

## Notes on the “Lava-Kuśa episode” in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*

### Abstract

Somadeva’s *Kathāsaritsāgara*, one of the retellings of the *Bṛhatkathā*, has a small tale of Rāma which mainly traces the story of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the final volume in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This is not a simple retelling, but intends to be a unique adaptation. Especially interesting is that there is an episode regarding Rāma’s two sons, Lava and Kuśa, in which we find many elements peculiar to this retelling. The present paper will examine the plot of the “Lava-Kuśa episode” in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* and clarify sources of some elements (keywords/motifs), while comparing the *Kathāsaritsāgara* mainly to the tale of Rāma in Kṣemendra’s *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, another retelling of the *Bṛhatkathā*. Thereafter, we will consider the question of what type of plot was comprised in the lost work \*Kashmirian *Bṛhatkathā*, upon which both retellings based their respective versions.

### Introduction

In the 9th volume of Somadeva’s *Kathāsaritsāgara* (=KSS, 11th c. CE)<sup>1</sup>, there is a small tale of Rāma which is told in 54 verses, KSS 9,1.59–112: Somadeva first summarises the story of the 1st to the 6th volumes of Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa* (Rm), namely the story from Rāma’s birth to his victory over Rāvaṇa and return to Ayodhyā along with Sītā, in a mere 6 verses (KSS 9,1.59–64), and he dedicates another 48 verses (KSS 9,1.65–112) to a presentation of the story of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the final volume of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Rm 7). Thus, this part of the KSS apparently intends to show a “retelling of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*”. However, Somadeva does not just trace the renowned story in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but rather seeks to offer a unique adaptation.

Especially striking is the uniqueness of the episode regarding Rāma’s two sons. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sītā gives birth to “twin boys” at Vālmīki’s hermitage, where

<sup>1</sup> The date of Somadeva’s compilation of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* is supposed to be 1063–1081 CE. Cf. Winternitz 1922: 319.

she is staying after being forsaken by her husband, Rāma, due to a false accusation of infidelity. Vālmīki names the elder one “Kuśa” and younger one “Lava”. In the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, however, Sītā first gives birth to Lava only, and later Vālmīki creates Kuśa, a replica of Lava, made of sacred “kuśa grass”.<sup>2</sup> Then Sītā adopts Kuśa as the younger brother of Lava. In this way, the order of brotherhood is inverted from that as told in the original *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Apart from the miraculous birth of Kuśa, the *Kathāsaritsāgara* comprises many peculiar elements, which scholars have given only little attention.<sup>3</sup> The present paper focuses especially on the episode of Lava and Kuśa (I temporarily refer to it as the “Lava-Kuśa episode”) in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, and examines sources of some elements (keywords/motifs) found in that episode.

### The Tale of Rāma in *Kathāsaritsāgara* 9,1.59–112

The *Kathāsaritsāgara*, “the Ocean of the Streams of Stories”, compiled in 18 volumes (*lambaka-*), is an adaptation of the *Bṛhatkathā*, “the Great Narrative”. The latter is said to have been written by Guṇāḍhya, but its original text is no longer extant.<sup>4</sup> Somadeva, the author of *Kathāsaritsāgara*, was a poet of the Kashmirian Court in the second half of the 11th century CE, and he retold the story of the *Bṛhatkathā* in a large-scale narrative consisting of 21 388 verses: The central character in this narrative is Naravāhanadatta, son of King Udayana who rules the land of Vatsa. One day, Madanamañcukā, the first wife of Naravāhanadatta is abducted by Mānasavega, king of Vidyādharas (semi-divine beings). Then, Naravāhanadatta begins to search for his missing wife, and rescues her while defeating Mānasavega and other enemies. Thereafter, Naravāhanadatta is endowed by the God Śiva with the status of Cakravartin (the supreme king) in the world of Vidyādharas.

On the other hand, the adventurous story of Naravāhanadatta is adorned by various substories in which he falls in love with many Vidyādhārīs (ladies of Vidyādhara) and marries them one after another. The small tale of Rāma is inserted into such a substory in the 9th volume, “*Alaṃkāravatī-Lambaka*”, which gives an account of the marriage of Naravāhanadatta and Alaṃkāravatī: One day, Kāñcanaprabhā, mother of Alaṃkāravatī, is informed by Śiva that her daughter is destined to be a wife of

<sup>2</sup> The *kuśa* grass (*Desmostachya bipinnata*) is often used for purifying of utensils in the Vedic ritual. Cf. Sen 1978: 95 (as “*barhiṣ-*”), 83–84 (as “*pavitra-*”), 108 (as “*veda-*”).

<sup>3</sup> Brockington 1985: 265 (fn. 13) briefly mentions that the motif of “creation of Kuśa from *kuśa* grass” occurs in the Tibetan version of the Rāma story, the Tale of Rāma in the KSS, and the Kashmiri version as well as Southeast Asian versions of the Rāma story. Smith 1999: 109–110 summarises the tale of Rāma in the KSS.

<sup>4</sup> The date of the original work attributed to Guṇāḍhya is indefinite. Winternitz 1922: 316 presumes it as around the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. It is transmitted that Guṇāḍhya made the *Bṛhatkathā* in “*Paiśācī*”, the little-known Prakrit language, which is thought to be an old dialect in North-west India. Cf. Winternitz 1922: 312; Lacôte 1908: 40–59.

Naravāhanadatta, and later the two fall in love just as Śiva announced. On the day before their wedding, Naravāhanadatta has to return to his home country of Vatsa temporarily on account of a small task. It is a separation for merely one night, but the two sink into a deep sorrow as if it were a long separation. Then, Kāñcanaprabhā narrates the tale of Rāma in order to encourage them.

KSS 9,1.57–58:

*dr̥ṣṭvā tau tādṛ̥ṣau dvāv apy avādīt kāñcanaprabhā |  
kim ekarātriviśeṣe hy adhairyaṃ yuvayor idam || 57 ||*

*anīscitāvadhiṃ dhīrāḥ sahanṭe virahaṃ ciram |  
śrīyatām rāmabhadrasya sītādevyās tathā kathā || 58 ||*

57. When Kāñcanaprabhā saw the two in such a state, she said: “Why do you show such discouragement because you are to be separated for one night?”

58. People who possess firmness endure for a long mutual separation to which no termination is assigned. Hear the tale [which tells of] such a case of Rāmabhadra and his queen Sītā.

In this way, Kāñcanaprabhā begins to tell the tale, in which Rāma forsakes Sītā in the forest against his true will, and long after they happily reunite. This tale is told for the purpose of “encouraging” a young couple; for this reason, it does not have a tragic ending like that in the original story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in which Sītā ultimately enters the earth and Rāma laments the eternal separation from her (Rm 7,88–89). The second half of the tale, however, seems to deviate from that purpose, because it mentions almost nothing about the relationship between Rāma and Sītā, but rather presents the marvelous episode of their children, Lava and Kuśa.

Table 1: Synopsis of the tale of Rāma in KSS 9,1.59–112 with numbers of comparable portions of the tale of Rāma in *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (=BKM) 15,1.33–50

Contents	KSS	BKM
[A] Summary of the story of vols. 1–6 in the Vālmīki’s <i>Rāmāyaṇa</i> .	9,1.59–64	15,1.33–42
[B] Sītā is forsaken in the forest by Rāma, who is afraid of the false accusation of her infidelity by citizens.	9,1.65–71	15,1.43
[C] Sītā demonstrates her innocence by crossing the pond called “Tṛṭibhasaras” in front of hermits who are suspicious of her chastity. The hermits get angry at Rāma, who wrongly forsook her.	9,1.72–85	<i>cf. 15,1.44–48ab</i> [Hermits talk about a tṛṭibha bird who overcame his mistaken doubt about his wife’s chastity.]

[D] Sītā gives birth to Lava, and Vālmīki creates Kuśa from <i>kuśa</i> grass; Vālmīki teaches them the use of weapons and all sciences.	9,1.86–94	<i>cf. 15,1.48cd–49ab</i> [Sītā gives birth to twin boys just as told in the Rm.]
[E] Lava plunders golden lotuses and <i>mandāra</i> flowers from Kubera’s garden, while defeating Yakṣas (the attendants of Kubera).	9,1.95–100ab	—
[F] Lakṣmaṇa abducts Lava as a victim at the human sacrifice ( <i>naramedha-</i> ) to be held by Rāma; Kuśa goes to Ayodhyā in order to rescue Lava and battles against Lakṣmaṇa as well as Rāma.	9,1.100cd–107ab	<i>cf. 15,1.49cd</i> [The boys meet Rāma, who is just holding his horse sacrifice ( <i>vājimedha-</i> ).]
[G] Hearing the identity of the two boys, Rāma recognises them as his own sons and calls Sītā back to Ayodhyā.	9,1.107cd–112	15,1.50

It is also to be noted that the part of the Lava-Kuśa episode in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* shows only minor correspondence to the tale of Rāma in the BKM, another extant recension of the *Bṛhatkathā* in Kashmir. The *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* was made by Kṣemendra, who was mainly active in the first half of the 11th century CE,<sup>5</sup> and it also has the tale of Rāma in its *Alaṃkāravatī-Lambaka* (the 15th volume). Both works (the BKM and the KSS) are thought to be abridged retellings based on a common source of the *Bṛhatkathā* which was known in medieval Kashmir, but no longer exists. Undoubtedly, the lost precedent work, the so-called “\*Kashmirian *Bṛhatkathā*” (\*KBK),<sup>6</sup> already had a tale of Rāma in the same place in the story, and both works based their respective versions upon it. But the plot of the second half of both works differed from each other due to certain reasons. Now I would like to offer “Table 1”, which shows a synopsis of the tale of Rāma in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* while showing numbers of comparable portions in *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*.

In this table we can roughly recognise that both works (the BKM and the KSS) show clear correspondences in portions [A] and [B]. The contents of [A] and [B]

<sup>5</sup> It is supposed that Kṣemendra made the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* around 1037 CE, about 30 years earlier than Somadeva’s compilation of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (see fn. 1). Cf. Winternitz 1922: 319.

<sup>6</sup> Lacôte 1908: 122–145 clarifies that the BKM and the KSS are based upon some common source (cf. Winternitz 1922: 318). According to Serbaeva Saraogi 2009: 337 (fn. 112), Alexis Sanderson suggests in his unpublished work in 2004 that the KSS has undergone at least two redactions, both in Kashmir, being originally a large text written in a *paśāca* language of non-Kashmiri origin.

are basically the same in both works, though the manner of narrating is somewhat different between them: In [A], the BKM shows a summary of the story in Rm volumes 1–6 with 10 verses, a little more than of the number in the KSS which has 6 verses; For [B], the BKM has merely 1 verse for telling Rāma’s forsaking of Sītā, but the KSS has more detailed depiction with 7 verses, in which Rāma gets a shock while hearing a conversation between a man and his wife among his subjects who are very suspicious of Sītā’s chastity, and Rāma decides to forsake Sītā in order to defend his honour. In any case, both works steadily follow the plot as shown in the original Rm (7,42–44).

In addition, the verses of the concluding portion [G], KSS 9,1.107cd–112 and BKM 15,1.49cd–50, depict the happy reunion of Rāma and Sītā along with the two boys, while deviating from the plot of the Rm. This is reasonable because this tale of Rāma is told in order to encourage Naravāhanadatta and Alaṃkāravatī as previously mentioned.

On the other hand, portions [C] to [F] deal with the episode after Sītā was left by Lakṣmaṇa in the forest, which the KSS narrates in detail with 35 and a half verses (9,1.72–107ab). In contrast, the comparable portions in the BKM consist of merely 5 and a half verses (15,1.44–49cd), the contents of which basically follow the original story of the Rm. That is to say that, in these portions, the narrative of the KSS represents its uniqueness most directly. Therefore, we will examine these portions respectively in the next section in order to clarify the sources of the “Lava-Kuśa episode” in the KSS to the extent possible.

### The Lava-Kuśa Episode in *Kathāsaritsāgara* 9,1.72–112

#### *KSS 9,1.72–85 (portion [C]): Sītā’s proof of her innocence*

The contents of portion [C] in the KSS and the BKM seem much different on the surface, but they comprise several common words and motifs. The BKM describes that hermits (*muni-*) in the forest immediately discern the innocence of Sītā, left there by Lakṣmaṇa, who tearfully does so upon an order from Rāma. Then, the hermits talk about a couple of “*ṭiṭṭibha*”, a kind of bird: Once a male *ṭiṭṭibha*, staying on the shore of a pond, saw his wife bird just flying near another male bird without any intention. Then, the male bird became suspicious of her chastity. When the husband went to forsake her, he heard a voice from the sky say, “[she is a] chaste woman!” (*sādhvī-*), and he immediately trusted her again. Compared to this fable, the hermits criticise Rāma’s wrongful behaviour (BKM 15,1.44–48ab). Thereafter, Sītā reaches the hermitage of Vālmīki.

On the other hand, portion [C] in the KSS presents an episode “after” Sītā’s arrival at the hermitage of Vālmīki: First the hermits (*muni-*) are suspicious about Sītā’s chastity, and intend to move to some other forest in order to avoid seeing her,

whom they find impure. When Sītā hopes to be inspected by them regarding her chastity, they propose that she proves it at a pond called “Ṭīṭibhasaras” (“pond of ṭīṭibha”). It is there that once a chaste woman (*sādhvī*-) called Ṭīṭibhī, whose husband had wrongly accused her of adultery, implored the gods to manifest the fact, and they proved her chastity. Then, Sītā demonstrates her innocence by crossing the water while riding on the lap of the earth goddess whom she invoked. Finally, the hermits recognise Sītā’s chastity and criticise Rāma’s wrongful behaviour (KSS 9,1.72–85).

Thus, both works apparently share some keywords, namely the keywords of “ṭīṭibhī-/ṭīṭibhī-”<sup>7</sup> and “*sādhvī*-”, and the motifs that one recognises the innocence of a chaste woman (*sādhvī*-) and that the hermits criticise Rāma. In addition, the location of story, “the shore of a pond”, is also common. Maybe the lost \*KBK, upon which both works were based, comprised these elements in some form or other. What causes the difference between the works is in fact that the KSS depicts the miraculous scene of “Sītā’s proof of her innocence”, which the original Rm tells at the end of story of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* (Rm 7,88). In other words, the KSS combines the scene of Sītā’s proof with those elements common to the BKM version. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily mean that the KSS shows later modifications and the BKM version is closer to the original text in the \*KBK, because the BKM tends to shorten stories of the \*KBK, even awkwardly, and rather the KSS can reflect the original form of story.<sup>8</sup>

For the moment, we may presume at least three possibilities: (1) The BKM version is closer to the original story in the \*KBK, and the KSS shows the later enlargement; (2) The KSS version is closer to the original and the BKM shows the later abbreviation; (3) Transmissions of the \*KBK, upon which both works were based, were not same and had different stories for portion [C], and consequently the contents of both works differ.

*KSS 9,1.86–94 (portion [D]): Lava’s birth and creation of Kuśa by Vālmīki*

As for portion [D], the BKM has merely 3 *pādas* (15,1.48d + 49ab), which express that Sītā gives birth to twin boys and Vālmīki educates them into excellent *kṣatriyas*, just as told in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the Rm. In contrast to this, the KSS offers a comedic episode as follows: First Sītā gives birth to Lava. One day, she goes to bathe

<sup>7</sup> *ṭīṭibha*- is a kind of bird (*Amarakośa* 2,5.35 has *ṭīṭibhaka*-), *Paara jacana* or *Tringa goensis*. The form *ṭīṭibha*-/*bhī*- is attested in KSS 9,1 only. Somadeva knows the word *ṭīṭibha*- in the meaning of the bird, because he offers an episode of a pair of *ṭīṭibha* birds in KSS 10,4. Therefore, the word *ṭīṭibha*-/*bhī*-, which the BKM 15,1 shows, seems to be the original. Now I merely suggest that the word form *ṭīṭibha*-/*bhī*- could have been changed into the artificial word form *ṭīṭibha*-/*bhī*-, when Somadeva (or some precedent writer) modified the episode of a female bird to that of a woman named “Ṭīṭibhī”.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Winternitz 1922: 318 (fn. 2); Lacôte 1908: 123–134; Speyer 1908: 36–43.

along with Lava, whom she usually leaves at her shed. Meanwhile, Vālmīki comes to her shed and notices Lava’s absence. Then, he wrongly imagines that Lava was abducted by a beast, and quickly creates a “living replica” of Lava by means of sacred *kuśa* grass, in fear of Sītā’s fatal grief over her missing child. Sītā comes back along with Lava, and is surprised to see another child who exactly resembles Lava. After hearing the explanation from Vālmīki, she adopts the new child, named “Kuśa”, as the younger brother of Lava. Thereafter, Vālmīki holds rites of passage for them, and teaches them the use of weapons and all sciences (KSS 9,1.86–94).

This type of birth story of Rāma’s sons involving the “creation of Kuśa by means of *kuśa* grass”<sup>9</sup> had been known among some Tibetan people earlier than the period of Somadeva’s compiling of the KSS. In a manuscript of the Tibetan version of the Rāma story discovered in Dun-huang,<sup>10</sup> we find a story similar to that in the KSS, which tells of an event that occurred “before” Rāma’s abandonment of Sītā: One day, when Queen Sītā (*btsun mo si ta*) goes for a walk, she leaves her son Lava (*la ba*) in the care of 500 sages (*drañ sron*, skt. *ṛṣi-*), but Lava follows her. When the sages notice Lava’s absence, they realise that he is missing, and a sage creates another child by means of *kuśa* grass (*rtsva ku śa*). Thereafter, Sītā returns along with Lava and adopts another child, named Kuśa.<sup>11</sup>

Dun-huang was occupied by the Tibetan dynasty from 786<sup>12</sup> to 848 CE, and most probably the manuscript mentioned above was produced around this period. The origin of the Rāma story which the manuscript transmits is thought to be somewhere in India. Perhaps Vālmīki’s role in creating Kuśa described in the former Indian version has been replaced with that of the “500 sages” in the phase of Tibetan adaptation in which Vālmīki never appears. Kashmir, being located near Tibet as well as Central Asia, could be the origin place of that type of story or, at least, a passing point for its spreading outside India. In any case, it is highly probable that this type of birth story of Rāma’s sons was known in Kashmir at the time of Kṣemendra and Somadeva (11th c. CE).

<sup>9</sup> We find the same motif of “creation of Kuśa by means of *kuśa* grass” also in later retellings of the Rm: e.g. the *Ānanda-Rāmāyaṇa* (ĀnRm, around 1400 CE according to Koskikallio 2002: 314, fn. 6) 5,4.61–75; *Lavakuśa-Yuddha-Carita* 1283–1303 (ed. Grierson) in the Kashmiri version of the Rāma story by Divākara Prakāśa Bhaṭṭa (18th c. CE). Cf. Smith 1999: 111, 117.

<sup>10</sup> For the Rāma story comprised in the Dun-huang manuscripts, see de Jong 1972 (introduction and synopsis); 1977 (text); 1989 (English translation and text).

<sup>11</sup> For the portion in which Lava and Kuśa appear in the Tibetan version, see de Jong 1977: 84–85 (text XLII = manuscript A 352–368); 1989: 41–41 (translation XLII).

<sup>12</sup> De Jong 1972: 191 mentions the period of the Tibetan occupation of Dun-huang: “787 (according to Demiéville) or 782 (according to Fujieda) to 848”. [De Jong refers Demiéville, P. (1952) *Le concile de Lhasa*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, and Fujieda, A. (1969) *The Tunhuang Manuscripts: A General description, part II*. In: *Zinbun: Memoirs of the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University* 10: 17–39]. Ueyama 2012: 25–31 reconsiders the date of the fall of Dun-huang while referring to Chinese documents, and adopts 786 CE as the most reasonable year of the fall of Dun-huang. I follow Ueyama’s suggestion about the date of beginning of the Tibetan occupation of Dun-huang.

On the other hand, it is hard to attest whether the \*KBK had this type of birth story of Rāma's sons or not. Whichever it is, it seems reasonable to assume that this type of story was not created within the narrative tradition of the *Bṛhatkathā*, but was invented in some adaptation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and that later, it influenced the tale of Rāma in the *Bṛhatkathā*.

For the moment, we may presume at least three possibilities: (1) The KSS version is closer to the \*KBK, and the BKM replaced the original story in the \*KBK with the story just as told in the Rm; (2) The BKM version is closer to the original, and the KSS replaced the original with another story which was known in Kashmir during the same period; (3) Transmissions of the \*KBK, upon which both works were based, were not the same and had different stories for portion [D], and consequently the contents of both works differ.

*KSS 9,1.95–100ab (portion [E]): Lava's plundering of flowers from Kubera's garden*

In portion [E], the KSS depicts some acts of the two naughty boys, especially Lava, as follows: One day, the two boys slaughter a deer in the hermitage and eat its meat. Furthermore, they play with the holy *liṅga*, which Vālmīki worships every day. Having watched their acts with astonishment, Vālmīki orders them to perform atonement worship for Śiva with golden lotuses and flowers of the *mandāra* tree, both to be found in Kubera's garden on Mt. Kailāsa. Then, Lava goes to that garden and plunders those flowers, while defeating Yakṣas, the attendants of Kubera (KSS 9,1.95–100ab).

First, it can be said that Lava's attack against Kubera's garden represents the twin's aspect of "brave warriors", which was developed in medieval retellings of the Rm. The Rm, as well as the Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* (= Raghuv, 4th c. CE), merely mention the boys' singing of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which has the function of causing Sītā to return to Ayodhyā in order to clear her of suspicion. In later retellings such as the *Uttararāmacarita* (=UCR, 8th c. CE) by Bhavabhūti, the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* of the *Padma-Purāṇa* (=PdP, around 11th c. CE?), and the *Jaiminīya-Aśvamedha* (=JA, around 12th c. CE?), the aspect of epic singers is put aside, and rather that of brave warriors is strongly emphasised:<sup>13</sup> in those retellings, they bravely fight against large armies of Rāma without knowing he is their own father, and defeat great commanders such as Śatruṅga, Lakṣmaṇa, and so on. The KSS seems to present a new variation of the aspect of the brave warrior of Lava by depicting him overpowering Yakṣas.

<sup>13</sup> Rm 7,59–85; Raghuv 15,32–68; UCR 5, vv. 1–56; PdP 5,54; 5,60–64; JA 29,62–36,63. For detailed discussion, see Teshima, H. (forth.) The Evolution of the Kuśa-Lava Episode: Its Vedic Origin, and Variations in the Epic and Post-Epic Texts. In: DICSEP 7.

The source for the idea of “attacking Kubera’s garden” is indefinite because there is no similar scene in any other works of *Bṛhatkathā* including the BKM, or in any retellings of the Rm. It seems, however, presumable that its origin was not in the narrative tradition of the Rm, but in that of the *Bṛhatkathā*. The influence of the cult of Kubera, the god of wealth and the guardian of the north, characterises the narrative of the *Bṛhatkathā*,<sup>14</sup> and its Sanskrit variants, including the KSS, apparently tend to mention this god in different ways. Therefore, the scene as outlined above is thought to have been made in such a manner as to connect the “Kubera motif” peculiar to the narrative of *Bṛhatkathā* to the “aspect of the brave warrior” out of medieval retellings of the Rm.

As for portion [E], it is also remarkable that the two boys show “extraordinary power”: They slaughter the deer to eat, and play with the weighty *liṅga* of stone as if it were children’s toy. The two boys’ power, which is also emphasised in medieval retellings of the Rm, is naturally associated with their aspect of brave warriors as mentioned above. The retellings of the Rm, however, give them the powerful image only in the “battle scene”, and always depict them in the scene at the hermitage as innocent and childish. Therefore, the most unique point of the story in the KSS is that the boys show their power even when they are at home.

Perhaps those scenes found in the KSS have somehow been influenced by the famous legend of Kṛṣṇa’s boyhood. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (=BhāgP, around 8th to 10th c. CE?), for instance, comprises several episodes which represent the extraordinary power of Kṛṣṇa as a boy: Little Kṛṣṇa uprooted a forked *arjuna* tree by trailing a heavy mortar to which Yaśodā (his foster mother) had tied him in order to punish him for mischief (BhāgP 10,9–10).<sup>15</sup> Further, he seized the hind legs and tail of a calf, which was actually a transformed demon, whirled it round, and finally threw it far away (BhāgP 10,11.41–44). Thus, the image of Kṛṣṇa as a boy seems to overlap somewhat with that of Lava and Kuśa as described in the KSS. Now I merely speculate that Somadeva (or some precedent writer) could have been inspired by the legend of Kṛṣṇa’s boyhood to enhance the attractiveness of Rāma’s sons in the scenes of portion [E].

*KSS 9,1.100cd–107ab (portion [F]): Kuśa’s rescuing of Lava, who was abducted by Lakṣmaṇa*

The narrative of the KSS in portion [F] begins with the scene of an accident which happened to Lava, who was returning home from Kubera’s garden: Lava becomes a little tired and rests on a tree. At that moment, Lakṣmaṇa comes there seeking

<sup>14</sup> “Naravāhanadatta”, the name of the central character in the *Bṛhatkathā*, means “[the son] given by Naravāhana (an epithet of Kubera)”. For the connection between the narrative tradition of the *Bṛhatkathā* and the cult of Kubera is discussed in Tsuchida 2017: 167–169.

<sup>15</sup> The story in BhāgP 10,9–10 is a retelling of the episode told in HV 51.

someone suitable as a victim at the human sacrifice (*naramedha-*) to be held by his elder brother, Rāma. Lakṣmaṇa challenges Lava to a duel, and succeeds in binding this boy and then carrying him off to Ayodhyā. After hearing about this, Kuśa goes to Ayodhyā in order to rescue Lava, and he overpowers Rāma's armies and defeats even Lakṣmaṇa by means of divine weapons bestowed by Vālmīki. Finally, Kuśa fights against Rāma evenly (KSS 9,1.100cd–107ab). Thereafter Rāma asks for his identity, so the story continues to the concluding portion [G].

In this portion, the BKM (15,1.49cd) briefly mentions Rāma's "horse sacrifice" (*vājimedha-*), on the occasion of which the twin boys see Rāma and are introduced to him for the first time by Vālmīki. Thus, this passage simply follows the plot of the original Rm. Medieval retellings of the Rm, however, tend to describe fierce battles between the twins and Rāma's armies roughly as follows: Lava captures the horse released from the ritual place of Rāma's horse sacrifice and enters into combat with Rāma's armies. Lava defeats his opponents one after another, but Śatrughna, one of the younger brothers of Rāma, succeeds in defeating Lava. Then, Kuśa runs to the battlefield and rescues Lava, while overpowering all opponents.<sup>16</sup>

In general, the plot in the KSS is influenced by those in the medieval retellings of Rm as outlined above. But the KSS remarkably changes the "type of ritual" which Rāma celebrates: In the KSS, the "horse sacrifice" is replaced with the "human sacrifice". This new plot is obviously based upon the knowledge of kingship rituals ordained in the Vedas: According to the *Śatapatha-Brahmana* (ŚB) 13,5–7, for instance, the human sacrifice (*puruṣamedha-*) and the all sacrifice (*sarvamedha-*) are enlarged variants of the horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha-*), and they are all to be celebrated by highly puissant kings. They differ from each other mainly with regard to the principal victim (horse/man/all kinds of living things), the number of days for the Soma sacrifices (3 days/7 days/10 days), the size of the central fire altar, and the quantity of the sacrificial fee (*dakṣiṇā-*) given to the priests.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, at least from the view-point of Vedic ritualism, the horse sacrifice is replaceable by the human sacrifice as seen in the KSS.

On the other hand, it seems very bizarre that Rāma, who has usually been considered a merciful ruler, wants to sacrifice a child. This idea is totally unique to the KSS, so we find that no other work telling the Rāma story, whether it precedes or follows the KSS, describes such horrible behaviour by Rāma. Perhaps this plot was invented to simplify the story before the encounter between Rāma and his sons. As seen in the outline given above, the plot comprising the scenes of capturing the horse

<sup>16</sup> This type of plot is found in JA 29,62–32,7. In ĀnRm 5,7.47–123, Lakṣmaṇa defeats Lava and binds him, then Kuśa comes to the battlefield for rescuing of Lava. Cf. Smith 1999: 110–113. In addition, the ĀnRm (5,6.1–64) seems to have borrowed the motif of "Lava's plundering of flowers" from the episode in the KSS. But in the ĀnRm, Lava plunders flowers from Rāma's garden (not Kubera's).

<sup>17</sup> ŚB 13,5.4.24 (*aśvamedha*); 13,6.2.1.8 (*puruṣamedha*); 13,7.1.13 (*sarvamedha*). For the procedure of each of rituals, see Hillebrandt 1897: 149–154.

as well as the large-scale battles, which many retellings of the Rm describe, is difficult to shorten in order to adjust to a small-scale Rāma story. By changing the type of ritual from the horse sacrifice to the human sacrifice, one can make a new story which introduces the encounter of Rāma and his sons more efficiently.

Though it is hard to attest to which phase this type of plot occurred in, I wonder whether it could be made in the narrative tradition of the *Brhatkathā* in Kashmir, because the motif, in which someone is captured as a victim for human sacrifice, also appears in the preceding part of KSS, 2,2.140–143.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps this type of motif might have been preferred by medieval Kashmirian writers (or by Somadeva himself).

### Final Remarks

Through an examination of respective portions of the tale of Rāma in the KSS, we have clarified some remarkable points in that version. Especially in portions [E] and [F], the KSS demonstrates its uniqueness: Portion [E] depicts some scenes emphasising the “extraordinary power” of Lava and Kuśa, and narrates Lava’s plundering of flowers from Kubera’s garden; Portion [F] describes Lakṣmaṇa’s abduction of Lava for the “human sacrifice to be held by Rāma”. The contents of these portions are not shared with any other extant work.

Now we will consider the question of whether these portions could have also been in the lost \*KBK or not. As a clue to ponder this matter, I would like to offer “Table 2”, in which some parallel passages between the KSS and BKM are juxtaposed (the underlined portions indicate words shared in both texts).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Winternitz 1922: 327–328. The origin of this motif could be found in the archaic legend of Śunaḥṣepha (*Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* 7,13.1–18.9 and *Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra* 15,17–27), in which a boy is captured as a victim for the *puruṣamedha*.

Table 2: Apparent parallels in KSS 9,1.59–112 to BKM 15,1.33–50

KSS	BKM
Portion [A]	
<u>rājño</u> daśarathasyāsīd ayodhyādhipateh <u>sutah</u>   <u>rāmo</u> bharataśatruḡnalakṣmaṅānām purāgrajaḥ   59	<u>rājño</u> daśarathasyāsīd ayodhyādhipateh <u>sutah</u>   <u>rāmo</u> guṅagaṅārāmo virāmo vairisampadām    33
Portion [B]	
iti tadgr̥hiṅīm tām ca bruvatīm taṃ nijam patim   rāmo rājā sa <u>śuśrāva</u> khinnaś cābhyantaram yayau   69   lokāpavādabhītaś ca sītām <u>tatyāja tām vane</u>   sahate virahakleśam yaśasvī nāyaśaḥ punaḥ   70   sā ca <u>garbhālasā</u> daivād <u>vālmīkeḥ prāpad</u> <u>āśramam</u>	mithyāpavādām sītāyāḥ <u>śuśrāva</u> raghunandanah   tadājñayā lakṣmaṅas <u>tām vane</u> <u>garbhābhārālasām</u>   <u>tatyāja</u> sāśrunayano vālmīker āśramāntike   43   : <u>vālmīker āśramam prāpya</u> sītāsūta sutadvayam   48
Portion [C]	
asty atra <u>tītibhasaro</u> nāma tīrtham mahad vane   <u>tītibhī</u> hi purā kāpi bhartrānyāsaṅgaśaṅkinā    78    mithyaiva dūṣitā <u>sādhvī</u> cakrandāśaraṅā bhuvam   lokapālāmś ca tais tasyāḥ śuddhyartham tad vinirmitam    79	<u>tītibho</u> ’bdhitate jāyām dr̥ṣtvānyena samāgatām   pratiśrayārthinā bhartṛdhiyā nirvyājamānasām    45    īrṣyāśaṅkākulas tyuaktum udyatas tām nabhastalāt   śrutvā <u>sādhvīti</u> vacanam śīre ’syāḥ pratyayam yayau    46
Portion [D]	
ity uktā tena <u>muninā</u> sītā lavakuśau sutau   <u>tenaiva</u> <u>krtasamskārau</u> vardhayām āsa <u>tatra</u> <u>tau</u>   93	<u>tau tena muninā tatra</u> krtarājocitavratau   savidyau yayatur vājimedhe rāmam samāsthitam   49

In this table, we can see the words which were likely taken from the \*KBK as the common source for both retelling works, and recognise that they appear exclusively within portions [A] to [D]. Consequently, we may suppose that the \*KBK comprised those portions in some form. And, of course, it is considered that the final portion [G] was likely also in the \*KBK, though there are only a few words common between both retelling works.

On the other hand, we have no evidence which indicates that portions [E] and [F] existed in the \*KBK. Furthermore, the contents of these portions have almost

nothing to do with the relationship between Rāma and Sītā. As previously mentioned, this tale of Rāma is told for the purpose of “encouraging” Naravāhanadatta and Alaṃkāravatī, who have to separate from each other for one night. Therefore, the essential matter is to narrate the happy reunion of Rāma and Sītā after their endurance during a long separation. In other words, portions [E] and [F] are not necessary for the original purpose to tell the tale of Rāma on that occasion.

All things considered, we may speculate that portions [E] and [F] were not comprised in the \*KBK, and Somadeva inserted them into the second half of the tale of Rāma, if Kṣemendra, author of the BKM, did not dispose of both portions totally and replace them with the simple plot. In the case that portions [E] and [F] were inserted by Somadeva, he perhaps utilised some motifs or images regarding Lava and Kuśa which were known in medieval Kashmir. And it seems also conceivable that Somadeva added there some new element(s) which he created by himself.

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### Sažetak

U Somadevinj *Kathāsaritsāgari*, jednoj od prerada *Bṛhatkathā*, nalazi se kratka inačica priče o Rāmi koja uglavnom prati priču iz *Uttarakāṇḍe*, posljednje knjige *Rāmāyaṇe*. To ustvari nije jednostavna prerada, već jedinstvena adaptacija. Posebno je zanimljivo da se u njoj nalazi epizoda o Rāminim sinovima, Lavi i Kuśi, u kojoj nalazimo mnoge elemente svojstvene ovoj preradi. U ovom se radu raščlanjuje radnja „priče o Lavi i Kuśi“ u *Kathāsaritsāgari* i raznjašnjuju izvori nekih elemenata (ključne riječi/motivi) uspoređujući priču o Rāmi u *Kathāsaritsāgari* sa Kṣemendrinom *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, drugoj preradi *Bṛhatkathā*. Tako ćemo razmotriti pitanje kakav je tip zapleta sadržan u izgubljenom djelu \*Kašmirska *Bṛhatkathā*, na kojem se obje prerade temelje.

# Medhótá šrávah I

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