

# RAMAYANA

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*Translated by Robert Biggs*

PART IV

KIṢKINDHĀ-KĀṆḌA

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*With love, respect and 17 boxes of cereal*  
— *Sourcebits Family*



## SUGRĪVA DETECTS THE PRESENCE OF RĀMA

When Rāma reached the shore of Lake Pampā, which was crowded with lotus flowers, water lilies and fish, He began to lament, His mind being disturbed. Upon seeing the lake, Rāma's senses became excited because of delight. Coming under the sway of amorous desire, He said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Lake Pampā looks very beautiful with its water sparkling like a vaidurya gem, its surface covered with fully open lotus flowers and water lilies, and its shore lined with many kinds of trees. O Lakṣmaṇa, just see the forest so beautiful to behold along the shore of Lake Pampā, where the trees are like the peaks of mountains. I am being stricken with heartbreak just like during the spring season due to Sītā's abduction and Bharata's predicament. Although I am stricken with grief, Lake Pampā lined with wonderful forests fascinates Me with its cool and clear waters covered with many different types of flowers. Despite being blanketed with lotuses and teeming with snakes, wild beasts and birds, it appears very lovely. This field sprinkled with flowers fallen from trees is bright with blues and yellows, like a colorful carpet spread on the ground. The tops of trees laden with flowers are entwined all around with vines blossoming at their ends. O Lakṣmaṇa, this month is a time of pleasant breezes and it awakens profound feelings of love. It is fragrant with the aromas of trees bearing flowers and fruits.

"Just see the beauty of these forest groves showering down flowers, as clouds do shower down rain. Different varieties of trees standing among lovely rocks are dropping their flowers on the ground due to the force of strong winds. See how the wind is playing everywhere with the flowers fallen on the ground, those that are just falling, and those that are still on the trees. The bees, moved from their places by the wind, sing the praises of that wind which is shaking the tree branches weighted down with flowers. The wind issuing forth from mountain caves seems to sing as it makes the trees dance to the song of love-maddened cuckoos. Being shaken all over by the wind, the trees, having the ends of their branches entangled with each other,

appear to be tied together. Pleasing to the touch, as cooling as sandalwood paste, and wafting a sweet fragrance, this pious wind relieves exhaustion. Shaken by the wind, the forests fragrant with honey seem to be singing because of the constant humming of bumblebees. The mountains look enchanting with their peaks linked together by flowering trees growing in their level areas. With their tops cloaked with flowers, those trees shaken by the wind and swarming with honeybees seem to be singing.

See these flower-laden karṇikāra trees everywhere, which look like men dressed in yellow garments who are decorated with gold ornaments. O Lakṣmaṇa, this spring season resounding with the singing of many birds increases My grief at being separated from Sītā. In fact, love torments Me, overwhelmed as I am with grief. Engaging in a dispute with Me, the cuckoo joyfully calls out to Me. This waterfowl happily squawking in this nice forest waterfall saddens Me because I am overcome with amorous longing, O Lakṣmaṇa. When My beloved used to hear its cry in the past while She was still present in the cottage, She used to call Me with extreme delight. See how birds of every kind alight on trees, bushes and vines here and there, sounding various notes. When female birds are in the company of male birds, they are very happy to be in the midst of their own kind. Similarly, the female bees are humming sweetly because of their joy at hearing the buzzing of drones, O Lakṣmaṇa. By the honking of waterfowl and the shrill twitter of male cuckoos, these trees do sing, enkindling My amorous desires. Surely I will be consumed by the fire of spring which has the reddish aśoka flowerets as its hot embers, the humming of honeybees as its crackle and the aśoka trees' copper-colored leaves as its flames. O Lakṣmaṇa, there is no reason for Me to continue living without seeing that sweet-speaking woman with fine eyelashes and lovely hair.

“This season, during which flocks of cuckoos congregate in the precincts of pleasant forests, is very dear to My beloved Sītā, O sinless one. This fire of grief, which has sprung from love and is augmented by the qualities of spring, will very shortly consume Me. Not seeing My beloved Sītā and seeing these pleasing trees, My feelings of love will surely climax. Sītā's absence increases My grief, as does the spring which negates the possibility of sweat by its cool breezes. That fawn-eyed lady does indeed torment Me, overwhelmed as I am with anxiety and sorrow, and so also does

this cruel forest breeze which blows during this month of Caitra. These peacocks appear very beautiful as they dance here and there, their tails looking like crystal lattices being shaken by the wind. Surrounded by peahens, these love-maddened peacocks increase My longing, overwhelmed as I am by love. O Lakṣmaṇa, just see how that peahen is dancing at the side of her dancing peacock mate on top of that hill. Spreading the fan of his tail and apparently laughing at Me with his cries, that peacock is mentally pursuing his beloved peahen. Surely that peacock's beloved has not been stolen away in the forest by a rākṣasa. Therefore he is dancing with his beloved in the charming groves. For Me, however, it is unbearable to live here without Sītā during this flower-bearing month.

“See, O Lakṣmaṇa, how love is present even among the animal species, for which this peahen approaches her mate out of love. The broad-eyed Sītā would also be approaching Me in a bustle due to Her feelings of love, had She not been abducted. See how this multitude of forest flowers at the end of winter are all useless for Me. Overjoyed, the birds sing melodiously in chorus, calling out to one another and intoxicating Me with amorous desire. If spring has arrived in that region where My beloved is, surely She, being under the power of another, will be lamenting as I am. Assuredly spring will not touch that place where Sītā is. Even so, how can that woman with dark, lotus-like eyes continue living without Me? Or else, spring may be present where My beloved is, but what will that shapely woman do when She is being threatened by others? Certainly upon entering the spring season, that youthful woman who speaks so sweetly and whose eyes resemble lotus petals will give up Her life.

“The thought constantly recurs in My mind that the chaste Sītā cannot survive in separation from Me. The affection of Sītā, the princess of the Vaidehas, is truly focused on Me, and My affection is focused on Sītā under all circumstances. This breeze bearing the fragrance of flowers and gratifying the sense of touch is like fire to Me while I am thinking of my darling. The same breeze which I formerly considered enjoyable when in the company of Sītā, is, in Her absence, increasing My suffering. The crow that indicated Sītā's abduction by his crowing is now perched on a tree branch cawing jubilantly, indicating that She will return. While this crow took part in Sītā's abduction, he will now bring Me to where My broad-eyed Sītā is.

Listen, O Lakṣmaṇa, to the warbling of birds perched on the ends of flowering branches. Their sound is increasing My longing. That honeybee suddenly approaches the flowering spray of the tilaka tree which is being shaken by the wind, just as he would approach his darling when enthralled by love. Increasing the suffering of lovers, this aśoka tree is threatening Me with its sprays of flowers. O Lakṣmaṇa, yonder mango trees burdened with flowers look like human beings anointed with bright cosmetics, their minds bewildered by love. O Lakṣmaṇa, just see the kinnaras wandering randomly through the forest groves on the banks of Lake Pampā.

See these marvelously fragrant lotus flowers all over the water shining like the newly risen sun. Here is Lake Pampā whose pleasant waters are adorned with red lotus flowers, blue water lilies and aromatic white lotus flowers, and which is teeming with swans and ducks. Its waters are covered all over with lotus flowers that shine like the newly risen sun and whose pollen has been scattered by honeybees. Always frequented by ruddy geese, the wonderful woodlands along the shore look beautiful with herds of elephants and deer coming to drink its water. O Lakṣmaṇa, jarred by waves propelled by the force of the wind, the lotus flowers on the placid water are glistening.

Life no longer appeals to Me now that I am unable to see My Sītā, who is always fond of lotus flowers and whose broad eyes are shaped like the petals of a lotus flower. Oh how crooked is Cupid, that he makes Me remember the blessed Sītā, who speaks so nicely and is now gone and difficult to recover. I could endure the longing that has now arisen in Me if spring with its flower-bearing trees would not smite Me repeatedly. Those things which were pleasing while in Sītā's company have become unpleasant in Her absence. O Lakṣmaṇa, when I see the petals encircling the calyxes of lotus flowers, I am reminded of Sītā's bud-like eyes. The enchanting breeze caressing the filaments of lotus flowers and blowing through the trees resembles Sītā's breath. See the trunks of the exceptionally beautiful karṇikāra trees on the mountain peaks to the south of Lake Pampā. This king of mountains, Rṣyamūka, well-adorned by abundant minerals, is discharging a colorful cloud of dust stirred up by strong blasts of wind. The peaks of this mountain look as if they are on fire because of the leafless kimśuka trees covered with flowers. These blooming mālatī vines, mallikā



jasmine and karavīra trees which are growing on the banks of Lake Pampā are as fragrant as honey. There are ketakī and sindhuvāra trees and flowering vāsantī vines, as well as mādhavī and jasmine vines full of fragrance everywhere about. There are also blooming cirivilva, madhūka, vañjula, bakula, campaka, tilaka and nāga trees. On the tops of mountains are padmaka, blue aśoka and lodhra trees in bloom, tawny as the mane of a lion. There can also be seen aṅkola, kuraṇṭa, cūrṇaka, pāribhadraka, mango, pāṭali, kovidāra, mucukunda and arjuna trees in bloom on the mountain peaks. There are also ketaka, uddālaka, śirīṣa, śimśapā, dhava, śālmālī, kiṁśuka, red kurabaka, tiniśa, and naktamāla trees in bloom.

“O Lakṣmaṇa, see the pleasant, flowering trees entwined by blossoming vines here on the banks of Lake Pampā. The trees are bent so low by the wind that one can touch their branches. Vines embrace the trees like ladies intoxicated with love. Passing from tree to tree, mountain to mountain and forest to forest, the wind blows as if thrilled to taste the nectar of different flowers. Some trees are covered all over with flowers and are as fragrant as honey, while others are covered with buds and are dark-colored. The honeybees infatuated with nectar linger inside the flowers thinking: ‘How sweet this is! How delicious this is! How mature this is!’ Hidden inside the flowers, they suddenly emerge and fly off to other trees on the shore of Lake Pampā because of their greed for nectar. Strewn with mounds of flowers fallen of their own accord, this stretch of land looks like a bed made comfortable with spread sheets. O Lakṣmaṇa, different varieties of flowers have accumulated into piles of yellow and red across the mountain slopes.

“See the abundance of flowers on the trees at the end of winter. Indeed, during this flower-bearing month the trees are blooming as if in competition with each other. Crowned with flowers and resounding with the buzzing of bees calling out to each other, the trees look very beautiful. Diving into the clear water, this kāraṇḍava duck is enjoying with his beloved, awakening My feelings of love. Since Lake Pampā’s beauty, which resembles that of the Mandākinī River, is so captivating, its characteristics are famous throughout the world. If I happen to find that chaste woman, and We live in this particular forest, I shall not envy Lord Indra nor long to be in Ayodhyā. If I could indeed enjoy with Her in these pleasant meadows, I would not

worry nor long for anything else. Covered as they are with different kinds of flowers, those trees disturb My mind because of My separation from Sītā. See the lake full of cool water, covered with lotuses, teeming with ruddy geese, ducks, water fowl and herons, and frequented by wild boars and deer. Lake Pampā appears extremely beautiful with birds singing sweetly. Reminding Me of My darling whose face resembles the moon and whose eyes are shaped like lotus petals, the joyful birds of many kinds enflame My longing.

“Look at the stags with their does on the beautiful mountain tops and at Me suffering in separation from My fawn-eyed Sītā; their wandering here and there is afflicting My mind. I will be fortunate only if I am able to see My beloved on this mountain stirring with flocks of birds in rut. I could definitely survive if I could enjoy the pleasant breezes of Lake Pampā with the lovely Sītā at My side. Those who are lucky are able to enjoy the breezes coming from Lake Pampā, tantalizing breezes which carry the aroma of red lotus flowers and fragrant white water lilies, and which relieve distress. How can Sītā, the daughter of King Janaka, continue living when She is separated from Me and is in a helpless condition? How can I tell the righteous and truthful King Janaka that everything is all right when he inquires about Our well-being in a public assembly? Where is that dear Sītā who, dedicated as She was to the path of truth, followed Me into the forest when I was exiled by My father due to My bad fortune? O Lakṣmaṇa, how can I continue when I am so miserable due to the loss of Sītā, who followed Me when I lost My kingdom and was downcast? My mind is disturbed by not seeing Her fragrant, bright, spotless face with adorable eyes. When shall I hear Sītā’s unparalleled sweet and wholesome voice accompanied by smiles and laughter. Although She was suffering in the forest, She spoke kindly to Me when I was stricken with love, as if She were not suffering at all. What shall I tell My mother Kausalyā when she asks Me: ‘Where and how is the princess, my daughter-in-law?’ Go, Lakṣmaṇa! See My dear brother Bharata, for I am unable to continue living without Sītā.”

Thus Rāma lamented like a boat tossed about on the sea by high winds, unable to see the end of His suffering. As Rāma was lamenting like a fatherless child, His brother Lakṣmaṇa spoke the following just and perfect words: “Take heart, Rāma. May You have good luck. Do not worry, O best of

men. The intelligence of those whose minds are free from sin never becomes dull. Remembering the misery born from separation, give up affection for loved ones. Even a wet wick can burn when it is soaked with sufficient oil. Even if Rāvaṇa goes down to Pātāla or some region still lower than that, he will not live long under any circumstance. Let Us get some information on that sinful rākṣasa, he will then either return Sītā or meet his end. If Rāvaṇa enters with Sītā into the womb of Diti, the mother of the demons, I shall kill him even there if he does not give back Sītā. Be patient, O noble brother. Give up this miserly mentality, for those whose activities and goal have been obstructed cannot be successful without exertion. Such exertion is indeed very powerful; there is nothing more powerful than exertion. Men who exert themselves do not become discouraged while engaged in their duties. Depending on Our exertion alone, We shall recover Sītā. Abandoning sorrow at a distance, give up the behavior of one overwhelmed by desire. You no longer seem to know that You are a great soul advanced in self-realization.”

When Rāma, whose mind had been perturbed by sorrow, was awakened by Lakṣmaṇa, He gave up His grief and illusion and became resolute. Śrī Rāma, whose prowess was inconceivable and who was undisturbed, crossed beyond the charming Lake Pampā, which was lined with trees waving in the wind. With His mind overcome with anxiety, Rāma sallied forth with Lakṣmaṇa, hurriedly searching in the forests, waterfalls and caves. Walking in the manner of a playful elephant in rut, the great soul Lakṣmaṇa, whose mind was settled, tried to reassure Rāma by His own character and strength.

One day, the lord of the forest monkeys, Sugrīva, who used to roam about the environs of Rṣyamūka Mountain, happened to see the two amazing-looking princes, after which he became so frightened that he could not do anything. Moving slowly like an elephant, the monkey was crushed by the weight of fear and overwhelmed with anxiety at having seen the two princes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Frightened upon seeing those two powerful descendants of the Raghu Dynasty, the tawny-colored monkeys retreated to the security of their pious and enjoyable residence.

## SUGRĪVA SENDS HANUMĀN TO MEET RĀMA

Upon seeing the two brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who were both great souls, heroic and outstanding wielders of weapons, Sugrīva became fearful. Looking around in all directions, he could not find any relief anywhere. The monkey chief did not even wish to stay at his own place, and his fearful mind gave way to despondency. After contemplating the situation and consulting with his advisors about his strengths and weakness, Sugrīva and all his followers became very disturbed. The distraught monkey chieftain then pointed out Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to his ministers, saying: “These two men disguised as ascetics wearing tree bark cloth who have entered this impenetrable forest have obviously been sent by Vālī.” When Sugrīva’s ministers saw the two expert bowmen, they fled to another mountain top. Quickly reaching their new location, the tawny monkeys surrounded Sugrīva, who was the chief of those monkey leaders. Jumping from precipice to precipice, the monkeys shook the mountains with their forcefulness, until they all reached the same place. While leaping in that way, they also smashed the flowering trees growing on the mountains. When they jumped on that mountain from all sides, they frightened the deer, wild cats and tigers, and then proceeded elsewhere. Coming together on R̥śyamūka Mountain, all of Sugrīva’s ministers stationed themselves around him with joined palms. Thereafter Hanumān, who was skilled at speaking, spoke the following to Sugrīva, who was overcome with fear and apprehensive about Vālī committing some transgression: “Everyone should give up their anxiety about Vālī. This is the best of mountains known as R̥śyamūka. As such there is no danger from Vālī here. I do not see that cruel-looking Vālī, from whom you fled and of whom you are so fearful, O best of monkeys. Your wicked and sinful-acting elder brother Vālī, who is a source of danger for you, is not here. I therefore do not see any reason for fear. Your monkey nature is all too evident. Because of your light-mindedness, you are unable to remain fixed on a decision. Endowed as you are with intelligence and wisdom,

conduct your activities by reading the minds of others through their gestures. A king who is less intelligent cannot rule over his subjects properly.”

After hearing everything that Hanumān said, Sugrīva made the following reply, which was more convincing than what Hanumān had said: “Who would not be afraid of these two men with long arms and broad eyes who are bearing bows, arrows and swords? They look like the sons of gods! I fear these two outstanding men must have been sent by Vālī, for kings have many friends and these cannot be trusted at all. One should recognize enemies when they are going about in disguise. Mistrustful as they are, they assail the weak points of their adversaries who trust in them. Vālī is crafty in his affairs. Kings are shrewd in implementing plots by which their enemies are destroyed. Thus they should be known through spies dressed as ordinary men. O Hanumān, approaching those two men in an innocent way, you should find out about Them through Their gestures, expressions and words. Inspiring confidence in Them by repeatedly praising me with words and gestures, find out what Their intention is, whether they are pleased to hear what you say. Standing with your face toward me, inquire from Them why They have entered this forest. If you determine that They are pure in heart, O monkey, try to discover whether They are wicked or not by Their manner of speaking and facial expressions.”

When Hanumān, the son of the wind god, had been instructed in this way by the monkey king, he decided to go where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were. Accepting the monkey king’s command, Hanumān replied: “So be it.” Praising Sugrīva, who was dismayed and yet difficult to assail, Hanumān went to where the highly powerful Rāma and His brother Lakṣmaṇa were.

## HANUMĀN MEETS RĀMA AND LAKṢMAṆA

Hanumān accepted Sugrīva's order and then jumped from the top of R̥śyamūka Mountain to where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were. Because of his suspicions, Hanumān abandoned the form of a monkey and assumed the form of a mendicant. Falling on the ground before the two descendants of the Raghu Dynasty like a humble person, Hanumān then spoke to the two warriors, praising Them with sweet and agreeable words. Offering Them respect in accordance with scriptural rules, Hanumān, the son of the wind god, spoke to Them exactly according to Sugrīva's wishes: "You two ascetics of austere vows appear to be saintly kings or demigods. Why have You come to this region, frightening the deer herds and other forest creatures while examining all the trees that grow on the banks of Lake Pampā? You two are beautifying the auspicious waters of this lake. Who are You two ascetics of great fortitude and excellent complexion who are dressed in cloth made from the bark of trees. While sighing repeatedly, You are causing distress to all living creatures. You cast glances as does a lion and Your strength and prowess are also like a lion's. Bearing bows like Lord Indra's, You are capable of defeating any enemy. You are splendid, handsome and strut about like fine bulls. Your arms are like the trunk of an elephant and You are very effulgent. By Your bodily luster You are illuminating this best of mountains. You deserve to be kings and resemble the immortal gods. Why have You come to this region?

"Your eyes are just like the petals of a lotus flower. Your matted hair is tied in a knot atop Your heads. You two warriors resemble each other and look as if You have descended from the world of the gods. By the will of providence, the sun and moon have descended to the earth. You two men have broad chests and possess the beauty of gods. Your shoulders are as wide as a lion's. You are extremely enthusiastic, like two bulls in rut. Why are not Your arms, which are long, well-shaped, and like iron clubs, decorated with all kinds of suitable ornaments? I consider You both as capable of protecting

this entire earth with Mount Meru, the Vindhya Mountains and its oceans and forests. These precious bows of wonderful workmanship look like Lord Indra's gilded thunderbolts. These fine-looking quivers are full of dreadful, sharp arrows which are like serpents and which can put an end to one's life. These swords are long, very large in size, and are adorned with wrought gold, shining like two snakes that have shed their skin. Why do You not answer Me when I have glorified You both in this way?

“There is a certain monkey chieftain named Sugrīva who is righteous and valiant. He was banished by his brother and is now sadly wandering the earth. Sent by that great soul Sugrīva, king of the most important monkeys, I, a monkey named Hanumān, have come here. Sugrīva desires Your friendship. I am his minister, a monkey born from the wind god. I assumed this form as a mendicant in order to satisfy the wishes of Sugrīva. I jumped all the way from R̥śyamūka Mountain, for I can go anywhere I wish and assume any form I wish.” When Hanumān, who was a skillful speaker, finished saying all this, he said nothing more.

Upon hearing what Hanumān had said, the glorious Rāma, whose face was beaming with delight, spoke as follows to Lakṣmaṇa standing at His side: “This person who has arrived before Me is a minister of the lord of monkeys, Sugrīva, whom I was looking for. He is an eloquent speaker who utters sweet words with affection, O crusher of foes. It is not possible to speak like that unless one has studied the R̥g Veda, the Yajur Veda, or the Sāma Veda. He must have thoroughly studied grammar, for he has not said anything wrong even though talking extensively. Neither was there any fault in his face, eyes, forehead, eyebrows or any other limbs while he was speaking. His speech emanated from his chest, vibrated in his throat and was of medium tone. His words were concise, unambiguous, unfaltering and unhurried. The words he utters are wholesome, captivating and properly composed. Whose mind would not be pleased by these remarkable words which were manifested in three places—the heart, the throat and the head? They can even pacify the mind of an enemy with a raised sword. How can a king who has no such emissary have success in his enterprises? By the entreaties of such qualified emissaries, a king achieves success in all circumstances.”

After being spoken to in this way by Lord Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, who was Himself a master of speech, addressed Hanumān, the minister of Sugrīva: “We are familiar with the good qualities of the great soul Sugrīva, O wise monkey. We are also looking for that lord of monkeys, Sugrīva. We shall certainly do whatever you say under the command of Sugrīva, O best of monkeys.” Hearing those adroit words of Lakṣmaṇa and having his mind fixed on the victory of Sugrīva, Hanumān, who was visibly pleased, wished to establish friendship with the two princes.



## HANUMĀN INQUIRES FROM RĀMA ABOUT HIS VISIT

Hearing the sweet speeches of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and how They wished to meet Sugrīva, Hanumān was pleased and his mind began thinking of Sugrīva: “Sugrīva will certainly attain his kingdom, for Rāma has come with a purpose to accomplish and Sugrīva will have to assist Him.” Thus Hanumān felt extremely pleased and spoke as follows to Lord Rāma: “For what reason have You come with Your brother to this dreadful and impenetrable forest on the shores of Lake Pampā, which is infested with so many snakes and wild beasts?”

Upon hearing this inquiry, Lakṣmaṇa, on the urging of Rāma, spoke about Rāma, the son of King Daśaratha: “There was a king named Daśaratha who was splendid and devoted to righteousness. He always protected the four divisions of society through the execution of his own prescribed duties. He had no enemy nor did he have enmity with anyone. Moreover among living entities he was like another Lord Brahmā. He satisfied the Lord with sacrificial performances, such as agniṣṭoma, in which the priests were accordingly remunerated. This is his first-born son known to the people by the name Rāma. He is the shelter of all living beings and has complied with the instructions of His father. This warrior is the most qualified of King Daśaratha’s sons. He possesses the bodily characteristics of a monarch. He was just about to inherit the kingdom when He lost it and came here to live with Me in the forest. He was followed by His consort Sītā, who is most glorious and obedient to Him, as the sun is followed by its own brilliance when it sinks below the horizon. I am His younger brother named Lakṣmaṇa. Because of His qualities, I have accepted a position as His servant. He is always grateful and makes much of even the most insignificant service. My brother deserves to enjoy all kinds of comforts. He is most honorable and is always concerned about the welfare of all living beings. Deprived of His opulence, He is residing in the forest. A rākṣasa who can

assume any form at will has kidnapped His wife. We, however, do not know who that raksasa is.

“There was a son of Diti named Danu who was cursed to become a rākṣasa. He mentioned to Us that Sugrīva was a capable leader of monkeys. He said that Sugrīva would find out who had kidnapped Rāma’s wife. After saying this, Danu joyfully rose up to heaven. I have related all this to you in accordance with your inquiry. In fact, Rāma and I have come to take shelter of Sugrīva. Having previously attained lordship over the world, having given away all His wealth and having achieved unequalled fame, Rāma now wishes to have Sugrīva as His master. He whose father was the shelter of the world and fond of righteousness, his son, who is presently the shelter of the world, wishes to take shelter of Sugrīva. My elder brother in whom the whole world previously took shelter seeks the shelter of Sugrīva. That Rāma whose constant satisfaction constituted the pleasure of the citizens is longing for the mercy of the lord of monkeys. This is King Daśaratha’s first-born son well-known throughout the world as Rāma, who has always honored all of the earth’s rulers endowed with all good qualities. He has now come to take shelter of Sugrīva. That leader of monkey troops ought to be merciful to Rāma, seeing that He is overwhelmed with grief and has come seeking his shelter.”

While Lakṣmaṇa was speaking in this pathetic way with tears flowing from His eyes, Hanumān responded as follows: “By our good luck persons like you, who are intelligent, who have conquered their anger and controlled their senses, and who therefore deserve to meet Sugrīva, have come within the range of my vision. Robbed of the kingdom and estranged by Vālī, Sugrīva was deprived of his wife and exiled to the forest where he lives in great anxiety. Sugrīva, an offspring of the sun god, along with us monkeys, will help You locate Sītā.” When Hanumān finished speaking these sweet words, he softly added: “Let us go see Sugrīva.”

After offering respect to Hanumān according to the rules, the righteous Lakṣmaṇa said the following to Lord Rāma: “Overjoyed, this son of the wind god speaks appropriately. Because Sugrīva has some purpose to accomplish, You will also accomplish Yours. The warrior monkey Hanumān speaks clearly and his face is glowing with satisfaction. He would not speak

falsely.” Upon hearing this, that most wise son of the wind god was ready to take Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Sugrīva. Abandoning the guise of a mendicant, he again assumed his form as a monkey. Placing the two warriors on his shoulders, he departed. That best of monkeys whose fame was extensive was delighted like one who has achieved his goals. That fine-minded son of the wind god whose prowess was ample proceeded toward Ṛśyamūka Mountain with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.

## RĀMA AND SUGRĪVA BECOME FRIENDS

Jumping from R̥śyamūka Mountain to the nearby Malaya Mountain, Hanumān again assumed the guise of a mendicant and introduced Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Sugrīva: “This is the extremely wise Rāma of steadfast prowess, who has just arrived. His heroism is undeterrable and is accompanied by His brother Lakṣmaṇa. Rāma was born in the Ikṣvāku Dynasty as the son of King Daśaratha. He is famous for His dedication to duty and is carrying out the order of His father, for which reason He has come to reside in the wilderness. His wife was kidnapped by the demon Rāvaṇa, and so He has come to take shelter of you.

“King Daśaratha fully worshiped the fire god Agni with the performance of rājasūya and aśvamedha sacrifices in which the brāhmaṇas were duly rewarded and in which cows were given away in charity by the thousands. He ruled the earth by means of his austerity and truthfulness. On account of the king’s co-wife Kaikeyi, this prince was exiled to the forest and has come to take shelter of you. These two brothers—Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa—desire your friendship. Receive Them properly, for They are worthy of respect.”

Upon hearing Hanumān’s statement, Sugrīva was pleased in mind. Thus he gave up his fear of Rāma and was pacified. Assuming the form of a very handsome human, the monkey chieftain Sugrīva spoke to Rāma as follows: “You are trained in righteousness and are chivalrous and dear to all. Hanumān has truthfully informed me of Your good qualities. It is an honor for me and a great achievement that You seek the friendship of me, a monkey. If it pleases You to be my friend, here is my extended hand. Grasp my hand and thus establish a binding covenant with me.”

Rāma was very pleased to hear Sugrīva’s words and grasped Sugrīva’s hand tightly. Assuming an amicable mood, Rāma embraced Sugrīva to His breast. Then Hanumān abandoned the guise of an ascetic and assumed his

own form, after which he placed wood in a pile and set it on fire. While the fire was burning, the sober Hanumān worshiped it with flowers and then placed it between Rāma and Sugrīva. Circumambulating the blazing fire in a clockwise direction, Rāma and Sugrīva solemnized their friendship. By doing this they both felt tremendous mental satisfaction, though while looking at each other they were unable to achieve any satiety.

Sugrīva then joyfully spoke the following words to Rāma: “Since You are my bossom friend, we are one in happiness and distress.” Then Sugrīva broke off from a sāla tree a branch ladden with flowers and leaves. Laying the branch down on the ground, Sugrīva sat on it with Rāma. Hanumān then happily offered Lakṣmaṇa a fully flowering branch of a sandalwood tree to sit on.

After this, Sugrīva, whose eyes were bewildered with joy, gently spoke the following sweet words to Rāma: “Since I was exiled and deprived of my wife, I have been wandering around in this forest stricken with fear. After my wife was taken away from me, I took shelter of this impassable forest. Being banished and harassed by Vālī, I am living in this forest out of anxiety and with a perturbed mind. O blessed one, grant me protection from Vālī, overcome as I am with apprehension. O Rāma, You should act in such a way that I have no cause for fear.”

Hearing these words, Rāma, who was powerful and knew how to act appropriately, uttered the following pleasing words: “O mighty monkey, I know that friendship is the fruit of an act of kindness. I shall slay Vālī, who has taken away your wife. These sharp arrows of Mine, which shine like the sun, are infallible. They will forcefully strike down that Vālī of wicked deeds. Fitted with buzzard feathers, these arrows are as bright as Lord Indra’s thunderbolt. Sharp-tipped and straight-shafted, they are like angry snakes. You will soon see Vālī knocked down on the ground like a mountain shattered by My sharp arrows which are like cruel, venomous serpents.”

After Sugrīva heard Lord Rāma’s encouraging statement, he was very happy and spoke the following significant words: “By Your mercy, O lion among men, I hope to regain my beloved wife and kingdom. O god among men, deal with my older brother in such a way so that he will not assault me anymore.”

As soon as Sugrīva and Rāma became affectionate to each other, the left eyes of Sītā, Vālī and Rāvaṇa, which were lotus-like, golden and fiery respectively, began twitching simultaneously.

## SUGRĪVA SHOWS SĪTĀ'S VEIL AND JEWELRY

Sugrīva once more spoke pleasantly to Lord Rāma: “Hanumān, the best of my ministers, has informed me of the reason for which You have come to this desolate wilderness. While You were living in exile in the forest with Your brother Lakṣmaṇa, a rākṣasa kidnapped Your wife Sītā, the daughter of King Janaka. While She was being carried away from You and Lakṣmaṇa, She cried repeatedly. The vulture Jaṭāyu was killed by the rākṣasa who had been seeking an opportunity to kidnap Sītā. Before long You will give up the sorrow born from the separation from Your wife. I will bring Her back even as the Lord retrieved the Vedas when these were stolen by demons. Whether Your wife is in the depths of the subterranean region or on the crest of heaven, I shall bring Her back and deliver Her to You, O crusher of enemies. What I am saying is true, O descendant of the Raghu Dynasty. No one can keep Your wife as theirs, whether Indra or the gods and demons, anymore than one can digest poison. Give up Your sorrow, for I shall bring back Your beloved.

“I surmise that Sītā was undoubtedly carried off by a rākṣasa of cruel deeds as was witnessed by me. She was loudly crying out, “O Rāma! O Rāma! O Lakṣmaṇa!” as She writhed like a serpent queen in the embrace of Rāvaṇa. Seeing me with four other monkeys on the slope of a mountain, She tossed down Her veil and sparkling ornaments. We recovered them and kept them safely, O Rāma. I shall bring them so that You can identify them.”

Rāma then said to Sugrīva: “Bring them quickly, My friend. Why are you delaying?” Hearing this, Sugrīva immediately entered into the deep recess of a mountain cave in order to please Lord Rāma. Bringing back the veil and shiny ornaments, Sugrīva said, “Look!” as he showed them to Rāma. After Rāma grasped the cloth and sparkling jewelry, His face became covered with tears, as does the moon by fog. Being completely drenched

with tears shed due to His tremendous affection for Sītā, Rāma lost all composure and fell on the ground, crying out, “O My darling!” Constantly pressing that valuable jewelry to His chest, He hissed repeatedly, like an angry serpent in its hole.

Seeing Lakṣmaṇa at His side, Rāma began lamenting piteously with an unbroken flow of tears: “Look, Lakṣmaṇa! These are the veil and bodily ornaments dropped to the ground by Sītā while She was being kidnapped. Surely Sītā dropped these ornaments on the ground of some meadow as She was being abducted, for they look exactly the same.” Lakṣmaṇa then replied to Rāma as follows: “I do not recognize the bracelets, nor the earrings. I only recognize the anklebells because of My always bowing down to Her feet.”

Thereafter the sullen Rāma said to Sugrīva: “Tell Me to what place Sītā, who is dearer to Me than My life, was carried by the monstrous rākṣasa as witnessed by you. Also, where is the residence of that rākṣasa who has caused Me considerable suffering and on whose account I shall slay all the rākṣasas. He has opened the gates of hell for his own destruction by abducting Sītā and provoking Me excessively. O lord of monkeys, please inform Me about that night-stalker who, as My enemy, kidnapped My dearly beloved from the depths of the forest while I was diverted. I will soon dispatch him to the abode of the lord of death.”



## SUGRĪVA CONSOLES RĀMA

After Sugrīva had been spoken to in this way by Rāma, Sugrīva replied in the following way with joined palms and a voice choked with tears: “I do not at all know the residence, capability, prowess or even the shameful family lineage of that sinful rākṣasa. Give up Your sorrow, O crusher of enemies! I promise that I shall endeavor to return Sītā to You. After killing Rāvaṇa and his associates and thereby satisfying You, I shall then soon exert myself in such a way that You will become further pleased with me. Enough of this mental weakness! Remember Your own fortitude! Such weakness is not at all becoming of persons like You.

“I have also met with great adversity on account of my wife’s having been abducted. I neither grieve as You do, nor have I lost my composure. I do not grieve for my own wife, even though I am but an ordinary monkey, what to speak of a great person like You, who are cultured and resolute. You should restrain Your tears with fortitude. You should not abandon propriety, which is the fortitude of those who are resolute. By deliberating with one’s own intelligence in adversity, financial difficulty, danger or imminent death, a person of fortitude does not suffer. However, a childish person who always gives into to weakness, is helplessly plunged into sorrow, as an overloaded boat sinks in water.

“Here are my palms joined as a sign of reverence. I implore You out of affection—resort to manliness, do not allow any place for sorrow. There is no happiness for those who brood over their misfortune, and their strength gradually diminishes. Therefore, do not grieve. The life of one engrossed in sorrow is perilous. As such, give up Your grief, O greatest of kings, and resort to fortitude alone. I am giving You this advice out of a feeling of friendship, not simply to coerce You. Respecting my friendship, You should cease grieving.”

After being sweetly consoled by Sugrīva, Rāma wiped the tears from His face with the end of His cloth. When Rāma had returned to His normal condition because of Sugrīva's words, He embraced Sugrīva and spoke the following: "O Sugrīva, what you have done is worthy and appropriate, and exactly what an affectionate and benevolent friend ought to do. By your instruction, My friend, I have regained My composure. A friend like you is very rare, especially at this time. You should, however, attempt to locate Sītā, as well as the wicked and monstrous rākṣasa Rāvaṇa. You should also tell Me without any hesitation what I should do. You will achieve your goal, as much as seeds sown in fertile soil sprout during the rainy season. You should consider as truthful My promise to deliver you from Vālī, O tiger among monkeys. Never before have I spoken falsely, nor shall I ever do so. I promise you this and swear to it on truth itself."

Sugrīva and all his ministers were very pleased by what Lord Rāma said, and especially by His promise. In each other's company in that solitary region, the monkey and the human began discussing their happiness and suffering, which were similar. When the wise monkey heard the promise made by that best of men, he realized that he would thus achieve his desired goals.

## SUGRĪVA RELATES HIS PROBLEM WITH VĀLĪ

The monkey Sugrīva was very pleased by what Rāma said, and so replied to Him: “I am undoubtedly blessed by the gods in every way in that I have You who are endowed with such good qualities as a friend. With Your assistance, O sinless one, I should even be able to attain lordship over the gods, what to speak of my own kingdom. Indeed, I deserve to be respected by relatives and friends because I have solemnized friendship with a descendant of the Raghu Dynasty with fire as a witness. Eventually You will learn that I am a worthy friend for You, although I am unable to explain to You exactly what my virtues are. The love of great souls like You who have mastered themselves is indeed constant and their fortitude great. Persons do not consider their own silver, gold, garments and ornaments as personal possessions when in the company of friends. Whether rich or poor, happy or distressed, perfect or imperfect, a friend is one’s greatest resort. Upon seeing such affection, it is possible to renounce wealth, happiness or even one’s body for the sake of friendship.”

In the presence of Lakṣmaṇa, Śrī Rāma, who was as effulgent as Lord Indra, said to the soft-spoken Sugrīva: “That is correct.” Seeing Rāma and the powerful Lakṣmaṇa standing there, Sugrīva’s shifting eyes glanced all about in the forest. That lord of monkeys then saw not far from there a flowering sāla tree whose boughs had few leaves and which were swarming with bumblebees. Sugrīva broke off one of the flowering boughs with the most leaves, laid it on the ground and sat on it with Lord Rāma. Seeing them sitting like that, Hanumān also tore off a sāla branch and made the humble Lakṣmaṇa sit on it. When Rāma was comfortably seated like a calm sea on the slope of that mountain abounding in fruits and flowers, the delighted Sugrīva spoke the following sweet and tender words out of affection to Rāma: “Exiled and deprived of my wife, I wander this most excellent Rśyamūka Mountain listlessly. Having been exiled and antagonized by my

brother Vālī, I live here terrified, sunken in fear with a disturbed mind. You ought to be merciful to me, helpless as I am and stricken with fear of my brother Vālī, O You who can deliver everyone from fear.”

When the mighty and righteous Rāma had been addressed in this way by Sugrīva, He replied as if laughing: “A friend is recognized by his benevolent acts and an enemy by his injurious ones. I shall this very day rid you of this rogue who has taken away your wife. Here indeed are My swift arrows made from strong reeds and adorned with gold. They are equipped with buzzard feathers and resemble Lord Indra’s thunderbolt. They are sharp-tipped, smooth-shafted and are like angry serpents. Watch as My arrows strike down your inimical brother Vālī, who has wronged you, as if he were a shattered mountain.”

Upon hearing Rāma’s reply, Sugrīva, the leader of an army of monkeys, felt unequalled satisfaction and exclaimed: “Very good! O Rāma, I am completely overcome by grief, and You are the shelter for those who are suffering from the pangs of grief. I shall relate to You my problems, since I have accepted You as a friend. By accepting Your hand in friendship with a fire as the witness, I consider You more important than my own life. This I swear by truth. Recognizing You to be my friend, I am revealing in confidence the cause of the sorrow which is constantly disrupting my mind.”

Having spoken this much with tears welling up in his eyes, he was unable to speak any more due to his voice being choked up with tears. While sitting there in the presence of Rāma, Sugrīva, by recourse to his fortitude, managed to restrain his tears which had come on like the powerful course of a river. After restraining his tears and wiping his bright eyes, he drew a deep breath and began speaking as follows to Rāma: “Formerly I was forcefully deposed from the throne with harsh words and exiled by Vālī, who was mightier than I, although I had ascended it on his behest. He also took away my wife, who was more important to me than my life, and bound in chains those who were my friends and relatives. That wicked fellow is always attempting to destroy me, O Rāma. Yet I have killed many monkeys sent by him. Due to this fear alone I did not approach You when I saw You, for everyone becomes frightened when in danger. As a matter of fact, these monkeys headed by Hanumān have been my only companions, and that is why I have been able to keep myself alive despite the difficulty I am in.

These affectionate monkeys literally protect me on all sides. They accompany me wherever I go and stay with me wherever I stay.

“This is my story in brief, O Rāma. Of what use is it to say any more? My inimical brother Vālī is well-known for his cruelty. My suffering can be removed at once by killing him. My happiness and even my life depend on his destruction. This is the way in which to end my suffering. In happiness or distress, one’s only refuge is one’s friend.”

Upon hearing this request, Rāma again spoke to Sugrīva: “I want to hear the actual reason for which Vālī was so inimical to you. After hearing the reason for his enmity and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both of you, I shall immediately give you relief. Like the downpour of water during the monsoon, My indignation, which is strong and shakes My heart, is increasing when I hear how you were wronged. Speak joyfully and confidently until I string My bow. As soon as I shoot an arrow, your enemy will be killed.”

When Sugrīva was spoken to in this way by the great soul Rāma, he experienced unparalleled pleasure with his four monkey companions. With his face illuminated with delight, Sugrīva began relating to Rāma the actual cause for the enmity between him and Vālī.

## THE STORY OF SUGRĪVA'S EXILE

Sugrīva said: “My elder brother’s name is Vālī, who is capable of crushing any enemy. He was highly esteemed by our father, as well as by myself in the past. When our father passed away, Vālī, who was well-respected, was installed as king of the monkeys by the ministers because of his being the eldest son. While he ruled over his vast ancestral kingdom, I served him affectionately at all times like a menial servant. Besides the demon Maya’s son Dundubhi, there was an elder son named Māyāvī. Vālī formerly had a bitter dispute with him over a woman. Arriving at the gates of Kiṣkindhā at night while everyone was asleep, the enraged demon roared and challenged Vālī to fight.

“When my sleeping brother heard the frightful roar, he could not bear it and abruptly rushed out. While he was rushing out in anger to kill that great demon, he was blocked by his wives and me, who were bowing down out of respect. Brushing us all aside, the mighty Vālī sallied forth. Out of affection for Vālī, I also departed with him. Upon seeing my brother and me approaching from a distance, the demon became frightened and fled in a hurry. While he was fleeing in fear, we ran after him more quickly. At that time the road was illuminated by the light of the rising moon.

“That demon then hastily entered a large hole in the ground that was difficult to enter and covered with grass. When we reached that spot, we stopped. Seeing that his enemy had entered that hole, Vālī became infuriated and said to me: ‘O Sugrīva, stand watch here at the entrance to this tunnel while I enter it and quickly kill my enemy.’ When I heard his instruction, I requested him to allow me to accompany him, but instead he bound me by an oath to remain at my post while he entered the deep tunnel. While I waited at the entranceway, more than a year passed since he had entered.

“Not seeing my brother during all that time, I began fearing that he had been killed. Because of my affection for him and believing that he had died, I became bewildered. Then, after a long time, I saw a stream of foamy blood flowing from the tunnel’s entranceway. Thereafter I became very depressed. The thundering roar of demons also reached my ears. But even though my brother was also roaring as he fought, I did not hear him. By those indications I reasoned that my brother had been killed. I thereupon blocked the entrance to the tunnel with a boulder as large as a mountain. In anguish I offered libations of water to the spirit of my supposedly deceased brother and then returned to Kiṣkindhā, O friend. Although I concealed the truth, the ministers found out what had happened with effort.

“After discussing among themselves, the ministers conjointly installed me as king. Meanwhile, my brother Vālī disposed of his enemy, the great demon Māyāvī, and returned to Kiṣkindhā. Seeing me installed as king, his eyes turned red with rage. Binding my ministers in chains, he chastized them with harsh language. O Rāma, even though I was capable of restraining my sinful brother, I did not do so out of reverence for him as my elder brother.

“After Vālī killed his enemy Māyāvī, he then entered the city of Kiṣkindhā. Respecting him as I did, I greeted him with due respect. He, however, did not offer any blessing in return with a joyful mind. Bowing down, O Lord, I touched the top of my crown to his feet. Even so, because of his anger with me, he did not show any mercy.”

## VĀLĪ'S UNDUE ANGER TOWARD SUGRĪVA

Sugrīva continued: “With good intentions I tried to placate my brother, who was entirely outraged and rabid with anger, saying: ‘Luckily you have killed your enemy and returned home safely. Unprotected as I am, you are my only protector. Here is your many-ribbed parasol as bright as the full moon held by me, and yak-tail wisks. Please accept them. I waited at the entrance to the tunnel for one year, O king, despite my distress at your having entered it alone. When I saw blood collecting at the entranceway, my mind was drowning in misery and I became completely bewildered. I then covered the entranceway to the tunnel with a boulder broken from the tip of a mountain. Leaving that place, I again returned to Kiṣkindhā. When they saw that I had returned after such a long time without you, out of anxiety for the safety of this kingdom, the citizens and ministers installed me as king. This was not done out of covetousness on my part for the kingdom. Therefore you should excuse me. You alone deserve the honor of being king, while I am your humble servant as previously. My installation as king was only because of your absence. I herein restore to you the kingdom, which had been entrusted to me, along with its capital city, citizens and ministers, and which has been freed from all problems. Do not become angry with me, my dear brother. O king, I beseech you with a bowed head and joined palms. I was forced to accept the post of king by the concurrence of the ministers and citizens, lest the lack of a leader tempt someone to conquer it.’

“Even though I had spoken in such a tender manner, Vālī maligned me, saying ‘Curse you!’ and spoke many abusive words. Summoning together the common people and respectable ministers, he uttered the following most contemptible words in the midst of my well-wishers: ‘You all know how that great demon Māyāvī came in the night, savage and unintelligent as he was, and challenged me to fight. Upon hearing his enjoinder, I sallied forth from my royal palace. This baneful brother of mine also followed on my heels. As soon as the mighty demon saw that he was being pursued by two persons, he fled in fear of his life. Running with increased speed, he



entered a deep tunnel. Seeing that he had entered a very dangerous tunnel, I then said to my evil-looking brother: 'I cannot return to the city of Kiṣkindhā without slaying this demon. Wait at the entrance to this tunnel until I kill him.' Thinking that my brother would wait at the entrance for me, I entered the narrow opening. One year elapsed as I searched for that demon. When I finally found my enemy, he was no longer frightened because of the amount of time that had passed. I thereupon killed that demon and all his relatives. During the ensuing fight within the depths of the earth, a mass of blood flowed out from the tunnel's entrance, making it difficult to exit.

'After I had easily killed the demon Māyāvī, I could not find a way out of the tunnel because the entrance was blocked. I called out again and again for Sugrīva, but when there was no reply, I became exceedingly distraught. By repeated kicks I was able to push the rock back. Then I came out and returned to the capital. Disregarding brotherly affection, this merciless Sugrīva, desiring the kingdom for himself, sealed me inside the tunnel.'

"Having spoken in this way, the shameless Vālī then banished me, leaving me with only a single piece of cloth. Exiled by him and deprived of my wife, I wander over the earth with its forests and oceans out of fear. Distressed by the confiscation of my wife, I have taken shelter of this R̥śyamūka Mountain, which for a particular reason is inapproachable for Vālī. This is the full story of Vālī's great enmity with me. See my innocence in this predicament of mine. O warrior, You should be kind to me by protecting me from being subjugated by Vālī, sticken as I am with fear, for You can protect the whole world."

Lord Rāma, who was conversant with righteousness, heard Sugrīva's entreaty and began speaking in the following righteous manner as if laughing: "My unfailing, sharp arrows, which are as luminous as the sun, will strike down that debased Vālī by their force. That wicked scoundrel who has abducted your wife will live only until I see him. From My own experience I can infer that you are sunken in an ocean of sorrow. I shall help you cross it and attain all your goals."

Sugrīva was very pleased to hear Rāma's promise of assistance and therefore spoke the following important words.

## SUGRĪVA TESTS RĀMA'S STRENGTH

When Sugrīva heard Rāma's words, which increased his joy and courage, he joined his palms together and appraised Lord Rāma of Vālī's strength: "When angry, You can doubtlessly burn all these worlds with Your sharp, blazing arrows that can pierce one's vital organs, just as the sun does at the end of the age. Hear from me with an attentive mind about Vālī's ability, prowess and fortitude, then do what is necessary. Waking up at sunrise, Vālī stalks from the western ocean to the eastern, from the south up to the north, without becoming exhausted. Climbing the tops of mountains, he breaks off the tips of the mountains, throws them in the air with force and then catches them again. Many sturdy trees were easily broken by Vālī to demonstrate his strength. There was a mighty demon named Dundubhi who used to assume the form of a water buffalo. He shone like the peak of Mount Kailāsa and was as strong as one thousand elephants. Deluded by a boon which he had received, his mind had become wicked due to pride, and so he approached the ocean. Disdaining the wave-tossed sea which possesses abundant gems, he said: 'Give me a fight!'

"Then the righteous ocean rose up and replied to that demon Dundubhi, who was being impelled by the force of destiny: 'I am not fit to fight you who are skilled in battle. Listen and I will tell you who can fight with you. In a great forest is the king of mountains named Himavān. He is super excellent, the shelter of ascetics and famous as the father-in-law of Lord Śiva. Possessing thundering waterfalls, many caves and rapids, he is capable of giving you unmatched satisfaction.' Realizing that the ocean was afraid of him, that topmost of demons headed for the forest of Himavān like an arrow shot from a bow. Then Dundubhi hurled to the ground a large number of boulders as white as elephants from that mountain. Remaining on his own mountain top, the gentle Himavān, who had a pleasant appearance like a white cloud, said the following: 'O Dundubhi, do not annoy me. I am not very expert in fighting because I am the resort of ascetics.' When Dundubhi heard what the wise king of mountains said, with eyes red from

anger he demanded: ‘If you are unable to fight or are petrified with fear, then tell me who can fight with me, eager as I am for a match.’

“Hearing what the big demon said, the righteous Himavān became angry and, being skilled in speaking, replied as follows: ‘There is a glorious and highly intelligent monkey named Vālī who is equal to Indra in prowess. He resides in the city of Kiṣkindhā, which is unequalled in splendor. Being skilled in combat, he is capable of contending with you in a fray, as Indra did with Namuci. If you want to fight, then go to him right away. He is difficult to assault and is always valiant in warfare.’

“Dundubhi became furious when he heard what Himavān said. He immediately headed for Vālī’s capital, Kiṣkindhā. Assuming the form of a water buffalo with sharp-pointed horns, he inspired fear like the approach of a great storm cloud rumbling in the sky. The mighty demon shortly arrived at the gates of Kiṣkindhā. Dundubhi’s roaring shook the earth, like the beating of kettle drums. He broke down trees that were growing nearby and cleaved the earth with his hoofs. He arrogantly gouged the gates with his horns, as an elephant would with its tusks. From inside his private residential quarters, the intolerant Vālī heard the uproar and rushed out with his wives, as the moon is accompanied by the stars. Vālī, who was the lord of monkeys and of all the forest creatures, clearly spoke the following accentuated words to Dundubhi: ‘Why are you blocking this city’s gate and roaring? I know who you are, O Dundubhi. You had better spare your life by going away!’

“Hearing what the wise lord of the monkeys said, Dundubhi, his eyes reddened with anger, replied as follows: ‘You should not speak like that in the presence of ladies, O warrior. Fight with me right now, then I will know your strength. Or else, I shall restrain my anger for tonight. Dedicate yourself to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures until sunrise. Give presents to the monkeys after embracing them. Take leave of all your near and dear ones, O ruler of all the forest monkeys. Take one last good look at Kiṣkindhā, install someone equal to yourself on the throne as your successor, and enjoy with your wives while you can. For I am going to destroy your pride. To kill a drunkard, or one who is inattentive, asleep, unarmed, or

infatuated with women like you, is as despicable in this world as killing a foetus.’

“Sending away all his wives headed by Tārā, Vālī laughed heartily and out of anger slowly replied to that great demon: ‘If you are not afraid to fight with me, then do not hesitate thinking that I am drunk. My apparent inebriety is just the enthusiasm of a warrior for combat.’ Having said this, the wrathful Vālī jerked his head, causing his gold necklace, which was given to him by his father Lord Indra, to sway and stood there ready for battle.

“Vālī then seized Dundubhi, who resembled a mountain, by the horns and spun him around in a circle, roaring loudly. Vālī thereafter threw him down with a loud bellow. After being thrown down, blood immediately began flowing from Dundubhi’s ears. After this a terrible struggle ensued between the two warriors who were intent on victory on account of their intense rage. Vālī, who was equal to Indra in prowess, struck Dundubhi with fists, knees, feet, boulders and trees. As the monkey and demon fought, the demon began to loose ground and Vālī began to gain the advantage. Finally Vālī lifted Dundubhi up and threw him onto the ground so that Dundubhi was therein crushed in that deadly conflict. As soon as Dundubhi’s huge body hit the ground, he died. Lifting up Dundubhi’s lifeless cadaver with his arms, the strong Vālī threw him a distance of one yojana. While Dundubhi’s cadaver was flying through the air, drops of blood flowing from his mouth were scattered by the wind over the hermitage of the sage Mataṅga. Seeing those drops of blood splattered all around, the sage became irked and began thinking who was responsible: ‘Who is that wicked, feebleminded, incompetent knave who has thrown blood on me without any warning?’

“After saying this, when the sage came out in the open, he saw the cadaver of the mountain-like water buffalo fallen dead on the ground. He could understand by the power of his austerities that this was the work of a monkey. He therefore uttered a powerful curse against Vālī because he had thrown the corpse: ‘He who polluted this forest and my hermitage with blood and smashed these trees with the cadaver of this demon should not enter this forest because if he does, he will be killed. If he comes within one yojana of my hermitage, that brainless dolt will not be able to survive. Neither should any of his ministers remain in my forest. After hearing this curse, they should not stay any longer but should leave peacefully. I have

always protected this forest as if it were my son. If, therefore, they continue to stay in this forest for destroying its leaves and twigs, fruits and roots, I shall certainly also curse them. Today is the deadline for them to leave. If I see any monkey here tomorrow, he will be turned into stone for many thousands of years.”

Hearing the curse uttered by the sage, the monkeys thereafter left that forest. Seeing that they had done this, Vālī asked: ‘Why have all of you residents of Mataṅgavana come to see me? I hope everything is all right with the residents of that forest.’ Then all those monkeys began explaining to Vālī, who was adorned with a gold chain, the whole reason for the curse pronounced against him. When Vālī heard the explanation given by the monkeys, he approached the sage with joined palms and begged for forgiveness. The sage, however, ignored him and entered into his hermitage. Out of fear of that curse, Vālī became completely perplexed. For fear of that curse, Vālī does not care to enter the region of Rśyamūka Mountain or even see it, O Lord of human beings. Knowing that he cannot enter this great forest, O Rāma, I wander about with my advisors without any anxiety. Here is the demon Dundubhi’s glimmering heap of bones, which resembles a large mountain peak. And here are seven tall sāla trees with low-hanging branches, each of which Vālī can denude of leaves by shaking strongly. Such is Vālī’s strength as explained by me, O Rāma. How will You be able to kill him in combat?”

Lakṣmaṇa laughingly retorted to Sugrīva: “What act should Rāma perform so that you will believe that He can kill Vālī?” Sugrīva then replied to Him: “In the past Vālī pierced these seven sāla trees on a certain occasion one by one, and then repeated this again later. If Rāma should split even one of these trees with an arrow, witnessing His prowess, I will consider Vālī already dead. The same is also true, O Lakṣmaṇa, if upon lifting this water buffalo’s skeleton with one of His feet, Rāma can then throw it a distance of two hundred bows.”

After saying this, the red-eyed Sugrīva contemplated Rāma’s bodily beauty for a while, and then began speaking again: “The powerful monkey Vālī is heroic and considers himself so. He is famous for his strength and manliness and has never been defeated in battle. His activities are seen as

being difficult even for the gods. Pondering them, I am alarmed and have taken shelter of Rśyamūka Mountain. Just thinking about how he is invincible, unassailable and intolerant, I never leave this mountain. Dismayed and frightened, I roam about this great forest accompanied by my dedicated ministers, the chief of whom is Hanumān. I have also found a praiseworthy friend in You, who are kind to Your friends. O tiger among men, I have therefore taken shelter of You as one would the Himalaya Mountains. However, I am well aware of my evil brother's strength, whereas I have not yet witnessed Your prowess in battle, O descendant of the Raghu Dynasty. It is not that I am trying to test You, or belittle You, or frighten You. It is Vālī's activities which have engendered cowardice in me. Your unfaltering voice, intelligence, steadiness and physical appearance, indicate Your preeminent strength, like a fire covered by ashes."

When Lord Rāma heard what Sugrīva said, He began smiling and replied to the monkey: "If you have no confidence in Our prowess, O monkey, then I shall instill in you confidence in Our battle skill that is worthy of praise."

After speaking these words of consolation to Sugrīva, Rāma playfully lifted Dundubhi's huge cadaver with the toes of His foot and tossed it a distance of ten yojanas. When Sugrīva saw how Lord Rāma kicked the demon's dry skeleton away, he said to Him: "O friend, when Vālī threw this body in the past, it was freshly killed and heavy with flesh and blood, and he was exhausted from fighting and intoxicated. Stripped of flesh, it has become as light as dry grass and so You have easily tossed it. Under these circumstances I am unable to determine who is stronger—You or Vālī, for whether a body is dried up or not makes a big difference, O descendant of the Raghu Dynasty. I am still doubtful as to which of you is stronger. By trying to pierce one sāla tree with an arrow, Your strength or weakness will be revealed. Therefore, string this bow, which is like the trunk of an elephant, pull it back all the way to Your ear, and shoot a large arrow. The arrow which You shoot will undoubtedly pierce this sāla tree. Enough of this hesitation! Just do me this favor, O prince, according to my request. As the sun is the greatest of luminaries, the Himalayas are the greatest of mountains, the lion is the greatest of quadrupeds, You are the greatest of men in prowess."

## RĀMA'S PIERCES THE SEVEN SĀLA TREES

After hearing Sugrīva's well-worded request, the most glorious Rāma picked up His bow in order to inspire Sugrīva with confidence. Grasping that formidable bow, Rāma fired one arrow at the tree indicated by Sugrīva, filling the directions with the twang of His bow string. Having been propelled with great force, the guided arrow pierced all seven sālā trees, the flat area of the mountain on which they stood, and entered the earth, so it is said. In a moment the speedy arrow cut through the earth, came out the other side, returned to where Rāma was and entered again into the quiver. Sugrīva was completely amazed to see the force with which Rāma's arrow pierced the seven sālā trees. Overjoyed, Sugrīva joined his palms together to offer respect to Rāma and bowed, touching his head to the ground so that his jewelry was also hanging down. Delighted by that act, Sugrīva said to Rāma, who was the most knowledgeable in the use of weapons: "O best of men, You are able to kill in combat all the gods, including Indra, with Your arrows, what to speak of Vālī. Who can stand up to You in battle when You pierced with a single arrow those seven big sālā trees, the mountain and the earth! Now that I have made friends with You who are equal to Indra and Varuṇa, my grief has vanished and I am highly jubilant. O descendant of Kakutstha, please favor me by killing my inimical brother Vālī, for which reason I am standing here with joined palms."

Then Rāma embraced the pleasant-looking Sugrīva, who was as dear to Him as Lakṣmaṇa, and said: "Let us immediately go to Kiṣkindhā, O Sugrīva. You go ahead, and when you get there, challenge your so-called brother Vālī to a fight." They all quickly departed for the city of Kiṣkindhā. Upon arriving, they situated themselves in the thick forest, hiding themselves behind trees. With his cloth wrapped tightly around his waist, Sugrīva roared fiercely to challenge Vālī, so that the sky seemed to be rent by his forceful shouts. Hearing his brother's roaring, the powerful Vālī became furious and rushed out precipitously, as the sun pops up from below the horizon. There then commenced a most tumultuous battle between Vālī



and Sugrīva, which was like a clash between Mercury and Mars in the heavens. The enraged brothers struck each other in battle with their palms and soles, and with their fists, which felt like thunderbolts. At that time, Rāma, holding His bow, watched the two brothers, who resembled each other like the two twin gods, the Aśvini-kumāras. Because of this, Rāma could not distinguish who was Sugrīva and who was Vālī. Therefore He decided not to fire any arrow. Being trounced by Vālī and seeing that Rāma was not protecting him, Sugrīva ran to Ṛśyamūka Mountain.

Exhausted, drenched in blood, battered by blows and being pursued by the angry Vālī, Sugrīva entered the refuge of the great forest of Mataṅgavana. Seeing Sugrīva enter the forest, Vālī stopped out of fear of the curse and said: “You are free for now.” Rāma also returned along with Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān to where the monkey Sugrīva was. When the miserable Sugrīva saw that Rāma had returned with Lakṣmaṇa, he looked at the ground out of shame and said: “After showing me Your prowess and inducing me to challenge Vālī, why did You allow me to be pummeled by my enemy? You should have been truthful from the very beginning and told me that You were not going to kill Vālī at this time. Then I would not have left this place.”

Rāma replied in the following way to that great soul Sugrīva, who was complaining bitterly with a piteous voice: “O Sugrīva, let your anger be abated. Please hear the reason why I did not shoot any arrow. Both you and Vālī are exactly alike as far as ornaments, dress, size and movement. I cannot see any difference between you in voice, splendor, appearance, prowess, or speech. I was thus confused by your similarity, O best of monkeys. Therefore I did not fire My powerful arrow capable of slaying an enemy out of fear of accidentally hitting you, thus destroying the friendship which is the foundation sustaining both of us. If I, O great warrior and lord of monkeys, were to kill you out of ignorance or some lapse, my foolishness and childishness would be revealed. Killing one to whom protection has been promised is said to be the greatest sin.

“Lakṣmaṇa, the lovely Sītā and I are all dependent on You who are Our shelter in this forest. Therefore, please fight one more time. Do not be afraid, O monkey. Within one hour you will see Vālī struck down in battle by

one of My arrows and writhing on the ground. Put something on yourself so that I can recognize you when you are engaged in hand to hand combat.” Then Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: “Uprooting this auspicious and blossoming gajapuṣpa vine, tie it around Sugrīva’s neck.” Lakṣmaṇa then pulled up the gajapuṣpa vine that was growing on the side of the mountain and placed it around Sugrīva’s neck. With that flowering vine wrapped around his neck, Sugrīva shone like the moon at night encircled by stars, or like a rain cloud at sunset surrounded by herons. With his body shining brightly and his mind reassured by Rāma’s words, Sugrīva departed with Rāma for Kiṣkindhā, which was under the sway of Vālī.

## RĀMA VISITS THE HERMITAGE OF THE SAPTAJANAS

Lord Rāma then lifted up His big bow and gathered up His gold-adorned arrows that glared like the sun and which were effective in battle. He then left Rśyamūka Mountain with Sugrīva for Kiśkindhā, which was protected by Vāli's valor. In front of Lord Rāma strode the strong-necked Sugrīva accompanied by the powerful Lakṣmaṇa. Behind them came the valiant Hanumān, along with Nala, Nīla and the mighty Tāra, who was a leader of monkey hordes. Following Sugrīva, they saw trees bent down by the weight of flowers, rivers bearing pleasant waters flowing to the ocean, mountains, crevices and deep caves, pinnacles and prominent waterfalls of charming appearance. They also saw along the path sparkling ponds of water clear as a vaidurya gem with lotus flowers whose buds were just beginning to open. The ponds resounded with the cries of kāraṇḍava ducks, cranes, swans, ruddy geese and other water fowl. They saw forest deer roaming about everywhere fearlessly grazing on the soft, tender shoots of newly grown grass, or standing still. There were also numerous fierce, wild elephants with gleaming white tusks that would devastate the banks of the ponds. Elephants in rut, which were as big as the side of a mountain, were disturbing the sides of the mountain and stirring up clouds of dust as they moved about. Seeing in the forest different beasts and birds moving about under the protection of Sugrīva, They advanced quickly.

As they speedily proceeding to Kiśkindhā, Rāma saw a massive forest of trees, bushes and vines and said to Sugrīva: "Here is a thick forest that resembles a cloud in the sky. My dear friend, I am very curious to know what that is which resembles a big cloud hemmed in at the ends by banana trees. I want you to satisfy My curiosity." Upon hearing Rāma's question, Sugrīva began relating about that great forest as he continued walking along: "O descendant of the Raghu Dynasty, this extensive hermitage relieves physical exhaustion. It has gardens and groves providing delicious roots,

fruits and waters. Here lived seven sages named the Saptajanas, who performed extreme penances. They would always sleep sitting with their heads bowed down or by lying down in water. Their only nutrition was to breath once in seven days and they resided solely in the forest. After seven hundred years they ascended to heaven in their very same bodies. Being surrounded by a wall of trees and protected by their supernatural power, this hermitage is unassailable by the demons and gods headed by Lord Indra.

“Birds and other wild creatures avoid it, and those who unwittingly enter it never come out again. In it are heard the sounds of tinkling ornaments and vocal music, as well as instrumental music such as drums. There is also a heavenly fragrance, O Rāma. The three sacred fires—*dakṣiṇa*, *gārhapatya* and *āhavanīya*—are burning there. Their smoke, which is the color of a dove, is covering the tops of the trees like a cloud. With their tops covered with smoke and a mass of clouds, the trees look just like mountains of *vaidurya* gems. You and Your brother *Lakṣmaṇa* should offer Your respects humbly with joined palms. Nothing inauspicious is seen in the body of those who offer such respect to those self-realized sages.”

Then Rāma along with *Lakṣmaṇa* offered respects to those sages with joined palms. After They had done this, *Sugrīva* and the other monkeys continued walking on with highly gratified minds. After traveling a long distance from the hermitage of the Saptajanas, they saw the unassailable city of *Kiṣkindhā* which was protected by *Vālī*. Exhibiting their unmatched might, Rāma, *Lakṣmaṇa* and the monkeys again reached the city, taking up their weapons to slay their enemy *Vālī*, the son of Lord Indra, who was protecting the city by his prowess.

## SUGRĪVA AGAIN CHALLENGES VĀLĪ

Promptly reaching Kiṣkindhā, they all hid themselves in the dense jungle. Glancing all about the forest, the thick-necked Sugrīva, who was very fond of forests, became extremely aggravated. Roaring fiercely, Sugrīva, who was surrounded by his followers, challenged Vālī to fight, his shouts seeming to rend the sky. Rumbling like a huge cloud propelled by the force of the wind, he turned to Rāma, who shone like the rising sun, and said: “We have reached Vālī’s city Kiṣkindhā. Its gates are covered with wrought gold, it is adorned with flags and war machines and is surrounded with booby traps for monkeys. Please fulfill the promise You previously made to kill Vālī, just as the arrival of the appropriate season causes vines to bear fruits.”

Being petitioned in this way by Sugrīva, the dutiful Rāma, the slayer of enemies, replied as follows: “Lakṣmaṇa has already pulled up this gajapuṣpa vine and placed it around your neck as a distinguishing sign. With this vine draped around your neck, you are as effulgent as the moon encircled by stars at night. By firing just one arrow during your skirmish, I shall immediately free you from the fear and enmity engendered by Vālī. O Sugrīva, show Me your enemy in the guise of a brother! When struck down by My arrow, he will roll in the dust. If after crossing the path of My vision he continues to live, you may consider Me incompetent and rebuke Me on the spot. I pierced seven sāla trees in your presence. Therefore, know that by My strength I shall now kill Vālī. I have never ever spoken a lie, even when in difficulty, because of My greed for righteousness, nor will I ever do so. I shall fulfill My promise, just as Indra makes a field produce abundant grains by showers of rain. Give up your bewilderment!

“As such, now challenge Vālī by roaring in such a way that he has to come out. He is famous for his victories and is proud of his strength. As such, when summoned by you, being fond of fighting, he will promptly come out of his palace. Those who are aware of their own valor cannot bear the

sound of enemies challenging them to fight, especially when they are in the presence of women.”

When the golden-brown Sugrīva heard what Rāma said, he roared savagely, as if rending the sky. Hearing his roar, the city’s cows became frightened and ran in confusion, as do cultured women when treated in a vulgar way by hooligans due to lack of protection from the king. The deer also fled like scared horses on a battle field, and birds fell to the ground like those who fall from the heavenly planets when their pious credits are exhausted. The famed Sugrīva roared powerfully like a mass of thunder clouds. With his enhanced glory, he resembled the ocean unsettled by wind-swept waves.

## VĀLĪ'S WIFE BEGS HIM NOT TO FIGHT

The intolerant Vālī heard within his palace his brother Sugrīva's roar. When Vālī heard that roar which caused all living beings to tremble in fear, he lost his self-infatuation and became dreadfully outraged. With all his limbs seized with anger and glowing like the setting sun, Vālī suddenly lost his bodily effulgence like the sun upon setting. Vālī, who possessed fierce teeth and who glowed like fire due to anger, resembled a lotus pond sporting barren stalks whose roots had been dug up by elephants. Hearing that unbearable roar, Vālī rushed impetuously out of his palace, rending the earth with his feet.

Then Vālī's wife Tārā embraced him affectionately, showing her fondness for him, and, being frightened and confused, she spoke to him the following beneficial words: "Please give up this anger which is flowing like the current of a river, as a person upon rising in the morning takes off his flower garland. You can fight in the morning, O monkey warrior, for there are not many enemies, nor are you weak. I do not like that you are rushing out in a hurry. Please listen as I explain why I am stopping you. Previously you trounced Sugrīva when he challenged you to fight. When you came out, you defeated him. Suffering from severe blows, he fled.

"His coming back to challenge you after being particularly vanquished and smitten by you, arouses a suspicion in me. His roaring exhibits such pride and conviction. He would not be roaring with such impetuosity unless there was some due cause. I do not believe that Sugrīva has come here alone. It is on the basis of some supporter that he is roaring as he is. Sugrīva is by nature crafty and intelligent. He never enters into friendship with anyone without testing their prowess. I shall relate to you for your benefit what I have previously heard from your son Aṅgada. Once when Aṅgada went into the depths of the forest, his spies informed him of the following, which I am now relating to you.

“The king of Ayodhyā had two sons known as Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Born in the Ikṣvāku Dynasty, They are warriors who are impossible to defeat. While They were traveling, They came to help Sugrīva attain his cherished goal. Your brother’s assistant in this difficult conflict is the well-known Rāma, who is the crusher of enemy forces like the fire that flares up at the end of the age. He is like a tree that gives shelter to godly souls and is the ultimate goal of those in difficulty. He is the resort of the afflicted and the sole repository of fame. Possessing material and transcendental knowledge, He is dedicated to His father’s command. As the Himalaya Mountains are the source of minerals, He is the paramount embodiment of virtue. Therefore, it is not good for you to oppose that great soul Rāma, who is difficult to defeat and inestimable in martial exploits. O warrior, I shall tell you something, even though I do not wish to find fault with you. Please hear and act upon the advice I am about to give you. Kindly invest Aṅgada as prince regent without delay. Do not fight with your brother, for he is in a position of strength. In fact, I consider your friendship with Rāma as very essential for you. And Sugrīva will abandon at a distance his animosity toward you.

“Whether residing here or on Rśyamūka Mountain, your younger brother is always your most adoring friend. I do not see any friend equal to him in this world. By offering him gifts, honor and by other means, draw him near to you. Abandoning your enmity, let him stand by your side. As far as I am concerned, the thick-necked Sugriva has always been your friend. There is no other way for you to be successful except by depending on your brother’s friendship. If you intend on doing what is pleasing to me and if you consider me your well-wisher, accept my request and carry it out wholeheartedly. Be pleased with me and listen to my salutary advice—do not give in to anger. A fight with Rāma, who is as powerful as Indra, would not be advantageous for you.”

Thus Tārā offered wholesome advice to Vālī. But Vālī did not care to accept what she said because he was already in the grip of death and soon about to die.



## VĀLĪ GOES OUT TO FIGHT SUGRĪVA

Vālī rebuked Tārā, who had spoken in the afore-mentioned manner and whose face shone like the moon, saying: “Hearing the excited roaring of my brother Sugrīva, for what reason should I endure it, especially when he is inimical, O lovely woman? For those warriors who have never been defeated and have never retreated from the battle field, it is worse than death to tolerate a foray. I cannot bear the arrogant bellowing of that neckless Sugrīva, who wishes to engage in combat with me. Nor should you worry about Rāma’s acting against me. He is conversant with righteousness and is aware of His duty, therefore how could He commit any sin? Go back with the other women. Why are you still following me? O Tārā, you have shown your concern and devotion for me. I shall go out and fight with Sugrīva. Give up your anxiety. I shall destroy his pride, but shall not take away his life. As long as he is standing on the battle field, I shall fulfill his desire by striking him with my fists and with tree trunks until he flees. That wicked fellow will not be able to withstand my pride and anger. You have offered me assistance and shown me friendship, O Tārā. Go back with a controlled mind. I swear on my life that I shall return after defeating my brother in combat.”

Thereafter the sweet-speaking Tārā embraced Vālī and slowly circumambulated him clockwise while crying. Tārā then performed the svastyayana ceremony for auspiciousness by reciting various hymns from the Vedas in order to secure Vālī’s victory. Perplexed by her anxiety, she entered inside the royal chambers with the other co-wives. Once Tārā and the other ladies were inside the palace, Vālī angrily sailed forth from the city, hissing like a big snake. Breathing deeply, the splendorous Vālī was highly agitated and glanced all around to get a look at his enemy. He then saw the glorious golden-brown Sugrīva, tightly girded with cloth, standing firmly and shining like fire. Seeing that most valiant Sugrīva standing nearby, Vālī, being highly irate, tightened his own cloth. With his fists raised, the heroic Vālī opportunely approached Sugrīva to fight. Raising his clenched fist and stretching it to full length, Sugrīva also aimed it squarely at Vālī. With his

eyes as red as copper, Vālī said to Sugrīva, who was skilled in combat and approaching rapidly: “When I swing this fist of mine with fingers firmly clenched, it will return after taking your life.”

When spoken to in this way, Sugrīva angrily replied to Vālī as follows: “Let this fist strike you on the head, taking away your life.” Upon being hit with force by Vālī, Sugrīva was enraged and vomited blood, like a mountain with a waterfall. Sugrīva uprooted a sāla tree and vigorously struck Vālī’s limbs, as lightning bolts strike a mountain. Perplexed by the beating and crushed by the heavy weight of the sāla tree, Vālī began trembling like an overloaded boat in the sea. The two brothers possessed fierce strength and prowess and were as impetuous as Garuḍa. They were well-built, with intimidating bodies, and resembled the sun and the moon in the sky. They were intent on finding out each other’s vulnerable points. Then Vālī, who possessed great strength and valor, got the upper hand, and the mighty Sugrīva began to lose ground. With his pride broken by Vālī, Sugrīva began losing strength. Shortly Sugrīva showed his determination to Vālī. A vicious fight ensued between the two, like the battle between Indra and Vṛtra, in which they repeatedly used trees with their branches, mountain peaks, their own razor-sharp claws, fists, knees, feet and arms. Drenched in blood, they rumbled loudly like two clouds, threatening each other and fighting.

Lord Rāma saw that Sugrīva was getting weaker and was continually looking around in all directions. Then the mighty Rāma, seeing Sugrīva’s difficulty, looked intently at an arrow in order to slay Vālī. Then He fixed on His bow an arrow that was as venomous as a serpent, and pulled it back all the way, so that it was as ominous as the wheel of time at the end of the world. Frightened by the twang of the bow string, the birds and deer quickly fled away, as when bewildered at the end of the world. The released arrow, which shone like lightning, made a sound like thunder. Being shot by Rāma, the large arrow struck Vālī in the chest. When impacted by the arrow, the glorious and valorous monkey chieftain fell on the ground. Thus he lost his glory and consciousness, as the flag raised in honor of Lord Indra on the full moon day of the month of āśvin is dropped to the ground after the festival. Śrī Rāma, the best of men, had fired that excellent arrow decorated with gold and silver. That blazing arrow was like the dissolution of the world and

could destroy any enemy. It was like the smoking fire emanating from Lord Śiva's third eye. Soaked by streams of blood and bodily fluids, Vālī resembled a blossoming aśoka tree uprooted by the wind. Deprived of consciousness, Vālī, the son of Lord Indra, looked like Lord Indra's flag fallen on the ground.

## VĀLĪ CRITICIZES RĀMA

When Vālī, who was difficult to contend with, was hit by Rāma's arrow, he suddenly fell over like a hewn tree. He was lying with all his limbs splayed on the ground, like a flag whose rope was undone. When Vālī, the lord of the monkey hordes, had fallen on the ground, the earth did not look so well, like the night sky without the moon. Although knocked down on the ground, Vālī's body did not lose its life, beauty, splendor or glory. An excellent gold chain with a set diamond given to him by Indra preserved that monkey's life, effulgence and beauty. By dint of that gold necklace, the leader of monkey hordes looked like the edges of a cloud at sunset. Fallen on the ground, his splendor seemed to be divided into three parts—his necklace, his body and the deadly arrow. The arrow fired from Rāma's bow prepared the way to the spiritual world for Vālī, by which he could achieve the highest destination.

Vālī looked just like King Yayāti when he fell from the heavenly planets after his pious credits were exhausted, or like the sun fallen on the earth at the end of the age. Vālī, the son of Lord Indra, who was as unassailable and unbearable as his father, was fallen down. His neck was like a lion's. He had long arms. His mouth was bright and his eyes, yellow. With great respect, the two brothers slowly approached the fallen warrior, who resembled a flaming fire and who was looking at Them.

When Vālī saw Rāma and the mighty Lakṣmaṇa, he spoke the following words which were polite, harsh, yet indicative of righteousness: "You are the son of a king, famous and of pleasing appearance. All living beings speak of Your glories in this world in the following way: 'Rāma is of noble birth and the embodiment of goodness. He is courageous and has executed rigorous vows. He knows how to be compassionate and is engaged in the welfare of all the citizens. He is merciful, eager for victory, conversant with the proper time for doing things and firm in His vows.' What merit will You achieve by shooting me in the chest with an arrow while I was absorbed in fighting and looking in another direction? Self-control, peacefulness,

forgiveness, righteousness, fortitude, truthfulness and valor—these are the qualities of monarchs, O king, as also chastisement for offenders. Believing that You possessed these qualities and recognizing Your extraordinary ancestry, I went to fight with Sugrīva, even though obstructed by my wife Tārā. As long as I could not see You, I believed that You would not attack me while I was fighting with someone else with concentration and unaware of Your presence. Now I know that you are a shallow character, an unrighteous hypocrite committing sinful deeds, like a deep well concealed by grass. I did not know that You were a sinful rogue wearing the dress of the pious, completely enveloping Yourself in a guise of piety. I have never committed any offense in Your kingdom or capital. I have never even met You before, nor did I ever mock You. I am just a forest monkey who always lives on fruits and roots. And I had come here to do battle with someone else. O king, it seems You possess the characteristic of unrighteousness.

“Who, born in a royal family, properly educated and freed from doubts, would perform such a cruel deed under the pretense of righteousness? I have heard, O Rāma, that You were born in a royal dynasty and that You are righteous. Why then do You run around in the garb of the gentle when You are cruel? Equality, charity, forgiveness, righteousness, truthfulness, fortitude and prowess—these are the qualities of monarchs, O king, as well as chastisement of offenders. We are just forest-dwelling animals who live on roots and fruits. This is our nature, while You are a man and a ruler of men. Land, gold and silver—these are causes for contention. What interest could You have in my fruits here in this forest? Strict rule and leniency, chastisement and granting favors—these are the activities of a king. A king should not act whimsically. You, on the other hand, are overwhelmed with desires, are irascible and unstable. In the sphere of kingly duties, You kill whoever You wish. You have no faith in duty, nor is Your intelligence fixed in the attainment of wealth. Engaged in activities to satisfy Your whimsies, You are being dragged about by Your senses. Having killed me with an arrow, though I was innocent, and thus committing a reprehensible act, what will You say when in the midst of the godly?

“The murderer of a king, a brāhmaṇa, or a cow, one who engages in the slaughter of living things, a thief, a nonbeliever, and one who marries before his elder brother—these all go to hell. The informer, the miser, the

slayer of his own friend, and the one who violates the wife of his spiritual master—these descend to the world of sinners, of this there is no doubt. My skin cannot be worn by the pious, neither can my hair or bones be used or my flesh be eaten by those who are practicing virtue like You. Only five kinds of animals with five claws on each foot can be eaten by brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas: the rhinoceros, the porcupine, the iguana, the hare, and the tortoise. The wise do not touch my skin or bones, O king, because of my being a monkey. Although I have five claws, my flesh is uneatable, yet You have killed me anyways. The all-knowing Tārā gave me advice that was good and true. Not heeding it, I have come under the sway of death. With You as her lord, the earth is unprotected, like a chaste woman whose husband is a rascal. How were You engendered by the great soul King Daśaratha when You are a rogue, mischievous, petty, sinful and falsely peaceful?

“I have been slain by the elephant Rāma, who has broken the chain of morality, who has transgressed the duties of the virtuous, and who has abandoned the goad of righteousness. When You have committed such an unholy and unjust act, what will You say when You are in the company of the pious? I do not see You exhibiting the same valor against the wrongdoers as You do against us who are neutral to You. If You had been seen by me while I was fighting, You would have been slain and gone to the lord of death, Yamarāja, today. Although I am difficult to assail on the battlefield, I have been slain by You while I could not see You, as when a sleeping drunkard is bitten by a snake.

“If You had commanded me earlier, I could have brought back Sītā from whatever solitary place and slain Her abductor. I have been slain by You in order to gratify Sugrīva. But I would have delivered to You Rāvaṇa with a rope around his neck without killing him in battle. I could have brought back Sītā from the depths of the sea or from the subterranean world, as the Lord in His incarnation as Hayagrīva rescued the Vedas from the Madhu and Kaitabha demons. It would have been alright for Sugrīva to inherit the throne after I have gone to heaven, but it is unjust that I have been unrighteously slain by You. Given that people with such material desires are subject to death, if after due consideration You can give me a suitable answer as to why You have acted as You have, I shall forgive You.”

Having spoken in this way, Vālī, who shone like the sun, stared at Rāma. His mouth was parched around the edges. Being pained by the arrow that pierced him, that great soul who was a son of the sun god became silent.

## VĀLĪ BEGS RĀMA'S FORGIVENESS

After Vālī, who was slain and losing consciousness, had spoken to Rāma these harsh words, which seemed polite, beneficial and conducive to righteousness, Rāma replied as follows to that best of monkeys, who was like the sun deprived of its effulgence, a storm cloud that had dropped all its rain or an extinguished fire: “Why do you scold Me out of childishness, when you are ignorant of righteousness, worldly interests and when to act? My dear friend, why do you wish to speak to Me out of simian fickleness without first speaking with the elderly preceptors who possess wisdom? This earth with its mountains and forests belongs to the descendants of the Ikṣvāku Dynasty. They have the right to punish or reward the beasts, birds and men who reside here. The righteous soul Bharata is truthful, honest, conversant with duty, worldly desires and economic gain, and is engaged in punishing and rewarding according to merit—thus He rules over the earth. He possesses prudence and humility, and truthfulness is firmly established in Him. He possesses valor as prescribed in the scriptures and knows how to act according to time and place. Having been commanded by Him to propagate righteousness, We and other monarchs wander the face of the earth to do so. As long as Bharata, the tiger among kings, who is fond of righteousness, rules over the whole earth, who can do anything unrighteous? Being fixed in Our supreme duty and upholding the order of Our brother Bharata, We punish as necessary anyone who deviates from righteous.

“As far as you are concerned, you have hampered righteousness and are condemnable by your actions. And you are the chief of those who are slaves of lust and who do not stay on the path laid out by the saintly kings. One who follows the path of virtue should recognize these three as fathers: an elder brother, a father, and one who bestows learning. Based on the principle of righteousness, a younger brother, one's own son, and a qualified disciple—these three should be considered as sons. O monkey, the duties of the pious are subtle and most difficult to understand. Situated within the heart of all living beings, the Supersoul knows what is good and evil. By



association with monkeys who are fickle and inexperienced, how can you, yourself being fickle, know what righteousness is? As for Myself, I shall clearly tell you the significance of My statement. You should not denounce Me out of sheer anger. Take note of the reason for which you have been slain by Me—you have abandoned the eternal principle of righteousness by cohabiting with your brother's wife. Out of lust you cohabited with Sugrīva's wife Rumā, who is your sister-in-law, while Sugrīva was still alive, thus committing a great sin. This punishment has been meted out because you strayed from the path of righteousness, acted out of lust, and violated the wife of your brother. I do not see any other means of restraining one who is opposed to righteousness and has departed from the norms of common decency except such punishment, O leader of the monkey hordes. Moreover, I, a warrior born in a respectable family, cannot bear your sin. According to scripture, the punishment for one who approaches out of lust his own daughter, sister or the brother's wife is death.

“In fact, Bharata is the ruler of this earth and We are simply carrying out His orders. Since you have transgressed the laws of righteousness, how can We neglect you? The wise Bharata judges with righteousness those who have transgressed the principles of moral law and is determined to punish those who act out of lust. Taking to heart Bharata's instructions, We are determined to punish characters like you who breach the bonds of morality. Moreover, My friendship with Sugrīva is just like Mine with Lakṣmaṇa. It also has as its motive the recovery of Sugrīva's wife and kingdom and his endeavor to render Me a great favor. I gave My word to assist Sugrīva in the presence of all the monkeys. And how can one like Me disregard a promise? As such, for all these reasons which are based on the significant principles of morality, you should consider your punishment as justified. Your punishment should be seen as entirely in consonance with righteousness. And one who is thus conversant with duty should render suitable services to a friend. If you had been familiar with duty, I could have done the same for you. The following two verses were recited by Manu who was devoted to integrity, and they are accepted by those who are expert in the determination of duty: ‘Sinners who are punished by kings are absolved and ascend to the heavenly realm just like the godly who perform pious deeds. A thief is freed from his guilt by either punishment or clemency. But

if a king does not punish a sinner, he has to accept responsibility for that sin.’

“My noble ancestor Māndhātā administered a severe and appropriate penalty on a monk for perpetrated a crime similar to yours. Different monarchs have similarly punished other sinners for their blunders. And people also execute acts of expiation by which they absolve their guilt. Therefore, enough of this anguish. O tiger among monkeys, your death was conceived according to the principles of righteousness. We were not acting according to Our own whims. Listen to another reason why I shot you, O best of monkeys. When you hear that reason, you should not be angry with Me. I feel no affliction nor remorse for what I did. While in hiding or in the open, humans, by using different kinds of traps, nets and nooses, catch deer with beautiful legs as they try to flee in fear or as they stand their ground fearlessly. Men who are meat-eaters shoot deer regardless of whether they are aware or not or whether they are facing them or not, and there is no fault in this. Even the royal sages who are conversant with righteousness go hunting. Therefore, I have shot you in combat with an arrow. Whether you were fighting with Me or with someone else does not matter, for you are merely a monkey. Kings are the dispensers of merit which is difficult to achieve, and of fortunate life, of this there is no doubt. One should therefore neither injure, criticize, insult nor speak harshly to them. They are gods moving about on the surface of the earth in the form of human beings. Being ignorant of the principles of righteousness and acting on anger alone, you denounce Me, who am dedicated to the code of conduct of My ancestors.”

Greatly pained when spoken to in that way by Rāma and no longer finding fault with Him, Vālī had attained a correct understanding of righteousness. He thereafter replied to Rāma with joined palms: “O best of men, what You have said is true, there is no doubt about it. An ignorant person cannot argue with a learned person. O Rāma, You should not find fault with me for the unpleasant words which I erroneously spoke to You earlier. You are fully aware of the four goals of life and are engaged in the welfare of the people. Your intelligence is calm and undisturbed in determining punishment appropriate to the offense. O knower of righteousness, please deliver me with words conducive to righteousness, for I am the foremost of those who have transgressed morality.”

While staring at Rāma, Vālī slowly continued speaking to Him with a pained voice choked up with tears, like an elephant caught in mud: “I do not grieve for my self, nor for my wife Tārā, nor for my kinsmen as I do for my son Aṅgada, who possesses the best qualities and is adorned with gold bracelets. Unable to see me any longer, he who has been loved by me since his childhood will become like a dried up pond. O mighty Rāma, my beloved and only son, who was born from the womb of Tārā, is but an inexperienced boy and therefore deserves to be protected by You. Establish a congenial understanding between Sugrīva and Aṅgada, for You are their protector and the one who can teach them what should be done and what should not be done. You should adopt the same attitude toward Sugrīva and Aṅgada that You have toward Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa. You should also see that Sugrīva does not disregard Tārā, whose only fault is the offense committed by me. One who has received Your mercy, is under Your control and follows Your mind can indeed rule a kingdom, one can even achieve the heavenly realm or rule over the whole earth. Even though I was restrained by my wife Tārā, desiring death at Your hands, I entered into an encounter with my brother Sugrīva.”

After Vālī had humbly spoken to Rāma in this way, he became silent. Then Rāma consoled Vālī, who was now illuminated, speaking the following words which revealed the principles of righteousness: “O monkey, do not fret over this matter. You should not worry about Us or your self. We have determined Our course of action in relation to you in accordance with the principles of righteousness. He who punishes those who deserve it and he who receives punishment as he deserves, both these never come to ruin due to the fulfillment of the law of cause and effect. By My meting out punishment in accordance with the dictates of scripture, you are free from any contingent sin and have regained your own righteous nature. Give up your grief and bewilderment, and the fear present in your heart. O lord of monkeys, Aṅgada will depend on Sugrīva and Me just as he used to depend on you, of this there is no doubt.”

After hearing the sweet, reassuring words which were conducive to virtue, Vālī spoke the following reasonable words to Rāma, who was capable of completely crushing His enemy on the battle field: “O warrior of frightful prowess, You are equal to Lord Indra. Due to the pain caused by Your arrow

I became bewildered and thus I unwittingly vilified You. Be pleased with me and forgive my offense, O ruler of men!”

## TĀRĀ RUSHES TO THE SIDE OF HER DYING HUSBAND

Receiving a reply that was just and logical, Vālī, the great king of the monkeys, lay there fatally wounded by the arrow. All his limbs were crushed by stones and he was severely beaten by tree trunks. Being pierced by Rāma's arrow, he was losing consciousness. Vālī's wife Tārā heard how Vālī had been fatally wounded in battle by an arrow fired by Lord Rāma. Upon hearing about the unfortunate and terrible murder of her husband, she hurried out of the palatial quarters, which were like mountain caverns, with her son. When Aṅgada's body guards saw Rāma armed with a bow, they ran away in fear, even though they possessed dreadful prowess. Tārā saw the frightened monkeys fleeing as fast as they could, like deer who had bolted from the herd after their leader had been slain.

Approaching them, the dispirited Tārā said to them, who were all afraid of Rāma's arrows as if they had been pierced by them: "If Vālī has been killed by Rāma's arrows, which can strike with great force from a distance, so that his brother Sugrīva could gain the throne, why should you monkeys who are the royal attendants of Vālī abandon him and flee?"

Upon hearing Tārā's remark, the monkeys replied in a timely and unequivocal manner: "Go back, O mother, and protect your son! Death in the form of Rāma has slain Vālī and is carrying him away. Rāma's arrows, which are just like thunderbolts, shattered the trees and huge stones which Vālī hurled, and then struck him down. Since that tiger among monkeys who was equal to Indra in prowess has been slain, this whole army is fleeing toward Kiṣkindhā. Let us protect the gates of the city. Let Aṅgada be coronated king. We monkeys will serve Vālī's son when he assumes the post of king. However, O woman with a lovely face, your presence here is not at all pleasing to us. Other monkeys who are our enemies will soon take possession of all the high places. Among those monkeys, some have wives

and some have none. There is tremendous danger from those lusty fellows who were deprived of their possessions through exile.”

The lady of charming smiles heard what they said because they were at a short distance. The reply she gave them, which was worthy of her position as a queen, was as follows: “Now that the most glorious lion among monkeys who was my husband is finished, of what use to me are my son, the kingdom or even my own life? I shall simply seek the soles of the feet of that great soul who has been slain by an arrow fired by Rāma.”

Having said this, she ran quickly, crying out of extreme grief, and struck herself continuously on the head and breast with her fists. As she was going along, she presently saw her husband fallen down on the ground. He had been the slayer of demon chieftains who never retreated from battle. He used to hurl huge mountain peaks against his enemies, as Indra would hurl thunderbolts. He had the impetuosity of a gale storm and roared like a huge mass of clouds. In prowess he was equal to Indra. He was now like a cloud that was calm after discharging its rain. His roaring had previously inspired fear in those who roared. Though a hero, he had been felled by one who is a hero. He was like a lion who had been slain for the sake of prey by a tiger. He resembled a place of worship respected by all people whose altar and flag had been destroyed by Garuḍa on account of a snake. She saw Rāma standing and leaning on His excellent bow, as well as Lakṣmaṇa and her husband’s younger brother. Passing them, she reached the spot where her husband lay dying on the battle field. Seeing him, she was overcome with pain, became dizzy and fell on the ground. She again got up, like one rising from sleep, and began wailing. Seeing her husband tightly bound by the ropes of death, she cried. When Sugrīva saw her wailing like a female osprey, and that Aṅgada had also arrived, he became despondent.

## TĀRĀ INTENDS TO FAST UNTIL DEATH

Upon seeing her husband fallen on the ground, slain by an arrow shot by Rāma, and reaching him, that lady whose face shone like the moon embraced him. When Tārā saw Vālī, the lord of the monkeys, who was just like an elephant and equal to Lord Indra, struck down by an arrow and looking like an uprooted tree, her mind was stricken with sorrow and she lamented as follows: “O best of the monkey warriors, your prowess is fiercesome on the battle field. Why do you not speak to me now, O tiger among monkeys, when I stand disconsolate before you? Get up and lie down upon your excellent couch! Surely exalted kings like you do not lie on the bare ground. O monarch, the earth must be very dear to you in that you are ignoring me and embracing the earth with your limbs even though you are dead. Obviously you have created another city just like the charming Kiṣkindhā on the path leading to heaven by dint of your piety. You have now put a stop to the pastimes which we enjoyed with you in the forests fragrant with honey. I am devoid of happiness and hope and am drowning in an ocean of sorrow now that you, the leader of great generals, have passed away.

“My heart is very strong in that despite being pained with sorrow on seeing my husband dead, it does not break into a thousand pieces. Because you exiled Sugrīva and expropriated his wife, this is the fruit that you have reaped, O sovereign of the monkeys. When I offered you helpful advice out of a desire to assist you, out of illusion you disregarded me. O honorable sir, you will surely agitate the minds of the celestial damsels who are proud of their beauty and youth and expert in love affairs. The time has undoubtedly arrived for the termination of your life. By time’s power, you who could not be subdued have come under the complete control of Sugrīva. I was raised in a lifestyle free from suffering and had never previously been miserable. Now I shall suffer wretched and miserable widowhood as one forsaken. The fine lad Aṅgada is so dear to me and desiring of enjoyment. To what condition will he be reduced when his uncle Sugrīva becomes angry? O Aṅgada, take a

good look at your father who was fond of righteousness! Before long you will not be able to see him any more.

“O Vālī, after embracing your son and smelling his head, give me a message, as you have already departed from this world. Indeed, Rāma has accomplished a mighty task by killing you and He has fulfilled His promise to Sugrīva. O Sugrīva, be satisfied with the attainment of your goals. You will now regain your wife Rumā. Enjoy the kingdom without any anxiety, for your inimical brother has been liquidated. O Vālī, why do you not speak lovingly to me when I am lamenting like this? See here your many fine co-wives, O lord of monkeys.”

Hearing her lament in this way, the female monkeys surrounded her and Āṅgada and began wailing loudly and piteously out of sorrow. Then Tārā continued lamenting: “Why have you deserted Āṅgada to depart on the long journey to the other world, O you whose heroic arms are adorned with gold ornaments? When you have such a nice son with all the same good qualities as you, it is not at all proper for you to leave him and go away. What did I or your son ever do to displease you, O lord, that you have abandoned us to depart on the lengthy journey to the next world? If I ever did anything which you did not like, please forgive me for that, O lord of the monkey dynasty. I touch my head to your feet.”

Thus Tārā cried piteously at the side of her husband, surrounded by the other female monkeys. That woman of faultless complexion decided to fast completely from food and water, sitting on the ground where Vālī lay.



## HANUMĀN CONSOLES TĀRĀ

Then Hanumān, a leader of monkey hordes, slowly consoled Tārā, who was collapsed on the ground like a star fallen from the sky: “A departed soul reaps the fruits of his good and bad deeds executed in accordance with his intentions. For whom do you grieve when you yourself are lamentable? Whom do you pity when you yourself are miserable? Since this body is like a bubble, for whom should one grieve? You should look after this boy Aṅgada because he is your son. Please think about the rites that should be performed for the welfare of Vālī. You know that the birth and death of living beings is not stable. Therefore, the learned should only do that which is conducive to good fortune and not anything which is mundane, such as weeping. This monkey chieftain upon whom thousands, tens of thousands and millions of monkeys depended for the attainment of their goals has reached the end of his allotted life. Since he ruled his kingdom justly, gave charity fairly and provided for the sustenance of others, he has surely gone to that place attained by those who have scored victory through righteousness. Therefore you should not lament for him. Indeed, all these exceptional monkeys, your son Aṅgada, and these bears have you as their leader, O irreproachable lady. Madame, please slowly direct these two who are grief-stricken—Aṅgada and Sugrīva. Take Aṅgada by the hand and let him rule the earth. Let everything that a male descendant should do for his deceased father be executed at this time. Whatever is beneficial for the departed king has already been decreed by time. The funeral rites of the monkey king should be carried out and Aṅgada should be coronated. When you see your son sitting upon the royal lion throne, you will be pacified.”

Hearing Hanumān’s request, Tārā, who was overwhelmed with grief for her husband, replied to Hanumān who was standing nearby: “As far as I am concerned, there could be one hundred sons equal to Aṅgada, still I would prefer to embrace the body of my slain husband on the funeral pyre. I have no power over the monkey kingdom nor over Aṅgada. His uncle Sugrīva has such power in all matters and is close to him. This decision of

yours regarding Āṅgada is not worth maintaining, for the father or uncle is the benefactor of the son, O Hanumān, not the mother. In fact, there is nothing better for me to do in this world or in the next than to take shelter of my husband. I should accept this bed upon which lies this hero who was slain while facing his enemy.”

## VĀLĪ DIES

Breathing slowly and with hardly any life left, Vālī looked all around and first saw his younger brother. Then that lord of monkeys Vālī clearly and affectionately said to Sugrīva, who had achieved victory: “O Sugrīva, you should not hold me responsible for any sin, for I was forcefully carried away by what was meant to happen on account of my bewilderment. I think that we were not destined to enjoy happiness at the same time. For that reason the friendship that should be there between brothers became something else. Accept this very day rule over this kingdom of forest dwellers and know me to be already departed for the abode of Yamarāja, the lord of death. Indeed, I shall soon give up my life, kingdom, extensive wealth and great and irreproachable fame. Whatever I request you to do in this condition, you ought to carry out, O king. See Aṅgada fallen on the ground, with his face full of tears. He deserves a life of comfort and was raised that way. Although a boy, he is not childish. Please thoroughly protect this son of mine, who is dearer to me than my own life, as if he was your own son. Although he will be without me, see that he lacks nothing. You shall be his father and protector in every way, and his shelter during danger as I have been, O ruler of monkeys. This son of Tārā is equal to you in glory and prowess and will be ahead of you in the slaughter of the rākṣasas. Acting heroically on the battle field, the youthful Aṅgada, being strong and glorious, will perform actions equal to mine.

“Tārā, the daughter of King Suśeṇa, is very expert in discerning very subtle meanings, in interpreting various kinds of omens and in all other affairs. Whatever she says is right you should do without any hesitation. No opinion of Tārā ever proves wrong. You should undoubtedly carry out Lord Rāma’s task, for by not doing so you may accrue some sin, and He may attack you if He is slighted. Also, wear this celestial gold necklace, O Sugrīva, for the magnanimous goddess of fortune resides in it, and she will leave it if it remains on me when I die.”

When instructed in this way by Vālī out of brotherly affection, Sugrīva again became miserable, like the moon caught in an eclipse. Pacified by Vālī's words, carefully doing what was appropriate, he also accepted the gold necklace when permitted. After giving that gold necklace to Sugrīva, Vālī looked at his son standing nearby and, being about to die, spoke the following words out of affection to Aṅgada: "Pay due attention to time and place when doing something, see the pleasant and the unpleasant as equal, so also when it is time for happiness or distress, and always remain under the command of Sugrīva. If you act as you did when cherished by me, Sugrīva may not esteem you in the same way. You should not associate with those who are not his friends, nor with those who are his enemies, O crusher of foes. Dedicate yourself to your uncle's goals, remain self-disciplined and dependent on him. You should exhibit neither excessive fondness nor the lack of it, for both these constitute a great defect. Therefore, also be moderate."

Having said this, Vālī, who was in extreme pain from the arrow, with his eyes trembling and his frightful teeth showing, at last gave up his life. Then all the monkeys began wailing and cried out very loudly: "Since the king of the monkeys has ascended to heaven, Kiṣkindhā is now desolate, and so also are its gardens, mountains and forests. By the death of that tiger among monkeys, the monkeys have been deprived of their effulgence. It was by his great might that the forests and woodlands were covered with masses of flowers. Who will do that now? He gave battle to the great gandharva Golabha for fifteen years. The fight raged on day and night without stopping. In the end Golabha was struck down in the sixteenth year. After having killed that depraved fellow, how has Vālī, who protected us from all danger, been slain? Now that Vālī, the suzerain lord of the monkeys has been slain, the monkeys can achieve no peace, like a herd of wild cows in a forest whose leader has been killed by a lion."

Then Tārā, who was submerged in an ocean of adversity, looked at the face of her dead husband. Clinging to him like a vine clinging to a hewn tree, she fell on the ground.

## TĀRĀ LAMENTS FOR HER DEAD HUSBAND

While smelling the head of her deceased husband who had departed from this world, Tārā spoke to him the following words: “Not having followed my advice, you are lying very uncomfortably on stony and uneven ground. Certainly the earth is dearer to you than me, for you are lying there embracing her and do not answer me. Oh, destiny has come under the sway of Sugrīva! He alone is powerful, O hero fond of bold acts. The foremost of bears and monkeys fully worshiped you who were so powerful. Why do you not wake up upon hearing the miserable cries and lamentations of Aṅgada and myself? Previously on this hero’s bed lay those enemies killed by you. Now, having been killed in combat, you are lying on it, O my beloved who was fond of fighting. Leaving me all alone without protection, you have departed. An intelligent man should never give his daughter to a warrior. Just see me, the wife of a warrior, destroyed in no time and made a widow. My pride has been smashed and so also my everlasting fortune. I am drowning in a fathomless and vast ocean of grief. Surely my heart is made of steel in that upon seeing my husband killed, it has not broken into a thousand pieces immediately. He who was my husband and well-wisher, who by his very nature was very dear to me, and who was valorous in battle, has passed away. A woman deprived of her husband, even if she is blessed with a son, wealth and abundant food, is still called a widow by the people. You are lying in a pool of blood with your limbs spread, just as you used to on your own royal-red bed. Because your limbs are covered with dust and blood, I am unable to embrace you with my arms, O best of monkeys. By this most dreadful calamity, Sugrīva has achieved his goals and his fear has been dispelled by Rāma’s shooting one arrow. I am prevented from embracing your body by the arrow piercing your heart and so stand gazing at you who are dead.”

Nīla then pulled out the arrow that was stuck in Vālī’s flesh, as one would pull a venomous snake out of a mountain cave. While that arrow was being pulled out, it shone just like the rays of the setting sun when

obstructed by a mountain peak. Streams of blood flowed from all over Vālī's body which was stained with red pigment from the ground. Tārā wiped the dust of battle off of her husband and bathed him with the tears flowing from her eyes. Seeing her slain husband drenched in blood, Tārā said to her red-eyed son Aṅgada: "See the terrible end of your father, My son! His enmity which was a result of his sinful activities has come to an end. My dear son, greet your father the king, whose body is as brilliant as the sun and who has departed for the abode of the lord of death."

When instructed in this way, Aṅgada stood up and grasped the feet of his father. He squeezed those feet with his well-rounded arms and said: "I am your son Aṅgada." Tārā then said: "O Vālī, since Aṅgada is greeting you, why do you not speak to him as you used to, saying, 'May you live long, My son?' Like a cow with her calf whose bull has just been killed by a lion, I stand with my son at the side of you who are unconscious. Having performed a sacrifice in the form of a battle, why did you take your final purificatory bath in the blood sprung from the wound caused by Rāma without your wife? Why do I not see your gold necklace which was given to you by Lord Indra when he was pleased with you in a fight? Royal glory never leaves you any more than does light leave the sun when it sets behind Mount Meru. You did not follow my advice, nor was I able to obstruct you. As you have been destroyed in a conflict, so have I with my son, and good fortune is now abandoning me."

## TĀRĀ ALSO WANTS TO BE SLAIN BY RĀMA

Seeing Tārā being washed into an ocean of sorrow by the strong current of her tears, Sugrīva felt saddened because of his involvement in the slaughter of his brother Vālī. As Sugrīva watched, his face became completely wet with tears in a moment and his mind became disturbed. Surrounded by his servants, he slowly approached Rāma. Reaching the glorious Lord Rāma, who held a bow with arrows that were like poisonous snakes and who was distinguished by outstanding physical characteristics, Sugrīva said to Him: “Although You have acted according to Your promise and I have achieved my desired objective, my mind now turns away from the resultant royal enjoyments along with this very life of mine. Because of the death of my older brother, his wife Tārā is weeping excessively, the citizens are grief-stricken and wailing loudly, and Āṅgada is in danger. Therefore my mind finds no pleasure in sovereignty over the kingdom. In the past, due to anger, humiliation and indignation, I wanted to have Vālī killed. But now that he is dead I shall regret it bitterly until the end of my life, O best of the descendants of the Ikṣvāku Dynasty! I think it is better for me to stay on R̥śyamūka Mountain and subsist on what is available for me there than to attain heaven as a result of having killed Vālī. My brother’s words, ‘Go away! I do not wish to kill you!’ were worthy of him, O Rāma, whereas my plot to kill him is worthy of me.

“Even if one is being impelled by lust, after duly considering the responsibility for usurping the kingdom and the resultant sorrow caused by this, how can one find happiness in slaying such a highly qualified brother? Whereas he never considered killing me because that would have reduced his own greatness, because of my perversity I have perpetrated a transgression which has taken away his life. After moaning for an hour while I beat him with a tree branch, he consoled me by saying: ‘Do not do this again.’ While he maintained brotherliness, nobility and righteousness, I exhibited anger, lust and simian fickleness.

“By the slaughter of my brother I have achieved the same inconceivable, inadmissible, undesirable and utterly revolting sin as that achieved by Indra when he killed Viśvarūpa. Whereas the earth, the water, the trees and womankind accepted the sinful reaction of Lord Indra, who would agree to accept and bear the sin committed by a monkey? Since I have committed a misdeed causing the destruction of my dynasty, I am not fit to accept the post of prince regent from the citizens, much less dominion over the kingdom. I have carried out a vile and sinful act that is entirely condemnable. As such I am being overwhelmed by a tremendous sorrow, just as a current of water occasioned by a downpour of rain rushes to the lowest ground.

“The fully grown elephant of sin, whose rear end and tail represent the murder of one’s own brother, and whose trunk, eyes, head and tusks are remorse, is striking me, as it might strike a river bank. O best of men, this intolerable sin is diminishing the amount of piety in my heart, as gold quickly separates from dross when it is melted by fire. Because of my instrumentality in the death of Vālī, as well as Aṅgada’s pangs of grief, I consider this race of great monkey chiefs to be almost lifeless. It is easy to find a son who is virtuous and obedient, but where can one find a son like Aṅgada? Nor can there be found a land where one can be near one’s natural brother.

“If Aṅgada is able to survive the sorrow over his father’s death, than his mother, whose duty it is to raise him, will also be able to survive. But without her son, Tārā, being reduced to abject misery, would not be able to survive. Of this I am certain. Desiring the affection of my brother and his son, I shall enter a blazing fire. Remaining at Your command, these preeminent monkeys will search for Sītā. After my death, O prince, Your goal will be achieved in its entirety. O Rāma, give me permission to die, for I, an offender, have destroyed my race and do not deserve to live.”

When Rāma, the destroyer of enemy warriors, heard these pained words of Sugrīva, He began to shed tears and became disturbed for some time. Looking all around at that time, Śrī Rāma, who was the protector of the world and as forgiving as the earth, saw Tārā drowning in adversity and weeping miserably. Vālī’s chief minister then lifted up Tārā from the ground



where she lay embracing the body of her husband, who had charming eyes and was the lord of lion-like monkeys. When they tried to separate her from her husband, she struggled and clung to his body. At that time she saw Rāma holding a bow and arrows in his hands and glowing like the sun itself. The fawn-eyed woman recognized that He was Rāma, the descendant of Kakutstha, the foremost of all human beings, who possessed all the good characteristics of a monarch and who had beautiful eyes, although she had never seen Him before. The noblewoman Tārā, who had fallen into adversity and felt heartsick, hurried with faltering steps to the presence of Rāma, who was equal to Lord Indra, difficult to approach and of the highest dignity.

Reaching Lord Rāma, who was completely transcendental and who always hit the target because of His excelling in combat, Tārā, who was almost unconscious because of grief, said to Him: “You are immeasurable and difficult to approach. You have conquered Your senses and are the most righteous. Your fame is undecaying and You are wise. You are tolerant like the earth and Your eyes are reddish. You are holding a bow and arrow in Your hands. You possess tremendous strength and firm limbs. Having given up all human bodily comforts, You enjoy good fortune arising from a divine body. Please kill me with the same arrow with which You killed my beloved. When I am killed in that way, I will go where he is. Vālī could not be very happy without me. Even if he were to see heavenly damsels with eyes like the petals of lotus flowers wearing clothes of many different colors and crowns of reddish flowers, he would not enjoy them in my absence. Without me, even in heaven Vālī would be unhappy and lose his bodily color, as You have experienced on the slopes of R̥ṣyamūka Mountain without Your consort Sitā.

“You know how a young man suffers due to the loss of his sweetheart. Knowing this, please kill me so that Vālī will not suffer due to my absence. If You are thinking that You cannot do that because it is a sin to slay a woman, then, considering me as identical with Vālī, kill me. In that way You will not incur the sin of slaying a woman, O prince. In the revealed scriptures and their supportive texts it is stated that a wife is the very self of her husband. Therefore in this world the wise consider the giving of a daughter in marriage as the greatest gift. If after due regard for duty, You restore me to my beloved husband, by this act of kindness You will not reap the sin of slaying my husband. You should kill me, for I am suffering, without

protection, forlorn and reduced to this condition. Indeed, I cannot live very long without the wise monkey Vālī, who walked about like an elephant and who wore a most valuable gold necklace, O king!”

After being spoken to in this way by Tārā, the mighty Rāma consoled her by saying the following: “O wife of a warrior, I am not thinking incorrectly, for the whole world was created by God and everyone says that He created it with both happiness and distress. The three worlds cannot transgress the bounds which He has set, for they are under His control. You will enjoy supreme happiness as you did previously and your son will become prince regent. This is all God’s arrangement, and the wife of a warrior never laments.”

When consoled by the mighty Lord Rāma, the well-dressed Tārā, whose face showed signs of excessive wailing, became silent.

## THE CREMATION OF VĀLĪ

Sharing the grief of Tārā and Aṅgada, Śrī Rāma consoled them with the following words: “A dead person does not achieve well-being by the grieving of others. Therefore do those rites which are required after a death. Popular customs should be followed, and you have done so by shedding tears. The required rites cannot be performed once the appointed time has passed. Destiny is the cause of everything in this world and facilitates the execution of duties. Destiny is the cause by which all living beings engage in activities. No one is the doer of anything, nor is anyone independent. The whole world follows its nature and is under the influence of the time factor. The time factor does not overstep its own bounds, nor does it ever diminish. When confronted with nature, no one can overcome it.

“The time factor has no relation, friend, kinsman or cause, nor is it ever under the control of someone else. It has no cause nor is it conquerable. A saintly person should see everything as a transformation of the time factor. Merit, economic success and material enjoyment are the result of the process of time. Having attained the stainless fruit of his actions in the shape of merit, wealth and enjoyment, Vālī has regained his original nature. That great-souled monkey, by not maintaining his life, has attained that heaven which he deserved on account of his complete dedication to the execution of his duties. The destiny which Vālī has achieved is indeed the best. Enough of this lamenting! Do what is necessary for the occasion.”

After Rāma finished speaking, Lakṣmaṇa spoke the following polite words to Sugrīva, whose mind was disturbed: “Immediately perform with Tārā and Aṅgada the funeral rites of Vālī, as well as his cremation. Instruct someone to bring many dry logs and pieces of heavenly sandalwood for Vālī’s cremation ceremony. Comfort Aṅgada, who is sorely distressed. Do not be childish; this city is dependent on you. Let Aṅgada bring flower garlands, various pieces of cloth, clarified butter, vegetable oil, fragrant ointments and whatever else is require for this occasion. O Tāra, go find a palanquin and

return quickly, for promptness is especially appropriate at this time. Let strong monkeys who are capable of carrying Vālī's palanquin get ready."

Having spoken in this way to Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa, the slayer of inimical warriors, stood at the side of His brother Rāma. Hearing Lakṣmaṇa's instructions, the monkey general Tārā, whose mind was disturbed, quickly entered the city with his mind set on getting a palanquin. Tārā returned with a palanquin carried by monkey warriors. The palanquin was divine, and just like a chariot in that it had a royal seat for sitting on. It was adorned with carved figures of birds and trees. It was also covered with the figures of foot soldiers and was beautiful to see from any angle. It looked like the aerial vehicle of the perfected beings and had lattice work for air ventilation. It was perfectly assembled, spacious and constructed by the celestial carpenter Viśvakarmā. It had decorative mountains carved from wood and was made with the greatest of care. It was adorned with first class ornaments and chains and decked with beautiful flower garlands. It was upholstered with fine cloth and decorated with red sandalwood paste. On it were heaped piles of flowers. It was decked with garlands of sparkling lotus flowers the color of the rising sun.

Seeing such a palanquin, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Let Vālī be taken away immediately and the funeral rites performed." Wailing as he lifted up Vālī with Aṅgada's help, Sugrīva placed Vālī on the palanquin. After placing on the palanquin Vālī's dead body, which was adorned with different kinds of ornaments, flower garlands and clothing, King Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, gave the following command: "Let the last rites of my noble brother be performed as they should be. Let monkeys proceed before the palanquin, scattering many different kinds of jewels before the palanquin. Let Vālī's funeral rites be performed as soon as possible with the same wealth used for the obsequial rites of great kings."

Embracing Aṅgada at that moment, all the monkeys headed by Tārā, whose husband had been killed, began walking in procession as they wailed. Then all the monkey women who had been under the protection of Vālī repeatedly cried out, "O hero! O hero!" as they wept. All the monkey women headed by Tārā followed behind their slain husband, crying pitifully. By the cries of the monkey women in the midst of the forest, all the

woodlands and mountains in all directions seemed to be crying. On the solitary sandy bank of a mountain stream the grief-stricken monkeys in masse prepared a funeral pyre. Lowering the palanquin from their shoulders, the bearers halted at that lonely spot and all became dispirited. Seeing her husband lying on the palanquin, Tārā placed his head on her lap and, being completely overwhelmed with sorrow, began wailing: “O great king of the monkeys! O lord! O my darling! O most honorable one! O strong-armed one! O my love, look at me! Why do you not look at this your servant who is stricken with grief? O respectful one, even though your life has departed, your face still looks as beautiful and as effulgent as the setting sun, just like when you were alive. O monkey, time in the form of Rāma, who made us all widows by firing a single arrow, is taking you away. Do you not know, O king of kings, that these monkey women, though unable to leap, have come on foot? Why do you not look at your dear wives, whose faces are as effulgent as the moon, nor at Sugrīva, the lord of monkeys? O king, these ministers headed by Tāra, as well as the citizens, are standing around you. Send them away as you used to do, O conqueror of foes. Then, intoxicated with love, we shall all enjoy in the forest.”

The monkey women then picked up Tārā, who was wailing due to the anguish she felt over the death of her husband. With the help of Sugrīva, Aṅgada, who was weeping due to distress, then lifted his father on to the funeral pyre. Setting the pyre on fire according to scriptural regulations, Aṅgada then circumambulated clockwise around his father, who had set out on the long journey occasioned by death. Having cremated Vālī as required, they all went to bathe in the cool waters of an auspicious river. Thereafter, placing Aṅgada before them, along with Sugrīva and Tārā, they all offered libations of water to the spirit of the deceased Vālī. Sharing the same grief as the morose Sugrīva, the mighty Rāma had the funeral rites of Vālī performed. After cremating the body of Vālī, the foremost of capable males, who was famous and who had been slain by the arrow of Rāma, Sugrīva approached Lord Rāma, who shone like a blazing fire, along with Lakṣmaṇa.

## RĀMA GIVES INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONSECRATION OF SUGRĪVA

When Sugrīva finished his ceremonial bath after the cremation, the greatest of the monkey ministers came and stood around him. They all then approached the strong-armed Rāma, who was unwearied in action, and stood with joined palms, as sages stand around Lord Brahmā. Then Hanumān, the son of the wind god, who was as effulgent as a golden mountain and whose face was as brilliant as the rising sun, spoke with joined palms as follows: “By Your mercy, O Lord, Sugrīva was able to obtain this great ancestral monkey kingdom, which was very difficult to achieve. Entering into the beautiful city with Your permission, he will perform all of his duties along with his well-wishers. After the coronation ceremony in which he is bathed with waters scented with perfumes and medicinal herbs as per scriptural rule, he will offer You special worship with gems and flower garlands. You should therefore visit the mountain cave in which the city of Kiṣkindhā is located. Gladden the monkeys by giving them a leader.”

After being requested in this way by Hanumān, Rāma replied as follows: “My dear Hanumān, obeying the command of My father, for fourteen years I will not enter even a village, much less a city. As soon as Sugrīva enters the opulent and enjoyable city, let him be crowned king.” After saying this to Hanumān, Lord Rāma said the following to Sugrīva: “Conversant as you are with conduct, you should install Āṅgada, who possesses tremendous strength and character, as prince regent. Because he is the son of your older brother, the noble-minded Āṅgada should be installed as prince regent immediately.

“This is Śravaṇa, the first month of the rainy season. My dear friend, the four months comprising the rainy season have now begun. This is not the time for an undertaking. Go enter your beautiful city. Meanwhile, I shall reside on this mountain with Lakṣmaṇa. This mountain cave is pleasant, large and airy. It has sufficient water and abundant lotus flowers and water

lilies. When the month of Karttika begins, endeavor to slay Rāvaṇa. This is our agreement, My friend. Now go enter your palace. Arrange to have yourself coronated as king and enjoy with your well-wishers.”

Being ordered in this way by Rāma, Sugrīva, the king of the monkeys, entered the charming city of Kiṣkindhā, which had previously been protected by Vālī. When Sugrīva entered the city, thousands of monkeys offered him their respects and then entered the city, surrounding him from all sides. Then, when the citizens saw their ruler, they bowed their heads respectfully and threw themselves on the ground all at the same time. After all the citizens got up from the ground, the glorious Sugrīva spoke to them and then entered the pleasant inner chambers of his brother’s palace. As soon as Sugrīva came out of the palace, his well-wishers coronated him by anointing him, as the immortal gods did to Indra.

They brought him a white parasol with a pole covered with gold leaf and a pair of white yak-tail wisks with gold handles which brought one fame. They brought all kinds of gems, as well as grains and herbs, tree boughs with milky sap and flowers, pieces of white cloth and pale-colored ointments, perfumes and garlands of flowers that grow on land and in water, celestial sandalwood paste and many varieties of fragrances. There was also dried rice stained with yellow turmeric, seeds of priyaṅgu grass, honey, clarified butter, yogurt, a tiger skin, a boar’s skin, and a pair of sandals. Sixteen joyful maidens arrived there bearing fine ointments, a bright yellow pigment called go-rocana, and a red cosmetic called manah-śilā. Then, after satisfying the best of brāhmaṇas with jewels, cloth and food, they began the consecration of Sugrīva according the circumstances and in accordance with the rules and regulations.

Thereafter those monkeys who were familiar with the mantras of the Vedas spread kuśa grass, brought fire wood, lit the sacred fire, purified the fire to make it fit for sacrifice, and offered oblations of clarified butter into it. They sat Sugrīva facing eastward on an excellent throne with golden legs and coronated him with different appropriate hymns. This was done in the upper chamber of a palace decorated with brightly-colored flower garlands. Those best of monkeys brought the pure, auspicious waters from all the holy rivers and all the holy places where people bathe, as well as from

the ocean, and stored it in gold pots. As the Vāsus coronated Indra with a ceremonial bath, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Mainda, Dvividā, Hanumān, Jāmbavān and Nala joyfully bathed Sugrīva, pouring the fragrant water through beautiful buffalo horns and from large, round-bellied pots made from wrought gold.

Once the great soul Sugrīva's coronation was completed, all the monkeys shouted out with delight by the thousands. Obeying Lord Rāma's request, Sugrīva embraced Aṅgada and installed him as prince regent. After Aṅgada's installation, the noble monkeys all praised Sugrīva, crying out: "Very good! Very good!" Being pleased by what had taken place, they praised Lord Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa again and again. Being crowded with happy, well-fed people and decorated with banners and flags, the city of Kiṣkindhā situated within a mountain cave looked very nice. Sugrīva then informed the great soul Rāma about his coronation, as well as how he had regained his wife Rūmā and sovereignty over the kingdom, as Indra achieved rulership over the gods.



## RĀMA RESIDES IN A CAVE ON MOUNT PRASRAVAṆA

After informing Lord Rāma about his coronation as king, Sugrīva went back in his cave. Then Rāma went with His brother to Mount Prasravaṇa, which was noisy because of its tigers and deer and infested with lions that roared frightfully. The mountain was covered with many bushes and vines and thickly forested with trees. The place was frequented by bears, monkeys, blue-faced baboons and wild cats. The mountain looked like a mass of clouds and had springs of pure water that never dried up. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa chose as Their residence a large, long cave on top of the mountain.

Having made an agreement with Sugrīva that the search for Sītā would be taken up after the rainy season, the sinless Rāma spoke the following opportune and momentous words to Lakṣmaṇa: “This mountain cave is pleasant, spacious and airy. Let us reside in it, O Lakṣmaṇa, during the rainy nights. This lovely mountain peak is adorned with protruding crags which are white, black and red. It abounds in minerals and is beautified by caves from which streams full of croaking frogs flow. It is covered with groves of various kinds of trees, and vines with colorful flowers. It is noisy with the sounds of different kinds of birds and resounds with the loud cries of peacocks. There are bushes of mālatī and jasmine, and blooming trees of sinduvāra, śirīṣa, kadamba, arjuna and sarja. Moreover, this nice pond full of blossoming lotuses is not far from Our cave, O prince. Since this cave faces the south-west, it will be very good for Us. Because it is only elevated on the western side, it will be protected from wind and rain, My dear brother. Furthermore, at the entrance of the cave there is a large rock which is level and smooth and resembles a pile of black eye cosmetic.

“O brother, look toward the north at that mountain peak! It resembles a pile of black powder or a rain cloud rising above the horizon. To the south there is another mountain which shines like silver. It looks like Mount Kailāśa and is adorned with all kinds of minerals. See the river

flowing on the eastern side of the cave; it is just like the Maṇḍākinī River at Trikūṭa where we were staying previously. It is free from mud and is equal to the Ganges River. Its banks are adorned with trees such as sandalwood, tamāla, atimukta, padmaka, sarala, vānīra, timida, bakula, ketaka, hintāla, tiniśa, nīpa, vetraka, and kṛtamālaka. With these trees growing with different shapes on the river's banks, the river looks like a well-dressed young woman wearing fine cloth and ornaments. It is resounding with the cries of hundreds of flocks of many different kinds of birds. It is beautified by its ruddy geese which are fascinated with each other. It has pleasant sandy banks and is frequented by swans and cranes. The river looks like a fully dressed woman who is laughing heartily. In some places the river is covered with blue lotus flowers, in other places there are red ones and in other places, the newly opening buds of celestial white water lilies. Water fowl by the hundreds have taken shelter in this river and it resounds with the cries of peacocks and herons. This charming river is visited by multitudes of ascetics.

“See the sandalwood trees standing in nice rows, and the kakubha trees which seem to have appeared in order to please My mind. Oh, this region is most lovely, O conqueror of enemies! We could certainly enjoy Ourselves here, O Lakṣmaṇa. Let Us reside here comfortably. Sugrīva's charming capital Kiṣkindhā with its beautiful forests is not very far from here. The sound of musical instruments can be heard, O best of victors, as well as the shouts of monkeys and the rhythmic beating of clay mṛdaṅga drums. Having regained his wife, kingdom and a great fortune, Sugrīva must surely be rejoicing in the midst of his well-wishers.” Speaking in this way, Rāma began residing with Lakṣmaṇa on Prasravaṇa Mountain, on which could be seen many caves and groves of trees.

Although the mountain possessed abundant pleasures and opulence, while residing on it, Rāma did not find the slightest pleasure there because of His remembrance of His kidnapped consort. While lying on His bed at night, He could not sleep, even upon seeing the moon risen above the eastern horizon, His mind being agitated by both grief and the shedding of tears.

Lakṣmaṇa, who shared His brother's grief, spoke the following conciliatory words to Him who was constantly mourning and overwhelmed

with grief: “You are dedicated to Your duties in this world. You believe in the existence of God and are devoted to Him. You are by nature pious and resolute too. If You remain irresolute, You will be especially unable to kill in combat Your enemy Rāvaṇa, who is treacherous in his actions. Up root Your grief and make Your determination firm. Then You should eliminate that rākṣasa along with his clan. O descendant of Kakutstha, You are even able to turn upside down the earth with its oceans, mountains and forests, what to speak of Rāvaṇa. Wait until autumn, for the rainy season has just begun. Then You will annihilate Rāvaṇa along with his kingdom and army. I am simply awakening Your manliness, as one would rekindle a fire by pouring clarified butter on the hot coals at an appropriate time.”

Accepting Lakṣmaṇa’s advice as sound, Rāma spoke the following tender words to His well-wisher: “O Lakṣmaṇa, the advice You have given Me is exactly what should be given by one who is devoted, affectionate, benevolent and endowed with unfailing prowess. I have completely given up My grief, which mars all one’s activities. I shall now arouse My energy, which is unimpeded during acts of valor. I shall wait until autumn in accordance with Your request, looking forward to the goodness of Sugrīva and the calming of the rivers. A hero who has been benefited in some way is obliged to repay that. An ungrateful person who does not repay his debt afflicts the hearts of the pious”

Accepting what Rāma said as just, Lakṣmaṇa with joined palms replied to Rāma, whose appearance was pleasing and who was exhibiting His fine intelligence: “Sugrīva will soon accomplish everything that You desire, O King. Waiting for autumn, tolerate the botheration caused by the rain and remain determined to kill Your enemy. Restraining Your anger, wait for the fall season and endure these four months in My company. Reside here on this mountain which is inhabited by lions to pass the time, even though You are capable of slaying Your enemy.”

## RĀMA DESCRIBES THE RAINY SEASON

Having killed Vālī, installed Sugrīva as king and taken up residence on top of Mount Prasavaṇa, Rāma then said to Lakṣmaṇa: “The rainy season has now arrived. Just see the sky overcast with clouds that resemble mountains. Having sucked up water from the ocean through the sun’s rays, the sky is producing life-giving rains, as if it were a fetus carried for nine months. It is now possible to ascend into the sky by the staircase of the clouds and adorn the sun with garlands of kuṭaja and arjuna flowers. It seems as if the sky’s wounds have been covered with clouds as wet bandages that are reddish along the edges because of being tinged by the twilight. With its gentle breezes like sighs, its pale clouds and its golden twilight like sandalwood paste, the sky looks as if it were love-sick.

“Having been tormented with heat and then flooded with fresh rains, the earth is exuding hot tears, as Sītā surely must be doing in her affliction. Recently sprung from the depths of the clouds, as cooling as the leaves of a camphor tree and infused with the fragrance of ketaka flowers, the wind can be quaffed from the hollow of the joined hands. Similar to Sugrīva’s present situation, Mount Prasavaṇa’s enemy, the forest fire, is now eliminated. Its arjuna trees are in bloom. It is perfumed with the aroma of ketaka flowers and it is being bathed with torrents of rain. Due to being covered with clouds as if they were black antelope skins, adorned with showers of rain as if they were sacred threads worn by brāhmaṇas and their caves howling with winds as if they were reciting hymns from the Vedas, the mountains seem like students who have finished their study of the Vedas. Lashed with gold whips in the form of lighting bolts and rumbling from within its bosom, the sky appears to be anguishing. Lightning flashing in the depths of a dark blue cloud looks to Me like the ascetic Sītā squirming in the embrace of Rāvaṇa.

“Apparently smeared by clouds and concealed, the directions in which the planets headed by the moon preside are favorably inclined toward

those who are smitten with love. O Lakṣmaṇa, look at the kuṭaja trees in bloom on mountain tops! In some places they are covered with tears due to the excessive heat which they have endured. In other places they look satisfied by the rainfall and thus enkindle feelings of love in Me, even though I am stricken with grief. The dust has settled, the wind is cool and all the discomfort occasioned by the hot season has been assuaged. Kings who were out on military expeditions have halted and people who were abroad are returning to their homes. Desirous of sojourning at Mānasa-sarovara Lake, the swans have departed and the ruddy geese are consorting with their mates. The carts and chariots no longer traverse the roads which are damaged by repeated rains. The sky, which is visible in some places and not visible in others, looks like the calm ocean which is interspersed here and there with mountains. The mountain streams quickly carry to the ocean their fresh water, which is mixed with sarja and kadamba flowers, is reddish with mountain minerals and is followed by the cries of peacocks.

“People are eating in abundance the jambu fruits, which are bursting with juice and resemble bumblebees. Mango fruits, which have turned various colors upon maturing, are falling to the ground when shaken by the wind. With lightning as their flags and herons in flight as their garlands, the clouds have the shape of mountains. They are rumbling like bellowing elephants in rut arrayed for battle. With their pastures nurtured by abundant rain and their peacocks dancing jubilantly, the forests on which the clouds have poured their rains look more lovely in the afternoons. Having rested repeatedly on the colossal peaks of mountains, the rumbling clouds studded with herons continue their journey. Flying quickly to meet their longed-for cloud, a jubilant row of herons looks like a long garland of white lotus flowers adorning the sky. With its new grass sprinkled with new-born red indragopa insects, the earth looks charming like a woman with a green blanket speckled with red cochineal wrapped tightly around her waist.

“Lord Viṣṇu slowly falls asleep, rivers run swiftly to the ocean, a female heron joyfully approaches a cloud, and a beautiful woman full of longing approaches her beloved. Peacocks are joyfully dancing in the forest regions; the kadamba trees have flowers on their branches; the bulls and cows are equally eager to unite; the earth looks very pleasant with its fields of grains and woodlands. The rivers are flowing, the clouds are pouring down

rain, elephants in rut are trumpeting, the forest regions are looking beautiful, separated lovers are remembering each other, the peacocks are dancing, and the monkeys are feeling reassured. The great elephants feel overjoyed smelling the fragrance of ketaka flowers. They are pleased by hearing the sound of waterfalls in the midst of the forest, and bellow in unison with the peacocks. Being pelted with rain, the honeybees resting on the branches of a kadamba tree gradually shed the intoxication which had overtaken them suddenly due to imbibing the nectar of flowers. With their fully ripened fruits resembling balls of powdered charcoal and containing abundant juice, the branches of the jambu trees look as if they are being slowly sucked by swarms of honey bees.

“The forms of clouds adorned with flags of lightning and emitting deep and loud peals of thunder look beautiful like war elephants eager for battle. Being in rut, the elephant leader who has set out roaming the mountains and forests in search of combat, upon hearing the rumbling of the clouds, turns around, suspecting it to be a call to combat. Singing in some places by its swarms of honey bees, dancing in other places through its blue-necked peacocks, and becoming enraged in other areas through its great elephants in rut, the forest regions appeared endowed with different characteristics. Abounding in kadamba, sarja, arjuna and kandala trees, supplied with fresh water, and resounding with the cries of dancing peacocks in rut, the land of the forest region looks like a place intended for drinking spiritous liquor. Thirsty birds joyfully drink the crystal-clear water given by Indra which has fallen like pearls and collected in the hollows of leaves. Doing this, the birds’ wings become discolored by the wetness of the water. A concert has begun in the woodlands in the form of the sound of mṛdaṅga drums through the rumbling of clouds, the sweet accompaniment of stringed instruments through the humming of honey bees, and the rhythmic beat of croaking frogs.

“Music and dancing were seemingly set into motion in the forests by peacocks dancing merrily in one area, others crying out loudly in another area; in still another area peacocks were perched on the tops of trees observing everything with their jewel-like tails hanging down loose. Upon being awakened from their long hibernation by the repeated rumbling of clouds and aroused by the fresh rains, frogs of different sizes, shapes, colors

and sounds began croaking. Washing away their worn-out banks, the proud rivers with ruddy geese floating on their surfaces rush to meet their lord, the ocean, bearing him offerings of fruits and flowers for his pleasure. Dark blue clouds full of fresh rain cling to other such clouds, as rocks scorched by a forest fire cling to other similar rocks, being bound at the base. Elephants wander through the most delightful forests, in which are heard the cries of peacocks in heat. In those forests the tracts of grass are speckled with the tiny red insects called indragopa. The forests themselves are scented with the fragrance of arjuna and kadamba trees. Ignoring the lotus flowers whose filaments had been destroyed by the recent rains, black bumblebees joyfully suck the honey of newly blooming kadamba flowers with intact filaments.

“Mighty elephants roam about in rut, bulls are joyful, lions are more valorous in the forests, the great mountains look lovely, kings are quiet, and Lord Indra is sporting with the rain clouds. With their torrents of rain, the clouds hanging over the sky drown out the roar of the ocean, causing the rivers, ponds, lakes and reservoirs to overflow and flood the whole land. Abundant rains fall on the earth, winds blow with increased force, while rivers that have washed away their banks make roads impassable. As monarchs are consecrated with a ceremonial bath, the great mountains exhibit their beauty and splendor while being bathed with water carried in pitchers in the form of clouds by the wind god as a gift from Lord Indra. Because of the sky’s being covered with clouds, neither the sun nor stars are visible. The earth is wet because of the recent showers, and, being covered with darkness, the cardinal directions are indiscernible. After being washed clean by the showers, the great mountains look very beautiful with numerous waterfalls resembling long strands of pearls.

“With their force being impeded by protruding rocks, the waterfalls sparkle like breaking necklaces whose pearls are falling into caves in which peacocks cry out loudly. After falling with great force and washing the lower regions of the mountains, the cascades are arrested by large caverns. Resembling the necklaces worn by celestial damsels that are broken by the force of sexual embrace, the unparalleled cascades fall on all sides. Since the sun cannot be seen during the whole day, the only way by which it can be known that it is night is by the fact that birds return to their nests, the lotus flowers close and the evening jasmine buds open. Kings have turned back their military expeditions and their armies stand obstructed by the weather.

Indeed, hostilities and roads have both been reduced to the same state by water. Now it is that time in the month of Bhādrapāda (August) for beginning study of the Vedas for those brāhmaṇas who chant the Sāma Veda.

“Having finished preparing His dwelling for the rainy season and accumulated sufficient necessities to last during that period, Bharata, the king of Kosala, must have undertaken the vow of cāturmāsya which begins in the month of āṣāḍha (July). The current of the swelling Sarayū River is increasing, like the shouts of the people of Ayodhyā when they see Me returned from exile. Having defeated his enemy, regained his wife and established himself as ruler over his kingdom, Sugrīva is enjoying happiness during these rains which manifest numerous good qualities. Having lost My wife and extensive kingdom, I am suffering like a bank being corroded by a river, O Lakṣmaṇa! My grief is great, the rains have made travel impossible, and My enemy Rāvaṇa seems unassailable. When I saw how difficult it was to travel on the roads, I made no demand on Sugrīva, even though he was submissive to Me.

“I did not want to say anything to Sugrīva because he had just then been reunited with his wife after a long period of suffering, and My task is a long and arduous one. After resting sufficiently and realizing when it is time for action, Sugrīva will remember his obligation, of this there is no doubt. Therefore, I am simply awaiting the mercy of Sugrīva and the rivers, O prince! A heroic soul is certainly inclined to fulfill his obligations, whereas an ungrateful person who does not pay his debts offends those endowed with goodness.”

Praising Lord Rāma’s observation and thinking for a while, Lakṣmaṇa, with joined palms, showed His good judgement in the following way: “O king, soon Sugrīva will accomplish all Your desired goals. Endure the hindrance caused by the rain until the arrival of autumn, remaining intent on destroying Your enemy.”



## HANUMĀN URGES SUGRĪVA TO SEARCH FOR SĪTĀ

When the rainy season came to an end, Hanumān saw that the sky was clear, free from lightning and clouds, crowded with cranes, resonant with their cries, and illuminated with a lovely light. He also saw that Sugrīva, who had achieved his goals, was negligent in acquiring wealth and religious merit. Instead, Sugrīva had taken to the path of the ungodly, thinking only of his own affairs. Having accomplished his goals and finished his duties, Sugrīva was simply enjoying the company of beautiful women. Indeed, Sugrīva had achieved all his cherished goals—he had regained his own wife Rumā and had also gained the hand of Tārā, whom he had desired all along. Now he was enjoying day and night, with his anxieties extinguished and his wishes fulfilled, just as Indra enjoys himself with the hordes of gandharvas and apsarās. After entrusting the administration of the kingdom to his ministers, he did not bother to oversee them. Now that all danger to his kingdom had been removed, he engaged himself in lusty activities.

Hanumān, the son of the wind god, had ascertained the meaning of all the sacred scriptures and was completely familiar with what should be done and what should not be done. He knew the duties required for particular occasions and was expert in expressing himself. Thus Hanumān approached Sugrīva, who understood the truth underlying what was said to him, and who harbored deep love and trust toward Hanuman. After propitiating Sugrīva in various ways with reasonable arguments, Hanumān addressed him with the following words, which were friendly, truthful, beneficial, persuasive, righteous, prudent and full of meaning: “You have regained your kingdom and fame, and you have increased the prosperity of your dynasty. But you still have to gain the goodwill of friends. A monarch who knows how to act in relation to friends increases his dominion, glory and valor. O king, he to whom the treasury, the military, friends and one’s own self are all equal enjoys a large dominion.

“You are rich in moral conduct and are situated on a path free from danger. Therefore you should achieve the purpose of your friend Lord Rāma since you have promised to do so. One who out of illusion does not enthusiastically abandon all other duties to accomplish the goal of a friend meets with disaster. He who achieves the purpose of a friend only after the allotted time has passed does not act in a way beneficial to that friend, even though he might accomplish great things. The search for Sītā, which is the goal of our friend Rāma, is getting delayed! Therefore, let us accomplish this task for Śrī Rāma. Because He is so submissive to you, O king, Lord Rāma will not tell you that it is time to begin the search, even though He knows it is now time and is in a hurry to begin.

“Rāma is responsible for the prosperity of your dynasty and will remain your friend for a long time. His power is immeasurable and His personal virtues are unequaled. As He helped you achieve your goals, now you help Him achieve His. Order the monkey chiefs to summon the monkey hordes. If this task is begun without any pressure from Rāma, then it will be as if everything was done timely. However, if the task is done only on the urging of Rāma, it will surely be considered that there was a delay. You should carry out Rāma’s task even if you had not achieved your own goals. How much more are you obliged to Him when He has killed your enemy Vālī and won for you your kingdom. Although you are strong and exceptionally valiant, why do you delay in ordering the monkeys to begin the search and thus win the pleasure of Rāma, the son of King Daśaratha? Although Rāma is able to subdue the gods, demons and giant serpents with His arrows, He has given you the opportunity to fulfill your promise. He has performed a great act of kindness for you without hesitating to kill Vālī. Therefore, let us search for His wife Sītā on the earth as well as in the heavens. Neither gods, dānavas, gandharvas, demons, maruts, or yakṣas can frighten Him. As such, O king of monkeys, you should whole-heartedly satisfy Lord Rāma, who is so powerful and who has previously done you favors. By your command, O lord of monkeys, none of us will cease in our search whether below the earth, on the earth, in the water, in the air or in the heavens. Therefore, give orders as to who should do what and in what place. In fact, more than a million monkeys who are invincible are at your command, O sinless one!”

Upon hearing Hanumān's request, which was opportune and well-worded, Sugrīva made the proper decision. He duly instructed Nīla to summon the troops from all directions. He said: "Please see that my entire army, as well as all the troop leaders assemble without delay before their commander-in-chief. Those swift-footed and energetic monkeys who are guarding the frontiers should quickly leave their posts and present themselves in obedience to my command. Capital punishment will be the reward for any monkey taking more than two fortnights to come here. There will be no reconsideration on this point. In the company of Aṅgada, you should definitely approach the monkey elders with this command of mine."

After making this arrangement, the mighty Sugrīva retired to his palace.

## RĀMA SENDS LAKṢMAṆA TO REMIND SUGRĪVA

After Sugrīva had returned to his cavern and the sky was free from clouds, Lord Rāma, who was residing on Mount Prasravaṇa for the length of the rainy season, began to feel agony because of His love for Sītā and the anguish of being separated from Her. He was pained to see the sky clear, the orb of the moon free from clouds and the autumn night illuminated by moonlight. Seeing Sugrīva leading a life of sense gratification, while the time to begin the search for Sītā had passed, Rāma felt perplexed. When He had regained His mental balance, the wise Rāma, the protector of men, began thinking of Sītā, although She existed in His mind. While seated on the peak of the mountain beautified with gold ore, Śrī Rāma observed the autumn sky and began thinking of His dear consort. Seeing that the sky was clear, being free from lightning and clouds, and that it resounded with the cries of herons, Rāma lamented with plaintive words:

“How could that young woman of Mine be enjoying now when She was accustomed to imitating with Her voice the cries of herons making love? Seeing the āsana trees in bloom, which are as brilliant as gold, how could that young woman of Mine be enjoying now without seeing Me? How will that lady, whose voice was so tender, whose every limb was so charming and who was accustomed to be wakened by the sound of swans, wake up now? How will that lady with eyes as broad as the petals of a lotus flower feel when she hears the sound of ruddy geese cavorting about in pairs. Whether wandering about on the shore of lakes and streams or groves and forests, I am now unable to find any happiness without that fawn-eyed damsel. Constantly being increased by the qualities of autumn, love must be afflicting that fine lady because of Her tender age and separation from Me.”

In this and other ways did that best of men, Prince Rāma, lament, like a cātaka bird longing for water from Lord Indra. Returning after wandering about in those pleasant mountains in search of fruits, the

handsome Lakṣmaṇa saw His elder brother. Seeing Rāma all alone, overwhelmed with unbearable anxiety, without external awareness, despondent and miserable, the intelligent Lakṣmaṇa spoke to Him as follows:

“What is the use of abasing yourself by surrendering to love, O noble one? This always destroys mental concentration. Can You not regain your composure by some effort? Perform Your duties to completion. Let Your mind be peaceful. Devote Your time to concentrating Your mind. Getting the help of capable persons like Sugrīva, make Yourself strong. Having You as Her protector, Sītā cannot be easily retained by anyone else. No one can escape being burned when hugging a blazing flame of fire, O worthy hero!”

Rāma then spoke the following words, characteristic of His nature, to Lakṣmaṇa, who possessed auspicious marks and who was unassailable: “Your words are beneficial, acceptable, logical, consoling and conducive to righteousness and material gain. Undoubtedly, the matter at hand should be carried out with special attention. But We should not merely think of the fruit of this undertaking, which cannot be impeded, O prince!”

Remembering Sītā, whose eyes resembled the petals of a lotus flower, Rāma, whose face was withered, spoke as follows to Lakṣmaṇa: “Having showered the earth with rain, the thousand-eyed Indra is now peaceful, his work being completed. Having dropped their rains while rumbling deeply as they passed over mountains and trees, the clouds are exhausted. The clouds which were the color of a dark-blue lotus flower and which obscured all ten directions are now peaceful like elephants that have satisfied their lusty desires.

“The rainy winds, which blew strongly, were full of water and carried the fragrance of flowering kuṭāja and arjuna trees, has ceased blowing, though it is capable of doing so. The uproar caused by clouds, elephants, peacocks and waterfalls has suddenly stopped, O sinless one. The mountains are shining beautifully as if their peaks have been cleaned of their impurities by the huge clouds. The autumn rivers can be seen flowing slowly between their sandy banks, like a broad-waisted woman shy about a recent love affair.

Autumn has arrived, manifesting its beauty on the branches of saptacchada trees, in the light of the sun, moon and stars, and in the pastimes of preeminent elephants. With Her loveliness manifested in numerous ways and adorned with the beauties of autumn, the goddess of fortune excessively exhibits Her charm in the clusters of lotus flowers opened by the first rays of the sun. Scented with the fragrance of the flowers of saptacchada trees and resounding with the buzzing of honeybees, the breezes blowing in the forests greatly agitate the elephants in rut.

“With their large, extended wings covered with the pollen of lotus flowers while coursing the sandy banks of large rivers, the swans fond of rivers are consorting with ruddy geese. Loveliness is manifested in many ways: in elephants maddened with rut, in herds of excited cows and in the downward flowing of pleasant waters. Having shed their tail-feathers, the peacocks have lost their beauty and festivity, no longer feeling attachment for their mates. Noticing that the sky was free from any clouds, the peacocks have become absorbed in thinking about them. The depths of the forests seem to be illuminated with the golden tips of the priyaka trees which are very pleasing to the eyes and fragrant with a gratifying aroma. Elephants fond of lotus ponds are wandering about with their mates in the blossoming forest. Being agitated by lust and longing for intercourse, those excellent elephants are moving rather slowly. The clear sky is the color of a freshly polished sword. The waters of rivers are flowing in narrow streams. The blowing winds are cool due to contact with white lotus flowers. And the directions are bright, being freed from the darkness caused by clouds.

“Due to the heat of the sun, the mud has vanished and the earth is covered with dust after a long time. Now is the time for monarchs with enmity to do battle with one another. Overjoyed bulls whose beautiful forms have been enhanced by the qualities of autumn and whose bodies are covered with dust, being excited by lust and ready to fight with one another, are bellowing in the midst of cows. The she-elephants of good lineage, being smitten with love, though accustomed to moving quickly, are slowly rambling through the forest with their mates, sometimes encircling them. Having shed their magnificent tail-feathers, the peacocks on the banks of rivers go away miserable and dispirited as if frightened by the swarms of herons. Startling the ducks and ruddy geese by their loud bellows, the stately elephants standing in lakes adorned with lotuses drink the water after

splashing it again and again. Joyful swans land on rivers which are free from mud, lined with sand, filled with tasty water and frequented by herds of cows and flocks of herons and which resound with their noises.

“The din raised by the flowing of rivers, the rumbling of clouds, the roar of waterfalls and the howling of wind, as well as the crying of peacocks and the croaking of frogs has completely ceased. Highly venomous snakes of many different colors were shut up in their tunnels since the first rains. Emaciated and stricken with hunger, they are coming out of their holes. Oh, the twilight, tinged red with passion, has abandoned her blue clothes, the sky, her eyes sparkling with joy like stars due to the touch of shimmering moonbeams! With the risen moon as her charming face, the shining stars as her beautiful eyes and enveloped in moonlight, the night looks like a lady whose body is draped with white cloth. Jubilant from eating fully ripened grains, herons fly in an attractive line, dashing across the sky, like a knotted string being carried away by the wind. With a single swan sleeping in its midst and being decorated with flowers, the water of the great lake looks delightful, like the night sky illuminated by the full moon and beautified with masses of stars.

“With a broken girdle of scattered swans and decorated with garlands of blooming lotuses, the excellent lakes’ beauty is now increased, like lovely women adorned with jewelry. Mixed with the music produced by whistling bamboos and spread everywhere by the morning breeze, the sounds of butter churns, cows and bulls amplify each other. The banks of rivers are beautified by clumps of *kāśa* grass with its blossoming fronds agitated by the gentle wind, resembling pieces of freshly washed cloth. Bees fond of drinking honey merrily wander through the forests with their mates. Being intoxicated, they travel on the forest breezes, their bodies looking golden due to the pollen of lotuses and *āsana* flowers. The clear waters, blossoming lotuses, cries of herons, ripened fields of grain, gentle breezes and spotless moon indicate the end of the rainy season. The rivers with their visible girdle of fish are now moving slowly, like women who have enjoyed with their lovers at night and are therefore not anxious to move about at sunrise.

“With their surfaces covered with ruddy geese, duckweed and clumps of *kāśa* grass, the rivers resemble women whose faces are anointed

with golden go-rocana and enhanced with lines of cosmetics. Having grasped his bow and departed, Cupid, who is capable of fierce punishment, is now performing dreadful deeds in the forests, which are beautified by blooming bāṇa and āsana trees and are resounding with jubilant honeybees. After completely satisfying the world with abundant rain, filling the rivers and reservoirs, bestowing upon the earth ripe grains, and abandoning the sky, the clouds have vanished. My dear friend, the lakes look very charming with their pleasant waters, resounding with the cries of ospreys and crowded with ruddy geese. On the mountain peaks can be seen āsana, saptaparṇa, kovidāra, bandhujīva, tamāla trees and śyāma vines in bloom. O Lakṣmaṇa, see how the sandy river banks are crowded all about with swans, cranes, ruddy geese and ospreys. The time has arrived for inimical kings desirous of victory to act, My friend. This is the time for the first expedition of kings, O prince, but I see neither Sugrīva nor any activity instigated by him.

“The four months of the rainy season have passed as if they were one hundred years because of my grief upon not seeing Sītā. She followed Me into the formidable Daṇḍakā Forest, as a ruddy goose would follow her mate into a garden. O Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva is not being merciful to Me, even though I am separated from My darling, stricken with grief, deprived of My kingdom and living in exile. Because I am rejected by My family, bereft of My kingdom and outraged by Rāvaṇa, for these and other reasons the wicked Sugrīva holds Me in contempt. After fixing a time to begin the search for Sītā, that fool ignores it because he has already accomplished his goals. Therefore, enter the city of Kiṣkindhā and say the following on My behalf to that foolish monkey attached to worldly pleasures:

‘If after promising to assist those who have rendered service in the past, one breaks that promise, he is the lowest of men. On the other hand, a warrior who keeps his promise, whether it leads to good or evil, is the best of men. Carnivorous beasts will not even eat the cadavers of those who, after achieving their own goals, do not aid their friends in achieving theirs. Do you really wish to see My bow resembling a cluster of thunderbolts when I grasp its gilded frame on the battlefield? Do you wish to hear again the dreadful twang of My bowstring thundering like a bolt of lightning when I am angry on the battlefield?’



“Fully knowing My desire and My prowess in battle, and that I have You as My assistant, how is it that Sugrīva is not in anxiety? Having accomplished his own purpose, that lord of monkeys ignores the reason for which we struck up friendship with each other, O conqueror of enemy cities. After promising to take up My cause at the end of the rainy season, that monkey chieftain, enjoying himself as he is, does not recognize that the four months have already transpired. Amusing himself with his ministers and associates while drinking, Sugrīva is not being kind to Us who are afflicted with grief.

“Go and inform Sugrīva about the form which My anger will assume, O mighty youth: ‘The path taken by Vālī when killed on the battlefield is not yet closed. Stand by your promise, Sugrīva! Do not follow Vālī’s path. In battle I only killed Vālī. But I shall slay you, a breaker of promises, along with all your people.’

“Since this undertaking is impeded, way whatever is necessary initiate it, O best of men. Hurry! The time has already passed! Tell Sugrīva: ‘Considering your promise to Me as an eternal principle, keep it, O lord of monkeys. Do not let yourself see Vālī in the world of the dead when you are sent there by My arrows today!’”

Seeing His disconsolate elder brother completely enraged and ranting, that master of humanity developed a severe attitude toward Sugrīva.

## LAKṢMAṆA ANGRILY GOES TO KIṢKINDHĀ

Lakṣmaṇa spoke as follows to His elder brother Rāma, who, though of royal lineage, was overwhelmed with grief and longing for His consort: “Sugrīva is not following the example of the virtuous, nor does he recognize the relation between an action and its result. He will not be able to enjoy his royal simian opulence for long, for his mind does not concern itself with Your goal. Due to loss of reason, he has become attached to the pleasures of life and has no intention of helping You after You had kindly assisted him. O hero, let him die and meet his elder brother Vālī. Such an unqualified person should not be given a kingdom. I cannot control my anger which is impetuous. I shall kill Sugriva this very day. Let Sugrīva’s son Aṅgada commence the search for Sītā with the help of outstanding monkey warriors.”

As Lakṣmaṇa finished making known His intentions of slaying Sugrīva, He began to rush off to Kiṣkindhā, holding His bow and seething with anger for combat. Just then Rāma, the slayer of enemy warriors, spoke the following words, which were well-thought and civil: “Certainly no one like You would ever commit such a sin in this world. One who slays sin by right deliberation is a valiant warrior and the best of men. You should not entertain such thoughts, O Lakṣmaṇa, for You always conduct Yourself piously. Remember the love and friendship between Sugrīva and Myself and Our former activities together. Abandoning Your anger, You should speak in a conciliatory manner to Sugriva, who is guilty of tardiness, reminding him that the time for him to act has passed.”

Having been fully instructed by His elder brother about how to act, Lakṣmaṇa, the slayer of enemy soldiers, left for the city of Kiṣkindhā. Then the clear-thinking and intelligent Lakṣmaṇa, who was working for the benefit of His elder brother, being furious, entered Sugrīva’s palace. Holding His bow which was as brilliant as a rainbow, formidable like a mountain peak

and equal to all-conquering time, Lakṣmaṇa resembled Mount Mandara. Lakṣmaṇa was thinking about what He was supposed to say to Sugrīva and what He expected Sugrīva to say in reply. Though equal to Bṛhaspati in intelligence, He was inclined to do as instructed by His brother. He was surrounded by the fire of anger sprung from His brother's displeasure at not recovering Sitā. Being irritated, Lakṣmaṇa rushed ahead like a gale wind, felling sāla, tāla, āśvakarṇa and other trees, and knocking over mountain peaks by His speediness. Crushing the stones under His feet like an elephant, Lakṣmaṇa took long strides because of His haste to accomplish His task on behalf of Rāma. Lakṣmaṇa saw the great city of the simian chieftain Sugrīva situated on an impassible mountain and surrounded by an army of monkeys. Lakṣmaṇa, whose lips were trembling from anger at Sugrīva, saw fearsome monkeys roaming outside Kiṣkindhā.

Seeing Lakṣmaṇa, the monkeys, who resembled elephants, snatched up hundreds of boulders and huge trees from the tops of mountains. When Lakṣmaṇa saw that the monkeys were holding weapons, He became doubly angry, like a fire increased by additional fuel. Seeing Lakṣmaṇa so furious, like death-inflicting time, the monkeys fled in all directions, their bodily limbs trembling due to fear. They thereupon entered Sugrīva's palace and informed him of Lakṣmaṇa's angry arrival. At that time Sugrīva, who was attached to enjoying the company of women, was with his consort Tārā and did not heed the warning which the soldiers bore. After being ordered by the king's ministers, the monkeys, who resembled mountains, elephants or clouds and caused one's hairs to stand on end, proceeded out of the city. With claws and fangs as weapons, they were fierce-looking. They were all as proud as tigers and had fearsome faces. Some were as strong as ten elephants, some as strong as one hundred, and some as strong as one thousand.

Lakṣmaṇa then surveyed Kiṣkindhā, which was difficult to assail and was surrounded by a vast army of monkeys holding tree trunks in their hands. Thereafter all the monkey soldiers came out of the fortifications and made themselves clearly visible. Thinking about Sugrīva's negligence and His elder brother's anguish, Lakṣmaṇa again became overwhelmed with anger. Heaving long, hot sighs, his eyes turned red from anger so that that tiger

among men looked like a smokey fire. Lakṣmaṇa resembled a five-headed serpent, the tips of His arrows being the tongues, His bow being the coils, and His martial skill being its poison. Becoming greatly despondent out of fear, Aṅgada duly approached the infuriated Lakṣmaṇa, who resembled the fire of universal devastation or the Lord of serpents, Ananta-śeṣa.

With eyes red due to anger, the glorious Lakṣmaṇa commanded Aṅgada in the following way: “Tell Sugrīva about My arrival with these words: ‘Here is Lakṣmaṇa, the destroyer of enemies, arrived before you. Afflicted by the suffering of His brother, He is standing at your door. If it pleases you, heed his words, O monkey.’ After delivering this message to him, O conqueror of assailants, return quickly.”

Upon hearing Lakṣmaṇa’s request, Aṅgada became overwhelmed with anxiety. He therefore approached his uncle and said: “Lakṣmaṇa has arrived.” When Aṅgada first heard Lakṣmaṇa’s message, he departed greatly disturbed in mind and with his face twisted with alarm. First he bowed to his uncle Sugrīva, then to his aunt Rumā and his mother Tārā. After touching the feet of his uncle, he once again touched those of his aunt and mother. He then grabbed hold very tightly of Rumā’s feet and again made known the afore-mentioned matter. Sugrīva, however, being quite asleep, unconscious, intoxicated from drinking liquor and infatuated by love, did not wake up. Seeing that Lakṣmaṇa was furious, the monkeys, being overcome with fear, raised a hue and a cry in hopes of pacifying Him. They raised a loud clamor near Lakṣmaṇa that sounded like pounding ocean waves, peals of thunder, or roaring lions. That loud noise woke Sugrīva. He was disoriented due to intoxication, his eyes were red as copper and he wore only flower garlands.

The two ministers, Plakṣa and Prabhāva, had accompanied Aṅgada. They gave wise counsel, were noble-looking and were highly esteemed by Sugrīva himself. Standing respectfully beside Sugrīva, who was sitting like Indra, the lord of the winds, they informed him about the presence of Lakṣmaṇa, who had come to teach him about material well-being and righteousness. They said: “Having assumed human-like forms, the two highly glorious brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who are always true to Their word and worthy of sovereignty, have made you king. One of Them Lakṣmaṇa, is

standing at the door with a bow in His hands, because of which the monkeys are all shaking violently and shrieking loudly. Here is Lakṣmaṇa, the younger brother of Rāma, who has arrived under the order of Rāma with a message from Him and the determination to see that it is carried out. And this dear son of Tārā, Aṅgada, has been sent by Lakṣmaṇa to you, O sinless one. This Lakṣmaṇa, whose angry eyes seem to burn the monkeys, is standing at the door. Go immediately with your relatives and son and bow your head before Him to appease His anger. Do whatever the righteous Rāma requests you to do. Follow the conditions of the agreement and be truthful to your promise.”

## HANUMĀN ADDRESSES SUGRĪVA

When Sugrīva heard the message brought by Aṅgada and the two ministers regarding how angry Lakṣmaṇa was, he got up off of his bed. Having heard the entreaty of his ministers, Sugrīva, who was expert in taking counsel from his advisors and adept at political maneuvers, understanding the gravity of Lakṣmaṇa's anger and the vanity of his frivolity, spoke the following words to his ministers: "I have not uttered any harsh word nor have I committed any wrong against Rāma. I am therefore wondering why Rāma's brother Lakṣmaṇa is angry with me. Probably my enemies who are always seeking to bring me to grief have told Lakṣmaṇa about some supposed faults of mine. In this situation, we should try to carefully ascertain the actual state of mind of Lakṣmaṇa. In fact, I am not afraid of Lakṣmaṇa or Rāma. However, a friend who is unduly angry does cause misgivings. It is very easy to make friends, but difficult to maintain that friendship until the end. Because of the fickle nature of the mind, friendship is broken even over insignificant things. Therefore am I now afraid, for I am unable to repay the favor which the great soul Rāma has done for me."

After Sugrīva finished speaking in this way, the best of monkeys Hanumān made on the basis of his own logic the following statement in the midst of the monkey counselors: "It is not at all surprising that you, the lord of monkey hordes, have forgotten the kind service rendered to you. The heroic Rāma rejected fear at a distance when he killed for your sake Vālī, who was equal in prowess to Indra. His anger in this case is no doubt out of affection for you and has therefore sent His younger brother Lakṣmaṇa here. As inattentive as you are, you are unaware what the date is. The auspicious autumn green with saptacchada trees in bloom has already begun. The sky, being free of clouds, is illuminated by shining, bright planets. All the directions, as well as the rivers and lakes, are very pleasing.

"You are unaware that it is now the time for military undertakings, O best of monkeys. You are obviously absentminded and therefore

Lakṣmaṇa has come to remind you of your duty. The harsh language spoken by Rāma is out of distress for His consort Sītā. Therefore you should tolerate it. In fact, because of your offense, I do not see any other means of pacifying Lakṣmaṇa except going before Him with folded hands. A king should receive good advice from counselors appointed for that purpose. That is why, abandoning all fear, I shall tell you something over which I have carefully deliberated. Raising His bow when angry, Lord Rāma is able to bring under submission the whole universe, including gods, demons and gandharvas. It is not proper to provoke Him who deserves to be indemnified when one remembers the good deed done by Him and is thankful for it. O king, bow your head along with your sons and well-wishers. Stick to your agreement with Rāma, as a wife remains submissive to her husband. You should not disregard Rāma or Lakṣmaṇa's order, not even mentally. For your mind knows the extensive manly power of Rāma, who is equal in prowess to Indra, as well as that of Lakṣmaṇa.”

## LAKṢMAṆA ENTERS KIṢKINDHĀ

After this, Aṅgada returned from Sugrīva's palace and requested Lakṣmaṇa to enter the delightful cavern in which the city of Kiṣkindhā was located. Lakṣmaṇa did so to fulfill the order of Lord Rāma. The monkeys who stood guard at the gate were huge-bodied and strong. They all stood there with joined palms watching Lakṣmaṇa. The monkeys were terrified to see Lakṣmaṇa snorting angrily, and dared not encircle Him. Lakṣmaṇa saw the huge and pleasant cavern of Kiṣkindhā, which was adorned with sparkling gems. It was dazzling and graced with groves of blossoming trees. It possessed many mansions and palaces which were illuminated by their innumerable jewels. It was beautified by the presence of flowering kalpavṛkṣa trees which can fulfill all one's desires. All about were handsome monkeys wearing bright flower garlands and clothes. They were the sons of demigods and gandharvas and could assume any form at will. Kiṣkindhā was scented with the sweet aroma of sandalwood, aloe and lotus flowers, and its roads were fragrant with the smell of cider and honey. Lakṣmaṇa saw mountain streams whose waters were crystal-clear. He also saw the abode of Aṅgada, and along the main boulevard He saw the prominent mansions of the following important monkeys: Mainda, Dvīda, Gavaya, Gavāka, Gaja, Śarabha, Vidyunmāli, Subāhu, Nala, Kumuda, Suśeṇa, Tāra, Jāmbavān, Dadhivakra, Nīla, Supāṭala and Sunetra. They were shining like white clouds and were adorned with thousands of flower garlands. They contained abundant wealth and food grains and were beautified by the presence of jewel-like women.

He then saw the enchanting and unassailable palace of Sugrīva, which was encrusted all over with white crystal and was equal to Indra's palace. It had white spires like the peaks of Mount Kailāsa, and was further enhanced by blossoming trees capable of satisfying all one's desires. It also had mind-pleasing trees gifted by Indra. These resembled dark clouds and produced heavenly flowers and fruits and provided cooling shade. Its gates



were guarded by soldiers with weapons in their hands. It was covered with garlands of flowers and was white with gates covered with refined gold.

The mighty Lakṣmaṇa entered Sugrīva's charming palace without hindrance, as the sun enters a great cloud. After passing through seven courtyards which were crowded with people, the righteous Lakṣmaṇa saw the grand, secluded residential quarters of Sugrīva. It was furnished here and there with many fine couches covered with gold and silver that were spread with valuable cloth covers. As soon as He entered those chambers, He heard the sweet sound of metrical singing accompanied by harmonious stringed instruments. The mighty Lakṣmaṇa also saw in Sugrīva's chambers many ladies with different bodily proportions who were proud of their beauty and youth. Those ladies of high lineage with their bodies adorned with the finest jewelry were engaged in stringing lavish flower garlands. Lakṣmaṇa also saw Sugrīva's attendants, who were never unsatisfied, without engagement or devoid of nice clothes and ornaments.

Lakṣmaṇa felt embarrassed when He heard the soft tingling of the ladies' anklebells and golden waist belts. Upon hearing the sound of those ornaments, He became highly excited due to the intensity of His anger. He therefore plucked His bow string, filling all the directions with its sound. Restrained only by His own good character, Lakṣmaṇa withdrew to a distance, enraged as He was on account of Rāma's condition. Alarmed to learn of Lakṣmaṇa's arrival by the twang of His bow, Sugrīva got up from his throne. He thought: "Just as Aṅgada had informed me earlier, Lakṣmaṇa, who is very fond of His brother Rāma, has obviously arrived." Having learned from both Aṅgada and the twang of the bow that Lakṣmaṇa had arrived, Sugrīva's mouth became dry. Thereupon Sugrīva asked the following friendly question of the fair Tārā, although his mind was bewildered by fear:

"I wonder why Lakṣmaṇa, who is by nature mild, has come here as though He were angry, O lady with lovely eyebrows? Do you know the cause of the prince's anger, O innocent lady? Surely such an exemplary person would not become angry without due cause. If you are able to ascertain what it is which we have done that has displeased Him, please make it known without any further delay. Or else, my lady, you should go and personally pacify Him with soothing words. When the pure-minded Lakṣmaṇa sees

you, he will not be able to remain angry, for great souls never act harshly toward women. I shall meet with Lakṣmaṇa, whose eyes resemble the petals of a lotus flower, only after He has been placated by you.”

Faltering as she walked, the golden cord of her girdle becoming loose and her eyes rolling due to intoxication, Tārā bowed her slim body out of modesty as she came into the presence of Lakṣmaṇa. Seeing that Sugrīva’s wife had arrived, the royal prince looked downwards and became indifferent, His anger ceasing due to the proximity of a woman. Because of having drunken liquor and because of the peaceful appearance of the prince, Tārā did not feel shy. She spoke the following meaningful and conciliatory words which were bold due to affection: “What is the reason for Your anger, O prince? Who has disobeyed Your command? Who would intrepidly rush toward a grove of dry trees to escape a forest fire?”

Upon hearing her words, Lakṣmaṇa’s doubts were eradicated. Lakṣmaṇa then replied with the following affectionate words: “This husband of yours has shunned the attainment of righteousness and material amelioration, being engrossed in sense gratification, O lady intent on the well-being of your husband! Why do you not remind him of this? He does not concern himself with the affairs of the state, nor with Us who are sunken in misery. In the company of his ministers, O Tārā, he engages himself in trying to satisfy his senses. After fixing the limit of four months before commencing the search for Sītā, Sugrīva is unaware that the time has passed because he is enjoying himself drinking liquor. Drinking liquor is not considered praiseworthy for those who wish to attain religious merit and material amelioration. Wealth, enjoyment and righteousness are lost due to drinking. A great loss of religious merit occurs when one fails to repay a favor. One’s material interests are harmed when one loses a virtuous friend. A friend is one who is dedicated to truth and righteousness and who is foremost at advancing the interests of his friend. Both of these have been abandoned by your husband, for he is not steadfast in the execution of duty. Being knowledgeable about the nature of duty, please tell Us what We should do in the present circumstances in order to achieve the great task lying before Us.”

After hearing Lakṣmaṇa's words, which were conducive to righteousness, material gain and mental concentration, and which revealed His sweet nature, Tārā replied to Him in a way which showed her faith in Rāma's goal: "This is not the time for anger, O prince, nor should anger be shown to a friend. You should tolerate the negligence of Sugrīva since he does wish to help You achieve Your goal. How can one who is exceedingly virtuous vent his anger against someone weaker, O prince? How could a person like You give in to anger when You are always self-controlled and a well-spring of sobriety? I know the reason for the anger of Rāma, the friend of the monkey warriors. I know the reason for the delay in realizing Rāma's mission. I know the deed done by You on our behalf and I know what we have to do in this connection. I also know how strong the desire for sense enjoyment is among those who have material bodies. I also know to whom this attachment is fastened by the fetters of lust and how Sugrīva is now completely detached. Because You are under the sway of anger, You do not understand someone under the control of lust. A man attached to the fulfillment of lust does not give any more importance to time and place than he does to his own material gain and religious merit. Therefore, please pardon Your brother Sugrīva, the lord of the monkey dynasty, for he was engaged in fulfilling his own lust while at my side and has abandoned all shame in the attempt to satisfy his lustiness. Even great sages who were charismatic because of their practice of religiosity and austerity and their ability to inhibit their urges have lusty desires. Therefore, how is it possible that this monkey, being fickle and a king, would not become attached to material happiness?"

After having made this meaningful reply to Lakṣmaṇa, Tārā once more spoke words that were for the benefit of her husband: "For a long time Sugrīva has cherished the idea of undertaking Your quest, O best of men, even though he is a slave to lust. For that reason, hundreds of thousands of valorous monkeys residing in the mountains and who are capable of assuming any form at will have arrived here. Therefore, come inside our chambers, O strong-armed one, who have been guarding Your character by staying respectfully outside the women's quarters. The pious do not consider it wrong to glance on others' wife with a friendly eye."

Being invited by Tārā and being in a hurry because of His brother's command, the physically powerful Lakṣmaṇa entered into the palace. Thereafter He saw Sugrīva seated on a most excellent throne plated with gold and covered with very costly upholstery. The glorious Sugrīva was as brilliant as the sun. The limbs of his body were adorned with dazzling ornaments and garlands and so he resembled a divine being. He looked as invincible as Lord Indra. He was surrounded by beautiful ladies adorned with sparkling jewelry and garlands. Seeing this, Lakṣmaṇa's eyes became red with intense anger, like death personified. Sitting on his magnificent throne while embracing his wife Rumā, the large-eyed and golden-colored Sugrīva stared at Lakṣmaṇa, who was not short of strength.

## LAKṢMAṆA ADMONISHES SUGRĪVA

When Sugrīva saw that Lakṣmaṇa had entered the palace without resistance, his senses became disturbed. Seeing that Lakṣmaṇa was breathing heavily and glowing like a fire on account of his vexation over His brother's difficulty, that best of monkeys jumped off of his golden throne, like Lord Indra's finely adorned flag being thrust suddenly in the air. As Sugrīva had jumped, so did Rumā and the other women, like stars accompanying the full moon. His eyes reddish due to intoxication, Sugrīva approached with folded hands Lakṣmaṇa, who was standing there like a tall kalpa-vṛkṣa tree. Then Lakṣmaṇa angrily said to Sugrīva, who was standing next to Rumā in the midst of Tārā and the other women, like the moon surrounded by stars:

“A king who is endowed with piety and good lineage, who is compassionate and has his senses under control, and who is thankful and truthful is honored in this world. On the other hand, what king, being situated in unrighteousness, is more hard-hearted than he who makes false promises to those who have rendered him some service? By falsely promising to gift a horse one commits the sin of killing one thousand horses, by falsely promising to gift a cow one commits the sin of killing one thousand cows, while by falsely promising to help a person one destroys himself and all his people. One who after fulfilling his purposes does not repay his debt to his friends is ungrateful and deserves to be killed by all living beings, O lord of the monkeys! The following verse venerated by all men was spoken by Lord Brahmā when he became angry upon seeing an ungrateful person: “Expiations have been prescribed for one who kills a brāhmaṇa, one who drinks liquor, one who commits theft and one who violates a sacred vow, but not for one who is ungrateful.”

You are ignoble, ungrateful and a liar, O monkey, for after promising to assist Lord Rāma, you are neglecting to do so. Surely, having achieved your own goals by Rāma's help, you should make an effort on His behalf, initiating the search for Sītā. Instead you are attached to crass sense

enjoyment and untrue to your promise. Rāma does not consider you a snake croaking like a frog. Although sinful and wicked-minded, you were able to achieve sovereignty over the monkeys by the assistance of the highly blessed Rāma, who feels compassion for others. When you are pierced by Rāma's sharp arrows, you will soon see Vālī, if you fail to recognize the favor done for you by Rāma. The path which Vālī traversed when killed has not been closed. Honor your agreement, O Sugrīva. Do not follow Vālī's path! Obviously you do not see the arrows like thunderbolts shot from the bow of Lord Rāma, the descendant of Ikṣvāku. Therefore, you are complacently enjoying yourself without thinking of Rāma's mission."

## TĀRĀ PACIFIES LAKṢMAṆA

Tārā, who was as effulgence as the moon, then spoke to Lakṣmaṇa, who was burning with rage: “O Lakṣmaṇa, You should not talk like that! Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, does not deserve to hear such harsh words sprung from Your mouth. Sugrīva is not ungrateful, neither is he a cheater, a rogue, a liar or a deceiver. Nor has he forgotten the favor rendered to him by Rāma, which was difficult for others to achieve on the battlefield. By Rāma’s mercy, Sugrīva achieved perpetual glory and sovereignty over the monkeys, as well as Rumā and myself, O conqueror of enemies. After previously having slept miserably for so long, upon achieving such utter happiness, he was unaware of the time, as also once happened to the sage Viśvāmitra. While he was attached to the celestial damsel Ghṛtācī, ten years seemed no more than a day to the great sage Viśvāmitra. Although he was always very keen about the time, under those circumstances he did not notice how time was passing him by. What then to speak of an ordinary person?

“You should forgive Sugrīva, who is subject to the four bodily propensities—eating, sleeping, mating and defending. He is thoroughly exhausted and unsatisfied in the matter of fulfilling his lusty desires. O Lakṣmaṇa, a man with a nature like Yours should not allow himself to suddenly fall prey to anger without due deliberation. I placate You on behalf of Sugrīva, O knower of what is right. You should abandon this tremendous anger which has arisen in You. In my opinion, Sugrīva could abandon Rumā, myself, sovereignty over the monkeys, his wealth, stock of food grains and cows for the pleasure of Rāma. After slaying the demon Rāvaṇa in battle, Sugrīva will reunite Rāma and Sītā, just like the moon with the star rohiṇī. They say there are hundreds of thousands and even millions of rākṣasas in Laṅkā. Without first killing those rākṣasas, who are difficult to defeat and who can assume any form at will, it is not possible to kill Rāvaṇa, who has abducted Sītā. They and Rāvaṇa cannot be slain by anyone unaided, especially not by Sugrīva.

“This at any rate is what the great monkey chieftain Vālī had said, for he was exceptionally wise. How he achieved such power, I do not know. I am only saying what I have heard. To assist You, messengers have been sent to muster strong monkeys who are outstanding in battle. Because he is waiting for the arrival of those mighty warriors, Sugrīva has not embarked on the expedition to achieve Rāma’s goal. O Lakṣmaṇa, today is the time limit set by Sugrīva for their arrival. Today You will meet hundreds of thousands of stalwart monkeys, bears and long-tailed baboons. Since they will be arriving here soon, please give up Your anger. When they see Your eyes red with anger, the monkey women cannot find any peace, fearing a repeat of the previous slaughter of Vālī.”



## SUGRĪVA BEGS LAKṢMAṆA FOR FORGIVENESS

After Tārā had spoken in such a polite manner, Lakṣmaṇa, who was by nature gentle, accepted her request. When this occurred, Sugriva abandoned his fear of Lakṣmaṇa, as one would abandon wet clothes after bathing. Then Sugrīva tore the beautiful, many-colored garland from his neck and was free from vanity. Sugrīva, the best of the monkeys, humbly spoke to the formidable Lakṣmaṇa the following gladdening words: “O Lakṣmaṇa, the son of Sumitrā, my lost wealth, glory and sovereignty over the monkeys was recovered in perpetuity by the mercy of Lord Rāma. Who is that god who can repay even a tiny portion of the service rendered by Rāma, who is known by His own deeds? With me as His assistant, the righteous Rāma will regain His consort Sītā and slay the demon Rāvaṇa by dint of His own might. What need does Rāma have of an assistant when with a single arrow He pierced seven huge trees, the mountain on which they stood and the earth itself? Of what use is an assistant to Him, O Lakṣmaṇa, when the twang of His bowstring caused the earth with its mountains to shake? I shall follow Rāma’s expedition when He sallies forth with the troops to slay His enemy Rāvaṇa. If I, Your servant, have committed any infraction out of confidence or love, please pardon me. There is no servant who does not commit some error.”

While the great soul Sugrīva was speaking in this way, Lakṣmaṇa became very pleased with him and lovingly replied as follows: “My brother is very fortunate to have you as His lord, especially since you are so humble, O ruler of the monkeys! On account of your dignity and purity, you deserve to enjoy the unequalled opulence of a simian dominion. With you as His assistant, the valorous Rāma will undoubtedly slay His enemies in battle before long. Since you are acquainted with the principles of righteousness, are grateful for Rāma’s help and never retreat from battle, your remarks are just and reasonable. What person aware of his own faults could speak so

depreciatively of himself besides My elder brother and yourself, even though you are competent in many affairs. You are equal to Rāma in prowess and strength and have been designated by the gods as His assistant for a long time to come, O best of monkeys! But, immediately leave this place with Me, O warrior, and reassure your friend Rāma, who is suffering due to the abduction of Sītā. And forgive Me, My friend, for the harsh words which I spoke when relating Rāma's message."

## MONKEY WARRIORS ASSEMBLE AT KIṢKINDHĀ

On hearing what the great soul Lakṣmaṇa said, Sugrīva gave the following instruction to his counselor Hanumān, who was standing at his side: “Quickly bring by gift, persuasion or whatever means the mighty monkeys who reside on these mountain peaks—Mahendra, Himālaya, Vindhya, Kailāsa and Mandara, as well as those that always dwell on the mountains on the other side of the ocean in the west which are as effulgent as the newly risen sun. Also summon those monkeys who reside on those mountains which are the abode of the sun and as effulgent as the sunrise, the formidable monkeys who reside in the forest of Padma Mountain, as well as those monkeys residing on Añjana Mountain who are as dark as eye-liner or storm clouds and as powerful as elephants, the monkeys who are as effulgent as gold residing in the caves of Mount Mahāśaila, those living on the slopes of Mount Meru, those who reside on Dhūmra Mountain, the monkeys residing on Mahāruṇa Mountain who are the color of the rising sun, drinking mead and moving about furiously, as well as the monkeys who reside all about in exceedingly charming forests that are vast and fragrant, having hermitages of sages in their regions.”

When Hanumān, the son of the wind god, heard this command from Sugrīva, he sent monkey messengers in all directions. By the king’s command, the monkeys immediately leapt into the sky which was covered with one step by Lord Viṣṇu, traversing the course of the birds and luminaries. They caused all the monkeys living along the oceans, in the mountains, in the forests and along the rivers and lakes to mobilize for Rāma’s purpose. When they heard the command of the king of kings, Sugrīva, who was like death personified, they all came out of fear of him. In this way, thirty million very strong monkeys the color of eye-liner came from Añjana Mountain to where Rāma was. One hundred million monkeys as effulgent as molten gold came from the mountains where the sun sets. One billion monkeys the color of a lion’s mane came from Mount Kailāsa. Ten

billion monkeys living on fruits and roots came from the Himālaya Mountains. Billions of monkeys fearsome like Mars itself came hastily from the Vindhya Mountains. It was impossible to ascertain the number of monkeys who came from the Ocean of Milk, from the forest of Tamālavana where they live on coconuts, or those who came from the forests, caves and river banks. As those legions of monkeys arrived, they blocked out the sun.

Those valiant monkeys who were sent to muster the simian troops saw in the Himālaya Mountains a huge tree. At that spot in the mountains a nice sacrifice agreeable to all the gods was executed in the past in order to propitiate Lord Śiva. They also saw roots and fruits that were as tasty as the nectar of immortality and which had sprung up from the grains and milk offered in that sacrifice. Whoever eats the celestial fruits sprung from the remnants of that sacrifice will be satisfied for one month. Since they live on fruits, those stalwart monkeys gathered those celestial fruits and roots, as well as herbs too. From that sacrificial arena they also brought fragrant flowers for the pleasure of Sugrīva.

Those messengers rallied all the monkeys on the earth and quickly returned at the head of the multitudes. Within one hour those swift-moving monkeys reached Kiṣkindhā where Sugrīva was. Presenting all the roots, fruits and herbs, they requested Sugrīva to accept them with the following words: “By your command, all the monkeys on the mountains, lakes, rivers and forests of the world are arriving.” Hearing this, Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, felt pleased and accept their gifts affectionately.

## SUGRIVA GOES TO PLACATE RĀMA

After accepting all those gifts and speaking with them kindly, Sugrīva dismissed those messengers. After sending away those thousands of messengers who had performed their duty, Sugrīva felt as if he and Rāma had already achieved their goal. Then Lakṣmaṇa said to that foremost monkey of frightful strength, giving Sugrīva great joy: “Come out of Kiṣkindhā, if you so please, O gentle one!” Very pleased to hear Lakṣmaṇa’s suggestion, Sugrīva replied: “So be it! Let us go out. I must obey Your command.” When Sugrīva finished speaking in this way to Lakṣmaṇa, he sent away Tārā and the other ladies. Then he called out loudly to some strong-bodied monkeys who were permitted to be within the ladies’ quarters: “Come here!” Upon hearing his words, they immediately came to him with folded palms. Shining like the sun, Sugrīva said to them: “Bring my palanquin here this very minute!” On his order, the quick-striding monkeys promptly brought the fine-looking palanquin. When Sugrīva saw that it was ready, he said to Lakṣmaṇa: “Please sit on it at once, O Lakṣmaṇa.” Saying this, Sugrīva and Lakṣmaṇa got onto the gold palanquin which was being carried by a group of monkeys.

A white parasol was being carried over Sugrīva’s head and monkeys were standing around him waving white yak-tail wisks. Some monkeys were blowing conchshells and beating drums, while others sang songs in praise of Sugrīva. Thus did he travel in splendor for the first time since he had achieved his royal fortune. Surrounded by hundreds of fierce monkeys bearing weapons in their hands, he proceeded to where Rāma was. When he reached the magnificent place where Rāma was residing, Sugrīva got down from the palanquin with Lakṣmaṇa and stood with joined palms. When Rāma saw the vast army of monkeys standing with folded hands and resembling lotus buds in a lake, He became very pleased with Sugrīva. Then Sugrīva threw himself on the ground before Rāma, touching his head to Rāma’s feet, after which Rāma lifted him up. Rāma embraced him out of

affection and high regards. Doing this, Rāma said to him: “Please sit down.” Seeing that he was sitting on the ground, Rāma said:

“A king always strives for religious merit, material amelioration and sense enjoyment at the appropriate times, O best of the monkeys. However, one who pursues sense enjoyment while ignoring religious merit and material amelioration will wake up when he falls, like one who sleeps in the top of a tree. A king who engages himself in slaying his enemies and in winning friends is blessed with religious merit. Indeed, he enjoys the fruit of religious merit, material amelioration and sense enjoyment. The time for endeavor has now arrived, O conqueror of foes! Therefore, O lord of monkeys, think about how to proceed in consultation with your ministers.”

When Rāma finished speaking in this way, Sugrīva replied: “My lost wealth, glory and sovereignty over the monkeys was recovered in perpetuity by Your mercy, O strong-armed one. I have achieved all this by the grace of You and Your brother. One who does not return a favor is the vilest of men. These hundreds of mighty monkeys have come here after summoning all the monkey hordes of the earth. On their way are bears, monkeys and long-tailed baboons of fearsome appearance who possess intimate knowledge of the forest, as well as monkeys capable of assuming any form who were born from gods and gandharvas. They are followed by hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, millions, tens of millions, billions, tens of billions, trillions, and even more. Soon will arrive the monkeys who reside on Mount Meru and in the Vindhya Mountains and who are equal to Lord Indra. They are coming to You in order to fight the rākṣasas. After killing Rāvaṇa, they will surely bring back Sītā.”

When Rāma saw the endeavor Sugrīva was making under His command, He looked like a blossoming blue lotus flower because of joy.

## ARRIVAL OF THE MONKEY HORDES

While Sugrīva was yet speaking in this way with folded hands, Rāma embraced him tightly and said: “It is not at all surprising that Indra showers down rain, that the sun with its thousands of rays clears the sky of darkness, that the moon by its brilliance illuminates the night, or that a person like you pleases his friends, O conqueror of enemies. It is not at all surprising that this beautiful quality exists in you. I know that you always speak in a pleasing manner. With you as my helper I shall be able to conquer all My enemies in battle. You indeed are a well-wisher and friend capable of assisting Me. For his own destruction that lowest of rākṣasas Rāvaṇa kidnapped Sītā by deceiving Her, just as Anuhlāda kidnapped Śacī, the daughter of the demon Paulomā. In a short time I shall kill Rāvaṇa with My sharp arrows, as Indra slew Paulomā for connivance in the abduction of Śacī.”

Meanwhile, there arose a great cloud of dust blocking the burning heat of the sun. All the directions were obscured and covered by the darkness and the whole earth with its mountains, forests and groves shook. Then the whole earth became covered with innumerable exceedingly strong monkeys who resembled big mountains and who had very sharp teeth. In the twinkling of an eye the area was covered with millions of monkey chiefs who were able to assume any form at will. These formidable monkeys came from the banks of rivers, the slopes of mountains, the shores of oceans and forests, and were roaring like thundering clouds. Some were the color of the rising sun, others yellowish like the moon, others were the color of the filaments of a lotus flower and others were white from living on the icy peaks of the Himālaya Mountains.

First there appeared the valiant and glorious monkey named Śatabali, who was followed by millions of monkeys. Then came Suṣeṇa, who looked like a golden mountain and who was the powerful father of Tārā. He was followed by many millions of monkeys. After that arrived Tārā, the

father of Rumā and father-in-law of Sugrīva, followed by millions of monkeys. Then arrived the wise and foremost of monkeys, Kesarī, the glorious father of Hanumān, followed by hundreds of thousands of monkeys. He was the color of the filaments of a lotus flower and was as effulgent as the newly risen sun. The fiercesome Gavākṣa, the king of the long-tail baboons, arrived surrounded by one billion followers. Accompanied by two billion bears of frightening speed came Dhūmra, the destroyer of enemies. Surrounded by fearsome monkeys numbering thirty million came the general named Panasa. Next appeared the general Nīla followed by one hundred million monkeys. He had a gigantic body and looked like a big pile of black antimony. Then arrived Gavaya, who shone like a mountain of gold and who was surrounded by fifty million. Then came the mighty general Darīmukha, who stood in the presence of Sugrīva with one billion followers. Mainda and Dvidida, both sons of the Aśvinī-kumāras also arrived, each followed by one billion monkeys.

Followed by thirty million monkeys, the mighty Gaja, who possessed great strength, also came before Sugrīva. The king of bears, Jāmbavān, who possessed tremendous vigor, also presented himself submissively before Sugrīva, followed by one hundred million bears. The mighty Rumaṇvān came quickly, surrounded by hundreds of millions of valiant monkeys. Next came Gandhamādana followed by one billion monkeys. Then came Aṅgada, the prince regent, who was equal to his father Vālī in prowess, accompanied by many billions of monkeys. Then was seen Tāra as bright as a star followed by fifty million monkeys of formidable deeds. The general Indrajānu could also be seen with his one hundred and ten million monkeys. Then arrived Rambha, as brilliant as the rising sun, surrounded by eleven thousand and one hundred monkeys. Next came the valiant and mighty general named Durmukha, followed by twenty million monkeys. Hanumān also appeared, surrounded by one billion undefeatable monkeys who looked like the many peaks of Mount Kailāsa. The valorous Nala also arrived there followed by one billion one hundred thousand monkeys that dwelt in trees. Then Dadimukha arrived before Sugrīva, followed by one hundred million monkeys.

The generals Śarabha, Kumuda, Vahni Rāmha and many others whose numbers could not be calculated arrived there, covering the earth



with its mountains and forests. Jumping from one tree to another and from branch to branch and growling, the monkeys surrounded Sugrīva as clouds surround the sun. All the generals presented themselves to Sugrīva by announcing themselves with many words and bowed heads. After approaching Sugrīva and following the required etiquette, those foremost monkeys would depart, while others that had just met with Sugrīva stood by with joined palms. Having informed Lord Rāma about the arrival of all the generals who were in a hurry to settle down and take rest, Sugrīva stood with joined hands before Rāma and said the following to the monkey generals: “After stationing your forces conveniently near mountain streams and in forest groves, each general should be able to determine the exact number of his troops.”

## SUGRĪVA SENDS VINATA TO THE EAST

Then Sugrīva, the king of the monkeys, whose wealth had increased considerably, said the following to Rāma, the tiger among men who was the crusher of hostile armies: “These powerful generals as effulgent as Indra who reside within my dominion have arrived and are now properly accommodated. The generals, being fearsome and resembling daityas and dānavas, have arrived followed by their very powerful soldiers who are capable of tremendous deeds. These mighty monkey generals are well-known for their exploits and have conquered fatigue. They are well-known for their valor in battle and are outstanding in their ventures. These monkeys, O Rāma, can move over land and water. Residing on different mountains, they number many millions and are all your servants. They are all at Your beck and call and are engaged in the welfare of their master. They are capable of carrying out Your wishes. These generals have arrived with many thousands of troops capable of fierce heroism. Just say whatever You consider opportune. You should order this army which is obedient to Your command. Even though we know what it is we must do, You should give us proper orders.”

Embracing Sugrīva tightly, Śrī Rāma said: “Let it be ascertained whether Sītā is alive or not and the land where Rāvaṇa resides, O greatest of the wise. When you have located the place where Sītā and Rāvaṇa are, I shall do what is expedient. Neither I nor Lakṣmaṇa are capable of doing anything until then. Only you are capable of doing so, O king of the monkeys. Having already understood My mission, You should give the necessary orders. You indeed know what My goal is, O warrior. Of this there is no doubt. You are My second well-wisher, Lakṣmaṇa being the first. You are courageous, wise and know when to do a particular thing. Intent on Our welfare, you have completely achieved your own goals and are the most knowledgeable about My goals.”

Upon receiving this instruction, Sugrīva spoken to the general Vinata in the presence of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa: “You possess wisdom about the time and place for action and are expert in determining your duty. Followed by one hundred thousand monkeys, explore the eastern direction with its mountains, forest and groves. There search for Sītā and the residence of Rāvaṇa in the mountain heights, in forests and along river banks. You should search in all those regions where flows the Ganges, the Sarayu, the Kauśikī, the lovely Yamunā and its source, the Sarasvatī, the Sindhu, the Śoṇa whose waters sparkle like a gem, the Mahi and Kālamahī graced with mountains and forests. Also scour the regions known as Brahmanālā, Videha, Mālava, Kāśī, Kosala Magadha, Puṇḍra, Aṅga, as well as the land of silkworms and the land where silver mines abound. All these places should be searched while looking for Sītā, the beloved consort of Rāma and daughter-in-law of King Daśaratha.

“You should explore the towns built on mountains bordered by the sea, whatever villages are on Mount Mandara, as well as all the places where dwell those who have large ears, those whose ears reach their lips, those whose faces are awfully black like iron, those who are swift-moving one-legged ghosts, those who are powerful nomads, those who are cannibals, those who are handsome kirātas with a golden complexion and tufts of sharp hair on their heads, those who are kirātas subsisting on raw fish who reside on islands and cross the waters by boat. O forest dwellers, you should explore all those places that can be reached by crossing mountains and by leaping over them, as well as those places which are accessible by boat. Full of enthusiasm, you should search Yavadvīpa with its seven kingdoms, and also the islands with gold and silver mines. Beyond Yavadvīpa lies a mountain named Śīśira which is inhabited by gods and demons and which kisses the sky with its summit. All together search for the glorious Rāma’s consort in the mountain heights and forests and near the waterfalls of those islands.

“Then, crossing the ocean to the region inhabited by siddhas and carāṇas and reaching the Śoṇa River whose waters are reddish, search for Sītā and Rāvaṇa at all its bathing places and in the forests along its banks. You should explore streams hemmed in by numerous scary gardens and which flow from mountain peaks, as well as mountain caves and forests. Then you should explore the grim group of islands known as Ikṣudvīpa, as

well as the roaring ocean surrounding it that is tossed by the wind. The hunger-stricken, huge-bodied demons there, when duly permitted by Lord Brahmā, regularly capture ocean birds by their shadows. Use mantras to cross that roaring ocean which resembles a dark cloud and is infested with big serpents. Then, upon reaching the Red Sea, you will see the giant kūṭaśālmali tree on the island known as Śālmali. There you will see Garuḍa's home decorated with different kinds of jewels. It was constructed by Viśvakarmā and resembles Mount Kailāsa.

“On that island dwell gigantic, formidable rākṣasas of different forms known as mandehas. They are fearsome and hang upside down from the peaks of mountains. Those rākṣasas attack the rising sun each day, and being burned to death by its intense effulgence, fall head-long into the ocean, where they become revived and again hang from the peaks of mountains. Going further, you will reach that ocean which is as white as a cloud and is called Kṣīrodaka, the ocean of milk. Its waves seem to be adorned with necklaces of pearls. In the middle of that ocean is a huge white mountain called Rṣabha. It is covered with groves of blooming trees that emit a celestial fragrance. On that mountain is a lake called Sudarśana which is crowded with swans and shimmering silver lotus flowers with filaments of gold. The delighted gods, carāṇas, yakṣas, kinnaras, and bebies of celestial damsels resort to that lotus lake to enjoy themselves. Crossing the ocean of milk, you will soon see the ocean of fresh water. It is frightening for all living beings and in its depths rages a submarine fire known as Vadavāmukha. It is said that it was produced when the sage Aurva's anger fell into that ocean. The wonderful water full of moving and nonmoving beings which is thrashing about with impetuosity is the fuel for that fire. There can be heard the wailing of the creatures living in that ocean being burnt by the fire and as well as of those that are able to escape it.

“At a distance of thirteen yojanas from the northern shore of the ocean of fresh water is a very large mountain as brilliant as gold which is known by the name Jātarūpaśila. There you will also find seated in front of the mountain the thousand-headed snake named Ananta-śeṣa. He holds up the earth, is as effulgent as the moon, is clad in blue garments and has eyes as broad as the petals of a lotus flower. In front of that mountain is a golden three-boughed palmyra tree surrounded with a platform and which is the

ensign of Ananta-śeṣa. The gods consider this tree the boundary mark indicating the limit of the east. Beyond it lies the glorious mountain of gold from where the sun is supposed to rise. Touching the heavens with its golden peak reaching one hundred yojanas, it shines gloriously on its base. It looks very beautiful with its golden sāla, tamāla, palmyra and karṇikāra trees in bloom and shining like the sun.

“On that peak is another everlasting golden peak called Saumanasa which is one yojana long and ten yojanas high. In ancient times the Supreme Person Viṣṇu in His incarnation as Trivikrama placed His first step on that peak, and His second He placed on Mount Meru. The sun becomes more visible when, while passing Jambudvīpa from the north, it ascends Mount Meru. On that mountain great sages called vālakhilyas practice austerities. They are seen to glow, being as bright as the sun. In front of this eastern mountain is an island called Sudarśana. All living beings get sight and life from the light reflected off of it. You should search for Rāvaṇa and Sītā everywhere on the peaks, caves and forests of that mountain. Illuminated by the brilliance of both Mount Meru and the magnanimous sun, the eastern direction appears reddish at sunrise and sunset.

“This eastern mountain where the sun rises was made at the beginning of the creation as a door for those leaving this world and for those coming down. Therefore it is called the first or eastern direction. You should thoroughly search for Rāvaṇa and Sītā on that mountain’s peaks, cascades and caves. Past that mountain, the eastern direction is impenetrable, being inhabited only by its presiding deity, Indra. It receives no light from the sun or moon, but remains covered by darkness and is therefore invisible or unseeable. You should look for Sītā on the peaks of all the afore-mentioned mountains, on the banks of all the afore-mentioned rivers, and in all the afore-mentioned caves, as well as in all those regions that I have not mentioned. The monkeys may proceed up to there. We have no information about what lies beyond the eastern mountain, being as it is without sunlight and having no perceivable boundary. After reaching the eastern mountain, if you should find Sītā and also Rāvaṇa’s abode, return before one month. Do not stay longer than a month. Anyone doing so I shall punish with death. After finding Sītā and thus having achieved your goal, come back

immediately. When you have carefully scoured the eastern region dear to Lord Indra, found Sītā and returned here, you will be very happy.”

## SUGRĪVA SENDS HANUMĀN, NĪLA & AṄGADA TO THE SOUTH

After sending that mighty army of monkeys to the east, Sugrīva sent very experienced monkeys to the south. For that expedition the courageous Sugrīva commissioned heroes endowed with speed and prowess headed by Aṅgada. They were Nīla, son of the fire god Agni, Hanumān, son of the wind god, the exceptionally powerful Jāmbavān, son of Lord Brahmā, as also Suhotra, Śārārī, Śaragulma, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Suṣeṇa, Vṛṣabha, Mainda, Dvividā, another Suṣeṇa, Gandhamādana and the two sons of Anaṅga—Ulkāmukha and Hutāśana. After designating the extremely energetic Aṅgada as their leader, Sugrīva assigned them the southern region to explore. He told them about those places that were difficult to access in that region:

“Explore the Vindhya Mountains which have thousands of peaks. They are covered with all kinds of trees and vines. There flows the pleasant Narmadā River which is infested with big snakes. Then search along the lovely Godāvarī River, the wide Kṛṣṇaveṇī River and the highly fortunate Varadā River infested with big snakes. Search the territories known as Mekhala, Utkala and also the cities of Daśārṇa, ābravantī and Avanti. Completely search the territories of Vidarbha, Rṣṭika, Māhiṣaka, Vaṅga, Kalinga, Kauśika, the entire region of Daṇḍakāraṇya, as also the territories of Andhra, Puṇḍra, Cola, Pāṇḍya and Kerala. You should also go to the Ayomukha Mountains of Malaya. Their lovely peaks consist of various minerals and are covered with flowering forests. You should thoroughly search those extensive mountains which are covered with beautiful groves of sandalwood trees. Then you will see that blessed and divine Kāverī River which is frequented by heavenly damsels.

“Seated in front of the Malaya mountain range you will find the foremost of sages Agastya, shining like the sun. When allowed by that great soul, you will cross the great Tāmraparṇī River, which is infested with

alligators. With its islands and waters covered with sandalwood trees, it goes to the ocean, as a young lady approaches her lover. Passing that place, you will see the wonderful golden gate inlaid with pearls and gems of the city of the Pāṇḍyas. Upon reaching the ocean, you may decide what to do next. Agastya established the splendid Mount Mahendra made of gold and crowned with lovely peaks and trees between the moat of the city of the Pāṇḍyas and the ocean, into which the mountain enters.

“The thousand-eyed Indra visits that mountain on every fifteenth day of the dark fortnight. It is adorned with every kind of flowering tree and creeper, and is visited by the foremost of the gods, ṛṣis and yakṣas. Celestial damsels, siddhas and caraṇas throng there. On the other side of the ocean is a resplendent island measuring a distance of one hundred yojanas. It is impenetrable to human beings. Search it thoroughly. You should especially look for Sītā there with all your mind. That land is undoubtedly the abode of the evil-minded Rāvaṇa, the lord of the rākṣasas, whose vigor is equal to Indra and who deserves to be killed. In the midst of the southern ocean lives a rākṣasī known as Aṅgārikā. She captures her prey by seizing their shadow as they fly in the air. Meticulously searching all those places to remove any doubts about them, locate the whereabouts of Rāma’s consort Sītā.

“Going one hundred yojanas into the ocean to the island of Laṅkā and passing it shines a glorious mountain named Puṣpitaka. It is inhabited by siddhas and caraṇas. It is as bright as the rays of the sun and moon, and is partly submerged in the ocean, its summit apparently scratching the vault of heaven. It has a golden peak upon which the sun rests, and a silver one upon which the moon rests. Neither the ungrateful, hard-hearted nor unbelieving can see it. Respectfully bow your heads before that mountain and then assiduously carry on your search for Sītā. O monkeys, beyond that mountain is the mountain known as Sūryavān at a distance of one hundred and one and a half yojanas from Puṣpitaka Mountain on a path which is difficult to tread. Passing beyond it, you will reach Vaidyuta Mountain. It is covered with trees very pleasing to the mind which are capable of fulfilling all one’s desires. After enjoying the first-class fruits, roots and honey available there, go further. There you will find the mountain called Kuñjara, which delights the eyes and mind. On it is a dwelling of the sage Agastya which was built



for him by the heavenly architect Viśvakarmā. It is one yojana long and eighty yojanas tall, and is adorned with gold and various kinds of gems.

“On that mountain is a city called Bhogavatī, the home of serpents. It has broad avenues, is difficult to assail, is well-fortified and protected on all sides by highly poisonous snakes with sharp fangs. The awe-inspiring king of snakes Vāsuki lives in that city. After entering it, search it carefully. You should explore whatever places there are nearby the city or those hidden from view. Past that region there is a great and glorious mountain called Ṛṣabha. Its shape resembles a bull and it contains many jewels. On it grow various species of heavenly sandalwood trees, such as gośīrṣaka, padmaka, hariśyāma and agnisamaprabha. When you see them, however, you should not touch them at all.

“That forest is protected by a species of gandharvas called rohita. They have five leaders who are as effulgent as the sun. Their names are Śailūṣa, Grāmaṇī, Śikṣā, Śukha and Babhru. They are engaged in the performance of pious activities and they enjoy their bodies which are lustrous like the sun, moon or fire. Those who have gained the right to ascend to heaven and are unasailable live there. Do not go beyond that region, for that is Pitṛloka, the fearful abode of the forefathers. In that region is found the capital of Yama, the lord of death. It is covered by darkness that causes great discomfort. You will only be able to explore this far, O best of monkey warriors. Moving beings are unable to go beyond this region. Thoroughly searching that area and whatever else can be seen, after discovering the whereabouts of Sītā, come back here. He who returns in less than a month with the news that he has located Sītā will enjoy material pleasures equal to mine. There will be no one more dear to me than he. Indeed, he will be dearer to me than my own life. Even if he has committed many offences, I shall consider him my friend. You all have immeasurable strength and prowess and were born in very qualified families. Commence that endeavor which will result in the retrieval of Sītā.”

## SUGRĪVA SENDS SUṢEṆA AND OTHERS TO THE WEST

After sending the aforesaid monkeys to the south, Sugrīva joined his palms together, bowed his head and spoke the following words to the mighty general Suṣeṇa, the father of Tārā, and therefore his own father-in-law. Sugrīva also addressed the great monkey Arciṣmān, the son of the great sage Mārīca, who was surrounded by valiant warriors. He was as radiant as Lord Indra, was endowed with intelligence and prowess and was equal to Garuḍa in brilliance. Sugrīva also addressed the exceedingly capable monkeys known as Arcirmālyas and the sons of Marīci known as Mārīcas, as well as those who were the sons of great sages. All these he instructed to search the western direction:

“Accompanied by two hundred thousand monkeys and being led by Suṣeṇa, go and search carefully for Sītā. Search the region of Saurāṣṭra, Bāhlikā, the territory of the Śurasenas, as well as the prosperous districts and extensive settlements. Search the region of Kuṅṣi which is thick with punnāga trees, bakula trees, uddalaka trees as well as thickets of ketaka bushes. Explore the auspicious rivers flowing toward the west which carry cool waters, as well as the hermitages of ascetics, whatever mountains there are and the uncultivated lands consisting of many deserts and high, cold precipices.

“After searching throughout the western region covered with mountain ranges difficult to access, you should go further to the Arabian Sea whose waters are stirred up by timi fish. There you monkeys will enjoy yourselves in thickets of ketaka bushes, groves of tamāla trees and groves of coconut trees. Search for Sītā and for Rāvaṇa’s residence there, as well as on the hills and in the forests along the seashore. Also explore the cities called Muravī, Jaṭāpura, Avantī, Aṅgalepā, as well as the forest called Alakṣita, and the countries and large towns existing there. There is a mountain by the

name Somagiri covered with gigantic trees at the confluence of the Sindhu River and ocean. On the pleasant plateaus of that mountain dwell winged lions that carry gigantic timi fish, alligators and elephants to their nests. Having been carried to those nests on the mountain peaks which abound with water everywhere, the proud elephants roam around, bellowing like thundering clouds. The golden summit of Somagiri Mountain touches the heavens and is overspread with beautiful trees. You monkeys, being capable of assuming any form at will, should thoroughly investigate that mountain.

“When you reach that ocean (the Arabian Sea), you will also see the golden summit of Pāriyātra Mountain, which is one hundred yojanas high and difficult to see. On that mountain peak dwell two hundred and forty million gandharvas who are very swift, as brilliant as fire and capable of exhibiting any form they wish. Glowing like flames of fire when they gather together from all sides, you should not offend them even though they possess terrible prowess, nor should you pick any of the fruits growing in that region. For those gandharvas are difficult to approach, valiant, energetic, most powerful and fiercely intrepid, and they guard the fruits and roots found there. You should carefully look for Sītā in that area. As long as you act like normal monkeys you have no need to fear those gandharvas. In that locality is a big mountain called Vajra, which is as effulgent as a vaidurya gem, as hard as a diamond and covered with plenteous trees and vines. It is one hundred yojanas high from all sides. You should examine the caves of that mountain with great attention, O monkeys!”

“On one forth of the ocean stands the mountain known as Cakravān. Viśvakarmā, the architect of the gods, forged a cakra there. After killing the demons Hayagrīva and Pañcajana at that place, the Supreme Person Viṣṇu took the cakra away from Hayagrīva and the conchshell away from Pañcajana. You should search intently for Sītā in all the caves and lovely peaks of that mountain. In that fathomless ocean is a mountain called Varāha which has golden peaks and is five hundred and one and a half yojanas high. On that mountain is located the golden city of Prāgiyotiṣa. In that city dwells the wicked demon known as Naraka. You should search for Rāvaṇa and Sītā all over the lovely peaks and deep caves of that mountain. Going beyond that mountain in which veins of gold are clearly visible, there is an entire mountain of gold with ten thousand waterfalls. On that

mountain elephants, boars, lions and tigers are constantly roaring everywhere, exulting in the tumult they raise. On that mountain called Megha was the glorious Indra, subduer of the demon Pāka, crowned king by the gods. Going past that lord of mountains protected by Indra, you will reach a range of sixty thousand gold hills which is as effulgent as the newly risen sun and which is illuminated on all sides by brilliantly shining golden trees in bloom.

“In the middle of those hills stands Mount Meru, the foremost of mountains and their king as well. In ancient times the mount received a boon from Lord Indra after pleasing him. The sun god said the following: ‘By my mercy all those who take shelter of you by day or by night will become golden. Whether gods, gandharvas or demons reside on you, they will become my devotees and will be as effulgent as gold.’ Going to Mount Meru at sunset, the gods, viśvedevas, vasus and maruts worship the sun god, afterwhich he hides himself behind that western mountain, remaining unseen by all the living entities. In half an hour the sun quickly reaches that mountain at one thousand yojanas. On the summit of that mountain is a heavenly abode shining like the sun and consisting of numerous palaces constructed by Viśvakarmā. It is beautified with graceful trees and flocks of different kinds of birds. It is the abode of Varuṇa, who holds a noose in his hand. Between Mount Meru and the western mountain on a charming platform stands a brilliant golden tāla tree with ten boughs. You should meticulously search for Rāvaṇa and Sītā everywhere, including along all the lakes and rivers which are difficult to reach in that region.

“On Mount Meru dwells a sage known as Merusāvaṇṇi who is conversant with righteousness, is enlightened by his own austerities and is equal to Lord Brahmā. After bowing your heads down to the ground, you should query the sage for news about Sītā. Transcoursing the mortal world, at the fall of night the sun sets behind that mountain. You monkeys can only go that far. We do not know anything about what lies beyond that hinterland where the sun does not shine. If you manage to ascertain the whereabouts of Rāvaṇa and Sītā at the western mountain, return here within one month. Do not take longer than one month. I shall kill anyone who takes longer than a month to return. My valiant father-in-law will accompany you. You should listen to and obey all his instructions. My strong-armed father-in-law

possesses extraordinary power and is my superior. You monkeys are also courageous and fit to lead. Yet, I request you to accept him as your leader for searching the western region. We can only repay our debt to Lord Rāma for the service He has rendered us when we have found His consort. You should accomplish every other affair apart from this goal with due consideration for place, time and purpose.”

After carefully listening to Sugrīva’s instructions and bidding him farewell, all those monkeys headed by Suṣeṇa departed for the western region guarded by Varuṇa.

## SUGRĪVA SENDS ŚATABALI AND OTHERS TO THE NORTH

After dispatching his father-in-law to the western region, Sugrīva, the king of the monkeys, instructed Śatabali in a manner that was beneficial to himself and to Rāma: “Surrounded by hundreds and thousands of forest monkeys along with all your counselors who are like the sons of Yama, the lord of death, proceed into the northern region adorned with the snowy peaks of the Himālayas and search everywhere for the glorious consort of Rāma. When you have accomplished this and we have fulfilled the cherished mission of Lord Rāma, we will be freed from debt, O you who are skilled at achieving your goals. In fact, the great soul Rāma has done us a favor. If we are able to repay that act of kindness, our lives will be successful. One’s birth is considered successful if one helps a suppliant achieve what he requests, even if the suppliant has done nothing for that person. How much more so would it be if one helps him who has rendered some service in the past. Reaching this conclusion, you who desire to please us should do whatever is necessary to find Sītā. This Rāma standing here deserves the respect of all living beings, is the best of men and has cultivated affection toward us. With your abundant intelligence and prowess, search the many difficult to reach rivers and mountain ranges.

“Search the lands where live the Mlecchas, Pulindas, Śurasenas, Prasthalas, Bharatas, Kurus, Madras, Kāmbojas and Yavanas, and also the towns of the Śakas and the lands of the Daradas. Also explore the Himālaya Mountains. You should search all over for Rāvaṇa and Sītā in the groves of lodhra and padmaka trees and in the pine forests of the Himālayas. After visiting the sage Soma’s hermitage, which is frequently visited by gods and gandharvas, you will reach the tall peak of Mount Kāla. Scour the high precipices and deep mountain caves in search of Rāma’s consort. Passing the gigantic Mount Kāla which has substantial gold deposits, you should come to the mountain called Sudarśana. Past that is a mountain called Devasakha, which is the refuge of many birds. It is swarming with flocks of many

different species of birds and forested with many kinds of trees. Look for Rāvaṇa and Sītā everywhere in the forests, near waterfalls and in caves. Passing that mountain, you will reach a region measuring one hundred *yojanas* across which is devoid of mountains, rivers and trees and which is uninhabited by any living beings. Crossing that hair-raising region quickly, you will be pleased to reach the white Mount Kailāsa.

“There is located Kuvera’s lovely palace made from gold. It resembles a white cloud and was constructed by Viśvakarmā. It has a wide lake abounding in lotuses and waterlilies. It is crowded with swans and ruddy geese and frequented by bebies of heavenly damsels. Kuvera is the son of the sage Vaiśrava and king of the *yakṣas*. He is the one who bestows wealth and is honored by everyone. He enjoys himself there with the *yakṣas*. Search for Rāvaṇa and Sītā on the mountain peaks as bright as the moon, as well as in the caves thereabout. When you come to Krauñca Mountain, which is very difficult to approach, carefully enter its cave, for it is said to be quite impassable. Under the invitation of the gods, great-souled sages as effulgent as the sun and themselves resembling gods dwell in that cave. You should also explore the other caves, peaks, precipices, plateaus and slopes of Krauñca Mountain. Scour the treeless peak of Krauñca Mountain which is known as Mānasa. It is the abode of many birds and can fulfill all desires. Neither spirits, gods nor *rākṣasas* care to go there. You should comb Krauñca Mountain with its peaks, plateaus and prominences.

“Past Krauñca Mountain is a mountain called Maināka. On it is a palace made by the *dānava* Maya himself. You should likewise search Maināka Mountain with its peaks, plateaus and caverns. There you will find the abodes of *kinnara* women. Going beyond that region, you will arrive at a hermitage inhabited by perfected beings. There reside perfected ascetics of the *vaikhānasa* and *vāḷakhilya* orders. After properly respecting those great ascetics who have freed themselves from all sin, you should humbly solicit them for information about Sītā. Near there is a lake called *Vaikhānasa* which is filled with golden lotus flowers and resorted to by swans as brilliant as the newly risen sun. Kuvera’s riding elephant called *Sārvabhauma* always roams about that area with she-elephants. Beyond that lake is an expanse of sky devoid of sun, moon, stars and thundering clouds. That land is illuminated as if by the sunlight due to the effulgence of godly ascetics who

dwell there. Past that region is a river called Śailodā. On both its banks grow kīcakā bamboo whose dry stalks rattle when the wind blows through. When the bamboos become entangled, they permit the holy men to cross over the river and return.

“The land of the Uttara-kurus, where dwell those who have performed pious deeds, lies along that river. In that region are thousands of rivers. In those rivers the leaves of plants are blue-green like vaidurya gems. The rivers’ waters form pools wherein bloom golden lotuses. Lakes shimmering like the rising sun and covered with clumps of red lotuses beautify that land. All throughout that land are masses of blue lotuses whose petals resemble valuable jewels and whose filaments are as bright as gold. The rivers have sandy banks strewn with round pearls, precious gems and nuggets of gold. The rivers are hemmed in by fabulous mountains of all kinds of gems and gold and are as radiant as the sun. The trees that grow there always bear flowers and fruits and are crowded with birds. These have a heavenly aroma, taste and touch and can satisfy all one’s desires. Other trees produce many different kinds of adornments and clothes. The ornaments are encrusted with sparkling pearls and vaidurya gems. These are fit for both men and women to wear. Some trees bear highly desirable fruits that can be enjoyed during all the seasons, even winter. Some trees produce beds with blankets. Others produce fascinating flower garlands, or various kinds of costly drinks and eatables. Still others produce women endowed with beauty, youth and good qualities.

“Splendorous gandharvas, siddhas, nāgas and vidyādhara always enjoy there with their women. All of them have performed pious acts in previous lives. All of them are engaged in love-making. All of them live in comfort and luxury with their women. One always hears the sound of singing and instrumental music, as well as peals of laughter which pleases the minds of everyone. No one there is unhappy, nor inclined to evil. And one’s good qualities which gratify the mind increase day by day.

“Beyond the land of the Utara-kurus is the northern ocean. In the middle of it stands a large golden mountain called Somagiri. Those who have attained the heavenly planets such as Indraloka and Brahmaloka, as well as the gods themselves clearly see that kingly mountain. Although there is no sun in that region, it is illuminated by the effulgence of that mountain as if



by the sun itself. Thus you should understand that it is endowed with the sun's brightness. There resides the Supreme Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu, who is the all-pervading Supersoul, surrounded by Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and great sages. You should by no means venture north of the region of Uttara-kuru. Indeed, there is no way of going beyond it. It is said that Mount Somagiri is difficult to scale, even for gods. After sighting it, you should immediately come back. Monkeys can only go that far. We have no knowledge of that unbounded region without sun that lies beyond Uttara-kuru. You should search all those places described by me. You should also decide to search any other areas not mentioned by me. By discovering Sītā, you monkeys equal to the fire and wind gods will have accomplished a task most agreeable to Lord Rāma, and even more so to me. After that, I will honor you with all kinds of enjoyable gifts which you will enjoy with your relatives. You will then wander the earth with your dear ones without any fear of enemies, O best of monkeys!"

## RĀMA GIVES HIS SIGNET RING TO HANUMĀN

Because Sugrīva was sure that Hanumān would be successful in finding Sītā, he then specifically spoke in such a way as to further encourage Hanumān. Being extremely pleased with Hanumān, the son of the wind god, Sugrīva, the lord of the forest-dwelling monkeys, spoke as follows: “O best of monkeys, I see no obstruction to your movement on the ground, in the air, in space, in the world of the immortals, or in the waters. You know all the worlds inhabited by demons, gandharvas, nāgas, humans and gods. Your unobstructed movement, speed, energy and dexterity are like those of your father, the wind god, O great and heroic monkey. Neither is there any being in this world who is equal to you in vigor. As such you should ponder the means of finding Sītā. In you indeed abide strength, intelligence, prowess, good judgement and knowledge of time and place.”

From this statement Rāma could understand that the success of this mission depended on Hanumān, and so He began to think: “Sugrīva is completely convinced about Hanumān’s ability, and Hanumān too is certain about his own success in this matter. Having proven himself by his actions and been accepted by his lord, Hanumān’s efforts will be successful.”

Gazing at that monkey who was quite fit to accomplish the task, Rāma’s mind became joyful as if He had achieved His goal. Rāma happily gave Hanumān a ring with Rāma’s name on it as a token of recognition for Sītā. Then Rāma said: “By this token, O best of monkeys, Sītā, being undisturbed, will know that you have come from Me. Your resolution, your courageous heroism and Sugrīva’s statement indicate success to me.”

Taking the ring and touching it to his head, Hanumān then bowed down to Rāma’s feet with joined palms. Leading that great army of monkeys, Hanumān shone like the spotless orb of the moon beautified by a mass of stars in a cloudless sky. As Hanumān was leaving, Lord Rāma said: “I am

dependent on your strength, O mighty one. Exert yourself in such a way by your abundant prowess that Sītā, the daughter of King Janaka, may be found.”

## THE MONKEYS DEPART IN SEARCH OF SĪTĀ

Calling all the monkeys, Sugrīva spoke to them in a manner to accomplish Rāma's mission: "You should search all those places which I have assigned to you." Understanding their master's ominous command, the monkeys sallied forth, covering the earth like a swarm of locusts. Śrī Rāma returned to Mount Prasavaṇa where He would continue to live for a period of one month with Lakṣmaṇa until the discovery of Sītā. The valiant monkey Śatabali then suddenly sallied forth toward the northern direction bordered by the Himālaya Mountains. The monkey general Vinata marched toward the east. Accompanied by Tāra, Aṅgada and others, Hanumān headed toward the south where the sage Agastya resides. Furthermore, the monkey chieftain Suṣeṇa proceeded toward the fearful eastern direction that is guarded by Varuṇa. After sending the monkeys off in all directions accordingly, Sugrīva, the commander-in-chief of the monkey forces, enjoyed himself immensely.

When ordered by the king, all the monkey generals hastily marched to the direction assigned to them, shouting and howling, growling and snarling, roaring and running along. After receiving the king's instructions, the generals replied: "We shall slay Rāvaṇa and bring back Sītā." Different generals boastfully said: "I shall single-handedly kill Rāvaṇa on the battlefield, and forcibly bring back Sītā who is trembling due to Her difficulties. You should all wait here." "I shall single-handedly bring back Sītā even from the nether regions. I shall knock down trees. I shall spit open mountains and the earth, and churn the oceans." "I can jump at least one hundred yojanas across the ocean." "I can jump even more than one hundred yojanas." "No one can obstruct my movement on the earth's surface, in the ocean, on the mountains, in the forest, or in the nether region." Thus did the monkeys proud of their strength speak in this manner one by one in the presence of Sugrīva, their ruler.

## SUGRĪVA EXPLAINS HOW HE LEARNED GEOGRAPHY

When the monkey generals had departed with their troops, Rāma asked Sugrīva: “How is it that you are familiar with the entire earth disc?” Bowing low, Sugrīva replied: “Please listen. I shall narrate everything in detail. When Vālī was pursuing the demon Māyāvī toward the Malaya Mountain, the demon in the guise of a buffalo entered into a cave on the Malaya Mountain. Vālī also entered that cave in order to kill the demon. On Vālī’s instruction, I waited obediently at the entrance of the cave. Vālī did not come out of the cave, even after one year. Then the cave became filled with gushing blood. I then concluded that my elder brother had been killed. I placed a boulder the size of a mountain over the entrance of the cave so that the buffalo would not be able to come out and would thus perish.

“Having no hope for Vālī’s survival, I came back to Kiṣkindhā. Having obtained a vast kingdom along with the wives Tārā and Rumā, I lived there with my friends free from anxiety. Meanwhile, after slaying the buffalo demon, Vālī came back. I returned the kingdom to him out of respect, for I was afraid of his anger. Desiring to kill me, the wicked Vālī, who was mentally derranged, chased me as I ran with my ministers. Being pursued by Vālī, I ran quickly, seeing many different rivers, forests and towns. I saw the whole earth as clearly as a reflection in a mirror, everything passing me by like a wirling fire brand. Thus the world seemed no bigger than the hoofprint of a cow. When I reached the eastern region, I saw many different kinds of trees, as well as mountains, rivers and many different charming lakes. There I saw the eastern mountain containing deposits of minerals, as also the ocean of milk which is the constant abode of celestial damsels.

“Being pursued by Vālī, I hurriedly returned and headed for the southern region where lies the thickly forested Vindhya Mountains adorned with sandalwood trees. After seeing those mountains and trees I then left the southern region, heading elsewhere. Thus I reached the western region

while being chased by Vālī. Seeing those mountains and trees, I reached the western region. While being pursued by Vālī, I saw the different lands and the excellent mountain. When I reached that mountain, I raced toward the north. As I fled from Vālī, I could not find any shelter in the Himālayas, on Mount Meru, or at the northern ocean. Then Hanumān said to me: ‘I just now remembered how Vālī was cursed by the sage Mataṅga that if he ever entered his hermitage, his head would certainly burst into a hundred pieces. We could live there happily and without any fear.’ While I resided at R̥śyamūka Mountain, Vālī did not enter for fear of the sage Mataṅga’s curse. In that way, O king, I personally saw the whole earth disc, afterwhich I took up residence in a cave on R̥śyamūka Mountain.”

## THE MONKEYS FAIL TO FIND SĪTĀ

Receiving their orders from their king Sugrīva, the monkey generals at once departed with their troops for their assigned regions. They completely searched the lakes, bushes growing along rivers, open fields, towns, mountains and also areas impenetrable because of rivers. Looking all day long for Sītā, the monkeys would gather together at a particular place at night. Traversing during the day the lands where trees bore fruits in all seasons and which could satisfy all one's desires, they took rest at night. Considering the day they departed as the first, the generals returned after one month to Mount Prasavaṇa with Sugrīva. While scouring the eastern region assigned to him, Vinata and his ministers failed to locate Sītā and returned. After searching the entire northern region, the great monkey Śatabali then returned with his forces. Exploring the western region with his monkeys, Suśeṇa returned to Sugrīva after one month had passed.

The generals approached Sugrīva, who was sitting with Lord Rāma on the slope of Mount Prasavaṇa, and said: "We have searched all the countries, mountains, forests, caves and rivers flowing into the sea. We have scoured all the caves mentioned by you, as well as bowers covered with vines. While exploring continents and rugged impassable terrain, we killed many gigantic creatures, suspecting that they might be Rāvaṇa. The great soul Hanumān, who is of noble lineage, will find Sītā. Fortunately he has gone in the same direction in which Sītā has gone."

## THE MONKEYS EXPLORE THE VINDHYA MOUNTAINS

Accompanied by Tāra and Aṅgada, Hanumān proceeded toward the southern region assigned to them by Sugrīva. After travelling a long way with all those generals and exploring the caves and thick forests of the Vindhya Mountains, Hanumān stopped. After searching through the mountain peaks, rivers, lakes, thick forests and inaccessible regions, those valiant monkeys failed to locate Sita, the daughter of King Janaka. The monkeys, who were difficult to overpower, stayed wherever they could and ate different kinds of roots and fruits while searching for Sītā. The region was riddled with caves, difficult to explore, arid, uninhabited, desolate and frightening.

After searching throughout all those regions, the thirsty monkey generals left and entered another fearful region difficult to attack. The trees there did not bear fruits, flowers or leaves. The rivers were dry and it was even difficult to unearth edible roots. There were no buffalos, deer, elephants, tigers, birds or any other kind of forest creatures. There were no trees, herbs, vines or creepers. There were no lotuses with smooth leaves, nor clusters of blooming lotus flowers, charming to see and swarming with honeybees.

There was a great sage named Kaṇḍu who was very fortunate, truthful and dedicated to the practice of austerities. The advanced sage was easily angered and difficult to overcome because of his austerities. In that forest the sage's sixteen year-old son's life expired, for which the sage became furious. By the curse of that righteous sage, that great forest became uninhabitable, impenetrable, and devoid of beasts and birds. After searching the forests, mountains, caves and flowing rivers, the monkeys who were trying to please Sugrīva were unable to locate Rāvaṇa or Sītā.

Upon entering that dreadful forest overgrown with vines and bushes, the monkeys saw a ferocious demon as big as a mountain and



unafraid even of the gods. Seeing how big he was, the monkeys tightened the sashes around their waists in preparation for combat. When the mighty demon saw all those monkeys, he said: “You are finished!” Becoming enraged, Aṅgada rushed toward the demon, who was swooping down with a raised fist to strike Aṅgada. Thinking him to be Rāvaṇa, Aṅgada struck him with the palm of his hand, so it is said. Being slain by Aṅgada, the demon vomited blood and fell on the ground like a mountain. After the demon had been killed, the monkeys shone triumphantly and they thoroughly searched all the mountain caves in that area. When they finished scouring the area, they entered inside another frightful mountain cave. After completing their search of that cave, they came out exhausted and sat at the foot of a tree, feeling disappointed.

## THE MONKEYS SEARCH THE SILVER MOUNTAIN

The wise Aṅgada, being exhausted, then slowly spoke the following words to the monkeys: “Together we have searched forests, mountains, rivers, caves, pits and impenetrable regions, yet we have not found Sītā, the daughter of King Janaka, nor Her abductor, the wicked rākṣasa. Moreover, quite a bit of time has passed, and Sugrīva’s command is formidable. Therefore all of you continue looking all about. Giving up lethargy, anxiety and sleep, search until you find Sītā. It is said that courage, enthusiasm and indefeatable spirit are conducive to success. Therefore I say this to you. Let the forest monkeys scour this impassable forest today. Giving up torpor, search this forest again. One who engages in action will see the fruit of his work. Enough of this lethargy! It is inappropriate for us. King Sugrīva apportions sever punishment. We should always dread him, as well as the great soul Rāma. You should follow this advice of mine, if it pleases you. Otherwise, tell me what you consider more advisable for us, O monkeys.”

Upon hearing Aṅgada’s admonition, Gandhamādana spoke as follows with a voice waivering due to thirst and exhaustion: “Aṅgada’s advice is typical of him. It is beneficial and agreeable. Therefore you should follow it. Let us once again search all the mountains, caves, rocks, desolate forests and mountain waterfalls which were assigned to us by Sugrīva. Let us scour all the mountain heights together.”

Getting up all at the same time, the powerful monkeys explored the southern region crowded with the forested peaks of the Vindhya Mountains. The monkeys scaled the pinnacles of the Silver Mountain, which resembled an autumn cloud. Desirous of finding Sītā, they began searching the charming kodra forests and groves of saptaṛṇī trees growing there. Climbing up that mountain slope, the dauntless monkeys felt exhausted and failed to find Rāma’s beloved consort. After thoroughly examining the mountain with its many caves, the monkeys came down, casting glances all

around. On reaching the ground, being tired and perplexed, the monkeys stayed for some time, taking shelter there at the foot of a tree. After resting for some time and becoming relieved from exhaustion, they prepared to again search the entire southern region. Led by Hanumān, the stalwart monkeys proceeded to wander across the Vindhya Mountain range.

## THE MONKEYS MEET THE ASCETIC WOMAN SVAYAMPRABHĀ

Accompanied by Tāra and Aṅgada , the monkey Hanumān began searching the caves, forests, dens of lions and tigers, mountain cascades, rough slopes and precipices of those mountains. They then reached the south-western summit of those mountains. While they were on that mountain, the appointed time passed. That area was difficult to explore because of the many caves and thick forests. Hanumān thoroughly scoured that mountain. Searching so that each one was never far away, the monkeys Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Mainda, Dvivida, Hanumān, Jāmbavān, Prince Regent Aṅgada and Tāra soon saw a cave called Ṛkṣabīla. Its mouth was open, though it was difficult to enter, and was the home of Maya Dānava. Overwhelmed with hunger and thirst and being exhausted, they were seeking water. Therefore they eyed the entrance of the cave which was covered by trees and vines. Herons, swans, cranes and ruddy geese were coming out of the cave with their bodies wet with water and smeared with the pollen of lotus flowers. When the monkeys reached the entrance of the cave, which was emitting a pleasing fragrance, they became bewildered with wonder.

Hoping to find water inside the cave, the monkey leaders approached the cave, which was crowded with all kinds of creatures and resembled the nether region. It was fearful and difficult to behold and most difficult to enter. Then Hanumān, son of the wind god, looking like a mountain peak and being capable of penetrating thick jungles, said to the doubtful monkeys: “After searching the southern lands criss-crossed with mountains, we are all quite tired and have found no sign of Sītā. And now, from everywhere in this cave are emerging wet swans, herons, cranes and ruddy geese. Surely there must be a well or pool of water in there. Moreover the trees at the entrance of this cave are all very green.” Having said this, they all entered into that cave which was enveloped in darkness, without any sunlight or moonlight, and therefore frightful. Upon entering, those heroic

monkeys saw lions and other beasts and birds, and thereafter penetrated deep into the cavern. Neither their vision, strength or prowess failed them as they proceeded. As the movement of the wind is not impeded, neither was their vision in that darkness. Penetrating deep into the cave, the monkeys saw a place that was clear and charming.

Clutching hold of each other, the monkeys continued a distance of one yojana into that dreadful cave thick with all kinds of trees. Thirsty as they were and desiring water, they were bewildered and absent-minded as they proceeded through that cave for some time, without faltering. When the weary-faced monkeys, who were hungry and thirsty, became hopeless about their life, they saw a light. They soon reached a shining grove of golden trees as brilliant as fire, such as tamāla, punnāga, vañjula, dhava, campaka, nāga, and kaṇṇikāra trees in bloom. They had clusters of golden flowers and tender red leaves. They were entangled with vines and adorned with their own gold ornamentation. There were golden trees whose trunks were shining as brightly as the morning sun and which had protective bases of vaidurya gems. They saw pools crowded with birds and clusters of blue lotus flowers resembling vaidurya gems. In that area they saw huge trees and lotuses of gold as brilliant as the newly risen sun, as well as pools of blue lotuses with pleasant water in which swam golden fish and huge tortoises. The monkeys saw palaces of gold and silver, and on all sides mansions of gold, silver and marble inlaid with vaidurya gems and sporting windows covered with screens of pearls.

All about them they saw trees bearing flowers and fruits that resembled pieces of coral. On all sides could be seen golden bees, honey, couches and seats encrusted with gold and jewels, costly conveyances, piles of vessels made from gold, silver and brass, mounds of aloewood and celestial sandalwood, pure foods, edible roots and fruits, expensive drinks, liquors and juices, piles of expensive shimmering cloth, as well as piles of decorative blankets and deerskins. The monkeys also saw placed here and there piles of sparkling gold resembling fire. Looking all about in the cavern, they saw a certain woman not far away. They saw that she was an ascetic dressed in bark cloth and the skin of a black antelope, eating meagerly and glowing with glory. Amazed, the monkeys stopped there all about. Hanumān then asked her the following question: “Who are you and whose cave is this?” Greeting her

with joined palms, Hanumān, who resembled a mountain, again asked the old woman: “Who are you and who owns this cave, buildings, gems and gold? Speak up!”

## SVAYAMPARBHĀ RELATES THE HISTORY OF THE CAVE

Having spoken in that way, Hanumān again addressed the elderly ascetic woman who was most fortunate and engaged in the practice of austerities: “Completely fatigued due to hunger and thirst, we hastily entered this dark cave. Upon entering this great cavern, we were bewildered and apprehensive to see so many amazing things. To whom belong these brilliant golden trees, pure foods, edible roots and fruits, golden conveyances and residences of silver with windows covered with screens of gems? By whose spiritual power were these golden trees bearing flowers, fruits and sweet fragrance produced, as well as these golden lotuses growing in clear water? Why are these fish swimming with tortoises golden? Is this your own doing, or is it the result of someone else’s power attained through asceticism? Please explain this in full to us, for we are completely ignorant in this regards.”

Being questioned in this way by Hanumān, the elderly ascetic woman engaged in the practice of virtue for the benefit of all living beings replied to him as follows: “There is a powerful wizard named Maya, who is the foremost of the dānavas. This entire golden forest was created by him by dint of his magical powers. Formerly he was the chief architect of the dānava kings, so it is said. He is the one who built this heavenly golden palace. Practising austerities in the great wilderness for one thousand years, Maya Dānava received from Lord Brahmā the boon of all the same powers as Śukrācārya. After creating this forest, that powerful dānava, being capable of fulfilling all his own desires, lived here happily for some time. Because the dānava was attached to the heavenly damsel Hemā, Indra, the lord of the gods, threw a thunderbolt at him. Lord Brahmā then bestowed this magnificent forest to Hemā, along with perpetual enjoyment of luxuries and this golden palace. I am Svayamparbhā, the daughter of Merusāvarṇī. I guard this palace for Hemā, O best of monkeys. My dear friend Hemā is expert in singing and dancing. And I am guarding her fabulous palace in accordance with the boon she received. What are you trying to accomplish or whose

purpose are you trying to fulfill that you are treading these difficult paths? And how did you find this inaccessible cave? After partaking of these foodstuffs, edible roots and fruits and drinking water, you can tell me everything.”



## HANUMĀN EXPLAINS HIS MISSION TO SVAYAMPRABHĀ

After the monkeys had rested, the ascetic woman single-mindedly spoke the following words to them: “If your fatigue has been dispelled by eating fruits, and if your story is worth hearing, then please do tell it to me. I am eager to hear it.” Upon hearing her request, Hanumān proceeded to narrate everything straightforwardly: “The glorious son of King Daśaratha, Rāma, the king of the whole world and an equal to Indra and Varuṇa, entered the Daṇḍakā Forest with His brother Lakṣmaṇa and His consort Sītā. His wife was violently kidnapped from Janasthāna by Rāvaṇa. Lord Rāma’s dear friend is the valiant king of the monkeys named Sugrīva. He sent us along with these fierce chieftains headed by Aṅgada to the southern region inhabited by the sage Agastya and protected by Yama, the lord of death. We were instructed to look for the rākṣasa Rāvaṇa who can change his form at will, as well as Princess Sītā.

“After searching the entire southern region, we were hungry and tired and so took shelter under a tree. Pale and wane, we began reflecting how we were sunken in an ocean of anxiety whose shore we could not see. As our eyes wandered here and there, we spied this cave covered with trees and vines and enveloped in darkness. From out of the cave flew swans, ospreys, cranes and other aquatic birds wet with water. I suggested that we all go inside the cave. All of them came to the same conclusion, suspecting that there was water in the cave. In a hurry to enter, we rushed into this dark cave while holding each other’s hands. That is the reason and the way by which we came here. We came to you out of hunger and exhaustion. Our hunger has been vanquished by eating the roots and fruits which you have so hospitably offered us. Since you saved us when we were dying of hunger, tell us what we can do to repay your service.”

When spoken to in this way by Hanumān, Svayamprabhā replied as follows to all those monkey chieftains: “I am very pleased with all you heroic

monkeys. But because I am engaged in a life of piety, there is no service that anyone can do for me.”

## SVAYAMPARBHĀ DELIVERS THE MONKEYS FROM THE CAVE

When the ascetic woman finished speaking those auspicious words that were full of spiritual significance, Hanumān replied to that offenceless lady in the following way: “We all take shelter of you who are engaged in the practice of righteousness. The time limit set for us by Sugrīva has surely already expired while we were wandering in this cave. You should therefore help us get out of this deadful cave, for we have violated Sugrīva’s orders and are therefore doomed. You should deliver us who are stricken with fear of Sugrīva. We had a great task to accomplish, O virtuous woman, but we were unable to do it while we were here.”

Being requested in this way by Hanumān, the ascetic woman replied as follows: “I think it is most difficult for any living being who has entered this cave to get out. I shall however deliver all of you monkeys out of this cave by the power of my austerities and restraint of mind. All of you close your eyes, for it is not possible for those with opened eyes to get out of the cave.” Closing their eyes, they then all covered their faces with the supple fingers of their hands because of their desire to leave. While they kept their faces covered with their hands, they were transported out of the cave in the twinkling of an eye. The pious ascetic lady then consoled them after they had been delivered from danger: “There is the Vindhya Mountain range thickly forested with trees and vines. There is Mount Prasavaṇa and there, the Indian Ocean. Good luck to you monkeys! I shall return to my abode.” Saying this, she returned inside her splendid cave.

Then the monkeys saw the shoreless ocean which is the abode of Varuṇa, lord of the watery depths. It was covered with fearsome waves. While searching the mountain cave created by the magical powers of Maya Dānava, the one month fixed for them by Sugrīva had elapsed. Sitting down at the foot of one of the Vindhya Mountains whose trees were in full bloom, the monkeys began to fret. Seeing how the tree branches were burdened

with spring flowers and hundreds of vines, they became stricken with fear. Informing each other that spring had arrived and realizing that the time period for performing their task had expired, they sank down to the ground. Then the highly intelligent Prince Aṅgada, whose chest was like a lion's or a bull's, spoke the following:

“We all set out in accordance with the order of Sugrīva. Do you not realize that one month has passed while we were in the cave? We set forth in the month of Aśvin (September), and that time has passed. As such, what should we do? You have earned the confidence of Sugrīva. You are expert in politics. You are devoted to procuring his welfare and are engaged by him in all kinds of activities. You are all unequalled in work and your manliness is well known everywhere. Under Sugrīva's command, you accepted me as your leader when you set forth. Having failed to accomplish our task, we shall now die. Of this there is no doubt. Since the time limit set by Sugrīva has passed, we forest monkeys should simply sit down and fast until death.

“Severe by nature and established in authority, Sugrīva would never forgive us offenders. And without any news about Sītā, he will surely release his furry upon us. Therefore, the best thing for us to do is to begin fasting until death this very day, renouncing our sons, wives, wealth and homes. The king will certainly kill us all when we return to Kiṣkindhā. It is better for us to die here than to have an ignoble death at the hands of Sugrīva. Neither was I installed as Prince Regent by Sugrīva. This was done by Lord Rāma, who is never wearied in action. Sugrīva previously had a grudge against me because of my father. Seeing my transgression, he has already decided to have me killed in a most cruel manner. What to do with my well-wishers when they see my life ending in that way? I shall therefore sit down here on this holy shore of the ocean to fast until death.”

Hearing this exhortation made by Aṅgada, all the monkeys replied in the following mournful way: “Sugrīva is severe by nature, and Rāma is attached to His consort. Seeing that the time for returning has passed and that we have not found Sītā, Sugrīva will certainly have us killed in order to please Rāma. It is not advisable for offenders to go before their master. Let us return to Sugrīva only after finding Sītā or obtaining some information about Her. If not, we will go to the abode of the lord of death.”

Hearing these words uttered by the frightened monkeys, Tāra said: “Enough of this despair! Let us enter the cave and stay there if it so pleases you. Having been created by magical powers, this cave is difficult to enter and has abundant trees, water, food and drinks. Here there is no cause for fear from Indra, Rāma or even less so from Sugrīva.” After hearing the favorable statements of Aṅgada and Tāra, the monkeys regained confidence and said: “Let us immediately do what is expedient so that we may not be killed by Sugrīva.”

## HANUMĀN WARNS THE MONKEYS TO RETURN TO KIṢKINDHĀ

When Tāra, who was as effulgent as a star, finished speaking in this way without any opposition from Aṅgada, Hanumān considered the kingdom of Kiṣkindhā already seized by Aṅgada. Hanumān considered Aṅgada to be endowed with intelligence distinguished by eight attributes, endowed with fourfold strength and fourteen virtues. Constantly increasing in energy, strength and valor, Aṅgada's glory was growing like the waxing moon. Hanumān then began trying to convince Aṅgada, who was inclined to listen to Tāra's advice, as Indra would be inclined to Śukrācārya, and thus tired of carrying out Sugrīva's order. By employing the third and fourth methods—sowing dissention and using force—Hanumān first set all the monkeys against each other through eloquent speech. Once this was accomplished, he then proceeded to intimidate Aṅgada by using many alarming words and threats:

“You are certainly more powerful in combat than your uncle, and as able as your father to tightly retain sovereignty. The monkeys, however, are always fickle-minded, O best of monkeys. Without their sons and wives, they would not tolerate your commands. I tell you clearly that these monkeys will not become attached to you. You are unable to turn Jāmbavān, Nīla and Suhotra, nor I, nor all these monkeys against Sugrīva by persuasion, gifts or threat of violence. One can be at ease when entering into hostilities with the weak. One who is weak should therefore avoid hostility with the strong. Because of what you have heard, you consider this cave impregnable. Yet this cave can be rent asunder by the action of Lakṣmaṇa's arrows. In fact, a small opening was previously made in this cave by Lord Indra's thunderbolt. Lakṣmaṇa, however, will tear this cave to pieces like a leaf cup with His sharp arrows. Lakṣmaṇa has many such steel-tipped arrows which strike like bolts of lightning and can even shatter mountains.”

“As soon as you settle down in this cave, all the monkeys will abandon you, for they have already decided to do so. Remembering their wives and children, famished and wearied by their plight, they will turn their backs on you. Abandoned by your friends, well-wishers and relatives, you will be terrified by the rustling of a blade of grass. Flying at great speed and difficult to counteract, Lakṣmaṇa’s arrows, which are meant for killing opponents, will under no circumstance spare you. On the other hand, if you return with us and submit yourself humbly before Sugrīva, he will eventually install you on the throne. Your uncle is fond of righteousness and is affectionate, firm in vows, pure and true to his word. He will certainly not kill you. He is especially enamored of your mother. Indeed, he lives for her alone. And you are his only offspring. Therefore, O Aṅgada, let us go back.”

## THE MONKEYS AGAIN DECIDE TO FAST UNTIL DEATH

Hearing Hanumān's words, which were courteous, conducive to virtue and respectful of Sugrīva, Aṅgada replied as follows: "Neither steadiness, purity of the self, nonviolence, straightforwardness, valor, nor composure are found in Sugrīva. Detestable as Sugrīva is, he took the beloved wife of his elder brother while he was still alive, though she is by moral principle his mother. How does he know what morality is? When his elder brother was engaged in combat, Sugrīva sealed the entrance of the cave. Whose services will Sugrīva remember when after Rāma had offered him His hand in friendship and done him a favor, he forget all about Rāma? Sugrīva began the search for Sītā out of fear of Lakṣmaṇa, not out of fear of unrighteousness. Therefore, how can there be any righteousness in him? What noble person from his race will ever trust that sinful, ungrateful, forgetful and fickle-minded monkey? Whether he has good qualities or not, why would Sugrīva install me on the throne and allow me to live when I am born in the family of his enemy?

"After returning to Kiṣkindhā, how would I be able to survive like a helpless weakling, since I am an offender, have sown discord among my ministers, and am devoid of power? The wicked and merciless Sugrīva will surely have me imprisoned and punished in secret in order to protect his sovereignty. Fasting until death is preferable to incarceration and ruin. All you monkeys should bid me farewell and return to your homes. I solemnly declare unto you that I shall not return to Kiṣkindhā, but shall fast until death at this very place. Death is certainly better for me. After greeting King Sugrīva, you may inform him of my condition, and so also the two mighty princes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. You should inform my uncle Sugrīva and my aunt Rumā about my welfare and health only after greeting them properly. You should also console my poor mother Tārā, who is by nature affectionate to her son and compassionate too. She will definitely give up her life when she hears that I am dead."



Saying this much and offering respects to the elderly monkeys, the disconsolate Aṅgada sat down on a mat of kuśa grass. As soon as he had done this, the other monkeys became overwhelmed and shed hot tears from their eyes. Condemning Sugrīva and praising Vālī, they surrounded Aṅgada and determined to fast until death. After considering Aṅgada's statement, they sipped water three times for purification. Sitting down facing east on mats of kuśa grass whose points were facing south, they took shelter of the shore of the Indian Ocean. They thought that this was the best thing for them to do. While the monkeys were discussing about Rāma's exile, the death of King Daśaratha, the massacre at Janasthāna, the slaughter of Jaṭāyu, the abduction of Sītā, the killing of Vālī in battle and Rāma's anger, another danger approached the monkeys. With those monkeys resembling mountain peaks wailing loudly in dismay, the caves of that mountain echoed like a cloud rumbling with thunder.

## SAMPĀTI SWOOPS DOWN TO DEVOUR THE MONKEYS

The king of vultures also happened to arrive at the same plateau where the monkeys were fasting until death. He was the long-lived bird known by the name Sampāti, who was the glorious brother of Jaṭāyu and his strength and fame were well known. Coming out of a cave all of a sudden and feeling delighted to see the monkeys there, Sampāti said: “As by destiny a man in this world gets the fruition of his actions, this food meant for me has come after a long time. I shall eat these monkeys one after another as they drop dead from starvation.” The bird uttered these words when he saw the monkeys. Becoming greatly disturbed to hear the hungry bird’s remarks, Aṅgada said to Hanumān: “Just see! In order to destroy the monkeys under the pretext of Sītā, Yama, the lord of death, has come to this land. Rāma’s mission has not been accomplished nor has King Sugrīva’s instruction been followed. Now this unforeseen calamity has overtaken us monkeys.

“You have heard in its entirety of the service rendered by Jaṭāyu, the king of vultures, who was desirous of pleasing Sītā. Similarly, all living beings, even those born in animal species, do what is pleasing to Rāma, giving up their lives like us. Bound by love and compassion for Rāma, people serve each other. Therefore, give up your very lives in the attempt to serve Him. Jaṭāyu, who knew what duty was, did a thing pleasing to Rāma by laying down his life. We have traversed a difficult path in order to please Lord Rāma, and we are now exhausted and about to lose our lives without having found Sītā. Jaṭāyu was fortunate to be slain by Rāvaṇa, for thus he attained the supreme destination and is freed from fear of Sugrīva. The monkeys have fallen into calamity by the death of Jaṭāyu and King Daśaratha, and by the abduction of Sītā. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa’s exile in the forest with Sītā, Rāma’s slaying of Vālī with an arrow, and the annihilation of the rākṣasas because of Rāma’s anger—all these are brought about by the boons Kaikeyī requested.”

His mind being greatly agitated by hearing their mournful lamentations and seeing them fallen on the ground, the wise Sampāti, king of the vultures, spoke piteously. After hearing the words sprung from Aṅgada's mouth, Sampāti said: "Who speaks of the slaughter of my brother Jaṭāyu, who is dearer to me than my own life, thus causing my heart to tremble? How did a battle take place between him and a rākṣasa in Janasthāna? I am hearing my brother's name after a very long time. With your help I wish to come down from this mountain perch. I am very pleased to hear the praising of my younger brother after such a long time, for he was qualified and deserving of praise for his prowess. O monkeys, I wish to hear about the death of my brother Jaṭāyu, who lived in Janasthāna. How did King Daśaratha, who is a friend of my brother and the father of Rāma, die? My wings have been burned by the sun's rays and therefore I cannot fly. I want to come down from this mountain, O conquerors of enemies."

## ANĠADA NARRATES THE STORY OF RĀMA TO SAMPĀTI

After hearing Sampāti's words choked up due to sadness, the monkey generals did not trust him because of his previous intention to eat them. When the monkeys who had begun to fast saw the vulture, they came to the dreadful conclusion that he wished to eat them all: "If this vulture devours us who have sat down to fast, we will have thoroughly accomplished our purpose very quickly." All the monkeys thereafter came to this conclusion. Anḡada then helped the vulture come down from the mountain peak and said: "There was a mighty king of the monkeys named Ṛkṣarāja. My noble grandfather had two pious sons—Sugrīva and Vālī—both of whom had tremendous strength. My father King Vālī was well known in the world. The mighty warrior and glorious son of King Daśaratha known by the name Rāma, who was the ruler of the whole earth, entered the Daṇḍakā Forest along with His brother Lakṣmaṇa and His wife Sītā. Devoted to the command of His father, he took up the path of righteousness. His wife was forcibly abducted from Janasthāna by Rāvaṇa. The vulture Jaṭāyu, a friend of Rāma's father, saw Sītā being carried away into the sky. After smashing Rāvaṇa's chariot and placing Sītā safely on the ground, the vulture, being exhausted, was slain in combat by Rāvaṇa. In this way the vulture was slain by Rāvaṇa, who was more powerful.

"After Rāma performed his funeral rites, Jaṭāyu attained the supreme destination. Then Rāma established friendship with my great uncle Sugrīva and killed my father. Since my uncle Sugrīva had been banished with his ministers, after slaying Vālī, Rāma made Sugrīva king. Installed on the throne by Rāma, Sugrīva is the lord of all the monkeys. Sent by him and engaged in this way by Rāma, we have been searching everywhere for Sītā, who is as effulgent as the sun, but have not found Her. After thoroughly scouring the Daṇḍakā Forest, we inadvertently entered a concealed cavern. While we explored that cave constructed by the magician Maya, the one

month time limit set by King Sugrīva elapsed. Since we have exceeded the time period, out of fear we order-carriers of Sugrīva have sat down to fast until death. If Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sugrīva are angry, there is no question of us surviving upon returning to Kiṣkindhā.”

## SAMPĀTI NARRATES HIS HISTORY

When the monkeys, who had given up all hopes for living, finished relating their sorrowful tale, the vulture Sampāti, shedding tears, loudly replied: “The vulture whom you mentioned as slain by the stronger Rāvaṇa was my younger brother Jaṭāyu. Due to my old age and loss of wings I have to tolerate this news, for I do not have the strength to avenge this aggression against my brother. In the past, when Indra killed Vṛtrāsura, Jaṭāyu and I speedily flew up to heaven with the intention of defeating Indra. Shortly after we began flying, we reached the sun encircled with blazing rays of light. When the sun reached the midway position in its journey across the sky, Jaṭāyu was becoming exhausted by the sun’s heat. Seeing my brother tormented by the sun’s rays and greatly perturbed, I covered him with my own wings out of affection. In this way, my wings were burnt up and I fell down to the Vindhya Mountains, O monkeys. Living on this mountain, I have had no news of my brother.”

Hearing the story related by Jaṭāyu’s brother Sampāti, the wise Aṅgada replied: “If you are indeed the brother of Jaṭāyu and have heard the story I narrated, tell me if you know the place where that rākṣasa stays. If you actually know where Rāvaṇa, the short-sighted ruler of the rākṣasas, is, whether that be near or far, please tell us.” Then the powerful Sampāti, the elder brother of Jaṭāyu, spoke the following words that were becoming of himself, thereby pleasing the monkeys: “Although I am a vulture whose wings are burnt off and devoid of virility, O monkeys, I can render Rāma the greatest aid by my speech alone. I know the worlds presided over by Varuṇa and encompassed with three steps by Viṣṇu in His incarnation as Trivikrama. I am also familiar with the places where the gods and demons fought in combat and where they churned the elixir of immortality from the ocean of milk. Even though my strength is robbed by old age and my life force is waning, I must first perform this task for Rāma.”

“Once I saw a beautiful young lady being carried away by the sinful Rāvaṇa. She was crying out, ‘O Rāma! O Rāma! O Lakṣmana!’ She was tossing off her ornaments and flailing her arms in the air. Her exquisite silken garments shone brightly against the swarthy body of the rākṣasa, like the sun perched on a mountain peak or a bolt of lightning in the sky. Because She was calling out the name ‘Rāma,’ I think She must be Sītā. Listen as I speak about the abode of that rākṣasa. The very son of the sage Viśravā and the half-brother of Kuvera, a rākṣasa named Rāvaṇa lives in the city of Laṅkā. That charming city constructed by Viśvakarmā is on an island lying one hundred yojanas from here. The gates and terraces of that city are made of gold, and the great wall surrounding it is as brilliant as the sun.

“In that city resides the forlorn Sītā clad in silken garments in the inner chambers of Rāvaṇa’s palace under the watch of rākṣasīs. There you will find Sītā, the daughter of King Janaka. After reaching the end of the ocean at a full one hundred yojanas and reaching its southern coast, you will find Rāvaṇa in Laṅkā, which is hidden on all sides by the sea. Going there quickly, show your prowess, O monkeys! By intuition I can see that you will find Sītā and return. Now the first level of flight is that of sparrows and other birds that eat grains. The next higher level is that of birds that eat the remnants of meals and those that eat fruits. The third level is that of cranes, herons and ospreys. The fourth level is that of hawks, and the fifth is that of vultures. The sixth is that of swans endowed with strength and virility and graced with beauty and youth. The flight level of Garuḍa, however, is the highest. All we vultures were born from Aruṇa, the son of Vinatā.

“Standing here, I can see both Rāvaṇa and Sītā. We also possess Garuḍa’s supernatural power of vision. As such, by the potency of our food and because of our own kinship with Garuḍa, we can always see up to a distance of one hundred yojanas. Moreover, the food set aside for us by nature is that which is seen at a great distance, while others find their food at the feet of trees. The outrage committed by the flesh-eating demon against my brother should some how or other be avenged. The means should be found for crossing the salty ocean. You will surely find Sītā, and having attained your goal, you will return to Kiṣkindhā. I want you to take me to

the ocean so that I can offer libations of water to my magnanimous brother, who has attained heaven.”

Thereafter the monkeys, who were endowed with extraordinary strength, carried Sampāti to the shore of the ocean. When Sampāti finished the funeral rites, the elated monkeys carried him back to where they had met him.



## SAMPĀTI EXPLAINS HIS KNOWLEDGE OF SĪTĀ'S ABDUCTION

The monkeys were very delighted to hear the nectarean words spoken by that king of vultures. Rising up all together from the ground, Jāmbavān, the best of bears, said the following to Sampāti: “Where is Sītā? Who saw Her? And who kidnapped Her? Please explain all that and become a shelter for us forest dwellers. Who is unworried by Rāma’s arrows which fly as quickly as lightning or by those fired by Lakṣmaṇa Himself?”

Again consoling the monkeys who were elated and eager to hear about Sītā, Sampāti said: “Listen to how I heard about Sītā’s abduction, who related it to me and where the broad-eyed Sītā is. Long ago I fell down onto this inaccessible mountain which is many yojanas high. I am old and my life and prowess are spent. That best of birds, my son named Supārśva, regularly brought me food when I was in that condition. Gandharvas possess intense lustiness, serpents, anger, deer, fear, and we birds, hunger. Once he came to me without any meat at the time of sunset, when I was hungry and hankering for food. My son endured my harsh words uttered for his failure to bring me food when I was hungry. Offering me respects, he related the following incident:

‘O father, I flew into the sky at the proper time to secure flesh for food, stationing myself in such a way so as to block the approach to Mahendra Mountain. I stayed there with my head hanging downward in order to intercept the passage of the thousands of creatures living in the sea. Then I saw someone resembling a pile of black cosmetics carrying a lady who was as effulgent as the morning sun. Seeing them I decided to capture them as food for you. He, however, humbly requested me for passage with sweet words. There is no one even among the vile who would attack those who speak words of praise. How then could one like me do so, dear father?

‘After covering the sky with his splendor, he quickly passed by. Thereafter I was approached and greeted by beings travelling through the sky. The great sages said to me:

You are lucky to be alive, child. It is your good fortune that somehow or other that demon carrying a lady left without harming you.

‘Thus did those gracious sages speak to me. I was informed that the demon was Rāvaṇa, the king of the rākṣasas. I watched Rāma’s wife, Sītā, whose ornaments were broken, garments torn and hair dissheveled. She was overwhelmed with grief and was crying loudly. This is how my time was spent, O father.’

“Thus did my son Suparśva relay this information to me. Even after hearing this, I did not think of acting in a valorous way. For how can a wingless bird try to do anything? But listen to what I am capable of doing, since I am accustomed to helping others with my words and intelligence. I shall explain to you that which depends on your prowess. I shall indeed do you a favor by my words and intelligence. In fact, Rāma’s mission is also mine, of this there is no doubt. You all are most intelligent, powerful and wise. Being commissioned by Sugrīva, you are unassailable even by the gods. The arrows of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are razor-sharp and ended with vulture feathers. Therefore they are capable of subduing the three worlds. Of course, Rāvaṇa is endowed with vigor and strength. There is, however, nothing difficult for you to achieve, since you are so capable. As such, what is the use of wasting time? Make up your minds, for those who are as intelligent as you do not delay in beginning their tasks.”

## SAMPĀTI'S MEETING WITH THE SAGE NĪŚĀKARA

The monkey leaders all sat down on the mountain, surrounding Sampāti, who had previously bathed after performing his brother's funeral rites. Having inspired the monkeys, Sampāti joyfully spoke to Aṅgada, who was sitting nearby, surrounded by monkeys: "Let all the monkeys listen attentively and quietly to what I have to say. I will fully explain how I learned about Sītā. Formerly, when my wings were singed by the scorching rays of the sun, I fell down to the forest on this peak of the Vindhya Mountains. When I regained consciousness after six days, being weak and faint, I looked around but was unable to recognize anything. After scanning all the oceans, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests and beaches, my memory returned. Thus I realized that I was on the southern shore of the ocean bounded by the Vindhya Mountains, which are teeming with flocks of birds and riddled with caves.

"Here there was a holy hermitage worshiped even by the gods. In it resided the sage known as Nīśākara, who was engaged in practicing difficult austerities. Since the righteous sage ascended to heaven, I have passed eight thousand years dwelling on this mountain in his absence. Slowly coming down from the mountain where I fell, with difficulty I reached a plain overgrown with sharp kuśa grass. Desiring to see that sage, I reached his hermitage with great difficulty. Indeed, Jaṭāyu and I used to visit that sage often. Fragrant breezes blew in the area around that hermitage. There were no trees without fruits or flowers. Reaching the holy hermitage, I sat underneath a tree, desirous as I was of seeing the venerable sage Nīśākara.

"Soon, at a distance, I saw the unassailable sage illuminated by his own glory. He had just taken his bath and was returning from the south. Bears, deer, tigers, lions and serpents followed him on all sides, as people follow a cherished benefactor. Seeing that the sage had reached his hermitage, all the animals departed, just as the king's army and ministers

leave the king when he enters his palace. The sage was happy to see me and went inside his hermitage. Coming out again after a few minutes, he asked me why I had come: 'Seeing you without your plumage, I did not recognize you. Your wings have been burnt by fire, and your skin is also damaged. Previously I used to see two vultures—brothers and rulers of their species—both of pleasing appearance and as quick as the wind. You are the older brother Sampāti, and Jaṭāyu is your younger brother. Assuming human forms, you used to touch my feet respectfully. Is this some disease that you have contracted? How have your wings fallen off? Or who has punished you in this way? Please tell me everything.'"

## SAMPĀTI EXPLAINS HIS MISHAP

Afterwards, Sampāti informed the sage about their dangerous undertaking to chastise Indra, which was difficult to accomplish, and their approaching the sun: “O venerable sage, because of the wounds on my flesh, my shame, my perturbation and my exhaustion, I am unable to reply to your inquiries. Jaṭāyu and I were both bewildered by pride and enviousness. As such we took a challenge before sages on the peak of Mount Kailāsa to follow the sun until it had set behind the western mountain, flying high into the sky to measure our prowess. We both flew into the sky together and beheld different cities on the surface of the earth as no bigger than the wheel of a charriot. In one area we heard instrumental music, in another, the chanting of Vedic hymns. In another place we saw singing ladies dressed in red. Flying speedily into the sky, we reached the path of the sun and saw that the forest looked like a grassy field. The mountains piled on the earth looked like pebbles and the rivers crossing it looked like strings. The Himālaya, Vindhya and Meru Mountains looked like elephants in a pond.

“We were then overtaken by intense sweat, fatigue and fear. We became bewildered and practically unconscious. We could not distinguish the southern, south-eastern or western directions. The world which operates under specific laws seemed as if it had been prematurely consumed by fire. Depending on my eyes for sight, my mind became confused. After struggling to fix my eyes on the horizon, I was again able to see the sun. It appeared to us as if it were the same size as the earth. Without any notice, Jaṭāyu thereafter dropped down to the earth. Seeing him do so, I quickly allowed myself to fall down from the sky. Having been covered by my wings, Jaṭāyu was not burned. I, however, because of my recklessness, was badly burned as I fell from the sky. I assumed that Jaṭāyu had fallen somewhere in Janasthāna, while I fell down with burnt wings and unconscious in the Vindhya Mountains. Deprived of my sovereignty, brother, wings and prowess, I simply want to die and will jump off of a mountain peak.”

## THE SAGE NIŚĀKARA'S PREDICTION ABOUT SAMPĀTI

Sampāti continued: “Relating this story to the great sage, I began weeping because of my great sadness. After contemplating for awhile, the venerable sage replied: ‘You will get another pair of wings, as well as vitality, sight, valor and strength. I have heard from historical narrations that a remarkable even would take place in the future. I have learned this not only by hearing, but have also seen it by dint of my austerities. There will be a king named Daśaratha in the dynasty descending from Ikṣvāku. His son will be the mighty Rāma. He will go into the forest with His brother Lakṣmaṇa in order to uphold the order of His father. A certain rākṣasa named Rāvaṇa born in the dynasty of Nairṛti and lord of the rākṣasas, being unkillable by gods or demons, will abduct Rāma’s consort from the forest at Janasthāna. Even though offered very palatable and desirable preparations to eat, the illustrious and fortunate Sītā did not eat them. Learning about this, Indra will give Her a pudding of rice and milk that will be like the elixir of immortality which even the gods find difficult to obtain. When She finds out that the pudding had come from Indra, Sītā will take the first part and spill it on the ground, saying:

Whether My husband and master is still alive with Lakṣmaṇa, or whether They have attained divinity, let this rice pudding reach Them.

“Dispatched as messengers of Lord Rāma, monkeys will come. O bird, inform them about Rāma’s consort. Under no circumstances should you leave this area. After all, what can you do in your present condition? Wait for the proper time and place and you will get new wings. I can supply you with new wings this very moment. But by staying here you will perform a deed beneficial to the whole world. This is indeed your duty to those two princes, to yourself, to the brāhmaṇas, to the gods, to the great sages and to

Lord Indra. I long to see the two brothers—Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Yet I do not wish to continue living for a long time and will give up this body.’

“Thus spoke the great sage who could see the Supreme Truth.”

## SAMPĀTI RECEIVES NEW WINGS

Sampāti continued: “Praising me in this and other ways, the eloquent sage took leave of me and entered his dwelling. Slowly crawling from the mountain cave and ascending this peak of the Vindhya Mountains, I have been waiting for you. Since then until the present more than eight thousand years have passed. Remembering the sage’s words, I have been waiting for that time and place. After the sage Niśākara passed away and attained heaven, I have been burning with anxiety because of my doubts. I have been brushing aside the thought of suicide which would occasionally arise by remembering the sage’s prediction. The hope which he instilled in me for my survival drives away my sorrow, as a flame of fire drives away darkness. Knowing as I did the prowess of the evil-minded Rāvaṇa, I rebuked my son, asking: ‘Why did you not try to protect Sītā?’ Even hearing Her cries for help and seeing that Sītā was being taken away from the two princes, my son did not do any act that would have pleased me, despite knowing my deep friendship with King Daśaratha.”

As Sampāti was speaking with the monkeys, a new pair of wings sprung from his shoulders right in front of the monkeys. Seeing his body sporting a pair of wings with golden feathers, he experienced tremendous delight and said to the monkeys: “By the power of the immeasurable sage Niśākara, my wings which were previously burned by the rays of the sun have grown back. I am now experiencing the same prowess, strength and vitality as in my youth. Just do everything you can and you will find Sītā. The recovery of my wings is the confirmation of your success.”

After speaking in this way to all those monkeys, Sampāti, the best of birds, jumped of the mountain peak with the desire to test his flying skill. When the monkeys, who were dependent on their valor, heard what Sampāti said, their minds became overjoyed. Having regained their prowess which was like the wind and also their virility, they headed for the southern region where the constellation Abhijit shines with the determination to find Sītā.



## THE MONKEYS DISPIRITED ON SEEING THE OCEAN

Informed in this way by the king of vultures, the monkeys, who were as valiant as lions, jumped up all together and shouted joyfully. After hearing Sampāti's account, desiring to find Sītā, the monkeys happily approached the Indian Ocean, which was the way to Rāvaṇa's abode. Upon reaching that area, the monkeys of formidable prowess saw the ocean which was like a reflection of the entire land mass of the world. Having reached the northern coast of the Indian Ocean, the monkey warriors stopped there. The monkeys became distressed when they saw that ocean which was hair-raising. In some parts it seemed to be asleep, in others it seemed to be playing, in others it seemed to be covered with volumes of water the size of mountains or by enormous waves. In its depths were gathered huge, monstrous creatures. Seeing that the ocean was shoreless like the sky, the monkeys all exclaimed at once: "How will we accomplish our task?" Seeing the army despondent from seeing the ocean, Aṅgada tried to assuage their fear: "Do not let your minds become despondent. Despondency is very harmful. It destroys a man just as an angry snake kills a child. Fruitless are the efforts of one who, though endeavoring vigorously, gives way to despondency."

After the night had passed, Aṅgada again approached the elder leaders and consulted with them. While the soldiers were standing around Aṅgada, they resembled an army of demigods surrounding Lord Indra. Besides Aṅgada and Hanumān, who else could hold that simian army in check? Addressing both the elders and the soldiers, the glorious Aṅgada greeted them and spoke the following meaningful words: "What mighty monkey can jump across this ocean? Who will make Sugrīva, the conqueror of foes, true to his promise? Which monkey warrior can jump a distance of one hundred yojanas? Who will free these monkey generals from fear? By whose power will we accomplish our goal and happily return to Kīṣkindhā to

see our wives, children and homes? By whose mercy will we joyfully meet Rāma, the hardy Lakṣmaṇa and the powerful Sugrīva? If any one of you monkeys is capable of jumping across the ocean, kindly rid us of our fear by doing so immediately.”

When they heard Aṅgada’s request, no one said anything. All the monkey soldiers remained still. Once more did Aṅgada address those monkeys: “You are all the best of the strong and of firm valor. You are born in distinguished families and have been honored frequently. Your movement can never be obstructed under any circumstance. Therefore, O monkeys, tell me who has the ability to jump across the ocean.”

## THE MONKEYS PROCLAIM THEIR JUMPING SKILLS

After hearing what Aṅgada said, the foremost of all those monkeys, such as Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Mainda, Dvidida, Suṣeṇa and Jāmbavān, began declaring their jumping ability one after the other. Gaja said: “I can jump ten yojanas!” Gavākṣa said: “I can jump twenty yojanas!” Then the monkey Gavaya said: “O monkeys, I can leap a distance of thirty yojanas!” The monkey Śarabha said: “I can jump forty yojanas!” The mighty Gandhamādana said to the monkeys: “I can leap fifty yojanas! Of this there is no doubt.” Thereafter Mainda said: “I am capable of jumping a full sixty yojanas!” The powerful Dvidida declared: “I can undoubtedly jump seventy yojanas.” The best of monkeys, Suṣeṇa declared to the monkeys: “I, however, can jump eighty yojanas.”

While they were speaking in this way, Jāmbavān, the oldest of them, offered them respects and said: “Previously I had the capacity to jump great distances, though now I have certainly reached the end of my life. Nevertheless, the task which Rāma and Sugrīva have decided to accomplish cannot be neglected. Please note the distance that I can presently leap. I can jump a distance of ninety yojanas. Of this there is no doubt.” Then Jāmbavān continued speaking to those monkeys: “Of course I had a greater capacity than this in the past. When the eternal Lord Viṣṇu manifested His incarnation as Trivikrama during the sacrifice performed by King Bali, I circumambulated the Lord as He traversed the universe in three steps. Now that I am old, the distance I can jump has diminished. When I was young, my strength was unmatched by others. At present I reckon my ability to be only this much. However, the task cannot be accomplished with this much skill in jumping.”

Offering respects to the wise Jāmbavān, Aṅgada said: “I can leap one hundred yojanas, but I am not certain whether I can return or not.” Then

the eloquent Jāmbavān replied to him: “Your ability is well known, O best of the monkeys and bears. Surely you can jump one hundred or one thousand yojanas and return. A master can never be dispatched by those who are his servants. All of us are meant to be directed by you, O best of the monkeys. We are in the position of being your menial servants, like a master with his spouse. Therefore you should always protect us as if we were your spouses. You are the root of the work that has to be done, O conqueror of foes. Those who are expert in all affairs say that the root of a thing must be carefully protected, for while the root exists it is possible for something to flower and bear fruit. In this regards, you are the means of accomplishing this task, O warrior of unfailing valor. Endowed as you are with intelligence and prowess, you are the expedient in the matter, for you are our superior and the son of our superior, O best of monkeys.”

Āṅgada, the son of Vālī, replied as follows: “If neither I nor any other monkey performs the task at hand, then we will again have to start fasting until death. Having failed to carry out Sugrīva’s instruction, I do not see how we can protect our lives when we return to Kiṣkindhā. Sugrīva can be either very merciful or enraged. If we return without having carried out his instructions, we will meet with destruction. Therefore you should ponder the means by which this task may not be hindered.”

When Āṅgada finished speaking in this way, Jāmbavān replied to him: “Your mission will not be obstructed in the least, O hero! I shall now appeal to him who can accomplish this task.” Then Jāmbavān addressed an appeal to that best of monkeys Hanumān, who was sitting peacefully at a distance.

## HANUMĀN REQUESTED TO JUMP ACROSS THE OCEAN

Seeing that the hundreds of thousands of monkey soldiers were despondent, Jāmbavān spoke as follows to Hanumān: “O hero, you are the most learned of the monkeys. You are sitting quietly by yourself. Why do you not speak? O Hanumān, you are equal in prowess and strength to Sugrīva, and even to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Kaśyapa’s descendant was the mighty and best of birds known as Garuḍa, a son of Vinatā. Many times I saw that glorious bird of great speed snatching up snakes from the ocean. There is no difference between the strength of his wings and your arms, nor is there any difference in prowess and velocity. Your strength, intelligence, vigor and courage are exception among all living beings. Why do you not recognize your own capability?

“There was an outstanding celestial damsel known as Puñjikasthalā. By a curse she was born as the daughter of a great monkey chieftain named Kuñjara. She became known as Añjanā, the wife of the monkey Kesari. Her bodily proportions were the most lovely of any female monkey and she was famous in all the three worlds for her physical beauty. Though a monkey, she could change her form at will. Once she assumed a human form looking beautiful and youthful. She was wearing wonderful garlands and ornaments and was wearing costly silk garments. She was strolling about on the top of a mountain which resembled a large rain cloud. The wind god gently removed the beautiful yellow robe with a red border from the broad-eyed lady standing on the mountain top. He thereafter beheld her lovely countenance, her rounded and tightly pressed thighs and her shapely raised breasts.

“As soon as the wind god saw that lovely woman with broad hips, slender waist and lovely limbs, he became infatuated by lust. The wind god embraced with his two arms that innocent lady whose body was infused by Cupid. Bewildered by what was happening, the lady of noble actions said: ‘Why do you wish to brake my vow of fidelity to only one husband.’ Upon

hearing Añjanā's utterance, the wind god replied: 'I shall not harm you. O fortunate lady, you have no reason to fear. While embracing you, my mind entered you. Therefore you will give birth to a son who will be powerful and intelligent. Possessing exceptional courage, vigor, strength and prowess, he will be equal to me in leaping and jumping.'

"Your mother was pleased when spoken to in this way. She gave birth to you, the best of monkeys, in a cave on Mount Mandara. When you were a child, you saw the risen sun in the great forest. Thinking that it was a fruit and desiring to get it, you jumped into the sky. Reaching a distance of three thousand yojanas, you were repulsed by the brilliance of the sun. You did not become despondent because of that. Seeing you quickly rising up into the sky even after having fallen like that, Indra became angry and hurled a thunderbolt at you. Then he threw you against the topmost peak of a mountain, fracturing your jaw. Thus you became known as Hanumān for your swollen jaw.

"Seeing you badly injured, the wind god Vāyu, the bearer of fragrances, became extremely angry and did not visit the three worlds any more. From lack of air, the demigods became confused and all the three worlds felt distressed. Lord Brahmā then pacified the wind god and granted you the boon of invulnerability in battle. Pleased to see you undisturbed by the impact of his thunderbolt, the thousand-eyed Indra granted you the boon of being able to choose when you die. In this way you are the child of Kesari engendered in his wife by another, O monkey of frightful prowess. Being the offspring of the wind god, you are equal to him in vigor. Because you are his son, you are equal to him in jumping.

"At the moment our energy is exhausted. Therefore you should now protect us. Endowed with skill and prowess, you are like another Garuḍa. During the Lord's incarnation as Trivikrama, I circumambulated the earth with its mountains, forests and groves twenty-one times. When the gods wanted to extract the elixir of immortality from the ocean of milk, they commissioned me to bring the necessary herbs because of my extraordinary strength. Now I am old and devoid of prowess. At the present time only you among us possess all the necessary qualities. As such, show your prowess, for you are the best of the monkeys. The entire monkey army is anxious to see your virility. Get up, O tiger among monkeys, and jump across the ocean, for

your jumping skill surpasses that of all other living beings. All the monkeys are despondent, O Hanumān. Why do you ignore them? Show your prowess even as the all-mighty Viṣṇu traversed the universe in three steps.”

Encouraged by Jāmbavān and convinced of his own vigor, Hanumān, the son of the wind god, greatly pleased those monkeys by assuming a gigantic form.

## HANUMĀN PREPARES TO JUMP ACROSS THE OCEAN

When the monkeys saw that Hanumān had suddenly assumed a suitable form for leaping one hundred yojanas across the ocean and was full of vigor, they became overjoyed, shouting loudly and glorifying Hanumān. Standing all around him, they were jubilant and amazed, even as were all beings when they saw the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa display His form as Trivikrama. As Hanumān was being praised, he continued to grow in size, swirling his tail around joyfully as he remembered his own strength. While Hanumān was being praised by the elder monkeys and was becoming surcharged with energy, he looked exceptionally beautiful. As a lion stretches himself out in a spacious mountain den, so did Hanumān, the son of the wind god, stretch himself in size. When Hanuman yawned, his open mouth resembled a red-hot pan or a smokeless fire. With his hair standing on end due to delight, Hanumān, rising up amidst the monkeys, addressed the senior monkeys in the following way:

“Shattering mountain peaks and circulating in space, the wind is the friend of fire and of immeasurable strength. I am the son of the wind god of rapid speed and movement. Thus no one is equal to me in leaping. I can circumambulate one thousand times the peak of Mount Meru, which seems to be scratching the sky. I can push the ocean away with the force of my arms to flood the world with its mountains, rivers and lakes. With my thighs and shanks I can stir up the ocean, bringing its huge crocodiles to the surface. I can circumambulate Garuḍa one thousand times as he flies through the sky. I can overtake the sun blazing with its wreath of rays when it rises from the east before it can set in the west. Then I can return with the same terribly rapid speed without ever setting foot on the earth, O best of monkeys.

“I can overtake all the luminaries in speed. I can dry up the ocean and tear the earth to pieces. I can crush mountains into powder by jumping



on them. Jumping with great speed, I can cross the ocean. The flowers from all kinds of trees and vines will follow me now when I leap through the air. Thus my journey across the sky will resemble the Milky Way. All living beings will see me leaping into the fearful sky, flying through the air and landing on the other side of the ocean. You will see me resembling a huge cloud, covering the heavens and swallowing the sky as I go. Crossing the sky with a concentrated mind, I shall rend clouds, shake mountains and dry up the sea.

“Such capability is found in Garuḍa, in the wind god, and in myself. Except for Garuḍa and the swift wind god, I do not see any created being who can follow me when I jump. In the twinkling of an eye, I shall suddenly leap into the supportless vault of heaven like a bolt of lightning sprung from a cloud. My form as I leap across the sea will resemble Lord Viṣṇu’s incarnation as Trivikrama when He crossed the universe with three steps. By my intelligence and mental effort I can see that I shall find Sītā. Therefore, rejoice, O you monkeys! Being equal to the wind god in speed and equal to Garuda in velocity, I believe that I can jump one thousand yojanas. By my prowess I can forcibly bring here the nectar of immortality from the hand of Indra bearing a thunderbolt, or even from Lord Brahmā. I think I can even pick up Laṅkā and take it elsewhere.”

Exultant and amazed, the monkeys there gazed as that monkey whose splendor was immeasurable boasted loudly. Upon hearing these words uttered by Hanumān which extinguished the anxiety of his comrades, Jāmbavān delightedly spoke to Hanumān as follows: “O son of the valiant Kesari! O son of the wind god! You have eliminated the tremendous anxiety of your comrades. Desiring your well-being, the assembled leaders will invoke a prayer of auspiciousness for your success. By the mercy of the sages, the approval of the elder monkeys and the mercy of your superiors, jump across the ocean! We shall stand on one leg until you return, for the lives of all the forest-dwelling monkeys depends on you.”

Then Hanumān said: “This place cannot bear the pressure caused by my jumping. Those peaks of Mount Mahendra, which is solid stone, are firm and large. Those peaks on which I shall exert pressure are thickly forested and adorned with mounds of minerals. They will be able to

withstand the pressing of my feet when I leap from there to a distance of one hundred yojanas.”

Then Hanumān, widely known as the son of the wind, climbed atop Mount Mahendra, which was covered with many kinds of trees, meadows frequented by deer, flowering creepers and trees that always bore fruits and flowers. That best of mountains was infested with lions and tigers and frequented by elephants in rut. It resounded with the sound of mating birds and was crowded with waterfalls. Hanumān, who was equal in prowess to Lord Indra, climbed Mount Mahendra, whose peaks jutted upwards steeply.

When that great mountain felt the pressure of Hanumān’s feet, it screamed like a elephant in rut being attacked by a lion. It released streams of water, its masses of rocks being crushed. Its deer and elephants became frightened and its tall trees shook. Nāga and gandharva couples, who were addicted to intoxication and sex, began abandoning that great peak, as did flying birds and groups of vidyādhars. While stones fell from the trembling peaks of the great mountain, snakes hide in holes. As the hissing snakes came halfway out of their holes, the mountain looked as if it were adorned with flags. When the mountain was abandoned by the sages who were perturbed by fear, it resembled a traveler without any companion in a large wilderness. Hanumān, who was dynamic, outstanding and the slayer of enemy warriors, composed his mind and mentally went to Laṅkā.