



Ramayana ... rooted in the land, rooted in the minds (a)

Narendra Joshi



Rameshwaram is famous for Sri Rama, his epic Ramayana and especially the episode of Ram setu. Ramayana is in fact ingrained in the mind and culture of India.

Swami Vivekananda has spoken with lot of pride about Ramayana and also about the episode of squirrel and setubandhan which happened in Rameshwaram. From his words the deep influence and role of Ramayana in moulding our national character will be more clear. Following are some of the quotes of Swamiji.:

'Rama the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal father and above all an ideal king. No language can purer, none chaster, none more beautiful and at the same time simpler than the language in which the great sage Valmiki depicted the life story of Rama. ..And what to speak of Sita? You may exhaust the literature of the whole world that is past, and I may assure you that you will have to exhaust the literature of the future, before finding another Sita. Sita is unique, she has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu; we all are children of Sita.' [The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda](#) by [Swami Vivekananda](#) [Volume 3, Lectures from Colombo to Almora](#)

'I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth. I do not dare to put myself in the position of God and dictate to our society, "This way thou shouldst move and not that." I simply want to be like the squirrel in the building of Râma's bridge, who was quite content to put on the bridge his little quota of sand-dust. That is my position.' lecture delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, 31 January 1900 in which Swamiji narrated the story of Ramayana < [The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda](#) | [Volume 4/Lectures and Discourses](#)

'The monkeys laughed, for they were bringing whole mountains, whole forests, huge loads of sand for the bridge — so they laughed at the little squirrel rolling in the sand and then shaking himself. But Rama saw it and remarked: "Blessed be the little squirrel; he is doing his work to the best of his ability, and he is therefore quite as great as the greatest of you." Then he gently stroked the squirrel on the back, and the marks of Rama's fingers, running

lengthways, are seen on the squirrel's back to this day.' Lecture at Victoria Hall, Madras. [Volume 3, Lectures from Colombo to Almora.](#)

In several places geographically far away from each other you will be shown by the 'official' guides, villagers and even tribals, places belonging to some episode of Ramayana. Whether it is birthplace of Hanuman, a place where part of Dronagiri fell down, a place where Sita stayed, Jatayu was killed, and so on. How can parts of Dronagiri fell in Tamilnadu at Marutwamalay as well as in several states of India? How Hanuman can be born in several places across the land with names like Ajaneri, Anjaneypuram and so on, how Vanavasa can be Dandakaranya in Maharashtra, now Panchvati near Nasik, as well as in Chitrakoot in Vindhya range of U.P. and M.P., How two monkeys who built fort in Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh also built Setu in Rameshwaram, How search of Sita can be in South India, in Maharashtra, as well as in Assam? A rationalistic critic asks such questions and then certifies that the story must be fictitious, or at least exaggerated. Such unsympathetic remarks cannot stop us from seeing Ramayana everywhere, every-time. For the epic is rooted not just in our land, it is in our mind, in the deepest self of us. Geography can help a culture to perpetuate; it cannot stop it from imagining.



Hanuman and his son Makardwaja in Java

This picture is about battle between Hanuman and his son Makardwaja. It is found in Java

Hanuman is celibate in Indian epic Ramayana. In fact he is epitome of celibacy. However there is an interesting episode where he met his son Makardhwaj, a look alike and fought with him to rescue Rama and Lakshmana from the demon. How his son was born? the myth says that his sweat was swallowed by a Makar, (a crocodile?) and the son was born.

Hanuman is not celibate in Jain kathas and philosophy. He is shown as someone marrying several princesses as a part of political annexing of the respective kingdom.

In another variation which is in South East Asia, Hanuman was son in law of Khar dushana an asura who was Ravana's relative. Sri Rama killed this asura and so initially Hanuman was very angry with Rama. Later he became his disciple.

Legends vary as the area varies, time varies and psyche of people varies. Interesting !!
