

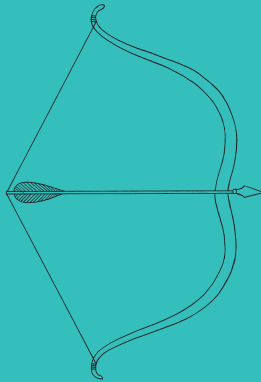
CLAY SANSKRIT LIBRARY

# Ramáyana

Book One

## Boyhood

by Valmíki



Translated by

**ROBERT P. GOLDMAN**

With a Foreword by Amartya Sen

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS & JJC FOUNDATION

THE CLAY SANSKRIT LIBRARY  
FOUNDED BY JOHN & JENNIFER CLAY

GENERAL EDITOR  
SHELDON POLLOCK

EDITED BY  
ISABELLE ONIANS



[WWW.CLAYSANSKRITLIBRARY.ORG](http://WWW.CLAYSANSKRITLIBRARY.ORG)  
[WWW.NYUPRESS.ORG](http://WWW.NYUPRESS.ORG)

*Artwork by Robert Beer.*  
*Typeset in Adobe Garamond at 10.25 : 12.3+pt.*  
*XML-development by Stuart Brown.*  
*Editorial input from Dániel Balogh, Ridi Faruque,*  
*Chris Gibbons, Tomoyuki Kono & Eszter Somogyi.*  
*Printed and Bound in Great Britain by*  
*TJ International, Cornwall on acid free paper*

# RĀMĀYAṆA

BOOK ONE

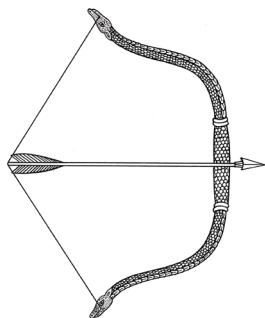
## BOYHOOD

BY VĀLMĪKI

TRANSLATED BY

Robert P. Goldman

WITH A FOREWORD BY AMARTYA SEN



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS

JJC FOUNDATION

2009

Sanskrit Text: Copyright © 1960–1975 by the Oriental Institute, Baroda  
All rights reserved.

Translation: Copyright © 1984 by Princeton University Press  
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form  
or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying,  
recording or by any information storage and retrieval system,  
without permission in writing from the Publisher.

All else: copyright © 2005 by the CSL  
All rights reserved.

First Edition 2005

ISBN 978-0-8147-3163-5

The Clay Sanskrit Library is co-published by  
New York University Press  
and the JJC Foundation.

Further information about this volume  
and the rest of the Clay Sanskrit Library  
is available at the end of this book  
and on the following websites:

[www.claysanskritlibrary.org](http://www.claysanskritlibrary.org)

[www.nyupress.org](http://www.nyupress.org)

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Vālmiki

[Rāmāyaṇa. Bālakāṇḍa. English]

Ramayana. Book one, Boyhood / by Valmiki ;  
translated by Robert P. Goldman.

p. cm. – (The Clay Sanskrit Library)

In English ; translated from Sanskrit.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8147-3163-5

1. Epic literature, Sanskrit. 2. Rāma (Hindu deity) in literature.

I. Goldman, Robert P., 1942 - II. Title. III. Series.

BL1 I39.242.B35E5 2005

294.5'92204521-dc22 2004024059

# CONTENTS

CSL Conventions	vii	
Foreword	xv	
Introduction	xxvii	
RAMÁYANA I – BOYHOOD		
1	The Tale of Rama	3
2–4	The Creation of Poetry	19
5–7	The Kingdom of Kósala	39
8–13	The Tale of Rishya·shringa and the Sacrifices of Dasha·ratha	55
14–16	The Incarnation of Vishnu	89
17–29	Rama's Birth and Youthful Exploits	103
30–48	The Journey to Míthila and Vishva· mitra's Narration of Puránic Legends	157
49–64	The Saga of Vishva·mitra	239
65	The Birth of Sita	307
66	The Breaking of the Bow	315
67–72	The Marriage of the Sons of Dasha·ratha	323
73–76	The Return to Ayódhya	351
Glossary	369	

CANTOS 2–4  
THE CREATION OF POETRY

2.1 NĀRADASYA TU tad|vākyaṃ śrutvā vākya|viśāradaḥ  
pūjayām āsa dharm'|ātmā saha|śiṣyo mahā|muniḥ.

Yathāvat pūjitas tena deva'|rṣir Nāradas tadā  
āprṣtv" āiv' ābhyanujñātaḥ sa jagāma vihāyasam.  
Sa muhūrtaṃ gate tasmin deva|lokaṃ munis tadā  
jagāma Tamasā|tīraṃ Jāhnavyās tv avidūrataḥ.  
Sa tu tīraṃ samāsādya Tamasāyā mahā|muniḥ  
śiṣyam āha sthitaṃ pārśve dṛṣtvā tīrtham Akardamam.

2.5 «Akardamam idaṃ tīrthaṃ Bharadvāja niśāmaya  
ramaṇīyaṃ prasann'|āmbu san|manuṣya|mano yathā.  
Nyasyatāṃ kalaśas tāta dīyatāṃ valkalaṃ mama  
idaṃ ev' āvagāhiṣye Tamasā|tīrtham uttamam.»

Evam ukto Bharadvājo Vālmīkena mah"|ātmanā  
prāyacchata munes tasya valkalaṃ niyato guroḥ.  
Sa śiṣya|hastād ādāya valkalaṃ niyat'|ēndriyaḥ  
vicācāra ha paśyaṃs tat sarvato vipulaṃ vanam.  
Tasy' ābhyaṣe tu mithunaṃ carantam anapāyīnam  
dadarśa bhagavāṃs tatra krauñcayoś cāru|niḥsvanam.

2.10 Tasmāt tu mithunād ekaṃ pumāṃsaṃ pāpa|niścayaḥ  
jaghāna vaira|nilayo niśādas tasya paśyataḥ.  
Taṃ soṇita|parīt'|āṅgaṃ veṣṭamānaṃ mahī|tale  
bhāryā tu nihataṃ dṛṣtvā rurāva karuṇāṃ giram.  
Tathā tu taṃ dvi|jaṃ dṛṣtvā niśādena nipātitam  
rṣer dharm'|ātmanas tasya kāruṇyaṃ samapadyata.



WHEN THE GREAT and eloquent sage had heard his 2.1  
words, the righteous man and his disciples did Ná-  
rada great honor. After the divine seer Nárada had been  
duly honored by the sage, he took his leave and, receiving  
it, flew off into the sky. Once Nárada had departed for the  
world of the gods, the sage went after a while to the bank  
of the Támasa river, not far from the Jáhnavi, the Ganges.  
Upon reaching the Támasa riverbank, the great sage spied  
a bathing spot that was free from mud and spoke to the  
disciple who stood beside him. “Bharad-vaja, look at this 2.5  
lovely bathing place so free from mud. Its waters are as lucid  
as the mind of a good man. Set down the water jar, dear  
boy, and give me my bark-cloth robe, for I will bathe here  
at this excellent bathing spot of the Támasa.”

Addressed in this fashion by the great Valmíki, Bharad-va-  
ja, always attentive to his *guru*, gave him his bark-cloth robe.  
Taking the bark-cloth from his disciple’s hands, he walked  
about, his senses tightly controlled, looking all about him  
at the vast forest. Nearby, that holy man saw an inseparable  
pair of sweet-voiced *krauñcha* birds wandering about. But 2.10  
even as he watched, a Nisháda hunter, filled with malice  
and intent on mischief, struck down the male of the pair.  
Seeing him struck down and writhing on the ground, his  
body covered with blood, his mate uttered a piteous cry.  
And the pious seer, seeing the bird struck down in this  
fashion by the Nisháda, was filled with pity.

Tataḥ karuṇa|veditvād «adharmo ’yam iti» dvijah  
niśāmya rudatīm krauñcīm idaṃ vacanam abravīt.  
«Mā niśāda pratiṣṭhāṃ tvam agamaḥ śāsvatīḥ samāḥ  
yat krauñca|mithunād ekam avadhīḥ kāmā|mohitam.»

- 2.15 Tasya’ āivaṃ bruvataś cintā babhūva hṛdi vīkṣataḥ  
śok’|ārtēn’ āsya śakuneḥ, «kim idaṃ vyāhṛtaṃ mayā?»

Cintayan sa mahā|prājñāś cakāra matimān matim  
śiṣyaṃ c’ āiv’ ābravīd vākyaṃ idaṃ sa muni|pum|gavaḥ:  
«Pāda|baddho ’kṣara|samas tantrī|laya|samanvitaḥ  
śok’|ārtasya pravṛtto me śloko bhavatu n’ ānyathā.»  
Śiṣyas tu tasya bruvato muner vākyaṃ anuttamam  
pratijagrāha samhṛṣṭas tasya tuṣṭo ’bhavad guruḥ.

So ’bhiṣekaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā tīrthe tasmin yathā|vidhi  
tam eva cintayann artham upāvartata vai muniḥ.

- 2.20 Bharadvājas tataḥ śiṣyo vinītaḥ śrutavān guroḥ  
kalaśaṃ pūrṇam ādāya pṛṣṭhato ’nujagāma ha.  
Sa praviśy’ āśrama|padaṃ śiṣyeṇa saha dharma|vit  
upaviṣṭaḥ kathās c’ ānyās cakāra dhyānam āsthitaḥ.

Ājagāma tato brahmā loka|kartā svayaṃ prabhuḥ  
catur|mukho mahā|tejā draṣṭuṃ taṃ muni|pum|gavam.  
Vālmīkir atha taṃ dṛṣṭvā sahas” ōttḥāya vāg|yataḥ  
prāñjaliḥ prayato bhūtvā tasthau parama|vismitaḥ.  
Pūjayām āsa taṃ devaṃ pādy’|ārgḥy’|āsana|vandanaiḥ

Then, in the intensity of this feeling of compassion, the brahman thought, “This is wrong.” Hearing the *krauñcha* hen wailing, he uttered these words: “Since, Nisháda, you killed one of this pair of *krauñchas*, distracted at the height of passion, you shall not live for very long.” And even as he stood watching and spoke in this way, this thought arose in his heart, “Stricken with grief for this bird, what is this I have uttered?” 2.15

But upon reflection, that wise and thoughtful man came to a conclusion. Then that bull among sages spoke these words to his disciple: “Fixed in metrical quarters, each with a like number of syllables, and fit for the accompaniment of stringed and percussion instruments, the utterance that I produced in this access of *shoka*, grief, shall be called *shloka*, poetry, and nothing else.” But the delighted disciple had memorized that unsurpassed utterance even as the sage was making it, so that his *guru* was pleased with him.

At last the sage took the prescribed ritual bath at the bathing spot and, still pondering this matter, went back. His disciple, the obedient and learned Bharad-vaja, took up his *guru*'s brimming water pot and followed behind him. The sage, who knew the ways of righteousness, entered his ashram with his disciple, seated himself and began to discuss various other matters, still lost in profound thought. 2.20

Then the mighty four-faced lord Brahma himself, the maker of the worlds, came to see the bull among sages. Seeing him, Valmíki rose quickly and without a word. He stood subdued and greatly wonderstruck, his hands cupped in reverence. Then he worshipped the god, offering water for his feet, the welcome offering, a seat and hymns of praise.

praṇamya vidhivac c' âinaṃ pṛṣṭv" ânāmayam avyayam.

2.25 Ath' ôpaviśya bhagavān āsane param'ârcite

Vālmīkaye maha"rṣaye saṃdides' āsanaṃ tataḥ.

Upaviṣṭe tadā tasmin sāksāl loka|pitā|mahe

tad|gaten' âiva manasā Vālmīkir dhyānam āsthitaḥ.

«Pāp'âtmanā kṛtaṃ kaṣṭaṃ vaira|grahaṇa|buddhinā

yas tādṛśaṃ cāru|ravaṃ krauñcaṃ hanyād akāraṇāt.»

Śocann eva muhuḥ krauñcīm upaślokam imaṃ punaḥ

jagāv antar|gata|manā bhūtvā śoka|parāyaṇaḥ.

Tam uvāca tato Brahmā prahasan muni|puṃ|gavam:

«śloka eva tvayā baddho n' âtra kāryā vicāraṇā.

2.30 Maç|chandād eva te brahman pravṛtt" êyaṃ sarasvatī

Rāmasya caritaṃ kṛtsnaṃ kuru tvam ṛṣi|sattama.

Dharm'âtmano guṇavato loke Rāmasya dhīmataḥ

vṛttaṃ kathaya dhīrasya yathā te Nārādāc chrutam.

Rahasyaṃ ca prakāśaṃ ca yad vṛttaṃ tasya dhīmataḥ

Rāmasya saha Saumitre rākṣasānāṃ ca sarvaśaḥ.

Vaidehyās c' âiva yad vṛttaṃ prakāśaṃ yadi vā rahaḥ

tac c' âpy aviditaṃ sarvaṃ viditaṃ te bhaviṣyati.

Na te vāg anṛtā kāvyē kā cid atra bhaviṣyati

kuru Rāma|kathāṃ puṇyāṃ śloka|baddhāṃ mano|ramām.

2.35 Yāvat sthāsyanti girayaḥ saritaś ca mahī|tale

tāvad Rāmāyaṇa|kathā lokeṣu pracariṣyati.

Yāvad Rāmasya ca kathā tvat|kṛtā pracariṣyati

tāvad ūrdhvam adhaś ca tvam mal|lokeṣu nivatsyasi.»

When he had made the prescribed prostration before him, he asked after his continuing well-being. Once the holy lord was seated in a place of honor, he motioned the great seer Valmíki also to a seat. But even though the grandfather of the worlds himself sat there before him, Valmíki, his mind once more harking back to what had happened, lapsed again into profound thought: “That wicked man, his mind possessed by malice, did a terrible thing in killing such a sweet-voiced *krauñcha* bird for no reason.” Grieving once more for the *krauñcha* hen, given over wholly to his grief and lost in his inner thought, he sang the verse again right there before the god. 2.25

With a smile, Brahma spoke to the bull among sages, “This is a *shloka* that you have composed. You needn’t be perplexed about this. Brahman, it was by my will alone that you produced this elegant speech. Greatest of seers, you must now compose the entire history of Rama. You must tell the world the story of the righteous, virtuous, wise and steadfast Rama, just as you heard it from Nárada, the full story, public and private, of that wise man. For all that befell wise Rama, Saumítri, the *rákshasas* and Vaidéhi, whether in public or private, will be revealed to you, even those events of which you are ignorant. No utterance of yours in this poem shall be false. Now compose the holy story of Rama fashioned into *shlokas* to delight the heart. As long as the mountains and rivers shall endure upon the earth, so long will the story of the *Ramáyana* be told among men. And as long as the story of Rama you compose is told, so long will you live on in my worlds above and below.” 2.30 2.35

Ity uktvā bhagavān Brahmā tatr' āiv' āntar|adhīyata  
tataḥ sa|śiṣyo Vālmīkir munir vismayam āyayau.

Tasya śiṣyās tataḥ sarve jaguḥ ślokaṃ imaṃ punaḥ  
muhur muhuḥ prīyamāṇāḥ prāhuś ca bhṛśa|vismitāḥ:  
«Sam'ākṣaraiś caturbhir yaḥ pādair gīto maha"r|ṛṣiṇā  
so 'nuvyāharaṇād bhūyaḥ śokaḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ.»

2.40 Tasya buddhir iyaṃ jātā Vālmīker bhāvit'ātmanāḥ:  
«kṛtsnaṃ Rām'āyaṇaṃ kāvyam īdṛśaiḥ karavāṇy aham.»

Udāra|vṛtt'ārtha|padair mano|ramais  
tad" āsya Rāmasya cakāra kīrtimān  
sam'ākṣaraiḥ śloka|śatair yaśasvino  
yaśas|karaṃ kāvyam udāra|dhīr muniḥ.

3.1 ŚRUTVĀ VASTU samagraṃ tad  
dharm'ātmā dharma|saṃhitam  
vyaktam anveṣate bhūyo  
yad vṛttaṃ tasya dhīmataḥ.

Upasprśy' ṍdakaṃ saṃyañ muniḥ sthitvā kṛt'āñjaliḥ  
prācīn'āgreṣu darbheṣu dharmen' ānveṣate gatim.

Janma Rāmasya sumahad vīryaṃ sarv'ānukūlatām  
lokasya priyatām kṣāntiṃ saumyatām satya|śīlatām,  
Nānā|citrāḥ kathās c' ānyā Viśvāmitra|sah'āyane  
Jānakyās ca vivāhaṃ ca dhanuśaś ca vibhedanam,

3.5 Rāma|Rāma|vivādaṃ ca guṇān Dāśarathes tathā  
tath" ābhiṣekaṃ Rāmasya Kaikeyyā duṣṭa|bhāvatām,  
Vyāghātāṃ c' ābhiṣekasya Rāmasya ca vivāsanam

When the holy lord Brahma had spoken in this fashion, he vanished on the spot, and the sage Valmíki and his disciples were filled with wonder.

Then all his disciples chanted that *shloka* again. Delighted and filled with wonder, they said over and over again: “The *shoka*, grief, that the great seer sang out in four metrical quarters, all equal in syllables, has, by virtue of its being repeated after him, become *shloka*, poetry.” Then the contemplative Valmíki conceived this idea: “Let me compose an entire poem, called the *Ramáyana*, in verses such as these.” 2.40

And thus did the renowned sage with enormous insight compose this poem which adds to the glory of the glorious Rama, with hundreds of *shlokas* equal in syllables, their words noble in sound and meaning, delighting the heart.

AND SO IT CAME ABOUT that the righteous man, having learned the entire substance of that story, exemplary of righteousness, the tale of wise Rama, sought to make it public. First the sage sipped water in the prescribed fashion. Then, seated on *darbha* grass with the tips pointed east and cupping his hands reverently, he sought through profound meditation the means of access to this tale. 3.1

Rama’s birth, his great strength and kindness to all, the people’s love for him, his forbearance, gentleness and truthful nature, the various other marvelous stories told on the journey with Vishva-mitra, Jánaki’s wedding, and the breaking of the bow, the dispute between the two Ramas and the virtues of Dasha-rathi, Rama’s consecration and Kaiké-yi’s wicked nature, the interruption of the consecration and the banishment of Rama, the king’s grief and lamentation 3.5

rājñah śoka|vilāpaṃ ca para|lokasya c' āśrayam,  
 Prakṛtīnām viśadaṃ ca prakṛtīnām visarjanam  
 niśād'ādhīpa|saṃvādaṃ sūt'ōpāvartanaṃ tathā,  
 Gaṅgāyās c' ābhisaṃtāraṃ Bharadvājasya darśanam  
 Bharadvāj'ābhyanujñānāc Citrakūṭasya darśanam,  
 Vāstu|karma|niveśaṃ ca Bharat'āgamaṃ tathā  
 prasādanaṃ ca Rāmasya pituś ca salila|kriyām,  
 3.10 Pāduk'āgry'ābhiśekaṃ ca Nandigrāma|nivāsanam  
 Daṇḍak'āraṇya|gamaṃ Sutīkṣṇena samāgamam,  
 Anasūyā|samasyām ca aṅga|rāgasya c' ārpaṇam  
 Śūrpaṇakhyās ca saṃvādaṃ virūpa|karaṇaṃ tathā,  
 Vadhaṃ Khara|Triśirasor utthānaṃ Rāvaṇasya ca  
 Mārīcasya vadhaṃ c' āiva Vaidehyā haraṇaṃ tathā,  
 Rāghavasya vilāpaṃ ca ḡdhra|rāja|nibarhaṇam  
 Kabandha|darśanaṃ c' āiva Pampāyās c' āpi darśanam,  
 Śarbaryā darśanaṃ c' āiva Hanūmad|darśanaṃ tathā  
 vilāpaṃ c' āiva Pampāyām Rāghavasya mah'ātmanaḥ,  
 3.15 Ṛṣyamūkasya gamaṃ Sugrīveṇa samāgamam  
 pratyay'ōtpādanaṃ sakhyaṃ Vāli|Sugrīva|vigraham,  
 Vāli|pramathanaṃ c' āiva Sugrīva|pratipādanaṃ  
 Tārā|vilāpa|samayaṃ varṣa|rātri|nivāsanam,  
 Kopaṃ Rāghava|siṃhasya balānām upasaṃgraham  
 diśaḥ prasthāpanaṃ c' āiva pṛthivyās ca nivedanam,  
 Aṅgulīyaka|dānaṃ ca ṛkṣasya bila|darśanam  
 prāy'ōpaveśanaṃ c' āiva Saṃpātes c' āpi darśanam,  
 Parvat'ārohaṇaṃ c' āiva sāgarasya ca laṅghanam  
 rātrau Laṅkā|praveśaṃ ca ekasy' āpi vicintanam,



and his departure for the next world, the dejection of the common people and their abandonment, the conversation with the Nisháda chief and the return of the charioteer, the crossing of the Ganges and the meeting with Bharad-vaja, the arrival at Mount Chitra-kuta on the instructions of Bharad-vaja, the building of and dwelling in a hut and the coming of Bhárata, the propitiation of Rama and the funeral libations for his father, the consecration of the wonderful sandals and the dwelling in Nandi-grama, the journey to the Dándaka forest and the meeting with Sutíkshna, the encounter with Anasúya and her presentation of the ointment, the conversation with Shurpa-nakha and her disfigurement, the slaying of Khara and Tri-shiras and the setting out of Rávana, the destruction of Marícha and the abduction of Vaidéhi, the lamentation of Rághava and the death of the vulture king, the encounter with Kabándha and arrival at Lake Pampa, the encounters with Shábari and Hanumán, and the lamentations of great Rághava at Lake Pampa, the journey to Rishya-muka and the meeting with Sugríva, the engendering of confidence, the alliance, and the battle between Valin and Sugríva, the slaying of Valin and the installation of Sugríva, the lamentation of Tara, the agreement and the settling in for the rainy season, the anger of the lion of the Rághavas, the marshalling of the troops, their being dispatched in all directions and the description of the earth, the giving of the ring, the discovery of Riksha's cave, the fast until death and the encounter with Sampáti, the ascent of the mountain and the leap over the ocean, the entry into Lanka by night and the solitary

- 3.20 Āpāna|bhūmi|gamanam avarodhasya darśanam  
 aśoka|vanikā|yānaṃ Sītāyās c' āpi darśanam,  
 Abhijñāna|pradānaṃ ca Sītāyās c' āpi bhāṣaṇam  
 rākṣasī|tarjanaṃ c' āiva Trijaṭā|svapna|darśanam,  
 Maṇi|pradānaṃ Sītāyā vṛkṣa|bhaṅgaṃ tath" āiva ca  
 rākṣasī|vidravaṃ c' āiva kiṃ|karāṇāṃ nibarhaṇam,  
 Grahaṇam vāyu|sūnoś ca Laṅkā|dāh' |ābhigarjanam  
 pratiplavanam ev' ātha madhūnāṃ haraṇam tathā,  
 Rāghav' |āsvāsanam c' āiva maṇi|niryātanaṃ tathā  
 saṃgamaṃ ca samudrasya Nala|setoś ca bandhanam,
- 3.25 Pratāraṃ ca samudrasya rātrau Laṅk" |āvarodhanam  
 Vibhīṣaṇena saṃsargaṃ vadh' |ōpāya|nivedanam,  
 Kumbhakarṇasya nidhanaṃ Meghanāda|nibarhaṇam  
 Rāvaṇasya vināśaṃ ca Sīt" |āvāptim areḥ pure,  
 Vibhīṣaṇ' |ābhiṣekaṃ ca Puṣpakasya ca darśanam  
 Ayodhyāyās ca gamanam Bharatena samāgamam,  
 Rām' |ābhiṣek' |ābhyudayaṃ sarva|sainya|visarjanam  
 sva|rāṣṭra|rañjanaṃ c' āiva Vaidehyās ca visarjanam,  
 Anāgataṃ ca yat kiṃ cid Rāmasya vasu|dhā|tale  
 tac cakār' |ōttare kāvyē Vālmikir bhagavān ṛṣiḥ.

- 4.1 PRĀPTA|RĀJYASYA Rāmasya Vālmikir bhagavān ṛṣiḥ  
 cakāra caritaṃ kṛtsnaṃ vicitra|padam ātmavān.  
 Kṛtvā tu tan mahā|prājñāḥ sa|bhaviṣyaṃ sah' |ōttaram  
 cintayām āsa, «ko nv etat prayuñjīyād iti?» prabhuḥ.  
 Tasya cintayamānasya maha" |rṣer bhāvit' |ātmanaḥ

deliberations, the arrival at the drinking ground, the view 3.20  
of the women's quarters, the arrival at the *ashóka* grove, and  
the meeting with Sita, the giving of the token of recognition  
and Sita's speech, the threats of the *rákshasa* women and  
the dream-vision of Tri-jata, Sita's giving of the jewel and  
the breaking of the trees, the flight of the *rákshasa* women  
and the slaughter of the servants, the capture of Vayu's son  
Hanumán, and the wailing at the burning of Lanka, the  
return leap, and the seizure of the mead, the consolation of  
Rághava and the presentation of the jewel, the encounter  
with the ocean and the construction of Nala's bridge, the 3.25  
crossing of the ocean and the siege of Lanka by night, the  
alliance with Vibhíshana and his revelation of the means of  
destruction, the death of Kumbha-karna and the slaying of  
Megha-nada, the destruction of Rávana and the recovery of  
Sita in the enemy's citadel, the consecration of Vibhíshana  
and the acquisition of the chariot Púshpaka, the journey to  
Ayódhya and the meeting with Bhárata, the celebration of  
Rama's consecration and his dismissal of all his troops, his  
pleasing the kingdom and his sending away Vaidéhi— all  
of this did the holy seer Valmíki render into poetry. Even  
those events which had not yet befallen Rama on earth were  
rendered in the latter portion of his poem.

IT WAS AFTER Rama had regained his kingdom that the 4.1  
holy and self-controlled seer Valmíki composed this entire  
history in such wonderful words. When the wise master had  
finished it, including the sections dealing with the future  
and final events, he thought, "Who should perform it?"  
And as the great contemplative seer was pondering this,

agrñhītāṃ tataḥ pādaḥ muni|veṣau Kuśī|Lavau.  
 Kuśī|Lavau tu dharmajñāu rāja|putrau yaśasvināu  
 bhrātarau svara|saṃpannau dadarś' āśrama|vāsināu.

4.5 Sa tu medhāvināu dr̥ṣṭvā vedeṣu pariniṣṭhitau  
 ved' |ōpabr̥mhaṇ' |ārthāya tāv agrāhayata prabhuḥ.

Kāvyam Rāmāyaṇam kṛtsnam Sītāyās caritaṃ mahat  
 Paulastya|vadham ity eva cakāra carita|vrataḥ.

Pāṭhye geye ca madhuraṃ pramāṇais tribhir anvitam  
 jātibhiḥ saptabhir yuktaṃ tantri|laya|samanvitam.

Hāsyāśṅgāra|kāruṇya|raudra|vīra|bhayānakaiḥ  
 bībhats' |ādi|rasair yuktaṃ kāvyam etad agāyatām.

Tau tu gāndharva|tattva|jñāu sthāna|mūrccana|kovidau  
 bhrātarau svara|saṃpannau gandharvāv iva rūpiṇau.

4.10 Rūpa|lakṣaṇa|saṃpannau madhura|svara|bhāṣiṇau  
 bimbād iv' ōddhṛtau bimbau Rāma|dehāt tath' āparau.  
 Tau rāja|putrau kārtsnyena dharmyam ākhyānam uttamam  
 vāco vidheyaṃ tat sarvaṃ kṛtvā kāvyam anindītau.  
 R̥ṣiṇām ca dvi|jātīnām sādḥūnām ca samāgame  
 yath' |ōpadeśam tattva|jñāu jagatus tau samāhitau  
 mah' |ātmānau mahā|bhāgau sarva|lakṣaṇa|lakṣitau.

Kusha and Lava, in the guise of sages, came and touched his feet. He looked at the two glorious brothers, Kusha and Lava, who lived in his ashram, for they were sons of the king, familiar with the ways of righteousness, and had sweet voices. Perceiving that they were well grounded in the Vedas and had excellent memories, he accepted them as students of Vedic exegesis. 4.5

A man who always fulfilled his vows, he taught them the whole of this great poem, the *Ramáyana*, which is the tale of Sita and the slaying of Paulástya. It is sweet both when recited and when sung in the three tempos to the seven notes of the scale, and it is eminently suitable for the accompaniment of both stringed and percussion instruments. The two disciples sang the poem, which is replete with all the poetic sentiments: the humorous, the erotic, the piteous, the wrathful, the heroic, the terrifying, the loathsome and the rest.

The brothers, beautiful as *gandhárvas*, had beautiful voices and were well versed in the *gandhárvas*' musical art. They were expert in both articulation and modulation. Gifted with beauty and auspicious marks, they spoke with sweet voices. Like twin reflections they seemed, born of the same image, Rama's body. That unsurpassed tale is exemplary of righteousness, and so the two blameless sons of the king learned the entire poem by heart. And when they had done so, the two great and gifted men, who understood its essence and were marked by every auspicious sign, sang it as they had been instructed, with single-minded concentration before assemblies of seers, brahmans and good men. 4.10

Tau kadā cit sametānām ṛṣiṅnām bhāvit'jatmanām  
āsinānām samīpa|sthāv idam kāvyam agāyatām.

Tac chrutvā munayaḥ sarve bāṣpa|paryākul'lēkṣaṅāḥ  
«sādhu sādhv ity!» tāv ūcuḥ paraṃ vismayam āgatāḥ.

- 4.15 Te prīta|manasaḥ sarve munayo dharmā|vatsalāḥ  
praśaśamsuḥ praśastavyau gāyamānau Kuśī|Lavau:  
«Aho gītasya mādhyamaṃ ślokānām ca viśeṣataḥ!  
cira|nirvṛttam apy etat pratyakṣam iva darśitam.»

Praviśya tāv ubhau suṣṭhu tadā bhāvam agāyatām  
sahitau madhuraṃ raktaṃ saṃpannaṃ svara|saṃpadā.  
Evaṃ praśasyamānau tau tapaḥ|ślāghyair maha"rṣibhiḥ  
saṃraktataram atyartham madhuraṃ tāv agāyatām.  
Prītaḥ kaś cin munis tābhyām saṃsthitaḥ kalaśam dadau  
prasanno valkalaṃ kaś cid dadau tābhyām mahā|yaśāḥ.

- 4.20 Āścaryam idam ākhyānaṃ muninā saṃprakīrtitam  
paraṃ kavīnām ādhāraṃ samāptaṃ ca yathā|kramam.

Praśasyamānau sarvatra kadā cit tatra gāyakau  
rathyāsu rāja|mārgeṣu dadarśa Bharat'āgrajaḥ.  
Sva|veśma c' ānīya tato bhrātarau sa Kuśī|Lavau  
pūjayām āsa pūj"ārḥau Rāmaḥ śatru|nibarhaṅāḥ.  
Āsīnaḥ kāñcane divye sa ca siṃh'āsane prabhuḥ  
upopaviṣṭaiḥ sacivair bhrātr̥bhiś ca paraṃ|tapaḥ.  
Dṛṣṭvā tu rūpa|saṃpannau tāv ubhau vīṇināu tataḥ  
uvāca Lakṣmaṇaṃ Rāmaḥ Śatruḅnaṃ Bharataṃ tathā.

Now on one occasion the two sang the poem in the presence of some pure-minded seers who were seated in an assembly. When the sages heard it, their eyes were clouded with tears and filled with the greatest wonder, they all said to the two, “Excellent, excellent!” All the sages, glad at heart and loving righteousness, praised Kusha and Lava as they sang, for they were worthy of praise: “Ah, the sweetness of the singing and especially the poetry! Even though this all took place so long ago, it is as though it were happening before our very eyes.” 4.15

Then the two of them together, entering fully into the emotion of the story, sang it with the full range of notes, sweetly and with feeling. Praised in this fashion by those great seers, who were themselves to be extolled for their asceticism, they sang more sweetly still and with still greater feeling. One sage there, delighted, gave them a water jar. Another, a man of great renown, gave them a bark-cloth mantle. This wondrous tale that the sage told and that he completed in perfect sequence is the great source of inspiration for poets. 4.20

Now it happened that on one occasion the elder brother of Bhárata saw there those two singers who were being praised everywhere on the roads and royal highways. And Rama, the destroyer of his enemies, brought the brothers, Kusha and Lava, to his own dwelling, where he honored them, for they were worthy of honor. Then lord Rama, chastiser of his foes, seated on a heavenly throne of gold with his ministers and brothers sitting nearby, looked at the two beautiful youths with their lutes and spoke to Lákshmana, Shatru·ghna Bhárata. “Let us listen to this tale, whose 4.25

- 4.25 «Śrūyatām idam ākhyānam anayor deva|varcasoḥ  
 vicitr'ārtha|padaṃ samyag gāyator madhura|svaram.  
 Imau munī pārthiva|lakṣmaṇ'ānvitau  
 Kuśil|Lavau c' āiva mahā|tapasvinau  
 mam' āpi tad bhūti|karaṃ pracakṣate  
 mah"ānubhāvaṃ caritaṃ nibodhata.»  
 Tatas tu tau Rāma|vacaḥ pracoditāv  
 agāyatām mārga|vidhāna|saṃpadā  
 sa c' āpi Rāmaḥ pariṣad|gataḥ śanair  
 bubhūṣay" āsaktamanā babhūva ha.



words and meaning alike are wonderful, as it is sweetly sung by these two godlike men. For although these two sages, Kusha and Lava, are great ascetics, they bear all the marks of kings. Moreover, it is said that the profound tale they tell is highly beneficial, even for me. Listen to it.”

Then, at a word from Rama, the two of them began to sing in the full perfection of the marga mode. And right there in the assembly, even Rama, in his desire to experience it fully, gradually permitted his mind to become enthralled.

WWW.CLAYSANSKRITLIBRARY.COM

Valmiki's RAMÁYANA is one of the two great national epics of India. The first book, "Boyhood," introduces the young hero Rama and sets the scene for the adventures ahead. It begins with a fascinating excursus on the origins and function of poetry itself.

क्रे

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Washington Square  
New York, NY 10003  
www.nyupress.org

ISBN 0-8147-3163-5

