THE EPISODE OF MAIYARAB
IN THE THAI RĀMAKĪEN
AND ITS POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP
TO TAMIL FOLKLORE*

The aim of this paper is to throw some light on the possible source (s) for some of the *motifs* and details to be found in the Maiyarab episode of the Thai *Rāmakīen* on the basis of some data from Tamil folklore relating to the Rāma story in South India.

The problem of tracing the sources of the Maiyarab episode was examined by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat in 1942 and H.H. the Prince was of the view that some details of the episode might have been derived from a South Indian version of the Rāma story.[1]

The writer of the present paper has also been keenly interested in the subject since 1966 when he embarked on the studies of cultural contacts between Thailand and Southern India. Some of his findings based on the literary versions of the Rāma story have already been published in a couple of articles in the *Journal of the Siam Society* in 1968 and 1982. However, the problem of the Maiyarab episode has not been examined adequately so far in his articles for the main reason that there is no such episode in the early literary versions of the Rāma story in Tamil or

---

* A paper presented to the International Conference on Thai Studies, 22-24 August 1984, Bangkok, Thailand.

1. H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, "Maiyarab the magician," *The Standard,* No. 53 (Bangkok, 1942), pp. 15-21; see also *The Khŏn,3rd edition, Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, B.E. 2505, A.D.1962,* pp. 5-6.

in Sanskrit[2]. The writer, therefore, turned to the folk tradition especially among the Tamil-speaking people of South India, and it would seem that the Tamil folklore has a great deal of light to throw on the question of sources for the episodes such as that of Maiyarāb in the Southeast Asian versions of the Rāma story.[3]

Briefly, the central story of Maiyarāb is that he kidnaps Rāma and imprisons him in the nether world with the intention of killing him. Hanumān pursues Maiyarāb there and rescues Rāma. Maiyarāb is killed. However, if we take into account the various *motifs* that cluster around the central story and compare them with those of the Tamil folk version, it would become evident that the Thai literary version of the episode has been elaborated with several elements which were perhaps adopted from the Tamil folk version of the story. Thus, for example, a comparison of the various *motifs* relating to the episode as depicted in the two versions shows that at least fifteen of the motifs are common to the Thai Rāmakīen and to the Tamil folk version of the *Mayilirāvanan* story.[4] They are:

1. Maiyarāb in the Tamil *Rāmakīen* and Mayiliravanan in the Tamil folk version are said to be the king of the nether world.

2. When Maiyarāb hears of the prediction that his nephew will become king of the nether world, he imprisons both his sister and her son, who is his nephew.

3. In order to prevent Maiyarāb from kidnapping Rāma (Phra Rām in Thai), Hanumān makes himself into a gigantic fortress and conceals Rāma. Hanumān's mouth is the gate of the fortress. He also places his tail in a circle around the entire camp.

---

2. Mention may, however, be made of the fact that the episode similar to that of Maiyarāb is to be found in later versions of the Rāma story and these include *Mahī rāvana Caritra* in Assamese, *Mahī rāvanerpāla* in Bengali, *Dakṣiṇī Rāmāyana* in Oriya, and the *Ānandarāmāyana* in Sanskrit.

3. Besides the Thai *Rāmakīen*, the Malay *Hikayat Seri Rāma* also includes an episode similar to that of Maiyarāb with some variants, and in this work Maiyarāb is known as Pātāla Mahārāyan and he is said to be one of Rāvana's offsprings born in the nether world. See *Hikayat Seri Rāma*, edited by W.G. Shellabear. Rumi version prepared by Wahi bin Long. Singapore: Malaysia Publishing House Ltd., 1964, pp. 173-196 (Romanised Malay text); also Zeiseniss, A. *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia, its origin and development,* translated by P.W. Burch. Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963, pp. 74-86.

4. *Mayilirāvanan katai.* Madras. B.R.N. & Sons., n.d. 88 pp. (Tamil text). The story of Mayilirāvanan is known to have been a part of Tamil folklore for a long time in South India before it was committed to writing and later published. The published text of the story is in the form of dialogues and narration suitable for dramatic production.

4. After Rāma is kidnapped by Maiyarāb, Hanumān passes through the hollow stalk of lotus plant to reach the nether world.

5. Before gaining entry into Maiyarāb's palace, Hanumān encounters Macchānu (Maccakarppan in Tamil meaning 'born of fish-womb')[5], duels with him, finds him to be too strong, learns that he is his son born of a fish, and that Maiyarāb is his master.

6. Macchānu refuses to betray his master.

7. Hanumān meets Maiyarāb's sister when she comes to draw water from a pool at the command of Maiyarāb.

8. Hanumān assures her of his help to install her son as the ruler of the nether world.

9. Maiyarāb's sister helps Hanumān by smuggling him (in the form of a lotus fibre in the Thai *Rāmakīen* and as a beetle hidden under mango leaves in a pot of water in the Tamil folk version).

10. When Maiyarāb's sister is weighed at the gate in order to make sure that no foreign elements are smuggled into the palace, the weighing machine breaks down because of Hanumān's weight.

11. After Hanumān rescues Rāma, he carries his master to a distant mountain where he is entrusted to the care of the gods in the Thai *Rāmakīen* and to the care of the earth-goddess in the Tamil folk version.

12. Maiyarāb cannot be killed until Hanumān finds and crushes the bee (or five beetles according to the Tamil folk version) containing his soul.

13. Maiyarāb's nephew is installed as the king of the nether world and Macchānu becomes his deputy.

14. Hanumān returns to the mountain where Rāma was placed under

---

5. According to the Tamil folk version, Maccakarppan reveals to Hanumān that he is the son of Hanumān and a fish-mother named Timiti. He also tells Hanumān that at the time of Hanumān's great leap to Lankā over the sea in search of Sītā, his sweat fell into the mouth of a female fish, that is, Timiti, who later gave birth to Maccakarppan. Vāyu, the wind-god, who is also the father of Hanumān, is said to have conferred a boon of great strength on Maccakarppan. See *Mayilirāvanan katai*. Madras: B.R.N. & Sons., n.d., pp. 28-29. According to the Thai *Rāmakīen*, Macchānu is Hanumān's son, born of a mermaid named Suphanna Maccha. *Rāmakīen*, Phrarachaniphon thi 1, Vol. 2, pp. 298-307.

divine protection, and then both Rāma and Hanumān return to the camp.

15. Rāma feels immensely grateful to Hanumān for having rescued him from Maiyarāb

The presence of so many similar *motifs* in the Thai *Rāmakīen* and in tne Tamil folk version does not mean of course that the two versions are the same. Indeed, there are also divergent motifs in both versions. For example, in the Thai *Rāmakīen* it is Maiyarāb's mother (instead of his consort as in the Tamil folk version) who tries to dissuade him from his evil plan. According to the *Rāmakīen,* Maiyarāb has a dream which is interpreted by the astrologers to mean that his nephew will become the king of the nether world, whereas in the Tamil folk version the prediction is issued by an anonymous voice from the sky. Again, according to the *Rāmakīen,* only Rāma is kidnapped by Maiyarāb, whereas in the Tamil folk version both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are kidnapped by Maiyarāb.

The differences found in the two versions relate also to name-forms. Thus, in the *Rāmakīen* the name of the demonic character who abducts Rāma is given as Maiyarāb, whereas in the Tamil folk version he is indentified as Mayiliravaṇan.[6] The name of Maiyarāb's sister in the Thai version is Phirakuan and her son is named Waiyawik, while in the Tamil folk version Mayilirāvaṇan's sister is called Tūratantikai and her son is Nīlamēkan. Again, according to the Tamil folk version, Maiyarāb's intention behind kidnapping Rāma is to offer him sacrificially to the goddess Kāli, whereas in the Thai version Maiyarāb is planning to boil Rāma as well as his nephew in hot water in the course of a magic ceremony.

In spite of these variants, the presence of a large number of common *motifs*

6. The name-forms *Mayilirāvaṇan* in Tamil, *Maiyarāb in Thai,* and *Mahīrāvana* in Assamese, Bengali, Oriya and other languages do seem to pose a problem. First of all, it may be noted that the name consists of two parts. The latter part, namely, *rāvana,* of which the Thai *-rab* is most probably an abbreviation, seems to have been added to the names of certain demonic characters who came to complement the chief villain of the story, namely Rāvana, especially in later versions of the Rāma story. As for the first part of the name, perhaps the term *Mai,* which means in Tamil 'darkness' and especially 'the black pigment' used in witchcraft', was used in the original folk tradition to characterise a relative of Rāvana notorious for his magic skill. While in the Thai version the original form has been retained, in Tamil it has become *Mayil* which means 'peacock' and which apparently does not signify the purport of the original term *Mai.* As regards the form *Mahī,* which means either 'earth' or 'great' generally in several Indian languages including Sanskrit, is thought to be a Sanskritised form of *Mai.* See W.L. Smith. "Mahīrāvana and the Womb Demon", *Indologica Taurinensia,* Vol. 10 (1982), pp. 218-219.

central to the story would seem to indicate that the royal author of the *Rāmakīen* could have adopted such folk elements perhaps through Tamil informants in the Thai kingdom. This possibility is strongly suggested by the fact that certain other versions of the Rāma story, which include a similar episode and which are also known to have been used as the other possible sources for the composition of the Thai *Rāmakīen,* happen to have different *motifs.* For example, Krttivāsa's poem in Bengali language entitled *Mahīravaṇerpāla,* which is also believed to incorporate several elements of Bengali folklore, depicts the episode of Mahīravaṇa in a somewhat different manner,[7] and several of its motifs are not the same as in the Thai *Rāmakīen* and the Tamil folk version. The Bengali work, for example, does not refer to the passage of the hollow stalk of the lotus plant used by Hanumān to reach the nether world; instead it says that Hanumān uses the same subterranean passage which had opened by itself for Mahīravaṇa to carry away Rāma and Lakṣamṇa. Again there is no mention in the Bengali version about Mahīravaṇa's sister helping Hanumān to smuggle him into the palace. It is also noteworthy that neither the Tamil folk version nor the Thai *Rāmakīen* refers to the scene where, according to the Bengali version, Hanumān kills Maiyarāb (or Mayiliravaṇan/Mahīravaṇa) in front of the image of the goddess Kāli when he prostrates himself by way of demonstrating to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa how to bow before the goddess.

It would, therefore, seem reasonable to conclude that the royal author of the Thai *Rāmakīen* had perhaps a somewhat closer access to the Tamil folk tradition from which to select elements for the portrayal of the Maiyarāb episode in his classic work.

S. Singaravelu
University of Malaya

---

7. Dineshchandra Sen, *The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas.* Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1920, pp. 254-283.

References

(a) *Texts and Translations*

Rāmakīen, Phrarachaniphon ratchakan thi I. 4 vols. Bangkok: Khrurusaphaa, B.E. 2494, A.D. 1951; reprint, Bangkok: Samnakphim Klangwithaya, B.E. 2056, A.D. 1963. See Vol. 2, pp. 328-447. (Thai text).

The *Rāmakīen,* a prose translation of the Thai version of Rāmayāna, by R.A. Olsson. Bangkok: Praepittaya Company Ltd., 1968. See pp. 181-192.

Mayilirāvaṇan katai. Madras: B.R.N. Sons. n.d.

Hikayat Seri Rāma, ed., by W.G. Shellabear. Rumi version prepared by Wahi bin Long. Singapore: Malaysia Publishing House Ltd., 1964. See pp. 173-196. (Romanised Malay text).

(b) *Other works*

Dhani Nivat, H.H. Prince., 1942, "Maiyarāb the magician", *The Standard,* No. 53 (Bangkok, 1942), pp. 15-21.

Sen, Dineshchandra., 1920, *The Bengali Rāmāyanas.* Calcutta: University Of Calcutta, 1920.

Singaravelu, S., 1968. "A comparative study of the Sanskrit, Tamil, Thai and Malay versions of the story of Rāma", *Journal of the Siam society,* Vol. 56, pt. 2 (July 1968) pp. 137-185.
——————————. ., 1982. "The Rāma story in the Thai cultural tradition", *Journal of the Siam Society* Vol. 70, pts. 1 & 2 (July 1982), pp. 50-70.

Smith, W.L., 1982, "Mahīrāvana and the Womb Demon", *Indologica Taurinensia,* Vol. 10 (Torino, Italy, 1982), pp. 215-225.

Sieseniss, A., 1963. *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia, its origin and development.* Translated by P.W. Burch. With a Foreword by C. Hooykaas. Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963. See pp. 74-86.

APPENDICES

I

The Story Of Mayilirāvaṇan In Tamil Folk Tradition

According to the Tamil folk tradition, the story of Mayilirāvaṇan[1] was narrated by the sage Nārada to the sage Gautama. It begins with the great disappointment and sorrow of Rāvaṇan (Irāvaṇan in Tamil) over the death of his generals and relatives including Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvaṇa's son Indrajit in the early and later stages of the battle for Lanka. It is then that a counsellor (Prahasta) at the court of Rāvaṇa suggests that the assistance of Mayilirāvaṇan from nether Lankā (Pātāla Ilaṅkai in Tamil) be sought by Rāvaṇa. Mayilirāvanan is said to be a younger brother of Rāvaṇa; he is well versed in magic. Rāvaṇa seeks his help. Mayilirāvaṇan decides to abduct Rāma and Laksmaṇa to nether Lankā and offer them sacrificially to the goddess Kāli. Vāyu (the wind-god) is informed by Trijatā about the evil design of Mayilirāvaṇan. Vāyu in turn conveys the news to Vibhīsana, who is now an ally of Rāma. Vibhīsana, who is aware of the magic skill of Mayilirāvaṇan anticipates that the latter would resort to various tricks including that of assuming the form of Vibhīsaṇa. On the suggestion of Vibhīsana, Sugrīva and Jāmbavān, Hanumān encloses Rāma's entire camp with his elongated tail as a fort. Hanumān's mouth is the entrance to the fort and his ear is its exit. The entire army is instructed to be vigilant during the whole night.

Meanwhile Mayilirāvaṇan's consort Varṇamālikai pleads with her husband not to undertake the plan of abduction; however, her plea is rejected. At first Mayilirāvaṇan sends two of his counsellors (Caturan and Cāyittiyan) to Rāma's camp to carry out the abduction, but they are unable to enter the fort. Then Mayilirāvaṇan himself decides to carry out the plan. He assumes the form of Vibhīsaṇa and passes through the hollow stem of the lotus plant to travel from his subterranean kingdom to Rāma's camp. Again, in the disguise of Vibhīsann, he enters Hanumāa's mouth, casts a magic spell over the entire camp, places Rāma and

---

1. *Mayilirāvaṇan katai.* Madras: B.R.N. Sons. n.d. 88 pp.

Laksmana in a closed casket, and carries them away through the ear of Hanumān to nether Lankā. At this juncture, Mayiliravaṇan is warned by a voice from the sky that Hanumān will destroy the fortress of nether Lankā, install Nīlamēkan (a nephew of Mayiliravaṇam.) as the ruler of nether Lankā, and rescue Rāma and Laksmaṇa. Mayiliravaṇam, who is frightened of the prediction, imprisons his sister Tūratantikai and her son Nīlamēkan.

Meanwhile, Vibhīsaṇa tells Hanumān that the passage to nether Lankā is to be found in the lotus stem growing in the middle of the ocean. He also informs him about a powerful demon named Maccakarppan or Maccavallapan who guards the fortress of Mayiliravaṇan and about a pool outside the fortress from which the women of nether Lankā obtain water in their pots, which are carefully weighed over a scale at the entrance to the fort to make sure that no alien elements are allowed to enter the kingdom.

Hanumān first overcomes thousands of demons guarding the lotus plant in the ocean, and then, after reducing his body to tiny form, he passes through the stem of the lotus plant. He then encounters Maccakarppan, who battles with him fiercely. Hanumān, who is impressed with the great strength of Maccakarppan, enquires about his family background. Maccakarppan reveals that he is the son of Hanumān and a fish-mother named Timiti. He further informs Hanumān that at the time of Hanumān's great leap towards Lankā in search of Sītā, his sweat fell into the mouth of a female fish, who later gave birth to Maccakarppan ('born of fish-womb'). Vāyu, the wind-god, who is also the father of Hanumān, had conferred a boon of great strength on Maccakarppan. Then, Hanumān in turn reveals his identity and seeks the help of Maccakarppan to trace the whereabouts of Rāma and Laksmaṇa. Maccakarppan tells Hanumān that his loyalty is to Mayiliravaṇan, who is his master and that he would never turn a traitor to his master even if he is approached by his own father for his help. Maccakarppan also reveals that his life-principle is to be found in his chest and that Hanumān can gain entry to the fort only after overcoming Maccakarppan. Hanumān punches Maccakarppan's chest to cause him to faint and gains entry into the fortress. Meanwhile, Mayiliravaṇan summons his sister Tūratantikai and order her to fetch water from the pool in the Uttiyānavanam for the ceremony at which Rāma and Laksmaṇa are to be sacrificed to the goddess Kāli.

Hanumān happens to see Tūratantikai in the Uttiyānavanam and after transforming himself into a tiny being conceals himself behind the leaves of a tree.

29

He overhears Tūratantikai's lamentation about the ceremonial sacrifice of Rāma and Laksmana to be carried out by Mayilirāvanan. At this point, Hanumān reveals his identity and asks her to explain the reasons for her sadness. Tūratantikai tells Hanumān about her husband Kālatattan and her son Nīlamēkan. She then tells Hanumān why she and her son have been imprisoned by her brother Mayilirāvanan. According to her, when Mayilirāvanan's daughter Rūpavati was betrothed to Nīlamēkan, a voice from the sky predicted that Nīeamēkan would soon replace Mayilirāvanan as the ruler of nether Laṅkā. On hearing this, Mayilirāvanan cancelled the betrothal, killed Tūratantikai's husband and imprisoned both Tūratantikai and her son Nīlamēkan. Hanumān then assures Tūratantikai that he would not only destroy Mayilirāvanan, but also install Nīamēkan as the new ruler of nether Laṅkā. In return Hanumān asks Tūratantikai for information about Rāma and Laksmana.

After informing Hanumān about the whereabouts of Rāma and Laksmana, Tūratantikai tells him about the weighing machine at the entrance to the fort which is used to weigh all persons and things passing through the entrance to keep away the enemies of Mayilirāvanan. Hanumān seeks the help of Tūratantikai to gain entry into the fort. She agrees to help. Hanumān in the form of a beetle conceals himself behind a bunch of mango leaves placed over the pot of water which Tūratantikai is carrying for the sacrificial ceremony. When Tūratantikai steps on the weighing scale, its needle turns upside down and the demonic soldiers at the entrance suspect the identity of Tūratantikai. When they are about to attack her, Hanumān reveals his mammoth form and destroys the demons in the course of a great battle. Hanumān then meets Nīlamēkan, who points to the temple of the goddess of Kāli, where Rāma and Laksmana are to be sacrificied. Hanumān breaks open the temple door and offers praise to Rāma so that he will awaken. Rāma awakens a little and enquires of Hanumān how he came to be where he is now. After Hanumān tells Rāma about Mayilirāvanan's evil deed, Rāma falls asleep again under the influence of the spell cast by Mayilirāvanan. Hanumān carries the casket containing Rāma and Laksmana to a distant cave and prays to the goddess of earth to protect Rāma and Laksmana until he conquers Mayilirāvanan. The goddess agrees to do so.

Meanwhile, the news about Hanumān's presence in nether Laṅkā reaches Mayilirāvanan, and he also learns that his sister and nephew are no longer under custody. He orders his troops to capture the two. When they are about to be caught, they seek Hanumān's help. Hanumān once again assumes his mammoth form and destroys the demonic troops in a fierce battle. Eventually Mayilirāvanan

himself comes forward to challenge Hanumān.

In the ensuing duel between Hanumān and Mayilirāvaṇan, it is found that, though Mayilirāvaṇan is killed several times, he rises again from destruction. Hanumān asks Tūratantikai about the mysterious power of Mayilirāvaṇan that keeps him alive. Tūratantikai reveals to Hanumān that the five elements of Mayilirāvaṇan are to be found in the form of five beetles living in five caves of a distant mountain range and that whosoever kills all the five beetles together while stepping on the body Mayilirāvaṇan will be able to destroy him.

When Hanumān encounters Mayiliravaṇan again, he runs away and seeks shelter in a cave, where he begins to perform a magic ceremony. From the sacrificial fire rises a great fiery demon, who is ordered by Mayilirāvaṇan to destroy Hanumān. Hanumān appeals to the god of fire to reduce the heat of the fiery demon and battles with him. He is also told by the goddesses of righteousness that the fiery demon arose from the sacrificial ceremony conducted by Mayilirāvaṇan and the demon can only be conquered if the ceremony is disrupted. Hanumān then proceeds to a spot where there is a great banyan tree which conceals the entrance to the hall where the ceremony is being held. Hanumān uproots the huge tree, and after reaching the subterranean cave, disrupts the ceremony. After the fiery demon is subdued, the demon salutes Hanumān and vanishes. Mayilirāvaṇan escapes from the cave and turns himself into a silvery mountain covered with trees and mansions. Tūratantikai points to Hanumān the silvery mountain which is the guise of Mayilirāvaṇan. Mayilirāvaṇan escapes once again and tries to reach Rāvaṇa's palace in Laṅkā. But he finds that all the passages through the lotus stem are blocked by Vāyu (the wind-god). Vāyu calls upon Hanumān to verify Mayilirāvaṇan's claim that Hanumān has already been installed as the new ruler of nether Laṅkā after subduing Mayilirāvaṇan. When Hanumān makes his appearance, Mayilirāvaṇan assumes the form of a mad elephant and tries to escape from the scene. Hanumān captures him and attacks him. Mayilirāvaṇan abandons the form of the elephant and produces a magic chariot from which he begins to shower powerful arrows, which are neutralized by Hanumān's serpentine arrows. Mayilirāvaṇan then releases the arrows of Garuḍa, to which Hanumān replies with the arrows of fire. Mayilirāvaṇan releases the arrows of rain. The battle continues with all the ferocity. Finally, Mayilirāvaṇan tries to slash Hanumān's chest with his sword. Hanumān catches hold of Mayilirāvaṇan, and with his left leg firmly planted on Mayilirāvaṇan's chest, Hanumān's right leg reaches the mountain where the five beetles representing the

five elements of Mayiliravanan are to be found. Hanumān seizes the five beetles
with his right hand and crushes them at the same time killing Mayilirāvanan. Before
passing away, Mayilirāvanan praises Hanumān's prowess and asks for his
forgiveness. After his funeral ceremonies, Rūpavati (Mayilirāvanan's daughter) is
married to Nīlamēkan, who is installed as the ruler of nether Laṅkā. Hanumān also
asks Maccakarppan to assist Nīlamēkan.

Hanumān then meets the goddess of earth and asks for the casket
containing Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Hanumān, together with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in
the casket, passes through the lotus stem. Maccakarppan wants to join his father to
fight against Rāvaṇa, but Hanumān tells him to stay in nether Laṅkā, for otherwise
Hanumān might be embarrassed if Sugrīva and others were to know that
Maccakarppan is his son.

After Hanumān reaches the camp, the casket by itself vanishes, while Rāma
and Lakṣmaṇa awaken from their long sleep. As the gods shower flowers from the
heaven, Rāma asks for the reason. Before Jāmbavān could answer, Hanumān
signals to him not to divulge the story of what happened from the time of
Mayilirāvanan's abduction of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. However, after the fall of
Rāvaṇa, Rama comes to know of the heroic deeds of Hanumān in rescuing him
from Mayilirāvanan and feels immensely grateful to Hanumān.

II

The Episode Of Mahī Rāvaṇa In The Bengali Poem Entitled Mahī Rāvaṇer Pāla, Composed By Krttivāsa[2]

The episode occurs after the fall of Indrajit in the battle for Laṅkā. Mahī Rāvaṇa is said to be a son of Rāvaṇa born in the nether world during one of Rāvaṇa's adventurous exploits there. Rāvaṇa's son is named Mahī Rāvaṇa, meaning 'Ravana, born of the earth below'.

Mahī Rāvaṇa rules over the subterranean region. He is a devotee of the goddess Kāli and he has obtained a magic spell as a boon from the goddess which no enemy can overcome.

Mahii Rāvaṇa feels the need to help his father and he hastens to his father's court. After hearing of his father's need for help in the battle against Rāma, he assures his father that he will cast a magic spell over Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who will be then taken to the nether world to be sacrificed at the altar of his tutelary deity Kāli.

Meanwhile, Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa's younger brother, who is now an ally of Rāma, assumes the form of a bird and flies up to Rāvaṇa's palace gate and observes Mahī Rāvaṇa narrating the details of his evil design to his father. On his return to Rāma's camp, Vibhiīṣaṇa informs Rāma of Mahī Rāvaṇa's plans. He also advises all the army chiefs to keep a careful vigilance over Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa during the night. On the suggestion of Hanumān, Rāma hurls Vishṇu's discus towards the sky to block the passage of Mahī Rāvaṇa by air. Nala keeps watch over the passage from the nether world. Hanumān builds a great fort for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and stands guarding over it at its entrance. Vibhīṣaṇa, who is the only person outside the fort, issues firm instructions to Hanumān not to allow anyone including his father Vāyu (the wind-god) to enter the fort.

---

2. Dineshchandra Sen, *The Bengali Ramayanas*. Calcutta, The University of Calcutta, 1920, pp. 254-283.

Mahī Rāvaṇa using his magic powers first assumes the form of King Daśaratha, then Bharata, Kausalya (Rāma's mother) and King Janaka, and tries to gain entry into the fort. But each time Hanumān refuses him entry unless approved by Vibhīṣaṇa himself. As soon as Vibhīṣaṇa is called to verify, Mahī Rāvaṇa will vanish from the scene. Finally, Mahī Rāvaṇa appears in the guise of Vibhīṣaṇa himself and enters the fort. Making himself invisible, he utters magic syllables in the name of the goddess Kāli and causes all the guards fall asleep. Soon, under Mahī Rāvaṇa's spell, an underground passage opens of itself, and Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who also fall asleep, are carried away by Mahī Rāvaṇa into his own subterranean palace.

It is only later that Hanumān learns that Mahī Rāvaṇa had deceived him to gain entry in the guise of Vibhīṣaṇa and that he had abducted Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. He resolves to rescue Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from Mahī Rāvaṇa's palace, and for this purpose he enters the same subterranean passage used by Mahī Rāvaṇa. He disguises himself as a tiny monkey and enters the city of Mahī Rāvaṇa.

Hanumān in the guise of a monkey overhears the conversation of an old demon who says that the appearance of two men (Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) and a monkey (Hanumān) in the nether world is an ominous sign foretelling the destruction of Mahī Rāvaṇa, for according to a boon received by Mahī Rāvaṇa from the goddess Kāli, men and monkeys are not included in the list of enemies who cannot overcome Mahī Rāvaṇa. Hanumān also learns from a maid-servant of the palace that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are to be sacrificed to the goddess Kāli on that day. Hanumān then transforms himself into a fly, enters the palace and discovers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in a well-guarded room. He enters the room through a window and salutes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa who are now awake. He informs them of their abduction by Mahī Rāvaṇa, of which they are still unaware. He transforms himself into a fly again and enters the shrine of the goddess Kāli, who tells him of a strategem by which Mahī Rāvaṇa can be overcome. The plan is for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to ask Mahī Rāvaṇa to show them how to bow before the goddess for the sacrifice and when Mahī Rāvaṇa prostrates himself before the goddess, Hanumān is to take the sword from the image of the goddess and sever Mahī Rāvaṇa's head. Hanumān then informs Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa of the plan, and at the ceremony Hanumān succeeds in killing Mahī Rāvaṇa with the sword of the goddess when he prostrates himself on the ground.

After the fall of Mahī Rāvaṇa, his pregnant queen challenges Hanumān,

who kicks her in the stomach and causes her to give birth to a son named Ahi Rāvaṇa, who attacks Hanumān in turn. Finally Hanumān vanquishes Ahi Rāvaṇa, and Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa return to the camp safely.

35

Journal of The Siam Society

III
The Epiosde Of Maiyarāb In The Thai Rāmakīen³

According to the Thai Rāmakīen, Maiyarāb is the king of the Underworld and his help is sought by Thotsakan (Dasakaṇṭha) to help him in the war against Phra Rām (Rāma). Maiyarāb's mother Chanthaprapha tries to dissuade him from responding to Thotsakan's request. But Maiyarāb ignores her advice and goes to Laṅkā. Thotsakan tells him to kidnap Phra Rām by hypnotizing his defenders and then kill him. Maiyarāb agrees and then he goes to the Surakān mountain to perform magic rites. During the ceremony he produces a magic powder by grinding the hearts of two fierce lions to dust and mixing it with poisonous mushrooms. Then he goes to his palace in the Underworld, where he has a dream, which is interpreted by his astrologers to mean that his nephew will become king if he goes to Laṅkā. Maiyarāb does not understand the significance of the dream. Nevertheless, as a precautionary measure, he throws his sister Phirākuan and her son Waiyawik in prison. Then he hurries back to Laṅkā with his magic powder.

Meanwhile, Phra Rām has a dream, which is interpreted by Phiphēk (Vibhīṣaṇa) as signifying great danger lurking over Phra Rām and his army. All the monkey soldiers are asked to stay awake during the whole night until the following morning. Hanumān makes himself into a gigantic fortress and conceals Phra Rām, Phra Lak (Lakṣmaṇa) and Phiphēk in his open mouth. Hanumān's tongue is the gate. Sukhrīp is the gatekeeper. Hanumān also places his tail in a circle around the entire camp.

Maiyarāb realises that Hanumān has changed himself into a fortress and he resorts to a strategem in order to gain access to Phra Rām. He goes to the Solot mountain where he has a magic diamond. He hangs it in the sky. When the monkey soldiers observe its bright light in the east, they think that it is the morning star indicating that it is already dawn. A few monkey soldiers fall asleep. Maiyarāb then uses his diamond blow-pipe to blow the deadly magic powder over the sleeping soldiers to cause them to sink even deeper in their sleep. Then he enters Hanumān's mouth, where Phra Lak and Phiphēk are sleeping at the feet of Phra Rām. He

---

3. *Rāmakīen*, Phrarachaniphon thi 1, Vol. 2, pp. 328-447.

sprinkles the rest of the powder on them. Then he picks up Phra Rām and flees to the Underworld, where he places Phra Rām in an iron cage in a palm orchard. He plans to boil Phra Rām in magic water the next day.

Meanwhile, Phra Lak wakes up and finds that his brother is missing. Phiphēk consults the horoscope and announces that Phra Rām has been kidnapped by Maiyarāb. Hanumān is sent in pursuit of the demon. He enters through the hollow stem of a lotus plant in a pond to reach the Underworld. He overcomes various obstacles and comes to another lotus pond, where he meets Macchānu, who obstructs Hanumān's mission. Hanumān tries to catch Macchānu, but he is too strong. Hanumān then asks Macchānu who he is. Macchānu replies that he is the son of Suphanna Maccha and Hanumān, while Maiyarāb is his step-father. Hanumān then identifies himself as his father. When he is challenged to show the marks of his identity, Hanumān breathes out stars. Hanumān then asks Macchānu to help him to find Phra Rām. Macchānu, without wishing to betray his step-father, answers in a riddle by saying that he should go by the same way he came.

Then, Hanumān jumps into a lotus pond and enters through a hollow stem of a lotus plant. After reaching Maiyarāb's palace grounds, he climbs a tree and observes Maiyarāb's sister Phirākuan coming to draw water from a lake nearby. Hanumān hears her saying that Phra Rām and her son Waiyawik will be made into soup in a magic kettle at dawn the next day. Hanumān then meets Phirākuan and offers her his help to save her son if she will tell him where Phra Rām is to be found. Phirākuan helps Hanumān to gain access into the heavily guarded palace by smuggling him in the form of tiny lotus fibre. Hanumān then casts a spell on the soldiers guarding the iron cage and removes Phra Rām to the Surakān mountain, where the gods watch over him. Hanumān then goes to kill Maiyarāb.

Maiyarāb proposes that they each make a club by twisting three palm trees together and use the club to beat each other into the earth three times. Hanumān agrees. The force of Maiyarāb's three blows drives Hanumān into the ground, but it does not hurt him in the least. When it comes to his turn to beat Maiyarāb, Hanumān shatters his body and throws the arms and legs in different directions, but the parts later fly through the air and join together. Phirākuan then reveals to Hanumān that Maiyarāb's soul lives as a bee on a palm tree on the Trikūta mountain. Hanumān goes to the mountain and catches the bee. He squashes the bee while at the same time he cuts off Maiyarāb's head.

Maiyarāb's nephew Waiyawik then becomes the king of the Underworld

and Macchānu his deputy. Hanumān goes back to the Surakān mountain where Phra Rām is being guarded by the gods. Soon, Phra Rām wakes up, but he is completely unaware of what has happened during the previous night. However, when he sees Maiyarāb's head, he realizes that Hanumān's valour has saved his life.