

INDIAN EPIC

(From the Children's Book: *Lights, Camera, Diwali!*)

Once upon a time, there was a king named *Dasarata* who ruled over the city of *Ayodha*. When the king married his second wife, *Kaikeyi*, he made a promise to her. He told her he would grant her two wishes because she saved his life in a battle.



One day, King *Dasarata* announced to the city of *Ayodha* that he was going to make his first son, *Rama* the prince. *Rama's* stepmother, Queen *Kaikeyi*, did not like that *Rama* would be the prince. She wanted her own son, *Bharata* to be crowned prince.

Queen *Kaikeyi* decided to use one of her wishes to banish Rama to the forest for 14 years. Rama was an obedient son. He honored his father's promise by going to the forest with his beautiful wife *Sita*. His loyal brother *Lakshman* also decided to go with him to the forest.



While living in the forest, a demon named *Ravana*, kidnapped *Rama's* wife *Sita*. A monkey named *Hanuman* and his monkey warriors helped rescue *Sita* from the demon. During the battle, Rama's brother, *Lakshman* hurt his leg. The only known cure for his leg was an herb that was on a mountain. Hanuman went to the mountain, picked up the entire mountain, and brought it back to Lakshman. Lakshman was immediately cured from using the herbs.



When 14 years passed, *Rama*, *Sita* and *Lakshman* returned to the city of *Ayodha*. The people from *Ayodha* set up "rows of lights" to safely welcome them back to the city. On this day, everyone remembers that light will always shine bright over darkness, and that good will always overcome evil.