
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU
REALLY LISTEN: ON TRANSLATING
THE OLD JAVANESE RĀMĀYAṆA
RĀMĀYAṆA KAKAWIN,
SARGAH 26, TRANSLATION AND ESSAY*

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Suwadanā (20)¹

1.

Look there! Ayodhyā, the city all covered and hidden under an ashy gray dome.

The ancient rites have been performed there without stop since the city was
first created

The drifting clouds of thick smoke still billow there, fill the air like mists
blown by a breeze

The city looks still and intent, like a devout gray *wiku* sitting in ashes

* We would like to acknowledge Mark Oliver's important contribution to this translation of *Sargah XXVI*. Tom Hunter graciously agreed to review the translation with us and provided insightful comments and suggestions. We thank them both. Any errors are our own.

¹ The capitalized name is that of the poetic meter in which the stanza was composed. The number in parentheses refers to the number of syllables appearing in each line of the particular meter, a metric property we strove to maintain, as much as possible, in the translation.

Śardūlawikrīḍita (19)

2.

Look! People all scatter about like leaves when they see you up here in the
sky
As long as they were bathing in the pond, preoccupied,—they didn't look up
here
Then straight down out of the sun appears suddenly a huge flying creature—
The demon of death has arrived here, they think, when they look up in wonder

3.

They wrap their *kains* in a hurry and as they pull on their shirts miss the arm
holes
And push on their bangles too hard as they run, and scratch their cheeks with
sharp hairpins
Look! Parents poking kids when they stop, give a slap, twist an arm and pull
them along
And then one draws water too fast,—empty pots grinding as they swing to and
fro

Kusumawicitra (12)

4.

Someone over there washing a horse, he jumps up
And he heads home and forgets all about the horse
Heads home and leaves behind the horse in the water
Fearful, distracted, he cries out, stares at the sky

5.

Look at the reapers there, splashing about like birds
They all drop their scythes and leave off their reaping
They scatter all over, leave the best grass uncut
All tossed are their cuttings, everything left behind

6.

That washer over there stops washing and stares up
As if really brave, looks back, and then runs away
Leaves the laundry there, shouting out Ah! again Ah!
Confused and panting, hides under a palm tree

Mālinī (15)

7.

There's Bharata come out to meet you here where you're descending
With all these elephants, chariots and many fine horses
Tuned drums and gongs and rows of barrel drums alongside beating
Like the drum-beat sound at Māgha when the flags of nobles fly

8.

And dear Hanūmān, son of the wind, with my own beloved mother
Coming to greet us, joyous, now eager after so many years
Go quickly to her and present yourself, bow down and don't weep
Take away her sorrow, end the years of being left behind

Drutawilambita (12)

9.

The King, lord of the earth, with the Queen at his side
They bow in devotion as his mother's tears stream
Recalling all the pain of long separation
She embraces her own son, still crying aloud

10.

Kékayī, mother of excellent Bharata
Adds her flowing tears to the ongoing weeping
This is the sorrow that is now sorrow no more
For joy arrives when her beloved child arrives

11.

And so it is when that old grief returns again
And meets happiness and draws a noose around it
It's just the same way envy hexes happiness
Comes to suppress it then stays, unrelenting

12.

That grief which once intruded with no shame
Now defenceless is enveloped by joy
And such is the action of *suka-duka* in this world
For from their beginning they cannot be separated

13.

Grief is charcoal, joy bright lacquer, both from one tree
Like a gamelan consort clashes and combines
A whole person is bronze metal and flute bamboo
Full of sorrow and joy both sounding together

14.

Impossible to separate, companions they are
Certainly neither one can ever fall in battle
Their nature is a cycle of wins and defeats
Sorrow is soon forgotten when joy is alive

15.

Great happiness is like the flow of *amṛta*
And tears well up and fall from the spring of their source
And grief floats away, swept in the flow of the stream
The happiness of reunion washes old grief

16.

Where in the end are the last traces of weeping
Laughter and elation drive them out and away
The pleasure and delight of her son's returning
Overcome her sorrow and destroy her yearning

17.

King Wibhīṣaṇa with the King of the Monkeys
They both are announced and come forward together
And both of them bow to the one embracing her son
And she sees her duty to the oncoming guests

18.

And then it is Bharata's turn to come forward
He drops to his knees in respect for his brother
Who right away then out of love for the younger
Lifts him up, embraces him, and strokes his dear face

19.

And then arrive groups of his royal relatives
In rows they come forward, and bow to honor him
Together they *sēmbah* and the joy increases
He stops and holds them back to ask the name of each

20.

Who is that one? Who is this? And who may you be?
Me? I'm so and so—You? The child of whatshisname
Your parent! It's been a while and I'd forgotten
Your father, yes, he never tired of snaring quail

21.

And thus the beautiful music of his laughter
 Gladdens the minds of his family and subjects
 And his glances sprinkle *amṛta* on their hearts
 Happy in anticipation of being seen

Daṇḍaka (105)

22.

Elephants and carriages stand ready
 Flags rise, nobles bow, officers
 Return to their horses and elephants
 Sumantrī, first among ministers, goes to the front
 And instructs the villagers to proceed to the royal road
 They hold in their hands presents to offer the king
 Cooked and uncooked food, lots of fruit, buffalo, mutton
 All kinds of fish, and pork, venison, every kind of meat
 Chopped and mixed with fragrant spices

The spokespeople speak nonstop seeking to line up everyone with offerings
 Milling like cattle fighting off bees
 None with empty hands, all rushing around
 Eager to see the king and procession
 The high and the mighty
 Who with superior strength of character proceed in an orderly way
 Don't block the road! Don't trouble the lords!
 Don't get so excited! Don't push at the venerable brahmins,
 So carefully ordered

Together they proceed, playful, waving, walking with parasols
 Laughing, light of heart, excited, and loving
 If pusher is pushed they push down their passions
 If a bouquet of flowers is let go and dropped
 And all of a sudden one is annoyed by the push
 And holds back, but not willing to be shaken
 Glances at the crowd with complete composure—
 The one whose breast had taken the blow
 Affectionately pinches the offender

Bharata holds back shyly, hesitant to go to the front
 He sees the loved ones walking together,
 Each happy with the other, each intent on the other
 Joking together like that—
 And so he stays behind, and because he does the loving pair look back
 And see their royal brother, then stop and wait for him
 Pretending to be watching the many gifts of clothing
 Being presented just then to the monkey warriors

Daṇḍaka (105)

23.

Excited, fighting, quarrelling with each other
 The monkey warriors bend and break off long stalks of sweet
 Sugarcane, sauntering and swinging along the great royal way
 Stuffing themselves and spilling fresh coconut milk which then
 Drips and flows down their chests
 Struggling over the trampled fruit of the *tal* palm—

And thus to the gatehouse the royal couple walk side by side
 Bemused along the way by the monkeys and their boisterous antics

They come closer to the great Kingdom of Kingdoms
 And in homage to the monkey warriors they give gifts
 And bring out the good will in those who are watching
 The spectators are elated—the palace women look on at the monkeys
 Whose medals and ornaments are loosely hanging
 Thrilled by the sound of trumpets and conches blaring

The one truly predestined to rule the world
 The one whose goals have been attained
 Is coming home

Bharata comes up to relieve Lakṣmaṇa

Who—like a bending cypress—turns to Mainda
 Who passes on the treasure box to Lakṣmaṇa
 Equalled then by the noble Śatrughna
 Who takes the great jewelled *payung* from Nala
 And carefully carries it above the King
 So perfect they are—four great trees giving shade to the world—
 Like the Four Ways of Power
Sama—persuasion
Dana—generosity
Danda—force
Bheda—division

So then they seemed, these four

They arrive at the gate where brahmin masters of ritual greet them
 with the Water of Peace and Calm Mind, following the customs
 Women dance to singers and drums and a beautiful gamelan—
 They perform a duel, two by two, stand, circle about, step forward,
 Swoop, raise up, and walk elegantly over the dancing ground
 Their many finger cymbals quicken the gamelan—it follows—
 Blending with the strings of many soft zithers

Daṇḍaka (105)

24.

The audience square sanded with the dust of gold and gems
 the great front hall decked in many colored gems
 Delightful gradation of color, its roof gleaming
 Gold, silver, jewels, pearls hanging down
 Its eaves painted red with *duray* sap
 Hanging there also a royal fan like a great mustache
 and various other decorations trailing alongside
 Dangling from the roof like tears
 Yellow coconuts in abundance
 The king eminent and prominently visible
 Sits on his throne, all radiant with matchless jewels

When the royal couple have already reached their seats
 honored guests follow in order
 The King of Lēngkā and the King of the Monkeys on jewelled palanquins
 followed by the son of Kékayī, by Somitra, by Śatrughna
 gifted with garlands
 Roasting spits are carried in, and mountains of rice
 beautiful food to clear the mind
 The flavor of the best foods contained in all the broad seas,
 rivers and forests
 But the capacity of words is not capable of describing the foods
 in golden dishes
 Nor the hours spent in the continuous exchanging of gifts.

The monkey army in the northern assembly square is presented with gifts
 their chief Jāmbawān lines them up
 And noble Suséna arranges them
 They did not need to be told by the King
 To eat and accept all they were given
 Bowls of wine and molasses liquor
 overflowing with the clear and precious drink
 Excellent drink scooped from golden bowls
 By the servers arriving pouring and filling
 The monkeys scarcely able to stand in their drunkenness
 Their chests stained red and matted stiffly
 Dripping with remnants of overturned drafts

His ears glowing red the monkey king is clapping
 passionate and boasting
 Exhausted by sweet beer and honey liquor
 trying to rise he makes a crazy, dizzy, unstable *sěmbah*
 Following at his side come the crowd
 drums plucked lutes and harps, lovely are the songs they play
 In harmony with the elating music of the flutes
 Accompanied by gamelan, its many sounds pleasing to the mind
 Enjoyed by the group of idle monkeys
 Attentively listening to the gamelan

25. (Irregular daṇḍaka?)

The King—best of the Raghū line—and his Queen taste the food
 together and, taking turns, consume all of it for the cooks have made it fresh
 and delicious. The best betel—fermented, ground, and spread on leaves; the
 servers attentive among them move around one by one. All this while there is
 eating and then drinking, then beginning again, they come back with more,
 adding food, replacing it again for them—food of many marvelous tastes, all
 six divine flavors and scents serve to make everyone warmer and warmer until
 drops of perspiration appear, brought on by drink, and passions rise; then
 come forward those with cool fragrant balm of saffron and sandalwood to bathe
 them, and the beautiful feeling on the breast, shoulder, and neck reaches the
 heart and cools it, and over all this the refreshing flow of a large waving
 fan; and their garlanded gold faces are beautiful—as if in bloom they rise
 from blue lotus, yellow *campaka*, pink *bolu*, sweet *gaḍung*, the love-flower of
 the *pandanus* most fragrant of all ...
 ... Then they come down to the open yard, along with the younger brother,
 and the grand and most virtuous Bharata approaches the guests standing there,
 the eating, drinking Monkey Warriors; and there near Bharata is one Baṇḍira
 by name who takes part in welcoming the most honored of all guests, explaining
 things to them and answering their needs ...

... "Is anything missing? Can I bring you anything? Betel? Whatever you lack ... a little ginger, some soup, a refreshing drink? There's rice porridge in golden bowls, there's sour fish soup with salty caviar—Don't be afraid, guests, come up—There might be some *sangging* left. Wait a minute, wait for the cookies they're bringing there at the side just now. Fill your drinks and don't complain when you get drunk. There are eggs—going quickly. Take some seacrabs. What do they taste like? It's an unusual taste, created with care by our fishbutcher whose ways make him far too proud to share his secrets about food. When he fails, he gets rude! He strives for fame, fears failure ... I ... look at that sealobster! It's going to burn! Whoever cooks really has to pay attention ... He cut right through it! He looks exhausted, Whatshisname here ... the whitefish is cut up, put on a spit but not finished until it's turned slowly and gets juicy ... That's liver of shark with dried pieces of peacock fish ... Be quiet as we go toward the animal pens—deer from the forest, ugly pond tortoises—best of tastes! Oh? You're not aware of the recommended meats in the authoritative *Sūpakaśāstra*?—Good with *lulu* fish or goat, anything roasted—iguana, lizard, wildpigeons, *prits*—served with the best quail ...

... Porcupine of truly the finest taste—One last pangolin left behind. Whatever is finished cooking is ready to be taken, yes. They are impatient of your arrival, heroic Monkeys! Enjoy the tastes! If anyone is still hungry later, it's quite OK to go to the kitchen and fetch a big round platter of crisp pork, arrowroot chips, pressed smoked fish—all the ingredients for *warawan*, a choice dish. See if you are strong enough to try what is reputed throughout the world to be the very pinnacle of taste—a beautiful, succulent, juicy, firm but fat fruit bat—A little tough!—the neck is like—what's it—a burnt offering! ... The *talukan*, *tuliring*, all of the shellfish are dragging slowly along—the cook will be ashamed if they are too bland. And there's turtle meat, raw meat, *gulai* of all kinds, stuffed and steamed green bamboo, spicy dishes, sour dishes, food wrapped in leaves, some *saradans*, some steamed vegetables ... or roasted on coals to perfection ... Sliced dried fish in *pečěl*, and *pečěl* with no fish! Suck some salty lemon. The rice is good even with just water and nothing added. There's also beer. Crisp little smelt with fragrant coconut sauce, sweetbreads, jackfruit, uncountable *salaks*, ghee. (Shouts) To the edges of the palace, the smell of ground sesame. The very best of good eating ...

... And here are the finest peanuts for you to chew. And, look: breadfruit. Take some quick! And don't soak yourselves drinking! ... And Here! yams, jackfruit, bananas, excellent yellow fruits, and *salak*. Very sweet. And sweet sugarcane. And for the youngsters, the special frothy milk ... Don't just suck on the sweet *jukut*! Don't miss the good sticky rice, white and mixed with peanuts ... Leave whatever remains—too fat or hard and tough ... That's sticky rice with turmeric ...

... And look there at the guy cutting things up carefully in the kitchen
—he's like someone beating on a drum, slapping down at the chopblock, as if
he's laughing, with his teeth all bared and the guy all bent over, and the
firewood cracks like someone has put sesame oil on the fire, and that startles
the four drunks groping about the entrance ... Don't forget the rice packets in
the meantime ... They've left the *bubur* made of fresh milk unfinished and cold,
distracted by drink. Here, take some flowers for your hair. And ...

Why such excellent food, such personal pleasure?

For a victor in battle, with Śri enshrined in his heart,
good food is the greatest of all offerings to Lord Mahéśwara
The first cause of pleasure and of prosperity

Basantatilaka (14)

26.

Thus are the words the excellent speaker Bhandhira spoke
When he welcomed all the guests and asked after their needs
Following him noble Bharata speaks warmly to them
Reaching out in friendship to the king's beloved army

27.

After the ceremony of honor is completed
The monkey King and Wibhīṣaṇa are well pleased
The face of the twilight moon in fourth quarter shines clearly
So radiant, so sweetly it shines, arousing desire

28.

And King Rāma enters the inner rooms of the *kraton*
With his guests, King Wibhīṣaṇa and the King of Monkeys
Fine soft mats are spread out for them in the jewelled throne room
Where the honored guests are invited to lie down and sleep

29.

Then Rāma the king enters the gold pavilion and by his side
His beloved consort Sītā, smiling with greatest joy
They go up to the bed, sweet scented, with pillows and spreads
A standing torch, glowing curtains, and carved *nāgas* entwined

30.

Because for so long they had endured separation
Sang Kāma, God of Love, is beside them when they arrive
And their desire to love and be loved is restoration
From that act of love, a family, the children they seek

Mālinī (15)

37.

Together the two great guests, fully pleased, ask to take their leave—
Leave to carry back home with them the treasured gifts of the king
The elephants, the chariots, the horses, maids and servants
They accept then all of the gifts which the great king gave to them

Śārdūlawikrīḍita (19)

38.

And then Trijaṭā steps up to the King, pays homage, and takes her leave
of him
And of Sītā the divine Queen, never far from her, always right beside
her
Queen Sītā loves her, gives her gifts of robes, jewels, and ornaments
All of them the very finest and most highly valued—servants, gold,
gems

Dodhakawṛtta (11)

39.

The beloved Trijaṭā is glad at heart
She accepts the royal gifts with a *sēmbah*
And, looking joyful, Sītā recalls for her
How it was back then when they were in Lēngkā

40.

Trijaṭā, little Sister, listen to me
Remember back to your earlier sadness
The time you came up to that sweet smelling lake
And on a stone by the spring said a prayer

Praharsīṇī (13)

41.

You approached the big trees in the deep silent forest
Figures of Durggā, Gaṇeśa, and spirits of trees
And that high, very steep path seemed impassable
And the task of your prayer, that too was difficult

42.

You asked that the king be victorious in battle
And that I return again to this Ayodhyā
And your rituals there, all of them proved to be right
Now make right what you vowed and finish your act of love

Turagagati (12)

43.

Let one hundred swans now be set free on that lake
Set one thousand buffalos free in that forest
Release one hundred million goats on those steep hills
To be free of grief, release me from my promise

44.

My promise to the gods, please fulfill it for me
At the temple please offer gold and precious stones
For the excellent brahmins, holy men, scholars,
For the people of worth give them good food and drink

Swāgatā (11)

45.

Go then freely as you will, little sister
At the center of my joy is the joy you brought
You received no joy like that from me, sister
But go now, little sister, may your way be smooth

46.

And after you are there if you still feel wistful
At the Grove of Aśoka you'll find peace of mind
It will be as if I am again there with you
Always present in your memory, dear sister.

47.

And these are the words that the King's daughter spoke then
The honored guests are satisfied, rise up, and bow
King Wibhīṣaṇa and the Lord of the Monkeys
Arise quickly, to return to their own country

48.

Together they leave, to bring joy to the world
For, in the end, kings assure the good of the world
And like the great Bo tree they shelter the world
Two great Sampang from whose branches rains *amṛta*

Aśwalalita (23)

49.

Glory to the most powerful Śiva,
you are the honored lord and protector of your three worlds
I bow my heart always to your feet,
never forgetting, continually aware of you
This from my heart is the fruit of devotion,
that the world may follow my devotion to you
This story—may this wise and often told tale
have many listeners to hear its true *rasa*

Jagaddhita (23)

50.

Just like an act of love
the acts of Raghū's son fulfill the whole of his worldly dharma
And this Rāmāyaṇa, this auspicious tale,
may its sweet smell move the minds of all hearers
The greatest thinkers become wiser, the virtuous clearer of mind,
when they recite it
Transparent its recital becomes, so even a muddled dolt can come to
liberation

And that is the reason I persevere in telling the story of this most
beloved man
I wish to attain the purifying benefit of following the steps of a great
teacher
From his benevolence flow out into the world good results which are both
beautiful and fruitful
It gives hope of recovery and return of skill to one without a trace of
learning left

Kusumasurabhi (27)

52.

I ask forbearance from all good people of skill
whose works are worthy of praise, who inspire love
most excellent

I would be like a slave to you,
to learn your great qualities,
with the expectation of improving my own
For only those of highest quality can be thought great teachers
those who can lead one to liberation

A sweet-scented flower communicates its rich fragrance to others
yet retains its purity and sweetness

And so the Rāmāyaṇa ends.

On Translating the Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa: What Happens When You *Really* Listen

A. K. Ramanujan retold from Telugu the following story about the telling of the Rāmāyaṇa:²

“A villager who had no sense of culture and no interest in it was married to a woman who was very cultured. She tried various ways of cultivating his taste for the higher things of life, but he just wasn’t interested.

“Once a great reciter of that grand epic, the *Ramayana*, came to the village. Every evening he would sing, recite, and explain the verses of the epic. The whole village went to this one-man performance as if it were a rare feast.

“The woman who was married to the uncultured dolt tried to interest him in the performance. She nagged him and forced him to go and listen. This time, he grumbled as usual but decided to humor her. So he went in the evening and sat at the back. It was an all-night performance, and he just couldn’t keep awake. He slept through the night. Early in the morning, when the canto was over and the reciter sang the closing verses for the day, sweets were distributed according to custom. Someone put a few sweets into the mouth of the sleeping man. He woke up soon after and went home. His wife was delighted that her husband had stayed through the night and asked him eagerly how he had enjoyed the *Ramayana*. He said, ‘It was very sweet.’ The wife was happy to hear it.

“The next day the wife again insisted on his listening to the epic. So he went to the enclosure where the reciter was performing, sat against a wall, and before long fell fast asleep. The place was crowded, and a young boy sat on his shoulder and made himself comfortable and listened open-mouthed to the fascinating story. In the morning, when the night’s portion of the story came to an end, everyone got up and so did the husband. The boy had got off earlier, but the man felt aches and pains from the weight he had borne all night. When he got home and his wife asked him eagerly how it was, he said, ‘It got heavier and heavier by morning.’ The wife said, ‘That’s the way the story is.’ She was happy that her husband was at last beginning to feel the emotion and the greatness of the epic.

“On the third day, he sat at the edge of the crowd and was so sleepy that he lay down on the floor and even snored. Early in the morning, a dog came that way and pissed into his mouth a little before he woke up and went home. When his wife asked him how it was, he moved his mouth this way and that, made a face, and said, ‘Terrible. It was so salty.’ His wife knew something was wrong, and asked him what exactly had happened, and didn’t let up till he finally told her how he had been sleeping through the performance every night.

“On the fourth day, his wife went with him. She sat him down in the very first row and told him sternly that he should keep awake no matter what happened. So he sat dutifully in the front row and began to listen. Very soon, he was caught up in the

² A. K. Ramanujan, ed., *Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1991), pp. 55–56. Our title is borrowed from that of the folktale “What Happens When You Really Listen.”

adventures and the characters of the great epic story. On that day, the reciter was enchanting the audience with the story of Hanuman the monkey and how he had to leap across the ocean to take Rama's signet ring to Sita, the abducted wife of Rama. When Hanuman was making his leap, the signet ring slipped from his hand and fell into the ocean. Hanuman didn't know what to do. He had to get the ring back quickly and take it to Sita in the demon's kingdom. While he was wringing his hands, the husband, who was listening with rapt attention in the first row, said, 'Hanuman, don't worry. I'll get it for you.' Then he jumped up and dived into the ocean, found the ring in the ocean floor, and brought it back and gave it to Hanuman.

Everyone was astonished. They thought this man was someone special, really blessed by Rama and Hanuman. Ever since he has been respected in the village as a wise elder, and he also behaved like one. That's what happens when you really listen to a story, especially the *Ramayana*."

Sweet, heavy, salty, and, when you really listen, quite real, with real places, real characters, real adventures, a story capable of making a dolt wise. So it continues to be, in South and Southeast Asia, in the names of places on the land, of kings, queens, and heroes, and of ideal political conduct and ideal marriage. It is the story everyone knows, the supreme prior text.

A few years ago, we decided to read and translate together the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* (sometimes called the Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa). Considered among the most beautiful of Javanese works, the Rāmāyaṇa, composed circa the tenth century, has been a major source of influence through the centuries on the literature, political and moral philosophy, plastic and performing arts in Indonesia. It has also been a favorite of Western scholarship. In this essay our main intent is not to reproduce or debate earlier findings but rather to share some of our thoughts about the process of translating a text from so distant a time and place.³

It seemed too much to translate the whole work, so we decided to concentrate on the final canto (*sargah*)—to read the story backwards, you might say. There were several reasons for starting at the end, some of which emerged as we studied it.

One reason for reading first that last canto, when Rama and Sita return home from Lengka, was that it contains, after the resolving episodes, the evaluation of the whole epic—an overt statement of the purpose of it, what happens when you *really* listen.

³ Still, a few historical notes are in order: although various *sargahs* (in full or in part) of the *Ramayana Kakawin* were studied and translated over the years by different scholars, *Sargah XXVI* was not translated in full until 1980 (see below). At least in part, the reason had to do with the "interpolation debate," which involved important Dutch philologists of the first half of the twentieth century, as well as Dutch-educated philologists like Poerbatjaraka. According to the interpolation theory, various stanzas—those considered by scholars as too erotic, obscene, ornamented, excessive, thoughtless, artificial, or difficult—were viewed as additions to an original text that was believed to have been corrupted over time. *Sargah XXVI*, the final one in the poem, was sometimes considered an interpolation in its entirety, for it includes erotic passages, as well as much that is clearly and splendidly local and could not have been translated from any Indian source. Even when the *sargah* was translated, certain sections were left out, as when, for example, Juynboll deleted stanzas 11–16 for being "too didactic." An extended discussion of interpolation issues in the context of *kakawin* literature can be found in C. Hooykaas, *The Old Javanese Ramayana Kakawin, with Special Reference to the Problem of Interpolation in Kakawins* (S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955), pp. 10–17. For Juynboll's Dutch translation of *sargahs XXIV, XXV, and XXVI*, see "Vertaling van Sarga XXIV, XXV, en XXVI (slot) van het Oud Javaansche Ramayana," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 94 (1936): 409–47.

According to W. Labov, the evaluation is “perhaps the most important element in addition to the basic narrative clause ... the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*: why it was told, and what the narrator was getting at.” There are many ways to tell the same story, to make very different points. An evaluation wards off the rejoinder, “So what?” and tells why this story is tellable.⁴

Much of the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*, particularly the earlier cantos, is translated from Sanskrit. C. Hooykaas has made a very detailed study about which of the episodes are translations and which are not.⁵ Although about two-thirds of the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* are based on the Sanskrit *Bhaṭṭikāvya* (a seventh century South Indian Ramayana also called the *Rāvaṇavadha*), most of the final cantos are not translated, at least from that or any other known Sanskrit source. This final canto, the one we translated, *Sargah XXVI*, is not, as far as we know, a translation. This canto, the one which includes the evaluation, is an original creation in the literary translation-language that has come to be called Kawi.

Kawi was a language evolved for the purpose of translating from Sanskrit, the kind of language linguists and specialists in language acquisition often call an inter-language. Nissaya Burmese—the language shaped to translate Pali texts—would be another example of an inter-language, evolved for the needs of translation. Kawi contains many Sanskrit words, mostly in noun form, but there is more that is Sanskritic in it than just words. There are also the things one does with words—the acts of languaging one performs, the prior texts one evokes. This is hard to talk about. Besides the words, the story is from Sanskrit, and so is the way one tells it and the context in which one tells it.

Our goal has not been to establish an original Urtext, a reconstructed original source. We chose two texts on which to base most of our translation. First, we used the Balinese edition completed in Den Pasar in 1986. Our reason for choosing it was that this text is the one being used now in readings in Bali, a contemporary, living text in the long life of the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*. To quote Thoreau, “the chisel of a thousand years has shaped it,” and its composers, re-tellers, and translators have been many. In Great Time, the lifetime of a text after the death of the author(s), the Balinese edition is most recent, the youngest.

The other text is the three-volume text and translation by Soewito Santoso published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore) and the International Academy of Indian Culture (New Delhi) in 1980.⁶ Though we disagree with many of

⁴ W. Labov, “Language in the Inner City,” cited in Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward A Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 46-47. On the significance of the evaluation see further, W. Labov and J. Waletzky, “Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience,” *Essay of the Verbal and Visual Arts*, J. Helm, ed., Proceedings of the 1996 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press), pp. 12-44.

⁵ C. Hooykaas, *The Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*, pp. 20-35. See also C. Hooykaas, *The Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa: An Exemplary Kakawin as to Form and Content* (Amsterdam: Noord- Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1958).

⁶ Soewito Santoso, *Indonesian Rāmāyaṇa* (Singapore and New Delhi: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and the International Academy of Indian Culture, 1980). Santoso’s is the first complete, published translation of the text, an admirable accomplishment. His romanization is based on Kern’s edition. In addition to the latter, Santoso consulted eight manuscripts from Bali and Surakarta while preparing his translation. The transliteration of words throughout our translation and glossary, and of passages from the

the readings, it is a useful and available text, translated by a Javanese scholar. Using Santoso's English translation as a starting point, we traveled back to Kawi, with the invaluable help of the two-volume *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* published in 1982 in The Netherlands.⁷ After getting a good (though not complete) sense of what Santoso's romanized Kawi text said, we reread the canto in the Balinese text, noting the differences with Santoso's version, and with the version produced by H. Kern, published in 1900 in Javanese script.⁸ We also looked at Canto XXVI in the unpublished Indonesian translations by Poerbatjaraka and Mardiwarsito (the latter left us by Professor Mardiwarsito when he taught Kawi at the University of Michigan in the 1970s).

In order to justify this approach—moving from translation back to source text rather than from source to translation—we would like to invoke Schleiermacher's distinction between primary and secondary philology. Primary philology is concerned with the art of judging rightly the genuineness of written works and passages; secondary philology, which is based on primary philology and builds upon its results, is hermeneutics: the art of understanding rightly another man's language, particularly his written language. The tasks are quite different: the former usually results in a constructed text and a translation, while the latter begins with a translation and attempts to study it by taking it apart and—in one sense of the current term—deconstructing it. Out of that comes a new reading, a new translation with its own interpretation of the sources.

We now turn to the evaluation stanza of the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*, which explains the reasons it is tellable. Here is the antepenultimate stanza of the work, in our translation. We meet again the uncultured dolt and what happens when he really listens:

50.

Just like an act of love,
 the acts of Raghū's son fulfill the whole of worldly dharma
 And this Rāmāyaṇa, this auspicious tale,
 may its sweet smell move the minds of all hearers
 The greatest thinkers become wiser, the virtuous clearer of mind
 when they recite it
 Transparent its recital becomes, so even a muddled dolt can come to
 liberation

Somewhat similar to the evaluation of the folktale above, this evaluation suggests transformation for all listeners of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, whether they be great thinkers or dolts. To note a contrast with this message, let us look at the evaluation stanza from the Sanskrit *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, the text that served as the model for the first part of the *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kakawin cited in our essay, are based on Santoso's edition. In other instances—as when mention is made of widely known Sanskrit or Javanese names or concepts—no diacritics are used.

⁷ P. J. Zoetmulder in collaboration with S. O. Robson, *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982).

⁸ H. Kern, *Ramayana Kakawin, Oudjavaansch Heldendicht* (The Hague, 1900). Kern's edition represented a dramatic shift from the earlier handwritten Javanese and Balinese manuscripts, as changing the writing technology profoundly affects reading, understanding, and translation.

Kakawin, before the poet went his own way in composing the remaining part of the story. The poet here has a strikingly different goal:

“Comprehensible with the help of a commentary, if this epic poem may become a festivity of the highly intelligent, it is enough. Those of deficient intellect have been disappointed by me in this regard, on account of my fondness for the learned.”⁹

The *Bhaṭṭikāvya* is not a prototype of Indian Ramayanas, of which there are hundreds. We point to the vastly different evaluations in these two versions because the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* began as a translation of the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* and, as we try to imagine what happened over time as the Ramayana found a home in Java, the evaluation in the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* can offer us a hint about how far the Javanese poet traveled his own path in creating this unique and beautiful text. It is to his voice that we tried to *really* listen.

* * *

“The quality of the Lord’s compassion can be understood from the experience of true human love.” C. Rajagopalachari, *Ramayana*.

With each new passage, we re-translated, separately and together, sorting out the exuberances of the translation—the things in our English with no counterpart in the source—and the deficiencies—the things in the source with no counterpart in the translation. There were many of both. The evaluation will serve as an example for discussing these differences—and silences—across languages.

Stanza 50 is one of the most difficult stanzas in *Sargah XXVI*. Let’s step back and take a closer, slower look, particularly at the first line. The poetic form (frequently used in Kawi) is called *Jagaddhita*, which requires that each line contain 23 syllables, long and short, in the following pattern: 1-1-1/s-s-1/s-1-s/s-s-1/s-s-s/s-s-s/1-s-(s or 1). The form is called, appropriately for the content of the stanza, “*Jagaddhita*”—The Well-Being of the World. The author, whose name, some say, appears in the third line of this stanza (Yogīśwara—Lord of the Yogis), is putting Old Javanese into Sanskritic metres—very difficult metres since syllable length does not play the same role in Old Javanese as it does in Sanskrit.

The Kawi poet does something that has been rare among translators until recently: translating forms along with content. Recent counter examples are Seamus Heaney’s translation of *Beowulf* from Old English, or Robert Pinsky’s translation of *The Inferno* of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The author, who might be pleased to be called Yogīśwara, seems throughout a master of invention in putting the language he is helping to shape into patterns pre-shaped for Sanskrit.

This stanza (though not every stanza) is heavy with Sanskrit, like Sanskrit rocks held together with Old Javanese cement. In it, we believe, the author is not translating Sanskrit but composing with it, in an innovative blend with Old Javanese. (We will call the blend Kawi, and the non-Sanskritic part Old Javanese.) Let us look more closely at the way Yogīśwara does it.

⁹ Maheshwar Anant Karandikar and Shailaja Karandikar, eds., *Bhaṭṭikāvya: English and Sanskrit* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1982), p. 326.

As translators know (and as translations must ignore), words do not have single “meanings” but rather evoke fields of meaning that are constantly expanding each time they are used. (And perhaps slightly contracting each time they are not?) Translators choose counterpart words from those available to them, and these counterparts themselves have fields of meaning. Using the excellent Zoetmulder *Old Javanese–English Dictionary*, let us try, by listing the English translations for each word as it appears in the dictionary, to give an idea of the range of each word in the first line. We might call this a paradigmatic translation:

Sākṣāt Skt. With the eyes before one’s eyes evidently openly manifestly in bodily form visibly really clearly like	manmatha Skt. Love God of Love amorous passion desire	śīla Skt. practice conduct disposition character good conduct morality piety virtue moral character action	sang OJ particle (person of a certain rank)	Raghū Skt. Raghu (ancestor of Rama)	sutā Skt. son
amēnuhi OJ to fill give bounteously make complete	wiṣaya Skt. sphere (of influence) activity dominion kingdom territory scope, range reach field of action object (of affection) concern attention (esp. the objects of the five senses) everything perceptible by the senses the visible world what arouses sensual desire sensual enjoyments affection passion having a passion for keen on skilled in	dharma Skt. (That which is established or firm) law usage customary observance or prescribed conduct duty right justice virtue morality religion good works one’s preordained course of life benevolence, etc.	ring OJ: ri-ng ri +ng (ri=particle With prepositional function, often combined with definite particle –ng) In the, on the, to the, at the		
sa-rāt OJ whole world with visible inhabited world one mankind					

As awkward as it appears, studying this paradigm can be a very helpful exercise for a translator, often revealing the metaphors underlying the words and the possibilities evoked by them. In this sense the paradigm is a corrective of too rapid assimilation of a distant language into one's own language, for it prods one to look at the words as fields of meaning. The first word is a good example: *sākṣāt*. It is a Sanskrit compound in an Old Javanese clausal context. Usually in the *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* each line is a clause, simple or complex, and usually the order of elements is Old Javanese. The pattern here is common: there is a single subject between two predicates, Rama's acts being the subject, and what comes before and after being the predicates. The first predicate is "*Sākṣāt Manmatha*." Referring to the paradigmatic translation above, notice that there are many readings of *sākṣāt*: does it mean "just like," "in bodily form," "before one's eyes"? "*Manmatha*" can be read as a Sanskrit name for the god of love, Kama, or as a common noun, "amorous passion," "desire." The closer one looks, the more possibilities appear.

One does not want to read too much into a passage or a word, but when one tries to "really listen," the range of a word can be relevant, especially with a translation language like Kawi, where words often are meaningful in two languages. We know our poet plays with double meanings across languages, e.g. when he puns "*sih-ta*" (meaning "your love" in Old Javanese, "*Sītā*" in Sanskrit) in stanza 42. In Old Javanese "*sākṣāt*" can be read as "*sāk*"—"fallen apart, opened, dispersed, scattered ...," cognate with "*rusak*" in modern Indonesian, and "*sāt*"—"dryness ... ended, finished." It seems wise to hold these possibilities in mind when translating a translation language, where puns are a field of invention and source of poetic richness that extend beyond the resources of either language by itself—an emergent property and constant possibility and quite certainly part of the amusement, then, as it is in the modern shadowplay, where local etymologies of Sanskrit terms are part of the fun.¹⁰

"Just like *Manmatha*"—or "*manmatha*"—here the capital "M" makes a difference, pushing us to read "*Manmatha*" as a proper noun, a name for Kama, God of Love. "Just like the God of Love." Or, if written with a small "m," it becomes the "act of love." Or perhaps it is both at once—the god and what he is god of. The context of the rest of this difficult line, a major part of the evaluation of the story, will help a little.

Just like *M/manmatha*, the *śīla*—the action, practice, or morality—of Rama (Son of Raghu) fills or completes (the Old Javanese verb root is a cognate of *penuh* in Modern Indonesian) the *wiśaya dharma* of the world—the true laws of passion. Do Rama and *Manmatha* both do that? Or is it "*manmatha*," the act of love itself, that functions exactly like the right-conduct of Rama in fulfilling the dharma of passion in the world?

The rest of stanza 50, the evaluation, tells what reading or hearing it does to its audience. But before going on, let us look briefly at the structure of the first line.

Sākṣāt manmatha śīla sang Raghūsutāmēnuhi wiśaya dharma ring sarāt

The dominant sounds play through the sentence—first of all we hear the s's. (Sanskrit's array of different s's becomes one in Kawi). Then the m's and the r's, but the s's sound throughout. Each line in Kawi has an alliteration, a dominant sound. The

¹⁰ See A. L. Becker, "Text Building, Epistemology, and Aesthetics" in *Beyond Translation: Essays Towards a Modern Philology* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 53–58.

domain of alliteration is basically the line, not the stanza. The stanza coheres formally in having for each line the same number of syllables and array of longs and shorts (*guru-lagu*). (In our translation we strove to follow the number of syllables, but not the *guru-lagu* of each stanza—it was too difficult to do. We bow in humility before Yogīśwara, who would have seen it as a requirement to match the sound pattern more fully). If analyzing the line grammatically, one might say that it has an Adverbial Predicate (just like “*Manmatha*”), a Subject (the conduct of Raghu’s son), an Active Predicate (“fulfills”), a Locative Object (the dharma of *wiṣaya*), and a Benefactive Indirect Object (for the whole world).

Rhetorically, the line presents a common figure in Kawi, a topic between two predications. Rama’s conduct is like “*Manmatha*,” and it fulfills the dharma of passion for the whole world.

Do we have to look this closely? When the language is so distant, we believe we do, at least once, just as a forester might study a few square feet of ground to gain insight into the whole forest.

We’d like to look now at several more passages from the *sargah*, highlighting additional aspects of the *Kakawin* and its translation.

* * *

When the festivities honoring Rama and Sita’s return to Ayodya are over, with the moon high in the sky and the guests gone to sleep on soft mats, Rama and Sita enter the gold pavilion. Just as the entire story, ever since Sita’s abduction, leads up to this moment of their reunion, so this passage, finally describing it, progresses toward the increasingly close, deep, interior:

29.

Then Rāma the king enters the gold pavilion and by his side
His beloved consort Sītā, smiling with greatest joy
They go up to the bed, sweet scented, with pillows and spreads
A standing torch, glowing curtains, and carved *nāgas* entwined

30.

Because for so long they had endured separation
Sang Kāma, God of Love, is beside them when they arrive
And their desire to love and be loved is restoration
From that act of love, a family, the children they seek

31.

They stay there with the devotion of naked ascetics
In the flush of passion their clothing loosens and falls off
Their minds are absorbed in the sensations of that moment
In homage they worship the deep secret of the *lingga*

32.

They go on, attending to the deep mystery of it
 Embracing fully, in a moving encounter with god
 Reaching up and touching the delicate *rasa* of it
 Doing thus over and over, ever the more in touch

33.

One separated then meeting the beloved again
 Is not the same as one joining a lover the first time
 Desire, love, longing combine with memory of the past
 And this gives the supreme *rasa* to those who meet again

34.

The soft scent of perfume spreads with their deepening desire
 The inner glow of brandy increases their elation
 These deep feelings of passion keep them alert and awake
 And their love, like thick tree sap, binds them together as one

In translating this passage, we were confronted with an age old question: what is love? Or rather, can we assume that our word “love” is the correct translation for any or all of the Kawi words appearing in the text? The various Kawi words (*lulut, hyun, ras-ras, uněng, rāsika, āsih, kūng*) all translate as love, desire, or longing in our dictionary, but point to the difficulty or impossibility of reconstructing their particular shades and nuances in the context of this erotic and philosophical scene, which seems so central to the entire story.

The act of love is described by the poet using an ascetic simile. The lovers are like naked ascetics, fulfilling a vow, full of devotion; their minds are absorbed meditatively in the moment, they worship the *lingga*, symbol of Siva, lord of yogis; they are glowing, alert, and awake.

As the lovers are bound together as one, the intimate description comes to a halt, as if the poet pulls back suddenly, unable or unwilling to continue. His voice goes from describing the scene in the third person to speaking in the first person, and he asks forgiveness, and patience, for not knowing better how to convey the love, the passion:

35.

Only lovers themselves can know the ecstasy of love
 I have not known it truly, so forgive my ignorance
 Read the *Kāma Sūtra*, the *Madanodaya*, works like that
 If you can read these books you can know the *rasa* of love.

The poet then is an ascetic. He has not known love except in the story, which is probably enough for liberation. His name, Yogīśwara, testifies to this, as does his acknowledgment in the verse, above. Love here is an ascetic practice, a form of devotion.

Let us look at the first line of this stanza in the Kawi:

Sang rāsikā ta rasikān rumasé rasa ngkā

In this line, we can see the workings of the translation language around the Sanskrit word *rāsa*, which can mean many things—sap, juice, love, deep emotion, taste, flavor, feeling, intention, opinion, substance, meaning, real disposition—and appears in various forms four times in this single line. The theme of the story, the *sargah* this passage, narrows down to this verse, or even to this single line. It zooms in on it: on love—prefaced here with the honorific title *sang*—on the lovers, their delight, the texts that lead to knowledge, the use of Sanskrit, and the place of the poet, who in a personal moment turns to his listeners to reveal something of his identity and the way it has shaped this understanding of the Ramayana story.

* * *

The return of Rama and Sita to their kingdom and their welcome by the crowds, the merry monkeys, and shy Bharata is depicted by the poet in the *daṇḍaka* meter, one often used in *kakawin* literature for portraying battle scenes. The scene is, indeed, somewhat reminiscent of a battle in its chaotic, noisy atmosphere and the multiple, concurrent snapshots of events it depicts. And yet it is a scene of joy and festivity, of laughter and warmth and excitement, with colors, scents, and flavors crowded onto the page. We suspect this may be another instance displaying the poet's good humor as he uses the *daṇḍaka* (and another, similar meter we could not identify) to describe a mock battle of food and drink whose "casualties" have gorged themselves on delicacies like shark liver, iguana, stuffed green bamboo and breadfruit. The scene comes alive with Baṇḍira's voice—the way he offers to serve the various dishes, comments on their quality and special appeal, and seems to be replying to comments made by the guests—and it highlights for the reader, and translator, some of the most interesting cultural aspects of the text.

Many things about an earlier era on Java can be gleaned from reading these stanzas. We find a detailed, step-by-step depiction of Javanese dance movements and the accompanying gamelan instruments and music, which even the monkeys seem to savor. Types of flowers are mentioned, like the lotus, *campaka*, and *bolu*, and also a large range of fauna, including many sea creatures, mammals, and birds. We read about a dizzying array of dishes and ways of serving food, some of which—like *pěcěl* or *bubur*—sound very familiar, while others, like *sangging*, *talukan*, or *tuliring*, remained unidentifiable despite our attempts. We learn of cooking techniques and even of textual sources concerned with food. These passages were part of the reason we decided to start from the end: difficult yet fascinating to read and translate, they were clearly a local, Javanese creation rather than an adaptation of a *Ramayana* written elsewhere.

The End of the End

Not only this *sargah*, but the entire *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* comes to a close with the words of Sita to her friend and guardian Trijata. Trijata is the daughter of Wibhisana, newly crowned king of Lengka, and the niece of the fallen demon king, Rawana. When Sita was held captive, it was Trijata's duty to guard her lest she escape, but she quickly revealed herself to be a close and loyal companion and supporter during the difficult days when Sita awaited her rescue. In a previous *sargah* (XXIV, 169–177) Trijata stands up to Rama and strongly reprimands him for suspecting that Sita's purity had been compromised while she was captive in Lengka.

In this last scene, before the guests take their leave and we reach the final closing verses of evaluation and praise for the teachers, Sita speaks and Trijata listens. In an emotional scene, these two women, friends close as sisters, remember their ordeal—and their courage to overcome it. Many Ramayanas include a section where, after the reunion, Rama finds himself gradually overcome with suspicions concerning Sita's loyalty and chastity, until at last he banishes Sita from the kingdom, and she, in grief, asks mother earth to take her back into her depths. Here Sita is strong and her words lucid, and the reader (or listener) of the text is left with her voice as the one concluding the story. This has made us wonder whether the text's author was female. This is also the final portrayal of a loving relationship in this *sargah*, which has already depicted so movingly the love of Rama and Sita, of Rama and his mother, and of Rama and Sita towards Bharata.

Let us look more closely at several points in Sita's speech, some of which exemplify broader trends in the *Kakawin*:

Assonance plays a major role in the text, and in Javanese in general, as it tends to use numerous onomatopoeia and word repetitions. Sita's words, invoking images of past hardships, offer an example of this pattern, one in which much Sanskrit vocabulary is used to enhance the sound effects:

41.

*Wrēkṣāgōng ya ta pinararnta śunya-śūnyān,
Hyang Durggā Gaṇapati bāp banaspati ngkā
Sēngkan durggama maruhur ya durgga mārgga
Durgrāhyān inangēn-angēn paranta tānghyang.*

You approached the big trees in the deep silent forest
Figures of Durggā, Gaṇeśa, and spirits of trees
And that high, very steep path seemed impassable
And the task of your prayer, that too was difficult.

In terms of the sound play, what comes to the fore are the “g” and especially “gg” sounds, harsh and rough as the endeavor Trijata and Sita underwent. Almost all the words involved in creating this effect are Sanskrit: *Durggā*, *Gaṇapati*, *durggama*, *durggā*, *mārgga*, *durgrāhyān*; the Sanskrit prefix *dur*, itself implying “evil,” “want,” “difficulty,” and all things negative, is used four times in this short passage: *Durggā*—the Goddess

in her terrible form; *durgama*—steep; *durgamārgga*—impassable path; *durgāhyān*—harsh, hard, underlying and emphasizing the hardship, pain, and despair of the situation. In this case and others, the Sanskrit vocabulary enhances the possibilities for the elaborate Javanese sound play techniques.

In the following stanza we have what seems to us as a pun. Having read the *daṇḍakas*, we are convinced that the poet had a sense of humor, so why wouldn't he use puns?

42.

You asked that the king be victorious in battle
And that I return again to this Ayodhyā
And your rituals there, all of them proved to be right
Now make right what you vowed and finish your act of love.

The final line in the Javanese reads: *yekān tuhwakēna tulusakēnta sihta*. Ending with *sihta*—meaning “your love” in Kawi, but also standing for her own name (“furrow” in Sanskrit)—Sita is asking Trijata to complete her act of love, and to complete this act for her, for Sita, offering a new reading of her name in the Javanese context, so fitting for this scene that speaks of loving bonds.

Sita recalls her vow:

43.

Let one hundred swans now be set free on that lake
Set one thousand buffalos free in that forest
Release one hundred million goats on those steep hills
To be free of grief, release me from my promise

44.

My promise to the gods, please fulfill it for me
At the temple please offer gold and precious stones
For the excellent Brahmins, holy men, scholars,
For the people of worth give them good food and drink.

The above stanza contains more than 50 percent Sanskrit vocabulary, making us wonder whether there was any pattern to the way Sanskrit was used in Kawi: were certain contexts within the story seen as more appropriate for its use? Is this preponderance of Sanskrit words a coincidence? Was the style here shaped by a question of available, appropriate vocabulary and metric considerations? Hooykaas suggested that Kawi was heavily Sanskritized when issues of great importance or sacredness were being discussed. If accurate, this pattern would be in tune with the common notion that Sanskrit was considered elevated above the local language, and yet this seems an insufficient explanation. A close and detailed future study will be needed if patterns are to be sought, and here we can do no more than invoke the question.

Sita gives Trijata credit for her joy, and sends her off with the following words:

45.

Go then freely as you will, little sister
 At the center of my joy is the joy you brought
 You received no joy like that from me, sister
 But go now, little sister, may your way be smooth.

46.

And after you are there if you still feel wistful
 At the Grove of Aśoka you'll find peace of mind
 It will be as if I am again there with you
 Always present in your memory, dear sister.

Sita's voice, using the first- and second person when speaking to Trijata, is intimate and loving. In stanza 45, the word *suka*—joy, happiness—is repeated over and over, as if countering the various uses of the negative prefix *dur* from the previously quoted stanza, underscoring how the hardships imposed by nature and demons were overcome through love, friendship, and support. Sita refers fondly to Trijata as “little sister,” a term repeated three times in the stanza and one very difficult to render into English, which does not have an array of familial addresses as Javanese does. The entire speech ends with that same *antĕn*—“little sister”—the final words Trijata will hear.

We find this scene particularly intriguing, and also moving, because it is a scene of parting, of separation. The Ramayana moves towards the reunion of Rama and Sita, of Rama with his family, subjects and kingdom—all reunions that will bring order and justice back to the reign. But this scene is different: Sita and Trijata were together through days of pain and hope, and their bond is so strong that if Trijata goes to the Asoka grove, she will be able, through her imagination and the power of past experience, to be with Sita again. But they are parting now, as the other guests too take their leave, and the end of the story is marked by these separations, not the reunion that seems to govern the text. In her final words, and in the context of saying goodbye, Sita talks about memory. After recalling their days in Lengka, her vow and her wish to be released from it, and the joy she received from Trijata, she invokes the memories of the future: how she herself will be remembered by Trijata in the land of her former captives, and how memories can come to life in the right place and atmosphere, perhaps also telling us something about how and why we remember this ancient story.

The *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* has many more scenes worth dwelling on, but we will stop here. In translating *sargah* XXVI into twenty-first century English, we attempted to capture something of the atmosphere of the story, with its moving, didactic, and humorous moments, to convey the richness of depiction and multiplicity of individual voices created by the poet long ago on Java, and to share with a new audience why it is a story worth *really* listening to.

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Glossary

amṛta — nectar

Baṇḍira — a court attendant

Bharata — Rāma's older brother

bolu — a type of flower

bubur — a type of porridge

campaka — a type of flower

dharma — law, right conduct, duty, justice, virtue

duray — a type of tree

Durggā — the goddess in her terrible form

gaḍung — a type of flower

Gaṇeśa — the elephant-headed god, son of Siva, remover of obstacles

gulai — curry dishes

Hanūmān — the monkey hero who helped free Sītā

Jāmbawān — a monkey chief

jukut — vegetables, greens

kain — garment worn around the lower part of the body

Kékayī — Bharata's mother

King Wibhīṣaṇa — Rāvana's righteous brother who replaced him on the throne of Lëngkā

kraton — royal court, palace

Lakṣmaṇa — Rama's younger brother, who accompanied him and Sītā to the forest

Lëngkā — Rāvaṇa's demon kingdom

Lord Mahéśwara — the Great Lord, Śiva

lulu — a type of fish

Madanodaya — "The Rising of Love," title of a Sanskrit work

Māgha — the name of a month (?)

Mainda — a monkey chief

Nala — a monkey chief

pandanus — a type of tree

pangolin — better known as an "ant eater": a mammal with small head, elongated snout and a sticky tongue

payung — royal parasol

peacock fish — a fish with brilliant colors

pěcěl — spicy peanut sauce

prits — a kind of small bird

Raghū — Rāma's ancestral line

rasa — feeling, flavor, sap, substance, meaning, real disposition

salaks — the pear-shaped fruit of a thorny type of palm tree, native to Southeast Asia

Sang Kāma — god of love

Sangging — a type of dish

saradans — a type of food or preparation method

Śatrughna — Rāma's younger brother

sěmbah — gesture of reverence, veneration

Somitra — Lakṣmaṇa, son of Sumitrā

Śri — beauty, prosperity, radiance, goddess of wealth, the wife of Wisnu

suka-duka — pleasure and pain; joy and sorrow

Sumantrī — prime minister of Ayodhyā

Sūpakaśāstra — the name of a Sanskrit work on cookery

Suséna — a monkey chief

talukan — a type of dish

Trijaṭā — Wibhīṣaṇa's daughter, Rāvaṇa's niece, entrusted with guarding the captive
Sītā

tuliring — a type of dish

warawan — a type of dish

wiku — ascetic, monk, sage