



# Diwali: The Story of Rama and Sita

# About this resource

This is the story of Rama and Sita which tells of the very first Diwali celebration.

The story is split into scenes designed to accompany dances depicting the story.

Dances to accompany the story can be found in the Odissi Dance - Teacher Resource.

Music to accompany the Dances can be found here:

[https://soundcloud.com/reading\\_museum/diwali/s-oQFz69p5pW4](https://soundcloud.com/reading_museum/diwali/s-oQFz69p5pW4)

# Setting the Scene

Lord Raghuveer (also known as Ram or Rama) has arrived. He is the conqueror of Lanka (Sri Lanka). He is the pride of Avadh- in Uttar Pradesh in India. Accompanying him are Angad, Sugreev and Hanuman.

As you listen to the Story, keep these questions in your mind to discuss at the end.

- Where had lord Ram come from?
- For how long had he been away from his birthplace?
- How and why did he go to Lanka?
- How come people of Avadh were so proud of him?
- Where did Ram meet Angad, Sugreev and Hanuman?
- Where had lord Ram returned from?

# Scene 1

Lord Ram was a prince in Ayodhya- capital of Avadh. He was greatly loved by his father and his three queens. He was equally revered by the people of Ayodhya who wanted him to succeed his father Dashrath as the king.

However, gods in heaven wanted lord Ram to establish on earth a society in which truth wins not cheating and malice. So they hatched a plan. They asked queen kakaey to have Rama banished from the kingdom for 14 years. Hence Ram, Sita his wife and Ram's younger brother Laxman left Ayodhya.

People of Ayodhya were heart-broken and so were Ram's parents. They tried to persuade Ram not to go. For Ram, his father's wish was his command and would not want his father to earn dishonour because his son could not fulfil his father's wish.

It was a custom amongst Raghuvanshi family (princely family) that you have to fulfil the promise you have made, even if it means sacrificing your life in the process.

They went to Shringverpur in UP as their first stop. Nishad raj Guh- king of fishermen offered to serve Ram, Sita and Laxman by offering the services of his village. There were tears in his eyes when he saw the princes and Sita mata sleeping on hay under a tree. King Dashratha's palace walls are studded with precious gems. Their mattresses are cushioned with soft feathers. Their bed linen is silky and soft. Here in Shringverpur they do not even have a cloth to cover their feet at night.

Ram politely declined Nishad raj Guh's offer. They changed their clothes and wore saffron colour robes which is a sign of giving up the worldly pleasures. They ate fruit, vegetables and roots only. They were forbidden to enter any town or habitat. So they lived in the jungle.

# Scene 2 - Part 1

The forests they visited were all in India. Chatisgarh-Dhandakaranya during early exile. Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh where they met Tulsidas. Here they spent 11 years of their exile. Beautiful natural beauty and nice climate and river Mandakini flows here.

Maharishis (Hermits) like Atri, Agastha and Shribhang meditated here in the mountains. On the other side of Chitrakoot was Dandakarnya- home of demons (Rakshas/demon/ evil person) Ravan- the king of Lanka's brothers lived here.

Amidst the large crowd of hermits in Chitrakoot, while Tulsidas grinds the sandalwood to turn into paste, Raghuveer ( Ram) appeared before him asking the paste to be smeared on his forehead.

It was in Chitrakoot that Tulsidas wrote the epic Ramayan- the sacred Hindu book depicting how lord Ram taught us how to live our life in a righteous manner.

Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman went to Panchvati near Nasik in Maharashtra. Here one day Ravan's sister Shrupnakha appeared and asked Ram to marry him.

Laxman chopped off her nose and ear for thinking such low thoughts for Ram as he was already married. Shrupnakha felt insulted and furious. She reported back to her brother Ravan how Laxman had defaced and disfigured her.

Ravan was a very powerful demon who had conquered many countries. He had ten heads. Everyone was frightened of his strength. He lived in a golden palace in Sri Lanka. He asked the gods to give him a boon that he will not die of the hands of any gods. Human beings did not matter to him as they were weak and timid in front of Ravan.

# Scene 2 - Part 2

By this time Sita, Ram and Laxman had moved to Panchvati in Maharashtra. One day Sita saw a golden deer and asked Ram to catch it so she could look after it as a pet. Ram tried to convince her that demons can change their bodies and this could be a trick of a demon. But Sita was adamant and wanted the deer. Ram left Laxman to take care of Sita while he ventured out in the deep forest to catch the deer. Time passed but Ram did not return. Sita now really concerned about the safety of her husband asked Laxman to go in search of Ram. Laxman knew it won't be safe to leave Sita alone. So he drew a line outside the cottage called Laxman Rekha imploring Sita not to cross it. She would be safe in her cottage as anyone who tried to cross the line would be destroyed.

As soon as Laxman left, the king of demons Ravan appeared in the guise of a wise priest and asked Sita for food. It was a custom to offer food to any risihis (sadhus) who came to the door and not to send them empty handed. Sita brought a basket of fruit but Ravan said it was disrespectful of her to offer from a distance. Wanting to be respectful Sita crossed the Laxman Rekha. This was Ravan's plan- he abducted Sita, put her in his Pushpak Viman and left for Sri Lanka. Sita shouted for help at the top of her voice but in the jungle no one heard her cries. She began to drop a trail of her jewellery.

A bird called Jatayu pecked at Ravan's body to free Sita and to bring the viman down. The cruel Ravan attacked Jatayu fiercely with his sword. As Ram and Laxman came looking for Sita, Jatayu told them which way Sita had been taken and breathed his last. Jatayu hill is in Kerala.

# Scene 3



As Ram and Laxman searched for Sita, they reached Kishkindha- the kingdom of vanar king Sugreev. Here they met Hanuman, who is an incarnation of lord Shiva. Hanuman introduced them to King Sugreev. Kishkindha maps out as Hampi in Karnataka.

Hanuman ji is the son of wind God and could fly. He promised Ram he would find out where Sita was taken. He flew over the Indian ocean and reached Sri Lanka. Here he found Sita under the Ashok tree, sad and heart-broken as she was in captivity. She did not know what would come of her as Ravan was a cruel king and wanted to marry her by force.

Hanuman landed at the base of the mountain. He took a ring from Ram and showed it to Sita. She in turn gave her lotus shaped head ornament to give to Ram. Hanuman ji assured that Ram will be back with full force to free Sita.

Ram ji thanked Hanuman for locating Sita as he returned from Lanka. He asked how was Sita. Hanuman ji said, " Sita ki hai vipati vishala, bib hi kahey bhali deen dyala." (Oh kind king Sita's troubles are so great that is better to leave them unsaid.)

Ram started gathering an army of monkeys supported by Angad and Sugreev. They reached Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu where Ram worshipped lord Shiva for his blessings. The monkeys helped Ram built a bridge to Sri Lanka made of limestone.

# Scene 4

When lord Ram reached Lanka, Ravan's brother Vibhishan joined him for he did not like Ravan's policy of ruling by creating fear in people's mind. He worshipped Ram as he treated everyone equally.

After a fierce battle that lasted for months, the cruel Ravan was killed. Sita joined her husband Ram and they started their journey home by a boat.



# End Scene

People of Ayodhya was overjoyed when Hanuman gave the message that Ram, Sit and Laxman were coming home after 14 years. They had fulfilled the wishes of the gods by eliminating evil and establishing righteousness on earth.

# Song of Rama and Sita

Aaye Raguveer Dhir

Lanka dheesh , Avadh maan

Sang sakha Angad, Sugreev aur Hanuman

Chitrakoot keg hat par bhai santan ki bheer.

Tulsidas Chandan ghisen, tilak leit Raguveer

Sab janat Prabhu prbhuta toyee.

Tadpee kahey bin rah ana koyee.

Sita Ram charit ati Pawan

Madhur , Saras aur ati man bhawan.

# Glossary

Maharishis -	Hermits. They are people who live on their own in isolated places.
Rakshas -	Demons or evil people
Dandakarnya -	Home of demons
Boon -	A favour
Risihis -	A learned and enlightened person
Sadhus -	A monk
Pushpak Viman -	A mythological flying palace