



Animals in Indian Mythology, Art & Culture



ecopanions

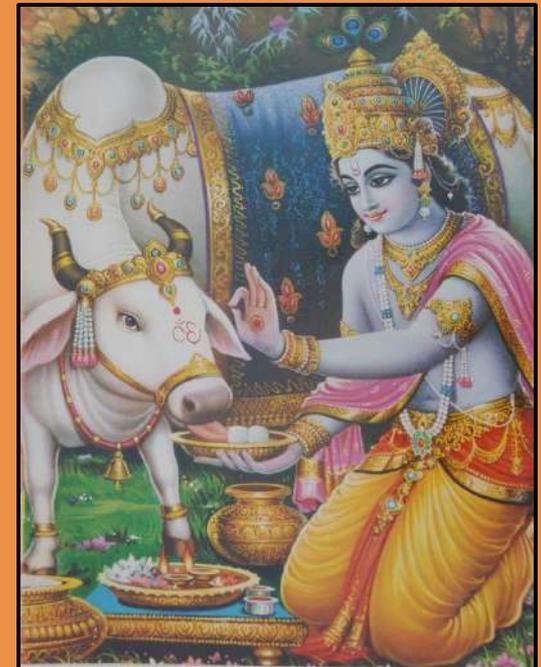
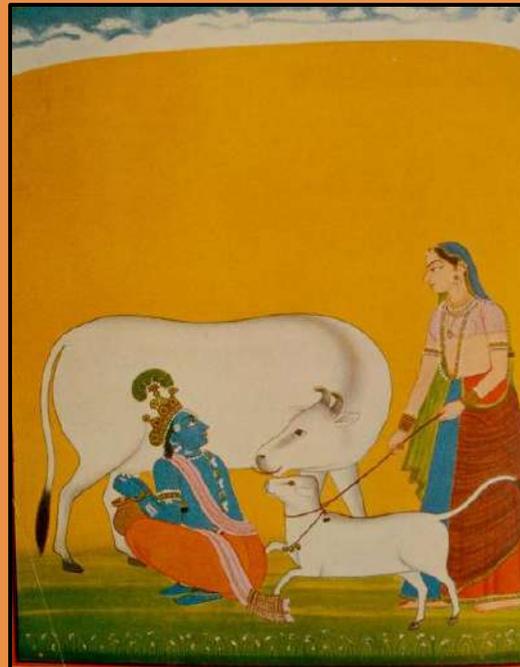


Nihal Mathur

INTRODUCTION

We share this planet with plants & animals with whom we have an inseparable link. But it is with the animals that Man has had an ancient & intimate relationship.

In India there has been a strong bond between Man & Animal which finds reflection in the Mythology, Art and Culture of this country.



MYTHOLOGY

There are Mythologies
from around the world

Ancient Egypt ,
Mesopotamia,
Greece,

Rome, China, Mexico and
of course, India.

All cultures
tend to make their own
Mythologies.

American culture
in a globalised world
is currently making
Myths out of their Movies

Superman,
ET,

Star Wars

so What is Mythology?



MEANING of MYTHOLOGY

Just as Science tries to answer
Questions of Cosmology
& How did Life begin on Earth etc
Mythology also tries to explain our Origins”
Who We Are,
Where did We come from?
What is the Purpose of Life? etc
While Science employs a Rational Methodology
to look for answers,
Mythology engages the Imagination
in an allegorical story-telling technique.

But Myths are not merely stories.
They carry within a kernel of Truth.
And “Truths” are Abstract.
So Myths communicate an abstract idea
by creating characters from the real world,
and set them in a dramatic narrative.
In telling the story, Myths take a listener
from one level of understanding to another.

UNDERSTANDING INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

In the Hindu Pantheon, there are 330,000,000 Gods & Goddesses

These are all those powers in nature upon whom depends the survival of man.

Hence, from the elemental sun, air, fire, water, earth to health, wealth, learning, and even death all become Gods & Goddesses.



But the holy trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva Forces of Creation, Sustenance & Destruction in this Universe are central to Indian Thought. Abstract as these Powers and Forces are, they are given Human or Animal form as Gods & Goddesses so that People can understand them easily.

“VAHANAS” of the GODS

“Vahan” is a Sanskrit word that means “to carry / transport”.
All Gods & Goddesses have their own “Vahans” to move around.

The Vahans have a deep association
with their Masters and are endowed with power
complimentary to their qualities.

Mouse is the Mount of Ganesh

GOD	ANIMAL		GOD	ANIMAL		GOD	ANIMAL
Brahma	Hansa		Vishnu	Garud		Shiva	Bull
Durga	Tiger / Lion		Indra	Elephant		Manasa	Snake
Yama	Buffalo		Kartikay	Peacock		Laxmi	Owl
Kama	Parrot		Surya	Horse		Yamuna	Tortoise
Shani	Vulture		Ketu	Eagle		Yayu	Antelope

IN THE COMPANY OF GODS

The animals are
personified, symbolized & celebrated
in Indian art & literature;
custom & ritual;
fair & festival.

But above all, animals find a unique position
in the mythology of India
where they are seen
in the company of the gods & goddesses.

Tradition demands a beginning with The Elephant because no beginning is made without Ganesh the God with a Head of an Elephant.



THE ELEPHANT

GANESHA

The Remover of all Obstacles

Ganesh or Ganapati
is the first among equals
who is worshipped before beginning
any enterprise, function or ceremony
because

He is the Remover of All Obstacles
just like an Elephant that crashes his way
thru an impenetrable jungle.

In what appears to be a classic case
of Yin & Yang,

the Elephant God finds
a Mouse as his mount.

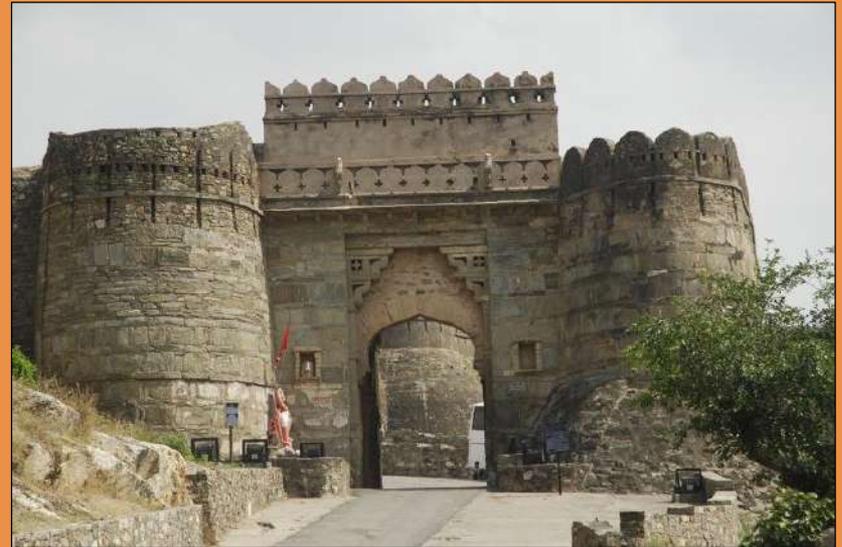
And not without reason
because by its very small size
and powerful set of incisors,
a Mouse is also able to cut or
pass through obstacles
where the Elephant fails.

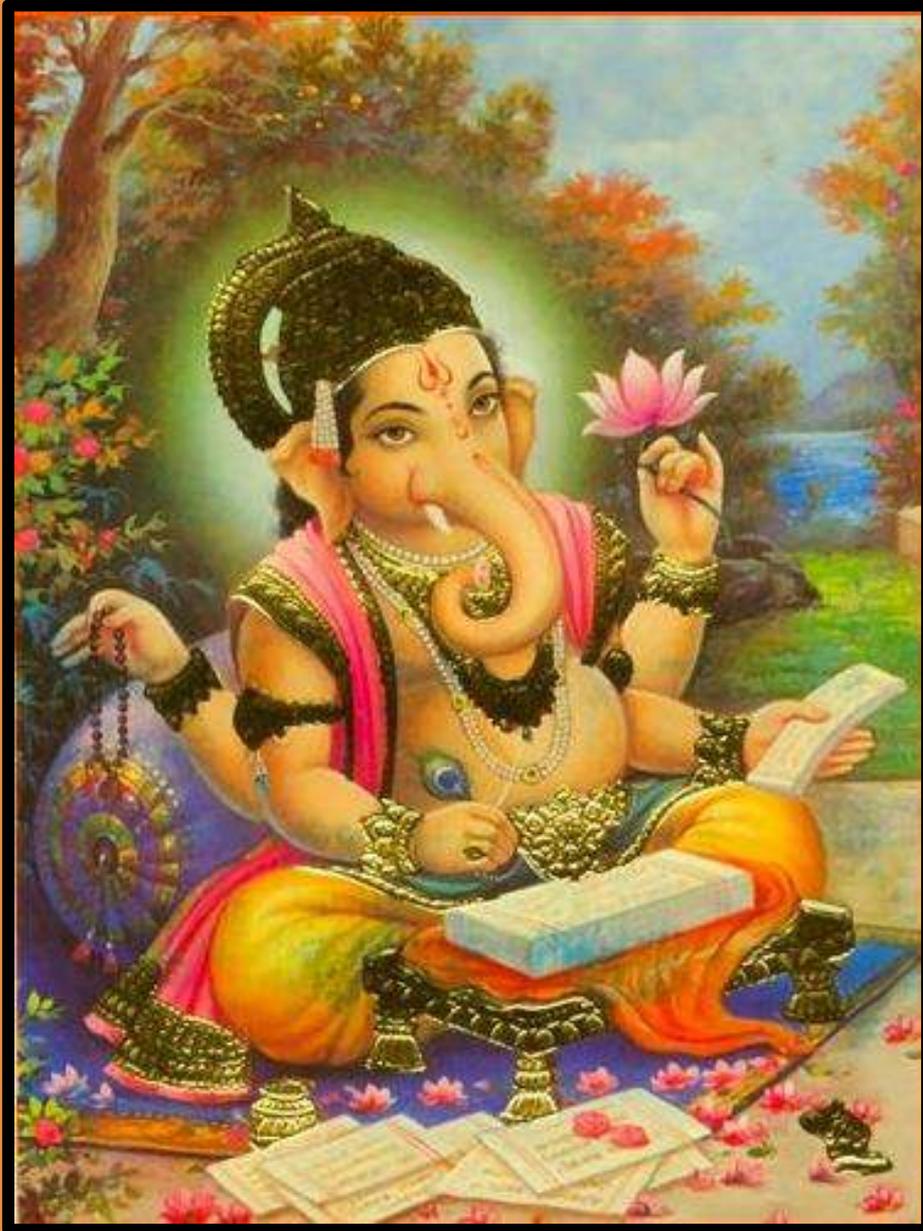
Together, the Mouse & the Elephant
are unstoppable
because they remove
all obstacles in their way.



GANESH at the GATEWAY

Ganesh
is the presiding deity that
graces
the entrance
to every building whether it is a
gateway of a Fort
or the doorway
to a home.





Ganesh is also known for his
WISDOM.

Scriptures tell
Shiva cut his human head off
and later replaced it with
the head of an Elephant.

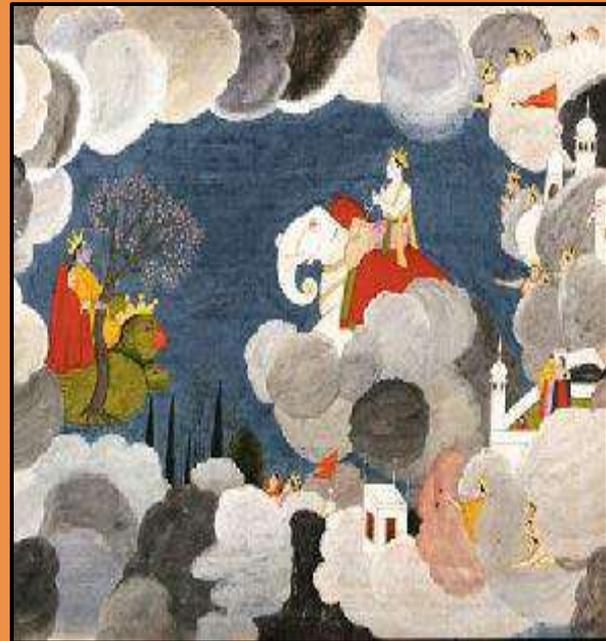
Cutting off the head
signifies shedding of the “ego”.
And Wisdom comes
only when Ego goes.

The Elephant also symbolizes
INTELLIGENCE
and Indian writers recognize Ganesh
as their patron deity
who is said to have written
the Mahabharata
with the tip of its tusk.

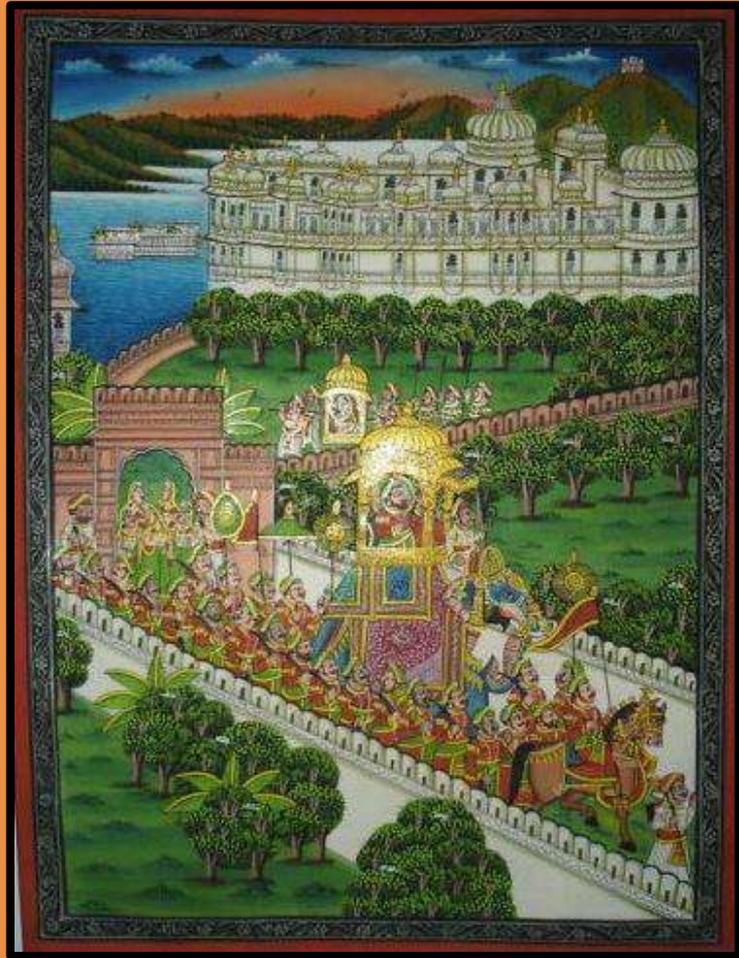
AIRAVAT

The Elephant

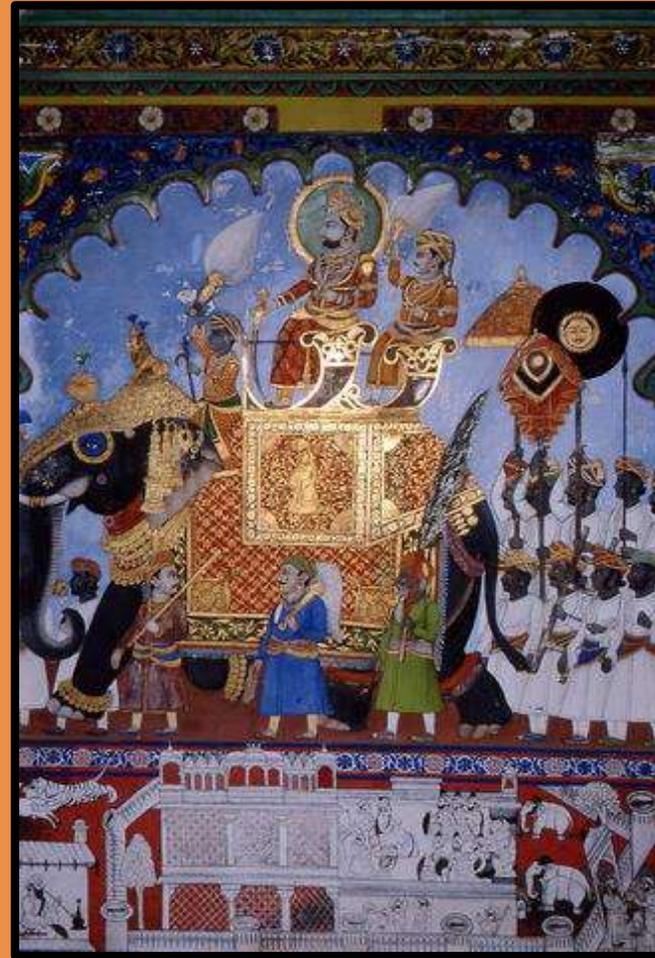
It is befitting that the largest animal living on land is the mount of INDRA the King of Gods who moves around on a white elephant called AIRAVAT born in the Churning of the Oceans a classic Indian myth (more later).



If the Heavenly King of Gods rode an Elephant
then it was befitting that the Earthly Kings should also ride one.
Elephants came to be associated with
ROYALTY, POMP & POWER.

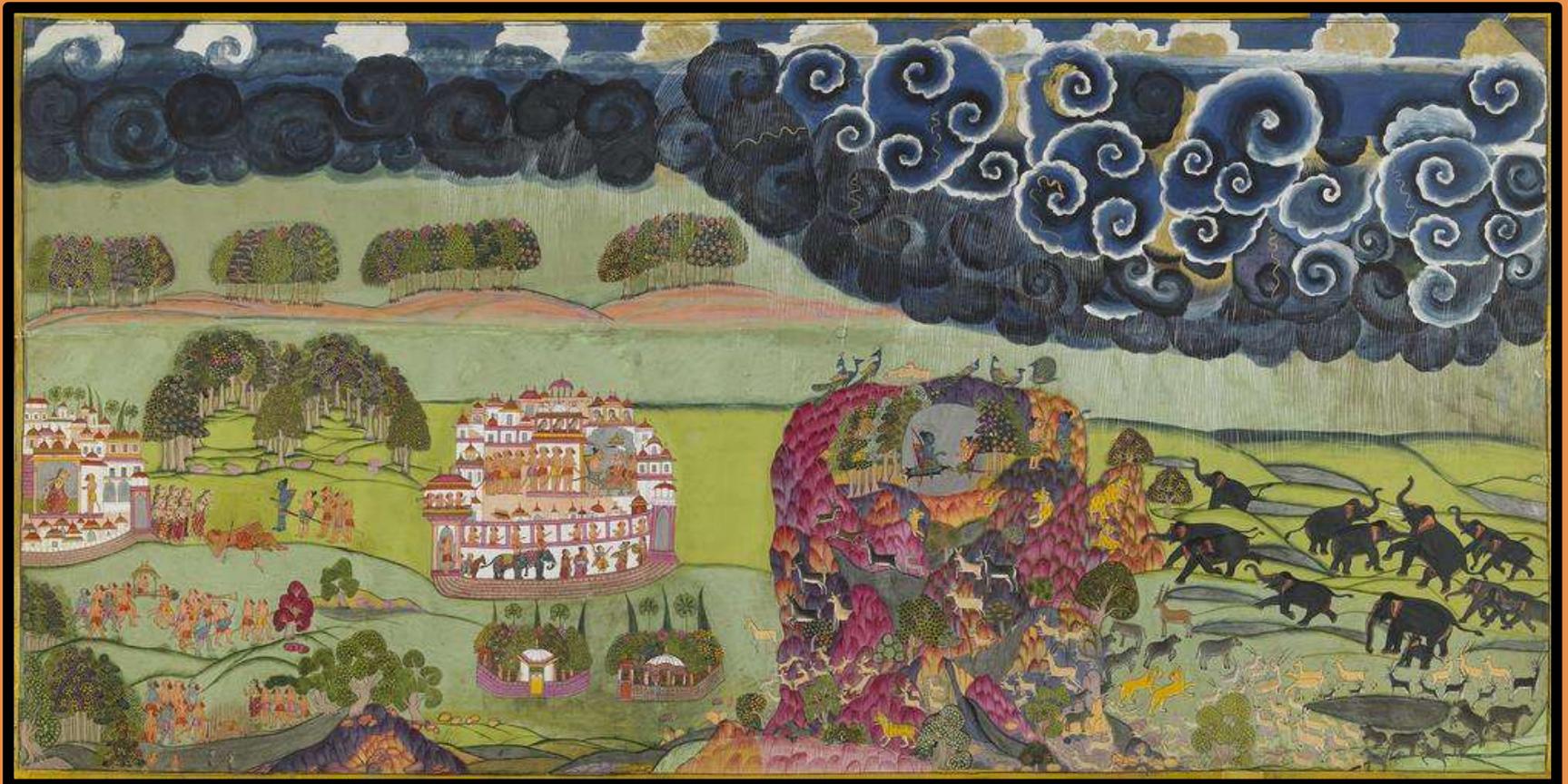


Mewar Miniature cir 1780



Bundi School 1830

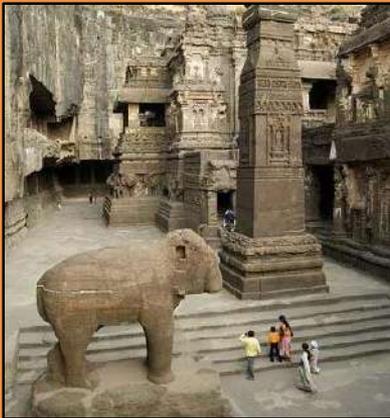
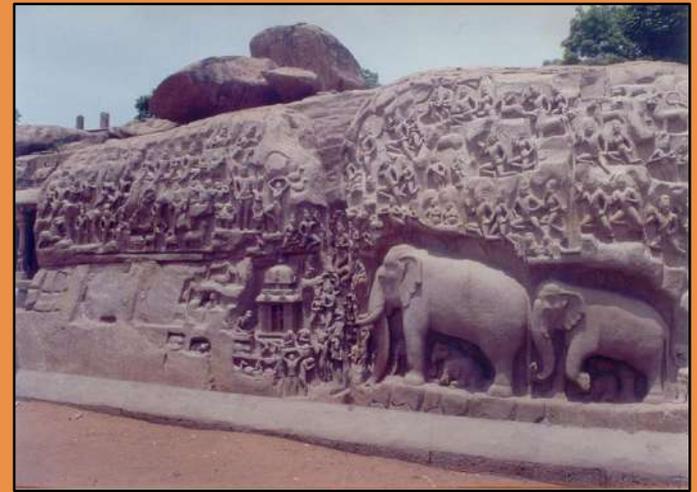
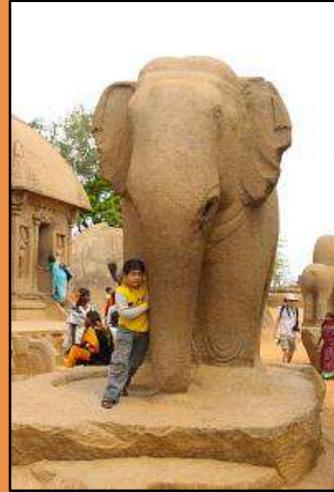
But Indra is also the God of Rain & Thunder
who comes riding dark grey “elephants”
across the monsoon skies bringing torrential rains.
Elephant is celebrated in Indian Literature as a
SYMBOL OF RAIN BEARING CLOUDS.



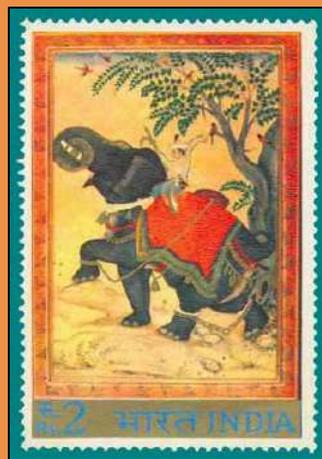
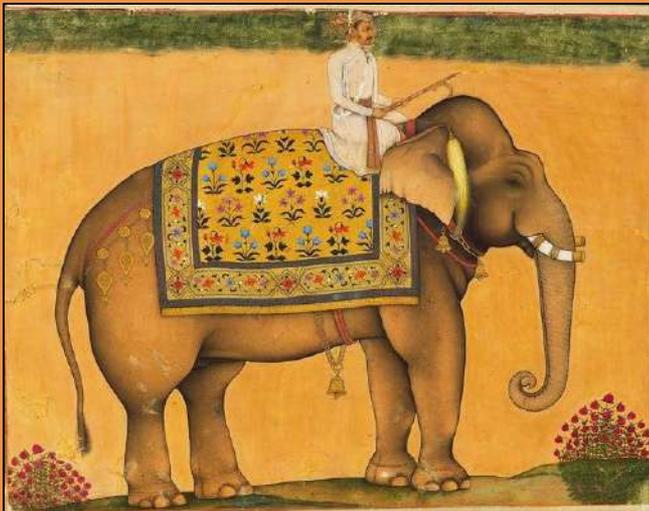


Connected to the Cloud
Elephant links to Rain,
and comes to be
identified with
Good Crops & Rich Harvests.
Hence Elephants
were associated with
Agricultural Prosperity
and
LAXMI
the Goddess of
Wealth & Prosperity.
Two white elephants
are depicted on either side,
sprinkling the
life giving waters.

Masterpieces in Indian
ARCHITECTURE & SCULPTURE
are to be found in the rock cut architecture at
Mahabalipuram, Ajanta & Ellora caves.



From Pre-historic to modern times
images of Elephants are immortalized in
INDIAN PAINTINGS



FAIRS & FESTIVALS:

Ganesh Chaturthi / Thrissurpuram / Sonapur



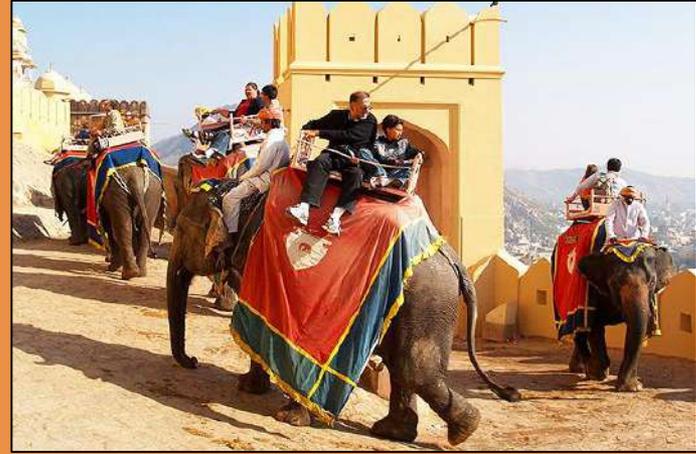
THE TEMPLE ELEPHANT

Guruvayoor / Madurai / Tiruchirapalli



THE WORKING ELEPHANT:

Timber, Tourist & Wedding Industry



THE COW

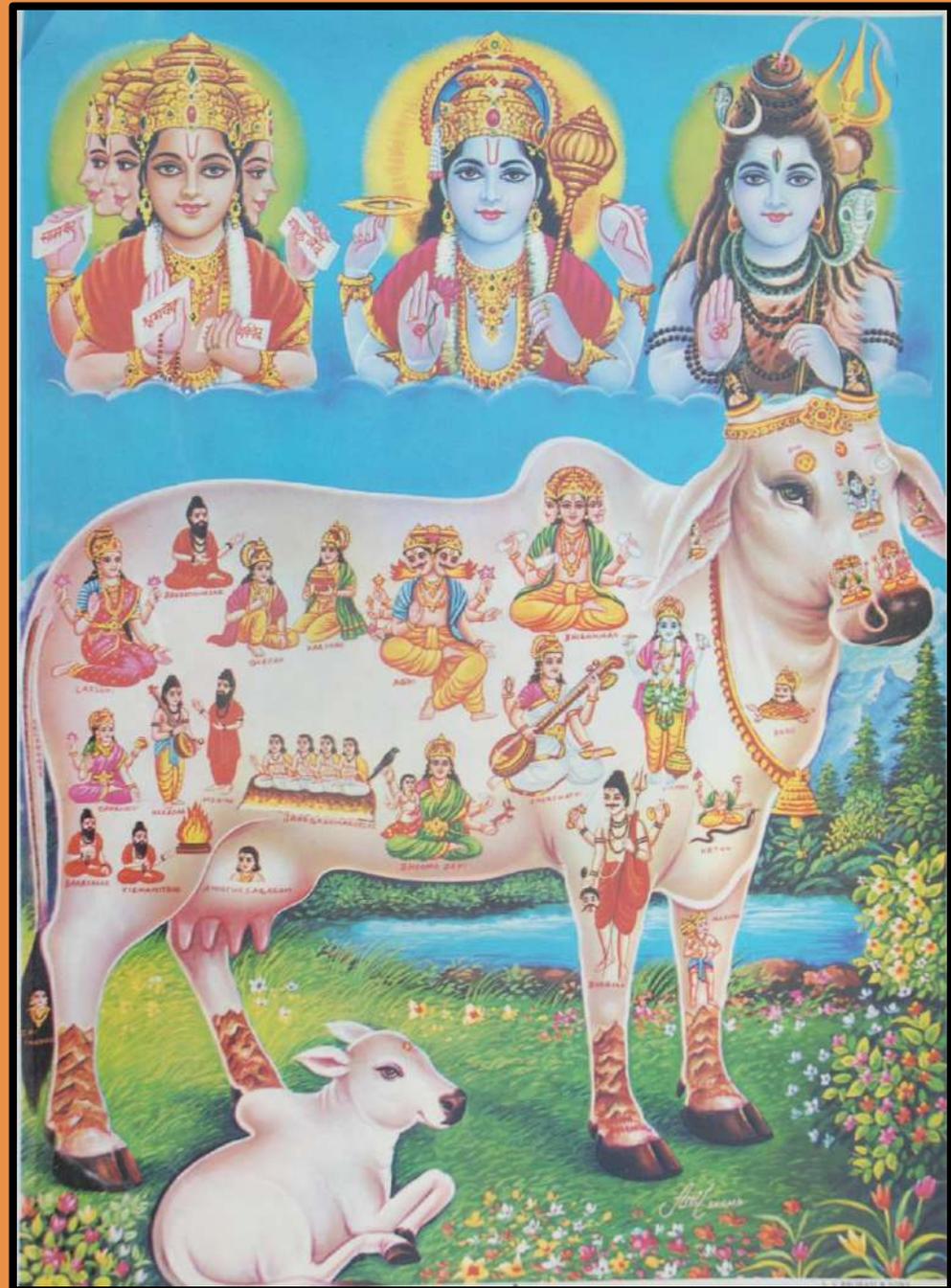
A photograph showing a man in a green and pink shirt milking a large white cow. The man is crouching next to a grey bucket with the 'BOSCH' logo. The cow is tied to a tree. In the background, another cow is visible under a tree.

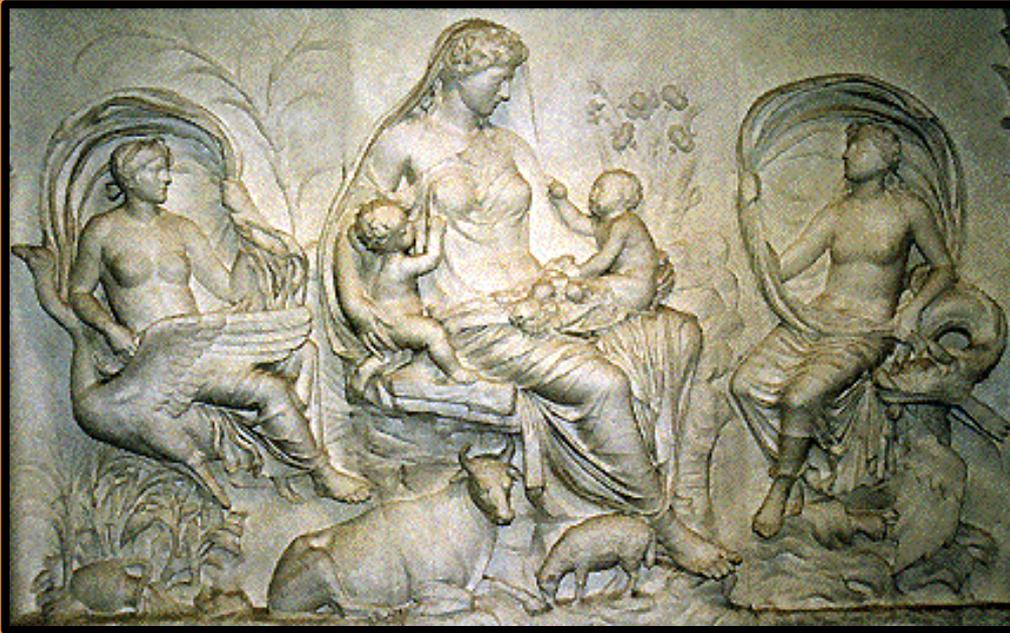
In India,
the first essay
every child
gets to write is
“Gai Hamari Mata Hai” or
“Cow is Our Mother”

KAMADHENU

THE DIVINE MOTHER

Indian scriptures tell us that
Cow is a gift of the Gods
to the human race.
It is a celestial being,
born from the
churning of the cosmic ocean.
A Divine Mother that gives milk
to all human beings
and bring them up
as her very own offspring.
In Indian scriptures,
there are elaborate descriptions
of the Cow as a sustainer of life.
In fact, the Cow gives more
than just sustenance.
It is also very useful
in many other ways.
It is in this conception
that the cow is understood as
Kamadhenu,
the wish-fulfilling mythical cow.





Earth = Mother = Milk = Cow

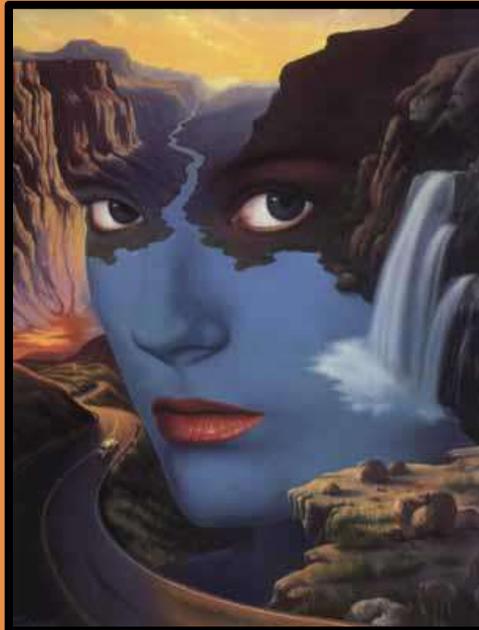
"GAI"

is the Hindi word
for Cow
and is similar in
letter & spirit to

"GAIA"

the Greek Goddess of Earth.

The Cow
is symbolic of
Mother Earth
itself.



KRISHNA THE COWBOY

It is with the cult of Krishna that the Cow is closely connected. There are many stories of Krishna protecting the cows, cow-herders & milkmaids. In popular Indian imagination it is Lord Krishna who symbolizes the kind of relationship Man should have with the Cow. Hence to take care of this gentle creature is a matter of virtue for the Hindus who call it their 'Dharma' or Moral Duty.



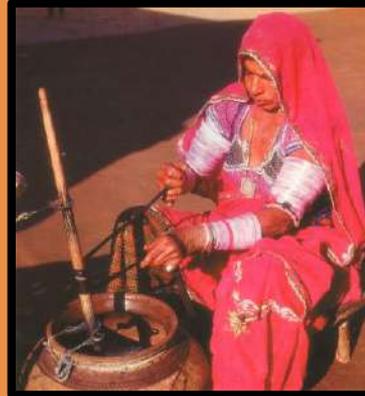
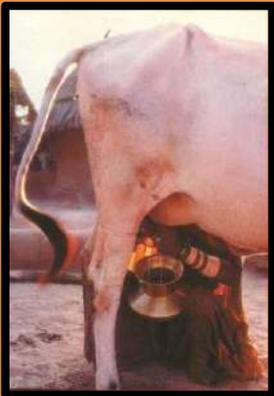
In India's
agricultural
and
pastoral
society,
Cows
are still
considered
to be the
REAL
WEALTH
of the people.



MILK & BY-PRODUCTS

Yogurt, Butter, Ghee, Buttermilk, Paneer, and “Khoaya / Mava” used in making Indian sweets.

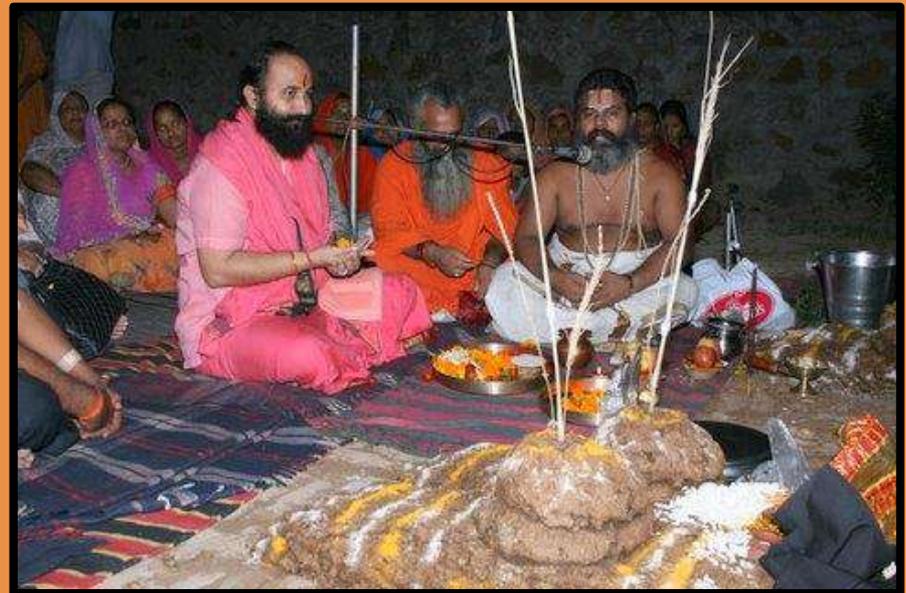
The People of India will tell you that cow milk is special because it sharpens the intellect, gives swiftness to body and imparts a quality of peace to the mind



“GAU MAL & MUTRA” COW DUNG & URINE

1. Organic Fertiliser

Cow Dung makes excellent organic manure and a natural pesticide. Compared to chemical fertilizer that degrade the land, Gobar actually improves the health of the soil. No wonder, in Indian mythology Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth & Prosperity, resides in Cow's Gobar and is worshipped during Diwali as “Govardhan Puja”



“GAU MAL & MUTRA” COW DUNG & URINE

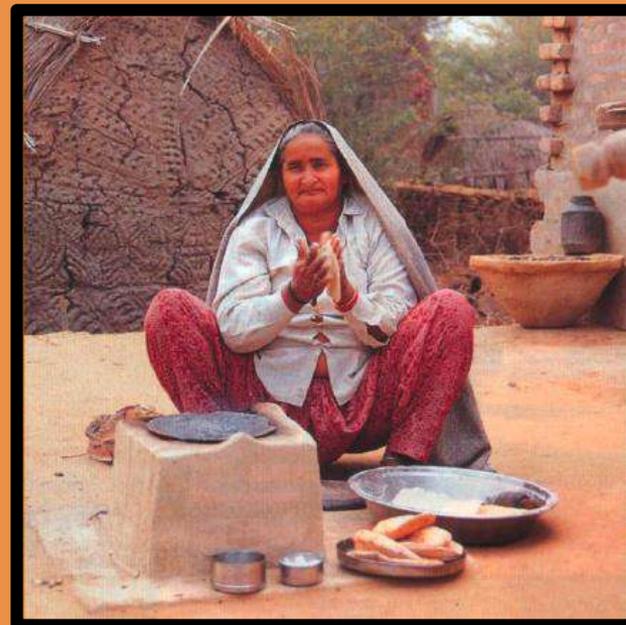
2. Fuel

Mixed with mud & straw, cow dung & urine is dried and used as fuel to light kitchen fires.

Traditional wisdom says that temperatures of the fire from the cow dung never exceed 300 degree Celsius

a Level beyond which the nutrients begin to get destroyed.

Gobar produces bio-gas & generates electricity.



“GAU MAL & MUTRA” COW DUNG & URINE

3. The Dis-infective Quality

Cow dung or “Gobar”
is also very anti-septic.
Mixed with clay,
cow dung & urine
become a plastering medium
of mud huts
that keeps insects
and reptiles away.
Scientific studies also show
that “Gobar” resists
solar radiation.



“GAU MAL & MUTRA” COW DUNG & URINE

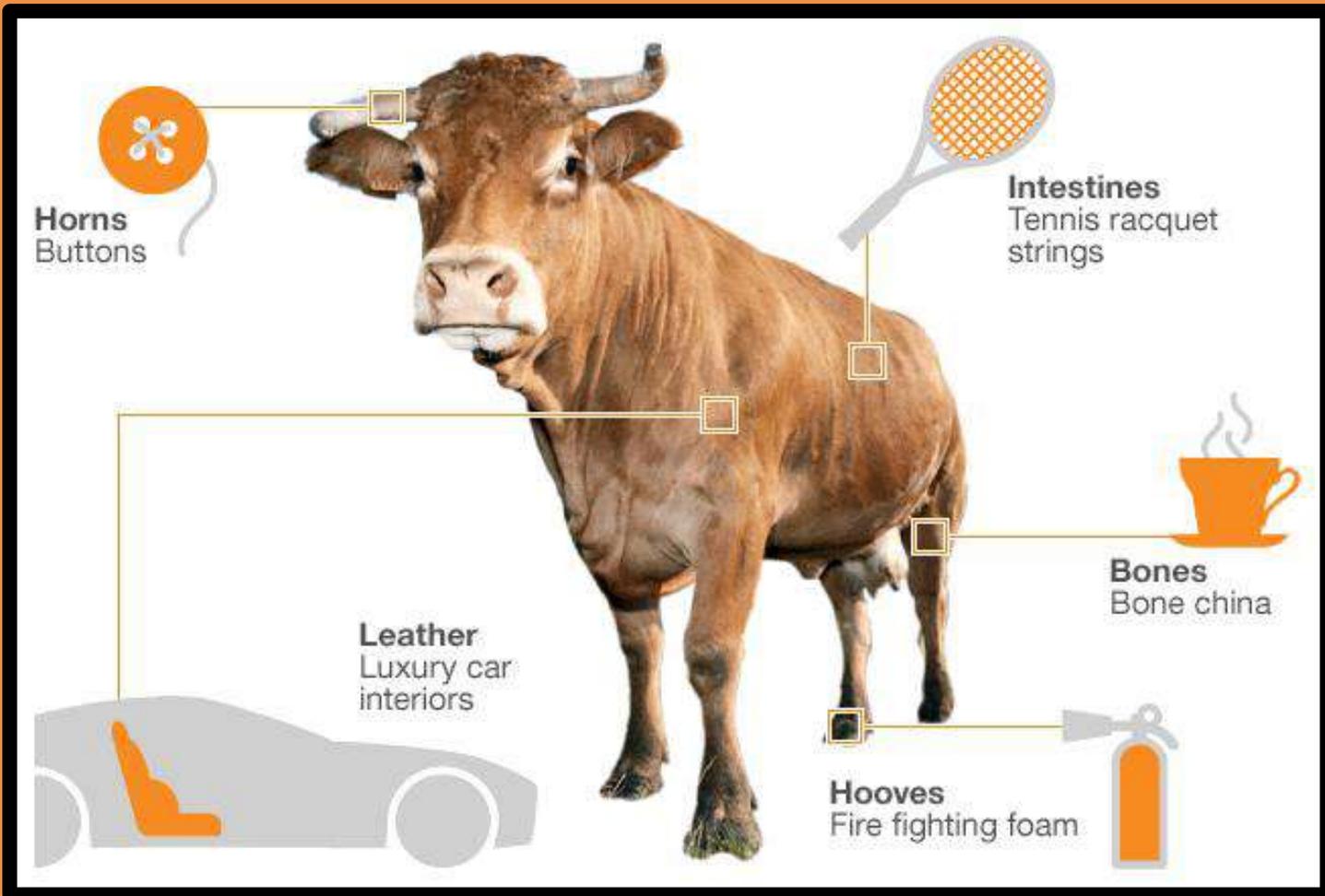
4. Ayurvedic Medicine

The curative quality of Gau Mutra or Cow Urine has also been well known.

It is used in Ayurveda the ancient Indian system of medicine as a remedy for many ailments .



EVEN in DEATH the Cow is Useful



WORSHIP of the COW

No wonder
the Cow is worshiped in our country
in many fairs & festivals,
rituals & customs.
But “Gau Asthami”
is one day in the year
which is exclusively dedicated to
the Worship of the Cow.

No Hindu ceremony is complete
without the “Panchgavya”
or the Five Gifts of the Cow:
Milk, Yogurt, Ghee, Gobar & Gau Mutra.

To give cow in charity or “Gau Daan”
is considered the highest act of piety.



FEEDING THE COWS

So if you cannot
give a cow in charity,
you could
certainly feed one.
Feeding the Cows
in India
is an organized affair
at an Individual level
and also
at an the Institutional.



GAUSHALAS & PINJARA POLS

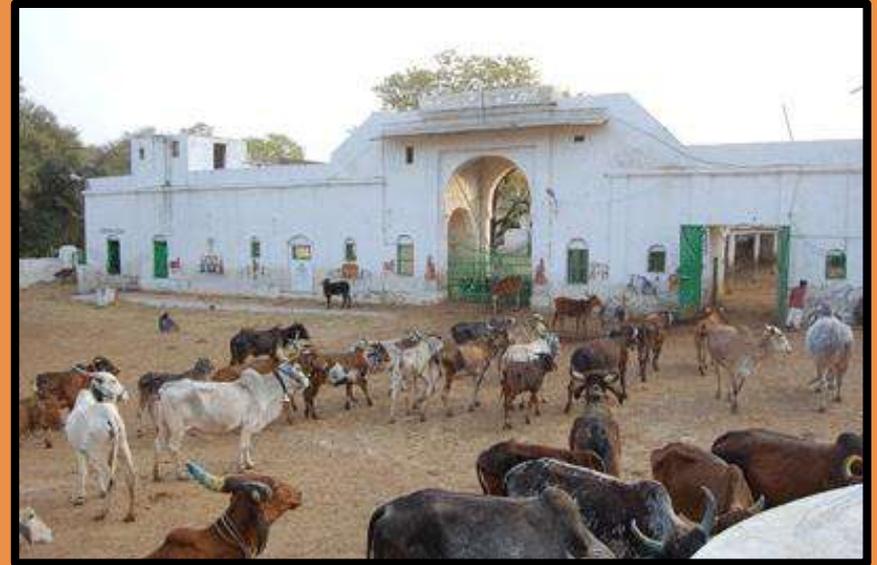
The concept of the `Gaushala` literally "a Place for the Cow".

It is fundamentally different from the Dairy because it also maintains non-milking cows.

Pinjara Pols are a yet another concept where people maintain sick, dying and deformed cows.

Managed by trusts, societies, etc, the Gaushalas are as old as 2000 BC and still continue to exist in almost every small city & town in India.

The oldest known Guashala is in Varanasi & the largest one is in the temple town of Nathdwara.



PUBLIC APATHY

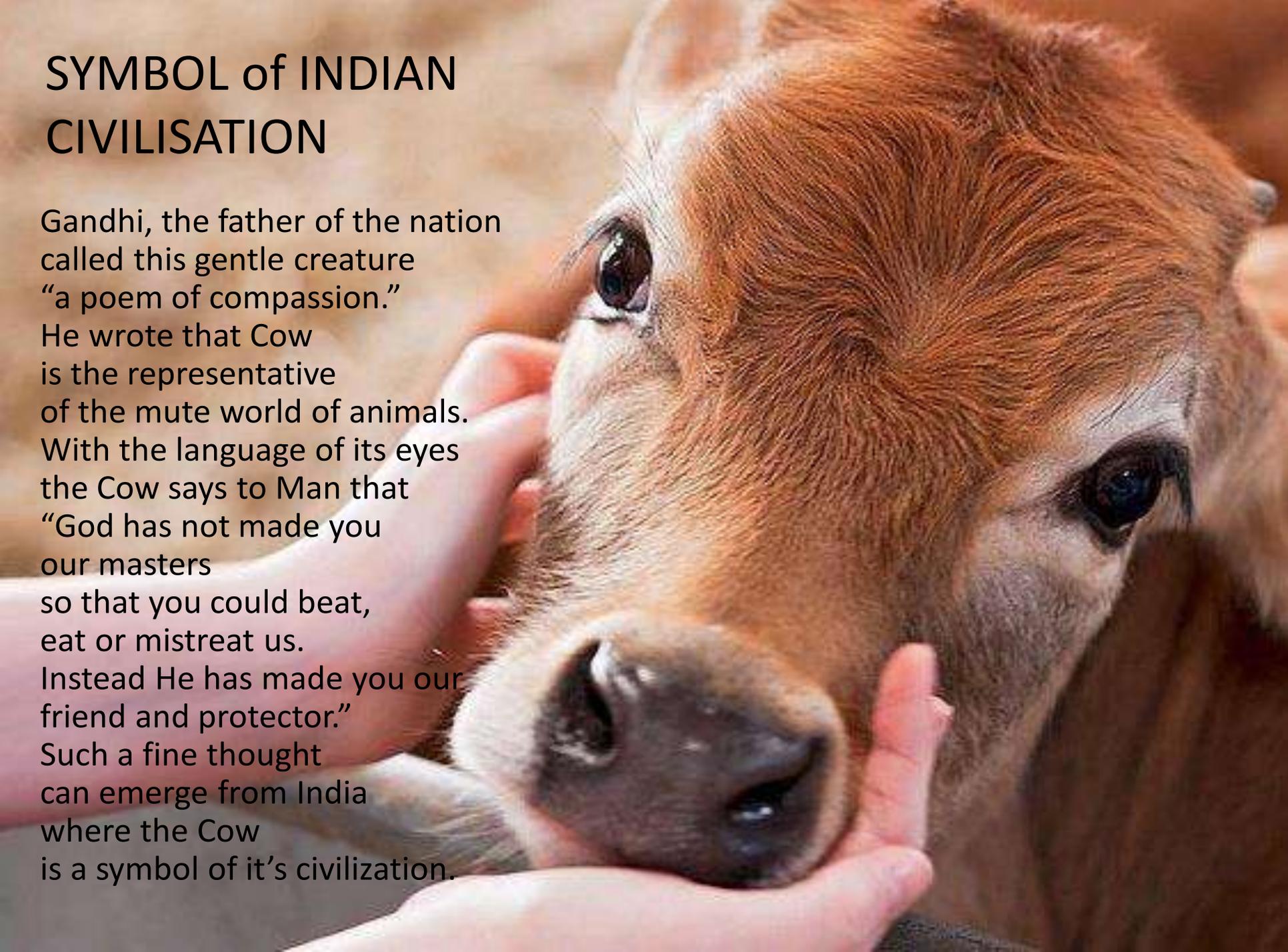
In India where there are thousands of organizations that work for the welfare of the Cow how come we still see them wandering the streets, eating garbage?
How does one explain such public apathy?

Religious sentiments make People keep the Cows.
Economic conditions makes People push their non-milking cows into the city for free foraging.
And Politics keeps the Cows on the street.



SYMBOL of INDIAN CIVILISATION

Gandhi, the father of the nation called this gentle creature “a poem of compassion.” He wrote that Cow is the representative of the mute world of animals. With the language of its eyes the Cow says to Man that “God has not made you our masters so that you could beat, eat or mistreat us. Instead He has made you our friend and protector.” Such a fine thought can emerge from India where the Cow is a symbol of it’s civilization.



GAUDHULI
a very special time...



Time, Death & Fertility

THE COBRA

No other animal
has captivated
human imagination
more intensely
than the Snake
which is a
powerful
symbol
in many
mythologies
of the world.
And this is
also true
in India.

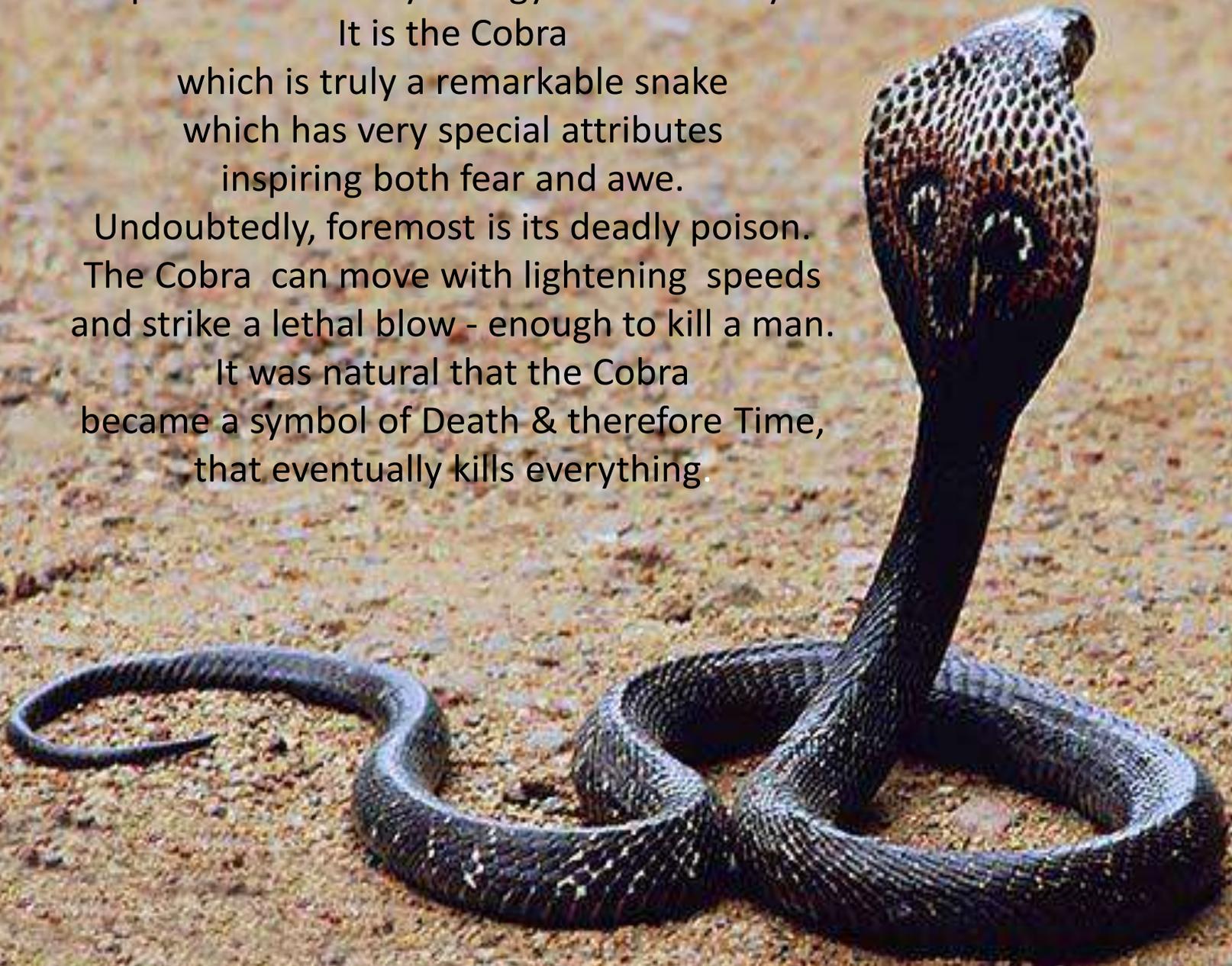


The serpent in Indian mythology is no ordinary snake.

It is the Cobra
which is truly a remarkable snake
which has very special attributes
inspiring both fear and awe.

Undoubtedly, foremost is its deadly poison.
The Cobra can move with lightening speeds
and strike a lethal blow - enough to kill a man.

It was natural that the Cobra
became a symbol of Death & therefore Time,
that eventually kills everything.



SHIVA

the King of Serpents

It was natural
that the Cobra
found its way
around the neck
of SHIVA
the God of Destruction.
He is also known
as the NAGARAJA
or the King of Serpents.



THE ETERNAL SNAKE

In Indian mythology there are 3 names:
ANANTA, SHESHA & VASUKI
for the Eternal Snake that came into being
when this Universe began.
All the three names denote Time.

Like Time itself, "*Ananta Nag*" is the "Endless Snake"
which is timeless, boundless, infinite, inexhaustible, everlasting,
eternal, unending....

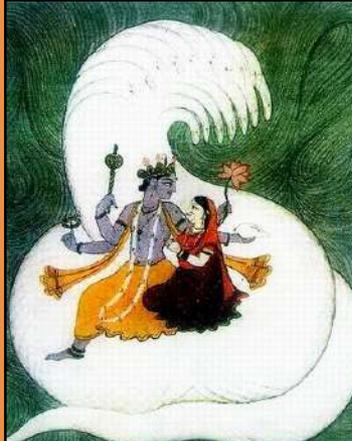
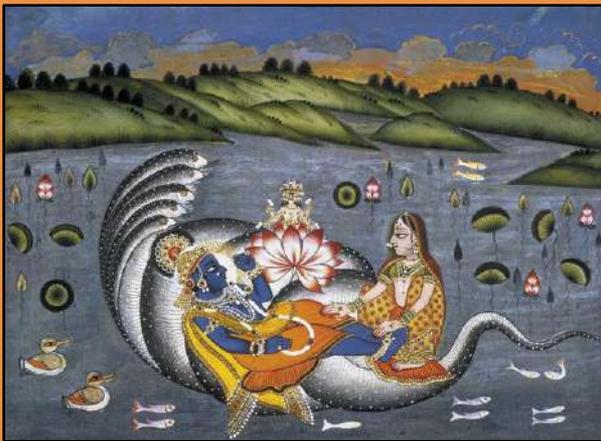
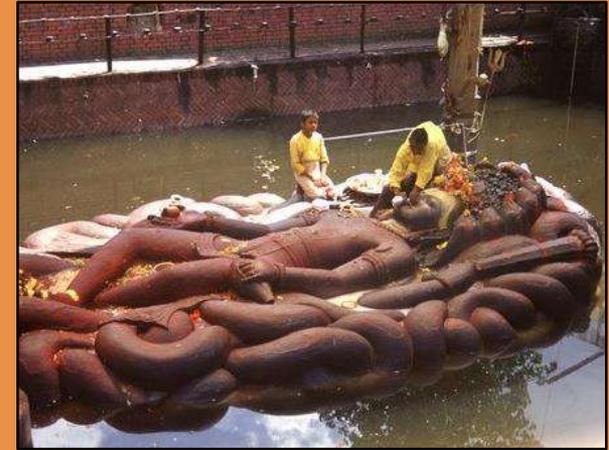
"*Shesh Nag*" directly translates as the "Residue Snake."
It is "Time" that is left as residue
when all creation /universe ceases to exist.

And then there is "*Vasuki*",
the Great King of the Nagas,
the progenitor of all snakes on planet earth.

Vishnu reclining on the coils of the timeless serpent –
ANANTA / SHESHA / VASUKI
is one of the classic imagery from Indian Mythology
celebrated in Indian art and architecture.



The image of
VISHNU RECLINING on the COILS of the Eternal Snake
are celebrated in Indian
Architecture, Sculpture & Painting



SAMUDRA MANTHAN

or the Churning of the Cosmic Ocean
is a classic Indian myth
mentioned in Hindu scriptures.



SHIVA

the Blue Necked

In the Churning of the Oceans along with the Amrit, or the Elixir Great Vish or Poison was also produced.

It threatened to destroy the universe.

Shiva saved the day by drinking the dreaded poison but not letting it down his throat which turned blue.

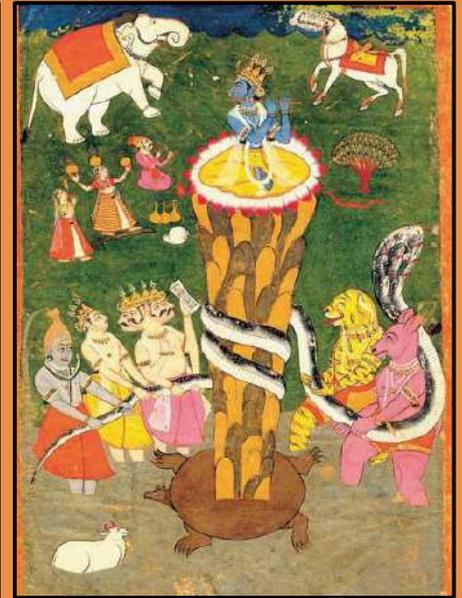
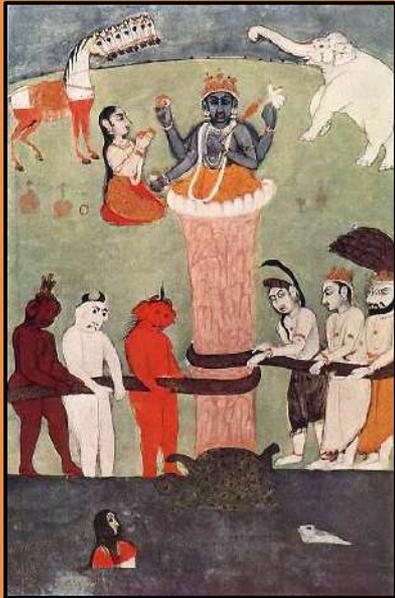
Hence Shiva, the Neelkant



Some of most exquisite works depicting
Samudra Manthan
in architecture & sculpture are found at
ANGKOR VAT in CAMBODIA



Images of Samudra Manthan are found in all schools of Indian Miniature Paintings



COBRA & FERTILITY

Cobra has come to symbolize fertility. It has its origins in another special quality of the Cobra:

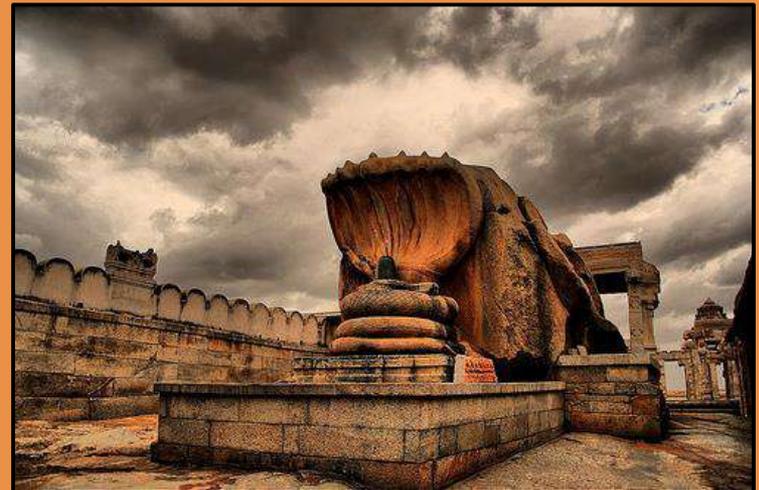
It can cast off old skin and grow new ones.

This made the cobra a symbol of Rebirth & Regeneration.

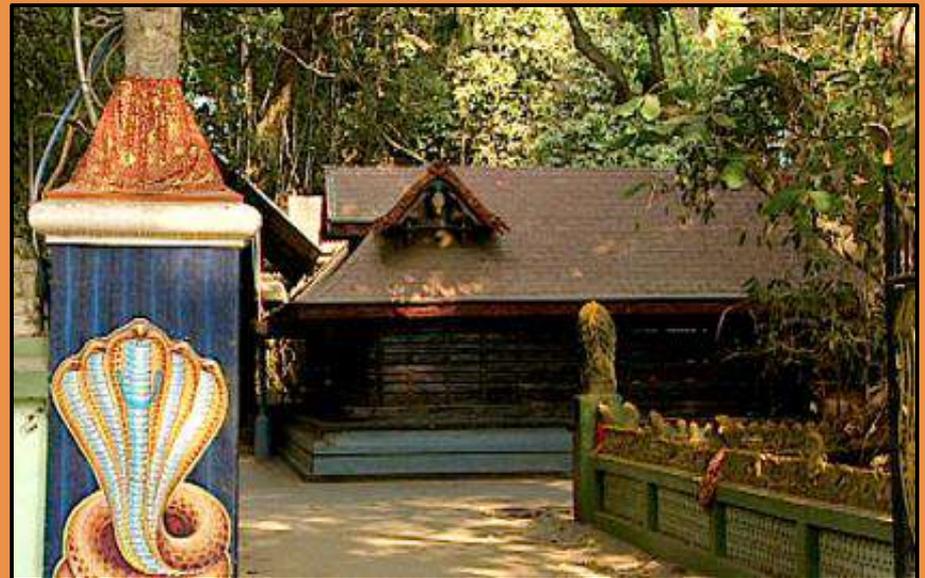
Cobra is also prime feeder of rats and therefore a friend of the farmer.

It was natural that the cobra came to represent Agricultural Growth & Fertility.

However, because the cobra was linked to the Lingam it became a powerful Symbol of Fertility.



In south India there is a powerful
CULT of the SERPENT GODS & GODESSES
which are worshiped by women desiring offsprings.



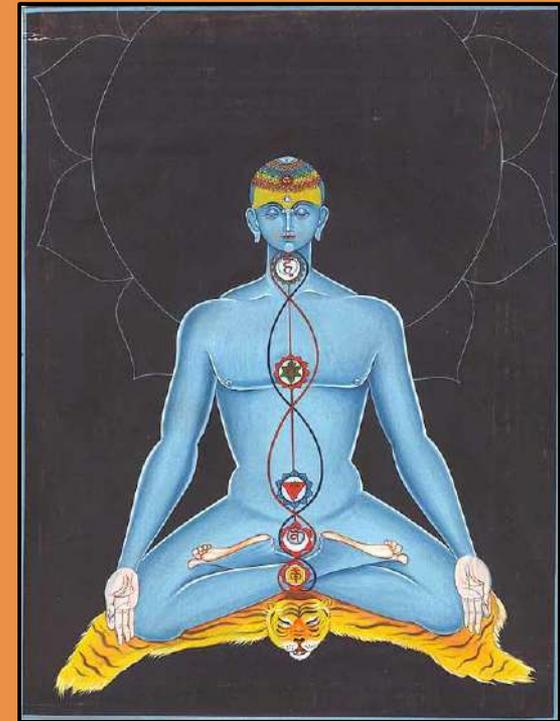
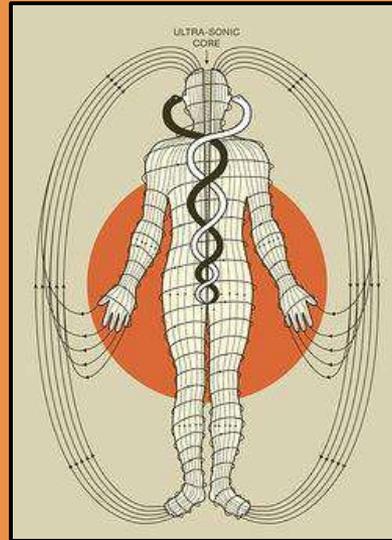
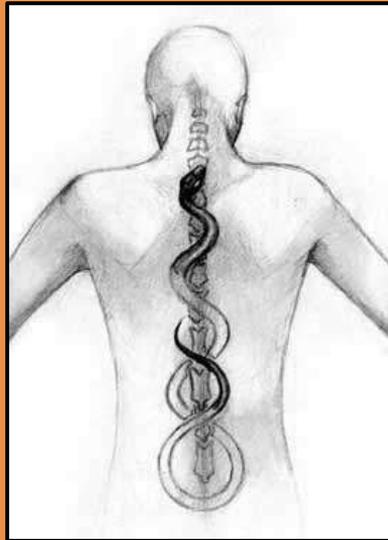
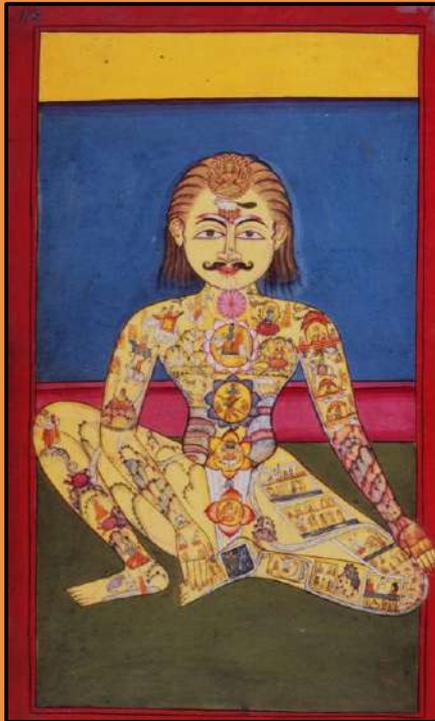
SYMBOL of CREATIVE ENERGY

The restless stirring character of the Cobra made it a symbol of creative energy.

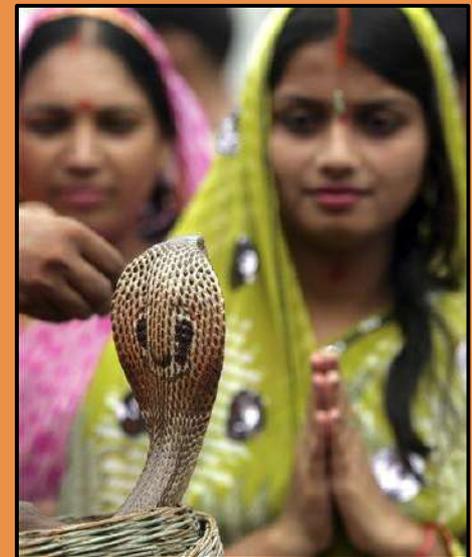
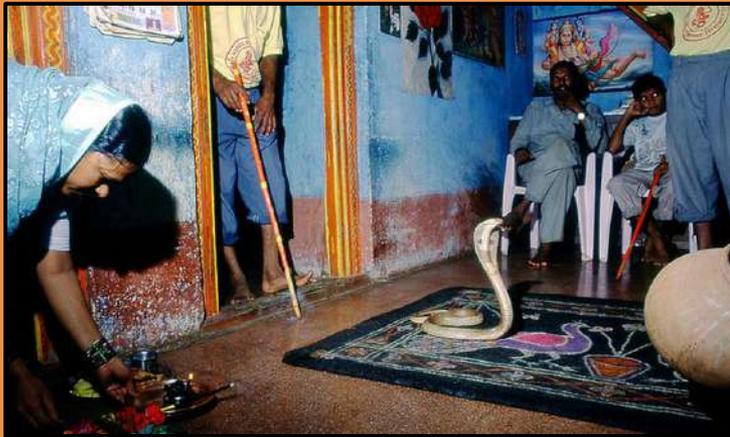
In Yoga, Cosmic Energy is represented as a coiled serpent that lies dormant in every human body at the bottom of the spinal cord.

With Yoga practice the snake moves up the spinal cord with a burst of energy.

This is called the
Awakening of Kundalini

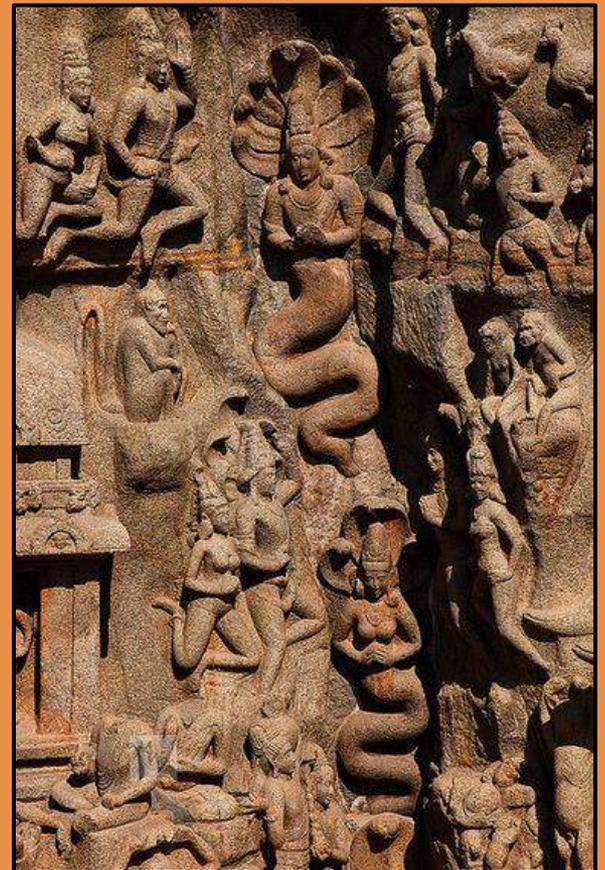


There many fairs & festivals in different parts India at different times of the year. But is the FESTIVAL of NAGPANCHAMI that is celebrated all over the country and is most dramatic at Shrirala in Sangli district, Maharashtra.



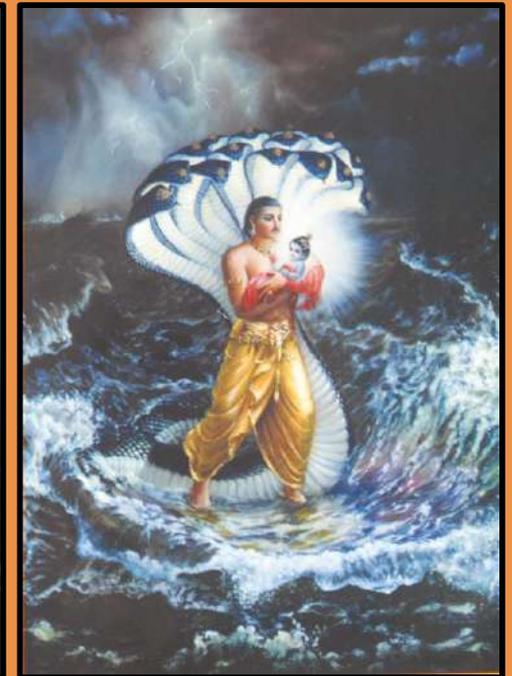
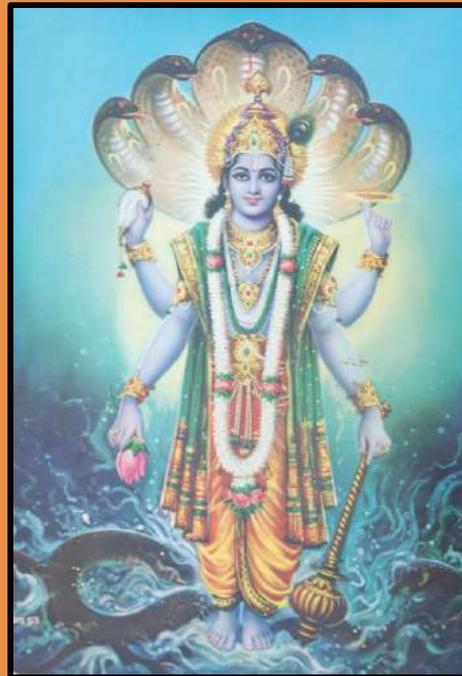
NAG & NAGIN

The fact that the cobra seemed to thrive on land but disappeared with equal ease under water, associated them with the nether worlds or the Pataloks ruled by Nagas and Nagins or serpent demigods. It was said that the Nagas protected the wealth of the earth and in popular imagination, they became the guardians of old forgotten treasures buried underground.



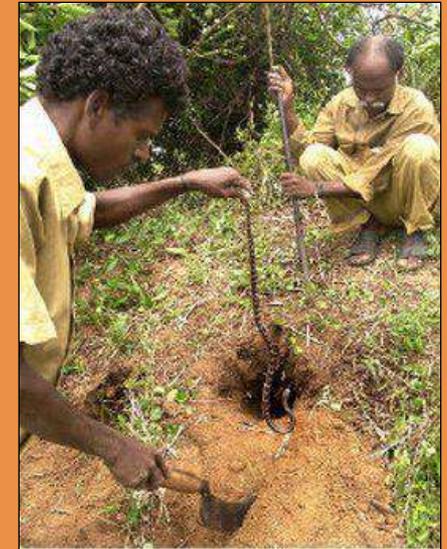
Symbol of Divine Protection

The spreading hood of the cobra became a symbol of divine protection for whoever came under it was guarded by Time itself.



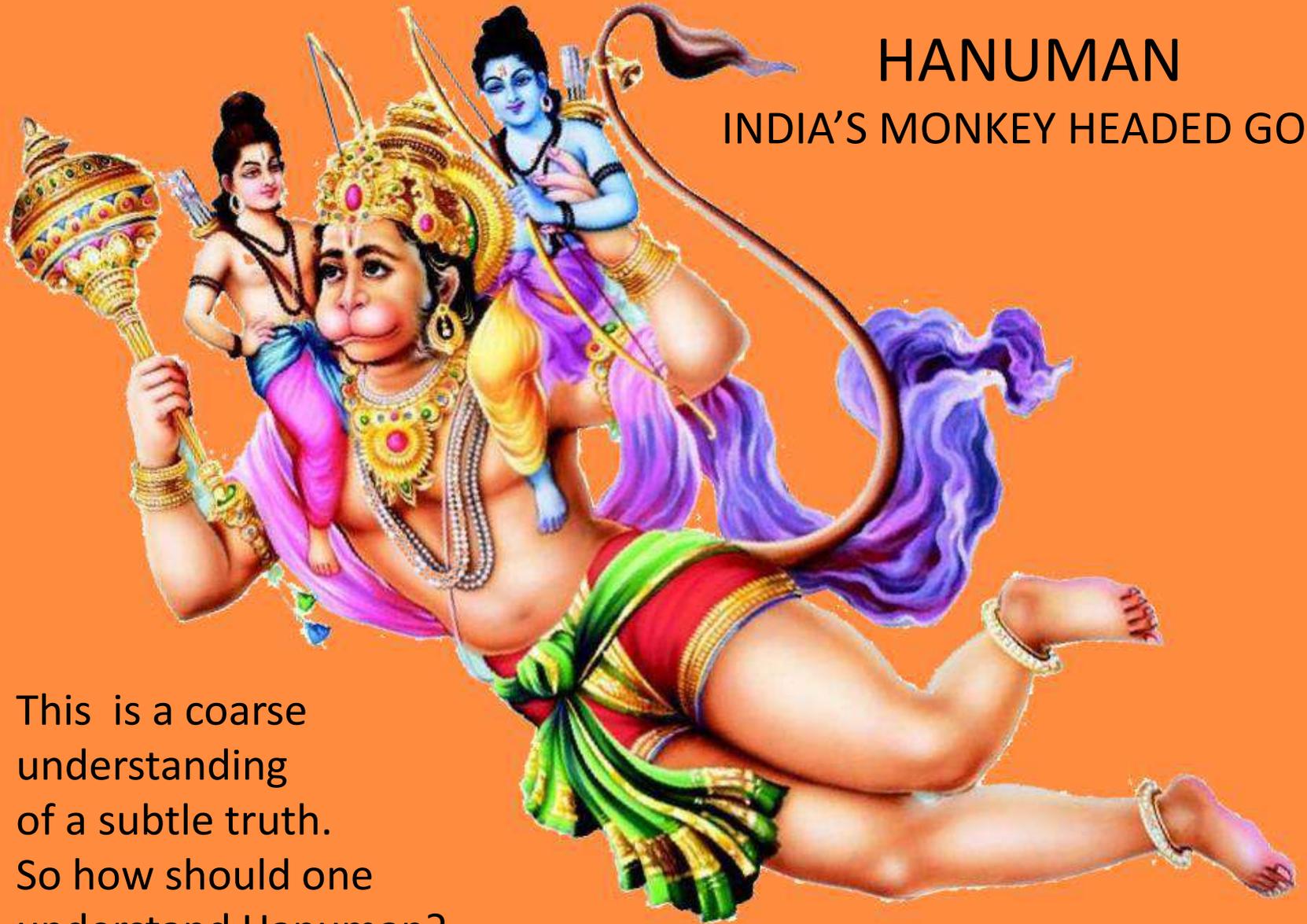
LAND of SNAKE CHARMERS

Many Tribes & Communities:
The Saperas / Naths / Kalbelias / Irulas



HANUMAN

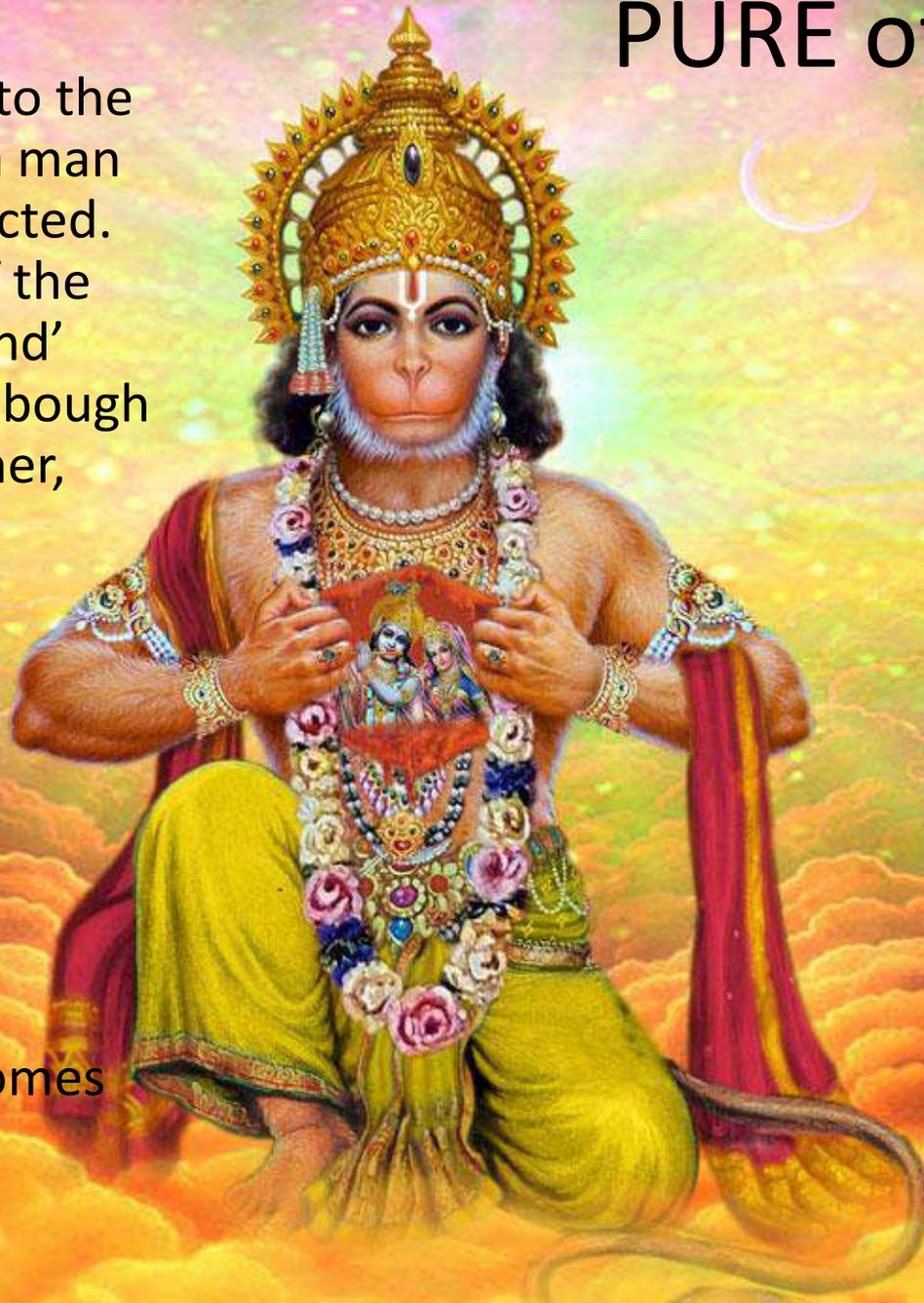
INDIA'S MONKEY HEADED GOD



This is a coarse understanding of a subtle truth. So how should one understand Hanuman?

PURE of HEART

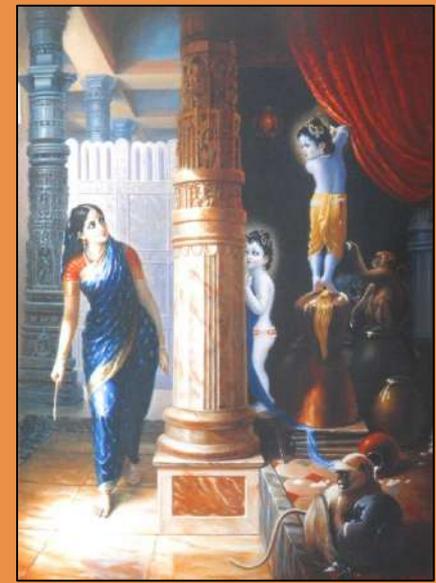
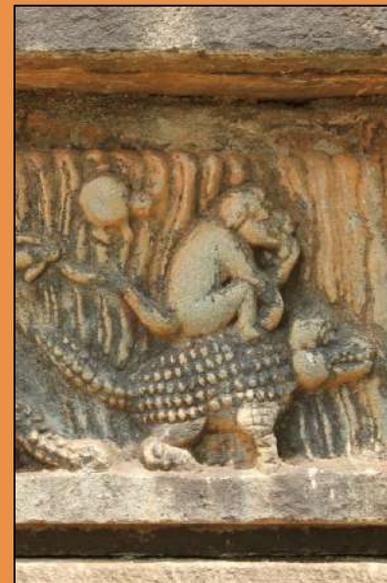
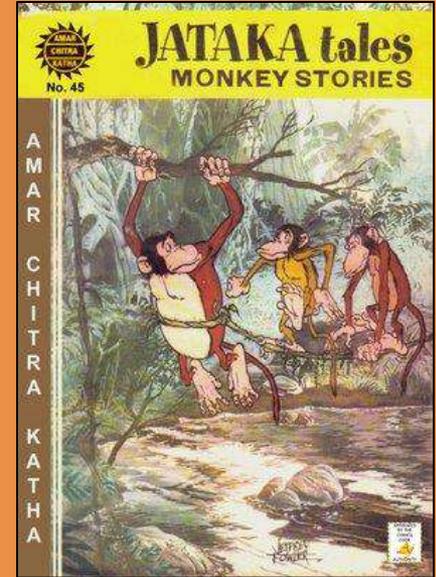
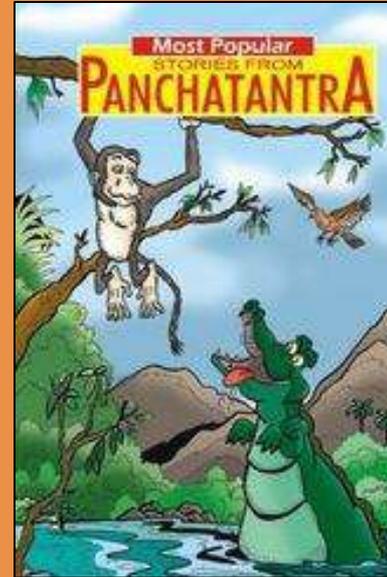
A Restless Monkey is often compared to the unsteady mind of a man who is easily distracted. Scriptures speak of the roving 'monkey mind' jumping from one bough of passion to another, always longing for things. However, a time comes when the mind becomes still in devotion to Lord Rama. Then truly the Monkey Mind becomes Hanuman the Pure of Heart.



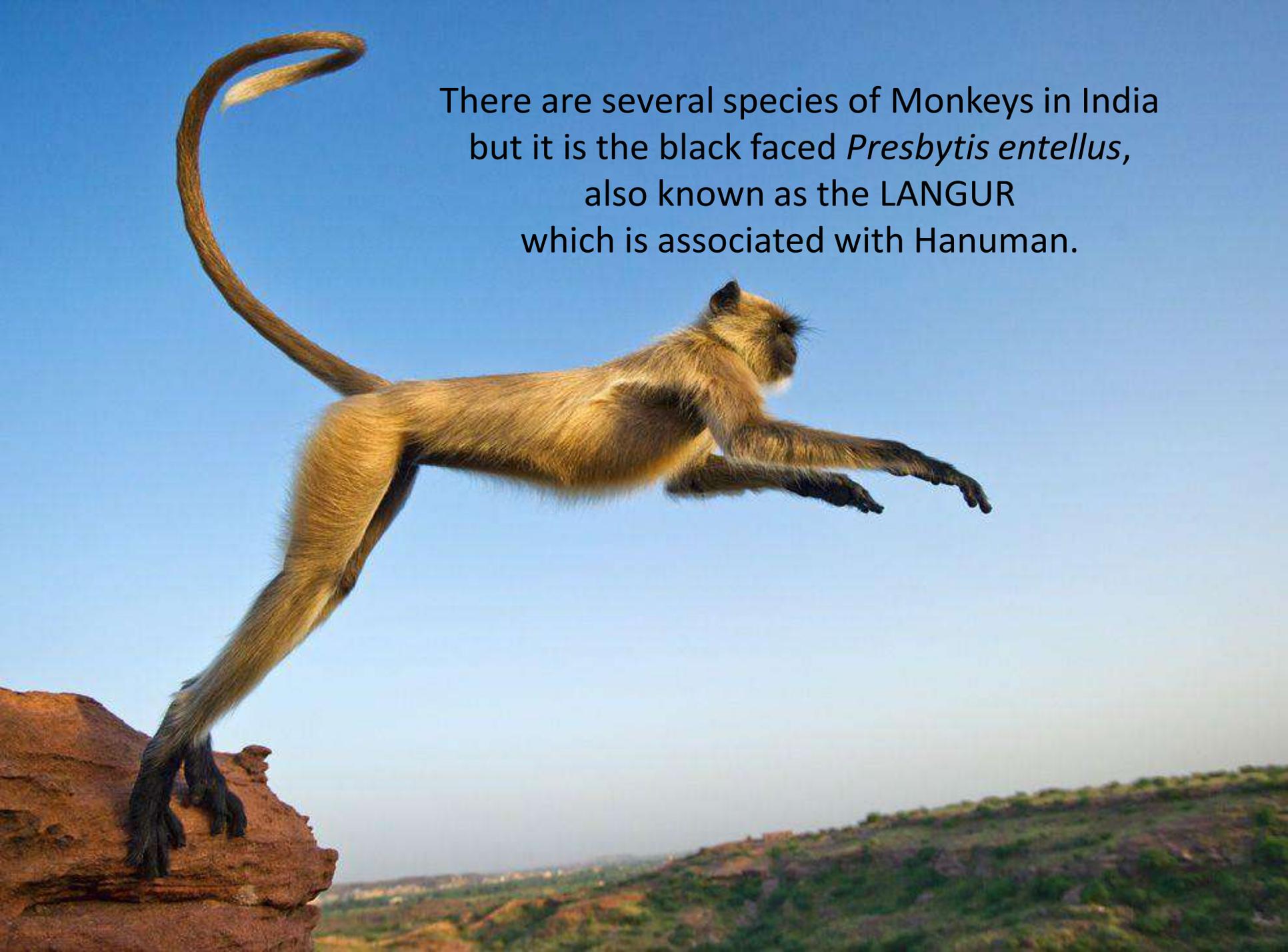
PANCHATANTRA

In observing a monkey we find a mirror on to ourselves. Small wonder then that in ancient Indian tales, Panchtantra & Jataka Tales, the Monkey is a character that makes more frequent appearance than any other animal.

The Mischievous Monkey is usually perceived as a playful animal but they can be pilfering opportunists and considered to be of nuisance value but the Langur is still tolerated by the people.



There are several species of Monkeys in India but it is the black faced *Presbytis entellus*, also known as the LANGUR which is associated with Hanuman.



THE BULL

A powerful and handsome beast, the Bull became a symbol of Strength & Fighting qualities. It's remarkable Virility and association with man in Agriculture also made it a symbol of both Masculinity & Fertility.

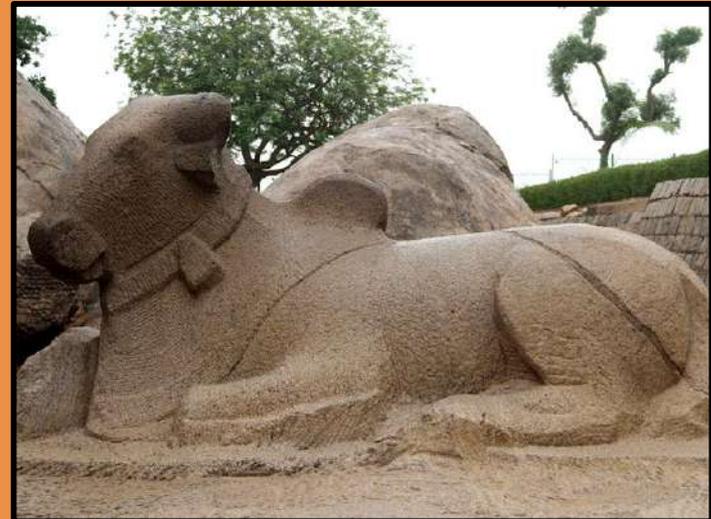
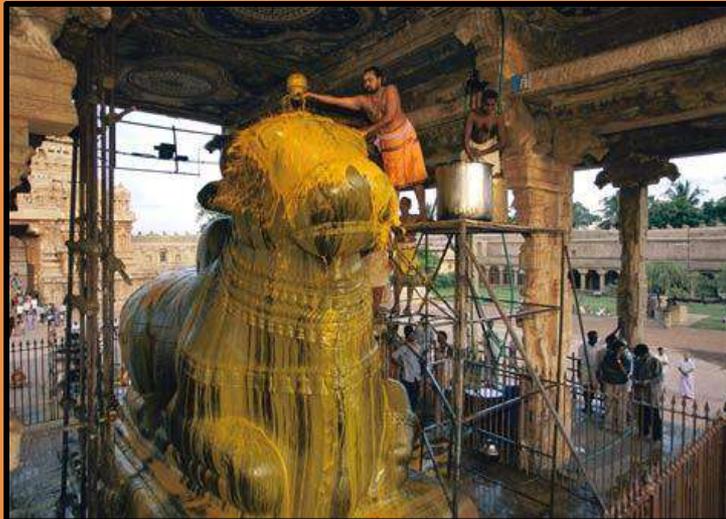


NANDI the BULL

No wonder
the Bull came to
symbolizes Kama
or the sexual impulse.
Among those who have
mastered the `bull' - or
controlled `desire',
is Shiva,
also known as the Pashupati
or the Lord of the Beasts,
whose mount is
Nandi the Bull.



COLOSSAL IMAGES of the NANDI
carved out of monolithic rocks are found all over the southern India
where they are worshiped.



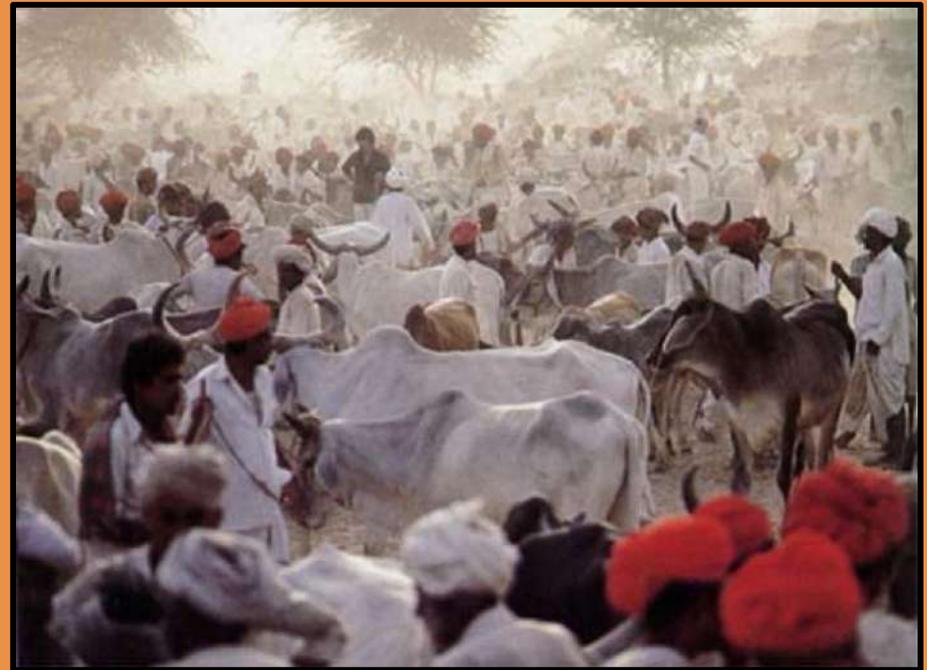
THE PUSHKAR CATTLE FAIR

Once upon a time,
Bullock was the chief
beast of burden
that was harnessed
to plough the fields
& provide transportation.

Even today,
despite mechanization,
the Bull continues to be important in
rural economy and society.

There are cattle fairs
across the country
where bullocks are
not only bought & sold
but also decorated with colorful beads &
bells etc.

The Pushkar Fair in Rajasthan is perhaps
the largest in terms of size.



RACING the BULLS

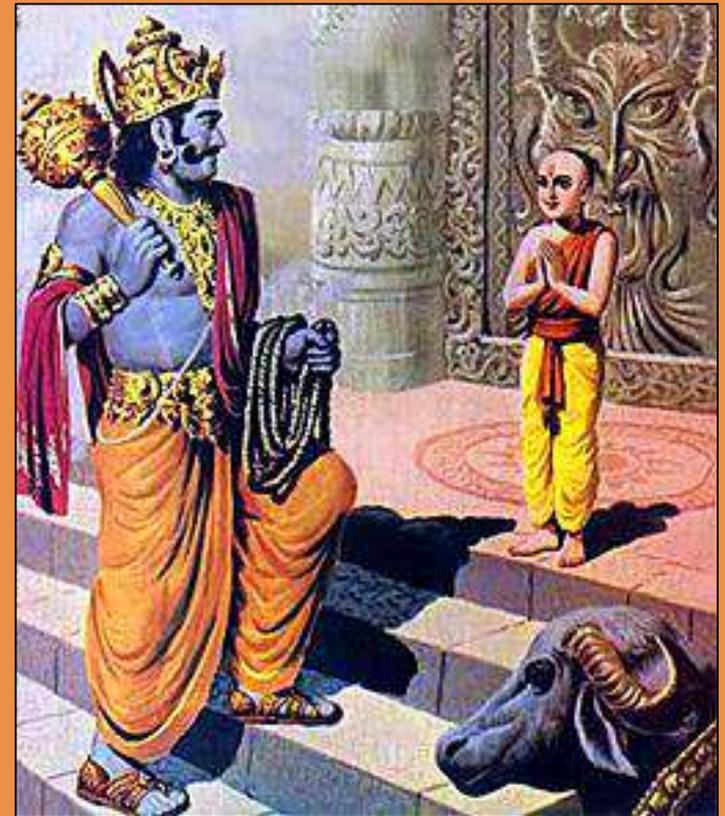


A spectacular tradition in the southern states
where thousands gather annually to see the Bulls Race
through a water channel!

The Races play a significant social role
when there is a lull between the planting & harvesting seasons.

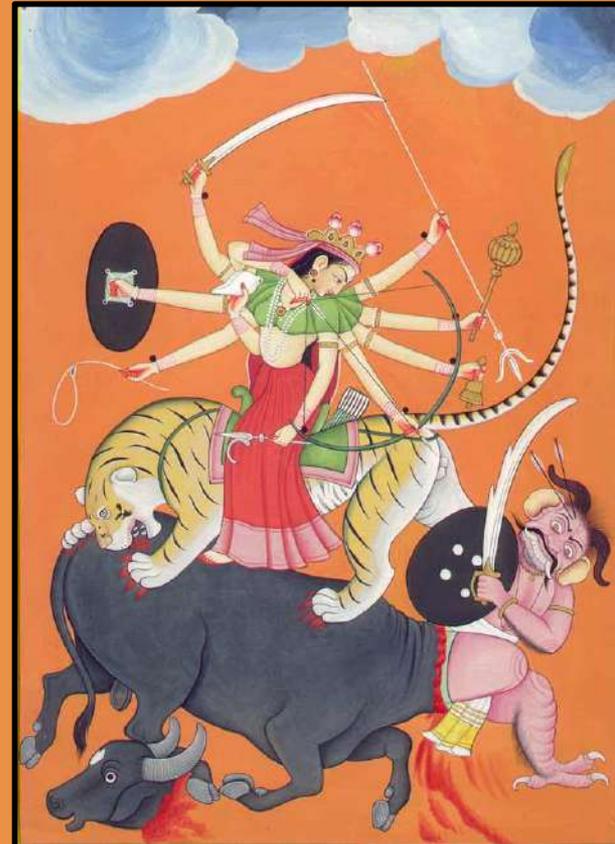
BUFFALO & Yama

Dark & ugly, Buffalo is likened to Human Ignorance.
Yama, the God of Death comes riding the Buffalo of Ignorance
because in Hindu worldview there is no Death –
only Rebirth or Salvation.



MAHISHASUR the BUFFALO

Buffalo also symbolises Human Ego in the character of the mythical monster Mahishasur, half human half buffalo and absolutely demonic that can only be killed by Durga that comes riding a tiger or a lion



DURGA the GODDESS

The Quintessential Indian Thought is:

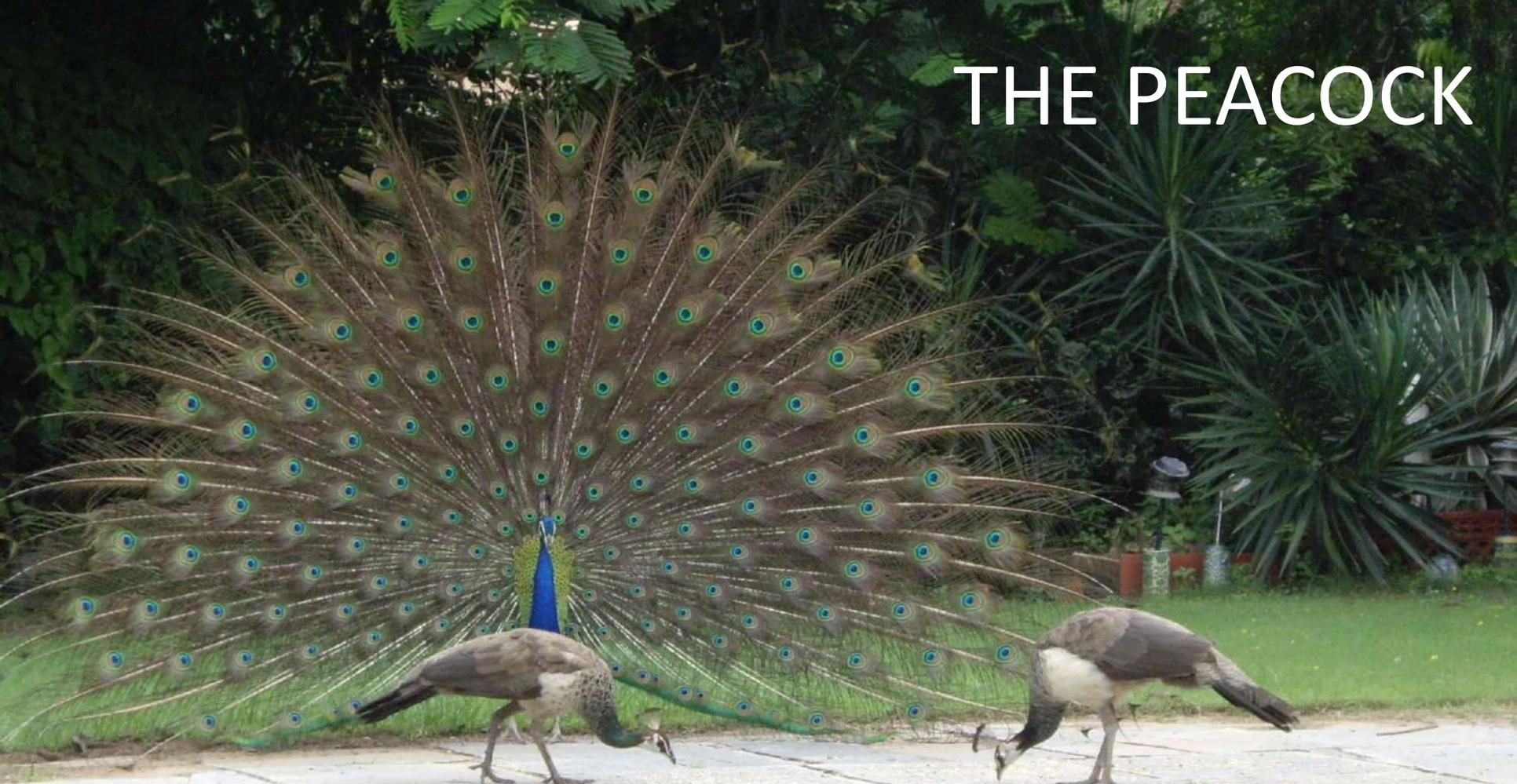
“I” does not exist.

Those who say “I AM” or “I” exists
are ignorant of their immortality
and Oneness with God / Almighty /Creator...

For them, Yama the Lord of Death
will certainly come one day
riding the Buffalo of their own Ignorance.

It is Durga
a power within us
that can kill or dispel our ignorance
and lead us into Light & Salvation.

THE PEACOCK

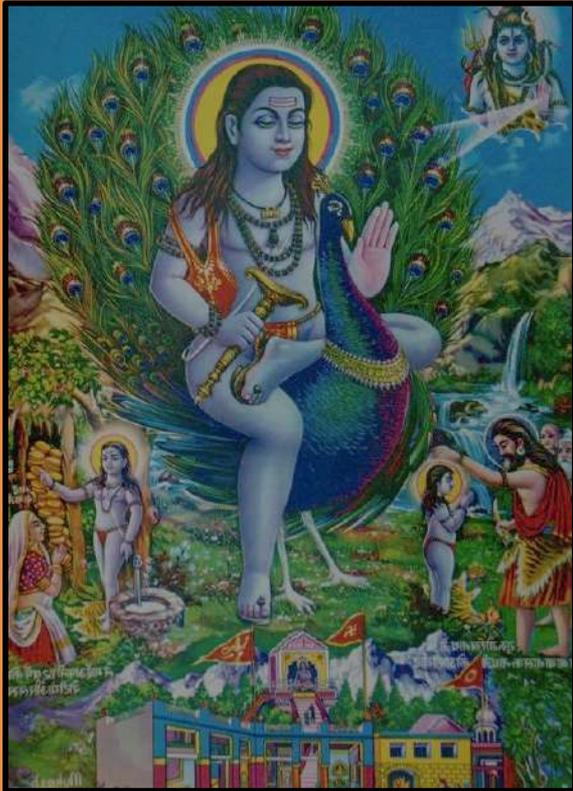


There are 3 species of Peacock in the world:
The Blue Indian Peafowl, the Green Burmese Peafowl & the Congo Peafowl.
It is the Indian Peacock however, which is well known in the world
and widely distributed all over the country.
Among 2,000 species of birds in India, Peacock is indeed the most majestic.

PEACOCK & KRISHNA

In the complex world of Hindu & Buddhist pantheon, the Peacock is found in the company of Gods & Goddesses.

But it is with the Cult of Krishna that the peacock is closely connected in myth and legend.



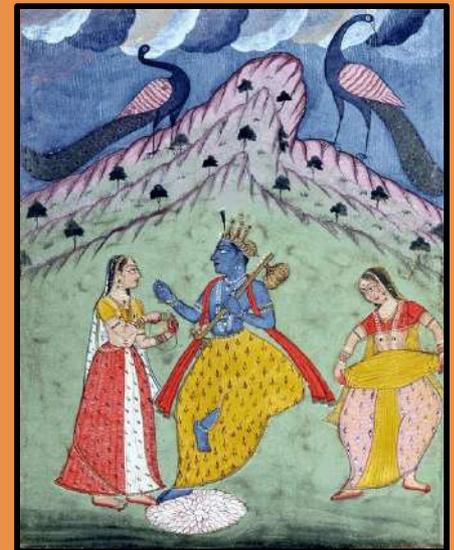
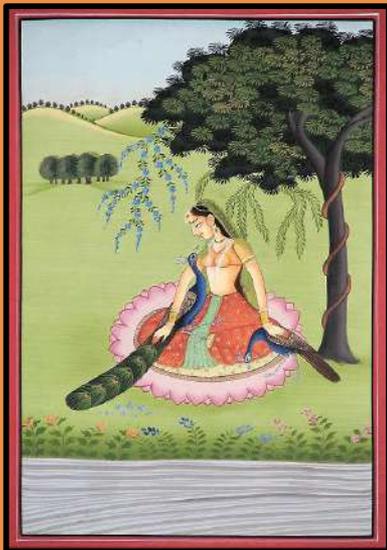
The Strident
Calls of the Peacock
not only heralds
the onset of Rains
but also the
Season of Romance.
CALLS of the PEACOCK
beckon separated lovers
to reunite.

This is a recurrent theme in
Folk Songs & Poetry of India
and is depicted beautifully in
Rajput Miniature Paintings.



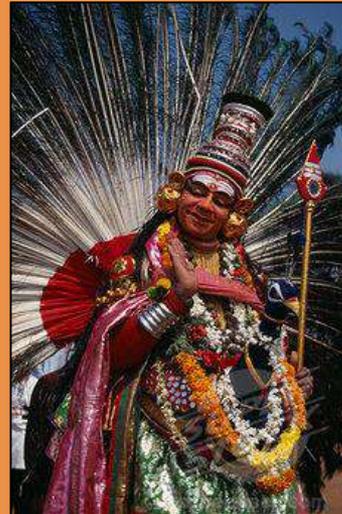
In the science of Indian Classical Music,
there are meters known after the peacock.

The magic of Indian musical modes - the 'ragas' and the 'raginis'
are pictorially represented in the Rajput miniature paintings,
which have the peacock as an important symbol.



Breathtaking to behold,
different dancing poses & postures of the Peacock
have greatly influenced man's zest to dance.

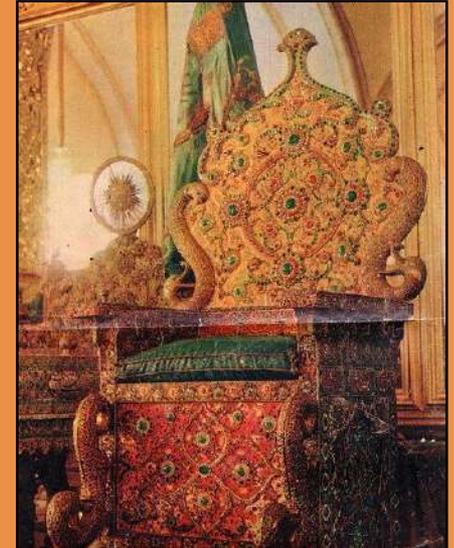
Hand gestures & foot movements depicting the PEACOCK DANCE
find expression in the Classical, Folk and Tribal Dancing Traditions of India.



Exquisite Specimens of PEACOCK ARTIFACTS

Images of this beautiful bird are fashioned in fabric, carved in wood and stone and shaped in clay & metal by traditional craftsmen.

In 5000 years of the Indian Story the Peacock appears as iconic artifacts from Indian History & Culture like coins, seals and of course the legendary 'Peacock Throne'.



National Bird of India

Symbolic of many qualities
grace, pride, beauty, love & arts

Peacock

is the sacred bird of India
protected not only by
a religious sentiment
but also by
parliamentary statute.

Peacock is the
National Bird of India



HANSA the GANDER Mount of Brahma

Hansa
is an extraordinary beautiful bird
that is said to live in High Himalayas.
It is the mount of Brahma,
the Creator of the Cosmos.

Hansa symbolizes
Divine Spirit
that lives in every human body.
It flies freely
between the Earthly
& the Heavenly spheres
and is not bound by either.
Remaining Forever Free....



Mt Kailash 21.000 ft

MANSAROVER Lake in the Mind

Badrinath

Joshimath

TIBET AUTONOMOUS
REGION, CHINA

Mansarover

INDIA

It is said that Hansa is our Intellect
whose food is pearls
which are found in the
mythical lake of Mansarover.
A combination of
two Sanskrit words:
Mansa or Mind and Sarovara or Lake.



HANSA BUDDHI

If Mansarover is the
Lake in the Mind
then our Intellect
is referred as
Hansa Buddhi
that feed on “Pearls”
found only in
Mansarover.

Pearls
must then be,
deep spiritual thoughts
of the Saints & the Gurus.
And Thoughts are Words.
And Words
are the first steps towards
Learning.



SARASWATI The Goddess of Learning

Connected to
the Word,
Hansa symbolises
Wisdom & Intellect.
It is depicted at the
feet of Saraswati,
Consort of Brahma
and
Goddess of Learning
or Vidya.



Laxmi & Owl

It is said that Laxmi the Goddess of Wealth comes riding an Owl. So what's the connection?

Laxmi is Wealth and Wealth is Maya or Illusion that which does not exist because wealth is perishable.

The wise know this. And those who don't are Ignorant.

Like the Owl that sleeps thru the day and can only see in the darkness of the night called Agyanta or Ignorance in Sanskrit.

Wealth comes to those who are ignorant of the fact that it can be lost unlike the teachings of the Saints that are immortal

JATAYU

THE OLD VULTURE

In Ramayan when Sita is being abducted by Ravan, there appears a unique character in the form of an old vulture called Jatayu which means 'Ancient of Age'. Jatayu puts up a fight to save Sita but Ravan mortally wounded him and whisked Sita away.

So what's the connect to the Vulture?

Because vultures have a very keen eyesight and they can see far ahead.

Vulture symbolizes Farsightedness. Looking into the future Jatayu sees that Ram will finally kill Ravan for abducting Sita.

So Jatayu tries to stop Ravan from this own destruction.

There is a Jatayu in everyone of us that warns us about the results of our actions.



Part Human, Part Eagle

Garud is a mythical bird that appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology and has a presence in South East Asia, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaya, Indonesia and the faraway Mongolia. And it is the national symbol of Indonesia.



In India

GARUD is the Vehicle of Vishnu

who reclines on Ananta,
the Serpent of Time



This seems like
a contradiction because
enmity of Eagle & Serpent
is legendary.

So how come Vishnu
has a Serpent Killer as his Mount
when he also lies
on the coils of one?

Can the Serpent of Time
that kills everybody
also kill it's Creator –
Vishnu himself?



No.
Because
Vishnu has Garuda
that keeps the
Serpent of Time
in balance.

The Crow of Consciousness

Human Consciousness
full of self importance
“I, Me & Myself”
is likened to the cawing of a crow
that is really very unpleasant to hear.

In Yog Vashisht,
that records the dialogue between
Guru Vashisht and his Shishya Ram,
we hear of Kagbhasundi
a very old Sage in the form of a Crow
who endured Time and witnessed
Creation and Dissolutions of the Earth several times.
Obviously no Human Body can survive eons
but Human Consciousness can, and does.

Connected to Consciousness
the Crow is considered to be the most Intelligent bird
forever Alert!

“Shraadh”: Feeding the Crows



Legends tell that the Crow can also fly backwards & forwards in Time thru different Worlds - the Here & the Hereafter. No wonder the Crows come to symbolize our Ancestors. That is why the crows are fed during the “Shraadhs.”

OTHER ANIMALS

There are many
OTHER ANIMALS IN INDIAN MYTHOLGY
Mouse, Horse, Dog, Deer, Ants, etc
that have their own significance.

And not without reason.

Consider the enormity of what we call Indian Thought:

4 Vedas

200 Upanishads

6 Shastras

18 Puranas

Ramayana

Mahabharata

Yog Vashishta

Adi Granth

just to name a few

Nobody could ever hope to read all this in one lifetime.

But despite many stories in many scriptures
the idea remains the same.

CONCLUSIONS

The Idea is about a better appreciation
of our natural Environment.
Thousands of years before the world came to know
what is ecology and why must we respect
our natural Environment,
ancient Indian thought enshrined that idea in the scriptures
so that Man is never at cross purposes with Nature.
Today, more than at any time
in the history of human civilization,
this understanding has become critical for
the survival of Man on the planet.
In that sense, there is a global appeal in the subject.
The story of Animals in Indian Mythology & Legend
is an attempt to present the complexity
and richness of Indian thought
In an engaging and simple manner
so as to reach the widest audience possible.

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the Importance of Ecology
the Story of Resources and
the Lessons of Sustainability

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Nihal Mathur

D/279, Todarmal Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302016 Cell +91.96600.87910 Email: nihal@ecopanions.com