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Rama Beyond Price

by Muráři



Edited & Translated by
JUDIT TÖRZSÖK

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ACT III
THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

tataḥ praviṣati JANAKO, VIŚVĀMITRAḤ, ŚATĀNANDO, RĀMA|
LAKṢMAṆAU *ca*.

JANAKAḤ: (*sa/harṣam*) bhagavan Viśvāmitra,

3.50 lumpann a|drṣṭa|jāmātr̥|saṃpadām śucam adya naḥ;
tvad|āgama|janm” âyam ānandaḥ su|dināyate.

api ca,

adya pradakṣiṇa|śikh”|ā|valayaḥ Kṛśānur
aśnāti me jana|padeṣu vaṣaṭ|kṛtāni.
tvat|tejasi sphurati śāntika|pauṣṭikeṣu,
svām ca srucam śithilam Āṅgirasō bibharti.

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: sakhe, Sīradhvaja! cirasya śāntaḥ puṣṭaś ca
tav’ âyam jana|padaḥ,

yatra tvam brahma|mīmāṃsā|tattva|jño daṇḍa|dhāraḥ,
purodhās c’ âiva yasy’ âsāv Āṅgiraḥ prapitā|mahaḥ.

3.55 (*smitam kṛtvā*.) jāmātur a|darśana|janm” âyam śokaḥ punar
asmākam upaśamayitum avaśiṣyate. kiṃ ca, śoka|harṣau
nāma loka|yātr” êyam bhavataḥ. tathā hi,

yajūṃṣi taittirīyāṇi mūrtāni vamati sma yaḥ,
sa yogī Yājñavalkyas tvām ved’|āntān adhya|jīgapat.

JÁNAKA, VISHVA·MITRA, SHATÁNANDA, RAMA, and LÁKSHMANA enter.

JÁNAKA: (*with delight*) Venerable Vishva-mitra,

Grief could have overcome us today, because we have not been lucky enough to find an appropriate son-in-law—but this grief is now gone, as the joy to see you arrive makes our day cloudless. 3.50

Moreover,

Today, the flames go around clockwise* while the fire consumes the offerings made to it in our kingdom. Your power radiates everywhere as the ritual acts to promote welfare and prosperity are performed, and the sage Shatánanda can keep his sacrificial ladle unused.*

VISHVA·MITRA: My friend, Jánaka, your kingdom has been peaceful and prosperous for a long time. . .

Here, where you, a true philosopher, an expert of brahmanical knowledge, are the ruler, for whom the grandson of Ángiras, Shatánanda, performs the priestly duties.

(*smiling*) Now, what remains for us to do is to chase away the grief you feel because you cannot find a son-in-law. In any case, what are these worldly experiences, happiness or grief, for you? For, 3.55

He who revealed the form of sacrificial formulas according to the Tittiriya tradition of Vedic texts, the yogi Yajnaválkya himself, taught you Vedic philosophy.

LAKṢMAṆAḤ: (*jan'ântikam.*) ārya, ayaṃ sa rājā Vaidehaḥ,
pavitram a|parimey' |āścaryam yasy' āpadānam upādhyā-
yād anuśrūyate.

RĀMAḤ: (*sa/pramod'/ânurāgam.*) vatsa, sa ev' āyaṃ Śatapa-
tha|kath" |âdhikārī puruṣaḥ, praṇāyyāy' |ânte|vāsine yas-
mai bhagavān vājaneyo Yājñavalkyaḥ śuklāni yajūṃṣi
provāca.

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*muhūrtam nirvarṇya*)

3.60 nijāya tasmai gurave yatīnāṃ
jaitrāya viśrāṇita|go|sahasram,
taṃ go|sahasr' |âdhipateḥ praśiṣyam
upāsmahe Maithilam ātithyam.

JANAKAḤ: (*sa/prasrayam*) bhagavan, yat kiṃ cid anyad abhi-
dadhāsi, tatra prabhaviṣṇur bhavān eva. tatra|bhavatas
tu Sahasra|mayūkh' |ânte|vāsino yog' |īśvarād bhagavato
Yājñavalkyād adhyayanam iti mahīyas" īyam asmākaṃ
yaśaḥ|patākā.

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*vihasya*) bho mahā|yogin!

kiṃ Yājñavalkyo, Janakaḥ kim evaṃ?
na vaḥ sva|rūpaṃ kavayo 'pi vidyuh.
pravāha|nityān adhikṛtya yuṣmān
sahasra|śākhāḥ śrutayaḥ prathante.

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

LÁKSHMANA: (*aside to RAMA*) My brother, this is that king, Jánaka, about whose virtuous and incomparably miraculous deeds we heard from our master.

RAMA: (*happily, with affection*) My little brother, he is the man who has figures in the Shata-patha Bráhmna, who studied the Vedas without attachment to this world, and to whom Yajnaválkya, founder of the tradition of the white Yajur-veda, revealed the sacrificial formulas.

VISHVA-MITRA: (*looking at JÁNAKA for a moment*)

He has given a thousand cows to his preceptor, who won against the other ascetics;* he is the disciple of the thousand-rayed Sun's disciple—we honor him, the King of Míthila, who always receives his guests in the right manner. 3.60

JÁNAKA: (*politely*) No matter what you say, venerable Vishva-mitra, you shall outwit me in this conversation. But the real reason for my becoming famous is that I had the honor of studying under the guidance of the best of yogis, the venerable disciple of the thousand-rayed Sun.

VISHVA-MITRA: (*smiling*) O great yogi,

What kind of person is Yajnaválkya? What sort of man is Jánaka? Even the seers are unable to explain your true nature to us. Thanks to your uninterrupted chain of preceptors and disciples, the holy scriptures have been revealed in their thousands of branches.

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: bhagavan, evam īdṛśāḥ khalv amī tri|bhuvana|mahanīya|mahimāno manīṣiṇaḥ.

3.65 JANAKAḤ: (*sa/vailakṣya/smitam*) bhagavan,

nirmāya kārmaṇam ṛcām agha|marṣaṇīnām
unmārjanīr jagad|aghāni tav' ādya vācaḥ
śrotuṃ cira|praṇayi|kautukam asti ceto.
duḥkhā|karoti punar eṣa mam' ārtha|vādaḥ.

tad virama. (*iti śīrasy aṅjalim ghaṭayati.*)

VISVĀMITRAḤ: (*sa/smitam, asy' aṅjalim udghāṭayan*) sakhe
Sīradhvaja! samhriyatām aṅjaliḥ. amī tūṣṇīm|bhūtāḥ
smaḥ. Kātyāyanī|kāmuka|kārmuk' |āropaṇa|pravīṇena
duhituḥ patyā sampraty a|paryuṣita|pratijño bhūyāḥ!

LAKṢMAṆAḤ: (*apavārya*) ārya, paras|param eteṣāṃ pauraṣ'|
ōtkarṣa|praśamsā|ramaṇīyaḥ pāvano 'yam ṛṣiṇāṃ sama-
vāyaḥ.

3.70 RĀMAḤ: vatsa, yad āttha.

smaranti lok'|ātham amī kila śrutīr
iti pratiṣṭhām adhigantum īsmahe.
paraṃ yad eṣāṃ punar asti vaibhavaṃ,
tad eta eva vyatividrate yadi.

JANAKAḤ: (*sa/harṣam*) param anugrḥīto 'smi.

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

SHATÁNANDA: Venerable Vishva-mitra, such are indeed those sages, whose fame has spread in the three worlds.

JÁNAKA: (*smiling in embarrassment*) Venerable Vishva-mitra, 3.65

My heart has for a long time been eager to hear your words, which perform the magic of the purificatory Rigvedic chants and destroy the sins of the world. But these affirmations praising me make me uneasy.

So please stop. (*He puts his folded hands on his head.*)

VISHVA-MITRA: (*smiling, making JÁNAKA's arms descend*) My friend, Jánaka, do not beg me with folded hands. I am not going to say anything. May your promise be fulfilled and your daughter's future husband be able to take up the bow of Párvati's husband.

LÁKSHMANA: (*aside*) My brother, they praise each other's manly qualities, which makes their meeting pleasant; their conversation has a purificatory effect.

RAMA: My little brother, as you say, 3.70

They transmit Vedic knowledge for the sake of this world—this is what we are able to understand about their greatness. But only they can possibly understand each other's real power.

JÁNAKA: (*with delight*) I am very much honored.

samasyā vā sām̐nām̐,
 bahir|a|bahir|am̐haḥ|parim̐rjām̐
 ṛcām̐ vā sam̐vādaḥ,
 kim api yajuṣām̐ vā paripaṇaḥ,
 tvad|āśīr|vādo 'yaṃ
 bahu|viṣaya|sākṣāt|kṛta|phalo
 varam̐ me vatsāyāḥ
 kathayati puro|varttinam̐ iva.

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*s'ākūta/smitam*) sakhe Śīradhvaja. evam etat.

3.75 davīyasyo dūrād
 a|patham̐ iha c' āmutra ca śucām̐
 tri|vedī|vākyānām̐
 an|aticira|bhagnā iva khilāḥ.
 śruti|grāhyam̐ jyotiḥ
 kim api bahir|antar|mala|muṣo
 m̐rjāyā majjānaḥ
 kva nu vipariyanti dvi|ja|giraḥ?

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: (*sva/gatam*) nūnam̐ Rāma|bhadram̐ eva jāmā-
 taram̐ abhisam̐dhāya bhagavān̐ ayaṃ punaḥ punar va-
 kr' |ōktibhiḥ Śīradhvajam̐ parimohayate. bhavatu! aham
 asya prarocan' |ārtham̐ a|sam̐vidāna iva pṛcchāmi. (*pra-
 kāsam̐, munim̐ prati*) kasy' ēdam̐ Śakunta|rāja|ketor iva
 Kaustubha|Śrīvatsau dāraka|ratna|dvayam̐?

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*vihasya, svagatam*) sādhu, vatsa Śatānanda!
 yad etat kṛtam̐ tīrtham̐ vivakṣitasya vastunaḥ sukh' |āva-
 tāraya. (*prakāsam*) vatsa Gautama, Kakutstha|kula|ku-
 mārāv etau.

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

Like the synthesis of Samavedic songs, like the truthfulness of Rigvedic chants, which purify external and internal sins, like the stock of Yajurvedic formulas, such are your words of blessing, which have come true on many different occasions. They now talk about my daughter's bridegroom as if he were present here.

VISHVA-MITRA: (*smiling purposefully*) My friend, Jánaka, it is true.

Very distant and far beyond any grief of this or the next world, they are like untouched lands—made of Vedic words—which have just been plowed. They are made of light that one can perceive only by hearing, they purify internal as well as external impurities, being as they are the core of purity itself—such are the words of brahmins. In what could they prove to be wrong? 3.75

SHATÁNANDA: (*aside*) Surely, this venerable sage thinks already of Rama as the king's would-be son-in-law, and confuses Jánaka with repeated allusions. All right, to please him, I shall inquire as if I were ignorant. (*aloud, to the sage*) Venerable Vishva-mitra, to whom do these two dear boys belong, who are like the Káustubha gem and Shri-vatsa mark on Gáruda-bannered Vishnu?*

VISHVA-MITRA: (*smiling, aside*) Well done, my friend, Shatánanda. You have given a cue so that I can easily introduce the subject I wanted to talk about. (*aloud*) My friend, Shatánanda, these are two princes of the Kakútsa dynasty.

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: (*sa/pratyabhijñam iva*)

putr'ârthe jagad|eka|jānghika|yay'ûd-
 dāma|bhramat|kīrtinā,
 cātur|hotra|vitīrṇa|viśva|vasudhā|
 cakreṇa cakre makhaḥ
 rājñā Pañkti|rathena, yatra sakala|
 svar|vāsi|sarv'âtithau
 sa sven' âiva phala|pradaḥ phalam api
 sven' âiva Nārāyaṇaḥ.

3.80 tat kim etāv eva tau Dāśarathī, yau kila Rāma|Lakṣmaṇāv
 iti Tāḍakā|mathana|maṅgal' |ôdghāta|vitīrṇa|divy' |âs-
 tra|mantra|pārāyaṇena bhagavat" âiva vinītau vaitānasya
 karmaṇas' chidrā|pidhāna|dakṣiṇayā bhagavantam upā-
 sām̐babhūvatur?

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: atha kim.

JANAKAS *tau sa/sneha/bahu/mānam paśyati.*

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: tad anayoḥ kataro Rāmaḥ, kataro Lakṣma-
 ṇaḥ?

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*RĀMAM nirdiśan*) vatsa, Āṅgīrasa,

3.85 ye catvāro dinakara|kula|
 kṣattr|saṃtāna|mallī|
 māl" |âmlāna|stabaka|sa|dr̥ṣā
 jajñire rāja|putrāḥ.
 Rāmas teṣām a|carama|bhavas,
 Tāḍakā|kāla|rātri|
 pratyūṣo 'yaṃ su|carita|kathā|
 kandalī|mūla|kandaḥ.

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

SHATÁNANDA: (*as if he were recognizing them*)

King Dasha-ratha, whose fame had reached everywhere in the form of his swift sacrificial horse, unique in this world, the king who had rewarded his four officiating priests with the gift of the whole earth, performed a sacrifice to have sons.* The guests invited were all the inhabitants of heaven; and he who makes all sacrifices fruitful, Vishnu-Naráyana, himself came to be the result obtained through the sacrifice.*

So are these Dasha-ratha's two sons, Rama and Lákshmana, 3.80
whom you yourself taught and to whom you transmitted the science of the divine mantra-weapons to strike down and kill Tádaka successfully? Are they the ones who honored you with the gift of destroying all obstacles to your sacrifice?

VISHVA-MITRA: Yes, indeed.

JÁNAKA *looks at them with affection and respect.*

SHATÁNANDA: So which of them is Rama and which is Lákshmana?

VISHVA-MITRA: (*pointing at RAMA*) My dear friend, Shatánanda,

Four princes were born, four unfading flower clusters 3.85
in the jasmine garland of the line of warriors in the solar dynasty. Here is Rama, the eldest of them, the dawn that ended the night of Tádaka's threat, the root of what is a plantain tree of good acts.

(LAKṢMAṆAM *nirdiśya*) ayam c' āparo Lakṣmaṇaḥ.

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: bhagavan, diṣṭyā Vasiṣṭha|prasūtaṃ kṣatram
rddhyati.

JANAKAḤ: (*vihasya*) sādhu bhagavan, asmā|dṛśiṣu praviśya
krīḍasi.

krodh'āgnau Puruhūta|huṃ|kṛti|parā-
bhūta|Triśaṅku|trapā|
saṃpāta|jvalite jagat|traya|mayīm
tvayy āhutiṃ juhvati,
saṃbhrānt'ōpanatasya nāṭa|jarā|
vaiklavya|śirṇ'ākṣarāḥ
pratyūhāya babhūvur Ambuja|bhuvo
devasya cāt'ūktayaḥ.

3.90 tam api nāma bhagavantam yajamānam anye gopāyitāraḥ.

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: rāja'|rṣe, evam etat. kiṃ punar na dikṣiṣya-
māṇāḥ krudhyant' īti rakṣitāraṃ kṣatriyam upādadate.

JANAKAḤ: (*sa/harṣam* RĀMA|LAKṢMAṆAU *nirvarṇya*, *jan'ān-
tikam*) bhagavan Śatānanda,

bhavati na tathā Bhānoḥ śiṣye
gurau vasato mama
svayam api munau Viśvāmitre
gṛhān adhitiṣṭhati,
Daśaratha|sutāv etau dṛṣṭvā
yath" ōcchvasitaṃ manaḥ
śīthilayati me pratyag|jyotiḥ|
prabodha|sukh'āsikām.

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

(*pointing at LÁKSHMANA*) And the other one is Lákshmana.

SHATÁNANDA: Venerable Vishva-mitra, thank god, warriors begotten by Vasíshta prosper.

JÁNAKA: (*smiling*) Well done, venerable Vishva-mitra. Adapting yourself to people like me, you just play with us.

When you were making a sacrifice of the three worlds into the fire of your wrath kindled by the deep shame of Tri-shanku, who had been humiliated by the roaring Indra,* then lotus-born Brahma, being confused by this destruction of his creation,* bowed down to you and uttered some flattering hymns of garbled words—as if he had been hindered by his feigned old age—to interrupt you.

Still, may others protect and help you with your sacrifices! 3.90

SHATÁNANDA: Royal sage, may it be so. As initiates of a sacrifice should not be angered, they need to employ a warrior to protect them.

JÁNAKA: (*looking at RAMA and LÁKSHMANA with delight, aside to SHATÁNANDA*) Venerable Shatánanda,

My heart had never been so delighted by the presence of my preceptor, the Sun's disciple, when I lived in his house, nor by the arrival of the sage Vishva-mitra in our home, as it is now by seeing these two sons of Dasha-ratha. My mind forgets even the joy of knowing the Supreme Self.

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: rāja|rṣe Vaideha, īdr̥śam ev' âitat. mam' âpi
rāja|putrāv etau sākṣāt|kurvato vatse Sīt" |Ōrmile na hr̥-
dayād avarohataḥ.

3.95 JANAKAḤ: (VIŚVĀMITRAM *prati*) bhagavan,
idaṃ vayo, mūrtir iyam manojñā,
vīr'âdbhuto 'yam carita|prarohaḥ.
imau kumārau, bata, paśyato me
kṛt'ârtham antar|naṭat' îva cetaḥ.

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*s'ôtprāsa|hāsam*) sakhe Sīradhvaja, hr̥dayam
ev' āmantrayasva: kim|artham kṛt'ârtham as' îti.

JANAKAḤ: (*sa|khedam*)

yad|gotrasya prathama|puruṣas
tejasām īśvaro 'yam,
yeṣāṃ dharma|pravacana|gurur
brahma|vādī Vasiṣṭhaḥ,
ye vartante tava ca hr̥daye
suṣṭhu saṃbandha|yogyās
te rājāno; mama punar asau
dāruṇaḥ śulka|setuḥ.

3.100 RĀMA|LAKṢMAṆAU: (*jan'ântikam*) katham, asmadiyāḥ ka-
thāḥ prastūyante!

VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*sa|smitam*) rāja|rṣe, yadi śulka|saṃsth" âiva
kevalam antar|āyas, tan na kiṃ cid etat.

JANAKAḤ: (*sa|khedam vimṣann, apavārya*) bhagavan Ān-
girasa,

yad vidann api Videha|nandinī
pāṇi|pīḍana|vidher mah" |ârghatām
evam āha munir eṣa Kauśikaḥ,

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

SHATÁNANDA: Royal sage, Jánaka, it is indeed so. When I see these two princes, they remind my heart of our dear little Sita and Úrmila.

JÁNAKA: (*to VISHVA-MITRA*) Venerable Vishva-mitra, 3.95
Look at their youthfulness, their handsome appearance, their eminent deeds, heroic and admirable. When I behold these two princes, my heart, having all its desires fulfilled, almost dances with joy.

VISHVA-MITRA: (*smiling ironically*) My friend, Jánaka, then ask your heart why it has obtained all its desires.

JÁNAKA: (*with distress*)
These kings whose paternal ancestor is the Lord of the Luminaries, to whom Vasíshta, the preceptor of the Vedas, taught the words of law and religion—these kings who are so dear to your heart would make very good husbands. But I have a promise to fulfill strictly, concerning the bride-price.

RAMA AND LÁKSHMANA: (*whispering to each other*) Look, they 3.100
are talking about our affairs.

VISHVA-MITRA: (*smiling*) Royal sage, if the only obstacle is that promise concerning the bride-price, it is not even worth mentioning.

JÁNAKA: (*reflecting, with pain, aside*) Venerable Shatánanda,
What this sage Vishva-mitra has just said—though he knows what a great price is required in order to obtain Sita's hand—confuses my mind very much.

tena muhyati cirāya me manah
 tad eva sthānavīyaṃ vā dhanuḥ syād idam īdṛśam,
 etad|āropanaṃ nāma paṇo vā mama jarjaraḥ.

3.105 ŚATĀNANDAḤ: śāntaṃ pāpaṃ, śāntaṃ pāpaṃ.

dur|laṅgham Īśvara|śar'āsanam, a|pramocya|
 śulka|grahas tvam asi; sarvam idaṃ tath" āiva.
 kim tv asya Rāghava|śiśoḥ sahaj'|ānubhāva|
 gambhīra|bhīṣaṇam ati|sphuṭam eva vṛttam.

JANAKAḤ: (*munim prati*) bhagavan Kauśika, ciram api vika-
 lpayan na bhavad|girām abhidheyam ady' āpi niścinomi.

VÍŚVĀMITRAḤ: (*vihasya*) tad upadarśaya kārmukam aindu|
 śekharam. Rāma|bhadra eva vyākarotu.

RĀMAḤ: (*sa/harṣaṃ, sva/gatam*) katham alika|vikalpair āt-
 mānaṃ vinodayāmi? nanv ayaṃ mam' āiva kautukaṃ
 pūrayitum aiśvaraṃ dhanur abhyarthayate bhagavān.
 (JANAKAḤ *ca dṛṣtvā, sa/vimarśam*) ahaha,

3.110 «bālena saṃbhāvyam idaṃ ca karma
 bravīti ca pratyayito maha"rṣiḥ.»
 iti dhruvaṃ mantrayate nṛpo 'yaṃ.
 datte kim atr' ōttaram? ākulo 'smi.

JANAKAḤ: (*muhūrtam iva sthitvā, dīrgham uṣṇaṃ ca niḥś-
 vasya*) bhagavan, kva tādrśaṃ bhāga|dheyam asmākam,
 yena bhagavatā Vīśvāmitreṇa nāthavanto vayaṃ Mai-
 thilīm etasmai Raghu|kula|kumārāya pratipādyā cirāya
 carit'|ārthā bhavāmaḥ?

RĀMO *lajjate.*

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

Either this bow of Shiva is to be strung by Rama, as said, or my promise about it will be broken.

SHATÁNANDA: God forbid!

3.105

Shiva's bow is hard to string, and your promise about the bride-price should not be broken—this is the state of the matter. However, Rama's conduct has clearly proved that his innate power is frightening and limitless.*

JÁNAKA: (*toward the sage*) Venerable Vishva-mitra, I have been thinking about what you said for a long time, but I still do not quite understand what you meant.

VISHVA·MITRA: (*smiling*) Then show us Shiva's bow, and Rama himself shall interpret my words for you.

RAMA: (*with delight, aside*) Why, am I deluding myself with false hopes? But the sage must be asking for Shiva's bow in order to satisfy my curiosity! (*looking at JÁNAKA, reflecting*) Alas,

The king surely says to himself: "This great sage is quite confident that even a child can perform the task." So how will he react to this request? —This is what worries me.

3.110

JÁNAKA: (*waiting for a moment, then, with a deep sigh*) Venerable Vishva-mitra, how could I be so lucky to be able to give Sita to this Raghu prince and fulfill my greatest wish after a long time, thanks to your gracious help?*

RAMA *is bashful.*

JANAKAḤ:

yat|kodaṇḍa|samarpita|tri|bhuvana|
 chidrā|pidhāna|vratam
 jātam rohitam eva kevalam apa-
 jyā|bandham aindram dhanuḥ,
 te 'pi prekṣya purā śar'āsanam idam
 maurvī|kiṇa|śyāmikā|
 kastūrī|surabhī|kṛtān abibharur
 vyartham bhujān bhū|bhujah.

3.115 VIŚVĀMITRAḤ: sakhe Sīradhvaja, katham mahā|puṇya|rāśim
 ātmānam avamanyase?

tvad|bhāga|dheyam api tādr̥śam, utsavānām
 etādr̥śam vayam api prasamīkṣitārah.
 santy eva viśva|bhuvan'ā|bhaya|dāna|śauṇḍāḥ
 kṣoṇī|bhujah, param amī tu na Rāma|bhadrah.

LAKṢMAṆAḤ: (*sva/gatam*) katham, etad upādhyāyen' āiv'
 ābhihitam, yad asmi vaktu|kāmaḥ.

JANAKAḤ: bhagavan! satyam, a|cintyo hi maṇi|mantr'āu-
 śadh'|ādīnām iva Raghu|rāja|ḍimbhānām anubhāvaḥ.
 param etad bravīmi:

Gir'īśen' ārāddham
 tri|jagad|avajaitram, diviśadām
 upādāya jyotiḥ
 Sarasi|ruha|janmā yad asṛjat,
 Hṛṣīk'ēśo yasminn
 iṣur ajani, maurvī Phaṇi|patiḥ,
 puras tisro lakṣyam,
 dhanur iti kim apy adbhutam idam.

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

JÁNAKA:

Indra's bow has bestowed the task of protecting the three worlds onto the bows of some powerful kings, and has become a straight rainbow, without its bowstring attached.* Yet even these kings, when they saw Shiva's bow—although their arms seemed almost scented by the musk that their calluses resembled after stringing so many bows—were completely helpless.*

VISHVA-MITRA: My friend, Jánaka! Why do you lament your 3.115
fate when you have so much luck.

You are very fortunate and we are here to witness that wedding feast. There are indeed eminent kings capable of bestowing safety upon the world, but Rama simply does not belong to the same category.

LÁKSHMANA: (*aside*) Why, my master has just said exactly what I was about to remark.

JÁNAKA: Venerable Vishva-mitra, it is true that just as the power of precious stones, mantras, medicinal herbs and the like is unimaginable, so is it with the power of the Raghu princes. But I must also tell you something.

It was requested by Shiva, Lord of the Mountains, and it was fashioned by Brahma, out of the radiance of the gods put together, to conquer the three worlds. Vishnu has become its arrow, the Lord of the Serpents its string and the three demon-cities its target—this is the story of this miraculous bow.

3.120 ŚATĀNANDAḤ: āḥ kim anayā Pināka|praśasti|prapañcikayā?
 tad etat Kauśikam eva pramāṇayanto bahu|manyāmahe.
 api ca, kim a|śakyaṃ Rāma|bhadrasya?

utpādayan kam api kauṇapa|koṭi|homam,
 tejo|hutāśana|samindhana|sāmidhenīm
 yas Tāḍakām akṛta bāla|sakhaiḥ pṛṣatkair,
 īśaj|jayaḥ sphuṭam anena Daś'ānana 'pi.

nepathy'ārdha|praviṣṭaḥ PURUṢAḤ.

PURUṢAḤ: deva, Daś'ānana|purohitaḥ Śauṣkalo nāma ma-
 hā|rājaṃ didṛkṣate.

ŚATĀNANDAḤ: (*s'ôdvegam.*) āḥ! āgacchatu.

3.125 PURUṢO *niṣkrāntaḥ*.

RĀMAḤ: (*sa|vyayam, jan'āntikam*) vatsa Lakṣmaṇa, katham
 antarito 'yam anena dur|ātmanā rākṣasena Kām'|āri|kār-
 muka|paricaryā|mah" |ôtsavaḥ?

LAKṢMAṆAḤ: na kevalam ayam. . . (*ity ardh'ôktau hasati.*)

RĀMAḤ *sa|praṇaya|roṣa|smitam tam apāṅgena paśyati.*

praviśya.

3.130 ŚAUṢKALAḤ: (*pratyekam avalokya, ātma|gatam*) katham, atr'
 āiva Janaka|Śatānandābhyāṃ puras|kṛto viśveṣām as-
 mākam a|mitro Viśvāmitraḥ. (*vicintya*) tiṣṭhatu. hatako
 'yam. (*hastam dakṣiṇena dṛṣtvā*) aye, kāv etau kṣatriya|
 brahma|cāriṇau?

ACT III: THE BREAKING OF SHIVA'S BOW

SHATÁNANDA: What is the point in praising Shiva's bow in such an elaborate way? I take Vishva-mitra's words as true, and respect him. Moreover, what could be impossible for Rama? 3.120

He is preparing for a miraculous sacrifice of thousands of demons, for which, with the help of his childhood friends, his arrows, he has already used Tádaka as mantric fuel to kindle the fire of his power—he shall surely conquer even ten-headed Rávana easily.

From behind the scenes, a MAN comes halfway onto the stage.

MAN: Your Majesty, the sacrificial priest of ten-headed Rávana, Sháushkala, desires to see you.

SHATÁNANDA: (*with agitation*) Ah, let him enter.

The MAN exits.

3.125

RAMA: (*with alarm, aside to LÁKSHMANA*) My dear Lákshmana, how come this ill-willed demon is hindering the great festive adoration of Shiva's bow?

LÁKSHMANA: My brother, and not only this. . . (*He laughs in the middle of the sentence.*)

RAMA casts a side glance in his direction, smiling with affection, but also with irritation.

Then SHÁUSHKALA enters.

SHÁUSHKALA: (*looking at each of them, then aside*) Here is our archenemy, received by Jánaka and Shatánanda—Vishva-mitra.* (*reflecting*) Let this wretched one be here. (*looking to his right*) O, who are these two warriors doing their Vedic studentship? 3.130



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RAMA BEYOND PRICE is a dramatized remake of the “Ramáyana,” and this is its first English translation. Reputed to be one of the most difficult literary texts in Sanskrit, it was one of the most popular plays among Indian pundits.

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