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## The Character of Ravana and Rama from the Buddhist Perspectives of the Ten Worlds

**B.A. Mahalakshmi Prasad, M.A.**

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### Abstract

Epics have always been a part of our lives. They inspire and guide us through our trials and tribulations. Epics are in the form of stories narrated to the common man, with examples and situations that the common man can understand. At the same time they offer easy solutions to sometimes insurmountable problems.

*Ramayana* is an epic written by Valmiki. It dates from at least the third century B.C. (Goldman 1990). *Ramayana* is an epic story reflecting religious, political, and social beliefs and moral doctrines. *Ramayana* also exists in other versions within some Buddhist and other Asian religious traditions. There are texts of *Ramayana* in several regional languages, including Sanskrit, Chinese, Thai, Telugu, Bengali, Kashmiri, and Tamil. The *Ramayana* story combines magic, fantasy, romance and adventure as it recounts the life of Rama—the seventh incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, his brother Lakshman, Rama's wife Sita, his opponent Ravana, a host of demons, and an army of monkeys loyal to Rama led by Hanuman.

This paper looks at the character of Ravana and Rama through the Nichiren Daishonin's perspectives of the ten worlds.

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## **Introduction**

Literature defines epic as a narrative that is written in grand scale that documents the exploits of a superman or the hero to zenith. Ramayana, the epic of India has assimilated itself into the integral part of the psyche of people of India. It has been quoted, written and rewritten from different perspectives and has always managed to initiate or fuel man's imaginative flight leading to myriad flavourful reproductions of the epic.

One of the most important roles that the epic has played in everyday life is that it portrays and upholds the Dharma (*Dharma* is defined in the glossary) and the rules that man has to follow, while showing the results of erroneous judgements. The paths that man has to travel in his quest to oasis are rife with pebbles and lies. Epics like Ramayana plays the role of a guide as they direct the ignorant man towards the right path that is strewn with manageable pebbles compared to the insurmountable pitfalls that the seeker encounters in life. Some versions of the epic texts are more orientated towards the idea of personal Godhead (a tendency called Bhakti) while others want to stress ideal personality and moralistic issues (Kosikikulino 1996).

The present paper aims to look at the characters of Rama and Ravana through the Nichren Daishonin's perspectives of the mutually existing ten worlds.

## **Nichren Buddhism**

Nichren Daishonin's Buddhism is one of the major sections of Buddhism. Nichren Daishonin was a Buddhist monk who lived during the Kamakura period (1185–1333) in Japan. Nichiren taught devotion to the Lotus Sutra which literally means "The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law," preached by Shakyamuni, the sage of the Shakyas, the historical founder of Buddhism who expounded the highest teaching of last 8 years of Gautama Buddha life 'Myoho-enge-kyo', the translation of which was provided by Kumarajiva. However, it is viewed that the Pre-Lotus sutra teaching viewed the ten worlds separate from each other while the Louts Sutra views the ten worlds as being two facets of the same diamond where each facet acts as a vehicle to attain budhhahood (Hokke Getigi Shakusm vol. ig.) Miao-lo (SGI) states, "The true entity is invariably revealed in all phenomena, and all phenomena invariably possess the Ten Factors. The Ten Factors invariably function within the Ten Worlds, and the Ten Worlds invariably entail both life and its environment" (Kongobei-ron). T'ien-t'ai states, "The profound principle of 'true entity' is the original Law of Myoho-enge-kyo, the principle of cause and effect.

## **The Structure of This Paper**

The paper is divided into two sections:

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The Character of Ravana and Rama from the Buddhist Perspectives of the Ten Worlds

1. A brief overview of Ramayana with a brief description of the characters of Rama and Ravana.
2. A brief overview of Nichren Daishonin and the ten worlds and the characters of Rama and Ravana in the background of the mutually existing ten worlds.

## Section 1 Ramanaya

A brief overview of Ramayana with a concise description of the characters of Ravana and Rama.

### Structure of Valmiki's *Ramayana*

Valmiki's *Ramayana* is the oldest version of Ramayana and is the basis of all the various versions of the Ramayana that are relevant in the various cultures. The text survives in numerous complete and partial manuscripts, the oldest surviving of which is dated from the eleventh century AD. The current text of Valmiki Ramayana has come down to us in two regional versions from the north and the south of India Goldman (1990). Valmiki's Ramayana has been traditionally divided into seven books, dealing with the life of Rama from his birth to his death.

1. ***Bala Kanda*** –Narrates the birth of Rama, his childhood and his wedding to Sita.
2. ***Ayodhya Kanda*** – Narrates the series of events that culminate in Rama's exile from Ayodhya.
3. ***Aranya Kanda*** – Narrates Rama's exile and Sita's abduction by Ravana.
4. ***Kishkindha Kanda*** – Narrates the search for Sita by Vanara Sugriva and Rama.
5. ***Sundara Kanda*** –Narrates the adventures of Hanuman while searching for Sita.
6. ***Yuddha Kanda***- Narrates the Rama-Ravana war, the rescue of Sita and the coronation of Rama in Ayodhya.
7. ***Uttara Kanda*** – Narrates the story of Rama and Sita's life together in Ayodhya.

### Variant Versions

Rāma's story is mentioned in a number of Purāṇas. The Śaiva Purāṇas, such as the *Liṅga Purāṇa* and *Śiva Purāṇa*, make Rāma a devotee of Śiva, while the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and other Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas describe him as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. In the twelfth century, the Vaiṣṇava theology, particularly that of Rāmānuja, gave rise to a cult of Rāma. Numerous Vaiṣṇava commentators on the *Rāmāyaṇa* interpret Rāma as the manifestation of the divine among human beings. In keeping with Vaiṣṇava influences, the *bhakti* Rāmāyaṇas make Rāma the god (Viṣṇu) incarnate exercising his *līlā* ("divine play") with his consort, Sītā. Jonah(1992)

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A late fourteenth-century text, *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, uses the narrative form to provide an *advaita* (nondualist) philosophical orientation to the teachings of the Rāma cult. In this book, presented as a conversation between Śiva and Pārvatī, Rāma is *brahman*, the Absolute itself, which takes a human shape as a pretext to accomplish his divine purposes (Jonah 1992).

Valmiki's Ramayana is the forerunner to the various narrations of Ramayana Goldman (1990). There exists many narrations or "tellings" of Ramayana that form the basis of popular lore and contemporary literature and have become deeply ingrained the psyche of the people.

In the Mahabharata a version of Ramayana called Ramopakhyana that is narrated by Yudhishtira, Rama is devoid of any divine characteristics. According to K. Watanabe in 1907 (Cengage, 2003), the earliest record of the *Ramayana* is a Chinese Buddhist text of disputed date.

Notable *Ramayana* texts is the Pre-Christian, Buddhist *Dasaratha Jataka* which transforms Rāma from a martial hero into a spiritually elevated person. In the *Dāśaratha Jātaka*, Rāma is depicted as a *bodhisattva*.

The Jain text, Vimalasūri's *Paumacariya*, transforms him into one of their sixty-three *śalākāpuruṣas*. Rāma eats no meat, performs no sacrifices involving animals, and wins his battle by wit rather than by violence.

Other *Rāmāyaṇa* texts of the Jain community include the twelfth century Hemacandra's *Jaina Rāmāyaṇa* and Nāgacandra's *Rāmacandracarita Purāṇa*. In these versions, Rāma eventually enters the Jain order as a monk and finally achieves liberation through heroic mortifications (Jaini 2000).

Some popular variant versions of Ramayana include the Ramcharitmanas, attributed to Tulsidas, the sixteenth-century Bengali *Ramayana Kriitibasa*, by Chandravati, and the eighteenth-century Kashmiri *Ramayana* of Divakar Prakash Bhatt.

There is an extensive tradition of oral storytelling based on the Ramayana in Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Maldives. Bulke Camille (1950), author of *Ramakatha*, has identified over 300 variants of Ramayana.

### **Version Followed in India**

There are several versions of Ramayana that exist in India. One of the oldest versions is the 'Bhattikavya' by Bhatti written in Prakrit language in the seventh century. Kamban in 12th century AD wrote *Ramavatharam* in Tamil, that is popularly known as KambaRamayanam. Kotha Ramayana in Assamese by the 14th century poet Madhava Kandali and the Bengali version by Krittivas in the 14th century. Telugu version by Ranganatha in the 15th century. Tulsidas in 1576 wrote the masterpiece Sri Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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*Ramacharit Manas* in Awadhi. Torave Ramayana in Kannada by the 16th century poet Narahari. Oriya by Bala Rama Das in the 16th century, a Malayalam version by Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan in the 16th century. Gujarati poet Premanand wrote a version of *Ramayana* in the 17th century in Gujarati. Ramayana in Marathi by Sridhara in the 18th century. Mappillapattu, a genre of song popular among the Muslims belonging to Kerala and Lakshadweep have incorporated some episodes from the Ramayana into its songs known as *Mappila Ramayana*. In *Mappila Ramayana*, the story of the Ramayana has been changed into that of a sultan, and there are no major changes in the names of characters except for Rama, which is 'Laman' in many places.

### **Contemporary Versions**

The contemporary versions of Ramayana are also as popular as the older versions of the epic. Some of the most popular versions awarded by Jnanpith are *Sri Ramayana Darshanam* by Dr. K. V. Puttappa (Kuvempu) in Kannada and *Ramayana Kalpavrikshamu* by Viswanatha Satyanarayana in Telugu. A prose version called Geet Ramayan in Marathi by G.D. Madgulkar is considered a masterpiece of Marathi literature. R. K. Narayan wrote a shortened prose interpretation of the epic. Ashok Banker has written a series of six English language novels based on the Ramayana. Rajgopalachari wrote an abridged English retelling of the Valmiki Ramayana. Virgin Comics, featuring the Ramayana as reinvisioned by author Deepak Chopra and filmmaker Shekhar Kapur. The Ramayana has been adapted on screen as well, in a television series from the 1980s by producer Ramanand Sagar, which was based primarily off the Ramcharitmanas and Valmiki Ramayana. A Japanese animated film called *Rama - The Prince of Light* was also released in the early 1990s.

### **Plot and Major Characters**

Valmiki's Ramayana is the most popular text despite its length and complexity. The story narrative of Valmiki Ramayan is as follows, Dashratha the king of Ayodhya after a lot of propiation to gods is finally blessed with four sons Rama, Lakshmana, Bharat and Shtrughna with his three wives Koushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra. The boys grow up to be strong and brave princes. Dashratha begs his wife Kaikeyi to make Rama the king. However, Kaikeyi stands her ground and banishes Rama to the forest for 14 years, his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana accompany him to the forest. In the forest, Ravana, the king of Lanka, who has ten heads and twenty arms, abducts Sita. Rama with the help of the monkey army wages war against Ravana, rescues Sita, and returns to Ayodhya to bring in an era of peace and prosperity (Rama Rajya)

### **Morals in Ramayana**

Valmiki's Ramayan sets the exemplary example of the perfect man and adopts the viewpoint of Dharma. The Vedas hold that following Dahrma will ensure one's

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welfare in this and the next world. Valmiki endows Rama with the sixteen qualities that make for a perfect and complete man; however, Rama like all human beings in this world, must overcome personal as well as societal, circumstantial flaws and prejudices that are beyond his control.

Valmiki's Ramayana elucidates the concepts of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Valmiki portrays Rama as following a principle in which Artha does not interfere with Dharma and vice versa. Similarly, Kama does not interfere with either Dharma or with Artha. This principle can be seen in Vibhishna's advice to Ravana wherein he advises Ravana to use Dharma in the morning, Artha in the daytime and Kaama at night while observing that Ravana is busy with Kaama, which ultimately will lead to his destruction.

## **Rama**

The word *Rama* is derived from Rigveda and Atharvaveda, where the meaning of the word 'Rama' is given as "dark, balck", or a noun meaning "darkness", e.g. RV 10.3.3 (Griffith 200). Agni far spreading with conspicuous lustre hath compassed Night [Rama] with whitely shining garments (trans. Griffith 2003).

According to Monier-Williams (2006), three Ramas were celebrated in post-Vedic times:

1. *Rāma-chandra* ("Rama-moon"), son of Dasaratha, descended from Raghu of the Solar Dynasty, the subject of this article
2. *Parashu-rāma* ("Rama of the Battle-axe"), the Sixth Avatara of Vishnu, sometimes also referred to as *Jāmadagnya*, or as *Bhārgava Rāma* (descended from Bhrigu), a "Chiranjeevi" or Immortal.
3. *Bala-rāma* ("the strong Rama"), also called *Halāyudha* (Wielder of the Plough in Battle), the older brother and close companion of Krishna, the Eighth Avatara of Vishnu.

## **A Secular and Complex Hero**

Rama, the epic hero of Ramayana, is a very secular and complex hero. The most celebrated character in Indian literature, divinity incarnate in mortal form to kill the demon Ravana.

Rama is perceived as perfect, self-controlled, truthful, eloquent, majestic, and capable of annihilating all his enemies.

Rāma is described as Perfect: Self and devoted to only one wife. Similarly, Sītā is described as the ideal in chastity, devoted to Rāma in thought, word, and deed, however, Rama too like any mortal is given to moments of weakness wherein he digress from his chosen path. He embodies the desirable virtues that makes for a man

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that inspires affection, devotion, an individual who fearlessly treads the path of virtue, the ideal person “Maryada Purushottama”, a man who fulfils his moral obligations. Following the war, Rama returns to Ayodhya, is crowned as king, and brings in a period of Ramarajya. Ramarajya signifies the end of dystopia and the beginning of utopia “Rama Rajya” where there is perfect justice and freedom, peace and prosperity. There are no natural disasters, diseases, ailments or ill-fortune of any nature for any living being. There are no sins committed in the world by any of his people. Always attentive and accessible to his people, Rama is worshipped and hailed by all - the very symbol of moksha, the ultimate goal and destination of all life, and the best example of perfect character and human conduct, inspiring human beings for countless succeeding ages.

## **Ravana**

Ravana’s major role in the epic is that of an antagonist. However, he is also referred to as a very great man, a man of virtues, foremost in his knowledge of the shastras and other knowledge, a great learned scholar. In Ramayana he is the king of Lanka, and a leader of the tribe of Rakshasas. He is depicted with ten heads; there are several theories that explain the presence of ten heads, from possessing Amrita in his stomach to his erudition, to represent the ten crowns he wore as a result of his being the sovereign of ten countries.” (PK Balachandran 2007). The ten heads earned Ravana the name “Dashamukha, Dashanan, Dashagriva.”

Though Ravana was aggressive and arrogant, he was also an exemplary scholar. Under Vishrava's tutelage, Ravana mastered the Vedas and the holy books and also the arts and ways of Kshatriyas. Ravana is known for his dance worship Shiva Tandava to Lord Shiva. It is during this incident that he acquires the name 'Ravana', meaning "(He) Of the terrifying roar", given to him by Shiva - the earth is said to have quaked at Ravana's cry of pain when the mountain was pinned on him (Monier-Williams 2006).

Ravana by his sheer persistence crowned himself the emperor of the three worlds conquering humans, celestials and other demons. Following his initial training, Ravana performed an intense penance to Brahma, lasting several years. Pleased with his tapasya Brahma offered him a boon. Ravana asked for immortality, which Brahma refused. Ravana then asked for absolute invulnerability and supremacy before gods and heavenly spirits, other demons, serpents and wild beasts. Contemptuous of mortal men, he did not ask for protection from them. Brahma granted him these boons, and additionally great strength by way of knowledge of divine weapons and sorcery. While Ravana usurped Kubera to begin with, he was nevertheless regarded as a benevolent and effective ruler. Lanka flourished under his rule.

## **Section 2 Nichiren Buddhism and Ramayana**

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This section deals with the teaching of Nichiren Daishonin {SGI}. Nichiren Buddhism follows a Lotus Sutra formulated by the 13th-century Japanese priest Nichiren. The Mahayana Buddhist tradition considers the Lotus Sutra to be the fullest expression of the teachings of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha who was born in present-day Nepal some 2,500 years ago. The Lotus Sutra is revered for its message that all people possess the Buddha nature, both men and women. The image of the pure lotus flower growing in a muddy pond symbolizes how people can develop this enlightened state of life in the midst of their daily problems and struggles. [SGI]

This paper tries to look at the Ravana's ten heads from the Buddhist perspective of Nichiren Daishonin that acknowledges the existence of the ten worlds and compares Ravana's ten heads to the Buddhist perspective of the ten worlds.

### **Ten Worlds**

The ten worlds represented by Nichiren Daishonin are Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity or Tranquillity, Rapture, or Heaven, Learning, Realisation, Bodhisattva and Buddha. The first six (Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity or Tranquillity, Rapture, or Heaven) of these life states are called the six lower worlds. All human beings without any effort can experience them and the lives of the people move within six life states that constantly change. At the same time, the four (Learning, Realisation, Bodhisattva and Buddha) higher worlds require effort, the need to want to improve ourselves, mustering our energies and learning to direct them in a worthwhile way that requires patience, tenacity, and concentration.

### **The Workings of the Ten Worlds**

The nine worlds (from hell to Bodhisattava) can be experienced as positive or negative. The Buddha state originates from the very depths of life, called the amala consciousness, meaning the fundamentally pure life force or consciousness. The function of the Buddha state is to bring out the positive side of the other nine worlds. This principle of the Ten Worlds shows that the Buddha state is a naturally occurring condition of life in every living being.

The purpose of Buddhist practice is to enable us to cause the Buddha state to appear; to have it working strongly in us. In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, the Buddha is not a perceived as a perfect, ideal being, but is perceived as an ordinary person living in rhythm with the law of the universe who is capable of taking wise, audacious and empathetic action for the benefit of others.

### **The Mutual Possession of the Ten Worlds**

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism talks about 'the mutual possession' of the ten worlds. The ten worlds do not exist as separate, isolated realms. Rather, each world embraces

and contains within it the potential for all the others. The following table presents the ten worlds and their qualities

<b>World</b>	<b>Positive Aspect</b>	<b>Negative Aspect</b>
Hell	Having experienced hell helps us maintain a desire to better our circumstances. Empathy, understanding the sufferings of others.	Misery and suffering. Fear, grief and destructive rages or depression. A feeling of being imprisoned by one's circumstances.
Hunger	The driving force to improve a situation. People can hunger, even yearn to see others happy and fight for peace in the world	Being dominated by desires or cravings, both physical and mental
Animality	Protective instincts, for example, that we need more sleep. Preservation of self or others.	Instinctive behaviour, lacking in reason. Fear of those who seem stronger and bullying of those who seem weaker. The 'law of the jungle'.
Anger	Anger at injustice. The passion to fight authoritarian behavior	Feeling superior to others and wanting to show it. Aggressiveness. Feeling in conflict with others. The world of self-centredness and ego
Humanity, or Tranquility	Being at peace, calm and reasonable. An opportunity to restore one's energies.	Constant inactivity, laziness, passivity.
Rapture, or Heaven	Temporary joy when desires are fulfilled. Exhilaration at being alive	Short term gratification when one's desires have been achieved . Can quickly revert to hell, or hunger.
Learning	Learning about life and oneself from others and from existing knowledge.	Can lead to self-centredness and separation from others. In the Lotus Sutra people of Learning and Realization were taught they could only enter the realm of Buddhahood through faith.
Realisation	The wisdom or insight where we gain an understanding of an aspect of life from our own observations and experiences.	Can lead to self-centredness and a tendency to use one's intellect, rather than one's wisdom, to solve problems.
Bodhisattva	Devotion to the happiness of others	May turn to arrogance if you

	as shown by eg nurses or a parent's love for a child.	feel superior to those you are helping. Pouring life-force out towards the lives of others, without paying attention to one's own needs means that one's life will move towards the lower life states.
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Human life constantly moves within the six lower worlds and the four upper worlds however, each world that a person exists in also at the same time provides an opportunity for the upper worlds to manifest and become the dominant state of that individual's life in the very next moment. Thus, constantly transforming the life condition of a person and carrying within it the potential state of enlightenment. This process of constant transformation is referred to as the 'mutual possession' of the ten worlds. In this background the characters of Rama and Ravana become transformative beings that carry the potential to emerge as enlightened beings.

Rama and Ravana both exhibit the positive and negative aspects of the mutually existing ten worlds, however, if one looks keenly into the epic the delicately executed controlled balance of the ten worlds plays a crucial role in Rama achieving buddhahood while Ravana meets his end. The following paragraphs try to elucidate this difference between Rama and Ravana while drawing examples from the epic of Ramayana to make a distinction between the fundamental differences in approach in treading the path of Dharma by Rama and Ravan.

### **The Mutually Existing Ten Worlds and Their Description**

**Hell-** this is the first world in the Nichern Daishonin's concept of the ten worlds. The positive aspect of Hell is that a person having experienced hell helps us maintain a desire to better our circumstances, empathy, understanding the sufferings of others.

The negative aspect of Hell is Misery and suffering, fear, grief and destructive rages or depression, a feeling of being imprisoned by one's circumstances. The characters of Ravana and Rama, they both embrace the different aspects of Hell. After the abduction of Seeta, Rama is plunged briefly into depression and despair; through Lakhmana's counselling, he manages to overcome the negative aspect of Hell. However, Ravana suffers from destructive rage. Lakshmana chops off her nose, and when Shurpanaka comes to Ravana's court entreating him to seek revenge, rage overcomes Ravana.

**Hunger** – The second world in the Nichern Daishonin's concept of the ten worlds. The positive aspect of which is, the driving force to improve a situation. People can hunger, even yearn to see others happy and fight for peace in the world. Rama embraces the positive aspect of Hunger Rama has the hunger to see all the people happy and content and in order to achieve Rama Rajya, a concept that signifies the

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end of dystopia and the beginning of utopia “Rama Rajya” where there is perfect justice and freedom, peace and prosperity. There are no natural disasters, diseases, ailments or ill-fortune of any nature for any living being. There are no sins committed in the world by any of his people. Always attentive and accessible to his people, Rama is worshipped and hailed by all - the very symbol of moksha, the ultimate goal and destination of all life, and the best example of perfect character and human conduct, inspiring human beings for countless succeeding ages. Rama destroys evil in the form of Ravana. while Ravana embraces the negative aspect of the world that is Being dominated by desires or cravings, both physical and mental and therefore he is dominated by the desire to rule the world; to be the most powerful being in the three worlds.

**Animality**- The third world in the Nichern Daishonin’s concept of the ten worlds. The positive aspect of which is, Protective instincts, for example, that we need more sleep. Preservation of self or others. Rama embraces the positive aspect of Animality. Rama always strives to protect the well-being of his praja and he agrees to go on a exile in order to protect his father’s honour. Rama dissuades Sita from accompanying him during his exile in order to protect Sita from experiencing the hardships of exile. Ravana embraces both the positive and negative aspect of this world. While Ravana usurped Kubera to rule Lanka, he was nevertheless regarded as a benevolent and effective ruler. Lanka flourished under his rule. He is driven by the action that is dictated by arrogance and originates realms of Anger, all the positive aspect of this world is converted into the negative aspect. The negative aspect of the world that is instinctive behavior, lacking in reason, fear of those who seem stronger and bullying of those who seem weaker, ‘law of the jungle’. becomes predominant in Ravana’s character and therefore his actions appear pre-meditated or planned he is given to rash almost animalistic behaviors, lacking in reason creating a desire in him to rule the world; to be the most powerful being in the three worlds world.

**Anger** - The fourth world in the Nichern Daishonin’s concept of the ten worlds. At the same time, Rama also exhibits the negative aspect of anger Feeling superior to others and wanting to show it, aggressiveness, feeling in conflict with others, the world of self-centredness and ego. After Sita is abducted Rama is faced with a dilemma of trying to cross the ocean, despite his tapasya, fasting and meditation, the lord of the oceans ‘Varuna’ does not respond and Rama in a fit of rage angrily attacks the ocean. However, after the appearance of Varuna, Rama manages to control his negative anger into a positive one which is, Anger at injustice. The passion to fight authoritarian behaviour embodied by Rama, wherein he manages to transform any negative aspect of anger experienced into a positive aspect therefore when Rama experiences anger, it is positive anger that brings about good in the society. However, Ravana embodies the negative aspect due to which he is always in conflict with himself and with others about upholding Dharma.

**Humanity, or Tranquility** - The fifth world in the Nichern Daishonin’s concept of the ten worlds. Rama embodies the positive aspect of the fifth world that us being at Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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peace, calm and reasonable an opportunity to restore one's energies and as a result Rama exhibits resoundingly and calmness when Dasharatha informs Rama about KaiKai's intentions and entreats Rama to kill him and crown himself King. While Ravana inhabits the negative aspect of the world that is Constant inactivity, laziness, passivity and as a result he becomes complacent and arrogant after abducting Sita.

**Rapture, or Heaven** - The sixth world in the Nichren Daishonin's concept of the ten worlds. The positive realm of which is inhabited by Rama that is temporary joy when desires are fulfilled, exhilaration at being alive and therefore while in Exile, instead of missing the luxuries of being a prince and living in a palace Rama enjoys the life of the forest and makes himself at home in the forest among other living creatures. The negative realm inhabited by Ravana that is characterized by short-term gratification when one's desires have been achieved, can quickly revert to hell, or hunger. Ravana easily resorts to the realms of hell, hunger and animality as apparent from the example where Ravana does intense tasya and propitiates Brahma and finally seeks the boon of immortality following which he invests himself in trying to become so powerful that he could rule the world.

**Learning** – The seventh world in Nichren Daishonin's concept of ten worlds. Rama embodies the positive aspect that is learning about life and oneself from others and from existing knowledge and therefore Rama exhibits his innate hunger for learning and is an apt pupil when Vishwamitra teaches a mantra to Rama. While, Ravana inhabits the negative aspect that leads to self-centredness and separation from others. In the Lotus Sutra people of Learning and Realization were taught they could only enter the realm of Buddhahood through faith. However, Ravana embodies the negative aspect of learning Ravana wants to defy the Gods and become the master of the three worlds.

**Realisation-** The eighth world in Naichren Daishonin's concept of ten worlds. The positive aspect is characterized by wisdom or insight where we gain an understanding of an aspect of life from our own observations and experiences. Rama realization is portrayed in the Yuddha Kanda where, after Rama is crowned king of Ayodhya, he does not punish KaiKai as he realizes that KaiKai like any mother aspired for the best for her son and thus forgave her and treated her with all the respect and love. While the negative aspect is characterized by self-centredness and a tendency to use one's intellect, rather than one's wisdom, to solve problems that Ravana exhibits through the tendency to use one's intellect instead of wisdom. Ravana, despite good advice from his brother Vibhishana, insists to continue on the path he has embarked upon

**Bodhisattva and Buddha hood.-** [The word consists of bodhi (enlightenment) and sattva (beings) and means someone who seeks enlightenment, for themselves and others.] The positive aspect of which are Devotion to the happiness of others as shown by eg nurses or a parent's love for a child, which is embodied by Rama. Rama tread on the path of Dharma and for doing so he gave up his rightful claim to the throne, and agreed to go into exile for fourteen years, to fulfill the vow that his father

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had given to Kaikeyi, one of King Dashratha's wives. This is in spite of the fact that Kaikeyi's son, Bharat, begged him to return back to Ayodhya and said that he did not want to rule in place of Rama. Rama asserts his dedication to Dharma when he undertakes to offer Ravana a final chance to make peace, despite his heinous actions and patronage of evil, by immediately returning Sita and apologizing to both Rama and Sita, but Ravana refuses. After he was crowned the king of Ayodhya, he brought in RamRajya, where there is perfect justice and freedom, peace and prosperity. There are no natural disasters, diseases, ailments or ill-fortune of any nature for any living being. There are no sins committed in the world by any of his people.

### **Ravana and Buddhist Perception**

Ravana embodies the negative aspect of arrogance feeling superior to those you are helping, pouring life-force out towards the lives of others, without paying attention to one's own needs means that one's life will move towards the lower life states. In his quest to conquer the world, he overlooked the value of many men and life. He gave in more and more into his Daitya tendencies, gravitated towards the lower worlds, and ultimately fails to achieve Buddha hood. While Rama gradually gravitates towards the upper world by his action and finally achieves Buddha hood this is seen in the life course that Rama follows, after ruling as a king ascends heaven and the people who accompany him on the walk ascend heaven. Rama not only maintained his buddhabhood, by association, people who walked or tried to walk the path set by Rama also attained buddhahood.

### **Conclusion**

The story of Rama and Ravana is full of morality and sets a path towards an ideal mutually beneficial of existences. However, the individual story of Rama as mere mortal man who overcomes the flaws of character to manifest buddhahood is profound. Rama overcame the ten worlds that exist mutually. Rama was able to transform the three realms of existence The Realm of the Individual Consciousness – that is the awareness on all levels, including subconscious and psychosomatic; it includes the elements of form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness. The realm of Living Beings – that is the awareness of plants, animals, and all sentient beings. And the third realm of the Environment – that is the awareness of the neighborhood, region, earth, solar system, our galaxy, the universe and creates Ramarajya. Ramayana, the story carries in it explicit examples of choice that a man is faced with on a day-to-day basis the choice to embrace life in the right aspect or tread the path of self-destruction.

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### Glossary

**Artha**- artha is one of the four goals of life, known as purusharthas which means "purpose, cause, motive, meaning, notion".

**Bharatha**- Brother of Rama born to Kaikeyi.

**Daitya** - are a clan or race or Asura as are the Danavas.

**Dharma**- Righteousness is that which accomplishes the three tasks of keeping the social system in an excellent condition, bringing about the worldly progress of every living being and causing progress in the spiritual as well – Shri Shankaracharya.

**Kama** - kāma is regarded as the third of the four goals of life (purusharthas, which means as pleasure, sensual gratification, sexual fulfillment, pleasure of the senses, desire, eros, or the aesthetic enjoyment of life.

**Kaikeyi** - the second of King Daśaratha's three wives and a queen of Ayodhyā. She was the mother of Bharata.

**Lakshmana** - Lakshmana is the twin brother of Shatrughna, born in Ayodhya to Sumitra, the second wife of Dasharatha.

**Lotus Sutra**- (Jap. Hokkeko; Skt. Saddharma-pundirika-sutra) "The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law," Shakyamuni's highest teaching, expounded in the last 8 years of his life. The translation known in China and Japan is Myoho-renge-kyo translated by Kumarajiva.

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**Moksha** - is the liberation from samsara and the concomitant suffering involved in being subject to the cycle of repeated death and reincarnation.

**Nichren Daishonin**- The true Buddha; the founder of our faith, born on February 16, 1222, 170 years after the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law (q.v.).

**Rama** - The son of King Daśaratha of Ayodhyā born to Koushalya.

**Rakshsa** - is a race of mythological humanoid beings or unrighteous spirit in Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Rakshasas are also called man-eaters.

**Ravana** – king of the tribe of Rakshasa and king of Lanka.

**Shatrughna** - Shatrughna was born to the virtuous king of Ayodhya, Dasaratha, and his third wife, Queen Sumitra.

**Sita** –Wife of Rama.

**Tapsya** - in Sanskrit means "heat". In Vedic religion and Hinduism, it is used figuratively, denoting spiritual suffering, mortification or austerity, and also the spiritual ecstasy of a yogin.

**Varuna** - The god of the ocean, often considered king of the gods.

**Vibhishana** - He was the younger brother of the demon Ravana.

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