Title: I am a Shri Ramacharitamanasa (Ramayana)
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Here I am! Over 1000 pages of Hindi text about the life of the lord Rama. I am filled with lots of narration, teachings, stories and most importantly who reads it the pictures about the life of lord Rama. My version of the Ramayana was adopted by Tulasidasa and was edited and translated from Sanskrit to Hindi by R.C. Prasad. I was published, printed and bound by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers in New Delhi, India and released in 1988. I have a nice red hard cover and a case to be kept in to prevent any damage to me. Sometime between of me being published in 1988 to early 1989 I was shipped on a plane and headed to Guyana South America, where I

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1 Alex Persaud is a fourth-year student majoring in Biology and minors in Chemistry and History of Religion. This paper was written for Dr. Scott's RLG 301H5 (Stranger Things: Religious Objects In Theory and Practice) course. I want to thank my family for their inspiration and the editor of Prandium for his assistance in the paper's publication.
was purchased for $750 Guyana dollars equivalent to $75 Canadian dollars and destined to my owner.

My owner was named Joe Persaud he was a very nice man and took extremely good care of me. Joe had placed a special order for me from India because Joe wanted a Ramayana in Hindi and not in English because Joe thought the translations at the time from Sanskrit to Hindi to English was that some of the meaning was lost. Also, all the Ramayana books in Guyana were mostly in English which did not satisfy him. Joe used to read me a lot in fact everyday he would open me and read a couple verses in the morning and then carry on with his day. Most times I was stored at the altar at Joe’s house on the top shelf, so his kids would not reach me and destroy my pages. Joe also had bought a special bag and a book stand for me when he was going out, so I will stay protected and when Joe used me I would not be on the ground. On most weekends or special religious holidays especially around Holi this is when I would go out with Joe where he would assemble with other men and sing the Ramayana by using me. This would go on for hours and sometimes groups would challenge each other who sing about me better. Oddly enough when the group would assemble consumption of alcohol was done while Joe and his friends would sing about me.

I stayed in Guyana for only a year and half when Joe and his family immigrated to Canada where Joe brought me along for the trip. It was important to Joe to bring me along because this was his link to Guyana and his religion. My life in Canada was somewhat different I was not used as much but at least once a week Joe would still open me up and read a little bit and then put me back at altar. Later, in mid to late 1990’s Joe would still congregate with his friends but now in a mandir and no alcohol and sing various verses of me. As time progressed Joe got older and lost his eye sight and could not read me as well because my print was too small to read.
Joe would soon not use me at all because he could not see me at all. This is where I became a more a decorative piece now and not for education or learning about the Ramayana. I say this because since Joe was not using me I was left at the altar and would only be admired by other people when they saw me because no one read Hindi and only read English. The last thing Joe did for me was he taped over and nice silver covering over my hard cover because after of 20 years of use my cover had some wear and tear. By getting a new cover I looked brand new and hopefully more appealing for someone to read me. Since Joe could not use me anymore he passed me on to his son Rohan where so far has been my home for last 15 years.

Now since moving into Rohan’s house I remain still stored at the altar but now I just collect dust. I am rarely used anymore mainly because I am only in Hindi and no one can read Hindi in Rohan’s household. I am generally still well kept my case is usually get dust off every so often and when I am used is just to admire the illustrations in me. When I am ever used it is mostly commemorating or in memory of Joe and what he used to do with me and often bragged about that I am a Hindi text and Joe knew how to read Hindi. It seems like my intended purpose of me has changed overtime I was first used as a teaching tool and to spread the glories of Lord Rama but now although I still have that same purpose I am now perceived as a sentimental value in memory of Joe and how he used me. In the coming future I hope someone in the household will learn Hindi and start to read me again and learn about the teachings of Lord Rama. Until then if you know someone who can read Hindi and will use me reach out I am currently still sitting at the altar collecting dust!
Bibliography


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