

Rasas in the *Ramacharitmanas*

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Background

- This research project analyzed rasas presented in the *Ramcharitmanas*, focusing on bhakti (devotion) rasa.
- Rasa is a Sanskrit word that can be translated as flavor or essence, in aesthetic theory
- *Ramcharitmanas* was written by Tulasidas, a 16th century poet and saint

Methods

- Read and analyzed the text, *Ramcharitmanas*, translated from Awadhi into English.
- Identified key sections that included instances that exemplified various rasas
- Included sections 60-70, 124-127, 200-203
- Examined Valmiki's *Ramayana* and various performances of Ramlila

Results

Valmiki's *Ramayana*

- 5th century, BCE
- A Sanskrit epic about Rama, an ideal king, in Ayodhya, India

Veera Rasa (Bravery)

- The sage Bhushundi describes Rama as "Raghuveera", hero of Raghu's lineage
- Majesty of the royal palace: "it was all of gold studded with precious stones"

Raudra Rasa (Anger)

- Kaikeyi is described as a "swollen stream of fury that had issued from the mountain of sin...", or "pApa prahara pragat bhai soi, bhari krodha jala jaai na joi"

Karuna Rasa (Sadness)

- Dasharatha states, "Jeevanu mora rAma binu nAhi", or "I cannot live without Rama"

Results

Bhakti Rasa (Devotion)

- Sabari is "so overwhelmed with love that no words came to her lips"
- Nine forms of devotion
- Hanuman, an ideal devotee
- Lakshmana, a devoted brother
- Devotional ideals in the form of sage Sanaka and his three brothers
- "O befriender of the meek", "propagator of humility", "crest-jewel of earthly kings"

Bhakti Rasa in Ramlila



Photo by Pamela Lothspeich

Conclusions

- The evocation of rasa differs across text and performance
- The epic is a source of shared cultural pride across India
- Ramlila and other performances based on this text flourish across South and Southeast Asia



Photos by Pamela Lothspeich

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