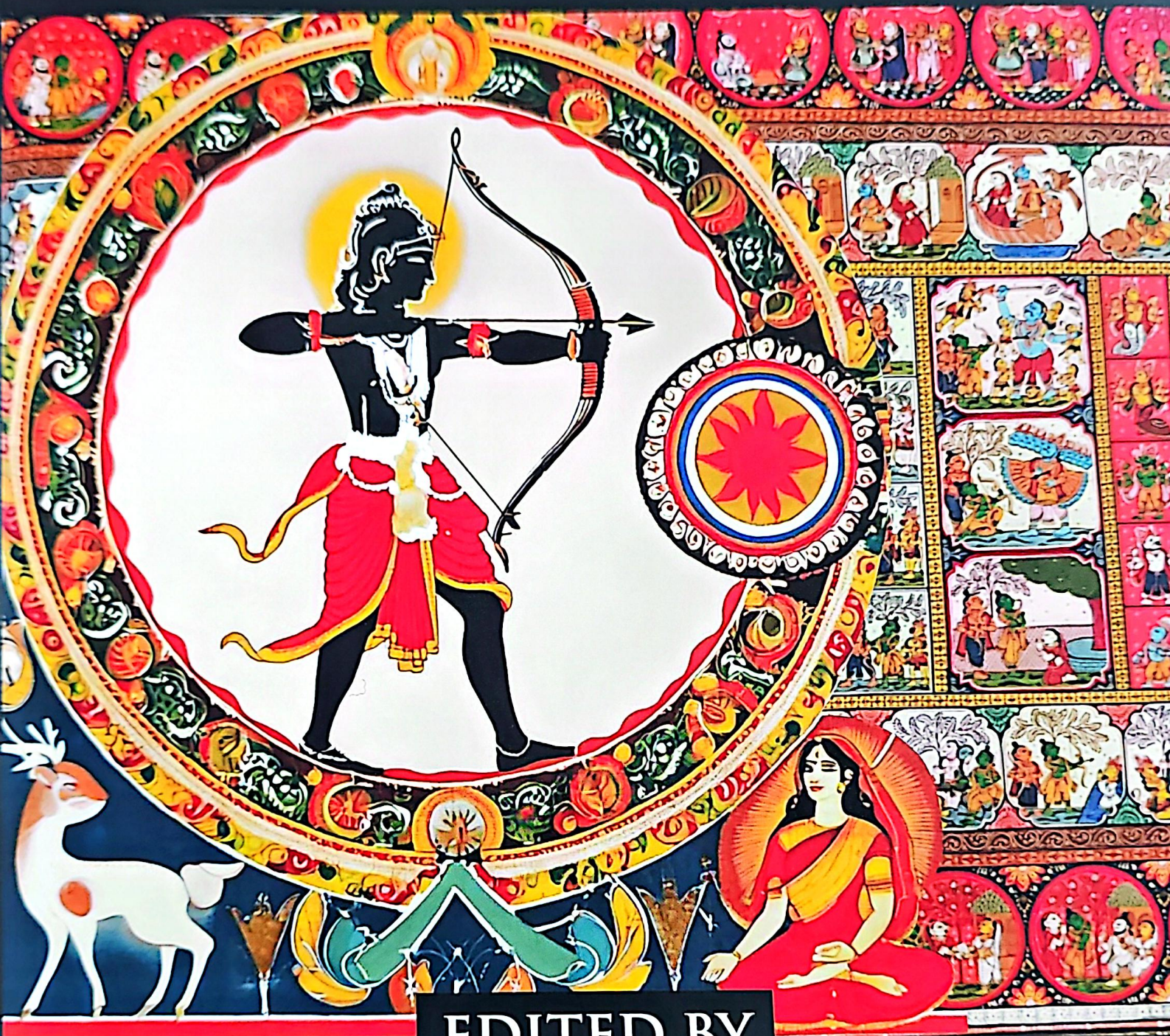




RAMAYANA

IN WORLD ART AND THOUGHT



EDITED BY

SHOVANA NARAYAN



RAMAYANA
in
World Art and Thought

Contents

Acknowledgement	7
Introduction	9
Section I: Outreach	
1. Following the Footsteps of Sri Ram in Punjab <i>Lady Kishwar Desai</i>	21
2. Krittivasa Ramayana: The Traditions of Bharatvarsha <i>Bivash Ranjan Mondal</i>	34
3. Persian Ramayanas <i>Rana Safvi</i>	48
4. Stylistic Representations of the Ramayana in Mughal Paintings <i>Dr. Seema Bhalla</i>	63
5. The Ramayana in Southeast Asia <i>Sharon Lowen</i>	82
6. The Indian Princess Who United Two Nations: The 2000-Year-Old Historical Connection between Ayodhya and South Korea <i>Dr. Zena Chung</i>	108
7. Ramlila in Belarus <i>Amb. (Retd.) Sangeeta Bahadur</i>	123
8. The Romance of the Ramayana <i>Mehru Jaffer</i>	137
9. The Visualisation of the Ramayana under Akbar's Patronage <i>Dr. Abira Bhattacharya</i>	148
Section II: Perspectives and Significance	
10. Unveiling Shri Ram : The Valmiki Ramayana's Legendary Warrior <i>Rear Admiral Dr. S. Kulshrestha, (Retd.)</i>	171

11. Hanuman's Bhakti; Sita's Shakti <i>Prof. Ashish Khokar</i>	189
12. Ecological Diversity and the Ramayana <i>Shovana Narayan</i>	206
13. The Warp and Weft of Ethics and Morality in the Ramayana <i>Dr. Gunjan Pradhan Sinha</i>	225
14. Sitayana: Her Story Retold <i>Amita Sahaya</i>	236
15. Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and India's Soft Power Diplomacy <i>Amb. Akhilesh Misra</i>	252
16. Shri Ram: Illuminating the Path for the Indian Diaspora and Southeast Asia <i>Dr. K.K. Mishra</i>	258
17. Localisations and Contested Narratives: Ramayana in Laos <i>Neeru Misra</i>	274
18. Indian Music and Ramayana <i>Surmani K.S. Vasantha Lakshmi</i>	295
List of Contributors	304

Acknowledgement

When I was asked by the publisher, Sanjay Arya, to edit a book on “Ramayan in World Art and Thought”, I found it interesting for a couple of reasons: (a) that it would be a nice idea to have different perspectives on the Ramayan encapsulated in one volume and (b) that for a change, I would be acquiring and assimilating articles - because till now, I have been used to doing original research work. My only request to Sanjay ji was that while I would acquire the articles, the detailed tasks of a line editor, copy editor and a proof reader would be assigned by him to appropriate persons.

I was overwhelmed with the unhesitating participation, generosity and kind gesture of each and every contributor of the articles in this volume. Words are inadequate to express my sincere heartfelt gratitude to them for reposing faith and belief in me and for being such wonderful friends and colleagues.

Thank you, my dear friends, Lady Kishwar Desai, Amb. Akhileshwar Misra, Ms. Mehru Jaffer, Ms. Rana Safvi, Dr. Seema Bhalla, Dr. Zena Chung, Guru Sharon Lowen, Prof Ashish Khokar, Rear Admiral Dr. S. Kulshrestha, Dr. Gunjan Pradhan Sinha, Dr. Kamal Kishor Misra, Ms. Amita Nigam Sahaya, Amb. Sangeeta Bahadur, Dr. Abira Bhattacharya, Shri Bivash Ranjan Mondal, Dr. Neeru Misra and K.S. Vasantha Lakshmi. Each of your article, brought in new perspectives which has enriched appreciation of the Ramayan.

My gratitude to editors Samyuktha Nair and Jehanara Warsi for their patience and combing the manuscript thoroughly.

Thank you, Sanjay Ji, for your courage and determination in publishing books on art, history and culture especially in the classical field, in spite of the popular belief that they do not ‘sell’ and also for reposing confidence in me.

Shovana Narayan



6

The Indian Princess who United Two Nations The 2000-Year-Old Historical Connection between Ayodhya and South Korea—A True Love Story

Dr. Zena Chung

There is a rich historical and cultural bonding between South Korea and the city of Ayodhya, considered the oldest holy city of India is best known as the birthplace of Lord Ram. According to Korean legends, some 2000 years ago (in 48 AD), 16-year-old Princess Suriratna, daughter

of the King of Ayodhya, went to Korea and married King Kim Suro. She later came to be known as Queen Heo Hwang-ok. The Korean history book, Samguk Yusa, has a mention of a princess hailing from Ayuta.

According to the legend, the 16-year-old Princess Suriratna decided to set sail from India after her parents had a dream that a pious king, King Suro, awaited her arrival at Gim Hae. Accompanied by her brother, Jangyu Hwasang, she landed on the east coast of Korea where King Kim Suro welcomed her with his army, as he had had a similar dream of her arrival. They were married on 17 July 48 AD.

The couple has 10 sons and two daughters. Two of their sons took their mother's last name, 'Heo', while the others adopted their father's last name, 'Kim'. Today, these two are prominent clans in Korea, and marriages between them are forbidden. The pagodas (samadhis) of both the King and the Queen are in the form of large, round earthen mounds topped by lush green grass. Ancient engraved memorial stones dedicated to the couple exist in Korea today, but they are a few kilometres apart, in separate compounds, surrounded by boundary walls and maintained by the Government of South Korea. To this day, the royal couple is worshipped with fairs at their pagodas, and many devout members of the Karak clan travel to India each year for an ancestor worship ritual in Ayodhya in the months of February and March.



Princess Heo Hwang-ok a.k.a. Suriratna and Her husband King Suro



Princess of Ayodhya—Queen Hwang Hua-Ok

In an interview with the *Asia Age* on 27 January 2010, the First Lady of Korea, Kim Yoon-ok, wife of former South Korean President, Lee Myung Bak, very proudly proclaimed that she is a descendent of the Princess of Ayodhya, belonging to the Kachhwaha clan. It is a coincidence that Devisingh Shekhawat, the husband of the then Honourable President of India, Pratibha Patil and the Lady Kim Yoon Ok, wife of the former South Korean President, both belong to the Kachhwaha clan of the Princess of Ayodhya. If the President of North Korea, Kim Jong Un, accepts an offer of filial relationship, India could be a welcome mediator between the two Koreas now, as India had previously worked as a peace facilitator to terminate the Korean War that had started in 1953.

During former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's ((2004–2014)) visit to South Korea in 2012, the First Lady, Shrimati Gursharan Kaur, was informed by a delegate that a few thousand Indians were living in Korea. At this point, Korean President Lee Myung Bak's wife, Yoon-ok

Kim, corrected him by saying that he was misinformed and that the number was more than 50 lakhs, because she herself could trace her ancestry back to India, an obvious reference to Koreans who trace their roots to Ayodhya including her. South Korea has more than 50 lakh people out of its over 50 million people who trace their ancestry to King Kim Suro and Queen Heo, the Indian Princess of Ayodhya. Besides Korean President Lee Myung Bak's wife, Yoon-ok Kim, this includes many high dignitaries such as the former Korean Prime Minister, Mr. Kim Jong Pil and the former South Korean President, Kim Dae Jung.



Queen Heo Hwang-ok (aka Princess Suriratna) and King Kim Suro, Gimhae Gaya Theme Park

The South Korean Prime Minister, Mr. Kim Jong Pil, at the time of his official visit to India in April 1999, attended a memorial service to King Kim Suro. At Ayodhya, in the compound of the Kings' Pagoda, two saplings were planted—one, by the Raja of Ayodhya, Shri Bimlendra Mohan Prasad Misra and the second, by the District Magistrate of Faizabad, Ms. Aggarwal. The Ceremony was addressed by Raja Shri Bimlendra Mohan Prasad Mishra, who did not claim to be a descendant of the Princess, as his Brahmin ancestors had migrated from Bihar about 300 years ago.

While researching the events of the First War of Independence in 1857, a few photos of the last Rajput King of Ayodhya, Raja Man Singh, showed him in handcuffs, after he was captured in Varanasi. He was later hanged by the British for allegedly supporting the Sepoy Mutiny.

There was no effort made from the Indian side to trace the descendants of Raja Man Singh. However, the Korean clansmen have tested the DNA of people around Ayodhya and found matching results. Much effort is desired from the Indian side to trace the ancestry of the 2000-year-old history. India-Korea family bond deserves to be strengthened at various levels, in the mutual interest of both communities and countries.

Raja Bimlendra Mohan Pratap Mishra of Ayodhya, member of Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, while talking to The Times of India in 2018, recalls how ties between Ayodhya and South Korea revived in the mid-1990s. He said that in 1996, a delegation from Inje University arrived in Ayodhya to trace Queen Heo's lineage and in 1999, they invited him to South Korea's capital and he was bestowed the highest honour, adding that he felt proud to have played a key role in bringing India and South Korea closer. "They trust me and sent the plaque for Queen's memorial in my name."

Today, South Koreans trace their origin to the Karak clan in the city of Gim Hae in South Korea. Choe Chong-dae, a columnist at Korea Times, wrote: "According to the 'Samguk Yusa', a 13th-century Korean historical chronicle, India-Korea friendship began in 48 AD when Princess Suriratna journeyed from Ayodhya, India, to Korea to marry King Kim Su-ro and subsequently became Queen Heo Hwang-ok of the Gaya Kingdom (42-562 A.D.)."

Kim Byung-mo, a senior archaeologist and a professor at Hanyang University, South Korea, whose family (clan) originates from Gim Hae, shared his decades-long academic research in the book portraying the Kims' genetic link with the royal family of Ayodhya. He wrote that Korea and India shared genes since the union of King Kim Su-ro with Queen Heo. There is no solid evidence of this yet, but recent genetic studies have pointed out Queen Heo's possible link to India. The *Samguk Yusa* is the only source of this legend.

The Queen Huh Memorial Park was established in Ayodhya by the Uttar Pradesh government in collaboration with the Gim Hae City of South Korea in 2001. It was inaugurated in 2022 by the Korean Government. Covering approximately 2,000 sq mt, it includes a meditation hall, queen and king pavilions, pathways, fountain, murals and audio-video facilities. Since then, several of the Karak dynasty descendants of Queen Hwang-ok as well as several hundreds of Koreans visit Queen Heo Memorial Park to pay their respects. Queen Hwang-ok's link to India is luring South Korean companies like Hyundai, LG and Samsung to invest more in the state. Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, signed an MoU with South Korea to enhance bilateral relations in 2018 and another MoU was signed on May 23, 2023, with North Gyungsang Province in South Korea.

The relationship gained further prominence when South Korean First Lady Kim Jung-sook visited Ayodhya in November 2018 and also attended the ceremony to unveil Queen Hwang-ok's memorial on the west bank of River Saryu in Ayodhya that marked the start of a joint project between South Korea and India.



First Family of Korea with Former President Shri Ramnath Kovind, Smt. Savita Kovind and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

Today, there are monuments in the city of Gim Hae dedicated to the historical union of the Korean king and Indian queen. The Indian Government attaches great cultural value to this relationship between Korea and India and has been promoting both international and Korean tourism.



(South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol (L) and First Lady Kim Keon Hee disembark the presidential plane at Palam Air Base in New Delhi for the G20 Summit in India on 8 September 2023.)



The current South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol (left) shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at their bilateral summit held at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi, India on 10 September 2023 (Kim Yong Wii from the office of the President)

India and the Republic of Korea are two equally culturally opulent countries where traditions are valued and inheritance is preserved. People of both countries strive to work hard to balance the intricacies of the modern world and the customs of their forefathers. It is reflected in their lifestyle, work culture, food, clothing and other aspects of life which is fascinating and calls for a closer view.

At the Pran Pratishtha ceremony at Ayodhya Ram temple on 22 January 2024, the Ambassador of South Korea to India, His Excellency, Mr. Chang Jee-bok and Kim Chil-su from South Korea, belonging to Queen Heo's dynasty, were present.

Presently, an initiative has been taken up by myself, Ms. Seon D. Chung (aka Zena Chung) as the Founder & Director, of Global Diplomats Forum and Indo Korea Business Culture Center (IKBCC), to further promote the Indo-Korean international relationship, further strengthening the efforts of past several years to develop this cultural bonding in India. I am happy to be the proud recipient of the prestigious Dr. Sarojini Naidu International Award in 2020 by the AAFT University and Asian Academy of Arts.

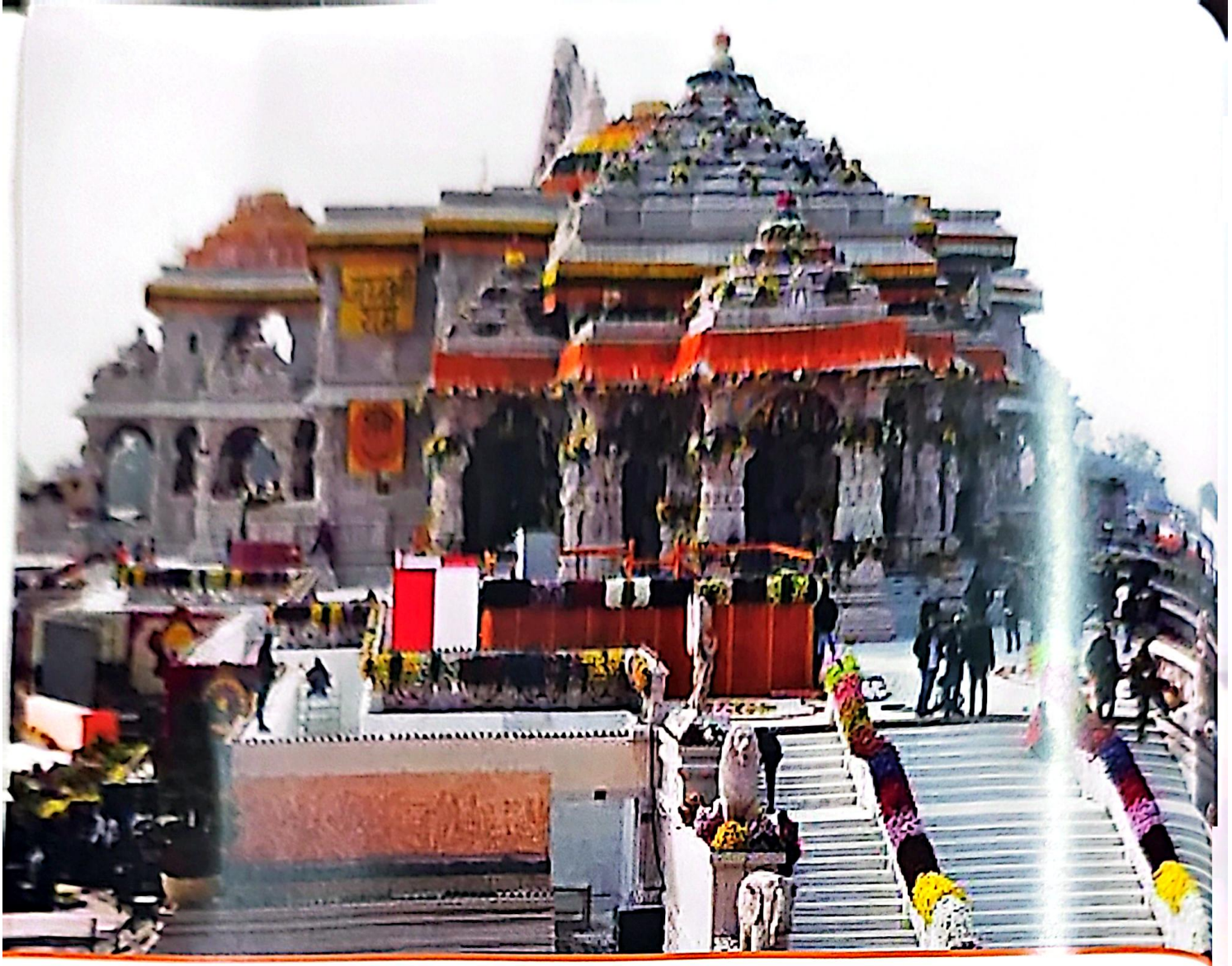


Dr. Zena Chung's Official Visit to the Ram Temple, Ayodhya

Documentaries have been made by us in 2020 on the historical ties between India and Korea, highlighting the marriage between Korean King Kim Suro, the founder of Gaya Kingdom and also the Karak clan with the 'Princess of Ayodhya', who later came to known as Queen Heo Hwang-ok in Korea. The union of Korean King Kim Suro and Princess of Ayodhya, Queen Heo Hwang-OK is a pious reality among two clans in South Korea, as true as the existence of Lord Ram in India.

Brig. Naresh Bahadur Singh (Retd.) VSM, at a press conference on 19 April 2023 in New Delhi informed the audience in his address that he belongs to a family which is the clan of Princess Suriratna who had travelled to Korea. They are known as 'Kushwaha'. At Gim Hae, which he visited during his official capacity as the President of the India Olympic Association when the Asian Games was held in the city of Pusan (close to Gim Hae city), he was very warmly welcomed by all Koreans.

In order to further strengthen the ties between South Korea and India and also as a great tribute to the Hindu God of Ayodhya, Lord Ram, it is our endeavour to see that a Ram Temple is constructed in the City of Gim Hae. This would strengthen Indo-Korea ties and cultural bonding.



Shri Ram Mandir, Ayodhya

This would further enlighten the South Koreans about the blood relationship of their Queen Heo to Lord Rama. In this manner, Koreans would learn more about Lord Ram, revered by the Indians, but is hitherto relatively unknown to Koreans, in spite of Queen Heo. Similarly, Indians would get to know more about their Princess of Ayodhya, who is less known to Indians whereas she has been widely recognised as Queen Heo Hwang-ok in Korea.

In a press conference on 28 April 2023 chaired by Dr. G.V. Rao, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India and the Vice President of India Society of International Law, he introduced the panel and the audience to the idea of the construction of a Ram Temple in South Korea as the brainchild of Dr. Zena Chung. Dr. Rao also mentioned that a 38-member delegation from South Korea had requested that Ayodhya and Gim Hae be declared sister cities, which was accepted and officially declared by the Government of India and the Government of South Korea. This would not only promote peace through interpersonal relationships but would also “offer the flexibility to allow connections to form between communities that are mutually beneficial and take on issues that are most relevant to the partners”.



Press Conference: Proposed Construction of Lord Ram Temple In South Korea on 19 April 2023



First Family of Korea with CM of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Aditya Nath

She found that Queen Heo is very well-known in Korea but not in India and Lord Ram, who is worshipped by everyone in India, is not very well known in Korea. So, she wants to promote the project so that there will be greater and stronger ties between India and Korea.

Several efforts, at various levels, are being made to strengthen relations between the two nations by promoting business, trade, education, tourism and cultural activities between the two countries. Dr. Zena Chung's India-Korea Business Culture Centre plans to open India-Korea Business Culture Centers (IKBCC) all across India by opening one state one IKBCC centre in India with the hope of establishing 30 India-Korea Business Culture Centers (IKBCC). Dr. Sandeep Marwah, President of Noida Film City, and the International Chamber of Media and Entertainment Industry (ICMEI) has been promoting international cultural exchanges and promoting Indo-Korea relations by hosting Indo-Korea film festivals.



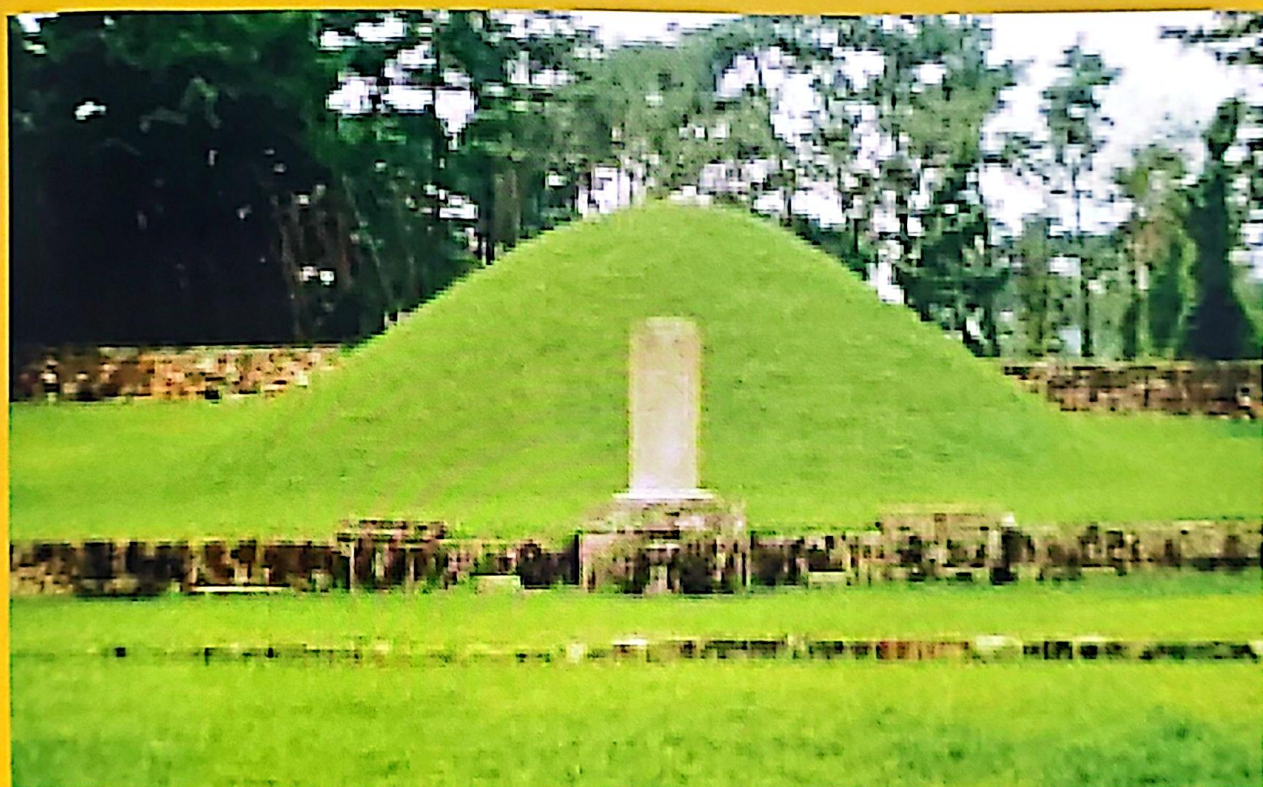
Statue of Queen Heo Hwang-ok, Next to King Suro's Tomb



Mangan Island, Gim Hae—Princess Suriratna's Arrival Point



Tomb of King Suro



Tomb of Queen Heo beside that of King Suro, Gim Hae



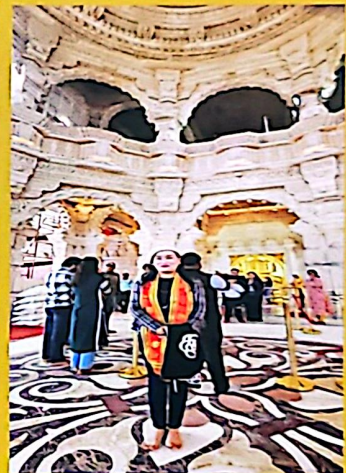
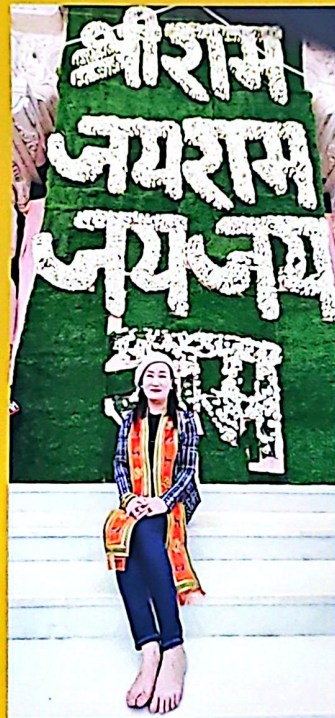
Pasa Stone Pagoda Below the Tomb of Queen Heo Hwang-ok



Indian Postage Stamps of Queen Heo Hwang-ok, aka Suriratna

Indian Postage Stamps of Queen Heo Hwang-ok, aka Suriratna





The year 2023–2024 was a very significant year as it marked the 50-year diplomatic relations and celebrated as golden jubilee between India and Korea. At the G20 Presidency hosted by India, we strongly supported the principles and values of India enshrined in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (We are all one family under one God), 'Atithi Devo Bhava' (The guest is equivalent to God), which meet all the criteria by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance). Their realisation would go a long way in promoting world peace and harmony.



Princess Suriratna

The Princess of Ayodhya and Lord Ram's character are examples that should change the mindset of people all across the world, towards the path of a happy, compassionate and peaceful world: a symbol of 'one world, one earth, one family'!

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शंकीर्णोपायनमः ॥ शंकराचार्येण नमस्कृत्य नरैश्चैव नरोत्तमं ॥ देवीसरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥ १ ॥ जय
निरघुवंशतिसक्तः कौशल्यानंदनो रामः ॥ दशवदननिधनकारी दाशरथिः पुंडरीकान्तः ॥ २ ॥ **सूत उवा**
च ॥ कराचिचारो योगी परानुग्रहसो कया ॥ पर्यटनसक्तो लोकान् सत्यलोकमुपागमत् ॥ ३ ॥ तत्र दृष्ट्वा मृ
र्त्तिमद्भिर्छंदोभिः परिवेष्टितं ॥ सात्त्विकं प्रभया सत्प्रकाशं सत्यं ते सभोगृहं ॥ ४ ॥ मार्कंडेया दिमुनिभिः स
यमानं सुहृद्भिः ॥ सर्वार्थगोचरज्ञानं सरस्वत्या समनितं ॥ ५ ॥ वत्सु खं जगन्नाथं भक्ताभीष्टफलप्रदम् ॥
प्रणम्य देवदत्तं तदा वसुनिपुंगवः ॥ ६ ॥ प्रसन्नस्तमुनिं प्राह स्वयं भूषेत्सोत्तमं ॥ किं प्रष्टुं कामस्त्वमीसि
तद्दिष्टमिति ते मुने ॥ ७ ॥ **स्तोत्रं** कल्पवृक्षस्य मुनिर्ब्रह्माण्डमवधीत् ॥ तत्रः शुभं तमया सर्वपूर्वमेव शुभाशुभं ॥ ८ ॥ र
रानीमेकमेवास्ति श्रोतव्यं सरस्वती ॥ तद्ब्रह्म सपिब्रह्म हि यदिते नुग्रहो मयि ॥ ९ ॥ **प्राप्ते** कल्पिपुगे घोरे नराः पुण्यविव
र्जिताः ॥ दुराचाररताः सर्वे सत्यवार्ता पराश्रुताः ॥ १० ॥ परापनाद निरताः परद्रव्याभिलाषिणः ॥ परस्त्रीसक्तमनसः
परहिंसा परायणाः ॥ ११ ॥ **प्राप्त** दृष्टयो मूढानां तिका पश्य बुद्धयः ॥ मातापितृकृतदेषास्तीरे ॥ १२ ॥ **मर्किकराः** ॥ १३ ॥
विप्रास्तो भगवद्गुरुः ॥ १४ ॥ **जीविनः** ॥ धनार्जनार्थं मग्नस्तु विषामदविमोहिनाः ॥ १५ ॥ **द** ॥ १६ ॥ **माणाः** प्रा
यशः परवचकोः ॥ १७ ॥ **प्रा** ॥ स्वधर्मत्यागशीलिनः ॥ १८ ॥ **तद्** कृदा वगेके नि ॥ १९ ॥ **शिव**



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