

Beyond Revisionism: Textual, Geographical, and Historical Convergence on Sri Lanka as Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā

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Scope and Rationale

In standard usage, attested consistently across encyclopedic, academic, and popular sources with no connection to this dispute, Nala Setu, Rama Setu, and Adam's Bridge are three names for one physical structure: the causeway between Rāmeśvaram, India, and Mannar Island, Sri Lanka, engineered, in the narrative, by the vanara Nala, and used by Rāma's army to cross to Laṅkā. Wikipedia's own article on Nala states this plainly: "the vanara... credited as the engineer of the Rāma Setu... The bridge is also known as Nala Setu, the bridge of Nala" ([Nala \(Ramayana\), Wikipedia](#)). A heritage source on Sri Lankan geography describes the same structure the same way: "This structure, known as Nala Setu or Rāma Setu... Adam's Bridge — also called Rām Setu or Rāma's Bridge" ([Lakpura](#)). The three names are not competing identifications. They are the same bridge, named for its builder, its user, and, later, a British colonial reference, respectively.

Jijith Nadumuri Ravi has publicly denied this identity. In his own words, in a public post asking the question directly: "Is Rama Setu the same as Nala Setu?" ([2 Aug 2026, Facebook](#)) his answer was no. He argues that Nala's bridge in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa connects the northern shore of the Narmadā to Bhagatrav on its southern shore, a structure entirely separate from the one between Rāmeśvaram and Sri Lanka. This is a stronger claim than a simple relocation of Laṅkā. It requires rejecting a terminological identity treated as basic, uncontested fact everywhere else it appears, and asserting instead that two differently named things are actually two different physical structures, one of which is not attested anywhere outside his own material in the sources checked for this paper. This paper tests that specific claim, along with everything built on top of it, using nothing but checkable sources: the primary text, physical geology, an independent foreign witness, published botany, documented history, and, repeatedly, Ravi's own words when tested against each other. Every point checked confirms the ordinary reading: one bridge, not two.

The paper has two parts, built to different standards of proof. Part One asks why the claim under examination, that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā is Bhagatrav in Gujarat rather than Sri Lanka, exists at all. It traces that claim to its stated chronological origin, tests the geography that origin requires on pure internal logic, and documents the pattern by which the claim is defended once challenged. This is a negative case: it shows the claim's own foundations do not hold, using nothing but the claim's own words, maps, and sources against it. Part Two does something different in kind. Rather than testing a claim, it assembles six independent lines of evidence, textual, physical-geological, foreign and independent, ecological, historical, and cartographic, none derived from or dependent on any of the others, and shows that all six converge on the same island. This is a positive case, and it would stand even if Part One did not exist. Together, they are two separate kinds of proof, a demolition and a construction, arriving at the same conclusion from opposite directions.

A Note on Sourcing

Colour marks authorship, not argumentative role. [\(date\)](#) marks anything originating with Jijith Nadumuri Ravi himself: his posts, his book, his comment replies, and his own reference map, whether it is being cited as the claim under examination or as evidence against a different claim of his. [\(date\)](#) marks anything independent of him: the primary text of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, government surveys, peer-reviewed academic publications, and accounts by parties with no connection to this dispute. This rule is applied without exception throughout, including where the claim's own material is being

used to contradict the claim itself: it is still his material, and is marked red. A separate marking, shown in *(date, comment reply)*, denotes a direct quotation from a live reply to Ravi in an ongoing comment thread, verified by screenshot and quoted verbatim, but without an independently fetched permalink, since individual nested replies on these platforms do not reliably generate their own stable link. Every such quotation is reproduced exactly as written, including Ravi's own spelling and punctuation.

Abstract

Nala Setu, Rama Setu, and Adam's Bridge are, in every source with no connection to this dispute, the same physical structure, named for its builder, its user, and its later colonial designation respectively. Jijith Nadumuri Ravi has publicly denied this, asking the question himself and answering no. This paper tests that denial and everything built on it, and finds it does not survive contact with a single checkable source. The claim that they are different structures, and that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā sits at Bhagatrav on the Narmadā rather than at the island now called Sri Lanka, traces to a specific chronological mechanism: a claimed reinterpretation of the Vedanga Jyotisha that compresses the interval between Rāma and the Kurukṣetra War from millennia to roughly a century. Checked directly against the Vedanga Jyotisha's own primary text, it contains no such framework, only a five-year lunisolar calendar cycle, and the substituted chronology directly contradicts Ravi's own earlier published Yuga system. The geography this invented chronology requires then fails on its own terms: the claim's own map shows a continuous coastal land route removing the narrative necessity for any bridge at all, its unit of measurement is worth two different values a hundred times apart depending on which distance needs explaining, and its supporting ecology, pepper and coconut, matches the exclusive native range of Kerala and Sri Lanka, confirmed independently at the level of the text's own ecosystem classification of Laṅkā. Set against this failure, six wholly independent lines of evidence, textual, physical-geological, foreign and independent, ecological, historical, and cartographic, converge on Sri Lanka, each reaching its conclusion by a method that owes nothing to any of the others. Among them: a real, surveyed, forty-eight-kilometre chain of shoals sits exactly where the traditional crossing is placed, walkable within recorded history until a storm severed it in 1480 CE, and named for Rāma on independent European maps since 1747, more than two centuries before this dispute existed. When these problems are raised directly with Ravi, the pattern of response is consistent and documented here in his own words: redirection to unread, unreviewed, self-published books, and the invention of new supporting figures, for sea level, for measurement units, for years of research, each appearing only after the previous version was checked and shown not to hold, alongside a direct claim, addressed to his own readers, that Rāma's "real life history" is not confined to what Vālmīki wrote. Rama Setu and Nala Setu are, on all available evidence, the same bridge, in the same strait, where the text has always placed it.

Keywords: Rama Setu; Adam's Bridge; Vedanga Jyotisha; Yuga chronology; Bhagatrav; Laṅkā geography; Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa; unfalsifiability; *Piper nigrum*; agroclimatology

Part One: Why the Claim Exists, and Why It Fails

1. The Core Claim

The claim under examination throughout this paper is stated plainly and repeatedly across its author's public material: that the Laṅkā of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa is not the island now known as Sri Lanka, but Bhagatrav, a Late Harappan port site at the mouth of the Narmadā in Gujarat ([27 Oct 2025, X](#)) ([Facebook](#)). The most direct public statement of this claim's consequence is Ravi's own question, examined in full in this paper: "Is Rama Setu the same as Nala Setu?" ([2 Aug 2026, Facebook](#)), answered there in the negative. This paper asks a prior question: on what basis does the claim's own author believe any of this in the first place? The answer, stated in his own words when pressed, is chronological. Rāma is dated to 1950–1850 BCE, a date that falls within the Harappan period rather than in the mythologically distant past most traditions place him in. Once that date is fixed, a Harappan-era identification for Laṅkā becomes not just possible but necessary, the epic's geography has to be relocated to wherever the archaeology of that specific window can be found. Bhagatrav is a real, excavated, datable Harappan-era site. The date comes first; the site is what the date requires.

2. The Mechanism: A Reinterpreted Vedanga Jyotisha

2.1 What Vedanga Jyotisha Actually Contains

Checked directly against the primary text of the Vedanga Jyotisha (Lagadha, both recensions), its yuga is a five-year lunisolar calendar-intercalation cycle: 5 solar years, 67 lunar sidereal cycles, 1,830 days, 62 synodic months, 1,860 tithis ([Vedanga Jyotisha, primary text](#)). Its own opening verse states its purpose directly: to determine the correct time for sacrifices. This is a civil and ritual calendar tool. Checked across every available treatment of the text, scholarly and primary, there is no four-fold Yuga grouping in it anywhere, no Krita, Treta, Dvāpara, or Kali division, and no connection of any kind to historical or dynastic chronology. The text describes how to keep a lunisolar calendar in sync. It does not describe how to date a king.

2.2 The Contradiction With Ravi's Own Earlier Chronology

Ravi has published a separate chronological framework, the Markandeya Yuga System, in an earlier paper ([Yamunā Sarasvatī Links](#)). That framework gives a Chatur Yuga, a full four-age cycle, a duration of 12,000 years: R̥ta 4,800 years, Tretā 3,600 years, Dvāpara 2,400 years, Kali 1,200 years. Under that system, Tretā (Rāma's age) runs 7700–4100 BCE and Dvāpara (the Kurukṣetra War's age) runs 4100–1700 BCE, roughly 2,400 years apart. But the same author's stated dates for these two events, Rāma at 1950–1850 BCE and the war at 1900–1700 BCE, are barely a century apart, nowhere near the interval his own published Yuga table requires.

Directly asked to reconcile this, the response, quoted here exactly as given, introduced an entirely new framework: ([comment reply, 2026](#)) "*Rgvedic People and Pandavas used this 5-year Yugas of Vedanga Jyotisha so do the Mauryans... 20-year Chatur Yuga got latched onto Saturn Jupiter Cycle of 20 years and then to 60, 120, 1200, 12000 years and finally to $12000 \times 360 = 4.32$ million-year-long Chatur Yuga in post Mauryan Periods.*" A twenty-year Chatur Yuga collapses the gap between Rāma and the Kurukṣetra War almost exactly to the century actually claimed for them. It is not a discovery independently arrived at and then applied; it is a number that appeared only

once the previous framework had been checked against Ravi's own stated dates and found not to fit, sized precisely to make the fit work.

2.3 Why This Mechanism Matters

This is not a peripheral detail of the claim. It is the load-bearing assumption underneath all of it. Without a chronology that places Rāma inside the Harappan period, there is no reason to search for his Laṅkā among Harappan-era archaeological sites at all, and no reason to consider Bhagatrav a candidate in the first place. The geography did not lead to the date. The date, arrived at first and defended with an ancient calendar text repurposed to say something it does not say, produced the requirement for a Harappan-era Laṅkā, and Bhagatrav is the site that requirement was then made to fit.

3. The Geography That Results, Tested on Its Own Logic

3.1 The Yojana Problem

The distance math needed to make a Narmadā-mouth crossing physically plausible rests on a claimed “Harappan Yojana” of 120 metres, producing a 12 km bridge from a stated 100-yojana span. But the same author, explaining a different part of the same overall theory, a proposed later voyage from Odisha to Sri Lanka, uses a different value for the identical unit: “100 Mauryan Yojanas - 12 km × 100 = 1200 km.” That makes one Mauryan Yojana equal to 12 kilometres, a hundred times larger than the Harappan figure used for the bridge. Each value is sized precisely to make its own specific claim work: the small unit makes a Narmadā crossing feasible, the large unit makes an Odisha-to-Sri-Lanka sea voyage plausible. The same word, in the same overall theory, carries two values differing by two orders of magnitude, chosen after the fact for whichever distance needed explaining.

3.2 The Bridge Nobody Needed to Build

Before any question of geography, the claim requires treating “Nala Setu” as a different structure from “Rama Setu.” No source outside the claim's own material supports this. Standard reference material treats the two names as synonymous, one bridge named for its builder and again for its user: “the vanara... credited as the engineer of the Rāma Setu... The bridge is also known as Nala Setu, the bridge of Nala” ([Nala \(Ramayana\), Wikipedia](#)). Splitting one attested structure into two requires evidence of its own, and none beyond the claim's own assertion has been produced anywhere in the material examined for this paper.

A further problem is internal to the claim's own illustrative map ([2 Aug 2026, Facebook](#)): the Gulf of Khambhat is shown with a continuous coastal land route running around it, connecting the claimed northern staging point to Bhagatrav without any sea crossing required at all. The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa frames Nala's bridge as the response to an unavoidable obstacle, an ocean with no alternative, constructed under urgent time pressure with Sītā's rescue as the stated priority ([Sundara Kāṇḍa 5.65](#)) ([Yuddha Kāṇḍa 6.15](#)). If a coastal march was already available on the claim's own map, the bridge stops being the epic's central act of necessity and becomes an unexplained hundred-yojana detour. Asked directly why the army would build rather than march, the answer given was that “temporary bridge construction over rivers for large army crossing into enemy territory is the norm.” That is a true general statement about military engineering, and it does not address why this specific army, with a coastal alternative shown on the

claim's own material, would choose the harder option. The problem does not arise for the traditional Rāmeśvaram–Sri Lanka identification, where the Palk Strait offers no land alternative at any point, and the epic's insistence on the bridge as singular and unavoidable matches the geography exactly.

3.3 The Ecology That Doesn't Match Either

The earliest located public statement of the claim adds a third, independent line of supporting evidence, ecological rather than textual or metrological: that Bhagatrav's surrounding forest “reflects the pepper- and coconut-growing ecology of coastal Maharashtra” (27 Oct 2025, X). This is checkable independently of everything else in this paper, using only modern botanical and climatological data. Black pepper's native range is documented, without meaningful scholarly dispute, as restricted to Kerala's Western Ghats, with a secondary native range extending to Sri Lanka and nowhere else ([Kew Science, POWO](#)): “Black pepper is native to the Western Ghats of Kerala State in India, where it grows wild in the mountains.” Its cultivation requires 2,000–4,000 mm of well-distributed annual rainfall with near-constant humidity ([IndiaAgroNet](#)) ([ScienceInsights, 2026](#)). Coconut requires 1,200–2,500 mm annually with consistent tropical warmth ([Agrownet](#)), and over 90% of India's cultivated area sits in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh ([Hebbbar et al., Plants, 2022](#)). Bharuch district, the actual location of Bhagatrav, receives approximately 860–890 mm of annual rainfall, a semi-arid, tropical-savanna regime ([climate-data.org](#)) ([weather-and-climate.com](#)), roughly a third to a half of what either species needs to survive at all, and neither is documented as ever having been cultivated there. The claim's own wording compounds the problem independently of the climate data: it cites the ecology of coastal Maharashtra, a different state from the one Bhagatrav sits in, to support a Gujarat identification. And the specific ecological signature offered as evidence for this claim, exclusively Kerala and Sri Lanka for pepper, overwhelmingly South India for coconut, matches the traditional identification this claim argues against far more closely than it matches the site it was offered in support of.

This is not an isolated botanical coincidence. Published academic analysis of Vālmīki's own flora and fauna descriptions, cataloguing the plants and forest types named across the epic, classifies the text's own account of Laṅkā specifically as “the evergreen tropical forests of Sri Lanka,” one of only four distinct ecosystems Vālmīki describes across the whole narrative, alongside the tropical deciduous, dry-and-moist deciduous, and alpine Himalayan zones associated with the epic's mainland locations ([Plant Diversity in the Valmiki Ramayana](#)). An evergreen forest is, definitionally, one without a pronounced dry season severe enough to cause seasonal leaf loss; it requires consistent, near year-round moisture. Bharuch's documented climate, effectively rainless for months at a stretch each year, is a dry-winter tropical savanna by definition, the opposite classification. Sri Lanka's wet-zone forests, by contrast, are independently and extensively documented as evergreen rainforest ecoregions in their own right, entirely apart from anything the Rāmāyaṇa says about them. The text's own internal ecological classification of Laṅkā, reached by scholars working on Vālmīki's botany with no stake in this dispute, already points to the same island the pepper and coconut evidence points to, and away from the site this claim requires it to be.

4. The Defense Pattern

4.1 Evasion by Redirection

When a reader on LinkedIn asked directly for a single source behind a related claim, the reply, quoted in full because its precision matters ([LinkedIn comment thread](#)), was: “these posts are for casual readers of Linked In. Not planning to spend hours giving references to every hundred individual comments. Not feasible. For this i write the books... If you are really so dying for references, buy these books.” This is the same move performed throughout this paper's own record: a specific, checkable question is met not with a source but with a redirect toward a commercial product the same author sells.

4.2 Evasion by Invention

Beyond redirection, the pattern documented across this series is one of numbers changing precisely at the moment they are checked. A sea-level figure for the Gujarat coast moved from “2.5 to 3 meters” to “6 meter... dropping to 3 to 2 meters,” with no source given at either stage, and a figure roughly three times higher than the standardised regional reconstruction for the same gulf. A claimed “25 years” of research became, on direct questioning, three different starting points in succession, 2018, then 1987 explicitly set aside, then 2000, each producing a different total, with the explicit admission, quoted exactly: “I am used to saying 25 for a couple of years.” The yojana value and the Chatur Yuga length each moved the same way, documented in [§2](#) and [§3](#) above. In every instance recorded across this series, the number that appears after a challenge is never smaller or more modest than the one it replaces; it is always precisely large or small enough to resolve the specific objection just raised.

5. Beyond Revisionism

5.1 Why the Position Never Moves

This section does not argue that Ravi is unqualified to do this research, or that a background outside traditional Indology disqualifies anyone from reaching a correct conclusion. That standard would be unfair applied to him and would apply just as unfairly to the author of this paper, an independent researcher with no formal academic appointment either. Credentials, in either direction, are not the measure used here. What is used instead is something narrower and fully documented: how the position responds when a specific, checkable claim within it is shown not to hold.

Across every exchange recorded in this paper and its companion, the same shape repeats. A number is checked and found unsupported, sea level, the yojana value, years of research, the length of a Chatur Yuga. What follows is never “that's a fair point, let me look into it,” and never a withdrawal. It is, every time, a new number, a new framework, or a new starting date, produced in the same confident register as the version it replaces, with no acknowledgment that anything has changed. Ravi has described this pattern himself as evidence of rigor rather than revision, invoking a real historian's genuine change of position as the model: “Prof BB Lal was a supporter of AIT till half of his career and then switched to OIT.”

The comparison does not hold up. B. B. Lal's shift was a single, publicly reasoned change of position on one specific question, explained in his own writing, over the course of decades, with the archaeological basis for the change stated plainly and left open to challenge. What this paper documents instead is a sea-level figure that

changed twice in the course of one conversation, a research-history claim that produced three different starting dates in the same thread, and a chronological framework that was replaced entirely within days of the version it superseded being checked, each time framed, in Ravi's own words, as simply what "healthy Research looks like": "New evidences leading to better more accurate conclusions is what is healthy Research looks like." A single revision, publicly reasoned, over years, is what Lal did. Several reformulations, each produced only after being caught rather than volunteered, within the same week, is not the same category of event, and calling it by the same name does not make it one.

When this pattern was put to him directly, without reference to credentials of any kind, the response was to characterise the objection as personal rather than substantive: "You seems to dislike my more accurate latest Research while emotionally like my older Research. Can't help it." Every specific point raised in that exchange was a number, a date, or a direct quotation checked against another quotation or a primary source, nothing in it turned on feeling. Recasting a checked contradiction as an emotional reaction is itself a way of not engaging with it, and it is the same underlying move as producing a new figure instead of examining the old one: in both cases, the specific challenge goes unanswered and the position continues exactly as before.

Ravi has stated the underlying position directly rather than leaving it implicit. Addressing his followers on the same platform, he wrote: (*comment reply, 2026*) "*Here is the effort it takes to understand real life history of Sri Rama spread across Rgveda, Ramayana and Mahabharata. He is not confined to Valmiki Ramayana alone like many researchers think.*" This is not a claim about textual cross-reference or comparative reading, ordinary and legitimate tools in Rāmāyaṇa scholarship. It is a claim that the "real life history" of Rāma exists somewhere outside, and prior to, what Vālmīki wrote, and that Vālmīki's account is one incomplete source among several rather than the primary text this claim's own repeated appeals to Critical Edition verses otherwise treat it as. It is worth noting plainly that at least one reader responding to the same body of work reached a similar conclusion about its overall direction: "I really like your 25k page archive, that is real work, and congratulations for that but I completely disagree with these reinterpretations of Ramayana. It's nothing personal." That the disagreement extends beyond a single critic is worth registering, not because head-counts settle a scholarly question, but because it confirms the concern raised here is not idiosyncratic to this paper.

5.2 Revision Without Accountability

Revising a settled position is not, by itself, improper. Every field discussed in this paper has revised itself before, and legitimately: excavation reports get superseded by better excavations, climate reconstructions get refined by better proxies, species ranges get updated as new surveys come in, and textual scholarship reconsiders attribution and dating when new manuscript evidence appears. What makes a revision like that legitimate is not the conclusion it reaches, but the standard it submits itself to: it engages the specific evidence of the field it is revising, it is exposed to correction by people qualified to check it, and it is retracted or amended when that check finds it wanting. Legitimate revisionism costs something to attempt, because it can fail publicly. What this paper has documented is a different kind of act, revision that touches four separate disciplines at once and submits to the standard of none of them. It overrides a peer-reviewed excavation report, the 2015 re-excavation of Bhagatrav, published by trained archaeologists who dated the site, examined it for fortification and structures,

and reported what they found, by simply asserting a different site history with no counter-excavation of its own. It overrides published paleoclimate reconstructions of the Gujarat coast, the actual work of researchers who measured sediment cores and dated highstands, by substituting numbers with no study named behind them, numbers that moved twice when checked. It overrides the established, Kew-documented native range of two named plant species, the accumulated work of botanists and agricultural scientists, with an ecological claim that does not survive an afternoon of checking. And it overrides the text's own traditional attribution to Vālmīki, treating his account as one incomplete source among several rather than the primary text it has been treated as for as long as it has existed.

None of these four acts of revision was submitted to the discipline it revises. None was published where an archaeologist, a paleoclimatologist, a botanist, or a Sanskritist could formally review and answer it. Each was asserted directly to a lay audience on social media and in a self-published book, and, as §5.1 documents, each was structured so that no possible correction ever produces a withdrawal, only a replacement. That combination, revising several independent fields simultaneously, answering to none of their standards, and treating every correction as an opportunity to assert a new version rather than a reason to reconsider, is the actual object of concern in this paper. It is not that a claim turned out to be wrong; claims are frequently wrong, and being wrong in public is not a failing. It is that the claim is structured never to have to answer for being wrong, to the excavators at Bhagatrav, to the paleoclimatologists whose reconstructions it silently improves upon, to the botanists whose documented ranges it contradicts, or to the text and the tradition it claims to be reading more faithfully than anyone before it. Revision that costs nothing to attempt and answers to no one is not a competing scholarly position. It is something else, and this paper's title is meant to name the difference plainly: whatever this is, it is beyond revisionism, not an instance of it.

The deeper question is the one implied by the whole structure examined here. The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa is attributed, by the tradition this claim itself repeatedly invokes for authority, to Vālmīki. The text places Laṅkā on the shore of the Dakṣiṇa Samudra after a described open-ocean crossing, states the hundred-yojana distance five separate times, and frames the bridge as a response to an obstacle with no alternative. A reinterpretation this extensive, relocating the epic's central geography by roughly 1,500 kilometres and compressing its chronology by orders of magnitude, is not a minor gloss on the received text. It is a claim to understand what the text is actually describing better than the text describes it, defended by a chronology traced to a document that does not contain the framework attributed to it, and sustained, when challenged, by redirection and invention rather than by evidence. That is the standard this paper has tested, and the standard it has found unmet at every stage examined.

Part One — Summary

The claim that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā sits in Gujarat rather than Sri Lanka does not originate in the text or in archaeology. It originates in a date, and the date originates in a chronological framework, attached to the Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa, that the Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa does not contain, and that directly contradicts Ravi's own earlier published chronology. The geography that date requires fails on its own terms, its bridge unnecessary by the claim's own map, its unit of measurement worth two different values depending on which distance needs explaining. And at every point this structure has been checked, the response has been to point toward an unread book or to produce a new number, never to produce the source the challenge actually asked for. A reading built this way is

not a competing interpretation of Vālmīki. It is a chronology in search of a geography, defended by an author who has not yet been willing to test it against the one standard that would settle it: a citation anyone else can check. That is the negative case, complete on its own terms. What follows does not depend on it.

Part Two: The Convergent Case for Sri Lanka

6. What Convergence Requires

Everything up to this point has tested a claim and found it unsupported. What follows is different in kind: not a test of a claim, but a positive case, standing entirely on its own, that would hold even if Part One of this paper did not exist. It assembles six lines of evidence, textual, physical-geological, foreign and independent, ecological, historical, and cartographic, each reaching its conclusion by a completely different method, none derived from or dependent on any of the others, and shows that all six converge on the same place. Convergence of this kind is the strongest form evidence takes in any historical field: not one long chain of inference that fails if a single link breaks, but several independent, unconnected roads arriving at the identical destination. For a geographic identification to be genuinely convergent, each supporting line must be independently derived, not built from the others, and independently checkable, not resting on the word of an interested party. The six lines that follow meet both conditions. A Sanskrit philologist reading Sundara Kāṇḍa reaches a placement without needing geology. The Geological Survey of India surveyed a strait without needing the Chinese Buddhist canon. A 5th-century Chinese monk recorded an island without ever having read, or being able to read, Vālmīki. None of these six sources was built to support any of the others. That they agree is the entire argument.

7. Six Independent Lines

7.1 The Text's Own Placement

Sundara Kāṇḍa states plainly, in Hanumān's own report after completing the crossing, that Laṅkā sits on the southern shore of the Dakṣiṇa Samudra, the very sea he has just crossed ([Sundara Kāṇḍa 5.65.9](#)). The same hundred-yojana open-ocean crossing is stated five separate times across the Kāṇḍa, each instance describing deep water, crocodile-infested currents, and flight, not a short swim across a river mouth ([Sundara Kāṇḍa 5.1](#)). The southern search party in Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa is dispatched already assuming Rāvaṇa's location is an island, and is routed through Vindhya-region terrain consistent with a march converging on the far south of the peninsula, not a short hop across Gujarat ([Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa 4.41](#)) ([4.50](#)). Later, when the entire army departs for Laṅkā rather than a single scout, the text repeats the same bearing at the scale of a full military campaign: Rāma “moved towards southern direction, along with the army,” hundreds of thousands of troops committed to a single stated heading ([Yuddha Kāṇḍa 6.4](#)). This is the text's own account, on its own terms, requiring no external corroboration to state what it says, and it is internally consistent across three independent narrative moments, a single scout's leap, an army's dispatch, and a whole campaign's march, spread across two separate Kāṇḍas and, on any reasonable reading, composed at different points in the text's long compositional history.

7.2 A Physical Structure That Actually Exists

Between Rāmeśvaram and Mannar Island, Sri Lanka, a chain of limestone shoals roughly 48 kilometres long, known interchangeably as Adam's Bridge, Rama Setu, and Nala Setu ([Lakpura](#)), has been directly surveyed, mapped, and studied ([Adam's Bridge, Wikipedia](#)) ([iasgyan.in](#), [UPSC brief](#)). It sits exactly where the traditional identification requires a crossing, is shallow enough that temple records at Rāmeśvaram describe it as passable on foot until a cyclone severed the connection in 1480 CE, and comprises roughly a hundred linked patch reefs per ISRO's own Space Applications Centre survey. No equivalent formation, no surveyed shoal, no comparable natural or historical crossing structure of any kind, is claimed or documented anywhere near the Narmādā estuary. This is not a textual argument. It is a location anyone can go and stand on, and it is the direct, physical answer to the question this paper takes its title from: Nala Setu is Rama Setu, one bridge, not two, because no second structure has ever been found.

7.3 Witnesses With No Stake in the Question

The Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian, travelling 399–414 CE, sailed from the Indian port of Tamralipti to an island he recorded as “Sinhala,” stayed two years, and left a detailed account describing it as a populous, prosperous island reached only by sea voyage from the Indian mainland ([Legge trans., 1886, Project Gutenberg #2124](#)). Faxian was not working from Vālmīki, had no reason to confirm or deny any later identification, and predates every party to this dispute by well over a millennium. His account simply describes, from complete independence, an island in exactly the location the traditional reading already places Laṅkā in.

A second, independent Chinese account extends this corroboration by two further centuries. Xuanzang, travelling India 629–645 CE, intended to visit the island himself and was unable to, but compiled a substantial account of it from reports gathered during his travels, recorded in his *Record of the Western Regions*, including its geography, its name Sinhala, and multiple origin traditions circulating about its people ([Study of the Historical Records of Xuanzang on Sri Lanka](#)). This is a different kind of source from Faxian's, compiled rather than witnessed firsthand, and it is named as such here rather than overstated. What it adds is independent of Faxian in exactly the way this section requires: a second Chinese Buddhist source, writing two centuries later, drawing on different informants, still locating Sinhala in the same place, with no reference to Vālmīki, no reference to Rāvaṇa, and no stake in any later dispute over where an epic's geography belongs. Two independent Chinese sources, two centuries apart, describing the same island in the same location, is not the kind of agreement produced by two accounts copying each other.

7.4 The Text's Own Ecosystem

As established in [§3.3](#), published academic analysis of Vālmīki's own flora and fauna descriptions classifies his account of Laṅkā specifically as “the evergreen tropical forests of Sri Lanka” ([Plant Diversity in the Valmiki Ramayana](#)), a classification independently confirmed by the real, documented ecology of Sri Lanka's wet zone, and definitionally incompatible with the dry-winter tropical savanna documented at the Narmādā estuary. This line of evidence belongs equally to the negative case against Bhagatrav and to the positive case for Sri Lanka: it fails one location and confirms the other by the same measurement.

7.5 A Documented Historical Process

Historian Justin W. Henry's *Ravana's Kingdom: The Ramayana and Sri Lankan History from Below* documents, with primary sources, how Sri Lanka came to be identified with Rāvaṇa's realm, including the Cōḷa dynasty's specific role in making the identification concrete in the ninth century CE ([Oxford, 2022](#)). This is a real, traceable history of an identification developing over centuries, documented the way historical claims are ordinarily documented, with dates, dynasties, and inscriptions, not asserted.

The contrast with the mechanism examined in Part One is worth drawing out directly. Henry's account traces gradual, attested, cumulative change: successive rulers, texts, and inscriptions building an identification over roughly a millennium, each stage independently datable and checkable against the historical record. That is what a real revision of a geographic identification looks like when it actually happens, slow, cumulative, and visible at every stage to anyone who wants to check it. It is the opposite, in method if not in outcome, of a chronology invented, checked, and replaced within the span of a single week.

7.6 Even the Opposing Claim's Own Cartography

Ravi has maintained, since at least 2012, independently verifiable through the Internet Archive ([Wayback Machine, 7 Jan 2012](#)), and still live today ([live page](#)), a reference map placing Laṅkā on the island south of India, not at the Narmādā. This is not neutral background, it is Ravi's own longest-standing research product, maintained across the entire period the competing claim has been advanced elsewhere. Even the source most motivated to place Laṅkā in Gujarat has, for over a decade, placed it in Sri Lanka instead.

8. What Bhagatrav Has Instead

Set against six independent lines converging on one island, the competing identification has a single, internally excavated site. The 2015 re-excavation of Bhagatrav, published peer-reviewed in 2025, found the site unfortified, without structures, and with even its port function disputed by its own excavators ([Kanungo et al., Radiocarbon, 2025](#)). It has no surveyed strait, no independent foreign witness, no matching ecosystem, no documented historical process of identification, and its own promoter's own decade-old map places Laṅkā somewhere else entirely. Where the traditional identification is held up by six unconnected pillars, the competing claim is held up by one, and that one has since been re-examined and found not to bear the weight placed on it.

9. The Comparison, Side by Side

Line of Evidence	Sri Lanka	Bhagatrav
Textual placement	Matches directly, no reinterpretation needed	Requires four invented redaction layers
Physical crossing	Surveyed, exists, GSI-mapped	None surveyed or claimed
Independent witness	Faxian (5th c.) and Xuanzang (7th c.), no stake in dispute	None
Ecosystem match	Confirmed by independent Rāmāyaṇa botany scholarship	Contradicted by documented climate data

Line of Evidence	Sri Lanka	Bhagatrav
Historical process	Documented, 9th c. CE Cōḷa dynasty onward	None documented
Ravi's own cartography	Matches, since at least 2012	Contradicts the claim's own map
Chronological anchor	Not required; text stands on its own	Rests on a Yuga framework absent from its own cited source

Conclusion

Nala Setu is Rama Setu. Every independently checkable line of evidence assembled in this paper confirms what standard reference material already states, and finds nothing to support the claim that they are two structures. That claim rests on a single site, reached only by inventing a chronology, sourced to a document that does not contain the framework attributed to it, contradicting Ravi's own earlier published Yuga system, and defended, when tested, not by evidence but by redirection to unread books and by numbers that move precisely when checked. Set against that single, now-collapsed pillar are six lines of evidence that owe nothing to each other: the text's own placement, a physical strait that has been surveyed and can be visited, a foreign witness with no stake in the outcome, the epic's own ecological classification of the island, a documented historical process spanning centuries, and, not least, Ravi's own longest-standing cartography. A single claim can be argued into place with enough reinterpretation, enough invented units, enough new frameworks produced on demand. Six independent lines, reaching the same conclusion by six unrelated methods, cannot be argued into place the same way, because dismantling one does nothing to the other five. Remove any one of them, the text, the strait, the witness, the ecology, the history, or the opposing map Ravi himself made, and the other five still stand exactly where they were. Rama Setu and Nala Setu are the same bridge. The evidence for that is not a single argument. It is six.

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Dated sources marked red originate with Jijith Nadumuri Ravi himself; sources marked blue are independent of him. Italicised red entries are verbatim quotations from live comment threads without an independently fetched permalink.

*****addendum: At the time of writing, the author no longer has access to several of the comment threads quoted in this paper, blocked, deleted, or otherwise removed. The quotations were captured by screenshot at the time and are reproduced exactly as recorded.*

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AI Disclosure

Source verification and citation formatting assisted by Claude (Anthropic), disclosed transparently per standing author practice. The author takes full responsibility for this article.