

(also called Rṣabhakūṭa 3. 109. 7; once identified with Kailāsa 6. 7. 39).

A. Location : Listed by Saṃjaya among the six mountains which stretch towards the east and merge at both ends in the eastern and the western oceans (*prāgāyatā mahārāja śad ete ratnaparvatāḥ / avagāḍhā hy ubhayataḥ samudrau pūrvapaścimau*) 6. 7. 2; the distance between them is thousands of *yojanas* (*teṣāṃ antaraviṣkambho yojanāni sahasraśaḥ*) 6. 7. 4; it lies between Haimavata-varṣa and Harivarṣa; the Varṣa beyond Hemakūṭa is Harivarṣa (*idaṃ tu bhārataṃ varṣaṃ tato haimavataṃ param / hemakūṭāt param caiva harivarṣaṃ pracakṣate*) 6. 7. 6; identified with Kailāsa (*hemakūṭas tu sumahān kailāso nāma parvataḥ*) 6. 7. 39; to the north of Kailāsa and towards Malnāka is the Hiraṇyakeśvara mountain 6. 7. 40; near the rivers Nandā and Aparanandā (*tataḥ prayātāḥ ... nandāṃ aparānandāṃ ca nadyau ... / sa parvataṃ samāsādyā hemakūṭam*) 3. 109. 1-2; 3. 109. 18-19.

B. Description : Free from disease (*anā-maya*) 3. 109. 2; big (*mahāgiri*) 3. 109. 14; (*sumahant*) 6. 7. 39; all the six mountains listed by Saṃjaya are full of jewels (*ratna-parvatāḥ*) 6. 7. 2 and resorted to by Siddhas and Cāraṇas (*siddhacāraṇasevitāḥ*) 6. 7. 4.

C. Characteristics : (1) Many unthinkable wonders happen on the mountain (*acintyān adbhutān bhāvān dadarśa subahūn nṛpaḥ*); spoken words turn into clouds and rocks by thousands and hence people cannot climb it (*vāco yatrābhavan meghā upalāś ca sahasraśaḥ / nāśaknuvaṃs tam āroḍhum ... janāḥ*) 3. 109. 3; wind always blows there and it rains continuously; the oblation bearing god (Fire) can be seen there morning and evening (*vāyur nityaṃ vavau yatra nityaṃ*

*devaś ca varṣati / sāyam prātāś ca bhagavān dṛśyate havyavāhanah*) 3. 109. 4; (2) One cannot even look at this mountain, let alone climb it; one who has not practised austerities cannot look at it or climb it (*nāśaknuvann abhidraṣṭum kuta evāddhirohitum // nātaptatapasā śakyo draṣṭum eṣa mahāgiriḥ / āroḍhum vāpi kaunteya*) 3. 109. 13-14; (3) Guhyakas live there (*hemakūṭe tu guhyakāḥ*) 6. 7. 48; King Vaiśravaṇa, along with the Guhyakas, enjoys himself there (*yatra vaiśravaṇo rājā guhyakaiḥ saha modate*) 6. 7. 39.

D. Epic event : Yudhiṣṭhira having reached Hemakūṭa saw many wonders there 3. 109. 5; Lomaśa gave to him the explanation of these wonders 3. 109. 6-17 (see the next section); he advised Yudhiṣṭhira to bathe in the river Nandā flowing along the mountain since a bath destroyed the sin instantly 3. 109. 18; he also asked him to restrain his speech (*niyata-vāg bhava*) 3. 109. 14.

E. Past events : (1) An ascetic named Rṣabha once lived on this mountain (hence called Rṣabhakūṭa?) and was practising austerities for many hundred years (*anekasatavarṣāyus tapasvī*); he got angry when he was drawn into conversation by others; so he told the mountain to release rocks if any one uttered a word there; he summoned wind and bade him not to make noise; hence if any one tried to speak there he was restrained by a cloud (*sa vai sambhāṣyamāṇo 'nyaiḥ kopād girim uvāca ha / ya iha vyāharet kaścid upalān utsṛjes tadā // vātāṃ cāhūya mā śabdān ity uvāca sa tāpasah / vyāharaṃś caiva puruṣo meghena vinivāryate*) 3. 109. 7-9; (2) When gods formerly came to the river Nandā (flowing near Hemakūṭa) men followed there to see the gods; since the