
Ramashtapadi by Sri Ramakavi

श्री रामकविकृता रामाष्टपदी

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Commentary by P. R. Kannan

Navi Mumbai, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Sri Rama Ashtapadi has been authored by Sri Ramakavi on the pattern of the famous Radha-Krishna Ashtapadi, Gita Govindam of Jayadeva. As the poet states towards the close of this beautiful and soulful work, it appears he belonged to Hosani sect of Karnataka and he wrote this Ashtapadi at the behest of the ruler of Srirangapattinam in Karnataka. Scholars hold that Ramakavi was the brother of Vanchesvara Kavi alias Kutti Kavi, author of the well-known satire Mahisha Sataka, son of the daughter of the much venerated Sri Govinda Dikshita, regarded as Advaita Vidyacharya, who was minister of the first Nayak kings of Thanjavur, Achyuta and Ragunatha.

In our Sanatana Dharma human birth is considered very precious and is said to be the most suitable for attaining Moksham. 'Punarapi jananam, punarapi maranam, punarapi janani jathare sayanam' - so goes the unbreakable chain of births and deaths. Cutting this chain and reaching the feet of Bhagavan, merging with him totally and enjoying the Advaita Ananda is Moksham, permanent Liberation. Sastras show many paths to attain this exalted state; great men say that of them the path of Bhakti is the easiest, particularly in Kaliyuga, which is noted for feebleness of body and mind. Namasankirtanam, singing Bhagavan's names and lilas, is highly recommended by all great exponents of Hinduism. Among the bhakti literature, 'Ashtapadi' holds an important position. When Ashtapadi is sung to raga and tala, waves of bhakti rise in the listener. Our bhajana sampradaya celebrates the weddings of Bhagavan's forms using these Ashtapadis, much like the age-old celebrations of these weddings in Vaidika ritual form. Singing of Ashtapadi, celebrating wedding etc. are all meant to intensify our sense of bhakti and bliss.

The first Ashtapadi was written by the great devotee-poet Jayadeva of Puri Jagannatha kshetra on Radha and Krishna; it was titled 'Gita Govindam'. Sri Ramakavi's Rama Ashtapadi follows the same literary pattern. It too has 24 Ashtapadis, each having eight charanas, set to the same Raga and Tala. The Ashtapadi itself is by way of a conversation or description relating to a specific theme, while the slokas prior to and following the Ashtapadi carry the story forward. The poetical composition is highly original and the words have a gentle, musical flow. Unlike Gita Govindam, Sivagitimala (Kamakshi- Ekamreswara Ashtapadi, popularly called Siva Ashtapadi) and Gita Sundaram (Meenakshi-Sundareswara Ashtapadi), this Ashtapadi on Rama does not have Sringara Rasa as the predominant sentiment. The story is also not about the separation of the loving couple after a quarrel and their eventual reunion. On the other hand the entire story of Ramayana based on Valmiki's Adikavya, with due expression of various Rasas unfolds through the Ashtapadis.

In Sri Rama Ashtapadi, the first Ashtapadi is a very brief summary of the Ramayana story, bringing out the purpose of Sri Rama's Avatara, viz. establishment of dharma. The second Ashtapadi is an eloquent stotra of Rama, emphasising his compassion. Sage Viswamitra informs Rama of Tataka's prowess in the next Ashtapadi. The enchantment of Mithila's women with Rama, Janaka's enquiry of Viswamitra about the two ascetic princes and marriage festivities are covered next. Rama then persuades Sita not to insist on accompanying him to the forest. The poet then records the wailing of Dasaratha on separation from Rama. The next Ashtapadi is a beautiful prayer of Sita to river Ganga. Rama then utters words of love to Sita in Panchavati. This is quickly followed by the wailing of Rama on not finding Sita in the cottage and Jatayu's dying message to Rama on his fight with Ravana. Sabari's offering of fruits to Rama is feelingly told in the next Ashtapadi. Sugriva then informs Rama of Vali's prowess. After Vali's killing, Tara's address of pacification to Lakshmana on the inaction of Sugriva follows. Hanuman's words of consolation to Sita and warning to Ravana are covered next. Hanuman's message to Rama on Sita's pitiable condition and Rama's wailing and appeal to Manmatha not to torture him are taken up in the next Ashtapadis. The prayers of Vibhishna and Samudraraja to Rama quickly follow. Brahma's stotram after the war is taken up next. Rama then shows Sita the battlefield and other salient spots en route to Ayodhya. The final twentyfourth Ashtapadi covers the Rishis' stotram to Rama after Pattabhishekam.

Sri Rama Ashtapadi is the loving and inspired work of the poet Sri Ramakavi and is sure

to instil devotion in the mind of the reader and singer towards the lotus feet of Sri Rama and Sita.

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श्री रामकविकृता रामाष्टपदी

Ramashtapadi by Sri Ramakavi

आरभिरागेण, अटतालेन गीयते

Raga Arabhi, Tala Ata

श्लो ॥ राम पाहि रमा-मनोहर रामराज दयानिधे
कामिता-मितदान-कल्पक कातरीकृत-वारिधे राम पाहि ॥

Slokas

Rama, protect me. Enchanter of Lakshmi; Rama the king; Treasure house of Compassion; Kalpaka tree fulfilling limitless desires; One who frightened the Ocean (Samudraraja); Rama, protect me.

आगमान्त-निकुञ्ज-कुञ्जर योगि-सिद्धि-विधायक
नागराज-समान-दोर्युग नाथ मां रघुनायक राम पाहि ॥

Elephant (or Aswatha tree) in the woods of Vedantas; Ordainer of fulfillment of Yoga; Having two arms (powerful) like the serpent king (Sesha); Hero in the dynasty of Raghu; my Lord Rama, protect me.

देव देव पुराण चिन्मयदेह तेऽस्तु नमो नमो
भावनाफल-दायिनेऽखिल- भावनाय नमो नमो राम पाहि ॥

Deva among Devas; Ancient One, whose form is Consciousness; my prostrations to you again and again. Dispenser of fruits of true feelings of bhakti; Pervading the entire universe of feelings; Rama, protect me; prostrations to you again and again.

सौराष्ट्रागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

(Raga Sourashtra) (Tala Adi)

विहित-भूम्यवनाय वीरातिवीराय महित-स्वचरिताय मङ्गलम् ॥

महीपतिवेषाय मङ्गलं महिमातिशयिताय मङ्गलम् ॥

To the protector of Earth, to the extremely valorous one, to one whose account is glorious, may you be auspicious. To one who put on the garb of a king, whose greatness evokes wonder, may you be auspicious.

दशरथ-भाग्याय दयमान-हृदयाय मशकित-दशास्याय मङ्गलम् ॥

महीपतिवेषाय मङ्गलं महिमातिशयिताय मङ्गलम् ॥

To the good fortune of Dasaratha, to one whose heart melts with compassion, one who crushed the ten-headed Ravana like a mosquito, one who put on the garb of a king; may you be auspicious.

कञ्जभू-विनुताय कल्याणरूपाय मञ्जुल-वचनाय मङ्गलम् ॥

महीपतिवेषाय मङ्गलं महिमातिशयिताय मङ्गलम् ॥

Worshipped by the Lotus born Brahma; of the very form of auspiciousness; soft in speech; one who put on the garb of a king; may you be auspicious.

॥ प्रथमाष्टपदी ॥

(प्रलयपयोधिजले इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 1

(Like in Pralayapayodhijale)

श्लो ॥ वंशे जन्मवते रवेर्मुनिपतेः यज्ञावनं तन्वते

शैवं भञ्जयते धनुर्जनकजा-पाणिग्रहं कुर्वते ।

रामौजो हरते वनं प्रचलते नक्तञ्चरान्निघ्नते

लङ्केशं जयते स्वराज्यमवते रामाय तुभ्यं नमः ॥

Sloka

To Rama, who incarnated in the lineage of Surya; protected the yagna of Viswamitra, the chief among sages; broke the bow of Siva; clasped the hand of Sita, the daughter of Janaka; stole the glory of Parasurama (in a confrontation); who proceeded to the forest and killed Rakshasas; who was victorious over Ravana, the king of Lanka; who protects his own kingdom; my prostrations to you.

मालवीरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Malavi, Tala Adi

श्रीमति सूर्यकुले अकरोः अवतारं
प्रापयितुं भुवनं-अभारं
राघव धृत-मनुज-शरीर जय जय राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you incarnated in the glorious lineage of Surya. Raghava, you assumed the body of a human in order to rid the earth of the unbearable load of sinners; victory to you again and again.

सुरगणसाह्यविधौ करुणारससान्द्र
दशरथ-दुग्ध-पयोनिधि-चन्द्र (राघव)

Rama, Hari, you came down in order to help the Devas; you are the essence of compassion incarnate; you are the moon from the ocean of milk of Dasaratha; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

कौशिक-मखपाल पावित-मुनिदार
पुरहर-कार्मुक-भञ्जन धीर (राघव)

Rama, Hari, you protected the yagna of sage Vishwamitra; you were adored by Ahalya, consort of sage Goutama (whom you raised from curse); you are the courageous one, who broke the bow of Siva, the vanquisher of Tripuras; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

भार्गव-गर्वहर पालित-पितृवचन
विरचित-खरमुख-राक्षस-हनन (राघव)

Rama, Hari, you relieved Parasurama of his impudence; you obeyed your father's instructions implicitly; you killed Rakshasas like Khara; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

विदळित-कनकमृग गळित-वधूसौख्य
कल्पित-दिनकर-सुतवर-सख्य (राघव)

Rama, Hari, you annihilated the golden deer, you were deprived of the joy of Sita's company; you made friends with Sugriva, the great son of Surya; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

स्तम्भित-वारिनिधे सीतासोत्कण्ठ
रणहत-सानुजसुत-दशकण्ठ (राघव)

Rama, Hari, you stultified the ocean; with Sita ardently longing to rejoin you, you killed Ravana along with his son and younger brother in war; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

भूमिसुता-रमण विधिमुख-सुरपूज्य
चिरपरिपालित-रघुकुलराज्य (राघव)

Rama, Hari, you are the charming husband in the company of Sita, the daughter of Bhumi; you are worshipped by Devas headed by Brahma; you ruled over the kingdom of the dynasty of Raghu for long years; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

इति तव रामकवौ कथयति शुभचरितं
कुरु हृदयं सदयं सुखचरितं (राघव)

Rama, Hari, having listened to the auspicious story sung by Ramakavi, please render your heart full of compassion and happiness; Raghava, victory to you again and again.

श्लो. शृण्वन्ति ये गीतमिदं समग्रं भक्त्या कृतं रामकवीश्वरेण ।
ते कृत्स्न-रामायण-वाचनस्य फलं लभन्ते श्रममन्तरेण ॥

Sloka

Those, who listen in full to this song rendered by Ramakavi with devotion, derive effortlessly the fruit of reading the entire Ramayanam.

In this first Ashtapadi, the entire story of Ramayana has been succinctly brought out by the genius of the poet, with due emphasis on the unending auspicious qualities of Rama, specially compassion, and the main purpose of the Avatara, viz. establishment of Dharma on earth. Life seeks out various dharmas in a man on different occasions. While Rama showed the world how to obediently carry out the instructions of father, and be reverential and helpful to sages, he displayed the innate valour of a kshatriya by breaking the Siva dhanus in the royal assembly of Janaka and taunting the ocean with the threat of drying it up. All these varying perspectives of dharma in various rasas are brought out enchantingly by the poet.

॥ द्वितीयाष्टपदी ॥

(श्रितकमलाकुच इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 2

(Like in Sritakamalakucha)

भैरवीरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Bhairavi, Tala Triputa

दशरथ-पुण्य-परिपाक रक्षित-लोक

भुवन-पावन पुण्यश्लोक जय जय ॥ राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you came as the fruition of all the merits of Dasaratha; you protected the world; you purified the earth; remembering your acts of your fame brings Punya (merit). Victory to you again and again.

हररमणी-जप्यमानाख्य देवता-मुख्य

पालय कृतभक्त-सौख्य जय जय ॥ राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, your name is chanted by Parvathi, consort of Siva; you are the chief among Devatas; you bestow happiness on your devotees; please protect. Victory to you again and again.

नवकुवलयदल-श्यामल हृदि कोमल

अव्याज-करुणालवाल जय जय ॥ राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you are blue-complexioned like the water lily; you are soft hearted; you are the ocean of motiveless compassion. Victory to you again and again.

संसार-जलधि-नाविक सुगुण-भावुक

पालित-निजपद-सेवक जय जय ॥ राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you are the boatman in the ocean of samsara (cycle of births and deaths); you show love for good qualities; you protect those who worship at your feet. Victory to you again and again.

अज्ञान-तमोलोक-बान्धव दास-बान्धव

परिचित पतगेन्द्र-सैन्धव जय जय ॥ राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you are the well-meaning relative for those who are bound in the dark world of ignorance; you are the support for those who have surrendered to you; you have Garuda, the king of birds as your vehicle. Victory to you again and again.

जगती-मङ्गल-नामधेय साधुविधेय

परमयोगि-भागधेय जय जय ॥ राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you bear the insignia of auspiciousness of the world; you are at the behest of the virtuous; you are the good fortune of supreme yogis; Victory to you again and again.

कलित-तापस-तत्त्वबोधन मोक्षसाधन

सफलित-शरसन्धान जय जय ॥

राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, you teach the Supreme Reality to the sages; you are the means of Moksha, Liberation; your arrows, when aimed, are ever successful. Victory to you again and again.

इति रामकवि-विरचितं मङ्गलगीतं

जयति श्रीहरिगुणभूतं जय जय ॥

राम हरे ॥

Rama, Hari, this auspicious song by Ramakavi, dwelling on the qualities of Sri Hari is ever victorious. Victory to you again and again.

श्लो ॥ एतद्रामकवीश्वरेण रचितं गीतं रघूणां प्रभोः

श्रीकल्याण-गुणैरलङ्कृतपदं गायन्ति शृण्वन्ति ये ।

ते भोगानुपभुज्य चेह विपुलाभोगा विमुक्तामया

मुक्तास्संसृति-बन्धनेन महताऽप्यन्ते लभन्ते हरिम् ॥

Slokas

Those, who sing and listen to this song by Ramakviswara - the song embellished by words describing the auspicious qualities of the hero of the Raghu lineage - will enjoy all pleasures here including good health free from disease, and, freed from the great bondage of samsara, attain to Hari at the end.

यज्ञत्राण-कृतेऽर्थितो दशरथो गाधेस्सुतेनात्मजं

कृच्छ्रा-ल्लब्धमपि प्रियं तमृषये प्रादाद् वसिष्ठाज्ञया ।

श्रीरामोऽपि सलक्ष्मणो धृतधनुर्बाणो महान्तं शनैः

पन्थानं समतीत्य किञ्चन महारण्यं पुरः प्रैक्षत ॥

Dasaratha, requested by Viswamitra, the son of Gaadhi, for protecting his yagna, handed over to him, by the order of Vasishta, Sri Rama, though he was very dear to him and had been attained with great difficulty. Sri Rama, together with Lakshmana, armed with powerful bow and arrows, walked some distance and saw in front of him a huge forest.

दूरे दृष्ट्वा निविड-घटित-स्निग्ध-जीमूतमाला-

लीलां विभ्रच्छ्रुति-कटुरटञ्जिल्लिका-नादभीमम् ।

जीर्णारण्यं चिरखिलतया दुर्गमार्ग-प्रचारं

पप्रच्छ श्रीकुशिकतनयं विस्मयाद् रामभद्रः ॥

Ramabhadra noted at a distance that the forest was marked by the play of dense rain-bearing cloud formations and terrifying sound of crickets, hard on the ears and appeared devastated and hard of access owing to long periods of disuse. He now asked Viswamitra, the son of Kusika, with wonder.

पृच्छते रामभद्राय कौतुकात् ताटकावनम् ।

जगत्यभ्युदया-शंसि शशंस कुशिकात्मजः ॥

Viswamitra, the son of Kusika, started to tell Ramabhadra about Tatakavana, quelling his curiosity and simultaneously wishing the well being of the world.

In this second Ashtapadi, Ramakavi has sung the praise of Rama bringing out his essential compassion for the weak and the oppressed, and gift of the supreme Gnana leading to Moksha in deserving cases. In the slokas he quickly covers the initial parts of the epic and leads us towards the elimination of the demoness Tataka.

॥ तृतीयाष्टपदी ॥

(ललितलवङ्गलता इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 3

(Like in Lalitalavangalata)

वसन्तरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Vasanta, Tala Adi

दिक्षु तरक्षु-परिक्षुभिताखिल-धावित-भीत-कुरङ्गे ।

प्रवितत-रोहिण-विटपि-विलम्बित-फूत्कृत-घोर-भुजङ्गे ॥

In this dry forest hyenas are strutting in all directions; deer are running in fear; in this expanse of fig trees, many terrific serpents are making hissing sound.

निवसति चिरमिह काचन यक्षी

राम निरुध्य वनं तदिदं पथि

खदिर-हुताश-समाक्षी (निवसति चिरमिह) ॥

Here lives a Yakshini for long; her very (terrible) presence obstructs travel through this forest; she has eyes, red like fire fed with lots of wood.

उन्मद-महिष-विषाण-समुद्धृत-मांसल-पांसु-कदम्बे
पृथुतर-बुंहित-नटन-समुत्सुक-बर्हिण-चलित-कदम्बे ॥ (निवसति)
प्रतिपद-निपतित-नरमांसाशन-भैरव-फेरवजाले ।
विकट-विशङ्कट-लुठदति-निष्ठुर-घाटि-करोटि-विशाले ॥ (निवसति)

Here are kadamba trees laden with dust mixed with pieces of flesh tossed by aggressive wild buffaloes with their horns; there are huge wild peacocks, making roaring noise, and eager to dance. There are multitudes of terrible jackals, eating human flesh, which they scatter at every step. The yakshini has a huge skull; her neck bones at the back are huge, formidable, very hard and rolling.

जगदशुभावह-निजभुज-विक्रम-परिहृत-मानुषचारे ।
इह गिलिताखिल-वर्त्मनि कटुतर-झिल्लीझाङ्कति-घोरे ॥ (निवसति)
इदमिह मलद-करूश-समाह्वय-शालि-सुजीर्णमरण्यम् ।
रचय रघूत्तम विनिहत-ताटकमखिल-तपस्वि-शरण्यम् ॥ (निवसति)

The strength of her powerful arms has rendered the forest completely rid of human movement; the terrible sound emanating from her wild anklets during her movement makes the forest very fearful. This (fertile) area of Malada and Karoosa has been turned into a denuded forest. O Raghuttama, you kill Tataka and make the forest the refuge of austere sages.

यक्षवधूवन-वर्णन-परमिह रामकवेरिति गीतम् ।
गायति यो भजते स कदापि न दुर्गम-कानन-भीतिम् ॥ (निवसति)

One, who sings this song of Ramakavi describing the Yakshini's forest, will never face the fear of a terrible forest.

श्लो ॥ हत्वा सुन्द-वधूमवाप्य च महान्त्यस्त्राणि सिद्धाश्रमे
मारीचादि-निशाचरान्नियमयन्निर्विघ्न-यज्ञक्रियः ।
वैदेहाध्वर-दर्शनोत्सुक-हृदा गाधेस्सुतेनादरात्
नीतो पावित-गौतमर्षि-दयितो रामो विदेहान् ययौ ॥

Slokas

After killing Tataka, the wife of Sunda, obtaining powerful divine weapons and repressing Rakshasas like Maricha in Siddhasrama, thus allowing Viswamitra's yagna to proceed without hindrance, Rama was led to Videha by Viswamitra with grace. Receiving the

adoration of Ahalya, the wife of Rishi Goutama and, being eager to see the yagna of Janaka, Rama proceeded to Videha.

समीक्ष्य रामं मिथिला-नगर्यां वीथ्यां प्रयान्तं स्मर-सुन्दराङ्गम् ।

रूपेण तस्यापहतान्तरङ्गाः पुराङ्गनाः चक्रुरिमान् विलासान् ॥

Seeing Rama, with beautiful limbs like Manmatha, striding on the roads of the city of Mithila, the women of the city, with their hearts robbed by his handsome form, indulged in various sports.

In this third Ashtapadi, Ramakavi the poet uses the 'bibhatsa' (disgust) rasa to good effect to describe the atrocities of Tataka the Yakshini in the forest. The emphasis is on two anti-social aspects: one, killing of innocent travellers and inhabitants; the second, denuding a fertile area of land. The poet's description is as if anticipating Rama's ethical objection to killing a woman, which is explicitly described in Valmiki Ramayanam. The poet concludes with the mention of spontaneous joy arising in the hearts of women of Mithila on looking at Rama.

॥ चतुर्थाष्टपदी ॥

(चन्दनचर्चित इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 4

(Like in Chandanacharchita)

रामक्रियारागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Ramakriya, Tala Adi

काचन वीक्षितुमेनमनङ्गमिवोज्झित-मण्डन-लीला ।

अभजत सौधमपि त्वरया निजमगणित-गुरुजन-जाला ॥

प्रविशति दाशरथौ नगरे सरोजदृशामभिमानहरे ॥ (प्रविशति)

Unnoticed by the group of elders, a woman reached her mansion quickly and agitatedly with playful sport as if she were about to see Manmatha, when Rama entered the city, robbing the ego of the women, who had eyes, lovely like lotus.

कापि निनिन्द वधूरधिकं निजकुचभर-जघन-नितम्बम् ।

रघुवर-दर्शन-जनित-कुतूहल-गमन-विरचित-विलम्बम् ॥ (प्रविशति)

In her great curiosity to look at Rama, the great personage in the Raghu lineage, and anxiety owing to delay (in reaching the vantage point) due to her slow gait, another woman cursed her heavy bosom, hips and the posterior for causing it.

काचन लोचनदेयमदादलिके महिलाञ्जन-भङ्गम् ।

काप्यपलायत कमितरि पश्यति विवृतकुचा गतसङ्गम् ॥ (प्रविशति)

Yet another woman put on her forehead the collyrium to be applied on the eyes. Another ran with her breasts exposed, while her beloved was watching, leaving his embrace.

कापि ददौ कर-पल्लवयोर्मणिनूपुरमस्मृत-देहा ।

सौध-गवाक्षं गतमपराप्यनुतत्पृथु-कुच-परिणाहा ॥ (प्रविशति)

Another woman, unmindful of her limbs, put on her tender hands the gem-studded anklets (to be worn on ankles). Another reached the window in her mansion with her large breasts obstructing (looking out).

नेत्रमहोत्सव एष नृणामिह दृष्टिपथादतियाति

एहि सखि त्वरयेति च काचिदकूजदलज्जमभीति ॥ (प्रविशति)

Another woman shouted without any bashfulness or fear to her friend, asking her to come quickly and saying that a great festivity for the human eyes is moving away from vision.

काचन तूर्ण-मलक्तज-सिक्तपदेन पुरः प्रचलन्ती ।

योषिदशोभत हृद्यनुराग-ममान्तमिव प्रकिरन्ती ॥ (प्रविशति)

Another woman was going in front with rapid strides of her feet decorated with red lac; she shone as if she was exuding the love in her heart through the tips (of her feet).

कापि गवाक्ष-पदेन समीक्ष्य रघुप्रवरं जनवृन्दे ।

हर-रतिपतिरयमिति सादरमञ्जलिनैव ववन्दे ॥ (प्रविशति)

Yet another woman looked at Rama among the crowd of people through the window and paid respects with joined hands, thinking that this must be the enchanting Siva or Manmatha, the consort of Rati.

कापि निपीय दृशैव विभुं हृदि भावनया विहरन्ती ।

विरहभयादपिहित-नयनाजनि सौख्यमिवानुभवन्ती ॥ (प्रविशति)

Another woman drank the beauty of Rama with her eyes; with emotions of love straddling her heart and enjoying great happiness, she then shut her eyes with the fear of separation.

रामकवेरिति गीतमिदं परिगायति यो मृदुरागम् ।

कामयते तमनङ्गभयादिह योषिदुदञ्चित रागम् ॥ (प्रविशति)

One, who sings this song of soft emotions of love of Ramakavi, is struck by the overflowing love in the women, afraid of Manmatha.

श्लो ॥ वरगुण-गणारामं रामं समीक्ष्य सलक्ष्मणं
सपदि जनको राजा पूजां विधाय कुतूहली ।
दुहितृ-विषयां चिन्तामन्तर्वहन्ननयोः कथां
कुशिक-तनयं पृच्छत्यच्छाशयं स्म सविस्मयः ॥

Sloka

Looking at Rama, the abode of host of lofty qualities, accompanied by Lakshmana, King Janaka performed Pooja quickly. With the anxiety on account of his daughter in his mind (relating to her marriage), he asked Viswamitra with wonder for a complete narration of the story of these two personages.

In this fourth Ashtapadi, the poet employs his fertile imagination to portray 'Sringara' (passionate love) rasa in the context of the women of Mithila looking at the strange handsome visitor. Unlike 'Gita Govindam', Sringara rasa is sparingly used by Ramakavi in Rama Ashtapadi; this is one of those rare pieces. Mithila women eyeing Rama with love is unknown to Valmiki and Adhyatma Ramayanas. Ramakavi bases this Ashtapadi on Kamba Ramayanam in Tamil, where such a description is found.

॥ पञ्चमाष्टपदी ॥

(निभृतनिकुञ्ज इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 5

(Like in Nibhrutanikunja)

काम्भोजिरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Kambhoji, Tala Triputa)

मणिमय-मण्डन-मण्डित-सुन्दर-लोल-शिखण्डक-भूषौ ।

अन्योन्य-सदृश-सुरूप-धराविह काविमौ मौलि-धृतेषुधी ॥

वद हे तापस तमिम-मुदन्तं ।

मधुरतराकृति-महीपति-लक्षण-महितौ कावेतौ नितान्तम् ॥ (वद)

Who are these two, with tufts of hair decorated with gem studded beautiful ornaments, with quiver of arrows hanging from head, and resembling each other in handsome form?

Tell me oh sage, the story of these two in full. Who are they, with enchanting sweet forms, bearing the signs of kings?

समद-मदावळ-गर्वित-केसरि-मन्थरतर-गतिधीरौ ।

आजानु-लम्बितपीन-भुजाविह काविमौ राजकुमारौ ॥ (वद)

Who are these two brave princes, striding slowly like lions intoxicated, and with hefty arms extending upto knee?

कर्णान्त-विश्रान्त-रक्तान्त-लोचन-सूचित-महाराजवंशौ ।

अन्योन्य-समानौ प्रमाणे-ङ्गितादिषु काविमौ तूण-युतांसौ ॥ (वद)

Who are these, with blood red eyes extending upto ears indicating royal lineage, and looking similar in appearance and conduct, and bearing the quiver of arrows?

सुरमणि-नवहेम-मसृण-तनुद्युति-पुनरुक्त-रत्नकलापौ ।

अभिनव-यौवन-देहधराविह काविमौ करधृत-चापौ ॥ (वद)

Who are these, whose forms exhibit fresh youth, and whose bodies shine brilliantly like divine gem-studded freshly minted gold, decorated with too many gem studded ornaments, and with bows in their hands?

क्षत्र-कुलोचित धीरगुणावपि शान्तौ तवाप्यनुरूपौ ।

मम-नयनोत्सव-पोषकराविह काविमौ मदन-सुरूपौ ॥ (वद)

Who are these, looking like Manmatha, nurturing the celebration of my eyes, and, remaining peaceful to go with your nature, though possessed of courageous qualities suited to kshatriya lineage?

ध्रुवमति-मानुषमस्त्यनयोरिह धाम किमप्यति-मात्रम् ।

श्रवण-कुतूहल-मुदयति मे मुनिकुलवर किं कुलगोत्रम् ॥ (वद)

These two are certainly superhuman, beyond measure. Which is their residence here? What is their lineage and Gotra? O best among sages, I am eager to listen from you.

त्रिभुवन-मोहनकर-मनयोरिद-मृषिवर-रूपमुदारम् ।

वीक्ष्य जनो भुवि विस्मयते हृदि को भजते न विकारम् ॥ (वद)

O best among Rishis, the handsome form of these two enchants the three worlds; on seeing them, who in this world will not undergo transformation with wonder in heart?

श्रीरामकविनेति वर्णितमद्भुत-रघुवर-रूपविलासम् ।

गायतामनुदिन-मनुभजते हृदि रघुपतिरनिश-निवासम् ॥ (वद)

Rama takes residence permanently in the heart of one, who sings every day this song of Sri Ramakavi describing the wonderful beauty of the form of Rama.

श्लो ॥ विश्वामित्रवचः प्रहृष्ट-जनक-व्यादिष्ट-दूतोदितैः

क्षिप्रं प्राप निजैर्जनैर्दशरथस्सीरध्वज-स्यान्तिकम् ।

गोदानादि समस्त-माभ्युदयिकं कृत्वाथ रामादयः

चत्वारोऽपि विदेहराज-तनया-पाणीनगृह्णन्-करैः ॥

Slokas

Janaka overflowed with joy on hearing the words of Viswamitra in reply and sent emissaries to Dasaratha. Accompanied by relatives, Dasaratha reached Janaka's city quickly. Rama and his brothers - all four of them - performed Godana (ceremonial gift of cow), Naandi Sraadha etc. in detail and clasped the hands of the daughters of the king of Videha in marriage.

नवमिव मनःकामं रामं सकौतुक-मङ्गलं

परिणयविधौ देव्या दिव्यां वहन्त-मलङ्कृतिम् ।

ध्वनति गगने भेर्या तौर्यत्रिके सुरसुभ्रवां

मिलितमभवद्विश्वं शश्वत् विलोकितुमादरात् ॥

The universe became curious with freshly developing longing mixed with respect in order to see the auspicious Rama during his marriage with Devi, divinely decorated, when the sky reverberated with the triple symphony of song, instrumental music of kettle drum and dance of celestial women of beauty.

The poet shows his mastery while bringing out the handsomeness, the kshatriya sternness and pleasing qualities of Rama and Lakshmana in this Ashtapadi. Janaka speaks as if in anticipation of Rama's prowess waiting to be exhibited while handling the Siva bow. This is a nice building up on what is only indicated as a short curious enquiry in Valmiki Ramayanam. The poet does not mention Rama breaking the Siva bow explicitly here, making it as a pointer hidden in the fact that Janaka sent emissaries to Dasaratha. Sri Ramakavi has already sung the glory of Rama breaking the bow of Siva in the initial Ashtapadis.

॥ षष्ठाष्टपदी ॥

(सञ्चरदधर इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 6

(Like in Sancharadhara)

तोडि/ देवगान्धारि रागेण, त्रिपुट तालेन गीयते

Raga Todi/ Devagandhari, Tala Triputa

हरिद्राकण्ठ-विराजित-प्रतिसर-मङ्गल-कङ्कणपाणिम् ।

जानकी-कलितानुलेपन-रञ्जित-दीक्षांशुकोज्ज्वल-श्रेणिम् ॥

रामं परिणय-समुचितवेषं स्मरति सुकृती कोऽपि हृदि साभिलाषम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who shines with his neck yellowed with turmeric; his wrist displaying the marriage vow string and bracelet; with the shining ritual silk dresses even more glorified by the fragrances used by Janaki; who is in beautiful marriage attire.

कल्याण-मण्डप-वेदि-मध्यासीन-मृषिगणमय-परिवारम् ।

भरत-लक्ष्मण-शत्रुघ्नैरपि कल्याण-वेषैरभिगत-मुदारम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who is seated in front of the altar in the marriage hall among groups of Rishis; who is handsome, followed by Bharata, Lakshmana and Satrugna in marriage attire.

वृद्ध-सुवासिनी-जनकृत-नवरत्न-नीराजना-द्युपचारम् ।

निरुपम-शिवचाप-भञ्जन-परिहृत-दुर्वार-जनक-विचारम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who is honoured by waving the lighted lamp studded with the nine precious gems by aged sumangali (whose husbands are alive) women; who relieved Janaka of his inexorable worry by breaking the matchless Siva's bow.

सरस-वयस्थ-जनेन समं कृत-विविध-विनोद-विलासम् ।

अनुगुण-पतिलाभ-समुदित-बहुतर-वैदेही-हृदय-विकासम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who is engaged in multifarious sports with friends of similar age and persuasion; who is in the company of Vaidehi, whose heart swells exceedingly with joy on having attained husband suited to her outlook.

जानकी-परिणय-सादर-सुरमुक्त- सुरतरु-कुसुम-समूहम् ।
नारद-तुम्बुरुमुख-सर्वगन्धर्व-वादित्र-मुखरित-गेहम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who is adored by heaps of Kalpaka flowers, dropped by Devas with grace on the occasion of his marriage with Janaki; who is in the palace, in the midst of chiming sound of musical instruments played by Narada, Tumburu and all Gandharvas.

अभिनव-घन-घनसार-विलेपन-कोमल-श्यामल-देहम् ।
परिणत-हिमकर-कर-निकरैरिव चपल सजल-जलवाहम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who shines with his smooth dark body glorified with application of freshly prepared dense camphor; like a stream full of flowing water, flowing in zigzag manner, and beautified with the dense rays of the moon.

गौरी-कल्याणेति गानकरेन्द्र-पुरन्धि-जनोक्ति-समोदम् ।
नतनृप-कोटीर-कोटि-लसन्मणि-रुचिभर-रञ्जित-पादम् ॥ (रामं)

Some virtuous man contemplates with love in his heart on Rama, who is happily surrounded by the exclamations of Deva women singing 'Gowri Kalyanam'; whose feet are decorated by the edges of the gem-studded crowns of kings who prostrate.

श्रीरामकविवर-विरचित-रघुपति-परिणय-मङ्गलगीतम् ।
गायता-मनुदिन-मुदयति सद्मसु नित्य-महोत्सव-जातम् ॥ (रामं)

May this auspicious song on Sri Raghupati's marriage by the great poet Sri Ramakavi be sung every day in homes, giving rise to continuous festivity every day.

श्लो ॥ याते गाधिसुते वनं रघुपतिःपित्रादिभिस्स्वां पुरीं
गच्छन् वर्त्मनि भार्गव-स्मयहरः साकेत-सन्तोषकृत् ।
पित्रा सद्गुण-नन्दिना नियमिते स्वे यौवराज्यागमे
कुब्जा-विघ्नवशा-दरण्य-गमनेऽप्यासीत् समानस्थितिः ॥

Slokas

After sage Viswamitra left for the forest, Raghupati, accompanied by his parents and others, left for Ayodhya. On the way, he robbed Parasurama of his conceit. In Ayodhya, people were very happy. His father Dasaratha, who was enchanted by the virtues of Rama, nominated him as Crown Prince (Yuvaraja). Then owing to the obstacle created by the hunch-backed woman (Manthara), Rama had to go to forest. However he retained equanimity in both these conditions.

सीतां वना-नुगमनाय पुरः प्रवृत्तां
प्रीत्या निवर्तयितु-माजनुषस्सुखार्हाम् ।
वस्तव्यतां प्रति वने बहुदोष-जातं
भीतिप्रदं मृगदृशां निजगाद रामः ॥

When Sita was eager to accompany Rama to the forest, Rama spoke to her on the many dangers in forest life including the terror of animals, with a view to dissuading her from the idea of proceeding to the forest, keeping in mind her high birth and comfortable living.

सरयू-सैकतोद्यान-सञ्चारेऽप्यतिखेदिनौ ।
चरणौ ते महारण्ये कथं देवि भविष्यतः ॥

Devi, in the great forest, what will happen to your feet, which feel very miserable even in the sands of Sarayu river and the gardens.

In this Ashtapadi, the great poet Ramakavi draws an enchanting word-picture of the grand marriage celebration of Rama with Sita. He makes a quick reference to his encounter with Parasurama. The much acclaimed equanimity of Rama, when told to accept the position of Yuvaraja and then to go to the forest for fourteen long years, is beautifully and succinctly brought out by the poet. Valmiki refers to this state of mind of a Sthitapragna (one whose awareness is ever steady) in many slokas, one of which is:

उचितं च महाबहुर्न जहौ हर्षमात्मवान् ।
शारदः समुदीर्णांशुश्चन्द्रस्तेज इवात्मजम् ॥

“The valorous Rama, who always had control on his mind, never left his natural happy disposition, just as the moon of shining rays of autumn does not leave its natural radiance.”
(2:19:37)

॥ सप्तमाष्टपदी ॥

(निन्दति चन्दनम् इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 7

(Like in Nindati Chandanam)

सावेरि/ सौराष्ट्र रागेण, आदि/ त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Saveri/ Sourashtra, Tala Adi/ Triputa

तरुतल-शयनं गतरस-मशनं तदपि नताङ्गि दिनान्ते ।

वल्कल-मनुचितमपि वसनं तव युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥

Humble woman, the forest life - with sleeping at the foot of tree; eating food of no taste, that too, at the close of day; wearing bark of tree, that too, of unsuitable size and shape- is not at all suitable for you.

प्राणसमे मम सीते देवि प्राणसमे मम सीते ।

मदुदीरित-हितवचनं कल-भाषिणि विशतु सुखं श्रवः सीते ॥ (प्राण)

My Sita, my life, my Sita, my life, your speech is child-like lisp. May my words, intended for your good, get into your ears nicely.

व्याळ-मृगादन-समदम-दावळ -सिम्हगणा विवलन्ते ।

तत्र निशाचरकुल-मभिधावति युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

The forest, where snakes, hyenas and mad lions in large groups roam about and clusters of Rakshasas move around, is not at all suitable for you.

अविरतमपि तपसा वनसीमसु श्रमसह-मङ्ग गतं ते ।

वपुरति-मृदुलं शिरीष-सुमादपि युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

In the forest you will continuously experience suffering due to severe conditions. Your body is much more delicate than the flower of the Sirisha tree. The forest is not suitable for you.

हिममरु-दार्ता-घनवृष्टिषु तत्र सुखं न लभन्ते ।

अपि च निरन्तर-कण्टक-संहति-युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

During heavy rains accompanied by cold, dusty and painful winds, it will be miserable. Further there will be continual spread of thorns and bushes. The forest is not suitable for you.

अनुदिनमपि घनभैरव-फेरव-वाशितमपि च निशान्ते ।

श्रवणशुचं बहु जनयति मानिनि युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

Every day there will be very terribly howling jackals and crying birds in the nights. O honourable woman, all this causes miserable sensation while hearing. The forest is not suitable for you.

अविरल-तरुतल-सन्तति-सङ्कर-परिपथनेन वनान्ते ।

कलुषा-म्भांसि सरांसि विलासिनि युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

In the forest dense growth of trees and vegetation obstructs the path. O sportive woman, the water bodies hold dirty water. The forest is not suitable for you.

शिव शिव नूनमितोऽपि भयं बहु वरतनु तत्र दुरन्ते ।

स्मरसि पुरा शशिमुखि वचनं मम युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

O beautiful woman, in the forest, Siva, Siva, there is more and more endless fear. O moon-faced woman, you will remember all of my words very shortly. The forest is not suitable for you.

इति तव राम-समीरित-मिदमिह मानय हितमिति कान्ते ।

सपदि निवर्तय हृदय-मणूदरि युक्तमतो न वनं ते ॥ (प्राण)

O beloved, accept whatever has been told to you by this Rama as it is in your interest. Change your mind immediately, o woman of slight belly. The forest is not suitable for you.

श्लो ॥ कैकेय्या वरदान-वञ्चित-हृदा पित्रा नियुक्तं वने

सीता-लक्ष्मण-सङ्गतं रघुपतिं सूतस्सुमन्त्रो रथम् ।

आरोप्य व्यतिलङ्घ्य नैकनगर-ग्रामान्त-सीमातटीं

गङ्गाया नयति स्म यत्र सबलः श्रीराममित्रं गुहः ॥

Slokas

The charioteer Sumantra seated in the chariot, Raghuapati, who had been cheated by Kaikeyi in the guise of boons (given by his father) and dispatched to the forest by his father. Rama was accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana. Sumantra crossed many towns and villages and reached the shore of Ganga, where Guha, who was strong and would become the friend of Rama, lived.

ततस्सुमन्त्रं नितरां रुदन्त-माश्वास्य रामः पितृ-गौरवेण ।

भार्या-नुजाभ्यां वनमेव गन्तुं तदाभवत् तापस-वेषधारी ॥

Rama consoled Sumantra, who was crying very much, with the respect due to his father. With the appearance of an austere man in penance, he proceeded towards the forest along with his wife and younger brother.

तं तया कान्तयारण्ये वस्तुं दशरथो गतम् ।
रामं विचिन्त्य हृदये तत्याज धृतिमात्मनः ॥

Dasaratha was worried in his heart about Rama, who had gone away for living in the forest, together with his beloved wife, and lost his steadiness.

In this Ashtapadi poet Ramakavi has employed the 'bhayanaka' (fearsome) rasa with telling effect. Rama's repeated and deft reference to the delicateness of Sita's form is to accentuate the fear of the forest and heighten the pathos in the situation. The poet's jump to Rama's departure to the forest along with Sita and Lakshmana is an indirect pointer to Sita's successful persuasion with Rama for accompanying him to the forest. Even in the brief narration of events, Sri Ramakavi does not fail to mention the great respect due to father shown by Rama towards the aged Sumantra, the minister and charioteer.

॥ अष्टमाष्टपदी ॥

(मामियं चलिता इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 8

(Like in Mamiyam Chalita)

भूपालरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Bhupala, Tala Triputa

रम्य-हर्म्यत-लोचितौ मम पुत्रकौ वनसीमनि
सूत शंस कथं गतौ वद सीतयाऽसुख-धामनि
शिव शिव सुमन्त्र सुमते क्वात्मजो विपिनेषु ॥ (शिव)

O charioteer, tell me how my sons, used to living in beautiful palace, carry on with Sita in the miserable forest. Siva, Siva, o wise Sumantra, where in the forest is my son?

जानकी धृत-वल्कला किमुवाच वीक्ष्य वनानि ।
लक्ष्मणोऽपि जगाद कानि सुलक्षणो वचनानि ॥ (शिव)

Tell me what Janaki, wearing the tree-bark, said on seeing the woods; tell me what words the handsome Lakshmana uttered.

सन्ततं परिवर्तते हृदि तन्मुखं स्मितशोभि ।

प्रातरर्क-करावमर्श-सुफुल्ल-पद्मसनाभि ॥ (शिव)

His face always appears in my heart - face shining with smile and resembling the fully blossomed lotus flower caressed by the rays of the morning Sun.

ते हि धन्यतमा वनात् पुनरागतं सहजेन ।

लोकयन्ति पुरा सुतं मम ये दृशा प्रमदेन ॥ (शिव)

They alone are indeed the most fortunate, who will ere long, look at my son with naturally proud eyes on his return from the forest.

तद्वचा-स्याकर्णयेयं कदा सुधा-मधुराणि ।

सहज-गौरव-विनय-भारभरेण सूक्तधराणि ॥ (शिव)

When will I hear his words, with nectarine sweetness and full of wisdom, combined with natural depth and humility.

न क्षणार्ध-मिहासितुं प्रभवामि हन्त गृहेषु ।

तत्र मां नय यत्र तौ मम पुत्रकौ विपिनेषु ॥ (शिव)

I do not wish to remain in this house even for half a second. Take me there in the woods, where those sons of mine are.

राघवा-नुगता-धुनापि निवर्तते न चिराय ।

कातरेण हृदा समं मम दृष्टिरात्मसुखाय ॥ (शिव)

My vision, which followed Raghava, together with my distressed heart, does not return even now for such a long time, due to the joy I get (on being with Rama).

धीररामकवेरिदं भणितं हरिप्रणयेन ।

उषसि गायत शृणुत नन्दत सादरं हृदयेन ॥ (शिव)

Sing with heartfelt emotion this song told by the courageous Ramakavi with Hari's blessings in the early morning, hear others sing and dwell in joy.

श्लो ॥ श्रीरामोऽपि निवर्त्य सूत-ममर-स्रोतोवहायाःपरं

पारं प्राप्नुमना मनागिव वल्लज्जां विदेहात्मजाम् ।

आरोप्य प्रथमं ततो गुहकरालम्बी विभुर्-लाघवाद्

आरोहत् तरणिं धृतायुधभरः पश्चात् सुमित्रात्मजः ॥

Slokas

Sri Rama, having asked the charioteer to return, wished to reach the other shore of the divine Ganga river. He slowly helped the bashful Sita get into the boat first; he then entered the boat dexterously, held by the hands of Guha, followed by Lakshmana, who carried a lot of weapons.

तामासाद्य जगद्वन्द्यां गङ्गां मङ्गल-दायिनीम् ।

पत्युः कुशल-मव्यग्रा प्रार्थयामास जानकी ॥

Janaki then looked to Ganga, the river, worshipped by the entire world and the bestower of all auspiciousness, and prayed with a composed mind for her husband's welfare.

In this eighth Ashtapadi, poet Ramakavi has given full expression to the uncontrolled sorrow of king Dasaratha on separation from his very dear sons, Rama and Lakshmana. Dasaratha is also perturbed that Sita, the glorious princess of Janaka, has to live the life of an anchorite wearing the dress of bark of tree in the forest. While expressing misery, it is usual to exclaim 'Siva, Siva'; this can be seen in many literary works including Siva Ashtapadi of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi, 62nd Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.

Unable to bear the separation, Dasaratha wishes to go to the forest himself and join his sons. 'Karuna' (pity) rasa has been nicely employed by the poet here. Rama's determination to live in the forest takes him to Ganga's other shore. The poet then leads us to the prayer of Sita to Ganga.

॥ नवमाष्टपदी ॥

(राधावदन इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 9

(Like in Radhavadana)

घण्टा / मध्यमावति रागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Ghanta/ Madhyamavati, Tala Adi

प्रापय पुनरपि देवे पतिं मम कुशलिन-माशु नगर्याम् ।

तदनु तवाम्ब करोमि यथोचित-विविध-विचित्र-सपर्याम् ॥

O Devi, o mother, reach my husband quickly to the city again comfortably. I shall perform various special Poojas to you as suitable.

कलये भवतीं सुरधुनि धुत-भवभीतिम् ।

आगमान्त-नुत-वैभवशालिनि सज्जनता-शिवतातिम् ॥ (कलये)

O divine river, you remove the fear of samsara (transmigration of soul in repeated births).

O glorious one, revered by Upanishads, you grant succession of auspicious developments to virtuous people.

त्रिभुवन-पावन-सगर-कुमारक-सद्गति-दायिनि धन्ये ।

वन-गमनोन्मुख-मव दयितं मम तुहिन-महीधर-कन्ये ॥ (कलये)

You are meritorious; you granted the desired good state to the sons of king Sagara; you purify the three worlds. O daughter of Himavan, protect my husband, who is about to go to the forest.

मोक्ष-शिरोग्रह-सुखगमनोचित-सोपानाम्बु-तरङ्गे ।

रघुकुल-पालिनि देवे पतिं मम पालय भगवति गङ्गे ॥ (कलये)

Your wavy waters are the steps for comfortable ascension to the pinnacle of Liberation.

O Bhagavati Ganga, you are the protector of the lineage of Raghus; please protect my husband.

जगदघ-नाशिनि जननि भगीरथ-निरुपम-कीर्ति-पताके ।

त्वामिह नौमि सदा दयितं मम पालय भावित-लोके ॥ (कलये)

O mother, you are the destroyer of sins of all people; you are the banner of the matchless fame of Bhagiratha. You are adored by the entire world. I worship you. Always protect my husband.

देवि दयस्व कपर्दि-कपर्दक-मालतिका-कृतमाले ।

तटयुग-सान्द्रित-कुसुमित-केसर-नवकृत-मालत-माले ॥ (कलये)

Devi, take pity. You are like a garland of jasmine flowers in the matted hair of Siva. You are as if garlanded with abundance of freshly flowered sweet-scented trees in rows on both sides.

मुरहर-चरण-सरोरुह-मधुरस-निरुपम-पूर्णविलासे ।

अनुपदमपि बहुतर-भयशालिनि पालय नो वनवासे ॥ (कलये)

You are full of glory imbibing the matchless sweet honey from the lotus feet of Vishnu. Please protect us during our sojourn in the forest, which is full of many sources of fear in every step.

विलसति विकसित-सरसिज-निर्गत-मलिपटलं तव नीलम् ।
मज्जन-कृज्जन-देहसमुद्रतमिव घनपातक-जालम् ॥ (कलये)

Your occasional shining black colour is from the droves of bees getting out of blossomed lotus flowers. It is as if signifying the dense web of sins emanating from the bodies of people immersing themselves in Ganga.

रामकवेरिति गीतमुदार-पदावलि-कोमल-बन्धम् ।
अनुदिनमपि पठतां हरते भुवि जह्नुसुता भवबन्धम् ॥ (कलये)

The daughter of Rishi Jahnu, Ganga removes on earth the bondage of samsara of those, who read every day this song of Ramakavi, with beautiful expressions softly bound together.

श्लो ॥ तीर्त्वा विष्णुपदोद्भवामथ भरद्वाजं प्रयागे मुनिं
नत्वा तद्वचसा विचित्रविपिने द्राक् चित्रकूटे गिरौ ।
कृत्वा पर्णकुटीं वसन् प्रमुदितस्सौमित्रि-शुश्रूषया
वैदेहीं समलोभयद् कतिपयं कालं रघूणां पतिः ॥

After crossing Ganga, the waters born of the feet of Vishnu, Raghupathi worshipped sage Bharadwaja in Prayaga. At the sage's instance Rama quickly went to Mount Chitrakut in the midst of the wonderful forest and lived in a hut of leaves. Pleased with the services rendered by Lakshmana, Rama allured Sita to be happy for some time.

जनकजा-वनलोभन-सम्भवद्रुचिरसौ चिरसौरभ-भृद्गुमाः ।
गिरितटीर्विविधास्समदर्शयत्स सरसां सरसामपि च श्रियम् ॥

Rama showed Sita many trees spreading fragrance and various enchanting lakes of sweet water at the foot of hills; Sita was mightily happy.

In this moving Ashtapadi, the poet brings out Sita's deep anxiety in regard to the dangers to Rama from forest life, which she expresses very movingly in her prayers to the divine river Ganga. Sita's love of Rama emerges very naturally as a devoted Pativrata wife's virtuous attachment to her husband. The poet also brings out the greatness of Ganga as a purifying divinity, very much on the lines of Valmiki's depiction in Ramayanam. His depiction of occasional black patches in the river stream as signifying the sins emanating from people who bathe and get purified is a piece of beautiful poetry as well as emotional divinity.

॥ दशमाष्टपदी ॥

(समुदितमदने इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 10

(Like in Samuditamadane)

सावेरि / गुम्मकाम्भोजि रागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Saveri/ Gummakambhoji, Tala Triputa

इह सुमजटिलं कङ्केळि-पटलं विलसति मधुराधरे ।

चम्पक-कुसुमं परिमलै-रसमं विरचय कबरीभरे ॥

दयिते विपिने विहर सुखं सुमुखि यथेष्ट-मधुना ॥ (दयिते)

Here in the pleasing lower part of a number of Asoka trees, dense flowers shine. Wear in your hair these Champaka flowers with different fragrances. O beautiful beloved, wander in the forest now as much as you like.

इह पश्य नलिनि परिरण-दलिनि कलयति हृदयमुतम् ।

अपचिनु वकुलं परिमल-बहुलं कुरु भुजशिखरे पदम् ॥ (दयिते)

Here look at this lotus with very delightful petals; it captivates the heart. Collect vakula flowers of sweet fragrance and wear at the top of your arms in steps.

सुरभित-ककुभं लोकय ककुभं विहरण-रसिके वने ।

मालती-निचयो विलसतु कुचयोरुपरि ते रुचिरानने ॥ (दयिते)

Sita, you like to wander in this forest. Look at this Kutaja tree with fragrant flowers. O beautiful faced, let this collection of jasmine flowers shine on top of your bosom.

तव भुज-युगलं मालती-मृदुलं वेष्टय ननु मे गले ।

सुमतरु-सविधं प्रापये विविधं तत्र सञ्चर कोमले ॥ (दयिते)

Now put your twin arms, soft like jasmine, round my neck. O delicate one, wander in this place where many types of flower-bearing trees abound.

अनुरागादयि ते वनसीम्नि दयिते चिरमिह वसतोऽपि मे ।

अवरोधा-दधिकं सुख-मनवधिकं भवति हि ललनोत्तमे ॥ (दयिते)

O beloved, even if I live here in this forest for a long time, I feel unlimited pleasure owing to your love, more than in the inner apartments (of our palace), o best woman.

शुचिमांस-मधुना भावित-मधुना स्वीकुरु धरणीसुते ।

उपविश विमले आनत-द्रुमतले शीतल-मृदुमारुते ॥ (दयिते)

O daughter of Bhumi, take these clean fleshy fruits now along with good honey. O spotless one, sit under this stooping down tree, where cool wind blows.

अतिदूनौ चरणौ कृतवन-चरणौ विधराङ्गे मम साम्प्रतम् ।

खेदा-पनयनं मृदुतर-रचनं कलयामि यदा ते हितम् ॥ (दयिते)

Place now your feet, very much pained, having moved about in the forest, on my lap; let me do you good by pressing your soft feet so as to remove the misery.

श्रीरामकविना निगदित-ममुनादृत-मार्यकवि-ससदा ।

वैदेही-ललितं रघुवर-महितं विधुनोतु दुरितं सदा ॥ (दयिते)

May this song by Sri Ramakavi, cherished by the assembly of learned poets, containing the outpourings of Raghuvara towards the delicate Vaidehi remove misery always.

श्लो ॥ नीतो राक्षसनाशनाय मुनिभी रामो दिशं दक्षिणां

पश्यन्नाश्रम-वासिनस्स्वयमपि द्राक् पञ्चवट्याश्रयः ।

सीता-लुब्ध-दशास्य-चोदित-वलन्मारीच-मायामृग-

व्याकृष्टो निहतेन तेन करुणाक्रन्दैरभू-त्वञ्चितः ॥

Slokas

Rama, who was led by sages towards the southern direction for the purpose of killing Rakshasas (who were troubling the sages), saw many of the sages living in Asramas in Panchavati area. In the meantime, persuaded by the ten-headed Ravana, who lusted after Sita, Maricha in the guise of an illusive golden deer attracted Sita. Rama killed Maricha, who cried piteously (in Rama's voice) and was thus cheated.

श्रान्तो भृशं तदनु पञ्चवटीकुटीर-

मागत्य तत्र जनकेन्द्र-सुता-मपश्यन् ।

मोहाकुलो विरह-कातर-धीर्वनान्ते

विष्वक् भ्रमन् बहुविधं विललाप रामः ॥

A very tired and distressed Rama then reached his hut in Panchavati and, not finding Janaki there, he felt very grieved, confused and vexed on separation and, wandering in the forest all around, he wailed inconsolably.

This Ashtapadi is in absolute contrast to Ashtapadi 7, where the 'bhayanaka' rasa was employed to frighten Sita of the dangers of forest life. Here Rama wishes to make Sita

happy by any means available in the forest, where natural beauty and attractions are in abundance. The poet resorts to the rare use of 'Sringara' rasa, but without impinging in the least upon the strict code of conduct of a Tapasvi (practitioner of austerity), which Rama and Sita exemplify. Sri Ramakavi mentions the fact that Rama, true to his nature of observing kshatriya dharma and helping those who seek him out, promised to destroy Rakshasas troubling the sages in the forest as requested by them.

॥ एकादशाष्टपदी ॥

(वदसि यदि इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 11

(Like in Vadasi yadi)

मुखारि रागेण, झम्पतालेन गीयते

Raga Mukhari, Tala Jhampa

दरहसित-सुन्दरं तव वदन-पङ्कजं दर्शय सकृन्मम सलीलम् ।

तरल-तरलायते हृदय-मधुनाधिकं वहति परिताप-मतिवेलम् ॥

वने कासि सीते वचनमयि देहि सुकुमारं

मयि वद निरागसि क्रोध-मुपयासि किं मुञ्च परिहास-मतिदूरम् ॥ (वने)

O Sita, show me once your beautiful and sportive lotus face with gentle smile. My heart trembles very much now and is very aggrieved. Where are you in the forest; give me your tender words; tell me whether you are angry with me, who am faultless; leave joking aside very far.

प्रेयसि सहायतां प्राप्य किल ते मया गहनभुवि देवि चिरकालम् ।

नगरमपि मुञ्चता स्वजनमपि मुञ्चता नगणित-मभूद् सुखजालम् ॥ (वने)

O beloved Devi, with your help I spent quite a long time in this forest land, leaving city behind, leaving my own people behind; the web of pleasure has become meaningless.

प्रणयिनि परीक्षितुं किमुत मम मानसं कचन गहने किमसि लीना ।

अल-मल-मितोऽधिकं विरह-चकितोऽस्मि मे जीवित-कला भव-दधीना ॥ (वने)

O beloved, are you putting my mind to test? Where are you hiding in this forest? Enough of this, I am shocked due to this separation; my art of life is under your care.

रहित-मधुनैकया भुवनमखिलं त्वया शून्यमिव भाति मम नूनम् ।

मम कि-मयोध्यया प्राण-वहनेन वा स्फुरति मम न प्रतिविधानम् ॥ (वने)

With you gone, the entire earth appears empty to me now. For me, what with Ayodhya, what with continuing to live; no counter-measure strikes my mind.

समय-मिम-मुपलभ्य विषम-शर-पातकी मम पुनरुपांशु-वधकारी ।

तनुरपि च सज्जयत्यहह निहतोऽस्म्यहं शिव शिव विधि-स्तदनुसारी ॥ (वने)

Taking advantage of this opportune time, the sinful Manmatha, who holds five different arrows, kills me silently and attacks my body. I am killed. Siva, Siva, destiny favours him.

बिल्व-सदृश-स्तनी क नु कथय बिल्व सा तिलक-रुचिरां ब्रूहि तिलक वामाम् ।

क्षितिभृता-मधिनाथ कापि नृप-सुन्दरी वीक्षिता यदि शंस रामाम् ॥ (वने)

O bilva tree, tell me where is the lass with bilva-like rounded breasts. O Tilaka tree, tell me where is the lass with beautiful mark on the forehead (or beautiful ornaments). O chief of mountains, did you see the beautiful princess anywhere, tell me.

राममय-जीविते रघुवंश-दीपिके हा महीवर-पुत्रि हा सुशीले ।

देहि मे प्रतिवचनं देहि मम दर्शनं हा प्रिये मम हृदनुकूले ॥ (वने)

O Sita, whose entire life is suffused with Rama, o light of the Raghu lineage, o virtuous daughter of Bhumi, o Sita of noble conduct, answer me; appear before me; o beloved, o Sita, ever favourable to my heart.

रामकविना भणितमिति धरणिकन्यका-रहित-रघुनायक-विलापम् ।

श्रवण-मधुरं सदसि गायतां नहि भवति मानिनी-जन-विरह-पापम् ॥ (वने)

May this song of wail of Raghunayaka separated from Sita, the daughter of Bhumi, as told by Ramakavi, be sweet of hearing; those who sing this in assemblies will not undergo the misery of separation from loved ones.

श्लो ॥ शोकोन्मत्तमना वने सहभुवा रामो विचिन्वन् प्रियां

प्रत्येणं प्रतिबर्हिणं प्रतिगिरि प्रत्यापगं प्रत्यगम् ।

पृच्छन् लक्ष्मण-सान्त्वितः प्रतिपदं गच्छन् ददर्शाग्रतः

कस्या-प्याहव-लक्षणं हतहयं निर्विण्ण-सूतं रथम् ॥

Slokas

Rama, with mind full of grief and, thinking of his beloved, enquired every deer, every peacock, every hill, every river and every mountain about the whereabouts of Sita. As he

walked along, consoled by Lakshmana, he saw in front of him certain signs of a fight having taken place in which horses were killed, charioteer was eliminated and chariot was broken.

तमागतं वीक्ष्य रघुप्रवीर-मन्वेषमाणं जनकेन्द्र-पुत्रीम् ।

प्राणैर्लुठद्भिः निजकण्ठपीठे मुह्यन् मुहुः प्राह शनैः जटायुः ॥

Seeing that chief among Raghus in search of the daughter of Janaka coming along, Jatayu haltingly spoke, with his life breath swinging in the throat and frequently lapsing into unconscious state.

In stark contrast to the previous Ashtapadi soaked in 'Sringara' rasa, this Ashtapadi is full of 'Karuna' rasa. Rama wails inconsolably; he expresses his undying love for Sita. By talking of Sita, whose entire life is suffused with Rama and her being the light of the Raghu lineage, Rama confirms Sita's exalted position of 'Pativrata'. Like in Valmiki Ramayana, he enquires all trees, mountains and rivers about the whereabouts of Sita. At last he sees Jatayu, who conveys to him the news of Ravana's kidnapping of Sita.

॥ द्वादशाष्टपदी ॥

(स्मरसमरोचित इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 12

(Like in Smarasamarochita)

सारङ्गरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Saranga, Tala Triputa

अनुकल-समुदित-निजतनु-कम्पा रावण-जलधर-मिलितेव शम्पा ।

नीता सुररिपुणा सीता निशिचर-पतिना अतिकृपणा ॥ (नीता)

Sita was extremely pitiable; her body was trembling owing to being carried; she looked like lightning accompanied by the cloud of Ravana, while being carried away by the king of Rakshasas.

परिधृत-मृदुतर-नवहेम-वसना गमन-रभस-लोलसिञ्जानरशना ॥ (नीता)

Sita was wearing very soft dress shining like newly minted gold; her girdle was making tingling sound in the strong movement (of being carried away).

क्रोशन्ती भयभार-परवश-करणा हा राम हा लक्ष्मणेति सकरुणा ॥ (नीता)

Sita wailed piteously, crying 'Ha Rama, Ha Lakshmana' with great fear owing to being under the sway of an outsider.

तरलित-सारङ्ग-शाबक-नयना भूषण-पातन-स्फुटीभवदयना ॥ (नीता)

Sita's black deer-like eyes were tremulous and full of fear; she wished to convey a certain message clearly by dropping her ornaments while moving.

मद्वध-दर्शन-बहुलित-चिन्ता पुनरपि तेनैव हता तव कान्ता ॥ (नीता)

Your beloved Sita was very much worried on seeing me being killed; she was again carried away (by Ravana).

यामोषधीमिव विचिनोषि भुवने सा देवि मत्प्राणैस्सह राम विपिने ॥ (नीता)

The Devi you are searching for like a medicinal herb on this earth, has gone away in the forest along with my life breath.

अपहृता मूढेन विन्दे मुहूर्ते एष्यति न चिरेण महनीयकीर्ते ॥ (नीता)

She has been kidnapped by that fool in 'Vinda' Muhurtha; hence, oh Rama of great fame, she is bound to return to you soon. (It is believed that a person kidnapped during Vinda Muhurtha cannot but return to his rightful place very soon).

श्रीरामकविवर-कृतिमिति पठतां वितरति रघुपतिः श्रिय-मतिवितताम् ॥

Raghupati blesses unending wealth and glory on those who read this song by the great poet Sri Ramakavi.

श्लो । तं संस्कृत्य जटायुषं पितृसखं सीता-प्रवृत्त्युत्सुको

हत्वा घोर-कबन्ध-मस्य वचसा सुग्रीव-सख्यादृतः ।

गच्छन्नेव वने तपस्वि-पटली-शुश्रूषया विश्रुतां

रामः कामपि सन्ददर्श शबरी-मातिथ्य-दानोत्सुकाम् ॥

Slokas

Rama performed the Aparā kriyas for Jatayu, his father's friend and proceeded anxiously in search of Sita. After killing the terrible Kabandha, he wished to get the friendship of Sugriva as advised by Kabandha. Proceeding ahead, he saw a woman called Sabari, who had earned renown for her service to a number of sages and who was eager to play hospitality to him.

अथ सा काचन सिद्धा भक्तिनिबद्धा तपस्विनी शबरी ।

वन्यफलैः किल रामं जगदभिरामं समर्हयाञ्चके ॥

Sabari, the woman of great austerity and spiritual attainments, was bound by devotion to Rama; she offered fruits of the forest to Rama, who was loved by the whole world, and worshipped him with veneration.

In this twelfth Ashtapadi, Jatayu gives Rama very valuable clues about Sita's sudden disappearance. In his capacity as an old friend of Dasaratha, he reassures Rama on the basis of astrology that as Ravana had chosen the most inappropriate Muhurtha for kidnapping Sita, Sita was bound to return to Rama very soon. Rama shows the world the path of Dharma when he performs the Aparā kriyas for Jatayu the bird, thus establishing the importance of Aparā kriyas as well as the need for gratefulness to a trusted friend, who sacrificed his own life for his sake.

॥ त्रयोदशाष्टपदी ॥

(पश्यति दिशि दिशि इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 13

(Like in Pasyati Disi Disi)

शङ्कराभरणरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Sankarabharana, Tala Triputa

पक्वानि स्वयमेव तरुमूर्ध्नी-मानि दयया भक्षय राजरम्भा-फलानि ।

नाथ विभो रघुनाथ विभो स्वीकुरु नाना-वन्य-फलम् ॥ (नाथ)

O Lord! O Supreme! O Raghunatha! Please accept these large bananas, which ripened in the trees on their own and all these various forest fruits.

मधुर-मधुरिम-केसर-जालं त्वत्कृते मया नीतं तदिदं रसालम् ॥ (नाथ)

Take these very sweet and fibrous mango fruits, brought specially for you.

कर्कन्धु-फल-मिद-मत्यन्त-रुचिर-मीषदलमपि ते खादने मधुरम् ॥ (नाथ)

Take these jujube (Ilandai-Tamil) fruits, so tasty that even a small quantity is satisfying.

स्वरस-परिणत-मिदमिह पनसं भवदर्थ-मुपनीत-मतिशय-सरसम् ॥ (नाथ)

Take these jack fruits, extraordinarily tasty and juicy, brought specially for you.

स्फुटितानि दाडिम-फलानि गृहाण गोस्तनी-स्तवकानि मामनुगृहाण ॥ (नाथ)

Take these pomegranates, cracked open, and bunch of grapes and bless me.

इद-मतिश्रम-हारि सरस-मभित्तं अङ्गीकुरु विटपि-पक्वं कपित्थम् ॥ (नाथ)

Take this wood-apple (Vilam - Tamil), tasty and unbroken, ripened in the tree and plucked with great trouble.

अतिसूक्ष्म-रसबीज-मिदमिह पृथुलं भक्षय वनजम्बूफल-मतिमृदुलम् ॥ (नाथ)

Take these large forest rose-apples (Naval-Tamil), very soft and with tiny and tasty seeds.

त्वत्कृते मया देव स्वादं स्वादं गुप्तानि फलान्येवं मोदं मोदम् ॥ (नाथ)

O Lord! I have preserved these very delicious fruits for your sake with great joy. Take them.

श्रीरामकवेरिति गायत गीतं प्रतिदिन-मृष्टान्न-दान-प्रतीतम् ॥ (नाथ)

May people sing this song of Sri Ramakavi, setting forth charity of good food every day.

श्लो । शबर्या यातायां त्रिदिव-मनुनीतो हनुमता
रवेः पुत्रं मित्रं सपदि विरचय्याग्नि-सविधे ।
सखिप्रेम्णा रामो हृदयगत-माधिं कथितवान्
तदा सुग्रीवोऽपि स्वय-मनुपदं वालि-चकितः ॥

Slokas

Sabari left for Svarga. Rama, led by Hanuman, quickly established friendship with Sugriva, son of Surya, in the presence of Agni. He expressed his mental agony to Sugriva with the love due to a friend; Sugriva too responded in turn and conveyed his great fear of Vali.

सख्यं विधाय सहसा रघुपुङ्गवेन
पुत्रस्तदा दिनपतेर्मुदितः कपीन्द्रः ।
तं वालिनं रणमुखे निहतं कपीनां
राज्यं स्वहस्त-गतमेव चिराय मेने ॥

Having established friendship with Rama, the best among Raghus, Sugriva, the son of Surya and king of monkeys, felt very happy at once, and considered Vali as having been killed in war and the kingdom of monkeys handed to him for eternity.

कथय कपिपते कथं विशिष्टो जगति कथं बल-पौरुषस्स वाली ।
इति रघुपतिना तथा नियुक्तो हरिपतिरित्थ-मुवाच वालिशक्तिम् ॥

Rama asked Sugriva: How is Vali famous and what is his strength and valour? Tell me. Sugriva replied giving the details of the prowess of Vali.

In this thirteenth Ashtapadi, Sabari's unparalleled devotion to Sri Rama, based entirely on her Guru Maharishi Matanga's guidance, has been brought out in a very picturesque manner through descriptions of various fruits of the forest which she offered to the Lord with love, after having waited with one-pointed attention for a very long time for his darshan. The poet moves on quickly from 'bhakti' to 'maitri' (he does not miss to mention that 'maitri' was established in the presence of Agni and thus firmed up) and describes Sugriva's happiness after meeting Sri Rama.

॥ चतुर्दशाष्टपदी ॥

(वहति मलयसमीरे इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 14

(Like in Vahati Malayasamire)

आनन्दभैरवीरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Anadabhairavi, Tala Adi

अवनीधर-शिखर-जालं कन्दुकमिव सलीलम् ।

क्षिपति वियति विपुलं धरति पुनरपि सखेलम् ॥

Vali sportingly uproots many peaks of mountains and throws them up in the sky like balls and picks them up in his hands.

स किल रघूत्तम वाली पितृविक्रमशाली ॥ (स किल)

O best among raghus! Vali is like his father Indra in valour.

अपि च पुनरेकसालं विदलयति विशालम् ।

वहति निजभुजबलं मम सकल-विपदि मूलम् ॥ (स किल)

Vali further split a huge Sal tree and carries openly the strength of his powerful arms. He is at the root of all my troubles.

स हि चतुरुदधि-वारि उषसि नियमकारी ।

अटति विमल-लहरीमय-मनुदिन-मविकारी ॥ (स किल)

Vali goes to all the four seas every day at dawn and performs daily rituals and moves about tirelessly in the seas with huge tides.

सहज इति नाममात्रं भवति न मम मित्रम् ।

अहरत मम कलत्रं अहमिह तव दयापात्रम् ॥ (स किल)

Vali is my brother for only name's sake; he has no goodwill for me. He has kidnapped my wife. I am the person fit to receive your compassion.

परिचित-विविध-देशं श्रीरामधृत-निदेशम् ।

मामव सहज-सदृशं रचय मम रिपु-विनाशम् ॥ (स किल)

I am like your brother; I am familiar with many different territories; I shall act as per your instructions. Please protect me. Please destroy my enemy.

श्लो । आश्वास्यथ कपीन्द्रमस्य जनयन् कामं बल-प्रत्ययं

हत्वा वालिनमाहवे रघुपतिः सुग्रीव-राज्यप्रदः ।

तिष्ठन् माल्यवतस्तटे शरदुपारम्भेऽपि कामातुरं

सुग्रीवं प्रति सन्दिदेश स मृषा-कोपाकुलो लक्ष्मणम् ॥

Slokas

Sri Rama consoled Sugriva , inspired confidence in him by showing his strength in a test and then killed Vali in a battle. He handed the kingdom of monkeys to Sugriva and stayed at the foot of the Malyavan hills. When Sugriva did not act on his promise to Rama even after the advent of autumn and remained engrossed in worldly pleasures, Rama, with feigned anger, sent Lakshmana to him.

रामक्रोध-द्विगुणित-रुषं लक्ष्मणं वीक्ष्य भीत्या

सुग्रीवेणा-नुनयनकृते प्रेषिता भूषिताङ्गी ॥

स्त्रंसत्काञ्ची-स्खलित-गमना मन्दमन्द प्रयान्ती

वाक्यैरेवं प्रणय-मधुरैस्सान्त्वयामास तारा ॥

On seeing Lakshmana twice as angry as Rama, Sugriva became afraid and sent Tara in order to meet and pacify Lakshmana. Walking with a slow gait and with the anklet bells jingling, the heavily bejewelled Tara came and spoke sweet and loving words and pacified Lakshmana.

In this fourteenth Ashtapadi, 'vira' rasa is predominant. Vali's enormous prowess combined with his treacherous action in kidnapping his younger brother's wife is brought out by the poet. The poet goes on to describe the piteous entreaties of Sugriva, the subsequent killing of Vali by Rama, Sugriva's assurance of assistance to Rama and his later indifference, and how Sugriva very cleverly sends Tara, Vali's wife, to meet Lakshmana and pacify him.

॥ पञ्चदशाष्टपदी ॥

(अनिलतरल इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 15

(Like in Anilatarala)

पुन्नागवरालिरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Punnavagavaraḷi, Tala Adi

दिशि दिशि जनक-दुहितृ-विचयाय प्रहित-महाबल-कपिनिचयाय ।

कुप्य न वानर-भूभुजे सुहृदे ॥ (कुप्य न)

O kin and well-wisher of monkeys! Do not get angry. Hordes of very powerful monkeys have been despatched in all directions for searching Janaki.

नवसमधिगत-विभव-सहिताय विषय-सुखेन चिर-मसुहिताय ॥ (कु)

Do not get angry with Sugriva, who has suffered for long for want of mundane pleasures and has now got newly arrived splendour.

लघुतर-कपिकुल-धृतजननाय नरवर-राघव-हितमननाय ॥ (कु)

Sugriva is after all born in the lowly genre of monkeys; but he is conscious of the welfare of Raghava, the best among men.

त्वदुपकृतिमपि न गणयति नितरां स्मृतिमपि मुञ्चति वपुषि च न पराम् ॥ (कु)

He has committed the guilt of not honouring your great help; now he never forgets his own body and does not care for anything else.

न खलु स कञ्चन पुनरपराधं कलयति परिहर सुहृदि विरोधम् ॥ (कु)

He will not commit such a blunder any more; please drop your animosity towards a well-wisher.

प्रणमति कपिपतिरिह कुरु करुणां प्रशमय दृशमपि समधिकमरुणाम् ॥ (कु)

Sugriva, the ruler of monkeys, prostrates to you; show compassion; quell your deep red eyes.

विशिख-निवहमिव गिरमतिपुरुषां श्रावय कर्णं न कुरु पदमरुषाम् ॥ (कु)

Do not make him hear very angry and harsh words like multitude of sharp arrows.

श्रीरामकविवर-कथित-वचनानि प्रपठतो दिशति हरिरिह सुखानि ॥ (कु)

Hari grants happiness here to one who reads these words of the great poet Sri Ramakavi.

श्लो ॥ सीतां मार्गितु-मुद्यतेषु कपिषु प्रोल्लङ्घ्य वारांनिधिं
लङ्कायां परितो विचित्य हनुमान-त्यन्त-चिन्ताकुलः ।
दीनामैक्षत राक्षसीभिरभितस्सरक्षितां शिंशुपा-
मूले देहविसर्जन-व्यवसितां देवीं स्मरन्तीं पतिम् ॥

Slokas

Of the monkeys planning to cross the ocean, Hanuman succeeded and searched for Sita in Lanka all around with great anxiety (in not finding her). He then saw Sita Devi at the foot of Simsupa tree surrounded by Rakshasis; Sita was in a pitiable condition and, thinking of her husband, she tried to drop her body.

रावण-मन्दिर-निहितां राघव-रहितां जगत्त्रयी-महिताम् ।
अतिसाहस-सन्निहितां जनकेन्द्र-सुता-मुवाच पवनसुतः ॥

Hanuman, the son of Vayu, spoke these words to Sita, the daughter of king Janaka, who was kept by force in the territory of Ravana, separated from Raghava, honoured in all the three worlds and possessed of great courage.

In this fifteenth Ashtapadi, Tara's very clever entreaties to Lakshmana are steeped in 'Karuna' rasa. She assures Lakshmana of the firm intent of Sugriva to seek out Sita, but at the same time she draws his attention to Sugriva's monkey nature and weakness. The poet moves on to Sundarakandam and briefly touches upon Hanuman's tenacious search for Sita. Hanuman addresses Sita in the toughest circumstance when she was attempting to commit suicide.

॥ षोडशाष्टपदी ॥

(हरिरभिसरति इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 16

(Like in Harirabhisarathi)

यदुकुलकाम्भोजिरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Yadukula kambhoji, Tala Adi

तव पतिरनुजेन विजयते कुशली त्वामाह कुशलं त्वयि प्रेमशाली ।

राघवे सर्वथा कुरु मा विषादमये ॥ (राघवे)

O Sita! Your husband, along with his younger brother, is well and is full of love for you; he enquires about your welfare. Do not grieve for him at all.

एष्यति रघुपतिरिह सेना-रजसा मम वचन श्रवणा-दनुतरसा ॥ (राघवे)

Rama will come here with a large army very quickly as soon as he hears my words (of your being found here).

निन्दति निजमपि बहुधा शरीरं तव विरहे गुरुमिव भूमिभारम् ॥ (राघवे)

Owing to separation from you, Rama detests his own body very much and finds life on earth unbearably heavy.

नाश्नाति न पिबति न च याति निद्रां ध्यायति भवतीं सदा हृदि भद्राम् ॥ (राघवे)

Rama does not take food or drink, nor does he sleep, thinking always of you, the auspicious consort, in his heart.

तं च मशक-कीटमपि देवि नाङ्गे रामोऽपनयति विरह विवशोऽन्तरङ्गे ॥ (राघवे)

Rama does not even drive away mosquitoes and worms from his limbs owing to grief of separation gnawing at his heart.

त्वन्मय-हृदयेन दिशि दिशि भवतीमवलोक्या-नुलभ्य शुचं याति महतीम् ॥ (राघवे)

With his heart entirely occupied by you, Rama looks for you in all directions and, not finding you, he is very grieved.

वहति मन्मथ-बाणहतमपि करुणं हा सीते कासीति विलपति करुणम् ॥ (राघवे)

Though hit by Manmatha's arrows, he pities for you and moans in pity, 'O Sita, where are you'.

श्रीरामकविवर-कृतिमिति पठतां वैदेही वितनोति मति-मतिसुहिताम् ॥ (राघवे)

Vaidehi grants very pleasing and salutary intellect to those who read this song of the great poet Sri Ramakavi.

श्लो । दत्वा प्रत्ययमङ्गुलीयकमतो गत्वा स भङ्क्त्वा वनं

हत्वा मन्त्रिसुता-नथाक्षमपरान् रक्षोगणा-नाहवे ।

बद्धः शक्रजिता पितामहवचस्सम्मानयन् मारुतिः

नीते रावण-सन्निधिं विगतभीर्बन्धं क्षणा-दच्छिनत् ॥

Slokas

Hanuman handed the ring of Rama as a sign of identity to Sita, destroyed the Asokavana and killed the sons of Mantris, Prince Aksha and other Rakshasa hordes in a battle. Bound by Indrajit (with Brahmastra) and honouring the words of Brahma, Maruti was taken to the presence of Ravana; fearlessly he broke open the bond of the Astra in a moment there.

दशवदन-समीपे मुक्त-पैतामहास्त्रः
तदनु तदनुजानां शृण्वतामग्र एव ।
विगत-भय-कलङ्कः कीर्तयन् रामकीर्तिं
मृदु-परुष-गभीरं वाक्यमूचे हनुमान् ॥

Freed from the Astra of Brahma, Hanuman spoke these words, which were at once soft, harsh and of deep import, to the ten-headed Ravana within the earshot of Ravana's brothers and with no trace of fear and singing the fame of Rama.

In this sixteenth Ashtapadi, the beauty of Sundarakandam is captured in Hanuman's words of consolation and courage to Sita. His description of Rama's condition brims with pathos. The account of his clever decision to get bound by the Brahmastra though he had the capacity to free himself, in order to meet Ravana and give him wholesome advice has been told captivately.

॥ सप्तदशाष्टपदी ॥

(विरचितचाटुवचनम् इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 17

(Like in Virachitachatuvaachanam)

कल्याणीरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Kalyani, Tala Triputa

हरिपतिराह सखा भवतो बहु कुशलमनामयदं ते ।
विसृज नरेन्द्र-वधूं स हि तिष्ठति निश्चितधीर्भवदन्ते ॥

Hanuman, the best among monkeys, said to Ravana: "O friend, may you be very well and healthy. Please release the wife of the king; he is in fact waiting near you with determined mind.

वक्ष्ये हित-वचनं निशामय निशिचर-नाथ
रघुपति-दूत-मवेहि च मामिह वायुसुतं हनुमन्तम् ।

दशरथ-तनय-विरोधकृतं भुवि मूर्त-मिवाङ्ग कृतान्तम् ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

O lord of Rakshasas, listen to my well-meaning words. Know me as the emissary of Rama, Hanuman, the son of Vayu. You have made an enemy of Rama, the son of Dasaratha, who is truly like Yama incarnate on earth.

प्लवग-चमूरिह सत्वर-मेष्यति दुष्कर-समर-विशङ्का ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

The army of monkeys will land here quickly, ready for a tough war.

इयमपि राक्षसराज भविष्यति भस्ममयी तव लङ्का ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

O king of Rakshasas, this Lanka of yours will be reduced to ashes.

अलमहमङ्ग भवन्तमपारबलं समरे विनिहन्तुम् ।

रघुपति-पत्नि-बलिस्त्वमये कथ-माकलये भुवि मन्तुम् ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

I am alone truly sufficient to destroy your limitless prowess in war. When you will be the victim of Rama's arrows, O Ravana, how do you desire life?

रक्ष कुलं न च बलमपि नाशय शृणु सुहृदुक्त-मवैरम् ।

प्रकुपित-राघव-हुतभुजि मा भज दशमुख शलभ-विकारम् ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

O ten-headed Ravana, do not destroy the race of Rakshasas and their strength; listen to the words of your well-wisher uttered without animosity. Do not become a moth in the fire of the wrath of Raghava.

अपि विधि-मन्दिरमपि शिवमन्दिर-मनुभजसे यदि भीत्या ।

रघुपति-मुक्तशरो न विमुञ्चति जीव यथोचित-मत्या ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

Even if you take refuge in the abode of Brahma or Siva out of fear, the arrow unleashed by Raghupati does not spare the Jiva, as it is aimed with proper intent.

गायति रामकवेरति यो मृदु-सरस-पदावलि-गीतम् ।

व्यवहृति-कौशलमेति स भूपति-सदसि गिरामपि गीतम् ॥ (वक्ष्ये)

One, who sings this song of Ramakavi couched in soft and sweet chain of words, attains the mastery to speak beautiful words in the king's assembly.

श्लो । क्रुद्धेनाथ दशाननेन वसनैः पुच्छेऽग्निना दीपिते

लङ्कां भस्ममयीं विधाय जलधौ संशाम्य सीतां पुनः ।

दृष्ट्वा जाम्बव-दङ्गदादि-निकटं प्राप्य क्षणा-न्मारुतिः

सीतावृत्त-मशेषतस्समवदत् सञ्जीवयन् वानरान् ॥

Slokas

The angry ten-headed Ravana got Hanuman's tail wrapped with clothes and lighted with fire. Hanuman reduced Lanka to ashes and put out the fire in his tail in the ocean and met Sita again. He returned in a moment to the place where Jambavan, Angada and others were camping and conveyed to them the complete story of Sita, thus revitalising the monkeys.

तारेयेन हनूमता-भ्यनुमता-इशाखामृगाणां गणाः
सुग्रीवस्य सुरक्षितां मधुवनी-मुल्लङ्घ्य सोल्लुण्ठनम् ।
रामं लक्ष्मण-सङ्गतं गिरितटे सोत्साहमेत्य क्षणात्
साहम्पूर्विक-मक्रमेण गणशस्सर्वं शशंसुः प्रियम् ॥

The hordes of monkeys, permitted by Angada, the son of Tara, and Hanuman, ransacked with ridicule Madhuvana, preserved with care by Sugriva. They then went to where Rama and Lakshmana were stationed at the foot of mountain and recounted lovingly, but in no proper order, the entire story amid clamour of 'me first, me first'.

सीतोदन्त-शुभाक्षरामृत-रसास्वादेन रामो मनः-
सन्ताप-ज्वर-हारिणा प्रमुदितः प्रेमोक्षितैर्वीक्षितैः ।
पश्यन् वायुसुतं प्रशस्य बहु तं मध्ये हरीणां मुहुः
बाहुभ्यां परिरभ्य साश्रुनयनः पप्रच्छ सीतास्थितिम् ॥

With his grief removed by the nectarine sweet hearing of the auspicious account of Sita, Rama became happy and looked at Hanuman, the son of Vayu, with eyes, brimming with love and extolled him very much again and again in the midst of so many monkeys. He embraced Hanuman with his arms and enquired about Sita's condition with tear-filled eyes.

उद्याने दशकन्धरेण निहिता नक्तञ्चरी-वेष्टिता
किं ब्रूते मनुते च किं कथ-मसून् धत्ते प्रिया जानकी ।
ब्रूहि ब्रूहि कपे पुनः पुनरिति श्रीरामचन्द्रेरितः
सीतायै मनसा नतिं विरचयन्नृचे तदीयां दशाम् ॥

Sri Ramachandra asked Hanuman: "Imprisoned in the garden by the ten-headed Ravana and surrounded by Rakshasis, what does the loving Janaki say; what is she thinking of; how does she retain her life-breath? O monkey, tell me, tell me again and again." Adoring Sita mentally, Hanuman spoke about her condition.

In this seventeenth Ashtapadi, Hanuman's well-intentioned advice to Ravana in measured words to restore Sita to Rama honourably, describing Rama's unmatched prowess has been

very nicely set forth by the poet. The poet mentions clearly that Siva or Brahma would not offer Ravana any succour, once he has made an enemy of Rama. Hanuman is suitably rewarded by Rama with embrace and kind words on his return from his momentous meeting with Sita.

॥ अष्टादशाष्टपदी ॥

(स्तनविनिहित इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 18

(Like in Stanavinihita)

बिलहरिरागेण, त्रिपुटतालेन गीयते

Raga Bilahari, Tala Triputa

अविरल-गलदश्रु वहति सा नयनम् ।

मुञ्चति न कदापि भूतल-शयनम् ॥

जानकी राम जानकी विरहे तव सीदति ॥ (जानकी)

O Rama, Janaki is miserable in separation. Her eyes shed tears continuously; she never leaves lying down on earth.

शुक्ल-प्रतिप-चन्द्ररेखेन सुकृशा ।

कातरतया विरहे तव विवशा ॥ (जानकी)

Janaki is thin like the outline of moon on the 1st day (Prathama) of Sukla Paksha; in separation she is uncontrollably distressed.

भव-दुपगमनाय शोकविमूढा ।

अविरतमपि मनोरथ-मधिरूढा ॥ (जानकी)

Overcome by grief, she is perpetually wishful of your arrival.

मलिनांशुक-धूलि-धूसरदेहा ।

मुहुरपि हाहेति जात-विमोहा ॥ (जानकी)

Her attire is dusty; she bears a body, greyed due to dust; she wails frequently 'Ha, ha' and becomes unconscious.

दशमुख-विनाशाय जीवित-मार्या ।

वहति सा कुपिता-हिरिव भार्या ॥ (जानकी)

Janaki, your wife, like an angry snake, bears her life for destruction of the ten-headed Ravana.

उपवन-शकुनानामपि दयनीया ।

रोदिति शिंशपा-तल-शयनीया ॥ (जानकी)

Lying at the foot of the Simsupa tree, she weeps and is more pitiable than even the birds in the garden.

मूर्तिरिव सा करुणारस-धारा ।

शिव शिवानधिगत-शोकाब्धि-पारा ॥ (जानकी)

Janaki is as if the flow of the essence of pity incarnate. Siva, Siva, her ocean of grief has no shore.

श्रीरामकविवर-कृतमिति गीतम् ।

गायता-मनुदिनमपि सुप्रभातम् ॥ (जानकी)

May this song by the great poet Sri Ramakavi be sung every day in the morning.

श्लो ॥ राज्ञः कपीनां धृतमाज्ञयाऽथ समागतैर्वानर-सैन्यपालैः ।

समावृतो दाशरथिः पयोधेः पौलस्त्य-नाशाय तटं प्रपेदे ॥

Slokas

Rama, the son of Dasaratha, arrived at the shore of the ocean for the destruction of Ravana, the grandson of sage Pulastya, surrounded by commanders of the monkey army, who had gathered on the orders of the monkey king Sugriva.

उपजल-निधि-निविष्टै-रुद्धतैर्युद्धमार्गे

हरिपतिभि-रसङ्ख्यैस्सादरं सेव्यमानः ।

चिर-मवनि-कुमारीं चिन्तयन्नन्तरङ्गे

गतमपि रघुनाथस्तां निशा-मध्युवास ॥

Served respectfully by innumerable monkey lords, who camped on the sea-shore and who haughtily yearned for the war, Raghunatha spent the night, thinking continuously in his heart of Sita, the daughter of Bhumi.

अत्रान्तरे विरहि-मण्डल-चण्डमानोः

चन्द्रस्य सान्द्र-विशिखाभ-मयूखजालैः ।

मन्दानिलेन च भृशं परिपीड्यमानो

रामो विमुच्य धृति-मित्थ-मुवाच दीनः ॥

In the meantime, the pitiable Rama, tortured by the shining web of arrow-like rays of Chandra, known to be terrible to groups of separated lovers, and by the soft winds, lost composure and spoke thus.

वाहि वात यतः कान्ता तां स्पृष्ट्वा मामपि स्पृश ।
त्वयि मे गात्र-संस्पर्शः चन्द्रे दृष्टि-समागमः ॥

O wind, touch me after touching my love; let me then have contact of my body with you, and also let my vision be on Chandra, whom my love also would be looking at.

इत्यादि बह्वसदृशं परिमुक्त-कण्ठं
रामो रुदन्नवरजेन समाहितोऽपि ।
कामेन काममति-निर्दय-मर्द्यमानो
न स्वस्थधी-रजनि मानववंशनाथः ॥

Weeping and letting out many such words unexpected of him, Rama, the king in the race of Manu, though accompanied by his younger brother, tortured mercilessly by the love-kindling Manmatha, did not attain composure.

आकर्णपूर्ण-कुसुमायुध-चापवल्ली-
दुर्वार-सर्वविशिखावलि-भिन्नचेताः ।
सीतावियोग-विधुरः प्रवरो रघूणां
शोकाकुल-स्मर-मुपालभताधिदीनः ॥

With his mind torn by the powerful groups of darts of flowers unleashed from the bowstring drawn upto ear by Manmatha, the highly pitiable Rama, the best among Raghus, overcome by grief, spoke thus to Manmatha.

In this eighteenth Ashtapadi, Sri Ramakavi has brought to bear Karuna rasa at its peak. The separated lovers, Sita and Rama are both deeply distressed. Sita is aggrieved on being kept imprisoned in Asokavana, unknown to Rama. Normally Devi's face is compared by poets with full Moon; but here Sita's emaciated form is interestingly seen as parallel to the Moon of Sukla Paksha Prathama day. Rama was initially in agony over not being able to locate Sita, and now, on knowing Sita's pitiable condition, his grief knows no bounds. He is unable to bear the darts of love of Manmatha.

॥ एकोनविंशाष्टपदी ॥

(कथितसमये इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 19

(Like in Kathitasamaye)

आहिरिरागेण, झम्पतालेन गीयते

Raga Aahiri, Tala Jhampa

अहह वितनोषि मयि सुचिरमपि पौरुषम् ।

प्रकटयसि विरहवति धिगिह तव पौरुषम् ॥

बाधसे मदन किमये प्रिया-विरह-कातरं माम् ॥ (बाधसे)

O Manmatha, you have shown your valour to me for long. Fie upon your valour, you exhibit it to a separated lover. Why are you torturing me, distressed due to separation from my beloved.

विरचयसि शिव शिव पिशाचीव पीडनम् ।

भवसि यदि शूर इह धुरि धर शरासनम् ॥ (बाधसे)

Siva, Siva, you are causing agony like a Pisacha (goblin). If you are truly valorous, you appear before me carrying your bevy of arrows.

नियत-मसवोऽपि बत दधति बहुभारताम् ।

शरणमिह को नु मम त्वयि वहति वैरिताम् ॥ (बाधसे)

Though possessing only limited energy of life-breath (with no body), you seem to carry a heavy load. I have surrendered to you; I bear no enmity towards you.

दलय न शरेण मां हृदि वसति जानकी ।

अदय-हृदयोऽसि बत विरहि-वध-पातकी ॥ (बाधसे)

Do not cleave me with your arrow; in my heart abides Janaki. You have a heart devoid of pity; you are indeed committing the sin of murder of a separated lover.

प्रहर मयि काममयि विरहिषु कुतूहली ।

प्रहर न तु तां क्वापि जीवति यदि मैथिली ॥ (बाधसे)

Attack me, the forlorn lover, enthusiastically as you wish; but do not attack Janaki, if she is alive.

विधुरपि च हन्त मे विधुरयति चेतनाम् ।

त्वमपि यमदूत इव दिशसि बहुयातनाम् ॥

परिलुठति जीवितं बहुकृश-ममङ्गले ।

देहविगमे मम किमपरमिह मङ्गले ॥ (बाधसे)

O, even Chandra afflicts my senses; you are also giving me much misery like a Yamaduta (Yama's messenger). You strike at my life and emaciate me very inauspiciously. Once I depart from this body, what good is then left?

इति सरसराम-विभु-भणित-मुपगीयताम् ।

निजयुवतिजन-विरह-भयमिह विमुच्यताम् ॥ (बाधसे)

May this sensitive song by Ramakavi be sung by all; let them be freed of the fear of separation from their young beloveds.

श्लो ॥ अत्रान्तरे दशमुखेन हितोपदेशात्

निर्भत्सिताय सहजेन विभीषणाय ।

राज्यार्थिने रघुपतिः शरणागताय

दत्वाभयं च सखितां च मुदं प्रपदे ॥

Slokas

In the meantime Vibhishana, who was reviled by his elder brother Ravana (the ten-headed) on being offered wholesome advice, came and took refuge under Sri Rama with the wish of attaining the kingdom of Lanka. Rama bestowed on him freedom from fear and took on his friendship joyfully.

तदनु स नभसोऽवतीर्य हर्षाच्चरणममुं करणैस्त्रिभिः प्रपन्नः ।

उपजलधि विभीषणः प्रसन्नं सविनय-मित्थमुवाच रामचन्द्रम् ॥

At that time Vibhishana descended from the sky happily. He surrendered to Sri Ramachandra with all the three instruments (mind, speech and action) on the shore of the ocean. He spoke thus with humility to the highly pleased Sri Rama.

This nineteenth Ashtapadi is full of pathos. Rama, like an ordinary human being, suffers at the relentless strike of Manmatha; his thoughts go all out in search of Sita. He curses Manmatha for his excessive opportunism and pleads for mercy. The concluding Slokas convey the celebrated surrender of Vibhishana to Rama and lay the ground for his strengthening of the bond of friendship in the next Ashtapadi.

॥ विंशाष्टपदी ॥

(रजनिजनित इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 20

(Like in Rajanijanita)

आरभीरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Aarabhi, Tala Adi

सन्त्यज धन-दार-दारक-बान्धव-परिजन-जालमशेषम् ।

त्वामेव शरणागतोऽस्मीह मां कुरु सुग्रीवाङ्गद-निर्विशेषम् ॥

O Rama, detaching completely from the web of wealth, wife, children, relatives and friends, I have taken refuge in you alone. Treat me same as Sugriva and Angada.

राम पालय मां कृपालय पालय नतावन-दीक्षाम् ।

सादरमथ मयि कुरु करुणामृत-सङ्गता-पाङ्ग-निरीक्षाम् ॥ (राम)

O Rama, seat of compassion, protect me; stick to your vow of protecting one who surrenders to you. Now direct at me kindly your sidelong vision full of the nectar of compassion.

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते अभयम् सर्वभूतेभ्यो

ददामीति व्रतमिदं तवाकर्ण्य प्राप्तोऽहम्

राज्यार्थं त्यज वा रक्ष वा यथाप्रीति ॥ (राम)

O Rama, I arrived here on hearing your vow: “I grant freedom from fear from all living beings to one, who surrenders to me and pleads even once saying that he is mine”. I am desirous of kingdom. You abandon me or protect me, as you like.

सर्वलोक-शरण्य सर्ववीरा-ग्रगण्य मामपि कुरु सखिपदे देव ।

त्रिभुवन-कण्टकमिह घातयिष्यामि तव भार्याहर-मचिरादेव ॥ (राम)

O Rama, Deva, you are the refuge of all worlds; you are the foremost among all valorous men. Grant me also the status of friend. I shall annihilate quickly the thorn of the three worlds, who has kidnapped your wife.

जानामि रणचर्यामस्त्रगीतीरपि जानामि राक्षस-मायाम् ।

जानामि रघुकुल-नायक तावक-भुजयुग-शक्ति-ममेयाम् ॥ (राम)

O Rama, I know warfare and usage of divine weapons; I know also the power of illusion of Rakshasas. O hero of the race of Raghu, I am also aware of the immeasurable power of your twin arms.

जनकसुता-प्रतिदानविधौ बहुकथितोऽपि हितवचनानि ।

पथ्यानि न गृह्णाति मर्तुकाम इव विविध-भेषज-रचनानि ॥ (राम)

Ravana does not accept the salutary words of advice offered copiously in respect of restoring Sita back to you, the advice in the form of different types of solutions (medicines). He behaves like one wishing to die.

वरदान-दर्पितमपि नैकशाप-हतायुष-माहवकुण्ठम् ।

शमय मया सह समिति सहायेन सपरिकरं दशकण्ठम् ॥ (राम)

Though he is conceited with the boons he has, his power in warfare is blunted owing to many curses affecting his longevity. You annihilate that ten-headed Ravana with his retinue with the help of the army and myself.

याचस्व जलनिधि-मिम-मधुना सैनिक-भार-गमनाय पन्थानम् ।

दास्यति न चेदयमस्त्रविदांवर कलया-मोघास्त्र-शरसन्धानम् ॥ (राम)

You request this Ocean now for giving way for the army of soldiers to move. If he does not oblige, o the best among wielders of divine weapons, you deploy the unfailing divine weapon.

श्रीरामकवि-सूक्तमिति शरणागत-भक्त-विभीषण-वादम् ।

प्रतिदिन-मुषसि सुधामधुरं पठ विसृज सखे भवखेदम् ॥ (राम)

Read this poem by Sri Ramakavi, describing the nectarine sweet pleadings of the devotee Vibhishana during surrender to Rama, every day in the morning. O friend, leave aside the misery of samsara.

श्लो ॥ इत्थं विभीषण-गिरा रघुनन्दनोऽपि

दर्भेषु वारिधि-तटे नियुतः शयानः ।

नादर्शयद्वत्त यदा जलधिः स्वरूपं

रोषात् तदा धनुषि भीममिषुं युयोज ॥

Slokas

As thus advised by Vibhishana, Rama lay down on the shore of the ocean on a bed of Darbha grass. When the Ocean did not show up, Rama angrily applied a terrible arrow on to his bow.

सर्वाम्भः परिशोषणाय दधतं सज्जीकृतं कार्मुकं

कोपध्मातमवेक्ष्य तं त्रिजगतां कोदण्ड-दीक्षागुरुम् ।
वाचं सानुनयं प्रसादन-परामूचे प्रणम्योत्थितो
भीतः प्राञ्जलि-रञ्जसा रघुपतिं दीनो नदीनो भृशम् ॥

Seeing Rama, the master archer of all the three worlds in the highly inflamed state of anger, holding the bow with the arrow ready for striking with a view to drying up the entire ocean, the poor Ocean, lord of rivers, prostrated to Rama and, overcome by fear, he quickly spoke these most propitiating words with folded palms in all humility.

Sri Ramakavi deals with the celebrated Vibhishana Saranagati in this twentieth Ashtapadi in a very captivating manner. Vibhishana's pleadings are a lesson in surrender to Bhagavan. Vibhishana refers to his efforts in bringing Ravana to the path of righteousness, his own prowess, and ability and willingness to be of assistance to Rama in warfare, specially in deciphering the special tricks of Rakshasas. Through Vibhishana's words, the poet brings out the oft-quoted, illustrious assurance of Rama from Valmiki Ramayana:

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥
आनयैनं हरिश्रेष्ठ दत्तमस्याभयं मया ।
विभीषणो वा सुग्रीव यदि वा रावणः स्वयम् ॥

“I vouchsafe freedom from fear arising from all living beings to him, who comes to me only once and seeks protection saying, ‘I am yours’. O jewel among monkeys, Sugriva, be he Vibhishana or Ravana himself, security has been granted by me in his favour.” Vibhishana takes up his advisory role immediately and asks Rama to request the Devata of Ocean to give way.

॥ एकविंशाष्टपदी ॥

(रतिसुखसारे इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 21

(Like in Ratisukhasare)

केदारगौलरागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Kedaragoula, Tala Adi

तव शरदाहं विषहे नाहं संहर संहर कोपम् ।

मयि कुरु हृदयं सम्प्रति सदयं तव तवहित-मिद-मनुरूपम् ॥

O Rama, I am your autumn (best friend); not your enemy. Subdue your anger. Now render your heart full of compassion; it will also be agreeable to your purpose.

रघुवर-चरण तव मे शरणं मयि कुरु मा बत रोषम् ।

परिहर चापं त्यज सन्तापं कलय निजाश्रित-पोषम् ॥ (रघुवर)

O the best of Raghus, your feet are my refuge. Do not show anger towards me. Leave aside this bow; abandon anguish; nourish me, who has surrendered to you.

गतिमिह दीनां पश्य नदीनां त्वयि कुपिते सविकारम् ।

मयि किल मन्तुं नार्हसि मन्तुं शमय कलुष-मतिघोरम् ॥ (रघुवर)

Look at the state of the poor rivers here, when you get angry and show perturbation. Do not find fault with me in your mind. Subdue your very terrible wrath.

नतजनरक्षा तव किल दीक्षा दृष्टमिदं ननु काके ।

कलयसि परुषं जल-परिशोषं किमिति मयीह वराके ॥ (रघुवर)

Your vow of protecting one who surrenders to you has been noted in your treatment of the crow. How then do you entertain with the pitiable me the cruel idea of drying up the waters?

(The reference here is to the story of Jayantha, Indra's son, taking the form of a crow and hurting Sita while Rama was asleep on her lap in the forest. Rama spared the life of Jayantha when he surrendered to him; the Brahmastra deployed by Rama took away only one eye of Jayantha.)

त्वष्ट-सुतोऽयं मामक-तोयं स्तम्भयतां नलनामा ।

प्रचलतु सेना वानरसेना चरणैरेव हि भीमा ॥ (रघुवर)

Let this Nala, son of Tvashta, arrest the waters in me. Let the massive army of monkeys and others cross the ocean on foot.

रिपु-वधहेतुं त्वत्कृतसेतुं त्रिभुवन-पावनरूपम् ।

सुचिरमहेयं शिरसि वहेयं दर्शन-दूरित-पापम् ॥ (रघुवर)

I shall carry on my head the bridge made for your sake for killing your enemies; the bridge will purify all the three worlds and will remove the sins of those who have its darshan; its fame will last very long.

Skanda Puranam states in Sethumahatmyam:

दृष्टमात्रे रामसेतौ मुक्तिः संसार-सागरात् ।

हरे हरौ च भक्तिः स्यात्-तथा पुण्य-समृद्धिता ॥

समस्त-देवतारूपः सेतु-बन्धः प्रकीर्तितः ।

तद्-दर्शनवतः पुंसः कः पुण्यं गणितुं क्षमः ॥ (३.१.१८,२३)

“Mere darshan of Ramasethu bestows Mukti (Liberation) from the ocean of samsara. Devotion to Vishnu and Siva as well as enormous merit result. Sethu is celebrated as the form of all Devatas. Who can count the merits of the person, who has darshan of Sethu?”

रघुकुलदीपे त्वयि कृतकोपे जगदखिलं धृतशङ्कम् ।

मयि जडरूपे धृत-परितापे कलय हृदयमकलङ्कम् ॥ (रघुवर)

O Light of the race of Raghus, if you become so wrathful, the whole world develops enormous fear. My form is after all inanimate; I am repentant. Remove the blot from your heart.

भज हृदि मोदं त्यज निर्वेदं यास्यसि जनक-कुमारीम् ।

रचय सवेगं गमनोद्योगं ताडय विजय-भेरीम् ॥ (रघुवर)

Get cheer in your heart; drop indifference; you will attain Sita. Start quickly the preparations for movement; beat the victory drum.

रामकवीन्द्रे वरगुण-सान्द्रे कथयति तदिद-मुदारम् ।

गायत महितं रघुपति-चरितं भजत भवाम्बुधि-पारम् ॥ (रघुवर)

Sing this song of Ramakavi, excellent with lofty ideas and describing the story of Raghupati and reach the other shore of the ocean of samsara.

श्लो ॥ इत्यम्भोधि-गिरा नलेन जलधौ सेतुं विधाया-द्रिभिः

लङ्कां प्राप्य दशाननस्य तनयान् भ्रातृंश्च सेनापतीन् ।

हत्वा तं च सकुम्भकर्णममरप्रीत्यै रघूणां पतिः

सीतां पावक-पाविता-मुपगतां चक्रे जनुस्सार्थकम् ॥

Slokas

Told thus by the Lord of Ocean, Rama got the bridge built with hills by Nala in the ocean and reached Lanka. He killed the sons of the ten-headed Ravana, his brothers, army commanders, Kumbhakarna and Ravana also for the pleasure of Devas. He attained Sita, purified by Agni and fulfilled the purpose of his Avatara.

दशमुखमुखा-न्हत्वा सत्वाधिकान् रजनी-चरान्
नवहुतभुजा पूतां सीतामवाप्य मुदान्वितम् ।
रघुकुलपतिर्मध्ये युद्धावनेरमरैस्समं
सकलजगतां खष्टा तुष्टाव हृष्टमना विधिः ॥

Rama killed the Rakshasa warriors headed by Ravana and became very happy on attaining Sita, purified freshly in Agni. He shone with Devas in the battlefield. Brahma, the creator of all the worlds, propitiated him very happily.

In this twentyfirst Ashtapadi, we find the poet taking up the Karuna (compassion) rasa, followed quickly by the Vira (heroism) Rasa. How Rama pardoned the Lord of Ocean on the latter invoking Rama's celebrated quality of compassion to those who surrender and how he quickly organized the erection of the Sethu across the ocean, killed all the enemies and attained Sita have been succinctly and nicely presented.

॥ द्वाविंशाष्टपदी ॥

(किसलयशयनतले इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 22

(Like in Kisalayasyanatale)

नाथनामक्रियारागेण, आदितालेन गीयते

Raga Nathanamakriya, Tala Adi

दशमुखमुख-रजनीचर-पीडित-जगदवनाय सतोषम् ।

रघुवंशमशेष-सुरार्थनया-दृत-मानुषवेषम् ॥

स्वयमधुना नारायणं स्मर मनसि स्वमनादिम् ॥

O Rama, remember that you are the beginningless Narayana, who has taken human form happily in response to the prayer of Devas in order to protect the world from the torture caused by Ravana and other Rakshasas.

प्रतिविधि-कल्पमनल्प-जगत्परिकल्पन-शिल्पविशेषम् ।

उद्धत-दैत्य-निषूदनमम्बुधिसिद्धानि शयनितशेषम् ॥ (स्वय)

You are Narayana, reclining on the bed of Sesha in the Ocean of Milk, who project the huge world with all its variety at the beginning of every Brahma Kalpa and kill the haughty Asuras as necessary.

नयनयुगं रवि-चन्द्रमसौ तव सुरकुलमङ्गरुहाणि ।

हृदयमहं रसना-दयिता मम तव विनतिं करवाणि ॥ (स्वय)

Your twin eyes are Surya and Chandra; hairs on your body are the groups of Devas; your heart is myself. My consort Saraswathi is your tongue. I extol you.

तव महिमाम्बुधि-लव-कणिकामपि वेत्ति न हि श्रुतिजालम् ।

नापि वयं बत किमुत परे स्तुति-साहस-कल्पनयालम् ॥ (स्वय)

The great web of Vedas does not know even a small drop of the ocean of your greatness. How then can we even think of attempting to praise you.

सृजति जगन्ति भवानपि रक्षति संहरति स्वयमन्ते ।

अमित-गुणोऽसि पतिर्जगतामसि पारमुपैमि कथं ते ॥ (स्वय)

You project the worlds, protect them and destroy them yourself at the end. Your virtues are immeasurable; you are the lord of the worlds. How can I visualize your whole?

दिशि दिशि तिष्ठसि दिवि भुवि गोषु च विप्रगणेऽखिलजन्तौ ।

स्यूतमिदं जग-दखिलमपि त्वयि मणि-निकरा इव तन्तौ ॥ (स्वय)

You pervade everything - all directions, the upper worlds, the earth, the cows, the brahmanas and in fact all beings. All these created worlds are woven in you like cluster of gems in a thread.

Bhagavan says in Bhagavadgita:

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥

“All this creation is woven into me like clusters of gems in a thread.”

सुरगण-काङ्क्षित-सिद्धिरभूदिह निजपद-माश्रय विष्णो ।

चिरमपि पालय रघूत्तम राज्यमनन्त-सुरोत्तम जिष्णो ॥ (स्वय)

Vishnu, now that the desired objective of the Devas has been achieved, please return to your original state. O best among Raghus, one without end, the best among Devas, victorious one, please protect your kingdom for long.

इति वररामकृतां विधिमुख-गलितामिह कामम् ।

रघुपति-नुतिमपि गायति यो भुवि स हि भजते किल कामम् ॥ (स्वय)

One, who sings this poem of eulogy of Rama by Ramakavi, which emanated from Brahma as desired by him, shall attain all his wishes on earth.

श्लो ॥ गतेष्वेषु स्वं स्वं भुवनममरेष्वाश्रुतमसौ
ददौ लङ्का-राज्यं सकल-मनुजा-याशरपतेः ।
चिराद् द्रष्टुं रामो भरतमधिकोत्कण्ठित-मना-
स्समं सुग्रीवाद्यै-रभजत विमानं धनपतेः ॥

Slokas

After Devas returned to their own realms, Rama gave away, as agreed, the entire kingdom of Lanka to Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, the lord of Rakshasas. Being very eager for a long time to meet Bharata, Rama mounted the Pushpaka Vimana of Kubera together with Sugriva and others.

आरोप्य पुष्पकविमानमथाग्निपूतां
सीतां समस्त-भुवनैरपि पूज्यमानः ।
अङ्गे निधाय मुदितः प्रवरो रघूणां
तस्यै रणावनिमदर्शयदादरेण ॥

Rama, worshipped by all the worlds, helped Sita, purified in Agni, to mount the Pushpaka Vimana. He then kept her on his lap and lovingly showed her the battlefield.

This twentysecond Ashtapadi contains one of the best panegyrics of Rama in this poetic composition of Ramakavi. Brahma reminds Rama of his divinity and supreme state and asks him to return to his original state of Vishnu. Valmiki Ramayana also provides an excellent Phalasruti (listing of fruits) for this stotra of Brahma.

॥ त्रयोविंशाष्टपदी ॥

(मञ्जुतरकुञ्जतल इतिवत्)

ASHTAPADI 23

(Like in Manjutarakunjatala)

घण्टारागेण, झम्पतालेन गीयते

Raga Ghanta, Tala Jhampa

दशवदनमसकृ-दिषु-दलित-देहम् ।
इह सुदति लुलित-तनुमुचित-दाहम् ॥
पश्य सीते देवि ननु भूमौ ॥ (पश्य)

Sita, see here the body of the ten-headed Ravana, pierced by many arrows, lying on the ground in a crushed state ready for cremation. (Though the body had already been cremated by Vibhishana, Rama brings the mental picture of Ravana to Sita).

मम शर-विदलितमपि कुम्भकर्णम् ।

इह सुदति रवितनय-विलूनकर्णम् ॥ (पश्य)

See also Kumbhakarna lying here, pierced by my arrows and ear severed by Sugriva, the son of Surya.

पवनसुत-कर-निहतमपि निकुम्भम् ।

इह सुदति कपिपति-हतमपि कुम्भम् ॥ (पश्य)

See also Nikumbha, killed by Hanuman and Kumbha, exterminated by Sugriva.

मदवरज-बाण-विदलित-मत्तिकायम् ।

इह सुदति हतमखिल-रिपु-निकायम् ॥ (पश्य)

See also Atikaya, annihilated by my younger brother Lakshmana. The entire mass of the enemies killed by us lies here.

सरसीरुहमुखि भवदुपगम-हेतुम् ।

इह जलधि-जठरमधिरचित-सेतुम् ॥ (पश्य)

Sita with lotus-like face, see this bridge raised across the ocean for approaching you.

इह सपदि पशुपति-रदिशदतिसौख्यम् ।

इह समजनि मम कपि-नृपति-सख्यम् ॥ (पश्य)

See, here Pasupati (Siva) bestowed great ease instantly. Here the friendship between me and Sugriva came up.

इह निशित-मदसिहतमपि कबन्धम् ।

इह हत-विराध-मतिदेहबन्धम् ॥ (पश्य)

See, here was Kabandha, full of excessive intoxication; here Viradha of massive build was killed.

उषितमिह शयितमिह ननु भवत्या ।

विहृतमिह गिरिषु वन-लोभवत्या ॥ (पश्य)

See, I spent time going around and lying down here along with you; here we roamed in hills and forests and enjoyed.

इति पठति रामकवि-सरस-गीतम् ।

इह जयति सकलमपि वैरिजातम् ॥ (पश्य)

One, who reads this sensitive poem of Ramakavi, conquers all hostility of enemies.

श्लो ॥ आरुह्याथ स पुष्पकं रणभुवं भूमीभुवे दर्शयन्

नन्दिग्राममुपेत्य लब्धभरतो दिव्याम्बरा-लङ्कृतः ।

पौरैर्जानपदैर्जनैरपि मुदाऽयोध्यां प्रविष्टः पुरीं

रामो रत्नमये सहा-वनिभुवा पीठेऽभिषिक्तोऽभवत् ॥

Slokas

After showing the battlefield to Sita from Pushpaka Vimana, Rama reached Nandigrama and was met by Bharata. Clad in royal attire, Rama entered the city of Ayodhya, accompanied by the citizens of the city and other surrounding habitations. Along with Sita, born of Bhumi, Rama was coronated in Ayodhya, seated in gem-encrusted throne.

भार्या- भ्रातृ-समन्वितं रघुपतिं भद्रासना-ध्यासितं

दिव्यालङ्कारणैरलङ्कृततनुं देवं त्रिलोकेश्वरम् ।

प्रायो बाङ्घनसा-तिवर्तिनि तदा पट्टाभिषेकोत्सवे

हृष्टा-स्तुष्टुवुरिष्टलाभ-मुदिता ब्रह्मर्षि-देवर्षयः ॥

Brahmarishis and Devarishis were delighted to have darshan of Rama, the Deva who was the lord of the three worlds, seated in the glorious throne, accompanied by his consort and brothers, and decorated in regal splendour, amidst the festivities of coronation, which transcended mind and speech, and felt happy at having attained their desired ends.

The victorious Rama shows his consort Sita in this twentythird Ashtapadi the various triumphs he had achieved in the battle fought relentlessly in Lanka, followed by other encounters and places of sojourn in the forests. The recall at this sweet moment of the past events evokes keen enjoyment in the reader.

Brahmarishis and Devarishis are least influenced by events in the mundane world, given as they are totally to living in spiritual bliss. However, being aware of Rama's divinity, even they could not but become extremely cheerful at the time of Pattabhishekam of Rama. This has been beautifully brought out by Sri Ramakavi.

॥ चतुर्विंशाष्टपदी ॥

(कुरु यदुनन्दन इतिवत्)

(Like in Kuru Yadunandana)

मङ्गलकौशिकरागेण, तिश्त्रतालेन गीयते

Raga Mangalakousika, Tala Tisra

जय जय राम गुणैरभिराम विरोधि-विराम जगत्पते ।

त्रिजगदुपप्लव-परिशमन प्लवगाधिप-राज्यद भूमिपते ॥

परिपाहि हे रघुनन्दन श्रित-जनता-हरिचन्दन ॥ (परिपाहि)

O Rama, you allure people with your attractive qualities. O lord of the worlds, you decimate your enemies. You put down the calamities of the three worlds. O lord of the earth, you gave away the kingdom (of Kishkindha) to the monkey king Sugriva. O Raghunandana, you are the Harichandana (wish-fulfilling) tree for the people who have surrendered to you. Please protect us. Victory to you; Victory to you.

Harichandana is one of the five wish-fulfilling trees in Swargaloka - Mandara, Parijata, Santhana, Kalpavriksha and Harichandana.

सुरगण-चित्त-कलङ्क-मलं कमलेक्षण देव निवारितम् ।

चिरमपि रक्ष ननु क्षितिमक्षति भ्रातृभिरेव मनोरथम् ॥ (परिपाहि)

Deva with lotus-like eyes, the dirty stain in the minds of the Devas has been removed by you. Please protect the earth for a long time, pervading it and fulfilling wishes like those of brothers.

चरण-सरोरुह-शरणगतावन-सप्रतिभूरिह भूमितले ।

विलस-दृशो जलरुह-सदृशौ कुरु विद्वज्जनेषु सुशीतले ॥ (परिपाहि)

You surely protect those on this earth, who take refuge in your lotus feet. Please direct your very cool and brilliant lotus-like eyes towards the miserable people.

सारमते रमते हृदयं त्वयि यस्य सुभक्ति-वशंवदे ।

स भजति काञ्चन धन-सुत-काञ्चन-सम्पदमत्र पदे पदे ॥ (परिपाहि)

One, whose heart with discerning intellect is in the grip of deep devotion to you, attains everlasting wealth, progeny, riches and glory here at every step.

सकृदयि ते दयितेव यमञ्चति नामकला मधुसोदरा ।

प्रति तरसा-त्तरसा तमुपैति च सत्कविता-तिविकस्वरा ॥ (परिपाहि)

Very beautiful and sweet poetry approaches him speedily and pleasantly, whom the art of uttering your nectarine names grips like a beloved.

यावदिमौ नभसीन्दुरवी पृथिवी च सपर्वतकानना ।

तावदियं तव रामकथा भुवि स्थास्यति नूतननूतना ॥ (परिपाहि)

So long as Chandra and Surya in the sky, and the earth with hills and forests last, your story of Rama will remain established with ever-new joy.

जय जय राघव जय जय माधव जय जय तव जय मङ्गलम् ।

जय जय सीता-सतत-मनोहर जय जय तव शुभमङ्गलम् ॥ (परिपाहि)

O Raghava, victory to you. Madhava, victory and auspiciousness to you. Ever alluring to Sita, victory to you. May all auspiciousness be yours.

रामकवीन्द्र-विरचितमिमं रघुपतिनायक-महोत्सवम् ।

पठत जना भुवि भजत मुदा परमिह-पर-शाश्वत-वैभवम् ॥ (परिपाहि)

May people on earth read this festive story of the hero of the Raghu dynasty, authored by Ramakavi and attain supreme and everlasting glory joyously here and hereafter.

श्लो ॥ विश्वामित्र-कुलाब्धि-कौस्तुभमणेः श्रीचोलसीम्नि स्फुर-

द्राजश्रीसहजीन्द्र-कल्पित-महाग्रामस्थ-विद्वन्मणेः ।

श्रीरामस्य कवेः प्रशस्तयशसः श्रीमन्महाहौशनेः

कर्णाटस्य कृतिसस्तां हृदि मुदं दद्यात्सुपद्या भृशम् ॥

Slokas

May this sweet composition by the illustrious Sri Ramakavi, the Koustubha jewel in the ocean of the dynasty of Visvamitra, belonging to the glorious Hosani sect of Karnataka, the scholar-jewel living in the great village in the Chola territory, carved by Raja Sri Sahajindra (Shaji Maharaj), provide enormous cheer in the hearts of virtuous people.

यः श्रीरङ्गपुरे विभाति महितः श्रीमान् सतामग्रणीः

विद्वन्मण्डल-मण्डनो निरुपमः कर्णाटक-क्षमापतिः ।

तस्य प्रार्थनयैव रामकविना श्रीरामगाथासुधा-

वर्षोऽयं रचितोऽधुना भुवि सुधीह-च्छातकानां मुदे ॥

This story of Rama, the shower of nectar, has been written by Ramakavi at the request of the unparalleled great and glorious king of Karnataka, the foremost among the virtuous,

extolled by the assemblies of scholars, who shines in Srirangapattinam, for the cheer of the Chataka birds in the hearts of wise men. (The import is that just as Chataka bird lives only on rain drops, wise persons live on such enlightened nectarine shower of poetry).

जयतु जगति रम्या स्वैकसम्भाव्यसाम्या
बहुकविजन-मान्या वर्ण्य-वस्त्वैक-सौम्या ।
अधिगत-शुभसीताराम-चारित्रगीता
सरसपद-विनीता मत्कृता रामगीता ॥

May this Ramagita written by me, the pleasing poem describing the auspicious account of Sita and Rama, the poem which is unique and without parallel, esteemed by many poets, beautiful in that it describes that one object which deserves to be described, versed in sweet words, be victorious in this world.

Sri Ramakavi combines prayer, narration of the greatness of the story of Rama, Phalasruti (listing of fruits) and Mangalaasasanam (expression of auspiciousness) in this concluding twentyfourth Ashtapadi. Like in Valmiki Ramayana, the poet says that the story of Rama would continue to attract people on earth as long as Surya and Chandra, and the earth exist.

The fact that this Rama Ashtapadi by Sri Ramakavi, like its predecessor Gita Govindam, has found a lasting and coveted place in the prevailing Sampradaya Bhajan system speaks volumes for the content, presentation, inspiring devotion and sweet melody of the work. Sita Kalyanams conducted in Bhajan Paddhati incorporate this Ashtapadi lovingly.

The translator believes that this effort would help many devotees of Rama in understanding and enjoying the import of this unique composition.

इति श्रीमच्छोलदेशाग्रपूज्य-विद्वत्समाज-विराजमान-षाजहीन्द्र-
पुरवास्तव्य-होशनि-कर्णाटक-जातीय-विश्वामित्रवंश-मुक्ताफल-
श्रीरामकविकृता श्रीरामाष्टपदी सम्पूर्णा ॥

Thus ends Sri Rama Ashtapadi by Sri Ramakavi, the pearl in the dynasty of Visvamitra, belonging to the Hosani sect of Karnataka, shining in the assembly of scholars extolled as the foremost in Choladesa, living in Shajahindrapura.

॥ शुभमस्तु ॥

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