

The R?m?ya?a of V?lm?ki: An Epic of Ancient India, Volume VII: Uttarak???a (Princeton Library of Asian Translations)

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The seventh and final book of the monumental *R?m?ya?a* of *V?lm?ki*, the *Uttarak???a*, brings the epic saga to a close with an account of the dramatic events of King R?ma's millennia-long reign. It opens with a colorful history of the demonic race of the *r?k?asas* and the violent career of R?ma's villainous foe R?va?a, and later recounts R?ma's grateful discharge of his allies in the great war at Lank? as well as his romantic reunion with his wife S?t?. But dark clouds gather as R?ma, confronted by scandal over S?t?'s time in captivity under the lustful R?va?a, makes the agonizing decision to banish his beloved wife, now pregnant. As R?ma continues as king, marvelous tales and events unfurl, illustrating the benefits of righteous rule and the perils that await monarchs who fail to address the needs of their subjects.

The *Uttarak???a* has long served as a point of social and religious controversy largely for its accounts of the banishment of S?t?, as well as of R?ma's killing of a low-caste ascetic. The translators' introduction provides a full discussion of these issues and the complex reception history of the *Uttarak???a*. This translation of the critical edition also includes exhaustive notes and a comprehensive bibliography.



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