

70. Thereafter Indrajit of well-known power and prowess was killed by Lakṣmaṇa in the battle lasting for five days till the thirteenth day.

71. On the fourteenth day there was a cessation of hostilities. Hence the Ten-headed One had an opportunity for preliminary preparation. On the new-moon day Rāvaṇa came for the battle.

72. In the course of the five days beginning with the first day of the bright half of Caitra and ending with *Pañcamī*, Rāvaṇa continued the hostilities and the slaughter of the demons was immense.

73-75. Till the eighth day of the bright half of Caitra, the destruction of the chariots, horses etc. continued. On the ninth day in the bright half of Caitra, when Lakṣmaṇa was pierced with the Śakti (javelin) Rāma became infuriated and routed the Ten-headed One. Hanumān also fought. On the advice of Vibhīṣaṇa he went for bringing the medicinal herb from Droṇādri mountain for Lakṣmaṇa. He brought (the herb) Viśalyā (antidote for wounds) and made Lakṣmaṇa drink it.

76-77. There was cessation of hostilities on the tenth day. At night there was the battle of the demons. On the eleventh day, the (divine) chariot with Mātali as the charioteer, for the sake of Rāma, came there (to help) in the fight. After a battle lasting for eighteen days beginning with the twelfth day (of the bright half) and ending with the fourteenth day of the dark half, Rāma killed Rāvaṇa in a single combat with chariots.

78-80. The cremation of Rāvaṇa and others took place on the new-moon day. In the tumultuous and fierce battle Rāma gained victory.

Beginning with the second day of the bright half of Māgha and ending with the fourteenth day of the dark half of Caitra, the overall extent of the hostilities was a period of eighty-seven days. In the middle, truce was declared for fifteen days. The actual battle took place for seventy-two days. On the first day of Vaiśākha Rāma stayed on the battlefield. On the second day Vibhīṣaṇa was crowned as king of Laṅkā.

81-85. The (test of) purity of Sītā took place on the third day. Boons were granted by Devas. Daśaratha came (from heaven and gave his approval to it).

After slaying the lord of Laṅkā, the lord (Rāma), the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa, took with him the meritorious daughter of

Janaka, who had been subjected to misery by the demon and returned with great pleasure.

On the fourth day of Vaiśākha Rāma boarded the aerial chariot Puṣpaka. He returned by air. On the way to the city of Ayodhyā, when the fourteen year period was complete, on the fifth day of the month of Mādhava (i.e. Vaiśākha), Rāma and party camped in the hermitage of Bhāradvāja (? Bharadvāja). He came to Nandigrāma by Puṣpaka on the sixth day.

86-89. The great scion of the family of Raghu was crowned as the king of Ayodhyā on the seventh day.

Maithilī stayed in the abode of Rāvaṇa separated from Rāma for a period of fourteen months and ten days.

Rāma began to rule the kingdom in his forty-second year. Sītā was then thirty-three years old.

At the end of fourteen years Lord Rāma, the destroyer of the pride of Rāvaṇa, gladly entered his city of Ayodhyā. There Rāma ruled the kingdom in the company of his brothers.

90. After ruling the kingdom for eleven thousand years, Rāma went to heaven.

91. In the kingdom of Rāma the people were fully happy in their minds. The men became endowed with riches and grains as well as with sons and grandsons.

92. Clouds showered as much as desired. The vegetation was of good quality. Cows yielded plenty of milk. Trees yielded perpetual fruits.

93. There was neither mental anguish nor illness, O king, in the kingdom of Rāma. All the women were chaste; all the men were devoted to their parents.

94. Brāhmaṇas were devoted to the (study of) Vedas always; Kṣatriyas served Brāhmaṇas. Men of Vaiśya caste continued to be devoted to Brāhmaṇas and cows.

95. There was no mixture of castes and no transgression of duties. There was no barren or wretched woman; no woman had only a single child or had her child dead.

96. There was no widow; nor a woman with a husband bewailed at any time. None disregarded or insulted parents, preceptors and elders.

97. No meritorious person transgressed the words of old people; no one misappropriated other person's land and property. People were not covetous of other men's wives.

98. People were not bent upon slander. There was no indigent or sickly man. There was no thief, gambler, liquor-addict or sinner.

99. There was no thief of gold, no Brāhmaṇa's slayer, defiler of preceptor's bed, slayer of woman, murderer of children and speaker of falsehood.

100. There was no one wilfully depriving another of his livelihood; there was no perjurer, no rogue, no ungrateful wretch and no dirty person was seen.

101. Brāhmaṇas, the masters of the Vedas, were honoured always and everywhere. There was no anti-Vaiṣṇava or one not adhering to his vows, O king, in the famous kingdom of Rāma.

102-103. While he was ruling the kingdom his eloquent priest Vasiṣṭha, a son of Brahmā, returned after performing pilgrimage to various places. That illustrious storehouse of austerities accompanied by sages was duly honoured as his preceptor.

104. Rāma honoured him by standing up and offering *Arghya*, *Pādya*, *Madhuparka* and other things of worship.

Vasiṣṭha, the eminent sage, enquired about Rāma's welfare:

105. "O Rāma, is there all-round welfare in the kingdom, cavalry, elephants, army, treasury—nay in the entire land, your brothers and your servants?" When the sage asked thus Rāma said:

106. "With the favour of Your Holiness I have all-round welfare." Then Rāma enquired about the welfare of the great Sage Vasiṣṭha:

107-109. "I hope you are happy in the company of your wife and sons."

He (the sage) narrated everything to him about all the holy places resorted to by him all over the earth—all the shrines and holy pools. Thereupon, the lotus-eyed Rāma who was curious, asked him about the greatness of the holy places and also wanted to know which of them was the most excellent one.