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# Ramáyana

Book Two

## Ayódhya

by Valmíki



Translated by  
SHELDON I. POLLOCK

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# RĀMĀYAṆA

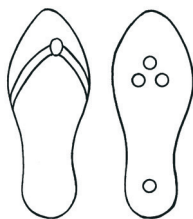
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2005

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## CONTENTS

CSL Conventions		vii
Introduction		xv
RAMÁYANA II – AYÓDHYA		
1–6	Rama as Prince Regent	3
7–12	The Boons of Kaikéyi	39
13–22	Rama Submits	75
23–28	Sita and Lákshmana	131
29–36	Rama Renounces	159
37–42	Ayódhya Grieves	199
43–50	Mount Chitra·kuta	227
51–58	The End of Dasha·ratha	271
59–68	Bhárata Returns	315
69–76	Bhárata Refuses the Throne	357
77–87	Bhárata in Pursuit of Rama	393
88–103	Rama is Resolved	449
104–107	The Viceroyalty of Bhárata	541
108–111	Rama Enters the Forest	559
Glossary		583
Index		587

7-12

THE BOONS OF KAIKÉYI

7.1 J NĀTI|DĀSĪ YATO JĀTĀ Kaikeyyās tu sah' |ōṣitā  
 prāsadaṃ candra|saṃkāśam āuroha yadr̥cchayā.  
 Sikta|rāja|pathāṃ kṛtsnāṃ prakīrṇa|kamal' |ōtpalāṃ  
 Ayodhyāṃ Mantharā tasmāt prāsādād anvavaikṣata.  
 Patākābhir var' |ārhābhir dhvajaiś ca samalaṃkṛtām  
 siktāṃ candana|toyaiś ca śiraḥ|snāta|janair vṛtām  
 Avidūre sthitāṃ dr̥ṣṭvā dhātṛiṃ papraccha Mantharā:  
 «uttamen' ābhisaṃyuktā harṣeṇ' ārthaparā satī?

7.5 Rāma|mātā dhanam kiṃ nu janebhyaḥ saṃprayacchati?  
 atimātraṃ praharṣo 'yaṃ kiṃ janasya ca śaṃsa me?  
 kārayiṣyati kiṃ v' āpi saṃprahr̥ṣto mahī|patiḥ?»  
 Vidīryamāṇā harṣeṇa dhātṛi paramayā mudā  
 ācacakṣe 'tha kubjāyai bhūyasīm Rāghave śriyam:  
 «Śvaḥ Puṣyeṇa jita|krodham yauvarājyena Rāghavam  
 rājā Daśaratho Rāmam abhiṣecayit' ānagham.»

Dhātṛyās tu vacanaṃ śrutvā kubjā kṣipram amarṣitā  
 Kailāsa|śikhara' |ākārāt prāsādād avarohata.  
 Sā dahyamānā kopena Mantharā pāpa|darśinī  
 śayānām etya Kaikeyīm idaṃ vacanam abravīt:

7.10 «Uttiṣṭha mūdhe! kiṃ śeṣe bhayaṃ tvām abhivartate?  
 upapluta|mah' |āughena kim ātmānaṃ na budhyase?  
 Aniṣṭe subhag' |ākāre saubhāgyena vikatthase  
 calaṃ hi tava saubhāgyaṃ nadyaḥ srota iv' oṣṇage.»  
 Evam uktā tu Kaikeyī ruṣṭayā paruṣaṃ vacaḥ  
 kubjayā pāpa|darśinyā viṣādāgamat param.



NOW, KAIKÉYI'S family servant, who had lived with her 7.1  
from the time of her birth, had happened to ascend  
to the rooftop terrace that shone like the moon. From the  
terrace Mánthara could see all Ayódhya—the king's way  
newly sprinkled, the lotuses and water lilies strewn about,  
the costly ornamental pennants and banners, the sprinkling  
of sandalwood water and the crowds of freshly bathed peo-  
ple. Seeing a nursemaid standing nearby, Mánthara asked, 7.5  
“Why is Rama's mother so delighted and giving away money  
to people, when she has always been so miserly? Tell me,  
why are the people displaying such boundless delight? Has  
something happened to delight the lord of earth? What is he  
planning to do?” Bursting with delight and out of sheer glad-  
ness the nursemaid told the hunchback Mánthara about the  
greater majesty in store for Rághava: “Tomorrow on Pushya  
day King Dasha-ratha is going to consecrate Rama Rágha-  
va as prince regent, the blameless prince who has mastered  
his anger.”

When she heard what the nursemaid said, the hunchback  
was furious and descended straightway from the terrace  
that was like the peak of Mount Kailása. Consumed with  
rage, the malevolent Mánthara approached Kaikéyi as she  
lay upon her couch, and she said: “Get up, you foolish 7.10  
woman! How can you lie there when danger is threatening  
you? Don't you realize that a flood of misery is about to  
overwhelm you? Your beautiful face has lost its charm. You  
boast of the power of your beauty, but it has proved to be as  
fleeting as a river's current in the hot season.” So she spoke,  
and Kaikéyi was deeply distraught at the bitter words of the  
angry, malevolent hunchback. “Mánthara,” she replied, “is

Kaikeyī tv abravīt kubjāṃ: «kaccit kṣemaṃ na Manthare?  
viṣaṇṇa|vadanāṃ hi tvāṃ lakṣaye bhṛśa|duḥkhitāṃ.»

Mantharā tu vacaḥ śrutvā Kaikeyyā madhur'ākṣaram  
uvāca krodha|saṃyuktā vākyam vākyā|viśārādā.

7.15 Sā viṣaṇṇatarā bhūtvā kubjā tasyā hit'āiṣiṇī  
viṣādayantī provāca bhedayantī ca Rāghavam:  
«Akṣemaṃ sumahad devi pravṛttam tvad|vināśanam  
Rāmaṃ Daśaratho rājā yauvarājye 'bhiṣekṣyati.  
S' āsmy agādhe bhaye magnā duḥkha|śoka|samanvitā  
dahyamān' ānalen' ēva tvadd hit'|ārtham ih' āgatā.  
Tava duḥkhena Kaikeyi mama duḥkham mahad bhavet  
tvad|vṛddhau mama vṛddhiś ca bhaved atra na saṃśayaḥ.

Nar'|ādhipa|kule jātā mahiṣī tvaṃ mahī|pateḥ  
ugratvaṃ rāja|dharmāṇāṃ katham devi na budhyase?

7.20 Dharma|vādī śaṭho bhartā ślakṣṇa|vādī ca dāruṇaḥ  
śuddha|bhāve na jānīṣe ten' āivam atisaṃdhitā.  
Upasthitam prayuñjānas tvayi sāntvam an|arthakam  
arthen' āiv' ādya te bhartā Kausalyāṃ yojayiṣyati.  
Apavāhya sa duṣṭ'|ātmā Bharataṃ tava bandhuṣu  
kālyam sthāpayitā Rāmaṃ rājye nihata|kaṇṭake.  
Śatruḥ pati|pravādena mātr' ēva hitakāmyayā  
āśiṣa iv' ānkena bāle paridhṛtas tvayā.  
Yathā hi kuryāt sarpo vā śatrur vā pratyupekṣitaḥ  
rājñā Daśarathen' ādya saputrā tvaṃ tathā kṛtā.

something wrong? I can tell by the distress in your face how sorely troubled you are.”

Hearing Kaikéyi’s gentle words the wrathful Mánthara spoke—and a very clever speaker she was. The hunchback 7.15 grew even more distraught, and, with Kaikéyi’s best interests at heart, spoke out, trying to sharpen her distress and turn her against Rághava: “Something is very seriously wrong, my lady, something that threatens to ruin you. For King Dasha-ratha is going to consecrate Rama as prince regent. I felt myself sinking down into unfathomable danger, stricken with grief and sorrow, burning as if on fire. And so I have come here, with your best interests at heart. When you are sorrowful, Kaikéyi, I am too, and even more, and, when you prosper, so do I. There is not the slightest doubt of this. You were born into a family of kings, you are a queen of the lord of earth. My lady, how can you fail to know that the ways of kings are ruthless?”

Your husband talks of righteousness, but he is deceiving 7.20 you; his words are gentle but he is cruel. You are too innocent to understand, and so he has utterly defrauded you like this. When expedient, your husband reassures you, but it is all worthless. Now that there is something of real worth he is ready to bestow it upon Kausálya. Having got Bhárata out of the way by sending him off to your family, the wicked man shall tomorrow establish Rama in unchallenged kingship. He is an enemy pretending to be your husband. He is like a viper, child, whom you have taken to your bosom and lovingly mothered. For what an enemy or a snake would do if one ignored them, King Dasha-ratha is now doing to

- 7.25 Pāpen' ânṛta|sāntvena bāle nityam sukh' |ôcite  
 Rāmaṃ sthāpayatā rājye s' |ānubandhā hatā hy asi.  
 Sā prāpta|kālaṃ Kaikeyi kṣipraṃ kuru hitaṃ tava.  
 trāyasva putram ātmānaṃ mām ca vismaya|darśane.»  
 Mantharāyā vacaḥ śrutvā śayanāt sā śubh' |ānanā  
 evam ābharaṇaṃ tasyai kubjāyai pradadau śubham.  
 Dattvā tv ābharaṇaṃ tasyai kubjāyai pramad' |ôttamā  
 Kaikeyī Mantharāṃ hr̥ṣṭā punar ev' ābravīd idam:  
 «Idaṃ tu Manthare mahyam ākhyāsi paramaṃ priyam.  
 etan me priyam ākhyātuḥ kiṃ vā bhūyaḥ karomi te?  
 7.30 Rāme vā Bharate v' āhaṃ viśeṣaṃ n' ôpalakṣaye  
 tasmāt tuṣṭ' āsmi yad rājā Rāmaṃ rājye 'bhiṣekṣyati.  
 Na me paraṃ kiṃ cid itas tvayā punaḥ  
 priyaṃ priy' |ârhe suvacam vaco varam.  
 tathā hy avocas tvam ataḥ priy' |ôttaram  
 varam paraṃ te pradadāmi taṃ vṛṇu!»

- 8.1 MANTHARĀ TV ABHYASŪY' āinām  
 utsṛjy' ābharaṇaṃ ca tat  
 uvāc' êdaṃ tato vākyaṃ  
 kopa|duḥkha|samanvitā:  
 «Harṣaṃ kim idam asthāne kṛtavaty asi bālīse?  
 śoka|sāgara|madhyastham ātmānaṃ n' āvabudhyase?  
 Subhagā khalu Kausalyā yasyāḥ putro 'bhiṣekṣyate  
 yauvarājyena mahatā śvaḥ Puṣyeṇa dvij' |ôttamaiḥ.

you and your son. The man is evil, his assurances false, and, 7.25  
 by establishing Rama in the kingship, dear child who has  
 always known comfort, he will bring ruin upon you and  
 your family. Kaikéyi, the time has come to act, and you  
 must act swiftly, for your own good. You must save your  
 son, yourself and me, my enchanting beauty.”

After listening to Mánthara's speech, the lovely woman  
 rose from the couch and presented the hunchback with a  
 lovely piece of jewelry. And, when she had given the hunch-  
 back the jewelry, Kaikéyi, most beautiful of women, said  
 in delight to Mánthara: “What you have reported to me  
 is the most wonderful news. How else may I reward you,  
 Mánthara, for reporting such good news to me? I draw 7.30  
 no distinction between Rama and Bhárata, and so I am  
 perfectly content that the king should consecrate Rama as  
 king. You could not possibly tell me better news than this,  
 or speak more welcome words, my well-deserving woman.  
 For what you have told me I will give you yet another boon,  
 something you might like more—just choose it!”

BUT MÁNTHARA WAS beside herself with rage and sor- 8.1  
 row. She threw the jewelry away and said spitefully: “You  
 foolish woman, how can you be delighted at such a mo-  
 ment? Are you not aware that you stand in the midst of a  
 sea of grief? It is Kausálya who is fortunate; it is her son the  
 eminent *brahmans* will consecrate as the powerful prince  
 regent tomorrow, on Pushya day. Once Kausálya secures  
 this great object of joy, she will cheerfully eliminate her en-  
 emies. And you will have to wait on her with hands cupped

Prāptāṃ sumahatīm prītiṃ pratītāṃ tām hata|dviṣam  
upasthāsyasi Kausalyām dās” iva tvam kṛt’|āñjaliḥ.

- 8.5 Hṛṣṭāḥ khalu bhaviṣyanti Rāmasya paramāḥ striyaḥ  
aprahṛṣṭā bhaviṣyanti snuṣās te Bharata|kṣaye.»

Tām drṣṭvā parama|prītāṃ bruvantīm Mantharām tataḥ  
Rāmas’ āiva guṇān devī Kaikeyī praśaśaṃsa ha:

«Dharmajño gurubhir dāntaḥ kṛtajñaḥ satya|vāk śuciḥ  
Rāmo rājñaḥ suto jyeṣṭho yauvarājyam ato ’rhati.

Bhrātṛṇ bhrṭyāṃś ca dīrgh’|āyuh! pitṛvat pālayiṣyati  
saṃtapyase kathaṃ kubje śrutvā Rām’|ābhiṣecanam?  
Bharataś c’ āpi Rāmasya dhruvaṃ varṣa|śatāt param  
pitṛ|paitāmahaṃ rājyam avāpsyati nara|rṣabhaḥ.

- 8.10 Sā tvam abhyudaye prāpte vartamāne ca Manthare  
bhaviṣyati ca kalyāṇe kim|arthaṃ paritapyase?  
Kausalyāto ’tiriktaṃ ca sa tu śuśrūṣate hi mām.»

Kaikeyyā vacanaṃ śrutvā Mantharā bhṛṣa|duḥkhitā  
dīrgham uṣṇaṃ viniḥśvasya Kaikeyīm idam abravīt:

«An|artha|darśinī maurkhyān n’ ātmānam avabudhyase  
śoka|vyasana|vistīrṇe majjantī duḥkhasāgare.

Bhavitā Rāghavo rājā Rāghavasya ca yaḥ sutāḥ  
rāja|vaṃśāt tu Bharataḥ Kaikeyi parihāsyate.

Na hi rājñaḥ sutāḥ sarve rājye tiṣṭhanti bhāmini  
sthāpyamāneṣu sarveṣu sumahān anayo bhavet.

- 8.15 Tasmāj jyeṣṭhe hi Kaikeyi rājya|tantrāṇi pārthivāḥ  
sthāpayanty an|avady’|āṅgi guṇavatsv itareṣv api.  
Asāv atyanta|nirbhagnas tava putro bhaviṣyati  
a|nāthavat sukhebhyaś ca rāja|vaṃśāc ca vatsale.

in reverence, like a serving woman. Delight is truly in store 8.5  
for Rama's exalted women, and all that is in store for your  
daughters-in-law is misery, at Bhárata's downfall."

Seeing how deeply distressed Mánthara was as she spoke,  
Queen Kaikéyi began to extol Rama's virtues: "Rama knows  
what is right, his *gurus* have taught him self-restraint. He  
is grateful, truthful and honest, and as the king's eldest son  
he deserves to be prince regent. He will protect his brothers  
and his dependents like a father; and long may he live!  
How can you be upset, hunchback, at learning of Rama's  
consecration? Surely Bhárata as well, the bull among men,  
will obtain the kingship of his fathers and forefathers after  
Rama's one hundred years. Why should you be upset, Mán- 8.10  
thara, when we have prospered in the past, and prosper now,  
and shall have good fortune in the future? For he obeys me  
even more scrupulously than he does Kausályá."

When she heard what Kaikéyi said, Mánthara was still  
more sorely troubled. She heaved a long and hot sigh and  
then replied: "You are too simpleminded to see what is  
good for you and what is not. You are not aware that you  
are sinking in an ocean of sorrow fraught with disaster and  
grief. Rághava will be king, Kaikéyi, and then the son of  
Rághava, while Bhárata will be debarred from the royal  
succession altogether. For not all the sons of a king stand  
in line for the kingship, my lovely. Were all of them to  
be so placed, grave misfortune would ensue. That is why 8.15  
kings place the powers of kingship in the hands of the eldest,  
faultless Kaikéyi, however worthy the others. Like a helpless  
boy that son of yours, the object of all your motherly love,

S'' âhaṃ tvad|arthe saṃprāptā  
 tvaṃ tu māṃ n' âvabudhyase  
 sapatni|vṛddhau yā me tvaṃ  
 pradeyaṃ dātum icchasi!

Dhruvaṃ tu Bharataṃ Rāmaḥ prāpya rājyam akaṅṭakam  
 deś'|ântaraṃ nāyayitvā lok'|ântaram ath' âpi vā!  
 Bāla eva hi mātulyaṃ Bharato nāyitas tvayā  
 saṃnikarṣāc ca sauhārdaṃ jāyate sthāvareṣv api.

8.20 Goptā hi Rāmaṃ Saumitrir Lakṣmaṇaṃ c' âpi Rāghavaḥ  
 aśvinor iva saubhrātraṃ tayor lokeṣu viśrutam.  
 Tasmān na Lakṣmaṇe Rāmaḥ pāpaṃ kiṃ cit kariṣyati  
 Rāmas tu Bharate pāpaṃ kuryād iti na saṃśayaḥ.

Tasmād Rājagṛhād eva vanaṃ gacchatu te sutaḥ.  
 etadd hi rocate mahyaṃ bhṛṣaṃc' âpi hitaṃ tava.  
 Evaṃ te jñātipakṣasya śreyaś c' âiva bhaviṣyati  
 yadi ced Bharato dharmāt pitryaṃ rājyam avāpsyati.  
 Sa te sukh' |ôcito bālo Rāmasya sahajo ripuḥ  
 samṛdh'|ârthasya naṣṭ'|ârtho jīviṣyati kathaṃ vaśe?

8.25 Abhidrutam iv' âraṇye siṃhena gaja|yūthapam  
 pracchādyamānaṃ Rāmeṇa Bharataṃ trātum arhasi.  
 Darpān nirākṛtā pūrvaṃ tvayā saubhāgyavattayā  
 Rāma|mātā sapatnī te kathaṃ vairaṃ na yātayet?  
 Yadā hi Rāmaḥ pṛthivīm avāpsyati  
 dhruvaṃ pranaṣṭo Bharato bhaviṣyati  
 ato hi saṃcintaya rājyam ātmaje  
 parasya c' âdy' âiva vivāsa kāraṇam.»



will be totally excluded from the royal succession and from its pleasures as well.

Here I am, come on your behalf, but you pay me no heed. Instead, you want to reward me in token of your rival's good luck! Surely once Rama secures unchallenged kingship he will have Bhárata sent off to some other country—if not to the other world! And you had to send Bhárata, a mere boy, off to your brother's, though knowing full well that proximity breeds affection, even in insentient things. Now Rághava will protect Lákshmana, just as Saumítri will protect Rama, for their brotherly love is as celebrated as that of the Ashvins. And so Rama will do no harm to Lákshmana, but he will to Bhárata without question. 8.20

So let your son go straight from Raja-griha to the forest. That is the course I favor, and it is very much in your own best interests. For in this way good fortune may still befall your side of the family—if, that is, Bhárata secures, as by rights he should, the kingship of his forefathers. Your child has known only comfort, and, at the same time, he is Rama's natural enemy. How could the one, with his fortunes lost, live under the sway of the other, whose fortunes are thriving? Like the leader of an elephant herd attacked by a lion in the forest, your son is about to be set upon by Rama, and you must save him. Then, too, because of your beauty's power you used to spurn your co-wife, Rama's mother, so proudly. How could she fail to repay that enmity? When Rama secures control of the land, Bhárata will be lost for certain. You must therefore devise some way of making your son the king and banishing his enemy this very day." 8.25

9.1 EVAM UKTĀ TU Kaikeyī krodhena jvalit'ānanā  
 dīrgham uṣṇaṃ viniḥśvasya Mantharām idam abravīt:  
 «Adya Rāmam itaḥ kṣipraṃ vanaṃ prasthāpayāmy aham  
 yauvarājyena Bharataṃ kṣipraṃ ev' ābhiṣecaye.  
 Idaṃ tv idānīm saṃpāśya ken' ōpāyena Manthare:  
 Bharataḥ prāpnuyād rājyaṃ na tu Rāmaḥ kathaṃ cana?»

Evam uktā tayā devyā Mantharā pāpa|darśinī  
 Rām'ārtham upahiṃsantī Kaikeyīm idam abravīt:

9.5 «Hant' êdānīm pravakṣyāmi Kaikeyi śrūyatām ca me  
 yathā te Bharato rājyaṃ putraḥ prāpsyati kevalam.»  
 Śrutv' āivaṃ vacanaṃ tasyā Mantharāyās tu Kaikayī  
 kiṃ cid utthāya śayanāt sv'āstīrṇād idam abravīt:  
 «Kathaya tvaṃ mam' ōpāyaṃ ken' ōpāyena Manthare!  
 Bharataḥ prāpnuyād rājyaṃ na tu Rāmaḥ kathaṃ cana?»

Evam uktā tayā devyā Mantharā pāpa|darśinī  
 Rām'ārtham upahiṃsantī kubjā vacanam abravīt:

«Tava dev'āsure yuddhe saha rāja|rṣibhiḥ patiḥ  
 agacchat tvām upādāya deva|rājasya sāhyakṛt

9.10 Diśam āsthāya Kaikeyi dakṣiṇāṃ Daṇḍakān prati  
 Vaijayantam iti khyātaṃ puraṃ yatra Timidhvajaḥ  
 Sa Śambara iti khyātaḥ śata|māyo mah"āsurah  
 dadau Śakrasya saṃgrāmaṃ deva|saṃghair anirjitah.  
 Tasmin mahati saṃgrāme rājā Daśarathas tadā  
 apavāhya tvayā devī saṃgrāmān naṣṭa|cetanaḥ  
 Tatr' āpi vikṣataḥ śastraiḥ patis te rakṣitas tvayā  
 tuṣṭena tena dattau te dvau varau śubha|darśane.  
 Sa tvay" ōktaḥ patir devi: «yad" êccheyaṃ tadā varau  
 grhṇīyām iti" tat tena tath" êty uktaṃ mah"ātmanā.

SO MÁNTHARA SPOKE, and Kaikéyi, her face glowing with 9.1  
 rage, heaved a long and burning sigh and said to her: “Today,  
 at once, I will have Rama banished to the forest, and at once  
 have Bhárata consecrated as prince regent. But now, Mán-  
 thara, think: In what way can Bhárata, and not Rama, secure  
 the kingship?”

So Queen Kaikéyi spoke, and the malevolent Mánthara  
 answered her, to the ruin of Rama’s fortunes: “Well, then, 9.5  
 I shall tell you, Kaikéyi—and pay close attention—how  
 your son Bhárata may secure sovereign kingship.” Hearing  
 Mánthara’s words, Kaikéyi half rose from her sumptuous  
 couch and exclaimed: “Tell me the way, Mánthara! How  
 can Bhárata, and not Rama, secure the kingship?”

So the queen spoke, and the malevolent hunchback an-  
 swered her, to the ruin of Rama’s fortunes: “When the gods  
 and *ásuras* were at war, your husband went with the royal  
 seers to lend assistance to the king of the gods, and he took  
 you along. He set off toward the south, Kaikéyi, to the 9.10  
 Dándakas and the city called Vaijayánta. It was there that  
 Timi-dhvaja ruled, the same who is called Shámbara, a great  
*ásura* of a hundred magic powers. He had given battle to  
 Shakra, and the host of gods could not conquer him. In  
 the great battle that followed, King Dasha-ratha was struck  
 unconscious, and you, my lady, conveyed him out of battle.  
 But there, too, your husband was wounded by weapons,  
 and once again you saved him, my lovely. And so in his  
 gratitude he granted you two boons. Then, my lady, you  
 said to your husband, ‘I shall choose my two boons when I  
 want them,’ and the great king consented. I myself was un-  
 aware of this, my lady, until you yourself told me, long ago.

an|abhijñā hy ahaṃ devi tvay” āiva kathitaṃ purā  
 9.15 Tau varau yāca bhartāraṃ: Bharatasy’ ābhiṣecanam  
 pravrajānaṃ ca Rāmasya tvaṃ varṣāṇi catur|daśa.

Krodh’|āgāraṃ praviśy’ ādya kruddh” ēv’ āsvapateḥ sute  
 śeṣv’ ānantarhitāyāṃ tvaṃ bhūmau malina|vāsini  
 mā sm’ āinaṃ pratyudīkṣethā mā c’ āinaṃ abhibhāṣathāḥ.  
 Dayitā tvaṃ sadā bhartur atra me n’ āsti saṃśayaḥ  
 tvat|kr̥te ca mahā|rājo viśed api hut’|āśanam.

Na tvāṃ krodhayituṃ śakto na kruddhāṃ pratyudīkṣitum  
 tava priy’|ārthaṃ rājā hi prāṇān api parityajet.

Na hy atikramituṃ śaktas tava vākyaṃ mahī|patiḥ  
 manda|svabhāve budhyasva saubhāgya|balam ātmanaḥ.

9.20 Maṇi|muktā|suarṇāni ratnāni vividhāni ca  
 dadyād Daśaratho rājā mā sma teṣu manaḥ kṛthāḥ.  
 Yau tau dev’|āsure yuddhe varau Daśaratho ’dadāt.  
 tau smāraya mahā|bhāge so ’rtho mā tvāṃ atikramet.

Yadā tu te varam dadyāt svayam utthāpya Rāghavaḥ  
 vyavasthāpya mahā|rājaṃ tvaṃ imaṃ vṛṇuyā varam:  
 ‹Rāmaṃ pravrajay’ āraṇye nava varṣāṇi pañca ca  
 Bharataḥ kriyatāṃ rājā pṛthivyāṃ pārthiva|rṣabhaḥ.›  
 Evaṃ pravrajītas c’ āiva Rāmo ‹rāmo› bhaviṣyati  
 Bharatas ca hat’|āmitras tava rājā bhaviṣyati.

9.25 Yena kālena Rāmas ca vanāt pratyāgamiṣyati  
 tena kālena putras te kṛta|mūlo bhaviṣyati.  
 saṃgrhīta|manuṣyaś ca suhr̥dbhiḥ sārddham ātmavān.  
 Prāpta|kālaṃ tu te manye rājānaṃ vīta|sādhvasā.  
 Rām’|ābhiṣeka|saṃkalpān nigṛhya vinivartaya.»

You must now demand these two boons of your husband: 9.15  
the consecration of Bhárata and the banishment of Rama  
for fourteen years.

Now go into your private chamber, daughter of Ashva-  
pati, as if in a fit of rage. Put on a dirty garment, lie down  
on the bare ground, and don't speak to him, don't even  
look at him. Your husband has always adored you, I haven't  
any doubt of it. For your sake the great king would even  
go through fire. The king could not bring himself to anger  
you, nor even bear to look at you when you are angry. He  
would give up his own life to please you. The lord of the  
land is powerless to refuse your demand. Dull-witted girl,  
recognize the power of your beauty. King Dasha-ratha will 9.20  
offer gems, pearls, gold, a whole array of precious gifts—but  
pay no mind to them. Just keep reminding Dasha-ratha of  
those two boons he granted at the battle of the gods and  
*ásuras*. Illustrious lady, you must not let this opportunity  
pass you by.

When the great king Rághava helps you up himself and  
offers you a boon, then you must ask him for this one, first  
making sure he swears to it: 'Banish Rama to the forest for  
nine years and five, and make Bhárata king of the land, the  
bull among kings.' In this way Rama will be banished and  
cease to be 'the pleasing prince,' and your Bhárata, his rival  
eliminated, will be king. And by the time Rama returns 9.25  
from the forest, your steadfast son and his supporters will  
have struck deep roots and won over the populace. I think  
it high time you overcame your timidity. You must forcibly  
prevent the king from carrying out Rama's consecration."

An|artham artha|rūpeṇa grāhitā sā tatas tayā  
hr̥ṣṭā pratītā Kaikeyī Mantharām idam abravīt:

«Kubje tvāṃ n' ābhijānāmi  
śreṣṭhāṃ śreṣṭh'ābhidhāyinīm  
pṛthivyām asi kubjānām  
uttamā buddhi|niscaye.

- Tvam eva tu mam' ārtheṣu nitya|yuktā hit'āiṣiṇī  
n' āhaṃ samavabudhyeyaṃ kubje rājñas cikīrṣitam.
- 9.30 Santi duḥsaṃsthitāḥ kubjā vakrāḥ parama|pāpikāḥ  
tvam padmam iva vātena saṃnatā priya|darśanā.  
Uras te 'bhiniviṣṭaṃ vai yāvat skandhāt samunnatam  
adhastāc c' ōdaraṃ śātāṃ sunābham iva lajjitam.  
Jaghanam tava nirghuṣṭaṃ raśanā|dāma|śobhitam  
jaṅghe bhṛśam upanyaste pādaḥ c' āpy āyatāv ubhau.  
Tvam āyatābhyāṃ sakthibhyāṃ Manthare kṣauma|vāsini  
agrato mama gacchantī rāja|hamsīva rājase.
- Tav' ēdaṃ sthagu yad dīrghaṃ rathaghoṇam iv' āyatam  
matayaḥ kṣatra|vidyās ca māyās c' ātra vasanti te.
- 9.35 Atra te pratimokṣyāmi mālāṃ kubje hiraṇmayīm  
abhiṣikte ca Bharate Rāghave ca vanam gate.  
Jātyena ca suvarṇena suniṣṭaptena sundari  
labdh'ārthā ca pratītā ca lepaiṣyāmi te sthagu.  
Mukhe ca tilakaṃ citraṃ jātārūpamayaṃ śubham  
kārayiṣyāmi te kubje śubhāny ābharaṇāni ca.  
Paridhāya śubhe vastre deva|deva carīṣyasi  
candram āhvayamānena mukhen' āpratimānanā

And so Mánthara induced her to accept such evil by disguising it as good, and Kaikéyi, now cheered and delighted, replied:

“Hunchback, I never recognized your excellence, nor how excellent your advice. Of all the hunchbacks in the land there is none better at devising plans. You are the only one who has always sought my advantage and had my interests at heart. I might never have known, hunchback, what the king intended to do. There are hunchbacks who are misshapen, crooked and hideously ugly—but not you, you are lovely, you are bent no more than a lotus in the breeze. Your chest is arched, raised as high as your shoulders, and, down below, your waist, with its lovely navel, seems as if it had grown thin in envy of it. Your girdle-belt beautifies your hips and sets them jingling. Your legs are set strong under you, while your feet are long. With your wide buttocks, Mánthara, and your garment of white linen, you are as resplendent as a wild goose when you go before me. 9.30

And this huge hump of yours, wide as the hub of a chariot wheel—your clever ideas must be stored in it, your political wisdom and magic powers. And there, hunchback, is where I will drape you with a garland made of gold, once Bhárata is consecrated and Rághava has gone to the forest. When I have accomplished my purpose, my lovely, when I am satisfied, I will anoint your hump with precious liquid gold. And for your face I will have them fashion an elaborate and beautiful forehead mark of gold and exquisite jewelry for you, hunchback. Dressed in a pair of lovely garments you shall go about like a goddess; with that face of yours that challenges the moon, peerless in visage; and you shall strut 9.35

gamişyasi gatiṃ mukhyāṃ garvayantī dviṣaj|janam.  
Tav' āpi kubjāḥ kubjāyāḥ sarv'|ābharaṇa|bhūṣitāḥ  
pādaḥ paricarişyanti yath" āiva tvaṃ sadā mama.»

9.40 Iti praśasyamānā sā Kaikeyīm idam abravīt  
śayānāṃ śayane śubhre vedyāṃ agni|śikhām iva:  
«Gat' |ōdake setu|bandho na kalyāṇi vidhīyate  
uttiṣṭha kuru kalyāṇaṃ rājānam anudarśaya!»  
Tathā protsāhitā devī gatvā Mantharayā saha  
krodh' |āgāraṃ viśāl' |ākṣī saubhāgya|mada|garvitā.  
Aneka|śata|śāhasraṃ muktā|hāraṃ var' |ānganā  
avamucya var' |ārhanī śubhāny ābharaṇāni ca.  
Tato hem' |ōpamā tatra kubjā vākyam vaśam gatā  
saṃviśya bhūmau Kaikeyī Mantharām idam abravīt:

9.45 «Iha vā māṃ mṛtāṃ kubje nṛpāy' āvedayişyasi  
vanaṃ tu Rāghave prāpte Bharataḥ prāpsyati kṣitim.»

Ath' āitad uktvā vacanaṃ su|dāruṇaṃ  
nidhāya sarv'|ābharaṇāni bhāminī  
asaṃvṛtām āstaraṇena medinīm  
tad" ādhiśīsyē patit" ēva kinnarī.  
Udīrṇa|saṃrambha|tamo|vṛt' |ānanā  
tath" āvamukt' |ōttama|mālya|bhūṣaṇā  
nar' |ēndra|patnī vimanā babhūva sā  
tamo|vṛtā dyaḥ iva magna|tārakā.



holding your head high before the people who hate me. You too shall have hunchbacks, adorned with every sort of ornament, to humbly serve you, hunchback, just as you always serve me.”

Being flattered in this fashion, she replied to Kaikéyi, who 9.40  
still lay on her luxurious couch like a flame of fire on an altar:  
“One does not build a dike, my precious, after the water is gone. Get up, apprise the king, and see to your own welfare!”  
Thus incited, the large-eyed queen went with Mánthara to her private chamber, puffed up with the intoxicating power of her beauty. There the lovely lady removed her pearl necklace, worth many hundred thousands, and her other costly and beautiful jewelry. And then, under the spell of the hunchback Mánthara’s words, the golden Kai-  
kéyi got down upon the floor and said to her: “Hunchback, 9.45  
go inform the king that I will surely die right here unless Bhárata receives as his portion the land and Rághava, as his, the forest.”

And, uttering these ruthless words, the lady put all her jewelry aside and lay down upon the ground bare of any spread, like a fallen *kínnara* woman. Her face enveloped in the darkness of her swollen rage, her fine garlands and ornaments stripped off, the wife of the lord of men grew distraught and took on the appearance of a darkened sky, when all the stars have set.

10.1 ĀJÑĀPYA TU MAHĀ|RĀJO Rāghvasy' ābhiṣecanam  
 priy'ārḥām priyam ākhyātum vives' āntaḥ|puraṃ vaśī.  
 Tām tatra patitām bhūmau śayānām atath" |ôcitām  
 pratapta iva duḥkhena so 'paśyaj jagatī|patih.  
 Sa vṛddhas taruṇīm bhāryām prāṇebhyo 'pi garīyasīm  
 apāpaḥ pāpa|saṃkalpām dadarśa dharanī|tale.  
 Kareṇum iva digdhena viddhām mṛgayuṇā vane  
 mahā|gaja iv' āraṇye snehāt parimamarśa tām.

10.5 Parimṛśya ca pāṇibhyām abhisamtrasta|cetanaḥ  
 kāmī kamala|patr'ākṣīm uvāca vanitām idam:

«Na te 'ham abhijānāmi krodham ātmani saṃśritam  
 devi ken' ābhiyukt" āsi? kena v" āsi vimānitā?

Yad idam mama duḥkhāya śeṣe kalyāṇi pāmsuṣu  
 bhūmau śeṣe kim|arthaṃ tvaṃ mayi kalyāṇa cetasi?

bhūt'ôpahata|citt" êva mama citta|pramāthinī

Santi me kuśalā vaidyā abhitsuṣṭās ca sarvaśaḥ

sukhitām tvām kariṣyanti vyādhim ācakṣva bhāmini

Kasya vā te priyaṃ kāryaṃ? kena vā vipriyaṃ kṛtam?

kaḥ priyaṃ labhatām adya? ko vā sumahad apriyaṃ?

10.10 Avadhyo vadhyatām ko vā vadhyaḥ ko vā vimucyatām?

daridraḥ ko bhavativ ādhyo? dravyavān v" āpy akimcanaḥ?

Ahaṃ c' āiva madīyās ca sarve tava vaś'ānugāḥ.

na te kaṃ cid abhiprāyaṃ vyāhantum aham utsahe.

Ātmano jīviten' āpi brūhi yan manas" êcchasi

yāvad āvartate cakraṃ tāvatī me vasuṃ|dharā.»

## THE BOONS OF KAIKÉYI

NOW, WHEN THE great king had given orders for Rághava's consecration, he gladly entered the inner chamber to tell his beloved wife the good news. But when the lord of the world saw her fallen on the ground and lying there in a posture so ill-befitting her, he was consumed with sorrow. The guileless old man saw her on the floor, that guileful young wife of his, who meant more to him than life itself. He began to caress her affectionately, as a great bull elephant in the wilderness might caress his cow wounded by the poisoned arrow of a hunter lurking in the forest. And, as he caressed his lotus-eyed wife with his hands, sick with worry and desire, he said to her:

“I do not understand, my lady, why you should be angry. Has someone offended you, or shown you disrespect, that you should lie here in the dust, my precious, and cause me such sorrow? What reason have you to lie upon the floor as if possessed by a spirit, driving me to distraction, when you are so precious to me? I have skilled physicians, who have been gratified in every way. They will make you well again. Tell me what hurts you, my lovely. Is there someone to whom you would have favor shown, or has someone aroused your disfavor? The one shall find favor at once, the other incur my lasting disfavor. Is there some guilty man who should be freed, or some innocent man I should execute? What poor man should I enrich, what rich man impoverish? I and my people, we all bow to your will. I could not bring myself to thwart any wish of yours, not if it cost me my life. Tell me what your heart desires, for all the earth belongs to me, as far as the wheel of my power reaches.”

Tath” óktā sā samāsvastā vaktukāmā tad apriyam  
paripīḍayitum bhūyo bhartāram upacakrame.

«N’ āsmi viprakṛtā deva kena cin na vimānitā  
abhiprāyas tu me kaś cit tam icchāmi tvayā kṛtam.

10.15 Pratijñāṃ pratijānīṣva yadi tvaṃ kartum icchasi  
atha tad vyāhariṣyāmi yad abhiprārthitaṃ mayā.»

Evam uktas tayā rājā priyayā strī|vaśaṃ gataḥ  
tām uvāca mahā|tejāḥ Kaikeyīm īśad|utsmiṭaḥ:

«Avalipte na jānāsi tvattaḥ priyataro mama  
manujo manuja|vyāghrād Rāmād anyo na vidyate?  
Bhadre hṛdayam apy etad anumṛśy’ óddharasva me  
etat samīkṣya Kaikeyi brūhi yat sādhu manyase.  
Balam ātmani paśyantī na mām śaṅkitum arhasi  
kariṣyāmi tava prītiṃ sukr̥ten’ āpi te śape.»

10.20 Tena vākyena saṃhr̥ṣṭā tam abhiprāyam ātmanaḥ  
vyājahāra mahā|ghoram abhyāgatam iv’ āntakam:

«Yathākrameṇa śapasi varam mama dadāsi ca  
tac chr̥ṇvantu trayas|triṃśad devāḥ s’|ēndra|purogamāḥ.

Candr’|ādityau nabhas c’ āiva grahā rātry|ahanī diśaḥ  
jagac ca pṛthivī c’ āiva sa|gandharvā sa|rākṣasā.

Niśācarāṇi bhūtāni gr̥heṣu gr̥ha|devatāḥ

yāni c’ ānyāni bhūtāni jānīyur bhāṣitaṃ tava.

Satya|saṃdho mahā|tejā dharmajñāḥ susamāhitaḥ  
varam mama dadāty eṣa tan me śṛṇvantu devatāḥ.»

So he spoke, and now encouraged she resolved to tell her hateful plan. She then commenced to cause her husband still greater pain. “No one has mistreated me, my lord, or shown me disrespect But there is one wish I have that I should like you to fulfill. You must first give me your promise that you are willing to do it. Then I shall reveal what it is I desire.” So his beloved Kaikéyi spoke, and the mighty king, hopelessly under the woman’s power, said to her with some surprise: “Do you not yet know, proud lady, that except for Rama, tiger among men, there is not a single person I love as much as you? Take hold of my heart, rip it out and examine it closely, my lovely Kaikéyi; then tell me if you do not find it true. Seeing that I have the power, you ought not to doubt me. I will do what will make you happy, I swear to you by all my acquired merit.” 10.15

His words filled her with delight, and she made ready to reveal her dreadful wish, which was like a visitation of death: “Let the three and thirty gods, with Indra at their head, hear how you in due order swear an oath and grant me a boon. Let the sun and moon, the sky, the planets, night and day, the quarters of space, heaven and earth, let all the *gandhárvas* and *rákshasas*, the spirits that stalk the night, the household gods in every house and all the other spirits take heed of what you have said. This mighty king, who is true to his word and knows the ways of righteousness, in full awareness grants me a boon—let the deities give ear to this for me.” 10.20

10.25 Iti devī maheṣvāsaṃ parigr̥hy' ābhiśasya ca  
 tataḥ param uvāc' ēdaṃ varadaṃ kāmā|mohitam.  
 «Varau yau me tvayā deva tadā dattau mahī|pate  
 tau tāvad aham ady' āiva vakṣyāmi śṛṇu me vacaḥ.  
 Abhiṣeka|samārambho Rāghavasy' ōpakalpitaḥ  
 anen' āiv' ābhiṣekeṇa Bharato me 'bhiṣicyatām.  
 Nava pañca ca varṣāṇi Daṇḍak'āraṇyam āsritaḥ  
 cīr'ājina|jaṭā|dhārī Rāmo bhavatu tāpasaḥ.  
 Bharato bhajatām adya yauvarājyam akaṅṭakam  
 adya c' āiva hi paśyeyaṃ prayāntaṃ Rāghavaṃ vane.»

10.30 Tataḥ śrutvā mahā|rāja Kaikeyyā dāruṇaṃ vacaḥ  
 vyathito vilavaś c' āiva vyāghrīm dr̥ṣṭvā yathā mṛgaḥ.  
 Asaṃvṛtāyām āsīno jagatyāṃ dīrgham ucchvasan  
 «aho dhig iti» s'āmarṣo vācam uktvā nar'ādhipaḥ.  
 moham āpedivān bhūyaḥ śok'ōpahata|cetanaḥ.

Cireṇa tu nr̥paḥ saṃjñāṃ pratilabhya suduḥkhitaḥ  
 Kaikeyīm abravīt kruddhaḥ pradahann iva cakṣuṣā.

«Nṛśaṃse duṣṭa|cāritre kulasy' āsya vināśini!  
 kiṃ kṛtaṃ tava Rāmeṇa pāpe pāpaṃ may" āpi vā?  
 Sadā te janani tulyāṃ vṛttiṃ vahati Rāghavaḥ  
 tasy' āiva tvam an|arthāya kiṃ|nimittam ih' ōdyatā?

10.35 Tvaṃ may" ātmavināśāya bhavanaṃ svaṃ praveśitā  
 avijñānān nr̥pa|sutā vyālī tīkṣṇa|viṣā yathā.  
 Jīva|loko yadā sarvo Rāmasy' ēha guṇa|stavam  
 aparādhaṃ kam uddīśya tyakṣyāmīṣṭam ahaṃ sutam?  
 Kausalyāṃ vā Sumitrāṃ vā tyajeyam api vā śriyam  
 jīvitam v" ātmano Rāmaṃ na tv eva pitṛ|vatsalam.

Thus the queen ensnared the great archer and called upon 10.25  
witnesses. She then addressed the king, who in his mad  
passion had granted her a boon. “I will now claim the two  
boons you once granted me, my lord. Hear my words, your  
majesty. Let my son Bhárata be consecrated with the very rite  
of consecration you have prepared for Rághava. Let Rama  
withdraw to Dándaka wilderness and for nine years and  
five live the life of an ascetic, wearing hides and bark-cloth  
garments and matted hair. Let Bhárata today become the  
uncontested prince regent, and let me see Rághava depart  
this very day for the forest.” When the great king heard 10.30  
Kaikéyi’s ruthless demands, he was shaken and unnerved,  
like a stag at the sight of a tigress. The lord of men gasped  
as he sank down upon the bare floor. “Oh damn you!” he  
cried in uncontrollable fury before he fell into a stupor, his  
heart crushed by grief.

Gradually the king regained his senses and then, in bitter  
sorrow and anger, he spoke to Kaikéyi, with fire in his eyes:  
“Malicious, wicked woman, bent on destroying this House!  
Evil woman, what evil did Rama or I ever do to you? Rágha-  
va has always treated you just like his own mother. What  
reason can you have for trying to wreck his fortunes, of all  
people? It was sheer suicide to bring you into my home. 10.35  
I did it unwittingly, thinking you a princess—and not a  
deadly poisonous viper. When praise for Rama’s virtues is  
on the lips of every living soul, what crime could I adduce  
as pretext for renouncing my favorite son? I would sooner  
renounce Kausálya, or Sumíttra, or sovereignty, or life itself,  
than Rama, who so cherishes his father.

Parā bhavati me prītir dṛṣṭvā tanayam agrajam  
 apaśyatas tu me Rāmaṃ naṣṭā bhavati cetanā.  
 Tiṣṭhel loko vinā sūryaṃ sasyaṃ vā salilaṃ vinā  
 na tu Rāmaṃ vinā dehe tiṣṭhet tu mama jīvitam.  
 10.40 Tad alaṃ tyajyatām eṣa niścayaḥ pāpa|niścaye!  
 api te caraṇau mūrdhnā spr̥śāmy eṣa prasīda me?»  
 Sa bhūmi|pālo vilapann a|nāthavat  
 striyā gr̥hīto hr̥haye 'timātratā  
 papāta devyāś caraṇau prasāritāv  
 ubhāv asaṃspr̥śya yath' āturas tathā.

11.1 ATAD|ARHAṂ MAHĀ|RĀJAṂ śayānam atath' |ôcitam  
 Yayātim iva puṇy' |ānte deva|lokāt paricyutam.  
 An|artha|rūpā siddh' |āsthā abhītā bhaya|darśinī  
 punar ākārayām āsa tam eva varam aṅganā.  
 «Tvaṃ katthyase mahā|rāja satya|vādī dṛḍha|vrataḥ  
 mama c' êmaṃ varam kasmād vidhārayitum icchasi?»  
 Evam uktas tu Kaikeyā rājā Daśarathas tadā  
 pratyuvāca tataḥ kruddho muhūrtaṃ vihvalann iva:  
 11.5 «Mṛte mayi! gate Rāme vanaṃ manuja|puṃgave  
 hant' ānārye mam' āmitre Rāmaḥ pravrajīto vanam?  
 Yadi satyaṃ bravīmy etat tad asatyaṃ bhaviṣyati  
 akīrtir atulā loke dhruvaṃ paribhavaś ca me.»



The greatest joy I know is seeing my firstborn son. If I cannot see Rama, I shall lose my mind. The world might endure without the sun, or crops without water, but without Rama life could not endure within my body. Enough, then, 10.40  
 give up this scheme, you evil-scheming woman. I beg you! Must I get down and bow my head to your feet?" His heart in the grip of a woman who knew no bounds, the guardian of the earth began helplessly to cry, and as the queen extended her feet he tried in vain to touch them, and collapsed like a man on the point of death.

THE KING LAY THERE, in so unaccustomed a posture, so 11.1  
 ill-befitting his dignity, like Yayāti himself, his merit exhausted, fallen from the world of the gods. But the woman was unafraid, for all the fear she awoke. She was misfortune incarnate and had yet to secure her fortunes. Once more she tried to force him to fulfill the boon. "You are vaunted, great king, as a man true to his word and firm in his vows. How then can you be prepared to withhold my boon?" So Kaikéyi spoke, and King Dasha-ratha, faltering for a moment, angrily replied: "Vile woman, mortal enemy! Will 11.5  
 you not be happy, will you not be satisfied until you see me dead, and Rama, the bull among men, gone to the forest? To satisfy Kaikéyi Rama must be banished to the forest, but if I keep my word in this, then I must be guilty of another lie. My infamy will be unequalled in the eyes of the people and my disgrace inevitable."

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“Ayódhya” is Book Two of Valmíki’s RAMÁYANA, one of the two great national epics of India. The young hero Rama sets out willingly from the capital with wife and brother for a fourteen-year banishment, which will entail great suffering and further difficult choices in the books ahead.

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