिः ।

Mg. रामगिरिः तत्रस्थाश्रमवनेषु चित्रकूटपर्वततपोवनेषु

L. रामगिरिं दण्डकारण्यं तस्य आश्रमाः रामगिर्याश्रमाः तेषु

P. रामगिर्याश्रमेषु रामेण चिरमध्युषितत्वात् तेनैव नाम्ना प्रसिद्धो गिरिः चित्रकूट इति केचित् । अन्यः कश्चित् इति अन्ये । तत्संबन्धिषु राममुक्तमुक्तेषु शून्येषु तापसनिवासस्थानेषु ।

Saro. रामगिर्याश्रमेषु रामगिरिः दण्डकारण्ये प्रसिद्धः तस्य आश्रमेषु राम-गिरौ वसति कृतवान् इति वाच्ये यदाश्रमोपादानं तेन दुस्तपः तपःप्रभावात् मुनीनां

एव शापसंतापनयनक्षमत्वं अतस्तेषां शरणमनुष्ठितं इति व्यव्यते...विदेहदुहित्रा  
वनपावनपानीयेषु...

### TRANSLATION

A certain *Yakṣa* neglectful of his duties and shorn of his glory by the curse of his lord, which was to last for a year and was unbearable by reason of his separation from his wife, took up his abode among the *hermitages* on Mount *Rāmagiri* which abounded in shady trees and where the waters were rendered sacred by *Sītā's* ablutions.

### COMMENTS

The opening verse is important for many reasons. It sets the stage. The background or the previous history of the banished *Yakṣa*, artistically compressed to a bare minimum, is cleverly *shoved* in. All the important details and even the characters in the *Yakṣa* story bear a close resemblance to those of the *Rāma* episode in *Vālmīki's* epic. The *Yakṣa* is fashioned after *Rāma-in-separation*. (See ch. VI)

*Rāma-giri*<sup>1</sup>: This verse, along with some others, gives us unmistakable clues about its appearance and location. We definitely learn four things from *Kālidāsa's* text.

1. The hill *Rāma-giri* was lofty, imposing and with a towering peak (आदिलिङ्गसानुं, तुङ्गं शैलं, अद्रेः शृङ्गं etc.)

2. It was known to be associated with *Rāma* and *Sītā* during their exile (जनकतनयास्नान in this verse and also रघुपतिपदैः अङ्कितं v. 12).

3. There were *āśramas* or *hermitages* round about the *Rāmagiri* hill.

4. The hill, according to *Kālidāsa*, was situated on the *Vanavāsa* route of *Rāma* i. e. to say, somewhere in the *Dandakāraṇya* forest. (P's comment shows that the question whether

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1. It is significant to note that this compound-word रामगिरि is dissolved by the various ancient commentators of Me. as रामाश्रितः गिरिः on the same lines as शाकपाथिव, or छायातरु which occurs in this very verse.

Rāmagiri can be identified or not with Citrakūṭa, was raised even before the 13th century and that there were already two opinions about it. We shall deal with that topic in a separate Chapter.)

These propositions, which the text itself reveals, also stand supported by all the ancient commentators.

*Rāmagiryāśrameṣu* (रामगिर्याश्रमेषु) :—Undoubtedly the poet's allusion in the very first verse to the hermitages of Rāma and Sitā is rather abrupt, and particularly appears to be so to us, in the twentieth century. It presupposes the existence of a hill of Rāma in K's times, widely known as the site of forest-dwellings (of sages) where Rāma was supposed to have stayed. Rāma and Sitā in the D forest, lived in the various आश्रमसु of sages as Sutrīkṣṇa, Śarabhaṅga and others (Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa). While relating Rāma's story of exile, Kālidāsa himself in his Raghuvamśa refers to his stay in the hermitages of the same hospitable sages. (Raghu XII.) Here too the poet is referring to the same आश्रमसु.

The word आश्रमसु (Hermitages) here does not mean simply huts, but represent the extensive habitations or colonies of the sages meant for practising penance. Similarly Y may not be taken to be dwelling on the mountain, as is generally supposed. The restive and lonely Y of course may have been treading on the hill R off and on in his pensive moods. But his dwelling-places or आश्रमसु were rather situated in the neighbourhood of Rāmagiri and not on the hill itself.<sup>1</sup>

*Janakatanayāśnānapuṇyodakeṣu* (जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु) :—

This again is an unambiguous reference which clearly shows that the poet takes his Rāmagiri to be a historical site where Sitā also along with Rāma resided for some time obviously during the period of their banishment from Ayodhyā. In order to emphasise the holiness or traditional sanctity of a historical place, K often alludes to such purificatory baths of illustrious personages known to have bathed in its waters. Compare Raghu 13-61 where the river Śarayū of Ayodhyā is described as rendered more holy due to sacrificial baths by Ikṣvāku Kings :

1. In accordance with the Mīmāṃsā rules, as in गङ्गायां घोषः, the राम-गिर्याश्रमाः may preferably be taken to mean the āśramas situated near about Rāmagiri and not on Rāmagiri.

Also see our comments on *Tasmān adrau* (तस्मिन् अद्रौ) in V. 2.



जलानि या तीरनिखातयूपा वहस्योऽध्यामनु राजधानीम् ।  
तुरङ्गमेधावभृथावतीर्णः इक्ष्वाकुभिः पुण्यतरीकृतानि॥

*Āśramesu* (आश्रमेषु):—Why is the poet talking of many *Āśramas*, when one would have been quite alright for Y to live in? The too clever explanation of M<sup>1</sup> is neither correct nor satisfactory. And then again why is the word *Āśrama*<sup>2</sup> used? It is still more significant that when the occasion arises again the poet uses the same word (रामगिर्याश्रमस्थः V. 102) The word *āśrama* clearly means a hermitage, but, cell, dwelling or abode of ascetics. Y was certainly not an ascetic. One can almost be sure that K would not ordinarily use the word *Āśrama* (आश्रम) for the dwelling of Y, although temporary, unless there was a special reason for it,—and much less so in plural. The repetition of the word *āśrama* (used on both occasions) and then again its use in plural can only be explained by the same hypothesis: The poet here refers to and has in mind the various *Āśramas* or hermitages in D forest of sages like *Sutikṣṇa*, *Śarabhaṅga* etc. where Rāma and Janakatanayā lived for some time during their exile, and expressly mentioned in *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as *Raghuvamśa* cantos XII and XIII. Mahākosaḥ or the modern Chhattisgad, as we shall see later on, formed part of the ancient D forest and must have been known in K's days as the site of the hermitages mentioned above. Employment of the word आश्रम is far more significant

1. अत्र रसो विप्रलम्भाख्यः वृत्तारः । तत्राप्यनुमादावस्था । अत एव एकत्र  
अनवस्थानं सूचितं आश्रमेषु इति बहुवचनेन । — M. on V. 1.

2. Like the word *Āśrama*, equally noteworthy is the repetition of the expression *Rāmagiri* in both these places (V. 1 and 102) K well knew the principle and propriety in not repeating the same words or phrases as far as possible (नैकं पदं द्विः प्रयोज्यं प्रायेण—Kāvya Prakāśa VII). He could have easily used his favourite word *Śaila* शैल (which he has actually used in तुङ्गं शैलं v. 12) instead of *Giri* गिरि in either of the above mentioned verses, without encountering any difficulties about metre. He could have written रामशैलाश्रमेषु in v. 1 or रामशैलाश्रमस्थः in v. 102. But he sticks to रामगिर्याश्रमसु in both the places. This repetition tends to show that K regards *Rāmagiri* as the proper name denoting the hill of Rāma. It further indicates that the poet expected his contemporary readers to know the hill *Rāmagiri* and its whereabouts. That alone explains the otherwise inexplicable and rather abrupt allusion to *Rāmagiryaśramas* and *Janakatanayānāna* in the opening verse.

and crucial than it is usually taken to be. The tell-tale expression *āśrameṣu* provides us with unmistakable clues as to the environments as also the exact location of Y's residence as stated above.

## 2

तस्मिन्नद्रौ कतिचिदबलाविप्रयुक्तः स कामी  
नीत्वा मासान्कनकवलयभ्रंशरिक्तप्रकोष्ठः ।  
आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे मेघमाश्लिष्टसानुं  
वप्रक्रीडापरिणतगजप्रेक्षणीयं ददर्श ॥

T and V प्रथमदिवसे; C and M notice this reading; Śaśvata accepts it, referring also to प्रथमदिवसे.

Although Motajit reads प्रथमदिवसे, still he interprets it to mean प्रथमदिवसे i. e. to say the last or full-moon day. He comments thus :

आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे प्रधानदिवसे । आद्यः प्रधानः प्रथमाविति विधः ।  
आषाढपूर्णिमायां इत्यर्थः ।

विजयसूरि also says the same thing : आषाढाभिधनक्षत्रेण युक्ता पौर्णमासी आषाढपौर्णमासी अस्मिन् इति ।

V. आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे समातिदिने । केचित्तु शकारथकारयोः लिपि-  
सादृश्यात् प्रथम इति ऊचुः । ... वर्षाकालस्य प्रस्तुतत्वात् आदिदिनमित्येतत्  
त्वतीव विरुद्धम् ।

I. आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे प्रधानदिवसे । आदिप्रवरौ प्रथमौ इत्युक्ते ।  
आषाढस्य पौर्णिमायां इत्यर्थः । कृष्यादिकर्मप्रमुदितहृदयतया समस्तजनपदस्य दिनं  
इदमेव प्रधानं । अन्यदिवसस्य तथाविधप्रसिद्धेरभावात् । अथ प्रथमं आद्यं प्रति-  
पदिनं उच्यते । तत्र घटते...

P. आषाढस्य ग्रीष्मर्तुद्वितीयमासस्य

D. आषाढमासादिकानाश्वयुजमासान्तानित्यर्थः । ननु आषाढस्य प्रथम-  
दिवस इति उक्तम् । आषाढश्रावणौ ग्राह्ये ततः परं शरद् इति प्रसिद्धम् तस्मात्  
कथं आषाढात् प्रभृति मासचतुष्टयात् परः शरत्काल इति उक्तम् । उच्यते ऋतूनां  
कल्पना द्विधा । केचित् षट् ऋतवः इति वदन्ति अपरे त्रय इति । अत्र तावत्

अनुव्रयपक्षाश्रयेण उक्तम् । यथा रामायणे 'चत्वारो वार्षिका प्रोक्ता गता वर्ष-  
शतोपमा' इति ।

M. केचित् 'आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे' इति अत्र 'प्रत्यासन्ने नभसि' इति  
वक्ष्यमाणनभोमासप्रत्यासत्त्यर्थे 'प्रथमदिवसे' इति पाठं कल्पयन्ति । तत् असंगतम् ।

#### TRANSLATION

Having passed some months, the lover, who was separated from his wife and whose forearm was bare by the fall of the golden bracelet saw on the last day of *Āṣāḍha* a cloud on that mountain resting on the peak, which was as beautiful as an elephant stooping to give a side-blow with his tusks in sport with a rampart.

#### COMMENTS

आदिलष्टसानुः—Rāmagiri had a peak. Moreover it must have been a hugh and towering one, considering that a large menacing cloud—looking like an attacking elephant—clung to it. The hill, which the poet had before his eyes, was big, tall and with a peak. Note also अद्रि V 2, तुङ्गं शैलं V 12, अद्रेः शृङ्गं हरति पवनः V 14, and स्निग्धच्छायातरु V 1.

तस्मिन् अद्रौ :—These two words in the locative case rather go with ददर्श than नीत्वा मासान्. The poet here appears to indicate the place where Y saw the cloud and not where he had passed some months (i. e. eight). His dwelling place is twice mentioned as the Rāmagiri hermitages (V. 1 and 98), which were more probably understood to be at the foot and in the vicinity of that hill.

आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे :—V accepts this reading as the original of the poet as against प्रथमदिवसे which he rejects with his reasons V makes a grievance that the people (or scribes) misreading य for श are falling into a sad error. Y saw the cloud on the last and not the first day of *Āṣāḍha*. This conclusion also finds corroboration from प्रत्यासन्ने नभसि (Śrāvapa is imminent V 4) and परिणतशरच्चन्द्रिकासु क्षपासु (V. 107) Y expects reunion round about full-moon time in Kārtika. Now working back and calculating



4 months from this point of time, we exactly get the full-moon day in Āṣāḍha, which is the last day of that month according to the ancient system of counting (It is prevalent even today in Northern India). On the other hand, if we accept 'the first day' of Āṣāḍha, it ill suits the imminent Śrāvāṇa and secondly creates a discrepancy of 11 or 15 days! But it will be seen that the discrepancy is not of the poet but has since arisen due to the subsequent improvement (प्रथमदिवसे) in the text.

The reason why Kālidāsa refers to the last day of Āṣāḍha is that his rainy season started from the month of Śrāvāṇa and not from Āṣāḍha, as the case is today.<sup>1</sup> I have found and collected not less than ten references<sup>2</sup> to months and seasons from Kālidāsa's other works, which all go to show that the poet considered Śrāvāṇa as the first month of rainy season. None is however found which may show anything to the contrary. Such being the case, the day on which Kālidāsa's Yakṣa saw the rain-bearing and menacing cloud, can hardly be the first day of Āṣāḍha. It was the full-moon day or the last day in that month i. e. to say the cloud appeared on the eve of Śrāvāṇa. (Also see note on प्रत्यासन्ने नभसि under v. 4).

It may be noted that Kālidāsa has borrowed from Rāmāyaṇa not only the grief of the longing lover (Rāma-in-separation) on Mount Prasravana, the rainy season and its four months (चत्वारो वाषिका मासः) but almost the identical day for his Meghadūta. Rāma's emotional outburst is at the beginning of the rainy season. Rāma says : पूर्वोऽयं वाषिको मासः श्रावणः सलिलगमः

One more thing is noteworthy in this connection. There are some commentators like J etc. who, while adopting the reading prathama, actually explain it to mean the full-moon day. Thus for all practical purposes, they are found to agree virtually with prasaṁmadivase, although seemingly they appear to have adopted the

1 It appears from Varāhamihira's work that it was from the 6th century that Āṣāḍha instead of Śrāvāṇa began to be considered as the starting point of the rainy season (or Dakṣiṇāyana). Seasons recede approximately by one month in every two thousand years due to precession of equinoxes. (See Ch. IX)

2 These references are noted in Ch. VIII;

Also see my Mar. paper कालिदासकालीन ऋतुव्यवस्था  
(Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona, July 1959).

other reading. To sum up, the whole thing boils down to this : praśamadivase is more reasonable, fitting and consistent and hence more probable than prathamadivase. Whatever the original version of the poet may be, there can hardly be any doubt that he refers here to the full-moon day in Āṣāḍha—which means Kālī-dāsa's rainy season started in Śrāvaṇa and not in Āṣāḍha.

## 4

प्रत्यासन्ने नमसि दयितार्जीवितालम्बनार्था  
जीमूतेन स्वकुशलमयीं हारयिष्यन्प्रवृत्तिम् ।  
स प्रत्यग्रैः कुटजकुसुमैः कल्पितार्घाय तस्मै  
प्रीतः प्रीतिप्रमुखवचनं स्वागतं व्याजहार ॥

D reads मनसि instead of नमसि ! (See our comments below.)

## TRANSLATION

Desirous of sustaining the life of his beloved one, the month of *Śrāvaṇa* being at hand, and of sending news of his welfare to her by the cloud, he, full of joy, bade him a welcome couched in affectionate expressions, after worshipping him with fresh jasmine flowers.

## COMMENTS

प्रत्यग्रैः कुटजकुसुमैः The kuṭaja shrubs grow in abundance usually in hilly tracts and flower up during rainy season only. The flowers small in size and spotlessly white have a peculiar sweet aroma. The shrubs generally do not grow more than 4 to 5 ft. high.

The first signs of the advent of the rainy season are delicately but deliberately described. Kuṭaja flowers are in evidence (v. 4) The rain-bow is visible (v. 13).<sup>1</sup> A shower on the Rāmāgiri itself is hinted (v. 12).

Surely enough the rainy season had started though not yet in its full swing. The cloud which Y noticed was not only a har-

<sup>1</sup> Kuṭaja flowers and the rain-bow, always associated with rainy season, are noticed by the poet in canto II (Rts.) which is entirely devoted to the description of the rainy season.

binger of the approaching season but one of the noble mass of rain-bearing monsoon clouds, well on their way towards north. Thus the scene opens in Me. at the beginning of the rainy season and not before it.

प्रत्यासन्ने नमसि :—“ The month of Śrāvapa was imminent.” The rainy season is traditionally represented as the worst period for lovers to bear the pangs of separation. K’s rainy season, as that of Rāmāyapa started from Śrāvapa. On the first day of Āṣāḍha, Śrāvapa could hardly be said to be प्रत्यासन्न, without stretching twisting and violating the language. The cloud could not be there that time.

It is interesting to look at the commentary of Dakṣiṇāvarta (14th century) in this connection. He is known for capricious readings and fanciful explanations ( see S. K. De’s critical edition ) D adopts the reading प्रथमदिवसे and has tried to justify it. But his consequent embarrassment in the attempt is worth pointing out. It led him to change the original word नमसि into मनसि which apart from other thing is a glaring misfit. The reading मनसि is not to be found in any other manuscript ! The change however from नमसि to मनसि seems to have been necessitated, obviously because he thought and thought rightly ( in his own way ) that प्रत्यासन्ने नमसि—the imminent Śrāvapa—would conflict with the reading प्रथमदिवसे which he wanted to adopt. This is how he demurs to प्रथमदिवस :

ननु आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवस इति उक्तम् । आषाढश्रावणौ प्रावृद्  
ततः परं शरद् इति प्रसिद्धम् । तस्मात् कथं आषाढात् प्रभृति मासचतुष्टयात्  
परः शरत्काल इति उक्तम् ? उच्यते । ऋतूनां कल्पना द्विधा । केचित्  
षट् ऋतवः इति वदन्ति । अपरे त्रय इति । अत्र तावत् ऋतुत्रयपक्षाभयेण उक्तम् ।

D’s comment clearly reveals that आषाढ and श्रावण now constituted the first two months of the rainy reason and not श्रावण-भाद्रपद as before. K was earlier than D at least by a millenium if not more. In the meantime, on account of the precession of the equinoxes the seasons have receded. Probably unmindful of this D was confused by K’s reference to कार्तिक as the month of the शरद् season, because his शरद् ended with आश्विन. The diffi-



culty is easily solved if we observe that K's rainy season comprised of श्रावण and भाद्रपद to be followed by शरद् comprising आश्विन and कार्तिक. But D, who imagined that conditions must have been the same before as in his times, stuck to प्रथमदिवसे. But thereby he came up against two inconvenient assertions of K which were against his reading. One of them was प्रत्यासन्ने नभसि, which he changed, as probably he could not otherwise explain away नभसि so as to fit with his scheme of seasons. The second hurdle in his way was the शरद् season in V 107. How to reconcile कार्तिक with शरद्? So to obviate the difficulty, he tries to explain that according to some there are three seasons only just as another school recognises six, and that K is here talking in terms of three seasons! Needless to say that the too clever explanation is neither correct nor satisfactory. It should also be borne in mind that K always talks of six seasons and not three (Rts. and also his other works). In मनसि introduced for the original नभसि of the poet, we get a typical instance of 'intellectual' interference attempting to 'improve' the ancient texts (& make them conform to the changing conditions). In the present case, it indirectly confirms the reading प्रथमदिवसे.

## 12

आपृच्छस्व प्रियसखममुं तुङ्गमालिङ्ग्य शैलं  
बन्धुः पुंसां रघुपतिपदैरङ्कितं मेखलामु ।  
काले काले भवति भवता यस्य संयोगमेत्य  
स्नेहव्यक्तिश्चिरविरहजं मुञ्चतो वाष्पमुष्णम् ॥

V अमुं शैलं चित्रकूटं आलिङ्ग्य...तुङ्गं उन्नतं तथा सर्वजनपूज्यैः रामपादैः  
मेखलामु नितम्बभागेषु अङ्कितं मुद्रितं इति पावनोक्तिः ।

Saro रघुपतिपदैः अङ्कितं रामचरणन्यासैः चिह्नितं मेखलामु कटिप्रदेशेषु...  
तुङ्गं महा उन्नतं

M रघुपतिपदैः रामपादन्यासैः मेखलामु कटकेषु चिह्नितम् ।

### TRANSLATION

Take your leave of thy dear friend, after having embraced him i.e. this lofty mountain, marked on his

sides with the foot-prints of *Rāma* which are worthy of being worshipped by men; who (the mountain) on coming into contact with the every season manifests his friendship by shedding a hot tear due to a long separation.

#### COMMENTS

तुङ्गं शैलः—This again confirms that the *Rāmagiri* hill which K is describing was a lofty mountain. The description अद्रेः शृङ्गं हरति पवनः (v. 14) and also the epithet उन्मुखीभिः are significant.

रघुपतिपदैः अङ्कितं—The unambiguous reference to the Prince of the *Raghu* dynasty makes it clear that K took the hill to have been associated with *Rāma* during his punishment. The other tell-tale expressions रामागिर्याश्रमेषु and जनकतनयास्नानपुष्पोदकेषु may also be considered. It is persistently urged by a pro-*Rāmateka* scholar that there are two पादुकाः (in stone) there in front of the image of *Rāma* and that K refers to them in this expression. The contention however can hardly stand. Obviously the present allusion is neither to the पादुकाः in stone nor to the feet of any image. Reference is to the historical *Rāma* and his erstwhile residence on the hill (along with *Sītā*.) The meaning and usage of the term पदैः (note the plural which in Sanskrit means three or more) imply foot-prints. अङ्कितं again means marked or stamped. Also note मेखलामु (again in plural). पदैः thus cannot be made to represent, by any stretch of language, the two पादुकाः in stone at *Rāmateka* or any where else).

#### 14

अद्रेः शृङ्गं हरति पवनः किं स्वदित्युन्मुखीभिः  
दृष्टोत्साहश्चकितचकितं मुग्धसिद्धाङ्गनाभिः ।  
स्थानादस्मात्सरसनिचुलादुत्पतोदङ्मुखः खं  
दिङ्गनागानां पथि परिहरन्स्थूलहस्तावलेपान् ॥

V अस्मात् स्थानात् त्वं उत्तराभिमुखः खं उद्वच्छ ।

St तोयद त्वं उत्पत ऊर्ध्वं गच्छ कीदृग् उदङ्मुखः उत्तराभिमुखः ख  
आकाशं अनुपरुद्धं देशम् ।

O उदङ्मुखः उत्तराभिमुखः खं आकाशं उत्पत उद्गच्छ ।

J त्वं अस्मात् स्थानात् उदङ्मुखः सन् खं आकाशं उत्पत याहि ।...  
सरसा स्निग्धा आर्द्रा अरूक्षा निचुला वेतसा यत्र तत् तस्मात् ।

Sa अस्मात् स्थानात् रामगिरिनाम्नः पर्वतात् त्वं उत्पत ऊर्ध्वं गच्छ ।  
कथंभूतः उदङ्मुखः उत्तराभिमुखः

MG उदङ्मुखः उत्तराभिमुखः आकाशं गच्छ

P खमुत्पत इति । सकलदेशदर्शनसौकर्याय गगनशिखरं आरोह इति ।

M उदङ्मुखः सन् अलकाया उदीच्यत्वात् इति आशयः । खं आकाशं  
उत्पत उद्गच्छ ।

Saro खं आकाशं प्रति उत्पत ऊर्ध्वं गच्छ । कथंभूतः उदङ्मुखः  
उत्तराभिमुखः ।

#### TRANSLATION

From this place abounding in wet canes, rise up to the sky above, with thy face to the north, avoiding on the way contact with the massive trunks of the quarter-elephants, thy movements, being watched by the silly wives of the Siddhas with their uplifted faces full of surprise as if the wind were carrying away the crest of the mountain.

#### COMMENTS

Verses 14, 16 and 19 in Me. are the most important and crucial for the purpose of our enquiry. Our claim is that these three verses, if properly interpreted, by themselves go to establish beyond a shadow of doubt, the location and identity of the Rāmagadh hill in M. P., and the east-west route of the cloud (therefrom up to Ujjayini) also gets a firm footing from the text itself. The readers and lovers of Kālidāsa are particularly requested, therefore, to see and examine our analysis, interpretation and exposition of the three very pertinent verses in question.

The present verse must be dealt with even more fully than the other two, because today it is invariably understood as signifying a northward journey of the cloud from Rāmagiri. But



nothing can be farther from the intention of the poet. The cause of the mischief is to be found in the small but deceptive epithet उदङ्मुख, which has led some of the modern research students astray. (The ancient pandits who commented on Me. never took that expression to mean a northward journey as can be seen from the relevant extracts quoted above). Let us try to get at the meaning of the poet :

उदङ्मुखः (त्वं) अस्मात् स्थानात् खं उत्पत

This is the instruction addressed to the cloud at the time of its departure from the R hill. Now let us scan the constituent terms उत्पत, खं उत्पत, अस्मात् स्थानात् खं उत्पत and lastly उदङ्मुखः अस्मात् स्थानात् खं उत्पत.

उत्पतः First of all the root पत् with उत् always indicates vertical or upward movement. Verbs simply denoting motion are गच्छ, व्रज्, संचर् etc. which are used throughout in Me. by the poet to signify a horizontal direction.<sup>1</sup> But when combined with the prefix उत् (= ut) any such verbs must and do mean an upward movement.

खं उत्पत : Note that ख (= sky) is used in the accusative case (खं) and not in the locative case (ख). The expression, therefore, means rise up, i. e. higher up to the skies and not through or along the skies.<sup>2</sup> खं उत्पत clearly implies approaching the sky by jumping up from below, i. e. lower regions.

अस्मात् स्थानात् खं उत्पत : The cloud is to rise or jump up, but whereto and wherefrom? Both the points are specifically mentioned. Jump up from this place (i. e. the peak of the Rāmāgiri hill) to the sky above. The line thus only contemplates and describes the first and pre-requisite step before the cloud actually (advances or) proceeds on its way viz. disentangling itself from the

1 It will be interesting to observe in this connection all the verbs (20 in all) used in Pūrva Megha to denote motion. They are listed by us under v. 58, where we have pointed out how and why उत्पत stands out from other verbs in denoting an upward direction.

2 The sense of the locative case is the location or place. (आधार = अधिकरणम् Pāṇini 1, 4-45). If travelling in, through or along the skies is to be described, then the word must be used in the locative case as in खे नमसि etc. For instance, see यावद् गिरः खे मरुतां चरन्ति Ks 3.72.

peak of the hill to which it was clinging and jumping up to the sky above it. (It is after this, i. e. from V. 16 that the cloud is expected to start moving horizontally or along the skies ).

If more proof is needed about the meaning of पत् with उत् or about the sense in which K uses it, we may point out an instance in point, where K has used the same root with the same upasarga ( prefix ) and luckily enough along with उ—

प्रत्युद्वजन्तीव खं उत्पतन्त्यो गोदावरीसारसपङ्क्तयस्त्वाम् ( Raghu 13.33 )  
The Sārasa birds from the Godāvarī river below are jumping up to or towards the sky ( i. e. the spot where Rāma's aerial car was located by them ).

Also cf. the use of the word उत्पतन् in V. 54 of Me. ( ने सं-  
नोत्पतन्तरमसाः etc. ) where it clearly means 'Jumping up to'. This reading is accepted by J, Sb, S, C, D, M, P and Es.

उदङ्मुखः This is an epithet of the cloud and not an adverb.  
The word उदङ् has two meanings :<sup>1</sup>

1. Turned or going upwards
2. Northern or turned towards north.

उदङ् here may well have the first meaning, viz. turned upwards as here the cloud is actually to go upwards ( उत्पतन् ). In that case 'the northward journey' will have no basis at all. Even if the latter meaning is to be accepted, उदङ् cannot be separated from मुख, with which it is linked. It would, therefore, mean that the cloud was to rise up to the skies with its face turned towards north. Nothing more nothing less. No actual going to the north can be made out. This is the meaning which we get after correctly and scientifically interpreting the line in question. It may also be noted that this interpretation gets full support from all the ancient commentaries, which are quoted above. It may be urged that as the cloud is asked to turn its face towards north, an inference may be drawn that thereafter it was to travel to the north. But then again the word उत्पतन् comes in the way. The cloud is asked to be उदङ्मुख only while he is taking its first leap to reach the sky above. Obviously the expressed sense of उत्पतन्, viz. the vertical direction cannot be reconciled with the northward movement attempted to be inferred from the poet's wording.

<sup>1</sup> Apte's Dictionary.

Thus, so far as the present verse is concerned, the northward journey cannot be established from the word उदङ्मुख. On the other hand, it stands negatived. Further, in V. 16 we shall find that the Māla land ( the immediately next station in the journey ) was situated to the south of Rāmagiri. Māla to the south roundly destroys the 'northward journey' suggestion. It will be realised how the word उदङ्मुख ( face to the north ) had put us on the wrong track, ever since the *editio princeps* of the Megha-dūta was published by Wilson in 1813.

The question remains, however, as to why then the cloud was asked to turn its face to the north ? Two reasons are possible. It may be because the ultimate destination of the cloud was to the north. V suggests this reason ( अलकायाः उदीच्यत्वात् ). We, however, wish to suggest an additional reason. Turning the face to the north was recommended by the poet, because it was considered auspicious<sup>1</sup> to do so at the time of departure. In support of the suggestion, we may point out that Kālidāsa has made Prince Raghu to become ' उदङ्मुख ' obviously for the same reason. ( Raghu V.59; also see ch. III where this point is dealt with in more detail ). We may quote here an instance in point from Rāmāyaṇa. Rāma turned the face of his chariot to the north first, although he was to proceed to the south, i. e. to the D forest.

उदङ्मुखं तं तु रथं चकार । प्रयाणमाङ्गल्यनिमित्तदर्शनात्

Ayo. 46-34

For additional grounds why this verse cannot be read to signify a northward journey of the cloud, see ch. III.

अस्मात् सरसनिचुलात् स्वानात् : It would not be unreasonable to think that the poet here is referring to the special charm, loveliness or some unique and well-known feature of the Rāmagiri hill. Why now Nicula is generally taken to mean a kind of tree. But then why were the trees wet ? But from the wording, सरसनिचुल appears to be a permanent feature of this place that is to say even during the dry seasons. Then now could they be wet all the year round ? Besides, it is rather difficult to understand why, of all the things, the poet should refer to the Nicula trees in particular ? We have to suggest that in this epithet the reference is to the Hathiphor

<sup>1</sup> The rainbow in the immediately next verse appears to be mentioned to serve the same purpose, as pointed out by P.



tunnel (The Rkṣavila of Rāmāyaṇa) on Rāmgadh. (See chs. III and IV).

उन्मुह्योनिः मुग्धसिद्धाङ्गनाभिः Here the poet simply alludes to the unsophisticated wives of the sages. The word *Siddha* in this phrase, however, is invariably taken to mean the semi-divine beings endowed with supernatural powers. But their wives can hardly be called unsophisticated. Moreover, the epithet उन्मुह्योनिः presupposes that the *Siddhāṅganās* are looking at the cloud, about to jump up from the hill Rāmagiri, from the earth and from the heavens. The *Siddhas* who are known for moving about along with their wives through the skies are not supposed to descend down and stay on the earth. Besides where is the point in saying that only the *Siddhāṅganās* and not the *Siddhas* were surprised? As for *Siddhāṅganās* themselves, they are not so unsophisticated as the verse would make them out to be. The word *Siddha*<sup>1</sup>, therefore, obviously means sages and thus confirms our interpretation of the word *āśrameṣu* (आश्रमेषु) in V. 1. By *mugdha siddhāṅganās* the poet wants to refer to the wives of sages who were known or supposed to have lived during ancient times in the hermitages in the neighbourhood of Rāmagiri (=the Rāmgadh hill in M. P.) cf. मुग्धाः तापसकन्यकाः in *Śākuntala*.

## 15

रत्नच्छायाव्यतिकर इव प्रेक्ष्यमेतत्पुरस्तात्  
वल्मीकाग्रात्प्रभवति धनुःखण्डमाखण्डलस्य ।  
येन श्यामं वपुरतितरां कान्तिमापत्स्यते ते  
वर्हेणैव स्फुरितरुचिना गोपवेषस्य विष्णोः ॥

P अथ मध्येमार्गकथनं गमनसमये प्रशस्तं दैवतं एव उपपन्नं किमपि मङ्गलं

1 The word *Siddha* (सिद्ध) means 'any sage or seer' (Apte)

It may be noted that K himself has used the word in the same sense in the *Meghadūta* itself in another place, शश्वत् सिद्धैरुपचितवर्णैः etc. V. 55 M comments on it thus सिद्धैः योगिभिः । सिद्धिनिष्पत्तियोगयोः इति विश्वः । Also see *Bhagavad Gita* 10. 27 सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः

अवलोक्य तदुद्दर्पणाय आह रलेति ।... इन्द्रधनुषो दर्शनस्य यात्रायां मङ्गलत्वमुक्तम् ।

### TRANSLATION

Yonder is seen this fragment of *Indra's* bow in front, as fine-looking as a combination of the rays of gems, arisen from the top of the anthill; from which thy dark body will receive very great splendour, as that of *Viṣṇu* in the disguise of a cowherd derives from a glittering peacock feather.

### COMMENTS

धनुःखण्डं आखण्डलस्य :—Yonder appears the rain-bow. As already indicated this is a sure sign of the rains having set in. The summer season has ended.

The poet mentions the rain-bow here as also उदङ्मुख in the last verse, probably because these two things are considered to be auspicious to a person, setting out on a journey.<sup>1</sup>

वल्मीकाग्रात् :—The word वल्मीक<sup>2</sup> has been variously interpreted, but usually taken to mean an ant-hill. V and Sd also explain it as वल्मीकः सातपो मेघः ( a cloud shining due to sun's rays ) ; we are, however, inclined to prefer the latter interpretation for the following reason : According to K's simile, if the cloud ( on account of the rain-bow ) is to appear like Kṛṣṇa with a peacock feather ( of course on the head ), then the fragment of the rainbow referred to must rise from the cloud upwards in the sky - and not from the ground.

## 16

त्वय्यायत्तं कृषिफलमिति ॥ रूविकारानभिज्ञैः  
प्रीतिस्निग्धैर्जनपदवधूलोचनैः पीयमानः ।  
सद्यः सीरोत्कण्ठसुरभिक्षेत्रमारुह्य मालं  
किञ्चित्पश्चाद् व्रज लघुगतिर्भूय एवोत्तरेण ॥

V किञ्चित्पश्चात् प्रवलय गतिं भूय एवोत्तरेण

1 According to Yajñavalkya and Mahāyātra.

2 Shri D. D. Vaze from Ambaranath informs me that वल्मीक refers here to the Hathiphor tunnel on Rāmgadh, which is K's Rāmāgiri.

St. किञ्चित्पश्चात् प्रगुणय गतिं भूय एवोत्तरेण  
किञ्चित्पश्चात् प्रचलय गतिं भूय एवोत्तरेण

Saro, Rām } read :  
G. B. and Ew } किञ्चित्पश्चाद् व्रज लघुगतिः किञ्चिदेवोत्तरेण  
and explain it as : लघुगतिः शीघ्रगतिः सन्  
किञ्चित् ईषत् पश्चात् पश्चिमेन किञ्चित् उत्तरेण  
व्रज गमिष्यसि—Bharata.

V मालमुदारं क्षेत्रं किञ्चित् मनाक् आरुह्य पश्चादनन्तरम् उत्तरेण उत्तरस्यां  
दिशि भूयो बहुतरम् । गतिं प्रचलय व्यावर्तय । मालं हि दक्षिणाशायं  
तेन च उत्तराशा गन्तव्या इति गतिप्रचलनम् :...प्रचलनं स्फिरणम् ।  
उत्तरेण इत्येनवन्तः ।

St. त्वमुदीचीं प्रस्थितः अपि किञ्चित् मनाक् पश्चात् मालं पश्चात्यसीमान्तं  
दक्षिणाश्रितमारुह्य तस्य उपरि स्थित्वा । क्षणमात्रं कृतविलम्बश्च भूयः  
पुनरपि उत्तरेणैव दिग्भागेन गतिं गमनं प्रगुणय सजीकुरु । प्रचलय  
वा प्रवर्तय ।

J त्वं पश्चात् किञ्चिन्मनाक् भूयः पुनरपि तु उत्तरेणैव व्रज । यायाः ।  
अत्र अन्यदृक्त्तंशयणस्य अनभिहितत्वात् ।...प्रीतिमनुभूय भूय एव  
उत्तरां दिशमाश्रित्य त्वरय...किं कृत्वा । किञ्चिन्मनाक् पश्चिमदिग्भा-  
गमाश्रितमा लंबभूमिमारुह्य ।...उदीचीं प्रस्थितः अपि किञ्चिन्मनाक्  
पश्चात् पश्चिमभागमाश्रितं मालमारुह्य भूय एव उत्तरेणैव व्रज ।  
इति चरितार्थ एव ।

MG मालं मालाभिधानं क्षेत्रं आरुह्य त्वा किञ्चित् दक्षिणाश्रितं आरुह्य  
अतिव्याप्तः पुनरपि उत्तरेणैव व्रज गच्छ ।

D मालेन पश्चाद्गमनं तदुत्तरेण गमनं चाम्रकूटाख्ये पर्वते विश्रान्त्यर्थ-  
मुक्तमिति अवसेयम् ।

C पश्चात् पश्चिमभागेन वृष्टिसर्जनात्...भूय एव पुनरेव उत्तरेणैव उत्तर-  
दिग्भागेन व्रज...मालेन अनुगमनं तदुत्तरेण गमनं च चाम्रकूटगिरि-  
विश्रामार्थ इति ।

MS माले वृद्धिं कृत्वा पश्चात् मालक्षेत्रारोहणानन्तरं भूयः पुनरपि उत्तरेण  
व्रज उत्तरां दिशं प्रति गच्छ इत्यर्थः ।

( This becomes meaningless unless Māla is to the south; or  
otherwise भूयः ( पुनरपि ) would have no sense. )



S आरुह्य उपरि स्थित्वा मनाक् पश्चात् पश्चिमभागेन वृष्टिः विसर्जनात् लघुगतिः व्रज गच्छ । मालेन पश्चात् गमनं तदुत्तरेण गमनं च आसन्नकूटे विभ्रान्त्यर्थ इति द्रष्टव्यम् ।

Su पुनरपि उत्तरेणैव उत्तरस्यां दिशि गच्छ । किं कृत्वा ? पश्चात् पूर्वस्यां दिशि मालं मालाख्यं देशं किञ्चित् स्तोकमारुह्य उपरि स्थित्वा ।

( पूर्वस्यां in the passage is an obvious misfit and evidently appears to be an error of the critic or of the later copyists. )

P मालयोगात् मालव इति हि देशः प्रसिद्धः । किञ्चित् पश्चात् पश्चिमां दिशमुद्दिश्य मार्गसौन्दर्यानुरोधेन । लघुगतिः शीघ्रगमनः मध्ये विश्रम शैलाभावात् । उत्तरेण उत्तरदिग्भागेन । भूयः पुनः, अङ्गीकृतायाः उत्तरदिशः मध्ये परित्यागात् । एवकारो भिन्नक्रमः उत्तरेणैव प्रस्तुतेन इत्यर्थः ।

[ This passage cannot mean, as suggested by one scholar that the cloud had already taken a northward direction. अङ्गीकृत and प्रस्तुत evidently mean the north which the cloud had undertaken to go to—as its ultimate destination. Read P's comment on V. 14 already quoted. It does not presuppose any journey to the north. Whatever may be P's other merits, his observations about topographical positions are not very accurate and edifying. ]

M मालं मालाख्यं क्षेत्रं...तत्र अभिवृध्य...भूयः पुनरपि उत्तरेण एव उत्तरमार्गेणैव व्रज गच्छ ।

Saro हे घन त्वं उदीचीं प्रस्थितः किञ्चित् मनाक् पश्चात् पश्चिमभागा-  
श्रितं मालं आरुह्य इति संबन्धः । एवं हि ( # ) उत्तरेणैव व्रज  
इति चरितार्थमेव ।

#### TRANSLATION

Prof. Pathak translates thus :

When observed by the village women, with eyes full of affection and ignorant of the amorous sportings of the eye-lashes, because the fruit of agricultural labour depends on thee, retire a little to the west after ascending the *Māla*, where the fields are at once rendered fragrant by the operation of the plough and

\* The page of the manuscript being torn here, the word is lost.

then pursue thy northerly course at a swifter pace again.

It may be seen that Pathak's translation ( or, in fact, any other translation ) may well serve our purpose. But now in the light of the present research, we may offer our translation as follows :—

While being eagerly looked up to ( lit. drunk ) by the village maidens, with eyes full of affection and ignorant of the amorous sportings of the eye-lashes, because the fruit of agricultural labour depends on thee, (after) placing yourself for a while over the *Māla* plateau, where the fields are at once rendered fragrant by the operation of the plough, wheel back again (or mostly ) to the north

or

after having ascended the *Māla* plateau, go a little towards the west and then turn (back) again to the north.

#### COMMENTS

**The location of *Māla Kṣetra* :—**If not to the north, where was the cloud to turn to ? The cloud after leaving *Rāmagiri* was immediately to traverse the *Māla* land, which lay close by. The question of questions, therefore, is where was *Māla* situated ? On which side of the *Rāmagiri* ?

First of all, let us see what the text itself indicates ( adopting for the time being De's text of the verse in the critical edition ) *Māla* could not be to the north, as journey in that direction is not indicated by the poet so far. Moreover, if one had to turn only ' a little ' to the west ( किञ्चित् पश्चात् ) and then again to the north for reaching *Āmrakūṭa* i. e. to say continue the northward journey only after a little swerving towards the west, then in that case the deviation would be much too minor and negligible to deserve a special mention of it.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, it is obvious that the ad—

1 If we presume the *Māla* land to the north and consider this verse along with the next one we will find that the last line of the present verse is rendered rather redundant and loses all its propriety. The cloud could have been asked to go straightway from *Māla Kṣetra* to the next place *Āmrakūṭa*. For, the deviation then appears to be without any purpose or propriety. The detour becomes worth mentioning only if we place *Māla* in the opposite direction, i. e. to the south,

joining Māla land could not be to the west ( because thereafter again going to the west would be ridiculous ). Nor could it be to the east, as it would be a palpable misfit with the coming back to the west again. It would mean traversing the Māla land and then return to or towards Rāmāgiri again ! The only reasonable and probable alternative, with which we are left, is placing the Māla to the south.

If, of course we are to accept the reading of Vallabha ( the oldest in point of time ) as the authentic text of the last line, then we can go a step further and say that the Meghadūta itself expressly mentions Māla to the south. V reads किञ्चित् पश्चात् प्रवलय गतिं भूय एवोत्तरेण which means : After traversing the Māla land wheel back again towards the north. This position clearly presupposes Māla to the south. In fact V says so expressly in his commentary.

We prefer V's reading and consider it as correct and original ( of Kālidāsa ) for the following reasons :

1 व्रज लघुगतिः is obviously a *lexio simplicior*. Had it been there from the beginning, प्रवलय गति would not have been introduced in its place.

2 V's text is the oldest so far found. St, an equally old critic also reads प्रवलय ( which looks a slight aberration of प्रवलय, व mistaken or changed for च )

3 V appears to know of only one reading viz. प्रवलय गति, as he does not notice any other. In any case, it was probably supposed to be more authentic and hence was more in vogue in his times, than the later and simplified version व्रज लघुगतिः

4 V's text is not only the oldest so far found but on the whole appears to be comparatively more authentic. His text is nearest to that of the poet. We have found that his प्रथमदिवसे in V. 1 agrees with the original version of the poet. The number of verses in V's text ( and also those which he rejects as spurious ) point at the same conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

5 V is often found to note in his commentary other versions or readings and he gives his reasons also for rejecting them, some-

1 Cf. De's Introduction ( Sahitya Academy's critical edition )



times even explaining how and why they arose.<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that in the present case, he does nothing of the sort. Of course Jināsena in the 7th century, reads वज्र लघुगतिः. But from V's commentary, it appears that प्रबल्य गति was more well known and considered as more authentic.

6 It may be that both the readings are of the poet himself. On second thought he may have changed the first version (after it had gone into circulation) and substituted a better or simpler version in its place—the result of which is that both are preserved in the form of two different text-traditions:<sup>2</sup>

Now, all<sup>3</sup> the ancient commentaries which seek to give the location of Māla place it to the south of Rāmāgiri. (See above) We may point out here that curiously enough even Jināsena in his work based on the Meghadūta, has composed his verses on the basis that the cloud after the Rāmāgiri was to travel first to the south and then back again to the north.<sup>4</sup> Thus the tradition, of Māla to the south undoubtedly appears to be in existence at least from the 7th century and even before that. It stands corroborated by various old critics like V, St, Mg, S, D, Ch, etc. It is also significant that this location is not denied, questioned or differed from by any of the commentaries extant to day. That is to say there is not the slightest suggestion anywhere about any contrary or rival tradition in the air. It must be borne in mind that the numerous critics mentioned above are widely separated from each other (as regards provenance and period). Their total agreement, therefore, on this point, which must be regarded as original and not secondary, goes a long way.

1 Cf. लिपिसारूप्यमोहात् प्रथम इति ऊचुः V. I.

2 The third text-tradition, already quoted above, is pretty old and followed by Saro, Ra'm, G, B and Ew : किञ्चित् पश्चात् वज्र लघुगतिः किञ्चिद्-दोक्षरेण । It will be seen that even this tradition means much the same thing as the first two. It only substitutes किञ्चित् for भूयः. Surprisingly enough this reading exactly fits in with Rāmgadh and Amarakāṇṭaka (See the map). For, if we turn first to the south from R and then travel a little to the west and then again a little to the north, we exactly come up against A.

3 The only isolated instance is that of Sumati Vijaya whose manuscript-copy appears to mention Māla to the east, which, as already shown is an obvious error. The exception goes to prove the rule in the present case.

4 Cf. Parshvabhudaya of Jināsena ( 7th century ).

The location of Māla to the south will be further corroborated by the identity of Āmrakūṭa with Amarkaṇṭaka, which we seek to establish in our exposition of V. 19.<sup>1</sup> The last line viz. किञ्चित् पश्चात् etc. only delineates the route from Māla land up to Āmrakūṭa, which is to be reached immediately in V. 18. There is no other station in between. What is meant therefore in this verse is a U shaped route or detour as between Rāmagiri and Āmrakūṭa (of course towards the west via south).

आरुह्य :—Māla may well be an elevated table-land ( मालं उन्नतभूतलम् ). But it is not correct to infer or propound, as some scholars<sup>2</sup> do, from the word āruhya that the Māla was situated on a higher ground than Rāmagiri itself. As V says rightly, āruhya simply means तदुपरि स्थित्वा (i.e. an act of overhanging only).

## 17

त्वामासारप्रशमितवनोपप्लवं साधु मूर्ध्ना  
वक्ष्यस्यध्वश्रमपरिगतं सानुमानात्प्रकूटः ।  
न क्षुद्रोऽपि प्रथमसुकृतापेक्षया संश्रयाय  
प्राप्ते मित्रे भवति विमुखः किं पुनर्यस्तथोच्चैः ॥

### TRANSLATION

The mountain *Āmrakūṭa* will cheerfully bear thee on its head when thou art fatigued by the journey, because thou hast extinguished the wild fire with shower. Not even a low person, in consideration of previous favours, refuses shelter to a friend who is come to seek refuge; how much less will one so high ?

### COMMENTS

सानुमान् आप्रकूटः The poet's *Āmrakūṭa* hill is tall and imposing (उच्चैः and not क्षुद्र V. 17) It has a peak (सानुमान्, कूट and

1 It may be seen that our location of the Māla near about Ratanpur in northern Chhattisgad exactly corresponds to Māla of Wilson.

2 Prof. Mirashi pp, 57-58, Meghadutatil Ramagiri arthat Ramtek.

also शिखरं. V. 18).<sup>1</sup> It abounds in mango-trees.<sup>2</sup> The name आम्रकूट also suggests the same thing. The word आम्रकूट bears a close resemblance to the word अमरकण्टक. The peak Āmrakūṭa probably represents one of the westernmost peaks of the Amarakantaka range ( For more particulars see Ch. III). The fixation of Amarakantaka is further confirmed by ( 1 ) विशीर्णं रेवा or the Revā falls on it V. 19 and ( 2 ) the small stream of Revā referred to in V. 20 as जम्बूकुञ्जप्रतिहतरयं.

The Āmrakūṭa hill must be placed to the north-west of the Māla land as it is to be reached in V. 17 immediately after following the directional instruction in V. 16 viz. किञ्चित् पश्चात् etc. i. e. a little to the west and then north.

## 19

स्थित्वा तस्मिन्वनचरवधूभुक्तकुञ्जे मुहूर्तं  
तोयोत्सर्गद्रुततरगतिस्तत्परं वर्त्म तीर्णः ।  
रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णी  
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य ॥

St. विकीर्णी in the place of विशीर्णी

V विन्ध्याद्रेः पादे अधोभागे । पादाः प्रत्यन्तपर्वता इति अमरः । भक्ति-  
च्छेदेः विच्छित्तिविभागैः दत्तां गजवपुषि भूतिं सुधाभिव ।

St. उपलविषमे शिलापुटस्थपुटे । अमुना विकरणमुक्तम् तामुपमिमीते ।  
अङ्गे गात्रे गजस्य ... एतेन विन्ध्यस्य पादपदाभिधानेन सिन्धुरत्वाध्यारोपः  
तदङ्गोद्भासिभूतिपत्रावली सादृश्यप्रकाशनेन रेवाया रामणीयकं दूरात् अवलोक्यमानत्वं  
उक्तम् ।

J. तत्परं वर्त्म तीर्णः सन् तस्माद्विरेः परभागभाजि अयनं अतिक्रान्तः सन्  
रेवां द्रक्ष्यसि । ... किञ्चिदां रेवां । विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णी शतशः स्फुटितां । विन्ध्याद्रे-  
( द्रेः ) प्रत्यन्तपर्वते शतधाभूतां ।

1 मध्ये श्यामः स्तन इव भुवः शेषविस्तारपाण्डुः ( V. 18 )

Whether a western peak in Amarakantaka range actually appears somewhat like a dome ( like the shape of a woman's breast ) must be left to be judged by those who travel by air over the tract.

2 काननाम्रैः V. 18



Ms. विन्ध्याचले विशीर्णौ शतशः स्फुटितां कर्पण ? विन्ध्यपादे उपलविषमे उपलाः पाषाणाः विषमाः उच्चनीचाः चास्मिन् उपलविषमः तस्मिन् । गजस्य शरीरे भूतिमिव चित्रविशेषमिव । विन्ध्याचलगजयोः साम्यं, नर्मदाभूत्योः साम्यं इति ।

Saro विन्ध्यस्य प्रसिद्धशिखरिणः पाद प्रत्यन्तपर्वतविकीर्णौ शतशः स्फुटित-प्रवाहां । विन्ध्यस्य पादपदाभिधानेन सिन्धुरत्वाध्यारोपः, तदङ्गोद्भासितभूतिपत्रावली ।

P. उपलविषमे शिलाभिर्निम्नान्ते, स्थूलविकटस्थित्या शिलावद्विषमे वा । विन्ध्यपादे 'पादाः प्रत्यन्तपर्वताः' इत्यमरः । विशीर्णाम् उच्चावचशिलातलास्फालनस्खलितजर्जरिततया बहुमार्गीकृतम् । भक्तिच्छेदैः विन्यासविच्छित्तिविशेषैः । भूति भस्म । 'भूतिर्भसितं भस्म' इति हज्जयुधः । विन्ध्यस्य समासे गुणीभूतत्वेऽपि वस्तुतः प्राधान्यात् तस्यैव गजेनोपमेयत्वम् । तुङ्गत्वदर्शनीयत्वादिः साधारणो धर्मः, रेवाभूत्योस्तु स्वच्छत्वपापहरत्वादिः ।

#### TRANSLATION

Note: All the Commentators, without an exception explain विन्ध्यपाद as the adjacent foot-hill of the Vindhya mountain and quote पादाः प्रत्यन्तपर्वताः as an authority from Amarkośa. It is evident from this that they took the scene of the scattered Revā to be on the Vindhya hill and not at its foot i. e. the plains below.

Resting for a short while on it (the *Amarkū.a*) whose bowers of creepers are used by the wives of foresters, and traversing the road beyond it at a swifter pace by reason of the discharge of water, thou wilt see the *Narmadā*, shattered (or scattered) on the Vindhyan hill due to rocks, (looking like the decoration composed of painted streaks on the body of an elephant.

#### COMMENTS

तत्परं वर्त्म तीणः Some <sup>1</sup> scholars from this wording have tried to question the identification of Amarkantaka because the river Narmadā rises there. It is pointed out that the river is noticed after going some distance beyond the Āmrakūṭa. But तत् evidently stands for the peak Āmrakūṭa which is to be identified with one of the hills and not the whole range of Amarkantaka (extending over 100 miles east-west).

<sup>1</sup> Prof. V. G. Paranjpe ; Edition of Meghadūta.

Moreover what is noticed is **not** simply the stream of the river Revā but the Revā **falls** i. e. on the slopes where it descends down the mountain.

If, therefore, the cloud rests first on one of the westernmost peaks of Amarakantaka (approaching of course from south or southeast as per the last line of v. 16), it is perfectly consistent and natural that it should be required to cross some distance beyond in order to get the view of the falls. (The place, where Narmadā descends is at least 10 miles to the west from the point where it rises ).

विन्ध्यपादे :—Pāda here means and represents a hill in the Vindhyas. Some people take विन्ध्यपादे to mean at the foot of the Vindhya hills. But as will be shown below the context does not allow of any such interpretation. Everyone of the commentators, without an exception, explains this term as meaning an adjacent hill in the Vindhya range, quoting पादाः प्रत्यन्तपर्वताः from Amarakośa as their authority. It shows undoubtedly that the ancients took the scene of विशीर्ण रेवा ( shattered Revā or Ravā falls ) on the Vindhyan hill (विन्ध्यपादे<sup>1</sup>—the locative case) and not at its foot. It goes without saying that the hill under notice must be from the Amarakantaka range of the Vindhya mountains, as the Revā does not and cannot descend down any other hill.

विशीर्णाः—The word here means “shattered,” or “scattered” or “parted into streamlets ” i. e. spread all over. The verse evidently describes a typical scene, of the mountain, during the rainy season, with various streams of water gurgling down its slopes and flowing ( covering ) all over ( ultimately combining themselves at the foot to form the main channel of the river ). And hence the poet's simile of an elephant with painted streaks on his body.

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the word विन्ध्यपाद is used here as a proper noun. विन्ध्यपाद was the name given to a part of the Vindhya range including Amarakantaka. Prof. A. V. Pandya of Vallabh Vidyanagar, who has personally visited the part and studied the question, informs me : “ विन्ध्यपाद ( Vindhyapada ) is definitely the Satpura range in its entirety. The Maikal is not a mountaia in itself, but a part of the great Satpura range, just as are the Mahadeva Hills of the Panchamadhi area. I have made a detailed study of both the Vindhya and Vindhyachala. The Riksha was also a portion of the Satpura or the Vindhyapada.”

It is interesting to note St's reading विकीर्णा. Either of them in this particular context means much the same thing although विकीर्णा seems to be a more happy and fitting expression as it suits the sense and simile better. St. explains विशीर्णा by giving its synonym as विकीर्णा. Other critics also ( like M, P and others ) who read विशीर्णा explain it more or less in the sense of विकीर्णा. Thus the two words are interchangeable and seem to have signified almost an identical meaning. Kālidāsa himself has often used these two words to denote the same sense viz. scattered or spread over. It is possible that both the versions are of the poet himself, introduced at different times. If that is so, we are inclined to think that K must have subsequently changed his previous reading विशीर्णा into a better fitting विकीर्णा.

It is clear that the poet here compares the विन्ध्यपाद i. e. the Vindhyan hill with the Revā falls to an elephant with painted ( white ) streaks on his body.

St, Ms, Saro, P and yet others actually say so in their Commentaries. Obviously such a hill cannot but be from the Amar-kāṭaka range, where the Revā takes its rise.

Lastly, we have to place an interesting though indirect, proof regarding the point under consideration. K often compares a person ( warrior or a king ) with an elephant as well as with a big mountain. So also the poet compares in many places an elephant with a mountain and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> Thus the circle is completed. K equates the things like this :

1 Look at the following comparisons :

**Elephant Compared with Mountain**

Raghu 5-46 शैलोपमः ( स गजः ).

„ 6-54 क्षरत्सैन्यगजच्छलेन यात्रासु यातीव पुरो महेन्द्रः

[ अद्रिकल्पा अस्य गजाः इत्यर्थः—M ]

„ 5-72 स्तम्बेरमाः ...येषां विभ्रान्ति तरुणारुणरागयोगात्  
भिन्नाद्रिगैरिकतटा इव दन्तकोशाः

„ 13-74 तेषु ( गजेन्द्रेषु ) क्षरत्सु बहुधा मदवारिधाराः  
शैलाधिरोहणसुखान्युपलेभिरे ते

[ It is worth noting in this connection that K also compares a standing up cow with a Mountain पाटलायां गवि = सानुमतः अघित्यकायां Raghu 2-29 ]



Person with garlands etc. = Elephant with painted streaks or streams of ichor etc. = Mountain with streams etc.

We find from various instances that the poet took all the three as comparable with each other. Thus there can be hardly any doubt that the poet is alluding in this verse to a hill from the Amarkantaka range which forms part of Vindhya.

But Prof. Mirashi joins issue with us on this point. Tacitly assuming Rāmāṭeka as the starting point, he is constrained to shift the scene to Hoshangabad! Thereby he has to bring down the scene to the plains of Malwa i. e. to say, ground instead of an उपलव्धिम hill. But then how could river get shattered or scattered on a plain ground? He argues that विसृज् means dried up and that K here describes the river Narmadā as impoverished with scant water due to scorching heat of summer. But even then how could a single dried up stream look like so many painted streaks? The professor goes on to argue that as the stream is dried up in summer it is subdivided into streamlets. But even after all this ingenuous manipulation it still remains to explain how a flat bed of a river could look like an elephant! In his anxiety to save the collapsing Rāmṭek, the learned Professor is adopting strange arguments. It needs hardly be said that the scene in question, like all others described in the Pūrva-Megha,

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Person (standing or sitting up) = Mountain

- Raghu 6-60 स निर्मरोद्गार इवाद्रिराजः  
 „ 16-70 स घातुनिष्पन्द इवाद्रिराजः  
 „ 12-80 कुम्भकर्णः शृङ्गीव टङ्कुच्छिन्नमनःशिलः  
 „ 15-23 निशाचरः = गिरिः

Person = Elephant

- Raghu 16-68 विलोलहारः (कुशः) = स्कन्धावलम्बोद्धृतपद्मिनीकः  
 द्विपेन्द्रः  
 „ 2-57 न्यस्तचिह्ना राजलक्ष्मीं दधानः (दिलीपः) =  
 अन्तर्मदावस्थः द्विपेन्द्रः  
 Ks 3-76 सुरगज इव विभ्रत्पद्मिनीं दन्तलम्बां  
 प्रतिपथगतिरासीत् वेगदीर्घकृताङ्गः

is a characteristic and typical scene from the rainy season and not from summer.<sup>1</sup> It may also be noted that the amazing 'dried up' interpretation of विशीर्ण is unwarranted and militates against the context. Nor did it occur so far to a single critic—ancient or modern! No amount of 'ingenuity' or equivocation can transfer Kālidāsa's scattered Revā from the Amarakaṭṭaka hills to any other place. The Hoshangabad corollary is as wrong as the original Rāmaṭeka hypothesis. According to us the present verse, with its unmistakable description, proves beyond the least shadow of doubt that K is referring here to the Revā falls formed during the rains, on the hill (i. e. Amarakaṭṭaka or the Āmrakūṭa of the poet). Apart from the identity of Āmrakūṭa with Amarakaṭṭaka, which of course is independently established before, the location of the 'shattered Revā' on the Amarakaṭṭaka supplies a further undeniable confirmation and thus forms one of our strongest links in the chain. It destroys Rāmaṭeka and confirms Rāmagadh. If any more proof is needed for our proposition, we offer our additional grounds in support as follows :—

1 The river Revā, during rains, cannot get shattered or scattered anywhere else except on the hill which it descends down. (In fact the poet expressly says so by using the words उपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे).

2 All commentators take Vindhyapāda to mean an adjacent hill in the Vindhyas.

3. There cannot be the least doubt that the present verse describes a scene from the rainy season. A just similar picture by Kālidāsa himself occurs in canto II of Rts<sup>2</sup> which is exclusively devoted to the description of the rainy season. (The rainbow and many other things peculiar to the rainy season are described in Me. as well as canto II of Rts.)

4. The simile of an elephant with painted streaks on his body presupposes that something big and vertical is to be com-

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1 This is also quite apparent from the fact that so many characteristic features of the rainy season recorded by the poet in his Rts (canto II) find a mention in Me.

2 समाचिताः ( or सुभूषिताः ) प्रस्रवणैः समन्ततः भूधराः V. 2-16 Rts. Hills or mountains full of ( looking ornamented by ) streams of water flowing all over.

pared. Only a big mountain ( dark ) with streams ( white ) flowing all over suits the comparison in the verse. It should also be borne in mind that K often likens a hill to an elephant and vice versa. He also compares a person ( i. e. his majestic and imposing personality ) with an elephant.<sup>1</sup>

5. Kālidāsa has used the same simile ( an elephant with painted streaks ) in his Kumāra-Sambhava<sup>2</sup> while describing a mountain. This leaves no doubt in our mind that K is alluding here also to a hill itself and not the plains at its foot.

6. A hill with streams flowing over it seems to be a favourite theme with the poet. He has alluded to it in several places.<sup>3</sup> These allusions, inferentially, point at the same conclusion.

Thus the present verse undoubtedly goes to prove two propositions : (1) The विशीर्ण रेवा or the Revā falls are on the hill; and

(2) That hill is none other than the Amarakaṇṭaka

1 See f. n. on pp. 83-4

2 उन्नतावनतभाववत्तया चन्द्रिका सतिमिरा गिरेरियम् ।

भक्तिभिर्बहुविधाभिरपिता भाति भूतिरिव मत्तदन्तिनः ॥ Ks 8-69.

3 A hill with streams flowing all over is referred to in Raghu 6-60, 16-70, 6-54, 13-74. It may be pointed out here that the scene of the Amara-kaṇṭaka hill with scattered Revā is exactly similar to the one pictured by the Rāmāyaṇa in the description of rainy season ( Ki 28-48-50 )

नवैर्जलैर्घैः घरणी वितृप्ता...

महान्ति कूटानि महीधराणां

धाराविधौतान्यधिकं विभान्ति

शैलोपलप्रस्खलमानवेगाः

शैलौत्तमानां विपुलाः प्रपाताः

हारा विकीर्यन्त इवावभान्ति...

( the word विकीर्यन्त may be noted and compared with विकीर्ण in this verse. )

शीघ्रं प्रवेगा विपुलाः प्रपाताः

निर्घातशृङ्गोपतला गिरीणाम्

मुक्ताकलपप्रतिमा पतन्तो...

महागुहोत्सङ्गतलैर्घ्रियन्ते

It is significant to note that K also compares the king wearing pearl-garlands with a hill strewn over with flowing streams :

पाण्डुर्यमसापितलम्बहारः... सनिर्गरोद्गार इवाद्रिराजः

( For amplification of these points and more details, see Ch. III ).



## 20

तस्यास्तिकैर्धनगजमदैर्वासितं वान्तवृष्टि-  
 र्जम्बूकुञ्जप्रतिहतरयं तोयमादाय गच्छेः ।  
 अन्तःसारं घन तुलयितुं नानिलः शक्यति त्वां  
 रिक्तः सर्वो भवति हि लघुः पूर्णता गौरवाय ॥

V तिकैः काननकरिदागैः वासितं मुरभीकृतम् । विन्ध्यो हि गजवासः ।  
 तथा तीरजेन जम्बूखडेन जम्बूघनेन जडीकृतवेगम् ।

## TRANSLATION

Having poured out showers of rain, thou wilt take its water which is fragrant with the juice of wild elephants and whose current is obstructed by bowers of jambu trees. The wind will not be able to move thee full of water; for every thing empty becomes light; fullness contributes to heaviness.

## COMMENTS

जम्बूकुञ्जप्रतिहतरयम् :—The stream or speed of the Narmadā was obstructed by the Jambu trees (or its overhanging branches). This epithet indicates the small stream of Narmadā near its rise. Otherwise its speed or current could not be checked by the Jambu thickets through which it has to pass. It is evident that this description cannot be applicable to a huge and surging mass of water which the Narmadā is during the rainy season in the plains of Malwa. The cloud coming from Rāmaṭeka has to come up against this sort of the Narmadā (nearabout Hoshangabad according to Rāmaṭeka scholars), which can hardly be described as जम्बूकुञ्जप्रतिहत्. The many small streams of the Narmadā after rising in the Amarakantaka range at various points come down the hills joining at Mandala to form the main stream. The poet refers to one of such streams probably one on the northern side, which has to be crossed while going from Amarakantaka to Vidiśā.

Thus विशीर्णं (last verse) and जम्बूकुञ्जप्रतिहत् indicate the Narmadā on and near Amarakantaka in its own turn, destroys Rāmaṭeka and establishes Rāmgadh. The description वनगजमदैः

वासितं तोयं ( the waters of the Narmadā rendered pungent as also fragrant due to the ichors of the forest elephants ) in a way confirms the above location, because as V says—विन्ध्यो हि गजवासः

## 22

उत्पश्यामि द्रुतमपि सखे मत्प्रियार्थं यियासोः  
कालक्षेपं ककुभसुरभौ पर्वते पर्वते ते ।  
शुक्लापाङ्गैः सजलनयनैः स्वागतीकृत्य केकाः  
प्रत्युद्यातः कथमपि भवान् गन्तुमाशु व्यवस्येत् ॥

V अस्मद्वितार्थं त्वरितमपि जिगमिषोः तव कुसुमगन्धे सर्वत्राद्रौ तवाहं  
कालक्षेपं उत्पश्यामि उत्प्रेक्षे ।

## TRANSLATION

I suppose, O friend, that though desirous of travelling quickly for my beloved one's sake, thou wilt be delayed on each of the many mountains fragrant with kuṭaja flowers. Received with cries expressive of welcome by the peacocks whose eyes are full of tears, thou wilt try to travel rapidly by some means or other.

## COMMENTS

पर्वते पर्वते :—The repetition of the word obviously pre-supposes that the cloud was expected to come across quite an appreciable number of hills, while wending its way through the *Das'ārṇa* Country (i. e. roughly from Amarakapṭaka or river Narmadā up to Ujjayinī). Now this description is justifiable only on the basis of an east-west route or journey of the cloud i. e. to say only if the cloud is to travel along the Vindhya range and certainly not if it is made to go across that range. The cloud coming from Rāmaṭeka (i. e. south) would have to meet and cross the Vindhyan range only once at some point or the other and thus would hardly fulfil the description of the poet पर्वते पर्वते.

V's comment also in this connection quoted above is very significant and confirms this interpretation. By सर्वत्र अद्रौ, he

definitely means विन्ध्याद्रि i. e. the extensive Vindhya range. Vallabha takes the journey to be east-west i. e. along the northern Vindhyas.

## 24

तेषां दिक्षु प्रथितविदिशालक्षणां राजधानीं  
गत्वा सद्यः फलमपि महत्कामुक्तवस्य लब्ध्वा ।  
तीरोपान्तस्तनितसुभगं पास्यसि स्वादु यत्त-  
त्सम्भ्रमङ्गं मुखमपि पयो वेत्रवत्याश्चलोर्मि ॥

### TRANSLATION

After going to the capital of that ( country ), whose name *Vidiśā* is famed throughout the quarters, thou wilt at once realise the great wish of a lover; where thou wilt drink the sweet water of the undulating *Vetravati*, which resembles a frowning face, in an agreeable manner, because of thy thunderings near the banks.

### COMMENTS

We have particularly to invite the attention of the reader to the geographical position of the river *Vetravati* and that of the city of *Vidiśā*<sup>1</sup> as indicated in this verse. The order is important. The cloud has to reach the city (*Vidiśā*) first and then it can drink the waters of the *Vetravati* etc. The gerund गत्वा<sup>2</sup> makes arrival in *Vidiśā* a prerequisite. Now, *Vidiśā* identified with the ruins of *Besnagar* near modern *Bhilsa* in *Madhya Pradesh* is situated on eastern banks of the river *Betwa* i. e. *Vetravati*. Thus this verse clearly presupposes and proves that the cloud is advancing towards *Vidiśā* from the west i. e. to say from *Rāmgadh* and *Amarakaṇṭaka*. The situation or order<sup>3</sup> of the two places mentioned by *Kālidāsa*

1 Cf. मञ्जुमालाविलासिनीकुचतटास्फालनजर्जरितोमिमालया वेत्रवत्या परिगता विदिशाभिधाना नगरी राजधान्यासीत् । *Kadambari* I

2 समानकर्तृकयोः पूर्वकाले । — *Pāṇini*.

3 *K* refers to *Vidiśā* in his *Malavikā*, both as a river and a city. Thus *Vidiśā* probably appears to be another name of *Vetravati*, which fact shows *K*'s intimate knowledge of these parts. The detailed and accurate descriptions in *Me.* of places near *Vidiśā* point at the same conclusion. It looks unlikely that *K* would confuse or make a mistake about the order of *Vidiśā* and the river *Vetravati*.



in this verse becomes rather impossible, and inexplicable if the cloud is to approach Vidiśa from the south (i. e. from Ramtek ), because in that case it need not go to Vidiśa first, but can well reach the river Vetravati from the south. We again get a clear indication here that the route of the cloud was east to west and not from south to north, as is generally supposed.

## 27

वक्रः पन्था यदपि भवतः प्रस्थितस्योत्तराशां  
सौधोत्सङ्गप्रणयविमुखो मा स्म भूरुजयिन्याः ।  
विद्युद्दामस्फुरितचकितैस्तत्र पौराङ्गनानां  
लोलापाङ्गैर्यदि न रमसे लोचनैर्वञ्चितोऽसि ॥

V कौवेरी आशां प्रति तव यियासोः

D विन्ध्याद्रिप्रमवा विन्ध्यं निर्मिय उत्तरवाहिनी कापि नद्यस्ति निर्विन्ध्येति ।  
तस्याः प्राक् तीरे कियन्तं चाध्वानं प्रागतिक्रम्य वर्तते खलूजयिनी । तस्मान्निर्वि-  
न्ध्यायाः पश्चिमतीरदेशेनोत्तरां गच्छतो मेघस्योजयिनीगमने पन्थाः वक्रः स्यादिति ।

M विन्ध्यात् उत्तरवाहिन्या निर्विन्ध्यायाः प्राग्भागे कियत्यपि दूरे स्थिता  
उजयिनी । उत्तरपथस्तु निर्विन्ध्यायाः पश्चिमे इति वक्रत्वम् ।

## TRANSLATION

Though thy route (i. e. the route, which you have taken ) is circuitous for thee wishing to reach (or started for ) the North, yet do not fail to take interest in the balconies of the palaces of *Ujjayini*. If thou art not amused by the eyes of the townswomen there with unsteady side-glances and dazzled by flashes of lightning, thou wilt be deceived.

## COMMENTS

वक्रः पन्थाः This expression of the poet is unfortunately much misunderstood. It does not and can never mean that the route deviates from this point onwards, or from Vidiśa either. This verse occurs during the journey from Vidiśa to Ujjayini—which is quite in a straight line and in a westerly direction. It should be borne in mind that the instruction वक्रः पन्थाः is inserted or thought of after

visiting three more places ( after Vidiṣā ) viz. the Vetravati V. 24, Nīcaiḥ hill V. 25 and Vananadī V. 26—which takes us about half way towards Ujjayinī. Further route from Vananadī up to Ujjayinī represents a continuation of the journey in the same direction ( i.e. westerly ) as before and is by no means a departure. Also note V's comment on प्रस्थितस्योत्तराशा<sup>1</sup> (=कौबेरी आशा प्रति तव विद्यासोः). Thus प्रस्थितस्य or विद्यासोः appears to imply and indicate that the cloud has not so far taken the northerly direction. The route is yet east-west only. What is then the correct meaning of ' the round about way ' ? There are two probabilities. It may have a reference to the round-about journey ( i. e. towards the west ) already undertaken right from Rāmagadh. Or perhaps the poet is referring to the further diversion via Ujjayinī, which looks more probable. It may be that in those days one route branched off towards north after Nīcaiḥ hill near Vidiṣā, from the main east-west road. Another land route of course proceeded to the north via Ujjayinī. As K was anxious to take the cloud to Ujjayinī, he had to abandon the first-mentioned route which was shorter and take the longer and roundabout way to the Himālayas via Ujjayinī. And hence वक्रः पन्था यदपि भवतः प्रस्थितस्योत्तराशा etc. M's comment definitely appears to support our conclusion.

The detour envisaged in this verse is supposed and rightly so to be recommended for the sake of a visit to Ujjayinī. But coming from south ( i. e. Rāmaṭeka ) it actually amounts to a deviation for Vidiṣā ! Because in that case after crossing the Narmadā ( near Hoshangabad as the supporters of Rāmaṭeka suggest ) the cloud could have been asked straightway to head for Ujjayinī. In fact Vidiṣā then remains out of the way ! From the context, therefore, it again becomes clear that the cloud is coming from the east. Up to Vidiṣā ( and Nīcaiḥ hill ) the journey was alright, as Vidiṣā was on the way from Mahākosala up to there. But here the poet certainly owe d an explanation to his reader as the cloud was not to turn to the north by the first available route nearabout Nīcaiḥ hill and Vananadī. Instead he wanted the cloud to go further west only to reach and rest in Ujjayinī and enjoy its sights.

1 उत्तराशां प्रस्थितस्य in this line from the context obviously means, as V rightly says, उत्तराशां विद्यासोः । that is to say the cloud is yet to go towards the north, which means, inferentially, that it was not so far required to travel in that direction.

This scheme of the extended journey or detour ( वक्रः पन्थाः ) was apparently hit upon because that fashionable metropolis was worth describing and more probably because the poet longed to offer his pen-picture of that city—so dear to him for many reasons—as he well knew that his readers would relish it.

Thus we notice two big departures in the cloud's intended journey. The first is for the sake of Māla Ksetra while the second one is in favour of Ujjayini. It is remarkable that Kālidāsa notices and includes in his picture even the small and negligible places on the way right from Māla up to Ujjayini. His minute observation and fond description betray a certain intimacy and even filial warmth for this part of the country.

## 57

प्रालेयाद्रेरुपतटमतिक्रम्य तांस्तान्विशेषान्  
हंसद्वारं भृगुपतियशोवर्त्म यक्रौञ्चरन्ध्रम् ।  
तेनोदीचीं दिशमनुसरः तिर्यगायामशोभी  
इयामः पादो बलिनियमनाभ्युद्यतस्येव विष्णोः ॥

## TRANSLATION

Passing beyond those various curiosities on the slopes of the *Himālaya*, (looking) beautiful by reason of thy form being compressed obliquely and resembling the black foot of *Viṣṇu* intent upon putting down *Bali*, thou shouldst go to the north through the opening in the *Krauñca* mountain by which flamingoes proceed to the *Mānasa* lake and which established *Parasurāma's* fame.

## COMMENTS

तेन (क्रौञ्चरन्ध्रेन) उदीचीं दिशं अनुसर<sup>1</sup> :-- The cloud is here near the outer ridge of the *Himālayas*. It is now asked to pass through

1 Also mark the contrast between उदङ्गमुखाः खं उत्पत (v. 14) and उदीचीं दिशं अनुसर in the present verse. The sense of the former expression cannot be as in the latter. See our comment under the next verse also.



the hole in the Krauñca mountain and thereby adopt a northward direction hereafter (up to Alakā). This presupposes that the previous direction up to this place was other than northward. It can be readily seen from the map that the direction of the journey from Bramhāvarta (north-west of Delhi) to the Himālayas (near Haradvāra) is eastward. Thus our proposition, that the instruction किञ्चित् पदवात् व्रज लघुगतिः भूय एवोत्तरेण (v. 16) is not meant to cover the whole of the remaining journey, is confirmed by the position expressly stated by the poet in this verse. The said instruction was obviously meant to indicate the route between Māla and Āmrakūṭa only.

## 58

गत्वा चोर्ध्वं दशमुखभुजोच्छ्वासितप्रस्थसंधेः  
कैलासस्य त्रिदशवनितादर्पणस्यातिथिः स्याः ।  
गृह्णोच्छ्वायैः कुमुदविशदैर्यो वितत्य स्थितः खं  
राशीभूतः प्रतिदिनमिव त्र्यम्बकस्यादहासः ॥

## TRANSLATION

After ascending higher, thou shouldst become the guest of *Kailāsa*, the joints of whose summits have been slackened by the arms of *Rāvaṇa*, which is the mirror of the wives of the gods, which fills the sky with its lofty peaks white like lotuses, and which resembles the laughter of *Siva* accumulated day by day.

## COMMENTS

गत्वा च ऊर्ध्वः—The cloud is now asked to go up i. e. ascend. It is noteworthy that in the whole of the poem, the upward direction is recommended only twice. The first occasion was at the very beginning (अस्मात् स्थानात् खं उत्पत्त v. 14) when the cloud had to be asked to make a move from Rāmagiri. But it was आदिलष्टानु—clinging to the hill. It was first necessary to disentangle itself and rise up—higher—in the skies before it could be expected to get moving on its journey 'mounted on his aerial track or path of wind' (पवनपदवीं आरूढं v. 8). Similarly here the cloud has now

to begin its ascent of the Himālayas for reaching Mount Kailāsa and Alaka on its top. It is clear that in both these places the occasion demanded an upward direction. In further support of the proposition, we have to point out that the numerous other verbs used through out by the poet show and prescribe a horizontal movement for the cloud. We list them hereunder :

गन्तासि	13	प्राप्य; अनुसर	30
(उत्पत)	14	यायाः	33
व्रज	16	अध्वशेषं वाहयेत्	38
तीर्णः	19	प्रस्थानं	41
गच्छे:	20	उपजिगमिषो:	42
गन्तुं विद्यासो:	22	व्यालम्बेयाः	45
गत्वा	24	व्रज	47
व्रज	26	गच्छे:	50
प्रस्थितस्य	27	उदीचीं दिशं अनुसरे:	57
संनिपत्य	28	(गत्वा च ऊर्ध्वं)	58

Thus only two verses 14 and 58 speak of upward direction at Rāmagiri and Himālayas respectively, obviously because the context required it. This position confirms our interpretation of उदङ्गमुखः खं उत्पत in v. 14 which must mean, as in the present verse, rising or jumping upward ( and not going northward ).

## 98

तामायुष्मन्मम च वचनादात्मनश्चोपकर्तुं  
 ऋयादेवं तव सहचरो रामगिर्याश्रमस्थः ।  
 अव्यापन्नः कुशलमबले पृच्छति त्वां नियुक्तः  
 पूर्वाशास्यं सुलभविपदां प्राणिनामेतदेव ॥

## TRANSLATION

O long-lived one, at my request and in order to do good to thyself thou shouldst say to her thus.—  
 Thy consort staying in the hermitages of *Rāmagiri* is doing well; he, separated ( from you ) inquires after thy health. This is the only thing to be first

wished for by men, who are easily afflicted with misfortunes.

### COMMENTS

Rāmagiryās'ramastha :—Y is again referred to here as staying in the hermitages round about the Rāmagiri hill. As has been already indicated, āśrama means a hermitage of a sage and not a dwelling house of an ordinary individual. It rather represents the तपोवन or तपोभूमि i. e. to say an extensive habitation or a colony of sages for practising penance. Particularly notable is the repeated use of the words Rāmagiri and āśrama, which the poet has used while introducing Y and his surroundings in the opening verse. It goes to indicate that the word Rāmagiri is being used not merely as a descriptive phrase, but as a proper noun. ( See our comments under V. 1 ).

## 107

शापान्तो मे भुजगशयनादुत्थिते शार्ङ्गपाणौ  
मासानन्यानामय चतुरो लोचने मीलयित्वा ।  
पश्चादावां विरहगुणितं तं तमात्मामिलाषं  
निर्वेक्ष्यावः परिणतशरच्चन्द्रिकासु क्षपासु ॥

### TRANSLATION

My curse will come to an end when *Viṣṇu* rises from his serpent-couch; pass the remaining four months with thy eyes shut; afterwards we shall enjoy those various desires redoubled owing to our separation during nights in which the light of the autumnal (= *Sarad* ) moon is perfect.

### COMMENTS

परिणतशरच्चन्द्रिकासु क्षपासु :—Y is looking forward to the full-moon nights in the month of Kārtika, when he expects the re-union to take place ( i. e. to say about 4 days after God Viṣṇu is supposed to awaken from his four-months long sleep on the Ekādaśī or eleventh day of that month ). Now according to the



counting system prevalent in ancient times (even today in N. India) the full-moon night in Kārttika means the last day of that month. Counting back 4 months, therefore, from this day, we get the last or full-moon day of Āṣāḍha i. e. the प्रथमदिवस of that month. Moreover, K's rainy season started in Śrāvaṇa (i. e. practically the last day of Āṣāḍha) as already shown in our comments under v. 2. Thus our preference for आपादस्य प्रथमदिवसे finds further support from the परिणतशरच्चन्द्रिका nights which come exactly after an interval of 4 months, which Y's wife had yet to pass in loneliness.

शेषान् मासान् गमय चतुरोः—Four months yet remain out of the curse-period of one year. We have seen how this 4 months' period tallies almost exactly with that between the last day (full-moon) of Āṣāḍha and the end of Kārttika (the full-moon night of that month).

But why is the poet talking of exactly 4 months as remaining? Why not more or less? And moreover why are the months synchronised with those of the rainy season?

The answer is to be found in the fact that the theme and story of Me. are taken from Rāmāyaṇa (See ch. VI) Vālmīki's epic is the feeder, which supplied the details in question.

Table noting meanings of important crucial words or expressions with references noted thereunder showing how and in which sense K uses them. Occasionally references from other works are also quoted. The following meanings are given from V. S. Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Revised and enlarged edition (Prasad Prakashana 1957).

उत्पत् = (a) To fly or jump up; often with acc. or dat. of place.

(b) To go or rush towards

उत्पत्न = 1 Flying up, a leap, spring.

2 Rising or going up, ascending.

खं उत्पत्तन्यो गोदावरीसारसपङ्क्तयस्त्वाम् । Raghu 13.

पितुः पदं मध्यममुत्पत्तनीं Vi 1:19.

स्वर्गायोत्पत्तिता भवेत् Vi 4:2.

ते चाकाशमसिद्ध्याममुत्पत्य परमर्षयः ।

आसेदुरोषधिप्रस्थं मनसा समरंहसः ॥ Ks 6:36.

उत्पतनिपता = Any act in which it is said ' उत्पत, निपत ' ( p. 412 ) i. e. flying up and down ) Pāṇini II. 1.72.  
ये संरम्भोत्पतनरभसा Me 54.

उदच्-उदञ्च् a. = 1 Turned or going upwards.

2 Upper, Higher.

3 Northern, turned towards the north.

उदङ्मुख a. = Facing the north; उत्पतोदङ्मुखः खम् Me. 14.

उदङ्मुखः सोलविदस्त्रमंत्रं जग्राह Raghu 5.59.

उदङ्मुखं तं तु रथं चकार

प्रयाणमाङ्गल्यनिमित्तदर्शनात् Rāmāyana.

विकृ = 1 To scatter, throw about; strew or spread about.

2 To split; cut to pieces.

विकिरणम् = 1 Scattering, throwing about, dispersing.

2 Spreading abroad.

विकीर्णं p.p.=1 Scattered, dispersed. 2 Diffused.

विकीर्णविस्तीर्णकलापशोभितम् बहिकुलम् Rts. 2.6.

विकीर्णकेशाम् परेतभूमिषु Ks 5.68 ( इतस्ततः प्रसृताः commentaries )

विकीर्णसप्तपिबलिप्रहासिभिः Ks 5.37 ( पर्यस्ताः—Cs ).

व्यकीर्यत अम्बकपादमूले पुष्पोच्चयः पल्लवमङ्गभिन्नः Ks 3.61.

विशीर्णं = 1 Shattered, broken to pieces.

विशीर्णपङ्क्ति मृगाणां यूयम् Raghu 9.56 (=broken or dispersed)

विशीर्णतल्पाद्दशतो Raghu 16.11 (=Broken or dispersed).

**NOTE :** In addition to the ancient authorities quoted above, we have also consulted all other ancient commentaries, available in manuscript-form and preserved in the archives of the Bhandarkar O. R. Institute Poona. They are the works of Vijayasūri, Vatsa-Vyāsa, Motajit, Ksemaharṣa Gapi, and other two manuscripts styled as Meghalatā and Kalpalatā. It is not possible for want of space to note the relevant extracts from them. Besides they are comparatively of later date. But so far as the important verses No. 1, 12, 14, 16 and 19 are concerned, it may be stated that they all concur in saying that the Rāmāgiri is Citrakūṭā i. e. to say the erstwhile residence of Rāma, उत्पत means going up ( ऊर्ध्वं गच्छ ), Māla was to the south and lastly विन्ध्यपाद represented the hill in the Vindhya.

The reader shall have seen by now, how the eleven propositions, set out at the beginning, are supported by, and in fact flow from the text itself of the poet, when it is interpreted correctly and scientifically on the lines indicated above. Of course, the elucidation or amplification of the various points, touched upon or discussed only briefly herein, will follow later on. So also further proofs and considerations shall be adduced in chapters to follow. To sum up, so far as our main thesis about the fixation of Rāmagiri is concerned, the text of Meghadūta yields, on scrutiny the following important conclusions : The poet's Āmrakūṭa is to the west of his Rāmagiri ( because the cloud has to undergo a U shaped detour in between.) The Māla land extended to the south-west of Rāmagiri and south-east of Āmrakūṭa. Āmrakūṭa represents one of the westernmost peaks in the Amarkaṇṭaka range. The shattered or scattered Revā of Meghadūta is identical with the Narmadā falls on the slopes of Amarkaṇṭaka, to be witnessed during the rains. As Ramgadha in M. P. is situated towards the east of Amarkaṇṭaka ( about 70 miles ), just as is required by the topography in Meghadūta, it is the only hill—identifiable with the Rāmagiri of that poem.

It may be seen that the conclusion about Ramgadha will be still more strengthened if that hill can be shown to lie in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest i. e. to say on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma ( particularly *ā la* Kālidāsa ). That topic is dealt with in the next chapter.





## CHAPTER II

### THE VANAVĀSA ROUTE OF RĀMA.

रामः.....चित्रकूटस्थलीं जहौ  
प्रययौ आतिथेयेषु वसन् ऋषिकुलेषु सः  
दक्षिणां दिशं ऋक्षेषु वार्षिकेष्टिव भास्करः<sup>1</sup>

—Raghu 12.24-5.

While the historicity of the Rāma episode may be questionable, the existence of a belief in its historicity particularly in ancient times can hardly be a matter of doubt. Much of the ancient literature embodying the Rāma story (including the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa) is obviously composed on that basis. Whenever we refer to the historical route of Rāma during his exile, it should be understood to mean the supposed historical route of that prince of Ayodhyā, as mentioned in the various ancient works, historical or literary. We have, therefore, now to make an endeavour to discover and fix the forest route of Rāma, as nearly as we can, at least in a fair degree—of course as far as the problem allows of solution—not so much for its own sake, as for securing a valuable clue for the fixation of the spatial starting point of the cloud's journey in the *Meghadūta*. The reader will recall here the three characteristic features of R mentioned by the poet :

- 1 The name Rāmāgiri
- 2 रघूपतिपदः अङ्कितं मेखलानु
- 3 जनकतनयास्नानपुष्पोदकेषु

From the three allusions it is more than clear that the poet had selected and described a hill which was according to him on

<sup>1</sup> Translation of these verses will be found in the chapter itself, where the verses are quoted again.

the Vanavāsa route of Rāma and Sītā i. e. in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest. Probably it was already known in K's days by the name Rāmāgiri itself, or at least was regarded as a holy hill connected with and sanctified by Rāma's sojourn. We are therefore directly concerned to know which was Rāma's route according to Kalidāsa. We can however narrow the compass still further. The banished Prince of Ayodhyā undisputedly travelled up to Prayag (Allahabad) i. e. near the confluence of the Ganges and Jamna, after which he entered the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest. Equally undisputed is the fact that Sītā was taken away by Rāvaṇa in Panchavati and did not accompany the exiled Rāma thereafter.<sup>1</sup> The real issue therefore before us would be to fix the direction of Rāma's route from Prayag upto Panchavati, on which lay the Rāmāgiri of K., or in other words to fix the locations of the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest and the Panchavati according to the poet. But before doing so, let us see in brief what the route from Prayag to Panchavati was like according to Vālmīki, who preceded Kalidāsa and also according to those who came after him. The reason for this investigation is obvious. It may serve as a pointer and in a way corroborate Kalidāsa's Vanavāsa route. K is seen borrowing freely from Vālmīki's epic. Instances of some of the strikingly close parallelisms between Me. itself and Rāmāyaṇa will be noted and discussed in their due place (See Ch. II.) In fact the names of the places in Rāma's journey and their order occurring in Rāmāyaṇa and Raghuvamśa are almost identical (See Appendix). K's locations of Daṇḍakāraṇya and Panchavati, therefore, are not likely to be very different from those of Vālmīki and probably even from his successors like Bhavabhūti and others. We shall first turn to Vālmīki.

Vālmīki's work evidently stands edited from time to time. While his original version may go back a few centuries before Christ it is supposed to have obtained its present form by the 2nd or 3rd century A. D. The topographical scheme and locations in the present version of Vālmīki's epic, therefore, may fairly be taken to reflect the notions then current, say from 4th century B. C. to 4th century A. D. The epic contains the best available evidence about Rāma's route such as was known in those times.

1 As for the location of Rāvaṇa's Lanka, there is a divergence of views among scholars. We have not discussed the problem as Rāma's route beyond R̥ṣyamāka is not pertinent to our enquiry. Ceylon however appears to be Kalidāsa's Lanka from Ch. XIII of his Raghuvamśa.

## TRADITION OF PANCHAVATI AT BHADRACHALAM

Now while Prayag is a well-known and undisputed place as Rāma's sojourn, the present location of Panchavati<sup>1</sup> near Nasik is highly questionable. There is another time-honoured tradition and site for the Panchavati of Rāma viz. on the east Godavari near Bhadrachalam ( Rajmahendry ) in the modern Andhra State. Thus the tie is between Nasik and Bhadrachalam. Undoubtedly the Panchavati of Rāma was situated on the banks ( northern ) of Godavari. But the issue at present can be said to have been boiled down to two rival theories indicated above. It is evident that the fixation of the correct Panchavati would primarily determine the question of Rāmā's Dandakāranya route; i. e. to say the question of its direction, and extent. Now as for antiquity, the Panchavati at Bhadrachalam represents an equally strong and formidable rival. ( In fact the traditions about it appear to be full, more sound, and more in consonance with the events related in the Rāma story ). On the point of tradition we have the following :

“Coringa<sup>2</sup> ( Vernacular-Korangi ) village nearly 10 miles South of Kokonada.

“Coringa is of some religious importance, since the neighbouring village of Masakapalli is one of the places at which pilgrims bathe when performing the sapta-sagar yatra or the pilgrimage of seven mouths; already referred to. The river Coringa is said to have been brought to the sea by sage Atri, and the bathing place is called the Atreya-Sagar-Sangam. It is also believed that the demon Maricha who was sent by Ravana in the form of a golden deer to Rama, when he and Sita were at Parnashala, was killed by Rama at this place. Rama is supposed to have founded the Siva temple of Korangeshwar Swami.”

“Bhadrachalam is considered a holy spot, since Rāma is supposed to have lived there for some time after the abduction of Sītā. The name means “The hill of Bhadra” and is said to be derived from the fact that a saint of that name was living there

1 The word Panchavati literally means a locality of five banian trees. Probably it represented something like a quincunx of them.

2 The extracts are from the Gazetteer of the Godavari District pp.-211-2, 261-5.



at the time of Rama's sojourn. Rama promised to return when he had found Sita, and did so after many years, and gave the saint salvation.

"Parnashala<sup>1</sup>:—22 miles by road north of Bhadrachalam. Population 276. It is widely believed in the district that this is the spot on the bank of the Godavari described in the Ramayana where Ravana carried off Sita.

"In a stream bed near the village the people show the stone on which Sita is supposed to have sat while bathing. Certain marks on a rock resemble foot prints, and these are therefore called Sita's foot prints, and are revered accordingly. On another rock are yellow stains which are attributed to the yellow dye from Sita's clothes when they were laid out to dry, or according to another account, to the saffron she used to adorn herself withal. The black stain left by Rama's sash when put out to dry is also shown on another rock. The Nalugu gutta hill on opposite side of the river is supposed to have been formed by an accumulation of Nalugu (a kind of soap) left by Sita, after her daily bath. Behind the Vishnu temple is a hollow which is pointed out as the exact place where Sita was seized; some of the earth is said to have been carried off with her. There is also a Siva temple in the neighbourhood, where it is said, Ravana used to pretend to worship, disguised as a mendicant.

"The Godavari has by this time assumed imposing proportions being generally a mile, and some times, two and a half miles broad. After its junctions with Saveri,<sup>2</sup> however, its bed is suddenly contracted by spurs of ghats till at length it forces a passage between them, penetrating by an almost precipitous gorge to the very heart of the range. The scenery of this gorge is famous for its beauty.

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1 Opposite Parnashala, on the southern bank of the Godavari there is a hill known as Rathabaguta ( रथवगुता ) in Telugu, which means 'the hill of Chariot'. The popular belief is that Jatayu was sleeping on this hill when Ravana was taking Sita away in his Chariot. The wheelmarks seen on the top of the hill are supposed to be caused by Ravana's chariot.

2 The name of the river Saveri—Shabari is the same as that of the devotee of Rama.

It is also significant that even today the people of Shabara tribe are found to live on the banks of this river.

“Sri. Ramagiri ( holy Rama's hill ) :—lies 44 miles south by east of Bhadrachalam. It is supposed to have been here that the bird Jatayu who had tried to hinder Ravana's abduction of Sita, but had been mortally wounded in the attempt, told the news of the abduction with his dying breath to Rama as he passed that way. The grateful Rama performed the funeral rites of the faithful bird at Sri Ramagiri. The god is known as Kolasa ( the joyful ) Rama because he here had news of his lost wife ; while the Rama at Parnashala is Sokha ( the sorrowful ) because his bereavement occurred there.

“The neighbouring hill called Vali Sugriva is so named from the legend that it was there that Rama obtained further news of Sita from Sugriva, brother of Vali and king of the monkeys.

### RĀMA'S ROUTE IN VĀLMIKI'S EPIC

Thus, so far as ancient tradition is concerned, Bhadrachalam in Andhra does not lag behind Nasik in Maharashtra. In fact in some respects the former must be regarded as more acceptable and reliable than the latter, as the traditional accounts appear to be fuller, more detailed and reasonable, and also more in consonance with the events and probabilities of the Rāma story. Now the important sites and halting places of Rāma said to lie between Prayag and Panchavati are 1 the D forest, 2 Chitrakuta hill, 3 the penance groves of sages ( like Suteekshna, Sharabhanga and others ), 4 the hermitage of Agastya and 5 Panchavati, which was included in the region called Janasthana. It will be readily seen that the location or identification of these intervening places will largely depend on that of Panchavati itself. Now the author of Rāmāyaṇa undoubtedly appear to locate the Panchavati near Bhadrachalam rather than near Nasik. Here are the pointers in brief :

1. If Rāma were to come from Prayag to Nasik near the western coast, he would have been required to go through the following countries or kingdoms—the Mahakosal, Dasharna, Chedi-mandal, Avanti, Vidarbha, Maharashtra-mandal and so forth. Those countries and their kingdoms were known in the times of Rāmāyaṇa but none of them are mentioned in the present context. Some of the ruling families of the said kingdoms were even connected with the Royal house of Raghus by matrimonial alliance.



The exiled Prince of Ayodhyā, in distress, and moreover bound by the express condition of living in the forest was not expected to have visited or passed through the dominions of other kings, some of whom were his relations.

Then again there is no mention of the rivers like Tapti and particularly Narmada, which Rāma necessarily would have been required to cross before reaching Nasik. The significant omission appears to place Rāma's route to the east of Narmada.

2. Hanumān goes to Rkṣa-vila (tunnel in the Rkṣa mountain) which was in the region traversed by the sage Agastya.

अगस्त्याचरितां वाशां दक्षिणां यमरक्षिताम्<sup>1</sup>

The numerous references in Rāmāyaṇa expressly state that the Rikṣa-vil was in the Vindhya, and also in the Dandakaranya forest.<sup>2</sup> Rikṣa or Rikṣavat is the name of the eastern part of the Vindhya range. Now the topography of this part round about Rkṣa-vila again is given thus<sup>3</sup>:—

एष विन्ध्यगिरिः श्रीमान् नानाद्रुमलतायुतः ।

एष प्रलवणः शैलः सागरोज्यं महोदधिः ॥

Hereafter in the Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa the chapters that follow (Ch. 56 and onwards) clearly place the Mahendra mountain very close to this place Rkṣa-vila which was in the Vindhya. The Mahendra, of course represents the Eastern Ghats. But here its portion in Kālīṅga is referred to. Rāmāyaṇa thus locates the Rikṣa mountain (with its tunnel), the Vindhya, the Mahendra mountain, the ocean (southern) the hill Prasravan and even the hermitage of Agastya in the same i. e. eastern region. This region cannot be any other than the modern province of Orissa.

3. While going further from Panchavati to Pampa (Hampi in Bellari District) Rāma is required to turn several times to the west and travel long distances in that direction. It is noteworthy that he had to go to the east only once and that too only for

1 Kiṣkindhā 52-7.

2 Ibid 49-15 and 22, 50-1; 57-16, 60-4, 61-16; 630.2.

3 Ibid 52.31-32.

4 Pargiter suggests that there may be another Vindhya in the extreme south (i. e. near Mysore). But the suggestion is absolutely unfounded. There is no evidence or even a faint tradition to show that there were two Vindhya.

This Prasravana hill is of course different from the one near Rsyaniuka.



three Koshas (i. e. 6 miles). This subsequent journey and the direction thereof presuppose Panchavati in the east and do not fit in with Nasik on the western coast.

4. According to Goda Mahatmya (Ch. 95) there were five Tirthas viz. रामतीर्थ, सहस्रकुण्डतीर्थ, किष्किवातीर्थ, भद्रातीर्थ and पतत्रितीर्थ, situated on the banks of the Godavari, 400-500 miles to the South-East of Nasik. The fourth of the list viz. Bhadratirtha appears to be identical with Bhadrachalam.

5. Rāmāyana (as also Raghuvamśa of K) describes the Panchapsaras lake of the sage Māṇḍakarnī,<sup>1</sup> as situated in the Dandakaranya forest to the south of Chitrakūṭa. Begler<sup>2</sup> identifies the site of this lake with the region between Bakalo and Bandhanpur (i. e. a little to the south of the Ramgadh hill in M. P.)

We regard Beglar's identification as valid for the additional reason that the name of the sage Mandakarni may have been derived owing to the vicinity of or association with Mand river in that region, which is still known by that name.

6. The south eastern part of Chattisgad or Madhy Pradesh is still called by the name Dandakaranya. This site now selected by the Govt. of India for rehabilitation of the refugees from Pakistan is known as 'Dandakaranya Colony'.

7. Rāma tradition is perhaps the loudest in the region between Chattisgad and Andhra. Although in India the tendency of naming places after Rāma is general, the number of such places to be found in this part of the country is particularly large and striking.<sup>3</sup>

There is an ancient historical site near Bilaspur (M. P.) known as "Sheori-Narayan". A temple still stands there, in the forest near Raypur about 90 miles south of the Ramgadh hill. It is supposed to mark the site where Rāma met Shabari.

1 In some manuscripts of Raghuvamśa we find Shatakarni instead of Mandakarni. The original version of K probably was Mandakarni, which is found in Rāmāyana.

2 A. S. I. XIII.

3 Even the following names of villages and towns are perhaps reminiscent of old tradition and popular nations : Khariyal (=Kharalaya i. e. the abode of the demon Khara whom Rama killed here) Jagadapur (=Jagadalanpur), Rakapalli (=Rakshasapalli), Sambalpur (=Shambarpur or Vijayantapur).

Shri. Aba Chandorkar, the energetic research-student of Rāmāyana, who has toured this part of the country, records<sup>1</sup> the following : The aborigines or Gonds in Gondvan (Chhattisgad) call themselves descendants of Rāvaṇa. In every village, they have an idol of Rāvaṇa<sup>2</sup> installed just as in Maharashtra people have that of Hanumān in every village. The idol is publicly worshipped on Dasara day. In Andhra there is still a river known as Shabari. People of the Shabara tribe who live on its banks number over some lakhs.

According to Shri Chandorkar, the origin of the name 'Nasik' is not in the current story about Shurpanakha's nose cut here. Umā, the daughter of Dakṣa was cut into pieces by the God Mahadeo. Nasik (in Sanskrit, it means nose) got its name, because Umā's lopped nose was supposed to have dropped here.

8. The four chapters (40 to 43 in Kiṣkindhā) enumerate respectively the countries lying in the four directions. The order followed is also worth nothing. East, south, west and then north. These are described as the outlying countries on the borders of Aryavarta i. e. the region between the Himalayas and Vindhya.<sup>3</sup> It is remarkable that the Dandakaranya forest figures amongst the southern regions and does not find mention amongst the western countries<sup>4</sup>.

Then again, in Ch. 41 which lists the southern regions, appear the following verses :

अन्वीक्ष्य दण्डकारण्यं सपर्वततटीगुहाम्  
नदीं गोदावरीं चैव सर्वमेवानुपश्यत  
तथैवांध्रान् च पण्ड्याश्च चोलान् पांड्याश्च केरलान् (9 to 12)

1 Weekly Sakal (Mar.) 26-7-53.

2. This fact may partially explain how the images of Rāvaṇa along with Indrajit and Kumbhakaraṇa are found on the Ramgadh hill (See Ch. III).

3 The Tilak commentary on V 22 of Ch. 40 says : हिमवद्विष्णुमध्यवर्त्यावर्तपिक्शया प्राच्यादिविभागः अत्र विवक्षित इति आहुः

4 C. V. Vaidya observes that the D forest is mentioned in two places once in the list of the southern countries and again in the list of eastern countries. I could not verify this as I could not get other editions or manuscripts except the Nirṇayasagara edition. If the observation is correct, it goes a long way in proving our conclusion about the D forest lying towards the east and not west.

The Tilak commentary on the river Godavari runs thus :

गोदावरी विध्यपूर्वप्रदेशवर्तिन गोदावरीनदीम् । Again नदी  
गोदावरी दंडकारण्यप्रदेशवर्तिगोदावरीप्रदेशम् ।

Thus Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa of Rāmāyaṇa clearly places the Dandakaranya to the east.

9. The Uttarakāṇḍa appears to locate the Dandakaranya outside Vidarbha but adjacent to it<sup>1</sup>. Whatever the northern and southern limits of the Dandaka-forest may have been in the former times, it was definitely supposed and specifically mentioned to lie in the times of Rāmāyaṇa between the two mountains Vindhya (to the north) and Shaivala to the south (विध्यशैवलयोर्मध्ये). Now Vindhya here obviously cannot mean the whole range of that name from east to west, as there were actually many countries and kingdoms to the south of that mountain. Which part of the Vindhya then constituted the northern boundary of the Dandakaranya forest ? It must be the eastern part of the Vindhyas, in view of the reasons stated above (particularly Vindhya and Mahendra etc. being said to be in same region).

Mount Shaivala remains unidentified so far. The difficulty about it is that it is not mentioned anywhere else. We may here suggest a location, which strikes us as the most probable one : Shaivala probably is represented by what are known to-day as the Nagarjun hills and also by the names Shri Hill or Shri Shailya hill (in Andhra). Our reasons for the identification are as follows :—

A. Shaivala is said to mark the southern limits of the D forest and as such, must be placed somewhere to the south of the river Godavari—and preferably the eastern region so as to be consistent with the topography in Rāmāyaṇa, as stated above.

B. The word Shri in Shri-Shailya is only a prefix used to denote reverence in which the hill is held. The real original name appears to be Shailya (शैल्य) which closely resembles the word Shaivala (शैवल). The former may well be a corruption of the latter name. No other hill is known particularly in this region with a name which resembles 'Shaivala'.

<sup>1</sup> Verses 3-9 Ch. 79 of Uttarakāṇḍa. For a more detailed discussion of this topic see Ch. VI, where the verses in question are quoted.



C. We have seen above that Vindhya in this connection ( विन्ध्यश्रवणः ) means the eastern portion of it. Shaivala representing the southern limit of the D forest, also must be located in the east—so as to correspond to the eastern Vindhyas.

Thus, it appears that the south eastern region between the Vindhyas and the Nagarjun hills<sup>1</sup> ( Shaivala ) forms the historical Dandakaranya of Rāmāyaṇa.

10. It would not be perhaps out of place to refer here to the question of how and why the Nasik tradition arose at all. We are inclined to think that probably the confusion between the Dandaka country and the Dandaka forest was at least in part responsible for the subsequent emergence of a second Panchavati near the western coast. Gautami-Mahatmya ( Ch. 22 ) appears to notice a Dandaka country<sup>2</sup> extending about 100 to 150 miles to the east from where the river Godavari rises. This is further confirmed by a reference to the southern countries found in the same work :

अथापरे जनपदा दक्षिणापथवासिनः  
पूर्णाश्च केवलाश्चैव गोलंगूलास्तथैव च  
ऋणिका मूषिकाश्चैव कुमार रामठाः शकाः  
महाराष्ट्रा माहिषिकाः कलिगाश्चैव सर्वशः  
आभीराः सह वैशिक्या अटव्याश्च सत्ताश्च ये  
पुलिदाश्चैव मीलेयाः वंदर्भा दंडकैः सह

and so on ( V. 54 to 56 ).

1 Ramtek is some times attempted to be identified with the Shaivala of Rāmāyaṇa ( Prof. Mirashi ). The notion, if at all it was prevalent, is evidently a mistaken one and of comparatively recent origin. It may be that Ramtek was also known in the past as Shaivala for some time by some people. But obviously it cannot be the Shaivala of Rāmāyaṇa. We have to suggest here the following reason, why Ramtek should have come to acquire that name at all. It was well known that the celebrated Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna resided in the Shailya-Shaivala hills, which are now called after him ( Nagarjun Konda ) Thus, the association of Nagarjuna with Shailya-Shaivala mountain was firmly rooted in public memory. Now, it is equally well known that Nagarjuna was staying at Ramtek ( on the adjacent hill, one mile, to the east ) in a cave which is still known as the cave of Nagarjuna. Probably some people were mistakenly led to think that Ramtek hill was the same Shailya or Shaivala hill, where the world famous philosopher lived.

2 The word used is only Dandaka, not coupled with either vana or aranya. It is worth noting that the work uses the word Dandakaranya in Ch. 55 and onwards. But before that, only the word Dandaka is used which apparently denotes a country or region of that name, as distinguished from the forest bearing that name.

It appears therefore that the Dandaka region or the country of the Dandaka people was different from but very close to the kingdom of Vidarbha. Dr. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that Deogiri ( the modern Daulatabad ) is referred to in Hemādri's *Vratakhanda*<sup>2</sup> as a town in district lying on the western border of the Dandakaranya forest. Thus it seems that at least up to the 12th century the Dandakaranya forest was taken to have been situated towards the east of the river Godavari and not to the west. It is true that generally no reference to the Dandaka country as such is found being made. But that is so probably because it was comparatively an unimportant country and perhaps was often included partly in Maharashtra or more probably in Vidarbha as can be seen from the expression *वंदर्भा वंदकैः सह*.

It is possible that the term Dandaka in course of time came to denote the region around the Godavari in general. Soon after Dandaka as the name of a western Kingdom or region became obsolete, or was substituted and forgotten, the old word Dandaka still remained only to acquire thereafter the sense of Dandakaranya due to the shortness and aberrations of popular memory.

11. Extracts from eminent authorities on the subject may be quoted here :

"In the Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma is represented to have lived for a long time in Dandakaranya at a place called Panchavati, situated on the banks of Godavari, about 2 yojanas from the hermitage of Agastya. Nasik claims to be the Panchavati where Rāma lived. But the poet could hardly be expected to have brought his hero from the Vindhya to such remote westerly place as Nasik. The river Godavari must from the description occurring in the Rāmāyaṇa as well as in Bhavabhūti's *Uttararamacharita* have been wide at Rāma's Panchavati.

"The Āryas did proceed or communicate with the Northernmost portion of the Eastern coast, not by crossing that range ( the Vindhya ) but avoiding it by taking an easterly course.

"The Indian Āryas had gone as far as the Northern Circars ( Ganjim ) by the eastern route. They first settled in Vidarbha

1 The Early History of the Deccan by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar.

2 A work written about 700 years ago.

approaching it still by the eastern route; but in the course of some time more they crossed the Vindhya and settled in Dandakaranya along the banks of the Godavari.<sup>1</sup>

"Bhadrachalam built on the Godavari river which is here very deep and rapid about 104 miles from Rajmahendri; celebrated for the temple of Rāmachandra who is said to have crossed the river at this spot on this famous expedition to the island of Ceylon....Twenty miles from Bhadrachalam is Parnashālā, another shrine of great antiquity."<sup>2</sup>

"Janasthanam a portion of the great Dandaka (in the Deccan) the eastern part of it."<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note that as against the evidence incorporated above, there is hardly anything in Vālmīki's work to indicate that the Panchavati was situated near Nasik on the western coast. The Nasik tradition about Rāma's Panchavati therefore appears to be comparatively of later origin and seems to have been born out of a confused and wishful superstition, ever to be nursed blindly and fondly thereafter by credulous and indiscriminating posterity. Now if the Panchavati is to be located, as it must be for reasons mentioned above, near Bhadrachalam on the eastern coast, it follows that the whole chain of places in between Prayag and Panchavati must now be located in Chhattisgad and the northern part of Andhra.

### BHAVABHŪTI'S PANCHAVATI

After having dealt with the illustrious predecessor of Kālidāsa let us now turn to his successors. In particular, it would be important to know Bhavabhūti's location of the Panchavati, again for the same reason viz. that his notion (8th century) is not likely to be very different from that of Kālidāsa. The enquiry would have an added point or interest as Bhavabhūti and his forefathers hailed from that very region of Andhradesha, otherwise called Telangana. We get some reliable information on the point in question from his Uttara-Rāma-Charita :

1 Early History of the Deccan by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar.

2 Imperial Gazetteer of India : Sir William Hunter.

3 H. H. Willson (Dictionary).



A. The picturesque topographical descriptions of the hills, rivers, forests, waterfalls etc. in the first three Acts appear to point their finger at the Eastern Panchavati rather than otherwise.

B. The last verse of Act II gives us a definite clue, as it describes the river Godavari near Panchavati.

एते ते कुहरेषु गद्गदनदद्गोदावरीवारयः  
 मेघालंबितमौलिनीलशिखराः क्षौणीभूतो दक्षिणाः ।  
 अन्योन्यप्रतिघातसंकुलचलत्कल्लोलकोलाहलैः  
 उत्तालास्त इमे गभीरपयसः पुण्याः सरित्संगमाः<sup>1</sup> ॥

Now, the river Godavari referred to in the verse is evidently not the one near its rise i. e. Nasik. The expression गद्गदनदत् here is onometopoetic and clearly indicates the peculiar sound created only when the flow is wide, deep and powerful. The various streams into which the Godavari is split up and which meet the sea at various points are described in this verse as clearly indicated by the word सरित्संगमाः.

The scene described is obviously one near Bhadrachalam<sup>2</sup> or Rajamundry and leaves no room for doubt. As stated above, Bhavabhūti was a brahmin from Telangana, who must have been familiar with the region around the east Godavari. There is good reason to believe that the familiar picture of the seven streams of the river (सप्तगोदावरी) running into and joining the sea must be before his eyes, when he composed this verse. It appears that Bhavabhūti also describes in some places sights and scenes, actually witnessed by him, just as Kālidāsa has done before him in his Meghadūta.

C. अयमसी जनस्थानपश्चिमः चित्रकुंजवान् नाम  
 दनुकबंधाविष्टितो दंडकारण्यभूभागः । Act I

This allusion places the Kabandha forest to the west of the Dandakaranya forest. It was near Pampa (Hampi). This position hardly suits Nasik, and points again at the same conclusion.

1 Dr. S. K. Belvalkar was kind enough to point out this verse to me as supporting the proposition in question.

2 Barua rightly points out in his essay on Bhavabhūti: "It is clear from the description of Bhavabhūti that the mountain Prasravana (प्रस्रवण) is a portion of Eastern Ghats through which the Godavari rushes into the plains."

Before we turn to Kālidāsa, we have to record an interesting piece of evidence which although not of first rate importance constitutes a rather peculiar and negative sort of proof. In Anargha-  
raghava, ( A Sanskrit drama by Murari ) the author has described Rāma's journey back from Lanka to Ayodhya in the aerial car. While most of the writers after Vālmiki have followed him closely in this respect, Murari has tried to be ingenuous by introducing a novel route : His Rāma points out and describes to Sītā such places and countries which were not visited by them before, and this indirectly reveals Vanavāsa route of Rāma. Thus by a process of elimination, we get from the said work of Murari<sup>1</sup> the same route viz, Prayag to east Godavari.

A reputed Andhra poet by name Shrinath flourished about 700 years ago, who is well-known in Telangana as the author of " Andra Naishadha ". In his work, which is a translation of Kashikhanda in Sanskrit, the author has described the river Godavari and the Prasravana hill in the same region viz. the Andhra country.<sup>2</sup>

कोन्निवासरंवलकुगुंभसंभट्ट गोदावरितीरनिकोन्नुनांघ्र-  
देशवृन्तरुगुनपुट्ट.

( मत्तेभविक्कीडितवृत्त )

अहरारंममुलंदुन्नखवण शैलाधित्यकाकंदरा-  
कुहरक्रोडकटाहगद्गदनदद्गोदावरी<sup>3</sup> सिधुवा-  
लहरीशीकरमालिकाशिशिरमुल् पंपासखुलुदंडका-  
गहनग्राहुलु वायुलूदयसिकिन् गलिचेनाल्हादमुन् ॥

The passage means and expressly states that the Prasravana hill was near the Panchavati on the east Godavari in Andhra country.

1 It may be that this ingenuous but unusual and rather unwarranted tampering with the traditional historical account of Rāma's journey may be one of the reasons why Murari acquired a reputation for eccentricity ( मुरारेस्तृतीयः पन्थाः ).

2 The original passage in Telugu is as follows :—( We found it quoted in an article by one K. Laxmanrao in an old Marathi journal and therefore may be verified by those who know the language ).

3 It may be noted that the expression गद्गदनदद्गोदावरी also occurs in Bhavabhuti's verse quoted above.

## KĀLIDASA'S VANAVĀSA ROUTE

The foregoing discussion aimed at finding out the route according to Vālmīki and others, which was useful in a way, as constituting a side proof of the question at issue. Now let us have it direct from Kālidāsa himself. To start with, it may be noted that Kālidāsa's names and order of the places on the route in question are almost identical with those of Vālmīki excepting a very few minor changes ( see the table given in Appendix ). The important places mentioned by K are in the following order<sup>1</sup> from north to south : (1) Confluence of Ganges and Yamuna (2) Citra-kūṭa hill, (3) Hermitages of Sūkṣhna, Sharabhanga etc. (4) Ashram of Āgastya (5) Panchavati, which was of course included (6) in Janasthana.

Let us start from the southern and take Janasthan first.

While returning from Lanka ( Ceylon ) in the aerial car Pushpaka the first place noticed by Kālidāsa's Rāma ( Raghu Ch. 13 ) is Janasthana on approaching the shores of India after crossing the ocean :

अमी जनस्थानमपोदविष्णं मत्वा समारब्धनवोटजानि  
अध्यासते चीरभूतो यथास्वं चिरोञ्जितान्याश्रममण्डलानि

It is remarkable that this situation of Janasthan to the extreme south is again confirmed from another allusion of the poet in Ch. VI of his Raghu :

अस्त्रं हरादाप्तवता दुरापं येनेन्द्रलोकावजयाय दृप्तः  
पुरा जनस्थानविमर्दशंकी संधाय लंकाधिपतिः प्रतस्थे 62.  
अनेन पाणौ विधिवत् गृहीते महाकुलीनेन महीव गुर्वी  
रत्नानुविद्धान्बमेखलाया दिशः सपत्नी भव दक्षिणस्याः 63.  
ताम्रूलवल्लीपरिणद्धपुगास्वलालतालिङ्गितचन्दनासु  
तमालपत्रास्तरणामु रन्तुं प्रसीद शश्वन्मलयस्थलीषु 64.

Kalidasa here gives us almost the correct boundaries of his Janasthana. VI. 62 shows that it abutted on the Pandya territory which was of course to the extreme south near about the tip of

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that the sequence of places is consistently maintained by K in Ch.12 and Ch.13 of Raghu while describing Rāma's journey towards south and back again to Ayodhya by air.



the land. V. 63 indicates ocean to the south-east, while V. 64 clearly locates the Malaya mountain<sup>1</sup> with its forests to its west. Thus Kālidāsa's Janasthana, speaking approximately, appears identical with Andhradesh in the south-east. It follows as a natural corollary that his Panchavati was on the east Godavari.

As for the hermitage of Agastya, K appears to place it on the eastern coast somewhere in between Kalinga and the river Kaveri. In the description of the military conquest of Raghu, the following verse occurs :

ततो वेलातटेनैव फलवत्पुगमालिना  
अगस्त्याचरितां आशां अनाशास्यजयो ययौ Ch. 4.44.

In another place<sup>2</sup>, Kālidāsa describes the sage as paying occasional visits to the Pandya capital which is earlier mentioned as Uragpur<sup>3</sup>, which is very probably modern Nagpur or Nagpattan on Kaveri on the eastern coast. Kālidāsa thus seems to take the Andhra region in south-east from Kalinga down to the Pandya dominions as associated with Agastya and his wanderings. As he mentions Agastya's hermitage before Godavari and Panchavati, Kālidāsa must be said to place it a few miles to the north of Bhadrachalam and the river Godavari.

Now we have to point out a verse of Kālidāsa, very important for the purposes of this inquiry. We have to suggest that the poet therein clearly indicates the direction of Rāma's journey from the Citrakūṭa hill to the Panchavati in the south.

रामः.....चित्रकूटस्थलीं जहौ  
प्रययावातिथेयेषु वसन् ऋषिकुलेषु सः  
दक्षिणां दिशमुक्षेपु वार्षिकेष्टिव भास्करः Ibid. 12-24/25.

**Translation :—**Rāma left the region of the Citrakūṭa mountain....halting at the hermitages of the hospitable sages (obviously those of Sūtikshna, Sharabhanga etc. which the poet specifically mentions in Ch. 13), he proceeded towards the southern quarter, as the sun after residing in the autumnal lunar mansions (i. e. the ten asterisms) goes to the south.

1 Rucipati, the commentator of Anargharaghava says :— जनस्थानं मलयाद्रिसमीपे रक्षोवासस्थानम् । Being a resident of the Sambalpur district (M. P.) he appears to record the southernmost boundary of Janasthana in his comment.

2 Raghu 6-61. The allusion shows that Agastya had affectionate relations with the Pandya king and was on visiting terms with him.

3 Ibid. 6-59 ( अचोराण्यस्य पुरस्य नाथं )

The simile of the south-going sun unmistakably reveals what impression Kālidāsa carried and wanted to convey about the course of Rāma's wanderings. It is impossible to believe that a poet like Kālidāsa would use the simile in question had he wanted to refer to the exiled Prince going from Citrakūṭa to Nasik. That would obviously mean a journey from east to west and is hardly comparable to that of the sun going from north to south. The direction of Rāma's journey from the Citrakūṭa hill was due south i. e. to say, more or less, directly towards the south, till he reached the banks of the east Godavari. This course presupposes Panchavati near Bhadrachalam. It is also significant that Kālidāsa does not mention here his favourite river Narmada. The hermitages of Sūtikahna, Sharabhang and others also now must be located to the south of the Citrakūṭa<sup>1</sup> hill ( Bundelkhand ) i. e. some where in Chhattisgad, to the east or north-east of the Narmada. This is exactly the region around the Ramgadh hill,—which now is to be identified with the Rāmagiri of Kālidāsa.

In conclusion, we can say with reasonable certainty that the Vanavāsa route of Rāma, as known to Kālidāsa, lay along the line joining Prayag (or Citrakūṭa) with Bhadrachalam i.e. through the region of Gondvan, or Chhattisgad, which then represented the northern part of the ancient Dandakāranya—a notion which K shared in common with his predecessor Vālmiki as also with his successors like Bhavabhūti and others. Kālidāsa probably visited or at least knew all those places, which the tradition must have already made famous and holy on account of Rāma's supposed association with them. Can it be doubted that in his Meghadūta, the poet refers to a hill on this route? Kālidāsa's Rāmagiri must therefore be searched for and placed in the Chhattisgad area i. e. the eastern part of the present Madhya Pradesh—of course in such a way as would suit the topography in Meghadūta. The next step, therefore, in our enquiry will be to seek, to find out where Kālidāsa places the Rāmagiri in his Meghadūta—which must be the concern of the subsequent chapters.

1 We have of course taken Citrakūṭa hill here to mean the hill in Bundelkhand near Kamatanath—the identification which is at present usually accepted. But further in Ch. IV we have discussed and supported the identity of K's Citrakūṭa with the present Ramgadh hill. If that is accepted, it will provide an additional proof for Kālidāsa's Vanavāsa route, which we seek to establish in the present Chapter.



### CHAPTER III

## RAMGADH HILL IN MADHYA PRADESH SOLVES THE RĀMAGIRI PROBLEM

The problem of the identification of Rāmagiri in Kālidāsa's Meghadūta still remains unsettled, although that intriguing question has ever interested and engaged many a searching scholar. The question has a peculiar attraction or interest of its own, apart from its historical importance or utility and the Kālidāsa-loving world is ever eager to know the answer, if it can. The present position as regards the problem stands as summed up by the editor, Dr. S. K. De, in the critical edition of Me. published by the Sahitya Academy (1957) :—

**Rāmagiri.** The exact location of this hill is uncertain. Both Vallabhadeva and Mallinātha say that it is Citra-kūṭa. Wilson identified it with Ramtek 'the hill of Rāma', which is still a place of pilgrimage, situated about 24 miles to the north of Nagpur; and this conjecture is supported, according to V. V. Mirashi, by an inscription of Pravarsena II. Some would identify it with the Ramgadh hill in Madhya Pradesh, situated near Āmra-kūṭa, which is the source of the river Narmadā. Or, is the place as imaginary as the poet's mythical Alakā?

Unfortunately, however, the Ramgadh identification is at present supposed to be the weakest proposition among the whole lot, Ramtek theory being the most favoured one, probably because it had no serious rival throughout its long career, ever since it was put forward by Wilson in 1813. Curiously enough, Ramgadh had very few supporters—in fact, only two as far as the author knows—Prof. K. B. Pathak and Begler. Pathak, however, never went beyond indicating its probability only casually, in a brief note on



*R* in his second edition of *Me.* Begler<sup>1</sup> tried to suggest Ramgadh mainly on the ground that it was the same as the Citrakūṭa hill of Rāmāyana. But his arguments were subsequently met and refuted by General Cunningham.<sup>2</sup> Poor Ramgadh, never taken seriously and thus pushed into the back ground fell into an oblivion and is no longer in the picture. Ramgadh is to-day under a cloud. But the clouds pass and the sun remains. The present treatise is an attempt to establish or reinstate Ramgadh in *M. P.* as the Rāmāgiri of Kālidāsa, on the strength of the newly discovered evidence, touching the text and topography in his celebrated poem.

#### THE SIX TESTS :

For the fixation of Rāmāgiri, which is our present concern, the following tests or criteria can be formulated :—

1. Description of *R* in *Me.* itself,  
i. e. to say, its physical features.
2. Location of *R*, as suggested in *Me.*
3. Identifying the other places after *R*, on the route of the cloud.
4. Fixing the route of the cloud from the direction of the journey, mentioned by the poet.
5. Natural course of the monsoon winds and the rain-bearing clouds : the land-route in those days.
6. Evidence of tradition and archaeology.

It will be realised that out of the six items or tests, the first four, which are absolutely essential and crucial for our job, would serve as sure pointers in the matter of identification. As for the fifth, it may be that the route of the cloud in *Me.* corresponds at least roughly to the natural course of the monsoon clouds, although it is more probable that it also represents in a fair degree the land-route in those days. As for the last item concerning the evidence of tradition, it can never be considered as conclusive in itself, as this type of evidence is often found to be incorrect and misleading. Although, the presence of tradition may not, by itself, be able to sustain or substantiate a given proposition, it is clear that the absence of it may well create doubts about its validity. In the present case, however, we shall find that the evidence of tradition is

<sup>1</sup> Archaeological survey of India Vol. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> Archaeological survey of India Vol. XXI.

ample and may well serve us as a corroborating factor. We shall now proceed to set out the evidence and material which we have collected or discovered under each of the heads, one by one.

## I Physical Features

First, let us see how the poet himself describes his Rāmagiri hill. From amongst the many items supplied by the poet, we shall first consider only the most significant, distinguishing and therefore unmistakable characteristics of the hill in question :—

तुङ्गं शैलं v. 12

अद्रेः वृद्धं हरति पवनः v. 14

आश्लिष्टमानुं v. 2

This means that the Rāmagiri hill was a tall imposing mountain, having a towering peak, such as would attract or obstruct the high soaring big monsoon clouds. Besides, it had a small river<sup>2</sup> or a rivulet and a thick shady forest. The hill also abounded in mineral wet paints ( घातुराग ) such as could be used by the Yaksha to paint the likeness of his beloved on the piece of the rock.

Now Ramgadh hill in M. P. fulfils this description in all its details. It is a very imposing and lofty hill ( 3202 ft. from sea-level and about 2000 ft. from the ground ) with a towering and a tapering peak ( about 600 ft. high ). Clouds touch it during the monsoons. A spring and a small river flow on its top. Natural paints—red, white and black—are found on it in abundance, since ancient times. In fact, the multi-coloured paintings ( about 4900 years old according to the opinion of experts ) found here on the ceiling of what are known as Jogimara caves are said to have been painted with such indigenous paints to be found here.<sup>3</sup>

1 The word *shringa* means a horn as also a peak. It appears that the latter meaning is secondary or derived from the former and has come into vogue, because the peak of a mountain, especially a tapering one looks like a horn. It is interesting in this connection to observe that 'horn' in the English names of the places is used in the sense of 'a peak' ( Chamber's Dictionary p. 1159 ) e. g. Schreckhorn, Matterhorn, etc.

2 प्रतनुषु नदीवीचिषु V. 101.

स्निग्धच्छायातरुषु V. 1

त्वामालिख्य प्रणयकुपितां घातुरागैः विलापाम् V. 102.

3 Vide Chhattisgad Gazetteer ( Govt. of India ), A. S. I. Vol. XIII, Asit Haldar's personal account ( Modern Review—October 1914 ) and Statistical Account of Bengal by Sir William Hunter.

We quote here under a few pertinent passages from the descriptions of Haldar and Begler, just necessary for our purposes. For fuller, more detailed and interesting accounts, the reader may advisedly look up the sources, indicated in the foot-note on p. 117 :

#### TOWERING PEAK

"As we proceeded we caught the first glimpse of the highest peak of the Ramgarh Hills on our way through Pathri. The towering peak seemed to smile complacently upon the miserable pilgrims as it peered through the low valleys between the intervening hills  
—Asit Haldar, P. 382

Now, V. 14 in Me. informs us that when a resting cloud was swept off its top, the scene appeared to give an impression to a person standing at the foot, as if the peak of the hill itself was being carried away by the wind. It is very interesting, in this connection, to notice Mr. Haldar's observation recording his personal experience while camping at the foot of the Ramgadh hills—

"While we were in camp at Udipur we had a pleasant view one day of a fleecy cloud overhanging two peaks and the scene reminded us of the following lines in the 'Cloud Messenger' of Kalidasa :—

अत्रेः शृङ्गं हरति पवनः किंस्विदित्यमुन्मुखीभि-  
वृष्टोत्साहश्चकितचकितं मुग्धसिद्धाङ्गनाभिः  
स्थानादस्मात्सरसनिचुलाद्दुत्पतोदङ्मुखः खं  
दिङ्नामानां पयि परिहरन्स्यूलहस्तावलेपान्

The sight of thee will drive to plain surprise,  
The Siddha wives : in wonder, face up turned,  
They will ask, if winds are tearing off the peak,  
As leavest thou this Asram cool and wet,  
With Nichula woods, do thou avoid  
The moving Din/Naga's trunks and shoot up high :

*The picture drawn by the poet seemed to stand before our eyes in all its reality.*

— Ibid

#### MINERAL PAINTS ( dhāturaṅga )

"In the cave is found moist chalk, and the cave has, by the removal of this chalk by devotees to make the sacred mark on the forehead after worship of the temple above.....

—Chhattisgarh Gazetteer pp. 230-6



The huts built by the korwas possess one peculiarity. Even the poorest cottager does not omit these decorations. The people decorate their courtyards with coloured earth in pretty ornamental designs. They mostly use a kind of white indigenous colour which they get very easily from the earth...

"The red material does not appear to be very common here.. I believe the white paints used in the paintings were prepared from the indigenous white clay to which I have already referred. This white clay is obtainable in abundance in the cave above the high hill near the temple and it is used in preparing an ointment which is applied by devout pilgrims to their foreheads.

—Haldar p. 381 and 386

Begler found the names of Rāma and Sītā written all over in red and white earth ( A. S. I. XIII pp. 38, 39 ). Tradition further says that this ( Ramgadh ) is the Citrakūṭa Hill rendered immortal by Rāma's sojourn ( *ibid* p. 42 )

It is very significant to note that the place, where this moist chalk or natural wet paint is found, is called *Tilak-mati*<sup>1</sup> ( *Ibid* )

#### THICK FOREST

"The forest was so thick that in some places the sun's rays could hardly penetrate through the foliage...the journey was enlivened by the sight of beautiful lakes full of lilies and by the sweet blended notes of various kinds of birds as we marched through the jungles.

—Haldar, pp. 380-2.

1. Cf. the following incident in the Rāmāyana ( Ayo. 96. 18-19 )

स निवृद्ध्यांगुलि रामो धीते मनःशिलोच्चये  
चकार तिलकं तस्या ललाटे रुचिरं तदा  
बालाकंसमवर्णेन तेजसा गिरिघातुना

This canto, however, is generally supposed to be interpolated. But then, this is what we find again in 40.5 of Sundara kānda.

मनःशिलायाः तिलको गंडपाश्वे निवेक्षितः  
त्वया प्रनष्टे तिलके तं किल स्मर्तुमर्हसि

The actual finding of the red material ( dhātūrāga ), though a small item in itself, is to some extent indicative of the Ramgadh-Rāmagiri identity, as also it is of the identity of Ramgadh with the Citrakūṭa of Rāma.

## RIVER OR SPRING

“ Entering by the gateway and skirting the edge of the table-land towards the north, we came on the northside to a sizable piece of table ground about 200 ft. in width, through which a small river meandering, falling in cascades down the cliff, after reaching the edge of the table-land.

—Begler, Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. XIII, p. 32.

We have considered above, only the prominent and outstanding features of R, leaving out minor ones although they do tally with those of Ramgadh. One such feature is worth mentioning here. V. 11 of Me. refers to swans, travelling from R right up to Himalayas i. e. to the Mānasa lake. Female cranes are flying in V. 9.

संपत्स्यन्ते नमसि भवतो राजहंसाः सहायाः V. 11

सेविष्यन्ते नयनसुभगं स्वे भवन्तं बलाकाः V. 9

We are inclined to believe that this description is also realistic. It is a recorded fact that these birds appear and are seen only in N. India i. e. to the north of the river Narmada. By the beginning of rainy season these birds in hundreds travel thousands of miles towards north even beyond Indian territory. They return to India again in the Śarad season i. e. after the rainy season is over. In fact, the birds in question, are not the original residents of this land; they are foreigners. In his Rts. also, K gives us the description of rivers full of swans (हंस) and Kādamba etc. With reference to this phenomenon, Dr. Apte writes in his very informative book<sup>1</sup>—

For this scene, we have to cross Narmada (i. e. go to N. India). A swan (हंस) and even a Kādamba is not to be seen to the south of Narmada. Cranes are also rarely to be seen in Maharashtra.

Thus, the bird-scenes depicted in Me. appear to indicate that the topographical back-ground in that poem is to the north of Narmada. This again speaks against Ramtek, which is much far to the south of Narmada.

[We have some good reason to think that two other peculiar features of Ramgadh are also referred to by the poet in his Me. They are the Hathiphor tunnel and the ‘wet’ trees—which appear to be suggested or reflected in the expressions, सरस निचुलात्

1. *Pakshi-darśhana* (Mar.) by Dr. M. V. Apte, p. 92 and 69.

v. 14 and स्निग्धच्छायातरुषु v. 1, respectively. Ofcourse they are touched upon only lightly and indirectly, obviously because the poem did not need either comprehensive or exhaustive description of the hill in view. The reader will find this point discussed in Ch. V. We have not enlisted the above two characteristics here, as our reasoning in that respect is more or less conjectural.]

Thus do the physical features, in so far as the poet describes them, tally. Now, we shall turn to the more important item viz. location.

## II The Location

Kālidāsa himself gives the following unmistakable<sup>1</sup> clues about the location of Rāmagiri :—

वन्द्यः पृसां रघुपतिपदैः अङ्कितं मेखलाम् V. 12

रामगिर्याश्रमेषु V. 1

जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु V. 1

These persistent references to the association of Rāma and Sītā definitely indicate that the poet has in mind a hill, on what he supposed to be the Vanavāsa route of Rāma, i. e. to say somewhere on the site of the ancient Dandakāranya forest. The ancient commentaries of Me. support this location.<sup>1</sup> St. (10th or 11th century)—says specifically in his comments on the first verse :—

रामगिरिः दण्डकान्तः प्रसिद्धः

Vallabhdeva, the oldest commentator, known so far (10th century), and Mallinātha also say that Rāmagiri here means Citrakūṭa—रामगिरिः अत्र चित्रकूटः। Now, apart from the question<sup>2</sup> whether Rāmagiri is Citrakūṭa or not (Citrakūṭa hill itself, be it noted, was in D forest), one thing which seems fairly certain and beyond doubt, is that the poet himself and the ancient critics, also know or took R to be in the D forest and as lying on the route of Rāma and Sītā from Ayodhya to Panchavati<sup>3</sup>.

1. It is significant to note that many of the ancient commentators locate R in D forest, while none of them says anything contrary to it. The rest who identify it with Citrakūṭa virtually mean the same thing.

2. The question of identity of R with Citrakūṭa is dealt with separately in Chapter IV.

3. We are not concerned with Rāma's route beyond or south of Panchavati as Sītā was not with him thereafter. The poet's significant expression जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु clearly means that R was situated in between Ayodhya and Panchavati.



Thus R is, according to Kālidāsa, obviously one of the halting places where Rāma stayed during his exile along with Sītā. Now, the whole question about the fixation of Vanavāsa route has already been discussed at length in the last chapter. Rāma's famous Panchavati, as was ever supposed in ancient times, was situated on the East-Godavari near Bhadrachalam.

As for K himself, we have seen that he indicates that Rāma's route from Citrakūṭa to Bhadrachalam was southward, just 'like the path of the sun going from north to south'. We may quote here again that significant and very enlightening verse of the poet —

रामः .....चित्रकूटस्थलीं जहौ  
प्रयागातिथेयेषु वसन् ऋषिकुलेषु सः  
दक्षिणां दिशमक्षेपु वार्षिकेष्टिव भास्करः

Raghu XII. 24/25.

We must bear in mind, that K immediately in the very next canto makes his Rāma come back to Ayodhya by the same route (of course now by air). Can there be any doubt that the 'hospitable hermitages' (आतिथेयेषु ऋषिकुलेषु) in the above verse are none other than the hermitages of Sharabhanga etc., which the poet mentions in canto XIII of Raghu and which he places in between Panchavati and Citrakūṭa?

It follows therefore as the most natural conclusion that the various habitations of sages or आश्रमस of Sharabhanga, Sūtikshna etc., as mentioned by Kālidāsa himself, were situated, broadly speaking on the line joining Citrakūṭa and Bhadrachalam. Rāmāgiri, one of the halting places, must be located therefore in the same region i. e. roughly speaking the Chhattisgad division in Madhya Pradesh. This region, then, according to the belief of K was the site of the ancient hermitages under notice.<sup>1</sup>

Our Ramgadh hill is situated exactly in this region viz. Chhattisgad (in the present Sarguja District, near Ambikapur in M. P.). It may be recalled that this part is called Dandakāranya

1. We have shown in Ch. I under V. 1. that it is to these hermitages (आश्रमस) of Sharabhanga etc. in D forest that the poet is alluding in the well-known phrase Rāmāgiryāshrameshu (रामगिर्याश्रमेषु v. 1); as also in Rāmāgiryāshramasthah (रामगिर्याश्रमस्थः v. 98)

even to-day as ever it was since ancient times and in this very part the present scene of the Government of India for rehabilitating the refugees known as Dandakāranya Colony is under way.

### III Location of Adjoining Places :

Now let us approach the problem from another direction i. e. to fix the places mentioned on the route of the cloud between Rāmāgiri and Vidisha, as the route thereafter is almost clear and undisputed. The places or intervening stations between R and Vidisha ( modern Bhilsa )<sup>1</sup> are three in number—The Māla plateau, the Āmrakūṭa hill and thirdly what may be called the shattered or scattered scene of the river Revā. Let us move up towards Rāmāgiri beginning with the last mentioned place.

#### (a) THE SHATTERED REVĀ

This peculiar scene is described by K as follows :—

रेवां द्रव्यस्युपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णा  
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचिता भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य v. 19

The real implication and significance of these lines and therefore the exact location of the scene described seem to have eluded the critics so far. The scene is often placed at the foot of the hills i. e. on the plains below, by interpreting *pāda* (पाद) to mean the foot of the Vindhya. But the Vindhya range extends right upto the western coast! Which is then the exact spot of the shattered Narmada? It is attempted to be placed by a scholar<sup>1</sup> on the plains near about Hoshangabad, obviously to suit his Ramtek theory. The scene is however unmistakably of the hill ( a spur of the Vindhya Mountain ) which, during rainy season, is full of streams of the Revā descending down its slopes. Otherwise, the stream of the river would not get shattered or scattered ( विशीर्णा or विकीर्णा ). The word विन्ध्यपादे ( note the locative case ) here definitely means **on** the adjacent or foot-hill of the Vindhya. The Vindhya-pāda hill, which K refers to, can be none other than a hill in the Amarkantaka range. For, nowhere else can we find the river Revā of the description, so graphically offered to us by the poet in v. 19. We have already shown in

1. Prof. V. V. Mirashi : Marathi work "Meghadutatil Ramāgiri Arthat Ramtek" pp. 34 and 62, as also his previous works.

ch. I, how all the ancient commentaries<sup>1</sup> interpret *visṛṇa* in the sense stated above.

But in recent times (i. e. after 1813) Vindhyapāda is usually taken to mean 'at the foot of the hill' i. e. to say on the plains below. It is urged by the same scholar that विशीर्णा must mean dried up and therefore this scene of shattered Revā is the one near Hoshangabad, where according to him the river Revā or Narmada is dried up during summer and its course is broken up into more than one streams.

In the first place, K does not describe here a scene from summer. Meghadūta is full of typical characteristic scenes from rainy season and clearly this is one of them. Secondly, even supposing that during summer the river Revā near Hoshangabad gets parched and parted into two or three thin streams instead of one, they would hardly look like painted streaks which are many more in number. Then again there is another difficulty. How is the bed of the river or the plain ground over which it flows (near Hoshangabad or in fact anywhere after once the river descends down into the plains from Amarkantaka where it rises) to look like an elephant? It is clear that the simile of an elephant necessarily presupposes some object rising above ground—something like a formidable hill or a mountain<sup>2</sup>.

Here we have to adduce a very interesting proof in support of our proposition. It appears that a hill, during rains, naturally getting covered with a number of streams formed due to falling waters over the slopes, was a favourite sight with our poet even since his early days. In his Rts in the second Canto, which is devoted to the description of the rainy season, this is how he depicts

1. The first Marathi translation (metrical) of Mc. was published as far back as in 1860, by Krishnashastri Chiplonkar, a Sanskrit pandit of repute. He of course learned Sanskrit from the shastrins, in the traditional way. It would, therefore, be pertinent to look at his translation of the lines in question (V. 19), which he offers as given below.

विष्वादीच्या कठिण कडघाटुनि पडतां मग रेवेल  
पुढें देखिल गजशरिरावरि जेवि वर्णरचनेला

—Padya-ratnavali p. 7

2. It should be particularly borne in mind in this connection that K is often found comparing the elephant with a mountain and vice versa. We have quoted some instances, in our comments under V. 19 in Ch. I (pp. 82-3)



just the same scene<sup>1</sup> viz. of the hills, during rains, with clouds clinging to their tops and with streams running merrily all over :

सितोत्पलामाम्बुदचुम्बितोपलः

समाचिताः प्रस्त्रवणीः समन्ततः

प्रवृत्तनृत्यैः शिखिभिः समाकुलाः

समुत्सुकत्वं जनयन्ति भूधराः<sup>2</sup>

The metrical translation of the verse by R. S. Pandit runs thus :-

The Granite peaks of the mountain are kissed  
By Cloudlets floating like the silver lotus ;  
And all its gulleys and springs and sills  
Are flowing and bubbling with water; etc.

No comment is necessary. The scene is undoubtedly the same or similar as the one under notice in V. 19 of Me.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt that the scene of shattered Revā,<sup>4</sup> described by Kalidāsa

1. More or less a similar scene appears to be before the eyes of Kalidāsa, when he composed the following stanza of Raghu, VI. 60

पाण्ड्योऽयमसापितलम्बहारः क्लृप्ताङ्गरामो हरिचन्दनेन  
आभाति बालतपरक्तसानुः सनिशरोन्दारि इवाद्रिराजः

2. Rts. 2.16.

3. Those who wish to pursue this subject still further may turn to Canto II of Rts, which may advantageously be compared with Me. The striking parallels therein are very significant and worth noting. Significantly enough, the scenes, K is describing from the rainy season, are from the Vindhya hills (See Rts 2.8 and 27: वनानि वैष्णानि हरन्ति मानसं and समुप-जनिततापं ह्लादयन्तीव विध्यं). Many of the typical sights of the rainy season are common to both the works, although in Me. we see a more finished artist. The selection of the Vindhya surroundings for background both in the early Rts. and the subsequent Me., coupled with the fondness and the air of familiarity with which he describes them, suggests that he belonged or lived in those parts. It may be that he originally belonged to Mahakoshal (Chhattisgad area) and then migrated to Vidisha or Ujjayini. This might explain how K knew the route from Ramgadh to Ujjayini so minutely and also why he took his cloud to the north by a circuitous way i. e. via present Malwa.

4. Shri Vaze from Ambarnath informs me that the phenomenon described as 'the shattered Rewa' refers to the famous waterfalls known as Kapila-dhārā (falling from a height of 80 ft. about five miles to the west, from where the river rises) Even if that be so, our main conclusion viz. the identity of A' kankak would not be affected. But as shown above, the hill full of streams or falls all over is intended and in fact we get that scene only in the rainy season.

is a characteristic scene from the rainy season and if it is so it must be placed on the hill and not at its foot. We have found a subtle but convincing proof for our proposition in the other work by the same author viz. Kumārsambhava ( 8. 69 ) where luckily enough, the poet has employed the very same simile of an elephant with his body painted over with streaks, to describe a sight very similar to the one in question. Here is the pertinent verse—

उन्नतावनतभाववत्तया  
चन्द्रिका सतिमिरा गिरेरियम्  
भक्तिभिर्वट्टुविद्याभिरपिता  
भाति भूतिरिव मत्तदन्तिनः Ks 8. 69.

Mallinātha's commentary: गिरेः उन्नतावनतभाववत्तया निम्नोन्नत-  
प्रदेशवत्त्वेन हेतुना सतिमिरा तिमिरमिश्रा समोन्नतेषु तमसः अनवकाशात् इति  
भावः । इयं चन्द्रिका वट्टुविद्याभिः भक्तिभिः रचनाभिः अपिता विन्यस्ता मत्तदन्तिनः  
भूतिः भसितमेव आभाति । . . . . तत्र भक्तिसहितानि गजांगानि एव तिमिरभागो-  
पमानम् इति अनुसंधेयम् ।

The poet describes the mountain thus: The moonlight fall-  
ing on (lit. of) this mountain interspersed by shadows because of  
its unevenness appears as if it is a decoration (=bhūti) composed  
of many painted streaks on the body of an elephant. What is  
compared with an elephant, be it noted, is the mountain. Even  
many of the words here are not only similar but the same! It  
can be seen therefore that both Himalaya and Vindhyapāda are  
likened in two places respectively, but with the same object i. e.  
to say an elephant with painted streaks. As the उपमान (=the  
thing compared with) is common, it is clear that the उपमेय  
(=the thing compared) must be a mountain in both the cases.  
The following equations emerge from the two comparisons of the  
poet, when put together:

Moon's rays	=	Various streams	=	painted streaks
( white )		( white )		( white )
penetrating through		of the river Revā		
the dark shadows				
on		on		on
the Himalayas	=	the Vindhyapāda	=	elephant's body
looking dark		looking dark		looking dark
due to the night-time				



The expression Vindhypāda<sup>1</sup> therefore is clearly used here by the poet to denote a hill in the Vindhya range. The word (pāda) in it cannot mean here 'the foot of the hills' but is used in the sense of an adjacent hill (पादाः प्रत्यन्तपर्वताः), as expounded by all the Sanskrit commentators. (We have already dealt with this point in more detail in Ch. I under V. 19).

Some of them have given a very lucid exposition<sup>2</sup> of the simile under notice, which shows that the ancients were interpreting this verse and the simile of the elephant exactly in the way we are propounding it now.

The one thing is thus firmly established. The place of this scene is on the western slopes of Amarkantak range, where the river Revā (like any other river) is seen during the rainy season, coming down the hill in a number of streams—'shattered' or 'scattered' i. e. विशीर्णा or विकीर्णा<sup>3</sup> of the poet. The hill, which the poet has in mind here, cannot be any other than Amarkantak<sup>4</sup>,

1. Vindhypāda also was the name given to the southern range of the Vindhyas—which included the Satpura, the Mahadeo hills, the Mekhala mountain and the Ramgadh hill. It may be that K used Vindhypāda in this sense also.

2. विध्याचल (योः) गजयोः साम्यं नर्मदाभूत्योः साम्यं इति ।

—Meghraj.

विन्ध्यस्य गजेन उपमेयत्वम्

—Purna Sarawati.

For other commentaries, offering similar interpretation, see Ch. I.

3. It is significant to note the contrast between the विशीर्ण रेवा in Me. and जलवेणिर्मया रेवा in Raghu 6.43. In the former case K describes the Revā as vishīrna or vikīrna obviously because he takes it to be a scene on the hill, while in Raghu he mentions the same river as above (also note the totally different type of simile he uses there viz. माहिष्मतीव प्रनितम्बकांची) because the stream now referred to is one near Mahishmati (Omkār Mandhata near Ujjain) i. e. to say, flowing in a single stream on the plains of Malwa. That is why the streams (plural) of the Rewa in Me. are compared to the various painted streaks, while one single stream of the same river on the plains of Malwa, is likened to a girdle on the hips. This position clearly goes to show that K in Me. is describing the hill (in the range of Amarkantak) where the Revā takes its rise and descends down to the plains below, naturally in a number of streams, during the rains.

4. We get another supporting proof of this in the descriptive phrases like जंबूकुंजप्रतिहतरयं तोयं and also वनगजमदैः वासितं, occurring in the next



because that river does not and cannot descend any other hill. But the conclusion need not rest on our interpretation alone. The scene real and not imaginary, as already explained before. Anyone can visit the site even now and behold the scene with his own eyes. He can verify and enjoy the beauty as also the correctness of the description<sup>1</sup> poetic and enchanting yet graphic and faithful.

#### (b) THE ĀMRĀKŪTA HILL

The literal meaning of the word Āmrakūt is a peak or a hill full of mango-trees. There is no such hill to-day known as Āmrakūt. The Āmrakūt hill in Me. is already identified by some with Amarkantak mainly because of the strong resemblance between the two words and secondly because of its vicinity to the river Narmada. It is to be shown that Āmrakūt represents one of the peaks in the vast range known as Amarkantak. The additional grounds to be urged for the proposition are as follows :—

1. The most important ground, on which we can rely now, is the fixation of the 'shattered Revā' scene. It is evident that the Āmrakūt peak must be located somewhere in the vicinity of the western slopes or part of Amarkantak where the Revā descends.

2. Apart from the striking similarity between the two words Āmrakūt and Amarkantak, it can be shown that *kantaka* (कंटक) was sometimes used for *kūṭa* (कुट)

The *Trikūṭa* hill near Nasik for instance is mentioned *Tri-kantaka* in the *Godā-Mahātmya*. It is not surprising therefore

verse no. 20, which also go to indicate that a small modest stream or streams of the Revā, near about its rise, are referred to here by the poet. Could the branches of Jambhul trees be thought strong enough to cause a break in or check the speed of the flow, when once that river descends from the hill and begins to gather tremendous force and speed, which it does in the plains of Malwa? Similarly, is not the thick forest on A the correct place for the वनगज्स or wild. elephants? It may be noted that this part was famous in ancient times for abounding in elephants.

2. In Raghu (XVI. 31) the poet alludes to the river Revā as *mahāvira* (महाबिरावा रेवा) i. e. roaring or making a big noise. From the above verse, Kalidāsa definitely appears to know the earlier course of this river very well, and also the hilly parts of Amarkantak through which alone its flow or water-falls can create a sound, which the poet refers to. We are inclined to think that in this verse also, a similar if not the same scene (*vishīṭa* or scattered Revā) is referred to, although not from rainy season. For amplification of this point see Ch. VII.

to find that the word *Amarkantak* came in vogue in course of time, either as a substitute or as a corrupt form for *Āmrakūṭa*.

3. The big and formidable range of hill known as Amarkantak<sup>1</sup>, in M. P. extends over miles (about 100 miles in length east-west). The late Raibahadur Hiralal of Katni says that one of the peaks in Amarkantak is still known as *Āmrakūṭa*. (See p. 29 Location of Lankā by Sirdar Kibe).

4. The range once definitely formed part of the Vindhya.<sup>2</sup> It was also known as त्रिकूटाचल, सोम, मेकल (same as to-day's Maikal range) ऋक्ष, ऋक्षपाद etc. Whatever that may be, it is not impossible, that one of its peaks got the name *Āmrakūṭa* due to exuberance of mango-trees. The name त्रिकूटाचल obviously means a mountain or range having three peaks<sup>3</sup>. It is very likely that they had three separate names ending in *kūṭa*, one of them being *Āmrakūṭa*. It appears that this mountain, formerly known by the above names, subsequently came to be called as अमरकंटक or अमरकंट which names seem to be the forerunners of the present अमरकंटक.<sup>4</sup> Now the word कंटक means 'the side or ridge of mountain' (vide Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary). It is possible that the word आम्रकंटक may have been used alternately for आम्रकूट. It may be that आम्रकूट or आम्रकंटक soon became आम्रकंटक or आम्रकंटक which ultimately gave way to अमरकंटक or the present अमरकंटक.

5. It will be noticed that the first component of the word in question viz. *āmra* (*amara*) has managed to survive all the subse-

1 Amarkantak is a very ancient and sacred place of the Hindus. It forms part of the Maikal Mountains giving rise to three big rivers—Narmada, Shon and Mahanadi. Height 3468 ft. Padma Purān describes it as Chandika Tirtha. According to Matsya Purān it is even more sacred than Kurukṣetra.

2 सवन्ती विंध्याद्रे: v. 18 from नर्मदाहारीस्तोत्रम्, a devotional poem by Shankarāchārya. Incidentally, it is apparent from the same source, that the people of Shabara tribe lived on the banks of the Narmada.

3 It was customary to name the peaks in the Vindhya range as Citrakūṭa, Salakūṭa, Madhukūṭa etc. which were current since very early days.

4 These names are mentioned in Skandha Purān (Avantiya khand 230.15 and 21). Probably, the name अमरकंटक was also in vogue, as appears from one Sanskrit Kavya called Revalahari purporting to have been written in 1710 A. D. It is composed by one Diwakar Shukla, the old manuscript of which was discovered by Pandit Ramaratan Sharma of Hoshangabad.



quent changes it has undergone. The word *āmra* meaning mango-trees is obviously very important in this connection as that seems to supply the reason for the nomenclature. The abundance of mango-trees in this part seems to be the special characteristic or sinequanon of the place. Now it is significant to note that the name of the chief deity on A is *Āmrakantheshwar*. There is a famous spring here known as *āmanālā* also called *āmarnālā* or *āmbānālā*.<sup>1</sup> One of the names of the Narmada is given as *Amareshwari* in *Bhavanitantra*. Even to-day on *Amarkantak* the mango-tree is in evidence in large numbers.

6. Lastly, a small but interesting piece of evidence is to be placed before the reader, which although not dependable by itself is well worth consideration. We have to compare the two verses of K one from *Meghadūta* and the other from his *Rts*.

The first describes the *Āmrakūta* mountain while the latter gives the picture of the *Vindhya* mountain immediately after the advent of the rainy season. This is *Āmrakūta* in *Me*.

त्वामासारप्रशमितवनोपप्लवं साधु मूध्ना  
वक्ष्यस्यध्वश्मपरिगतं सानुमान् आभ्रकूटः  
न क्षुद्रोऽपि प्रथममुकृतापेक्षया संश्रयाय  
प्राप्ते मित्रे भवति विमुक्तः किं पुनर्यस्तथोच्चैः *Me*. 17.

Now see the *Vindhyas* in *Rts*.—

जलधरविननातां आश्रयोऽस्माकमुच्चैः  
अयमिति जलसेकैः तोयदास्तोयनम्राः ।  
अतिशयपरुषाभिर्ग्रीष्मदन्हेः शिखामिः  
समुपजनिततापं ल्हादयन्तीव विन्ध्यम्<sup>2</sup> (*Rts*. 2 27)

The parallel is too close to need comment. The natural phenomenon described in either, the friendship between a tall mountain and a soaring cloud, the idea of obliging each other—all this is strikingly similar. Is it not likely that both the verses are reminiscent of a scene witnessed and experienced by the poet

1 *ām* in Hindi or *āmbā* in Marathi means a mango-tree, both words formed from Sanskrit *āmra*, *Nālā* (ver.) means a spring or a small rivulet.

2 The poet's love for the *Vindhya* is quite apparent. But more than that he seems to be particularly familiar with the scenery and atmosphere during the rainy season in the *Vindhyan* region. This point is dealt with more fully in Ch. VII—K hails from *Mahākosal*.



some time when he had occasion to visit this part of the country? In all probability by Āmrakūṭa K means a peak in the Vindhya. If that is so, it further supports the already proved Amarkantak identification.

A brief notice of the objections to Amarkantak will not be out of place here. Prof. V. G. Paranjpe has raised the following two objections (as quoted in the critical edition of Meghadūta by S. K. Dey) :—

“ Amarkantak is 200 miles to the east of the straight line joining Ramtek and Bhilsa (Vidiśā) and the description *drutatara gatis tatparam vartma tirnah revām draksysi* will be impossible in its case as it is the source of the Narmada, Amarkantak, further, is in the Maikala mountain, and therefore Vindhya *pāde viśīrṇām* will be inapplicable to the river nearly, the Vindhya range being far away to the West. It must be some hill to the north of the Mahadev hills, and south of Sohagpur.”

(1) The first objection proceeds on the assumption that Ramtek is Rāmagiri which is wrong and unwarranted. As shown above, the shattered scene of Narmada must be located where that river descends down the uneven slopes on the western side of the Amarkantak. This descent of the Narmada or the shattered scene is more than 10 miles to the west, from the spot where it rises. The geographical position being such, the identification of Amarkantak does not come in conflict with the poet's description *तत्परं वर्त्म तीर्थः ।*

(2) Secondly, the learned Professor tacitly assumes that Vindhya range is far away to the west of Amarkantak. But Vindhya is a general term and was very often indiscriminately used to denote the whole range (from end to end) or any part of it, including Amarkantak.<sup>1</sup> A convincing proof of this is found

1. *शिवरतनपत्राङ्कुरेवांबुराक्षेः विध्यस्य*—(Fleet: Gupta Inscriptions Vol. III p. 154). This is an inscription in the year 533–34 A. D. recording a poem of the court-panegyrist of king Yashodharman of Dashapur. The similarity between this description and K's *विध्यपादे विशीर्णा रेवा* may be noted. The inscriptional allusion also clearly shows that Amarkantak was known as the Vindhya mountain atleast from the fifth century if not even earlier. It is also apperant from the same inscription that Vindhya and Pāriyātra were different, as the latter is mentioned to be situated to the north of the Vindhyas. Probably Pāriyātra represented the modern Aravali hills.

in the verses of the court panegyrist of the famous king Yashodharman of Dashapur, ( 6th Century A. D. ) where we get a vivid poetic inscription of the river Revā " the waters of which flow down from the slopes of the summits of the **Vindhya**. "

To sum up, Amarkantak answers well to the description of Āmrakūṭa ( tall, imposing, the peak, mango-trees etc.). Its location viz. in Vindhya suits us as well. Being situated near the Revā and moreover the 'shattered Revā' it does not offend against the prescribed route of the cloud. It is to be shown presently that it fits in exactly and with remarkable accuracy with the direction in which the cloud is asked to travel from R to A. But that discussion must be reserved till the next topic where it will be dealt with fully. Thus approaching the problem from the other end we have come up to the Amarkantak hill. Now only one station intervenes between us and our destination i. e. the starting point in Me., and that is Māla land. Now, only if we can find out and get over this Mālakṣetra, we can hope to reach the renowned Rāmagiri hill of Kālidāsa.

#### (c) THE MĀLA-KṢETRA

The Mālakṣetra mentioned as the very first station in the cloud's journey was perhaps the most difficult to identify so far and can be said to be even more evasive and baffling than the Rāmagiri itself. It has been the despair of the searching scholars, although various attempts have been made to get at it. The reason is that very little about it is said in Me. and what is actually said is of such a nature that there is hardly anything by which you can size it up or pin it down. Even the meaning of the word is now not free from obscurity and the word itself is capable of interpretations more than one. One is inclined to feel that after all, the Māla was not so vague, enigmatic or unintelligible to the contemporary readers, whose knowledge about it the poet took for granted. We are however not so much concerned here with *what* Māla was like, as we are with *where* it was situated. The geographical note on Māla in the critical edition by S. K. Dey runs thus :—

*Māla* :—Perhaps Mallināth is right in believing that Māla does not refer to any particular place, but it simply means an elevated table-land, implied by the word *āruhya*.



Similarly Vallabhadeva would interpret it as an alluvial plateau. But some commentators understand by Māla *mālākhyo deśaḥ* or *māla-yogān mālav iti prasiddho deśaḥ*, while other explain it vaguely as *kṣetra-samūha*, *vana-bhūmi*, *grāmāntarāṭavi*, and so forth. Wilson thinks that a particular district is meant, and identifies it with a place called Malda in the vicinity of Ratanpur, the chief town of northern Chattisgad <sup>1</sup>.

At present there are mainly two theories in the field regarding the location of Māla. One of them is that it should be located near Sheoni-Chhapara<sup>2</sup> i. e. about midway on the road going from Ramtek to Jabalpur. No reasons are assigned however in support of this theory. It is obvious that Sheoni-Chhapara is being suggested to suit Ramtek, which now is no longer tenable; and if Ramtek breaks down, so does Sheoni-Chhapara along with it. Wilson has suggested the place Malda, a little to the north of Ratanpur in Chattisgad. Prof. Mirashi questions this and also says that he could not find on the map any such place as Malda. Wilson's reasons for his identification appear to be two<sup>3</sup>—the similarity between the words Māla and Malda and secondly the vicinity of Amarkantak. While Wilson's reasoning is certainly worth consideration, still it fails to establish his identification beyond doubt.

We of course uphold the proposition that Malda, or the region around it represents the Māla-kṣetra of Me. but for totally different and stronger reasons. The location of Māla would depend on the answer of the questions : where was Māla situated ? On which side of Rāmagiri ? And on which side of Āmrakūṭa (Amarkantak) ? Contrary to prevalent notions, it is to be shown presently that the Māla was situated to the south of Rāmagiri and of course to the south or south-east of Āmrakūṭa, just as the topography of Me. requires it. It should be remembered, that Amarkantak could be reached only after going a little to the west after traversing

1 Sahitya Academy's edition, p. 113.

2 Māla near Sheoni Chhapara (north of Nagpur) is suggested by Prof. V. V. Mirashi of Nagpur.

3 Wilson also says something in this connection, about the easterly course of the cloud from R etc.. But we have shown that there is absolutely no warrant either in Me or anywhere for the cloud's easterly course from R.





पश्चात् व्रज लघुगतिः (or preferably प्रवलय गति) भूय एवोत्तरेण simply describes the route from Rāmagiri to Āmrakūṭa only.

This construction or interpretation, which we are submitting is neither arbitrary nor unauthorised. Vallabhadeva the famous 10th century pandit and critic, known for his lucid and pointed commentary points out the location of Māla in unambiguous terms :

मालं हि दक्षिणाशास्थं तेन च उत्तराशा गन्तव्या

Vallabha categorically states that Māla was to the south and after traversing it the cloud was to turn to the north. Other ancient commentaries also say the same thing. Thus the Māla was to the south of R, and not to the north as is generally taken for granted. The cloud's journey at the out-set, therefore is clearly southward. But this conclusion need not rest on the strength of the ancient commentaries alone. We have to point out, that the text itself of Me. indicates Māla to the south, and in fact explicitly says so, as will be shown presently.

It follows therefore from the foregoing, as the most logical conclusion that Rāmagiri was situated in the eastern region of Amarkantak. Ramgadh hill is exactly so situated. The Māla-kṣetra mentioned in Meghadūta was to the south of Ramgadh near about Ratanpur in Chattisgad. The place called Malda found here, as Wilson says, may well be reminiscent of the old name <sup>1</sup> Māla by which this part was known in ancient times. In the end we have to cite one more proof. People of Koraku tribe live in this part (the old Sarguja state in Chattisgad). The Korakus worship two deities, Mahadeo and *Māla-dhani* <sup>2</sup>

1 Many of the ancient lexicographers say that Māla was another name of the Malava country मालं मालवदेशश्च. Now the modern Malwa did not acquire the name Malawa till the second or third century A. D. This position suggests that the present Malawa must have been known as Māladesha before it came to be called Malavadesh. Further, it is to be pointed out that in ancient times, the region around Ujjayini was called West Mālava while east Mālava extended presumably upto Chattisgad. Vatsyāyana says: उज्जयिनी-देशभावस्तु एव अपरमालव्यः, मालव्य इति पूर्वमालवभावः। It appears probable from this, that formerly the word Mālava or before that, simply Māla indicated eastern Malwa i. e. some part of the Chattisgad area. Similarly two places Malhar and Malkhurda are found on the map just below Ratanpur. Ptolemy refers to a town called Mailat nearabout Chattisgad. It would be interesting to find out whether these names have anything to do with our Māla in Me.

2 Chattisgad District Gazetteer pp. 284/5.



(मालवनी = The Lord of Māla). It appears to indicate that that part was formerly known as Māla.

To put the whole discussion or our argument about Māla in a nut-shell, in the form of a mathematical formula, the position may be stated thus :—

- (1) Māla lay to the South or south-east of Āmrakūṭa (as in Me itself).
- (2) Āmrakūṭa = Amarkantak. (as we have shown above).
- (3) Malda is to the south-west of Amarkantak.  
∴ Māla = Malda, region near Ratanpur in Chattisgad.
- (4) Then again Māla was also to the south or south-west of Rāmāgiri (according to the ancient commentaries).
- (5) Malda is to the south-west of Ramgadh

∴ Ramgadh=Rāmāgiri.

Thus, our identification of Māla with the region around Ratanpur confirms Amarkantak and is itself confirmed by it; just as on the other hand, it also confirms the Ramgadh identification, and is in turn confirmed by it. It will be seen how this conclusion, independantly arrived at, is amply supported by the direction of the cloud's journey, as envisaged and mentioned in the text by the poet himself.

#### IV Direction of the Cloud's Journey

Attempts have often been made in the past to fix the direction of the cloud's journey from the poet's allusions thereto—especially on the basis of the well-known instruction to the cloud in v. 16 viz. किञ्चित् पश्चात् etc. But the elusive line has baffled many an attempt, as the words therein are capable of yielding multiple and contrary meanings. The ambiguity and uncertainty were further heightened by the fact that this single line contains maximum number of recenssions and text variants, capable of various interpretations. No wonder if it proves the despair of research-students. The confusion is worse confounded by the unfortunate interpretation, which has come to stay, of another line उत्पतोदङ्मुखः स etc. which is invariably taken to signify a northward journey of the cloud.

It appears, however, that unfortunately the correct import and significance of both the lines have escaped attention so far.





It may be realised, that without taking aid from the geographical context or topographical corroboration, any attempt to go back to the original words or get at the meaning of the poet himself, is likely to lead us astray. Let us have therefore a fresh and scientific approach to the problem with a clean slate—starting without any prejudices or preconceived notions.

In all, there are four references in Me. as regards the direction, noted below, although the third one is rather vague and not specific.

1 स्थानात् अस्मात् सरसनिचुलात् उत्पत् उदङ्मुखः खं v. 14.

2 किञ्चित् पश्चात् ब्रज लघुगतिः भूय एवोत्तरेण v. 16

3 वक्रः पंथा यदपि भवतः v. 27

4 तेनोदीचीं दिशमनुसरेः v. 58

The first two concern us mainly. Since the publication of my Marathi work, I have found that the main and perhaps the only objection to Ramgadh is that it is not to the south of Amarakantak and the Narmada. The objection obviously proceeds on a tacit assumption that the cloud's journey was northward which interpretation has for its basis the expression *udañmukha*—उदङ्मुखः. In fact, I think it is that small word which is responsible for putting the people off the scent and keeping Kālidāsa's Rāmāgiri in dark till to-day. We have already shown that the Māla lay to the south of R and hence, to start with, the cloud's journey could not be northward. We have sufficiently discussed and pointed out the correct meaning and implication of that word—उदङ्मुखः—in Ch. I under v. 14. But in order to elucidate the matter still further, it seems advisable, even at the risk of some repetition, to deal with the question more fully and exhaustively. Our proposition is that in any case the line in question viz. उत्पत्तौदङ्मुखः खं etc. cannot mean actual going or proceeding to the north. Our reasons are as follows :—

1. First of all, the verb उत्पत् (पत् with उत्) does not and can never signify a horizontal movement. *Utpata* उत्पत् can only mean rise upwards or higher up. Note also the word *kham* खं, which is in the accusative case and not in the locative case. The cloud is to jump up to the skies i. e. skies above the R hill (not through or along the skies). It should be noted that all the

commentaries explain the word उत्पत as उद्गच्छ or ऊर्ध्वगच्छ i. e. rise upward.

2. Now let us come to the word *udāṇmukha* उदङ्मुख. Firstly apart from what meaning it conveys here, one thing must be made absolutely clear. If उत्पत signifies an upward direction, ( which it does ), उदङ्मुख cannot be construed to mean a northerly direction. Poet like K cannot be expected to imply two contradictory directions in the same sentence. Moreover had the poet wanted to suggest a horizontal direction here instead of the upward one, he would have very well used verbs like गच्छ, व्रज, संचर etc. In fact, we wish to point out here a very remarkable thing in this connection. K naturally had to use many verbs denoting motion throughout the *Pūrva Megha*. But it is noteworthy that only in two places he has used an expression which indicates an upward movement. The first is *utpata* v. 14, used because the cloud which is clinging to the hill top is to be asked to jump up and rise higher in the skies. The second occasion is in v. 58 where the expression *gatvā cha urdhvam* is used because here the cloud was to go up the Himalayas or Kailās mountain i. e. it was to begin its ascent from this point onwards. Except these two occasions, the poet has all along used verbs<sup>1</sup> denoting horizontal movement ( in about 18 places ). Thus the reader will see how and why K has used the phrase *utpata*. He undoubtedly wanted to suggest an upward direction here, as he did in V. 58, when again the ascent was to be indicated.

3. There is one more circumstance mentioned in this verse, which confirms the upward movement. The following two lines taken together make up the sentence.

स्थानादस्मात् सरसनिचुलात् उत्पतोदङ्मुखः खं  
दिङ्नागानां पथि परिहरन् स्थूलहस्तावलेपान्

While jumping up to the skies i. e. rising higher up, the cloud has to avert the onslaughts of the दिङ्नाग ( Quarter-elephants ). Now it is a patent fact that the दिङ्नाग are supposed to be moving on a plane very high up in the skies. If the cloud proceeds to the north from the hill instead of higher up, it is hardly in

1. See Ch. I under v. 58, where all the verbs used in the *Pūrva Megha* to denote motion or movement are listed to prove our point.



danger of coming across the aggressive quarter-elephants. Does it not indicate that the poet while composing this stanza had in his mind the picture of the cloud which was to disentangle itself from the hill-top to soar high up to the skies—"to mount on the path of the wind" (त्वामारुढं पवनपदवीं) before actually starting on the journey?

4. The word उदङ् in the compound उदङ्मुख has no independent existence of its own, but is inextricably linked up with the word मुख. The rules of Sanskrit grammar would not allow उदङ् to be construed with उत्पत. Thus उदङ्मुखः खं उत्पत would only mean, jump to the skies with thy face turned towards north. Still no actual going to the north can be made out. Otherwise, in that case the poet would have used, instead of the roundabout and clumsy उदङ्मुख, some such expression as उदीचीं or उत्तरेण गच्छ व्रज, संचर etc., which he has actually done in V. 58 (तेनोदीचीं दिशमनुसरेः). It is important to note that none of the Sanskrit Commentaries explains the line as signifying actual going to the north. On the contrary, almost all of them specifically state that Māla, the first station in the journey, was to the south and none asserts that it was elsewhere. If Māla was to the south, how could the cloud be asked to proceed to the north?

5. *Udan* again has two meanings - 1 Turned or going upwards, and 2 Northern, turned towards north. Now there is nothing in the text or context to show that the poet has used the word here in the latter sense. On the other hand, it is more probable that he used it in the first sense, viz. turned or going upwards, especially because it very well suits *utpata* and the context. In that case the meaning simply would be—jump up to the skies with thy face turned upwards. If the poet has this meaning in view there is an end of 'the northward journey.'

6. In the alternative, even supposing that the poet has used the word उदङ् in the sense of north, still it must be remembered that it is combined with मुख, as already stated. Obviously then it would only mean that the face is to be turned towards the north. Now the question may arise: Why should the cloud turn its face to the North? The answer is not far to seek. It was considered auspicious to turn one's face either to the north or to the east, when one sets out on a long journey (or before per-

forming solemn or religious rites). For instance K himself has used the word *udānimukha* in Raghu 5·59. Prince Aja at the time of accepting the *mantra* and the missile ( अस्त्रमंत्रं ) first turned his face to the north before doing so.

उदङ्मुखः सोऽस्त्रविदस्त्रमंत्रं  
जग्राह तस्मान्निगृहीतशपात्

Then again an illustration from *Rāmāyaṇa* may be cited here to prove the point. Rāma, when he set out for Dandākarāṇya ( which was of course to the south ) first turned the face of his chariot to the north, and the reason is expressly stated. The same word *udānimukha* is used :

उदङ्मुखं तं तु रथं चकार  
प्रयाणमांगल्यनिमित्तदर्शनात्

Facing the north (and also east) on<sup>1</sup> such occasions was supposed to avert evil or mishap during the intended journey. This appears to be the reason or propriety in asking the cloud to become *udānimukha*.<sup>2</sup> It is also possible that the poet here only wishes to suggest the cloud its ultimate destination viz. the north.<sup>3</sup>

7. Here 'facing the north' becomes the expressed sense (वाच्यार्थं) while 'going to the north' is at best an inferred sense (लक्षणाार्थं). The rules of interpretation require, in the first instance, that the spoken sense be preferred unless it is found to be absurd or inapplicable, in which case alone the inferred sense is to be brought in, provided it suits the context properly and in a better manner. It has already been shown that in the present case the spoken sense suits the context admirably while the inferred sense militates against it. There is no reason therefore to reject the natural and literal meanings of उत्पत्त and उदङ्मुख.

1. Also Comp.

अन्तर्जानुः शुची देशे उपविष्ट उदङ्मुखः

प्राग्वा ब्राम्हेण तीर्थेन द्विजो नित्यमुपस्पृशेत्—Yādnyavalkya.

2. It may be noted that in the very next verse No. 15 appears the rain-bow. It is mentioned again for the same- 'auspicious' purpose, as hinted by some commentators.

3. Mallinatha says : उदङ्मुखः सन् । अलकाया उदीच्यत्वात् इति आशयः ।



Thus it will be clear that on proper grammatical construction the expression उदङ्मुखः स उत्पत can never mean actual going to the north, and what is more important, it was **never** understood in that sense during the long centuries till 1813. On the top of it all, Māla to the south of R is the best answer to the northward journey interpretation.

FIRST TO THE SOUTH—

AND THEN BACK AGAIN TO THE NORTH

Thus if the cloud from R has not to go to the north, then towards which direction was it to proceed? If we reason it out, there would not be much difficulty in concluding that it was southward and could be none other. East obviously is not and cannot be in the picture. West would be impossible as also misfitting and even absurd, in view of the subsequent instruction किञ्चित् पश्चात् “a little to the west<sup>1</sup>” which in that case, would be either redundant or ridiculously tautologous. The above instruction obviously presupposes some other direction before turning to the west. The only direction therefore left for the cloud to turn to for approaching Māla is the south. It can be none other. Thus by the process of elimination, the **initial southward journey** of the cloud becomes firmly established from the text itself. The conclusion is inevitable and irresistible. This conclusion again gets strong confirmation, as repeatedly pointed out, from the situation of Māla to the south, as expressly and emphatically affirmed by the ancient commentaries. Similarly, if one is to reach Amarkantak from south, it necessarily presupposes a previous initial journey towards south from R (as just indicated above) which in other words means the Māla lay to the south of R. The expression भूयः (=again) एव उत्तरेण supports this interpretation. And if we accept Vallabha's प्रवलय गति which is the older, in fact the oldest reading available, it takes the matter almost beyond any doubt whatsoever.

Now let us make an attempt to get at the correct implication and significance of crucial lines in v. 16. Dey's text runs thus :—

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1. If, however, *pascāt* instead of 'west' is taken in the sense of afterwards (अनन्तरं), then in that case, the line obviously goes to indicate that the Māla and therefore the journey was in other direction than north.



सद्यः सीरोत्कवणसुरभि क्षेत्रमारुह्य मालं  
किञ्चित् पश्चात् व्रज लघुगतिभूय एवोत्तरेण

But the last line contains many variants. To avoid repetition of the same matter the reader is referred to Ch. 1, where the question of textual interpretation of this verse is fully dealt with. It will be interesting, however, to see how in this particular case the different variants arose. It will be still more interesting to observe that, in fact, the various readings although differently worded hint at the same thing—which is very remarkable. Here are the different readings :

Vallabhadev	— प्रवलय गति	( for व्रज लघुगतिः )
Sthiradeva	प्रगुणय गति	} ( for व्रज लघुगतिः )
	— or	
	प्रचलय गति	
Goswāmi and Bharatmallika	— किञ्चिदेवोत्तरेण	( for भूय एवोत्तरेण )

Now the two words *pascāt* (पश्चात्) and *bhūyas* (भूयः) have two meanings each. *Pascāt* may mean to the west or afterwards, while *bhūyas* may mean again or for the most part. The commentators have accepted either the one or the other of the two meanings in both the cases.

V's commentary, known for brevity and lucidity, is worth quoting in this connection.

मालं उदारं क्षेत्रं किञ्चिन्मनामारुह्य पश्चादनन्तरम् उत्तरेण उत्तरस्यां दिशि भूयो बहुतरम् । गतिं प्रवलय व्यावर्तय । मालं हि दक्षिणाशास्थं तेन च उत्तराशा गन्तव्या इति गतिप्रवलनम् । . . . . प्रवलनं स्फुरणं उत्तरेण इत्येवबन्तः ।

That means ascending the Māla, which was to the south, the cloud thereafter was to wheel back, but now mostly to the north self (एव). V obviously takes *pascāt* in the sense of afterwards (अनन्तरं) and *bhūyas* to mean mostly (बहुतरं). V also apparently understands by मालं आरुह्य that the act of मालारोहण i. e. visiting the Māla land is complete or accomplished (मालारोहणं वृष्ट्या वधु-प्रीत्यर्थः) Now V seems to take *pascāt* in the sense of 'thereafter' presumably because he knew or believed that the Māla land, situated to the south of R, lay or extended east-west. Thus as the sense of going towards west was already taken to be included in मालं आरुह्य, there was no point now in taking *pascāt* to indicate westerly direction.

Equally important it would be to notice what another ancient authority says on the point. Sthiradeva writes even more specifically :

त्वमुदीचीं प्रस्थितोऽपि किञ्चित् मनाक् पश्चात्<sup>1</sup> मालं पादचात्यसीमान्तं  
दक्षिणाश्रितमारुह्य तस्थोपरि स्थित्वा । क्षणमात्रं कृतविलम्बदश्च भूयः  
पुनरपि उत्तरेणैव दिग्भागेन गतिं गमनं प्रगुणय सज्जीकुरु । प्रचलय वा  
प्रवर्तय ।

The comment is very emphatic and significant. Although the cloud has set out and is bound for north, **yet** it is asked to go south because the Māla land is situated in that direction. It is noteworthy again that none of the numerous Sanskrit commentators give any other location to the Māla land. In fact almost all of them state that Māla was to the south. But we have cited here only V and St because they are the most ancient amongst them and mainly because they were pioneers in the field. Now why should V and St state so emphatically and explicitly that the Māla was to the south of R ? And that too especially when they were conscious of the fact that the course of the cloud must be towards the north ? St. in fact says it in so many words : त्वमुदीचीं प्रस्थितः अपि and so on This detour for the sake of Māla land appears to be akin to the subsequent diversion envisaged by the poet in वक्रः पंथाः ( v. 27 ) to be indulged in for visiting Ujjayini. Two possibilities arise. It may be that K had an affinity or at least a soft corner for this region and its inhabitants because of his stay there for one reason or another. Or else he knew this part of the country as the land-route in those times connecting the east with famous cities like Vidisha and Ujjayini passed through it. Apart from that, the comments of V and St. as regards the location of Māla go a long way in establishing it to the south of R. They either knew the fact from personal knowledge or they supplied the information on the basis of a still older tradition current in their times. Their assertion assumes greater significance, considering that their job did not make it obligatory for them to come out with it. They could have well kept mum

1. St. like V takes the adverb किञ्चित् 'a little' to qualify मालं आरुह्य in the preceding line. This construction is not only grammatically correct, but further according to us, is the one intended by the poet and expresses the sense which he wanted to convey.



over the location of Māla and passed on after just explaining the meaning of the word as best as they could. A passing reference may be made to Jinasena,<sup>1</sup> (8th century A. D.) the author of *Pārshvābhudaya*, who curiously enough takes this line to signify Māla to the South as his composition shows. It can be safely inferred that Māla was understood or known to lie to the south of R since early times at least as far back as the 8th century A.D. — which period takes us very close to the times of the poet himself. The tradition thus dates back to the times when probably everybody knew as to which the Rāmagiri of Kālidāsa was and also where the Māla-kṣetra lay. The long unbroken tradition about Māla to the south, uncontradicted as it stands, can not be dismissed or dealt with too lightly.

Similarly V's reading<sup>2</sup> प्रवलय गति ( the oldest available ) is very remarkable and deserves pointed attention. It means turn right about or wheel back ( of course to the north ) which implies and even presupposes a prior southerly direction. In view of this reading and the direction which it laid down, V naturally would not take bhūyas to mean again because that sense was already expressed by प्रवलय and moreover by the word एव.

In all probability, *pravalaya gatim* appears to be the original version of the poet himself. In any case it is older than the more current *vraja laghugati* which is obviously a *lexio simplicior*.

As Prof. V. G. Paranjpe rightly remarks in his edition, had it been there from the beginning, no change would have been made. It is very significant to note that those of the commentators who introduced or adopted *vraja laghugati* had to interpret and take

1 Jinasena, the Jain author and Guru of the Rāshtrakūt king Amogh-varsha flourished in the 8th century A. D. His poem *Pārshvābhudaya* is based on Meghadūta ( adopting the method of सुमस्यापूरण ). It is significant to note that he also depicts the journey of the cloud first to the south and then towards north. But as Jinasena was not much concerned with expressing correctly what Me conveyed, this evidence may be taken for what it is worth.

2 It appears that till V's times, no other reading except *pravalaya gatim* was known. For, V does not notice any other reading. Had there been any, he would mention it and controvert it as he has done at other places, for example in the case of *prashama* vs. *prathama* in v. 2.



*pascāt*<sup>1</sup> now as signifying westerly direction and also *bhūyas* as meaning 'again'. Presumably, the adoption of *vraja laghugati* (for *pravalaya gati*) required this change. The sense, which was lost by abandoning *pravalaya viz.* at the act of turning round or wheeling back to the north, had to be restored. It was done by interpreting *pascāt* to mean west and by taking *bhūyas* to mean again. Thus it will be seen, how the various commentators through their various readings and interpretations, yet arrived at the same thing and virtually expressed the same sense viz. a small detour in the cloud's journey via Māla which lay to the south of Rāmāgiri.

Here, we have to invite attention to yet another point, regarding the probable location of Māla and the direction of the initial journey. Let us assume, for argument's sake that the Māla land was to the north of R, and that the cloud is to proceed first to the north (as is at present erroneously supposed on the basis of the unwarranted interpretation of the words *utpala* and *udaṇmukha*). In that case, however, it should be noted that the first part of the direction viz. *kimcit pascāt vraja* or 'go a little to the west' loses all significance and becomes almost unnecessary and even meaningless. If the route thereafter is to be northward again, it is evident that in that case, the direction or the journey of the cloud from R to Āmrakūṭa would be broadly speaking only towards north more or less. The intervening 'small' i. e. 'negligible' (*kimcit*) deviation or departure towards the west then becomes so slight, insignificant and unimportant that there appears hardly any occasion and much less any propriety in referring to it. One does not expect K to throw in tedious, unwanted and superfluous details, unless they served some purpose. N-W-N means more or less a continuation of the northward journey, while S-W-N is a definite and glaring departure or detour which is not only worth mentioning but which demands a mention. And that is the

1. It may be considered that the Yakṣa (i. e. Kalidāsa) who is issuing his instructions to the cloud from the *Ramgadh* hill is not likely to use the word *pascāt* in the sense of 'to the west'. If we accept Vallabha's reading *pravalaya gati* (which must be the older and original version for reasons stated above) then there is no alternative but to interpret *pascāt* as meaning afterwards. The oldest commentator after all seems to be right in his interpretation as in his readings. Some of the later commentators began to interpret *pascāt* as meaning westward probably because they were misled into thinking that *pascāt* also signified a direction, just as *uttareṇa* in the same line did so.

reason which prompted him to describe it in the way, in which he has done it.

Thus, the important couplet in question clearly contemplates three consecutive stages in the cloud's journey :

1. Ascending over the Māla land.
2. Traversing thereafter some distance towards the west.
3. And thirdly wheeling back again to the north.

Here we have to urge a new point of much importance and significance. The direction contained in the line in question ( viz. किञ्चित् पश्चात् व्रज लघुगतिः भूय एवोत्तरेण ) cannot, and does not, apply to or cover the whole<sup>1</sup> journey i. e. right up to the Himalayas as is usually supposed, nor does it apply to the journey beyond Āmrakūṭa as advocated by some. There is no reason why the direction should be stretched to cover the journey up to Vidisha either. As the direction is inserted in between the two places Māla and Āmrakūṭa, it is only<sup>2</sup> proper and reasonable to suppose that it was obviously meant to convey the direction to be followed by the cloud in negotiating the distance in between those two places only and not beyond. The point becomes very clear when we read the last two lines of v. 16 and the first two lines of v. 17 together. The four lines in question and their transliteration are offered below :

सद्यः सीरोत्कण्ठसुरभिक्षेत्रमाहूय मालं  
किञ्चित् पश्चात् व्रज लघुगतिः भूय एवोत्तरेण ॥  
त्वामासारप्रशमितवनोपप्लवं साधु मूर्ध्ना  
वक्ष्यस्यध्वश्चमपरिगतं सानुमान् आम्रकूटः ।

Sadyaḥ sīrotkaṣaṇasurabhi kṣetramāruhya mālāṃ  
Kimeit paścāt vraja laghugatirbhūya evottareṇa  
Tvāmāsārapraśamitavanopaplavaṃ sādhu mūrdhnā  
vakṣyasyadhvaśramaparigatam sānumān Āmrakūṭaḥ

1 The direction viz. 'a little to the west and then again to the north' could not have been meant for the whole journey, because even leaving out the earlier part of it, Vidisha to Ujjayini means going west, Ujjayini to Brāhmāvarta north, then again Brāhmāvarta to Kankhal means going east and in the last stage again to the north (v. 57) from the ridge of the Himalayas upto Alaka.

2 The Mimamsa rule of *Sannidhi* supports this interpretation, संनिधान or संनिधि means putting down together, juxta-position; proximity, vicinity; combination, aggregate—Pt. I. 191.



The position is quite plain. When, after Māla, you will go a little to the west and then wheel back to the north again, you will come across the lofty Āmrakūṭa. The direction prescribed for the cloud after the Māla viz. 'a little to the west and then to the north again' is obviously restricted to and meant for the journey from Māla to Āmrakūṭa only.

From the foregoing it may become abundantly clear, that the poet places his Rāmagiri to the east of Āmrakūṭa and a detour is recommended from the former to the latter via south (Māla). Now, we have already proved in the preceding pages the identity of Āmrakūṭa with Amarkantak. It follows therefore that Rāmagiri must be to the east of Amarkantak i. e. in Chhattisgad. The Ramgadh hill in Chhattisgad is exactly to the east of Amarkantak, at a distance of about seventyfive miles. Thus it will be seen that the direction of the journey, prescribed for the cloud, fits in well with Ramgadh in M. P., and in fact, with no other place suggested in this connection.

One small point may be dealt with here. It is sometimes urged that the verse *Vakraḥ panthāḥ* etc. (v. 27) indicates flying at a tangent and the route therefore from Vidisha to Ujjayini must be taken to be branching off in a different direction from the one adopted till then; and as the route from Vidisha to Ujjayini is east-west, the route from Rāmagiri upto Vidisha must be south-north, which supports the Ramtek theory. But the word *Vakra* has various meanings as crooked, bent, curved, winding, tortuous, round about, indirect, circuitous etc., etc. Secondly, it should be noted that the verse in question does not come immediately after Vidisha, but after three more places are visited thereafter viz. the river Vatravati, Nicais hill and Vananadi (verses 24. 25. 26). Thus, it is clear that if a break in the direction was meant by *Vakraḥ panthāḥ*, it should have come immediately after Vidisha, which is not the case. The only point in uttering the direction *Vakraḥ panthāḥ* etc. can be, that as Ujjayini lies still further west, the visit to that city would necessitate a round about or circuitous digression, which however should not be minded. *Vakraḥ panthāḥ* therefore, clearly represents a continuation of the already circuitous way, already undertaken.

It may be asked as to why the cloud should have been pulled back to the south at all—obviously out of the way for a



small detour—when it was ultimately to go to the North? Unfortunately information about certain places known in K's time is denied to us. But it would be unfair and even unscientific to reject topographical positions which the text itself is seen to establish, simply because they do not conform to our notions about them to-day. The reasons of the poet however may be as follows :—

1. It appears that K knew the way at least from Rāmagiri hill up to Ujjayini and the places thereon very accurately and thoroughly. The route which K describes is undoubtedly a zigzag one. His consciousness of that fact has come out openly in one place (v. 27). Obviously the poet's route is not straight or direct—as the crow flies or as the cloud could fly. What then made him prefer the route, which he has in Me. ? He certainly does not appear to have selected it, thoughtlessly or at random. As has been already hinted, the route in Me. possibly represents the land route of those days. Presumably our poet often went this way while travelling to and from Ujjayini, with which city he is said to be connected, and rightly so, in one way or the other. From the topography and the maps of this region the route in Me. does appear to have been the land-route connecting Ramagadh with Amarkantak in former times.

The poet's allusion to the Māla land is not without a certain realistic touch about it. Probably K knew Māla-kṣetra very well, stretching as it did along the roadside, as he also knew the naive peasant-women in that region looking with wondering and expectant eyes towards the promising monsoon clouds in the sky. Probably K has described here, which was to him, a familiar sight. The reference to the Māla-kṣetra, although brief, is no doubt a fond, delicate and deliberate one. The manner in which K describes it goes to suggest that it was known to the people and that K was conscious of this fact. (See Ch. VII)

2. The diversion intended is after all very small covering only a negligible distance, especially looking to the vast extent of the cloud's journey.

3. The poet supplies a valid reason (and a bit romantic also). He makes out such a good case for the out-of-the way excursion, that none can grudge it.

Thus there is no inherent improbability in the initial southward detour. There does not appear to be any reason sound or strong enough to reject or modify the conclusions, already arrived at, regarding the identification of the route in Meghadūta and the places thereon.

## V The Monsoons and their Direction : The Land-route

Now, let us consider the usual direction<sup>1</sup> of the monsoon breezes and clouds. According to meteorological science and observations, the route of the rain-bearing clouds ( for the past two thousand years at least ) can be indicated in brief as follows :—

At the advent of the rainy season, the monsoons entering the Indian sub-continent from the south-west do not cross the formidable Vindhya range at all. They first go right up to the Bay of Bengal, where they turn round the eastern-most end of the Vindhyas. Thus, changing their direction they begin their westward march, i. e. over the valley of the Mahanadi, the hilly tract of Chhota Nagpur and the plateau of Malwa. Thereafter they start their voyage towards north—ultimately reaching the Himalayas.



It may be seen that the march of the Indian Monsoon clouds and their direction suit Ramgadh tolerably well, but do not suit Ramtek at all. The rain-bearing clouds do not travel from the south to the north across the Vindhyas. Of course there is no means to ascertain now what meteorological knowledge the poet had and whether he fixed the cloud's route in Me. in accordance with the usual direction of the clouds. That possibility, however, cannot be ruled out altogether or dismissed summarily. The poet's connections with Malwa are well-known. We have shown in Ch. VII that Mahākosal probably was his

<sup>1</sup> Based on information supplied by the [Meteorological Department, Poona.

original home. Then again K is, more often than not, seen to describe the Vindhyan hills during rains. It appears probable that K had observed and knew how and in which direction the rain-bearing clouds appeared in the skies and travelled. If, therefore, we are to suppose that the poet fixed the route in Me, also because it fairly agreed with the natural, usual and well known course of the monsoon clouds, then it may be regarded as one more confirmation of the Ramgadh identification.

The above mentioned route more or less tallies with the one described by K. It is true that Meghadūta was not meant to be a scientific treatise on geography or meteorology. Yet it would certainly not be very wrong or fastidious to hold that a poet of Kālidāsa's calibre and reputation would not normally think of sending a monsoon cloud ( although in a poem ) along the Indian skies, in a manner strikingly at variance with the established direction of the rain-bearing clouds. It seems that Kālidāsa was aware of the fact that winds blow in a particular and fixed direction ( *pavana-padavīm* v. 8 ). It is to be pointed out here that the south-west monsoons which rush in across the lower western coast of India, cannot and do not proceed to the north across the Vindhyas. They are blocked by the formidable range. They enter Northern India only by a circuitous way as mentioned above. If this test were to be adopted, it is plain that any place ( like Ramtek ) to the south of the Vindhyas would be hit and could not be held as the R of Kālidāsa.

Thus, while roughly corresponding to the usual course of the monsoon-clouds, the route as delineated in Meghadūta, very probably represents, as already indicated, the land-route of those times. The Chhittisgad area is a hilly tract and the region around Ramgadh ( in modern Sarguja District ) is especially so. Even a glance at the modern maps will show that there is no direct road or a cart-track connecting Ramgadh with Amarkantak. To-day ( even under much more developed conditions ) if one has to go to Amarkantak from Ramgadh, one has to take the road coming towards the south-west and then back again to the north—much after the manner described in Me. From Amarkantak onwards there must have been a big road running along the northern bank of the Narmada from east to west joining Jabalpur ( the ancient Tewar ), Dasharna Coun-



try, Vidisha and Ujjayini, which were all flourishing and well known sites of those times.

## VI Evidence of Tradition and Archaeology

(A) Curiously enough, a tradition still lingers in this part of Chattisgad that it was here and with reference to Ramgad hill, that the poet composed his immortal Meghadūta.<sup>1</sup>

(B) The Ramagadh hill is a famous place which was undoubtedly known since very ancient times. The Jogimāra cave there has on its ceiling paintings, which according to the opinion of experts are supposed to be 4900 years old. There is a temple on the top supposed to contain images of Rāma, Laxman and Sītā. The peculiarity of the temple is that it is built by placing high rectangular boulders one upon another. No mortar is used. There are other images also including those of Rāvana, Bharat and Vishnu also. It is very significant that Ramagadh is called Citrakūṭa by the local people ( even to-day as I am informed by Prof. A. V. Pandya of Vallabha Vidyanagar, who visited the Ramgad hill only recently ) and the superstitious belief still persists that Rāma, Laxman and Sītā lived here during their banishment. Two large carvings appear on the outer hill of the 'cave of Laxman' which are supposed to be the foot-prints of the Great Rāma when he came here. A unique and amazing feature of the Ramgad hill may be mentioned here. There is a vast natural tunnel ( about 40 ft. in height and 500 ft. in length ) in the ridge of the mountain known as Hathphor or Hathiphor.

We quote the following from the *Central Provinces Gazetteers : Chhattisgad Feudatory States* pp. 230-6:—

The Ramgarh hill was visited by Mr. L. E. B. Cobden Ramsay, I. C. S. in 1905, and he gives the following description of its present appearance.

" The Ramgarh hill rises abruptly from the surrounding plains of Rampur tappa of the Sarguja State. It consists of a long steep ridge rising over a thousand feet from the plains.

1. This information was recently supplied to me by Dr. S. L. Belvalkar of Bhandarkar O. R. Institute, who learnt of this tradition when he was touring in those parts.

This ridge at the south-western extremity is capped by a sheer perpendicular mass of rock, rising more than a thousand feet above the main ridge. At the northern end of the lower ridge is the vast tunnel known as "HATHPHORE". Above the tunnel are two fair-sized caves hidden over by thick jungle. These are known respectively as "Sita Bengra" and "Lakshman Bengra". I managed to scale the rock and enter the former cave; the rock inside has been hollowed out into two fair-sized dwelling rooms. Connecting these two rooms is a kind of a hall with a stone platform....

Ascending the ridge a small level ledge of rock some fifty yards long by thirty yards wide is met with at the base of a lofty pinnacle of rock which rises sheer from the main ridge. At the southern extremity of this ledge a stream of crystal clear and icy water gushes forth from the rock, flowing over a board seam of coal. It is said that this stream is supplied from a huge cavern of water situated in the heart of the lofty mass of rock towering above. On this small ledge a Mela is annually held in Chait when pilgrims from all parts come to drink the water of this spring.

...This boulder is known as "Vashistha Gupha" where the spiritual adviser of Ramchandra is supposed to have lived. Worshippers wending their way to the temples on the summit are alleged to have been mystified by the supernatural utterances proceeding apparently from this solid rock.

On the summit of the hill there is a small temple more or less intact. The temple is not remarkable in any way for architectural beauty, but is remarkable for the enormous blocks of Mahadeo and Hanuman, with image of Ramchandra in the centre, of Lakshman on the right hand side of Ramchandra, and of Janaki, wife of Ramchandra on his left hand. There are images also of Bharat and Vishnu Bhagwan with four hands. The hill cannot be descended on the western side, but it is possible to make one's way some two hundred feet down to a small cave in the face of the rock. In the cave is found moist chalk, and the cave has, by the removal of this chalk by devotees to make the sacred mark on the forehead after worship of the temple above, been hollowed to a great distance, showing number of worshippers who have in times gone by resorted thither. Just



below the cave is a pool of transparent water which is said never to vary in depth.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be shown in the subsequent chapter, that there is good reason to believe that this Hathphor tunnel is noticed in Rāmāyan as Rkṣa-vila or the tunnel in the Rkṣa mountain and further that this very mountain with its tunnel is referred to by K in his Raghu (XIII-47) as the Citrakūṭa hill of Rāma. That proposition is discussed separately because we seek to prove the identity of the Ramagadh hill independently of it, although it may form an additional proof of the same, if accepted.

#### THEATRE ON RAMGADH ?

Besides these are two inscriptions in each of the two caves on Ramgadh in Pali characters dating back to about 2nd century B. C. Dr. Bloch, a distinguished scholar, contended that the larger cave must have served as a place for dramatic performances much after the style of the Greek theatre, which view excited much interest among the orientlists. Dr. Burgen however controverted this view in the Indian Antiquary, the following quotation<sup>2</sup> from which, will acquaint the reader with the nature of the controversy :-

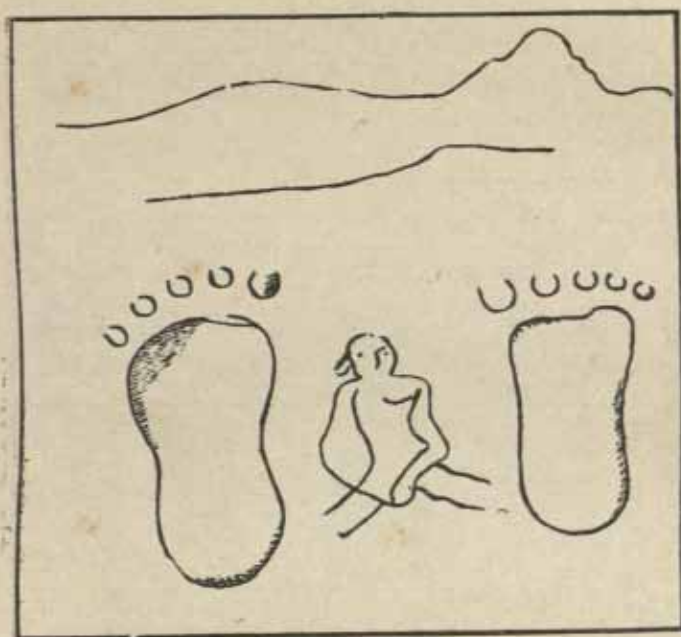
"Dr. Bloch of the Archaeological Survey had already visited these caves and in a letter of 30th April 1904, published in the Zeitschrift der deut. Morgenland, Bd. LVIII, S. 455, he reads the first line of the inscription in the larger cave as-Adipayamti hadaym sabnava-garukavayo, and explains it as-Adipayanti hridayam svabhāvagunkavayah: 'The poets, by nature, worthy of honour fire the heart.' From the inscription beginning thus, he infers that 'we may surely expect a panegyric on the poetic art, and when such a hymn is met with on the wall of an artificial rock excavation, it can there be applicable only because the place served for presenting poetical compositions before a larger public. And the arrangement of the cave,' he adds, 'is admirably adopted to this purpose. In a semicircle, rising above on one another in terrace form, a row of seats are hewn out,

1. The reader will find a similar account of the Ramgadh hill in the descriptions given by Beglar in A. S. I. Vol. XIII., Sir William Hunter in the Statistical Account of Bengal and Asit Haldar in Modern Review (October 1914).

2. The passage is quoted from 'Descriptive Lists of Inscriptions in the C. P. and Berar' by Rai Bahadur Hiralal, p. p. 171-3.



"Foot-prints" of Rāma, Ramgadh



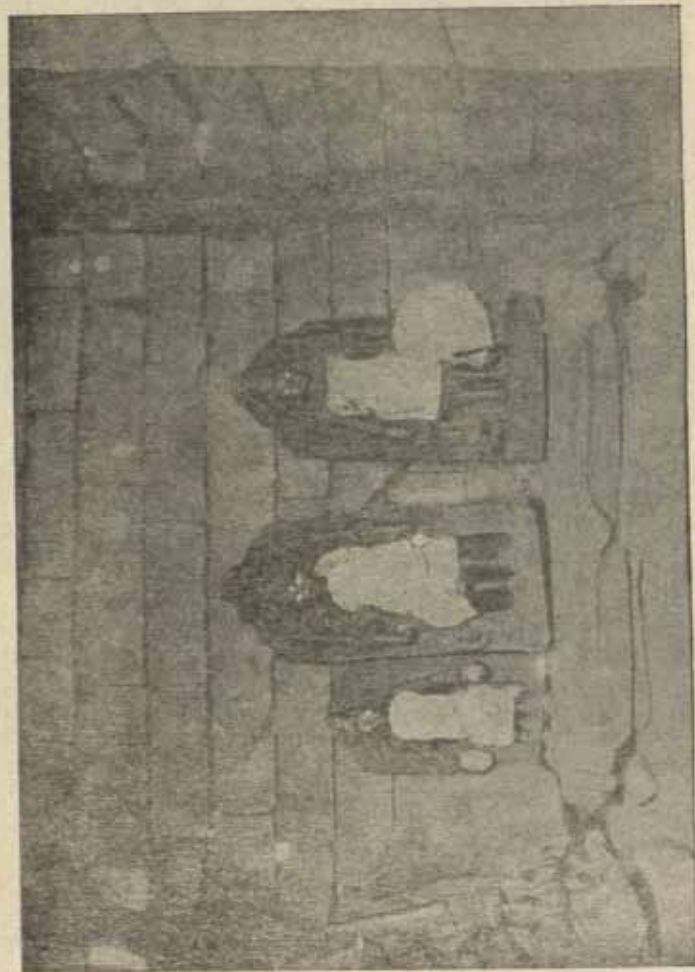
*"Raghupatipadaiah ankitam mekhalāsu"*

Ancient temple on the hill-top, Ramgadh



Inside are images of Rama, Sita, Hanuman etc.

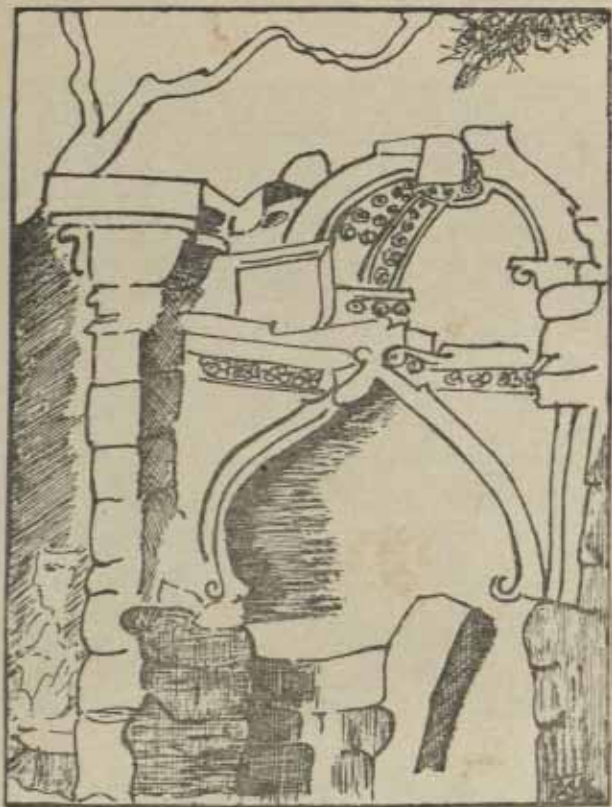
Images installed inside the temple

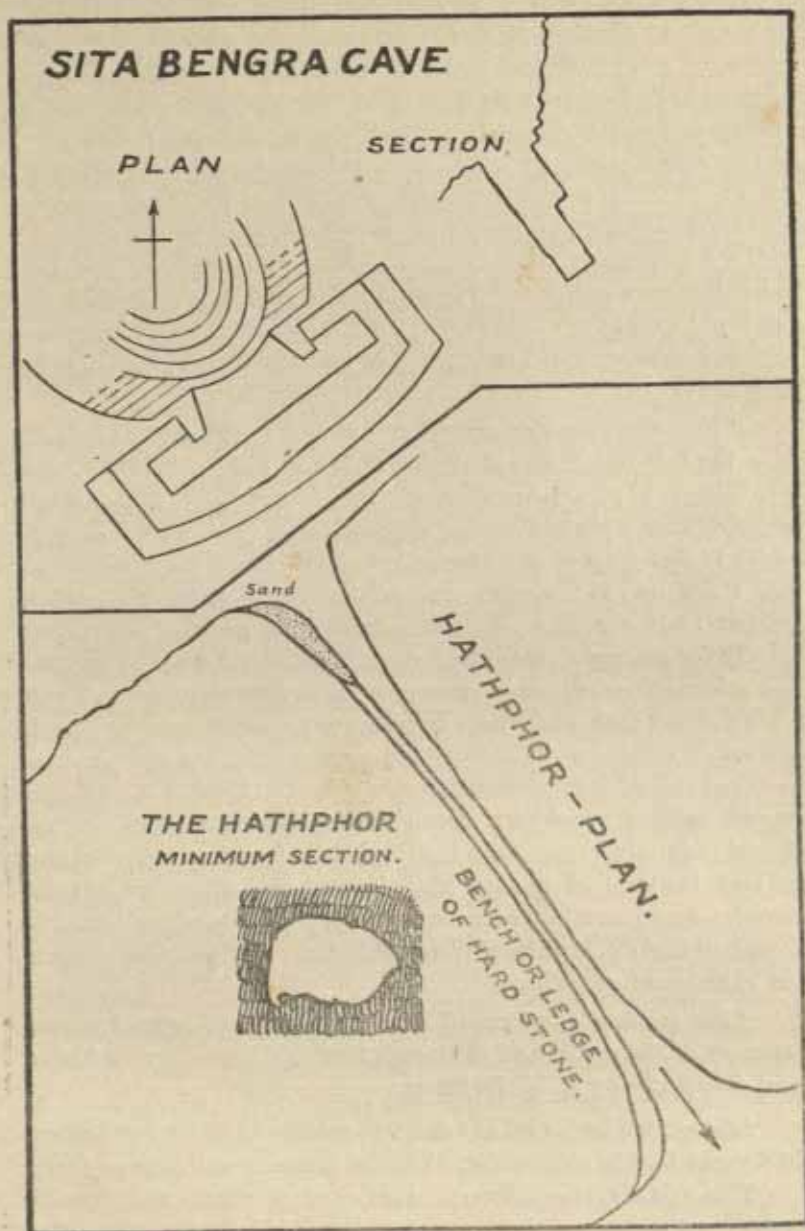


This photograph (from Chhattisgarh Gazetteer) purports to be of images of Sita, Rama and Lakshman (from left to right). But on closer examination, it appears that the central figure is that of Balarama, and the figure to the left is that of Revati. Image to the right, however, is a composite figure, undoubtedly representing Rama, Sita and Hanuman. ( See p. 162)



Carved entrance, Ramgadh





Sketch copied from A. S. I. Vol. XIII

which are again divided by radiating lines, quite in the style of the Greek theatre. From these seats a comfortable view was presented over a natural platform laid out below, which afforded room enough to erect a small stage. Naturally the amphitheatre is only in miniature : it might afford space for thirty spectators; but its arrangement on a classical model cannot be mistaken. Above the seats is a rectangular chamber with broad benches along the walls, where people evidently retired when the cold of winter nights made it unpleasant to remain in the open air. At the entrance, there are still deep holes in the floor, into which the posts were fitted that supported the curtain by which the cold was shut out, and inside there was room enough for festive nâch party."

"Now this seems a somewhat extensive deduction to draw from the first line of an inscription and the ascent to this cave. Mr. Beglar's plan (Arch. Sur. India Rep. Vol. XIII, pl.x) and Mr. Ball's sketch of the approach show the vaulted entry, about 14 feet deep opening to ten or twelve yards wide at the front, with stairs up at the sides and semi-circular steps or benches between: but the rock appears naturally to shelve away rather rapidly for placing a stage below; and inside the *raum genug für eine solenne 'nautch party'* is scarcely 5 feet between the wall and a bench 2 feet high, and would be cramped for any dancemovement. We surely require more satisfactory evidence before we conclude that this approach was constructed as a Greek theatre for dramatic representations even on a small scale. Had this been so, we should naturally expect that such would be found not only in this solitary instance in remote Sarguja, but the other and better exmples would certainly occur among the hundreds of rock excavations still fairly complete in Western India. Yet no trace of such has been found else where.

"But much of the force of the deduction must depend on the accuracy of the reading of the inscription, which in May 1904 was read differently by A. M. Boyer as:—

Adipayamti hadayam sa ( dha ) va garaka ( m ) vayo eti tayam  
dule vasamtiya hi savanubhute kundas tatam evam alamga ( ta ),

This would give a different sense, but the true reading will depend on the impression or photographs of the epigraphs. Mr. Boyer's transcription of the 'Jogimara' inscription runs:—



Sutanukā nama deva lasikyi  
 Tam kamayitha ba lu na seye  
 Devadine nama lupadakhe

And makes Davadi (n) na an 'artist of statues' and excellent among young people and a lover of 'Sutanuka the devadasi.'

"That some of the early caves may have been used for amusements is quite probable. In one of the Aurangabad Bauddha caves we have a nach represented in the very shrine (Arch. Sur. West. India, Vol. III, pl. liv, fig. 5), and it may readily have occurred to modern visitors that such caves as Nos. 3 and 15 at Nasik, the Uparkot Cave at Junagadh, and others at Kuda, Mahad, &c., with seats round three sides of them, might have been so arranged with a view to theatrical representations. But these were not in the open air, like Greek theatres.

"And here I may incidentally remark that it seems as if we sometimes forget that all the numerous Viharas (literally, 'pleasure-house') may not have been occupied by monks. There must have been convents for the nuns, possibly some of them rich in wall frescoes, such as we see the remains of at Ajanta in which nachnis and lenasobhikas are not excluded. Something might perhaps be learnt on this matter from the management and inmates of the monasteries and convents in Nepal and Tibet: Bauddha moral conduct is not necessarily of a high order."

#### INFERENCES

Let us now concentrate, from out of the material available, on what is pertinent to our present enquiry and to see how far it helps us in our identification of Ramgadh.

(1) The lofty hill known as Ramgadh to-day, whatever its former name was, is undoubtedly famous and known for the last 5000 years. What is more relevant, it is still traditionally associated with the residence of Rāma and Sītā during their exile. There are numerous stories and traditions current among the local people. Connecting the banished Prince of Ayodhya and his spouse with various spots and places on the hill. The carved 'foot-prints' supposed to be of the Great Rāma, whatever may be their exact date, seem to be fairly old and support the tradition. It at once reminds one of K's description of the hill वंद्यः पुरां रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं मेखलासु. Then, there is "on the table-

land a spring, which runs down a steep incline and forms the source of a river. Tradition has it that in the past age Sita, Rama and Laxman once bathed at this very spot during the period of their banishment. Hindu pilgrims regard this spring as even more sacred than the Ganges itself". (Halder- M. Review). This tradition about Sītā's bath recalls to our mind the well-known line in the opening verse of the Me जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु. There is a place called tilak-māti ( तिलकमाती ), where moist chalk is found in abundance, to which the devotees repairs to make the sacred mark on the forehead. It is believed that Rāma applied the *tilak* on the forehead of Sītā at this spot and hence it came to be called by its present name.

Further on 'tradition says, Sita used to reside in the cave known as Sita Bengra. The Reur river, which flows not very far off from the foot of the hill, is identified with the Mandakini.... and tradition further says that this ( Ramgadh ) is the Chitrakut hill rendered immortal by Rama's sojourn' (Beglar in A. S. I. XIII p. 42 ).

( 2 ) Now as to the temple on the top. It seems that the three images therein the standing posture were taken by the research scholars so far to be those of Rāma, Laxman and Sītā, probably because all the details were not discernible as the details were covered with clothing. But Prof. V. V. Mirashi, who has procured a photograph of the bare images, now contends that two of the images represent Balarāma and Revatī. Whatever that may be, the fact remains that the third image ( extreme right ) which is a composite one, undoubtedly contains the figures of Rāma and Sītā with Hanumāna at their feet. ( See the photo. ) The fact that a fair is held annually in the month of Caitra also suggests that the main or presiding deity is Rāma and not Balrāma

( 3 ) There is no other hill or mountain in the Chhattisgad area known by a name which resembles more closely the word Rāmagiri. गिरि is often changed for गढ़ in the process of corruption. That is how the former Rāmagiri has come to be known as Ramgadh. Another just similar instance of this process is found in Meghadūta itself. Devagiri referred to by K in v. 42 is the modern Devagadh in Malwa<sup>1</sup>. It is significant to note, ( as Prof.

<sup>1</sup> Similarly according to some, the word Chhattisgad is derived from Chedishagiri. In Maharashtra, Shiwaji's famous capital Raygad was formerly Rayari or Raygiri.



Pandya informs me ) that Ramgadh is still alternately called Rāmagiri also.

(4) It is interesting to observe that the surroundings of Ramgadh also are traditionally associated with the exploits of Rāma one way or the other and are thus full of the Rāma saga. To quote some instances: The area round about Ramgadh is called Rampur tappa. Look at the tell-tale names of the places roundabout-Rampur, Laxmanpur, Sitapur, Lakhandi hill ( because Laxman stayed there ), Ramchabutra ( the stone block on which Rāma used to sit ). Tradition says Vishrampur, the old name of Ambikapur till a few years ago, came in vogue because Rāma passed ten years of his exile there. The ancient temple of Shevri Narayan stands even today, about 90 miles to the south of Ramagadh, in the forest region of the Raipur District. It is said that Rāma met Shabari ( or Shevri ) here.

Thus there is a wide and long-standing tradition which indicates that Rāma's forest route lay through this part of the country which it may be pointed out is only consistent with the Panchavati at Bhadrachalam.

(5) If the cave on Ramgadh served as a place for exhibiting dramatic art, in that case Kālidāsa the dramatist had good reason to be connected with it. It may supply us with the reason why K should have known the place so well. But the theory of ' the Greek theatre on Ramgadh ' is highly conjectural. It may be considered how far it would have been desirable or even practicable to hold theatrical performances at a height of 3202 ft. in those days on a hill the stiff ascent of which did not allow of easy access. At the most it may have been possible only occasionally such as in the times of fair, when people in large numbers were expected to collect there.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

The two inscriptions ( 2nd century B. C. ) to be found on the hill, to say the least, suggest the following inferences :-

1. That the place was a well-known site in those days, which attracted the visitors to it for one reason or another and probably was inhabited by people staying there on account of either the temple there or monastery, or the religious performances not excluding the dances before the deity (such as by Devdāsīs). The love-



affair, recorded in one of the inscriptions between a sculptor and a dancing girl, indicates that the place served as a meeting place for the lovers as well. The panegyric on poetic art contained in the other inscription certainly suggests the probability of a sort of literary gathering held at least on occasions, when poets or singers amused the audiences by reciting choice-pieces from poetical compositions of all descriptions.

2. The place is undoubtedly a lovely spot endowed by Nature with rare scenic beauty. It was also 'safe' in the sense that it was a bit isolated being situated on a hill-top and thus naturally prevented from being crowded. It is no wonder therefore if it once served as a favourite haunt for lovers of poetry. The place was thus famous (also for its ancient paintings) at least in Northern India or in the Madhya Desh (in the middle country including Ujjayini).

3. It is only natural to expect that everybody in those days knew of it and much more so in the case of a person like Kālidāsa, who from his works appears to be a widely travelled and well-informed man of his times. K was an ardent lover of Nature. It looks scarcely probable for him not to have visited the place, which for many reasons was so well-known in his days.

#### JINASENA : THE JAIN TRADITION

Lastly, we have to draw attention of the reader to the oldest piece of evidence touching the Rāmagiri problem, which is to be found in the Pārshvābyudaya of Jinasena, the celebrated Jain author and preceptor of the Rāshtrakūṭa King Amoghavarsha. He flourished and composed his work "in the latter part of 8th century or before śaka 705 (= C. 783 A. D.)."

Here is his verse (No. 46 based on the important line in v. 12 of Me.)

भयश्चानुस्मर सिध्दियुपः कार्यसिद्धयै प्रयत्य  
प्रायेणेष्टा महति विधुरे देवताऽनुस्मृतिर्नः ।  
सिद्धिक्षेत्रं शरणमथवा गच्छ तं रामशैलं  
बन्धैः पुंसां रघुपतिपदैरङ्कितं मेखलानु ॥

The ancient Jain Commentary on the above verse runs thus :

सिद्धिक्षेत्रम् ध्येयस्थानम् । तं रामशैलम् ।

रामगिर्यपराभिधानं चित्रकूटम् । शरणं शरण्यम् ।

गच्छ याहि । संग्रामभीरुश्चेत् तत्पृष्ठगतो भव इत्यर्थः ।

Thus it appears that the Jain tradition since old times regards Rāmāgiri as only another name of Rāma's Citrakūṭa hill.<sup>1</sup> (Note the word सिद्धिक्षेत्रम्). J writing in the 8th century, in the above verse appears to allude to Rāmāgiri, as a real, geographical and historical place. It appears that J knew Rāmāgiri to be a holy hill of Hindus (a place for salvation etc.) and associated with Rāma's sojourn. In the above verse, J intends to suggest the superiority of the Jain deities as against Rāma, the popular God of the Hindus. J obviously appears to refer to a hill, which was widely known in his times as रामशैल or रामगिरि 'the holy hill of Rāma.'

We have already referred, in the foregoing pages, to another important point in J's work. He takes the direction of the cloud's journey from R to be first *southward* and then *north*.<sup>2</sup>

J's work is a very valuable testimonium, representing as it does the beliefs and positions, obtaining in as early as the 8th century. If we are to suppose that K belonged to the 5th century (Gupta Period), J comes very close to K, and therefore his evidence shall have to be regarded as of still greater importance.

The evidence of tradition, such as it is available, can, of course, by no means considered to be conclusive of the Ramgadh identification, although its absence might have weakened it, to some extent at least. The traditions, in so far as they are supported by archaeological evidence, definitely tend to establish the antiquity of the Ramgadh hill and the popular supposition about Rāma's association with it current for the last one thousand years at least, if not more. It further indicates the probability that the hill was taken to be the 'Hill of Rāma' (on account of his erstwhile residence there) even in the earlier times i. e. to say about the times in which our poet flourished—which fact must have made him refer to it as रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं and also by the phrase जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु.

1 Also see v. 4 in J's work and the commentary on the word रामगिरि.

2 See J's verse based on the line किञ्चित् पश्चात् etc. (Me. 16)

## CONCLUSION

We have seen how the available evidence, both internal and external, classified and arranged under the six heads, unmistakably points in the direction of Ramgadh as the only solution of the Rāmagiri problem. There is no other place, which can be shown to stand or satisfy the crucial tests like the description, the location, the direction of the cloud's journey, the geographical situation of the other known places etc. in Me, as discussed above. The conclusion is irresistible. If K had any particular hill in view as his starting point—and there is no reason to believe he had not—it was probably none other than the lofty Ramgadh hill in Madhya Pradesh, which has been shown to fit in so admirably and convincingly with his topographical scheme in Meghadūta. One can plot Rāmagiri, the starting point of the cloud's journey, on the poet's canvass, almost with a mathematical precision. Under the circumstances, there hardly remains any justification to maintain that it is mythical. Let us leave aside for the moment the many things stated by K about Rāmagiri in Me, all of which do tally<sup>1</sup> with Ramgadh. Hereunder we classify only the prominent, crucial, most important, distinguishing and peculiar features or characteristics mentioned by the poet :

- (1) Tall and imposing
- (2) Towering peak
- (3) On the Vanavāsa route of Rāma
- (4) Nearbut the river Revā or Narmada
- (5) To the east of Amarkantak (as shown above).

These are unmistakable clues. They represent a collection or sum-total of many unique or special features, which can hardly occur or recur a second time or in a second place. And we would not have found all of them present together, had the place been mythical. If the chance of any one of the attributes or characteristics of a 'mythical' place being actually found in a real geographical place is represented, say, by a fraction, the possibility of finding more or *all* of them present in a real place is very rare, being the product of these fractions, and any one with a sense of mathematical odds would see that it is practically nil. In other

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1. See table at the end, wherein we have listed important items of similarity between R and Ramgadh.



words, the collection found of the various characteristics, including the unique features and particularly the surrounding, topographical position is a sure pointer of the identity of a place in question.

Rāmagiri in the Meghadūta is as real and historical as the other geographical places, with which it is linked, like Māla, Amarkantak, Revā, Vidisha, Ujjayini and so on—except the last one Alakā. Similarly the phrase *udanmukha* on the most natural, scientific and correct interpretation of the phrase, as already made clear, cannot by any means be made to establish a northward journey of the cloud, and in fact, it never did so in the past ever since the celebrated poem saw the light of the day. This rectification of an erroneous interpretation, amongst other things, hits at the Ramtek theory which is no longer tenable, but which, as it now turns out to be, unduly held the field for the last one hundred and fifty years. The new evidence and perspective presented above will, it is hoped, clear the ground for rendering unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar, i. e. to say, for recognising the just claims of the Ramgadhi hill as regards its identity with the famous Rāmagiri of Kālidāsa.



## CHAPTER IV

### MYSTERY OF THE CITRAKŪṬA HILL

रामगिरिः अत्र चित्रकूटः<sup>1</sup>—Vallabha ( 10th century ).

रामगिरिः दण्डकान्तःप्रसिद्धः<sup>2</sup>—Sthiradeva ( 11th century ).

धारास्वनोद्गारिदरीमुखोऽसौ शृंगायलम्नाबुदवप्रपंकः

.....दृप्तः ककुच्चान् इव चित्रकूटः

—Raghu XIII. 47

The reason why a discussion about Citrakūṭa should claim our attention in the present enquiry is twofold. Vallabhadeva, the oldest critic of Me, regarded Rāmagiri as identical with Citrakūṭa. And so did many others including Mallinātha etc. Then again, significantly enough, Ramgadh in M. P. is known as Rāmagiri, as also by the name of Citrakūṭa, even to-day, in pursuance of an old tradition. Now Vallabha's commentary Panjikā ( 10th century ) on v. 1 goes on to say :

रामगिरिः अत्र चित्रकूटः । न तु ऋष्यमूकः तत्र सीतायाः वासामावात् ।

V appears to proceed on a very logical reasoning. In Rāmāyana, Rāma is described to have stayed only on two mountains—Citrakūṭa in the north and Ṛṣyamūk in the south. In view of Kālidāsa's allusion to जनकतनयास्तन, the latter is ruled out because Sītā could never be on Ṛṣyamūk by the side of Rāma as she was at that time in the custody of Rāvaṇa. The only alternative left therefore is Citrakūṭa—the only hill where Rāma and Sītā are expressly stated to have lived together. The argument certainly appears to be logical and convincing. But it presu-

1. Rāmagiri referred to here ( i. e. in Me ) is the Citrakūṭa hill.—V's comment on v. 1.

2. It is well-known that Rāmagiri is in the Dandaka forest.—St's comment on v. 1.

pposes that Kalidāsa chose his Rāmāgiri only out of the two hills specifically mentioned by Rāmāyana—which of course appears to be quite likely. But our difficulty does not end here.

## TWO DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

We have seen that the Rāmāgiri must now be identified with Ramgadh [in M. P. The present Citrakūṭa which we shall hereafter refer to as Kamtanath Citrakūṭa however, is at least 200 miles to the north of Ramgadh i. e. Rāmāgiri. Thus the identity of Rāmāgiri with Kamtanath Citrakūṭa represents an impossible position. The question remains, how and why was it so affirmed by almost all the ancient critics ?

We must here invite the attention of the reader to an important fact. It is interesting to find that the question of identification of K's Rāmāgiri was a fairly engaging topic even in ancient times and the identity of that hill with Ci appears to have been both affirmed and denied even in the times long before the 14th century. Pūrṇasarasvatī who wrote his renowned commentary Vidyullatā in the 14th century observes under v. 1 :

....विशेषणाम्यां 'पापहरत्वं मनोहरत्वं च युगपदेकत्र न संभवति; तदुभयमत्र समुदितम्; अतः अत्रैव वसामः' इति तस्य ( यक्षस्य ) बुद्धिरुत्पन्ना इति द्योत्यते । रामगिर्याश्रमेषु....रामेण चिरमध्युषितत्वात् तेनैव नाम्ना प्रसिद्धो गिरिः चित्रकूट इति केचित्, अन्यः कश्चित् इति अन्ये ।

The critic here probably refers to Vallabhadeva, who affirmed the identity and some others who subsequently advocated a different view. Thus there clearly appear to have existed two differing views on the point of identity since fairly old times. Why was it asserted by some and denied by others ? We have to suggest that the Citrakūṭa of the former was different from that of the latter and probably they are not talking about the same hill. The existence of two hills in different regions known as Citrakūṭa may have been responsible for this divergance of views. It is evident that Vallabha and in fact almost all other ancient critics were locating the Rāmāgiri somewhere in the Vindhyan region of Mahākosal, looking to the topographical scheme in Meghadūta as understood and expounded by them in their commentaries. Vallabhā equated it with Citrakūṭa because presumably he took the latter to be situated not in Bundelkhand but in Mahākosal or



Chhattisgad (i. e. in the Vindhya to the east of Amarkantak). We shall see presently how the present location of Citrakūta in Bundelkhand is questionable. But apart from that, there clearly appear to be two distinct traditions since ancient times about the location of Citrakūta. One is represented by the hill near the Kamtanatha in Bundelkhand in the north while the other by the Ramgadhi hill in M. P. in the south.<sup>1</sup> It appears that in course of time, two Citrakūta, just like two Panchavatis, arose, as a result of mistaken or confused notions. It appears that those critics of Meghadūta who took Citrakūta to be the hill in Bundelkhand demurred to Vallabha's proposition; while those like V who believed Ramgadhi in the south to be the Citrakūta of Rāma asserted that रामगिरिः अत्र चित्रकूटः ।

If there is any hill mentioned in the annals or literature about Rāma, which stands out more prominently than another, it is Mount Citrakūta in the Dandakārṇya forest. Kālidāsa refers to it in his Raghuvamśa and moreover gives a very graphic description of it (13-47). —We have to discuss the probable location of Ci for two reasons. If the identity of Rāmagiri (Ramgadhi) — with Citrakūta is established, as hinted at by Vallabha, it will undoubtedly form a very important and strong connecting link in the chain of prepositions, which we are seeking to establish. It is sure to furnish a strong and additional proof if more proof is needed at all for our identification of Ramgadhi, which has already been proved independently in the foregoing chapters. Secondly, apart from any other notions or traditions about the situation of the hill in question, we have to find out, if we can, where Kālidāsa placed it. We take the liberty to set out here, rather in advance, the conclusions which we are aiming at :

1. At one time Ramgadhi was popularly supposed to be the Citrakūta of the Rāmāyaṇa. Probably there were two traditions about it current since old times—one about the Kamtanath hill in Bundelkhand and the other about Ramgadhi.

2. In any case, Ramgadhi, apart from whether it was supposed to be Ci or not, was in ancient times definitely supposed to

1. Varāhamihira evidently appears to refer to the Citrakūta in the south (probably Ramgadhi) when he includes कर्णट-महादवी-चित्रकूट-नासिक्य-चोलगिरि-चोलाः in the Dakṣhināṅga i. e. the southern portion of Kurma Vibhaga.

be a hill associated with the residence of Rāma and Sītā during their exile. That is why it was known as 'Rāmagiri' the hill of Rāma. Presumably it had another name, in former times, viz. Citrakūṭa, because of the ancient paintings which it possessed in the Jogimara cave on its top (Citra=pictures, kūṭa=peak). As the name (Citrakūṭa) was identical, it may be, that it started being confused with the Kamtanath<sup>1</sup> Citrakūṭa and in course of time came to be regarded as the Citrakūṭa of Rāma which tradition curiously enough still lingers in those parts.

3. Ramgadh, whether it represents the Citrakūṭa of Rāmāyana or not, certainly appears to be the Citrakūṭa of Kālidāsa looking to its location and description given in Raghuvamsha.

The present hill near Kamtanath in Bundelkhand is traditionally supposed to be the Citrakūṭa of Rāma. Some modern Scholars<sup>2</sup> have confirmed this identification. Apart from tradition, however, it is extremely doubtful whether this hill can represent the Citrakūṭa of the Rāmāyana. It is not possible to quote or give here all the descriptive details about this hill contained in the Rāmāyana. The reader is, however, referred to a table prepared for the purpose which is appended at the end. It will suffice our purpose for the present if we single out and examine its prominent features and unmistakable characteristics, as stated in the epic. They are listed hereunder :

1. Very big, extensive, lofty, imposing, charming to look at, tall towering peak.
2. Profusely watered by springs, brooks, rivulets or rivers etc.
3. A Cave.<sup>3</sup>
4. A very thick and shady forest.
5. Full of all sorts of birds and animals.
6. Wet mineral paints.

In addition we may indicate here in brief how the hill is described in the ancient Bauddha and Jain records :—

1 Exact location 25 x 81, about 65 miles to the south-west of Prayag (Allahabad). Four miles from the railway station bearing the same name.

2 Pargiter J. R. A. S. (1894).

3 Citrakūṭa is called गृहगिरी (Ayodhya 103-49) See also Ayo 54-14 and Buaddha Jātakas.

It was a pleasant spot. . . . . It ( Chitrakut ) had a golden cave and a natural lake.

This beautiful mountain was the abode of many geese living in the golden cave which it contained, some of which were swift and some golden.<sup>1</sup>

Chittakud was a sacred hill, charming and beautiful to look at. Rāma and Laxman came at the foot of this hill in the Mālava country, the forest was so dense that it was difficult to find a human habitation there.<sup>2</sup>

Now, let us turn for comparison ( or rather for contrast ) to the present Citrakūṭa near Kamtanath in Bundelkhand. Just like Ramtek near Nagpur, it is a small, dwarfish, unassuming hill ( height not more than 500 ft. from the ground ). Flat-topped and without a peak. No springs or brooks etc. on the hill. No cave. Meagre probability of having birds or animals ( esp. like deer or elephants ) because there is no forest.

If we apply the other tests, the Kamtanath hill is found equally wanting. The Rāmāyaṇa gives its distance from Prayag as 20 miles, while the actual distance is 65 miles. Moreover the hill according to the epic appears to be in the forest which it confines within the two boundaries-Vindhya and Śaivala.<sup>3</sup> But actually the hill in question is to the north of the Vindhyas. The river Mandakini which is said to flow by its side is placed to the north. Now, the distance between Prayag and this hill is actually 65 miles.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly the hill is miles away to the north of the Vindhyas and could hardly be in the D forest of the epic. The river Payoṣṇi near it which is being identified with the Mandakini is rather to the West and not to the North, as required.

As for the route leading to Ci and its direction, they are no doubt described twice in the epic. But curiously enough in

1 Buaddha Jātakas 2-176, 3-208, 5-337, 2-107, 5-381, 4-212-423/4. They describe the Citrakūṭa cave as 'golden' probably because it was believed to be identical with 'golden' R̥ṣka-vil ( see next chapter ).

2 Jain Padma Purāṇa.

3 विष्णुशैवल्योर्मध्यं.

4 Pargiter has attempted to explain away this inconvenient distance. But his argument is hardly satisfactory.



both the places the description of the route is much too vague and confused and does not give to us a clear or convincing picture. This part in the epic especially appears to be involved and may have been retouched by subsequent editors.

The tradition connecting it with Rāma's sojourn, however, appears to be pretty old. The oldest reference to Citrakūṭa, which we have found in the epigraphical record is in the inscription<sup>1</sup> of Karnaḍeva (1042 A. D.). King Harsha (Chandella 9th century) is described therein as the sovereign of Citrakūṭa. As the dominions of the Chandella kings were in northern India, the Citrakūṭa of the inscription most probably represents the hill in Bundelkhand (unless of course it could be shown to be identical with some other hill, for instance the Ramgadh-Citrakūṭa in Mahākosal). Another old allusion is found in the Deoli<sup>2</sup>. Copper plate inscription, which refers to the Rāshtrakūṭa King Kṛṣṇa III (10th century) in the following terms :—

यस्य परपेक्षिताखिलदक्षिणदिग्बिजयमाकर्ण्य ।

गलिता गुर्जरहृदयात् कालंजर-चित्रकूटाशा ॥

Kālanjar and Citrakūṭa, thus conjointly mentioned in the inscription, clearly appear to refer to the two forts near Jumna in Bundelkhand (modern U. P.), which are known to history by their above-mentioned names. But we have to point out here, that both the epigraphical allusions regard this hill as of strategic or military importance rather than as a sacred place of worship or pilgrimage connected with Rāma. The hill, it is submitted, would not have been converted into a fighting fort or military station, had it been a holy place in those days—the hill of Rāma, visited by thousands of pilgrims. One is inclined to think that in ancient times Citrakūṭa, the fort and Citrakūṭa, the sacred hill of Rāma were two distinct places. It was only some time after, when the memories began to fade, that the confusion arose.

It may be that the place or the hill-fort was known as Citrakūṭa (not connected with Rāma at least till the 10th century) but in subsequent times it was taken for the Citrakūṭa of Rāma, first mistakenly and thereafter blindly and wishfully.

1 Benares Cooper-plate inscription of Karnaḍeva, the Kalchuri King of Tripuri (Chedi) dated 1042 A. D.—p. 29-30. Inscriptions of C. P. and Berar by Rai Bahadur Hira Lal.

2 Deoli Copper plate inscription vide Fleet.

## IS RAMGADH THE CITRAKŪṬA OF RĀMAYANA ?

Let us see now, how Ramgadh in M. P. fares in this connection. Beglar<sup>1</sup>, who personally visited the Ramgadh hill, suggested for the first time its identification with the Citrakūṭa hill in Rāmāyana. His emphasis, however was on the descriptions of that place as contained in Vālmiki's epic. In addition to that, we have to record our reasons here, as follows :—

(1) Ramgadh perfectly answers to the description, as pointed out by Beglar ( esp. towering peak, cave i. e. Hathiphor tunnel, springs etc. ). Beglar says in conclusion :

I cannot speak too highly of the natural beauties of the hill-tracts; the swift clear streams leaping in cascader and lying in still, deep pools, of every rich colour from bright emerald green to deep dark reddish-brown fringed by a vegetation so rich, so green and in such charming contrast to the dark, black and bright red lines of the weather-beaten rock and freshly exposed earth; the murmur of the streams; the songs of birds; the herds of deer; the more distant hills of a soft blue; and the nearer rocks rugged and tinted with bold dashes of red and yellow and black, make up a charming whole rarely surpassed. **The exquisite descriptions of the Ramayana are literally true**—all except the hermits, "coats of of dark" and their belongings.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Ramgadh is in the Vindhya range itself and thus is in the D forest of the epic. The Rehur river which is called Mandakini by the local inhabitants, is to the north. Distance from Prayag (about 200 miles) however does not tally with the *daśakrośa* (20 miles) of Rāmāyana. Is *daśakrośa* an innovation (the original *śatakrośa* ?) introduced subsequently to suit the newly arisen Citrakūṭa in Bundelkhand ?

(3) The old tradition is still current which regards Ramgadh as the Citrakūṭa of Rāma. Many places in its neighbourhood are named after Rāma and are associated with some incident or in the Rāma story; e. g. Cittalikhani, Ram-Chabutra, Rampur Laxmanpur, Sitapur, Vishrampur, Rampur tappa, Lakhandi hil, (because Laxman lived there) and so on.<sup>3</sup>

1 A. S. I. Vol. XIII.

2 Ibid p. 66.

3 Beglar: A. S. I. Vol. XIII.



Tradition has it that in the past age Sita, Ram and Lakshman once bathed at this very spot during the period of their banishment. Hindu pilgrims regard this spring as even more sacred than the Ganges itself.<sup>1</sup>

Tradition also says, Sita used to reside in the cave known as Sita Bengra. The Reur river, which flows not very far off from the foot of the hill, is indentified with the Mandakini. and tradition further says that this (Ramgadh) is the Chitrakuta Hill rendered immortal by Rama's sojourn.<sup>2</sup>

"One comes upon a number of large natural open caves. Here it is said Munis and Rishis used to reside—some say Rāma himself used to live here. . . . whether Rāma did or not, Rāma's name certainly resides in these caves with a vengeance, for the last occupant has completely filled every inch of available spot in and about the caves with the names of Rāma and Sītā in red and white earth!"—Beglar.

The reader may also look up accounts by Hunter, Haldar and Cobden Ramsey (Gazetteers), which inform us about some more traditions about Rāma, current there.

(4) Varāhamihira (see foot-note on p. 170) in the 6th century speaks of a Citrakūṭa in the south, which probably is identical with the Ramgadh hill. The term 'south' or the southern direction covered the Vindhya and regions beyond it. In any case this definitely shows that there was a Citrakūṭa in the south, if there was also one in the north.

(5) Bauddha Jātakas, as quoted above, mention this hill (चित्तकुड in Pali) as having a cave or a golden cave on it. Thus the existence of a cave seems to be the *sine qua non* of the hill. The Jātakas try to place the Chittakud in Himalayas but, as is well known, they exhibit a marked tendency of transferring places situated in the south to the northern and particularly the Himalayan region. The Jain Padmapuraṇa records that Rāma and Laxman came to the Citrakūṭa which was in the Mālava country. (This Mālava may have some thing to do with Kālidāsa's Māla in

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.



Me). In the time of Vātsyāyana<sup>1</sup>, Mālava meant eastern Malwa and may have extended up to Chhattisgad.

(6) A reference has already been made to the most ancient paintings (4000 years old) in the Jogimara cave of the Ramagdh hill. It is natural that these old paintings should have been considered by the people in those days as a unique and amazing feature of the hill. This fact probably was responsible for suggesting its name Citrakūṭa which literally means the 'peak possessing the paintings.' We can easily imagine how people must have subsequently confounded it with the Citrakūṭa of Rāma, and thus the tradition may have started, if it did not already exist before. It may also be noted that the hills in this part of the Vindhya (roughly the eastern portion of the range) had acquired names ending in Kūṭa. Amarakantak was called Trikūṭācala<sup>2</sup>, along with its other names Rkṣa and Mekal. Other instances are given by Rai Bahadur Hira Lal of Katni as Salakūṭa and Madhukūṭa. He also says that there is a peak called Amrakūṭa in the Amarakantak range (See Ch III).

(7) The Rkṣa range represents the eastern part of the Vindhya<sup>3</sup>. It is significant that the river Citrakūṭa is said to rise in the Rkṣa mountain<sup>4</sup>. So also the river Mandakani (near the Ci hill) is described as a Rkṣa river<sup>5</sup>. Does it not indicate that Ci was supposed to be a part of the Rkṣa and indirectly that of the eastern Vindhya? Now, the modern Amarakantak, which gives rise to the Narmada obviously cannot be the Citrakūṭa. The Ramagdh hill alone in the eastern Vindhya with its tradition, remains to be identified with Citrakūṭa.

Thus the only hurdle in the way of Ramagdh appears to be the discrepancy about distance. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions it to be 20 miles from Ci to Prayag. It is already pointed out that the Kamtanath hill (65 miles from Prayag) is also not free from this difficulty. On the whole, it can be easily seen that the Ramagdh-Citrakūṭa has better claims in the matter than the Kamtanath-Citrakūṭa hill in Bundalkhand. It is possible, however,

1 उज्जयिनीदेशमावस्तु एव अपरमालव्यः । मालव्य इति पूर्वमालवभावः ।

2 Trikūṭācala literally means a mountain having three peaks.

3 See Ch. V.

4 Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.

5 B. C. Law : Rivers of India.

that as in the case of Panchavati,..two independant traditions arose as regards Ci also, one of which regarded Ramgadh in M. P. as the renowned Citrakūṭa of Rāma, while another held the Kamtanath hill in reverence for the same reason.

### KĀLIDĀSA'S CITRAKŪṬA

The more pertinent question, however, that faces us is as to which hill represents Kālidāsa's Citrakūṭa. For, that would throw considerable light and help us in determining whether Kālidāsa's Rāmagiri was in fact the hill which he took to be the Citrakūṭa of Rāma.

(1) Kālidāsa describes the hill in question only in one place, but he gives us a graphic description, which is extremely important for our enquiry.

धारास्वनोद्गारिदरीमुखोऽसौ शृंगाग्रललांबुदवप्रपंकः

बध्नाति मे बंधुरगात्रि चक्षुः दृप्तः ककुच्चान् इव चित्रकूटः<sup>1</sup>

Raghu XIII. 47.

The amazing similarity between the Citrakūṭa as presented by K in this verse and Ramgadh is quite apparant and needs no comment. Particularly the resounding cave throwing out water through its mouth and the towering peak ( शृंगाग्र ) represent very peculiar characteristics, which seem to be almost decisive in the matter. The poet in this verse likens the peaked mountain with its tunnel or the open-mouthed cave to a yawning mouth of a wild bull. It is interesting to recall here how Halder in 1914 on seeing the Ramgadh hill with its Hathiphor tunnel at the top ( without knowing Kālidāsa's simile ) was reminded of a similar phenomenon.

“The tunnel was so wide and dark that it might be likened to the open mouth of a gigantic dragon ready to devour its pray. There, right away in a corner, the water from a spring was constantly dripping on a stone. The gentle dripping sound of the spring resounded between

1 English translation from Nandargikar's edition : O thou of un-even limbs, yonder the mount Chitrakuta with its mouth of caves resounding with the sound of rivulets, and having the clouds resting on its peaks and hence appearing like a wild bull whose cave-like ( yawning ) mouth emits a thundering sound ( bellowing ) with mud sticking to the points of its horns on account of वप्रक्कीडा ( i. e. playfully butting against a rock or mound ), rivets my eyes.



the caves and hill-sides and produced a loud roaring sound.<sup>1</sup>

The picturesque description by Kālidāsa certainly suggests that the poet must have himself witnessed the scene. In any case it is undeniable that Kālidāsa is not referring here to the dwarfish, flat-topped and cave-less hill near Kamtanath in Bundelkhand.<sup>2</sup>

(2) In Ch. 12 of Raghuvamśa, Rāma is mentioned to have entered the D forest before he comes across the Citrakūta-forest and the Citrakūta hill (verses 9, 15 and 24). Thus Kālidāsa's Citrakūta was undoubtedly in Dandakāranya, which as we have seen, could not be to the south of Vindhya. (विन्ध्यक्षेत्रयोर्मध्ये).

(3) The poet in his Raghuvamśa has described the places in Rāma's journey from Ayodhya to Lankā and then back again.<sup>3</sup> If we were to take K's Citrakūta for the hill in Bundelkhand, it means that the poet has not referred to the Vindhyas at all in both the places, which seems rather queer. We have shown elsewhere (particularly in Ch. VIII) that among the hills, the Vindhya mountain was a first favourite with Kālidāsa along with its neighbouring regions on the north (Chhattisgad, Amarkantak etc.)

We have also shown therein how the poet is fond of referring time and again to his beloved Vindhya and hardly loses an opportunity to bring it into the picture. Under the circumstances, it seems rather unnatural and even impossible for him to miss or omit his favourite Vindhya on both occasions referred to above.

Revā or Narmada also is a favourite river with the poet, which he frequently mentions and describes. But its non-mention

1 Asit Haldar, Modern Review 1914, p. 379. Also see the description by Hunter, Beglar and the Gazetteers.

2 For more details, the reader is referred to Beglar's account in A. S. I. XIII. Cunningham subsequently has attempted to refute Beglar's arguments. He suggests that a certain river named Gupta-Godavari flows at a distance of nine miles from the Kamtanath hill and Kalidasa's allusion may be taken as referring to this stream. The argument however is obviously unconvincing offers a poor apology.

3 Raghu Ch. XII and XIII.



in Raghu Chapter XII and XIII, can be easily explained as natural because Rāma's route lay to the east of that river. But different is the case with the Vindhyas, which Rāma must cross before coming into the south or while going back to Ayodhya. Now, the only hill which K notices in between Prayaga and Panchavati (Bhandrachalam) is the Citrakūṭa hill. If therefore we locate Kālidāsa's imposing Citrakūṭa hill in the Vindhya range (of course its eastern part i. e. Ramgadh) which we can reasonably do from other considerations as well,—it may easily explain the otherwise inexplicable omission of that favourite and formidable mountain-range.

Thus the Citrakūṭa of Kālidāsa, like that of Rāmāyaṇa, appears to be identical with Ramgadh in Madhya Pradesh. If this proposition is accepted, it may solve the mystery and supply the reason why the poet in his Meghadūta called it रामगिरि, रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं and जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदक. It may also explain why Vallabha in the 10th century observed रामगिरिः अत्र चित्रकूटः and why Sthiradeva, an equally old commentator also remarked : रामगिरिस्तु दण्डकान्तःप्रसिद्धः ।



## CHAPTER V.

### RKṢA-VIL : ONE MORE POINTER

We shall now proceed to reinforce our conclusion about the identity of Ramgadh with the Rāmāgiri, by yet another proof, indirect but interesting. For the sake of brevity and precision, as also because the present subject-matter is to be marshalled here only as a side-proof, we may set out the proof and conclusions concisely and in a mathematical form.

Rkṣa, Rkṣavat or Rkṣavān, one of the Kulaparvatas or one of the chief mountain-systems, has been identified with the mountains of Gondvana.<sup>1</sup> It formed the eastern portion of the Vindhya range. Strictly speaking the eastern projection of the Pāriyātra, from where Dhasan, the eastern feeder of the Betwa, takes its rise, constituted the Vindhya range.<sup>2</sup> In the northern part of this double mountain range are situated the Pāriyātra in the west and Vindhya proper in the east, while the entire southern part is the Rkṣa which is separated from the Pāriyātra by the valley of the Narmada and from the Vindhya proper by that of the same. To-day we call this whole chain formed by these three mountains by the name of the Vindhya range. In ancient geography of India the stream of Vainarani was supposed to flow in the mountains of Rkṣa which fact may imply that the hills of Mayurabhanj and Kendujhar were considered to be the parts of the Rkṣavān. It ran uninterruptedly towards the east from the northern end of the Sahyadri, and then to the north of its eastern end lay the Vindhya proper and Pāriyātra.<sup>3</sup> Now, a place named as Rkṣa-vil<sup>4</sup> (रक्ष-विल) in the

1 N. L. Dey: The Geo. Dic.

2 Jayachandra Vidyānāth: *Bharatabhūmi aur uske Nicasi*, p. 63

3 Ibid.

4 Rkṣa is a mountain of that name in the Vindhya-range. Vil means an aperture, opening, outlet, a cave, hollow (Apte's dictionary).

Vindhya range is mentioned and described in Rāmāyaṇa.<sup>1</sup> The word itself means a tunnel in the Rikṣa mountain just as Krauñca-vil<sup>2</sup> or Krauñca-randhra means an aperture or tunnel in the mountain bearing that name. Hanumāna, the monkey-chief, is described to have visited that place during his search for Sītā,

The description<sup>3</sup> of the Rkṣa-vil, shorn of its poetical exaggerations and embellishments is reduced to this:—It was a big and extensived tunnel in the Rkṣa-mountain; Amazing; Covered or surrounded by big trees and creepers which were with water; Some source of water inside; birds (Krauñca, Sārasa, Cakravāk etc.) were coming out of it with their bodies wet. It was dark i. e. there was no light inside.

One noticeable peculiarity is that all sorts of trees, flowers, lotuses, creepers and birds which were there or in its neighbourhood are described to be 'of gold' i. e. of golden or bright yellow colour.<sup>4</sup>

Now, let us see where the Rkṣa-vil can be located. We are concerning ourselves with this question because the Rkṣa-vil is to be shown as identical with the Hathiphor tunnel on Ramgadh.

Mount Rkṣa is also called Rkṣavāt or Rkṣavān<sup>5</sup>.

Rkṣa obviously represented the eastern part of the Vindhyas.<sup>6</sup>

The Rkṣa-vil as its name indicates was ofcourse in the Rkṣa Mountain.

1 Chapters 50 onwards of Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍ.

2 Rāmāyaṇa itself notices Krauñca-vil in Ki. 43-25; so also does Me in V. 57

3 Ibid Ch. 51-52.

4 It can be readily seen how all this description tallies with that of the Hathiphor tunnel on Ramgadh. The reader may advisedly compare the two. A Comparative table noting the prominent details is also given in the Appendix. We have already shown that Ramgadh can well be identified with Ci. In this chapter it will be seen that the Rkṣa-vil of Rāmāyaṇa is also identical with the Hathiphor tunnel. The all 'golden' description of the Rkṣa-vil cave in Rāmāyaṇa may explain why the Jātakas often mention a 'golden cave' on Ci and also that many geese were living in it.

5 ऋक्षवन्तं गिरिश्रेष्ठं अध्यास्ते नर्मदां पिबन्—Rāmāyaṇa.

वप्रक्रियां ऋक्षवतस्तटेपु—Raghu 5.44

6 Rkṣa is described in Shānti Parva as the mountain lying between the two rivers Shon and Mahanadi, which clearly means Amarkantak and hills to the east. Dr. Nandalal Dey says that the name Rkṣa was given just to the Vindhyan hills in Gondvana.



Numerous references like विध्ये, विध्यकानने, विध्ये पर्वतसतमे etc. in Ch. 49, 52 etc. (किष्किषा)

विध्यकाननसंकीर्णा विचेरुक्षिणां दिशम्

विध्यमेवादितः कृत्वा विचेरुश्च समंततः ॥

Now, one thing must be made clear. Hanumāna and others who came to search for Sītā in this part from Kiṣkindhā, were directed by Sugriva to go to the south. The Vindhya is not however to the south of Kiṣkindhā, but to the north. This led Pargiter to suggest that there were two Vindhya mountains and the Vindhya referred to here must be in the extreme south i. e. another Vindhya somewhere in modern Mysore. There is however not an *iota* of evidence for the strange proposition. No body has ever heard about two Vindhyas. Moreover the places and countries mentioned by Sugriva as lying in different directions, are mentioned not with reference to Kiṣkindhā, but with reference to Āryāvarta i. e. the country between Himalayas and Vindhya. A mere glance at lists of the places lying in four directions (Ch. 40 to 43) would make this point absolutely clear. Especially if we look at the list of the 'Southern' countries, there will be hardly any room for doubt. This is how it begins

सहस्रशिरसं विध्यं नानाद्रुमलतायुतं

नर्मदां च नदीं रम्यां महोरगनिषेविताम्

ततो गोदावरीं रम्यां कुण्डवेणीं महानदीं

मेखलानुत्कलांश्चैव दशार्णनगराण्यपि

आन्नदन्तीं अवन्तीं च सर्वमेवानुपश्यत

विदर्भां ऋष्टिकांश्चैव रम्यान् माहिषकानपि

There can not be any doubt that the Vindhya intended here is the same old renowned mountain near Narmada. The Tilak commentary on Rāmāyaṇa rightly points out—

हिमवद्विध्यमध्यवत्यांर्यावतपिक्षया प्राच्यादिविभागः अत्र विवक्षितः इति आहुः । .....अत्रापि आर्यावतपिक्षया दक्षिणत्वमाह ।

The Rkṣa-vil was situated in the Vindhyas. The Rkṣa-vil was in the Dandakāranya forest.<sup>1</sup> Sampāti was staying in the Vindhyas<sup>2</sup> and just close to the Rkṣa-vil. Mahendra mountain,

1 Rāmāyaṇa Ki. 57, 16.

2 Ibid. Ch. 58, 60, 63.

bordering on the eastern shore was just beyond (to the west of) Sampāti's abode in the Vindhyas<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, it is abundantly clear that the Rkṣa-vil i. e. the Rkṣa mountain, the Vindhya (i. e. its eastern portion), the Dandakāraṇya forest and the Mahendra mountain, according to Rāmāyaṇa, were all in the same region i. e. to say near about the eastern part of the Vindhyan range.

In other words, we get the following equations, each one independently, but which go to prove one another :

Rkṣa-vil = In Rkṣa, in Vindhya in D forest,  
near Mahendra mountain.

Rkṣa = In the eastern part.

D forest = In the eastern part.

Mahendra = In the eastern part.

∴ Rkṣa-vil = In the eastern part of the Vindhya.

Now, it is obvious that Rkṣa-vil must be somewhere to the east of Amarkantak (because A is known as the source of the Narmada, Shon and Mahanadi and besides it has no cave or tunnel).

The Rkṣa-vil must now be located in the Vindhyas between Amarkantak to the west and Mahendra to the east.

Ramgadh is exactly so situated.

Besides, there is no such big natural tunnel (बिल) like Hathiphore to be found elsewhere in this part (or in fact in the whole of the Vindhya range).

∴ Hathiphore tunnel = Rkṣa-vil.

i. e. Ramgadh hill = part of Rkṣa

i. e. part of Eastern Vindhyas.

Now, there is reason to believe that K noticed in his Megha-dūta the Hathiphore tunnel and its spring on Ramgadh (i. e. the Rkṣa-vil)<sup>2</sup>. Some peculiar words or expressions like स्निग्धच्छायातट

1 Ibid. Ch. 64 to 67.

2 The reference is ofcourse brief and casual, as nothing more was required for the purposes of his poem. Besides, he had already an occasion to describe it elsewhere. (Raghu 13.47; धारास्वनोद्गारि etc.)

and सरसनिचुल स्थान betray or give out an impression that the poet is making a veiled reference to the beautiful 'wet' spot i. e. the Hathiphore tunnel on Ramgadh.

It may be that the word 'Nicula' is used here in the special sense of tunnel. Its usual meaning (a kind of tree) hardly suits the context. This can be easily seen from how the critics, both modern and ancient are at pains in interpreting the word. Some of them have suggested arbitrary and even fanciful explanations. Why of all the things should the poet refer to Nicula trees, at a time when the cloud was asked to take its leave of the Rāmagiri mountain! And also why were the Niculas wet (सरस) just as the छायातरुs were wet (स्निग्ध)? We have to suggest that the poet refers here to the Rkṣa-vil or the Hathiphore tunnel on Ramgadh<sup>1</sup>.

Ramgadh in Madhya Pradesh is undoubtedly an old hill known since very ancient times, considering the 4900 years old paintings and the 2nd centnry (B. C.) inscriptions in Brahmi script. It is only natural to expect that it had many and different names during its long career. We have to suggest that the following names were in vogue to denote the hill, at one time or another, in the different stages or periods of history—some of them being used either simultaneously or one after another. In the misty past some of them may have become faint or obscure yielding place to others in course of time—remaining only to be mentioned oddly and rarely to the great confusion of the modern critic :

Vindhya → Vindhya pāda → Rkṣa (=Prasravaṇa ? )<sup>2</sup> →

1 For some additional grounds regarding this point, the reader is referred to Ch. VI.

2 This Prasravaṇa must not be confused with the Prasravaṇa or Malyavana in Kiṣkindhā near Pampā. The nun Swayamprabhā in Rkṣa vil probably gives us the name of that hill (Prasravaṇa) in the following verse :  
एष विध्यो गिरिः...एष प्रस्रवणः शैलः सागरोज्यं महोदधिः

The word is thus explained in the Amarkośa commentary : पानीयं निपत्य बहुलीभवति तस्य स्थानस्य । प्रस्रवति अस्मिन् इति प्रस्रवणम् ।

Now look at the following verse in Rāmāyaṇa describing Citrakūṣa (Ayo 94. 13). जलप्रपातैः उन्मदेदैः निष्पदैश्च क्वचित् क्वचित् । स्रवन्दिः भात्ययं शैलः स्रवन्मद दध द्विपः ।

Thus प्रस्रवण probably was another descriptive name, appropriately used to denote the चित्रकूट hill, having the ऋक्ष-विल spring watering its sides.



Citrakūṭa<sup>1</sup> → Guhāgiri<sup>2</sup> → Rāmagiri → Ramgadh<sup>3</sup>

Using the mathematical terminology again, we have proved independently in Ch. III the following equation—

$$\text{Ramgadh} = \text{Rāmagiri}$$

In Ch. IV, we have seen how both of them can be equated with Citrakūṭa, and in the present chapter also with the Rkṣavil mountain. Thus we have sought to establish :

$$\text{Ramgadh-Hathiphor} = \text{Rkṣa-vil.}$$

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Ramgadh-Hathiphor} \\ \text{and also Rkṣa-vil} \end{array} \right\} = \text{Citrakūṭa-cave.}$$

$$\therefore \text{Ramgadh tunnel} = \text{Rkṣa-vil} = \text{Citrakūṭa-cave.}$$

i. e. Hathiphor.

$$\text{Now Rāmagiri} = \text{Rkṣa} + \text{vil} (\text{स्निग्ध, सरसिचुलस्थान etc}).$$

$$\text{Then again, Rāmagiri} = \text{Citrakūṭa} (\text{As shown in Ch. IV})$$

$\therefore$  Rkṣa, Citrakūṭa, Ramgadh and Rāmagiri are so many different names used for the same place, which means that—

$$\text{Ramgadh} = \text{Rāmagiri.}$$

Whatever the method, answer is the same. Thus two independent methods confirm the results, while the results in their own turn, confirms the correctness and efficacy of the method.

Two questions may arise : Why did not Rāmāyana describe Citrakūṭa as the Rkṣa-vil hill or vice versa ? Why did not K mention Citrakūṭa or Rkṣa or even Vindhya instead of or in addition to Rāmagiri ? The epic stands evidently edited from time to time. Moreover, different names appear to be used in different contexts. The ancient places must have had various names. It is also possible that while Rkṣa-vil represented the peak with the Hathiphor tunnel, Citrakūṭa was the name of another (adjacent) peak in the Ramgadh hills. It looks more probable

1 रामकूट, the word used by Jināsena in his पार्श्वाम्बुदय (based on Me), as a synonym for K's रामगिरि.

2 Ayo, 103.49 गुहागिरीणां च दिशश्च संततं etc. Also see Ayo.—94.14 where Rāma describes the cave on Ci. गुहासमीरणो गंधान्... .. कं नरं न प्रहर्षयेत् ।

3 Curiously enough Ramgadh is still called and known both as Rāmagiri and Ci, (Prof. A. V. Pandya of Vallabha Vidyanagar, who visited Ramgadh has kindly supplied to me this information recently).

that Rāma and Sītā had their hut or hermitage built at the foot of the Citrakūṭa hill, as seen from the following verse :

तस्य शैलस्य पादे तु विविक्ते सलिलावृते ।  
आश्रमं चक्रनुदचार भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥

—Ayo. 60.19. Rāmāyaṇa edition published by Dayanand series.

This is corroborated by the fact that Laxman had to climb up a tall Sala tree in order to observe certain things at a distance ( Ayo 110-8, Rama. N. S. Edi. ).

Kālidāsa may not have made a specific mention of either Citrakūṭa or Rkṣa in his Me for the simple reason that it was not called for. His hero now was a certain anonymous Yakṣa. The name Rāmagiri which was much more suggestive, and appropriate ( than any other like Citrakūṭa etc. ) was just enough for his purpose.



## CHAPTER VI

### RĀMA EPISODE AND THE YAKṢA STORY

इह खलु कविः सीतां प्रति हनुमता हारितं संदेशं हृदयेन  
समुद्रहन् तस्थानीयनायकनायिकाद्युत्पादनेन संदेशं करोति ।

—Dakṣiṇāvarta Nāth ( 13th century ).

Why of all the places was a hill associated with Rāma selected by the poet for the residence of his cursed Yakṣa ? Why was it referred to by him as Rāmagiri ? And why was Sītā ( Janakatanayā ) brought in the picture ? Moreover why was the hill selected from the Vindhyan region i. e. the Dandakārṇya ? Where from are brought the hermitages ( आश्रमेषु ), in which the Yakṣa lived ? How is it that the curse-period of separation is conceived as exactly one year, and neither more nor less ? And why should the scene open exactly at a point of time, when 8 moths out of 12 had elapsed and 4 more were yet to go ? Besides why are the remaining 4 months chosen, so as to correspond to the months of the rainy season ? In other words, what led the poet to choose for his theme the lamentation of the longing and lovelorn Yakṣa exactly at the beginning of the rainy season and why was the expected union timed to take place in the autumn, the Sharat season ? Although the above queries appear to represent so many different problems, their solution however is one and the same ! And it is not far to seek if we turn to Vālmiki's Rāma epic, which it is submitted, served the poet as the source and mainspring of his composition. Kālidāsa singled out the episode of Rāma-in-separation and transformed it into his Yakṣa story, ofcourse with great subtlety and ingenuity. Kālidāsa's 'imaginary' Yakṣa is Vālmiki's languishing Rāma in disguise.

Nothing can be interesting and even instructive, than to trace the source of inspiration of a work like Kālidāsa's Meghadūta. Various attempts have been made to get at the source which may



have suggested the central idea of sending a message<sup>1</sup>. But it is generally maintained that "whatever may have been the source of Kālidāsa's inspiration, there can be no doubt that the treatment is his own."<sup>2</sup> It appears however almost certain, that the embassy of Hanumān in Rāmāyaṇa suggested to Kālidāsa the motif of his poem. But the debt of Kālidāsa does not end here. A considerable number of parallel passages are to be found in Meghadūta<sup>3</sup>, which clearly shows that Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa was before him. We have to suggest here that the theme and story of Rāma, such as is included in two Kāndas, Kiṣkindhā and Sundara, constituted the main source and basis for the poet's Meghadūta. Kālidāsa has drawn substantially on Vālmīki's work (in any case much more than is generally supposed) and he is indebted to the Rāmāyaṇa not only for the central idea or the poetical device (viz. of sending a friendly cloud as a messenger), but for the skeleton of the story as well—ofcourse in so far as Meghadūta has a story. The choice of a semi-divine hero is also a significant pointer. The main characters, the emotional background as well as the physical environment, and the many incidents along with the details appear distinctly to have been taken over from the great epic. The ancients knew or atleast scented it, and from the old commentaries we can gather that a tradition was current since old times that Kālidāsa based his Meghadūta on the Rāmāyaṇa<sup>4</sup>. Dakṣiṇāvarta Nāth (13th century) explicitly says:—

1 "The idea of sending a message may have been suggested by the embassy of Hanumant in the Rāmāyaṇa or of the swan in the story of Nala in the Mahābhārata..... A distant parallel is also found in the Kāmavilap Jātaka (No. 297), where a crow is sent as a messenger by a man in danger to his wife." Introduction to Sahitya Academy's edition by Dr. S. K. De, p. XXX. Yet others are inclined to think that the poem is based on a similar situation in poet's life.

2 Ibid. P. XXXI.

3 The present writer has found such passages (parallel or identical) in the case of at least more than 80 verses of Me. out of the total of 111. As such instances cannot be quoted in extenso in a work of this kind, they must be left over to be dealt with separately.

4 Cf. also the commentaries of Sthiradeva, Mallinātha and many others. Pūrṇa-Saraswatī thus refers to his predecessors, who held this view:—

कवेः यक्षवृत्तान्ते सीताराघववृत्तान्तसमाधिः अस्ति इति केचित् ।

—Pūrṇa-saraswatī.

सीतां प्रति रामस्य हनुमत्संदेशं मनसि निधाय मेघसंदेशं कविः कृतवान् इति आहुः ।—Mallinātha.

इह खलु कविः सीतां प्रति हनूमता हारितं संदेशं हृदयेन  
समुद्ब्रूहन् तस्थानीयनायकनायिकाद्युत्पादनेन संदेशं करोति ।

“ Dwelling and drawing indeed upon the incident in the Rāmāyana viz. the embassy of Hanumān to Sītā, the poet has composed his Meghadūta — actually modelling his characters ( lit. hero, heroine etc. ) after those in the epic. ”

We can readily recognise Rāma, Sītā and Hanumān in the Yakṣa, his beloved and the cloud respectively. Look at the picture of Vālmiki's Rāma-in-separation

अनाथो हृतराज्योऽहं . . दीनो दूरगृहः कामी  
अहं तु हृतदारश्च राज्यात् च महतश्च्युतः  
शोकश्च मम विस्तीर्णो वर्षाश्च भृशदुर्गमाः  
कथं सा रमते बाला पश्यन्ती मामपश्यती  
एवमादि नरथेष्ठः विललाप नृपालमजः  
आसीनः पर्वतस्याग्रे . . . जगाम मनसा प्रियाम्  
रामः कामशोकाभिपीडितः . . . .  
दृष्ट्वा कालमतीतं च मुमोह परमातुरः  
स तु संज्ञामुपागम्य मुहूर्तान्मितिमाधूपः  
मनस्थामपि वैदेहीं चितयामास राघवः  
शोकरक्तेक्षणः श्रीमान् उन्मत्त इव लक्ष्यते  
इत्येवं विलपन् रामः परिधाबन् वनाद्वनं  
क्वचिदुद्भ्रमते योगात् क्वचिद्विभ्रमते बलात्  
क्वचिन्मत्त इवाभाति कान्तान्वेषणतत्परः  
काननानि च वेगेन भ्रमत्यपरिसंस्थितः

The verses quoted are from Aranya Ch. 59 onwards and Kiṣkindhā Ch. 28 and onwards. The reader however should turn to the original. The perusal of the pertinent portions from Rāmāyana alone can give a correct and full idea as to how the grief, the mood of separation, and the demented condition of the hero have been almost transplanted by Kālidāsa for his purposes. Now here is Sītā in the Aśokavanikā of Rāvana )

मलिनसंवीता, दुःखसंतप्ता, परिक्षीणा, तपस्विनी, अश्रुपूर्णमुखी, तन्वी,  
कुशांगी, दुःखपरायणा, शोकव्यानपरा, पूर्णचंद्रानना, निःश्वसन्ती पुनःपुनः,  
अनिदिता, अनलंकृता, etc.

—Sundara Kanda Ch. 15, 19 etc.



Hanumân is described as :—

विद्युद्गणविभूषित, वायूसूनुः पवनात्मयोनि, चारुनानाविधरूपधारी,  
कामरूप, महामेघसंकाशः, etc. —Sundara, Ch. I

It may be noted in particular that Hanumân flying over the ocean to Lankâ has been repeatedly compared with a big cloud ( at least half a dozen times, Sundara Kânda Ch. 1) which must have suggested to the subtle mind of the poet the poetical device of his prospective cloud-messenger.

Then again, many of the situations in Kâlidâsa's Meghadûta as compared with Râmâyana are identical. We propose to point out here instances of close parallelism, which tend to show that even the treatment of Kâlidâsa is not all his own at least to the extent to which it is generally taken to be. Hereunder are listed some of the important situations in the Râmâyana, which appear to have served the poet as the original for his similar situations in Meghadûta. The resemblance is too close to resist inference of Kâlidâsa's indebtedness to the Âdyakavi—the ' first poet ' of the world.

### PARALLEL SITUATIONS

1. The sorrowful conversation between Râma and Laxman on the banks of the lake Pampâ ( near Rîṣyamuk ); Râma is reminded of the far-away Sîtâ at seeing the trees, streams, animals and birds etc. ( Ch. 1 Kiṣkindhâ )

Râma is overcome with grief for Sîtâ. Then Râma goes over to stay on the Prasravapa hill. The description of the peak Mâlyavân. Râma's helpless and pitiable mental condition due to the separation from his beloved Sîtâ. Laxman cajoles him and entreats him to take courage and somehow pass 4 months and await the Sharat season. —Ibid Ch. 27

It is particularly significant to note that this entreaty to wait for 4 months of the rainy season ( चत्वारो वादिका मासाः ) and await the Śarat season ( शरत्कालं प्रतीक्षस्व ) is found repeated, not less than eleven times.

The graphic description of the rainy season ( just begun ). Râma is kept reminded continuously of Sîtâ. His anxiety and eagerness about the reunion.



Groups of बलाका are jumping towards the clouds; the चक्रवाक् birds start for and are on their way to Mānasa lake (Me only replaces these birds by Swans in v. 11). —Ibid Ch. 28.

Again the pathetic lamentation of Rāma. —Ibid Ch. 30.

2. The journey of Rāma-dūta Hanumāna through the skies to communicate the message of Rāma to Sītā. Description of the way and the flying Hanumān. He is often likened to cloud (big, roaring, attended with lightening etc.).

The city of Lankā appears to Hanumān as the city of Kubera, i. e. Alakā. —Sundara Ch. 1.

3. The description of gay and affluent city of Lankā; the lofty and colourful palaces; the description of sports, music, etc. —Ibid Ch. 2-11.

4. The pen-picture of lonely and miserable Sītā in Aśoka-vana. —Ibid Ch. 15 and onwards.

5. The embassy of Hanumān. He conveys Rāma's message to Sītā. The words of the message and even the manner of conveying it are worth noting. They are strikingly similar in both the works under notice. —Ibid Ch. 32 and onwards.

6. The stay of Rāma and Sītā on the Citrakūṭa hill. The description of its surrounding thick forest, the scenic beauty and its lofty peak. Baths of Sītā in the neighbouring river Mandakini. —Ayodhyā Ch. 52 onwards and also 94 etc.

7. Description of the Rkṣa-vil tunnel in the Vindhya mountain. The trees near this cave are wet (स्निग्ध). Birds (like हंस, सारस and चक्रवाक्) are coming out of the tunnel. —Ki. Ch. 50-51.

The student of Meghadūta, who reads these parts from Rāmāyana in [the original, cannot but be struck by the extraordinary resemblance they hold to the very similar situations found in Meghadūta. One is driven to the conclusion that Kālidāsa has cleverly and ingenuously pieced them together altering them where necessary according to his requirements, in order to produce his enchanting and now different looking Yakṣa story.

Thus from the comparison of the two works, we can derive the following equations :—

Rāma	=	Yakṣa.
Sītā	=	Yakṣa's wife.
Flying Hanumān.	=	The flying cloud.
Rāma sends a reassuring message.	=	Yakṣa sends a reassuring message.
The anger of Kaikeyī on Rāma.	=	The anger of Kubera on Yakṣa.
Rāma's residence in forest.	=	Yakṣa's residence in forest.
Rāma's separation from Sītā.	=	Yakṣa's separation from his wife.
Period of separation <sup>1</sup> (approximately) one year.	=	Period of separation one year.
The need to pass somehow the four months of the rainy season.	=	The need to pass somehow the four months of the rainy season.
Mental condition of the hero at the advent of the rainy season.	=	Mental condition of the hero at the advent of the rainy season.
Prasravana hill.	=	Rāmagiri hill.
Journey of Rāmadūta Hanumān through the sky.	=	Journey of the cloud-messenger through the sky.
The city of Lankā.	=	The city of Alakā.
Condition of Sītā (Physical and mental).	=	Condition of Yakṣa's wife (Physical and mental).
Lamentation, excitement and impatience of Rāma at the start of rainy season.	=	Lamentation, excitement and impatience of Yakṣa at the start of rainy season.
Love, longing and loyalty of the spouses.	=	Love, longing and loyalty of the spouses.
Content of Rāma's message.	=	Content of Yakṣa's message.
The manner of conveying the message.	=	The manner of conveying the message.
Rāma gives a token ring to Hanumāna.	=	Yakṣa relates an incident for the same purpose.
Hope of re-union in Śarat	=	Hope of re-union in Śarat.

Rāmadūta → Meghadūta.

1. The vanavāsa lasted for 14 years. Sītā was abducted in the 13th year.

Thus, we can now imagine why K kept his hero—the Yakṣa—anonymous, and similarly why he did not give a name to Yakṣa's wife at the other end. One would naturally expect Y to give out her name to the cloud during his emotional outburst or message, which is thoughtfully constructed, carefully worded and minutely detailed. It is equally significant that Kālidāsa does not supply the reason for the curse. The poet could have easily invented and inserted one had he intended to do so. But, he does nothing of the kind. Why? The reason is the same: Y was, as it were, as good as Rāma in disguise.

Y is modelled after the famous historical hero-in-seperation of the Epic—ofcourse with suitable changes, which the job required. Thanks to the skill and subtlety of the poet, the whole literary fete or the artistic transformation was so cleverly executed, that we have now to 'discover' it. The fact, however, is so patent that on close scrutiny and thinking it becomes almost transparently clear to us even today, and presumably must have been all the more so in the past, when the poem was first composed and published. The theme and sources of the Meghadūta could not have been much of a mystery to the reader in the good old times. It is not without some purpose and plan that Y is presented to us without a name. For one thing, there was no need to give one. As Shakespeare says: What is in a name? The hero of the Meghadūta would be just the same, if he were to be called X instead of Y. The stronger reason, however, must have been that there was hardly any propriety in giving a name at all or some other name to the hero, whom the contemporary reader would at once recognise as the proto-type of the great Rāma.

### SOME TELL-TALE EXPRESSIONS

#### 1 स्निग्ध ( v. 1 ).

The fact that Kālidāsa borrows certain words and expressions as also some of the ideas from Rāmāyaṇa can easily be established. We have to submit that the word *snigdha*, occurring in the very first verse is an instance in point. The pertinent couplet runs thus—

यक्षश्चक्रे जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु  
स्निग्धच्छायातल्पे वसति रामगिर्यश्रमेषु



स्निग्ध here is usually taken to mean 'thick'. One of its meanings is 'shining'. Both of them, however, hardly suit the context. In the former sense if taken along with छायातर, the word is obviously tautologous. Moreover, Kālidāsa does not appear to use this adjective (स्निग्ध) for trees elsewhere. I was wondering as to how and why the poet should have used this word at all and as to where did he bring it from. I opened Rāmāyana and looked up the description of the Rkṣa-vil, ( which place we have identified with the Rāmāgiri ) and to my great amazement and joy actually found it there ( Ch. 50 of Kiśkindhā ), used in the sense of 'wet'. The party of Hanumān and others in search of Sītā were wandering through the Vindyan region, when they came up to the Rkṣa mountain and saw a big tunnel. They had gone thirsty and to their surprise they found that the birds ( Swans, Krauñcas, Śarasas etc. ) which were coming out of the tunnel had their bodies wet.

The trees at the mouth of the said tunnel ( Rkṣa-vil ) were also wet. Hanumāna at once guessed from this that there must be a lake or some source of water inside.

क्षुत्पिपासापरीतास्तु श्रान्तास्तु सलिलायिनः  
 वयं सर्वे परिश्रान्ता न च पश्याम मैथिलीम् ।  
 अस्माच्चापि बिलात् हंसाः कौचाश्च सह सारसैः  
 जलाद्रीः चक्रवाकाश्च निष्पतन्ति स्म सर्वशः  
 नूनं सलिलवान् अत्र कूपो वा यदि वा हृदः  
 तथा चेज्मे बिलद्वारे स्निग्धास्तिष्ठन्ति पादपाः  
 इत्युक्तास्तद्विलं सर्वे विविशुस्तिमिरावृतम्

Ki. Ch. 50.14-17.

The trees near the tunnel were स्निग्ध ( wet ) because of their contact with water from it. we have already shown in the last chapter, how the present Ramgadh hill with its Hathiphor tunnel, spring and shady trees is identifiable with the site of Rkṣa-vil in Rāmāyana<sup>1</sup>. Besides, the poet must have himself witnessed the whole scene at the Ramgadh hill. Has not Kālidāsa taken the word स्निग्ध from the description of the Rkṣa vil and used it in the same sence ( wet ), with reference to the same place ? The

1 Kālidāsa ofcourse was well acquainted with Valmiki's Rāmāyana. The following verses ( Rāghu. 12.59 ) in particular, appear to show that he knew the search for Sītā by monkeys and the Rkṣa-vil incident in the epic :

small word, if accepted to have been borrowed from Rāmāyaṇa, as stated above, is capable of throwing light on many things.

इतस्तत्तश्च वैदेहीं अन्वेष्टुं भर्तृचोदिताः ।  
 कपयश्चेहः आर्तस्य रामस्येव मनोरथाः ॥  
 प्रवृत्तावुपलब्धायां तस्याः संपातिदर्शनात् ।  
 मारुतिः सागरं तीर्णः संसारमिव निर्ममः ॥

## 2. स्थानात् अस्मात् सरसनिचुलात् (v. 14).

The line containing the above expression is as follows:—

स्थानात् अस्मात् सरसनिचुलात् उत्पतोदङ्मुखः खम् ।

It is remarkable to see that after स्निग्धच्छायातरु (wet shady trees) the poet again refers to सरस निचुल or wet canes<sup>1</sup> on the Rāmagiri hill. Why should the canes on the hill be wet? And where is the propriety in calling them so? Moreover judging from the wording, the poet appears to give here the picture of the hill as is always to be found there. He means to say that "this place is such that the cane trees on it are ever wet". The description also betrays the poet's familiarity and association with the place, which he must have visited before. The word सरस (wet) as applied to निचुल trees (canes) cannot be explained satisfactorily except on one hypothesis: Kālidāsa is describing here the Ramgadhi hill with its spring or a rivulet flowing from inside the Hathiphor tunnel (to be identified with the Rkṣa-vil). He must have personally come and seen the beauty-spot with his own eyes where he must have actually found the cane trees becoming wet by the waters of the spring. In this Kālidāsa appears to take for granted, that his readers also knew that this place was सरसनिचुल i. e. to say, it had cane-trees on it which were watered by the spring flowing on its top.

## 3. प्रथमदिवसे (v. 2).

We have seen already that Kālidāsa's Yakṣa saw the cloud on the last day (प्रथम) of Āṣāḍha and not on the first (प्रथम)<sup>2</sup>.

1 We are taking here (निचुल) in the sense in which it is usually accepted viz. a kind of tree. But in the last chapter, we have shown that K has used the word निचुल in the expression सरसनिचुलस्थान in a special sense i. e. to denote the Rkṣa-vil or the Hathiphor tunnel on Ramgadhi.

2 See Ch. I and also Ch. IX for fuller discussion of this topic.

We have also seen that the poet has conjured his Yakṣa out of Rāma, who was in a similar mental condition on the Prasravaṇa hill, and be it noted, at the beginning of the rainy season i. e. to say, at the end of Āṣāḍha. That particular season is described in Rāmāyaṇa thus :

पूर्वोऽयं वायिको मासः श्रावणः सलिलागमः Ki. 26 14.  
निद्रा शनैः केशवमभ्युपैति—Ki. 28 25.

The verses evidently refer to the advent of Śrāvaṇa (ofcourse पूर्णिमान्त i. e. ending with full moon ) i. e. to say about 4 days after the एकादशी or eleventh day in Āṣāḍha, when God Viṣṇu is supposed to retire for his four months' long sleep. As Kalidāsa has borrowed from Rāmāyaṇa its hero-in-separation, his grief and love-lorn condition, his stay on a hill and the rainy season, so also has he taken over the identical period and in fact the exact point of time for his story in Me viz. the end of Āṣāḍha.

#### 4. आश्रमेषु (v. 1).

Why is Y described as staying in many Āśramas instead of one ? M has certainly offered an ingenious explanation :

तत्रापि उन्मादावस्था । अत एव एकत्र अनवस्थानं  
सूचितं आश्रमेषु इति बहुवचनेन ।

But this explanation is more imaginary than true. We have to suggest that in referring to the Āśramas round about Rāmagiri, K had in mind the Āśramas or 'आश्रममण्डल' of Sūtikṣṇa and other sages which Rāma visited and stayed in along with Sītā in the D forest. We think that for his रामगिर्याश्रमेषु, K had the following picture and verses of Vālmīki before him :

रामस्तु सहितो भ्रात्रा सीतया च परंतपः  
सुतीक्ष्णस्याश्रमपदं जगाम सह तैर्द्विजैः ।  
स गत्वा दूरमध्वानं नदीस्तीर्त्वा बहूदकाः  
ददर्श विमलं शैलं महामेरुमिवोन्नतम् ।  
एतस्मिन्नाश्रमे वासं चिरं तु न समर्पये  
तमेवमुवत्सोपरमं रामः संघ्यामुपागतम् ।  
त्वरामहे वयं द्रष्टुं कृस्तमाश्रममण्डलम्  
ऋषीणां पुण्यशीलानां दण्डकारण्यवासिनाम् ।  
अरिष्टं गच्छ पन्थानं राम सौमित्रिणा सह  
सीतया चानया सार्धं छायेयवानुवृत्तया ।



पद्मश्रमपदं रम्यं दण्डकारण्यवासिनाम्  
 एषां तपस्विनां वीर तपसा भावितात्मनाम् ।  
 सुप्राज्यफलमूलानि पुष्पितानि वनानि च  
 प्रशस्तमृगयूथानि शान्तपक्षिगणानि च ।  
 फुल्लपङ्कजस्रण्डानि प्रसन्नसलिलानि च  
 कारण्डविकीर्णानि तटाकानि सरांसि च ।  
 द्रक्ष्यसे दृष्टिरम्याणि गिरिप्रस्त्रवणानि च  
 रमणीयान्परण्यानि मयूराभित्तानि च ।  
 गम्यतां वः स सौमित्रे भवानपि च गच्छतु  
 आगन्तव्यं च ते दृष्ट्वा पुनरेवाश्रमं प्रति ।  
 इत्येवमुक्त्वा वचनं महात्मा सीतां प्रियां मैथिलराजपुत्रीम्  
 रामो धनुष्मान्सह लक्ष्मणेन जगाम रम्याणि तपोवनानि ।  
 तौ पश्यमानौ विविधाञ्छैलप्रस्थान्वनानि च  
 नदीश्च विविधा रम्या जग्मतुः सह सीतया  
 प्रविश्य सह वैदेह्या लक्ष्मणेन च राघवः  
 तदा तस्मिन्स काकुत्स्थः श्रीमत्याश्रममण्डले ।  
 उपित्वा च सुत्रं तत्र पूज्यमानो महर्षिभिः  
 जगाम चाश्रमांस्तेषां पर्यायेण तपस्विनाम् ।  
 येषामुपितवान्पूर्वं सकाशे स महास्त्रवित्  
 क्वचित्परिदशान्मासानेकसंवत्सरं क्वचित् ।  
 क्वचिच्च चतुरो मासान्पञ्च पट् च परान्क्वचित्  
 अपरत्राधिकान्मासानव्यर्धमविकं क्वचित् ।  
 श्रीन्मासानष्टमासांश्च राघवो न्यवसत्सुखम्  
 तत्र संवसतस्तस्य मुनीनामाश्रमेषु वै ।  
 रमतश्चानुक्लयेन ययुः संवत्सरा दश  
 परिसृत्य च धर्मज्ञो राघवः सह सीतया ।  
 सुतीक्ष्णस्याश्रमपदं पुनरेवाजगाम ह  
 स तमाश्रममागम्य मुनिभिः परिपूजितः ।

—Aranya Kand Ch. 7. 1, 2, 22. Ch. 8. 6, 11 to 16. Ch. 10. 22.  
Ch. 11. 2, 22 to 28.

Are not these the same hospitable आश्रम of sages which K has referred to in Raghu, while describing Rāma's journey from Oitrakūṭa to Panchavati ? Here is K's verse :

प्रयागावातिथेयेषु वसन् ऋषिकुलेषु सः  
 दक्षिणां दिशं ऋक्षेषु वापिकेध्विव भास्करः —Raghu 12 25

The following extracts from the ancient commentaries explaining रामगिर्याश्रमेऽऽ are worth quoting again, in this connection :

Mg.—रामगिरिः तत्रस्थाश्रमवनेषु चित्रकूटपर्वततपोवनेषु ।

P —रामगिर्याश्रमेऽऽ . . . रामभक्तमन्त्रेषु शून्येषु तापसनिवासस्थानेषु ।

C —रामेण दशरथिना उपलक्षितः गिरिः चित्रकूटः

पर्वतः तस्य आश्रमाः मुनिगृहाः ।

L —रामगिरिं दंडकारण्यं तस्य आश्रमाः रामगिर्याश्रमाः तेषु ।

Whatever may be the actual source which suggested to the poet the central idea in his poem, it appears certain that Rāmāyana has provided him with all the material and even the details which he cleverly transplanted or transformed to suit the needs of his own projected work. The old tradition, asserting the fact, can not be dismissed too lightly. If the Yakṣa is x-rayed deeply and deligently with the help of the (re) search light, we can discover Rāma inside. Probably Vālmiki's tragic and moving picture of Rāma-in-separation, drawn with characteristic simplicity and effect, produced a deep and profound impression on Kālidāsa, as it would, on any person of aesthetic and sensitive and poetic temperament. It must have touched him to the quick. The brave and noble hero of the Rāmāyana was reduced, by reverses of fate, to a miserable condition. The Crown Prince was brusquely asked to repair to the forest region. It was a bolt from the blue. The great Rāma, crestfallen, banished to the forest, separated from his beloved, was a pitiable sight—running wildly and embracing trees and creepers in his momentary madness ( उन्माद ), like any ordinary human being. The advent of the rainy season on the lonely hill proved, as it were, the last straw and turned the longing lover almost into a lunatic. Kālidāsa probably saw in all this a good motif for a short lyrical poem, substituted an anonymous Yakṣa for the hero of the epic and accomplished his object by adding his own touches and inserting the description of his native land and thereby left a work behind him, to be handed down from generation to generation not only as a remarkable love-poem but as an amazingly unique literary piece, never to be forgotten by an appreciative and grateful posterity.





The composite image 'of Rāma, Sītā and Hanumān in the 'Rāma-temple' on the hilltop, Ramgadh. ( See p. 162. For a group-photo of all the three images inside, including this one, see p. 157. ) Photo obtained from The Central Museum, Nagpur.



## CHAPTER VII

### KĀLIDĀSA HAILS FROM MAHĀKOSAL

तस्य तदेव हि मधुरं यस्य मनो यत्र संलग्नम्<sup>1</sup> ।

The reader shall have seen by now that the fixation of Ram-gadh in M. P. as the Rāmagiri of Kālidāsa ( Ch. III ) stands further confirmed and strengthened by its location in the Vindhya and in the D forest i. e. to say on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma, as also by its probable identity with the Citrakūṭa or Ṛkṣa hill of the Rāmāyaṇa. We have already shown that even the text-passages in Me. itself presuppose, and in fact expressly suggest, that Rāmagiri was to the east of Amarkantak and Narmada i. e. in the Chhattisgad region. Now, after the identification of Ram-gadh, the whole picture becomes different. Not only must we now correct the mistaken notions about the topographical position or background in K's poem, but it is also necessary to change the old perspective or ideas about K and his Meghadūta viz. that his topography is more or less imaginary or invented or has been introduced for verisimilitude. But what is still more important, the newly discovered positions above, suggest and even force certain new conclusions upon us, as regards the date and particularly the provenance of our poet. We shall deal with the latter question in the present Chapter.

#### WHY KĀLIDĀSA SELECTED RAMGADH

We have seen how the Ramgadh hill must now be identified with the Rāmagiri. The question, however, remains as to why

<sup>1</sup> An old Sanskrit saying ( Subhāṣita-ratna-Bhāṇḍāgāra, 4th edn. p. 10). Also compare तत्तस्य किमपि द्रव्यं यो हि यस्य प्रिया जनः in Uttara-Rāma-Carita. The idea expressed is this : That object becomes charming to a person on which his heart is set; in other words, it is the affinity, association or attachment that makes a thing sweet or endearing. The subjective element is emphasised here.

Kālidāsa should have selected that particular hill in Madhya Pradesh as the spatial starting point for his Meghadūta. We shall make an endeavour here to notice, in brief, the reasons which must have led the poet to do so.

1. Ramgadh probably was popularly regarded in K's times as the Citrakūṭa of Rāma. In the alternative, whether Ci or not, it was certainly known as 'the hill of Rāma — associated with Rāma and Sītā. It represented the historical site, (described in Rāmāyaṇa) which in the past had on it hermitages of sages like Sutrīkṣṇa, Śarabhaṅga etc. The hill stood in the region, which was regarded as a part of the ancient Dandkāraṇya forest. Thus the Ramgadh hill lay on what was taken to be in those times the Vanavāsa route of Rāma.

According to Dr. Bloch, the cave on the top served as a theatre, used for dramatic performances. One of the two inscriptions there, suggests that it was a rendezvous for lovers. But the other lithic record on the hill leaves little doubt that the spot then served as a meeting place for a sort of jolly gathering of poets or atleast as a place, where poetic compositions were publicly recited in times of fair etc. In that case, there was good reason for Kālidāsa to be associated with the place.

2. Secondly, the Ramgadh hill is a very ancient and well-known place since old times (approximately 4900 years). It stood distinguished owing to the combination of many peculiar characteristics: tradition about Rāma's residence, D forest, and penance-groves of sages; natural caves which are known to day as Laxman bengra, Sita bengra, Jogimara and so on; a towering peak; the amazing tunnel (now known-as Hathiphor) and the spring flowing through it with a reverberating sound; the ancient paintings still existing in the Jogimara caves, dating back to about five thousand years according to the opinion of the experts; the two stone inscriptions in Brahmi script belonging to 2nd and 3rd century B. C.

3. Ramgadh is a spot of amazing scenic beauty (See the descriptions, already quoted, of Haldar, Beglar, Hunter etc.)

4. For reasons stated above in 1 and 2, we can say with reasonable certainty that the Ramgadh hill was situated on the

land-route<sup>1</sup> or the trade-route<sup>2</sup> in those times, especially considering the ancient inscriptions, caves and still older paintings to be found there. Now, we have seen that K for reaching Amarkantak (Āmrakūṭa) mentions the route via. south i. e. through Malda (Māla) near Ratanpur. There can be hardly any doubt that Kālidāsa knew too well the region around Ujjayini, Vidisha and even Amarkantak. He was particularly familiar with the Vindhyan region, right from Mahākosal upto Daśapur (Mandosar), which part of the country he appears to describe from personal knowledge. It is rightly said of him, that he must have spent an appreciable period of his life in Ujjayini or Malwa. Under the circumstances, it is only natural to expect that Kālidāsa, a widely travelled person, must have visited the Ramgadh hill, which was then known as Citrakūṭa or at least the hill of Rāma and which stood only about 75 miles to the east of Amarkantak. The chief reason for his visit may be that it was the sacred hill of Rāma.<sup>3</sup> At the end of Ch. V, we have already recorded our reasons indicating his personal and intimate knowledge about the hill in question.

We now group hereunder our reasons in brief which tend to show, that Kālidāsa, the author of Meghadūta and Raghuvamśa, must have visited the Ramgadh hills, and that he had a long personal acquaintance with that part of the country :

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1 Samudragupta's route of conquest, i. e. via. Sagar, Jabalpur, Mahākosal and so on, appears to indicate that in fact this must have been the land-route in the 4th or 5th century A. D. Besides, it is only reasonable to infer that the hills with carvings, paintings and lithic records stood connected with the nearby towns and centres of activity by road communications.

2 The following allusion to 'crowds of travellers' in v. 96 appears to indicate that K had in view, and was describing the land-route or trade-route in his times :

यो वृन्दानि त्वरयति पथि श्राम्यतां प्रोषितानां  
मद्रस्तिग्वैर्ध्वनिभिरबलावेणिमोक्षोत्सुकानि

3 As we have shown further in Ch. VIII, the word Rāmagiri in Prabhāvati Gupta's inscription ( रामगिरिस्वामिनः पादमूलात् ) may well be a reference to the Ramgadh hill in Mahākosal, which was then under the suzerainty of the Vakatakas. If that be so, it will go to indicate that Ramgadh was known as Rāmagiri at least since the 4th century if not earlier, and that the sacred spot attracted visitors and devotees from far and near.



1. Kālidāsa's graphic description of the Citrakūṭa in Raghu, which could hardly be composed without seeing Ramgadh and its amazing Hathiphor tunnel.
2. Allusion to wet paints (घातुराग in Me v. 102), which are actually found in abundance on Ramgadh, even today.
3. The expression सरसनिचुलात् स्थानात् points at the same conclusion.
4. The descriptive phrase स्निग्धच्छायातरुषु referring to 'wet' trees (See Ch. VI).
5. The love and familiarity betrayed in the fond reference to the adjacent Māla-land, which otherwise appears dry, needless and inexplicable.
6. Last but not the least, the mention of the nearby places and the direction of the cloud's journey, as now shown, (from R to U) is almost mathematically accurate. So much precision, be it remembered, about geographical places is neither expected nor essential in a lyrical poem. Therefore, it indicates two things. Firstly the poet's power of observation and sense of accuracy and secondly his acquaintance with the Ramgadh hill, and the region around it.

### THE SIGNIFICANT DETOUR VIA MĀLA

Thus, we can reasonably presume that K knew and must have visited the Ramgadh hill. But then he must have known so many other hills, especially in Malwa, where he undoubtedly lived at least for some period. He knew that there were good many hills in between, on the way up to Ujjayini or Mandosar (पर्वते पर्वते v. 22). In fact he has actually described Āmrakūṭa (v. 17), Vindhya-pāda (v. 19) Nicaīḥ hill (v. 25), and Devagiri (v. 42). It is usually suggested and generally accepted that K prescribed the circuitous route (वक्रः पथः v. 2) only to secure an opportunity to describe his beloved Ujjayini. But the proposition is not at all sound and logical although it appears to be so at first sight. We have already shown in the earlier chapters, that the route from Vidisha to Ujjayini was not (and could not be) circuitous but that it was only a continuation of the already circuitous way undertaken right from the start i. e. Ramgadh.

Two views are generally held and advanced in this connection. Some people are inclined to regard R and the adjoining places as simply imaginary. The other view is that there was a break or a branching off i. e. to say a detour or diversion from the 'northward route' of the cloud, introduced with the object of describing Ujjayini, which was dear to him for many reasons. The reader however, will see that if the chief and only purpose of the poet was to describe Ujjayini (or say Vidisha or Dashapur), the poet could well have selected as his starting point, some hill in the neighbourhood of those renowned cities. And it would have served his purpose alright. He could have even 'imagined' i. e. to say created out of his imagination a hill of desired proportions and description and 'placed' it at the desired spot round about Ujjayini, so as to suit his requirements. And in that case his hero, the lonely Yakṣa, could have lived as comfortably—or rather as uncomfortably, because of the grief of separation—on that 'mythical' or real hill near Ujjayini as on the Ramgadhi hill in Mahākosal. This scheme was certainly not going to make much difference, so far as the development of the theme or the quality of the poem, in general, was concerned. There could not be any difficulty about Māla or Āmrakūṭa also, because those places, equally imaginary according to the mythical view, could have easily been transplanted and fitted in, according to convenience, somewhere after Ujjayini—if at all they were considered to require a mention.

But K did nothing of the sort. Why? some people as stated above, are inclined to think that K's Rāmagiri is after all nothing but mythical, and that his topographical picture gives 'an overall impression of poetic verisimilitude'. Even assuming for a moment that R is mythical, the question still remains as to why K gives it a particular location which he does i. e. in Mahākosal? What made him 'place' his Rāmagiri, where he did, i. e. to say, push it as far as beyond Amarakantak? It is up to those, who regard Rāmagiri as mythical, to explain why it was 'placed' by the poet in Chhattisgad and why not in any other region? The most pertinent and crucial question for investigation would be this: In spotting out and selecting a suitable starting point in his Meghadūta, why did K go all the way upto Mahākosal which was even more than 400 miles to the east of Ujjayini? And then again why the U shaped detour via Māla in between Ramagadhi and Amarakantak?



We have seen that Kālidāsa selected Ramgadh for three reasons: Firstly, because (1) the hill was known in his times either as Citrakūṭa or at least as the hill of Rāma, and hence the lonely but lovely spot was thought of as very appropriate and suitable for the residence of his hero, the Yakṣa-in-separation (who was fashioned after Rāma himself) (2) Secondly, it lay on the land-route going from Mahākosal towards Vidisha or Ujjayini, and which he knew well as he had used it often times; and lastly, (3) the poet wanted to seek the opportunity of describing his favourite Vindhya and the Vindhyan region viz. the tract around Ratanpur and Amarkantak, which he loved and remembered because of his long-standing association and affinity.

### VINDHYA, THE FIRST FAVOURITE OF THE POET

It is remarkable that Kālidāsa refers only to three countries (जनपद) in his Meghadūta viz. Daśārṇa, Avanti and Bramhāvarta. Now, Daśārṇa obviously formed part of the modern Malwa, the region on the northern bank of the Narmada. We have seen that in Meghadūta, the Daśārṇa country is to be reached or approached from the East, as the cloud was supposed to set out on his mission from the Rāmāgiri in Chhattisgad. If the starting point instead had been Ramtek in Vidarbha, it would not be very improper to expect Kālidāsa to make a specific mention of the more famous Vidarbha country, which is actually referred to and described by him in both of his works—Mālavikāgnimitra and Raghuvamśa. Amogst other things, the non-mention of Vidarbha speaks eloquently against Ramtek. Then again, K's description of Revā in Me also would have been altogether different than दिग्धपादे विशीर्णा. It would have been something on the lines of जलवेगिरिस्थां रेवा etc. as in Raghū VI. An attempt is sometimes made to connect K with Vidarbha and particularly with Ramtek on the basis of the Pravarasena-Prabhāvatī inscription. But the whole structure of such conjectures, based as it is on the supposed identity of Ramtek with Rāmāgiri, tumbles down like a house of cards when Ramtek itself is now disproved.

On the other hand, K chooses to describe places in the countries like Mahākosal, Daśārṇa and Avanti with fondness and accuracy. Why does he do it? Why did he select Ramgadh in M. P. in particular as his starting point, when he could have chosen for his purpose any other place throughout the length and breadth of the



country ? Was it a mere accident or coincidence ? At the most, the choice of Ramgadh can be explained away on the ground that it was then already known as Rāmagiri or the hill of Rāma. But then it would have been also possible—may, even more natural—to take the cloud to its destination viz. the Himalayas by a northward and more direct route—for instance via Allahabad the river Ganges, Benares or even Patna ( the old Pataliputra or Puṣpapur, the famous capital of Magadha ), the river Shon, the famous city of Ayodhya and so on. But significantly enough Kālidāsa has not chosen this route, although he knew each of the famous places mentioned above. In fact he has mentioned and described them elsewhere. What is more important to bear in mind is that this route<sup>1</sup> would have been more direct and natural. In spite of that, Kālidāsa undertakes a much longer round-about way and adopts a westerly course from Ramgadh right upto Ujjayini. Why ? To say that he did so for the sake of his love for Ujjayini may be only partially true. But that does not appear to be the sole or main object of the poet, for reasons already discussed above. A detour from Ramgadh towards south before reaching Amarkantak must also now be considered and accounted for. It was certainly not necessary and would not have found a mention, had the target been only Ujjayini. What may be the reason then behind this out-of-the-way excursion ? The Māla kṣetra, the first station after Rāmagiri in the cloud's journey was situated to the south of that hill i. e. somewhere in the neighbourhood of Ratanpur in Chhattisgad area. ( See Chapters I and III ) To quote Sthiradeva again, who rightly highlights the deliberate and glaring departure :

त्वं उदीचीं प्रस्थितः अपि मालं दक्षिणावर्तितं आरुह्य  
पुनरपि उत्तरेणैव दिग्भागेन गमनं सज्जीकुरु ।

Although the cloud had set out for the north, yet it was asked first to turn to the south, i. e. quite in the opposite direction obviously for the purpose of visiting the Māla kṣetra.

This position clearly appears to point at two things.

Firstly, that for one reason or another the site of Māla kṣetra was familiar to Kālidāsa and had a peculiar attraction for him.

1 K has actually described this very route upto Ayodhya in Raghu XIII, wherein Rama's aerial car comes flying over ( east ) Godavari, Panchavti, D forest i. e. hermitages of sages like Sūtikṣṇa etc., Citrakūṭa, Prayag and so forth upto Ayodhya,

Secondly, that the circuitous route described in Me. from Ramgadh to Amarkantak via south i. e. the Māla must have been a land-route in those times.

Now, there is no doubt that K has described the places especially from Ramgadh to Ujjayini in great detail. Thereafter, the region around Mandosar is also described more or less in the same manner, though perhaps with a little less of zeal. There is no gainsaying the fact that the poet has given us amazingly accurate descriptions of the places in between Ramgadh and Ujjayini (or Mandosar) including towns, mountains and rivers, big or small.

It is evident that K knew the route from Ramgadh to Ujjayini too well to miss any detail, or to commit any mistake about it. It is not without significance that K brings into the picture even little known, small and seemingly negligible places<sup>1</sup>—which, ordinarily, any one would have ignored and set aside as dry and unappealing, unless he was interested in them one way or the other. It can be reasonably presumed therefore, that the description in Me. of the places under notice, undoubtedly reveals, on the part of the poet, an acquaintance with the sites concerned, if not also a sort of filial love and affection, which close and constant association alone could create. From this position, however, two scholars of repute have respectively deduced two different conclusions. The late Prof. S. M. Paranpje has argued that K must have belonged to Vidisha while M. M. Harprasad Shastri maintains that he must have been a citizen of Mandosar and also the Court-poet of the King Yaśodharman of that city (6th century A. D.). No doubt, it is true that K's description of the places from Rāmagiri to Ujjayini (or Dashapur at the most) does possess a certain unmistakable touch of fondness or familiarity which is absent in his descriptions thereafter. (A big gap from Daśapura to Brahmāvarta also may be significantly noticed in this connection.) It should be remembered, however, that both the scholars have proceeded to build up their theories on the basis of the old assumption, i. e. to say, in pursuance of the then prevalent notion about the location of the Māla kṣetra viz. that it was situated to the north of R and that R was Ramtek. But the whole topographical picture, which they took for granted, is now changed. We shall therefore adopt their line of reasoning, but adapt it to the altered position. The significant detour via Māla must now be

1 Nicañ hill, and the rivers Vananadi, Sindhu, Gambhīrā etc.



accounted for and explained. If a fond and detailed description of or allusion to a locality is to be regarded as the result of K's association with it, the Māla kṣetra in Mahākosal or the region around Amarkantak (i.e. Vindhya<sup>1</sup>) has *a posteriori* even stronger claims than Vidisha or Mandosar, particularly because of the newly discovered circumstance that K goes out of his way to describe it and includes it in his picture.

Now we propose to show here, in brief, how the above conclusion finds sufficient and satisfactory confirmation in other works of the poet. We must bear in mind one very significant fact that the Vindhya region provided K with the background and atmosphere for his early (or earliest) work—The Seasons (ऋतुसंहार). Then again, looking to the description of the six seasons, in the poem, it appears to have been composed with reference to the Vindhyan region on the northern bank of the Narmada (roughly modern Malwa). The description does not fit so much with the other parts of the country.<sup>2</sup>

We have also to point out here, that the Vindhya mountain in the mind of the poet appears to be inextricably associated with the rainy season. He is hardly seen referring to the Vindhya without mentioning the showers of rain or the streaks of lightening.

(1) See descriptions of Vindhya in Rts (2) विष्वस्य मेघप्रभवा इवापः Raghu 14. 8. (3) विद्युद्दाम्ना मेघराजो व विन्ध्यम् (Mal. 3. 21)

1 K actually calls Amarkantak by the name Vindhya-pāda in V.19.

2 Pandit S. N. Vyas of Ujjain points out in his article विष्वस्य महाकवि कालिदास at p. 26 : ...किन्तु कालिदासने जिन ऋतुओं का वर्णन किया, वे यथार्थ रूपमें मालव प्रकृतिमें ही साक्ष्य होते हैं। ऋतुसंहारकी षड्ऋतुओंका रूप न तो बंगालमें ही रहता है न हिमालयमें ही। बंगालमें केवल चार ऋतु ही होते हैं, हिमालयमें केवल दो ही रहती हैं, कहीं कहीं तीन भी। फिर ये ऋतुओंकी संगति कैसे जुड़ाई जा सकती है? यदि कवि बंगाली होता तो वह अपनी सर्वप्रथम कृति कही जानेवाली रचना ऋतुसंहारमें क्यों नहीं वर्षारम्भ से संबद्धत प्रवृत्ति का संकेत करता है। मेघदूतका आपाद मास तो शुद्ध 'मानसून' (वर्षागम) का सूचक है, जो उसका संदेशवाहक का काव्य माध्यम है। बंगालमें यदि ग्रीष्म समशीतोष्ण रहती है तो ऋतुसंहारके "प्रचंडसूर्यः स्पृहणीय चंद्रमा" से उसकी कैसे संगति जुड़ायी जा सकेगी? यही आपत्ति हिमालय और विदर्भ को रहेगी। किन्तु कालिदासकी कृति ही शब्दोंमें मालव-मोह लिये हुये हैं, जो अपनी जन्मभूमि के अनुराग की साक्षी है।



The repeated allusions to the Vindhya hills particularly during rains strongly suggest that K was a resident of Vindhya region atleast for an appreciable period of time, where he must have spent and observed many a rainy season.

To return to the Meghadūta, the westward march of the cloud from Ramgadh to Ujjayini itself, represents a considerable diversion for reaching the north. But now in addition to that, we must also notice, consider and endeavour to account for the initial glaring departure viz. the U shaped detour via Māla kṣetra i. e. the Ratanpur region. The detour via Ratanpur is more of a striking diversion than the round-about way to the north via Ujjayini. K's Yakṣa, be it noted, could well have taken the cloud straight from Ramgadh to Amarkantak, directly as the crow flies. In fact, he was anxious to avoid delays and diversions. But instead of heading straight towards the west why is the cloud being asked to turn to the south and visit the Māla kṣetra? The specially recommended detour must have a special reason behind it. As the Sanskrit maxim<sup>1</sup> says aptly, even a dull-witted person does not act without a motive, and much less so would one expect this of the Yakṣa—who is but a mouthpiece of Kālidāsa. The route in Me especially from R to U, very probably represents the land-route of those days which K appears to know too well, even to a minutest detail,—which does not seem possible, unless one has used it oftentimes. Now what made Kālidāsa go by this road to and fro? The travels of K from Ujjayini towards Mahākosal and back indicate his interest in the latter as much as in the former place, with which his connection is usually and rightly presumed. Had Kālidāsa been the resident of Ujjayini since childhood, as often suggested, and brought up there only, there appears to be no reason for him, normally speaking, to keep coming very often towards the east upto the Mahākosal region, by the land-route described in Meghadūta. On the other hand, from his first work, Rtusamhāra, we can infer his intimate contact with the Vindhya hill and Vindhya region, atleast during the formative period of his life even if not since his childhood. It looks more probable that K came from Mahākosal to Ujjayini and not vice versa. It appears fairly certain that K was connected with or interested in Mahākosal i. e. the Vindhya region in some way or the other, and

1 प्रयोजनमनुद्ध्य न मंदाऽपि प्रवर्तते ।

probably he originally belonged to the region around Ratanpur. This inference or conclusion also gets support from K's Rts., which is evidently composed in his early days—and which was probably his first major literary attempt worth the name. The scenes pictured in Rts are from the Vindhya hills, and curiously enough, some of them are exactly similar to those depicted in Me., which, as we can now say, are from the same region i. e. to say around Ramgadh, Ratanpur and Amarkantak. It is especially noteworthy that the pen-picture of Āmrakūṭa in the rainy season is almost the same as is drawn of the Vindhya hill during rains in Rts.<sup>1</sup> Possibly the Amarkantak hills of the Vindhya range and the surrounding forests (वनानि वैन्ध्यानि) were before K's eyes when he composed his Rts. If we proceed on the assumption—and there is no cogent reason why we should not—that a budding author in his earlier works is generally prone to depict the sites and scenes of his childhood, Kālidāsa can be said to have been born or at least brought up in Vindhyan environs, and more probably, on the basis of Meghadūta, in the vicinity of Amarkantak i. e. to say in the Bilaspur District of the modern Chhattisgad. Thus it appears that K belonged originally to Mahākosal, from where he might have been attracted subsequently towards the renowned and prosperous cities like, Vidisha and Ujjayini, where perhaps he lived most of his life, as he must have found a more suitable atmosphere there for his expanding talents. Even after settling in Ujjayini it was impossible for K, as for any one else, to forget the impressions and associations of his childhood. The undying and evergreen love for the place of his birth or his original home, where he spent his younger days, must have often made him undertake the journey to Mahākosal by the familiar route—proceeding merrily along, by the side of his beloved Vindhya range, and enjoying over again the never-to-be-forgotten places and sights like the Daśārṇa country with its bright garden-hedges, nest-building crows and Jambu forests, the great Amarkantak with its Revā falls and, last but certainly not the least, the Māla kṣetra which, howsoever dry and unappealing to others, was ever as charming and loveable a sight for him, as were its young and unsophisticated village maidens.

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1 See Rts. 2.27. This point is more fully dealt with in Ch. III.



## MĀLA DEŚA WAS HIS HOME

Now we shall set out here in brief, the various steps leading to our proposition about the poet's provenance, together with the conclusions to be deduced therefrom :

## 1

Kālidāsa belonged to and lived in the Vindhyan region :

(A) The Vindhychala was his great favourite. He offers fond and picturesque descriptions of the Vindhyan hills and region in his first work *Rts*, and as we can now say, he has done the same in his *Meghadūta*.

(B) Moreover, Mount Vindhya, in K's mind, seems to be inseparably connected with the rainy season. For, he hardly refers to one without the other. He describes the Vindhya mountain and that too during rains, not only often, but it is very remarkable that he has done so in four of his works, which were obviously punctuated by long intervals :—

*Rts* : वनानि वैध्यानि हरन्ति मानसं  
समुपजनिततापं स्नादयन्तीव विन्ध्यम्  
So also the whole of Canto II

*Mālavika* : विद्युद्गम्ना मेघराजीव विन्ध्यम्

*Raghu* : तस्यापतन् मूर्ध्नि जलानि जिष्णोः  
विन्ध्यस्य मेघप्रभवा इवापः

*Meghadūta* : विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णा रेवां V. 19.

Coupled with this, must now be considered the descriptions of *Āmrakūṭa*, *R*, and *Māla*—which were all in the Vindhya region.

These repeated allusions to Vindhya during rains<sup>1</sup> have a significance for us from two standpoints. Firstly, it may be seen that both in *Rts* or *Me*, where the poet was free to select any topographical background he liked (and even none in the case of former), his choice fell on the Vindhyan region. But it is even more significant to find him again in his other works, as stated above, alluding to the Vindhya during rainy season, even when

1 K often alludes to a mountain with streams flowing all over e. g. स निश्रोद्गारि इवाद्रिराजः । (For other instances see Ch. III). Probably K had his familiar Vindhya before his eyes, when he wrote such descriptions.



the occasion by no means demanded a reference to that particular mountain.

A young author particularly in his earlier works is prone to depict and bring into the picture his home-land or the region of his childhood associations, whenever an opportunity presents itself or whenever he can create one for the purpose. No doubt a stray reference to the showers on the Himalayas and perhaps also on some other hill is found in his writings. But such allusions are very rare and moreover they are only passing, brief or incidental, and therefore must stand on a different footing. They present a striking contrast with the poet's persistent and fond references to the Vindhya. The conclusion is inevitable. Vindhya with its wild forests and scenic beauty during rains stood prominent on his mental horizon. The poet must have spent and observed many a rainy season in the precincts of Vindhyan hills—which is not possible unless he hailed from that region and had resided there at one stage or another, and more probably in the earlier age, which is the most impressionable period in one's life.

## 2

**That Vindhyan region was to the north of the Narmada :**

(A) The seasons described so minutely and picturesquely in our poet's first work *Rts*, as indicated above, are such as to be found only in the region of the present Malwa.

(B) K in his *Me selects* and describes the places, hills, landscape and the route on the northern bank of the Narmada.

(C) In K's writings, we do not come across such detailed descriptions of places to the south of the Narmada, as we do, of places to the north. For instance, K has not furnished anywhere a particularly detailed description of the Vidarbha country or any part thereof<sup>1</sup>.

## 3

**K often travelled by the route between Ujjayini and Ramgadh :**

(A) K's connections with Ujjayini are often presumed, and rightly so. It is almost certain that he must have resided in Ujjayini, some time or the other in his life time for one reason or another.

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<sup>1</sup> P. 71, Mirashi's *Kalidasa* ( Mar )

(B) We now know that the route in Me is from Ramgadh to Ujjayini. We have shown how the direction, delineation and description of that route, and the places thereon, are offered with great accuracy of detail. This was hardly possible, unless the poet had personal and intimate knowledge of the route and places in question.

(C) It must also be remembered that some of the places are seemingly so small, insignificant and negligible. A non-resident of those parts was not likely to know those places or their names so correctly, and there was no reason for him to describe them so minutely, and moreover, so fondly and faithfully. The descriptions (R to U) are not those of a casual or disinterested observer. They come from one, who must have had ample opportunity to roam about, observe and remember the terrain under notice.

## 4

His minute and intimate personal knowledge about Amarkantak and Narmada :

(A) We have to point out that K's descriptions of the river Revā (i. e. Narmada) are highly significant and worth our study. What is remarkable is that the poet, very significantly, and rightly too, describes at two places the river Revā quite differently from each other :

अस्याङ्गुलदमीर्भव दीर्घबाहोर्माहिष्मतीवप्रनितम्बकाञ्चीम् ।  
प्रासादजालैर्जलवेणिरम्यां रेवां यदि प्रेक्षितुमस्ति कामः<sup>1</sup> ॥

- Raghu VI. 43

रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे विसीर्णा<sup>2</sup> - Me. 19

It is evident that the former description is of a single stream, whereas in the latter case it is one of several streams flowing down the rocky hill in the Amarkantak range i. e. the Vindhya. It is to be noted that the descriptions are different because the places alluded to are different. The first description is of the Revā near Māhiṣmatī (Omkār-Māndhātā) the capital of the Anūpa country.

1 Be thou therefore, the लक्ष्मी in the lap of this long-armed King, if thou, O fair one, entertainest a desire of looking at the river Revā from the windows of his palace, charming on account of the curling ripples of water, and looking like a girdle on the hips in the form of the ramparts of the city of माहिष्मती (Māhiṣmatī)

2 The Narmada shattered (or scattered) on the Vindhyān hill due to rocks (looking) like the decoration composed of painted streaks on the body of an elephant.

That is to say the poet notices here the course of the Revā on the plains of Malwa, somewhere near Khandwa, where it cannot but be a single stream. (Note जलवेणिरम्यां and वप्रनितम्बकाञ्ची in the same verse). But naturally, quite different is the spectacle to behold when that river, during the rainy season, gets 'scattered' i. e. divided, broken up or parted into several streamlets on the Amarkantak hill. Thus the reader can see how Kālidāsa's descriptions of (real) places can be distinguished from each other and hence relished or appreciated all the more, when we read them after understanding the topography which they refer to and describe. This is one of the many instances exhibiting Kālidāsa's power or peculiar knack of description, which is at once poetic and realistic, and which is *imaginative yet true*. No less do they exhibit the expert knowledge of a geographer.

(B) The precise and *correct* details noted by the poet in the following phrases in v. 20, describing the waters of Revā on the Amarkantak hills, prove the same point.

जंबूकुंजप्रतिहतरयं तोयं  
वनगजमदैः वासितं  
तिक्तं

(C) Now, here, we have to invite the attention of the reader to three other verses in Canto XVI of K's Raghu, in which the Vindhya is again brought into the picture, even though be it noted, the occasion certainly did not demand it and the reference could well have been dropped without least affecting the narration or its poetical merit.

मार्गेषिणी सा कटकान्तरेषु बंध्येषु सेना बहुधा विभिक्षा ।  
चकार रेवेव महाविरावा बद्धप्रतिश्रुन्तिगुहामुखानि ॥  
स घातुर्भेदारुणयाननेमिः प्रभुः प्रयाणध्वनिमिषतूर्यैः  
व्यलङ्घयत् विध्यमुपायनानि पश्यन्तुलिन्दैरुपादितानि ॥  
तीर्थं तदीयं गजसेतुबंधात् प्रतीपगा उत्तरतोऽयं गंगाम्<sup>1</sup> vv. 31—33

1 Here again it may be noted, that K. in Raghu XVI only wanted to convey that Kuśa came back to Ayodhya from Kushāvanti in the south i. e. Mahākosal. And yet K. here refers to and brings in the Vindhyan hills and its caves. The 'roaring' Revā again finds a mention. In the whole of Kuśa's journey to Ayodhya, only three places are mentioned by K., and it is important to remember that one of them is the Vindhya mountain with its forests and rivers. And then again out of five verses, three verses are utilised to describe the Vindhyan precincts, the remaining two describing the rivers Ganges and Sharayu (v. 34 and 35) respectively.



We have to suggest that K here brings in the Vindhya with its forests and waters for the same reason, for which he has described it elsewhere viz. his affection for and association with the Vindhyan region.

(D) Now, we shall turn to the most important point, which we want to make regarding V. 31, just quoted above. To start with, we offer its translation as follows :—

That ( Kuśa's ) army like the roaring Revā, seeking a way ( i. e. passage or opening ) through the valleys or the slopes of the Vindhya mountain, being variously split up into divisions, made the mouths of the caves reverberate the sound ( i. e. echo ).

Now it is well-known that K's similes are very often *Pūṇo-pamās*<sup>1</sup> ( पूर्णोपमा ). In fact, it is a marked tendency and characteristic of our poet, and, according to us, we get a fine and striking specimen of it in the present verse. Thus, all the adjectival phrases viz.—

वैद्येषु कटकान्तरेषु मार्गेषु  
बहुधा विभक्ता, and  
महाविरावा

are intended to apply equally and aptly to the marching and roaring army as also to the river Revā. Now, let us size up the picture of the Revā, which the poet has in mind here and which he intends to hold up before the reader for being compared with. The significant and 'loud' epithet महाविरावा i. e. roaring clearly indicates that the Revā referred to here represents its earlier stream on the Amarkantak, where it rises and descends down the uneven rocks of that mountain. The other expressions, viz. 'variously split up', and 'seeking a way through the valleys or the slopes of the Vindhya' support and establish the same conclusion. We have to point out here the close and striking resemblance between this picture of the Revā and the one of the same river presented to us in V. 19 of Me, which is as follows :

रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलब्धिमे विध्यपादे विक्षीणी

The same, identical scene of the split Revā on Amarkantak is referred to and described in both the places ( perhaps with the only difference that the split up course of Revā in Me is the one

1 पूर्णोपमा is a full or complete simile, i. e. one in which the four requisites उपमान, उपमेय, साधारणधर्म and उपमाप्रतिपादक are all expressed.

during the rainy season). As already pointed out, there was no special, sufficient or even adequate reason for the poet here to refer to the Vindhya at all and much less to Amarkantak in particular and still less to the river Revā. The Revā here, be it noted, need not have been described at all, but has been dragged in *somehow* by way of a simile. The inference that follows is hard to resist. Kālidāsa had an intimate personal knowledge of the Amarkantak hill and particularly those parts of it through which noisily flow down the split-up streams of the Revā. His constant or long association with this part of the country naturally created in the poet a fond affection for it, which often found expression in his composition, notwithstanding whether there was an adequate occasion for it or not.

(E) Then again, in the immediately following verse quoted above (Raghu XVI-33) K appears to notice a smallish sacred (unnamed) river in the Vindhya which Kuśa is mentioned to have crossed. We desire to draw attention to the epithet प्रतीपगङ्गा (*pratīpagāṃ*=flowing towards west), used with reference to that *tīrtha* or sacred rivulet. Now, obviously it was a matter of little consequence whether it flowed here to the west or east or in any other direction. Why should it have been mentioned at all? Is the detail wantonly invented and carelessly thrown in? Or was it inserted to suit the metre? None of these probabilities however stands to reason. Why and how is it, then, that an obscure stream in the Vindhya should find a mention, together with the direction of its current, which hardly mattered? According to us, the small word (प्रतीपगङ्गा) containing an 'insignificant' detail, throws considerable light on the issue in question, particularly when considered along with other circumstances pointed out above. K knew the region around Amarkantak very well, through which he must have often travelled and roamed for one reason or another—observing sights and sounds which were to be reflected and immortalised in his subsequent writings.

## 5

Kālidāsa originally belonged to Mahākosal, from where he must have gone over to stay in Ujjayini :

(A) We have already arrived at the conclusion, in the foregoing pages, that K belonged to and resided in the Vindhyan region, i. e. to the north or east of the Narmada. But, then, as



the name Vindhya is generally applicable to the double range of mountains of that name, the Vindhyan region may be said to extend from end to end or from Sourashtra to Orissa, i. e. to say over a length of about 800 miles. Question is, can we narrow down the compass? Let us make an endeavour. As the first step, we can very well leave out the region to the west of Ujjayini as also on the other hand, the eastern territory beyond Ramgadh, for obvious reasons. Considering together all the reasons so far discussed, we can fairly fix our 'searching-area' as lying in between Ujjayini and Ramgadh.

(B) Ujjayini is often believed to be his original home (of course without any positive proof) chiefly on the ground that except Alakā, which is of course mythical, K nowhere offers such full and detailed description of any other city<sup>1</sup>. But it is equally possible that K describes Ujjayini at such length (at any rate more fully than other cities), because it was a famous and flourishing capital or centre and perhaps the most fashionable metropolis of his times; and also for the additional reason that in later life, after coming to Ujjayini he might have settled there and thus become a sort of permanent resident of that city. Then again, we have already shown, that had K belonged to Ujjayini proper, there was no reason or possibility for him, in the natural course of events, to know the Vindhyan region or hills so minutely or to get an opportunity to observe the flora and fauna as also the topography of that region, and further to describe it all so fondly and faultlessly as he has done in his earliest effort *Rtusamhāra* and even in the more matured *Meghadūta*. The hypothesis also does not adequately explain his intimacy with the Māla and Amarkantak region. Besides, while the charming and even gorgeous description of Ujjayini, undoubtedly indicates the poet's acquaintance with that city, yet it does not appear to contain that kind of unmistakable note of genuine affection or attachment, which we might expect from a proud and permanent inhabitant of a particular place.

The 'pompous' and 'affluent' description, none the less, appears to be more or less formal, and even somewhat 'professional' or of a set type—offered or inserted more out of awe, respect or wonder rather than a feeling of genuine love or admiration. It lacks the warmth of feeling, which springs from the heart. To take an

1. Kālidāsa (Mirashi) p. 72.



instance, a western writer originally belonging to the country-side, but who in later life has seen or taken up residence in a flourishing or luxurious metropolis like London, Paris or Berlin, may and does offer to his readers glamorous pen-pictures of those big cities. But that can hardly mean or prove that he was a native resident of the places which he so admirably describes. Thus, while it would be perfectly legitimate to regard Ujjayini as Kālidāsa's place of residence at some time or the other, it is hardly justifiable to hold that it was also his native place, where he was born or brought up since boyhood.

If then Ujjayini was not Kālidāsa's original home, where did he come there from? Evidently in search of his home we must go east of Ujjayini.

We now know, that Ramgadh-Ujjayini was a familiar route with our poet, which he knew very minutely. We can also legitimately infer on the basis of Rts, that K must have spent his childhood days in a hilly tract around the Vindhya mountain. If we put these two things together, the conclusion which we are driving at, is not very far off. The Ramgadh-Ratanpur-Amarkantak area in Chhattisgad is exactly the sort of the hilly tract in the Vindhyan region, which we are looking out for. It is fondly described in Rts. It is often alluded to in his other works. It is specifically described in the Meghadūta. It is the region, we are searching for.

## 6

**The Māla country was K's original home :**

We have seen that K belonged to the Vindhyan region. Now, the Meghadūta route from Ramgadh to Ujjayini practically runs the whole length of that region, i. e. alongside the northern range of that mountain. It is, therefore, evident that K's native place, which ever it was, lay on or nearabout the route, described in his Me. Against this back-ground, would it not be reasonable and legitimate to expect our poet to refer to his native land, where he was born or grew up or resided in the early part of his life? Considering the human psychology and particularly the emotional nature of poets in general, it appears highly improbable and even inconceivable that K would forget or would not care to make a reference to his home-province, especially when it lay on the route which he was out to describe in great detail. Would he not at least just record its name?

On the route from R to U, K makes a mention of three countries only (1) *Mā'a* (2) *Daśārṇa* and (3) *Avanti*.<sup>1</sup> The last two names are to be rejected for reasons already discussed. Moreover, as for *Daśārṇa*, we do not find any other reference to this country. It is not mentioned anywhere in the other works of the poet, and significantly enough, not even in his historical drama, *Mālāvikā*, wherein his hero Agnimitra figures as the king of that country. The only reasonable probability or solution, therefore, with which we are left, is the *Māla* land. It was known in K's times as the *Māla* country (*Janapada जनपद* Me. v. 16) where, as the poet knew well, the agricultural population was dependent on timely rains for a good crop. The *Māla* Janapada in K's times was a part of what was formerly known as *Mahākosal* or *Dakṣiṇa Kosal*.

## 7

**Poet's two-fold object in prescribing the southward as also the westward detour : Visit to *Māla* and *Ujjayini* :**

The object underlying the circuitous or the diverting route in Me right from the start viz. R, appears to be two-fold. The first or initial detour is via *Māla* land, which was to the south. Secondly, further on in v. 27, we learn of the additional object, viz. of visiting U. Thus *Ujjayini* and *Māla* are the two places in the journey, for the sake of which the straight or direct route was to be departed from. We suggest that these two places—for which K goes out of his way—exactly represent the two points, which are symbolic, as it were, of the two different phases or stages in our poet's life. The *Māla* country was his original home. Therefrom he went over to *Ujjayini*, the capital of *Avantis*—probably by the same route subsequently described in the *Meghadūta*. The one represents the land of his birth while the other, the field of his subsequent activity or career.

To sum up : K's writings evince a fond intimacy with the *Vindhya* region. His descriptions (R to U) are precise, clear, significant and deliberate. Detour via *Māla* shows his obvious partiality. Besides, would not any poet mention his native land, if he could ? *Chhattisgad*, known as *Māla* to K, was his home.

1 It is significant that K does not mention the country, or word *Mālava*, which he certainly would have used, had the word been then in vogue. The word actually came to be used only after 2nd or 3rd century A. D. and not before.



### HOW AND WHY KĀLIDĀSA FIXED UPON HIS ROUTE IN Me.

If one flew, as the crow flies, straight from Ramgadh to Amarkantak, Māla would be left out! Roughly speaking, Chhattisgad or the region to the south or south-east of Amarkantak, comprising the districts of Bilaspur and Raypur etc., was probably known in K's times as the Māla or Māla deśa or Māla kṣetra. (It may have acquired the name kṣetra perhaps because it was traditionally known as the region of Rāma's Vanavāsa wanderings.) Now, in a way, the poet was free to choose and chalk out any route for his cloud. But obviously the freedom of choice could not be exercised or carried beyond certain limits or to a ridiculous extent. Let us pause for a moment and imagine as to how Kālidāsa himself must have tackled the ticklish problem:

When the cloud was about to leave Rāmagiri (i.e. Ramgadh) K was a bit perplexed. He was in two minds. In which direction is the cloud to proceed? K of course dropped the idea of taking the cloud straight to the Himalayas by direct Northern route i.e. via Allahabad, Ayodhya etc. Probably he did not even think about it. He desired and proposed to take the western route, no matter that it was a much longer and round about way. One of the reasons which must have weighed with him was that it was also the land-route in those times, well known to the people, connecting Mahākosal with Malwa and proceeding to the north via Mandosar, Delhi region and so on. Vidisha and Ujjayini as also Amarkantak with its scattered Revā and all those familiar places stood before his mental vision. Yes, here was an opportunity presenting itself to describe those localities. In no time he decided upon the westerly course. But at this moment another thought intervened. He remembered his home-land. Why not bring it in the picture? But flying straight from Ramgadh to Amarkantak means giving a go-by to Māla! It clearly stood out of the way. The westerly course, to be adopted in the direction of Amarkantak, Vidisha, Ujjayini and so on, was already a considerable diversion. Thus a visit to Māla became a pretty awkward proposition for Kālidāsa, as it lay actually to the south of Ramgadh i.e. exactly in the opposite direction! The poet was on the horns of a dilemma. He could neither justifiably include the Māla deśa in his picture, nor could he bear the idea of excluding or bypassing his dear home-land. He was in a fix and his position



became very much like his own Duṣyanta—in the Fifth Act of his finest play—who, after Śakuntalā presented herself before him in his court, was at his wit's end, and could neither accept nor abandon her :

न च खलु परिभोक्तुं नैव शक्नोमि हातुम् ।

Eventually Kālidāsa did find a way out. He hit upon a happy compromise—a sort of golden mean between the two impossible positions. He decided to allow the cloud to visit the Māla country but only 'a little' i. e. partially ( किञ्चित्<sup>1</sup> ) and thereafter ( पश्चात्<sup>2</sup> ) make it atonce turn round ( प्रवलय गति of V ) and come back again i. e. towards north ( भूय<sup>3</sup> एवोत्तरेण ) to reach Amar-kantak. Thus did the detour for the sake of Māla, although short, serve the double purpose in view. The deviation was now negligible and within limits, while the poet could also bring in his Māla within the picture. Probably, that was the reason why K could not do full justice to his home-region and describe it to his heart's content any more than devoting one single verse. None the less, the brief reference does not fail to betray a certain warmth of feeling. In the projected journey of the cloud Kālidāsa did manage to include both the countries—Māla and Avanti—the one which he came from and the other which he subsequently settled in.

### HIS LOVE OF THE HOME-LAND

It was probably in this very region around Ramgadh hills that K composed his immortal Meghadūta, or, at least a major portion of it, as averred by an old tradition<sup>4</sup> which still lingers in those parts of the country. He knew and was familiar with this part since childhood. That is why Kālidāsa goes out of his way. That is why Kālidāsa makes the cloud of his own creation go out of its

1 It has already been shown in Ch. I and III that किञ्चित् in v. 16 goes more suitably with मालं आरुह्य rather than पश्चात्, as V, St. and so many others construe ( किञ्चित् = मनाक् i. e. a little. )

2 पश्चात् also, from the context, would mean thereafter rather than towards west.

3 V's प्रवलय गति presupposes Māla to the south. Then again, in his reading, पश्चात् does mean thereafter. Apart from that, even भूयः ( again ) एव उत्तरेण by itself, also appears to presuppose Māla to the south.

4. See page 152.

way. This is the secret behind the mention of the 'mysterious' Māla and the otherwise unaccountable diversion for its sake. One is tempted to conclude that the fond, deliberate, uncalled for, and even 'unnecessary' allusion of the poet to that dry and insignificant tract is reminiscent of his past associations and acquaintance with that part of the country. It appears to betray the love and lively remembrance of his original home<sup>1</sup>. The reason is obvious. It is the same, as embodied in the well-known saying :

जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी<sup>2</sup>

We are here reminded of the famous lines of Sir Walter Scott<sup>3</sup>—

Breathes there the man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said  
"This is my own, my native land!"  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned  
From wandering on a foreign strand?

Much more would the feeling of attachment or longing be, for one's native land, in the case of a person of poetic temperament or of highly sensitive and cultured mind. In prescribing a detour via Māla, we do discern a purpose. We can almost read between the lines. It is suggestive of inhabitiveness. It is love for the home land. It is memory, sweet memory, awakened memory. It is fond attachment and fascination for the native land, clamouring for an outlet.

1 स्मरणालंकार (Rhetorical Recollection) was a favourite figure of speech with K. It is thus defined यच्चानुभवमयस्य दृष्टे तत्तद्वशे स्मृतिः स्मरणं K. P.10. Canto XIII of Raghu, from beginning to end, abounds in delightful instances of the said figure of speech. The poet describes there, with remarkable skill and subtlety, the feelings and emotions of Rāma, when he sees the same old familiar places. Would such a poet lose an opportunity, if he gets one, to describe the places, which he himself once lived in and loved?

2 One's mother as also the mother-land is even dearer (lit. greater) than the heaven itself.

3 Sir Walter Scott's 'patriot' may not be so much up or in evidence today, in the present age of confused loyalties and in the modern 'one and indivisible' world of collapsing barriers. But he was certainly alive and ubiquitous in the good old days—as he is even today, and as he will ever be so long as the human nature remains what it is—in the sense of a citizen who instinctively learns to love and adore his home-land, with which he is bound up by a thousand ties, memories and associations.

In the Meghadūta, wherein he was free to choose his own topography, Kālidāsa yet selected one which he did, evidently for reasons stated above. One can imagine how eagerly and delightfully he must have seized and utilised the opportunity to describe the region, which was his happy home in younger days, the pleasant memories of which must have been cherished by him for ever, even long after he might have left his home in Mahākosal for Ujjayini.





## CHAPTER VIII

### RAMTEK AND OTHER THEORIES

We have all along concentrated in this treatise on establishing Ramgadh as the Rāmagiri in Kālidāsa's Meghadūta because that would constitute the best and most conclusive answer to the claims of Ramtek or any other place, thought of in this connection. But it would be in the fitness of things, and perhaps in a way even necessary at this stage, to notice in brief how the other proposed locations are absolute misfits. Of all the places, Ramtek shall be dealt with first and more fully, because it is the oldest claimant in the field, and was generally supported by all uptil now as the most likely or fitting place, obviously because it had no serious rival so far. As stated in the introduction, since the publication of the present thesis in Marathi, general consensus of opinion in Maharashtra has already turned against the Ramtek view and is veering round in favour of Ramgadh. The reader will recall here the six tests or criteria (Ch. III) which we had formulated and utilized for the fixation of Rāmagiri. Let us now apply the same tests to each of the remaining contestants for the title, and see how they fare.

#### RAMTEK

I. Description : Evidently this small hill near Nagpur does not answer to the description in Me. It falls far short. Ramtek is a small, dwarfish and unassuming hill (height not more than 500 ft. from the ground<sup>1</sup>). Moreover this hill is a flat-topped one, *without* a peak, river or rivulet. No mineral wet paints or वातुराग are found here. Similarly one does not expect a thick shady forest in this region (स्निग्धच्छायातरुद्वय), particularly in the 4th century, as Ramtek was situated at a distance of only three miles from Nandardhan, the then capital of the Vākātakas.

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1 Imperial and District Gazetteers.

It will be readily seen what contrast poor Ramtek presents, when compared with K's totally different picture of Rāmagiri : Tall, imposing, towering peak, spring, river, mineral paints, thick shady forest ( तुल्लं शैलं, अद्रेः शृङ्गं हरति पवनः, आश्लिष्टतानुं ). Particularly the absence of peak appears to be a decisive factor and would prove most fatal to the Ramtek identification.

**II. Location :** According to Meghadūta, the Rāmagiri was situated on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma and Sitā i. e. somewhere in the Dandakāranya forest. (रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं V. 12 and जनक-तनया स्नानपुण्योदकेऽ V. 1). The ancient commentators have specifically mentioned this location<sup>1</sup>. As shown already in Ch. II, Rāma's route (even according to K) lay towards south from Prayag (Allahabad) to Panchavati at Bhadrachalam. But apart from that, Ramtek near Nagpur being in Vidarbha could not be in the Dandakāranya forest. The country and kingdom of Vidarbha was well known from the Rāmāyana times. In fact, the ruling family of Vidarbha was connected with that of Rāma by matrimonial alliance. The wife of Rāma's grandfather Raghu was a Vidarbha Princess (Raghuvamśa VI.). K himself describes the Vidarbha country as flourishing and in affluent circumstances (सौराज्यरम्यान् अपरो विदर्भान् Ibid). Vidarbha and Ramtek therefore obviously cannot have been included in the Dandakāranya forest. Ramtek cannot claim or establish any connection with the Vanavāsa route as known to the ancients and in particular to Kālidāsa. There is no past or current tradition to that effect either.

**III. Identification of places in the neighbourhood of Rāmagiri :** The first three places mentioned viz. Māla, the Āmrakūṭa hill and the scattered Revā, if correctly identified, can determine the location of Rāmagiri as also the route of the cloud. (For our identification of these places and the reasoning thereof, see Ch. III). We have seen that Māla kṣetra was to the south of Rāmagiri. Then again, the identification of Āmrakūṭa with Amarkantak completely destroys Ramtek. The difficulties of Ramtek in this respect are many and insurmountable : The Māla kṣetra will have to be placed in or near Nagpur itself! Further on, if the

1 स्थिरदेव says, रामगिरिः दण्डकान्तःप्रसिद्धः । So also do many others (See Ch. I).



cloud is to wheel back from the Nagpur region and proceed towards north, there is no hill, and much less an imposing one like the Āmarkūṭa of Kālidāsa, to be encountered for a considerable distance (about two to three hundred miles) till we reach the Satpura range on the southern bank of the Narmada. But the topography in Me. requires and presupposes that Āmarkūṭa hill could be reached just after and near the Māla kṣetra. Lastly, the shattered or scattered scene of the river Narmada (v.19) can only be located in the Amarkantak range. Now, amongst the supporters of Ramtek, there are two different schools or rather ways of interpreting the direction and route of the cloud. Wilson holds on to Amarkantak, but that means turning to the east from R—which direction is absolutely unwarranted. Mirashi tries to take the cloud across the Narmada near Hoshagabad i. e. on the plain ground, where the river can never be shattered or scattered as on a hill !

IV. The direction of the cloud's journey : We have already shown, how the direction of the cloud in the intended journey from Rāmāgiri to Āmrakūṭa was first to the south, then a little towards west, and then again back towards north (Ch. III). This direction and route totally rule out the Ramtek hypothesis. In fact, this is perhaps the most crucial and most convincing test of all. Ramtek miserably fails on that score and consequently must be set aside as a gross misfit. We shall, however, proceed to show in brief, by the method of *reductio ad absurdum*, how the direction and route of the cloud, as suggested by Mirashi and Wilson respectively, are not only unauthorized and incorrect but inconsistent and improbable (See Mirashi's map on the next page, which we have reproduced from his recent booklet on the subject).

Mirashi's route is hit by the following positions :—

(1) Mirashi's Māla land, placed near Sheoni Chhapara, is much too distant viz. about 50 miles to the north from Ramtek. But Me would rather have it much closer—in fact, adjacent to R.

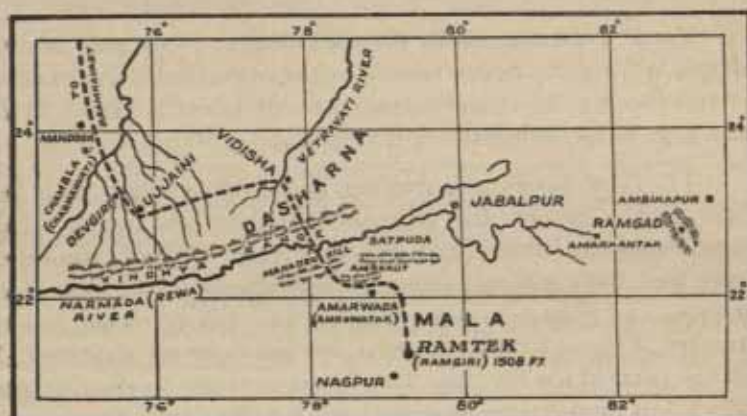
(2) Mirashi tries to connect Amarvada with Āmrakūṭa, and quite arbitrarily places the latter near the former place. But Amarvada is the name of a village and has nothing to do with Āmrakūṭa which represents a mountain.

(3) Mirashi's Āmrakūṭa is not fixed. He only vaguely suggests that some hill in the Satpura range may be regarded as Āmra-



kūṭa. He does not give any reasons why Sheoni-Chhapra should be considered as Māla, or why some hill from the Salpura range is to be regarded as the Āmrakūṭa. Tacitly assuming, as he does, the identity of Ramtek as well as the northward journey of the cloud therefrom, he goes on to fix the places in question as would suit his fond hypothesis. Thus instead of locating R from adjoining places, he proceeds to determine those places on the basis of Ramek, which he takes for granted.

(4) Mirashi's Āmrakūṭa is reached immediately after turning to the west! According to v. 16, however, Āmrakūṭa is to be reached only after going to the west *and* north.



*Mirashi's map : cloud's route from Ramtek to Ujjayini*

(5) The Narmada, which Miradhi's cloud would cross, is near about Hoshangabad. The river cannot become shattered or scattered on plain ground! The scene described by the poet is *on* the Vindhyan hill (विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णा).

(6) Coming from south and approaching Vidisha, Mirashi's cloud can reach the river Vetravati, even before it gets into that renowned city. The order of places in Me however is the other way round i. e. Vidisha first and Vetravati thereafter. This position in Me presupposes the cloud advancing from the west (i. e. Ramgad) and not from south (Ramtek).

(7) If we accept Mirashi's route, it remains unexplained why the cloud should be made to go to Vidisha at all. Why not straight on to Ujjayini?

Now Wilson's route becomes impossible for the following reasons :

(A) Ramtek to Amarakantak becomes an easterly route ! But Me nowhere mentions it.

(B) While proceeding eastward from Ramtek, one actually comes across some streams of the Narmada even before reaching Amarakantak or even Malda ( i. e. Māla ). But the cloud has to visit first the Māla land, then Āmrakūṭa, and only thereafter the river Narmada.

**V. The direction of the Monsoon clouds :** The rain-bearing clouds, while going from southern region to the north, do not move or travel *across* the Vindhya range at all ( See Ch. III ). If this test is to be applied, Ramtek is ruled out.

**VI. The evidence of tradition and Archaeology :** It is true that on the top of the Ramtek hill,<sup>1</sup> there are temples dedicated to Rāma, Laxman and Sītā, but they evidently appear to have been built in recent times. ( There are also many other small temples and तीर्थs or sacred places on the hill ). There are a number of Rāma temples however, erected since ancient times, in all the parts of the country. There is no evidence to show whether this hill in former times possessed any temples or was known as the 'hill of Rāma', and particularly so in the times of Kalidāsa. There is an inscription on stone embedded in the inner wall of one of the temples, which is supposed to belong to the 13th century. The inscription refers to a king Rāmacandra in the Yādava family, who is now identified as Rāmadeorāo Yādva of Daulatabad, the contemporary of the great saint Dnyāneśwara. It should be remembered that this record gives Sindūragiri and Tapangiri as the names of this place. An inscriptional record of Pravarasena II, known as Riddhapur plates, was found near Amaravati in Berar. It is urged that the expression रामगिरि-स्वामिनः पादमूलात् found therein refers to Ramtek. But the inference is hardly justifiable. This point will be discussed later on. Thus, the antiquity of the place at the most cannot be carried much beyond the 13th century. But even that is not very impor-



tant. What is most pertinent to our inquiry is, whether the place was associated, or rather known to be associated, or even mistakenly taken to be associated for the matter of that, with the actual residence of Rāma and Sītā during their banishment, as required by K's famous references रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं and जनकतनयास्तानपुष्पोदकेषु. No such evidence, even that of a faint tradition, is forthcoming. On the other hand, as already shown, there is ample evidence to believe that the banished Prince of Ayodhya never passed, or was never taken to have passed, through the flourishing Vidarbha country which never was a part and parcel of the Dandākāranya. While the existence of a tradition may not be conclusive, its absence does provide a sort of negative evidence, by no means insignificant.

Thus the supposititious Ramtek does not stand any of the tests, essential for the purpose. Even supposing for the sake of argument, that Ramtek in older days was at any time actually known by the name Rāmagiri, it is evident that it cannot be identical with Kalidāsa's Rāmagiri in Meghadūta. The Ramtek hill, which inter alia cannot be topographically justified, must stand rejected.

Prof. V. V. Mirashi, the ardent supporter of the Ramtek identification, had championed for long his cause in various articles,<sup>1</sup> perhaps as best as it could be done. Eventually in my Marathi work upholding Ramgadh, it became necessary for me to meet his arguments and show that the position taken by him was untenable. The Nagpur scholar, however, in retaliation has brought out a booklet, intending to prop up Ramtek again and rebut my objections against it. He reiterates his once refuted arguments and conclusions almost verbatim, and curiously enough, with the same zest and insistence as before. Articles still continue to flow from Prof. Mirashi's pen in various periodicals, attacking Ramgadh and defending Ramtek. Hence it has become necessary to notice his arguments once again, although in brief. Prof. Mirashi's various arguments along with our refutation are being tendered hereunder. (Page references below, to Mirashi's above mentioned Marathi work, *Meghadūtātīl Rāmagiri Arthāt Ramtek*, published in December 1958).

<sup>1</sup> Some of them are collected and printed in his *Saushodhan-mukta-vali*, Part 1.



## PROF. MIRASHI'S ARGUMENT NO. 1

Ramtek must be regarded as tolerably tall or tall enough, because its height is 1508 ft., as shown in the survey—maps (by Govt. of India).

## REFUTATION

In my Marathi work, one of my grounds in attacking Ramtek was that it is a small, dwarfish hill, measuring not more than about 500 ft. in height. Mirashi now attempts to counter it by quoting from the official measurements. But the make-believe is hardly fair and will not convince anyone. The figure 1508, which he quotes in retaliation, is deceptive and misleading. That is given in the official maps, as is customary, to show the height from *sea-level*. The actual height of Ramtek, however, from the ground or foot of the hill is *not more than 500 ft.* only. The height of Nagpur itself and the surrounding region (including Ramtek) is already about 1000 ft. from sea-level! It needs hardly be pointed out that what is pertinent in the present case is the height of the hill from the ground and not from the sea-level. When a poet, or anyone for the matter of that, repeatedly describes a hill or a mountain as lofty, imposing etc., does he thereby refer to or contemplate its height from the sea-level?

## ARGUMENT NO. 2

Ramtek is a very ancient place and known since ancient times as the sacred place of Rāma. Similarity between the two words Ramtek and Rāmagiri is evident. There is no other ancient or sacred place in this region which may resemble in name with Rāmagiri. Hence modern Ramtek is ancient Rāmagiri.

## REFUTATION

There is no evidence to show that Ramtek is an ancient place nor is there any evidence to show that it was a sacred place or the hill of Rāma, before the 11th or 12th century. As for similarity, there is none between the two words *tek* and *giri*. The common term *Rāma*, which is found in both the words, cannot carry us very far. There is a strong tendency in this country to name the places after Rāma, and a considerable number of them may be found all over India, like Rampur, Ramnagar, Ramtappa, Ramghal (valley), Ramtekri (hill), Ramnadi, Ramgadh and so

on. On the contrary, phonetically Ramgadh is nearer to Rāmagiri than Ramtek. Besides, as already pointed out, *giri* is often found changed for *gadh*. To cite an instance from Me. itself, Devagiri in V. 42 is the modern Devagadh. (Other examples are:—चेदीशगिरि—चेदीशगड—छत्तीसगड and रायरी—रायगिरि—रायगड).

Incidentally one important fact may be noted in this connection. From Mirashi's book (p. 1), Ramtek appears to be the name of the village or town situated at the foot of this hill and not that of the hill itself. The Mahānubhāva manuscript of the 13th century, referring to this hill and quoted by Mirashi in parts, nowhere mentions it as Ramtek. It only refers to a certain temple of Rāma on the hill. As noted before, the Bakhar of Bhosalas of Nagpur (18th century) refers to it only as Ramakshetra but not Ramtek. The Yadava inscription on the hill specifically records तपगिरि, and सिंदूरगिरि or सिंदुराचल, as being its two names. The expression रामस्य गिरौ-इह occurring therein (and not रामगिरौ) obviously is not a proper name but only a descriptive phrase. It is evidently used there to denote that God Rāma blesses this place just as many other deities are similarly mentioned to do. Thus the name Ramtek as applied to the hill appears to be of very recent origin; and as the name of the town also, it does not seem to be very old.

### ARGUMENT No. 3

Bright red stones are found in abundance on the Ramtek hill. They glitter particularly when newly broken and look blood red when sunrays shine upon them. These red stones represent the घातुराग which Yakṣa is described to have used in V. 102. (Mirashi now suggests red earth or chalk, लाल माती p. 42, found here.)

### REFUTATION

घातुराग can neither be red stone nor red earth. Kālidāsa often used this word घातुराग or घातुरस which means a 'mineral' wet paint<sup>1</sup> usually found in hills. Stones, howsoever red they may look, can hardly be a substitute for wet paints which were needed by the Yakṣa to paint the likenesses of his beloved. The

1 घातवः गैरिकादयः त एव रंजकद्रव्याणि—Mallinātha. Also see Ks. 1-4. Kālidāsa has actually used the word घातुरस, meaning wet or rather fluid paints—Ibid. 1-7.



धातुराग in Me do and must mean the mineral wet paints ( red, white, black etc. ) such as are to be actually found on the Ram-gadh hill even to-day ( See Ch. III ).

#### ARGUMENT NO. 4

The inscription in the times of the Vākātaka Prince Pravarsena II ( known as Rddhapur plates, found in the village of that name in Amraoti District ) records donation by his mother Prabhāvatī Gupta. It starts with the words रामगिरिस्वामिनः पादमुल्लत्. That means it was issued ' from the feet of the Lord of Rāmagiri. ' Vākātakas ruled over Vidarbha. No other place except Ramtek is to found in Vidarbha to day, the name of which can be shown to be so similar or akin to that of Rāmagiri. Hence Ramtek is identical with the Rāmagiri mentioned in the inscription, and also with the Rāmagiri of Kālidāsa. Epigraphical evidence is and must be considered as of first-rate importance. With a view to support this proposition still further, the Professor goes on merrily to build up the following theory :

K was a court-poet of Candraguta II, whose daughter Prabhāvatī Gupta was given in marriage to the Vākātaka Prince Rudrasen II, who ruled over Vidarbha with Nandivardhana as its capital. Due to the premature death of Rudrasen, Prabhāvatī assumed the responsibilities of the Government and acted as a regent during the minority of her son Pravarsen II. Candragupta deputed some of his officers to Vidarbha to assist Prabhāvatī in her onerous duties. K was one of them. K thus naturally got an opportunity to stay in Vidarbha. As the Ramtek hill ( the then Rāmagiri ) is situated at a distance of only a few miles from Nandivardhan, the old capital of Vākātakas, K must have visited it often and there it was that K got the brilliant idea or inspiration for his Meghadūta. Hence, it is not surprising if K has chosen and described the Ramtek hill as the Rāmagiri in his Me.

#### REFUTATION

The word ' Rāmagiri ' in the said inscription is regarded by Prof. Mirashi as the main prop or even as a trump-card. In fact, this argument is the burden of his song. His contention, therefore, must be dealt with rather exhaustively. It would be well to enter a *caveat* here against the danger of accepting theories, however ingenious, attractive or even plausible, without positive proof.



In the first place it is problematic whether K flourished in the fourth century. For ought we know, he may have lived in the first century B. C. as well. It is not yet proved beyond doubt that he actually belonged to the Court of Candragupta II, and much less that he actually served the Gupta king in the capacity of an able diplomat or administrator. Literary excellence and statesmanship generally do not dwell together even as in the case of Shri and Saraswati as mentioned by the poet himself<sup>1</sup> in one place.

The present theory, however, presupposes without any justification or data that, K in addition to his poetical qualities also possessed diplomatic skill and administrative capacity, and that too, to such a degree that his master Candragupta II should think of lending the services of this poet-cum-diplomat to his daughter Prabhaṅgavati during her supposed embarrassment. The theorist is trying to make bricks without hay. The proposition, to say the least, puts a heavy strain on the reader's imagination, and in the absence of positive proof sounds highly improbable and is a difficult pill to swallow.

Then again, it is extremely doubtful whether the word Rāmagiri in the inscription, found at Riddhapur in Amraoti District, refers to Ramtek at all. Mirashi tacitly assumes that the place (Rāmagiri of the inscription) must be taken to be in Vidarbha,—which is wrong. It was customary in those days for members of the Royal family to visit the sacred places even outside their territory and make their grants from there. Numerous inscriptional records are in evidence to prove the fact. Now is it not probable that there may have been other hills known in those days as Rāmagiri or the hill of Rāma? Can anybody vouchsafe today that in the times of Kālidāsa or Prabhāvatī there did not exist any other Rāmagiri either in Vidarbha itself or throughout the whole country? Besides, what guarantee or evidence is there to show that Ramrek was *then* known as Rāmagiri?

Then the Professor presumes that 'the Lord of Rāmagiri' in the inscription meant Rāma or Rāmacandra and further argues

1 Raghu VI. 29. Also Cf. Kalidasa's own saying :

प्रायेण सामग्र्यविधौ गुणानां पराङ्मुखी विश्वसृजः प्रवृत्तिः । Ks. III. 28.

Generally speaking, the combination of various virtues or qualities, is rarely to be found in one person,—particularly those, which are incompatible with each other.

that only his *pādukās* (and not his full image) were installed there (at Ramtek) for worship! But, the astounding proposition is advanced without any basis or proof whatsoever. First of all, there is nothing to show who was the presiding deity of Rāmagiri<sup>1</sup>. Mirashi himself contends that Prabhāvatī was a devotee of Viṣṇu as seen from another inscription, which begins after her salutation to Viṣṇu. On his own showing therefore, the Lord of Rāmagiri may be Viṣṇu as well. But that does not suit him. Mirashi wants to connect these 'feet of the Lord of Rāmagiri' with K's allusion in Me viz. रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं etc. But we shall discuss the utter impossibility of such a proposition a little later. Mirashi wants us to believe (1) that Ramtek is identical with Rāmagiri; (2) that there was here a temple on Ramtek even in the 4th century; (3) that this temple contained only the *pādukās* of Rāma (and not the full image); (4) that only the *pādukās* here were worshipped in the times of the Vākātakas; (5) that the पादमूल in the inscription represents the two stone *pādukās* of the Lord of Rāmagiri; and that (6) Prabhāvatī Guptā issued her grant from here.

None of these propositions however can be substantiated on the strength of the dubious inscription, as shown above.

But the real point is different altogether. We wish to emphasise here, that even if we were to accept all the reasoning of Prof. Mirashi in this context as valid, even then his purpose is not

1. S. R. Tikekar has expressed the view that the word Rāmagiri in the inscription does not refer either to a hill or even to a deity but that it may be the name of a girl or gosavi (saint). He also points out that one देवनंदस्वामी is mentioned at the end as a messenger-which name appears to be similar to रामगिरि स्वामी. Prof. Mirashi of course contents this view. One thing however may be pointed out here in support of Shri Tikekar's conjecture. Strangely enough this a ward of Prabhāvatī does not mention the names of donees at all. This is very supprising and looks almost impossible. The record purports to denote certain lands to Brahmins of तैत्तिरीय शाखा and belonging to पाराशर गोत्र. Can it be that a person by name रामगिरि was the religious head of the group of those Brahmins? That may partially explain why the donees were not mentioned.

It may further be pointed out that the phrase पादमूलात् is used with reference to a living person also.

नाहं गच्छामि दुष्यन्तं नास्मि पुत्रहितं पिणी

पादमूले वसिष्ठ्यामि महर्षेर्भोजितात्मनः M. Bh. Ādiparvan 96-25.



served. Ramtek still remains unproved. Let us assume for argument's sake that Ramtek was in the 5th century known as Rāmāgiri. But the difficulty is that it cannot be the Rāmāgiri of Kālidāsa, as described in his Meghadūta. Let us suppose that the Vākātaka queen Prabhāvatī went to Ramtek and from there issued her grant under notice, from 'the feet of the Lord of Rāmāgiri' i. e. to say from the feet of the image of Rāma installed there. And yet it is not enough. There are other prerequisites. Kālidāsa provides us with two unmistakable pointers in रघुपतिपदैः अकितं and जनकतनयास्तानपुण्योदकेषु. It is abundantly clear that the poet was referring to a hill, which in his mind was connected-not with the feet of an idol of Rāma nor his pādūkās (Pair of carved stone steps) but with his actual foot-prints i. e. to say where he had come and stayed and moved about along with Sītā during his banishment. We have seen that Ramtek in Vidarbha cannot lie on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma and as such could never have afforded shelter to Rāma and Sītā during their exile. And hence even if we concede that Ramtek is the Rāmāgiri of Prabhāvatī's inscription, it is certainly not the Rāmāgiri of Kālidāsa's Meghadūta. Merely because the word Rāmāgiri is found in the inscription, it is hardly scientific to start proclaiming to the world that Kālidāsa's Rāmāgiri is found. It is still more undesirable to be adamant about it. Epigraphy is not everything. An inscriptional record, with all its utility, has its own limitations and it is evident that it can be used, only subject to other considerations. Unfortunately the Professor loses sight of the fact, that in addition to the name Rāmāgiri, Meghadūta lays down important historical and topographical clues or characteristics. On considering them Ramtek fails, inspite of its supposed mention in Prabhāvatī's inscription.

Incidentally, a small but significant point may be mentioned here. If, as Mirashi would have us believe, Kālidāsa was familiar with the Ramtek hill because of his visits to that place, this fact goes much against his own theory. For, in that case, we can confidently say that K is not at all describing the Ramtek hill in his Me ! If he had in mind Ramtek for his Rāmāgiri, and wanted to describe it, it does not need much of imagination to see that K, in that case, would have given us a totally different picture of the hill.



Lastly, we have to point out that the Rāmagiri of Prabhāvatī's inscription may well be our Ramgadh hill in Madhya Pradesh. The Balaghat<sup>1</sup> inscription of the Vākātaka Prince Prithvisena II records that the ruler of Mahākosal (along with those of Mālava and Mekhala countries) was a fundatory of his father Narendrasena<sup>2</sup> (son of Pravarasena II). Thus in the times of Pravarasena II and his mother Prabhāvatī, the Vākātakas may fairly be presumed to be the overlords of the region of Mahākosal i. e. modern Chhattisgarh.

If Ramgadh situated in Mahākosal was then renowned and held sacred as the hill of Rāma, which it must have been, it is possible—nay, even very probable, that the religious-minded Vākātaka queen Prabhāvatī should pay a visit to it.

If so, the Rāmagiri referred to in her inscription beginning with रामगिरिस्वामिनः पादमूलात् is evidently our Ramgadh hill.

#### ARGUMENT NO. 5

The Ramtek hill is to be identified with the Śaivala (शैवल) mountain of Rāmāyana described therein as the southern limit of the Dandakāranya forest ( दिव्यशैवलयोर्मध्ये ). As Śambuka was practising penance on that hill, Rāma came there and killed him. This explains Kālidāsa's description viz. रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं etc.

#### REFUTATION

The argument should not have been advanced at all. For his proposition and the name Śaivala, Mirashi relies on two obscure and dubious manuscripts of a much later date, the historical worth of which is highly questionable. The inherent improbability of Ramtek being identical with Śaivala<sup>3</sup> is much too glaring and patent. Among other things, the Śaivala mountain, which represents the southern limit of D forest, obviously cannot be so close to the Vindhya, it's northern limit. It may be recalled that the Yadava inscription on the hill, which refers to it as तपगिरि or सिद्धगिरि, does not mention the name Śaival at all. Moreover the Śambuka incident occurs at the fag-end of the Rāma story i. e. in the last Chapter ( उत्तरकांड ) of Rāmāyana, and does not pertain to the

1 The districts of Balaghat and Bhandara actually formed part of the Vākātaka territory. ( Mirashi p. 54 ).

2 कोसलमेकलमालवाधिपतिभिः अभ्यर्चितशसनः ।

3 For our identification of Mount Śaivala with the Nagarjuna hills in Andhra, see Ch. II.

Vanavāsa period. Rāma alone is described to have come for killing Śambuk and was not accompanied by Sītā. During that period of time, poor Sītā, discarded by Rāma, was putting up with her two sons in the sacred Āśrama of the sage Vālmiki! Megha-dūta contemplates a hill treaded over not only by the great Rāma but also rendered sacred by the purificatory baths of Sītā (जनकतनयास्नानपुष्पोदकेषु v. 1). Thus even if we assume, for the sake of argument, the alleged Ramtek-Saivala identity and the arrival of Rāma there for—Śambuka's assassination, yet it is in no way helpful to the Ramtek hypothesis. On the top of it all, the manuscript itself, on which Mirashi relies for support, contains two verses,<sup>1</sup> which expressly mention that Rāma had never come to the Saivala mountain before the Śambuk incident! That means it was never visited before by Rāma, and much less by Rāma and Sītā during their exile. Thus, the Professor leans on a broken reed indeed. Mirashi however seems to have given up the Śambuk-Saivala argument (p. 44) although he has included it in his recent book. So it may not now be dealt with very seriously or exhaustively, as was required to be done in my Marathi work. I had shown therein that Ramtek, or any place in Vidarbha, cannot be identical with the Saivala mountain where Rāma is said to have killed Śambuka. (According to us, Saivala should be identified with (Shri) Śāilya mountain in Andhra. We have already given our reasons in Ch. II).

#### ARGUMENT No. 6

Dandakāranya forest was in Vidarbha ("दंडकारण्य विदर्भात्च होतें"<sup>2</sup>). Rāmāyana gives us its location. Rāma learns from Agastya that Śveta, who was formerly the king of Vidarbha, was practising penance in a barren forest. So Rāma enquired—

भगवन्स्तद्धनं घोरं तपस्तप्यति यत्र सः

श्वेतो वेदमन्को राजा कथं तदमृगद्विजम् । Uttara kānde 79.2

1 Rāma says to Laxman —

बभाषे लक्ष्मणं सोऽथ क्वचित् दृष्टः स्वयानघ  
एवं गुणैः समायुक्तो गिरी रम्यः सुमित्रज  
चित्रकूटादिलंकान्तं भ्रातं तु बहुविस्तरम्  
न श्रुतं न मया दृष्टं इष्टं सर्वजनस्य वै

Verses 42, 43, सिद्धरगिरिमहात्म्य Chapter XIII.

2 Probably Prof. Mirashi wanted to convey by this statement that Vidarbha was included in D forest.



How was the forest turned barren, where the Vidarbha king was practising penance? Agastya answered this question by relating the story of king Daṇḍa. Daṇḍa had his kingdom in the region between Vindhya and Śaivala mountains. As the result of a curse, Daṇḍa's kingdom perished and a wild forest grew up there.

तस्यासौ दण्डविषयो विन्ध्यशैवल्योर्नृप

ततः प्रभृति काकुत्स्थ दण्डकारण्यमुच्यते 81.18-19.

The land, to which people from Daṇḍa's country repaired, came to be called Janasthāna.

तपस्विनः स्थिता ह्यत्र जनस्थानमतोऽभवत् । 81.20.

Hence the conclusion, that the once affluent Vidarbha country due to the curse became a forest and got the name Daṇḍakarāṇya in the times of Rāmāyana.

—Prof. Mirashi's Marathi article in  
Sanjaya, July 1959, pp.115-6.

#### REFUTATION

Prof. Mirashi appears to adopt different and contradictory positions or stand-points at different times, as would suit the exigencies of his case. At one time, he was pointedly insisting that sites in the Meghadūta must *not* be searched and identified with the help or in the light of the Rāma episode or the Rāmāyana (p. 44). One does not know whether he conveniently forgot that he himself was doing so, when he made an unsuccessful attempt to connect Rāma with Ramtek on the basis of the unhelpful<sup>1</sup> Śambuka episode in Vālmiki's epic. My line of reasoning in the previous work was, that Rāmāgiri, in view of K's oft-quoted allusions, must be placed on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma and that any hill or mountain which is not so, can have no claims in the matter.

But Prof. Mirashi would have none of it, and kept insisting on his 'pound of flesh', perhaps because he became apprehensive that the Rāmāyana business would create difficulties in the way of Ramtek. However as the controversy went on, it became increasingly clear that the Rāmāgiri in Me. must be located on the Vanavāsa route i. e. in the D forest. Prof. Mirashi, it appears,

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed refutation of the 'Sambuka-Saivala' argument of Prof. Mirashi, see Ch. I of my Marathi work.



was constrained to appreciate the force of the argument, as can be seen from his recent efforts for the search of the D forest. It appeared necessary to 'connect' Ramtek area i. e. Vidarbha with the ancient D forest. In his anxiety, Prof. Mirashi now turned to the Rāmāyana and on that authority has at long last found D forest in Vidarbha ! An amazing discovery indeed ! But in shifting his stand thus, and putting his case on a new footing, the learned partisan of Ramtek has landed himself into fresh troubles and has made matters worse for himself. He quotes from Rāmāyana to support his totally new stand viz. that Vidarbha formed part of the D forest. But unfortunately, the authority on which he relies proves exactly the opposite of what he is out to prove thereby. For, it clearly shows that Vidarbha was *outside* the limits of Dandakāranya ! We only need quote the following verses to serve our purpose :

King Śveta of Vidarbha, on whom Mirashi relies, relates his own story thus—

पुरा वैदभंको राजा पिता मम महायशः  
 सुदेव इति विख्यातः त्रिषु लोकेषु वीर्यवान्  
 तस्य पुत्रद्वयं ब्रह्मन्द्राम्यां स्त्रीभ्यामजायत  
 अहं श्वेत इति ख्यातो यवीयान् सुरधोऽभवत्  
 ततः पितरि स्वयति पीरा मामभ्यपेक्षयन्  
 तत्र हि कृतवान् राज्यं धर्म्यं च सुसमाहितः  
 एवं वर्षसहस्राणि समतीतानि सुव्रत  
 राज्यं कारयतो ब्रह्मन्प्रजा धर्मेण रक्षतः  
 सोऽहं निमित्ते कस्मिंश्चित् विज्ञातायुर्द्विजोत्तम  
 कालधर्मं हृदि न्यस्य ततो वनमुपागमम्  
 सोऽहं वनमिदं दुर्गं मृगपक्षिविर्वाजितम्  
 तपश्चतुर्षु प्रविष्टोऽस्मि समीपे सरसः शुभे  
 भ्रातरं सुरधं राज्ये अभिषिच्य महीपतिम्  
 इदं सरः समासाद्य तपस्तप्तं मया चिरम्

—Verses 3-9, Ch. 78 of Uttarakānda.

The passage states in the most unambiguous terms that Śveta, after ruling over Vidarbha for a considerable time, left the throne. He then placed his younger brother Suratha on the throne of Vidarbha and thereafter went over, for penance, to the wild and

unoccupied forest. That was the Dandakāranya, which was *already* rendered like that due to the curse of *Danda*, mentioned above. King Danda had lived in Krita age<sup>1</sup>, while Śweta flourished in Treta age. That is to say the D forest had come into existence thousands of years before the times of Śweta, who ruled over Vidarbha country quite alright. The matter needs no comment. It may be noted that this cursed king Danda had nothing to do with Vidarbha, his dominions lying somewhere between the two mountains Vindhya and Śaivala. Danda's dominions, according to Rāmāyaṇa, are identical with the forest region to which King Śweta went over after leaving the kingdom of Vidarbha safely in the charge of his younger brother Suratha. Had the Vidarbha country been turned into the D forest, the Rāmāyaṇa would say so specifically. On the contrary, the epic clearly states in the above-quoted passage, as also elsewhere, that the Vidarbha country was quite different from and lay outside the limits of the Dandakāranya forest ! Thus Prof. Mirashi, in avoiding Scylla has fallen into Charybdis. His belated and desperate attempt to take recourse to the Rāmāyaṇa thus recoils on him and must fail. As mentioned in the षट्कुटीरभातन्याय<sup>2</sup> story, unfortunately the Professor has exactly come up against the very thing, which he was striving to bypass so far. He cannot convert Vidarbha, the fair, fertile and flourishing country of Rāmāyaṇa, as well as of Raghuvamśa, into a wild and barren forest, much as it may suit his theory. There is no warrant for it. Ramtek being in Vidarbha (i. e. outside the D forest) is not the Rāmgiri of Kālidāsa.

#### ARGUMENT No. 7

In the 4th century, during the times of Vākātakas, only the 'Pādukās' (pair of carved stone steps) of Rāma on the Ramtek hill were worshipped. It is evident that Kālidāsa's allusion रघुपतिपदेः अंकितं मेखलामु confirms the worship of the 'Pādukās' on the hill in

1 Ibid, Chs. 77 to 79.

2 षट्कुटीरभातन्याय—The maxim of day break near a toll station. It takes its origin from the attempt of one, (say, a cartman who with the intention of avoiding a toll, takes at night an unfrequented] road, but unfortunately finds himself at day-break, near that very toll-station, and is obliged to pay the toll which he studiously tried to avoid. Thus the maxim is used to denote the occurrence of that, which one studiously tries to avoid (Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary, revised edition).



those times (p. 14). रघुपतिपदैः in Me denotes the stone पादुकाs on Ramtek (p. 32). In ancient times it was customary to add स्वामिन् to the name of विष्णु, and ईश्वर to that of शिव. Hence रामगिरि-स्वामिन् in the inscription of Prabhāvatī denotes and stands for the Rāma incarnation. From this we can readily infer that there was a temple of Rāma on Rāmagiri, i. e. Ramtek (P. 31).

### REFUTATION

In trying to rely on the stone पादुकाs of Rāma at Ramtek, Prof. Mirashi is leaning on a broken reed indeed. The expression रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं in Me is obviously not meant to refer<sup>1</sup> either to the पादुकाs in stone, or to the feet of the idol, that may or may not be in existence on the hill during the period in question. The plain meaning of the expression is that the hill Rāmagiri, at some time in the past, had become, so to say, honoured with the foot-prints of the great Rāma, i. e. Rāma was supposed to have stayed here, of course temporarily, during his banishment. This meaning is reassuringly confirmed by another suggestive phrase of Kālidāsa, जनकतनयास्नानपुष्पोदकेषु. The plural पदैः ( which in Sanskrit means at least more than two ) evidently cannot be taken to mean पादुकाs which are always two in number. पदैः must and does mean foot-prints<sup>1</sup>. The root अङ् also means to mark or to stamp, so that अंकितं would mean marked or stamped with. The term मेखलासु ( again plural ) also may be noted. पादुकाs could be at one place only and certainly not all over the slopes of the mountain ! Thus Kālidāsa's expression, on a proper grammatical construction, does not admit of Mirashi's strange interpretation. If K wanted to refer to pādūkās, he would have used the word पादुका itself which he has actually used elsewhere<sup>2</sup>.

He has sadly missed the whole point, and, what is sadder still, he is found energetically defending an indefensible position. Mirashi's statement that in former times, the stone pādūkās and not the idol of Rāma were worshipped at Ramtek, is absolutely unwarranted and made without any basis or authority whatsoever.

1 V. S. Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary or any other lexicon. Apte gives the following example of the use of पदैः in the sense of foot-prints : पदैः गृह्यते चोरः ।

2 Bharata at Citrakūṭa asked of Rama for a pair of his wooden slippers—ययाचे पादुके पद्मात्कृतुं राज्याधिदेवते । Note the dual.—Raghu. 12.17.



There is no evidence that such a custom ever existed in ancient times. The proposition is fantastic, and is obviously advanced in order to connect the present stone-pādukās on Ramtek with Rāma's foot-prints in V. 12 (रघुपतिपदेः). The attempt, however, is futile and must fail. As for the word Rāmagiri, it has already been pointed out that it does not refer to the Ramtek hill; and even if it did, it cannot represent the Rāmagiri in Meghadūta.

#### ARGUMENT No. 8

The Māla land is to be identified with the region around Sheoni—Chhapara, i. e. north of Ramtek (Nagpur), and Āmrakūṭa with some hill in the Satpura range. विशीर्णा or the shattered Revā is to be placed near Hoshangabad. विशीर्णा is to be interpreted as dried up, because of the scorching heat in summer. Naturally, therefore, the stream would be broken up into many currents due to scarcity of water, and that is why the poet called it विशीर्णा.

#### REFUTATION

The real snag in the whole argument is that these identifications are proposed on the assumption that Ramtek is Rāmagiri. No reasoning is however offered why the particular sites suggested by him should be accepted.

The correct, scientific, and logical process would be to deduce the location of R from adjoining places. Curiously enough, Mirashi takes for granted which he is out to prove. Moreover, the distance between Ramtek and Sheoni appears to be rather disproportionately long (approximately 50 miles). Meghadūta would rather have Māla much closer. Mirashi's Āmrakūṭa is not fixed! He vaguely alludes to some hill in the Satpura range, which according to him, may have been known as Āmrakūṭa in ancient times.

Now, as for his amazing interpretation of the word विशीर्णा (in the sense of 'dried up'), the point has been already discussed in detail (Chs. I and III). No commentator, ancient or modern, suggests the 'dried up' meaning of विशीर्ण रेवा. The whole of the Pūrva-Megha is nothing but a series of characteristic pen-pictures of the rainy season. And Mirashi wants us to believe, that the scattered Revā represents an impoverished dried up stream with scant water in it, and consequently sub-divided into small stream-lets due to summer. The learned critic is talking about chalk, while the poet talked about cheese. It is evidently

a typical scene of the hill, with streams flowing all over, due to rains. Our reasons are already recorded why the scene of scattered Revā cannot be placed near Hoshangabad, or in fact anywhere after the river once begins to flow in the plains of Malwa. Besides, the above places are being suggested on the basis of a mistaken notion about the northward journey of the cloud from Rāmāgiri. We have however shown that the initial journey of the cloud was southward, which cuts at the very root of Mirashi's proposed identifications under notice.

#### ARGUMENT No. 9

The route of the cloud is first toward north (उदङ्मुख). Malā kṣetra must therefore be located to the north of Rāmāgiri. Then the cloud is to turn to the west and thereafter again to the north. (किञ्चित् पश्चात् तत्र लवुगतिः भूप एवोत्तरेण). This route agrees with and points at Ramtek.

#### REFUTATION

The question involving the direction of the cloud's journey has been already discussed by us almost threadbare. Prof. Mirashi's argument of course is based on the current notion about the northward journey of the cloud. The error however, must be rectified in the light of the present discoveries. If Ramtek was the starting point, K would have made the cloud fly straight to Ujjayini. No reason can be assigned to take a round about way via. Māla (Sheoni-Chhapara) and also Vidiśa etc. Besides, one expects Kālidāsa in that case to refer to and describe the familiar Vidarbha rather than Daśarna. Then again, K's apology in V. 27 for circuitous way or branching off the route (वक्रः पथाः) should have come much earlier, i. e. near Mirashi's Amarvada.

Thus looking to Prof. Mirashi's contentions, it can be seen that his case was shaping the evidence, and not evidence the case. But now with the discovery of Māla to the south, and the Amarkantak identification, Ramtek loses perhaps the only strong point that could be urged in its favour, viz. its situation to the south of the river Narmada, and thus it stands shorn of the last vestige of probability, which uptil now, it appeared to possess.

#### ARGUMENT No. 10

"Feeling unhappy (or jealous) about the unanimity of views in favour of Ramtek, Mr. Paranjpe (the present writer) in



order to run a counter-theory, is boosting up Ramgadh as against Ramtek.<sup>1</sup> ( p. 36 ).

( During the controversy, Prof. Mirashi has started quoting opinions of scholars, who favoured the Ramtek identification. See at the end of his recent book under notice. )

### REFUTATION

The first part of the argument appears to attribute a motive to the present writer. To say the least, the 'charge' is not at all true and far less relevant. There is no reason on earth why any one, and least of all the present writer, should be unhappy or feel hurt by the Ramtek-Rāmagiri identity ! The question is purely academical. I did attack Ramtek in my Marathi work, as strongly as I could, for the simple reason, that on investigation, I was convinced that Ramtek was a misfit, and that it was unduly holding the field. I considered it a duty to invite attention to it. The same reason impelled me to discuss, question and refute Prof. Mirashi's ( special ) pleading in its behalf. The result is that, in return, poor Ramagadh and my humble self have come in for castigation at his hands ! Whatever that may be, higher considerations require the refutation of Ramtek. The present writer believes that the question of discovery of K's Rāmagiri is as interesting as it is vital for the purposes of further study and research concerning Kālidāsa, as also our Ancient History. There is no reason to be dogmatic. One must needs look at such problems objectively.

As for the opinions of some scholars ( four in number ), which Mirashi proudly quotes in his favour, it must be pointed out that they were formed or expressed, long before the present controversy arose. ( My present thesis in Marathi was published in July 1958 ). It would hardly be fair or proper to drag them in. Moreover, that would be doing injustice to these eminent scholars, as the issue, or the Ramgadh case presented by me, was not before them when they expressed their views. The stand or attitude, which Prof. Mirashi appears to take up in

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1 Mirashi's original statement runs as follows... या ऐकमत्याचें श्री. परांजपे यांस वैद्यम्य वाटून त्यांनीं मध्य प्रदेशाच्या सरगुजा संस्थानांतील रामगड यास रामटेकचा प्रतिस्पर्धी म्हणून उभें केलें आहे.



the present matter, is hardly fair or scientific, and makes painful reading. Either because of regional affinity or some other reason, best known to himself, the Nagpur scholar appears to have developed a Ramtek complex. Beyond a certain limit, the controversy is useless. We are inclined to believe that, eminent scholar that he is, he would not have thought it desirable to urge or persist in most of his arguments, had he not been so prepossessed and case-ridden. We get an inkling of it in his preface ( p. 9 ). The reason why the Nagpur scholar is disproportionately vehement or assertive than is usual, appears to be, as he himself observes, that " the question has assumed still greater importance, as the Govt. of Bombay<sup>1</sup> is at present thinking of raising a Kalidāsa Memorial at Ramtek." But that is more a reason, why one should be rather critical than insistent.

#### THE JAYPUR RĀMAGIRI ( Bastar )

The late M. M. Shivadas Barlinge ( an Advocate of Nagpur ) expounded the view that a hill, called ' Rāmagiri ' in Jaypur State ( now in Andhra province, 16 miles to the south of Jagadapur ), is the Rāmagiri described in Meghadūta. According to him, this lofty hill ( 2617 ft. ) has a peak and hence agrees well with the description अद्रेः शृंगं हरति पवनः etc. Advancing to the north from this place, the plateau in Bastar is reached—which is to be identified with Māla kṣetra. Then turning to the west, one comes across Amarkantak which is identical with Āmrakūta. The Nicula trees mentioned in v. 14 are to be found even to-day only in this region and not on Ramtek.

It appears that this hill may well agree with the description in Meghadūta. But it evidently cannot stand the other important crucial tests laid down for the purpose. Particularly, it will now be hit by our initial southward journey of the cloud. Besides, there would be many other difficulties. Mahi or Mahanadi, a very big river in the way, would remain unnoticed. The distance from the hill up to Amarkantak would be abnormally long ( about 250 miles ) and it would appear rather queer for the poet not to notice a single place, even for rest, during this proposed non-stop flight

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1 The Bombay State is since reconstituted and named Maharashtra ( from 1st of May 1960 ).

for the cloud. The flora and fauna are two uncertain and changing a factor to base an important conclusion upon, particularly when other considerations go against it.

### THE RAMSHEJ HILLS NEAR NASIK

Prof. K. M. Shembavanekar<sup>1</sup> has recently attempted to propound a new theory. According to him, Kālidāsa's Rāmāgiri should be identified with what are known as Ramashej hills near Nasik. The main reason which has induced the learned Professor appears to be the prevalent notion about Rāma's association with Nasik (Panchavati), which region he identifies with D forest. He also maintains, that the famous Citrakūta hill must be placed in the south near Nasik, and should be identified with Ramshej hills. Ramshej hills formerly might have been known as Rāmāgiri, and that may explain why Mallinath said रामगिरिरत्न चित्रकूटः ।

This novel theory does not bear the least scrutiny. Amongst other things, it violently shocks the topographical scheme, so accurately and elaborately described in Me. Starting northward from the Nasik region, the cloud has to keep to the Western coast and hover about in the coastal region of Gujarat (somewhere in the neighbourhood of Surat). If the cloud is now to turn towards the west, it runs the grave risk of taking itself out of the borders of India, with a prospect of embarking on the Arabian sea—which was certainly not contemplated by Kālidāsa. The order of places again is turned all topsy-turvy. The theorist probably did not care to see that his cloud would be required to face and meet the river Narmada first, then visit Ujjayini and thereafter reach Vidiśa etc. Here is a cloud aspiring to go from west to east ! But that is exactly the other way round. The difficulties of this theory are endless and it may not be considered seriously.

### RAMTEKARI (M. P.)

It appears that there is a hill known as Ramtekari near Ratanpur in Chhattisgad. Of course, there is no claim put forward in its behalf, so far as the author knows. Only recently in an article in Hindi,<sup>2</sup> I noticed a casual passing reference to the

1 Navabhārat (Marathi Periodical) Issues of July & September, 1959.

2 मेघदूत का रामगिरि: Article in Hindi by Shri Hariprasad Paldhi, kindly sent to me by Pandit S. N. Vyasa, of Ujjain.



above hill. The writer of the article of course wholly discredits the hill, as the probable Rāmāgiri in Me. But its topographical situation struck me, and I do think that the hill in question certainly deserves more notice and consideration, than it appears to have received so far. This is what the article observes :—

रतनपुर के पास की रामटेकरी भी, इसी कारण से (=विदिशा उज्जयिनी के पूर्व होने से) रामगिरि नहीं हो सकता ।.....इसके निकट का मालदा मालक्षेत्र नहीं हो सकता, क्योंकि वह भी रामटेकरीके उत्तर नहीं है ।

The writer, in effect, indicates the improbability of Ramtekari being the Rāmāgiri, and Malda the Mālākṣetra, on the ground that Ramtekari is much to the east of Vidiśa and Ujjayini and also because Malda is not situated to the north of that hill.

Thus, it appears that the Ramtekari hill near Ratanpur noticed by the writer is 'rejected by him, because it stands to the north of Malda. We have seen, however, that the cloud's route initially proceeds to the south and then after 'a little-west' wheels back again to the north to reach Amarkantak. It may, therefore, be readily seen now that, so far as the location as given in Me is concerned, this Ramtekari hill, which is to the north of Malda i. e. the Māla of Me, and to the south-east of Amarkantak i. e. Āmrakūṭa, fits in very well.<sup>1</sup> But the other tests or factors (like description, tradition, archaeological evidence, probability and so on) appear to point at Ramgadh more than this obscure hill.

### THE 'MYTHICAL HILL' THEORY

Probably the following two reasons weighed with those, who doubted the geographical existence of Rāmāgiri.

(1) Alakā—the other end—is mythical.

(2) Me is after all a lyrical fantasy. In other words, the nature of the poem is 'predominantly imaginary' such as giving 'an over-all impression of verisimilitude.'

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1 Unfortunately, I could not get the exact location of this Ramtekari hill, nor could I find it plotted on the maps. But from the reference in the article of Shri. Hariprasad, referred to above, it seems that the hill must be somewhere to the north of Malda and Ratanpur i. e. to say, very close to our Ramgadh. The reader will see, that it falls exactly on the cloud's route from Ramgadh to Amarkantak via south as shown by us.—Author.



The view no doubt derived some of its strength from the fact that Ramtek, the only powerful candidate in the field so far, could not fully satisfy the critical conscience of the discerning critics. Probably, Ramtek was tolerated, more because there was nothing else to fill up the vacuum. Far less satisfactory were considered a few other identifications (like Ramgadh) which were suggested only rarely, faintly and apologetically. We have seen how and why Ramgadh was thrown overboard. The main ground was that it was not situated to the south of the Narmada. The whole position, however, is changed, and must now stand duly corrected in the light of the present thesis. Ramgadh satisfies us on all points. The whole topographical picture in Me. therefore, deserves to be viewed and studied afresh, on the basis of the newly drawn conclusions. It is necessary to approach the question with a clean slate and an open mind, brushing aside old prejudices or prepossessions, formed consciously or unconsciously in this respect. Let us first deal with the reasoning for the 'mythical' view.

The city of Alakā, chosen as the place of destination, is referred to and described undoubtedly in a mythological and fabulous sense. The theme compelled this course. For, that city is the conventionally renowned abode of the Yakshas<sup>1</sup> and their Lord Kubera. But does that necessarily mean that Rāmagiri at the other end was also mythical? It must be borne in mind, that while Alakā is mythical, the Himalayas on which that city is situated are not so. It may also be noted that at least from Āmrakūṭa (i. e. Amar-

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1 Even the notions about the Yakshas, their King Kubera and their residence in the City of Alakā, may have a remote foundation in the early history of the Aryans. The topic is worth a separate study. The information contained in the following extract may be found important and interesting in the present context :

"Once Garhwal was the land of the famous race known as Yaksha. Alakapuri, the capital of Yakshas was situated beside the bank of Alakananda river near Mt. Kailasa. Kubera was the Emperor. Aryans used to get gold from Kubera, untill they knew gold ores. That is why Kubera was called the 'treasurer of Gods'. And it is a fact that gold was strained out of the sand and water of Alakanada till few years ago. This was a special kind of gold and the Sanskrit name for it was 'Pipilika swarna', the gold belonging to ants. In the 18th century A. D. the tribes living in the east of Kosi river were known as Kirata, Linboo, Yakha, etc."

—Journal of the M. S. Uni. of Baroda  
Vol. VIII. (March 1959) p. 88

—By A. C. Chandola.

kantak, the second station from R ) right upto the Himalayas or Mount Kailāsa, every place, big or small, is a geographical reality and can be easily identified even to-day. The only places, which could not be identified ( of course, upto now ) with certainty, were the Rāmagiri and the Māla kṣetra. Is it logical or scientific to regard only those two places, as mythical or imaginary, simply because we to-day are not able to identify them ? And that too, when they are described by the poet as directly connected with the other well-known places—like Amarkantak, Naramada, Vidiśa, Ujjayini and so on ? It is true that the Me, in a way, is a lyrical fantasy. But does that mean that everything it contains or describes is nothing but pure fiction ? We know and can verify that the places from Amarkantak right up to Kailāsa are real and that their description is faithful and realistic, though presented with a poetic touch and tinge. Prima facie, there is no reason to assume that only the first-mentioned one or two places are imaginary, unless they could be shown to be so.

The reasons, which indicate that R is not mythical, may be grouped hereunder, in brief, as follows :—

( i ) We now find that Ramgadh is situated exactly where Meghadūta places it. Ramgadh totally agrees with the description, location ( Rama's route ) and other characteristics of R mentioned by the poet.

( ii ) If K meant R to be mythical, he would not connect it with the other well-known geographical places by a well-defined route and accurately mentioned directions. ( किञ्चित् पश्चात् वज्र लघु-गतिर्भूय एवोत्तरेण etc. )

The poet, in that case, would rather have been more vague and not so specific. Now with Ramgadh as R, the distances, directions and descriptions of the cloud's journey become so accurate, appropriate and fitting that this agreement cannot be lightly dismissed as accidental.

( iii ) There is that unmistakable touch of reality or realism throughout in the description of places, right from R up to the Himalayas.

( iv ) Not a single ancient critic is found to suggest that R was mythical. On the contrary, almost all of them suggest that it was in D forest.

(v) Had R been mythical, as also the Māla land, how did the ancient critics, ( like V, St. and others ) know that Māla was to the south of R ? Obviously, they either knew the Māla kṣetra and its situation, or atleast they knew of it from the tradition to that effect, handed down to them from still older times.

(vi) It looks rather improbable for K to invent a hill, give it a name and location and then also represent ( falsely ) that it was connected with Rāma and Sītā. There was hardly any point or propriety in doing so, as the contemporary readers were sure to make it out.

(vii) From the mention of a very few but peculiar characteristics, the description of R appears to be that of a real place. ( See Chs. I and VI, where the significance of the phrases आश्रमेषु, सरसनिचुल, स्निग्ध, रघुपतिपदैः अंकितं and जनकतनयास्नानपुष्पोदकेषु is explained. Ch. VII may also be referred to in this connection.)

At one time, there may have existed some ground to induce the belief, that Ramgiri in the Me is just mythical. But now after the emergence of Ramgadh on the scene, there can hardly be any reason to doubt the geographical existence or reality of the hill in question. In a way, the whole of the present treatise is an answer to the ' mythical hill ' view-point. Among other proofs, the topographical justification of the Ramgadh proposition, which is its highest guarantee, excludes all other possibilities. The Ramgadh location is now as certain and convincing, as it can be under the circumstances. Evidence both internal and external confirms it almost with a mathematical precision.





## CHAPTER IX

### MORE ABOUT DATE, LIFE AND TIMES OF KĀLIDĀSA

*The function of a modern historian should be to disentangle legendary, fictitious, or mythological material from the purely historical and cultural data.*<sup>1</sup>

Although the question of date, provenance or history of the poet, strictly speaking, does not fall within the scope of the present inquiry, it would be worth while to see, if any sidelight is also thrown on the issue by the newly gained conclusions about R and other places, and if so to what extent. It is, therefore, proposed in this chapter to indicate in brief the extent, to which our new conclusions take us towards solving the problem. The vexed and ticklish question concerning the date ( and provenance ) of Kālidāsa yet remains one of the most controversial and unsettled problems of Indian chronology, although the question has been approached, treated and discussed from various stand-points over a century by eminent scholars, both occidental and oriental. The date of the poet, as is well-known, fluctuates from 150 B. C. ( the reign of Agnimitra ) to 4th or 5th century A. D. ( the Gupta period ), while practically all provinces in India from Kashmir to Kerala and from Vidarbha to Bengal claim him as their own. The phenomenon is not unknown or unprecedented in history, and we find a similar state of affairs in the case of the great Homer. The anonymous ballad sings :

Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,  
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

While several provinces and towns contend for Kālidāsa as well, we do not know whether he also shared the same fate as that

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction, Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas by Dr. A. D. Pusalkar, p. LXVIII.

of Homer during his lifetime. However, it is generally assumed, nay, almost taken for granted (on the strength of traditional accounts) that the great poet basked in the sunshine of royal favour and that his patron was a king Vikramāditya of Ujjayini—apart from the question who this Vikramāditya was. It must be said, however, that the 'Court-poet' theory is more assumed than proved. It may be that the then King of Ujjayini, whosoever he was, might have encouraged and honoured the poet and even bestowed occasional presents or emoluments, as a mark of appreciation for his amazing poetical qualities. But to go further and urge that K belonged to the court or was a regular court-poet, happy and affluent, enjoying all the pleasures and luxuries which his office afforded him, is a proposition, which would require positive proof. It is not often that merit is recognised or rewarded, and instances are not wanting of deserving men being neglected and even cold-shouldered or spurned, although the history records instances of generous kings who extended state-patronage to poets and pandits.

It is true that K has nowhere exhibited, like Bhavabhūti, any indication of non-recognition, rebuff or frustration in his life. But that does not necessarily mean that K could secure all he needed, or that all was well with him from beginning to end. We can imagine what Bhavabhūti's fate must have been from his well-known utterance.<sup>1</sup> Significantly enough, in Kālidasa's works we do not find even a faint allusion to kings as patrons of art or literature.

Perfectly well did he know how the courtiers or dependents had to behave rather diabolically, and even hypocritically, so as to suit the changing whims and moods of their Royal Masters. We get a revealing glimpse of it, when the General or C-in-C of the King is shown to play a hide and seek game in the first Act of the Śakuntala.

सेनापतिः (जनान्तिकम्) राखे, स्थिरप्रतिबन्धो भव । अहं तावत् स्वामि-  
नश्चित्तवृत्तिमनुवर्तिष्ये । (प्रकाशम्) प्रलपतु एव वैधेयः । ननु प्रभुरेवान्  
निदर्शनम् ।

General- (Aside i. e. to Vidūshaka) Friend ! Be of firm opposition (to the hunting expedition). As for me, I shall follow the

1 ये नाम केचिदिह नः प्रथयन्त्यवज्ञां  
जानन्तु ते किमपि तान् प्रति नैव यत्नः ।

inclination of my lord's mind. (Aloud i. e. to the king) Let this fool (Vidushaka) rave. Why, your Majesty himself is an illustration here (of how the hunting is an ideal diversion ).

On the other hand, this is what the poet has to observe regarding the behaviour of Royal Masters vis a vis their dependents :

प्रयोजनापेक्षितया प्रभूणां प्रायश्चलं गौरवमाश्रितेषु<sup>1</sup> । Ks. III. 1

And that is the reason why the great Indra, a few verses ahead, rather condescendingly pats Madana on the back, obviously to humour him :—

ऐरावतास्फालनकर्कशेन हस्तेन पस्पर्शं तदगमिद्रः । Ks. III. 22.

Similarly, Kalidāsa has not minced matters in delineating his King in *Malavikā*. Of the two dancing-masters (Ganadasa and Haradatta) attached to the court or palace, it is interesting to observe how the king exploits them, by playing one against the other.

It is doubtful whether and how far the court-atmosphere, with its intrigues and jealousies, sychophants and flatterers, could have been congenial to a person of Kalidāsa's temperament; and one is inclined to believe, that after all, he might have chosen not to hanker after or depend upon the prospect of gains from the royal treasury at the cost of his self-respect, independence and dignity. As Kalidāsa himself observes<sup>2</sup> in one place, it is a rare phenomenon for the Goddesses of Shri (Wealth) and Saraswati (Learning) to live together, whose abodes by nature are different. And probably, for aught we know, K was no exception to the rule.

### DATE

At present the whole controversy about the poet's date may be said to have boiled down to two prominent and rival views : The traditional theory of the first century B. C. and the fourth century A. D. theory. The reason why these two theories alone are considered seriously is, that a king Virkamāditya, the presumed patron of Kalidāsa, is not to be found in the intervening period.

1 Translation :—Generally, dignity (or stiffness) of powerful masters with reference to their dependents, is changed on account of and in proportion to, their being desirous of achieving a particular end in view.

2 निसर्गमित्रास्पदमेकसंस्थं अस्मिन् द्वयं श्रीश्चसरस्वती च ।

Also compare Ks. III. 28



It appears more reasonable, however, to hold that Kālidāsa flourished in the first century B. C. for additional reasons stated below, which may be considered along with the other already known arguments in favour of the first century.

1. We have already seen in Ch. 1, how in verse 2 Kālidāsa's original version must be प्रथमदिवसे and not प्रथमदिवसे which means that the Yakṣa saw the cloud not on the first but on the last day, i. e. the full-moon day of the month of Āṣadha according to the ancient custom of counting months, which is prevalent even today in Northern India. The reasons for this conclusion may be enumerated here in brief :

A. Vallabhadeva and the Tibetan translation of Me read प्रथमदिवसे. The former even strongly defends the reading with cogent reasons.

B. There are clear indications in Me that the rainy season had already set in (the appearance of the rain-bow, the lightening, the Kutaja flowers, showers on Rāmāgiri and Āmrakūṭa etc.) This position is inconsistent with the reading अषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे.

C. In Valmiki's epic we find unambiguous evidence of the fact, that the rains started in Śrāvana in the Rāmāyana times.

पूर्वोऽयं वापिको मासः श्रावणः सलिलागमः । Ki 26-14.

The four months of the rainy season were supposed to be from Śrāvana onwards. The numerous allusions of Kālidāsa himself to the months clearly indicate Śrāvana as the first month of the rainy season.<sup>1</sup> Particularly his simile नभोबीजमुष्टिं दधाना etc. ( which meant sowing operations were done in the month of Śrāvana ) in the last verse of Raghu leaves no doubt on the point. The more ancient words नभस् and नभस्य for Śrāvana and Bhādrapada respectively, were prominently the months of the rains. Both the words appear to have been derived from नभस् which means the skies. Had Āṣadha and Śrāvana instead been the two months of rain, they would have acquired these names.

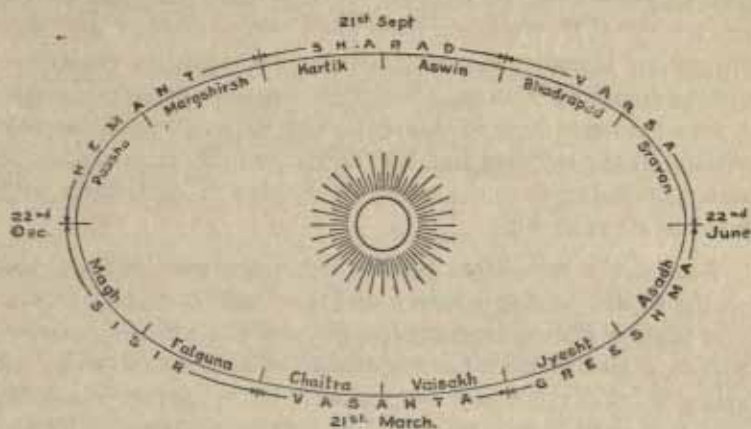
1 This topic is dealt with more fully in my paper कालिदासाचा वर्षाऋतु, read in Bharat Itihāsa Sanshodhak Mandal (June 1959). K's allusions on which we rely for our conclusion are as follows :

Raghu. 1.46, 11.7, 12.29, 14.84, 17.41, 18.6, 19.39, 19.57.

Malavika 3.21, 5.7

Ks. 5.26/27.

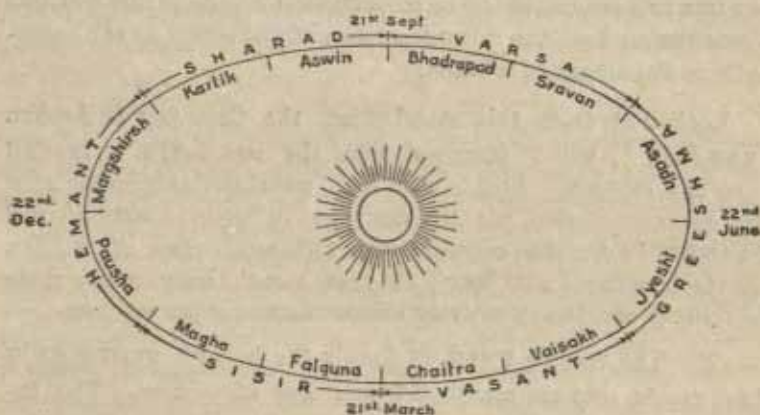
## Kālidāsa' Seasons



His rainy reason started from Śrāvapa



## Seasons from 6th century onwards



Now the rainy season starts from Āṣāḍha

D. For the rainy season to recede by one month, nearly two thousand years have to elapse. Varāhamihira flourished in the sixth century A. D. We know from his writings that in his time दक्षिणायन and therefore the rainy season were taken to commence from the month of Śrāvapa. But this was not consistent with the actual state of facts or observations. He determined the new positions of the solstices and laid down that the rainy season be counted thereafter from the month of Āṣadha in conformity with the actual state of things.

Besides, the rains begin in India first on the western coast, and then the monsoons slowly turn round the Vindhya mountains and travel towards Malwa, reaching that region about a fortnight later. Kālidāsa, therefore, must have flourished at such a time, when the starting point of the rainy season must have, roughly speaking, moved backward from Śrāvapa to the middle of Āṣadha. This is the reason, why Yakṣa saw the cloud a fortnight later, on Rāmāgiri, i. e. on the full-moon day of Āṣadha.

Moreover, in old days, as even now in some parts of the country, months were counted as ending on the full-moon day (पौर्णिमांत). In addition, *Cāturmāsya* constitutes the four months of the rainy season. The full moon day in Āṣadha was considered to be the last day of the month of Āṣadha and rains began in Śrāvapa when *Cāturmāsya* began. It should be noted that even to-day *Cāturmāsya* begins from the full moon-day of Āṣadha. It is thus a sure sign or a relic, showing or commemorating the earlier practise of considering both the rainy season and *Cāturmāsya* as commencing from the month of Śrāvapa.

Looked at from this stand-point, the first day of Āṣadha (प्रथम दिवस), will be identical with the last day, i. e. the full moon day of ज्येष्ठ. And in that case, we shall be arriving at a very queer conclusion, viz. K's rainy season began in ज्येष्ठ instead of in श्रावण! On the contrary, the full moon day of Āṣadha i. e. the last day (प्रथम दिवस) of that month very much suits the context and thus positively substantiates our proposition.

E. The reading प्रथमदिवसे hardly fits in with प्रत्यासन्ने नमसि which meant that the month Śrāvapa was impending. This inconsistency became so glaring, that Dakṣiṇāvarta in the 13th century, who wanted to retain प्रथमदिवसे, was perforce required to



change नभसि into मनसि ! His ingenuity, however, can no more succeed in doing away with नभसि, than it will, in trying to stamp out the प्रशम दिवस of K (See Ch. I for fuller discussion).

F. It is evident that one of the two readings is original, while the other was introduced subsequently. Now, supposing that the original reading was प्रथम, then there was hardly any reason at any time thereafter to change it into प्रशम. On the other hand, the later commentators or scribes had 'good' reason to take the original प्रथम as a mistake of the author, and therefore tried to rectify it by substituting प्रथम for प्रशम (a slight change which would not harm the metre). They thus attempted to bring the poet's allusion in a line with their own times, when seasons had receded, and consequently the reading प्रथम was becoming increasingly more suitable and adequate—little considering what harm they were causing thereby to the historic worth of Kālidāsa's original expression प्रशमदिवसे.

G. According to v. 107, although the curse was to end on the eleventh day of Kārtika the union was to take place on the autumnal nights with perfect moon-light ( परिणतशरद् चंद्रिकासु क्षयासु ) i. e. to say obviously the nights which mark the end of कार्तिक. Counting back four months from the last day i. e. the full-moon day of कार्तिक, we exactly get the last day of Āṣāḍha or its प्रथम-दिवस. Needless to say, that if the reading प्रथमदिवसे is accepted, Yakṣa's wife would have to wait for five months instead of four !

Thus, प्रशमदिवसे and other similar allusions of the poet already referred to, undoubtedly indicate a different scheme of seasons from the one, now in vogue. K's श्रावण-भाद्रपद represented his वर्षाऋतु, while आश्विन-कार्तिक the शरदऋतु, and so on. At least from some of his references, it clearly appears that Kālidāsa was describing the conditions in his times ( Particularly See Raghu 19. 57 ).

We have noticed, that it was since the times of Varāhamihira the celebrated astrologer of the 6th century A. D., that the beginning of Āṣāḍha in the place of Śrāvaṇa was declared, as marking the advent of दक्षिणायन—as also the advent of the rainy season. Kālidāsa, however, must have lived in such times, when श्रावण-भाद्रपद were held as the two months of वर्षाऋतु and when the rainy season actually started in the month of श्रावण (of course speaking

roughly and on an average). For obtaining K's date, it is not intended here to advance or rely on any argument based on astronomical considerations. For, any such attempt is not likely to yield reliable results, considering the uncertainty and incompleteness of the data. But one thing is fairly certain. Kālidāsa, who must be taken to have preceded Varāhamihira by some centuries atleast, cannot be assigned to the times immediately before the 6th century A. D. The two limits for K's date are fairly fixed. It is evident, therefore, that Kālidāsa must be taken back and placed rather nearer, than otherwise, to the *terminus a quo* or the earlier limit, which is generally taken to be the first or second century B. C.—of course so far as the other known facts or considerations would permit.

2. The modern Malwa, i. e. the region immediately to the North of the river Narmada has obviously derived its name from मालव (Mālava). But the country did not acquire the name मालव till the 2nd or 3rd century A. D. Till then, it was known by the still older name दशार्ण<sup>1</sup> (Daśārṇa). Now had K been somewhere nearer to the 5th century A. D. (Gupta period), as he is often assumed to be and not without some arguable reasons, one would expect him to refer to that country by its then current and popular name Mālava, rather than by the older and probably obsolete name Daśārṇa. The fact that K nowhere mentions Mālava while referring to this part of the country, with which he was very intimately connected, suggests that he flourished when that part was known as Daśārṇa and had not yet acquired the new name Mālava, which it did only after the 2nd century A. D.

3. Similarly, Vidiśa is mentioned in Me as the well-known or even widely known capital of the Daśārṇa country. (दिक्षु प्रसिद्ध-विदिशालक्षणां राजधानीं v. 24). According to Kālidāsa's own account in *Mālavikāgnimitra*, Vidiśa<sup>2</sup> was at one time being governed by Prince Agnimitra, probably as his father's Viceroy (Goptṛ). Now

1 The name Daśārṇa for Mālava is not much in evidence after the second or 3rd century in literary or epigraphical records. Mālava is found to have been used instead. According to Vatsyayana, quoted before, अपरमालव्य denoted the region around Ujjayini, while simply मालव्य meant पूर्वमालव i. e. eastern Malwa.

2 The Bharhut inscriptions also refer to Vidiśa and two Śunga princes, viz. Revatimitra and Vajimitra.



it may be noted, that Vidiṣā at no other time figures in history as a capital either before or after the Śunga period. We know that under the Guptas, Vidiṣā was certainly not the capital and Candragupta II is generally supposed to have shifted the headquarters of his Empire from Pātaliputra to Ujjayini. Thus it is almost certain that the present allusion is to Vidiṣā under the Śungas. Now if K is to be assigned to the reigning period of that Gupta monarch (4th or 5th century A. D.), it is rather difficult to see why he should have described Vidiṣā as the famous capital city, unless we believe that K was referring to its political condition obtaining four hundred years ago,—which appears to be extremely unlikely if not impossible. In that case, Vidiṣā also could have been mentioned, like Ujjayini, without the needless reference to its being a capital. It may be casually noticed, that K, in Me does not mention Ujjayini as the capital of the Avantis, while in Raghu 6.34 he does so, though indirectly. The specific mention of Vidiṣā as the capital city of that region, strongly suggests that K must have flourished either in the Śunga period, when that city was actually the capital, or; more probably in the times immediately after the Śungas when the memory of the erstwhile capital might have been yet fresh in the minds of the people. Now it appears to be extremely improbable, that K might have produced his drama *Mālavikāgnimitra* during the reign of the Śunga kings, as the picture, drawn therein of the affairs of King Agnimitra or his Queens was certainly not a very flattering one, and could hardly have been calculated to please or cheer up either the members of the Royal family or their loyal citizens of Vidiṣā. Thus, the first century B. C. again emerges as the approximate probable date of the poet.

Incidentally it may be mentioned here, that K in his *Mālavikāgnimitra* also refers to Vidiṣā to indicate the river of that name, while in Me he mentions the river *Vetravati* as flowing by the city of Vidiṣā. The river Vidiṣā obviously appears to be identical with the *Vetravati*.<sup>1</sup> And if that is so, the know-

1 The old Vidiṣā is identified with the ruins of what is now known as Besnagar, near Bhilsa. The Herodotus pillar stands near the confluence of Betwa and Bes, about two miles to the north-west of the Railway station. Besnagar probably is a corruption of Vidiṣā nagari or nagara. If that is so, the r. Bes must be the old r. Vidiṣā, known to K. Vidiṣā must have been the name of the tributary of *Vetravati* (Betwa), falling into it near the city of Vidiṣā.



ledge of both the names of the river on the part of the poet further supports our conclusion, that K was not only thoroughly acquainted with this region, but most probably, must have stayed in this part of the country atleast for some time. It may be recalled here that in Me, K offers a particularly detailed description of places in the neighbourhood of Vidiśā. Along the extensive route, perhaps no other part is more minutely and graphically described than that between Vidiśā and Ujjayini.

4. Verse 41 of Me contains the following famous or rather notorious line :

ज्ञातास्वादो विवृतजघनां को विहातुं समर्थः ।

This utterance has evoked much adverse criticism. The line represents a fine specimen of the licencious vein in which the poet is often found to indulge, when a suitable occasion presents itself. Canto VIII of the Kumārasambhava is another such instance which has been strongly criticised by critics, ever since ancient times for its overlucious descriptions, and perhaps more so for taking liberties with Divine beings in describing their love-affair and nuptial bliss.

Apart from the question whether such indulgence or licence may be justifiable or not, it evidently appears to be in tune with the taste or trend of the times in which the poet wrote. Almost the total absence of this type of poetical outburst in subsequent literary works suggests an earlier date for the poet. K must have lived in a period when such indulgence was not taboo, but on the other hand was rather relished or appreciated, and in any case, tolerated as obscenity within limits. Such a period may be placed near about the beginning of the Christian era, when dramas like Mṛcchakatikam were being produced or relished.

5. We do not find today the historical sources of K's compositions. From his Raghuvamśa it appears that for his meterial, he was drawing on some other works also than the Rāmāyana in its present form. To quote the well-known instance, his order of the kings of the Raghu dynasty is nowhere to be found except in the now discovered *Pratimā* of Bhāsa. Particularly, in works of the type of Raghuvamśa, a responsible poet may take liberties with minor details here and there, but certainly

not with the order of the kings or the main incidents in their life. K, therefore, belongs to a period—presumably the first century B. C.—when some of the notions, traditions and accounts concerning the legend or history of Rāma were somewhat different than those embodied in the present version of Vālmiki's epic, which is generally supposed to have been prepared in the second century A. D.

6. We know from K's well-known allusion, that in his times the dramas of Bhāsa, Soumilla, Kaviputra<sup>1</sup> and also some others were in vogue and were being staged, much to the liking of the elite and others in those days, when K was yet unknown and was yet to make a *debut* in the field. Strangely enough, we are still in dark as to who the 'others' were. As for those who are specifically mentioned by name, none of their works was either known or extant till 1910, in which year, owing to the energies of T. Ganapati Shastri, we for the first-time regained what are now known as the thirteen plays of Bhāsa. Even so, the other two—Soumilla and Kaviputra—are to us nothing more than mere names. If these authors and their plays were great favourites of the people in the 4th and 5th century (alleged date of Kālidāsa), one is at a loss to know why and how all of them managed to fall into an oblivion even till to-day—which looks rather improbable. It appears more reasonable to take K's date back i. e. to say nearer towards its earlier limit.

7. The inferences which we have drawn above from geographical considerations, about Kālidāsa's demonstrable acquaintance and even partiality for Vidiśa and the surrounding terrain of the first century B. C., are corroborated, to a considerable extent, by the conclusions independently arrived at, from the study of the historical background described by the poet in his *Mālavikāgnimitra*. It is now generally conceded, and rightly so, that some of the main characters at least in the drama, represent real personages, and that certain historical incidents referred to in the play must have a foundation in fact. As Prof. Wilson has rightly pointed out: "The events of his (Agnimitra's) reign, which are familiarly alluded to, were not of a character to have survived any very protracted interval in popular recollection." It, therefore, looks somewhat improbable that K in the 5th century should

1 नासकविसौमिल्लकविपुत्रादीनां प्रबंधान् etc.—*Mālavikā*, Act I.



think of producing a drama—and that too his first one—to be based on the rather uninteresting reign and affairs of a king, who had lived atleast 400 years ago and was probably forgotten by that time. It is still more improbable that K should know some of the minutest historical details concerning the period and reign of Agnimitra even after a lapse of four centuries, and further, that he should introduce them in his drama—particularly when they were needless and were to serve no purpose in the development of the theme. In short, judging from whatever is recorded in history or even in the play itself, there was hardly anything peculiar or praiseworthy in the reign, personality or achievements of Prince Agnimitra to strike, inspire or fire the imagination of a poet born four hundred years after the event.

The late Prof. S. M. Paranjpe in a critical article<sup>1</sup> has enumerated at least six items, mentioned in the drama, which are not only unimportant, but also unnecessary and not likely to be known to the poet of a much later date. They may be briefly stated as follows :—

(i) Virasen, the brother of Queen Dharmi is mentioned as of inferior caste.

(ii) Some letters are produced in the play—rather an unusual feature.

(iii) Two sub-heroines in the persons of धारिणी and इरावती are presented, while, at best, one would have sufficed even if that was necessary as a contrast to मालविका.

(iv) स (माधवसेनः) त्वया भद्रेक्षया सकलत्रसोदर्यः मोक्तव्यः (Act.1) The needless allusion to the कलत्र of माधवसेन here, is quite uncalled for as also unhelpful in any way.

(v) .....तद् यातव्यपक्षे स्थितस्य पूर्वसंकल्पितसमुन्मूलनाय वीरसेन-प्रमुखं दंडचक्रं आज्ञापय (Act. 1). What is this 'पूर्वसंकल्पित' ? There is no explanation nor any previous reference in the drama itself, to guide us as to 'what was already contemplated or decided upon.' The author obviously presupposes a पूर्वसंकल्पित and also banks upon its knowledge on the part of the people, for whom he was writing.

1 Sahitya-Sangraha (Mar) pp. 88 to 102.



(vi) विगतरोषचेतसा is the expression occurring in the message, which has arrived from General Pushpamitra to his son Prince Agnimitra. This wording from the letter again betrays a definite and detailed knowledge of the incidents described. अग्नि-मित्र's रोष or grudge is referred to, without any attempt anywhere to disclose what the grudge was about. Looking to the context, it can be easily seen that this particular expression is absolutely needless and redundant. Then why was it inserted? Obviously because people in those times, including K, knew that Prince Agnimitra and his father were not on good terms with each other, and also knew the reason for it. The General's letter of entreating अग्निमित्र to forget the past (विगतरोषचेतसा) also must have been an event of common knowledge in those times.

In addition to these items, some more may be mentioned here :-

The following verse occurs in the drama—

अचिरादिष्ठितराज्यः शत्रुः प्रकृतिष्वरुहमूलत्वात्  
नवसरोहणशियिलस्तरुश्च सुकरः समुद्धर्तुम् । (1.8).

The information which we get here, that the king of Vidarbha has very recently come to the throne, is of the same type as discussed before. Similar is the allusion to the imprisonment of the मौर्यसचिव (1.7) and again to his release as follows—

यज्ञशालमुररीकृत्य मुच्यन्तां सर्वे बंधनस्थाः (Act V)

It was not at all necessary to mention that the brother-in-law of यज्ञसेन was the former minister of the Mouryan King (probably बृहद्रथ, the last Mouryan king assassinated by Senapati Puṣyamitra). Similarly, it would have hardly made any difference from the viewpoint of the drama, had the Mouryan minister (मौर्य सचिव) been released or not released along with the other prisoners.

Some other references, like the elephants in the attacking army of Agnimitra being tied to the trees on the bank of the river Varada in the Vidarbha country (5.1), are of the same type, and point at the same conclusion.

The nature of the historical allusions, mentioned above, clearly shows that they are not invented by the poet. Even the

events of Agnimitra's reign, in general, as Prof. Wilson says, were hardly such as would be cherished by the future generations in their memory, and such less so, the irrelevant and insignificant details thereof like those noted above. From this, Prof. S. M. Paranjpe concludes that K flourished either during Agnimitra's reign, or in the period which immediately succeeded it. But, for reasons recorded above, K cannot be reasonably assigned to the Śunga period, and must therefore be placed in the first century after the Śunga rule came to an end.

The only natural and reasonable inference, therefore, that can be drawn is that K lived in the times, not far removed from Agnimitra's reign i. e. to say somewhere in the first century B. C.; and he wrote his *Mālavikāgnimitra* after the end of the Śungas, probably in Vidisha itself, when everybody remembered Prince Agnimitra, had heard about him, and had talked about him and his affairs, and when people of Vidisha were presumably interested and inclined to see a dramatic representation of the romantic events in the life of their ex-King,—which they knew to have happened in their own city only a few decades ago. The first audiences, who witnessed the performance of the new drama, must have well understood and appreciated the many historical details and allusions in it—which now appear to us to be so dry, out of context and insignificant. The choice of the theme and the way in which the poet has handled it, cannot be satisfactorily explained on any other hypothesis.

It is of course not impossible for a poet to fall back for his theme on a historical incident, belonging to the remote past. A few exceptional instances in point, are found in *Mudrārākṣasa* of Viśākṣadatta or *Devicandraguptam*. But then it must be remembered that, both the plays select and depict their heroes, respectively,—who are perhaps the most prominent and outstanding personalities—both of them Candraguptas—in the ancient history of India. Moreover, the incidents in the lives of those historical personages, around which the plot is woven, are already dramatic in themselves, and therefore, were such as would easily tempt and inspire any poet worth the name. It may be readily admitted, that both these factors were absent in the case of Prince Agnimitra. Kālidāsa chose his first theme, not because, it was attractive or remarkable enough, but because he knew that it had a



strong local appeal. The avoidable and unhelpful mention of a number of unimportant historical happenings and their details clearly indicates that the drama was produced in the times when the events—the usurpation of power by General Puśyamitra, the consequent imprisonment of मौर्यसचिव, the war with Vidarbha, the grudge of Prince अग्निमित्र against his father, etc.—had only recently occurred and were well-known and yet quite fresh in the memory of the people.

8. According to Kālidāsa, उत्तरायण commenced sometime in spring ( वसंत ऋतु ) and दक्षिणायन sometime in early winter ( शरदऋतु ). Days become longer in spring and nights in winter.

The present day definitions of उत्तरायण and दक्षिणायन have been in vogue in Astronomical literature since very ancient times. वेदांगज्योतिष, पंचसिद्धान्तिका of Varāhamihira and सूर्यसिद्धांत give the same definitions.

But it appears, that the meaning of these terms, as cited by Kālidāsa, was also accepted in the country since equally ancient times. The famous astronomer Āryabhatta, who just preceded Varāhamihira, says in the fourth chapter of his work गोलार्ध्याय, that the path of the sun consists of two parts, the northern and the southern. The part from Vernal equinox (first point of मेन) to Autumnal equinox (first point of Libra, i. e. the end point of कन्या) is the northern and the part from Autumnal equinox back again to Vernal equinox (i. e. the end point of मीन) is the southern. These two parts were already known as देवयान and पितृयान in Vedic times. The sun was on the northern side of the celestial equator in देवयान, and on the southern side in पितृयान. This is the reason why the parts were considered as उत्तरायण and दक्षिणायन respectively.<sup>1</sup>

We need not here go deeper into the subject, What is pertinent to the point under reference is, that there were two different schools or notions in this country, since ancient times, about the span, period or nature of the Dakṣiṇāyana and Uttarāyana, as stated above. The first one is the same as is prevalent even now. The other school, however, which equates Devayāna with Uttarāyana appears to be older in point of time. All the references of

1 Vide Shri T. G. Dhavale's Article in Swarajya (Mar. Weekly of Poona, 14th Nov. 1959).



the poet appear to reflect this latter tradition. Kālidāsa, therefore, very probably belonged to a period before this school or notion became obsolete,—which may fairly be placed somewhere about the first century B. C.

### KĀLIDĀSA AND VIKRAMĀDITYA

The long unbroken tradition, which associates Kālidāsa with a king Vikramāditya, certainly deserves credence. Kālidāsa, Vikramāditya and Ujjayini represent a sort of trio or eternal triangle, which is deeply rooted in the racial memory of the Hindus for centuries long. The problem, however, is like an equation having all its quantities unknown. For although Ujjayini is known, its connection with Kālidāsa or his patron Vikramāditya is more often presumed than proved. The picture becomes all the more blurred and confused by a good many kings, flitting across the pages of History, who styled themselves as Vikramāditya. Other Kālidāsas are not wanting too. The many rebald, too clever and ingenuous stories, woven fondly around the two personages, obviously appear to be invented in subsequent times.

Rāja Śekhara, in the 10th century, knew of three Kālidāsas.<sup>1</sup> Whatever exploits or incidents therefore are attributed by tradition to Vikram or Kālidāsa, may not necessarily belong to any one person bearing that name. The growth of fond, half-historical, half-invented accounts about the life and achievements of the two illustrious personages, appears to indicate that the original Vikramāditya and Kālidāsa must have enjoyed tremendous popularity during their lifetime and even thereafter. There is no wonder, therefore, that the names of Vikram and K soon became symbolic, or even synonymous for an ideal king and ideal poet,—who were ever to remain in the field thereafter, ready and fit to receive from the credulous posterity, the confused honour or tribute for any glorious and remarkable achievements in history, which however may rightfully belong to other personages of the same name, appearing subsequently on the scene.

The real problem, therefore, is like this : Did King Vikramāditya of Ujjayini, if there was one, patronise the Raghukar Kālidāsa and if so, when ? But from the data available so far,

1 एकोऽपि जीयते हन्त कालिदासो न केनचित् ।

शृंगारे ललितोद्गारे कालिदासत्रयी किमु ॥

the prospect of a satisfactory solution of this problem does not appear to be very bright or even near-at-hand, unless we luckily stumble upon a chance discovery as that of an old manuscript or an inscription, which may shed new light on the issue in question. In the meanwhile, we can only study and discuss the various theories, and attempt to determine which of them is more probable or consistent with the facts already known or newly discovered. In the period with which we are concerned, only two Vikramas or Vikramādityas, known so far, present themselves before the historian—as the probable patrons of Kālidāsa. The first is king Vikramaditya of Ujjayini in the first century B. C., who allegedly founded the era-Vikram Samvat—in 57 B. C., commemorating thereby a crushing victory over the Śakas. The second figure to come across is that of the famous Gupta Emperor Candragupta II alias Vikramāditya (380 to 412 A. D.). The latter is fancied by some scholars as the Royal patron of Kālidāsa, thus assigning him to the 4th century. It is true that Candragupta can well be called a Sakari or the extirpator of Śakas, because it was he, who finally drove them out from Malwa. Candragupta certainly arrogated to himself the proud title Vikramāditya, as seen from his coins, which fact however does not fail to suggest that there must have been some hero of that name in the past, famous for his achievements as a king, and, to bear whose name as a title was looked upon by him as a matter of pride. He thus appears to be Vikramāditya the *second* of history. Besides, the main difficulty in his case is, whether he can at all be styled as the king of Ujjayini in the proper sense of the term. It is generally assumed, but has not been proved, that Ujjayini was ever his head quarters<sup>1</sup> or even his second capital. There are some other reasons<sup>2</sup> also which point against the suggested contemporaneity of Candragupta II and Kālidāsa, which need not be mentioned here.

On the other hand, the historicity of Vikramāditya of Ujjayini, the founder of the Vikram-Samvat in 57 B. C. is also doubtful. It is true, that one cannot prove it today to the satisfaction of a questioning critic, although its probability cannot be totally ruled out<sup>3</sup>. If we proceed on the basis that Kālidāsa lived in the first century, as suggested above, we naturally expect his contempo-

1 B. C. law-Ujjayini in Ancient India p. 20.

2 For reasons, see Raj Bali Pandey's Vikramāditya of Ujjayini, pp. 69-76.

3 Vide V. A. Smith.



rary, the King Vikramāditya, to be reigning in Ujjayini in the same period. Let us see whether, and how far, it is possible to trace and size up a historical personality such as Vikramaditya of Ujjayini in the first century B. C. For that purpose it would be necessary to trace the history of Ujjayini for the relevant period.

## THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF UJJAYINI

( First Century B. C. )

Curiously enough, the chequered history of this renowned ancient city remains shrouded in mystery for about two centuries after the fall of the Mōuryan Empire. We definitely know that Ujjayini, as also Vidisha ( which, according to Pali accounts, was included at that time in the Mouryan Province of Avanti ), formed part of the great Mouryan Empire; and that, even during the reign of Aśoka, Ujjayini continued to be the Viceregal headquarters, where Aśoka himself had formerly lived for 11 years as the Viceroy of Avanti. Nothing definite, however, is known what happened thereafter. When the curtain rises again, we see Ujjayini under the rule of the Śaka Kṣatrapas ( about 1st century A. D. ) which was to last, till Candragupta II finally defeated and drove them out from Malwa. Whether or not Avanti formed part and parcel of the Magadha Empire under the Śungas, is problematical. It is doubtful if Ujjayini and even Vidisha were included in the dominions of the Kānvas, who had now usurped the suzerainty of the weak and decaying Śungas. What happened to Ujjayini in the intervening period ? No reliable evidence is forthcoming and the gap remains. One has to fill the gap only tentatively by reconstructing the past, as best as could be done, from what meagre data we possess about the period. While attempting the job, we have to suggest the following events, as having taken place in the political history of Ujjayini during the period in question :

1. The Andhras ( Sātavāhana Kings ) conquered Ujjayini from Puṣyamitra himself or the later Śungas, as also they did Vidisha a little later on, probably in 72 B. C., immediately after the Kanvas captured the throne of Magadha from Devabhūmi the last King of Śungas.

2. A local dynasty named Gardabhins ( or Garhabhilas ) sprang up. Gardabhil, its first founder, was either an ambitious independent Chieftain who seized Ujjayini—taking advantage of



the lessening hold of the Sātawāhanas, ruling from the far-removed Pratiṣṭhāna, or perhaps he was a feudatory of the Sātawāhana conquerors. Gardabhil ruled from 74 to 61 B. C.

3. The Saka Kings of the North-west ousted Gardabhil and dethroned him after invading Ujjayini in 61 B. C., at the instance of Kālaka, a Jain monk who brought the foreigners in, in order to wreak vengeance on Gardabhil for having insulted his sister.

4. Vikrama or Vikramāditya, the brave son of Gardabhil defeated the Śakas and reconquered Ujjayini from them, in 57 B. C. This brilliant and perhaps the first victory over the Śaka foreigners was destined to remain rooted in the memory of the people for long.

5. Some time after, a Sātawāhan King inflicted a crushing defeat on Vikramāditya.

6. The Śaka Kṣatrapas again established themselves as rulers of Ujjayini and the whole western territory ( First century A. D ), until they were finally defeated and driven out by Candragupta II.

It is common knowledge that atleast some Purānic accounts, formerly rejected or considered of dubious value, have now become acceptable, as they got corroboration from numismatic, palaeographic and literary evidence. There is no reason to be dogmatic, but we need not brush aside a Puranic version or discredit it simply because it does not happen to find any corroboration as yet. Better course under the circumstances would be, to accept those portions of the Purāṇas ( of course tentatively ) which, although not corroborated so far by other sources, are yet not opposed to, or inconsistent with any of the established facts or positions. Thus there seems to be no reason to doubt the historicity or atleast the probability of the events and their sequence suggested above. Now the Purāṇas would have us believe that the fall of the Śungas was followed, on the one hand, by the rise of the Kānvas, and on the other, by that of the Sātawāhanas under Simuk and his brother Krishna. The Purāṇas further state that the fall of the Kānvas was also in turn followed by the imperial power of the Sātawāhanas. Much of this account stands substantially corroborated by reliable independent evidence. It is possible to piece together a coherent story out of the scattered material, if we judiciously set right the obviously muddled and edited statements in the Purāṇas. We have to suggest here, that

when the Purāṇas refer to the rise or fall of the Andhras (Śā-tawāhan rulers), they do so (as we interpret it) with reference to happenings in Northern India. It appears from inscriptions at Nanaghat, Hathigumpha and Nasik that Puṣyamitra, Kharvel and Śātakarṇi (the third Śā-tawāhan king from Simuk) were more or less contemporaries of each other<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, Śātakarṇi is actually mentioned in the Hathigumpha inscription as Kharavela's rival<sup>2</sup>.

### Political conditions in First Century B. C.



Thus, early in the first century B. C., we find Ujjayini surrounded by three powers—Yavanas in the north, the Śungas (Vidiṣā) on the east and Andhras of Pratiṣṭhāna in the south. The Andhras in

1 See Rapson, pp. 478-82.

2 Ibid.

this region were separated only by the rivers Tapi and Narmada from the kingdoms of Ujjayini and Vidiśā, which lay along the great high-road from the western coast to Pataliputra. The incursion of the rapidly growing power of the Andhras from their western stronghold Pratisthāna, first in the direction of Ujjayini and then Vidiśā, appears almost to be established by the evidence of coins<sup>1</sup> and inscriptions<sup>2</sup>. Such an event is by no means improbable. It is not unnatural that a growing power like Andhras should aspire to cross the Narmada, and make a dash in the north to bid for supremacy and to build up their power on the ruins of the Mouryan empire. According to Rapson, it is this conquest of Ujjayini which explains the performance of the horse-sacrifice by Śātakarṇi ( of the Nanaghat inscription ) and the same fete entitled the Andhras to a place amongst the imperial dynasties mentioned in the Purāṇas. There seems little doubt therefore, that by about the middle of the first century B.C. the Andhras held sway over the region comprising Western and Eastern Malwa. That also may explain and substantiate another tradition, preserved by the Purāṇas viz. that when Śunga rule ended, one Sisunandi began to reign in Vidiśā,—the maternal uncle of Sisuk ( Simuka ) who was evidently no other than the first Śātawāhana ruler<sup>3</sup>. Sisunandi probably must have been appointed as the governor of Vidiśā by the Śātawāhana conquerors.

Now, Purāṇas speak of seven Gardabhilas, as forming a local dynasty, with 87 years allotted for their reign, but do not connect them with Ujjayini. They rather mention these kings among the successors of the Andhras. But again, we may interpret this statement ( which otherwise becomes baffling and inexplicable ) on the same lines indicated before. The Puranic statement in this case also must be understood to refer only to events in the north-

1 " Numismatic testimony, if it has been rightly interpreted, shows that at this period, the Andhras had traversed the intervening territories and conquered the kingdom of Ujjayini. Their earliest known coins bear the name of King Sata...They are of Malwa fabric " Rapson pp 478-9.

2 An inscription (No. 346) on one of the Bhilsa topes records a devotion made in the reign of a king Shatakarni who cannot be identified more precisely, but who must certainly have been an Andhra..There is now a general consensus among archaeologists that it probably belongs to about the middle of first century B. C. — Ibid. pp. 480-1.

3 Raychaudhari, p. 330.



ern India. Gardabhils were the successors of the Andhras in the north, i. e. to say they replaced the Andhras in the region of Malwa, or Ujjayini. That means, the rise of the Gardabhil dynasty took place after the waning or end of the Andhra power in Malwa, i. e. northern India, which alone was considered to be the Āryāvarta or Bhāratvarṣa. This construction, which we propose, gains in plausibility, as we do not find any trace of a dynasty of this name in history after the total disappearance of the Andhras from the political scene in the 3rd century. We shall presently see how the the Gardabhins of the Purāṇas can reasonably be conneted with Ujjayini.

There is a very strong Jain tradition, preserved in their works which avers that the Gardabhilla dynasty, founded by the most celebrated of its kings, ruled Ujjayini. Gardabhilla may have been an adventure, independent chieftain or a feudatory, left behind by the Śātavāhana conquerer of Ujjayini. In the latter case, it may perhaps explain partially the account, that Vikramāditya came from Pratiśthana. Gardabhilla reigned from 74 to 61 B. C.<sup>1</sup> He offered violence to Saraswati, the sister of Kālakāchārya (a Jain monk) who in revenge uprooted Gardabhilla and established the Śaka Kings at Ujjayini. Gardabhilla's son Vikramāditya destroyed the Sakas<sup>2</sup> and inaugurated the era.<sup>3</sup> Some time after, it appears, that a war broke out between Vikramāditya and the Śātvāhanas in which the former suffered a defeat. The Jain Vividha-tirtha-kalpa credits a powerful Śātvāhana Prince of Pratiśthāna in Maharashtra with the inauguration of an era (the Vikrama era by implication) in commemoration of his victory in a battle with the Mālava ruler Vikramāditya of Ujjayini or Avanti, who was forced to retreat at last to his own territory. That is possibly the reason why in some works Śātavāhana (or Śāli-vāhana) is called a son (political successor?) of Vikramāditya.

1 Vide तीर्थोद्धार प्रकीर्णक quoted in P. C. Naher's Epitome of Jainism Appendix A—pp. ii-iii.

2 One is tempted to trace an echo of this incident in the following lines of K, describing Prince Raghu :

आयोघनाग्रसरतां स्वयि वीर याते

किं वा रिपूस्तव गुरुः स्वयमुच्छिनत्ति ॥ (Raghu. 5.71)

Did K herein hint at the brilliant fete of his patron Vikramāditya?

3 Dr. Nanda Lal Dey's Geographical Dictionary. This account is found in various Jain works and Pattavālies.

It was after these events that Śāka Kṣatrapas of the West came and ruled in Ujjayini, till Candragupta II finally expelled them from this part of the country. It may be recalled that Goutamiputra Śātakarṇi was also known and praised as *Vara-Vārāpa-Vikrama* and *Cāru-Vikrama*, which fact has even led some scholars to regard him as the 'original *Vikramāditya*'. It is possible, that in course of time the earlier Śātakarṇi ( of the Nanaghat inscription ) was confounded with this 'Vikrama' Śātakarṇi—who in turn may have been taken for the *Vikramāditya* of Ujjayini.

Rapson's analysis of the Kālakāchārya episode from the viewpoint of its historic worth is worth quoting here :—

" This legend is perhaps not totally devoid of all historical interest. For it records how the Jain saint Kalaka, having been insulted by king Gardabhilla of Ujjain, who according to various traditions, was the father of the famous *Vikramāditya*, went in his desire for revenge to the land of the Cakas, whose king was styled ' king of kings ' ( *Sahanusahi* ). This title, in its Greek and Indian forms, was certainly borne by the Caka kings of the Punjab, Maues and his successors, who belong to this period; and as it actually appears in the form *shaonano shao* on the coins of their successors, the Kushana monarchs, we are perhaps justified in concluding that the legend is to some extent historical in character. However this may be, the story goes on to tell us that Kalaka persuaded a number of Caka satraps to invade Ujjain and overthrow the dynasty of Gardabhilla; but that, some years afterwards, his son, the glorious *Vikramāditya*, repelled the invaders and re-established the throne of his ancestors. What the historical foundation of this legend may be, is wholly uncertain. Perhaps it contains faint recollections of the Scythian dominion in Western India during the first century B. C. In any case, it seems undoubtedly to give further proof of the connexion of the Jain with Ujjain, a fact indicated also by their use of the *Vikrama* era, which was established in the country of Malwa, of which Ujjain was the capital. " —Rapson, pp. 149-50.

The same authority elsewhere rightly concludes about Kālakāchārya incident thus :

" The story can neither be proved nor disproved; but it may be said in its favour that its historical setting is not inconsistent

with what we know of the political circumstances of Ujjayini at this period"<sup>1</sup>.

Thus the historical picture of Ujjayini in the first century is, as yet, by no means distinct or wholly visible. But from all accounts, the conclusion seems to be irresistible that there was a king Vikramāditya in that period, who fought the Śakas and expelled them for the first time. His name and exploits probably provided the original nucleus for the confused Vikrama saga—developed subsequently around that name, as he ever remained in the field to receive and retain the glory and honours which perhaps legitimately belonged to different Vikramādityas that preceded or came after him.

### CONCLUSION

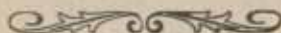
If, therefore, we believe the tradition about Vikramāditya of Ujjayini being the patron or contemporary of Kālidāsa, and if we accept that K lived and produced his *Me* and particularly his *Mālavikāgnimitra*, in times immediately after the end of the Śunga period as shown above, then we have no other alternative but to presume the reign of a king Vikramāditya round about that intriguing year, viz. 57 B. C. As is well-known, the undying tradition about an illustrious king Vikramāditya of Ujjayini in the first century B. C.—a brave, daring, benevolent and generous Prince as also the founder of the Vikram Samvat—is supported by detailed Jain records, which appear to be genuine historical documents. We have already seen, that there is nothing to discredit the Jain story of Kālakācharya. On the other hand, it fits in well with the historical setting of that period. Nor is there anything inherently improbable about the first century B. C.—the suggested date for the poet. There is hardly any circumstance, formerly recorded or newly discovered, which could be shown to falsify it.

Kālidāsa, in all probability, hailed from Mahākosala, the region on the eastern frontiers of Daśarṇa or modern Malwa. He was definitely associated with the Vindhyan region around Amar-kantak, where he must have spent some of his younger days—the most impressionable age in one's life. That explains why young Kālidāsa fondly described the familiar scenes from the Vindhya hills in his first literary piece *Ṛtusambhāra*. That also

<sup>1</sup> Rapson, pp. 480-1.



explains the faithful and accurate pen-pictures in his *Meghadūta* of the hills and places in this very region. That is the reason why the Ramgadh hill in Mahākosal and the obscure Mala kṣetra nearby find a place in his poem. Eventually, the young and ambitious poet must have turned his steps towards Vidiśa and Ujjayini, which were then the well-known centres of culture and learning as well as the seats of political power. While in Vidiśa, perhaps under the rule of the Kāpvas or of Sisunandi, he must have learnt the many popular and romantic tales about the Śunga princes, whose memory was yet fresh in the minds of the people. It was most probably in Vidiśa, or at least mainly for the people of Vidiśa ( E. Malwa ), that Kālidāsa produced his first play, based on Prince Agnimitra's life, which must have immensely amused the contemporary audiences as they knew its historical background very well. Ultimately, however, our poet must have gone over to Ujjayini, to find there an appreciative friend or patron in the brave and generous Prince, Vikramāditya, with whose name his own was to be linked, ever after to be remembered by future generations.



P. S. Only recently, I came across an important reference in F. E. Pargiter's work, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*. The learned author has recorded therein, an old tradition about the existence of Rāmagiri hill in Chhattisgad area. This is what he observes on pp. 277-8 :—

... That was probably the Chhattisgad District, because that was called Dakṣiṇa Kosala, and *in it was a hill called Ramagiri*. His ( Rama's ) long stay there would have connected it with his home, Kosala. Hence probably arose its name ( viz. Dakṣiṇa Kosala. )

It needs hardly be mentioned how the tradition supports our identification of the Ramgad hill, which is situated in Chhattisgad itself. It may be considered along with the other evidence about tradition, noted in ch. III ( pp. 152-165. )

-Author.

TABLES

1. Geographical places mentioned in Meghadūta.

2. A comparative table noting the location, special features and characteristics of the Rāmagiri hill, mentioned in Me, and showing how they tally with Ramgadh in M. P. and how they are conspicuously absent in Ramtek near Nagpur.

3. The Direction of the cloud's journey in Meghdūta.

4. Citrakūta as described in various places in the Rāmāyaṇa :  
( A brief summary in English. )

5. Contrast between the Rāmāyaṇa-Citrakūta and the present so-called Kamtanath-Citrakūta in Bundelkhand.

6. Comparative table of Rāma's Vanavāsa route and the important places thereon, from Prayag to Panchavati or Janasthāna, as described in four places, twice in Rāmāyaṇa, and twice in K's Raghuvamśa ( from Ayodhya to Lanka and back ). It may be noted that the names of various places as also their order, are almost the same.

7. Comparative table, showing how the location and description of the Citrakūta-cave, Hathiphor tunnel and the Rkṣa-vil of Rāmāyaṇa, tally with each other.

8. Comparative table, showing similarity in the descriptions of Rāmagiri, Citrakūta and Ramgadh.

9. [ Table noting and equating the similar or parallel situations and incidents in the Rāmāyaṇa and Meghdūta, is given on p. 192, ch. VI ]



TABLE NO. 1. Geographical places mentioned in Meghadūta.

Verse No.	Name of Place	Present Location
1.	Rāmagiri	— Ramgadh hill in Madhya Pradesh.
16.	Māla	— Region ( Malda ) to the south of Ramgadh and to the north of Ratanpur.
17.	Āmrakūta	— A peak in Amarkantak range.
19.	Vindhyapāda	— Vindhyan hill in Amarkantak range over which the river Narmada descends down to the plains below.
23.	Daśarṇa	— Malwa ( Eastern Part ).
24.	Vidiśa	— Bhilsa.
24.	Vetravati	— Modern Betwa river.
25.	Nicaihgiri	— A hill near ( very probably the west of ) Bhilsa.
26.	Vananadi	— A small river, which is reached after crossing the Betwa. Probably the one which is now called Pārvatī.
27.	Ujjayini	— Ujjayini.
28.	Nirvindhya	— It may be a small tributary of Chambal between the rivers Betwa and the Kālī Sindh, probably the river called Newuj, ( or according to others the river called Parwan ), which flows in to the Kālī Sindh.
29.	Sindhu	— Identical with Kālī or Kālā Sindh which flows into the Chambal.
30.	Avantī	— Western Malwa.
31.	Siprā	— Modern Kṣipra.
33.	Gandhavati	— A small river to the west of Ujjayini ( supposed to be a tributary of Kṣiprā ).
40.	Gambhirā	— A small river in Malwa.
42.	Devagiri	— Modern Devgadh in M. P.

45. Carmapvati — Chambal river.
47. Daśapur — Mandosar.
48. Brahmāvarta — The region round about Delhi, including Sonapat, Amin, Karnal and Panipat. (Lying between the rivers Saraswati and Drṣadvatī, according to Manu ii. 17.
48. Kurukṣetra — Continuous to Brahmāvarta, a little to the south-east of Thaneshwar. Still a place of pilgrimage, especially at the time of eclipse.
49. Saraswati — One of the sacred rivers of India which flows a little to the north-west of Kurukṣetra, and runs into the desert of Marwar where it is lost in the sands.
50. Kankhal — Now the village of the same name near Hardwar on the west bank of the Ganges.
50. Gangā Nadi — The Ganges.
52. Himalayas — The Himalayās.
55. Shree Caraṇanyāsa — A sacred spot in the Himalayas so called from its having a foot-print of God Śiva. Wilson identifies it with Haraka Payari (the steps of Śiva near Hardwar.)
57. Crauñca-randra — A gap or pass in the Crauñca mountain (Himalaya) used fiamingoes as a passage to Mānasa lake.
58. Kailāsa — Mt. Kailasa.
62. Mānasa lake — The Mānasa lake.
63. Alakā — ? (Mythical abode of the Yakṣas supposed to be situated on the slopes of Mt. Kailāsa.)

TABLE NO. 2

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES<sup>1</sup> COMPARED

	RĀMAGIRI	RAMGADH	RAMTEK.
1. Description.	Lofty, imposing, towering peak, River, rivulet; or spring. Wet mineral paints.	Lofty, imposing, towering peak, River, rivulet or spring, wet mineral paints.	Short (about 500 ft.), flat-topped; no peak; no river, rivulet or spring; wet mineral paints not found.
2. Location	Situated on the Vanavāsa route, i. e. in D forest. Treaded over by Rāma and rendered holy by the purifactory baths of Sītā. Here Rāma and Sītā lived in their banishment.	Situated on the Vanavāsa route i. e. in D forest. According to tradition. It is treaded over by Rāma and rendered holy by the purifactory baths of Sītā, and here Rāmā and Sītā lived in their banishment.	Situated in Vidarbha (i. e. not in D forest, hence not on the Vanavāsa route of Rāma). No association with the rendered Rāma and Sītā, during their exile; Could not be held sacred due to baths of the latter.
3. Adjoining places.	Situated to the north of Māla (Malda in Ratanpur), and to the east of Āmrakūta (=Amarkantak) and the river Revā (=Narmada).	Situated to the north of Malda in Ratanpur, and to the east of Amarkantak, and river Narmada.	Situated to the south of A'kantak (or even Amarvada of Mirashi) and Narmadā.



	RĀMAGIRI	RAMGADH	RAMTEK
4. Direction	Proceeding south from here, one comes across Māla; and then after 'a little west' if one turns round, back to the north, one reaches Āmrakūṭa and then the river Revā, scattered on the Vindhya-pāda hill (like painted streaks, on the elephant's body.)	Proceeding south from here, one comes across Malda; and then after a little west if one turns round back to the north, one reaches Amarkantak and then the river Narmada, scattered on the Vindhya (pāda) hill (like printed streaks on the elephant's body).	Proceeding south from Ramtek one comes across Nagpur itself; and then after a little west, if one turns round, back again to the north, there is no hill (much less A'kantak) on the way right up to the Satpura range! Then again Narmada near Hoshangabad cannot be scattered.
5. Monsoon winds	Monsoon clouds go from here to A'kantak and then towards west through Malwa to Vidiśā, Ujjayini and so on to the north.	Monsoon clouds go from here to A'kantak and then towards west through Malwa to Vidiśā, Ujjayini and so on to the north.	Monsoon clouds do not travel from south to north across the Vindhya range.

1. We have selected and enlisted only the outstanding features or distinguishing and unmistakable characteristics. We have purposely left out such features, as Kutaja flowers or thick forest etc., as they are fairly common, comparatively insignificant and hence hardly decisive.

TABLE NO. 3

THE DIRECTION OF THE CLOUD'S JOURNEY  
IN MEGHADŪTA

From Rāmagiri towards Māla	South.
Traversing the Māla land	A little westward.
Māla to Āmrakūṭa hill	North.
Āmrakūṭa to Vidiśa	West.
Vidiśa to Ujjayini	Further west
Ujjayini to Bramhāvarta	North.
Bramhāvarta to the foot of the Himalayas	East.
Ridge of the Himalayas to Kailāsa	North again ( as also up- ward, v. 58 ).

TABLE NO. 4

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CITRAKŪṬA  
IN RĀMĀYAṆA

( Brief summary in English<sup>1</sup> )

1. Place of solitude.
2. Lovely, pleasant.
3. Lofty — imposing — holy.
4. Towering peaks.
5. Thick forest, abundance of big trees.
6. Abounding in wild animals.
7. Herds of pea-cocks, elephants and deers.
8. All sorts of birds.
9. Site of hermitages of sages, and sacred places.
10. River, spring, water-fall, etc.
11. Cave.
12. Place of Yakṣas and Kinnaras.
13. Two rivers — Mandākinī and Mālīnī.
14. Tapering peak as if shooting from the earth.
15. Variety of creepers, variegated flowers and fruits.

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1 For a fuller and detailed table noting the original Sanskrit passages from Rāmāyaṇa, the reader is referred to the Marathi work by the Author ( pp. 108-9 ).

TABLE NO. 5

THE CITRAKŪṬA IN RĀMĀYAṆA	THE PRESENT CITRAKŪṬA (Kamtanath hill in Bundelkhand)
1. Very lofty, having towering wonderfull peaks, charming to look at, etc.	1. Very low (about 500 ft.) no peak, flat-topped, looking very ordinary.
2. River, spring, cave, table-land on top, spring rising or flowing through the tunnel. सरित् प्रस्मवणप्रस्थान् दरीकंदर- निर्जरान् Ayo. 54.42.	2. No springs, river, cave or table-land etc.
3. Situated at a distance of 20 miles from Prayag.	3. Situated 65 miles from Prayag.
4. Due to several streams, looking like an elephant. (With ichor flowing)	4. No streams.
5. Dense forest.	5. No forest, not even big trees; only grass grows all over. (Beglar)
6. A charming cave on the northern slope.	6. No cave.
7. Abounds in wild elephants.	7. No elephants (no possibility as there is no forest.)
8. Mandākini river to the north.	8. Payoṣṇi river to the east.
9. Herds of deer including Citrāṅg (चित्रांग) i.e. a spotted variety.	9. Deer not found here.
10. Dhāturāṅ (mineral paints)	10. Mineral paints not found.



TABLE NO. 6 : Vanavāsa Route, Prayag to Panchavati

<i>Yuddha kanda</i>	<i>Ayodhya kanda</i>	<i>Raghu. XIII.</i>	<i>Raghu. XII.</i>
Prayag	Prayag	Prayag Ganges + Yamuna Hermitage of Atri <sup>1</sup>	Prayag Dandakāranya Citrakūṭa-Vana
Citrakūṭa	Citrakūṭa (Mandākini r.)	Citrakūṭa (Mandākini r.)	Citrakūṭa
Hermitage of Atri	Hermitage of Atri Entry in D forest Mid-forest (वनमध्य)		Hermitage of Atri
Śarabhanga	Śarabhanga Sutikṣṇa Māṇḍakarni Pancāpsaras	Śarabhanga Sutikṣṇa Śatakarni, <sup>2</sup> Pancāpsaras	Hermitages of many hospitable sages. (XII. 25)
Hermitage of Agastya.	H. of Agastya	H. of Agastya	H. of Agastya
Panchavati (Godavari r.)	Panchavati (Godavari r.)	Panchavati (Godavari r.) Pampā } <sup>3</sup> Mālyavān }	Panchavati
Janasthāna	Janasthāna	Janasthāna	Janasthāna

NOTE :—In all the four places above, there is no mention of Vindhya or Narmada. The absence of Vindhya can probably be explained because Citrakūṭa in Vindhya range is mentioned. But the omission of Narmada indicates that Rāma's route lay through the Eastern Vindhyas, east of N.

1 Route in Raghu. XIII is by air. Hence, hermitage of Atri, although mentioned after Cī, may not be necessarily to the north of that hill. It may be that the Cī was mentioned first because its tall peak was visible from a distance, and could catch the eye first.

2 In some manuscripts of Raghu, Māṇḍakarnī is used for Śatakarnī.

3 These places are actually not on the way, but they appear to be visible from the aerial car, for the same reason indicated in f. n. No. 1 above.

TABLE NO. 7.

	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	SHAPE
1 Rkṣa-vil in Rāmāyaṇa	Hollow, lengthy, watered, trees, birds and everything 'golden'.	In { Eastern Vindhya. Rkṣa. D forest.	Marvellous, amazing.
2 { A- Citrakūṭa-cave of Buddhists	A pleasant spot, having a golden cave and a natural lake.	Himalayas ( a favourite substitute of the Buddhists for D forest.) South of Prayag.	— — —
B- Citrakūṭa-cave of Rāmāyaṇa	Probably hollow.	In { Eastern Vindhya D forest.	— — —
C- Citrakūṭa of Kalidāsa	Probably hollow, big, watered, roaring sound.	In { Eastern Vindhya. D forest.	Opened mouth of a wild bull. <sup>1</sup>
3 The Hathiphor tunnel on Ramgadh.	Hollow, big, watered, roaring sound.	In the present Chhattisgad i. e. to say— In { Eastern Vindhya. Ancient Rkṣa Ancient D forest.	Open mouth of a gigantic dragon. <sup>2</sup>
4 The spot ( cave or tunnel ) on Rāmāgiri	Beauty-spot full of water.	Ramgadh hill in the present Chhattisgad, i. e. location as above.	— — —

1 धारास्वनोद्गारिदरीमुखोऽती...वृत्तः ककुद्धान् इव चित्रकूटः ॥ Raghu 13:47.

2 "The tunnel was so wide and dark that it might be likened to the open mouth of a gigantic dragon ready to devour its prey. There, right away in a corner, the water from a spring was constantly dripping on a stone. The gentle dripping sound of the spring resounded between the caves and hill sides and produced a loud roaring sound." —Haldar, M. Review, p. 384.

TABLE NO. 8.

	RĀMAGIRI	CITRAKŪṬA	RAMGADH
1. Description	Lofty, imposing, tall peak, visible from all sides, charming, sacred, River, spring, or waterfall etc. Birds of all description Thick forest : big shady trees. Place of solitude.	Lofty, imposing, tall peak, visible from all sides, charming, sacred. River, spring, or waterfall etc. Birds of all description Thick forest : big shady trees. Place of solitude.	Lofty, imposing, tall peak, visible from all sides. charming, sacred. River, spring, or waterfall etc. Birds of all description Thick forest : big shady trees. Place of solitude.
2. Location	To the east of of A'kantak and Narmada. In the Eastern Vindhya (= Rkṣa ) i. e. to the west of Mahendra mountain. In D forest. on Vanavāsa route of Rāma.	To the east of A'kantak and Narmada. In the Eastern Vindhya (= Rkṣa ) i. e. to the west of Mahendra mountain. In D forest. on Vanavāsa route of Rāma.	To the east of A'kantak and Narmada. In the Eastern Vindhya (= Rkṣa ) i. e. to the west of Mahendra mountain. In D forest. on Vanavāsa route of Rāma.



	RĀMAGIRI	CITRAKŪṬA	RAMGADH
3. Special features	Rāma's stay here in exile.  Baths of Sītā. Foot-prints of Rāma. Sacred place, Hermitages of sages, penance ground.	Rama's stay here in exile.  Baths of Sītā. Foot-prints of Rāma. Sacred place. Hermitages of sages, penance ground.	Ancient Traditions still current about Rāma's stay here, in exile. Baths of Sītā Foot-prints of Rāma. Sacred place. Hermitages of sages. penance ground.
4. Distinguishing characteristics.	Cave Wet mineral paints or dhaturagas, v. 102.	Cave <sup>1</sup> Wet mineral paints <sup>2</sup> or dhaturagas.	Cave Wet mineral paints ( ' Tilak-mati ' ) or dhaturagas.

1. Ayo, ch. which follows after 95. This is supposed to be interpolated, but even, it has its own significance and historic worth. It is noteworthy that the description of Ci. in this ch. tallies amazingly with the Ramgadh hill in M. P.

2. Wet mineral paint found on Ci. is noticed twice in Rāmāyaṇa, and Rama is described as having applied red 'tilak' on Sītā's forehead.

मनः शिलायास्तिलको गण्डपाद्वे निवेशितः । Sundara, 40-5.

चकार तिलकं तस्या ललाटे रुचिरं तदा । Ayo. verse 18 in the Ch. next after 95.

It is interesting to find the tradition about the place called 'tilak-mati' on the Ramgadh hill. It is believed that the place got the name because it was here (Ramgadh taken as ancient Ci.) that Rāma is supposed to have applied the *tilak* on the forehead of Sītā.

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Page	Line	Read	For
7	7	Rāmagiri	Ramtek
24	24	their	this
28	14	two things :	two things
35	13	now the tacit presumption	now as the tacit presumption
60	21	J ( J stands for Janārdana Vyāsa )	I
71	9	and not from the heavens	and from the heavens
104	f. n. 3	notions	nations
112	13	the southern end, and	the southern and
272	15	adventurer	adventure





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