

RAMAKIEN

*The Thai Ramayana*



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NAGA  
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## Introduction

The Indian epic, *Ramayana*, relates how Rama, heir to the throne of Ayodhya in northern India, is banished by his stepmother's trickery. Rama spends fourteen years in exile, initially with his consort, Sita, and his brother, Lakshman. After the Demon King Ravana abducts Sita and carries her to Lanka (Sri Lanka) in hopes of marrying her, Rama and Lakshman rescue Sita with the assistance of monkey warriors. Finally, Rama gains his rightful inheritance in Ayodhya.

**T**he *Ramakien*, literally the 'Story of Rama', is a Thai version of the Indian epic. Besides being an important literary work, the *Ramakien* is a cultural paradigm. The classic and popular story has inspired numerous Thai art forms. *Ramakien* themes and motifs are depicted in classical shadow plays and masked dance dramas, Buddhist temple statuary, decorative elements and murals, and comprise illustrative material for religious manuscript cabinets and talismanic tattoos.

Ever since 1902, when the *Ramakien* became part of the Thai school curriculum, millions of Thais have been exposed to the epic's literary, artistic and moral influences, and enchanted by its combination of romance, adventure and heroism.

Formal exposure to the *Ramakien* represented fruition of the epic's cultural longevity and evolution, which date back many, many centuries.

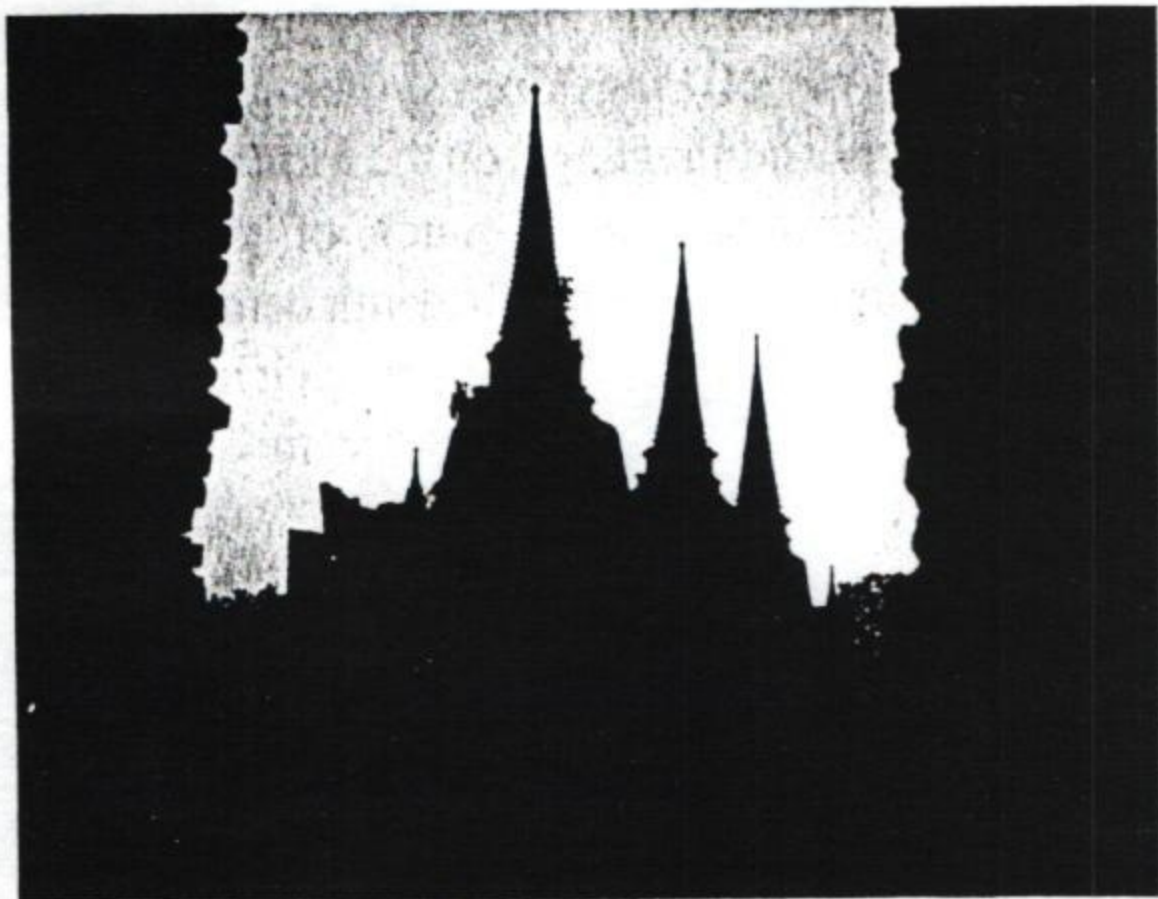
The *Ramayana* was composed over two thousand years ago from time-honoured oral traditions by the Indian poet, Valmiki. The *Ramayana* entered Southeast Asia with the spread of Hindu and Buddhist culture. Indian, particularly Brahman, influence achieved indelible ascendancy, specifically in terms of kingship, mythology, political structures, arts and language, on the Mon and Khmer civilisations that dominated much of present-day Thailand from the sixth to thirteenth centuries AD. The Thais inherited, and developed, such influences, particularly after Sukhothai became the first truly independent Thai kingdom in 1238.

The *Ramayana* enjoyed widespread popularity wherever it travelled, partly because of its authentically attractive heroes and heroines. Rama was one of the Hindu god Vishnu's earthly incarnations and epitomised human male perfection. Rama was a happily married man, quite unlike religious solitaries

such as the Buddha or Christ. Rama was handsome, courageous and chivalrous. Rama was the ideal son, the ideal brother, the ideal husband and the ideal warrior. His consort, Sita, embodied female perfection. Sita was incomparably beautiful, compassionate, virtuous and faithful, equally the perfect woman, the perfect wife and the perfect lover.

The *Ramayana* enjoyed broad popular appeal as a touching romance invested with magic, chicanery, supernatural events and political intrigue. Moreover, those royal courts that had adopted the Brahman concept of divine kingship, viewed the *Ramayana* as a panegyric to divine rule. Essentially, the *Ramayana* was a tale of Hindu gods reborn as kings specifically to destroy earthly evil, and comprised, in effect, a readymade genealogy to legitimise dynasties during eras when thrones were more frequently usurped than inherited.

Certainly, Ayudhya, the Siamese capital from 1350 to 1767, was named after Ayodhya in the *Ramayana*. Moreover, King Ramathipodi (Rama the Sovereign), Ayudhya's founder, derived his name



Ruins in Ayudhya, the ancient Siamese capital

from Rama, hero of the *Ramayana*. The custom was adopted by several subsequent Ayudhyan monarchs. Kings of Bangkok's Chakri dynasty have also adopted the title of Rama. The ninth and current Chakri monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is also known as King Rama IX.

## II.

**T**he 'Story of Rama' had its genesis long ago, probably in northern India, where events inspiring the *Ramayana* were believed to have occurred during the earliest years of the Aryan occupation, perhaps one thousand years before Christ, or some five centuries before the Buddha embarked on his itinerant ministry.

The 'Story of Rama' evidently predates Buddhism. In the *Digha Nikaya*, one of the older parts of the Pali Canon, the main Theravada Buddhist scripture, the recital of ballads, including stories such as those concerning Rama, is mentioned as one of several occupations shunned by the Buddha.

The original Rama was probably the son of a small state's chieftain. Almost certainly, he lived in considerably less opulent circumstances than those described in the *Ramayana*. Nevertheless, Rama clearly personified the moral standards and spiritual aspirations characterising early Aryan ideals. Rama's monkey warriors were probably based on friendly, somewhat less civilised forest tribes inhabiting central India. Demons, more civilised, yet inherently cruel, were probably an alien race who had established themselves in Sri Lanka before penetrating the southern Indian mainland.



## The Indian Connection

*Indian cultural domination of Southeast Asia gained significant impetus some 300 years before the birth of Christ after two Indian emperors, Chanda Gupta, and his grandson, Ashoka, decided, respectively, to promote foreign trade, and despatch Buddhist missionaries to neighbouring countries.*

*Chanda Gupta's reign began in 321 BC, by which time India had attained a comparatively high level of civilisation. The earliest Indian traders probably crossed the Bay of Bengal, or travelled overland, into regions comprising present-day Burma, Laos and Thailand, and beyond, while compatriots from southern India penetrated Java, the Indonesian archipelago and neighbouring regions, including the Malay peninsula.*

*Many adventurous young bachelors settled wherever they established trading posts, and married local women. Those who settled permanently sired families, furthering Indian influence, and imparted their knowledge, culture, customs and religion to receptive locals.*

*When Ashoka, whose reign extended from 275 until 232 BC, despatched Buddhist missionaries to*

*Southeast Asia, substantial numbers of flourishing, Indian-dominated communities were immediately receptive to the new faith, thereby advancing Buddhism's rapid spread. Buddhism was quickly embraced by local chieftains and kings, who would subsequently accept the Indian concepts of kingship from Brahmans.*

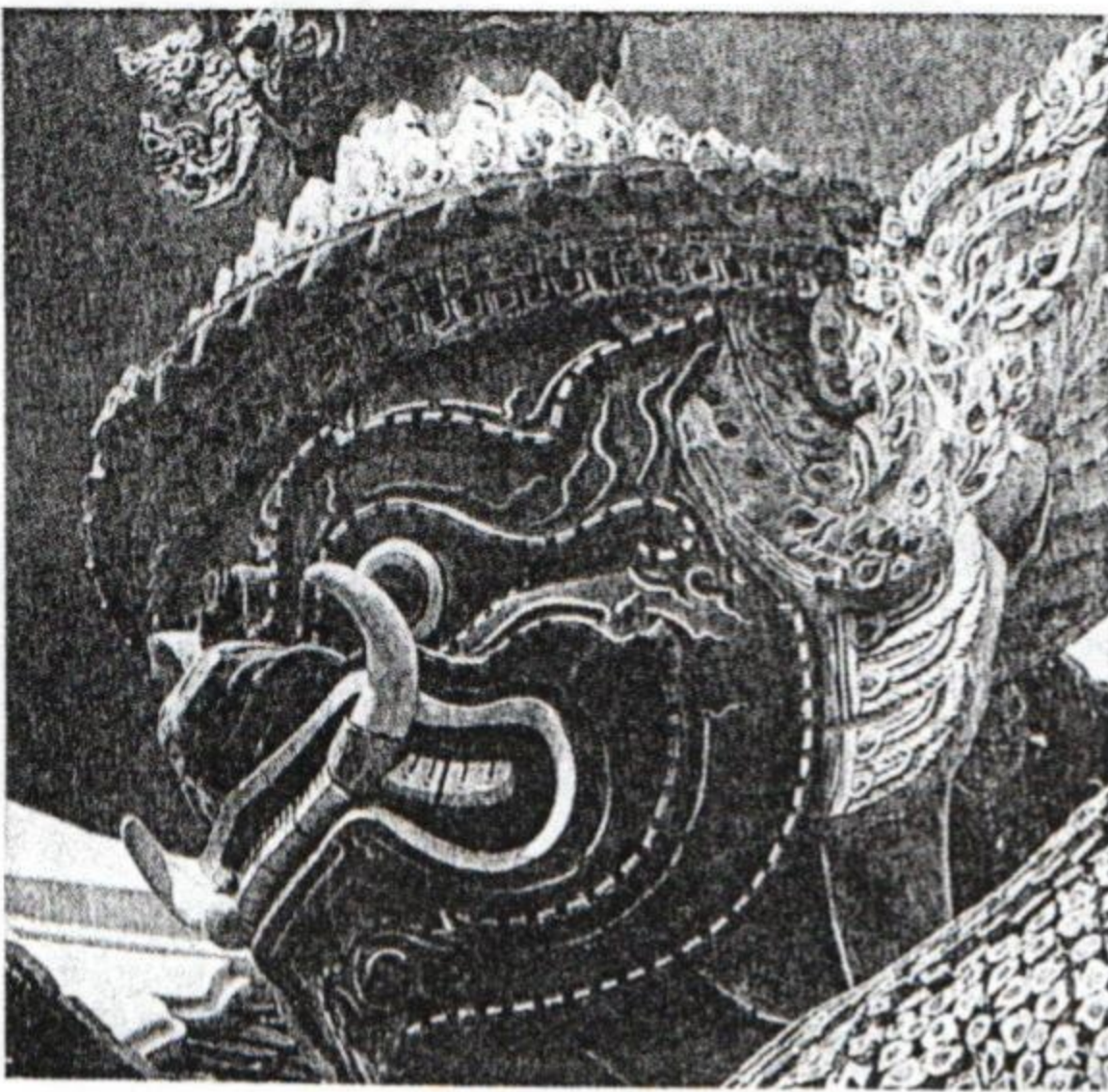
*Brahmans gradually made themselves indispensable as soothsayers, priests and sources of legitimisation at local courts. Power customarily flowed downwards from the king, inspiring obedience and emulation, and enabling the priestly caste to wield extraordinary, almost disproportionate influence.*

*Indian concepts filled a cultural vacuum and inspired nascent indigenous art forms that, even fully developed, whether in Burma or Bali, never wholly erased, either visibly or spiritually, their Indian origins.*

*This was particularly true of the Mons and Khmers who, from the sixth to thirteenth centuries, inhabited areas including southern Burma, Kampuchea, the entire Chao Phraya river basin, and lower northeast Thailand. The Mons and Khmers wholeheartedly embraced Indian cultural tenets, whether of Brahman, Hindu or Buddhist origin. The Thais inherited and adapted such influences, and gradually developed their own culture.*

*Indian literary, architectural, musical, religious, sculptural and dramatic influences prevailed, to the extent that many classical Thai art forms, and superstitions, customs and beliefs, can be traced to their Indian origins.*

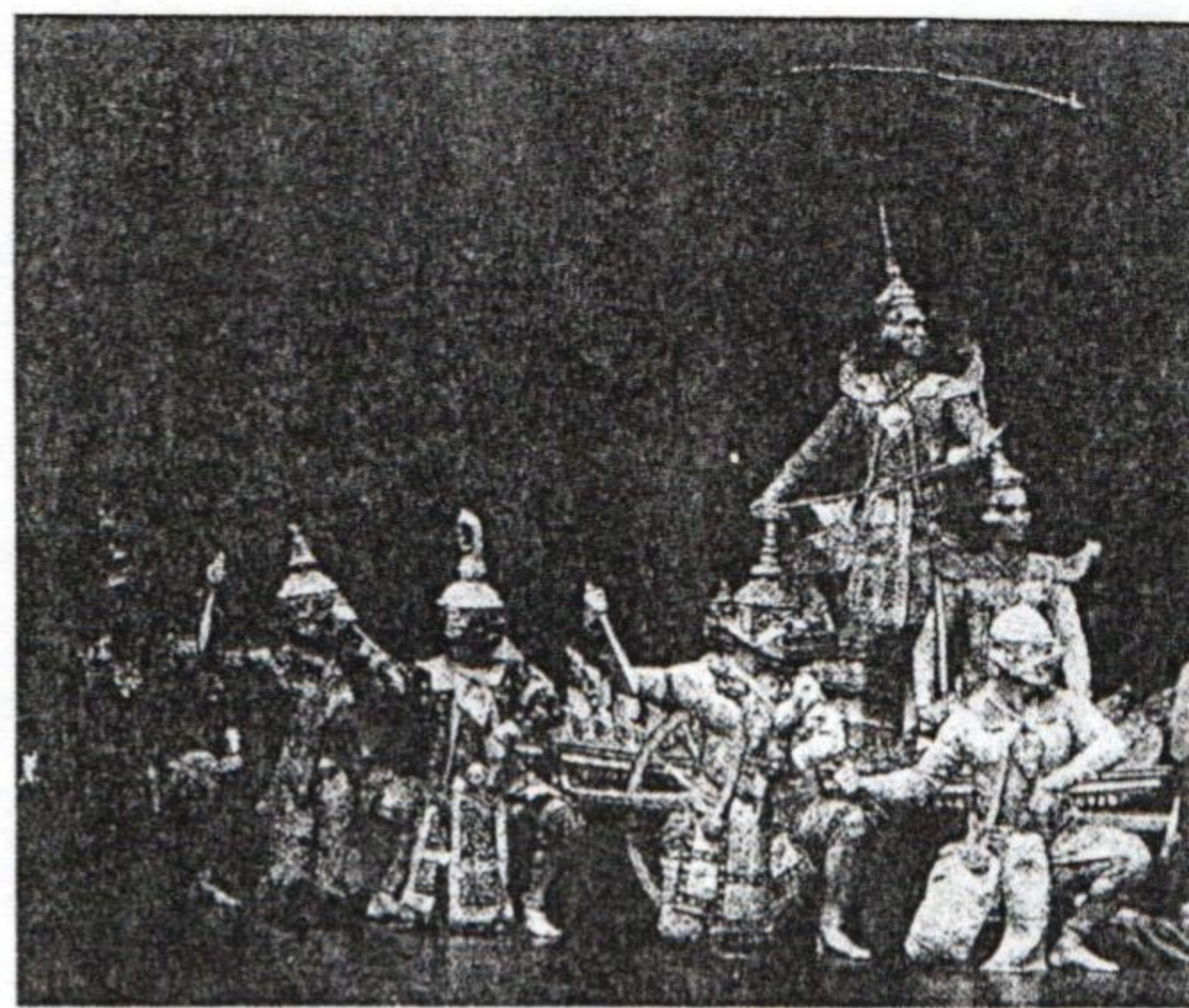
*One of the paramount influences was the Ramayana.*



For several centuries, the 'Story of Rama' was told and retold. It was subtly embroidered and embellished, and repeatedly invested with local details and traditions, gaining popularity throughout ever-increasing parts of India. The story probably spread from the northeast and penetrated to the west and south, much as *Ramayana* events originated north of the Ganges, near the Nepalese border, before proceeding southwards through central Indian forests to Sri Lanka, and back again.

Such oral traditions, already with singularly distinctive regional variations, continued until the *Ramayana* was composed in its present form, probably during the fourth century BC, by the sage, Valmiki.

According to legend, the renowned hermit, Narada, related the story of Rama and Sita to Valmiki, who later approached a river to bathe. Two amorous herons disported on the riverbank. The male heron died bloodily when felled by a hunter's arrow. The female heron's distress affected Valmiki so much that he heartily cursed the hunter in spontaneous metrical speech. Subsequently, the god Brahma approached Valmiki and commended he celebrate the story of



Rama and Sita in the poetic measure he had just involuntarily invented.

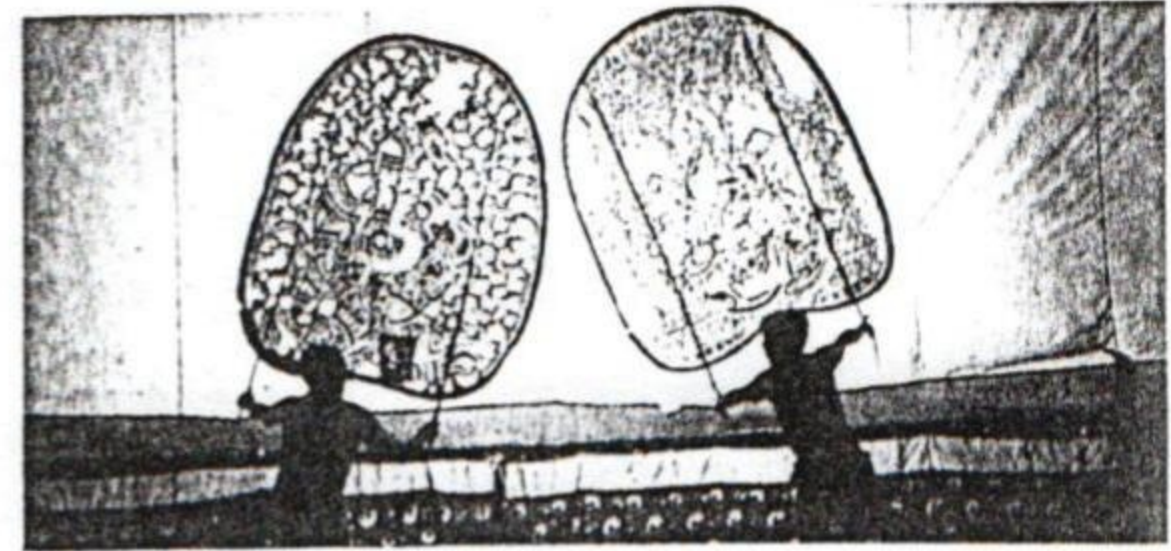
Valmiki complied with Brahma's injunction, and composed the epic that was destined to travel far beyond its country of origin. The *Ramayana* became equally well known in Tibet and Bali, spreading throughout the Indian subcontinent, Indochina, Malaya and the Indonesian archipelago, and into China, Mongolia and Japan, retaining, wherever it travelled, as a folk tale or legend, a charming combination of romance and adventure that excited imaginations and inspired numerous regional variants.

The *Ramayana* became the Hindu scripture second in importance only to the even longer epic, *Mahabharata*. Indeed, Valmiki is believed to have composed two versions of the *Ramayana*, the longer comprising one thousand million metrical verses for use by the gods, and a shorter version, twenty-four thousand verses long, for mankind. The latter version remains in use today.

Oral traditions of recitation and transmission continued throughout ensuing centuries. The *Ramayana* was not written in Sanskrit, the classical language of Hindu India, until the sixth century AD.



LEFT: a demon guardian at Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaeo  
 CENTRE: a classical masked dance confrontation featuring Rama and Tosakanth  
 BELOW: a shadow play performance of a Ramakien episode  
 OVERLEAF: Pimai's Khmer sanctuary  
 PAGES 12 & 13: a Phnom Rung lintel depicts Vishnu reclining on the Cosmic Ocean



Other vernacular versions were composed in every major Indian language. Khamban's Tamil *Ramavataran* (Rama's Incarnation) was written during the ninth century. The shorter Hindi version, *Ramacharitmanas* (Rama's Glory) was composed by Tulsi Das during the sixteenth century. Merely one of more than three hundred and fifty Hindi versions of the *Ramayana*, the *Ramacharitmanas* is considered one of the world's greatest religious poems.

Valmiki's *Ramayana* is three times longer than the *Iliad*, and one quarter the length of the *Mahabharata*. For all its considerable extent, the *Ramayana* is characterised by sequential, straightforward narrative, notably devoid of digression. The Hindu trinity of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer is featured in the *Ramayana*. Vishnu is particularly prominent, because the Preserver was traditionally summoned whenever troubles arose in Heaven or on Earth.

Millions of Indians regard Vishnu as the major Hindu god. A myth of creation depicts Brahma emerging from a lotus issuing from Vishnu's navel, while Shiva emerges from Vishnu's forehead. Vishnu is generally credited with ten incarnations. The first

five, the Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion and Dwarf, were mythical. As a dwarf, when demons conquered the Earth, Vishnu persuaded the demon king to promise him as much space as he could cover in three steps. Then, assuming his true form, Vishnu strode across the Earth and Heaven to recover the world for mankind.

Vishnu's other incarnations are said to have included Ramachandra (Rama of the *Ramayana*), Krishna, Arjuna's charioteer and counsellor in the *Mahabharata*, and the Indian Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who gained enlightenment during his mid-thirties to become Buddha.

Vishnu's wife, Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty, love and prosperity, also enjoyed several human incarnations. In every case, she was loved by Vishnu's incarnation. Lakshmi was Sita in the *Ramayana*, and Krishna's consort, Rukmini, in the *Mahabharata*.

Such longstanding, consistent fidelity partly accounted for the way the *Ramayana* captured the popular Indian imagination. Essentially, the epic was a romance between two devoted married adults. The average western mind may be more receptive, or more sympathetic, to teenage lovers and balcony

scenes beneath full moons, but the Indian (and many another Asian) mind derives equal pleasure from tales of marital devotion and fidelity.

### III.

Considerable physical evidence exists to prove that the *Ramayana* was well known in Thailand before Sukhothai became the first independent Thai kingdom. Khmer sanctuaries scattered throughout northeastern Thailand are rich in iconography depicting Hindu gods and *Ramayana* scenes. Bas relief depictions in Nakhon Ratchasima's Prasat Hin Pimai and Buriram's Prasat Hin Phnom Rung include Indra riding Erawan, Vishnu reclining on the Cosmic Ocean, Shiva dancing, Sukrib fighting Pali, and Rama's triumphant return to Ayodhya.

The ubiquity of such iconography indicates that the 'Story of Rama' was known to local inhabitants during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and perhaps even much earlier – a seventh-century Khmer stone inscription found inside Kampuchea records arrangements for the recitation of the *Ramayana*.

Precious little is known about the *Ramayana* in Thailand during either the Sukhothai or Ayudhya periods, essentially the years 1238 to 1767, when Burmese invaders sacked Ayudhya and reduced most historical records to ashes. The former capital was abandoned, Bangkok subsequently becoming the new Thai capital in 1782.

Scant evidence that survived Ayudhya's destruction includes lacquer and gold leaf illustrations depicting *Ramayana* episodes, and adorning manuscript cabinets, choreography manuals, contemporary ac-





counts of masked dance drama and shadow play performances, and narrative material of *Ramayana* incidents recited during such performances.

Ayudhyan versions of the *Ramayana* may have been destroyed by fire. The longest of four existing versions of the *Ramakien* was completed during 1798 by the first Chakri monarch, King Rama I, and his intimates, who incorporated Thai and Buddhist ceremonial elements to preserve knowledge of Ayudhyan rites and traditions.

Essentially, Rama I's *Ramakien* is an allegory of the triumph of good over evil, though it can also be viewed as an eulogy to monarchic glory, extolling as it does the timeless virtues of perseverance in the face of adversity, of loyalty and rank, while linking, at the time of its composition, a magnificent past to a keenly anticipated yet uncertain future.

The *Ramakien* chronicles the war between the ten-headed, twenty-armed Demon King Tosakanth (Ravana in the *Ramayana*) and Ayudhya's righteous monarch-to-be, Rama, Vishnu's earthly incarnation. The epic vividly depicts how Rama and his brother, Lakshman, pursue Tosakanth after he abducts Rama's consort, Sita, and carries her to his island kingdom in hopes of marrying her. Aided by several allies, principally the white monkey general, Hanuman, the two princes engage in several battles and suffer setbacks before routing Tosakanth's demon armies, and rescuing Sita.

Rama I's *Ramakien* parallels Valmiki's original in plot, except for the ending, but differs considerably in details. Indeed, Rama I's *Ramakien* is an amalgam of material from several different sources. The plot contains elements from the Tamil, Hindi and Bengali versions of the *Ramayana*, the Malay *Hikayat Sri Rama* (The Annals of Sri Rama), the Siamese prose

work, *Narai Sip Pang* (Ten Incarnations of Vishnu), and certain sections of the Laotian *Rama Jataka*, a former folk tale.

Despite such diverse elements, or perhaps because of them, the *Ramakien* is unique, and quintessentially Thai in spirit, in ambience, and in the addition of certain episodes not found in Valmiki's original.

Other differences between the Thai and Indian epics concern mood and characterisation. The *Ramayana* is primarily concerned with Hindu gods who have willingly relinquished celestial pleasures and been reincarnated as warriors to fight earthly evil. *Ramakien* focus shifts from the religious to the temporal, from divinities to royals, almost from men to monkeys, narrative sanctifying monarchic honour and achievements.

Hanuman embodies the most immediately noticeable difference in characterisation. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, the monkey general is a sober celibate. In Rama I's *Ramakien*, Hanuman becomes almost the central character, certainly the major agent for dramatic change. Hanuman is Rama's loyal and unquestioning servant, an immediately recognisable archetype, and an invincible warrior who enjoys numerous amorous successes with celestial maidens and demon queens. In a very real sense, Hanuman's lecherous conquests, magical powers and mischievous nature personify basic male fantasies. Few red-blooded males would be able to resist fighting for a noble cause while enjoying several diversions with invariably accommodating females.

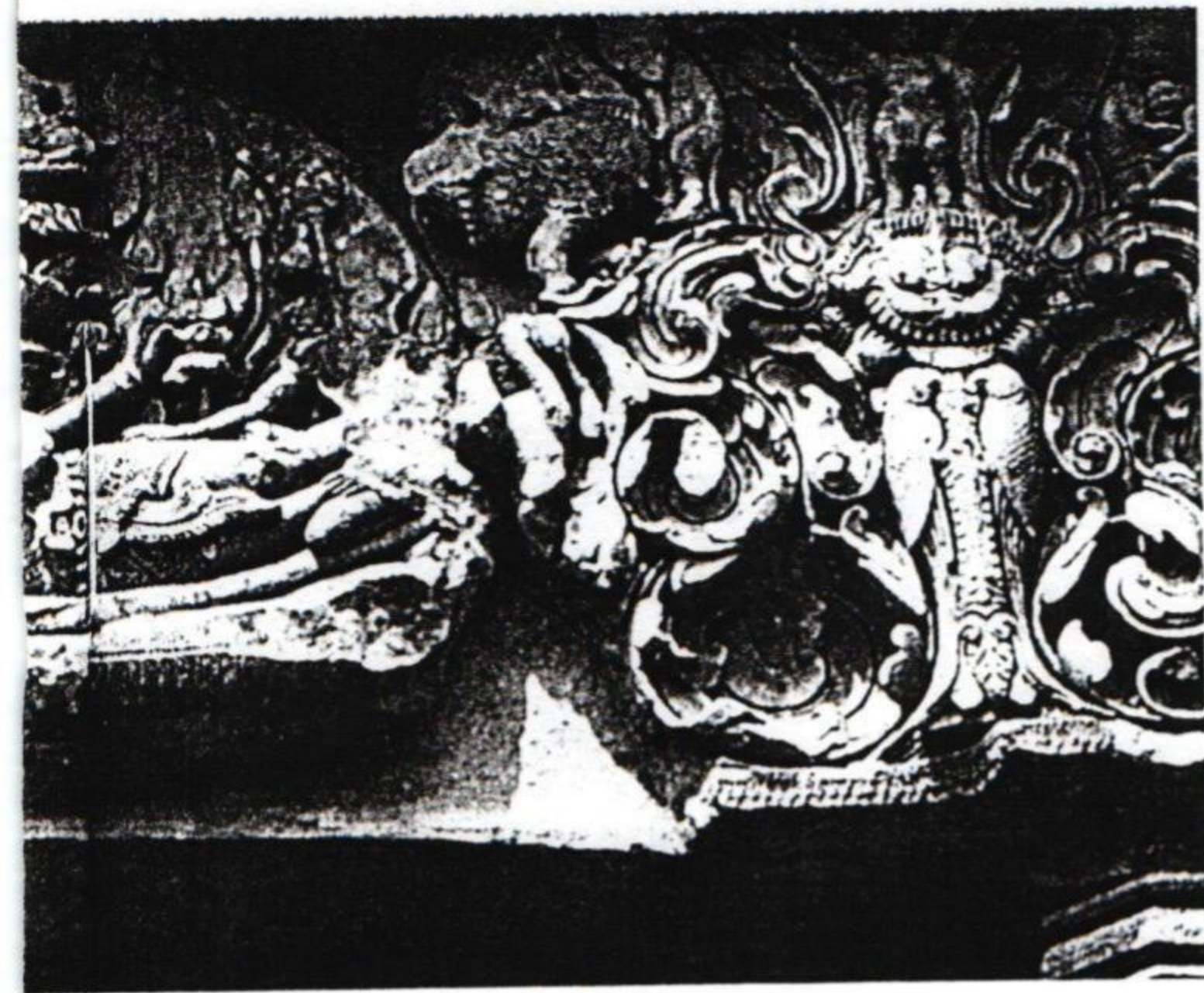


#### IV.

Surviving *Ramakien* fragments from the Ayudhya period, and versions composed during the Bangkok period, were mostly composed in verse, and almost exclusively for dramatic performances.

Prose versions for reading pleasure were composed only during this century. Latter-day prose versions tend to be hybrids drawn from different sources, each edition subtly different as compilers sought to clarify or dramatise certain episodes or incidents.

Ultimately, the *Ramakien* remains popular in Thailand because of the simple majesty of the story; its mixture of romance, adventure and minor intrigues; of mythological beings, humans, demons, gods, forest creatures and angels; its blend of fantasy and human situations; and, last but by no means least, because the epic contains the eighteenth-century equivalents of Sex, Drugs, Violence and Rock 'n' Roll.



The epic combines attractive heroes with credible villains, and serves as a surprisingly clear cultural mirror for contemporary events.

The *Ramakien* continues to provide inspiration for other Thai literary and dramatic forms, some major, some minor, all lesser, and remains the major source for Thai literary archetypes and dramatic stereotypes.

Essentially, no villain could be more roguish, opportunistic, selfish, yet wholly understandable, than Tosakanth.

No manservant could be more attractive, helpful, loyal and entertaining than Hanuman.

Only a stupid man would not cherish a wife as beautiful and faithful as Sita.

And few women would be unhappy with a husband as devoted as Rama.

The reader need only temporarily suspend disbelief, and mundane critical faculties, to be entertained by a story that has enchanted, in manifold diverse forms and many different languages, billions of Asians during the past two thousand years, and more.

## Editor's Note

*Narrative on the following pages is not a literal translation of any Thai version of the Ramakien. Rather, it is an accurate, albeit critically edited retelling of the epic drawn from Thai poetic and prose sources.*

*Inasmuch as possible, editing has been confined to clarification, mainly by eliminating or minimising redundancies and repetitions, particularly in battle scenes and dialogue, and to facilitate smoother narrative flow. In so doing, the sentimentality suffusing Thai versions has been substantially reduced. Every effort has been made to retain incidents, even in condensed form, featured in Thai versions.*

*Since the Indian names of Hindu gods are more familiar to native English-speaking readers than their Thai equivalents, Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu are used throughout the following pages, rather than Phra Isuan, Phra Phrom and Phra Narai. Also, Rama is never Phra Ram. Neither is Sita ever Nang Seeda.*

*In Thai-language versions of the Ramakien, major characters are awarded titles, or change their names, after the triumphant return to Ayudhya. To avoid confusion, characters in this English-language version retain their original names. Hanuman, for example, becomes Anuchit in Thai-language versions. In the following pages, he remains Hanuman until the end of the story.*

*Last but not least, Thai-language versions of the Ramakien customarily comprise one long, continuous story. This version is presented in five parts. Such divisions were made, equally, to facilitate easier comprehension and afford visual relief.*

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

## Major Gods & Goddesses

### ATHIT

God of the Sun, guardian of the solar cycle.

### INDRA

God of the Firmament, and one of Shiva's principal lieutenants.

### LAKSHMI

Goddess of Fortune, Vishnu's wife, and reborn on Earth as Sita, consort of Rama.

### PAI

God of the Wind, and surrogate father of Hanuman, the white monkey.

### PIROON

The life-sustaining god of Rain.

### RAMASOON

God of Thunder, and erstwhile tormentor of men and animals. *(former)*

### SAHA BODI BRAHMA

Brahma the Creator, and builder of Longka.

### SHIVA

Lord of the Universe, resident on the celestial Mount Krailas.

### UMA

Shiva's wife and Matriarch goddess of Heaven.

### VISHNU

Resident in the Cosmic Ocean until reborn on Earth, at Shiva's behest, specifically to destroy evil demons, as the righteous Rama of Ayudhya.

## Humans

### ADJANAKAWI, YUKAKHARA, DAHA & YAKA

Four hermits who meditated in Tawarawadee Forest in Chompoo Tawcep. Ayudhya was named after them.

### ATANTA, WACHIRA, WISUT & MAHA ROMASINGH

Four hermits residing in Himapan Forest who resurrected a dead toad and gave her new life as Montho.

### ANOMATAN

Ayudhya's first king, born of Vishnu's meditative powers.

### ATCHABAN

Anomatan's son, who ruled Ayudhya after his father's demise.

### ANGKOT

Seer and teacher to Pali.

### AROONWADEE

Romapat's daughter, and Kailakot's wife.

BHROT

Vishnu's diamond discus reborn on Earth as Rama's scarlet-faced half brother.

CHANOK

Hermit king of Mithila who plucked Sita from the water to become her foster-father.

KAIYAKASEE

Tosaroth's wife and mother of Bhrot, and principal reason for Rama's fourteen years of exile.

KAIYAKET

Father of Kaiyakasee and ruler of Kaiyakat.

KALAIKOT

Hermit whose meditative powers prevented rainfall for three years. Petitioned Shiva for Vishnu to be reincarnated on Earth.

KALA ADJANA

Beautiful woman conjured by Kodom to become his wife. Mother of Pali and Sukrib.

KAOSURIYA

Tosaroth's second wife and mother of Rama.

KHUKHAN

Hunter who helped Rama during his 14-year exile.

KODOM

Forest hermit who conjured Kala Adjana as his wife. Their daughter was Hanuman's mother.

KOSOP

Hermit on Mount Singhakor who informed Rama how to kill the demon Anurat.

LAKSHMAN

The celestial Serpent King, Ananta Naga, reborn on Earth as Vishnu's gold-faced brother.

LOP

Twin son of Rama, created by the hermit Watchamaruk, to duplicate his brother, Mongkut.

MANEE GAYSORN

Anomatan's queen.

MONGKUT

Son of Sita and Rama, and twin brother of Lop.

MONTHO

Tosakkanth's wife.

NAROD

Hermit on Mount Solot who directed Hanuman to Longka.

RAMA

Vishnu's green-faced reincarnation on Earth.

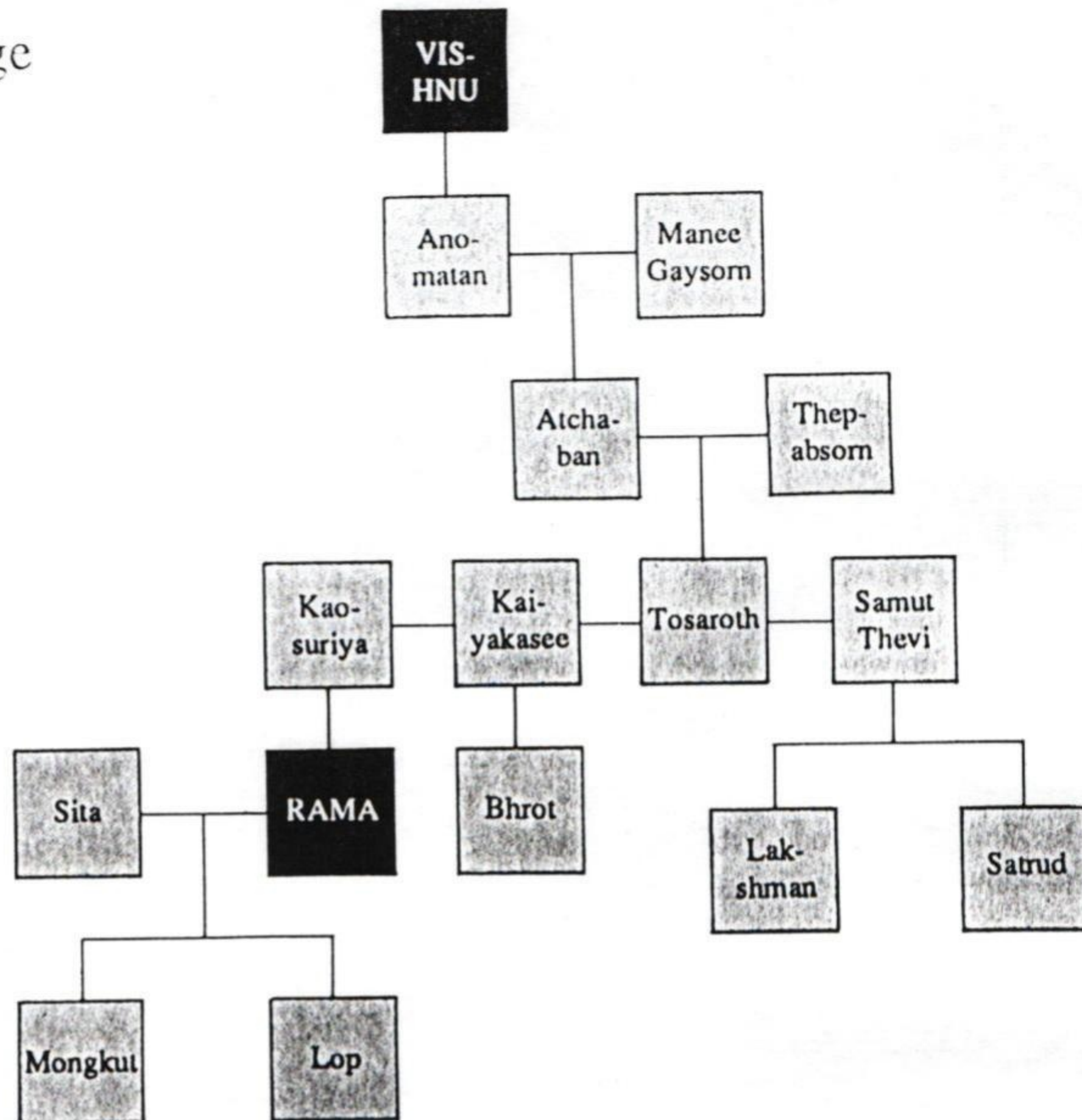
SAMUT THEVI

Tosaroth's third wife, and mother of Lakshman and Satrud.

SATRUD

Vishnu's jewelled club reborn as Rama's purple-faced half brother.

# Rama's Lineage



SAWAHA  
Mother of Hanuman.

SITA  
Lakshmi, Vishnu's goddess wife, reborn on Earth as daughter to Tosakanth and Montho.

SUMET  
Maiyarab's hermit teacher.

SORAPANG & TAWACHA  
Forest hermits who helped Rama during his 14-year exile.

THEPABSORN  
Atchaban's consort.

TOSAROTH  
Rama's father.

WASIT & WISAWAMIT  
Hermit teachers of Rama and his brothers.

WATCHAMARUK  
Hermit who gave Sita refuge during her forest exile.

## Monkeys

### CHOMBHUPAN

Pali's second son.

### CHOMPUWARAT

One of Rama's monkey warriors who transformed himself into a bear to destroy Indrachit's magic arrow ceremony.

### HANUMAN

White monkey, made from Shiva's celestial weapons, with fur which sparkled like diamonds. Son of the Wind god, Pai, and Sawaha. Rama's greatest warrior. Able to inhale deeply and exhale moons and stars. Gifted by Shiva with immortality, and the ability to transform himself into other shapes and beings, and make himself invisible.

### KEO UDORN

Maha Chompoo's wife and Nilapat's foster mother.

### KAKAT

Green-faced monkey, son of Indra and Kala Adjana. Ruler of Khit Khin.

### MAHA CHOMPOO

Ruler of Chompoo, a monkey kingdom neighbouring Khit Khin.

### NILA NON

Viceroy of Chompoo.

### NILAPAT

Black monkey, son of the god of Time awarded by Shiva to Maha Chompoo.

### ONGKOT

Pali's son conceived by Montho.

### PALI

New name for Kakat bestowed by Shiva. Pali was awarded a trident and the magical power to absorb half the strength of anyone he fought.

### SUKRIB

Pali's brother. Son of the Sun god, Athit, and Kala Adjana.

## 18. Celestials Reborn as Monkey Generals (Sip Baed Mongkut)

## Khit Khin Kingdom

### CHAI-AMPAWAN

The god Wisan

### KEYOON

The god Wiroonhok

### KOMUT

The god Himapan

### MALUNTHAKESORN

The god of Jupiter

PIMON PANOM  
The god of Saturn

SUTAPLI  
The god of the Moon

SURAKAN  
The god Mahachai

SURASEN  
The god of Mercury

WAIYABUTR  
Piroon, the Rain god

## Chompoo Kingdom

KESORNTHAMALA  
The god Paisorn

KUMITAN  
The god of Neptune

MAYOON  
The god Wiroonpak

NILA-EK  
The god Pinai

NILAKAN  
The god Pines

NILAPANAN  
Rahu, the god of Eclipses

NILAPASAN  
The god of Venus

NILARAT  
Samut, the Ocean god

WISANTRAWEE  
The god of Mars

## Demons & Ogres

ADUN  
Tosakanth's niece, who tricked Sita into drawing the Demon King's portrait on a slate.

ANURAT  
Demon with a pleasure garden on Mount Singhakor.

ATSAMUKHEE  
Ogress living on forest animals, and who briefly captured Lakshman.

ASURA BRAHMA  
Demon bestowed by Shiva with more power than all celestial beings, and armed with a jewelled club.

ASURAPAD  
Son of Hanuman and Benjakai.

ATSAKAN  
Ruler of Djakrawan with the power to perpetually double himself.

**BANLAIJAK, NONYAPAK & SURIYAPOP**  
Sons of Djakrawat who helped their father fight Bhrot and Satrud.

**BANLAIKAN**  
Tosakanth's slippery-skinned son by Kala Akhee.

**BENJAKAI**  
Daughter of Pipek and Treechada, who transformed herself into a dead Sita to prevent Rama from attacking Longka. One of Hanuman's many wives, and mother of Asurapad.

**CHIUHA**  
Tosakanth's brother-in-law and Samanakha's husband, accidentally slain by Tosakanth.

**CHANG**  
Tosakanth's elephant wife and mother of Totsakireewan and Tosakiriton.

**CHANTARAPRAPA**  
Maiyarab's mother.

**DJITPAIREE**  
Saeng Athit's soothsayer.

**DJAKRAWAT**  
Intimate friend of Tosakanth and ruler of Maliwan who helped Paina wrest Longka from Pipek.

**HIRAN**  
Awarded unrivalled physical strength by Shiva and slain by Vishnu for abusing such powers.

**INDRACHIT (RONAPAK)**  
Tosakanth's warrior son by Montho with the ability to transform himself into Indra, and renamed Indrachit after defeating Indra.

**KA KANASOON**  
Tosakanth's evil Crow Queen ally.

**KALA AKHEE**  
Kala Naga's daughter, Tosakanth's wife and Banlaikan's mother.

**KANYUWEK & YAMALIWAN**  
Sons of Indrachit and Suwanakanyuma, who helped Asurapad capture Paina.

**KAMPAN**  
Major demon commander under Indrachit.

**KANTAMALEE**  
Tosakanth's sister-in-law, wife of his brother, Khumpakan.

**KHUMPAKAN**  
Tosakanth's younger brother, and viceroy of Longka.

**KHUMPAKAT**  
Tosakanth's nephew, and son of Chiuha and Samanakha.

**KHUMPON**  
Demon cursed by Shiva for spying on celestial maidens, and possessing only the upper part of his body.

KONTAN

Guardian of Longka against aerial invasion.

KORN

Tosakanth's brother, and father of Mangkornkan, Torapi's reincarnation.

KUMPAKASOON

Demon aide to Tosakanth.

KUPERAN

Tosakanth's elder brother, and former owner of the Busabok Kaeo chariot.

KUWEN

Demon ruler of Kalawut.

LASATIAN

Tosakanth's father.

MAHABAN

One of Tosakanth's closest friends, slain by Hanuman during a battle to avenge Tosakanth's death.

MAKAWAN

Maliwan guardian whose incantions made surrounding forests perpetually burn.

MAIYARAB

Magician ruler of Badan.

MALEEWAKA BRAHMA (MALEEWARAT)

Virtuous demon rewarded by Shiva with the power to have his utterances come true.

MALIKA.

Djaturapak's wife, and Lasatian's mother.

MANGKORNKAN

Son of Korn and Rachadasoon, and reincarnation of the buffalo, Torapi.

MAREET

Son of Ka Kanasoon who transformed himself into a golden deer, enabling Tosakanth to abduct Sita.

MATCHANU

Offspring of Hanuman and Supanamatcha, with strength rivalling his father.

MULAPALAM & SAHASADECHA

Demon rulers allied to Tosakanth. Sahasadecha had one thousand heads and two thousand arms.

NONTAKAN (TORAPA)

Shiva's errant palace guard punished by Shiva to be reborn a white buffalo named Torapa.

NONTOK

Green-faced demon who washed the feet of angels before they met Shiva on Mount Krailas. Slain by Vishnu and reborn on Earth as Tosakanth.

PAINA

Son of Tosakanth and Montho, born after the former's death. Pipek erroneously believed Paina to be his own child.

PAKLAN

Demon cursed by Shiva and finally freed from the spell by Ongkot.

PANURAT

Monster demon who disguised himself as a garden to trap Rama's army.

PATOOTATAN

Lustful demon killed by Tosaroth.

PHEESUA SAMUT

Ogress guardian of Longka against seaborne invaders.

PIPEK

Tosakanth's younger brother, the demi-god Wesuyan sent by Shiva to be a future ally of Vishnu. A wise seer with the ability to foretell the future.

PIRAB

Demon residing beneath Asakan Mountain.

PIRAGUAN

Daughter of Sakayawong, ruler of Badan.

PATAKAWE, RUTIKASOON & TREEPALAM

Demon commanders of Tosakanth.

PHRAYA WAYUPAK

Demon with body of a dragon and the claws of a garuda.

RACHADASOON

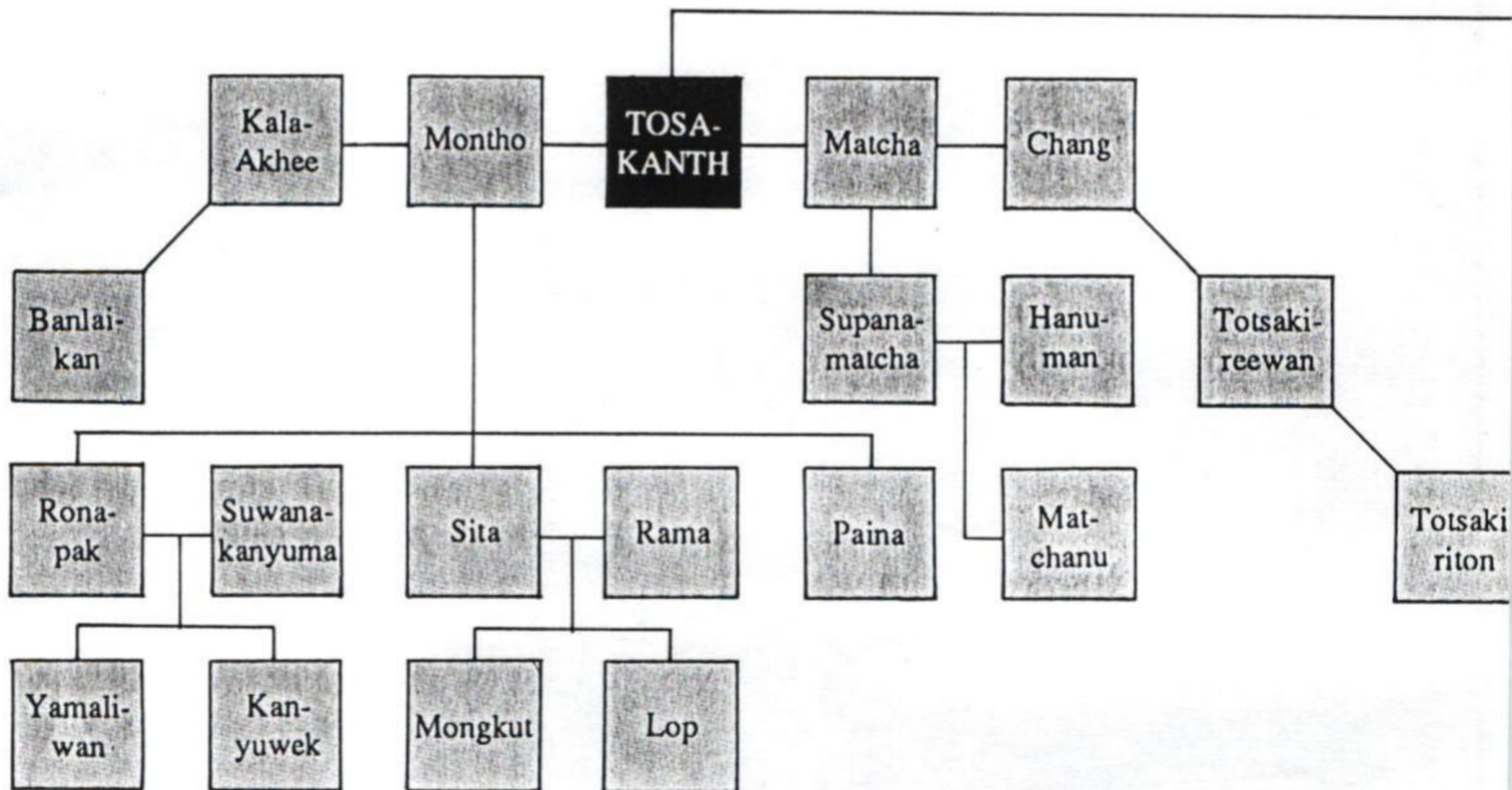
Korn's wife and Mangkornkan's mother.

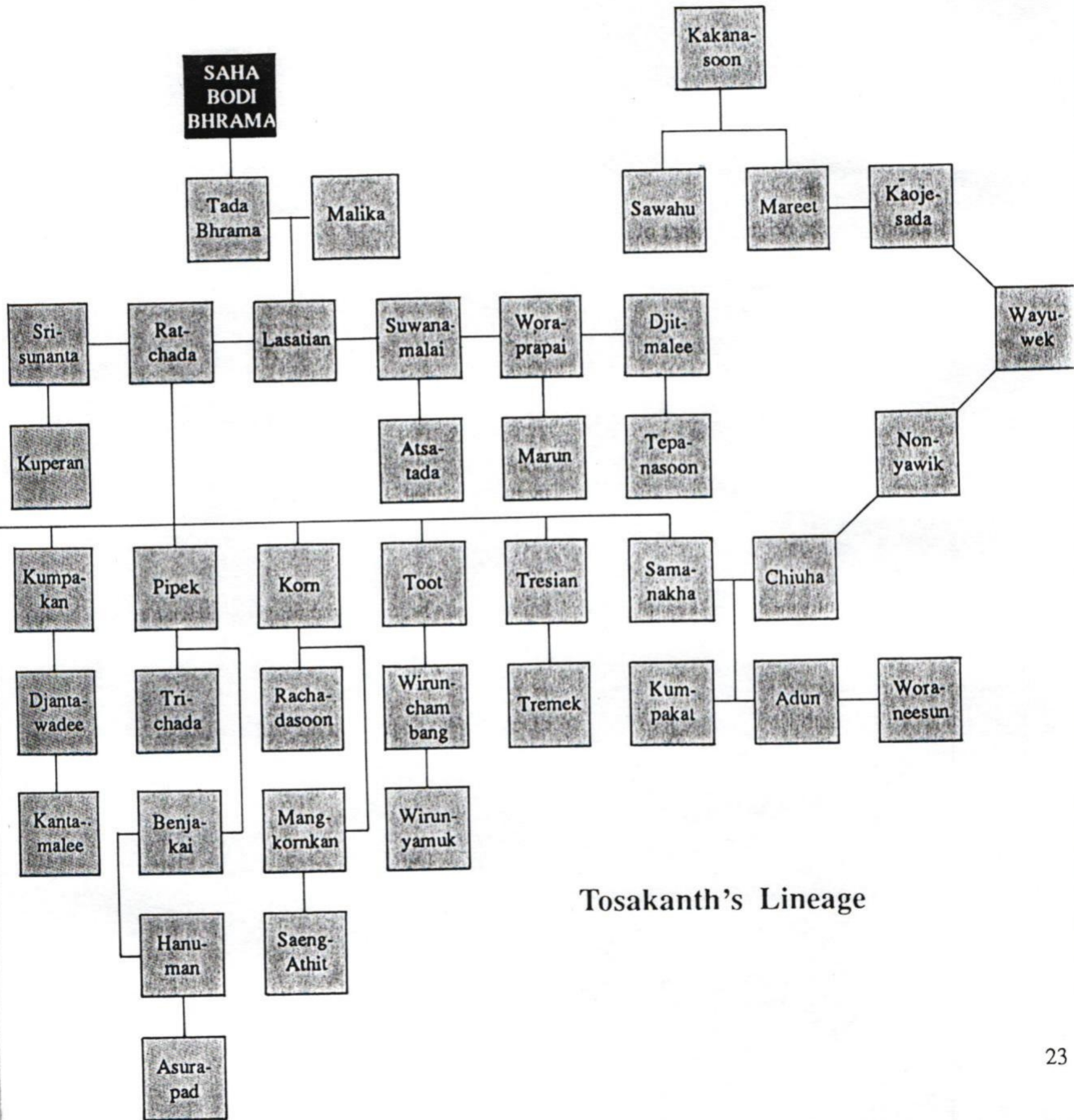
RATANAMALEE

Djakrawat's daughter and wife to Matchanu.

RATCHADA

Tosakanth's mother.





Tosakanth's Lineage

RITHIKAN

Demon general who helped Ronapak defeat Indra.

SAENG ATHIT

Tosakanth's nephew, and possessor of a diamond with searing rays given him by Tada Brahma.

SAHA MALIWAN

Saha Bodi Brahma's cousin, original owner of the chariot, Busabok Kaco.

SAKAYAWONG

Son of Saha Maliwan, and ruler of Badan.

SAMANAKHA

Chiuha's love-starved widow who fell in love with Rama. His rejection precipitated Sita's abduction, and resulted in war against the demons.

SARANTOOT

Demon messenger who informed Tosakkaanth of Kumpakan's death.

SATALOONG & TREEMEK

Demon friends of Tosakanth who assisted him in battle against Rama.

SATASOON & WIRUNCHAMBANG

Demon allies of Tosakanth.

SUKHACHAN

Condemned demon transformed into Sita and decapitated by Indrachit.

SUKORASARN

Tosakkanth's aide sent to spy on Rama's camp but captured, beaten and returned.

SUPANAMATCHA

Tosakanth's mermaid daughter and Queen of the Fishes. One of Hanuman's several wives.

SUWANAKANYUMA

Indrachit's widow.

SWAHU

Son of the Crow Queen Ka Kanasoon

TADA DRAHMA (DJATURA PAK)

Brahama's cousin and first ruler of Longka.

TEPANASOON

Lord of Djakrawan city and Tosakanth's monumental half-brother who swallowed monkey armies alive.

TOOT & TRISIAN

Samanakha's brothers who fought with Rama to avenge their sister.

TORAPI

Black buffalo who killed his father, Torapa.

TOSAKANTH

Demon King of Longka.

TOTSAKIRITON & TOTSAKIREEWAN

Tosakkanth's sons by the Himapan Forest elephant, Chang.

TREEBURAM

Demon Ruler of Solot Kingdom who requested

supernatural powers from Shiva but misused them until slain by Shiva himself.

**TREECHADA**

Pipek's wife and Sita's maid.

**TRIPAGEN**

Son of Kuwen.

**WAIYAKASOON & NILAKAYASOON**

Demon warriors who fled to Djakrawan to inform Atsakan of Tosakanth's demise.

**WAITAN**

Ruler of Underworld vulture kingdom of Kurirat. Friend of Djakrawat.

**WAIYAWIK**

Son of Piraguan, Maiyarab's older sister.

**WIRANYAMOOK**

Tosakanth's demon commander.

**WIROONHOK**

Demon residing in Badan. Tilted Mount Krailas by hurling gold chain at a reptile.

**WIRUNAPAT**

Son of Kontanurat. Fought battles with Bhrot and Satrud during attempt to attack Kaiyaket.

**WISANU BRAHMA**

Architect's aide to Saha Bodi Brahma.

**WORANEESUN**

Guardian who informed the teenaged Paina that Tosakanth, not Pipek, was his real father.



# The Three Worlds

Mount  
Sumaine

Mount Kra

Mount Yod Fah

Heaven

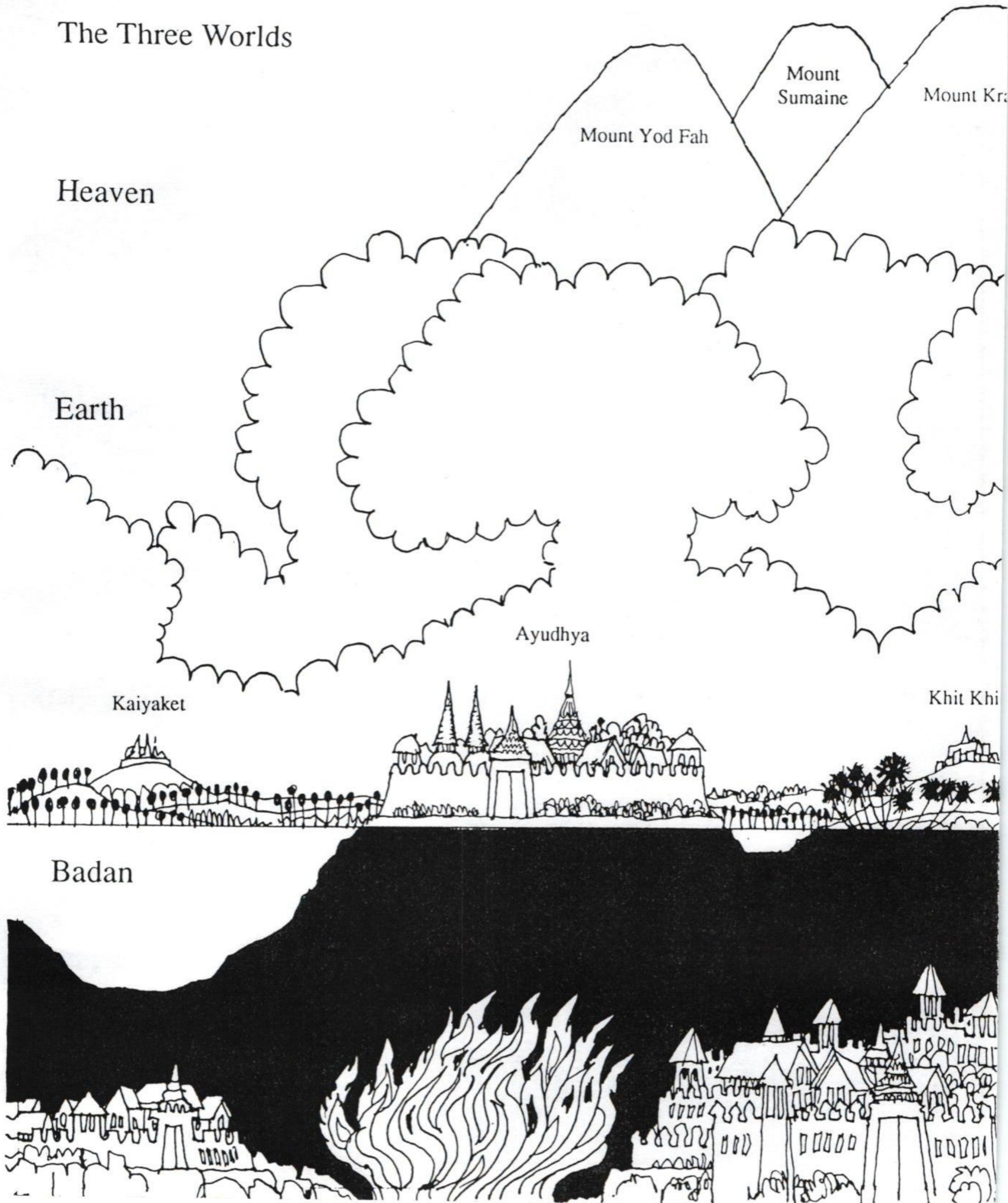
Earth

Ayudhya

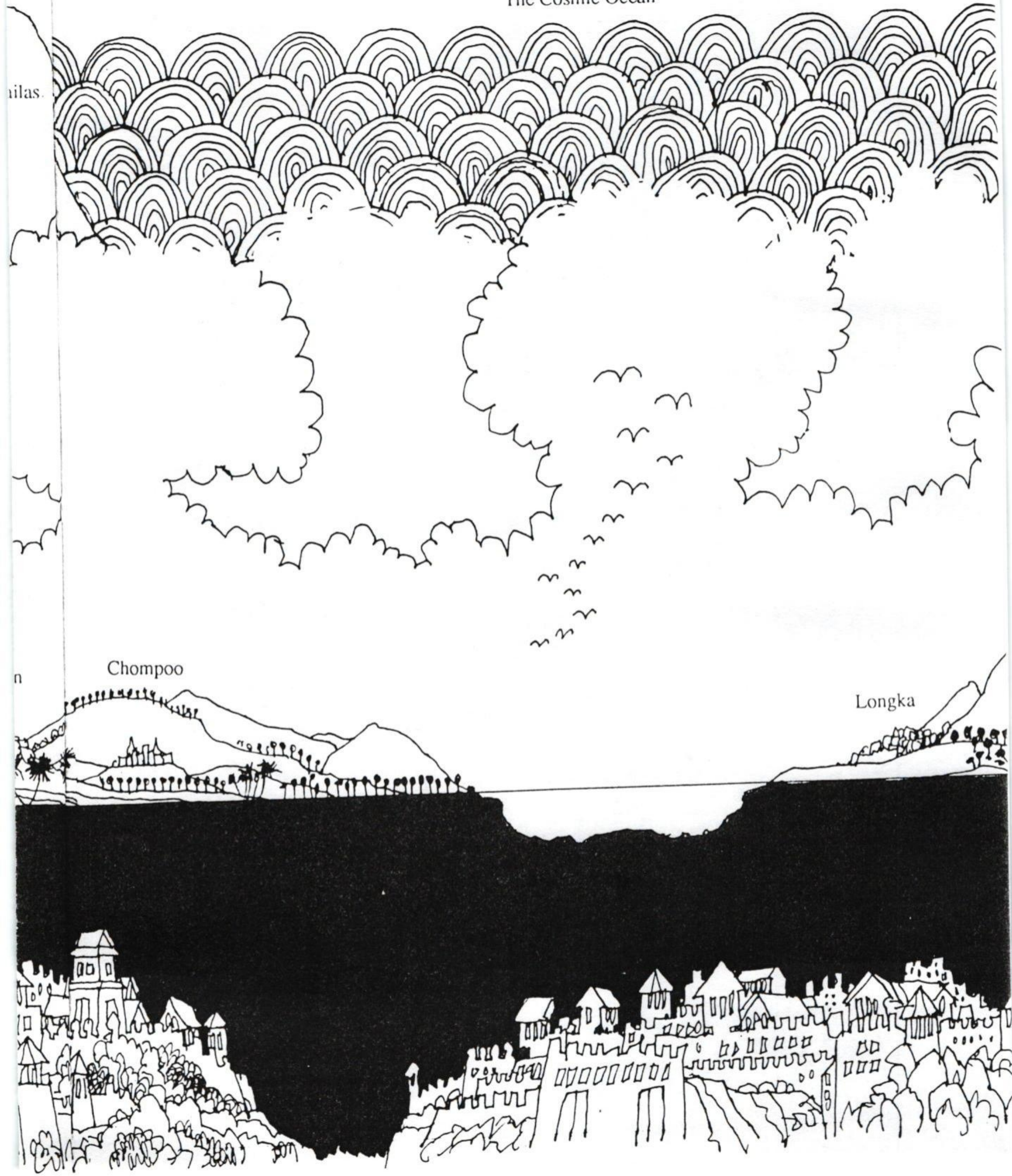
Kaiyaket

Khit Khi

Badan



The Cosmic Ocean



ailas.

n

Chompoo

Longka

Kaiyaket

Mount Yod Fah

Mount Sumaine

Ayudhya

Khit K

Mount Hema





Mount  
Kraila

Mount Awut

Mount Sanpaya

Chompoo

Mount Atakiree

hin

atiran

Morakot  
Hill

Mount  
Olot

Mc  
Nil

RANGKA

Longka

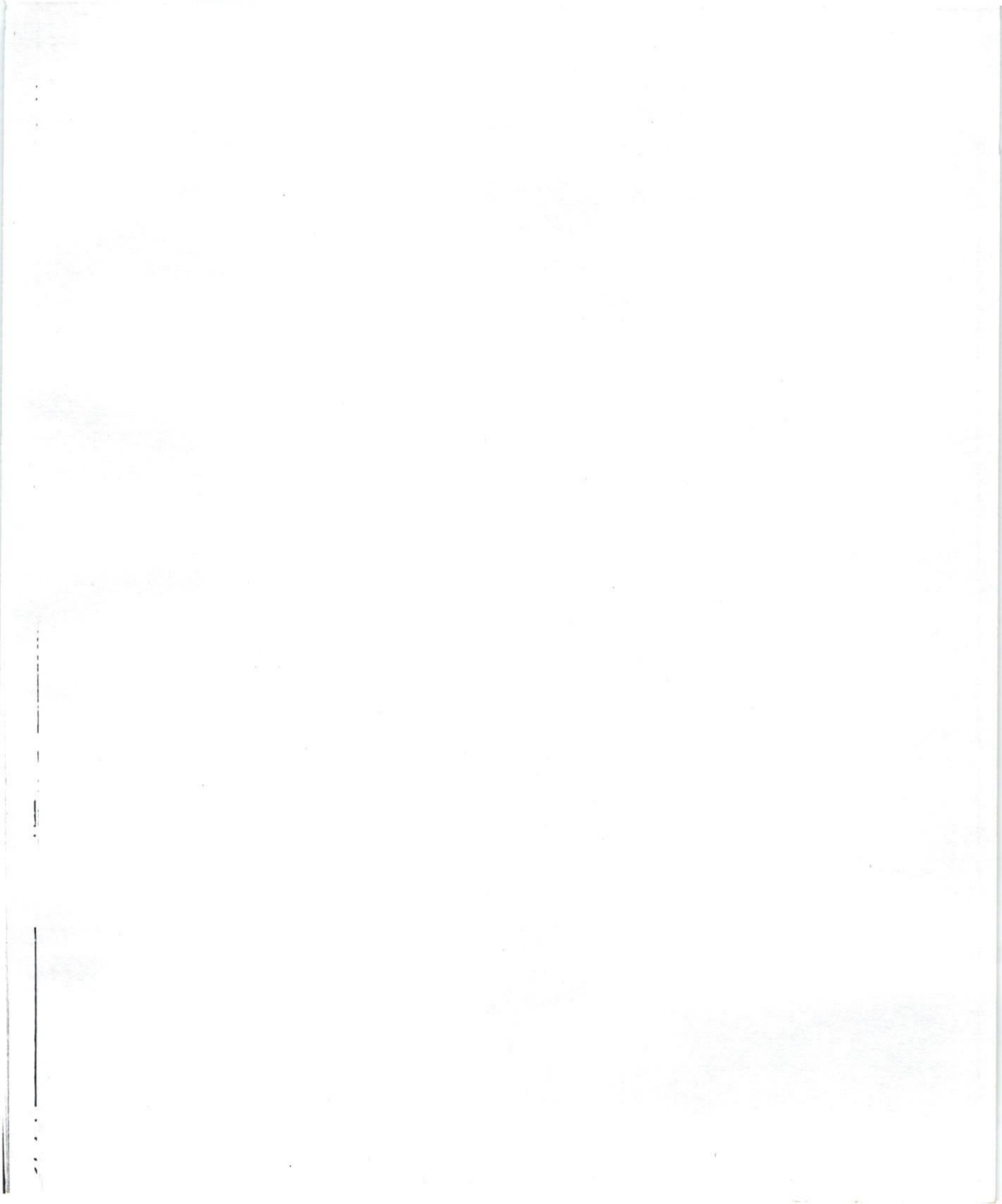
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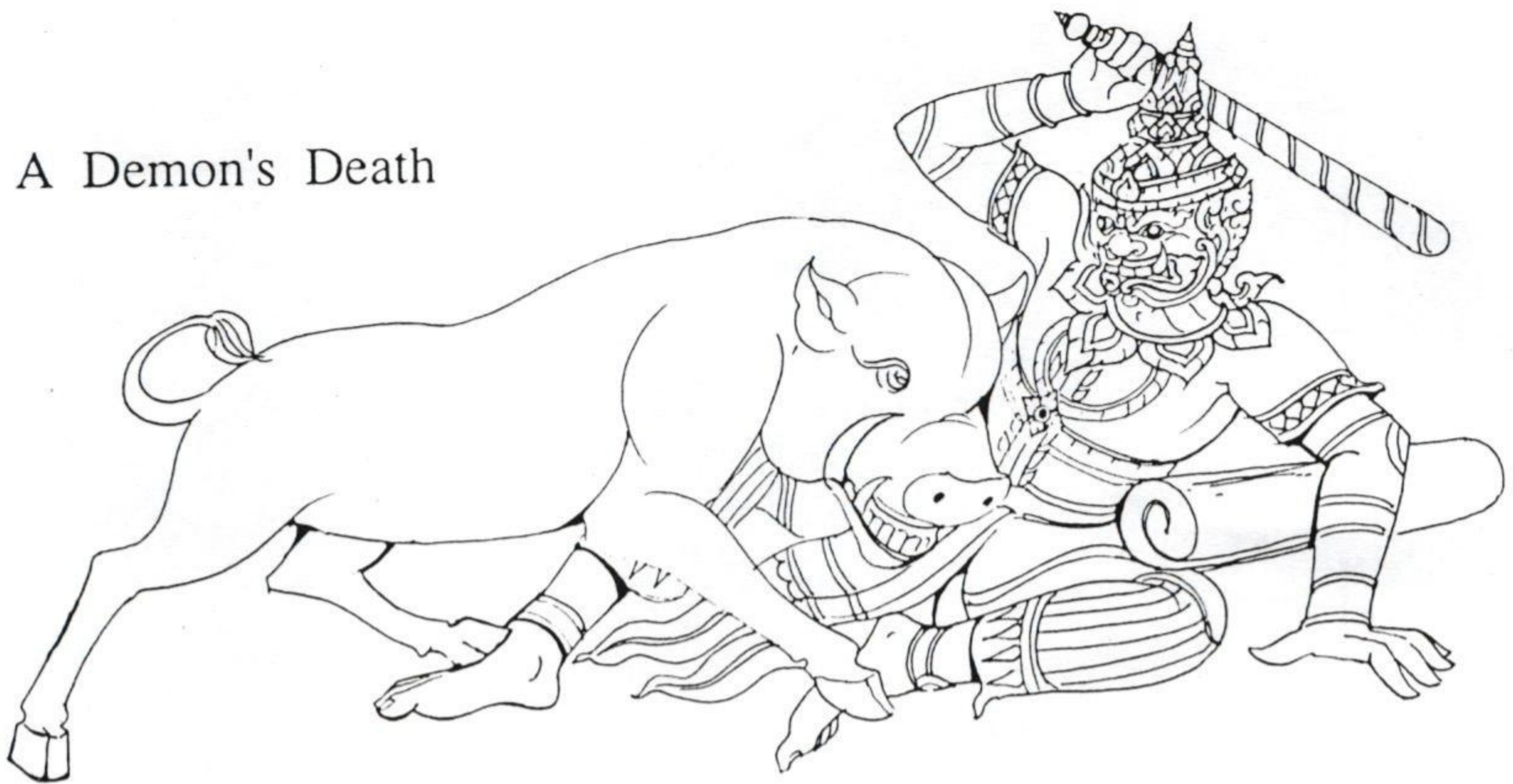
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ຫ້າມຈໍາໜ່າຍ

Part 1  
**Beginnings**



## A Demon's Death



**A**n ambitious and powerful demon named Hiran the Golden lived atop Mount Djakrawan, the peak of which ascended into Heaven. Hiran sought to augment his already considerable power by sitting in meditation until he was noticed by the god Shiva, Lord of the Universe. Shiva was impressed by Hiran's ostensible piety and granted the demon's request that he be awarded unrivalled physical strength.

Hiran conceitedly believed he held immutable sway over every being within the Three Worlds of Heaven, Earth and the Underworld. Wishing to rid the Earth of everyone but himself, Hiran rolled up the surface of the planet like a carpet. Subsequently, he entered the underworld kingdom of Badan. There Hiran arrogantly intimidated and bullied everyone he encountered.

Angels watched with dismay Hiran's ugly excesses, and flew to the celestial Mount Krailas where Shiva resided. They informed Shiva of events they had witnessed, and described Hiran's grotesque behaviour.

Shiva realised Hiran had abused his powers for selfish and evil purposes, and summoned the god Vishnu. Shiva commissioned Vishnu to destroy Hiran and replace the Earth's surface. Vishnu descended to Badan where he transformed himself into a powerful white boar of beautiful and stunning appearance. In porcine guise, Vishnu charged Hiran, felled him and decapitated the demon with his razor-sharp tusks.

Vishnu then replaced the Earth's surface and restored the planet to its original condition.

## Vishnu's Son & Ayudhya's Founding

On reassuming his original form, Vishnu summoned his steed Garuda, a vulturine bird, and mortal enemy of snakes, to transport him back to his celestial home in the Cosmic Ocean. There Vishnu resided on the coiled back of Ananta Naga, the mighty seven-headed Serpent King.

In due course, Vishnu meditated. A beautiful lotus emerging from the middle of the Ocean



unfolded to reveal a handsome boy. Vishnu's meditative powers were so powerful that the boy assumed corporeal form.

Vishnu flew with his son to Mount Krailas. After reporting he had slain Hiran, Vishnu presented the boy to Shiva.

Shiva was much pleased. "With Hiran's death, the world may live in peace. And now I perceive your son will become the greatest king in the Three Worlds."

Shiva ordered the god Indra to erect a city for the mightiest king on Earth at the most beautiful of sites.

Indra rode his white elephant steed, Erawan, and led a host of angels to Earth. Erawan had thirty-three heads and two hundred and thirty-one tusks. The white elephant was so enormous, it resembled a snowclad Mount Krailas. Each tusk bore seven lotus blossoms. Each blossom held seven apasaras, or beautiful celestial maidens. The eleven thousand and more apasaras each wore gold and diamonds that glittered with dazzling effect in the sun.

Indra eventually came to a verdant forest in the heart of Chompoo Tawee, Land of the Roses, where four hermits who had resided there for one hundred thousand years prayed.

The hermits, named Adjahakawi, Yukakhara, Daha and Yaka, were informed by Indra, "I have been ordered by Shiva to build a city for Vishnu's son in the most beautiful site on Earth."

The hermits said the forest was called Tawarawadee, and recommended that Indra erect his city there because a large tree on the west side was auspiciously shaped like a royal umbrella. Indra accepted their advice, and used the first syllables of the hermits' names, A-Yu-Da-Ya, to name his city Ayudhya, the Great and Holy City of Angels.

Shiva was pleased with the site and name, and requested Witsunakam, the god of Arts, and Celestial Architect, to design Ayudhya. Witsanukam produced a bejewelled palace in the twinkling of an eye. Three spectacular spires soared heavenwards from the palace roof. Spacious, shaded balconies faced the four heavenly directions. Lesser palace buildings gleamed with the most precious of stones.

Maidservants' and concubines' quarters had thousands of rooms. Stables for war elephants were great and strong. The king's chariot was kept in a splendid coach house. Sumptuous gardens and parks surrounded the palace. Tall palm trees shaded leisure pavilions. Barracks and fields served soldiers. A crystal pool shaded by fruit trees was embedded in green lawns like a gigantic diamond. Fragrant lotuses bloomed in the calm waters. Pai, the god of Wind, gently cooled the area.

Ayudhya was so beautiful that honourable men would come from all corners of the world to fill the city with colourful life. Indra selected fifty-six thousand maidens for the king's pleasure house. Each maiden possessed Benja Galayanee, the five characteristics of a perfect woman, namely



## The Real Ayudhya

French artist's impression of a 17th-century royal barge procession in Ayudhya

*Ayudhya, or Krungthep Dvaravati Sri Ayudhya, to give the riverine island city state its full name, was founded on the morning of the nineteenth day of March, 1350 AD, by the Prince of U-Thong, who styled himself Ramathipodi (Rama the Sovereign).*

*Krungthep means 'Divine Capital'. Dvaravati was derived from the capital city, Dvaraka, of Krishna, Arjuna's charioteer and counsellor in the Indian epic, Mahabharata, and another of Vishnu's human incarnations. Sri can mean either 'honour' or 'glory'. Ayudhya was named after Ayodhya, the city of Rama in the Ramayana.*

*Ramathipodi's new capital, built on the site of an already extant settlement, and some forty kilometres upriver from Bangkok, would remain the heart of Siam for 417 years under thirty-three kings until its destruction in 1767 by Burmese invaders.*

*From its humble origin as a mud-walled settlement, Ayudhya would develop into one of*

*the most powerful and glorious capitals in Southeast Asia, a city of gilded temples and palaces protected by cannon fortresses and water gates, wherein a unique, largely waterborne way of life would prompt Fernando Mendez Pinto, a Portuguese Jesuit, to describe Ayudhya during the 1550s as the 'Venice of the East'.*

*Throughout the city's colourful history, Ayudhya would attract European and Asian merchants, mercenaries, missionaries and adventurers. Some would lead picturesque lives, often of luxurious ease. Others would meet grisly deaths. Ayudhya's fortunes would wax, under the guidance of warrior and statesmen kings whose exploits became legendary, and wane under effete weaklings, avaricious usurpers and pressures from neighbouring kingdoms.*

*It was in Ayudhya that the Thais developed and perfected their culture in myriad forms, everything from spectacular golden*

*Buddhas and lavish dramatic performances, to unique poetic genres and gilded royal barges. By the mid-1600s, Ayudhya would be a cosmopolitan city where Japanese and Chinese merchants mingled with counterparts from Arabia and every major European seafaring nation.*

*The end came after an unusually long fifteen-month siege when, on the seventh night of April, 1767, Burmese troops, according to an eye-witness report recorded in Dutch by one Anthony Goyaton, '...at the time the city was surrounded by high water, approached... with boats, scaled the walls with ladders...and by throwing earthen pots with gunpowder chased the besieged from the walls. Having mastered the city...they destroyed it entirely to ashes...'*

*Temples and palaces were gutted. Priceless treasures were removed. Gold was melted from revered Buddha images. Irreplaceable histories were reduced to ashes. Many survivors were marched to Burma as prisoners.*

*Wholesale destruction makes it difficult to know precisely how important the 'Story of Rama' was to Ayudhyan culture. Paradoxically, the clearest indications of Ramayana influences in Ayudhya may be found in Bangkok.*

*Shortly after establishing his new capital on the site of a somnolent riverside market town named Ban Kok (Village of Wild Plums), King Rama I deliberately attempted to recreate every aspect of the then-recently-demolished Ayudhyan culture and way of life.*

*One of his major undertakings, and achievements, was the composition of the Ramakien.*



beautiful hair, beautiful lips, beautiful teeth, perfect complexion and enduring beauty.

Once Indra was satisfied with his efforts, he returned to Shiva with his angels. Shiva summoned Vishnu's son. "With the name Anomatan, you will rule the most majestic of lands. You will enjoy life, and protect the world, and conquer every evil."

Shiva gave Anomatan the mighty celestial weapons of a ring, a trident and a bow, and blessed him before he descended to Earth with Indra and an army of angels.

Once Indra had conducted Anomatan to Ayudhya, he flew to find the king a wife. She would possess Benja Galayanee, and be a consort worthy of the mightiest of kings. Indra found such a wife, Manee Gaysorn, and also furnished maids and soldiers.

Thus Anomatan lived happily in Ayudhya, with the esteem of the populace and the respect of neighbouring kingdoms.

## Brahma Builds Longka

A four-faced god, Saha Bodi Brahma, sat in Heaven, thinking of his cousin, Saha Maliwan, who lived in Rang Ka, the Island of Crows. Saha Bodi Brahma gazed down upon the world, and saw his cousin fleeing from Rang Ka to the underworld kingdom of Badan, specifically to escape the real or imagined punitive attention of Vishnu.

Saha Bodi Brahma regretted the island would become deserted by members of the Brahma clan, and decided to construct there a city for another cousin, the four-faced demon, Tada Brahma. Saha Bodi Brahma sat astride the white swan, Hemarat, whose flowing tail and sparkling wings led swarming demons during the descent to Rang Ka.

On arriving at the island, everyone saw the

massive black Mount Nilaka rising into the clouds. A huge nest of sturdy young crows occupied the peak. Saha Bodi Brahma viewed the crows' nest as a particularly favourable omen, and decided to build the proposed city at the mountain base.

The master builder, Witsanu Brahma, built the city in a trice by casting a spell and raising clasped hands above his head. The citadel was protected by a double wall. City streets were studded with diamonds that glistened like water. Gemstones decorating the inner wall glittered in the sun. A triple-spired palace was surrounded by barracks, stables, markets, pleasure houses and an extensive and beautiful garden.

The god of Wind, Pai, blew sweet and fragrant breezes through the city. Bees hummed among flowers. The ocean surrounding the island was filled with ferocious guardian fish. Far below the ocean surface, a fearsome sea ogress, Pheesua Samut guarded the island against seaborne invasion. A demon named Kontan flew above the city on guard duty.

Saha Bodi Brahma named the city Phichai Longka, the Victorious Nest of Crows. Crows and fish swore allegiance to him. Saha Bodi Brahma populated Longka with one billion demons from Mount Djakrawan. Saha Bodi Brahma then installed Tada Brahma in the newly built city where he would reside with his consort, Malika, and sixteen thousand comely concubines. Tada Brahma was bestowed the title Djatura Pak, the Four-Faced, and ruled the demons armed with holy weapons -- a trident, a spear, a royal umbrella to conceal himself and his city from enemies, and innumerable potent magic spells.

Thus empowered, Tada Brahma became Saha Bodi Brahma's earthly representative. In due

course, a son, Lasatian, was born to Malika. Lasatian inherited four arms from his celestial forebears, but otherwise had the appearance of a demon.

## Another Demon's Death

King Anomatan ruled Ayudhya for ten thousand years. His consort, Manee Gaysorn, bore him a son, Atchaban. The young Prince Atchaban was similarly endowed with his father's sterling qualities. Virtuous and strong, he, too, became respected and feared throughout the Three Worlds.

In due course, Anomatan's earthly existence ended. He left his grieving widow and returned to Heaven, whereupon Atchaban ruled Ayudhya.

Around this time, another demon, Asurapak, who lived at the base of Mount Djakrawan, began harbouring ambitions of becoming more powerful than angels or gods.

Asurapak approached Shiva and requested celestial powers. The benevolent Shiva sympathetically awarded him a powerful jewelled club. The jubilant demon immediately sought to test his new weapon.

A seer named Maleewaka Brahma in the service of the Longkan king perceived Asurapak harboured evil intentions. Convinced Asurapak would destroy Heaven and Earth, Maleewaka Brahma went to Mount Krailas and petitioned Shiva, who acknowledged the danger. Shiva gave Maleewaka Brahma his double-edged sword, Phra Khan, which was more powerful than Asurapak's jewelled club.

"You are to summon Ayudhya's new monarch, Atchaban," Shiva directed the seer. "Atchaban can destroy Asurapak with this sword. You carry my blessings and protection in the event Atchaban elects to wage war on all the demons."



Maleewaka Brahma immediately flew to Ayudhya, where he delivered Shiva's message and sword to the new Ayudhyan monarch.

At the same time, Asurapak cavorted through the heavens, indiscriminately flailing with his club every god, angel and hermit he encountered. One hermit promptly flew to Ayudhya to enlist Atchaban's assistance.

Atchaban ventured forth with angels to attack the renegade demon.

When Asurapak saw the forces arrayed against him, he challenged, "Why mass you against the favoured of Shiva?"

Atchaban replied, "Demon, you are no longer so favoured. You have an evil heart and have been condemned by the gods. Prepare to die at the hand of Atchaban of Ayudhya."

Confident of his strength, Asurapak recklessly attacked, and was felled by Atchaban's sword. The demon was mortally wounded. Atchaban decapitated the demon, and stuck Asurapak's head atop a pole for display before an Ayudhyan pleasure garden.

Atchaban returned to Ayudhya.

After befriending Atchaban, Maleewaka Brahma grew increasingly pious. One day he visited Mount Krailas and requested that Shiva permit him to reside on the celestial Mount Yod Fah, and bestow upon him the power of having everything he said come true.

Shiva perceived Maleewaka Brahma was honest and fair, and granted his request, bestowing upon him the name Maleewarat.

## Saha Maliwan Leaves the Underworld

Saha Maliwan hid in Badan for a considerable period of time. There he received news of the world above, and learned Saha Bodi Brahma had built Longka. Maliwan also discovered that Tada Brahma, his uncle, ruled the new city. Eventually, Maliwan summoned sufficient courage to venture forth and pay the Longkan monarch tribute.

Saha Maliwan travelled by his crystal chariot, Busabok Kaeo. The transparent and exquisite chariot needed no steed to pull it, and would travel wherever the rider wished, provided that person was not a widow. The chariot travelled from Badan, soaring over clouds, hills and forests, moving as swiftly as the wind.

Maliwan arrived in Longka, still fearing Vishnu, and informed Tada Brahma the god had been persecuting him, jealous of his power, hence

## Indra's Return

*During the reign of the Ayudhyan 'Tiger King', Sanphet VII (1703-1709), Siam was afflicted with terrible famine and drought.*

*Rice stocks neared exhaustion. Waterways either dried up or, like rivers encircling Ayudhya, became coated with an odiferous green slime. Fish died in their thousands. Those that remained were considered poisonous or inedible.*

*Sickness broke out. The king feared the consumption of polluted water would further the spread of disease, and forbade his subjects to drink it.*

*Ayudhyans who could obtain water from no other source grew restless, and threatened to rebel. Civil disobedience appeared imminent. It was claimed the god Indra had appeared at Ayudhya's city gates to declare the green scum covering the rivers was a pancea for all known diseases. Rumours spread like wildfire. Relieved Ayudhyans rushed to the rivers to annoint themselves with the scum and polluted water. Civil unrest was averted.*

*Fifteen days later, heavy rain fell. The countryside was inundated. Waterways burst their banks, flushing away scum and restoring former fertility to the land. Drought and famine ended. Diseases gradually disappeared.*

his self-imposed exile in Badan. Maliwan fawned and flattered the king by expressing eternal gratitude for having such a powerful regal ally.

Maliwan declined Tada Brahma's request he remain in Longka, and gave his uncle the crystal chariot before slipping back again into the underworld kingdom.

Shortly thereafter, Tada Brahma, several thousand years old, died. His four-armed, white-faced son, Lasatian, assumed the throne of Longka and ruled with his five beautiful queens.

Maleewarat, residing for the sake of eternal righteousness atop his celestial mountain, flew down to Longka. There he instructed his nephew, Lasatian, on matters pertaining to kingly virtues before returning to Heaven.

## Shiva Slays Treeburam

Treeburam, the demon ruler of Solot kingdom, was extremely powerful, and believed his power unrivalled. Were he to attain more power, he believed he could probably deal even with Vishnu. Obtaining more power necessitated receiving Shiva's assistance. Accordingly, Treeburam entered the forest where he meditated for seven years and seven days, sitting on water and encircled by magic fire.

Shiva became restless and looked down from Heaven. On seeing the meditating demon, Shiva rode the Bull King Usaparat to visit Treeburam. Shiva enquired why the demon had sat for so long within the fire. Treeburam joyfully knelt at Shiva's feet and requested supernatural powers, so that not even Vishnu could overpower him. Before bestowing such favours, Shiva made the demon promise to be righteous, and vow never to use such powers against celestial beings.



Treeburam agreed to such conditions, but subsequently succumbed to long-cherished lusts. He had frequently dreamed of the ecstasy of coupling with celestial maidens. Treeburam waylaid and thrashed angels escorting a particularly beautiful maiden, and debauched her. The precedent awakened a gargantuan appetite for further mayhem. Treeburam flew across galaxies, chasing, capturing and repeatedly raping celestial maidens. He left his despoiled victims weeping wretchedly before returning, exhausted, temporarily sated, to Solot.

Angels went to Mount Krailas to inform Shiva of the demon's callous cruelty. Shiva was angered, and promptly summoned Indra, Brahma and Vishnu to help him overcome the demon in whom he had vested such awesome power.

Shiva fashioned several special weapons. One, a mighty bow, was as heavy as a mountain. Shiva used the venom of Ananta Naga, the celestial Serpent King, as a bowstring, and Vishnu's strength for an arrow.

Shiva led a mighty army to Solot to fight Treeburam. Vishnu, Indra and Brahma were

Shiva's lieutenants. Rahu, the god of Eclipses, who had once attempted to swallow the moon, was Shiva's standard bearer. Other gods blew trumpets. The god of Fire brought up the rear.

Shiva failed to kill Treeburam with his mighty bow, for he had granted Treeburam's wish that Vishnu would never be able to overpower him. Shiva finally overcame the evil power inherent in his erroneous gift to the demon with the strongest weapon he possessed. Shiva opened a third eye on his forehead. Fire streamed out to engulf and destroy the depraved Treeburam.

Before returning with his victorious army to Heaven, Shiva deposited his mighty bow in the city of Mithala to protect the citizenry.

## Vishnu & Nontok

Shiva awarded Nontok, a green-faced demon, the task of washing angels' feet before they met Shiva on Mount Krailas.

Angels habitually teased Nontok with rough treatment, including plucking hairs from his head. Eventually, Nontok became totally bald. Nontok grew very frustrated, and asked Shiva to make his forefinger into a diamond with the magical power to kill anyone at whom the finger was pointed.

Shiva innocently granted Nontok his wish. Thereafter, whenever angels tormented Nontok by deliberately touching his head, or mockingly holding a mirror to his ugly face, Nontok would point his diamond finger to kill them. Eventually, Nontok used his magical powers indiscriminately. Soon the heavens were in turmoil.

Shiva summoned Vishnu to control Nontok. Vishnu transformed himself into an extraordinarily beautiful woman. Nontok noticed the adorable creature. He longingly admired her deportment, her

beauty, her soft and sinuous body.

When the woman drew near, Nontok asked, "Oh, beautiful maiden, from which part of Heaven comest thou? Aren't thou afraid of being harmed by male angels?"

The woman replied, "My name is Supanabsorn. I am a servant of Shiva. Whenever we daughters of Heaven meet someone, we fulfill that person's wish. We are dancers. Whosoever desires our friendship must follow us in dancing."

She began dancing for Nontok. Her graceful



movements enchanted the demon. Each displayed her body to the greatest advantage. Nontok clumsily imitated her, keenly anticipating subsequent pleasures.

When Supanabsorn pointed her fingers to her thighs, Nontok followed suit. Suddenly, he collapsed, legs broken by his diamond finger's magical powers.

Supanabsorn immediately transformed herself back into Vishnu, armed with a trident, a mace, a discus and a conch shell.

Nontok was shocked and scared to be thus defeated. He claimed that having merely two arms against Vishnu's four was disadvantageous, the major reason why Vishnu, along with his trickery, could triumph.

Vishnu angrily ordered Nontok's rebirth on Earth as a ten-faced, twenty-armed creature, adding, "I will be reborn as an ordinary human



being with merely two arms. Nevertheless, I will defeat and kill you!”

Vishnu then decapitated Nontok with his trident.

## Tosakanth Is Born

Lasatian of Longka had five wives who bore him many children. His consort, Ratchada, presented him with a son who had ten heads and twenty arms. Thus was Nontok reborn on Earth. The delighted parents named him Tosakanth. Shortly thereafter, another son, Khumpakan, was born.

Tosakanth thrived throughout adolescence and, when fully grown entered, as was the custom, the forest to seek magical powers. He encountered Khorbut, a seer and masterful magician, who was delighted and honoured to have a royal pupil. Tosakanth diligently mastered everything he was taught.

One day, Tosakanth innocently strayed into the pleasure gardens of the god Orachoon, who lived above Mount Djakrawan. Tosakanth picked fruit and flowers until the god arrived and

demanded to know why Tosakanth trespassed.

Tosakanth’s unnecessarily insolent answer provoked Orachoon into unleashing a magical snake arrow which coiled itself tightly around Tosakanth and elevated him high into the midst of a fearsome thunderstorm. Khorbut was alerted by the violent thunder and hurried to the garden where he pleaded for Tosakanth’s life.

Orachoon’s heart softened, and he released Tosakanth.

## Pipek’s Birth

In the meantime, Queen Ratchada had become pregnant again. Shiva saw that Tosakanth was becoming uncommonly evil and powerful, and decided her new child should become a future ally of Vishnu. Accordingly, he caused the demi-god Wesuyan to inhabit Ratchada’s womb.

When Ratchada gave birth, she named her new son Pipek. Shiva gave Tosakanth’s younger brother a magical crystal, enabling Pipek to foretell the future. Although Pipek possessed less magical power than Tosakanth, he was extremely wise.

Not long afterwards, a baby sister was born, and given the name Samanakha.

## A Hermit Conjures A Wife

The childless King Kodom ruled Sakot, a city state in Chompoo Taweep.

After appointing his queen regent, Kodom left Sakot to become a forest hermit. He lived in secluded poverty for thousands of years. His white beard became so long that eventually rice birds nested therein.

One day the hen bird occupied the nest while the cock bird flew in search of food. The cock came upon a fertile lotus pond where one lotus



was particularly large and beautiful. The bird alighted upon the flower, whereupon petals closed over him. The trapped bird was obliged to spend the night inside the lotus, and joyfully flew away, released when the petals opened at dawn.

On returning to his nest, the hen accused him of infidelity. The male bird protested such accusations were groundless, declaring, "Should I have lied, let the sins of this hermit become my burden."

Kodom exclaimed, "Bird, do you claim that after thousands of years of seclusion I am not pure, am not free of sins?"

"You are childless," the bird declared. "That is sinful, a sin and burden I truly fear."

Kodom felt belittled and immediately retired to the lake where he customarily performed ablutions. There he bathed and shaved off his ancient beard. Initiating a fiery ritual, he conjured up a truly beautiful woman whom he named Kala Adjana, Born of Fire. He immediately married her.

Soon Kala Adjana bore him a daughter named Sawaha, the Magic Word, who was as equally beautiful as her mother.

## Cuckolded By Celestials

Indra realised Tosakanth was becoming excessively powerful. Eventually, Vishnu would have to descend to Earth to combat such evil. Before that occurred, Vishnu would need allies. Indra looked down from Heaven and saw that Kodom was absent, gathering fruit for Kala Adjana. Indra decided to make Kala Adjana his wife in order to bear a son who would become one of Vishnu's allies. Accordingly, Indra descended to Earth and voiced such sweet words of seduction that Kala Adjana, enchanted by Indra's appearance, wholeheartedly succumbed to his amatory advances. Subsequently, Kala Adjana bore a green-faced son whom Kodom innocently accepted as his own.

Later, when Kala Adjana was playing with her son, the Sun god, Athit, passed by. Kala Adjana was smitten by his good looks. Kodom had entered the forest to gather berries. Aware of her feelings, Athit decided to sire another future ally for Vishnu. Thus for the second time, Kodom's wife was seduced and impregnated by a celestial

luminary. The second male child, as radiant as the sun, was also accepted by Kodom as his own.

## Betrayal & Transformations

One day, Kodom took his children to bathe. He carried the infant son in his arms, the first-born on his back. His daughter held his hand. She was openly jealous her brothers were carried while she walked.

"Your own child walks," she exclaimed. "Yet you carry strangers' children."

"What do you mean?" Kodom asked.

"Mother entertained male visitors while you were in the forest."

"I will throw all three of you into the water!" Kodom declared angrily. "My true child will emerge to stand before me. Others will become monkeys!"

After throwing everyone into the lake, only Sawaha stood before him. Kodom embraced his daughter. Two chattering monkeys leapt from branch to branch overhead.

Back at his dwelling, Kodom heartily cursed his wife.

"Whore! You couple with strangers! You will become stone! When Vishnu arrives to fight demons, he will use your body to bridge the ocean to Longka! You will sink to the ocean floor forever!"

Immediately the curse was voiced, Kala Adjana cursed her daughter for heartlessly betraying her, and declared that henceforth Sawaha would stand on one leg, open-mouthed atop Mount Djakrawan, there to eat only wind until giving birth to a monkey.

Both women were consigned to their respective fates.

## Celestial Assistance

Indra looked down upon Earth. Seeing a unique green-faced monkey, he recognised his own son. Athit also recognised his offspring in the shape of a radiant, red-faced monkey.

The gods co-operated in building their sons a monkey citadel named Khit Khin. The monarch would be Kakat, the senior green-faced monkey. Sukrib, the junior red-faced monkey, would be viceroy. Both fathers taught their sons the arts of magic before returning to Heaven.

The brothers ruled Khit Khin amicably. King Kakat had a powerful ally, Maha Chompoo, ruler of the neighbouring monkey kingdom of Chompoo. Maha Chompoo was childless. Shiva awarded him and his queen the black monkey, Nilapat, son of the god of Time, as their foster-child.

## Hanuman's Birth

Cursed by her own mother, Sawaha stood on one leg atop Mount Djakrawan, open-mouthed, eating only the wind until such time as she gave birth to a monkey.

Shiva saw her, and ordered the Wind god, Pai, to insert Shiva's celestial weapons inside Sawaha's mouth so that she might produce a mighty warrior to help Vishnu fight demons.

Shiva's jewelled club would form the monkey's spine, and permit him to levitate. The monkey's body would be moulded from Shiva's trident, his head from the diamond discus. The monkey would be able to exorcise the trident for combat purposes. The monkey would be able to fly, to attack demons, to accomplish all tasks assigned to him. And he would father many children by celestial maidens.



Pai transferred such power by inserting the weapons into Sawaha's mouth. Thirty months later, a monkey emerged from her mouth and flew to Heaven. The monkey had the physique of a mature teenage youth, and white fur that sparkled like diamonds. His teeth were jewels. He was able to inhale deeply and exhale moons and stars. Pai named him Hanuman and prepared to present him to Shiva.

Hanuman bade farewell to Sawaha. Before his departure, Hanuman's mother told him that only Vishnu's earthly reincarnation would be able to see his sparkling fur, and that Hanuman should immediately ally himself with that person.

Hanuman returned to Heaven where he leapt from Mount Krailas into the garden of Shiva's wife, the Matriarch goddess, Uma. Hanuman playfully snatched fruit from trees, and in so doing damaged branches and blossom. When Uma saw the destruction, she reduced Hanuman's strength

by half. Hanuman contritely begged forgiveness. Uma softened. She informed Hanuman that when Vishnu, in his earthly incarnation, stroked Hanuman from head to tail, his strength would be restored.

Hanuman was taken by Pai to Shiva, who admired the mighty monkey. Shiva granted Hanuman immortality, the ability to transform himself into other shapes and beings, and the power to make himself invisible. In the event he was killed in battle, Hanuman could be restored to life by having the wind blow over him.

Shiva summoned Kakat and Sukrib, informing them that Hanuman was to become their ward, and a prince of the monkey kingdom.

## Thunder & Lightning

Goddesses and angels cavorted among billowing clouds at the advent of the Rains Season. The goddess of Cloud and Water, Manee Mekhala, joined celebrations by dancing with a flashing diamond in her hands.

Ramasoon, the god of Thunder, whose might prevailed downwards from the sixth heaven all the way into Badan, lived in a cloud with a bow and arrow, and a jewelled thunder axe.

Ramasoon emerged from his cloud, intent on fun. He coveted Manee Mekhala's sparkling diamond, and attempted to snatch it away. Manee Mekhala playfully eluded him, throwing and catching her diamond through towering clouds.

Ramasoon pursued her, his booming axe cleaving a pathway through the clouds. He unleashed thunderclap after thunderclap in pursuit of her diamond. Lightning flashes became brighter, thunder louder, but still he could not catch her.

During his pursuit, Orachoon innocently crossed Ramasoon's path. The Thunder god

bellowed at his fellow celestial to stay clear. Orachoon was affronted. He declared himself free to travel wheresoever he wished, and capable of subduing Tosakanth, a ten-headed and twenty-armed creature. Orachoon opined Ramasoon, with only one head and two arms, would be well advised to exhibit some humility.

Ramasoon was incensed. He grabbed Orachoon's ankles and swung the god above his head like a sling-shot before hurling him headlong into the celestial Mount Sumaine. Impact killed Orachoon outright, and dislodged the towering mountain from its foundations.

Ramasoon resumed his pursuit of Manee Mekhala, but she had travelled far away, lightning flashes merely distant flickers.

Finally, Ramasoon abandoned his chase, and returned to his cloud as torrential rain lashed down.

## A Mountain Replaced & Sullied Rewards

Shiva summoned all the denizens of Heaven to help replace Mount Sumaine to its original position. Ananta Naga, the celestial Serpent King, coiled himself around the mountain while everyone pulled hard on his powerful body. Repeated efforts to shift the mountain proved futile.

Shiva summoned the monkeys, Kakat and Sukrib, to help. When gods and angels pulled Ananta Naga, the serpent was fully extended. Sukrib tickled the serpent's navel, whereupon Ananta Naga contracted violently, and the mountain moved. Kakat put his shoulder against the mountain, and helped return it to its true position.

Shiva rewarded the monkeys for their



assistance. He renamed Kakat as Pali Thirat, the Strong, and awarded him a trident and the magical power of absorbing to his own advantage half the strength of anyone he fought.

Shiva presented a heavenly maiden, Kaeo Dara, the Diamond Star, for Sukrib, and asked Pali to deliver the beautiful woman to his brother.

Vishnu anticipated mischief, and suggested Shiva protect the maiden until she was safely delivered to Sukrib. Pali was acutely embarrassed by Vishnu's suspicions, and vowed to deliver the maiden unsullied.

"Should I fail to do this," he declared, "let me die by one of your arrows."

Despite Pali's vow, Shiva had Kaeo Dara placed inside a crystal vial before giving her to Pali for delivery.

Pali flew back to Khit Khin. Before reaching the city, he rested at a certain spot. He loosened the vial stopper and was immediately captivated by the maiden's exceptional beauty. The longer he looked, the more lustful he became, tormented by promises he had made to safely deliver her to his

brother.

Finally, unable to contain mounting desire, Pali extracted the naked nymph from containment. With sweet words and tender actions, Pali deflowered Kaeo Dara, and in making her his wife, broke his promise to Vishnu and Shiva.

## Tosaroth's Birth

Atchaban contentedly ruled Ayudhya with his wife, Thepabsorn. The couple's happiness became complete when she delivered a son, Tosaroth, the future Ayudhyan monarch destined to become the father of Rama, Vishnu's earthly reincarnation.

## A Toad Transformed

Four hermits, Ananta, Wachira, Wisut and Maha Romasingh, lived in a simple hut in the Himapan forest for thirty thousand years. Five hundred cows living in adjacent thickets provided the holy men with milk. After nourishing themselves, the hermits gave whatever remained to a female toad.

One day, Anong, daughter of the Underworld's Snake King, passed by. Anong had transformed herself into a beautiful young woman and perpetually journeyed throughout the world seeking virile young men to satisfy her relentless passion. A scarcity of human beings made her grow increasingly frustrated. Anong saw a thick, strong field snake concealed in grass beside the hermits' hut. Anong promptly transformed herself back into her original form, and joyfully coupled with the snake before the eyes of the holy men.

The hermit Maha Romasingh opined her outrageous lechery, particularly with a common field snake, shameful and vile, and gently tapped her tail with a stick to remind her who she was.

When Anong ignored him, he struck her in the middle of her back. The chastened Anong immediately disengaged and fled back to the Underworld. Once her shame subsided, she feared news of her misdemeanour might reach her father. She decided to kill the hermits, and returned to Earth. She deliberately released deadly venom into the hermits' milk jar and slithered away.

The toad had witnessed her treachery. The toad decided to save her benefactors, and leapt inside the milk jar where she was swiftly killed by Anong's venom. When the hermits discovered the toad floating lifeless inside the jar, they were dismayed by the creature's apparent greed. They decided to restore the toad's life so that she might explain her behaviour. The revived toad duly informed them of Anong's treachery.

To reward the toad's sacrifice, the hermits transformed her into a beautiful woman, graced with a sympathetic nature. The woman possessed every physical characteristic of all the celestial queens. No celestial being was more beautiful or lovable. Montho was her name.

Since Montho was a mature woman, the hermits decided she could not remain with them. They presented her to Shiva, whom they knew would cherish and love her.

Thus Montho went to Heaven, where Shiva blessed her and presented her to his wife, the goddess Uma.

## Snakes & Demons Battle

Kala Naga, the black Serpent King of the Underworld, realised that demons around his city had become ominously strong. They were as numerous as serpents, and posed a genuine threat to Kala Naga's power. Kala Naga decided he had



## Garudas

*Of all the Ramakien's mythological creatures, the garuda remains the most visually ubiquitous in Thailand.*

*The half-bird, half-human steed of Vishnu has been the royal and national symbol since 1868. The garuda adorns the royal standard and sceptre, and numerous vehicles and vessels, including funeral chariots and escort barges in the royal barge fleet.*

*The garuda has been incorporated into the insignia of certain government ministries and departments, adorns government stationery, forms, invoices and receipts, the Thai passport, all Thai currency, and even the national lottery ticket.*

*Garudas are prominently visible in Buddhist temples, on regal architecture, and adorn banks, showrooms and buildings belonging to companies that have gained royal approval for rendering Thailand outstanding commercial and charitable services.*

to conquer the demons and destroy their evil influence before they gained ascendancy.

When the serpent army attacked, the demons fled. The demons greatly feared the snakes' fatal venom. The demon leader, Saha Maliwan, deplored their defeat. He knew the snakes feared only garudas, and that his friend, Lasatian, the ruler of Longka, possessed the magic bow, Witsanuwet, the arrows of which became garudas when released. Saha Maliwan sent a messenger to Longka requesting Lasatian's assistance.

Lasatian responded by leading a mighty army to assist demon brethren. The serpent army was simply overwhelmed. Kala Naga was struck by an arrow and disabled. He transformed himself into a seven-headed serpent. His eyes were as large as suns and emitted sparks that could burn Heaven. He attacked Lasatian. The Demon King fired arrows from Witsanuwet which turned into garudas as large as the god Brahma. The garudas seized Kala Naga's neck and brought the wriggling, screaming captive before the Demon King.

Lasatian thanked the garudas for capturing and subduing the snake whereupon Kala Naga transformed himself into a handsome young man and threw himself at Lasatian's feet. He pleaded for his life. He offered in return his beautiful daughter, Kala Akhee, the Black Fire. Lasatian accepted the proposed exchange, and permitted Kala Naga to return to his own city as the Serpent King.

## Tosakanth's Rise To Power

Lasatian returned triumphantly to Longka, and led Akhee, the most beautiful daughter of the Four Nether Regions, in a victory procession through the city gates.

In his palace, Lasatian presented the dark

beauty to his son, Tosakanth and, feeling death approach, informed Tosakanth, "You will reign as King of Longka. Akhee will be your wife. Her love is far greater than that offered by all the eighty-four thousand palace concubines."

Lasatian bequeathed other sons and daughters chariots, kingdoms or advantageous marriages, and assigned Pipek, the seer, and Khumpakan as advisers to their brother Tosakanth. Lasatian had ruled Longka for sixty thousand years. He summoned the Death god, Madjurit, and terminated his magnificent existence. Tosakanth was duly crowned, and after his coronation his kindred departed for their respective kingdoms.

The demon family gradually became a great power in the world.

Tosakanth assiduously courted increasingly more allies until the Earth inexorably fell under demon dominion.

## Tosakanth Straightens Mount Krailas

The demon Wiroonhok, who resided in Badan, commanded many soldiers. Seven times annually, he pledged allegiance to Shiva. Intending to swear anew such fealty, Wiroonhok climbed Mount Krailas where, unbeknown to him, Shiva slept, pledging allegiance during his ascent in stentorian tones.

A gecko named Sarapoo lived on the summit, and considered the demon's efforts somewhat ridiculous. Shiva slept, which meant, effectively, that Wiroonhok pledged allegiance to nobody. The lizard blithely responded, "Tok-ay, tok-ay" to each of Wiroonhok's vows.

Eventually, Wiroonhok realised that Shiva slept, and a lizard brazenly mocked him. The

demon hurled a gold chain at the reptile. Impact shredded the gecko and caused the mountain to tilt. Wiroonhok forswore future co-operation with any celestial, and angrily returned to Badan.

Shiva requested assistance in realigning the mountain. Several attempts ended in dismal failure. Finally, Tosakanth employed his immense magical powers to transform himself into Mount Sumaine. Thus disguised, Tosakanth gradually straightened Mount Krailas. The formidable display of magic and strength sent panicked celestials fleeing in every direction.

## Tosakanth's Reward

Shiva felt obliged to grant Tosakanth whatever favour he requested. The lustful Demon King asked for Uma, Shiva's beloved wife. Shiva pleaded Tosakanth change his request. Tosakanth remained adamant. Shiva felt obliged to comply, even though he knew Tosakanth would soon be forced to return Uma:

Tosakanth bodily lifted the goddess to carry her away, whereupon Uma rendered her entire being as if fire. Fearsomely intense heat forced Tosakanth to release her from his covetous embrace and carry her on his heads. By the time he reached Earth, he had ten excruciating headaches, and was obliged to set Uma onto the ground. Thus did Tosakanth lead the goddess through forests to Longka.

Vishnu had witnessed Shiva's sacrifice, and immediately descended to Longka where he transformed himself into an aged demon farmer. He deliberately created a plantation wherein he planted large trees upside down, exposing roots and trunks to the air.

On passing with Uma, Tosakanth scoffed at the

sight. "Old man, why do you plant trees so witlessly?"

The disguised Vishnu sniggered. "Such absurd questions! Your knowledge is that of a half-wit!"

"You risk your life, old man," angrily. "Are you claiming I am as stupid as you?"

Vishnu laughed mirthlessly. "Your woman will scorch your manhood. She will render you impotent. You will never father sons again. Is that wise?"

Tosakanth realised the old man was right. Uma's intense heat would render him as fruitless as any dead tree.

"Which woman should I have taken from Heaven?" he mused.

"Montho, the beautiful angel," Vishnu slyly suggested.

Tosakanth nodded thoughtfully, and promptly returned to Shiva with Uma, asking for Montho in exchange. Tosakanth's request was gladly granted.

Tosakanth was enchanted by Montho's rare and exquisite beauty, and held her cool body in twenty-armed embrace as he flew her back to Longka.

## Pali Intervenes

Pali noticed Tosakanth flying high above Khit Khin with an extraordinarily beautiful woman in his arms. Pali took his trident and flew to intercept Tosakanth.

"Ten heads! How dare you brazenly fly with a woman above my kingdom?"

"The sky belongs to everyone," Tosakanth replied. "I did not mean to step over a king's head, even if he is a common ape."

Pali bridled at the description. The son of Indra a common ape!



Pali brandished his trident. "The woman belongs to me," he growled, attempting to free Montho from Tosakanth's grip. The Demon King was a formidable opponent. He could embrace the woman with ten arms, and resist with ten others. But Pali was able to absorb half of Tosakanth's strength to his own advantage.

Tosakanth felt distressingly enfeebled as strength drained from him. He attempted to pursue Pali and his purloined bride, but could not catch them. Eventually, Tosakanth abandoned the chase and returned, downhearted, uncommonly dejected, to Longka.

Once Pali had installed Montho in his palace, he frankly admired her physical beauty, and enquired why she had been with the Demon King.

Montho replied that Shiva had presented her to Tosakanth. Pali brushed aside Montho's misgivings regarding remaining in Khit Khin, and with art, guile and magical powers overcame her every objection to seduce the innocent maiden, and make her his wife.

## Tosakanth Is Helped

In Longka, Tosakanth retired straight to his bedchamber, mourning both loss of manhood and

honour, and lamenting an ape had broken his heart.

Kala Akhee tried to comfort her husband. Tosakanth remained inconsolable. For seven months, night and day, Tosakanth thought solely of Montho. Pipek and Khumpakan were dismayed by their brother's sorrowful monomania, and summoned Khorbut to Longka, hoping the sage might somehow help.

Tosakanth briefly brightened at the presence of his hermit teacher, but soon relapsed into silent melancholy. Khorbut advised Tosakanth to enlist the assistance of Pali's former teacher, Angkot. Tosakanth did as Khorbut suggested. Pali's teacher was sympathetic. Tosakanth waited in Angkot's forest hut while he flew to Khit Khin to petition his erstwhile pupil.

Pali received Angkot warmly, but declined to release Montho, even after accepting his teacher's convincing arguments for her release. Montho was six months pregnant. Pali knew that if her child was born in Longka, Tosakanth would not hesitate to slay the monkey offspring.

Angkot assured Pali he could transfer the foetus from Montho's womb into a female goat, where it would continue to mature until the time of birth.

Pali summoned Montho to explain that Tosakanth sought her return, whereupon she lamented bitterly, "Why do you return me to the demon? Do you no longer love me? What of your promise to make me your queen? Nothing is more shameful than having two husbands. It would have been best never to have been born!"

She wept so wretchedly, she weakened and fainted. While Montho was unconscious, Angkot transferred the foetus from her womb to a female goat. Angkot healed the wound and erased the scar,

and any vestige of monkey contact by restoring Montho's virginity. When she woke, Montho was completely renewed.

Angkot escorted Montho back to his hut. Tosakanth was delighted by her return, and flew with her to Longka. Their subsequent marriage erased from Montho's memory any trace of her sojourn with Pali, and she became Tosakanth's devoted and loving wife.

## Another Defeat

Pali's son, conceived by Montho, and born of a goat, was named Ongkot. When Ongkot was ten years old, an auspicious bathing ceremony was arranged in the local river. Astrologers determined a propitious time and date. Hermits, seers and sorcerers duly sanctified the water. Tosakanth learned of forthcoming ceremonies in Khit Khin and immediately sought revenge. He believed that killing Ongkot would adequately compensate for former humiliations at Pali's hands. Tosakanth transformed himself into a monstrous crab with wickedly fearsome claws and concealed himself on the riverbed at the site of the ceremony.

Monkey guards noticed the giant crab when Ongkot entered the water with hermits. Pali seized the crab and dragged it free of the water, again absorbing half an opponent's strength to his own advantage. Tosakanth panicked and changed himself back into a demon. Tosakanth was tightly bound and rendered immobile while the auspicious ceremony was completed without further incident.

Thereafter, Tosakanth was led to Pali's palace in shame. Monkey soldiers beat the Demon King as punishment for harbouring ill intentions. Ongkot was permitted to parade Tosakanth around the palace, leading him like a tethered animal, or

servile pet, as jeering, scornful monkeys openly voiced the most wounding of insults. After seven days of beatings and merciless humiliations, Tosakanth was a sorry sight.

Eventually, Pali took pity and released him.

## Immortality Achieved

Tosakanth returned to Longka, humiliated and ashamed. He had become the laughing-stock of angels and monkeys alike. He desperately needed to assure himself of protection against further humiliation, and wished he could somehow make himself immortal.

His teacher, Khorbut, learned of Tosakanth's humiliation and promised his help. Khorbut took Tosakanth into the forest and initiated an esoteric ritual that lasted nine months, nine days and nine minutes, whereupon Tosakanth's heart slowly, magically, miraculously emerged from his chest.

Khorbut carefully placed the vital organ inside a glass container. With immortality, Tosakanth would be invincible in battle. Tosakanth pledged to honour his teacher, who would henceforth keep Tosakanth's heart in a safe place. The heart could never be kept near Tosakanth, for it would immediately re-enter his body to render the Demon King mortal again.

## Of Thievery & Tusks

Lasatian, Tosakanth's father, had bequeathed before his death the beautiful crystal chariot, Busabok Kaeo, to an older son, Kuperan, who used the magical vehicle to fly to Mount Krailas whenever he visited Shiva.

Tosakanth envied his brother's possession of

the exquisite chariot. Envy grew increasingly uncontrollable. One day, Tosakanth intercepted Kuperan as he returned from Mount Krailas to his own kingdom.

Kuperan was pleased to see his younger brother.

Tosakanth brusquely ignored fraternal greetings. "That chariot is mine," he declared. "The chariot and Longka are inseparable. Relinquish the chariot to your regal brother."

Kuperan was insulted. "Upstart! You should have respect for the eldest family member! You are evil of heart!"

Tosakanth responded by knocking Kuperan from the chariot with a jewelled club, and sending his brother in headlong flight back to Mount Krailas.

Shiva was in his garden, meditating on the back of an elephant. Kuperan's cries interrupted Shiva's reverie. Shiva saw the frightened Kuperan sprinting in ever-decreasing circles around the elephant, pursued by Tosakanth who gradually gained on his brother.

Shiva plucked a tusk from his elephant and hurled it like a javelin at Tosakanth. The tusk embedded itself in the Demon King's chest, protruding from back and front.

Shiva cursed Tosakanth. "The tusk will remain embedded in you until your death!"

Enduring great pain, Tosakanth returned in the crystal chariot to Longka. There he tried to extract the tusk. Tormented attempts, and those of accomplished magicians, proved futile. Pain could be relieved, but the tusk remained firmly in place. Finally, protruding ends were sawn off, and exit wounds covered with gold plates.

When Tosakanth was clothed, the wounds remained invisible to public view.



## Ronapak Is Born

Tosakanth's wounds soon healed. The Demon King disguised himself as the god Indra and chased angels, heavenly queens and celestial maidens through the clouds.

Tosakanth's absence became extended. Montho feared he had died and began to grieve. It was suggested she sit upon the Busabok Kaeo chariot. The vehicle would not ascend when carrying a widow. Montho was relieved Tosakanth survived when the chariot rose into the air with her on board.

In the meantime, Tosakanth had tired of airborne sport, and had dived into the ocean depths where he coupled with a fish. The union resulted in the golden mermaid, Supanamatcha. Then

Tosakanth entered the Himapan forest to pleasure a cow elephant who later delivered two strong sons. Finally, Tosakanth returned to his palace and impregnated Montho, who later bore him a son, Ronapak. Such was Tosakanth's rampant lust, and virility, that three thousand other wives also bore him sons.

Ronapak had a warlike face. He grew to become as arrogantly grasping as his father. When fifteen, Ronapak learned the magic arts from Tosakanth's teacher, the seer Khorbut. Khorbut loved Ronapak as a son, and taught him a special prayer to summon the gods Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu. Ronapak subsequently meditated for seven years, and received as favours from the gods three special arrows as weapons. From Shiva, in exchange for immortality, Ronapak received the ability to change himself into Indra.

Tosakanth realised Ronapak was destined for heroic feats, and created a powerful army for his son to attack Indra, the only god not to have left Heaven to grant favours. News reached the gods that demons would attack Indra. A celestial army assembled. Millions of angels, blowing horns and beating gongs and drums, marched forward to attack.

When Ronapak encountered the celestial army, he reviled the gods, particularly Indra, before attacking. Heavy slaughter occurred on both sides, until Ronapak released his awesome Serpent Arrow which sprayed deadly venom across the battlefield, and scattered the angel army in all directions.

Indra retaliated by hurling his diamond discus which turned into a firebrand encircling the demon leader. Ronapak swiftly fired another arrow into the clouds, whereupon torrential rain extinguished



the flames. Indra hurled his trident, which changed into a net enmeshing Ronapak's troops. Ronapak fired his third special arrow, which shredded the net and changed into more serpents expectorating deadly venom. Angels fled in terror. Indra saw himself being deserted by panicked troops and generals, and was obliged to abandon his weapons and chariot, and flee himself in frustration.

Ronapak was jubilant. He had triumphed. Tosakanth was delighted. He renamed his son Indrachit, which means 'Victor of Indra'.

## A Demon Reborn

One of Shiva's palace guards, a demon named Kontakan, innocently frightened a palace maiden.

Shiva punished Kontakan by ordering him reborn as a white buffalo named Torapa. It would be Torapa's fate to be killed by a male offspring, whereupon Kontakan would again become one of Shiva's palace guards.

Kontakan lacked the heart to protest what he viewed as overly harsh punishment, and began his new existence as a buffalo. He actually enjoyed his new life. He had many willing cows for wives and killed every bull calf he sired to prevent his prophesied death. The ploy worked until a pregnant cow hid from Torapa in a cave and secretly gave birth to a black buffalo, named Torapi, the instrument by which Torapa's predetermined fate would eventually be sealed.



## A New Underworld King

Saha Maliwan ruled Badan for ten million years. Eventually, he appointed his son, who adopted the name Sakayawong, to replace him.

Sakayawong's queen bore him a daughter, Piraguan, and a son, Maiyarab. The son became his parents' favourite. Once his father died, Maiyarab ruled Badan.

Sumet, a hermit living in Himapan forest, taught Maiyarab every conceivable magical art, particularly how to change his form, how to render himself invisible, and how to prepare a powerful sleeping potion that no living being could resist.

Sumet also wanted to make Maiyarab invulnerable. To that effect, the hermit exorcised

Maiyarab's soul from his body. Maiyarab's soul emerged from his mouth in the form of a green bee. The insect circled Maiyarab thrice before flying away to extract pollen from flowers. When the bee returned, Sumet caught it, and hid the insect in a secret place on Mount Treekoot.

## A Royal Marriage

Kaiyaket, who ruled a city of the same name, had a fifteen-year-old daughter, Kaiyakasee, whom he adored. She was of marriageable age, yet Kaiyaket rejected all suitors as being unfit or unworthy of his daughter's hand.

Kaiyaket learned that Atchaban of Ayudhya had an unmarried son named Tosaroth. Wishing

to form an alliance with Atchaban, Kaiyaket proposed their children wed. Atchaban sympathetically welcomed the proposal. Tosaroth was enchanted by Kaiyakasee. Once a suitable dowry was arranged, the couple married.

Atchaban was old, and decided to bequeath Ayudhya to Tosaroth. Shortly after the marriage, Atchaban entered the forest to spend his remaining years as a hermit. While travelling through the forest, Atchaban encountered a hunter carrying a live deer. Atchaban pitied the deer, and offered the hungry hunter his own flesh if he would release the animal.

The hunter accepted Atchaban's proposal and released the deer. Atchaban experienced no pain when the hunter began carving flesh from his body. By the time the hunter had finished, nothing remained. Atchaban was dead.

Shiva had witnessed Atchaban's selfless sacrifice, and arranged the compassionate king's reincarnation in Heaven.

## A Queen's Devotion

A lustful demon named Patootatan lived in a Himapan forest cave. Patootatan habitually debauched young females, and harboured grandiose schemes to overthrow Indra.

One day, he saw a comely young maiden among the clouds. Patootatan promptly chased her, felling angels during his pursuit. Some such angels informed Indra a demon had trespassed into Heaven. Indra reacted by immediately summoning Tosaroth of Ayudhya to confront Patootatan, armed with Indra's sword.

Tosaroth was accompanied by Queen Kaiyakasee, who insisted on remaining by her husband's side, when he approached the demon. When Patootatan saw a man approaching in a

chariot, accompanied by a beautiful woman, nascent lust began to simmer.

"Who are you?" he cried.

"Tosaroth of Ayudhya. Indra requests I slay you for your insolence."

"Little man!" derisively, ogling the beautiful woman. "You must be scared witless if you need your wife's support! I shall make her mine!"

Patootatan leapt belligerently onto Tosaroth's chariot. Tosaroth promptly leapt onto the demon's shoulder and struck him with Indra's sword. Patootatan hurled his club, which turned into leaping flames encircling the chariot. Tosaroth threw Indra's sword, which changed into rain extinguishing the fire. The sword shattered the club before returning to Tosaroth's hand.

The axle of Tosaroth's chariot snapped. Kaiyakasee held it together, enabling the vehicle to move. Devotion to her husband protected Kaiyakasee's person. Patootatan unleashed an arrow. Tosaroth hurled the sword again, shattering the arrow, and fatally cleaving the demon's chest.

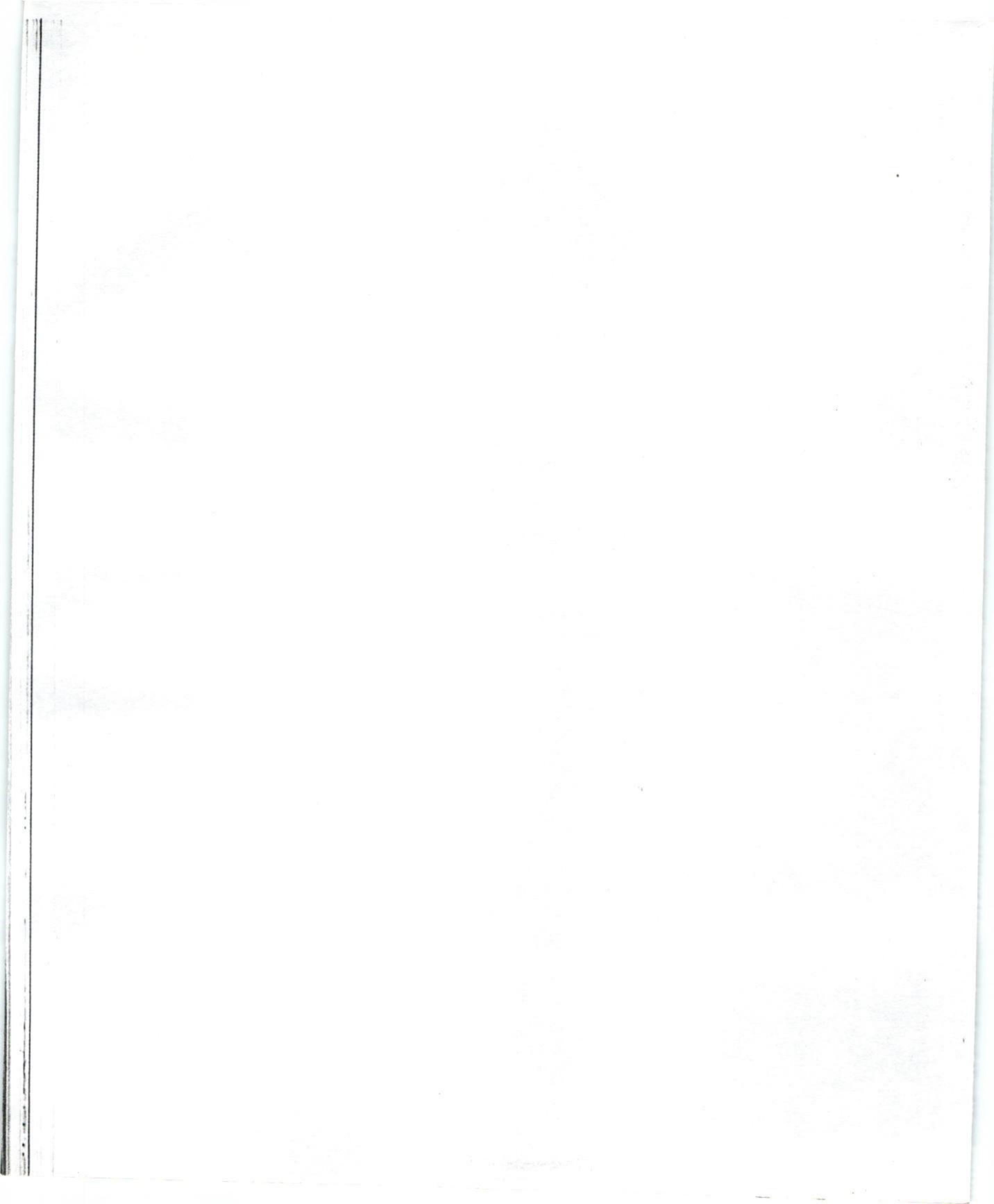
In gratitude for Kaiyakasee's selfless devotion, Tosaroth promised her any one wish of her choice, while jubilant angels rejoiced at the king's victory.

## Kalaikot Learns Something

Drought afflicted Romapatan kingdom for three years. King Romapat attempted to summon rain with magical incantations. Despite lengthy and complicated rituals, not a single cloud appeared in the perpetually blue and cruelly hot sky. A hunter learned of the king's quandry, and explained why the drought prevailed.

"The hermit Kalaikot is responsible. His magic and meditation are so powerful that he does

Part 2  
Rebirth, Marriage & Exile



## Vishnu's Reincarnation



**A**yudhya's King Tosaroth had three wives, Kaiyakasee, Kaosuriya and Samut Thevi. Each queen was childless. The situation was not conducive to contentment. One day, Tosaroth summoned all sages within his kingdom, and sought their advice regarding such disturbing infertility.

Unanimously, they advised him to consult their leader, the wisest sage of all, Kalaikot, who resided with his wife, Aroonawadee, in Romapatan kingdom. Tosaroth accepted their advice and in due course visited Kalaikot.

Subsequently, Kalaikot flew to Heaven where he suggested Shiva advantageously take the opportunity to arrange the reincarnation of Vishnu on Earth to subjugate the increasingly evil demons.

Shiva agreed, and despatched Indra with his angels to the Cosmic Ocean where Vishnu resided on the mighty Serpent King Ananta Naga's coiled back. The god, Phra Sri, resided on Vishnu's left side. Lakshmi, Vishnu's wife and the goddess of

Fortune, resided on Vishnu's right side.

Vishnu declared himself willing to fight the demons.

"The world is troubled," Shiva informed him. "Demons brazenly oppose everything of value. You will be reborn in Ayudhya as Tosaroth's son. Henceforth, the royal family of Ayudhya will become your own."

Vishnu voiced his own requirements.

"I want Lakshmi reborn on Earth as my wife. I need my club and discus for protection. Moreover, I wish Ananta Naga be reborn as my brother, Lakshman."

Shiva agreed.

"You will be reborn as Rama in Ayudhya. At the same time, Lakshmi will be reborn in Longka, as the Demon King Tosakanth's daughter, Sita."

Several gods and celestial beings volunteered to be Vishnu's soldiers on Earth. Shiva promised that, among others, his own son, and the Elephant god, the Comet god, the Forest, Ocean, Moon and Fire gods, the gods of the planets Mars, Saturn,

Venus, Jupiter and Mercury, would be reborn on Earth as monkey generals. Shiva arranged that should any be slain in battle, they would be restored to life whenever the wind blew over them.

Shiva taught Kalaikot a special incantation, saying its ceremonial recitation in Ayudhya would produce a flame. The flame would become a demon bearing atop his head a tray containing four portions of magic rice. The demon Crow Queen, Ka Kanasoon, would steal a half portion of the magic rice for Tosakanth's Queen Montho to consume, enabling Sita to be born. The remaining rice, consumed by Tosaroth's queens, would become Tosaroth's sons.

Kalaikot returned to Ayudhya where he informed Tosaroth of Shiva's plans. The special incantation was ceremoniously recited. Magic rice duly appeared. As Shiva had prophesied, part of it was stolen for Tosakanth's Queen Montho -- who had smelled the ambrosial concoction even while in Longka, and immediately craved some -- by the demon Crow Queen Ka Kanasoon. Actions preordained, the Ayudhyan and Longkan queens each duly ate their allotted portions of the magic rice.

Subsequently, Tosaroth's three wives became pregnant. Vishnu found new life in Kaosuriya's womb. His diamond discus assumed new form inside Kaiyakasee. And Samut Thevi bore the former Serpent King and the jewelled club.

When the time of birth arrived, Indra sent his four wives to assist. Tosaroth's queens effortlessly delivered their powerful offspring. The firstborn, Rama, had a green face. Bhrot, the diamond discus, had a scarlet face. The twins, Lakshman and Satrud, the jewelled club, had gold and purple faces respectively.

## Sita's Birth

At the precise moment the Ayudhyan queens went into labour, Tosakanth's wife, Montho, as preordained by Shiva, delivered a female child, Vishnu's reincarnated wife, Lakshmi, and henceforth known as Sita.

Scarcely had Sita entered the world when she cried, thrice, "Destroy the demon race!"

Tosakanth asked his brother, Pipek, to cast a horoscope for his new daughter. Pipek did as requested, and opined Sita would cause the demons misfortune, perhaps even catastrophe. Montho believed Pipek was merely jealous, but entertained doubts when another soothsayer duplicated Pipek's prophesy.

Tosakanth attempted to kill Sita on the spot, whereupon Montho interceded, shrieking, "You will have to kill me before you kill my daughter!"

Pipek suggested Sita be placed inside a crystal casket. Tosakanth agreed, and had a courtier float the casket away downstream on a river, an ancient practice meant to do away with evil.

The casket may have eventually sunk and drowned its occupant but for a lotus that rose beneath the receptacle to keep it afloat. Schools of fish escorted the lotus-borne casket until it floated past a hut where the hermit, Chanok, erstwhile king of Mithila, resided. Chanok plucked the casket from the water. Unable as a hermit to raise the beautiful child therein, Chanok placed Sita under the care of forest spirits, and buried the casket for safety.

## Adolescent Tuition

On reaching puberty, the four Ayudhyan princes, Rama, Lakshman, Bhrot and Satrud, were taught the arts of war before Tosaroth entrusted



Statue of a rishi in Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaeo

## Of Hermits & Brahmans

*Hermits feature prominently in the Ramayana and Ramakien as honoured teachers, sages, magicians, soothsayers, astrologers and the like.*

*Hermits are, in fact, synonymous with Brahmans, the most renowned and early of whom were rishis, forest-dwelling poets who composed songs praising the gods. Rishis were regarded as being divinely inspired. Many were sanctified after death and honoured in sacred literature, as was Vyasa in the Mahabharata, and Narada and Valmiki in the Ramayana.*

*During the millennia before Christ, mantras and hymns were composed, memorised and passed in oral transmission from generation to generation, and recited during religious ceremonial by priests skilled in sacrificial rites. Such men were spiritual guides and*

*philosophers, intimates of kings, noblemen, chieftains. Rishis were also seers who 'ensured' kingly successes in battle by performing mystic rites, and subsequently celebrated monarchic triumphs in song. Such was the genesis of legends, folk tales, and literary classics.*

*Gradually, an organised priesthood became established. Each clan or kingdom had its chief priest. Compositions of new songs and mantras ceased. Those extant were deemed sufficient for every purpose. Religious beliefs became systemised. Rituals grew increasingly complicated.*

*Once Brahmans became an hereditary profession, religious ceremonies could not be performed unless presided over by holy men. Sacrifices, the means by which man influenced and gained power over the gods, and magical control over the forces of nature, could be rendered futile by erroneous construction of altars, or the inappropriate selection of chants.*

*Such failures meant that demons hovering around such altars could intercept offerings intended for deities, and negate intended effects. Lengthy preparations were required for certain sacrifices. Altars were erected with mathematical precision. Stones were annointed and blessed. Offerings were made at appropriate stages to gods that provided protection.*

*A Brahman's life was divided into four parts. The first was childhood. The second was probation, when he entered a forest hermitage to serve a revered sage who became, effectively, his spiritual father. The third was marriage, when the Brahman raised a family*



Image of the god Brahma in Bangkok's Brahman temple

and performed duties expected of his caste. The fourth saw him abandon his comfortable home, after dividing his worldly possessions among his offspring, in the deerskin apparel of a hermit, and reside in lonely forests or Himalayan mountains.

In solitude, the Brahman devoted himself to ascetic practices. He performed severe penances, and single-mindedly contemplated spiritual problems. Some such men became respected teachers who instructed young acolytes, and composed sacred writings. India's forest hermitages were, in effect, ancient universities, repositories of the most valued knowledge.

Brahman studies advanced cultural development. Brahmans were responsible for introducing and developing alphabetical signs. Brahman scholars compiled the first Sanskrit grammar, and the art of composition. Brahman

sacrificial calculations, involving precise construction of altars, and the observance of ceremonies during appropriate seasons, inspired abstruse mathematical studies. Brahmans invented numerical figures that attained universal usage and gave the world Algebra.

Brahman hermits included great thinkers who inspired Indian metaphysical thought, and became synonymous with noble, contemplative lives beside clearly flowing rivers.

Gradually, Brahmans gained intellectual ascendancy. By making themselves indispensable for religious rituals, they were able to impose their will over kings and nobles. The holy men were no longer the humble servants of wealthy patrons, but had attained paramouncy over fellow men and, effectively, even over the gods, for only when Brahmans deigned to act as intermediaries could men and deities communicate.

Brahmans extended extraordinary control over daily Indian life with magic spells and metrical charms in which spirits were invoked for assistance. Lovers were charmed for success. Warriors were charmed for protection against spells. Cattle and sheep were charmed against wild beasts. Houses were charmed against evil spirits and demons. Greedy demons of disease were exorcised from sick bodies with sacred incantations.

Gradually, Brahmans became not merely priests and doctors, but magicians and seers, and wielded extraordinary influence on the past, present and future.

They would wield similarly extraordinary influence when they travelled abroad, mainly by determining the rituals, trappings and tenor of Southeast Asian royal courts.

them to the tutelage of two particularly wise hermits, Wasit and Wiswamit.

The hermits took the princes into the forest and imparted their knowledge, esoteric and otherwise, and largely in the form of archery and magical spells. Once their studies were complete, Shiva sent the four princes each a bow with three magical arrows. Such weapons would enable them to triumph over demons and giants.

Each arrow had magical properties regarding distance of flight, destinations or transformation. Satrud's three arrows, for example, could become, respectively, a violent storm, heavy rainfall and fire. One of Lakshman's arrows multiplied thousandfold by thousandfold during flight. Every one of the magical arrows would return to its rightful owner after use.

When the princes returned home, Tosaroth permitted each to sit on Ayudhya's golden throne, confident his four sons were now the world's mightiest warriors.

King Kaiyaket learned his grandson, Bhrot, had become a great archer, and requested Tosaroth send him to live in Kaiyaket. The king was already advanced in years, and would never sire a son of his own.

Bhrot took leave of his parents, Tosaroth and Kaiyakasee, to travel to Kaiyaket with his brother, Satrud, while Rama and Lakshman remained in Ayudhya.

## Tosakanth Incites Attack

Tosakanth feared human hermits were developing too many supernatural powers. Already hermits could levitate, fly through the air and summon celestial weapons. Their powers needed curbing before they became a threat to the demons.

Tosakanth commissioned the evil Crow Queen, Ka Kanason, to raid Ayudhya and deal with the hermits. The sky darkened as crows followed Ka Kanason in assault. Forest animals sought refuge as, with sharp claws and beaks, crows systematically destroyed hermit huts, and tore the beards and hair of panicked inhabitants. Hermits scattered in every direction. The jubilant crows returned to Longka.

Wasit and Wiswamit enlisted the help of their former royal pupils. Rama and Lakshman were simply delighted to have the opportunity to fight demons, and cleverly concealed themselves in forest surrounding the shattered huts, awaiting further onslaught.

Later, the crows attacked for a second time. Rama and Lakshman unleashed their magic arrows, whereupon many crows transformed themselves into demons. Great numbers were slaughtered. Ka Kanason was furious and screeched with such terrifying volume her distress was heard in Himapan forest. She personally attacked the brothers, attempting to tear them into little pieces.

Rama shot her through the heart, whereupon she doubled into a knot and fell dead to the ground.

## Flying Horses Attack

The few surviving crows informed Ka Kanason's sons, the demons Swahu and Mareet, of their mother's fate. Swahu and Mareet swore instant revenge, and left Longka with four thousand flying horses. Hoofbeats thundered ominously throughout the world, cannonading between mountains and echoing across the skies.

Swahu and Mareet gathered their horses above the spot where their mother had perished. On

seeing Rama and Lakshman far below, the brothers drove their horses forward, intent on trampling the tiny princes to death.

Royal arrows felled many of the horses before Rama and Lakshman launched their own assault. Every one of the horses was killed. Swahu and Mareet conjured magic fire, but Rama transformed himself into the four-armed Vishnu and shot Swahu dead with one of his magic arrows.

On witnessing his brother's death, the terrified Mareet fled to Longka, while angels and hermits joyfully celebrated another demon defeat.

## Chanok Returns Home

Chanok meditated for many years. Enlightenment proved wholly elusive. Finally, he wearied of forest existence, and thought longingly of his childless yet beloved queen, Ratanamane, of home, of Mithila kingdom, of return.

Chanok remembered the buried casket containing Sita and arranged for the ground to be ploughed in order to locate the sixteen-year-old woman.

With the assistance of Shiva's bull, Usaparat, the casket was uncovered. When Chanok opened the receptacle, the most beautiful maiden in the Three Worlds emerged. Chanok decided to present Sita as his daughter to his queen.

Chanok donned regal attire and, with Sita beside him, returned to Mithila in his chariot. Queen Ratanamane wept with joy at her husband's return, accompanied by such a beautiful daughter.

## The Great Bow Contest

Of sweet and modest disposition, Sita matured until such time as Chanok decided she should wed.

Chanok ordered court astrologers to determine an auspicious day for choosing a worthy husband.

Chanok possessed Shiva's great bow, deposited in Mithila by the god after he had slain the ambitious demon, Treeburam. Chanok decided that whosoever could lift the great bow would be awarded Sita's hand in marriage.

The king sent envoys to one hundred and one cities, inviting bachelors of royal ancestry to compete in a Great Bow Lifting Contest. Whosoever won would be awarded "the most beautiful woman in the Universe" as his bride.

Princes arrived in Mithila by the hundreds, accompanied by colourful retinues, including warriors and hermit teachers. Rama and Lakshman were among the many who attended. The brothers were accompanied by their former teachers, Wiswamit and Wasit.

On entering the city, Rama noticed an exceptionally beautiful woman seated at a palace window. When their eyes fleetingly met, they immediately fell in love with one another. Thus did Rama and Sita, destined to marry, first meet on Earth.

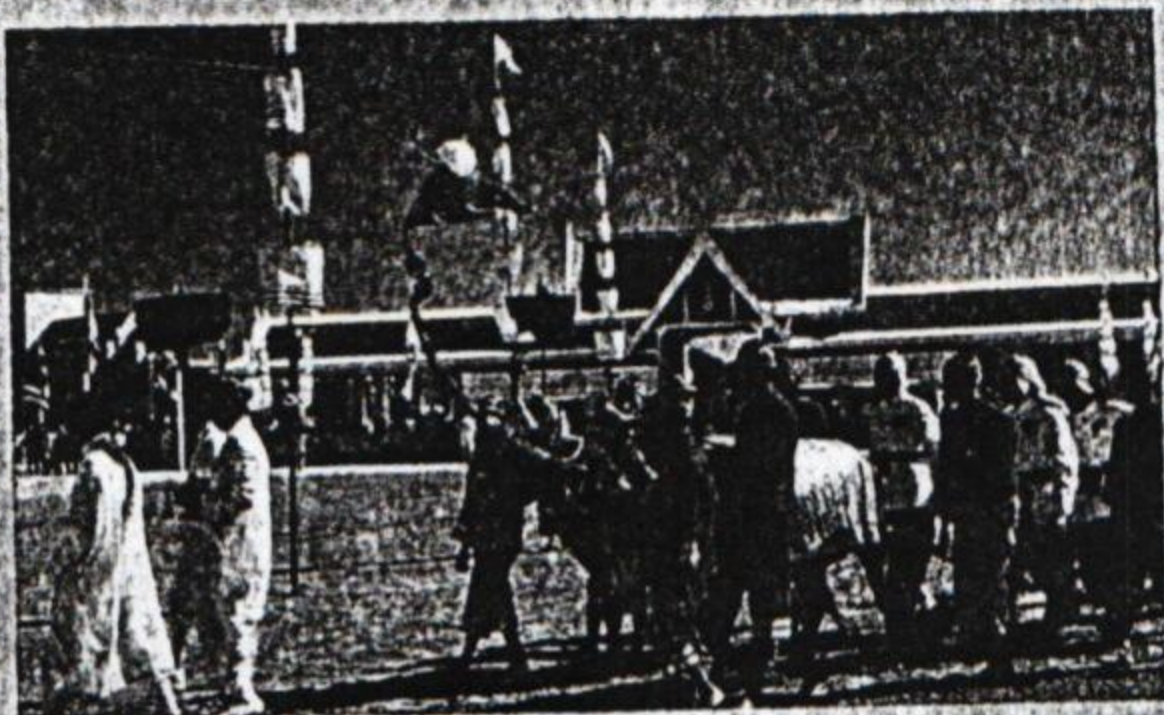
Rama was the sole contestant to lift the Great Bow. The weapon was as heavy as a mountain, and only someone of celestial origin and exceptional virtue could handle it with ease.

Heaven celebrated Rama's momentous victory with thunder and lightning, momentarily turning day into night before the sun shone anew with enhanced brilliance.

## Marriage

Chanok immediately initiated wedding preparations, and sent envoys to inform Tosaroth in Ayudhya that his son, Rama, had won his daughter's

Brahmans participate in Bangkok's annual Royal Ploughing Ceremony, presided over by H.M. the King each May. The Brahmanic rite symbolises the attention Indra and Vishnu (represented by the King) give to the official beginning of the annual rice-planting season.



## Court Brahmins

Even though devoted Buddhists, Ayudhyan monarchs embraced the Brahman concept of divine kingship. Upon coronation, they were invested with the trappings of Brahman ritual, and retitled with the names of Hindu gods. As previously mentioned, Ayudhya's founder, Ramathipodi, derived his name from Rama, hero of the Ramayana, and the god Vishnu's earthly incarnation.

Brahmins, the highest caste Hindus, were an hereditary aristocracy who concerned themselves with sacred ceremonies, cosmology, esoteric treatises and sublime speculation. Brahmins regarded kingship as the logical reward for spiritually-exalted previous existences. The concept was eagerly embraced by Khmer courts in Angkor. Khmer monarchs found Brahmins indispensable as sources of

legitimation. Ayudhyan monarchs shared the same view. King Ramathipodi imported eight Brahmins from the Hindu holy city of Benares specifically to preside over and legitimise his coronation. Their descendants conduct various ceremonies for the Thai royal court today.

Throughout the Ayudhya period, court Brahmins concerned themselves with every aspect of royal existence, from birth to death. Brahmins presided over coronations, royal tonsures, and the oath of allegiance undertaken by all officials. Brahmins presided over royal weddings and funerals. Brahmins determined with astrological calculations and horoscopes auspicious times for royal travel, royal ceremonies and state undertakings such as battles and constructing forts or temples. Brahmins analysed royal dreams, and interpreted omens such as abnormal congregations of wild animals or birds. Brahmins predicted victory, or defeat, in warfare, and even the vagaries of weather regarding agricultural fertility.

Ostensibly invaluable, the Brahmins increasingly existed solely on the sufferance of staunchly Buddhist kings who retained the priests, largely to lend themselves stature, mystique and dignity, qualities consolidating the authority vital to maintaining oftentimes precarious positions. King Narai was probably the last Ayudhyan monarch to favour Brahmins. Narai's successors identified themselves more closely with monarchs mentioned in Buddhist jatakas (birth stories). By the time Ayudhya fell to the Burmese in 1767, Brahmins were essentially court functionaries lacking any real power.

hand in marriage.

Tosaroth had not seen Rama or Lakshman since they left home to battle crows and flying horses. He was pleased to learn of Rama's triumph and good fortune, and summoned Bhrot and Satrud to return forthwith to Ayudhya.

Once the family was complete, Tosaroth led his queens and sons with a mighty retinue to Mithila for Rama's wedding. Celebrations were attended by numerous royals and celestials, including Indra, his consort, Suchada, and angelic hosts. There was particular joy in Heaven that Vishnu and Lakshmi were at last reunited as man and wife on Earth.

After ceremonial bathing, and appropriate rites, the young newlyweds were led to a specially constructed diamond palace. There Rama and Sita consummated their earthly marriage with abiding tenderness and eternal love.

## Ramasoon's Bow

Rama and Sita accompanied Tosaroth when he led his family back to Ayudhya. Chanok and Ratanamane gave the couple their blessings before the journey. Sita's foster-parents watched until the regal retinue disappeared from sight before pledging each other eternal love.

During the journey through wild forest, a bird alighted on Tosaroth's standard, and pecked at it before flying away. Tosaroth recognised the incident as a troublesome omen, and doubled his guard.

Shortly thereafter, Ramasoon thundered throughout the Three Worlds. He emerged from his celestial abode, intent on sport with humans. Tosaroth's retinue was the largest of visible targets. Ramasoon descended to obstructively arrest

Tosaroth's progress through Mithilan forest.

Thunder roared as he demanded to know who led the party. Ramasoon claimed they trespassed on his domain, whereupon one of Tosaroth's lieutenants demanded safe passage for Rama and his new bride.

Ramasoon promptly challenged Rama. "Where goest thou, midget, with thine wife?"

"I am Vishnu," calmly. "I reside on Earth solely to slay demons."

Ramasoon scoffingly dismissed the claim. "And I am Ramasoon," contemptuously. "I have come from Heaven to kill killers."

Ramasoon leapt heavenwards, invisible among thunder and swirling clouds, preparing to attack.

Sita pleaded with Rama to eschew conflict, but desisted when Tosaroth opined the confrontation divinely preordained.

Rama prepared an arrow, and waited for sight of Ramasoon. He fired at the briefest glimpse. The arrow instantly became a diamond discus spinning into the clouds. It missed its target, but a second arrow smashed Ramasoon's jewelled thunder axe.

Angrily, Ramasoon leapt into Rama's chariot, intending to wrestle the human into submission. Rama resisted, and inflicted terrible punishment. When Ramasoon saw Rama's four arms, he realised his opponent was indeed Vishnu, and that he had committed a grievous error. Ramasoon immediately fell to his knees and begged for his life.

Rama declared, "I spare you. But you are never to torment animals or men ever again."

"I promise," contritely. "Please accept my bow as proof of my promise."

Rama accepted the token, and summoned the Rain god, Piroon, to safeguard the bow until Rama

had use for it.

Rama hurled the bow high through the clouds before resuming the journey to Ayudhya with Sita and his family. The journey was completed without further incident.

On reaching Ayudhya, Bhrot and Satrud travelled onward to Kaiyaket.

## A Prophecy Fulfilled

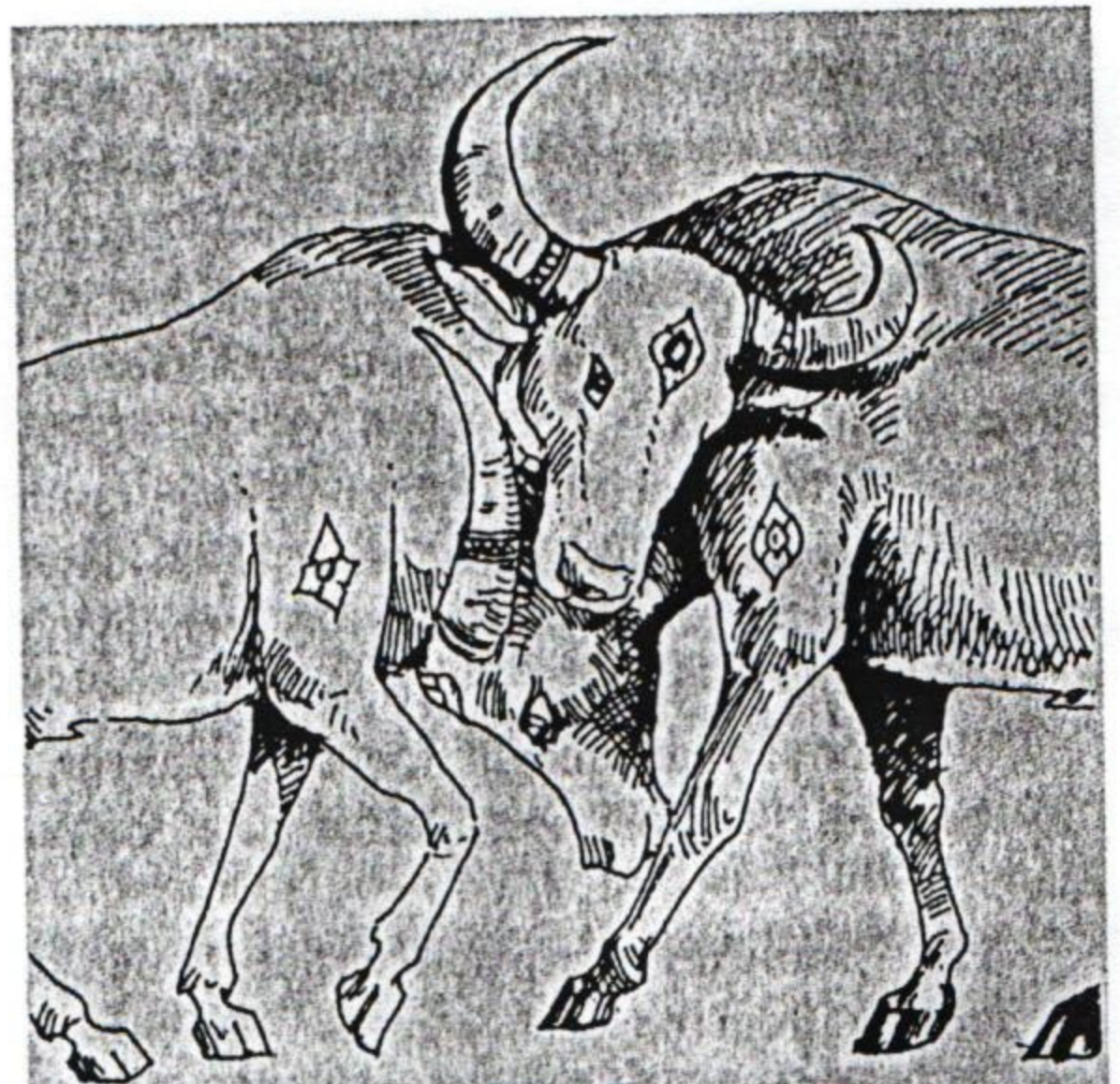
Torapi, the black buffalo destined to kill his father, Torapa, lived in a cave under the watchful protection of six guardian spirits arranged by his mother. One day, Torapi emerged from his cave to check the size of his footprint against that of Torapa. He discovered their footprints were of equal size, and immediately challenged his black-hearted father to fight.

Torapi waited until Torapa had exhausted himself with futile charges before using his horns to slit open his father's belly, mortally wounding the hapless Torapa. Torapi immediately appropriated his father's five thousand cows as his own wives. Extremely proud of his victory, and conceitedly wishing to rule the Earth, Torapi challenged all jungle and mountain spirits, the Oceanic god, Samut, and Shiva.

Shiva was exceedingly angry, and suggested Torapi fight Pali, the monkey king of Khit Khin, to prove himself a worthy opponent. Torapi immediately challenged the monkey monarch. The two combatants fought savagely for almost one day, but neither triumphed. Pali persuaded Torapi to fight with him the following day in Surakan cave. Torapi agreed.

## Sukrib's Exile

Pali informed his brother, Sukrib, of the



## Popular Sayings 1

*Spoken Thai is peppered with literary allusions that lend the language much of its expressive colour. Many such sayings are connected with the Ramakien.*

*Two sayings are related to the episode in which the young buffalo, Torapi, killed his father, Torapa. 'To measure the hoofprints' means to be contemptuous of one's parents, as when Torapi measured his hoof against Torapa's hoofprint, impatient to kill his father once he was fully grown.*

*Similarly, a child described as 'being like Torapi' is considered to be someone with no regard for his or her parents, someone who might kill them without qualms.*

forthcoming fight, and told him to patiently await the outcome. Were Pali not to reappear within seven days, Sukrib should take soldiers to observe any blood. Concentrated blood would be buffalo blood. Light blood would be monkey blood. On discovering the latter, Sukrib was to block the cave entrance with rocks.

The following morning, Pali and Torapi again engaged in inconclusive battle. After seven days, Pali realised he could win only by employing subterfuge.

"You derive your strength from spirit sources," Pali declared. "It is not possible for me to defeat you."

"Hah!" snorted the arrogant buffalo. "I derive my strength from no such sources. My power, monkey, comes solely from my horns."

With those words, Torapi sealed his fate. Guardian spirits angrily deserted him, belittled by his arrogance, furious they had protected him for so long without either gratitude or respect.

Pali watched the spirits depart, elated his ploy had worked. Shortly thereafter, absorbing half of Torapi's strength, he felled the buffalo with a mighty blow and struck him dead.

The Rain god, Piroon, celebrated Pali's victory with refreshing rainfall. Sukrib saw light blood emerging from the cave, actually buffalo's blood diluted by rain, and erroneously believed his brother had been killed. After mourning Pali's demise, Sukrib had soldiers block the cave entrance with rocks, in accordance with Pali's stated wishes.

Pali indignantly discovered the cave entrance blocked, and suspected Sukrib of treachery. Denied exit, Pali decapitated Torapi and hurled the buffalo's head at the blocked entrance. Rocks scattered,



enabling Pali to emerge.

Back in his palace, Pali accused Sukrib of coveting his throne before exiling his innocent brother. Sukrib was obliged to wander far away, contemplating injustices that had apparently originated when Pali purloined Sukrib's intended bride, Kaeo Dara.

Eventually, Sukrib encountered his nephew, the white monkey, Hanuman. Sukrib related what had happened. Hanuman was sympathetic and promised to help his uncle. He left Sukrib practising penances in the forest, austerities that would considerably strengthen the monkey's magical powers.

## Torapi's Rebirth

Torapi was soon reborn. Before long, he occupied the womb of Ratchadasoon, wife of Korn, one of Tosakanth's numerous brothers. At birth, the newest nephew of the Demon King was named Mangkornkan. Subsequently, Mangkornkan had a brother named Saeng Athit.

## Rama's Exile

Tosaroth wanted to abdicate, and have Rama succeed him. He initiated plans for Rama's coronation. However, Queen Kaiyakasee learned of Tosaroth's plans from a vindictive maidservant who, years earlier, had been the victim of one of Rama's childish pranks.

Kaiyakasee reminded Tosaroth that he owed her a wish, that he had promised he would grant her whatsoever she desired after defeating the lustful demon, Patootatan. Kaiyakasee persuaded the king to allow her son, Bhrot, to rule Ayudhya before Rama whom, she suggested, be exiled into the forest for fourteen years before inheriting the throne. Tosaroth felt obliged to honour his promise, and reluctantly agreed.

On being informed of what had transpired, Rama expressed his gratitude.

"Thus shall I have fourteen years in which to fight demons. The time shall pass as but the winking of an eye."

Sita and Lakshman elected to accompany Rama into exile. When they left the palace, and Ayudhya, Tosaroth felt bereft and heartbroken. He deliberately accelerated his death by holding his breath, whereupon Madjurat, the Death god, carried Tosaroth back to Heaven.

## The Forest Journey

Rama, Sita and Lakshman journeyed by foot through dense forest until reaching a broad river. A party of hunters led by a man named Khukan encountered the trio and fed them before boating them across the waterway. Khukan volunteered his services to Rama, who gratefully declined, declaring he wished to travel to Ayudhya's borders as quickly as possible.

The hunters escorted the royals to the hut of the hermit, Phra Thawat, before parting company. From there, the trio travelled onward until reaching yet another hermit's hut. The sage, Surapong, directed them to a trail on the seven-peaked Mount Satakoot where a hut awaited weary travellers seeking refuge and rest.

Grateful for the hermit's directions, Rama, Sita and Lakshman continued their journey, leaving Ayudhya far behind.

## Tosaroth's Funeral

Bhrot and Satrud heard that Rama would become king of Ayudhya, and asked King Kaiyaket for permission to attend their brother's coronation.

On entering Ayudhya, they wondered why the city was so uncharacteristically silent and deserted. In due course, they learned of Tosaroth's death, and the cause, and immediately visited the royal funeral pavilion to pay their last respects. Both brothers prayed for their father.

Queen Kaiyakasee learned of Bhrot's return, and hurriedly left the palace to see her son. She located him praying at his father's bier, and chastised him for not having visited her first.

Bhrot would have struck his mother, but for Satrud's timely intervention. Subsequently, Tosaroth's funeral was completed with appropriate ceremonial, after which Bhrot and Satrud left Ayudhya in pursuit of Rama, hoping to persuade their brother to return to the capital to accept his rightful inheritance.

With the willing assistance of the hunter, Khukan, and hermits, they were able to locate their exiled kinfolk. Rama mourned his father's death, but steadfastly declined their entreaties to return

to Ayudhya. Rama claimed it was divine intention, and in accordance with Tosaroth's wishes, that he spend fourteen years in exile specifically to destroy demons.

Bhrot and Satrud realised Rama was adamant, and returned to Ayudhya in accordance with his wishes.

## Conflict

Sita claimed knowledge of a place where they might reside in peace, prompting the three royals to travel onwards to the broad Amarut River. There an angel, Sai Tawet, tended the fig trees of the gods. Sai Tawet provided a golden sampan to ferry them across the river.

On reaching the far bank, Rama, Sita and Lakshman entered the kingdom of the demon, Pirap, an habitual despoiler of celestial maidens. Shiva had awarded the demon the power of oceans and the might of fire. Pirap had created a large lake and extensive gardens into which Rama and his companions now ventured.

Many tame animals cavorted among verdant trees and shrubs. Golden trees bore ambrosial fruits that were gathered daily. The brothers picked a golden apple for Sita. No sooner had she bitten into the succulent fruit than a garden watchman appeared, angrily berating them.

"Why do you steal our fruit?" belligerently.

"We thought this a public garden," Rama replied. "We eat in the manner of hermits -- suffice to still hunger and no more."

"A poor excuse," darkly.

Lakshman silenced the man by clubbing him to death before the trio moved on.

Pirap discovered the watchman's corpse and angrily sought those responsible. He discovered the

three royals sleeping peacefully in the shade of trees. Pirap challenged Rama, and seized the terrified Sita, flying away with her. Rama fired an arrow which forced Pirap to release Sita.

The demon howled, "Who dares attack the greatest and most feared in the Three Worlds?"

Rama responded by smashing Pirap with his club. Pirap retaliated by throwing massive boulders to crush the two brothers. Rama finally shot the demon dead with another arrow.

The royals continued their journey further from Ayudhya. At one point, they freed from eternal fire an angel cursed by Shiva. At another, they collected Shiva's golden armour from a forest hermit, before arriving at the Kotawaree River where Indra had erected two riverside huts for them.

## Lakshman Kills A Demon

Khumpakat, nephew of Tosakanth, and son of the Demon King's sister, Samanakha, was eager to acquire a mighty sword capable of quartering Heaven and Earth.

Khumpakat sat amid forest bamboo, chanting magical incantations, whereupon Brahma arrived to present a holy sword that might subjugate the Three Worlds. Khumpakat arrogantly demanded Brahma personally hand him the sword, specifically because he was Tosakanth's nephew. Such insolence angered Brahma, who embedded the sword in the forest floor where the demon chanted.

Lakshman, collecting fruit, saw the sword and pulled it free. Sunbeams reflected from the polished blade struck Khumpakat's eyelids. The demon opened his eyes, momentarily believing a god was presenting him with the sword.

Lakshman struck the demon dead with the



## Dramatisations

Two dramatic forms, the Khon masked drama, and the classic Nang Yai shadow play, date from the Ayudhya period and draw their storylines exclusively from the Ramakien.

Both forms are believed to have originated in Ayudhya's royal courts. Neither remain particularly popular. Indeed, Nang Yai is very rarely staged, and is virtually extinct.

Shadow play probably originated in India, considerably more than two thousand years ago. Buddhist scriptures and the Mahabharata contain numerous allusions to shadow play. The shadow play was probably introduced to Thailand after having developed throughout Java and Malaya.

Historic sources indicate shadow play was performed frequently during the Ayudhya period. The earliest reliable evidence is a palace law dating from 1458.

Nang Yai performances entailed manipulation to musical and narrative accompaniment of large, intricately fashioned, two-dimensional cowhide figures before a brilliantly backlit white screen. The cowhide figures, some almost two metres in height, depicted major Ramakien characters, or entire scenes set within palaces or forests.

Male bearers of Nang Yai figures danced in accordance with the characters of figures or scenes depicted. Action was frequently strenuous to compensate for the figures' lack of moving parts. Movements were more often quick than slow, and sometimes involved somersaults or, during battle scenes, energetic jumps and collisions to simulate combat. Such handlers would strut arrogantly to depict warlike demons, or assume feminine mannerisms to depict graceful heroines.

Such movements purportedly influenced Khon choreography. Most actors in a Khon performance wear elaborate masks and lavishly embroidered costumes. Verse narration, dialogue and songs describing action are voiced by an offstage chorus that sits with a woodwind, gong and drum ensemble which produces sweet musical accompaniment to Khon actors' oftentimes vigorous movements.

Origins of the Khon masked drama are not clear. Some scholars believe the masked drama is derived from Indian temple rituals and dancing. Others believe the Khon evolved from the shadow play, costumed humans replacing two-dimensional leather shadow figures. Stiffly formalised action and profile presentation of Khon performers were viewed as conclusive evidence of such evolution.

Whatever their origins, both forms are believed to have evolved from the Brahman conviction that Hindu gods taught humans how to dance, specifically to be able to pay homage to such deities.

In those terms, both forms can be considered divinely inspired.



blade, and returned to Rama's hut to offer his brother the sword. Rama declined, since he had a powerful sword of his own.

The royal trio sat happily eating fruit, content in their new abode.

## Another Demon's Death

One day, Tosakanth went hunting in Longkan forests, and appointed his gigantic brother-in-law, Chiuha, the governor of Longka for seven days. Chiuha diligently guarded the city, but on the seventh day, weary, forgetful of Tosakanth's imminent return, decided to sleep. While he slept, Chiuha protectively covered Longka with his gigantic tongue.

On returning, Tosakanth could neither locate nor see his city, and feared enemies were in occupation. Tosakanth hurled his discus at the darkened sky, and innocently severed Chiuha's tongue. The demon bled profusely and literally drowned in his own blood.

Samanakha, Chiuha's widow, complained bitterly to her brother. "I am young. I have always enjoyed a man's company and love. Now I am denied such fundamental pleasures. It is imperative I find a new husband."

Tosakanth contritely acquiesced, whereupon Samanakha flew from Longka, across the ocean, seeking any male who would gratify her burgeoning physical desires.

## Rejection & Revenge

Samanakha's love-starved search for an obliging male led her to the bucolic environs of the River Kotawaree where the three royals resided.

In the golden light of dawn, as birds sang and butterflies danced, Rama went to fetch water. At her first glimpse of Rama, Samanakha's lust mounted with dizzying speed. The handsome man made her heart feel on fire.

"It cannot be Shiva," she thought to herself. "He would be wearing his special necklace. It cannot be Vishnu, for he does not have four hands. It cannot be Tada Brahma. He does not have four faces. The Sun god, Athit, is still among the clouds. The Moon god, Chandra, would not be seen here. It's probably an abdicated king living as a hermit."

Samanakha immediately transformed herself into a celestial maiden of exceptional beauty. She struggled to contain mounting passions. Appetite glazed her eyes. Her body felt inflamed with desire. Her full breasts felt as though they might burst. Her thighs quivered. Her entire being felt primed for the physical pleasures and ecstasies of lovemaking.

Trembling, she approached Rama who, surprised on seeing, unexpectedly, such a beautiful woman in such surroundings, immediately suspected her of being a demon. Rama asked her from whence she came, and why.

"I am Samanakha," melodiously. "My brother, Tosakanth, wishes me to marry a demon. I have declined, and come here for refuge. I will gladly remain here with you, and serve you forever."

Rama calmly declined the offer, and reproached Samanakha when, lasciviously, she



offered her ripe body and suggested they make love forthwith. Sexual hunger became hatred when Rama curtly abandoned her.

Samanakha followed Rama back to his hut, and for the first time saw Sita. Samanakha reluctantly acknowledged to herself that the other woman's beauty was incomparably greater than her own. Samanakha believed that if she could kill Sita, Rama might change his mind and succumb to her allure. Samanakha transformed herself back into a demon, and immediately assaulted Sita. Rama and Lakshman promptly came to Sita's rescue.

On seeing Lakshman, Samanakha's appetites reached breaking point. Suddenly, she craved not just Rama, but also the second man, and knew she could never be satisfied until both men were her husbands.

Rama struck Samanakha to the ground. Lakshman stood on her chest. Both brothers cut off Samanakha's hands and feet, and removed her ears, nose and lips.

Blood streamed from her wounds as Samanakha stumbled away through the forest, intent on summoning her brothers to exact revenge.

## More Demon Deaths

Samanakha's brother, Korn, ruled Romakan kingdom. When his bloodied, screeching sister described how Chiuha had been killed, and how, subsequently, wandering in the forest, two men had savagely beaten and wounded her for rejecting their sexual advances, his heart hardened.

Korn summoned warriors and immediately set out to avenge his sister. Rama heard the vanguard of Korn's party. When Korn magically encircled the riverside huts with fire, Rama unleashed an arrow whereby rainfall extinguished threatening flames.

Korn fired an arrow that broke Rama's bow. Rama immediately demanded the Rain god, Piroon, provide Ramasoon's bow, and with the new weapon completely destroyed Korn's chariot. Korn uprooted a tree and repeatedly charged Rama. Rama eluded him, and survived when Korn hurled a mountain. Finally, Rama unleashed his most powerful arrow to kill the demon. Angels in Heaven rejoiced and showered Rama with flowers.

Toot, another of Samanakha's brothers, attacked Rama. The demon rendered himself



invisible, but the sound of his horses' hooves betrayed his position. Rama fired at the sound, whereupon Toot escaped into a cloud. Rama fired a second arrow which separated Toot's head and limbs from his torso. Again angels rejoiced.

Yet another brother, the three-headed Tressian, attacked Rama, and suffered a similar fate. Demon corpses were strewn throughout the forest.

Samanakha learned of her brothers' fate and their warriors' deaths, and despondently returned to Longka, there to inform Tosakanth of her troubles and their mutual losses.

## Tosakanth's Temptation

On listening to Samanakha's tale, Tosakanth's ten heads projected anger and fury, while his twenty arms reached for weapons of war.

Samanakha claimed she had been bringing back to Longka a beautiful woman worthy of sitting at Tosakanth's side, and that bogus hermits had assaulted her near their huts.

Samanakha's descriptions of Sita's beauty aroused and excited her brother's philandering instincts. Tosakanth asked if Sita equalled in beauty his queen, Montho.

"There is nobody as beautiful as she."

"On Earth?"

"Throughout the Three Worlds."

"Even in Heaven?"

"Even there."

"The goddesses Uma and Lakshmi?"

"Nobody compares," emphatically.

His sister's tale awoke disturbing impulses. He simply coveted the beautiful and as-yet-unseen stranger. Tosakanth sought Montho's advice. Montho warned him against doing anything that might offend gods or humans.

That night, Tosakanth dreamed solely of the beautiful stranger. The following morning, Tosakanth summoned Mareet, surviving son of the Crow Queen Ka Kanason, and ordered his assistance during a "mission of significant importance."

## The Golden Deer

Tosakanth and Mareet flew by chariot to the Kotawaree River. There Tosakanth ordered Mareet to transform himself into a golden deer. Antlers were made of diamonds. The stunning creature resembled a celestial creation. Tosakanth imparted instructions before both demon and deer melted into adjacent forest.

Sita sat beside her hut with Rama and Lakshman. Suddenly, a golden deer jumped into a clearing before disappearing into nearby forest. The delightful creature could easily have come from a celestial pleasure garden.

Sita exclaimed, "That beautiful deer! How delightful! Please," addressing Rama, "catch him for me."

"No such animal exists naturally," Rama opined. "It must be a disguised demon."



“Please! I do so much want that golden deer!”

Against his better judgement, Rama left to pursue the deer, instructing Lakshman to remain with Sita.

The frightened Mareet had recognised Rama as the killer of his brother, Swahu, and lured Rama deeper into the forest, further and further away from the riverside huts. Rama grew impatient at being unable to capture the animal, and prepared an arrow to kill it. At least Sita could have its golden hide.

Rama fired. The arrow struck Mareet in the belly. The mortally wounded demon immediately screamed, “Lakshman, help me! The deer is a demon! I am wounded! Help!”

Mareet’s voice precisely duplicated Rama’s but Lakshman doubted it was really his brother

crying for help. Anyone who had destroyed so many demons was unlikely to have been bested by a disguised deer. The voice, like the deer, was probably counterfeit.

Sita, however, panicked. “I have senselessly sent my beloved to his death! Lakshman, please help! If he dies, I shall die of sorrow! Lakshman, please help!” urgently.

Lakshman was reluctant to leave Sita alone, yet her fears became contagious. She was genuinely distraught. Lakshman believed he could return swiftly, in event of emergency, and hurried towards the yelling voice.

Angels watched horrified as Sita was left alone. Tosakanth the Demon King lurked nearby. Tosakanth so terrified the angels that none dared warn Sita of imminent danger.

Part 3  
**Abduction & Pursuit**

## Tosakanth Abducts Sita



**T**he Demon King was delighted to see Lakshman leave. Immediately he transformed himself into an aged hermit wearing sackcloth, and emerged from concealment.

Tosakanth approached Sita's hut and was virtually transfixed by her extraordinary beauty. Samanakha had not exaggerated in describing Sita as the most beautiful woman in the Three Worlds. Her figure and complexion, in every exquisite detail, embodied feminine perfection.

Tosakanth approached as though to bestow blessings. Sita saw the hermit and asked him to identify himself. Tosakanth was equally enchanted by her melodious voice. It was as soothing and refreshing as summer rain.

"I am Sutham of Longka," he replied. "And who are you?"

"Sita, wife of the Lord Rama."

"You are as beautiful as a goddess. Why hide you your beauty from the world? You should become the consort of my master, Tosakanth. Great riches would be yours."

Sita looked pained. "Men and gods regard the ten-headed demon a traitor, an affront to every decency."

"Only the ignorant so claim," smoothly. "Tosakanth is actually good, and kind, and powerful."

"Grandfather, Vishnu dwells on Earth as Rama, specifically to destroy demons. He could defeat Tosakanth as effortlessly as he killed his three brothers and their soldiers."

Tosakanth felt belittled. "I have more power than Rama!" he snarled, promptly transforming himself into his normal ten-headed, twenty-armed form.

Sita was terrified. Tosakanth seized her,



## Visions of Beauty

*Benja Galayanee, the five characteristics of the perfect woman, namely beauty of hair, flesh, bones, skin and youth, was inspired by Buddhist commentaries which claimed a woman of great merit possessed long hair like a peacock's tail; bright red lips soft and even to the touch; white diamondlike teeth; white skin as smooth as water lilies; and, even though having borne ten children, remained as youthful as any woman who had borne but one.*

*Eighteenth-century ideals of feminine perfection can be divined from the poetic passage in the Ramakien where Tosakanth is transfixed by Sita's beauty before abducting her. Sita's physical attributes are compared largely with natural phenomena, and include:*

- Face, of lunar brightness.*
- Eyes, glowing like a doe's.*

*Teeth, as black as the blackest sapphires.*  
*Skin, of jewel-like clarity.*

*Cheeks, golden like marian plums.*

*Neck, white as a swan.*

*Figure, slender like a celestial bird.*

*Breasts, as proud as lotus buds.*

*Complexion, glowing as if burnished with gold.*

*The black teeth can be 'explained' by an observation made by Nicolas Gervaise, a Frenchman who lived in Ayudhya during the mid-1680s. Gervaise claimed Siamese ladies believed the devil, in common with European men, had white teeth, and that it was shameful for human beings to have teeth resembling those of beasts of the jungle and forest.*

*Efforts were thus made from around the age of fourteen or fifteen to artificially blacken teeth to remove any such stigma.*

amused by her ineffectual struggles and pitiful cries for help. Tosakanth returned with the captive Sita to his chariot, laughing at Rama's gullibility and loss while soaring high in flight.

## Sadayu Intervenes

The giant Bird King, Sadayu, a friend of Tosaroth, and loyal to Rama, flew among the clouds. Sadayu saw in the distance Tosakanth's chariot. Drawing closer, Sadayu saw Sita struggling in Tosakanth's embrace.

The giant bird swooped, attempting to free Sita, cursing Tosakanth as a ten-headed ignoramus who had abducted Vishnu's wife. Tosakanth defiantly claimed he was not afraid of Vishnu and resisted Sadayu's attempts to thwart his flight. The bird's massive wings darkened the sky as Sadayu pecked, flapped, obstructed Tosakanth's chariot, forcing him down ever closer to the ground.

Sadayu might have prevailed had he not rashly boasted he feared nothing but Shiva, Vishnu and Sita's ring. Tosakanth immediately wrenched the ring from Sita's finger and hurled it at the bird. The ring broke Sadayu's wings, and sent him tumbling to the ground. Tosakanth's chariot, freed of obstruction, soared higher in the sky and flew out of sight.

## Arrival In Longka

Sita wept for the gallant Sadayu. She tried, unsuccessfully, as Tosakanth's chariot sped past, to leave a message for Rama with golden peacocks living on Mount Kantamat. Later, Sita was able to consign her shawl to wild monkeys, and pleaded they present it to Rama as a token of her love.

Tosakanth hastened back to Longka, flying through clouds, fearing Rama's pursuit. The Demon

King interned Sita in his Kwan pleasure garden, beyond the city, and far from Montho's eyes. There Sita would be guarded by demon offspring, who were ordered to provide her with everything she requested, everything except freedom.

## Pursuit

Rama carried the dead golden deer on his shoulders back through the forest to his hut. He was alarmed to meet Lakshman. Both men raced back to their riverside dwellings. Sita was conspicuously absent. A lengthy search of immediate environs failed to locate her.

The brothers were overcome by grief, and fainted. Indra caused reviving rain to fall, and informed them they ought travel to the southwest to learn about Sita.

Rama and Lakshman hurriedly did as suggested, and eventually encountered the mortally wounded Sadayu, who held Sita's ring in his beak. The bird informed them of Sita's abduction by Tosakanth before dying.

Rama and Lakshman cremated the Bird King, using three magic arrows, one to create a bier, another to make fire, the third to extinguish flames once Sadayu had been reduced to ashes.

Afterwards, they hurried through the forest and encountered a monstrous demon, Khumpon, who had been cursed by Shiva to possess only the upper part of his body. Such punishment had been inflicted for spying on a celestial maiden. Khumpon was cursed to so remain until Vishnu killed him, enabling him to return to Heaven.

Rama identified himself, whereupon Khumpon directed the brothers to Khit Khin where they would gain the support of monkey soldiers in their search for Sita, and fight against the demons.

Rama thanked the demon and shot him with a magic arrow, thus breaking Shiva's curse, and sending Khumpon to be reborn on Mount Krailas.

## Another Abduction

The demon Atsamukhee's two brightly coloured tusks emerged from her fearsome mouth and curved back towards her ears. Red eyes bulged ferociously from their sockets. Ugly and powerful, Atsamukhee lived on unsuspecting forest animals.

Sighting Rama and Lakshman, she craved human delicacies. Drawing closer, she decided they were far too handsome to eat. They could better satisfy other, equally basic appetites.

Atsamukhee magically darkened the sky, and plucked up the unsuspecting Lakshman. She held him close to her face, sniffed him, passed him from one hand to the other, before deciding to return to Heaven to enjoy her new plaything.

She began flying upwards as Rama, having lost sight of Lakshman, released an arrow at the sky. Suddenly, the sun reappeared, indicating darkness had been of magical origin.

Lakshman remained in darkness, imprisoned inside one of the demon's fists. Lakshman recited powerful incantations that weakened Atsamukhee until she felt herself falling towards the ground.

She felt obliged to release Lakshman upon landing, whereupon he struck at her hand and held her at sword-point. Atsamukhee pleaded for mercy. Because she had released Lakshman, he permitted her to go free.

Rama was pleased by Lakshman's escape, gratified by his strength, and approved of his chivalrous clemency. Danger averted, the two brothers travelled onward.

## Enter Hanuman

Rama and Lakshman travelled without respite for several days, sleeping each night under the stars. Eventually, they entered a banana forest where Hanuman meditated. The Wind god, Pai, cooled the dense forest. The brothers, weary of travel, stretched out to rest. Soon they slept.

Hanuman discovered them. After playfully waking them, Hanuman realised Rama was Vishnu's earthly reincarnation for Rama had recognised certain physical characteristics as Hanuman's mother, Sawaha, had prophesied. Hanuman knelt to swear allegiance. When Rama informed Hanuman of how Tosakanth had abducted Sita, the white monkey advised caution. Tosakanth was a powerful warrior, and Longka was far away. Rama would need armed assistance. Hanuman claimed his uncle, Sukrib, was a powerful warrior. He, and other monkeys in Khit Khin, would surely support Rama's cause.

Hanuman flew to bring Sukrib to meet Rama. Sukrib explained to Rama he was exiled from Khit Khin. Sukrib described the circumstances, opining his problems originated from earlier events, specifically when Pali purloined Shiva's gift, the celestial maiden, Kaeo Dara.

Rama promised to help Sukrib overthrow Pali. When Sukrib explained that Pali was a formidable opponent, able to absorb half an opponent's strength to his own advantage, Rama pledged to negate such ability by sprinkling Sukrib with consecrated water.

## Sukrib Fights Pali

Sukrib returned to Khit Khin and challenged Pali at his palace. Pali immediately responded.

## Ramakien Versions

*Ramakien fragments surviving from the Ayudhya period, and most versions composed during the Bangkok period, were composed exclusively for dramatic performances.*

*Major extant versions of the Ramakien, in chronological order, are as follows:*

### RAMAKIEN KHAM CHAN

*is also known as Raja Pilap (Rama's Estrangement, or Separation, and a popular name for the Ramayana during the Ayudhya period), or Nirat Sita. This comprises narrative recited during Khon masked drama or Nang Yai shadow play performances, and dates from the late Ayudhya period.*

### RAMAKIEN KHAM PAGAYA

*(Ramakien for Recital)*

*Original Ayudhyan manuscript, same as above.*

**RAMAKIEN BOT LAKHON** (Ramakien for Dramatic Purposes) also dates from the late Ayudhya period, and is known as Bot Lakhon Chaleuy Sukdi (unofficial, not standard prosody).

### RAMAKIEN BOT LAKHON

*4 chapters composed by King Taksin of Thonburi (reign : 1767-1782).*

### RAMAKIEN BOT LAKHON

*Composed by King Rama I (reign : 1782-1809), this version is a long, continuous and complete story comprising 117 handwritten Thai manuscripts.*

### RAMAKIEN BOT LAKHON

*Composed by King Rama II (reign : 1809-1824), this shorter version, of selected episodes, comprises 36 handwritten Thai manuscripts.*



**Hanuman seduces Supanamatcha**

### RAMAKIEN BOT PHRARAJANIPHON KHAM PAGAYA

*Revision by King Rama II of the Ayudhyan Bot Kham Pagaya.*

### RAMAKIEN BOT LAKHON

*3 episodes composed by King Mongkut (Rama IV, reign : 1851-1868).*

### KLOANG RAMAKIEN

*King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, reign : 1868-1910) and intimates composed this version which is engraved on marble plaques to describe the cloister murals in Bangkok's Emerald Buddha Chapel.*

**RAMAKIEN BOT RONG & BOT PAGAYA**  
*King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, reign : 1910-1925) composed this version from an English-language translation of Valmiki's Ramayana.*

Rama watched, disguised as a hermit, intending, whenever opportunity presented itself, to shoot Pali with one of his magic arrows.

Hand-to-hand fighting was so frenzied that onlookers could barely distinguish one monkey from the other. Pali's love for his younger brother prevented him from using his sword. Instead, Pali bodily threw Sukrib at Mount Djakrawan, hoping humiliation would make his brother desist. Sukrib was protected by Rama's consecrated water, and was not hurt, but he was angry Rama had not fired his arrow at Pali.

On returning to Khit Khin, Sukrib remonstrated with Rama. Rama tied a white handkerchief to Sukrib's wrist to better identify him. Sukrib challenged Pali to fight a second time. Pali was incensed, and did his utmost to triumph. When the fighting monkeys neared Rama, he was able to identify Pali. Rama unleashed his arrow, only to see Pali angrily snatch it from the air.

"See here," Pali bellowed. "We fight because we are angry. We are brothers. This is none of your damned business, hermit."

Rama replied, "We are Vishnu, and have come to Earth to destroy demons. Recall you Shiva, and the celestial maiden, Kaeo Dara, and your solemn promise to deliver her unsullied to your brother?"

On realising who Rama was, Pali confessed, "I erred. I committed great wrong. Your servant awaits justice," mindful of an earlier vow to die by one of Vishnu's arrows.

Rama was moved by Pali's declaration. "We do not require your life. Spill but just a drop of your blood to honour your vow."

"No. I was born noble, with honour. It is fitting I should die accordingly."

Pali turned to Sukrib to bid him farewell.



"Take good care of Rama," he advised his brother. "Make yourself available day and night. Never be idle. Should Rama ask for your opinion, never lie to him to your own advantage... Dress suitably for court. Pay homage and keep your face down. Do not look around. Keep a good distance from the throne... Never become infatuated with any of his concubines... Always be faithful to him. Do not feel overly proud that Rama holds you in high esteem... Never divulge state secrets to visitors from other cities, and never become familiar with them. Never voice objections should Rama wish to reward any of his subjects. Should Rama become angry with them, never fan his rage... Never steal from the state. Remember all of Rama's wishes and opinions. Remember, too, that a good warrior willingly sacrifices his life for the throne. Heed well my advice, and good fortune will smile on you..."

So saying, Pali plunged Rama's arrow into his own heart.

Sukrib knelt to weep over his brother's prostrate body. Pali's wives and sons joined Sukrib in mourning. None bore Sukrib visible animus.

Pali was duly cremated, as befitting a king, before Sukrib offered Rama the crown and city of Khit Khin. Rama declined, but requested a monkey army be raised to help him defeat the demons. Sukrib pledged assistance.

Thereupon, Sukrib inherited not only Pali's crown, but all his consorts and children.

Thus were Sukrib and Kaeo Dara finally united, as was Shiva's original intention.

## Military Matters

Absolute ruler of Khit Khin, Sukrib began summoning monkey warriors so that within seven days Rama might have an army to march on Longka.

While waiting for his army to be readied, Rama was approached by forest monkeys who gave him Sita's shawl, and passed on her message.

Indra recommended Rama and Lakshman abandon their hermit existence and confront Tosakanth as royals. Accordingly, Indra commissioned angels to erect a palace with golden pavilions where the brothers formally returned to princehood.

Sukrib commissioned Pali's sons, Ongkot and Chombupan, to help him raise the required army, and summoned Hanuman to come from Katalcewan forest.

During his journey, Hanuman encountered one of Tosakanth's leading commanders, Rithikan, whose fearsome reputation stemmed from battle-field bravery when Ronapak defeated Indra to win

## Didactic Connections

*Pali's exhortations to Sukrib to rule wisely and well, before his self-inflicted demise, inspired a didactic poem entitled Kloang Pali Son Nong (Pali teaches his brother), composed by the Ayudhyan monarch, Narai, who ruled from 1656 until 1688.*

*Narai is credited with authoring two more didactic poems with Ramakien connections, Kloang Tosaroth Son Phra Ram (Tosaroth teaches Rama), and Kloang Ratchasarot (The ideal king).*

*Narai is best remembered for fashioning largely harmonious relations with major European powers, and presiding over Ayudhya during the city state's zenith as a major Southeast Asian power. Prosperity and peace enabled Thai arts and culture to flourish as never before. Recitation fragments of the Ramakien for shadow play, and other dramatic performances, provide perhaps the clearest indications of the epic's cultural importance.*

*Narai's own closest association with the Ramakien was intensely personal: his name. Narai is the phonetic transcription of Narayana, the Thai name by which Vishnu is best known.*

the name Indrachit.

Since Hanuman would shortly be fighting for Rama, he decided to prove his mettle by fighting Yak Rithikan. Declaring himself an ally of Rama, and a nephew of Sukrib, Hanuman attacked the demon with his trident.

The demon general laughed scornfully, and summoned flying warriors from the clouds. Hanuman battled with every weapon he possessed, including teeth and claws, and sent dead demons tumbling into the jungle far below. Hanuman despatched their commander with his trident.

Not a single survivor remained.

On learning of Hanuman's memorable feat, Sukrib ordered victory celebrations.

## Another Abduction

After seven days, Rama reminded Sukrib of his promise to form an army. Sukrib professed concern.

"Lord, we monkeys fear not demons. But Maha Chompoo, ruler of our neighbouring kingdom, was Pali's best friend. It is rumoured he will avenge Pali's death."

Rama saw the need for diplomacy. "Summon your nephew, Hanuman. He will accompany you to see Maha Chompoo with a message from me."

Sukrib and Hanuman duly visited Maha Chompoo. The monkey king received them courteously, claiming he would accord a warmer welcome only to Shiva or Vishnu. Sukrib responded by declaring he delivered a message from a god. Maha Chompoo declined to accept it, claiming he would only listen to such messages directly from the gods themselves, never from so-called emissaries.

Maha Chompoo adamantly refused to believe Sukrib and Hanuman were emissaries from Vishnu,

and left the two monkeys wondering what next to do.

Hanuman decided they had but one option. That night, Hanuman cast a spell on Maha Chompoo, putting him into deep sleep, and spirited him from his bedchamber, flying back with the sleeping monarch and Sukrib to where Rama awaited them, on Mount Kantamat. There Hanuman and Sukrib explained why they had felt compelled to abduct the monkey monarch. Rama was pleased by Hanuman's initiative, and stroked his back, thereby restoring the strength Uma had punitively reduced on Mount Krailas.

Maha Chompoo fainted immediately he woke and saw the green-faced Vishnu standing before him, armed with his trident, discus, conch shell and mace.

Rama revived him, whereupon Maha Chompoo knelt at Rama's feet, apologising for the way he had doubted Rama's emissaries. Maha Chompoo offered Rama his kingdom and throne. Rama declined, but asked for Maha Chompoo's warriors, so that two monkey armies might combine to attack Longka.

Maha Chompoo willingly promised such assistance.

## Another Monkey Ally

When Kao Udon, Maha Chompoo's wife, woke the following morning and discovered her husband missing, she feared the worst. She consulted palace soothsayers, who reassured her Maha Chompoo would safely return.

Kao Udon summoned her foster-child, the black monkey, Nilapat, and informed him that the previous day two emissaries, purportedly representing Vishnu, had visited Maha Chompoo. They, too, were missing. She urged Nilapat to hurry to

locate his foster-father.

Nilapat loved and honoured Maha Chompoo as though he were his real father, and willingly protected him against all and sundry. Nilapat flew to Mount Kantamat where he saw, beneath a royal umbrella, his father and the two monkey emissaries kneeling before a handsome human nobleman.

Nilapat transformed himself into a golden fly of delicate proportions and alighted on Maha Chompoo's ear.

"Why do you sit with your enemies?" he whispered. "Leave with me. Your wife, my beloved mother, awaits our return."

Maha Chompoo recognised the voice and smiled. "This is Vishnu," he said. "He has come to destroy demons. He is not our enemy. He is our friend."

Nilapat remained silent as Maha Chompoo addressed Rama.

"Lord, may my foster-son join us?"

"He may," watching the golden fly suddenly become a powerful black monkey.

Thus did Rama acquire four monkey warriors as allies, the white Hanuman, the black Nilapat, the red Sukrib and the light green Ongkot. Rama was pleased, and suggested that Maha Chompoo, already of venerable age, remain behind to take care of both kingdoms during the warriors' absence.

With Maha Chompoo a dedicated ally, Sukrib was able to muster monkey armies rapidly. Rama was well satisfied. At long last, he could begin marching towards Longka.

## Reconnaissance To Longka

Rama commissioned Hanuman, Ongkot and Chombupan to search for Sita and determine the easiest route to Longka.

Rama gave Hanuman a message for Sita.

"Tell her she is always in our heart. We are on our way to rescue her. Return to her the ring that killed Sadayu. And her shawl. These can be proof you come from us."

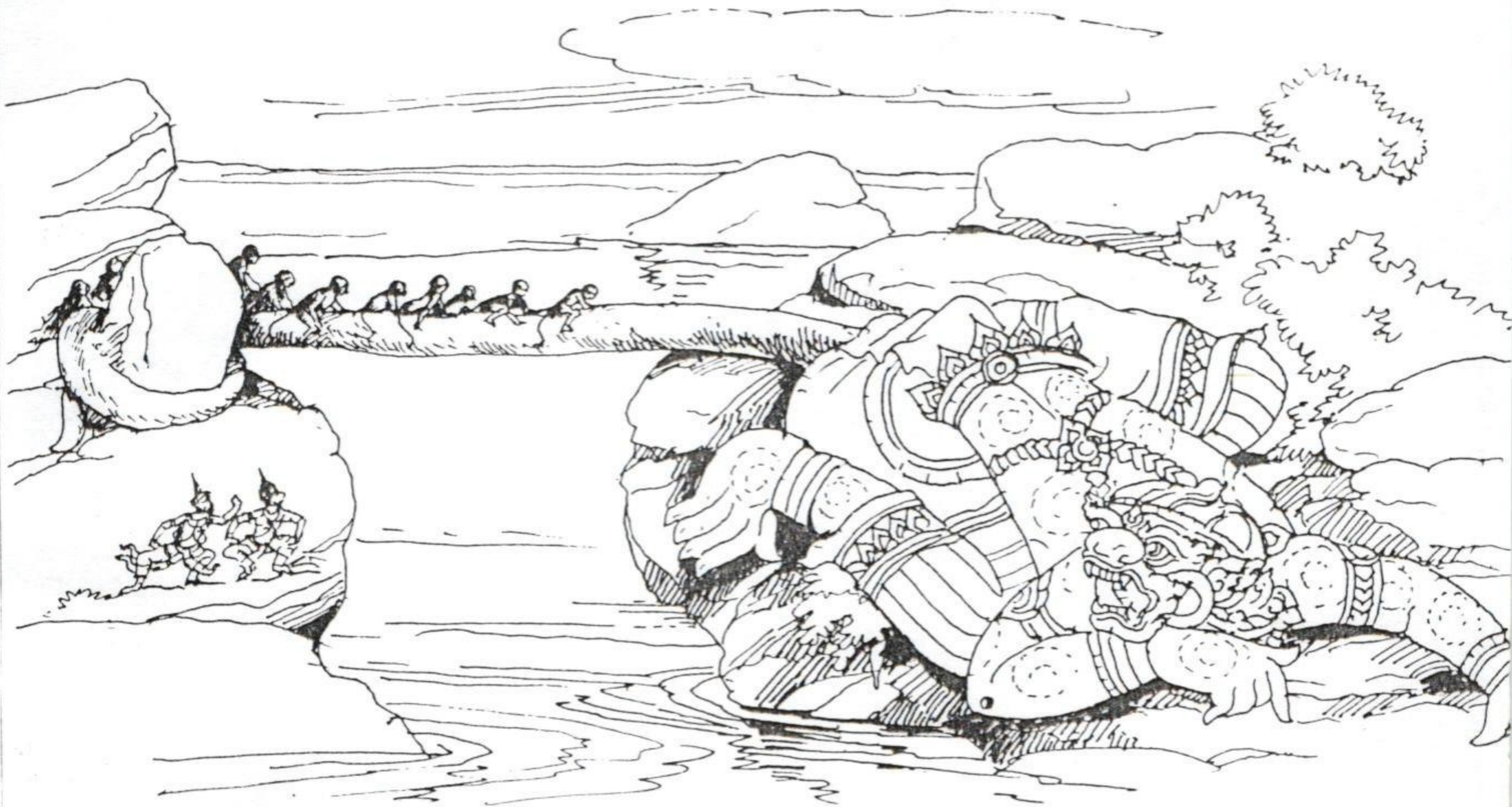
Hanuman doubted such items would comprise wholly convincing proof Hanuman was Rama's emissary. "Demons could easily have obtained such items. Your beloved may doubt my credentials. I need more to convince her I come from you."

"Then tell her that we fell in love from the moment we first saw each other in Mithila. Nobody but we know that."

The three generals led monkey warriors away into the forest, and camped the first night beside an extensive lotus pond. At midnight, Paklan, a demon cursed by Shiva, emerged from the water and kicked Ongkot. A fight ensued. Ongkot triumphed, and discovered his opponent's spell would be broken if Ongkot stroked his body three times. Ongkot obliged, and the demon returned to Heaven as an angel.

After five weeks of steady travel, the monkeys came upon a moated citadel deep within the jungle. Hanuman entered the deserted and eerily silent city and encountered a beautiful maiden, Butsamalee. As fate would have it, Hanuman was destined to free her from a spell. After Hanuman seduced and made love to Butsamalee, she directed Hanuman towards Longka, initially by a nine-week journey to a river where her younger sister would furnish further directions.

Hanuman threw Butsamalee high into the clouds to return her to Heaven before rejoining his companions. After a nine-week journey, the monkey soldiers discovered, as promised,



Butsamalee's sister awaiting them beside a river. She directed them across the waterway to a specific hermit, and promptly disappeared from sight.

The party followed her directions after Hanuman enlarged his body to colossal dimensions, enabling fellow monkeys to use his tail as a bridge across the broad river. The hermit directed them on a fifteen-week journey to the snow-capped Mount Hematiran which was located beside the ocean facing Longka.

## Help & Hindrance

Sampatee, brother of Sadayu, lived in a summit cave on Mount Hematiran. The giant bird flew Hanuman, Ongkot and Chombupan towards Longka for an aerial view of their best route. Sampatee landed at Mount Kanta Singkorn, midway between the mainland and Longka. He pointed

out to the three generals the black Mount Nilakala, the mountain of crows, before flying Ongkot and Chombupan back to their monkey warriors. Hanuman flew on alone to Longka.

Nearing the island, Hanuman encountered the fearsome sea ogress, Pheesua Samut, who guarded Tosakanth's capital against intruders. Pheesua Samut erupted from the ocean bed, red eyes gleaming and massive tusks quivering with rage as water poured from her. She immediately attacked Hanuman, trying to swat him with her club.

Hanuman eluded her every attempt, whereupon she tried to swallow him alive. Hanuman obligingly flew past jagged fangs into her gaping mouth, and emerged from her left ear, before re-entering her mouth. Hanuman flew straight down her throat and into her bowels where, in aqueous red light, he wreaked havoc by slashing everything

in sight with his trident.

The ogress sank slowly beneath the waves, gushing blood. Hanuman hacked off her hands and feet to feed predatory fishes, and left her motionless on the ocean floor before flying on to Longka.

## Hermit Capers

Hanuman landed in Longka at Mount Olot, mistakenly believing it was Mount Nilakala. Hanuman transformed himself into an ordinary forest monkey, and approached the hut of a hermit named Narod.

Narod asked him who he was. Hanuman declared himself to be an ordinary monkey. He said he had come to Longka specifically to seek his fortune, to take a demon wife and begin a family.

Narod laughed, opining no demon lady could be physically satisfied by a monkey, particularly since she would rather eat him than look at him.

Hanuman felt belittled. That night he slept in the hermit's garden hut. Intending to test the hermit, Hanuman enlarged his body until it filled the hut.

Plaintively, he summoned Narod. "I need your help. Your hut is too small. I cannot stretch."

The hermit was astounded, and magically made the hut very much larger.

A short while later, Hanuman enlarged his body a second time. "Hermit, I am sick of sleeping inside your tiny hut."

Again the astonished hermit made the hut larger.

Hanuman enlarged his body for a third time so that it stretched over the entire garden, and called the hermit. Narod tired of such transparent provocation and summoned cold rain. Hanuman

shivered with discomfort. Soon his body shrank to its original size. The hermit relented and conjured a fire for Hanuman to warm and dry himself. The pair slept through the night without further incident.

The following morning, Narod bathed in the adjacent lake and deliberately left his walking stick in the water. It became a leech that would affix itself to Hanuman when the monkey bathed. When Hanuman washed his face, the leech attached itself to the monkey's chin.

Try as he might, pulling and squeezing, Hanuman could not dislodge it, and returned to the hermit's hut where Narod chuckled at his discomfort. Narod plucked away the leech, which immediately became a walking stick again.

Hanuman apologised for having behaved childishly and left to fly over Longka. He encountered the demon, Kontan, who guarded Tosakanth's city against airborne intruders. Hanuman killed the demon and threw the corpse into the ocean. Hanuman landed in Longka, disguised as a demon.

Guards and sentries ignored him. Hanuman chanted incantations that made all city inhabitants sleep as though drugged. Hanuman explored four palaces, discovering only sleeping demons wherever he looked. In the most beautiful palace, Hanuman saw Tosakanth sleeping with an extraordinarily beautiful woman in his arms.

Hanuman feared it was Sita, that Rama's consort had succumbed to the Demon King's lascivious attentions. Prepared to decapitate Tosakanth for his dastardly seduction, Hanuman recognised at the very last instant Montho, Tosakanth's rightful wife. Hanuman left them in peace and continued his quest for Sita.

He was unable to locate her, and returned dispirited to the hermit, Narod. On learning that Hanuman sought Sita, Narod informed him that Tosakanth had imprisoned Sita in the Kwan pleasure garden beyond the city.

## Discovery

Hanuman flew to Kwan garden. He transformed himself into a tiny monkey and stealthily moved through arboreal cover to within sight of a pavilion. Inside was the most beautiful woman Hanuman had ever seen. Convinced he had located Sita, Hanuman watched the melancholy woman from concealment throughout the day.

Tosakanth enjoyed no peace of mind. He lusted for Sita with every ounce of his being, but every time he approached to declare his love, her awesome body heat prevented close proximity. Other beautiful women no longer interested Tosakanth, whereas Sita excited his imagination and rendered him love-sick.

A full moon inspired the tormented Demon King to don the most spectacular of gorgeous regal finery. Escorted by guards carrying fiery torches, Tosakanth visited Sita in her pavilion, again entreating her to return with him to his palace.

"I long for your love. All my riches will be yours if only you consent to be my queen."

Sita heartily cursed Tosakanth. "You personify evil! Vishnu will conquer you and your tribe. You see me here only because of trickery and cowardice."

Her insults fell on deaf ears.

"You deserve to be the queen of my city," Tosakanth declared. "Become mine, and everything will be yours."

"I would rather die than accompany you! I



long for Vishnu to kill you!"

Tosakanth realised further entreaties would be spurned and departed, dejected, whereupon Sita voiced anguish, addressing the moonlit heavens and absent Rama.

"Darling, when will you slay this loathsome demon? I will take my life and wait for you in Heaven."

So saying, Sita fashioned a shawl into a sling and noose, and attempted to hang herself from a nearby tree.

Hanuman immediately leapt to rescue her, telling Sita he had come from Rama. Hanuman relayed Rama's message.

"Your face is not familiar," Sita said. "How can you prove you come from whence you claim?"

"With this ring and shawl."

Sita cast them aside. "They were abandoned. Anyone could have found them. You could easily



be in Tosakanth's employ."

"Never," genuinely offended. "Lord Rama told me that you and he fell in love upon first sight in Mithila."

Sita wept upon hearing that, accepting Hanuman's claim to be Rama's emissary. Hanuman suggested Sita escape with him, but she demurred, claiming it would not be seemly to be abducted by a demon and rescued by a monkey. It would be better to wait until Rama came to her rescue.

Hanuman informed her Rama had raised an army, and was drawing close to rescue her. Sita felt relieved, and returned to her pavilion, all thoughts of suicide relinquished.

## Capture

Hanuman sought to gauge the demons' power and his own strength. He deliberately created a noisy disturbance, and wilfully wrecked parts of the garden. He killed every demon guard who

attempted to pacify him. Eventually, his victims numbered in the hundreds. Shaken survivors fled to inform Tosakanth of the uncontrollable vandal. Tosakanth summoned Indrachit to destroy the powerful monkey.

Indrachit rushed to the garden where Hanuman deliberately mocked him and his warriors, labelling Indrachit an ineffectual braggart. Indrachit fired magic arrows, all of which Hanuman effortlessly plucked from the air, broke in two, and threw back at Indrachit's feet. Eventually, Hanuman tired of such sport. When Indrachit unleashed his most potent arrow, which became serpents, Hanuman allowed himself to be bound by serpents and thence escorted to Tosakanth's palace.

## Conflagration

Tosakanth was proud that Indrachit had subdued the troublesome monkey, and ordered that Hanuman be publicly executed. An executioner employed in rapid succession a javelin, a lance, a trident and a gigantic pestle to no effect. Hanuman laughed derisively when an axe and hammer were also employed to no avail, before breaking free and killing his would-be executioner.

Tosakanth grew frantic, and had Hanuman thrown into an elephant kraal where he was pulverised by a massive wild bull elephant, again to no effect. Hanuman effortlessly manipulated the elephant's tusks, as though they were floral garlands, before killing the hapless creature.

Tosakanth demanded to know if Hanuman was immortal.

"Hardly," the monkey replied.

"Hardly?"

"One thing can kill me."

"What?"

“Fire,” innocently.

Tosakanth, delighted by the monkey’s transparent stupidity, promptly had logs and kindling piled high. Hanuman was tossed on top, and Tosakanth personally lit the bonfire with a spark from his diamond spear.

Flames leapt high, whereupon Hanuman leapt free and ran inside Tosakanth’s diamond palace, emerging when the structure was in flames. Hanuman similarly set fire to horse and elephant stables, and dwellings neighbouring the palace, finally engulfing Montho’s palace in leaping flames.

Tosakanth realised he had been tricked. Fire from his spear could not be extinguished. He gathered panicked wives and concubines, and fled with his court to the nearby Mount Satana. Many ordinary citizens suffocated in the raging conflagration. Soon Longka was reduced to smouldering ruins.

Hanuman dived into the ocean, and emerged in his original form, his white coat shining like diamonds. The fire had left him untouched, except for the tip of his tail, which still smouldered. No matter how many times Hanuman dipped his tail in water, it would not cease smouldering.

Hanuman sought help from the hermit, Narod, who chastised him for being able to burn down an entire city without being able to extinguish his own tail. The hermit laughed and said it could be extinguished in the smallest well. Hanuman held the tip of his tail inside his own mouth, whereupon smouldering ceased.

Hanuman thanked the hermit, and returned to colleagues waiting at Mount Hematiran.



## Censure

Celestial beings, frightened of Tosakanth, helped the Demon King rebuild Longka. The restored city exceeded the original in splendour.

Hanuman and his companions returned to Rama. Hanuman related how he had prevented Sita’s suicide, returned her ring and shawl, and relayed Rama’s message. Rama reprimanded Hanuman on discovering he had set Longka on fire. Not only had Hanuman exceeded orders, he might have witlessly endangered Sita had Tosakanth realised Hanuman was allied to Rama.

Hanuman opined the latter was unlikely since he had been disguised as a forest monkey. Nevertheless, he was prepared to atone for any wrongdoing with his life. The offer was declined, particularly after other monkey warriors voiced unanimous support for the white monkey.

Camp was struck, and Hanuman led the monkey armies as they marched from Mount Kankakala to the coast.

## Banishment

Sita continued living in the pleasure garden pavilion, spurning Tosakanth's frequent advances, and frustrating his every effort to seduce her with sweet words and promises.

One night, Tosakanth had a vivid dream, which he related to Pipek.

"A white eagle flew across the Kongka River from the east, and settled in our courtyard. It was intercepted by a black eagle from the west. A terrible fight ensued. The black eagle lost, and plummeted to where it lay writhing on the ground. It died, and immediately turned into a demon holding its intestines in a coconut shell. Suddenly, a woman ran up and set the shell aflame. Flames caught my hand, and I burned in agony. How would you interpret this dream?"

Pipek immediately understood the dream's import.

"The coconut shell signifies Longka," he opined. "The intestines, Your Excellency. The flame was Sita. The woman who lit the fire, Samanakha. The white eagle was Rama. The black eagle was Your Excellency. War will break out because of Sita. Rama will come to win her back. I foresee great troubles for Longka."

Pipek advised Tosakanth to return Sita forthwith to her rightful husband to avert calamity, otherwise Rama would surely destroy Tosakanth and his family.

Tosakanth was enraged by his brother's prediction and advice.

"Traitor! You side with my enemies! Return Sita! Never!"

Tosakanth proceeded to beat Pipek, and might have killed him had not another brother, Khumpakan, and Indrachit, interceded. Tosakanth

exiled Pipek in the belief he was treacherous, and identified more with Tosakanth's enemies than with his own family.

Tosakanth confiscated Pipek's property. Pipek's wife, Treechada, became a handmaiden in Sita's service. Pipek's daughter, Benjakai, was reserved exclusively for Tosakanth's personal pleasure.

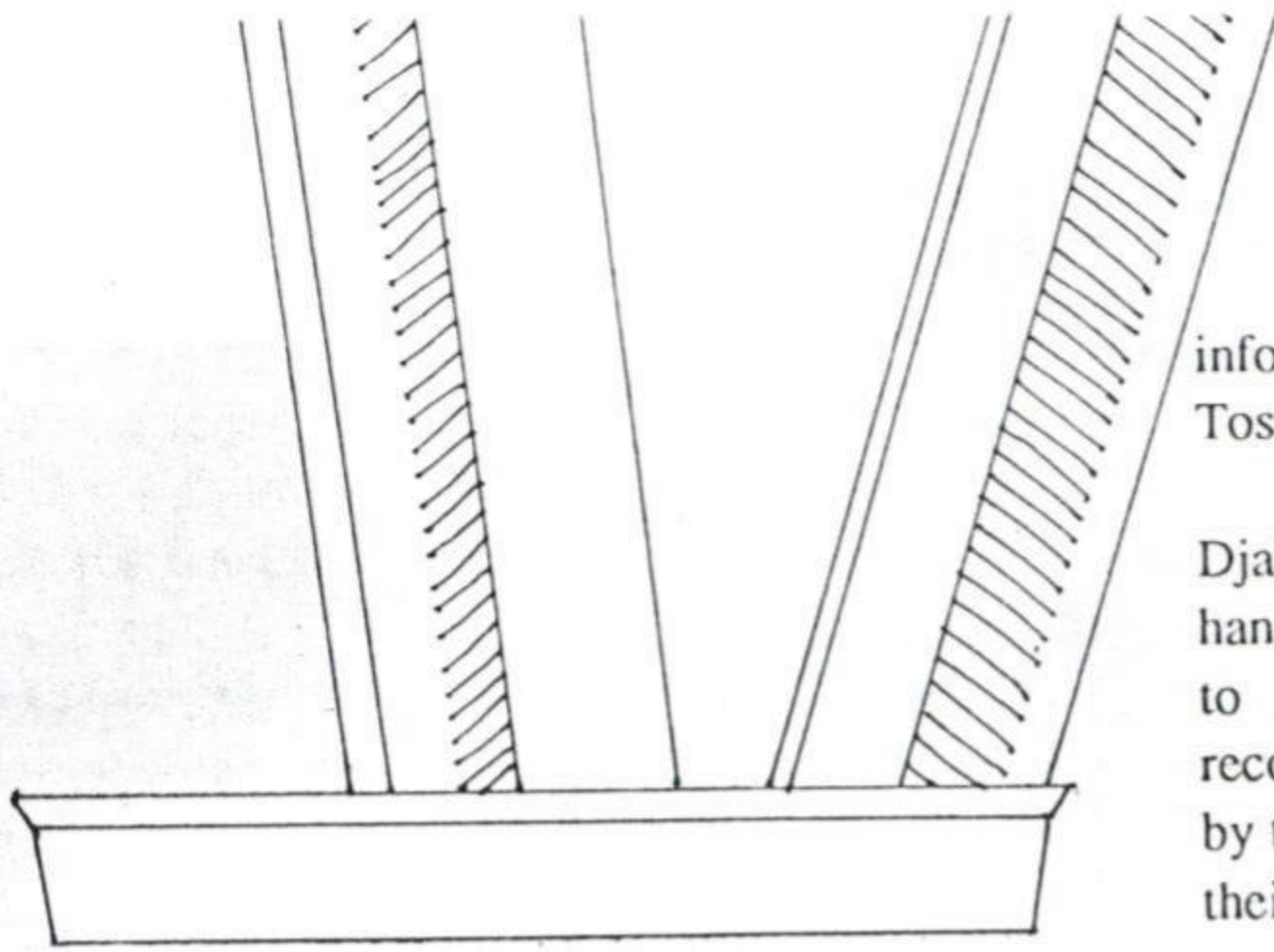
Pipek realised Rama would best support him. He flew to Rama's camp. Nilakhan, a black monkey, escorted him to Sukrib, who duly presented Pipek to Rama. Pipek related his story, after which he was commanded to pledge loyalty to Rama by drinking from a vessel containing Rama's sword.

Sukrib sympathised with Pipek, explaining he, too, once had a brother who would have killed him. Pipek expressed interest in Rama's military strength. Rama ordered Sukrib to demonstrate his warriors' powers. Hanuman raised the sun. Someone else lifted Heaven above his head. Other monkeys flew high, transforming themselves into the shapes of innumerable demons and celestial beings. Others again hurled massive boulders through the air to demonstrate their strength.

## The Tattooed Spy

One such boulder hurtled through the sky and landed on ground fronting Tosakanth's palace. The Demon King summoned his counsellor, the porcine Sukorasarn, and ordered him to investigate the cause.

Sukorasarn transformed himself into a hawk and flew towards the mainland where he witnessed monkey warriors demonstrating their formidable strengths. Sukorasarn was suddenly felled. He immediately sought protection by disguising himself as a monkey. Pipek spotted him and



## Cursed Allegiance

*The incident in which Pipek is commanded to pledge loyalty by drinking from a vessel containing Rama's sword was probably inspired by an ancient Thai ceremony, Thu Nam Phrapitat Satcha.*

*Thu Nam Phrapitat Satcha ceremonial entailed the Siamese military swearing allegiance to the monarch while drinking water that had been magically cursed to harm those who subsequently broke their vows. The ceremony was probably performed from the founding of Ayudhya as the Thai capital, in 1350, until 1932, when Siam, as Thailand was then known, became a constitutional monarchy.*

*A poem, Lilit Ongkan Chaeng Nam, probably composed during the mid-fourteenth century, provided the text for recitation during the ceremony, and invoked many Hindu gods and Ramayana characters. Archaic in style and vocabulary, Lilit Ongkan Chaeng Nam was written in Khom, a variant of the Khmer script used largely for Pali, the language of Theravada Buddhism, and other sacred texts.*

informed Rama, who ordered Hanuman to capture Tosakanth's spy.

Hanuman made himself as large as Mount Djakrawan, and covered all the monkeys with one hand. Hanuman left merely a tiny exit for them to emerge, one by one. Demons remained recognisable even when disguised, distinguished by two factors. They never ever cast shadows. And their eyes never blinked.

Hanuman brought the captured Sukorasarn before Rama, who tattooed the demon's face before ordering he be returned to Longka.

Sukorasarn related to Tosakanth what he had seen, what had happened, and how Pipek had been instrumental in his capture. Tosakanth decided Pipek would have to die, or at least be neutralised, before he betrayed all the Demon King's secrets.

## Tosakanth, The Hermit

Once again, Tosakanth assumed the form of a venerable hermit. He flew across the ocean and cast a powerful spell that would render Pipek speechless. Tosakanth located Rama's camp, and approached his nemesis.

Tosakanth offered Rama blessings before claiming he had knowledge of Sita.

"She has already become Tosakanth's wife. Sita is determined to remain in Longka, where she has discovered eternal and hitherto unexperienced happiness."

Rama replied calmly. "Sita is really Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu. Her virtue is irreproachable. I am confident of her fidelity. Nothing will prevent me from destroying Tosakanth and his demons."

Tosakanth pointed to Pipek. "Beware of the traitor in your midst. He is Tosakanth's brother, and cannot be trusted."

Pipek was speechless, and unable to defend himself or identify the disguised Demon King.

However, Rama remained impervious to the hermit's claims and innuendoes. Tosakanth realised his efforts were fruitless and duly removed himself from Rama's presence.

Shortly after Tosakanth departed, Pipek's voice returned. "That was Tosakanth!" he exclaimed. "He rendered me speechless, and hoped you would have me destroyed."

Rama heartily cursed Tosakanth.

Preparations for war continued unabated.

## The False Sita

Tosakanth believed conflict might be avoided if he could persuade Rama that Sita had died. He summoned his niece, Benjakai, Pipek's daughter, and ordered her to transform herself as Sita. Tosakanth promised that if what he planned was successful, Pipek would be reinstated with more titles, more honour and more privileges than ever before.

Benjakai surreptitiously studied Sita, noting the captive woman's every expression, her every gesture and every feature, before attempting transformation. When Benjakai was satisfied with the results, she returned to Tosakanth.

The lovesick Tosakanth was delighted to see Sita approach him of her own free will, and immediately promised her everything she desired on Earth and in Heaven.

When Benjakai was finally able to extricate herself from Tosakanth's covetous embrace, and transformed herself back into her original form, Tosakanth was dismayed and very angry, but finally heartened. He believed Benjakai's duplicity would be effective, that Rama's army would become dispirited once Sita's demise became apparent.



Tosakanth ordered Benjakai to float herself, as Sita, and dead, past Rama's camp.

Rama discovered 'Sita's' body when bathing the following morning. He pulled the lifeless corpse of his beloved wife from the water before becoming overcome with grief. Tosakanth's ruse might have succeeded had not Hanuman suspected trickery. Hanuman sought permission to cremate the body. When flames licked around her, Benjakai attempted to escape amid the smoke. Hanuman captured her to expose the deception and brought her before Rama and Pipek.

Rama was relieved Benjakai was not really Sita, and duly pardoned her. Rama ordered Benjakai be returned to Longka to inform Tosakanth his ploy had failed.

Hanuman was made her escort and entrusted with Benjakai's safe return. Hanuman flew Benjakai across the ocean. The monkey's amorous impulses proved wholly irresistible. By the time Benjakai arrived in Longka, she had become Hanuman's ardent wife.

## A Monkey Quarrel

Monkeys were commissioned to build a causeway linking the mainland with Longka. It was decided Sukrib would oversee construction work jointly performed by Hanuman and Nilapat, the black monkey.

Nilapat had long harboured a grudge against Sukrib and Hanuman, particularly the white monkey, for the insolent way they had abducted the sleeping Maha Chompoo from his bed and carried him to Rama. Nilapat decided the moment of reckoning had arrived. Instead of tossing stones to Hanuman to enable the white monkey to build the causeway, Nilapat hurled an entire mountain. Hanuman calmly avoided injury and equally calmly bided his time.

When he and Nilapat exchanged places, Hanuman carried massive rocks on his person and hovered above the black monkey. He deposited his load on Nilapat, who frantically dodged plummeting missiles. Angry words were exchanged, whereupon both monkeys began fighting. They ignored Sukrib's entreaties to desist, and were eventually separated by Lakshman.

Rama scolded them both and accepted Sukrib's proposal they be separated. Hanuman was to remain to construct the vital causeway, while Nilapat would return to help Maha Chompoo rule Khit Khin.



## The Mermaid

Tosakanth attempted to frustrate Rama's advance by ordering one of his daughters, the mermaid Supanamatcha, to help. As Queen of the Fishes, Supanamatcha was able to command her subjects to remove causeway stones immediately they were deposited.

Hanuman became suspicious of the stones' incessant disappearance, and dived into the ocean to investigate. He successfully caught the beautiful Supanamatcha. Captive embrace became caresses. Hanuman's amorous advances were novel, welcome, complimentary, and eventually accommodated with increasingly great ardour. Amid foaming waves and warm currents, Supanamatcha

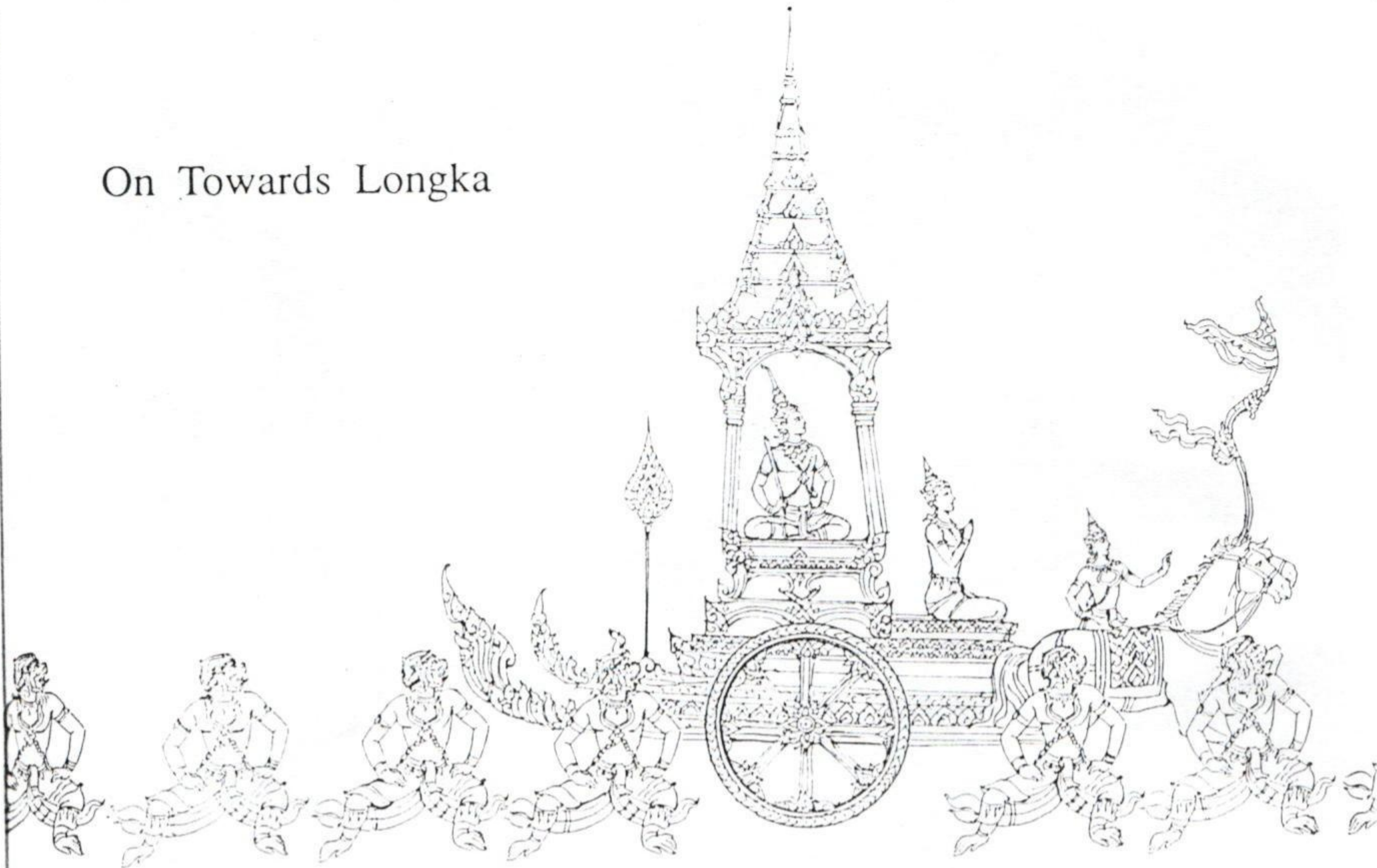
joyfully became Hanuman's wife. Thereafter, Supanamatcha ordered her subjects to replace every stolen stone, and willingly helped Hanuman complete the causeway.

Supanamatcha became pregnant. Fearful Tosakanth would discover her duplicity, she delivered her child on a beach. The child resembled Hanuman, except for a fish tail. Named Matchanu, the male child was discovered by Maiyarab, the accomplished magician and Demon King of Badan. Maiyarab permitted the unique monkey fish to swim in a lotus pond fronting his subterranean palace, on the condition that Matchanu guard Maiyarab against all intruders.



Part 4  
War

## On Towards Longka



**R**ama's monkey armies crossed the causeway towards Longka. The monkey general, Chaiyampawan, led the procession waving a victory flag. Rama rode in the middle of the formation on a magnificent chariot specially provided by Indra.

Tosakanth watched the monkey advance and ordered the gigantic demon, Panurat, to inter himself in the ground at the Longkan end of the causeway until only his thick fur remained visible. Panurat's fur was to become flowers so heavily laden with pollen invaders would become overpowered and fall helplessly asleep. Then all Panurat had to do was turn over and crush and suffocate the enemy to death.

Tosakanth promised Panurat half his kingdom if he were able to defeat the monkeys, and returned

to his palace. Panurat did as requested, transforming his fur into luscious flower beds dissected by invitingly shaded pathways and cool running streams.

Rama asked the angel, Prakontan, to locate a suitable place to camp. Prakontan believed the luscious flower gardens appropriate and informed Rama, whereupon Pipek declared Longka did not naturally possess any such garden. Its very existence indicated that sorcery was somehow involved.

Rama had Hanuman investigate. The white monkey suspiciously explored the splendid garden before burrowing deep into adjacent ground to expose the demon. After Panurat had confessed his evil intentions, Hanuman decapitated him. Rama complimented Hanuman, and demoted the careless Prakontan.

Rama asked Pipek where the armies might

comfortably camp. Somewhere near Longka was preferable. Pipek replied that Morakot Hill was an exceptionally suitable place, but that a resident demon, Kumpakagoon, needed first to be conquered.

Rama assigned the task to Hanuman, who swiftly routed Kumpakagoon and his demon warriors. Once Morakot Hill was secured, Rama's armies bivouacked there for the night.

## Envoy To Longka

Rama met with his commanders the following morning to formulate strategies. They had several options. They could attack Longka immediately. Or place the city under siege. Or try one last time to find a peaceful solution. It was decided that Ongkot should visit Longka to try and persuade Tosakanth to return Sita and thereby avoid bloodshed.

Ongkot, Pali's son by Montho, arrived as Rama's envoy at Longka's city gates, and was promptly denied entrance when panicked demon guards slammed shut the city gates behind them and fled for shelter.

Ongkot enlarged himself to mountainous proportions and covered the sun with his hands, plunging Longka into total darkness. Tosakanth was puzzled by such darkness, and exceedingly angry when he discovered a monkey named Ongkot, claiming to be Rama's envoy, was responsible. Tosakanth clearly remembered earlier humiliations at Pali's hands, particularly the way Ongkot had tormented Tosakanth after he had been captured disguised as a gigantic crab.

Tosakanth ordered Montho to prepare food for her son while the Demon King readied himself to receive, as etiquette demanded, the monkey envoy.



Ongkot had little patience for such niceties, and smashed down the city gates before entering Longka. Panicked citizens fled in every direction. Ongkot sat on his gigantic coiled tail to elevate himself to be level with Tosakanth's throne, infuriating the Demon King.

"How dare you sit as high as a king?" Tosakanth said. "A lowly monkey boldly displays such effrontery!"

"I am a monkey of celestial ancestry," Ongkot replied. "I have every right to sit as high as you."

Ongkot then delivered Rama's message, demanding that Tosakanth return Sita unharmed forthwith, thereby avoiding otherwise inevitable hostilities.

Tosakanth adamantly refused. Diplomacy was eschewed as increasingly gross insults pertaining to ancestry and previous humiliations were

exchanged. Finally, Tosakanth demanded demon guards seize the insolent monkey.

Ongkot killed four demons and, in escaping from Longka, deliberately smashed to pieces the guardian statue of Saha Bodi Brahma, Longka's four-faced founder.

Wanton vandalism enraged Tosakanth, particularly since so many of his brothers and guardian allies had already perished.

## Sukrib Topples Tosakanth

Tosakanth had inherited from Tada Brahma a gigantic canopy that was able to conceal Longka from its enemies. He ordered it erected above the city to block sunlight. Darkness immediately ensued. The enemy was unable to see Longka, but demons could watch monkeys. Tosakanth climbed up onto the canopy with wives and concubines to observe Rama's troops.

Rama asked Pipek why the sky had so dramatically darkened, and Longka had disappeared.

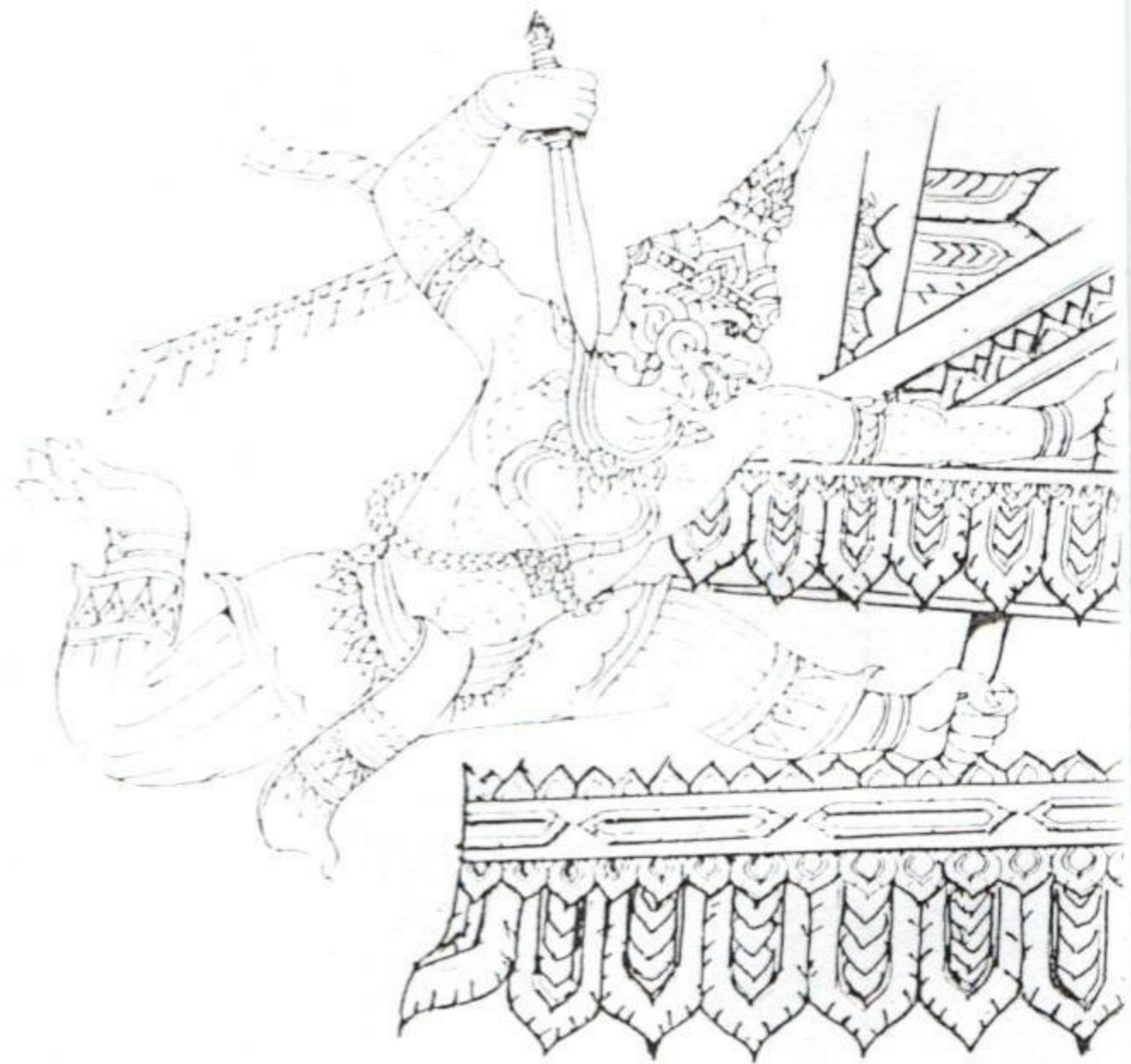
"Tosakanth possesses a magic canopy that permits him to see us while we are denied opportunity to see him. If you wish to see Longka again, the canopy must be destroyed."

Sukrib requested the honour of eliminating the canopy and approached Longka. Sukrib magnified himself to colossal proportions, sending panicked demon guards fleeing in every direction.

Sukrib openly ridiculed Tosakanth and his entourage.

"Wife stealer! Thief! I will smash your canopy!"

"How, braggart? You needed another's assistance to kill your own brother! I would slay you, but I do not want my sword defiled with monkey blood!"

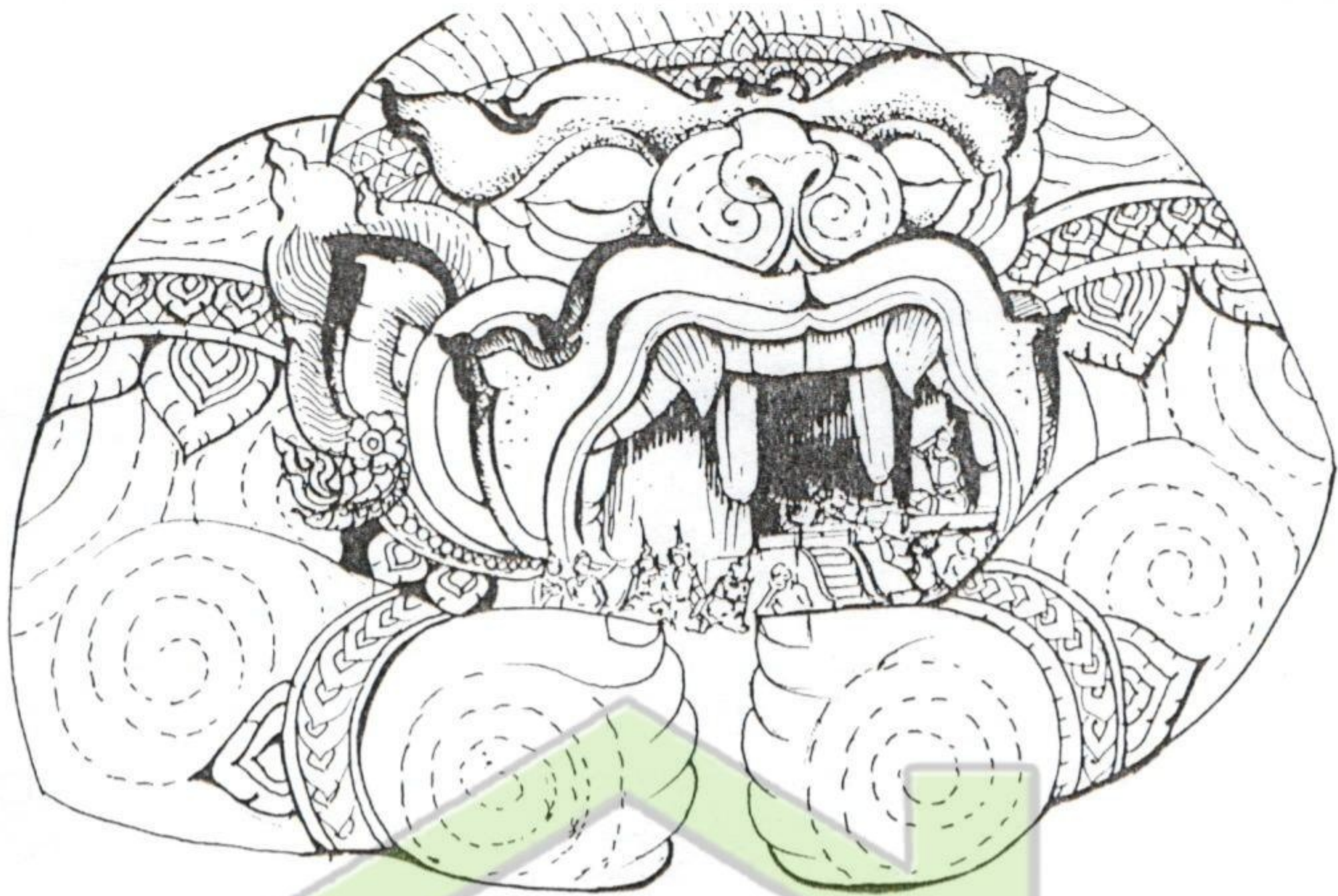


Gross insults escalated, whereupon Sukrib leapt onto the canopy. Tosakanth gathered wives and concubines in nineteen arms, and with his free hand fended off Sukrib.

Frustrated, Sukrib leapt from the canopy and shattered the shaft. The entire structure abruptly collapsed, sending Tosakanth and his party tumbling to the ground, and rendering Longka visible to Rama's armies once again.

## Tosakanth Enlists Maiyarab

Tosakanth enlisted the assistance of his nephew, Maiyarab, ruler of Badan. The most accomplished of magicians, Maiyarab willingly agreed to use his formidable magical powers against Rama, despite the misgivings of his mother, Chantaraprapa, who was convinced Maiyarab's involvement would prove fatal to her son.



Tosakanth suggested Maiyarab find a way of kidnapping and murdering Rama, claiming such actions would save countless innocent lives. Maiyarab agreed and prepared a magical sleeping potion, conjuring from thin air maidens, white elephants and lions before obtaining the correct and potent formula.

That night, Maiyarab slept poorly and endured nightmares. When informed of Maiyarab's nocturnal torment, his astrologer predicted that one of Maiyarab's close relatives would rule Badan in his stead. Maiyarab suspected that Waiyawik, son of his elder sister, Piraguan, harboured sinister ambitions. Maiyarab feared Waiyawik would rebel, and ordered him incarcerated.

On Morakot Hill, Rama dreamed that the sun, emitting brilliant rays in a cloudless sky, was suddenly eclipsed, while he, Rama, whose feet sank to Badan, reached up into Heaven to break off a canopy tier in Brahman territory.

Rama related the vivid dream to Pipek, who predicted the dream augured Rama's temporary bad

fate. Pipek opined evil would threaten at midnight, but end with the appearance of the morning star.

Extra-special precautions were taken that night. Sukrib doubled guards everywhere. Monkey warriors were ordered to light fires. Hanuman enlarged himself to mountain size and held Rama's pavilion inside his mouth to protect Rama, Lakshman and Pipek.

Maiyarab transformed himself into a monkey and entered the camp. When he saw the stringent precautions taken against him, he journeyed to the summit of a neighbouring hill and manipulated a magic glass, making its flashes resemble the morning star. Monkey warriors were suitably deceived, and sentries relaxed their vigilance. Subsequently, Maiyarab was able to use his magic potion to bewitch the entire camp.

Once everyone was sound asleep, Maiyarab stole Rama from his pavilion in the comatose Hanuman's mouth, and spirited him away into Badan where he caged the sleeping Rama in a bamboo grove.

## Father Fights Son

The following morning, Lakshman sent Hanuman in pursuit of the abducted Rama. Armed with Pipek's advice and directions, Hanuman entered the Underworld by squeezing himself down through the stem and roots of a particularly large and beautiful lotus.

Hanuman's journey grew increasingly perilous. He was obliged to slay demon guards, and an elephant, and negotiate his way through fires made by clashing mountains. After fighting through swarms of mosquitoes, each larger than chickens, Hanuman arrived at yet another lotus pond.

There he was challenged by a monkey with the tail of a fish. The monkey denied Hanuman further progress, whereupon he and Hanuman fought. No matter what Hanuman did, he was unable to defeat his opponent. Hanuman was the mightiest of warriors, and could not understand his apparent failure of powers. Eventually, Hanuman asked the guard to identify his parents, and realised he was fighting Matchanu, his own son by the golden mermaid Supanamatcha.

Hanuman promptly identified himself to his incredulous son and proved he was whom he claimed by exhaling moons and stars. Father and son embraced, and Hanuman informed Matchanu how and why he had come. Matchanu hinted how Hanuman might enter Badan, whereupon Hanuman dived into the lotus pond to gain entrance to the city.

## Rescue

Near the city gates, Hanuman encountered the disconsolate Piraguan, who had been ordered by Maiyarab to fetch water. The following morning,

her son, Waiyawik, and the captive Rama were to be executed by being boiled alive.

Hanuman identified himself, and promised assistance if Piraguan could help him gain entrance into the city. To that end, Hanuman transformed himself into a lotus filament that Piraguan attached to her shawl.

As was customary, Piraguan had to be weighed before entering the city gates. Anyone of abnormal weight faced summary execution. The scale broke under the latent weight of Hanuman. Guards became suspicious. Piraguan successfully argued the scales were old, adding she cared nought if guards killed her for her only son was due to die the morrow. The guards relented, and allowed Piraguan entrance whereby she spirited Hanuman inside the city.

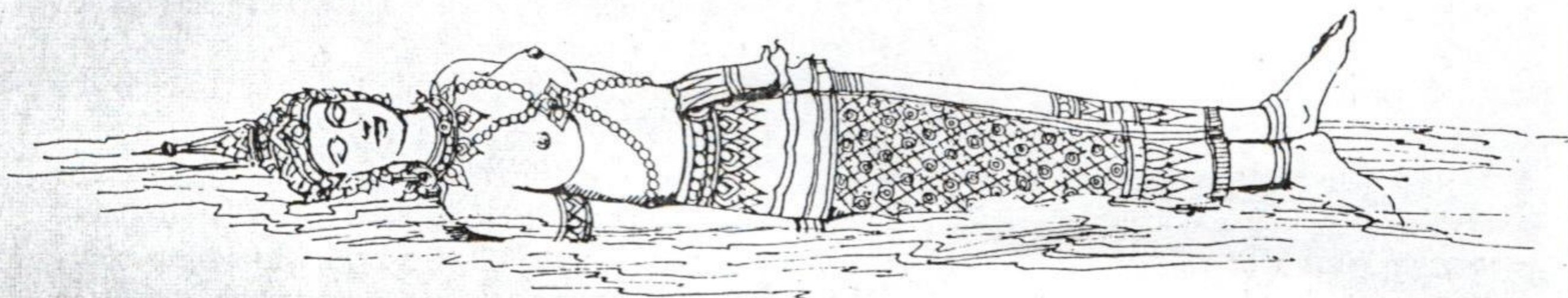
On resuming his natural form, Hanuman rendered himself invisible. He located and broke open the cage holding the still sleeping Rama. Hanuman spirited Rama away and concealed him on a nearby hill. After commissioning angels to guard Rama, Hanuman returned to Badan.

## A Demon's Death

Hanuman broke into Maiyarab's palace and made himself visible. He woke the sleeping demon inside his bedchamber and challenged Maiyarab to fight.

In rapid succession, Hanuman swiftly broke Maiyarab's sword, club and lance, but the fight proved inconclusive. Eventually, mutually frustrated, both opponents agreed to thrice strike each other unopposed to determine the victor. Maiyarab clubbed Hanuman on the head three times, driving the monkey into the ground, but inflicting no real damage.

Benjakai, daughter of Pipek, and the 'false Sita', participant in one of Tosakanth's ploys to avert war. The Demon King believed that if Rama could be convinced his abducted wife was dead, he would lose heart in pursuing his campaign to destroy the demons.



## Laotian Influences

*The astonishing two-part Laotian Rama Jataka, which was probably written during the mid-1500s, comprises twenty and twenty-two chapters respectively.*

*King Tosaroth of Cantaburi Sri Sattang<sup>a</sup> (Vientiane) had three children, Rama, Lakshman and their sister, Cantha. When Cantha was forcibly taken by their cousin, Ravana the Great of Inthapat (Angkor), the brothers vowed to avenge their cousin's wrongs. They followed him to Angkor, largely following the Mekhong River. During their successful return journey, Rama and Lakshman each took several wives, largely princesses, daughters of local chieftains, or celestial nymphs. Their offspring became leaders of their fathers' armies during the second part of the Rama Jataka when Rama and Lakshman pursued Ravana, and subjugated him in his new capital of Lanka, after he abducted Sita.*

*Early during the second part, seeking the abducted Sita, Rama became a monkey for three years and fathered Hanuman. Rama also had a ten-necked son named Tosakanth from one of his numerous earlier liaisons during the Rama Jataka's first part. Once Rama regained human form, and took yet another wife, he and Lakshman pursued Ravana to Lanka.*

*Subsequent events largely parallel those in Valmiki's original.*

*Rama's profligacy notwithstanding, including having two Amazonian wives who help fight his battles, the Rama Jataka is notable for episodes not in Valmiki's original, but which either reappear or inspire incidents in Rama I's Ramakien.*

*These include the floating 'false Sita' episode featuring Benjakai, and Rama's abduction from his camp by Maiyarab, and Hanuman's subsequent rescue.*

When Hanuman thrice clubbed Maiyarab, he shattered the club and fragmented the demon's body. Hanuman threw Maiyarab's limbs in every direction, and was astonished when the fragments reassembled in mid-air. Immediately, the restored Maiyarab stood before him.

The pair fought inconclusively again. When Hanuman learned from Piraguan that her brother was invulnerable because his soul lived independently as a green bee on a nearby mountain, Hanuman promptly pinned Maiyarab to the ground and enlarged his body to colossal proportions. With his free hand, Hanuman plucked the green bee from the mountain. Hanuman held it for the terrified Maiyarab to see, before crushing the insect between his fingers, and simultaneously decapitating Maiyarab.

Hanuman appointed Waiyawik the new ruler of Badan, and made his son, Matchanu, the viceroy before carrying the still sleeping Rama and Maiyarab's head back to the anxiously awaiting Lakshman on Morakot Hill.

When Rama woke, he mistakenly believed Pipek's warnings had been erroneous. Then he saw Maiyarab's head, and realised something had happened. On learning of the details, Rama appreciated he owed Hanuman a great deal.

## Enter Khumpakan

On learning of Maiyarab's death, Tosakanth ordered his viceroy, and younger brother, Khumpakan, to lead his troops.

Khumpakan was extremely reluctant. "Why do we fight? Because you have stolen another's wife. Return Sita and this senseless conflict will end."

Tosakanth was indignant. "Have you no regard for your family? Men cut off our sister's hands

and feet. They have killed our brethren and kin. Monkeys have humiliated us."

Khumpakan was not convinced. "Samanakha is no better than a common whore. And you blindly listened to her lies. Lies and greed caused this mischief. The monkeys acted only as warriors must act. This conflict is senseless."

Tosakanth berated his brother. "Such cowardice! Is it sinful to believe your own sister? Go and live with the enemy! Join Pipek! You can rule Longka after my death!"

Khumpakan was shamed by Tosakanth's arrant scorn, and against his better instincts reluctantly agreed to fight.

Pipek attempted to dissuade his honest brother from fighting Rama by intercepting Khumpakan as he led demon troops towards Morakot Hill. Khumpakan obstinately refused to believe Rama was Vishnu.

"The god has four arms. Rama has merely two. Vishnu commands angels. Rama commands monkeys. However, I give you a chance to prove his identity. If he solves a riddle, I will accept your claim and return to Longka. The war will be over."

"The riddle?"

"Who is the evil woman? What is the name of the malicious hermit? Who is the elephant with long tusks? Who is the traitorous man?"

Pipek returned to Rama and repeated Khumpakan's riddle. Rama could not answer. Neither could Pipek.

Pipek proposed that Ongkot should approach Khumpakan and trick the demon into providing the correct answer.

Ongkot did as suggested, and sat once again on his coiled tail.

"I come from Rama," he said. "I am here to

ask in advance the answer to your riddle. Rama wishes to be certain he has correctly understood the meaning of your riddle before personally answering you."

Khumpakan laughed. "Tosakanth is the elephant. Rama is the hermit. Samanakha is the woman. Pipek is the traitor. Let's not waste more time. Inform Rama I challenge him to battle."

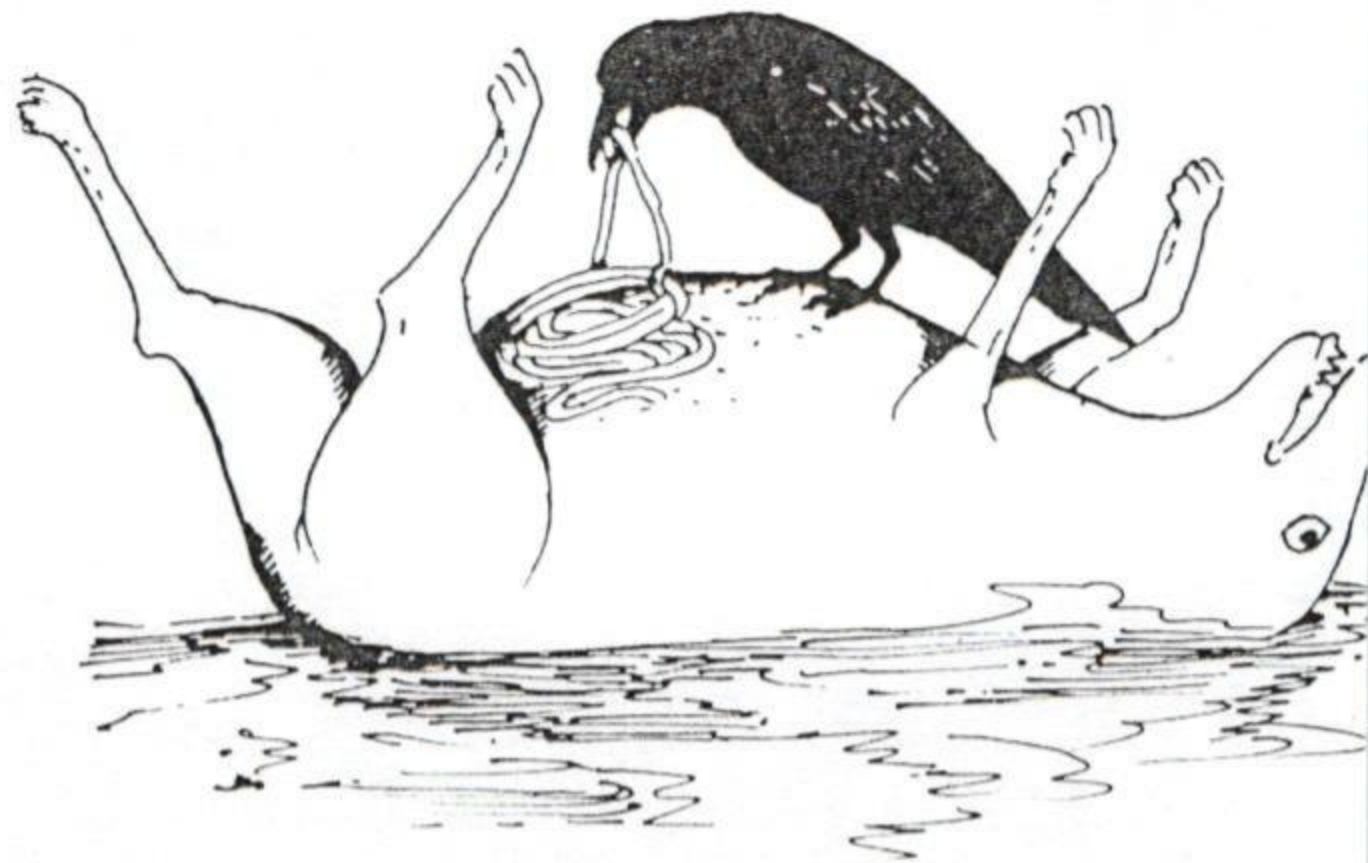
War appeared inevitable.

## Of Trickery & Magic Lances

Sukrib led monkey warriors against Khumpakan. The demon attempted to infuriate the monkey with insults, but Sukrib cleverly responded in kind. Khumpakan then tricked Sukrib into uprooting a massive tree to demonstrate his strength. The effort exhausted the monkey, whereupon Khumpakan captured him. Hanuman was able to rescue Sukrib.

Khumpakan decided he could not possibly triumph without employing a magic lance that belonged to him. The lance was kept in Heaven by the eight-armed god, Atchada Brahma. Khumpakan flew to Heaven to request the lance be given him. The god informed Khumpakan the lance's magic properties had been exhausted, but could be restored with appropriate rites. The celestial keeper was reluctant to relinquish the lance after discovering it was to be used against Rama and his allies, but had little choice since Khumpakan was the rightful owner.

Pipek realised Khumpakan had obtained his magic lance and was preparing appropriate rites to restore the weapon's invincibility. Pipek suggested that Hanuman and Ongkot frustrate Khumpakan's plans. Pipek explained that his brother was pathologically fastidious, and abhorred any form



of filth or stench.

Hanuman transformed himself into a rotting canine corpse of offensively odiferous character, replete with exposed, yellowing and pus-filled entrails. Ongkot changed himself into a crow noisily feeding with great relish on the dog's suppurating bowels. When the corpse of the rotting dog, legs airborne, and being devoured by a crow, floated past the place where Khumpakan performed his magic ceremonies, the sight and stench made the demon vomit.

The ceremony was discontinued forthwith.

## Battlefield Drama

Tosakanth opined that Khumpakan's lance still possessed sufficient power, and urged Khumpakan to take to the battlefield.

Lakshman led monkey warriors to engage Khumpakan. He and the demon exchanged personal insults whereupon their armies clashed.

Heads were split. Brains were spilled. Bones

LEFT: a section of the Wat Phra Kaeo murals  
 RIGHT: a bas relief vignette from Wat Po  
 OVERLEAF: a lacquer and gold leaf vignette of  
 Hanuman fighting a royal demon



## Pictorial Depictions

*Striking pictorial depictions of the Ramakien exist as temple murals, and bas relief, and black lacquer and gold leaf illustrations adorning Buddhist scripture cabinets.*

*One of Rama I's major tasks after making Bangkok his new capital was initiating construction of the riverside Grand Palace. A principal focal point was a Buddhist temple lacking a resident monastic community. A similar complex, Wat Sri Sanphet (Temple of the Precious Omniscience) had existed within Ayudhya's royal palace. The Bangkok temple was built on a smaller scale than its illustrious Ayudhyan predecessor, specifically to enshrine the national palladium, a petite jasper Buddha image with a chequered, albeit romantic history. The new temple was named Wat Sri Ratana Sasadaram. It is best known today as Wat Phra Kaeo, or the Chapel of the Emerald Buddha.*

*Artistic effort was lavished on Wat Phra Kaeo so that it might rival in visual splendour its Ayudhyan inspiration. Murals depicting the*

*Ramakien entirely cover the gallery walls. The original murals were commissioned by Rama I after his written version of the epic was completed in 1798. The murals were extensively restored in 1832, in 1882, in 1932 and, most recently, in 1982 for the Bangkok Bicentennial.*

*The murals illustrate the entire epic, and are divided into 178 sections. The murals' ambience, including architectural details such as palaces, pavilions and lesser buildings, and landscape, is unmistakably Thai. Major characters wear raiment closely resembling the richly brocaded costumes worn by Khon masked dance performers. Demons portrayed are identical in appearance to demon statues, small and gigantic, found in profusion throughout the entire chapel complex.*

*Wat Phra Jetubon Wimol Mongkharam, better known as Wat Po, and home of a famous Reclining Buddha image, borders the southern edge of the Grand Palace enclave. Wat Po is believed to date from the late 1600s, though the temple's general appearance*

dates largely from extensive restorations commissioned by Rama III, and executed between 1832 and 1848.

A major undertaking entailed the construction of a new ordination chapel, which is remarkable for 152 marble bas relief panels depicting a somewhat odd Ramakien sequence beginning with Tosakanth abducting Sita, and ending with Hanuman slaying Sahasadecha. Logically, the sequence might be expected to end with Tosakanth's death, or Sita's return. The panels, each of mysterious origin and some eighteen inches square, are evidently the work of many hands. Some embody exquisite craftsmanship and sparkling humour. No records exist concerning their creation. It has been surmised they were commissioned by Rama I during the composition of his version of the Ramakien; or they were somehow salvaged from the ruins of Ayudhya; or that artists during Rama III's reign carved them specifically for the chapel.

Mysteries apart, few Ramakien depictions are more striking than the gorgeous combination of black lacquer and gold leaf used to such exhilarating effect on eighteenth and nineteenth-century teak cabinets created specifically to contain Buddhist scriptures,

Traditional palm leaf and paper manuscripts deteriorated rapidly in Thailand's tropical humidity unless adequately protected against termites, moisture and direct sunlight. Such treasured manuscripts had each been laboriously produced by hand, and were not easy to replace. Western printing techniques were introduced in Thailand only during the mid-1830s.



The sturdy teak cabinets produced expressly to contain and protect such scriptures were accorded exceptional artistic attention, partly because, housing sacred objects, they shared the stature of shrines. Enjoying singular functional importance, they were invested with aesthetic distinction by master craftsmen, and were sufficiently large to accommodate either bold designs, or intricately detailed motifs.

Favoured subject material included Buddhist cosmology, scenes from popular jatakas, the life of the Buddha, and Ramakien scenes -- including fearsome demons to 'protect' the sacred contents. Ramakien battle scenes were particularly popular, and frequently depicted Hanuman, and other monkey warriors, and demons such as Tosakanth.

Modern Ramakien depictions tend to be more mundane. They are mostly confined to calendar art, book illustrations, and tourist or souvenir 'art'. Sometimes Ramakien vignettes adorn the sides of fishing boats and ten-wheel trucks, or kites, T-shirts, cassette covers.

were broken. Blood was shed. Lives were lost. The monkeys Surasen, Surakan and Nilakhan killed the demon commanders Treepalam, Rutikasoon and Patakawee. Khumpakan thundered forward in his chariot to assist. Lakshman fired an arrow that shattered Khumpakan's chariot. Khumpakan retaliated by hurling his lance, which struck Lakshman and immediately felled him.

Hanuman and Ongkot helped remove Lakshman from the battlefield as monkey warriors successfully forced the demons into retreat. Efforts to remove Khumpakan's lance from Lakshman's inert body proved fruitless. As darkness fell, a messenger summoned Rama, who fired an arrow to illuminate the battlefield before hurrying to his brother's side.

Rama was unable to extract the lance, and feared Lakshman was lost.

Rama lamented, "Dear friend, we've faced numerous hardships together, and have won them all. How could you have lost to this demon? Remember, we've been reincarnated to help erase evil. With you lying here dead...if I were to continue fighting, what's the use of regaining a wife, when I've lost a brother? On returning home, I will surely endure the wrath of our brothers and mothers, and be branded forever as the monster who loved his wife so much, he risked the life of his own brother -- and be forever shamed."

Pipek advised Rama that certain herbs growing on Mount Sanpaya, if mixed with holy water from Panja Mahanatee, could remove the lance and heal Lakshman's wound. However, everything would have to be collected and administered before daybreak.

Hanuman hurried to intercept the Sun god, Athit, and explained the situation and his predica-

ment. Athit was sympathetic, but said he dare not arrest or interfere in any way with the solar cycle. However, Athit promised to rise behind clouds the following morning, ensuring that sunlight would not strike the earth until the lance had been removed and appropriate medicine administered.

Hanuman immediately flew to Mount Sanpaya to collect the herbs Sangkoranee and Treechawa. He coiled his tail around the mountain summit to gather them before flying to Ayudhya to collect holy water. The princes Bhrot and Satrud provided precisely what he needed.

Hanuman then returned to where Lakshman lay wounded. Pipek prepared the required medicine and applied it. The lance fell away and Lakshman's wound healed.

Lakshman opened his eyes, and was fully restored to life.

## The Demon Dam

Khumpakan wept tears of blood on learning that Lakshman had been saved. Khumpakan decided next to dam a river supplying the monkey armies with water. Either the enemy would die of thirst, or parched troops would mutiny and desert. Either way, the war would be over and avert needless bloodshed.

Khumpakan left his wife, Kantamalee, with maidservants and went to the head of the river. There he enlarged his body to dam the waterway. The formerly copious flow of water dwindled to a trickle before completely drying.

Pipek was able to explain what had happened. Hanuman promptly set about frustrating Khumpakan's scheme. First, he disguised himself as a hawk, then as a beautiful girl to spy on Kantamalee, and finally disguised himself as

Kantamalee herself to discover Khumpakan's precise whereabouts. Finally, Hanuman physically attacked Khumpakan.

Hanuman sent Khumpakan back to Longka, thereby releasing life-giving water to the monkeys once again.

## Another Battle

Tosakanth felt nothing but hatred for Pipek. His brother had been instrumental in frustrating his every strategy and apparent success.

Tosakanth urged Khumpakan to attack. When Khumpakan mounted his chariot, the wheels would not turn. Lions drawing the vehicle suddenly resembled donkeys. Horses and elephants grew capriciously restless. Four ghosts floated before his eyes. Crows pecked at his standard. Soldiers' cries sounded like laments. Omens were not good.

Demons and monkeys closed in battle. Slain demons blocked the passage of chariots. Khumpakan unleashed an arrow that fell as a firebrand, forcing monkeys into retreat. Rama responded with an arrow that became torrential rain, extinguishing flames and forming a raging torrent that assumed tidal wave proportions to sweep away demon soldiers, elephants and chariots.

Rama shot at Khumpakan. The arrow struck the demon in the chest and toppled him.

Mortally wounded, Khumpakan belatedly realised that Rama was indeed Vishnu, and cried, "I should have listened to Pipek! I beg you to take care of him, and permit me to return to Heaven."

Rama absolved Khumpakan of his errors, and promised his requests would be granted.

Celestial maidens descended to take Khumpakan back to Heaven.

The demon messenger, Sarantoot, informed

Tosakanth of his younger brother's death.

## Enter Indrachit

Tosakanth summoned his favourite son, Indrachit, to lead his troops. Pipek warned Rama of Indrachit's imminent arrival on the battlefield, and reminded everyone of the powerful arrows, awarded by celestials, in Indrachit's possession.

The following morning, Lakshman led monkey warriors against demon formations. Indrachit had never seen a human being before and was fascinated by Lakshman's light skin and beautiful clothing. He was startled when a demon general identified Lakshman as someone who had been considered mortally wounded by Khumpakan's magical lance.

Indrachit addressed the enemy. "I am Indrachit, victor of the god Indra. I fear nothing but Shiva. I suggest you withdraw, for none can withstand my arrows."

Lakshman replied, "I am Rama's brother. It has been decreed in Heaven that demons will be destroyed. It is you who should withdraw, for your lives are endangered."

Hanuman had crept close to Indrachit's chariot. Hanuman suddenly began mocking Indrachit and his weapons. Indrachit immediately fired an arrow at the insolent monkey. The arrow felled Hanuman but inflicted no real damage. Other monkey commanders attacked Indrachit, and were similarly felled by his arrows.

Lakshman unleashed one of his own magical arrows into the sky. Thunderbolts and celestial whirlwinds marked its progress. Wind fashioned by the arrow revived fallen monkeys. One after another, they all stood. The arrow demolished Indrachit's chariot. Demons were scythed to the

ground and slaughtered by flying splinters.

Lakshman leapt across dead demons and assaulted Indrachit with his club. Indrachit fired more arrows, which Lakshman neutralised with arrows of his own.

The battle proved inconclusive.

Indrachit withdrew, determined to fight again.

## Mangkornkan's Death

Indrachit enjoyed no peace of mind and little sleep that night. The following morning, he informed Tosakanth that he needed to absent himself for seven days to render his Nagabat serpent arrow truly invincible.

Tosakanth summoned his nephew, Mangkornkan, the reincarnated black buffalo, Torapi, to continue the war during Indrachit's absence. Tosakanth feted his nephew with every imaginable pleasure until Mangkornkan fell asleep, sated and inebriated, amid fawning palace concubines.

The following morning, Mangkornkan led demon armies onto the battlefield to confront monkeys led by Rama. The demon boastfully catalogued his prowess, whereupon Rama insulted him by describing how he had killed Mangkornkan's father, Korn. Rama opined the demon could more profitably suckle at his mother's breasts than face certain death.

Enraged, Mangkornkan immediately attacked. Rama fired an arrow which beheaded numerous demons. Mangkornkan hurled his discus to fell monkeys. Rama fired another arrow, which became a wind reviving dead monkeys while slaying even more demons.

Mangkornkan leapt into Heaven to restore his magical powers and emerged in multiple forms.

The entire sky was filled with identical Mangkornkan clones that rained weapons on monkeys far below. When Rama successfully decapitated the real Mangkornkan with an arrow, all the demon's clones fell lifeless from the sky.

## Magic Thwarted

Tosakanth awarded command of the demon armies to Wiranyamook, while Rama consulted Pipek regarding Indrachit's conspicuous absence.

"Indrachit is making his magic arrow invincible," Pipek said. "He sits motionless in meditation on Mount Akatkiree, repeatedly chanting magical formulae."

"Can he not be distracted?" Rama asked.

"Indrachit sits inside a hollow tree. Were something to bend and crack the tree, his incantations could be interrupted and rendered impotent."

One of Rama's warriors, Chompuwarat, flew to Mount Akatkiree and changed himself into a black bear of awesomely massive proportions. The bear charged past demon guards and assaulted the tree in which Indrachit sat. The tree toppled with thunderous impact, terrifying the magic serpent that had emerged from the earth to dance before the arrow. The snake believed garudas were attacking, and fled for its life back into Badan.

The startled Indrachit watched in horror as the bear suddenly became a monkey and promptly disappeared.

Indrachit was obliged to return to Longka without having rendered his Nagabat arrow completely invincible.

## Garudas To The Rescue

Opposing armies squared off again, Lakshman leading the monkeys, the vengeful Indrachit the

demons.

Arrows were exchanged, whereupon Indrachit temporarily relinquished command to Wiroonyamook, who immediately rendered himself invisible. Lakshman fired an arrow which became a diamond net in which Wiroonyamook became entangled. The demon managed to escape. Indrachit fired his Nagabat arrow that transformed itself into swarming serpents that rained down in attack, killing many monkeys and rendering Lakshman unconscious.

Rama was obliged to summon his powerful vulturine steed, Garuda, to assist. Many garudas descended to drive the powerful serpents back to Badan, and save the day.

## The False Indra

Indrachit managed to successfully enchant another arrow, during which time Hanuman killed a major demon commander, Kampan, and Pipek led Nila Non and two monkey regiments into Saliwan forest to collect fresh fruit for Rama's armies.

On returning to Longka, Indrachit transformed himself into Indra riding his white elephant, Erawan, and made a majestic entrance on the battlefield.

Despite Hanuman's misgivings, Lakshman innocently believed the real god Indra approached and relaxed his guard. Indrachit unleashed his magic arrow and rendered Lakshman and all monkey warriors, except Hanuman, either critically wounded, or unconscious.

Hanuman recognised Indrachit, and angrily leapt into the sky to break the false Erawan's neck. Indrachit beat Hanuman unconscious with his bow.

Convinced of victory, Indrachit returned with his army to Longka.



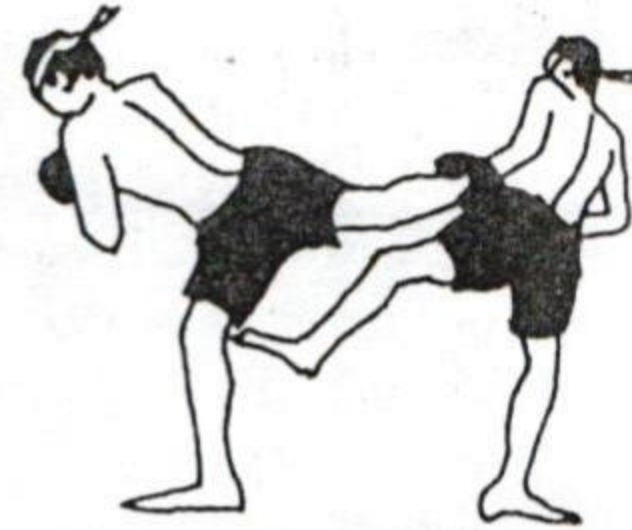
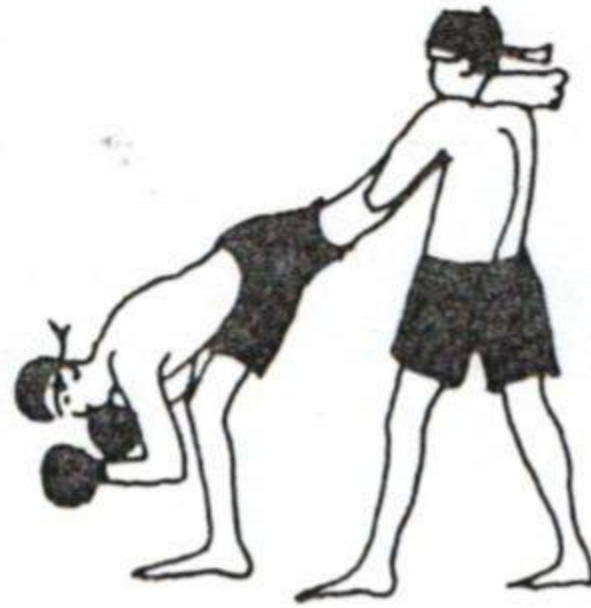
## Widowhood Disproved

Rama grew anxious when Lakshman had not returned by sunset. He hurried to the battlefield with Chombhupan. Rama unleashed an arrow to illuminate the way, and discovered monkey corpses everywhere. Even Hanuman sprawled senseless beside a severed elephant head.

Rama discovered other monkey commanders' bodies. On locating Lakshman's inert body, Rama feared the worst, He had lost his wife. He had lost his allies. He had lost his brother. He had lost everything. Rama swooned, and fell motionless onto the ground.

Chombhupan was confused and believed Rama had also perished. He and surviving monkeys sank

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: English names of Muay Thai postures are Entering the underworld; Twisting the Naga's tail; Montho sitting on a bench; Sukrib lifting the tree; and Climbing Mount Sumaine.



## Martial Connections

The battlefield incident in which Hanuman leapt skywards to break the false Erawan's neck inspired the name of a Muay Thai (Thai boxing) leaping neck hold and bent knee-kick, Hak Khor Erawan (*Breaking Erawan's neck*).

Other offensive postures in Thailand's major martial art inspired by Ramakien occurrences include the moment when Hanuman presented Sita with her ring to prove he was Rama's emissary. A double fist blow is called Hanuman Tawai Waen (*Hanuman presents the ring*).

More than one dozen such incidents similarly inspired names for offensive and defensive postures, punches, foot thrusts, elbow blocks and kicks.

Hanuman's descent into Badan is evoked in a reverse foot thrust, Mout Badan (*Entering the underworld*).

The incident in which Sukrib exhausted himself by uprooting a tree is evoked in the

blocking of a reverse kick.

The naga, the mythological serpent, is evoked in catching and twisting an opponent's ankle, Bid Hang Naga (*Twisting the naga's tail*).

Other postures are named after Vishnu, Rama, Ongkot, Sadayu, Tosakanth, Indrachit, Khumpakan and lesser demons.

A complicated reverse elbow thrust is even named after Tosakanth's consort, Montho.

Other Ramakien connections include the fluid and graceful pre-fight 'boxing dance' which is known as 'Rama's discus-throwing dance'.

Lastly, many Thai boxers' arm circlets contain traditional cloth portraits of Hanuman, believed to date from the 1300s, replete with sacred Khom script. Such portraits are worn in the belief that they bestow courage and endurance, the willpower to triumph, and offer protection against pain.

to their haunches and lamented such calamity with mournful howls and cries.

Tosakanth was delighted when he learned of their grief. Tosakanth believed that if Sita saw Rama's inert body, she would believe him dead, and might finally agree to become Tosakanth's consort.

Tosakanth had Sita transported to the battlefield, escorted by Treechada, Pipek's wife, in the crystal chariot, Busabok Kaeo. Sita was dismayed by apparent carnage. She wept upon seeing Hanuman's inert body. She experienced boundless grief upon seeing Rama's and Lakshman's motionless forms. It appeared her beloved husband had sacrificed his life in a futile attempt to rescue her. She was consumed with grief, and believed her life was no longer worth living.

Treechada consoled the weeping woman, and informed Sita that Rama could not really be dead. The chariot, Busabok, would never become airborne with widows as passengers. Treechada explained that Montho had boarded the chariot when Tosakanth was absent, debauching elephant cows and mermaids. Montho had at least known that her husband was alive when the chariot became airborne with her on board.

Sita felt reassured, and returned to Kwan garden with a very much lighter heart.

## Revival

Pipek, Nila Non and two monkey regiments returned from collecting forest fruits to discover Hanuman, Sukrib and Ongkot sprawled on the battlefield as if dead. Pipek revived Hanuman, much to the white monkey's gratitude.

Hanuman informed Pipek of recent occurrences. Together they located other monkey



commanders, and Rama, who slowly revived. Pipek said the effects of Indrachit's arrow could be neutralised solely by the fragrance of herbs growing on Mount Awut. The mountain and such herbs were guarded by a powerful angel who used a mighty discus to deter visitors seeking such herbs.

Hanuman immediately flew to Mount Awut. The guardian angel recognised the white monkey as one of Vishnu's followers, and did not oppose him. However, the angel declared, when informed of the purpose of Hanuman's visit, that nobody could pluck the herbs from the mountain.

Hanuman responded simply by lifting the entire mountain and carrying it back to Morakot Hill. There the wind god, Pai, spread the fragrance of the herbs over fallen warriors. One by one, everyone, including Lakshman, was gradually revived, and stood as if freshly reborn.

## More Trickery

Tosakanth was overjoyed by the prospect of Sita soon becoming his. Exhilaration abruptly evaporated when he learned that Rama, Lakshman and all monkey warriors had been revived, thanks once again to the traitorous Pipek's advice.

Indrachit conceived a plan to stall the enemy's advance. He had a condemned demon, a cowardly warrior named Sukhachar, removed from prison, and ordered the demon to transform himself into Sita. This the demon did. The false Sita was then placed inside Indrachit's chariot.

When Indrachit encountered Lakshman on the battlefield, he declared, "Many have died on both sides because of a woman! If you wish custody of this woman for your brother, she is yours!"

Lakshman saw Sita inside Indrachit's chariot, but declined to accept her, insisting Indrachit himself present her to Rama.

Indrachit sneered in reply. "I have not been beaten! I am not your slave! My father no longer wants her! You don't want her! I don't want her! Nobody wants her! I will send her head to your brother!"

Indrachit immediately decapitated the false Sita before Lakshman's startled eyes, and threw the head at Lakshman's feet, before wheeling away in his chariot.

Incensed, Lakshman unleashed an arrow to kill Indrachit. The demon calmly plucked it from flight with the same hand that had thrown Sita's head, and declared, "Hear ye well, men and monkeys! You have invaded Longka! I will invade Ayudhya with millions of warriors, and kill every inhabitant! I go there forthwith," departing amid clouds of dust in great haste.

Rama was heartbroken on being shown Sita's

head. Pipek assured him that the head was counterfeit, merely another of Indrachit's tricks. Moreover, Pipek stressed, Indrachit's vow to pillage Ayudhya was a hollow threat meant to divert the allies' attention and draw them away from Longka.

Rama accepted Pipek's comforting reassurance. The monkeys camped for the night, awaiting the inevitable renewal of conflict the morrow.

## Thwarted Again

Pipek informed Rama and Lakshman that Indrachit intended to harden his body by magic. If he succeeded, he and his warriors would become invincible. It was imperative the ceremony be disrupted. Pipek advised that Lakshman lead the bravest monkey warriors on this most vital of missions.

Lakshman led Hanuman, Ongkot and trusted monkey commanders to Mount Djakrawan, and located the bamboo thicket wherein Indrachit had constructed a shrine in which to conduct magic rites. Cordons of demon warriors protected Indrachit. Lakshman unleashed a fire arrow. The shrine roof erupted in flames. Hanuman and monkey colleagues immediately attacked and, breaking enemy bones and cracking enemy skulls, scattered demon guards.

Indrachit opened his eyes, and kicked weapons from the hands of monkey assailants. Indrachit sprinted to his chariot and fired an arrow. Lakshman responded with an arrow that pulverised Indrachit's missile in mid-flight, before piercing Indrachit's chest. Indrachit tore the arrow free, and saw his serpent arrow neutralised by a garuda arrow. Both warriors fired their mightiest arrows. A violent thunderstorm raged immediately the arrows col-



lided. Indrachit hurled his discus to blot out the sun. During ensuing confusion, and lightning-convulsed darkness, Indrachit managed to escape.

Wounded and disheartened, Indrachit returned to Longka, and went to see Montho. His mother was shaken by his ashen appearance, and realised Indrachit was destined to atone for sins his father had committed in previous lives.

Montho's pleas to Tosakanth to return Sita to save their son's life fell on deaf ears. Tosakanth adamantly refused to entertain any such solution, claiming he loved Sita more than his own life. Indrachit foresaw with startling clarity the demise

of demon clans. Nevertheless, he informed his father he would fight again the morrow. Tosakanth gave Indrachit his mighty Surakan arrow.

Indrachit took leave of his parents. He consoled himself that night in the arms of his affectionate and loving wife, Suwanakanyuma who, sensing the worst, could not get her fill of him.

## A Death

Indrachit's wife and concubines bid longing farewells when Indrachit left his palace the following morning. Portents were not favourable. Lions pulling his chariot moved as slowly as

horses. Soldiers spoke in undertones.

Indrachit and Lakshman met on the battlefield. They exchanged taunts, aware the day of reckoning had arrived, before Indrachit unleashed Tosakanth's Surakan arrow. Innumerable monkeys fell. Lakshman responded with his own mighty arrow. Indrachit's chariot was shattered. Lions perished. Felled monkeys were revived. Innumerable demons fell dead.

Blood discoloured the battlefield. Indrachit approached Lakshman and challenged him to a duel. The antagonists fought with wild fury. When Indrachit was clubbed to the ground, he summoned remaining magical powers to darken the heavens, flying to conceal himself among swirling clouds. There he caused swords, spears, tridents, maces and clubs to rain down on defenceless monkeys.

Lakshman fired another arrow that struck Indrachit in the chest. The deluge of weapons immediately ceased. Lakshman prepared a final arrow to decapitate the mortally wounded Indrachit. Pipek hastily prevented him from drawing his bow.

"Don't shoot!" he exclaimed. "Indrachit was granted a special favour by Brahma. Were he to die, and his head be severed, his blood, on hitting earth, would catch fire and engulf the world in flames. Have Ongkot, his half brother, fly to Heaven. He must receive from Tada Brahma a diamond bowl with which to catch Indrachit's head and blood."

Ongkot did as commissioned. He soon returned to Earth holding the required diamond bowl. Lakshman finally unleashed his arrow. It promptly decapitated Indrachit. Ongkot caught the head and blood in the bowl. The headless corpse fell to earth near Mount Djakrawan.

Ongkot then flew high, and held the bowl containing Indrachit's head at arm's length. Rama

unleashed his mightiest of arrows, which reduced both head and bowl to ashes, saving the world from all-consuming conflagration.

Tosakanth was overcome with grief when Indrachit's headless remains were returned to Longka. Indrachit's mother and wife were wholly inconsolable. Citizens mourned the mighty warrior's death and feared the worst.

Indrachit was duly cremated. Tosakanth's anger and hatred found clear focus. Tosakanth ordered that the mightiest of demon armies be assembled. The morrow, Tosakanth himself would lead warriors onto the battlefield.



## Rama & Tosakanth Fight

Four thousand lions drew Tosakanth's ornately fashioned war chariot. Richly caparisoned horse and elephant cavalry, and infantry, followed ten demon princes in battle chariots.

Sukrib amassed an equally large force. Indra sent Rama for the occasion a special war chariot drawn by two thousand horses. Rama wore Shiva's armour and led his army as a field marshal.

On encountering Tosakanth on the battlefield, Rama declared, "You will soon be finished, along with the scum you accompany."



Ten monkey commanders immediately engaged ten demon generals in close combat, and split open heads and spilled brains. Ten demon princes attempted to avenge them, but other

monkeys, including Hanuman, Sukrib and Ongkot, bested them, ferociously hacking them, their chariots and their steeds to pieces.

Tosakanth hurled his discus to fell monkey



warriors. Rama responded by firing an arrow that shattered the discus and revived fallen monkeys. Arrows thundered back and forth between the two antagonists, producing raging fire, and torrential

rainfall, and violent winds, and awesome floods, before both armies disengaged and withdrew, prepared to resume fighting the morrow.

## Popular Sayings 2

*Tosakanth inspired several Thai expressions.*

*The most common one is Rapanasoon, the Demon King's nickname. Originally, the name was used to describe any ill-mannered lout. In comparatively recent times, Rapanasoon has become a synonym for 'total destruction', probably after the manner in which Tosakanth customarily fought.*

*Awesome damage trailed by a typhoon is Rapanasoon. Complete annihilation of any military combat unit is Rapanasoon. The destructive flattening of an orchard during a violent thunderstorm is Rapanasoon. Highway accidents in which carnage ensures no survivors is also Rapanasoon.*

*The incident when Shiva hurled an elephant tusk into Tosakanth's chest as punishment for maltreating his brother, Kuperan, when stealing the chariot, Busabok, gave the Demon King another nickname, Chang Korance (Large-tusked elephant). Chang Koranee is used to describe any villainous character of particularly low intent.*

## More Demon Allies

Tosakanth invited his close friends, the brothers and rulers of other demon kingdoms, Mulapalam and Sahasadecha, to help fight Rama. After feasting them, Tosakanth led his two allies onto the battlefield. A thunderstorm arose. Lightning struck Tosakanth's chariot. Sahasadecha opined it a bad omen, and convinced Tosakanth it was best he return to his palace.

Monkey warriors were terrified of Sahasadecha. The demon's awesome appearance stemmed from his one thousand heads and two thousand arms. They, combined with his mountainous volume, made him appear as impregnable as any fortress. Monkey warriors fled in every direction, leaving only Rama, Lakshman and monkey generals to face the enemy.

When Sahasadecha saw the puny opposition, he felt insulted, and decided to withdraw, leaving the battlefield to Mulapalam and his troops. Mulapalam managed to persuade Sahasadecha things were not as simple as they appeared. Sahasadecha agreed to remain nearby and advised Mulapalam to seek and kill whichever brother, Rama or Lakshman, he preferred. Sahasadecha would later deal with the remaining brother and, if possible, also kill Pipek.

Lakshman fought Mulapalam, and after extended and ferocious combat, killed him.

## Hanuman's Deception

Pipek opined that news of Mulapalam's death would quickly reach Sahasadecha, and provoke his swift retaliation. The thousand-headed demon possessed an extremely potent club that could kill opponents and revive allies. Sahasadecha would be rendered considerably less fearsome if the club

could be taken away from him.

Hanuman changed himself into a petite white monkey, and jumped in front of Sahasadecha's chariot when the demon raced to the battlefield, leading warriors to avenge his slain brother.

Hanuman fabricated a shameless hard luck story, cataloguing indignities suffered at the hands of monkey warriors and humans. Hanuman described gross misfortune, humiliating servitude, near starvation, frequent beatings and total homelessness, among other humiliations, before expressing delight Sahasadecha would fight erst-while tormentors.

Sahasadecha took pity on the white monkey, and allowed the creature to share his chariot as his army thundered towards the battlefield. Hanuman emoted, tearful white relatives might perish, yet laughing that Rama, Lakshman and monkey tormentors would soon die.

Hanuman flattered and fooled Sahasadecha into giving him the magic club so that he might fight by the demon's side. Evidently, a surfeit of heads did not compensate for a lack of brains. On receiving the club, Hanuman immediately enlarged himself to colossal size. Sahasadecha's chariot collapsed beneath Hanuman's weight. Demons immediately attacked Hanuman, but he slayed them all. Sahasadecha attempted to snatch back his powerful club.

"Monkey, you have tricked me into relinquishing my prized asset," he complained. "You are too cowardly to fight me without it."

"This club?" Hanuman replied contemptuously. "I don't need it."

Hanuman broke the club into pieces and threw them at Sahasadecha, before stabbing the demon with his trident, and coiling him up, immobilised,



captive, in his tail.

Hanuman flew to the monkey army to display the dying demon. Monkeys assembled to watch the monster laboriously breathe his last. Drawn-out sighs escaped one thousand mouths to herald death. Hanuman buried his trident in Sahasadecha's neck, whereupon one thousand severed heads rolled like marbles across the ground.

## The Sunbeam Demon

Tosakanth mourned the brothers' deaths, and prepared to battle himself the following morning with the enemy.

A counsellor suggested Tosakanth enlist the assistance of his nephew, Saeng Athit. Tosakanth agreed. His nephew was prepared to fight the following morning, and promised his uncle either to prevail or die in the attempt.

Pipek warned Rama and Lakshman that Saeng Athit was a formidable opponent. Tada Brahma had given the demon a diamond which emitted searing rays to destroy his enemies. Saeng Athit's soothsayer, Djitrapaicee, would certainly be entrusted with obtaining the diamond from Tada Brahma in Heaven. It would be most advantageous

if the allies could deny Saeng Athit such possession.

Pipek himself assumed Djitrapairee's form so that Ongkot could duplicate the soothsayer's appearance. Once Ongkot had fashioned a credible likeness, he flew to Heaven to pay obeisance to Tada Brahma. He explained that Tosakanth waged war. Saeng Athit, allied with his uncle, requested use of his diamond. It was willingly given. Ongkot returned to Earth and resumed his original form.

Saeng Athit and Rama fought on the battlefield. After Rama frustrated his every move, Saeng Athit realised that the humans were extremely powerful, and that it would be necessary to deploy his powerful diamond. Djitrapairee was sent to Heaven to fetch the diamond. He returned empty-handed, informing Saeng Athit that Tada Brahma had been deceived and had given the diamond to an impostor.

Saeng Athit realised Pipek had betrayed his secret to Rama. He was obliged to fight without his favourite weapon.

Before long, Saeng Athit, Djitrapairee and their demon warriors all lay dead.

Angels rejoiced and praised the victors.

## Tosakanth Fights Again

Tosakanth was infuriated by his continual losses, of warriors, of allies and of friends, and led Longka's largest army onto the battlefield.

Tosakanth and Rama clashed again as demons and monkeys engaged in combat. Tosakanth used his twenty arms to murderous effect, scything enemies to the ground. Rama retaliated with magic arrows which revived fallen monkeys and slayed demons. Fortunes waxed and waned. Tosakanth used his diamond discus, Rama his bow and

arrows. Gradually, the allies gained the upper hand. Tosakanth was felled by one of Rama's arrows. Removal necessitated seven lengthy and powerful incantations.

At sunset, Tosakanth and his much depleted force straggled home, while Rama celebrated victory.



## More Demon Allies

Montho reminded Tosakanth that his friends, Sataloong and Treemek, had not fought for Longka. Both mighty demons were duly summoned to assist.

The demons were both struck down by arrows unleashed by Rama and Lakshman. Sataloong died instantly. Treemek was badly wounded, but managed to remove the arrow before escaping to Badan. There he sought refuge in the city of the black Serpent King, Kala Naga.

Kala Naga said, "Rama is Vishnu. He came from Heaven specifically to destroy demons. I cannot protect you here. You must leave quickly. You may fly through my kingdom. No more. Make for Mount Djakrawan. Reduce yourself to the size of a dust mote. Leave quickly."

Treemek flew away and did as suggested, reducing his body to minute proportions in the vicinity of Mount Djakrawan, before concealing himself inside a grain of sand.

Pipek employed his clairvoyant powers and informed Rama Treemek had fled to Badan and sought refuge with Kala Naga. Hanuman left in pursuit, and threatened the Serpent King with violence before successfully tracing Treemek to his grain of sand and, killing the demon, completing the task the arrow had begun.

## Tosakanth Frustrated

As before, Montho advised Tosakanth to avoid further loss and bloodshed by returning Sita to Rama.

Tosakanth's infatuation with Sita remained all-consuming, and he adamantly refused. Instead, he visited his jewelled pavilion beside Mount Nilakala. There he intended initiating rites to render himself and his warriors invincible. Concentrated meditation over seven days and seven nights would make Tosakanth's body as hard as diamonds. No weapon would be able to wound him. Moreover, Tosakanth would be able to point his diamond finger, with fatal effect, at anyone he wished. And sprinkling lustral water on his warriors would render them immortal.

Demon soldiers were ordered to excavate a cave at the mountain base. Tosakanth inspected the newly formed cavern, and ordered soldiers to block the entrance with camouflaged rocks once he was inside. Once ensconced within, Tosakanth cast such a powerful spell that neither angels nor garudas would be able to dislodge the rocks.

Monkeys wondered why battlefield hostilities had ceased. Rama learned from Pipek that Tosakanth

was sequestered somewhere on Mount Nilakala, hardening his body to diamond strength. Rama ordered Hanuman, Ongkot and Nila Non to locate Tosakanth and disrupt the ceremony forthwith.

On reaching the mountain, the three monkeys successfully located Tosakanth's cave, but were unable to remove rocks from the entrance. Hanuman returned to ask Pipek how entrance might be gained.

Pipek informed Hanuman that dirty water in which a female demon had washed her feet would loosen rocks sufficiently to make entry possible. Hanuman promptly flew to Longka to seek Benjakai, his wife, and request such water. Benjakai was delighted to see Hanuman and gladly provided the water he needed. When Benjakai became amorous, Hanuman caressed and briefly embraced his wife before leaving. He simply lacked time to make love. Benjakai wept.

Hanuman promised to return when victory had been achieved, and returned to his waiting colleagues. After the required water had been sprinkled on the rocks, the monkeys were able to push them aside and gain entrance into the cave.

Tosakanth sat there, apparently asleep, actually in deep meditation. The monkeys tried waking him. They removed his weapons and manhandled him. Tosakanth opened his eyes, aware they attempted to interrupt his meditation. His consciousness resided deep within his being. He remained aware of but impervious to their meddlesome attentions.

Finally, Hanuman decided it was necessary to bring Montho to see her husband in order to break his concentration. Hanuman abducted Montho from Longka and brought her before the meditating demon.

"Here is your wife," Hanuman declared. "Did



you not once share her with another monkey? Pali by name! Open your eyes! Look!”

Montho implored Tosakanth. “Beloved, save me from these wretched animals.”

Tosakanth became aware of Montho’s voice, and opened his eyes. His wife was being molested by three monkeys. One brazenly caressed her thighs. Another stroked her cheeks. A third fondled her breasts, judging their weight and volume.

The sight was too much for Tosakanth. He leapt to his feet and chased the lascivious beasts from the cave. The monkeys laughed gleefully at their success.

Tosakanth’s ceremony had been disrupted.

Tosakanth was unable to resume his meditation. He comforted Montho before returning with her to Longka.

## More Demon Allies

Other demon rulers, Satasoon and Wirunchambang, elected to fight on Tosakanth’s behalf.

Satasoon possessed many celestial weapons awarded him by angels. On the battlefield, Satasoon demanded angels send him such weapons. Monkey warriors concealed themselves in clouds to catch weapons that rained down. Not a single weapon reached Satasoon. He angrily concluded angels had betrayed him. Satasoon fought with Hanuman, who received from monkeys in the clouds the demon’s confiscated weapons. Eventually, Hanuman decapitated Satasoon.

Wirunchambang saw how Satasoon had been tricked, and led his troops to attack. He rendered himself and his soldiers invisible, to little avail. Wirunchambang soon realised he was unable to defeat Rama. He knotted his cape, transforming it into his own image. Wirunchambang darkened the sky to facilitate his furtive escape while his false image tirelessly fought. Monkey warriors toiled to destroy it, without success. Even when Rama shot it with a potent arrow, it continued to fight.

In the meantime, Wirunchambang had flown to an ocean cave where he met Wanarin, a beautiful celestial maiden banished by Shiva from Heaven for dereliction of duty. Wanarin suggested Wirunchambang avoid pursuit by concealing himself in the ocean.

## Another Pursuit

Pipek advised Rama to ignore Wirunchambang’s false image and to send Hanuman after the cowardly demon. Rama fired a guiding arrow which Hanuman dutifully followed. He landed at a beachside cave on Mount Akatkiree. After encountering forest

monkeys, and learning a celestial maiden resided in the cave, Hanuman changed himself into a handsome youth.

Hanuman discovered from the beautiful maiden, Wanarin, that she was to reside in the cave until a virile and warlike monkey named Hanuman would visit and return her to Heaven. On hearing that, Hanuman transformed himself back to his original form. He exhaled moons and stars. Wanarin was simply enthralled. She soon succumbed to Hanuman's seductive words, and sensual caresses, and became his wife.

After lovemaking, Hanuman asked Wanarin where he might locate Wirunchambang. Wanarin informed Hanuman the demon had concealed himself somewhere in the ocean. Hanuman gratefully kissed his new wife and flew away.

Hanuman was unable to locate Wirunchambang, but noticed one particular bubble in the ocean foam. The bubble was conspicuously larger than any other, and did not move with the waves. Hanuman enlarged his body to colossal proportions, and strained the surf with his hands. Wirunchambang had concealed himself inside the bubble, and was appalled to see his nemesis.

The demon immediately changed himself back into his original form. Spewing fire, he attacked Hanuman, driving him back into the water. Wirunchambang uttered magical incantations, and the ocean parted beneath his feet. Wirunchambang promptly sank to conceal himself on the ocean floor.

Hanuman responded by extending his tail to awesome length. His tail snaked across the ocean floor, seeking the demon. On locating Wirunchambang, Hanuman's tail coiled itself tightly around the demon's body, and brought him

to the surface. Hanuman hauled him to within reach, took hold of Wirunchambang's feet, spun him above his head, and hurled the demon headlong into a cliff to kill him.

Hanuman celebrated his triumph by making love again to his receptive and ardent new wife, before throwing Wanarin high into the sky to return her to Heaven.

Wirunchambang's battlefield image crumpled into a cape the instant the demon died. Rama knew Hanuman had triumphed, and was pleased when the mighty ape returned with the demon's head.

## Maleewarat's Judgement

Tosakanth sent two nephews to Heaven to invite his great uncle, Maleewarat, to come and judge the dispute between Rama and himself. Maleewarat was universally respected for his fairness and impartiality. Moreover, Maleewarat's tongue had been blessed by Shiva. It was so sacred, it could command and determine anyone's fate.

Tosakanth believed that if Maleewarat could be persuaded Rama was wrong, Maleewarat would curse Rama with sanctified words to ensure Rama's defeat.

Maleewarat came to Earth with attendant angels, and camped mid-way between Longka and Rama's camp, anxious not to favour either side before first carefully examining the evidence.

Hostilities ceased and a truce prevailed as Maleewarat judged the dispute, after carefully listening to detailed testimony from Tosakanth, Rama and Sita in the presence of monkey allies, demons, gods and celestial beings.

Rama's and Sita's testimony tallied and bore the sweet ring of truth, whereas Tosakanth evidently lied. Tosakanth was clearly guilty of

stealing another's wife. Gods unanimously decided right was on Rama's side. Accordingly, Maleewarat judged the case in Rama's favour. Maleewarat cursed Tosakanth instead. Maleewarat declared Tosakanth responsible for destroying all of Brahma's descendants with his incorrigible evil.

Tosakanth was furious, and returned to Longka with Sita, determined to take revenge.

## Another Ploy Thwarted

Tosakanth initiated a ceremony to destroy the divinities who had supported Rama. Tosakanth's father, Lasatian, had taught him how to burn effigies of the gods for three days. If appropriate incantations were chanted, gods so cursed would die. Indra, who had repeatedly assisted Rama, and Maleewarat, were Tosakanth's immediate targets. Other gods would die later.

Tosakanth intended at the same time to temper his diamond spear in the fire. If Shiva died, the god's awesome powers would be transferred to the spear. Tosakanth would become invincible, and able to slay his enemies with ease.

Tosakanth prepared a suitable fire and inserted effigies of the celestials in the flames. He began chanting appropriate verses as the heat grew fiercer.

Angels informed Shiva of Tosakanth's actions and evident intentions. Shiva summoned Pali, who had been reborn a god, and ordered him to disrupt Tosakanth's evil ceremony. Pali reassumed the monkey form in which he had ruled Khit Khin, and flew to Longka. On locating Tosakanth, Pali deliberately darkened the sky.

When Tosakanth opened his eyes and saw a monkey standing before him, he believed it was Hanuman who had come to punish him. Tosakanth

seized a javelin. Pali wielded a sword. Pali deflected Tosakanth's javelin in mid-flight. Tosakanth was struck by Pali's sword and forced to flee back to Longka.

Pali extinguished the flames of Tosakanth's fire. He threw the burned effigies into a river where they sank completely from view. Pali returned to Heaven, satisfied Tosakanth's evil scheme had been thwarted.

## Death Averted

Pipek foresaw that Tosakanth would seek to destroy him, blaming his brother for all his woes. Pipek sought Rama's special protection, claiming Tosakanth would attempt to kill him that day on the battlefield.

Rama assigned Lakshman to guard Pipek, and prepared to face Tosakanth. Both combatants fired arrows. Tosakanth's felled monkeys. Rama's revived monkeys and felled demons.

Tosakanth sighted Pipek in Lakshman's chariot, and hastened towards him. Lakshman's arrow shattered Tosakanth's chariot. Tosakanth hurled his discus. It trailed fire above the monkey army. Lakshman's second arrow extinguished the flames and sent the discus tumbling into demon warriors.

Tosakanth hurled his diamond spear at Pipek. Lakshman attempted to intercept it with his club, but succeeded merely in deflecting the spear into himself. Lakshman toppled, seriously wounded.

Rama unleashed an arrow at Tosakanth. The missile struck its intended target, but fell out after Tosakanth voiced appropriate incantations. Tosakanth left the battlefield to return to Longka. Rama hurried to attend to his fallen brother.

Pipek told Rama that Lakshman's revival could be achieved solely with a special medicine.



The herbs Treechawa and Sangkoranee would have to be mixed with the dung of Shiva's steed, the Bull King, Usaparat, in a mortar belonging to Kala Naga, and with a pestle Tosakanth used as a pillow. Everything would need to be collected, mixed and administered within the space of one night for the remedy to be efficacious.

Hanuman was able to collect all the necessary ingredients within the allotted time. In so doing, while in Tosakanth's palace, Hanuman stealthily tied the sleeping Tosakanth's hair to that of his wife, Montho, and sealed their bondage with a curse. Hanuman tattooed on their foreheads the message that, in order to separate their hair, Montho would have to strike Tosakanth's head three times.

When Tosakanth woke, he asked his spiritual teacher, Khorbut, to separate him from Montho. Khorbut was not able to untangle their hair, either by spell, incantation or physical means. Finally, Tosakanth had to endure the humiliation of allowing Montho to slap his head, thrice, so they could be parted.

Lakshman was saved.

The war continued.

## The Voracious Giant

Tosakanth summoned his half-brother, Tepanasun, lord of Djakrawan city, to join his fight.

The gigantic demon flew to Longka with many warriors, and immediately engaged Rama and Lakshman in battle. Monkeys split heads and disembowelled demons until the ground turned red. Tepanasun fired an arrow which killed many monkeys. Rama fired his arrow, reviving fallen monkeys and killing many demons.

Tepanasun enlarged his body to mountainous proportions, and sank beneath his own weight into the ground, up to his chest. His broad mouth completely blocked the horizon. His tongue concealed the sun. Tepanasun surrounded monkey regiments with his arms and drew all the warriors inside his mouth. It was so dark, the monkeys could offer no resistance. Tepanasun swallowed the monkeys alive without even bothering to chew them.

Pipek urged Rama to sever Tepanasun's limbs. Sukrib cut off Tepanasun's arms. The demon began resisting with his feet. Rama unleashed his mightiest arrow to kill the demon.

When Tepanasun's abdomen was cut open, the entire monkey army emerged, stupefied. Indra revived them by sprinkling holy water.

## Montho's Elixir

Montho believed she could assist Tosakanth by preparing a life-restoring elixir similar to that which Shiva's wife, Uma, had prepared in Heaven. Montho had often watched Uma sprinkle magic water over corpses to restore life. Were Montho able to duplicate the elixir and revive slain demons, Longka might be saved.

Tosakanth heartily approved of her plan.

Montho informed her husband she would need to be celibate for the magic water to be sufficiently potent. Tosakanth should restrain his carnal impulses until such time as all demon corpses had been revived, and could do battle again.

Montho duly constructed a special pavilion for her ceremony, and commenced preparations for producing the magic water.

## Elephantine Assistance

Totsakireewan and Totsakiriton, Tosakanth's sons by the Himapan forest elephant cow, had the bodies of demons and elephantine heads replete with large ears, tusks and trunks.

The two sons arrived in Longka to assist their father as Montho commenced her magic water preparations. Tosakanth's elephantine offspring entered the battlefield with their father, and fought bravely. However, they, too, were felled with numerous other demons. Tosakanth was enraged, and roared with such awesome volume that monkeys' eardrums were almost shattered.

Tosakanth hurled his discus, which killed innumerable monkeys. Rama responded by firing another arrow that revived all dead monkeys and killed remaining demons, except Tosakanth.

Tosakanth helplessly watched losses mount until seven days had passed, and Montho completed her magic elixir. Then Tosakanth rode his war elephant among demon corpses littering the battlefield, sprinkling them with Montho's magic water. All who had been slain were immediately restored to life.

Sukrib, Ongkot, Hanuman and Lakshman watched the ominous development. Rama unleashed his most powerful arrow to kill revived demon corpses again. Tosakanth responded by

sprinkling them with Montho's magic elixir to restore them back to life for a second time.

## A Queen Deceived

Pipek urged that Montho's magic water preparation be disrupted forthwith. If the demons could be repeatedly revived, war would become interminable, and the allies might even face exhaustion and eventual defeat.

Hanuman transformed himself until he resembled in every detail Tosakanth. Nila Non transformed himself to become the Demon King's war elephant. Chombhupan became its mahout. Monkey warriors under their command transformed themselves into demon soldiers before the party departed for Longka.

On entering Longka's city gates, the disguised Hanuman roared, "Victory is ours! The enemy are dead! Their army is destroyed! Everyone may rejoice in safety!"

Spontaneous victory celebrations erupted. Delighted citizens were relieved hostilities had ceased. Enthusiastic crowds accompanied Hanuman's war elephant to the pavilion where Montho continued her production of the magic water.

Hanuman approached Montho. "Beloved," he declared, "your magic elixir has worked miracles. Every demon rose again from the dead. The enemy has been defeated. Only Pipek survives. We have triumphed. You may cease forthwith your noble and priceless efforts."

Montho opened her eyes to discover Tosakanth smiling at her.

"Beloved," he said. "Come from this place. I yearn to sample your love again."

Hanuman led the lovestruck woman into the



palace, and there enjoyed carnal relations with someone who innocently believed she ardently coupled, both in love and celebration, with her real husband. While she and Hanuman made love, Chombhupan's soldiers completely demolished the pavilion where Montho had prepared her magic water.

After a suitable interval, Hanuman took his leave of Montho.

"You must forgive me, beloved. But Pipek must be dealt with. When I return, we shall be reunited in love."

Montho blushed with pleasure, and promised she would spend intervening hours preparing herself for her husband's return.

On the battlefield, Tosakanth exhausted Montho's magic elixir, and saw his warriors repeatedly fall to Rama's powerful arrows. No matter how many of the enemy Tosakanth despatched, Rama was able to revive them merely

by firing his arrows across the battlefield.

Finally, Tosakanth was forced to retreat, and hurried back to Longka. Montho was frightened by the way he had changed from being a loving, considerate and affectionate husband to an irate and vengeful one.

"Why have you ceased preparing the elixir?" he shouted.

"You yourself told me to cease."

"I? When?" angrily.

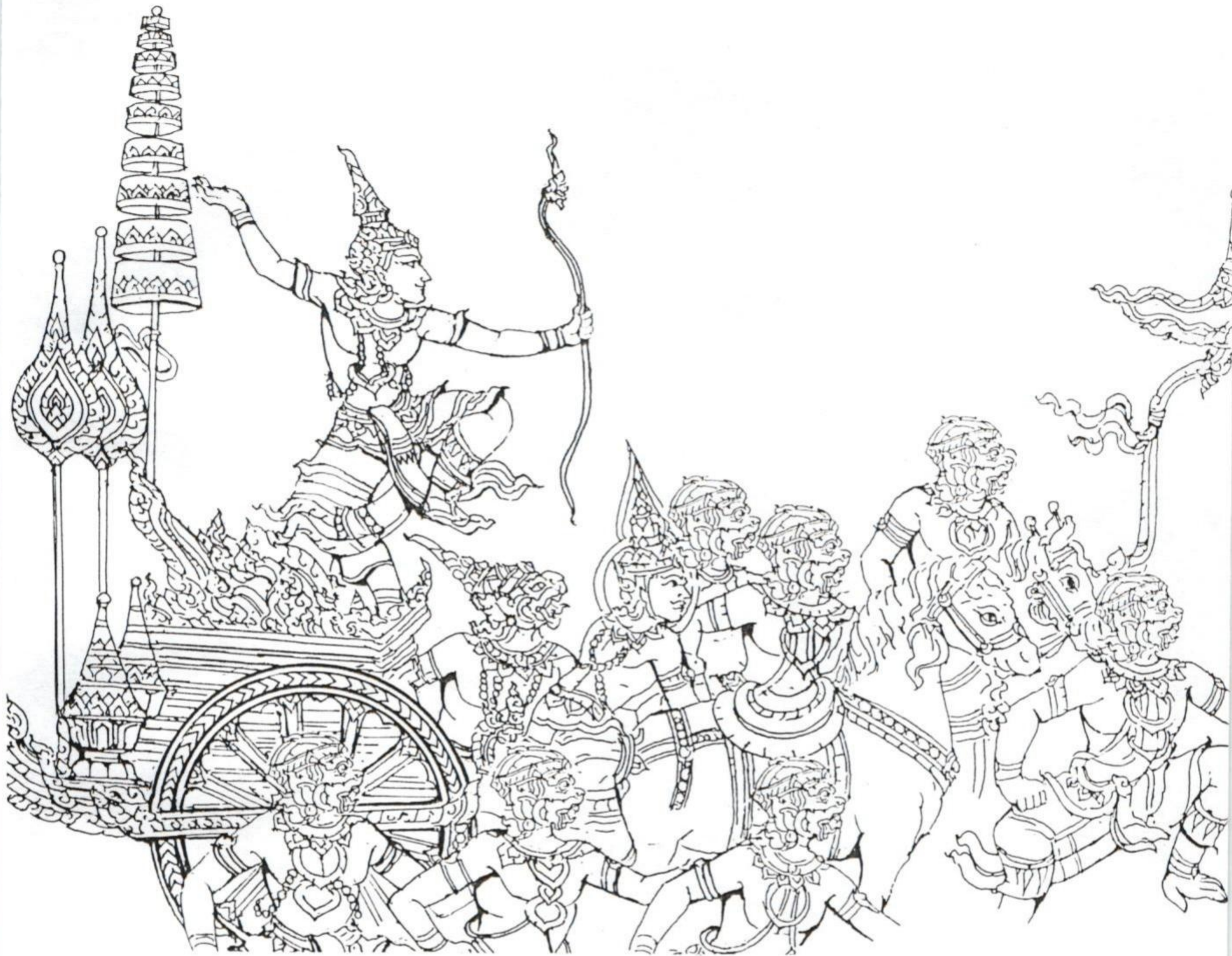
"When you returned earlier."

"I never returned earlier," vexed.

Montho realised she had been cruelly deceived. The one with whom she had so ardently made love had not been her real husband.

She was filled with remorse, and suddenly swooned.

The concerned Tosakanth was able to coax the entire story from her. He realised Montho had been innocently duped, and tenderly forgave her.

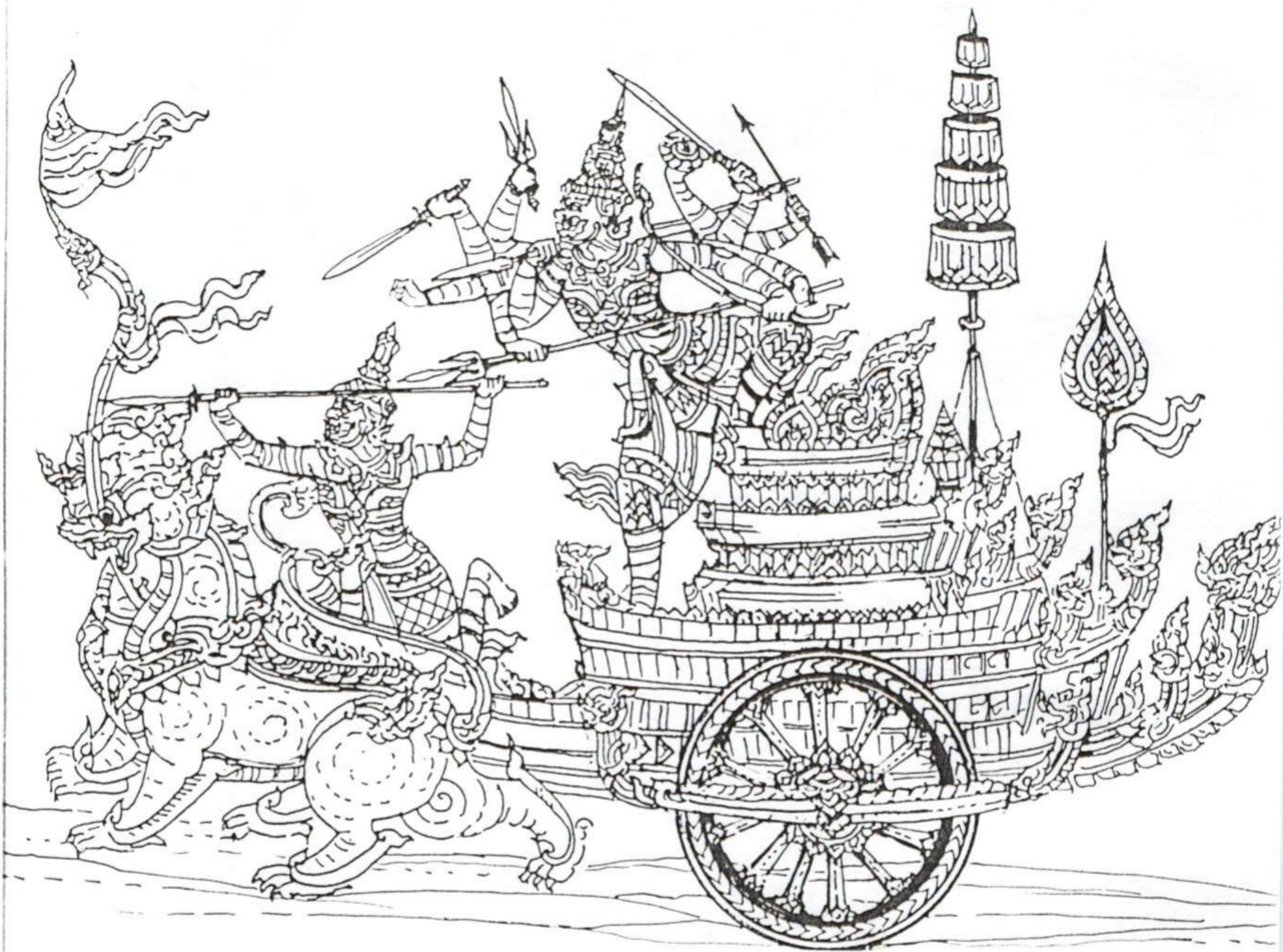


## Rama & Tosakanth Fight

Rama and Tosakanth clashed on the battlefield again. Rama shattered Tosakanth's chariot with an arrow. Tosakanth grabbed Rama's chariot and attempted to overturn it. Rama clubbed the Demon King into defending himself. Rama cut off all of Tosakanth's twenty arms. New limbs immediately grew as replacements. Tosakanth fired a serpent

arrow. Monkeys fled from poisonous onslaught. Rama summoned Garuda to help. Rama fired another arrow that cut Tosakanth in two. Ten heads hurtled through the air. His trunk toppled over. Severed parts sought each other and immediately reunited.

Tosakanth fired an arrow that passed straight



through Rama's body. Magic incantations sufficed to render Rama whole again.

Tosakanth had successfully employed his bow in many battles, but the monkeys and men refused to be bested. He wearied of the fight. He ached all over. He withdrew from the battlefield to return to Longka.

Rama was equally discouraged. He had done

enough to kill Tosakanth one dozen times, yet still the Demon King survived.

Rama asked Pipek why he was unable to kill Tosakanth. The seer revealed the secret of the Demon King's invulnerability, namely that the seer, Khorbut, had removed Tosakanth's heart from his body, and kept the organ in a secret place.

## Hanuman Defects

Hanuman volunteered to try and obtain Tosakanth's heart. He requested that Ongkot be permitted to accompany him. Rama agreed. Before the monkeys left, Hanuman whispered to Rama that Rama should never believe anyone were Hanuman's loyalty ever called into question.

Hanuman and Ongkot flew to the forest hut of Khorbut. The surprised hermit asked them why they had come.

Hanuman answered for them both. "I am Hanuman. This is Ongkot, son of Pali, who formerly ruled Khit Khin. We have served Rama well, but we are tired of orders and complaints, and no rewards. We wish to obtain a more benevolent master. We have heard that Tosakanth treats his warriors well, and wish to serve him."

Khorbut said, "Approach the king yourselves. Why do you come to me?"

Hanuman said, "I dare not approach Tosakanth alone. Once, in the service of Rama, I foolishly killed one thousand offspring and burned down Longka. I appreciate I erred, but Tosakanth might slay me on sight. However, with your protection, he might relent."

Khorbut nodded. "That is perhaps so. The king can use good warriors," he mused. "I will take you to him."

Hanuman thanked the sage. Together with Ongkot, they journeyed through the forest towards Longka. As they travelled, Hanuman mentioned Tosakanth's heart.

"The traitor, Pipek, has informed Rama that you are the custodian of the great king's heart."

Khorbut admitted that was true.

"Are you not afraid those of ill intentions will not steal it during your absence?"

"It is buried. It is quite safe."

Hanuman shook his head. "You should not underestimate the great king's enemies. They are cunning. They could excavate half the forest during our absence. I believe it would be much wiser to keep the heart with your person."

Khorbut experienced doubts. Hanuman's reasoning appeared sensible. The more he thought about it, the more he believed it was better to be safe than sorry.

Khorbut returned to fetch Tosakanth's heart.

## Tosakanth's Acceptance

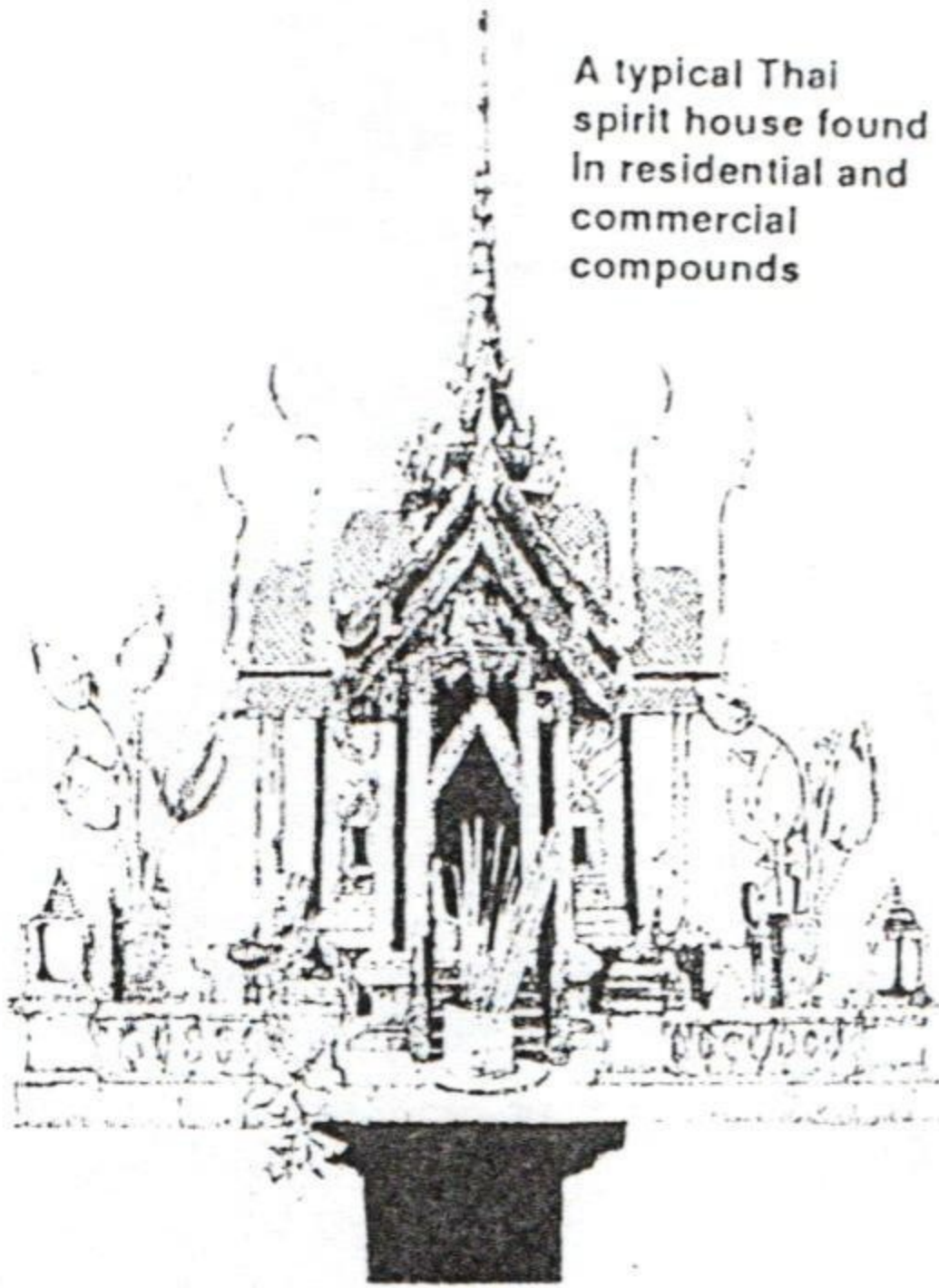
On approaching Longka, Hanuman suggested Khorbut entrust Ongkot with Tosakanth's heart. Calamity might ensue if the organ re-entered Tosakanth's body and rendered the Demon King vulnerable.

Khorbut accepted the suggestion. He and Hanuman left Ongkot waiting outside the city gates with the glass receptacle containing Tosakanth's heart.

Hanuman accompanied Khorbut into the city. Citizens were simply terrified by Hanuman's unexpected presence, and fled in every direction. Hanuman fretted aloud that Ongkot might be arrested unless city guards knew him to be under Khorbut's protection. Hanuman suggested he return briefly to the city gates to inform the guards. Khorbut agreed.

Hanuman magically conjured a second glass receptacle, identical in weight and appearance to the one containing Tosakanth's heart, and handed it to Ongkot. Hanuman instructed Ongkot to bury the original receptacle on the ocean shore, and to give the copy to Khorbut when the hermit reappeared. When Ongkot saw Hanuman flying,

A typical Thai spirit house found in residential and commercial compounds



## Magic Connections

*Magic, spells and curses are recurring themes throughout the Ramakien. Such phenomena evidently enjoy a long history in Thailand. Sorcerers, witches, necromancers and harbourers of familiar spirits are specifically mentioned in Ayudhyan laws dating from the 1350s. Their methods of preparing love philtres and burying wax images of those they wished to harm would have been familiar to European contemporaries.*

*Such efforts involved black magic, broadly meaning any wilful and systematic attempt, by numerous methods of different origins, to attain mental, physical or spiritual ascendancy over immediate environs, fellow human beings or*

*circumstances, whether by psychic exertions or by employing spells and incantations.*

*Magic customarily involved the assistance of powerful, oftentimes virulent forces referred to by the all-embracing term 'spirits'. Widespread belief in such forces is visible, in its mildest form, in miniature spirit houses, originally modelled after Brahman shrines, and containing model Brahman deities, found in residential and commercial compounds throughout Thailand. Resident spirits are propitiated with regular offerings in the hope they will provide physical protection and good luck.*

*The Ramakien is frequently invoked in local beliefs. During southern Thailand's Tham Kwan ceremony, which encourages and strengthens a person's spirit, Ramakien characters are referred to in prayerlike recitations chanted during appropriate ceremonial.*

*Moreover, during house purification ceremonies in southern Thailand, auxiliary to Buddhist ritual, Ramakien characters including Rama, Lakshman, Tosakanth, Pipek and Hanuman are invited to be present to witness the proceedings.*

*Certain Thai magic spells enjoy Ramakien connections in name.*

*They include Narai Kleun Jak (Vishnu swallows his discus) which is supposed to strike terror into the enemy, or win cases in court; Narai Khai Jak (Vishnu disgorges his discus) which is believed to make childbirth easy; and Narai Plang Rup (Vishnu's disguise) which is meant to protect oneself on the battlefield.*

and exhaling stars, Ongkot was to retrieve the original receptacle, whereupon they would return together to Rama's camp.

Hanuman hurried back to the waiting Khorbut, and accompanied the hermit into Tosakanth's palace. Tosakanth was enraged by Hanuman's sudden appearance and totally unexpected presence, but listened carefully when Khorbut explained the mighty ape wished to defect. Khorbut listed Hanuman's reasons, and opined the white monkey would become a powerful ally in Tosakanth's fight against Rama.

Hanuman contritely apologised for his past offences against Longka. Tosakanth solicited the opinions of court nobles. All agreed Hanuman should be accepted as an ally forthwith.

Ongkot waited outside the city for Khorbut, and handed him the substituted receptacle when he reappeared. The hermit suspected nothing, and returned to his forest home. Ongkot flew to the ocean shore where he stood guard over Tosakanth's real heart.

Despite Montho's instinctive misgivings, Tosakanth accepted Hanuman as a genuine ally, and treated him as a son, awarding the white monkey Indrachit's war chariot and weapons. Hanuman promised in return to take to the battlefield the following day, and to fight whoever appeared.

## Fights & Rewards

Tosakanth placed Indrachit's troops under Hanuman's command. Pipek told Rama that Hanuman would lead demons onto the battlefield. Rama remembered what Hanuman had told him, and remained confident, contrary appearances notwithstanding, of the white monkey's loyalty.




Hanuman watched Lakshman lead monkeys into battle. He detached himself from demons, declaring he would face men and monkeys alone.

Hanuman confronted Lakshman, shouting, "I have a new master! I now live in a king's palace, not merely the forest! I wage war now not for you, but against you!"

Lakshman was incensed by such apparent treachery, and heartily cursed his erstwhile ally.

Hanuman and Lakshman exchanged blows. Hanuman eluded Lakshman's efforts by the merest fraction, while making sure his own efforts were



not effective. He was able to skilfully sustain the illusion that he and Lakshman fought savagely, without either becoming hurt.

Consequently, the fight proved inconclusive. Finally, Hanuman disengaged, claiming he would triumph the morrow, before leading troops back to Longka.

Demon soldiers were unanimously grateful they had neither fought nor died. All effusively praised their new commander. Tosakanth was pleased to learn of Hanuman's deeds, and awarded him all the palaces and treasures of Indrachit. These included his dead son's wife, the beautiful widow, Suwanakanyuma, and renowned concubines.

That night, Suwanakanyuma yielded to Hanuman's affectionate embraces and enjoyed again the physical pleasures of marriage when she and the white ape made passionate love.

## Trickery Revealed

Tosakanth treated Hanuman kindly the following morning, suggesting he dally with palace women, to restore his strength and rest after strenuous battlefield exertions.

Hanuman demurred. "Victory should be within reach. Accompany me today. I will bring you both Rama and Lakshman."

Rama and Lakshman had already assembled their warriors on the battlefield when Tosakanth and Hanuman arrived with demon troops.

Hanuman repeated he would bring Rama and Lakshman to Tosakanth, and rose into the air. Once in full flight, he exhaled stars. Ongkot saw him. Ongkot immediately retrieved Tosakanth's heart and flew to meet Hanuman. Together, the monkeys flew to Rama and explained how they had obtained

the Demon King's heart.

Hanuman then flew away, and landed in the space dividing the opposing armies. Tosakanth believed Hanuman returned with the two humans. He was crestfallen when Hanuman raised high above his head the crystal receptacle for everyone to see.

Tosakanth realised he had been foully tricked. He pleaded with Hanuman to return his heart.

Hanuman replied that would happen only if Sita was returned forthwith. Failure to return her would ensure Tosakanth's death.

Tosakanth declared, "Never! I have fought for love! I will die for love! The Three Worlds know this! I will never return Sita! If I am denied victory in this existence, I shall obtain it in the next!"

Hanuman said, "I should crush this receptacle to pieces."

"I do not fear death," Tosakanth said. "But first I will take leave of Longka. I will fight on the battlefield tomorrow."

## Farewells

Montho was shocked by Tosakanth's grim demeanour when he entered her bedchamber.

"Hanuman has obtained my heart," he said. "I am no longer invulnerable. I shall die tomorrow."

"Make friends of your enemies. Return Sita."

"Never. Death is preferable to life without honour."

Tosakanth ordered trusted warriors to prepare to accompany him the following morning. Montho and palace women wept for Tosakanth throughout the night, suffusing the palace with great melancholy.

The following morning, Tosakanth transformed himself, assuming the appearance of a

celestial luminary, rivalling Indra in magnificence, and bade his women farewell. Montho embraced him and begged, once again, he return Sita.

Again he refused. He remained resolute and whipped his chariot forward. Women ran alongside, blinded by grief. Some beat their breasts. Others threw themselves weeping to the ground.

Ruling Longka had been pleasurable. Tosakanth grieved for his jewelled palaces, for his beloved Montho, for the host of concubines, for the pleasure gardens, for the diversions and joys he had not and would never experience with Sita.

His warriors were sad. No breeze animated trees or pennants. Birds did not sing. Lions did not roar. The sun did not shine. Grey clouds filled the sky. Tosakanth knew the time for regrets had long since passed. He mercilessly whipped his steeds forwards. Thunder rent the heavens as the Demon King sped towards his last battle.

## Victory

Shiva sent Garuda to Earth. Rama prepared fortifications. Sukrib ordered his troops into line. The war neared its final outcome.

Monkey warriors cheered the signal to attack. Demons simply refused to fight. Death scared them. Some fled into the forest. Others hid beneath battlefield corpses. Others again transformed themselves into birds and flew away.

Monkey warriors attacked and mercilessly slaughtered every demon within range. The entire demon army soon perished. Only Tosakanth survived. He fired an arrow at Rama. It proved ineffective. Tosakanth realised his life neared its end. Rama hesitated at unleashing his arrow, particularly since Tosakanth had assumed such magnificent form. Hanuman insisted Rama release

his arrow to pierce the Demon King's disguise.

Rama fired. His arrow sped unerringly towards its target, emitting awesome rolls of thunder. The arrow struck Tosakanth. Felled, Tosakanth immediately resumed his original form. With ten heads and twenty arms, Tosakanth writhed in pain. He saw his brother, Pipek. Anger gave way to sadness.

With dying breaths, Tosakanth's first mouth asked, "Pipek, why have you helped slay your own brother?"

Tosakanth's second mouth said, "You are my blood brother. The throne of Longka shall be yours."

Tosakanth's third mouth requested, "Take care of my wives, Montho, Kala Akhee, and the many women of the palace."

The fourth mouth advised, "Serve the kingdom with justice and righteousness."

The fifth mouth said, "Do not be avaricious and dishonourable, as was I."

The sixth mouth requested, "Please forgive me everything. Do not be angry as I now go to Heaven."

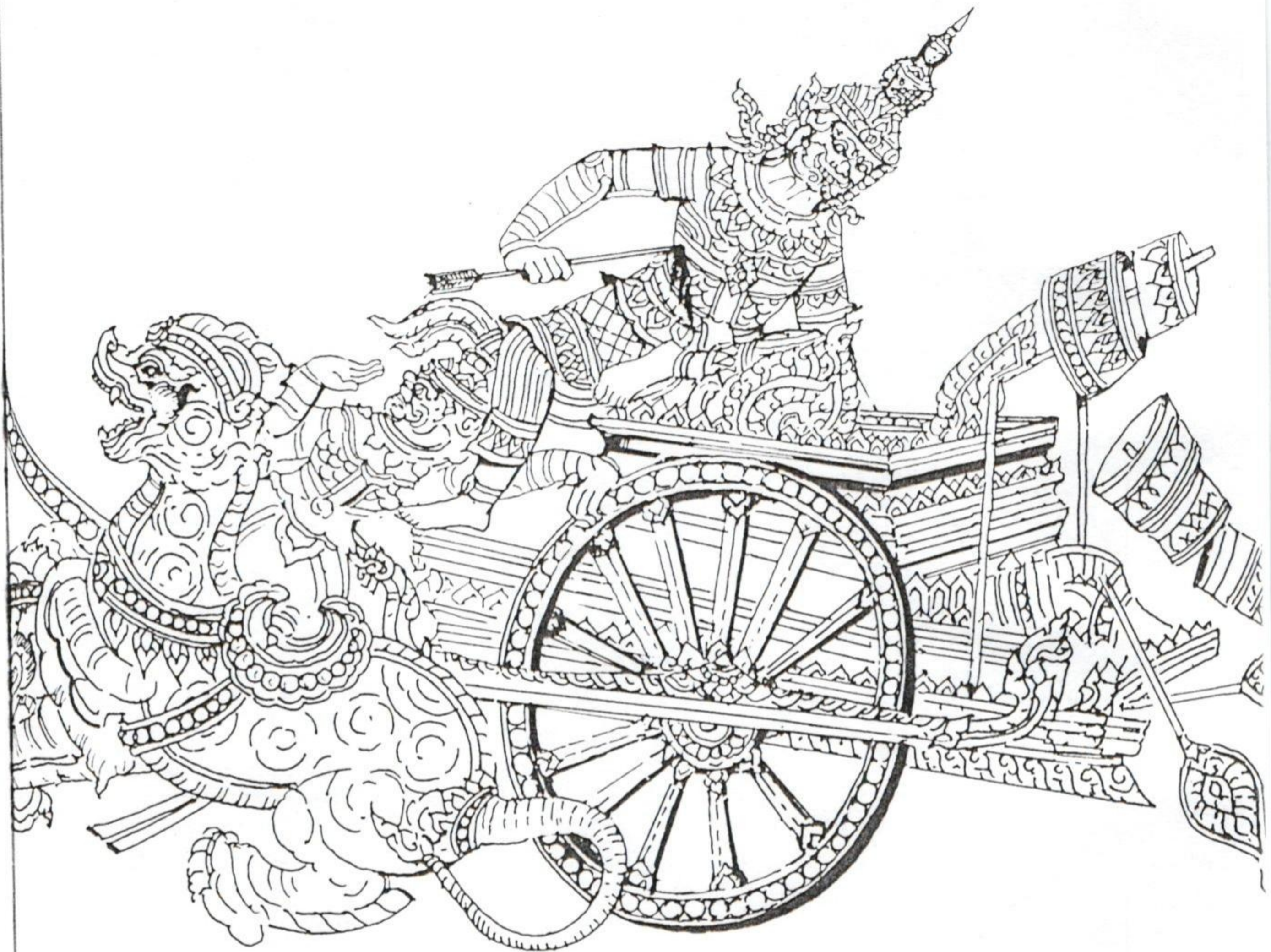
The seventh asked, "Take care of the city. Try to prevent civil war."

The eighth whispered, "I raised you. I want you to be good. I am bad. I am dying. I have caused trouble everywhere."

The ninth mouth softly spoke. "When I am dead, please cremate me according to custom."

The tenth mouth remained silent. The Demon King weakened fast. Hanuman ended Tosakanth's life by crushing the crystal receptacle containing the Demon King's heart. The war was over.

All gods, angels and celestial beings rejoiced in Rama's victory, and liberally showered the battlefield with flowers and fragrant blossoms.



News of Tosakanth's death reached Montho. She led a procession of wives and concubines onto the battlefield where they discovered their beloved's body. Montho was almost mindless with grief. Pipek comforted her. He arranged his brother's body be returned to Longka and prepared for cremation.

Pipek walked behind the coffin to Longka, and then took the chariot, Busabok Kaco, to Kwan garden to fetch Sita. Afterwards, Pipek collected Montho, Kala Akhee, and Indrachit's and Khumpakan's widows before escorting all the women to Morakot Hill to pay homage to Rama, as victor, as husband, and as a god.

Part 5  
**Reunion & Aftermath**

## Fidelity Confirmed



**O**n being returned to Rama after fourteen years' separation, Sita worried that her husband might be suspicious and believe she had succumbed to Tosakanth's advances.

Sita had confided such fears to Pipek.

The seer had said, "Rama has become a stranger to you. And you to him. But worry not. Love survives. Virtue invariably protects the virtuous."

Sita felt relieved. She held back while Pipek presented Tosakanth's womenfolk and relatives to Rama.

Rama had seen Sita, and immediately wanted to embrace her, but appreciated he needed to prove her fidelity and innocence before accepting her again as his wife.

Rama addressed Sita. "I have thought of nothing else but winning you back. Your face is still as beautiful as the full moon. Yet the demon must have rewarded you. Will you show me his precious gifts?"

Sita felt numbed by the hurtful allusions. She experienced deep shame that Rama could ever have doubted her fidelity. She decided that being a woman was difficult. Women were always blamed for everything.

She said, "I was abducted, and compelled to live apart from my husband. It appears doubts remain regarding my fidelity. Let the Three Worlds bear witness. I will walk on fire to prove myself."

Rama fired an arrow heavenwards. It sped through the clouds and thundered into Heaven where Indra, understanding Lakshmi, as Sita, demanded trial by fire, promptly summoned other celestials to bear witness.

Rama waited until celestials had assembled on Morakot Hill before firing another arrow to ignite wood gathered for the trial Sita had demanded.

Sita declared, "I have loved neither Tosakanth nor any man other than my husband. Only my husband has possessed me, body and soul, heart

and mind. If this not be true, let the flames destroy me. If I have observed the fidelity of matrimony, let the flames cool my feet.”

Sita walked slowly across the fire. Beautiful lotus blossoms emerged from the flames to unfold coolly beneath her feet. Thus protected, she crossed safely to the other side of the fire, totally unscathed.

Assembled gods promptly bestowed their blessings.

Rama gratefully led Sita to his throne where, reinstated as his consort, she sat by his side.

## Longka's New Monarch

Rama awarded Pipek the throne of Longka. The seer returned to his capital to prepare Tosakanth's funeral. Rama, Sita and Lakshman were invited to participate in cremation ceremonies. Montho and other palace women walked before them at Rama's request.

After Tosakanth's cremation, Pipek was formally crowned. Treechada was reunited with her husband, and became Pipek's principal queen. Montho came under Pipek's protection as his second queen. Pipek was happy in the palace, and ruled Longka with benign justice, just as his deceased elder brother had requested.

## Trouble

Waiyakasoon and Nilakayasoon, prominent demon warriors, fled to Djakrawan and informed the ruler, Atsakan, of Tosakanth's demise. All three demons wished to avenge the slain Demon King.

Atsakan marched to Longka to destroy Pipek and the humans. Rama's army engaged him. Hanuman fought Atsakan after most demon soldiers had perished. Hanuman pummelled the



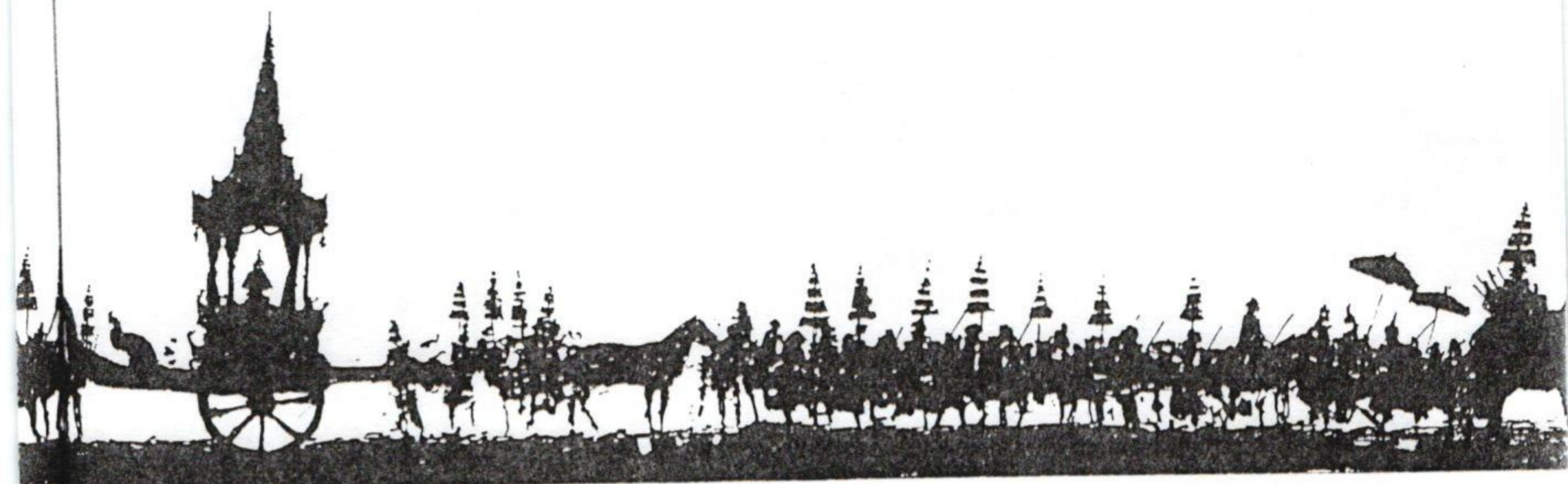
demon into the earth, smashed his chariot, and killed the lions drawing it. Atsakan fired an arrow that pierced thousands of monkeys. Rama revived them with his own arrow, which also cut Atsakan in two. Both halves survived and fought on. Another arrow saw the demon quadrupled. Another arrow saw eight ferocious demons fight. After more arrows, hundreds of demons grappled with the monkeys.

Rama summoned Pipek to explain the phenomena.

“Shiva gave Atsakan the ability to double himself.” Pipek said. “He will continue to double himself in combat. The sole way of overcoming this magic is to drive demon warriors into water.”

Rama unleashed another arrow that descended as one hundred thousand clouds on the demons, shattering them. A celestial whirlwind blew the fragmented demons away into the ocean.

Following victory, Rama assembled his soldiers for the march home. Indra's charioteer returned to Heaven with the chariot Rama had employed during his war with Tosakanth. Rama was anxious to return to Ayudhya. Fourteen years of exile had been completed. Rama was ready to accept his rightful inheritance.



Pipek accompanied Rama to the causeway. There Pipek asked that the link between the mainland and island be destroyed so that ocean waters might again freely flow. Rama marched his armies across the causeway to the mainland before destroying the construction with his mightiest arrow. Once rocks settled in the ocean depths, waters reunited as before.

Pipek returned to Longka, while Rama and his followers entered the forest and made camp for the night, sleeping under cool lunar light.

## Attempted Revenge

Tosakanth's son by Kala Akhee, Banlaikan, had lived with his grandfather, Kala Naga, in Badan since the age of five. Banlaikan had acquired a great deal of knowledge, but had grown increasingly homesick for Longka, particularly after his father had appeared one night in a dream to summon him home.

Banlaikan ascended into the Middle World, and was surprised that demons freely went about their business in Longka. Such serenity appeared wholly unusual. Banlaikan entered Tosakanth's palace at night to ask his mother why Longka appeared so uncharacteristically peaceful.

Kala Akhee tearfully informed her son of Tosakanth's death, the circumstances, and the manner in which his father had died. Her son was furious, and immediately swore to seek revenge. Kala Akhee attempted to dissuade him. On realising the impetuous youth was adamant, Kala Akhee gave Banlaikan a bow and arrow that had belonged to Tosakanth.

"Brahma gave this to your father. It is the only weapon of your father's that remains. It is purportedly the mightiest. If you are determined to avenge him, I wish you to return victorious."

Banlaikan immediately flew across the ocean, seeking traces of the men and their loathsome monkey armies.

Pipek sent word to Rama that Tosakanth's son was in pursuit and sought revenge.

Rama camped forthwith, and Hanuman returned to intercept Banlaikan, with orders to turn him back if a peaceful solution could be found.

Hanuman transformed himself into a water buffalo and happily wallowed in a muddy ditch, awaiting the demon. When Banlaikan passed, he arrogantly asked the water buffalo if he had seen an army of men and monkeys.

Hanuman requested assistance before answer-

ing, explaining he was stuck in the mud. The demon failed to extract him. Hanuman suggested Banlaikan rest and bathe before trying again. The second time, Banlaikan hauled Hanuman onto dry ground.

"Rama is Vishnu," Hanuman declared. "He was born a man solely to kill demons. I advise you to turn back, or he will kill you, too."

Banlaikan was enraged by such presumptuous dogma, but again Hanuman tried to dissuade him from pursuit. Banlaikan's ire mounted.

"Why be angry with me?" Hanuman asked. "I am trying to protect you. If you don't want to listen, fight me. If you can beat a buffalo, perhaps you can beat Rama."

Banlaikan grew even more furious.

"I saved your life, yet you want to fight me! I will kill you!"

The demon drew Tosakanth's bow. Hanuman charged, horns lowered. He changed himself back into his original form when he realised he could not possibly triumph as a buffalo. Hanuman identified himself as being in Rama's service, and attempted to kill the demon with his trident. The weapon's three tines slid ineffectually off Banlaikan's body. Repeated attempts at piercing him proved equally fruitless.

Hanuman recalled Pipek once mentioning that Banlaikan bathed in plant sap to render himself slippery. Hanuman disengaged, and magically created a second Hanuman who continued to fight. Hanuman himself flew into the forest to seek advice from the hermit, Titsapai Muncce.

The hermit said, "I revere and protect life. I cannot tell you how to kill someone."

As he spoke, the old man scooped up sand and let it trickle through his fingers. Hanuman laughed

in comprehension, and returned to where Banlaikan fought Hanuman's double.

Hanuman used sand to cover and dry the demon's body. Finally, Hanuman sank his trident into Banlaikan's chest. Hanuman delivered the demon's head to Rama, whereupon the triumphant army resumed travelling through the forest.

## Triumphant Homecoming

Nilapat, the black monkey who squabbled with Hanuman during the construction of the causeway to Longka, was the viceroy of Khit Khin. On learning of Rama's return, Nilapat made preparations for the victors' arrival and set out with monkey soldiers to greet Rama.

Sukrib invited Rama to spend the night in his palace, to rest before he continued to Ayudhya. Kaeo Dara welcomed the victorious army, delighted to be finally reunited with Sukrib after so many years.

Rama continued his journey the next morning, encountering the hermits Wasit and Wiswamit, and the hunter, Khukhan. Rama was received everywhere he passed with open delight. On nearing home, Rama sent Hanuman and Khukhan ahead to Ayudhya to announce his victorious return.

Bhrot and Satrud had been prepared to immolate themselves, believing Rama was dead. They and the three queens were exhilarated by the unexpected news, and went to greet the victorious army beyond Ayudhya's city gates amid scenes of great rejoicing.

Kaiyakasee, who had been instrumental in Rama's exile, expressed great delight in his return, and sought forgiveness for having caused Rama's banishment.

Rama replied, "Fear not, mother. I return with

love, not hatred. Your son entered the forest not because of your jealousy, but because of divine instructions to destroy demons."

Citizens watching the magnificent procession entering Ayudhya saw the victory chariots of Bhrot and Satrud precede the queens' chariots. Rama and Sita followed in the Busabok Kaeo chariot. Monkey warriors came next, followed by Lakshman who led demon mercenaries. The procession entered the palace grounds. Monkeys were welcomed to pleasure gardens where fruit grew in lavish abundance. Demons were directed to adjacent forests where they might hunt to their hearts' content.

Indra descended from Heaven with celestial dancers to attend Rama's coronation. Gods, celestial beings and hermits were invited to witness colourful ceremony as Rama finally accepted his rightful inheritance.

## Awards

Rama rewarded his allies for bravery and faithful service.

Lakshman was awarded the kingdom of Romakan, and received royal regalia.

Bhrot and Satrud had ruled Ayudhya well, and were appointed viceroys to assist Rama.

Hanuman was awarded the regal name Phraya Anuchit, or Mighty Friend, and in recognition of his many services, half of Ayudhya to rule.

Pipek's crown was reaffirmed. Rama sent him five thousand servants. Pipek would henceforth rule as Totsakiriwong.

Sukrib would remain ruler of Khit Khin and Tawarawadee with the new title of Phraya Waiyuwongsa.

Ongkot would become Sukrib's viceroy with

the title of Phraya Intranupap.

Chombhupan would rule Pangtan.

Surasen would become viceroy of Chompoo.

Remaining monkey commanders received other titles, jewels, gold and slaves for their services. All would reside in Khit Khin.

Bhrot and Satrud returned to administer Kaiyaket, while Hanuman suggested Lakshman not be separated from Rama. The suggestion was accepted, whereupon Surasen became the regent of Romakan.

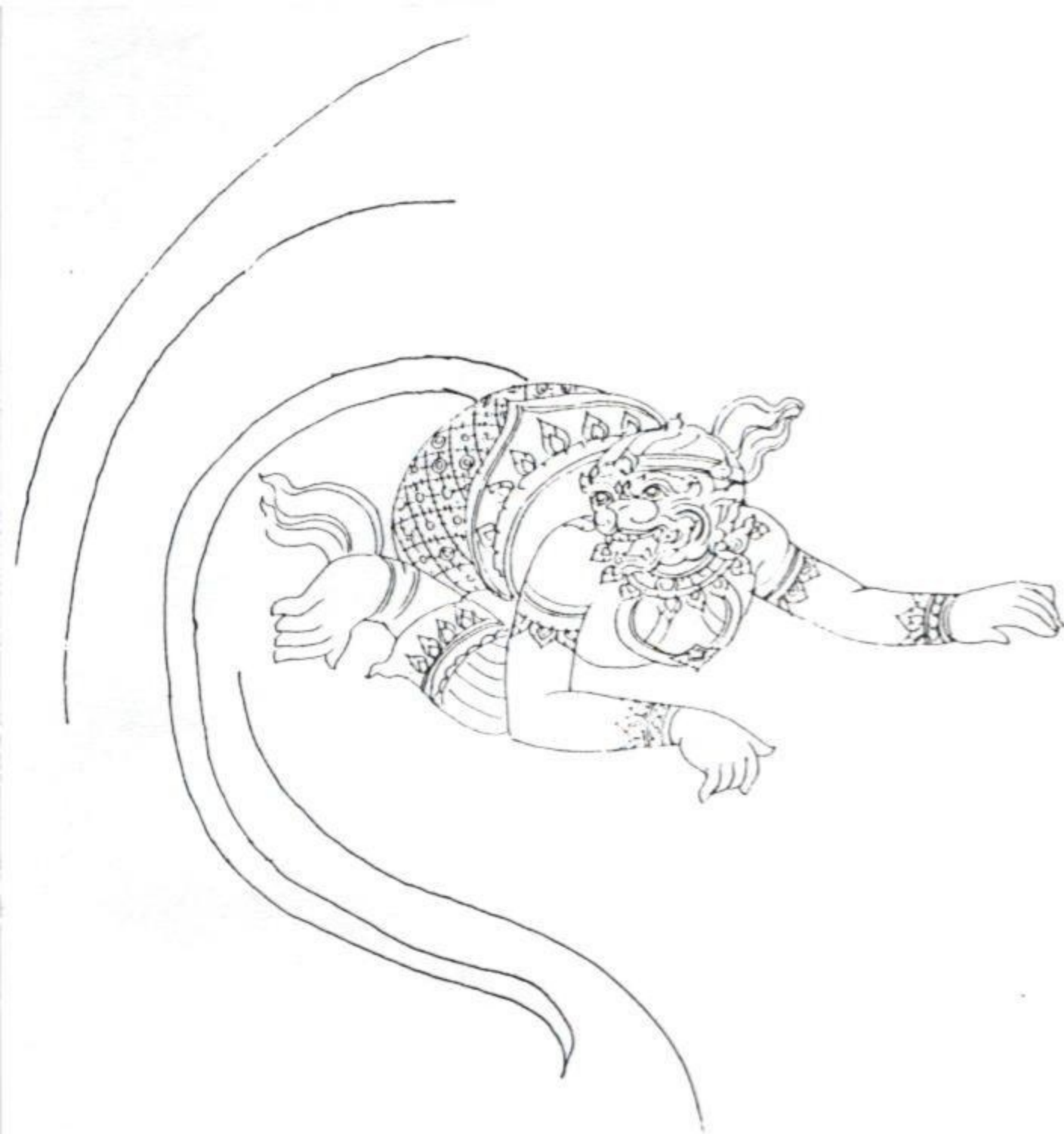
Rama informed Pipek, "You are a fine and noble seer. Nevertheless, you lack the power and experience to be a warrior king. For that reason, I will fire an arrow to Longka each month. Should there be trouble, you may return the arrow with a message."

The allies dispersed, each to their own rewards and residences, each hoping to live in eternal peace.

## Hanuman's Discomfort

As Phraya Anuchit, Hanuman felt happy and contented with the court women, but acutely discomforted whenever he sat on Ayudhya's throne beneath the royal umbrella. He felt extraordinarily restless. Fire burned in his chest. He grew pale. He trembled. He felt dizzy. He suspected such reactions arose because he shared the throne with Rama. In his heart, Hanuman knew he was not equal.

Discomfort became so acute that eventually he approached Rama and requested permission to relinquish such rule. Rama was sympathetic, and wanted to treat Hanuman fairly. Therefore, he fired an arrow heavenwards and asked his trusted friend to follow it. Wherever the arrow landed, Rama



would build a city especially for Hanuman.

The arrow landed on a nine-peaked mountain shrouded with forest and rocks. Hanuman made a circle with his tail to delineate city boundaries, and a diamond wall promptly arose.

On returning to Ayudhya, Hanuman was dismayed when Rama chastised him. Rama explained he had wanted Hanuman to learn where the arrow fell, for Rama intended to have soldiers construct there a city within the space of twenty-four hours. By constructing a diamond wall, Hanuman had exceeded his brief, and probably ensured future misfortune.

Hanuman felt wretched. Rama advised him not to worry, adding he would have angels build the city.

Shiva sent Witsunakam to the diamond wall. A city instantly arose, rivalling in splendour anything in Heaven. Rama named it Nop Buree, the City of Nine. Rama sent treasure, horses,

chariots and soldiers with Hanuman when he went to rule the human settlement.

There Hanuman resided in peace, and returned once weekly to Ayudhya, specifically to pay tribute.

## Longka Under Siege

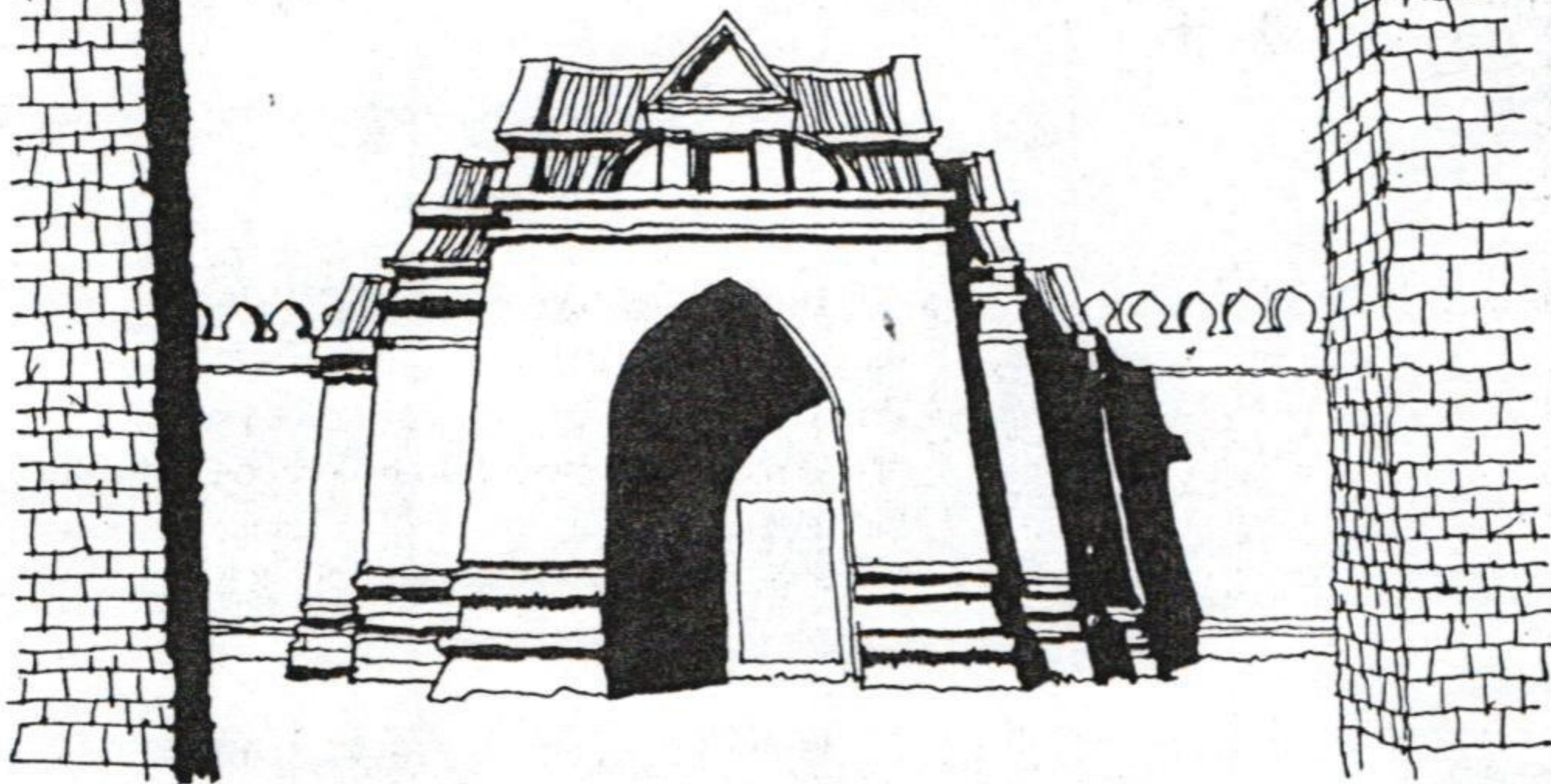
Maha Ban, one of Tosakanth's closest friends, and ruler of Djakrawan, visited Longka, where he learned of the Demon King's death.

Believing Pipek to be an usurper, Maha Ban ordered soldiers to march on Longka. Pipek learned trouble approached, and contacted Rama, who had already dreamed trouble brewed in Longka. Hanuman volunteered to help Pipek and immediately flew to the beleaguered city. Pipek was immensely relieved such formidable assistance had arrived.

Longka was surrounded, but antagonists had not penetrated the city's outer defences. Hanuman led demons out to do battle. On seeing Longkan warriors, Maha Ban declared they should not needlessly sacrifice their lives for Pipek who, solely, was the target of his wrath.

Longkan soldiers ignored his appeal. A fierce battle ensued. Demons killed demons. Maha Ban managed to topple Pipek from his elephant. Hanuman rushed to the rescue and smashed Maha Ban to the ground, before cutting open the demon's chest to extract and crush his heart.

Once Maha Ban was dead, Longkan warriors hunted down enemy stragglers. Hostilities quickly ceased. Pipek led Hanuman in a victory procession to his palace. There Hanuman was reunited with Pipek's daughter, Benjakai, and spend an ardent night with his delighted wife.



Gatehouse of Narai's Lopburi palace. The massive gates are large enough to admit with ease a fully caparisoned war elephant

## The Real Nop Buree

*Hanuman's city, Nop Buree, is actually Lopburi, a former Khmer outpost some 40 miles north of Ayudhya. Lopburi was the summer residence of the Ayudhyan monarch, Narai, whose palace remains Lopburi's major architectural complex. Today, Lopburi is a provincial capital and garrison town.*

*Numerous local legends concern the Ramakien. Lopburi's city pillar shrine on Rama Road is believed to be the spot where Rama's arrow landed. The shrine marks the centre of the city that has since been constructed around it.*

*Another legend claims that heat from Rama's arrow bleached land around Lopburi. In fact, much local soil has a high chalk content, and appears correspondingly lighter.*

*The local Thale Chupson (Lake for consecrating arrows) is believed to have been the place where Rama immersed his arrow. Lake water was considered sacred, and was once used in all Siamese royal court ceremonies requiring water. Lopburi inhabitants*

*formerly sent such water to Angkor as tribute. In 1854, King Mongkut (Rama IV) had his weapons sprinkled with lake water, thereby investing them with Rama's authority and power.*

*Chai Badan (Frontier of the Underworld), near Lopburi, is purportedly the place from where Hanuman entered the subterranean city of Badan to rescue Rama.*

*The stream of Sukrib, near Bang Wra in Lopburi province, emerges from Pali cave, purportedly where the monkey ruler of Khit Khin killed the buffalo, Torapi.*

*Khao San Phaya, a mountain in Chainat, north of Lopburi, is said to have been the place from which Hanuman collected herbs to revive fallen warriors. The monkey is also believed to have quenched his thirst in a nearby lake.*

*Probably the most visible Ramakien connection is the provincial seal, which depicts Vishnu holding a bow, arrow, discus and trident.*

The following morning, Pipek sent his servant, Paowanasoon, to rule over Djakrawan, before flying with Hanuman to Ayudhya.

## Births & Developments

Time passed. Montho gave birth to a son, Paina Suriyawong, whom Pipek loved, erroneously believing the child to be his own. In fact, Montho had been pregnant when Tosakanth died, but had kept her condition secret.

Benjakai also gave birth to a son, named Asurapad, who had the body of a demon and the head of a monkey.

While both children were growing together as friends in Longka, Hanuman ruled benevolently over his subjects and wives in Nop Buree. Everything went well until one day he entered the palace gardens to cavort in trees, as had been a former pleasure. He experienced a sudden craving for fruits. After handing his crown to one of the court ladies, Hanuman leapt high into trees to pick mangoes.

Sap fell on his head. Holding a branch with both hands, Hanuman wiped his head and face with his feet, provoking laughter from the women below, who were suddenly made aware that their ruler was not so much a monarch as a monkey. Hanuman was deeply embarrassed, and resolved to quit the city forthwith and live as a forest hermit.

Rama gave his blessings, whereupon Hanuman went to see the hermit, Titsapai, whom he had consulted when puzzled by how to kill Tosakanth's son, the slippery Banlaikan.

The hermit informed Hanuman he would accept him only in human form, claiming mere animals could never be granted the blessing of meditation.

## Discoveries

Paina Suriyawong grew to be thirteen. One day, he entered a garden with his guardian, Woraneesun, who informed him the garden pavilion had once been the residence of a woman Paina's father had loved. On being pressed to explain, Woraneesun said that Sita had been the woman, and that Tosakanth, not Pipek, was Paina's real father.

Disturbed by the revelation, Paina confronted Montho, who confessed that Tosakanth was indeed his real father. Montho explained that at his father's death, the city had been awarded to Pipek, the current ruler. Montho described the circumstances of Paina's birth. Paina was profoundly hurt and experienced revulsion for Pipek, who had evidently betrayed his father. Paina resolved to raise an army and conquer the city, for he, son of Tosakanth, was evidently the rightful ruler, not his treacherous uncle.

Paina asked Montho whether any of his father's allies survived. She told him that the four-faced Djakrawat, ruler of Maliwan, had been one of Tosakanth's closest friends. Paina vowed to leave, to mature, to grow strong, to become conversant with occult sciences and the arts of war, before returning to overthrow Pipek and assume the Longkan throne, Rama's support or opposition be damned.

Montho attempted to dissuade him. Montho declared Paina should pay homage to Rama rather than oppose him, opining it was better to be Rama's lowliest slave than his mightiest enemy.

Paina consulted Woraneesun. The pair agreed to pretend to want to study martial arts. Pipek and Montho consented, whereupon the couple left,

taking with them a diamond goblet that Tosakanth and Djakrawat had shared when drinking together. The goblet would help prove Paina's identity.

Paina learnt from the hermit, Kan, a thorough knowledge of war and related sciences. After mastering everything he had been taught, Paina and his companion negotiated the river of fire protecting Djakrawat's kingdom and entered Maliwan city.

## Welcome & Triumph

A captain presented the visitors to Djakrawat.

Paina explained their presence. "I am Paina Suriyawong. Tosakanth was my father. Montho is my mother. When my father died, his throne was taken by his own brother, someone who betrayed him and assisted the enemy. My mother informed me you were my father's close friend. I have brought this goblet, and come to you with my guardian, Woraneesun."

Djakrawat recognised the diamond goblet and embraced his young guest.

"I think of Tosakanth with boundless affection," he declared. "For my friend's son, I will conquer the evil traitor and his allies!"

Djakrawat marched to Longka with troops while Paina returned to the palace to inform Montho of developments. Pipek warmly greeted Paina, who received his embrace coolly before leaving.

Djakrawat sent a message to Pipek, demanding he surrender without resistance, or otherwise face execution for betraying the demons. Pipek was terrified, but dared not lose face. He responded by declining to yield.

The infuriated Djakrawat vowed to decapitate Pipek, but was dissuaded by Paina on the grounds

## A Buddhist Connection

*The hermit Titsapai's insistence he would accept Hanuman as an acolyte only in human form, and his claim that animals could not be granted the blessing of meditation, reflects a genuine Buddhist concern regarding ordination as a bhikkhu (Buddhist ecclesiastic).*

*Part of the Buddhist ordination ceremony entails a cross-examination in Pali, during which the would-be bhikkhu is specifically asked to affirm that he is really a human being.*

*Such concern is neatly illustrated in a charming folk legend that provides the origin of the name Naag, which is given to all tonsured, white-robed candidates for Buddhist monkhood.*

*Naga (Sanskrit) and Naag (Thai) is the generic name for the mythological serpent. Once a Naag transformed himself into human form and was ordained a bhikkhu. During deep sleep, the Naag's magical powers also slept. He turned back into a serpent. When the incident was reported to the Buddha, the Naag was immediately expelled from the monkhood, for only human beings may be ordained. The crestfallen Naag asked a favour of the Buddha, specifically that Naag be the name for all candidates for monkhood. In recognition of the serpent's many kindnesses to the Buddha before enlightenment, the request was gladly granted.*



that Pipek had been a decent substitute father. Djakrawat relented, and fired a serpent arrow which tightly coiled itself around and completely immobilised Pipek.

The invaders entered the palace. Pipek was bound in chains and tortured. Montho was extremely frightened. Rebellion was certain to have disastrous consequences. Rama would certainly respond. However, she was equally afraid of Djakrawat. Montho greeted him, whereupon Djakrawat began making preparations for Paina's coronation.

## Asurapad Seeks Hanuman

Asurapad, the monkey demon, had grown to be equally as strong as Paina. Asurapad learned what had happened to Pipek and sought to assist his grandfather by persuading Paina to curtail such

maltreatment.

Djakrawat was present with Paina in the throne room. He refused Asurapad admittance, claiming that under no circumstances did he wish to see the face of the enemy, or the son of an animal.

Humiliated, Asurapad complained to Benjakai.

"I am a soldier. Like my father. It is better to die than accept disgrace. I will seek my father, and ask him to kill Djakrawat."

Benjakai counselled caution, advising her son to wait until Djakrawat left Longka before departing himself. When after fifteen days, Djakrawat returned to Maliwan, Asurapad bid farewell to his mother and grandmother, and left to seek his father.

During his wanderings, he encountered the hermit, Titsapai, and enquired how he might locate Hanuman. The hermit directed Asurapad to a lonely man staring at a fire.

Asurapad approached the man, and repeated his question. The man asked his identity, and from whence he came. When Asurapad identified himself, the man immediately transformed himself into a white monkey, exhaling moons and stars.

Father and son embraced. Hanuman was delighted, both by his son's unexpected presence and, on hearing what had occurred in Longka, the prospect of a good fight.

Hanuman flew with Asurapad to Khit Khin to inform Sukrib of recent events in Longka. Sukrib promised to enlist Maha Chompoo's assistance in liberating Longka and freeing Pipek.

On learning of Pipek's fate, Rama became angry and immediately summoned Bhrot and Satrud from Kaiyaket to lead monkey warriors to Longka.

Bangkok's Chakri monarchs have ruled Thailand since 1782. The Chakri dynasty's symbol incorporates the trident of Shiva with the discus of Vishnu.



## Regal Connections

*Rama embodied the perfect warrior king's every virtue. Rama was chivalrous, did not surrender to evil and was devoted to his duties. Rama was a benevolent leader and loving husband. Rama was tenacious and honest, and personified strength and endurance. Rama was an authentic hero who inspired great personal loyalty, and was ultimately successful in everything he did.*

*Rama's triumphs were noteworthy in every respect. They embraced every decent social, political, moral and spiritual aspiration. It was hardly surprising that Rama became someone with whom Southeast Asian rulers wished to become associated, albeit symbolically, and even if only in name. Long before any Thai monarch sought such association, the Burmese king Kyanzitha (1084-1112) styled himself a descendant of Rama.*

*Names of the early Ayudhyan monarchs, Ramathipodi, Ramasuan and Ramaratcha, had obvious connotations. Less obvious was the Ayudhyan monarch who reigned from 1605 until 1610, Ekathosarat, who was named after Rama's father, Tosaroth. As previously mentioned, Ayudhya's King Narai had the name by which Vishnu is best known in Thailand.*

*Regal connections with Rama continued well into the Bangkok period, both in title and visible manifestations.*

*King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) was still so strongly identified with the legendary Rama that, following his return to Bangkok from an extensive European tour in 1897, the Thai court staged a Khon masked drama in Bangkok's Royal Plaza, entitled Rama returns to Ayudhya.*

## Pride & Prejudice

Sukrib raised fifteen monkey regiments. Maha Chompoo sent seventeen regiments under the command of his foster-son, Nilapat, the black monkey.

The armies assembled in Ayudhya. Nilapat expressed regret concerning his conduct during causeway construction prior to the first war, and requested the opportunity to redeem himself by leading the army and fighting demons in the second. Rama granted his request.

Lakshman gave Satrud his mightiest arrow, and armour awarded him by Indra. Rama presented his mightiest arrow to Bhrot, and the diamond armour given him by Shiva.

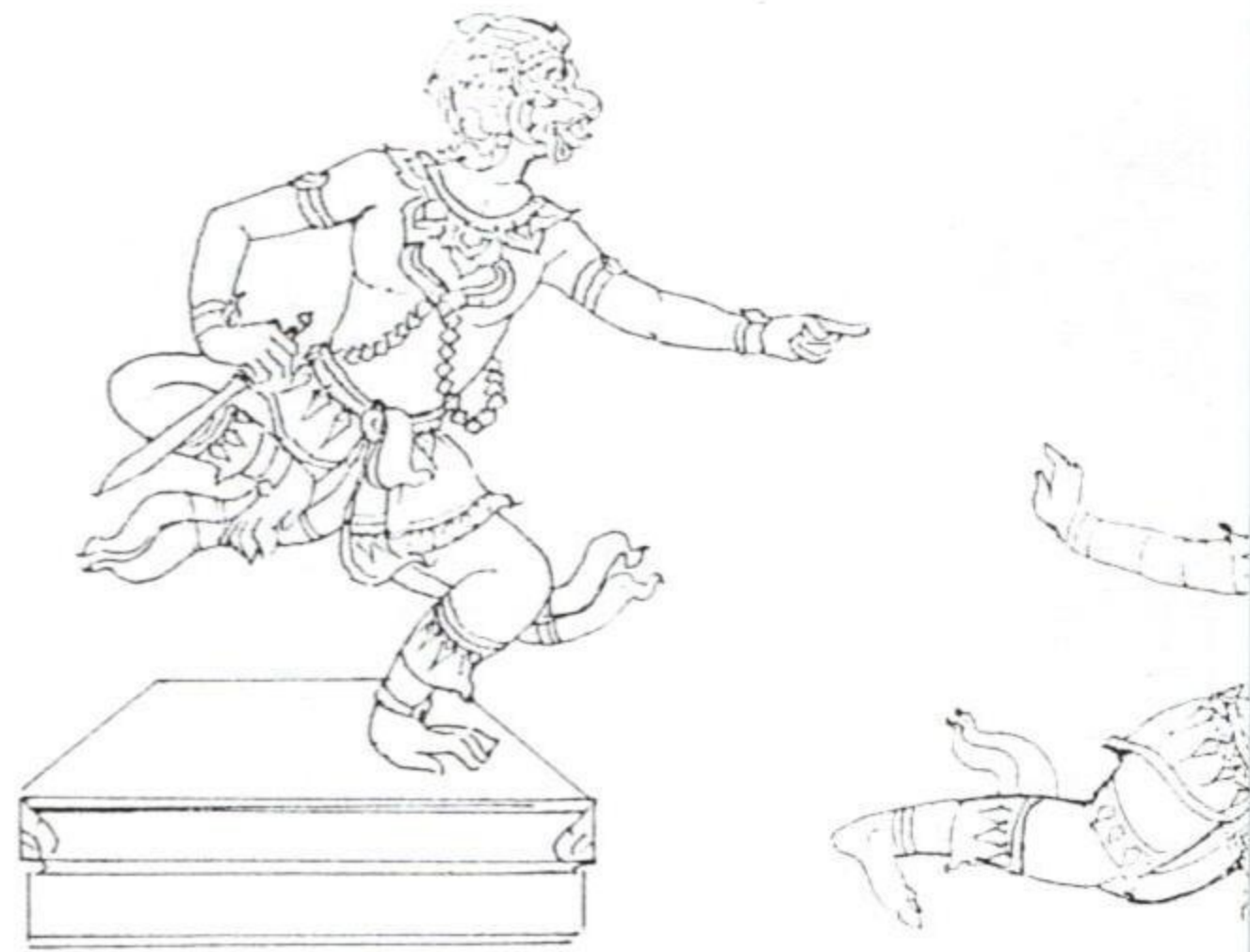
The army marched through forest towards Longka. The causeway no longer existed. Nilapat enlarged his body to bridge the ocean between the mainland and island. The army crossed safely and camped, as Rama's army had done before them, on Morakot Hill.

Chombhupan was despatched to invite Paina to come and pay homage. The monkey levitated above the palace. He saw Paina on his throne, surrounded by followers.

Chombhupan stated in stentorian tones that Paina had unlawfully imprisoned the rightful ruler of Longka, that Rama had sent his two brothers, and that Paina should present himself forthwith before them at Morakot Hill.

Paina was frightened, but defiant.

"Rama and Pipek fought my father because they wished to plunder Longka," he said. "Djakrawat learned of this and came to Longka. Pipek scorned



him, and was imprisoned. It was I who pleaded Pipek's life be spared. Now I rule. This is as it should be, for my father ruled before me. Why does Rama interfere? I will not go to Morakot Hill. Longka will no longer be victimised by men and monkeys."

Chombhupan responded. "Traitor! Pipek raised you as his own son! Is this how you honour your father? You are scarcely worth wasting an arrow on!"

"Ape! Loudmouth! If you attack, how can you win without Pipek to betray me! If we meet, it will be with my army! To fight, not grovel!"

"Demon! You are the child of many fathers! Of Pali, of Tosakanth, of Hanuman, of Pipek! Who knows? You even had to bring Djakrawat to your mother! You will be executed like a common criminal!"

Paina shouted for guards to seize the insolent monkey. All fled at sight of Chombhupan, who swiftly descended to snatch Paina from his throne. The monkey thrashed the demon until Paina's cheeks were bloody, and threw him across the room.



Chombhupan pinned Paina to the floor with a foot.

"Now you know my strength, braggart! I can kill you without the help of humans, at any time!"

Chombhupan flew away, leaving the humiliated Paina burning with shame. Paina went to see Montho and described what had happened. His mother comfortingly embraced him. Montho described how demons had been killed during the first war, fearful history was about to repeat itself.

"Release Pipek," she pleaded. "Let him go the monkey camp. Otherwise, my child, you will surely die!"

Paina would not listen. He was as stubborn and hard-headed as his father. Pride and anger burned in his chest. He was determined Pipek would never go free.

## Indrachit's Sons

Yamaliwan and Kanyuwek, sons of Indrachit and Suwanakanyuma, discovered that Paina would lead a demon army against the men and monkeys the following morning. They sought their mother's

advice on how best to benefit from such knowledge. She suggested they secretly leave Longka and seek Hanuman, identifying themselves as the sons of Suwanakanyuma, who always remembered Hanuman with affection. Such contact should safeguard both sons and their mother.

The brothers did as suggested. Hanuman welcomed them and brought them before Bhrot and Satrud.

"These sons of Indrachit have come to warn us that Paina will lead an army against us tomorrow. They have volunteered to capture Paina if you will spare their lives, and protect their mother."

Bhrot immediately accepted the youths' proposal, and urged the two brothers to return without delay to Longka before their absence was noticed.

## Longka Liberated

The next morning, Yamaliwan and Kanyuwek volunteered to join Paina's army. Sons of a renowned warrior, their offer was gladly accepted.

When the two armies met on the battlefield, Paina boasted he would kill all monkeys and men.

Asurapad answered on behalf of the allies.

"Loudmouth! My grandfather is one of your mother's husbands! He loved you as a son! You have betrayed him! It is you who will die!"

Hostilities commenced. Asurapad swiftly destroyed Paina's chariot. Indrachit's sons immediately felled Paina. One held his right arm, the other the left, pinning him helpless on the ground. Asurapad captured Worancesun, whereupon hostilities ceased. The two captives were brought before Bhrot and Satrud, and chained, while Asurapad, Yamaliwan and Kanyuwek entered

Longka to free Pipek.

Once released, Pipek immediately hurried to Morakot Hill to proffer thanks. Bhrot was curious.

"You were the greatest of seers," he said. "You could foretell everything. How could you not realise Paina was not your own son? Had Asurapad not warned Rama, you might well have been dead by now."

Pipek looked embarrassed. "I foolishly believed him my own, and loved him as a son."

Bhrot had the two prisoners summoned. After interrogation and torture, both confessed to inciting rebellion. Bhrot had Sukrib parade them in chains around Longka before they were formally executed.

Their heads were stuck on poles beside the city gates, visible deterrents against further betrayal or rebellion.

## Hanuman Weakens Maliwan

There could never be lasting peace until Djakrawat was either subdued or coerced into peaceful co-existence. Bhrot had Pipek determine the most auspicious time to march on Maliwan.

Pipek informed Bhrot the journey was long and difficult. There were many obstacles. Maliwan was protected by a fiery forest and a moat of bubbling acid. The warning was duly noted, and when the army neared the city, camp was made to determine how best to proceed.

In the meantime, Djakrawat suffered a terrifying nightmare. He dreamed a royal horse's tail burst into flames, also destroying a royal umbrella.

A soothsayer prophesied catastrophe. Djakrawat's principal warrior summoned a hermit. The hermit confirmed the soothsayer's prediction, but bolstered Djakrawat's confidence by sprinkling him with lustral water to harden and strengthen his physique.

Hanuman transformed himself into a red-eyed monkey of truly monstrous proportions, with four heads and eight arms. Hanuman towered above





Maliwan like the sun, and leapt across the fiery forest and acid moat to land inside the city.

Ninety million demons rushed for their weapons. Hanuman felled them like leaves from trees. The guardian Makawan, whose incantations made the forest perpetually burn, attacked Hanuman. Hanuman lifted the demon with his feet, and flew high above the city, before deliberately dropping Makawan. The demon's body plummeted to the ground. Impact pulverised it to dust. The forest fires were immediately extinguished, leaving aught but skeletal black trees and stumps.

Next Hanuman attacked Kalasoon, a black demon in charge of the city's walls. Kalasoon repeatedly voiced spells which summoned coiled serpents. The serpents spat their venom into the hissing and bubbling acid moat. Eighteen million demons guarded the perpetual ceremony. Hanuman transformed himself into Garuda, and killed snakes or sent them fleeing underground. The acid moat evaporated until the ground was completely and harmlessly dry.

Next Hanuman physically assaulted Kalasoon. He rolled eighty thousand demon warriors in a ball to fell them. Hanuman seized the black demon and hurled him headlong into Mount Djakrawan to kill him. Hanuman levelled the city walls encircling Maliwan before returning to the monkey army camp.

## Nila Non's Message

When Djakrawat looked from his palace window the following morning, he saw a black monkey hovering before him. Djakrawat haughtily demanded the monkey pay homage.

The monkey scoffed at the very idea. "I am Nila Non, viceroy of Chompoo. I do not humble

myself before demons.”

Nila Non informed Djakrawat that he had erred in supporting Paina and imprisoning Pipek in Longka. Such actions violated the wishes of Rama. However, were Djakrawat to eschew further evil, his life would be spared.

Djakrawat responded scornfully. “Ape, I was the friend of Tosakanth, whom you killed. Pipek betrayed his brother, and wrongfully denied Paina his rightful inheritance. It is only correct that a son succeed his father.”

Nila Non answered by cataloguing some of Tosakanth’s crimes, before informing Djakrawat that it had been Tosakanth’s dying wish that Pipek succeed him.

Djakrawat chose to ignore the claim, and declared he was prepared to fight. Angry, insulting words were exchanged. Nila Non rose in the air and purposely caused darkness to fall. Nila Non used his sword to set Maliwan on fire. Flames could not be extinguished, and reduced the formerly magnificent city to ashes.

Moreover, Nila Non deliberately broke the statue of the four-faced Brahma on the palace roof before returning to the monkey camp overlooking Maliwan on Mount Maiyura.

## Losses & Pain

Djakrawat had three sons, Suriyapop, Banlaijak and Nonyupak. Each fought on their father’s behalf. Even though each resorted to powerful magic, or clever subterfuge, to achieve victory, and even though all attained temporary ascendancy over their opponents, all three were slain.

Bhrot killed Suriyapop and Banlaijak. Satrud killed Nonyupak. In each and every case, Pipek was instrumental in thwarting demon schemes, or

saving the lives of demon opponents.

Djakrawat despised Pipek, yet was almost at wit’s end. He realised he could not successfully oppose the men and monkeys alone. He felt obliged to enlist the help of his friend, Waitan, who ruled the underworld vulture kingdom of Kururat. The demon possessed a mighty club which could instantly kill any living creature.

After a heavy drinking bout with Djakrawat, Waitan entered the battlefield. Nilapat and Asurapad fought and killed so many demon warriors that Waitan realised he had foolishly underestimated the enemy. It became imperative he absent himself for three days to enchant his club. Were he successful, Shiva would be obliged to bless him, thereby rendering Waitan invincible.

Pipek learned of the scheme. Nilapat and Asurapad were sent to Badan to frustrate Waitan. Both monkeys tormented the demon and tricked him into relaxing his guard before killing him with his own club.

On learning of Waitan’s death, Djakrawat realised everything was lost. He entered the battlefield the following morning, knowing death would be his only release. He fought honourably, but Bhrot and Satrud mortally wounded him. Djakrawat repented his crimes, whereupon the brothers promised he would ascend in death to Heaven.

The second war against the demons was finally over.

## The Victorious Return

Djakrawat’s women fetched his body from the battlefield. The corpse was returned to Maliwan for cremation. Bhrot and Satrud entered the ruined city in triumphant procession. The brothers advised

ministers to rule harmoniously and peaceably in the absence of a sovereign.

Nilapat was despatched to Ayudhya to announce victory. The brothers travelled with their army back to Longka, where Treechada, Montho and Benjakai welcomed and were reunited once again with their menfolk.

The following morning, the army began the return march to Ayudhya. They crossed the ocean on Hanuman's back, and hastened towards the capital.

During their journey, they encountered heavy rain and a fearsome thunderstorm. Bhrot was angry and prepared an arrow to halt the storm when he was restrained by Pipek. Pipek reminded Bhrot that rain was necessary for living creatures. Bhrot relented and aimed his arrow at a distant place to attract the storm away from them, enabling the army to continue unhindered.

On their return, Rama congratulated the victors, and asked Bhrot and Satrud to resume their duties in Kaiyaket. Monkeys were rewarded with titles and positions. Asurapad became a viceroy of Longka. Indrachit's sons were similarly rewarded, Yamaliwan ruling the underworld vulture city of Kurarat, his brother becoming Kanuchit of Djakrawan.

Waiyawik, son of Piraguan, and ruler of Badan, emerged from the underworld with Matchanu, to request that Rama award him Hanuman to help rule his kingdom, for Waiyawik loved and honoured Hanuman as a father.

A misunderstanding arose outside Ayudhya when demon and monkey warriors met. Maha Chompoo believed demons were marching on Ayudhya, while Waiyawik believed renegade monkeys were intent on storming the capital.

## Popular Sayings 3

*Other Thai sayings associated with the Ramakien include Sip Baed Mongkut, the collective name of eighteen monkey commanders. The expression, formerly used to describe mischievous children, is now employed to describe hooligans or thieves.*

*The incident when Ongkot coiled his tail to elevate himself to be level with Tosakanth, inspired the expression, 'Ongkot coils his tail', used to describe a boaster or social upstart.*

*Ngaum Phra Ram means to be 'exceptionally tired and weary', and refers specifically to Rama's fourteen-year exile, his vicissitudes and conflict with Tosakanth.*

*'Two-faced like Pali' means to be unreliable, and refers to the original monkey king of Khit Khin. Though of essentially noble character, Pali periodically succumbed to avarice and ambition. Breaking his word led to his eventual downfall.*

*Ling Lauk Chao means to be respectful before an adult or superior, and completely the opposite behind their backs. The expression is derived from Hanuman's behaviour when he pretended to ally himself with Tosakanth.*

*Last but not least, Cheepai Banlaijak is a vulgarity that combines the most commonly used Thai expletive with the name of one of Djakrawat's demon sons. The expression, politely translated, can mean 'utterly damned' or 'completely ruined'.*



Conflict ensued.

Hanuman was able to resolve the misunderstanding, and presented Matchanu to Rama, who with one swift stroke of his sword sliced off Matchanu's fish tail. Matchanu was awarded the title Panurat. Ratanamalee, Djakrawat's daughter, became Matchanu's bride.

Waiyawik returned to Badan, and Hanuman assumed rule of the demons in Maliwan.

## Sita's Picture

Sita was three months pregnant.

The female demon, Adun, Tosakanth's niece, and Samanakha's daughter, blamed Sita for all the misfortunes that had befallen the demons. Adun believed that she would obtain adequate revenge if she could destroy Rama's love for his pregnant

wife.

Adun transformed herself into a beautiful young maiden and approached Sita to ask if she might serve her. Sita innocently granted Adun's request. Through selective and subtle use of her magical powers, Adun kept other servants at a distance, and began to monopolise Sita's company.

One day, Adun asked Sita what Tosakanth had looked like. She explained she was too young ever to have seen the infamous demon, and had heard about him only from second or third-hand sources. Sita described Tosakanth, but Adun claimed not to be able to picture him. Adun requested that Sita make a pictorial depiction.

Sita obliged by drawing Tosakanth's portrait on a slate, depicting ten heads, terrifying faces and bulging eyes. Adun feigned horror.

Just then, Rama and Lakshman returned from hunting in the forest. Adun was delighted. She evaporated into thin air and entered the slate. Sita realised the maid was a ghost of evil intent, particularly when she saw Adun leering at her from within the slate. Sita attempted, unsuccessfully, to erase the portrait of Tosakanth from the slate as Rama approached the room. Sita quickly slid the slate beneath Rama's couch, and left.

Rama experienced acute discomfort when he reclined to rest. Great heat grew beneath him. It seemed ants swarmed over his skin. The heat became unbearable.

Rama was enraged, and threatened to punish whichever chambermaid was responsible. Sita heard the uproar and summoned Lakshman, asking him to pacify Rama.

Rama informed Lakshman of what had happened. The men sought the source of heat. Lakshman discovered Sita's slate. Tosakanth's portrait remained clearly visible.

"Who drew this?" Rama shouted. "Who placed this picture here to mock me?"

Rama threatened chambermaids, whereupon Sita entered the room. Sita said that one of her maids had requested she depict the Demon King. The maid had disappeared, and the picture could not be erased.

Rama was incensed.

"Slut! You have many husbands! Now I discover that he *was* your lover! That's why you drew his picture! I cannot keep a woman with many hearts! You will die! How can I love someone who used a picture of the stud she sported with to burn up my bed?"

Sita remained silent in the face of such wounding accusations.

Rama addressed Lakshman.

"You will take this woman into the forest and kill her with your sword. Bring back her evil heart to me. She is shameful and has forfeited all rights."

## Exile

Lakshman was apologetic, and asked Sita to forgive him for what Rama had ordered him to do. He led Sita far away from the city into the forest.

When they stopped, Sita began to weep.

"I am innocent," she cried. "I am not an evil woman. Please kill me quickly."

Lakshman wanted to release her. He could scarcely believe that fourteen years of exile, of hardship and war should result in such a sorrowful ending. He could not bring himself to use his sword.

"You must take my heart back," Sita declared. "Please, kill me quickly."

Lakshman dithered.

Sita said, "If you don't return with my heart, Rama will believe I seduced you, as I am believed to have committed adultery with demons. Kill me, and save your reputation."

Lakshman saw the truth of her claim, and prepared to draw his sword. Then he remembered she was pregnant. He would be taking not just one life, but two. He was in a terrible quandry.

Sita knelt before him, exposing her neck, awaiting death. Lakshman raised his sword, ready to sever her head at the neck. The sword flew from his grasp. He recovered it, and brought the blade down on Sita's neck, his eyes firmly closed.

The sword fell as flowers, and formed a floral garland around Sita's neck. When Sita removed the garland, and gave it back to Lakshman, it became



Lakshman's sword again, proving conclusively to him that Sita was innocent of everything of which she had been accused.

"It is best we part," Lakshman said. "I cannot kill you. I must return to Ayudhya."

Lakshman felt wretched, abandoning Sita, defenceless, pregnant, alone in the forest. Nevertheless, he felt compelled to return towards Ayudhya, albeit with a heavy heart.

Indra had witnessed everything, and wished to assist both Lakshman and Sita. Indra placed at Lakshman's feet a dead female deer. Lakshman removed the animal's heart to give to Rama.

When offered the heart, Rama declared, "This is not a human heart. I have forfeited my manhood and honour to an animal who did not love me."

Lakshman was unable to say anything, and returned to his chambers, consumed with grief.

## A New Home

Alone, at the mercy of wild animals and malevolent forest spirits, Sita began walking. Indra entered the forest, adopting the form of a buffalo, and asked her why she wandered alone.

On hearing her sorry tale, the buffalo promised Sita he would lead her to a revered hermit with whom she might seek shelter. Sita followed the huge and protective beast until dawn when she arrived at the hut of the hermit, Watchamaruk.

Watchamaruk had the face of a deer. He listened intently as Sita related her woeful tale.

The hermit opined, "Rama was ignorant to punish you thus. Walking on the fire proved your innocence. You are most welcome to stay here."

So saying, Watchamaruk created with magical incantations a hut for Sita, a simple dwelling she might call home.

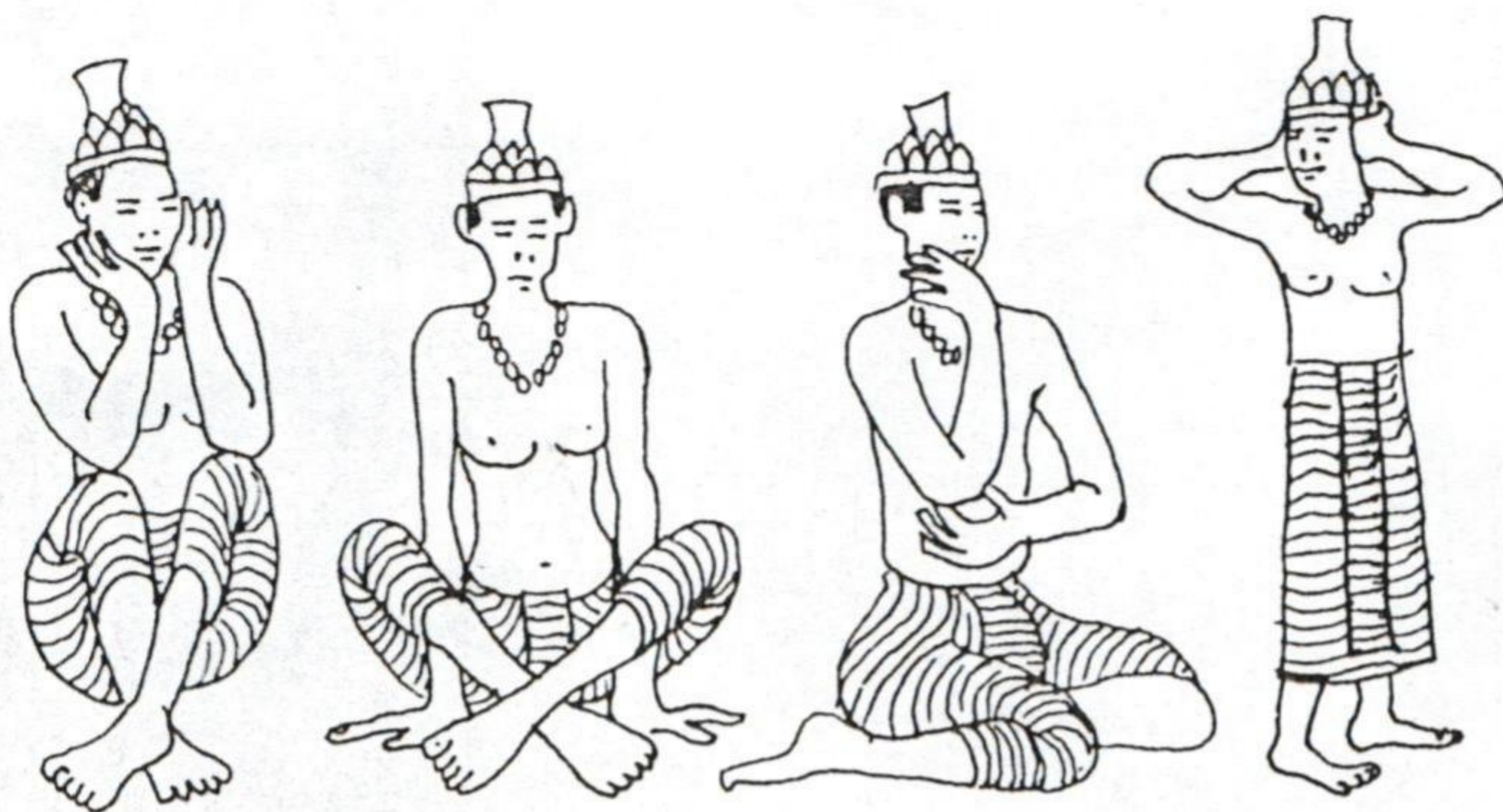
## One Son, Then Two

Sita lived contentedly, and treated Watchamaruk with the respect and honour she would have accorded a father.

Time passed until she felt herself in labour. Indra sent his four queens to assist in the delivery of a male child. The boy, whom his mother adored, strongly resembled Rama.

One day, Sita asked the hermit to watch over her son while she bathed in a nearby pool. Nearing the water, Sita encountered a troop of wild monkeys. Many mothers had babies clinging to their necks. One monkey mother explained she would never entrust her child to someone else's care.

Chastened, Sita returned to collect her son. The meditating Watchamaruk did not see them leave. When he opened his eyes and saw that Sita's



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:  
 Watchamarun depicts the relief of waist pain; Sumet demonstrates how to relieve dizziness; Khorbut shows how to relieve a bruised or swollen arm; and Chanok's posture lessens shoulder pain.

## Hermits & Healing

*The hermit as a source of magic, power or knowledge is a common theme throughout the Ramakien. The rishi, or forest-dwelling hermit, is revered in Thailand. Legend claims he learned every art from Indra, and imparted such knowledge to fellow men.*

*In 1836, King Rama III commissioned a major section of Bangkok's Wat Phra Jetubon Wimol Mongkharam, better known as Wat Po, where skilled craftsmen fashioned eighty images of rishis in postures depicting ways of bringing physical relief to various parts of the anatomy. Such postures, a form of self-administered massage, after lengthy bouts of sedentary meditation, probably provided the inspiration for traditional Thai massage.*

*Four basic elements, wind, earth, fire and water, were believed to determine physical well-being. Imbalance of any one element either in excess or scarcity, was considered a fundamental cause of sickness. During the mid-1800s, massage*

*played an important role in sustaining physical equilibrium of the four elements.*

*Rama III, and the abbot of Wat Po, and court poets jointly authored an eighty-five stanza work entitled Klon Duton (Physical Exercise) to clarify the eighty rishi postures and their respective uses. Each posture was named after hermits in predominantly Thai and Chinese literary works. More than twenty stanzas featured Ramakien hermits.*

*They included Chanok, who discovered the infant Sita and buried her for safe-keeping (evoked in a posture to relieve thigh and shoulder pain); Kodom, father of Hanuman's mother (relief of wind in the chest); Sumet, magician teacher of Maiyarab (relief of dizziness); Khorbut, keeper of Tosakanth's heart (relief of bruised or swollen arm); and Watchamaruk, the hermit with whom Sita stayed when her son was born (relief of pain in the waist).*

child was missing, he feared a wild animal had stolen the child. Watchamaruk immediately set about magically creating a substitute.

Thus did Sita acquire two sons. Watchamaruk gave the brothers names. The first born was named Mongkut. The second was named Lop.

## A Shattered Tree

The brothers grew to be ten years old. Their beauty dazzled both their mother and their foster-father. Sita found herself fondly admiring the boys innumerable times each day.

Watchamaruk taught them everything he knew regarding cosmic knowledge, occult sciences, forest craft, magical powers and the arts of war. He made bows and arrows for the boys, and taught them magic incantations to be voiced with the release of their arrows. The boys became accomplished archers who could hit the smallest of targets with pinpoint accuracy.

One day, Mongkut and Lop entered the forest in search of adventure. They came across a gigantic Rang tree which ascended into Heaven. Mongkut wanted to shatter it with one arrow.

His arrow split the massive tree in two. All branches broke off with an accumulative noise resembling a cosmic thunderclap. Sound reverberated throughout the heavens. The ground shook and trembled. The noise frightened kings and angels, gods and men. Goddesses flew higher into Heaven. Garudas were knocked from their perches in cloud trees. Men fled panicked from their cities. Forest animals bellowed in fear. The Three Worlds trembled with fright.

Mongkut and Lop happily returned home.



Several Bangkok throughfares bear the name of the hero of the 'Story of Rama'



## Ramakien Nomenclature

Many, many objects are named, or categorised, after Ramakien characters and episodes. Such disparate entities include bridges, plants, companies, roads, lethal weapons and Thailand's fabled 'white elephants'.

There are, for example, some thirty plants, fruits and flowers named after Ramakien characters. These include Rama Fires An Arrow (American Aloe, Century Plant), Sita's Head (Elkhorn Fern), Indra's Tiered Umbrella (Lion's Ear), and the Maiyarab Tree (Giant Sensitive Plant).

Ramakien nomenclature is given to several Thai armed forces' weapons, units and warships. More than twenty ancient cannons dating from the Ayudhya, Thonburi and early Bangkok periods were given names such as Hanuman Decapitating Maiyarab and Indrachit Firing An Arrow.

Royal Thai Airforce wings were named in 1939 after the monkey warriors Hanuman, Sukrib, Ongkot, Chombhupan and Nilapat.

Several Royal Thai Navy vessels were also named after Ramakien warriors. Two modern anti-submarine patrol craft, HTMS Pali and

HTMS Sukrib sustain the tradition.

A casual perusal of the Greater Bangkok Telephone Directory reveals some fifty business establishments, ranging through antique shops, jewellers and video outlets, incorporating the name Rama. Bridges, streets, hotels and hospitals bear the name Rama, as do food products, pharmacies and opticians.

Sita, Hanuman, Erawan, Narai and Indra number among other popular Ramakien names employed for commercial purposes.

The albino elephants, or 'white elephants', belonging to Thai monarchs, are categorised as four major types, namely those of Brahma's lineage, those of Shiva's lineage, those of Vishnu's lineage, and those of the Fire god Akhani's lineage. All four are equally prized for different qualities.

Thailand's royal barges enjoy similarly inspired nomenclature. Each barge is distinguished by its ornately carved figurehead. The principal vessel, the graceful, swan-like Suphannahongse, is named after the mythological steed of Brahma. The Anantanagaraj (Ananta Naga) is named after the seven-headed Serpent King who was reborn as Lakshman. Escort barges, replete with bow cannons, include garuda barges, and Krabi class barges bearing figureheads of Hanuman, Pali, Sukrib and Nilapat straddling bow cannon ports.

Even rockets for artificial rainmaking, intended to replace aircraft, enjoy Ramakien nomenclature. Two hundred and nine surface-to-air rockets designed to explode and seed clouds at altitudes of four thousand to six thousand feet, have been named Piroon 2 after the god of Rain.



## Hanuman's Humiliation

Rama summoned all magicians, seers, sooth-sayers, astrologers and hermits to determine the cause of the terrifying thunderclap. None could offer a clear explanation. Some reminded Rama that he and Lakshman, when young, had fired arrows which shook the world in similar manner. Conceivably, a mighty warrior was outraged.

Rama summoned his brothers to lead an army lest enemies threatened Ayudhya. Rama also decided to release the royal horse, Upakan, and have Hanuman follow the steed to see if anyone dared capture and ride it.

Mongkut and Lop entered the forest and followed a particularly colourful bird. They came upon a forest clearing where a horse with a black face, a white body and red hooves quietly grazed. The animal's saddle and bridle were made of gold.

The boys caught the horse, and read a gold tablet hanging from its neck. The tablet stated the steed belonged to Rama of Ayudhya. The tablet warned that whomsoever captured and rode the horse did so at peril, for any such person would be considered an enemy, a traitor or a rebel.

The boys elected to ride the horse in able to meet the animal's powerful owner.

Hanuman approached the Upakan horse and riders disguised as a forest monkey, intending to subdue the boys at the first opportunity. He managed to get close enough to offer them bananas, and prepared to capture them, when he was hit by Mongkut.

Hanuman immediately assumed his original form. The boys leapt onto Hanuman and rendered him helpless, tightly binding him with vines.

Despite his formidable magical powers, Hanuman was helpless to free himself. The boys tattooed Hanuman's forehead with the message, 'Nobody but this ape's master may free him'.

Hanuman stumbled away, humiliated, and felt nothing but shame when encountering Bhrot and his soldiers. Bhrot was unable to sever Hanuman's restraints with his sword, and advised the embarrassed monkey to return and report to Rama.

## Mongkut's Capture

Hanuman related his story to Rama. Rama freed him, and ordered the monkey to return to fight with Bhrot and other warriors against the insolent youths.

Mongkut and Lop watched as warriors approached them through the forest. The ape they had subdued led warriors in a war chariot.

Bhrot threatened the children with capture and execution for having ridden the royal horse. Mongkut's impertinent response angered Bhrot. The boys gave a good account of themselves, but were eventually overwhelmed and subdued. Hanuman captured and trussed Mongkut, but Lop managed to escape.

Rama declared that the captive Mongkut would be executed three days hence, and that until such time he was to be placed under heavy guard.

## Release

Lop returned home to inform Sita and Watchamaruk of Mongkut's capture. Sita was overcome with grief. She reproached herself for not having been more protective. When Lop declared he would attempt to rescue Mongkut, his mother became even more upset, for she feared losing not just one son, but both.



Lop regarded attempted rescue as the only honourable course of action. Sita removed a ring from her finger. She handed it to Lop, claiming it could burst fetters and open doors. Sita suggested Lop discover a way of smuggling the ring to his brother.

Indra sent the goddess, Rampa, to meet Lop when he arrived outside Ayudhya's city walls. Rampa changed herself into a beautiful young Ayudhyan maiden, and suggested she carry water to Mongkut.

Lop wrote a message on the bottom of the water jar, inserted Sita's ring, and filled the container with water. Rampa carried the jar past unsuspecting guards, and left it with Mongkut. Mongkut quenched his thirst, and discovered Lop's message and Sita's ring.

Mongkut was able to make good his escape, and discovered Lop awaiting him outside the city walls. The youths hurried home, believing Rama

would come in pursuit once Mongkut's escape became known.

## Recognition

Rama and his three brothers pursued the boys. Once the fugitives came in sight, Rama ordered soldiers to capture them. Rama believed their capture a relatively simple task. However, once again, the youths offered spirited resistance, frustrating every effort to subdue them, severing restraints fashioned by several magical arrows with almost contemptuous ease.

Rama fired a poisonous arrow. Mongkut nullified it with a rain arrow. Rama fired a garuda arrow. Mongkut swept it away with a wind arrow. Arrows from father and son collided with monumental impact in mid-air. Another of Rama's arrows fell as flowers upon the two boys.

Rama was frustrated and intrigued. He suspected the youths were of royal descent. He fired another arrow. If the youths were of pure and honourable origin, the arrow would fall as food. If the youths were inherently evil, the arrow would kill its intended victims.

The arrow descended as food. A royal umbrella unfolded over the boys' heads. Rama ordered hostilities cease, and asked the boys to identify themselves.

Mongkut responded by asking Rama to identify himself first. When Rama disclosed his identity, Mongkut realised Rama was his real father. He decided to punish Rama for having maltreated his mother.

"I am Mongkut. This is my brother, Lop. We live in a hermit's hut with our foster-father. Our mother's name is Sita."



## Ramakien Trivia

Many arcane snippets of information and theory are connected with the 'Story of Rama'. Herewith, in no particular order of importance, are some of the more entertaining ones.

- Valmiki's Ramayana concludes with the implication that the 'Story of Rama' possesses magic properties: reading merely one verse of the epic guarantees a son to anyone previously lacking a male heir; impoverished readers of the epic will acquire riches; errant readers are purified.
- The oldest 'Story of Rama' in Buddhist India was probably the Dasaratha Jataka in which Sita is featured as Rama's sister.
- As early as 251 AD, K'ang-seng-hui rendered a jataka form of the Ramayana into Chinese.
- In the Rama Jataka, popularly recited in Laos and certain parts of northeastern Thailand during cremations, or ceremonies for the dead, the Buddha is quoted as claiming he had been Rama during a previous life.
- The Reamker (Cambodian) version of the Ramayana takes approximately fifty hours to recite.
- According to an ancient Thai belief, the Ramakien possessed magic properties: anyone able to read the entire epic over seven days and seven nights could command from the

heavens three days and three nights of rainfall.

- The sixteenth-century Chinese classic Hsi-yu-chi (Monkey) incorporated, together with other material, Hanuman's travels in pursuit of Sita.
- The Ramayana/Ramakien is actually an esoteric allegory of man's spiritual quest (Rama) for Nirvana (Sita), a purification of physical and intellectual faculties in which Ravana/Tosakanth and his brothers are coarse passions, and similar imperfections, while monkey warriors represent virtues.



Rama's heart was immediately filled with compassion and love. Rama asked Lakshman whether it was possible the boy spoke the truth.

Lakshman confessed, "I was unable to kill Sita, as you ordered. My sword became flowers. The heart I gave you was that of a dead deer. Everything was ordained by angels."

Rama stepped down from his chariot, and led his three brothers to his sons.

"I erred," he told the boys. "Your mother once drew a portrait of the demon, Tosakanth. Your father thought she loved and honoured the demon. I ordered my brother to kill her. The order was not carried out. Now I can see the faces of sons occupying their mother's womb. Please forgive your father for his cruel mistake. Help him find your mother. I will bring everyone back to Ayudhya, where we may live happily together."

Mongkut shook his head.

"We both wish to stay with our mother and the hermit. We live in peace and contentment. You have tried to catch us. You have tried to beat us. You have tried to kill us. We cannot forget this. Kindly return to your city. Permit us to return to our mother."

Rama was unable to persuade the boys to change their minds. The boys left an increasingly lachrymose and unhappy assembly behind them, and disappeared into the forest.

## Discovery

Mongkut and Lop returned to Sita and related what had happened. Sita lamented that Rama would pursue them to wreck their freedom and happiness.

Even as she spoke, Rama arrived with warriors outside the hut, and heard the voice of the woman he had once loved. Nascent affection arose within him, and he begged admittance into the hut.

"I love you as much as ever," he declared. "I have committed a terrible error. I am truly sorry for it. Please open the door. Our children should be in Ayudhya, living as princes."

Sita was torn between dislike and love. She felt unable either to exit, or admit Rama into the hut.



Watchamaruk understood both her dilemma and her sadness. The hermit stepped outside to speak on her behalf. He informed Rama that Mongkut was the child Sita carried when she entered the forest. The second boy, Lop, had been magically substituted when Mongkut had ostensibly disappeared.

Watchamaruk entered the hut on Rama's behalf to urge Sita to forgive him.

"Rama wanted me dead because I was supposedly evil. Now he wishes an evil woman back into his city. How may we live happily?" she asked.

The hermit exited to convey Sita's doubts, and re-entered to repeat Rama's request that Sita allow

him to see her.

Sita sought Watchamaruk's advice. The hermit suggested they meet face to face to try and reconcile their differences. Sita agreed Rama could enter the hut.

Watchamaruk left, whereupon Rama entered, and saw that Sita was as beautiful as ever. He was struck with intense longing. He begged Sita to return with him to Ayudhya, to live as they had lived before.

Sita tearfully lowered her eyes, angry, unable to reply.

Rama voiced remorse, vowed love, described how he had been treated coldly by the three queen mothers ever since Sita had been falsely accused.



Sita complained bitterly. "I drew Tosakanth's portrait because a female ghost asked me. You did not believe me. I have lived in freedom for ten years, and discovered a happiness I never knew in Ayudhya. Kindly return there. You have concubines everywhere. I will remain here."

Rama tried again to persuade Sita to accompany him.

"I would rather live in the forest," she declared. "Return, without a bad woman, such as I."

Rama said, "If you are determined to remain here, then at least let me take our sons. By looking into their faces, I might satisfy my heart."

Sita was startled. "Why the children? They resemble Tosakanth, with whom I was supposedly adulterous. They are the children of a slut. When you punished the mother, did you consult the children? No! The children belong to me! Not you!"

Rama recoiled at such scorn. His reaction made Sita comprehend the depth of his shame and sorrow, and she relented. The children belonged, equally, to him.

Sita summoned Mongkut and Lop. "Your mother wishes you to return to Ayudhya, where your father and uncles will raise you as the highest of the highborn. You will become famous warriors."

Watchamaruk approved Sita's decision to relinquish her sons and remain herself in the forest.

Rama left with Mongkut and Lop, declaring that Sita was welcome in Ayudhya any time she changed her mind.

As Rama's entourage departed, everyone begged the forgiveness of Mongkut and Lop for any wrongs committed against them.



## Deception

Mongkut and Lop lived happily in Ayudhya. Both thought often of Sita. Rama was delighted by his sons' presence, but wished the family was complete. One day, he asked Mongkut and Lop to try and persuade their mother to come and live in Ayudhya, claiming he might die of melancholy were she not to oblige.

Sita greeted her sons warmly when they arrived at Watchamaruk's clearing, but declined their father's invitation.

"I will not return. I have been disgraced and shamed. I wish to live here, not in the city. I doubt your father will die of sadness. Should he, I will come and pay last respects."

The two princes returned to Ayudhya to inform Rama they had not been successful. Rama felt distraught, and heartily cursed the day Tosakanth had entered everyone's lives.

Rama summoned Hanuman and ordered him to visit Sita, to inform her that Rama had died



of grief after seeing their sons return home alone. The three queen mothers now invited their daughter to the funeral.

Sita's anger evaporated at news of Rama's death. She bid Watchamaruk farewell, and accompanied Hanuman on the journey to Ayudhya. Hanuman pitied Sita her slow progress, and enlarged himself to colossal proportions. He carried Sita in his paw and flew them both back to Ayudhya.

Hanuman let Sita down at the funeral pavilion. Sita immediately mounted the steps towards the urn. She lamented that her husband had died without their having been reconciled. She begged her dead husband to forgive her for being so obstinate.

Sita was furious when Rama emerged from the urn to embrace her. She accused him of childish deception and, with hands clasped together, asked Mother Earth to grant her refuge in the kingdom of Wirun Naga. A fissure opened, into which Sita

leapt, before the ground closed after her.

The dismayed Rama summoned Pipek. The seer opined Rama should exile himself from Ayudhya for exactly one year, after which his luck would improve.

Rama accepted Pipek's advice, and entered the forest in exile for a second time, accompanied by Lakshman and Hanuman.

## Conflict

Kuwen of Kalawut had an evil son named Tripagan. The demon would deliberately frighten everyone he encountered. One day, Tripagan saw in the forest three itinerants, and decided to take them to his father for pets.

Hanuman engaged demon warriors, and chastised Tripagan for his senseless assault. The demon remained defiant. Lakshman shot and killed Tripagan. Surviving warriors fled to inform Kuwen.

The old demon was bent on revenge. Hanuman killed his commander, while Rama neutralised Kuwen's arrows with arrows of his own. A garuda arrow finally killed the old demon.

After a five-week journey, Rama, Lakshman and Hanuman came to a gigantic Sok tree. They rested in its shade. Hanuman discovered a demon who had been banished from Heaven by Shiva for habitual lechery. Rama was able to remove Shiva's curse. The demon flew back to Heaven as an angel.

Sukrib learned of what had happened in Ayudhya. He led an army of warriors in pursuit of Rama and his companions to lend assistance.

Phraya Wayupak, a demon with the body of a dragon, and the claws of a garuda, had been sired by a demon and born of a bird mother. He flew with eagles over the forest and saw trees teeming with Sukrib's warriors. He recognised the men and



experienced a sudden craving for human flesh. He swooped to scoop up Rama and Lakshman in his claws.

Hanuman and Sukrib snatched his prey away.

Nilapat and Ongkot decapitated Phraya Wayupak.

## Another Fight

The allies camped at Mount Singhakor where the demon, Anurat, maintained a pleasure garden. Anurat's major commander, Nontakan, attacked with five thousand warriors. Nontakan was wounded, and flew to inform Anurat of the human and enemy intruders.

Anurat led a great demon army to expel the monkeys. Nilapat, Asurapad, Matchanu and Sukrib fought fiercely and bravely. Rama hit Anurat with



an arrow, which the demon removed with magic incantations.

Anurat flew to a lake in middle of the gardens. A hermit, Kosop, sat in deep meditation, and saw that Rama could not kill Anurat. The hermit flew to Rama to inform him that only a bullrush forced into the demon's chest would prove fatal.

Anurat hardened his body with lake water, and attacked the monkeys once again. Rama fired a bullrush from his bow. It struck the demon in the chest, hurling his body through the air to a cave entrance.

Hanuman was instructed to hammer the bullrush deep into Anurat's chest. Rama then conjured a diamond rooster to stand watch over the corpse. The rooster held a fish in its beak. The fish had a hammer. The rooster was to alert the

fish to hammer the bullrush back inside Anurat's chest if ever it began to emerge. The demon would take at least one billion years to get free.

Rama's year of self-imposed exile was almost complete. He urged Lakshman and his monkey companions to accompany him back to Ayudhya.

## Reconciliation

Ayudhya received Rama and his companions amid scenes of great jubilation. Indra witnessed Rama's return, and visited Shiva to request that the Lord of the Universe fashion reconciliation between Rama and Sita.

Shiva had Sita brought from the underworld, and listened to her explain why she and Rama were separated. Shiva pitied Sita for all her misfortunes, and summoned Rama to Mount Krailas.

Rama arrived with his three brothers, and wanted to embrace Sita immediately upon seeing her. He restrained himself and acknowledged that Sita had been terribly wronged, and that he had committed grievous errors.

Shiva turned to Sita and stated that the main cause of estrangement had been the female demon ghost, Adun. Pride and obstinacy had furthered estrangement. The time had come to forget the past, and resume life as Rama's wife.

Sita remained doubtful, but Shiva managed to convince her that Rama would never harm her again.

The couple were remarried with appropriated ceremonial on Mount Krailas, and Indra provided a diamond chariot for the newlyweds' joyous return to Ayudhya.

There Rama and Sita lived in happiness with their sons.

"ภูบาลพิโรธไอ้  
รักยักษ์ลอบเลขา  
เจ้าลักษณเร่รเวพา  
แล้วแหวะดวงใจให้  
สิตา  
ซ่อนไว้  
ปลงชีพ เสียพ่อ  
แห่งข้าขอคู"

Excerpt from Ramakien poetic version, engraved in room (section) 167 of Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaeo murals, in which Rama condemns Sita to death.

## Solely Thai

*The incident in which Rama condemns Sita to death occurs nowhere in any Indian version of the Ramayana. Without such condemnation, of course, there could never have been the reconciliation between the hero and heroine in the Ramakien -- an incident typically Thai and, again, not in Valmiki's original.*

*Of other differences between Thai and Indian versions of the 'Story of Rama', perhaps the most noticeable is that in the Ramayana Vishnu was himself reincarnated as Tosaroth's four sons, Rama, Lakshman, Bhrot and Satrud, and not merely as Rama.*

## Kaiyaket Falls

An evil demon named Kontanurat, who ruled Ditsaseein, had an equally evil son named Wirunapat. One day, Kontanurat went hunting with his son and demon warriors. After killing much game, they amused themselves by deliberately destroying hermits' huts. Terrified inhabitants fled to Kaiyaket, pursued by demons.

Kontanurat despatched a warrior to deliver an ultimatum to King Kaiyaket. Either he payed homage to the demons, or his kingdom would be reduced to dust. Kaiyaket prepared a message to Ayudhya, and ordered city battlements manned. He declined to surrender or bow to the demons.

Demons attacked. City defences were weak. Demons soon forced their way inside. Kaiyaket was

obliged to flee, and was smuggled into the forest where he sought refuge with the hermit, Kowin.

Demons celebrated their easy victory. Wirunpat immediately herded city women together, and subsequently pleased himself with them in numerous ways.

Surviving warriors informed Rama of Kaiyaket's downfall. Bhrot and Satrud were immediately named generals of an army in which the young princes, Mongkut and Lop, were also awarded commands. Hanuman and Sukrib sent troops.

Once the army reached Kaiyaket, Chombhuwarat was despatched to convey a message to Kontanurat. The demon arrogantly refused to accept a demand to surrender, whereupon hostilities became inevitable.



## The Triumphant Princes

Wirunapat led forward elements of the demon army into battle. On seeing Mongkut and Lop, he could scarcely believe his eyes. It appeared the enemy had been reduced to fielding children.

Derisively, he exchanged boasts and insults with the princes before hostilities erupted. Monkey commanders killed many demons, while Lop engaged Wirunapat. Arrows were exchanged. Lop's final arrow turned into a whirlwind that collected strewn weapons littering the battlefield, and sent them hurtling into the demon's body to kill him.

Kontanurat attacked with venomous intent to avenge his son's death. Mongkut engaged him, and eventually prevailed, thanks to his magic arrow.

Gods and celestial beings celebrated the deaths of the evil demons by showering the battlefield with flowers.

## Peace Reigns

The triumphant army entered Kaiyaket to unanimous acclaim. King Kaiyaket was located with the hermit, and restored to his throne.

News of the victory was received with great joy and pride in Ayudhya.

King Kaiyaket embraced Bhrot and Satrud, and awarded them the rule of his kingdom. The monkeys, richly rewarded, returned to their respective homes. The great war with the demons was finally over.

Rama, Sita, Mongkut and Lop, Rama's soldiers and soothsayers, Lakshman, Bhrot and Satrud all lived in eternal happiness.

The Three Worlds enjoyed peace under Rama and Sita.

Good fortune existed everywhere.

The story ends.



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Various articles from the *Journal of the Siam Society*, including:

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