

There are many people around the world who are familiar with the Rama. dramatic play. I say play because the Rama. play has never come before an audience in the form of a movie picture. But I am also sure that there are also a large number of people who have never heard about this Rama. drama. Hence this introduction.

According to a Myanmar renowned writer Sayagyi (Hsa ja gji:) Paragu, this Rama. drama originated from India. To quote another two Myanmar renowned writers, Sayagyi (Hsa ja gji:) Mya Than Tint and Sayamagyi (Hsa ja ma. gji:) Daw Khin Hnin Yu, this Rama. drama first came into being as an epic poem written by an Indian hermit named Wala. mi. ki in the The' ka ta. language 2000 years ago. Sayagyi Paragu was also known to have said that over the incoming years, this epic poem became a part of religious writings as a moral lesson between good and evil. The Rama. story spread throughout South East Asia and could be found in the religious writings of Hindusim, Buddhism and Jainism.

As years passed by the Rama. story began to appear in many different versions. Even in India where the story originated, different versions appeared. In some versions Rama. appeared as one of the reincarnations of the Hindu God Vishnu. Hence in later writings the Rama. story came

to be written from a religious outlook and sometimes from a historical outlook.

Another renowned Myanmar writer Banya (Ba. nja:) says that in every romantic story there are three main characters. The hero, the heroine and the villain. The hero stands for good, the villain for evil and the heroine always becomes the hero's sweetheart or has a love, hate relationship with the villain. In this Rama. story Rama. is the hero, Dassagiri the villain and Sita Deiwi the heroine. In the original story Rama. is a prince, Dassagiri an ogre and Sita Deiwi a princess.

The summary of the story is Rama. beat Dassagiri in an archery contest and won Sita Dei-wi's hand. Dassagiri saw Sita in person for the first time at the archery contest and fell hopelessly in love with her. On the other hand Sita also saw Dassagiri for the first time and detested his ogrelike appearance and rough manner. On the newly-wed couple's journey back home, Dassagiri stole Sita away from Rama. and took her back to his country where he was king. Prince Rama. who had already been banished from his country on account of his stepmother queen who wanted her own son to become crown prince, rallied an army to save Sita from the clutches of Dassagiri. The orge king who had imprisoned Sita Deiwi in his luxurious palace loved her so much that he did not even touch a strand of her hair but

just begged for her love. Sita Deiwi remained faithful to Rama.. In the ensuing battle Rama. killed Dassagiri and Sita was saved. The story was made interesting by the expressions of love shown and spoken by Dassagiri. The words spoken by Sita to Dassagiri, not to sacrifice his soldiers and people by going to war just for the sake of a woman. The faithfulness shown by a wife towards her husband. The debate between Dassagiri and his generals at the council of war. The wise counsel of Dassagiri's younger brother Bi. bi. tha. na., and most of all the family council between Dassagiri and his kin on how to abduct Sita Deiwi from Rama..

The above facts are the backbone of this ancient dramatic story. But as this story is over 2000 years old, the versions have been changed in many ways. In the original story there are deities, monkey kings and monkey warriors in near humanlike form and also having supernatural powers. All in all much more like a fairy tale. The name Dassagiri in the original version portrays a ten headed ogre. If one translates Dassagiri which is a Sanskrit word, 'Dassa' means 'Ten' and 'giri' means 'mountain' which directly means 'Ten Mountains'. In other words it means ' Lord of the Ten Mountains' which has a more down to earth meaning. In the original version and the dramatic plays based upon it Rama. is always portrayed

as a green coloured person and his brother Le' kha na. as a golden coloured one. Chit Oo Nyo, in this book cleverly converted all these by making the two princes into Aryans, with Rama. having green eyes and wearing green dresses and his younger brother Le' kha na. having gold coloured irises and wearing yellow clothes. Instead of a ten headed ogre, Dassagiri became 'Lord of the Ten Moun-tains'.

In this present book, the author Chit Oo Nyo has written this Rama. drama in a down to earth very practical style. It grips the reader from the very first page to the last. The main theme of this book which is different from all previous ones is that the main character happens to be Dassagiri in a human form, a Dravidian king. The author Chit Oo Nyo cleverly weaves the story to make the reader sympathize Dassagiri. To understand his deep love for Sita Deiwi and his honourable manner in treating her while she was in his power. This book has been printed eleven times in Myanmar between the years 1977 and 2017. In other words it is a masterpiece of Chit Oo Nyo. It is indeed a great pleasure for the translator to be of service in some way to help contribute this Myanmar master-piece to the English speaking people of the world.