



**The R?m?ya?a of V?lm?ki: An Epic of Ancient  
India, Volume VII: Uttarak???a (Princeton  
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The seventh and final book of the monumental *Rāmayāna of Valmiki*, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, brings the epic saga to a close with an account of the dramatic events of King Rāma's millennia-long reign. It opens with a colorful history of the demonic race of the *rākāṣas* and the violent career of Rāma's villainous foe Rāvaṇa, and later recounts Rāma's grateful discharge of his allies in the great war at Lankā as well as his romantic reunion with his wife Sītā. But dark clouds gather as Rāma, confronted by scandal over Sītā's time in captivity under the lustful Rāvaṇa, makes the agonizing decision to banish his beloved wife, now pregnant. As Rāma 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 *Uttarakāṇḍa* has long served as a point of social and religious controversy largely for its accounts of the banishment of Sītā, as well as of Rāma's killing of a low-caste ascetic. The translators' introduction provides a full discussion of these issues and the complex reception history of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. This translation of the critical edition also includes exhaustive notes and a comprehensive bibliography.

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