The Rāmāyaṇa has influenced the religious as well as moral thought and moulded the lives of many generations in this country for over two thousand years. Its recitation, listening to a 'Sloka, a line or even a Pāda from it is believed to bestow religious merit on the reciter and the listener. It is said that no work of world literature, secular in origin, has ever produced such an influence on the life and thought of a people as the Rāmāyaṇa.

We Indians have always revered and enjoyed the epic with the firm belief that it is a very old religious work written by Vālmīki, after he had uttered the 'Sloka accidentally on seeing a kraunça bird pierced by a hunter's arrow. But the western approach of assigning a date or at least a period to every ancient Indian work of importance has caused a great confusion in respect of this great work also, mainly because of the utter disregard shown by our ancient writer to providing sufficient information regarding his personality and times and partly due to the inability of the foreigners to fully appreciate and evaluate the inner soul of our literature; the latter led some scholars to give the Rāmāyaṇa as late a date as the 11th century A.D.

The above theory about the date of the epic is no more taken seriously, but it highlights the truth in Rusalkar's observation in the context of discussing the date of the
Mahābhārata, which says, "The approach should be with open eyes and with the mind used to Indian thought and without being hypercritical. The observations of foreign scholars are vitiated by their applying alien canons and aesthetic standards." To this we can add the view of Lakṣmanasvarūpa who says, "A foreign scholar, however learned he may be, can neither evaluate properly the inner soul of the literature of a different race so different to him from the point of view of culture, civilization, philosophy, art and attitude towards life nor he can measure its depth. Literature of a race is born of its tradition, environment, geographical and climatic conditions and the political institutions. Its proper explanation is an unachievable goal for a foreigner."

Scholars have generally discussed the date of the epic in two parts: (i) the date when the Genuine Rāmāyaṇa comprising the books II to VI was composed and (ii) the date by which the first and last books of the present Rāmāyaṇa were added. The dates assigned by various scholars to the composition of the 'Genuine' Rāmāyaṇa are as follows:

1. Between 8th and 6th century B.C.
2. Before 500 B.C.
3. 4th century B.C.
4. 5th century B.C.
5. 3rd century B.C.
The question whether the books I and VII formed parts of the Genuine Rāmāyana will be discussed separately in this chapter. Presently we will concern ourselves with the available evidences for deciding a date for the epic as it is available to us today. But quoting S.K. Chatterji, "Our findings are not in the realm of scientific truth. Historians operate mainly but not exclusively ———— in the field of facts and situations which are well documented; they operate also and at the same time in that of ideas and concepts, visions and imagination, signs and symbols, myths and legends etc. which have all their haunts in the minds and behaviour pattern of live men and women with whom history is certainly concerned."  

We find that the Vedic literature has some references to some of the important characters of the Rāmāyana such as:

1) Ikṣvāku’s name appears in a mantra of the Rgveda which says, "In whose service the rich and illustrious Ikṣvāku achieves prosperity ————."  

2) In a mantra in the Atharvaveda it is said, "Whom you, O Ikṣvāku I knew in the times bygone."  

3) Dāśaratha is also referred to in the Rgveda; his forty brown horses are said to be leading a contingent of one thousand horses.  

4) Rāma’s name occurs in the Rgveda along with some other powerful Yajamānas and he appears to be a king.
v) In the *Aitareya Brähmana*, the *Satapatha Brähmana* and the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brähmana* Rāma Mārgeya, Rāma Aputasvini and Rāma Krūtujateya occur respectively.

vi) Áśvapati’s name is found in the *Satapatha Brähmana* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

vii) Janaka appears in a number of references in the Vedic literature.

viii) The name of Sītā also is found in a number of works.

But it is argued that the names occurring in the Vedic literature cannot necessarily be identified with the characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, obviously because dependence on mere occurrences of names of the epic-personalities here and there in the vast Vedic literature, without any interconnection whatsoever, cannot take us anywhere near the plausible date when Vālmikī composed his great work.

Of the two great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, we have authentic and conclusive evidences regarding the existence of the latter in its present form before a particular period. Therefore, if we could know as to which of the two works in the form they are available today existed earlier, it would be easier for us to fix a date by which the *Rāmāyaṇa* either existed or not.

The genuine *Rāmāyaṇa*, according to Jacobi, was composed before the Kernel of the *Mahābhārata* assumed a
definite shape, because while the heroes of the Mahābhārata are never referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa, the story of Rāma often occurs in the former, and because the book VII of the Mahābhārata which cannot be regarded as a later addition quotes two lines as composed by Vālmiki, which occur in the book VI of the Rāmāyaṇa. Macdonell also quotes this very verse and says advancing the argument that the poem of Vālmiki must have generally been known as an old work before the Mahābhārata assumed a coherent shape. He further argues that the Rāmopākhyāṇa or the episode of Rāma found in the Mahābhārata seems to be based on the Rāmāyaṇa as it contains many verses which more or less agree with Vālmiki's lines and the author believes that his reader has the knowledge of the Rāmāyaṇa.

Winternitz, however, believes that the old, genuine Rāmāyaṇa could not be an earlier work and argues:

(1) Allusions to Vāsudeva, Arjuna and Yādīśthira already occur in Pāṇini's grammar whereas Rāma is not mentioned either by Pāṇini or Patañjali or in the inscriptions of pre-Christian era.

(2) It is likely that the theory of incarnation arose out of the Kṛṣṇa-cult and that the transformation of Rāma into an incarnation of Viṣṇu resulted only later by analogy to Kṛṣṇa-incarnation.
(3) The Rāmāyaṇa has been declared by a few scholars to be the older of the two because the burning of widows does not occur in it while it is mentioned in the Mahābhārata; but the matter of fact is that in the old, genuine Mahābhārata, burning of widows is just as much absent as in the genuine Rāmāyaṇa.

(4) In the Mahābhārata, we still have a distinct remnant of the ancient ballad form in the prose formulae, such as 'Yudhiṣṭhīra spoke' or 'Duryodhana spoke', introducing the speeches of various characters, while in the Rāmāyaṇa the speakers throughout are introduced in verse.

(5) Throughout the Mahābhārata, we encounter rougher manners and a more war-like spirit than the Rāmāyaṇa.

(6) There is not that embittered hatred, that fierce resentment between Rāma and Rāvana and Lakṣmaṇa and Indraji as in the Mahābhārata whereas we read of the battles between Arjuna and Karpa and Bhīma and Duryodhana.

(7) Sītā of the Rāmāyaṇa always maintains a certain calmness and meekness in her accusation and lamentation, and in her speeches there is not a trace of the wild passion we so often find in Draupadi in the Mahābhārata; and Kuntī and Gāndhārī, too, are the true hero-mothers of a warlike race whereas Kaushalā and Kaikeyī in the Rāmāyaṇa can rather be compared with the queens of the classical drama; this seems to indicate that the Mahābhārata belongs to a ruder, more warlike age and the Rāmāyaṇa shows traces of a more refined civilization.
It can be easily admitted that all these arguments do not refute the arguments put forth by Jacobi. Moreover, the arguments advanced by Winteritz are not well founded. It is not correct to say that Pāṇini is not familiar with the characters of the Rāmāyaṇa as he alludes to Kālkeyī, Ka०salyā, Sūryapānakha, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bhārata, Rāvaṇa, etc. But that cannot help because if mere occurrences of certain names of the characters of the epic could settle the issue, we could easily assign the Rāmāyaṇa a date prior to the origin of the Vedas as the Vedic literature contains the names of many Rāmāyaṇa-characters, as mentioned above. Ikṣvāku, Dāsaratha and Rāma are mentioned in the Ṛgveda as celebrated, mighty kings and Sītā appears as the furrow personified and invoked as a goddess; moreover, in some of the Gṛhyasūtras also she again appears as the genius of ploughed field, is praised as a being of a great beauty and acclaimed as wife of Indra or Pārījata. This origin (of Sītā) has traces in the Rāmāyaṇa also.

The argument that the theory of Rāma’s incarnation arose out of the Kṛṣṇa cult and that the transformation of the hero Kṛṣṇa into an incarnation of Viṣṇu resulted only later by analogy to Kṛṣṇa-incarnation also cannot have much bearing on the date of the Rāmāyaṇa because, according to R.G. Bhandarkar, Rāma was being worshipped in the first century A.D.²² He was considered an incarnation of Viṣṇu, as is evident from the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa²³(5th century A.D.) and Viśvamittra²⁴ (6th century A.D.) which give rules
for making Rāma's statues.

The non-existence of the practice of burning of widows does prove the earlier origin of the Rāmāyana. The contention that the self-immolation episode of Māri does not belong to the genuine Mahābhārata is not convincing as Māri and her sons are important characters of the epic.

The prose formulae in the Mahābhārata, on which Winternitz has laid much stress, are no proofs of its being older. The Rāṣṭras belonging to a very late date have also retained these formulae in order to appear as antiques. Similarly, there is no doubt that the heroic sentiment has been depicted more effectively in the Mahābhārata than in the Rāmāyana, but the credit for that goes to the authors of the former. Otherwise, the simplicity of life as depicted in the Rāmāyana indicates that it is older than the Mahābhārata which belongs to a ruder, warlike age.35 It is also wrong to say that Sītā of the Rāmāyana always maintains a certain calmness and meekness. Her retort to Ḥammān when he conveyed to her the news that Rāma was doing well can well be an example.36

The Mahābhārata belongs to a ruder, warlike age not in the sense that it depicts man as more primitive, as Winternitz proposes, while the society depicted here has morally degenerated by imbibing archaic features such as polyandry and Niyoga, materially it is far more advanced. The powerful kingdoms, the magnificent palaces, the great
sacrifices, the developed knowledge of weapons and warfare and the wider geographical horizon of the Mahābhārata all point to a more advanced civilisation than the one found in the Rāmāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{37}

Another important point is the presence of the Yavanas. The Yavanas (Greeks) are referred to in the Mahābhārata as allies of the Kurus, and 'Sakas and Pahlavas are also described along with them. But the Rāmāyaṇa is totally ignorant of them.\textsuperscript{38}

There are ample evidences that the authors of the Mahābhārata were fully aware of the Rāmāyaṇa written by Vālmīki. According to the Vyākhyādharma-rūpa, Vyāsa wrote the epic and the Purāṇas after studying the Rāmāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{39} It is also said that Vyāsa wrote a commentary on the Rāmāyaṇa at the request of Bhīṣṇu, a manuscript of which is available.\textsuperscript{40}

We can quote many such instances from the Mahābhārata itself as betray its knowledge of the Rāmāyaṇa and give us an idea of the form of the older epic with which the authors of the Mahābhārata were acquainted:

(A) Bhūma addresses Hannūmān as the great monkey, famous in the Rāmāyaṇa for his high qualities;\textsuperscript{41} this shows that Hannūmān was already famous for his exploits described in the Rāmāyaṇa, and that his birth-story as given in the Kīśkindhākānda\textsuperscript{42} and the Uttarākānda\textsuperscript{43} was also well known.
(B) In the Svargarohanaparvam, Rāma is referred to as the incarnation of Viṣṇu or Hari who was praised everywhere in the Vedas, the Ṛmāyaṇa and in the holy Bhārata. Here the chronology puts the Rāmāyaṇa in between the Vedas and the Bhārata, and thereby substantiates Jabobi's thesis referred to earlier that the Rāmāyaṇa was written before the Kernel of the Mahābhārata assumed a definite shape.

(C) The Droṇaparva quotes two lines from the Yuddhakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa.

(D) The Bhāgayudita refers to Rāma as the best warrior.

(E) Vālmiki has been mentioned along with the other singers of Govinda's glory such as Devala, Asita and Markandeya.

The further evidences which show that the Rāmāyaṇa was written earlier than the Mahābhārata are as follows:

1. The Arānysakarṇa narrates Rāmakathā in eleven verses, describing Rāma's birth and his rule that lasted for 11000 years.

2. Nārada tells Śrūjaya the stories of sixteen kings including Rāma who, even though great, died at the end of their lives. He praises Rāma and gives an account of his life from the Avadhvākāṇḍa to the Yuddhakāṇḍa: the period of his exile has been
described in 10 verses while his coronation, great qualities and rule for eleven thousand years have been devoted 21 verses; he has been declared as the greatest of all men, sages, the gods, and all other creatures.\(^4\)

\((3)\) The 'Sāntiparva describes Rāma's exile along with his great qualities and the high standard of his rule. It is also said that Rāma ruled the earth for ten thousand years and performed an Āśvamedha sacrifice. He is remembered here as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.\(^4\) The 'Sāntiparva, thus, knows the Rāmāyaṇa including the Uttarakāṇḍa.

\((4)\) In the Aranyaka-parva, Nṛkandṭeya narrates to Nādiśṭhira the story of Rāma. He tells the eldest Pāṇḍava that the calamity he suffered had been faced by Rāma also.\(^5\) The story here has material found in the Bālakāṇḍa and the Uttarakāṇḍa, apart from the story from the book II to book VI.

All these instances are enough to establish that the Mahābhārata is familiar with the Rāmāyaṇa from the book I to book VII as: (a) it reiterates the statement in the book I that Rāma ruled the earth for 11 thousand years,\(^5\) (b) it refers to Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu at the request of Brahmā,\(^5\) (c) it is again Viṣṇu who narrates the story of Rāma as he does in the book I, and (d) it refers to Rāma's performance of an Āśvamedha sacrifice which is described in the last book of the Rāmāyaṇa.\(^5\)
P. L. Vaidya has also tried to prove on the basis of the divergent details of Rāma's story found in the episode of Rāma that the Mahābhārata is an older work than the Rāmāyaṇa. But the divergencies are few and of insignificant nature which does not affect the main stream of the story. They do not sufficiently prove the theory that the Rāmopākhyaṇa is based on an earlier Ākhyāna and not on the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. The relation between the Rāmopākhyaṇa and Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa has been discussed by a number of scholars already and it has been proved on the basis of the evidence of a number of verses that the author of the Rāmopākhyaṇa was influenced by Vālmiki's work. V. Raghvan has further examined the problem which can safely put the controversy to rest forever in favour of the Rāmāyaṇa.

B. B. Lal also has the view that the Mahābhārata is an older work. According to him, Kṛṣṇa should have preceded Rāma because the excavations undertaken at Ayodhyā have not revealed positively that the site belongs to a period earlier than the 8th century B.C., and because the Brahāranyaka Upaniṣad has a discussion between Janaka and Pārīkṣita. But his theory has many shortcomings. He safeguards all that he says by the proviso "If Rāma was a historical figure living in Ayodhyā." Moreover, the absence of P. G. W. cannot be applied with any certainty to explain the chronology of the two works. It is also well known that Janaka was the
name of a dynasty and not of an individual ruler; therefore, the reference to a Janaka in the Upanishad cannot prove that the Mahabharata existed earlier. Besides that, Rama's father-in-law has nowhere been referred to in the Ramayana as a philosopher king although he has been addressed as 'Mahārāma', Dharmaśāna, Dharmavatasa, etc., epithets which have been given in the Sanskrit literature to all great kings not belonging to the opposite camp. Nevertheless, the argument cannot satisfy the Indian tradition which refers to Bhaktaśaya, the king of Ayodhya and son of Bhadrala who was killed by Abhimanyu, as a contemporary of Parikṣita.

If we accept Lal's theory, Rama will have to be accepted as a successor of Bhaktaśaya, at the beginning of Kali-āge. We, therefore, agree with A. Ghosh who says, "Archaeology can confirm tradition, interpret it or reject it but cannot certainly alter it or create a new one."

Thus, it can be concluded that by the time the Mahabharata assumed its present form, Rama was held and worshipped as an incarnation of Visnu, who had appeared in a human form in order to slay Raiva and his Raikṣasas. Therefore, the Ramayana must have come to exist in its present form long before the Mahabharata was completed. That is why the date by which the later epic was fully compiled and when it was in the process of being given its shape is important in the context of deciding a date for the compilation of the Ramayana.
The European and the American orientalists as also many Indian scholars advocate the orthodox view that the genuine Mahābhārata was written by Vyāsa soon after the Bhārata war. C. V. Vaidya puts the date of Vyāsa's work soon after 3102 B.C., of Vaiśampāyana's adaptation between 1400-1200 B.C., of the revised edition in about 250 B.C. and states that Vaiśampāyana and Sūta added "fiction --- invented for magnifying the importance of the work." But P. P. S. Sastri prefers to accept the existing tradition which makes Vaiśampāyana as a direct pupil of Vyāsa and Suta as a son of Vaiśampāyana contemporary of Romaharṣaṇa, than indulge in a super-criticism which tries to set at naught the internal evidence of the epic and the current tradition.

On the other hand we have the ingenious theory, styled as Inversion Theory, put forth by Holtzmann and others. According to this theory the epic was non-existent until the 12th century A.D. Schroeder and Grierson also enunciated a theory analogous to the inversion theory. In Schroder's view the original poem belongs to the 7th to 4th century B.C. composed by bards of the Kuru; then occurred the inversion owing to fall of the Kuru. Grierson considers the struggle for supremacy between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas as the principal motive behind the inversion of the original poem. According to him the Kauravas of the Madhyadeśa, who supported the Brāhmaṇas, came into conflict with the unorthodox Pāṇcālas and Pāṇḍavas.
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These views are, however, based only on inferences drawn by the scholars and are supported by no evidence. Moreover, the inscriptive evidence conclusively prove the existence of the Mahābhārata before 400 A.D. It is also well known that a conflict between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas is almost unknown to the history of religion, and there is no proof of such a conflict in the period of the Brāhmaṇas. The inversion theory is, therefore, rightly termed as an ingenious hypothesis.

Some years ago, an interesting debate on the historicity of the Mahābhārata was initiated by a couple of contemporary writers. They collected the views of many scholars and brought out a book under the title - Mahābhārata - Myth and Reality. Many scholars who participated discussed also the date of the epic; the views of some of them are briefly discussed below:

H.D. Sankalia has opined that the Parvas depict political geography of India of the 2nd and 3rd century A.D.; therefore, the critical edition of the epic belongs to 4th century A.D. D. C. Sirkar agrees with him. According to R.C. Majumdar also the Mahābhārata, as it is, does not belong to a period later than 4th century A.D. because it has been referred to in the inscription of 4th or 5th century A.D. as consisting of one lakh verses.

In Mīrashī’s view, however, the epic compiled by Vaiśampāyana must have existed before the Āśvalāyana and
Pāṇini, and its present form must have come to exist in the 2nd century A.D. because (i) Nāvalāyana and Pāṇini know Vaiśeṣikāyana as the recaster of the great epic and the former refers to him as Mahābhāratacūrya, (ii) some Gupta inscriptions inform us that the epic had assumed the form comprising a hundred thousand verses before the 5th century A.D. and (iii) the Harivamsa which forms its appendix dates as back as to the 2nd century A.D. for it was used by the Vākāṭaka king Sarvasena to compose his lost Prākṛta poem Harivilāya and Bhāsa for the themes of his plays.\textsuperscript{75}

Tracing the Mahābhārata's characters in art, Dvivedi evinces that Kṛṣṇa-stories found great favour with the artists of 2nd century B.C.\textsuperscript{76}, and it is also argued that his legends are found on the coins of Agathacles.\textsuperscript{77}

To the above views we can add the opinion expressed by Macdonell who informs us that there are several land-grants dated between 450-500 A.D. and found in different parts of India, which quote the Mahābhārata as an authority teaching rewards of pious donors and punishments of the impious plunderer. It shows that in the middle of the 5th century, the epic already had the character of a Sāṃśārv or Dharmaśāstra. According to him, as century's time must have elapsed before the epic could attain the said status in the vast area.\textsuperscript{78}

Thus, most of the scholars agree that by the 4th century A.D. the Mahābhārata had attained its present form. The inscriptive evidence prove that the epic included by
that date the long chapters 12 and 13 as well as the Harivamsa, without any of which it would have been impossible to speak of it as having one lakh verses. If we may accept that Bāṣa flourished before 2nd century A.D. and that the Vākūtaka king used the present epic for his work, the Mahābhārata can be safely put as back as to the first century B.C.

Earlier evidences of Āvalāyana and Pāṇini point to the existence of the Mahābhārata in some form, which must have been fairly large, before their times i.e. 5th century B.C. It is, therefore, plausible to deduce that the Rāmāyana existed before the 5th century B.C. since the earlier epic was composed before Vyāsa's work took any coherent shape.

It has been opined that in the oldest Buddhist literature we still find examples of the Ākhyanas or ballad poetry and, therefore, it should be recognised as the forerunner of the Rāmāyana. 79 Rhys Davids has also concluded from this that the Rāmāyana could not have yet existed as an epic at the time of the Buddha-ballads. 80 It is also pointed out that the story of Rāma is found in a somewhat altered form in one of the Pāli birth-stories of the Buddha, the Puṣṇapūra Jātaka.

It might seem at the first sight that the Jātaka is older than the Rāmāyana; therefore Winternitz argues:
(1) The fact that only one of the twelve ancient Gāthās appear in the Rāmāyāna proves that the Jātaka is based on some earlier ballad and not on the Rāmāyāna.

(2) The Jātaka tells us many tales of demons and big animals; but we do not hear a word of Rāvana or Hanumān because when the Tripiṭikas came to exist, there were ballads dealing with Rāma's story but not the epic.

(3) The idea of explaining the exceeding mildness, gentleness and calmness which are ascribed to Rāma by the Buddhist undercurrent should not be rejected.

(4) The metre of the Rāmāyāna appears to represent a later stage of development than the Buddhist Pāli Poetry, and approximates to the metre of the later portion of the Mahābhārata.

(5) As an epic the Rāmāyāna is very far removed from the Vedas because there is nothing to indicate that the songs of Rāma and Sītā existed in the Vedic times. 

It is very clear that the stories of Rāma, thus, must have been composed by the author of the Jātaka himself. But the fact that a verse from the Rāmāyāna actually occurs in a prose form in the Jātaka proves that the author of the Jātaka has some knowledge of the Rāmāyāna - although a very poor knowledge - and has filled in the blanks by his own imagination, as is proved by the following facts: (1) the author knows Rāma and Bharata as the sons of different mothers but
does not know the names of the queens. (2) He knows Sītā as the queen of Rāma and yet does not know her father's name. (3) He does not know the name of Daśaratha's capital and describes it as Vārasana. 83

The view that the Jātaka is based on some earlier ballad is equally unconvincing. If the Jātaka is based on the 'original' Rāma-ballad, how is it that the entire Rāma-literature speaks of Ayodhyā and not Vārasana as the capital of Daśaratha? Similarly, the argument that the Jātaka does not mention Rāvaṇa and, therefore, the Rāvaṇa episode is a later invention of Vālmiki, added to the original ballad or ballads which formed the basis of the Jātaka, is not acceptable as the Lanka-episode is not unknown to the Jātaka. Although the Jātaka is made to end with the marriage of Rāma and Sītā after the manner of fairy-tales, there are traces that the author believed them to have wedded earlier. 84

The view that the depiction of Rāma has been influenced by the Buddhist thought should also be rejected since the qualities could not be a Buddhist-monopoly and are actually found in many great men of the world. The greater freedom with which the Pāli poetry handles the 'Sloka comes from the recent application of Pāli to literary purposes as well as the inferior preservation of the works. Otherwise, the Pāli works observe the law of the classical 'sloka. It is also worth a notice that the Buddhist literature makes use of the Āryā metre which is untraceable in the epic. 85
The remaining argument of Winternitz can be ignored, it being of no help in deciding the chronology of the Ramayana and the Buddha.

There are clear evidences to prove that the Ramayana is of Pre-Buddhistic character. The only passage referring to the Buddha in the epic has been accepted by the scholars as an interpolation. The capital of Kosal in the Ramayana has been always named Ayodhya while the Buddhists, the Jains, the Greeks and Patanjali invariably refer to it as Saketa. The Ramayana, therefore, must have been composed when Ayodhya's new name, Saketa, was still unknown.

The question whether the Greeks are known to the epic is also important. The Greeks have been mentioned twice in the epic; but these passages are considered as interpolations. The assumption that there is a Greek influence on Rama's story lacks foundation and have been rightly refuted. The tale of Sita's abduction and the expedition against Lanka have no real similarity with the story of the rape of Helen or the Trojan war; nor there is any sufficient reason to suppose that the account of Rama's bending the bow in order to win Sita has been borrowed from the adventures of Ulysses. Moreover, stories of similar feats of strength for the like objects are found in the poetry of other nations, besides the Greeks, and could easily have arisen independently.

The political condition of Eastern India as revealed in the Ramayana throws some additional light on the age of the epic.
1) The city of Patalliputra was founded by king Kālāśoka (360 B.C.); and by the times of Megasthenes (300 B.C.) it had become the capital of India. In the book I (Sarga 35) Rāma is described passing by the very spot where the city stood, yet the poet who gives accounts of a number of cities in the eastern part such as Kauśāmbī, Kānyakubja and Kāmpīlya, does not exhibit any knowledge of its existence. Had Patalliputra existed at the time of the epic’s origin, it could not have escaped notice.

2) In the last book of the Rāmāyaṇa, we are told that Rāma’s son Lava fixed his seat of government at ‘Srāvasti, a city from where king Prasenajit of Kosala ruled in the Buddha’s time. This also points out that the epic, including the book VII, was composed when the ancient Ayodhyā had not been deserted but was still the chief city of Kosala, when its new name Saketa was still unknown and before the seat of government was shifted to ‘Srāvasti.91

3) Mithilā and Vaiśālī have been described in the book I as twin cities under separate rulers. But we know that by the times of the Buddha they had coalesced to form the famous city of Vaiśālī, ruled by an oligarchy.92

4) The Rāmāyaṇa is acquainted with patriarchal rule of kings possessing small territories. But we know with certainty that there were many big states even before the fourth century and that some states were ruled by oligarchies.
Summarising the result of our investigation into
the age of the Ramayana, we can say that:

(i) the Ramayana was already an old and famous work
when the Mahabharata attained its present shape;

(ii) the Ramayana existed before the kernel of the
Mahabharata assumed a coherent shape, i.e. before
the 6th century B.C. as Vaisampayana, a recaster of
the epic, lived before the times of Panini and
Avalantika;

(iii) it is older than the Buddha because it has no traces
of the Buddha or Buddhism;

(iv) there can be no question of Greek influence as the
epic betrays no acquaintance with these foreigners;

(v) the political condition of the Eastern India revealed
in the Ramayana also points to its pre-Buddhist
origin;

(vi) therefore, the Ramayana was composed before 600 B.C.,
and the upper limit may be put as 1000 B.C.

AUTHOR AND AUTHORSHIP

Internal and external evidences and the tradition
ascribe the authorship of the Ramayana to Valmiki, the
Adikavi. According to the epic, he heard the story of
Rama from Narada in a brief form. Then he invented the
'Sloka metre on being struck with grief by the sight of a
Kraunca-killing and, at the behest of Brahma, prepared himself to write the Ramayana on the basis of the story heard by him from Narada. In order to know more details of the story, he sat down in a Samadhi and discovered what had already happened and was going to happen. He saw through his mind's eye all actions of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Dasaratha and his queens, and saw them as clearly as he would see an Amanaka placed on his own palm. The search revealed the events of Rama's life up to the banishment of Sita and his later times. According to the epic, Valmiki wrote his poem when Rama had already acquired kingship.

In the Uttarakanda again, the author of the epic has been named as Bhagavan Valmiki who wrote his work describing Rama's activities from the beginning to the end of his life. The poem is described being recited from the account of Narada-meeting, i.e. the first Sarga of the present Ramayana.

The external evidences acclaiming Valmiki as the author of the Ramayana are found in many later works. In the Mahabharata, Valmiki has been quoted as having sung a verse which says that anything that can harm the enemy should be done, and this verse is found in the Ramayana in an unaltered form. The Agrivada gives the gist of the Ramayana ascribing its authorship to Valmiki. The Gerudapuran also contains the same verses. The Harivansha describes the Yaduvastrapas staging a play based on the Ramayana poem. Kalidasa in his Krivanka remembers Valmiki at two places indicating that he knows him as the
author of the epic.\textsuperscript{105} Bhavabhūti, Bhāsa, Ācārya, 'Śāṅkara,
Rāmānuja, and others also remember Vālmīki with much respect.
It is, therefore, beyond any doubt that it was Vālmīki whose
genius culminated into the immortal epic known as the
Rāmāyaṇa which, being the earliest poem of importance,
conforming to the rules of poetics, justly received the name
of Adikāvyā, i.e. the first artificial poem.

The epic tells us very little about the life and
personality of Vālmīki. The earlier as well as the later
references and accounts make the picture more misty instead
of throwing some light on it, and thereby give rise to
conjectures describing him as a bard or a man of low social
strata.

The earliest available reference to the name Vālmīki
is found in the Taittirīya Prātiśākhya depicting him as a
grammari\textsuperscript{106} an. But it is argued that a grammarian would not
have allowed himself so much use of archaic language.
Similarly, references presenting him as a Sunārṇa bird etc.
are also of no help.\textsuperscript{107}

The Mahābhārata remembers Vālmīki at various places.
In the Dvāpara\textsuperscript{108} and in the Sānti\textsuperscript{109} he has been
referred to as a poet. In the 'Sānti\textsuperscript{110} again, we find a
Bhārgava poet who wrote the Rāmacarit, and in the Anuśāsana
Dvāra\textsuperscript{111} Vālmīki who had attained great glory has been mentioned.
His name occurs in many more contexts in the Mahābhārata.
such as in the Ādiṣeṣa, Śaḥṣaṣeṣa, Śaṃṣeṣa, and Vidyeṣa. There can be no doubt that the Mahābhārata is acquainted with the Vālmiki of the Rāmāyana, particularly because it quotes two lines composed by him, as explained above. But it provides no more lucid information.

The traditional account of Vālmiki is that he was a robber who became a Maharṣi later after undergoing a long and severe penance. This sort of accounts are found in a developed form, first, in the Skandapurāṇa which has material belonging mostly to the 8th century A.D. and many interpolations of unknown periods. The seed of the tradition, however, can be traced to the Mahābhārata. A few verses occurring in the Mahābhārata, it is thought, must have provided the different accounts of Vālmiki's life found in the Skandapurāṇa and other later works.

The Skandapurāṇa has as many as four stories on the early life of the great sage, which are briefly as follow:

1. He was the son of a sage named Krūra, who got covered by an anthill (Vālmika) and was named as Vālmika; his son got named as Vālmika and wrote the Rāmāyana.

2. He was a decept, named Agniṣeṭa, who took to penance at the behest of the Saptarṣis, and then received the name because of the anthill that covered him during his long meditation.

3. He was a Dvija named Lohajangha, who turned into a
Robber to save his family during a famine. Later, he met the Saptarṣis with a desire to rob them. The sages sent him home to know if his family members were ready to share the fruit of his sins, and he found himself alone. He, therefore, requested the sages for a Mantra and received the Jātadhāta Mantra. His body was covered by an anthill and, thereby, he got the name Vālmīki. The Saptarṣis made the forecast that Vālmīki would write the Rāmāyaṇa.¹²¹

A Brāhmaṇa, named 'Samimukha, met the Saptarṣis and became a sage himself by chanting the word 'Rāma' in the reversed order of the letters. An anthill grew around him while he was repeating the word 'Māṛa' in a standing posture for a very long time. Thus, he got named as Vālmīki.¹²²

In the Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma, Lakṣmīna and Sītā are described meeting Vālmīki near Citrakūṭa while going to the forest. They want to know from him about a place where they could live. Vālmīki pays his respects to Rāma, and then narrates his own story in order to project the religious importance of Rāma's name. In this account he is said to have been a Drīḍha who spent his childhood with the Kirātas, and who, by living with thieves, became a thief himself.¹²³ The rest of the story is the same as found in the Skandaapurāṇa.

The Tatvamāgraha Rāmāvaṇa has a story of Vālmīki which has incorporated some supernatural element also.¹²⁴
The Ānanda Rāmāyana has another version of Vālmiki's story. According to it, a Brāhmaṇa, named Sūmbha, of Srīvatsagotra and a resident of 'Sākala fell in love with a courtesan and behaved like a 'Śūdra, leaving his daily routine. However, he performed one auspicious act that he showed hospitality for a day to a Brāhmaṇa. He died remembering the woman he loved and, therefore, was born as a Vyādha in his next birth. The courtesan was born as a Bhilani and became his wife. One day the Vyādha robbed a Brāhmaṇa, but returned the shoes on seeing the robbed man in pain from walking barefooted. The Brāhmaṇa blessed him and told him that it was because of the pious act he had done in his previous birth that the noble thought of returning the shoes occurred to him. He told him further about his next birth of a she-serpent and sage Krūṣ, his would be bringing-up by Kirātas, meeting the Saptarṣis and becoming Vālmiki after being blessed by them. After becoming known as Vālmiki, he learned the story of Rāma from Brāhmaṇa and wrote the Rāmāyana.

Most of the material in the above story is evidently taken from the Skanda and the Adhyātma Rāmāyana.125

The Krittivāśīva Rāmāyana has an enlarged version of the story in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana; according to it, Vālmiki was a son of Cyuvana.126

The Tarve Hanavana narrates that a Vyādha of Kraunca-vana was blessed by Bhardvāja. The Vyādha practised penance
and became known as Vālmīki because of the anthill that grew around him.\textsuperscript{126}

There are many more fantastic stories about Vālmīki; for example (i) the story that he met Nānaka and went to Cāndālagaha to live there on a hill named Gāda, which became a place of pilgrimage for scavengers\textsuperscript{127} (ii) the story of his corpse being seen at Vārānasī\textsuperscript{128} (iii) the story that he was engaged by Brahmā to clean his throne and that Lālabega, the ancestor of Lālabegi, was born from the cleaning-cloth\textsuperscript{129} (iv) the stories in Saraladāsa’s Urvā Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{130} and Rāmadasīkāvati\textsuperscript{131}

The image of Vālmīki as the guru of scavengers has, thus, a very recent origin. He came to be known as an incarnation of Viṣṇu by the 5th century A.D. and was worshipped as is borne out by the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa.\textsuperscript{132}

The Rāmāyaṇa introduces Vālmīki to us as one who witnessed many events of the Rāma-story. He has been referred to as a Tapasvī\textsuperscript{133}, Muni\textsuperscript{134}, Mahāmuni\textsuperscript{135}, Maharṣi\textsuperscript{136}, Bhagavān\textsuperscript{137}, Dharmavīd\textsuperscript{138}, Mahāmātī\textsuperscript{139} etc. In the Uttarakāṇḍa, he has been described as a friend of Daśaratha.\textsuperscript{140} He wrote the Rāmāyaṇa and taught its recitation to his two pupils, Lava and Kuśa, as is said in the book I.\textsuperscript{140a} In the book VII again, we come to know a little about his parentage: he calls himself as the tenth son of Pracetāsa, who never sinned or told a lie.\textsuperscript{141} In the Bālakāṇḍa\textsuperscript{142}, his Āgrāma is described as located near the river Tamasā while in the Uttarakāṇḍa it is shown near Gaṅgā\textsuperscript{143}, but
these varying references to his hermitage need not be taken to meaning that they refer to different personalities because, as explained by Divindarāja (on II.56.16), the sages shifted their hermitages from one place to another, a fact which is supported by the description of Viśvāmitra shifting his āśrama after the sacrifice.144

Vālmiki of the epic has been identified by some with Bhārgava Cyavana. This identification is obviously, and as rightly observed by Balke145, based on the derivation of the word Vālmiki from Valmika which is said to have covered Cyavana sitting in Smādi. But in the book VII we find that Bhārgava Cyavana was a different personality who lived on the bank of Yamunā,146 and who came along with other sages to tell Rāma about the atrocities of Lavana. Another Bhārgava is also referred to in the same book, who had a daughter named Bhārgavi, and who was the preceptor of king Daṇḍa. The king molested Bhārgavi and the sage Uśanas cursed him. Therefore, he was a different person.

Thus, the information available on the life of Vālmiki is insufficient and no definite account of his life, lineage or personality can be construed on its basis. We, however, understand that Pracetas, whom Vālmiki has referred to as his ancestor, is another epithet of Varuṇa used by Kālidāsa in Kumārasambhava.148 The Rgveda refers to Brugu as Vāruni149 and the Ātavatāmaka150 speaks of him as a son of Varuṇa. The Brāhavat Purāṇa informs us about the birth of
two sons to Varuṇa from his wife Cāṇi.\(^{151}\)

One fact established by the various accounts of Vālmīki is that he wrote the Rāmāyaṇa. In the Rāmāyaṇa he retracts his lineage to Varuṇa, and we are aware that tracing one’s lineage to one god or another was a common practice in ancient India; for instance, we find Daśaratha and Janaka\(^{152}\) (and so also others) eagerly tracing their divine origin. Varuṇa’s son, according to the Rāyveda and Satpatha, was called Vāruni and Bṛgu. It can, therefore, be deduced that Vālmīki, who was known as tenth in the lineage of Varuṇa was also called Ṛṣāṅgava after his great ancestor, Bṛgu. His father in many of the references is said to be sage Kṛṣṇa. May be, Kṛṣṇa was ninth in the grand lineage and to him Vālmīki was born.

The reference quoted from the Mahābhārata says that Vālmīki fell into disfavour of the Brāhmaṇas due to some dispute, and was accused of Brāhmahatya. He was absolved of it by lord Śiva. In other works he is said to have been of a low-birth and reared by the Kūrataś. In the Rāmāyaṇa, we do not find Vālmīki enjoying as high a reputation as enjoyed by Agastya, Bhardvāja and others. He has not been described accompanying the sages who came to Ayodhyā to honour Rāma for his victory over Rāvana, although his hermitage was located near the Kosala capital. Sītā has to say it herself on an oath that she committed no sin, even after Vālmīki vouchsafes a testimony of her purity. These
can be an indication that Vālmīki's reputation suffered from some blemish in his past-history. But he was no doubt held in esteem and invited to the sacrifice after his great work had been recited in the court of Ayodhyā.

In its present form the Rāmāyaṇa consists of seven books. It has come to us preserved in three distinct recensions, the West-Indian, the Bengal and the Bombay. About one third of verses in each recension does not occur in the other two, but the Bombay recension, known as southern recension, has preserved the oldest form of the text in most of the cases. The variations in them are of such a nature as can be accounted for by the oral tradition among the professional reciters of the epic, at the time when they assumed definite shapes in different parts of the country by being committed to writing.153

Most of the western scholars and many Indians do not consider the Rāmāyaṇa as the work of a single author. It is argued that the bards, through their generations, added a lot to the original poem without affecting the form. It is the considered view of Weber,154 Janobi155 and others that the genuine Rāmāyaṇa consisted of only five books (II to VI), and that the first and the seventh books were added later on, in an attempt to reconstruct the beginning and the end.

The main arguments advanced in favour of the reconstruction theory are:
(1) One of the indexes in the book I gives events of the life of Rāma from the Ayodhyākānda to the Mādhavakānda only, which formed the genuine Rāмāyaṇa at one stage; the second index was added later to include the books I and VII.

(2) Half of the matter or more in the two books added later does not have any relation with the main story.

(3) There are a number of contradictions in respect of statements made in the genuine part. For example, Lekṣmana is described being married to Urmila in the book I, yet in the book III he is said to be a bachelor: Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa have been shown leaving Ayodhya in the book VI, but in the book VII they are again described being seen off by Rāma, etc.

(4) The Phalāsṛuti at the end of the book VI and its other than usual colophon also indicate that the older Rāmāyaṇa ended here. This is supported also by the Rāmopāśyana in the Mahābhārata.

(5) Rāma appears more as a mortal hero in the genuine text, while the added books depict him as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

(6) The language and style of the two added books are inferior to those of the genuine text.

These arguments, however, are neither so weighty nor conclusive as they may look; they are no more than mere
hypothesises unsupported by any real internal evidence or the tradition of this country. The following examination will prove our point:

Jacobi as well as others who support his view take Nārada’s speech for the first and the real index of the contents of the Rāmāyana written by Vālmīki, and the list of topics selected by Vālmīki as the second and interpolated index for including the ‘spurious kāṇḍas’ in the epic. This is no doubt a very far fetched idea and an unnecessary attempt to read what is not intended by the poet. Any reader of the epic can witness that the Rāmāyana starts on a dramatic note by presenting Vālmīki and Nārada busy in talking, the former asking the latter to say if there be a man with certain very high qualities of human character and the latter naming Rāma as the ideal man possessing all the coveted qualities. The whole matter in Sargas 1 to 4, infact, fits in so nicely and naturally in the artistically woven texture of the epic story that it hardly looks like an interpolation or makes one believe that the book I and VII are the added matters. Moreover, idea to consider the Sargas 1 and 3 as containing two separate indexes of the Rāmāyana is unrealistic because if somebody had intended to add the Bālakāṇḍa and Uttarakāṇḍa and tried to make them look like genuine parts, he could very well have altered, enlarged or eliminated the Nārada-episode to avoid the risk of being detected. If it can be accepted that nobody objected to the additions, it
should also be accorded to that nobody would have cared for the alterations or enlargement, too.

Nārada's account starts with the description of Rāma's qualities and ends with the forecast that Rāma will rule for 11 thousand years. This account itself has many statements which are not consistent with the contents of the so-called older portion. Some examples are given below:

(A) Daśaratha is said to have followed Rāma to a long distance.\footnote{156} This goes against the description in the \emph{Arodhyākāṇḍa} which says that the ministers of king Daśaratha told him not to follow Rāma a long way if he desired him to return soon.\footnote{157}

(B) Vālī is stated being killed by Rāma in his first attempt,\footnote{158} which is again not a correct statement if compared with the contents of the book III.\footnote{159}

(C) Nārada does not describe Sītā's fire-ordeal after the war, yet the book VI contains the event and the reunion.\footnote{160}

(D) Hemuśān is described in Nārada's account being caught by the Rākṣasas and not by Meghāṇā.

(E) Nārada does not narrate the exploits of Lakṣaṇa, Hemuśān and others on Rāma's side, and of Kumbhakaraṇa, Meghāṇā etc. on the opposite side; but these have been described in detail in the genuine \emph{Rāmāyaṇa} devoting a considerable space.
The above and many other contradictions and omissions prove that the poet does not follow Nārada strictly and religiously. If the theory of the first index, the second index and its modification is accepted, then we will have to exclude large portions from the books II to VI, treating them as spurious and subsequent additions, on the basis of Nārada's evidence.

The Sarga 3 is stated to be a revised index of the epic to include the spurious chapters. Nevertheless, it misses references to many events and details of the story such as: (i) the description of Rāma's appearance and lineage, (ii) the story of Daśaratha, (iii) the sandal-episode, (iv) the episode of Virādha, (v) Rāma's fight with the Rākṣasas at Janasthāna, (vi) Hanumān's exploits, (vii) Lakṣmana's injuries during the war, (viii) Šīta's fire-ordeal, (ix) the account of Rākṣasas' origin and exploits, (x) the story of Hanumān, (xi) the story of Vālī, (xii) the victory over Lavaṇa, (xiii) the Šambūka-killing, (xiv) Šīta's second ordeal and (xv) the Āśvamedha performance by Rāma. Had the third Sarga been a revised index, it would not have missed so many events or at least the events referred to in the first Sarga and the episodes and happenings described in the epic. The variations between the first and the third Sargas, therefore, should be attributed to the extent of the purpose set before the each narrator of Rāma's story: Nārada was solely concerned with the description of Rāma's
qualities and the high standard of his administration, we touched only those events which elucidated his statement, avoiding many unrequired ones even though forming part of the books II to VI. On the other hand, Vālmi̯ki set before himself the task of narrating the whole story; knowing the limitations of Nārada’s account, he probed more and more and discovered all that has been described. What Vālmi̯ki did is expected of all good writers.

Even if we may take the Sarga 1 as an index of the events and an indicator of the length of the original poem, the seventh book cannot be considered as spurious because the account given by Nārada betrays knowledge of events found in the Uttara vιde the prophecy that Rāma would rule the earth for eleven thousand years, and then go to Brahmāloka; the rule and the event are described in the seventh book only. Therefore, it will be reasonable if we accept the internal evidence that the Rāmāyaṇa contained all the seven books and that Vālmi̯ki wrote the complete story of Rāma.

The first four Sargas, according to some, are from a different hand, added to the epic at a later stage by a pupil of Vālmi̯ki or somebody else. This question was raised in the past, too, and answered by the commentators of the epic, who are almost unanimous that these formed a part of the Rāmāyaṇa from the beginning and do not represent an after thought. Moreover, Kālidāsa also believed that these Sargas were the part of the epic as he has referred to the Kausūma killing episode.
The argument based on the style and language of the books I and VII wants us to believe that half the matter in these books is irrelevant and interrupts the flow of the narration. But it is only a matter of approach, because to others the legends contained in these books are the logical necessity for the proper completion of the poem. As a matter of fact Valmiki exhibits an excellent understanding of human nature in these books: the way in which Viśvāmitra has been described telling various old stories to Rāma and Lakṣaṇa, on way to his hermitage, is the nice manifestation. After all, what else a man in real life would do when accompanied by two inquisitive young men and having nothing to do but walking and resting during a long journey? Story telling and describing the scene can be the easiest and natural way to keep them engaged and cheerful. That is what Viśvāmitra has been described doing in the book I. In the book VII, the narration of the origin and history of Rākṣasas and other important characters sounds very natural. The poet understands that readers would love to know the history of other important characters described in the earlier books, and, therefore, provides the same at the earliest opportunity. The beginning of the seventh book is the most appropriate place to put through the information.

The description in these books is always in rhyme with the speed of the action. It is fast when the action is fast and slow when there is not much to describe. For example, see the verse describing Tātakā's death:
Tamapatantipa vegena Vikrāntaśaśaśīmiva,

The onslaught of Tāṭakā, Rāma's shooting an arrow, hitting the target and the fatal fall of the Rākṣasī have all been described in a picturesque style in only two lines.

The poetry in the Rālaṅkāṇḍa is not inferior than the other books. A few samples given below will suffice to prove it:

1. Viśvāmitra is described going to his hermitage along with Rāma and Lākeśaṇa, giving a beautiful picture of the three marching together:

Viśvāmitra yāvāvāgre tato Rāmaḥ mahāyāsaḥ,
Kākapakṣadhāro dhanvī tāp ca Saumitrināvagāt.
Kalāpinau dhanaśpāni 'Sobhayānau diśo dāsa,
Viśvāmitra mahātmānaṁ triśūrāviva Rāmagau,

2. A beautiful description of gradual night-fall can be witnessed in the following verses from the same context:

Nīpandāstaraṇeḥ sarve niśīṇāya Ṣrīpakaśīṇaḥ,
Naiṣena tamsī vyāptā dīśāca Raghunandana.
Śanairvivujyate sandhyāḥ nabho netrairvivavṛtam,
Nākṣatratārāgahanāṁ jyotiḥbhīrke bhāvate.
Uttisthati ca śītāpiḥ āśī lokatmanudāh,
Hṛdayanprāṇinīṁ loka manāṃśa prabhayā vibho.
Rām. I.33.15-17.
Similar examples can be quoted from the last book, too.

On the other hand instances of bad poetry can easily be traced from the so called genuine text. The following lines are worth noticing:

Rāmārthamupahimsantām kaikeyāmidamabravita. Rām.II.9.4

The contradictions quoted from the epic are either based on misinterpretations resulting from explanation of words without referring to the context or are not very serious in nature. The use of word 'Akyōttārā' for Lakṣman, for instance, cannot be taken as a contradiction when seen in the right perspective. Rāma and Lakṣman are depicted as having a fun with 'Surpanakha', and, therefore, the word 'Akyōttārā' in the context should not be taken as a factual statement, even if it is granted that it means 'a bachelor'. Similarly, the statement in the Ayodhyākanda that Bharata was allowed to leave for a sojourn with his maternal grandfather is not a repetition, as has been shown in the critical edition. This in fact reveals that the second book has a knowledge of the first book.

The contradictions reported from the last book also are nothing but a matter of style. Moreover, whatever real contradictions are found in the books I and VII cannot be decisive in respect of their antiquity, because such contradictions of facts and happenings are found in a good number in the books II to VI also, and some of them are given below:
In the Ayodhyakānda, it is Bharata who requests Rāma to step on the sandals; but, later on, he says that it was done by Vaśiṣṭha.

Rāma says something to sages, but later claims to have said something else.

The story of Saprāti narrated at two places has contradictions; according to the first, he burnt his wings for the sake of his brother, but in the second the cause for it is said to be different.

The lists of the chief-warriors on Rāma's side in the book VI, one by 'Suka-Sarāña and the other by 'Sārdūla, do not agree with each other.

Rāvana does not raise his hand to beat Sītā - he only threatens but Hanumān reports later that Rāvana made an attempt to kill her.

Sītā narrates the crow-episode to Hanumān, yet it is not found in the earlier Kānda at the required place.

Mainākas peak is described being fallen by Hanumān by his chest at one place and by his tail at another.

The argument that only the books I and VII tend to present Rāma as an incarnation is equally untenable. It is true that in the book I Viṣṇu grants the gods' request and agrees to take birth as a son of Raṣaratha, and in the Book VII Rāma is visited by Kāla to convey a message from Brahma;
and to say that this talk about Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu is limited to a few Sargas or a couple of verses only does not refute the argument. But the fallacy of the argument is proved by the fact that depiction of Rāma and his brothers as incarnations of Viṣṇu, and the Vānaras being sons of the gods is not confined to the first and the last books only. There is a large number of instances in the books II to VI wherein Rāma and others have been referred to and identified as incarnations. A few instances are given below:

(A) Before going to Aśokavanika, Hanumān first pays his salutation to Rāma, Lakṣman and Sītā, and then to Rudra, Indra, Anila, Candra, Arka and Marudgana.¹⁷⁷

(B) The soul of Daśaratha is described in the sixth book as honouring Rāma as an incarnation.¹⁷⁸

(C) Rāma is described granting Jāṭāyu a stay in the Loka which are achieved by those who perform a large number of sacrifices and give land to others.¹⁷⁹

(D) To 'Sabri it is said that she would go to desired worlds on seeing Rāma.¹⁸⁰

(E) Hanumān is described saying that there is nothing which is unknown to Rāma.¹⁸¹

(F) Mālyavān, a minister of Rāvana, declares that Rāma is nothing but an incarnation of Viṣṇu.¹⁸²

(G) Rāma himself is shown proclaiming his equality with God 'Śiva, and then saying that his powers in the
use of arms and celestial missiles could be equalled by Śiva only; 183 and to Rāvana he says, "Even if you may go to Indra, Vaivasvat, Bhūskara, Svaśāmbhu, Vaiśvānara or Śaṅkara or run to all the ten directions, you will not escape me today." 184

(B) Brahma himself declares unequivocally that Rāma is the creator of all the worlds and the best of the learned ones. 185 He further adds that Rāma is the Nārāyaṇa, bearing a disc as a weapon, the boar with one horn, the victor of the past and future enemies, the non-perishing Brahma and Satya, the ultimate Dharma of all the worlds and the Viṣvavasena having four arms. 186

(I) Rāma causes salvation of Kabandhā, 187 and his arrows grant Paramagati to Vāli. 188 Moreover, all the gods are shown taking deep interest in Rāma's activities, which apparently point to the statement in the first book.

The instances quoted above have been retained by the critical edition, evincing their MSS support.

Lakṣmana has also been identified with Viṣṇu in the Yuddhakīrti. When hit by Rāvana with a Brahma's dart, he is said to have thought of his partial incarnation of Viṣṇu to become so heavy that Rāvana could not lift him from the ground and so light that Hanumān could easily do so. 189
The relevant question is - why Rāma has been depicted as an incarnation of Viṣṇu as well as a mortal hero in the whole of the epic? The conventional answer can be that Rāma intentionally behaved like a mortal although he was an incarnation, which made him appear in the epic as a god and as a man. A reasonable explanation is, however, provided indirectly by the Arthāṣāstra, for the two-way characterisation of Rāma in the epic, vide its advice to the conqueror for capturing enemy's town. According to Kautilya, the conqueror should fill his own side with enthusiasm and the opposite camp with terror by getting his omniscience and association with divine powers proclaimed through conversation with and worship of agents appearing as deities in fire sanctuaries, via underground passages, looking like Nāgas or Varuṇa, arisen from under the water and showing rows of fire at night inside the water; soothsayers, interpreters of omens, astrologers, reciters of the Purāṇas and secret agents - those who have helped and those who have witnessed - should broadcast that power of the king in his own territory; and in the enemy's territory they should speak of his meeting the gods and acquiring treasure and army from a divine source.

Could it be, therefore, that the proclamation of Rāma's divine origin was a political move, and thereby he came to be known as an incarnation? The internal evidence of the epic answers this in affirmative. According to the epic, a divine figure arose from the fire and presented a
dish of milk-preparation to Daśarathas: Rāma acquired many divine-weapons, talked to the gods and received their advice as well as help in fighting Rāvana. All those could have been the propaganda part of the strategy envisaged by the political Pandits of the times in order to fill their own side with ardour and counter Rāvana's propaganda of having received boons from Brahmā and Śiva. The success of the move can be judged by the results, which are best evident from the views of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and other works.

A further study of the Rāmāyaṇa shows that many of great sages of the epic-period were involved in the strategic move to oust the Rākṣasas from the main land; they helped widely publicise Rāma's divinity. The epic's text even has the testimony that Rāma's exile was an affair arranged in full knowledge of Rāma.¹⁹¹ Many more proofs of the above contention can be cited from the epic.¹⁹²

It is, thus, clear from the internal evidence of the Rāmāyaṇa that the attempt to characterise Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu is not, in any way, more in the first and the last books than in the other books; therefore, these books cannot be separated from the text on this ground. It seems that Rāma had come to be regarded as an incarnation in his own life-time,¹⁹³ as has happened in the case of many great men, and hence does not sound unnatural in a country like ours.
Visn̄u in the Rāmāyaṇa is no doubt a very powerful god, unlike the Visn̄u of Vedas. He is the killer Ṛgū's wife, the measurer of all the worlds in three strides, the supporter of the earth as Kapilā and the destroyer of the demon Nādhu. The gods approach Him for rescue and praise Him after he kills Rāvaṇa. The fact that Kauśalyā has been described worshipping Visn̄u averts that there were Visn̄u-temples in Ayodhya in the times of the Rāmāyaṇa. But Indra's importance was on the decline as is born by the description of his exploits, namely Vṛtra-killing, horse-stealing, dissecting Diti's foetus into parts and, of course, the Ahalyā-episode. He has not been described as the almighty God in any of the chapters but shown needing even human help to fight 'Sambhāra. He is depicted as speaking to Brahmā like a subordinate god, and Khara declares him incapable of facing him. Brahmā is also described in the Rāmāyaṇa as the Supreme God, next to Visn̄u, as almost all the boons are shown being granted by Him. He is described being approached by the gods for help, when in distress, to lead them out of trouble. Visn̄u, on the other hand, is only a destroyer of demons in the Rāmāyaṇa, but a few verses depict him as the cause of the beginning and the end of the world. Brahmā in the Rāmāyaṇa is, thus, not any lesser god than Visn̄u.

The changed position of the gods in the Rāmāyaṇa seems to indicate the trend of the times, which culminated
later in the establishment of Viṣṇu as the Supreme God in most parts of the country. So in the Rāmāyana, we have only glimpses of what was destined to develop later, and that should not surprise anybody.

The Bhaṣaṇārūtī at the end of the book VI provides an opportunity to some to think that the Rāmāyana ended with it. But it should be borne in mind that the poem at the end of the Muḍḍhakāṇḍa is still incomplete even according to the 'index' provided in Nārada's speech, which foretells Rāma's going to heaven after ruling the earth for 10000 years. It is suggested that the verses purporting to show that the Rāmāyana ends with the sixth book are not genuine and must have been added by somebody at a later stage, because Vālmiki could not have described his work as archaic (Arśa), nor could he state that it was written in olden times. Moreover, Vālmiki has himself unambiguously stated that the poem written by him comprises 500 Sargas, describing Rāma's life from the beginning to the end, and that the work contains the Uttarākāṇḍa as well, the main part being known as the Rāmāyana. It has also been stated that the Uttarākāṇḍa contains mainly the activities of Rāṣṭraparṇīsana, banishment of Sītā and what had not happened at the time of the beginning of the book.

The noteworthy thing is that the last book was separated from the rest by Vālmiki himself, declaring at the time that it was written by the poet himself; it has
been referred to as Uttarakāvya also. It cannot be that in all the examples the separation of the Uttarā from the main is due to the requirement of the metre. It can be, therefore, argued that since the last book is shown separately, a Phalāśṛuti was added to the sixth book by somebody to mark the end of the main portion of the total Kāvya.

The argument based on the abnormal colophon at the end of the sixth book should also be rejected on the same grounds. We have another example before us in the form of the Mahābhārata wherein not only the story is completed by describing even the ascent of the Pāṇḍavas to heaven but the story of Kṛṣṇa is also narrated. Here, in the Rāmāyaṇa also, the reader expects of the author to narrate the story up to the death of the hero; the inclusion of Rāvana’s account can find a parallel in the Harivāma.210

It can also be argued that the Mahābhārata is well acquainted with the material in the seventh book. The Āpadādharma in the 'Śāntinārva has the Ādhiḥ-Śāmāṇ dialogue in the cremation ground, over the dead body of a child. The Jackal suggests that there could be every chance of the boy being revived, and to support his point he quotes the example of the dead Brāhmaṇa boy coming to life after Kṛṣṇa had killed 'Sambūka.211 In the Āvamedhikāparva, Vyāsa speaks of the Āvamedha-performance by Rāma,212 which has been described in the Uttarākānda. So, the Rāmāyaṇa could not have ended
with the sixth book. Moreover, the critical edition does not leave any room for a further discussion on the subject by omitting the Bhalaśruti and the colophon on the basis of the insufficient MSS support.

Another argument advanced in favour of the thesis that Bālakānda is a later addition may be taken up here. The argument is that Brahmanism was ascertaining its supremacy over the Iṣatriya-varṇa, which is not supported by the first book wherein Brāhmaṇa Paṇḍuraṇa has been shown humiliated at the hands of Rāma. The book I, in fact, depicts a scene of perfect harmony among the four castes.

We may now examine whether the different chapters of the Rāmāyana reveal any knowledge of one another:

1. In the Bālakānda, the references to Rāvanā suggest that the author is aware of the contents in the seventh book. The book I again manifests its knowledge of the last book when it tells us that nobody saw a son dying during the epic period, this is, obviously, a reference to the 'Sambūka-episode in the book VII.

2. The Uttarakānda exhibits its knowledge of the book VI and the book I by making such statements as: "Sītā had given a proof of her purity in the past (a reference to the fire-ordeal), "the Vānaras entered their own Yonis" and "from meeting with Nārada onwards."
3. Mainda and Dvivida have been called "the sons of the gods Áśvins"\textsuperscript{221}, which again is a clear reference to the contents of the book I.

4. The story of Viśvāmitra given in the Rālakaṇḍa has been referred to in the Kiskindhākaṇḍa, in support of the argument that there was nothing abnormal in Sugrīva's behaviour after achieving power\textsuperscript{222}.

5. Rāma is described quoting the story of Sagarā's sons, learnt by him from Viśvāmitra earlier, in support of his decision to obey his father.\textsuperscript{223} The story of Amaṇḍasa is also briefly repeated\textsuperscript{224} in the Ayodhyākaṇḍa.

6. The book VI evinces its acquaintance with the matter of the book I vide 'Sārdūla's report on Rāma's army'\textsuperscript{225}; we find also the Sea-god telling Rāma about Nala's divine origin.\textsuperscript{226}

These are only a few of the numerous instances found in the Rāmāyaṇa's various books, which show that the epic is a well knitted, homogeneous work from the hand of Vālmiki.

Examined in the light of the authentic ancient Indian literary tradition also, the book one and the seven emerge as integral parts of the Rāmāyaṇa. Without these two books the story of Rāma's sojourn in this world would have been rendered incomplete. A number of important events of the
story, such as Rāma's birth, childhood, early exploits, marriage, events during his rule, Sītā's banishment, birth of Lava and Kuśa, Ávamadha-performance and the end would have remained untold.

A study of Kālidāsa's Raghuvamsa makes it vivid that he had the text of the Rāmāyana including books I and VII before him. Kālidāsa refers to the Kraunca-incident in the Bālakanda and is fully aware of the contents of the book VII. To him, both of these books are the genuine parts of the epic. He has, therefore, followed the story of the Rāmāyana from the Bālakanda to the Uttarakanda and specifically included the account of the origin, rise and fall of the Rākṣasas, giving reasons for its inclusion. The oath of Sītā given in the Raghuvamsa is almost identical with that found in the Uttararāmāyaṇa. In the Raghuvamsa she says:

Vāmanāḥ Karmabhīṣṭaṁ paryayau vyabhicāro yathā nāme,
Tathā Viśvāphare devi māmāntardhātumarhanti.
Raghuvamsa. XV.31.

In the Rāmāyana we find the following verse:

Yathā hāpi Rāghavādanyam manasad pir na cintaye,
Tathā me Mādhavi devi vivaram dātumarhati.
Rām. VII.33.10

Another great poet, Bhavabhūti, who flourished in the 8th century A.D., has also incorporated in his
Utterāparāścarita, several incidents of the seventh book such as Sītā's longing to visit the scenes of their exile-period, the scandal and the consequent banishment, the 'Sāmbūka-episode, etc. Bhavabhūti, moreover, expressly states that his work is only a dramatised form of the story composed by the poet who was conversant with the supreme spirit. He reveals his knowledge of the book I also, since Lava and Kuśa question the propriety of Taṭākā-kiilling by Rāma.

Lastly, it can be said that the clear internal evidences cannot be ignored for the sake of unrealistic conjectures. Vālmīki had set to write the complete story of Rāma. He tried to include more facts and details as the story told by Nārada was brief and incomplete, limited only to Rāma's activities during a particular period i.e. from the exile to coronation, and events of Rāma's childhood and later life had not been accounted for. He collected all the remaining details and compiled the complete story, giving also the circumstances which led him to write the poem. He wrote the account from Rāma's birth to his coronation in six books and the banishment of Sītā and other happenings in the seventh book. The seven books, according to the internal evidence, consisted of five hundred cantos.

The hypothesis based on the extent of the Bhāttikāvya, the Rāmacāndrika, the Pādmapurāṇa, etc. also cannot be given any credence and should be rejected in view of the clear
and conclusive internal and external evidences.\textsuperscript{234} The contention of Shende that the Bhārgavas enlarged the original Rāmāyaṇa,\textsuperscript{235} too, does not convince because of the lack of a clear supporting evidence; more so because the verse referring to a Bhārgava poet has not been accepted as genuine by the critical edition. Moreover, unless it is proved by some evidence that Vālmīki could not or did not complete his work and left the task for others due to unavoidable circumstances, as happened in the case of Bāṇa and Daṇḍin, it cannot be accepted that he did not tell the story from the beginning to the end, particularly when there are clear literary evidences provided by the Mahābhārata, Kālidāsa and others to make us believe otherwise.

The other interesting question is whether Vālmīki was a contemporary of Rāma? We have already discussed that the Rāmāyaṇa was composed before the 6th century B.C. Therefore, Vālmīki lived before that date. The internal evidence shows that he was a contemporary of Rāma and so is believed by the Mahābhārata, Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti. Even then scholars believe that he could not have lived as early as before the 9th century B.C., the date assigned to the Mahābhārata.\textsuperscript{236}

There are, therefore, three possibilities before us: (1) Vālmīki was a contemporary of Rāma and composed his poem when Rāma was ruling.\textsuperscript{237} (2) He was a contemporary
of Rāma and wrote his book in the same circumstances, first, giving the story up to the banishment of Sītā and the birth of two princes, which was recited in Rāma's court, and described the subsequent events later. (3) He was not a contemporary but lived before the times of Pāṇini and the Buddha and wrote the epic.

The second possibility is supported by the internal as well as external evidences and sounds more reasonable; therefore, it should be given preference to the first and third, particularly when there is no authentic proof to support the last and because he could not be expected to write events like Sītā's departure from the scene and Rāma's death and get them recited in the court, too. It is only a question of choosing between the hypotheses and the fact supported by evidences.

The number of the Sargas in the available epic is, of course, larger than five hundred. The Bombay edition has 645 (24049 verses) and the critical edition has 606 Sargas (18766 verses). It is, thus, more than a hundred cantos which might be considered as interpolations.

It is, however, significant that the number of verses believed to be written by Vālmīki has not increased significantly in the Bombay edition and has dropped by more than 5000 in the critical edition, while the Sargas have shot up from 500 to 606 in the latter. This phenomenon cannot be explained simply by saying that more than a hundred
Sargas were added to the genuine book, evidently because that should have increased the number of verses also. A plausible answer for the increase in the number of Sargas can be that it has been due to the liberties taken by the scribes in the form of reconstruction of the cantos of the epic, and that has caused the inflation. The reconstruction obviously did not require any increase in the number of verses of the original poem and, therefore, they have remained around 24,000 in the Bombay edition.

We do not, however, intend to prove that there are no interpolations in the Rāmāyaṇa. Interpolations must have crept in with the long passage of time the epic has taken to reach us and because of the oral transmission of the text; but they could be in the form of a few verses or a few Sargas here and there, and not in the form or size of Kāndas or hundreds of Sargas. In our view, the tradition and the society, which had started treating Rāma as an incarnation and the Rāmāyaṇa as a sacred book, could not have allowed and, at the same time, accepted such an act silently, remaining helpless witnesses of such a grotesque and irresponsible attempt.
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3. Rusalkar, A. D. Vedic Age, p. 269.

4. Agrawal Hansraj, A Brief History of Sanskrit Literature, Foreword.

5. Jacobi, H. das Rāmāyaṇa, p. 100 ff.


8. Monier-Williams, M. Indian Epic Poetry, p. 3; Vaidya C.V. The Riddles of the Rāmāyaṇa, pp. 20 and 51.


11. Nāyakāvākṣara vṛata revān marāyyadhate, Rgveda, X. 60. 4.


14. Pra tadduḥāśe prthavāne vena pra Rāme vocamasure Mahāvastu,
    De yuktavāya pāngaṣṭāsmayu pathā viśvāyogām Rgveda, X. 93. 4.

15. Altareya Br. VII. 27-34.
18. ‘Satapatha Br. I.6.1.2.
20. Kṛṣṇa-jurvedīya Taittirīya Br. III.10.9; ‘Satapatha Br. XI.3.1.2-4, XI.4.3.20, XI.6.2.1-10, XI.6.3.1; Jaiminiya Br. II.76-77; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. III.1.1-2.
21.Ṛgveda, I.140.4, IV.7.7; Atharvaveda, I.3.12; Yajurveda (Kāṭhaka Sāṁhitā), XX.3; Kapisthala Sāṁhitā, XXXII.5-6; Maitrīyaṇi Sāṁhitā, III.2.4-5; Taittirīya Sāṁhitā, V.2.5.5; ‘Satapatha Br. XIII.9.2.6-7; Taittirīya Br. (K. Yajurveda) II.3.10.
21A. Buleke, C. Rāmakathā-Utpatti aur Vikāsa, pp.32-34.
22. op.cit.
23. Api Cāyaṃ purā gītāḥ ‘sloka Vālmikināh bhuvi,
Na Ca hastavyah striyaśceti Yadṛaviṣi Plāveṇgama,
Piśākārmanitrāṇam yatsyat kartavyam eva tat.

Mbh. Dronaparva, 118.48.

(The second line has been omitted in the critical edition).
26. Aṣṭādhṛṣṭi, VII.3.2.
27. Ibid, V.1.155.
28. Ibid, VI.2.122.
29. See Buleke, op.cit. p.32.
32. Vaiṣṇavism 'Said'm, p.47.
33. Viśṇudharmottara Purāṇa, III. 85.62.
34. Brahmasphatī, 33.30.
36. Kuśāti yadi kākutsthak kim na sāgaramkhālan,
Mahīṃ dāhāti kopenhā yugāntānirañjīhitah. Rṣa. V.34.12.
38. See Macdonell, HSI, p.236.
39. Paśaḥ Rāmāyaṇam Vyāsa kāvyabījanāmnātanaṁ,
Yatra Rāmacaritraṁ syāt tadāhaṁ tatraśākṣitaṁ. Rāmāyaṇa pathitam me prasamo/mi kṛtatvayāṁ,
Kariṣyāmi purāṇāṁ Mahābhāratam eva ca.

Rāmdharmam Purāṇa, I.30.47,51,55.

40. Ramasastri, K.S. Studies in Rāmāyaṇa - Riddles of Rāmāyaṇa, Book II, p.1 : It says, "A curious K.S is that of Rāmāyaṇa Tatparyādiṇī which is said to have been an exposition of the meaning of the Rāmāyaṇa by Vyāsa at the request of Yuddhikīṁtha."

41. Brāhmatā namsa guṇālāghāvo buddhisattvabātānivīteḥ,
Rāmāyaṇe suvīkhyātāṁ 'śūro Vānarapūṇgavaḥ.

Mbh. Ar.P. 47.11.

42. Ṛṣi. IV.65.
43. Ṛṣi. VII.35-36.
44. Vedī Rāmāyaṇe punye Bhārate Bhāratasahāḥ,
46. See Buleke, op.cit. p.48.
47. Mbh. Ar. P. 147.23-38 (Gītā Press ed.)
48. Mbh. Dr. P. 55 (Gītā Press ed.)
49. Mbh. IS.P. 29. 46-55.
51. Rām. I.1.76.
52. Mbh. Ar. P. 147.28; 260.5; 299.18.
53. Rām. VII. 74-88.
57. MMR.
58. For Janaka's dynasty see Farjitar, F.E. Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, London 1922, pp. 64, 94, 141.
60. Rām. I.66.27.
61. Rām. I.69.7.
62. MMR pp. 148-156.
63. See Rusalkar, op.cit. p. XXIV.
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73. Ibid.
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77. Banerji, P. Krishna in Indian Art.
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80. Rhys Davids, T.W. Buddhist India, p. 83.
81. op. cit. p. 508 ff.
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84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Winternitz, op. cit. p. 514.
88. Weber, A. On the Ramayana, IA. 1872 & 1873 (Bom);
89. Jaskobi, op. cit. p. 94 ff.; Telang, K.T. Was Ramayana
 copied from Homer, IA. 1873 (Bom); Monier Williams,
 Indian Wisdom, p. 316; Macdonell, op.cit. p. 302.
90. Cf. Winternitz, op. cit. pp. 514-15; Macdonell, BSL,
p. 306; Basalkar, op.cit. p.XXXIX: he quotes Telang,
Vaidya, Hopkins and others to support his view.
92. Ibid, p. 309.
95. Rām. I.3.2.
96. Rām. I.3.4-29.
97. Drāpyatājyasā Rūpasya Vālmīkībhagavāṃśiḥ,
98. Vālmīkībhagavāṃkarta samprāpta yajnasamvidham,
   Yonedam caritam tadbhūmaśeṣam saṃpradarātāṁ,
   Ādiprabhṛti vai rājan pācascargaśatāṁca,
   Pratīṣṭhā jīvitaṁ yāvat tāvat sarvasya vartato.
   Rām. VII.85. 12-20.
99. Drāvytāmaditavā pūrvam sargaṇāmśadadārasanāt,
   Rām. VII.84.11.
100. Nāb. Dr. P. 118.48.
101. Rām. VI.68.27.
103. Garudapurāṇa, Part I, 143.
104. Harivaṃśa, Vissuparva, 93. 6-33.
105. Kaviḥ maśedhābhaṁśya yataḥ niśādvidābhāṇḍajah,
   Darśanottāḥ 'slokātvarmapadyata yasya 'sokah.
   Raghavaṃśa, XIV.70.
   Fürvaiḥ sūribhiḥ kaviḥbhīrvalmīkyādibhiḥ,
   Raghavaṃśa, II.4.
106. 5.30, 5.36, 9.4, 18.6.
107. See Bulcke, op. cit. p. 35.
109. Ibid, XII. 100-104.
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114. Ibid, Ar. P. 83.102.
115. Ibid, Ud. P. 81.27.
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Vivāde suṇāṁunibhirbrahmāṅho vai bhagavāṇīti.
Uktāḥ kaṇeṇa ca viṣṭastenaḥ dharmaṁ Bhārata,
Sahānam ananām bhūmamvaḥ samāyate svarnam gataḥ.
Muktasyaśmi tataḥ pāpaistato duḥkhvināśeṇaḥ,
Āha mam tripurghno vai yaśaste/grapaṣ bhavisyati.
118. See Bulcke, op. cit. p. 39.
120. Ibid, Avantikhaṇḍa, 24.
121. Ibid, Nāgarakhaṇḍa, 124.
122. Ibid, Abhūsakhaṇḍa, 298.
123. Ādhyatma Rāmāyaṇa, Ay. kāṇḍa, 6.42-88.
125. Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa, Rājya-kāṇḍa, 14.
126. See kṛtivāsīya Rāmāyaṇa.
127A. Torve Ramayana, I.2.
129. Bahar Hardeva, Lalabega ki Ugpatti, Janapada(Kashi)
130. Uriya Mahabharata (Saradass).
131. Ramsarikavati (Raghuraja Singh)
132. Vismudharmottara Puraja, 118.3; 119.5; 120.5.
133. Rām. I. 1.1.
135. Rām. I. 2.4.
136. Rām. I. 4.4; VII.49.2.
137. Rām. VII.49.1, 3, 4, 7.
138. Rām. VII.49.7.
139. Rām. VII. 49.3.
140. Rām. VII. 46.16.
140A. Rām. I. 34.
141. Pracetasa/dam dasamah putro Rāghavanandana,
Na Smarāmyanrtam vākyam tathemau tavaputrakau.
Rām. VII.37.17.
142. Rām. I.2.3.
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144. Svasti vo/stu gamisyami siddha Siddhāramadham,
145. op. cit. p. 36.
146. Priyamanā naravyāgra Yasunātiravasinaḥ, Rām.VII.52.2.
147. Rām. VII.71.
149. Rgveda, VI.65; X.16.
151. Bhāgavatapurāṇa, VI.18.1.
152. Rām. I.69-70.
154. op. cit.
155. op. cit.
156. Pururājanugato dūrasya pitrā Daśarathena ca, Rām.I.1.25.
158. Tatas Sugrīvavaranādhatvā Vālmīkaḥ, Rām. I.1.55.
159. Rām. IV. 15-16.
160. The Gitapress ed. of the Rāmāyaṇa has retained the reference to the fire ordeal in the first Sarga of the Bk but the critical edition (Baroda) has omitted it as an interpolation.
161. Daśavarṣasaharsaṁ Daśavarṣasatānica,
Rāmo rājyaānupāṣaṅgav Bhramalokam Prayaśyati. Rām.I.1.76.
165. Rām. III. 17.3.
166. The critical edition includes the few 'alokas referring to Bharata's departure to his maternal grandfather's kingdom in the Ayodhyākānda, Sarga I. The question of contradiction is, thus, solved.
167. Ḫaṃ bruvānem Bhrataḥ Kauśalyasutabravīt, Ṛm. II.104.20.
168. Ḫaṃ sukto mahāprājñā Vaśīsthāṇ Pratyuvācaḥ, Ṛm. II.105.11.
169. Ṛm. III. 5. 19-20.
170. Ṛm. III.9. 9-16.
171. Ṛm. IV. 57 and 60.
172. Ṛm. V.20.
173. Ṛm. V. 56.65.
174. Ṛm. V. 39.
175. Ṛm. V.1.95.
176. Ṛm. V.56.11.
177. Namo/stu āmasya salakṣaṇaṇāya devaśī ca tasyai Janakatmajai,
Namo/stu Rudrindrayamānilabhya namo/stu Candrārkāmarud
ganēbhyaḥ. Ṛm. V.11.59.
178. Idānāṃ ca vijñānāṃ yathā saumya saurēvarāh,
Vadārtham Kṛṣṇasya vihitam puruṣottaman. Ṛm.VI.107.17.
179. Yā gatirajnaśīlānāmabheriṣṇaḥ ca yā gatiḥ,
Aparāvartīnām ya ca bhūmipradūtiṇām.
Māyā tvam samāṇyāto gacchalośametamān,
Grāhamāja mahāṣatva saṃśādāyā ca mayā vraja.
Ṛm. III.64. 29-30.
180. Tasm ca drātvā varamlokośāmānāt vam ganiṣyasi,
Ṛm. III.70.12.
181. Ajñātām nāsti te kṣīcitṛīṣu lokoṣu Rāghava,
Ātmānes pujayaṁma prabhayassām naḥśrīttaya. Ṛm.VI.11.26.
182. Viṣṇu mānāsāḥ Rāmaḥ mānuṣaḥ dehamāstitam,
Na hi mānuṣamātro/sau Rāghavo drāhāvikramāḥ. Ṛm.VI.26.31.
183. Etyastra-balam divyam mama va trayambakasya va.  
Rām. VI. 81. 3.

184. Yadvindraivalvasvantabharākāraṃ svambhūvaiśvānara  
'sambharaṇa, Gamiṣyasi tvam dasa va diśo va tathāpit  
me nādyagato vimokṣyase.  Rām. VI. 47. 122.

185. Karta sarvasyaloekaṣaya 'sreṣṭho jñāṇvatāṃ varah,  
Upekiṣase katham Sītāṃ patantiṃ havyavahane. Rām. VI. 105. 5.

186. Bhagavānārāyaṇe devah 'arīmāṇācakrañcudho vihhāh,  
Eṣāṃ varāhaṃ bhūta bhavyasapatanajita.  
Aksaraṃ Brahmāsatyaṃ ca madhye cānte ca Rāghava,  
Lakṣmana tvam para dharmo Viṣṇuṣenaścaturbhujaḥ.  


188. Rām. IV. 17. 8.

189. Viṣṇusacintyam svam bhūgaṃtmaṃ Pratyamnarat.  
Rām. VI. 7. 104.

190. Arthasastra, XIII.1.1-8.

191. Cf. Agastya says to Rāma:  
Ānītaṇvamānam deśasupāyena mahāraṣṭibhiḥ,  
Eṣāṃ vadārthaṃ krūrānam rākṣasām pāpakarmām.  
Rām. III. 29. 31.

Earlier Rāma says:  
Bhavatāmarthaśiddhyarthamāgataḥ saṃ yastrecheṣāh,  
Tasya me/yam vane vāso bhaviṣyatī me haṁphalaḥ.  
Rām. III. 5. 20.

On seeing Sītā being abducted, the sages say:  
Kṛtamūryamiti 'arīmāṇvajahāra pitāmahah. Rām. III. 5. 11.

193. Not only Rāma and his brothers have been depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa as incarnations of God Viṣṇu but the Vānaras also are proclaimed in the book VI to have a divine origin; for example:

Daśāvānarakotyaśca rūpānaṁ yaddbākekapinināṁ,
'Srimatam devaputrānaṁ 'sesānādhyātamutasahe.

Rām VI.21.29.


196. Rām. I.75.17.

197. Rām. VI.105.

198. Rām. I.23


201. Rām. I.47.


204. Rām. III.18.

205. Brahmā has been described in the epic as having four faces and as Kaḥāteja (I.2.22). The 'sloka metre is created by his vīl(I.2.30); he orders the gods to produce sons on the earth in the forms of Vānaras, Rāṣas etc.(I.16); he allows Gāṅgā to come down from heaven, on being pleased by Bagāratha(I.41);
he elevates the earth as Varaha (II.102.3); he makes Virāgha unkillable by weapons (III.2-4); he gives 
Abhaya to Rāvana from all except men (III.30). In 
other kāṇdas, too, the supremacy of Brahmā is galore.

206. Agrawal Jagannath, op.cit.; Shah, U.P. Rāmāyana (Cr.ed.)
Book VII. Introduction.

207. Ādiprabhṛti vai rājan —— Rām. VII.35.20.

208. Etāvedvākhyanaṁ sottaraṁ Brahmaṇūjītan,
Rāmāyanaṁiti khyatam mukhyam Vālmūkinā kītam.
Rām. VII.100.26.

209. Svāṣṭraraṇānam caiva vaidehyāśca visarjanam,


211. Mbh. XII.149.


213. Sankalia, H.D. Bālakāṇḍa in Historio Perspective,
Indds, March, 78. Vol.15, No.I.

214. Kṣatram brahmamukham cāsid vaiśyāh kṣatramāxvatatah,
'Sūdrāḥ svakaraniratāstrīṇ varṇāmupacārinah.'
Rām.I.6.17.

215. Cf. Paulastyavamśa prabhavo Rāvano nāma rākṣasah,
Sa Brahmanā dattavarastraḷokyaṁ būḥate bhṛṣam.
Mahābhāro maḥāvīrya rākṣasaṁbhubhivṛtah,
'Srūyante ca mahārāja Rāvano rākṣasādhipah.'
Sakṣaḍvaiśravāṇaḥbhūtāṁ putro viśravaso mūrṣah.
216. Rām. VII. 1-14.
217. Na putramaraṇaṁ kaciddraksyaṁ puruṣah kvacit,

Rām. I. 1. 72.
218. Pratayayō hi purā datto, Rām. VII. 88. 3.
219. Vānarāśca svakām yoni, Rām. VII. 100. 18.
220. Nāradādarāsanāt, Rām. VII. 85. 11.
221. Rām. V. 53. 13-14.
222. Prāptakalām na jñāte Viśvāmitro yathā munih, Rām. IV. 34. 6.
223. Asmaṇāṁ ca kule pūrvaṁ sagarasyājñāyā pituh, Rām. II. 18. 28.
224. Asmaṇio grhitvā tu kṛjataḥ pathi dārakāṁ,
Sāryvāḥ prakṣipannapu rasate tena durmatiḥ.

Rām. II. 32. 15 and ff.
227. Sabhājanayopagatān divyān muninpuraskṛtya hasyata 'satroḥ,
'Suśrava tebhyaḥ prabhavedivrtte svaviksma gaurava-
mādadhānam.
Raghuvansā, XIV. 18.
228. Tametāṁ paribhāyantvabhinayairvinyastorūpāṁ budhāh,
'Sabdabrahmakaveḥ parinātaṁ prajñayasya vārunīmām.
Utterarāmaśrit, VII. 20.
229. Dr. Sankalia (Indica) quotes this to prove that the
Bālakṛṣṇa is a later addition. He has failed to
appreciate that by quoting the Tāṭākū episode the poet
has conceded that the first book is an integral part
of the original Rāmāyaṇa.

The two singers Lava and Kuśa are said to have recited the poem from Vālmīki's meeting with Nārāda (VII.85.11).


The critical edition contains only the verses giving out the name of the author and the number of the Sargas, and omits the rest which gives also the number of the 'slokas. The critical edition, therefore, does not allow the question "kim pramāṇaḥ" (VII.85.18) to be fully answered, while in the Gitāpress edition the question is fully answered.


236. Lal, B.B. MMR.


238. Tamāṁ gīte tu vijñāya Šītāpurāṇa kuśilavu,

Tasyāḥ pariṣadā mādhye Rāmo vacanamahovite.

Rām. VII. 85.2.

It can be inferred from the above verse that the recitation by the two singers ended with the information that Šītā had given birth to two sons and that those two sons were taught the recitation of the Rāmāyaṇa. The later events must have been incorporated by the poet himself at a later stage. It is not possible to believe that the two singers sang the Rāmāyaṇa to the end including description of Šītā's going underground and also the later events.