



THE WALDORF CLEARING HOUSE

N E W S L E T T E R

NEW SERIES vol.3, no. 4 Spring 1987

The Story of Rama (A play)
Patzlaff: From Analyzing to
Imagining - Working out an
Artistic Approach to
Knowledge in the Teaching of
Literature

THE WALDORF CLEARING HOUSE 17100 SUPERIOR STREET NORTHRIDGE CALIFORNIA 91325



321 E. Decker
Viroqua, Wisconsin 54665
(608)637-7828

January 1987

Waldorf Clearinghouse
17100 Superior Street
Northridge, CA 91325

(With the attached play, "The Story of Rama," we include here some background information on this project that we found very effective.)
We submit this for you to use in the Clearinghouse if you wish.

As a concluding project to their block on Ancient India, our fifth graders wrote a play around the legend of Rama. They presented it first to the younger classes, and later to parents and friends. The children devised their own costumes. During their study time, a priest who had lived in India came to show them some Indian artifacts and to teach them some of the customs of India, among them the formal greeting of kneeling and bowing one's head to the feet of the respected one. A friend accompanied the play with several ancient Indian musical instruments: the sarode, the delruba, and the tambura.

With the help of parents and class teacher, the children prepared a traditional Indian dinner, which they served after the performance for their parents. Everyone felt that for a few hours they had been immersed in the spirit of Ancient India.

Karen Bezin (12/1)
Karen Bezin, Class Teacher
Pleasant Ridge School
Viroqua, Wisconsin

THE STORY OF RAMA

Scene I Palace of King Dasharatha

King Dasharatha: Whatever shall I do? I have three wives and not one will bear a child. And when I die, who will reign over the kingdom, and be my heir?

The King asked a wise man to advise him. The wise man told the King to pray to the gods. The gods answered King Dasharatha's prayers, telling him to make a mixture of rice and milk and feed it to his three wives. King Dasharatha obeyed the instructions of the gods. A year passed.

Servant: Oh King, oh King! Your three wives have all had children and there is a pair of twins among them.

King Dasharatha: I am overjoyed at this good news! I shall name my sons Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrugna.

The four brothers were good companions and were taught by a very fine teacher. They learned to shoot a bow and to ride an elephant and to fight demons. Rama and Lakshmana became close friends, and Bharata and Shatrugna were friends also. They grew into fine young men and travelled to distant lands with their teacher.

Scene II - City in Kingdom of King Janaka

One day as they were travelling, they came to the kingdom of King Janaka. In the town there was a festival, and the king and his daughter Sita were watching the events. Rama cast his eyes on Sita and fell in love with her. Sita saw Rama and fell in love with him too.

King Janaka: Many young men would like to marry Sita. But the one who will get her hand must pass a test. If you can string my magic bow, you may marry Sita. Many princes have tried and failed.

Rama: I would like to try to string the bow and win Sita for my wife.

(Rama strings the bow. Crowd cheers.)

King Janaka: Congratulations, my son. You shall marry Sita. I see you are accompanied by three fine brothers. I know of three of Sita's cousins who would make good wives for them. We will send a message to your father, King Dasharatha, to bring his court. We will celebrate four weddings at one time.

Scene III - Palace of King Dasharatha

After the wedding, King Dasharatha, his wives, his sons and his sons' wives returned to their own kingdom.

King Dasharatha: My good people. I have made an important decision. I am happy to announce that I have named Rama to be king after me.

(Crowd cheers.)

Everyone was happy to have Rama be king, except for an old hunchback who was Queen Kaikeyi's servant.

Hunchback Servant (to Queen Kaikeyi): I never did like that Rama, ever since the day he threw three mudballs at me when he was three years old. Now Rama is going to be king and his mother is going to be the favorite queen instead of you.

Queen Kaikeyi: I could not stand it if Rama were king instead of my own son, Bharata. But how can I get the king to change his mind? I think I have a plan

Queen Kaikeyi (to King Dasharatha): Remember, long ago, I saved your life in battle, and you gave me two wishes. I have made them.

1 - I want my son Bharata to be king.

2 - I want Rama to be banished from this kingdom for 14 years.

King Dasharatha: Please, dear Queen, do not wish this painful thing for me.

Queen Kaikeyi: My mind is made up.

King Dasharatha (to Rama): My heart is grieved that you will not be king after me and that you must be banished to the forest.

Rama: Dear Father, do not be discouraged. I am sure Bharata, my good brother, will be a fine king. I know that there is much to learn in the forest. I am your obedient son and will follow your command.

Lakshmana: Rama, I will go with you into banishment. You will need my help.

Rama: Thank you, dear brother.

Sita: Rama, I have sold all our belongings. I am ready to accompany you and Lakshmana.

Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana departed from the kingdom in a little boat. Everyone was sad to see them go. Not long after their departure, King Dasharatha died of a broken heart.

Scene IV - The Forest

Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana lived a happy, simple life in the forest. They prayed and studied with holy men who lived alone in the forest. The animals became their friends.

Meanwhile, Bharata, who had been in a far-off land when Rama was banished, heard the news and came to find Rama.

Bharata: I do not want to be king. Rama, please come back and be king.

Rama: I cannot disobey my father's command. I must stay away for 14 years.

Bharata: Very well, then. Give me your sandals. I will place them on your throne. That way the people will know that I am saving the throne for you. I will rule in your place while you are gone. I will not live in the palace and I will not wear the crown. Farewell.

One day, as Rama sat outside his cottage, a beautiful princess came by. She looked at Rama and talked beautiful words to him. Then she started saying nasty things about Sita. As Rama listened, he began to realize that she was a she-devil and he did not believe her. The she-devil got frustrated, turned back into her ugly form and Lakshmana ran out and cut off her nose and ears. The she-devil told her brother Ravanna, the 10-headed leader of the demons, about Rama and Sita. Ravanna decided he would like the beautiful Sita for his wife, so they made plans.

Sita: Look, Rama, a golden deer, just outside the cottage.

Rama: I will follow it. You stay with Lakshmana; it might be a trap.

The golden deer disappeared among the trees. When Rama found it, it was lying as if injured, on the ground. It called out for help, and the voice was just like Rama's voice. Lakshmana went running to help Rama, leaving Sita alone. This was what Ravanna was waiting for. He seized Sita and carried her off to his castle.

Rama: Where is Sita?

Lakshmana: I wish I knew.

Rama: We must search until we find her.

After many days and nights of searching, they come to the kingdom of the monkeys. The monkeys were having a terrible war, and Rama helped them make peace. The king of the monkeys named Hanuman, was eternally grateful to Rama. He pledged to be a faithful friend to Rama and to help him find Sita. Hanuman was informed by an eagle that Sita was in the castle of Ravanna on the island of Lanka. Hanuman made himself very big and jumped from the coast of India to the island. He searched the castle til he found Sita in the garden, guarded by ugly demon women because she refused to marry Ravanna.

Hanuman: Sita, wife of Rama. I bring you this ring, so you know I come from Rama.

Sita: Give this jewel from me to Rama. Tell him where I am and that I am all right.

Unfortunately, Ravanna's guards seized Hanuman at that moment and tied rags to his tail and set them on fire. But Hanuman used the flaming rags to set fire to all the houses in the town, and then jumped into the water and swam back to Rama.

Rama: I call on all the monkeys and bears to form an army.

We will build a bridge to Lanka and fight the demon army of Ravanna.

Thus began a very terrible war which lasted many days and nights. Ravanna used every evil trick imaginable to try to defeat Rama's army. Once, when Rama's army was almost wiped out by deadly, invisible arrows, Hanuman jumped to a mountain top, where special herbs were growing, and brought the whole mountain top back with him and revived Rama's army.

At last, Rama and Ravanna were fighting alone. Rama cut off one of Ravanna's ten heads, but another grew immediately back in its place. Then he cut off two arms which wiggled and grabbed at Rama, while two new arms grew back. Rama realized that he could not kill Ravanna's body. Then he thought of a prayer his old teacher had taught him. He said the words and they went straight to the heart of Ravanna and struck him down. He fell from his chariot, dead. The war was over.

The war was over. Rama asked the gods to give life back to the monkeys and bears that had been killed in the war.

The fourteen years were over. Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana returned to their kingdom and were welcomed by Bharata. Rama and Sita sat on the throne. On one side stood the faithful brother Lakshmana; on the other, the loyal friend Hanuman. And so began a reign of peace, happiness and plenty.

*

*

*

Pleasant Ridge School
Viroqua, WI
(5th grade play)