

QUEEN HEO HWANG-OK



Issue

The Ram Katha Park of Ayodhya will now be known as Queen Heo Hwang-ok Memorial Park, named after the Korean Queen having Indian roots.

Background

A musical performance was also carried out on the story of the queen at Kamani Auditorium. It was undertaken by Korean Centre for Culture.

Details

- Korean queen Heo Hwang-ok was born as Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya. She was the daughter of King Padmasen and queen Indumati.
- The ancient kingdom of Kaushala was ruled by the king. The kingdom extended from present-day UP to Odisha.
- The story of the queen is depicted in Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of Three Kingdoms). The memorabilia includes legends, folktales and history of Korea's three kingdoms — Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla.

The queen's journey

- The queen travelled to Korea and married Kim Suro, founder and King of Geumgwan Gaya in south-eastern Korea in 48 BC.
- The king of Ayodhya had sent his daughter after having a dream about her marrying Suro. She was the first queen of Geumgwan Gaya.

Legacy of the queen

- In modern day Korea, more than 6 million people trace their lineage to queen Heo Hwang-ok. The clans they belong include Gimhae Kim, Heo and Lee.
- The King Suro and the queen gave rise to the Karak dynasty. The decedents of this dynasty include former South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung and former Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil.
- The queen has a significant presence in popular culture of Korea. There are many plays and music based on her life.
- Many Koreans visit Ayodhya to pay homage to the queen. In Korea, the tombs of the King and queen are maintained as memorial park.

Cultural ties with Korea based on queen's legacy

- An agreement was signed between India and South Korea to develop Ayodhya and Gimhae as sister cities.
- The existing memorial was refurbished in 2016 and the first Lady of South Korea attended the inauguration of the beautification work in 2018.

Validity of the legend

- The story and legend of the queen has helped boost the relationship between India and South Korea. However, there are different versions of same story.
- The legends mention her kingdom as Ayuta and popular culture considers it Ayodhya. In India there are no records of the queen.
- Some say that the mentioned kingdom is Thailand's Ayutthaya kingdom. The Thai kingdom came into existence in 1350, decades after the story was written.

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