

## **APPENDIX B: READ ALOUD VERSION OF THE RAMAYANA, ADAPTED BY SARAH WILLNER**

### **Part 1: The Early Life of Rama**

The entire kingdom of Ayodhya in India shared the sadness of their king, Dasharatha, who had three wives but no children. In deep meditation, he was told how to enact a ceremony and distill a pure butter to give to his wives. After drinking it, they became pregnant and had many sons.

The King's servant Mergdah discussed the magical qualities of the butter. "How come that doesn't work for me?" Merdah's old and wise father, also a valued servant of the King, replied, "Any old butter won't do. It's the meditation that makes it work."

The King's favorite son was Prince Rama, son of his wife Kausalya, who was studious, brave, thoughtful, and loyal. Everyone agreed that Rama should become king after his father. His father decided to hold the inauguration before he died, to make sure that his choice would be carried out peacefully. Tualen and Merdah kept to the King's side around the clock to carry his wishes to the people.

Fabulous preparations were made for the ceremony. People came from all over the kingdom to attend the inauguration of their beloved Prince Rama.

### **Part 2: Rama's Exile**

But all did not go as just as planned. On the eve of the ceremony, another of Dasharatha's wives, Queen Kaikeyi, was overcome with jealousy. Why shouldn't her son, Bharata, Rama's brother, become king? Was he not as good as Rama? She remembered that long ago she had taken very good care of King Dasharatha after he received a wound on the battlefield and he had promised to grant her a wish ...

She ran to his bedside. "Queen Kaikeyi, why do you come to me at this late hour of the night?"

"To remind you of our love for each other."

"Yes, my dear, I never forget it."

Queen Kaikeyi moved closer. "But it seems that you have forgotten your promise, to grant me a wish closest to my heart."

King Dasharatha felt his heart beat faster. What was she getting at?

Queen Kaikeyi continued, "I now call for you to grant me the wish closest to my heart. Choose my son, not Rama, to become king after you. And banish Rama to the forest for fourteen years."

King Dasharatha was confused and shocked at this last-minute block to his plans. But he kept his word and sadly agreed to carry out Queen Kaikeyi's wish.

Rama, though surprised by his father's new decree, faithfully prepared to live in the wild forest for fourteen years. His brother Bharata, who loved Rama and was embarrassed by his mother's conniving, gently took Rama's sandals and placed them on the throne. "You are the true ruler of Ayodhya. I will merely maintain the throne, awaiting your return."

"We cannot stay here without you. We are coming with you." Rama's wife Sita and his loyal brother Lakshmana also took off their finery, put on the modest clothing of hermits, and joined Rama walking past the heartbroken people of Ayodhya into the forest.

### **Part 3: Abduction of Sita**

In the forest, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana meditated and learned how to live peacefully with the plants and wild animals. But one day the demoness Surpanaka, wandering through the forest, caught sight of Rama and fell in love. When she approached him, he cut off one of her ears and pushed her away. Enraged, she went home to her far southern island kingdom of Lanka and complained to her brother Ravana, the ten-headed demon king.

Two servants of Ravana and Surpanaka, the vain Delem and the pin-headed, blundering Sangut discussed the situation. Delem confided in Sangut, "Hmm. If Ravana really wants to bother Rama, he should make off with his wife." Sangut agreed, "Yeah! Rama and Sita are sooooo perfect. Kidnapping his wife would be sooooo annoying!" Delem glared at Sangut. "You are annoying."

At first, Ravana couldn't be bothered to punish Rama. But Surpanaka enticed him, "Didn't you know that Rama has one of the most beautiful women in the world as his wife? Ravana considered this and grew more interested. "I would love to steal her away ..."

Ravana flew north to the forest. He persuaded his uncle to change himself into a lovely golden deer and run out in front of Sita. "How entrancing is that little golden deer! I must have it!" Sita implored Rama to capture the golden deer for her, never resting until Rama reluctantly agreed. He left his brother Lakshmana to guard Sita, and pursued the golden deer into the forest.

As soon as Rama left his companions, the deer cried out using Rama's voice, "I am hurt! Lakshmana, if you love me, help me!" Lakshmana was faced with a horrible choice: rescue his brother or continue to guard Sita from the perils of the forest, as he had sworn to do? Lakshmana thought fast. "Sita, I will go. But I am drawing this magic protective circle around you. Do not go outside it for anything or anyone!" And he ran into the forest after his brother.

At once, Ravana stepped into the clearing near Sita, disguised as an old man. "Ah, madam. Could you please get some water for this old and tired hermit?" Sita was now faced with a difficult choice of her own. Stay safe, inside the magic circle, but disobey her duty to help an elder person in need?

She just barely leaned out of the circle towards the water jug, when Ravana threw off his disguise and swept her up, rushing airborne towards his kingdom of Lanka.

Rama and Lakshmana realized that they had been tricked and raced back to the clearing, now empty not only of their beloved Sita, but also of any clues as to where she had gone.

Rama and Lakshmana searched for Sita throughout the forest they encountered the magical bird, Jatayus, who had just fought Ravana in the air. He was fatally wounded. Before dying, Jatayus told Rama and Lakshmana who Sita's kidnapper was, and where they were going. Rama and Lakshmana prayed together and helped Jatayus' soul go to heaven.

Later, another bird, Garuda, helped heal the brothers' wounds during battles in the forest on their way to find Sita.

#### **Part 4: Destruction of Lanka and Sita's Rescue**

Rama and Lakshmana then enlisted the help of Hanuman, the powerful Monkey King. Agile and swift in body, loyal to his friends, Hanuman brought together his entire monkey army to help bring Sita back.

With the army of monkeys, Rama and Lakshmana finally reached the end of the land. From the southern tip of India, Hanuman flew over the ocean to Lanka to spy. Sita was surprised to see the monkey materialize in her garden prison. "Has Rama truly sent you, or is this just another of Ravana's ploys to get me to marry him? I have not given in to any of his demands." To prove that he had been sent by Rama, Hanuman gave Sita one of Rama's rings. Now convinced, Sita gave him a flower from her hair as a message to Rama. Hanuman raced back to the mainland.

But the monkey army first needed to figure out how to cross the ocean straight to Lanka. On Hanuman's command, the monkeys made a bridge of trees, stones, and even their bodies, to carry Rama and Lakshmana to Lanka. There, they all joined in the terrible fight, as the two sides clashed using supernatural powers and magic weapons. Rama and the monkey army defeated the demons, and the brothers were reunited with Sita.

Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita thanked Hanuman and his monkey army, and returned to Ayodhya. The fourteen years of exile were over, and Prince Rama could now take his place as king. Rama's brother gracefully returned the throne to his wise brother Rama, with his wife Sita and brother with Lakshmana by his side. Wise, old Tualen and his son Merdah stepped up to serve translate for Rama and Sita. The kingdom was restored to harmony.

## **APPENDIX C: VOCABULARY**

Bali: One of more than 17,000 islands in the country of Indonesia

Bali Hinduism: The main religion in Bali, combining indigenous religion with Hinduism from India

Banyan: Huge tree in the center of each Balinese village

Gamelan: Indonesian (and Malaysian) music ensemble and/or instruments

Indonesia: The fourth most populous country in the world; mainly made up of islands big and small

Interdependence: In life and in the performing arts, people have to work together to survive

Kayonan: The Tree of Life shadow puppet

Kecak: Interlocking vocal chant

Ramayana: Story of Rama and Sita

Symbol: Something that stands for something else, especially something physical that represents a larger concept. For example, Sita is a symbol of an ideal woman. A hand with two fingers outstretched in a 'V' is a symbol for peace.