COMPOSITION AND NARRATIVE IN THE *AYODHYAKANDA* OF THE JAGAT SINGH *RAMAYANA*: A STUDY OF TEXT AND IMAGE IN AN INDIAN MANUSCRIPT

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for

The Degree Master of Arts in the

Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Cathleen Ann Cummings, B.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
1999

Master's Examination Committee:

Dr. Susan Huntington, Adviser
Dr. John Seyller, University of Vermont

Approved by

[Signature]
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ABSTRACT

The Jagat Singh Ramayana was commissioned in 1649 for the Royal Library in Udaipur, the capital city of Mewar, during the reign of Rana Jagat Singh (r. 1628-52) and was completed in 1653. With six out of seven books of the epic completed, the Jagat Singh Ramayana is widely considered one of the most ambitious projects of all Mewar painting. Sahibdin, the leading artist in Jagat Singh's workshop, was responsible for Book II, the Ayodhyakanda, and Book VI.

This thesis identifies for the first time the subject of all illustrations in the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana and treats the relationship between narrative and composition within the paintings of the Ayodhyakanda. Sahibdin uses a variety of specific compositional approaches to convey the more intangible elements of the narrative, such as mood, that might otherwise be lost in his literal visualization of the story built up through sequences of specific action and event. Through compositional means, he establishes a discernible contrast between the two settings of the Ayodhyakanda--city and forest--and distinguishes between the space and time in which the characters exist before Rama's exile from that in which the characters exist following the exile. These compositional differences reflect the different stages and moments of the narrative and the compositional choices made and maintained in these paintings enable the richness of the
text to be made visible to the reader. The narrative here is, in fact, carried by the illustrations, with the accompanying text playing a secondary role.

In order to fully understand and contextualize these assertions I discuss the development of Sahibdin's style, the production of the Jagat Singh Ramayana manuscript as a whole, and the historical context of the Ayodhyakanda. It is shown that Sahibdin's painting style resulted from a combination of factors. Based on the early, indigenous Western Indian painting tradition, Sahibdin was also influenced by Mughal and Popular Mughal painting in ways that make his work unique from that of other Mewari artists. Under a patron who seems to have actively supported the illustrated manuscript tradition, Sahibdin was allowed important opportunities to develop his style and explore a wide range of expressive techniques. During Jagat Singh's reign, Sahibdin's style thus became established as the illustrative style of Mewar painting, maintained with little modification under Jagat Singh's immediate successors.
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I would also like to thank Mr. Jeremiah Losty at the British Library who kindly read this thesis in its very early stage and contributed useful comments. Thanks also to Dr. Michael O’Keefe and Mr. Paul Carter at the British Library for making the manuscript of the Ayodhyakanda available to me.

The Department of History of Art at The Ohio State University provided funding to enable me to visit the British Library to study the manuscript. I am most grateful for this assistance.
ViTA

April 12, 1964

Born - Cincinnati, Ohio

1986

B.A. Art History, English, Mills College

1993

M.A. Computer Applications for Art History,
Birkbeck College, University of London

1994 - 1996

Cultural Programs Assistant,
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

1996 - present

Graduate Teaching and Research Associate,
The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History of Art
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A few years before his death in October of 1652, Rana Jagat Singh, ruler of the Rajput state of Mewar, commissioned a large illustrated manuscript of the Ramayana, one of the great epic narratives of Indian literature. The first volume was completed in 1649 and the final two books were finished in 1653, a few months after the ruler’s death. The Jagat Singh Ramayana rivaled in scale the great illustrated histories produced in the painting workshops of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and may have required

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1 Since the English pronunciation of the Sanskrit words used in this thesis is not materially affected by the Sanskrit diacritics, for the sake of simplicity and ease of reading diacritical marks have been omitted from the thesis.

2 Jeremiah P. Losty, The Art of the Book in India, (London: British Library Board, 1982), has written of Jagat Singh as the commissioner of the set of volumes. However, other scholars hold differing opinions as to whether Jagat Singh can, in fact, be considered the book’s “patron.” He is explicitly mentioned in only one of the seven colophons, that of the Ayodhyakanda, in which it is said that the book was made for his inspection. However, given the unprecedented scale of the book, it is unlikely that it could have been produced without royal assistance. Further, Sahibdin, the artist responsible for Books II and VI, had a history of patronage by Jagat Singh. Given the enormity of the resources required to complete the project as well as the possible political ramifications of it (to be discussed below), I accept Losty’s attribution of Jagat Singh as patron.

3 Losty, The Art of the Book in India, p. 125. See also Appendix B for a brief summary of the historiography of the Jagat Singh Ramayana, in which Losty’s contribution, and those of others, to our understanding of the manuscript are discussed.
an expansion of the royal painting workshop at Udaipur to execute it.⁴ The manuscript is widely considered one of the most ambitious projects of all Mewar painting, reflecting the “golden age” of manuscript illustration in Mewar, before the general decline in quality and range of compositions visible by the early 18th century.

According to the colophons, the scribe Hirananda was assigned the responsibility of copying out the text to all seven volumes of the Ramayana. Three artists were appointed to create the paintings that accompanied the text.⁵ Manohar, a relatively conservative junior artist, was put in charge of Books I, III and VII. Book IV, and possibly also Book V, fell to an unidentified artist who has been identified by Losty as a Deccani, or at least as Deccani-trained.⁶ Sahibdin, considered to be the leading artist in the Jagat Singh workshop, was responsible for Books II and VI.⁷ Book II, the Ayodhyakanda, tells of Rama’s exile into the forest and the start of his life there with his brother, Lakshmana, and his wife, Sita; the Yuddhakanda, Book VI, is the book of battles, in which Rama fights and defeats the demon king Ravana in order to gain the release of his abducted wife, Sita. The colophon of the Ayodhyakanda specifically indicates that the Ayodhyakanda was made for

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⁷ Andrew Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Gita-Govinda Illustrations,” Chhavi-2, Rek Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume (Bararas: Bharat Kala Bhavan), 1981, p. 233. As Topsfield explains in fn. 2, the name Sahibdin is an approximate spelling of the artist’s name and seems to be a corrupt form of Shihab ud-Din.
Jagat Singh’s inspection. As Losty has pointed out, Sahibdin was

...especially associated with Rana Jagat Singh, for his earliest known work (a dispersed Ragamala series – paintings of musical modes) is dated in the first year of Jagat Singh’s reign in 1628, and his other paintings span the course of the monarch’s reign with the last known work dated 1655.

During Jagat Singh’s reign, Sahibdin’s style became established as the illustrative style of Mewar painting, maintained with little modification under Jagat Singh’s successors, Raj Singh and Jai Singh.

The Yuddhakanda, is generally considered to be Sahibdin’s highest achievement, and Sahibdin’s role as artist is specifically noted in the colophon. The Ayodhyakanda was completed two years before the Yuddhakanda, and its illustrations are often more tentative and less technically proficient than those of the Yuddhakanda, with Sahibdin collaborating with other artists of his workshop more regularly. Yet, the importance of the Ayodhyakanda in the Ramayana cannot be overestimated, for it is in the Ayodhyakanda that the story of the Ramayana really begins. As Sheldon I. Poliock has pointed out, “all action that follows depends directly on what happens here, just as everything that precedes

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8 Losty, The Art of the Book in India, p. 126.
11 Losty, The Art of the Book in India, pp. 126-128.
serves no other function than to prepare this site.”

In the Ayodhyakanda the narrative takes its first truly dramatic turn, triggering extreme shifts not only in action and setting but also in mood of the many characters, and these shifts allow for a broader range of compositional types than are found in Sahibdin’s other work, including the later Yuddhakanda of this manuscript.

This paper will treat this relationship between narrative and composition in the Ayodhyakanda. It is my assertion that Sahibdin, as the primary artist of the book, used a variety of specific compositional approaches to convey the more intangible elements of the narrative, such as mood, that might otherwise be lost in his literal visualization of the story built up through sequences of specific action and event. Elements of his approach are visible in other of Sahibdin’s works, but are particularly clearly expressed in the Ayodhyakanda [British Library, London, Add.15296(l)]. It is also my contention that these compositional choices result from the visual dichotomy Sahibdin creates between those scenes which takes place in Ayodhya before exile (“inside”) and those in the forest after exile (“outside”), and that the compositional choices made and maintained in these paintings enable the richness of the text to be made visible to the reader. Further, I will suggest that the narrative here is, in fact, carried by the illustrations, and that the accompanying text plays a secondary role.

Before these assertions can be presented and considered it is important to come to some understanding of Sahibdin as an artist, and to see which elements of his style are

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inherited from the historical Western Indian and so-called Chaurapanchasika styles and what are the elements he himself seems to have grafted onto those traditions. This I will do in Chapter Two, where I will also briefly survey the important commissions of his career, which culminated in the Jagat Singh Ramayana. Chapter 3 will then present the main assertion of this work, that Sahibdin employed a range of compositional approaches as tools to further the narrative of the Ayodhyakanda. There I will fully describe this phenomenon through a series of specific examples.

In the subsequent chapters, the Ayodhyakanda will be contextualized in order that we may understand how and why Sahibdin takes the compositional approaches he does. In Chapter 4 I will discuss the production of the Jagat Singh Ramayana manuscript as a whole, its physical properties, the workshop process which created it, and the relationship between scribe and painter. Chapter 5 places the Ayodhyakanda in its historical context, discussing the factors that influenced the patron and his patronage of the manuscript and looking specifically at how these facts bear upon Sahibdin’s style and approach. Each of the paintings in the volume is identified in Appendix A, which is arranged sequentially according to folio number.

With this exploration of Sahibdin’s Ayodhyakanda, and my identification of all paintings in the volume, I hope to arrive at a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between composition and narrative in a masterpiece of Rajput manuscript painting, and, at the same time, to provide a new model for the analysis of Indian manuscript painting. Additionally, I hope that this study will deepen our understanding of the relationship between Mughal and Rajput painting.
CHAPTER 2

SAHIBDIN AND HIS STYLE

Little can be said about a specific Mewari painting style before the beginning of the 17th century. Until this time Mewari artists and those from neighboring Rajput states seem to have followed the general features of the Western Indian and the so-called Chaurapanchasika painting traditions. A very early dated painting set believed to be of Mewar origin, the Supasanachchariyan of 1423, follows many of the standard conventions of the Western Indian style, including a limited palette of a few basic colors, applied without modelling, and the generally stylized treatment of the subject. The Chawand Ragamala of 1605 (see Figure 1, Lalita Raga, and Figure 2, Malkos Raga, from this set), the earliest inscribed Mewari illustrated manuscript, is clearly consistent with this earlier Mewari expression of the Western Indian style. The paintings of the Chawand Ragamala are nearly square in format, subdivided into small square or rectangular compartments and filled in with a few unmodulated bright colors. Figures are angular, with faces shown in profile, and are unnaturally large in relationship to the architectural

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13 Discussed in Moti Chandra, Mewar Painting in the Seventeenth Century (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1957), no page.
elements.\textsuperscript{14} The compositions are conceived very much in terms of horizontal registers: a thin strip along the bottom edge of the painting to mark the ground is topped by a forest or pavilion in a wide horizontal band in the center of the composition; a band of blue with a white border at the top edge of the painting suggests the sky. The consistency in style among these works suggests that the intervening years between the 1423 and the 1605 series saw little change in the traditional mode of painting.

With the influence of Mughal, Popular Mughal, and sub-imperial Mughal painting during the latter part of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, however, individual Hindu kingdoms seem to have begun to develop their own modes of expression, modes which may also have been influenced by the movement of itinerant artists among regions during the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{15} Much of Mughal painting was based on the format, techniques and subject matter of Persian painting, displaying the Persian interest in fine, detailed drawing, and the extensive use of gold mixed with a varied and soft palette. Additionally, Mughal painters adopted Persian motifs, such as a regularly-patterned landscape ground and exaggerated, vertical rock forms. Mughal artists, however, were also interested in exploring motifs and techniques derived from other sources, including the use of volumetric modelling and shading and the perspectival effects common in European art. The unique modes of expression that developed in the various Hindu kingdoms was, in part, responsive to the local artists' awareness of these elements of Mughal painting, as well as the degree to

\textsuperscript{14} Milo C. Beach, \textit{Mughal and Rajput Painting} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 118.

\textsuperscript{15} Moti Chandra, “Paintings from an Illustrated Version of the \textit{Ramayana} Painted at Udaipur in A. D. 1649,” in \textit{Prince of Wales Museum of Western India Bulletin 5} (1955), p. 36.
which the local artists were willing to adopt those Mughal painting characteristics. Further, the degree to which Mughal influence was felt in each kingdom often correlated with each ruler’s political relationship with the Mughal emperor in Agra.

The Mewar court atelier seems to have been formally established only when Jagat Singh took the throne in 1628. 16 Sahibdin may have been the director of the atelier; he is one of only two artists working in Udaipur whom we know by name during the Jagat Singh period, the other being Manahor, who worked on Book I, and possibly also Books III and VII, of the Ramayana.17 Sahibdin was certainly the lead artist in the Jagat Singh workshop and on the Ayodhyakanda project. His style can be seen as a hybrid of indigenous and Mughal influences (see, for example, Folios 27, 69, or 101). Sahibdin’s works are rooted in the traditional Western Indian and “Chaurapanchasika” painting idioms, visible especially in his use of a vivid palette to achieve an energetic and emotive effect, and an approach to composition grounded in the architectural box in which figures are framed. At the same time, compositional techniques derived from Mughal painting are clearly visible in his work. These include the use of compositional diagonals, a diminished figural scale, and descriptions of the exteriors of architectural spaces.

In Sahibdin’s paintings we also find a preference for certain motifs found in Mughal painting, such as hills and rocks defined in the Mughal manner (see folio 71, for example),18 and the depiction of rectangular canopies overhanging the entrances to tents

16 Losty, The Art of the Book in India, p. 105.
17 Losty, The Art of the Book in India, p. 105.
18 All paintings of the Ayodhyakanda are reproduced in Appendix A. Chapter, or sarga, numbers given for each image, and quotations from the text, derive from the critical edition of the Ramayana.
and pavilions (see folio 104). These compositional techniques and motifs are visible in the examples of Mughal and sub-imperial Mughal painting reproduced here as Figures 3, 4, and 5. Figure 3, a page from the ca. 1589 *Baburnama*, is a typical example of Akbari painting. Here, the Mughal use of diagonal elements in the landscape gives a dynamism to the scene and suggests a relatively naturalistic recession of the landscape into the distance. The varied Mughal palette with an emphasis on pastels, and the Persian-inspired mountain forms are also represented in this example. Figure 4, a page from the Mughal *Akbar-i Barmakahyan* of ca. 1595, provides an example of the Mughal interest in soft and volumetric modelling of figures and in portraiture; in this example we also see the popular canopy motif which Sahibdin frequently adopts. Figure 5 is an example of a Popular Mughal manuscript, the *Razmnama* of 1617; many characteristically Mughal features are visible in this work, including the vertical format, the high horizon line, the presence of text panels within the illustrative frame, and the naturalistic treatment of many of the landscape elements.

Although we cannot say for certain whether Sahibdin was exposed to any specific Mughal manuscript or album, it is certainly the impact of these types of works on Sahibdin

translated by Sheldon I Pollock and edited by Robert P. Goldman; see footnote 12.


that resulted in the evolution of his characteristic Mewari idiom. Though he painted in a style most closely associated with Hindu and Jain painting, Sahibdin was a Muslim. As is well known, many Muslim artists were employed in Rajput painting studios, including the artist responsible for the 1605 Chawand Ragamala, Nasir ad-Din. Most scholars agree that Sahibdin was aware of current trends in Mughal painting and that Sahibdin deliberately modified his style in light of Mughal developments. Indeed, there is reason to suppose, as Losty, Pramod Chandra, and others have done, that the higher degree of Mughal influence in Sahibdin’s work, when compared to other Mewari painters such as Manohar, is a result of Sahibdin’s experience working the Mughal atelier or, more likely at Popular Mughal centers such as Agra.\footnote{Losty, “The Jagat Singh Valmiki-Ramayana Manuscript from Udaipur,” in IAVRI Bulletin IV (1978), p. 7.} This Mughal influence is an important element of Sahibdin’s style, and key to understanding why his style is unique from that of his contemporaries, such as Manohar.

Sahibdin was largely responsible for the creation of the Mewari painting style that developed during the reign of Jagat Singh into a specific and discrete painting tradition that was to be of enormous influence on successive generations of Mewari painters. There were several coincident factors (which are the subject of Chapter 5 of this work) which provided the possibility for the expansion of Sahibdin’s own creative expression into the formation of a full-fledged regional style. First, as discussed above, is Sahibdin’s familiarity with Mughal and Popular Mughal painting. Second, the relatively peaceful relationship between the Mughal and Mewar courts during Jagat Singh’s reign resulted in
greater resources for artistic production of all types than had heretofore been available. Third, Jagat Singh seems to have been an active and generous patron who provided multiple opportunities for Sahibdin to work out the transition from works more closely related to Western Indian style, such as the Chawand Ragamala, to those that included Sahibdin's awareness of Mughal painting techniques and motifs, and his literal-minded interpretations of texts and subtexts.

Sahibdin's earliest known work is the Ragamala of 1628 (Figure 6), which was probably commissioned during the final months of Karan Singh's reign. Its compositions and figural groupings show a clear debt to the Chawand Ragamala (see Figures 1 and 2). However, Sahibdin also incorporates formal methods derived from Mughal painting as well. In particular, he uses a more naturalistic scale relationship between figures and architecture, some modeling and shading of the figures, and finer, more detailed drawing technique overall. Furthermore, according to Andrew Topsfield, "the spatial setting of his comparatively diminished human figures is better articulated, and the hard edges and linear rhythms of earlier native style are smoothed in a more bland and considered drawing." Sahibdin's figures tend to be exceptionally finely painted, particularly in the faces, and the women are more elongated than is generally seen in Mewari painting.

The horizontal stacking of the compositional elements, seen in the Chawand Ragamala, is a significant feature in other early Mewari painting sets. It is seen for

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24 See Topsfield, "Sahibdin's Gita-Govinda Illustrations" for a fuller discussion of this point.

example, in the ca. 1625 *Rasamanjari* series (Figure 7) and derives from the earlier, pre-Mughal Western Indian style. One of Sahibdin’s key contributions to the 17th-century Mewari painting style was the expanded use of diagonal passages in his compositions, often created through simple means. Landscape elements, such as rivers, slant sharply, (see Figure 8, for example, a painting from the ca. 1635 *Rasikapriya* series in which “Krishna and Radha Steal an Underwater Kiss”\(^{26}\); or, paired events are placed in diagonally opposed corners of the composition, such as those in Figure 9, “The Proud Nayika and the Servants of Kama” from the ca. 1635 *Rasikapriya* series,\(^{27}\) or in Figure 10, another work from the ca. 1635 *Rasikapriya*, “The Proud Nayika and Thunder in the Sky.”\(^{28}\)

These diagonally-opposed spaces are linked by intervening landscape elements, wild, overgrowing trees evoking the strong emotions of the hero and heroine enclosed within their architectural spaces. Examples of diagonally-placed patterns and motifs (especially the motif of the river that cuts diagonally across a page) can be found in painting of various of the earlier regional schools that derived from the Western Indian tradition. However, these motifs were generally treated as decorative surface patterns; they were not indicative of an attempt to deny or move away from the stable horizontal frame that characterized traditional painting. In the Mughal vernacular, however, diagonal elements are often used to create an impression of naturalistic depth and a sense of movement. The resulting depth and sense of movement contribute to the perception that the painting

\(^{26}\) Discussed and reproduced as figure 6 in Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Illustrations to the *Rasikapriya*.”

\(^{27}\) Reproduced as figure 14 in Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Illustrations to the *Rasikapriya*.”

\(^{28}\) Reproduced as figure 13 in Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Illustrations to the *Rasikapriya*.”
represents an immediate and specific moment, contrasting with the often stiff and frozen effect of Hindu paintings of this period. Sahibdin deliberately adopts this use of diagonal elements as a way of conveying an impression of immediacy. His ability to create interesting compositions which break away from, or are entirely free of, the compartmentalization of traditional Mewari painting reveals his understanding of the Popular Mughal painting idiom.

Despite the incorporation of the diagonal in his compositions, Sahibdin does not abandon the more traditional horizontal register format. Many paintings in the Ayodhyakanda rely on this more traditional type of composition, and, often, these are ones in which architectural elements anchor a corner or a side of the picture framing the protagonists. (Most of these occur in the first part of the book; see, for example, folios 22, 23, 29, and 48). Sahibdin’s compositional skill is clearly visible in the way he combines different architectural elements of varying size and shape to form a variety of individual structures and compounds, such as in folios 2 or 11. He makes multiple usable spaces within which individual figures and figural groups function, but skillfully avoids monotony from one painting to the next by avoiding recurring patterns of evenly-sized boxes. Variations in the architecture are reinforced by alternating the colors of each element to create a patchwork-like image. This can be discerned from variations in architecture across the sequence of paintings from folio 6 to folios 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Folios 6, 7, 8, and 11 each have an architectural structure anchored to the right edge of the painting which houses the main narrative focus of that folio. Further, in these paintings Sahibdin frequently reintroduces some diagonal element to the composition. For example, he makes
use of the Mughal motif of the suspended canopy over the tent or pavilion entrance, which appears like a projecting triangle from the side of the structure so that the rigidly square or rectangular structure is unbalanced (see folio 13, 41, or 104). Other motifs, such as the sharply-cut staircase, are also used to reintroduce the diagonal into a painting (folios 6 and 14, as well as 22 and 24).

Andrew Topsfield has pointed out the manner in which Sahibdin alternated between the traditional register format of Mewari painting and what is perhaps a more stylistically adventurous type of composition influenced by Mughal and Popular Mughal styles.\(^{29}\) As will be discussed in the next chapter, Sahibdin uses these different styles quite deliberately in the *Ayodhyakanda* to set up and reinforce the opposition between the city of Ayodhya and the events that take place there, and the forest setting. In the city scenes Sahibdin relies more heavily upon creating compositions which have a horizontal emphasis, or are made up of multiple box-like rooms and pavilions linked together (although his compositions are never quite so rigidly compartmentalized as works of other Mewari artists). In the forest, the compositions often lose all sense of rigidity, compositional diagonals are abundant, and there is a great deal of expressiveness captured in the multi-colored hills dotted with verdant vegetation (see folios 61, 66, 68, or 79 for examples).

In the course of his career, Sahibdin also alternated between paintings which primarily evoke a poetic sentiment and those which tell an epic tale. Much of Sahibdin’s early work, from the 1620s and 1630s, were illustrations to smaller poetic and devotional texts, such as the *Gita Govinda* and the *Rasikapriya* (each of which he painted twice

\(^{29}\) Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s *Gita-Govinda* Illustrations,” p. 236.
during this early period). In these works the composition and style tend to follow those seen in his 1628 *Ragamala*; in format they are vertical rather than horizontal, and in content the focus is chiefly the emotional intensity felt by the figures and conveyed in the overall theme of the text. In his illustrations to such poetic texts Sahibdin demonstrated his ability to capture in the accompanying paintings not only the exact narrative content but also the metaphoric and descriptive passages of the text. Vishakha Desai has discussed the manner in which Sahibdin captured these elements in his illustrations to the *Rasikapriya* of ca. 1635:

The primary forms are main compositional and figural elements that convey the principal meaning of the text. The secondary elements visualize the more subtle literary nuances of text and provide a greater degree of visual specificity. The tertiary forms can be understood as visual conventions that help create an aesthetically cohesive image without necessarily carrying any specific textual meaning... The distinguishing characteristic of the Sahibdin *Rasikapriya* is the well integrated relationship among the primary, secondary, and tertiary visual elements as carriers of layered literary meaning.²⁰

In his early works, and the *Rasikapriya* and *Gita Govinda* sets in particular, Sahibdin became well versed in capturing the mood of the text through specific motifs and compositional structures. One motif which he frequently uses in these works for emotive effect is that of a globular white vessel in the foreground space at the bottom of the

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painting which echoed the swelling form of the heroine and the heightened the intensity of the longing felt by the hero and heroine. Often, these vessels are shown paired when the moment of the lovers' union is at hand (see Figures 7 and 10).\textsuperscript{31} Another commonly used motif to suggest the union of lovers is the paired cypress and plaintain trees. In other cases Sahibdin makes even more literal references to the metaphoric elements of the text, as in Figure 11, a scene from the ca. 1635 \textit{Rasikapriya} in which the lovelorn heroine refuses the garland and the red powder offered by her maid – the garland, she says, feels to her like a snake and the red powder like fire. In the foreground of the painting we find represented an image of the snake and of the fire, the metaphorical elements made visible.\textsuperscript{32}

The heightened emotions of the archetypal lovers of the \textit{Gita Govinda} and the \textit{Rasikapriya} are equally captured in the dense, ripe vegetation that serves as a background for the figures and that sometimes functions as part of a compositional device to emphasize the separation between the figures. For example, in Figure 12, Sahibdin's illustration to the twelfth song of the \textit{Gita Govinda} in the 1629 set, discussed and reproduced by Andrew Topsfield,\textsuperscript{33} Sahibdin places in opposite corners of the composition two pavilions in which the separated lovers sit; the structures in opposition seem to tug at the corners of the painting, pulling the lovers farther apart. The intervening space, which forms a diagonal in the opposite direction, is densely packed with flowering trees characteristic of the rainy

\textsuperscript{31} For example, see figure 2, from the 1628 \textit{Ragamala}, and figure 13, from the ca. 1635 \textit{Rasikapriya}, reproduced by Topsfield in "Sahibdin's Illustrations to the Rasikapriya."

\textsuperscript{32} See Desai, "From Illustrations to Icons," pp. 104-105 and figure 4.

\textsuperscript{33} Topsfield, "Sahibdin’s \textit{Gita-Govinda} Illustrations," p. 236 and figure no. 510.
season, reinforcing the mood of longing felt by the figures.\textsuperscript{34} In these types of works Sahibdin shows himself to be a master at conveying mood, not just through literal visualizations of the literary metaphors but in the way he composes the picture. Topsfield discusses other similar moments in this Rasikapriya: “It is above all in his resourceful approach to the many Rasikapriya stanzas in which little occurs except the evocation of a particular mood or sentiment that Sahibdin shows his originality as an illustrator.”\textsuperscript{35}

Sahibdin’s later work, from the 1640s and 1650s, including his paintings for the Ramayana, is consistent with the earlier paintings in terms of the palette and the fine quality of the draftsmanship. But, because of the significantly greater amount of text to be accommodated in the narrative works, as compared to poetic works such as the Gita Govinda, the later paintings are generally done in the more traditional horizontal format allowing for maximum expression of the events of the story both textually and visually. The events themselves are now the primary focus of the paintings rather than the emotions felt by the figures or a specific mood within the text that the painting is designed to convey. In works like the 1648 Bhagavata Purana and the Ramayana, Sahibdin is concerned primarily with the narrative content of the epic rather than the metaphoric passages of the text.

The Bhagavata Purana of 1648 is more closely related in conception and style to the Ramayana than any of Sahibdin’s earlier works. In many ways it seems to have served as a stylistic prelude and testing-ground for many of the complex multi-scene

\textsuperscript{34} Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Gita-Govinda Illustrations,” p. 237.

\textsuperscript{35} Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Illustrations to the Rasikapriya,” p. 24.
paintings of the *Ayodhyakanda* (just as the *Ayodhyakanda* led to even more expansive and complicated compositions of the *Yuddhakanda*). Eight-eight of the 129 illustrations of the *Bhagavata Purana* cover the full page, and each of these is roughly equivalent in size to the paintings of the *Ramayana*.  

Sahibdin’s name appears at the foot of two of the paintings of the incomplete manuscript; many other paintings in the manuscript are very simple in conception and execution and were probably done by his assistants. In paintings which are clearly by Sahibdin, such as folio 5b of Canto 8 (reproduced by Jeremiah Losty in *Art of the Book in India*, plate XXXIII), the high viewpoint, the mix of bright and pastel colors in carefully-selected contrasts, and particularly the complex array of figure and animal groups across the composition, skillfully separated by trees and sprays, suggest Sahibdin’s dynamic forest compositions in the second half of the *Ayodhyakanda*. In particular, Sahibdin’s ability to convey simultaneous action through figure groupings, without framing those figures in box-like settings or in a horizontal registers, which is a key element to his *Ayodhyakanda* compositions, is apparent in certain works of the *Bhagavata Purana*.

It is significant that in these later epic works Sahibdin does not abandon the earlier interest in conveying mood that marked the poetic works such as the *Gita Govinda* and the *Rasikapriya*. However, as will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, the later narrative paintings express mood primarily through compositional means with little reliance on the placement of symbolic motifs that is such an important feature of his earlier

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illustrations. When Sahibdin does make symbolic allusions, they are generalized and subtle, and they more specifically refer to the narrative. For example, throughout the *Ayodhyakanda* Sahibdin seems to reserve descriptions of floral and vegetal forms for those paintings that refer to the chaotic world of the “outside.” In almost all the compositions within the city, exterior spaces—the gardens and parks surrounding the palace and other city buildings—are conspicuously devoid of plant life. Decorative detail is focused instead on the figures themselves, in the lively interactions among minor figures in large groupings (for example, see folio 17) and in the colorful, multi-patterned textiles worn by the female figures. On the other hand, the forest pictures explode with brightly colored trees and flowering shrubs. This contrast heightens the distinction between these “outside” paintings and those of the city, or “inside” that Sahibdin establishes. The abundance of the forest recalls the treatment of bowers and forests in Sahibdin’s earlier works, such as the *Gita Govinda* and the *Rasikapriya* series, in which the burgeoning plant life served as symbolic expressions of the passion felt by the key characters. Sahibdin clearly displays an ability to evoke mood and emotion—even while focusing primarily on narrative—which distinguishes his style from that of other early Mewari painters. This feature of his work was influential in determining the Mewari painting style.

Sahibdin appears to have had a number of followers working with him, many of whom copied his works directly. For example, the two versions of the *Rasikapriya* done in the 1630s (the earliest examples of the subject painted in Mewar) at least partly attributable to Sahibdin seem to have been closely imitated by later artists.\(^\text{38}\) Also, a near-duplicate of

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\(^{38}\) Topsfield, “Sahibdin’s Illustrations to the *Rasikapriya*,” p. 22.
Sahibdin’s 1629 *Gita Govinda* was made by one of his followers sometime between 1630 and 1650.\(^{39}\) Topsfield has described Sahibdin’s impact: “His became the classic seventeenth-century Udaipur style, imitated by his contemporaries and successors until well into the eighteenth century, when traditional manuscript illustrations began to be displaced by the more naturalistic, Mughal-inspired art of court portraiture and reportage.”\(^{40}\) Many of Sahibdin’s works provided the basic compositional models for both contemporary and later Mewari artists. For example, Sahibdin’s illustration of “Radha’s Open Form of Love out of Separation” in the *Rasikapriya* of ca. 1635 (Figure 13) is copied in three later Mewari versions of the *Rasikapriya*, one dating to ca. 1640-45, another to ca. 1660-1670, and a third to ca. 1720 (Figures 14-16).\(^{41}\)

The next chapter, the main focus of this work, will discuss a specific and definitive manifestation of Sahibdin’s style – that of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*. His compositions for the *Ramayana* were among Sahibdin’s final works, no doubt occupying him almost exclusively during the period in which they were made. They represent the culmination of his ability to evoke the intangible elements of the narrative within in paintings.

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\(^{40}\) Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajastan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, p. 18.

\(^{41}\) Desai, “From Illustrations to Icons,” figures 8 - 11.
FIGURE 1: Lalita Raga from the Chawand Ragamala of 1605.
FIGURE 2: Malkos Raga from the Chawand Ragamala of 1605.
FIGURE 3: Illustration from the ca. 1589 Baburnama.
FIGURE 4: Illustration from the Akhbar-i Barmakiyan of ca. 1595.
FIGURE 5: Illustration from the Razmnama of 1617.
FIGURE 6: Illustration by Sahibdin from the *Ragamala* of 1628.
FIGURE 7: Illustration from the ca. 1625 Rasamanjari series.
FIGURE 8: “Krishna and Radha Steal an Underwater Kiss,” by Sahibdin, from the ca. 1635 Rasikapriya
FIGURE 9: “The Proud Nayika and the Servants of Kama,” by Sahibdin, from the ca 1635 *Rasikapriya*. 
FIGURE 10: The Proud Nayika and Thunder in the Sky,” by Sahibdin, from the ca. 1635 Rasikapriya.
FIGURE 11: Illustration by Sahibdin from the ca. 1635 Rasikupriya.
FIGURE 12: “Radha’s Yearning,” by Sahibdin, from the ca. 1629 Gita Govinda.
FIGURE 13: “Radha’s Open Form of Love out of Separation,” by Sahibdin, from the ca. 1635 Rasikapriya.
FIGURE 14: "Radha's Open Form of Love out of Separation," from a Rasikapriya ca. 1640-45.
FIGURE 15 “Radha’s Open Form of Love out of Separation,” from a Rasikapriya ca. 1660-70.
FIGURE 16 “Radha’s Open Form of Love out of Separation,” from a Rasikapriya ca. 1720.
CHAPTER 3

COMPOSITION AND NARRATIVE IN THE AYODHYAKANDA

The core of the Ramayana narrative, including the events of the Ayodhyakanda, through the Yuddhakanda, probably dates between the sixth and the third centuries B.C.E. The Balakanda and Uttarakanda, the first and the seventh books, were probably added several centuries later. The Ramayana is generally attributed to the poet Valmiki, and most versions, even those which do not claim to have been written by Valmiki, refer to his work in some way. Many versions of the Ramayana are known, particularly those produced by Kamban, a south Indian poet, and by Tulsi Das. There are distinctive northern and southern recensions and, further, in the northern recension, eastern

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42 The history of the Ramayana as a single and specific epic narrative is long and complex. Elements and abbreviations of the Ramayana story date back to some of the Puranas, including the Vismupurana. The core of the epic was probably formed sometime between the sixth and the third centuries B.C.E. and transmitted orally by wandering bards for several centuries before taking a written form. According to J. L. Brockington, the first and final books did not become a part of the epic until approximately the second to third centuries C.E. (J. L. Brockington, Righteous Rama, Chapter 10, and appendix, discussed in W. L. Smith, Ramayana Traditions in Eastern India [Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1988], pp. 11-21.) Versions of the Ramayana exist in all of the major and most of the minor Indian languages as well as throughout Southeast and East Asia, including several other Sanskrit Ramayanas. Some versions differ only in slight details while others show significant plot-altering variations. Although Valmiki is designated as the author of the epic, “Valmiki” is almost certainly a generic term of authorship.

and western versions are known.\textsuperscript{44} Additionally there is long tradition of dramatic and dance-drama renditions of the story. The Jagat Singh \textit{Ramayana}, however, follows extremely closely those versions of the story attributed to Valmiki, such as is found in the critical edition by Robert P. Goldman.\textsuperscript{45} The exact recension illustrated by Sahibdin and copied out by Hirananda is not known but may be based on a northern, and probably a Bengali, recension of the text.\textsuperscript{46} This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

It will be useful at this point to summarize the key events of the \textit{Ayodhyakanda} for the unfamiliar reader. The \textit{Ayodhyakanda} opens in the city of Ayodhya, ruled over by Dasaratha, father of four noble sons: Rama, Laksmana, Bharata, and Satrughna. Here in Ayodhya Rama lives peacefully with his wife, Sita. However, when Dasaratha moves to crown Rama the Prince Regent, Dasaratha’s second wife, Kaikeyi, her mind poisoned by her scheming maid, Manthara, demands of Dasaratha that he now grant her two boons he had once promised her. For these boons Kaikeyi demands that Dasaratha exile Rama to the Dandaka forest for a period of fourteen years, and that he crown her own son, Bharata, in place of Rama. Dasaratha is compelled to agree to Kaikeyi’s wishes, and instructs Rama accordingly. Rama, the ever-dutiful son, willingly accepts this instruction and makes his way to the forest, accompanied by Laksmana and Sita, to live the life of a hermit. They travel first to the town of Srngaverupa on the bank of the Ganges River, where they are hosted by Guha, the town chief. Crossing the Ganges, Rama and his party travel deeper

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Williams, \textit{The Two-Headed Deer}, p. 23.
\item Jeremiah P. Losy, personal communication, September 1998.
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\end{footnotesize}
into the wild, to the hermitage of the ascetic Bharadvaja, before making their way to the Citrakuta Hill. Meanwhile, Bharata, returning to Ayodhya and learning of these events, seeks out Rama in the forest and implores him to return to Ayodhya and to his rightful place on the throne. Rama, in fidelity to his father's command, vows to remain in the forest until the period of his exile is complete. Rama, Sita, and Laksmana happily reside among the forest hermits, while faithful Bharata vows to rule as Rama's regent.

The city of Ayodhya is the crucial starting place of the Ayodhyakanda and of the drama of the Ramayana as a whole. Ayodhya represents the cosmic forces in balance at the macrocosmic level, and social stability at the microcosmic one. When the Ayodhyakanda begins, the cosmos and the social order are equally harmonious: Dasaratha rules peacefully over Ayodhya. The citizens of Ayodhya, loving Rama, are secure in the knowledge that he will be Dasaratha's successor on the throne. But as the Ayodhyakanda proceeds, order is disrupted by Kaikeyi's actions, and later (in the third book, the Aranyakanda) plunged into total disorder by Ravana. As Harry M. Buck has points out, Rama's goal in the Ramayana is the restoration of the cosmic order. This occurs only near the end of the story, when Rama has defeated Ravana, has been reunited with Sita, and has returned to Ayodhya to take his place on the throne.47 The city of Ayodhya itself symbolizes order, while the supernatural forces that begin to take over in the story do so only when the characters are outside Ayodhya. Ravana is not met in the Ayodhyakanda at all, and only at the end of the Ayodhyakanda is mention made of raksasas (demons),

several of whom Rama must face as he travels deeper into the forest at the opening of Book Three, the Aranyakanda. As I will show, the artist Sahibdin’s understanding and interpretation of this dichotomy are key to the choices he makes in composing the book as a whole as well as its individual compositions.

As Sheldon Pollock points out, the epic poets who narrated the Ramayana (as well as the Mahabharata) were interested in the events and ways of life that could be found principally in urban society, particularly the duty of the individual to his family, his class, and his community, and the problems of state and kingship. By the time the Ramayana was composed the city had become “the literary focal point of civilized life.” In contrast to the settled and ordered existence of the city was the wild forest where supernatural forces operated. “The contrast—at times tension—between the city and the forest, which was increasingly to command the attention of the urban poet, becomes palpable, perhaps for the first time in Indian history, here in the Ayodhyakanda.”

In my initial viewings of the paintings of the Ayodhyakanda there appeared to be a clearly discernible contrast between the two settings—city and forest—and the types of events that occur in and because of them. This contrast, it seemed to me, was made visible primarily through alternation of compositional types. Subsequently, my exploration of

48 Buck, “Dharmic Choice and the Figure of Lórá Rama,” pp. 19-20.
50 Pollock, p. 3.
51 Pollock, pp 3-4.
writings on the literary tradition of the *Ramayana*, such as those by Sheldon Pollock and Harry S. Buck noted above (as well as works by others not here mentioned), seemed to support my initial conclusions concerning an inside/outside dichotomy. These are the ideas that will be explored in depth in this chapter.

It is my contention that Sahibdin’s illustrations to the *Ayodhyakanda* not only visualize the text of the Valmiki’s *Ramayana* in close and literal terms, but also mirror the narrative dichotomy that divides the book into two parts. This dichotomy may be described as referring to “inside” and “outside:” “inside” serves to indicate Ayodhya and all it connotes; “outside” indicates the forest and all that it connotes. More specifically, “inside” refers to the city and palace of Ayodhya and all of the narrative events that take place in and around it, and, most significantly, to the period before Rama’s exile. “Inside” thus stands for inclusion, for a kind of wholeness and the right order of things. The earlier paintings of the book that represent the events and settings of the “inside” are presented in sharp contrast to those later paintings in the book that suggest “outside,” a term that will signify not only the forest but also the period after Rama’s exile when the natural order of things is awry.

I suggest that Sahibdin uses different compositional approaches to distinguish the paintings of “inside” from those of “outside” in order to make the narrative dichotomy overt. In so doing he goes beyond simply literally depicting the narrative content of the story to evoke the narrative’s shifting moods, and those of its primary characters. In this chapter I will show how these distinctions in the *Ayodhyakanda* between in and out, order and chaos, are reflected in the choice of compositional models from which the paintings
are constructed. In other words, Sahibdin makes use of distinct compositional approaches to separate the paintings of the first part of the book from those of the second. As we will see, these changes of approach signal a deliberate intent on the part of the artist to reflect the literal progress of the narrative, but also to evoke the broader distinctions of mood that permeate each half of the book. Furthermore, as we will see, small groups of paintings have specific compositional relationships which create drama and heighten mood, and the visual effect of the book as a whole works by linking these smaller sets into a larger series, as well as by allowing compositional types from either part of the book to work in opposition. In all of this, compositional choice and narrative choice are intricately bound together.

An artist creating a visual narrative manipulates compositional elements according to the needs of the narrative but in a way that also may convey the artist’s own personal style and preferences. These compositional choices affect the manner in which a story is told and allow the artist to inject a personal vision into even the most literally rendered set of paintings. All compositional choices have a narrative impact, whether intentional or not. The several compositional formulae I will identify in the paintings of the Ayodhyakanda vary according to what they illustrate—whether the first, “inside” section, or the second, “outside” section of the book. Thus, while the visual representation of the story follows the overall dichotomy that marks the text itself (I will discuss the text in more detail in Chapter 4), it also captures the more subtly-nuanced changes in mood and tone through compositions that move, for example, from solid and stable horizontals and verticals, to more colorfully conceived diagonals.
The composition provides the support frame for the selected narrative mode, so the artist’s compositional choices determine the resulting narrative mode. Once the artist becomes familiar with the text, he must then decide which events and episodes to illustrate, the sequence in which to place the events, and the manner of assembling them. Those choices affect the way we view and understand that story through the illustrations. Continuous narrative is the preferred narrative mode in the Ayodhyakanda, though it is used somewhat less frequently in the second half of the book where both synoptic and monoscopic approaches are more widely adopted.\textsuperscript{52} In continuous narrative, multiple successive events are represented within a single frame, and the image of the protagonist(s) is repeated in the illustration of each event. The continuous narrative mode clearly conveys the progressive movement of the figures and events across time and space. In the synoptic narrative mode, multiple events and protagonists are also shown, but there is no clear indication of the sequence or order. In the monoscopic mode each painting depicts only one scene or event. The horizontal orientation of the pages of the whole Ramayana and the relatively large painted area facilitated Sahibdin’s extensive use of continuous or synoptic narrative approaches in the composition of the paintings of the Ayodhyakanda since there was ample room to show multiple groups of figures, to show figures in movement, and to present multiple actions or activities.

Inside Ayodhya: Folios 1 - 58

The first thirty-one paintings in the book (folios 1 - 58) serve to ground the Ayodhyakanda in scenes of the “inside.” Here, Sahibdin sets up specific compositional models which create visual expectations on the part of the viewer, leading to a smooth flow of the “reading” (viewing) and interpretation of the narrative. He also creates short sequences of compositions to create and accentuate the drama at specific points in the narrative. In this first section several types of compositions and compositional devices can be identified, which will be discussed in terms of their effect on narrative function.

The first of these compositional types can be seen in the paintings of folios 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 15, 29, all of which fall into a pattern of three-part composition. In these, the picture plane is divided into three areas or spaces, and the picture tells three events in continuous narrative, each event illustrated within its own space. Often, these spaces are created by dividing the picture in half vertically, with one side again divided into horizontal registers; space may also be divided vertically into three roughly equal areas. In this approach, all elements of the narrative are in balance, that is, there is not one event among the three that is more visually prominent. The reading of the events is sometimes linear (read horizontally from left to right or right to left), although more often the figural groupings in their compositional supports are read in a circular or triangular manner. Furthermore, the first, or starting event, shifts location within the composition from one painting to the next. In these three-part compositions, in which directionality is not a focus of the narrative, there is no “natural” movement of the eye to which the artist must conform. By repeating the three-part composition the artist creates an expected viewing
pattern which the viewer quickly assimilates, facilitating an easy reading of the narrative. At the same time, shifting the position of the narrative starting-point from one painting to the next challenges these very expectations, and saves the paradigm from potential visual tedium.

An example of how this compositional formula plays out in both visual and narrative terms is folio 6. In this illustration from the very beginning of the *Ayodhyakanda*, Bharata and Satrughna have traveled to the home of Bharata’s grandfather: A) Bharata’s grandfather rides out to greet his grandsons; B) Bharata, Satrughna, Yudhajit, and the grandfather repair to an upper chamber in the palace; C) they all converse. Here, each moment of the narrative is located within its own compositional space. This separation of elements of continuous narrative into discrete spaces makes the narrative order clear and also indicates that these are distinct moments. (A later group of paintings, folios 82-85, are also of the three-part type; they are a part of a set of paintings in the second part of the book that are a special case for consideration and will be treated in detail below.)

A second group of paintings (folios 2, 13, 14, 22, 24, 27, 34, and 46) can be termed parallel compositions. In these, the picture is divided vertically into two halves that are equated in both visual and narrative terms. To both separate and link the two halves a central transitional space is created—an intermediary element which is sometimes rendered in a rather dramatic way through the manipulation of architectural features. The parallel composition is used to depict both sequential and concurrent episodes, and paintings in this group tend to be particularly visually interesting.

An example of parallel composition is the first painting in the book (folio 2). At
right, Bharata and Satrughna, preparing to depart for the home of Bharata’s grandfather, bid farewell to Dasaratha, Rama, and Laksmana. This event takes place in Dasaratha’s throne room. At left the two figures, now in the private apartments of the queens, bow and say goodbye to their mothers. The central space between these two architectural boxes is a transitional space with two doors through which Bharata and Satrughna proceed when moving from Dasaratha’s official chambers to the rooms of the queen mothers.

The parallel compositional type, which makes clear the sequential nature of events, equates the two architectural spaces even as it exaggerates the differences between them. In the example of folio 2, the open, official space on the right side of the painting, and the smaller, intimate space on the left are in sharp contrast. In the parallel compositional format, the center section created by the separation of two architectural elements consistently serves not only as a transition space but also as a frame for one or another figure whose presence is central to the action or mood of the painting, even when that figure is not the painting’s main subject. The transitional section at center creates a frame for Bharata, who is flanked by a noticeably smaller Satrughna.

The use of a strong diagonal element within the transitional section is a feature of several parallel-composition paintings and reflects the impact of Mughal painting on Sahibdin’s style. Used to disrupt the symmetry of the composition and create a more active and dynamic pattern, the diagonal also has a narrative impact. In folio 14, for example, four actions are represented (along with an atemporal event which defines the setting.) Interior space is described at either side of the painting while exterior space is the transitional center. Here, a staircase cutting a jagged slope between the painting’s two
halves serves to link the third and fourth events—Rama departing in his chariot, followed by
Rama greeting his mother, Kausalya. Kausalya is placed at the painting’s top left, while
Rama is shown moving towards the right edge of the page, so that Rama appears to be
moving away from his mother rather than towards her. The diagonal of the transitional
space is particularly important in this painting because it establishes a link between these
last two events, without which they might seem disconnected. The diagonal movement
between the two figures, however, draws them back together.

The diagonal element in compositions such as this suggests not only animation and
motion, but also instability. In two of a series of three paintings, folios 22, 24, and 27, the
strong central diagonal employed as a transitional feature reflects an upheaval in the
narrative. These three paintings were clearly conceived as a narrative event and were
meant to be viewed in sequence. In the first, folio 22, the maid Manthara poisons
Kaikeyi’s mind so that she demands Rama’s banishment. In this composition Manthara
descends the staircase at center; as the real perpetrator of the subsequent action it is she
who becomes framed within the transitional space. The two-part staircase forming two
opposed angles leads the eye to both the right and left interior spaces where the actions that
Manthara instigates unfold. As her backdrop, the double diagonals evoke the discord that
Manthara foments in the narrative. In the next painting (folio 24) Dasaratha finds Kaikeyi
distraught, and is then horrified by her demands that Rama be exiled. The composition of
the previous painting is mirrored here, although now the central figure framed within the
transitional space is not a direct participant in the action of the narrative. (He may be
Sumantra, whom we might expect because of events subsequently described, or an
attendant figure who awaits the outcome of events played out in the interior space.) In the third painting of this sequence (folio 27) Sumantra, sent to fetch Rama, meets the brahmans who have made preparations for the coronation. Here, the composition is simpler than the preceding two. Sumantra is shown twice within the central frame as he participates in both actions described in the two halves of the picture. His repeated presence is pivotal in the change of mood between the distraught Dasaratha at one side of the painting and the expectant brahmans on the other.

A third type of composition expresses a clear intent on the part of the artist to distinguish interior and exterior spaces in order to create dramatic tension, and these distinctions are clearly articulated even when there is no narrative necessity for them. Paintings which fall into this category are folios 7, 12, 50, 51, 52, 56, 57, and a later group 76, 80, and 84. As with three-part compositions, these works—which we may loosely term interior/exterior composition—are also found primarily in the first part of the book, through folio 58. Three paintings of this type that appear later in the book (folios 76, 80, and 84) seem to be overt copies of earlier pictures.

Folios 50, 51, and 52, are conceived as a sequence and serve as examples of this compositional type. In folio 50, Dasaratha, having summoned his queens to the palace, embraces Rama, Laksmana, and Sita as they prepare to depart for the forest. The artist places all action related to the narrative within the confines of the palace, but in addition to this interior space he has chosen to establish the palace wall, the portal and a space outside the palace. To create these two spaces of greatly unequal size, the artist uses a broad vertical band off-center to divide the picture plane, with figures clustered in the middle of
the larger section. Visual disequilibrium is enhanced by color contrasts between the two spaces. The figures who stand outside have no narrative bearing and are present only to fill a potential visual void.

This compositional choice is a feature of Sahibdin's particular style, under the impact of Mughal prototypes; it is also apparent in works of the *Yuddhakanda* but not in the books of other artists. For example, we may compare this work to the first painting of the *Balakanda* (Figure 17), which presents another scene which takes place entirely within the palace; as befits its narrative content, the *Balakanda* work is concerned only with interior space. In the *Ayodhyakanda* a different compositional choice was made to illustrate a similar scenario.

The application of the inside/outside paradigm has a narrative impact whether or not the choice was made for extra-narrative reasons. These compositions draw attention to both inside and out, each part drawing the focus of the viewer by its very contrast with the other. The outside here becomes a subtle part of the narrative; the looming ever-present outside creates a mood of foreboding which foreshadows the exile to come. In the *Ayodhyakanda* the choice to include both the inside and the outside of the space is quite deliberate and indirectly reflects the involvement with the inclusion/exile dichotomy that pervades the book as a whole.

The composition of folio 53 replicates that of the preceding painting. Here, Kaikeyi has brought coarse garments for Rama, Laksmana and Sita; with Rama and Laksmana robed in their coarse attire, Kaikeyi helps Sita don hers. As before, the outside is an illustration of narrative and visual emptiness in contrast to the crowded, familiar
setting of inside, the inclusionary realm inhabited by all the loved ones Rama will soon leave behind. Finally, in folio 53, a narrative function is implicit in the division between interior and exterior areas, for here the chariot in which Rama will depart is brought to the gates of the palace. Yet the chariot is empty and horseless; it is not directly related to current action but presupposes the action of the next section of the book. The exterior element in this painting functions in opposition to the crowded interior, already evoking the sense of emptiness at the separation and loss to come. Folios 50-52 and 56-57, which adopt the inside/outside schism, are suitably placed at the transition between the two sections of the book: the city of Ayodhya in the first part of the book, and the forest outside that commences with folio 63.

As seen in the preceding three paintings, the doorway is a recurring motif in illustrations of the Ayodhyakanda and is often included without regard to narrative. Of the thirty-one paintings in the book’s first half only five do not include a doorway. That Sahibdin makes frequent use of this motif is another indicator of Mughal influence on his style, doorways often functioning in Mughal painting to stress the “reality” of architectural space. As used by Sahibdin, the repeated appearance of the doorway becomes symbolic of movement between spaces. It is the process of going or coming that is stressed rather than the state of simply being, which is more typical of Rajasthani painting. Consequently, the narrative tone is active rather than static, turbulent rather than peaceful.

Outside Ayodhya: Folios 61-129

So far we have examined the “inside” portion of the Ayodhyakanda, those events
that are centered in the city before Rama’s exile. The second half of the narrative is concerned with the “outside” world and the period of exile, and its illustrations are of two types. The first category is made up of the twenty-one paintings set in the forest (folios 61, 63, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 79, 97, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 108, 111, 112, 114, 118, 121, and 126). These paintings respond directly, oppositionally, to illustrations of the earlier section of the narrative. No longer constrained by the presence of large architectural elements which anchor the paintings of the book’s first half, these forest paintings show much greater compositional variation. The compositional frame and the placement and number of events it supports do not function in so parallel a fashion here; the result is a different relationship between the space within a composition and action which takes place within that space. Approached in a less grid-like manner, these compositions also reflect a change in mood from order to chaos which marks the progress of the narrative.

Folio 61 is the first painting of the forest section of the book. Here the composition is split vertically at center into two halves, the division created by the tree and rock at the bottom center edge of the page. On the right side of the painting Rama, Laksmana, Sita, and Sumantra spend the night in the forest surrounded by the people of Ayodhya; at left, the heroes depart before the sleeping citizens awake. This composition frames a simple, two-part continuous narrative, with one moment of action on either side of the painting, although the figures of the sleeping townsfolk participate in both moments of action. At the same time, this is one of the most visually arresting paintings in the forest book. The steep 45-degree angle at which the sleeping figures are placed, and the active juxtaposition of colors—yellow mats against a lilac ground—create a dizzying effect which seems to reflect
disorder, the sense of unbalance that permeates this outside/exile group of paintings.

The composition split vertically is used several more times in the forest section of the book, with similar narrative implications. In several compositions (see folios 63, 108, 112, 126), though distinct spaces are created by formal means, narrative action is crowded into one area, while the rest of the compositional space often serves only as setting. In folio 108, for example, the composition is divided, slightly off-center, by the hut of Bharadvaja, and narrative actions take place on the left side of this division. Although the group of onlookers on the right side is as visually significant as the actors at left, this group does not directly participate in the events of the narrative, but serves to mark its setting.

In folio 126 the division of space into two halves is even more apparent, created by the central vertical of Citrakuta Hill and its distinctive earthy color set against the rest of the forest at right. The left side of the folio is crowded with the figures of Rama, his brothers, mothers and the sages of Ayodhya making their farewells. The contrast between the four narrative moments captured here, read in a circular fashion, and the single event that dominates the right side of the page, is acute. At right, Bharata and his entourage, departing in their chariots, move towards the right edge of the page. The direction of the movement, and the singularity of the moment, evoke the mood of separation central to this point in the narrative.

Other forest paintings make use of diagonal lines to cut the picture surface, forming pockets of distinct space within a narratively contiguous whole. These space pockets often take the form of interlocking triangles; within them, one or many events may be shown. This type of illustration mimics in intention, though not in composition, the earlier paintings
of the book where a specific narrative moment is assigned to each separate compositional space. In the book's earlier paintings devices such as the diagonal staircase are used to connect spaces which are clearly seen, because of their architectural frames, as distinct. But in these works separational devices are constructed to break up a space which literally flows together, in order that the continuous narrative might be read more easily. Contrasting colors set against each other further define the space pockets of the forest illustrations, and as a result colors become codified: yellow for the wild forest, green for "tamer" areas of the forest (the places where hermits live), and a rusty ochre for Citrakuta Hill.

This compositional style is adopted in folio 68. This composition is cut into thirds, at right by a tall tree which slices off a vertical section of the painting, and at the center and left by a long, sloping angle of hill which moves from the bottom center of the painting to the top left side. Complementary colors are used to further distinguish these spaces, the deep green of the forest in sharp contrast to the bright pink of Bharadvaja's hill. The color contrast is reinforced by the presence of the two trees, described in lighter shades of green and pink, at bottom center of the painting. Four narrative moments are dispersed among the three compositional spaces.

Here, and in other forest paintings, the architectural elements are not the space-enclosing structures of the first half of the book, but instead appear as backgrounds. Buildings such as Bharadvaja's hermitage in this work, or the hut in which Rama and Sita live (folios 70, 71, 111, 112, 114, 116, 121, and 126), are completely flat, like curtains at the back of a stage. They are disproportionately small and make no suggestion of a
believable interior.

Four paintings (folio 66, 69, 79, 84) use the motif of the river as the compositional foundation. The river is conceived as a broad band cutting a diagonal swath across the page from top to bottom, and so the picture is again divided into three spaces bounded by angular lines. Compositions are consistent among this group of paintings but in each a different number of events is depicted. This trend is reflected generally in the latter half of the narrative where there is little constancy to the amount of narrative action depicted in any one painting. As a result, the steady pacing established in the first part of the book gives way to a digressive flow to the reading of the forest paintings. Where the number of stories to tell in each painting increases, there is often a more complicated or circular arrangement of form. In these river paintings there may be two, four, five, or six narrative moments included within a relatively stable compositional frame. Folio 66 illustrates five events of the narrative, beginning in the center of the page and moving in a counterclockwise circle. The six events of folio 79 begin at bottom left, and the action moves circularly, concluding at top left.

A second category of paintings in this "outside" section of the book (folios 80, 82-85, 89, 90, 93, 96, 106, 107, 127-129) are ones which return to the framework of architecturally defined spaces but are also related because of their decidedly inferior quality and an apparent reliance on compositional models from the first part of the book. The paintings in this second category are grouped together also by a tendency toward simpler compositions and more awkward technique, most likely the result of different artists and an increased pace of production.
Folios 82-85 fall into the three-part compositional formula that was established for the first half of the book. This sequence takes place immediately following the death of Dasaratha. In folio 82 swift messengers are instructed to fetch Bharata from his grandfather's home; the messengers arrive at the palace of Bharata's grandfather (folio 83); Bharata leaves his grandfather for Ayodhya (folio 84); Bharata and Satrughna arrive in Ayodhya to find their father's palace empty (folio 85). Narratively, this sequence is rooted in the outside period of the later paintings, but compositionally these works look back directly to the first section of the book. For example, compare folio 85 from this series to folio 6, which seems to be its compositional inspiration. The positioning of the two-storied building at the right edge of folio 6, the grouping of a row of small rooms divided by columns at top, and a wall of variously colored panels at the bottom are duplicated in folio 85. The placement of the figures in their chariots is also very similar. Likewise, folio 84 seems to be heavily influenced by folios 7 and 11. The paintings in this set from folios 82 - 85 are all of inferior quality; note especially folio 82 in which the non-figural elements appear to be hurried in their execution, as if unfinished. This is also true of other works, such as folios 90 and 96 which have an equally unfinished appearance, and are missing the details that make the earlier works more visually rich.

Folio 89, another work which exhibits inferior draftsmanship, draws upon compositional models from the first part of the book, particularly folios 22 and 24. Here the space is divided into two horizontal registers into which random architectural elements are placed to create frames for actions. At the bottom right an attempt has been made to recreate the stairway that was used to such dramatic effect in the earlier pictures, folios 22

55
and 24. Again, it seems clear that this work was made by an artist of lesser skill, assuredly not Sahibdin. In addition to the change in quality of some later works, a distinct change in figural style is apparent after folio 103. At this point and for several subsequent paintings Rama becomes a different color, and he and his brothers have a noticeably different profile. At the same point an erosion in compositional complexity is evident.

All of these works point to the conclusion that the pace of production was increased towards the end of the manuscript, and that Sahibdin was assisted in its production by artists of lesser ability. It is likely that these artists had to rely upon Sahibdin’s earlier works as models rather than working from pages on which the overall design had been laid down by the master.

The *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana* ends at folio 129 with Bharata in residence in Nandigrama and the installation of the Rama’s sandals on the throne. However, in the critical edition of the text there are a further four chapters, in which Rama learns about Ravana, and leaves Citrakuta Hill with Lakshmana and Sita for the hermitage of Atri and Anasuya. The most conspicuous divergences between the illustrations of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana* and the narrative as presented in the critical edition of Valmiki’s text are in those paintings in which Bharata figures as a key player. The first six paintings of the book illustrate Bharata’s visit to the home of his grandfather, an event which is accorded only two verses in the critical edition of the Valmiki text. On the other hand, Bharata’s encounter with Kaikeyi and Manthara after returning to Ayodhya, described in chapters 66-68 and 72, is greatly condensed here into just one painting (folio 89). Folio 104 is an unidentified composition which forms part of the sequence in which Bharata travels to
Citrakuta Hill in pursuit of Rama; it seems to represent an “extra” event or encounter, one not described in Valmiki. In all other regards, however, the illustrations are extraordinarily faithful to the Valmiki text as presented in Goldman’s critical edition. The conclusion of the book with Bharata rather than Rama, the significance given him early in the book, and the other variations concerning him that are apparent in the illustrations, may point to a recension that deviates from Valmiki in its emphasis on Bharata. Sheldon Pollock has pointed out that some northern recensions do emphasize Bharata’s role, or elaborate upon his activities, to a greater degree than Valmiki, a point to which we will return in the next chapter.

Finally, a comment should be made about Sahibdin’s consistent use of directionality and its impact on the viewer’s reading of the paintings. Many paintings in the narrative involve movement of figures towards or away from some object. To illustrate these scenes a consistent pattern of motion is created. Movement inwards, towards Ayodhya, is illustrated as proceeding left to right; since this is also the usual direction of reading an illustrated manuscript, this directionality may seem more “natural” to the viewer. Movement outward and away is right to left. Whenever Rama approaches his father’s palace (folios 15, 18, 30) he approaches from the left. Even in folio 14 when Rama leaves his father’s palace the direction of movement is still left to right, since Rama is continuing his journey, proceeding towards his mother’s apartments. The departure from Ayodhya in folios 56 and 57, and indeed in all the scenes in which Rama, Laksmana, and Sita travel towards the forest, proceeds from right to left. Bharata and Satrughna return to Ayodhya traveling left to right; departing to find Rama they move right to left, and on returning in
dejection again travel left to right. The integrity of the “inside” and “outside” spaces is reinforced by this consistent use of directionality, enabling the viewer to perceive in one quick glance the impact of the action portrayed.

It is clear from this analysis of the paintings of the Ayodhyakanda that composition plays a key role in the visualization of the narrative on many levels. The sixty-eight paintings of the Ayodhyakanda function as a single unit, revealing as a linked chain the events of the book. This whole, though, works on levels beyond the revelation of the basic moments of action when it is broken down into smaller units: individual compositions which deliberately work in opposition one to another to emphasize the narrative dichotomy, or are constructed into short sequences which create and heighten drama. The conception of both the whole and its parts is guided by distinctions between inside and outside, between order and chaos, which echo across the compositions and the varying compositional types that play off one another across different parts of the book. Thus, although we can follow the events of the story one painting at a time it is when we see them in sequence that the broader strokes of mood, of nuanced meanings, can be perceived.

The Ayodhyakanda begins well for the protagonists, but becomes increasingly bizarre and chaotic as the book progresses. Though Rama, his wife, and brother, seem to be unaffected by the twists and turns of events, all around them are in despair, weighed down by anxiety. Sahibdin’s compositional approaches frame the telling of the story according to one or another narrative mode and mirror the story’s changes and moods. Sahibdin parcels out narrative events to different compositional types according to the
needs of the narrative, the pace of production, and his own fancy. The two elements, composition and narrative approach, are intricately bound up with each other.

Works in the first section of the book make full use of architectural and other elements to break up space into separate compartments, into which the discrete narrative events are placed. In the first section of the book several compositional models are repeated so that depiction of events becomes regularized and the narrative is easily read. Once the setting changes to the forest in the second half of the book, the narrative strategies used rely on different compositional formulas for their support. Here, the painting is sectioned in different ways, and narrative sequences tend to become much more fluid with more events per painting but no consistent plan followed in the distribution of those events. The second half of the book also describes events set in city and palace (locations), but the compositional models for these paintings derive from those of the first group, and their treatment is one of the indicators of a change in the pace of the book’s production.
CHAPTER 4

THE PRODUCTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

In this chapter I will discuss the production of the Jagat Singh Ramayana manuscript as a whole, with particular attention paid to those elements which reveal more about Sahibdin and his working method, and about the Ayodhyakanda generally. This discussion will include a description of the physical properties of the book, a survey of the workshop process that created it, and a discussion of the relationship between the text and the images that accompany it.

4.1 The Production Process

The Jagat Singh Ramayana as whole contained approximately 400 paintings. It is in the traditional pathi format, derived from the format of earlier books on palm leaf and thus arranged along the horizontal. The Ayodhyakanda itself comprises 129 folios with sixty-eight paintings. The folios measure 21 cm. high x 38.5 cm. wide, with a painted area of 17-18 x 35 cm. bounded by red and yellow borders which frequently extend to the edge of the page. Originally unbound, as is typical in the indigenous Indian manuscript
tradition, the current binding was made for the Duke of Sussex in the early 19th century. Further, at that time the painted folios were reversed so that the paintings, actually painted on the verso are, now bound as recto.

It is clear from the way in which text pages are interspersed with the painted folios that the paintings were completed before the text was copied, as will be discussed in more detail below. Creating the finished paintings before copying the text onto the reverse seems to have occurred sporadically in the Udaipur workshop (to take one example, the Rasikapriya, painted by Sahibdin around 1630-1635 was made in this same way) as well as in the Mughal workshop and other painting workshops in Rajasthan.

Information in the colophon of each book suggests that two directors were placed in charge of the production of the seven books of the Jagat Singh Ramayana. Acarya Jasvant, who may have been the court librarian or the studio administrator was in charge of the first three books. These books seem to have been made in sequence, with the Balakanda being completed in 1649, the Ayodhyakanda in 1650, and the Aranyakanda in 1651. The remaining books may have been commissioned by another director, Vyasa

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53 The Jagat Singh Ramayana remained in the Royal Library in Udaipur until about 1820 when four of the volumes (the Ayodhya, Kiskindha, Yuddha, and Uttara Kandas) were given to Colonel James Tod by Maharana Bhim Singh. Tod in turn presented the books to the Duke of Sussex, and the British Library acquired them in 1844 when the Sussex collection was sold. See Losty, The Art of the Book in India, p. 127.

54 Losty, personal communication.

55 Desai, “From Illustrations to Icons,” p. 102.

56 Of the manuscripts on which Sahibdin worked we know this to have been the typical practice; see, for example, Desai, “From Illustrations to Icons,” p. 102.

57 Losty, The Art of the Book in India, pp. 126-130.
Jayadeva, who is mentioned in the colophon of the Kiskindhakanda and the Uttarakanda. However, no director is mentioned in the Yuddhakanda’s colophon, and no colophon exists for the volume of the Sundarakanda that is believed to be from the Jagat Singh set.\(^{58}\)

With three artists principally responsible for these last four books it is likely they were produced simultaneously, perhaps out of sequence: the Yuddhakanda was completed in 1652, while the Kishkindhakanda and the Uttarakanda were both completed in 1653, after Jagat Singh’s death. Losty suggests that the Kiskindha- and Sundarakandas were never properly finished; these books may have been rushed to completion following Jagat Singh’s death.\(^{59}\)

The colophon of the Ayodhyakanda makes explicit reference to its production for the personal perusal of Jagat Singh. This colophon does not specifically mention Sahibdin as the artist of the Ayodhyakanda, but he is listed as the artist in the colophon of the Yuddhakanda. As senior artist, Sahibdin would have been the master of studio and he, along with Manohar and the Deccani artist, would have been assisted by several junior artists and assistants.\(^{60}\) The standard practice seems to have been for the master artist to conceive and lay out the compositions and to draw the key figures, while the assistants were responsible for preparing pigments, burnishing the page, and doing much of the coloring. In the Ayodhyakanda, one or another of these junior artists may have drawn a small number of the compositions, for the book contains some paintings of poor quality in

\(^{58}\) Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, pp. 128-129.

\(^{59}\) Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, pp. 128-129.

\(^{60}\) Losty, “Sahib Din’s Book of Battles,” p. 102.
terms of both overall compositional conception and drawing.61

The significant variation in the number of paintings from one book to the next seems to be the result of the great autonomy given each artist in matters concerning the production and design of these illustrations. For example, Sahibdin's two books, the Ayodhyakanda and the Yuddhakanda, contain sixty-eight and eighty-eight paintings respectively while the books produced by Manohar and his workshop, the Balakanda and the Aranyakanda, contain seventy-nine and thirty-six paintings, respectively. Since the paintings in each book were made before the text was copied, they were not required to conform to a specific number of text pages. As a result, it would seem that the number of paintings needed to illustrate the book's events was decided upon by the chief artist of that book. This decision directly influenced the content of the paintings. Sahibdin could illustrate the Yuddhakanda in an extraordinarily literal manner because he allocated eighty-eight paintings in which to convey the story. The large number of paintings permits a variety of compositional types in the Yuddhakanda, from monoscenic paintings with a single figural group set in an open landscape, to densely crowded compositions with multiple figural groups relating multiple events. On the other hand, Manohar and the

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61 See, for example, folio 89, which depicts Bharata's confrontation of Kaikeyi on his return to Ayodhya. The composition includes motifs and devices employed by Sahibdin, such as the sharply angled staircase from which Manthara flees, or the alternation of figural groupings between outside and inside the frontally-conceived architectural boxes. However, the painting as a whole is extremely awkwardly composed and in certain passages (including the transition to the staircase) makes no logical spatial sense. It seems likely that the composition was drawn by a less sophisticated artist than Sahibdin, though one who was familiar with his work. Other paintings in the second half of the book show a more traditional architectural treatment that more closely resembles Manohar's work in the Balakanda rather than Sahibdin's (see folios 82, 106, 107, and 128). The presence of the lower quality or different compositions toward the end of the book may support the suggestion made earlier that the Ayodhyakanda was rushed to completion.
artists of the *Aranyakanda* used less than half this number of paintings to illustrate that book, and thus the illustrations tend to be consistently dense, each subdivided into horizontal registers enclosing multiple narrative spaces.

In practice, the events described in the text seem to have been assigned painting space in an inconsistent way. In the *Ayodhyakanda* Sahibdin certainly did not use any standard formula to allocate painting space, nor did he maintain a consistent relationship between textual events or episodes and the painting space used to illustrate them. Some chapters in the *Ayodhyakanda* are illustrated in a remarkably concise manner. Folio 89, for example, contains events described in four chapters (*sargas* 66, 67, 68, and 72). Other events seem to have represented a broader range of artistic possibility to Sahibdin, and these were expanded to fill successive painted folios. Folios 70 and 71, for example, convey the events of a single chapter, *sarga* 50, in which the wonders of Citrakuta Hill are described extensively. It would seem that Sahibdin’s explicit choice to devote two paintings to this chapter was simply one of personal and artistic preference, a preference which no doubt inspired the vibrancy of the drawing and palette.

Despite the obvious verve and individual spirit with which many of the folios were executed, Sahibdin occasionally reused his own compositions or shared them with his fellow artists. For example, the *Ayodhyakanda*’s folio 107 seems to be source for the *Uttarakanda*’s folio 93. This suggests that while each artist might have had his own studio and group of assistants, he was not working in isolation. Within the *Ayodhyakanda* itself, folio 104 is an almost exact duplicate of folio 100. These two paintings may have

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been made at the same time. This possibility arises both from the striking compositional similarity of the two paintings and the fact that in both works Bharata and Satrughna are dressed in princely garb despite the fact that in the intervening folio, in which Bharata and the others cross the river, he and Satrughna have already adopted the ascetic dress they will wear for the remainder of the book. It is unlikely that the folios were bound out of sequence since both the folio and painting numbers that appear on the pages are consistent with the current folio numbers. It seems that pages were not necessarily painted in a strict sequence but only roughly so; it might even be that some similar compositions were painted at the same time. This almost assembly-line manner of approaching the production process lends itself to Sahibdin’s practice of composing sequences of paintings to convey an extended dramatic episode (for example, see the sequences created by folios 51, 53, 56 and 57, or folios 22 and 24).

The length of time taken to make each painting is not known. Vidya Dehejia has suggested a production time of approximately two weeks per painting, a time frame which seems plausible given the simplicity of some of the pages and the fact that each received only a single burnishing, rather than the multiple burnishings normally given to Mughal manuscript paintings. However, some of Sahibdin’s more elaborate paintings and sequences of paintings are grand in conception, with highly detailed, highly refined work which might reasonably have demanded more than the average amount of time to complete.


4.2 Relationship Between Text and Images

Two points seem clear regarding the relationship between Sahibdin's paintings and the text they are designed to accompany. First, the paintings took precedence over the text as the predominant form of expression. The images were made before the text was copied, and are of a much higher quality as paintings than the text is as writing. Further, it is the number and content of the paintings, and not the layout of the text, that dictated the format for the book as a whole, so that the text was manipulated to fit in with the images. Second, the paintings closely and literally follow the form of the Ramayana attributed to Valmiki, probably a standard and rather generic form of the epic with only slight variations which give us a clue as to its being a northern or northeastern recension. What is more, Sahibdin seems to have made a serious effort to represent the epic literally, just as it unfolds sarga by sarga. Those episodes that have been excluded are primarily those which continue an action or a dialogue established in a previous sarga. It may be that these excluded episodes were not represented because their visualization would have led to a repetitive or mundane series of paintings.

That the images were the primary means of telling the story is clear from an examination of the text itself. The scribe, Hirananda, was a Jain; on many of the text pages he employed the Jain practice of marking the place for the stringholes (used to bind the manuscripts in traditional pothi format books on palm leaf) with a cross-shaped design. In some folios of the Ayodhyakanda, especially the first ones, the cross was outlined in red and a red dot placed at its center; red dots were also placed in the side margins. After folio 7 the red dots within the crosses are no longer used, and after folio 9, the red outlining of
the cross disappears. Later, the cross is eliminated altogether or represented in one of several variations. Hirananda makes no attempt to establish a standard page format; indeed, there is little suggestion of any advance planning on the part of the scribe as to the lock and placement of the text on the page.

Neither is Hirananda consistent in the number of lines he assigns to each page, and it is apparent that he soon realized that constant line number adjustments were needed in order that the text on the obverse would match up with the illustration on the reverse of each folio. Each of the first three folios has nine lines of text per text page; but from folio 7 on, the number of lines per page begins to vary considerably. For example, folio 7 contains twelve lines of text on the obverse, folio 9 has fifteen lines of text on obverse and reverse, and folio 13 has nineteen lines of text on obverse and reverse. The obverse of folio 66 contains twenty-two lines of text, more than any on other page in the manuscript and apparently quite a difficult fit. It is clear that on some folios Hirananda was struggling to keep pace with the illustrations on the reverse of his text pages, a process of catch-up which is made even more apparent by the fact that there are often several folios with text only on obverse and reverse inserted between folios with paintings on the reverse.

Undoubtedly, then, Hirananda was writing the text after the paintings had been completed.

The writing itself is not of a very high standard, with deletions, corrections and additions visible on most text pages. A yellowish paint is frequently applied to cover incorrect characters in order that the corrected character could be rewritten over it. In many instances, however, Hirananda did not cover the mistake but simply crossed it out in black ink and penned in the correct character above. The scribe seems to have seen his
task as a rather utilitarian one and did not take great pains to create writing which is formally beautiful. Overall there is a hurried, scruffy quality to the writing, typical of Indian manuscripts with Devanagari writing, which strongly suggests that the text served as an aid to the illustrations but was not intended to have an aesthetic value of its own. That aesthetic focus was entirely to be found in the paintings.

The paintings in the *Ayodhyakanda* carry not only aesthetic burden of the volume but the narrative one as well. That Sahibdin’s illustrations to the *Ayodhyakanda* take the lead as the primary storytelling vehicle in the *Ayodhyakanda* attests to his very detailed and literal treatment of the story, which is made possible by the high image-to-text ratio. By this I do not mean to compare the number of Hirananda’s text pages to the number of paintings, for this would not necessarily accurately convey the relationship between the two, particularly given the inconsistent number of lines per page. Rather, it is the way that Sahibdin develops the *Ayodhyakanda* according to the number of paintings he has allotted to each of its chapters that is of interest. Of the 107 *sargas* in the critical edition of the *Ayodhyakanda* only thirteen are not made visible in some clear way in Sahibdin’s sixty-eight paintings; in other words, the paintings illustrate ninety-four out of 107 *sargas*, roughly one painting to describe every one and one-third chapters of the book. Vishakha Desai has described Sahibdin’s “highly developed visual vocabulary and the specificity of the word-image relationship” in the context of his illustrated *Rasikapriya*, and in Chapter

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65 See Appendix 1, in which the *sarga(s)* and verses related to each paintings are given. Those *sargas* (according to the critical edition) which are not made visible in the paintings include: 38-40; 42; 45; 51-55; 71-72; 87.

3 we have seen how this relationship is equally visible in his other illustrated manuscripts. His literal interpretation of text is clearly a key component of Sahibdin’s approach. Those *sargas* that are omitted from explicit representation in the *Ayodhyakanda* seem to have been done so because they involve ongoing dialogue rather than activity, or would confuse the viewer/reading without adding anything of significance to the story. Both these causes seem to be the reason for the omission of *sargas* 51 - 55, in which Sumantra relates to Dasaratha the events of Rama’s journey into the forest, a journey which had just been extensively portrayed in a previous sequence of illustrations. Certainly, Sahibdin made well-formed choices as to what to keep and what to omit from his painted narrative, choices which enhanced the literal unfolding of that narrative.

A more interesting phenomenon related to Sahibdin’s storytelling pace is the way in which events are seemingly protracted across several paintings in some cases, while they are contracted into a single painting in others. The first six paintings in the *Ayodhyakanda* are all illustrations to events which, in the critical edition, fall within the first *sarga* of the book. These paintings describe Bharata and Satrughna’s departure from Ayodhya and their journey to and arrival at the home of Bharata’s grandfather, while in Ayodhya the king and his ministers choose Rama as prince regent. Given Sahibdin’s seemingly literal-minded nature it seems likely that this is in fact another example of his literal interpretation of the text, and thus that the text from which he worked was probably one in which these events were emphasized, probably a northern or northeastern recension. Although the specific recension he might have taken as his primary source is unknown, Sheldon Pollock describes such a version:
The N [northern] recension, however, in various interpolations after verse 4, describes Bharata's departure, voyage, arrival and stay among the Kekayas..., his course of education there (which includes learning how to write)...; and his dispatch of a messenger to Dasaratha informing him that he is ready to return home.\textsuperscript{67}

At the opposite end of this phenomenon, events of several chapters may be compacted into a single painting, but for reasons which seem to be altogether different from that just described. For example, folio 34 depicts six sequential moments of action, events which are described in the seven chapters from sargas 16-22. The key events of these chapters are all included, indicated by discrete figural groupings arranged in a circular sequence across the page. As Losty has pointed out, Sahibdin was a master at creating compositions which revolved around effective figural groupings.\textsuperscript{68} Here, the seemingly swift-moving visual sequencing of the figural groups gives immediacy to these most crucial of moments, when Rama is told of his banishment and must convey the news to his mother.

Whereas here Sahibdin deliberately puts into one visual field a most dramatic sequence of events, at other times he allows the drama to unfold across several paintings, as in the sequence illustrating Rama's departure from Ayodhya (folios 50, 51, 553, 56, 57). Sahibdin seems to consciously change the pace of the visual narrative, controlling the

\textsuperscript{67} Pollock, fn.4 to sarga 1, p. 327.

\textsuperscript{68} Losty, \textit{The Art of the Book in India}, p. 127.
storytelling process. Clearly, the compositions of the *Ayodhyakanda* serve as the primary "text" and supersede Hirananda's written accompaniment.
CHAPTER 5

THE RAMAYANA IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter I will discuss some of the historical factors that may have influenced the patron and patronage of the Ramayana, as well as those that bear upon Sahibdin’s style and approach to the paintings of the Ayodhyakanda.

Traditionally, the Mewar kingdom was considered the most powerful of the Rajasthani states. Mewar led the resistance against Mughal overlordship and was the last of the Rajasthani states to succumb to Mughal authority. When Rana Amar Singh was finally forced to submit to Emperor Jahangir in February 1615, the Mewaris were spared much of the humiliation suffered by most of the other Rajasthani states and retained a higher degree of autonomy than their counterparts. Additionally, under Jagat Singh’s predecessor, Karan Singh, close links were developed between the Mughal and Mewar states. Karan Singh was the eldest son of the defeated Rana Amar Singh (r. 1597-1620) who was sent to court “as a mark of the Rana’s capitulation to the imperialists”69 and while there was treated with great deference and respect. In his memoirs Jahangir makes mention on several occasions of his attempts to please and impress Karan Singh. In 1623,

when Prince Khurram, the future Shah Jahan, rebelled against his father Jahangir, he took refuge with Karan Singh, who by then had become ruler of Mewar (r. 1620-1628) in the capital city of Udaipur where Karan Singh built for him a special residence. Prince Khurram enjoyed Karan’s hospitality in Udaipur for approximately four months.\(^70\)

When Jagat Singh ascended to the throne late in 1628 he preserved, at least outwardly, the close relationship with the Mughal court established by his father and his uncle, Bhim Singh, receiving gifts and titles from Shah Jahan and even sending troops to aid Shah Jahan in the Deccan.\(^71\) Despite a number of minor skirmishes between Mewar and Mughal forces, this relationship persisted throughout Jagat Singh’s reign.\(^72\) This new era of relative peace is said to have led to a resurgence in the arts, especially architecture. James Tod, in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast’han*, characterized the period of Jagat Singh’s rule thus:

> The twenty-six years during which Juggut Sing occupied the throne passed in uninterrupted tranquillity: a state unfruitful to the bard, who flourishes only amidst agitation and strife. This period was devoted to the cultivation of the peaceful arts, especially architecture; and to Juggut Sing Oodipoor is indebted for those magnificent works which bear his name, and excite our astonishment,

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\(^{72}\) G. N. Sharma, p. 132, characterizes Jagat Singh’s attitude toward Mughal authority as follows: “On the whole the Rana maintained a kind of balance between his personal ambitions and the suzerainty of Delhi by asserting his authority, whenever the emperor’s attention was occupied elsewhere and offering submission when the imperial weight seemed to be dangerous.”
after all the disasters we have related, at the resources he found to accomplish them.\textsuperscript{73}

Painting too flourished during this period, and many illustrated manuscripts were produced for the royal library of Jagat Singh. Included among these are the several important sets of illustrated manuscript paintings produced by Sahibdin and his studio, discussed in Chapter 2: a \textit{Ragamala} series dated to 1628, two \textit{Rasikapriya} sets of the 1630s attributed, at least in part, to Sahibdin, two versions of the \textit{Gita Govinda} from 1629 and ca. 1635, a \textit{Suryavamsaparakash} of 1645, and a \textit{Bhagavata Purana} of 1648.\textsuperscript{74} The \textit{Ramayana} of 1649-53 was the most monumental commission undertaken by the Mewar court workshops up to that time.

The production of the \textit{Ramayana} on such a monumental scale in Jagat Singh’s workshop may be related to the strongly-held belief by the Mewars that they were lineal descendants of Rama. The Sesodiyas, the Mewar ruling family, considered themselves to be of the same solar lineage as Rama himself, and thus traced their ancestry back directly to Rama. As Tod pointed out,

At Oodipoor the sun has universal precedence; his portal (\textit{Surya-pol}) is the chief entrance to the city; his name gives dignity to the chief apartment or hall (\textit{Surya-mahal}) of the palace; and from the balcony of the sun (\textit{Surya-gokra}) the descendant of Rama shows himself in the dark monsoon as the sun’s


\textsuperscript{74} Desai, “From Illustrations to Icons,” pp. 100-101.
The creation of the *Ramayana* on the scale of this production served as a family history of the Mewar ruling house in the same manner as the monumental illustrated histories of the Mughals, the *Genghis*, *Timur*, *Babur* and *Akbarnamas*. As Losty explains:

It is not surprising then that the *Ramayana* should have been the text selected for this grandiose treatment for it concerns the great hero of the Solar race, Rama, the ancestor of the Rana of Udaipur, the present head of the *Suryavamsa*, and it may be seen as a Hindu reaction to, and imitation of, the ancestor-glorifying traditions of the Mughals.\(^7\)

The familiarity of some of the Mewar rulers, especially Jagat Singh’s father, Karan Singh, with Mughal manuscript painting, may have been another impetus for the production of this monumental *Ramayana* in the workshops of Udaipur. Karan and Bhim Singh both attended the Mughal court and would likely have been familiar with the Mughal painting. Several portraits of Karan Singh, and at least two of his brother Bhim Singh, can be found in Mughal paintings produced during the reign of Shah Jahan.\(^7\) As shown in Chapter 2, the influence of this Mughal, and the related Popular Mughal, painting


\(76\) Losty, *The Art of the Boo in India*, p. 125.

\(77\) Karan Singh’s portrait is included in two paintings in the *Padshahnama*: “Jahangir Receives Prince Khurram on the return from the Mewar Campaign,” a painting by Balchand ca. 1635 of an event of 1615, and “Jahangir Receives Prince Khurram on His Return from the Mewar Campaign”, another depiction of the event painted by Murar ca. 1640. Karan and Bhim Singh are also believed to be portrayed in another work by Murar in 1640 describing the event of 1617, “Jahangir Receives Prince Khurram on his return from the Deccan.” See Milo C. Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World*, catalogue numbers 5, 8-9, and 38. Karan’s portrait was also painted individually and included within an album.
tradition is clearly visible in the work of Sahibdin. The inventory of the royal library at Udaipur carried out in the late 19th or early 20th century under the reign of Maharana Fateh Singh reveals the presence of numerous Mughal paintings in the collection, including works of the style of the Akbari and Jahangiri periods.\(^78\) It is likely that at least some of these works were in the collection of the royal library in the early 17th century, possibly brought to court by Karan Singh.\(^79\) As chief artist in the Udaipur atelier Sahibdin would have had ample opportunity to study such works. Losty has even suggested the possibility that Sahibdin traveled to the court of Jahangir himself, in the company of Karan Singh or Jagat Singh.\(^80\) Clearly, the complex relationship between the Mewar and Mughal courts affected the painting workshop at Udaipur and influenced the production of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

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\(^79\) No record of paintings commissioned by or given as gifts to Karan are known; Jahangir describes many types of gifts given to Karan, including the usual horses, elephants, jeweled armery and robes of honor, but also “carpets, state cushions perfumes, vessels of gold...” etc. (Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, tenth year of the reign.) Also in that year Jahangir states that statues of Rana Amar Singh and of Karan Singh were sculpted in white marble and placed in the gardens at Agra.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This work identifies for the first time the subject of all illustrations in the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana. In my examination of these paintings, I have shown that Sahibdin establishes a discernible contrast between the two settings of the Ayodhyakanda—city and forest—and between the types of events that occur in and because of these different settings. This contrast is illustrated by Sahibdin’s alternation of compositional types: Sahibdin creates specific and distinct sets of compositional approaches and employs to convey elements of the narrative which would otherwise have been lost in his literal visualization of the story of the Ayodhyakanda. In particular, Sahibdin distinguishes between the space and time in which the characters exist before Rama’s exile from that in which the characters exist following the exile. He does this by structuring his compositions according to where they fall in the narrative. For events inside Ayodhya, the compositional field is divided into visually discrete domains. These domains are organized to create dramatic tension between narrative moments. The later compositions, those “outside” Ayodhya, are less rigidly constrained within visually delineated subdivisions. Here, the compositions have larger and looser arrangements of figures and more complicated relationships between figures. These compositional
differences reflect the different stages and moments of the narrative.

Sahibdin’s painting style, a style which became the basic form of expression of painting in Mewar thereafter, resulted from a combination of factors. His style was based on the early, indigenous Western Indian painting tradition. But, Sahibdin had obviously been exposed to Mughal and Popular Mughal painting, possibly as a result of Karan Singh’s experience at the court at Delhi and his relationship with the future Shah Jahan. In addition to the direct artistic contact which Karan Singh’s relationship with the Mughals afforded, Sahibdin and the entire artistic production machinery of the Mewar court benefitted from the relative peace that existed with the Mughals. Further, under a patron who seems to have actively supported the illustrated manuscript tradition, Sahibdin was allowed important opportunities to develop his style and explore a wide range of expressive techniques.

Although elements of his approach are visible in other of Sahibdin’s works, they are most articulately stated in the Ayodhyakanda. The degree to which Sahibdin’s painting style and his approach to composition was employed by other artists has yet to be ascertained. By analyzing other Rajput manuscript paintings in this way we may be able to better understand the role of the both artist and illustration in conveying the full meaning of the narrative to the viewer.
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APPENDIX A

IDENTIFICATION AND ILLUSTRATION OF PAINTINGS IN THE AYODHYAKANDA

FIGURE 18: Folio 2 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 1
A Bharata and Satruighna bid farewell to Dasaratha in the presence of Rama,
B Lakshmana and ministers (1:4).
C Bharata and Satruighna move through the palace of Ayodha.

B Bharata and Satruighna bid farewell to their three mothers.
FIGURE 19: Folio 3 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 1

A  Rama and Laksmana bid farewell to Bharata and Satrughna.
B  Rama and Laksmana return to Ayodhya.
C  Escorted by Yudhajit, Bharata’s uncle, Bharata and Satrughna depart in a chariot to the house of Bharata’s grandfather (1:5).
FIGURE 20: Folio 4 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 1
Bharata and Satrughna approach the palace of Bharata's grandfather.
FIGURE 21: Folio 5 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 1
A  Bharata and Satrughna dismount from their chariots and approach Bharata’s grandfather (1:6)।
B  Bharata and Satrughna embrace their grandfather, who has come out in his chariot to greet them.
FIGURE 22: Folio 6 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 1
A  Bharata’s grandfather in his chariot leads the boys into his palace.
B  Bharata, Satrughna, Yudhajit, and their grandfather climb the stairs to an upper apartment in the palace.
C  Bharata, Satrughna, Yudhajit, their grandfather converse.
FIGURE 23: Folio 7 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 1
A  Bharata and Satrughna bow before (or receive instruction from) Yudhajit while musicians play.
B  Bharata and Satrughna appear on horseback.
C  Bharata and Satrughna, with Yudhajit, before their grandfather.
FIGURE 24: Folio 8 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 1
A  Rama and Laksmana are seated before Dusartha, surrounded by ministers.
B  Figures to be identified.
FIGURE 25: Folio 11 of the Ayodhya-kanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 2-3

A  Dasaratha discusses the coronation of Rama with Vasistha, Vamadeva, and his ministers.
B  Vasistha and Vamadeva (and Sumantra?) inform Rama that Dasaratha wishes to see him.
C  A sacrificial rite? Possibly this is part of the making of the arrangements for the coronation; the townspeople worship the gods in response to the news of Rama’s coronation.

“When the townspeople heard the king’s announcement, it was as if they had secured some longed-for object and, on taking leave of the lord of men, they went home and worshiped the gods in deep delight” (3:32).
FIGURE 26: Folio 12 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagar Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 3
A. Rama and Laksmana respond to the summons of Dasaratha.
B. Rama falls prostrate at the feet of Dasaratha.
C. Dasaratha tells Rama he wishes to make him the yuvraj (prince regent) (3:23-28).
FIGURE 27: Folio 13 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 3
A  Rama leaves Dusaratha’s apartments.
B  Figures with cattle and horses, receive gifts.
C  Kausalya bestows gifts on the messengers.
   "The excellent lady directed that gold and cows and an assortment of precious objects be given to those who brought the news". (3:30).
Sarga 4
A Having sent for Rama a second time, Dasaratha tells him the enthronement will take place the following day (4:11-27).
B Rama and Laksmana exit Dasaratha’s presence through the doorway (4:28-29).
C Rama and Laksmana in their chariot go to find Kausalya.
D Rama and Laksmana greet Kausalya and Sumitra who are at the temple (“shrine-room”) offering prayers to the gods. As described in the text, she is now clad in white (4:30).

"There in the shrine-room he saw her, clothed in linen, solemnly and silently praying for his royal fortune."
FIGURE 29: Folio 15 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 5 - 6
A  Sent by Dasaratha, Vasistha goes to Rama’s apartments and is greeted by Rama who helps him down from his chariot (5:1-6).
B  Vasistha tells Rama of the preparations he must make for the coronation (5:7-9).
C  Rama and Vasistha worship at the temple of Lord Narayana. “*When the family priest had gone Rama bathed and then, restraining his desire, he worshiped Narayana in the company of his large-eyed wife*” (6:1-4)
FIGURE 30: Folio 16 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jugat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 6, verses 10-20
Meanwhile, the people of Ayodhya hang bunting and flags, and beautify the city in preparations for the coronation. "All the people of the town had heard about Rama’s consecration, and so when they saw night brighten into dawn they began to adorn the city... On all the assembly halls, and on prominent trees colorful banners and pennants were run up high."
FIGURE 31: Folio 17 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 6
Later, the city has been prepared; now the people converse excitedly about the impending coronation.
FIGURE 32: Folio 18 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 5
A  Vasistha returns to the king and informs him that the needful has been done
   “Seeing he had come, the king left his throne and questioned him, and Vasistha informed him that his
   mission had been carried out.” (5:20-22).
B  Hearing this, the king retires to his apartment.
   “… the king dismissed the multitudes of people and withdrew into his private chamber, like a lion into a
   mountain cave.” (5:23-24)
Sarga 7-10

A  The maid Manthara descends from the terrace where she had been watching the excited activities taking place in the town, and goes to the apartments of her mistress Kaikeyi (7:1-9).

B (i) Manthara tries to convince Kaikeyi that Rama’s coronation spells doom for her and her son Bharata.

B (ii) Initially, Kaikeyi rejects this advice and gives Manthara expensive gifts in honor of Rama’s coronation (7:27-31).

C  Dasaratha goes to inform Kaikeyi of the good news, but finds her prostrate in the “chamber of displeasure.” “But when the lord of the world saw her fallen on the ground and lying there in a posture so ill-befitting her, he was consumed with sorrow.” (10:1-5)
FIGURE 34: Folio 24 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 10-12

A (i) Finding Kaikeyi lying on the bed in woe, Dasaratha asks her why she is so upset (10:1-12).
A (ii) Kaikeyi demands from Dasaratha the boons owed to her (10:13-29).
B Dasaratha is distraught at her request and begs her to rescind it.

"The world might endure without the sun, or crops without water; but without Rama life could not endure within my body. Enough then, give up this scheme, you evil-scheming woman. I beg you! Must I get down and bow my head to your feet?" (10:30-41)

C Kaikeyi is unmoved by his pleas.
FIGURE 35: Folio 27 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 12-13

A  The king in grief is unable to speak, so Kaikeyi sends for Rama on Dasaratha's behalf. Sumantra looks to the king for confirmation (12.17-21).

B  Meanwhile, the brahmans have made all the preparations for the coronation, and gathered gold pots of holy water, but the king does not emerge from his rooms. Sumantra on his mission to fetch Rama emerges from the palace where he encounters the Brahmans.

"... the chief brahmans made the preparations for Rama's consecration. They set out golden ewers, a richly ornamented throne... water brought from the holy confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna..." (13.1-22)
FIGURE 36: Folio 29 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 13-15
A. Sumantra takes the chariot to Rama’s apartments (13:23-14:4).
B. Sumantra tells Rama Dasaratha wishes to see him (14:6-16).
C. Ravana and Sumantra go towards Dasaratha’s palace (14:18-15:3).
FIGURE 37: Folio 30 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Rama*yan.

Sarga (14) 15
A Rama (and Sumantra?) approach the palace (15:11-13).
B Rama (with Vasistha?) makes an oblation by fire; other sages/offerers are there.
C Meanwhile, an empty throne flanked by cauri bearers has been set out for Rama by the brahmans. (See 14:4-7).

Rama’s “supporters” in the background, delighted with his upcoming coronation, bow to him.
FIGURE 38: Folio 31 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 15-16
A  Rama, with Laksmana, enters his father’s palace (15:13).
B  Rama and Laksmana enter, bow before Dasaratha, then before Kaikeyi (16:2).

"First he made an obeisance with all deference at his father’s feet and then did homage most scrupulously at the feet of Kaikeyi." (16:2)
Sarga 16-22

A  Rama (and Laksmana) hear Kaikeyi and immediately accede to her desire. They stand, make a reverent gesture to their parents, and prepare to leave; Dasaratha is still in a swoon (16:20-54).

B  Rama and Laksmana leave the palace (16:54-57).

C  Rama and Laksmana greet Kausalya and tell her of the turn of events (17:1-12). According to the text she is in her early morning practice of worshiping Visnu although she is depicted merely as standing ready.  

D  Kausalya is distraught and collapses (17:17-18).

E  Kausalya offers prayers for his safety and happiness.

F  Meanwhile, four men make offerings at a homa pit. Their relationship to the narrative is unclear.
FIGURE 40: Folio 41 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 23-27
A  Rama and Laksmana return to Rama’s palace in a chariot. From an upper window, Sita observes their arrival.
B  Rama (with Laksmana) tells Sita of his exile. She tells him that she is going to accompany him into exile (23:8-27; 32).
[C]  Kaikeyi. She is not present at this scene, but her shadow falls upon all these other figures.
[D]  The royal mount, now riderless.
FIGURE 41: Folio 46 of the \textit{Ayodhyakanda} of the Jagat Singh \textit{Ramayana}.

Sarga 27-29

A  Rama gives away his possessions to brahman.
Rama gives cattle to the penniless brahman Trijata (29:22-27). Rama instructs him to throw his staff; Trijata will be given however many cattle fall within the span of the staff-throw. The staff falls on the farther bank of the Sarayu River, Trijata is given all the cattle not already distributed to others.
 "Rama replied to him jokingly, ‘There are one thousand cows I have not yet allocated. You shall have as many as you can cover by hurling your staff’... Then the great sage Trijata along with his wife accepted the herd of cows and pronounced blessings on the great prince...".

B  Meanwhile, Sita gives away her jewelry and possessions.
FIGURE 42: Folio 48 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 30-31

A Rama, Laksmna and Sita go on foot to Kaikeyi’s palace to say goodbye to Dasaratha. Meanwhile, people who had heard about the turn of events throng to see Rama, Laksmna and Sita (30:1-24).

B The king tells Sumantra to first go fetch his other wives before admitting Rama (31:6-7).

"‘Sumantra, bring all my wives to me. I wish to see Raghava in the company of all my wives.’" (31:7).
Sarga 31
A  Door guardian at the entrance to the palace.
B  The other queens having arrived, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita enter the palace and bow before the king, Sumantra announcing them (31:11-12).
C  Dasaratha embraces Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, surrounded by the other queens ("half seven hundred ladies with coppery eyes") (31:17-18).
Sarga 33
Kaikeyi has brought coarse dresses for Rama, Laksmana and Sita. She helps Sita to dress in hers. The other wives and Dasaratha make gestures of wailing. Rama, Laksmana and Sita are robed in their coarse attire over their other clothes.

"Kaikeyi herself then brought the barkcloth garments. 'Put them on!' she said to Raghava, unembarrassed before the crowd of people." (33:6)
FIGURE 45: Folio 53 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 34

A Seeing Rama dressed in barkcloth, Dasaratha cries out and loses consciousness (34:1-8).

_The great-armed lord of the land fell unconscious for a moment and then in sorrow he began to lament.... Then he cried out 'Rama!' only once, and could speak no further._ (34:3-8).

B Dasaratha demands that Sumantra bring the best of chariots and horses, and enough robes and jewelry to last Sita for the fourteen years of exile. Obeying her father-in-law, she casts off the coarse dress and is adorned in finery. She embraces Kausalya (34:9-28).

C Rama, Laksmiana and Sita bow before the mothers (34:32-35).
Sarga 35
Rama, Laksmana and Sita depart, surrounded by the crowd of Ayodhya. Dasaratha in the doorway surrounded by his wives, waves goodbye.

“As Raghava set out for his long stay in the great wilderness, a wave of stupor passed through the city, overwhelming the army and the people... The town was in utter agony... The king... despondent and wretched, his body bathed in sweat, he halted with his wives and gazed out after his perfect son.” (35:15-35).
Sarga 37
With Rama and the chariot out of sight, Dasaratha falls down in a faint.
"But once the lord of the land could no longer see even Rama's dust, in anguish and despair he fell to the ground." (37:3).
FIGURE 48: Folio 58 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 37

A  Kausalya and Sumitra help Dasaratha, but Kaikeyi is ordered not to touch him (37:4-9). "Kaikeyi, do not touch me, evil woman, I do not want to see you." (37.6).

B  Dasaratha lies down in a bed in Kausalya’s palace, attended by Kausalya and Sumitra (37:24-28).
FIGURE 49: Folio 61 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 41

A  Rama, Laksmana, Sita and Sumantra, still surrounded by the people of Ayodhya, spend the night on the bank of the Tamasa River. While Rama and Sita sleep, Laksmana stays awake all night telling stories of Rama’s virtue to Sumantra (41:1-14).

“Escorted by Saumitri (Laksmana), Rama found the bed of leaves made ready near the bank of the Tamasa, and he and his wife then retired. When Laksmana saw that his brother had fallen asleep with his wife, engaged the charioteer in conversation, talking about Rama’s many virtues.” (37:12-13).

B  Rama awakes and, finding the citizens of Ayodhya still asleep, decides to depart quickly (41:16-23).
FIGURE 50: Folio 63 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 44
They reach the town of Srngaverupa on the bank of the Ganges, where they decide to spend the night. Guha, the chief of the town, comes forward with his men to greet them.

"Guha embraced Raghava in anguish, saying: 'This land, no less than Ayodhya, belongs to you. *What may I do for you, Rama?* Then at once he had the welcome-offering brought along with an assortment of choice foods and drinks.' (44:12-13).
FIGURE 51: Folio 66 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 46
A  Rama addresses Guha; he convinces Sumantra to return to Ayodhya and gives him messages to take back to his father, mothers, and Bharata. Meanwhile, one of Guha’s crowd carries sap from a banyan tree.
B  Sumantra departs in the chariot.
C  With the sap of the banyan tree Laksmana matts his hair, then helps Rama with his (46:56-57).
D  They cross the river with the help of two oarsmen.
E  On the other side of the river, Laksmana cooks a meal of meat. Note that the four types of deer mentioned in the text (46:79) are not shown here, but are shown later.
FIGURE 52: Folio 68 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 47-48
A  They spend the night in the forest.
B  The next morning they continue to travel in the forest.
C  They come to the hermitage of the sage Bharadvaja, at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, and greet the sage (48:5-15).
D  Bharadvaja instructs them on the location of Ciktrakuta Hill (48:17-29).
   “Twenty miles from here, my son, is a mountain where you may live. It is a sacred place where great seers make their home, with a pleasant prospect at every turn”. (48:25).
FIGURE 53: Folio 69 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 49-50
A They bid farewell to Bliradvaja.
B Having built a raft, Rama, Laksmana and Sita cross the Yamuna (49:9-12)
C They spend another night in a forest under a tree.
D Walking in the forest, Rama points out to Sita a tree covered in wildflowers and other delights (50:6-10).

"'Look, Vaidehi, the kimsuka trees are in full blossom now that winter is past. Garlanded with their red flowers, they almost seem to be on fire.'" (50:6).
FIGURE 54: Folio 70 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 50, Verses 1 - 14
A They arrive at the Citrakuta Hill.
B Rama and Laksmana quickly erect a hut.

"An on reaching the mountain where birds of every description came flocking, he said, ‘This will be our dwelling for now. We shall enjoy ourselves here, dear brother. Fetch wood, dear Laksmana, good, hard wood, and build a place to live, for my heart is set on living here.’". (50:12-13).
FIGURE 55: Folio 71 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 50, Verses 15-22
On the Citrakuta Hill, Rama, Laksmana, and Sita have settled down.
A Laksmana kills an antelope for use in sacrificial offering.
B Laksmana cooks the flesh of the antelope.
C Rama makes the sacrificial offering. Sita is in the hut.
D Sita serves food to Rama and Laksmana.
FIGURE 56: Folio 72 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 51

A  Sumantra returns to Ayodhya (51:1-14).
B  His chariot empty outside the palace, Sumantra goes inside to greet the king. Dasaratha, on seeing Sumantra return alone, faints (51:15-22).
C  Sumantra relates Rama’s message to Dasaratha, Kausalya and Sumitra. “Sumantra advanced to where the lord of men was sitting. Doing obeisance to him, he delivered Rama’s message just as it had been told to him.” (51:21).
FIGURE 57: Folio 76 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 51-52 (-56?) (57)
A  Dasaratha falls into a swoon, attended by Kausalya and Sumitra. He begins to narrate the story of his killing the ascetic.
   “The king listened in silence, and then, his mind reeling, he fell to the ground in a faint, overwhelmed by grief for Rama.” (51:22).
B  Sumantra relates his experience to Vasistha and the other sages and ministers.
FIGURE 58: Folio 79 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 57-58
Dasaratha relates to Kausalya the sin for which he is now suffering.
A  Dasaratha hunting on the banks of the Sarayu river. He shoots at a noise, thinking it is an elephant.
B  At dawn, Dasaratha goes toward the sound and realizes he has mortally wounded an ascetic youth. Dasaratha pulls out the arrow, while the ascetic points in the direction of his parent’s hut.
C  As bidden by the ascetic, Dasaratha goes to fetch the youth’s father and mother who are blind. He confesses to them his crime.
D  He leads the youth’s parents to their son.
E  The parents hold their dead son.  F  The ascetic ascends to heaven.
Sarga 59
Almost sunrise, still dark, the musicians go to wake up Dasaratha. The other consorts come to wake Dasaratha and the two sleeping queens, and discover that Dasaratha is dead.

"Realizing that the glorious bull among kings had passed away, his wives gathered around him, weeping wildly and piteously in their sorrow, and stretching out their arms in helpless lamentation." (59:14).
FIGURE 60: Folio 82 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 60-62

A The king is embalmed in oil, since no funeral can take place without the presence of Bharata.

B As Vasistha presides, the ministers of state discuss what is to be done. They sit before an empty throne. “Night passed, and when the sun rose the deputies of the king, the brahmans, convened and went to the assembly hall... But in the end they turned to Vasistha himself, the foremost among them, the family priest of the king.” (61:1-3).

C Swift messengers, their horses waiting outside, are instructed to send for Bharata.
FIGURE 61: Folio 83 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 62-63

A The messengers approach the palace of Bharata’s grandfather (62:15).

B Meanwhile, Bharata has a nightmare. He is surrounded by concerned companions.

"'This was the terrifying dream I had last night. Surely I myself, or Rama, or the king, or Laksmana is going to die.'" (63:15).

C To be resolved.
FIGURE 62: Folio 84 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Rāmacarita*.

Sarga 64
A  The messengers arrive and convey to Bharata the message that they have been given.
B  Bharata and Satrughna beg leave of their grandfather.
C  Bharata and Satrughna in the chariot headed for Ayodhya. They are surrounded by expensive gifts of camels, an elephant and a fine, saddle horse, and retainers.

"The king of Kekaya honored Bharata with the gift of prize elephants, many-colored blankets, and hides, and gave him riches... His uncle gave him riches too handsome elephants, bred on Mount Iravata and Mount Indrasira, and swift asses that easily took the yoke." (64:17-20).
FIGURE 63: Folio 85 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 65
A. Bharata and party approach Ayodhya.
B. Bharata and party enter Ayodhya.
C. Bharata and Satrughna find their father's palace empty.
FIGURE 64: Folio 89 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 66-68 & 72
A  Bharata and Satrughna greet Kaikeyi.
B  They converse. She tells them of Dasaratha’s death (66:1-14).
C  Bharata falls down weeping.
D  Manthara enters the apartments of Kaikeyi as she further explains to Bharata and Satrughna the past events.
E & F Bharata hands Manthara over to Satrughna for punishment. Satrughna kicks her and drags her by her hair.
G  Manthara runs away.
FIGURE 65: Folio 90 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 69-70

A  Bharata and Satrughna enter through the portal of Kausalya's palace.
B  Bharata and Satrughna bow down before Kausalya and Sumitra.
C  Bharata swoons again with grief.
D  Bharata, Satrughna and Vasistha discuss funeral arrangements with Kausalya and Sumitra.

"As Katkeyi's son Bharata still lay consumed with grief, Vasistha, most eloquent of seers, came and eloquently spoke to him: 'Glorious prince, I pray you, enough of this grief. It is time you performed the obsequies for the lord of men.'" (70:1)
FIGURE 66: Folio 93 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*

Sarga 70
A  Dasaratha’s body is carried to the cremation ground, followed by Bharata, Satruhnna and women of the palace.
B  Bharata and Satruhnna offer libations for the peace of the departed king.
C  Goods for the pyre brought in a bullock cart (70:16).
D  The body of the king is cremated.
   “After placing various other fragrant substances on the pyre, the priests laid the protector of the earth in the center.” (70:17).
Sarga 73
Bharata sits on (the throne?) a seat, with Satrughna standing by his side, in discussion with the sage Vasistha. Surrounding them are ministers and nobles, and the objects necessary for the coronation. Bharata announces that he will not take the throne but will seek out Rama, compel him to return to Ayodhya, and remain himself in the forest in Rama’s stead.

“The devoted Bharata reverently circled all the articles for the consecration and then made this reply to all the people: ‘... Rama, our elder brother, shall be the lord of the earth. As for me, I will live in the wilderness for the nine years and five... And all the consecration materials standing ready here I will carry in the vanguard as I go to the forest on Rama’s behalf.’” (73:6-10).
FIGURE 68: Folio 97 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 74-77
After making plans to follow Rama to the forest, and sending out engineers to pave new roads, Bharata along with the army and the citizens of Ayodhya set out for the forest.

"Proceeding joyfully to the appointed region, that vast flood of people resembled the great rushing tide of the sea under a full moon." (74:4).
Sarga 72-79

Reaching the bank of the holy Ganga, they all stop to camp for the night.

A Guha, seeing the group arrive, and recognizing Bharata, goes out to greet him and to learn his intentions toward Rama.

“Now, the king of the Nisadas, seeing the banded army encamped along the Ganges, hurried off at once to speak with his kinsmen.” (78:1)

B Sumantra, who knows Guha, announces his presence to Bharata who is sitting in his tent with Satrughna, Vasistha and others. They all converse as Guha seeks to know Bharata’s true intentions toward Rama (78:13-79:14).
FIGURE 70: Folio 101 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 80-82
A Guha tells Bharata, Satrughna, Vasistha, and the mothers how Rama, Laksmana, Sita had passed their first night of exile there, and shows the group where Rama, Laksmana, and Sita talked, walked, etc.
B Bharata and Satrughna in discussion with Vasistha?
C Contemplating the feet of Rama, Bharata faints; the mothers rush to his aid (81:2-6).
D Guha shows Bharata and Satrughna the very spot on which Rama and Sita slept beneath a tree
E Vasistha in discussion with Guha.
FIGURE 71: Folio 103 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 83
A  Bharata and Satrughna ask Guha for a fleet of boats to cross the Ganges (83:7).
B  Everyone crosses the river. In their eagerness, some citizens even swim across. The elephants with their mahouts swim across.

"Some boats were laden with women, others with horses, while still others transported the vehicles and teams and the great treasures... The caparisoned elephants were urged on by their drivers, and making the crossing, they looked like flag-topped mountains. Only some of the people were able to board the boats, others crossed on rafts, in tubs or barrels, while still others had only their arms to use."

(83:17-30).
FIGURE 72: Folio 104 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga to be resolved.
The figure in red and yellow looks like Guha; although not in Valmiki, in Tulsidas (see Caupai 220) there is some indication that Guha accompanies Bharata and company across the river.
Sarga 84
A  Bharata leaves the entourage camped in the forest and proceeds to the hermitage of Bharadvaja, accompanied by Vasisthā, Satruḥna, and the sages (84:1-2).
B  Bharadvaja greets them all with great reverence, especially Vasisthā whom he knows. Bharadvaja then enquires after Bharata’s purpose (though he already knows it) and offers him the hospitality of the hermitage (84:4-22).
“I knew what was in your heart and only questioned you to hear it openly confirmed... Your brother is living on the great mountain Citrakuta. Tomorrow you shall go to that place, but stay here tonight with your counselors. Grant me this desire, wise prince.” (84:20-21).
FIGURE 74: Folio 106 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 85
A  Celestial mansions, food and drink, heavenly music appear for the enjoyment of Bharata’s army and the citizens of Ayodhya, created by Visvakarman after Bharadvaja, in a superconscious samadhi state asks his assistance.
B  A feast is eaten. Inside the mystically created palace, before an empty throne, Bharata and Satrughna make obeisance to Bharadvaja, then they all sit together and converse.

"And there was a royal palace that looked like a silvery cloud... There was a heavenly throne in it, a fan and a parasol, and with his ministers Bharata approached as if the king were there. He paid homage to the throne, prostrating himself before Rama..." (85:30-37).
FIGURE 75: Folio 107 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 85

With horses stabled, elephants bathing themselves in ponds, and all the animals and people well fed, they all pass the night (85:52–77). And while they were enjoying themselves like this in Bharadvaja’s lovely ashram, just like the gods in Nandana, the night slipped away… (85:75).
FIGURE 76: Folio 108 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 86
On waking the next morning, all find that the hermitage has been restored to its natural state.

A Bharata and Satrughna introduce Bharadvaja to the three mothers. Bharadvaja tells Bharata not to blame Kaikeyi (86:18-28).

"Then Bharadvaja, a sage strict in his vows, made a request of Bharata" ‘I should like to make the acquaintance of your mothers individually, Raghava.'" (86:18).

B Bharata, Satrughna, sages, bow to Bharadvaja and depart for the Citrakuta Hill.
FIGURE 77: Folio 111 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 88-89

A  *Kimarās.*

C  Rama, Laksmana, and Sīta happily dwell in the forest.

D  Rama and Sīta roam the forest; Sīta is attacked by a crow which Rama shoots at for disturbing them.

E  Rama points out to Sīta many of the delightful flora and fauna of Citrakuta Hill.

F  Rama and Sīta are together in the forest.

G  The ascetics who bathe in the water of the river, which Rama pronounces to Sīta as one of the pleasing aspects of their environment.

H  Rama and Sīta are in the forest; Rama points out a monkey and a tiger to Sīta.
FIGURE 78: Folio 112 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sargas 90-92
A One day sitting outside his hut, Rama perceives the tumult of the approaching army and instructs Laksmana to investigate. (90:3-5).
B Laksmana arises.
C Laksmana climbs the tree.
D At the top of the tree, seeing Bharata’s party in the distance, Laksmana turns back to Rama and announces Bharata’s arrival.
E Bharata and Guha make their way to Rama’s camp.
FIGURE 79: Folio 114 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 93-95
A Arriving in the hermitage, Bharata and Satrughna rush to Rama and fall at his feet. Rama embraces them.
B Embracing his two brothers, Rama asks after the welfare of all in Ayodhya.
C On hearing the news of his father’s death, Rama faints (95:8-11).
D-E Rama and his brothers and Sita go down to the River Mandakini and offer libations of water for the peace of Dasaratha’s soul.
F Rama, with Sita and his brothers, sits unhappily outside the hut (95:33-34).
FIGURE 80: Folio 118 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 96
A The royal entourage and the sage Vasistha, on hearing the mourning sounds of Rama and Laksmana, go toward the hermitage.
[B] Rama, Laksmana, Sita, Bharata, Satrughna are outside the hut.
C Rama and Laksmana, on seeing the royal entourage approach, rush forward to greet them. They bow to their three mothers. Kausalya embraces Sita (96:13-23).
D Rama, Laksmana, and Sita bow before the sages (96:24-26).
FIGURE 81: Folio 121 of the *Ayodhyakanda* of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*.

Sarga 97-103
Early the next morning all assemble. Bharata and Rama converse. Vasistha also joins the discussion. In this section of text Bharata implores Rama to return to Ayodhya but is unable to convince him.
FIGURE 82 Folio 126 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 104-105
A Rama makes a gift of his sandals to Bharata who, holding them in his hands, bows down at Rama’s feet for a blessing.
B Rama and Laksmana say goodbye to Vasistha and the sages (104:24).
C Rama, Laksmana, and Sita say goodbye to the three mothers. Sita and Kausalya embrace once more.
D With eyes filled with tears, Rama reenters his hut (104:25).
E Placing the sandals on his head Bharata departs with Satrughna in one chariot, Vasistha and the other sages in another (105:1-2).
FIGURE 83: Folio 127 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 106-107

A  The returning party approaches Ayodhya (106:1).
B  They enter Ayodhya (106:1).
C  Bharata informs the ministers that he will take up residence in Nandigrama. The ministers agree to his proposal (107:4-6).
   "I have come to ask leave of you all; I am going to Nandigrama. There I shall suffer through all this sorrow of being without Raghava... I shall await Rama until he assumes the kingship, for he is the glorious king." (107:2-3).
D  Bharata and Satrughna tell the mothers of Bharata’s intent to go to Nandigrama.
FIGURE 84: Folio 128 of the Ayodhyakanda of the Jagat Singh Ramayana.

Sarga 107
All the gurus and brahmans, led by Vasistha, accompany Bharata and Satrughna to Nandigrama. They are followed by the army and the townsfolk.

"And altogether unbidden, the army, a crush of elephants, horses, and chariots, set off as Bharata left, and so did all the inhabitants of the town. Righteous Bharata, who cherished his brother, hurried in his chariot to Nandigrama, still bearing the slippers upon his head." (107:11-12).
Sarga 107

Dressed in the manner of an ascetic Bharata lives in Nandigrama. He is seated before an empty throne.
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