

## Shri Raghavendrateertha : Shri Ramkrishna Charitra manjari

- Prof. D. V. Potdar

Some of Acharya Madhwa's miracles are to be found in his writings—like Mahabharat tatparya nirnaya in which he summarises two Indian classics and weaves a third one, Anu bhashya in which the content of Vyasa's aphorisms is outlined in just thirty-two stanzas! Narayana panditaacharya, following his example perhaps, reduces Madhwa vijaya (sixteen cantos) to thirty-two stanzas. Raghavendra teertha goes still further and tells the story of both the epics in thirty-nine stanzas!

Ramayana is of course Rama katha. Mahabharat is, as Kumara vyas says Krishna katha ( cf.—I narrate the story of Krishna / to please the learned on the earth).

While reading the work I was reminded of Pampabharata. This way of summarizing, the Kannada poets have called 'simha avalokana krama', that is a lion moving fast, now and then looking back, to see the ground that he has covered.

Laxminarayanacharya, the (pre-ordination) son of the swamiji, has annotated the text.

### 1. Ram charitra manjari:

1.

Possessed of knowledge/wealth, Rama, of yore, born of Dasharatha, was taken away by Vishwamitra along with his brother, and learnt mantras from him to kill Tataka. Getting brahmastra and other weapons he killed many demons to protect sacrifices. He released Ahalya from her curse, broke Shiva's bow and married Janaki. May he shower his grace on us!

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Note: The supreme being seems to take something from others, not because he needs it but just to favour the giver.

2.

While returning with his wife and brothers, Rama, twanging Bhargava's bow\*, killed the demon\*\* residing in him and returned to his township. Dasharatha asked the sages about crowning Rama. They replied that he was fit, possessing all auspicious qualities, being the soul of all living beings, and free from all defects. The citizens honoured him, and I join them.

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\*Vaishnava dhanus      \*\*Tapomaya

3.

To please Kaikeyi, along with his brothers Rama donned bark garments and went to the forest, crossing the Ganga, and was worshipped by Guha. He knotted his hair in a charming manner. After he was honoured by Bharadwaja, he ferried across the Yamuna, and reached Chitrakoota. His mothers and innocent brother came to appease him. Hearing of his father's death he comforted them, and performed the last rites. May he protect me.

4.

Giving Bharata his sandals, he sent him to look after the kingdom, and killed the demon nesting in the eyeball of crows\*. After being worshipped by Atri he proceeded to the Dandaka forest. He fulfilled the desire of Sharabhanga\*\*, and slew Viradha. Requested by some leading sages to control the demons, he reassured them, and received his sword, bow and quiver from Agastya. May he protect us.

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Note: \* Turangasura, occupying the body of Jayanta \*\*Sharabhanga—an old sage who wanted to see Rama before his death.

5

While staying at Panchavati, he had Shurpanakha maimed. Then he killed fourteen flesh-eaters, and Khara, Dushana, Trishirsha, and also Maricha in the guise of a deer. Searching for the dummy of the daughter of the earth\*, stolen by Ravana, he came across a wounded kite+, and despatched him to his suitable place#. He also killed Kabandha. May he protect us.

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\* Sita + Jatayu #suitable place—refers to swarupa yogyata ( cadre?)

6.

He went to the bank of Pampa and stayed there. Pleased with the devotion of Shabari he released\* her. Acting on the word of Hanuman he made friends with Sugreeva, destroying seven tala+ trees, grown strong by Brahma's boon. He killed Wali and made Sugreeva the king. Then he lived in a cave in the Malayavat mountain. May he protect us.

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\* release—moksha + tala—kind of tree, residence of the rakshasas

7.

He stayed there for some months, and sent the monkey chiefs in ten directions\* Listening to Hanuman, who had returned after finding Seeta, he went with the many chiefs and Sugreeva

He honoured the brother of Ravana+, and killed demons, appealed to by the King of the Sea. He had a bridge built by the monkeys, attacked his enemy's township, and had them destroyed by his troops. May he protect us.

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\* to search for Sita + Vibhishana

8.

He killed Ravana and his brother, the large-bodied Kumbhakarna, blessed Garuda who had killed all the serpents\* and was bowing to him, and Hanuman who was holding the mountain which had made all the dead alive. He protected all his troops with Vijnana-  
astra and had Indrajitu killed by Laxmana.

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\* actually cut off the serpent lassoes

9.

After killing many demons, he was showered with flowers by Brahma and other gods. He accepted Sita, purified by fire, and made his devotee\* the king of the rakshas. He returned to his township in the Pushpaka+ along with others. He was crowned, and honoured all his subjects. May he grant all my wishes.

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\* devotee—Vibhishana +divine plane

10.

Ruling the plentiful earth, praised by the sages, rewarding the son of Vayu, sending back Sugreeva and others, crowning Bharata as heir-apparent, appointing Laxmana for administrative work, listening to the suffering dog\* and fulfilling his wish, he had Lavanasura killed by Laxmana. He slew the plebe, (performing penance), and saved the brahmana's son. He received the garland+ from Agastya.

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\* a corrupt and greedy priest in his previous birth now praying for release!  
+ given to him by the king Shweta

11.

He performed a sacrifice, had three crores of demons killed by Bharata, and was ready to go to his place\* listening to the appeal of Rudra+. In the meanwhile he had to satiate Durvas by instant food. He crowned his own sons. Now, the Lotus-feet #, served by Shree and Hree, while Hanuman holds the white umbrella and waves the chamara, Brahma and others sing his praise, rests in his own abode. May he protect me!

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\* shweta dweepa + because the earth was turning into heaven!  
# Shriman Narayana

Thus the story of Rama, in brief, has been narrated by the sage Raghvendra, may it bring the grace of Ramachandra ( to the reader ).

## 2. Shri Krishna charitra manjari:

1.

Vishnu, appealed to by Brahma and other deities to lessen the load of the earth was born to Devaki. He made Nanda happy. He killed Putana, sent to finish kids. During the festive occasion of the first visit to the temple he kicked and killed the demon\* hidden in the wheels of the cart. While he was resting in Devaki's lap, she felt he was a bit heavy and placed him on the ground. A demon+ in the form of a cyclone carried him away, but Krishna slew him. May he protect us.

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Note: \* Shakatusara + Trinavarta

2.

Resting in his mother's lap, sometime, Krishna yawned, revealing to her the entire universe. Gargacharya conducted his naming ceremony. He revelled in pranks, befitting a child, and stole with his chums milk and curds stored in pots in the cowgirls' houses, to favour them\* And when he opened his mouth to show his mother that he had not swallowed dirt, once more she had a glimpse of the universe. May he enlighten me.

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\* see note above (Ram charitra manjari--1)

3.

When he broke a pot full of curds, Nanda's wife was angry, and she tied him up to a pounding pit with some difficulty. He freed the sons of Kubera from a curse\*. Along with Nanda and others he went to Brindavan, and pleased the residents there by playing on his flute. While herding cattle, he despatched an enemy of the gods,+ come there in the guise of a calf.

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\* Narada's + Vatsasura.

4.

While grazing cows with his friends he came across a demon in the guise of a stork, and catching him by his sharp beak split him into two. To comfort his friends, he had Khara

killed by Balarama. He trod on Kali, the serpent, and drove him out of the river Yamuna, making the water pure. He swallowed the wildfire surrounding the ranch, where the cowherds were sleeping and saved them. He also killed a wicked demon residing in a tree.

5.

He summoned the cows, which had entered a thick forest and had lost their way. Swallowing wild fire he protected the frightened cowherds, who had followed him. Sitting on a boulder on the bank of the Yamuna, surrounded by cows and cowherds, he ate food. He played on his flute, and charmed the damsels in Gokula.

6.

The cowgirls had performed penance wishing Krishna to be their husband. Once they were bathing naked and he stole their clothes and gave them back (after an appeal), he ate the food brought by the wives of 'class' brahmins along with the hungry cowherds. Since the offering meant for him was eaten, the angry Indra started a downpour. Krishna held up a great mountain and protected his people.

7.

Because of this feat he was called Govinda. He brought back his father taken away by Varuna, and showed to Nanda and others his own abode\* and original form. The damsels in Gokula, with beautiful bodies, slightly bent by the weight of their breasts were attracted by his playing on the flute. He enjoyed their company, charming them with pleasant talk, on the bank of the Yamuna, during nights brightened by moonlight.

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\* vaikuntha

8.

To destroy the vanity of the cowgirls, he walked away with one of them. She became proud and wanted to ride on his back. To humble her he disappeared. All the cowgirls were sad and started singing his praise. He was happy and reappearing trod the Rasa dance with them. May he be pleased with us.

9.

He killed Sankhachuda, took away the jewel in his head, and gave it to his brother. The sad cowgirls (remembered and) described his tricks. He killed the great demon Vrishabha, and was praised by Indra. He also killed Keshi. The divine sage reminded him of the work still to be done. To liberate his own people he killed Maya's son\*. May he liberate me.

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\* he had forced the cowherds into the cave.

10.

Invited by Akrura he decided to go to Mathura, comforting the distressed damsels in Gokula. While Akrura was bathing in the river he showed him his divine form resting on the serpent, and was praised by him. Reaching Kamsa's capital, he cut off the head of the washerman, and donned fine clothes. He delighted his friend Sudhama. He made a crooked (in three places) woman charming and was honoured by the citizens. May he protect me.

11.

Accompanied by his brother he broke Shiva's bow, destroyed the guards protecting it, killed an elephant, and all the court wrestlers. From a high platform, he pulled down Kamsa, and knocked the breath out of him, pleasing his parents and others. Garga performed his thread ceremony. Then he went to a teacher to study all the shastras\*.

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\* born a human, behave like one!

12.

He brought to his teacher his son\*, and returned to Mathura. He sent Uddhava to Gokul to soothe Nanda and others with his words, made love to Trivakra, delighted Akrura engaged in good deeds, learnt from him the fate of the Pandavas. He destroyed the army of Jarasandha and made him run away.

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\* from Yamaloka

13.

He set out from Mathura with Balarama, and met Bhargava to seek his permission. He approached Gomanta and accepted the crown offered by Garuda, killed Vasudeva shrigala, and led his kith and kin to the city built in the middle of the sea. He had Kalayavana killed by the fire emanating from the eyes of Mouchakunda.

14.

Praised by the king, he destroyed the army of Kalayavana. Pretending to be defeated, he approached Gomanta, and was conquered by Jarasandha. He quenched the fire, on the mountain and came to Dwaraka. From Kritavarma he learnt what the Pandavas had done. While the kings watched he kidnapped Rukmini, and later defeated them.

15

He deformed Rukmina, and accepted Jambavati, daughter of Jambavat, along with Syamantaka\*, and also Satyabhama, went to Hastinapur to know the fate of the Pandavas,

after the burning of the wax palace. He pacified Satyabhama, and along with her went to Dwaraka. He wanted to meet the Pandavas, who had won Draupadi after hitting the target at Hastinapura.

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\* a jewel

16.

Krishna came to Dwaraka and killed the enemy of Satrajit. He showed the syamantaka jewel which was with Akrura to Balarama and pacified him. Then he went to Indraprastha to meet the Pandavas. He came to the bank of the Yamuna with Arjuna, and married Kalindi. He had a township built up for Dharma raja. Let Krishna in Dwaraka protect me.

17.

He accepted Mitravinda, bound up seven strong bulls and married Neela, Bhadra, and the daughter of the king of Madradesha. At Indra's request, he flew to the fortress of Narakasura at the top of the Himalayas, along with his wife, on the shoulders of Garuda, and destroyed it. With his disc he cut off the head of Mura, and was praised by the gods.

18.

He killed the sons of thirty five top ministers, fought a terrible battle with Narakasura, accompanied by elephants etc, and cut off his head with his disc. Praised by Goddess Earth he crowned Narakasura's son, and took many fair maidens, charmingly dressed to Dwaraka. He pleased Aditi by handing over to her ear ornaments\*.

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\* snatched away by Narakasura formerly

19.

Worshipped by Indra, he took away Indra's favourite tree, winning the battle with the devas that ensued later. He returned to Dwaraka and had a handsome son born of Rukmini. He cut off the head of Paundrika, who had invaded Dwaraka. Paundrika's son had an issue Kritya—an embodiment of fire—which Krishna destroyed by the lustre of his chariot wheels. May he fulfil our desire.

20.

Once during the solar eclipse, Krishna with his group of damsels, went to Parashuram kshetra, and delighted his kith and kin come there, and also the group of rishis. He had sacrifices performed by his father and came to Dwaraka. He explained many spiritual matters to his

father, and showed his mother her lost sons\* and comforted her. May he keep me away from harms.

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\* killed by Kamsa

21

His pleasant words charmed Rukmini. By his many wives he had handsome sons, ten by each, and also many grandsons. During his grandson's marriage he had Rukmina killed by his angry brother. He spent a pleasant time with his wives in all his homes. May he fulfil my desires

22.

In the homes of his sixteen thousand wives, luxuriously furnished, and lighted by many bright gems, he was seen by Narada, in each of the houses, eating, sleeping, performing japa, getting ready to go hunting, throwing dice, preaching, or sometimes counselling.

23.

Getting up in the early morning, pleased, Krishna performed rituals suited for him, and then proceeded to court. He tipped the messenger sent to him, and remembering the rest of the work to be done by him—pointed out by Narada--he went to the glorious Indraprastha along with a large army. Honoured by his kith and kin, he had Jarasandha killed by Bhima, and liberated the kings\*

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\* imprisoned by Jarasandha

24.

Crowning Jarasandha's son, he cut off the head of Shishupal, and helped Dharmaraj successfully complete the sacrifice begun by him. Departing from Indraprastha, he came to his township and saw it destroyed by Salva. Angry, he killed him, -- standing in the middle of the sea, and grown powerful by Shiva's boon-- and reached his place.

25.

Hearing from a brahmin that Dharmaraj had to go the forest with his brothers, he went there and comforted them all. While returning to Dwaraka he granted the lizard his former handsome figure. Then he went to the palace of Vaideha, and spent some time there, making his devotees happy. He returned to Dwaraka, and afterwards proceeded with a large army to Upaplavya.

26.

Acting as a messenger, he showed his timeless, charming form to Dhritarashtra, and to Arjuna, (granting them divine vision), to the latter after preaching the Gita. Acting as his charioteer, Krishna took Arjuna to kailas and had astras\* given to him by Shiva. He got wicked Duryodhan slain by Bhima, and made Dharmaraj the king of the land. I worship him.

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\* missiles

27.

He reached Dwaraka, the residence of the Yadavas, and fulfilled the desire of his dear friend Kuchaila, performed the Ashwamedha sacrifice, showed his residence\* to Arjuna, gave the brahmin his sons slew Dantavakra along with his brother, and came to Dwaraka. He spent his time happily, preaching to Uddhava.

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\* anantasana

28.

Protecting all the worlds, gladdening all his people, free from all defects, possessed only of joy, showered with flowers of the divine tree by the chiefs among the gods, hailed by the gandharvas and siddhas with the words, "Victory, victory to you" ,Krishna brimming with all blisses flourishes with his wives, sons and grandsons here!

29.

Thus this story of Krishna was briefly narrated by the yati Raghvendra. May it bring the grace of Krishna to the reader.

OM TAT SAT

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I am grateful to the Mutaliks for lending me a copy of the book.