



A Review on Different Versions of Ramayan Available Today

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ABSTRACT

The Ramayan is an ancient Hindu epic that has been retold in various forms over the centuries. This article explores five different versions of the Ramayan, including the original Valmiki Ramayan, the simplified Tulsidas Ramayan, the Kamban Ramayan with its unique emphasis on the role of women, the spiritual interpretation of the Adhyatma Ramayan, and the Hindi language Ramcharitmanas that emphasizes devotion to Lord Rama. Each version has its unique features, such as language, characterization, and focus on certain events. The Valmiki Ramayan provides a highly detailed and complex narrative, while the Tulsidas Ramayan is more accessible to the general public. The Kamban Ramayan provides a unique perspective on the story of Lord Rama, and the Adhyatma Ramayan emphasizes the teachings and lessons that can be drawn from the story. Finally, the Ramcharitmanas is another retelling of the epic in Hindi language that emphasizes devotion to Lord Rama. Various reference books can be used for further research on the different versions of Ramayan.

1. Valmiki Ramayan

The Valmiki Ramayan is considered to be the original and oldest version of Ramayan. It was written by the sage Valmiki in Sanskrit around 500 BCE. The epic is divided into seven books or kandas, which are Bala Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kishkindha Kanda, Sundara Kanda, Yuddha Kanda, and Uttara Kanda.

The Valmiki Ramayan is a highly detailed work that provides a complex and poetic language, characterization of key characters, and descriptions of events. The epic begins with the birth of Lord Rama, the son of King Dasharatha and Queen Kausalya. It then goes on to describe Rama's childhood, his marriage to Sita, his exile to the forest, his battle against the demon king Ravana, and his eventual return to Ayodhya.

The epic is also notable for its philosophical and ethical teachings. It discusses the concept of dharma, or duty, and the importance of fulfilling one's obligations. It also emphasizes the virtues of truth, righteousness, and compassion.

2. Tulsidas Ramayan

The Tulsidas Ramayan is a retelling of the Valmiki Ramayan in Awadhi language. It was written by the poet Tulsidas in the 16th century. The Tulsidas Ramayan is also divided into seven kandas, but the names of the kandas differ slightly from those in the Valmiki Ramayan. They are Bal Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kishkindha Kanda, Sundar Kanda, Lanka Kanda, and Uttara Kanda.

The Tulsidas Ramayan is a simplified version of the Valmiki Ramayan and is more accessible to the general public. It is written in Awadhi dialect and features simpler language

and fewer characters. However, it still includes the main elements of the story, such as Rama's birth, his exile, his battle against Ravana, and his eventual return to Ayodhya.

One of the main differences between the two versions is the characterization of the main characters. The Valmiki Ramayan provides more depth and complexity to the characters of Rama, Sita, and other key figures. For example, in the Valmiki Ramayan, Rama is portrayed as a virtuous and noble prince who always adheres to dharma, whereas in the Tulsidas Ramayan, he is depicted as a more human and relatable character who experiences a range of emotions.

Another difference is the focus on certain events. The Valmiki Ramayan includes more detailed descriptions of events such as Ravana's abduction of Sita and Rama's battle against him. The Tulsidas Ramayan, on the other hand, focuses more on Rama's journey and his interactions with other characters.

3. Kamban Ramayan

The Kamban Ramayan is a Tamil version of the epic, written by the poet Kamban in the 12th century. The Kamban Ramayan is notable for its poetic language and detailed descriptions of events. It follows the main elements of the Valmiki Ramayan but also includes some additional stories and subplots.

One of the unique features of the Kamban Ramayan is its emphasis on the role of women in the story. Sita, in particular, is given more agency and independence in the Kamban Ramayan than in some other versions. The epic also includes a detailed description of Ravana's sister, Surpanakha, and her interactions with Rama and his companions.

The Kamban Ramayan is also notable for its depiction of the battle scenes. Kamban provides vivid and detailed descriptions of the warriors, weapons, and tactics used in the battles between Rama's army and Ravana's forces.

4. Adhyatma Ramayan

The Adhyatma Ramayan is a spiritual interpretation of the epic. It is believed to have been written by the sage Veda Vyasa, who also compiled the Mahabharata. The Adhyatma Ramayan focuses on the spiritual teachings and lessons that can be drawn from the story of Lord Rama.

The Adhyatma Ramayan emphasizes the concept of the oneness of all beings and the importance of devotion to God. It also discusses the nature of the soul and the path to spiritual liberation.

The Adhyatma Ramayan is divided into seven kandas, but the structure and content differ from the Valmiki Ramayan. It includes additional stories and teachings, such as a detailed description of the story of Hanuman and his devotion to Rama.

5. Ramcharitmanas

The Ramcharitmanas is another retelling of the Ramayan in Hindi language. It was written by the poet Goswami Tulsidas in the 16th century. The Ramcharitmanas is also divided into seven kandas, which are Bal Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kishkindha Kanda, Sundar Kanda, Lanka Kanda, and Uttar Kanda.

The Ramcharitmanas is similar to the Tulsidas Ramayan in terms of its simplified language and focus on the main elements of the story. However, it also includes some additional stories and subplots, such as the story of Ahalya, the wife of sage Gautama, who is turned into a stone by a curse but is later freed by Rama.

The Ramcharitmanas is also notable for its emphasis on devotion to Lord Rama. The epic includes many hymns and prayers to Rama and his companions, as well as teachings on the nature of God and the path to spiritual liberation.

Conclusion

The Ramayan is an epic that has been retold in various forms over the centuries. Each version of the epic has its unique features, such as language, characterization, and focus on certain events. The Valmiki Ramayan is the original and oldest version and provides a highly detailed and complex narrative, while the Tulsidas Ramayan is a simplified version that is more accessible to the general public.

The Kamban Ramayan provides a unique perspective on the story of Lord Rama, with a focus on the role of women and detailed descriptions of the battle scenes. The Adhyatma Ramayan is a spiritual interpretation that emphasizes the teachings and lessons that can be drawn from the story of Lord Rama. Finally, the Ramcharitmanas is another retelling of the epic in Hindi language that emphasizes devotion to Lord Rama.

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