

Historical Rama

by Bharath Gyan

While Divinity is a matter of faith, Historicity is a matter of existence.

Did Rama really exist? Is Rama historical?

Bharath Gyan has adopted an integrated approach, to rationally understand the ancient and continuous civilization of India.

In this, we examine

1. established literary texts of the land,
2. Geography of the land corroborating with the texts and local legends
3. Archaeological finds
4. continuous historical records and
5. new scientific techniques of validating all of these.

We will now unravel the Historicity of Rama in a rational, logical and scientific manner from the following perspectives:

Literary texts

Amongst the various literary works on Ramayana, Valmiki Ramayana is a biography and an authentic credible historic text written during the time of Rama and validated by Rama Himself when His sons narrate it to Him. Hence it can rightfully be called a historical text.

It is for this reason Ramayana is called an Itihasa meaning It Thus happened.

This text lists the lineage of Rama for close to 51 generations before and 32 generations after Him. If a character is imaginary, the family tree would usually extend to a few generations before or after. It is never so exhaustive.

In 1808, James Mill and Charles Grant were appointed by the British, to write the history of India as a syllabus for the Helibary College.

First they and later other colonial writers classified the Indian texts and thought as fabricated trash and drilled it into the minds of Indians that these were mythology.

Mill and Grant wrote the history of India deliberately without visiting India lest they get influenced by its rich culture.

Whereas, when Alberuni visited India in 1030 CE, among the many things that he wrote about India, he also wrote in good detail about Rama having been a historical person of this land.

There are many pictorial Persian texts on Ramayana, commissioned by Begum Hameeda Banu, the mother of Akbar. Akbar himself and his courtier Abdur Rahim Khan-e-khan. They all wrote this not as religious texts but because they considered this as a historical text of their land.

Geography

Ramayana is a Geographically correct text. Every place visited by Rama is today identifiable by historic landmarks, commemorative temples and local legends.

The names of the rivers that Bharatha crosses are mentioned in the same sequence in which they are geographically present today. This helps us today to identify the route Bharata took to reach Ayodhya from Kekeya.

The story is well intertwined in the local legend in every place mentioned in the Ramayana text. We clearly see here, a conjunction of archeology, local legends and literature converging with the geography of the land. Such convergence is rarely seen in other ancient historical texts of the world.

Archaeo Astronomy

The ancient Indians used the sky as their clock dial.

The ancient Indians divided the sky into 27 Nakshatra or star units. The hands were 7 – namely sun, moon and the 5 planets of Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mars and Mercury.

Each combination uniquely denotes an astronomical configuration in time and the same combination does not repeat itself.

Ramayana and Mahabharatha, the traditional Historical texts of India, contain many astronomical observations as recorded by the chroniclers.

When we cull out these observations and search for them using the Planetarium software, it throws up dates of when these configurations must have occurred in the past.

Using this technique, we get Rama's date of birth as 10th January 5114 BCE.

When we cull out the remaining observations in Ramayana and check for the dates using the software, we get dates for the remaining events of Ramayana which tally with the elapse time for those events as mentioned in the Ramayana text. This internal consistency validates the correctness of these dates.

Moreover, if the corrections advocated by Varahamihira, the noted Indian astronomer of 530 CE, had been applied, then 1 year adjustment for every 72 years over the last 7200 years between 5114 BCE and now would have accounted for the difference of 100 days between Rama's birth in January in 5114 BCE and our celebration of Rama Navami in April today. This further validates the correctness of these dates.

The modern astronomers have also explained this through the phenomenon of precession of equinox.

The Astronomical dating method not only fixes the time period of the event, but also shows the geographical location from where the unique planetary configuration could have been observed and this helps us confirm the geographic locations of Ramayana.

Archaeology

It is today difficult to find archaeological evidences in the cities associated with the life of Rama as there has been continuous civilization living there and they have kept building and rebuilding their cities over generations.

It is because the deep seas swallowed Dwaraka, the town became uninhabitable and frozen in time and hence after so many thousands of years, it is still able to provide evidence for the existence of an advanced township tallying with the city described in the epic Mahabharata.

Similarly the only such place to look for archaeological evidences of Rama is the Rama Setu which today could be submerged in the sea.

If this bridge is mentioned in passing in the text, it doesn't warrant further examination.

The text gives the process of bridge construction in great and specific detail. This level of detailing of bridge construction urges us to examine the details. This construction detailing can be studied from the aspects of Survey, Planning and Civil engineering involved.

A detailed examination of these processes go to show how the bridge has been a planned construction led by Nala, an engineer of the Vishwakarma clan.

The text clearly describes as to how the bridge was a man made accretion over a natural sea ridge. And how under Nala's guidance, this bridge construction had taken place with the following typical engineering principles followed even today such as:

- Foundation for the bridge
- Flat finished level
- Pore pressure concept to prevent damage to the structure from waves and water currents
- Linear alignment
- Leveraging of topography features to minimize effort and speed up the construction

Due to the passage of time of many millenia, sand has accumulated over this structure and what we are able to see now is mainly sand bars and shoals.

In the last few decades, man made satellites have been regularly orbiting the earth and photographing various parts of the earth. One such area they have photographed is the southern part of India. In this set of photographs, this bridge is also visible. It can be distinctly seen as a shallow underwater causeway connecting the 2 lands.

These photographs do suggestively indicate it to be man made due to its unique curvature and near uniform width. The opinion of many is that, this is the man made bridge as detailed in the Ramayana text.

While publishing these photographs, what has been mentioned is that the land at the 2 ends of this bridge is many lakh years old and this is based on their understanding from geology, archaeology and other artifacts found at the ground. Hence, they further go on to state that the connecting causeway is also old.

The agency has also cautioned that while the satellite images suggest the man made nature of the bridge, they alone cannot help date ground structures. These satellite images can only help augment the other already available references to arrive at a good indication of the man made nature of the bridge and that it is imperative to use other sources of data and techniques to arrive at a conclusive proof for the age and structure of the bridge.

Today, on an average, this causeway is about 2m below water. When this bridge was built, it must have been built atleast about 1m above the then water level ie when the bridge was built the sea must have been 3m or 9 feet below present day sea level.

As per the world Oceanography report, a 9 feet rise in sea levels due to the melting of the polar ice caps and global warming should have occurred over 7000 years.

This helps us to date the bridge construction to about 7000 years ago or 5000 BCE using Oceanography as a dating tool.

Travelogues and Historical records

This bridge has found mention in historical records over the last 1000 years in various forms such as maps, coins and travelogues. The kings at either ends of the bridge in India and Sri Lanka, have been regarded as the guard and protector of the bridge over thousands of years.

At this point it is pertinent to bring in an interesting observation in the Mahabharatha text.

When the Pandava princes were traveling through the forest, they come across Rishi Markandeya who regales them with stories of their land. In one of the stories, he tells them about Nala Setu. How it was built by Nala and being an engineering marvel, it was a protected monument of their times.

Conclusion

Given this repeated reference to the bridge, its usage and understanding its importance, today we need to rightfully promulgate an order under the ASI act clause 4, to call this a heritage monument. It is a fit case to be called a civil engineering marvel of an ancient civilization.

The Setu symbolizes many things to many people.

When we look at it from a rational, historical, civil engineering perspective, we see that it is a historical monument and a civil engineering achievement par excellence. It is a civil engineering feat of Nala, Nila and the Vanara team.

These people were residents of Kishkinda which is modern day Hampi, which is part of the Dravida land or Southern India. So these people were the original inhabitants of this land and can be called the Adi Dravida.

This bridge can therefore be viewed as an engineering feat of the native Adi Dravida people.

To recap,

- from the point of Archaeo-Astronomy, Rama is found to have walked this earth about 7000 years back.
- The detailing of the bridge, the only archeological remain left and the sea level rise factors also indicate similar dates.
- The veneration of Rama has not been limited to India alone. The Egyptian pharaohs call themselves Ramses of the Solar dynasty, which seems to be a derivative of the name Rama and his Surya Vamsa dynasty. In the east, in Thailand, the kings of the ruling Chakri dynasty take on the title Rama. The present King is Rama the IX.

This emphasizes the spread of the glory (effulgence) of Rama across civilizations, the world over and brings forth the stature in which Rama was held across the globe through the times.

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Further inputs on this topic are welcome at historicalrama@gmail.com.

For further data on Historical Rama, viewers may visit www.historicalrama.org.

Viewers are also welcome to visit our website www.bharathgyan.com for our 64 other subject capsules.

List of References

Valmiki Ramayana

Individual scholars referred to by Bharath Gyan to whom credits have been given all through this compilation

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NASA images and comments