Ramáyana
Book One
Boyhood
by Valmîki

Translated by
ROBERT P. GOLDMAN

With a Foreword by Amartya Sen

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS & JJC FOUNDATION
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## CONTENTS

CSL Conventions vii
Foreword xv
Introduction xxvii

### RAMÁYANA I – BOYHOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Tale of Rama</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>The Creation of Poetry</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>The Kingdom of Kóśala</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–13</td>
<td>The Tale of Rishya·shringa and the Sacrifices of Dasha·ratha</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–16</td>
<td>The Incarnation of Vishnu</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17–29</td>
<td>Rama’s Birth and Youthful Exploits</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–48</td>
<td>The Journey to Míthila and Vishva·mitra’s Narration of Puránic Legends</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49–64</td>
<td>The Saga of Vishva·mitra</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>The Birth of Sita</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>The Breaking of the Bow</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67–72</td>
<td>The Marriage of the Sons of Dasha·ratha</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73–76</td>
<td>The Return to Ayódhya</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glossary 369
2.1 Nāradasya tu tadvākyāṅ śrutiṃ vākyavijāradaḥ pujayām āsa dharmā̄tmatā sahaśiśyo mahaṃmuṇiḥ.
Yathāvāt pūjitas tena deva’īśir Nāradas tadā āśṛṣṭi’āv ābhyanujñātaḥ sa jagāma vihāyasam.
Sa muhūrtam gate tasmā devalokaṃ munis tadā jagāma Tamasāttirama Jahnavaṃ tv avidūrataḥ.
Sa tu tīraṃ samāsādyta Tamasāyā mahaṃmuṇiḥ śīyam āha sthitam pārśve dṛṣṭvā tīrtham Akadamam.

2.5 «Akadamam idaṃ tīrthaṃ Bharadvāja niśāmaya ramaṇīyaṃ prasann’āmbu saṃjnaṃsaṃyo mano yathā.
Nyasatāṃ kalaśas tāta diyaṭaṃ vallaṃṣī mama idam ev’āvagāhiṣye Tamasāttirtham uttamam.»
Evam ukto Bharadvājo Vālmikena mahājātmanā praṇyacchata munes tasya vallaṃṣī niyato gurʊḥ.
Sa śīyaḥ hastad ādāya vallaṃṣī niyart’endriyaḥ vicacāra ha paśyaṃs tat sarvato vipulaṃ vanam.
Tasyā’abhyāše tu mithunāṃ carantam anapāyinam dadarṣa bhagavāṃs tatra krauḍcayoś cāruṇāhvanam.

2.10 Tasmāt tu mithunād ekam pumāṃsaṃ pāpajñācayaḥ jaghāna vairaṇilayo niśādas tasya paśyaṭaḥ.
Tāṃ sōṅitaṃparīt’āṅgaṃ veṣṭamānaṃ mahiṭṭale bhārya tu nihaṭaṃ dṛṣṭvā rurāva karṇaṃ giraṃ.
Tathā tu taṃ dvijaṃ dṛṣṭvā niśādena nipātitam ṛṣer dharmājātmanas tasya kārṇyaṃ samapadyata.
When the great and eloquent sage had heard his words, the righteous man and his disciples did Nárada great honor. After the divine seer Nárada had been duly honored by the sage, he took his leave and, receiving it, flew off into the sky. Once Nárada had departed for the world of the gods, the sage went after a while to the bank of the Támasa river, not far from the Jāhnnavi, the Ganges. Upon reaching the Támasa riverbank, the great sage spied a bathing spot that was free from mud and spoke to the disciple who stood beside him. “Bharad-vaja, look at this lovely bathing place so free from mud. Its waters are as lucid as the mind of a good man. Set down the water jar, dear boy, and give me my bark-cloth robe, for I will bathe here at this excellent bathing spot of the Támasa.”

Addressed in this fashion by the great Valmíki, Bharad-vaja, always attentive to his guru, gave him his bark-cloth robe. Taking the bark-cloth from his disciple’s hands, he walked about, his senses tightly controlled, looking all about him at the vast forest. Nearby, that holy man saw an inseparable pair of sweet-voiced krauñcha birds wandering about. But even as he watched, a Nisháda hunter, filled with malice and intent on mischief, struck down the male of the pair. Seeing him struck down and writhing on the ground, his body covered with blood, his mate uttered a piteous cry. And the pious seer, seeing the bird struck down in this fashion by the Nisháda, was filled with pity.
Tataḥ karuṇāvedātād «adharmo 'yam iti» dvijaḥ
niśāmya rudatīṁ krauṇcīm idaṁ vacanam abravit.
«Mā niśāda pratiṣṭhāṁ tvam agamaḥ śāśvatiḥ samāḥ
yat krauṇcām thunād ekam avadhiḥ kāma/mohitam.»

Tasya 'āvam bruvataś cintā babhūva ḍṛdi viśṣataḥ
śok'jātreṇ 'āṣya śakuneh, «kim idaṁ vyāhṛtaṁ mayā?»

Cintayan sa mahāprājītaś cakāra matimān matīm
śiṣyaṃ c' āiv' ābravīd vākyam idaṁ sa munipūrṇīgavahā:
«Paḍābaddho 'ksaraśaṁs tantriśayāsamanvitāḥ
śok'jārtasya pravṛttto me śloko bhavatu n' ānyathā.»
Śiṣyas tu tasya bruvato muner vākyam anuttamam
pratijārāḥ samhṛṣṭas tasya tuṣṭo 'bhavad guruḥ.

So 'bhīṣekeṇa tataḥ kṛtva tīrthe tasmin yathāvidhi
tam eva cintayann artham upāvartata vai muniḥ.

Bharadvājas tataḥ śiṣyo vinītaḥ śrutavān guroḥ
kalaśaṃ puṛṇaṃ ādāya prṣṭhato 'nujaṅgāma ha.
Sa praviśyāś aśramaḥpadaṁ śiṣyeṇa saha dharmajyāt
upaviṣṭaḥ kathāc' ānyāś cakāra dhyāṇam āsthitāḥ.

Ājāgama tato brahmā lokaḥkartā svayaṃ prabhuh
caiturmukho mahāṣeṣe dṛṣṭuṁ taṁ munipūrṇīgavam.
Vālmikīr atha taṁ dṛṣṭvā sahas’ōṭhāya vāgyataḥ
prāṇjaliḥ prayato bhūtvā rasthau paramājīṣmītaḥ.
Pūjyāṃ āsa taṁ devaṁ pādyā jārghyāṣaṇāvandanaṁ

46
THE CREATION OF POETRY

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

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

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

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

2.25 Ath’ āpaviṣṭya bhagavān āsanē param’ārcite
Vālmīkaye maha’”ṛṣaye saṃditdeś āsanāṃ tataḥ.
Upaviṣte tadā tasmā sākṣā lokaśītāṃmahe
 tadgaten’ āiva manasā Vālmikir dhīyānaṃ āśhitaḥ.
«Pāp’ātmānaḥ kṛtaṃ kaṣṭhaṃ vairaghrānaḥbuddhinā
yas tādṛśaṃ cāru'rravaṃ krauḥcama hanyād akāraṇāt.»
Śocanī eva mūhū krauṇcīm upaślokaṃ imaṃ punah
 jagāv antargata’manā bhūtvā šokaparāyaṇaḥ.

Tam uvāca tato Brahmā prahasaṃ munipūṇīgavaṃ:
«sloka eva tvaya baddho n’ ātra kārya vītarāṇā.

2.30 Macchandād eva te brahmaṃ pravṛttī” ēyam sarvasvati
Rāmasya caritaṃ kṛṣṇaṃ kuru tvam śīśattama.
Dharm’ātmano guṇavato loke Rāmasya dhīmatāḥ
vṛttam kathaya dhīrasya yathā te Nāradāc chrutam.
Rahasyam ca prakāśaṃ ca yad vṛttam tasya dhīmatāḥ
Rāmasya saha Saumitre rākṣaśāṇāṃ ca sarvaśāḥ.
Vaidheyaś c’ āiva yad vṛttam prakāśaṃ yadi vā rahaḥ
tac c’ āpy aviditaṃ sarvaṃ viditaṃ te bhavisyati.
Na te vāg anṛṭa käyve kā cid ātra bhavisyati
kuru Rāmakathāṃ pūnyāṃ śloka'baddhāṃ mano'ramām.

2.35 Yāvat sthāsyanti girayaḥ saritaś ca māhiṭale
tāvad Rāmāyaṇakathā lokeṣu pracarıṣyati.
Yāvad Rāmasya ca kathā tvatākṛtā pracarıṣyati
tāvad ūrdhvam adhaś ca tvam ma'lokeṣu nivatsyasi.»

48
When he had made the prescribed prostration before him, he asked after his continuing well-being. Once the holy lord was seated in a place of honor, he motioned the great seer Valmiki also to a seat. But even though the grandfather of the worlds himself sat there before him, Valmiki, his mind once more harking back to what had happened, lapsed again into profound thought: “That wicked man, his mind possessed by malice, did a terrible thing in killing such a sweet-voiced krñucha bird for no reason.” Grieving once more for the krñucha hen, given over wholly to his grief and lost in his inner thought, he sang the verse again right there before the god.

With a smile, Brahma spoke to the bull among sages, “This is a śloka that you have composed. You needn’t be perplexed about this. Brahman, it was by my will alone that you produced this elegant speech. Greatest of seers, you must now compose the entire history of Rama. You must tell the world the story of the righteous, virtuous, wise and steadfast Rama, just as you heard it from Nārada, the full story, public and private, of that wise man. For all that befell wise Rama, Saumitri, the rākṣhasas and Vāidēhi, whether in public or private, will be revealed to you, even those events of which you are ignorant. No utterance of yours in this poem shall be false. Now compose the holy story of Rama fashioned into ślokas to delight the heart. As long as the mountains and rivers shall endure upon the earth, so long will the story of the Ramāyana be told among men. And as long as the story of Rama you compose is told, so long will you live on in my worlds above and below.”
Ity ukte bhagavān Brahmā tatr’ āiv’ āntaṇadhiyata
tataḥ saṣiṣya Vālmikir munir viṣmayam āyayaau.
Tasya śiṣyā tataḥ sarve jaguḥ ślokām imaṃ punaḥ
muhur muhuḥ prīyamāṇaḥ prāhuṣ ca bhṛṣa vismitaḥ:
«Sam’ākṣaraś caturbhir yah pādaṅg gīto maha’”ṛṣiṇā
so ’nuyāharanād bhūyāḥ śokāḥ ślokātvar āgataḥ.»

Tasya buddhīr iyam jātā Vālmikīr bhāvīr’ātmanaḥ:
«kṛṣṇaṃ Rām’āyaṇaṃ kāvyam ṣṛṣaiḥ karavāny aham.»
Tasya’ṣayād bhūyāḥ. ’ṣloka imam. punah
tad” āṣa Rāmasya cakāra kīrtīmān
sam’ākṣaraś ślokāśatair yaśasvino
yaśas’karaṃ kāvyam udāraḍhir muniḥ.

3.1 Śrutvā vastu samagramāṃ tad
dharm’ātma dharmasaṃhitam
vyaktam anveṣate bhūyo
yad vṛttiḥ tasya dhīmataḥ.
Upasṛṣṭya ṣūkaṃ sāmyaṃ muniḥ śhitvā kṛṣṭ’ānjaliḥ
prācīn’āgreṣu darbheṣu dharmen’ anveṣate gatīm.
Janma Rāmasya sumahad viryaṃ sarv’ānuktulatām
lokasya priyatāṃ keśantīṃ saumyatāṃ satyājsīlatām,
Nanācitarāḥ kartṭaḥ c’ ānya Viśvāmirāsaḥ ṣāyane
Jānakyāś ca vivāham ca dhanuṣaḥ ca vibhedanam,
3.5 Rāmaṃ Rāmāvādaṃ ca gunān Dāśarathes tathā
tath” ābhiṣekam Rāmasya Kaikeyyā duṣṭaḥbhāvataḥ,
Vyāghātaṃ c’ ābhiṣekasya Rāmasya ca vivāsanam
THE CREATION OF POETRY

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

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

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

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

Rama’s birth, his great strength and kindliness to all, the people’s love for him, his forbearance, gentleness and truthful nature, the various other marvelous stories told on the journey with Vishva-mitra, Jánaki’s wedding, and the breaking of the bow, the dispute between the two Ramas and the virtues of Dasha-rathi, Rama’s consecration and Kaiké-yi’s wicked nature, the interruption of the consecration and the banishment of Rama, the king’s grief and lamentation...
rājīṇāḥ śokāvilāpaṃ ca paralokasya c’ ārayam,
Prakṛtināṃ viśādaṃ ca prakṛtināṃ visarjanam
niśād’ādhipaśaṃvādam sūr’ āpavartanaṃ tathā,
Gaṅgāyāś c’ ābhisaṃtrāraṃ Bharadvāṣya darśanam
Bharadvāj’ābhyanuṣiñānaṃc Citraktuṣaṣya darśanam,
Vāstukarmānīvesaṃ ca Bharat’āgamanāṃ tathā
prasādanaṃ ca Rāmasya pituś ca salilākṛiyāṃ,

3.10 Pāduk’āgry’ābhisekam ca Nandigrāmaṇīvaśananam
Daṇḍak’āranyāgaśamanāṃ Sutkiṣṭena samāgamanam,
Anasūyāsamasyaṃ ca aṅgārāgaśya c’ ārpaṇam
Śūraṇakhyāṣ ca saṃvādam virūpākaraṇaṃ tathā,
Vadhaṃ Khara/Triśirasor utthānaṃ Rāvaṇasya ca
Māricasya vadhāṃ c’ āiva Vaidhyā haraṇaṃ tathā,
Rāghavasya vilāpaṃ ca grindhāraṇaṇaṃ nibharanaṃ
Kabandhaḍaśaśanaṃ c’ āiva Pampāyāś c’ āpi darśanam,
Śarbyā darśanaṃ c’ āiva Hanumad’ārśanaṃ tathā
vilāpaṃ c’ āiva Pampāyaṃ Rāghavasya mah’ ātmanaḥ,

3.15 Ṛṣyamūkṣaṣya gamanaṃ Śugrīvena samāgamanam
pratya’y’ōtpadanaṃ sakhyāṃ VālīŚugrīvaṇāgramam,
Vālīpramathanaṃ c’ āiva Śugrīvajapitipadanaṃ
Tārāvilāpaṃ samayaṃ varṣa’ṛtriṇīvaśananam,
Kopaṃ Rāghavasimhasya balanām upasaṃgharham
diśaḥ prsthāpanaṃ c’ āiva ṗṛthivyāṣ ca nivedanam,
Aṅguliyaśaṣyaṃ ca sṛṣaṣya bilādarśanam
prāya’y’ōpaveśanaṃ c’ āiva Śampāṭeś c’ āpi darśanam,
Parvāṭ’ārohaṇaṃ c’ āiva sāgarasya ca lāṅghanam
rātrau Lāṅkāpraveśaṃ ca ekṣy’ āpi vicintanam,
and his departure for the next world, the dejection of the common people and their abandonment, the conversation with the Nishāda chief and the return of the charioteer, the crossing of the Ganges and the meeting with Bharad-va-ja, the arrival at Mount Chitra-kuta on the instructions of Bharad-va-ja, the building of and dwelling in a hut and the coming of Bhārata, the propitiation of Rama and the funeral libations for his father, the consecration of the wonderful sandals and the dwelling in Nandi-grama, the journey to the Dāndaka forest and the meeting with Sutikshna, the encounter with Anasūya and her presentation of the ointment, the conversation with Shurpa-nakha and her disfigurement, the slaying of Khara and Trí-shiras and the setting out of Rāvana, the destruction of Marícha and the abduction of Vaidēhi, the lamentation of Rāghava and the death of the vulture king, the encounter with Kabāndha and arrival at Lake Pampa, the encounters with Shābari and Hanumān, and the lamentations of great Rāghava at Lake Pampa, the journey to Rishya-muka and the meeting with Sugrīva, the engendering of confidence, the alliance, and the battle between Valin and Sugrīva, the slaying of Valin and the installation of Sugrīva, the lamentation of Tara, the agreement and the settling in for the rainy season, the anger of the lion of the Rāghavas, the marshalling of the troops, their being dispatched in all directions and the description of the earth, the giving of the ring, the discovery of Rikshā's cave, the fast until death and the encounter with Sampāti, the ascent of the mountain and the leap over the ocean, the entry into Lanka by night and the solitary
3.20 अपानमहत्तमित्यादि दर्शनम् अशोकायवस्याः सत्याय श्री दर्शनम्,
अभिज्ञानप्रदानम् श्री सत्याय श्री भाषणम्
राक्षसितारणाम् श्री उत्तमो त्रिष्णुवस्यप्रदानम्,
मणिप्रदानम् श्री उष्णद्रव्याभित्रम् तथा उत्तमो उपदेशाभित्रम्,
ग्रहणाम् यथा यथा निद्रारूपम् तथा यथा समारोहम्
प्रति प्रति चावलयम् तथा यथा उपदेशाभित्रम्
रामायणस्य श्री वस्तुवधवस्तुवधवस्तुवध श्री दर्शनम्
3.25 यथा यथा वधवस्तुवध श्री दर्शनम् नान्दिनीयान्
विभिषणेन समहारन प्रदानम् कुमारकृत्यानि
नन्दिनीयानि नन्दिनीयानि नन्दिनीयानि
राजस्या विनाशम् श्री उष्णद्रव्याभित्रम्,
विभिषणां विभिषणां विभिषणां
विभिषणां विभिषणां विभिषणां
पुष्पकस्य आरोहणम् तथा समारोहम्
ऋग्वेदस्य वैदिको वैदिको वैदिको
कन्यानि नान्दिनीयानि नान्दिनीयानि
रामायणस्य श्री वस्तुवध श्री दर्शनम्
4.1 प्राप्तराज्यस्य रामस्या वाल्मिकि भगवान् रशि
कारकान्ति रस विषय प्रदानम् यथा अन्तम्
कर्ति तत् महाप्रजापतिः साध्विकम्
शाश्वतस्य अन्तम् अन्तम्
ततो च तत् महाप्रजापतिः
रामायणस्य श्री वस्तुवध श्री दर्शनम्
deliberations, the arrival at the drinking ground, the view of the women's quarters, the arrival at the āshōka grove, and the meeting with Sīta, the giving of the token of recognition and Sīta's speech, the threats of the rākṣasā women and the dream-vision of Trījata, Sīta's giving of the jewel and the breaking of the trees, the flight of the rākṣasā women and the slaughter of the servants, the capture of Vāyu's son Hanumān, and the wailing at the burning of Lāṅka, the return leap, and the seizure of the mead, the consolation of Rāgaha and the presentation of the jewel, the encounter with the ocean and the construction of Nāla's bridge, the crossing of the ocean and the siege of Lāṅka by night, the alliance with Vibhīṣana and his revelation of the means of destruction, the death of Kumbha-karna and the slaying of Megha-nāda, the destruction of Rāvana and the recovery of Sīta in the enemy's citadel, the consecration of Vibhīṣana and the acquisition of the chariot Pūshpaka, the journey to Ayōdhya and the meeting with Bhārata, the celebration of Rāma's consecration and his dismissal of all his troops, his pleasing the kingdom and his sending away Vaidēhi— all of this did the holy seer Valmīki render into poetry. Even those events which had not yet befallen Rāma on earth were rendered in the latter portion of his poem.

It was after Rāma had regained his kingdom that the holy and self-controlled seer Valmīki composed this entire history in such wonderful words. When the wise master had finished it, including the sections dealing with the future and final events, he thought, "Who should perform it?" And as the great contemplative seer was pondering this,
agrhnitam tatah padau muniyevau KušīLau.  
KušīLau tu dharmajñau rājaiputrau yaśasvinau  
bhrātarau svarāsampannau dadarś' āśramāvāsīnau.

Sa tu medhāvinau dṛṣṭvā veduve pariṇisṭhitau  
ved'oparbṛmhaṇ'ārthāya tav agrāhaya prabhuh.  

Kāvyamā Ramāyaṇam kṛṣṇanām Śitāyā caritaṁ mahat  
Paulastyavadham ity eva cakāra carita/vrataḥ.  
Paṭhye geye ca madhuraṁ pramaṇais tribhir anvitam  
ṝaṭibhīṁ saptaḥbhir yuktāṃ tantri/laya/ Asi/samanvitam.

Hāṣya/ṛṣigārakāruṣya/raudra/ṛihaḥ/hayānakaḥ  
bibhats'ādi/āsair yuktāṃ kāvyam etad agāyatām.  

Tāu tu gāndharvā/tattvajñau sthāna/mūrcchanā/kovidau  
bhrātarau svarāsampannau gandharvāv iva rūpiniṇau.

Rāpaḷaḷaśaṇaśaṁpannau madhuraśvarambhāśiṇau  
bimbād iv'oddhṛtau bimbau Rāmadehāt tath"āparau.  
Tāu rājaiputrau kāṛtsnyena dharmayam ākhyānam uttamam  
vāco vidheyaṁ tat sarvaṁ kṛtvā kāvyam aninditau.  
Ṛṣiṇaṁ ca dvijaṁ saṁdūnāṁ ca saṁgaṁe  
yath"opadeśaṁ tattvajñau jagatās tau samāhitau  
maḥ"ātmānau mahaḥbhāgau sarvalaḷaśaṇalakṣitau.
Kusha and Lava, in the guise of sages, came and touched his feet. He looked at the two glorious brothers, Kusha and Lava, who lived in his ashram, for they were sons of the king, familiar with the ways of righteousness, and had sweet voices. Perceiving that they were well grounded in the Vedas and had excellent memories, he accepted them as students of Vedic exegesis.

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

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

Taצ chṛtvā munayaḥ sarve bāṣpaipaṁyakul’ekṣanaḥ
«sādhu sādhy ity!» tāv ucuḥ paraṁ vismayam āgataḥ.

4.15 Te prītaśmaṇasah sarve munayo dharmavatsalāh
prāśaśaṃsuḥ prāśastavyau gāyamāṇau Kuṣī.Lavau:
«Aho gītasya mādhuryaṃ slokaṇāṃ ca viśeṣaṭāḥ!
ciraṇirvṛttam apy etat pratyakṣam iva darśitam.»

Praviśya tāv ubhau susṛṣu tādā bhāvaṃ āgatyām
saḥitaḥ mādhuraṃ rakteṣaṃ saṃpannaṃ svarājaṃ padā.
Ektaḥ prāśasya māṇau tā vaiṣṇavaḥ laṅghyair maha’śrībhī ṣaṃraktataṃ tāy arthaṃ mādhuraṃ tāv āgatyām.

Prītaḥ kaś cīn munis tābhyaṃ saṃśitaḥ kalaṣāṃ daṇau
prāsanno valkalaṃ kaś cīd daṇau tābhyaṃ mahāyasāḥ.

Āścaryam idam ākhyāṇam muninaṃ saṃprakṛśitaṃ
paraṃ kaviṇāṃ adhāraṇaṃ samāptāṃ ca yathākṛtāmam.

Prāśasya māṇau sarvatra kādā cīt tatra gāyaκau
rathyaśu rājaṁaṃgraṇaḥ daradāraḥ Bharat’āgraṇaḥ.
Svāveśaṁ c aṇīya tato bhṛtarārau sa Kuṣī.Lavau
pūjayaṃ asa pūj’ārhaḥ Rāmaḥ śatrūṇiḥbarhaṇaḥ.

Āśaḥ kāṅcane divye sa ca śinc’h’jasane prabhūḥ
upopaviśṭaḥ sacivaiḥ bhṛṭṛbhiḥ ca paraṃśutaḥ.

Drṣṭvā tu rūpaśaṃpannaḥ tāv ubhau viṇīnaḥ taraḥ
uvāca Lakṣmaṇaḥ Rāmaḥ Śatrughnaḥ Bharaṭaṁ tatha.

58
THE CREATION OF POETRY

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

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

Now it happened that on one occasion the elder brother of Bhārata saw there those two singers who were being praised everywhere on the roads and royal highways. And Rama, the destroyer of his enemies, brought the brothers, Kusha and Lava, to his own dwelling, where he honored them, for they were worthy of honor. Then lord Rama, chastiser of his foes, seated on a heavenly throne of gold with his ministers and brothers sitting nearby, looked at the two beautiful youths with their lutes and spoke to Lākṣmaṇa, Shatru·ghna Bhārata. “Let us listen to this tale, whose
4.25 «Śṛyātām idam ākhyānam anayor deva varcasiḥ
vicitr'ārtha-padaṁ samyag gāyator madhuraśvaram.
Imau muni pārthiva-lakṣmaṇāṁ ānvitaṁ
Kuśīl-Lavau c'āiva mahātapasvinau
mama'āpi tād bhūtikaraṇaṁ pracāsate
mah'ānubhāvaṁ caritaṁ nibodhata.»
Tatas tu tāu Rāma-vacāḥ pracoditaṁ
tagāyatāṁ mārga-vidhānaṁ sampadā
sa c'āpi Rāmaḥ pariṣadgataḥ śanair
bubhūṣayāḥ āsaktamanā babhūva ha.
words and meaning alike are wonderful, as it is sweetly sung by these two godlike men. For although these two sages, Kus- sha and Lava, are great ascetics, they bear all the marks of kings. Moreover, it is said that the profound tale they tell is highly beneficial, even for me. Listen to it."

Then, at a word from Rama, the two of them began to sing in the full perfection of the marga mode. And right there in the assembly, even Rama, in his desire to experience it fully, gradually permitted his mind to become enthralled.
Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library publication of Book One (of seven) of Valmiki’s Ramayana, the source revered throughout South Asia as the original account of the career of Rama, ideal man and incarnation of the great god Vishnu.

In “Boyhood,” Rama, the crown prince of the city of Ayodhya, is a model son and warrior. His father, King Dasharatha, sends him to rescue a sage from persecution by demons, but first Rama must kill a fearsome ogress. That done, he drives out the demons, restores peace and attends a tournament in the neighboring city of Mithila; here he bends the bow that no other warrior can handle, winning the prize and the hand of Sita, the princess of Mithila. He and Sita and his brothers and their wives return in triumph to be feted in Ayodhya.

The epic prefaces Rama’s story with an elaborate account of the origins of the poem and of poetry itself. This preamble is of great importance to an understanding of traditional Indian thinking on the subject of emotion and literary process.