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Tenth Chapter

Seeing of Mandodhari

(This chapter gives further description of the harem of Ravana, It gives a vivid description of Ravana, his women and his wife Mandodhari. It ends describing the happy Hanuman who mistook Mandodari for Sita)

Hanuman who was searching there, saw a cot, which was fit to be in the land of Devas, which was great, which had special parts made of gold and ivory, which had bed covers inlaid with diamonds, which had extremely costly special seats and which was fully decorated by gems and crystals. 1-2

He also saw a particular very special seat which was decorated all over by gold, which was shining like sun, which was very broad and which had all things which end sorrow 3

On one side of the seat he saw a very special umbrella, which glittered like the moon and which was decorated by many very special garlands. 4

On all four sides women were fanning the cot with white fan with soft bristles, it was scented by collection of many perfumes, several incense generating smoke were wafting about it, very precious bed sheets made of wool and hides covered it and all around it was decorated by garlands made of several rare flowers. 5-6

That monkey chief Hanuman saw on the shining bed on the cot, the Chief of Rakshasas, who was of the colour of deep black cloud, who was wearing special glittering ear studs, who was having red eyes, who was having very long hands, who was wearing cloths with golden zari, who had applied the highly perfumed paste of red sandal, who wore precious ornaments which was like the streaks of lightning in the red clouded sky of the dusk, who was handsome, who could assume any form that he wished, who was equal to the immobile Mandhara mountain with its several trees and bushes, who wore several pretty ornaments, who was tired after love play during the night, who was the darling of Rakshasa ladies, who created pleasant life to the Rakshasas and who was not showing the effect of alcohol that he has drunk. 7-11

Nearing Ravana, who was like a hissing serpent, Hanuman, who could even scare very strong people, was scared and confused and stepped back. 12

Afterwards that monkey chief Hanuman climbed a stairs reached another hall and from there carefully examined the sleeping king of Rakshasas. 13

That costly bed on which the chief of Rakshasas was sleeping looked like garden in which an elephant was sleeping after trampling over it. 14

He saw the two hands of the Rakshasa king, which was attached to his golden shoulders, which were long, which were like the flags of Indra, which had scars made by the tusks of elephant Iravatha, which were starting from his thick shoulders having the scars made by Vajrayudha, which was having the wounds made by Vishnu's wheel, which was attached to his equal and thick shoulders, which had good hands and fingers, which had ideally shaped fingers and thumb, which were able and were like iron bars, which were round and resembled the trunk of an elephant, which were lying on the clean bed and which were like five headed serpents. 15-18

He looked at his two hands which were well covered with specially cold specially scented sandal wood which was as red as the blood of rabbits, which were decorated, which was applied with mixture of several scents, which was massaged by great ladies, which used to make devas, yakshas, Pannagas, gandarwas and Danavas weep, which were kept on the bed and which resembled pythons sleeping on both his sides. 19-21

That mountain like Rakshasa with his two hands shined like the perfectly shaped Mandhara Mountain with its two peaks. 22

The breath of the sleeping king of rakshasas which was having the sweet smelling scent of mango flower, pongamia flower and Vakula flower, which was having the smell of many food items and which was having the reeking smell of alcoholic drinks spread throughout that area, came out of his very big mouth. 23-24

Hanuman saw in that hall, Ravana who was shining with a slightly out of place crown made of precious gems and pearls, who was having a glittering face because of his ear studs, who was having a fat long and broad chest applied with the paste of red sandal which was shining because of his garlands, who was wearing a white silk upper cloth which was slipping down, who was wearing a very costly yellow silk, who was having red eyes, who appeared as if he was a mountain made of black gram, who was breathing like a serpent, who was like a royal elephant sleeping in the river Ganges amidst huge crowds, who was having the entire body shining by the light provided by golden lamps, who was like a cloud lit on all four sides by streaks of lightning, who was a great individual and who was having love towards his wife „sleeping along with his wives who slept at the corners of his feet. 25-30

He saw many of them(wives) who were having shining faces like the moon, who were wearing pretty ear studs, and who were wearing flower garlands which never fade. 31

He also saw some experts in dance and music who were seated and wearing the great ornaments worn by Ravana on his shoulders and lap. 32

He saw them wearing shoulder bangles of molten gold and ear studs made of diamond and other precious stones. 33

Due to their pretty glittering ear studs and faces like moon, that Vimana was shining like the sky because of a collection of stars. 34

- Those narrow hipped ladies of Ravana were sleeping in various places due to tiresomeness caused by various exercises like lovemaking. 35
- One lady was sleeping in the dancing pose with pretty Mudhras(symbols) shown by her hands and with many of her pretty parts exposed. 36
- One lady who was sleeping embracing the Veena looked like a boat afloat in a mighty river, which was tied by the tendrils of Lotus plant. 37
- A black eyed sleeping beauty with the Madduka (a type of drum) kept in her armpits, looked like a mother with her darling baby. 38
- Another lady with very pretty breasts who was also pretty all over was sleeping embracing a drum and looked like a lady embracing her husband whom she has met after a very long separation. 39
- Another lotus-eyed beauty was asleep embracing the Veena and appeared as if she had met her boy friend when nobody is around. 40
- Another very passionate lady who was a dancer was sleeping embracing the Vipanchika (a stringed instrument) and appeared as if she was sleeping in tight embrace of her husband. 41
- Another lady with eyes like wine was asleep embracing the drum with her golden coloured soft voluptuous and pretty body. 42
- One flawless pretty lady was holding the drum in her armpits between her arms and breast and was sleeping tired because of her passion. 43
- Another lady was sleeping with the two pieces of the drum (thabla) in her tight embrace and appeared as if she was holding her husband and baby in her hands. 44
- Another lotus leaf eyed lady was holding with her two stretched hands the giant drum and was sleeping because of exertions of zest. 45
- Another lady who was asleep with the slightly tilted Ghata (earthen pot musical instrument) looked like a small hill of the multi coloured flower garlands, which were kept fresh by sprinkling of water. 46
- A young girl, who was deep asleep, was hiding her gold pot like breasts with hands and sleeping. 47
- A full moon faced lady with lotus petal like eyes forgot herself in her love zest and was sleeping embracing another lady with a pretty backside. 48

Many noble ladies in their great passion were sleeping embracing tightly to their breasts several musical instruments like they would embrace their lover. 49

That monkey then saw another very pretty lady sleeping on a beautiful bed in a place away from these ladies. 50

That great hero Hanuman who was the son of wind God saw the sleeping Mandodari¹⁴, who was wearing very prettily crafted ornaments made of pearls and other precious gems, who by her natural luster was an ornament for that great house, who was a dear, who was white in colour, who was chief queen of that harem, who was golden in colour, who was having a pretty appearance and who was well made up, Hanuman mistook her for Sita because she was the epitome of youth and beauty and became extremely pleased and happy. 51-54

Exhibiting his monkey qualities he clapped his hands, kissed his own tail, became happy, jumped here and there, sang, ran, climbed on the pillar and jumped from there. 55

Thus ends the tenth chapter of Sundara Kanda which is in the Ramayana which is the first epic written by Valmiki.

Eleventh Chapter

Search in the hall for drinking

(A full and detailed description of the hall of drink and Hanuman's search for Sita there is recounted in this chapter)

Within a quarter of minute he rejected his momentary wish that it was Sita as not right and became clear headed and started thinking, in the right path. 1

After that Hanuman decided that “There was no chance of Sita who was separated from Sri Rama sleeping, nor eating, nor wearing of ornaments, nor even drinking water nor go near another male even if he were the king of Devas for even among devas there is none as great as Rama and so this lady has to be somebody else.” And he started searching further in the hall of drinking. 2-3

The monkey chief saw Ravana who was deep asleep due to being tired by his intense love making and his collection of ladies among whom some were tired because of love making, some because of singing, some because of dancing and some asleep because of consumption of alcoholic drinks. He saw some ladies leaning on drums of different types and on small seats as well as many sleeping on special beds made for sleep by ladies. He saw thousands of ladies some decorated by ornaments, some who had the habit of

¹⁴ Mandodari was the daughter of Maya, the Asura Architect and her mother was cursed by Goddess Parvathy to become and live like a frog(Mandooka) for 12 years .Mandodari was living with Parvathy and she was gifted by her to Ravana,

describing their bodily beauty, some who describe the meanings of songs, some who work according to the need of place and time and some who can speak properly to suit an occasion 4-7

Amongst those ladies, the Rakshasa king of great valor, looked like a bull among cows of high pedigree in a very wide stable. 8

Naturally being surrounded by those ladies, the king of Rakshasas shined like an awesome he-elephant among large number of she elephants of the forest. 9

In the house of the great chief of rakshasas, the monkey chief saw collection of well stocked drinking places(bars) 10

In that drinking place Hanuman saw meats of deer, pig and raven kept separately. 11

He also saw further half eaten peacocks and hen kept in large golden vessels. 12

Hanuman saw the meats of eagle, sheep, porcupine, deer and peacock cooked with curd and Masalas, fully cooked doves, half eaten ravens, buffalos and one thorn fishes, well cooked mutton, several type of side dishes, several type of drinks and several type of light eatables. 13-14

Similarly by different types of drinks which were sour, salty and other great tastes made by concentrating the juices of grapes, orange and pomegranate and those chains, armlets and bangles which have been removed and strewn all over and also decorated by flowers and fruits kept in goblets that place was very pretty. 15-16

That place of drink appeared to be glistening even without fire by the very many tastefully arranged sofas and chairs. 17

Garlands and also very many distilled alcoholic drinks, various alcoholic drinks made with sugar syrup, honey, fruit juices and flower concentrates, several other drinks which were sorted and kept and various types of meat which were properly mixed, cooked and made by great chefs, with great care in which various spices and condiments which were added in proper proportion filled that drinking place and added to its luster. 18-20

That monkey chief saw many specially made drinks filled in silver and golden pots arranged in different place all over. 21

He also saw large number goblets, which were made of gold, silver and many made with several gems. 22

That place was also filled with serving cups for these drinks, which were made of gold, crystal and gold alloy. 23

That Hanuman saw in some place half emptied goblets, in some places empty goblets and in some places goblets filled to the brim. 24

He wandered here and there seeing various eatables, drinks sorted in different categories, left over food, broken drink pots, spilled water, fruits and prettily made garlands. 25-26

There were white cushions used by ladies for sleeping and various beauties sleeping tightly embraced. 27

Not only that in some cases one lady in her sleep was covering herself with the pulled out dress of another and several were in very deep slumber. 28

It was wonderful, that the cloths on their body and the garlands that they were wearing did not move by their heavy breath, which was like the slowly wafting wind. 29

The breeze carrying with in it the incense of cool sandal, by the scents of various alcoholic drinks and the various flowers in garlands was wafting here and there, That Puspaka Vimana was also full of scents of various perfumes worn by different ladies, the sandalwood and other incense that were being burnt. 30-31

In that house of Rakshasa some of the ladies were brown, some were black and some others were of golden colour. 32

Their looks because of deep sleep and made loose by their passion, appeared like the lotus pond in which the flowers have closed up. 33

Like this the great soul Hanuman wandered all over Ravana's harem and searched in all places but in spite of that did not find Janaki (Sita, Janaka's daughter). 34

Hanuman became very thoughtful and worried because he thought that in staring at those women he has slipped from Dharma (the standards of right conduct.) 35

He thought that the sight of this crowd of wives of the enemy when they were deep asleep made him a commit a great sin. 36

(The sloka could also indicate half nude ladies who were asleep)

Then he thought that his stare at the wives of somebody else was not done in a worldly manner. 37

“This sight of other people's wives has not done by me with passion.” , he further thought. 38

Then a new doubtless thought pointing towards the correct decision arose in the mind of very intelligent Hanuman who was capable of great thought 39

“I saw all the wives of Ravana who were sleeping without any fear and with great belief. In spite of that my mind did not waver even a little bit.” He thought. 40-41

“Mind is the sole cause of all the sense organs doing good or bad and that mind did not waver even a bit in my case”, he thought. 42

“Always suppose a lady has to be searched it should be in the crowd ladies only and therefore It is impossible to me to search and find out Sita in any other place.” he further thought 43

“Search for an animal of a specific type has to be made within the type only and a lost woman cannot be searched among a group of deer.” He thought. 44

“And therefore this Harem of Ravana was searched well by me with a very clean mind and in spite of that I could not find Sita” he thought. 45

The great Hero Hanuman saw many lasses of Devas, Gandarwas and Nagas but was not able to find Janaki. 46

Having seen many great ladies but because he was not able to find Sita, he went outside from that hall at that time and started thinking. 47

The great soul Hanuman having come out of that hall of drinking, took great pain in starting the search for Sita again. 48

Thus ends the eleventh chapter of Sundara Kanda which is in the Ramayana which is the first epic written by Valmiki.

Twelfth Chapter

Hanuman's worry

(Hanuman's final search for Sita in the harem, his fear for having committed a sin because of his entry in to the Harem and his sense of dejection in not being able to find Sita are described)

That Son of God of wind visited separately the garden enclosures, picture galleries and bedrooms in the center of the palace , but he who was interested in seeing the beautiful Sita could not see her. 1

Because that great monkey was not able to see the darling of the son of Raghu, he thought thus “because Sita who is very upset is not visible to me, it is definite that she is no more alive.” 2

“It is possible that the daughter of Janaka who treads by the path of pristine duty, who is devoted to her husband, who has interest in protecting her virtue, might have been killed by the chief of Rakshasas who exhibits many bad qualities.” he thought 3

“After seeing the ladies of the chief of Rakshasas who are having ugly features, who are ugly, who do not have the luster in their body, and who are having a very cruel vision , Sita who is the daughter of Janaka might have died out of fear”. He thought 4

“Without seeing Sita, without doing my duty and having spent lot of time with other monkeys , I should not go back to Sugreeva because the powerful Sugreeva awards great punishments”, he thought. 5

“I have searched all over the harem, I have seen all ladies of Ravana but I only could not see the sterling natured Sita and so all my efforts are in vain”, thought he. 6

“When I go back and meet all the monkeys who have gathered together they would ask “Hey hero, what did you do there? Please tell us about it. What happened there?” and what will I who has not been able to see her reply to them?”. He thought. 7

“If the time is delayed too much for my return definitely they will all commit mass suicide by starvation”, he thought. 8

“When I return after crossing the sea. all those assembled monkeys and also Angada and the very old Jambhavan would individually find fault with me”. He thought. 9

“Being not disappointed in one’s intentions leads to greater wealth, very real pleasures and zest in doing things”, he thought. 10

“This emotion of not getting dispirited by failure leads to success in man’s actions and so I should put in more effort and do more searching”, he thought. 11

He decided that he would put in more intense search in all places where search was not done and started searching. 12

He searched in drinking halls, he searched in flowerbeds, again he searched in picture galleries and he searched well in sporting arenas. 13

He also searched in streets in between the gardens, various types of towers, underground cellars, memorial houses and outer halls of the palaces. 14

That great monkey Hanuman traveled to all places and searched by climbing, getting down, stopping once in a while, walking, opening the doors, breaking open closed doors, getting in, getting out, jumping down and jumping up. 15-16

The places that he has not visited in Ravana’s Harem were not even four fingers broad. 17

That Hanuman searched in the streets between outer walls of buildings, the platforms associated with memorials, wells, and lakes. 18

- In those places Hanuman saw Rakshasis with various forms who were very ugly, whose actions were ugly but he was not able to see the daughter of Janaka. 19
- Hanuman saw there many Vidhyadara maidens whose beauty was unparalleled in the world but was not able to see only the wife of Rama. 20
- Hanuman saw there very beautiful Naga maidens who had faces like the full moon but he was not able to see the good-natured Sita. 21
- Hanuman saw Naga maidens forcibly abducted by Ravana after victory in war but he was not able to see only the daughter of Janaka. 22
- The son of Wind God who was both intelligent and heroic saw several ladies with good lineage but not Sita and became very sad. 23
- His sorrow went on increasing when he thought that the effort put up by monkeys and his crossing of the ocean was fully wasted. 24
- The son of wind God got down from the Pushpaka Vimana with immense sorrow and became very thoughtful. 25

Thus ends the twelfth chapter of Sundara Kanda which is in the Ramayana which is the first epic written by Valmiki.

Thirteenth Chapter

Crashing of hopes of Hanuman

(The worries of the very disappointed Hanuman are described graphically. At the end he sees a glimmer of hope when he sees the Asoka forest)

After jumping from the Vimana on to the wall he was restless like the streaks of lightning among the clouds. 1

The monkey Hanuman after not being able to find the daughter of Janaka in Ravana's palace in spite of vigorous and complete search told to himself as follows:- 2

“I with a desire to do good to Lord Rama have searched this city completely and in spite of that was not able to find the very pretty Sita who is the daughter of Janaka.” 3

“I have definitely searched fully in small ponds, big ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, bushes in the deltas, forts, mountains and plains and am not able to find the daughter of Janaka anywhere.” 4

“The eagle king Sampathi told me about the presence of Sita in Ravana’s palace and still I am not able to find her.” 5

“That Sita who was not born out of a womb, who was brought up in the kingdom of king Videha, who was well brought up with culture by the king of Mithila, who is the foster daughter of the sage-king Janaka will never reach the arms of Ravana who is uncultured., Is it not?” 6

“I think that when Ravana who was afraid of the arrows of Rama abducted her and was flying at a great height, Sita must have slipped from his hands and fallen to earth and died.” 7

“I feel that , it is a possibility that the heart of the well pedigreed Sita who was being abducted and was traveling in the paths of the sky used by sages must have stopped on seeing the sea . “ 8

“I feel by the power of Ravana’s thigh and being trampled in his tight hands must have made her to give up her life.” 9

“Another possibility is that traveling far above the sky that daughter of Janaka must have tried to escape and fallen in the sea and must have died.” 10

“Alas, it is a possibility that the Sita who was far away from her relations, who was doing great penance and who was bent upon preserving her purity must have been eaten by the horrible Ravana.” 11

“Or it is possible that the cruel wives of the Rakshasa king must have eaten Sita who is pure and had black eyes.” 12

“It is also possible that always thinking about the full moon face of Rama who had eyes like the petals of lotus flower, and seeing there was no other alternative she must have simply died.” 13

“It is also probable that Sita who was born in the Kingdom of Mithila must have cried aloud “Hey Rama”, “Hey Lakshmana”, and “Hey Ayodhya”, and also crying many other things must have forsaken her body.” 14

“: I also think that some times she must have been hidden in some dark underground vaults and like a bird put in a cage and must be crying even now.” 15

“How can Sita who is the wife of Rama, who has eyes like lotus petals, who is famous and who has brought up in the house of Janaka submit herself to Ravana?” 16

“Whether she has been well hidden or has been killed or is no more because of her deep sorrow , this should not be informed to Sri Rama who is very deeply attached to her?” 17

“If I do inform him the truth danger will result and if I do not inform ,then also it would have a worse result and in this circumstance I am not able to decide either way.” 18-19

Hanuman then again reexamined his thought process to conclude as to what would be timely, yield good result and would be accepted as right by everybody. 20

“If I do return to the kingdom of the monkeys without seeing Sita, what great thing would I get?”, he thought 21

“My crossing of the ocean, entry in to the city of Lanka and seeing of Rakshasas would go waste.”, he thought. 22

“What will Sugreeva and the monkeys who have accompanied me and those two sons of Dasaratha who have reached Kishkinda tell me?”, he thought. 23

“As soon as I reach ,If I inform the bad news to Sri Rama that I have not been able to find Sita, because of that he will die.”, he thought. 24

“He would not stay alive if he hears the very cruel, hard hearted ,terrible and hard words which are without mercy and which cannot be borne by sense organs .”he thought 25

“The intelligent Lakshmana full of love to him seeing that Rama is bent on death will not also continue to live”, he thought. 26

“Once Bharatha hears that his two brothers are no more , he will also die .Once Shatrugna knows that Bharatha is dead he will also die. “ he thought. 27

“Once they know that their sons are all dead, the mothers Kausalya, Sumithra and Kaikeyi would also not live.” , he thought. 28

“When he sees Sri Rama in this state, the grateful and truthful king of monkeys Sugreeva would also forsake his life”. He thought. 29

“The miserable Ruma (Wife of Sugreeva) would be afflicted by the loss of her husband and be unhappy, sad and suffering pain and would leave her life.”, he thought. 30

“Once Sugreeva is no more, Tara who is already miserable by the loss of Vali and also gone down in health by that sorrow would also die.”, he thought. 31

“How will the lad Angadha continue to live in spite of the sorrow of loosing both his parents and also Sugreeva.”, he thought. 32

“It is certain that afflicted by the sorrow of the loss of their kings, the monkeys would beat their head by their hands and fists and break their head.”, he thought. 33

“All the monkey heroes who were respected and loved by good words and gifts by the famous monkey king would sacrifice their lives “, he thought. 34

“After that the monkeys would not go to play in places where there are lot of houses or in forests or in mountains.”, he thought. 35

“Those who live with families and with wives and children , would be affected by the sorrow of their king and would roll in to rough terrain from the top of the mountains and die”, he thought.. 36

“Otherwise they will all die by consuming poison or hanging themselves or by starvation or by entering in to the fire or falling on weapons.”, he thought. 37

“I think that by my return ,the Ikshuvaku clan and the monkeys would all be destroyed and consequently there would be intolerably great wailing”, he thought. 38

“So I would not return to the city of Kishkinda for it would not be possible for me to see Sugreeva without seeing Sita.”. he thought. 39

“If without returning I stay here ,then those two great heroes who are also great souls, with a hope that the work will be done eventually would keep their souls and so the monkeys also would live boldly.”, he thought. 40

“If I am not able to see the daughter of Janaka, I can live in the shadow of the trees here with whatever good food that I get or with whatever food that comes my way , controlling my five senses and live a life of a recluse.”, he thought. 41

“Otherwise I can raise a raging fire in these fertile areas with fruits and roots , near the sea and die by entering It.”, he thought. 42

“The other alternative is to die of starvation so that the crows and other flesh eaters would eat away my body.”, he thought. 43

“I know that this method of leaving ones life is permitted by great sages”, he thought. 44

“If I am not able to find Janaki then with grace I can fall in to the water”, he thought. 45

“This beautiful long night which began very well for me in which benefits were received one after another which lead to my fame became a waste to me because I am not able to see Sita.”, he thought. 46

“At least I can become a sage who controls all his senses and live below a tree.”, he thought. 47

“Without seeing that black eyed beauty I will not return from here”, he thought. 48

“If I return from here without finding Sita , Angada will die with all his monkeys.”, he thought. 49

“There are many bad results because of death and the one who lives ultimately gets the good and he one who lives definitely gets pleasures , and so I will keep my life.”, he thought. 50

That monkey chief in spite of again and again analyzing his sorrow did still not reach the end of his sorrow. 51

He then thought, “Let the abducted wife of Rama be any where but let me kill the very strong ten headed Ravana for by doing that base act and at least I would have taken revenge.” 52-53

“Otherwise I will take him like a sacrificial cow being taken to the fire over the sea and put him at the feet of Rama”, he thought. 54

Not knowing anything about that Sita, being very thoughtful, worried and sad the monkey thought thus. 55

“Till I am able to see the famous Sita who is the wife of Rama, I would keep on searching the city of Lanka again and again.” 56

“Had I brought Rama with me fully believing the words of Sampathi, not being able to see his wife, Rama would have burnt all the monkeys.” 57

“I would live here reducing my food and controlling my organs for because of that those men and monkeys will not all die because of me.” 58

“I am able to see an Asoka forest with very big trees and this is the only one place I have not searched yet.” 59

“I would salute the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, eleven Suns two Aswini devas, and seven Maruths and become some one who will increase the sorrow of these Rakshasas” 60

“I am going to somehow win over all the rakshasas and present Sita belonging to the Ikshuvaku clan to Sri Rama like giving the end result to the one who is doing fire sacrifice.” 61

The resplendent Hanuman who was the Son of God of wind, meditated like this for some time and ended up with the senses devoid of the tie of sadness. 62

“My salutations to Sri Rama along with his brother Lakshmana, My salutations to Sita who is the daughter of Janaka, My salutations to Rudra, Indra, Yama the god of death, Vayu the god of wind, moon, sun and The people of Maruth”, he saluted 63

After saluting thus and also saluting Sugreeva Hanuman thoughtfully examined all the ways to the Asoka forest. He considered Asoka forest as the first place for success and thought about his future steps. 64-65

“This Asoka forest , with all sort of decorations, with densely populated trees and which is full of Rakshasas should be searched immediately he thought.” 66

“Here sentries have been posted here and there and are protecting the trees and the wind is also blowing strong”, he observed. 67

“Let the sages and Devas bless me to give me result in this attempt by making me small and not visible to Ravana and also for the sake of Rama.”, he prayed 68

“Let the ever existing Lord Brahma , other Devas, God of Fire, God of wind and Indra with his weapon of diamond grant me success.”, he further prayed. 69

“Let Varuna(god of rain) with the rope in his hand, sun, moon, the great Aswini devas, Maruths, Parameshwara, that God who is the chief of all beings, all the beings and several other invisible gods who are on my way grant me victory in my attempt”, he prayed.

70-71

“When will I be able to see the noble Sita’s face, which has a prominent nose. which has clean teeth, which is without blemishes, which has eyes like the petals of lotus flower and which glitters like the moon without blemishes ?”, he wailed. 72

“How is she who is without support, who is forever meditating, who has been abducted by the cruel sinner Ravana who wore a good form over his terrible aspect, going to become visible in front of my eye?”, he thought. 73

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter of Sundara Kanda which is in the Ramayana which is the first epic written by Valmiki.

Fourteenth Chapter

Searching inside the Asoka forest

(Graphic description of the Asoka forest as seen by Hanuman is given. Seeing the forest Hanuman decides that Sita should definitely visit there because she likes the forest and also needs to do her morning ablutions)

The very powerful Hanuman after thinking for some more time and after meditating on Sita, Jumped immediately on to the wall of that palace of Ravana. 1

Enthused all over his body by his self confidence that monkey climbed that boundary wall and saw many trees with flowers symbolic of spring season, several Sala trees,

several pretty Asoka trees, Several champaka trees in full bloom, several karnikara trees, several Naaka trees, several mango trees and several Kapimuka(monkey face) trees. 2-3

In that orchard with many mango trees, which is surrounded by pretty climbing plants he rushed in side, like an arrow rushing to its aim from the string of the bow. 4

That Hanuman entered that garden which was full of sound made by birds, which was like a rising sun, which was made strange by silver and gold like trees, which was full of birds and deer on all sides, which had several small strange and pretty gardens, which was full of several trees with flowers and fruits, which was always full of nightingales and bees, which was full of sounds made by peacocks, which had a rich varieties of birds, which had people who are happy and in which birds and animals were playing. 5-8

Hanuman who was searching for the very pretty lady Sita who was blemish less, woke up several birds which were sound asleep. 9

The trees which were shaken violently by the birds which were flying above them, caused a multi coloured rain of flowers. 10

Hanuman the son of the God of wind, covered completely by the shedding flowers looked like a mountain of flowers in the middle of that Asoka Forest. 11

All animals seeing the monkey rushing in all directions thought that he was the spring season itself. 12

The ground covered by the shedding flowers from the trees looked like a lady wearing ornaments. 13

The trees shaken vigorously by the strong monkey shed various types of flowers. 14

The trees having shed their leaves, branches , flowers and fruits looked like a loosing gambler who has already pledged his cloths and ornaments. 15

Those bare stems of the trees looked like they have been destroyed by cyclone and consequently deserted by all birds and appeared as if they are of no use. 16

That Asoka forest beat by the hands and tail of the monkey was bereft of any noble trees and resembled a lady with disheveled hair, with erased Sindhoora (dots in the forehead) . with ashen lips drunk by a tenacious lover and with marks all over the body made by his nails and teeth. 17-18

The monkey cut and fell the groups of twining climbers all over in the garden, which was similar to the scattering of clouds over Vindhya Mountain by the Wind God. 19

Traveling through the garden, that monkey chief saw places which were inlaid with precious stones, which were made of silver, which were made of gold ;streams (fountains) of various shapes, which were filled with very pure water, which had steps made of the nine types of precious stones here and there, which had pearls and corals as sand, which had the middle portion made of crystals, which glittered prettily by the very special type of golden trees, which was full of Lotus and Neelothphala flowers, which was filled with the cooing sound of Chakravaka birds, which was having the sound created by crabs, which had the sound created by the beaks of swans, which was filled with nectar like water, which was arranged in such a way that it was surrounded by small rivulets on all sides ; gardens filled with several type of climbing plants, which had several wish giving trees, which had several Karaveera plants; and which had orchards filled with dense ornamental shrubs. 20-25

Here the monkey chief saw many mountains with cloud like tall peaks, which had several very pretty sharp peaks, which was surrounded on all four sides by sentry stations, which was filled with houses made by granite stones, which was surrounded by different varieties of trees, which was the prettiest in the world, and which had several pretty terraces. 26-27

He saw streams flowing from those mountains, which looked like the pretty loving ladies raising from the lap of their lovers and slowly going forward. 28

Not only that but the monkey chief thought that the pretty streams which were flowing back because of huge trees with a large sinking crowns were stopping them, were like the angry sweetheart who is stopped by her relatives and coming back after giving up her anger and going near her darling 29-30

The monkey chief Hanuman who was the son of wind God, saw near the river a lotus pond full of different varieties of birds and a lake which was filled with cold water, which had several steps inlaid with precious gems, which had sand strewn with pearls, which had several flocks of deer roaming here and there, which had very pretty and specialized orchards, which was constructed by Viswakarma (the architect of Devas), which was surrounded by several flower beds and which was decorated by several well crafted towers. 31-34

The trees in the garden were bearing fruits and flowers and were decorated .They also had platforms constructed all round which had golden steps. 35

Hanuman the monkey saw a golden Simshuba tree (caller “Irumul “in Malayalam) with various climbers and leaves encircling it and which had a golden platform beneath it. 36
(These trees do exist in Kerala forests even now. They are mainly used for firewood)

He saw springs in very low lying areas and also dry places and several mountain like golden tress. 37-38

That great monkey chief thought for a moment that he too is golden seeing the glitter similar to the Meru Mountain of those trees. 39

He was wonderstruck on seeing the golden Simshuba tree with its seedlings around it, and also with numerous bell like sound created by the pleasantly wafting wind. 40

Hanuman who was very swift climbed another Simshuba tree which had flowery tips, which had young leaf and flower buds and which had very dense leaves and thought, “ I would be able to see from here Vaidehi (daughter of Videha) who is sad because of her sorrow, who always fervently wishes for seeing Rama, and who may have accidentally come over here.” 41-42

“This Asoka forest belonging to the bad soul Ravana is very pretty and is decorated with Sandalwood trees, Champaka trees and Bakula trees.” 43

“The royal lady who is the daughter of Janaka would certainly come over to this very pretty lotus pond which is full of birds.” 44

“That Janaki (Sita) who is the queen. Who has experience in living in forests, who is very talented and who is the very innocent darling of Raghava (Sri Rama who is the descendent of King Raghu) would definitely come here.” 45
(Raghu the ancestor of Rama served the celestial cow Nandini and got a son called Dilipa)

“ Perhaps that daughter of Janaka who has doe like eyes, who has become thin by constant thought of Sri Rama and who has lot of experience in living in forests would certainly come over here.” 46

“That lady who has wilted due to parting with Rama, who has lotus like eyes and who is a traveler in the forest is likely to come daily here as she is interested in seeing the forest.” 47

“That Janaki who is the very innocent wife of Sri Rama, who is the daughter of Janaka, who is of good colour, who is in the middle of youth, and who is great is always interested in people who travel in the forest and also taking in to account that the dawn is coming near she would be coming to this river with clean waters to offer her Ablations of the dawn.” 48-49
(The Brahmanas and Kshatriyas offer oblations during dawn, noon and dusk (Called Sandhyavandanam) to the Sun God. But these are at present being done only by males. This stanza indicates that during those times even ladies used to offer it)

“This holy Asoka forest is very suitable to the intelligent wife of Rama who is the daughter in law of the great King.” 50

“If that moon faced lady is alive she would definitely come to this river with crystal clear water.” 51

At that time , thinking thus, the great Hanuman hid himself among leaves of a profusely flowering tree expecting to see wife of the king of men and was staring down the tree and was watching everything. 52

Thus ends the fourteenth chapter of Sundara Kanda which is in the Ramayana which is the first epic written by Valmiki.

Fifteenth Chapter

Seeing of Sita

(This chapter initially gives a description of Asoka vana and its one occupant whom Hanuman suspects as Sita. In the end using pure logic Hanuman concludes that she definitely is Sita)

Sitting on the Simshuba tree Hanuman examined all areas down below , in the garden in search of Mythili (princess of Mithila) and saw everything which was there in the Asoka forest. 1

Sitting there he saw well the entire garden, which was full of shining climbers and trees, which was sweetly scented, which was decorated all over, which was similar to the ornamental parks, which was full of animals and birds, which had lot of great mansions, which was resounding with the sweet song of Koels, which had golden fruits and flowers, which had many ponds, which had several sofas and carpets, which had several underground chambers, which had trees which fruit and flower in all seasons, which had several Asoka trees full of flowers from bottom to top and were touching the floor because of the heavy load of flowers , which had several Karnikara trees, which had several fully flowering Palasa trees, which was shining like a sun due to the dense flowers and glitter of Asoka trees, which appeared to shine because of various ornament like flowers and which had bare leaved trees so made by the very many birds which were often flying as a flock . 2-8

Because of their luster that entire area appeared to be shining and the garden also shined with multi crowned pongamia trees, the seven leafed trees, Champaka trees and Udhalaka trees. 9

There were thousands of Asoka trees in the garden some of which were golden, some like the flame of fire and some very jet black. 10

That forest with several parks and was as pretty as Indra’s celebrated Nandana vana and Kubera’s famous Chithra vana and was pretty , holy , greatly attractive, with holy splendor, which cannot be compared to any other garden and which was much above the rest. 11

It was like a second sky full of star collections which resembled flowers and with its flowers resembling the nine precious gems it was like the fifth sea. 12

That pretty garden filled with very desirable scents resembled the great Gandhamadana mountain and was full of honey smelling trees which flower in all seasons and with various types of deer and birds which make different types of noises and was stealer of mind with wafting perfumes all around. 13-14

That monkey chief also saw a temple which was near the Asoka forest, which was tall, which was supported by thousand pillars in the middle. Which was as white as Kailasa, which had steps made of coral. Which had floor made of molten gold, which had the glitter attracting the eyes, which was holy and which appeared to touch the sky in height. 15-17

(Possibly this is a very rare mention of temple in the entire Ramayana. Taking in to account that nothing is mentioned about its presiding deity, the word Chaithya in the verse could be taken to mean as a remarkable building. The word 1000-pillared hall is perhaps mentioned first time in Hindu literature)

He saw in the garden a lady who was wearing dirty cloths, who was surrounded by several Rakshasis, who was thin because of starvation, who was again and again breathing hard and who was shining like the crescent of moon in the early waning period. After staring and seeing her with care he saw that broad eyed lady who was with glittering mien, who was like a flame of fire darkened by smoke, who was dressed in a single disheveled great yellow cloth, who was laden with dust, who was not made up, who was like a pond without lotus, who was ashamed, who looked wilted due to sorrow, who was like a lady saint, who was like the star Rohini affected by planet Mars, who was with face made wet by tears, who was dejected, who was thin because she was not taking food, who was full of sad thoughts and sorrow, who was full of fear, who was not seeing any of her dear relatives near by, who was like a deer separated from her flock and surrounded by dogs, who was having singly made hair which was hanging like a cobra behind her, who was like a black forest covered earth in the autumn, who needed good life, who was wilted by sorrow, who never knew the troubles caused by sorrow, who was very thin and who was covered with dirt. 18-25

He concluded that she was that lady who was abducted by Ravana the Rakshasa who could assume any desired form and that she was having the same appearance as she had when abducted. 26
(Rama had given Description of how she looked when she was abducted)

Even after Seeing Sita, who had a face like full moon, who had pretty eyebrows, . Who had very pretty round breasts, who by her luster was removing darkness from all directions, who had very black hair, who had lips like the red guava fruit, who had very beautiful hips, who had eyes like petals of lotus, who is born in a great family, who was born in the channel created by plough, who is darling of all the world like Rati (wife of God of love)who had the shine of the full moon, who had extremely pretty body, who was sitting on the floor as if meditating with full control over all her organs, who was like

the serpent maiden hissing with fear , who was not shining because of the hard and long sorrow, who was like the flame of fire hidden by the smoke, who was like the poem which praises but which was not clear, who was like the assets which had vanished, who was like the hope which is reduced, who was like the desire which is stopped, who was like the fulfillment of desires which were dangerous, who was like the confused wisdom, who was like the fame darkened by gossips which were not true, who was sad because she was not able to attain Rama, who had grown thin because she was abducted by Rakshasas , who was having eyes like a doe, who was seeing here and there with fear because of her weakness, who was breathing heavily again and again with a lusterless face with black curved eyes and eye brows. , who was coated with dust and dirt, who should wear make up but who did not wear it, who should be pitied, who was like the moon light hidden by black clouds and who was like the corrupted Vedic knowledge which was not repeated and practiced, Hanuman's brain was full of suspicions..27-36

Hanuman recognized Sita with great difficulty which was similar to understanding of an ungrammatical sentence without any figure of speech and which indicated a wrong meaning. 37

He understood her as Sita who was a princess, who was blameless and who had wide eyes after looking at her carefully due to the following reasons. 38

“He saw those ornaments (which could be easily removed and are not a symbol of a married woman) which were pointed out to be worn by her by Sri Rama as an identification hanging and shining on a nearby branch of a tree. “ 39

(This stanza indicates that there were some ornaments even during those times which should always worn by married women and there were others, which were optional and could be removed. Here it is mentioned that Sita only wore such ornaments that were compulsory. She threw some of them over the Kishkinda Mountain when she was being abducted by Ravana and were collected by the monkeys)

“He thought that some of those ornaments which were worn by her permanently were fixed strongly and were coated with dirt and were definitely those pointed by Sri Rama as identification like those ornaments made of coral and other jewels being worn on her fingers and hands, like the well crafted ear drops, and like the well tied ear ornament called Swadamshtam”. 40-41

(It is interesting to note that he does not mention the mangalyam, which must have been introduced after this time.)

“He did not see on her those ornaments which were thrown by her from the Pushpaka Vimana on Rishya Mookha Mountains and all those which she was having were those listed but not thrown out. “ 42-43

(Sugreeva and his friends were hiding in Rishya Mookha mountains afraid of Vali, who could not enter there due to a curse.)

“At that time the monkey chief saw her golden yellow pretty upper cloth had fallen down and was hanging on the tree. “ 44

(This stanza indicates that she was not wearing a sari but a two pieced cloth and the upper cloth must have been similar to Uthariyam worn by males)

“Whatever ornaments she has thrown away were definitely the one seen by the monkeys”, He thought . 45

“Though whatever cloth she was wearing was crumpled and dirty because they were worn for a long time, they were definitely having the luster and colour of the cloth befitting her status, without doubt” , he thought. 46

“Though this golden darling of Sri Rama was now in the custody of some one else, She who is faultless was definitely in his mind and this is definitely her”. He thought. 47

“This is the one for whom Sri Rama was sad, due to mercy, affection, sorrow and love; mercy because a helpless one has fallen in others hands, affection because he had the responsibility of protecting the one who has come to him for protection, sorrow because his wife was missing and love because she was the wife who was acting according to his wishes.” 48-49

“The beauty of each part of her body and its shape were similar to that of the beauty of Sri Rama and the personality of his was also similar to hers, and so this black eyed beauty must be her”. He thought. 50

“This ladies mind lives within his and his mind lives within her and that must be the reason why she and he are staying alive at least for this short time”. He thought. 51-52

“Sri Rama in spite of parting from this lady is still keeping his body in tact and his body is not breaking to pieces and so it is clear that Lord Sri Rama is doing things which were impossible to others”. He thought. 53

“By living away from this wonderful beauty Sita at least for some time, the great Sri Rama was doing some thing which is impossible for others”, he again thought. 54

Like this becoming happy on seeing Sita, he thought in his mind of Sri Rama and thought of him as his Lord. 55
(*He felt that she was keeping her virtue in tact and became happy*)

Thus ends the fifteenth chapter of Sundara Kanda which is in the Ramayana which is the first epic written by Valmiki.