I. GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

The manuscript materials, collected for use in the edition of the RMK, seem to be far distant from the time of Mādhava Kandali. The oldest manuscript received so far \((G_3)\) belongs to the later half of the 16th century (Saka 7 1494, ca A.D. 1562). The other fourteen manuscripts collated bear dates which range from the early part of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th. The dates are: Saka 1637 (ca A.D. 1715, Be), Saka 1658 (ca A.D. 1736, B1), Saka 1658 (ca A.D. 1736, B2), Saka 1710 (ca A.D. 1788, N), Saka 1727 (ca A.D. 1805, J), Saka 1730 (ca A.D. 1808, N), Saka 1731 (ca A.D. 1809, Sk), Saka 1736 (ca A.D. 1814, K), Saka 1741 (ca A.D. 1819, G2), Saka 1750 (ca A.D. 1828, C1), Saka 1755 (ca A.D. 1833, S1), Saka 1767 (ca A.D. 1845, S2), Saka 1768 (ca A.D. 1846, Br1) and Saka 1823 (ca A.D. 1901, C).

It is not possible for us to say how many manuscripts of the RMK are still in existence, firstly, because no complete list of these manuscripts has ever been compiled, secondly, because the manuscripts have not been thoroughly searched for or collected or properly preserved, and thirdly, because the expression 'Rāmāyana manuscript' as ordinarily understood and used, is ambiguous, as it may be applied to mean a manuscript of a single kānda as well as a manuscript of the complete RMK (even including the Ādi-kānda of Mādhavadeva and the Uttara-kānda of Śankaradeva).
It appears that the different kāṇḍas of the HMK have mostly been copied separately, as, in my long search, I have been able to get only one manuscript \((G_1)\) which probably contained seven kāṇḍas, namely, Mādhava Kandali's five and two supplementary kāṇḍas done by Mādhavadeva and Śaṅkaradeva. This fragmentary MS \(G_1\), has now 74 folios - the Ayodhyā-fol. 89, the Aranya-ff. 90-113, the Kīśkindhyā-ff. 114-133 and the Sundara-ff. 134-162. The total number of verses for the Aranya-kāṇḍa, the Kīśkindhyā-kāṇḍa and the Sundara-kāṇḍa is 2,204. The total number of verses in Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa is 1,128 according to this MS. The total number of verses in the Ādi-kāṇḍa of Mādhavadeva according to the printed edition of Harinarayan Dattabaru (1968) is 1,492. It is quite probable that this MS in its folios from 1-89 contained the Ādi-kāṇḍa of Mādhavadeva as well as the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa of Mādhava Kandali. I have found a manuscript \((G_2)\), the oldest MS containing the Kīśkindhyā-kāṇḍa of Ananta Kandali (16th century) besides Mādhava Kandali's Sundara-kāṇḍa.

I have come across fortytwo manuscripts in all, of different kāṇḍas of the HMK, taking into account manuscripts falling within my purview from Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts, the hand-written catalogues of public, educational and Government institutions (e.g., Kāṣṭāpa Anusandhan Samiti, the Barpetā-sattra, the Chumariyā-sattra, the Hājo Hayagrīva-Mādhava temple, Gauhati University, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam,
etc.) accessible to me, as also those manuscripts whose owners have kindly shown them to me, or lent them to me for collation or inspection. But this does in no way give an idea of the actual number of extant manuscripts of the BMK, because there must be quite a large number of manuscripts still in private possessions and in various satras and temples of Assam. In regard to the preservation of manuscripts in the effective media of satras or Vaisnava establishments one thing may be mentioned. Those works of pre-Saṅkaradeva times which did not conform to the tenets of bhakti or which were not approved or were openly denounced by the Gurus, Saṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva, were not likely to be kept or copied in a sattra. We find thus that several works of Saṅkaradeva's contemporary Pitāmbara Kavi with their glowing erotic sentiment are nowhere found in the sattras and have, in fact, even disappeared from general preservation elsewhere. This Pitāmbara Kavi, it may be noted, was on one occasion disapproved of by the Saint.\textsuperscript{1} It is also to be noted that in the sattras and in private archives the edition of the BMK as approved and redacted by Saṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva only would find a place. Secondly, it is almost exclusively the sattras and private libraries under the influence of sattras that the BMK as all other texts would find the medium of circulation and preservation, texts unapproved of by the two Gurus scarcely having any chance of life. The extinction of the

\textsuperscript{1} Kathā-guru-carita, 1952, p. 96
works of Pitāmbara Kavi is an example in point. The bhakti-
upadesas in almost all texts of the ṚMK, were, according to
the Guru-carita-kathā, the gift of the two Vaisnava Gurus.

Of the manuscripts of the ṚMK available, the number
of manuscripts of the Lāṅka-kāṇḍa is much greater in number
(almost 50 p.c. of the available ones), perhaps because of
the fact that people in general are very fond of hearing
narratives of combats. The extant manuscripts of the
Ayodhya-kāṇḍa, the Aranyā-kāṇḍa and the Kīṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa are
the fewest in number. It was found practicable, even after
strenuous efforts, to collect only three complete manuscripts
of the Ayodhya-kāṇḍa.

Of the manuscripts collected, I selected twenty
eight in all and examined them fully. In selecting the
manuscripts for collation, two points were generally kept
in view, e.g., the age of the manuscripts and their sources.
Altogether eighteen manuscripts (besides two printed texts
Bb and Bq) were finally collated (seventeen of them fully
and one partially) for the four centos of the ṚMK — the
Ayodhya, the Aranyā, the Kīṣkindhyā and the Sundara-kāṇḍas,
three for the Ayodhya-kāṇḍa, four for the Aranyā-kāṇḍa,
four for the Kīṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa, six for the Sundara-kāṇḍa
and the remaining for these three kāṇḍas taken together.
These manuscripts were written either on sācipāt or on

1. art. 234
tulāpāt (indigenous paper folios)\(^1\) or on modern paper and generally in two styles of Old Assamese Script - the Kāithelī type or Lakhārī type and the Gadgāyā type and in some manuscripts both these varieties are found intermixed.\(^2\)

It appears that among the manuscripts collated fourteen seem to be in Kāithelī type, three in Gadgāyā type and the remaining one in a mixture of Gadgāyā and Kāithelī. The 'Description of Manuscripts Used' brings out the peculiarities in these manuscripts.

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1. Sācipāt was made from the bark of sāci (Aguru) tree and tulāpāt was made by pressing cotton. The details of the process of preparing Sācipāt have been given by Sir Edward Gait in an appendix to his *History of Assam* (1967, p. 428)

2. In regard to the peculiarities of the different styles of Old Assamese Script, Dr Maheswar Neog writes, "There appeared variations of this Assam Script; and as many as three or four types of the script were now to be distinguished. The most widely used type was known as Gadgāyā ākhar possibly because it had its main centre of culture seems to have been the Āhom capital, Gadgāo. The traditional Sanskrit scholars had their own style, Bāmuniyā, generally used in the preparation of copies of Sanskrit texts. The writer caste, Kāyasthas, again, stuck to their own method of writing mainly in their books of accounts and official documents. Their system became known as Kāithelī or, sometimes, Lakhārī. ... The Kāithelī type was the most artistic and clearest writing and made for excellent calligraphy. The Bāmuniyā type is characterised by long tendril-like endstrokes, while Gadgāyā ākhar is very much simple and unornamented. Sometimes the copyists are seem to have vacillated between two styles. But whatever be the small variations in style, the system of writing, widely speaking is the same". (Introduction to the second edition, *Assamyā Prācin Lipli*, 1979, pp. 6-7).
I have already stated why after collecting and collating readings of the whole of Madhava Kandali's Rāmāyāṇa, I am taking up only four kāṇḍas for text-critical study.

I have selected the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, the Aranyakāṇḍa, the Kīśkindhyā-kāṇḍa and the Sundara-kāṇḍa for the purpose of my study even though they are not by far the best in him, firstly, because our manuscript materials are the most uniform in regard to these four kāṇḍas and secondly, because these four kāṇḍas are contained in a single manuscript together (although the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa in incomplete form) written by a single hand, and their study is, therefore, expected to bring about interesting results. The variations in the text in these four kāṇḍas are most extensive, in the Aranyakāṇḍa the variations extending to the forms of metre over as many as 5 verses (two manuscripts having the chāvi metre, and the remaining three manuscripts jhumuri metre). Although I have selected four kāṇḍas in order to control the volume of work, I shall be drawing upon all my manuscript materials in relation to the other
kāṇḍa also while considering various aspects of our study.

The manuscripts collated and utilized for these four kāṇḍas of the RMX are as follows:

Kāltheli type of Script:

B₁ = Barpeta, Kamrup; preserved at Kāmarūpa Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati, MS No 386 (86). Dated Saka 1658 (ca A.D. 1736), complete Aranya-kāṇḍa

B₂ = Barpeta; deposited at Kāmarūpa Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati MS No 379 (79). Dated Saka 1658 (ca A.D. 1736), complete Kiskindhyā-kāṇḍa

B₃ = Bar-herāmda-sattra MS, Kamrup, in the sattra's possession, complete Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, undated

B₄ = Belsar, Kamrup; kept at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 950. Complete Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, undated

C = Chamariya-sattra MS, Kamrup, in the sattra's possession. Dated Saka 1623 (ca A.D. 1901), complete Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa
C₁ = Chamarīyā-sattrā MS, in the sattrā's possession. Dated Śaka 1750 (ca A.D. 1828), complete Aranya-kāṇḍa

C₂ = Chamarīyā-sattrā MS, in the sattrā's possession, incomplete Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa, undated

K = Kāljirāpṝā, Nityānanda, Kamrup; deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 684. Dated Śaka 1735 (ca A.D. 1814), incomplete Sundara-kāṇḍa, undated

M = Medhipūrā, Kamrup; kept at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, MS No 1126. Dated Śaka 1710 (ca A.D. 1788), complete Sundara-kāṇḍa

N = Nowgong, in private possession, dated Śaka 1730 (ca A.D. 1808), complete Sundara-kāṇḍa

G₂ = North-Gauhati, Kamrup; preserved at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, MS No 544. Dated Śaka 1741 (ca A.D. 1819), incomplete Aranya-kāṇḍa

S₁ = Sundarīdiyā-sattrā MS, Kamrup, in the sattrā's possession. Dated Śaka 1755 (ca A.D. 1833). Complete Aranya-kāṇḍa
$S_2$ = Sundarīdiyā, Kamrup; deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, MS No 1438. Dated Saka 1767 (ca A.D. 1845). Complete Sundara-kāṇḍa

Gadgāyā type of Script:

Be = Bengālī-āti-sattrā MS, Mājulī; preserved at Kamrupa Amusandhān Samiti, No 479 (179). Dated Saka 1637 (ca A.D. 1715). Incomplete illustrated Sundara-kāṇḍa

G₃ = North-Gauhatī; kept at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, No 570. Dated (Saka?) 1484 (ca A.D. 1562). Incomplete Kiṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa of Ananta Kandali and incomplete Sundara-kāṇḍa of MK

Ss = Sāntābāri, Sarbhog, Kamrup; preserved at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, MS No 1199, incomplete Kiṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa, undated

Gadgāyā-Kālithelī (mixed) type:

G₁ = North-Gauhati; available at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, No 1679. Complete Aranya-, Kiṣkindhyā- and Sundara-kāṇḍas along with the last folio of
Ayodhya-kāṇḍa, undated

Besides these, the following manuscripts and printed texts were also partially collated and used as critical apparatus:

(a) MANUSCRIPT

Kāśithelī type of Script:

A = Abhayāpurī, Goalpara; kept at Gauhati University Library, Gauhati, No 1410.
Incomplete Kiśkindhyā-kāṇḍa, undated

(b) PRINTED TEXTS

Rb = (Sampūrṇa) Asaṃiyā Sēt-kāṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa, com. & pub. Madhavohandra Bardalai, Rāibāhādur, Barpeta, 1899 (ed. 1)

Rc = Asaṃiyā Sēt-kāṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa, pub. Prasannalal Chaudhury, Barpeta, 1941 (ed. 1)

Moreover, in considering the identity of the author and in the matter of accepting or rejecting the text because of disagreement and more particularly in highlighting the historical value of the RMK, the following manuscripts as well as the printed texts were also consulted:
B₃ = Barpeta; preserved at Kāmrūpa Amusandhān Samiti, No 393 (93), incomplete Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa, undated

Br₁ = Belgāt, Kamrup; deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, MS No 948. Dated Śaka 1768 (ca A.D. 1846), complete Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa

H = Hājo, in Hayagrīva-Mādhava temple's possession. Dated Śaka 1730 (ca A.D. 1808), complete Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa

J = Jorhāt; kept at Kāmrūpa Amusandhān Samiti, No 440 (140). Dated Śaka 1727 (ca A.D. 1805), complete Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa

Kg = Kālāg, Kamrup; deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, No 818. Incomplete Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa, undated

P = Pānbārī, Nityānanda, Kamrup; preserved at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, No 1463. Incomplete Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa, undated

S₃ = Sundarīdiyā-sattra MS, in the sattra's possession. Dated Śaka 1651 (ca A.D. 1729),
xix

complete Sundara-kāṇḍa

$S_4 =$ Sundarādiyā-sattra MS, in the sattra's possession. Dated Śaka 1784 (ca A.D. 1862), complete Sundara-kāṇḍa

$S_5 =$ Sundarādiyā-sattra MS, in the sattra's possession, incomplete Sundara-kāṇḍa

Sk = Soālkuchi, Kamrup, in private possession. Dated Śaka 1731 (ca A.D. 1809), complete Laṅkā-kāṇḍa

(d) PRINTED TEXTS

Rs = Rāmāyaṇa, ed. Kanakohandra Sarma, Kāvyatirtha, Bebejiyā, Nowgong, 1941 (ed. 1)

Rd = Sāt-kāṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa, ed. Harinarayan, Dattabarua, Sāhitya-ratna, Nalbāri, (ed. 1), 1968 (ed. 2, consulted)

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPTS USED

We include here both the manuscripts and the printed texts used in the preparation of our text. Colophons and verses quoted from these
Manuscripts are markedly corrupt. They appear in the description without correction or emendation as they are found in the manuscripts. Two signs are used here:

- placed before a manuscript indicates that it is only partially collated.
- placed before a manuscript indicates that it is not collated at all.

The MS $G_1$ containing all the four kāṇḍas together (although the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa is in incomplete form) and the MS $G_3$, the oldest manuscript of the RMK available so far, are discussed at the beginning. The other MSS are discussed according to the alphabetical order of identity given in accordance with the sources from which they are available.

The insertion-numbers $1^*$, $2^*$, $3^*$, etc. etc. given in the description of MSS below concern the respective kāṇḍas under discussion except in $G_1$ and the two printed texts.

$G_1$

North-Gauhati, Assam Government Collection, preserved at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam, Gauhati, MS No 1679. The total number of folios is 74 (numbered 89-162) with about 16 lines (each line consisting of about 65-66 letters) to a side; size 51 cm x 16 cm; the scripts are of Gadhgāyā-Kāitheli mixed type and
look quite uniform. No date is given, but from the palaeographical peculiarities as well as its general condition, it seems to have been written in the middle part of the 18th century. Sācīpāṭ.

It has already been discussed that this valuable MS which contains the last few verses of the Ayodhyā-kānda (f. 89) and the complete text of the Arāṇya-(number of folios: 24, ff. 90-113), the Kīśkindhyā (folios: 20, ff. 114-133) and the Sundara-kāndas (folios: 29, ff. 134-162), is unfortunately incomplete. It has also been discussed that this MS must have contained originally at least, if not all the kāndas, the Ādi-kānda of Mādhavadeva and the complete MK's text of the Ayodhyā-kānda. The writing in neat and careful, erasures and corrections are few and far between, the verse numbers are given except in a few places. The last folio is badly damaged; folios 89-93, 99, 106, 131, 153-156, 158-159, 152, 156-158 and 161 are also partially worn-out, but all other folios are in good condition. Spelling mistakes are few and the orthography is moderately trustworthy. The text on the Ayodhyā-kānda in it, begins (on f. 89a): 1) ... rate māthe cadāila, 2) bhāratah bolanta: rāma bhaila śiṅgha: āmi bhailo yena sasa/ prāna

1. See 'General Account of the Manuscripts', p. ix
The Aranya-kāṇḍa in it begins (on f. 90a): 1) om śrīkṛṣṇāya namah,
2) jaya jaya kr ... //. The Aranyakāṇḍa

The Aranyakāṇḍa begins (on f. 90a): 1) om śrīkṛṣṇāya namah,
2) jaya jaya kr ... //. The Aranyakāṇḍa

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The Aranyakāṇḍa begins (on f. 90a): 1) om śrīkṛṣṇāya namah,
2) jaya jaya kr ... //. The Aranyakāṇḍa

The Aranyakāṇḍa begins (on f. 90a): 1) om śrīkṛṣṇāya namah,
tariyo samsāra/ ālāsa tejiyā rāma bolā bāre bāra//,
2) kīśkindā-kānda samāptam. The Sundara-kānda begins (on
f. 154a) thus : 1) nāmo nāmab, 2) duladi//nāmo nārāyana : 
bighini khaṇḍana : rāghuṇa nandana rāma/ sahasreka bāhu : 
sahasreka sira : jēra sahasreka nāma// bāpara satyakā : 
pāliyā rāghava : sitā same gailā bana/ bolanta kandalī : 
āna gati nāī : rāma rāma dui caīrana// ; ends (on f. 162b) :
sunyokā sabhādada : madhura komala pada : pūnyakathā rāma 
caritra/ yamapatha nibārana : kalimala saṁhārana : mahārāsa 
sravane amṛta// bhava bhaya bināsaka : mahāmokṣa prakāsaka : 
samasta dharmara ise sāra/ jāni sunā jātana kari ; qāki bolā 
hari hari : tebe sukhe tarībā samsāra, 2) sīkrūnāyā nāmo, 
3) bāsudebāya nāmo, 4) ... sakā ... //.

This is a very well-preserved MS and it is
remarkable for the uniformity in style and orthography.

Insertions found in this MS are : Ar/12*, 14*, 
15*, 16*, 17*; Kis/1*; Sum/1*, 6*, 7*, 8*, 12* and 13*.

Collated at DHAS from the manuscript.

A facsimile of f. 121b is given between pp. xxiii
and xxiv

G3

North-Gauhati; Assam Government Collection,
purchased from U.C. Lekharu and preserved at Department of
Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam, Gauhati, MS No. 570. Dated (Saka) 1484 (ca A.D. 1562). It should be mentioned here that though written clearly the figure 1484 at the end of the MS is not preceded by the word 'Saka' as in other MSS. However, from the palaeographical peculiarities of the MS and its general condition, it can be safely said that the MS does belong to Saka 1484; and thus, this appears to be the oldest MS of the BMK I have collected so far. I have already stated that this MS contains the Kiskindhya-kanda of Ananta Kandali (ff. 1-24) and the Sundara-kanda of Madhava Kandali (ff. 25-54), but unfortunately both are in incomplete form. The following folios are, however, missing - 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 25, 29, 31, 32. The total number of available folios is 45 (of these, 19 folios are of Ananta Kandali's Kiskindhya-kanda and the remaining 26 folios are of Madhava Kandali's Sundara-kanda) with about 17 to 18 lines (each line consisting of 50 to 55 letters) to a side; size 32 cm x 11 cm, sācipāt; the script is of Gaṅgāyā type, written in the same hand.

The text of MK's Sundara-kanda begins on f. 26a, the first folio of this kanda (f. 25) being lost, thus:

1) ... nahi sapo darasiyo konajana //29//, 2) karajoda mūruta āgat bhaila thiva/ sāṅkā parihrā āmi jagatara jiya// āmāra saṅgama adharmaka nahi dara/ putreka huibeka garudara samasara //30//; ends (on f. 54b) : 1) bhaya bhava bināsaka : mahāmekṣa prakāsaka : samaste dharmara ise sāra/ jāni sunā
jatna kari: dāki bolā hari hari: tebe sukhe taribā
samsāra //858//, 2) sampurṇa sundarakāṇḍa śrīkṛṣṇāye
namonamah/... śrīra... devako alekha kōti pranāma/
śrīkṛṣṇadeako kōti pranāma karo// samsārara sādhu samastaka
kōti kōti... ... duyo thānara patha //148//. Each folio
on its reverse, bears a serial number just as in G₁; verse
numbers are also given. The MS is not free from scribal
errors. The copyist frequently writes ṛ ( y) for ṛ (a;
ṛgamī, ṛgāti), ṇ (ũ) for ṇ (m; maṇṭ) and ṛ (d) for ṛ (dh;
ṛjāīn). The gliding ṛ generally has been dispensed with
(ũjānt, ṛdāng ) and in many places, ṛ appears in place of
ṛ and vice versa (ṛmaṇḍana , ṛdāng ). However, as no MS
older and better than this is available, we shall use this
as the base for the Sundara-kāṇḍa of our edition of the HMK
except for the purpose of those portions of the text the
folios of which have been missing or worn-out or badly
damaged. For the missing texts we shall depend on M and
G₂.

Collated from the manuscript at DHAS. A
facsimile of f. 38b is given, between pp. xxiii
and xxiv

A

Abhayāpurī Goalpara; collected from Pratum Saikia
and deposited at Gauhati University Library, MS No 1410.
Undated; incomplete Kśiṅkindhyā-kāṇḍa. The total number of available folios is 22, with about 12-14 lines to a side and about 45-50 letters to a line; size 40.5 cm x 10.5 cm; characters are of Kāthelī type. Sācipāt.

A few folios including the last folios of this MS are missing, folios 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 20, 22, 23, 26 and 28 are also worm-eaten and badly damaged. Begins (on f. 15): 1) nama rāmacandraśya namaḥ, 2) pranāmilo rāma tini trelōkṣya nātha/ nīśāśva rāvanka bodhilā lāṅkāta// sugrśnara hita-buddhi bālira marana/ mādhava bhanilā sārīrāmara charana//

The MS is carelessly written and is full of spelling mistakes. The scribe frequently writes ए (e) for ओ (o), e.g., कोबि, गोया); and it shows a great tendency to use च (ch). The MS is undated, but appears to be written at the last part of the 18th century by one scribe.

Collation ends at f. 4.

Barpeta, Kamrup; collected from late Shyamalal Chaudhury's wife and kept at Kamrūpa Anusandhān Samiti, Gauhati, MS No 386(86). Dated Saka 1658 (ca A.D. 1736). The total number of folios is 36, with about 13 lines to a side and about 42-48 letters to a line; size 30.5 cm x 9.5 cm;
sācipāt. Complete text of Aranyaka-kāṇḍa with a total number of 773 verses; written in one scribe in the Kaitheli type of Assamese Script.

This MS contains many spurious passages which are not found in any other MSS except the printed editions (Rb, Rq, Rd and Rs). There is one passage which is attributed to Brahmā (the Creator) as supplicating Rāma as the Supreme God – in the Style of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. The supplication reads as follows:

ākasata thāki brahmā avanta bui
karibē lāgīlā pāche tuti cāri mūyī
namō namō rāma karo oarane pranati
tumi nārāyane sadānanda laṅkhipati
jāka smari tārāi mahā mahā pāpīgana
pranāmo devara deva prabhupī niraṇjana
tumi brahmā tumī bīṣṇu tumī ṛpūrāri
jagata kāraṇa namō tumise murāri
tumi saṅcā sabe micā jagata jateka
saṃsārato nāhikai tohmāta betireka
nāhi ādi anta madya parichina hari
jagatake byāpiyā āpumī āchā dhari
kāla māyā ādi jata adhina jāhāra
purnabrahma murtirāma karo namaskāra
namō bhakatara citta bita ātma deva
sahibuli devesame karilanta āeva

i. ins. 8*
Besides this, the MS contains three lengthy passages which describe the physical beauty of Īrūmā, Rāma and Lākṣmīnāra almost in the language of Śāṅkaradeva, Nādhavadeva and other succeeding poets. A lengthier description of combats between Rāma and Dūṣana is also found in this MS.

Begins:

1) sūrāmāsandrāyā namaḥ, 2) jaya namō rāmacakrā prabhū bhagavanta/ jāhāra lilāra keho napāvanta anta// ichā 
mātre howe sūrīti pālana saṅhāra/ hena rāmapade karo koṭi
namaskārya; ends:

1) brahmā ādi deve : bānchiyo nāpāve : 
bhāratata nāra kāyā/ hena para : durliabha saira : kibā
bhāgye ācā pāyā// hena jēni jama : jivana sāphali : dhara
mādhavara nāma/ dāki mukha bhari : bolā uoca kari :
nirantara rāma rāma//, 2) śloka// rāmaś cintāya

This MS corresponds, page for page, with Rb (and also subsequent editions - Rc, Rd and Rs) with slight changes in the shape of words. The MS is described in

Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts by Hemchandra
Goswami as follows: "This pathi is written on Sanchibark and contains 36 folios; size of the pathi is 12 x 3\frac{1}{2} inches. Each page of a folio contains 13 lines and there are 773 stanzas in the pathi. The present copy was made in Saka 1658; and it naturally looks old and in some places the letters have become quite indecipherable. The characters are of the Kâlthelî type and the pathi is fairly free from orthographical mistakes."\(^1\) However, as no MS better than this is available we shall use this as the basis of the Aranya-kânda.

Insertions in this MS are: 1*, 2*, 3*, 4*, 5*, 6*, 7*, 8*, 9* and 10

Collated at KAS from the manuscript.

A facsimile of f.16b is given between pp.xxxiii and xxxiv

Barpeta, Kamrup; preserved at Kâmrupa Anusandhāna Samiti, Gauhati, MS No 379(79), complete text of Kṣīkindhyā-kânda in a total number of 705 verses. Dated Saka 1658 (ca A.D. 1736). The total number of folios is 32, with about

\(^1\) Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscript, pp. 141-142
11-13 lines (upto f. 29, 13 lines and there after, 11-12 lines) to a side and 40-45 letters to a line; size 30.5 cm x 9.5 cm; characters are of Kāthelī type. Sācipāt.

The MS which is also collected from late Shyamal Chaudhury's wife and described by Hemchandra Goswami at page 143 in the Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts, is written probably by the same scribe who wrote MS B₁. Each folio of the MS bears, on its reverse the serial number, on the left-hand margin near the word Sr (Sri), and the verse numbers are also given. This MS begins: 1) śrīrāmacandrāya namah, 2) praṇamiślo rāma tini trailekṣyare nātha/ nisācara rāvanaka badhila laṅkāta// sugṛṇa hīta budhi bāliśa marana/ mādhava bhanilā śrīrāma carana/; and ends: daiyobāni nohe nuhi ito lokēkhe kathē/ ihēra eteke dosa nalaibā sarbbathē// rāma rāma charitra sumi taiyo saṃsāra/ ālāsa tejiyā rāma bolō bēre bēre/; 3) kiskindakāṇḍa sampurna samāptam, 4) jathāśrṣṭaḥ tathā lekhitaṃ likhaka nāsti dosanaṃ bhismechāpi rene bhaṃigaḥ munināṇcaḥ bhramaḥ/ jata dosaṃ tata dosaṃ kṣemāvanta madhusudanaṃ// Saka 1658.

The MS is carefully written with a very few marginal corrections, and the writing is clear and legible. The MS appears to have the least interpolated matter. This MS struck us as the most reliable basis for the Kiskindhyā- kāṇḍa.

Collated at KAS from the manuscript. A facsimile of f. 20b is given between pp. xlv and xlvi.
Barpeta, Kamrup; preserved at Kamarupa Anusandhan Saniti, Gauhati, MS No 393(93); incomplete Lanka-kandā.
Folios 103, with about 11-13 lines to a side and 50-52 letters to a line; size 32 cm x 8.5 cm; sācipāt, appears to be written in a mixture of Gadgāyā and Kāthelī types of script.

The first folio of the MS is missing; folios 2, 3, 96-104 are also partly damaged. Begins on f. 2 with v. 11 od: bānarārā hāte niyā bandi karilanta/ karajoda kariyā rāmaka bhetāilanta; ends: 1) eteke jāniyā : rāmaka bhajiyā : tejiyā samasta kāma/ saṃsāra tariyo : baikunthe cāliyo : ḍāki bolā rāma rāma//, 2) namah kṛṣṇāya/, 3) yathā drṣṭam tathā likhitam//. The MS is undated, but it appears to be written in the early part of 18th century.

Collation ends at f. 17.

Be

Beṅgenā-āti-sattrā, Mājulī; collected for and preserved at Kāmarūpa Anusandhan Saniti, Gauhati, MS No 479(179), illustrated Sundara-kandā. Dated Saka 1637 (ca A.D. 1715). Total number of available folios is 64, with about 14 lines to a side and about 60-65 letters to a line;
This MS is collected from the Adhikara of Bengenā-āti-sattra, and is described as MS No. 126 in the Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts by Hemchandra Goswami. This had originally altogether 70 folios. But unfortunately folios 9, 11, 34, 36, 40 and 51 are not available now. Each folio has, on either side, illustration depicting events narrated in the text. It begins: 1) nama śrikrṣṇaya,
2) nama nārāyaṇa: bighini khandana: ragnura nandana rāma/
sahasreka bāhu: sahasreka sīra: jāra sahasreka nāma/
bāpara satyaka: pāliyā rēghave: sitē same gailā bana/
bolanta kandali: āna gati nāhi: rāmara dui earana//; and ends: 1) suniyoka sabhāsada: madhura kowala pāda:
punyakathā rāmara caritra: yamapatha nibārena: kalimala
saṃhāraṇa: mahāraṣṭa śravane amṛta// thayabhaya bināsaka:
mahāmokṣa prakāsaka: samasta dharmara ise sāra/ jāni sunā
jatna kari: ṭāki bolā hari hari: tebe sukhe taribā saṃsāra//,
2) sāka 1637/ jathādṛṣṭāṃ tathā likhitāṃ likhake nāsti
dusanaṃ/ bhimcāpi ranobhanga munirapi matibhramaḥ//.

It is in a state of good preservation, having a fresh and clean appearance. The margins are clear, the writing clear and legible.

Insertions found in this MS are: 1*, 3*, 4* and 5*.

1. pp. 147-148
Bar-herānda-sattrā MS, Kamrup. Undated, complete Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa. The total number of folios is 83, with about 11-12 lines to a side and 35-38 letters to a line; size 29.5 cm x 9 cm. Characters are of Kāthāli type. Sācipāt.

This is a well-preserved MS, all folios being in good condition. Begins: 1) sīrāmaçañḍraya namaḥ//, 2) pada// jaya jaya rāmaçañḍra jagata ādhāra/ brahma hera purandara sevaka jāhāra// sṛṣṭi sthiti laya jāra lilā anupāma/ hena rōmapade karo sadāya pranām//; and ends: 1) sakale sāstrara : ehise tātperja : jāniyā tejiyo belā/ sthira jīvana : jāi ketikṣāna : apeksāra āro belā// kalita sampratī : nāhi āna gati : bine mādhavara nāme/ mādhava kandali : kahe nirantarā : ḍāki bolā rāma rūma//

Each folio has double bordering lines on all four sides of the margin, with intersecting lines. The writing is clear and legible, but spelling mistakes are numerous. Marginal corrections are also considerable, perhaps, made generally in the same hand. The scribe frequently writes ॐ (0) for ॐ (au, e.g., चोपर्थ ) and एः (ū) for ए (0, e.g., पांगो ). It is to be noted that in this MS, we get the stems for the first personal and second personal pronouns only आमा (āmā) and तोमा (toṃā); not आमा and तोमा (āmā and toṃā)
even in a single place.

Insertion found in this MS is: 5°.

Collated from the manuscript which were received through Principal Gajenchandra Thakuria from the sattra Authority.

Br

Bolsar, Kamrup; Assam Government Collection, deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 950. Undated, Ayodhya-kāṇḍa. The total number of folios is 62 (numbered 83-144; first 82 folios are missing, which, perhaps contain the Ādi-kāṇḍa of Mādhavadeva), with 14 lines (each line consisting of about 40-45 letters) to a side; size 45 cm x 15.5 cm. Sācipāt.

The MS is written, it appears, in one hand in the Kāithelī variety of Assamese Script. Begins (on f. 83b): 1) śrīkrṣṇāya namah, 2) sloka// rāmaṁ laksmanapurbbajam rāghubaraṁ sītāpatīṁ sundaraṁ kākuththam karanāmayaṁ gunanidhīṁ bīpraṇīṁ dhārmikāṁ rājantṛaṁ satyasandhyāṁ dasarathatanaṁ syāmanāṁ santamurttiṁ lokābhīrāmaṁ rāghukula tilakaṁ rāghavaṁ rāvanavāriṁ// rāmāya rāmacandrāya rāmabhadrāya bedhasē/ rāghunāthāya nāthāya sītāyā pataye namah//, 3) jaya jaya rāmacandra jagata ādhāra/ brahmā hari purandara sēvaka jāhē/ sṛṣṭi sthiti laya jāra līlā anupāma/
The MS is carefully written; only a few corrections of scribe's errors are noted in the margin, by a different hand. Verses are generally numbered; and each folio bears, on its reverse, the serial number also. Spellings are moderately trustworthy. Although the MS bears no date, from its appearance, as well as the script, it appears that it is not more than 200 years old. In constituting the text of Ayodhyā-kānda, we shall mainly depend on this MS, as no MS better than this is available so far as this kānda is concerned.

Insertions found in this MS are: 3*, 5*.

Collated at DHAS from the manuscript. A facsimile of f. 104b is given, between pp.xxiii and xxxiv.
The total number of folios is 114, with 12-13 lines to a side and about 44-45 letters to a line; size 43 cm x 14 cm. Tulāpāt (indigenous paper folios), written in the Kāithelī type of Assamese Script, probably in the same hand.

A comparatively modern MS, containing the complete text of MK's Lanka-kāṇḍa, begins: 1) ū śīkrṣṇāya namo nama//, 2) pada// jaya jaya krṣṇa iṣṭa deva hṛdaya// paraṁ isvara mahaṁśara sṛṣṭikara// jagatāka rakṣā kare jāra avatāre// karo namakāra sahasreka ekebāre// ; ends: 1) 1768 tāḥ 18 pusu, 2) iti śīlaṅkākāṇḍa rāmaṇya saṁāpta//, 3) jathādṛṣṭam tathā lekhitaṁ likhake nāsti dusanaṁ bhimaōpi ranebhanga numināṇa matibhramaḥ// The MS is in good condition except folios 1, 113 and 114, which are partly worm-eaten. The writing is clear and legible with a few corrections on the margins.

Collated from the manuscript at DHAS.

C

Chamariyā, Kamrup, in possession of the sattra.
Dated Sāka 1823 (ca A.D. 1901), contains complete text of Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa. The total number of folios is 100 (of which ff. 93-100 are slightly torn out), with about 10-11 lines to a side and 35-40 letters to a line. Size 32 cm x 11 cm; scripts are of Kāithelī type with a modern look. Modern paper.
This is written perhaps by two scribes (ff. 1-21 by one scribe and the remaining by the other) after two years of the publication of Madhavachandra Bardalai's edition (Rb), and as such this is the most modern MS and also the latest among what I collected so far. The day and 'tithi' are also mentioned at the end after the date and month as "Sukrabāra/krṣṇāpañcami". Begins : 1) śrīrāmacandra namonamabh, 2) jaya jaya rāmoandra jagata ādhāra/ brahma hara purandara sevaka jāhāra// srṣti sthiti laya jāre lilā anupāma/ hena rāmapade karo sadāya pranāma, ends : 1) sakale sāstara : ehi tātaparyya : jāniyā tejio helē/ athira jīvana : jāibe keṭikṣana : apekṣero ēro belē// kalita samprati : mahi āna gati : bine mādhavara nāma/ mādhava kandali: kahe nirente : dāki bolā rāma rāma// , 2) ayadhyā-kāṇḍa rāmāyaṇa samāpta, 3) jathēdrstaṁ tathālikhitam likhake nāsti dosām bhimeśpirane bhanga munināṇca matibhramaṁ/ bandeahan jaganātham nṛhari bhaktamanobhistadīsiddhasyaṁ rāmāyaṇaṁ pranāyaṁ maī pāpibhi ... rapaṁ ayodhyā-kāṇḍa likṣyate nāstabyaḍoṣanaṁ, 4) aparādha sahastraṇi kṛyante hari ... wayā dāsobhaṁ matimesatsa = kṣematsamabhusoḍanaṁ// ... iti sana 1308// sakābdā /1823/ 24 yesta/ sukrabāra krṣṇā pañcami//

The text of the MS is comparatively reliable, but so far the orthographical matters are concerned it is extremely corrupt. The numerous scribal mistakes which disfigure every page, betray the writer to be a professional
scribe, not thoroughly familiar with the old Assamese Script. He writes य (y) for व (v) and aspirate थ (th) for non-aspirate त (t), e.g., त्रेष्ण for त्रष्ण. Cerebral त (t)’s are mostly found used in this MS.

Insertions found in this MS are: 2*, 4*.

Collated at the sattrā from the manuscript.

Chamariyā-sattrā MS, Kamrup. Dated Saka 1750 (ca A.D. 1828), complete Aranya-kāṇḍa. The total number of folios is 75, with about 10-11 lines (each line consisting of 35-40 letters) to side; size 31.5 cm x 10.5 cm, written in the Kātheli type of Script. Tulāpāt (indigenous paper folios).

Some of the folios of the MS are coloured deep yellow, a few including the last folio are worm-eaten; otherwise the condition is good. The MS is written neatly but is extremely corrupt and unintelligible in places, on account of the scribes inability to read the exemplar correctly. Begins: 1) śrīkṛṣṇāya nāmonamah, 2) jaya jaya rāmacandra prabhuh bhagavanta/ jāhāra lilāra kaho napāvanta vanta/ iehāmātre hoe sṛṣṭhi pālena saṃbāra/ hena rāmapade karo koṭi namaskāra/ ; ends: 1) śrīkṛṣṇāya namo/, 2) iti śrīaranyakāṇḍa sampurnne sampātā/ saka// 1750 tārikṣa/
The writing is full of mistakes, but no corrections are, however, to be seen, the MS being perhaps, not much used. The scribe frequently writes य (y) for र (r) and vice versa. However, so far the text is concerned, it is moderately trustworthy having less interpolated matter.

Insertions found in this are: 12*, 18*.

Collated at the sattrā from the manuscript.

C2

Chamariyā-sattrā MS, Kamrup. Undated, incomplete Kīśkindhyā-kāṇḍa. The total number of available folios is 34, with about 11 lines to a side and 40-45 letters to a line; size 28 cm x 8 cm. Sācīpūt.

The MS contains folios 1-34, but the remaining folios (of which the actual number is not known to us) are missing with the text. Folios 21, 22, 23, 27 and 32 are worm-eaten and folio 34 is mutilated. Begins: 1) namo bhagavata śrīkṛṣṇāya namah, 2) pada// pranāmilo rāma tini trailekyara nātha// nisācara rāvanāka bodhilā laṅkāta//
The writing is legible and uniform, but orthographical mistakes are numerous. Marginal corrections as well as the corrections in the body are generally made in the same hand with black pigment. The MS is undated, but appears to be written in the later part of the 18th century.

Collated at the sattra from the manuscript.

North-Gauhati, Kamrup; deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 554. Dated Saka 1741 (ca A.D. 1819). The total number of available folios is 76 (numbered 3-78; first two folios are missing); size 38 cm x 11 cm; sācipāt. The folio has 8 lines to a side and 38-40 letters to a line. Characters are of Kāśithēli type.

This MS containing the incomplete text of Aparaṇya-kāṇḍa was purchased from U.C. Lekharu of North-Gauhati. The name of the scribe, which comes after the day, month and 'tithi' at the end of the MS, appears as: Śrīśrīlakṣminātha prabhudevara dāsa bethāi (Bethāi); the year comes last.
Begins (on f. 36) : 1) ... sitā satī mājhata osanta/ katokšane oitrukata bana tejianla// nadi nada gahana bisesa bana desa/ dala bila edāilanta nikuña āsasa// ; ends : 1) hena jāni janma : jivana sāphalī : dharā mādhavara nāma/ dāki mukha bharī : bōla uucha hari : nirantare rāma rāma// , 2) sūkrāṇḍāya namo naamah// sūrāmacandra namo namah// sūrilakṣmināth prabhudeva namo namah// āghonara 13 jānote biśapatibhre trayodasi tithi sūrāmacandra aranyakanda samponandha jye sūrilakṣmināth prabhudevera dēya bethēi likhake likhitam// 1741// The numbering of the folios and verses is most erratic; orthographical mistakes are numerous. Marginal corrections, as well as other corrections in the body of the text, are generally made by using red pigment, most probably, by a different hand. General condition of the MS is good. However, the following folios are partly damaged : 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9.

Insertions found in this MS are : 9*, 10*, 13*.

Collated at DHAS from the manuscript.

+H

Hājo, Kamrup, preserved at Hayagrīva-Nādhava temple, contains complete text of Laiikā-kānda. Dated Saka 1730 (ca A.D. 1808). Folios 78, with about 11-12 lines to a side and 60-62 letters to a line; size 51 cm x 15 cm;
sācīpāt; script: Kāitheli type. Begins: 1) rāmāya
rāmacandraśya bhedaśe raghunāthāya sitāyāḥ pataye nāmaḥ//,
2) nāmo naśāmaḥ: bīhini kāndanaḥ: rāghura nandana rāma/
sahasreka bāhuḥ: sahasreka sīraḥ: jāra sahasreka nāma//;
ends: 1) sākṛdā 1730 āśādara 16 dina gate bhṛhaspatibāre
saptasya titho//

A carefully written and well preserved MS; folios
1–2 are slightly worm-eaten; margins are clean except in a
few places.

J

Jorhāt, available at Kāmarūpa Anusandhāna Samiti,
Gauhati, No 440 (140). Dated Śaka 1727 (ca A.D. 1805). The
total number of folios is 145, with about 9 to 11 lines
(each line consisting of 40 to 42 letters) to a side; size
43 cm x 11 cm, sācīpāt.

The MS which contains the complete text of MK’s
Lanka-kānda, was copied by one Dharmanārāṇā of Khudra
Mākhībāhā (Kamrup, Assam) on the 28th day of Chaitra, Śaka
1727, in the Kāitheli type of Assamese Script. Begins:
1) sīkṛṣṇāya nāmaḥ, 2) rāmāraṇotī rāmeṇi rāme manorame/
sahasranāmasattulyarāma nāma varānane//, 3) delādi// nāmo
nārāyanaḥ: bīhini kāndanaḥ: rāghura nandana rāma/ sahasreka
bāhuḥ: sahasreka sīrā: jāra sahasreka nāma//; and ends:
1) etekā jāniyā : rāmata bhajīyo : tejiyā samāsta kāma/
samsāra tariyā : beikunthe caliyo : dāki bolā reśma reśma// 1893//, 2) śrīkṛṣṇaśya namē/ brahmasvarūpāya namonamāh// rāmacandrēve namē/ brahmasvarūpāya rāgahāya namonamo//, 3) jathādrśta tathā likhitau likhakonāsti dusanau bhimesyāpi raneebhaṅga u mināṅca matibrahmaḥ// chaitramāse 28 dina jayatāḥ gurubāre saṣṭhitau rāmāyana laṅkākānda pustaka samāptī//, 4) he mahanta pandita brahmāna bhaktāsāha pustaka likhote jadi barhā tūtā haiche āmāra samandhi sate dosa kṣemā dibē/ āmi kāmarupī dānte tṛna dhari kārpumya karīco/ aneka likhake likhīche tathāco kāmarupera ... nāma bāḍbhāga parganar khudra mākhibāhā grāmara kula kāyasta nāme dharmanārānara hāte laṅkāpustaka samāpti/ saka 1727 sattarasa sātāics//, 5) śloka// kalpabhrēkṣopikālena jadisyat phaladāyaka : tedātasyakotedovayairanyarmanmāhiruhaī//. Verse numbers are mentioned (except in a few places); the total number of verses is 1893. The writing is clean with a few corrections of the scribe's errors noted in the margin, probably by the same hand. The MS is in good condition except the last folio, which has suffered some damages on the margin. This is the same MS which is referred to and discussed in Hemchandra Goswami's Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts as MS No 124. Collated at KAS from the manuscript.

1. 'This manuscript is written on Sanchi bark, each folio measuring 17 x 4½ inches. There are 145 folios in all, each page of which contains 9 lines (actually 9-11 lines; Goswami, probably did not verify all pages) of writing.
Käljirēparē (Nityānanda), Kamrup; obtained from Maheshbohandra Goswami and deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 684. Dated Saka 1736 (ca A.D. 1844), incomplete Sundara-kānda. The total number of folios is 46 (ff. 1-50, of which 5, 27, 38 and 42 are missing), with about 12-15 lines to a side and 38-42 letters to a line; written, as it appears, in the Kāitheli variety of Assamese Script; size 35 cm x 11 cm.

Sācipāt.

The first and also the last folios of the MS are slightly damaged, but other folios are in good condition. Begins: 1) dam., 2) dolaṇi// nma nārāyaṇa : bīghini khandana : raghura nandana rāma/ sahasreka bāhu : sahasreka sira : jāra sahasreka nāma// ; and ends (on f. 50b): 1) rāmāyaṇa kathā ito : rāma bilāpa jito : samāpati sundara caritra/ bāli bādha kathā ito : parama pavitra jito : karilanta rāme same mitra// trailokya isvāra huyā : dhyānato nedekhe jye : pasū huyā rāmaka dekhilō/ kino punya ācche kari : dāki bolā hari hari : biprita ihena miliā// , 2) śrīkrṣṇāya namonamah/ sama 1225 rāja// Saka 1736/

There are 1,893 stanzas in the puthi and it is generally free from spelling mistakes. The writings are uniform and resemble the laṅkhari characters of Kamrup (Kāitheli ākhar is also called Lakhari in Kamrup). The puthi was copied by Dharmanārēin Kāyastha, of Khudramākhībhā in Nāmbarbhāg mauza of Kamrup in Saka 1727.' (p. 145)
The writing is neat and clear, but full of spelling mistakes. Marginal corrections are generally made in black pigment, perhaps, by the same hand.

Insertions found in this MS are: 11*, 16*.

Collated from the manuscript at DHAS.

Kalāg, Kamrup; Assam Government Collection, preserved at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 818; incomplete Sundara-kāṇḍa. The total number of available folios is 56 (ff. 1-74; the intermediary folios 40-42, 46-47, 54-58, 60-62, 64-66, 69, 73 and also probably the last two folios are, however, missing). The folio has about 11-12 lines to a side and 28-30 letters to a line. Size 27 cm x 12 cm; tulāpāṭ (indigenous paper folios). No date, but probably written in the last part of 18th century in the Kālītheli type.

Begins: 1) sīrāmacandra bhagavatopade padmāya namah//, 2) dolari// namo nārāyaṇa: bīghini khaṇḍana: rāghura nandana rāma/ sahasreka bāhu: sahasreka sira: jāra sahasreka nāma//; and ends (on f. 74b): 1) sugṛnaka ōdi kari bānara bhāluke/ thākilanta prabhu rāma sube le uccuke//
The MS is carefully written; the margins are clean; corrections which are interlinear, are few and far between.

Medhipārā, Kamrup; obtained from Chandrakanta Medhi and deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 1126. Dated Saka 1710 (ca A.D. 1788), complete Sundara-kāṇḍa. The total number of folios is 71, with about 8 lines to a side and 40-45 letters to a line; size 32 cm x 8.5 cm; written in the Kaithelī type of Assamese Script, Sācīpāt.

The last two folios of the MS which are written by the son of some Dvijarāja, are torn-out; folios 6, 9, 13, 20, 25, 33, 50-71 are also partly damaged. Begins:

1) srīrāmaandrāya namah, 2) namo nārāyana : bighini khandana : raghura mandana rāma/ sahasreka bāhu : sahasreka sira : jāra sahasreka nāma// ends: 1) kariyā pranāma srīrāma oaranata/ sundarakāṇḍara pada likhila samprata/ rūtue gagana dvipa abani sahita/ phāgunāra purnimāta dvijarāja suta/ bādhā tūtā jikico bhaileka likhanata/ āmāra buddhira jano bha pramādata/, 3) ... saka //1710//

The MS is carefully written in a uniform style, marginal mistakes being few; spellings are also moderately trustworthy. So far as the text of Sundara-kāṇḍa is concerned, this is the shortest MS among the available MSS and thus has much value.

Insertions found in this MS are : 2*, 10* and 15*. 
Collated at DHAS from the manuscript.

A facsimile of f. 15a is given between pp.xlv and xlvi

N

Nowgong, in private possession. Dated Saka 1730 (ca A.D. 1808), complete Sundara-kāṇḍa. The total number of folios is 67, with about 9-10 lines to a side and 40-45 letters to a line; size 30.5 cm x 10 cm; Kāthelī type of Assamese Script. Sācipāt.

The owner of this MS is Atma Singha, the great great grandson of Chaitanya Singha who fell fighting in the battle-field of Hādirāchaki in defence of Sargadew Chandrakānta Singha in the third Burma invasion. Atma Singha handed over the MS to Dr Maheswar Neog who has kindly lent it to me for collation. Many of the folios of this MS are badly damaged; the first two folios and also the last folio are torn-out and folios 3-5 are worm-eaten. Begins:

Insertion found in this MS is: 1

Collated from the manuscript.

Pinbari, Nityananda, Kamrup; Assam Government Collection, deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 1463. No date. Folios 100, with about 11-12 lines to a side and about 45-48 letters to a line; size 29 cm x 7.5 cm; sācipāt, written in the Kāthelī variety of Assamese Script.

The MS containing the MH's text of Lanka-kāṇḍa, had a total number of 115 folios, but unfortunately folios 1, 2, 7, 25, 43, 47, 54, 70, 71, 78, 79, 87, 88, 100 and 109 are missing; folios 3-6, 8, 9, 22, 28, 35, 55, 63, 65, 68, 76 and 90 are also badly damaged. F. 3 begins: 1) henamate senā cāhe sukaje sārane/ māyārupe duhāṅka cinile bibhisane/

A comparatively modern and moderately trustworthy MS; written, probably in the beginning of the 19th century.

(Printed edition) Sampūrṇa Asamīyā Sāt-kāṇḍa
Rāmāyana, com. and pub. Madhavchandra Bardalai, Rāibāhādur (with an introduction), Barpeta, 1st edn. (not printed again), Sāka 1821 (A.D. 1899); modern paper, size 23.5 cm x 15 cm. The total number of pages is 465+16. Verses are unnumbered, but every narration in the text is preceded by an editorial comment giving a gist of episodes and incidents. This edition

Insertions found in this edition are: Ayo/5*, Ar/1*, 2*, 3*, 4*, 5*, 6*, 7*, 8*, 9*, 10*, 11*, 12*, 13*; Sun/9*.

0 Ro

(Printed edition) Asamīyā Sāt-kāṇḍa Rāmāyāṇa (title from cover), pub. Prasannalal Chaudhury (with the publisher's foreword), Barpeta, 1941 (1st edn. not printed again) containing seven kāṇḍas of the Rāmāyāṇa, namely, Mādhava Kandali's five - the Ayodhya; Aranya; Kiśkindhya; Sundara- and the two supplementary kāṇḍas - the Ādi- and Uttara-done by Mādhavadeva and Sāṅkaradeva respectively. Total number of pages 503+14; modern paper; size 23.5 cm x 15.5 cm. Every narration is preceded by an editorial title or comment as in Rb. This edition has considerable variations in the text especially in the Sundara- and Lāṅkā-kāṇḍas (even extending to the forms of metre) from Rb. Pages 97-99, 115-120, 125-128, 132-134, 160-189, 192-194, 205-207, 218-220, 257-266, 282-284, 292-295, 307, 310-503 are collated from the printed edition.
Insertions found in this edition are: Ayodhya/3*; 
Arjuna/1*-13*; Sundara/9*, 14*.

(Red)

(Printed edition) Sapta-kanda Rāmāyaṇa (title from cover), ed. Harinarayan Dattabaru, Sāhityaratna, Nalbari, 1st edn., 503 Saṅkarābda (A.D. 1952); 2nd edn. (1968, consulted and used). The total number of pages is 522+22 (appendix); modern paper; size 24.5 cm x 18 cm. This also contains all the five kāndas of the RMK along with the Ādi-kanda of Madhavadeva and the Uttara-kanda of Saṅkaradeva, every narration being preceded by an editorial title. This appears to be just a reprint of Rb with slight typographical changes.

(Rs)

(Printed edition) Rāmāyaṇa, ed. Kanakchandra Sarma, Kāvyatirtha, Bebejia (Nowgong, Assam), 1st edn., 1941; modern paper; pages 469+20, size 25 cm x 19 cm. In this edition, every kanda is divided into different chapters - 41 chapters in the Ayodhya-kanda, 22 in Aranya; 26 in Kiskindhya; 41 in Sundara; and 56 in Lankā, and verse numbers are mentioned chapter-wise. The texts of this edition is almost identical with that of Rb. This also contains seven
kāndas of the Rāmāyaṇa, namely, the five kāndas of Mādhava Kandali and the Ādi- and Uttara-kāndas done by Mādhavadeva and Saṅkaradeva respectively.

Sundaridīyā-sattrā MS, Kamrup. Dated Śaka 1755 (ca A.D. 1833), complete Aranya-kānda. The total number of folios is 43, with about 12 lines to a side and 45–48 letters to a line; size 28 cm x 9 cm; characters are of Kāltheli type. Sācīpāṭ.

The date of the MS appears at the end of the kānda, but the name of the scribe is not mentioned. The general condition of the MS is good except folios 3, 4, 41 and 42, the upper portions of which are torn out. Each folio bears, on its reverse, in the left-hand margin the serial number near the word Śrī (Śrī), and the verse numbers are also given. Begins : 1) namo sṛīkṛṣṇāya, 2) jaya namo rāmacandra prabhu bhagavanta/ jāhāra līlāra keho napāvanta anta// inchāmātre howe siddhi pālana sambhāra/ hena rāmapade karo koṭi namaskāra// ; and ends : 1) hena yāni janma : jivana sāphali : dharā mādhavara nāma/ dāki mukha bhari : bolā uocha kari : nirantare rāma rāma/ , 2) sṛīkṛṣṇāya nama/ arnyakāṇḍa samāpta// saka 1755// tārikṣa 8 āgrahana//

The MS is neatly and carefully written, and the margins are also clean. However, it shows a great tendency
to use कः (ी, ए.ग., भगी, देखी), ए (उ, ए.ग., जैन, दुर्योग, प्रतिनिधि) and य (य, ए.ग., यानी, यात्रा). So far as the text is concerned, this is moderately trustworthy.

Insertion found in this is : 12*

Collated from the manuscript at Sundaridiyā-sattra.

S2

Sundaridiyā, Kamrup; Assam Government Collection, preserved at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 1438, complete Sundara-kānda.
Dated Saka 1767 (ca A.D. 1845). Total number of folios is 67 (numbered 1-67), with about 9-10 lines (each line consisting of about 45-48 letters) to a side; size 35 cm x 9.5 cm; written in the Keithelī variety of Script. Saopāt.

The owner of the MS was Uttamchandra Budhābhakat of Sundaridiyā-sattra, and it was written by a scribe who hailed from Makarakuṇcī village. The date is given as: munirasanagaḥ chandraḥ atrasāke samāpataḥ (Saka 1767).

Begins: 1) srikrṣṇaḥs namah, 2) sloka// ādau ramataḥ pravesam hantyāpi mṛgakāṇoanam vaidehiharanam jatāuramaranam sugrīnumdarsanam/ vāli nigrahanam samudrataranam lāṅkāpūddhahānam passatraṭvārnnaḥ kumbhakarnnababaddham etādhi rāmāyanam//, 3) dolodl//; and ends: 1) jathādṛṣṭam tathā likhitam lekhakau nāsti dosanaḥ bhimesyāpi ranebhanga
Liii

munināṅca matibhramaḥ/ ... namō/ sṛṣivāya namah namō//
2) minarasauracandre ekāberāddavagate ravibesare
nabadmyantithau sṛṣī sundara-kanda puṣpaka sampurnne
samāpataḥ/, 3) saka/ munirasanaṅgaḥ chandraḥ atrasāke
samāpataḥ// grāma makarakūṃcira lekhakera hastāksaret//

The writing is clear and legible, but scribal mistakes are numerous. The scribe frequently writes (0) for अ (a, e.g., अगगिति गगति ) उ (u) for ज (0, e.g.,
पाक for पारे ), and इलु (ilu) for ईलो (ilō, e.g., प्रनायलु ).
The gliding व (v) and य (y) generally have been dispensed with (e.g., उत्तराल , पतिमि ). The serial numbers of the
folios are given correctly, but the verse numbers are most erratic. Marginal corrections are generally made by the
same scribe, but sometimes by a different hand also.
However, so far the text is concerned, the MS is comparatively reliable.

Insertion found in this MS is : 9*.

Collated at DHAS from the manuscript.

*S

Sundaridiyā, Kamrup, in possession of Sundaridiyā- sattra. Dated Saka 1651 (ca A.D. 1729), complete Sundara-
kānda. Folios 35, with about 14 lines (each line consisting
of 52-55 letters) to a side; size 36 cm x 10.5 cm; sāoipāt,
Kaitheli type of Assamese Script. Begins : 1) ṇ
Liv


This MS agrees, page to page, with S₂ ; there are many small differences between them, neither can be a direct copy of the other; they must go back to a more remote common source. Neatly written and generally correct.

+S₄

Sundaridīya, Kamrup, in sattrā's possession, contains the complete text of Sundara-kānda in a total of 50 folios. Dated Sāka 1784 (ca A.D. 1862). The folio has 11 lines to a side and about 50 to 52 letters to a line. Sāopāt; size 34.5 cm x 8.5 cm; the script is Kāthelī. Begins : 1) ? sūrāmacandra sūkranāya nama namah/, 2) namo nārāyana : bighini khandana : rāghura nandana rāma/ sahasreka bāhu : sahasreka sīra : jēra sahasreka nāma//; ends : 1) sāka 1784/, 2) jara jore sahāśada bole tuti bēni/ dekhēsē likhilahe tutyaka najēni// bebrē tutā deṣamāhe khemīhē samprati/ janaṃ janaṃ krēṃa caraneśe moti/, 3) namo sūrāmacandrāya/, 4) sāna 1272 tārikṣa ēśrīchaitra/, 5) sundarakānda samāpta// Spelling full
of mistakes, but writing clear and legible. This MS also appears to be of the same source as those of $S_2$ and $S_4$, but is less dependable than either of them.

$S_3$

Sundarīdiya, available in possession of the sattra; incomplete Sundara-kāṇḍa (appears to be of the same origin with those of $S_2$, $S_3$ and $S_4$). The available folios are 57 (ff. 2-58), with about 9-10 lines (each line consisting of about 45-48 letters) to a side; size 30.5 cm x 6.5 cm; sācipāt, written in the same hand, script used: Kāitheli type.

The first and the two last folios of the MS are unfortunately missing. Folios 2, 34, 43, 50-58 have also suffered some damage on the margin probably owing to rough handling and not being well preserved. F. 2 begins:

1) karajode angadata binaya badati/ ekekai bolanta yāra jateka sakati/ prathamate gaya bire dile samidhāna/ dewe jāibe pūro dasa jojanara māna//; ends (on f. 58b) : nāhi eko bira hanumanta saribari/ parabhava dekhi devagana gaila dari// tṛjagata pati rāme trādase sahāya/ nale parasile silā talaka nājāya// The MS is undated, but appears to be written in the early part of the 18th century.
Soālkuchi, Kamrup, in possession of S. C. Medhi, contains the complete text of Lankā-kāṇḍa. Dated Saka 1731 (ca A.D. 1809). Folios 77, with 12 lines (each line consisting of about 50-55 letters) to a side; size 39 cm x 12.5 cm; sācipā, written by the same scribe in the Kāthelī type. Begins: 1) sīkrṣṇāya namo namah/, 2) jaya jaya krṣṇa ista deva hṛdaya/ para puruṣa mahēśvara sṛṣṭikara// jagatake rākṣa kare jāra avatāre/ karo namaskāra sahasreka ekobāre// ; ends: 1) saka 1731//, 2) jathāārṣaṃ tathā likhitam likhake nāsti dusanaṃ bhimaśāpi rane bhangam unīnānāya matibhrama, 3) sīrasānapati lāṅkāhānda/, 4) sīkrṣṇāya namo namah/ śrīguruvarane bhaktiratā/ sīkrṣṇāya namo//

A total number of 14 folios (ff. 64-77) are slightly damaged; but on the whole, a well preserved MS, with clean and legible writing.

Collected from the manuscript.

Sē

Sāntābarī, Sarbhog, Kamrup; Assam Government Collection, deposited at Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, MS No 1199. Undated, incomplete Kīśkindha-kāṇḍa. The total number of available
folios is 35, with about 10-11 lines to a side and 42-45 letters to a line; size 31 cm x 9 cm; characters are of Gadgāyā type.

The MS originally contained 46 folios (ff. 1-46), but unfortunately a total number of 10 folios (ff. 1, 3, 13, 16, 28, 33, 35, 42, 45, 46) is now missing. The remaining folios are also not in good condition; many of them, namely, ff. 2, 4-12, 15 are very brittle, and worm-eaten in places; large pieces have broken off, and are badly mutilated.

Begins (on f. 2a): 1) palāi gaiyā gahbarata ācā pāncojana/ ...

... sugrīne belyanta obā sunā bāyusuta/ jignaśi cāhiyo howe nehe baliduta//; and ends (on f. 44b): 1) ekā bolo bolo bulibēka lāge dāre/ uta kastā dekha jeb tarite sāgara// sāgara tarita kohē nakaribā saṅka/ pithita cādiyā sabahānke nibo laṅka// 563//, 2) supāroca bēni pache suni senābala//

The MS, on the whole, is carefully written one; spellings are comparatively correct; margins are almost clean. From the orthographical peculiarities of the MS and its general condition, it appears that the MS belongs to the early part of the 17th century.

Collected at DHAS from the manuscript.

IV. TESTIMONIA

In collecting the text of Mādhava Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa, one difficulty the researcher faces is the dearth of
testimonia and epitomes. As is true of most such literature in NIL, commentaries etc. are either scanty or not there at all. We have, therefore, to depend entirely on Vālmīki's original in Sanskrit, and for our purposes, on the Eastern Recension of the Rāmāyaṇa.

The Rāmāyaṇa literature in Assamese, starts with MK's Rāmāyaṇa. The later Rāmāyaṇas like the Gīti-rāmāyaṇa of Durgāvara, Ananta Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa and Kathā-rāmāyaṇa of Raghunāth Mahanta are hardly more than plagiarisations of Mādhava Kandali's text. All these sources however, have been used in constituting our text of the Rāmāyaṇa.

V. INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE MANUSCRIPTS

As in other places of India, in Assam also there is no manuscript history. As such, in determining the genealogy and source and also the relationships among various MSS there is no extant guide. While in a few MSS the scribe's name and on whose instruction they were copied are entered, there is no mention of the source from which the exemplar was received. Therefore, in determining the

1. As no printed text of Ananta Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa is available, MSS G , J (MS No 423 of KAS) and MSS found at Barpatā-(B) and Chamarīyā-sattras (C) are used.

2. See G J, etc. in 'Description of the Manuscripts Used'
relationships of such manuscripts and in preparing their pedigree we have nothing but 'the skilled and methodical exercise of the human intellect' to fall back upon. The more usual tests to describe the genealogical relationship between manuscripts, as described by Dr S.M. Katre are:

"(I) Omissions of words and passages and transpositions of passages. Omissions are the surest test of affinity, says Hall, since if they are numerous they can hardly have arisen by accident, and all of these cannot have been imported into a text by a comparison with other manuscripts. They frequently imply a far closer connection than could be influenced by identity of reading, and often show the immediate descent of one manuscript from another."

(II) Agreement in a number of peculiar readings or in other peculiarities. It must be remembered that the relationship between manuscripts is not always simple; each manuscript accepted as a factor in constructing the text is not necessarily descended from one single ancestor, so that complete identity of reading is not always possible from manuscripts derived ultimately from the same source.¹ These two principles have been our mainstay in analysing the relationships of manuscripts for the BMK and in determining their pedigree. While due stress has been given on frequencies and numbers as far as omissions, insertions etc. are concerned, they had not been sufficient in determining

¹. Introduction to Indian Textual Criticism, 1954, p. 38
the authenticity of a particular manuscript. We have, therefore, considered and analyzed the circumstances leading to these chances and also the nature of errors that crept in, by way of scientifically weighing all the available evidence. In collating and preparing this critical edition of the BMK, collected and collated manuscripts are shown under two script-wise divisions: the Gadgāyā and the Kāitheli. But as far as the texts are concerned, the type and shape of letters are hardly significant. All we can get to know and state is that the old Assamese Script underwent certain peculiar changes.

It is already stated that the different kāndas of the BMK have mostly been copied separately, as, in my long investigation, I have been able to get only one manuscript (G₁) which contains three kāndas together, namely, the Aranya-, Kiskindhayā- and Sundara-kāndas along with the last few verses of the Ayodhyā-. Therefore, in analysing the interrelationships among the manuscripts, the manuscripts used for each kānda will have to be treated separately.

(A) For Ayodhayā-kānda, besides two printed texts (Rh & Rn, partially collated) Eh, Br, and C, these three MSS have been fully collated along with the last few verses of G₁. As to form a general idea of the peculiarities of these manuscripts we first give a list of the various insertions:

* found in Br
Let us now look at the list of omissions in the various manuscripts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Omissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 189^b</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 255</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 351^b</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 461</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 589^bc</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 689</td>
<td>omitted in Br, but found in Br C Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 758^ed</td>
<td>omitted in Br, but found in Br C Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 795^bc</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 945</td>
<td>omitted in Br, but found in Br C Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 1119^cd</td>
<td>omitted in C, but found in Br Bh C Rb Ro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can now compare a few peculiar readings of words and parts of sentences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Omissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bh Br Rb Re jamadagni rāmaka</td>
<td>C bhāryā samannite, v.4^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bh Br Rb Re rāmamukha dekhi</td>
<td>C rāmaka dekhi, v.4^d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bh Br Rb Re eśāi</td>
<td>C teho, v.17^c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bh Br Rb Re māngalya</td>
<td>C māngalya, v.64^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bh Br Rb Re bhalilanta</td>
<td>C chalilanta, v.66^d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bh Br Rb Re jāra guna</td>
<td>C mādhavara, v.165^c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above three lists we find that in case of insertions or interpolations, Br and Bh are in agreement in one point, Br Rb and Rc all agree in one place, while C disagrees with Br and Bh in one place only but with Br Bh Rb and Rc in two places. In case of omission of verses or lines Br Bh Rb and Rc agree in seven places and Br C Rb and Rc in three. In case of peculiar readings of words or parts of sentences, Bh Br Rb and Rc are in agreement on all seven counts, but C stands out as the only variant reading. Thus we find that Bh Br Rb and Rc are nearer one another and are perhaps of the same ancestry. C being at variance with all of them, consequently, may belong to a different source.

From the above discussion the pedigree of the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa may be reconstituted as follows:
(B) In Aranyakanda, $G_1$, $G_2$, $B_1$, $S_1$ and $C_1$—these five manuscripts and two printed editions are collated and used for the present edition of the RMK. Of these, $G_2$, $B_1$, $Rb$ and $Rc$ have vv. 553-557 in chavi metre (ins. 12*), while $G_1$ and $S_1$ have the jhumari verification and $C_1$ also has two verses as in $G_1$ and $S_1$. This shows clearly that while $G_2$, $B_1$, $Rb$ and $Rc$ are nearer one another and hence they belong to one ancestor, $G_1$, $S_1$ and $C_1$ belong to another.

Consideration of insertions in different manuscripts will help establish their further relationships:

1* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
2* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
3* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
4* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
5* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
6* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
7* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
8* found in $B_1$ $Rb$ $Rc$
9* found in $G_2$, $B_1$, $Rb$, $Rc$
10* found in $G_2$, $B_1$, $Rb$, $Rc$
11* found in $G_2$, $Rb$, $Rc$
12* found in $G_2$, $Rb$, $Rc$
13* found in $G_2$, $Rb$, $Rc$
14* found in $G_1$
15* found in $G_1$
16* found in $G_1$
17* found in $G_1$
We thus find $B_1$, $Rb$ and $Re$ agreeing in eight places, $G_2$, $E_1$, $Rb$ and $Re$ in two, $G_2$, $Rb$ and $Re$ in two, while $G_4$ and $S_1$ disagree in four places. Their relationships can be seen clearly in the following pedigree of the MSS:

(C) In Kṣīrśaṅkha-bāṇḍa, besides the printed editions, I have collated and used altogether five manuscripts. They are $G_1$, $E_1$, $E_2$, $C_2$ and $A$. Among these manuscripts, there is the following insertion which is found only in $G_4$:

suniyā sugyā bole suprodna bidhi
nieye jānilo manoratha bhaila siddhi
subhaṣana sāhi rūmeandre jātrā dīla
tāli badhīha lāgi ānande sahi

Now, let us take the cases of omissions of verses or lines and some peculiar readings of words found in the different MSS:

(1) v. 260$^{cd}$ emitted in $G_4$, but found in $E_2$, $E_2$, $Rb$, $Re$
    v. 264$^{ab}$ emitted in $G_4$, but found in $E_2$, $E_2$, $C_2$, $Rb$, $Re$
v. 319 d omitted in Rb Re, but found in G₁ R₂ Ss C₂
v. 320 a omitted in Rb Re, but found in G₁ R₂ Ss C₂
v. 545 cd omitted in R₂ Rb Re, but found in G₁ Ss C₂

(ii) v. 10 G₁ karmata R₂ Ss C₂ A Rb Re kāryata
v. 111 G₁ dhari tulilanta R₂ Ss C₂ Rb Re tuli dharilanta
v. 130 G₁ āsphola R₂ Ss C₂ Rb Re hāmphola
v. 132 G₁ gaila R₂ Ss C₂ Rb Re bhaila
v. 168 G₁ tanu R₂ Ss C₂ Rb Re deha
v. 247 G₁ eali R₂ Ss C₂ Rb Re eadi
v. 497 G₁ kumbhira R₂ Ss C₂ Rb Re gambhira

Thus we find that in case of omissions, R₂ Ss C₂
Rb Re agree with each other in two places, Rb and Re in two
places, R₂ Rb and Re in one place, G₁ R₂ Ss and C₂ in two
places and G₁ Ss and C₂ in one. In case of peculiar
readings of words R₂ Ss C₂ A Rb and Re agree in one place
(A not collated fully), R₂ Ss C₂ A Rb and Re agree in six
places and disagree with G₁ in all places. So, it clearly
shows that G₁ belongs to one family while the others belong
to another. The following pedigree of the different MSS
constituting the Critical Apparatus of the Arapya-kāṇḍa of
the present edition of the HMK will more clearly explain
their mutual relationships:
(D) In Sundara-kāṇḍa, altogether nine MSS (including two printed editions), namely, G₁, G₂, M, K, Be, S₂, N, Kb, and Re are collated by me. Among these manuscripts, I find a total number of sixteen insertions and a total number of ninety-five emissions of either verses or lines in the different manuscripts. To have an idea about the interrelationship of these MSS, the insertions found in different MSS are shown below:

(i) 1* found in G₁, Be, N (In G₂, f. missing)
2* found in M
3* found in Be
4* found in Be
5* found in Be
6* found in G₁
7* found in G₁ (In G₂, f. missing)
8* found in G₁
9* found in S₂, Kb, Be
10* found in M
Now, let us consider the omissions of verses or lines:

(ii) v.10* omitted in N, but found in G₁ M K S₂ Rb Rc

(In G₃, f. missing)

v.25 cd  " M,  " G₁ K S₂ Be N Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)

v.25 ab  " N,  " G₁ M K S₂ Be Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)

v.34  " M,  " G₁ G₃ K S₂ Be N Rb Rc

v.60 ed  " N,  " G₁ G₃ M K S₂ Be Rb Rc

v.89 ab  " M,  " G₁ G₃ K S₂ Be N Rb Rc

v.123 ab  " G₁ Be N,  " M K S₂ Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)

v.151 ab  " M,  " G₁ K S₂ Be N Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)

v.158 ab  " M,  " G₁ K S₂ Be N Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)

v.146 ab  " S₂,  " G₁ M K Be N Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)

v.147 ed  " N,  " G₁ G₃ M K Be N Rb Rc

v.167 ed  " N,  " G₁ G₃ Be S₂ N Rb Rc

v.194 ab  " G₁ Be,  " M K S₂ N Rb Rc (In G₃, f. missing)
v.208\textsuperscript{bc} omitted in M, but found in \(G_1\) K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re
\((\text{In } G_3, f. \text{ missing})\)

v.228 " Be, " \(G_1\) M K S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re \((\text{In } G_3, f. \text{ missing})\)

v.235\textsuperscript{d} " Be, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M K S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.244\textsuperscript{ed} " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.254-255 " G\textsubscript{1}, " \(G_3\) M K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.270\textsuperscript{ed} " S\textsubscript{2}, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.281 " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.282\textsuperscript{a,b} " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.285\textsuperscript{ed} " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.286\textsuperscript{ed} " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.296\textsuperscript{a,b} " K, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.298\textsuperscript{ed} " K, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.314\textsuperscript{be} " Be, " \(G_1\) M K S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re \((\text{In } G_3, f. \text{ missing})\)

v.333\textsuperscript{a,b} " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.340 " G\textsubscript{3}, " \(G_1\) M K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.340\textsuperscript{a,b} " N, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.345\textsuperscript{b,c} " S\textsubscript{2}, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M K Be S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re

v.346\textsuperscript{a,b} " K, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.357\textsuperscript{d} " K, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.379\textsuperscript{ed} " M " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K S\textsubscript{2} N Rb Re \((\text{In Be, f. missing})\)

v.386-388 " G\textsubscript{3}, " \(G_1\) M K S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.411\textsuperscript{a,b} " K, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} M S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.418\textsuperscript{ed} " M, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re

v.419\textsuperscript{a,b} " M, " \(G_1\) G\textsubscript{3} K S\textsubscript{2} Be N Rb Re
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>v.419&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>omitted in N, but found in G₁ G₃ K M S₂ Be Rb Re</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v.419</td>
<td>&quot; S₂, &quot; G₁ G₃ K M Be N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.431&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; Be, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.435&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.439&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; N, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.458&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ Be S₂ N Rb Re (In K, f. missing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.459&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ Be S₂ N Rb Re (In K, f. missing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.467&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; N, &quot; G₁ G₃ M Be S₂ Rb Re (In K, f. missing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.472&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; G₁, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.473&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; G₁, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.475&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.476&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; K, &quot; G₁ G₃ M Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.489&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; G₁, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
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<tr>
<td>v.497&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; G₃, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.509&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.502&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; S₂ N, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be Rb Re</td>
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<tr>
<td>v.550</td>
<td>&quot; S₂ Rb Re, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K N Be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.566</td>
<td>&quot; Rb, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ N Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.567&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; Rb, &quot; G₁ G₃ M K Be S₂ N Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.585&lt;sup&gt;bed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
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<tr>
<td>v.586&lt;sup&gt;ed&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>v.587</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
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<tr>
<td>v.588&lt;sup&gt;cd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; K, &quot; G₁ G₃ M Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.590</td>
<td>&quot; M K, &quot; G₁ G₃ Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.596&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>&quot; M, &quot; G₁ G₃ K Be S₂ N Rb Re</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>600b</td>
<td>v.600</td>
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<td>v.600</td>
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<td>601</td>
<td>v.601</td>
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<td>v.624</td>
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<td>v.625</td>
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<td>v.671</td>
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<tr>
<td>714od</td>
<td>v.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>739a</td>
<td>v.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742-743</td>
<td>v.742-743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>746ab</td>
<td>v.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>761ab</td>
<td>v.761</td>
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<tr>
<td>775ab</td>
<td>v.775</td>
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<td>775</td>
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<td>780d</td>
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<td>v.793</td>
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<td>800ab</td>
<td>v.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>811od</td>
<td>v.811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
omitted in \( G_1 \), but found in \( G_3 \) \( M \) \( K \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)
\( v.822^{ab} \) " \( K, \) " \( G_1 \) \( G_3 \) \( M \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)
\( v.823 \) " \( Ro, \) " \( G_1 \) \( G_3 \) \( M \) \( K \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \)
\( v.829^{cd} \) " \( M, \) " \( G_1 \) \( G_3 \) \( K \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)
\( v.848^{d} \) " \( G_1, \) " \( G_3 \) \( M \) \( K \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)
\( v.849^{cd} \) " \( N, \) " \( G_1 \) \( G_3 \) \( K \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)
\( v.852 \) " \( G_1 \) \( Be, \) " \( G_3 \) \( M \) \( K \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)
\( v.853^{cd} \) " \( M, \) " \( G_1 \) \( G_3 \) \( K \) \( Be \) \( S_2 \) \( N \) \( Rb \) \( Ro \)

From the first list above we find that \( G_1 \) disagrees with the others in four places (not considering possible disagreements in missing folios) and each of \( Be \) \( M \) and \( K \) disagrees with others in three places; while \( G_1 \) \( Be \) \( N \) and \( S_2 \) \( Rb \) and \( Ro \) agree with one another in one place. In the second list \( G_1 \) and \( Be \) agree with each other in three places, \( G_1 \) \( Be \) and \( N \) agree in one place, \( S_2 \) and \( N \) in one place, \( S_2 \) and \( Rb \) in one place, \( S_2 \) \( Rb \) and \( Ro \) in one place, and \( M \) and \( K \) in one place, \( M \) and \( S_2 \) in one place, \( G_1 \) and \( M \) in one place and \( G_3 \) and \( M \) in one place. Thus we can reasonably conclude that while MSS \( G_1 \) \( Be \) and \( N \) belong to one family having a common ancestor, \( G_3 \) \( M \) \( K \) \( S_2 \) \( Rb \) and \( Ro \) belong to another. The following pedigree will explain these relationships clearly:
VI. PROBLEMS OF ORTHOGRAPHY

Because of the prevalent confusion orthography is the most serious of problems in a text-critical study of the RMK. This, however, is not peculiar to the RMK, as we face this problem in studying most Old Assamese texts. Commenting on the peculiarities of the orthography of ŚrīmadBhāgavata Dassana-ekamāha (first part) in the first edition based on and exactly copied from the manuscript established as belonging to Saka 1461 (ca A.D. 1539), Harinarayan Dattabarnia says: "Dental 'S' is the most predominant, long 'ī' and long 'ā' are very rarely used, after the 'r' sound letters are not always compounded, 'yy' usually becoming 'y', e.g., sūrya > sūrya, bhāryyā > bhāryā, kārya > kārya, etc.; in place of other 'y', 'j' is commonly used ... ."¹ A

¹. Quoted in the Preface (Bhūnikā) to Ayurveda, ed. Naheowar Hoog (in Press)
similar practice has been noted by Kaliram Medhi long before, while regarding the orthography of Prahlād-caritra by Hem Sarṣvatī in his edition of 1913 where he says that he has retained the spellings of the original. In his preface, he tries to give reasons for the orthographic methods followed in Prahlād-caritra: "The orthographical corruption that underwent in Prākrit in transcription, Sanskrit words left its mark in Prahlād-caritra. But a consideration of the pronunciation of Assamese words of those days will show it to be entirely different from the present pronunciation of Bengali, Hindi etc. Despite changes in spellings the peculiar Assamese pronunciation has been consistently maintained. . . . But this must be kept in mind that only in places where palatal 'ś' and cerebral 'ṣ' are nearer in sound to the Assamese 's' (dental) have they been transcribed as 's': in other places the 'ṣ' becomes 'kh' and 'kh' becomes 's'. Cerebral 'ṅ' and long ī and ū are also not present in the text. 'b' and 'v' are transcribed as they are pronounced."¹ The above findings are also seen to apply to the RMK from our study of the various manuscripts collected and collated for constituting the present text. Every manuscript bears testimony to the fact that in Assamese also the changes in pronunciation of Sanskrit words after it

¹ Preface (Pātanī), Prahlād-caritra, 1913, pp. o-su. Hemehandra Goswami in his article 'Hem Sarṣvatī' is of the same opinion as far as its words and orthography (Hemehandra Goswami Racanāvalī, ed. Benudhar Sarma, 1972, p. 326).
had crossed the Prākṛt - Apabhramśa stage and attained to its Neo Indo-Aryan Assamese stage had been incorporated. In Sanskrit there is no disparity between letters and sounds. Every letter used had a corresponding individual sound. In the Prākṛt stage, however, Sanskrit underwent numerous changes in sounds and letters and both became separate entities. For example, the Sanskrit 'śṛgāla' becomes 'śiāla' in Prākṛt. As in Prākṛt, the palatal 'Ś' sound in the original had been dispensed with, the tadbhava form derived from 'śṛ' is written with dental 'Ś'. As Assamese has attained its present form from O.I.A. after crossing the Prākṛt-Apabhramśa stage, so it is natural that the changes Sanskrit underwent during the Prākṛt-Apabhramśa state will also be there in Assamese.1 An analysis of the peculiarities in pronunciation in Assamese will show that even though the letters1 'i̯', 'u̯', 'ṛi', 't-series / t-series', 'Ś/Ś',

1. In this context it may be mentioned that in his Facsimile Edition of Caryāgītikāsa (1977), in which we find instances of Old Assamese writing and which seems to retain the original spellings etc., Nilratan Sen observes: "From the orthography and prosodical style of the c. songs it appears that the composers did not strictly adhere to the rules of long short pronunciation of the Sanskrit vowels; and that was possible due to the growing tendency of using the long vowels in the E.NIA vernacular as short" (Introduction, pp. xxvi-xxvii).

2. This orthographical principle in Modern Assamese has been introduced by Hemchandra Barua (Maheswar Neog, 'Ekhan Cithi', Bajāli-Eigitrē, ed. S.C. Caudhury and N. Caudhury, 1978, p. 0.15; Kālirām Madhi-Sūrtimālya, ed. R.C. Thakuria, 1978, p. 137). It should be kept in mind that the Baptist Missionaries who had been primarily responsible in getting the Modern Assamese language in its present solid footing had advocated an orthography based on actual pronunciation (Nathan Brown, 'Style and Mode of
'j/jh/y', 'r/d' are used in writing Assamese now, they have no separate significance as far as pronunciation is concerned. That the scribes who had at least some learning had also realized this factor is evident from all the manuscripts. Not only in tadbhava and semi-tatsama words, even in the tatsama and proper nouns, the scribes have not followed Sanskrit orthography. For example, 'sarga', 'sikhara', 'nisaara', 'savya', 'caturdise', 'kesa', 'nma', 'ayodhy', 'kausalya', 'sita', 'sugriva', 'vali' - these tatsama and proper nouns in Sanskrit we find as 'sarga', 'sikhara-sikhara', 'nisaara-nisahara', 'savy-sajya-sahya', 'caturdise', 'kesa', 'nma', 'ajodhy', 'kosalya-kausolya', 'sita-sita-sita', 'sugrva', 'bali' in the manuscripts. From this we can surmise that amongst the literate people of those days orthography based on pronunciation was popular. But as far as these MSS are concerned, there is a pronounced lack of uniformity in the orthographical methods. The same scribe in the same manuscript is often found using different forms of the same word. For example, we can look at G3 which can be said to be the oldest and the most reliable orthographically. Here in place of the present spellings of the words 'carana', 'yojana', 'santi' we find in vv. 65, 42 and 569 as 'charana', 'jojana' and 'santi' respectively. But these very words are also written as 'carana', 'yojana' and 'santi' in vv. 199, 61 and 568. In other MSS also such
disuniformity of spelling is often seen. From these we can reasonably conclude that these scribes were familiar with all forms of Assamese Script which had evolved from old Brāhmī Script, but as far as their pronunciation is concerned, they did not find any particular significance in the forms of letters. Therefore, it appears that from among homophonic letters, they used whatever form came to their mind, may be because of the confusion in spelling etc. caused by the scribes. Brown (1867) had remarked "...the language has hitherto had no standard, and has been used vaguely."¹ Further, Robinson (1854) remarked "...the slovenly modes of pronunciation, and the capricious varieties of spelling displayed by the people."² Now the problem is if there was no standard or norm at all in Old Assamese orthography, was it all full of 'capricious variety'? It is certain that no such standard can be found in the MSS of the scribes we have consulted and used. But it is difficult to accept that an 'unerring' poet like Mādhava Kandali would not have a systematic orthography. Since in a text critical study, we have to rely principally on manuscript materials and as we have no extant autograph of either Mādhava Kandali or any of his contemporaries and as yet there is no dictionary or even grammar of Old Assamese language, it is really difficult to form an adequate idea of the principles of orthography

¹-². Both the quotations are from the Preface (Rūmikā) to Arumōdai, ed. Maheswar Neog (in Press)
followed and practised in those days. Therefore, on the basis of our study of the natural path of evolution of the Assamese language, the changes effected in Sanskrit sounds during the Prākrit-Apabhṛṃśa stage and the witness of the collected and collated manuscripts, we have for our purposes, retained the forms of words and spellings as we found them.

Besides, as Dr Neog has said, 'when words travel from one language to another their pronunciation and form are determined by the new language and not by the original.'\(^1\)

So, this method of determining the orthography of the RMK strikes us as the most rational. Whatever form or spelling is found and found more frequently in the more reliable of the MSS is retained. For example, 'i' in place of 'i' and 'ī', 'u' in place of 'u' and 'ū', 'o' in place of 'ɔ' and 'ɔh', 'j' and 'jh' in place of 'j', 'jh' and 'y', 's' in place of 's' and 'ś', 't'-series in place of 't'-series and 'r' in place of 'r'. Still on the basis of the reasons in the MSS considered to be more reliable, we have, in places, used 'i', 'ū', 'ch' (as in the Aranya-kāṇḍa, 'ācā', 'ācīla', 'āce' etc. are written as 'ācā', 'ācīla', 'āce'), 'y', 's', 'ś', 't'-series and 'd' also. Even though we have, as a rule dispensed with the compound form of letters after the 'r' sound, in others, however, we considered it reasonable to retain the compounded form. Both forms of such words

\(^1\) Preface (Prāshṭā) to Arunodai, op.cit.
as 'tomāra/tohmāra', 'tetikhana/tetikhsana' are used. There is no 'r'/˚r' sound in Assamese, it being pronounced as 'ri'. But we have retained both 'r' and 'ri' as is dictated by the MSS. In 'jena', 'jadi', 'ji', 'jāka/jāhāka', 'jāra/jāhāra', 'j' (⟨jā⟩) is perfectly legitimate and as it is used in most of the MSS, we have retained it. In the same way in words such as 'jāi', 'kara jore', 'taju' etc., 'j' is used. In case of tattasama and proper nouns also we have maintained the form found in the MSS. It is, however, our personal conjecture that once a text-critical study of his contemporary writers and those following him is made and completed, much of the existing orthographical confusion will evaporate and we shall be able to form an adequate and definitive idea of the methods of orthography Madhava Kandali had followed.

VII. ERRORS AND THEIR TYPES IN THE MANUSCRIPTS

Even though the scribes\(^1\) in majority of the MSS of the RMK claim to have copied only what they found\(^2\) like the

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1. There were two classes of scribes in Assam — the 'Khanikar' and the 'Likhak'. The Likhak class had a better educational background while the Khanikars were only literate. They used to copy MSS as they would a painting. While there are errors in the copying of both classes, in the MSS copied by the Likhak errors are more numerous. In the MSS of the RMK, however, no scribe is mentioned as a Khanikar — all sign their names as Likhakas.

2. See B₂, B₇, Be, Br₁, C, J, K, N, S₂, Sk in 'Description of the Manuscripts Used'.
scribes of other Old Assamese MSS, still, an examination of the said MSS will reveal glaring examples of errors and corruptions. These are visual or psychological. While some errors appear to be deliberate or intentional the others have accidentally crept in. Of intentional errors, we could mention an insertion like Ar/17* and of unintentional or accidental errors mention could be made of kāja (C) for hrāda (Ayo/v. 194). The rest of the mistakes lies midway between these two extremes, e.g., insertions: Ayo/v* 3*, 5*; Ar/1*, 4*, 5*, 6*, 7*, 8*, 9*, 10*, 11*, 13*; Sun/6*, 13*, etc. The nature of errors and corruptions as designated by Dr S.M. Hatre in his treatment of errors and corruptions in manuscripts in general also applies to the MSS of the RMK. They fall primarily under three groups: (a) Involuntary or Mechanical, (b) Voluntary, and (c) Semi-voluntary. The following are some of the causes that led to the corruptions and errors in the RMK text:

1. **Confusion of Letters:** Owing to lack of experience of unfamiliarity with the faces or style of some Old Assamese Scripts, some scribes wrote क (k) for ḍ (hr/hu), न (n) for न (n) and ऋ (o) for ऋ (t). For example, anukāja (C) for anubrāda (Ayo/v. 194), jalaya (Nh) for janaya (Ayo/v. 362), sikhara opare (Nh Nc) for sikhara pare (Ayo/v. 593).

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1. Introduction to Indian Textual Criticism, 1954, pp. 56-62
(ii) Transposition of Letters: For example, aribala (C) for abirala (Ayo/v. 261), khelāyasa (G₁) for khelāwaya (Sun/v. 107).

(iii) Transposition of Lines or Verses: In G₁ (Ar) verse 7 stands after verse 5, in K (Sum) verse 399 found after verse 400, N (Sum/v. 454) reads in the order a b d c. They are clearly shown in the Critical Apparatus of the Constituted Text.

(iv) Addition of Letters: For instance, pailā (C₁) for paila (Kis/v. 50), rāvanāka (G₁) for rāvanaka (Sum/v. 108), gailā (K N) gaila (Sun/v. 139), ucchitata (S₂) for ucitata (Sum/v. 216) etc.

(v) Omission of Letters: For example, āura (M N) for āurara (Sun/v. 137), khedi (C₁) for khediyā (Ar/v. 221), lagā (G₂) for lagāsa (Ar/v. 222), etc.

(vi) Omission and Insertion of Verses or Lines: They are shown elaborately in § preceding Section.¹

(vii) Wrong Junctions and Divisions of Words: For example, biragane tāta (Nh) for biraganitāta (Ayo/v. 268).

1. See 'Interrelationships among the Manuscripts' pp. Lvi—Lxxii
Of the total forty spurious passages of verse composition in the four kāṇḍas under study, 5, 18, 1 and 16 belong to the Ayodhyā-, Aranya-, Kīskindhyā- and Sundara-kāṇḍas respectively including the lone Sanskrit śloka in the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa. They are mentioned as 'insertions' in 'Description of the Manuscripts Used' and shown in the Critical Apparatus under the Constituted Text wherever they occur.

From an examination of the lengthy or considerable passages which are not found in the majority of the manuscripts or in the earlier manuscripts, these spurious passages are seen to have particular characteristics in them, namely, (i) they apotheosise Rāma as an incarnation of the Supreme God (1) or (ii) they propagate the glory of Rāma-nāma and the Supremacy of bhakti (devotion) (2) or (iii) they are the supplications of gods like Brahmā, Indra, etc., to Rāma as the highest of the gods (3) — this in the style of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa; or (iv) they are the descriptions of personal beauty almost in the language of Śankaradeva, Mādhavadeva and other follower poets; or

A scholar of much eminence as Dimbeswar Neog lavishes much praise on and is enthusiastic about such spurious passages found only in non-critical texts (Asamiyā).
(v) lengthier descriptions of combats between hero and hero\(^1\) — which characteristic became very much popular with post-Sankaradeva poets.

From the manuscripts available to-day, we cannot detect the admonitions (upadesa) of bhakti put in by Sankaradeva and Mādhavadeva as a part of their scheme to save Mādhava Kandali from the devastation created by plagiarists.\(^2\) We, however, come across one poem, captioned 'Ehaṭīmā'\(^3\) at the close of a section of the narration. The poem purports to be a prayer of the poet to Rāma much in the fashion of prayers inserted by Sankaradeva in some of his upadesas. It may be noted that the poetical form called Ehaṭīmā, evolved later in the writings of Sankaradeva. The language and matter of the Ehaṭīmā echo Sankaradeva's Ehaṭīmā in the Brajaveli idiom. Some contemporary writers attempt to find the atmosphere of bhakti in Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa or read the influence of Kandali on the bhakta poets,\(^4\) but the spurious character of lines containing such matter would exhibit the reverse process — the impact of bhakta poets on the text of Kandali's Rāmāyaṇa, Dimbeswar

\begin{itemize}
  \item Sāhityara Buraṇjī, 1957, pp. 199-202).
  \item 1. Aranya-kānda, ins. 7*, 12*
  \item 2. Guru-carita-kathā, ed. M. Neog, art. 234
  \item 3. Aranya-kānda, ins. 17*
\end{itemize}
Neog would take this as a generalised phenomenon so far as all the pre-Saṅkaradeva poets are concerned: "The Vaiṣṇavite colophons were posthumous, to be sure, in Mādhaw Kandali's work, also probably in those of Hem Saraswatī, Harihar, Kaviratna and other predecessors of Saṅkaradeva." ¹

IX. PRINCIPLES FOLLOWED IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE TEXT

There are no definite rules to be followed in the constitution of a text. Even the evidence of the majority of the MSS is not enough to reconstruct a text as some MSS, although forming a minority, present the text in the original form or in a form which is nearer the original. Therefore, in constituting the text, individual cases have to be judged on their own merit. Moreover, it is to be mentioned that the same principles cannot be applied in all types of texts in the same manner. For instance, the principles which were enunciated by the western scholars in constituting the Latin and the Greek classical texts could not be followed strictly in the case of Indian classical Sanskrit texts. Dr V.S. Sukthankar, in constituting the text of the Ādiparvan of the Mahābhārata formulated and enunciated some principles² for the reconstruction of the Indian classical

¹. New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature, p. 115

Sanskrit texts and more particularly for the *Mahābhārata* text. These principles have been declared 'very sound' and recommended even for the critical Edition of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyana* by the recent scholars of the Oriental Institute of Baroda. But these principles too could not be applied in the constitution of the RMK as it is a vernacular text and the factors which are available and applicable in the Sanskrit text are not applicable in a vernacular text. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana* have their different recensions and versions, Sanskrit has recognised grammars and dictionaries, but the RMK has no recensions or versions, and Old Assamese has no dictionary or grammar. However, the most commonly recognised maxims of textual criticism, (a) 'lectio difficilior' (prefer the harder reading) and (b) 'codices are to be weighed and not counted' have been primarily relied on in constituting the RMK text. To be more precise, I mention below the main principles which have guided me in the constitution of the four different kāṇḍas of this critical Edition of the RMK:


2. *Introduction to Indian Textual Criticism*, S.M. Katre, 1954, p. 72

3. ibid., p. 47
1. In Ayodhya-kāṇḍa, (a) Br is taken as the basis. So, in regard to the acceptance of the text, preference is given to it, (b) when all the MSS agree with one another, the text is accepted.

2. In Aranya-kāṇḍa, B₁ is taken as the base. When G₂ B₁ Rb and Rc agree with one another, the text is accepted.

3. In Kīśkindhya-kāṇḍa, B₂ is taken as the basis. When B₂ S₂ C₂ Rb and Rc agree with one another, the text is accepted.

4. In Sundara-kāṇḍa, G₃ is taken as the base (except for the portions of the missing folios). When G₃ M K S₂ Rb and Rc agree with one another, the text is accepted.

When a verse or passage is omitted in majority of the MSS, provided some of the MSS in question are closely related and one cannot have influenced one another, it is dropped as insertion (interpolation) and shown in the Critical Apparatus below the verse of the text concerned. Emendation is avoided except in one place (e.g., kosala, Ayo/v. 298), in favour of the doctrine of the conservative School of Textual Criticism: "It is better to leave in the text what, if not the original reading, atleast the remains of it." ¹

¹ Quoted in Introduction to Indian Textual Criticism, 1954, p. 73
It may be noted that even though the text has been reconstructed primarily on the basis of the evidence of the MSS, we have, at places, resorted to some higher criticism also, though not in detail.

X. THE CONSTITUTED TEXT

The constituted text of the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, the Aranya-kāṇḍa, the Kīśkindhyā-kāṇḍa and the Sundara-kāṇḍa consist of 1125, 742, 604 and 858 verses respectively against 1126, 773, 604 and 854 verses found in the printed edition of Harinārasya Dattabera (Rd). Of these, a total number of 10 verses (\(\frac{1}{16}\)) in the Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa, 16 in the Aranya-kāṇḍa, 3 in the Kīśkindhyā-kāṇḍa and 17 in the Sundara-kāṇḍa which are generally accepted have certain doubtful readings, because they contain such features as the concept of Rāma as incarnation of the Supreme God, the glorification of Rāma-nāma and the supremacy of bhakti (devotion) which have found place in a majority of the Additional Apocryphal Verses. Moreover, there is one verse,

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1. See 'Additional Apocryphal Verses'. In this regard, Maheswar Neog observes, "in Kandali's work in the present form there is a note of propaganda, so common with the Vaisnava poets of later ages, celebrating the miraculous powers of the name of God. This note of propaganda and consideration of Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu are foreign to the original Rāmāyana but are evident in a much later work called Madhava Rāmāyana. Can the presence of these elements in Madhava Kandali's version of the Rāmāyana be taken as an influence of this work? There is, however, a more probable explanation afforded by Kathā-
namely, the first verse in the Sundara-kāṇḍa which has also been found in the beginning of the Laṅkā-kāṇḍa. Added to this is the poet’s own assertion, "this is no divine revelation but things of earth." ¹

guru-carita (recently edited and entitled by M. Neog as Guru-carita-kathā), which says that Mādhavadeva and Śaṅkaradeva completed the Rāmāyana by adding the first and last cantos to it and that Mādhavadeva inserted upadeśa (teaching of devotion, bhakti) where there was only subha subha (simple benedictory verses). This is tantamount to saying that the Rāmāyana was revised, edited and brought on to a line with literary work of the Bhakti School ('Assamese Literature before Śaṅkaradeva', Aspects of Early Assamese Literature, ed. Banikanta Kakati, 1959, p. 28).

¹ 'devabāṇi muhi ito laukikhe kathā' (Kiskindhyā-kāṇḍa, v. 604)