

Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari

With the complete *Makaranda Madhuri* commentary

Root text by Rasikacharya Swami Agradas (Agradeva)

Commentary by Sri Rasrangamani Ji Maharaj

Complete English translation of the scanned volume

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Translator's note

This edition translates all readable textual material in the 46-leaf scan: the title and publication pages, the publisher's preface and notes, Swami Agradas's complete 80-verse root poem, Sri Rasrangamani's complete *Makaranda Madhuri* commentary, cited verses and scriptural passages, the two colophons, the commentator's concluding compositions, and the appendix. The first scan leaf contains only a damaged ornamental fragment and the scanner's watermark; it has no recoverable continuous passage to translate. Decorative marks and repeated scanner watermarks are omitted.

The root poem and commentary are written in Braj/Awadhi-inflected devotional Hindi, with Sanskrit citations. The English aims to be complete and close in meaning while remaining readable. Explanatory words supplied by the commentator are translated as explanation, not silently inserted into the root poem. Proper names and technical terms are retained where an English replacement would narrow their traditional meaning. *Rasika* means one capable of savoring divine love; *bhavana* is contemplative visualization or devotional imaginative realization; *dhyana* is meditation; *shruti* and *smriti* denote revealed scripture and remembered sacred tradition; *samsara* is the cycle of birth and death.

Publication pages

Place of issue: Sri Shatrughna Sharanji Maharaj, Sri Rasa-Moda-Kunja, Ayodhya; and Dharma Sangha Shiksha Mandal, Durga Kund, Varanasi.

Victory to Sri Janaki's Beloved.

Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari, composed by Rasika-emperor Sri Agradeva Swami, with the *Makaranda Madhuri* commentary by Sakhyendra Sri Rasrangamani Ji Maharaj.

Publisher: Shanti Jana Kalyan Trust, Calcutta. Second edition: 2,000 copies. Price: a loving recitation.

Preface

Victory to Sri Janaki and her Lord.

The sweet worship of Sri Sita-Rama is beginningless and eternally established. According to the *Sadashiva Samhita*, the Vedas received instruction in this radiant mode of worship from Lord Shesha. The *Shiva Samhita* and *Hanumat Samhita* say that the great sage Agastya received special instruction in sweet worship from beloved Sri Hanuman. The *Bhushundi Ramayana* states that Brahma, father of the worlds, taught the devotee Bhushundi the sweet worship of Sri Sita-Rama. In the Kaushala Khanda of the beginningless, ancient *Brihad Ramayana*, Suta Ji related to Shaunaka and the other great sages the account of Sita and Rama's rasa that had issued from the mouth of Lord Vyasadeva.

Among the Alvar acharyas of the present age, the *Sahasragiti* of Sri Shathakopa Swami and the formal marriage of Sri Ranganayaki Ji with Sri Rangadeva Ji likewise bear witness to this sweet mode of worship.

Among our earlier acharyas, Bhagavan Ramananda Swami's *Vaishnava Matabja Bhaskara* and Sri Anantananda Swami's *Sri Hari Bhakti Sindhu ki Vela* have, from the earliest period of the Sri Sampradaya, resounded like drums proclaiming the sweet worship of Sri Sita-Rama.

Before Sri Agradevacharya, however, this stream of Sita-Rama worship, filled with the sovereign rasa, remained hidden from public sight like the subterranean Phalgu-Ganga, and invisible like the current of the Saraswati where it joins the Triveni. The credit for openly and widely spreading this worship belongs to the feet of Rasikacharya Sri Agradeva Swami.

In our Vaishnava community there are fifty-two recognized *dvaras*, each ordinarily associated with the seat established by one dvaracharya. Sri Agracharya alone, through his disciples and disciples' disciples, caused thirteen such seats to be established.

He is held to be the embodied descent of Srimati Chandrakala Ji, sovereign among Sri Maithili's companions. It is therefore no surprise that his revolutionary and wondrous influence in spreading this worship inaugurated a new age.

The root work published here, *Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari*, is the immortal composition of this great, influential, and exceptional rasikacharya. In the sampradaya, the *Dhyana Manjari* is regarded as a book of blessing. Through reading and contemplating it, the object, place, time, and assembly described within become directly present in the field of meditation of faithful readers.

Among our former acharyas, Sri Swami Shankaradas Ji Maharaj said something like the following to his son and disciple, Sri Swami Jivaram Ji Maharaj:

*Sing these very verses and sing the Dhyana Manjari;
place it reverently upon your head, for it brings the welfare of Sita-Rama.
As soon as you read of its place and time, they will speak within your heart;
in only a short while you will receive the fruit of its blessing. [2]*

For this reason, within our own observation, many editions of this jewel of a book revered by the community have appeared from different publishing centers: editions of the root text, editions with footnotes, and editions containing a simple explanation. Even so, demand for it continues steadily to increase among today's devotees. Its popularity in the community is evident.

In our colorful rasika community, intoxicated with devotional feeling, this supremely venerable jewel of a book has always been worn like a necklace. Even today many revered persons know the entire compact work by heart. Through its daily recitation they have achieved great success in the discipline of meditation.

[1] See the opening invocation of *Sri Sita-Rama Rasa Chandrodaya* and verse 15 in the *Rasika Prakasha Bhaktamala*.

[2] Ibid., *kavittas* 10 and 11.

The celebrated commentator on the root text published here is the accomplished saint Sri Rasrangamani Ji Maharaj, remembered each morning with reverence, who was absorbed in the devotional mood of friendship. Even today, when skilled singers sing his sweet, deeply affecting, emotion-filled songs, those assembled at festival gatherings become saturated with devotional feeling. The commentator named his praiseworthy commentary *Makaranda Madhuri*, "The Sweetness of Nectar." Its qualities match its name. Read the commentary and your heart will surely become fragrant with its perfumed feeling.

Sri "Mani" Ji Maharaj was both a formidable scholar of Vedanta philosophy and an experienced, established siddha who had entered the innermost region of devotional feeling. As is the root work, so is his *Makaranda Madhuri* commentary: a union of jewel and gold, or milk blended with sugar.

The commentary's language is Awadhi. Rendered in Awadhi, the mother tongue of the sweet Beloved, Sri Avadhabihari, it becomes all the more relishable.

Several gentlemen advised us to convert the commentary's Awadhi into the standard Khari Boli Hindi familiar to contemporary educated society, or at least to permit a scholar to do so. We feared, however, that the vigor of the language of samadhi, which flowed in this form from Sri Rasrangamani Ji Maharaj's heart steeped in love, would not survive such recasting. We therefore urged the publisher to print the revered commentator's original words without alteration. That is what has been done.

We ask sensitive readers to continue studying and contemplating this meditation text together with its commentary. Your discipline of meditation will certainly reach fulfillment. This is our unwavering conviction.

This highly useful jewel of a book is appearing for the devotional community through the generous financial gift of Sri Purushottamlal Ji Dhanuka, a wealthy and life-giving gentleman of Calcutta. The grateful heart of the community he has benefited will spontaneously pronounce blessings upon the publisher. What more need we say?

All work connected with publication, editing, and related matters was completed by the learned Sri Radheshyam Ji Semka of Varanasi. He too deserves our thanks.

May society benefit from the reading, teaching, publication, and circulation of this book.

The humble attendant of rasika devotees,

Shatrughna Sharan

Sri Rasa-Moda-Kunja, Ayodhya

Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari with Makaranda Madhuri

Salutations to Sri Sita and Rama. Salutations to the blessed Hanuman.

The commentator's invocation

Doha

Meditate upon Sri Ramananda, the radiant lamp of the true sampradaya. Agra composed the work after touching his own Master's feet and bowing his head at the Guru's feet.

This lovely *Dhyana Manjari* of Rama and Sita is a bestower of blessings. By Hanuman's grace I write its *tilaka*, this beautiful treasury of joy.

The root author's invocation

1. I meditate upon steadfast Sri Raghavira, ornament of the lineage of Raghu. He is a treasury of bliss for those who take refuge in him, and he destroys the faults that form an ocean of sin.

मूल पाठ 1

सुमरिँ श्री रघुवीर धीर रघुवंश वभिषण ।

शरण गहे सुख राशहिरत अघसागर दूषण ॥१॥

2. Beautiful and supremely generous Rama bears an arrow and the Sharanga bow. Holding the Lord in the heart through meditation brings delight to the wise.

मूल पाठ 2

सुन्दर राम उदार बान कर सारंगधारी ।

हयि धरिप्रभु को ध्यान वदिष जन आनंदकारी ॥२॥

Tilaka Vartika: Commentary

At the beginning, after remembering this all-limbed meditation as an auspicious invocation and briefly describing the Lord's names, qualities, and majesty in a manner suited to his intention, the poet will meditate upon Sri Ayodhya. She is the foundational power underlying meditation upon Rama's form: the support of infinite worlds, a treasury of infinite divine virtues, beyond the gunas and beyond form, and the essence of being, consciousness, and bliss. Salutations to Sri Rama. The meter is *rola*.

"I remember steadfast Sri Raghavira, ornament of Raghu's lineage." What is he like? For those who take refuge, he is a treasury of bliss; he removes the ocean of sin and the ocean of faults. This is the grammatical connection of the words.

Now the inner feeling is explained. I remember Raghavira, steadfast ornament of Raghu's lineage, together with his sovereign Sri Sita, the mine of the wealth of beauty, the primal Power, supreme Devotion, and the giver of delight to Sri Rama.

By including the word *Sri*, Sita is understood. The feeling is that our chosen mantra is the blessed six-syllabled mantra. Therefore she will be obtained by its grace. Although the name Raghavira alone is stated rather than the Couple's two names explicitly, the reason is that Sri Sita and Rama are one reality. They become a Couple only for the delight of devotees. As it is said:

Speech and meaning are like water and its waves: they are spoken of as different, yet are not different. I bow to the feet of Sita and Rama, who are supremely dear to the distressed.

The name Raghavira destroys every obstacle. It shows Sri Rama as capable of protecting those who surrender, appearing in youthful form. Calling him "steadfast" also teaches that meditation cannot be sustained without steadiness; he will grant us at least a particle of his own steadiness. Calling him the ornament of Raghu's lineage reveals his mastery of royal sweetness.

How is the ornament of Raghu's line a treasury of bliss for one who has taken refuge? Whoever takes hold of his feet, knowing him as protector, and comes under their shelter with humility and dependence, finds in him a treasury of bliss. He frees that person from every sorrow and fear and gives the immeasurable treasure of happiness. He removes both the unfathomable ocean of accumulated sinful actions gathered through many births and the drowning ocean of faults that appear as the karmic dispositions already bearing fruit. As the "treasury of bliss," he bestows knowledge of his own true nature; then newly performed karma no longer adheres. Thus surrendered souls attain fearless liberation. This is the intended inner meaning of verse 1.

The second verse describes the Supreme Reality as the totality of every rasa, the object worshiped by the wise, and the embodiment of bliss.

"Beautiful" means that from toenails to the crown of his head every limb bears the marks of the Supreme Person; his form enchants sages' minds and consists of the rasa of divine love. He is Sri Rama: he delights and is delighted in Sri Janaki, delights the minds of sages, and, as the indwelling Lord, dwells throughout all moving and unmoving existence. "Generous" means that he gives to all beings the very ground of their conscious existence. To protect them he carries an arrow and the Sharanga bow in his two hands. He gives bliss to the discriminating wise who know essence from non-essence. Holding in my heart this Lord, the bow-bearer who accomplishes what appears impossible, I remember and contemplate him.

The verb from the preceding verse also governs this one. "Beautiful" establishes the fullness of infinite auspicious qualities. "Rama" establishes the unbroken unity of his wondrous manifestation: beyond qualities and yet possessed of qualities, formless and yet embodied, supreme over all. "Generous" reveals his power to bestow prosperity, dharma, desire, liberation, devotion, and even his own self. The arrow and Sharanga show the primacy of bow and arrow among all his weapons; naming two weapons establishes the beginningless reality of his two-armed form.

The phrase "giver of joy to the wise" also carries this feeling: I am not wise, and therefore I hold him in my heart so that he may make even me wise and joyful. First I hold the meditation in my heart and remember it, so that the eternal abode may become directly present to mind and speech; only then do I describe it. This is the inner meaning of verse 2.

Meditation on the Divine City

3. Ayodhya, his own supreme abode, shines with surpassing beauty. Its mansions are made of gold and jewels and glow with the radiance of precious gems.

मूल पाठ 3

अवधपुरी नजि धाम परम अतिसुन्दर राजै ।

हाटक मणमिय सदन नगन की कान्तविरिजै ॥३॥

Context and commentary

Having completed the four-line meditative invocation, the author now begins *Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari*.

The title's metaphor is this: meditation upon Sri Sita-Rama is a wish-fulfilling tree; the intellect dependent upon that tree is like a flowering vine; the cluster of its speech is the *manjari*, its bouquet. The commentary on that bouquet is *Makaranda Madhuri*, the sweetness of its nectar.

Rama's name, form, play, and abode are all eternal and composed of being, consciousness, and bliss. Each establishes the eternality of the others. The revealed text says, "His name is great glory." If there is a name, a form is necessarily present; where there is a form, its activity and play must be present; and where there is play, there must be an abode that supports it. The poet therefore begins by describing Ayodhya, the supporting ground of meditation upon Rama's form and the accomplished seat of divine power.

"Ayodhya, his own supreme abode, shines with surpassing beauty." Ayodhya is known in a twofold form: one eternal and one manifest for a particular divine occasion. The third form is Ayodhya as inward devotional visualization in the devotee's mind, where the eternal and manifest forms are united.

Avadhabihari likewise has three modes, but the three are one and all three are eternal. Transcendent Ayodhya is established by authoritative scripture. The Ayodhya of divine play upon this earth is established by direct perception. The contemplative Ayodhya, uniting scriptural authority and direct manifestation, is established through the inference born of both. Such is the supremely renowned city of Ayodhya, his own city.

Calling it "his own city" means that all six cities belong to Sri Rama, but Ayodhya belongs to him most intimately. Just as a king owns the country, villages, and cities, yet his royal palace is chiefly his own, so all other sacred cities relate to Sri Ramachandra as regions and villages, while Avadh is like his personal royal palace. Therefore Ayodhya is his own and supreme abode: no abode is dearer to him. As the *Manas Ramayana* says:

Though all praise Vaikuntha, and the Vedas and Puranas make it known throughout the world, it is not as dear to me as Avadh. Only a rare person understands this secret.

Those rare devotees who worship the rasa of royal sweetness and to whom Avadh is exceedingly dear understand it.

Because Ayodhya belongs to the Supremely Beautiful, she too is supremely beautiful. She "shines": she consists of radiance. Valmiki describes her as twelve *kos* wide and forty-eight *kos* long. Her beauty is now described briefly in a way that includes both the city and its royal palace. *Hataka* means gold. The mansions are made of gold and jewels. Ordinary parts of every house are fashioned from gold and common gems, but priceless stones are set especially in the fronts, doors, windows, battlements, and finials. Their radiance shines forth.

4. Its lovely painted entrances and gateways are exceedingly charming. Champatara, mandara, and wish-fulfilling trees captivate whoever beholds them.

मूल पाठ 4

पौरि द्वार अत चारु सुहावन चतिरति सोहै ।

चम्पतार मन्दार कल्पतरु देखत मोहै ॥ ४ ॥

Commentary

The outer court gates are extremely lovely, adorned with enchanting pictures. The first gate, the lion-gate of the outer court, has a very high arched frame of coral and golden doors studded with diamonds. Jeweled elephants stand on either side, with two lions above. It is fashioned with many such beautiful details.

Its auspicious pictures include cows with calves, brahmins, children, women carrying ritual vessels, unmarried girls, celestial nymphs, the sun, moon and other gods, flowering and fruiting celestial trees with swans, peacocks and other birds upon them, and auspicious descents of the Lord. Because these wondrous pictures enchant eye and mind, the gateway shines exceedingly.

The images are of two kinds. Some are inlaid with gold, gems, pearls, and coral; others are painted only in colors. The royal gateway shines in this manner, and so do all the other doors. Before the gate lies a vast and beautiful courtyard planted with rows upon rows of champatara, mandara and other wish-fulfilling trees. When saints behold them, their minds are captivated.

Champatara is the name of a tree no longer commonly known. In some regions, perhaps, champa itself is called champatara; or *champa* may mean *chapatara*, the palmyra. Because *r* and *l* can function as cognate sounds, *tara* may refer to *tala*; *mandara* then supplies the wordplay. Mandara and the wish-fulfilling tree are trees of heaven. They were directly visible in that age and are now seen by saints with the mind's eye in meditation.

5. Every mansion is adorned with wondrous pictures and celestial beauty. Luminous rows of pearl-fringed windows look out upon the pathways.

मूल पाठ 5

भवन भवन चित्रराम चित्र की रम्भा सोहै ।

वनज सुतन की पाँत किन्तु गोवन मग जोहै ॥५॥

Context and commentary

Having described contemplation of the courtyard, the poet now describes further details.

Every building of the royal palace and every building throughout the city contains pictures formed both from color and from gems. The *Ramayana* likewise says:

In every lovely picture-hall and every house, scenes from Rama's life are painted. Seeing them, even the minds of sages are stolen away.

The images depict the births of the four beloved sons of Raghu, their childhood play, investiture with the sacred thread, study of the Vedas, the slaying of Tataka and Subahu, protection of the sacrifice, Sita's svayamvara and the breaking of the bow, the weddings of the four brothers, their return to Ayodhya and ceremonial welcome, their enjoyments through the six seasons, and other events. They are made so lifelike that sages mistake them for reality and their minds are enchanted.

Painted plantain trees also adorn the walls and doorways of the houses. Those on the walls are formed in colors. At the doors, the trunks are gold, the leaves green gemstones, the flowers red stones, and the unripe fruits green; some ripe fruits shine as yellow gems.

Pearls are the children of oysters born in water. Rows of their radiance adorn the windows. Blue and other gems form the latticed windows, and row upon row of pearl fringes hang within them. The windows are like the eyes of the buildings. Through these eyes the mansions, together with all who dwell in them, appear to gaze upon Sri Sita-Rama. Or the meditator looks through those windows with the eyes of meditation. *Gokha* is a vernacular form of the Sanskrit *gavaksha*, "window."

6. Spotless arches, standards, banners, and flags shine there. It seems that the beauty of all three worlds has gathered in Ayodhya to please Raghubara.

मूल पाठ 6

तोरण केतु पताक ध्वजा तहूँ वमिल सुहाई ।
मनु रघुबर हति करन आय त्रिभुवन छवि छाई ॥६॥

Commentary

Torana means both festive hangings and a secondary outer gateway of pillars, arches, and related construction. These shine there. Standards are of medium size, pennants are smaller, and flags are larger than both. Appropriate festive hangings adorn the fronts of the doors; standards and pennants rise from peaks and battlements; and flags fly from the towers of the principal palaces. They bear marvelous designs of flowering golden kachnar trees set with gems. They shine upon spotless staffs of gold inlaid with jewels.

The poet imagines that the beauty of heaven, earth, and the netherworld has assumed the forms of these standards and flags and spread itself over Ayodhya's houses to serve Sri Raghubara. Ravana had tormented the splendor of the three worlds; when their Lord descended in Ayodhya to destroy him, the beauty of all three worlds came to Ayodhya in order to serve, thinking, "Avadh is exceedingly dear to Sri Raghubara; here he will gladly accept our devotion."

7. Roads, neighborhoods, and marketplaces, studded with jewels, pour forth light. Darkness cannot remain there; radiance arises of itself.

मूल पाठ 7

वीथी वगर बजार रतन खचिजोत उजासा ।
रहन न पावै तमिरि सहज ही होत प्रकासा ॥७॥

Commentary

Vithi means a lane, and *vagara* the quarters and neighborhoods formed by those lanes. Marketplaces, squares, crossings, and royal roads are all studded with the nine kinds of gemstones. The stones illuminate everything with their own light. Even on a dark-moon night no darkness can remain; throughout both halves of the lunar month there is light without any lamp. As the *Ramayana* says:

Many windows fashioned from jewels shine, and in every house a jewel-lamp blazes.

8. Beholding the city's overflowing beauty, the sun's chariot seems to halt at midday. The gods rejoice and shower flowers as they gaze upon Ayodhya's splendor.

मूल पाठ 8

देखिपुरी छविभरा मध्य के अटकत रथ रवा ।
हरषह विरषह सिमन वबिध जन नरिखिपुरी छवा ॥८॥

Context and commentary

Having described in four verses the royal palace, the city's houses, markets, and related features, the poet now conveys their extraordinary beauty.

At midday the sun's chariot seems to stop when he sees Ayodhya filled with such splendor. At that time Lord Dinesha stands before Avadh. Seeing the radiant city and the playground of Sri Kaushala Kishora,

the moon of his own solar lineage, the sun remains there in delight with horses and charioteer and afterward moves only very slowly. Goswami Ji says the same:

Beholding Avadh's delight, companies of gods rejoice and shower flowers every day. At midday the sun moves slowly, and so do the moon and the stars.

[From *Gitavali* 23; the complete song appears in the appendix.]

Seeing the beauty of Sri Raghubara's charming city, Brahma, Indra, and the other gods rejoice greatly and shower pure, fragrant flowers from wish-fulfilling trees. With these flowers they worship Avadh, Avadhabihari, and all the inhabitants of Avadh.

9. This noblest city, filled with Sri Raghubara's glory, bestows the highest blessings. All its righteous men and women are wholly devoted to the Lord's fair renown.

मूल पाठ 9

श्री रघुवर जस भरी पुरी वर वर की दायन ।
धर्मशील नर नारसिबै प्रभु सुजस परायन ॥९॥

Commentary

The city is filled with Sri Raghubara's fame and bestows the noblest boon. Here *Sri* means both splendor and Sri Janaki. Raghubara's glory, together with her, is the fame of his mighty deeds: the destruction of Tataka and the others, protection of Vishvamitra's sacrifice, breaking Shiva's bow, delighting Janaka's heart, crushing the pride of Parashurama who had conquered the world, marriage with the daughter of Videha, returning to Ayodhya, lovingly increasing his subjects' welfare and enthusiasm, attending to the city's affairs, and all the other deeds told in the *Ramayana*. Ayodhya is filled with this glory. The minds of children, youths, elders, men, and women cannot contain the abundance of Rama's qualities and fame, so they continually give it voice: day and night they speak, hear, sing, and express approval. Such is the city filled with Raghubara's renown.

It also bestows the highest boon: prosperity, dharma, desire, love-filled devotion to Rama, and finally liberation, dwelling in the divine abode in one's eternal form. As the *Ramayana* says:

The lovely city gives Rama's abode and is known throughout all worlds as sanctifying. The world's vast multitude of beings born in all four ways do not remain in samsara after leaving the body in Avadh. Knowing the city to be captivating in every way, know it also as the giver of every attainment and the mine of auspiciousness.

The text uses the grammatically compressed form "bestower" to rhyme with "devoted" in the next line; its intended sense is "she who bestows."

The poet next explains what it means for the city to be filled with glory. Its men and women possess dharma as their very disposition. Dharma is of two kinds: the general duties of social and spiritual life, and the special dharma of devotion to the Lord. In the first, every man is devoted to one wife and every woman is faithful to her husband. In the second, love at Sri Rama's feet is natural to them. Therefore all remain completely intent upon the beautiful fame of the Lord Sri Sita-Rama. The next verse depicts this.

10. Wherever one goes, women meet one another while singing Raghubara's deeds. Their voices resemble the cuckoo's call, while their radiant forms flash like lightning.

मूल पाठ 10

गावत रघुबर चरति मलित जति तति ते भामनि ।
स्वर अस कोकलि नाद रूप जनु दमकत दामनि ॥१०॥

Commentary

Women are encountered singing Sri Raghubara's deeds. Each woman sings Rama's story together with her own circle. Some come from the Sarayu, some go toward it, and they meet on the way. Others approach along the different roads from the royal palace and join on the royal road. Or, within the meditator's contemplative vision, women appear and meet him while singing.

What are they like? Their throats produce voices like the cuckoo's sweet call. The radiance of their forms flashes like lightning, suddenly dazzling the eyes of anyone who looks. It is as though lightning in the form of these radiant women dwells within the cloud of bliss that is Ayodhya.

11. Who could adequately describe the good fortune of those young women? Seeing them, Shachi, Saraswati, and the mountain-born Parvati feel longing in their hearts.

मूल पाठ 11

तनि जुवतनि को भाग बरनकिा पै कहिआवै ।
सचि सारद नगसुता देखिकै मन ललचावै ॥११॥

Commentary

Sri Agradeva Swami asks: who could find words to describe the fortune of those young women? Which women? Those whom Sri Sita-Rama accept, each according to her proper place, as eternally related to themselves; to whom they grant darshana; and whom they honor appropriately. When the daughters of Janaka and Raghu gaze upon them with their eyes, hear their charming words, and receive their pure, humble speech, Shachi of Indra, Saraswati of Brahma, and Shiva's mountain-born Parvati look upon their fortune and desire in their hearts, "Ah, why were we not born among these women?"

12. Shruti and smriti proclaim Ayodhya to be the crown and limit of all cities. To meditate upon her brings happiness, and merely uttering her name destroys sin.

मूल पाठ 12

अवध पुरनि को अवधायिही श्रुतस्मृतबिरनी ।
ध्यान धरे सुख करनी नाम उचरत अघ हरनी ॥१२॥

Context and commentary

Having described the good fortune of the city's inhabitants, the poet now explains the city's majesty.

Ayodhya is the *avadhi*, the summit, boundary, and unsurpassed standard of all cities. Shruti and smriti declare this very doctrine. Two passages from the Taittiriya branch of the Krishna Yajurveda are offered as revealed authority:

Ayodhya, the city of the gods, has eight circles and nine gates. Within it is a golden treasury, a heavenly world enveloped in light.

To the person who knows that city of Brahman, surrounded by immortality, Brahman and Brahma grant life, fame, and offspring.

Thus it is stated in the Aranyaka. Now testimony from smriti:

Ayodhya is Para Brahman and the Sarayu is the Lord with attributes. The indwelling resident is the Lord of the universe; this I tell you truly. [1]

Avanti is said to be at Vishnu's feet and virtuous Kanchi at his waist; Dvaravati shines at his navel and boon-giving Mayapuri in his heart. Mathura is at the root of his neck, Varanasi at the tip of his nose, and the sages call Ayodhya, the city at his crown, the station of Brahman. [2]

There are a thousand such scriptural and traditional testimonies. Just as the head is the highest limit of all the body's limbs, Sri Ayodhya is like the head above all other cities and worlds.

Kavitta

*Virtuous Avanti shines at the Cosmic Person's feet;
Kanchi is his waist and Dvaravati blazes at his navel.
Maya is in his heart, Mathura at his throat, and Kashi at his nose;
thus these six adorn his limbs.
The sages call them stations of Brahman, says Rasrangamani,
but Avadh reigns upon the head above them all.
And upon Avadh's head, like the crowning ornament of pearls,
Sarayu, crest-jewel of rivers, attains her splendor.*

This kavitta explains the second Sanskrit verse.

Avadh is the very limit and culmination of every city.

Kavitta

*She is the culmination of yoga and the culmination of divine enjoyment;
no separation exists within her, and she is medicine for the disease of becoming.
She is the culmination of knowledge and of meditation upon the Lord,
the end of sorrow and an ocean that gives happiness. [1]

She is the culmination of glory and of the rasa of devotion,
the culmination of dwelling under Rama's sway, the curd cultured by the ghee of love.
Knowing her to be Rama's own form, Rasrangamani dwells in her and serves:
Avadh is indeed the culmination of every city.*

The revealed passages mean that Ayodhya, city of the radiant gods whose forms are being, consciousness, and bliss, has eight *chakras* or enclosing circuits and nine gates. She is a power of the Lord that possesses a form like a body. Within her are golden, radiant enclosures called the heavenly world itself, surrounded and pervaded by the light of Brahman. This explains the first passage.

To the person who knows this city of Brahman, enveloped in immortality, Brahman, the Supreme Brahman, and Brahma grant life, fame, and offspring. This is the fruit of merely knowing the city; through worship, one obtains residence there.

This interpretation refers to transcendent Ayodhya. Now a second interpretation is given. This visibly manifest Avadh is the *avadhi*, the standard and culmination, of every city. Shruti and smriti describe her in this way. Meditation upon her brings happiness, and uttering her names destroys sin. Her names are:

Doha

*Victory to Ayodhya and Kaushala; victory to stainless Saketa.
Victory to Avadh, Aparajita, and Satya, together with the Sarayu.*

Here the oneness of the supremacy of the Lord and his abode is shown. Just as meditation upon Sri Rama, Lord of the abode, bestows unbroken bliss, meditation upon Avadh gives happiness. Just as uttering Rama's names destroys sin, uttering Avadh's names destroys sin. Their shared power to grant liberation is implied, for liberation means the complete cessation of suffering and attainment of supreme happiness. Remembrance of the name destroys both sin and its fruit, suffering; meditation gives the happiness that is liberation. Therefore Ayodhya is the culmination of all cities.

13. Learned people labor greatly to find a fitting comparison for her qualities, yet every other description falls short. Beside Ayodhya, even the finest other realms seem small.

मूल पाठ 13

करकिरिबिहुत कलेस कहत उपमा जो गुणजिन ।

अन्य उक्तसिब अल्प अवधसिम अवधभिते बन ॥१३॥

Context and commentary

The poet now completes the declaration of Ayodhya's supremacy.

People of discernment, poets especially, drive their intelligence to great effort and imagine many comparisons between Avadh and other cities. Yet every statement that proposes some other comparison is too slight and inadequate. Exhausted, they finally say, "Only Avadh herself can be compared with Avadh." That alone makes a fitting comparison; no other is possible. This is the poetic figure called *ananvaya*, incomparable self-comparison. As it is said:

Finding no comparison anywhere and conceding defeat in the heart, one brings to mind the comparison: only this can be compared with itself.

The *Sri Avadha Bindu* says likewise:

Song

I offer myself to this beauty of Sri Ayodhya.

What is Brahma's realm or even Vaikuntha beside it? What is decaying Kailasa?

Those places arise from the three gunas and belong to the three gods;

Ayodhya is entirely different from them.

Thus Avadh is without comparison. [The *Sri Avadha Bindu*, composed by Sri Kashthajihva Swami, is a work worthy of study. Signed, the humble Shatrughna Sharan.]

The gardens of Ayodhya

14. Stepwells, wells, and ponds have stairways made of jewels. They are filled with spotless water and covered by blooming, fragrant night-lotuses.

मूल पाठ 14

बावडी कूप तडाग रतन सोपान बनाये ।

रहे अमल जल पूरविकिसति कल्हार जु छाये ॥१४॥

Context and commentary

This work uses the form *avadhi*, while other works use *avadh*. There is a slight difference in meaning. *Avadhi* means the measure, summit, or limit of all cities, whereas *avadh* means that which cannot be slain or overcome by time and the other forces. Because these are vernacular forms, *Avadhi* sounds well with *puri* and *Avadh* with *pur*.

Throughout Avadh are stepwells, wells, and ponds with staircases fashioned from jewels. They are filled with utterly clear water and covered by blooming *kalhara*, fragrant night-blooming water-lilies.

15. Birds sing sweetly beneath the cool shade of the trees. On every side, delightful gardens and pleasure-groves adorn the city.

मूल पाठ 15

सीतल तरु की छाँह वहिँग कूजत मन भाये ।
चहुँ ओर आराम लगत उपवन जु सुहाये ॥१५॥

16. Peacocks, doves, parrots, and cuckoos call from the branches. It is as though the gods have assumed the bodies of birds and are proclaiming the Lord's glory.

मूल पाठ 16

तनि पर केककिपोत कीर कोकलि कलिकारत ।
सुर धरतिनिकी देह मनो प्रभु सुजस उचारत ॥१६॥

Commentary

Cool trees shade the banks of those stepwells and ponds. Birds of many colors sing beneath them in ways that charm minds steeped in *rasa*.

All around Avadh lie *aramas*: gardens, groves, and flower gardens. There are twelve principal forests and twelve principal groves, together with many other small and large ones. All appear exceedingly beautiful. This explains verse 15.

In the trees of these gardens, peacocks and peahens, male and female doves, parrots, and cuckoos all cry out and sing in joyful voices. The poet imagines that Indra, Brahma, and the other gods have assumed these birds' bodies and are proclaiming the lovely fame of Sri Ramachandra, the almighty Lord of lords.

17. Branches sway beneath their heavy burden of fruit and flowers. They seem to stretch out their arms to offer fruit to travelers.

मूल पाठ 17

झूमरिहे लगभार डार फल फूलन भारी ।
पथकि जनन फल देन मनहुँ तनि भुजा पसारी ॥१७॥

Context and commentary

The poet now describes the trees. Their great branches sway beneath the weight of fruit and flowers. The comparison is offered with poetic imagination: those trees seem to stretch out branch-like arms in order to give fruit to travelers on the road. This suggests that they are even more generous than wish-fulfilling trees, for their hands are already extended to give without being asked.

Meditation on the Sarayu

18. Nearby, the Sarayu carries her brilliantly pure current. All know this generous river to be a ship for crossing the ocean of worldly existence.

मूल पाठ 18

नकिटहसिरजू सरति धरे अस उज्ज्वल धारा ।
भवसागर को तरन वदिति यह पोत उदारा ॥१८॥

Context and commentary

The poet now meditates upon the glory and power of Sri Sarayu, the jeweled necklace that adorns Ayodhya.

The gardens and groves lie close to Avadh, and immediately beside those gardens flows Sri Sarayu. Her name means "she who arose from the divine lake." She bears a brilliantly pure current: either the form of the white, tranquil rasa or the radiant form of love's rasa. The rasa of love is said to be eye-born, and the Sarayu likewise arose from Sri Rama's eyes. This river is, as the Vedas proclaim, the generous and renowned ship by which one crosses the ocean of samsara.

"Generous" means that she obstructs no one, whether high or low, virtuous or sinful. Anyone may board or leave without payment. The Lord's own words are testimony:

By bathing in her, a person effortlessly obtains residence near me beyond the stream of worldly existence.

Her generosity is further described:

Kavitta

*Hearing again and again the pure Sarayu's name, qualities, and glories,
all the world's men and women depart for Rama's abode.
At Yama's gate the hosts of death wail and seize at nothing;
unable to catch even sinners, they beat their heads in regret.*

*Dwelling upon her bank, every limb thrills with joy,
says Rasrangamani, reflecting again and again on the greatness of Rama's Ganga.
Raising her fluid waves like hands to carry souls across,
she seems to call sinners to herself again and again.*

Bathing in and drinking from her is like boarding the boat; reaching the opposite shore belongs alike to river and ship.

19. She destroys sin and the three kinds of suffering and grants the heart's rightful prayer. For the meritorious she is a firm, beautiful stairway ascending to Vaikuntha.

मूल पाठ 19

हरन पाप त्रय ताप जनन चतित फल देनी ।
सुकृती जन आरोह सुदृढ बैकुण्ठ नसिनी ॥१९॥

Commentary

Sri Sarayu's current destroys the three kinds of sin, those committed by action, speech, and mind, and the three kinds of affliction: suffering arising within oneself, suffering caused by divine or cosmic forces, and suffering caused by other beings and material conditions. When people pray to her with contemplation, remembrance of her name, and loving devotion, she grants all four aims of life. For meritorious souls she is a beautiful, firm staircase by which to ascend to Vaikuntha.

Those blessed people who regard Sri Sarayu as Rama's own form, know her water to consist of Rama's grace, and daily behold, worship, bathe in, and drink from her seem already to be climbing the steps to Vaikuntha. At the end of life they will reach that divine abode. "Meritorious" implies that love for Sri Sarayu does not arise without the virtue accumulated through many births. "Firm" shows that she is an unwavering means to the Lord.

Here Vaikuntha does not refer only to Vishnu's particular world. It has the same meaning as the supreme abode Ayodhya. That which cannot be conquered in battle by time and the other powers is called *Ayodhya*; that which cannot be checked, wounded, or destroyed by time and the other powers is called *Vaikuntha*. Both mean the supreme abode Ayodhya. As it is said, "Listen, dull-minded one: the world of Vaikuntha..."

Objection: First the Sarayu was called a ship across the ocean of samsara; why is she now called a stairway to Vaikuntha?

Answer: The first image describes the general liberation she gives to both the unmeritorious and meritorious: freedom from birth and death. The second describes the special liberation she gives the meritorious: attainment of Vaikuntha and nearness to Sri Rama. Let the wise understand the further implications.

20. Crowds of people gather along her banks, making a supremely lovely sight. They seem to be immortals who have left heaven to come and serve the Sarayu.

मूल पाठ 20

तीर नरन की भीर लगत अस परम सुहाये ।

मनहुँ व्योम को त्याग अमरगन सेवन आये ॥२०॥

Commentary

Crowds of people bathing gather on Sri Sarayu's bank. They appear so beautiful that they seem to be Indra and the other immortals who have abandoned heaven to come serve her. This suggests that the forms and radiance of Avadh's residents equal those of Indra and the gods, and that Sri Sarayu's greatness exceeds that of the celestial Ganga.

21. Blessed and greatly fortunate are those who bathe in and drink her waters. Her many kinds of ghats arrest and enchant even the minds of sages.

मूल पाठ 21

करें जो मज्जन पान धन्य बड़ भाग जनन के ।

वविधि भाँत के घाट तहाँ मन थकति मुननि के ॥२१॥

Commentary

The poet briefly praises and admires those who love Sri Sarayu: ah, greatly fortunate and blessed are those who bathe in and drink from her every day! These words also reveal his own grief at being separated from the direct daily experience of bathing and drinking there.

Sri Sarayu has many kinds of ghats, constructed separately for the four social orders and separately for women, all bound with gold and jewels. Seeing their beauty, even the naturally detached minds of sages are enchanted and brought to a standstill.

22. Her waters are profoundly deep, and their movement resounds with a grave music. Along her banks, dense clusters of exquisite lotuses shine.

मूल पाठ 22

नीर परम गंभीर चलत गहरि सुर गाजै ।

तहाँ तीर बहु सघन कमल अत सुन्दर राजै ॥२२॥

Commentary

Sri Sarayu's water is profoundly deep. As it moves, it roars with a grave sound, like a lion roaring to drive away elephant-like sins. Near the constructed ghats, many dense clusters of red, white, yellow, and blue lotuses shine beautifully along the bank. They are exceedingly beautiful: like temples of Lakshmi, and yet even more like the bodies, hands, feet, and eyes of Sri Sita-Rama.

One should not doubt that lotuses could remain in the current. In Satya Yuga and Treta Yuga, the power of the Sarayu, Ganga, and the other sacred rivers was openly manifest; therefore the flow did not sweep the flowers away. The lotuses remained blooming.

23. Swarms of bees hum from the heart of every lotus. They sound like assemblies of sages reciting the resonant words of the Vedas.

मूल पाठ 23

कमल कमल के मध्य जूथ मलिभिँवर गुंजारै ।
मानहुँ मुनजिन वृन्द वेदधुनि शिबद उचारै ॥२३॥

Commentary

Many swarms of bees gather within every lotus. Drinking nectar, colored by pollen, intoxicated and delighted, they hum. They seem like assemblies of sages reciting the sounds of the Vedas. The comparison concerns the combined, pleasing resonance of many bees. Goswami Ji says the same in the *Gitavali*:

Among rows of blossoming lotuses move masses of bees, humming a lovely, tender music and leaving no lotus apart. It is as though servants, having attained detachment and abandoned the home that is a well of sorrow, wander intoxicated with love, repeating your virtues.

[*Gitavali*, Bala Kanda, song 38, "Awake, Treasury of Grace, Janaki's Lord Ramachandra." Note by Shatrughna Sharan.]

24. Threefold breezes play there day and night, removing inner impurity. Cool, gentle, and fragrant, they bestow the highest joy.

मूल पाठ 24

त्रविधि बयारविहार बहुत नसिदिनि अघहारी ।
सीतल मंद सुगंध परम अतआनंदकारी ॥२४॥

Commentary

Three kinds of breeze blow day and night in playful movement, removing sin and sorrow. The second line explains the three: they are cool, gentle, and fragrant, scented with sandal from the Malaya mountains and with the flowers of Avadh's gardens after passing over the bathing places of Sri Sarayu.

They are supremely cool, fragrant, gentle, and bliss-giving. They destroy impurity because the Sarayu's water and the garden flowers have been sanctified by contact with the beautiful limbs of Sri Sita-Rama and their entire retinue. The wind that carries their fragrance therefore purifies the body, the dwelling, and the inner heart.

25. Chakva birds call beside the pools and increase the heart's delight. They seem like choirs of Gandharvas assembled in a holy place to sing.

मूल पाठ 25

बोलत चकवा कुण्ड तीर मन मोद बढ़ावै ।
मानहुँ परम सुदेस नकिर मलिगंधर्व गावै ॥२५॥

Commentary

Chakva birds call upon the banks of Sri Sarayu's deep pools: Lakshmana Kunda, Nirmali Kunda, and others within the river, and Sita Kunda, Vidya Kunda, and others beyond it. Hearing them increases the heart's delight. They seem like companies of Gandharvas gathered in groups, singing the virtues of Sri Sita-Ramachandra with fine voice, raga, rhythm, and composition in a beautiful and sacred place.

Sri Ashoka Grove

26. There stands the Ashoka grove, before which sorrow itself flees. Many kinds of trees, each like a tree of heaven, reign in splendor.

मूल पाठ 26

कानन तहाँ अशोक शोक तेह देखत भाजै ।

विविधि भाँतके वृक्ष सबै वृन्दारक राजै ॥२६॥

Context and commentary

The meditation has so far described Avadh's gardens and Sri Sarayu. The poet now turns to the principal grove.

At the meeting place of Avadh and the Sarayu stands the Ashoka forest, the eternal, stainless pleasure-grove of Sri Sita-Rama. Its qualities match its name: sorrow flees when it beholds the grove. Here sorrow means the pain of doubt about one's own true nature and the Lord's nature. When a saint directly sees the grove in meditation, that sorrowful doubt runs away. Then comes joy, the bliss of experiencing one's own true nature and the Lord's. For this reason it is also called Pramoda Vana, the Forest of Delight.

In the Ashoka forest no sorrow prevails. It is the splendid dwelling of throngs of Sita's bee-like companions. Playful hills, rivers, lakes, excellent birds, graceful gardens, rows of heavenly trees, and vine-covered bowers adorn it. Among companies of serpent beings, humans, gods, kings, and countless daughters of Gandharvas, Sita's Lord eternally reigns. On the Sarayu's bank a cool breeze blows, while they sit within beautiful pavilions and pleasure houses.

[From the *Rasika Prakasha Bhaktamala*. See also *Sri Ashoka Vatika Vilasa* by Sri Videhajasharan Maharaj and, for ancient scriptural testimony, the *Valmiki Ramayana*, Uttara Kanda, chapter 42. *Vrindaraka* means "deity."]

Valmiki Ji calls it the Ashoka Vanika; the *Janaki Gita* calls it the Ashoka Vatika; and the Upanishad calls it the Somasa forest.

In the supreme abode this grove contains trees of many species, colors, and forms. Principal among them are ashoka, mango, amra, kadamba, bel, plantain, champaka, tamala, coconut, jambu, jackfruit, areca, and many nut and fruit trees such as almond and date. Their colors are green, blue, yellow, and red. Some are high and some low; some spread narrowly and others widely. Clusters of lovely flowering vines wave among them.

All are *vrindaraka*: they form excellent groups, and divine powers have taken bodies as trees and creepers in order to serve the happiness of the Divine Couple. All the celestial trees, including mandara, parijata, santanaka, kalpataru, and harichandana, also reign there.

27. Who could tell the incomparable beauty of their branches and leaves? Seeing their masses of fruit and flowers, one loses awareness of the body.

मूल पाठ 27

साखा पत्र अनूप कहा कहाँ शोभा उनको ।
फल कुसुमन के झुण्ड नरिखि सुधरिहत न तन की ॥२७॥

Commentary

The branches and leaves of those trees are incomparable. The compassionate poet asks, "How could my mouth describe their beauty?" Because they are all divine *vrindarakas*, they are incomparable and beyond speech; they can only delight the mind. From top to bottom they are adorned with masses of fruit and flowers. Beholding them, one loses bodily awareness. Sri Sita-Rama, the compassionate Couple, have touched those trees with their lotus hands and watered them with the nectar of their gracious glances. They therefore immerse the beholder in bliss and make bodily awareness disappear.

28. Near a wish-fulfilling tree stands a wondrous, jewel-filled palace. All its ground is made of gold and shines with marvelous brilliance.

मूल पाठ 28

कल्पवृक्ष के नकिट तहाँ इक धाम मणनि जुत ।
कंचनमय सब भूमिपरम अतरिजत अद्भुत ॥२८॥

Commentary

Near the wish-fulfilling tree stands the principal palace, made of gold and filled with jewels; the whole ground likewise consists of jeweled gold and shines with extraordinary light.

At the center of all the divine trees stands a celestial kalpavriksha. Its root is made of the jewel of compassionate rasa; its strong blue trunk is firm as a thunderbolt; its boughs and branches radiate like blue gemstones; and its tender green leaves shine. It bears fragrant red flowers like nectar and red, joy-giving fruits like wish-fulfilling gems, filled with the essence of ambrosia. Drops of nectar continually fall from it. The tree is the visible form of the Divine Couple's compassion, generosity, and power to grant boons.

Beside that kalpavriksha stands the one principal abode, highest among all abodes, marvelous, varied, and beyond the ordinary world.

Sri Agracharya Swami presents this meditation upon Sri Sita-Rama in a form accepted by all authorities. It distills the essential portions of the *Sri Rama Tapani*, *Sri Rama Stavaraja*, *Agastya Samhita*, *Sundari Tantra*, and other Rama-rahasya texts. It accords with his own contemplative vision and with the rasas of love, friendship, service, and the others. It unites eternal and occasioned majesty in a form of supreme sweetness.

How wondrous is the principal palace? It is shaped like a lotus. The outermost audience hall surrounds it and contains thirty-two magnificent arched gates, with pillars inlaid with gold and gems and graceful projecting roofs above. The thirty-two gates resemble a lotus's thirty-two petals. Inside it runs a second encircling hall with sixteen lovely gates. Within that is a third round, expansive, lotus-shaped hall with twelve gates. Further within stands the cuckoo-shaped inner sanctuary with eight gates on every side.

The royal yantra of Sri Rama has the same order: first an outer great lotus of thirty-two petals, within it a lotus of sixteen petals, then one of twelve, a fourth of eight, and a fifth also of eight petals. At the temple's center stands an eight-sided golden platform. Such is this astonishing abode.

29. At the center of a golden platform stands a throne made of jewels. In the middle of that throne is a supremely auspicious lotus-seat.

मूल पाठ 29

स्वर्ण वेदिका मध्य तहाँ एक रतन सहिसन ।
सहिसन के मध्य परम अतिपिद्म सुभासन ॥२९॥

Commentary

The platform is fashioned with abundant radiance and supreme loveliness. Upon it stands the one principal, incomparable throne of jewels. A royal lion's seat is called a *simhasana*; this jeweled throne is the seat of young King Raghu's lion together with Sri Sita.

It is octagonal and supported by eight feet, with a lion cub adorning each. At its center lies a supremely divine and auspicious eight-petaled lotus-seat, formed from the eightfold primordial nature and the eight powers beginning with *anima*. Some describe a thousand-petaled lotus, but the *Tapani*, the *Stavaraja*, and Sri Agra Swami's *Ashtayama* specify eight petals.

30. At the lotus's heart, its beautiful central pericarp shines. There an astonishing radiance blazes, comparable only to fire.

मूल पाठ 30

ताके मध्य सुदेस कणिका सुन्दर राजै ।
अतिअद्भुत तहाँ तेज वह्निसिम उपमा छाजै ॥३०॥

Commentary

At the center of the lotus-seat shines its beautiful middle, the pericarp or central dais. It is luminous living reality, the transcendent conscious power in the form of the principle of the individual soul. Its seeds are said to be the fifty letters. Other works say that an astonishing flame-like radiance shines in this lotus pericarp.

First comes the solar mandala, then the lunar, then the fire mandala. The lower radiance resembles the sun, the upper resembles fire, and the moon-like brilliance lies between them. Its white light merges into the radiance of fire and sun, so that only fire-like light is visible. Because all three are united, the splendor is truly astonishing.

Meditation on Sri Rama

31. In its center shines Rama, lustrous as a blue lotus. His rain-cloud-dark body is an ocean containing every form of beauty.

मूल पाठ 31

ता मधिशोभति राम नील इन्दीवर ओभा ।
अखलि रूप अम्भोधसिजल घन तन की शोभा ॥३१॥

Commentary

At the center of that incomparable pericarp, which embodies the principle of the soul and is filled with threefold light, shines Sri Rama, delight of the eyes of every world, bearing the blue radiance of the dark lotus.

Like a spotless blue lotus, his fragrant body, filled with the sweet nectar of beauty, gives joy to the bee-like minds of his own people. The poet uses the dialect form *obha* for *abha*, radiance, to echo the sound of *shobha*, beauty.

How does he shine? He is the ocean and sovereign of all beauty. Beauty means that every limb from toenails to crown is so perfect that, even without ornaments, it seems adorned with many jewels. At the very sight of him, the bee-like eye and mind become trapped. He is the ocean of beauty's nectar, the cause of every form of beauty throughout the entire cosmos, and the living home of the aquatic creatures who are souls in love with his form.

An ocean has three chief qualities: it is unfathomable, shoreless, and able to submerge. All three belong to his beauty. His body also resembles a rain-filled cloud: it possesses the deep, dark splendor of such a cloud and rains the water of happiness. With the pure thunder of his speech he fills the peacock-like minds of his people with joy.

32. Upon his head rests a divine crown set with lovely gems and pearls. Beholding its loveliness, the gathered rays of the sun are put to shame.

मूल पाठ 32

सरि पर द्रव्य करीट जटति मंजुल मणमोती ।

नरिखरिचरिता लजति नकिर दनिकर को जोती ॥३२॥

Commentary

Upon the head of the crest-jewel of beauty rests an extraordinarily lovely divine crown set with gems. It is divine because Brahma himself fashioned it in his own mind. It is studded with jewels, and shapely pearls rise along its upper edge like little finials.

Seeing the crown's luminous beauty, the radiance of hosts of suns is ashamed. Sunlight, formed from the three gunas, is impure, while the crown's light is beyond the gunas and perfectly clear. Sunlight scorches; this light is cool and joy-giving. Sunlight is unstable, rising and setting; the crown's radiance is steady and uniform. Thus the light of multitudes of suns blushes before the crown's beauty.

33. Exquisite earrings adorn his two supremely beautiful cheeks. Seeing their radiance, both the lord of night and the lord of day, the moon and sun, are humbled.

मूल पाठ 33

कुण्डल ललति कपोल जुगल अतपिरम सुदेसा ।

तनिको नरिखप्रकाश लजति राकेस दनिसा ॥३३॥

Commentary

The most lovely earrings rest beside his supremely beautiful pair of cheeks. Seeing the earrings' light, the moon, lord of night, and sun, lord of day, are ashamed. The moon is humbled by the light of their pearls, the sun by the light of their red gems, for the earrings' radiance surpasses both.

Alternatively, the moon is ashamed by the brilliance of the cheeks and the sun by that of the earrings. The comparison of cheeks to the moon is well known. The word "lovely" stands like a lamp upon a threshold, illuminating both cheeks and earrings.

34. Dark, graceful curls curve beside his lovely lotus eyes. Around the lotus of his face, they seem like young bees drawn near by its nectar.

मूल पाठ 34

मेचक कुटलि सुचारु सरोरुह नयन सुहाये ।

मुख पंकज के नकिट मनहुँ अलछौना आये ॥३४॥

Commentary

The phrase can be read as describing dark, curly, exceedingly fine and beautifully patterned hair. With the variant reading *shiroruha*, "hair of the head," the meaning is direct: the hair is dark, curly, and graceful. The manuscripts, however, read *saroruha*, "lotus," and therefore the commentary also explains the next image.

His eyes, like lotuses, shine beautifully. They are lotus-red, vast, fully opened, and luminous; they hold the nectar of joy, are storehouses of the pollen of love, and are exceedingly dear, fragrant with beauty and goodness.

Savaiya

*Curving, wide, and overflowing with beauty, they surpass every comparison with deer, wagtail, or fish.
Filled with white and dark colors, says Rasrangamani, they are sharp, enchanting shafts.
Lovely as autumn lotuses, repositories of goodness and rasa, mirrors of gracious character,
may the eyes of Janaki's Lord, life-givers to the world, dwell forever in my eyes.*

The curly locks beside his cheeks appear like young bees that have approached the fully blossomed lotus of his face for its fragrant nectar. Because the loops of soft hair are small, they are called young bees.

35. His twin brows shine like two graceful rows of bees. His nose is perfectly formed, and the lotus is ashamed before the beauty of his face.

मूल पाठ 35

भृकुटी त्रयपद दुगुन मनहुँ अलअवलविरिजै ।
नासा परम सुदेस वदन लखपिंकज लाजै ॥३५॥

Commentary

What are the brows of the ornament of the Solar Dynasty like? *Trayapada doubled* gives *shatpada*, "six-footed," a poetic name for bees. They seem like rows of male and female bees. The brows are thicker toward the front, like male bees, and finer toward the ends, like small female bees. The two are named to convey the rise and fall of the curves. Here *ali* can specifically mean a female bee, as shown in a verse from Sri Agra Swami's *Ashtayama*:

The forest is filled with families of male and female bees, delighted by the scent of flowers, and resounds with parrots, mynas, peacocks, and cuckoos.

Because the verse clearly distinguishes *bhramara* and *ali*, this is the primary meaning. A second, playful interpretation is also possible. *Trayapada* may mean time, whose three divisions or characteristics are past, future, and present. The Lord's brows possess time's two qualities, origination and dissolution, and yet appear as rows of bees.

His nose is perfectly formed, so beautiful that the sesame flower, Love's quiver, and other celebrated comparisons look ugly beside it. Seeing the stainless face of Sita's Beloved, the lotus is ashamed, for it is born from mud and withers in a moment.

36. His gracious glance captivates the hearts of rasika devotees. His gentle smile and tender words rain joy upon all.

मूल पाठ 36

चतिवनचिरु कृपाल रसकि जन मन आकंबत ।
मंद हास मृदु वचन जनन को आनंद बरसत ॥३६॥

Commentary

His glance is both lovely and compassionate, filled with grace. It draws and seizes the hearts of rasika devotees: lovers, companions, servants, and others. Some minds are captured by its beauty alone, some by its compassion alone, and some by both; he draws them under his sway. His gentle smile and tender words rain joy on all his people, rasika and otherwise, young and old.

It is as though Maithili's Beloved were a supremely lovely cloud: flashing the lightning of his gentle smile, sounding the sweet music of soft speech, and raining the water of bliss, he makes the gathered crops of his people green and joyful.

37. His broad, luminous forehead firmly bears the seal of wisdom. A beautiful and generous tilaka shines there with immeasurable splendor.

मूल पाठ 37

दीर्घ दीप्त ललाट ज्ञानमुद्रा दृढ धारी ।

सुन्दर तलिक उदार अधकि छविसीमति भारी ॥३७॥

Commentary

The forehead of Sri Sitavihari, bearer of the firm seal of wisdom, is expansive and vast, filled with supreme light. Seated upon the throne of his own sovereignty, he has stamped the mind with the unbroken seal and form of knowledge and rests firmly in the peace and self-bliss of his own majesty. This seal is his own experience of his true nature. It is exceedingly difficult even for liberated souls to attain without grace; what then need be said of ordinary beings?

There is also an outward gesture of knowledge: join the right thumb to the index finger, extend the other three fingers, hold the hand steady before the heart, and keep mind and gaze still. This gesture is well known in meditations upon Sri Rama.

Upon that forehead is a beautiful yellow-red tilaka, "generous" because merely remembering it fulfills the heart's aim. Its abundant beauty greatly glorifies the forehead. No single shape is specified. Sampradaya texts instruct devotees to meditate upon the Lord as wearing the form of tilaka received from their own guru and to apply the same to his worshipful image.

38. A lovely jeweled necklace and lustrous pearls adorn him. The auspicious Shrivatsa mark shines upon his chest, and the Kaustubha gem blazes at his throat.

मूल पाठ 38

परम ललति मणमिल हार मुक्ता छवरिजै ।

उर श्रिवत्स सुचहिन कंठ कौस्तुभ मणिभ्रिजै ॥३८॥

Commentary

The meditator's gaze now descends from the forehead to the throat and chest. From throat to chest shine exquisitely lovely necklaces of gems and luminous strings of pearls. On the right side of the chest is the Shrivatsa, the sign of the Supreme Person and a mark of immense good fortune: a clockwise whorl of white hair shaped like the numeral seven. Above it at the throat shines the Kaustubha gem, red as a lotus and blazing with light. Some revered teachers describe the Shrivatsa as yellow, but Sri Parashara Bhatta's commentary on the *Vishnu Sahasranama* calls it white. Some also place it on the left.

39. The sacred thread streams beautifully across the center of his body. His two arms reach to his knees, adorned with bracelets set with priceless gems.

मूल पाठ 39

यज्जोपवीत सुदेस मध्य धारा जु वरिजै ।
उभय भुजा आजानु नगन जटकिंकण राजै ॥३९॥

Commentary

The beautiful yellow sacred thread runs like a stream from the left shoulder to the right side of the waist. It looks like a river colored by yellow pollen flowing down a blue mountain. Both his arms are *ajanu*, reaching to the knees, and upon them shine bracelets set with priceless jewels.

40. Rings mounted with choicest rubies magnificently adorn his fingers. His wondrous beauty glows with the splendor of dawn.

मूल पाठ 40

चूनी रतन जडाय मुद्रकि अधिकि सँवारी ।
शोभति अद्भुत रूप अरुण की छवि अनुहारी ॥४०॥

Commentary

The fingers of those hands are magnificently adorned by rings mounted with choicest stones. They are more wondrous than worldly rings because, within the setting of diamonds and rubies, the conscious name "Sri Rama" is engraved. The ring therefore has an extraordinary form and the radiant beauty of the sun.

Kavitta

*His hands bear the bow, uphold the world, and remove the sorrows of the poor;
they fill and sustain the bellies of all creation.
They overcome the devourers of the gods and the enemies' multitudes,
adorn the worlds, and grant boons even to Hari and Hara.
The delightful fingers of Rama, says Rasram, are ornamented
with exquisite rings engraved with Rama's name.
Their nails shine like gems and suns;
the hands of Sita's Lord are lakes filled with beautiful lotuses.*

Alternatively, "wondrous form" describes Rama's own form: made splendid by crown, rings, and every ornament, it is astonishing and luminous like the rising sun.

41. Many exquisite ornaments and a yellow silken garment gloriously adorn him. A graceful golden border gleams around its every edge.

मूल पाठ 41

भूषण वविधि सुदेस पीतपट शोभति भारी ।
लसत कोर चहुँ ओर छोर कल कंचनधारी ॥४१॥

Commentary

Having named the principal ornaments, the poet now allows for the preferences of many worshipers and includes others. Many beautiful ornaments shine upon the beautiful regions of Sri Rama's body: above the navel rests a square pendant fashioned from the nine gems and engraved with Rama's name; remarkable arm-bands adorn his arms; he wears the forest garland, and many more.

A yellow *pata*, the dhoti, adorns his waist. A yellow upper cloth hangs gracefully from the shoulder to the waist. Around the cloth runs a red border with beautiful lines of golden thread, and the upper garment ends in charming brocade tassels.

The yellow cloth shines magnificently upon the Lord's dark limbs: like a blossoming yellow vine upon a young tamala tree, like dawn sunlight upon a mountain of dark sapphire, and like a river of beauty within the stream of love's *rasa*. More glorious than all three, it seems that the radiance of Sita's own body has become fine silk suited to her Beloved's form.

42. A fine line of hair descends beautifully toward his navel. Around it, three graceful folds cast their lovely radiance.

मूल पाठ 42

रोमावलि बिन आइ नाभ अस लगत सुहाई ।
त्रविली ता मधलिलति रेख त्रय अत छवि छाई ॥४२॥

Commentary

A subtle, lovely, dark line of hair descends beautifully from the heart to the navel. The navel itself is exceedingly lovely, deep, and turning toward the right. Across the abdomen are the three folds commonly called the three belly-lines; their three graceful marks spread beauty across his middle.

43. A jeweled girdle shines splendidly around his shapely waist. His knees are strong and well formed, and his concealed ankles are exceedingly graceful.

मूल पाठ 43

कट पिरदेस सुधार अधिकि छविकिणि रिराजै ।
जानु पुष्ट बनगुढ गुल्फ अतलिलति वरिराजै ॥४३॥

Commentary

The waist of young Kaushalendra is round and slender, with graceful rise and curve. Upon it shines a tinkling girdle of gold set with gems, increasing the waist's beauty. Below it, the hips, thighs, and knees are round, strong, and perfectly formed. The lower legs likewise possess graceful rounded contours. The ankle-bones above the heels are deep and concealed, and therefore shine with exceptional elegance.

44. Beautiful golden anklets set with gems and rubies adorn him. Their soft, melodious ringing enchants the minds of all his attendants.

मूल पाठ 44

नूपुर पुरट सुचारु रचति मणिमानकि सोहैं ।
रव कल सुर संगीत सुनत परजिन मन मोहैं ॥४४॥

Commentary

At that place are anklets of gold, exquisitely fashioned with green gems below and red rubies above. Their sound is like music made from soft, sweet notes. Hearing it, the minds of the attendants and retinue nearby are enchanted, become absorbed in its form, and grow still.

45. His two tender, red lotus-feet bear the thunderbolt and the other sacred marks. They are Lakshmi's eternal dwelling and destroy the fear of *samsara* in all who seek refuge.

मूल पाठ 45

जुगल अरुण पद पद्म वहिवल कुलशिादकि मंडति ।
पद्मा नतिय नकिंत शरणगत भवभय खंडति ॥४५॥

Commentary

The two feet of Janaki's Beloved are tender and fragrant like red lotuses. They are adorned with forty-eight marks, beginning with the thunderbolt. Those red lotus-feet are the eternal home of Sri Padma, Lakshmi: beauty and auspicious fortune in the form of the marks dwell there forever.

They destroy the fear of worldly existence in those who take refuge. Those who accept Rama's feet as their protection, approach them, and bow are freed from the fear of becoming, from birth and death, and attain the fearless state.

46. A lovely arrow shines in his beautiful right hand. In his broad left hand rests the divine bow.

मूल पाठ 46

दक्षणि भुज शर सुभग सुहावन सुन्दर राजै ।
दवियायुध सुवशिल वाम कर धनुष वरिजै ॥४६॥

The forty-eight marks: Kavittas

Rasram meditates upon the marks on Rama's right foot and Sita's left: the upward line, auspicious swastika, octagon, Sri, plough, pestle, serpent, sky, lotus, chariot, cloth, barley-grain, wish-fulfilling tree, goad, banner, crown, sovereign discus, throne, staff of restraint, destruction of Yama's fear, chowrie, fair umbrella, human figure, and garland. [1]

Rasramamani meditates in his heart upon the signs on Rama's left foot and Sita's right: Sarayu, cow's hoof, auspicious earth, ritual pitcher, pennant, jambu fruit, crescent moon, conch, hexagon, triangle, mace, individual soul, point, divine power, pool of nectar, three lines, lovely fish, full moon, vina, flute, bow, quiver, swan, and moonlight. Seeing them, he rejoices greatly. [2]

Commentary

In the right hand of the Protector of the lowly shines an arrow that is lovely, charming, and beautiful. These near-synonyms are not redundant because each qualifies a different aspect: the arm is lovely, the arrow is beautiful, and the act of holding it is charming. Or the arrow itself has lovely feathers, a charming shaft, and a beautiful head. In the broad and beautiful left hand shines the vast divine bow. The word "vast" stands like a lamp on a threshold and illuminates both arm and weapon. [See the *kavittas* on the bow and arrow on the final page.]

47. Rama reigns eternally as a beautiful youth of sixteen years. Gazing upon his form, millions of suns are put to shame.

मूल पाठ 47

षोडश बरस कशोर राम नति सुन्दर राजै ।
रामरूप को नरिखविभाकर कोटकि लाजै ॥४७॥

Commentary

Sri Rama eternally reigns in the uninterrupted, uniform form of a dark, beautiful, two-armed youth of sixteen, the embodied ocean of love's rasa. Seeing Rama's form, millions of suns are ashamed. Their light belongs to the three gunas, is overcome by eclipses and other forces, and is destroyed by time. The light of Rama's form is beyond the gunas and unobstructed by time or anything else. Therefore millions of suns are humbled. Shruti says the same:

There the sun does not shine, nor moon nor stars. Lightning does not shine there; how then could this earthly fire? Everything shines after that One who alone is self-luminous; by his light all this is illumined.

[Katha Upanishad 2.2.15.]

Sri Ramachandra remains eternally sixteen years of age, while the gods remain eternally twenty-five.

48. Thus Raghavira sits upon the bliss-bestowing throne. He is the embodied form of being, consciousness, and bliss; at his left is King Janaka's daughter.

मूल पाठ 48

अस राजत रघुवीर धीर आसन सुखकारी ।

रूप सच्चिदानन्द वाम दसिजिनककुमारी ॥४८॥

Commentary

The meditation upon Sri Rama's form is now completed and meditation upon Sri Janakakishori begins. "Thus" means: exactly as the meditation has been described from "In its center shines Rama" onward. Sri Raghavira is renowned in five kinds of heroism: heroic in renunciation, compassion, knowledge, dharma, and valor.

He is the condensed embodiment of being, consciousness, and bliss, endowed with the qualities of the noble and self-controlled hero. He sits radiantly upon the blissful throne that gives joy to his own people. Rama's form is pure being-consciousness-bliss. The *Sri Rama Tapani* testifies:

Yogis delight in the infinite, eternal bliss of the conscious Self; therefore the word Rama names that Supreme Brahman.

And:

Rama, embodied in the half-measure of the sacred sound, is the single form of Brahman's bliss.

The vernacular *Ramayana* likewise says:

Your body is made of consciousness and bliss; the qualified know it to be free from change.

Here "qualified" means relishing worshipers who know Rama's reality and supremacy, not dry intellectualists.

The verse also suggests that the steadfast hero, clothed in heroic rasa and seated upon the unwavering seat of tranquil rasa, reigns as the joy-giving form of love's rasa. Filled with heroism, steadiness, and delight, he sits in the posture of ease: the left foot beneath the right thigh and the right foot resting upon the left thigh.

At Sri Raghavira's left reigns Sri Janakakumari, the primal Power, embodiment of being-consciousness-bliss and giver of joy to the world. The phrase "form of being, consciousness, and bliss" qualifies both Raghavira and Janakakumari, like a crow's single pupil traditionally said to serve both eyes. Just as "Raghavira" expresses royal sweetness, "Janakakumari" expresses tender, enchanting

sweetness. The eternality of their sweet play is known from this, while their shared qualification as being-consciousness-bliss establishes their unity of essence.

This refutes dry doctrines that regard primordial power as inert matter, illusion, or falsity. The *Rama Tapani*, *Brihadaranyaka*, and other Upanishads describe her as the form of being, consciousness, and bliss. The *Rama Tapani* says:

He is joined with Sita, the conscious one, golden in radiance, two-armed, and adorned with every ornament.

The *Brihadaranyaka* says:

He divided this very Self into two; from that arose husband and wife.

That Supreme Self of being, consciousness, and bliss caused his own single Self to appear in two forms; therefore husband and wife came to be.

Meditation from Sri Sita's head to her feet

49. Sita's beautiful and generous limbs possess the radiance of refined gold. Many ornaments, filled with the brilliance of precious stones, shine upon her.

मूल पाठ 49

नगन जरे छबिभरे वविधि भूषण अस सोहैं ।
सुन्दर अंग उदार वदिति चामीकर को हैं ॥४९॥

Context and commentary

The poet's gaze, having seen Rama's form adorned with many ornaments, now turns to Sri Janaki. After beholding the radiance of all her limbs, he describes her as he described the Lord, beginning with the head.

"Thus beautiful" means "exceedingly beautiful" in the vernacular idiom. From head to feet her limbs are known to be beautiful, generous, and radiant. Sri herself belongs to Sri; as the *Ramayana* says:

How can Sita's beauty be described? The Mother of the universe is the mine of beauty and virtue.

If one compares the fair limbs filled with Rama's rasa to gold, what standing does gold have before them? Gold is material, inert, hard, and an abode of the darkness of Kali. The comparison is only a faint pointer.

50. Glossy dark curls shimmer, and a graceful braid beautifies her back. That dark line appears to be the very boundary and consummation of beauty.

मूल पाठ 50

अलक झलकता श्याम पीठ शोभति कल वेणी ।
सुन्दरता की सीव कधिँ राजत अलशिरेणी ॥५०॥

Commentary

Fine curls wave beside both ears, glossy and lustrous black. A beautiful braid adorns her dark-backed silhouette. The poet offers several imagined comparisons. These three, curls, dark sheen, and braid, seem to be the very boundary of beauty. Or the two curls are the two frontiers of a kingdom formed from pure beauty. The braid upon her back resembles a row of bees upon the golden leaf of a plantain tree.

51. Her hair-parting is adorned in many ways with fine golden work. It shines magnificently, like the flowing current of the celestial Ganga.

मूल पाठ 51

सूत्र रचति सुवविधि प्रकार माँग जरतार सँवारी ।
मनहुँ सुरसरी धार बनी शोभा अस भारी ॥५१॥

52. Along either side of the parting are strings of large, spotless pearls. Amid the dense darkness of her hair, they gleam like a host of stars.

मूल पाठ 52

पाटन की लर ओर बड़े बड़े उज्ज्वल मोती ।
सघन तमिरि के मध्य मनो उडुगन को जोती ॥५२॥

Commentary

The hair-parting of Janaka's greatly fortunate daughter is arranged in many ways and ornamented with fine golden work: threads of gold and tiny pearls. Their strings shine magnificently like the current of the celestial Ganga, a stream in which the elephant of Sri Raghunandana's mind continually sports.

At the root of the braid above the parting and at its end, large white pearls are threaded together with blue silk. They shine like the light of a host of stars flashing amid dense darkness.

53. A jeweled head ornament, set with precious gems, shades her head. Lovely earrings shine beside her two graceful cheeks.

मूल पाठ 53

रतन रचति मणजिटति सीस पर बेंदा छाजै ।
ललति कपोल सुजुगल करन ताटक वरिजै ॥५३॥

54. Her flawless, luminous forehead possesses measureless beauty. It appears to be the supreme dwelling of marital blessedness and good fortune.

मूल पाठ 54

उज्ज्वल भाल सुचारु अमति उपमा अस सोहै ।
राजत परम सुहाग भाग को भवन कधिौ है ॥५४॥

Commentary

Here "jewel" means gold, for whatever is foremost among its class is called a jewel, and gold is foremost among metals. A *benda* head ornament made of gold and set with gems of many colors shades Sri Sita's head. Her two cheeks are exceedingly lovely, and *tatanka* earrings, the flower-shaped earrings commonly called *tarina*, shine especially at her ears, with pendant earrings below.

The forehead of the Daughter of Earth is luminous, beautifully formed, and immeasurable. A fitting comparison is that it appears to be the dwelling of supreme *suhaag* and fortune. *Suhaag* means the eternal love of one's life-beloved husband; fortune means completeness of wealth, people, and family in both parental and marital homes. Her forehead is the dwelling of both auspicious signs.

55. A graceful line of gorochana forms the tilaka upon her brow. Her noble, shapely nose is adorned by a lovely nose-ring.

मूल पाठ 55

गोरोचन को तलिक ललति रेखा बनाई ।
उन्नत नासा सुभग लसत बेसरजि सुहाई ॥५५॥

56. Her brows are beautiful, her eyes are large, and her moon-gentle glance purifies the world. Her serene face appears like a lotus in full bloom.

मूल पाठ 56

भृकुटी नयन वक्षिाल सोम चतिवनजिग पावन ।
मानहुँ वकिसति कमल वदन अस लगत सुहावन ॥५६॥

Commentary

Upon that forehead is an exceedingly lovely tilaka of gorochana; the lines of its design are beautifully formed. Gorochana is yellow, highly fragrant, and traditionally obtained from a most fortunate cow. Her high, shapely, beautiful nose bears an exceedingly light and lovely *vesari* nose-ring fashioned from gold, gems, and pearls.

Both brows and eyes are expansive. Her eyes' gentle glance is straightforward, cool, and filled with the nectar of compassion; it sanctifies an impure world. Her serene face appears beautiful like a fully opened lotus.

57. Beneath her red lips, the row of teeth shines enchantingly. At the center of her lovely chin, a tiny dark beauty mark reflects the hue of her dark Beloved.

मूल पाठ 57

अरुण अधर तर दसन पाँत अस लगत सुहाई ।
चारु चबुक बचि तनक बनिदु मेचक द्युत छाई ॥५७॥

58. A radiant necklace of fine pearls encircles her throat. Upon her broad heart rests a golden pendant fashioned with jewels.

मूल पाठ 58

कंठ पोतमिणजितसुखवा मुक्ता वर माला ।
पदकि रचति कलधौत वरिजत हृदय वक्षिला ॥५८॥

Commentary

Her red lips are exceedingly sweet. Beneath them the row of teeth appears most beautiful. Her chin is lovely and round, and at its center is a tiny dark dot. Dark as Sri Rama, steeped in the rasa of love, it seems that his hue has cast its reflection there.

Closely fitted around Sri Janakakishori's throat is a luminous collar of blue sapphire, whose fine radiance spreads across her neck. Here the vernacular *poti*, "fitted," derives from Sanskrit *prikta*, "joined closely." As the *Sneha Prakashika* says:

*Upon your fair throat, Sita, the close-set necklace casts its light;
it seems that the arm of your colorful Beloved has wrapped itself around you.*

Upon her broad heart lies a finest garland of pearls, and at its center a pendant of gold set with gems shines especially.

59. Her fine red sari is woven with threads of gold. Beneath it, a skillfully patterned bodice shines, steeped in many colors.

मूल पाठ 59

हेम तंतु कर रचति अरुण सारी रंग भीनो ।
कंचुकी चतिरति चतुर वविधि शोभति रंग भीनो ॥५९॥

Commentary

Her delicate red sari is woven with golden threads: borders, vines, and flower motifs are fashioned in gold. Red is the color of loving attachment, and she wears the sari that awakens love.

Her bodice is patterned in many ways through the skill of master artisans. Golden thread and minute pearls and gem-grains form its border, edging, fruits, necklaces, and many other ornamental images. It is "steeped in color," as if soaked so thoroughly that color drips from it. The bodice shines beneath the sari. Its color may be yellow and merge with her limbs, while appearing dark beside Sri Rama; or a green bodice may open beautifully beneath the red sari. The meditator may follow devotional preference.

60. Noble armlets lend beauty to her graceful arms. Colorful bangles and lovely rings exquisitely adorn her hands.

मूल पाठ 60

वर अंगद छवदित बाँहु अस लगति सुहाई ।
करन घूरी रंगभरी ललति मुँदरी बनआई ॥६०॥

61. Twin bracelets set with rubies and blue sapphires shine upon her wrists. They resemble lotus blossoms encircled by rows of dark bees.

मूल पाठ 61

पद्मराग मणि नील जटति युग कंकण राजै ।
मनहुँ वनज के फूल दुरेफन पंकत्विरिजै ॥६१॥

Commentary

Excellent armlets give beauty to her arms, which therefore appear exceedingly lovely. Upon her lotus hands sparkle bangles filled with dark-colored gems, and lovely rings are perfectly arranged on the auspicious fingers. The thumb ring contains a priceless mirror, the ring beside the thumb bears a sweet portrait of Sri Raghubara, and the middle-finger ring contains her own portrait. The others are set with various gems.

Two bracelets upon each hand, set with red rubies and blue sapphires, shine gloriously. The red bracelets resemble lotus flowers, while the blue ones upon them resemble rows of bees. The comparison with lotuses concerns color alone, not shape.

62. A full, richly fashioned skirt shines beautifully around her waist. Across its red, blue, white, and yellow ground ripple waves of many colors.

मूल पाठ 62

लहंगा कटपिरदेस भाँतअतिशोभति गहरि ।
अरुण असति सति पीत मध्य नाना रंग लहरी ॥६२॥

Commentary

Around her waist the skirt is deeply and richly fashioned with a wide, abundant flare. Its profundity is such that the movement of the mind sinks into it and can go no farther. Across it run red, blue, white, yellow, green, pink, violet, and many other waves or stripes, with brocaded vines woven between them.

63. A pair of golden anklets set with green gems shines upon her feet. Below them are tiny bells, and lovely toe-rings gleam at the tips.

मूल पाठ 63

हरति नगन कर जडति युगल जेहरासि राजै ।
तनि पर घुँघरू और अग्र बछिया सु वरिजै ॥६३॥

Commentary

A pair of golden *jehari* anklets set with green gems shines greatly upon her two feet. Below them are small bells; at the front, upon toes and big toes, charming *bichhiya* toe-rings shine with special beauty.

64. Precious stones and clusters of delicate gems are set upon them. The soles of her lotus-feet are naturally red and effortlessly beautiful.

मूल पाठ 64

तनि पर नग जु अमोल ललति चूनी गण लाये ।
चरण चारु तल अरुण सहज ही लगत सुहाये ॥६४॥

Commentary

At the center of each toe-ring is set a single priceless stone, surrounded by delicate clusters of tiny gems of many colors. Her feet are beautiful and bear the forty-eight sacred marks already described together with the marks on Sri Rama's feet. Their soles are exceedingly red. Even without the application of red *mahavar*, they are naturally and perfectly lovely.

Kavitta on Sita's feet

*Seek not such softness and redness in lac, hibiscus, bandhuka, or coral;
not in fresh mango leaves colored by the quality of passion.
Not in the choice flower, the young bride's body,
the vandana blossom, safflower, rose, or river water.
Not in the bimba fruit, the rising sun,
Rati's lips, or the lovely lotus.
Nowhere is found softness and redness so beautiful
as in Sita's feet, says Rasrangamani.*

Conclusion of the meditation from head to feet

Sri Swami Agradeva first offered reverence in two verses. In twenty-eight verses he then described meditation upon Avadh, the divine abode, the throne, and related features as a remedy for the torments of the twenty-eight hells.

From verse 31 through verse 46, he presented meditation upon Sri Rama in sixteen verses, corresponding to the sixteen ritual offerings. In one further verse he described the Lord's eternal age and the uniformity of his limitless radiance. Then, in a single verse, he described the Divine Couple's being-consciousness-bliss and their union; and in sixteen verses completed meditation upon Sri Swamini. This structure reveals both the supremacy of the Couple and the equality of his own love for them.

He now describes the glory of both Lords in two verses and meditation upon the subsidiary members of their retinue in four.

65. What comparison could be offered for the incomparable forms of the Divine Couple? Every object used in comparison shines only through a ray of their own power.

मूल पाठ 65

अतुलति युगल स्वरूप कवन अस उपमा तनिको ।
जेतकि उपमा दीप्ति शिक्त्किरि भासति तनिको ॥६५॥

Commentary

Every possible object of comparison in the world shines through the illuminating power received from them. What could possibly be offered as their comparison? There is none. The joined form of Sri Sita-Rama is therefore unequalled, without peer or analogy.

66. Thus Rama, the eternal enjoyer of Ayodhya, reigns within that divine city. The supremely generous Couple bless their servants with the joy of their glorious renown.

मूल पाठ 66

यह विधिरिजत राम अवधपुर अवधवहिरी ।
दंपतिपरम उदार सुजस सेवक सुखकारी ॥६६॥

Song offered as illustration

*Only Rama compares with Rama, and only Sita with Sita.
Shiva, Brahma, Saraswati, Shesha, and Shuka sought a parallel, but their effort bore little fruit.
Their beauty, character, marital blessedness, and limitless virtues conquer every woman and man in all the worlds.
Agra's radiant Master and Mistress are beyond all words; Shruti and Gita sing, "Not this, not this."*

Commentary

"Thus" in verse 66 means "in precisely the manner previously described." In eternal Ayodhyapura, Sri Rama, Sitaramana and unbroken Lord of Avadh, perpetually reigns.

They are a *dampati*, wife and husband: the one Supreme Self appears in the paired form in order to enjoy divine play in Avadh. They are supremely generous. They gave Maharaja Mithilesha the wealth of parental affection; they gave the people of Avadh and Mithila the bliss of childhood, wedding, and other divine sports; they gave Sugriva and Vibhishana kingdoms in this world and the fearless state beyond; and they gave the supreme state even to Avadh's members of all four social orders, animals, ants, and other creatures. Thus Sri Sita-Rama are the supremely generous Couple.

Even now their beautiful renown, filled with the same perfect generosity, gives joy to their servants. Whatever happiness they gave directly through their own forms in Treta Yuga, that very happiness the Couple now gives devotees merely through hearing and contemplating their noble fame.

There is a second interpretation. "Thus reigns Sri Rama, Lord of Avadh in Ayodhyapura. The Couple's glory is supremely generous." The hundred-crore-fold story of Rama, through the utterance of each single syllable, destroys even great sins such as brahmin-slaying, ends birth and death, and gives the supreme state. A verse testifies:

Raghnatha's deeds extend through a hundred crores of verses; a single syllable destroys a person's greatest sins.

Their supremely generous glory gives joy to devotees, just as Sri Sita-Rama themselves gave joy in Treta Yuga.

Meditation on the divine family

67. Fair-bodied Shatrughna, destroyer of enemies and radiant with noble splendor, stands to their left. Holding a fan in his right hand, he serves in harmony with the wishes of both Lords.

मूल पाठ 67

दक्षणि भुज रपिदलन गौर तन तेज उदारा ।
उभय हेतु अनुसार धरे तालवृन्त खण्डति धारा ॥६७॥

Commentary

Having described the principal meditation, the poet now describes the family as its subsidiary limbs. Sri Shatrughna, destroyer of enemies, has a fair body and generous radiance. In loving accord with the wishes of both Sri Sita and Rama, he holds a round palm-leaf fan in his right hand and stands near both Lords on their left. The *Gitavali* similarly speaks of the yellow sacred thread and garment at the waist.

68. Lakshmana, the embodiment of Shesha, holds the royal parasol; Bharata waves a lovely chowrie. Hanuman, son of the Wind, joins his lotus hands and sings the glory of the beautiful Lords.

मूल पाठ 68

शेष लयि कर छत्र भरत लयि चौर डुलावै ।
अनलिसुवन कर जोरि सुप्रभु को कीरति गावै ॥६८॥

Commentary

Sri Lakshmana Kumara is Shesha, Lord of all, part of Sri Rama the Supreme Brahman and the embodiment of devoted service. This ornament of Raghu's line, abode of graceful signs and treasury of divine virtues, holds the beautiful moon-shaped parasol and spreads its shade.

Likewise Sri Bharata, heir apparent and ornament of Raghu's line, king of devotees and blessed vessel of love for Rama, waves a beautiful chowrie. The Son of the Wind, Sri Hanuman, joins his lotus hands and sings the glory of the lovely Lords. The *Vinaya Patrika* says:

Victor over the pride of Gandharvas, skilled in the great drama, crown-jewel among millions of poet clans, master of song and virtue: victory to the dancer who, seeing Sita's Beloved seated upon the throne, dances in boundless joy.

69. In their appointed places, the eternal retinue forms a magnificent assembly. Surati, Vimala, and the other divine powers remain near, always obedient to the Couple's command.

मूल पाठ 69

अपनो अपनी ठौर नतिय परकिर बनभारी ।
सुरतशिक्षितविमिलादरिहत नति आज्ञाकारी ॥६९॥

Commentary

Sri Sita-Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, Shatrughna, and Hanuman correspond to the six syllables of the sovereign mantra. Having meditated upon them, the poet now describes the wider family.

In their respective places stand great assemblies of companions, female friends, male and female servants, bearing contemplative identification with eternal Avadh and Mithila in forms of being-consciousness-bliss. Each shines in the place of his or her own service. "In their own places" teaches their order: Bharata at the right, Shatrughna at the left, Lakshmana behind, Hanuman before;

beyond them remain Surati, Vimala and other companions who embody Sri Sita-Rama's powers, always near the Couple and obedient to their command.

Surati is the female companion who embodies Sri Sita-Rama's transcendent mutual love. Or the phrase may mean Vimala and the other companions filled with beautiful love, worshiped in the *Rama Tapani* yantra. Their names are Vimala, Utkarshini, Jnana, Kriya, Yoga, Prahvi or Humility, Satya, Ishana, and Anugraha. The secret texts likewise name Sri Charushila, Sri Chandrakala, Subhaga, Rupakala, Hema, Kshema, Vagmi, and many other companions.

70. Each attendant dwells in heart and mind upon the service entrusted to them. Others hold the vina, perfect its notes and melody, and worship the Lords through song.

मूल पाठ 70

जो जो जेह अधिकार सचवि सेवा मन वासै ।
वीणाधर सुर तान गान करि भुहउपासै ॥७०॥

Commentary

After indicating the female companions, the poet speaks of male companions and servants. Each minister or intimate attendant has been granted authority over a particular service and keeps the mind dwelling wholly within it.

The services include parasol, chowrie, fan, mirror, weapons, betel, flower garland, drinking water, and countless other services suited to season, preference, assembly, and time. Whoever longs for a service receives authority over it and perfumes the mind with the joy of that service alone, without entertaining any other desire. The poet also points to further services: some hold the vina and other instruments, refine their notes, take up the melody, and serve both Lords by singing the Couple's glory.

Sri Agra Swami's *Ashtayama* gives the ministers' names: Sulochana, Subhadra, Suchandra, Jayasena, Varishtha, Shubhashila, Anangajit, and Rasaketu. They are sons of Sumantra and the seven other ministers. There are likewise companions such as Sri Charushilamani, Sri Viramani Ji, Sri Dhiramani Ji, Hitamani Ji, Rasramamani Ji, and many other friends and sweet servants.

Fruits of the meditation and the poet's humility

71. Whoever holds this meditation within the heart makes human embodiment truly fruitful. Shiva, four-faced Brahma, and all the other gods bow at these feet.

मूल पाठ 71

यही ध्यान उर धरे स्वयं तन सुफल करैवा ।
भव चतुरानन आदचिरण बंदै सब देवा ॥७१॥

Commentary

Having described meditation upon the entire divine family, the poet now praises its fruit in five verses. In five further verses he will express his humility and complete the book.

Whoever holds this meditation, and no other, within the lotus of the heart makes the body fruitful by one's own effort. The individual soul, together with the indwelling Brahman, is the seed from which the tree of the body has grown. The fruit of that tree is this full-limbed meditation upon Sri Sita-Rama.

If someone asks why this meditation in particular should be held, the poet answers that Bhava, Mahadeva, four-faced Brahma, and all the other gods meditate upon Sri Sita-Rama and bow at these very feet. They also bow to anyone who holds this meditation. Therefore one should hold it.

72. Rasika devotees meditate every day upon this supreme vision of the Divine Couple. Without the heart of a rasika, no one can attain this meditation even in a dream.

मूल पाठ 72

यह दंपतिविर ध्यान रसकि जन नति प्रती ध्यावै ।
रसकि बनि यह ध्यान और सपनेहुँ नहि पावै ॥७२॥

Commentary

Having invoked Shiva and the other gods as witnesses, the poet now invokes rasika saints. Rasika devotees meditate daily upon this supreme meditation of the Divine Couple: highest among all meditations, uniting majesty and royal sweetness, supported by shruti and shastra, adorned by the contemplative realization of rasika saints, and including Sri Sita-Rama's entire family. Without the loving heart of a rasika, dry people cannot attain this meditation, the very form of Brahman's rasa, even in a dream.

73. Rasika devotees become steeped in this stainless stream of immortal nectar. To them, dry knowledge, yogic discipline, and austerity seem no more than husks to be cast away.

मूल पाठ 73

अमल अमृत रस धार रसकि जन यह रिस पागै ।
तनिहिको नीरस ज्ञान जोग तप छोई लागै ॥७३॥

Commentary

This meditation is a stream carrying immortal rasa free from the impurity of maya. The Divine Couple are a fathomless pool of stainless, immortal nectar. Their exquisitely sweet smiles, rasa-filled gracious glances, and other gestures are the flowing currents of that nectar. Rasika devotees become soaked and ripened in this stream; their inner faculties are transformed into meditation itself.

To such a person, knowledge that merely identifies individual self and Supreme Self, yoga that seeks seedless empty absorption, and austerity that torments the body for heavenly pleasure all appear tasteless, like discarded sugarcane fiber devoid of the rasa of loving devotion to Sri Rama. The implication is that those who relish knowledge, yoga, and austerity without the rasa of Rama-bhajana are like animals chewing sugarcane husks. As the couplet says:

Whoever desires liberation without worshiping Ramachandra, although learned, is like a horned animal without a tail.

74. Hearing this sacred account, the distilled essence of holiness, removes sin from the ears and heart. This supremely auspicious meditation bestows bliss upon the saints.

मूल पाठ 74

परम सार यह चरति सुनत श्रवणन अघहारी ।
ध्यान परम कल्याण संत जन आनंदकारी ॥७४॥

Commentary

This account in the form of a description of meditation is the very essence of supreme purity. When saints hear it through the ears, it removes every sin. When they actively meditate upon it, it gives the highest welfare, liberation filled with rasa. Both hearing and meditation bestow supreme bliss upon the saints.

75. Do not speak of it to those whose minds are muddled by the mire of crookedness. This radiant garland of jewels will be worn by the purest rasika devotees.

मूल पाठ 75

तनिहै भूलजिनकिहो कुटलिता पंक मलनि मन ।
यह उज्ज्वल मणमाल पहिरिहै परम रसकि जन ॥७५॥

Commentary

Sri Agra Swami instructs his followers: do not speak of this, even by mistake, to people whose minds have been soiled by the mud of crookedness. The *Dhyana Manjari* will not please them, for it is a garland of radiant, spotless jewels. Those with impure minds are not qualified for it. Its proper recipients are the highest rasika devotees, pure worshipers of Sri Sita-Rama. "Make them wear it" means "let them hear it": they will wear and preserve it around the neck of their pure understanding.

76. Who has wisdom great enough to describe the form of the Lord of the universe? What light can a tiny firefly display beside the sun?

मूल पाठ 76

जगत ईश को रूप वर्णकिहकिवन अधिकि मति ।
कहा अल्प खद्योत भानु के नकिट करै द्युति ॥७६॥

Commentary

The poet now expresses spiritual poverty and humility. The form of Sri Sita-Rama, Lord of the universe, lies beyond mind and speech. Who in this world could possess intelligence great enough to describe it in words? What comparison is there between the sun-like form of the universal Lord and the firefly-like intelligence of an individual soul? A tiny firefly can display no radiance beside the sun; likewise the creature's intelligence cannot describe the Lord's form.

77. How could the chataka bird hold all the rainwater in its little beak? Yet it receives a few drops in its mouth and, with those, finds complete joy.

मूल पाठ 77

कहाँ चातक की शक्तिअखलि जल चोच समावै ।
कछुक बूँद मुख परै ताहिलै आनंद पावै ॥७७॥

Commentary

If the form of the Lord of the universe cannot enter description and meditation, why attempt to describe it? The poet answers: how could a chataka bird have the power to hold in its beak all the rain poured by the cloud under the star Svati? Yet it receives a few drops in its mouth and rejoices in them. Likewise a soul has no power to contain the whole splendor within its intelligence; but if even a faint spray or reflection of that beauty enters the mind, the soul rejoices and becomes fulfilled.

78. I listened to the method taught by the Agamas and received whatever meaning delighted my heart. According to my understanding, I have described and shared this auspicious meditation.

मूल पाठ 78

सुनिआगम वधिअर्थ कछुक जो मनहिसुहायो ।
यह मंगलकर ध्यान यथामतविर्णसुनायो ॥७८॥

Commentary

The Agamas are the Tantric Samhitas, such as the *Sundari Tantra* and *Agastya Samhita*. The poet heard from Sri Guru and the saints the method of meditation taught there. Whatever meaning of those Agama texts delighted him, combining the way of scripture, the Guru's word, and his own settled realization, he described according to his capacity and related to those who desire meditation. It is a meditation rooted in auspiciousness and a bringer of auspiciousness to people.

79. By the grace of Sri Guru and the saints, this resident of the palace gatehouse revealed the secret. He disclosed it for the sake of rasika devotees.

मूल पाठ 79

श्री गुरु संत अनुग्रह ते अस गोपुरवासी ।
रसकि जनन हति करन रहस्यिह ताहप्रकासी ॥७९॥

Commentary

Who has described and related it? The poet, Sri Kripānidhi Ji, names in the manner of a witness both his contemplative identity and his bodily identity. By the grace of Sri Guru and the saints he became "such a resident of the palace gatehouse." What does "such" mean? Precisely what has been described from "Ayodhya, his own supreme abode, shines with surpassing beauty" onward.

In the divine Avadh of eternal contemplative realization, he became a resident of the *gopura*, the special entry gate of Sri Sita-Rama's principal palace, through the grace of Sri Guru and the saints. That resident of the gatehouse revealed and openly described this secret and supremely sweet meditation upon eternal Avadh so that rasika devotees might establish its bhavana.

80. Merely hearing the name *Dhyana Manjari* increases joy within the heart. Agra, servant of Sri Raghubara, sings it with a delighted mind.

मूल पाठ 80

ध्यानमंजरी नाम सुनत मन मोद बढ़ावै ।
श्री रघुवर को दास मुदति मन अग्र सो गावै ॥८०॥

Root-text colophon

Thus is completed *Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari*, composed by Sri Agradas, follower at the feet of Payahari Sri Krishnadas, who took refuge at the feet of Sri Anantananda in the lineage of Sri Swami Ramananda.

May it be offered to Sri Sita and Rama.

Commentary

The name of this secret teaching is *Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari*. Merely hearing it increases joy in the hearts of saints; what then need be said of actually holding its meditation?

"Agra" means the one whose delighted mind sings of Sri Raghubara together with Sri Janaki, and who is their servant. The intention is that Sri Raghubara will certainly make anyone who becomes his servant rejoice. As Sri Goswami Ji says:

Tulsi is joyful because King Rama has become his own.

And:

Blessed is Tulsi's fortune, for he has become the Lord's servant.

[And similar lines in the *Gita*vali.]

The reason for saying "servant" is that all individual selves are eternally servants of the Supreme Self, Sri Raghubara. As the verse says:

All selves are by their very nature servants of the Supreme Self. Those who possess no other defining characteristic remain forever bound; in service is liberation.

The dharma of a servant is service and attendance. This alone is life's support, both in the inward contemplative state and in the state of direct realization.

Hari. Om. That is truth. Salutations to the blessed Ramachandra.

The commentator's conclusion

Doha

*I bow to Sri Sarayu and Avadh; to Sita, Raghubara, and Hanuman;
to the feet of Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna; to Sri Guru, the bow and arrow, and the
saints.
Rasramamani has composed the exquisitely sweet Makaranda commentary.
May it benefit all who speak and hear it. Victory to Sri Sita-Rama.*

Barvai meter

*In Vikrama Samvat nineteen hundred and fifty-five,
in the bright half of Madhava month, on Friday, Janaki Navami, [1]
Rasramamani, servant taking refuge in Sita-Rama,
composed the commentary on the Sarayu's bank in the pure abode Avadh. [2]
He bows to Agra Swami's feet and sings this work;
within his heart is meditation on Sita and Raghubara and love for their names. [3]*

Kavitta

*The youthful Couple, fair and dark, steeped through and through in love,
remain clasped, graceful arms around each other's lovely necks.
Filled with the excitement of play and intoxicated by each other's beauty,
they steal delight and shine, eager for the divine sport.
Their restless eyes move; absorbed in pleasure,
dyed in the colors of rasa, their bodies gaze upon one another with love.
Sita and Raghunandana, roots of bliss, a pair of moons,
may they remain forever risen in the sky of my heart.*

Thus is completed the *Makaranda Madhuri* commentary on *Sri Sita-Rama Dhyana Manjari*, composed by Sri Sita-Rama-Sharan Rasramamani, disciple of Sri Kamadendramani, friend of Sri Raghavendra in the Ramanandi lineage.

May it be offered to Sri Sita-Rama. Salutations to the Gurus.

[*Viyat* means sky: the two moons in the sky of the heart.]

Appendix

Verses establishing the supremacy of the bow and arrow

Kavitta on the bow

*Raghunatha's bow reigns in his left hand, delighting the mind steeped in rasa;
more beautifully fashioned than the divine bow of the god of love.
Hearing the hard and terrible roar of its string, enemies tremble
like elephants hearing the voice of a lion.
Protector of saints and gods, curved like the young moon,
death of Lanka's lord, giver of fearlessness, destroyer of sorrow;
mighty guardian of earth, dharma, cows, and brahmins -
I bow to the bow, lord of weapons, and to its Bearer.*

Kavitta on the arrow

*The mighty wind forever dwells in its two feathers;
when released, it convulses the seven oceans and the worlds.
Upon its head dwell both the sun and mighty fire;
its astonishing weight equals Mount Meru and Mount Mandara.
Subtle as space, it flashes, says Rasrangamani;
each arrow is unfailing and its power beyond measure.
Millions of times stronger than the thunderbolt, thousands beyond the trident,
forty times beyond the discus. Such are Rama's speeding arrows.*

Gitavali song: Beholding the delight of Avadh

*Beholding the delight of Avadh,
companies of gods rejoice and shower flowers day and night.
Brahma watches in many ways, hoping to learn the art of building such a city,
but finds it utterly unfathomable, like free movement on land to a creature of water.
The delighted people of the city gaze upon the source of happiness and sing his praise;
their beautiful bee-like eyes drink nectar from the lotus of Rama's face.
At mid-heaven the sun moves slowly, and so do the stars and moon.
Beholding Rama's city, says Tulsi, every pair of sorrows disappears.*

Concluding verses of Tulsidas

*One trust, one strength, one hope, one faith:
one dark-cloud Rama alone is dear to chataka-like Tulsidas.*

*One trust in Rama's strength, one faith in Rama's name;
remembering the auspicious Name, Tulsidas asks for welfare and blessedness.*

*Until a soul worships Rama's feet, abandons desire, and leaves the abode of sorrow,
there can be no welfare anywhere, nor rest for the mind even in a dream.*

*The tongue is a serpent and the mouth its hole for one who does not repeat Hari's name.
Whoever has no love for Rama, says Tulsi, has destiny turned against him.*

*Let the heart split, the eyes burst, and the body burn. What use are they
if, remembering Rama, they do not melt, flow with tears, and thrill with devotion?*

Original recitation texts for supplementary passages

The eighty root verses appear in Devanagari beside their English translations throughout the main text. This appendix supplies the original wording of every additional verse, doha, kavitta, song, Sanskrit citation, and concluding recitation passage translated above.

Preface quotation

यही पद गाय ध्यान मंजरी संगाय,
कही माथै पधराय सयाराम हतिकारी है ।
याको देस काल पढते ही हयै भाखै तोह,
आसीसा को फल थोरे काल ही में पाई है ॥

The commentator's invocation

श्री सम्प्रदाय सुदीप श्री रामानन्दह ध्याय ।
अग्र कीन्ह पद परसनिजि गुरु चरणन सरि नाय ॥
आसीसवादी राम सयि ध्यान मंजरी मंजु ।
तासु तलिक हनुमत कृपा लखिौ ललति सुखपुंज ॥

Sita and Rama: speech and meaning

गरि अरथ जल बीचसिम कहयित भनि न भनि ।
बन्दौ सीताराम पद जनिहहि परम प्रयि खनि ॥

Scriptural praise of Ayodhya

यद्यपि सब बैकुंठ बखाना ।
वेद पुरान वदिति जग जाना ॥
अवध सरसि प्रयि मोहनि सोऊ ।
यह प्रसंग जानइ कोउ कोऊ ॥

The picture halls

चारु चित्रसाला गृह, गृह प्रतिलिखि बनाय ।
रामचरति जे नरिख मुनि, ते मन लेहचोराय ॥

The jewel-lit houses

बहु मणिरिचति झरोखा भराजै ।
गृह गृह प्रतमिणादीप वराजै ॥

Gitavali excerpt on Avadh

देखत अवध को आनन्द ।
हरषविरषत सुमन दनि दनि देवतन के वृन्द ॥
मध्य दविस वलिम्बि चलत दनिस उडुगन चन्द ॥

The city that grants Rama's abode

रामधामदा पुरी सुहावनी ।
लोक समस्त वदिति जग पावनी ॥
चार खानि जग जीव अपारा ।
अवध तजे तन नहि संसारा ॥
सब वर्धि पुरी मनोहर जानी ।
सकल सद्धिप्रद मंगल खानी ॥

Vedic testimony concerning Ayodhya

अष्टचक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या ।
तस्यां हरिण्मयः कोशः स्वर्गो लोको ज्योतिषावृतः ॥

यो वै तां ब्रह्मणो वेद अमृतेनावृतां पुरीम् ।
तस्मै ब्रह्म च ब्रह्मा च आयुः कीर्तप्रजां ददुः ॥

Smriti testimony concerning Ayodhya

अयोध्या च परं ब्रह्म सरयू सगुणः पुमान् ।
तन्नविासी जगन्नाथः सत्यमेतद् ब्रवीमति ॥

वर्षिणोः पादमवन्तकिं गुणवतीं मध्ये च काञ्चीपुरीम् ।
नाभौ द्वारवतीं तथा च हृदये मायापुरीं पुण्यदाम् ॥
ग्रीवामूलमुदाहरन्त मिथुरां नासाग्रवाराणसीम् ।
एतद् ब्रह्मपदं वदन्त मुनयोऽयोध्यापुरीं मस्तकम् ॥

Kavitta on the sacred cities

पुरुष के पायन अवन्ती गुणवन्ती लसै,
पुरी काञ्ची कटिद्वारावती नाभभिराजती ।
माया हृदय मार्हि केठ मथुरा कहाहिकासी,
नासा अग्र पाहि छौ छहूँ अंग छाजती ॥
एई ब्रह्मपद कहे मुनिरिसरंग भनी,
सबन के सीस पर अवधविराजती ।
अवधके सीस पर मुकुटाभरण सम,
सरति सरौमणि सरजू शोभा पावती ॥

Kavitta: Avadh is the culmination of all cities

जोग की अवधिदिव्य भोग की अवधि,
न वयिोग याके मध्य भवरोग औषधि है ।
ज्ञान की अवधिप्रभु ध्यान की अवधि,
दुखहान की अवधिदेन सुख को उदधि है ॥
जस को अवधिभक्तिरिस की अवधि,
रामवस की अवधिप्रेमघृत हेतु दधि है ।
रामरूपा जानबिसि सेवै रसरंगमणि,
अवधितो सब ही पुरीन की अवधि है ॥

Names of Ayodhya

जयत अयोध्या कोसला, जय वमिला साकेत ।
जयत अवध अपराजिता, सत्या सरजू समेत ॥

Self-comparison of the incomparable

लही न कतहुँ हारहिनि मानी ।
इन सम इहइ उपमा उर आनी ॥

Song from Sri Avadha Bindu

श्री अवधपुरी की यह छबिपर मैं वारी ।
ब्रह्मभवन बैकुण्ठ का है, का कैलास वकिारी ।
त्रिगुण तीन देवन की ते हैं, या तो उनते न्यारी ॥

The Lord's statement on bathing in the Sarayu

जा मज्जन ते बनिहप्रियासा ।
मम समीप नर पावर्हिबासा ॥

Kavitta on the generosity of the Sarayu

जग के तमाम नर वाम रामधाम जात,
नाम गुण ग्राम सुचि सरजू के सुनि सुनि ।
जम की जमात जम द्वारे बलिलात गहे,
पावत न पापी पछितात सीस धुनि धुनि ॥
अंग अंग फूल रसरंगमणि कूल बसि,
रामगंग महिमा महान अस गुनि गुनि ।
तारवि को तरल तरंग हाथ से उठाय,
मानहुँ पुकारती है पातकनि पुनपुनि ॥

Gitavali passage on bees among lotuses

वकिसति कमलावली चले पुंज चंचरीक,
गुंजत कल कोमल धुनतियागकिंज न्यारे ।
जनु वरिग पाइ सकल शोक कूप गृह वहिय,
भृत्य प्रेममत्त फरित गुनत गुण तहारे ॥

Chappaya on Sri Ashoka Grove

वपिनि अशोक जहाँ व्यापत न शोक,
सयि अलनि के थोक रास ओक बहु शोभाकर ।
क्रीडाचल सरति सरोवर वहिग वर वाटकि,
सुघर सुरतरु पाँतलिताधर ॥
नाग नर देव नृप गंधर्वसुता अनेक,
कोटनि के वृन्द मध्य राजै नति सयिवर ।
सरजू के तीर बहै सीतल समीर,
तहाँ बैठिचर नौर तरिखा पुलनिादधर ॥

Savaiya on Sri Rama's eyes

बाँके बडे उमडे सुखमा, उपमा मृग खंजन मीन लहै ना ।
छाल सतिसति रंग भरे, रसरंगमणाभिनमोहन पैना ॥
सुन्दर शारद सारस के सम, शील रसील सुशील के ऐना ।
नैनन मेरे बसें नति, जान जयिवन जानकनिाथ के नैना ॥

Sanskrit verse on the flowering forest

भ्रमरालकुलैर्युक्ते पुष्पगन्धानुमोदति ।
शुकशारकामयूरैश्च कोकलैरभकिजति ॥

Kavitta on Sri Rama's hands and rings

शर धनु धरन, दरन दुख दीनन के,
भरन करन वशिवभर के उदर के ।
सुरसा सुवन से हैं दादुर दुवन के,
वभूषण भुवन के वरद हरहर के ॥
मंडति हैं रसराम अँगुलनि अभरिम,
रामनाम अंकति त्यों मुदरकि सुघर के ।
मणिसे नखर के, वर्ण दनिकर के,
सुकंज शोभा सर के हैं कर सयिवर के ॥

Kavittas on the forty-eight marks of the feet

ध्यावै रसराम रामपद चहिन दाहनि में,
ऊर्ध्व सुरेखा मन स्वस्तिकि सुजानकै ।
अष्टकोण रमा हल मूसल सर्प पर,
अंबर जलज रथ वस्त्र जव जानकै ॥
कल्पवृक्ष अंकुश ध्वजा मुकुट चक्रराज,
आसन सु यमदंड यमभीति भानकै ।
चामर सुछत्र नर जौ माला एई अंक,
सीय पद वाम में वलिकत बखानकै ॥१॥

राम वाम पद चहिन ध्यावै रसराममणि,
सरजू सुगोपद सुभूमि उर आनकै ।
कलश पताका जम्बूफल अर्धचन्द्र शंख,
षट्कोण त्रिकोण गदा जीव जानकै ॥
बनिदु शक्ति सुधाकुण्ड त्रिविली त्यों मीन मंजु,
पूरो चन्द्र वीणा वंशी धनु सुख सानकै ।
तूण हंस चन्द्रकिदिएई अंक सीय पद,
दाहनि में देखत महान मोद मानकै ॥२॥

Katha Upanishad

न तत्र सूर्यो भातनि चन्द्रतारकं,
नेमा वदियुतो भान्त किंतोऽयमग्नः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं,
तस्य भासा सर्वमर्दि वभिाति ॥

Testimony concerning Rama as being-consciousness-bliss

रमन्ते योगिनोऽनन्ते नित्यानन्दे च्छिन्नात्मनि
इतरामपदेनासौ परं ब्रह्माभधीयते ॥

अर्धमात्रात्मको रामो ब्रह्मानन्दैकवगिरहः ॥

चिदानन्दमय देह तुम्हारी ।
वगित वकिर जान अधिकारी ॥

Testimony concerning Sita and the Divine Couple

हेममया द्विभुजया सर्वालंकृतया चिता ॥

स इममेवात्मानं द्वेधापातयत् ।
ततः पतश्चि पत्नी चाभवताम् ॥

Doha from Sri Sneha Prakashika

सयि तोरे गोरे गरे, पोतजितछिवाछाय ।
मनहुँ रंगीले लाल की, भुजा रही लपटाय ॥

Kavitta on Sri Sita's feet

जोहयि न जावक जपा बन्धूक वदिरुम में,
रजोगुण नवल रसाल दूरुम दल में ।
छेक सुमन में न वीरवधू तन में,
न वन्दन कुसुम्भ हूँ गुलाब गरि जल में ॥
बम्बि ही के फल में न बाल दवाकर में,
न रत के अधर में न मंजुल कमल में ।
ऐसी कोमलताई औ ललाई न सुहाई कहूँ,
जैसी रसरंगमणि सीय पदतल में ॥

Song comparing Sita and Rama only with themselves

राम से राम, सीता सो सीता ।
शवि वरिचशिरदा शेष शुक्र,
पटतर खोजा कम शर्म बीता ॥
सुन्दर शील सुहाग अमति गुण,
अखलि लोक नर नारी जीता ।
अग्रस्वामि स्वामिनी उजागर,
नेता नैता शिरुता गावत गीता ॥

Glory of Raghunatha's deeds

चरति रघुनाथस्य शतकोटिप्रवसितरम् ।
एकैकमक्षरं पुंसां महापातकनाशनम् ॥

Vinaya Patrika passage concerning Hanuman

महानाटक नपुण कोटिकेवकुल तलिक,
गान गुण गर्व गन्धर्व जेता ।
जयतसिहिसनासीन सीतारमण नरिखि,
नरिभर हर्ष नृत्यकारी ॥

Doha on devotion beyond dry liberation

रामचन्द्र के भजन बनि, जो यह पद नरिवान ।
ज्ञानवन्त अपसि नर, पशु बनि पूँछ वषान ॥

Sanskrit verse on the soul's eternal service

दासभूताः स्वतः सर्वे ह्यात्मानः परमात्मनः ।
नान्यथा लक्षणं येषां बन्धे मुक्तिः सदा हति ॥

The commentator's concluding doha

बन्दी श्री सरयू अवध, सयि रघुवर हनुमन्त ।
भरत लखन रघुरमन पद, श्रीगुरु धनु शर सन्त ॥
कृत मकरन्द सुमाधुरी, टीका मणारिसराम ।
कहहि सुनहि तनि हति करै, जय श्री सीताराम ॥

The commentator's Barvai verses

शत उनीस पुनपिचपन संवत माहि ।
माधव सति भृगु जानकी नवमी काहि ॥१॥
सीताराम शरण जन मणारिसराम ।
टीका रचित सरयू अवध सुधाम ॥२॥
अग्रस्वामि पद बन्दी सांगै यहु ।
हयि ध्यान सयि रघुवर नाम सनेहु ॥३॥

The commentator's concluding Kavitta

जुगल कशोर गौर श्यामल सनेह सने,
ललति सुबाहु कल कंठन कसे रहै ।
केलिके उछाह छवि छाके दोउ दोहूँ के,
लूटत आनंद लीला लोभति लसे रहै ॥
फेरत वलिचन वलिल त्यों वनिद माते,
राते रस रंग तन हेरत हेते रहै ।
सयि रघुनन्दन आनंदकन्द युगचन्द,
ऐसेहि हमारे हयि वयित उगे रहै ॥

Appendix Kavitta on the bow

राजै रघुनाथ वामहाथ रसरंग मनो,
दविय कामचाप ते सुचारु चत्तिकारी को ।
सुनै जासु रौंदा को कठोर घोर सोर काँपै,
अरि जैसे करसुनिनाद कुंजरारी को ॥
संत सुरपाल वक्र बालक मयंक गति,
लंकपतिकाल अभयदायक दुखारी को ।
धरनी धरम धेनु दवजि रखवार भारी,
बन्दी आयुधाधि धनुष धनुधारी को ॥

Appendix Kavitta on the arrow

महावायु बसत हमेस जुग पंखन पै,
छूटत में छोभै सातों सन्धि त्यों जहान हैं ।
फर पै वरिजै भानु पावक महान दोऊ,
गुरुता गजब मेरु मन्दर समान है ॥
सूक्ष्म आकाश ज्यों प्रकाशै रसरंगमणि,
एक ते अमोघ होत रूप बेप्रमान है ।
कुलशि ते कोटि गुने भूल ते सहस्र गुने,
चक्र ते चालीस गुने चले रामबान हैं ॥

Complete Gitavali song on Avadh

देखत अवध को आनंद ।
हरषविरषत सुमन नशिदिनि देवतनको वृन्द ॥
नगर रचना सखिन को वधितिकत बहु वधिबिन्द ।
नपिट लागत अगम ज्यों जलचरहगिमन सुछन्द ॥
मुदति पुरलोगनसिराहत नरिखसिखमाकन्द ।
जनिके सुअलचिख पयित राममुखारवन्द मरन्द ॥
मध्य व्योम वलिम्बचिलत दनिश उडुगन चन्द ।
रामपुरी बलिकतिलसी मटित सब दुखद्वन्द ॥

Concluding verses of Tulsidas

एक भरोसो एक बल, एक आस विश्वास ।
एक राम धनश्याम हति, चातक तुलसीदास ॥

एक भरोसो रामबल, रामनाम विश्वास ।
सुमरिनाम मंगल कुसल, माँगत तुलसीदास ॥

तबलगकुसल न जीव कहूँ, सपनेहुँ मन विश्वास ।
जबलगभिजत न रामपद, सोकधाम तजकाम ॥

रसना साँपनिबिदन बलि, जो न जपहरिनाम ।
तुलसी प्रेम न राम सो, ताहविधाता बाम ॥

हयि फाटहु फूटहु नयन, जरहु ते तन केहिकाम ।
दरवहस्रवहपुलकहनिही, तुलसी सुमरित राम ॥