



Hanuman Mask

Hanuman is worshipped by Hindus for his love and devotion to *Lord Rama*. In return for his unconditional love, Lord Rama granted Hanuman everlasting life.

Hanuman famously assisted Rama in his battle with *Ravana* (the demon king) to rescue *Sita*, who had been kidnapped by Ravana. The picture below left shows Hanuman bearing his heart which contains the image of Rama and Sita.

After his victory in the battle with Ravana, Rama gave gifts to all those who had assisted him in the battle. Turning towards Hanuman, Rama said, "There is nothing I can give you that would match the service you have rendered to me. All I can do is to give you my own self."



Hanuman the Crown Prince

Hanuman manages to infiltrate into Thosakanth's army and to gain his confidence. Thosakanth is overjoyed with what he believes to be a defection and a god-send. He elevates Hanuman to the position of the Crown Prince of Longka and gives him the regalia of Indrachit, the former heir who has been killed in the war. Hanuman proceeds to gain as much knowledge of his arch enemy's secrets as possible before playing havoc on much of the city and fleeing back to Rama's service. In this mask, Hanuman is depicted wearing Indrachit's crown.

Hanuman the King

After the vanquish of Thosakanth and the victorious end of the war, Rama is reunited with Sida. They triumphantly return to the throne of Ayodhya. Hanuman is rewarded with the kingship of a vassal state of Ayodhya. He accepts the reward, only to find after a short while that his simian nature is not suited to this high position. For example, he fails to sit still for any length of time. He resigns the kingship and leaves the regal splendour behind for a simple retirement. The mask which represents Hanuman in this episode wears the golden crown of state.

Hanuman the Hermit

Finally, Hanuman find peaceful life as a mendicant, living a life of seclusion in the forests. The mask of the hermit Hanuman wears the appropriate headgear.

The Missing Mask

There is a seventh mask of Hanuman. When Hanuman is in a pleasant mood, his face glows with pleasure. Thai craftsmen depict this mode by covering the mask with mother-of-pearl which reflects light in seven iridescent colours. A few mother-of-pearl masks exist in museums and private collections, but not yet in this collection.

