

JOURNAL
OF THE
BIHAR AND ORISSA RESEARCH SOCIETY.

March 1925.

C O N T E N T S.

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IV.—Aboriginal Names in the Ramayana.

By G. Ramadas, B.A., M.R.A.S.

The story of the wanderings of Rama, first sung by Vālmiki, increased in volume time after time until it counted 24,000 verses. The great pathos of the story and the striking character of the chief men therein seem to have tempted the poets that lived in times after Vālmiki, to add to the story. The ultimate result of these interpolations was to raise Rāma to the godhead. This is poetically expressed in

वाल्मीकिगिरिसम्भूता रामसागरगामिनी ।

पुनातु भुवनं पुण्या रामायणमहानदी ॥

The Rāmāyana is a great river that had its source in Vālmiki and flows into the Ocean-like Rāma—A river from its source to its mouth receives many tributaries and increases in volume; at last, it falls into the sea.

In the attempt to make Rāma great, the historical facts, the epic first set out to expound, were lost sight of. Hidden in these accumulations, the gem of history lies obscure, and it is thought to be an unpaying task to search for it. A study of the language and habits of the peoples with whom Rāma had come in contact in his wanderings will lead us far in the way of discovering that history which is covered up in the interpolations and impertinent additions. The names of places, of persons, and of objects mentioned south of the Ganges lead us to the discovery of the languages spoken by those peoples.

L a ñ k ā, the chief abode of R ā v a ṇ a, is understood to be the modern Ceylon, because the word is taken to mean an island. Sanskrit dictionaries say that it is the name of the town of R ā v a ṇ a; but are silent with regard to its derivation.

Why the city was called so is nowhere explained. The name of anything must signify some prominent feature of that object. This *L a ñ k ā* also must have had some significance in it which has subsequently been lost sight of.

H a n u m ā n was the first to see the *r ā k ṣ a s a* abode and he was struck with its lofty position on the *T r i k ū ṭ a* (V. 2.) In describing it to *R ā m a*, he said (VI. 3.)

२½ शैलाग्रे रचिता दुर्गा सा पूर्वैवपुरोपमा ॥

As soon as *R ā m a* had crossed the sea, he was also struck with its eminent situation and drew the attention of his brother *L a k ṣ m a ṇ a* to it (vi. 24)

9 आलिखन्ती मिवा काथ मुत्थिताम्.....

मनसेव कृतांलङ्कां नगाग्रे विश्वकर्मणा ॥

They then ascended a neighbouring hill and observed it to be, (VI. 39)

18 शिखरं तत्रिकूटस्य प्रांशु चैकं दिविशुश्रम् ।

समन्ता स्फुष्पसंच्छ्रमं महारजत सन्निभम् ॥

19 शतयोजनविस्तीर्णं विमलांचारुदर्शनम् ।

श्लक्ष्णं श्रीमन्महच्चै व दुष्प्रापं शकुनैरपि ॥

20 मनसापि दुरारोहं किम्पुनः कर्मणा जनैः ।

निविष्टा तत्र शिखरे लङ्का रावणपालिता ॥

The one peculiar feature that struck all these was its inaccessibility. *R ā m a* said that it was so high that it could not be reached even by birds or by mind. Even *R ā v a ṇ a* does not fail to say that his city was situated on the top of a hill (III. 47. 28.) Moreover, when *R ā v a ṇ a* went to the *D a ṇ ḍ a k a* forest, he is said to have descended ; *S u g r ī v a* told *R ā m a* that he could very easily go up to *L a ñ k ā* (VI. 2. 5.)

From these it is seen that the high situation was the chief feature of the place and the name must have signified it.

Since it is not a Sanskrit word, it must have been of one of the languages spoken by the tribes living in that region. The

poet has in the name of Śābarī, the forlorn inhabitant of the pensive plain, preserved to us the name of the tribes that had their home in and around the Daṇḍaka forest. The Śābarī here and Viradhā at the entrance of the forest seem to have been introduced for no other purpose than to intimate the nature of tribes to which they belonged. The Śābarī especially serves no purpose in the way of showing the whereabouts of Sītā—she did not even know that Rāma had lost his wife and was going in search of her. Her faith and devotion were not required at that time and place. Vālmiki was not a poet to introduce characters unnecessarily into his song. His purpose in bringing in the Śābarī here appears to be to tell us that the tribes in this region were of this class. Here is our clue to find out who these tribes were, and what language they spoke.

In the language of the Śābars or Śavars, Laṅkā means above, tall, high, and it is used to signify the sky or heaven. Any high object is indicated by this word. The final 'n' is dropped and the word ends in long 'ā', and it becomes feminine in Sanskrit. That the word is in the feminine gender consequent on the curtailment it has suffered, is intimated in Amarakośa III. 5.

5. स्त्रीभ्यां त्काचिन्मृणाल्यादिर्विबक्षाच्चये यदि ।

लङ्का सेफालिका टीका धाककी पञ्चकादकी ॥

It clearly appears that लङ्का had suffered curtailment and was consequently placed in the feminine gender. Laṅkā was originally a Śāvāra word and was adapted into Sanskrit.

If the rākṣasas were secure on the top of an inaccessible mountain, they must have a temporary abode in the country below to serve as a base to carry on their depredations on the Aryan settlers in the Daṇḍaka forest. Such was Janasthāna, the southernmost extremity of the forest. (II 116. 11—12). Rāvāna, the lord of the rākṣasas, says that he had placed fourteen thousand rākṣasas under the command of Khara at Janasthāna. (III. 964, 5).

When these were all killed by Rāma, he sent eight of his picked men to reinforce the place. (III 34. 18-20.) Thus it clearly appears that Janasthāna was a rākshasa camp in the plain region of the Daṇḍaka.

Janasthāna means the 'abode of men'; but nowhere is it described to have been inhabited by men. The significance of the word does not appear 'to be full of men' but to be 'below or down' in contrast (with) 'Lānkā'. In the language from which Lānkā was taken, 'down or below' is indicated by the word 'Jaitan'. The people of Lānkā living on the top of the hill spoke of Khara's camp as 'Jaitan', down or below. Even now men living on the hills speak of the lower country as 'below'. The people in Tirupatī name the town at the foot of the hill as 'below or down'—Tirupatī. The plain country of the Vijagapatam district is spoken of as the 'below or down' by men living in the agency. It is no wonder, therefore, if Khara's camp was called 'Jaitan'.¹ This name easily becomes 'Janasthāna' in the mouths of the Aryans.

In the vicinity of Janasthāna lived the old man Jaṭāyu who greeted Rāma and introduced himself as 'पितृसखा'. (III. 14-3) उवाच वत्स मां विद्धि वयस्यं पितृयात्मनः । But we are nowhere told how Jaṭāyu became the friend of Daśaratha, Rāma's father. When the Vānaras despairing to find Sītā, sat on the sea-shore bemoaning their fate, Sampātī came out of a cave in the hill near by and questioned them how Jaṭāyu became the friend of Daśaratha (IV. 56-24).

तस्यैव च मम भ्रातृ स्सखा दशरथः कथम् ।

But the vānaras without giving any reply to this question again repeated (IV. 57-9) 'रामस्यतु पितुर्मित्रं जटायुर्नाम गृध्रराट्' । Jaṭāyu was more a friend to Rāma than to his father. The old man of the Pañchavajī gave even his life to protect Rāma's wife. So it appears that 'पितृसखा' appears to be the meaning of the name Jaṭāyu.

¹ Near Gajapatīnagaram in the Vijagapatam District there is Jaitī which is just at the foot of a hill. Jaitī appears to be a contraction of Jaitan.

'U w ā' in Ś a v a r a means father. 'J a ṭ a' means a friend or companion as in the phrase 'J a ṭ ā l e a' which means 'in company'. The genitive termination 'ā' added on to U w ā keeps the form unchanged. 'J a ṭ a u w ā' (father's friend) easily becomes J a ṭ ā y u.

From the time Chitrakūṭa had been left till J a ṭ ā y u was cremated, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa were wandering in the forest of D a ṇ ḍ a k a. In Uttarakāṇḍa, which is clearly a later interpolation, the origin of the name of the forest is accounted for in a peculiar way. King D a ṇ ḍ a had committed rape on the daughter of Ś u k r a who in his anger laid the country under a curse.

सत्यरात्रेण राजासौ सभृत्य बलवाहनः ।
 पापकर्म समाचारो बधं प्राप्स्यति दुर्मतिः ॥
 सर्व्वं सत्वानि यानोह जङ्गमानिस्थावराणिच ।
 सर्व्वेषां पांशुवर्षेण क्षयः क्षिप्रं भविष्यति ॥
 दण्डस्य विषयो यावत् तावत् सवनमाश्रमम् ।
 पांशु भूतमिवा कस्मान् सत्यरात्राङ्गविष्यति ॥

 तदाप्रभृति काकुत्स्थ ! दण्डकारण्य मुच्यते ॥

The forest extended from A t r i's hermitage to about the tract lived in by A y o m u k h i. In this was included J a n a s t h ā n a. This forest is said to have been devoid of trees, animals and water, and was converted into a region of ashes. If it had been so, how did so many hermitages exist there? From the description of its parts visited by Rāma, it appears to have been full of rivers and lakes and consequently habitable to man. It may not be out of place to give here the nature and quality of the parts of the forest through which Rāma had passed. The first settlement was (III. I. 3).

शरण्यं सर्व्वभूतानां ससमृष्टाजिरं तथा ।
 मृगे बह्वभिराकीर्णं पक्षिसङ्घैः समावृतम् ॥

Then the forest of *Virādhā* (III. 2. 2 and 3).

नानामृग गणाकौर्णं शार्दूल वृकसेवितम् ।
ध्वस्त वृक्ष लता गुल्मं दुर्दर्शं सलिलाशयम् ॥
निष्कूजनानाशकुनिभिन्निकागणनादितम् ।

This is truly a tropical forest. The country between the hermitage of *Śarabhaṅga* and that of *Sutikṣiṇa* is said to be watered by the *Mandākini* and its affluents (III.5.3). The *Sutikṣiṇa* settlement, which they had reached after a long journey, was found to be a flourishing one (III. 7, 17, 18). The men living there had plenty of roots and fruits and even the deer find plenty of food. Around this colony there were a number of other colonies wherein the people were all happy. *Sutikṣiṇa* directed *Rāma* to go and see all those colonies (III.8.12) पश्याश्चमपदं रम्यं दण्डकारण्यवासिनाम् ।

Even this part of the forest is called the forest of *Dandaka*. *Rāma* was told that he would see in this region :—

सप्राज्यफलमूलानि पुष्पितानि वनानिच ।
प्रशस्तमृगयूथानि शान्तपक्षिगणानिच ।
कारण्डवविकौर्णानि तटाकानि सरांसि च ॥
द्रक्ष्यसे दृष्टिरम्याणि गिरिप्रस्रवणानिच ।
रमणीयान्यरण्यानि मयूराभि रतानिच ॥

'Lucid pools, floods and lakes, rills leaping from their parent hills', were the marked feature of the country. Wandering in these colonies *Rāma* spent about ten years and returned to *Sutikṣiṇa*'s abode again. Then they proceeded to the hermitage of *Agastya*. The intervening country is described (III. 11, 38, 40).

स्यत्ती प्राये वनोद्देशे पिप्पली वनशोभिते ।
बहुपुष्पफले रम्ये नाना शकुनि नादिते ॥
पद्मिन्यो विविधास्तत्र प्रसन्न सलि लादिशवाः ।
हंसकारण्डवा कीर्णा स्रक् वाकीष शोभिताः ॥

A g a s t y a 's abode is said to have been situated in रमणीये बनोद्देशे बहुपादपसंबृते । Thence they proceeded to Pañchavaṭi on the precincts of which lay J a n a s t h ā n a . Pañchavaṭi is said to have been on the banks of the Godāvārī.

In all these, prominence is given to the places containing some source of water. If there be no water, the region would not be fit for human habitation. It was this suitability that made the D a ṇ ḍ a k a forest a bone of contention between the Aryan settlers and the r ā k ṣ a s a s . If it had been a region of ashes, devoid of plant and animal life, as described in Uttarākāṇḍa, there would not have been so much of Aryan energy expended to secure it for Aryan habitation. Therefore the prominent feature of the country was that it was full of rivers, lakes, pools and other kinds of water sources which support life.

The word D a ṇ ḍ a k a does not mean 'of the King D a ṇ ḍ a ' but signifies 'full of water'. It is made of D ā n + D ā k + ā , the final ā being the ś a v a r a genitive termination. In ś a v a r a language D ā n means 'water'; in other dialects of ś a v a r a , D ā k is the word for water. So D ā n + d ā k denotes excess of water. D ā n + d ā k + ā means 'of much water'; D a n + d a k + ā aranya means the forest of much water.'

To the south of this forest lay the K r a u ṇ ḍ i c h a forest wherein lived the head-less demon K a b a n d h a . He was immovable as he had no limbs for locomotion. Any immovable object is called 'b a n d a ' in Telugu, which means a 'b o u l d e r ' . In Canarese 'b a n d e ' is the corresponding word. A similar word may also exist in ś a v a r a ; but it is now not possible, from the meagreness of vocabularies available, to say if the word is found in the ś a v a r a tongue—K a - b a n d a may mean a 'deadly rock' (K a being a contraction of 'K i a s ' which means death in savara).

Being directed by K a - b a n d h a the brothers go to the lake P a m p ā which is said to have been the abode of a kind of birds which were like lumps of butter (III. 73).

1 ½. घृतपिण्डोपमान् स्थूलां स्तान् द्विजान् भक्षायिष्यथः ।

Herein the colour of the birds is said to be like that of ghee. They do not fly away at the approach of man, as they did not know what harm was. (*ibid*)

नोद्विजन्ते नरान्द्रष्ट्वावधत्सा कोविदा इशुभाः ।

If they had never been killed before, why does K a b a n d h a say that the two brothers would eat them? So, it appears that this is a poetic way of saying that they cannot fly away at the approach of man. The peculiar features of these birds were that they were fat and of ghee colour and that they could not fly at the approach of man. Such birds are nowhere else mentioned. These were peculiar only in this lake of Pampā.

From the description of the birds it clearly appears that the birds were ducks. P a p ā r ā is the ś a v a r a word for a duck. P a m p ā may be a modification of P a p ā r ā. As 'h' is substituted for 'p' in many languages, P a m p ā becomes 'H a m p ā'; Hamsa appears to be closely allied to 'H a m p ā'. Therefore 'Hamsa' seems to have come from the śavara word 'p a p ā r ā' and 'h a m s ā' is used for a duck in all the M ū n d ā r i dialects. Pampā, the name of the lake is significant of its being the abode of the ducks in particular.

The R u s y a - m ū k a hill which lay to the east of the lake is said to have been the abode of elephants (III. 31) (शिशुनामभि रक्षितः) In spite of this clear statement, the commentator Jaṭadhara derives the name of the hill from स्यो मृगो मृको यत्र No deer are said to have been on the hill. Therefore this derivation cannot be feasible.

In saying शिशुनामभि रक्षितः, it is implied that there were herds of young elephants. The name of the hill perhaps signifies this feature. M ū k a means a crowd or herd. R u s y a must have been a modification of R ā - j i (R ā an elephant and j i the plural termination). R ā j i - m ū k a means a herd of elephants in śavara. It is a matter for philologists to find out how R ā j i became 'R u s y a'.

This hill has another peculiarity also. It is stated to be 'सुदुःखारोहण' (III. 31). It was with very great difficulty that it could be ascended. On the other side of this hill, lay the town of Kis - kin dh ā. Because the V ā n a r a headquarters were behind the hill relative to the position of the P a m p ā, it was K i n d ā n which means 'behind' in śavara. Those that sleep on the hill at night are said to be dead in the morning. This is poetically said in (III. 73, 34)

यस्तु तं विषमाचारः पाप कर्माऽधिरोहति ।

तत्रैव प्रहरत्यनें सुप्तभादाय राक्षसाः ॥

Such a hill may be said to be deadly; it has already been said that 'Kias' means death in śavara. Therefore 'Kias - K i n d ā n means 'behind the deadly hill.' However K i n d h a seems to be a sanskritised form of the śavara 'K i n d ā n'. As in 'L a ñ k ā', the final 'n' is dropped and the word ends in 'ā' long in Sanskrit.

These aboriginal names are found not only between the Chitrakūṭa and Lanṅā, they are also found to the north of the Chitrakūṭā. Here the Aryan influence having been greater than in the Daṇḍakā region, the names appear along with the Aryan equivalents.

Ś ṛ ṅ g i - b e r a, the chief place of the lord of the N i ṣ ā d a s, exhibits in its form the process of the aryanisation of the aborigines. 'Ś ṛ ṅ g i' is a Sanskrit name generally given to villages near a hill; 'B e r a' is the ś a v a r a word for 'a hill'. Ś ṛ ṅ g i explains 'bera'. The name seems to have been given that both the Aryans and the non-Aryans might understand its significance. As this village is said to lie on north of the Ganges, it shows that the Aryan influence that felt earlier than in the regions to the south of the river on the

Some of the rākṣasa gānyā. Therefore it appears that origin. verses 17½ and 18½ seem to be have been thrust in by the Vānater poet. Even though the two verses are omitted, rākṣasas y does not suffer a bit. And nowhere in these cantos

are said to be allied to the Vānaras. H a n u m ā n said to Rāvaṇa (V. 51.2)

अहं सुग्रीव संदेश दिह प्राप्तज्ञवालयम् ।

राक्षसेश हरीशस्त्वां भ्राता कुशलमब्रवीत् ॥

Sugrīva is said to be the brother of Rāvaṇa. We have already seen that the language spoken by Śabari and her neighbours was Śabara. The rākṣasa language must have been closely related to it.

Rāvaṇa is said in the U t t a r ā k ā ṇ ḍ a to have descended from Ś ā l a - K a ṭ a ṅ k a ṭ a, the daughter of Sandhyā. From the very sound Śallakataṅkata appears to be non-aryan. In Śavara, 'S a l o o n' means a daughter. Katankata is almost like the Telugu, Katika Katika Cheekati (thick darkness). Katankata may be a Sanskrit form of a non-aryan word meaning darkness. Ś ā l a - k a ṭ a ṅ k a ṭ a appears to be a modification of the non-aryan word Sala-katankata which means the daughter of darkness. She is described to be (VII. 4) सन्ध्या या स्तनयां सोथ सन्ध्यातुल्यां प्रभावतः By saying सन्ध्याया स्तनयां the meaning of her name is intimated as in other cases.

R ā v a ṇ a who was born in her family must also be a non-aryan. There is not much evidence to be deduced from the epic to show that the name of the Rākṣasa king was of the same language as Ś ā l a - K a ṭ a ṅ k a ṭ a. It appears to be a modification of the Śavara R a m e n which means a cat. In Rāmāyaṇa there appears to be a hint at this significance of the name. When Rāvaṇa revealed himself to Sita (III. 49.4)

कामरूपिण महं भद्रे पश्यमां कामद'पतिम् ।

dehere कामरूपिणम् may be taken to be the accusative singular of कामरूपी which means a polecat. But this can-herds of you^{red} as कामदस्पतिम् makes it to mean 'of beauty this feature. M ū k a means a ~~unusual totemistic~~ ^{unusual totemistic} ~~clans~~ ^{clans} amongst have been a modification of R ā - j i (R ā an elephant presumed the plural termination). R ā j i - m ū k a means ~~and their~~ ^{and their} elephants in śavara. It is a matter for philologists how R ā j i became 'R u s y a'.

S a r a m ā, the wife of Vibhīṣaṇa, was one of the Lankā women that gave consolation to Sītā in her sorrow. She is described to be *mṛdu-bhāṣiṇī* and *valgu-bhāṣiṇī*. She tells Sītā to hear her words which do her good. Therefore, it appears that her chief quality was to speak good words. The organ of speech is the mouth and it alone deserves to be called by that name which speaks kind and soft words. Therefore the name 'S a r a m ā' signifies a mouth. G a d a b a, a śavara dialect, still preserves the original word for mouth, though all the others including Śavara have adapted the Sanskrit word Mukha or Tuṇḍam. In Gadaba *Sarmo* means mouth (Grierson). Saramā must have been a modification of Saramo. In Rāmāyaṇa this person is introduced only in one place and much cannot be said in support of this.

'T r i s i r a' a rākṣasa is twice introduced in the story. T r i s i r a was one of the warriors under Khara in Janasthāna. He is described to have had three heads but not six arms. Even here there is much to suspect that the poet never intended to say that he had three heads. When Rāma had killed the horses and the driver of his car, Trisira rushed against Rāma, but he fell down senseless having been pierced through the heart by Rāma's arrow. (III. 27. 16½)

ततो हत त्रयया चक्षुःशुभ्रं दुःखतन्त्रं निशाचरम् ।

विभेद राम स्तं बाणैर्हृदये सोऽभवज्जडः ॥

Then it is said that Rāma cut off his three heads with three arrows.

सायकैश्चाप्रमेयात्मा सामर्षस्तस्य रक्षसः ।

शिरांस्यपातयद्रामो वेगमवह्निस्त्रिभिर्दिशते ॥

That Rāma separated the heads from the body of a man that had fallen senseless on the ground, is rather a slur on the character of the prince of Ayodhyā. Therefore it appears that the two verses 17½ and 18½ seem to be have been thrust in by some later poet. Even though the two verses are omitted, the story does not suffer a bit. And nowhere in these cantos

is he described with three heads. It clearly appears, therefore, that his name *Trisira* does not signify that he had three heads.

A second *rākṣasa* of the same name is said to have been a son of *Rāvaṇa*. Neither when *Trisira* advised his father regarding the fight (VI. 69) nor when he actually fought with *Hanumān* (VI. 70) he is said to have had three heads and arms of double that number. But in verses 43 to 48 it is said that his three heads were cut off by *Hanumān*. From the different metre in which these verses are found, it may be presumed that they were not of the original poet. Moreover it is said that the *Rākṣasa* is said to have fallen down senseless being struck on the chest by *Hanumān*. (VI. 70. 43.) Then again he got back his senses when he had heard the cry of *Hanumān*. (VI. 70. 44.) It was at this time that it is said that his heads were cut off by the leader of the *Vānaras*. From these considerations it appears that it was the later interpolators that interpreted *Trisira* to mean 'one with three heads'. A careful study of the whole poem makes clear that *Valmiki* never meant that *Rāvaṇa* had ten heads; yet the later poets played upon the words such as *Daśagrīva* and it was impressed on the popular mind that the *Rākṣasa* lord had ten heads and twenty arms. The same is the case with *Trisira* also.

'*Trisiraḥ*' seems to be a mere name and does not signify that he had three heads. There is nothing to show the real meaning of the name. The name appears to be a modification of *Tir-sēa-rāe* which in *Godaba*, a dialect of *śavara*, means 'high, devil' *Tir* means 'high or tall' and *sēa-rāe*, a devil. *Tir-sēarāe* is an apt name for a *rākṣasa*. This being changed to '*Trisiraḥ*' the original meaning was lost sight of and the poets took it to mean 'three heads'.

The other names are so far changed that it is impossible to trace out their origin. But the study of the names made above is sufficient to show that the region between the Ganges and *Lankā* was inhabited by tribes which are now called the *Mūndāris*; but in the time of *Valmiki* they appear to

have been known as the Sabaras or Śavaras, Rākṣasas, and Niṣādas.

A study of the habits and customs of these tribes described in the epic will further strengthen their identification with the modern tribes.