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Sītā Janakātmajā

Abstract

This article takes up a topic that was the subject of a relatively brief article by Camille Bulcke over half a century ago but, unlike that article, concentrates on the original Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa. It is clear that the earliest understanding of Sītā's parentage within the original Rāmāyaṇa is that she was born in the normal way as the child of Janaka and his wife. However, at a fairly early point in the development of the story, since it is attested from the second stage of growth onwards, the idea of Sītā emerging from the furrow begins to be put forward, quite probably as an *ex post facto* rationalisation of the etymological meaning of her name. Even more elaborate versions appear only later, starting with the story of Vedavatī in the Uttara-kāṇḍa (the third stage of growth within the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa), and growing ever more exotic in other texts and other countries as time passes.

Since Krzysztof Byrski and I first met at the 3rd World Sanskrit Conference held in Paris in 1977, I can claim to have known him for thirty years; it is, however, our meetings at the next two World Sanskrit Conferences, in 1979 at Weimar (still at that date part of the German Democratic Republic) and in 1981 at Varanasi, that I remember most vividly for personal as well as scholarly reasons. It is therefore a great pleasure as well as an honour to contribute to the felicitation volume for such a longstanding friend and colleague and to send greetings to him and his wife, Barbara.

In this article I take up a topic – the parentage of Sītā – that was the subject of a relatively brief article by Camille Bulcke over half a century ago (Bulcke 1952), an article which also surveyed later versions from India and Southeast Asia and so is even briefer on the original Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa, on which I shall concentrate. His conclusions, though, remain broadly valid: that Sītā's natural birth is the oldest version of her parentage and that her miraculous birth from the earth and the story of Vedavatī, both already found in the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa (although the story of Vedavatī in fact occurs in just one *sarga* of the late *Uttara-kāṇḍa*), are the seeds from which the other

stories have developed over the centuries. Since then there have only been occasional passing references to the topic in more recent works, mainly in articles on the role or character of Sītā (e.g. Sutherland 1989: 78), except for a few remarks in my own book on the Rāmāyaṇa (Brockington 1985; cf. Brockington 1995: 74-75). However, the increase in our knowledge of the history of the text since Bulcke wrote, including in particular the appearance of the Critical Edition (*Rāmāyaṇa* 1960-75), make it appropriate to take another full-scale look at the material.

The real alternatives are that Sītā is the daughter of Janaka and his wife or that she was found by Janaka in his furrow as he was ploughing. Both views can be supported by a number of references but they are clearly incompatible. Acceptance of the view that Sītā was found in the furrow involves dismissing the more numerous references to normal parentage as mere accidental lapses by the poet or reciter. While this is a possibility, though scarcely flattering to either poet or reciter, the number of such references argues against it and especially their tendency to occur mainly in earlier parts, whereas the foundling references occur only in later parts of the text, as I intend to demonstrate. It is therefore most probable that the story of Sītā in the furrow is a somewhat later development, no doubt influenced by the etymology of the name and possibly, as various scholars from Jacobi onwards have suggested, by what was remembered about the minor Vedic goddess of the same name (Jacobi 1893: 130-131; cf. Dimmitt 1982: 211-218). However, if we need to seek a rationale for her name, rather than looking to the Vedic Sītā, I would prefer to connect it with the use of the term in the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, which contains this definition: *sītādhyakṣopanītaḥ sasya-varṇakaḥ sītā* (KA 2.15.2); since the *sītādhyakṣa* elsewhere is charged with arranging for everything from organising the ploughing of the land to the gathering of the crops (KA 2.24.1-3), *sītā* is probably something more than just the produce or crops suggested by this definition, quite possibly the king's personal estate ("crown lands"). If this supposition is correct, Rāma's banishment from the kingdom and subsequent return to rule would then be symbolically paralleled by his loss of Sītā and his regaining of her.

The best starting point for this inquiry into Sītā's parentage is the variety of names used to designate her, among which the most frequent class comprises the various patronymics or similar terms. The four commonest names after Sītā (which accounts for half the total) are – in decreasing order of frequency – Vaidehī, Maithilī, Janakātmajā and Jānakī, quite frequently used in combination with each other. The name Sītā occurs 762 times in total in the text of the Critical Edition, Vaidehī 349 times, Maithilī 212 times, Janakātmajā 95 times and Jānakī 64 times. All other designations for Sītā are infrequent; those found in the text comprise *janaka-sutā* (found only in verses in longer metres, where it occurs six times), *janaka-nandinī*, *janakeśvarātmajā*, *janaka-nṛpātmajā*, *maithilātmajā*, *maithila-rāja-putrī*, *videhajā*, *vaideha-sutā* and *ikṣvāku-kula-nandinī*.¹

¹ Their actual occurrences are as follows: *janaka-sutā* 4.43.16d[l.v.], 62.15d[l.v.](iic), 5.6.16c[l.v.], 17b[l.v.], 14.30d[l.v.] and 6.70.42b[l.v.] (also 2.682*2[l.v.] and 5.232*3[l.v.]), *janaka-nandinī* 5.10.22d, 37.16d, 56.83b, 63.17b, 6.116.70b (also 2.705*1, 5.901*10, 1385*5 and 6.1026*7), *janakeśvarātmajā* 5.10.4d[l.v.] (and 6.3192*2[l.v.]),

What is most interesting is that so many of these names allude to Sītā as the actual daughter of Janaka. While the two forms *Vaidehī* and *Maithilī* are not by any means specific about this, since they can be interpreted more generally as *vṛddhied* derivatives, the term *Jānakī*, being clearly a patronymic in formation, does imply it rather more strongly. But *Janakātmajā* is even less ambiguous, as are several of the less frequent terms with their incorporation of the terms *ātmajā*, *putrī* and *sutā*, for both *ātmajā* and *sutā* derive from roots specifically denoting giving birth. Interestingly, *Jānakī* is markedly more frequent in the *Sundara-kāṇḍa* than elsewhere, for nearly three quarters of its occurrences are in that book, and what is significant for our inquiry is that nearly two thirds of these come from the first stage; in general, *Jānakī* has a higher proportion of occurrences in the first stage and lower proportions in the second and third stages than any of the other names.²

The commonest full *pāda* is *maithilī janakātmajā*, occurring sixteen times in the text (half in the first stage) and eleven times in the fourth and fifth stages; evidently its metrical form was preferred to that of *vaidehī janakātmajā*, occurring only three times in the text and four times in the fourth and fifth stages, since in general *Vaidehī* is substantially more frequent than *Maithilī*. Just occasionally Sītā's name is used in the same way, when a copula is included.³ Also, in the *Sundara-kāṇḍa*, we find the combination *x x x jānakīm sītām* (at 5.11.2c, 40.14a, 17c, 63.8c, also 4.1222* pr. and 5.323*9 pr., cf. *x x sītā ca jānakī* at 6.6.2d and 4.976*7 post.). On one occasion four of the names occur together: *x x sītātha vaidehī maithilī janakātmajā* at 5.11.6ab, a verse which interestingly is either not found or placed elsewhere in all Northern manuscripts (and *G₁*), a strong indicator of its secondary character.⁴

janaka-nṛpātmajā 5.36.56b[l.v.], *maithilātmajā* 5.66.29c[l.v.] (cf. *maithilā-pārthivātmajā* 2.894*1[l.v.]), *maithilā-rāja-putrī* 3.9.21b[l.v.], *videhajā* 4.42.61d[l.v.](iic) (also 5.1113*3[l.v.]; cf. *videha-putrī* 6 App.I.3.17*8[l.v.], 20[l.v.] and *videha-rāja-duhitṛ* at 4.909*2), *vaideha-sutā* 5.34.45d[l.v.] and *ikṣvāku-kula-nandinī* at 5.11.57b. The material in this and the next three paragraphs is based on Brockington 1995.

² For these stages of growth see my *Righteous Rāma* (Brockington 1985: 45-61). There are single occurrences of *Jānakī* in the *Bāla-* and *Aranya-kāṇḍas*, it occurs twice in the *Ayodhya-kāṇḍa*, three times in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, four times in the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa*, seven times in the *Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa* and 46 times in the *Sundara-kāṇḍa*; 59% are in the first stage, 34% in the second and 6% in the third. On the other hand, it is commoner in the * and Appendix I passages than in the text of all books except the *Sundara-kāṇḍa* (where nevertheless the name is much commoner than in the other books, occurring 22 times). The distribution of its nearest equivalent, *Janakātmajā*, is much closer to the average (50% in the first stage, 38% in the second and 12% in the third).

³ Thus *maithilī janakātmajā* occurs at 1.76.17b, 2.27.1b, 3.12.2d, 51.1b, 53.35b(acc.), 54.31b, 59.22b(acc.), 4.6.2d, 47.4d(acc.), 5.2.35b(acc.), 11.6b, 5.25.31b, 6.106.13d(acc.), 18b, 7.41.27b(acc.) and 86.26b (also 1.526*2 post., 1394*1 post., 2.908*1 post., 3.1084*1 post., 5.326*1(acc.), 354*(acc.), 659*5, 750*1(acc.), 1200*10 post., 6.3181*1 and App.I.15.130 post.; *vaidehī janakātmajā* at 2.92.8b, 6.101.29b,40b (also 3.840*1 post.(voc), 1195*2 post., 5.192*6 post. and 6.3676* post.), and *sītām ca janakātmajā* at 3.11.14d and 2 App.I.30.11 post.(nom.), *sītā vā janakātmajā* at 5.14.14b, *sītām vai janakātmajā* at 6 App.I.53.68 post. and *ha sīte janakātmaje* at 6 App.I.57.81. Also occasionally both Sītā and *Janakātmajā* occur within the same line, though not in the same *pāda*, for example at 3.40.32cd, 6.22.7cd (cf.12a+d), 5 App.I.4.67[l.v.] and App.I.5.14; cf. also *janakasya sutā sītā* at 6 App.I.53.82 pr.

⁴ This is the only instance in the text that I have found, but three names occasionally occur in * passages or App.I passages (for example, *sītām maithilīm janakātmajā* at 5.326*1 and *vaidehīm maithilīm janakātmajā*

It is also relevant to note some *pādas* which might easily have become stereotyped but which in fact occur only once: *sūtā janaka-rājasya* at 5.14.15c (cf. x x *janaka-rājasya duhitā* 5.1367*(instr.) and 6.101*1, *janaka-narendra-sutām* 6.103*4[1.v.]), *janakasya kule jātā* at 5.11.16a (also 1.57*3), and *janakasya sutām iṣṭām* at 5.25.5c (cf. *janakasya sutām rājñāḥ* 2.892*1 pr.). Collectively, these isolated *pādas* serve to reinforce the picture we can draw from the stereotyped *pādas* of Sītā as being indeed Janaka's own daughter. Occasionally both her descent and her marriage are alluded to together, as in Hanumān's meditations: *rāmasya dayitā bhāryā janakasya sūtā satī* at 5.12.47cd and *sūtā janaka-rājasya sītā bhartṛ-ḍṛḍha-vratā* at 5.14.15cd. While there are, not surprisingly, fewer stereotyped *pādas* linked with Sītā's names than with Rāma's, it is certainly significant that the largest group of such *pādas* are those which designate her as Janaka's daughter in fairly explicit terms, whereas there are none at all which allude to her miraculous birth (although the adjective *ayonijā* does occur four times – but not as part of any formulaic expression). It is no coincidence that the commonest *pāda* is indeed *vaidehī janakātmajā*. It is in fact one of the oddities of the situation that Sītā's father is named Janaka, which carries equally clear implications of real paternity; even if this is a dynastic name, its meaning is specific. Perhaps most striking of all in this regard is the occasion when Sītā identifies herself to Hanumān as Janaka's daughter, using the term *duhitā* which strongly implies being his actual daughter (*duhitā janakasyāham* at 5.31.12a).

Moreover, it is not just in the earlier stages of the tradition, as found in the first and second stages of growth of the Rāmāyaṇa, that Sītā is regarded as Janaka's real daughter. In the *Rāmopākhyāna*, the summary of the Rāmāyaṇa within the Mahā-bhārata, Mārkaṇḍeya when he introduces the characters first uses simply the name Jānakī (MBh. 3.258.1c), then enlarges on this slightly by declaring that she is Janaka's daughter, made by Tvaṣṭṛ to be Rāma's dear queen, and rounds it off by declaring that he has announced the birth of Rāma and Sītā to Yudhiṣṭhira (*videha-rājo janakaḥ sītā tasyātmajo vibho | yām cakāra svayaṃ tvaṣṭā rāmasya mahiṣīm priyām || etad rāmasya te janma sītāyās ca prakīrtitam* | MBh. 3.258.9-10ab). Later texts too can still refer to Sītā as born naturally; for example, the *Vāmana-purāṇa* states that she was *born* in king Janaka's house (so also *not* in a field – *Saro-māhātmya* 16.10: *tato jātā gṛhe rājñō janakasya mahātmanah | sītā nāmeti vikhyāta rāma-patnī pati-vratā*).

Not only is Janaka quite often called her father, but there are also a number of references to her mother. At 2.26.11 Sītā claims that she heard as a girl in her father's house (*pitur gṛhe* at a) about forest life from an ascetic woman in front of her mother (*mama mātur ihāgrataḥ* at d), although this is not altogether decisive, since she could be referring to Janaka's wife, just as Rāma can refer to his father Daśaratha's wives as his mothers (e.g. *yāḥ śeṣā mama mātaraḥ, samā hi mama mātaraḥ*, 2.23.29b+d).⁵ However, this explanation is much less easily tenable when Sītā talks to Anasūyā about

at 5.354*).

⁵ So too Sītā herself a *sarga* later can declare that she will not pine for mother, father or home (*na mātur na pitur tatra smariṣyāmi na veśmanah* 2.27.15ab), if she goes to the forest with Rāma, where she is more naturally referring to Daśaratha and Kausalyā than her own parents.

her mother instructing her at marriage (2.110.8), especially since she uses here the term *jananī* with its clear reference to the birth process, or when Rāma in his distress at Sītā's disappearance asks what he is to say to Janaka and Sītā's mother (3.60.11; the term here is *mātr*). All three of these direct references to Sītā's mother come from passages which I have identified as belonging to the second stage of growth of the text (Brockington 1985: 329-338), but they can be regarded as giving greater definition to what is implicit in the first stage.

More decisively, indeed, in a first-stage passage, which is more integral to the narrative, Sītā makes another reference to her mother when, on seeing – as she thinks – Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa dead in battle, she declares that she does not grieve for them, nor herself, nor her mother but rather for her wretched mother-in-law, that is Kausalyā (*nāhaṃ śocāmi bhartāraṃ nihataṃ na ca lakṣmaṇaṃ | nātmānaṃ jananīm cāpi yathā śvaśrūṃ tapasvinīm*, 6.38.20); in this context, the reference can only be to her natural mother and indeed the term is *jananī* again (although a couple of manuscripts blur this by substituting *nātmānaṃ mātaraṃ tātaṃ* for the third *pāda*). Also, at an earlier point in the narrative, as Sītā entrusts her *cūḍa-maṇi* to Hanumān to take back to Rāma, she declares that it will remind Rāma of three people, *jananyā mama ca rājño daśarathasya ca* (5.37.2cd), but this can be divided in several ways (and the commentators disagree over the matter), of which the simplest and therefore best is probably “my mother, the king (i.e. Janaka) and Daśaratha” (which also agrees with Rāma's comment, *maṇi-ratnaṃ idaṃ dattaṃ vaidehyāḥ śvaśureṇa me*, 5.64.4ab), although “of <your (i.e. Rāma's)> mother, me and king Daśaratha” is another possibility; this may well then be another reference by Sītā to her birth mother.

Before we move on, it is worth emphasising the point that *jananī* does standardly indicate the birth mother in the Rāmāyaṇa, whereas the commoner term *mātr* is used more widely and does often include step-mothers. Among the 36 occurrences of *jananī* in the text (of which 26 are in the *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa*, with a single occurrence in the *Aranya-kāṇḍa*, four in the *Sundara-kāṇḍa*, two in the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* and three in the *Uttara-kāṇḍa*), most are used probably or certainly for the birth mother, sometimes in pointed contrast to other terms; notable examples are Daśaratha saying to Kaikeyī that Rāma has treated her like his own mother (*sadā te jananī-tulyāṃ vṛttiṃ vahati rāghavaḥ*, 2.10.34ab) and Lakṣmaṇa fearing for Kausalyā, the king and his own mother (*kausalyā caiva rājā ca tathaiva ca jananī mama*, 2.45.14ab = 80.15ab). There are only two counter-examples: Rāma in a message to Bharata refers to Kaikeyī as *jananī me yavīyāsī* (2.46.51b), where it might be argued that he is thereby emphasising his dutifulness to her just as Daśaratha had earlier done, and Bharata addresses his mothers (*abravī jananīḥ sarvāḥ*, 2.82.2a), where the plural in itself rules out the specific meaning.⁶

⁶ One other instance is ambiguous: Rāma, addressing Bharata, deprecates blaming a mother (i.e. Kaikeyī, *parivādaṃ jananyāḥ*, 3.15.34c), which can be construed either as his step-mother or as Bharata's mother, but the use of *ambā madhyamā* in the next verse suggests that the better way to understand it is as Bharata's birth mother.

There are just three passages which provide any detail about Sītā being found by Janaka as he is ploughing, although all are surprisingly brief: 1.65.14-15ab, 2.110.27 and 5.14.16 (cf. also 7 App.I.13.14). The commentators generally explain that the ploughing is for a sacrifice, although none of the text passages is explicit about this, but in any case it is not directly relevant to the issue. In the *Bāla-kāṇḍa* passage Janaka himself explains to Viśvāmitra when he arrives, accompanied by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa: “once when I was ploughing a field, a female arose from my plough and was received by me as I cleared the field, so she is known by name as Sītā; sprung from the ground, she was reared as my daughter (*mamātmaja*!)”. Within this *sarga* 1.65, 1.1208* – an insertion of D₁ alone after 13ab – elaborates on Sītā’s springing up from under Janaka’s ploughshare by making her come from his semen (*vīrya*) spilt on the earth at the sight of Menakā; this passage is referred to by Antoine (1975: 40-41) but he fails to mention its relative lack of attestation. Similarly, within 2.110, additions in the Northern recension slightly more delicately add that Janaka saw the *apsaras* Menakā flying through the sky, wished in his childless state to have a daughter by her and is granted his wish (2.2385* and 2388*, read by Ś₁ Ñ V₁ B₁₋₃ D_{2.4.6}); this is reminiscent of the story at 1.62 of how Viśvāmitra is inveigled into dalliance with Menakā for ten years to the detriment of his asceticism, which may therefore have prompted the addition of this detail.⁷ Another Northern addition, 2.2389*, emphasises that Sītā is named after the furrow (*sītā*), in the same way as the *Bāla-kāṇḍa* lines.

While the explanation at 1.65.14-15ab occurs in the third stage of growth of the text, both the others come from the second stage. In that at 2.110.27 Sītā, after referring shortly before this to her mother (at 2.110.8, cited above), offers the same explanation in her conversation with Anasūyā, that she arose splitting the ground as Janaka was ploughing, and this statement may well have been the starting point for the only slightly fuller *Bāla-kāṇḍa* statement; certainly, a pointer in that direction is that Sītā’s speech to Anasūyā here is the only passage in which Lakṣmaṇa’s marriage to Sītā’s sister Ūrmilā is mentioned outside the *Bāla-kāṇḍa* (2.110.51). It is surely significant that the term *ayonijā* occurs only in these two passages (at 1.65.13d,27c and 2.110.36a) and at 7.17.27c (see below); this is similar to the rarity of its use for Draupadī in the Mahā-bhārata (occurring only at 1.153.8c, 2.72.13a and 18.4.9c – also a significant distribution – against eleven occurrences for other individuals), contrary to the impression given in some secondary sources.

At 5.14.16 it is Hanumān who, soliloquising over the newly located Sītā, declares that she arose splitting the earth in the field that was being cut by the plough and picturesquely adds that she was covered in the dust of the ground that resembled lotus pollen. It is again noteworthy that this follows closely a statement of her natural birth, here coming immediately after Hanumān has called her *sutā janaka-rājasya* (5.14.15c, cited above).

⁷ Interestingly, in another, earlier allusion to Viśvāmitra’s losing track of time as a result, the *apsaras* involved is named as Ghṛtācī (4.34.7a) and a single manuscript adds a passage which includes Gautama being similarly tempted by Menakā (4.659*, read by D₁₁ only). The story of Viśvāmitra and Menakā is of course told at greater length within MBh. 1.65-66.

Bulcke had already suggested that 5.14 is a late interpolation, though largely on the rather subjective grounds of this mention of Sītā's miraculous birth (Bulcke 1952: 107-117); his view is no doubt correct but it can now be supported on more cogent grounds (Brockington 1985: 341). Another episode that might be thought to support the idea of her emerging from the furrow is her swallowing by the earth in testimony to her purity at 7.88, since in references in secondary literature to this passage (e.g. Dimmitt 1982: 214) the earth is often stated to be her mother, as indeed she is termed in later texts. However, no word for mother occurs anywhere in this *sarga*, where the earth is called only *mādhavī devī* at 10c (with *dharaṇī* and *medinī* as variants) and *dharaṇī devī* at 13a.

In addition to the three passages examined above, but even more briefly, at 6.104.15 Sītā, while haranguing Rāma, declares that her origin is not from Janaka but from the earth (*apadeśena janakān notpattir vasudhā-talāt | mama vṛttam ca vṛttajña bahu te na puraskṛtam*); however, not only does this statement occur in a *sarga* identified as belonging to the second stage but also this verse is the first in a passage which is omitted by several manuscripts (Ś V₃ D_{8.12}), so it can be assigned with some certainty to the more developed stages of the text. So too can 5.4.20 (occurring within a *sarga* entirely in *triṣṭubh* metre, a very obvious sign of lateness) where, in the narrative of Hanumān's search for her, Sītā is inconsistently described as both born in a royal family (*rāja-kule prajātam* at *b*) and mind-born (*manasābhijātam* at *d*); it is no surprise that the commentators between them have several different explanations for the latter. The commentary of Rāmānuja even refers it to the resolution made by Vedavatī.

The story of Vedavatī, however, occurs only at 7.17 within the text of the Critical Edition (the name itself occurs at 8d, 23a, 31a and in a recapitulation at 18.1b), although at 6.1026*6 the Southern recension adds to Rāvaṇa's instructions about waking Kumbhakarṇa his awareness of a prophecy about his death at Rāma's hands and of Vedavatī's curse; the Vedavatī story can therefore have no claim to being the earliest version of Sītā's origins and is actually an elaboration of her birth in the furrow. For in this *sarga* Agastya narrates how Rāvaṇa comes across Kuśadhvaja's daughter, who is engaged in asceticism and, because of her study of the Vedas, is called Vedavatī and how she rebuffs his attempt to seize her and immolates herself in the fire, vowing to be reborn as his nemesis; Agastya concludes by declaring that she who was Vedavatī in the Kṛta-yuga has arisen from the furrow (*sītā*) in the Tretā-yuga to kill this Rākṣasa and is therefore called Sītā, where the reference to the Yugas is a clear mark of lateness. The occurrence of *ayonijā* at 27c looks rather like a conscious reminiscence of 1.65 and 2.110 (cf. above), while *kṣetre hala-mukha-graste* at 30c is strikingly similar to *kṣetre hala-mukha-kṣate* at 5.14.16b; we can be sure that this longer narrative does indeed depend on the brief narratives of Sītā's birth from the furrow.

Furthermore, a few manuscripts (B_{1.2} D_{3.5-7}, and the Kumbhakonam edition within brackets) add into this *sarga* a passage of nine lines, 343*, in which the child is born in Rāvaṇa's house and thrown into the sea, only to reach land and emerge from the furrow (1.9: *rājño hala-mukhāgrasthā punar abhyutthitā satī*). This is evidently related to the story, elaborated in such later texts as the Malay *Hikāyat Srī Rāma* and Divākara Prakāśa

Bhaṭṭa's Kāśmīrī version, about Sītā being born to Mandodarī and abandoned, for which it is probably the source. The lateness of all this material does not need emphasising.

To conclude, it is clear that the earliest understanding of Sītā's parentage within the original Rāmāyaṇa is that she was born in the normal way as the child of Janaka and his wife but at a fairly early point in the development of the story, since it is attested from the second stage of growth onwards, the idea of her emerging from the furrow begins to be put forward, quite probably as an *ex post facto* rationalisation of the etymological meaning of her name. Yet more elaborate versions appear only later, starting with the story of Vedavatī in the third stage of growth within the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa, and growing ever more exotic in other texts and other countries as time passes.

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