

John P. Clay and the Clay Sanskrit Library

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Bodleian Library MS. Sansk. e. 13 (R) (Or.long.D.49). The demon Rāvaṇa abducted Rāma's wife Sītā and brought her as captive to his city Laṅkā. Rāma's adventures to rescue her are narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the epic poem by the Valmiki that still enjoys enormous popularity in South and Southeast Asia. The miniature shown here is taken from a nineteenth-century illuminated scroll of the *Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa*, a medieval version of the tale of Rāma. In the foreground of the roundel, Rāma and his brother Lakṣmaṇa are depicted showering the demon Rāvaṇa with arrows during the battle to free Sītā.

Bhaṭṭi's Poem: The Death of Rāvaṇa (Skt. *Rāvaṇavadha*)

ततो ऽकुष्णादशग्रीवः क्रुद्धः प्राणान्वनौकसाम् ।
अगोपायच्च रक्षांसि दिशश्चारीनभाजयत् ॥

आलोकयत् स काकुत्स्थमधृष्णोद्धोरमध्वनत् ।
धनुरभ्रमयद्भीममभीषयत विद्विषः ॥

आस्कन्दल्लक्ष्मणं बानैरत्यक्रामच्च तं द्रुतम् ।
राममभ्यद्रवज्जिष्णुरस्कुनाच्च चेष्टुवृष्टिभिः ॥

अपौहद् बाणवर्षं तद्भल्लै रामो निराकुलः ।
प्रत्यस्कुनोदशग्रीवं शरैराशीविषोपमैः ॥

tato 'kuṣṇād Daśagrīvaḥ kruddhaḥ prāṇān van'āukasām
agopāyac ca rakṣāṃsi diśāś c' ārīn abhājayat.

ālokayat sa Kākutstham adhr̥ṣṇod, ghoram adhvanat,
dhanur abhramayad bhīmam abhīṣayata vidviṣaḥ.

āskandal Lakṣmaṇaṃ bāṇair atyakraṃmac ca taṃ drutam,
Rāmam abhyadravaj jiṣṇur askunāc* c' eṣu|vṛṣṭibhiḥ.

apauhad bāṇa|varṣaṃ tad bhallai Rāmo nirākulaḥ,
pratyaskunod daśa|grīvaṃ śarair āśī|viṣ'ōpamaiḥ.

Written in seventh-century South India, Bhaṭṭi's poem is both a lyrical account of Rāma's deeds as well as a treasury of grammatical and rhetorical illustrations for learners. Its most beautiful passages rank alongside the finest poetry in the Sanskrit tradition.

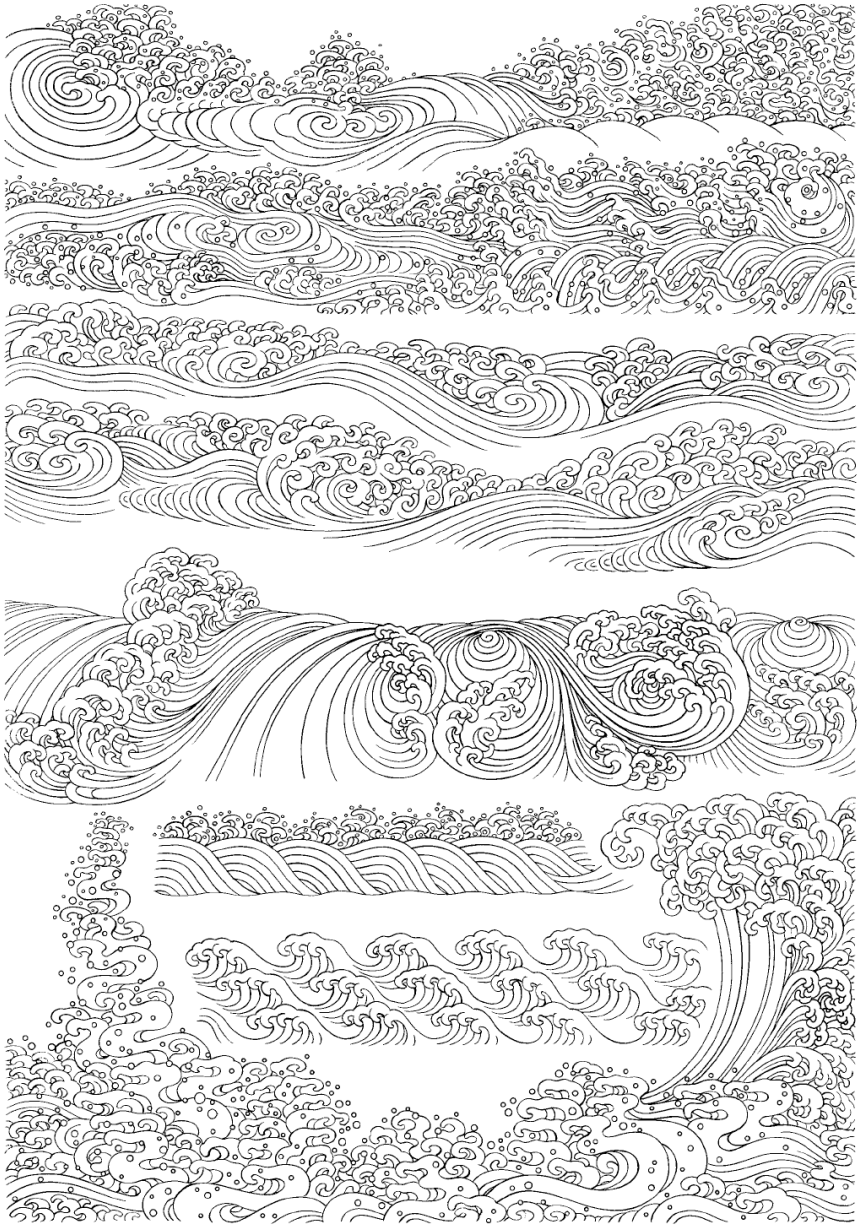
Then Rāvana enraged tore out the lives of the monkeys and guarded his demons and scattered his enemies to the horizons.

He saw Rama and attacked; he sounded a roar, wielded his fearful bow and terrified the enemy.

He attacked Lākshmana with arrows and quickly overpowered him, he charged triumphantly at Rama and enveloped him in showers of arrows.

Rama unfazed by missiles repelled that arrow shower: in response he covered Rāvana with arrows like poisonous snakes.

Rāvaṇavadha, 17.80-83, translated by Oliver Fallon
(from *Bhaṭṭi's Poem: The Death of Rāvaṇa*, Clay Sanskrit Library, p. 402-3;
eCSL volume 1 in alphabetical order)



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