

Epilogue of Ramayana

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CHAPTER - III

GROWTH OF THE RAMAYANA

Valmiki's original Ramayana was expanded in five successive stages by Suta and his son Sauti, Harivamshakara, Parvasangraha-kara and the author of the U-style by the addition of some imaginary characters and events and myths and legends. Of these the first four redactors have made additions in the Mahabharata also (see Chapter 5). Valmiki's original Ramayana is designated by VR, the additions made by Suta as SR, the additions made by Sauti as R (Sauti) and the additions made by author of the Parvasangraha as PR.

Suta tells us that after the asvamedha sacrifice, the king in his anxiety for an heir, performed the putreshti sacrifice also. At the gods request Vishnu agreed to incarnate himself as the four sons of Dasharatha in order to destroy their oppressor Ravana, the Rakshasa king of Lanka (1. 14-15). The other gods too agreed to take birth as Vanaras (1. 16).

The original Ramayana does not contain any description of the childhood and youth of the four princes or of their education and training. This, however, as pointed out by Brockington (p. 183) is due to the lack of interest in the prince's youth rather than the absence of such training. Suta has introduced the Vishvamitra episode to fill in this gap. He must have also felt that the account given by Sita to Atri's wife

Anusuya of her marriage with Raama (2. 110) did not do full justice to that great event.

Vishvamitra arrived in the court of Dasharatha (1. 1. 17b) and sought the help of Raama for the protection of his sacrifice against the depredation of the Rakshasas. The king hesitated saying that Raama was not yet fifteen and not well-instructed in the use of arms. On the advice of the royal priest Vasishtha, he reluctantly agreed. Raama and Lakshmana accompanied the sage who trained them in the use of missiles (1. 18-21). It is said that thereafter Vishvamitra imparted to Raama the vidyas named Bala and atibala (1. 21. 14-18), where vidya means occult knowledge or spell. Subsequently we are told how the sage secured divine weapons and instructed Raama in the use of these weapons, which are listed in sargas 1. 26-27. Later we are told that this knowledge of archery and missiles was secured by him from Lord Shiva, after propitiating him through arduous penance (1. 54. 16). When the sacrifice was begun, Rakshasas led by Marica and Subahu assailed it. With one of his missiles, Raama hurled Marica hundred yojanas away into the ocean and killed Subahu. Then under their protection, the sacrifice was completed without interruption.

Vishvamitra then took Raama and Lakshmana to Mithila to attend King Janaka's sacrifice. On the way they went through Visala, where Ahalya was lying turned into a stone by the curse of her husband Gautama. She had incurred this curse as she had succumbed to the seduction of Indra. At the suggestion of Vishvamitra, Raama touched the stone with his foot and released her from the curse (1. 47. 48). There at Mithila, they came to know about the miraculous birth of Sita and the resolve of Janaka, king of Mithila, to wed her to one who strings Shiva's bow (1. 66). Raama strung Shiva's bow, but it broke while he was stringing it. With the consent of Dasharatha, Raama wed Sita, Lakshmana her sister Urmila, and Bharata and Shatrughna her cousins. Raama then had to fight with the irate

Bhargava Raama who was angry with him for having dared to break Shiva's bow. The fight ended happily with Bhargava Raama acknowledging the superiority of Raama (1. 73-75).

The author of the U-style has interpolated the sargas (3, 22-28), which narrate the story of Rakshasi Tataka and give an account of the Siddhashrama of Vishvamitra. The sage told Raama that princes have the primary duty to protect their subjects and that he should feel no scruples in killing a dare-devil like Tataka. He also quoted precedents in this regard. Even when Tataka made a vicious attack on them, Raama hesitated to kill her and tried to put her out of action by chopping off her hands. But when he found that she was still capable of great mischief, he made an end of her (1. 25).

In the Ayodhyakanda, the sargas 74, 75, 77 have been added by Suta (see App. Paper HI, para 8). Bharata decided to visit Raama to persuade him to return to Ayodhya and took with him a large army. He constructed a road by filling up dips, levelling bumps, building bridges and even planting trees on the roadside. Sankalia remarks that the various artisans, technicians, craftsmen and engineers engaged in the construction of the road would do credit to a modern municipal corporation and public works department. The view of the Critical Editor that we get here a list of trades and professions known to the age of Valmiki is not correct (Critical Note 77). They were known to Suta who lived in the fifth century B. C.

In sarga 2. 94 Raama naturally questioned Bharata as to why he had come to the forest and then asked him a series of questions about his rule in Ayodhya. If Raama had waited for Bharata's reply, he would have come to know that Bharata had not accepted the kingship. In his note on the Addenda and Corrigenda to the Sabhaparva of Mbh. (pp. 489-91), Prof. Edgerton had pointed out that about 37 stanzas of the

Ramayana have their parallel in the Mbh. 11. 5. The Critical Editor (Critical Note 94) says that the kaccit sarga 94 is a later addition in imitation of Mbh. 11.5. In my study of the Mahabharata, it was found that the kaccit sarga in the Mbh. was added by Sauti (MGG. P. 157). The statistical evidence suggests that the Sarga 94 was added by Harivamshakara, who modelled it on the kaccit sarga in the Mbh. (see App. Paper III, para 11).

Sankalia (pp. 57-58) questions the propriety of the royal reception given by Bharadvaja to Bharata and his party (sarga 85). He says that instead of offering them a fare suitable to his style of living and the occasion, he regaled them by using his magical powers with a sumptuous feast with choicest women and meat dishes. The occasion is also not appropriate as the entire party is in mourning. It is found that this sarga was added by the Parvasangraha-kara in the 1st century B. C. (App. Paper III, para 10). So Sankalia's guess that this interpolation could have taken place at a time, when owing to the increasing trade with the Roman world, wine and women were freely entering India and regularly sought after by kings and the people turns out to be correct.

As many as 59 sargas have been added by the author of the U-style. The important additions made by this author are the Manthara episode and the story of Guha. The author says that the exile of Raama is due mostly to the machinations of Manthara, maid of Kaikeyi. Three sargas (2. 7-9) relate to the role of Manthara in bringing about Raama's exile. He has also inserted sarga 2.72, in which Bharata is shown to have become furious at the sight of Manthara, when he returned to Ayodhya after his father's death. This author has also added the scenes of grief and lamentation such as Dasharatha's grief (2. 12), laments of Kausalya and the citizens of Ayodhya (2. 38, 40) and of the female folk of Ayodhya at the time of departure of Raama (2.42), Raama's commiseration over his parent's lot and Kausalya's wail on the return of Sumanta (2. 54).

Sargas 2, 44-45, which recount Raama's meeting with Guha, the Nishada Chief, as well as the sargas 2.78-81 which narrate Bharata's encounter with Guha have also been added by the same author. When Guha saw Bharata's vast army, he suspected his intentions but welcomed him after taking necessary precautions. But when Bharata disclosed his intention, his doubts were cleared and he narrated to Bharata the state of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita in exile. Sarga 2.83, which was originally included in the R-group describes Guha's encounter with Bharata. This sarga also belongs to the U-group (see Appendix Paper fff, pars 9).

The preservation of the body of Dasharatha after his death until Bharata's arrival (2. 60) and the performance of funeral rites (2. 70-71) have also been inserted by him. Immediately after Dasharatha's death (2. 59), it is stated that his body was immersed in oil until the return of Bharata (2. 60, 12-14). After Bharata's return, the body of Dasharatha was cremated and a ten-day period of mourning was observed (2. 70-71). But when Bharata, along with his three widowed mothers, met Raama at Citrakuta and informed him of their father's death, Raama, Lakshmana and Sita performed jalakriya, and gave the ablutions (2. 95, 21-33). This means that the body of Dasharatha must have been cremated immediately after his death before the return of Bharata, according to the Hindu custom. This is confirmed by the statistical study as the sargas 2..60, 70,71 exhibit the U-style. The preservation of a dead body by its immersion in a tub filled with oil is mentioned in the Shrautasutras, whose date is about 4th century B. C. The Mahaparinibbanasutta, which is a work of about the third century B. C. also describes how Buddha's body was wrapped up in a new cloth and placed in an iron tub filled with oil and then covered up by another iron vessel (Kane Vol. V, pp. 234-35). The author of the U-style must have come to know of this practice and incorporated it in the text.

When Bharata entreated Raama to return to Ayodhya, Jabali, who is a materio-politically minded philosopher advised

him to return to Ayodhya, to which Raama gave a fitting retort that he would stick to the truth (2. 100-101). When Bharata still went on pressing him to return to Ayodhya, he tactfully declined by telling him that as a dutiful son, he ought to keep his father's promise. Bharata took his sandals, returned to Nandigram and ruled in the name of Raama (2. 105-107).

The Suta has added 37 sargas to the Aranyakanda. Sargas 16-17 describe the visit of Shurpanakha to Raama's ashrama. Seeing the handsome looks of Raama, she took a fancy to him (3. 16. 5). The poet makes fun of her by describing the contrast between their looks (3. 16, 8-10), which would strike a modern man as in bad taste. Raama told her in jest that he was already married and she should woo his younger brother, who was good-looking, well behaved and unmarried (akritadara). Commentator Govindaraja has tried to justify this untruth by saying that Raama would not speak an untruth even in jest and what he really meant was that Lakshmana was akritasahadara, i.e. one who was then without a wife. When Shurpanakha found that her advances were rejected, she went to attack Sita. So Lakshmana cut off her nose and ears as a punishment (3. 16-17).

To avenge her, her brother Khara sent two generals, Dushana and Trishiras, with an army to kill the brothers. Raama single-handedly killed both the generals (3. 26) and finally Khara himself (2. 27-28). Shurpanakha then went to Lanka and told her brother Ravana about her mutilation by Lakshmana and the death of their brother Khara at the hands of Raama and incited him to take by force Raama's beautiful wife Sita. Ravana revealed his plan of abducting Sita to Marica. Marica tried to dissuade him from carrying out his evil design and warned him that by doing so he would ruin himself and his kingdom. When Ravana threatened to kill him for disobedience, he reluctantly assumed the form of a golden deer and roamed about Raama as to catch the eye of Sita. Sita entreated Rama to get her that enchanting deer. Lakshmana warned that this may be the trickery of some Rakshasa, but

Raama went after the golden deer. When Raama suspected that some Rakshasa had assumed the form of the deer, he killed it and hastened back to his ashrama (3. 30-42). Ravana by then had forcibly seized Sita and carried her off to Lanka (3. 51).

When Raama did not find Sita in the ashram, he blamed Lakshmana for coming alone and feared the loss of Sita. His sorrow changed into anger and he thought of annihilating the world, but Lakshmana dissuaded him from carrying out this rash resolve (3. 61, 62). Sargas 65-69 describe his meeting with Kabandha, who told Raama about Sugriva and asked him to take his help. While, on his way to Sugriva's hide-out, Raama met an ascetic tribal woman Shabari, who welcomed him and extended to them hospitality with pure devotion (3. 70). The Harivamshakara and the author of the U-style have made no additions to the Aranyakanda.

In Kiskindhakanda, Suta has added the sargas 29-35. At the end of the, rainy season, Raama saw Sugriva immersed in sensual pleasures and showing no initiative to send a search party for Sita. He therefore had Lakshmana to warn Sugriva of the evil consequences of not honouring his pledge. An irate Lakshmana went to Kishkindha to convey Raama's reprimand to him. In the meantime Hanuman reminded Sugriva again to organise a search party, forgetting that Sugriva had already issued orders in this regard. Lakshmana bitterly reproached Sugriva, but Tara pacified him by telling him that Sugriva had already taken action to assemble the party. Lakshmana was convinced of Sugriva's sincerity and requested him to call on Raama and tell him about it (4. 29-35). This shows that the description of the Kiskindhakanda as a city with palatial buildings, spacious highways and flowery gardens (4. 30, 32) belongs to the 5th century B. C.

The Harivamshakara has added sargas 39-42, which describe how Sugriva sent search parties to the East, West, South and North. These are clearly later additions, as Sugriva

knew that Sita was carried by a Rakshasa king in the southern direction. Although all these four sargas exhibit the C-style, it is obvious that a search party headed by Angada was sent to the South and so stanzas 1-8 of sarga 40 only seem to belong to the original Ramayana. The remaining stanzas mention that the Vanaras crossed the rivers Narmada, Godavari, Krishnaveni, Varada and Kaveri and went through the countries, inter alia, Andhra, Pundra, Chola, Pandya and Kerala. The Critical Editor (Intr. XXXVI, XXXVII) points out that the above sargas bear a close similarity with Harivamsha III (46-52 ff). This is a striking corroboration of the statistical analysis which shows that these sargas were composed and added by Harivamshakara. These sargas are also stated to be very similar to the Matsyapurana (adhy. 163), which seems to have borrowed it from the Ramayana.

The author of the U-style had added the sargas 44-54 and 59-62. In sargas 44-54, it is stated that the search parties which had been sent to the East, West and North returned without any result. The Vanaras who had gone to the South saw the rikshabila and entered it. It is said that this bila was made by Maya, who lived there with a nymph called Hema. Maya had two sons named Mayavin and Dundubhi (4. 7-12). There the Vanaras met a female ascetic Svayamprabha to whom Hanuman explained their mission. She offered them food and water and led them out of the cave. She took them to a place from where she showed them the Prasravana mountain and the sea. Unable to keep to the schedule, Angada and his party resolved to fast unto death against the advice of Hanuman.

Sarga 43 also belongs to the U-group (App. Paper III, para 14). Sarga 43 states that Raama gave to Hanuman his signet ring bearing his name (svanamankopasobhitam). Later Hanuman presented it to Sita this ring bearing the name of Raama Raamanamankita (5. 34. 2). On this Sankalia observes p. 56) that as far as we knew, the earlier rings in India, from about 2500 B. C. to the first century B. C. were all simple round

wires of copper, bronze or terracota (those of gold seem to have disappeared). He further added that no ring except the one from Harappa has a bezel, i.e. a flat broad space on which a name can be inscribed. However, the same compound Raamanamankita is used in the case of arrows of Raama in verse 25 of sarga 6.52, which has been added by Harivamshakara. The author of the U-style, after adding sarga 47, seems to have added the stanzas 5.34.2 and 6.52.25.

The sargas 59-62 contain the story of sage Nishakara as told by Sampati. Sampati told the vanaras that he met sage Nishakara and acquainted him with the story of his life. Sage Nishakara then told him that he foresaw that Sampati would meet the Vanaras sent by Raama in search of his wife Sita and that he (Sampati) would regain his burnt wings, strength and vigour thereafter. This prophesy came true as foretold.

The Suta has made no additions to the Sundarakanda. The Harivamshakara had added the sargas 2-21 to this Kanda. These sargas relate how Hanuman assumed a minute form and searched for Sita in the palaces of Ravana and others.

In the Sundarakanda the lines 41-190 in the first sarga and 113 lines of sarga 56 have been added by the Parvasanrahakara. The former verses relate how Hanuman while crossing the sea was requested by the Mainaka mountain to rest on its peak and how his path was later blocked by Surasa, who was sent by the gods to test his prowess and presence of mind. He came off well in this test. The latter verses relate how the demoness Simhika wanted to devour him and was killed by him.

Sargas 32-65 of the Yuddhakanda have been added by Harivamshakara. These sargas describe the exploits of Indrajit. Indrajit put Raama and Lakshmana out of action by magic by binding them with the nagapasha to the horror of Vanaras, but they were miraculously freed by Garuda at the supplication of Hanuman (6. 32-40). Then followed a series of duels in which

the most fearsome warriors were slain by Raama, Lakshmana and the Vanara chiefs (6. 41-46). During this time, Raama over-powered Ravana, but spared his life (6. 47). The Rakshasas then made desperate efforts to wake up Kumbhakarna, the terrible brother of Ravana, who had fallen into deep sleep because of the boon of Brahmaa (6. 49). After he had caused some havoc among the Vanaras, he was eventually slain by Raama (6. 55). His sons also shared the same fate at the hands of Raama and L.akshmana (6. 63-64).

Although the sargas 103-108 were originally included in the R-group, it was found on further scrutiny that they disclosed the alpha-style and were added by Suta (see R. App. Paper III, pars 16). When Sita came before Raama after the death of Ravana, he gave her a sullen look and told her that he had destroyed the Rakshasa king, who had carried her away, proved his prowess and vindicated his honour. Sita at once saw that a tragic fate was in store for her and looked at him with eyes full of tears and a dread as of a hind about to be attacked by a hunter. He told her that as she had a stain on her character, he could not accept her as his wife and that she was free to go her own way. Sita decided to undergo ordeal by fire to prove her chastity. Agni, the fire god, handed her back unscathed to her husband. Gods came there along with Dasharatha and testified to the purity of Sita. Dasharatha told Raama to return to Ayodhya and rule his kingdom. The gods told Raama that he was an incarnation of Vishnu (6. 105-14). At the request of Raama Indra restored all the dead Vanaras and warriors (6. 108).

That the fire ordeal did not take place finds overwhelming corroboration in the internal evidence. This episode is omitted by the different versions of the Northern recension. It also does not figure in the short summary (1.1) (see Critical Note 1.1, 66). When Raama sent Hanuman in advance to find out Bharata's reaction to his return to Ayodhya, Hanuman narrated to Bharata, as requested by him, all the events that had taken

place after his departure from Citrakuta. Hanuman does not mention the fire ordeal by Sita, which is ascribed by commentators to his lapse of memory. Again we get different accounts of this episode in the Yuddhakanda and Uttarakanda of Ramayana and in the Ramopakhyana in the Mahabharata. In the Yuddhakanda it is stated that Sita was restored to Raama by Agni (6. 106), while Raama told his brothers, in Uttarakanda, 44.8, that she was delivered to him by Lord Mahendra. The fire ordeal finds no mention in the Ramopakhyana added by Harivarnshakara (Mbh. III 275), where he says that it was Vayu who testified the purity of Sita.

The whole of Uttarakanda is a later interpolation by Sauti, Harivarnshakara and the author of the U-style. The Uttarakanda, as its name suggests, describes the later events in Raama's life after his victorious return to Ayodhya. But curiously it starts with the earlier history of Lanka, which came to be ruled successively by Malyavat, Sumali and Mali, then by Vaisravana, also known as Kubera and then by Ravana. This story is told by Agastya, who visits Ayodhya after Raama's coronation.

The sargas 1-22 and 33-40 have been added by Sauti and sargas 23-32 by Harivarnshakara. Sage Agastya told Raama that Vaisravas was the son of Pulastya, a mind-born son of Brahmaa. His son Vaishravana practised severe penance, as a result of which Brahmaa gave him the Pushpaka chariot and made him the Lord of wealth and the guardian of the northern quarter. On the advice of his father, Kubera settled down with his thousands of Yakshas in Lanka, which was abandoned by the Rakshasas, and lived there peacefully until he was dispossessed by his step brother Ravana (1-3).

Earlier Lanka, which was built by The divine architect, Vishvakarman, was occupied by three Rakshasas Malyavat, Sumali and Mali, who grew up to be fierce warriors and started persecuting the gods. The gods prayed to Lord Vishnu to protect them and in the war that ensued Vishnu cut off the head

of Mali and routed the Rakshasa army with his Saranga bow. Dreading the might of Vishnu Malyavat and Sumali fled to the nether regions (patala) with their wives and followers. In course of time Sumali returned to the earth. One day he saw Vaishravana going in his Pushpaka chariot on a visit to his father. Filled with envy he persuaded his daughter Kaikasi to approach Vishravas and beg for a son. As she approached him at an inauspicious hour, he said that she would give birth to dreadful and cruel sons. When she appealed to him to give her a son like him, he softened and said that her last son would be a righteous person worthy of him. In due course, Kaikasi gave birth to cruel Ravana, terrible Kumbhakarna, daughter Shurpanakha and righteous Vibhishana. The brothers practised penance and obtained boons from Brahma: Ravana became invincible except to man, Vibhishana asked for virtue and Kumbhakarna sought deep sleep for six months in a year (7. 10). Ravana married Mandodari, daughter of Maya and had a son by name Meghanada (7. 12): He attacked Vedavati practising austerities, who immolated herself after cursing him that in her next birth she would bring about his destruction (7. 17). He claimed Lanka as his ancestral land and asked Kubera to leave it. On the advice of his father Kubera vacated it and settled down on mount Kailasa (7. 14, 15). Ravana started torturing gods, Gandharvas, sages and Yakshas, whereupon Kubera advised his brother to desist from such persecutions. Ravana set out to conquer the regents of the quarters. He attacked Kailasa and defeating Kubera and his army of Yakshas asked Kubera to leave it. On the advice of his father Kubera vacated it and settled down on mount Kailasa (7. 14, 15). Ravana started torturing gods, gandharvas, sages and Yakshas, whereupon Kubera advised his brother to desist from such persecutions. Ravana set out to conquer the regents of the quarters. He attacked Kailasa and defeating Kubera and his army of Yakshas, he seized his Pushpaka chariot (7. 12-15). He tried to lift Kailasa, but lord Shiva crushed his arms. When Ravana defeated Marutta, all other regents hid themselves

(7. 18). He even dared to challenge Yama, but the latter became invisible (7. 22). Ravana thereafter challenged all kings, but all except king Anaranya of Ayodhya, surrendered to him. In the fight that ensued, Anaranya was killed, but before he died, he cursed Ravana that he would meet his death at the hands of his descendant (Raama) (7. 19). Sauti then goes out to describe the exploits of Hanuman. The kings who had come to attend the coronation of Raama, including Sugriva and Vibhishana, left. Kubera presented the Pushpaka chariot to Raama. Bharata then gave a description of the benign rule of Raama.

Harivamshakara has added the sargas 23-34. Ravana fought with Nivatakavacas and concluded peace with them after a year (7. 23). He fought with the sons of Varena and defeated them. Meghanada performed a sacrifice and acquired the tamasi maya (7. 25). Ravana went to war with Indra in which Sumali was killed. Meghanada captured Indra, earning the nick-name Indrajit but released him at the intervention of Brahmaa. Ravana goes to Mahismati ruled by Haihaya Arjuna, who captured Ravana but released him at the request of Pulastya. Ravana attacked Vali while he was performing sandhya, but was caught by him in his arm-pit (7. 27-34). This author also records Ravana's misbehaviour with beautiful girls and married women and his incestuous rape of Rambha, because of which he incurred the curse of her betrothed, his nephew, Nalakubera that if he were to molest any woman in future, his head would shatter into smithereens. This curse is said to have saved Sita from molestation by Ravana (7. 24-2). The author's intention is evidently to show Ravana in an unfavourable light both as regards his prowess as well as his character.

The author of the U-style has added as many as sixty sargas (41-100) in the Uttarakanda. These sargas principally deal with the events subsequent to Raama's coronation, of which the two most important are Sambukavadha and Sityatya. The Ramopakhyana does not refer to these episodes

which is an independent corroboration that they did not form part of the original Ramayana. It also includes such legends as those of Shveta (68-69), Danda (70-72), Indra and Vritra (75-77) and Ila (78).

Raama lived happily with Sita, who was now pregnant and expressed to him her desire (dohada) to go and spend a day in a forest hermitage. In the meantime Raama heard scandalous gossip about Sita's chastity while in captivity of Ravana. People had started asking as to how Raama could continue to live with a woman, who had lived a year in Ravana's house. Raama heard this report with shock mixed with sorrow. He could not understand how people could be so mean as to spread such a slander, since it was public knowledge that Sita had proved her purity by fire ordeal. His conscience told him that she was pure. Brooding over this, he summoned his brothers and said to them. "This public gossip about Sita rankles in my heart. As a result of this ill-fame I shall lose my honour and the doors of heaven will be closed against me. I shrink so much from it that I shall, if necessary, give up my life, even you, what to say of Sita (7. 44, 11-13)." Raama then told Lakshmana, to take Sita to Valmiki's ashrama under a subterfuge of fulfilling her pregnancy-desire. There Lakshmana, to the utter dismay of Sita, acquainted her of Raama's resolve to repudiate her (7. 43-48). Valmiki took Sita to his hermitage. When Raama. ordered Shatrughna to conquer Asura Lavana, on his way he passed the night at the ashrams and came to know of the birth of Sita's twin sons (7. 58). Shatrughna killed Lavana and founded the city of Madhura (7. 59-62).

The peace of Ayodhya was shattered by the untimely death of a Brahmin boy. A Brahmin complained to Raama about the premature death of his son during his life-time. Narada told Raama that his death may be due to the practice of penance undertaken by a shudra, who was not authorized to perform it. Raama gave orders for the preservation of the body and set out in search of the culprit. Raama found Shudra Shambuka practising penance, executed the culprit on the spot and by restoring the dead back to life, upheld the social order based on

caste (7. 65-67).

The sequel of Sitayaga is continued in sargas (7. 81-89). Raama undertook Ashvamedha sacrifice, which was attended by Valmiki with Raama's sons. When Kusha and Lava sang Ramayana, Raama came to know that they were his sons and requested Valmiki to bring Sita to the assembly, so that she could prove her chastity publicly. Sita publicly affirmed her purity and called upon the mother earth to give her shelter. Mother earth appeared, took Sita in her lap and disappeared (7. 87-88). An inconsolate Raama performed the horse sacrifice after making a gold image of Sita as a substitute at the sacrifice.

After a long and prosperous reign, Kaala (Time) in the form of an ascetic reminded Raama that it was time for him to return to his original abode. Durvasa came and ordered Lakshmana to inform Raama immediately of his arrival. When he did so, Kala's condition of privacy was broken and Lakshmana gave up his mortal body in the river Sarayu (7. 95-96). After the tragic death of Lakshmana Raama decided to leave the mortal world and divided his kingdom between Kusha and Lava (7.97). Raama sent for Shatrughna, the Rakshasas and Vanaras and when they arrived, he, along with his brothers and the Vanaras took a plunge in the waters of Sarayu to return to his original abode. (7. 100).

The subsequent authors of the Ramayana have added much of the marvellous and miraculous elements in that work. It is true that the miraculous element is not absent in Valmik's Ramayana but it is in a low key. The birth of Raama and his three brothers is the result of the Ashvamedha sacrifice. Ravana and Raama fight with magic weapons (6. 87). Indra sends his chariot to Raama along with his charioteer Matali (6. 90), who reminds him to use the brahmastra against Ravana (6. 97.2). Raama then kills Ravana with that missile. Suta has added the putresti sacrifices (1. 14) which Dasharatha performs to get a

son, and gods request Vishnu to incarnate himself as the four sons of Dasharatha to destroy Ravana (1. 15). When Raama accompanies Vishvamitra with Lakshmana to protect his sacrifice, Vishvamitra imparts to Raama occult knowledge and spells known as bala and atibala (1. 21, 14, 18). Suta has also added the marvellous account of redemption by Raama of Ahalya from the curse of her husband Gautama (1. 47, 48), Raama's stringing the bow of Shiva, his wedding with Sita (1. 66) and his encounter with Bhargava Raama (I . 73-75). In the fire ordeal of Sita, which is added by Suta, Agni delivers her unscathed to Raama and gods along with the shade of Dasharatha come to testify to the purity of Sita (6. 105-107). Harivarnshakara describes the assumption by Hanuman of a minute form for the search of Sita in the palaces of Ravana and others (5. 2) and the miraculous release by Garuda of Raama and Lakshmana, who were bound by Indrajit with nagapasha (6. 32-40). The parvasangraha-kara narrates the royal reception given by sage Bharadvaja to Bharata by his magical powers (2. 85). The author of the U-style describes the episodes of Vanaras' entry into the Rikshabila and their encounter with Svayamprabha (4.49-51), of their meeting with sage Nishakara and his prophesy and Raama's return to his original abodes (7. 100).

Most of the legends which are contained in the Ramayana are also added by these authors. Suta has incorporated into the story of Raama the legends connected with his ancestry and birth such as the story of Sagara and of his ashvamedha sacrifice (1. 38), of Sagara's sons reduced to ashes by the anger of sage Kapila (1. 37-39). Bhagiratha's austerities for the descent of Ganga and the performance by Bhagiratha of the funeral rites of his ancestors, the sons of Sagara (1. 41 -43). The Vishvamitra episode is accompanied by an account of his ancestry (1. 31-33), his feud with Vasishtha over the divine cow Shabala (1. 51-55), the story of Trishanku (1. 51-59), the story of Shunahshepa (1. 60), his affairs with Menaka and

Rambha and his eventual attainment of the status of Brahmarshi (1. 62-63). Suta has also appended Ikshvaku's genealogy (1. 69). He has also added the legends connected with god Shiva, who had become the most prominent god during the days of Vaishampayana and in his time. These are the story of Kaama, who disturbed the penance of Shiva and was burnt to ashes (1, 22), the story of Ganga (1. 34), Uma and Kartikeya (1. 35-36) and the churning of the ocean (1. 44) and Shiva's gift of the bow to Janaka's ancestor (1. 65).

The redactors of the Ramayana also have included some Bhargava legends in the Ramayana. Dr. V. S. Sukthankar has explained how at some period the redactors of Bharata came under the powerful influence of the Bhargavas, who reedited the epic and added a number of episodes of Bhargavas and Niti and Dharma passages in the Epic. In my statistical study of the Mbh., I had also come to the conclusion that almost all the Bhargava legends and didactic passages in the Mbh. were added by Suta and Sauti (M. p. 42). Dr. Sukthankar remarks that compared to the Mbh. the epic Ramayana contains very few references to the Bhargavas (MG. p. 42). According to Brockington (p. 15, n. 21), the term Bhargava occurs twenty times in the Bala- and Uttarakandas, most of which are later additions. The term occurs only twice in the other Kandas. (2. 102. 16. 6. 4. 42), of which the last reference to Bhargava Ushanas belongs to Valmiki's Ramayana. After collecting all the references to the Bhrigus in the Ramayana, Shende has shown how a major portion of the Bhargava episodes found in the Balakanda and Uttarakanda have been added by the Bhargavas. All these references have been added by Suta, Sauti and the author of the U-style, perhaps under the Bhargava influence. Suta has interpolated the legend of king Ambarisha, who performed a sacrifice. The sacrificial victim was, however, carried away by gods and the king went in search

of a substitute. Bhargava Ricika, who had three sons, offered the middle one and the bargain was concluded on the payment of one thousand cows. On the advice of Vishvamitra, Sunahshepa prayed to God Indra, who granted him long life and was later adopted by the sage as his son and successor (1. 60). Suta has also narrated the story of Raama's encounter with Bhargava Raama, who became angry with him for breaking Shiva's bow. Raama accepted his challenge and defeated him. Since Raama could not take back the arrow from the bow, he released it and blocked his course to the other world, as requested by him (1. 73-5).

Surprisingly Sauti, who had contributed most of the Bhargava episodes to the Mbh., has made only two additions in this regard, Jamadagni is said to have been present in the court of Raama (7. 1-5). He also says that Bhargava Usanas officiated as a priest at the seven sacrifices performed by Indrajit, son of Ravana (7. 25. 6. 10).

The author of the U-style has contributed the following Bhargava legends in the Ramayana. King Asita, who was not, very prosperous, dwelt at Bhrigu Prasaravana, a holy bathing place. Kalindi, one of his two wives, was poisoned by her co-wife. She approached Bhargava Cyavana, who blessed her and told her that she would give birth to a son, who will be a glorious king. Her son was the great king Sagara, after whom an ocean is called Sagara (2. 102, 13-18). Bhargava Cyavana informs Raama about the oppression caused by Asura Lavana to ascetics there. Raama instructs Shatrughna to conquer the asura king (7. 53, 54). When Shatrughna makes a night halt on the way at Valmiki's ashrama, Cyavana recounts to him the valour of Lavana and Shula asuras (7. 59). Shatrughna kills Lavana and founds the city of Madhura (7. 60-62).

The last Bhargava legend, that of Danda (7. 70-7) added by this author has not much relevance for the story of Raama, except the unconvincing account of the origin of Dandakaranya. Among the hundred sons of Ikshvaku, the least intelligent was his last son, by name Danda. So while dividing

his kingdom among his sons, Ikshvaku gave to Danda the region between Vindhya and Shaivala (Panna) ranges. But as Danda misbehaved with Arāja, the daughter of his royal priest Ushanas, the sage cursed him as a result of which his kingdom was burnt to ashes and the region was turned into a forest known as Dandakaranya. This story may have been included to show that this forest was originally a part of the Kosala kingdom and was later usurped by the Rakshasas. So it was natural that Raama should give protection to the hermits there and take deterrent action against the encroaching Rakshasas.

It is human nature to denigrate the vanquished and deify the victors. The redactors, especially Suta and the author of the U-style, have shown Ravana as a ten-headed demon and Raama as an incarnation of Vishnu. Most of the descriptions of Ravana as Dashagriva, with ten necks (5. 6), occur in the additions made by Suta. Suta also refers to his ten heads and his many arms in the Sundarakanda (47. 6-8). On the other hand, Harivamshakara states that when Hanuman entered Ravana's place at night, he saw Ravana asleep with his two arms stretched on the floor (5. 8-13) and with shining earrings in his two ears (5. 20-27). It is true that when Ravana reveals his identity to Sita. He describes himself as the mighty Dashagriva, the king of Lanka (3. 46. 2). When he resumed his true form, he was referred to as Dashasya (3. 47. 7). Jatayu also accosts Ravana as Dashagriva (3. 48. 3), but later tells Raama that Ravana had taken his queen and wife (3. 63. 14). These sargas 46-48 belong to Valmiki's Ramayana, but the above stanzas which describe him as ten-necked etc. may have been inserted by Suta.

Further none of the persons, except Jatayu who had seen him at close quarters, refers to his ten heads. When Ravana discloses his identity to Sita, she does not say how a human can marry a ten-headed Rakshasa. Neither Sampati nor his son Suparsva who had seen Ravana carrying away Sita refer to his ten heads. When Vibhishana points out Ravana to Raama on

the battlefield, he too does not refer to his ten heads, but exclaims in wonder and admiration, "Oh, how resplendent and vigorous is this Ravana, the Lord of the rakshasas. He looks splendid, is difficult to gaze at, like the sun because of his rays! " (6. 47. 26-27). So Ravana had, like any other human being, one head, two hands and two feet.

The references to Ravana's licentious behaviour which occur in the Uttarakanda such as his assault on Vedavati (7. 17), his abduction of beautiful girls and married women (7. 24) and his rape of Rambha have all been inserted by Sauti to show him as a debauchee. He further adds that the rape of Rambha resulted in a curse by her betrothed Nalakubera (7. 26), which prevented him from molesting Sita. Harivamshakara, however, gives a different reason for Ravana's conduct towards Sita. He says that though Ravana pressed his suit, he gave her the following assurance. "Even then, O Maithili, I shall not touch you, so long as you do not desire me (akaamaa). I shall bear my desire for you in my heart" (5. 18. 6). Thus, though he was relentless in gratifying his desires and acquiring wealth through conquests, he was not a viciously sensual person as he has been made out to be by Sauti. The question whether the Rakshasas were man-eating demons or ordinary human beings will be discussed in Chapter VI.

On the other hand, while Valmiki depicts Raama as essentially human in Ramayana, its subsequent redactors have deified Raama and projected him as an incarnation of Vishnu. Suta for the first time affirms his divinity in the Balakanda(1. 14-1). He states that Vishnu incarnated himself as the four sons of Dasharatha and other gods were born as Vanaras. Suta also mentions Raama as an incarnation of Vishnu in the Yuddhakanda. Here he identifies Raama first with various deities and later equates him with Vishnu. Finally when after a long and

prosperous rule and tragic death of Lakshmana, Ramaa immolates himself along with his two brothers in the river Sharayu, they go to Brahmaloaka, where they are welcomed by Brahmaa personally (7. 100). This shows that the author of the U-style, who has added this sarga, still regarded him as an amshavatara or partial incarnation of Vishnu. As pointed out by Brokington (p. 222) it is only at a later stage that his complete identification with Vishnu becomes frequent. The latter finds a clear mention only in the starred passages and varia lecta which have been added after the first century A. D. The Ramayana also does not mention any one else, not even Bhargava Raama as an incarnation of Vishnu.

Since the expansion of the Ramayana has taken place over the period ending in the first century AD (ROG, p. 110), it would be instructive to find out whether the epic mentions Kautilya's Arthashastra. There are two instances in which there is a clear mention of Arthashastra in the Ramayana. In the Ayodhyakanda, it is stated that Raama questioned Bharata, whether he took counsel from the royal priest Sudharvan, who was well-versed in Arthashastra (2. 94). In the Yuddhakanda, Kumbhakarna advised Ravana not to act upon the improper advice given by advisors who were unacquainted with Arthashastra (6-61). Both these sargas have been incorporated in the Ramayana by Harivamshakara, who lived in the second century B, C. The Critical Editor of the Sundarakanda points out the Similarity between (HR 5-19-10) (Critical Note) with Kautilya's Arthashastra I.1.1 -1) which shows that Harivamshakara had based the above passage on Kautilya's Arthashastra. On this Guruge (pp. 49-50) remarks as follows

"The most important of the scientific treatises of ancient India which reflects her social conditions is the Arthashastra, which is traditionally ascribed to Kautilya or Vishnugupta or Chanakya, the chief minister of Chandragupta Maurya. It is, however, impossible to assign it, as it exists today to the 4th century B. C. nor is it justifiable to bring it down to the third century A. D. as Jolly has attempted to do. E. Johnston has

shown that the evidence of Ashvaghosha, the Jatakamala and the Lankavatarasutra may be utilised to establish the lower limit for the composition of the Arthashastra certainly not later than about, 200 A. D. Atindranath Bose has attempted to place it in the first century A. D. This is the only lower limit that can be assigned to this work. In the present state of our knowledge, it is advisable that we regard the Arthashastra to be a work assignable to the period third century B. C. to 100 A. D. as Raichaudhari has done. "

Since Kautilya's Arthashastra was known to Harivamshakara, it belonged to a period earlier than the second century B. C., which supports the traditional view that Kautilya was the chief minister of Chandragupta Maurya.

CHAPTER - IV

THE DATE OF RAMAYANA

In the statistical study of the Mahabharata (MGG. pp. 133-135), I had pointed out that of its four redactors, Suta, Sauti and Harivamshakara were familiar with the story of Ramayana and the Ramayana heroes. In the statistical study of Ramayana, it is seen that all the four redactors including Parvasangraha-kara of the Mbh. have made additions to the Ramayana also. There is also a fifth redactor, who has made significant additions to the Ramayana only namely the Manthara and Guha episodes in the ayodhyakanda and the Sitatyaga and the Sambukavadha in the uttarakanda.

Now as regards the date of Parvasangraha-kara we have the direct evidence of Dio chrysostornos, who had visited south India in 50 A. D. His statement that the Hindus possessed an Iliad of one lakh verses constitutes direct evidence that the Mbh. as the Shatasahasri was well-known even in South India in 50 A. D. (MGG, p. 128). We have to see whether the Mbh. per se consisted of HIV' as an integral part of the epic for this purpose. The commentators of I-IV regard it as an integral part of the Mbh. for the calculation of one lakh stanzas. Nilakantha observes in his introductory comment on the Harivamsha as

follows "Vyasa wrote the Mbh. with one hundred parvas inclusive of the three parvas of Harivamsha, as stated in 1.2.70 ". This finds further support in the fact that the Vulgate editions of the Mbh. and the Harivamsha, containing about 84,000 stanzas and 16,000 stanzas respectively, make up very neatly the figure of one lakh stanzas. If this is so, after taking the time taken by the additions made in the Mbh. to be known in the south, we can safely ascribe 1st century B. C. as the date of the Parvasangrahakara.

In his short summary appended to the first sarga of Balakanda, the Parvasangrahakara does not refer to the Sityaga. The episode of Sityaga has been added by the author of the U-style, who refers to it in the long summary (1. 3). The author of the U-style is, therefore, posterior to Parvasangrahakara, who has been ascribed to the 1st century B. C. (see also MGG. pp. 127-8-232). Kalidasa refers to Sityaga, Lavanavadha, Shambukavadha, Lakshmana's death and the Svargarohana of Raama. From this it is clear that the additions made by the author of the U-style to the Uttarakanda were very well-known to Kalidasa. V.M. Kulkarni, after a critical examination of the Jain evidence, has shown that Vimalasuri's Jain version of Raama's life, was profoundly influenced by Valmiki's Ramayana. He further states that the Uttarakanda, although a later addition, was known to the author of the Paumachariya. Vimalasuri is said to have composed his Paurnachariya in the year 530 after Mahavirass nirvana (i.e. 4 A. D.). But Kulkarni assigns his work to the third century A. D. It thus seems that by at least the third century A. D., the Uttarakanda had come to be regarded as an integral part of Valmiki's Ramayana.

We are able to fix the date of this author within fairly close limits, because of an astronomical reference in the Ayodhya-

kanda (4. 18). After Dasharatha had decided upon the installation of Raama as his successor, he had a bad dream. He says that the astrologers (daivajnas) had foreboded dire events, because the star of his life had been afflicted by the terrible planets like the Sun, the Mars and Rahu (2. 4. 17-19). The earliest reference to the seven-day week, and therefore, planets is made by Garga, who flourished in the first century B. C. Since sarga 4 of the Ayodhyakanda has been added by the author of the U-style, the latter could not have lived before the 1st century B. C. On the other hand, he could not have lived later than 100 A. D. as the famous Buddhist scholar Ashvaghosha refers to Valmiki in the Saundarananda as the tutor of Raama's Sons. That Valmiki brought up Raama's sons and tutored them is contained in the portion of the Uttarakanda added by this author. In view of this the final redaction of the Ramayana seems to have taken place in the early part of the 1st century A. D.

Before we take up the fixation of the date of the Ramayana, it will be worthwhile to examine the relative chronology of Ramayana and Ramopakhyaria in the Mbh. Scholars such as Jacobi, Winternitz down to Sukthankar held the view that Ramayana was composed earlier than the Ramopakhyana. Jacobi was the first to express the view that Ramopakhyana was a careless abridgment of the Raama epic as we have it. He pointed out a dozen passages which the Ramopakhyana had in common with the Ramayana. After consulting the Nirnayansagar edition (1888) of the Mbh. Sukthankar had found 86 concordances between the two consisting of 1.12 padas. Sukthankar had also found that the number of common padas in the Saugandhikaharana was 38, while it was 80 in the case of Nalopakhyana, which has an entirely different theme unconnected with the Ramayana. He observed that it was unlikely, nay almost impossible, that Adikavi Valmiki would borrow a few verses from

Nalopakhyana.

Dr. P. L. Vaidya, on the other hand, held the view that Ramopakhyana, being epic history (itihasa), was earlier than Valmiki's Ramayana, which was epic poetry. He observed that it is not unusual for a gifted poet to take up an original plain story and transform it by his creative genius into beautiful poetry. Dr. Raghavan, however, after examining all the relevant evidence, came to the conclusion that Ramopakhyana is a summary treatment of Valmiki's work. Both Dr. Vaidya and Dr. Raghavan, while making a comparative study of Ramopakhyana and Ramayana, have noted some significant (italics mine) differences between the two. Among the significant differences they mention the Vishvamisra episode and the story of Ahalya, are missing in Ramopakhyana. The statistical study has shown that both these are later interpolations in the Ramayana. The other differences are not material and can be explained on the basis that Harivamshakara had based his Ramopakhyana on a version of the Ramayana, which was available to him. Possibly this version, as pointed out by Guruge (p. 26), belonged to the southern recension, to which Ramopakhyana is more akin than to the Northern recension.

The statistical study of Ramayana should now set at rest this controversy. The statistical study of Mbh. showed that the three Upakhyanas viz. Ramopakhyana, Nalopakhyana and Saugandhikaharana exhibit the C-style, which is the style in which the Harivamsha is written (MGG. pp. 47-50). From the statistical analysis of the Ramayana, it was found that four sargas (39-42) of the Kiskindhakanda, twenty sargas (2. 21) of the Sundarakanda, thirty-four sargas (32-65) of the Yuddhakanda and ten sargas (23-32) of the Uttarakanda are also written in C-style, and so have been added by Harivanishakara. The Critical Editor of the Kiskindhakanda

observes that the sargas 39-42 of the Kiskindhakanda have a close similarity with III. 46. 42 ff. of Harivamsha, which is a striking corroboration of the statistical method. This proves conclusively that Harivamshakara has based his Ramopakhyana on a version of the Ramayana.

The date of Harivamshakara can be determined from the internal evidence in Harivamsha and a terracota find from Sugh assigned to the second century B. C. The latter contains an art depiction of Krishna learning Brahmi alphabet at the ashrama of Guru Sandipani. This fact is, however, not mentioned in the Critical Edition of the Mbh. but only in the Harivamsha (Vishnu. 79. 3). So this fixes the date of Harivamsha and its author as second century B. C. This finds further support from the mention of Vriddha Garga in the Sarasvatopakhyana of the Shalyaparva added by the Harivamshakara in the Mbh. Now an astronomer Garga Parashara is mentioned by Panini who is probably here referred to as Vriddha Garga to distinguish him from a younger Garga, who was coming into prominence at that time. The date of this younger Garga is fixed at 145 B. C. from a reference in his work to the invasion of Saketa by the Greek king Demetrios, who was a contemporary of Pusyamitra (see also MGG. pp. 127-129).

As both Suta and Sauti are father and son, we shall consider them together. As regards Sauti there is direct astronomical evidence to show that he could not have lived prior to 450 B. C. According to B. B. Dikshit, the winter solstice in the Vedanga Jyotisha period used to take place at the beginning of Dhanishtha. At present its place is near about Purva-Ashadha and some years ago it used be near Uttara-Ashadha. It must, therefore, be taking place near the Shravana in some former age. Dikshit read shravanadini rikshani in the Mbh. XIV. 44. 2 and thought that although it was not so stated

explicitly, the very expression shraavanadini conveyed that the winter solstice began in the shravana nakshatra. However, according to the Critical Edition, the correct reading is shravishthadini rikshani, where shravishtha is only another name for Dhanishtha. Sauti, however, mentions in Mbh. 1. 65. 34 that Vishvamitra, in creating a parallel world, arranged for the winter solstice to begin in shravana. This new arrangement came into vogue according to Dikshit's calculations by about 450 B. C.

Lord Krishna mentions in the Gita (35) that he is Margashirsa among the months. This implies that the year began with the month Maigashirsha, when Sauti composed the Gita (MGG p. 34). From the Table given by John Bently in his Historical view of the Indian astronomy, V. B. Ketkar says that the year began with Margashirsha in the cycle 699-452 B. C. and so the age of Gita must be placed somewhere during this period. Sauti could not have been later than 452 B. C., as after that period the year began with the month of Pausha. As Suta was the father of Sauti, he must have lived a little earlier than 450 B. C. From this it would appear that Suta and Sauti must have been junior contemporaries of Prasenjit, king of Kosala, Udayana, king of Vatsa, Chanda Pradyota, king of Ujjain and Ajatashatru, king of Magadha (see MGG. p. 130).

This demonstrates that the Ramayana was composed earlier than 450 B. C. with the first century A. D. as the closing date of its expansion. Diverse views have been expressed regarding the dating of Valmiki's original Ramayana. With the exception of Weber, who placed its date as the third or fourth century A. D. Jacobi Keith and Macdonell suggested that the core of Ramayana was composed before 500 B. C. More recent dates have been postulated by Bulcke (end of the fourth century B. C.), Gonda (fourth century B. C. and Guruge

(before the third century B. C.) Brockington (p, 12). Two eminent archaeologists H. D. Sankalia and B. B. Lal have expressed contrary views regarding the date of the original Ramayana. While Sankalia (p. 59) says that it might go back to a period between 15,00 and 1000 B. C., B. B. Lal states that it is posterior to the original Bharata of Vaishampayana. We shall first consider these views and then examine whether the internal evidence in the original Ramayana and original Bharata sheds any light on this question.

Sankalia states (pp. 60. 61) that the uppermost limit of Ramayana cannot be earlier than the beginning of the Iron Age in India. For, when Kaikeyi insisted on Sita's wearing garments of bark (valkala), someone remarked that the heart of Raama's mother seems to be made of *ayas* and so he argues that *ayas* in Ramayana definitely means iron which is a hard metal and not copper. He, therefore, concludes that the dates of iron from Hastinapura, Ahicchatra and elsewhere, with its associated object, the Painted Grey Ware vessels, occur late, i.e. between 800 B. C. and 400 B. C. and that it is not possible to date the first introduction of iron in Northern India and particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar before 800 B. C. But as Brockington (p. 68) says, *ayas* usually translated as iron, is cognate with Latin *aes* which means copper as well as iron. In the Ramayana, however, the word means definitely copper, as it uses the word *karshnayasa* or *kalayasa*, black metal for iron. Thus Bharata, returning to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's place, says that he saw in a dream his father seated on an iron throne (*pithe karshnayase*). The subsequent redactors too use the word *kalayasa* to denote iron. It is only Harivamshakara who mentions weapons made of iron; for instance the spear given by Ravana to Kumbhakarna was made of iron *kalayasa* (6. 53). Thus the balance of probability is that *ayas* denotes

copper or bronze in the Ramayana and iron is distinguished from it as 'black metal'. Thus the epic belongs to the pre-iron culture i.e. the copper age. The antiquity of Ayodhya as a historical site is now established beyond doubt by a find of Painted Grey Ware during excavations in March-April 1975 by B. B. Lal. However, Sankalia's suggestion that on this crucial point only excavations, both in depth and width in the Raama sites, can throw more light, deserves serious consideration by the Archeological Department.

Earlier B. B. Lal had pointed out that the excavations at the Ramayana sites had proved the absence of Painted Grey Ware found at the Mbh. sites. He, further, remarks, "if Raama was a historical figure living in Ayodhya, he was later in date than the Mbh. heroes". In support of his view he refers to the Brih. Up. (4th Kanda), wherein Janaka asks Yajnavalkya, kva pariksita abhavan? From this Lal concludes that Janaka, the father of Sita, was later than Parikshit, whom he took to be the grandson of Arjuna. The first point has already been discussed in the earlier paragraph. As regards the latter, it seems that Lal did not know that there was another Parikshit, who was a grandson of Kuru and so an ancestor of Arjuna. Vaishampayana himself relates the ancient story of Parikshit (itihasam puratanam, X11. 146. 14). The Brih. Up. also mentions Shvetaketu, son of Uddalaka, who is referred to by Pandu as having laid down the rule of monogamy for women (Mhh. 1. 113). This shows that Janaka, Yajnavalkya and Shvetaketu were contemporaries and lived prior to Pandu.

This Parikshit had four sons, Janamejaya II, Shrutasena, Ugrasena and Bhimasena. Janamejaya who succeeded him had killed the son of sage Gargya and so had incurred the sin of Brahmin slaughter (brahmahatya). Janamejaya sought the help

of Indrota Shaunaka in the atonement of this deadly sin. After making sure that Janamejaya was genuinely contrite about his crime and after getting an assurance from him of good conduct in future, Indrota performed the horse-sacrifice and absolved him of the dreadful sin which he had incurred. It is not known whether Janamejaya continued as king after the horse-sacrifice. Most probably as stated in the Harivamsha (2. 13), he was deserted by the people and had to abdicate his throne and the four brothers must have been under a cloud, which prompted the question from Janaka to Yajnavalkya. It seems that after this disqualification Bhimasena succeeded Janamejaya.

Secondly, there is no evidence to connect the Janaka of Brih. Up. with Sita. The mere fact that he took interest in philosophical discussions would not suffice to fix his identity. It is well-known that Janaka was the name of a dynasty and not of an individual ruler. According to the Bhagavata Parana (9-13.27) most of them were proficient in brahmavidya, ete vai maithila rajah atmavidyavisharadah. If Yajnavalkya was associated with Janaka, father of Sita, his name should have found mention in Ramayana. Mbh. (XII. 298-306) gives a dialogue between Janaka and Yajnavalkya, but there too there is no indication that he was the father of Sita. The Balakanda, although a later addition to the Epic, gives the name of the father of Sita as Siradhvaja. In Pargiter's Dynastic Lists (p. 147), Dasharatha is shown as a contemporary of Siradhavaja. In view of this, there are no adequate grounds to assume, as Bhavabhuti has done in his Mahaviracarita (1. 14), that the Janaka of Ramayana is the same as the Janaka of the Brih. Up.

That the composition of Valmiki's original Ramayana preceded Vaishampayana's Bharata is supported by internal evidence in the latter text. The original Ramayana does not mention any Mbh. heroes, even Krishna while Vaishampayana's Bharata contains references to Dasharathi

Raama, Lakshmana and their adversaries Ravana and his son Indrajit. In the Mbh. it is stated that demon Ravana was killed by Raama (IX. 30. 10). Vaishampayana further states later (IX. 38-9) that when Raama lived in the Dandaka forest, he killed many Rakshasa there. When Vaishampayana describes fierce combats between Mbh. heroes, he compares them with Ramayana heroes. Thus it is said that Sahadeva killed Niramitra, the Trigarta prince, as Raama killed Khara, brother of Ravana (Mbh. VII. 82. 28). The fight between Bhima and Alambusha is compared to that between Raama and Ravana (Mbh. VII. 81. 17) and later to that between Lakshmana and son of Ravana (Mbh. VII. 117. 10). Later Ghatotkaca, son of Bhima by Hidimba, says that he is the sovereign king of Rakshasas equal to Ravana in valour. In Mbh. VII. 156. 23, Krishna tells Arjuna that he got Bhima to slay Hidimba, Baka and Kirmira who all possessed the strength of Ravana. In Mbh. V111.4.52, Sanjaya tells Dhritarashtra that Karna was killed by Arjuna as Ravana by Raama see.(MGG. pp. 134-135).

Vaishampayana mentions Valmiki by name in Drona parva (118. 48) and Anushasana parvan (18.7). In justification of his action in slaying Bhurishravas, who had laid down his arms and was preparing for death by giving up food (through prayopaveshana), Satyaki says (Mbh. VII. 118.48):

*api ca yarn purer gitah shioko valmikina bhuvi I
pidakamm amitranan yat syat kartavyam eva tat II*

The second line of this verse occurs in Ramayana (6. 21. 8). In the Anushasanaparva (18. 7), Vaishampayana says that Valmiki told Yudhishtira how he had obtained blessings of Lord Shiva:

vainzikirs ca 'pi hhagavan ytedhishthiram abhashata I

Since Vaishampayana applies the epithet bhagavan to Valmiki here, the latter must have lived at least two to three centuries before him (MG. p. 135).

Further it is found that Valmiki's Ramayana is more archaic than Vaishampayana's Bharata. When Raama is extolled for his martial qualities, he is frequently compared with Indra. Brockington observes (pp. 219-21) that these comparisons, coupled with the three instances in the Yuddhakanda, where Raama and Lakshmana are compared with Indra and Vishnu, suggest that Indra was still regarded as the foremost God, with a subordinate position for Vishnu. In the Rigvedic period, Vishnu was an aid of Indra in his wars with Vritra and other asura kings (RV. VII. 99) and was known as Upendra, the prefix *upa* indicating subordination or inferiority. As observed by Brockington, the major deities whose names occur with any frequency in the original Ramayana, which he calls the first stage, are closer to the Vedic pantheon on the whole than to classical Hinduism, for example in the continued presence of Ashvins, Parjanya and Varuna and in the prominence of Indra compared with the insignificance of Vishnu and Shiva. As Lord Shiva had come to be regarded as the Supreme God in the days of Vaishampayana (M. p. 81), this shows that Valmiki's Ramayana belongs to the early post-Vedic period prior to the composition of Vaishampayana's Bharata.

It is evident that the Ramayana war was more antiquated than the Mahabharata war. The armies of both the belligerents were not organised into four limbs (*chaturanga*) consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. The armies were not organised into units of various sizes and the hierarchy of commands established as in the Mbh. The troops fought indiscriminately with at least the Vanaras and even their warriors fighting from the ground with such primitive weapons as hill-tops, rocks, trees, branches and fists. Even though the rakshasas fought with metal weapons such as arrows, spears, clubs, maces, swords etc. even their warriors at times reverted to the more primitive methods. Ravana too, in the final combat with Raama, fought with rocks and trees (6. 95. 17-18), indicating that the switch-over from the primitive to the more sophisticated weapons

was recent. Neither side is reported to have employed any strategy to win the war, and the different army formations (vyuhas), which are so conspicuous in the Mbh. war, find only a cursory mention in the Ramayana war. This goes to support the traditional view that the Ramayana war took place before the Mahabharata war.

It was found that the astronomical references in the Vaishampayana text of Mbh. are not sufficient to determine the age of the Mbh., nor is there any epigraphic or numismatic evidence available for that purpose (MGG. p. 133). We know that Udayana (Pali Udena) was a contemporary of Buddha and outlived him by about ten to fifteen years. If we take the date of Buddha's nirvana as 487 B. C. the date of Udayana's death comes to 475 B. C. Now according to the genealogy of Paurava kings, Udayana was twentyfourth in descent from Janamejaya III (both inclusive). As Vaishampayana had recited his work at the snake sacrifice of Janamejaya III, we can fix his time as $24 \times 20 + 475 = 955$ B. C. by taking 20 years as the average reign period.

In Pargiter's Dynastic Lists (pp. 147-149) Parikshit I is shown at s. no. 94, This is, however, contrary to the statement of Pandu that Shvetaketu had laid down the rule of monogamy for women not so long ago (nacirat, Mbh. I. 113. 8). The genealogy given in Mbh. (I. 90. 41-45) is as follows Kuru, Viduratha-Arugvat, Parikshit, Bhimasena, Pratishravas nee Pratipa. This genealogy as given by Sauti seems to be more authentic than Pargiter's genealogy based on Pauranic evidence. The disqualification incurred by the brothers of Janamejaya (II) seems to have been short-lived and Bhimasena appears to have succeeded Parikshit, not counting the short period during which his brother Janamejaya reigned. The date of Bhimasena who was removed by eight generations from Janamejaya, the grandson of Arjuna, comes to $955 + 8 \times 20 = 1115$ i.e. about

1100 B. C. This is also the date of Janaka, Yajnavalkya and Indrota Devapi Shaunaka, who performed the horse-sacrifice for Janamejaya

According to Pargiter's Chronological Table of Rishes (pp. 191-92), Indrota Devapi Shaunaka is shown at S. No. 71 and Valmiki at S. No. 66. This means that Valmiki was only four generations earlier than Indrota Shaunaka and so must have belonged to the twelfth century B. C. As Pargiter's Table of Rishes shows Vasishtha (associated with Dasharatha) at S. No. 64 and Valmiki at S. No. 66, Valmiki was only a generation later than Raama and must have belonged to the latter part of the 12th century B. C. Valmiki figures in the Uttarakanda of Ramayana as the host of Sita after her repudiation by Raama and the tutor of her two sons and that Valmiki attended Raama's ashvamedha sacrifice with the two sons who recited the Raama story there. But these are, however, later interpolations and have no historical basis. In this Ramayana too Valmiki does not claim to have met Raama, since had been done so, he would have proudly mentioned it.