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Title : PAMPA SAROVARA AND ITS ENVIRONS IN VALMIKI RAMAYANA

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to highlight Pampa Sarovara and its environs as detailed in Valmiki Ramayana, the oldest epic in Sanskrit literature. Pampa sarovara is situated in the world heritage site of Hampi in the Bellary district of Karnataka. Pampa sarovara is a rich source of water even in present times.

Reference to this Pampa sarovara is found in the 73rd, 74th, 75th, cantos of Aranyakanda and the 1st, 13th and 27th cantos of Kishkindhakanda. The details furnished in these cantos are worthy of consideration to resolve the water crisis during this “Water Year of 2007”.

Pampa sarovara is situated to the east of the Matanga hill and to the west of the Rishyamukha hill existing by the same names even to this day. Pampa sarovara serves as a perennial source of water as the rain waters falling on these hills flow down to the sarovara. The water thus collected is free from gravel slippery slime and duck weeds. Thus, the water is crystal clear, sparkling, limpid, cool and delightful scented with lotus fragrance.

The environs of the sarovara abound in forests is rich in flora and fauna. The flora described in the work Ramayana include the trees like Jambu (rose apple), Panasa (jack fruit), Amra (mango), Kadali (plantain), Tamala, Banyan, Plaksha, Peepul, Rakta Candana (red Sandalwood), Priyala, Blue Asoka, Kadamba, Karavira, Mandara, Karnikara, Tilaka, Nagakesari, etc.

The fauna in the Pampa environs includes Swans, Ducks, Kraunches, Ospreys and such other water birds. Fishes of rare variety like Vakratunda, Rohita Nalamina are found in plenty in the sarovara.

Another Sarovara in the Pampa environs referred to in Kishkindhakanda is the Matanga Saras near the Matanga hill edged similarly by dense forest exhibiting a variety of flora mentioned above. The Saptajanasya hermitage is represented as a spot of delightful nature. The Prasravana or Malyavan mountain cave where Rama dwelt during the rainy season is said to have been noisy by the roar of tigers, lions and covered with innumerable trees frequented by monkeys, bears, baboons, etc. On the other side of the cave a river resembling Mandakini at Trikuta flowing in easterly direction thronged by forest trees which can be taken as an indication to the Tungabhadra river flowing in the region now.

PAMPA SAROVARA AND ITS ENVIRONS IN VALMIKI RAMAYANA*

Dr. B.S. Shamala Rathna Kumari

Ramayana authored by sage Valmiki is the oldest Epic in Indian Sanskrit literature. This work, besides its political, social, religious, ethical and literary merit, is a rich mine of information about ecology and environment of contemporary India. The first reference to Pampa sarovara and its environs in the World Heritage Site of Hampi in the Bellary district of Karnataka is obtained in the 73rd canto of the Aranyakanda wherein Kabandha at the time of his ascending to heaven directs Sri Rama and Laksmana to move westward to reach the Risyamukha and the 74th, 75th, cantos of the aforesaid Aranyakanda and also the 1st, 13th, 27th cantos of the Kiskindhakanda furnish a vivid description of the Matanga saras, the forest near the Matanga hill, the Pampa sarovara, the Saptajanasya Hermitage and the Prasravana or Malyavan mountain cave and its surroundings. The fauna and the flora and the water – its sources, quality, purity, etc. in Hampi environs are highlighted in this paper.

Sri Rama and Laksmana during their sojourn in search of Sita meet Kabandha who directs their path westwards leading to the Pampa Sarovara lying to the west of the Risyamukha hill and to the east of the Matanga hill which exist by the same names even to this day.

The forest at the foot of the Matanga hill abounds in Jambu (rose-apple), Priyala, Banyan, Plaksha, Panasa(Jack fruit), Peepul, Rakta candana (red-sandlewood), Amra(mango), Nagakesari, Tilaka, Naktamalaka, blue Asoka,

* Srimad Valmiki Ramayana
(With Sanskrit text and English translation)
Part – 1 [Balakanda, Ayodhyakanda, Aranyakanda and Kishkindhakanda]
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Mandara, Kadamba, Karavira, Agnimukhya, Tinduka, Dhava trees. Passing beyond this forest there lies another vana (woodland) resembling Nandanavana of lord Indra and Chairaratha of lord Kubera.

Beyond this woodland is situated the lotus pond called Pampa sarovara. This lake is free from the gravel, slippery slime and duck weeds. Swimming on the waters of Pampa lovely swans, ducks, ospreys, krauncas making sounds in their sweet tones are seen. The sarovara is full of beautiful fishes, the Rohita, Nalamina and Vakratunda which provide delicious food. The delightful, pleasantly cool, wholesome and limpid water of Pampa fragrant with the scent of lotuses, sparkling like silver and crystal will quench one's thirst thoroughly. When Sri Rama and Laksmana following the directions of Kabandha reached the Pampa environs the spring season had commenced. The surroundings looked splendidly beautiful which intensified Rama's pangs of separation from his beloved wife Sita. Every aspect of beauty in this Pampa environs reminded him of the charm of Sita. Aspiring for his reunion with Sita, in a mood of lamentation describes the delightful Matanga saras which drew waters from afar and the forest edging it. Rama, to bathe, entered the Matanga sarovara which was covered with fully blown lotuses and lilies and swiftly swimming fishes. Its water, transparent as a cat's eye gem (Vaidurya) delighted him and the coolness fascinated Rama. The picturesque woodland was adorned with trees of every description, interspersed with flowers of various kinds. Infested with serpents and beasts of prey, surrounded by deer and birds, scattered with blossoms of various hues like blue and red dropped by trees overspread on land looked extremely pretty as carpets enriched by loads of flowers on all sides. The tree-tops stood entwined with climbers like Malati, Mallika, etc. with blossomed ends. The breeze is being celebrated in song by black bees which have shifted from their position, emerging from mountain caves and as though making the trees dance by the direct notes of cuckoos, the breeze has started singing as it were. Delightful to the touch, rendered cool by sandalwood and hence relieving fatigue, and wafting its pleasant fragrance as the breeze moves along. This month of Caitra (March), represents a period of agreeable breeze, trees in full blossoms and fruits awakening a senses to deep love, pride and delight.

The mountains look exceptionally charming with their peaks joined together by trees laden with blossom. The peaks of the Matanga hill appear ignited on all sides by the Kimsuka trees richly laden with flowers and shorn of leaves. Ankola, Kuranta, Curnaka, Paribhadra, Amra, Patali, Kovidara Mucukunda and Arjuna trees are seen in blossom on mountain peaks.

Birds of every description descend on trees, bushes and climbers on all sides. The Karnikara trees laden with flowers are looking like men heavily adorned with gold ornaments and clad in yellow. A variety of birds living in flock feel highly rejoiced on this strand of Pampa. Fire, in the vernal season which has bunches of crimson flowers of Asoka trees for its live embers, the humming of the bees for its crackle and the fresh leaves for its coppery tongues strongly stimulate senses of human beings. Dancing here and there with their wings resembling crystal windows, shaken by the wind, the yonder peacocks surrounded by peahens intoxicated by joy, spread their charm. The chorus in the forest of the birds warbling on the trees crested with flowers is instrumental in heightening joy in one's mind.

The Malati, Mallika, Padmaka and Karavira, Punnaga, Vanjula, Madhuka, Ciribilva, Bakula, Champaka, Tilaka, Naga, Blue Asoka, Ketaki, Sinduvara, Lodhra, Uddalaka, Sirisa, Naktamala, Syandana, Hintala, Kurabaka, Salmali, Kimsuka, Tinisa, Arjuna, Patali, Ankola and Kuranta trees in blossom entwined by Vasanti, Madhavi, Mallika climbers grown on the trees edging the Pampa sarovara nurtured by its waters emitting sweet aroma appeared like pretty woman drunk with love.

The Pampa sarovara is full of cool water covered all over with lotuses, frequented by Cakravakas (red Geese), inhabited by water fowls, teeming with ducks, herons and visited by deer.

While going to Kiskindha along with Laksmana and Sugriva, Rama sees a delightful grove and a hermitage which once belonged to a group of seven sages, thus receiving the name as Saptajanas. Here shines a crump of trees resembling a cloud on the sky and hemmed in at the end by the plantain trees. This extensive hermitage rich in gardens, grooves contain delicious roots, fruits and water.

After killing the vanara king Vali and enthroning Sugriva retired to mount Prasravana commonly called now as Malyavan which was rendered noisy by tigers and deer and infested with lions giving out a terrible roar, was covered with innumerable trees which was frequented by monkeys, bears, baboons, wild cats, nay, which looked like a mass of clouds, consisting of rocks. It was very sanctifying and conducive to blessedness. At the entrance of the cave there was a level and smooth and extensive rock as black as a heap of antimony.

So, a large and long cave on the summit of this hill was chosen by these Iksvaku brothers for their residence during the rainy season. The cave chosen was lovely, commodious and airy. Adorned with white, black and red crags rich in minerals and abound in frogs having their abode in rivers. Not far from the cave was situated a pond which got flooded with rain water. It was a lovely pond embellished with full blown lotuses.

On the other side of the cave a river resembling the Mandakini at Trikuta utterly free from the mud, flowing in an easterly direction and thronged with Srigandha, Tilaka, Sala, Tamala, Atimukta, Padmaka, Sarala as well as by Asoka trees. It was adorned with Vanora, Timida, Bakula, Ketaka, Hintala, Nipa, Vetasa and Krtamala trees of various shapes growing hither and thither on the banks of the river. The atmosphere was made noisy with various notes by hundreds of flocks of birds, especially by the Cakravaka birds and frequented by swans, cranes. It was hemmed with lovely sand banks. Enriched with precious stones of various types, the river looked as though it were heartily laughing. Frequented by multitudes of ascetics, this placid river (Tungabhadra) appears delightful.

Harihara, the great revolutionary poet in Kannada literature belonging to the 13th century A.D. has composed a work on flowers called "Pushpa Ragale" in which he has referred to flowers viz. kamala(lotus), ketaki, mallika, kumuda, kedage, sampige, surahonne and madhavi, mallika creepers, kadali and hombale trees grown in the Hampi environs used by him in the worship of lord pampapati Virupaksa. This evidences the fact that some of the species of the flora mentioned in Valmiki's Ramayana continued to grow here even in medieval times.

Abdur Razaq, Nicolo Conti, the foreign travelers who visited the great Vijayanagara (Hampi) also make references to the gardens of flowers (jasmine, rose), and groves of fruits (mango, jackfruit), which can be seen in the Pampa environs even to this day.

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 V"sqW"S"pqQO"z O"Qo \"S"X"o \$\$12\$\$

q\"uð" S"q"S"rz ZXY"pz T"z@;G"vðE"
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 V"q`êN"pu_ w^J>S"pqQO"X"o \$\$ 21 \$\$

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T\"êO"pu R"pO"sX"qNL>O"#\$29\$\$

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_"X"p@j"N"ê S"Qr QQLêZ _"zY"sO"X"o \$\$\$8\$\$\$

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qE"e"O"pY"sO"X"o \$ S"pS"pq\"B" _"zC"s^J>z
X"Y"tZ\"ZS"p{QO"X"o \$\$\$9\$\$\$

đ"pQmê"X"wB" _"zC"s^J>z
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"O"pB"tM>z V"IT"pQT" _"z@sij"X"o \$\$\$2\$\$\$

hjb\"pS"ZB"puT"sEF>vX"pêG"êpZvđE"
qS"^^uq\"O"X"o \$ X"uC"Zpqđ"qS"W"z đ"v"z
{S"OY"z đ"sqE"@jZz qđ\"X"o \$\$\$3\$\$\$

òY"z qB"qZB"s`p ZXY"p q\`đ"p"p Y"s@O"
X"pàO"p \$\$\$6\$\$\$

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T"sq^T"O"vàT"đ"pu{W"O"X"o \$\$\$10 \$\$\$

òY"z E" S"q"S"r ZXY"p Usj,,T"ŠG"X"qNL>O"p
S"pqO"QmZu B"s`pY"pS"pv W"q\`^Y"qO" \$\$\$ 11
\$\$\$

T"øpB"sQ@T"ø\`N"u Quđ"u B"s`p _"pR"s
W"q\`^Y"qO" \$ T"đE"pEE"v\`puβ"O"p _"pvXY"p
qS"\`pO"uY"z W"q\`^Y"qO" \$\$\$12 \$\$\$

FLORA:

Sanskrit names scientific names

1. T"z@jG"p

2. S"q"S"r

3. Tz"sS"pB"

= *Rottlera tinctoria*

4. >V"@sj"p

5. T"èp

6. _"pvB"qSR"@j = Red water lily
7. @sjX"sQ = White water lily
8. ìZq\"SQp
9. @jZ\"rZ = *Nerium odorum*
10. \"J>
11. V\"rG\"T\"tZ = *Citrus medica*
12. X\"p“O”r = *Jasminum grandiflorum*
13. @sjSQ = *Gum elibanum*
14. q_ "SQL\"pZ# = *Vitex negunda*
15. qđ"Zr^"p = *Acacia*
16. @jQXV"p = *Anthocephalus cadamba*
17. ìG"sêS" = White sal
18. _"G"ê = Red sal
19. T"ŠG"
20. qO""@j = A kind of *Cyrtandreae*
21. T"è@j
22. íOT""
23. í©p“@j = The tree *Cordia myxa*
24. S"pB"@uj_"Z
25. đ"pÚX""r = *Bombax malabanum*
26. @sj\"“Y"

FAUNA:

1. V"“p@j = *Ardea sibirica*
2. E"@øj\"p@j
3. E"pO"@j = *Cuculus melanoleucus*
4. S"aX"rS"
5. \"@øjO"szL>
6. `z_ " = ducks
7. X"Y"tZ
8. _"pZzB"
9. q`ZN"
10. E"pO"@j
11. S"pB"