

The "Hanuman Dhoka" proper, or Hanuman Gate, is located on the west side of Durbar Square. It is the entry gate to the palace, where a standing statue of Hanuman (monkey god), dated to 1672, guards the palace. Hanuman is decked with a red cloth and an umbrella. The face is smeared with a red paste. On the left is a stone sculpture dated to 1673 of Lord Narasimha (the half-man, half lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu), devouring the demon Hiranyakashipu, which is credited to Pratap Malla period according to an inscription on the pedestal of the image. Hanuman's assistance to the noble Rama during the exciting events of the Ramayana has led to the monkey god's appearance guarding many important entrances. Here, cloaked in red and sheltered by an umbrella, a Hanuman statue marks the dhoka (entrance) to the Hanuman Dhoka. the god's face has long disappeared under a coating of orange vermillion paste applied by generations of devotees. Hanuman also known as Maruti, Bajrangabali, and Anjaneya, is a deity in Hinduism, revered as a divine vanara, and a devoted companion of the deity Rama. Central to the Ramayana, Hanuman is celebrated for his unwavering devotion to Rama and is considered a chiranjivi. He is traditionally believed to be the spiritual offspring of the wind deity Vayu, who is said to have played a significant role in his birth. In Shaiva tradition, he is regarded to be an incarnation of Shiva, while in most of the Vaishnava traditions he is the son and incarnation of Vayu. His tales are recounted not only in the Ramayana but also in the Mahabharata and various Puranas. Devotional practices centered around Hanuman were not prominent in these texts or in early archaeological evidence. His theological significance and the cultivation of a devoted following emerged roughly a millennium after the Ramayana was composed, during the second millennium CE, coinciding with the advent of Islamic rule in the Indian subcontinent. Hanuman's abilities are partly attributed to his lineage from Vayu, symbolizing a connection with both the physical and the cosmic elements. Figures from the Bhakti movement, such as Samarth Ramdas, have portrayed Hanuman as an emblem of nationalism and defiance against oppression. According to Vaishnava tradition, the sage Madhvacharya posited that Vayu aids Vishnu in his earthly incarnations, a role akin to Hanuman's assistance to Rama. In recent times, the veneration of Hanuman through iconography and temple worship has significantly increased. He epitomizes the fusion of "strength, heroic initiative, and assertive excellence" with "loving, emotional devotion" to his lord Rama, embodying both Shakti and Bhakti. Subsequent literature has occasionally depicted him as the patron deity of martial arts, meditation, and scholarly pursuits. He is revered as an exemplar of self-control, faith, and commitment to a cause,

transcending his outward Vanara appearance. Traditionally, Hanuman is celebrated as a lifelong celibate, embodying the virtues of chastity. In Valmiki's Ramayana, estimated to have been composed before or in about the 3rd century BCE, Hanuman is an important, creative figure as a simian helper and messenger for Rama. It is, however, in the late medieval era that his profile evolves into a more central role and dominance as the exemplary spiritual devotee, particularly with the popular vernacular text Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas (~ 1575 CE). According to scholars such as Patrick Peebles and others, during a period of religious turmoil and Islamic rule of the Indian subcontinent, the Bhakti movement and devotionism-oriented Bhakti yoga had emerged as a major trend in Hindu culture by the 16th-century, and the Ramcharitmanas presented Rama as a Vishnu avatar, supreme being and a personal god worthy of devotion, with Hanuman as the ideal loving devotee with legendary courage, strength and powers. During this era, Hanuman evolved and emerged as the ideal combination of shakti and bhakti. Stories and folk traditions in and after the 17th century, began to reformulate and present Hanuman as a divine being, as a descendant of deities, and as an avatar of Shiva. He emerged as a champion of those religiously persecuted, expressing resistance, a yogi, an inspiration for martial artists and warriors, a character with less fur and increasingly human, symbolizing cherished virtues and internal values, and worthy of devotion in his own right. This evolution of Hanuman's religious status, and his cultural role as well as his iconography, continued through the colonial era and into post-colonial times. According to Hindu legends, Hanuman was born to mother Anjana and father Kesari. Hanuman is also called the son of the deity Vayu (Wind god) because of legends associated with Vayu's role in Hanuman's birth and is said to be the incarnation of Shiva (Destroyer god). One story mentioned in Eknath's Bhavartha Ramayana (16th century CE) states that when Anjana was worshiping Vayu, the King Dasharatha of Ayodhya was also performing the ritual of Putrakameshti yagna in order to have children. As a result, he received some sacred pudding (payasam) to be shared by his three wives, leading to the births of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. By divine ordinance, a kite snatched a fragment of that pudding and dropped it while flying over the forest where Anjana was engaged in worship. Vayu delivered the falling pudding to the outstretched hands of Anjana, who consumed it, leading to the birth of Hanuman. Maharshi Veda Vyasa proposed Anjanadri Hill at Tirumala is the birthplace of Hanuman. Anjaneri in Nasik, Maharashtra along with Anjeneri Anjanadri (Near Hampi) in Gangavathi Taluk Koppal District, Karnataka is one of a number of places that claim to be the location of Kishkinda. According to Valmiki's

Ramayana, one morning in his childhood, Hanuman was hungry and saw the sun. Mistaking it for a ripe fruit, he leapt up to eat it. In one version of the Hindu legend, the king of gods_Indra intervened and struck Hanuman with his thunderbolt. It hit Hanuman on his jaw, and he fell to the earth dead with a broken jaw. Hanuman's father, Vayu, became upset and withdrew all the air from Earth. The lack of air created immense suffering to all living beings. This led Shiva to intervene and resuscitate Hanuman, which in turn prompted Vayu to return air to the living beings. As the mistake was done by the god Indra, he grants Hanuman a wish that his body would be as strong as Indra's Vajra, and that his Vajra can also not harm him. Along with Indra other gods have also granted him wishes: the God Agni granted Hanuman a wish that fire won't harm him; God Varuna granted a wish for Hanuman that water won't harm him; God Vayu granted a wish for Hanuman that he will be as fast as wind and that the wind won't harm him. Brahma also granted Hanuman a wish that he can move to any place where he cannot be stopped. Hence these wishes make Hanuman an immortal, who has unique powers and strength. In another Hindu version of his childhood legend, which is likely older and also found in Jain texts such as the 8th-century Dhurtakhyana, Hanuman's leap to the sun proves to be fatal and he is burnt to ashes from the sun's heat. His ashes fall onto the earth and oceans. Gods then gather the ashes and his bones from land and, with the help of fishes, re-assemble him. They find everything except one fragment of his jawbone. His great-grandfather on his mother's side then asks Surya to restore the child to life. Surya returns him to life, but Hanuman is left with a disfigured jaw. Hanuman is said to have spent his childhood in Kishkindha. Some time after this event, Hanuman begins using his supernatural powers on innocent bystanders as simple pranks, until one day he pranks a meditating sage. In fury, the sage curses Hanuman to forget the vast majority of his powers. The curse remains into effect, until he is reminded of his powers in his adulthood. After Rama and his brother Lakshmana, searching for Rama's kidnapped wife, Sita, arrive in Kishkindha, the new king, and Rama's newfound ally the monkey king Sugriva, agree to send scouts in all four directions to search for Rama's missing wife. To the south, Sugriva sends Hanuman and some others, including the great bear Jambavan. This group travels all the way to the southernmost tip of India, where they encounter the ocean with the island of Lanka (said to be modern day Sri Lanka) visible in the horizon. The group wishes to investigate the island, but none can swim or jump so far (it was common for such supernatural powers to be common amongst figures in these epics). However, Jambavan knows from prior events that Hanuman used to be able to do such a feat with ease and lifts his

curse. The curse lifted; Hanuman now remembers all of his dynamic divine powers. He is said to have transformed into the size of a mountain and flew across the narrow channel to Lanka. Upon landing, he discovers a city populated by the Lanka king Ravana and his demon followers, so he shrinks down to the size of an ant and sneaks into the city. After searching the city, he discovers Sita in a grove, guarded by demon warriors. When they all fall asleep, he meets with Sita and discusses how he came to find her. She reveals that Ravana kidnapped her and is forcing her to marry him soon. He offers to rescue her but Sita refuses, stating that her husband must do it. What happens next differs by account, but a common tale is that after visiting Sita, he starts destroying the grove, prompting his capture. Regardless of the tale, he ends up captured in the court of Ravana himself, who laughs when Hanuman tells him that Rama is coming to take back Sita. Ravana orders his servants to light Hanuman's tail on fire as torture for threatening his safety. However, every time they put on an oil-soaked cloth to burn, he grows his tail longer so that more cloths need to be added. This continues until Ravana has had enough and orders the lighting to begin. However, when his tail is lit, he shrinks his tail back and breaks free of his bonds with his superhuman strength. He jumps out a window and jumps from rooftop to rooftop, burning down building after building, until much of the city is ablaze. Seeing this triumph, Hanuman leaves back for India. When he returns, he tells his scouting party what had occurred, and they rush back to Kishkindha, where Rama had been waiting all along for news. Hearing that Sita was safe and was awaiting him, Rama gathered the support of Sugriva's army and marched for Lanka. Thus begins the legendary Battle of Lanka. Throughout the long battle, Hanuman played a role as a general in the army. During one intense fight, Lakshmana, Rama's brother, was fatally wounded; it was thought that he would die without the aid of a herb from a Himalayan mountain. Hanuman was the only one who could make the journey so quickly, and was thus sent to the mountain. Upon arriving, he discovered that there were many herbs along the mountainside, and did not want to take the wrong herb back. So instead, he grew to the size of a mountain, ripped the mountain from the Earth, and flew it back to the battle. This act is perhaps his most legendary among Hindus. A chunk of this mountain was said to have fallen down and the present day "Forts Purandar and Vajragad" are believed to be the fallen pieces.

In the end, Rama revealed his divine powers as the incarnation of the God Vishnu, and slew Ravana and the rest of the demon army. Finally, Rama returned to his home of Ayodhya to return to his place as king. After blessing all those who aided him in the battle with gifts, Rama gave Hanuman his gift, which Hanuman threw

away. Many court officials, perplexed, were angered by this act. Hanuman replied that rather than needing a gift to remember Rama, he would always be in his heart. Some court officials, still upset, asked him for proof, and Hanuman tore open his chest, which had an image of Rama and Sita on his heart. Now proven as a true devotee, Rama cured him and blessed him with immortality, but Hanuman refused this and asked only for a place at Rama's feet to worship him. Touched, Rama blessed him with immortality anyway. Like Shesha Nag, Hanuman would live on after the kalpa (destruction of the universe). Centuries after the events of the Ramayana, and during the events of the Mahabharata, Hanuman is now a nearly forgotten demigod living his life in a forest. After some time, his spiritual brother through the god Vayu, Bhima, passes through looking for flowers for his wife. Hanuman senses this and decides to teach him a lesson, as Bhima had been known to be boastful of his superhuman strength (at this point in time supernatural powers were much rarer than in the Ramayana but still seen in the Hindu epics). Bhima encountered Hanuman lying on the ground in the shape of a feeble old monkey. He asked Hanuman to move, but he would not. As stepping over an individual was considered extremely disrespectful in this time, Hanuman suggested lifting his tail up to create a passage. Bhima heartily accepted, but could not lift the tail to any avail. Bhima, humbled, realized that the frail monkey was some sort of deity, and asked him to reveal himself. Hanuman revealed himself, much to Bhima's surprise, and the brothers embraced. Hanuman prophesied that Bhima would soon be a part of a terrible war, and promised Bhima that he would sit on the flag of his brother Arjuna's chariot and shout a battle cry for Bhima that would weaken the hearts of his enemies. Content, Hanuman left his brother to his search.