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THE MISSING LAMBHAS IN THE VASUDEVABHINDI
AND THE STORY OF PABHAVATI

(Abbreviations used: BK = Brhatkathâ, BKM = Brhatkathâmahâjâri, BKSS = Brhatkathâ-slokasangraha, Bhr Bhâ= Brhatkalpa Bhâsya, JHP = Jinasena’s Hariyamgapurâna, KSS = Kathâsirasâgara, MKH = Majjhimakhanda, Sama = Samavâyâhga, TSP = Trisatîsalâkâ-purusâcarita, KKc = Karakandacariu, VH = Vaseudvahindi.)

In the introduction to his MKH, also known as the second part of the VH, Dharmasenaganâi Mahattara claims that the VH originally contained 100 lambhas, describing the 100 marriages of Vasudeva which took place during his 100 years of wandering. But the author of the VH, says Dharmasenaganâi, narrated only 29 of these lambhas, leaving out the rest in order to avoid a too lengthy description of the tale. The author of the MKH thus claims to present the entire second part of the VH, fitting his work into the latter between the Piyanguusundarâlambha (the 18th lambha) and the Keumatiâlambha (21st lambha). He thereby presents the ‘missing link’ in the VH, which lacks the important 19th and 20th lambhas.

It is most interesting to note that the very first lambha of the MKH is the Pabhâvatâlambha, which deals with the conquest of Pabhâvatî (Prabhâvatî) and gives many more interesting details not found even in the KSS or BKM versions of the BK. There is no mention of Prabhâvatî in the existing incomplete edition of the BKSS.

I. THE BRIEF STORY OF PABHÂVATĪ FOUND IN THE VH

Although the VH contains an independent lambha called the Pabhâvatâlambha

1 The unpublished manuscript, partly prepared after comparing several manuscripts by the late Muni Punyavijaya of Ahmedabad, is now being edited in its final form by Dr. H. Bhayani and Dr. Ramaniklal in Ahmedabad and will be published by the L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad. A photocopy of the manuscript was brought by the author to Kiel for the Seminar for Indology, University of Kiel, West Germany. The manuscript is in four volumes containing 71 lambhas in all. Volume One (pp. 1–137) has been edited by Muni Punyavijaya, who gives variants from several manuscripts. This volume contains the Pabhâvatâlambha (pp. 1–129), the only part edited so far. The number of lines on the pages varies from 13 to 15, each containing 34–35 aksaras. The remaining part is the third Khanda, also known as Uttarârdha. Volume One (pp. 1–132) contains the lambhas 45–57. The lines on the pages vary from 23–26, each containing about 31 aksaras. Volume Two (pp. 131–290) contains the lambhas 57–71, the lines varying from 27 to 28 and containing 31–33 aksaras. The end of the manuscript (pp. 290–300) describes how Vasudeva and Somasiri are united. The whole work of 71 lambhas contains as many as 17,000 ślokas.

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(22), and mentions Pabhāvatī in a few sentences in the very beginning of the Keumatilambha (21), the whole account of her is so meagre that the complete story of Pabhāvatī remains fully unexplained.

II. THE Keumatilambha IN THE Vasudevahaṇḍi

The following points concerning the Keumatilambha are worthy of note:

(1) In this lambha preceding the Pabhāvatilambha we come across the name of Pabhāvatī for the very first time. In the very beginning of the lambha which supposedly deals with the marriage of Keumati (Ketumati), we are told that Pabhāvatī carries Vasudeva from his wife Piyaṅgusundāri to his beloved Somasīrī in Suvannapūrī, the city ruled by Vegavatī’s brother King Mānasavaṇa (Mānasavega). There Vasudeva manages to live in disguise until he is discovered by Mānasavega, who has him bound and files a case against him in the court of Balasīhā. Then a fight ensues between Vasudeva on the one side and Mānasavega and his followers on the other. But with the help of the magic art Panṇatti (Pannatti), bestowed by Pabhāvatī, Vasudeva manages to win the battle. Later on, for the sake of a promise made to Somasīrī, Vasudeva lets Mānasavega go after discharging only a little blood. Mānasavega then serves Vasudeva as a servant and carries him and Somasīrī to Mahāpura in his heavenly car.

Needless to say, this account is far too brief and sketchy to give any clear picture of Pabhāvatī.

(2) The Keumatilambha is one of the longest lambhas in the VH, comprising the biographies of the three Tiṁthakaras Santi, Kunthu and Ara, and narrating numerous details of their previous births. Obviously this account has nothing to do with the subject matter, i.e. the marriage of Keumati.

(3) Regarding the nomenclature of Keumatī there is no uniformity among the various Jain versions. In the VH (349, 4–5) she is called the sister of Jiyasatu, in the JHP (30.45) the daughter of Jarāsandha and in the TŚP (8.2.580) the daughter of Jītaśātru. Further, in the VH (348, 17–349, 14) Vasudeva simply cures Indasena, who is called the daughter of Jarāsandha and the wife of Jiyasatu, but he marries Keumati; in the JHP (30.46–56) Vasudeva cures Ketumati and marries Prabhāvatī. In the TŚP (8.2.578), however, Nandisenā is mentioned as the daughter of Jarāsandha and wife of Jītaśātru in place of Indasena.

(4) Both the JHP (26.52) and the TŚP (8.2.487–8) record a very brief account of Ketumati. Here the TŚP introduces an additional lambha known as the Kanakavatiλambha, which forms Chapter III of the parvan VIII and contains 1077 verses, more than double the number of Chapter II, which deals with all the marriages of Vasudeva.