

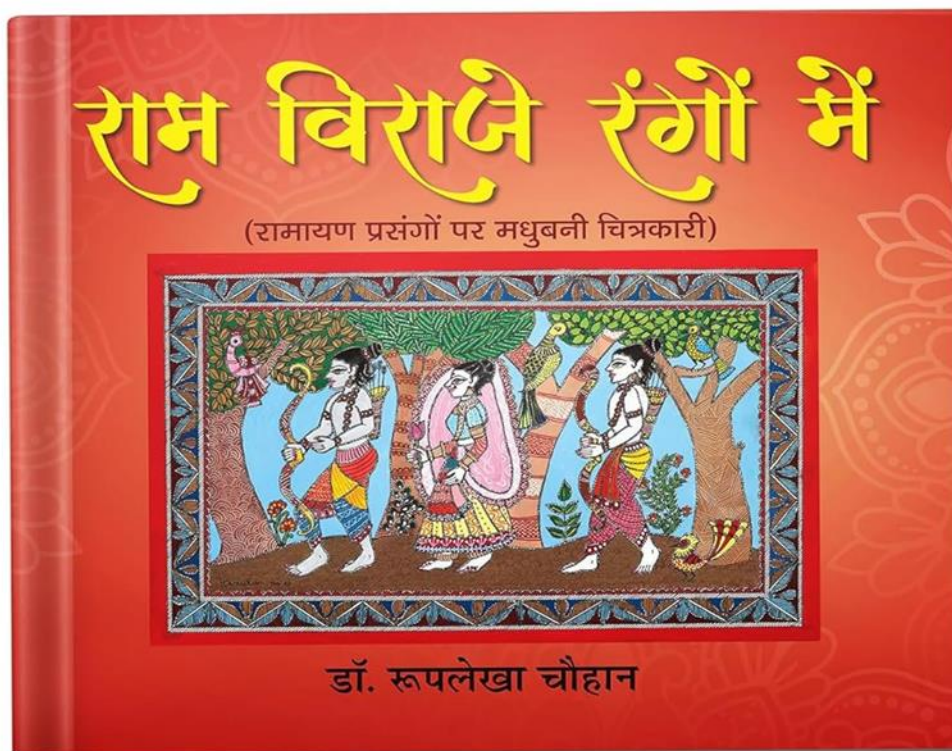
Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan's *Ram Viraje Rangon Mein: A Journey Through Colours, Faith, and Creativity*

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Harshit: What inspired you to write Ram Viraje Rangon Mein, and how did you approach the task of reimagining the Ramayana through the lens of colours?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: I had been painting landscapes in my leisure time and when a good number of them were ready, besides pencil sketches, these paintings and artwork was displayed in an exhibition. I was encouraged by the response of visitors and art lovers. One of my professional colleagues was also there to see the work. On her request I learnt the Madhubani style and made 10 paintings related to Ram Charit Manas. In the second World Ramayan Conference, held in January 2020 at Jabalpur, they were displayed. Thanks to the visitors again for boosting my confidence by their valuable comments. In the next edition of the conference i.e, the 3rd World Ramayan Conference, I had made about 20 more Madhubani paintings on the same theme. For the convenience of audience captions were added with each painting. Each painting was framed and was large. I thought of compiling them all in the form of a book and adding brief description of each in Hindi as well as English as there were a number of foreign delegates in the conference as well. This compilation attracted the then Minister of Culture of Sri Lanka, who requested for a copy the book, which I was happy to present.

Harshit: After dedicating 37 years to the medical profession, what prompted your shift toward spirituality and creative writing? How has your experience as a medical professional influenced your perspective on spirituality and the themes you explore in works like Ram Viraje Rangon Mein?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: In the 37 years as a medical professional and that too in an emergency based surgical branch, life was all about patients, surgery, emergencies and medical students



with little quality time for oneself. Still, it was a very satisfying experience and I truly enjoyed that busy life. Medical literature and recent advances were all that I could read. And in the later years, the additional responsibility of Dean of NSCB Medical College Jabalpur took away 10 hours of a day; besides phone calls and frequent official visits to Bhopal made me forget what leisure was. After leaving the job in 2017, I was left with an additional few hours of surplus time which had almost never been there in the past. It was fruitfully utilised in reading religious literature, drawing and painting. And when I started creating paintings in

Madhubani style, I truly lost track of time. It was very enjoyable. While reading Ram Charit Manas and Valmiki Ramayan, each event would generate an idea and would emerge as a picture. A drawing would pass through series of changes till it replicated what needed to be conveyed through the final work.



राम विराजे रंगों में पुस्तक का किया विमोचन

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लोक निर्माण मंत्री राकेश सिंह के मुख्य आतिथ्य में डॉ. रूपलेखा चौहान द्वारा मधुबनी चित्रकारी में रचित राम विराजे रंगों में पुस्तक का होटल अशोका में विमोचन हुआ। कार्यक्रम की अध्यक्षता साध्वी ज्ञानेश्वरी दीदी ने की तथा विशिष्ट अतिथि महापुर जगत बहादुर सिंह अनुरू रहे। श्री सिंह ने कहा कि यह रचो व गर्व की बात है कि भगवान

सड़क दुर्घटना में घायलों से मिले कैबिनेट मंत्री

कैबिनेट मंत्री राकेश सिंह ने विजयनगर में श्रिगत दिनों सड़क दुर्घटना में घायल हुए लोगों से रविवार को शैली और स्वास्थ्य अस्पताल में भेटकर उनका कुशलक्षेम जाना। उन्होंने कहा कि चिकित्सकों की देख-रेख में उपचारत हैं। इस दुःख की घड़ी में श्रीराम के जीवन चरित्र को चित्रकारी के माध्यम से संजोया गया है। मधुबनी चित्रकारी में सृजित इस अनुपम पुस्तक से निश्चित ही समाज

हम सभी घायलों और उनके पीड़ित परिवारों के साथ हैं। सभी घायलों को शीघ्र स्वास्थ्य लाभ की प्राप्ति हो, मानसदा से यही कामना है। श्री सिंह ने घायलों के उचित उपचार के लिए अधिकारियों को निर्देशित किया। को प्रेरणा मिलेगी। कार्यक्रम के पूर्व में डॉ. रूपलेखा चौहान ने पुस्तक लेखन के पृष्ठभूमि के संबंध में जानकारी दी।



Harshit: In Ram Viraje Rangon Mein, each color represents a specific emotion or theme. Can you elaborate on how you chose these colour associations and their significance in the context of the Ramayana?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: Colours speak an artist's language. Each colour has a meaning and message. For instance, white speaks of purity and serenity, pink is for softness, love and compassion. Earth is represented by green which also adds life to the work. Red colour is for courage, anger, agitation. Blue represents peace. On the whole the combination of colours must have a balance, and the art should look attractive.

Harshit: Ram Viraje Rangon Mein is known for its unique poetic style. How did you develop this style, and what challenges did you face while blending poetry with the epic's narrative?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: Honestly speaking I am anything but a poet. I simply added text to each painting and also some "doha" from the original book. These underwent editing in the hands of experts like my two children. If you find any poetic touch, I am sure the credit must go to my children.

Harshit: How do you think your work contributes to the understanding of the Ramayana in contemporary times, especially for this generation?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: If one reads a book, it is the black print on a white base. To be able to concentrate and recall it becomes a little difficult. If the same theme is represented in the form of a drawing it is imprinted in the mind and its gist is easy to comprehend. If a drawing



is coloured, it is simpler to convey the message. As a medical student also, my notes were accompanied by drawings as well as my answer sheets in my examination had many drawings. While teaching also I loved to draw to explain anything and also quote several examples and clinical cases related to the topic. For any

layperson to a subject, a visual medium such as a painting helps generate interest in it. Ramayan and Mahabharat became so popular after they were shown on television programs.

Harshit: What kind of research did you undertake to ensure the authenticity of the Ramayana's themes while adding your creative interpretation through colors?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: I tried to read Ram Charit Manas, and Valmiki Ramayan and also some references from the internet to make sense of what I had to picturise. I also discussed the same with experts in the texts. All these helped me create “Ram Viraje Rango Mein”.

Harshit: How has the response been from readers and critics, especially those deeply familiar with the Ramayana? Were there some surprising reactions?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: By and large the viewers and readers seemed to like it. Some foreigners asked questions related to the costumes and ornaments. Some people also pointed small spelling mistakes in the original work. I am thankful to them, as I could make corrections. If it was done by a professional artist, it could have been better, but since I am a gynecologist by profession, people thankfully had expectations which were reasonable. Some asked me “From

where did you collect these paintings?” On replying that I made them they ask, “But you are a doctor, right?”



Harshit: As an author, do you feel a personal connection to any particular character or episode in the Ramayana that influenced your writing in this book?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: I am thoroughly influenced by the character, quality and idealism that is revealed in each of Shri Ram’s behaviour and actions. At every stage of his life, he has never deviated from the path of truthful duty. Be it his love for brothers, respect for elders, regards for his associates, he epitomises values that are eternal. When I am in any trouble I pray to Hanuman ji and my prayers are answered. I do apologise when a mistake is made and try not to repeat it.

Harshit: How do you balance the traditional symbolism of the Ramayana with modern interpretations in your work?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: Ramayan helps us to see what role models are, and if we try to follow those ideals, we are less likely to falter.

Harshit: What was the most challenging aspect of writing Ram Viraje Rangon Mein, and how did you overcome it?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: There were many challenges indeed. To try to paint God, one needs perfection. I admit I was a beginner in reading the holy text properly and in the field of art as well. I learnt Madhubani style for the first time. Each painting began with a prayer to my Lord to guide me at each step. If it has become presentable, I give all credit to Him only. It is His mercy on me that I could undertake this task.

Harshit: Does Ram Viraje Rangon Mein mark the beginning of a series or a thematic exploration of other epics? Are you planning to write similar works on other mythological or spiritual texts?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: It is the beginning and not the end of work. There are more ideas emerging which I am trying to work on. I already have some pen drawings and paintings developed on the theme of the city of Orchha. I wish to visit that sacred place to collect some more information.

Harshit: What is the core message you hope readers will gain from Ram Viraje Rangon Mein, and how do you envision it influencing their perspective on life, spirituality, or the Ramayana itself?

Dr. Rooplekha Chauhan: I wish and hope people to read and understand the meaning of a truthful life. There are examples in the storey where evil characters were punished by Shri Ram. In everything that we do we must be cautious as every act of ours is carefully registered and “as we sow so shall we reap” is the clear message one should draw.

