

DANUTA STASIK

IMMOVABLE AS AṄGADA:¹
ĪŚVARDĀS'S AṄGAD PAIJ (1502)

1. Notes on Aṅgada's Mission in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*

In Vālmīki's poem, the earliest and most famous version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the episode of Aṅgada's mission is presented in sixty-eight verses (6.31.48-80). The position it holds among other versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* allows us to see it as the archetypal demonstration of Aṅgada's bravery that in later tradition substantially expanded, incorporating new details which may, and significantly do, vary in different tellings.

Its time in the narrative of the poem comes when the conflict between Rāma and Rāvaṇa escalates and both adversaries stand at the edge of war. Rāma decides to undertake the last diplomatic resort meant to prevent an armed conflict and sends Aṅgada as his emissary to Rāvaṇa's court in Laṅkā. The episode proper is preceded by the siege of Laṅkā "unassailable even by the gods" (6.31.22).² Rāma deployed his troops at the four gates of the city and (with Lakṣmaṇa) took post at the northern gate,

¹ Due to different pronunciation and transcription rules with respect to Sanskrit and Hindi words that are written in the same way in the Devanāgarī script, throughout my paper I use Sanskrit forms in the case of (literary) characters and places, in order to avoid confusion and multiplying different forms of words. Otherwise I follow the transcription commonly used for Hindi, in which short "a", dropped usually in final and certain intra-syllabic positions, is omitted. Thus, I write Aṅgada but *Aṅgad paij*, Rāma but *Rāmcaritmānas* and Rāmlīlā.

² Unless stated otherwise, all the translations of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* are those found in Goldman et al. (2010) and references to its Sanskrit text are to the critical edition (Vyas 1992).

i.e. near the seat of Rāvaṇa. He disposed his general Nīla at the eastern gate, Hanumān at the western gate, while Aṅgada fashioned as “very powerful” (*sumahābala*) was stationed at the southern gate (6.31.23-31). Only then Rāma, after taking advice from his counsellors and following Vibhīṣaṇa’s advice, summoned Aṅgada and sent him on a mission to Laṅkā. The main message of Rāma to be conveyed to Rāvaṇa was that unless he gave Sītā back, Rāma would put an end to him and the entire *rākṣasa* race (6.31.48-61).

Aṅgada, speeding “on his way, like Agni, bearer of oblations” (6.31.62), swiftly reached Rāvaṇa’s palace and stood there “like a blazing fire” (*dīptāgnisadṛśa*) at a short distance from him (6.31.64; Goldman et al. 2010: 201). Aṅgada first introduced himself and then repeated the entire speech of Rāma to Rāvaṇa (6.31.66-70). The harsh words of Rāma’s address enraged Rāvaṇa who ordered his ministers to seize Aṅgada and kill him (6.31.71-72). Four dreadful demons caught (6.31.73) him immediately but the author of the poem does not seem to be bothered by this and plainly states that “Tārā’s heroic son freely allowed himself to be captured in order to demonstrate his power before the host of *yātudhānas*”,³ or demons (6.31.74; Goldman et al. 2010: 202). Aṅgada leapt to the top of the palace with four demons clinging to his arms but his speed made them fall to the ground. He reached the lofty pinnacle of the palace, smashed it, loudly calling his name. He did all this just right in front of Rāvaṇa’s very eyes (6.31.76-78), and then, with a great roar, flew off back to his master Rāma. Rāvaṇa got terribly enraged by the assault on his palace but “foreseeing his own destruction”, he fell to sighing, while “Rāma – eager to slay his enemy – (...) advanced for battle in the company of many leaping monkeys, who roared in their excitement”⁴ (6.31.79-80; Goldman et al. 2010: 203).

³ *grāhayāmāsa tāreyaḥ svayamātmānamātmanā / balaṃ darśayituṃ vīro yātudhānagaṇe tadā //*

⁴ *rāvaṇastu paraṃ cakre krodhaṃ prāsādadharaṇāt / vināśaṃ cātmanaḥ paśyanniḥśvāsaparamo bhavat //* *rāmastu bahubhirhṛṣṭairninadabhiḥ plavaṅgamaiḥ / vṛto ripuvadhākāṅkṣi yudhāyaivābhyavartata //*

In his presentation, Vālmīki does not work out in much detail the course of Aṅgada's mission: Aṅgada arrives at Rāvaṇa's palace and conveys his master's message to the demon king. Nevertheless, Vālmīki is very clear about Aṅgada's power and makes him demonstrate it in the grand finale of his encounter with Rāvaṇa. In this context, one should also not overlook the indication of the weakness of Rāvaṇa "foreseeing his own destruction". It does not need saying that whatever Aṅgada, visualized as his master's obedient servant, does at Rāvaṇa's court, this should be seen as a "demonstration of power by proxy," a device that allows the poet to reveal Rāma's might which undoubtedly must exceed the might of his servant. This trait, as we shall soon see, was further elaborated with great imagination in the later Rāmāyaṇa tradition.

2. Aṅgada's Mission in Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas*

In the *Rāmcaritmānas* (1574), the most authoritative version of Rāma story in North India, and the latest among the three versions analysed in this paper, the treatment of aṅgada's mission comprises two hundred eighty-three lines (6.17.1-38 kha). This means that it is more than four times longer than the just discussed *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki; it is also much more elaborate.

In Tulsīdās's telling, Rāma took counsel of his ministers (*saciva*)⁵ and it was Jāmbavān who advised him to send Aṅgada, "the abode of wisdom, strength and virtue" (*budhi bala guna dhāmā*; 6.17.3), as his emissary to Rāvaṇa. Rāma instructed Aṅgada in the following words:

O son of Bāli, the abode of wisdom, strength and virtue,
My dear, go to Laṅkā to settle my case there!
I shouldn't advise you much,
I know you are very clever.

⁵ All references to the text of the *Rāmcaritmānas* are in accordance with the Gita Press edition: Tulsīdās 1971. All translations of the *Rāmcaritmānas* are mine.

Please talk to the enemy in such a way
That both my purpose is achieved and it is also of benefit
to him. (6.17.3-4)⁶

Aṅgada set on his mission. On reaching Laṅkā, he first had a close encounter with Rāvaṇa's son; no name is given in the text of the poem but in the *Rāmcaritmānas* tradition he is known to be Prahasta. Aṅgada came out of it victorious and other demons present there thought Prahasta to be dead. Without being asked, just horrified by Aṅgada's gaze, they showed him the way to Rāvaṇa's palace (6.18.2-5).

In the assembly hall, Aṅgada, "the valiant, very powerful son of Bāli, without slightest fear at heart" (...*mana neku na murā / bālitanaya atibala bākurā*; 6.19.4) approached frightful Rāvaṇa, who looked like "a soot mountain endowed with vital breath" (*sahita prāna kajjala giri*; 6.19.2). Asked by Rāvaṇa, he introduced himself as Rāma's emissary and expressed the purpose of his embassy in daring language (6.20.3-20). On hearing Aṅgada's words, Rāvaṇa tried to curb his audacity but Aṅgada was not an easy opponent and the exchange between them continued for a long while (6.21.1-34.3). On the one hand Aṅgada strived after proving his master's might and on the other hand Rāvaṇa tried not to acknowledge it. In the beginning, Rāma's emissary used polite, diplomatic language but in the course of their conversation, they both were gradually losing temper. Rāvaṇa's arrogance and obstinacy translated into more and more insulting language and at one point Aṅgada gnashing his teeth in anger beat the ground with his muscular arms. The earth swayed, Rāvaṇa very nearly fell from his throne and his ten crowns rolled on the ground. He put back some of them on his heads but others were snatched by Aṅgada and thrown to Rāma (6.32.1-32). Finally, Rāvaṇa accused Aṅgada of telling lies and this infuriated Rāma's emissary. Truly devoted to his Lord, eager to prove the might of Rāma, he planted his foot firmly on the ground of Rāvaṇa's court. He thus posed a

⁶ *bālitanaya budhi bala guna dhāmā / laṅkā jāhu tāta mama kāmā // bahuta bujhāi tumhahi kā kahañ / parama catura māñ jānata ahañ // kāju hamāra tāsu hita hoñ / ripu sana karehu batakahī soñ //*

challenge to Rāvaṇa and this is graphically visualized by Tulsīdās:

Remembering Rāma's glory,
He planted his foot amidst Rāvaṇa's assembly, making a
vow:
"If you can move my foot, o rouge!
I will go back to Rāma, having lost Sītā." (6.34.4-5)⁷

As a result, myriads of powerful (*balavānā*) demon warriors from Meghanād onwards, equalling him in his might (*koṭinha meghanāda sama subhaṭa*; 6.34 ka), tried to lift up Aṅgada's leg but it would not budge. At last, Rāvaṇa decided to take up the challenge but when he was about to touch Aṅgada's foot, the monkey uttered very significant words:

"You won't be delivered by grasping my foot.
Seize hold of Rāma's feet, you rogue!" (6.35.1-2)⁸

Hearing Aṅgada's words, Rāvaṇa, deep at heart feeling embarrassed, returned to his throne and sat on it with his heads hanging down (6.35.2-3). Once again Aṅgada tried to appeal to him but Rāvaṇa would not listen. Thus, it became obvious that both adversaries would meet on the battlefield. Aṅgada went back to Rāma and reported back about his mission on Laṅkā (6.35.5-35 ka, 6.38.2-38 kha).

It may be noted here that in Tulsīdās's rendering of this episode, Rāma took counsel of his ministers how to attack most effectively the inaccessible four gates of Laṅkā only after Aṅgada's mission had been completed. This is unlike in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, in which the episode took place after Rāma had deployed his troops at Laṅkā's gates.

⁷ *samujhi rāma pratāpa kapi kopā / sabhā mājha pana kari pada ropā // jaū mama carana sakasi saṭha ṭārī / phirahī rāmu sītā māi hārī //*

⁸ *mama pada gahē na tora ubārā // gahasi na rāma carana saṭha jāi /*

3. Īśvardās's *Aṅgad pajj* (*Aṅgada's Vow*)

Īśvardās is believed to be active during the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodī (1489-1517) (Sītārām 1936: 464-465 and Śukla ND: 74). Apart from being the author of the poem *Aṅgad pajj* (*Aṅgada's Vow*; 1502), he has also to his credit other poems concerned with the story of Rāma's deeds: the published *Bharat bilāp* (*Bharat's Lamentation*: Miśra 1958)⁹ and two unpublished, little known works: the *Rāmjanma* and the *Sītā vanvās*.¹⁰ Some scholars are of the opinion that all these works may in fact be fragments of a longer work – Īśvardās's telling of the *Rāmāyana* (Bulke 1962: 251, Premśāṅkar 1977: 21 and Miśra – Miśra 1979: 1-3). Whatever holds true with respect to their original form, it should not be overlooked that all these texts still await a thorough examination and critical edition, as their available published versions can be treated only as provisional. This also concerns the *Aṅgad pajj* in the edition of Rām Kumārī and Śivgopāl Miśra (Miśra – Miśra 1979) used in this paper, which is based on two late, partly incomplete manuscripts, one of which is dated 1733.

Īśvardās's version of Aṅgada's embassy is elaborated by the poet in *caupāī-dohā* sequence (usually two unnumbered *caupāīs* followed by a numbered *dohā*) that accumulates to four hundred ninety-six verses in total, which is more than two hundred verses longer (213) than the later *Rāmcaritmānas*.¹¹

The episode opens with the description of magnificent, seemingly invincible Laṅkā, though its citizens lived in uncertainty and fear after many of them had lost their lives in fire set to the city by Hanumān. The situation was so tense that

⁹ This work is also sometimes referred to as the *Bharat milāp*.

¹⁰ Īśvardās also composed the *Ekādaśī kathā* and the *Svargārohiṇī kathā* (their editions can be found in Miśra 1958 and Miśra – Miśra 1979 respectively), as well as the *Satyavatīkathā* (1501), one of the earliest extant works written in Avadhi, sometimes referred to as the first "Hindu" *premkhyānak* poem, a genre that is otherwise predominantly Sufi in character. Sītārām 1936: 464-5 and Miśra – Miśra 1979: 1-2. See also Stasik 2009: 60-1.

¹¹ Appendix of the printed version of the poem contains additional twenty-five verses; Miśra – Miśra 1979: 43.

even Rāvaṇa fell prey to it and could neither eat or drink nor sleep (4.4-6.6).¹²

After this short introduction, the poet changes the scene and for a while concentrates on Rāma who was pondering over possible steps to be taken in order to rescue Sītā: time was passing, nothing was happening, so – he thought – it must have been a very difficult time for her. Rāma was also evidently trying to avoid war by setting another mission to Laṅkā, though it seemed to him not a good idea to send Hanumān again (7.1-7.6). Rāma turned for counsel to his minister (no name is given) who assured him that apart from Hanumān, he had many gallant warriors who could be sent to Laṅkā. Rāma decided to issue a challenge to his soldiers and in conformity with tradition offered them *pān*, a preparation of betel leaf and areca nut (*pāna uṭhāi rahe raghunāthā*; 9.2). Taking it by one of the soldiers present in the assembly would mean his acceptance of Rāma's challenge. A colourful description of monkeys looking at each other and hanging their heads follows – much to Rāma's distress none was ready to accept his challenge (9.1-9.6). At that point, Jāmbavān came to his aid and told Rāma to summon aṅgada, the son of Bāli (*bāliputra jo aṅgada, tehi ānahu hākarāi*; 10.6). Nevertheless, Rāma was afraid of what kind of soldiers these cowardly monkeys would make (*ī jata bānara kādara jhārī*; 11.3) and wondered:

What reliance can be placed on them in harsh times?
Will they stay or go back through their own fault?¹³
(11.4)¹⁴

The poet corroborates Jāmbavān's choice with the portrayal of Aṅgada, who is described as an excellent emissary, clever and full of virtues; his bravery is also stressed with such words

¹² The editors numbered only entire stanzas (numbers are given after the last line of each stanza). Following their numbering of stanzas, I supplement it with the numbers of single verses within a stanza. Thus, the first number refers here to the number of a given stanza and the second one to single verse(s). If only one number is given, it refers to the entire stanza.

¹³ Alternative reading in the manuscript *kha: desā*: "to their own land."

¹⁴ *gāḍhe inha kara kavana bharosā / rahahī ki jāhī gau apane dosā //*

as “hero” (*bīra*, 12.6) or “great, powerful hero among *kṣatriyas*, of excellent pedigree, virtuous, profoundly knowledgeable” (*chatrinha māḥa mahā balabīrā / (...) subaṁsa guna gyana gambhīrā*; 13.1).

Rāma sent Aṅgada on a mission to Laṅkā (*bisṭārī tumha laṅkahī gavanahu*; 13.2), assuring him of their special relationship:

I have no other helper like you.
 You are my vital breath and support.¹⁵
 (...)
 You are to me like my brother Lakṣmaṇa.
 O gallant Aṅgada, listen attentively and pledge to your
 word to tell Rāvaṇa:
 “Send Sītā back!” (13.3-13.6)¹⁶

After a longer exchange of words between them (14.1-17.6), Aṅgada accepted the challenge. Then he went to meet Vibhīṣaṇa / Babhīchana who told him about the grandeur of Laṅkā, how it was protected against any possible threat not only by its army and citizens but also by all the gods who, as Rāvaṇa’s prisoners, were at his service (19.1-26.6). Vibhīṣaṇa advised Aṅgada to meet Hanumān who, as the only one among them, had an eyewitness experience of what Laṅkā was, and could also give him the first-hand information about the journey there (27.1-27.6).

When Aṅgada reached Laṅkā, all its citizens thought him to be Hanumān, the monkey who had once burnt their city, so they ran away as soon as they saw him (28.3-6). Having heard cries of their distress, even Rāvaṇa approached the gate of his palace and sent Prahasta to carry out reconnaissance, which turned fatal to his son after an encounter with Aṅgada (29.3-35.5). Aṅgada proceeded, killing anyone who stood on his way to Rāvaṇa and saving those who sympathized with Rāma (35.6-38.6).

¹⁵ Lit. “arms.”

¹⁶ *tumha taji more sevaka nāhī / tumha tau mora prāna aura bhāhī // (...) tumha more jasa lachamana bhāī // karahu paija purakhāratha / suna aṅgada cita lāī // rāvana saī asa bhākhehu / sītā dehu pathāī //*

Finally he appeared before Rāvaṇa. Seeing his gigantic body – seventy *yojanas*¹⁷ high, with forehead(s) ten *yojanas* wide, a nose stretched out up to one *kos* and ears to half a *yojana*, a chest twelve *yojanas* wide, arms fourteen *yojanas* long and in clothes spreading for sixteen *yojanas*¹⁸ – Aṅgada realized his own insignificance, literally he felt as “a little bird under a tree” (42.6).¹⁹ He wondered how to deliver Rāma’s message to him successfully. Summoning up his courage, he told Rāvaṇa to give Sītā back (43-44). A long and in general heated exchange between them took place and this passage occupies almost a fourth of the poem. It culminated in setting a foot by Aṅgada amidst Rāvaṇa’s assembly (48-69.1). All the time during the course of their conversation, when they both used quite offensive language, Rāvaṇa, on the one hand, tried to ignore Aṅgada and to deride the might of his master, asking for example: “How can he, who cannot protect his wife, fight on a battlefield?” (*jo nahī rākho āpani nārī / kaise kheta karaba una mārī*; 58.2). On the other hand, Aṅgada gave as good as he got, or even better, telling Rāvaṇa, among other things, that compared with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa he was just an insect! (*rāma lachana ke āge / jasa tuma kīṭa pataṅga // 46.6*). A few times in different ways Aṅgada tried to convince Rāvaṇa to give Sītā back to Rāma (e.g. 52.3, 54.1-55.6, 59.1-59.6).

Aṅgada, planting his foot in Rāvaṇa’s court, took vow (hence the title of the poem) that had it been lifted, he would leave Sītā with Rāvaṇa and himself go back home in disgrace (*carana upārasī rāvana, tau tohī sītā phābu / unha sameta māī kahata haū, hama lajāī ghara jāba*; 67.5-6). Rāvaṇa succeeded in encouraging the members of his assembly to lift Aṅgada’s foot, having declared publicly to give a half of his kingdom, home (lit. “inner courtyard”) and reserves to the one who would be successful (*ādhā rājapāṭa deū tākahā, ādhā sahana bhaṇḍāra*;

¹⁷ *Yojana* – a traditional measure of distance, reckoned variously as equal to 2, 4 or 8 *kos* (*kos* – approx. 3200 metres).

¹⁸ *sattari johana ūpara bārḥā // dasa johana mātha cakarāt / kosa eka lahu nāka pasarāt // ādhā johana kāna pasāre / bāraha johana hiradaī sāvārā // caudaha johana bāha lambāt / soraha johana pāṭa bichāī*; 42.1-42.5.

¹⁹ *jaisa bricha tara pañchī*.

68.6). Aṅgada set his foot on the ground firmly, remembering Rāma (*aṅgada pāū puhumī mahā dīnhā / rāmacandra kā sumirana kīnhā // 69.1*). Many demons tried hard to lift up Aṅgada's foot (69.2-69.5) but their all attempts were to no avail. However, all these efforts caused Rāma's throne to shake. It is noteworthy that when Vibhīṣaṇa enlightened Rāma what was the reason of this, Rāma felt like crying as he realized that had Aṅgada's foot been lifted up, he would lose Sītā (69.6-71.1). And in Rāvaṇa's court, after Meghanād and other "125 *lākhs* of Rāvaṇa's sons" (*savā lākha rāvana ke pūtā; 72.4*) had failed to move Aṅgada's foot, Rāvaṇa himself approached Aṅgada. He was about to touch his leg, when Aṅgada addressed him with the following words:

Take Sītā to Rāma and touch his feet.
It would be unbecoming to you to touch my foot.
(*āge lesi taī sītā, parasi rāma ke pāva / carana
dharā taī morā, chāḍi na jāi anyāu //; 76.5-6*)

With these words, Aṅgada left Rāvaṇa speechless and went straight to Aśoka Vāṭikā to meet Sītā and tell her about the well-being of Rāma (77.1-80). Only then he could go back to Rāma and tell him about his mission in great detail. Grateful Rāma promised to take Aṅgada with him to Ayodhyā (81-85).

4. The Evolution of the Story

As has been pointed out in the preceding sections of this paper, the exposition of the episode of Aṅgada's mission of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, presented in sixty-four verses (6.31.48-80), is the shortest among the discussed versions. Then follows the *Rāmcaritmānas* with two hundred eighty-three verses and the longest is Īśvardās's presentation which in its printed version amounts to four hundred ninety-six verses. Both early Hindi (Avadhi) works, the *Aṅgad paj* and the *Rāmcaritmānas*, are a very good example of how the story substantially evolved with the passage of time through incorporating novel, original

elements. However, what really underlies the further development of this episode of the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be found as early as in Vālmīki's version, roughly the half of which occupies the address of Rāma to be delivered to Rāvaṇa and in which Aṅgada's role is rather supporting. In this exposition, though economical with words, archetypal characteristics of Aṅgada are clearly marked. This was the foundation on which the later *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition built, amplifying the more and more pronounced trait of Aṅgada's character – his defiance to Rāvaṇa so much present in the literary and popular imagination of India. This is best typified not only by numerous elaborated earlier and later versions of the dialogue between Aṅgada and Rāvaṇa so vividly exemplified by the medieval poems of Īśvardās and Tulsīdās (in modern Hindi commonly referred to as *Aṅgad Rāvaṇ saṁvād*) but also by much more recent literary and folk expositions as well as works of visual arts,²⁰ films with such popular productions as Ramanand Sagar's (1917-2005) TV series,²¹ or countless local stagings of Rāmlīlā – all nowadays so easily available on the Internet.

The popularity of *Aṅgad Rāvaṇ saṁvād* undoubtedly owes a lot to such new motifs incorporated in it as that of Aṅgada's planting foot in Rāvaṇa's court and coiling up his lengthened tail into a seat as high as Rāvaṇa's throne. Both these motifs, popular all over India, seem to be of special significance towards the east – the first of them in the eastern part of the Hindi region (as we have seen, also present in Īśvardās and Tulsīdās) and the second of them in Bengal, especially in the

²⁰ Such as popular lithographs; see e.g. Fig. 6 in this paper, a postcard from the famous Ravi Varma Press (http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/bce_299_200/ramayana/attack/attack.html) or folk paintings like Madhubani (e.g. <http://www.exoticindiaart.com/product/paintings/angada-at-ravana-s-court-as-rama-s-ambassador-DE58/>).

²¹ Originally aired in 1987-1988 on the national channel Doordarshan, it was twice remade and produced by the Sagar family. The first remake was aired in 2008-2009 on NDTV Imagine channel "with fresh screenplay, dialogue, sets, music and cast," as well as with new "visual special effects," and the second remake, entitled *Rāmāyaṇ: jīvan kā ādhār* was aired in 2012-2013 on Zee TV. For more see: <http://www.sagartv.com/ramayan-new.htm> and <http://www.zeetv.com/shows/ramayan/>.

form of *Aṅgader Rāybār* (Bulke 1962: 243 and Brockington).²² While the origin of the first motif is not clear and still awaits more systematic study, the second motif can be found in its embryonic form in the anonymous medieval Sanskrit drama *Mahānāṭaka / Hanumannāṭaka* in which such scholars as C. Bulcke (1962: 560) and Ch. Vaudeville (1955: 285-286) see its source. However, their opinion seems text-centred, underplaying the oral dimension of the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition created by generations of traditional bards, narrators and poets which incorporates a multiplicity of voices and by its nature is polyphonic.

Summing up the insights gleaned from the foregoing analysis of the episode of Aṅgada's embassy, we may stress the importance of Īśvardās's *Aṅgad paj* as of an interesting early Hindi work in which we find a finely elaborated version of this episode, testifying not only to its form but also popularity in sixteenth-century Awadh. Together with the *Rāmcaritmānas* and other later sources it can help us understand how this episode has grown and gained popularity in the later *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition, with intent of aggrandizing Aṅgada's audacity and his defiance to Rāvaṇa. As a result, this reworked image has become very much alive in Indian popular imagination nourished on literature, Rāmlīlā performances, as well as modern media including cinema, TV, children's books (comics) and Internet resources. The episode in which Aṅgada plants his foot firmly on the ground of Rāvaṇa's court, challenging thus all gathered in the assembly to uproot his foot, forms part and parcel of this imagination and popular mythology in which he stands as a paragon of bravery, immovability and reliability. This image is so effective that, for example, in 2003, SAS Motors Limited, a company providing multi utility agricultural equipment and tractors introduced its flagship product "Angad Diesel Hal", advertised as "a gender friendly total solution for mechanization of small farms, that can plough, seed, de-weed,

²² I. Choudhuri, referring to this episode in Kṛttivāsa's *Rāmāyaṇa*, observes that it "has a humorous appeal. Angada appears before Rāvaṇa in his assembly and engages in verbal battle. The audience naturally enjoys the mutual hurling of invectives, which provide them with some sort of relief" (Choudhuri 2007: 141).

spray, irrigate with the required matching accessories”.²³ A staunch help indeed evincing how tradition and mythology blend with real life and technology!

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Fig.1. *Āṅgada in Rāvaṇa's court sitting on a throne made of his coiled up tail* (still from *Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan*, © Gayatri Films and Music Pvt. Ltd.)



Fig. 2. *Āṅgada planting his foot in Rāvaṇa's court* (still from *Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan*, © Gayatri Films and Music Pvt. Ltd.)



Fig. 3. *Aṅgada planting his foot in Rāvaṇa's court* (still from *Ramanad Sagar's Ramayan*, © Gayatri Films and Music Pvt. Ltd.)



Fig. 4. *Meghanād trying to lift up Aṅgada's foot* (still from *Ramanad Sagar's Ramayan*, © Gayatri Films and Music Pvt. Ltd.)



Fig. 5. *Rāvāṇa kneeling to lift up Aṅgada's foot* (still from *Ramanad Sagar's Ramayan*, © Gayatri Films and Music Pvt. Ltd.)

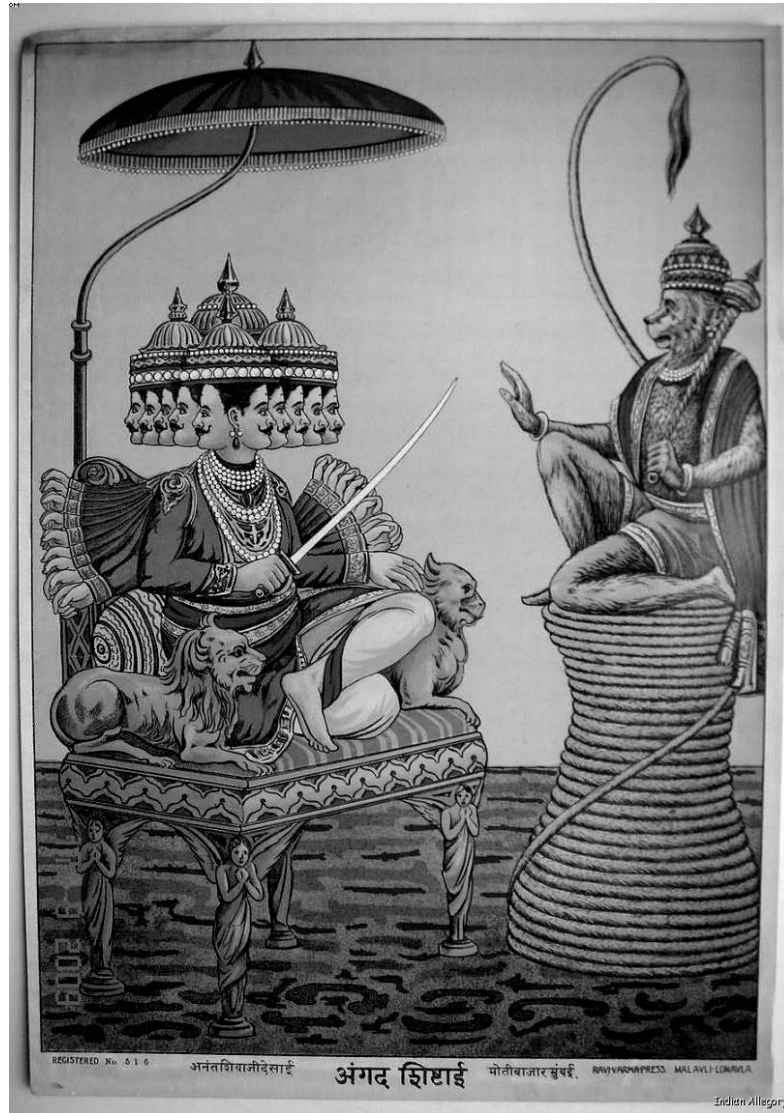


Fig. 6. *Aṅgada Rāvaṇa's court* (source: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00routesdata/bce_299_200/ramayana/attack/attack.html)