

APPENDIX

Nirvahana from Śūrpanakhāṅka, Act II of Āścaryacūdāmaṇiḥ.

(After putting on make-up, go near the mizhāvu and offer salutations. Do kamala parivarttana. Sit on stool, salute, observe the audience, salute with kamala parivarttana, act anukrama.)

Then, how did Srī Rāma tell Sītādevi various things; before that, how did Srī Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa talk about various things and reach the hut; before that, how did Rāma and Sītā make Lakṣmaṇa walk in front and start towards the hut; before that, how did Lakṣmaṇa observe the hut; before that how did Lakṣmaṇa make the hut; before that, how did Rāma intrust Lakṣmaṇa with making the hut? In this way.

(Then, after kann eriyuga, act the samkṣepa.)

Then Srī Rāma reached the hermitage of Agastya and paid obeisance to him. Then he promised the Mahārṣis who had come there to destroy all the Rākṣasas. At that time, he accepted special weapons presented by Agastya, again made obeisance to Agastya, and started out from there. On the way he made friends with Jaṭāyu. Then with his wife and brother, Rāma reached the banks of the Godāvarī river and sat down at the foot of a tree.

(In this way, after finishing the samkṣepa, do kann eriyuga, then act. Rāma keeps Sītā on his lap [in mime]. He looks at Sītā's face and feels pleased, and then he looks at the surroundings.)

"O Lakṣmaṇa, this place is fine. It is attractive because it is full of flowering trees. Therefore construct a hut here in which we may do penance!" ([Then have the Nañnyār recite the śloka] ayam deśa...)

(Then, as Lakṣmaṇa, tie the uttarīya and poynakha and stand in ōchāniccu.)

"What did my elder brother say? I have to construct a hut? So be it."

(Salute, withdraw, and turn around. Walk in kaḷappuRattu gait and turn around holding the bow and arrow. Stand in front of the lamp and observe both sides.)

"I shall do all this."

(Then fasten the head gear and belt, string the bow, and sound the string.

"At that time all the wild animals around the banks of the Godāvarī got frightened and ran away. How was that? The elephants were standing waving their ears when they heard the sound of the bow string. They were frightened and ran away in the manner of elephants. When the lions who were tearing open the foreheads of the elephants and drinking blood heard the sound of the bow string, they ran away in terror."

(Show the gaits of lions, tigers, and deer. All become frightened and run away in their particular gaits.)

"So, after driving away all the wild animals, the hut was made. How was it made? The branches of trees were cut down with the sword and were brought. Pillars, rafters, top beam, doors, etc., were made and tied together with creepers. The roof was thatched with leaves, and so the hut was finished. Then flowers were gathered and a bed was made with the petals. Pillows were made. Long, bent cane was brought and woven and a seat made. Water, fragrant with the pollen of lotus flowers,

was brought, and the ground all around was sprinkled. I did all this."

(Then have the śloka "jyāchosa..." [from Act I] recited.)

End of the Second Day [of Śūrpanakhāṅka]

"Now I shall go to inform my elder brother that the hut is ready."

(Walk in kaḷappuRattu.)

At that time, after her husband's death, Rāvaṇa's sister, Śūrpanakhā, started out with 14,000 rākṣasas, headed by Khara and Duṣaṇa, in search of a husband on the advice of Rāvaṇa. She reached the Janasthāna. She told Khara and the others, "All of you stay here," and she started out.

(Tuck the poynakha in. Show the gait of the rākṣasas. Show flight in the air by standing on the stool.)

"I saw Indra and longed for him. But then I thought, Indra is not suitable to be my husband. Why is that? Because he is the clandestine lover of Halya. That is why he is not suitable. Agni always makes things hot. Yama is very cruel. The work of Nirṛti is not proper for his status. Varuṇa is Gaṅga's husband. Vāyu is always moving about. Vaiśravaṇa is my brother. Srī Parameśvara is the enemy of Kāmadeva. Therefore, none of the gods are suitable for me.

"So I shall inquire on the earth."

(Show aerial flight, get down from the stool, put aside the stool, show the gait of a rākṣasī.)

"I searched the earth in many places. I finally went to the banks of the Godāvarī. At that time I saw Srī Rāma. I became sick with love. How is Srī Rāma? He is beautiful like blue-lotus flowers. He is equal

to Indra and to Kāmadeva.

"Rāma's face is beautiful; my face is rotten. His stomach is flat; I have a pot belly. His eyes are long and deep; mine are protruding and spread wide apart. His hair is beautiful; my hair is reddish and dishevelled. He is handsome; I am ugly. His voice is sweet; mine is harsh. He is young; I am old. He speaks sweet words; I speak rubbish. His actions are steeped in dharma; I do dirty things. Everyone is glad to see him; all are frightened when they see me." (She thinks about Rāma's qualities and her qualities and falls unconscious, overcome by love. ([Then the Nañnyār recites] tannyāya vṛttam...)

Then she thinks: "I shall go near him in a form acceptable to him." She recites māyā mantra and is changed into a beautiful damsel.

(Have the śloka sa lalitagamanāsa recited without showing mudras and walk in colyundi gait.)

After going near Srī Rāma.

(Salute in kamila parivarttana and stand in female style. Then again untie the end of the poynakha.)

Rāvaṇa's sister Śūrpaṅakhā became love sick and approached Srī Rama, just as a female serpent gets tired due to excess heat and goes to a sandalwood tree.

(Srī Rāma sits on the stool with Sītā in his lap and becomes happy looking at her face.)

At that time he saw a beautiful lady coming to him and standing near. Then he was very pleased and said this: "O beautiful one, who are you? Whose daughter are you? What is the reason for your moving

about in this cruel forest? Tell me the truth about all these things. I am eager to know all."

(Stand up, tuck in the poynakha, and stand as a lady.)

What did Srī Rāma say? He wants to know the truth about me? Did he say so? Then you may hear. "O great man, due to the death of my husband I am going about in search of another. I went to various places, and then I came here. On seeing you, I approached in order to find happiness."

(Remove the tuck and sit on the stool.)

Srī Rāma, having heard what was said, thought and said: "O beautiful one, I am already married. This one is my dear wife. For a woman like you, having a husband with two wives would lead to sorrow.

"O beautiful one, I will not accept you, but you need not grieve. I have a famous brother, Lakṣmaṇa. Who is he? He is one with good behavior, handsome, glowing, and strong.

"He has no wife, but he is anxious to have a wife, for he has attained marriageable age. He is very handsome and quite a match for you. He would be a good husband for you.

"Go to Lakṣmaṇa quickly."

(Tuck in the end of the poynakha and stand in the lady's stance.)

"What did he say? Did he say that I should go to Lakṣmaṇa? Then I shall go."

(So showing, salute in kamala parivarttana and walk colyundi.)

Then near Lakṣmaṇa.

(Salute and stand.)

At that time she was pleased to see Lakṣmaṇa with a bow and arrow in his hands, dark and beautiful like the blue lotus, with lotus-like eyes and a body which looked like Kāmadeva himself. "This Lakṣmaṇa is just like Rāma," she thought.

Then Lakṣmaṇa.

(Remove the tuck.)

Lakṣmaṇa, who had started in kalappuRattu gait to inform his elder brother that the hut was ready, looked to his left and saw a beautiful lady coming. "Is the origin of this womanly jewel the earth or the heaven? How is she? With long eyes, with arched eyebrows, with beautiful breasts, she is a proper abode for femininity."

(After showing the mudras for pañcāṅgam 'the five limbs' and being overcome by Kāma's arrows, he thinks:)

"My mind should not be moved. I am Lakṣmaṇa, the younger brother of Rāma. Let her adorn heaven and earth. But these agitations come only to those of weak mind. Let these thoughts cease. How can I be overcome with passion while remaining in the custody of my brother who has come to the forest to fulfill the wishes of his father and mother."

Then Śūrpaṅkhā.

(Tuck two ends of the poynakha, stand in female stance, and look longingly at Lakṣmaṇa.)

"O Lakṣmaṇa, come here. I have come to you as directed by your brother." When it was so said by Śūrpaṅkhā...

(Seeing Lakṣmaṇa's face, become shy and put the head down.)

Then Lakṣmaṇa, having heard what the beautiful woman said, looked up. Then he thought, "Even though I look at her with contemptuous eyes, I who am leading the life of a hermit, still she bends her head down, a trembling head with ornaments from which bees have fallen.

Then what did the beautiful lady say, "I have come here to serve you at the command of your brother"? Then he thought, "O beautiful lady, you won't feel happy staying with us who are engaged in penance. Why? For the only clothing to wear is made from bark. The only shelter is underneath the trees. The only food to nourish the body are roots and fruits. There are only grasses and creepers to lie on. The only ornaments are matted locks dripping with water. O lady, there is no use saying any more. You deserve more than this life in the forest. O beautiful lady, where are the sages and where is Kāmadeva, who is the enemy of these sages?"

Then what did the beautiful lady say? Is that it? "I will stay to serve you always, and I won't worry about it"? "O beautiful lady, wise men work to free themselves from servitude, but you want to be a slave and so you are a fool."

"Let me go quickly to my brother. I'll get there by the time he gets to the hut. Let me go to see my brother."

(Then walk in kalappuRattu gait and think:)

"Seeing such a lady in this forest is unnatural and unreal. Why is that? The hunters coming here for hunting will be frightened by this forest and they will not enter it. Where else is there a forest where such a beautiful lady comes? It is as if seeing a female swan drinking nectar from a golden lotus in the ocean. This lady is like

that."

At that time he saw his brother in the distance shining with sorrow. "O Mother, I denounce your deed that changed everything. What was that? Even after the coronation of my brother had begun, you prevented it. As a result my brother put on bark and discarded silk. Not only that, his lady had to walk along a path marked with the footprints of wolves. Bharata became thin and lean because of grief. The people of Kosalā suffered so much. And you became a cursed widow."

Then Lakṣmaṇa came near Srī Rāma, bowed, and said, "O brother, the hut is finished." Then he stood here.

Then having sat on the stool with Sītā on his lap and having enjoyed the breeze, Rāma said, "O beautiful Sītā, this place is happier than Ayodhyā. Why is that? Here the forest itself is the garden. How is that? It is full of fragrance from the flowers on the trees. There there is a hillock in the garden for playing, but here there are many mountains dark as the clouds, having streams and rivulets for smiles. There are many flowing rivers with swans in which we may bathe in the summer. Here the wind itself becomes the breeze from fans, winds which are cool because they are laden with mist and are fragrant with the scent of lotuses."

At that time he saw Lakṣmaṇa coming. "Is the hut built? Is that what you say? Then go in front of me and show me the way. O beautiful Sītā, let's go."

(Getting off the stool and having started, Lakṣmaṇa shows the way in kalappuRattu gait. Rāma follows him in the same way. Then Sītā also walks behind in colyundi gait.)

Then Srī Rāma looked at Lakṣmaṇa's face and thought: "His eyes are a little red. Even now the anger toward his mother has not left his face. Therefore let me assuage that anger by speaking to him."

"O Lakṣmaṇa, under some pretext we came here to a forest hermitage which has been trodden by our ancestors after passing on their kingship. Our coming here was made possible by our mother. And because of that we are very happy. We have the opportunity to meet and pay respects to the sages who sit on the paths of the forest and who do penance in order to gain salvation. Not only that, we have had occasion to bathe with pleasure in the rivers and holy waters and thus to remove our sorrows. Because of this, what your mother has done has been for our own good."

Then Lakṣmaṇa said: "How can I think of her as my mother? She has, with her mantras, which even surpass the mantras of Vaiṣiṣṭa in their power, prevented the coronation water, mingled with your father's tears of joy, from flowing onto your head, and milk from streaming from the breasts of our two mothers, their eyes wide open in pleasure. Thus she caused all the people sorrow."

Then, having heard the words of Lakṣmaṇa and having covered his ears: "O Lakṣmaṇa, you should not talk so cruelly about our mother. It is not for you to talk about her because you love the lost kingdom. The mind of wicked people always dwells on evil."

"O Lakṣmaṇa, what are we to gain by staying in Ayodhyā to protect it? To evil people who are in power their kingdom becomes their wife, weapons become their friends, and their own brothers and sons become their enemies. They go to hell for the sin done by others. The

ultimate gain is only an umbrella and two fans.

"While the King stood like Indra I sat for coronation without shame. How was my father? His eyes were filled with tears of joy caused by love."

"What did Lakṣmaṇa say? Is it that? 'Father decided to crown you because he lost the ability to protect the country'? It is not that. Father, who had the power to protect the heavens by killing the demons, must have been able to protect the earth, which was naturally ruled by him.

"Again, do you think our mother is the cause of the death of our father and our exile to the forest? O Lakṣmaṇa, it is not so. I will tell you the reason. One day our father was hunting in a forest. He heard the sound of water being drawn from a river by a young sage who was sent there by his blind parents. Taking the sound for that of a wild elephant drinking, he shot an arrow. The boy was killed with that arrow. The father of the boy cursed him: 'O King, you too shall die of separation from your son.' The reason for his death is this."

While saying many things like this, they didn't realize how far they had walked. "'Please enter the hut.' Is that what Lakṣmaṇa said? O Lakṣmaṇa, you too go some place and rest. Sītā, see Lakṣmaṇa's skill in building this hut. He made this hut after driving away the wild animals merely by sounding his bow. He made a bed strewn with new flowers. Then he made a stool with gathered cane. There are plenty of flowers on the bank of the Godāvarī for doing pūjā.

"O Sītā, let us rest by sitting here and enjoying the breeze,"

(Then he sits on the stool with Sītā on his lap.)

"O beautiful Sītā, loosen your blouse which is covered with dust. How is that blouse? It moves with your breathing, and that breath causes your lips to be dry."

End of the Third Day.

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