Ramayana as a complete life of real human
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ABSTRACT

The Ramayana was an important influence on later Sanskrit poetry and Indian life and culture. Like the Mahābhārata, the Ramayana is not just a story; it presents the teachings of ancient Hindu sages (Vedas) in narrative allegory, interspersing philosophical and devotional elements. The characters Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Hanuman and Ravana are all fundamental to the cultural consciousness of India, Nepal, and many South-East Asian countries such as Thailand and Indonesia. There are other versions of the Ramayana, although the Mahabharata, Brahmanical or Puranic period of the later 1st millennium CE. There is also a version of Ramayana, known as Ramopakhyana, of Madhava Kandali in Assamese (ca. 14th century), Shri Rama Panchali or Krittivasi Ramayan by Krittibas Ojha in Bengali (ca. 15th Century), and Ramacharitamanas by Tulasisadas in Awadhi which is an eastern form of Hindi (c. 16th century) [12].

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The past and configuration

Traditionally, the Ramayana is attributed to Valmiki, regarded as India's first poet [1-5]. The Indian tradition is unanimous in its agreement that the poem is work of a single poet, the sage Valmiki, a contemporary of Rama and a peripheral actor in the drama [6]. The story's original version in Sanskrit is known as Valmiki Ramayana, dating to approximately the 5th to 4th century B.C.[7][8]. While it is often viewed as a primarily devotional text, the Vaishnava elements appear to be later accretions possibly dating to the 2nd century BC or later [8]. The main body of the narrative lacks statements of Rama's divinity, and identifications of Rama with Vishnu are rare and subordinated in the later parts of the text [9].

According to Indian tradition, and to the Ramayana itself, the Ramayana belongs to the genre of itihāsa, like the Mahabharata. The definition of itihāsa has varied over time, with one definition being that itihāsa is a narrative of past events (purāvītta) which includes teachings on the goals of human life [1]. According to Hindu tradition, the Ramayana takes place during a period of time known as Treta Yuga [10].

In its extant form, Valmiki's Ramayana is an epic poem of some 50,000 lines. The text survives in several thousand partial and complete manuscripts, the oldest of which appears to date from the 11th century A.D.[11]. The text has several regional renderings, [12] recensions and subrecensions. Textual scholar Robert P. Goldman differentiates two major regional recensions: the northern (N) and the southern (S) [11] Scholar Romesh Chunder Dutt writes that “the Ramayana, like the Mahabharata, is a growth of centuries, but the main story is more distinctly the creation of one mind”[13].

There has been discussion as to whether the first and the last chapters of Valmiki's Ramayana were composed by the original author. Some still believe they are integral parts of the book in spite of some style differences and narrative contradictions between these two chapters and the rest of the book [14][15].

Famous retellings include the Ramayanam of Kambar in Tamil (ca. 11th–12th century), the Saptakanda Ramayana of Madhava Kandali in Assamese (ca. 14th century), Shri Rama Panchali or Krittivasi Ramayan by Krittibas Ojha in Bengali (ca. 15th Century), and Ramacharitamanas by Tulasisadas in Awadhi which is an eastern form of Hindi (c. 16th century) [12].

1.2. Period

Some cultural evidence (the presence of sati in the Mahabharata but not in the main body of the Ramayana) suggests that the Ramayana predates the Mahabharata. However, the general cultural background of the Ramayana is one of the post-urbanization period of the eastern part of North India, while the Mahabharata reflects the Kuru areas west of this, from the Rigvedic to the late Vedic period.

By tradition, the text belongs to the Treta Yuga, second of the four eons (yuga) of Hindu chronology. Rama is said to have been born in the Treta Yuga to King Dasaratha in thekshvaku vamsa (clan). The names of the characters (Rama, Sita, Dasharatha, Janaka, Vasishtha, Vishwamitra) are all known in late Vedic literature, older than the Valmiki Ramayana. However, nowhere in the surviving Vedic poetry is there a story similar to the Ramayana of Valmiki. According to the modern academic view, Vishnu, who according to Bala Kanda was incarnated as Rama, first came into prominence with the epics themselves and further during the ‘Puranic’ period of the later 1st millennium CE. There is also a version of Ramayana, known as Ramopakhyana, found in the epic Mahabharata. This version is depicted as a narration to Yudhishthira.

There is general consensus that books two to six form the oldest portion of the epic while the first book Bala Kanda and the last the Uttara Kanda are later additions. The author or authors of Bala Kanda and Ayodhya Kanda appear to be familiar with the eastern Gangetic basin region of northern India and the Kosala and Magadh region during the period of the sixteen janapadas as the geographical and geopolitical data is in keeping with what is known about the region. However, when the story moves to the Aranya Kanda and beyond, it seems to turn abruptly into fantasy with its demon-slaying hero and fantastic creatures. The geography of central and South India is increasingly vaguely described. The knowledge of the location of the island of Lanka also lacks detail. Basing his assumption on these features, the historian H.D. Sankalia has proposed a date of the 4th century BC for the composition of the text. A. L. Basham, however, is of the opinion that Rama may have been a minor chief who lived in the 8th or the 7th century BC.

2. BALA KANDA
Dasharatha was the king of Ayodhya. He had three queens and they are Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra. He was childless for a long time and, anxious to produce an heir, he performs a fire sacrifice known as Putra-Kameshti Yagya. As a consequence, Rama is first born to Kausalya, Bharata is born to Kaikeyi, and Lakshmana and Shatrughna are born to Sumitra. These sons are endowed, to various degrees, with the essence of the God Vishnu; Vishnu had opted to be born in mortality in order to combat the demon Ravana, who was opposing the Gods, and who could only be destroyed by a mortal. The boys are reared as the princes of the realm, receiving instructions from the scriptures and in warfare. When Rama is 16 years old, the sage Vishwamitra comes to the court of Dasharatha in search of help against demons, who were disturbing sacrificial rites. He chooses Rama, who is followed by Lakshmana, his constant companion throughout the story. The Ramayana and Lakshmana receive instructions and supernatural weapons from Vishwamitra, and proceed to destroy the demons.

3. AYODHYA KANDA
After Rama and Sita have been married for twelve years, an elderly Dasharatha expresses his desire to crown Rama, to which the Kosalas and his subjects express their support. On the eve of the great event, Kaikeyi—her jealousy aroused by Manthara, a wicked maidservant—claims two boons that Dasharatha had long ago granted her. Kaikeyi demands Rama to be exiled into wilderness for fourteen years, while the succession passes to her son Bharata. The broken heart, constrained by his rigid devotion to his given word, accedes to Kaikeyi's demands. Rama accepts his father's reluctant decree with absolute submission and calms self-control which characterizes him throughout the story. He is joined by Sita and Lakshmana. When he asks Sita not to follow him, she says, "the forest where you dwell is Ayodhya for me and Ayodhya without you is a veritable hell for me." After Rama's departure, king Dasharatha, unable to bear the grief, passes away. Meanwhile, Bharata who was on a visit to his maternal uncle learns about the events in Ayodhya. Bharata refuses to profit from his mother's wicked scheming and visits Rama in the forest. He requests Rama to return and rule. But Rama, determined to carry out his father's orders to the letter, refuses to return before the period of exile. However, Bharata carries Rama's sandals, and keeps them on the throne, while he rules as Rama's regent.

4. ARANYA KANDA
Rama, Sita and Lakshmana journeyed southward along the banks of the river Godavari, where they built cottages and lived off the land. At the Panchavati forest they are visited by a rakshasa woman, Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana. She attempts to seduce the brothers and, failing in this, attempts to kill Sita. Lakshmana stops her by cutting off her nose and ears. Hearing of this, her demon brother, Khar, organizes an attack against the princes, Rama annihilates Khar and his demons.

When news of these events reaches Ravana, he resolves to destroy Rama by capturing Sita with the aid of the rakshasa Maricha. Maricha, assuming the form of a golden deer, captivates Sita's attention. Entranced by the beauty of the deer, Sita pleads with Rama to capture it. Lord Rama, aware that this is the play of the demons, is unable to dissuade Sita from her desire and chases the deer into the forest, leaving Sita under Lakshmana's guard. After some time Sita hears Rama calling out to her; afraid for his life she insists that Lakshmana rush to his aid. Lakshmana tries to assure her that Rama is invincible, and that it is best if he continues to follow Rama's orders to protect her. On the verge of hysterics Sita insists that it is not she but Rama who needs Lakshmana's help. He obeys her wish but stipulates that she is not to leave the cottage or entertain any strangers. He draws a chalk outline, the Lakshmana rekha around the cottage and casts a spell on it that prevents anyone from entering the boundary but allows people to exit. Finally with the coast clear, Ravana appears in the guise of an ascetic requesting Sita's hospitality. Unaware of the devious plan of her guest, Sita is tricked into leaving the rekha and then forcibly carried away by the evil Ravana.

Jatayu, a vulture, tries to rescue Sita, but is mortally wounded. At Lanka Sita is kept under the heavy guard of rakshas. Ravana demands Sita marry him, but Sita, eternally devoted to Rama, refuses.[39] Rama and Lakshmana learn about Sita's abduction from Jatayu, and immediately set out to save her. During their search, they meet the demon Kabandha and the ascetic Shabari, who direct them towards Sugriva and Hanuman.

5. KISHKINDHA KANDA
The Kishkindha Kanda is set in the monkey citadel Kishkindha. Rama and Lakshmana meet Hanuman, the greatest of monkey heroes and an adherent of Sugriva, the banished pretender to the throne of Kishkindha. Rama befriends Sugriva and helps him by killing his elder brother Vaiu thus regaining the kingdom of Kishkindha, in exchange for helping Rama to recover Sita. However Sugriva soon forgets his promise and spends his time in debauchery. The clever monkey Queen Tara, second wife of Sugriva (initially wife of Vaiu), calmly intervenes to prevent an enraged Lakshmana from destroying the monkey citadel. She then eloquently convinces Sugriva to honor his pledge. Sugriva then sends search parties to the four corners of the earth, only to return without success from north, east and west. The southern search party under the leadership of Angad and Hanuman learns from a vulture named Sampati that Sita was taken to Lanka.

6. SUNDARA KANDA
The Sundara Kanda forms the heart of Valmiki's Ramayana and consists of a detailed, vivid account of Hanuman's adventures. After learning about Sita, Hanuman assumes a gargantuan form and makes a colossal leap across the ocean to Lanka. Here, Hanuman explores the demon's city and spies on Ravana. He locates Sita in Ashoka grove, who is wooed and threatened by Ravana and his rakshas to marry Ravana. He reassures her, giving Rama's sandals, and keeps them under Lakshmana's control which characterizes him throughout the story. Hanuman then wrecks havoc in Lanka by destroying trees and buildings, and killing Ravana's warriors. He allows himself to be captured and produced before Ravana. He gives a bold lecture to Ravana to release Sita. He is condemned and his tail is set on fire, but he escapes his bonds and, leaping from roof to roof, sets fire to Ravana's citadel and makes the giant leap back from the island. The joyous search party returns to Kishkindha with the news.

7. LANKA KANDA
The War of Lanka by Sahibdin.It depicts the monkey army of the protagonist Rama (top left, blue figure) fighting the demon-king of the king of Lanka, Ravana in order to save Rama's kidnapped wife Sita. The painting depicts multiple events in the battle against the three-headed demon generalTrisiras, in bottom left – Trisiras is beheaded by the monkey- companion of Rama – Hanuman. Having received Hanuman's report on Sita, Rama and Lakshmana proceed with their allies towards the shore of the southern sea. There they are joined by Ravana's renegade brother Vibhishana. The monkeys named "Nal" and "Neel" constructs a floating bridge (known as Rama Setu) across the ocean, and the princes and their army cross over to Lanka. A lengthy battle ensues and Rama kills Ravana, Rama then installs Vibhishana on the throne of Lanka.

8. UTTARA KANDA
The Uttara Kanda is regarded to be later addition to the original story by Valmiki and concerns the final years of Rama, Sita, and Rama's brothers. After being crowned king, many years passed pleasantly with Sita. However, despite the Agni Pariksha (fire ordeal) of Sita, rumours about her purity are spreading among the populace of Ayodhya. Rama yields to public opinion and reluctantly banishes Sita to the forest, where sage Valmiki provides shelter in hisashrama (hermitage). Here she gives birth to twin boys, Lava and Kusha, who became pupils of Valmiki and are brought up in ignorance of their identity.

Power on culture and art
One of the most important literary works of ancient India, the Ramayana has had a profound impact on art and culture in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. The story ushered in the tradition of the next thousand years of massive-scale works in the rich diction of regal courts and Hindu temples. It has also been translated into many languages, notably the Kambaramayana by the Tamil poet Kambar of the subcontinent.
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13th century, the Telugu-language Molla Ramayana, 14th century Kannada poet Narahari's Torave Ramayana, and 15th century Bengali poet Krittibas Ojha's Krittivasi Ramayan, as well as the 16th century Awadh version, Ramcharitramanas, written by Tulsidas. The Ramayana became popular in Southeast Asia during the 8th century and was represented in literature, temple architecture, dance and theatre. Today, dramatic enactments of the story of Ramayana, known as Ramlila, take place all across India and in many places across the globe within the Indian diaspora.

9. THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSION (उलेमाओं महत्व)

Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, is one of most popular deities worshipped in the Hindu religion. Each year, many devout pilgrims trace his journey through India and Nepal, halting at each of the holy sites along the way. The poem is not seen as just a literary monument, but serves as an integral part of Hinduism, and is held in such reverence that the mere reading or hearing of it, or certain passages of it, are believed by Hindus to free them from sin and bless the reader or listener. According to Hindu tradition, Rama is an incarnation (Avatar) of the God Vishnu. The main purpose of this incarnation is to demonstrate the righteous path (Dharma) for all living creatures on earth.

Rama, the Ramayana’s narrator, is a popular language poet's creation. This creation is believed to have spread throughout India and the diaspora.

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