

Sri Maithili Vivaha Padavali

A complete English translation of the Garland of Songs for the Wedding
of Sri Sita and Rama

Edited by Swami Sri Sitaramsharan Ji Maharaj, Head of Sri Lakshman Kila

Revised and enlarged fourth edition

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Translator's note

Sri Maithili Vivaha Padavali is a ceremonial and devotional anthology devoted to the wedding of Sri Sita and Rama. *Maithili* here is principally a name of Sita, the daughter of Mithila, although the collection also contains a substantial body of Maithili-language wedding poetry. *Padavali* means a garland or ordered collection of lyrical compositions.

This edition translates the complete readable devotional and ritual text of the revised and enlarged fourth edition: the publication pages and editor's preface; the invocations; the 315 numbered songs, together with the unnumbered ritual passages; the Sanskrit mantras and marriage formulas; the *kavitta*, *savaiya*, and *kundaliya* sections; Ramnath Pradhan's complete *Sri Ram Kaleva*; the concluding appendix; and the publisher's corrections. Repeated running heads, scanner watermarks, and purely decorative marks are also omitted.

The source moves among Braj, Awadhi, Maithili, older literary Hindi, Sanskrit, and the intimate vocabulary of women's wedding songs. The English therefore aims at fidelity of sense and devotional atmosphere rather than mechanical word-for-word equivalence. Refrains, teasing exchanges, seasonal imagery, poetic signatures, and changes of speaker are preserved. Important ceremonial terms such as *matkor*, *parichhan*, *kohbar*, *jevanar*, and *kaleva* are retained and explained where they first occur.

The printed scan and its OCR both contain damaged or uncertain readings. The publisher's errata are included at the end and have been consulted in reading the text. Where the page remains genuinely unresolved, the translation marks the uncertainty rather than supplying invented text.

Publication pages

Salutations to Sri Sita and Rama. Salutations to Sri Ramanandacharya. Salutations to Sri Yugalananya Sharan.

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Preface to the Fourth Edition

*Those who lovingly sing and hear the wedding of Sita and Raghubira
are ever filled with rejoicing; Rama's glory is the abode of auspiciousness.*

Goswami Sri Tulsidas Ji, revered as the sanctifying incarnation of the age of Kali, has called the wedding festival of Sri Sita and Rama supremely auspicious. Auspiciousness remains continually with those devotees who sing of that divine wedding.

Among the infinite lilas of Sri Sita and Rama, the wedding lila is exceptionally sweet and filled with rasa. The embodied form of Indian sacred culture blossoms forth in their marriage. Astonishing in the variety of its lila and the variety of its rasa, the wedding of Sri Sita and Rama is an immeasurable ocean of devotional savor.

Sri Sita, daughter of the king of Mithila, is the dwelling place of infinite beauty and sweetness. Sri Raghavendra is an ocean of the nectar of beauty and sweetness, capable of crushing the pride of innumerable Love-gods. At the wedding festival their unequalled sweetness reaches its fullest expression in the forms of bride and bridegroom. A life that has never beheld Sri Sita and Rama as bride and bridegroom has been lived in vain.

Sri Goswami Ji wrote:

*Rama is the bridegroom and Sita the bride, dear companion.
Like a raincloud and lightning are their lovely complexions; their beauty, perfect from head to
foot, steals the heart.
Adorned with wedding ornaments and wedding garments, the row of companions beholds them
and stands as though transfixed.
To have seen only this today is indeed the gain of life and birth, and the fruit of the eyes.*

In the *Kavitavali*, Sri Goswami Ji calls Lakshmi, Narayana, Gauri, Shankara, Lomasha, Bhushundi, Narada, Hanuman, and others as witnesses:

*Saraswati and Brahma, Gauri and Hara, Shesha and Ganesha have declared it;
Lomasha and Bhushundi have repeatedly added their testimony.
Having searched the fourteen worlds and examined every man and woman,
who could conceal anything from Narada, and who is so discerning as he?

They have said that only one Couple shines throughout the world.
Who has ever spoken or heard of another, even with four eyes to search?
Lakshmi, the Lord of Lakshmi, and wise Hanuman have all declared:
there is no woman like Sita and no man comparable to Rama.*

An immense literature concerning the wedding festival is available. Many compositions by accomplished saints have survived. Rasika devotees of Mithila sing numerous songs concerning the wedding, among which the songs of Sri Modalata Ji possess exceptional sweetness. The compositions of the acharyas of Avadh are also exceedingly relishable. Some had previously been published and others remained unpublished.

By the grace of Sri Sita and Rama, the necessary songs have been gathered into this volume. It is hoped that through them devotees who savor the wedding rasa will obtain a vision of the incomparable beauty of the bride and bridegroom, those stealers of the heart.

Phalguna Krishna Vijaya Ekadashi, Vikrama Samvat 2036

Swami Sri Sitaramsharan

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Complete Translation

Salutations to him who, like the chakora bird, gazes upon the moon-face of Sri Maithili.

Salutations to the revered Acharya Ramananda.

Salutations to the revered Yugalananyasharan.

Sri Maithili Vivaha Padavali

Opening Worship — Invocation

*I bow to the Guru, the Supreme Lord—who could ever recount his glory?
Ganesha, Mahesha, Sharada, Shesha, and Ramesha together grow weary trying to tell it.*

*The radiance from his toenails illumines the heart;
its darkness vanishes, and the secret loving play of Sita and her Beloved is revealed.*

*I bow to Sri Chandrakala Ali, crown jewel of all the sakhis.
Cast your gracious glance upon me and fill my heart with waves of the secret play.*

*I bow to Sri Charushila and the other companions, mines of beauty and virtue.
Compassionately dwell within my heart and awaken knowledge of rasa.*

*I bow to the venerable Maruti, whose equal as a rasika is unknown.
Turn your merciful gaze upon me and disclose the wisdom of rasa.*

*I bow to the great world-teacher, Sri Ramananda,
the divine sun risen to open the lotus-hearts of the rasikas.*

*Sri Tulsidas—great-hearted, generous, and filled with devotion—
was Valmiki incarnate, come to deliver the wayward souls of the Kali age.*

*Even Brahma would hesitate to declare that he was an incarnation of Sita's Beloved;
renowned as a world-teacher, he fashioned the exquisite Manas.*

*Again and again I bow to his lotus-feet.
Be gracious, and fill my heart with the generous love of Sita and her Beloved.*

*I bow to the venerable foremost Acharya, crown of all the rasikas;
when the field of loving devotion had grown parched, that king of rasa poured down its rain.*

*The dust of his feet is my wealth, my life, and my very breath.
Knowing me to be small and lowly, reveal to me the wisdom of rasa.*

*Sri Nabha, Sri Lal Ali, and the eminent Sri Madhuracharya;
Sri Ramahari, Rupa Sakhi, the treasure of compassion toward the humble;*

*Sri Ramcharan Hari, Rasika Ali, Sri Yugalapriya, the mine of rasa;
Sri Yugalananyasharan, the life and breath of the rasikas;*

Sri Janakivarasharan, the great and learned master;

Sri Ramavallabhasharan, and all the other great rasikas—

*I bow to the lotus-feet of every one of them, my two hands ever joined.
All of you, please show mercy, knowing me to be the least of the lowly.*

*Let the passion for the secret play increase within me day by day, and remove my ignorance.
This alone is my longing: may all of you together be gracious to me, O treasures of compassion.*

*Victory, victory to Sri Janaki! Victory to the youthful Lord of Awadh!
Victory to him in the bridegroom's attire, the crown of all rasikas!*

*Sita, Mandavi, Urmila, and Shrutakirti stand beautifully at their bridegrooms' left;
to the four lovely brides and the four lovely bridegrooms, Tulsi bows.*

Pada 1

Homage to the lotus-feet of Sri Agrasvami.

*His beloved words delight the rasikas' hearts,
awaken understanding, and brim with the lovely rasa of the rasa dance.*

*Foremost among rasikas, he upholds their doctrine,
dispelling the whole tangle of doubt about grace and worldly attachment.*

*Homage—victory, victory! In the joyous grove,
the Lover abides secretly in a bower with his Beloved.*

*Homage—victory to the name of Janaki's Beloved,
which hums through the garland of the rasikas' tongues.*

*The ways of love, fidelity, and trust, and the feet of the Darling—
says Yugalapriya—consume the darkness within the heart.*

The Glory of Sri Mithila — Pada 2

*Tirhut is supremely beloved and holy,
for there Sri Sita, daughter of Videha, was born in exquisite beauty.*

*Through her, Raghunandan—the sun that opens the lotus of Raghu's line—was sanctified;
there dwelt Yajnavalkya, Gautama, Kanada, Kaushika, Kapila, and other eminent sages;*

*Ashtavakra, Vyasa's son Shuka, and other sages of supreme knowledge and pure bearing
came to King Videha and received the unwavering essence of wisdom.*

*There were the illustrious Bodhayana, Udayana, Vachaspati, and Gangesha;
Shankara, Mandana, Gokul Dvija, the poet, and kings like Shivasimha.*

And the lovely bee Vidyapati forever hums there with poetry.

The Construction of the Wedding Pavilion

*He sent for many gifted artisans,
masters skilled in the craft of canopies.*

*Bowing to Brahma, they began their work
and fashioned pillars like golden plantain trunks.*

*Doha: Their leaves were green jewels, their fruit and flowers rubies;
beholding that wondrous design, even Brahma's mind was bewildered.*

*Every bamboo was fashioned from green gems;
so smooth and perfect were their joints that none could discern them.*

*Golden, curling serpent-vines were made upon them;
though lovely leaves adorned the vines, the joins could not be seen.*

*Ingeniously they fashioned and fastened the supporting bands,
hanging strings of pearls here and there between them.*

*From rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and turquoise,
they cut, engraved, and polished exquisite lotuses.*

*They made many-colored bees and birds;
when stirred by the breeze, they hummed and called.*

*Divine figures were carved upon the pillars,
each standing with auspicious offerings in hand.*

*Many kinds of sacred squares were laid out,
and vermilion made of jewels shone naturally beautiful.*

*Doha: Fragrant and exceedingly lovely leaves were carved from sapphire;
golden blossoms and emerald fruit gleamed upon silken cords.*

*Lovely festive door-garlands were arranged,
as though the god of love had adorned his snares.*

*Countless auspicious vessels were fashioned;
banners, pennants, cloth, and fly-whisks shone beautifully.*

*Many enchanting jeweled lamps were set out—
the wondrous canopy lies beyond description.*

*What poet could possess the wit to describe
the pavilion in which Vaidehi was to be the bride?*

*The bridegroom was Rama, ocean of beauty and virtue;
that canopy therefore became renowned throughout the three worlds.*

*The splendor of Janaka's palace was of the same order;
throughout the city, every house appeared just so.*

*Whoever beheld Tirhut at that hour
thought all fourteen worlds paltry beside it.*

*Even the wealth that graced the humblest dwelling there
astonished Indra, sovereign of the gods.*

*Doha: Lakshmi herself dwelt in that city, disguised as a noblewoman;
Saraswati and Shesha hesitate even to speak of that city's splendor.*

Auspicious Invocation of the Deities — Pada 3

*First invoke Lord Ganesha, accomplisher of auspiciousness;
O Lord, bring about the blessed union of Sri Ramalala as bridegroom and Sita as bride.*

*Bow your head at the feet of Shankara, the supreme bestower of good;
O Lord, let us behold the blessed union of Sita and Raghubara.*

*I cling to the feet of Gauri Gosain with love;
O Goddess, ever keep Sri Ramalala as my bridegroom and the young maiden as my bride.*

*I bow to Sri Dinkara, lord of the body;
O god, quickly show us the wedding of Sita and Rama.*

*With joined hands I ask this boon; bend down your head and grant it, Sri Ranganatha:
may Sita's married felicity endure for as long as the earth bears weight upon its head.*

*I petition you, O village god and village goddess—show mercy;
reveal the union of Sita and Raghubara and fill us with joy.*

*They humbly ask the ancestral deities for gladness;
the gods appear and bless them, and the Mother gathers those blessings into her veil.*

Sri Ramalala Nahchu — Sohar Metre — Pada 4

*First invoke Sharada, Ganapati, and Gauri;
sing and recite the nahchu of Ramalala.*

*Whoever sings it attains accomplishment and the supreme treasure;
the sins of ten million births depart. ||1||*

*Countless instruments resound in Dasharatha's palace;
all the heavenly realms behold it, their hearts overflowing with joy.*

*The city appears so lovely that it cannot be described;
Kausalya's delight will not fit within her heart. ||2||*

*Today the bamboo wedding pavilion is filled with jewels;
strings of pearls hang resplendent on all four sides.*

*Quickly bring a vessel filled with Ganga water;
let the young women sing auspicious songs and bathe Rama. ||3||*

*Fill the ritual square with elephant-pearls and diamonds;
bring handsome Rama and seat him there.*

*Golden pillars stand on all four sides, a throne in their midst;
light the jeweled lamps and let him sit upon that seat. ||4||*

*The fortunate women of Awadh, mistresses of their households, arrive in beauty;
smiling, the blacksmith's wife comes forward with her implement in hand.*

*The cowherd woman bears an auspicious pot of curds;
beholding her swelling youth, even the king is pleased. ||5||*

*The betel-seller, lovely in form, holds a prepared betel quid;
whoever has once seen her binds her forever within his heart.*

*The fair-bodied seamstress stands with her hands joined;
she applies exquisite saffron and scatters fragrant powder. ||6||*

*The modest cobbler's wife shyly asks for a diamond;
a radiant ring adorns her finger beautifully.*

*The flower-girl, slim-waisted and lovely-bodied,
bears a golden, jewel-studded peacock with graceful delight. ||7||*

*The slender umbrella-bearer holds a parasol in her hand;
moon-faced and auspicious-eyed, she guards everyone.*

*The barber-woman, broad-eyed, flashes her brows;
teasing the royal household with ritual abuse, she delights them all. ||8||*

*Kausalya's elder kinswoman gives her instruction:
"Do not go away—perform the nahchu while seated upon the throne."*

*Holding Rama in her lap, Kausalya sits with the blessed child;
the bridegroom Rama shines with the end of her veil above his head.*

*Quickly summon the barber-woman, a mine of every virtue;
adorn him in every way and ward off all misfortune. ||9||*

*The golden nail-cutter gleams within her hand;
beholding lovely Rama, her heart cannot contain its joy. ||10||*

*Golden earrings adorn his ears, and a nose-ring gleams upon his nose;
a necklace of elephant-pearls and a throat-jewel shine upon him.*

*Bracelets at his wrists, a tinkling girdle at his waist, and anklets ring;
the queen has given these gifts, and they make him more radiant still. ||11||*

*"Why is Ramaji dark while Lakshmana is fair?
O Queen Kausalya, did night descend within your womb?*

*Rama is Dasharatha's son—but Lakshmana seems another's;
yet Bharata and Shatrughna are brothers of Sri Raghunatha!" ||12||*

*Go today to Awadhpur, filled with delight;
fill your eyes with the sight of that abode of beauty.*

*How immensely fortunate is the barber-woman, holding the Lord's nails in her hand!
She boasts of her intimacy with Sri Raghunatha. ||13||*

*The feet that the barber-woman washes are the feet Rama lets her wash;
perfected sages yearn to obtain even the dust of those feet.*

*A wondrous garland of flowers adorns Rama's breast;
his sidelong glance is bliss itself, the very joy sought by sages. ||14||*

*As she cuts his nails, her tender emotion cannot be described;
his body is as delicate as a ruby.*

*Coloring the nails with javaka, she gently touches his soft toes;
most delicately she washes the Lord's feet. ||15||*

*Everyone offers gifts in many ways, each according to her station;
Tulsidas gives himself in sacrifice at the sight of Raghunayaka.*

*The king gives elephants, while the queens give necklaces;
they bestow jewels and treasures by the thousands. ||16||*

*Load carts full of gifts and carry them to the barber-woman's house;
delight her household, while blessings resound.*

*Then they celebrate with great festivity, all sorrow cast away;
may every person be happy and attain abundant joy. ||17||*

*The women of the inner palace shower affectionate ritual abuse;
Ramalala grows bashful when he sees his mother.*

*Everyone mingles together in a gathering of playful rasa;
the barber-woman's heart overflows as she blends the fragrances. ||18||*

*The bridegroom's mother rejoices when she sees it;
she gives gifts beyond counting, pouring them down like a rain-filled cloud.*

*Sing Ramalala's nahchu with the deepest joy;
whoever sings it attains accomplishment and the supreme treasure. ||19||*

*King Dasharatha sits resplendent upon his throne;
Tulsidas gives himself in sacrifice at the sight of Raghuraja.*

*Whoever sings, recites, and listens to this nahchu
attains prosperity, spiritual power, blessedness, and liberation. ||20||*

Haradi-bukavan — Pada 5

*Today is auspicious, delightful, and supremely pleasing to the heart;
the turmeric-anointing advances the blessed union of the Divine Couple.*

*It bathes Mithila in happiness and pours down rasa;
the turmeric-anointing reveals the feet of the Divine Couple.*

*It makes supreme love manifest and binds the wedding bond;
the turmeric-anointing awakens the Beloved Boy and Darling Girl.*

*The very sight of it releases one from the world and sends sorrow away;
the turmeric-anointing fills the heart with joy and dispels its grief.*

Raising the Tilak — Pada 6

*Today there is supreme, transcendent bliss, friend—its beauty cannot be described, O mother!
A company of Brahmins has come to raise the tilak for all four princes, O mother!*

*The courtyard is plastered with cow-dung, and ritual squares are filled with pearls, O mother;
leafy vessels brim with water, lamps are lit, and auspicious songs are sung, O mother.*

*Ganapati, Gauri, Girisha, the village deities, and Sri Rangadeva are invoked, O mother;
seeing the glorious tilak bestowed, the gods fill the sky with cries of victory, O mother.*

*Betel sweetens every mouth and kohl adorns every eye; loveliness overflows with delight, O mother.
All the joyful beholders rejoice, drinking the vision deeply through their eyes, O mother.*

Pada 7

Today the tilak is raised for Raghunandana.

*The four princes sit together, their beauty spreading all around;
in that very moment every auspicious blessing comes to pass for them.*

*Yellow sacred threads and yellow silk dhotis are placed upon all the beloved boys;
coconuts, betel, turmeric, curds, and durva grass fill the golden vessels.*

*Reciting mantra after Vedic mantra, the priests bestow them upon the moon of Raghu's line;
with tender love, Snehalata beautifully raises the auspicious tilak for Dasharatha's sons.*

Dhanavatti — Pada 8

*Mithila is auspicious today, friend; joy reigns in every home.
The Brahmins of Awadh's king have come bearing the written wedding-hour for the bridegroom.*

*The moment they behold the city's splendor, they are entranced by its array of auspicious ornaments;
Maharaja Shatananda receives them and honors them fittingly.*

*The gathered women mingle together and begin to sing auspicious songs;
turmeric, rice, and durva are taken up, while instruments resound.*

*The crown of Nimi's lineage honors them and grants abundant gifts;
says Modalata: the delighted heart cannot contain the bliss that fills it today.*

Dhanavatti — Pada 9

*Distributing rice, the barber has come from Awadh; the women of Mithila sing auspicious songs.
Clever women, lovely and discerning, ask the barber after the welfare of Awadh:*

"Tell us, barber—tell us of King Dasharatha's way of living, his manners, and his speech—"

*"What is he like—his fame and standing, his splendor, happiness, and honor?"
Hearing them, the barber was overcome with emotion and replied, "What can I, an ignorant man, say?
The fame and majesty of Ayodhya's lord resound throughout the fourteen worlds."
Sunayana and the women of Janakpur understood that house and groom to be worthy of their daughter.
Sneh Lata says: before the gods they joyfully set down the auspicious grain.*

Matkor — Pada 10

*Joy today—Janakpur is filled with joy, with joy!
Mother, today is Siya's matkor; on every side there is joy.*

*Joyous instruments are playing, and all the companions rejoice.
Mother, their bliss is boundless; lovely dancers sway in joy.*

*Uma, Rama, and Brahmani have all assembled in delight.
Mother, they sing auspicious songs whose sound gladdens the heart.*

*The gods joyfully shower flowers—everyone is filled with joy.
Mother, cries of "Victory! Victory!" ring in every direction; Srinidhi rejoices.*

Matkor — Pada 11

*The women fill their gathered veils again and again;
graceful Siya sets out to worship Kamala.*

*Adorned and arrayed in every limb,
Siya goes with her companions, absorbed in bliss.*

*Incense, lamps, garlands, sacred grass, tulsi, and flowers—
she arranges them on a tray, with unbroken rice and sandal paste.*

*They sing auspicious songs as the instruments play;
Sneh Lata rejoices inwardly over the daughter.*

Pada 12

*All the companions go together toward the lovely pond;
Janak's cherished daughter shines among them.
They carry auspicious pitchers, oil, and sprouted grain,
while ceremonial instruments sound.*

*They sing captivating songs of blessing;
hearing them, the maiden grows shy.
Priceless music of joyful welcome resounds,
and all the gods shower flowers.*

*Srinidhi carries a jewel-studded spade in his hand;
they go to dig the ritual earth.*

Pada 13

*Friend, behold Siya's lovely matkor—
everyone is overcome with bliss!*

*Through immense good fortune this hour has come;
rejoice, and sound the glad music of blessing—
flowers are raining on every side.*

*All the companions sing auspicious songs;
again and again they offer themselves to the four princesses,
while instruments thunder all around.*

*Drums, mridangas, and nafiris sound;
on every side cries of "Victory!" spread delight,
and Srinidhi dances, lost in bliss.*

Pada 14

*Today Siya goes to worship Kamala.
Uma, Rama, Kamala, and Brahmani—all have manifested from her;
that very Sita now asks Kamala for a dark and beautiful husband.*

*Shy among the women, she is lovely beyond compare, radiant with divine splendor.
What likeness could I offer in her praise? No comparison can be spoken.
Beautiful married women sing—each wondrous in form;
Sneh Lata beholds that peerless beauty, and her heart surges again and again.*

Pada 15

*The four sisters go to worship Kamala;
the married women accompanying them look lovely. [Refrain: Siya.]*

*In a golden platter are unbroken rice and sandal paste,
a garland woven of flowers,
and fresh green leaves of tulsi. [Refrain: Siya.]*

*Incense, lamps, offerings, and many kinds of fruit;
they carry abundant sweetmeats,
with dishes prepared in every variety. [Refrain: Siya.]*

*Beholding their beauty, the gods rain down flowers;
every limb thrills with delight—
blessed are the fathers of Nimi's lineage! [Refrain: Siya.]*

*One by one they sing playful wedding taunts;
the noble women brim with joy,
taking each person's name in turn—
delight, beauty, and the occasion all shine together. [Refrain: Siya.]*

Pada 16

*"Where does the yellow earth come from, and where the spade?
From whose household do seven married women go to dig the earth?"*

*"The yellow earth belongs to Kamala, and the spade is made of gold;
seven married women of Mithila go to dig the earth."*

"Father, what reward will you give for digging the earth?"

*"Daughter, I shall give you a basket filled with gold;
and I shall give the honored groom a horse to ride."*

Pada 17

*Gracious Queen Sunayana, the foremost of fortunate married women,
summoned all her daughters.
She arranged the four daughters' garments and ornaments,
and sent them forth to worship Kamala.*

*All their companions were filled with supreme bliss,
singing sweetly in the fifth mode.
Uma, Rama, and Brahmani gathered in many forms;
joining Siya's companions, they offered themselves to her.*

*The instruments sounded with surpassing sweetness;
their beauty cannot be described.
At every step their lotus feet touched the path,
revealing exquisite grace.*

*Drawing near, they bowed their heads in every prescribed way
and called to the goddess with devotion.
Sri Kamala at once appeared and bestowed her blessing;
cries of "Victory! Victory!" filled the air.*

*The four princesses worshiped her according to the rite
and obtained the husbands their hearts desired.
Taking earth from the bank, all bowed their heads and departed,
after the sprouted grain and other offerings had been distributed.*

*Seeing this mystery, even the delighted heavenly women longed for it.
Their joy could not be contained;
they offered mind, understanding, and heart in devotion.*

Pada 18

*Today Vaidehi duly performs her worship on Kamala's bank;
the gathered women sing auspiciously—who could tell its full extent?
Her eyes lowered from modesty before the world, her face is grave,
while Raghubara reigns in the temple of her heart and every limb thrills.*

*He upon whose lotus feet water, earth, sky, and wind all depend—
that is the one Siya asks of Kamala, humbly pleading for such a destiny.
Again and again she prays to Kamala, "Your glory endures through all four ages."
Sneh Lata says: "Cast your gracious ray; grant that Raghubir may be mine."*

Gari — Pada 19

*“Queen Kausalya, what wedding taunts shall we sing to you?
The one whom even Rama calls ‘Hari’—you familiarly call him ‘Hariya’!*

*“Your son and our daughter are both shameless lovers;
neither can remain without the other—such is their attachment!*

*“You two parents are fair, so how did your son come out dark?
Looking at you, one would think some curious exchange had taken place!*

*“You took charms and spells from your own son-in-law
and thereby made your four sons shine.
Rishyasringa completed the sacrifice—the whole world knows the tale!*

*“The women’s mothers sing, swelling over and over with delight:
blessed, blessed is your fortune, Kausalya—and blessed is my fair, lovely girl!”*

Gari — Pada 20

*“If Queen Kausalya came here—if Queen Kaikeyi came here—
what fulfillment birth itself would gain if Queen Sumitra came here!*

*“They would lodge within Janak’s palace,
and we would spread soft beds for them;
we would arrange elegant bolsters and pillows
and fill the rooms with many fragrances.*

*“We would prepare delicious foods in every flavor
and set out platters and bowls.*

*“Kamala would give them water for rinsing
and dry their limbs with the end of her veil.
Lovingly she would place betel in their mouths
and dress them in fine garments.*

*“Wrapped in bright shawls, they would lie down,
revealing the sweetness of their love;
their lotus hands would be gently pressed,
filling them with sweet and joyful ease.”*

Applying Turmeric — Pada 21

*At an auspicious hour, let everyone sing together:
for the blessed rite, turmeric is applied to (so-and-so Baba).*

*Cries of “Victory! Victory!” ring in every direction and his good fame resounds;
for the blessed rite, turmeric is applied to (so-and-so Baba).*

*The instruments thunder and delight increases;
for the blessed rite, turmeric is applied to Sri (so-and-so Baba).*

*Happiness arises everywhere, and the gods rain flowers;
for the blessed rite, turmeric is applied to Sri (so-and-so Baba).*

*The blessed turmeric is mixed—auspicious, auspicious!
By destiny’s decree this happiness has been received, steeped in auspicious color.
As it is smeared on, he is overwhelmed with love and gains the fruit of life;
for the blessed rite, turmeric is applied to Sri Sneh Baba.*

Applying Ubtan — Pada 22

*Great joy today in Mithila—Mother, its beauty cannot be described!
The married women come together in affection
to rub ubtan upon the limbs of all four brides.
The courtyard is plastered with cow dung,
and an ornate low seat is prepared.
Having invoked Ganapati and Gauri according to the rite,
they lovingly anoint all four.*

*A golden platter holds scented oil and fragrant ubtan;
their perfume spreads through all ten directions.
Five auspicious companions rub ubtan on their limbs,
singing sweetly in the fifth mode.*

*At the touch upon their bodies, transcendent happiness arises—
joy too vast for the heart to hold.
Seeing this mystery, heavenly women yearn for it
and shower down flowers in delight.*

*They cleanse the paste from their limbs, line their eyes with kohl,
and offer them fragrant betel.
Absorbed in delight, they gaze without blinking upon that beauty,
forgetting mind, understanding, and heart.*

Warding the Evil Eye from Sri Kishori — Pada 23

*The companions perform the chumavan for dusky Siya,
smiling softly all the while.*

*With milk and rice they circle every auspicious limb and her head,
turning away the evil eye.
Is she Sati, Sachi, Saraswati, Vishnu's beloved,
or Rama herself—or Rati?*

*The palanquin sways and the headdress upon her head
flashes with divine brilliance.
Friend, Moda's heart leaps
whenever she rises and presses close.*

Pada 24

*"O woman of Mithila, dark Shyam will take you as his bride.
Friend, I dreamed this very delight: he will come today with the sage.*

*"He will break the bow, place the victory-garland upon his breast,
and circle the sacred fire with you.
Do not worry now, Janak's cherished daughter—
you will obtain a bridegroom of Raghu's line.*

*"Each day he will give you joy
amid the rasa-play and pleasures of the delight-grove.
Whenever you sit offended in the palace,
he will fold his hands and coax you.*

*"He will braid your hair and weave flowers into it,
and paint red javak upon your feet.
Taking you in his lap, he will swell with delight
and lovingly feed you betel.*

*"Night and day he will be steeped in your love;
he will not remain without you even for a moment."
Ramsakhe says: the Lord, crazed by her beauty,
will remain gazing upon her face.*

Arrival of the Wedding Procession

*His limbs are dark and lustrous like a peacock's throat;
his splendid garments put lightning to shame.
He wears the many ornaments of a bridegroom;
every auspicious adornment is beautiful upon him.*

*His lovely face is like the stainless autumn moon;
his fresh lotus eyes make lotuses themselves ashamed.
None can describe all that unearthly beauty;
the heart silently savors it.*

*His charming brothers shine beside him,
making their spirited horses dance as they go.
The princes display their splendid steeds,
while heralds proclaim the glory of their lineage.*

*The horse upon which Rama rides
makes even Garuda blush to behold its gait.
Its beauty in every respect is beyond description—
it seems that Love himself has assumed a horse's form.*

Chhand

*As though Love had taken the form of a horse, it shines exceedingly for Rama;
its age, strength, beauty, virtues, and gait enchant every world.
Its gold-worked saddle glitters, set with radiant pearls, gems, and rubies;
gods, humans, and sages are transfixed by its tinkling ornaments, crest, and lovely reins.*

Doha

*The Lord's mind seems wholly absorbed in the horse, and the horse moves in accord with his
thought;
it is as though a cloud adorned with lightning and stars were making a splendid peacock dance.*

*Even Saraswati could not fully describe
the noble horse on which Rama rides.*

Pada 25

*The wedding procession has set out from the city of Ayodhya—how lovely it appears!
A great commotion has arisen in Janak's city. [Refrain: how lovely.]*

*All the gods have gathered and joined the procession—how lovely it appears!
The instruments thunder and resound. [Refrain: how lovely.]*

*Hearing the instruments, my heart leaps—how lovely it appears!
Their illumination makes the palace shine. [Refrain: how lovely.]*

*All the friends and companions go forth for the parichhan—how lovely it appears!
They are dressed in rippling silk garments. [Refrain: how lovely.]*

*Rasikajan says: beholding the bridegroom's beautiful form—how lovely it appears!—
my heart's desire has borne fruit. [Refrain: how lovely.]*

Parichhan

Chhand

*Both royal parties rejoice exceedingly, and kettledrums thunder on every side;
the delighted gods shower flowers, crying, "Victory, victory to the jewel of Raghu's line!"
Knowing that the procession is arriving in this manner, countless instruments sound;
the queen summons the married women to prepare every auspicious article for the parichhan.*

Doha

*Having arranged every auspicious thing by the prescribed rite,
the noble women, walking like elephants, joyfully set out to perform the parichhan.*

*Moon-faced and doe-eyed, each of them possesses a beauty
that dispels the proud intoxication of Rati herself.
They wear splendid garments of many colors,
and every body is adorned with every ornament.*

*Every limb is made wholly auspicious;
their sweet singing shames the cuckoo.
Bracelets, girdles, and anklets ring,
and the elephant of Love blushes to see their gait.*

*Instruments of many kinds resound;
sky and city are filled with auspiciousness.
Sachi, Sarada, Rama, and Bhavani—
the pure and innately wise women of the gods—*

*assume the excellent guise of mortal women
and mingle with the ladies of the royal household.
They sing beautiful, auspicious words;
all are so overcome with joy that no one recognizes them.*

Chhand

*Who could know which woman, borne along by bliss, has come to perform parichhan for the Supreme Brahman?
Sweet songs and melodious drums resound; gods shower flowers, and the sight is glorious.
Beholding the bridegroom, the very root of bliss, every heart is filled with joy;
lotus eyes overflow with love, and rows of thrilled hairs cover every body.*

Doha

*The happiness that arose in Sita's mother's heart when she saw Rama dressed as a bridegroom—
not even countless Saraswatis and Sheshas could describe it in a hundred aeons.*

*Knowing the hour to be auspicious, the queen restrains the tears in her eyes
and performs the parichhan with a joyful heart.*

Pada 26

*Mother, all four handsome bridegrooms are the sons of King Dasharatha!
They have brought four perfect matches for us—may Sri Gauri and Shankar protect them.*

*Crimson turbans grace their heads, studded with sparkling diamonds;
saffron marks shine high upon their brows.
Their extraordinary eyes, lined with kohl and finely traced,
fill every beholder with delight.*

*Jeweled earrings curve back against their cheeks,
and the pendant ornaments work their wonder.
However deeply one drinks in the sight, one is never satisfied;
smiling, they veil their faces with handkerchiefs.*

*Fragrant aloe spreads over their limbs; beauty reigns from head to foot;
jeweled garlands encircle their necks.
Preserve King Videha's honor—
may these bridegrooms remain in Mithila forever!*

*Whether she kindles love, recites a salt-charm, or weaves a web of spells—
otherwise, says Mod, separation will come: the sickness of longing will set life ablaze.*

Pada 27

*Raghunandan is coming—behold him, sisters!
You with the evil eye, restrain your gaze.
You who work enchantment, restrain your magic;
you who cast spells, restrain your spell.*

*Behold the jewel-studded wedding crown upon his brow, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold the streak of saffron, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold the kohl in his eyes, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold those captivating curls, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold his swaying earrings, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold the lovely jewel upon his nose, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold the dark and fair pair, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.
Behold Mod's thief of hearts, sisters—guard your gaze; guard your magic; guard your spell.*

Pada 28

*Sita's beloved is a second god of love, dear friend;
beneath the bridegroom's attire lies the full array of love, dear friend.
Kama has one bow and shoots five arrows, dear friend;
every limb of this groom is a divine weapon, dear friend.
Kama must run about upon his own two feet, dear friend;
this one rides a spirited, prancing steed, dear friend.
His arched brows and brow-mark are poised for battle, dear friend;
upon the bow, a well-honed arrow is set, dear friend.
His curving eyes are wine-red and brimming with rapture, dear friend;
his sidelong glances are spears and daggers, dear friend.*

*His earrings flash at his ears like shields, dear friend;
his spreading curls form a net in which to snare us, dear friend.
His lovely lips glow like pomegranate, dear friend;
between them his teeth flash sharp as a sword, dear friend.
Let someone flee, or hide herself in darkness, dear friend—
the radiance of his nose-pearl floods even that place with light, dear friend.
He comes slaughtering men and women alike, dear friend;
the mighty warrior neither pauses nor retreats, dear friend.
Let every tenderhearted soul beware, dear friend—
yet our darling bride is mightier even than he, dear friend.*

Pada 29

*The bridegroom has reached the doorway—look, look, fair women!
Mounted upon his horse, the bridegroom has come to the door, while the music thunders.
Herd upon herd of caparisoned elephants arrives, with paired carriages, stallions, and mares.
The bearers come grunting “hum, hum,” carrying brocaded, rattling litters.
With all the lights, the night appears as bright as midday; rockets burst and the earth trembles.
Sita's mother comes again and again, absorbed in love, having prepared the articles for parichhan.
The bridegroom smiles behind his handkerchief; joy wells up as he casts a glance toward Mod.*

Parichhan — Pada 30

*The honored guest has reached the threshold—come, let us perform parichhan!
Listen, listen, auspicious married women: you who adore the divine couple, companions and attendants, thirsty for the Beloved's love—come, all together, and receive the fruit of your eyes.
Steady the ritual basket; take turmeric and paired blades of durva grass, curds and fragrant offerings; adorn your necks with yellow—come, sweet-throated women, and sing the songs of blessing.
Uma, Rama, Bharati, and Sachi rejoice within; yearning for the sight, they assume beautiful forms. Come, mingle together, sing, and offer yourselves again and again.*

*Two are dark and two are fair; all four are thieves of hearts, crowns of the world. How splendidly the wedding crowns shine upon their heads—look well in every direction!
Their mother-in-law performs parichhan. What a surge of delight! The hair upon her body stands erect; she has neither sense nor awareness, and Mod, steeped in joy, offers himself in love.*

Auspicious Song — Pada 31

*Auspiciousness today in Janakpur—auspicious, auspicious indeed!
The stretched canopy is auspicious; the resonance of song is auspicious.
Auspicious instruments sound; the whole city is filled with auspiciousness.
Bearing auspicious articles, everyone gathers and arranges them auspiciously.
The learned Brahmins recite auspicious mantras.
Auspiciousness itself assumes a body and comes rushing forth, as though the goddess Mangala rejoiced.
The lovely bride and all four bridegrooms are auspicious.
This wedding, this sacred union of Mod's beloved, is auspicious.*

Pada 32

*Today is the blessed hour of Sita's wedding, dear friend; in every home auspicious songs and instruments thunder.
The wedding procession has arrived, arrayed upon many kinds of conveyances; at its head is the crown-jewel of the Raghu line.
Friend cannot hear the words of friend amid the boundless tumult of welcome.
Beholding the gods shower down countless blossoms, all raise cries of "Victory! Victory!"
Mod sings in exultation, absorbed in love; overwhelmed by the beauty, the women repeatedly break blades of grass to ward off the evil eye.*

Pada 33

*Today, mother, every home in Janakpur is filled with blessing, abundant joy, and festivity.
With a splendidly arrayed wedding procession, the lord of Ayodhya has come for the wedding.
Bustle fills market and road; every heart swells with eager delight.
Queen Sunaina's daughter has brought a cooling joy that has made everyone happy.
As the four princes are, so are the four brides, each assuming a beauty to match her lord.
One can tell that clever Providence fashioned them only after careful thought.
Through manifest good fortune, we have played in the lap of the lord of Mithila.
Seated in the kohbar, we shall savor tender delight, radiant joy, and loving play.*

Svasti Recitation

Om. May glorious Indra grant us well-being; may Pusha, knower of the universe, grant us well-being. May Tarkshya of the unbroken wheel grant us well-being; may Brihaspati bestow well-being upon us. (1)

You are Vishnu's forehead; you stand at the corners of Vishnu's mouth. You are Vishnu's cord; you are Vishnu's steadfast point. You belong to Vishnu; for Vishnu I take you. (2)

Om. Peace in the heavens; peace in the mid-region; peace upon the earth. Peace in the waters; peace in the healing plants; peace in the trees. Peace among all the gods; peace in Brahman; peace in all things; peace alone; peace upon peace. May that peace come to me. (3)

O gods, may we hear with our ears what is auspicious; O worshipful ones, may we see with our eyes what is auspicious. With firm limbs and bodies praising you, may we live out the span of life ordained by the gods. (4)

Sankalpa

Om—Vishnu, Vishnu, Vishnu! By the command of Vishnu, the blessed Lord and Supreme Person, in this present time: today, in the second half of Brahma's life;

in the age of the White Boar, in the Manvantara of Vaivasvata, in the twenty-eighth Kali Yuga, in the first quarter of Kali; upon Jambudvipa, in Bharatavarsha, in the land of Bharata, within a region of Aryavarta; in such-and-such country, at such-and-such sacred place; in the Vikrama year numbered such-and-such, in the year bearing such-and-such name, in such-and-such solstice, season, month, fortnight, lunar date, weekday, and constellation—for the unobstructed and complete celebration of the festival of Sri Sita and Rama's wedding, I shall perform the worship of Ganesha and Ambika, the worship of the sixteen Mothers, and the ancestral rite.

Worship of the Mothers — Pada 34

*The skillful priest Shatananda recites the mantras.
Queen Sunaina worships the Mothers in supreme happiness.
She has cow dung brought from the cowherds' quarter and the ritual square prepared.
First she worships Lord Ganesha and establishes the sacred vessel.
The queen worships the five deities and propitiates the protectress.
She worships her own lineage-goddess and entreats her again and again.
The gathered women sing blessings and awaken love.
Snehalata, too, sings of this worship for all to hear.*

Ghurchhak — Pada 35

*Carrying the vessel for ghurchhak, the sweet-natured married women set out in charming fashion, adorned with all sixteen embellishments.
Yellow saris clothe their golden bodies; their parted hair gleams with a rich red line of vermillion.
They step in rhythm with the auspicious instruments; their melody and song are beyond compare.
Offering blessings and surging with joy, they come to behold the chief of Raghu's line.*

Filling the ritual basket, they present the arati, then set off again, singing resounding cries of victory.

Pada 36

*The young beauties stand and sing the lovely ghurchhak, golden vessels borne upon their heads.
Glad music of celebration sounds at the royal lodging, where Dasharatha sits with his sons.
Hearing that the women have come to welcome the bridegroom, the lord of Ayodhya places seven
jewels in their vessel.
Then sage Vasishtha gives his instruction: "Go now, and let the beloved bride receive her lord."
Hearing the guru's tender and blessed words, Raghunath sets out with all four brothers.*

The Bridegroom's Entrance from the Royal Lodging — Pada 37

*Making his horse prance, the dark-hued guest approaches—look, my friend, what wondrous
splendor crowns his wedding plume!
High upon his broad brow, curling locks hang down; look, my friend, at those kohl-darkened
eyes.
Upon his smooth cheeks the earrings sport and sparkle; look, my friend, at those uniquely
crimson lips.
Seeing the buoyant nose-ring leap and sway, my heart swells; look, my friend—his smile leaves
me utterly undone.
Mod can no longer remain among his companions, even for a day or an instant; look, my
friend—let worldly shame be cast aside like ash!*

Pada 38

*Look, look, look, friend—the dark-hued guest!
The moment I behold him, friend, my heart is carried away.*

*Some jealous woman of Mithila may cast an evil spell upon him;
therefore, companion, quickly place a warding mark against the evil eye.
His proud horse pirouettes and prances;
its saddle and ornaments are studded with jewels.
The handsome rider fondles it and draws the reins;
it is as though bands of lightning danced upon a divine raincloud.
Three lines adorn his broad forehead,
as though declaring that none like him exists in all the three worlds.
His brows are bows, friend, and his eyes are keen arrows;
the deer of the mind comes of itself and is slain.
Round curls sway upon his rounded cheeks,
as though whispering, "Whose heart shall we steal this instant?"
Drunk upon his smile, the innocent nose-ring sways;
his priceless voice makes every limb thrill.
The carefree, enraptured groom bends near and offers counsel:
"Come, come, take refuge in him if you desire your welfare."
Serving Janaka's good, he extends his lotus hand.
Dwelling and dwelling in our eyes, the dark one has become their very color.
Blessed, blessed is my Kishori, for whose sake the bridegroom
has come of his own accord and become a guest of Mithila.
Age after age, friends, may bride and bridegroom live!
Mod sings blessings; flowers rain from the sky.*

Pada 39

*From the city of Ayodhya the beautiful bridegroom has come to Janakpur.
Beholding his beauty, which captivates even Madana, I have drawn it deep within my heart.
Peerless is the wedding crown upon his head, his ornaments, and his yellow garment.
His curls hang loose, his brows are a bow, and his lotus eyes are arrows.
Women come bearing golden platters, fully prepared to perform parichhan.
Queen Sunaina circles the arati, slowly casting her loving enchantment over him.
Ascetics strive and strive, yet Hari never comes under their control;
but Harinath says that a loving devotee brings him wholly under love's command.*

Pada 40

*Look—the sons of Dasharatha approach as bridegrooms,
splendid among their playful, charming companions.
Their mounts advance in magnificent array;
the elephants come on with a soft and stately tread.
Maces, standards, parasols, fly-whisks, fans, and other emblems are carried in hand,
while many bards and panegyrists sing their noble fame.
Blessed indeed is the fortune of every resident of Mithila:
beholding them, each offers body, mind, and wealth again and again.
This alone is Madhupanjali's longing—to go and behold Sri Sita;
this alone is the happiness that she cherishes.*

*The fivefold instruments resounded with auspicious song; cloth runners of many kinds were
spread upon the path.
After performing arati, they offered him the welcoming gift; then Rama proceeded to the
wedding pavilion.*

Procession to the Wedding Pavilion — Pada 41

*“Get down right here, dear boy, and walk to Lali's courtyard—
from this point onward, go on foot; walk to Lali's courtyard!
When you came from Ayodhya to Mithila, where was that palanquin then?
Do not try to trick us—we are clever women. Walk to Lali's courtyard!
All the people of your wedding party who have come riding
are here; now come down and walk to Lali's courtyard!
Everyone else has come on foot—what cause is there for shame?
All those equal to you have already gone ahead. Walk to Lali's courtyard!”
Hearing the women's affectionate teasing, the dear groom left his palanquin and stepped down;
at that moment all began to rejoice: “He will walk to Lali's courtyard!”*

Before Proceeding Further — Pada 42

*“Listen for a moment to one request of mine;
only after that should you set your foot forward.
This place is famous for one custom:
you must tell us the names of your mother and sister.
A mother is a hundred times greater than a father—
consider it yourself within your heart.
Unless the women know your mother's name,
how can they weave it into their wedding song?”
Mod says: hearing this, Sita smiles softly in her sweet voice and casts a sidelong, playful glance.*

Pada 43

His sandals are fashioned of gold and silver, their fastenings set with gems—the bridegroom Rama wears them as he walks.

Kohl beautifies his eyes, betel reddens his mouth, and curling locks swing about him. Mother is captivated—mother offers herself up—at the sight of his lovely form.

His lotus eyes are darkened with kohl—mother is captivated, mother offers herself up, seeing his sidelong glance.

His wondrous lips are crimson—mother is captivated, mother offers herself up, seeing his smile.

His pearl shines with radiant light—mother is captivated, mother offers herself up, seeing his dancing nose-ring.

A necklace and close-fitting coat grace his throat; he stands with a bow in his hand—the carefree king, the enraptured king, the young lord of Ayodhya.

He stands with a handkerchief in his hand, wiping his face and musing to himself—the mischievous bridegroom.

His feet are reddened with mahavar, and above them falls his yellow dhoti. A companion stands holding the ritual vessel—mother is sold, utterly sold, at the thought that he will return to Ayodhya.

Entrance Within — Pada 44

Walk slowly, slowly, dear boy, into Lali's courtyard.

Do not mistake this courtyard for Ayodhya and rush through it as swiftly as your heart desires.

Golden trees rise above emerald garden beds; flowerpots shine with a diamond-like splendor.

Jasmine vines, white jasmine, and chrysanthemums bloom here in hundreds of thousands of varieties.

Spring dwells forever in Mithila, through all thirty days and all twelve months.

In the center of the palace gleams a jeweled pavilion, beyond comparison in all the three worlds.

Seeing it, Snehalata praises its beauty—yet this is merely the adornment of the courtyard.

Pada 45

*Raghubar, walk slowly, slowly through Lali's lanes;
behold how the lovely women bloom like night-lotuses.*

*These eyes are chakora birds thirsting for the moon of his face;
let them drink deeply of that beauty—why hide yourself, O trickster?*

*These keen eyes have cast away all sense and reason;
what greater reward could they receive than the sight of darling Sita?*

*Smiling softly, the wise and loving women gaze upon them;
overcome with joy, they offer body and mind again and again.*

Pada 46

*Come, come today, bridegroom, into our courtyard;
all the wedding rites will be performed for you here.*

*Why do you walk that way, bridegroom, when going to your mother-in-law's house?
Everyone will laugh when they see your gait.*

*Walk gently, gently, bridegroom—do not take such enormous strides;
your darling sister-in-law will seize you by the nose!*

*One after another, all the sakhis pour ritual abuse upon you:
“Did no one teach you how to walk, bridegroom? Your sisters are shameless!”*

*The four bridegrooms laugh at their sisters-in-law's teasing;
Kanakalata is utterly enchanted with the bridegroom.*

Pada 47

*O connoisseur of Raghu's line, drenched in rasa,
come to the pavilion overflowing with the essence of joy.*

*He plants each foot with the grandeur of a lordly elephant,
while the mother who bore him takes his hand.*

*Hearing the women's words, the beloved strides ahead,
moving as though he were a master acrobat.*

*All four princes stand still and steadfast;
they appear as though carved from mighty mountains.*

*Defeated by delight, they pause and smile as they go;
the joyful women place handkerchiefs in their hands.*

Pada 48

*Come, come, come, friend—fill your eyes with the dark bridegroom!
A handkerchief rests upon his shoulder; sandal paste shines upon his broad brow.*

*A jeweled crown rests upon his head, and curling locks cluster around it.
How lovely and handsome a match he is for the maiden—a pairing wondrously fashioned by
Providence!*

*Blessed is the daughter who has found such a son-in-law; blessed, blessed is Mithila,
and blessed is King Janaka.*

*Gazing upon him, Snehalata sings in rapture:
“Today my life has become blessed.”*

The Inner Parichhan

*In this manner Rama came into the pavilion;
they offered him arghya and seated him upon a throne.*

*Chhand: Seating the bridegroom, they wave the lamp before him and rejoice as they gaze;
the women offer abundant jewels, garments, and ornaments while singing auspicious songs.*

*Brahma and the other great gods assume the guise of Brahmins and behold the celebration;
gazing upon the beauty of the sun that opens the lotus of Raghu's line, they count their lives
fulfilled.*

Pada 49

*O Queen, Ramaji has come as a guest—show him fitting honor.
Receive him reverently and with full ceremony, and seat him upon a throne of love.*

*Wash his feet with pure water and wipe them with the end of your veil;
gaze longingly upon his face, then circle mustard seed and salt to ward off the evil eye.*

*Send for sweet fruits and nuts and offer them with the deepest affection;
then give him pure water perfumed with lotus and the sweetest delicacies.*

*Adorn him exquisitely from head to foot and apply kohl to his eyes;
fill his brow with an ample tilak and let him savor delightful betel.*

*Regard him as your own son and perform his parichhan with love;
thrilled with joy and playful delight, grant him your blessing.*

Pada 50

Joy, joy—today is blessed!

The heart's desire has been fulfilled today.

*Behold Raghunandana, the splendid bridegroom;
he has become the source of happiness for everyone.*

*He is the life-breath of the rasika devotees,
a treasury of beauty, gentleness, and virtue.*

*Bring lovely durva grass and unbroken rice;
clear your sight and gaze upon him well.*

*Give milk, saffron, and a garland, dear one;
delight in his lovely locks, clustered like a garland of bees.*

*Drape the blue ceremonial shawl upon him;
circle a cow and salt around him as offerings.*

*Apply collyrium and adorn his brows;
take his glance and keep it within your heart.*

*Prepare a delicious feast,
and have nectar-like dishes made within.*

*Warm his cheeks with the ritual stone;
beholding the beloved, let both eyes rejoice.*

*Blessed is Sita, abode of joy;
blessed is this village of Mithila.*

*By her grace we remain at his left,
and have attained dark-hued Ghanshyama.*

*Bring your sisters and companions with you;
call all four noble bridegrooms.*

*Drunk with delight, they go together;
every limb thrills with joy.*

Pada 51

*At the very sight of the charming bridegroom Raghunandana,
everyone's heart was pierced through.*

*A flower-colored turban and crown shine upon his head;
kohl in his eyes and betel upon his lips gleam delightfully.*

*Curling locks fall about his head;
the heart is captivated by his yellow scarf.*

A beautiful yellow garment shines at his waist;

red dye adorns his feet, set with pearls.

*Says Dvij Duniya Mani: whoever beholds this beauty
becomes ensnared in the bonds of love.*

Pada 52

The four princes are excellent bridegrooms, friend—look upon their beauty!

*See the lovely jeweled crowns upon their heads,
with shimmering fringes across their brows—ward off the evil eye, and look!*

*Their brows are broad and marked with saffron, curds, and sacred rice;
their lotus eyes are darkened with kohl—taste the nectar of their glances!*

*Graceful cheeks and lovely earrings,
and curls tossing in delight—see them and let your heart rejoice!*

*This beauty, friend, is the true fruit of the eyes;
their name is the essence of all—chant it and test its sweetness upon your tongue.*

*By Sita's grace may you receive this joy;
Raghubara, support of life—keep him now within your eyes.*

Circumambulation of the Pavilion — Pada 53

*Receive joy, O givers of joy—the very essence of happiness has arrived;
into Mithilesha's courtyard the four Lords have come.*

*Lakshminidhi respectfully places a sheet around the necks of all four;
as they complete the seven circuits, radiance spreads everywhere.*

*He whose manifestation is all this, who is the essence of every essence,
has come here, humbly yielding to the power of love.*

Pada 54

*Hold the bridegroom's sheet, friend, and lead him around the sacred altar.
Lest the evil eye fall upon the bridegroom, friend, perform a protective charm.*

*Lest the bridegroom stumble, friend, lead him gently;
lest delusion overpower the beloved boy, fasten a charm about his throat.*

*Says Anandlata: hold the bridegroom's sheet, friend,
and lead him around the sacred altar.*

Inspection of the Bride — Pada 55

*How could I taunt the elder brother of such a bridegroom?
He has brought so many splendid garments and ornaments!*

*A forehead pendant, a flower ornament upon the head, and a lovely pearl-set nose-ring;
earrings, a floral ear-jewel, and a charming gem upon the nose.*

*A pea-shaped necklace and a radiant six-stranded chain;
a jeweled girdle, a seven-stranded necklace, a hansuli, and a thousand other ornaments.*

*Golden earrings shine with singular beauty;
finger-rings cast their own distinct radiance.*

*Armlets flash like lightning, exquisitely fashioned;
a tinkling girdle closely clasps her lovely waist.*

*Bracelets, anklets, and delicate foot-ornaments adorn her;
look at the sari with its border worked in pearls.*

*A golden vermilion box holds bright red sindur;
says Rama: all the men and women rejoice to see it.*

Inspection of the Bride by the Bridegroom's Elder Brother — Pada 56

*Her lotus hand has been placed in yours—this is the custom of our village;
recognize her, dear sir, recognize your own beloved, and do not forget.*

*This is one of our local customs—remember it well;
dear sir, do not regard her as a woman belonging to another.*

*The four maidens' restless eyes make the heart waver;
this examination is a genuine test, performed by the women of the royal house.*

*Although the four lovely princes have been accepted as their lords,
when tested by the sakhis, even these beloved men concede defeat.*

*Laughing, Snehalata says, "You will be defeated every time;
no one can fathom the customs of Mithila."*

The Bride's Arrival at the Pavilion

*Seeing the proper moment, Vasishtha called;
hearing him, Shatananda respectfully came.*

*"Go swiftly now and bring the maiden."
Glad to receive the command, they departed.*

*The queens adorned Sita and formed her bridal company;
rejoicing, they escorted her into the pavilion.*

*Chhand: The sakhis reverently brought Sita, the auspicious lady, beautifully adorned;
all the lovely women were dressed afresh and walked like intoxicated elephants.*

*Hearing their melodious singing, sages abandon meditation and the cuckoo grows ashamed;
toe-bells, anklets, and jeweled bangles resound in rhythm with their steps.*

*Doha: Sita, moon among women and delight of her house, shines beautifully;
amid the host of maidens she appears like loveliness embodied in a graceful woman.*

*The beauty of dear Sita cannot be described;
a small mind confronts immeasurable loveliness.*

*Thus Sita arrived within the pavilion,
while the joyful sages recited benedictions of peace.*

Pada 57

*The radiance of the beloved moon of bliss spreads on every side;
waves rise in the ocean of love within the courtyard.*

*Gods and celestial women behold it and become utterly bewildered;
all the people of Mithila are submerged in joy.*

*Though the prince of Awadh is himself as lovely as the god of love,
he gazes upon the young maiden's beauty like a chakora upon the moon.*

*Snehalata joins both hands and pleads:
"O eager Beloved, keep my petition within your heart."*

*At that moment the two family gurus
set forth all the prescribed rites.*

*Then, after grain had been placed, eight Brahmins were to pronounce blessings of well-being.
Having recited the prescribed formulas beginning with Sadasaspati three times, and having
taken the ritual grass, sacred rice, and other materials, they were to tie a protective bracelet at
the base of the bridegroom's right hand and at the middle of the bride's left hand.*

Purusha Sukta

*The Cosmic Person has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet.
Enveloping the earth on every side, he extends beyond it by ten fingers' breadth. ||1||*

*The Cosmic Person alone is all this—whatever has been and whatever is yet to be.
He is the Lord of immortality, and also of that which grows through food. ||2||*

*Such is his greatness, yet the Cosmic Person is greater still.
All beings are one quarter of him; three quarters are immortal in heaven. ||3||*

*Three quarters of the Cosmic Person rose upward;
one quarter came to be here again.
From there he spread in every direction,
into all that eats and all that does not eat. ||4||*

*From him Viraj was born, and from Viraj the Cosmic Person arose.
Once born, he extended beyond the earth, behind it and before it. ||5||*

*From that sacrifice in which everything was offered,
curds mixed with clarified butter were gathered.
From it he formed the animals of the air,
the forest, and the village. ||6||*

*From that all-offering sacrifice were born the Rig and Sama hymns;
from it were born the metres, and from it the Yajur Veda. ||7||*

*From it horses were born, and all creatures with two rows of teeth;
from it cattle were born, and from it goats and sheep. ||8||*

*Upon the sacred grass they consecrated as their offering
the Cosmic Person who had been born at the beginning;
with him the gods, the heavenly beings, and the sages performed the sacrifice. ||9||*

*When they divided the Cosmic Person, into how many portions did they arrange him?
What became his mouth? What were his arms? What were his thighs and feet called? ||10||*

*The Brahmin was his mouth; the warrior was made his arms;
the commoner was his thighs, and from his feet the servant was born. ||11||*

*The moon was born from his mind, and the sun was born from his eye;
Indra and Agni arose from his mouth, and Vayu from his breath. ||12||*

*From his navel came the middle realm; from his head, heaven was formed;
from his feet came the earth and from his ears the directions—thus they fashioned the worlds.
||13||*

*When the gods spread the sacrifice with the Cosmic Person as the offering,
spring became its clarified butter, summer its fuel, and autumn its oblation. ||14||*

*Seven were its enclosing sticks and thrice seven its kindling pieces,
when the gods, performing the sacrifice, bound the Cosmic Person as the sacrificial victim. ||15||*

*Through sacrifice the gods worshiped sacrifice;
those were the earliest sacred ordinances.
Those mighty ones attained the heights of heaven,
where the ancient heavenly beings and gods abide. ||16||*

Pada 58

*“Why did you enter the palace after being told so much?
Ask the four beloved boys!*

*Friend, see how tightly they have been bound—
how firmly the four beloved ones have been tied!*

*In Mithila the women displayed such astonishing cleverness:
the instant the boys entered, the boastful maidens bound all four.*

*Those before whom all fourteen worlds stand bound—
see how great is the natural power of the women of Mithila!*

*Once they had tied them, they brought a mortar and pestle:
“Count eight blows and pound carefully—today we shall have you husk the rice!”*

*Snehalata asks, “Why did you steal our hearts?
Beloved, now behold the fruit of heart-theft!”*

Pada 59

*Today the heart-thief has been recognized;
he has made everyone lose both knowledge and pride.*

*A jeweled peacock crowns the heart-thief’s head,
spreading waves of beauty everywhere.*

*The sharp corners of the heart-thief’s keen eyes
have pierced straight through the heart.*

*The heart-thief’s red, red lips
have bewildered the mind-enchanter himself.*

*Binding each of his beautiful limbs tightly,
the women have raised an uproar without end.*

*They fashion a golden mortar and a jeweled pestle,
and make him prepare the rice within it.*

*They bind the beloved’s auspicious hands beneath his wedding crown,
and make dear Sita speak words of rescue.*

*Rejoicing in the thief’s good fortune, they offer themselves in sacrifice;
the auspicious women fill the courtyard with song.*

Pada 60

*Our honor has risen higher through this grandson of Mithila!
We have no need of a guest's yoga, austerity, or meditation.*

*To have been born in Mithila is merit beyond measure;
by the Darling's grace we have gained a guest like you.*

*He by whose grace the great bonds of the world are severed—
we have tied that very Lord firmly in our knots!*

*Vishvambhara is renowned throughout the world,
yet in the Darling's courtyard he now pounds rice.*

*We have no need, O guest, of bow and arrows;
all we desire from you, O guest, is a gentle smile.*

Pada 61

*A mustard blossom—Sita's radiance is immense; a flax flower!
How beautifully the bridegroom's color shines; a flax flower!*

*From his diamond-like teeth, affection drips—rasa, rasa;
it sets every wedding guest aflame—rasa, rasa.*

*Friend, a torrent of sweet rasa pours down—soaked, soaked;
bathe within it—soaked, soaked.*

*The seven worlds were filled with immense darkness—but in my courtyard
four moons have risen together, in my courtyard.*

*The Lord for whose sake yogis sit in meditation in the forest—
that very Lord now pounds grain in my courtyard!
I have made that loving Lord my honored guest;
now no longing remains within my heart—none at all.*

The Bride's Nahchhu — Pada 62

*The young barber-woman is lovely enough to make heavenly women yearn;
behold the barber-woman's good fortune!
She kisses Siya's lotus feet,
while bliss and love surge again and again.*

*As she trims the lovely, moon-bright nails,
the gods begin to long for such a blessing
and shower auspicious flowers from heaven's wish-fulfilling tree.
With tender affection she rubs in the rich red dye,
touching the soles of Siya's feet—
immersed in love and in her own great fortune.*

*Beholding the beloved couple, the barber-woman shows them to everyone;
every pore of her body is steeped in delight and love.*

Pada 63

*The moment the barber-woman touches Siya's feet—victory, victory to Siya!—
Lakshmi herself comes to dwell at the barber's door.
She trims one, two, three, four, then nine nails—victory!—
and the storeroom fills with the nine precious gems.*

*When at last she trims the final nail and looks upon Siya's face—victory!—
her jeweled house gains walls of gold.
Then the barber-woman looks toward Sunayana—victory!—
and receives a necklace for her throat worth a million.*

*Filled with joyful affection, the barber-woman returns home—victory!—
where a thousand elephants sway at her gate.*

The Groom's Nahchhu — Pada 64

*"Honored guest, please show mercy and give me your lotus feet for a moment,
so that I may gain the blessed sight of trimming those lovely nails.
The daughter of my mistress has become the supremely blessed Siya;
by her grace I have remained content in body and soul.*

*"If my blade should hurt, please do not retain any anger in your heart.
This barber-woman has come here naturally—she has attended Sri Siya since childhood.
You are fair and your beloved is dark: the whole city talks of it!
Everyone asks how this can be; my heart grows shy even to speak.*

*"For the nahchhu fee, my lord, be merciful and give me generously;
and let me return with the barber and drink in joyful company."*

Pada 65

*Clutching his lotus feet, the barber-woman makes a stubborn demand:
"O Raghu's Lord, give me my gift before I perform the nahchhu!
I do not want a sari, bangles, or a ring;
nor do I want gold as my farewell gift.*

*"Shanta gained great happiness with Rishyasringa;
what I want now is a marriage alliance with the barber!
Great Dasharatha has three chief queens,
but the barber has not even one—there is no remedy for him!"*

*Thus, says Sneh Lata, the clever barber-woman makes her demand;
"O four brothers, consider it well within your hearts!"*

Pada 66

*A golden nail-cutter rests in the barber-woman's hand
as she gazes upon the bridegroom Rama's face.
"Why are two bridegrooms dark and two bridegrooms fair?
Trim the nails, barber-woman, trim the nails—but do not cut a finger!
Why are two of your bridegrooms dark, and why are two fair?"*

Worship of the Deities

Chhand

*Having completed the preparatory rites, they joyfully have the Brahmins worship the guru,
Gauri, and Ganapati;
the gods manifest, accept the worship, bestow blessings, and experience profound delight.
Attendants stand ready with golden vessels and pitchers,
filled with madhuparka and every auspicious article the sage may desire at the proper time.*

*According to the tradition of the family, everything is reverently offered with affection;
after the deities have thus been worshiped, Sita is given a beautiful throne.
Her beauty is revealed for all to behold, yet no one can fathom it;
how could a poet make manifest what lies beyond mind, understanding, speech, and even the
highest eloquence?*

Doha

*At the time of the fire-offering, Agni himself assumes visible form and lovingly receives the
oblations;
all the Vedas take the form of Brahmins and set forth the marriage rite.*

Washing the Bridegroom's Feet

*Janak's chief queen is renowned throughout the world;
how could Sita's mother ever be adequately praised?
Good fame, merit, happiness, and beauty—
the Creator gathered them all together and fashioned her.*

*Knowing the hour, the eminent sages call for her;
hearing them, the married women respectfully bring her forth.
Sunayana shines at Janak's left
like Maina beside the lord of the Himalayas.*

*Beautiful golden pitchers and jewel-studded vessels
are filled with pure, fragrant, auspicious water.
The delighted king and queen themselves take them in hand
and set them before Rama.*

*The sages recite the Vedas in auspicious tones;
knowing the occasion, flowers rain down from heaven.
Gazing lovingly upon the bridegroom,
the royal couple begins to wash his sacred feet.*

Chhand

*They begin to bathe his lotus feet, and rows of thrilled hairs rise over their bodies in love;
throughout heaven and city, songs, drums, and cries of victory surge and spread in every
direction.*

*Those lotus feet dwell forever in the heart-lake of Shiva, the enemy of Love;
remembered but once, they purify the mind and drive away every stain of the Kali age.
By touching them, the sage's wife—though steeped in sin—attained liberation;*

the gods proclaim the nectar of those feet, which Shiva bears upon his head, to be purity's utmost limit.

*Making their minds bees at those feet, sages and yogis attain the goal they cherish;
Janak, vessel of supreme good fortune, now washes those very feet, while everyone cries,
"Victory! Victory!"*

*With palms joined beside the bridegroom's feet,
the two family preceptors recite the lineages.*

Recitation of Lineage: Groom's Side

Om. Peace, peace, peace.

The lineage is to be recited after placing the bride's right hand upon the right hand of the son-in-law.

*I bow within the lotus of my heart to the Lord of rasa—
lovely as a rain-laden cloud, accessible through contemplation,
with golden-hued Janaki upon his left;
radiant with a pure smile, he fulfills the longings of loving hearts.*

*May all be well through Sri Rama: a shining drop upon the autumn moon;
the gentle stream of nectar flowing among the gods' mandara blossoms;
whose broad brow is graced by curling locks, a garland of hair, and a dark tilak;
whose lovely cheeks blaze with beauty as jeweled earrings swing beside them;
whose powerful shoulders frame a broad chest and whose slender waist is adorned;
whose astonishing might confounds the sun, moon, Brahma, and the whole cosmic sphere;
emperor of emperors, royal swan and crest-jewel of Raghu's line,
ocean without shore of unending happiness, mountain supporting the earth,
foundation of the world—*

*sweet and majestic, supreme actor among men and consummate urbane hero;
peerless at the feet of the great teachers of poets;
Lord of Maya and Lord of Love, whose bow strikes terror and who destroyed Khara;
refuge of the tender-eyed and shelter of the devoted;
joy of his devotees, Rama—the jewel of Kosala, delightful even in name;
whose virtues ring like jeweled anklets,
the root of bliss whose immeasurable feet are worshiped—victory to that Rama!*

*Brahma, unmanifest in origin, eternal, everlasting, and undecaying, arose first.
From him was born Marichi; Kashyapa was Marichi's son.
From Kashyapa came Vivasvan, and from Vivasvan came Manu;
Manu was the first lord of creatures, and Ikshvaku was Manu's son.*

*Ikshvaku's glorious son was known as Kukshi;
Kukshi's glorious son was Vikukshi, radiant and unconquered.
Vikukshi's son was mighty Bana, endowed with great splendor;
Bana's son was the glorious and powerful Anaranya.*

*From Anaranya came Prithu; Prithu's son was Trishanku.
Trishanku's mighty son was the greatly renowned Dhundhumara.
From Dhundhumara was born the radiant Yuvanashva;*

Yuvanashva's son was Mandhata, lord of the earth.

*Mandhata's glorious son was Susandhi.
Susandhi had two sons, Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit.
Dhruvasandhi's famous son was Bharata;
from the mighty Bharata was born a son named Asita.*

*Sagara was Asita's son, and Asamanja was Sagara's.
From Asamanja came Amshuman; Amshuman's son was Dilipa,
and Dilipa's son was Bhagiratha.
Bhagiratha's son was Kakutstha, and Kakutstha's son was Raghu.*

*Raghu's mighty son was Pravridha, the man-eater;
Pravridha was also called Kalmashapada, and his son was Shankhana.
Shankhana's son was Sudarshana, and Sudarshana's was Agnivarman.
Agnivarman's son was Shighraga, and Shighraga's was Maru.*

*Maru's son was Prashushruka, and from Prashushruka came Ambarisha.
Ambarisha's son was Nahusha; Nahusha's son was Yayati,
and Yayati's son was Nabhaga.
Nabhaga's glorious son was Aja, and Aja's son was Dasharatha.*

Recitation of Lineage in Hindi

*I place the dust of the guru's feet upon my head and contemplate Ganapati;
I bow to Shesha and Sarada and lower my head at Shambhu's feet.
Today I shall relate to the wise the lineage
in which the divine Sat-Chit-Ananda Rama appeared.*

*Newly arrayed as a bridegroom, he delights in this pavilion.
May I gain a stainless understanding beneath the gracious glance of Sita's bridegroom,
so that I may recount his lineage before this gathering.*

*First, from the lotus-navel of Vishnu appeared four-faced Brahma.
From him came Marichi, and from Marichi, Kashyapa, rich in austerity.
His son was King Vivasvan, and Vivasvan's was the handsome Manu;
Manu's son was Ikshvaku, and then came Kukshi.*

*From Sri Vikukshi came Bana, and from him mighty Anaranya;
from Sri Prithu came Trishanku, and from him the powerful Dhundhumara.
Yuvanashva's son was Mandhata; his son Susandhi preserved the stainless line.
From Dhruvasandhi came Bharata; from Bharata, Asita; then Sagara and Asamanja.*

*Amshuman's son was Sri Dilipa, and Dilipa's was Bhagiratha;
Bhagiratha's son was Kakutstha, and Sri Raghu's son was mighty Pravridha.
From Kalmashapada came Sudarshana; then Agnivarman;
from Shighraga came Maru, then Prashushruka and Ambarisha.*

*The illustrious Nahusha came next, then Yayati and glorious Nabhaga;
from Nabhaga was born the greatly fortunate Dasharatha, jewel of the line.
His sons are abodes of happiness, delightful to the eyes of the world,
royal swans upon the lake of Shambhu's mind and mines of every virtue.*

*Embodiments of Sat-Chit-Ananda, treasures of noble conduct, tenderhearted,
obedient to those who love them, generous and peerless—
they sit adorned for marriage in the center of the pavilion;
beholding them, even the god of Love sets the bow of his eyebrows.*

*Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, and beloved Shatrughna—
the four appear ever new, givers of happiness and radiant as the sun.*

*His son is Sri Ramachandra, second to none in exquisite sweetness;
his zodiacal name is Hiranyanama.
May there be well-being through that compact mass of Sat-Chit-Ananda,
the transcendent and complete Brahman, supreme Lord,
delight of the eyes of every world, abode of happiness,
supremely generous, the highest Brahman and supreme Self.*

*May there be well-being. The supremely noble one—
devoted to joyous reflection, virtuous conduct, study of the true scriptures,
and illumination of assemblies of learned people;
of the Vashishtha gotra and the single pravara of Vashishtha;
great-grandson of the illustrious Nabhaga Varman,
grandson of the illustrious Aja Varman,
and son of the illustrious Dasharatha Varman—
stands with folded hands and seeks refuge.
May auspiciousness attend this handsome bridegroom and bride.
Thus the groom's lineage is to be recited three times.*

Now the Bride's Side

Om. Peace, peace, peace.

*Victorious is the lovely lotus foot of Janak's daughter,
worshiped by Hari, Hara, and Brahma and faithfully served by seekers;
its clustered nails shine, its toes are encircled by rings,
and the greatest sages and lords of yoga contemplate it within their hearts.*

*Success and victory to Rama,
the bee drinking nectar from the pollen of Sri Sita's lotus feet;
whose broad forehead shines beneath curling locks, a tilak, and a garland of dark hair;
whose cloud-dark body gleams with the cool beauty of the moon,
whose incomparable face is an ocean of delight,
supreme jewel among dancers and urbane heroes,
son of Dasharatha and bee captivated by Janaki's happiness.*

*There was a king named Nimi, renowned by his deeds throughout the three worlds,
supremely righteous and foremost among all beings.
His son was named Mithi,
by whom the city of Mithila was founded.*

*The first to bear the title Janak was Mithi's son;
from Janak came Udavasu.
Righteous Nandivardhana was born to Udavasu,*

and Nandivardhana's son was named Suketu.

*Righteous and mighty Devarata was Suketu's son;
Devarata's royal son is remembered as Brihadratha.
Brihadratha's son was the powerful and glorious Mahavira;
Mahavira's steadfast son was Sudhriti, true in valor.*

*Righteous Sudharmika, also called Dhrishtaketu, was born to Sudhriti.
The royal sage Dhrishtaketu's son was the renowned Haryashva.
Haryashva's son was Maru, and Maru's son was Pratindhaka.
The righteous King Kirtiratha was Pratindhaka's son.*

*Kirtiratha's son is remembered as Devamidha;
Devamidha's was Vibudha, and Vibudha's was Mahidhraka.
Mighty King Kirtirata was Mahidhraka's son;
the royal sage Kirtirata's son was Maharoma.*

*Righteous Svarnaroma was born to Maharoma;
royal Hrasvaroma was born to Svarnaroma.
The illustrious son of Hrasvaroma was Siradhvaja.*

In Hindi

*Holding Siya's form within my heart, I bow my head to Ganapati;
by Vishvanath's grace I shall sing these virtues without hindrance.*

*In that lineage appeared the supreme Power, Siya—beloved daughter of Mithila's lord,
abode of compassion, wish-fulfilling lotus for the sake of devotees.
Nimi's son was Sri Mithi Raja, and his son the first Janak;
then came King Udavasu, Nandivardhana, and Suketu.*

*Devarata's son was Brihadratha, and after him came Mahavira;
Sudhriti's son was Dhrishtaketu, and from him came Haryashva.
Haryashva's son was Maru, and Maru's son Pratindhaka;
his son was Kirtiratha.*

*Next came King Devamidha; his son was Vibudha,
and Vibudha's was Mahidhraka.
Kirtirata's son was Maharoma, bearer of an auspicious name;
Svarnaroma followed, and from Hrasvaroma came Siradhvaja.*

*His cherished daughter is the very mine of beauty and noble character;
beholding the radiance of her moonlike face, even the moon is ashamed.
Before the brilliance of her beauty, lightning itself grows pale;
priceless ornaments of every kind adorn her body.*

*Uma, Rama, and Sarada cannot equal her even in comparison;
what need, then, is there to speak of Rati and a hundred others?
Janaki, Mandavi, Urmila, and Srutikirti—
all four brides appear exceedingly lovely today.*

*His daughter is the gentle Sri Sita—
lovely as a tender shoot, victorious through the merit of sacred sacrifice;
her zodiacal name is Hemalatika.
She is the crest-jewel of Nimi's line and the beloved of Sunayana,
adorned with majesty blended with sweetness and with every ornament,
devoted to loving service and play with her own husband—*

[The priest continues the bride's lineage declaration:] Of the Gautama gotra, descended from the three pravara sages Gautama, Angirasa, and Ayasya; great-granddaughter in the stated line, granddaughter of the illustrious Hrasvaroma, and daughter of the illustrious Siradhvaja. With purified hands I seek the refuge of this rite. May blessing attend the bride and groom. At the auspicious moment of kanyadana, the giver of the bride should recite this formula.

Kanyadana

*Beholding the taking of hands, Brahma, the gods, human beings, and sages were filled with joy.
Seeing the bride and groom, the very roots of happiness, the royal couple thrilled in every limb
and their hearts overflowed.
Following the ordinances of both worldly custom and the Vedas, the jewel among kings
performed the gift of his daughter.
As Himavan gave Girija to Mahesha, and the Ocean gave Sri to Hari,
so Janaka entrusted Sita to Rama and renewed his stainless fame throughout the world.
What entreaty could Videha make? His bodiless state had been stolen away by love.
The sacred fire-rite was performed according to rule, their garments were knotted together, and
the wedding rounds were about to begin.
Cries of victory, praises from the bards, Vedic chanting, auspicious songs, and kettledrums
resounded.
The sages rejoiced; Hari rejoiced; the wise gods showered flowers.*

Pada 67

*Blessed, blessed is Queen Sunaina's courtyard, where bride and bridegroom sit!
The pavilion is Mithila's own Manasarovar, exceedingly pure and beautiful;
within it sits a pair of swans—the bride and bridegroom.
On one side hangs the groom's wedding crown, while on the other the bride draws out her veil;
between them the arrows of their glances dart and flash.
All the messages of love have gathered there—lotus blossom upon lotus flower.*

*Videha's breast seems ready to burst; he is maddened by the course of his love—how can anyone
sing adequately of the taking of hands?*

Pada 68

*Father has tucked up his garment and seated himself in the pavilion—father, do not give your
daughter away!
Beneath the bridegroom's lotus hand lies Lali's hand; flowers and betel leaves shine between
them.
Guru Vasishtha recites the mantras, and Sri Rama repeats them.
All the companions join in auspicious song, while the gods repeatedly shower flowers.
Mother Sunaina sobs and sobs: "Today my daughter has become a stranger to me.
The daughter for whose sake I danced and delighted—she too has become a stranger to me."
"Be still, Mother Sunaina; this is indeed the way of the world."*

Gathbandhan — Pada 69

*Rama Chandra, lord of the three worlds, is the bridegroom who delights every heart;
Lali, the bride, is tender Sita—the wedding knot has been tied.
This bond is the noose of love; Rama's bracelet bears witness to it;
Lali is a golden vine, and the supremely radiant Raghunandan is the tree she clasps.
Bridegroom and bride sit together upon a single seat;
the gods shower flowers, and many instruments resound.
Latika joins the married women in singing songs of blessing:
“May all four couples live age after age; may Mithila be filled with blessing!”*

The Wedding Rounds

*Prince and princess take their graceful wedding rounds; all reverently receive the blessing of the sight.
No words can describe that captivating pair; whatever comparison one might offer would be too little.*

*The beautiful reflections of Rama and Sita sparkle within the jeweled pillars.
It seems that Kama and Rati have assumed countless forms to behold Rama's incomparable wedding.
Their longing for the sight is great, but so is their modesty: again and again they appear, then hide.
All who watch are lost in rapture; like Janaka, they forget themselves.
Delighted, the sages complete the wedding rounds, and every customary rite and gift is duly fulfilled.
For three rounds the bride goes before him, and for four the moon among kings goes before her;
at the fourth, the knot is bound, and all plunder an immeasurable treasure of joy.*

Pada 70

*All four bridegrooms take the wedding rounds, with their graceful brides beside them.
Dark and fair, fair and dark—the four perfectly matched pairs; cries of “Hari! Hari!” rise on every side.
Gem-studded wedding crowns shine upon their heads, stealing the splendor of lightning.
The wondrous brides have wine-red, kohl-darkened eyes; one glance from them leaves the beholder senseless.
The knot lies within veil and shawl: has the bride already bound her lord wholly beneath her sway?
In nine-colored, jewel-bright winnowing trays, parched rice is heaped and scattered.
Wave upon wave of joy pours forth, drenching the earth with happiness.
“Victory, victory—victory, victory!” resounds, while the gods shower down blossoms.
The couple gleams like a lamp within a crystal chamber; a lovely flame awakens in the jeweled hall.
It is as though Rati and her lord appear and vanish again and again in the brilliance.
The loving mother cannot contain her delight when she sees her dear daughter and son-in-law shyly stealing glances.*

Pada 71

My handsome beloved is radiant as the full moon.

Gazing upon that beauty, my whole being is pierced, and every auspicious-hearted woman rejoices.

*The charm of the veil changes at every instant; seeing it, the heart fills to overflowing.
Shy and hesitant, both bend low, startled as they move, each yearning to behold the other's
beauty.
The poet says: once the eyes have found such joy, they cannot turn their gaze away.
As the pair takes the wedding rounds, beholding their united beauty, I offer myself again and
again.*

The Gift of Vermilion

*Rama placed vermillion in Sita's hair-parting; its beauty cannot be described in any manner.
It was as though the serpent of her dark hair, greedy for nectar, had taken crimson pollen from a
lotus and adorned the moon of her face.*

Pada 72

*"From which city has the seller of vermillion come to sell vermillion?
And, mother, from which city is the maiden who has come to receive it?"
"The seller of vermillion has come from the city of Ayodhya;
the maiden of Mithila has come to receive the vermillion."
"What is the complexion of the charming bridegroom who has applied the vermillion?
Which tender young daughter has been adorned with it?"
"The charming bridegroom who applied it is dark-hued;
the tender daughter adorned with it is Sita."
Cries of "Victory! Victory!" arise, and flowers are showered down.
Kedamalata has sung this pada; whoever hears it is filled with joy.*

Pada 73

*Dear honored guest, bestow the vermillion.
This is no moment for embarrassment or argument; do not be stubborn now.
Dear one, if you will give the vermillion, incline your heart and listen to a few words of mine.
This is the favorable wedding hour, supremely auspicious; do not delay any longer.
Let the women singers raise sweet melodies and sing blessed, auspicious songs.
Damodar says: perform the rite today with a joyful heart, and bless bridegroom and bride.*

Durvakshat

*Om. May a Brahmin radiant with sacred learning be born in our realm; may a royal warrior be
born—heroic, skilled with arrows, a mighty chariot-fighter. May there be milk-giving cows,
strong oxen, swift horses, graceful women, victorious chariot-warriors, and valiant young men
for the sacrificer. May Parjanya rain for us whenever needed; may fruit-bearing plants ripen for
us, and may our welfare and security be assured.
May all endeavors bear fruit; may every wish be fulfilled. May the enemies' understanding be
destroyed, and may your friends arise and flourish.*

Chumavan — Pada 74

*Perform the chumavan, dear women, slowly, slowly.
Steadying a golden platter, the auspicious women circle it—perform the chumavan slowly, slowly.
Singing blessings, Queen Sunaina comes and performs the chumavan slowly, slowly.
Sita's brother runs from the palace—come slowly, slowly, Sita!
With affection they repeatedly warm and touch the bridegroom's cheeks—slowly, slowly.*

A Glimpse of the Wedding Pavilion

Once again the sage explained the matter to the king: “Call all four princes here.”

*When Rama and Janaki entered and sat upon the wedding seat, all hearts rejoiced at the sight.
Their bodies thrilled; seeing them again and again, everyone beheld the fresh fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of their own merit.
Exultation filled the whole world: “Rama's wedding has taken place!” everyone declared.
How could any tongue reach the end of describing so great an auspicious event?
Then Janaka received Vasishtha's permission and prepared the remaining weddings with every proper arrangement.
He had Mandavi, Shrutakirti, and Urmila summoned with honor.
First he gave Kushadhvaja's virtuous, gracious, and lovely daughter Mandavi to Bharata, performing the wedding with every custom and affection.
Then, honoring every rite, he gave Janaki's younger sister Urmila—beautiful in every way—to Lakshmana.
The maiden named Shrutakirti, lovely-eyed and a treasury of beauty and virtue, he gave to Shatrughna, whose radiant form and character matched her own.
Seeing each bride and groom suited to the other, everyone rejoiced; all praised their beauty, while the gods showered flowers.
The beautiful brides and handsome bridegrooms all shone together beneath one pavilion, like the four states of embodied life abiding in the heart together with Vishnu.
The lord of Ayodhya rejoiced to behold all his sons with their brides, as though the king had attained the four fruits of life together with the sacred acts that lead to them.*

Pada 75

*Sita and Rama shine beneath the golden pavilion;
golden wedding crowns grace their heads, and lovely pearls adorn their throats.*

*Lustrous pearl earrings touch their spotless cheeks;
their restless lotus eyes gleam like moving water-lilies.
Beside Sita's red veil, Rama's yellow cloth glows;
it is as though lightning flashed within a crimson cloud.
Sita's ornament is reflected upon Rama's heart,
like a divine lamp burning in the midst of the Yamuna's dark waters.
Near dark Rama, fair Sita shines
like tested gold beside an emerald jewel.
Rama becomes a dark raincloud and Sita a flash of lightning;
hearing of them, moon and chakora bird stand astonished.
Rama appears fair of body and Sita dark,
and at that reversal even the wise become bewildered.
Flowers rain from the clouds and cover the earth;
Rama's wedding is taking place in Janakpur, a vast treasury of merit.*

*Gods and human beings rejoice and shower flowers;
 Brahma and all the gods cry, delighted, "Victory! Victory!"
 Shankara forever holds Rama and Sita in meditation;
 beholding their form as Brahman, Indra worships them.
 Sages meditate upon this vision of the youthful divine pair;
 beholding their stainless delight again and again, the Vedas sing their praise.
 Whoever sings this blessing, or sings it for others to hear,
 attains Sita's lotus feet and the supreme abode.*

*Tulsidas says: ever bring Sita and Rama into your heart;
 without devotion to Rama, regard this human birth as squandered.*

Pada 76

*Beautiful women sing blessings beneath the pavilion;
 hearing them again and again, Sita and Rama take immense delight.
 May the motion of time and karma be halted; may this vision remain forever.
 Gazing and gazing upon it, may all people obtain the highest joy.
 Rama is adorned in saffron cloth and Sita in red;
 both are dyed in the two colors of love.
 Rama dwells forever in Sita, and Sita in Rama;
 their two garments proclaim that the two are one life.
 Joining the first and fourth, together with the interval between them, those two saving bounds
 mingle and pour forth dense rasa.
 Whether Mithila must go to Ayodhya or Ayodhya come here,
 let destiny never show us even a single day of separation.
 Let Janaka place his whole kingdom and all he possesses in Rama's care;
 otherwise, how could he remain worthy of the name "Videha"?
 May Sita and Rama sport forever in both realms;
 the gods perform arati, and Latika sings in both villages.*

Pada 77

*All four bridegrooms and all four brides sit beneath the pavilion;
 behold with full eyes how their radiance sparkles and flashes!*

*The brilliance of their wedding crowns flashes, while happiness and beauty spill forth.
 Shyly they glance at one another, swelling and thrilling with delight.
 The eldest groom is dark as a raincloud, and his bride is lightning.
 The next groom is like a tamala tree, his lovely Mandavi a golden vine.
 The third groom's fair body resembles the moon;
 his dark-hued bride is filled with still greater beauty.
 The youngest groom and bride are exceedingly tender, their waists slim as though barely formed;
 they are like a golden plantain and a dark vine, their beauty abiding together.
 Blue and yellow mingle and become a lush green;
 both the bridegroom's and the bride's processions appear drenched in that color.
 Blessed is Raghunandan's fortune, to have gained such a beloved wife;
 blessed is Kishori's fortune, to have Raghubar as her beloved.
 Blessed are all of us: we have found such splendid bridegrooms,
 and through our bond with Janaknath have gained such noble kinship.
 One woman, seeing the beauty, breaks a blade of grass and circles mustard seed and salt to ward
 off evil;*

*another companion installs the image of the couples within her heart.
Beholding them, the gods rejoice and shower flowers.
Modalata offers body and mind and touches the divine couples' feet.*

Pada 78

*"Come to Sri Kishori's courtyard, sister—Providence himself has come!
With Janaki, treasure-house of beauty and joy to Rama's moonlike heart, see what a pair
Providence has made; behold the other three pairs likewise.
Mandavi, the chakori, shines on the right beside Bharata, her moonlike lord;*

*Shrutakirti shines beside Shatrughna, and incomparable Urmila beside dear Lakshmana.
How perfectly it all appears—as a jewel shines within a ring!
Snehalata says: "Keep them here in Mithila all three hundred and sixty days,
and let every month possess a fifth lunar day just like this one!"*

Pada 79

*Friend, how many virtues of Providence can I sing today?
As our fair Kishori is an ocean of beauty, so has she received a fitting partner who delights the
eyes.
As Mandavi is a graceful swan and a chakori to Sita's moonlike face, so does she rejoice on
beholding Bharata, lost in love.
As are the daughters Urmila and virtuous Shrutakirti, so install Lakshmana and Shatrughna
within your heart, friend.
Seeing this affection, Videha has lost all sense of self. Let everyone preserve this love forever and
never forget it, friend.*

Pada 80

*Beneath the jewel-studded pavilion shines the charming dark bridegroom.
Upon his lovely head is a golden, gem-set sehra; jeweled pendants hang beside his ears.
Curls gleam upon his dark face like the young of serpents.
His lovely wedding crown shines above, its curving beauty stealing the heart.
Dear friend, such a handsome groom could exist nowhere else.*

Pada 81

*The pair of Rama and Janaki shines resplendent:
the bridegroom is dark and beautiful as a rain-laden lotus-cloud, while the bride's body is
radiantly fair.*

*At the hour of the wedding they shine within every heart;
my mind can find no comparison for them anywhere.*

*It is as though, within Love's lovely pavilion,
the Creator has gathered all the beauty of adornment in one place.*

*Both auspicious figures are enchanting—
she in her knotted veil and he in his yellow shawl.*

*As they circle the golden vessel,
Saraswati beholds their beauty and becomes bewildered.*

*Here the sage Vasishtha and there Shatananda
recount the glory of both lineages.*

*Here the king of Awadh and there the lord of Mithila embrace;
waves rise within the ocean of happiness.*

*The delighted women of Janaka's inner palace,
clever in the secret rasa, gaze upon them as though all else were straw.*

*Hearing songs, drums, and the chanting of the Vedas,
the gods shower flowers and proclaim their praise.*

*Their eyes have obtained their true reward; overcome by love,
all petition the Lord and offer blessings.*

*Says Tulsi: when the mind itself is submerged in such bliss,
how could the tongue describe that happiness?*

Pada 82

Rama is the bridegroom and Sita the bride!

*Like a dark cloud and lightning, their excellent complexions delight the heart;
beauty dwells in them perfectly from toenails to crown.*

*Friend, seeing them arrayed in wedding ornaments and garments,
the women stand utterly spellbound.*

*Life has borne fruit, birth has gained its reward, and the eyes have attained their purpose—
only today has this truth been proved.*

*Beauty's fragrant cow was milked; Love curdled its nectar-rich milk,
then churned it, and Sita-Rama emerged as its butter—the essence of loveliness throughout the
worlds.*

*Says Tulsidas: the joy and splendor of beholding them cannot be told;
it is as though Brahma sculpted two treasures of beauty upon the touchstone of Rati and Kama.*

Pada 83

*Friend, behold the beloved of Kausalya,
the joy-giving prince, exceedingly tender.*

*He shines at his wedding in the abode of the Maithilas,
a gift offered to the very mind of Love.*

*Within the jeweled pavilion he sits beside Sita,
filled with beauty—the chosen bridegroom of Sita.*

*He performs the prescribed rites of the blessed wedding,
a wondrous mine of marvels.*

*A jeweled crown and yellow garment adorn him;
his flawless lotus-face is beyond reproach.*

*Dense vermilion shines upon his head
like a gathering of lightning worshiping the sun.*

*A slightly opening sidelong glance beholds
the joy of Janaki's loveliness.*

*Bashful in the presence of his elders,
he lowers his moonlike face in modesty.*

*The daughter of Janaka offers the auspicious sandal paste,
her graceful hand adorned for the rite.*

*Raghuraja delights the assembly;
beautifully arrayed, Raghunandana shines.*

Pada 84

Raghubara is the bridegroom and Janaki the bride.

*Their dark-blue and golden limbs are like lovely blue and yellow lotuses;
every heart knows supreme delight.*

*A magnificent golden jeweled crown and a moonlike face—an abode of joy;
it seems that a full radiant moon has risen upon the mountain of adornment.*

*Red javaka colors his feet, henna her hands, and collyrium their eyes;
circling the golden vessel, they carry one another's hearts and lives with them.*

*Cries of victory, auspicious songs, and the thunder of drums fill the city;
gods and celestial women shower many-colored flowers.*

*The men and women of Janakpur are immersed in bliss,
all awareness of themselves forgotten.*

*The youthful Lord of Sita's house shines through boundless good fortune;
the radiance of both families has reached its fullness.*

Pada 85

*Ramachandra as bridegroom appears so charming, so deeply pleasing—
one cannot tell whether the weaver deserves the praise, or Ramachandra's garments themselves.*

*The jeweled crown appears so charming upon the bridegroom, so deeply pleasing—
one cannot tell whether the flower-girl's hands deserve the praise, or Ramachandra's head.*

*The sandal paste appears so charming upon the bridegroom, so deeply pleasing—
one cannot tell whether the learned priest's hand deserves the praise, or Ramachandra's brow.*

*The necklace appears so charming upon the bridegroom, so deeply pleasing—
one cannot tell whether the goldsmith's craft deserves the praise, or Ramachandra's throat.*

*The fitted garment appears so charming upon his body, so deeply pleasing—
one cannot tell whether the tailor's craft deserves the praise, or Ramachandra's form.*

*The red dye appears so charming upon his feet, so deeply pleasing—
one cannot tell whether the barber's application deserves the praise, or Ramachandra's feet.*

The Couple Shines Within the Pavilion — Pada 86

*The couple shines within the pavilion:
an emerald beside gold, lightning flashing within a dark cloud.*

*Behold the nectar-essence, the ocean of love;
Mithila's beauty brims over and spills.*

*A golden vine clings longingly to a dark tamala tree;
the pair shines utterly still and changeless.*

*This alone is Yogeshvara's longing:
may this divine couple forever remain so.*

Pada 87

*Behold today the prince of Awadh arrayed as bridegroom—
he whom the Vedas describe only by saying, "Not this, not this."*

*See the splendor of the jeweled crown upon his enchanting head,
as though ten million suns had risen at once.*

*Behold the wondrous play of sweetness upon sweetness;
astonishing is the beauty of his wedding crown today.*

See the heart-stealing tilak upon his brow,

the gem flashing upon his nose, and the sweetness resting upon his lips.

*See the lovely fish-shaped earrings at his ears,
and the clustered curls that weave their net.*

*His restless brows are the bow of Love,
and his slanting glance rises like an arrow upon it.*

*He is adorned with lovely wedding jewels and yellow silk;
guard your heart today, lest he steal it away.*

*O worshiper, recognize in him the very life of his own devotees;
today he may be obtained merely by casting a loving glance.*

Ghazal — Pada 88

*How charmingly the heart-stealing wedding crown adorns the bridegrooms!
With Sita as bride and Beloved, it has become the very crown of married blessedness.*

*Its graceful strands sway and entice;
drops of beauty seem to gather and tremble within it.*

*Upon the lovely sapphire face, charming as a rain-laden cloud,
its dangling strands flash like lightning.*

*It has become the instrument of love, the form of joyful delight;
today the wedding crown casts a marvelous spell upon the bridegrooms.*

*The clever thief who came to steal all Mithila
hides his beauty beneath the crown, then lets it spill forth again.*

*Beauty and sweetness walk together, halting the very steps of onlookers;
the captivating crown enchants them all.*

*Wondrous is the shower of rasa upon the bridegrooms;
even Love himself is robbed and left astonished by the wedding crown.*

Pada 89

*Blessings upon the singular beauty of bridegroom and bride—blessings, blessings!
Blessings upon every lovely curve of their graceful forms—blessings, blessings!*

*Crowns upon both heads, wedding ornaments, and fine garments upon both bodies—
no comparison can be found for their beauty. Blessings, blessings!*

*Countless lords of love grow ashamed on seeing the handsome bridegroom;
Rati herself is humbled by the beauty of Janaka's daughter. Blessings, blessings!*

*Those whom yogis yearn to behold sit resplendent in the pavilion;
great indeed is Mithila's fortune today. Blessings, blessings!*

*Like chakori birds abandoning the lovely moon for a moment to gaze at them—
such are the eyes of Nehalatika. Blessings, blessings!*

Pada 90

*Blessings upon Raghubara's matchless beauty—blessings, blessings!
Blessings upon the wondrous splendor of Shyamasundara—blessings, blessings!*

*A marvelous crown shines upon his head; astonishing kohl fills his eyes;
earrings, garland, and tilak adorn him today. Blessings, blessings!*

*His smile is lovely and captivating, and the row of his teeth steals the heart;
a gem flashes upon his nose. Blessings, blessings!*

*A yellow garment girds his waist and his scarf flashes like lightning;
tinkling ornaments resound at his feet. Blessings, blessings!*

*A lovely sacred thread shines upon his body; curls and brows enchant the mind;
the beauty of his every limb wards all sorrow from the heart. Blessings, blessings!*

Pada 91

*Blessings upon the lovely pair of Sita and Rama:
the Darling's redness flashes within her Beloved.*

Blessings upon the pair like lightning within a cloud.

*The maiden's face is the full autumn moon, treasury of every ray;
Janakanandini's eyes are its chakori birds—blessings upon them.*

*In the coupled beauty of the Divine Pair, each captivates the other;
the enchantment flows equally in both directions—blessings upon them.*

Pada 92

Blessings age after age upon this pair of four moons!

*Jeweled wedding crowns upon their heads, tilaks, and deep dark eyes;
kohl brims in those nectar-filled eyes—may they live blessed age after age.*

*Yellow cloth and red bridal veils—the pairs are dark and fair;
dark treasure beside fair treasure—may they live blessed age after age.*

*The Beloved's curls and the Darling's locks possess a beauty all their own;
every sakhi gives herself in sacrifice—may they live blessed age after age.*

Pada 93

*At every moment a fresh and incomparable beauty shines;
his form is a rain-filled cloud that puts even Love to shame.*

*His great eyes are dark, keen, kohl-lined, and lovely;
the red streaks within them make them more enchanting still.*

*Emerald bows are his graceful brows; his lovely nose-tip is a flower;
Love has stamped his seal upon the cheeks where earrings sway.*

*Dense curls fall across them—fish glimpsed within the moon;
though the mind strives in countless ways, it cannot reach the limit of this beauty.*

*Such beauty of form, such grace, and such wisdom—
friend, this bridegroom beyond all bounds delights me deeply.*

*Says Rasika Ali: may this incomparable couple reign changeless throughout the world;
may Providence increase their wealth and loving play anew each day.*

Arati — Pada 94

*Perform a beautiful and colorful arati
for the newly arrived bridegroom and bride.*

*Red dye graces the soles of their lovely feet,
and each row of nails is beautifully tinted.*

*Flowing garments gleam upon them,
priceless and rich beyond compare.*

*Their beauty is bordered by a king of bees;
their tender nectar-filled glances wander playfully.*

*Their jeweled crowns and every trailing strand
make the radiance of lightning seem pale.*

*Says Modalali: they are my everything;
a million limits cannot contain the beauty of Sita's Beloved.*

Pada 95

*Perform the arati of Sita,
bearer of beauty from toenails to crown.*

*Red and yellow garments shine splendidly; a graceful tilak adorns her brow;
Saraswati and the moon bow on seeing the lovely saffron and vermilion.*

*Ear-flowers and earrings flash; a necklace of pearls sways upon her breast;
bracelets gleam like lightning, dazzling as the sun.*

*Her fair body possesses exquisite loveliness;
no boundary can contain the play of her beauty.*

*Her movement in youthful grace is exceedingly subtle,
swifter than the mind itself.*

*Fly-whisks wave over the throne; drums resound and cries of victory rise;
Saraswati and the gods praise her as the Lady of countless universes.*

Arati — Pada 96

*All together, O mother, wave the arati
for the beautiful pair of Rama and Sita.*

*Crowns and crescent ornaments shine upon their heads,
spreading a brilliant radiance everywhere.*

*Vermilion, saffron, and sandal adorn their brows;
jeweled garlands and moon-necklaces rest upon their breasts.*

*Earrings sway at their ears,
flashing like a thousand bolts of lightning.*

*Red and yellow garments cover their bodies;
their lotus-feet are filled with incomparable bliss.*

*Rameshvara longs only for this vision;
their beauty is measureless and without end.*

Door-Blocking — Pada 97

*I shall take a fine payment for blocking the door—
only then, dear brother, will I let you enter the pleasant kohbar chamber.*

*Only when you give me the five-stranded necklace I desire, dear brother,
will I let you enter.*

*Only when you agree to whatever I ask, dear brother,
will I let you enter.*

*Arrange your sister's marriage to my brother—
only then will I let you enter.*

*If you will not grant that joy, then accept refuge in Sita—
only then will I let you enter, O colorful one!*

Pada 98

*"This is no doorway to pass freely, Raghunandana—listen!
When Raghunandana set out for the kohbar, the sakhis barred his way.*

*If you place one foot inside without paying the customary gift, you will receive ritual abuse by the
thousand;
if you have brought no wealth with you, sell even sister and mother!*

*Bashful Harinatha says nothing;
he only stands smiling, the playful Bihari."*

The Lord's Reply

*"The wise sage Vishvamitra asked my father and brought me here;
I brought no one else with me, friends.*

*I brought only one heart—and you, darling, have stolen it,
shooting your sidelong glance, friends.*

*It is growing late; let me go—heed what I say;
standing here, I fall at your feet, friends.*

*My heart has been taken by force, darling sakhi;
Srinidhi has carried it away and hidden it, friends."*

A Vision of the Kohbar

*His dark body is naturally beautiful,
its splendor shaming ten million gods of love.*

*His lotus-feet, lovely with red javaka,
are ever shaded by the bee-like minds of sages.*

*His pure and lovely yellow dhoti
steals the radiance of the young sun and lightning.*

*A melodious girdle and lovely waist-cord adorn him;
his arms are broad and their ornaments beautiful.*

*His yellow sacred thread gives forth magnificent beauty;
the signet-ring upon his hand steals every heart.*

*Every article of wedding array shines upon him;
broad ornaments reign across his breast.*

*A yellow upper-cloth is tucked gracefully;
pearls are fastened at both its ends.*

*Lotus eyes, graceful earrings at his ears,
and a face that is the treasury of all beauty;*

*lovely brows, an enchanting nose,
and a brow whose tilak is the abode of radiance.*

*A charming crown shines upon his head,
woven with auspicious pearls and jewels.*

*A great central jewel is set within that crown,
worshiped by the families of the city's women.*

*It is as though Brahma fashioned this treasury of beauty
upon the very touchstone of adornment.*

The women wave garments and ornaments in offering, perform arati, and sing auspicious songs;

gods shower flowers, while heralds and bards proclaim his spotless fame. ||1||

Having brought the princes and brides into the kohbar, all rejoice;
with deepest affection they begin the customary rites, singing auspicious songs.

Gauri teaches Rama the lahkauri rite with Sita, while Saraswati assists;
the women of the inner palace, overcome with laughter, consolation, and playful rasa, gain the
fruit of birth. ||2||

In the jewel upon her own wrist, Janaki sees
the most beautiful image of the Treasury of Beauty.

She cannot turn away from gazing upon it,
for fear that the vision might vanish.

The merriment, delight, and loving play cannot be described;
those women alone who witnessed it know it well.

Then all the beautiful sakhis escort bride and bridegroom
back toward the wedding encampment. ||3||

At that moment blessings resound throughout the city, and supreme joy spreads everywhere:
“May the four couples live forever!” everyone says with delighted hearts.

Yogic masters, perfected beings, great sages, and gods behold them and beat celestial drums;
showering many-colored flowers, they return to their own realms crying, “Victory! Victory!
Victory!” ||4||

Doha: Then all the princes came with their brides before their father;
beauty, auspiciousness, and joy filled the wedding encampment like surging water.

The Family Deities — Pada 99

These are your family deities—bow your heads respectfully before them;
address them humbly with joined hands, and offer yourselves again and again to their
compassion—delay no longer.

Give them auspicious seats and let them sit; wash their feet and place that water upon your
heads;
offer them sweet fruits and delicacies.

Your mother has sent these four brothers here;
they have come for your vision.

Receive them with gladness and celebrate your blessed fortune—

Pada 100

*“Beloved, fall at this goddess’s feet.
Fold your hands, prostrate yourself, and bow your head in supplication.
She is Bhavani, worshiped by our lineage; it is fitting that you should please her.
Supreme bliss will spread through every direction when you worship and have her worshiped.*

*“No elaborate chanting, austerity, restraint, singing, or music is needed;
simply fold your hands and plead, for her guileless nature melts at once.
She destroys affliction in every way,” says Moda’s song—“we tell you this sincerely.
Fall at her feet in humble devotion; do not provoke her anger by delay.”*

*The Lord smiles and asks, “What sort of goddess is this, sitting with her face concealed?
How will I know whether she is angry or pleased unless she reveals her form?
This power of illusion lies within my perception, yet she shows me not a single limb.
Do not keep me in such deception; I shall not bathe without seeing you.”*

*Excellent Rama seizes the end of her veil, and the women snatch it away.
“See how fortunate this servant-maid is—she has planted both feet upon his chest!
Doe-eyed one, what could we possibly do to you? We have not come to trick you.”
Laughing softly, Anavallabha’s companions touch the beloved’s feet.*

Pada 101

*“Come, all four bridegrooms, let us gamble and set a wager.
If you win, I shall go with you to Ayodhya,
casting aside worldly shame and family reserve in my eagerness to accompany my beloved.
But if you lose, give my brother an auspicious wedding
and marry him to your own sister!*

*Smiling and smiling, they polish the cowries in their hands,
guard their respective stakes, and steep themselves in delicious delight.*

*As the game continues, Moda’s four unconquered heroes lose;
the companions cheer their defeat and clap their hands.*

Joining the Wicks — Pada 102

*All four young bridegrooms shine in the kohbar;
the gathered women surround them, and the flavor of laughter spreads.
A jewel-set golden lamp bears its wick;
on a golden platter the women bring two burning flames, steeped in color.*

*“Beloved, join these two lamps together.
Do not imagine their immeasurable significance to be slight.
If the flames of these two lamps unite,
the beautiful couple’s affection will never break.”*

*Hearing this, the bride hides her face behind a handkerchief,
while the companions offer themselves to the sight, intoxicated by its beauty.
One speaks freely, without the least reserve:
“It is only the joining of wicks—why be shy about it?”*

*The beloved smiles: “Who will summon us at dawn?”
“The goddess of beauty will come herself, bearing flowers.”
Deepakala knows the rite well, says Moda’s Lord:
“My work is to unite one heart with the other.”*

Lahkori — Pada 103

*Beloved and lover play lahkori;
the clever women of Janakpur sing their playful wedding taunts.*

*Lakshminidhi’s beloved, crown of the clever, reflects within her heart and says:
“Listen, beloved of my life—we stand on your side.
If you win, my friend’s daughter wins; and if by chance you should lose,
even then we shall declare you victorious”—thus both treasure the thought in their hearts.*

*Each lays a loving snare at the other’s turn, and the wanderer of Ayodhya is caught;
then the delicate maiden eagerly makes her move, conquering her lover’s heart.*

Kohbar Laughter — Pada 104

*In the lovely kohbar chamber sit the four bridegrooms, friends;
an exuberant springtime of laughter and jest has blossomed there.
Young women like lotus buds surround them on every side,
while the four beloved companions sit enthroned in their midst.*

*Graceful women wave yak-tail fans, wild with beauty;
others feed them fragrant betel laden with many spices.
Everyone sits upon the floor in a circle—it is wonderfully entertaining;
joy and pleasure flow there beyond all measure.*

*Darling Siddhi says, “Friends, listen to the ways of Ayodhya:
in Raghu’s line even men become pregnant!
Once there lived the virtuous King Bahuka;
when word reached the women’s quarters, a great clamor arose.*

*“Sudyumna became a woman—what astonishing generosity!
Ila was known as a wanton lover and produced a son by her paramour.
For thirty days a woman, for thirty a man—*

hearing this, everyone bursts into peals of laughter!

*“Bhagiratha’s clever ancestress was remarkably resourceful:
she gave birth to sixty thousand sons in a single delivery!
And that loose woman Shanta did not recognize a husband worthy of her—
the whole world knows that she bound herself to an ascetic’s house.*

*“The women of Ayodhya are all exceedingly warmhearted;
by eating sacrificial pudding they produced the beloved sons who are Moda’s very life.
All those charming women are so captivating that one would offer everything to them;
Paramananda swells with pride in his own household, friends!”*

Pada 105

*“Sages call you the essence of the universe—yet fear keeps them from speaking the truth.
The Vedas say you are neither man nor woman; you perform your amorous play with Love.
We can see it from your makara-shaped earrings and from your tender youthful age!*

*“Dasharatha is fair and Kausalya is fair—then from whose house did you acquire your dark complexion?
Hari manifested through the contemplation of those two; thus he has become entangled with us!
Hearing these clever, satirical wedding taunts, Rama looks toward the women.
The gods, wholly fulfilled, pray: ‘Do not let him ever leave this city!’”*

Pada 106

*“Do not recite harsh wedding taunts to handsome bridegrooms like Rama and Lakshmana;
merely ask two or four fitting questions in playful laughter.
Friend, think carefully and answer the first question:*

*“Dasharatha is fair and Kausalya is fair—why, then, is Rama dark?
Listen, friend, to another astonishing event:
the women of Ayodhya ate kheer and gave birth to children!*

*"Speak of this unspeakable matter, friend—the ways of Raghu's line are extraordinary:
Sagara's wanton queen gave birth to sixty thousand sons!
Sneh Lata says, 'Do not take offense; these are only firm wedding taunts.
When you leave Mithila laughing and happy, Mother will give you a grand farewell gift.'"*

Kohbar Laughter — Pada 107

*"Her grandfathers and great-grandfathers enter this family; she herself belongs to us.
Whatever sort of guests they may be, why should anyone else concern themselves?
One is free to do as one pleases with one's own property—such is the law everywhere;
they sold their own sister, so why should anyone else concern themselves?*

*"Their ancestress bore sixty thousand sons, yet why slander her?
The woman who gives birth alone knows its pain and happiness—why should anyone else
concern themselves?"*

*All the beloved youths listen as taunt follows taunt, but what answer can they make?
Sneh Lata smiles; embarrassed by the truth of the matter, they cannot speak.*

Pati Dharai — Pada 108

*"Beloved, who taught you this trick?
Release the pathi; I have arranged this braid for cherished Siya's brow.
For twenty years it has remained upon her heart—today you have come into the house!
Give the customary gift that pleases me; until you accept the rite,
I, a daughter of Mithila, shall not let you go, O garland of my companions' hearts."*

Hearing her, the bridegroom bursts into laughter, delighted by her stubbornness;

*the companions begin to sing auspicious songs.
The dear groom agrees at last; the sister-in-law is won over,
praises his obstinate grace, and kisses his cheek.
After a hundred thousand entreaties, Dasharatha's son accepts the request;
with a gentle smile he works his wonder.*

The Veil — Pada 109

*Smiling, the beloved lifts Siya's veil.
The instant it rises and he beholds her beauty,
Ayodhya's cherished prince is utterly captivated.
Siya smiles and makes him wholly her own;
seeing it, her beloved is lost in wonder.*

*In that moment he abandons every pride in his own beauty;
he gazes while Love prevents even the blink of an eye.
The two are drowned together in the enchantment of all nine rasas;
the joy of that sight becomes the guardian of their eyes.*

Kohbar — Pada 110

*In the golden palace, jewel-lamps shine behind golden doors;
the kohbar is filled with delight.
An ivory bed, pillows of flowers, and a quilt made of gems await;
upon it sleeps Raghubara the bridegroom, with bride Sita at his left.*

*Blue and yellow silk and jeweled ornaments grace their dark and fair bodies.
The bridegroom turns his face away to sleep, while the bride lies sulking.
He takes her lotus cheek in the soft cloth,
then draws her again and again against his heart.*

*Bride and groom touch one another's limbs in joy,
and tears fill their eyes.
Jan Harinath says: the bliss of Raghunath and Siya
lies beyond description.*

Kohbar — Pada 111

*A golden mansion, studded with gems and rubies,
has sandalwood fitted upon its doors;
the bridal night is lovely.*

*Banana-tree pillars, golden leaves, paired pots at the doorway;
a canopy like the churning of the seven seas, adorned in rainbow colors.
Across the broad brow of the splendid mansion,
crimson festoons appear as beautiful as sandal paste.*

*Against cloth dark as clouded sky, strands of stars become necklaces of diamonds.
Nets of pearls and rows of coral garlands fill the playroom with delight.
Innumerable divine lamps blaze and glitter;
an ivory bed is spread with flowers, a curtain hanging above it.*

*Tender Sita enters and lies there beside Kausalya's son.
The women of Mithila sing with feeling and wander in loving delight.
Ranjan says: singing of the wedding of Rama and Siya,
they obtain all four auspicious fruits.*

Kohbar — Pada 112

*"Whose kohbar is red with crimson powder,
and whose kohbar is roofed with betel leaves?"
"Ayodhya's kohbar is red with crimson powder,
while Mithila's kohbar is roofed with betel leaves."*

*The bridegroom Sri Rama entered the kohbar;
Janak's daughter came with him.
"You are the son of a noble father;
cover your face with your veil against the sun's fierce heat."
When Sri Rama heard these words,*

*he rose—and clouds gathered and began to rain!
Then the bride began to cry aloud:
"Dear one, open the door, open it!"*

On this winter night, give me a place upon the bed.

“My father gave no dowry to yours.”

*“I shall accept no dowry from your father;
nor shall I give my own mother money for pilgrimage.”*

Setting Out for the Jevanar — Pada 113

*See how my dashing bridegroom-king comes toward us,
like a rain-bearing cloud in the springtime—my king!
Look at his two hands, crimson-red with henna;
all his clothing is scarlet, and he bears a fine handkerchief—my king!*

*Bashfully adorned for pleasure, he wears a garland of flowers around his neck;
he rides a horse beneath his bridal headdress—my king!
His bearing is truly regal, his every playful gesture royal;
a royal prince, this king from Faizabad!*

*His eyes are like twin roses, as though awakened from a night of love;
he is king over both this world and the next.
Come, friend—we must surely go meet dark Shyam;
that sword-bearing king has left us helpless before him!*

Pada 114

*Come, Lakshminidhi—make the horse dance, O bridegroom;
make the horse dance, all four bridegrooms!
Garuda blushes to see the horse’s gait,
and the peacock is ashamed of its graceful movement.*

*Clouds rise above the jeweled bridal crown upon his head,
and black locks curl in waves.
Jeweled pendants hang beside his tender cheeks;
sandal paste shines upon his brow.*

*His brows are bows and his ruthless eyes their arrows,
hunting the eyes of those who love him.
Sneh stands at the palace doorway and gazes,
while heralds sing thousands of praises.*

Pada 115

*My heart aches to enter the palace of Mithila’s lord;
at the very sight of the bridegroom’s beauty, I would surrender myself without price.
A golden ornament shines upon his head—my heart!
The four fair brothers are equal in youthful age;
no price can be placed upon their worth.*

*My heart longs to speak with him alone.
Bhikhari says: “Lift the veil.”*

Jevanar

*Again a feast of many kinds is prepared;
Janak sends invitations to the wedding guests.
Peerless cloth is spread upon the pathway,
and the king sets out with his sons.*

*He respectfully washes everyone's feet
and seats each guest upon an appropriate low seat.
Janak washes the feet of Ayodhya's lord—
his humility and affection cannot be described.*

*Then he washes Rama's lotus feet,
which lie hidden in the lotus of Hara's heart.
Knowing the three brothers to be Rama's equals,
Janak washes their feet with his own hands.*

*The king gives everyone a fitting seat
and summons all the skilled cooks.
Respectfully the betel attendants take their places,
preparing betel in gem-set golden boxes.*

Doha

*The six flavors, fragrant ghee, and foods of pure and lovely taste—
within moments the courteous, skillful cooks serve them all to everyone.*

*After taking the first five morsels, the guests begin their meal,
listening lovingly to the songs of wedding taunts.
Foods of many kinds are set before them,
so nectar-like that their excellence cannot be told.*

*Wise cooks begin to serve,
each one knowing the many dishes by name.
The scripture describes four modes of eating,
yet not even one can be fully portrayed.
Six delicious flavors appear in many dishes,
and every single flavor assumes countless forms.*

*Women and men call each person's name in turn,
singing wedding taunts in sweet melodies.
At that lovely hour, the taunts themselves appear splendid;
the king and his whole assembly laugh to hear them.*

*In this manner everyone completes the meal;
water for rinsing is respectfully offered.*

Doha

*Janak gives betel and honors Dasharatha with his whole company;
all the crowned kings joyfully return to the guest quarters.*

Riddles

1. *Thirty feet, yet it does not walk upon the earth;
no ears, but thirty-six eyes.
It protects you—offer your blessing to it.*

Answer: Lord Surya.

2. *“Cha-ka-ti” shines upon the face; “va-ra-na” rides upon “va-ga-ha.”
With their consorts, says the poet Ganga, may the prince be blessed.*

Explanation of the wordplay:

1. Cha = Sudarshana chakra; ka = water-pot; ti = trident.
2. Va = Brahma; ra = Rudra; na = Narayana.
3. Va = bull; ga = Garuda; ha = swan.

2. *A little bird grazes by the riverbank, swaying and dangling. Its beak is made of gold, and it drinks water through its tail.*

Answer: A lamp.

4. *The son's name comes from the father's, while the grandson's is something else. Let this babbling groom lift a morsel into his mouth!*

Answer: Mahuā.

Pada 116

Blessed, blessed is this life—look, friends, upon Raghubar's beauty!

Maharaja Dasharatha has come to dine with all four sons beside him: embodiments of love, four moons who ensnare the mind. My eyes are spellbound beholding them—look well upon their beauty!

Wash their feet and seat them before the platters. Adorn the leaf-plates with jewels; serve what pleases them—vegetables and every savory dish—and over it all pour the rasa of affectionate abuse. The delicacies are beyond counting!

If the wedding party cannot eat its fill, why did you not bring your own wives, your sisters, your paternal aunts, and your father's sisters? Who would fail to steal away their youth? Let us test and see!

Among three hundred and sixty women there is only one man; even after a hundred days there will be no escape. Janaka, give him another two or four! Your fame would fill the world if you kept him here as our bridegroom—listen, and see!

The companions sing their gari and offer themselves again and again—to the figures of all four mothers, to their graceful bearing, their lovely smiles, and the delighted glances with which Mod watches them, never looking away.

Pada 117

*The groom boasts very grandly, friend—his wedding party makes even grander claims!
No one in Mithila has ever seen so strange a procession.
From the very beginning Brahma became his father-in-law; everyone knows the wisdom of this clan.
The Vedas themselves proclaim him the ancient, unborn Purusha.
His relative by marriage is “ten,” and he too is a “chariot”; his lady relative is “seven times seven.”
Each one of them creates seventy disturbances apiece.
The wedding guests have remained here for three months, while their wives at home
spend the night counting stars, wondering when their husbands will return.
Ganga is named among the women of his line and Sarayu among the forefathers—what a reversal!
One is a shameless sinner, yet a mere dip in her instantly purifies the body.
Every fault became an ornament the moment this family gained kinship with Sita.
Mod cries “Victory!” in delight, while the gods shower flowers from heaven’s wish-fulfilling tree.*

Pada 118

*Dear honored guest, please dine according to your taste, and forgive every error, remembering
the women of Ayodhya.
We have not managed to prepare any dish truly worthy of you; thinking of this, my heart is
embarrassed.
Hearing the artless sincerity of our feeling, let your own gentle nature awaken again and again
with delight.
If any article seems displeasing, let me know as soon as you recognize it, and merely set a morsel
aside.
I am ashamed to speak even these few words—why are you famed as the supremely
compassionate one?
Do not be shy; follow the custom of your own household, O wise son who gives such happiness to
the saints.
Mod presents this humble entreaty; Sita’s beloved shines as he listens from behind the screen.*

Pada 119

*Beloved connoisseur, royal youth—O beloved connoisseur!
Taste our lovely dishes, and cast upon us one corner of your gracious glance.
Your name, virtues, and beauty are filled with wonders beyond all limit;
whether it is true or not, tell us truly—answer my questions!
The Vedas cry aloud and proclaim you Lord of the worlds;
yet what petition did your sister make among her three would-be husbands?
The world knows and accepts you as the Father of the universe—there is no error in this;
perhaps that is why you conduct yourself toward your own father as though you were his father!
They call you the essence of the whole world, after gathering together every sacred essence;
then what power remains in the “essence” of Bharata, Lakshmana, and Ripusudana?
You repeat your grandfather’s name, and your brother repeats yours—what bewildering
darkness of names!
Modalata has renounced all else to ask you: explain it, O thief of Sita’s heart.*

Pada 120

*I am not insulting you by even a sesame seed's measure; I am only recounting a fine history.
There once was a lord of Raghu's line who had a moonlike son. At first Nasiketa was born, and a
goat's head was placed upon him—hearing this tale, do not take offense.
Then came a greatly renowned destroyer of foes, whose very name makes one laugh; he
remained within the waters, and Mandhata, too, was born in a wondrous fashion—this is what I
have heard.
Sagara's wife was called Sumati. She did not give birth in the ordinary way, but brought forth
sixty thousand sons, who dug out the ocean for the world. Is this not a strange river of a story, as
you know?*

*Shanta was born in Ayodhya and raised in Romapada's house. She reached full age without
being married; then rain ceased and the people cried out. Now tell me—why should I call this
false?
Do not scowl upon hearing the tale; look upon me with a gracious gaze. I have told only this
much. Mod's eyes overflow with affection and remain fixed upon your moonlike face.*

Pada 121

*Do not feel shy within your heart—please eat a little more.
Whatever has been made, whether plain or savory, accept it knowingly and forgive us.
The hearts of loving people thirst for your glance; look toward them and smile.
Whatever dowry gifts you receive, do not let them bring sadness to your mind.
You have obtained Sita, who delivers both families; receive her with honor in your heart.
You are famed as an excellent guest—remain seated, smile, and give Mod your blessing.*

Pada 122

*You blush at the very sound of playful abuse, dear bridegroom Rama!
Eat our lovely dishes, and listen to my teasing words.
You are dark, with beauty that shames Kama—then how are your mother and father both so fair?
Hearing the gari in your father-in-law's city, Raghunandan smiles; O abode of grace, rejoice,
friend, and turn your gaze toward Sita.*

Pada 123

*Let us choose the choicest abuses and bestow them upon this darling groom!
Thirty-six kinds of food and countless dishes fill the jeweled platters.*

*The beloved youth dines within Siddhi Sadan while all his sisters-in-law sing.
Your sister Shanta is an exceedingly tender princess.
She ought to have been given to a royal prince, yet a matted-haired ascetic carried her away!
If this is the custom of your royal household, how can such conduct be accepted outside it?
Not one maiden of Ayodhya will be safe from being carried away.
The darling youth eats and smiles softly; Sita's companions offer themselves to him.*

Pada 124

*What wondrous delight there is, darling, in the gari of one's in-laws!
Through immense fortune you have come to Janakpur and found all your sisters-in-law.
Listen to one matter of ours: your sister is dearer to me than life itself.
Your royal beauty is a treasury of splendor, O dark and handsome bridegroom.
How will any woman of Ayodhya remain safe from you?
Yet one thing is certain: your sister is the radiance of your lineage.
Great and generous sages seek her—such is your sister!
When the whole world desires her, what guardian could possibly restrain her?
Let Princess Shanta wander through every lane of Mithila.
Behold and ponder the virtues of your own sister.*

Pada 125

*Honored guest, what can I say? Hearing it, my heart grows shy again and again.
Anyone who loves your sister would naturally suit you well.
Whoever catches her eye, she throws her arms around his neck.
She devours worldly shame and all concern for family honor, little by little.*

*Yet that maiden is supremely extraordinary and is not ashamed even in the least.
She does not delight in merely one man—she enchants all three worlds!
Seeing her beauty from nail to crown, Kama himself becomes useless and bewildered.
Mod says that the sophisticated women of Ayodhya go away transformed, turned altogether upside down.*

Pada 126

*You came, honored guest, and did exceedingly well; by good fortune you obtained beautiful Sita.
The moment the beloved set foot in your city, your sanctifying fame spread through all three worlds.
Through holy company you learned the highest essence and took Grandfather Vishvamitra along with you.
All dangers ended when you broke the bow; attaining Sita, you became cool and peaceful.
Seeing the disposition of Janaka's heart-enchanted daughter, you placed her hand within your own; Mod rejoices.*

Pada 127

*Sing plenty of gari for this charming, carefree darling!
You would become father to ten daughters, yet you keep fixing your eyes upon this one.
We shall feed you with thirty-six lovely dishes, serving each kind with affection.
Do not be embarrassed by this beloved gari from your in-laws; listen to it again and again.
You have only one sister, dear boy—tell us, to whom shall she be given?
The sages make so many efforts to obtain your sister.
Without Shanta they find no peace, not even for an instant.
The whole world desires revered Shanta—why keep asking again and again?
Give your sister here in Mithila; why send her anywhere else?*

Pada 128

*Do not take offense within your heart; listen to what I say, Raghunandan.
This gari is the affectionate gift of your in-laws.*

*Raw and cooked, sweet and sour—here are chutney and digestive powders.
Their sharp taste wakes the appetite, so the dishes please Your Highness.
You are known to be wise, yet you glare and roll your eyes;
even so, I shall not stop until my wish is fulfilled.
Even if the whole night passes while we sit here, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*I did not summon you, nor did anyone write you a letter;
barefoot, without even shoes, you came behind the sage as his companion.
Seeing Janakpur, the bee of your mind grew greedy for the nectar of the divine pair.
You would have remained here forever, had Guruji only given permission.
Your heart kept wondering how a bond with Janakpur might be made, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*Today you asked sage Kaushika's leave to behold Janaka's city.
The eagerness was in your own heart, but you placed the blame upon Lakshmana:
“If you permit, I shall show him the city, as though taking him to the holy places.”
Filled with proud delight, you set off dressed in all your finery.
The state of the flower garden cannot be described, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*At the first glance you saw only the city's outer beauty,
yet even then all the former pride of you two princes vanished.
The loveliness of the inner city proved finer still;
wherever you went, the mind remained fixed and the eyelids forgot to blink.
Gazing toward the bow pavilion, you stood astonished and startled, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*Every resident of Mithila knows how the bow was broken;
Shiva and the other gods were left dismayed and cast down.*

*Your head bowed, the victory garland was placed upon you—and one special thing occurred:
you gained a wife, your aim was won, and a treasury of joy rained down.
Everyone was drenched as though beneath a monsoon cloud, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*In all fourteen worlds the wedding news brought joy and preparations began.
Chariots, elephants, horses, camels, palanquins, garments, and every conveyance were assembled.
Gods, human beings, and sages joined the varied procession with hearts full of delight.
The whole company was incomparable—yet one thing remained lacking: the women of Ayodhya had not come!
Seeing the bridegroom's procession, the world was blessed, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*The residents of Ayodhya received every heart-desired and heaven-rare delight, ever fresh;
they forgot their own homes and doorways entirely.
Three months of hospitality and continual eating made every guest grow round.
Hearing our rich, mischievous gari, their hearts became sweet as rasgullas.
Meanwhile the women of Ayodhya counted the stars until dawn, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*All six flavors and every dish were served before the four brothers,
yet none of you could lift a morsel; you only sat smiling softly.
In your stories you toss the universe about like a little ball,
but in deed even a single sweet laddu became too heavy to raise!
Covering your face with a handkerchief, you smiled gently, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*One day everyone was served lentils, rice, greens, and curds;
when no other dish appeared, the men of Ayodhya lost their patience.
They rolled up their sleeves and hastily began to eat.
Then all the other dishes arrived at once—now let us see whether they eat them or not!*

*Caught in this dilemma, their hands drew back and they could neither eat nor refuse,
Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

*Seeing fine basmati flattened rice, they asked one another, “What tree does this grow upon?”
They stared here and there at curds, flattened rice, and many other foods.
One warned another, “Be quiet, or all Mithila will laugh at us!”
What a wondrous wedding party these residents of Mithila behold, Raghunandan—this is our
gari!*

*Here the worship uses Vedic mantras, yet its customs are wonderfully mischievous.
Proud young men like Lakshmana have their cheeks warmed and teased;
they are set to pounding grain, jostled and pinched by the nose by Mithila's women.
Not one clever stratagem works—they are left drenched in embarrassment.
Even Narayana and the sages laugh “Ha! Ha!” at them, Raghunandan—this is our gari!*

Pada 129

*In what pride did you set out, Raghavaji—in what pride did you come?
Dasharatha made immense efforts and Kaushalya performed austerities before you were called
their son.
Without spending a coin, you came to Mithila and received everything here for free!
Before reaching Buxar, what great manly deed had you performed in Ayodhya?
Once you entered Mithila's road, you slew Tataka and redeemed Ahalya.
First you deceived all Mithila with your captivating form and brought it under your spell;
then, entering the flower garden like a thief, you stole Sita's awareness.
You advanced, beauty bound about you, as though setting forth for battle; hearing the anklets
ring, you halted.
On that autumn dawn sweat appeared upon your brow, and for one moment you lost all
awareness.
Pure son of Raghu—where then was your firm resolve? How did such feeling fill your mind?*

*During the evening rite you faced east and, by some trick of moonlight, cast your enchantment.
When the moonlike groom rose dark as night, the shadow of fair Kishori, Janaka's beloved
daughter, fell upon him and turned him green with love.
You broke the bow and proudly wore the victory garland;
yet when you tried to open Kishori's bracelet, it would not come loose, and then you blushed.
You bound everyone in the bonds of maya, but in Mithila you yourself were bound.
The whole world rests cool beneath your shelter, yet you alone became ensnared in Mithila.
You are the receiver of all the world, yet they call you the crown-jewel of generous donors;
in Mithila the donor was noble Janaka, and you became the recipient.
Everywhere else you are worshiped as lord of the gods with the Vedas' sacred verses;
here at your in-laws' home you received no morsel without the abuse of sisters-in-law.
Though proclaimed by the Vedas, you became the girls' defeated opponent in the kohbar dice
game.
Losing and growing vexed, at last you fled from Mithila!*

The Daily Wedding Feast — Pada 130

*Seeing that Raghubar was burning from the spicy food, a companion offered the edge of her veil and laughingly said,
“Dear red-lipped boy, whose son are you? Openly tell us the truth.”
“Listen, dear one: I am the son of Dasharatha, whose noble fame is known throughout the world.”
“Your husband is fair, while you, dear boy, are dark—how am I to recognize you as the same lord?”
“Listen, clever woman: had I not become dark, what adornment would remain for me?
Without a word, I drank the rasa of Sri Janaka's daughter, and so, beloved, I became dark.”
“What bee must be summoned to the sweet nectar within a lotus?”
Hearing Ramcharan's intimate words, all the companions smiled.*

Pada 131

Listen, Rasikaraja Raghunandana, to ritual abuse spoken in the ways of love.

*You are dark while my mistress is fair—what a very great wonder!
If the color red should please you, then let us offer this proposal:*

*remain in Mithila for a little while and become a refined and tender city-dweller;
dwell within Sri Lakshminidhi's radiant palaces.*

*Perform whatever service pleases your Beloved and delights Srinidhi;
then, dear one, you will become fair, and my mistress will take on your likeness.*

*All the companions laugh together, exchanging these delightful thoughts;
hearing them, Raghunandana turns his face aside and smiles—Kamadendra gives himself in sacrifice.*

Pada 132

*The rasika prince Raghunandana eats with his beloved Sita,
the refined lady and treasury of rasa.*

*Fifty-six delicacies, the six tastes and all their subtle variations,
form an array of food that bestows delight.*

*Upon a table of wish-fulfilling gems lie soft dishes,
delicate as foam upon milk.*

*Knowing the Divine Couple's preferences,
the women arrange one wondrous creation after another:*

*juicy fruits, sprouts, roots and plantain,
sweet dried fruits and nectar-like confections;*

*many chutneys, pickles, murabba,
and vegetables prepared in countless ways.*

*The supremely youthful women serve them,
knowing the tastes of the Divine Couple.*

*Fragrant, cool water from the Sarayu
fills a consecrated golden ewer.*

*Pausing amid conversation steeped in rasa,
they pour the water with their own hands.*

*The couple eats from a single plate—
a vast and lovely source of bliss.*

*Says Agra Ali: they are my very life;
I break a straw before them and offer myself in sacrifice.*

Pada 133

*Sri Raghuvira and Mithilesha's Darling eat together,
surrounded by their companions.*

*Their lovely arms shine close together;
smiling, the youthful forms delight even Ananga.*

*Sita prepares a morsel and gives it lovingly to her Beloved;
he praises its flavor again and again.*

*The Divine Couple, treasures of rasa, are filled with color and delight;
the young companions gaze upon them from every side.*

*Their reflections flash within the jeweled palace,
as though it were a pleasure-ground fashioned for Love.*

*May they sport eternally in Sri Awadhpur;
beholding them, Agra Ali's longing has borne fruit.*

Pada 134

*The two eat together, absorbed in laughter and play;
waves of rasa, color, and delight pour through every limb.*

*Touching one another in ever-new ways, they lift morsels,
yet cannot bring them to their own mouths.*

*With the nectar of his own hand, Rama lovingly feeds
a morsel to Sita and gazes upon her.*

*His good fortune swells as he kisses her hand;
his heart becomes filled with immense delight.*

*Songs and instruments rise in fresh waves of melody;
the married women are immersed in happiness.*

*Says Kripanivasa: may I receive that blessed remnant
for which even great sages yearn.*

Pada 135

*The Beloved and his darling eat together,
increasing auspiciousness and joy.*

*They give one another morsels,
smiling gently, moon-face toward moon-face.*

*Vimala serves the many kinds of food,
while Kamala waves the fan.*

*This ocean of beauty cannot be described;
such sweetness makes the lovely bower delightful.*

*Chandrakala brings Sarayu water in her hands
and has them rinse after the meal.*

*Says Ramasakhe: may the Divine Pair remain gracious;
may this blessed vision forever endure.*

Pada 136

*Sri Raghunandana and Sita eat together;
friend, gaze and gaze again, and let your heart fill with joy.*

*Seated upon a jewel-studded throne,
they shine softly like a rain cloud and lightning.*

*The graceful sakhis refine the many dishes
and place jeweled plates in their lotus-hands.*

*Cuckoo-voiced women sing as they serve,
their seven tender notes exquisitely sweet.*

*Some hold heavy jeweled water-vessels,
filled with the lovely water of the Sarayu.*

*All gaze upon the faces of Beloved and Darling,
serving whatever their hearts desire.*

*They perfect each morsel and offer it to the other's moonlike face;
the beauty of that moment lies beyond words.*

*Says Rasika Ali: seeing this wondrous rasa,
I offer my very life in sacrifice.*

Pada 137

*They eat whatever pleases the heart;
only the eyes know the joy with which the two eat and feed one another.*

*The Beloved conceives a playful desire and prepares a morsel
to place in Sita's mouth.*

*But smiling, he gazes with eyes filled by her sweetness,
and the morsel remains forgotten in his hand.*

*This rare rasa, flowing through the five devotional moods,
is truly understood only by the intimate companions.*

*Hari's companions attain the longings of their hearts
through the grace of Mithilesha's Darling.*

Pada 138

*Sri Raghunandana and Sita eat together,
shining within a fresh bower of sweetness.*

*Intoxicated by one another's beauty, they play upon the jeweled seat,
offering delightful morsels with lotus-hands.*

*Many dishes have been made in countless ways,
abundant with the six tastes and four kinds of nectar.*

*Young maidens stand on every side,
longing to receive a command.*

*Filled with love and intoxicated by embodied rasa,
they smile enchantingly and steal the heart.*

*O Ramasakhe, within this ocean of nectar and joy,
the fish-like minds of rasikas are caught in beauty's net.*

Pada 139

Rama and beloved Sita rinse after eating.

*Shyama stands with betel in her hand,
and Rama holds the heavy vessel of water.*

*Chandravati carries a spotless mirror,
and tender Chandrakala bears a napkin.*

*Subhaga carries the Beloved's garments,
while another companion bears Sita's sari.*

*After rinsing, the couple sits upon a delightful seat,
bringing happiness to everyone.*

*Says Ramasakhe: again and again I offer myself
upon seeing the Divine Couple's beautiful faces.*

Pada 140

*Having eaten, they sit and receive betel:
fair Sita, youthful and charming, with her wise dark Beloved.*

*Some place flower-garlands upon them,
while others perfume them with attar.*

*A betel quid rests upon their lips; beauty overflows,
and a gentle smile plays there.*

*The Beloved smiles and gazes upon his Darling's form,
his reddened eyes languid with delight.*

*Then the beloved boy takes his Darling's hand and rises;
Rasika Ali receives the gift of joy.*

Pada 141

*Let me give you a refined betel quid:
kattha, lime, cloves, areca nut, and whatever else pleases the heart.*

*Come, beloved boy—let us play chaupar;
I shall wager my life and all my wisdom.*

*O Janakahariya, give Raghunandana the betel;
listen to the secret longing within the heart.*

Song of a Dom of Mithila — Pada 142

The Dom stands holding out his bowl, O beloved boy.

*For so many days I have watched the road for the bridegroom;
today that long-awaited day has finally come, O beloved boy.*

*Through age after age, dear child, others have received their turn;
this time the turn is mine, O beloved boy.*

*Gods, human beings, and sages yearn for the remnants from your plate;
only your devotees have a rightful claim to them, O beloved boy.*

*The Kurmi women glance this way and that;
bridegroom, cast your gaze upon me as well, O beloved boy.*

*With hands joined again and again, I petition you:
regard this Dom as one of your own, O beloved boy.*

*Says Rama's devotee Asha: bridegroom,
turn those gracious eyes toward me for just a moment, O beloved boy.*

Song of a Domin of Mithila — Pada 143

*O bridegroom, your very presence casts the evil eye;
I offer myself to you, my dark beloved!*

*A wedding cloth crowns your head; yellow silk girds your waist;
you wear a saffron robe.*

*A diamond flashes at your throat, delight shines upon your lips,
and playful longing ripples through your hands.*

*Charming, colorful, graceful—
your rose-red scarf is delightful.*

*Your brows draw Love's bow, and your eyes shoot arrows;
they strike again and again, their kohl a deadly poison.*

*I, the Domin of Mithila, will dwell in Awadh
and gather the remnants from your plate.*

*Tasting the nectar from your lips,
I shall spend my whole life in bliss.*

*Now I will never abandon this quarrel,
even if you take me away to the city of Awadh.*

*I shall gaze upon your beauty in every house,
courtyard, and assembly hall.*

Whenever you bathe—in the morning or at midday—

I shall remain upon the path, gazing at the red dye upon the Lord's feet.

*I shall perform service in the pleasure-palace,
taking up each task at every step.*

*Says Nehalata: beholding the bridegroom's beauty,
my life itself has become blessed.*

The Farewell: Barahmasa — Pada 144

*"If you leave your in-laws' home now, where will you go, my Lord?
Beloved, remain here in the city of Mithila.*

*The month of Pausha has arrived; your mother-in-law's heart is anxious,
yet all happiness dwells in this house of your in-laws.*

*In Magha, when the cold is lovely, I shall spread a quilt of love;
beneath that covering you will not fear the winter chill.*

*In Phalguna I shall have you play Holi;
I shall mix the colors and fill the water-syringe again and again.*

*In Chaitra the king of seasons arrives, with flowers overflowing;
I shall weave garland after garland and place them upon your lovely form.*

*When Vaishakha comes and the body is scorched by heat,
dear boy, I shall shelter you beneath a parasol.*

*In Jyeshtha the hot wind blows and even grass cannot bear it;
Beloved, I shall not let you walk upon the road.*

*In Ashadha the clouds gather and endless drops descend;
I shall let you behold the beauty of the riverbank from within the chamber.*

*When the splendor of Shravana arrives, I shall prepare a flower-decked swing;
Darling, you shall swing within the flower-garden.*

*In Bhadrapada the rivers and streams are full;
I shall adorn a boat, and we shall drift joyfully upon the Kamala River.*

*In Ashvina autumn's beauty comes, and moonlight spreads on every side;
I shall arrange the rasa dance within the golden palace.*

*At Kartika's second lunar day I shall celebrate and invite Shanti here;
vajri sweets will be served upon a jeweled plate.*

*In Agrahayana I shall arrange a festival, showering you with ritual abuse;
in such delight, why would you go to the house of your in-laws?"*

Pada 145

*"Bridegroom, where else could you find in-laws like these?
Do not leave Mithila; remain in the kohbar all twelve months.*

*Every sister and sister-in-law will stay in your service,
fulfilling every longing of your heart.*

*Whatever you ask for, we shall provide;
never, O Lord, will you be disappointed.*

*We shall choose flowers one by one and spread your bed,
and there you may enjoy the play of love.*

*You shall pass your days happily among us all."
Says Rupalata: abandon every worldly expectation.*

Pada 146

*"Let a fresh wedding be celebrated every day—guest, remain here!
Remain in Mithila, guest; where else would you go?*

*If you depart for Awadh, where will you find your sisters and sisters-in-law?
Who there will greet you with sweets and delicacies—and who will feed you without ritual abuse?*

*You have grown accustomed to all this; how will you give it up?
How will the bond tied with your beloved be broken?*

*If you carry your sisters and sisters-in-law away to Awadh,
will Awadh remain Awadh—or become Mithila itself?"*

Pada 147

*"Why not remain, O royal bridegroom, in Janaka's city?
With a gentle smile, Hari has poured the nectar of love into my heart.*

*O rasika lover, your heart-stealing glance
has struck the arrow of your eyes.*

*In the midst of this city I shall establish Sajanpur,
close beside the quarters of Videha.*

*Facing the palace of the young maiden,
I shall build a pure and lovely golden mansion.*

*Its moonlit courtyard will be spotless,
with flower-gardens, splendid trees, and fragrant pathways.*

*A spring breeze will blow there forever,
and the marketplace will overflow with joy.*

*Lovely women will meet you eagerly each day,
dear sisters as beloved as Sita herself.*

*O royal bridegroom, make this dear house of your in-laws blessed;
sport in many kinds of laughter and loving play.*

*Let your beautiful, doe-eyed sisters-in-law
strike you with their sidelong glances.*

*Says Nehalalita: even while you live in Awadh,
keep asking after the welfare of this city.”*

Pada 148

*“Darling, if you leave your in-laws’ home, where will you go?
If you go from Mithila to Awadh, tell us truthfully—when will you return?”*

*You came once and obtained Siaji;
when will you ever come again?*

*We tease you only because we are your sisters-in-law;
do not take sorrow from our ritual abuse.*

*O refined city-dweller, never forget
your sisters and sisters-in-law.”*

Pada 149

*“Darling, why leave your in-laws’ home?
Such happiness will never be found elsewhere.*

*Mother-in-law, father-in-law, sisters, and sisters-in-law—
remember everyone in Mithila.*

*Regard your wife’s sister as your own sister;
dear moon-faced one, come and see us again.*

*Even in the pleasure-groves, Raghubara, do not forget us;
send a letter written by your own hand.*

*If you go to Awadh, Raghunandana, tell us truthfully—when will you return?
Says Jnana Ali: my longing will bear fruit when you embrace me laughing.”*

Pada 150

*“Beloved, wise dark bridegroom, you must depart with your companions.
You were born here in Mithilapur by the grace of Shankara and Gauri.*

*Our mistress Siaji, treasury of virtue, is our sister;
today you are taking her away.*

*Awadh in Koshala is the crown among sacred realms,
and Rama the crown among rasikas.*

*Sri Pramodavana is the crown among forest bowers,
the abode of every happiness.*

*In separation from her, birds, parrots, and mynas,
the entire city and countryside, grow deeply distressed.*

*Says Yugalapriya: it is no longer fitting to remain;
now we must set out for Awadh.”*

Pada 151

*“Had I known that Ramaji, our guest, would leave for home at dawn,
ten or five of us friends would have gathered and bound him by oath beforehand, O beloved boy.*

*Ramaji rides away mounted upon his horse,
his shawl fluttering in the wind, O beloved boy.*

*A red turban shines upon Rama,
while Siqji wears her green bridal veil, O beloved boy.*

*Neither house nor doorway pleases me now;
even my own bed gives no delight, O beloved boy.*

*The friends of Janakpur say,
‘He bound us in love and then departed,’ O beloved boy.*

*One mind says, ‘Let me go with him into the wilderness,’
but the long road frightens me, O beloved boy.*

*‘Take heart, friend—Rama will return,
bringing Janaka’s Darling with him,’ O beloved boy.”*

Pada 152

*The daughter leaves the city of Mithila for a distant place, sister;
happiness has fallen away from Mithila, friend—it cannot be described.*

*Behold the condition of the king:
tears stream ceaselessly from his eyes.*

*The queens weep in separation within their palaces;
even the cows low, grieving for their calf.*

*Parrots, mynas, and all the creatures cry out,
calling again and again, “Sia! Sia!”*

Song of a Dom of Mithila — Pada 153

*“With such care I raised Siaji,
and now Raghubara is taking her away from us.*

*The happy elephants weep in their stalls and the horses in their stables;
the queens weep within the inner palace.*

*Come together, dear friends, embrace her one last time;
Sia is departing for a foreign land.*

*Ramachandra goes in front, the palanquin follows,
and Lakshmana walks behind it.*

*A cry of lamentation rises through Janaka’s city,
while songs of congratulation resound in Ayodhya.*

*Lakshmipati sings this samdaun:
what has been written by destiny cannot be erased.”*

Pada 154

*Dear Rama, beloved Raghunatha, may you always remain happy—
remain happy, ever laughing and joyful.*

*The women of Mithila, adorned in all sixteen ornaments,
are singing; listen to our petition, O prince.*

*Hear our plea attentively, bridegroom Sri Rama:
from this day onward, perform one task for us.*

*Morning, noon, and evening,
keep remembering us, dear one.*

*All the sakhis are overcome with tears;
remain here a few more days, Raghuraya.*

*We cannot live without seeing you.
I fear to insist too much, lest you become displeased;
I am only a simple woman, while you are the wise king of Raghu’s line.*

Bow at the feet of Mother Kausalya on our behalf.

*Bring Janaki with you to Mithila, Raghunatha;
keep returning here often.*

We shall feed our sons-in-law bright white rice—

*“Take a little leisure at our darling’s new home;
keep her for a few days, then send her back without delay.
Please fulfill this wish of ours, dear one.*

“As long as the Ganga and Yamuna flow,

as long as the sun's radiance endures,
may your wedded pair remain immortal.
Together everyone gives this blessing: may the couple live forever.
Dark beloved, keep your heart clear—do not take offense.
May Sita and Shyama always dwell in happiness, dear one.”

Parichhan in Ayodhya — Pada 155

“Friend, behold the radiant couple!
The Lord of Kosala has returned from Mithila to Ayodhya with his bride.
The bridegrooms dismount from their conveyances,
and all the mothers, thrilled with delight, begin the parichhan rite.

“Show us the fair bridegroom's face!
The queens of Dasharatha are impatient for the sight.
These mischievous women of Mithila know every spell and enchantment”—
so, to avert their magic, the mothers circle mustard and salt around the couple.

Each queen hurries eagerly to behold the brides;
after performing parichhan and warding away evil,
they lift the veils again and again.
Their hearts overflow with love as they open the jewel-studded curtains,
yet even after millions of glimpses their eyes remain unsatisfied.

Pada 156

“Friend, look—the bride has come into the house!
All the mothers perform parichhan, circling the auspicious articles again and again.
Someone averts evil with precious jewels and offers a ceremonial gift;
someone opens the veil, longing to see that lovely face.

“Astonished, they gaze upon the bride and bathe in an ocean of bliss.
They grow weary searching the three worlds, but find no beauty equal to Siya's.
Even the consorts of the gods are abashed before the Lord of Kosala's bride;
whoever sees her face forgets the customary gift, unable to steady her heart.
Disguised as companions, Girija, Saraswati, and Indira come openly for the sight.
Beholding her face, even Sri Raghuraja relinquishes all pride in his own beauty.”

Savaiya

Seeing the bride radiant as a lamp, Gauri's pride in beauty dissolves like a river;
the house is filled with hundreds of companions, while every desired perfection seems to stand
watching in all directions.
All the countless worlds tire themselves seeking another face fit to rival Siya's, but find none.
Placing Raghunandana—the jewel himself—into Siya's hands, her mother-in-law, though shy,
still gazes upon that face.

Chumavan in Ayodhya — Pada 157

*“Mother, the barber-woman has been summoned by name
to perform chumavan for the daughter and Raghubara.
The courtyard has been plastered and perfumed with sandal;
auspicious floor designs have been drawn with elephant pearls.*

*“Women hurry in bearing auspicious, brimming pots,
glowing like rubies, Mother.
Rama shines in yellow silk, with Sita seated at his right.
Mother Kausalya sits to perform chumavan for Sita and Sri Rama.”*

The Showing of the Bride’s Face — Pada 158

What a wondrous doll appeared at the showing of her face!

*In the courtyard of Kanak Bhavan a vast crowd has gathered;
thousands of queens arrive in their carriages.*

*In the heavens a great assembly of goddesses has formed,
and the women of the city too have gathered in throngs.
All the companions sing: “What a wondrous doll!” (1)*

*Queen Kaikeyi eagerly lifts the veil.
She stares, loses herself, then at last regains composure and says:
“The beauty of the entire universe has descended upon this bride;
neither Rati, Lakshmi, Saraswati, nor Uma can equal her.*

*“May this Indira, fit for a palace, be blessed;
may the bride be blessed with ever-new conjugal play and good fortune.
May this doll always remain immersed in happiness.” (2)*

*Wise and steadfast Queen Kausalya is so overwhelmed with delight
that she forgets to place the jeweled necklace upon her daughter-in-law.
Queen Sumitra immediately puts the necklace into her hand;
giving the precious ornament to the bride, Kausalya fulfills her heart’s desire.
“Seeing the bride’s face, our very lives are fulfilled, friends!” (3)*

*In this way all the queens behold her lovely face—
what poet could reckon the offerings they make?
The courtyard is heaped high with ornaments and gifts,
while celestial women, overcome with joy, carpet it with flowers.
Every one of them is filled with love, friends. (4)*

*When the queens withdraw, the others’ turn arrives.
They sit close beside her and circle mustard seed to avert the evil eye.*

*One by one they reveal Sri’s blessed face—
but who possesses the power to look upon the sun with her own eyes?
All forget how to speak, hear, or laugh, friends. (5)*

*Indrani and the other celestial women had come proud of their beauty;
one glance filled their hearts with astonishing wonder.*

*"Is this a face, or some magician's spectacle?" each asks, bewildered.
Each sees her own happiness reflected there and departs bearing its likeness.
We all forgot how to speak, meet, or laugh. (6)*

Kavitt

*The sister-in-law opens the bride's veil and seats her close;
companies upon companies of young women gather for the sight.
They gaze from the front and rear, from the right and left;
each sees her own face, yet no one can see the bride's face itself.*

*They go to all the mothers-in-law and tell whatever they imagine:
"Whose enchantment is this? Whose blessing?"
Poet Gopal says they marvel among themselves:
"Is she the daughter-in-law of a mirror—or has the mirror become her daughter-in-law?"*

Arati in Ayodhya — Pada 159

*With joyful hearts the mothers perform arati.
Thrilled and trembling, they circle golden cloth and precious gems again and again.
They teach the brides to bow at the elders' feet,
and all the mothers give blessings by the millions:
"May your wedded good fortune remain unbroken."*

*Seeing the beauty of Rama and Siya, the young women say to one another:
"Friend, now we know—listen! The Creator is indeed a great master of his craft."
Auspicious songs resound, drums thunder through the city,
and no one can contain the rising bliss.
"Live long, all you sons of Ayodhya's lord," sings Tulsidasa, "givers of joy!"*

Untying the Wedding Bracelet — Pada 160

*What an extraordinary thing this bracelet of Siya's has become!
Even the treasure-house of every art is defeated while trying to untie it;
all his pride has vanished.
He broke Shiva's bow and came away full of self-assurance,
but now every trace of that conceit is gone.*

*The new bridegroom cannot fathom its secret;
the more he tries to loosen it, the more bewildered he becomes.
Yogeshvara, treasure of our lives, has lost within his own heart
to the glances of darling Siya.*

Pada 161

*"Come now, show us your cleverness—untie this stubborn bracelet-knot!
How did you turn a stone into a woman?
How did you protect the sage's sacrifice
and destroy the whole host of demons?
This is no Maricha whose pride you can break—
untie this stubborn bracelet-knot!"*

*"Janaka made his fearsome vow,
and you crushed the pride of every warrior.
Even Parashurama fought and lost to you—
yet you have fallen into our snare!
Twisting your eyes will not help you here—
untie this stubborn bracelet-knot!"*

*"You have enchanted the women of Janakpur;
helplessly they have all become yours.
Think of them as innocent women without defense,
whom you conquered without a weapon.
Do not go about stealing hearts that belong to others—
untie this stubborn bracelet-knot!"*

*"You four princes of Raghu's line
have spread your glory throughout the world.
You never admit defeat and never bow your heads—
then tell us, before whom will you bow today?
Learn to fold your hands before darling Siya—
untie this stubborn bracelet-knot!"*

Kavitt

*One woman says, "Listen, O wanderer of Ayodhya:
if you do not seize and open this knot at once,
I shall acknowledge that you are truly our connoisseur of love
only when you have loosened the bracelet-knot."*

*At this, another charming girl laughs and says,
"Dark one, today all your courage and valor will drown!
Darling, you will not escape from us
until you fold your hands before Janaka's daughter."*

Description of the Bride's Beauty — Pada 162

*The beauty of Janaka's darling is immeasurable.
Dark, curling locks glisten upon her moonlike face;
two tresses rest on either side like serpents,
and the bridegroom gazes upon them without blinking.
Dasharatha's darling looks again and again,
his eager heart wholly absorbed.*

Pada 163

*Siya shines today, her body radiant and fair.
Her bangles glitter, her sari shimmers,
and henna richly colors her hands.
Betel has reddened her lips;
she smiles ever so softly.
Kripanivasa says: seated among her companions,
she is filled with beauty and carries herself proudly.*

Pada 164

*Janaka's darling shines among her companions.
All the other women resemble buds of white water lilies,
while Siya appears as the golden champak blossom.
Moon-faced beloved of Raghubara,
she is the ripe fruit of beauty's flowering vine.*

*Gazing upon her loveliness, the beloved's every faculty fails.
With a scarf laid across her shoulders,
she wanders each day through the lane of ashoka trees.
Rasamala says: "She delights my heart—
she is the place where my mind finds rest."*

Pada 165

*How boundless is the fortune of Janaka's darling!
Mistress of Kanak Bhavan, she shines among her companions like living light.
Brahma, Narada, the Vedas, Shiva, Shuka, and Kaga sing her glory;
her bridegroom gazes upon her face, utterly immersed in love.*

*Unshakable wedded blessedness dwells in every one of her limbs.
Rasamala prays: "Live long, cherished one,
united with your beloved in love."*

Pada 166

*Who could ever describe Siya's beauty?
Gauri, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha, the Vedas, and Shesha
all fall silent, humbled in mind.
We behold and contemplate her every day,
keeping that form enshrined within the happy mansion of the heart.*

*Nowhere have we found a fitting comparison;
in the whole world, whom could one set beside Siya?
Knowing this, we all smile—who could fully delight the heart with praise?
Rasamala circles twelve measures of mustard and salt
before Siya's face to ward away the evil eye.*

Pada 167

*Siya, I place my trust in you.
Our bond is your name and your village, Mithila;
you are our friend and support.
Cherished daughter of Mithilesha,
uphold the honor of your renowned compassion.
This alone is your devotee's heartfelt plea:
do not turn me away from your feet.*

Pada 168

*I offer myself to Priya's eyes!
Filled with feeling and filled with rasa,
they enchant even the wanderer of Ayodhya.
Their glances are playful and clever, stealing the heart;
their every curve and movement possesses a beauty all its own.*

*They shatter sorrow and pour out happiness,
becoming a wellspring of joy.
The wise beloved, steeped in love,
is ever conquered by their fresh rasa.
Hemalata sacrifices every comparison before them
and remains gazing without a blink.*

Pada 169

*How graceful is the speech of the cherished girl!
The rasika beloved hears it with delight,
and the lovely pleasure in his heart grows fourfold.
Mango nectar, ambrosia, crystallized sugar, and a hundred moons—
beside the sweetness of her simple, beautiful words, all seem insipid.*

*Her speech is priceless; the mind strains to weigh it,
yet the virtues of every lineage seem small before it.
It shines within her auspicious, moonlike face
like a sacred blossom amid the stars.
Hemalata says: her words are steeped in rasa,
an herb of immortality for life itself.*

Pada 170

*"Mother, our Janaka's darling reigns as queen!
Raghunandana himself, crown of all rasikas,
has come entirely under the sway of her rasa.*

*"He adorns the parting of her hair and arranges the curls upon her cheeks;
filling her with every nectar of life, he makes a garland of his own heart.
He dresses her in ornaments crafted like the sun's own brilliance,
then draws her veil across and shelters her modesty.
Ever obedient to Siya, he has cast away every hesitation and reserve.*

*"Siya knows herself to be queen of queens
and looks upon him with proud affection.*

*Gazing upon the moon of her face,
the king of the chakora birds is captivated at every instant.
In the full assembly of rasa, Priya dances at the front
while song and instruments sound.
Rasamala's beloved, darling of his mistress,
performs every service for her."*

Pada 171

*"Mistress, let me celebrate your wedded blessedness!
Whenever I enter this world, may I serve
Sri Mithilesha's cherished daughter.
I shall apply perfume and sandal paste,
dress and adorn my beloved Lord's lovely beloved,
and lovingly rub fragrant ubtan upon her.*

*"I shall prepare and offer betel,
then speak words steeped in rasa.
Each day I shall pamper her with her beloved
and make myself her attendant.
I shall remain at Shyamasakhi's doorway
and sustain myself upon her blessed remnants."*

Pada 172

*How tender are Siya's little feet—
soft as the down of a bird!
What are rose and crimson lotus beside them?
What greater redness could one imagine?
What is a drop of safflower dye,
whose color fades even as it is wrung out?
What are velvet, the plume of the siris blossom,
or the delicacy of a malati garland?
Before their softness, what comparison can stand?*

*Upon them shine the markings of an upturned lotus,
the wish-fulfilling tree, and the elephant goad.
The splendor of the entire world
has been placed upon each single line.
The gods long to wash those feet,
as the moon pours down its nectar.
Without loving attachment to them,
the ascetic's staff and water-pot are all in vain.*

Pada 173

*Siya is the great queen among queens;
all others are merely her attendants.
Indrani and Brahmani stand before her with folded hands.
Gauri prepares fragrant betel again and again,
while Lakshmi brings it forward to offer.
The eight siddhis stand with joined palms,
and the nine treasures are sold into her service.*

*Every pore of her being protects millions of universes.
Maya herself stands at a single landing
and gives water to all who come to drink;
yet even she repeatedly longs for Siya's grace
and honors her again and again.
Not a leaf can stir without the One
who dwells within every heart.
The saints know her as their chosen deity;
the world knows her as Rama's beloved.*

Pada 174

*Even Rama cannot equal Priya.
Belagi sings her glory without partiality—
here there is no place for stubborn pride.
Janaka is the giver and Rama the receiver;
tell me, then, whose station is higher?
In all the world Siya's name comes first,
and Rama's name follows after hers.*

*All beauty flows from Sri's feet,
and Rama longs to receive it.
Rama bears Siya's own character—
such is the poet's declaration.
Dasavaran asks: "When one washes the other's feet,
who is master and who is servant?"
Understanding this mystery, the mind
worships Siya's feet as its highest refuge.*

Pada 175

*Kishori, take me into your refuge and keep me there.
Compassionate to the lowly, guardian of those who bow before you—do not dwell upon the faults
born of this worldly existence.
I have no benefactor like you anywhere in the world; listen to my plea with both ears.
Your companion, overcome with love, entreats you: take her hand and make her your own.*

Pada 176

*The beauty of my beloved's eyes is forever new.
Beneath the guise of black collyrium, her delighting mind has beheld the dark beloved and made him its dwelling.
Her fair limbs, pupils, brows, and lashes move with the irresistible grace of fish.
Moment after moment their beauty gathers like a raincloud and showers rasa; the chataka bird of the heart drinks, absorbed.
In perpetual union, separation cannot touch them; they are absorbed in the bliss of their own true nature.
Jugalviharini knows this state, attainable by grace and the guru; she is accomplished and expert in rasa.*

Pada 177

*Beloved Sita's two eyes overflow with love.
Dark with collyrium, they delight the mind and bestow happiness upon her companions.
Khanjana birds, peacocks, fish, lotus petals, bees, and forest deer—none is their equal.
If one calls them Rati, Rati herself dies of shame; if one calls them Kama, even Kama cannot compare.
Uma, Lakshmi, Brahmani, and all the goddesses were weighed against them, yet none balanced the scale.
She is the dear daughter of Sri Mithilesha; only her beloved could offer a fitting comparison.
The eyes that behold them become fulfilled and saturated with rasa; no description can ever reach their end.
Jugalviharini knows that the Beloved alone truly understands them, gazing upon them day and night.*

Pada 178

*Kishori's matchless words are filled with rasa.
Moon, parrot, cuckoo—even the sweetest voice—none is their equal.
Her teeth shine softly, her lips glow with beauty, and her words give her beloved the highest delight.
Limb by limb her beauty overwhelms every poet; even Sharada's voice cannot express it.
She sports endlessly with her beloved and gives delight within the Golden Palace.
Jugalviharini, filled with exultation, serves them with the companions day and night.*

Pada 179

*Look, dear friends, upon the captivating bridegroom and bride!
Janaka's daughter is a blessed branch of the divine wish-fulfilling tree, gracious through the fortune of this birth.
Moonlight has arisen from the ocean of Nimi's line and illumined Ayodhya.
The nectar-faced bride drinks the stream of her beloved's beauty through her two eyes.*

Pada 180

*Behold the young bride of the youthful darling!
She is the sun that opens the lotus of Nimi's line, the sovereign lady who has brought happiness to Raghu's house.
A lovely art has unfolded from the new knot of affection between the maiden of Ayodhya's lord and her beloved.
Receiving the beautiful vessel of love according to her own desire, the young lover yearns for her.
Darling of the sovereign lord of love, she is the ornament upon my head.*

Pada 181

*Sita, I place my trust in your revered feet.
Kaushala's Prince, treasury of all illusion-dispelling power, dwells in the particles of dust beneath your soles.
Your feet are the means of crossing the world and the source of auspiciousness within my heart;
from them alone will my fortune arise.*

*They are the essential form of rasa, where eternal happiness overflows; they are a mine of blessed virtues and devotion, my refuge until death.
Show but a little affection and the heart of your servant is fulfilled—your renowned generosity exists to sustain and protect us.*

Pada 182

*Our Sita is the very limit of beauty.
In every limb dwell countless Lakshmis and Ratis; faced with them, all comparison is left without support.
Beholding the radiance of her face, the moon withdrew into the sky in shame and sorrow.
She is her beloved's very life, the life-restoring herb; separation from her brings terrible pain.
Every moment the companions circle mustard seed and salt around her to ward off the evil eye.
Mod beholds the sweetness of her lovely limbs, yet cannot drink enough of it.*

Pada 183

*Dear one, your beloved's eyes have become chakora birds before your moonlike face.
They do not wish to turn away even for an instant; it seems that the Creator gave them life only for this sight.
The connoisseur of rasa never accepts restraint, once he has drunk the nectar of your beauty.
Blessed, blessed is your wedded fortune; blessed is this abundant happiness bestowed upon you.
The Creator alone knows the taste of this supreme rasa—without your grace, it cannot be put into words.*

Pada 184

*How beautifully our sovereign Sita has been adorned!
Millions of suns and moons are shamed before her radiance; every comparison has proved insipid.
Adorned for the wedding, every limb of the lovely, captivating bride shines.
Blessed is your fortune, bridegroom of Ayodhya, to have received so excellent a bride!
Bridegroom and bride, live forever in happiness—this is the blessing of Sita's companion.*

Pada 185

*The bride is a darling, artless and carefree.
Exceedingly beautiful, tender, and charming, she is adorned in the full array of wedding ornaments.
Shining beside her beloved, she glows more brightly than millions of moons.
As the youthful groom is a captivating dark cloud, so the young bride is lightning.
Beholding them again and again, her dearest companions offer their very lives and circle protective offerings around them.*

Pada 186

*Beloved, your lover is exceedingly full of love.
The color of your passion spreads crimson through his eyes.
Yellow cloth shines at his waist; a yellow scarf rests upon his shoulders.
His yellow sacred thread is lovely, and a yellow mark is carefully set upon his brow.
At the mere sound of "Sita," he becomes so enchanted that all bodily awareness falls away.
Again and again he offers himself to every devotee who repeats Sita's name.
The king of connoisseurs forever keeps rasa upon his lips.
Every day he safeguards your pleasure and honors each tender inclination.
Is this Rati, or are you indeed she? This clever way of love is extraordinary.
Lost in delight within the temple of Mod, he remains forever immersed in happiness.*

Pada 187

*Dear Sita, most lovely one, cast toward me the corner of those lotus eyes.
Your beloved remains fixed in an unbroken gaze, like a chakora bird before the moon of bliss.
Reverently placing your feet upon the cloth spread over his hand, the thief of hearts adorns them with painted designs.
Reflecting upon his supreme good fortune, he sways in delight, wholly overwhelmed by love.*

*With saffron and musk he carefully traces firm designs upon your brow, cheeks, throat, and hair.
Again and again he colors you with the pigment of passion, himself immersed in the rasa of love.
Happy only in your happiness, he studies your every inclination and entreats you with eyes full of longing.
Ready from nail to crown with every adornment, he stands present—the crest-jewel among connoisseurs, says Mod.*

Pada 188

*Tell me, dear one—under love's command, what does your beloved not do for you?
Moment after moment your beauty assumes a fresh splendor; he gazes without even blinking.
The Unmanifest becomes manifest and fills your feet with crimson alta.
Deeply attached, almost intoxicated, he bows his head before them.
He secretly tends and embellishes them, then hides them within his heart.
Judging them a hundred times softer than his own curls, he nearly dies of reverent shame.
Seeing Sita's feet, he offers himself—body and life—again and again.
He becomes exceedingly tender toward every devotee who repeats Sita's name.*

Pada 189

*Kishori, I need nothing from anyone but you.
I have no concern at all with the rest of the world.
Ever since I heard of your gate,
the longing to meet you has possessed me.
Ask only my own heart
how one in separation remains alive.
I have made this single vow:
one day I shall take refuge beneath your feet.*

*Snehalatika desires to cling to those feet.
Whatever is destined to happen shall happen only through them.*

Pada 190

*Maharani Sita, become the guardian even of one so fallen as I; my sole hope is in your feet.
I have practiced no karma and no dharma; all my days have passed in pleasure and comfort.
Yet my birth occurred within the city of Mithila, and in that alone lies my trust and confidence.
Brahma, Hari, Hara, gods, humans, sages, and kinnara—all place their hope in this one abode.
Snehalata, too, has fixed her hope there: grant her a dwelling at your feet.*

Pada 191

*The cord of my hopes is tied toward the lotus feet of my sovereign lady.
You alone know what lies within; recognize this thirsty heart and cast upon it one corner of
grace.
This vine of love is very old; it has withered for want of water—water it now and make it flourish
again.
Sovereign Lady, preserve your natural character. Knowing me to have no refuge, do not
abandon me now; I have no other hand to grasp.
May I always meditate upon the divine pair and sing their rasa-filled virtues with my tongue,
immersing every pore in rasa.*

Pada 192

*Look, look, dear friend, upon the bride who is my companion—her beloved suits her perfectly.
The moon-jewel upon her head shames the moon; seeing it, even Rati and Kama are spellbound.
Her masses of dark curling hair work havoc, their locks spreading across the face of the lovely
woman.
Behold the sparkle of her earrings and the buoyant movement of her nose-ring, dear friend!*

*A wondrous forehead ornament shines; her abundant married splendor overflows.
Her lotus eyes are lovely and fresh, awakening exultation and love within the heart.
Behold the sweetness of her smile and the radiance of her teeth, dear friend!
Jewels, necklaces, and strings of gems hang gracefully upon her throat and heart.
Armlets and bracelets encircle her hands, their gems stunning even lightning with their glow.
Her beautiful clothing, pleasing to every connoisseur's heart, is filled with festive grace, dear
friend!
Her anklets and toe-rings gleam; her gait leads the beholder into refuge at her feet.
Their auspicious crimson color is lovely beyond compare.
She vanquishes the pride of the mind-enchanter, then delights the Enchanter's own mind, dear
friend!*

Petition to the Sovereign Lady — Pada 193

*Leaving your lotus feet, Mod has no other trust; remember this servant and take heed of her.
Though I am low, impure, and now a mine of faults, I am nevertheless called your servant—your servant.
Your forgiveness and other blessed virtues are sweeter than honey; the Vedas proclaim your fame.
Relying on that strength, I fill my belly by repeating your deeds and name, casting aside all calculation of merit.
Prananatha takes still greater pity upon me; beholding his compassionate eyes, I have woven this prayer.
Therefore, again and again I fold my hands and become lowly before you: keep me near your feet.
If Kaushala's Prince does not melt, the heap of yoga and deeds—large as Mount Meru—will be of no use.
If compassion still does not arise, then, O treasury of mercy, I shall speak your true virtues aloud without delay.
Maya, yogis, siddhas, sages, and even Brahma are all held under the power of him whom your sidelong glance forever seeks to please.
Janaka's daughter, beloved life of the jewel of Raghu's line, do not delay any longer.
Snehalata says: have your beloved grasp my hand; what has gone wrong will be made right in an instant.*

Description of the Bridegroom's Beauty — Pada 194

*Upon this beauty I offer countless splendid moons!
Dark and fair, the two have received one another's radiance and shine as the source of their companions' joy.
Smiling softly and speaking together, they seem to cast snares through their glances.
The divine pair, connoisseurs of beauty and intoxicated with rasa, meet like a bee with lotus nectar.
Janaka's daughter is the life and treasure of the dark prince; Raghunandan is hers.*

Pada 195

*Behold, friend, the colorful splendor of that turban!
The women of Mithila stand astonished, their eyes filled with love.
It shines upon the princes' heads as though it were the loveliest share of all good fortune.
The crest-plume appears like an unprecedented bud in the garden of the wish-fulfilling tree.
Upon the princes of Janaka it rises like the fluttering standard of wedded blessing.*

Pada 196

*Dear boy, let my eyes drink the cup of your beauty.
From childhood onward I have remained attached to Sita, sheltered beneath Maithili's protection.
Dasharatha's son, without you I shall neither go anywhere nor look upon anyone else.
Now you have come to Lali's home; dear boy, together with her, make me blessed.
I offer myself to the gracious gaze of the ever-youthful divine pair.*

Pada 197

*Rama, your gaze is filled with magic.
Whomever it regards, it subdues and keeps beneath its spell, O beautiful dark bow-bearing Rama.
Your curling locks frame and illumine your moonlike face; the hanging nose-jewel steals the mind.
Without Mithila, Jugalpriya is like a fish trapped within a net.*

Pada 198

*Your glance has fastened itself upon my heart.
From the moment you came from Ayodhya to Mithila, love awakened within me.
You are the handsome, blessed dark bridegroom, steeped in the rasa of Sita's love.
Jugalpriya's feeling for the divine pair awakens love within the hearts of connoisseurs.*

Pada 199

*My heart has fallen into the snare of your eyes.
There is subjugating magic and sorcery in the way you look with a gentle smile.
What can I say? Speech cannot contain it; your beauty has enclosed me within its circle.
The eyes drink, yet the heart writhes beneath the sharp arrows of your sidelong glance.
That dark form remains spread over me and does not depart, morning or evening.
In every way I shall remain beneath Sita's refuge and close to Ramcharan.*

Pada 200

*Beloved, you bound a dagger upon your waist in a single instant.
Among hundreds of thousands upon earth, no one can be seen whose grace equals yours.
Recitation, austerity, restraint, yoga, samadhi, observances, and religion—none remains of use.
Jewel of virtue, your intoxicating eyes have slain and reduced them all to dust.*

Pada 201

*Honeyed rasa fills your eyes.
Cruel magician famed throughout the world—you have conquered every assembly.
The moon's treasury of arts and the cloud's lightning flashed together in a single instant.
Proud and discerning beloved, you give pain to everyone in the space of a moment.
Through the melody of your smile, your incomparable form has entered my heart.*

Pada 202

*O beloved, again and again I offer myself to your beauty.
Where, in how many ages, and by what merit could one obtain so priceless a vision?
Your body is an exquisitely lovely dwelling of beauty; the eyes rejoice upon seeing it.
Your captivating smile increases the mind's sweet madness; bring those charming words to your lips.
Your restless glance steals awareness—its target is struck senseless and loses all composure.
Nectar drips from the beloved's speech; every syllable showers delight.
Beholding it, Yugal-ananya-ali forgets body and home.*

Pada 203

*Let me hear that sweet melody, my graceful beloved.
Beneath your red lips, the row of teeth seems like lightning dwelling in a crimson cloud.
Rogue, where can your crest-plume hide? Drunk with love, I shall fall at your feet and cling to
your neck.
Nowhere upon the earth can another form like yours be found, even in a mirror.
Reveal your face and go, beloved—you have stolen my heart and soul.*

Pada 204

*Beloved Sita teaches her lover the sitar.
Demonstrating the many distinctions of song, melody, rhythm, and syllable, she rejoices to see his
delight.
Taking her beloved's hand, the lovely woman reveals the incomparable secret of the art.
Beneath the pretext of instruction, that urbane ocean of rasa awakens arts filled with Kama and
delight.
The prince among connoisseurs himself comes to learn from his beloved.
The pure rasa of the couple's loving play rains down every mood and all nine rasas.
Beholding the beauty of the pair, he offers himself to this charming lesson.*

Pada 205

The youthful Divine Couple are the life of every life.

*Night and day the clever thieves of hearts savor ever-new delight and repose;
laughing and making one another laugh, they lose all awareness, immersed in rasa.*

*Memory and reason depart; beneath the moon's radiance they remain absorbed in the
moon-faced Lord.
Around them, the fortunate companions learn the twisting ways of Love.*

Says Yugal-ananya Ali: the lovers remain immersed in waves of rasa, night and day.

Pada 206

The singular bridegroom is a priceless treasure, lovely and beautiful.

*Every limb is adorned with the colors of rasa; from head to foot he shines in splendid array.
Seeing him, every comparison grows flavorless, and the mind is forever captivated.*

*He has enchanted the moving and unmoving worlds; all are intoxicated by this storehouse of joy.
Says Yugal-ananya Ali: my heart longs to behold the sparkle of his sidelong glance.*

Pada 207

I have fallen in love with that detached beloved!

*The fire of separation has doubled since he left me and went away.
He counseled me to be indifferent, yet then departed after placing the jewel of love within my heart.*

*I do not know in what land he now lingers, or what enchantress has ensnared him.
Says Yugal-ananya Ali: for the Beloved's sake I have become a yogini in every way.*

Pada 208

*Now I have become a true and fortunate bride.
The Lord of Kosala has bestowed his grace, and I have tasted the sweetness of the Beloved's love.*

*Worldly pleasures and splendor are forgotten; desire has perished, and the world's judgment seems hollow.
I have entered an ocean of ever-new love and dance in affection at my Beloved's feet, anklets ringing.*

*Abandoning every other discipline, I have taken the sacred rule of immersing myself in the Divine Couple's name.
Says Yugal-ananya Sharan: I seek only to remain absorbed in contemplation of Sita's Lord.*

Pada 209

The wondrous prince of Awadh has taken up residence in my eyes.

*Before the delightful moon of Ramachandra, even the autumn moon appears pale.
He sits upon a jewel-studded throne, a splendid crest rising upon his crown.*

*A pearl necklace shines upon his breast, and a yellow garment is fastened around his waist.
Janaka's Daughter sits radiant at his left, surpassing moonlight itself.*

Says Ramcharan: I offer myself to the sight of his jeweled ornaments, as a companion smiles softly.

Pada 210

Beloved, your eyes have stolen away my lovely heart.

*His shapely ears and broad, noble features reveal a hundred thousand fresh charms each moment.
Their beauty is the very essence of beauty, defeating the lotus, wagtail, antelope, and fish.*

*My eyes find no rest after beholding you; you have made me utterly mad.
Says Kovid Paramananda: fate has performed a wonder in giving me this aching sorrow.*

Pada 211

Colorful bridegroom, your smile has become a messenger.

*It has entered every home in Mithila, and everyone whispers about it.
Bringing every refined young woman beneath its sway, it leaves scarcely any veil of modesty intact.*

Says Rasika Ali: the force of such love has become irresistible.

Pada 212

Friend, Sita's bridegroom is wonderfully colorful!

*A jeweled crown shines upon his brow, strings of pearls hanging from it;
his cheeks glow, adorned by the lovely crest.*

*His long, glossy, curling black hair falls in ringlets;
his sharp eyes and sparkling nose-jewel are radiant.*

*His dark-hued body is exceedingly tender;
every limb seems to hold beauty fast.*

*Dignity, gravity, and every virtue dwell in him;
modesty and affection are visible in his very bearing.*

*Hunger and thirst have left me, mother;
night and day my mind remains intoxicated by his beauty.*

*In my heart I have vowed to surrender my body to him,
knowing that his love for my soul is deeper still.*

*Says Rasika Ali: the elders have learned this secret—
how long can the swelling river of love be concealed?*

Pada 213

*Understand, friend: one must become a lover.
Even if the heart's beloved does not speak, one must remain in his presence.*

*The nectar of Sita's Lord's holy fame fills the earth, and every worthy means is available;
yet people abandon yoga, sacrifice, vows, and discipline to drink the cruel poison of sensuality.*

*A true rasika fills the tongue, night and day, with the nectar of the Name;
making the eyes like chakora birds before the moon of the Beloved's joy, one drinks the nectar of
his beauty without end.*

*Let body, wealth, life, and honor go when love takes hold—do not delay.
Once wounded, what does the wounded lover see? Know that everything has been shattered.*

*Only one pierced by separation knows its sharp arrow; the unstruck cannot be called brave.
Says Jnana Ali: she alone is the Beloved's fortunate bride who keeps patience within her heart.*

Pada 214

What a powerful bridegroom he is, friend!

*The charming treasury of beauty has made a jest of stealing every mind.
His eyes shine like arrows of Love, striking blow after blow.*

Says Madhura Ali: how can one return home when he waylays us in the lanes?

Pada 215

Look, friend, at Rama adorned as bridegroom.

*A golden crown, peacock plume, and saffron blaze upon his head; a heavy jeweled garland gleams.
Red lac adorns his feet, bracelets his hands, and every ornament is beautifully arranged upon him.*

Says Vaijanath: who could describe his gait, his slender waist, and the yellow garment wrapped around him?

Pada 216

*Seeing Raghunatha's beauty, my heart cannot be satisfied, mother.
My eyes yearn without blinking; my body falls helpless, mother.*

*His dark form is steeped in all eight phases of love; nothing else delights me, mother.
Says Vaijanath: all sense and understanding have gone—I keep drinking his sweetness, mother.*

Pada 217

Ah, how charming is Sita's Lord!

*Friend, let us offer a million Cupids in sacrifice and ward the evil eye from his brow.
My heart trembles as he passes through the city streets—friend, let no one cast a spell upon him.*

*I would leap forward and cling to his neck; if he filled me with delight, I would care nothing for this body.
A marvel has descended upon Janaka's city: food, drink, and sleep are forgotten.*

Says Sri Raghuraja: I sacrifice myself to the crown upon his head; now I must become his mendicant.

Pada 218

*Friend, look at the noble prince—Sita's bridegroom in the palace of Mithila's king.
A crown rests upon his head and yellow garments clothe his body; one determined glance steals my heart.*

*A garland of pearls shines upon him, and his reddened eyes are darkened with kohl.
Friend, the handsome one steals my heart; if he looks gently upon me, this life will not survive.*

*His curls shine upon his face like a wondrous swarm of bees; his sehra sways and hangs down to his waist.
To Janaka's young women he is a deadly poison; seeing him, Love takes his seat and stands guard over the mind.*

*I shall no longer remain in Janaka's city—take the profit of this vision and do not hold back.
Whoever truly beholds this bridegroom cannot restrain the mind from following him.*

My heart longs to cling to his neck; for Raghuraja's sake I would abandon the entire world.

Pada 219

Dear bridegroom, your lovely glance is a thief of hearts.

*Your brows are a bow, your eyes its arrows, and the corners of those kohl-darkened eyes draw the string.
Every limb assails me; each one is filled with a bewitching curve.*

*The son of King Dasharatha comes riding, making his horse dance, friend.
Says Sarayu Sakhi: upon the bridegroom's beauty I would sacrifice ten million Cupids.*

Pada 220

Let no one cast a spell upon the dear prince!

*Women of Mithila, keep watch over your own hearts and minds.
Someone bring the warding mark for his brow—my heart writhes in longing.*

*Mother Sunayana, queen of Mithila, perform the rite of salt and flame to avert evil.
The enchanting forms of Rama and Lakshmana are as dear as Lakshminidhi himself.*

Says Lalamani: upon bridegroom Raghava I offer body, mind, and wealth.

Pada 221

Beautifully arrayed, Raghuraja has become the bridegroom in Mithila.

*A golden crown shines upon his head; the unmatched sehra pours boundless light.
His dark body and richly colored garments shine like lightning against a rain cloud.*

*Says Shivadayal: gods, men, and sages who see him are enchanted;
among all the city's women, no one can preserve her composure.*

Pada 222

Friend, the Prince of Awadh has carried away my heart.

*His innocent, lovely face enchants even Love himself; merely seeing him, he steals the heart.
When he looks upon me, the lotus-corners of his eyes shoot Love's arrows into my mind.*

My body and mind are bewildered; all awareness is lost, and only that moonlike beauty remains in thought.

Gazing upon his unequaled form, my eyes overflow with the supreme nectar of love.

*My love surges, and my body thrills like the chakora bird at the sight of the moon.
I am never satisfied while gazing upon that sweet beauty and drinking its nectar to the full.*

*All concern for worldly shame and decorum has escaped by the path of my eyes.
Night and day, silently delighted, my mind wanders through the lanes of Janaka's city.*

Pada 223

The wondrous bridegroom has completely stolen my heart.

*His broad, luminous brow, lovely crown, lotus-eyes darkened with kohl,
and shining tilak spread radiance everywhere.*

*Saffron, floral ornaments, peacock plume, jewels, and curling tassels adorn his sehra;
their splendor humbles even the pride of Love.*

*His curling locks are exceedingly lovely, like bees dwelling upon a bank of clouds;
he is steeped in the nectar cherished by rasikas.*

*Beautiful ornaments and garments adorn his graceful body;
a pearl necklace shines, and the mark of Bhrigu's foot appears upon his chest.*

*His glance naturally steals the hearts of sages;
his gentle smile has stolen my very jewel—as though he had worked some spell.*

*The instant I saw his beauty, my mind was caught;
my heart became steeped in the nectar of love, and I gave him body, mind, and wealth.*

*Rama Kumara has taken residence in my heart, friend, and immense waves of love keep rising.
Says Mauna Mudita: shame and public judgment have been cast away like straw; I have won the treasure of bliss.*

Pada 224

The Prince of Awadh is a most beloved bridegroom.

*A jewel-studded crown shines upon him, scattering a hundred million rays like the sun;
his sehra sways gently.*

*A broad saffron mark gleams upon his forehead, and dark curls hang down like a swarm of bees.
His formidable brows and singular lotus-eyes shine, deeply lined with kohl.*

*The sweetness of Manamohana's smile and his heart-stealing glance have filled my soul.
A forest garland shines upon his breast,*

bracelets upon his hands, a pure silken thread at his wrist, and a garland of pearls.

*Seeing the sweetness in every limb, fresh waves of love rise within my heart.
Says Mauna Mudita: for bridegroom Raghulal I cast away shame and public censure like straw
and leave the world's clamor behind.*

Pada 225

Friend, Sita's Lord is wonderfully colorful!

*Upon every limb one could sacrifice all the charm and pride of Love; he is lovely, artful, and
radiant.*

His moon-face steals the heart, and his tender dark body is utterly enchanting.

*His lotus-eyes steal the soul; his gentle smile has plundered the mind as well.
His softly rounded cheeks and elegant curls are steeped in the art of Love.*

*His cloud-dark body is supremely beautiful, a treasury of form that shatters pride.
His varied ornaments and garments are enchanting, and a lovely necklace lies upon his chest.*

*Men and women behold him with delight; their minds grow absorbed as waves of nectarean love
arise.*

Says Mauna Mudita: the bee of my mind remains forever absorbed at his lotus-feet.

Pada 226

My beloved's eyes are very powerful.

*One glance wounds me, and no salve can heal the wound;
my eyelids no longer close.*

*In an instant they steal shame and social restraint;
with the arrows of Love they take everything away.*

*Intoxicated and steeped in rasa, drunk upon his beauty beyond all comparison,
they captivate the mind.*

*Those untouched by love call this a lie;
when his gentle smile flashes, to whom could I tell the wonder in words?*

Pada 227

Without seeing him, my eyes will not obey me.

*Ever since they beheld the sweetness of that charming form, these rasika eyes have gone mad.
Like bees drinking nectar from a joyful lotus, my mind has become intoxicated.*

*As the chakora gazes toward the moon, my eyes drink cup after cup of the nectar of his beauty.
Ah, wise beloved Rama—without you, who could understand the silence of my heart?*

Pada 228

My heart has been struck by the sweetness of my beloved's smile.

*Rama's every limb is home to the beauty of ten million Cupids;
yellow garments upon his cloud-dark body flash like lightning.*

*The tassel and crest quiver upon his head; the fish of my heart is caught in the net of his curls.
This pain cannot be drawn out; it lies hidden in the gentle radiance of his nose-jewel.*

Pada 229

His curling locks have stolen my heart.

*Those lovely, arched tresses—dense, glossy, and black—fall gracefully across his cheeks.
His sidelong lotus-eyes are like the dagger of Love; they have murdered my heart.*

*The sweetness of the smile upon his moon-face has cast Love's enchantment and laid its snare upon me.
Says Mauna Mudita: beholding the sweet glory of the Prince of Awadh, my eyes have filled to overflowing.*

Pada 230

His every charming grace has entered and settled in my heart.

*Upon his cloud-dark body the yellow garment shines like flashing lightning,
tightly wrapped and fastened around his waist.*

*Like the chakora at dawn, turning from the fading moon,
I am ensnared by the nectarous beauty of his own moon-face.*

Seeing the loveliness of every limb,

the pride of ten million Cupids falls away.

*Says Mauna Mudita: the Prince of Awadh's beauty flashed in a glimpse through the window, and
my eyes sank helplessly into its path.*

Pada 231

*The heart-stealing beauty of Raghuvira
dwells in my heart night and day as he sports upon the banks of the Sarayu.*

*A gold-brocade turban crowns him, marked by a musk tilak and a diamond crest above it.
A jeweled necklace rests upon his breast, yellow cloth adorns him, and his gait is steady as a
noble elephant's.*

Dear friend, seeing the Prince of Awadh, I retain no awareness of ornament or garment.

Pada 232

Your fortune has awakened, dear bridegroom Raghava!

*From the day you came in the sage's company, all your affairs were set right.
Where could you have found such a bride? Reflect upon this within your heart.*

*Born in the solar dynasty, your destiny has opened the doors of blessedness.
Count every breath, and never let your heart become separate from Sita.*

Says Siya Sakhi: by wedding Sita, you have washed away the dark stain upon your lineage.

Pada 233

May Sita the bride's bridegroom remain forever a true bridegroom.

*Handsome, bliss-giving, and wise, his dark body is steeped in his beloved's love.
Rama embodies beauty and Love, spreading a canopy of ever-lovely form.*

*He savors that very form and his beloved's beauty, yet his heart is never satisfied.
Says Yugal-viharini: blessed is the Divine Couple who have received the companions' benediction.*

Pada 234

*"Friend, this gallant beloved of Ayodhya has come splendidly adorned!
A crown of pearls shines upon his head;
in a moment he bewitches every young woman's heart.
Who in all this world has not been captivated by him?*

*"Every graceful maiden of Mithila who once took pride in her beauty
has lost that pride upon beholding the beloved's loveliness.
Smiling, he casts an enchanting spell,
then looks upon them with a sidelong glance;
along every road in this city he has wrought sweet havoc."*

Pada 235

*How handsomely the bridegroom is adorned—a peacock crown shines upon his head!
Kohl has been placed within his eyes, yellow garments clothe his body,
his smile steals the heart, and a saffron mark adorns his brow.
Mithila's lovely women wander in confusion, intoxicated with love;
drawn by the darling's beauty, they run to see him wherever he goes.
"Rama, Lord of Sita, is the very abode of enchanting beauty," all the women say,
and they worship Gana-Gauri.*

Pada 236

*Your colorful eyes strike my very heart when you smile.
Wounded—yes, wounded—I wander wounded,
pierced by the sword of your glance.
Your pupils are dark, so dark,
while their corners are deeply red.
Nectar drips from your lips—nectar itself—
O heart-bewitching beloved!*

Pada 237

*"Dark one, your smile wreaks devastation.
Whoever beholds your red lips laughing
instantly forgets all knowledge.
Wounded, she falls to the ground;
in a moment no life seems to remain in her body.
Mohani Ali pleads: beloved of Videha's daughter,
lay aside this arrow!"*

Pada 238

*The dark beloved's eyebrow shines like a bow;
in a single instant it wounds a woman,
leaving no life within her body.
Friend, every lovely woman who dwells in Mithila
has been captivated by the beloved's smile.
Mohani Ali says: the young gallant's eyes
are the arrows of Manmatha himself.*

Pada 239

*His two eyes are swords tempered in poison.
When they strike, waves surge through the heart—
such is the astonishing sharpness of their edge!
Wounded, I wander through the lanes,
unable to maintain control of my body.
The charming gallant of Ayodhya,
the heart's beloved, brings everyone beneath his sway.*

Pada 240

*The darling's locks are filled with fragrance;
friend, they tumble here and there across his lovely cheeks.
Their devastating beauty has driven me mad.
Mohani Ali says: every moment
they are the sharpened sword of the executioner.*

Pada 241

*"Friend, he has snared my deer-like mind
in the net of his curling locks.
Ayodhya's darling has wounded me
with the spears of his eyes.
Love has fastened itself to that youth,
and now it cannot be released.
Mohani Ali, go and carry this message
from me to my darling."*

Pada 242

*The beloved of Ayodhya has struck this lovelorn woman
with the dagger of his eyes.
Darling friend, that handsome young prince
has lodged within both my eyes.*

*Teach me some spell of enchantment—
I shall count it a great kindness.
"Come, friend," says Mohani Ali;
"together we shall bring that beloved beneath our sway."*

Pada 243

*There stands Ayodhya's darling in Pramodavana!
When I behold his extraordinary, swaying gait,
my heart is utterly deceived and stolen.
When he speaks, it is as though nectar rains down;
with his glances he casts a spell upon the heart.*

*"From what bower have you come into this grove?
Turn toward me and grant my body one smiling glance."
Mohani Ali says: seeing the beloved wandering there,
tears of love stream from her eyes.*

Pada 244

*His astonishing sidelong glances have struck and wounded me.
Friend, my heart remains restless;
sleep no longer comes to my eyes.
It has no patience, but aches day and night;
nowhere does it find the least peace.
Mohani Ali pleads: "Abandon your mercilessness—
without you, not even a moment passes."*

Chaiti — Pada 245

*Sita gazes into her bracelet, O Rama,
and there beholds Raghubara's reflection.
Her hand can no longer remain steady;
she is intoxicated, wholly immersed in love.
All the companions gather and sing auspicious songs
as she sits in King Janaka's courtyard.
Mohani Ali says: "Listen, dear friend—
now the longing of marriage has arisen within her."*

Pada 246

*The beauty of Ayodhya's gallant captivates me, O Rama;
curling locks hang about his face.
I had gone with my friend into the pleasure-grove,
where a cool arbor cast its shade.
There in the grove my eyes met his—
those dark, curling tresses!
Seeing me, that beloved of Ayodhya
came and placed his arms around my neck.*

Pada 247

*My heart pounds within my breast, O Rama,
longing to meet my beloved.
The bracelet has slipped down upon my arm,
yet still he sends no letter.
Friend, whenever I remember his sweet words,
all awareness deserts me.
The gallant of Ayodhya has so bewitched me
that this has become my condition.*

Pada 248

*My beloved, the wanderer of Ayodhya, O Rama,
has made me forget myself.
Day and night, without my beloved,
my eyes rain tears and grow red.
Friend, whenever I remember
the devastating beauty of his curling hair,
not even for a moment does my heart find rest;
separation has brought me terrible misery.*

Pada 249

*The beloved wanders upon the bank of the Sarayu, O Rama.
Beneath the shade of a lovely arbor,
Ayodhya's beloved walks arm in arm with Siya.
Beauty reigns in every limb,
and a garland of flowers rests upon his chest.
Mohani Ali says: "Friend, my heart grows unbearably restless—
let me run and clasp my beloved around the neck!"*

Pada 250

*The gallant has struck me, O Rama,
with his sidelong glance.
Wounded, I wander from moment to moment;
nowhere do I find repose.
My friend has become a stranger to me,
and our eyes no longer meet.
Mohani Ali says: "Not even the smallest word
can now emerge from my mouth."*

Pada 251

*Upon that fair face rests a dark beauty-mark.
His eyes are charming, exceedingly red at the corners;
the vision draws near and settles against my heart.*

*Over that form a deep-blue sari shines
like lightning flashing within a raincloud.
Mohani Ali says: the beloved's heart is caught
upon seeing Siya's colorful, captivating smile.*

Pada 252

*Friend, behold the beauty of Siya's bridegroom!
He sits upon a jewel-studded golden throne,
crushing countless comparisons drawn from the god of love.
His body is like a blue lotus wrought from Indra's sapphire;
beholding that beauty, the mind becomes spellbound.*

*A jeweled crown rests above his curling locks;
in the joy of seeing him, the radiance of sun and moon grows pale.
Round cheeks, jewel earrings, and a gem upon his nose
shine like the tender bud of a celestial flower.
Betel reddens his smiling lips;
within his gaze the heart melts away in love.*

*His arched brows are striking,
his lovely teeth resemble pomegranate seeds,
and jeweled necklaces grace his conch-shaped throat.
Upon his broad chest rest a forest garland
and a garland of flowers, each increasing the other's beauty.*

*Friend, behold his thighs, knees, ankles,
and lotus feet—the resting place of every heart.
His pure yellow dhoti is tied beautifully at the waist,
casting brilliance in every direction.
In his red lotus-hand he turns a lotus;
beholding him, even the splendors of Shiva and the moon are humbled.
Hearing her beloved's words, Janaka's darling rejoices,
filled with love, says Rasamala.*

Pada 253

*Raghubira has taken possession of my peace.
Casting away the shame of the world and the dignity of family,
I have become a yogini.
With ashes upon my body and a rosary in my hand,
I wander along the bank of the Sarayu.
Day and night I roam the lanes of Pramodavana,
restless for the sight of him.
When shall the pain in my heart subside
after I behold that moonlike face framed by curling locks?
Rasamala says: I shall quench the burning of my heart
by drinking the cooling water of that beautiful face.*

Pada 254

*“Your glance pierces me, O prince!
Dark and keen-edged, your darting eyes
send arrows flying in Love’s battle.
Khajana birds, fish, and lotuses all grow humble
before those restless eyes.
Like hunters pursuing beauty,
they sport among the forest of women’s vine-like bodies.*

*“O prince, crown of rasikas,
knower of all that dwells within the heart:
your glance has lodged within my breast.
Rasamala pleads—come quickly and draw it out!”*

Pada 255

*“Raghava, your eyes are filled with magic.
Whoever they strike loses all awareness,
aches with pain, and falls upon the ground.
Filled with beauty, they run in pursuit of beauty,
like two warriors rushing together into combat.
Poor fish, lotuses, and deer are humbled by them
and retreat far away into water and forest.*

*“They have wearied and wounded countless travelers like me,
both inside their homes and outside.
Rasamala says: they heed no restraint
but remain always lodged within my heart.”*

Pada 256

*“Raghava, there is no trusting your eyes!
Like bees they fly from lotus to lotus,
forsaking the proper way of faithful love.
Leaving the flowers, they hurry toward the buds,
roaming about in shameless misconduct.
Having made garlands of jasmine, lotus, and ketaki,
they bind others fast in love.
Though defeated, they never admit defeat,
but still desire victory.
Rasamala says: these eyes of yours
continually invent new customs of their own.”*

Pada 257

*“Raghava, your eyes commit cruel tyranny!
Fickle, proud, and drunk on the arrows of Love,
they fight wherever they go.
Wishing to drink the nectar of beauty,
they make even the moon plead before them.
Ashamed by those eyes, the fish, lotus, and khajana bird
retreat to dwell in water and forest.
Roaming here and there, they fight,
and when they return face to face they never accept defeat.
Rasamala says: stealing everyone’s heart,
they fear no one at all.”*

Pada 258

*“Dark one, you have shot the arrow that steals all peace—
how shall I keep myself alive?
Spellbound by the lotus-eyed one’s gaze,
I have lost all awareness of body and mind.
My whole body trembles,
and sweat pours forth within my heart;
friend, how can I remain alive?*

*“Merciless one, you have planted pain within my heart
and wounded me, yet you do not care.
Navala Vihari Priya pleads:
bring me Dasharatha’s son, Siya’s beloved,
and save my life!”*

Pada 259

*"Dark, handsome, heart-enchancing beloved,
come and embrace me!
My thirsty eyes have been parted from you for ages;
let them drink your immortal nectar.
My life writhes and my heart pounds—
pour out the nectar of your rasa.
O rasika immersed in rasa,
every limb of mine has grown faint;
do not delay.
Navala Ali, tormented by separation,
begs in many ways: do not forsake me
and deprive me of this rasa."*

Pada 260

*My eyes have become bound to that handsome darling.
His dark curling hair, his forest-sweet words,
and those lips drinking nectar—
my gaze has frozen upon them.*

*Breast pressed against breast, heart entered into heart,
all memory of this world and the next fled away.
Like a parrot moving through a rosebud,
he entered the lane of the play of rasa;
day and night the mind no longer knows itself.
Navala Ali says: like raincloud and lightning joined together,
upper and lower limbs became intertwined,
steeped entirely in rasa.*

Pada 261

*Feast your eyes upon the beauty of Siya and Raghubira!
Beloved and lover sit within Kanak Bhavan,
their bodies fair and dark.
Every limb is colored in ever-new hues,
and bright many-colored garments gleam upon them.
In Priya's hand shines a flowering branch;
in the beloved's hand, a lovely bow and arrow.*

*Their eyes form a garden of vision filled with love—
peacock and parrot of the mind find their fruit there.
Even one blessed with human form grows unsteady at the sight,
then gathers composure and gazes once again.
Make the heart your page and love your pen;
take the dark ink of blissful tears.
Friend, paint and preserve this treasure:
the portrait of Janaki and her beloved.*

Pada 262

*"Your eyes will become entangled with his, O lotus-eyed friend!
I warned you not to travel that road,
but you paid no heed to my foolish words.
Those exceedingly lovely, dark, kohl-lined eyes
are very sharp;
suddenly they enter and kiss the heart,
piercing it straight through.
If your mind is caught upon them,
they will torment you day and night.
Ramasahaya says: without beholding that beauty,
the heart finds neither peace nor rest."*

Pada 263

*If the prince gives even the slightest smile,
reason drowns, the mind is lost,
and the body can no longer care for itself.
From a distance alone, Love gazed at him
and was burned to ashes;
yet Tripurari himself now takes a beggar's garb
and cries "Alakh!" from door to door.*

*Those who claimed that Maya, attachment, and passion
never came near them even in dreams
became caught in love's net
when they beheld his charming childhood play.
His gentle speech sells without a price
even the cleverest of sages.
Ramasahaya says: only one who has gone there
can know the marketplace of Ayodhya.*

Pada 264

*"Wondrous is your glance, O wanderer of Ayodhya!
Your eyes are arrows and your brows their bow—
I know no other weapon.
You leave no mark upon the surface,
yet wound the heart within;
what an extraordinary hunter you are!
Your eyes are filled with nectar, poison, and intoxication,
their whites, dark pupils, and red corners mingled together.
Baladeva says: whoever you look upon
lives and dies, bends and suddenly falls."*

Pada 265

*"Friend, the loving gestures of the two delight me!
Arm joined to arm and neck to neck, they smile and speak together;
the two moonlike faces gaze at one another
and bring their lovely cheeks close.
Their two crowns become entangled as they remain embraced,
and their moon-bright faces appear reflected in one another.
Siya Ali says: they are the very treasure of my life—
again and again I offer myself to this beauty."*

Pada 266

*These loving eyes will not be satisfied without beholding him.
Whenever I see my dark beloved sporting
in the bowers along the bank of the Sarayu,
a crown upon his head, earrings at his ears,
and dark curls clustering about his face—*

*I cannot endure the wound of his glance;
even his faint smile pierces me.
Siya Ali says: Ayodhya's beloved
has entered and settled within my heart,
and will not heed a word I say.*

Pada 267

*"Beloved, by what means can I keep you with me?
If I hold you within my heart, my eyes long for you;
if I hold you in my eyes, my heart trembles.
Neither way allows the mind to rest.
Darling, tell me—how can we meet?
Dark one, join eye to eye and heart to heart;
place your throat against my throat.
Siya Ali says: meet me in this way,
and when every limb touches, the burning will subside."*

Pada 268

*"This alone my mind desires day and night:
to behold my beloved, my very life.
Let my eyes see nothing else;
moment by moment I shall arrange my beloved's curls.
I shall drink the sweetness of the divine couple,
laughing as I offer body and mind.
I shall string the flower of my life upon the thread of love
and place that garland around the couple's necks.
Siya Ali says: clasping the treasure of my life to my breast,
I shall cast aside every worldly bond."*

Pada 269

*"Your beauty has lured me into its lane;
now that I have come, I stand bewildered.
Is its secret in the folds of your turban,
or in the dark curls upon your brow?
Is it in the corners of your eyes,
or in that gentle smile?
Is it in the yellow garment tied about your waist,
or in the fluttering end of your scarf?
Priya Ali says: I am defeated by looking;
I cannot tell which feature is the true sign of your beauty."*

Pada 270

*"I shall steal you away and hide you within my eyes.
Even if millions plead, I shall never let you go;
I shall keep your heart joined to my heart."*

*Keep body and mind forever dyed by that smiling, sidelong glance.
Sia-ali, make this divine pair—the treasure of your life—entirely your own in every way.*

Pada 271

*The Dark One's eyes brim and overflow with rasa.
They are packets of magic, spell upon spell; my heart can find no peace.
There is no rest by day and no sleep by night—to whom can I speak these words?
Waking and sleeping, even in dreams, they pierce me day and night.
Those dark, collyrium-lined, radiant, beloved eyes!
The divine pair's eyes wreak such havoc, yet still bestow the sweetest joy.*

Pada 272

*Remain well, remain happy, my beloved.
Rejoice always with your darling—you are our very life and breath.
Whether you meet me or do not is yours to choose; only remain wholly happy.
From afar I find comfort merely in hearing news of you; that alone sustains me.
Sia-ali says: wherever you dwell, remain mine alone—whether near or far apart.*

Pada 273

*How wonderfully he has become a groom!
What a saffron robe, what a wedding veil—what splendor surrounds him!
What ruby-red eyes, what collyrium—my heart is bewitched!
What bowlike brows, what eyes—Kama's bow itself has appeared!
The clever women of Mithilapura ask, "What queen bore such a son?"
What crimson his henna-dyed hands reveal, glowing like the lamps of Diwali!*

Pada 274

*How devastating is the intoxicated groom's gaze!
Ever since you entered Mithila, such havoc has swept through the city.
Your sharp, venomous eyes strike the young women with grievous wounds.
So many are wounded silently within; so many stand frozen where they are.
Sia-ali yearns to merge into you as a river enters the ocean.*

Pada 275

*My heart has been sold to Sita's bridegroom.
The saffron mark upon his fair brow has disappeared amid his curling locks.
His gentle, gentle smile has made me lose myself in the sweetness of his gaze.
The lovely radiance of every limb flutters through his yellow garments.
For this wondrous image, Sia-ali has surrendered every concern for family honor.*

Pada 276

*My beloved's bridegroom has enchanted my heart.
A crown rests upon his head; his curls are ringlets, and his great eyes are adorned with
collyrium.
Lovely are his lips, nose-ring, and earrings; a garland of flowers shines upon his breast.
Sweetness covers every limb, beloved, while your yellow garments flutter.
Sia-ali offers body, mind, and wealth—do not go away; remain close to your own people.*

Pada 277

*My heart refuses to find peace.
Ever since the beauty and radiance of Avadh's Prince shone before me, I have known no peace.
Show me your lovely face, beloved, and grant me the gift of your gentle smile.*

*To whom shall I tell my sorrow, dear friend? The whole night passes in restless tossing.
Within Sia-ali's heart, those two love-filled eyes pierce without cease.*

Pada 278

*I offer myself to that sidelong glance!
I offer myself to his gentle speech and swaying gait—to the enchanting one filled with rasa.
I offer myself to the dark collyrium of his eyes, to the dangling curls upon his face.
I offer myself to those heart-stealing glances—to the dancing jewel upon his nose.
Sia-ali offers herself to that dark face, to the yellow cloth that adorns him.*

Pada 279

*Sita's beloved has become the bridegroom today.
His crown, saffron robe, and jeweled necklace have stolen my heart.
Blessed is Mithilesha's darling, whom he has taken into a full embrace.
Dāmpati-ali offers body, mind, wealth—everything—to the beauty of this divine pair.*

Pada 280

*Beloved, behold Sita's bridegroom.
A sparkling jeweled crown rests upon him, and an incomparable veil of pearls.
Yellow garments shine upon his dark body, and his ornaments are utterly captivating.
He eats paan, smiles softly, speaks sweetly, and sends his eyes roaming.
Gop-ali has been sold without a price by the sudden fall of that gaze.*

Pada 281

*My gaze wanders here and there; I have forgotten the path to my own home.
With a sidelong glance and gentle smile, he has driven a dagger into my heart.
My mind is caught in his curls; I retain no awareness of my body.
Dyed in his dark color, dear friend, even my veil has turned dark.
My charming, artful beloved gives me no peace—he has taken my heart for his plaything.*

Pada 282

*The two are playing within my eyes.
Eating paan and smiling enchantingly, they delight together in the inner courtyard.
Drinking the sweetness of each other's beauty and paan, ecstasy spreads through every limb.
The two unite in ever-new play, thrilled by the freshness of youth.
However long they gaze upon one another, neither heart finds satisfaction.
Each circles an offering around the other and drinks, absorbed from moment to moment.
Drinking the nectar of each other's lips, they clasp one another in a close embrace.
This play of the divine pair shines on, dwelling in their companion's eyes.
The joyous rasa of beloved and lover cannot be expressed in words.*

Pada 283

*The two wage battle with their eyes.
Face meeting face, attraction grows fourfold and delight reaches its fullness.
Each draws the paired brows of the brows and sends eye-arrows that massacre the heart.
Sidelong glances fly from both sides, swift as lightning—Kama himself seems to be loosed.
The marvelous bullets of their pupils strike home within each other.
Feelings clash like warriors, proclaiming love in their desire to conquer the abode of joy.*

*The eyes grow red and dark as they struggle; fighting on and on, evening falls.
In the courtyard of rasa and the battlefield of love, the two take no rest.*

Pada 284

*The moon has risen in our courtyard—what care have we for anything now?
We are all Sri Sita's sisters, and Raghava has become our guest.
O blessed fortune of Mithila's courtyard: our honored guest has pounded the ceremonial rice!
By his grace, dear friends, affection and favor rain upon us.
The one upon whom Brahma and the other gods meditate is now bound within the knot of her garment.
May this sweet pair live age after age, their gentle smiles forever shining.*

Pada 285

*Where has such a matchless form ever appeared—this charming Prince of Avadh? Gazing and gazing, my very life slips away.
Collyrium adorns both his eyes; before him, even Kama's proud heart has died.
All the townspeople are caught in the snares of his curls, while his gentle smile thrusts its spear.
Dark One, dwell in Mithila with Sita; this is the longing within Mod's heart.*

Pada 286

*He is Mother Sunaina's honored guest—may no evil eye fall upon the treasure of our lives!
He is Kaushika's lovely plaything, the beautiful darling of great good fortune.
This dark, graceful boy seems to be the very child of Love.
O lovely one, keep roaming always through our courtyard.
Your eyes cast a snare; your gaze is filled with magical spells.
Mod cannot forget the meeting of those eyes—the sorcery within that glance.*

Pada 287

*How singularly captivating this groom appears, dear friend!
His jeweled crown and peacock plume sway; their radiance spills in every direction.
His curling locks dance, his brow tilts playfully, and his glance seems to kiss the eyes.
The saffron line and necklace shine; the jeweled chain at his throat glitters.
His lovely nose-jewel dances, and the very sight of it makes the heart leap.
His lips are full, his gentle smile sweet; all Mithila goes weak before him.
Through Sita he has become our honored guest, and Mod dances in delight.*

Pada 288

*When my eyes met Sita's bridegroom,
every thread of worldly shame and social restraint snapped at once.
The dark veil of time, karma, and overpowering delusion vanished the instant his beauty spread before me.
Each clever woman plundered immeasurable joy according to her own taste.
For Mod-ali, the dark one is the treasure of life itself—the life-restoring herb.*

Pada 289

*Look upon him, look upon him, sister! Hari himself has become greener beside Vaidehi, his bride.
Even Shesha and Sharada cannot begin to describe his beauty.
Her beloved shines beside her like the light of the world.
The cherished lover dwells with his cherished beloved, each contained within the other.
My fair Sita is the moon, and her beloved the moon-struck chakora bird.
By supreme fortune this union has come to pass—may you always remain just so.
Blessed is Mithila, blessed are Mod and Maithili, and blessed are all of us sisters!*

Pada 290

*As Sita is lovely, so lovely is her darling bridegroom—cast just one glance toward us.
Upon our darling's head I shall place the wedding crown and set pearls all around it.
I shall apply fragrant sandalwood, draw a saffron line upon his brow, and outline his eyes with
collyrium.
Blessed, blessed is my darling bride; blessed is the enchanter of hearts—I shall tie their knot
beneath the wedding pavilion.
Kissing the groom's face again and again, I shall ward all evil away—speak just one word
drenched in rasa.
I shall install both darlings within my heart; they are everything Sia-ali possesses.*

Pada 291

*My heart longs, dear friend, for our honored guest.
His beautiful complexion is dark, a wondrous jeweled crown rests on his head, and crimson
sandal marks his brow.
His eyes are lined in black; paan has reddened his lips, and a gentle smile plays upon his dark
face.
He wears the wedding dhoti, and bracelets of auspiciousness adorn his wrists.
Blessed, blessed is my Kishori! Beholding this loving pair, my heart itself has become their
wedding chamber.*

Pada 292

*At the sight of you, O heart-enchancing bridegroom, my heart can no longer bear itself; it cannot
forget you even for a moment.
My one desire is to remain with you, O enchanter, gazing upon your joyous beauty until I am
fulfilled.
Seeing your form, O enchanter, all sense and reason are forgotten; Kama is forever put to shame.
May destiny make Sita's wedded fortune everlasting, O enchanter—the very sight of it cools my
heart.
Fulfill the longing of your own Snehalata, O enchanter: dwell forever within my eyes.*

Pada 293

*My eyes will not be satisfied, my darling—lift your face a little.
A moon shines upon your lovely broad brow, and collyrium gives new beauty to your eyes; move
aside the fringe of your wedding crown.
Pomegranate-seed teeth flash within your smile, O dark and lovely enchanter—lift those
captivating eyes.
A diamond necklace and pearl-fringed crown, a beautiful coat and a splendid dhoti—show me
your crimson feet.
Beholding your enchanting beauty, Snehalata has stored it within her heart; now she will ask
nothing more.*

Pada 294

Your eyes are filled with magic—filled with magic; O my enchanter, your eyes commit such cruelty!

A jeweled crown rests on your head and your curls are deep black; upon your dark brow the bright tilak gleams like a moon amid the stars.

Your sharp eyes are thorny branches of a rose; darkened with collyrium, they seem like two bees hovering over water.

Beloved, your sweet smile has a beauty all its own; birth after birth my heart would gaze upon it. Latika's love can find no peace.

Pada 295

The dark guest has stolen my heart, dear friend; not even sleep will come.

Neither day nor night pleases me now—

neither house nor courtyard gives delight.

Through Sita I gained the sight of him; destiny has shown me great favor.

Latika sings, yet nothing pleases her—do not let him depart from Mithila.

Pada 296

I shall pass my days with Sita's beloved, O enchanter who has stolen my heart; without him, nothing pleases me.

His cruel eyes have pierced my heart with arrows, O enchanter; he has cast a spell that leaves me sobbing.

His lovely lotus hands are crimson, O enchanter, and every finger blossoms beautifully.

Once such love has arisen, even he cannot escape it, O enchanter—he himself has been sold in Mithila.

Pada 297

Dwell within my heart, dark honored guest Rama—you have settled there with your gentle smile. Your black curling hair and wedding crown are lovely, Rama; the sandal mark upon your brow dwells within my heart.

Your eyes are darkened with collyrium and reddened with love, Rama; your sidelong glance dwells within my heart.

You wear a yellow wedding dhoti and yellow coat, Rama, with auspicious bracelets upon your wrists.

Beside lovely Sita you are a blue lotus, Rama, the very life of your companion Sneha.

Pada 298

When Sri Raghava himself stands ready to help, what fear can remain?

We are all tigresses of Mithila, and he has become Mithila's son-in-law.

Our sister is Bhagavati herself, the one through whom the whole world finds relief.

He in whose palm the universe lies captive has himself been bound in Mithila.

Snehalata, remain fearless always, clinging to the bridegroom's feet.

Pada 299

*How singularly enchanting is today's adornment, dear friend!
It is as though bees encircle the full moon, gathered together in perfect beauty.
Scattered diamond particles sparkle like radiant stars within a cloud.
It is as though millions of Kamas and a fierce rainbow have appeared together.
Deer, fish, and khanjana birds lower their eyes in shame; even the moist lotus is abashed.
Two infant serpents—his curls—dangle upon his cheeks and play in delight.
The jewel at his nose and the bee-like brows move and hover between them.
Amid such sweetness, radiance, and splendor, every comparison itself begins to play.*

Pada 300

*Wherever your magic-filled eyes turned, enchantment followed.
Beholding that massed beauty like a dark storm cloud, a flood of feeling surged within me.
The tender bud of the heart trembled; the pollen of love filled it with sweet rasa.
The daggers of your eyes struck again and again with their lashes, as though overturning a casket of magic.
The wand of love rose; both eyes poured down, scattering pearls like rain.
Now my eyelids cannot turn away even for an instant—if they leave you for a moment, it seems my life will depart.*

Pada 301

*O heart-stealing beloved, Prince of Avadh, how intoxicated your eyes are!
Your brows are two bows, your eyes their arrows, and upon them lies collyrium dark as poison.*

*His crown flashes and sparkles upon his brow, its radiance streaming in every direction.
His curling locks jostle with one another, each displaying its own artful play.*

*The jewel at his nose is intoxicated today, as though it had drunk the boundless nectar of his lips.
Seeing his pomegranate-seed teeth and soft, gentle smile, my eager heart loses itself.*

*His earrings sport upon his cheeks, and a pure necklace gleams upon his throat.
The tilak-dot upon his dark-blue face flashes like lightning within a lovely cloud.*

*A bordered yellow garment covers his fitted coat, with a shawl cast above it.
Lac reddens his feet and henna his hands—their beauty is wondrous beyond compare.*

Beloved, dwell within the center of this heart; Vindhyeswari offers body and mind to you.

Pada 302

Friend, the handsome dark bridegroom has enchanted my heart.

*A crown rests upon his brow, and the saffron line of his tilak is exceedingly lovely.
His perfumed row of curls comes tumbling playfully down upon his cheeks.*

*He smiles softly; the nose-jewel sways, and the intoxication of Love overspreads his eyes.
Adorned in graceful ornaments and garments, he puts millions of Cupids to shame.*

*Fragrant lac beautifies the soles of his feet and steals the bee-like minds of sages.
Through Sita's fortune, blessedness, and love, he has come as her bridegroom.*

Says Yogeshwara: cast away the heart's pride and behold how the splendor of his beauty pours forth.

Pada 303

*The beauty of Sita's beloved is filled with magic.
As soon as my eyes behold him, he enchants my life, and I forget all awareness of home and doorway.*

*When I look toward the dark beloved, the flavor of the whole world turns insipid.
His tyrannous curls lie upon his cheeks, beautifully embodying the splendor of Love.*

*With a glance filled with affection he steals away my life—I offer myself in sacrifice.
Who can understand the mute heart, for whom he alone is the support of life?*

*The lovely soles of his feet are dyed crimson with lac, driving the heart mad with their redness.
Says Sri Ramaji: the tender bridegroom is forever the entire treasure of my life.*

Pada 304

His enormous eyes have driven us mad.

*Every lane in Mithila hums with talk of them; they have caused an uproar in every home.
Restless and crazed, everyone sits clutching her heart—those eyes have awakened their magic.*

*Married women are helpless and unmarried girls are elated, wandering about in a golden daze.
Hearing of him, even gentle saints rush out to look; his sidelong glance strikes like a spear.*

The poisonous eyes of the Prince of Awadh are city bandits—they have taken up pursuit behind us.

Pada 305

I offer body, mind, and everything I possess to the beloved prince Raghubara.

A golden jeweled crown shines upon his head, and his sehra sways over the moon-face of that charming prince.

His great rose-tinted eyes are filled with intoxication; their kohl-darkened glance works magic upon Mithila's women.

Black curls lie beside his earrings like young serpents guarding the treasure that belongs to beloved Sita.

As he smiles, betel-redness shines upon his lips; every heart aches when the pearl at his nose trembles.

His body is dark, his robe saffron-colored,

and the radiance of pearls streams over the borders of his yellow shawl.

Anklets adorn his feet, which glow crimson with lac; Nehalata's heart yearns for those red soles.

Pada 306

O Raghubara, royal prince, look upon me with the slightest smile.

*That moon-face makes the heart speak; that sweet smile is enchanting—O dark thief of hearts!
Beloved, now accept my love; join your eyes with mine, for the anguish of separation keeps rising.*

I have practiced no austerity or sacred discipline; I have simply taken refuge at your feet—Lord, now look toward me.

Your grace alone can save me; there is no other remedy, O Bihari. With folded hands I make this plea.

Pada 307

O rasika Raghava, you who dwell in Lady Sita's heart!

*Beloved, do not wander forgetfully through these lanes; do not let your feet touch their dust.
Having redeemed Gautama's wife, Raghubara, do not seek to extend your fame here.*

O renowned Lord whose foot-dust brings deliverance—my rasika Raghava!

*Your sweet, nectar-filled words have become a vina that captivates the heart;
their arrows pierce body and awareness, leaving no room even to speak.*

You are skilled at snaring the mind—my rasika Raghava!

*Love has taken hold, beloved, and bound me with its cord.
Every limb is steeped in your color, and my eyes have become chakora birds.*

Show me your moon-face—my rasika Raghava!

*Since love for you arose, the garden of my life has awakened into fortune.
Take away my body's pain, beloved—you who know the secrets of my mind.*

Knower of rasa, color, wisdom, and virtue—my rasika Raghava!

Pada 308

*When the maiden joyfully beheld the dark bridegroom, she forgot all awareness of herself.
Her eyelids fluttered, and beholding that pleasing face, her heart grew eager.*

*His moonlike radiance scattered everywhere; the moon itself became intoxicated and abandoned
its pride.*

*Drinking the nectar of his beauty, her heart grew cool as she turned her eyes toward him again
and again.*

*The fair young maiden sat at his left, creating the very limit of bliss.
Like lightning flashing within a dark cloud, the two poured down drops of love.*

*Janaka's long-awaited fruit ripened and filled every heart with joy when they entered the
wedding pavilion.*

Pada 309

*Your long, curling hair and lovely face—ah, bridegroom!
The bridegroom speaks words full of sweetness.*

*Your jeweled crown and ornamented robe—ah, bridegroom!
The gentle trembling of your nose-jewel is priceless.*

*Your kohl-dark eyes pierce my heart—ah, bridegroom!
Their sidelong glance is steeped in poison.*

*One mind says, “Remain forever at his side”—ah, bridegroom!
Another mind reels and wavers.*

*O heart-enchanting beloved, your enormous eyes—ah, bridegroom!
Open the veil and grant the bliss of your vision.*

Pada 310

*Through the bond of Mithila, Janaka’s Daughter has become my sister,
and Ramaji has become my honored guest and kinsman.*

*Tender Sita is dearer than life,
and the Prince of Kosala is the treasure of her life.*

*Beholding them, we shall make our own hearts into the wedding pavilion;
with bride and bridegroom, those thieves of hearts, we shall be immersed in laughing rasa.*

*With bride and bridegroom we shall pass our lives in Mithila,
while millions of eyes gaze upon the vine of beauty.*

Chitachorana

Pada 311

*Priceless is the bridegroom’s beauty; curling locks hang like dark-blue jewels.
His crown shines upon his head, flashing like sun and moon with light at every instant.*

*Or perhaps a new moon has risen in the sky, displaying some wholly unprecedented comparison.
His blue-lotus eyes and nectar-like speech pour sweetness beneath the splendor of his brows.*

*All the companions become a swarm of honeybees, drinking the nectar of his beauty until they are
intoxicated.*

Where in all the three worlds could there be another form so wondrous and incomparable?

*Great is the fortune of Janaka’s Daughter; may this blessed couple live age after age.
Says Ramalochana: tender Sita has received the fruit of her worship of Girija.*

Balamuvan

Pada 312

*Abandoning every worldly hope, I have come into refuge—O noble one, look upon me once.
Where can I carry this blazing fire that burns for you? Its flames consume my body, and I find no
moment's peace.*

*Yet your heart shows me no compassion; this seems a boundless wonder.
Scripture, the Vedas, holy books, and good saints all call you the crown of generous rasikas.*

*Why then do you torment me? What pleasure is there in refusing to look upon me?
Sustained only by hope, this fallen one's life refuses to depart; night and day I endure terrible
pain.*

*You take the orphan's hand and make that soul your own—why did you not first look upon my
faults?
Why recoil in disgust and shame to turn your eyes toward me?*

*Look to your own virtues and ancient vow, O hero of Raghu's line, ocean of compassion and
Prince of Awadh.
If Sita's Lord takes no thought for his servant Nehalata, what an uproar this tale will cause!*

Pada 313

Long live the beautiful bridegroom of the bride!

*His robe glitters with gold brocade, a sash adorns him, and a sehra hangs over his moonlike face.
He eats betel and smiles enchantingly; his kohl-dark eyes wound the heart.*

Says Madhupa Ali: gazing upon his beauty, I sacrifice body, mind, wealth—everything.

Pada 314

*May Queen Sita's married fortune remain unbroken; may the crown remain upon King Rama's
head.*

*As long as the earth rests upon Shesha's head and the streams of Ganga and Yamuna continue to
flow,
as long as moon and sun shine in the sky, may this bridal splendor remain.*

*May the bridegroom remain forever, and the bride forever; may each forever dwell within the
other.
May their wedded blessing endure, may the crown remain, and may this bridal beauty be ever
new.*

*May Kanaka-vihari dwell here forever; may the companions' assembly always remain.
May such adornment be renewed each day, and may loving devotees receive this great good
fortune.*

Pada 315

*The flower-gardener slept high upon the terrace, overlooking her garden.
“Wake, wake, gardener! The gardener calls you—rise, for dawn has come.”*

*When the gardener opened her eyes, she saw bridegroom Ramachandra standing at her door.
“Never until today have I seen such a rare and lovely prince—how has he come to stand at my doorway?”*

“Until today, gardener, the flame of love burned low; today it blazes fiercely.

*“At Father’s house auspicious signs have risen today—fashion a mirrored wedding-crown.
My eyes have never beheld such a crown; how shall a mirrored crown be made?”*

*“Around its edge, gardener, set diamonds, jewels, and pearls; place tender Sita in its center.
Let travelers upon the road see her reflected there, and women drawing water behold her at the well.*

“Let all the sisters-in-law see her reflection in the pavilion; in the bridal chamber dwells tender Sita.”

Kavitta

Stanza 1

*The knot of his yellow cloth was joined to her red bridal veil;
merely looking upon them captivated the mind like a jewel-studded ornament.*

*Branches of the Veda spoke their sacred words, and family customs were heard;
amid them all the peerless bridegroom fashioned a singular beauty.*

*Says Bindu Kavi: seeing Sita’s face, the bridegroom
stood rooted to the spot, unable to advance another step.*

*Janaki forgot the pavilion, ceremonial vessels, and pillars;
she began circling only that dark and lovely body.*

Stanza 2

*Such darkness is not found in a necklace of sapphires, nor in a youthful tamala tree;
not in Nanda’s Darling, nor in the blossom of flax.*

*It is not in Yamuna’s water, nor have I seen it in the jambu fruit;
not in a blade of durva grass, nor in a forest of blue lotuses.*

*Such a dark beauty is found nowhere else;
I have not seen it even in monsoon clouds at dusk.*

*At the time of Rama’s wedding, the shadow of Rama’s beauty
spread just such a darkness across Janaki’s face.*

Stanza 3

*King Janaka's daughter is wrapped in beauty from limb to limb;
it cannot be contained as she stands beside the abode of bliss, beloved Rama.*

*I swear by Rama that I invent nothing and conceal nothing;
Sita remains close beside him—this is no net of empty words.*

*This account is true, not woven from illusion, says Pramoda Manju:
she remains forever clasped to her beloved like a garland around his breast.*

*Seeing that garland, every maiden offers herself in sacrifice—
a golden vine lovingly entwined around a splendid dark tamala tree.*

Stanza 4

*If beloved Sita is the lotus, her beloved is its fragrance;
if the Beloved is the lotus, she is the fish immersed in its nectarean lake.*

*If the darling is water, her beloved is its sweetness;
if the Beloved is water, she is its cooling, bliss-bestowing power.*

*If the darling is milk, Raghubira is its flavor;
if the Beloved is milk, the darling is its fresh butter.*

*Says Moda Manju: Sita is the golden ring of bridal beauty,
and Rama is the sapphire jewel set within it.*

Stanza 5

*Her eyes are naturally lovely—reddened, round, and bashful with modesty,
renowned in their glory and steeped through with affection.*

*Her pointed eyes are sharp and sparkling, flashing with restlessness;
piercing the heart with playfulness, they shower forth virtue.*

*They awaken the world and bestow radiance, crushing wickedness, sorrow, and poverty;
lined with collyrium, they are dark and lovely.*

*Says Javat Gopala: rich with virtue and proud in their excellence,
these eyes are the glory of Queen Sita.*

Stanza 6

*Fair as lightning, enchanting, mistress of countless Ratis,
she is my sovereign lady, moving with the gait of an elephant-queen.*

*A fitted bodice and blue garment embrace her slender body;
her abundant ornaments reveal a realm of incomparable beauty.*

*The light of her moon-face spreads in every direction;
that mine of Rama's rasa destroys the darkness of night without remainder.*

*Drenched in the nectar of love, she smiles, revealing a pure row of teeth;
Sri Kishori, Mithilesha's Daughter, steals Rama's heart.*

Stanza 7

*The gods adorn her with flowers from the wish-fulfilling tree
and gaze with delight upon the sacred faces of the Couple.*

*In their many forms of play, joy unfolds and delight expands,
like the moon's mighty light driving darkness away.*

*Seeing Maithili, such vast and lovely bliss arises;
says Sakalata-vihari: this is the settled conviction of my heart—*

*nowhere in the seven worlds is beauty heard of equal to Rama's,
yet Sita's incomparable form is a hundred times lovelier even than Rama.*

Stanza 8

*They bear the beauty of bees, the charm of curved brows, and the intoxication of Varuni wine;
like lotuses steeped in Love's nectar, they are bees at the flower of Rama.*

*No creature or goddess—not Bharati, Sati, Parvati, or Rati—
possesses their pure and stainless loveliness.*

*Filled with tenderness and compassion, modesty, and gracious discernment,
they nourish all equally like the moon and are tender buds of blessing to devotees.*

*Though dwelling beneath the spell of Love, they bring every other heart beneath their sway.
Says Rasa Rama: the finest eyes are those of my mistress Maithili.*

Stanza 9

*To decorate the crimson soles of Janaka's Daughter,
the young barber-woman arrived in great haste.*

*She poured clear white water into a basin
for lotus-feet whose soles put even roses to shame.*

*Their reflection colored the water with the Jewel of rasa;
again and again she brought fresh water, brimming with eagerness.*

*"Have I already applied it, or must I still begin?" she wondered within her heart;
bewildered, she stood holding the red lac in her hand.*

Stanza 10

*Stars dwell in her nails, a moon in the circle of her face,
and the flashing of lightning in the radiance of her teeth.*

*The three sacred rivers meet within her eyes; every rank of accomplishment rests upon her
couch;
within her feeling lies the exquisite problem that inspires the poetry of all nine rasas.*

*Curvature dwells in her hair and absorption in her sidelong glance;
skill resides in her ears, and every tale submits to her.*

*Says Bindu Kavi: this is a matter established by knowledge and proof—
within Janaki's body dwells the beauty of the entire world.*

Stanza 11

*Shachi and Urvashi wave celestial yak-tail fans above her head;
Savitri serves her feet, as does the queen of Mahesha.
The daughters of Varuna, the king of birds, Kubera, and the Moon,
Gandharva maidens and lovely serpent-women—all render service.
The daughters of youthful kings glitter like lightning,
standing nearby with retinues brought from land after land.
Among those doe-eyed women, holding every eye in longing,
shines the wondrous Kishori, daughter of Mithilesha. (11)*

Stanza 12

*Not in kewra or ketaki, not in flowers or roses,
nor even in the lovely mango blossom;
not in parijata, Madhavi, or clove,
not in musk or Vaidyanatha sandalwood;
not in juhi, bela, champa, or chameli,
not in fresh sevati or even the choicest malati;
not in attar, perfume, or the blue lotus—
nowhere is there fragrance like that of the blessed couple's moonlike faces. (12)*

Stanza 13

*Seeing the bride's beauty, one takes her for Rati;
seeing the bridegroom, one imagines Manmatha himself.
Beholding the splendor of Siya and Raghubara at their wedding,
every rasika in the assembly goes mad with delight.
Her celebrated veil, his yellow silk, and the jeweled peacock crown—
whoever beholds them praises the blessed fortune of Mithilesha.*

*As fair and fresh as the young Kishori appears in bridal dress,
just so fresh and youthful is her dark bridegroom. (13)*

Stanza 14

*No second beauty can be found to equal
the grace of this lotus-eyed one.
His handsome darkness puts millions of Loves to shame;
every kind of adornment seems perfected upon him.
His tender smile steals the minds of men and women;
in Siya's beloved, even the simile of the bee finds fulfillment.
If by any means I could obtain the image that has pleased my heart,
I would bind it fast within the casket of my eyelids. (14)*

Stanza 15

*Anklets upon his feet, a torque upon his chest, and bracelets upon his arms,
while the radiance of yellow silk adorns his waist;
a robe, a shawl, and a gunja-bead garland around his neck—
every comparison vanishes upon his cheeks.
Upon his brow are the urdhva-pundra and saffron line, with a jewel at his nose;
softly smiling teeth and lightning-bright eyes.
Above the curling locks of Sri Videhi's beloved
sits a colorful cap glittering with gold embroidery. (15)*

Stanza 16

*"Ever since I beheld your enchanting image,
my heart has remained deceived and spellbound.
Neither home nor forest pleases me;
no garden delights me, and all desire for comfort has fled."*

*Dher Kavi says: again and again I turn the thought over—
"Let me go and meet him!" This one longing remains awake.
"Whom can I tell? Beloved, how can I reach you,
when watchful sisters-in-law surround me on every side?" (16)*

Stanza 17

*Beholding the lovely splendor of his waist-cloth and her veil,
the eyes fall still and can perform no other work.
The Vedas have become a colorful silken garment,
delightfully embroidered with Isha, Kena, and Katha.
Prashna, Mundaka, and Mandukya are set in it like stars;
Aitareya and Taittiriya form its radiant braidwork.
As though within the forest of Vedic meters two moons had risen,
the lovely beloved and her lover shine as an abode of joy. (17)*

Stanza 18

*Rama's body resembles a deep-blue cloud,
and Janaka's darling shines like pure lightning.
The color of Rama's limbs is like the rolling waves of the Yamuna,
and our Janaki is the fish of love who dwells within them.
Poet Bindu says: Rama's form is like Shankara's dark matted locks,
while Siya's grace is the celestial river flowing through them.
The comparison is complete: Rama is the immortal Dark One,
and Maithili a lovely bud of golden lotus. (18)*

Stanza 19

*"I came to Ayodhya and beheld him, friend—
never before had I seen such a wondrous form.*

*"He stole away my reason, taught me the way of affection,
and seized the love within my heart—such is the deed he has done!
Says Bihari: the instant I beheld that graceful youth,
he entered and settled within me; I became profoundly bewildered.
Separation became immeasurable, and nowhere did I find release;
Kausalya's son became the very pupil of my eyes." (19)*

Stanza 20

*A radiant crown shines upon his head,
spreading moonlike brilliance.
The earrings at his ears humble the pride of fish;
his gentle smile contains the sweetness of kalakand.
Remembering him drives me mad;
all movement and reason desert me in the spell of his beauty.
In all three worlds we have never beheld a vision
like today's vision of the blessed couple's moonlike faces. (20)*

Stanza 21

*Millions of sun-gems ornament the peacock crown upon his head;
its moonlike gleam dazzles the eyes.
A jeweled crest rises there and a peacock plume waves above it;
the strange splendor of the ornament is overwhelming.
Fine dark curls rest against his beautiful forehead,
and both lovers shine with one undivided radiance.
In all three worlds we have seen no vision
like this vision of the youthful couple. (21)*

Stanza 22

*Seeing the colors of his peacock crown, the moon itself grows faint;
the bride's blue sari looks lovely and delights the heart.
The blue cloth deepens the dark one's complexion,
like a dense storm cloud in the month of Shravan.
Darling Siya's fair body flashes like lightning,
while the Lord of Ayodhya seems a full monsoon moon.
When the divine couple smile with their arms about one another,
their sidelong glances cut the throats of hundreds of thousands. (22)*

Stanza 23

*My heart became absorbed in their lotus feet and lovely toenails;
it traveled into the anklets and then caught upon the heels.
It came to the unbroken circle of the waist, then moved through chest and head;
becoming his arms, it went and clasped the neck.
From there it emerged onto chin, lips, and nose,
then passed through spotless forehead, eyes, and brows.
It wished to wander upon the brow of Raghuraja Ramalal,
but his curls bound my mind in chains. (23)*

Stanza 24

*Dearer than emerald, her radiance flashes like a cloud;
Rama beholds her and cannot lower his eyelids.
Is she a serpent-princess, or Uma herself arisen?
Raghava grows restless, unable to turn away.
Merely seeing her makes the poison of love rise within the body.
The lovely minds of yogis themselves fall beneath her sway;
even the steadfast run about trying to recover their composure.*

*My own mind has become trapped in the chains of those curls;
again and again it twists and turns, trying to escape. (24)*

Stanza 25

*Darker than kohl, those slightly curling, lovely locks
are so heavy with beauty that every comparison seems small.
Jewels like emerald stars gleam among them;
cherished and arranged with love are Raghava's side-locks.
Fragrant with the finest perfume, brilliant and beautifully ordered,
those locks adorn Rama's head.
Hanging in tresses between them are the minds of yogis;
with these chains of hair he has bound the whole world. (25)*

Stanza 26

*Like the flash of a diamond, the glow of a firefly,
the gleam of lightning, or the luster of pearls;
like nectar's essence, like a boatman's shore,
like the master of magic setting forth on a journey;
like the root of beauty, like a flower in embroidery,
like the trident of splendor—such is the glory Raghava bears.
Like flowers opening, like the united light of moon and sun,
like a mine of pure gold—such is your smile. (26)*

Stanza 27

*Until today I had never seen within the world
one so charming, virtuous, and altogether handsome.
Whoever looks upon his body even once
forgets food and drink, night and sleep.*

*Shame, family honor, duty, and every restraint fall away—
what else could happen to the women who dwell in Mithila?
Wise friend, what has the handsome dark one filled within his eyes?
Is it magic, a spell, a charm, or some enchantment? (27)*

Stanza 28

*Taking aim, he releases sidelong eyes like arrows,
piercing one through; his dancing brows grant the highest peace.
Behold this treasury of beauty, before which Love himself is sold—
the Creator has liquefied beauty and fashioned him from it.
Casting aside modesty, one companion slips away from the gathering
and gazes at the kingdom of his beauty without blinking.
She looks upon that face with its dark, kohl-lined eyes;
Siya's own limbs thrill at the heart-enchancer's smile. (28)*

Stanza 29

*"In this Kali age, your eyes have become wish-fulfilling trees;
within them my own eyes long to build their nest.
Your eyes are the dark, moonless night of the rainy season,
and within them my eyes are masses of dense cloud.
Your eyes have become soft drums for music,
and within them my eyes are peacocks longing to dance.
Your eyes are my eyes, and my eyes belong to yours;
your eyes are thieves who have come to steal my eyes." (29)*

Stanza 30

*"Beloved, you have slain me by letting your curls hang loose;
and this gentle smile is your glory and grace!*

*"My heart is wounded, my very being effaced;
the wound is deep, dealt by the blow of your merciless glance.
How could travelers upon the path of love remain standing
when your brows are bows and your eyes arrows?
There is no release from the court of these eyes;
take me to your feet—my life will depart without delay." (30)*

Stanza 31

*Restless, keen-edged eyes go forth stealing the heart;
sharp as a needle, they pierce through the pupils.
They feel no shame before the lotus, nor does anything equal them,
their black pupils encircled by crimson threads.
They are mighty heroes, able to steal even Mohana's heart;
even khajana birds, after millions of attempts, accept defeat.
As he moves his eyes in playful restlessness,
it seems two fish are sporting in a silver bowl. (31)*

Stanza 32

*The instant those eyes look, no brilliance remains among the radiant;
the circle of the moon grows dull and pale.
Fish will die unstruck within their ponds;
alas, the lotuses will wither and decay.
Ferocious, deathly lions will devour the deer,
and every khajana bird will take wing.
Who else is powerful enough to fight them here?
Only the darling's own stubborn eyes will dare stand against them. (32)*

Stanza 33

*"Friend, my companion, listen carefully for a moment;
accept this counsel and repeat it within your heart.
Having gained youth, do not proudly display your strength;
remain aware that even a savage lion may be reduced to a jackal.*

*"You may endure daggers, spears, pistols, and arrows,
countless wounds from swords and lances;
regard even Death himself as no more than a child—
but keep ten million miles away from those sharp-edged eyes." (33)*

Stanza 34

*"Stay millions of miles away, friend—do not even remember him;
if the thought enters your heart, you will not remain conscious.
Remain with the one who knows the pain of others;
if you remain in his company, do not desire anyone else.
If you long for love, then burn in love's fire—
living for a moment and dying the next.
Death is acceptable, friend, but do not turn away even a little;
stay millions of miles from those sharp-edged eyes." (34)*

Stanza 35

*How astonishingly full of rasa, calm, and gentle they are;
restless, beautiful fish twisting in delight.
Noble yet wayward, compelling the heart and bringing it beneath their sway,
intoxicated with love, renowned thieves of consciousness.
What comparison can be fashioned for the eyes at their corners?
Vaidyanatha says: they grant peace and yet inflict pain.*

*I have searched the worlds and seen no other eyes like them—
only the enchanting eyes of Kosala's youthful prince. (35)*

Stanza 36

*Whomever Viharilala looks upon even once
forgets laughter, play, dawn, and speech.
She remembers neither veil nor bindu, neither necklace nor braid,
neither ornaments, skirt, sari, nor bodice;
neither herself nor home, neither love of husband and child,
neither beauty-mark, tooth-black, vermilion, nor red cosmetic.
“Friends, she is growing more and more unconscious,” says Nagaraj Lal,
“struck by his eyes as though by the blow of a gunshot.” (36)*

Stanza 37

*Wearing a safflower-colored wrap, I went alone toward the royal grove;
on the way I met the gallant of Ayodhya and froze in astonishment.
The moment I drew near, rain began to fall;
he smiled, understanding, and sheltered me beneath his yellow silk.
Under that very canopy the clever one sheltered me;
the raindrops ceased at that perfectly opportune moment.
I swear by my brothers and by my father’s feet:
the sweet ache of Raghava’s nature has never left me. (37)*

*As long as the speech of the Vedas
and Brahma’s mouth remain enthroned;
as long as the moon and its streaming radiance
continue to shine above Shiva’s head;
as long as the ocean, the mountains, and the earth endure,
and Shesha remains steadfast, bearing their weight—*

*As long as the sun and moon shine in the firmament,
may the noble fame of Sita-Rama remain abundant.
As long as the stream of Ganga spreads across the earth,
may this enchantment of Manmohan endure.*

Kuṇḍaliyā

*Eyes behold the beauty of eyes and become drenched in rasa, like honey.
Lover and beloved are alike filled to overflowing with the sweetest affection.
Having tasted that sweet affection, the eyes preserve not even the slightest reserve;
utterly helpless, they appear as though dipped in honey.
A wise companion offers sound counsel and tries to make them understand,
but those intoxicated eyes will not heed a single sweet word. (1)*

*Where the eyes have struck, the heart races and writhes;
nothing can be seen outside, while within everything is shattered.
The heart breaks apart within and sigh follows upon sigh;
Kama twists and burns it in the fierce heat of separation.
Wounded day and night, the mind finds no peace;
the face loses all its color once those lovely eyes have struck. (2)*

*Eye-arrows filled with rasa pierce the heart without pity;
the pang throbs in the breast, and the mind cannot hold firm.
The mind cannot hold firm; the whole body trembles.
Wave upon wave rises with terrible force as poison spreads through every limb.*

*Sweet one, I find no peace—where shall I go, and to whom shall I tell how those eyes torment me?
Day and night the cruel arrows of those tyrannical eyes ache within me. (3)*

*Eyes full of passion and intoxicating rasa send arrows sharp as swords.
They strike the heart, and a dreadful cry arises.
A terrible cry arises; the wound cannot be contained within the body.
Home and family are forgotten, and nothing else pleases the mind.
One staggers sweetly and speaks in broken, bewildered words—
marvelous, cruel, overpowering, mighty hunter-eyes! (4)*

Savaiyā

*The source of bliss is not in sugar candy, nor in grapes, nor in the taste of butter.
Bliss is not found by keeping anything in the heart, nor in smiling, teasing, or sweet speech.
O learned and clever ones, you may speak of happiness in a hundred thousand ways;
if there is happiness anywhere, its one true dwelling is a glimpse of the beloved darling's eyes. (1)*

*Only the one who has suffered it knows; everyone else laughs at another's pain.
Once the beloved pierces the heart, a million remedies cannot draw the barb out.
When even a tiny grain falls into the eye, the pain leaves no patience at all;
how then can there be peace, dear friend, when an entire image has entered and will not come
out? (2)*

*When glances clash even once, the desperate heart finds the very thing it seeks.
Helpless, the mind comes and falls into the snare; before the virtues of those eyes, self-control
cannot prevail.
Seeing the collyrium, the unstained heart surges with love.*

A gunshot wound may strike and pass, but once these eyes strike, no other eye can ever please. (3)

*Once those eyes strike, home and family are abandoned, though mother and father grieve to hear
of it.
Renunciation rises, pain grows twofold, and sorrow alone pervades.
Arrows may fly, swords may slash, and spears may strike while one still stands firm upon the
earth;
even a bullet wound may be endured, but no one's eyes inflict a wound like those eyes. (4)*

*How many connoisseurs, steeped in rasa, have lost themselves within it and burned their homes
behind them!
How many travelers, seeing that lovely radiance, have forgotten their road in the market lanes!
How many have gone to their graves, slain by a smile and a single glance!
Darling, if you were to become Rama-lala, thousands would lose their heads. (5)*

*Your lovely dark body is a vine of love, stealing the hearts of all who behold it.
I am defeated by those great eyes of yours and their crooked, sidelong glance.
Poets and guardians of beauty lose themselves before the sweetness of your bending,
heart-twisting form.
Darling, if you were to become Rama-lala, tens of millions would lose their heads. (6)*

*What comparison can be offered for the beauty of that dark body? What learned poet could
describe it?
Even Sharada, Shesha, and Mahesha possess no power to sing it fully.
Seeing the sweetness of Avadhesha's form, the sun itself is covered like a cloud in the rains.
Darling, if you were to become Rama-lala, hundreds of thousands would lose their heads. (7)*

*In all the worlds there is no comparison equal to that beauty.
The Vedas grow weary describing its glory; even the thousand-mouthed Shesha reaches his limit.*

*Lakshmi, Rati, and lightning—all their splendor is shamed before it.
O companion, accept my surrender and look upon me with a smile. (8)*

*Listen, Sri Mithilesha's Daughter: hold this one prayer within your heart.
If I have faults, tell them to Raghubara—but do not have me driven away from his presence.*

*Gopi-isha, sorely afflicted and terrified by the age of Kali, has come to your gate.
Knowing this refugee to have sought refuge, grant shelter—for she belongs to your own parental home. (9)*

*Friend, how lovely is the turban upon the head of the dark beloved, Raghunandana!
Earrings sway at his ears and curls fall over his cheeks, seizing the heart.
Seeing the radiance of his face, the moon offers up all its countless reflections.
He is the incomparable sovereign of rasa; every comparison in the world is insipid beside him.
(10)*

*A crown set with jewels rests upon his head, and golden earrings ripple at his ears.
Against the beauty of the dark cloud of his body, the brilliance of yellow cloth scatters like lightning.
A garland of tulsī and precious jewels hangs at his throat; his red face dispels the fear of worldly existence.
Manmohan has assumed such a bridegroom's form that he enchants even the mind of Mohana.
(11)*

*Whether you desire me or not, beloved, dwell forever within my heart, day and night.
Whether you speak or remain silent, smile or do not smile, embrace me or withhold yourself—do not be displeased; remain there.
Do whatever pleases your heart, Lord of Connoisseurs; remain happily absorbed in every delight.
Only let my eyes behold you, darling; remain forever fresh and youthful for millions of ages. (12)*

*His sweet smile, dear friend, exerts its force amid the bridal viewing.
This mind will heed no restraint; bewitched by that sweetness, it runs toward him.
Alī, draw Sita close as well and let both dwell fully within the bridal viewing.
O Creator, hear my prayer: may this beautiful pair live forever. (13)*

*The lovely dark body delights the mind and has stolen the beauty of the whole world.
In just this way, dear friend, the daughter of Videha forcibly steals the hearts of all women.
May no deceitful evil eye fall upon the sovereign couple.
May Shankara always protect them; may this beautiful pair live forever. (14)*

*As Raghunandana is dyed in Sita's color, so Rama colors Videha's Kishorī in his own.
Gazing upon the immeasurable beauty of both, the youthful dark one becomes intoxicated and innocent.
Shielding them from the gaze of others, behold this pair—Rama within Sita and Sita within Rama.
May Shankara always protect them; may this beautiful pair live forever. (15)*

*Sita and Rama sit together upon the bridal seat, their beauty shaming millions of Ratis.
Ornaments adorn every limb, and Sita's auspiciously colored veil is wondrously lovely.
Rows of jewels shine in every place, filling the heart with joy and exultation.
Surati prays: may Rama and Sita, this beautiful pair, live forever. (16)*

*May you sport in intimate seclusion, forever colored in the contest and play of love.
With your wise beloved, your very life, place your arms like a garland about each other's necks.
Srimati Chandrakala and the other companions offer every virtue, body, and life as no more than*

blades of grass.

Bathe forever in joy, O eternally youthful Kishora and Kishori. (17)

The two seem to look upon each other as their own reflections, so alike is their beauty.

In their gentle smiles and tender speech, one appears mirrored in the other.

Each is dyed in the other's color, limb within limb, according to their mutual delight.

The beloved's yellow garment appears upon one, and the beloved's dark sari upon the other. (18)

The two are intoxicated by each other's forms; darling, they overflow with delight.

Each rejoices in the other's laughter, play, and exultation.

What limit can be set to the natural affection between them? (19)

Each is the life of the other's life—the mine of conscious bliss.

Each adorns and arranges the other, circling offerings around them again and again.

They seem like two beloved flames of a single lamp.

Each is the other's true life, the wise breath of life, as dear to the eyes as sight itself.

Even when their eyes have drunk the sweetness of one another, those lovely eyes remain thirsty. (20)

With their own lotus hands, each feeds delicious morsels into the other's mouth.

I offer myself to the gentle smile of each, that mine of supreme rasa.

When one looks upon the other and sees such sweetness, both are overcome and intoxicated.

The two cannot contain the ever-new colors and surging delight of their play in rasa. (21)

I offer myself as I gaze upon them; with deepest love they ward all evil from one another.

Each hides the other beneath a silken cloth, overwhelmed by the weight of joy.

Hearing each other's lovely names, they contemplate them with the taste of a nectar-stream.

They fill each other's laps and join limb to limb in immeasurable joy and play. (22)

The two remain together; connoisseurs gaze upon their dance and play of rasa.

With their own hands each lovingly adorns the other's limbs.

Within their hearts, day and night, they cherish one another in countless ways.

Though limb remains joined to limb, each still longs to meet the other. (23)

Each sways and embraces the other, lifting and lowering them, never letting longing arise.

Each takes the other in their arms, increasing yearning through love.

Singing each other's virtues and captivated by each other's beauty, they offer themselves away.

Pressing one another to their hearts, they settle within the great ocean of bliss. (24)

Each lovingly adorns the other and remains steeped in affection.

Gazing upon each other's good fortune, they surge with waves of Kama.

Each remains dyed in the colors of love, absorbed in eternal play.

Speaking words of rasa to one another, they remain joined throughout the long night. (25)

Śrī Rāma Kalevā

Chhand

Victory to Ganapati, Girija, Girijapati, and the Mother who delights the world!
Victory to Gurudeva and Kesharinandana, whose lotus feet bestow happiness!
In Samvat 1902, upon Jyeshtha Dashahara,
this incomparable work was begun in Ayodhya.
How can I describe the strange and singular ways of love?
Therefore I shall sing with delight the playful kalevā feast of Prince Rama:
how Raghunandana ate the lovely meal in Janaka's palace,
and how I shall relate every jest of his many sisters-in-law.

How could I fully describe the joyous wedding of Sita and Raghubara?
The whole night passed in music, color, and celebration among the wedding party.
At dawn Janaka quickly summoned his own prince.
Hearing his father's command, Lakshminidhi came at once with his companions.
Seeing Mithilesha, he respectfully bowed at his feet.
“Son, go swiftly to the guest pavilion where Sri Avadhesha resides.
Present this request to King Dasharatha, obtain his permission,
and bring the four princes here to take their kalevā meal.”

Hearing this, Lakshminidhi bowed his head; his breast filled with delight.
Accompanied by his companions and smiling gently, he mounted a spirited horse and set out.

They displayed their skill, making the horses prance and perform many feats;
the companions smiled and gestured to one another as they reached the guest pavilion.
There King Dasharatha, sovereign of the solar line, sat enthroned,
surrounded on every side by radiant princes and every arrangement of happiness.
Attendants called out proclamations, and heralds recited royal praises;
singers sang auspicious virtues while kettledrums sounded at the gate.

There Mithilapati's prince arrived with his companions.
He respectfully bowed before the King of Avadh and the four princes.
Seeing Lakshminidhi, that treasury of joy, they honored him and all his companions.
The king, lamp of the Raghu line, took his hand and seated him beside himself.
In that moment Lakshminidhi and his friends gazed upon the beauty of Rama and his brothers
and became treasuries of happiness;
and Rama's heart too was cooled upon seeing Lakshminidhi's face.

Then Srinidhi joined his hands and spoke tenderly to the king:
“Please send the princes, your royal darlings, to take their kalevā meal.”
Immersed in love, Dasharatha smiled gently.
He quickly summoned the four princes and happily gave them leave.

Learning that preparations had been made in Janaka's city, every servant became joyfully busy.
Each began arranging the princes' attire, bringing ornaments and splendid garments.
Upon Raghunandana's head a gold-brocaded turban shone, set at a graceful threefold angle.
A many-colored plume bent charmingly upon it, each fold arranged with exquisite care.
A lovely peacock ornament of gold and jewels gleamed upon his head.
A wedding veil beside the vermilion jewel delighted the mind.

Along every edge, on every side, rows of jewels were set.
Such dazzling light streamed from them that the eyes could not bear to look.
His earrings swayed; priceless pearls touched his cheeks.

*Two splendid jeweled chains shone in dazzling brilliance.
The cruel, forceful jeweled ornaments plundered the lives of the young women;
rays burst from them in both directions like the sharp darts of Kama.*

*His eyes were crimson, dark with collyrium, intoxicating and utterly extraordinary.
They were so lovely and compelling that no other sight could hold one's gaze.
Filled with love's many colors and steeped in passion's rasa, they moved in their own proud way.
They seemed like Kama's two armies; whoever looked upon them was struck down.*

*How could one describe the lovely tilak upon his broad brow?
It was like lightning firmly set within a fresh dark cloud.
Between his crimson lips, his two rows of teeth flashed like lightning;
when he faced any direction and spoke with joy, marvelous splendor spread everywhere.*

*Upon his radiant dark body glittered a gold-brocaded robe;
dark edging adorned its hem, studded with rows of precious jewels.
A beautifully gathered yellow sash wrapped regally around his waist.
A fresh sacred thread, worth millions, shone with incomparable dignity.
Millions of pearls hung from its ends, with fine fringes along the borders.
So light and delicate was it that it scarcely seemed to weigh upon him; every woman who saw it
yearned for him.
Beneath the vermilion jewel at his throat lay many necklaces of precious stones.
Strings of gems shone upon his beautiful neck and arms, stealing the heart at a glance.*

*Gem-studded golden bracelets, pleasing and curved, were fastened around his wrists,
as though they were instruments of enchantment devised to conquer the hearts of every young
woman.
A jeweled girdle woven like a net was drawn tightly about his formidable waist.
Great golden armlets encircled his arms, and a lovely green garland adorned his breast.
Fragrant yellow brocaded slippers quietly aroused longing in every heart.
His feet, adorned with anklets and crimson mahāvar, made the body tremble at their sight.*

*Rama's face, the abode of every joy, shattered the pride of millions of Kamas.
At the sight of him, rasa rained into every heart as though his body itself were a raincloud.
When the Lord ate paan and spoke with his companions, whichever way he looked,
everyone forgot body and mind; his glance purchased their life and heart without a price.*

Dohā: *Who could describe Rama's incomparable bridegroom attire,
when even Shiva, Sanaka, and the other sages gaze upon it without finding satisfaction?*

*Thus Raghunandana and the four royal darlings, handsomely adorned, appeared with his
younger brothers.
Full of excitement, they mounted their horses, their bodies arrayed in ornaments.
The four Raghu princes were as dear to their father as life itself.
Mounting their horses with their companions, the intoxicated princes set out with Rama.
Attendants called their names and proclaimed auspicious praises.
Fly-whisks waved swiftly on both sides while companions held canopies above their heads.*

*To Rama's right rode Sri Lakshminidhi with his companions.
He made his restless horse show its paces, delighting every heart.
The mount of Raghunandana, whose very name is revered throughout the world,
moved with such beauty and excellence that the heart rejoiced to describe it.*

*Ornamented with ornaments, the horse himself adorned every ornament; even the sun's steeds
were ashamed at seeing him.*

Jewels were braided into his lovely mane, and little bells rang at his feet.

*His jeweled saddle of gold brocade shone with extraordinary beauty;
the deceptive splendor of its saddlecloth stole even Kama's heart.*

*His tight, graceful breast-band seemed a snare for every mind;
a brocaded girth wrapped his belly, spreading its splendid radiance.*

*Lovely reins and straps, marked with his name, adorned him;
a beautiful threefold jeweled crest bent proudly above his head.*

*Whichever way a rider turned him, he arrived there in an instant—coming and going in a breath.
He planted his feet, halted, and pranced upon the earth, displaying a delightful gait.*

*His waist was slender, his hooves broad as trays, and fresh shoes were fastened to them.
When he leapt, he could cross the heaving ocean in a single bound.*

*When his flying hooves struck the earth, even the sun's horses trembled in their hearts.
Over water, over land, or upon the path of wind, he never knew fear.*

*The rushing wind could not overtake him, and Garuda abandoned his pride.
Raghunandana's beloved horse displayed incomparable arts.*

*The horse named Samuda brought joy to all; Bharata sat proudly upon him.
Handsomely arrayed, he moved with a restless gait at Sri Raghunandana's right.*

*When the reins restrained him, he grew fiercely excited and began to quiver.
He stamped and sprang in graceful rhythm, delighting the fortunate eye.*

*Now he rose into the sky and astonished the gods; now he stirred delight upon the earth,
as though creating a staircase joining heaven and ground.*

*He bounded in four lovely, restless beats, measuring even lightning's swiftness.
Who could adequately describe the colorful steed of Prince Bharata?*

*The horse named Champa possessed a sharp and sparkling gait; Shatrughna rode upon him.
Dancing before the entire company, he put the peacock itself to shame.*

*If he lifted his forelegs only slightly, they rose many hands into the air.
Again and again his rider coaxed and caressed him, yet still he would not settle.*

*When the reins were gathered, he walked with measured, swaying steps,
and the gods themselves grew bashful and bewildered at the sight of that gait.*

*He pushed fearlessly through the ranks of kings, never faltering as he planted his feet.
Ripudamana's handsome horse unfolded countless feats.*

*Lakshmana's spirited horse was named Lakshmi, formidable and exceedingly swift.
He flew upward into the realm of wind; scarcely an eye could see him touch the ground.*

For an instant he flashed across the sky, casting beauty upon beauty;

moment after moment he danced in new ways and astonished everyone.

*He leapt and wheeled beside Lakshminidhi's horse;
all the Raghus considered it proper sport, and Rama too smiled gently.*

*Like a mass of clouds he bounded and made the dwellings of the gods tremble;
the beat of his hooves seemed to measure the very circle of the sun.*

*Where cannon and musket roared, he would charge straight there.
Filled with the flavor of battle, he crushed the enemy and won glory among heroes.*

*Such a mighty and powerful war-horse struck, wheeled, and drove opponents away.
Since he had dwelt in Janakpur, whoever beheld him*

*admired his glossy mane, shapely head, strong compact frame, and beautiful waist.
A woven net of silken threads streamed above him upon the wind.*

*He stepped as though scattering flowers and performed innumerable wonders—
bounding, swaying, prancing, and wheeling beyond anyone's power to describe.*

*Seeing the horse's restlessness and Lakshmana's mastery in riding him,
all the houses of Nimi and Raghu remained as though enchanted and sold away.*

*Rama and the other beloved princes watched in mounting delight;
charmed by Lakshmana, they praised him again and again.*

*Thus the procession sported along the road while many instruments sounded.
Hearing the heralds' calls, the women of the city gathered at their doors.*

*One woman gazed upon Rama's lovely face and became immersed in its bliss;
filled with affection and devoted to his form, she lost all awareness of her body.*

*Another beheld the incomparable bridegroom and dissolved in love;
her eyes overflowed, her mind swung like a cradle, and a wave of affection arose.*

*One lay upon a bed beside her husband, then rose and hurried to the window;
dyed in the color of Rama's form, the darling abandoned both husband and pleasure.*

*Another beautiful woman opened her veil while carrying a vessel of water;
seeing bridegroom Rama, she entered an ocean of bliss.*

Dohā: *One beheld the dark form, broke a straw in reverent self-offering, and became absorbed in joy;
steeped in that sweet image, she abandoned all awareness of herself.*

*Another gazed upon Raghunandana's beauty and said, "Friend, listen!
All the princes are going to take their kalevā meal in Janaka's palace.*

*"Srinidhi has gone to escort them and has brought all four royal sons—
the colorful young heroes of Raghu's line, beloved sons of King Dasharatha.*

"Blessed is our fortune, dear friend; let us fill our eyes with their sight.

Otherwise a vision of these bridegrooms, dearer than life, is very difficult to attain.

*“Mithilesha’s Daughter has received supreme fortune and wedded blessing today:
she has embraced to her heart that lovely dark embodiment of sweetness.”*

*Another companion said, “Listen, friend, a splendid opportunity has come.
Let us all go to Janaka’s palace, laugh with them, and make them laugh.”*

*As the women softly exchanged these words, they fell under love’s sway.
Compassionate Sri Rama heard them as he rode with his brothers and smiled.*

*The princes made their horses dance, filling the road with beauty while great kettledrums
sounded.*

Attendants and heralds proclaimed their praises as they entered Janaka’s city.

*Near the gate they saw lovely jeweled courtyards arrayed in splendor.
There the intoxicated princes of Raghu’s line halted.*

*The married women of the city hurried to inform Sita’s mother.
Golden vessels rested upon their heads, with auspicious leaves and rows of lamps.*

*Singing lovely songs of blessing and carrying golden trays,
many beautifully arrayed women came to perform the welcoming rite for Raghubara.*

*But when they drew near and beheld Rama’s beauty, floods of joyful tears filled their eyes.
They stood astonished wherever they were, gazing spellbound upon the bridegroom’s face.*

*Those colorful women became dyed in Rama’s beauty, seeing the entire treasury of bridal joy.
No awareness of body or mind remained; who among them could perform the auspicious rite?*

*All the dear women were submerged in the ocean of love, but at last they recovered great
composure.*

The companions somehow completed the welcoming rite, restraining the flood from their eyes.

*Lakshminidhi dismounted and helped all four princes descend from their horses.
Taking Raghunandana by the hand, he led him into the palace.*

*Kings from every island sat near Janaka;
the entire assembly of Nimi’s dynasty appeared radiant like portions of the gods.*

*Attendants called royal proclamations and kettledrums sounded in many ways.
Great brocaded banners flew above mighty young elephants.*

*Raghunandana entered respectfully with Lakshmana and his other younger brothers and made
obeisance.*

Seeing them, all the Nimivamsha rulers rose, and Janaka seated the princes nearby.

*Neck-garlands, kohl-dark eyes, the sehra, and a jeweled crown adorned Rama.
Seeing him dressed as bridegroom, the whole assembly of kings was delighted.*

After remaining for a while in Janaka’s court, King Dasharatha’s darlings

received the king's permission, bowed their heads, and went to their mother-in-law.

*There sat Queen Sunaina, cuckoo-voiced and the source of every happiness.
Who could compare her even to Indrani? Her loveliness enchanted Rati herself.*

*Moon-faced women sat on every side; some waved fly-whisks,
while others, beholding Rama's beauty, sang auspicious songs of āraṭi.*

*Upon a carpet lay a cushion and above it a splendid seat.
Queen Sunaina, wife of King Janaka, shone with the radiance of ten million moons.*

*At that moment Raghunandana entered in his heart-ensnaring bridegroom's attire.
Seeing him, the entire women's palace rose; no one remained composed in body or mind.*

*They performed āraṭi, offered jeweled ornaments, and respectfully washed the princes' feet.
Four thrones of different colors were placed, and the four bridegrooms sat upon them.*

*Beholding Rama's beauty, Mother Sunaina did not blink even once.
She forgot all awareness, could not speak, and found no words to utter.*

*She stared in amazement without moving, immersed in an ocean of great delight.
The colorful queen was dyed in Rama's form, and tears of love streamed from her eyes.*

*Seeing his mother-in-law in such a state, Rama wondered within his heart,
"What has happened to the queen today?" Yet he felt too shy to ask.*

*A clever companion understood his thought and spoke sweetly to Rama:
"Dear prince, this is all the doing of your virtues; do not hold the slightest doubt within your heart."*

*Hearing these words, Sunaina recovered her composure and awoke.
Again and again she ward off evil from him and kissed his cheeks.*

*The queen broke a straw before that sweet dark form in reverent self-offering;
charmed by Rama's beauty, she sold herself to him without a price.*

*Then, joining her hands, the queen spoke to Rama in a very gentle voice:
"Rise, dear son, and take your kalevā—whatever your heart desires."*

*Hearing this, the four royal darlings rose together with their companions.
Filled with fortune and love, Sunaina washed their feet with her own hands.*

*She seated all the brothers upon high, elaborately fashioned stools.
In soft and lovely golden trays she served many kinds of sweets.*

*The royal sons ate according to their tastes while fans waved before them.
The companions understood their preferences and served such dishes that their delight cannot be described.*

*They praised the flavors; afterward they rinsed, and the companions fed them betel.
Dressed again in fine garments, the princes sat with their companions, anointed with many fragrances.*

Dohā: *The royal princes sat in complete ease, sovereigns among princes;
beholding their laughter and play, hundreds of thousands of Kamas were ashamed.*

*At that time news reached the wife of Lakshminidhi, who came with her companions.
Her name was Siddhi, famed and radiant in virtue, beauty, and character.*

Filled with fortune and wedded blessing, she was exceedingly beautiful, intoxicated with fresh youth.

Skilled in the ways of rasikas and accomplished in love, she put Rati to shame.

*Rich in every virtue, a treasury of beauty, graceful and wise in every way,
she was Lakshminidhi's beloved life and the great queen of Nimi's line.*

*Raghubara's singular sister-in-law was deeply affectionate and adorned by love.
She knew how to sustain devotion to her beloved and was captivated by Rama's form.*

*Her restless eyes searched in every direction, eager to behold him.
Filled with delight, she came at once to Rama with her companions.*

Her face was a moon, and she carried a lotus in her hand; smiling gently, she illumined the palace.

Taking Rama's hand, the darling glanced sideways and said,

*"O heart-stealing young prince, what a great thief you are, beloved!
You stole away my awareness, dark one, and then went straight to your mother-in-law."*

*"Do not speak so perversely, dear one, hiding your own fault," Rama replied.
"You yourself remained concealed, fair lady, even after hearing that I had come.*

*"I entered your palace, but you did not make yourself known.
Fine indeed is your house, dear one, where everyone can disappear without a trace!"*

*Hearing Rama's words, the darling smiled softly and replied,
"Dear prince, the customs of your house cannot be imposed here."*

*Before Mother Sunaina she could not frame a suitable answer.
Taking Raghunandana by the hand, she led him to her own palace.*

*There the delighted darling provided four thrones and seated the princes.
Again and again she gazed upon their faces and performed many rites of āratī.*

*She placed lovely jasmine garlands around them and scented their garments with perfume.
Wiping Rama's face with the edge of her veil, she fed him betel with her own hand.*

*The expansive golden palace shone on every side with moonlight-like radiance;
jeweled pictures gleamed upon its walls and splendid paintings flashed.*

*Beautiful women like Rati and Rambha sat there, adorned in every ornament.
Some arranged buds and flowers, some a crest, and some a garland.*

One companion fed fragrant betel prepared with lovely cloves and camphor.

One stood holding a spittoon, while another waved a fly-whisk.

*One held a ewer filled with cool water, and another showed him a mirror.
Each darling, arrayed in her own ornamentation, came before Raghubara.*

*One tuned the jaltarang, sitar, and tambura; another kept rhythm with hand-cymbals.
One took a sitar and demonstrated many patterns and movements upon its strings.*

*One joined the upanga and murchang to the beat sounded upon the face of a mridanga.
Another drew such fresh notes from a vina that it seemed to utter a spell of enchantment.*

*A doe-eyed, cuckoo-voiced woman sang in the fifth mode;
her sweet melody entered the ear and made the heart of the separated lover tremble.*

*One honored rhythm with melody and spread an elaborate canopy of musical modes.
Hearing it, trees and stones seemed to melt, and Love awoke even within those who listened.*

*Seeing the beauty of that delightful abode, the royal princes became filled with love.
Rama conversed with his sister-in-law Siddhi, immersed in the supreme nectar of affection.*

*Millions of princesses who had come upon hearing King Nimi's wedding invitation
possessed so great a longing to meet Rama that no tender maiden could describe it.*

*Each was very beautiful and newly adorned, her golden hair arranged with care;
colorful, virtuous, and rich in grace, those princesses were most charming.*

*They understood the customs of love and were accomplished in its play;
whoever beheld them was enchanted, as though they were attendants of Kama.*

*When they heard that all four brothers had come to Siddhi's palace,
every darling arrived at once, recognizing that blissful opportunity.*

*All the royal maidens came thirsty for Rama's vision.
Siddhi, treasury of happiness, received every one of them with great honor.*

*They began to gaze upon Rama's beautiful form; joyful tears flooded their eyes.
They had fallen into the ocean of his beauty and could no longer be drawn out.*

*A jeweled golden crown and a singular crest of pearls shone upon him;
who could speak of the delight he stirred in the hearts of those royal women?*

*Yellow garments clothed him, graceful bracelets adorned his hands, and his curving glance
searched them out.*

Yogis, renunciants, chaste women, and ascetics alike remained fixed upon him.

*His kohl-dark eyes were extraordinary—slanting, graceful, and filled with collyrium.
No one could remain near him without being struck by their sidelong assault.*

*His glossy, glittering, curling locks spilled across his face.
Their sight raised poison within the young women, and no herb or antidote could cure it.*

Betel-redness spread across both his lips like the radiance of the sun;

it seemed a sharpened sword drawn from Kama's scabbard.

*A lovely dark garment lay gracefully over his cloud-dark body,
like lightning slowly spreading its splendor across a raincloud.*

*His gentle smile was a snare for every heart, and the proud curve of his brows enchanted them.
Hearing his nectar-filled speech, they forgot awareness of body, food, and clothing.*

*"I sacrifice myself to the bridegroom's form—how much of it can I describe?
Since beholding that beauty, no other image has entered my eyes."*

*Seeing that treasury of beauty, dark and lovely, their minds streamed away in delight;
bodices strained, bangles slipped from wrists, and bracelets rang sharply.*

Dohā: *Enchanted by the beauty they beheld, the tender maidens fell helpless;
all remained utterly astonished, forgetting the condition of body and mind.*

*Any woman who had considered her own form incomparable and remained proud of her beauty
saw the loveliness of Rama's face and sold herself to him without a price.*

*Any beauty who had proudly thought her own eyes lovelier than a doe's
was pierced by Rama's sidelong glance and fell wounded, shedding tears.*

*Women who had always relied upon the Vedas and faithfully guarded their chastity
were struck by Kama's arrows and wandered helpless and distraught.*

*Whoever was struck by Raghunandana's singular and playful messages of the eyes
retained no awareness of work or home, wandering as though intoxicated.*

*The exceedingly delicate princesses, led by Siddhi and filled with affection,
begin lovingly directing playful wedding-taunts at Raghubara.*

*One companion says, "Listen, darling—where did you obtain such a form?
We have heard that Kama is exceedingly handsome, but you surpass even him."*

*Siddhi says, "Listen, Raghunandana: you are our sister's husband.
Darling, we shall ask you one thing; conceal nothing from us.
Marriage alliances are generally made between people of the same rank and lineage;
how, then, did you marry your own sister to Rishi Rishyashringa?
Did he abduct her and run away, or did she willingly follow him?
Tell us the honest truth, darling—you are the fortunate bridegroom."*

*Lakshmana replies, "Listen, cherished girl: the Creator has fashioned the world in many ways.
The making and settling of royal marriages lie within a king's authority.
We are princes, and the dispassionate King of Videha gave his word;
by destiny's course and my heart's good fortune, my marriage took place in your house."*

*Another companion says, pretending astonishment,
"Why speak of all this? You are Siddhi, while Lakshminidhi is a woman—
how can one woman marry another?"*

Another says, "Listen, darling—who could possibly defeat you?
The ways of your household are already famous throughout the world!
The women of Ayodhya are noble, generous, and remarkably accomplished:
they eat sacrificial kheer and produce sons without any husband's work!"

Hearing the companion's words, Raghunandana answers with a gentle smile:
"Darling, conceal the ways of your own household
before you speak of the affairs of others.

"According to the Vedas, no one here was born from mother and father;
in your household they all sprang from the earth—such is not our custom!"

At that moment Chandrakala, exceedingly clever and tender,
Princess Siddhi's younger sister and Lakshminidhi's sister-in-law, says:
"Darling Ragho, from childhood you lived among ascetics.
Tell us honestly—where did you learn all these tricks and clever deceits?
Did you learn them among the sages' wives,
or beside your own sister?
Darling, without tasting something sweet and savory,
how could you recognize its flavor?"

Simple-hearted Bharata says, "Friend, you too remain an unmarried girl;
how can you, darling, speak of the company of men?
We lived among sages to learn knowledge,
and learned whatever they taught us.
To learn the arts of love from women,
we have now come into your presence."

Siddhi answers, "Listen, darling—do not speak in this way.
You are counted among holy men; what could you know of worldly affairs?"

Bharata says, "Darling, you speak the truth—we are indeed wandering sadhus.
Woman, serve us in such a way that our hearts become pleased.
Let the yogis fill their stomachs with the nectar of your lips;
give that nectar as food and perform the worship due to guests."

One companion says, "Listen, all of you—let us tell them one thing.
We have learned that they once went to protect a sage's sacrifice.
There they saw the lovely Tataka; overcome by desire, she ran toward them.
They could not tolerate her behavior,
and killed her out of spite."

Shatrughna replies, "Listen, fair one—do not lay a needless charge.
If those two did anything improper, exact its price from us.
Your household married into ours before learning everyone's conduct;
darling, do not preserve your grievance—let us settle the matter now.
For the sake of those women whose cause makes you angry,
all four brothers stand ready to serve you."

Hearing Shatrughna's words, a delicate maiden says,
"Darling, where did you acquire such cleverness?
Did you marry some treasury of feminine virtues,

*or keep company with courtesans?
We can see strange new signs in you
that do not appear in your three brothers.”*

*Shatrughna answers, “Fair one, only an informer could know such secrets;
we consider you more accomplished even than courtesans.
Yet our hearts perceive you all in one and the same way:
because you are our dear companions, you and we must certainly become kin.”*

*Hearing this fresh and skillful reply, Princess Siddhi says,
“Listen, Raghunandana—king of rasikas, root of bliss, wanderer in delight!
You appear so charming that even Kama would be enchanted by your beauty;
how, then, can any woman in Ayodhya possibly have escaped you?”*

*Having spoken, lovely Siddhi remains standing there, filled with delight.
Raghunandana takes her hand and answers in an exceedingly gentle voice.*

Dohā

*The Creator has bound the world within the limits of propriety;
king and pauper alike, and every chaste woman, conduct themselves accordingly.*

*“People preserve a fitting attitude after considering what is proper and improper;
but you imagine yourselves to know the affairs of everyone’s household!”
Hearing this, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna laugh and clap together;
Siddhi and the other princesses are filled with joy and affection.*

*Thus, laughing with Raghubara and making him laugh,
they direct many playful wedding-taunts toward him.
Each begins to fulfill the cherished desire held within her heart.
One companion approaches Rama and whispers something into his ear;
touching his cheek, the darling considers her birth fulfilled.
Another presses his lotus feet with her own tender lotus hands,
repeatedly draws them to her heart, and removes all their weariness.
Another removes the garland from the Lord of the house
and places it around her own neck;
finding Raghubara receptive, she offers her entire self to him.
Another applies sandal paste to Rama’s body,
then rubs that same fragrant paste upon herself;
touching the perfumed moisture of his skin,
the darling cools the burning within her.
Another brings her lotus hands and offers him
the khajana birds of her lovely eyes;
considering colorful Rama her own beloved,
she cannot bear to remain apart.
Another gathers tender buds and lovingly fashions
a plume for his head;
seeing Rama’s beauty increase beyond measure,
she remains astonished and intoxicated with rasa.
Another companion feeds Rama betel,
then takes what remains into her own mouth;
receiving it as the sacrament of love,*

*the lovely maiden becomes ecstatically absorbed.
Each worships Rama according to her own inclination
and drinks in her cherished inner vision;
the dark form rises within every heart,
and all become intoxicated with divine play.*

*Sri Raghunandana, crown of rasikas and fresh cloud of longing,
honors each one's desire in precisely the way it dwells within her heart.
Ayodhya's gallant and beloved becomes dear among the companions;
the tender maidens are caught in love's cage and can no longer fly away.*

*Raghunandana then says to Siddhi,
"If you will now grant permission,
we shall return to the guest-camp,
where the king awaits us."*

*Hearing the bridegroom's words, longing awakens within their hearts.
Siddhi and all the princesses speak in the pain of separation:
"You have nurtured us, intoxicated us, and immersed us in the nectar of beauty;
now tell us, cherished prince—by what means shall our lives remain
when you depart for Ayodhya?
Youthful, charming thief of hearts, why did you bind us in love
if now you intend to kill helpless women and go away, dark one?
If you preserve this same custom whenever you visit your in-laws,
you will slaughter all the women of Janakpur with the sword of love.*

*"We frail women implored you in every way,
yet you paid no heed;
drawing the bow of your brows,
you struck us with poison-tipped arrows from your eyes.
In one moment you stole our worldly shame,
family honor, and reputation.
Listen, king of rasikas: once love takes root,
it cannot be removed.
Whether it attaches itself to one high or low, of any caste,
it sells itself into that person's hands.
Until the sinful eyes obtain a glimpse,
they continue to yearn despite millions of efforts.
Although the beloved's form dwells specially in the heart day and night,
those sinful eyes remain unsatisfied until they behold him.*

*"His speech, gait, laughter, and loving glances
cannot fully be perceived even by affection alone;
still, darling, the longing to meet him remains immense.
Many men are called handsome and wise throughout the world,
yet until one sees one's own beloved,
the heart cannot become cool.*

*"The fire of separation burns every moment
in the one whose eyes have become attached to Raghunandana.
She takes that burning as happiness;
when tears pour down, she calls them fire.*

*Day and night she finds joy in that heat,
counting neither propriety nor impropriety.
Only one who has been sold into love's hands
understands the way of love.
The tears well up in her eyes
and her body wastes away;
only a lover can recognize a lover's pain.*

*"Better to remain hopeless and forsake every pleasure of the world
than for God to separate one from a sacred, loving friend.
If the Creator hears my prayer and shows the least compassion,
may I never be separated from my gallant, beloved darling.
Becoming helpless in love, let me abandon everything
and pass beyond bodily awareness;
O Creator, do not separate me even in a dream
from my own beloved friend.*

*"Let me endure every hell and remain an insect there for a lifetime,
but, Creator, do not separate me from the beloved who meets me in love.
Let me forsake karma and dharma and wander through the world intoxicated with love,
but, Creator, do not separate me from the darling of my life.
Let me dwell beneath the water for a lifetime,
drying my body through austerity,
but, Fate, do not separate me from my beloved even in a dream.*

*"Let me cast every pleasure into the ashes
and spend my life eating ashes from house to house,
but do not ever let me be parted from my own cherished beloved.
Let caste, lineage, and family honor be lost;
let me abandon everything and become a wandering beggar,
but never let the way of love disappear from these eyes."*

Dohā

*"Listen, prince: all the pleasures that exist in the world
become sorrow when one is separated from one's gallant beloved."*

*"Raghunandana, although we women are low in every way,
once we give our love to someone, we are sold into that person's hands.
We are exceedingly merciless, selfish, and accustomed to improper conduct,
yet toward the one we love we keep no deceit within the heart.
We women are base, images of death,
and always appear untruthful;
nevertheless, when we love someone,
we place body and mind entirely in that person's keeping.
We become separate from husband, son, relatives, and household;
we keep nothing between ourselves and the one with whom we have bound our love.
No one in the world is lower than we are, Raghubara,
and no one is higher than you;
but if the heart's love were weighed,
our scale would prove the heavier."*

Hearing the women's anguished words, youthful and steeped in rasa,

tender-hearted Raghunandana understands the secret way of love.
The destroyer of his devotees' fear replies:
"Listen, all you women.
I shall now reveal my own nature;
I will conceal nothing from you.
Shiva, Sanaka and the other sages, Brahma, and the gods
are not dearer to me than you;
you princesses are dearer to me even than they are.

"If anyone—wise or ignorant—loves me,
I keep that person always as dear as life,
without the least trace of pride.
Darling, everyone knows this to be my vow.
Otherwise creatures would not seek me
through chanting, austerity, vows, and meditation.

"Whenever I examine those lovers
who are greatly praised in the world,
I find in every case that only one partner truly keeps faith.
Frost burns the lotus's body; it does not protest, and when it sees the sun it rejoices;
how can the sun know such pain within the lotus's heart?
The chakora longs and, unable to obtain the moon,
gazes toward it every night;
but the moon feels not the slightest wound from the chakora's love.
Seeing its beloved raincloud, the frog and peacock dance,
but the cloud shows not even a little tenderness toward them.
The papiha cries 'Beloved! Beloved!' until it gives up its life,
yet its beloved shows no compassion and bears the sin of its death.
The fish abandons everything and never leaves the water day or night,
but even seeing such friendship, the water does not split apart in grief.
The moth approaches the lamp, enchanted by its radiance,
but the fire feels no pity while consuming its body.
Thus I have observed the conduct of many reputed lovers:
one gives up life for the other,
while the other feels no pain.

"My love is not of that kind, darling—
listen, Siddhi, abode of happiness.
I do not abandon the person who loves me,
not even for the span of an instant.

"If anyone regards my beloved devotee as small
and displays pride before that person,
then however great that proud one may be,
I make Brahma himself bow his head before my devotee.
Darling, I have that devotee worshiped
by every being in all the worlds;
why speak of others? I myself bow my head.
I keep not the slightest difference
between the devotee's body and my own;
I never withdraw my affection,
even if I see a hundred thousand faults in that person.

*"The kingdom of the three worlds, all royal power and riches,
my son, and Vaidehi—
none of these is as dear to me
as the love I bear my devotee.
For that devotee's sake I assume countless forms
and wander from forest to forest;
I bear innumerable calamities upon my head,
but never abandon my friend.
The courtesan, Jatayu the vulture, Gajendra the elephant, Ajamila,
Sabari, the king of monkeys, Jambavan, Hanuman, and Vibhishana—
all are my beloveds.*

*"Whoever gathers the mind away from everything else
and fastens love upon my feet—
I accompany that person like a servant;
this is my steadfast way.
But if one claims love for me while directing affection toward other gods,
then even after millions of supplications,
I do not go near that person.
One wholly devoted to love, wholly absorbed in consciousness,
who writes friendship upon the heart—
such a lover is never, even for a moment,
left afflicted by my neglect.
One who keeps self-interest in the heart, altruism upon the lips,
and displays a counterfeit love—
the face of such a treacherous friend
does not please me even in a dream.
When the great dissolution comes upon the universe
and no man or woman survives,
my beloved is not destroyed.
Listen, Siddhi and all you maidens.*

*"Whomever I resolve to protect has no killer;
whomever I choose to uproot has no power that can establish them.
If I conceive even a little happiness, joy, or welfare for that person,
all thirty-three crores of gods become perpetual servants.
In a moment I can make Brahma like a pauper
and make a pauper into Brahma;
I can make Shiva, Sanaka and the sages, and all the gods
dance wherever I please.*

*"Karma, dharma, valor, steadfastness, yogic power, and cleverness;
knowledge, meditation, realization, nobility,
political wisdom, and skill—
none of these can conquer me,
even after millions of efforts.
I am defeated by the loving soul;
in that place I retain no power of my own.*

"Therefore all of you are embodiments of love;

*Surati offers herself to you.
 Siddhi and all the princesses,
 you are dearer to me than life.
 I shall fulfill today every desire that dwells within your hearts.
 Preserving the honor of the world, darling,
 I shall never become separated from you.
 In every way I belong to you,
 and in every way you all belong to me.
 Truly, truly—this word of mine is truth;
 accept it, princesses.”*

Dohā

*Hearing Raghunandana’s words,
 the doors of concealment opened;
 love swelled within all the women,
 and their bodies could no longer contain it.*

*Gathering their composure, the excellent companions fold their lotus hands.
 Siddhi and all the princesses speak in exceedingly gentle voices:
 “Blessed is our fortune, Raghunandana;
 no one is greater than we.
 We were drowning in the ocean of worldly existence,
 but you have taken us by the arm and saved us.*

*“We women are foolish in every way, yet we have loved you with a pure heart.
 Among princes, none has shown compassion equal to yours.
 We can never repay the favor you have bestowed upon us, beloved;
 a thousand stars can never equal the moon.
 In whatever birth destiny may place us according to our karma,
 O connoisseur-king Raghunandana, may we meet you there forever.
 Even if fate inflicts millions of torments and this body perishes moment by moment,
 beloved, may the bond between us never break in any birth.”*

*Hearing these words, the indwelling Raghubara, steeped in the rasa of compassion,
 honored all the princesses, addressing each with tender speech.
 Taking leave of everyone, Raghunandana departed with his brothers;
 it seemed as though four radiant moons had emerged from the Palace of Siddhi.
 Rama ate paan as the companions of Siddhi walked beside him.
 They came to the royal palace and appeared before Sri Mother Sunaina.*

*Raghunandana bowed at her feet, his lotus hands joined,
 and in exceedingly gentle words asked permission to depart.
 Hearing her son-in-law's words, virtuous Sunaina's eyes filled with tears of love.
 She forgot all awareness, unable to decide whether to tell him to stay or go.
 Recovering her composure, Queen Sunaina presented Raghubara and his brothers
 with many garments of great value.
 Receiving the attire, they bowed their heads at her feet and accepted the Maharani's blessings.*

Dohā: *Joining her hands, Siddhi stood and said, “Listen, Rama, abode of bliss:
 We are handmaids at your feet, women thirsting for love.
 Beloved, remember your own renowned nature and do not withhold affection from us.”
 His eyes filled with tears as Raghunandana replied, “Beloved ones, we are your captives.”
 After consoling her in many ways, Siddhi returned to her palace.*

Raghunandana, accompanied by his brothers and companions, then entered Janaka's assembly. He respectfully bowed at Janaka's feet, received permission, and departed. When the princes and their companions reached the outer gate, the servants completed every preparation and summoned their conveyances. Some rode elephants, others horses, all splendidly adorned; some mounted beautiful chariots, while countless great instruments sounded. Lovely standards shone across the sky and heralds called aloud. From every direction arose songs, praises, and proclamations of glory. Some held royal parasols above their heads, while others spread fans in their hands. Some offered betel and water to Rama, and others waved fly-whisks on both sides.

With this full royal array, Sri Raghunandana mounted and set out for the guest pavilion. The women of Janaka's city leaned eagerly from their balconies to see him. One said, "Mithilesha's Kishori is fair as lightning, while Prince Rama is dark and lovely—how perfectly the pair is matched!" Another said, "In what birth did we worship so well that this longing has been fulfilled? May fate grant that in some birth I too might meet Prince Rama and serve him with body and heart." Another said, "Blessed is that woman of royal lineage who amassed such merit in a former life that she has gained birth beside Sri Prince Rama."

"Today my birth is blessed: I have obtained the world's supreme reward, the Prince of Nimi's line. Having attained my lovely beloved, I would never separate him from my heart." Another said, "Where is the prince of the Raghu line, and where am I, a wretched woman? How could such a cradle ever be mine? O Creator, this whole life has passed in vain." Another answered, "Why brood over fate, dear friend, and fill yourself with sorrow? Our good fortune is already so great that our eyes have beheld him."

Hearing these anguished words of the women on every side, steeped in the rasa of compassion, Raghunandana cast comforting glances in all directions and consoled their hearts. Sporting thus with his companions, he reached the guest pavilion. Dismounting with his brothers and friends, Raghubara went to his father. Seeing the King of Avadh, he respectfully bowed. The king hurried forward and embraced him; the depth of that love cannot be described. Seating and caressing his sons, the king asked, "How did Rama's kalevā meal unfold? Tell me everything."

Receiving the king's command, Raghunandana delighted Nanda's heart, relating all that had happened in the palace and explaining every detail. Hearing it, the maharaja and the entire assembly were immersed in an indescribable rasa. Then the king gave his sons leave to retire to their respective quarters. In this way the people of Janakapura began receiving an ever-new bliss; even millions of Indras could not equal the happiness enjoyed there.

How could I fully describe this charming account of Rama's kalevā? Shesha, Ganesha, Mahesha, and Sharada themselves could never reach its end.

Whoever desires the way of love within the heart should first read this work. Having attained the fullness of Rama's love, such a person will no longer dance to the world's tune. This secret scripture of Rama's kalevā belongs especially to connoisseurs; when its words fall upon their ears, no corrupt impulse arises in the heart. Begun on Jyeshtha Dashahara and completed on Ashvina Dashahara, this secret scripture of Rama's kalevā was joyfully brought to completion.

Dohā: *At the certified age of forty-five years,
Ramnath Pradhan composed this Kalevā scripture.*

Thus the Śrī Rāma Kalevā Is Complete

Appendix: Jayamāla-Pada

*Bend down as she places the victory garland around your neck, darling of the Raghu line.
My beloved is small and cannot reach your neck, darling of the Raghu line.
My Kishori, daughter of Avadh's lord, is exceedingly slender;
lower yourself within reach of her hands, darling of the Raghu line.
Our Sita is an innocent, artless young woman;
she does not yet know the arts of love's play, darling of the Raghu line.
Friend, remain bowed before your beloved so her arm will not grow tired;
bend far enough that Sita may reach your neck, darling of the Raghu line.*

Pada 308

*Rama is the abode of delight, at once fair and dark—how beautifully the beloved has become the groom!
Sparkle upon sparkle flashes from his captivating radiance.
His blue and yellow splendor overturns every comparison with a forest cloud and lightning.
He is the dwelling of beauty and joy, shaming millions of Kamas—O beloved!*

*Jewel upon jewel shines upon the wedding crown; his sweet image smiles.
Lovely garments in beautiful colors adorn him, and the groom's face is fresh as spring.
Pearl garlands hang upon him, with diamonds set everywhere—O Sita!*

*The beauty of this divine pair cannot be expressed.
Janakanandini is a golden image in which a dark jewel has been set.
Their beauty and names draw one wholly inward; even eight watches of the day are forgotten—O beloved!*

*The groom's face, lovely as Kama and captivating to the mind, casts its enchantment.
His naturally graceful, curving glance showers arrows like a roaming archer.
Every woman of Mithila has been utterly bewitched—O Sita!*

Pada 309

*Kaushika, great lord among sages, show us the sight of him;
beloved of our hearts, dearest one, do not leave us.
Walking onward, you redeemed Gautama's wife and beheld the city of Mithila.
You broke the bow and married Vaidehi—wonder upon wonder, reaching even Brahma's realm!
Do not break our friendship; do not bind yourself elsewhere—O beloved!*

*Seeing the longing of Janaka's daughter, you granted her your vision;
and you brought all the citizens of Janakapura under the dominion of rasa.
Keep your pledge; do not wound our hearts—O beloved!*

*Remain in Mithila for a few more days, Raghunandana; we entreat and honor you.
Blessed is the fortune of all us women, for through you this relationship has arisen.
Fulfill the obligations of that bond and let us remain intoxicated by your beauty—O beloved!*

*The Sarayu is forever deep and filled with dark water;
better to serve in Sita's palace and dwell here amid these mansions, O Bihari.
Establish your colors here and do not abandon our company—O beloved!*

Pada 310

*I offer myself to my sovereign lady Sita.
She shines upon Raghubara's left side and has cast enchantment even upon the Lord of the three worlds.
One hand rests around the Lord's neck; the other remains extended, granting fearlessness to devotees.
Mother, I too am a sinner who has come for refuge; keep the star of my heart forever joined to these feet, immersed in the colors of rasa.*

Pada 311

*As she walks, her crooked glance enchants even Manmohan.
My eyes cannot move from that beauty, and I cannot utter a word.*

*For the moon's sake, the chakori bird became a thief; for the discus, she became the bird caught at its center.
Coming and going, Bihari never tires of her—yet before such beauty, he himself stands exhausted and still.*

Pada 312

*A sweet parrot has come to my rooftop, dear friend, speaking sweet words:
"My precious guest has arrived!" (1)*

*In the chamber of my eyes I shall spread a delicate bed;
closing the shutters of my eyelids, I shall delight my beloved. (2)*

*Ever since I beheld that dark and lovely face, dear friend,
I have never recovered my senses.
My heart has bathed in the river of love. (3)*

*I burned every concern for worldly shame in love's fire.
I forgot every entanglement of the world. (4)*

*All desires were erased; choosing the bridegroom alone, I ran and installed him within my heart.
In love's river, I let the vine of attachment drift away. (5)*

Pada 313

*Today the city of Mithila is blessed, dear friend;
among the four bridegrooms, Raghubara is the supreme marvel.
A jeweled crown rests upon his head and earrings shine at his ears.
His dark, collyrium-lined, tyrannical eyes;
crimson sandalwood gleams upon his brow, dear friend—among all four!*

*The dark and fair pairs are unmatched in all the world.
No eye has ever seen their equal, nor has any ear heard of one.
May these incomparable couples live age after age, dear friend—among all four!*

*The sky is enraptured today, and the earth is enraptured.
Gazing upon the bridegrooms' dark and lovely faces,
children, elders, men, and women are all overwhelmed, dear friend—among all four!*

*The one for whose sake yogis practice yoga and repeat their japa
has himself come to Mithila as our honored guest.
Now ward the evil eye from him by lovingly touching his cheeks, dear friend—among all four!*

Errata

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