25. “Then those wicked kings, whose strength had been called into question, were broken. They fled with their ministers in all directions, stripped of their strength while being slaughtered.

26. “This, then, is the incomparably splendid bow, tiger among sages, firm in your vows. I shall show it to Rāma and Lakṣmana.

27. “And if, sage, Rāma, son of Dāsaratha, can string this bow, I will give him my daughter, who was not born from the womb.”

The end of the sixty-fifth sarga of the Bālākānda of the Śrī Rāmāyaṇa.

Sarga 66

1. When the great sage Viśvāmitra had listened to King Janaka’s words, he said to him, “Show Rāma the bow.”

2. So King Janaka gave the order to his ministers, “Bring the celestial bow and see that it is perfumed and adorned with garlands.”

3. Commanded by Janaka, the ministers entered the city and, placing the bow before them, came forth on the king’s orders.

4. Five thousand tall and brawny men were hard-put to drag its eight-wheeled chest.

5. But when they brought the iron chest that held the bow, his counsellors addressed the godlike King Janaka:

6. “Your majesty, best of kings, lord of Mithilā, here is the great bow, worshiped by all the kings. If you wish it, it shall be seen.”

7. Hearing their words, the king cupped his hands in reverence and spoke to great Viśvāmitra, Rāma, and Lakṣmana:

8. “Here is the great bow, brahman, that the Janakas worship and the mighty kings were unable to string.

9-10. “All the hosts of gods, asuras, rākṣasas, and the foremost among the gandharvas and yakṣas, hīmaras, and great serpents are incapable of bending this bow, stringing it, fitting an arrow to it, drawing its string, or even lifting it. What chance is there then for men?

11. “Yes, bull among sages, it is the greatest of bows that has been brought. Illustrious sage, please show it to the two princes.”

12. When righteous Viśvāmitra heard what Janaka said, he turned to Rāghava and said, “Rāma, my son, behold the bow.”

13. Following the great seer’s instructions, Rāma opened the chest in which the bow lay and regarding it closely, he spoke:

14. “Now, brahman, I shall touch this great bow with my hand. I shall attempt to lift and even string it.”

15. “Very well,” replied both king and sage. So following the sage’s instructions, he easily grasped the bow in the middle.

16. Then, as though it were mere play to him, the righteous prince, the delight of the Rāghus, strung the bow as thousands watched.

17. The mighty man affixed the bowstring and fitting an arrow to it, drew it back. But, in so doing, the best of men broke the bow in the middle.

18. There was a tremendous noise loud as a thunderclap, and a mighty trembling shook the earth, as if a mountain had been torn asunder.

19. Of all those men, only the great sage, the king, and the two Rāghavas remained standing; the rest fell, stunned by the noise.

20. When the people had come to their senses, the eloquent king, free from his anxiety, cupped his hands in reverence and addressed the bull among sages:

21. “Holy man, I have witnessed the might of Daśaratha’s son Rāma. It is marvelous and inconceivable. I had no notion of it.

22. “With Rāma, Daśaratha’s son, for her husband, my daughter Siṭā will bring glory to the House of the Janakas.

23. “And so, Kauśika, my vow that great strength should be her only bride-price has been proven true. For my daughter Siṭā, as dear to me as life itself, shall be given in marriage to Rāma.

24. “Bless you, Kauśika brahman, with your permission, my counsellors shall set out at once for Ayodhyā in swift chariots.

25. “With courteous words they shall bring the king to my city. And they shall tell him all about the betrothal of my daughter, whose only bride-price was strength.

26. “They shall also tell the king that the Kākus̄thas are under the sage’s protection. The king will be delighted. Now, let them go swiftly and bring him here.”