

given to Rāma and also told him the following three words of recognition so that Rāma might be all the more convinced.

(1) When Rāma first came to the garden near the palace in Mithilā I (Sītā) saw his reflection in the blue mirror in the veranda of my palace and the beauty of the reflection attracted me. I looked towards the garden to see the original of the reflection. Then he (Rāma) was looking down into the waters of the glass pond. He also saw my face reflected in the water and suddenly he looked at me. Our eyes met and in all shyness I hurried to and hid myself in the ladies' quarters.

(2) Before our wedding I sent him through a faithful maid, a love letter to which he gave me a suitable reply.

(3) After our wedding while we were living in Ayodhyā when one day I returned to our bedroom after a long chitchat with my younger sisters, my lord (Rāma) was lying on the cot in feigned sleep. Quietly I went up to him and kissed him on the lips. Because of the pressure on his lips and as my breast then touched his chest he pretended to have suddenly woken up and embraced me.

Having received thus from Sītā the Cūḍāmaṇi and these words of recognition Hanūmān took leave of Sītā and with her implied sanction went about to have a look at Laṅkā. At one place he heard Vibhīṣaṇa reciting Viṣṇu's names. After wishing that this house of the devotee should turn into a royal abode he passed Vibhīṣaṇa's house. Then he came to Rāvaṇa's palace and gathered information about the Rākṣasa power. "Now I must see Rāvaṇa in person, let him know personally the fact of my visit and I would give him righteous advice"—with this object in view Hanūmān began destroying the garden. He drove away the Rākṣasas, who came to punish him and some of them were killed. At last Meghanāda (Indrajit) attacked Hanūmān. Hiding in the sky he shot the Brahmāstra against Hanūmān, who yielded to it. The Rākṣasas took Hanūmān captive to Rāvaṇa. He freed himself of the cords that bound him, extended his tail which he shaped into circles, one over the other so that the last one rose more in height than Rāvaṇa's throne and seated himself on its top. Rāvaṇa and Hanūmān then began a conversation. Rāvaṇa, who got angry at the disrespect shown to him by Hanūmān, ordered the latter to be killed, but Vibhīṣaṇa opposed it saying that to kill emissaries and messengers was worse than killing one's own mother. Finally Rāvaṇa ordered that Hanūmān's tail be set fire to and he be insulted and humiliated.

Immediately Rākṣasas began to cover Hanūmān's tail with clothes. But, this tail began growing longer and longer with the result that no quantity of clothings sufficed to completely cover the ever-extending tail. At last the Rākṣasas poured oil over the tail and set fire to it. Then Hanūmān broke loose from captivity and jumped up into the air causing universal disaster by fire in Laṅkā. The fire did not affect the palace of Vibhīṣaṇa and also the platform around the Śimśapā tree where Sītā sat. After thus burning down Laṅkā Hanūmān extinguished the fire on his tail by dipping it in the ocean. Taking leave once again of Sītā, Hanūmān crossed the sea and reached Mahendragiri.

29) *Rāma-Rāvaṇa war.* Śrī Rāma and Sugrīva, who received Hanūmān's report about his visit to Laṅkā started for it with an army of monkeys. They camped on the shores of the south sea. Rāvaṇa held a meeting of his war council attended by his brothers and others. He expelled Vibhīṣaṇa, who opposed war and advised his brother to return Sītā to Rāma and to apologise to him. Vibhīṣaṇa quitted Laṅkā and took refuge with Rāma.

Rāma and others, who had assembled on the sea-shore decided to build a bund to Laṅkā. The first thing Rāma did, for the successful conclusion of the expedition, was to install a Śivaliṅga at Rāmeśvara. (See under Rāmeśvara). Then he prayed to Varuṇadeva for a passage across the sea. But, Varuṇa did not present himself and Śrī Rāma, angry with him, shot the āgneya (fiery) arrow into the heart of the sea when Varuṇa appeared, saluted him and advised him to build a bund across the sea. As a reward for Varuṇa Śrī Rāma, as requested by the former, killed with one arrow all the Rākṣasas, who lived in Gāndhāra island on the north-western shore of the ocean. Varuṇa returned to his abode. The construction of the bund was begun under the leadership of Sugrīva with Nala as chief planner and Nila as his co-planner. Jāmbavān and Hanūmān functioned as supervisors and other monkeys as workers. Mountains, hills, rocks etc. were brought from various quarters and the construction of the bund was begun.

Meanwhile, Rāvaṇa sent a great magician called Marutta disguised as King Janaka to Sītā to convert her to the side of Rāvaṇa. But, the attempt failed. Rāvaṇa then sent his two expert spies, Śuka and Sāraṇa disguised as monkeys to Rāma's camp. Jāmbavān and Hanūmān captured and brought them before Sugrīva. Weepingly they both sought refuge in Rāma, who set them free. They returned to Laṅkā and reported matters to Rāvaṇa, who felt a desire to have a look at Rāma for which purpose he, with his attendants, climbed to the top of the northern tower. Rāma, who knew about it by his spies climbed the heights of Subela mountain whence he stared at Rāvaṇa. Their eyes met in anger seeing which Sugrīva by one leap reached Rāvaṇa and kicked off to Rāma the crown from the central head of Rāvaṇa. After performing something like a destructive dance on Rāvaṇa's head Sugrīva by another leap returned to Rāma.

Full of disappointment Rāvaṇa returned to his palace. His father-in-law, Mālyavān, tried his best to dissuade Rāvaṇa from war, all to no purpose. Rāma sent an emissary to him to ask him to send Sītā back. Rāvaṇa declined to oblige, and immediately war began. During the first day of the war, the majority of the Rākṣasas including their great leaders like Mahābāhu, Mahāpārśva, Mahodara, Mahākāya etc. were killed. On the second day the Rākṣasa army under the command of Atikāya, son of Rāvaṇa, set out from the northern tower to fight. Lakṣmaṇa killed Atikāya with Brahmāstra. The other two Rākṣasa-commanders were Trīśiras and Meghanāda. Lakṣmaṇa encountered them. When the latter failed to win by righteous fighting he resorted to cunningness. That too did not bring victory to him, and then he hid himself in the sky and shot the nāgīstra given to him by Śiva against the enemy. That arrow rendered Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva and all the