

Sethu - Bandhan – Building Rama’s Bridge

NARRATOR: Namaste to all. Today Indians all over the world are celebrating Deepavali, in remembrance of the victorious return of Ram and Sita to Ayodhya. The current disturbing news is the decision of Indian politicians who are planning to demolish Rama’s Bridge connecting India and Sri Lanka. The bridge was built by Rama’s Army consisting of Vanars or monkeys who needed to cross the Indian Ocean to reach Sri Lanka to fight against Ravana who had kidnapped Sita.

Let us now watch the incidents that took place during the building of the bridge as a skit performed by the children of Fairfield, Iowa.

The story unfolds approximately two weeks after Hanuman returned finding Sita in Lanka. A meeting was hosted at Rameshwaram, in Tamil Nadu in the presence of Lord Ram along with Lakshmana, Hanuman, Vibheesan, Angad, Sugreev, & Jambhavan.

Scene Opens: Ram is seated in the middle with Lakshman.

Jambhavan: Jai Siyaram. My dear friends, we have all discussed on how to cross this ocean to fight the war with Ravan and get Sitamataji back to Ayodhya. I do not agree to building boats and ships to cross the ocean.

Sugreeva: Why do you object to building boats and ships, Jambhavanji?

Jambhavan: To build boats and ships we have to kill thousands and thousands of trees. Trees are our lifeline; we should not cut them unless there is no alternative.

Rama: We should cause only minimal damage to the ocean living beings as well.

Angad: What else can we do to cross this Ocean?

Vibeeshana: This ocean is difficult to cross. We have to build a bridge. But the Ocean is violent.

Jambhavan: But a Man like Lord Ram, who always follows Dharma, has inner peace and has control over himself will be helped by mother Nature Herself.

Hanuman: Oh Lord Rama, Please ask the King of the Ocean, Samdura Rajan to help us.

Rama: I will pray to The Ocean God as you suggest, my friends.

Nararator: Lord Ram spread the darbha (khusha) grass on the shores of the ocean and meditated upon the Lord of the Seas. This place is called Thirupullani, located 5 miles away from Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu, South India. In Tamil “pul” means Grass.

Om Om Om

Shanno mitra sham varunaha, Shanno bhavatvay namah, Shannoindro brihaspatihi, Shanno vishnu ruru pravaha
Namo brahmane, Namaste vayo, Tvameva pratyakshambrahma si, Tva meva pratyaksham brahma, varishyami
Ritham varishyami, Satyam varishyami, Tanma mavatu, Tatbhaktara mavatu, Avadhumaam, Avadhu bhaktarum
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti hi

Ram stands up in anger:

Ram: Hey Samudra Raajan. I have been patiently waiting for you and you are not coming. I will dry you up with my Brahmastra and Agniastra.

Samdura Raajan appears.

Samudra: Oh Lord Rama, please do not do that. Destroying me would cause harm to all living beings.

Lakshman: But you did not appear when Ram requested you to through his penance.

Samudra: Forgive me. Now, I will tell you how you can cross me with your army. This is Nala , the son of Vishvakarma, the architect of the Devas.

Nala: Lord Rama, I have a love for architecture and so I learnt it very well. Our talents should be helpful to us and also should benefit the society.

Rama: Mangalam Nala.

Nala: Oh Lord Rama, I am here to serve you.

Samudra: Let him build a bridge across me and I assure you, I will take good care of it. I will not sink it.

Nala: There are coral and sand islands in the ocean. We can also use them and make a bridge quickly.

Vanar: You are a very clever architect and this bridge will remain for ever.

Hanuman : We all will carry huge rocks and drop them in the ocean.

Sugreeva: Hey Vanars. Start the work immediately without delay.

Lakshman: Before we begin any task, we should pray to our Guru and Lord Ganesha for blessings.

Then lots of Vanars appears on stage.

They close their eyes for a few seconds and Chant Guru Brahma and Vakratunda Mahakaaya.

Vanars start to lift rocks, but they are unable to do so.

Vanar: Hey Hanuman, we cannot lift these rocks like you. You are much stronger than us.

Hanuman: If you chant Ram's name and do your work, you can accomplish any difficult task very easily.

Vanar: Why Rama Naam and not other names?

Lakshman: Rama Naama is the powerful combination of the two great Mantras of Lord Vishnu and Shiva. "Ra", the third letter of Om Namō Narayana , and "Ma" the third letter of Om Nama Shivaya, is Rama.

Sugreev: Say Siyavara-Rama Chandra ki Jai.

The Vanars chant Ram Nam and work.

Vanar: But Hanuman, we are so immature, we cannot focus on chanting Ram Nam. What shall we do?

Hanuman: Likitha Japa is good which means writing Ram's Name is the easy way to keep the mind focused.

Vibheeshana: You write Ram's name on every stone that you drop in the Ocean. Rama Naama is so great that it will also make them to float on water.

Rama: My dear friends, please do not disturb the life of villagers when we do our work.

Hanuman: Shri Raama Chandra Ki Jay.

Vanars write Ram Nam on the rocks and brings stones and drop them, chanting Ram's Name.

A Squirrel rolls down on the floor and shakes his body in the sea many times.

Angad: Hey you little squirrel what are you doing here?

Squirrel: I am helping the great Rama build the bridge to save Sitama.

Vanaras laugh.

Jambhavan: Don't laugh, Vanars. He is little in body but his efforts are big.

Hanuman: We might be ordinary people; however small our contribution, we make a big change in ourselves as well as in the world.

Rama: I will draw three lines of Lord Shiva on the squirrel's back as a mark of his generous nature.

All : Shri Rama Chandra ki jay.

Narrator: With great enthusiasm the Vanara Sena completed building the bridge in five days starting from Dhanushkoti, 2 miles away from Rameshwaram. This Bridge, also called Rama's Bridge or Nala's Bridge is a chain of limestone shoals, between the islands of Mannar, near northwestern Sri Lanka, and Rameswaram, off the southeastern coast of South India. Mannar in Tamil means Vishnu, the King. The bridge is 30 miles (48 km) long and separates the Gulf of Mannar (southwest) from the Palk Strait (northeast). Some of the sandbanks are dry and the sea in the area is very shallow, being only 3 ft to 30 ft (1 m to 10 m) deep.

Hanuman: With the blessings of Lord Ram, we have completed the Bridge. Let us thank the Tri-Devis for successfully completing the work.

All say Devi ki Jay.

Sugreev: This Rama's bridge will unite Rama and Sita soon.

Hanuman: Yes and this bridge will ever remain as a symbol uniting the Jeevatma with the Paramatma.

Jambavan: Oh Lord Ram, keep your Holy right foot on the bridge and we will all follow you.

Ram walks on the bridge, and all vanars, chant "Siya-vara Ramchandra ki Jay".

Narrator: We have to preserve the Monument of Rama's bridge for our future generations to sing the glories of Lord Rama and Devi Sita. Next time when we go to India, we should all go to Rameshwaram and see this bridge. Sita Rama Chandra Ki Jay.

End.

Introducing Artist:

- 1. Lord Rama:Pranav Challiyil**
- 2. Lakshmana:Kishen**
- 3. Hanuman:Shreya**
- 4. Jambhavan:Anuja**
- 5. Vibhishan:Devan**
- 6. Sugreev:Narayani**
- 7. Angad:Reva**
- 8. Samudra Rajan:Devika**
- 9. Nala:Chasten**
- 10. Vanar 1:Nandini**
- 11. Vanar 2:Dev Rishi**
- 12. Squirrel:Jayanta**
- 13. Vanar4:Sachi**
- 14. Vanar6:Paramita**

Narration by:Minolli Nayagar