

draw a picture of Rāvaṇa. Sītā drew on a piece of 'sitting-plank' Rāvaṇa's figure with the ten heads. Kaikeyī took away the picture on the pretext of exhibiting it in the ladies' quarters, and gave it to Rāma, when he returned from hunting, to sit on at the time of Pūjā (worship). Rāma got angry to find Rāvaṇa's picture drawn on the 'sitting plank'. Kaikeyī then told him that it was Sītā, who had drawn the picture and also that she usually praised Laṅkā and Rāvaṇa. Rāma pronounced the death penalty on Sītā for having drawn Rāvaṇa's picture. The inmates of the palace shuddered to hear the judgement. When Lakṣmaṇa seated Sītā on the floor to kill her, Bhūmidevī (earth) rent itself open into two and carried her off through the opening.

Śrī Rāma grew sadder and sadder following the disappearance of Sītā. Ill omens began to appear in Ayodhyā in increasing measure. One day a divine Ṛṣi whom the people of Ayodhyā had not seen till then, came to Rāma's palace. He told Rāma that he had to impart certain secrets to the latter and after making Rāma vow that no one would enter the room while they were conversing and that if any one did come when they were talking, he should either be killed or forsaken for ever, he began to talk with Rāma in a secluded spot. Rāma posted Lakṣmaṇa at the entrance with the strict injunctions that nobody should come into their presence. Within a short time great munis like Sanaka came there and told Lakṣmaṇa that they wanted to see Rāma. They were not prepared to wait even for a short time as requested by Lakṣmaṇa, but threatened ruin to the royal family. Lakṣmaṇa then, was prepared to suffer the consequence, and went to Rāma and told him about the arrival of Sanaka and others. Rāma, in keeping with his vow, banished Lakṣmaṇa immediately. But, when Rāma came out and looked for Sanaka and others no one was to be found anywhere there. When he returned to the inner apartment the Ṛṣi also was not to be seen. In fact they were Kāla and his emissaries deputed by Brahmā to recall Rāma as the object of his incarnation was already achieved.

Rāma, who had already been suffering mental agony on account of Sītā's departure, lost all peace of mind as Lakṣmaṇa's banishment followed Sītā's departure. He decided to put an end to his life for which purpose he went to the river Sarayū. All the dependants followed him. While the great mass of people who thronged both the banks of the river burst out into weeping Śrī Rāma and his followers drowned themselves in the waters of the Sarayū, and their spirits attained Vaiṣṇava. (Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Kamba Rāmāyaṇa and Tulasīdāsa Rāmāyaṇa).

RĀMAHRADA. A holy place on the boundary of Kurukṣetra. Ambā, daughter of a King of Kāśī once bathed here. (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 186, Verse 28).

RĀMAKA. A mountain. Sahadeva, during his triumphal tour of the south, conquered this mountain. (Sabhā Parva, Chapter 31, Verse 68).

RAMAṆA I. A son born to the Vasu known as Soma of his wife Manoharā. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 66, Verse 22).

RAMAṆACĪNA. A particular region in ancient India. (Bhīṣma Parva, Chapter 9, Verse 66).

RAMAṆA (M). (RAMAṆAKAM). An island near Dvārakā where, according to Chapter 38 of the Southern Text of Bhārata, there was a forest. It was in this island that Vinatā, mother of Garuḍa and Kadrū, mother of the nāgas lived. Garuḍa, after freeing his mother from her slavery evicted the nāgas from this island. (Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇa, Chapter 17). Following the eviction, many of the prominent nāgas lived in Pātāla. But, Kāliya, in fear of Garuḍa, lived in Kāṇḍī. After his suppression by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kāliya, with his family, as advised by Kṛṣṇa returned to Ramaṇakam. (Bhāgavata, 10th Skandha).

RAMAṆAKA. The third son of Yajñabāhu, son of Priyavrata. (Bhāgavata, 5th Skandha).

RAMAṆIYAKA. The island called Ramaṇakam where the nāgas live. (See under Ramaṇaka).

RAMAṬHA (S). I. A mleccha tribe who lived in the kingdom of Māndhātā. (Śānti Parva, Chapter 61, Verse 14).

RAMAṬHA (S). II. People of a low caste (mlecchas) who lived in South India during Purāṇic times. Nakula, subjugated this caste, and from that day onwards they became devoted to the Pāṇḍavas. They were invited to the Rājasūya conducted by Yudhiṣṭhira. (Vana Parva, Chapter 51, Verse 25).

RAMATĪRTHA I. A holy place in the river Gomatī. He who bathes in this tīrtha will derive the results of performing the Aśvamedha yajña. (Vana Parva, Chapter 34, Verse 73).

RAMATĪRTHA II. A holy spot on the top of the Mahendra mountain where Paraśurāma lived. A bath here brings the benefits of performing the aśvamedha yajña. (Vana Parva, Chapter 85, Verse 17).

RAMATĪRTHA III. A holy place in the plains of river Sarasvatī. (Śalya Parva, Chapter 49, Verse 7).

RĀMĀYAṆA.

1) *General.* Rāmāyaṇa is considered to be the first poetic composition in the world or at least in India, and hence it is called the Ādi Kāvya (First Epic). It is an epic as it contains descriptions and references to ancient themes. Vālmiki is its author, and hence Vālmiki is known as the 'Ādi kavi' also. Vālmiki and Śrī Rāma were contemporaries. During his life in exile in the forest Rāma visited Vālmiki's āśrama. It was in this āśrama that Sītā lived after being abandoned by Rāma. The connection in many ways of the life of Vālmiki with the 'Rāma story' was an incentive for him to write the Rāmāyaṇa.

2) *Composing of Rāmāyaṇa.* Once while returning from the river Tamasā Vālmiki witnessed a hunter shooting down one of a Krauñca (a kind of bird) couple. The intense emotion created by the incident burst out as follows in verse form.

Mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhām tvamagamah
śāsvatīḥ samāḥ /
Yat krauñcamithunādekamavadhiḥ
kāmamohitam. //

Immediately Brahmā appeared on the scene and advised Vālmiki to write the story of Rāma in the same pattern as that verse. Brahmā taught him about the past and the future of the history of Rāma. As Sītā, Kuśa, and Lava were living in his āśrama Vālmiki was well in the know about the present. In the above