

## Rama's walled city of Ayudhya (Thai Ramayana mural)

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Rama's hometown city of Ayudhya is depicted surrounded with solid white walls on a Ramayana mural painting at the Emerald Buddha Temple. The vantage point of this painting is from outside an inviting entrance gate door served by a well-worn footpath. Over the protective walls, the observer can see tiered roof buildings, gold spires, and trees inside the city. Mountains rise in the far distance beyond the walled city.

This is the location where the tale of the Ramayana begins, when the king who has three queens but no sons asks the gods for help. The gods give the king a liquid potion, which he divides among his queens. He gives half of the potion to the queen who bears Rama, making him the most perfect child. He gives one quarter of the potion to a second queen who bears another son. The remaining quarter is given to the third queen who gives birth to twin sons.

The Siamese artists who painted this image of Rama's homeland sought to portray it as a model for perfect human cities on earth, and reflective of royal architecture within Siam. They thereby associate Rama, an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, with the Siamese (now Thai) kings.



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