

= Trijata =

In the Hindu epic Ramayana , Trijata (Sanskrit : त्रिजाता , Trijaata) is a rakshasi (demoness) who is assigned the duty of guarding the kidnapped princess and goddess Sita , the heroine of the epic . Sita , the consort of Rama (the prince of Ayodhya and an avatar of the god Vishnu) , has been abducted by Ravana of Lanka , a demon king whom Trijata serves .

In the Ramayana , Trijata appears as a wise old rakshasi , who dreams of Ravana 's destruction and Rama 's victory . She accompanies Sita on a survey of the battlefield of the war between Rama and Ravana , and reassures Sita of Rama 's well @-@ being when Sita sees her husband unconscious and presumes him dead . In later Ramayana adaptations , Trijata becomes the daughter of Vibhishana , the brother of Ravana who sides with Rama . She plays a much greater role in later versions , especially Southeast Asian ones .

Barring a few exceptions where Trijata is cast as Ravana 's agent , she is generally portrayed as a friend and loyal companion of Sita in her adversity . On numerous occasions , she offers solace to Sita and brings news from the outside world ; she also dissuades Sita from committing suicide . After Rama 's victory and Ravana 's death , Trijata is richly rewarded by Sita and Rama . While some Ramayana adaptations mention her being a devotee of Rama , Southeast Asian versions often depict her as the wife of Rama 's monkey general Hanuman , whom she bears a son . She is worshipped as a local goddess in Varanasi and Ujjain ; both in India .

= = Names = =

While Indian , Javanese and Balinese versions of the Ramayana call her Trijata , she is known as Punukay in the Laotian Phra Lak Phra Lam , Benyaki in the Thai Ramakien and Devi Seri Jali in the Malay Hikayat Seri Rama .

= = The Ramayana = =

In the original Ramayana by Valmiki , Trijata is described as an aged rakshasi (demoness) who is prominently featured in two incidents . The first takes place in the Sundara Kanda , the epic 's fifth book . The kidnapped princess Sita is imprisoned in the Ashoka Vatika of Lanka . The demon @-@ king of Lanka , Ravana has ordered the raskshasis who guard Sita to convince her to marry him by any means possible , since Sita adamantly refuses and is still faithful to her husband Rama . After Ravana leaves , the rakshasis start to harass Sita to compel her to change her will . The aged Trijata intervenes and narrates a prophetic dream that predicts Ravana 's doom and Rama 's victory .

In her dream , Trijata sees Rama and his brother Lakshmana riding the celestial elephant Airavata toward Sita . Rama takes Sita in his lap and rises high in the sky , allowing Sita to touch the Sun and the Moon . Then the trio ride to Lanka and get into the Pushpaka Vimana (aerial chariot of Ravana) to fly towards the north , while Ravana , drenched in oil and with a red complexion , lies on the ground . Ravana then heads south on a donkey and falls in a pit of dung . A black woman in a red saree , drags him to the south . Other members of Ravana 's family , like his brother Kumbhakarna and son Indrajit , face similar fates . Ravana 's brother Vibishana is seen in regal white garments , riding a four tusked elephant near the Pushpaka Vimana . The city of Lanka drowns in the ocean and a monkey (vanara) messenger of Rama burns the city . Trijata advises the rakshasis to take refuge in Sita and apologize to her ; in turn , Sita promises that if Trijata 's dream materializes , she will protect her rakshasi guards .

The second incident is found in the sixth book , Yuddha Kanda . Rama and his brother Lakshmana come with a monkey army to rescue Sita from the clutches of the demon @-@ king . On the first day of war , Ravana 's son Indrajit binds the brothers with the weapon Nagapasha (serpent @-@ noose) and the brothers lose consciousness . Ravana sends Sita with Trijata to see the battlefield . Thinking her husband is dead , Sita laments , but is reassured by Trijata that the brothers are still alive . Trijata expresses her love for Sita and tells her that the captive 's " moral character and gentle

nature " have compelled her to love her .

= = Trijata and Vibhishana = =

In the Ramayana , Sita has few other rakshasi benefactors besides Trijata . When Hanuman ? the monkey @-@ general of Rama who was tasked to find Sita ? meets her in Lanka , she tells him that the wife of Vibhishana (the brother of Ravana who sides with Rama in the war) sent her daughter Kala (in other recensions of the Ramayana , known as Nanda or Anala) to proclaim Ravana 's intention to not surrender Sita to Rama , despite the advice of the wise minister Avindhya and Vibhishana . Another friend , Sarama , consoles Sita when Ravana shows Sita an illusory severed head of Rama . She also informs her of Rama 's well @-@ being and his entry in Lanka with his army . In some versions of the Ramayana , an interpolated canto mentions how Sarama also tells Sita of the burning of Lanka by Hanuman after his meeting with Sita . Ravana 's wife Mandodari is described to have rescued Sita in some versions , when Ravana tries to kill Sita . In later Rama @-@ centric literature , Sarama was identified as Vibhishana 's wife , while Trijata was regarded as his daughter .

The Tamil epic Kamba Ramayana , Govindaraja 's commentary on the Ramayana (Bhushana) , the Oriya Balaramadasa Ramayana , the Javanese Kakawin Ramayana and the Malay Seri Rama all accord the status of Vibhishana 's daughter to Trijata , a trend generally followed by post @-@ Ramayana literature . Though Govindaraja 's commentary on the Ramayana states that Trijata is Vibhishana 's daughter in the epic , Goldman considers this " strange " given her advanced age in the original epic .

A few works relate Trijata to Vibhishana in a position other than his daughter . The Ananda Ramayana and the Marathi Bhavartha Ramayana of Eknath regard Trijata as the wife and the sister of Vibhishana (thus sister of Ravana) respectively . The Jain version , the Vasudevahindi of Samghadasa Gani , says Trijata is a sister of Ravana , Vibhishana , Kumbhakarna , and Shurpanakha . Jayamangala 's commentary on the Bhattikavya also describes Trijata as Ravana 's sister .

= = Trijata and Sita = =

In later literature , Trijata plays the roles which were attributed to Kala , Sarama , and Mandodari in the original Ramayana . She becomes a more important character in Southeast Asian versions of the Ramayana , particularly in Indonesian retellings such as the Kakawin Ramayana .

In the Ramopakhyana (the narrative of Rama in the epic Mahabharata) , Sita informs Hanuman that Trijata brought her a message from Avindhya about the well @-@ being of Rama , and that he and Lakshmana will soon come to rescue her from Lanka . Trijata thus assumes the role assigned to Kala in the original Ramayana . The Raghuvamsa , the Setubandha , the Balaramadasa Ramayana , the Kakawin Ramayana and the Seri Rama all replace Sarama with Trijata in the episode where the truth of the illusory head of Rama is revealed to Sita . The Prasannaraghava has Trijata inform Sita about the burning of Lanka , instead of Sarama . The Balaramadasa Ramayana makes Trijata the saviour of Sita , when she stops Ravana from killing Sita in the Ashoka Vatika ; this role was originally assigned to Mandodari . Trijata again saves Sita 's life when a vengeful Ravana rushes to slay his captive after his son Indrajit is killed in the war . In the Ramayana , Suparshva ? a minister of Ravana ? stops him , while other adaptations attribute the act variously to Avindhya or Mandodari .

Besides crediting Trijata for acts attributed to others in the original epic , later literature adds new elements which grant Trijata a bigger role . In the Ramayana , just before meeting Hanuman , the thought of suicide crosses Sita 's mind , but she never attempts it . In the Prasannaraghava , Trijata and Sita engage in a " friendly conversation " before Ravana comes to meet her . After Ravana 's departure , Sita tells Trijata of her intent to commit suicide and urges Trijata to help her create a wood pyre . Trijata , however , refuses , saying there is not enough firewood . The Kakawin Ramayana also narrates that , when Sita sees the illusory severed heads of Rama and Lakshmana ,

she prepares a pyre . Trijata is ready to die with Sita , but first wants to inform her father Vibhishana . She returns with the news of Rama 's well @-@ being . Later on , after seeing Rama and Lakshmana bound by Indrajit 's Nagapasha , Sita instructs Trijata to again create a pyre , but Trijata holds off until she can confirm the truth from her father , and returns with the news that Rama is alive .

Many adaptations of the Ramayana narrate the friendship and companionship developed between Trijata and Sita . Trijata fulfils two important objectives : she comforts Sita and constantly updates Sita about the happenings of the war and the welfare of Rama . The Balaramadasa Ramayana describes Trijata assuaging Sita 's grief when they hear that Indrajit has wounded Rama and Lakshmana a second time . In the Balaramayana of Rajasekhara , Trijata employs two rakshasas to bring her news from the battlefield . The Ananda Ramayana narrates that , upon hearing Lakshmana 's conch sound , Sita urges Trijata to find out what has happened . Trijata learns of the death of Indrajit by Lakshmana and passes the news to Sita . The Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas also depicts Trijata breaking the news of Indrajit 's death to Sita , upon her inquiry . In another episode in the text , the two discuss the impending duel between Rama and Ravana on the final day of war . Sita is concerned that the ten @-@ headed Ravana is invincible and will magically regrow his severed heads . Trijata reassures Sita that Rama will slay Ravana by shooting an arrow through the demon @-@ king 's heart . The text emphasizes that Trijata is a devotee of Rama , a feature also found in the Bhavartha Ramayana .

The Kakawin Ramayana says that , when Sita is tormented by her 300 rakshasi guards , only Trijata comes to her rescue and offers her solace , keeping her company and playing games with her . In the Seri Rama , Trijata (here called " Dewi Srihati ") is in charge of Sita 's custody in Lanka . Sita tells Ravana that she will not even consider Ravana 's marriage proposal while her husband is alive , and will believe he 's dead only if she sees his head in Ravana 's hands . To trick Sita , Ravana visits her with two heads and proclaims that they belong to Rama and Lakshmana , but Trijata stops him and asks him to return the next day . She presents the heads to Sita , who decides to commit suicide , but Trijata asks her to wait until she can verify the truth . Carrying Sita 's dagger , she meets Rama and in return receives a girdle woven by Sita from Rama . She is carried back to Lanka by Hanuman . When Ravana arrives the next day , Trijata rebukes him for his deception and informs him that she had met Rama herself the previous day . An enraged Ravana tries to kill Trijata , who runs and seeks refuge in Sita , who takes all the blame . Trijata is recused of her duties and Sita is transferred to an iron castle , guarded by an army commanded by one of Ravana 's ministers .

= = Trijata as Ravana 's agent = =

While Trijata is generally portrayed in a positive light , the early Jain versions of the Ramayana either ignore her or demonize her as an agent of Ravana . Svayambhudeva 's Paumacriu , as well as Hemachandra 's Yogashastra and Ramayana , say that when Hanuman meets Sita and shows her Rama 's signet @-@ ring , Sita is overjoyed ; Trijata reports this to her master Ravana . Hemachandra emphasizes that Trijata 's job was to " tempt " Sita at Ravana 's behest . The Krittivasi Ramayana , possibly influenced by Jain narratives , portrays Trijata appealing to Sita to wed Ravana and rule as the queen of Lanka ; it is Sarama who functions as Sita 's friend in this version .

= = After the war = =

Numerous Ramayana adaptations record the gratitude of Sita and Rama who reward Trijata richly . In the Mahabharata version , Trijata is rewarded and honoured by Rama at the end of the war .

The Balaramayana mentions that after the war , Trijata accompanies Sita to her kingdom Ayodhya in the Pushpaka Vimana ; Rama uses the Pushpaka Vimana to return to Ayodhya . In the Ananda Ramayana , both Trijata and Sarama journey to Ayodhya in the Pushpaka Vimana . Later , when Sita visits Lanka , she tells Sarama to treat Trijata as if she would her . The Kakawin Ramayana mentions how Trijata is honoured with rich gifts by Sita at Ayodhya as her loyal companion and

solace , and the one who saved her life twice .

The oldest Indian manuscript to mention Trijata 's presence in Ayodhya is the Paumacriu . Many suggest that , after Sita 's exile and the subsequent battle between Rama and his sons , Sita be reaccepted by Rama . Trijata and Lankasundari are called from Lanka to attest to Sita 's chastity and both of them suggest an ordeal to convince the world of her purity .

In the Thai Ramakien , Hanuman helps Vibhishana (here called Phipek) kill a demon . Hanuman then marries Trijata (Benchakai) ; their union results in the birth of a son , Asurapada , a demon with a monkey head . In the Malay version , after the great war , Vibhishana requests that Hanuman wed his daughter Trijata (Seri Jati) . Hanuman agrees , on the condition that he remain with her for only a month . While Hanuman leaves for Ayodhya with Rama , Trijata gives birth to his son Hanuman Tegangga (Asurapada) . The Javanese Wayang golek puppet tradition also portrays Trijata as the wife of Hanuman .

= = Remembrance and assessment = =

Trijata is remembered as a friend and loyal companion of Sita in her time of need . Camille Bulcke , an expert on the literature of Rama , summarizes Trijata 's character :

For more than twenty centuries the poets , who retold the Rama @-@ story , have dealt lovingly on Trijat? 's friendship for S?t? . [...] [Trijat?] conquered the heart of those poets , and through them , the heart of all those who become acquainted with the Rama @-@ story . [...] the poets of the R?m?yana [...] conferred on the humble Trijat? the boon of immortality . No dream is better known in India than the dream of Trijat? , who will live for ever in the hearts of millions as the ideal of a true friend , because she comforted S?t? in her darkest hour : A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED .

A temple dedicated to Trijata (called Tirjata in this region) is situated near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple , the most prominent temple in Varanasi . As per local lore , Trijata wanted to accompany Sita to Ayodhya , but Sita said that she would not be allowed in Ayodhya as she was a demoness . Sita suggested her to visit Varanasi and attain moksha (emancipation) and blessed her to be worshipped as a goddess . Trijata enjoys daily worship as a local goddess . Flowers and green vegetables are offered to appease her . Women - who worship at her shrine for seven consecutive Wednesdays - are believed to be blessed with progeny and with the goddess ' protective glaze on their family . Many devotees flock the shrine on Kartik Poornima , the last day of the Hindu month of Kartik and its next day , the first day of Margashirsha month . It is believed that the goddess will fulfill the wishes of all who worship at her shrine , after paying obeisance at Kashi Vishwanath Temple on Kartik Poornima . On the first day of Margashirsha , worshippers who had observed a vrata (fast) in the previous month of Kartik conclude the vrata by bathing in the Ganges at the Dashashwamedh Ghat in the name of Trijata . Local lore holds that Rama granted a boon to Trijata : those who do not bathe in her honour after observing the vrata will lose all merit (punya) ? gained from the fast ? to her .

A temple of Trijata also exists in the temple complex of Balveer Hanuman Temple , Ujjain . Special puja (worship rituals) is offered to the goddess for 3 days , starting from Kartik Poornima .

In the Telugu Sita Puranamu , Ramaswami Chaudari portrays Trijata as the daughter of the Dravidian Vibhishana and the Aryan Gandharva Sarama . Trijata , a half @-@ Aryan , is labelled a traitor , who betrays her uncle Ravana and helps Sita . Vibhishana 's betrayal towards his brother and defection to Rama is also blamed on his Aryan wife .