

THE RĀMA STORY IN THE THAI CULTURAL TRADITION

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The Rāma story in Thai cultural tradition is represented in folklore as well as in various forms of artistic expression such as shadow-play, dance-drama, sculpture, painting, and literature.

1. The Rāma Story and Thai Folklore

The Thai people since the ancient times have believed that the Rāma story was set on Thai soil, and consequently some of the cities, towns, villages, mountains, and lakes have been popularly associated with the legend.¹ Thus, for example, the new city founded by the Thai king U Thong in 1350 A.D., was called Ayuthayā after the name of Ayōdhyā, the capital city of king Daśaratha and his successor Rāma. It is also noteworthy that the name Ayuthayā still forms part of the official name of Bangkok, which is the present-day capital of Thailand.² A town, situated north of Ayuthayā in Thailand, is called Lopburi (Lavapuri) and it is associated with Rāma's son Lava. The same town has also been given a nickname, that is, Nophburi (Navapuri), which is connected with Hanumān. According to the Thai tradition, Rāma shot an arrow in the air, and Nophburi as a new city of Hanumān was built where Rāma's arrow fell. It is also believed that the heat from Rāma's arrow turned the ground around the town white hot and therefore the ground has remained white and fertile to the present. Moreover, as a proof of the town's relationship with Hanumān, the local authorities are said to have founded a colony of monkeys on a rock near the centre of the town. The village named Kukhan near Sisaket is named after the king of the hunters Kukhan or Guha, who is also said to have ruled a kingdom known as Buriram, which is the name of a town near Sisaket. It is believed that the medicinal herbs, found by Hanumān to resuscitate the dead, are still to be found on a mountain called Khao Sanphaya near Lopburi. The flat area atop the mountain is said to have been formed by Hanumān in tossing his tail around the summit of the mountain like a lasso to obtain the herbs. The water of a lake known as Thale Chup Son is considered to be sacred, because Rāma is believed to have immersed his arrow in the lake. In 1854

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1. Sathien Koset (Phya Anuman Rajadon), *Upakorn Rāmakien* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2495, A.D. 1952), pp. 181 ff.; C. Velder. "Notes on the Rāma Saga in Thailand," *JSS.*, Vol. 56, pt. 1 (January 1968), pp. 44-46.

2. The principal portion of the official name of Bangkok is as follows: *Krunghēbmahānakhorn buanratanakosin mahintharāyuthayā mahādilokphob nopharatrāchathaniburrom.*

A.D., the weapons of the Thai king Moṅkut were sprinkled with the water of the lake in order to strengthen them by the power of Rāma.

The impact of the Rāma story in the Thai folk tradition is also evident from several expressions of proverbial value, which are traceable to the Rāma story. Thus, for example, 'to fly further from Laṅkā' means 'to overdo something' and this expression is apparently derived from the episode in which Hanumān during his journey towards Laṅkā is said to have flown beyond Laṅkā, because of his enthusiasm to find the whereabouts of Sītā quickly. The expression "To measure the hoofprint" means 'to be disrespectful to one's parents' and this meaning is connected with the episode in which the buffalo named Thōraphī measures his hoof in the hoofprint of his father, because he wants to kill him as soon as he is grown up. In the same sense, the saying 'a child like Thōraphī' is used of one who does not obey his parents. The expression 'Oṅkot (Aṅgada) rolls his tail' refers to a boaster, because Oṅkot rolls up his tail and sits on it in order to be of equal height with Rāvaṇa. The name Thosakan (Daśakaṅṭha, or Rāvaṇa) is used to refer to one, who does not have good manners. The expression 'beautiful as Sītā' is considered to be the highest compliment to be paid to a girl of great beauty. If she has finely drawn eyebrows, the expression 'her brows are drawn like the bow of Rāma' is used. The Rāma story is also connected with magic incantations, and it is also believed that one who is able to read the complete story in seven days and seven nights can cause rain to fall for three days and three nights.

As regards the Thai folk versions of the Rāma story, a recent comparative study of the Thai folk versions entitled *Phra Lak-Phra Lam, Rāma Jātaka, Horaman, Prommachak* and *Rāmakīen* has shown that the Rāma story in the course of transmission as folk tales has undergone several changes of detail, expansion, reduction, and transposition. Changes of detail are to be found particularly in the *why*-motifs and the *how*-motifs of the various characters' deeds, and these variations are found to occur usually at the beginning, at the juncture and at the end of the story. Local folk tales have also helped to furnish new materials. For example, in the northeastern version of *Phar Lak-Phra Lam*, the *Nāga* ('serpent') is added as one of the most popular characters and there are episodes about a *Nāga* building a city for Rāma's ancestors, and the *Nāga*-king's daughters are given in marriage to both Rāma and Hanumān. It is also found that Rāma is turned into a typical folk romance hero, who takes a number of minor wives as he goes through the series of battles with the demons. Another characteristic of these folk versions is that they retain only the major characters such as Rāma, Sītā, Rāvaṇa, Vālin, Sugrīva and Hanumān. This reduction in the number of characters means a simplification of plot. Interchange or transposition of episodes and characters also occurs in the folk versions, and in some cases, Rāma, Rāvaṇa, Vālin and Sugrīva are said to be the offsprings of the same ancestors; Indrajit becomes Rāvaṇa's brother; and Vibhīṣaṇa is replaced by one of Rāvaṇa's sons. It would thus

seem that as the Rāma story passes through folk tradition, it undergoes changes and adapts itself to the local environment.¹

2. The Rāma Story and the Thai Shadow-Play

The basic repertoire of the Thai shadow-play known as the *Nang*² consists exclusively of the episodes drawn from the Rāma story.³ A favourite theme of the *Nang* in the ancient times is the campaign of war waged by Rāvaṇa's brothers Khorn (Khara), Thūt (Dūṣaṇa) and Trisian (Trīśiras) against Rāma and his companions after Rāvaṇa's sister Sammanakhā (Śūrpaṇakhā) is mutilated by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa when she tries to molest Sītā. The other popular episodes played by the *Nang* performers include the episode in which the demon Maiyarāb (Mahī Rāvaṇa) abducts Rāma, who is then rescued by Hanumān.⁴ It may be also noted in this connexion that the *Nang Yai* figures found in the Ledermuseum in Offenbach, Germany, depict other episodes such as Rāma

1. Siraporn Thitathan, *Rāmakien : A Study in Tale Transmission*, M.A. thesis, Department of Thai Language, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 1979.
2. The earliest known reference to the Thai shadow-play is to be found in the Palatine Law of the Thai king Boromatrailokanath, enacted in 1458. There is also a mention of the *Nang* in the *Romance of the Lady Nophamas*, which is an eighteenth century prose work depicting the royal court life of the thirteenth century Sukhothai kingdom. According to H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, the Thai *Nang* had its origin in the Sumatran-based Śrī Vijaya kingdom and since the time it reached the Menam valley in Thailand, it has developed into a distinctively Thai artistic form. There are two major types of the *Nang*, performed at night, and they are known as the *Nang Yai* ('Shadow-play of large hide-figures') and the *Nang Talung* ('Shadow-play of small hide-figures from Pattalung', a southern province of Thailand). When the *Nang Yai* is played, each large hide-figure of originally one two metres in size is held up by its two poles on either hand of the performer in front of a white screen, which is lit from behind. As the performer manipulates the figure, he bends and sways at the same time keeping time with his foot movements to the accompaniment of recitation of the episode and music. The smaller hide-figures of the *Nang Talung* are akin to those of the *Wayang Kulit* in Malaysia, and their movable arms and legs are manipulated by the performer from behind a screen. The third type of the Thai *Nang* is known as the *Nang Ram* or *Rabam*, and it used to be performed in day-time with coloured hide-figures. See Rene Nicolas, "Le théâtre d'ombres au Siam," *JSS.*, Vol. 21 (1927), pp. 37-51 and Plates 1-17; H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, *The Nang*, Thai Culture New Series No. 3, 3rd edition, Bangkok : The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962, 16 pp. and Plates.
3. Phya Anuman Rajadon, *A Brief Survey of Cultural Thailand* (Thailand Culture Series No. 2, 4th edition, Bangkok : The National Culture Institute, B.E. 2499, A.D. 1956), p. 13. According to H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, the repertoire of the *Nang* in the old times included a Thai poem entitled *Samudghos* of the seventeenth century A.D., and later also the romance of the Javanese hero Panji. H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, *The Nang* (Bangkok, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962), pp. 12-13.
4. H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, *The Nang* (Bangkok, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962), p. 12.

stringing the bow in the archery contest for the hand of Sītā, Rāma pitching camp on the seashore opposite the fortress of Rāvaṇa in Laṅkā and holding a council of war, Vibhīṣaṇa's daughter Beṇyakāy disguising herself as Sītā to float midstream as if dead near Rāma's camp in an attempt to dissuade Rāma from continuing his campaign of war, the building of the causeway, Aṅgada's mission to Laṅkā as Rāma's emissary, Hanumān's adventures, the battles of Rāvaṇa's son Indrajit, and the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa.¹

3. The Rāma Story and the Classical Thai Drama

The classical Thai dramatic art has in all times drawn its subjects from the Rāma story. For example, the repertoire of the Thai Masked Play known as the *Khōn*² is exclusively taken from the Rāma story. The performers of the *Khōn*, except those playing the divine and human roles, wear masks³ and enact the story to the accompaniment of music and the recitation of texts containing poetic versions of the story composed by ancient poets. The recitations by the master of the *Khōn* known as *K'on P'ak*, are of two kinds, namely, the *K'am P'āk* and the *Ceracā*. The *K'am P'āk* is the *chanda* poetry of the type specified as the *Kāb* (*Kāvya*), and the *Ceracā* is the dialogue in rhythmic prose known as *rāi*, which may also include description of action on stage.⁴ The classical dramatic version of the Rāma story in Thai, which is considered to be the most suitable for the presentation of the *Khōn* on stage, is that of king Phra Phutthaloetla (1809-1824 A.D.), who is also known as king Rāma II of the Cakrī dynasty.⁵ The greater number of episodes from the Rāma story presented in the *Khōn* relate to the various phases of battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. The most popular episodes presented in the *Khōn* by the Royal Department of Fine Arts in

1. H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, "Hide Figures of the Ramakīen at the Ledermuseum in Offenbach, Germany," *JSS.*, Vol. 53, pt. 1 (January 1965), pp. 61-66 and 88 plates.
2. H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat and Dhanit Yupho, *The Khōn*, Thai Culture New Series No. 6, 3rd edition, Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962.
3. Dhanit Yupho, *Khōn Masks*, Thai Culture New Series No. 7, 2nd edition, Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962. The masks worn by the performers playing the roles of the demonic and simian characters are of various kinds. For example, Rāvaṇa's mask is in the form of a two-tiered crown with the lower tier showing demonic faces and the top tier showing a celestial face. Vibhīṣaṇa's mask consists of a gourd-like crown. Hanumān wears a white coronet.
4. H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat and Dhanit Yupho, *The Khōn* (Bangkok, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962), pp. 3-4.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 6; *Bot Lakhon ruang Rāmakīen, Phrarachaniphon Somdet Phra Phuttaloetla naphalai* (Bangkok, 1956).

Bangkok include those relating to the abduction of Rāma by the demon Maiyarāb, Hanumān's journey to Lañkā, and the fire-ordeal of Sītā.¹

Another form of the classical Thai drama is known as *Lakhon*, and it is played by actors and actresses, who sing and speak on suitable occasions during the performances. Though the repertoire of the *Lakhon* is generally drawn from the romantic tales of kings and demons composed in verse for the purpose, the Rāma story also offers a wide range of subjects of the performance of the *Lakhon* to suit the tastes of the rural and the urban audience.²

4. The Rāma Story in Thai Sculpture and Painting

Both the oral and written tradition of the Rāma story is represented in the Thai fine arts such as sculpture and mural painting. The chief characters as well as episodes of the Rāma story form part of the decoration in Buddhist temples. For example, the Wat Phra Jetubon (Chethuphon) in Bangkok displays 152 marble panels of relief sculptures, which relate the episodes of the Rāma story from Rāvaṇa's abduction of Sītā to the fall of a demon known as Sahasadecha.³ Many temples show sculptures of the monkey warriors and the subdued demons as the guardians of doors in temples such as the Royal Temple and the Wat Arun in Bangkok. The doors of the Wat Phra Jetubon show scenes from the Rāma story inlaid in mother of pearl.⁴

As regards mural paintings, the oldest Thai murals from the Ayuthayā period (14th-18th centuries A.D.) depicting the Rāma story are to be seen in the cave of Yala.⁵ In Bangkok, several Buddhist temples are decorated with murals depicting the Rāma legend. The entourage of Rāma is seen on the walls between the windows of the *Wihān* in Wat Suthat dating from the mid-19th century A.D. The arcades of the Emerald Buddha temple in the compound of the Royal Palace are decorated with 178 panels of mural paintings depicting the Rāma story from king Janaka's discovery of Sītā to the final restoration of Sītā to Rāma.⁶ These murals date from the time of the Thai king Phra Nang Klao (1824-1851 A.D.), who is also known as king Rāma III, and they were renovated again in 1927 during the reign of king Prajadipok (1925-1935 A.D.), who is also known as King Rāma VII.

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1. Dhanit Yupho, *The Khōn and Lakon*, Dance dramas presented by the Department of Fine Arts (Bangkok : The Fine Arts Department, 1963), pp. 1-71.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-260.
 3. J.M. Cadet, *The Rāmakīen*, the Thai epic. Illustrated with the bas-reliefs of Wat Phra Jetubon, Bangkok. Tokyo : Kodansha International Ltd., 1971. These panels of sculptures are said to have been brought from Ayuthayā after the fall of the city in 1767 A.D. C. Velder, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
 4. C. Velder, "Notes on the Rāma Saga in Thailand," *JSS.*, Vol. 56, pt. 1 (January 1968), p. 43.
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
 6. *The Rāmakīen Murals*, Bangkok : Vanchalerm Kanchanamongkol World Press Co., Ltd., 1968.

5. The Rāma Story in Thai Literature

The earliest known reference in a Thai document to the Rāma legend occurs in the inscription of king Rāma Khamhaeng of 1292 A.D., which is also the earliest known record in Thai language. The inscription, while enumerating the geographical location of important sites in the Sukhothai kingdom, mentions two caves named after Rāma and Sītā near the Sampat river in the vicinity of the capital. Subsequently during the reign of the Ayuthayā ruler Rāmāthibodi in the fifteenth century A.D., two verses relating to the royal consecration of water refer to Rāma and his brother Lakṣmaṇa. Rāma's victory over the demons in Laṅkā is mentioned in a poem composed during the reign of king Boromatrailokanath (1448-1488 A.D.). King Daśaratha and Sītā are mentioned in some verses composed during the reign of king Phra Nārāy (1656-1688 A.D.), while another poem of the same period speaks of Rāma and his sacred arrow subduing the demons in Laṅkā. King Janaka's discovery of Sītā and Rāma's mutilation of Śūrpaṅakhā are mentioned in a *Lakhon* text, belonging to the eighteenth century A.D. During the Thonburi period (1768-1782 A.D.), Phraya Mahānuphab's *Nirat* poem, dealing with the theme of lovers' separation, refers to the episode, in which Rāma slays the demon Mārīca in the form of a golden deer.¹ Apart from these scattered references to the particular characters and episodes of the Rāma legend in various Thai literary works, there are also several early texts known as *Kham Phāk Rāmākien* and *Bot Lakhon Rāmākien* dealing with specific episodes of the Rāma legend, and some of them are believed to have been composed during the Ayuthayā period (1350-1767 A.D.) for the purpose of recitation in connexion with the shadow-play and other dramatic performances.² It is also evident from some of the surviving fragments of the early Thai literary versions that the Rāma story was well established in the Thai literary tradition during the Ayuthayā period.³ However, with the fall of Ayuthayā in 1767 A.D., almost all the works of Thai literature were lost. Subsequently in 1770, king Taksin of Thonburi is known to have composed a *Lakhon* version of the story,⁴ but this version only deals with certain adventures of Hanumān in Laṅkā and with the story of Rāma's son known as Moṅkut. Then, the first monarch of the Bangkok period king Phra Phuttha Yotfa, who is also known as king Rāma I of Cakri dynasty, initiated the task of collecting all the available materials pertaining to

1. Cf. Sathien Koset (Phya Anuman Rajadhon), *Upakorn Rāmākien* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department. B.E. 2495, A.D. 1952), pp. 170-173; C. Velder, "Notes on the Rama Saga in Thailand," *JSS.*, Vol 56, pt. 1 (January 1968). pp. 34-35.
2. Cf. P. Schweisguth, *Étude sur la Littérature Siamoise* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1951), pp. 395-397.
3. C. Velder, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
4. *Bot Lakhon Rāmākien Phrarachantphon Somdet Phra Cau Krung Thonburi*, Bangkok, B.E. 2484, A.D. 1942.

the Rāma story from the surviving oral and written sources, and in 1798 A.D., he composed the most comprehensive Thai literary version known as the *Rāmakīen*¹ (*Rāmakīrti*, 'Rāma's Glory'). Subsequently in 1815 A.D., king Phra Phutthaloetla (Rāma II) wrote a dramatic version suitable for the *Khōn* and *Lakhon* performances. Similar versions have also been composed by king Monkut (Rāma IV) in 1825 and by king Wachirawut (Rāma VI) in 1910.

6. The Sources of The Thai Rāmakīen

The question of the basic sources of the Thai *Rāmakīen* may be approached from the viewpoint of the geographical as well as the historical background of the Thai kingdom. From the geographical viewpoint, the Thai people have had as their neighbours the Laotians in the north, the Burmese in the west, the Khmers in the east and the Malays in the south. From the historical point of view, prior to the appearance of the Thai kingdom in the thirteenth century A.D., Menam valley, or what is now central Thailand, was peopled by the Mon-speaking people of the Indianized Dvāravatī kingdom and later it was also part of the Indianized Khmer empire, while the Malay Peninsula was under the influence of the Sumatran-based Śrī Vijaya empire. Therefore, when the Thai people began to inhabit the Menam valley as well as the northern region of the Malay Peninsula, they would have come in contact with several elements of the Indianized civilization of the areas, and the Rāma story was no doubt one of the popular elements, which they adopted.²

As regards the basic sources of the Thai literary version, it is geneally believed by Thai scholars that the Rāma legend in the form of oral tradition reached the Menam valley together with the shadow-play through the Malay Peninsula from the Śrī Vijaya empire.³ This view seems to be also supported by the fact that there is a great deal of similarity between the shadow-play versions of the Malay Peninsula and the Thai literary and dramatic versions in regard to several motifs and episodes of the

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1. *Rāmakīen Phrarachaniphon ratchakan thi I* (The Rāmakīen of the First Reign), 4 Vols. Bangkok: Khruusapha, 1951.
 2. Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *A Brief Survey of Cultural Thailand* (4th edition, Bangkok: The National Culture Institute, B.E. 2499, A.D. 1956). pp. 3-7.
 3. Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *Thai Literature in relation to the diffusion of her cultures* (2nd edition, Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2506, A.D. 1963), p. 10; H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, *The Nang* (3rd edition, Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962), pp. 5-6; H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat and Dhanit Yupho, *The Khōn* (3rd edition), Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962), pp. 5-6. See also P. Schweisguth, *Étude sur la Littérature Siamoise* (Paris: Imprimeria Nationale, 1951), pp. 63-65.

Rāma story.¹ Furthermore, it is also noteworthy that some of the earliest known texts in Thai dealing with certain episodes of the Rāma story are known to have been composed for the specific purpose of recitation during the shadow-play and other dramatic performances, and apparently some of these texts were also included in the collection of sources for the composition of the literary version.

Though there is no doubt that the Thai literary version was derived mainly from the oral sources, there is also reason to believe that certain literary versions from the Indian sub-continent were also used as the sources for the composition of the Thai *Rāmākīen* by king Rāma I, and these versions included the Sanskrit epic of Vālmiki as well as the Tamil, Bengali, and Hindi versions of the Rāma story.²

7. The Major Characteristics of the Rāmākīen

The *Rāmākīen*³ of king Rāma I is a long poetic version composed in Thai metrical *klon* verse form, written originally on 102 folios, each folio consisting of 24 pages, each page containing four lines of approximately 20 words each, and the entire work containing 52,086 verses and 195,840 words. It is to be noted, however, that, unlike the Indian versions, the *Rāmākīen* is not sub-divided either into major sections such as *kānda* or chapters, but for purposes of analysis, we may treat this work as consisting of three major parts, the first part dealing with the origin of the chief characters, the second part depicting the chief dramatic events of the story including the fall of Rāvaṇa, and the final part describing the events which occur after Rāma's conquest of Rāvaṇa.

A noteworthy feature of the first part of the *Rāmākīen* dealing with the origin of the chief characters is that it begins with the story of Phra Nārāy (Lord Nārāyaṇa,

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1. Cf. P.L. Amin Sweeney, *The Rāmāyaṇa and the Malay Shadow-Play* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972), pp. 206-255.
 2. C. Velder, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Phya Anumun Rajadhon. *A Brief Survey of Cultural Thailand* (Bangkok, B.E. 2499, A.D. 1956), p. 15; H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat and Dhanit Yupho, *The Khon* (Bangkok, B.E. 2505, A.D. 1962), pp. 5-6.
 3. *Rāmākīen Phrarachaniphon ratchakan thi 1* (The *Rāmākīen* of the First Reign), 4 Vols., Bangkok: Khruusapha, 1951, 2976 pp. A summary translation of the *Rāmākīen* in English by Swami Satyananda Puri and Charoen Sarahiran was published in 1940 and a reprint of it appeared in 1949. A German translation of the *Rāmākīen* by C. Velder was published in 1962, and an English translation of this work by R.A. Olsson was published in 1968. See *Rāmākīen (Rāmākīen) or the Thai version of the Rāmāyaṇa*, Summary translation by Swami Satyananda Puri and Charoen Sarahiran, Bangkok: Dharmashrama and Prachand Press, B.E. 2483, A.D. 1940; reprint, Bangkok: Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge and Satyananda Puri Foundation, 1949; C. Velder, *Der Kampf der Götter Und Dämonen*, Aus dem Thailandischen Rāmākīen übertragen und mit einem Nachwort versehen von C. Velder, Schwinfurt: Neues Forum, 1962; R.A. Olsson (Trans.), *The Rāmākīen*, A Prose Translation of the Thai Rāmāyaṇa, Bangkok: Prae-pittaya Company Limited Partnership, 1968.

or Viṣṇu) in the form of a boar vanquishing the demon Hiranyak (Hiranyākṣa),¹ and this is followed by an account of the origin and the antecedents of Rāvaṇa, who is known as Thosakan (Daśakanṭha). According to the *Rāmakīen*, Phra Isuan (Lord Ísvara, or Śíva) accords his servant Nonthok (Nandaka) a boon which will enable him to change his index finger into a diamond and destroy anyone at whom he points this finger, and as Nonthok begins to misuse his power, Phra Nārāy assumes the form of a charming young woman and dances in front of Nonthok, who also tries to imitate the the various movements of her hands. At a particular moment, Nonthok happens to point his diamond finger towards himself and instantly his bones are crushed by the power of his own finger.² Nonthok is later reborn as Thosakan, who is said to be the son of Lastiyan (Pulastya). Thosakan's mother, who is named Rachada, gives birth to four other sons named Phiphék (Vibhīṣaṇa), Kumphakan (Kumbhakarṇa), Khorn (Khara), and Thūt (Dūṣaṇa), and to a daughter named Sammanakhā (Śurpaṇakhā). Thosakan has also four other half-brothers named Kupēran (Kubēra), Tephanasun Aksarathāda, and Māran, who are born of Lastiyan's four other wives named Sumanta, Citramala, Suwanmala, and Prapai.³ Thosakan first marries Kāla Akhi, who is the daughter of Kāla Nākha (Kāla Nāga) of the Underworld, and later he receives Nāng Manthō Thēwī (Maṇḍodarī), who is said to have been created from a frog⁴ by four

1. The legend of the demon Hiraṇyākṣa rolling up the earth like a mat and tucking it under his armpit before vanishing into the Underworld, where he is vanquished by Lord Viṣṇu in the form of boar is to be found in the *Purānas* such as the *Narasimha-Purāna* and the *Bhāgavata-Purāna* (III, xvii-xix). This legend occurs as a prelude in the *Rāmakīen* apparently because of another legend to be found in the *Bhāgavata-Purāna* (III, xvi. 7-12; VII, i, 35-46) that Hiraṇyākṣa and his brother Hiranyakaśipu were the first of the three reincarnations of Lord Viṣṇu's gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya, to be later reborn as Rāvaṇa and his brother Kumbhakarṇa.
2. According to the *Skanda-Purāna* (V. 3.67) Lord Śíva bestows upon a demon named Kalapṛṣṭha the power of reducing anyone to ashes by touching the head of that person with his hand, and later when the demon wants to test his power on Lord Śíva himself, Lord Viṣṇu assumes the form of an enchantress and persuades the demon to place his hand on his own head and the demon is reduced to ashes.
3. See diagram on Rāvaṇa's genealogy in the *Rāmakīen*. The name *Lastiyan* appears to be a Tamil name-form, derived from *Pulastiyān*, or *Pulattiyān*, for the Sanskrit name *Pulastya*. The names *Kupēran* and *Māran* are also identical with the Tamil name-forms *Kubēraṇ* and *Māraṇ* for the Sanskrit names *Kubēra* and *Mūra*, though *Māran* does not figure as one of Rāvaṇa's brothers in the Tamil literary version of the story.
4. In the *Dharmaparikṣa* of the Jainist Amitagati, Maṇḍodarī's mother is said to be a frog-woman, who swallows the sperm of Maya the ascetic. Moreover, the motif of Nāng Manthō Thēwī being created from a frog is reminiscent of the Sanskrit term *maṇḍūka* meaning a 'frog'. Cf. A. Zieseniss *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia* (Singapore, 1963), p. 111.

sages, as a gift from Phra Isuan in appreciation of Thosakan's help in setting the Kailāsa mountain upright again after a demon named Virulhok has caused its tilting to one side.¹ The children, whom Thosakan begets during his conquest of the world, include a golden mermaid named Suphanna-Maccha, born of a fish, and two sons named Thosakirithorn and Thosakiriwan, born of a female elephant in the forest of Himaphan. Later he also begets a son by Nang Manthō Thēwī, and he is at first named Ronapak, but after his victory over Indra, he is called Inthorochit (Indrajit).

As regards the origin of the simian characters, Phālī (Vālin) and Sukhrīp (Sugrīva) are born of Kāla Acanā, the wife of king Khōdam (Gōtama), as the result of her adultery with Phra In (Indra) and Phra Āthit (Āditya, the sun-god), and when king Khōdam immerses them into a lake in order to test their legitimacy, they become monkeys and vanish into the forest. Phra In and Phra Āthit build a city known as Khidkhin (Kīṣkindhā) for their sons.² Phālī becomes the king of Khidkhin and Sukhrīp his deputy. When the Sumēn (Sumēru) mountain tilts to one side because of Rāmsāun hurling Phra Archun (Arjuna) at the mountain, Phālī and Sukhrīp help to push the mountain to its original position.³ Phra Isuan rewards Phālī with a trident and certain magic power which will transfer to Phālī half the strength of anyone who fights with him.⁴ Phra Isuan also rewards Sukhrīp with a beautiful young maiden

1. The role of Rāvaṇa in trying to uproot the mountain of Kailāsa in the Hindu versions such as the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki (VII, 16) and the Tamil *Uttarakāntam* of Oṭṭakkūttar (7 : 63-75) is apparently reversed to that of Rāvaṇa setting the mountain upright again in the *Rāmakien* (I, 134-144).
2. The story relating to the birth of Phālī and Sukhrīp in the *Rāmakien* would seem to be the result of the combination as well as the modification of two different motifs to be found in the Sanskrit version of Vālmīki, the Tamil version of Kambaṇ, and the Tamil *Uttarakāntam* of Oṭṭakkūttar, namely, the motif of Ahalyā, who is the wife of the sage Gautama, committing adultery with Indra, and the motif of a monkey king named Ṛksarajas jumping into a pool on the Meru mountain, being changed into a beautiful woman and later giving birth to Vālin and Sugrīva, who have Indra and Sūrya ('the sun-god') as their fathers, respectively. *RK.*, I, 72-86; *VR.*, I, 48; VII, the first of the interpolated chapters occurring between Ch. 37 and Ch. 38; *KR.*, I, 9 : 74-79; *IR (OU.)*, 11 : 43, pp. 920-921.
3. The details of this episode in the *Rāmakien*, such as the serpent Ananta wrapping himself around the Sumēru mountain, the gods and the demi-gods pulling the serpent while Phālī pushes the mountain to its original position, are reminiscent of the episode in the Tamil version of Kambaṇ (*KR.*, IV, 5 : 30, pp. 410-411), in which Vālin is depicted as helping the gods and the demons in churning the Ocean of Milk while holding the head and tail of the serpent Vāsuki, who wraps himself around the Mandara mountain.
4. The motif of Vālin taking away half the strength of his opponent is to be found in the Tamil version of Kambaṇ (*KR.*, IV, 3 : 40).

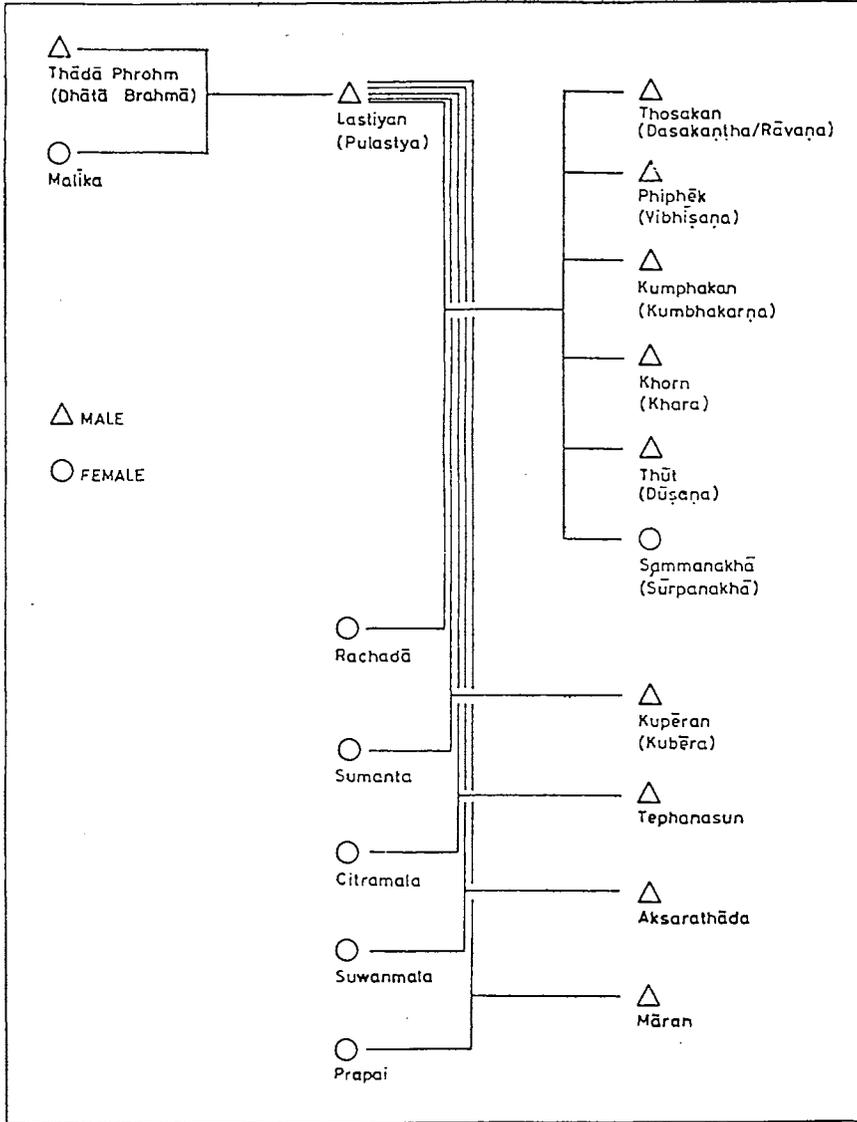


Fig. 1. The Genealogy of Ravana in the Thai Ramakien

named Dārā (Tārā), but Phālī takes her for himself. Subsequently, Phālī also seizes Thosakan's consort Nāng Manthō Thēwī and begets a son named Oṅkot (Aṅgada) before she is restored to Thosakan.¹

Another major episode, which leads to Phālī banishing Sukhrīp to the forest relates to Phālī's battle with a buffalo named Thōraphī. According to the *Rāmakiēn*,² Phra Isuan's gatekeeper Nonthakān (Nanthakāla) is reborn on earth as a buffalo named Thoraphā, who kills all the bull calves as soon as they are born, in order to perpetuate his stay in the forest on earth. However, one of the cows manages to run away from the herd soon after receiving Thōraphā's seed and gives birth to a son named Thōraphī secretly in a cave. After Thōraphī is told by his mother why he has not seen his father, he wants to kill his father. One day, Thōraphī goes out of the cave and matches the size of his hoof-prints with those of his father and finds that they are of the same size, and finally Thōraphā is gored to death by his own son. Phra Isuan curses Thōraphī for having killed his own father and tells him that he will be killed by Phālī and then he will be reborn as a demon named Monkonkan, to be killed by Rāma. Before Phālī goes to fight with Thōraphī in a cave, he tells Sukhrīp that, if the colour of the blood flowing out of the cave is bright red, it will signify Phālī's death. Therefore, when Sukhrīp sees bright red blood flowing from the cave, he assumes that Phālī is dead, and after having closed the exit of the cave, he becomes the ruler of Khidkhin. However, he is unaware that rain water has diluted the buffalo's dark thick blood and has made it appear to be bright red and that Phālī has in fact vanquished Thōraphī. After Phālī comes out of the cave, he banishes Sukhrīp to the forest, where Sukhrīp meets Hanumān, and they both practise asceticism.³

As regards Hanumān's birth, king Khōdam's wife Kāla Acanā curses her daughter named Sawāha to perform penance with her mouth open until she brings forth a monkey child as punishment for the exposure of her mother's adultery, and after the wind-god places Phra Isuan's celestial weapons in the mouth of Sawāha, Hanumān of white complexion is born of her mouth. Hanumān at first stays with

1. *RK.*, I, 146-163.

2. *RK.*, I, 212-217 and 432-450.

3. According to the Sanskrit epic of Vālmiki (*VR.*, IV, 11), Vālin kills a demon named Dundubhi, who assumes the form of a buffalo, and later Vālin also fights with Dundubhi's son named Māyāvi in a cavern, which is guarded by Sugrīva. After remaining at the mouth of the cavern for a whole year, Sugrīva sees blood mixed with foam flowing out of the cave, and assuming that Vālin is dead, he blocks the mouth of the cavern. However, Vālin comes out of the cavern after killing Māyāvi, and banishes Sugrīva to the forest, accusing him of treachery.

Phālī and Sukhrīp in accordance with Phra Isuan's command, and after Phālī banishes Sukhrīp to the forest, Hanumān becomes an ally of Sukhrīp.¹

As regards the lineage and birth of Rāma, who is known as Phra Rām in the *Rāmakīen*, his ancestors are said to be of divine origin, which is traced back to Phra Nārāy (Lord Nārāyaṇa, or Viṣṇu) through king Thosorot (Daśaratha), Achabān and Anomātan. Phra Rām himself is the reincarnation of Phra Nārāy, and his brothers Phra Lak (Laksana, or Lakṣmaṇa), Phra Phrot (Bharata), and Phra Satrud (Śatrughna) are the manifestations of Phra Nārāy's emblems, namely, the serpent Ananta, the discus, and the mace, respectively.² Phra Rām's consort Nāṅ Sīdā (Sītā) is also said to be the reincarnation of Phra Nārāy's consort Lakṣmī, but she is born as the daughter of Thosakan in Laṅkā and later becomes the adoptive daughter of king Chonok (Janaka) of Mithilā.³ The birth of Phra Rām, his brothers, and his consort Nāṅ Sīdā is caused by king Thosorot's queens Kausuriya (Kausalyā), Kaiyakēsī (Kaikēyī) and Samuthra Thewī (Sumitrā), and Thosakan's consort Nāṅ Manthō Thēwī partaking of the sacrificial meal of cooked rice, which is consecrated by a sage named Kalaikōt.⁴

1. *RK*, I, 82, 86-89 and 93-95. In the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki (*VR.*, IV, 66), as well as in the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, IV, 2 : 2, 3 and 16) and in the Tamil *Uttarakāṅṅam* (11 : 9), Hanumān is said to be the son of Vāyu ('the wind-god') and Añjana. According to other legends such as those to be found in the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, I, 5 : 27; *KKII.*, I, 5 : 28) and in the *Skanda-Purāṇa*, *Kēdārahanda*, Ch. 8), Hanumān is an aspect of Lord Śīva. It would therefore seem that the birth-story of Hanumān in the *Rāmakīen* is the result of combination and modification of different motifs such as Sawāha, instead of Añjana, being mentioned as the mother of Hanumān, Sawāha being mentioned as the sage Gautama's daughter, Gautama's wife cursing her daughter because of the betrayal of her adultery, and Lord Śīva (Phra Isuan) and the wind god playing a role in Hanumān's birth.
2. According to the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, I, 5 : 21-22; *KKII.*, I, 5 : 22-23), Lord Viṣṇu reincarnates himself as Rāma, while his emblems, namely the serpent Ananta, the discus, and the conch-shell are reborn as Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Śatrughna, respectively.
3. It is noteworthy that, while in the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki (*VR.*, I, 66) and the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, I, 12 : 16-17) Sīta is said to have appeared miraculously in the furrow to be adopted by king Janaka, and in the Jaina version entitled *Vasudevahīndī* of Saṅghadāsa, belonging to the fifth century A. D., Sīta is born as Rāvana's daughter, who is later adopted by king Janaka, in the *Rāmakīen* several elements such as the reincarnation of the goddess Lakṣmī as Sīta, her birth as the daughter of Rāvana, and king Janaka discovering her while ploughing the ground, are combined to present an elaborate motif of Sīta's birth and parentage.
4. The name-form *Kalaikōt* is identical with the Tamil name-form *Kalaikkōṭṭu-muṇi* occurring in the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, I, 5 : 36; *KKII.*, I, 5 : 37; *KR.*, I, 11 : 15) for the Sanskrit name *Ṛsyaśrṅga*.

The distinctive qualities of the *Rāmakīen* may be also seen in its second part, which deals with the main drama of the story covering such major episodes as Phra Rām's marriage to Nāng Sīdā, the banishment of Phra Rām, Thosakan's abduction of Nāng Sīdā, Phra Rām's meeting with Hanumān and Sukhrīp, the fall of Phālī, Hanumān's journey to Laṅkā, the building of the causeway, the battle in Laṅkā, the fall of Thosakan, Phra Rām's reunion with Nāng Sīdā and their return to Ayuthayā. The chief innovations to be found in these episodes of the second part include the following:

- (1) Phra Rām and Nāng Sīdā fall in love at first sight before the archery contest.¹
- (2) Queen Kaiyakēsi's hunch-back servant named Kucci, who bears a grudge against Phra Rām because of his childhood prank of taking shots at her hunch-back with bow and arrow,² instigates the queen to ask for the banishment of Phra Rām by reminding king Thosorot of his earlier promise of a boon in appreciation of the queen's help in averting the danger of the king's chariot breaking down during the battle against a demon named Pathuthan.
- (3) Phra Lak inadvertently kills Sammanakhā's son Kumphakat when the latter is performing penance in bamboo thickets.³
- (4) Sammanakhā assumes the form of a beautiful woman in an attempt to seduce Phra Rām and Phra Lak before she is punished by them.⁴
- (5) When Sadāyu (Jaṭāyu) boasts that Nāng Sīdā's ring is more powerful than himself, Thosakan snatches the ring from her finger and hurls it at Sadāyu, wounding him mortally, and Sadāyu holds up the ring on his beak until he is met by Phra Rām.⁵

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1. This motif is to be found in the Tamil version of Kamban (*KR.*, I, 10: 35-38) and it is reflective of the popular theme of premarital love, depicted in the classical Tamil poetry.
 2. A similar motif is also to be found in the Tamil version of Kamban (*KR.*, II, 2: 41) and in the Malay *Hikayat Serī Rāma* (*HSR.*, *SH.*, 60).
 3. According to Vimala Sūri's Jaina version entitled *Paumacariya*, Lakṣmaṇa inadvertently kills Candranakhā's son Śambūka when he practises asceticism in a bamboo thicket. Cf. A. Zieseniss, *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia* (Singapore, 1963), pp. 131-132.
 4. A similar motif is to be found in the Tamil version of Kamban (*KR.*, II, 5: 30-33) and in the Malay *Hikayat Seri Rama* (*HSR.*, *SH.*, 88).
 5. According to the Malay *Hikayat Serī Rāma*, Sītā drops her ring into the beak of Jaṭāyu to be given to Rāma. *HSR.*, *RO.*, 100; A. Zieseniss, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

- (6) When Hanumān sees Phra Rām sleeping in the lap of Phra Lak, he tries to awaken him by letting leaves fall on him and by snatching Phra Lak's bow and mocking at him. Subsequently, Phra Ram recognises Hanumān by his special features such as his earrings, which cannot be seen by anyone else except Phra Nārāy.¹
- (7) As Phra Rām cannot differentiate between Phālī and Sukhrīp at the time of their duel, he ties a piece of white cloth around the right wrist of Sukhrīp before he goes to fight with Phālī for the second time.²
- (8) When Phra Rām shoots his arrow at Phālī, he catches it in his hand and asks Phra Rām to stay out of fighting, and when Phra Rām asks for a mere drop of blood to rub on his arrow in order to fulfil Phra Isuan's decree, Phālī says that, as a noble warrior, he must fulfil every condition of Phra Isuan's decree, and then he plunges the arrow into himself.³
- (9) Phra Rām enlists the help of another monkey ruler named Mahā Chomphū in addition to the assistance of Sukhrīp and Hanumān.⁴
- (10) When Hanumān meets Nāng Sidā in Laṅkā, she asks for the marks of his identity, and Hanuman gives her ring and kerchief to her, and when she is not satisfied with these, Hanumān discloses the secret about the love at first sight, which is known to Phra Rām and herself only.⁵
- (11) After Hanumān is caught by Thosakan's son Inthorochit, he is set ablaze by Thosakan's diamond spear, and after reducing Laṅkā to ashes, Hanumān extinguishes the fire on his tail by sticking the tip of his tail into his mouth and at the same time pinching his nose.

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1. In the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., RO., 107-109), when Rāma is sleeping in the lap of Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān snatches the three arrows of Rāma from Lakṣmaṇa and disappears into the foliage of a tamarind tree, and later Rāma recognises Hanumān as his son by his earrings.
 2. According to the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (KR., IV, 7 : 52; KKII., IV, 7 : 61), on Rāma's suggestion, Sugrīva himself ties a wild creeper plant with flowers around his neck. In the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., RO., 114-115) Rāma winds a root around Sugrīva's body.
 3. In the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., RO., 115-117; SH, 108-109), when Rāma asks for the return of the arrow, Vālin replies that the arrow of Lord Viṣṇu must reach its target, and then as he flings the arrow towards the ground, it rises into the air, and swerving back, it pierces Vālin to death.
 4. A similar episode is to be found in the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., RO., 120-130), but not in the Sanskrit epic of Vālmiki, nor in the Tamil version of Kambaṅ. It may be also noted that the name of the monkey ruler, whose help is enlisted by Rāma, is given as Samburana in HSR.
 5. In the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (KR., IV, 13 : 67; KKII., IV, 12 : 67) as well as in the *Rāmakien* (RK., II, 102-103), before Hanumān's departure to Laṅkā, Rāma relates to him the secret of the love at first sight, known only to Rāma and Sītā, so that Hanumān may establish his identity by telling Sītā of the incident.

- (12) At the time of building the causeway, a quarrel breaks out between Hanumān and Mahā Chomphū's adoptive son Nilaphat, and Phra Rām orders Nilaphat to return to Khidkhin to take over the command of the city.
- (13) Thosakan asks his fish daughter Suphanna-Maccha to destroy the causeway,¹ but Hanumān wins over her friendship by making love to her, and Suphanna-Maccha later gives birth to a son named Macchanu who resembles Hanumān.²
- (14) Thosakan's brother Phiphēk (Vibhīṣaṇa) defects to Phra Rām after the monkey army has crossed over to Laṅkā.
- (15) At the command of Thosakan, Phiphēk's daughter named Beṅyakāy assumes the form of Nāṅ Sidā and floats up the river near Phra Rām's camp as though she is dead in an attempt to make Phra Rām give up his siege of Laṅkā, but Hanumān exposes her trickery. After Phra Rām forgives her, she is taken to Thosakan's palace, where Hanumān makes love to her, and subsequently she gives birth to Hanumān's son named Asuraphad.
- (16) Phra Rām's emissary Ongkot goes to Thosakan's palace, where he rolls up his tail and sits on it, so as to be on the same level as Thosakan.³
- (17) At the command of Thosakan, the king of the Underworld Maiyarāb abducts Phra Rām with the intention of killing him, but Hanumān rescues Phra Rām and kills Maiyarab.⁴

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1. In the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., RO., 141-143; SH., 158-159), Rāvaṇa's son Gaṅga Mahāsura instructs the fish in the sea to destroy the causeway, and Hanumān paralyses the fish by whipping the water with his tail.
2. According to the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., SH., 190-191), at the time of Hanumān's flight to Laṅkā across the sea, his sperm falls into the sea, and a fish swallows it and later gives birth to a son named Hanumān Tugangah, who is brought up by Rāvaṇa's son Gaṅga Mahasura.
3. In the Bengali version entitled *Aṅgader Raivāra*, composed by Kavicandra in the eighteenth century A.D., Angada elongates his tail, rolls it up and sits on it, so as to be on an equal level with Rāvaṇa. D. sen, *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 218-219.
4. According to the Bengali version entitled *Mahī Rāvaner Pālā*, composed by Kṛttivāsa in the fifteenth century A.D., Rāvaṇa's son Mahī Rāvaṇa abducts Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with the intention of sacrificing them to the goddess Kālī but Hanuman rescues them after slaying Mahī Rāvaṇa. In the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (HSR., SH., 184-194), Rāvaṇa's son Pātāla Mahārāyan abducts Rāma, but Hanumān rescues Rāma, and Pātāla Mahārāyan is killed by Rāma during the battle on the following day.

- (18) Kumphakan's magic spear known as *Mōkha Sakti* causes Phra Lak to faint, and Hanumān fetches the medicinal herbs to revive Phra Lak back to life.
- (19) Kumphakan at the point of his death sees Phra Rām with the attributes of Phra Nārāy and repents for not having heeded Phiphēk's advice.
- (20) Before Inthrochit is killed by Phra Rām, Aṅgada brings a diamond bowl from heaven to catch Inthrochit's head to avert conflagration of fire on earth.
- (21) Mūlaphalam (Mūlabala) is said to be the name of the deputy king of Phangtan.¹
- (22) After Phra Lak is struck with Thosakan's *Kabilaphat* spear, Hanumān brings the medicinal herbs, as well as the dung of the sacred bull Usuparat, a mortar belonging to Kāla Nākha of the Underworld, and a pestle kept by Thosakan under his pillow.²
- (23) Hanumān ties up Thosakan's hair with that of his wife, and the knot is untied only after Thosakan's wife strikes on his head three times.³
- (24) Thosakan's consort Nāṅ Manthō Thēwī prepares an elixir of life in order to revive all the dead demons, and Hanumān assumes the form of Thosakan and tells her to stop producing the elixir.
- (25) Hanumān and Oṅkot (Aṅgada) pretend to defect to Thosakan and take possession of the receptacle containing his soul from his teacher Khobutacan.
- (26) Hanumān crushes the receptacle containing Thosakan's soul when Phra Rām's arrow strikes Thosakan's chest, thus causing him to breathe his last.
- (27) Phra Rām himself ignites the logs of wood with his arrow for Nāṅ Sīdā's fire-ordeal.⁴

1. In the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki (*VR.*, VI, 94) and in the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, VI, 30: 2-3), the term *Mūlabala* (Mūlapalam in *KR*) refers to the reserve troops of Rāvaṇa. It may be also noted that the name-form *Mūlaphalam* in the *Rāmakīen* is identical with the Tamil name-form *Mūlapalam*.

2. In the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (*HSR.*, *SH.*, 241-245), Hanumān fetches the medicinal herbs as well as the stone from Rāvaṇa's bed-chamber to grind the herbs.

3. According to the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (*HSR.*, *SH.*, 245), Hanumān ties up Rāvaṇa's hair with that of his wife, and it is untied only after his wife inflicts a blow on his head.

4. In the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki (*VR.*, VI, 118) and in the Tamil version of Kambaṅ (*KR.*, VI, 37: 78-79), Lakṣmaṇa erects the pyre, and according to the Malay *Hikayat Sērī Rāma* (*HSR.*, *SH.*, 254-255), Hanumān erects the pyre for Sītā's fire-ordeal.

- (28) On Phiphēk's suggestion, Phra Rām destroys the causeway with his *Phralayawat* arrow after he and his companions return to the mainland from Lankā.¹
- (29) Phra Rām distributes the various parts of his kingdom to his brothers and the monkey warriors.
- (30) Phra Rām creates a new city known as Nophburi for Hanumān.

As regards the innovations introduced in the third part of the *Rāmakiēn*, the following episodes may be mentioned as examples:

- (1) Thosakan's son Phaina Suriyawong (Thosaphin), born of Nāng Manthō Thēwī after Thosakan's death, rebels against Phiphēk and imprisons him, but he is later vanquished by Phra Phrot.
- (2) Nāng Sīdā draws a picture of Thosakan on a slate at the request of a demoness named Adūn, who assumes the form of a beautiful maid,² and Phra Rām orders Phra Lak to take Nāng Sīdā to the forest and kill her. Phra Lak, however, leaves her in the forest and brings back the heart of a doe and shows it to Phra Rām as that of Nāng Sīdā.
- (3) Nāng Sīdā finds refuge with a sage named Wachamarik in the forest.
- (4) After Nāng Sīdā gives birth to a son named Phra Moṅkut, the sage Wachamarik creates another child named Phra Loph by drawing a picture of Phra Moṅkut on a magic slate and placing it in the sacred fire.³
- (5) As Nāng Sīdā refuses to return to Ayuthayā, Phra Rām resorts to the strategem of sending Hanumān to convey the false news of his death to her.
- (6) Nāng Sīdā is annoyed at being a victim of Phra Rām's trick and she disappears into the Underworld.

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1. According to the *Skanda-Purāna*, Rāma breaks the causeway into three parts in order to prevent men from entering Laṅkā. V. Raghavan, *The Greater Rāmāyaṇa* (Varanasi, 1973, p. 43.
2. According to the Bengali version of Candāvatī and the Malay *Hikayat Sēri Rāma* (HSR., SH., 268-270), Sītā draws the picture of Rāvaṇa on a fan at the request of Kaikēyī's daughter Kukuā (in the Bengali version) and Balyāṭārī's daughter Kikēwī Dēwī (in the Malay version). Cf. D. Sen, *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 196-200; A. Zieseniss, *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia* (Singapore 1963), p. 97.
3. Sōmadēva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (IX, *tarāṅga* 51, verses 86-93) refers to Rāma's son Kuśa being created by Vālmīki from the *kuśa* grass *Poa cynosuroides* after Sītā has already given birth to Lava. In the Malay *Hikayat Sēri Rāma* (HSR., SH., 271-272) Sītā's adoptive father Maharīsī Kalī creates a child named Gusī from a bundle of grass after Sītā has given birth to a son named Tablāwī.

- (7) Phra Rām vanquishes demons during his year-long self-imposed exile.
- (8) Phra Isuan brings together Phra Rām and Nāng Sīdā again.
- (9) Phra Rām's son Phra Moṅkut and Phra Loph liberate the kingdom of Kaiyakēt from the demon Khontanurat.¹

It would seem evident from the above examples of various episodes and motifs found in the three parts of the *Rōmakīen* that, though several of them are somewhat akin to certain elements of other versions of the Rāma story such as the Tamil version of Kamban, the Jaina version, the Bengali versions, and the Malay *Hikayat Serī Rāma*, nevertheless, there is considerable variation to be found in the final treatment of the story and its various episodes. In other words, the stories of Rāma, transmitted to the Thai people through the shadow-play as well as literary and oral sources, have not only been extended, but also transformed into a distinct work of literature.

8. CHARACTERISATION IN THE RĀMAKĪEN

The *Rāmakīen* portrays both the admirable and the undesirable character-traits to be found in the principal *dramatis personae* of the story. The chief character Phra Rām is said to be the reincarnation of Phra Nārāy (Lord Nārāyaṇa, or Viṣṇu), and as a ruler, who is endowed with supernatural powers, bravery, righteousness, munificence and compassion, Phra Rām is a model of kings.² At the same time, Phra Rām is also shown to be a human being, who, in a fit of great anger on seeing the picture of Thosakan, drawn by Nāng Sīdā, orders her to be put to death, but as he later repents for his hasty action, he merits the grace of Phra Isuan, who plays a commanding role in all critical situations. Phra Rām's consort Nāng Sīdā is depicted as the reincarnation of Phra Nārāy's consort Lakṣmī. She is beautiful in body and soul. Her faithful love for Phra Rām is imperturbable. All attempts made by Thosakan to seduce her cannot shake her firmness. Her steadfast character makes her an example for all women. However, Nāng Sīdā is also shown to be a gullible person, who goes to the

1. A South Indian folk tradition refers to Rāma's sons Kuśa and Lava conquering demons. Cf. B. Ziegebalg, *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter* (Madras, 1867), p. 133.
2. It may be noted in this connection that several of the Thai kings are known to have adopted the name Rāma as their royal title. For example, the Sukhothai ruler, who is also known to be the author of the earliest known Thai epigraphical document (1292 A.D.) was named Rāma Khamhaeng ('Rāma the Strong'). The first monarch of the Ayuthayā kingdom (1350 A.D.) was known as Rāmādhībodī (Rāmādhīpati). The rulers of the Cakrī dynasty of the present Bangkok period have also been given the title Rāma: Phra Phuttha Yotfa, King Rāma I (1782-1809), Phra Phutthaloetla, or King Rama II (1809-1824), Phra NangKlaw, or King Rāma III (1824-1851), King Moṅkut, or Rāma IV (1851-1868), King Chulalongkon, or Rāma V (1868-1910), King Wachirawut, or Rāma VI (1910-1925).

extent of casting aspersions on the character of Phra Lak, when he tries to assure her that Phra Rām is in no danger at the time of his pursuit of the golden deer. Phra Lak is the loyal brother of the king, and he is ever ready to fulfil any wish of Phra Rām and to accept and execute his orders. Hanumān is the foremost soldier of the king. His capability, devotion and sense of justice make him the ideal subordinate. Hanumān is, indeed, the favourite character of the Thai people, who adore him as a brave, shrewd, and happy warrior. He is the embodiment of all that expresses the freer and the unrestricted aspects of life. He is a great admirer of beautiful women, and he is neither celibate nor saintly as the Hanumān of the Hindu versions of the Rāma story. Phālī is a great hero and a capable leader, but he ruins himself through hybrid ambitions. Phiphēk is an astrologer, and his advice is constantly sought by Phra Rām in all critical situations. Thosakan is depicted as a complex character with human virtues as well as frailties. He is shown to be a great character, noted for his strength, and resourcefulness, and his action in abducting Nāng Sīdā is shrouded in the noble motive of love, for which he is prepared to sacrifice his life. His fall is inevitable, but it evokes sadness and sympathy. Thus, the major characters of the *Rāmakien* represent human life in its different facets, and the Thai people regard them as examples of the human society, and this is the reason for the continuing popularity of the Rāma legend in the Thai society.

ABBREVIATIONS

- HSR* *Hikayat Sērī Rāma.*
- HSR., RO.* *Geschiedenis van Śrī Rāma*, beroemd Indische Heroisch Dichtstuk, oorspronkelijk van Vālmīc en naar eene Maleische vertaling daarvan in het Maleisch met Arabisch karakter, mitsgaders met eene Voorrede en plaat uitgegeven, door en voor rekening van P.P. Roorda van Eysinga. Amsterdam : Bij. L. van Bakkenes, 1843.
- HSR., SH.* "Hikayat Sērī Rāma, edited by W.G. Shellabear," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 71 (December, 1915), pp. 1-285.
- IR (OU).* *Irāmāyaṇam. Oṭṭakūttar iyarriya uttarakāṇṭam* Annamalaingar : Annamalai University, 1977.
- JSS* *Journal of the Siam Society*, Bangkok.
- KKII* *Kaviccakaravartti Kambar iyarriya Irāmāyaṇam*, edited by R.P. Cētuppillai and others. Annamalainagar : Annamalai University, 1957-1970.
- KR* *Kambarāmāyanam*, edited with the commentary by V.M. Kōpālakirushṇamācāriyar. Madras, 1959.
- RK* *Rāmakiē Phrarachaniphon ratchakan Thi I.* 4 Vols. Bangkok : Chabap Khruusapha, 1951.
- VR* *The Vālmīki-Rāmāyana*, critically edited for the first time by G.H. Bhatt and others. 7 Volumes. Baroda : Oriental Institute, M.S. University of Baroda, 1960-1971.