

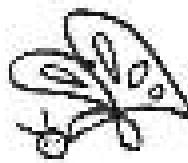
DEVDUTT PATTANAIK
INDIA'S BESTSELLING MYTHOLOGIST

PASHU

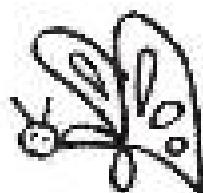
ANIMAL TALES FROM
HINDU MYTHOLOGY

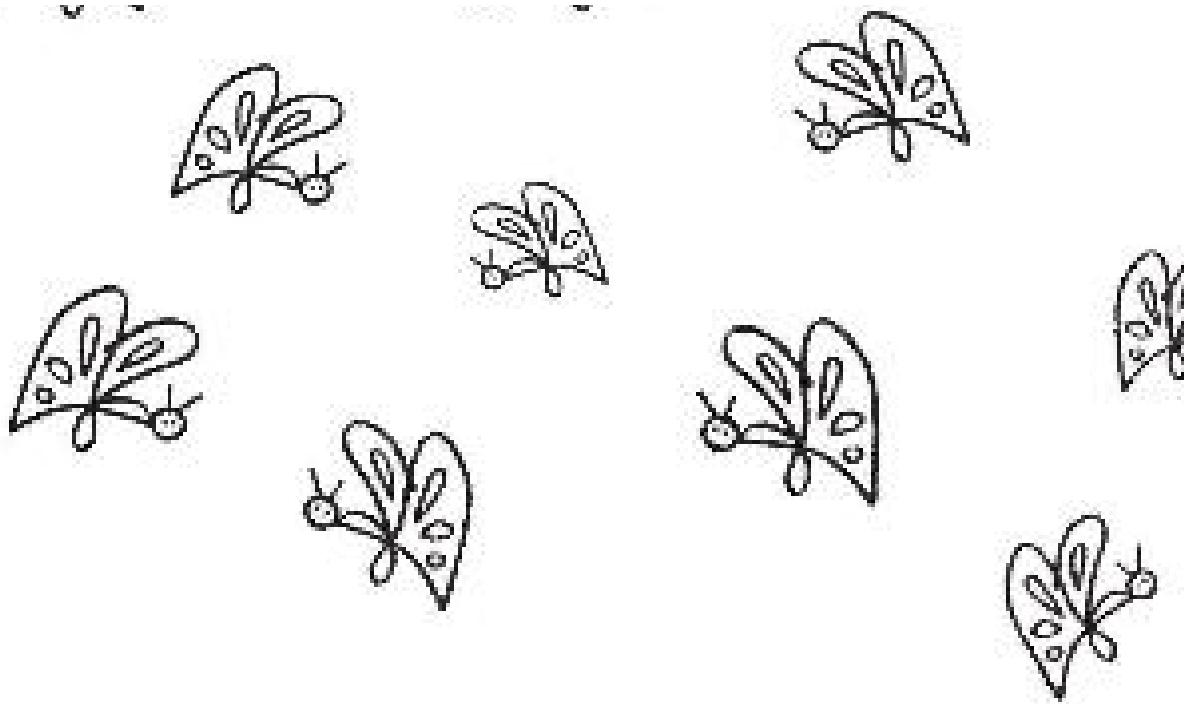


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Devdutt Pattanaik
illustrates stories for children.
He has written over
many for children
series makes gods
accessible to all. He believes that
chocolates: you chew the outside
get to the soft sweetness inside –
Mumbai. To know more, visit [www.devdutt.com](#)





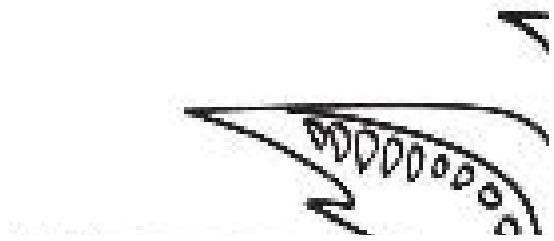
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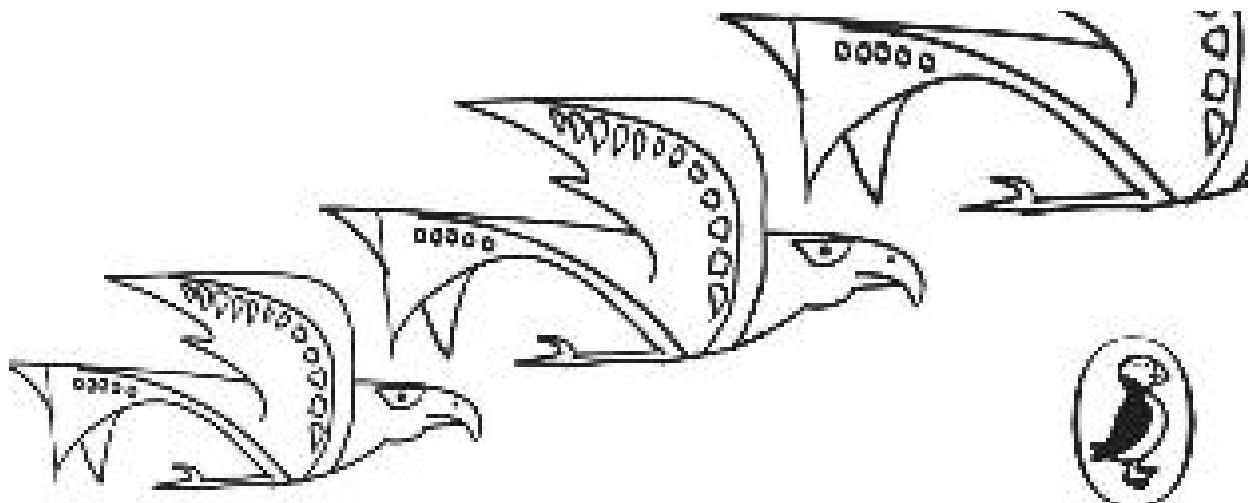
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ANIMAL TALES FROM HII

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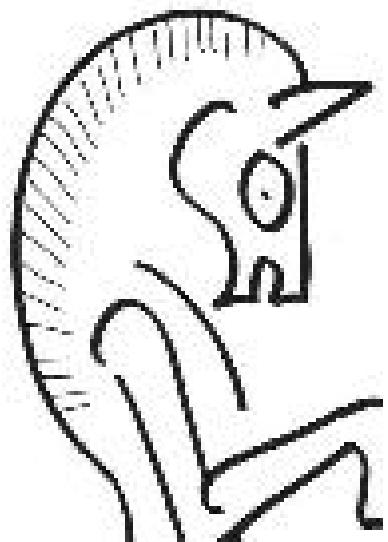
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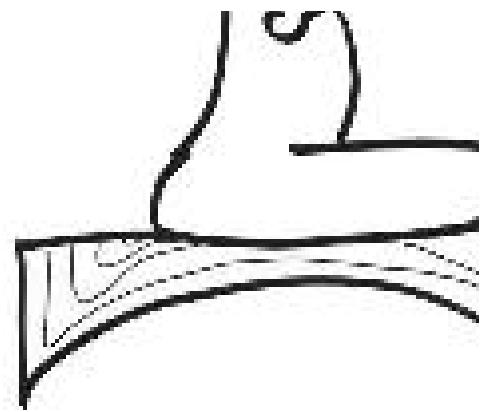
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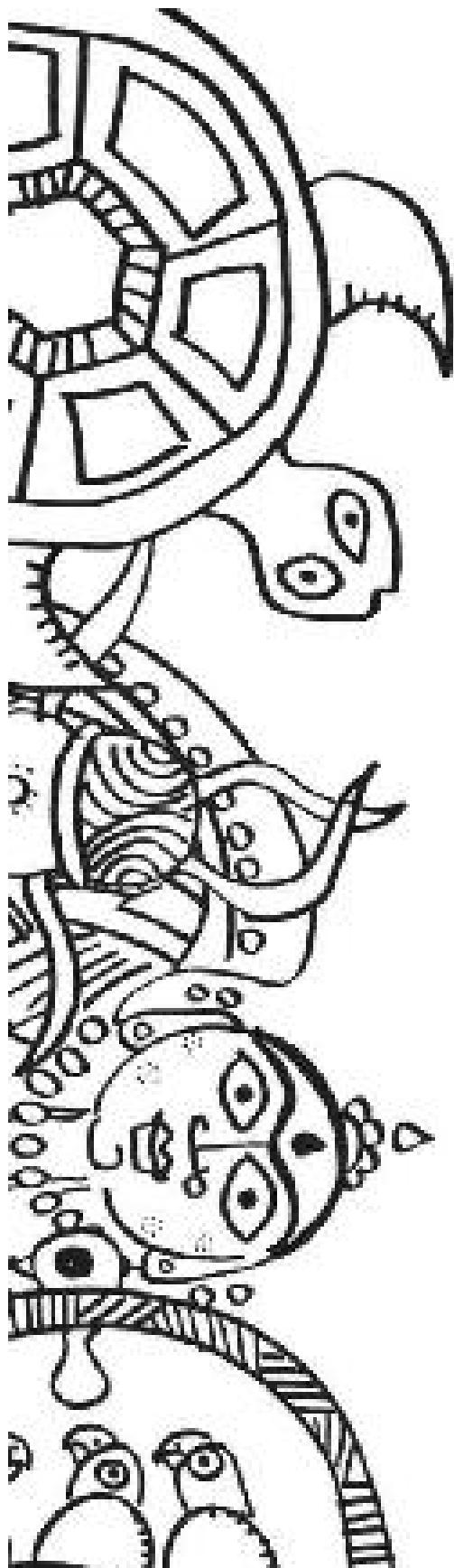
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A PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE COMPANY

*For all those who
wings, scales, claws:*



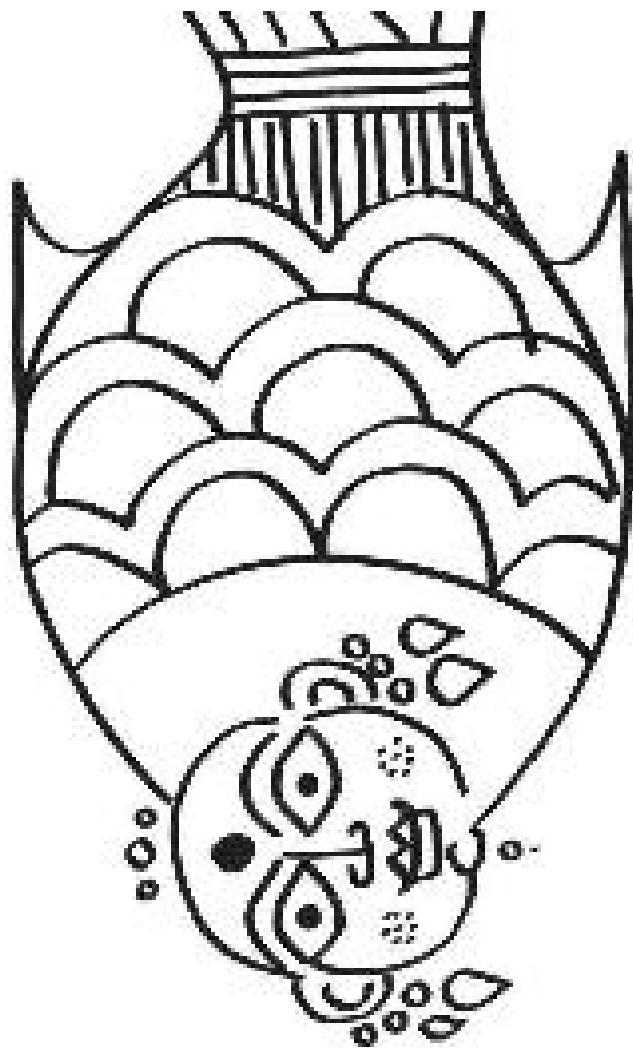




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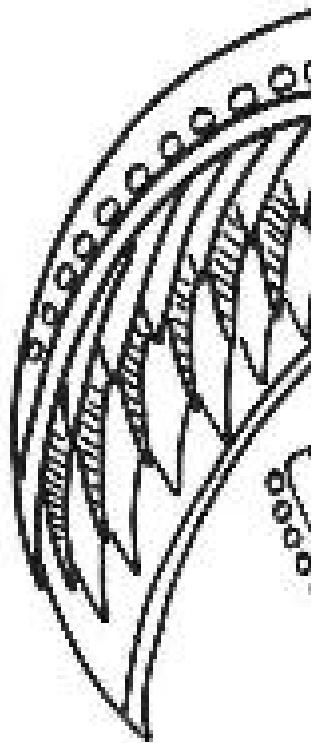
Pashu means animal in Sanskrit. An animal of importance is given a name in Hindu mythology. With the names of gods, demons, humans, animals, etc., are incomplete. Ancient Indian texts known as Puranas reveal that animals had a common ancestor named Kashyapa, son of Brahma. All the animals mentioned above all had different mothers.

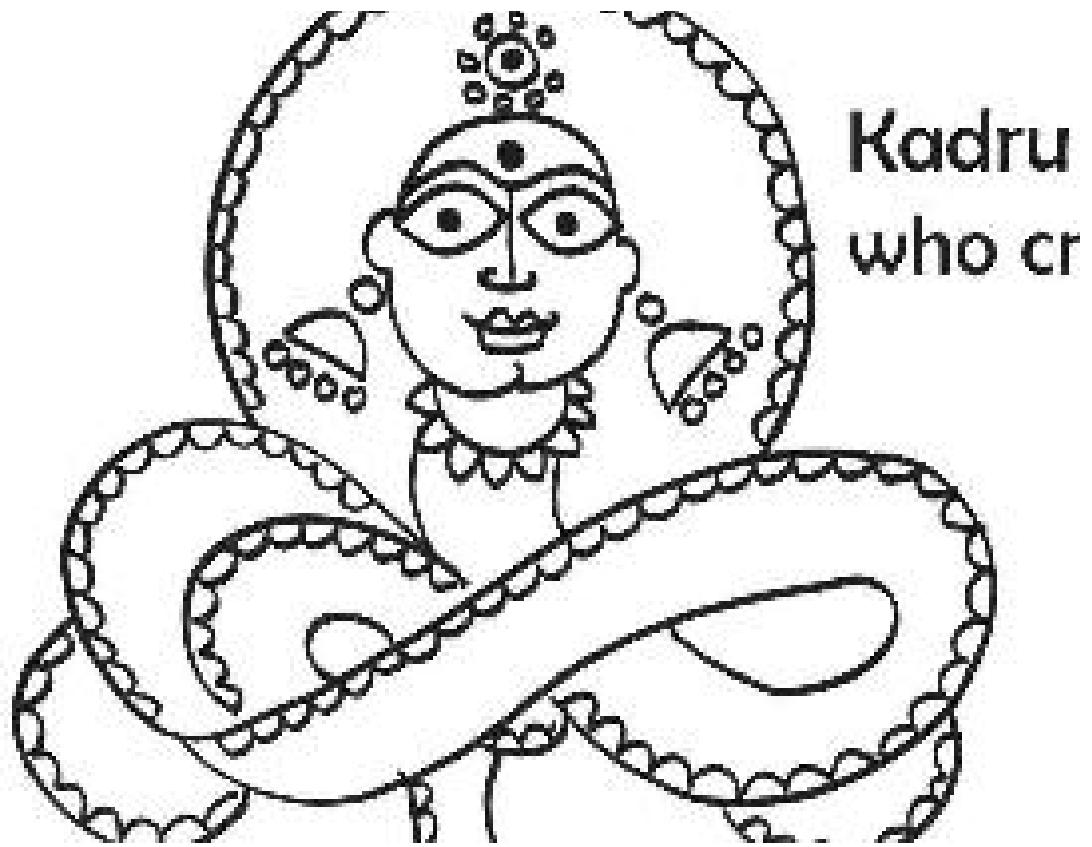




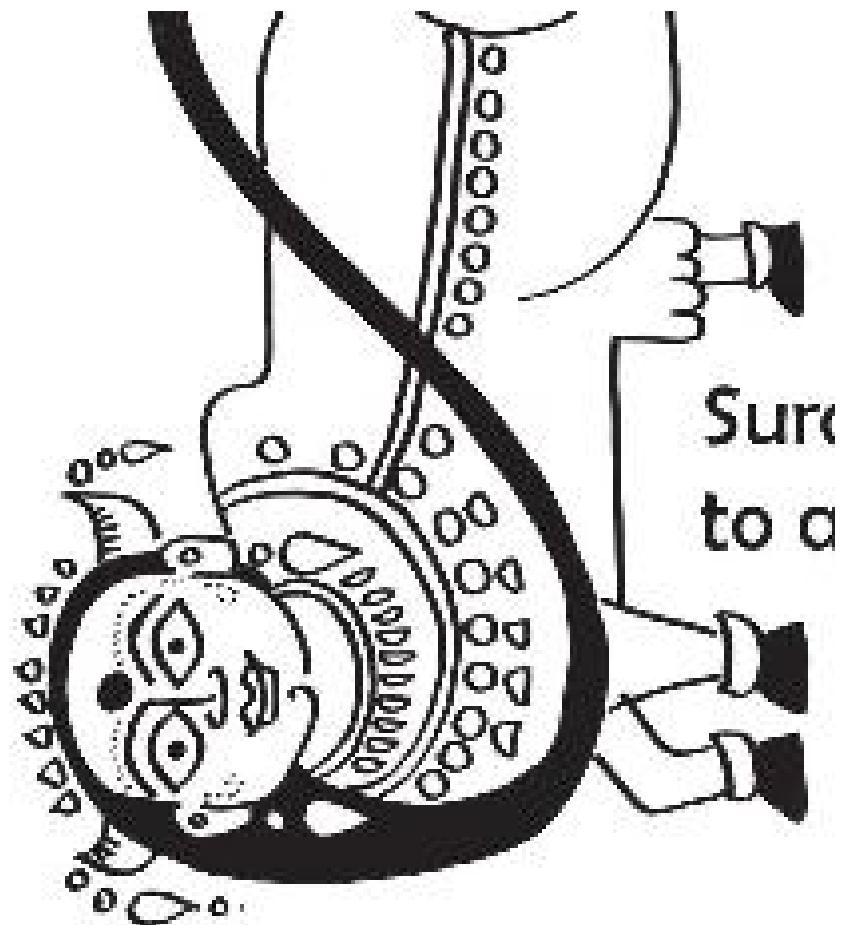
Timi gave birth to animals who fly.

Vinata gave birth to animals who fly.





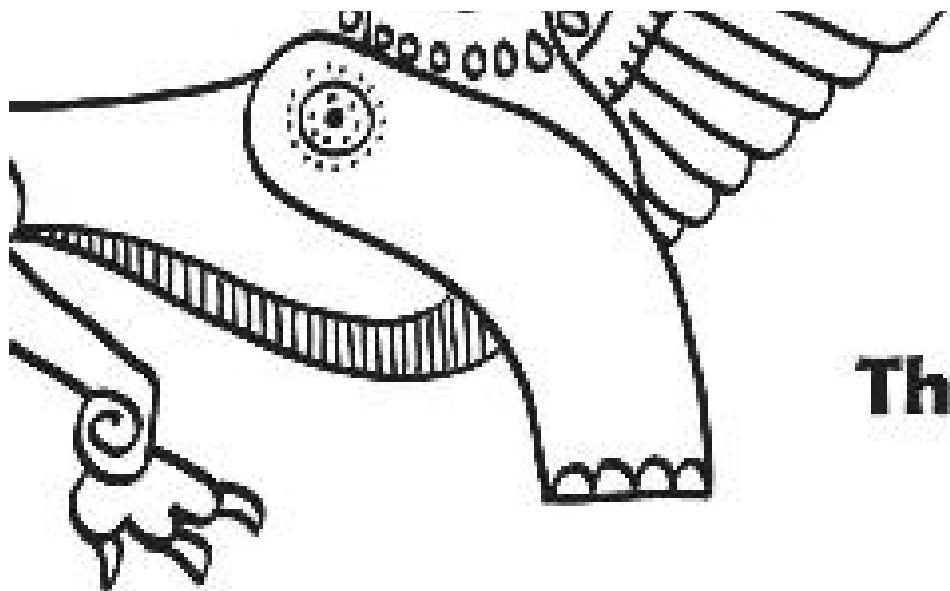
Kadru
who cr



Sarama gave birth to animals with paws.



Surasa



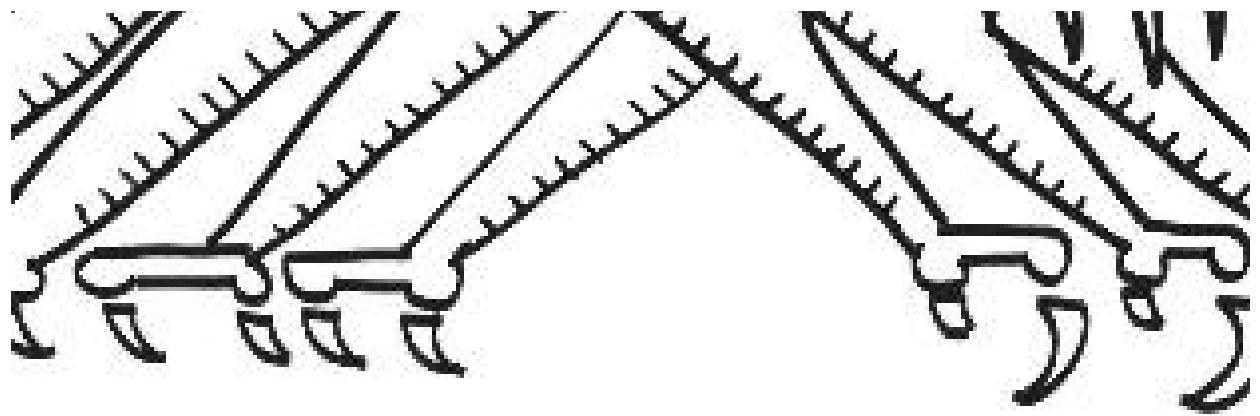
animal

This book



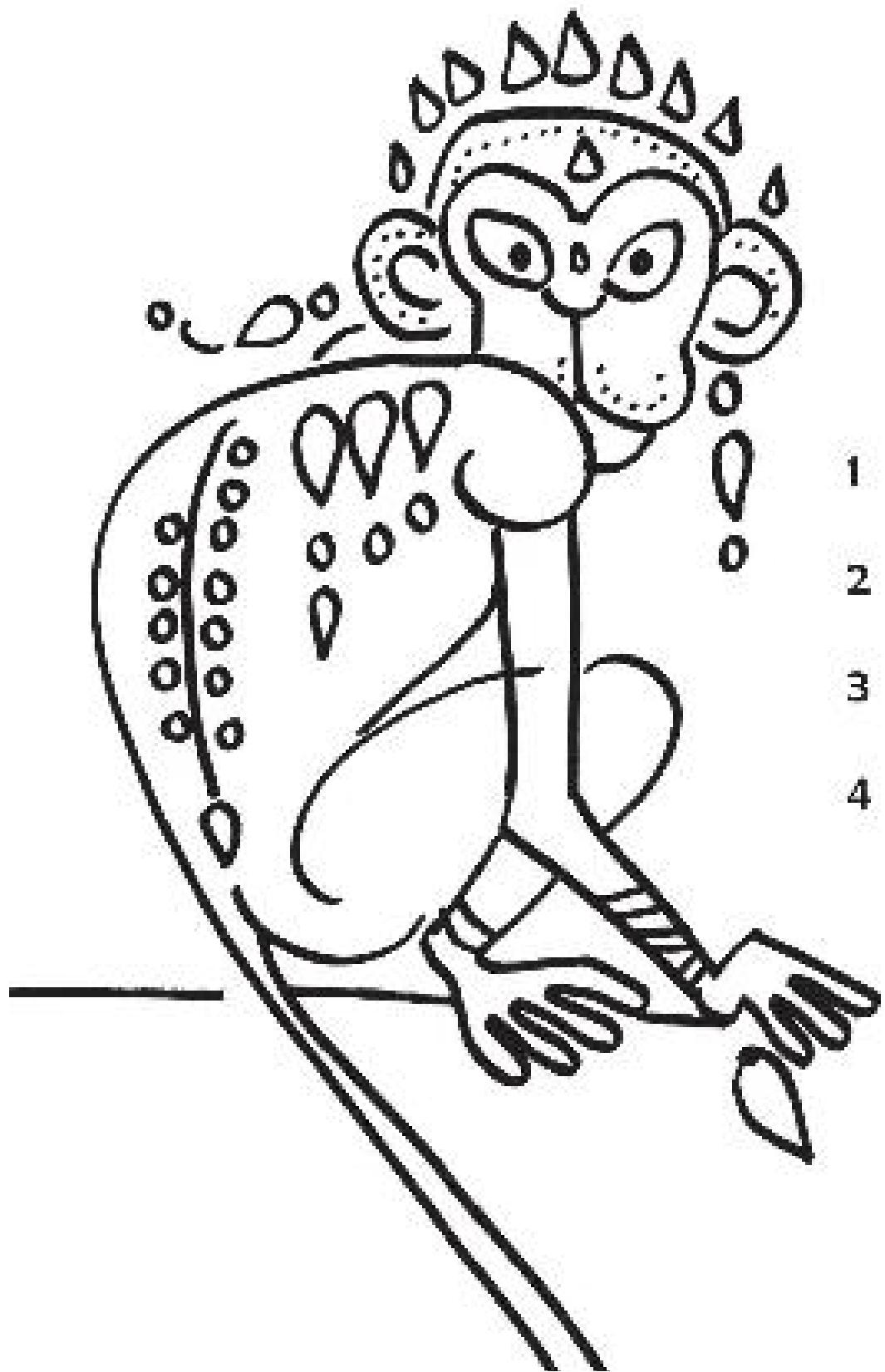
**But before you
keep in mind**







**Varuna has but a t
Indra, a hu
You and I, or**



- 1 Initial
- 2 Timi's
- 3 Vinate
- 4 Kadru creep

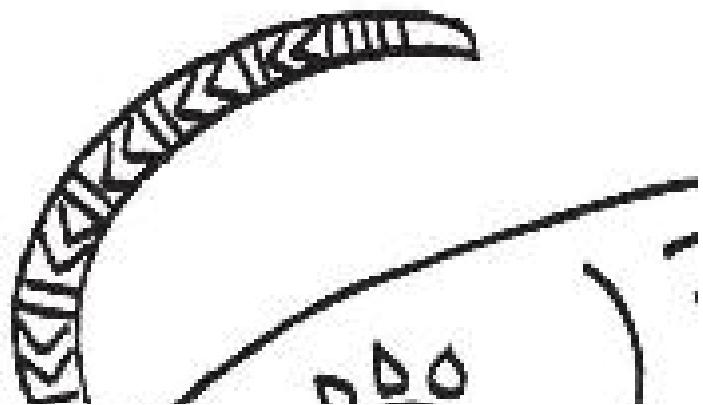


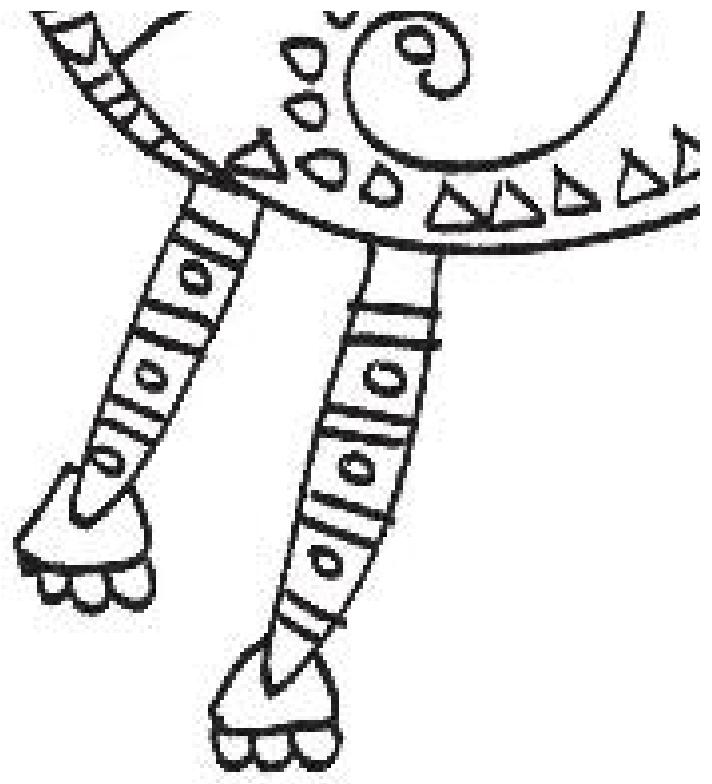
5 Surabhi's children with

6 Sarama's children with

**7 Surasa's children, who
are different**

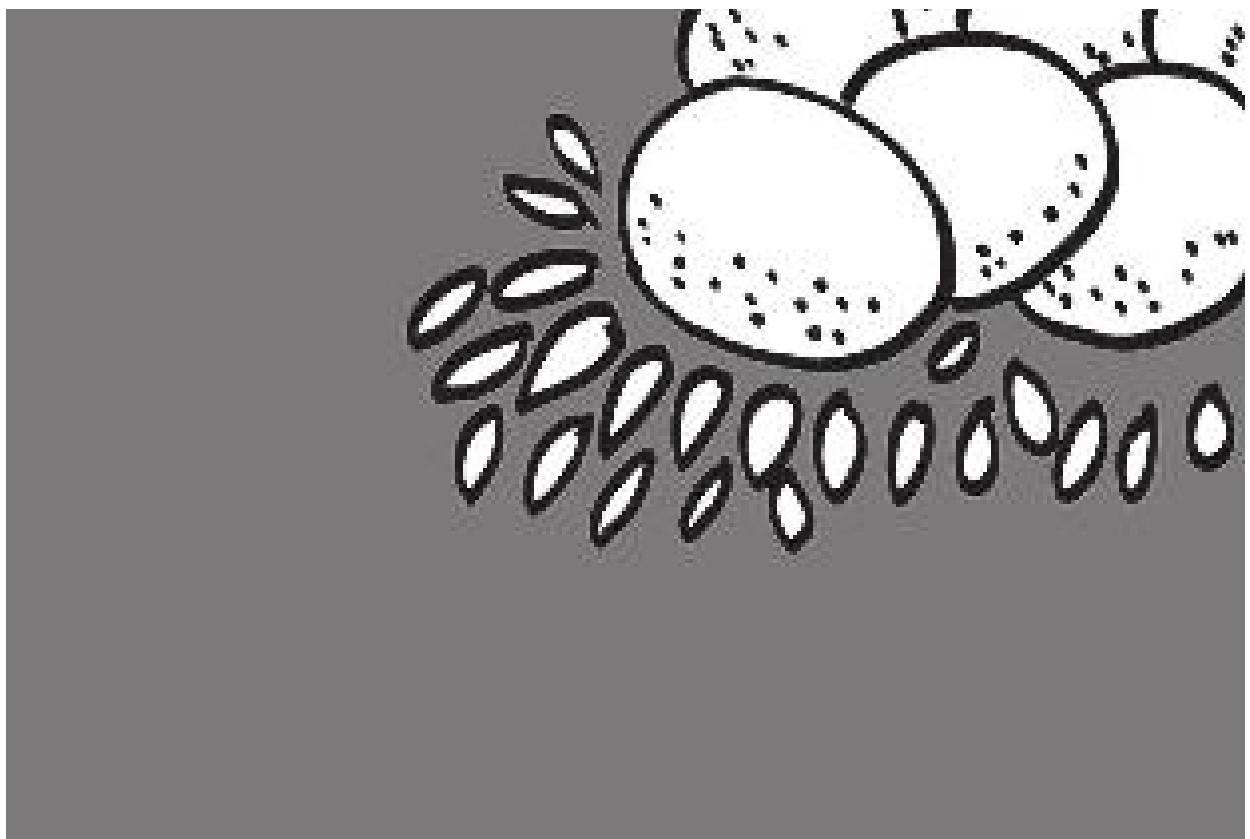
**8 Finally, humans versus
animals**





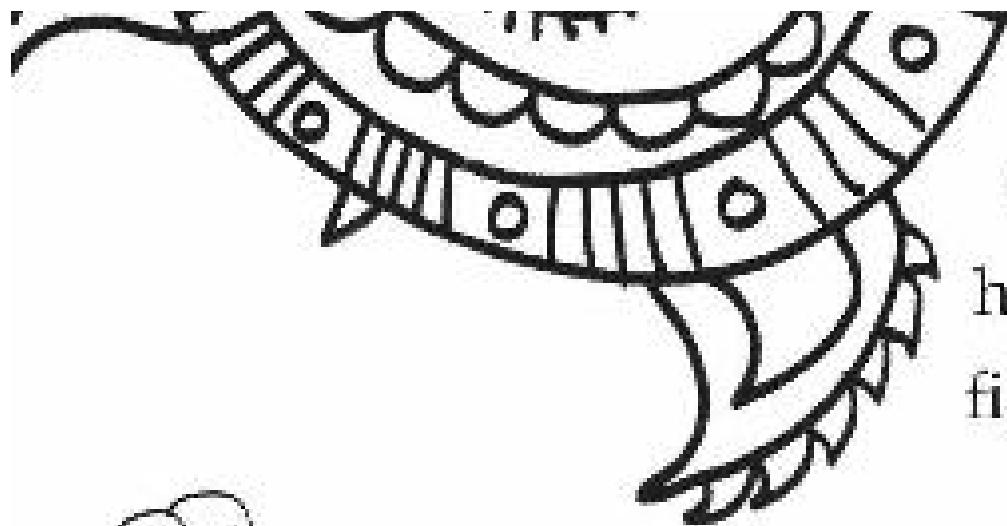
Initial the birth of



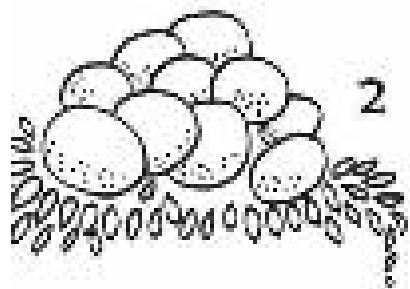


Brahma, the creator, had a son named Kashyapa. Kashyapa had many wives who gave birth to different types of children. Aditi gave birth to deities who live in the sky. Diti gave birth to demons who live under the earth.





claws
to all the
hooves. I
fishes and



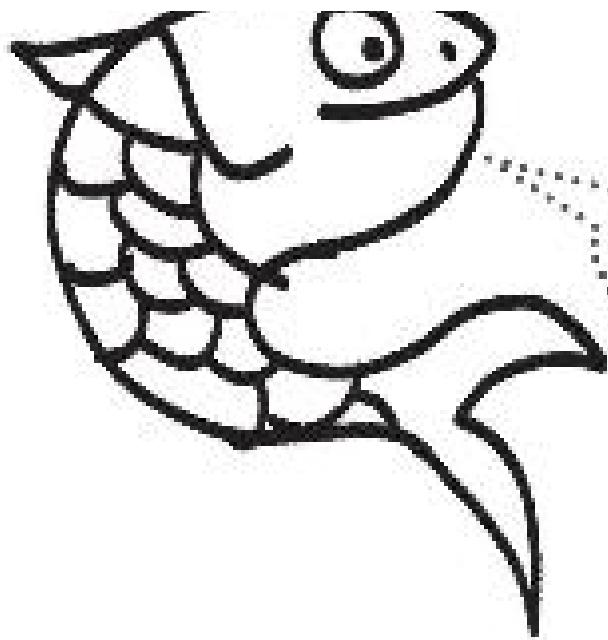
2

Devdutt P

monsters. Thus, all gods, demons and humans have a common ancestor. They call him Prajapati, father of all creatures. This theory is also found in the Puranas, books that are thousands of years old.

There are also other theories about how the animals came into being. Some of these theories are found in earlier books, while some have never been written but passed down orally by stargazers and story tellers.





Do you kn
Ucchaishrav

Pashu: Animal Tales from

Brahma and Si

The first man, Brahma, saw th

Shatarupa, and fell

He tried to tou
ran away. He i

getting caught

To catch up w:

a stag. She then became

stallion. She transformed

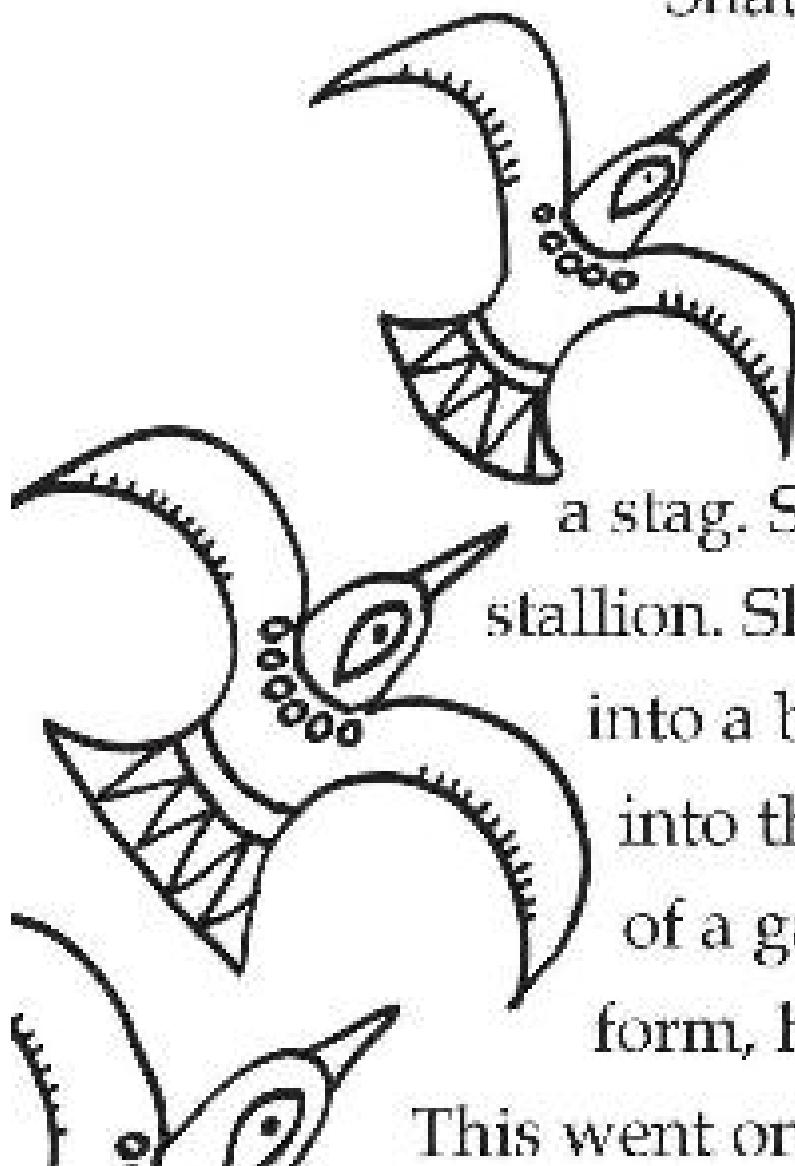
into a bull. She became

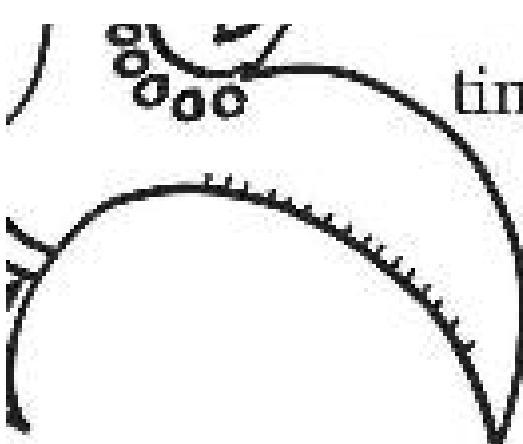
into the air. He follow

of a gander. Every ti

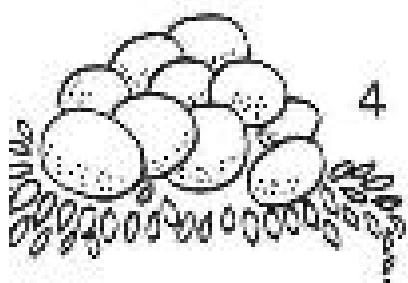
form, he took the corr

This went on for millions of





time, all kinds of beasts ca
ants and elephants to d
the Upanishads, conve
nearly three thousand

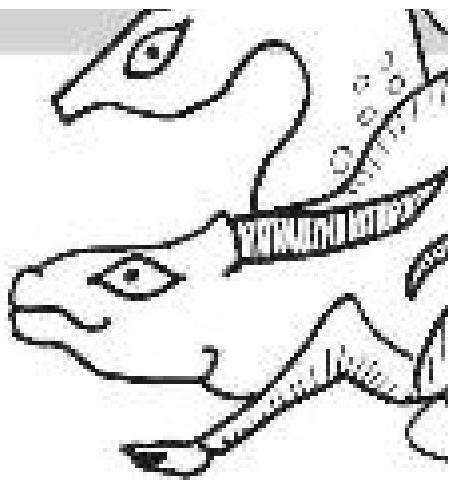


4

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The devas travel from one part of the world to another on animals. They also have flags or standards that bear the symbols of their respective deities. Indra, for example, is everywhere on his bull, whose neck and tail also has the symbol of a bull on it. Agni, the god of fire, flies on an eagle known as Garuda; his flag is a golden eagle. Shani, the god of the planet Saturn, is the planet of time, rides a vulture that is said to eat the dead. Mangal or the planet Mars is associated with war and aggression, and is said to travel on a tiger. These animals are called vahanas, means of transport, vehicles or mounts. Indra's mount is an elephant, Kartikeya's a peacock, Ganesh's a rat—different animals for different gods.

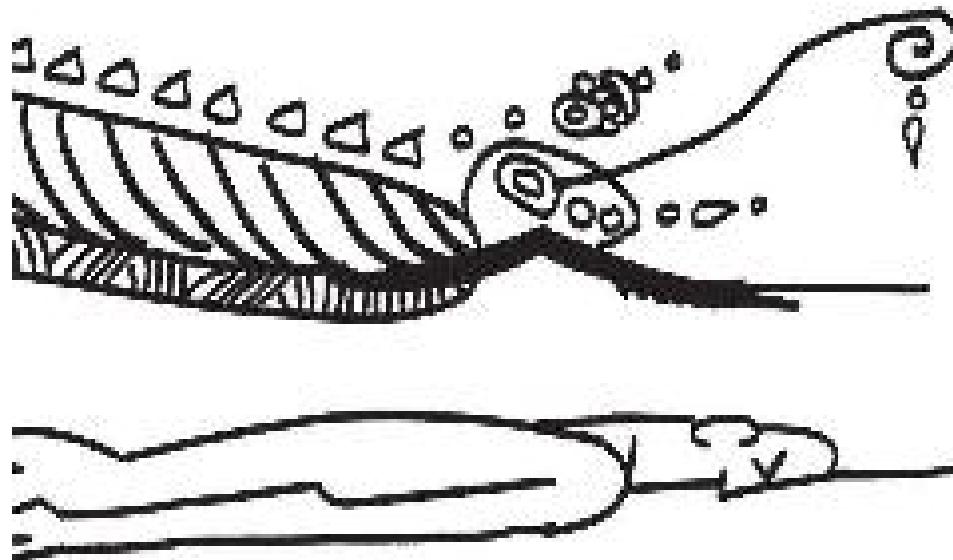




Poshi: Animal Tales from

Yogasanas.

Shiva was at peace with himself. In many poses, known as asana:



poses re

For exam

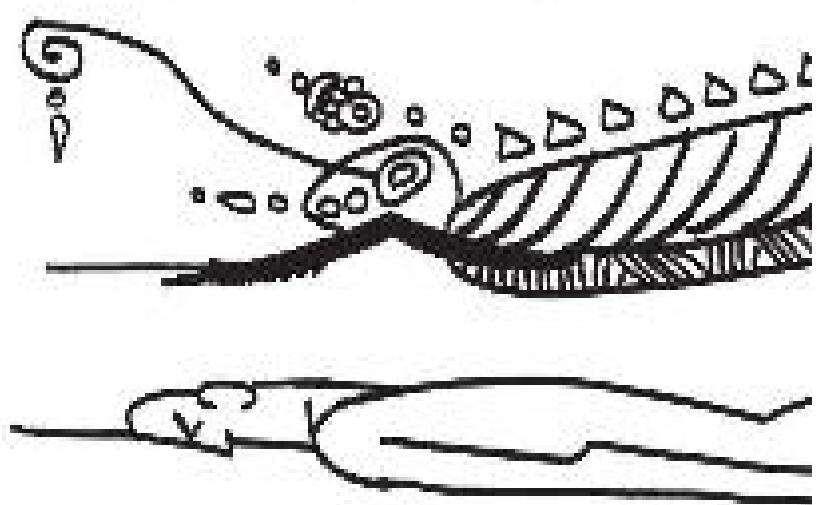
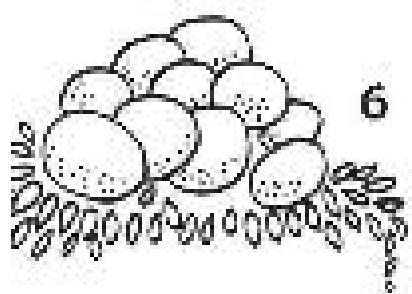
resemble

took this

being. Fi

fishes ca

the bhujang-asana, snakes ca
the salabh-asana, locusts cam
go-mukha-asana, cows came
stood in millions of poses, giv
different kinds of animals. So



Devdutt P

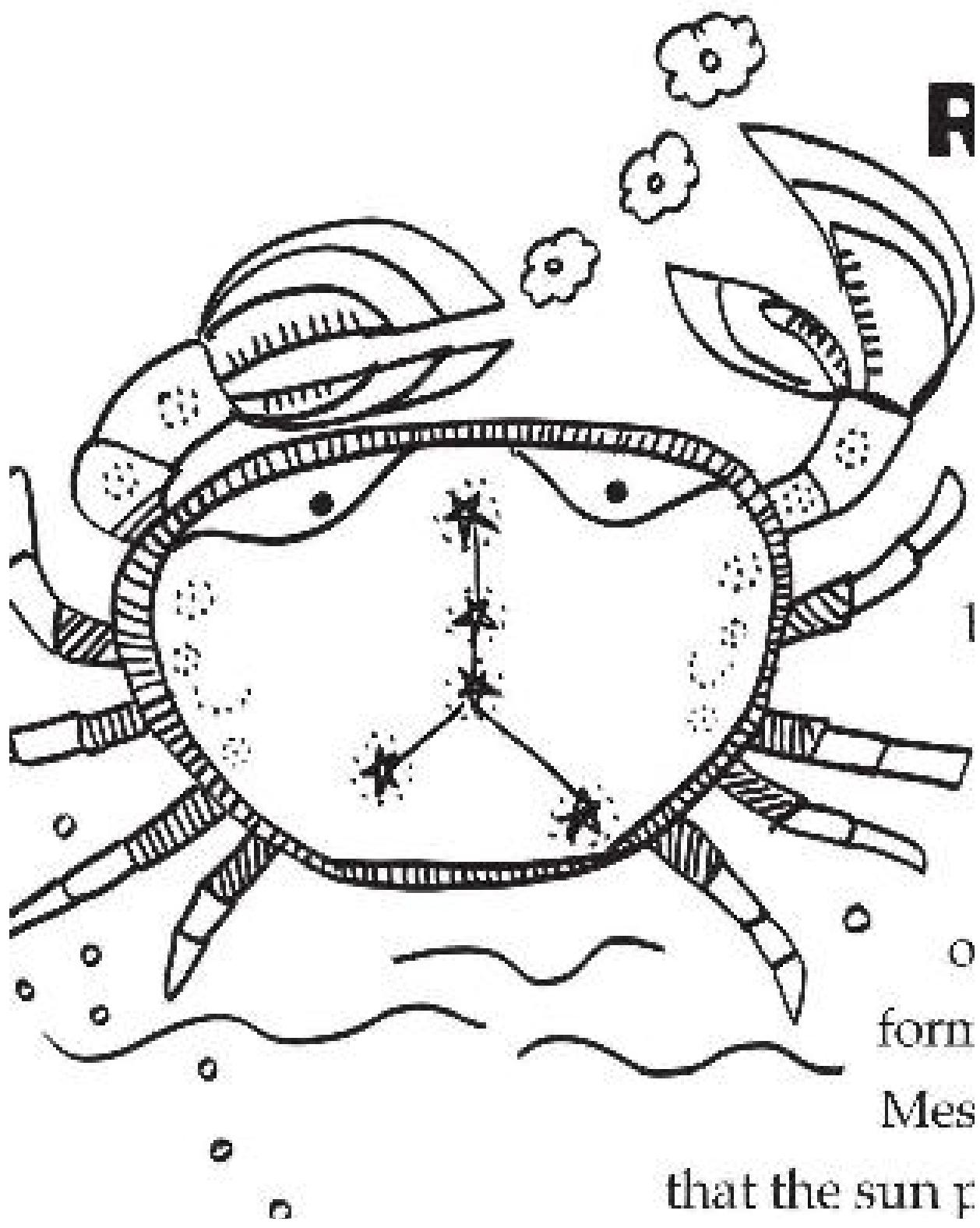
Avatars. From time to
who resides on the ocean of mil-
walk on the earth. He takes the
different animals when he does.
Sometimes he is a fish, sometim-
a turtle, sometimes a
wild boar, sometimes a
swan . . . In memory
of the many forms he
took, various animals
came into being. So the
next time you see a fish,
remember that it was once
a form of Vishnu. And



when you see a swan,
remember that, too, was
once a form of Vishnu.



Poshu: Animal Tales from

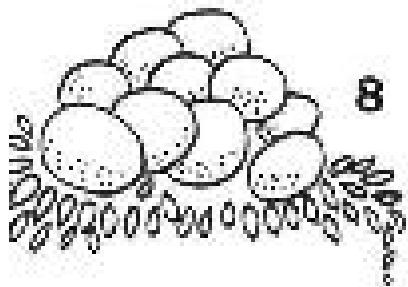


that the sun

form
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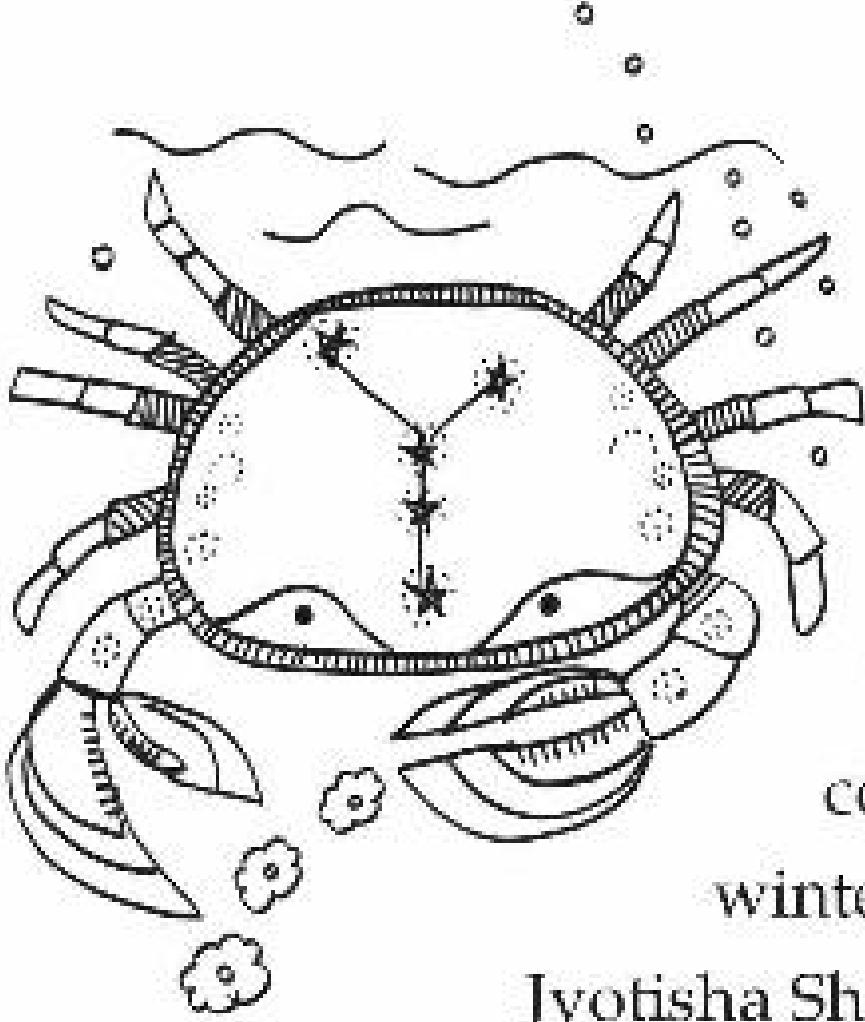
summer. Then there is Mîn
the scorpion; Simha, the lion;

After the sun passes the
whose tail is like a fish and he



8

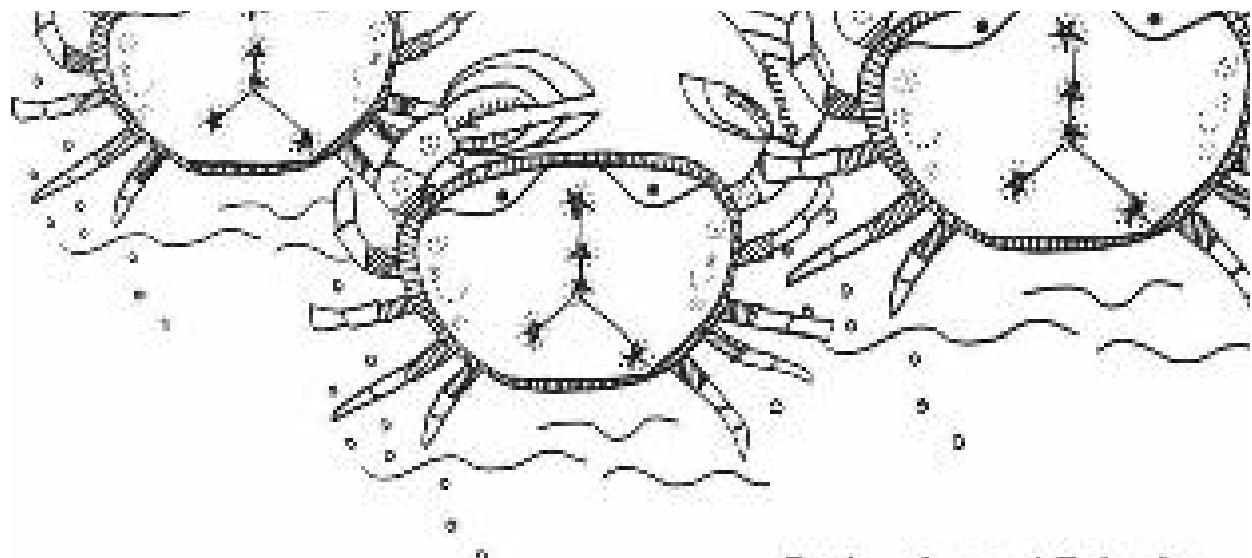
Devdutt P



the days get
warmer, heralding
of summer. In the
Karka Rasi, the days be-
come colder, indicating
winter. This informa-

Jyotisha Shastra, or the
Poets often wonder what
constellations or the animals.
Di stars inspire the gods to create t

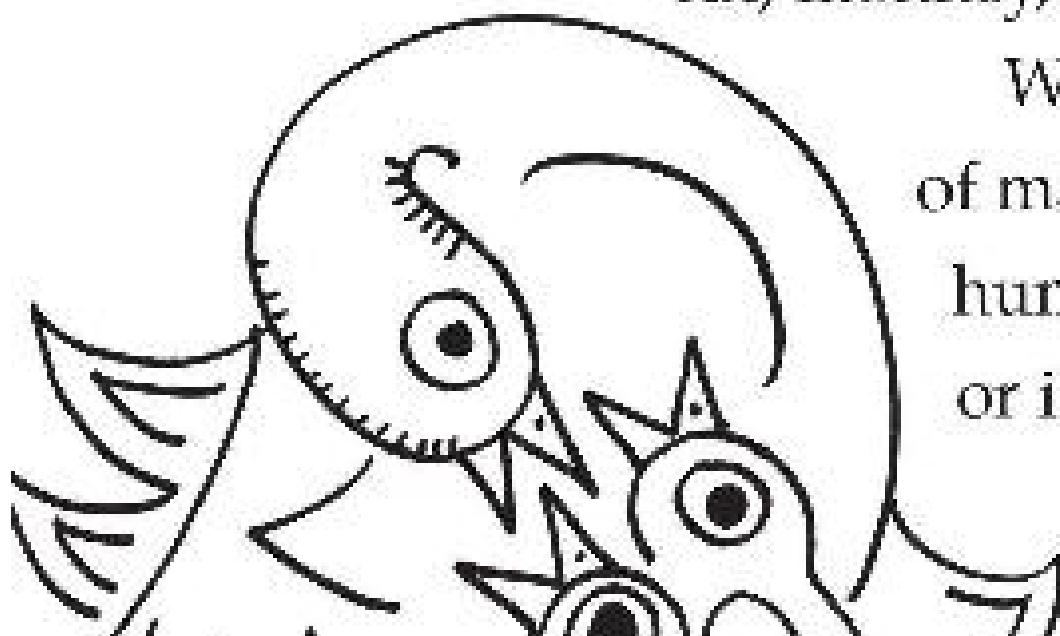


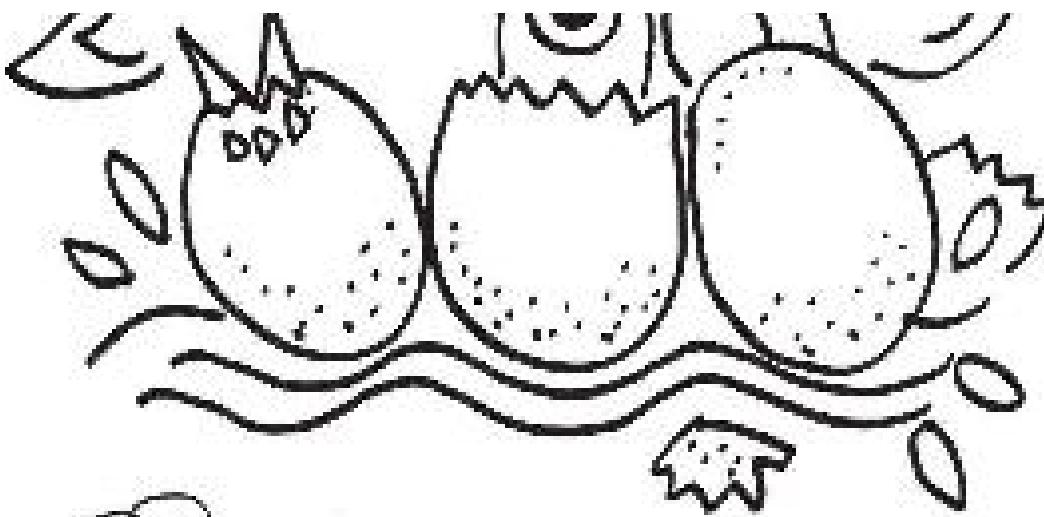


Pashu: Animal Tales from

Yoni. Many Hindus believe in getting a human life only after passing through animal wombs. Astrologers say that out of which was the last animal one was born in from one's time of birth determines an aspect of one's character. Some of the yonis are: elephant, cow, dog, monkey, rat, mouse, lion, tiger, etc.

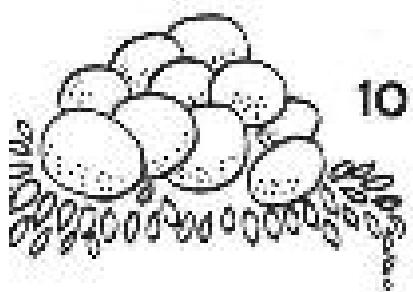
Which yoni is best for man or the best for humans? Is it the elephant or is it the monkey? The fact





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Devdutt P





**Timi's chi
who su**



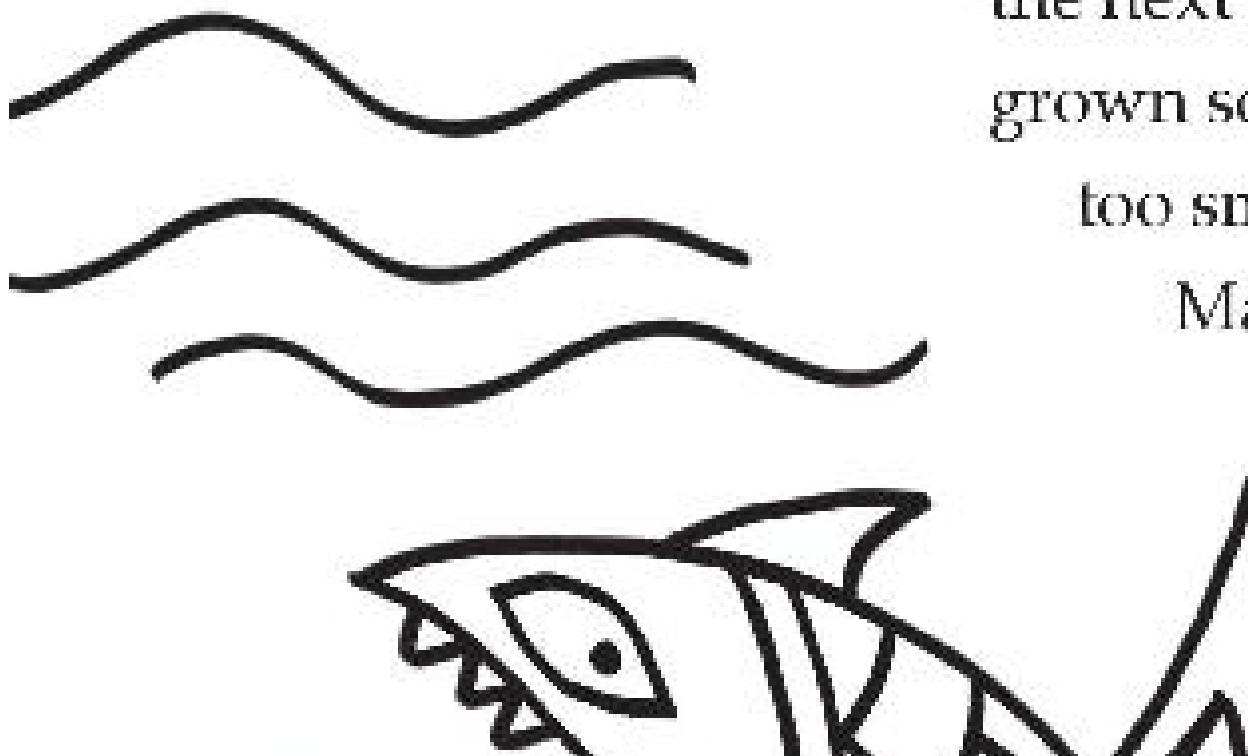
Manu.

Manu, the first standing on the bank of a river approached him and begged bigger fish. Manu, in his compassion, took a tiny fish out of the river in this pot. The fish was it

the next
grown so

too sm

M;





12

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day. So the fish was moved from pond, from the pond to a lake, from river and finally cast into the sea. It was not enough. Manu prayed that the sea would swell in size and accommodate him.

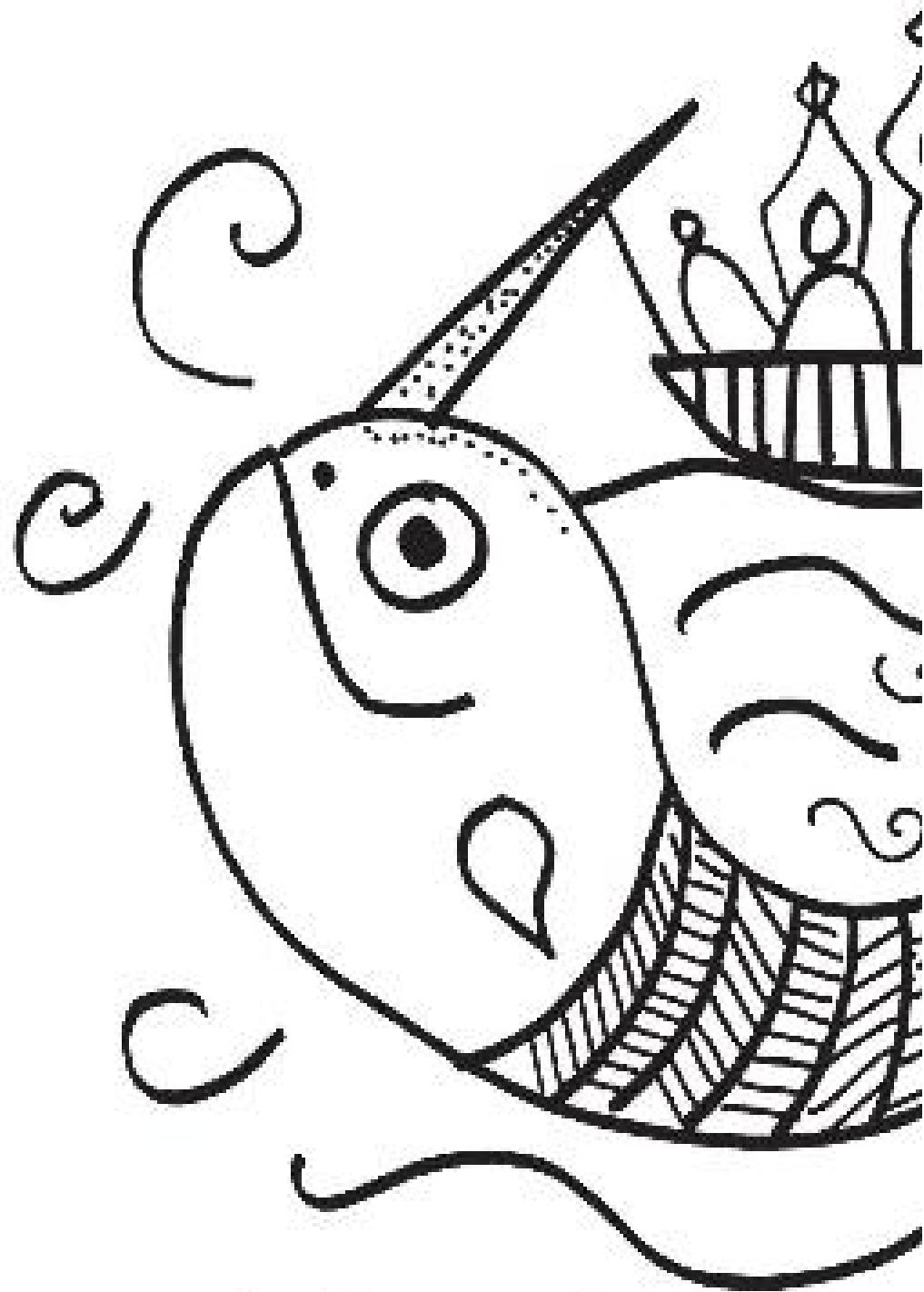
The rains fell and the sea expanded. But then the waters started creeping over dry land as well, submerging the earth with all its hills and plains. An alarmed Manu cried out in horror as the waters continued to rise.



flooding cities and forests. At this point the fish, now a giant, promised to help Manu.



Pashu: Animal Tales from



It asked him to place all that

survival of mankind on a boat
horn and asked Manu to tie it
fish guided the boat through
floodwaters, to the highest point



14

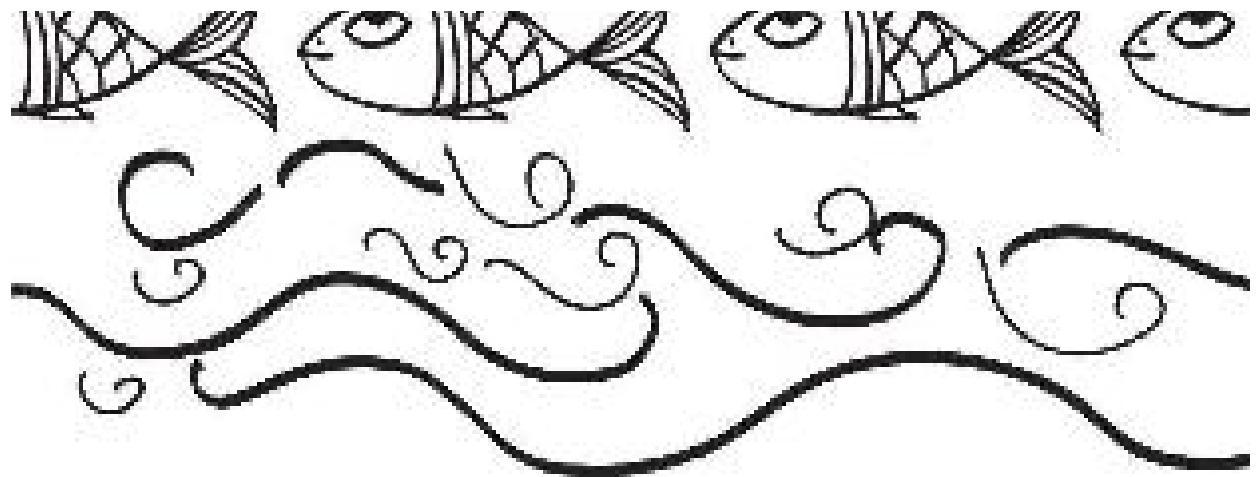
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Meru. There Manu sat waiting for the flood to recede so he could start civilizing the world.

The fish later revealed itself to Manu. The fish told Manu that his willingness to give up his life from the bigger fish had created a good karma. But his excessive concern for the smaller fish, whose demands were relentless, had created the destruction of the world. The fish said, "There has to be a balance between giving and taking. One must only give how much one can afford to give without indulging greed."

This story comes from the Mahabharata.





Pashu: Animal Tales from



A fish once overheard Shiva that there was so much wisdom in the cobra's hood that he became enlightened and was i

called Matsyendranath.



Panchajanya.

After education, it was time for Krishna to pay Sandipani, the tuition fee. 'Bring me a shellfish,' the teacher requested. 'He was abducted by a demon called Panchajana, who was hiding in the sea in the form of a shellfish. Krishna dived into the sea and found the shellfish demon.'

Krishna searched the coast of Prabhava and learnt that the boy had been kidnapped by a demon called Panchajana, who was hiding in the sea in the form of a shellfish. Krishna dived into the sea and found the shellfish demon.



After a long underwater duel, he rescued Sandipani's son. King the conch-shell body of the demon his trumpet. He named the trun

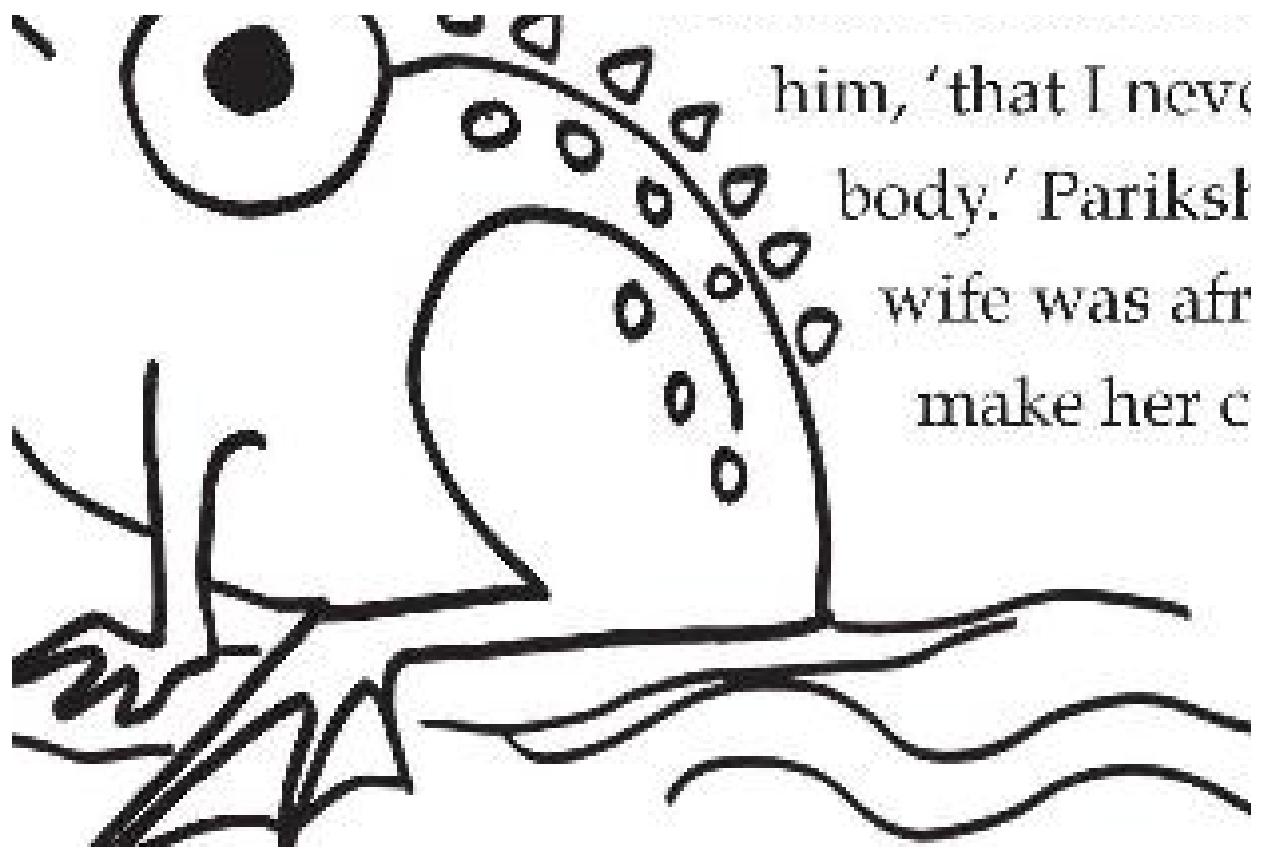
Pashu: Animal Tales from

The demon Shambara abducted Krishna's infant son Pradyumn from his cradle and threw him into a fire where he was swallowed by a fiend. The child was later cut open by a woman named Mayavati who found Pradyumn alive and raised him as her own son.

Parikshit's wife

Parikshit was the grandson of Arjuna, the great warrior. He had a peculiar wife named Sushobha.

A - Parikshit had told him before



him, 'that I never
body.' Parikst
wife was afr
make her c

that she never went near
a well or pond or lake.



Parikshit was
obsessed with his wife.
He even neglected his royal dut
that he could be with her,
much to the irritation of his
courtiers and ministers. One da
spirit of merriment, he took her
the centre of which there was a
Sushobhna saw the lake, she ju
not come out again. Parikshit se
Had she drowned?

He ordered the lake to be p

the lake had been dried, he found
Only frogs were sitting on the lake.
frogs had killed his wife and eaten her.
'Kill the frogs,' he commanded.

Pashu: Animal Tales from India

soldiers went about killing th
king, Ayu, begged Parikshit t





followed Pariks
but somehow
was not as it was before.



20

Devdutt P

Churning of the

The devas once wanted to churn the ocean of milk, because it was wonders of the world lay dissolved. Mandara, the king of mountains, served as the churning stick and Vasuki, the king of serpents, served as the churning rope. Akupara, the king of turtles, served as the base, keeping it afloat. The devas soon realized this churn was too gigantic for them to operate alone; they needed the help of their enemies, the asuras.

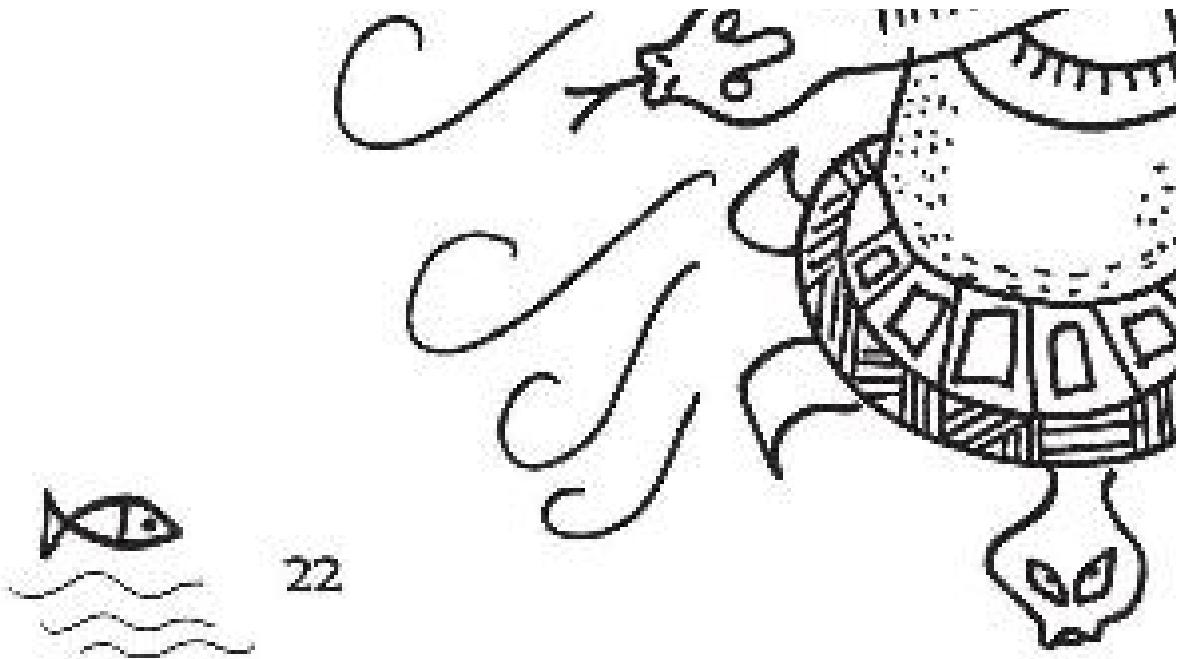
7

were as powerful as them. The two deities would serve as the appropriate witnesses. As soon as the churning began with the devas on one side and the asuras holding the tail and the asuras holding the k

Poshi: Animal Tales from India

hours of churning, Vasuki began to vomit. The poison he emitted was halahal, which threatened to kill all the asuras. But luckily, the hermit had compassion for the children and swallowed all the poison and cleared the ocean. After all the churning, the ocean finally revealed the depths of the waters and amongst them a whole host of





22

Airavata, the white elephant with six pairs of tusks, who became the king of the devas; and Ucchaishri that became the steed of Bali, king of the demons. Kamadhenu, the wish-fulfilling cow, was born from the ocean of milk and was

Many scriptures state that the earth rests on the backs of eight giant elephants, four facing north, south, east and west in the cardinal directions and four facing up, down, left and right in the ordinal directions. These elephants in turn, stand on a giant turtle that carries the earth on the sea. But there are other scriptures which say that the earth stands on the hood of a giant serpent.

like a jewel, and every time
that serpent moves, the earth
rumbles.

Pashu: Animal Tales from

Adrika.

A fisherman once cut open a fish and found

pair of human twins inside

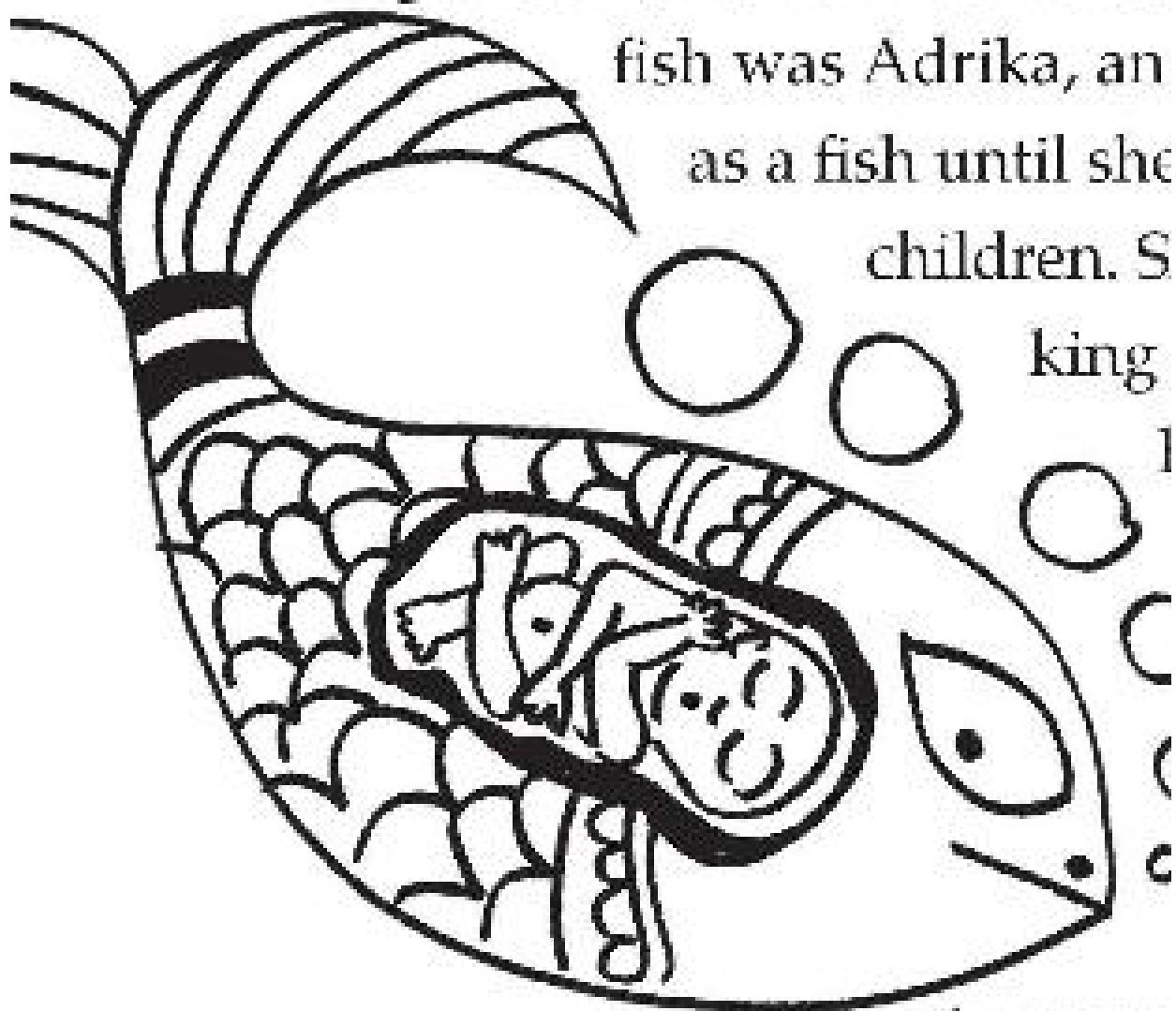
fish was Adrika, an

as a fish until she

children. S

king

1



humans

smelt dreadfully of fish.

This story comes from the



24

Devdutt P

Akupara's men

time ago, there was a noble king who performed so many charities that when he died, he was allowed to stay in the celestial city of Amravati, which was Indra's paradise. But one day Indra said to him, 'Return only if you can prove that there are creatures who remember your good deed.' So the king descended to the earth and found that it was not as he had known it; hundreds of years had passed and everything was different. Would anyone remember his good deed?

He sought out the oldest man of
Markandeya. 'Do you remember
who was Indradyumna?' he asked. T
head and said, 'He must have li

Pashu: Animal Tales from

Ask the crow Kakabhusandi-
than me. Maybe he remembe:

But even Kakabhusandi
him. In despair, Indradyum
remembers me,' he wailed.

'Wait,' said the crow, 'let

turtle, for he is old

more of the worl

Indradyum

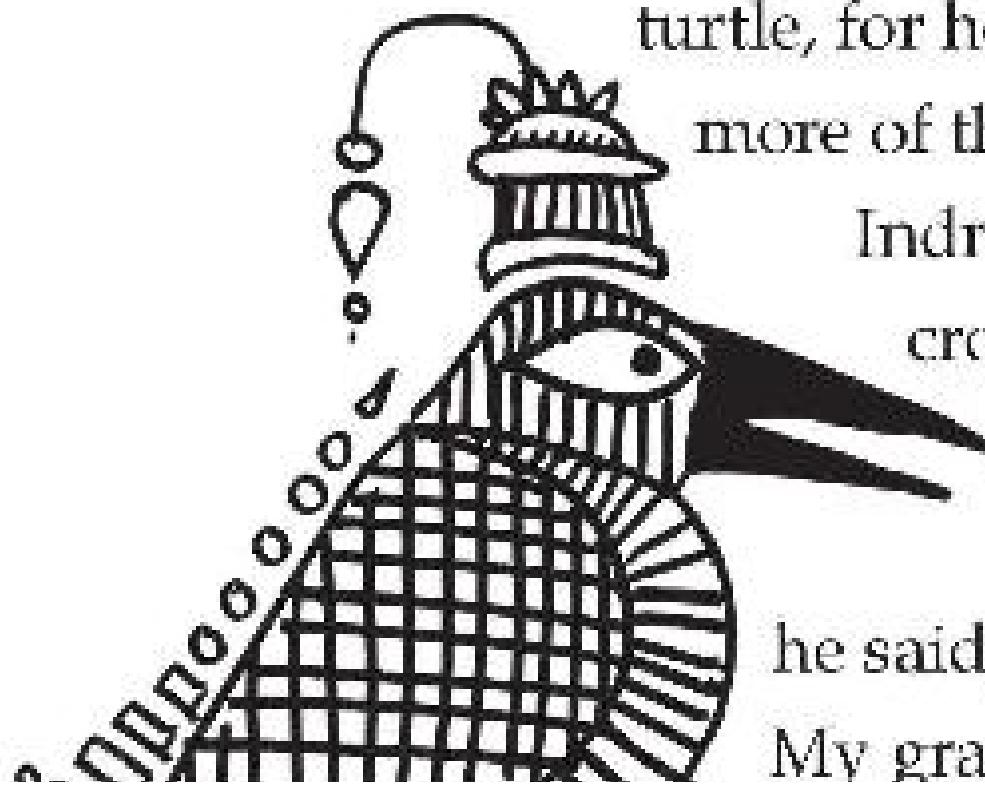
crow and

Akup

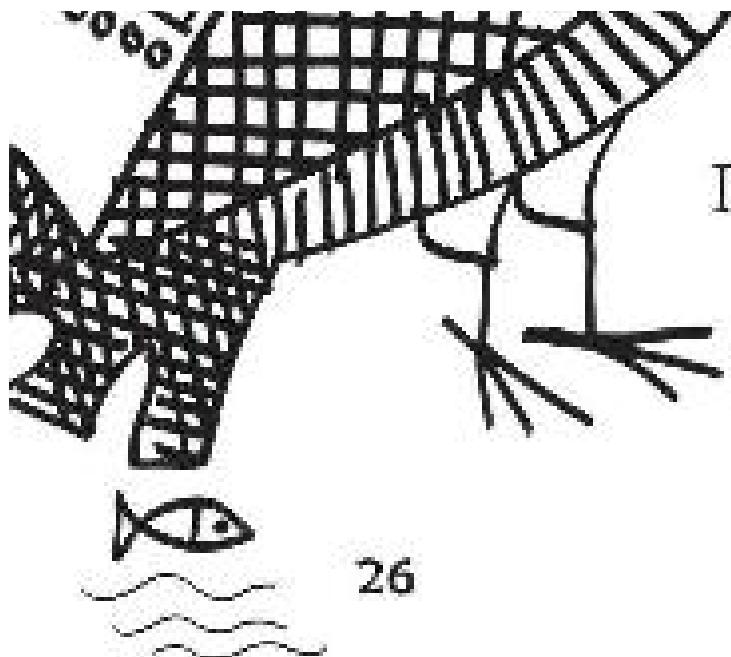
very c

he said, 'yes, I

My grandfath



him. He built the
Indradyumna did
any lake. Maybe
about some other

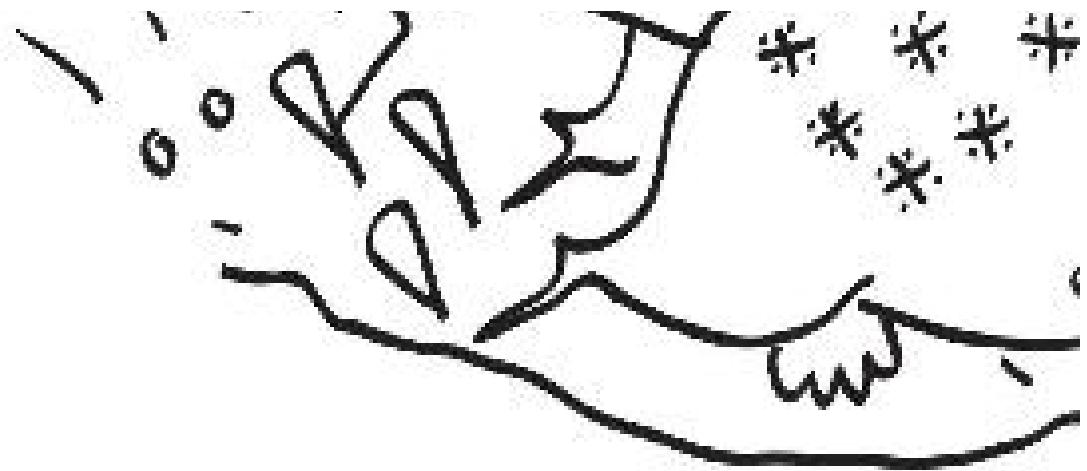


Akupara then clarified, 'My gran-
you did not set out to build a lake
away many cows in charity. You
that as they left your city, they kicked
dust, creating a depression. When
water collected in this depression

a lake. The lake became home

to fish and turtles, my gran-
amongst them. F

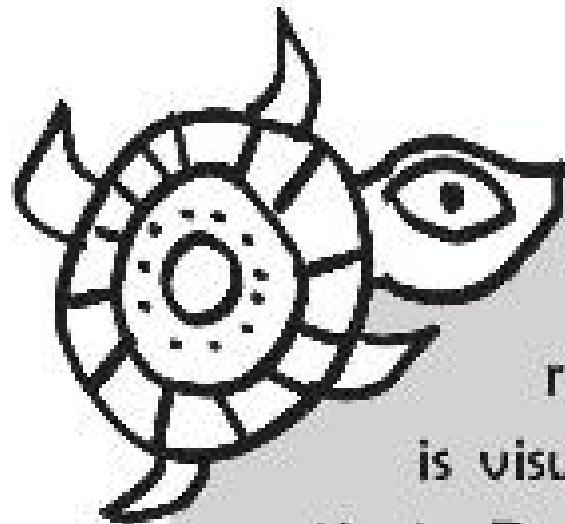




Pashu: Animal Tales from

my grandfather, who told the
how I remember you, Indrad.

Indradyumna was pleased
remembered him. He told Indra
welcomed back into Amravati

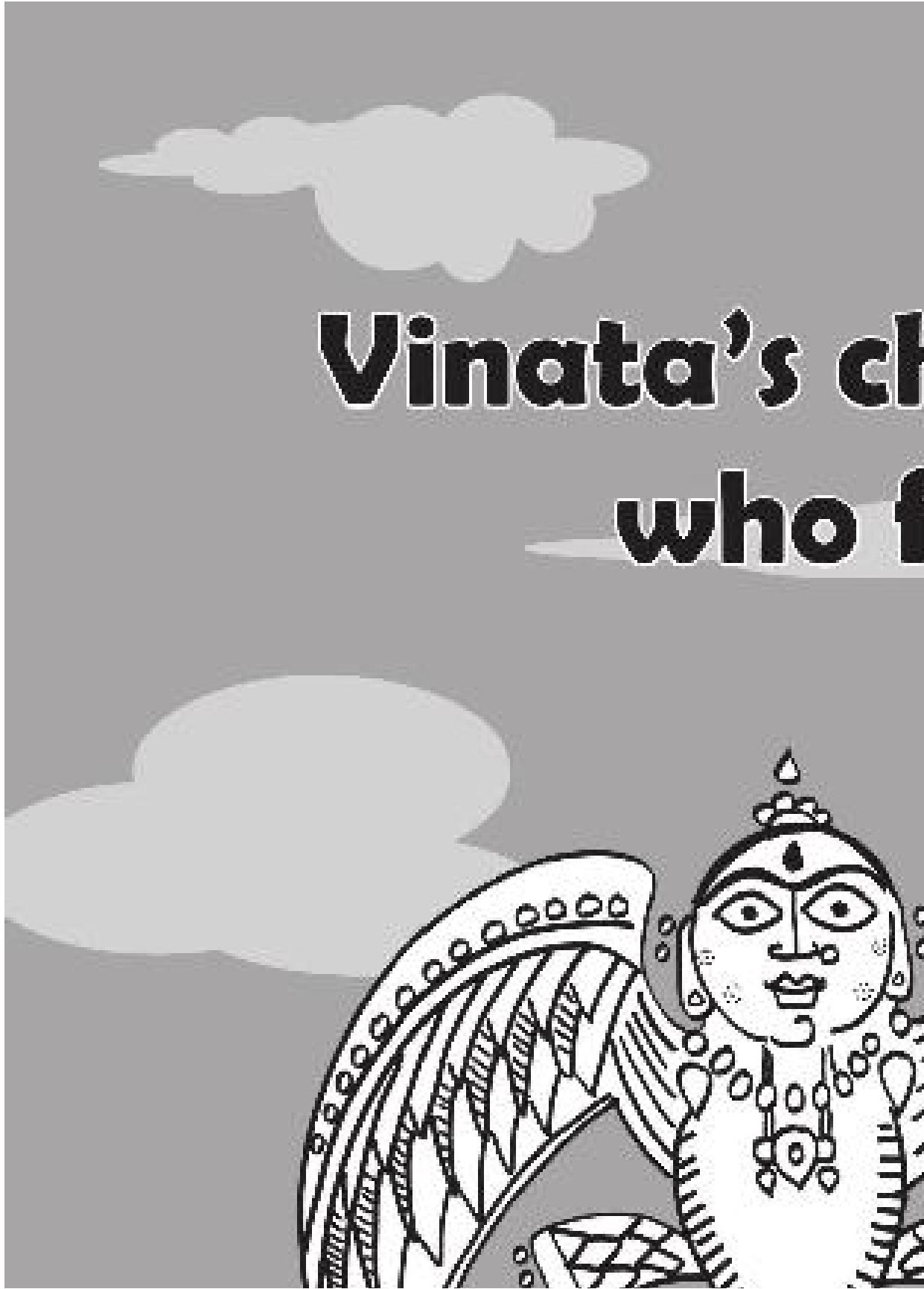


The Yamuna
river. So the river
is visualized as ridin
patient. By contrast, the
river and so the river god
Ganga is visualized as ridin
a Makara which some say i
shark.

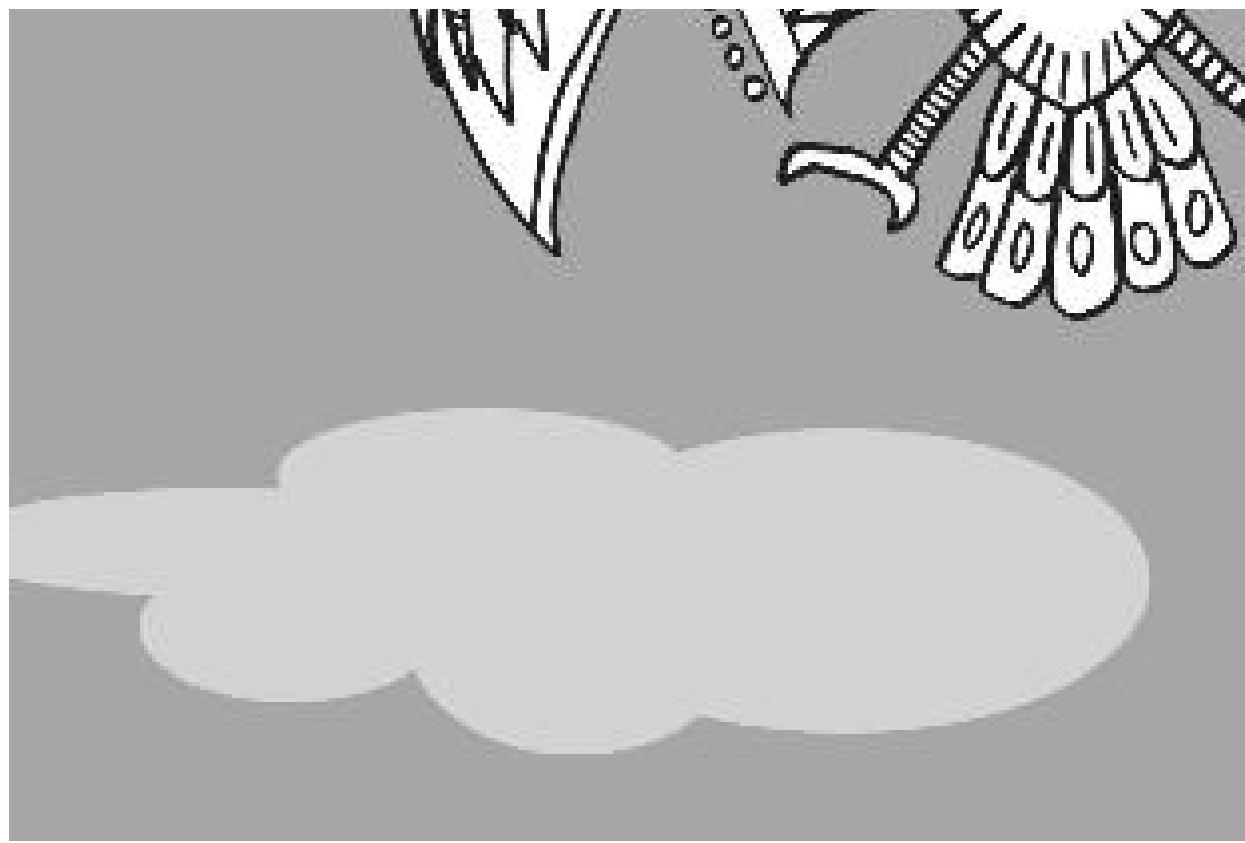


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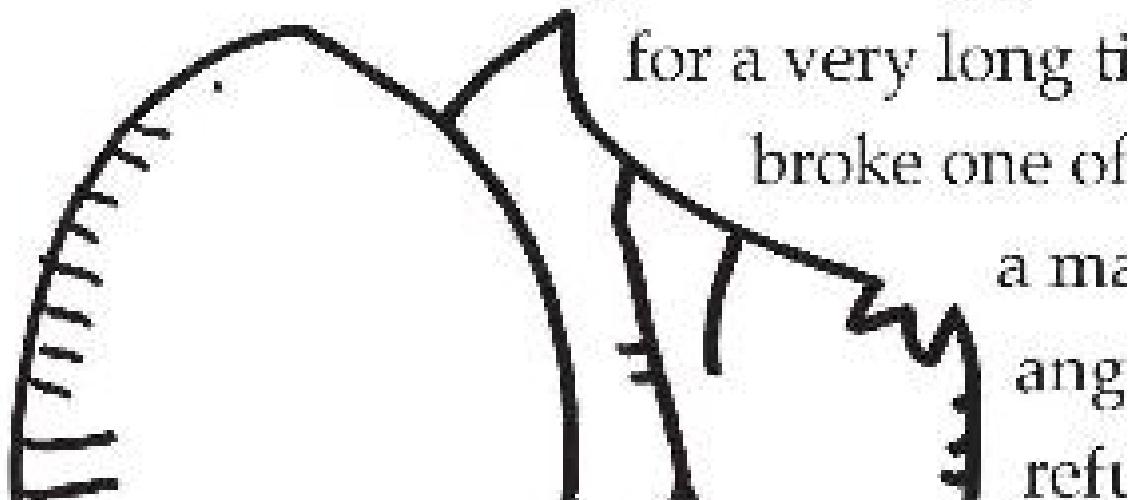


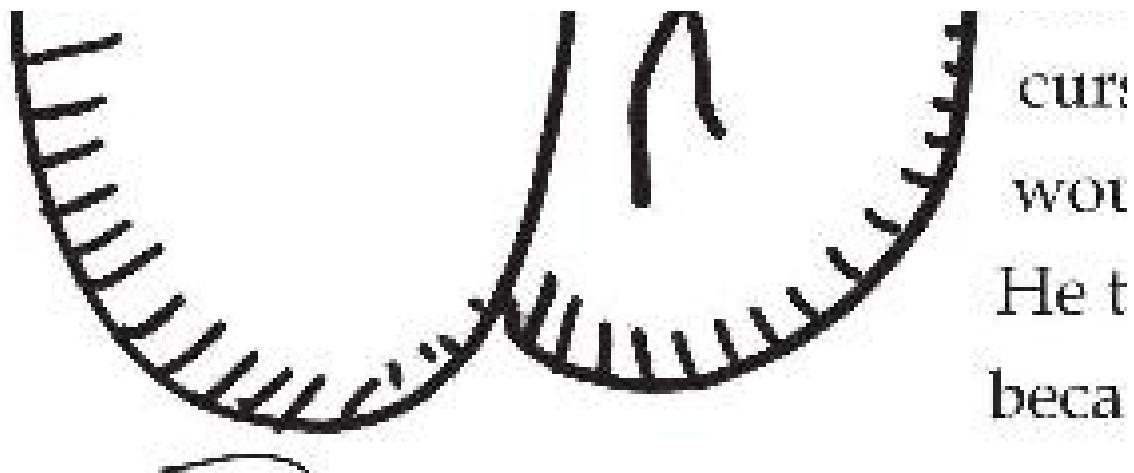
Vinata's child who f



Vinata's child

had several wives, of whom the most intelligent was Vinata (or Vanita). Kadru told Kashyapa that she wanted many children. Vinata, however, wanted two children, who would be more intelligent than all of Kadru's other children together. Kashyapa gave Kadru two eggs. From these eggs emerged the two most intelligent children. Vinata was given two eggs. These were also very intelligent.

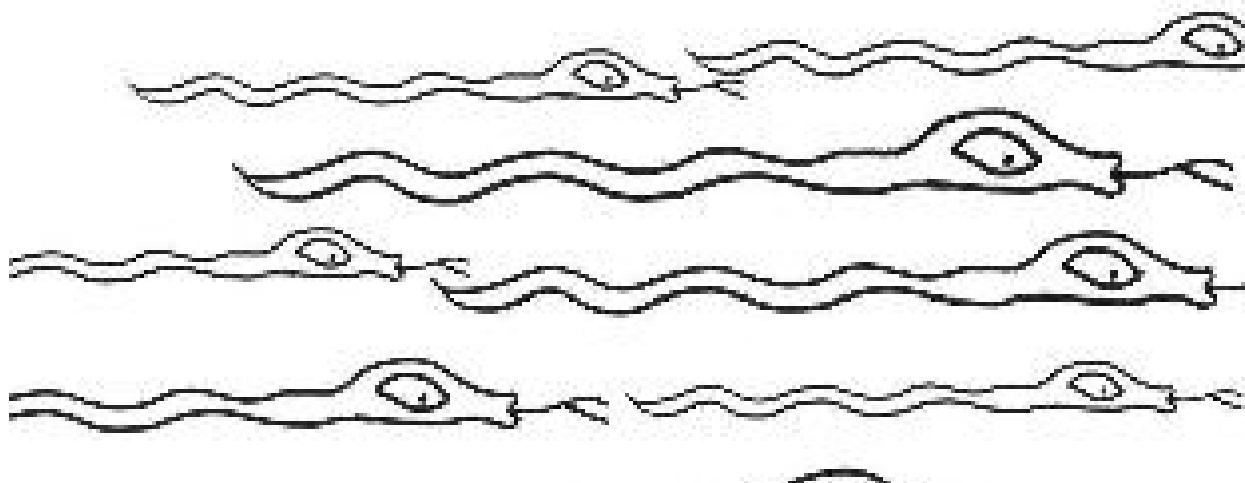


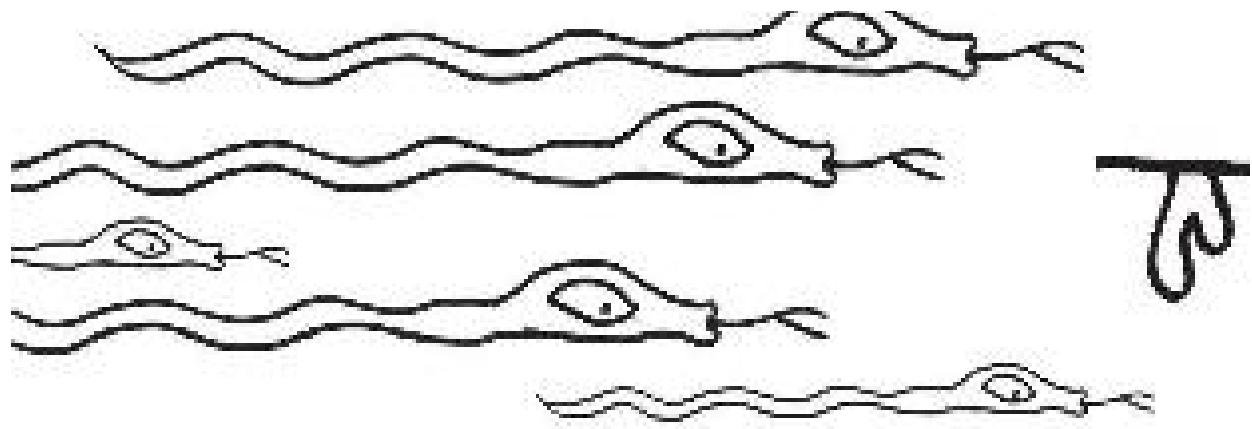


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He t
beca

Devdutt P

god of dawn, charioteer of the sun god. Having learnt her lesson, Vinata was patient with other egg. From it came Garuda great eagle, resplendent as the sun. Vinata eventually laid more eggs and became the mother of all birds. Garuda was the king and guard of all birds.





Pashu: Animal Tales from

Garuda's liber

being the son of Vinata, was l

the nagas, as his mothe

asked his masters th

'Get us amrita, the

and you will be fre

So Garuda fle

attacked Amra

devas. He defe

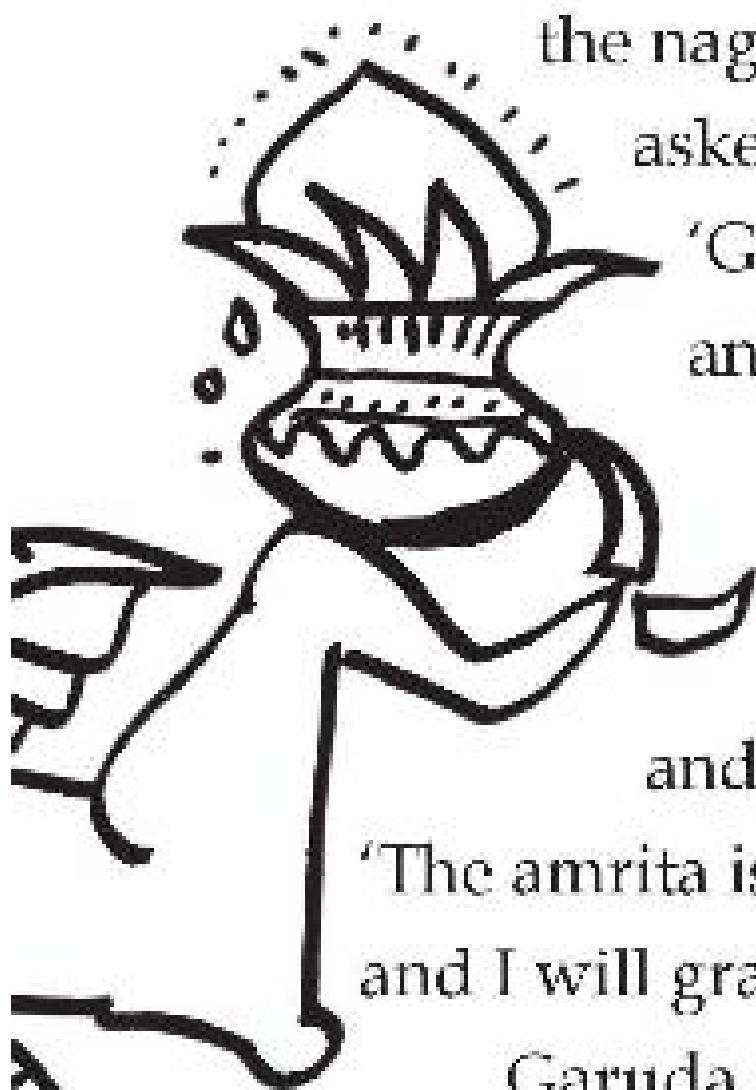
and secured the pot

'The amrita is not meant for r

and I will grant you a boon.'

Garuda said, 'I must tak

liberate myself and my moth



will bring it back and make s
not get even a sip of this nect

Indra said, 'If you succeed
give you whatever you desire'



Garuda returned to earth a pot of nectar to the nagas. 'I will have my freedom only if you release me and my mother from slavery,' he said.

The nagas said, 'So be it. We will set you and your mother free.'

Garuda placed the pot of nectar on the ground. As the nagas moved towards the pot, he said, 'It is considered improper to drink this divine liquid without first taking a bath or at least rinsing the mouth.'

The nagas agreed and rushed to a nearby river to take a dip. While they were away, Garuda's pot was left unguarded. At that

descended and took the pot back.
Did you not stop him?' the naga
angrily when they returned and
missing.

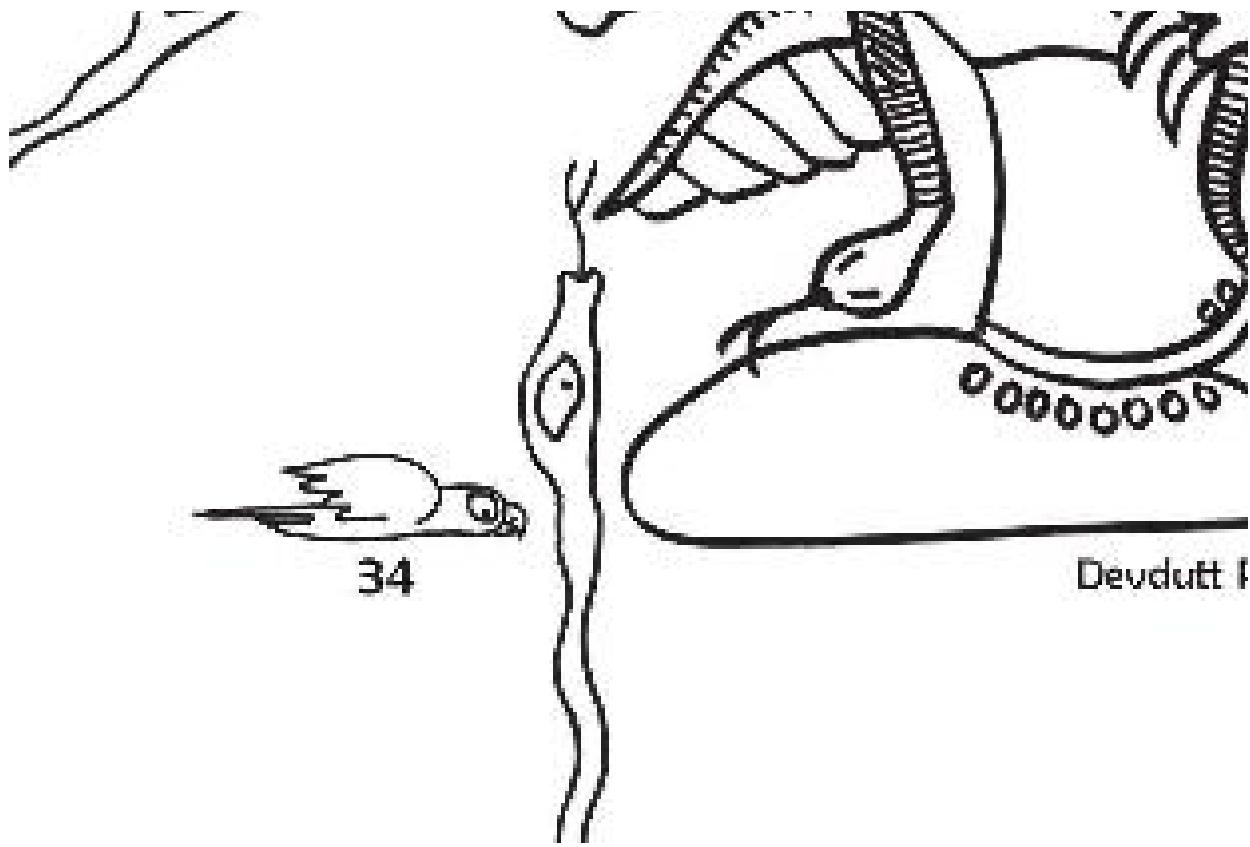
Pashu: Animal Tales from



'Oh,' said Garuda. 'Was amrita? But I am not your ser
me free, remember?'

The nagas realized that they could do nothing. They had lost the nectar of immortality. In their rage, they uprooted the blades of grass on which the amrita had been placed. As a result, they







ability to shed their skin and rei
one; this ensured that they neve

Garuda then went to Indra
'What do you wish for?' asked I
replied, 'I want the snakes to be

'So be it,' said Indra. Since
is always depicted as holding si
talons. Once their slave, he is no

Vishnu then met Garuda ai
you not drink the amrita yourse

Garuda replied, 'It was not
would be stealing. I was only do
masters wanted me, their slave,

Pleased with Garuda's will



Vishnu said, 'I want you to be n
into battle seated on your wings.'

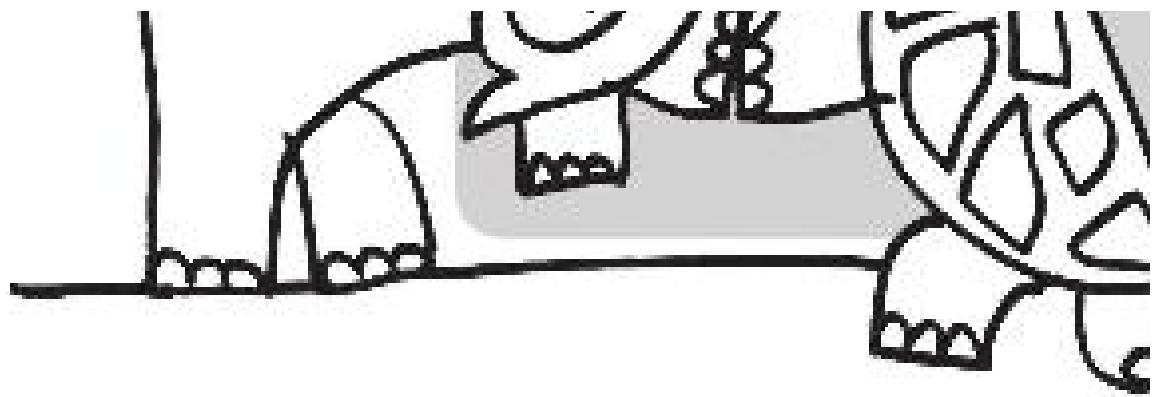
'I will agree to be below yo
me above you,' said Garuda.

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Vishnu smiled at this reply. 'It is very difficult to fulfill. Your intention is good and thus you will also always be successful.' And so Garuda became the most powerful among birds. His image is always placed in front of the Deities.

Once, Garuda was hunting for food. He saw a giant turtle that was eating a small elephant. 'This is not right,' thought Garuda. 'I must stop this.'





36

Devdutt P

Gunakeshi.

Gunake
Indra's charioteer, Matali, fell in
a very handsome naga, and told
wanted to marry him.

'I cannot marry you,' said
Sumukha, 'because I am
doomed to die tomorrow.'

He explained that in order to
prevent the mindless slaughter
of nagas by Garuda, Vasuki, the
king of nagas, had agreed that
every day, one naga would
willingly sacrifice himself
to be Garuda's food. That

way everyone need not live
in fear. It was Sumukha's turn the
evening. So, much as he wished
Gunakeshi, Gunakeshi was hear-

Pashu: Animal Tales from



Unable to bear the pain, Ma Devi tried to help. In her helplessness, she called out to Garuda.

'But he is my natural father,' said Garuda.

'That may be so, but you must have the strength in your heart to let this happen,' said Ma Devi. She had been advised. But Garuda was too strong. She could not move him. She then placed his hand on Garuda's wing. He could not move his hand because of the weight of his hand that Garuda held. He could not move his wings any more. He realised that he was trapped. He tried to free himself, but found that he was pinned. There was no escape.

'Please release me. Have pleaded Garuda.

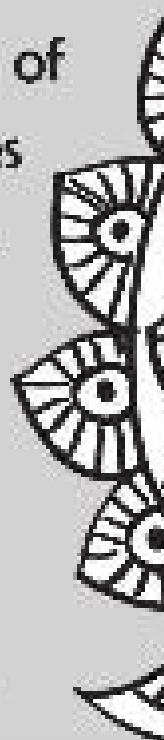
'Only if you are willing to another,' said Vishnu.



Garuda realized that to rescue one has to show compassion. He met Sumukha that following day. Gunakeshi was able to marry the

Muruga is the commander of the celestial forces and rides into battle on a peacock.

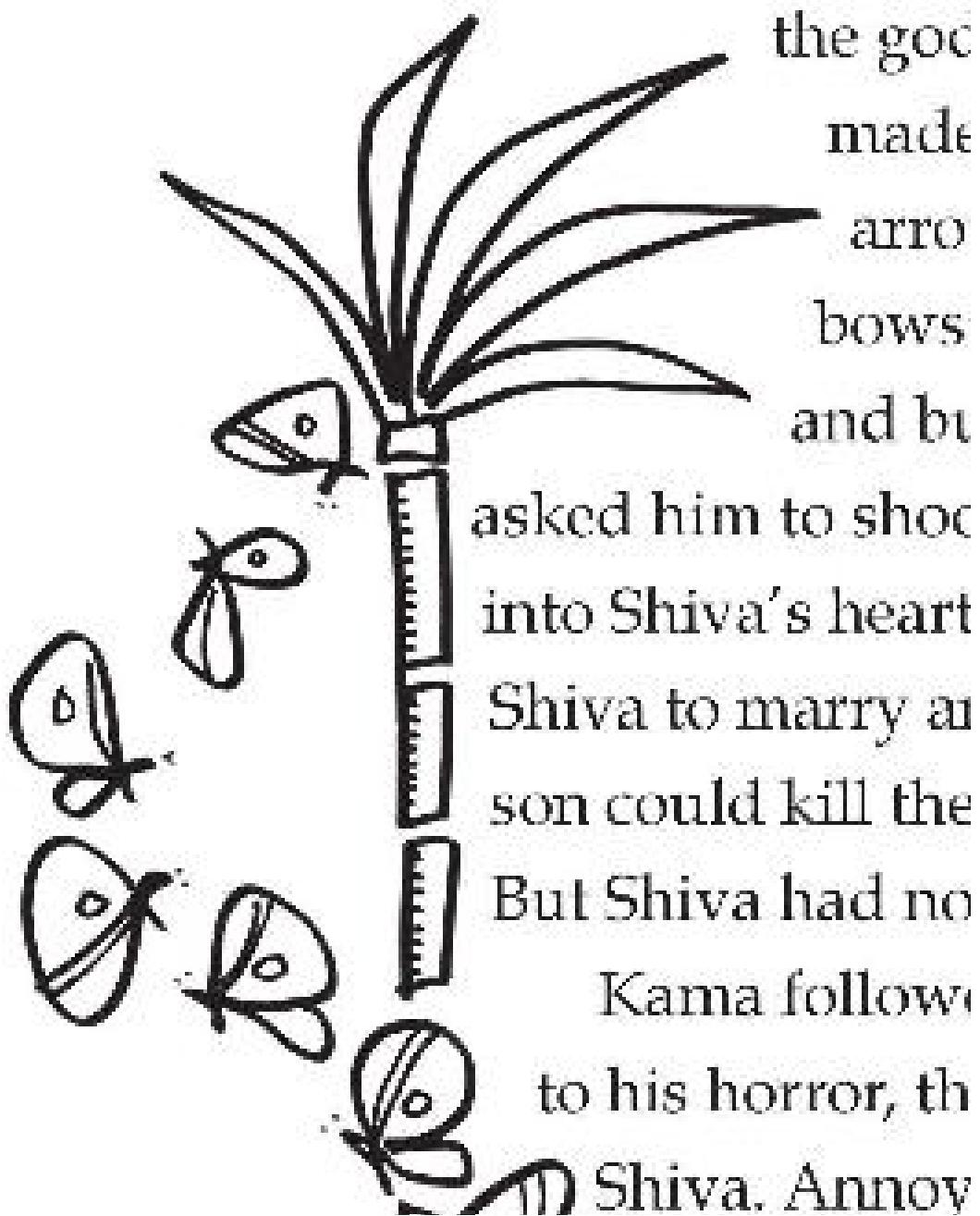
The peacock is often shown pinning a serpent to the ground. He holds a banner in his hand, which has the symbol of a rooster.





Pashu: Animal Tales from

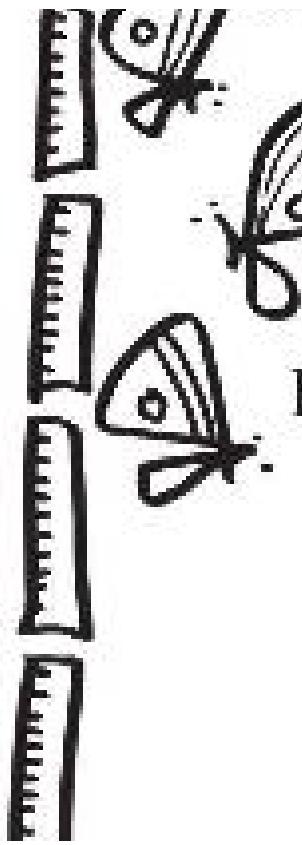
Kama and Ka



the god
made
arrow
bows
and bi
asked him to shoc
into Shiva's heart
Shiva to marry ai
son could kill the
But Shiva had no
Kama followi
to his horror, th
m Shiva. Annoy



40



to interru
opened f
loose a fi
Kama to ash

Devdutt P

Then devas turned to God
'Fear not, I will make Shiva marry you'
Shakti took on the form of Parvati and ascended the mountains. With her devotion, so great was it, that even Shiva was moved. So much that he offered her a boon. She said, 'I want to have a child'. Shiva agreed, became a child and together they created a child. This child defeated Taraka, to the delight of the devas. Shakti managed with her devotion to get the boon that she could not do with his arrows of Kama. She became known as Kamakshi, or Kama Devi. Her pet bird was Garuda. Garuda became her pet bird. In temples of Shakti, especially in south India, there is a small shrine to Shakti, especially in south India.

is always shown holding a parrot,
reminder of Kama, who gave
up his life to get Shiva
to marry.



Kama rides a parrot while his c
rides a mynah. The parrot an
represent masculinity and f
many folk tales. They often te
stories. These are popularly kno
totah-mynah stories. Totah
focus on masculine qualities l
bravery and adventure. Mynah
stories focus on feminine
qualities like love and
domestication. As each
story tries to prove a
point and challenge
the points made
by the other, we



realize that our entire
understanding of the
world comes from stories.



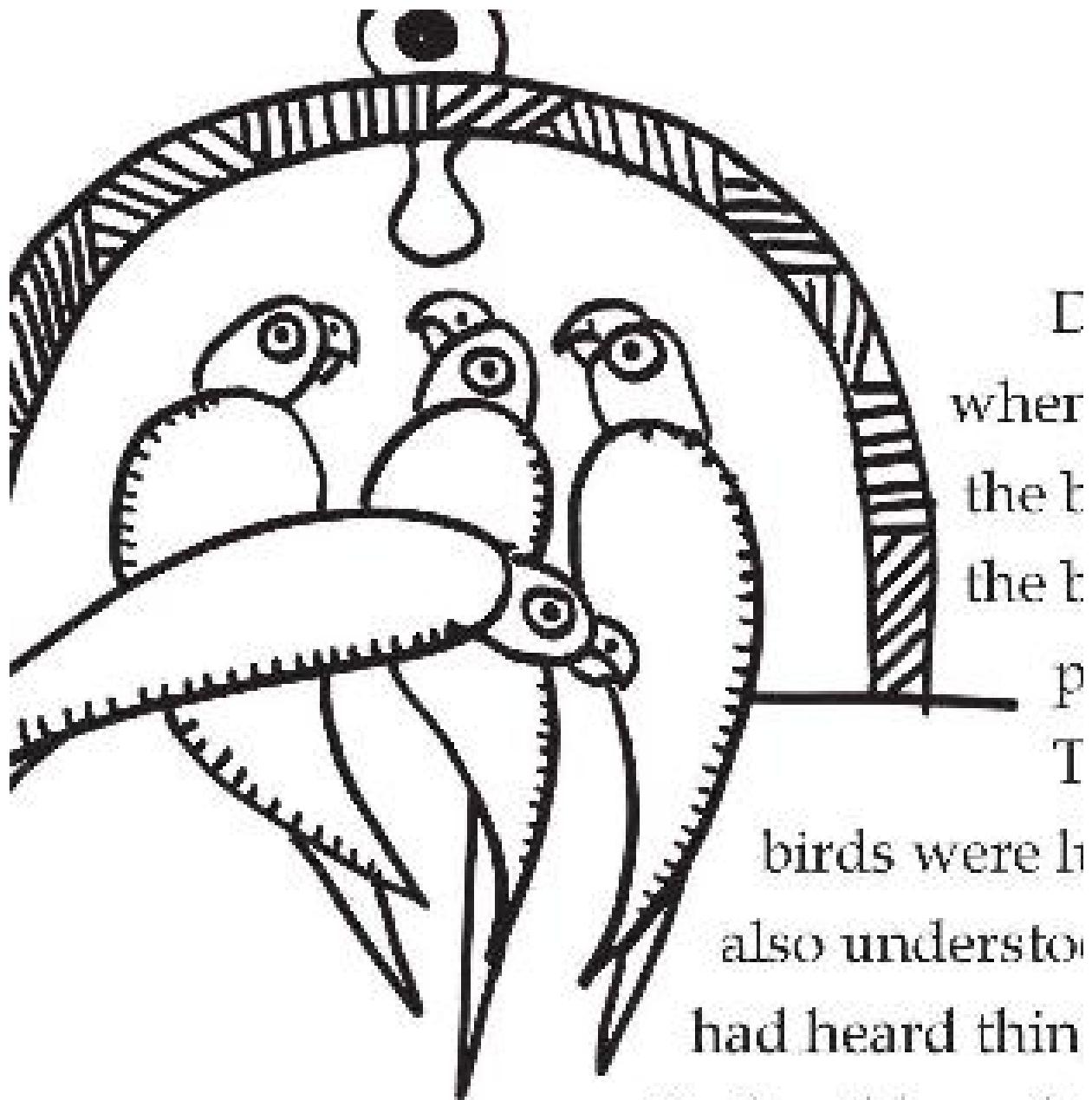
42

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Jaimini. When the Mahabharata war was taking place between the Pandavas and the Kauravas at Kurukshetra, a pregnant parrot was flying over the battlefield. Suddenly, an arrow flew up into the sky and hit the parrot, cutting open her belly. Four eggs fell out. These fell on to the battlefield as the ground was wet and soggy with the blood of many slain warriors. A large elephant's neck fell around one of the four eggs. Under the safety of the elephant's neck, the four eggs hatched into four small birds. They grew up to be four large parrots. One of them became the King of Parrots. He is known as Jaimini. He is the King of Parrots.

eggs hatched, and out came four little parrots could hear the sound them and also listen to the heart warrior.

Pashu: Animal Tales from



birds were li
also understo
had heard thin
So they blessed t

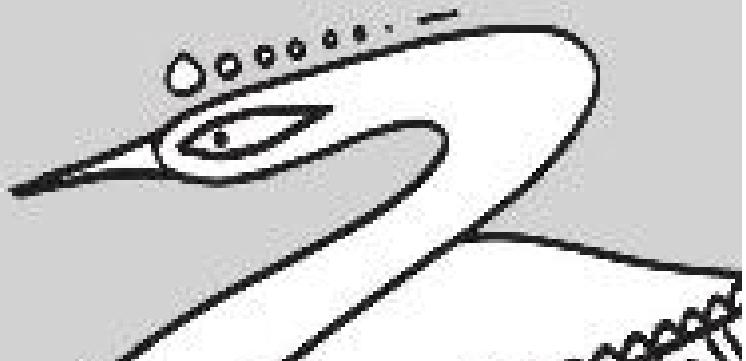
speech: 'Go share the wisdom
the battlefield with the world

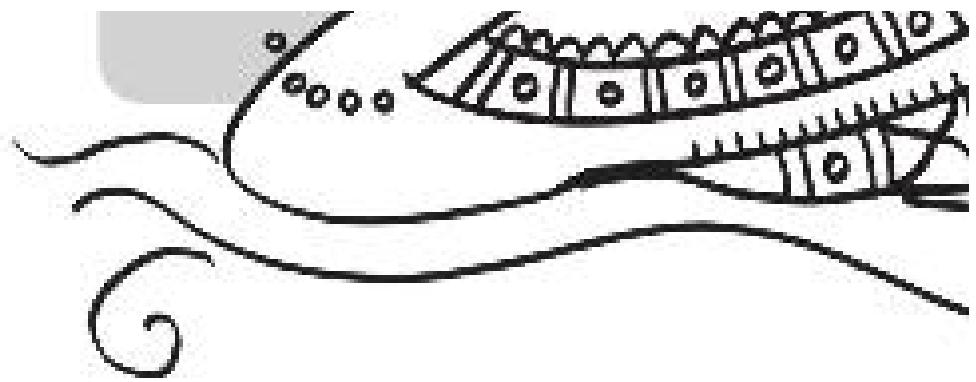
The four birds knew sto
not even Vyasa, who wrote th

later, a sage called Jaimini heard four birds and wrote them down in the Jaimini Mahabharata, an epic, quite different from Vyasa's.



Saraswati is associated with cows. It is believed that the bird has the power to separate milk from water. It possesses the power to separate truth from falsehood. Sometimes, Saraswati is associated with herons. These birds concentrate on one leg and catch fish in water in a flash to catch a fish. This is the symbol of concentration and the quality of a good student and is much admired by Saraswati.





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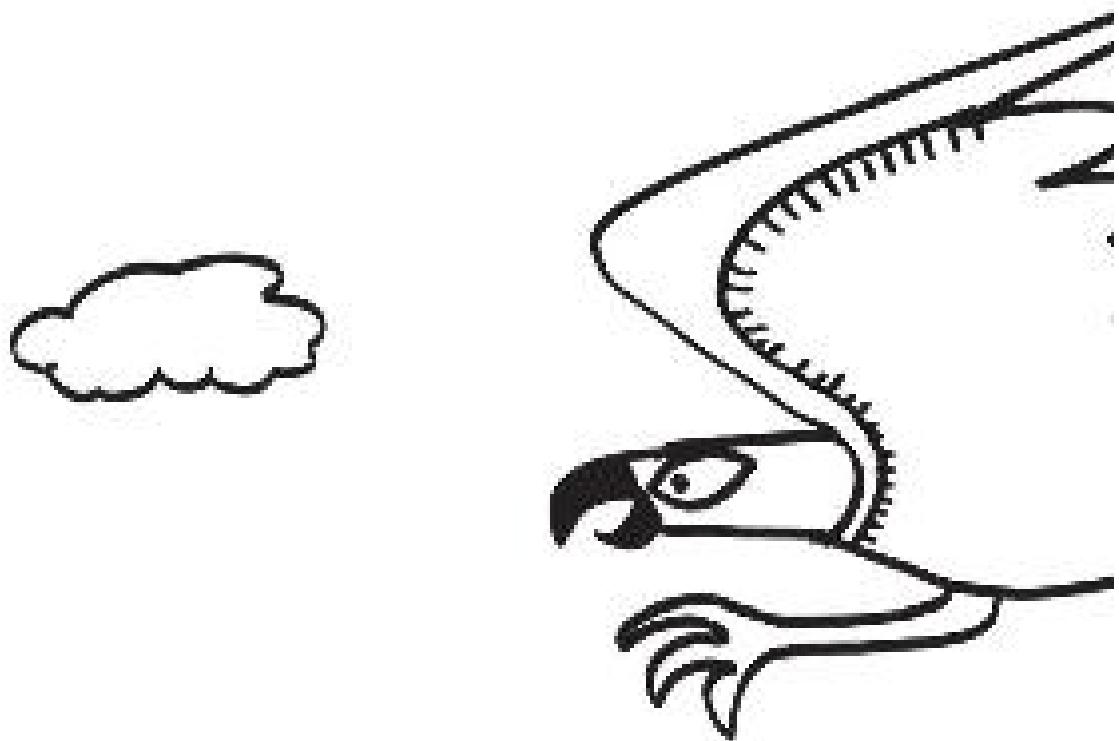


Shibi. One day, a dove
 by a hawk begged a king call
Shibi promised to save the do
hawk told Shibi, 'but what w
want me and my children to :

 ' Eat another dove,' said
 ' That's not fair to that do
dove be saved and not that? '

'Eat a rat then,' said the dove.
'That's not fair to the rat
for this dove?'
'Well, then eat my flesh.'





equal to the dove's weight.' The
and the king placed the dove on
surprise, the small dove weighed
he had imagined. In fact, he weighed
king's entire body weight! 'Even
the flesh of your entire body will
dove's,' said the hawk.

Shibi suddenly realized that
dove were sent by the gods to test

Never interfere in the cycle of nature. It is the law of the predator and prey. Nature does not interfere in the cycle of the dove or the hawk. Both have been created with their own set of skills and abilities. They have to be cunning to survive. The fittest will survive.

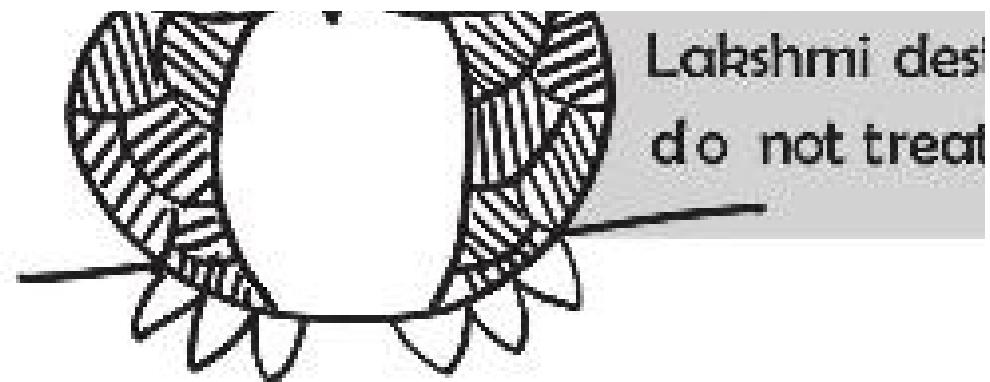
Pashu: Animal Tales from India

the day; the other will starve
wrong to pity the dove and p
the hawk.

Lakshmi, the goddess of
with an owl, who some say
Alakshmi, the goddess of q
to move from one place to
prevented from moving, or
hoarded or buried in the gr

do not w
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for her sist
in the form
to quarrels
Thus, with t





48

Devdutt P





Pashu: Animal Tales from

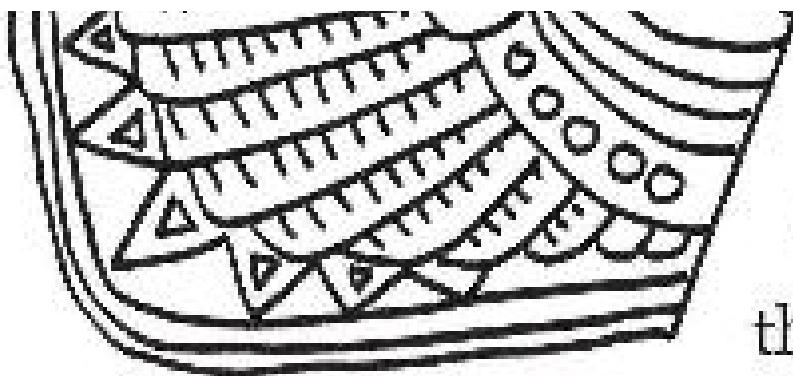
Jatayu tries to save Sita.

One day, Jatayu saw two boys and a girl who looked like royalty but were actually overheard their conversation. They were Ram, prince of Ayodhya, and his brother, Lakshman, who had been banished by their father to live in the forest for 14 years. Sorry for the three and watched as they built a tiny hut using leaves and twigs after luring the two brothers there. Ravana came to the hut in disguise.

o o o o o Sita o



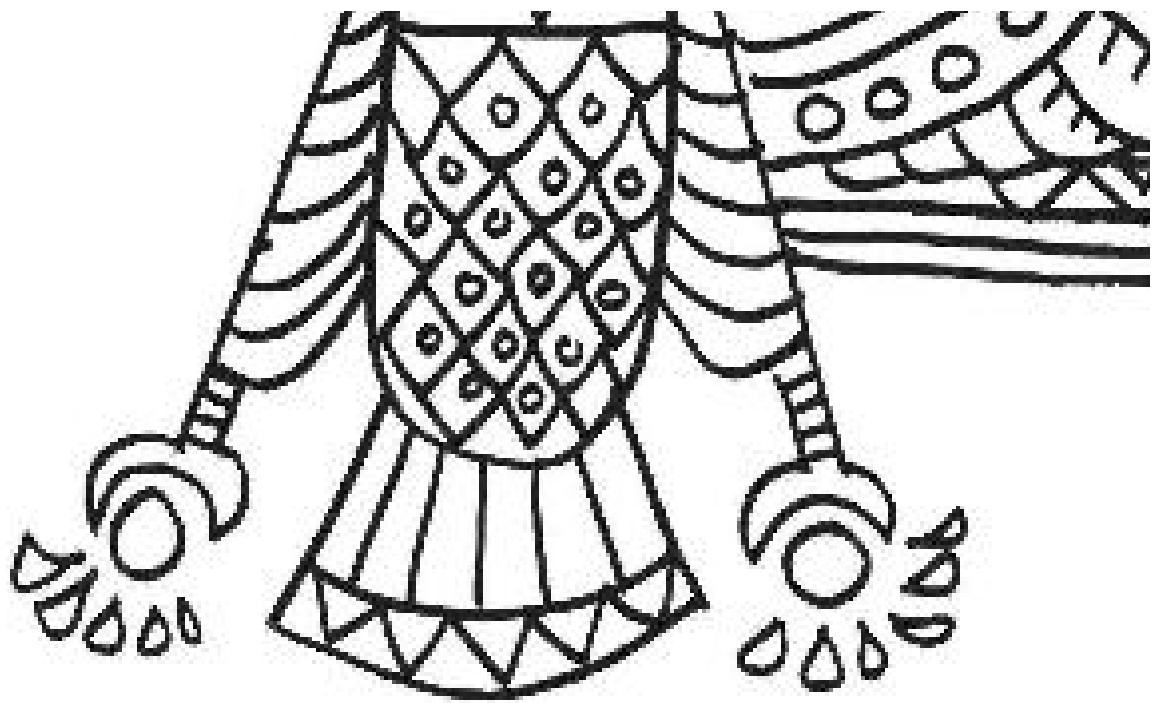
chariot
rose to
spread h
the chariot

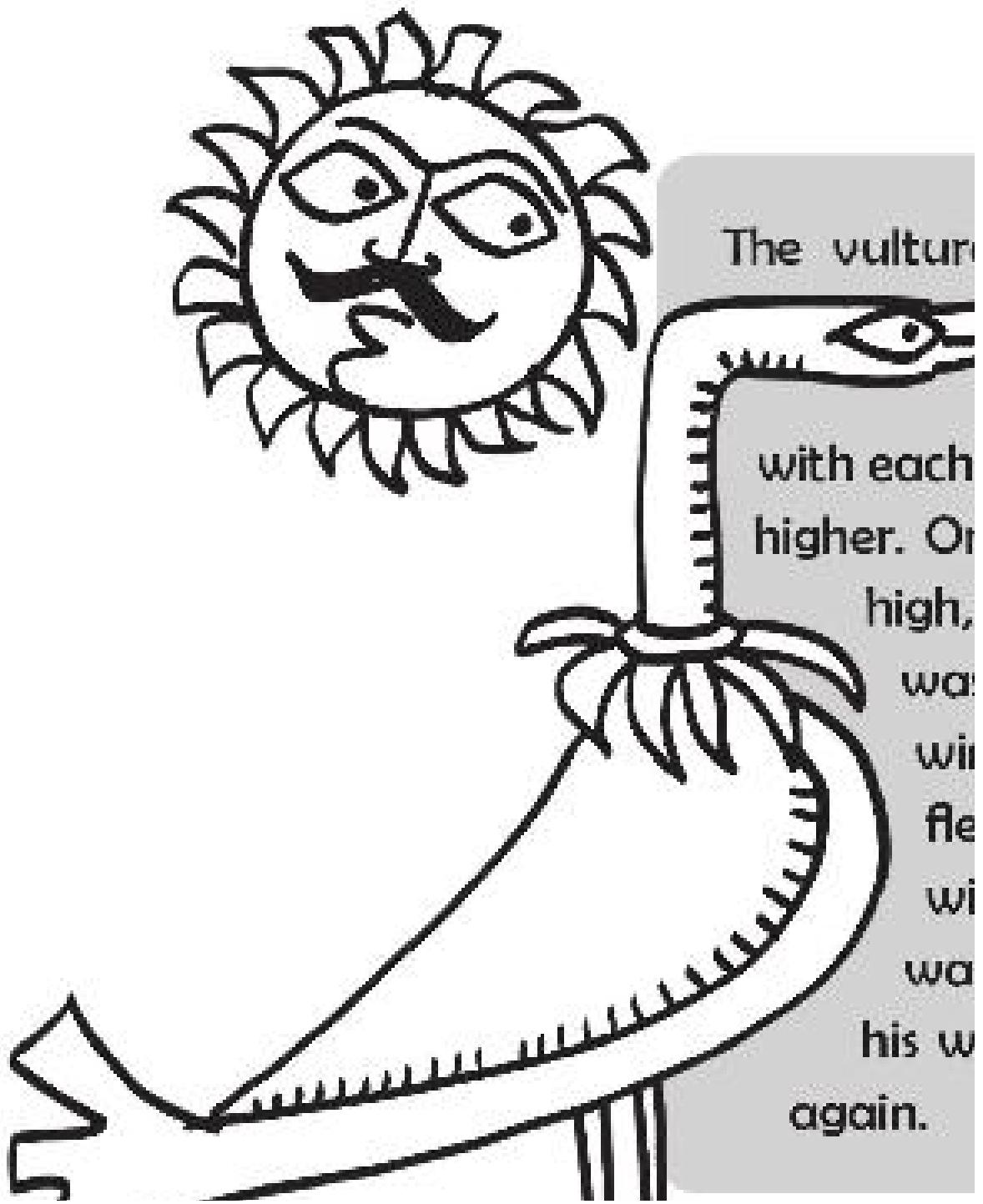


An angry Ravana raised his sword and chopped Jatayu's wings. The giant fell down to earth. When Ram and Lakshman came to their hut and realized that Sita was missing, they saw a wingless Jatayu on the floor. 'It was Ravana. He abducted her and took her south on his flying chariot,' said Jatayu. 'I tried to stop him but I failed.' So saying, Jatayu died.

the bird who believed that he would, sacrifice himself to save one universe.







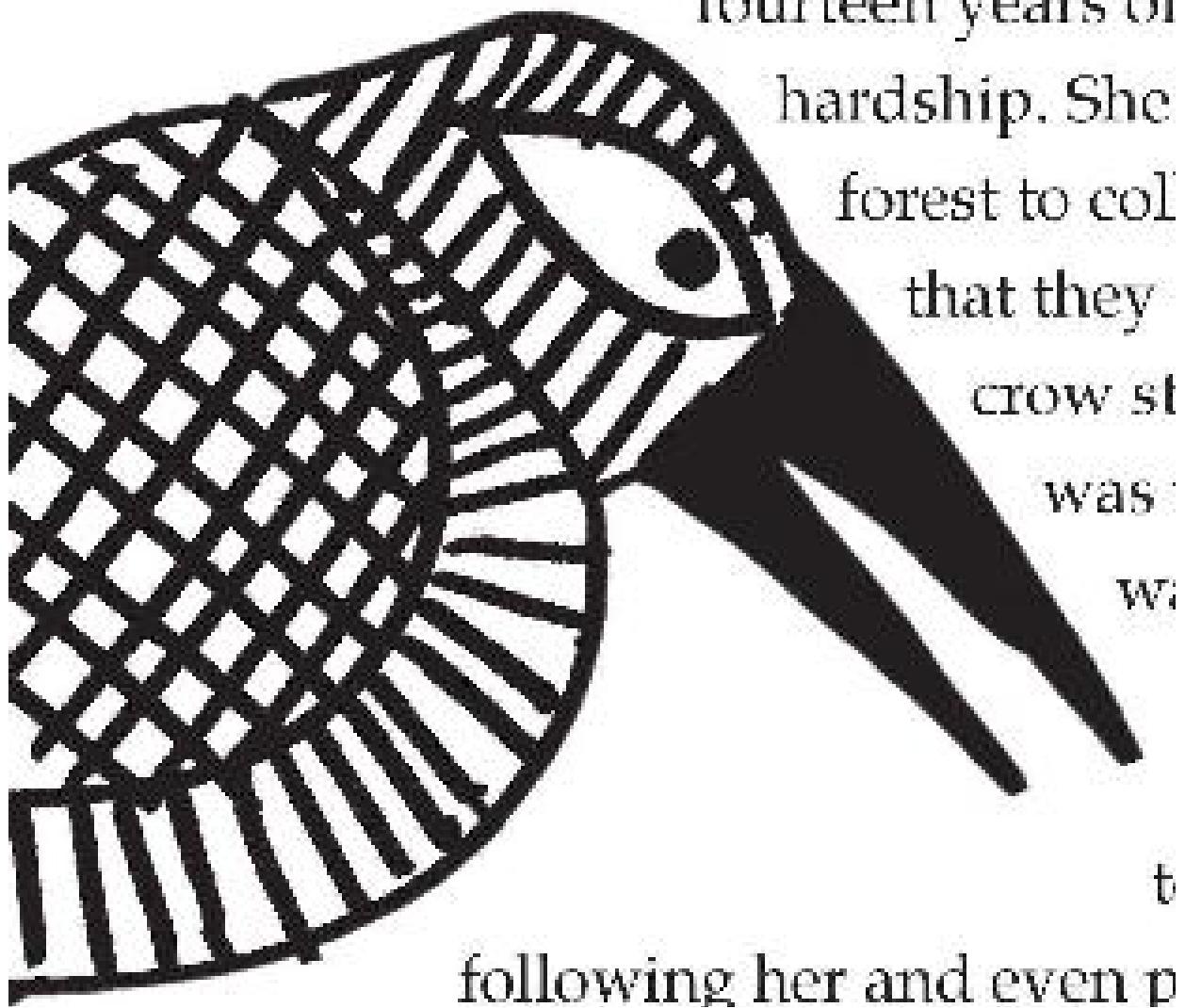


52

Devdutt P

The one-eyed c

followed her husband, Ram, the
to the forest, determined to live
fourteen years of



following her and even p

shoulder. When Sita complained of grass and poked the crow in the day, it is said that crows can only sometimes the left and sometimes the right shoulder.

Pashu: Animal Tales from



Kakabhusandi was a crow with exceptional memory. He remembered the stories of old kings, gods and sages. He knew Ramayana and the Mahabharata in full detail. So all the wise men of the forest concluded that Kakabhusandi was actually a wise man himself.

guise of a crow. They worshipped



54

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Kadru's children who creep about





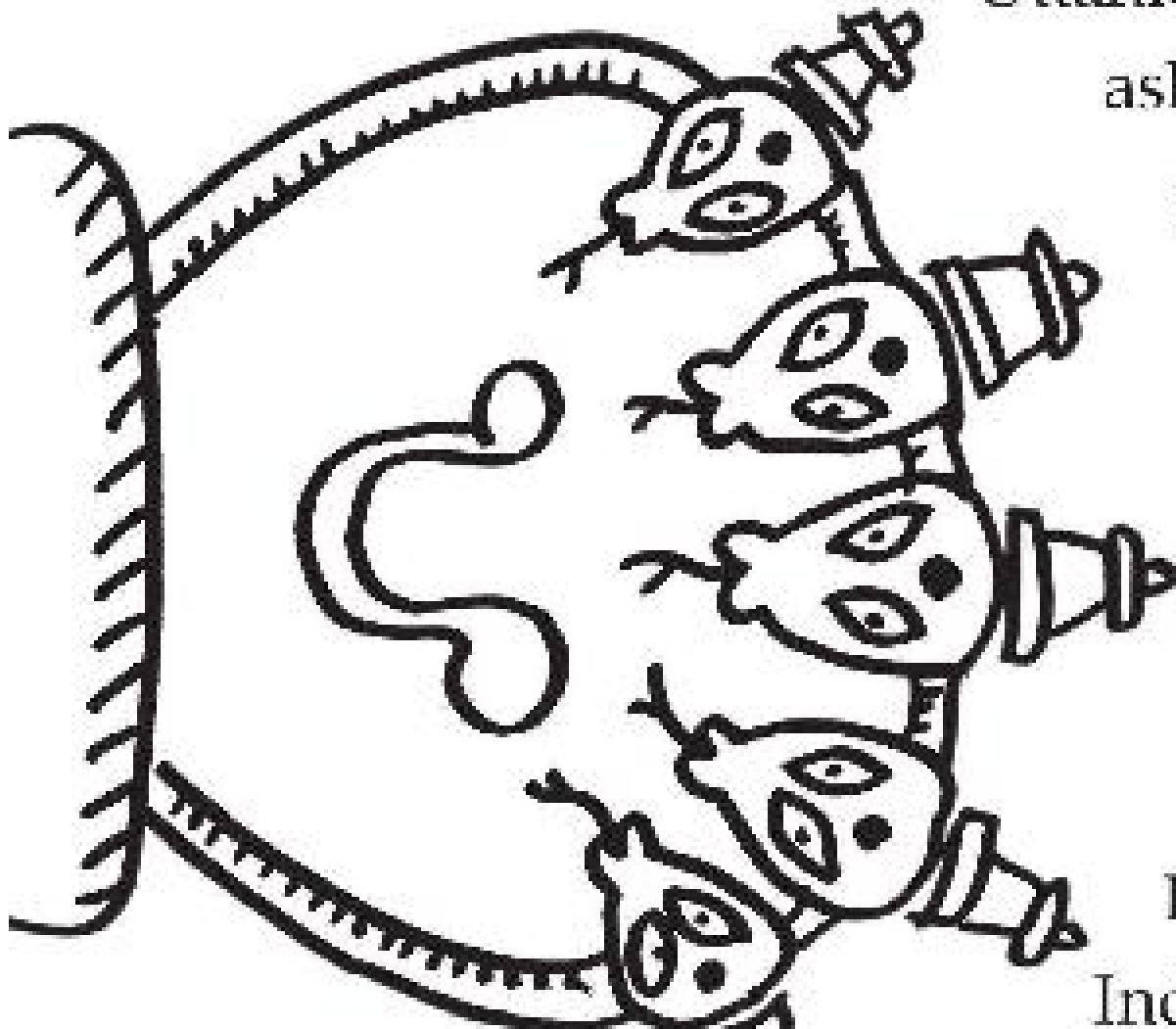
Uttanka's ears

common practice in ancient times was for a teacher to give his teacher a gift on completing a course.

Uttanka

asked

his



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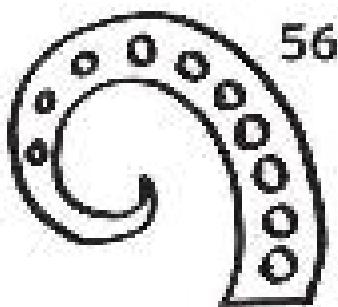
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he cried. Ind
staff with his thunderbolt and
that Uttanaka was able to bor



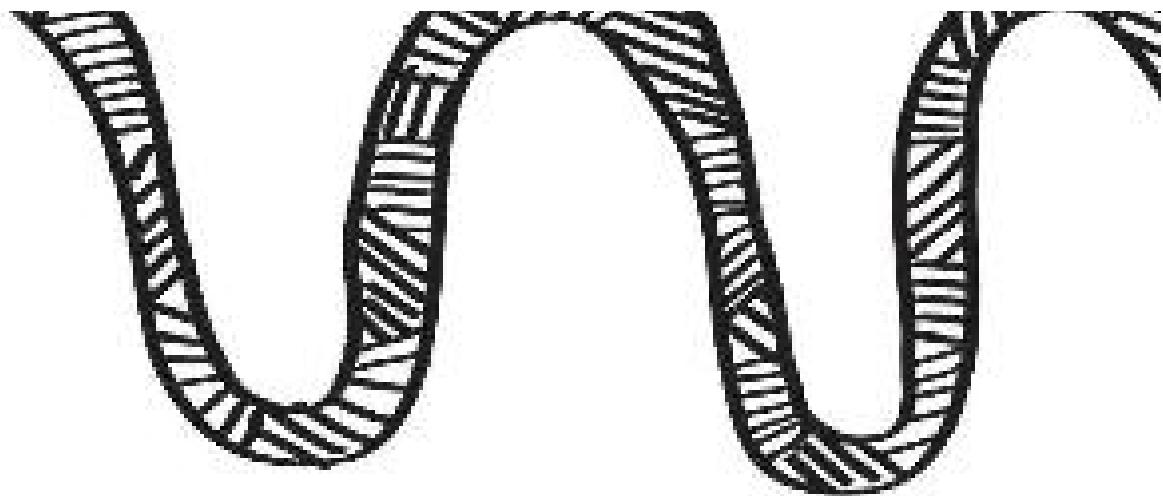
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Devdutt P

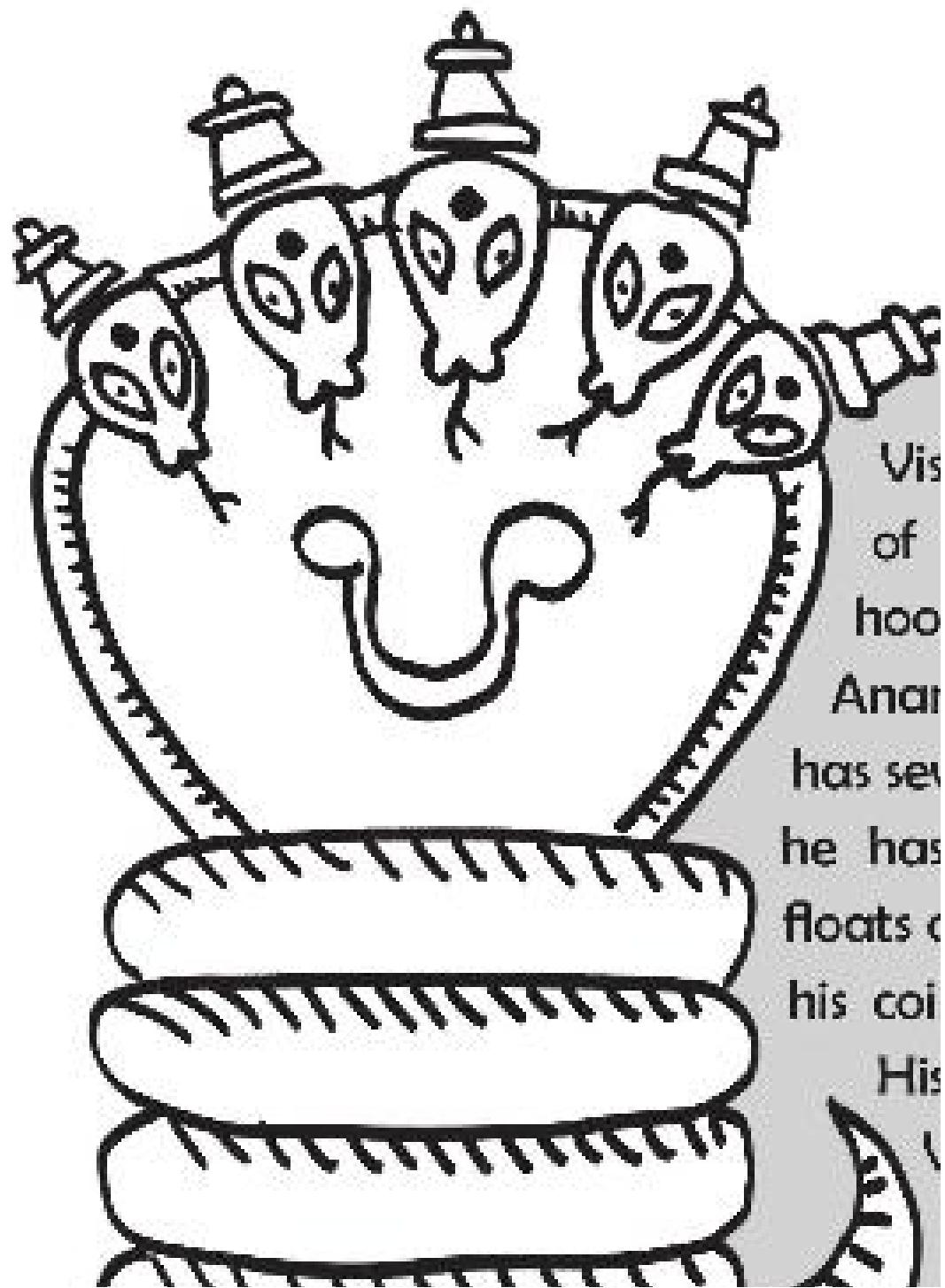
with it that led him straight to N
the land of the serpents. Uttanka
invoked Agni, god of fire, who :
before him in the form of a hors
On Agni's advice, he blew into t
horse's behind. This caused sm
out of the horse's nostrils. The s
Nagaloka and choked all the sei

Vasuki, the king of serpent
stop. 'Tell Takshaka to return my
Uttanka. Vasuki immediately or
return the earrings. A shamefac
was told.





Poshi: Animal Tales from



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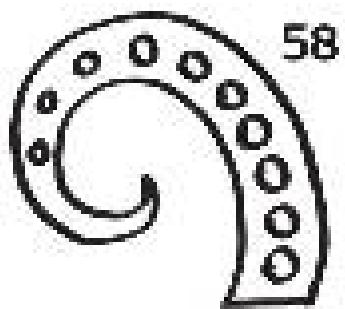
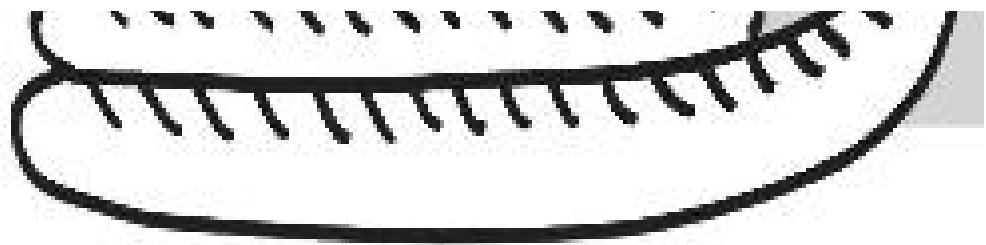
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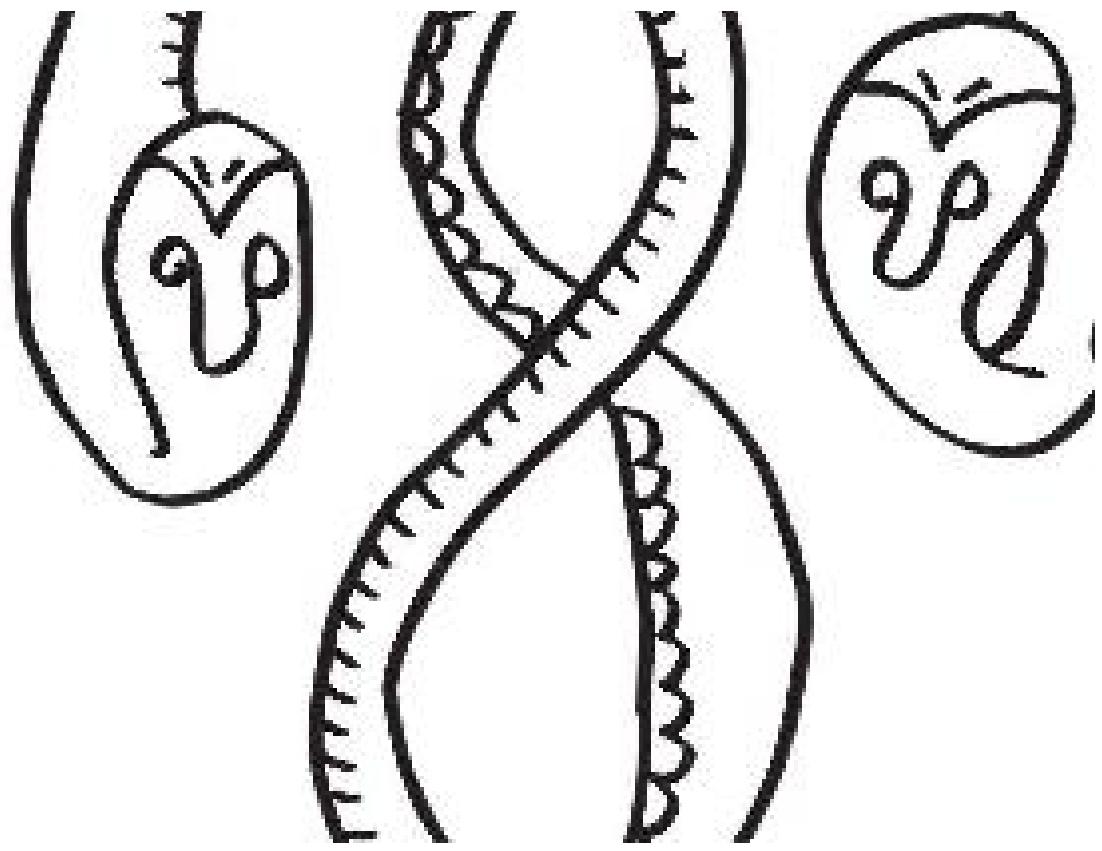
Devdutt P

Vasuki's sister.

T
called Jaratkaru. He had taken a
only marry a woman of the sam
Jaratkaru was also the name of t
sister. So Jaratkaru had no optio
sister of the king of serpents.

Jaratkaru and his wife had
One day, Astika learnt that King
asked Sage Uttanka to perform
intention of killing all the snake
explained Janamejay



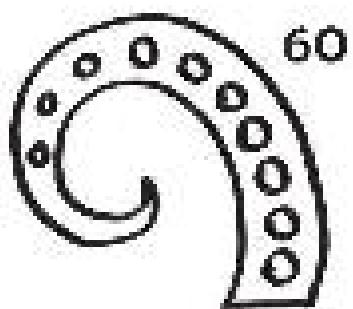
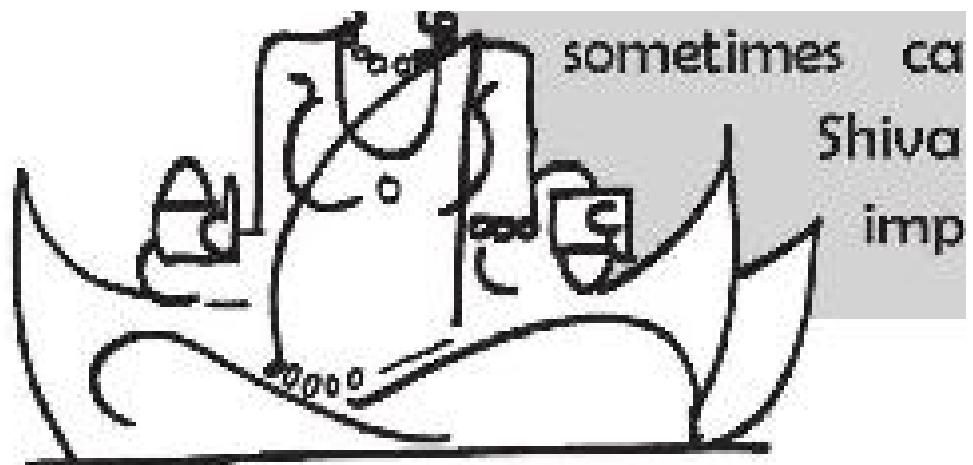


snake who bit your father was given a boon that he would kill a member of your family, because you had destroyed a forest where the nagas once lived. So the curse and the boon have been fulfilled. Let it go. Stop this terrible ritual.

Moved by Astika's appeal, Rishabhadeva stopped the ritual and spared the nagas.



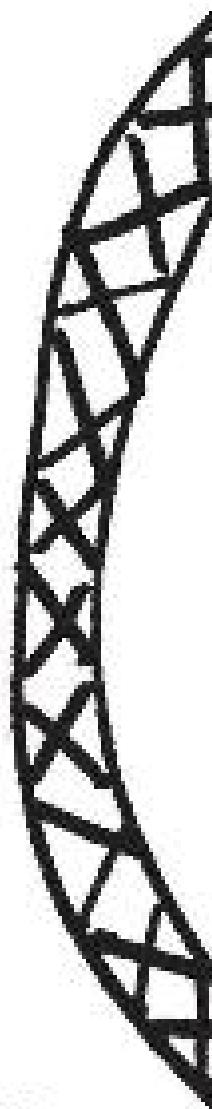
Goddess Mansa Devi, Vasuki's sister, is worshipped in India and Bengal for protection from snakes.



Devdutt P

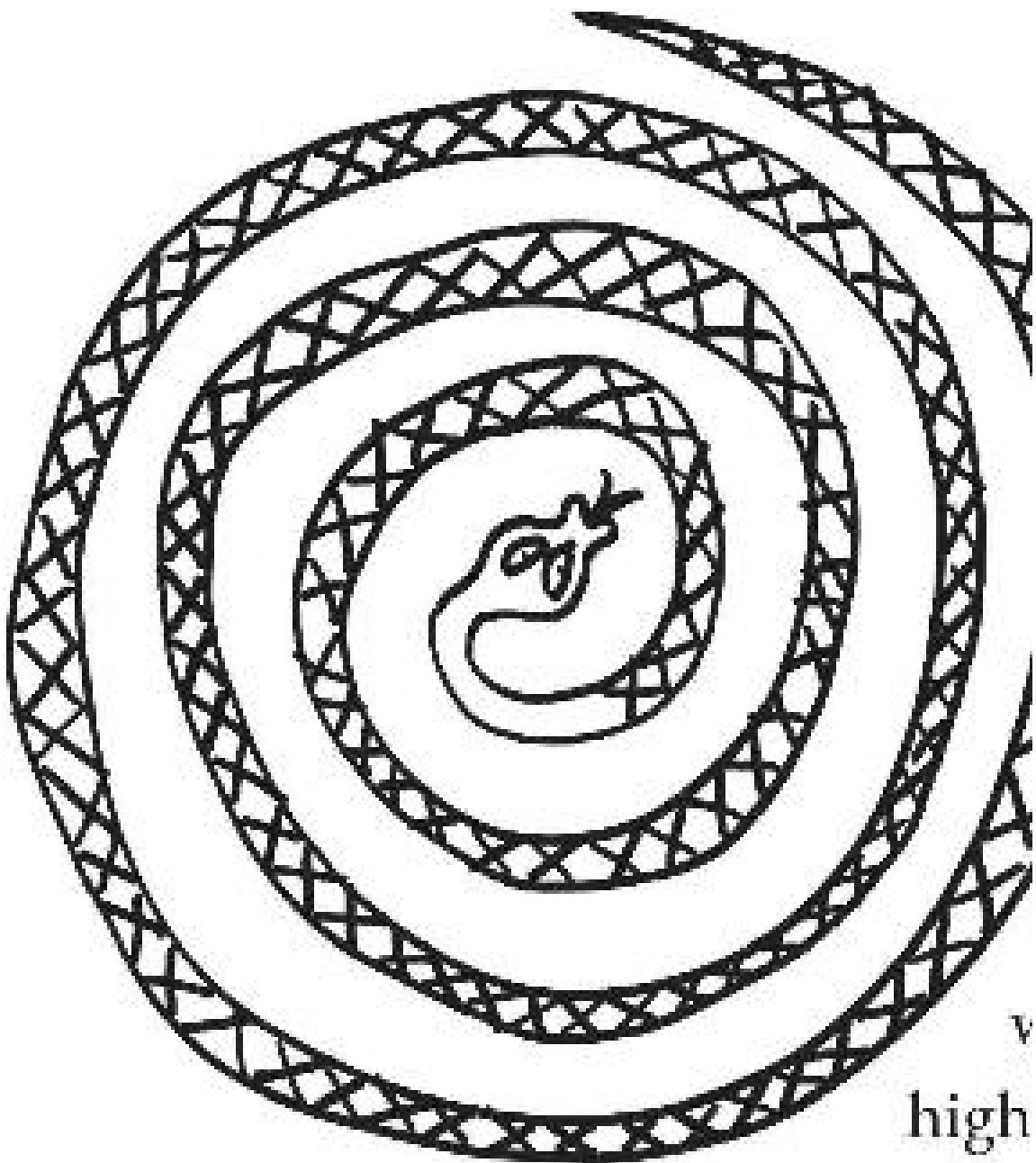
Nahusha.

Nahusha was a great king, so great that one day the devas came to him and asked him to be the temporary king of their city, Amravati, while their king, Indra, was away on a pilgrimage. Nahusha was honoured by the privilege bestowed upon him. In Amrava he would ride on Indra's elepha white-skinned Airavata. He wa



watch the dance of the apsaras. him everywhere, playing music sat under the Kalpavriksha, the every wish. He was given the je

Poshi: Animal Tales from

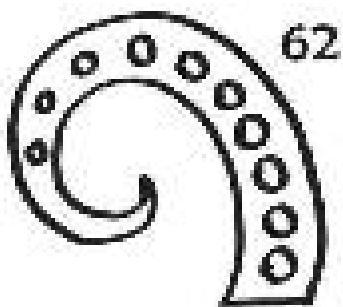


v
high
devas, had

They carried Nahusha's palai
wherever he wished to go. Al

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Agastya, a rather short man.
he could not walk as fast as th
the palanquin could not mov
wished it to. One day, irritate



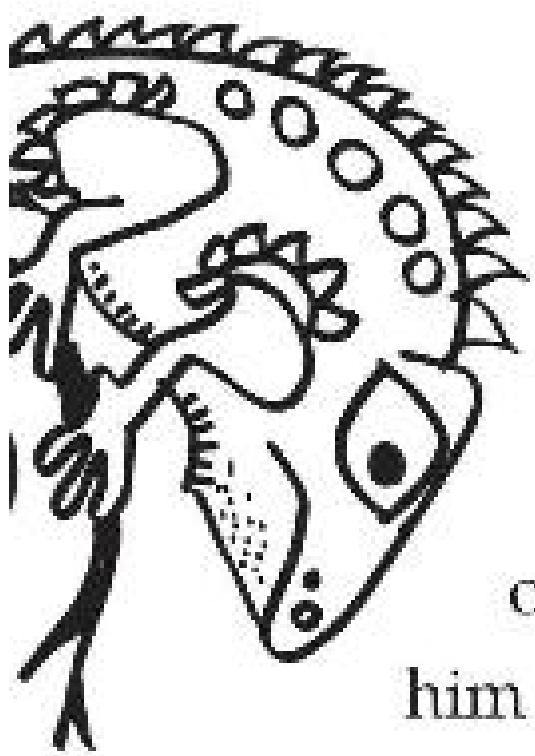
62

Devdutt P

of the palanquin, Nahusha kicked his head and shouted, 'Sarpa, sarpa means 'faster, faster'. But sarpa means 'serpent'. So Agastya cursed Nahusha to become a serpent. Thus the king who had chosen to rule over the gods ended up becoming a serpent crawling on the ground.

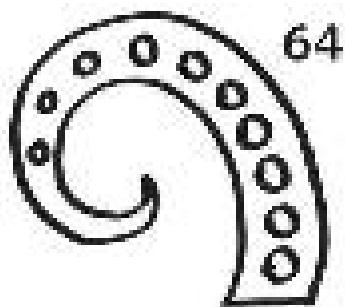
An asura tried to drink amrita, the nectar of immortality, but before he could swallow it, his neck was cut. The head became Rahu, the bodiless serpent who

causes eclipses, and the tail bears Ketu, the restless headless serpent which runs in the sky in the form of a comet.



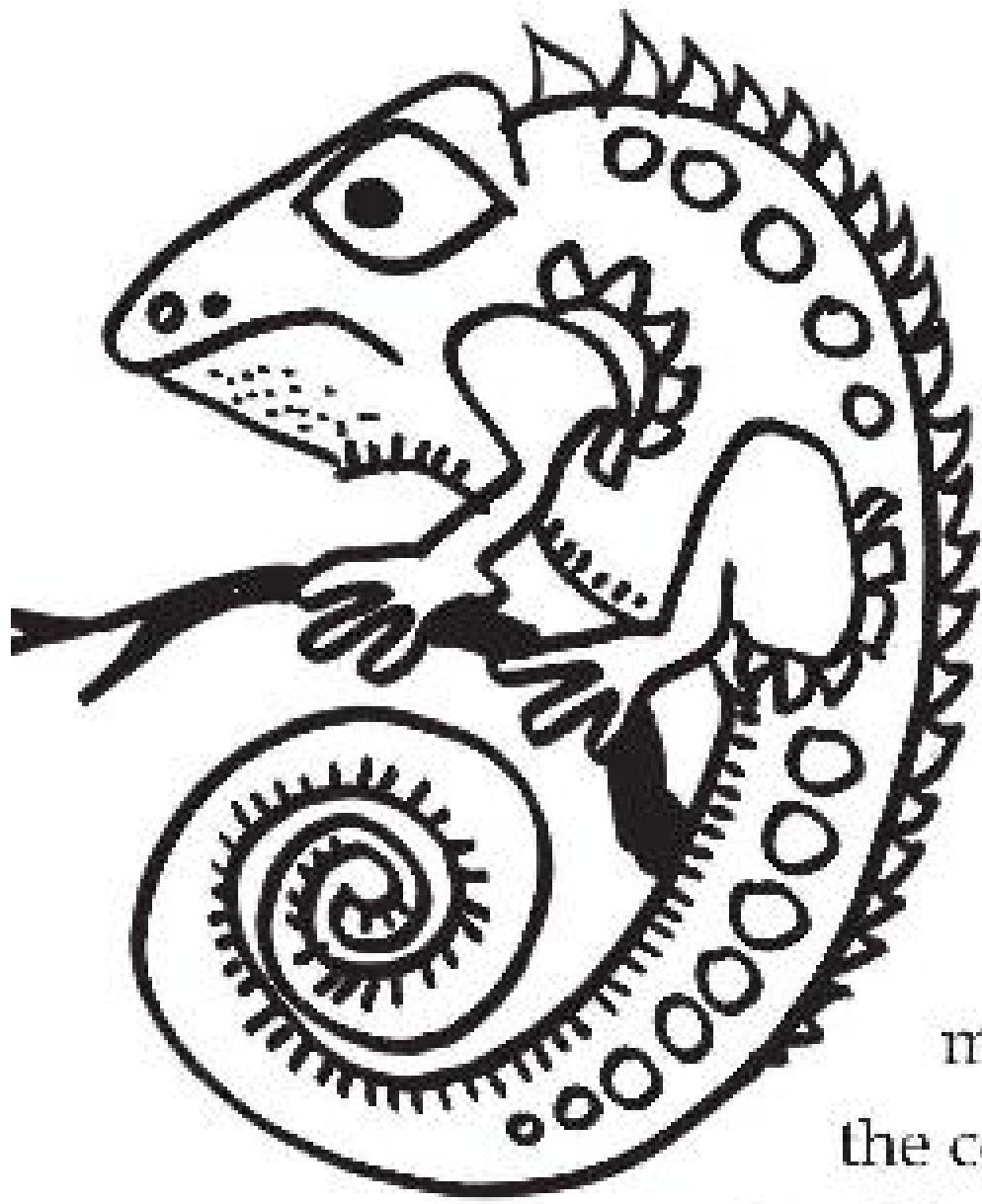
Nrga. One day, found a large lizard tr Or was it a chameleon' out but failed. So they w him about it. Krishna imme lizard's rescue. No sooner did than it turned into a beautifu 'I am Nrga,' said the being. 'C a king who had gifted thousa cows as charity. But a cow giv priest ran back into my royal shed. Unaware of what had h I gave that cow as a gift to an priest. Both priests claimed th

and demanded that I resolve
I begged them to forgive me ;
of cows as compensation to e
did not relent. Instead, they c



64

Devdutt P

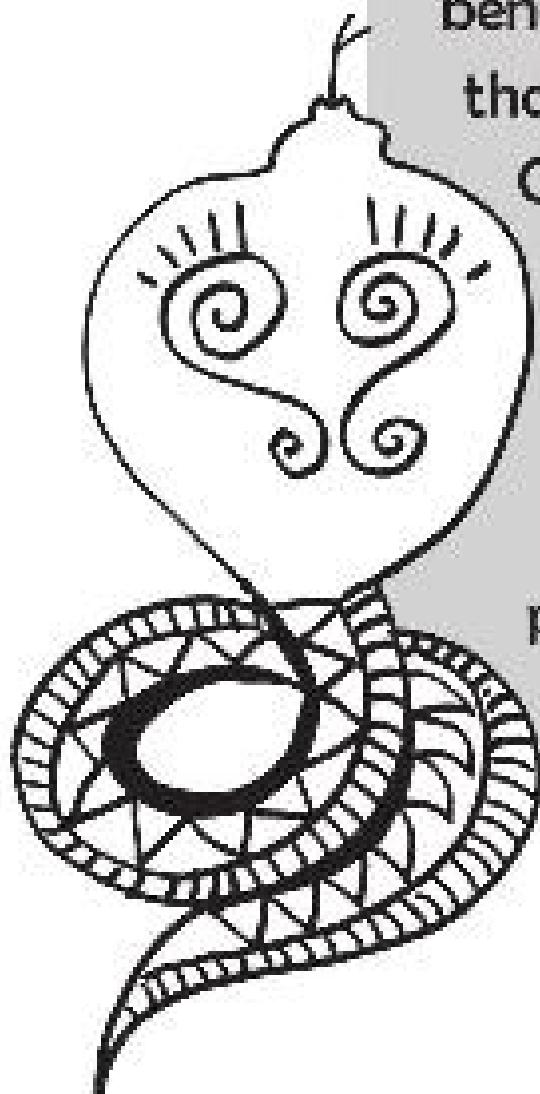


be reborn
cheatin
of my
Yama,
rebirth
day I v
Krishna
into a de
my place.
the celestial c
saying, Nrga rose to
presence of Krishna and his son

The serpent Karkotaka stays coiled around Shiva's neck. As long as he is there he is safe from Garuda.

Pashu: Animal Tales from

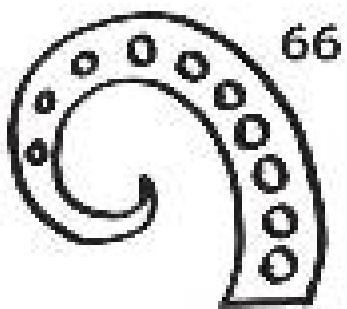
The poisonous snake Kaliya lived at the bend of the river Yamuna. He used to attack people and animals that cornered him. Once he attacked Garuda. As a result, the Yamuna river was polluted. Krishna decided to protect the river. He asked him to leave. Krishna then became Krishna the Dancer and protected the river. He also protected Kaliya by placing his footprint on the snake's head.



Who is Nandini?

मातृता विवरण

—

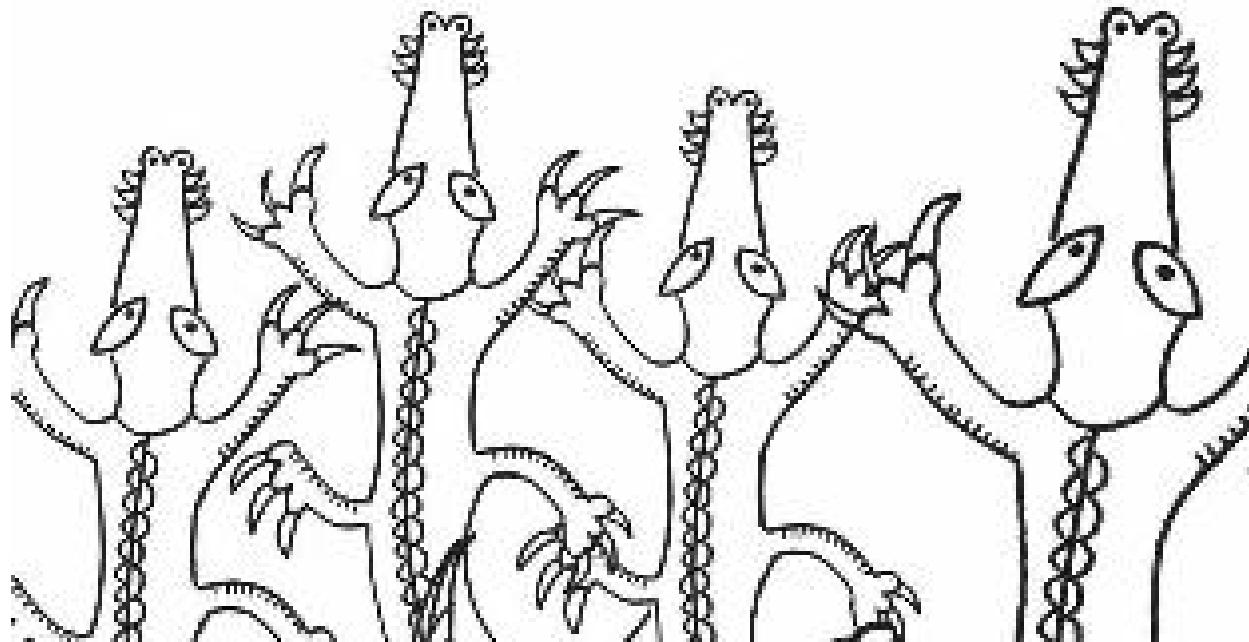


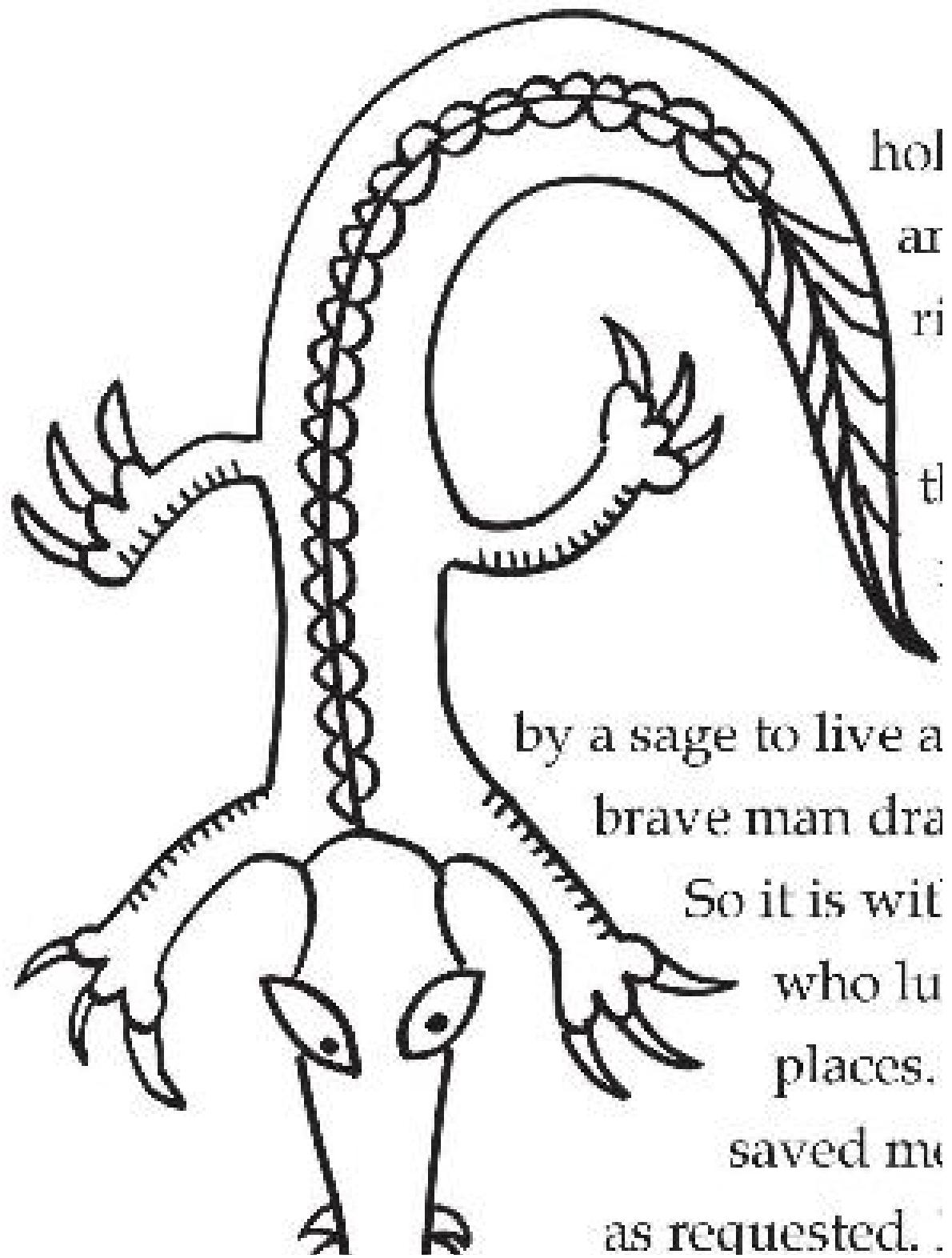
Devdutt P

Arjuna and the

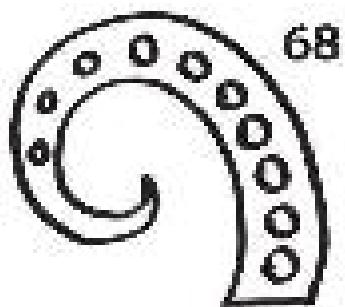
During a pilgrimage, Arjuna came across sites on the banks of a river that were frequented by pilgrims. On enquiry, he learnt that these crocodiles had made their home in each of these spots, devouring any man or woman who entered the waters. Arjuna, being determined to destroy these crocodiles and make the spot safe again. He entered the water at the safe spot and dared the crocodile to attack him. The crocodile rose from the riverbed and seized Arjuna's leg between its jaws and began dragging him underwater, intent on drowning him. This is how crocodiles are known to be very fierce animals.

prey. But Arjuna wrestled his le-



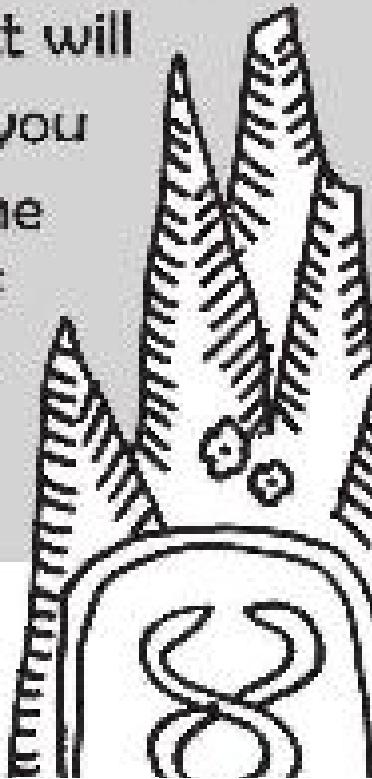


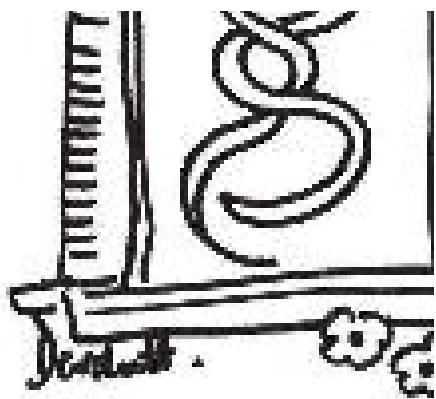
॥५॥ liberated from the
the five holy places
river were made safe for pilg



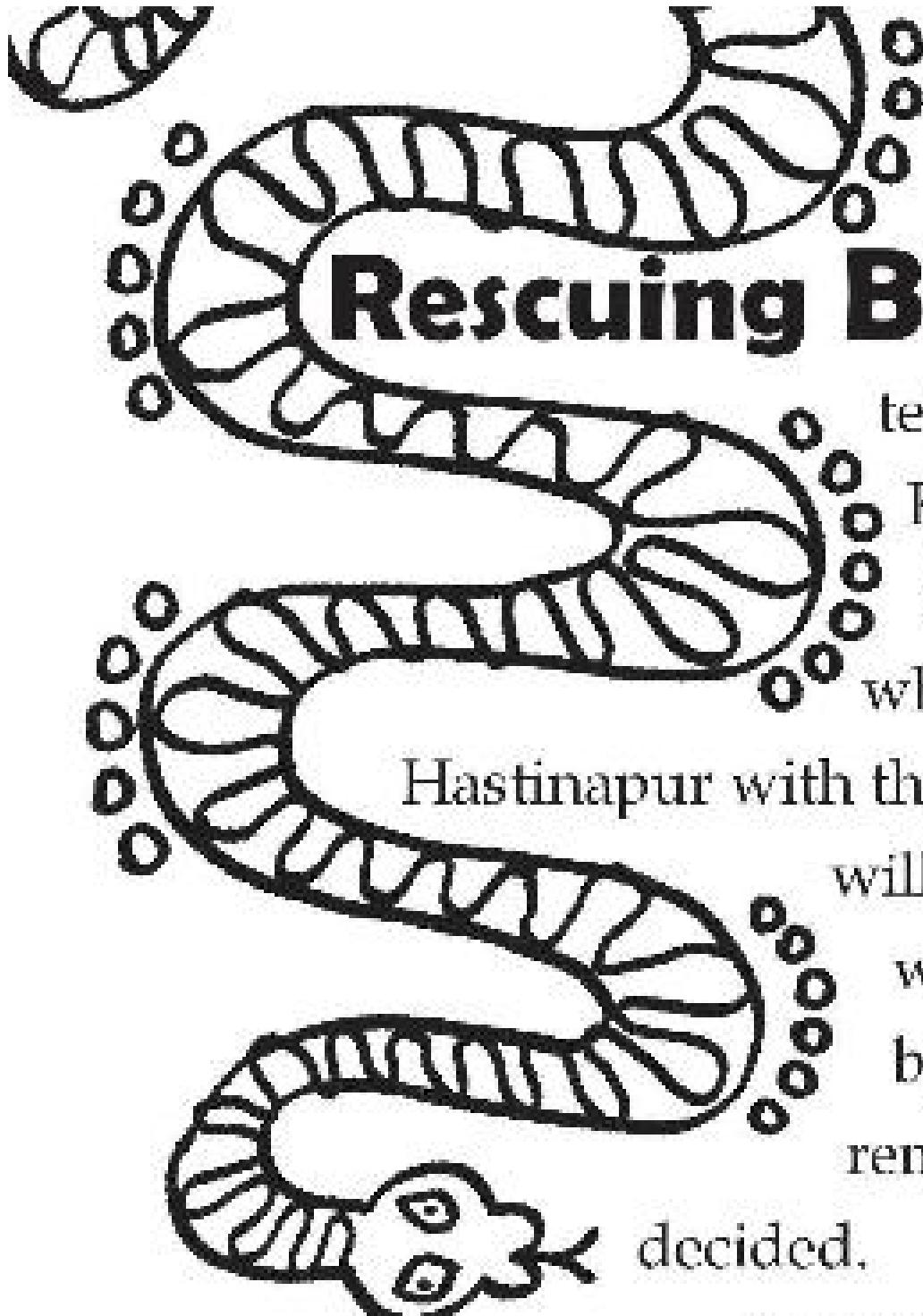
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Snake or naga worship is popular in India. Once the king of Nepal told his kingdom. The following year, Not a single cloud could be seen in the sky. The king begged the snakes to return. The snakes returned and the rains followed. People say that if you dig deep enough, at the bottom you may find a way to a series of tunnels that will eventually lead you to Naga-loka, the secret kingdom of the serpents under the ground.





Pashu: Animal Tales from



Rescuing Bhin

tells the :

Kaurav:

five Pa

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Hastinapur with them. 'W

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by one s

remains w

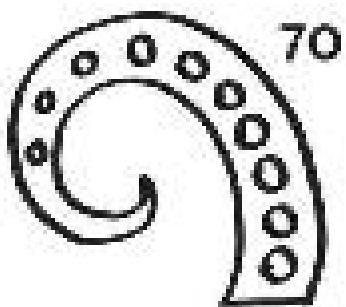
decided.

They made a

strongest of the Pandavas, so

uproot trees as if they were b

Bhima loved food. One day he was walking in the forest when he found a hermit. The hermit gave him food laced with poison. Bhima ate it and lost consciousness. The Kauravas found him and cut off his hands and feet and threw them into a river.



Devdutt P

Bhima sank into the riverbed, his
swam towards him. These naga
of injecting him with venom, the
poison racing through his veins
the rope that bound him and took
their underwater kingdom, where
Bhima a potion. ‘After you consume
potion, no poison can ever harm
you.’ Bhima did not understand why the nagas
were being so kind to him. ‘Because
said the old naga, ‘your mother’
ancestor, Yadu, was a friend
of the nagas and married
many naga women. This

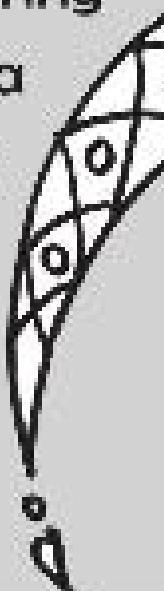


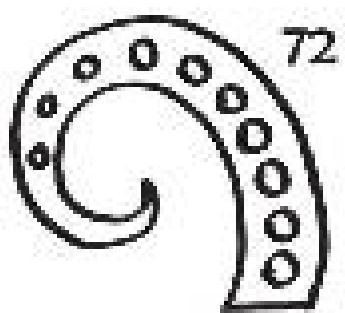
makes you our relative.
Relatives help each other.'



Pashu: Animal Tales from

In many folk tales there is reference to Naga-mani, the serpent jewel. Found in the hood of some special serpents, it has the power to heal and bring fortune. When Arjuna was wounded in battle against Babruvahana, the snake princess Uloopi secured this gem to save Arjuna's life.



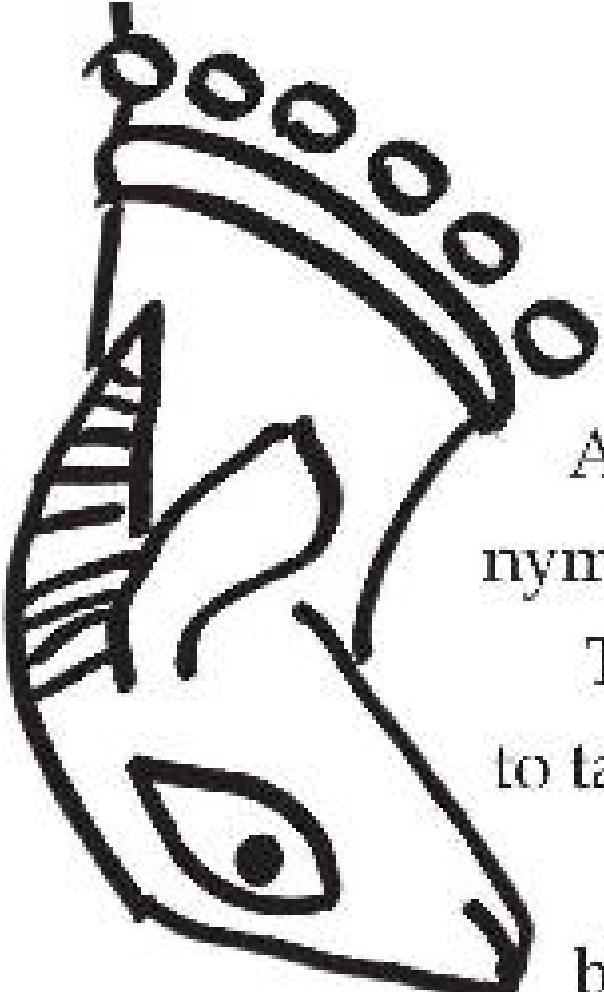


Devdutt P

Surabhi's chil hoov







Urvash

A king called Puru had a nymph, Urvashi. 'My wife is dead,' he said.

The nymph replied, 'I will go to take care of my people.'

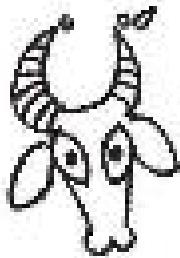
The king agreed. Urvashi became Pururav's wife and a goatherd. Now, the king was very upset – rather than taking care of his kingdom, he was taking care of a goat.

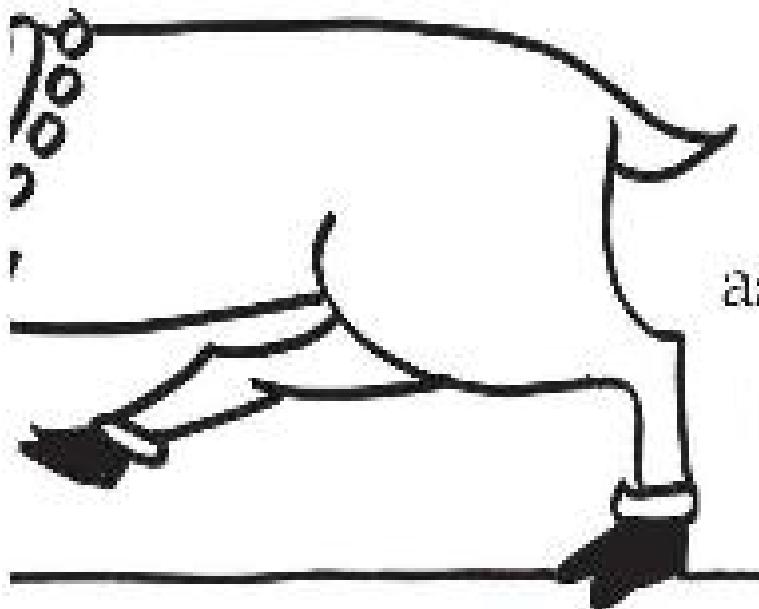
They prayed to the gods to do something about the situation. The gods were angry because the king had taken away their nymph. They said, 'to separate the two, so I will give you a gift.'

his kingdom and she can dan

The gods enlisted the ga

The gandharvas were celestia
within flowers. When Purura





asleep, they took
goats and ran.
was heartbrok
not take care.

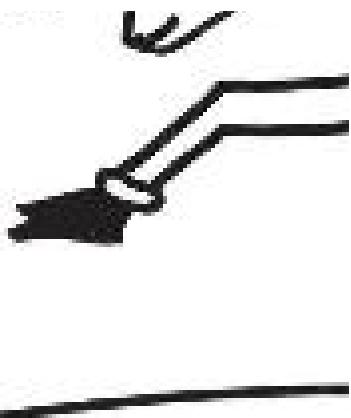
and now they are gone. So I must

said and rose to the abode of the

Pururava ran here and there
the goats, hoping to find them a
his wife. But the gandharvas ha
goats where no man could find
Pururava had no choice but to r
people and resume his
duties as king. And
Urvashi had no choice

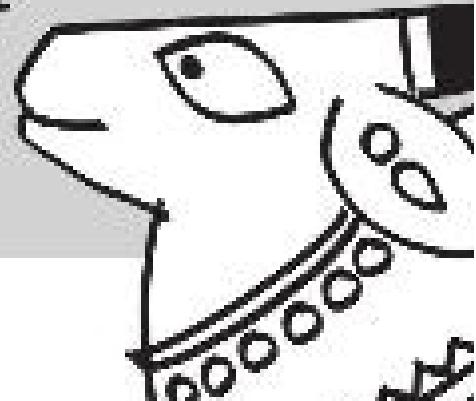


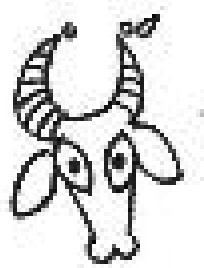
but to entertain the
gods with her
dance.



Poshu: Animal Tales from

Shiva rides a bull called Nandi. A bull is wild and unpredictable. If it gets angry, it can kill with its horns. A bull is tamed by neutering, a process by which it becomes unable to produce male offspring. A neutered bull is tame and timid, a beast of burden used for ploughs and carts but cannot father a cow. Shiva's bull represents the independent spirit of the hermit god.





76

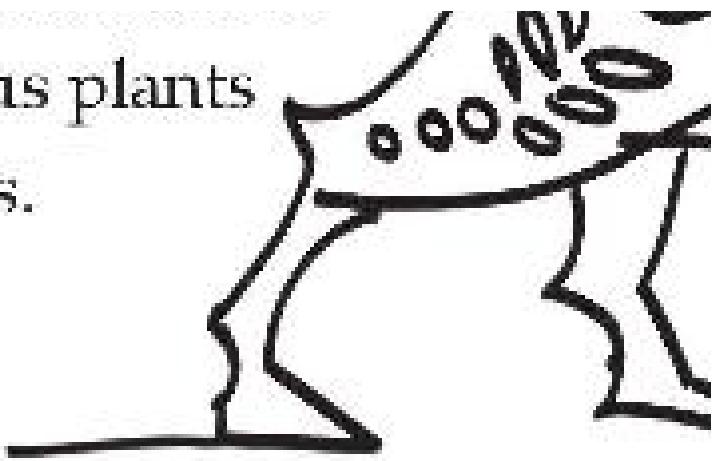
Devdutt P

Raising of the e

demon called Hiranyaksha drag
the sea. The earth goddess cried
for help. Out of Brahma's nostril
boar with long, sharp tusks. It p
gored Hiranyaksha to death, pl
its snout and raised her to the si
was Vishnu. The earth goddess
tightly as they rose that the eart
folds, which turned into mounta
valleys. Vishnu's tusks buried
themselves into the earth,
and thus the earth
became the mother



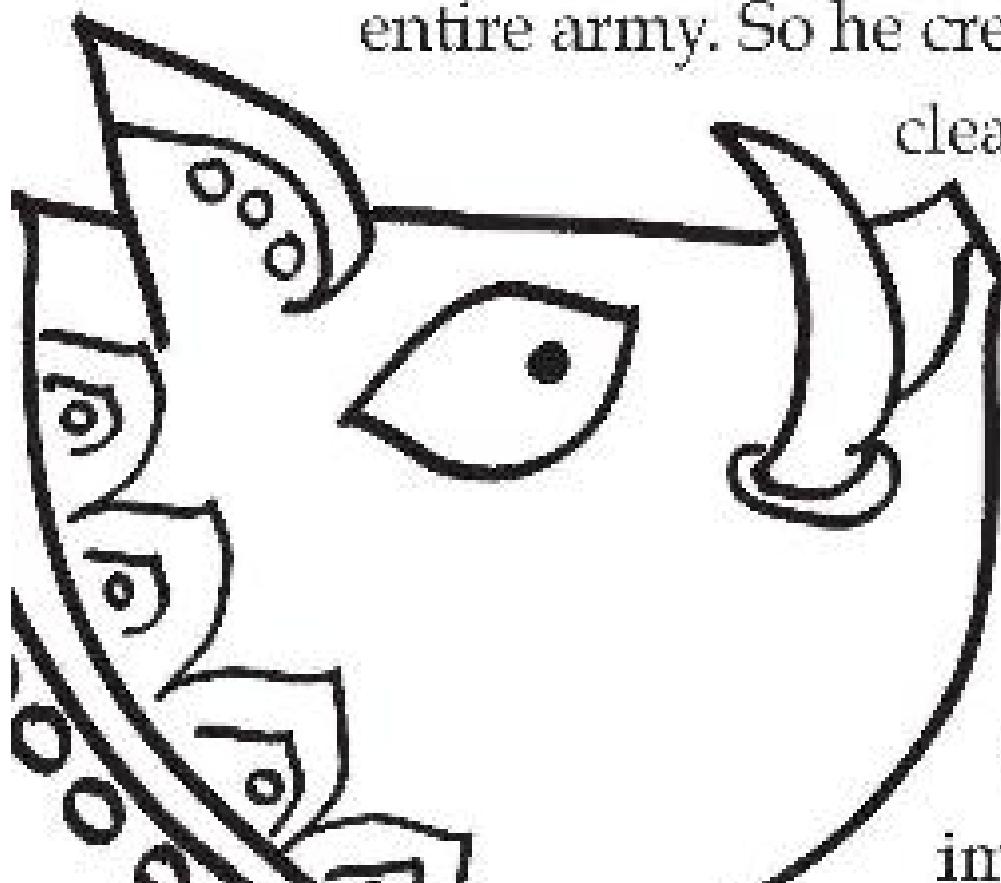
of various plants
and trees.



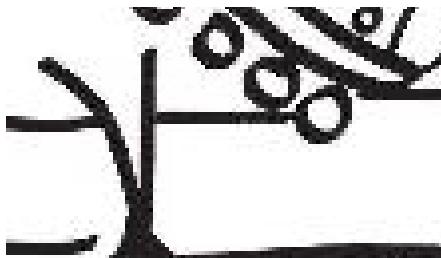
Poshi: Animal Tales from

Fight over a b

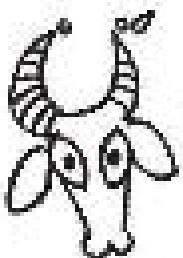
great archer from the Mahabhl
arrow called Pashupata that l
arrow had the strength of a h
With this single arrow, Arjuna
entire army. So he created an



clearing of :
before
emergen
ran tow
who se
order to
saw the
immediate



shot an arrow
arrow struck the boar
squeal and died. When
saw that the boar had been st



but two — one was his and one, !

'It is mine. I killed the boar
the animal after it was dead,' sa
hunter, standing, on the horizon

Arjuna looked at the Kirata
and said, 'You illiterate forest
dweller! Do you know who you
talking to? I am the greatest arch
world. It was my arrow that stri
boar and not yours.'

The Kirata was accompanie
many tribal women. They all sh
and protested. 'Our man killed
boar, not you,' they said.

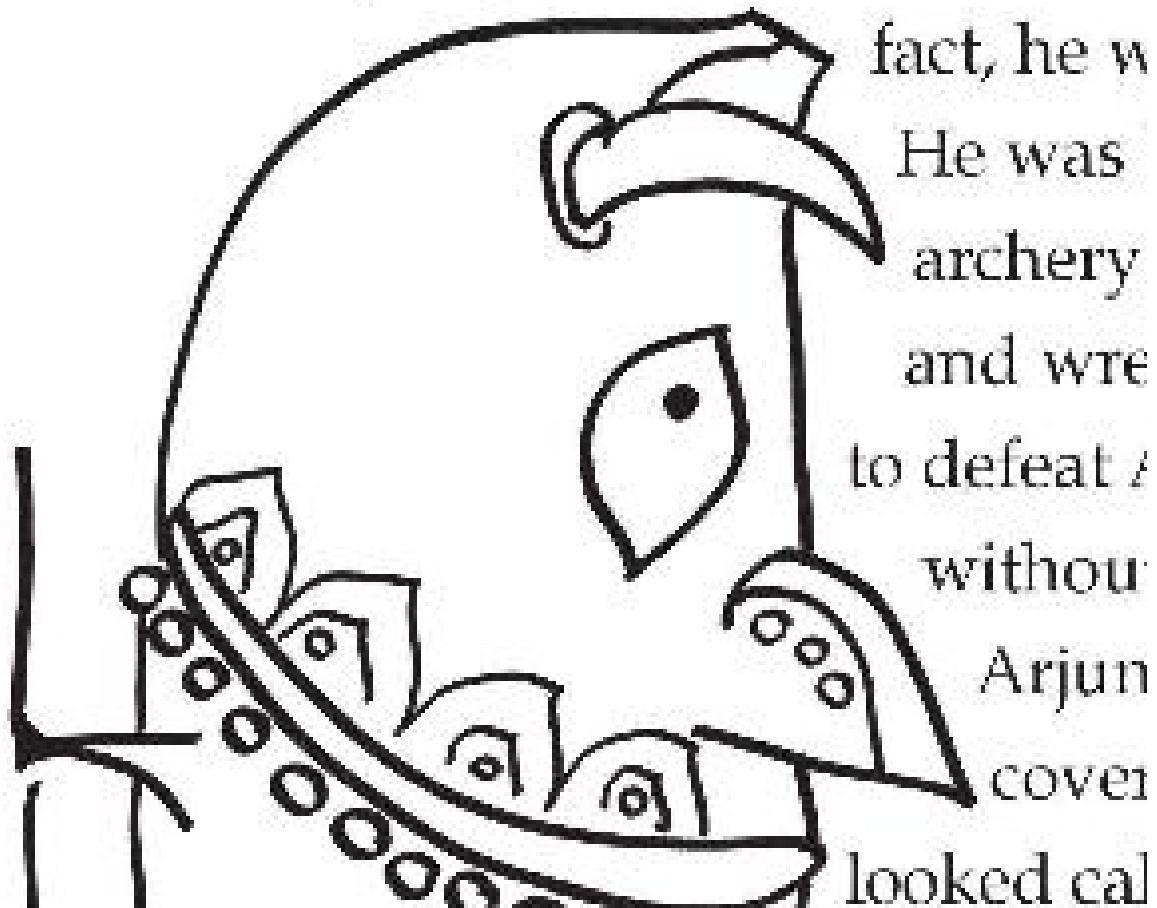
Arjuna lost his temper. 'Ho
what is mine? You are mere trib
You shot the boar after it was de

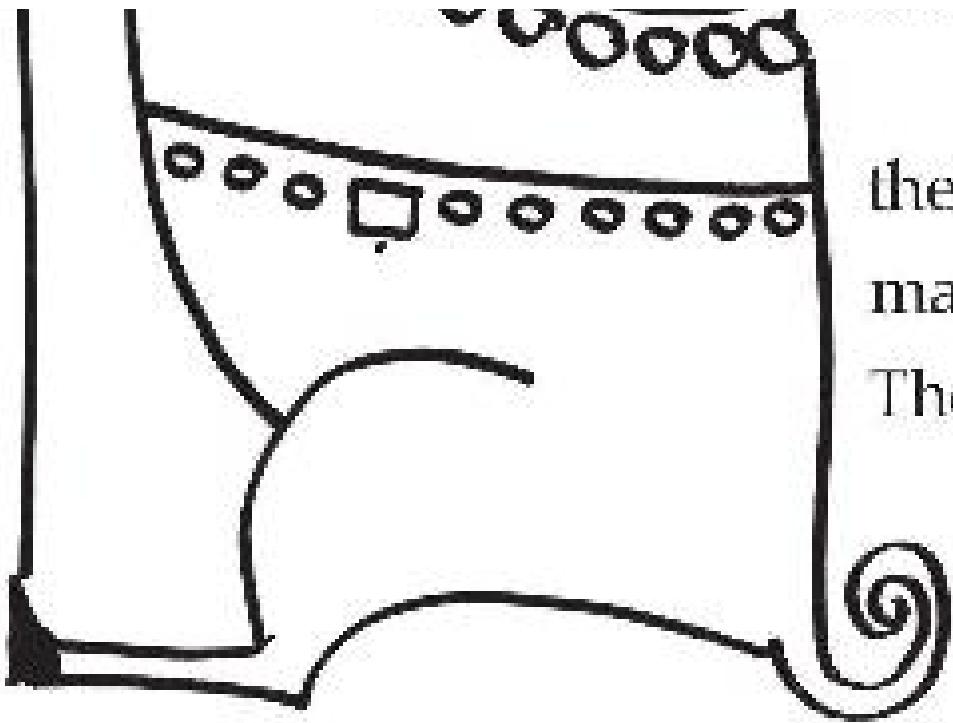
The Kirata smiled, adding

Pashu: Animal Tales from

wounded pride, and said, 'If I have a duel. The winner shall have the boar.'

Arjuna agreed and the duel began. To everyone's surprise, the Kirata turned out





Arju
the Kirati
man. WI
The Kirat

Devdutt P

in fact Shiva, and was testing Arjuna to see if he had learned that this was a lesson in humility. A tool sent by Shiva himself to prove his point, Arjuna bowed before Shiva, who blessed him with the arrow called Pashupata.

Arjuna's father, Pandu, once saw a stag with its mate. He was curse with death if he ever touched it. His wife, for it is a crime to kill a stag when it is with its mate.

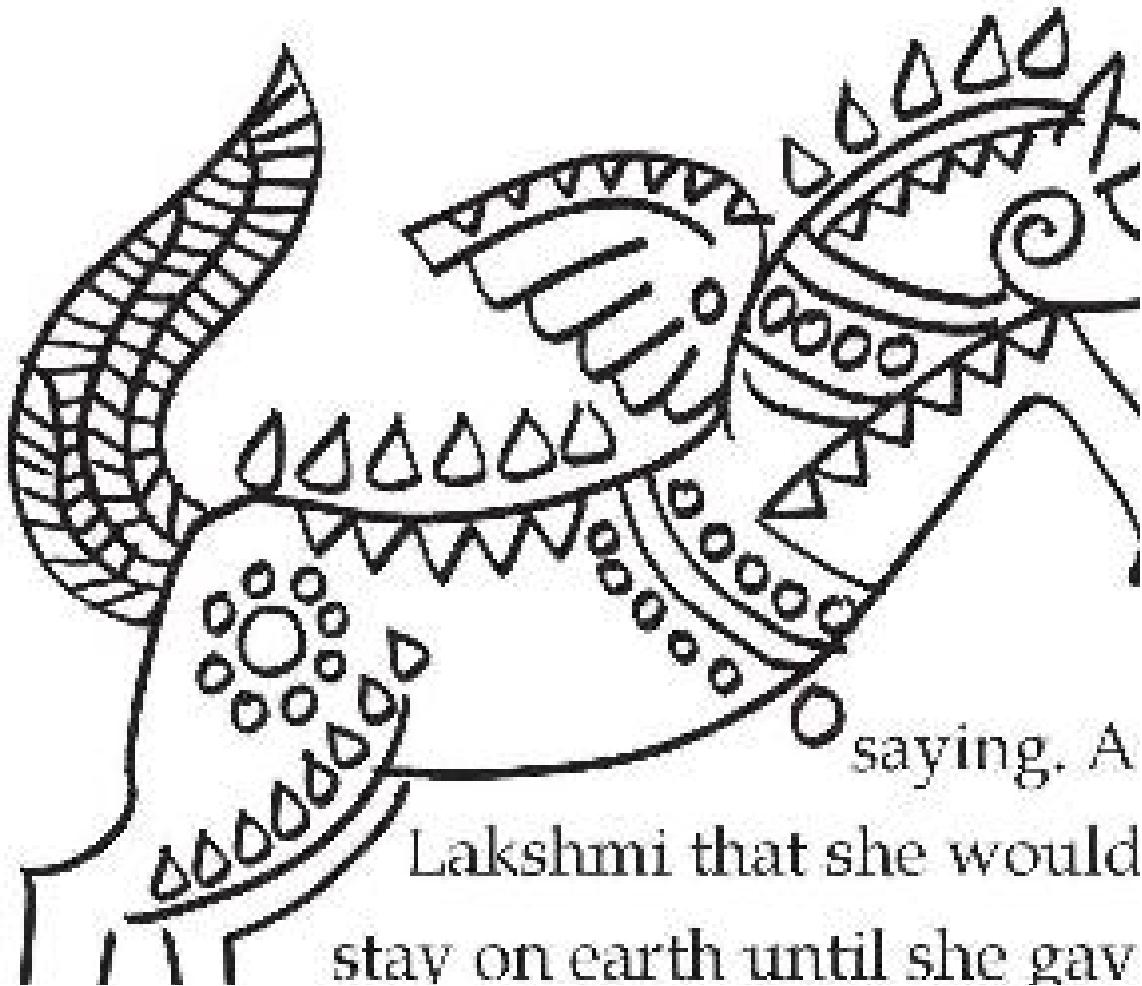




Pashu: Animal Tales from

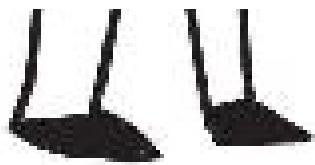
Ekavira Hehej

Revanta, son of the sun god,
Vishnu's abode Vaikuntha on
when Vishnu was sitting with



saying. A

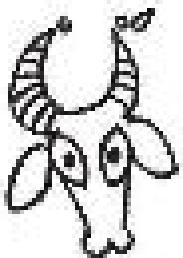
Lakshmi that she would
stay on earth until she gave



child. Lakshmi disappeare

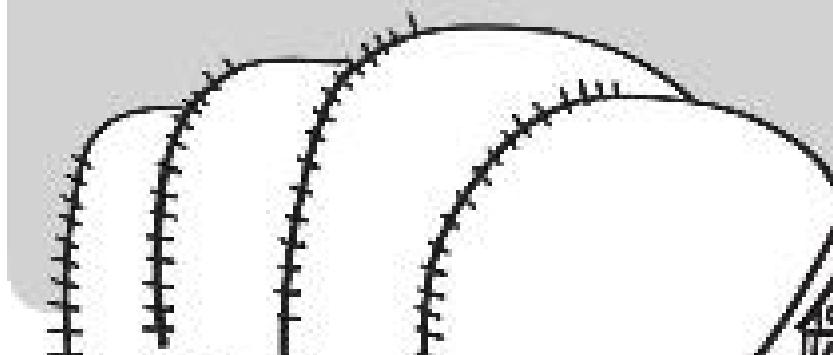
regretted his harsh words

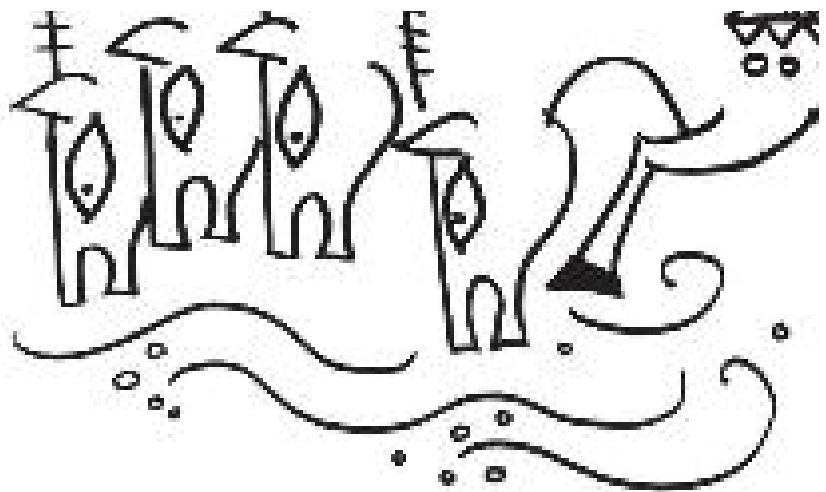
He saw Lakshmi runnin
form of a mare, so he took the



followed her. In due course, the child. Though born of horses, the form. He was called Heheya (bc grew up to be a great hero.

In the middle of the battle a point came when Krishn the horses who were pulling tired. So he asked Arjuna to into the ground and release c provide water for the horses.



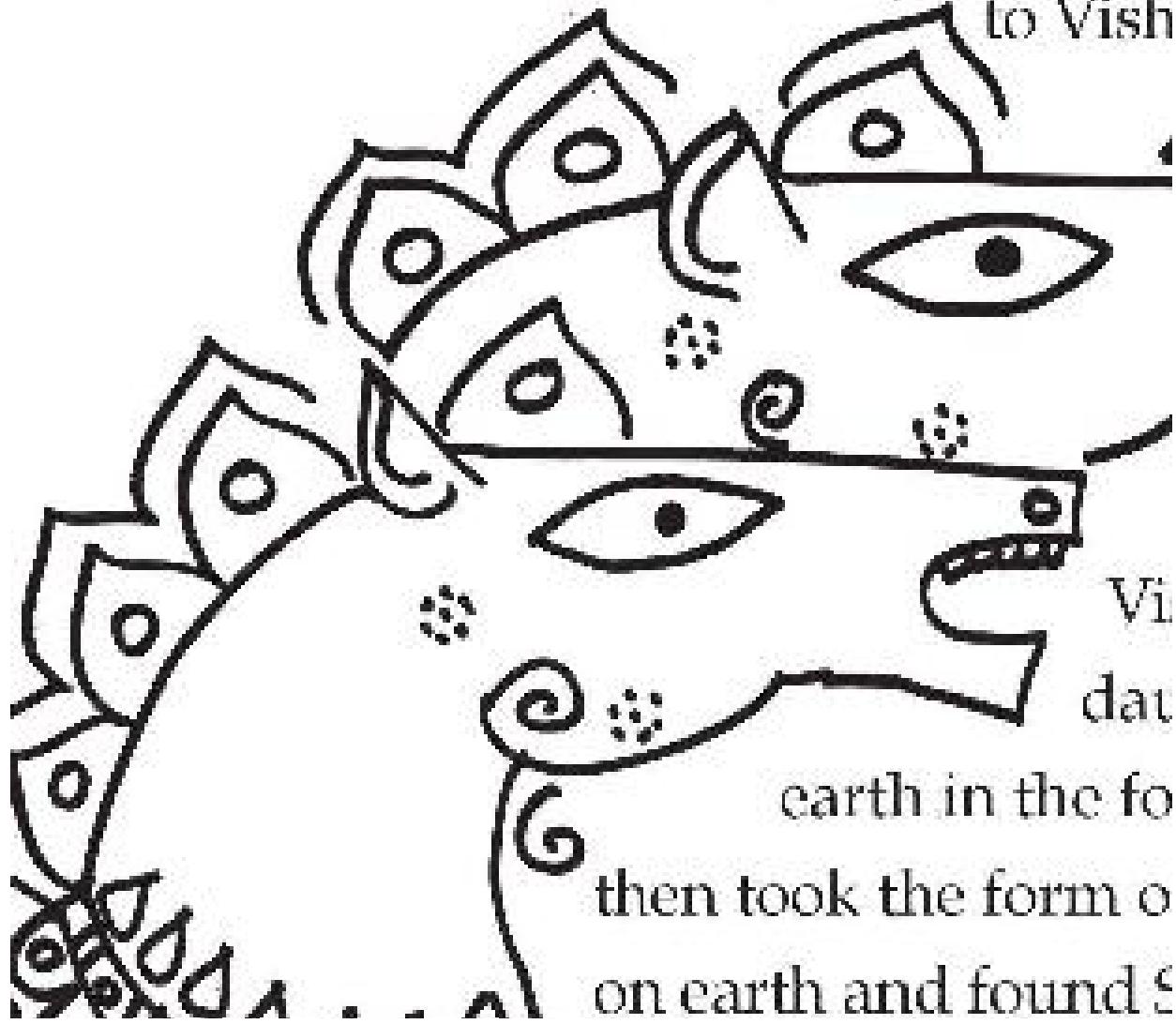


Pashu: Animal Tales from

The Ashwini T

the sun god, Surya, and his w
of the craftsman of the gods, ^

to Vish



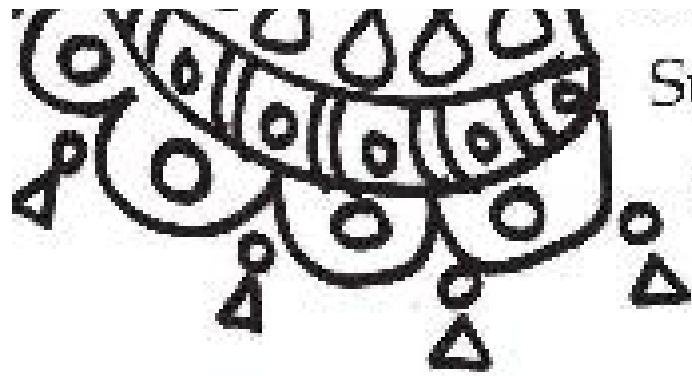
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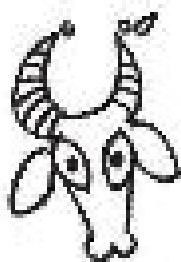
earth in the fo

then took the form o

on earth and found :



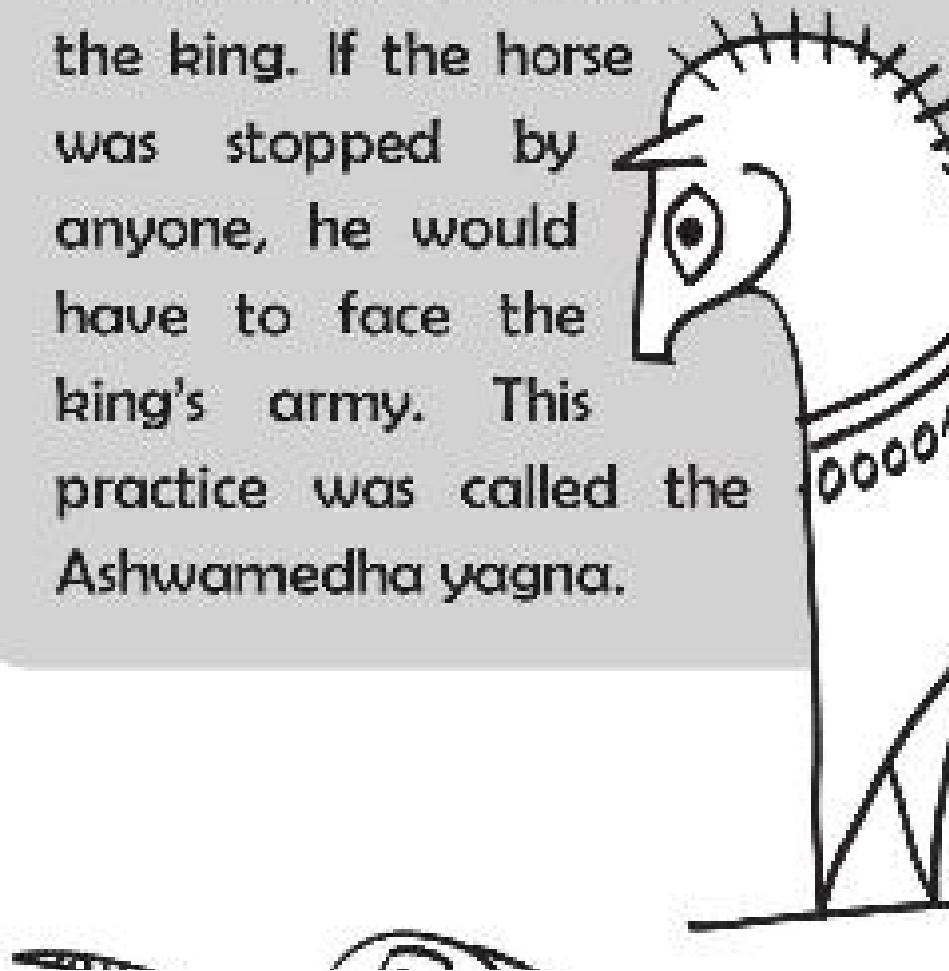
Surya and Saranya {
the Ashwini twins.
depicted as havir

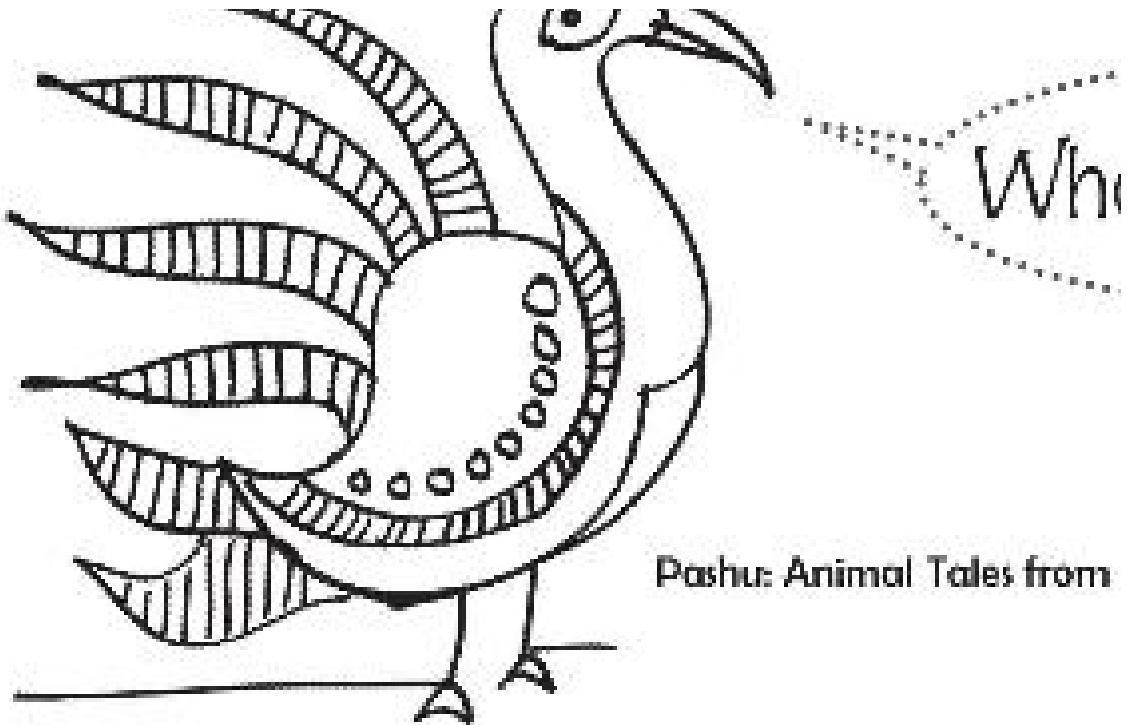


84

Devdutt P

In ancient times, a king would ride his royal horse and his army would follow the horse wherever it went. All the lands the horse traversed unchallenged came under the rule of the king. If the horse was stopped by anyone, he would have to face the king's army. This practice was called the Ashwamedha yagna.





Pashu: Animal Tales from

Ucchaishrava's

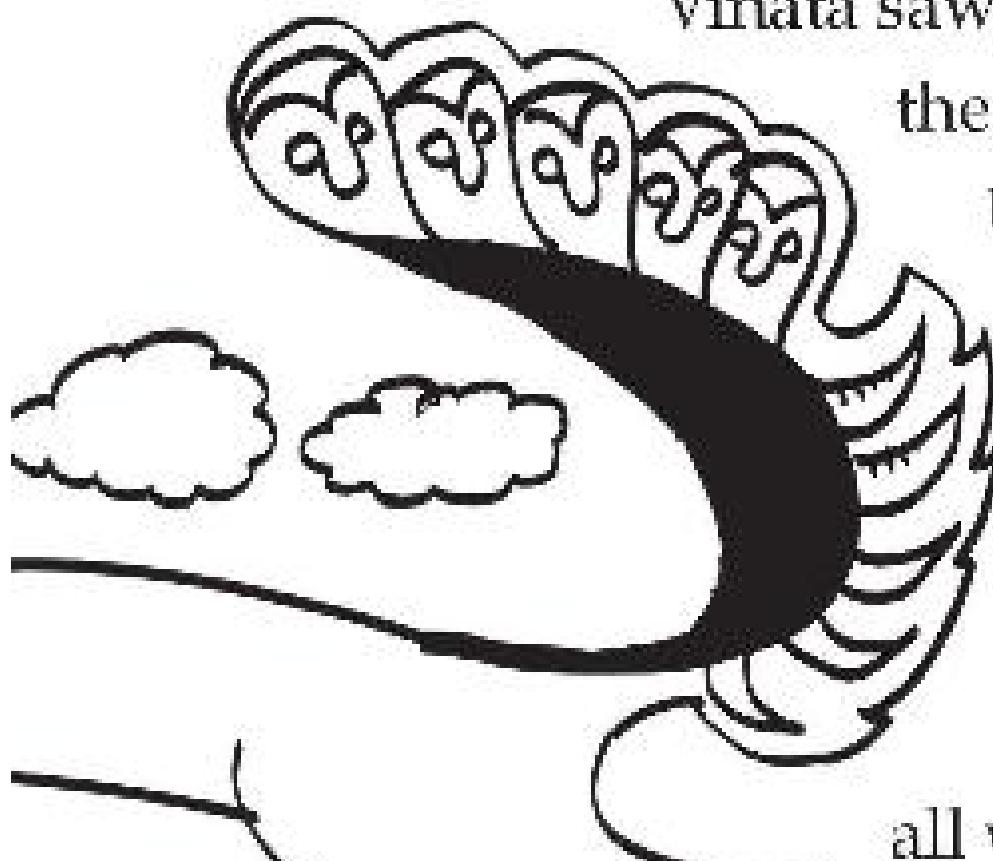
read the story of how Garuda
mother from slavery. Now, le
Vinata became a slave of the :

One day, at dawn, the tw

Vinata saw a white
the eastern .

Ucchaist
that ha
had ch
milk. I
a beaut
Kad

all white. It'

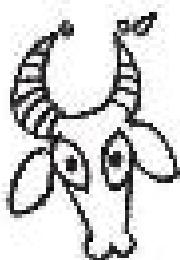


V

insist

white. :

was wrong and had weak eye



86

Devdutt P

until finally Kadru laid a bet, 'If I prove that the horse has black hair on its tail, you must become my slave. If I cannot prove it and you are right, I will be your slave.'

Vinata agreed. They both decided to stand facing the eastern horizon every day and check Ucchaishrava's tail.

That night Kadru told her children, 'Some of you, those who have been born here, can cling to Ucchaishrava's tail. At dawn he flies across the eastern horizon, and if he has black hair in his tail, Vinata must accept that I was right and she

slave.'

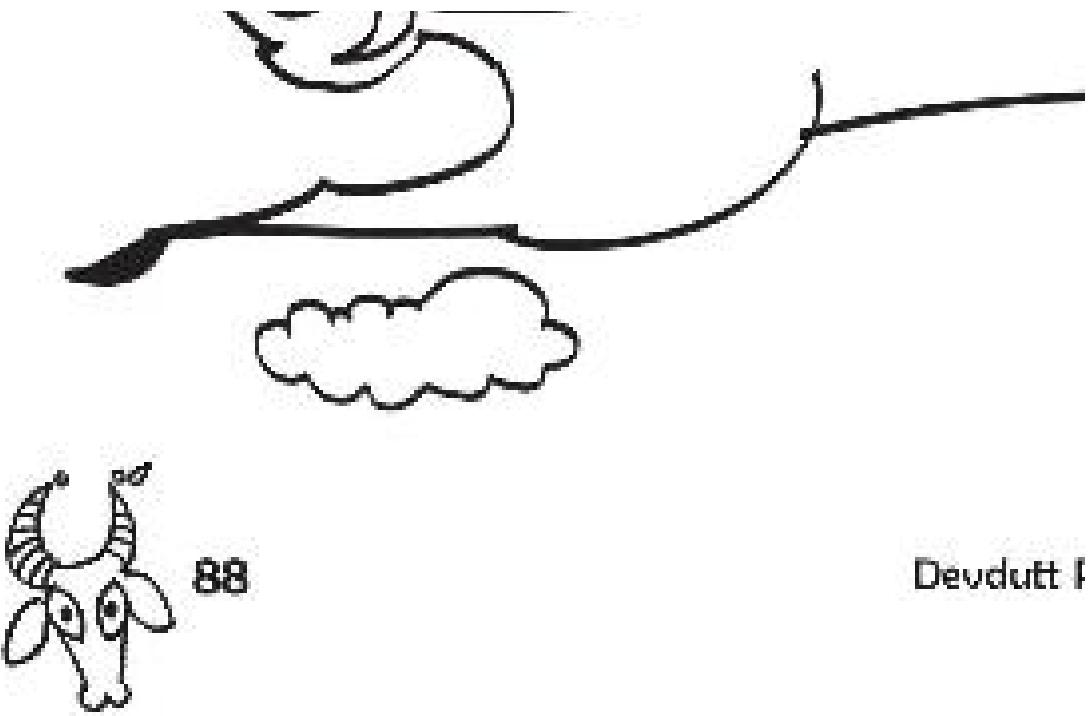
Some of Kadru's children c
of cheating. They protested. Kad
cursed them, 'One day, a king w

Pashu: Animal Tales from

to kill all the nagas in the world
you who disobeyed me will taste fire.'

Afraid of their mother, a
their way to Ucchaishrava. The
thick tail and clung to it as darkness
ran across the eastern horizon.
Vinata saw the horse and from





88

Devdutt P

it seemed as if the horse indeed
of hair on his tail. Vinata realize
have played some sort of trick b
for her to prove it. She had no cl
Kadru's slave.

A rishi called Ruchika wanted to
princess Satyavati. But Satyavati
not want his daughter to marry him.
laid down a seemingly impossible
me a thousand white horses, one
black ear, and you can marry my
Ruchika prayed to Varuna, god of water,
and the god gave him the thousand

horses, each with one black eye. In return for these horses as gifts, Ruchika was allowed to marry Satyavati.

Pashu: Animal Tales from India



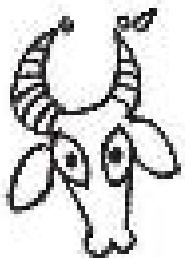
Golden deer

Once upon a time, in the forest, alor Lakshman and Rama were fighting with the forces of the demon king, Ravana. Sita and talk kingdon that, I alone two brothers away his servant, Maricha turned into a beautiful

the form of a golden deer and Maricha turned into a beautif

fine horns and magnificent skin
in sunlight. Sita saw this strange
Ram to get it for her.

To make her happy, Ram



90

Devdutt P

and set out in chase of the deer, determined to catch it, dead or alive. If dead, the deerskin would serve as a mat for Sita; if alive, it would make a pretty pet. 'You stay back and guard Sita,' Ram instructed Lakshman.

Hours passed. There was no deer. Then suddenly, a voice came, 'Save me, Lakshman! Save me, Ram. But it was in fact Maricha, who sounded like Ram. Hearing this, Sita had to rush to Ram's rescue. With both

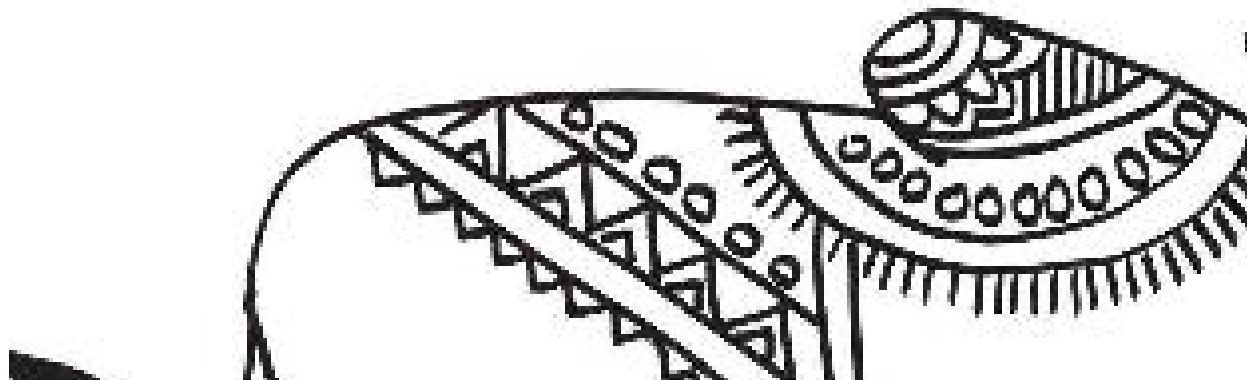
Sita was all alone in the hut, until
Ravana the opportunity he was
deer was instrumental in shaping
Ramayana.

Pashu: Animal Tales from

Kamadhenu.

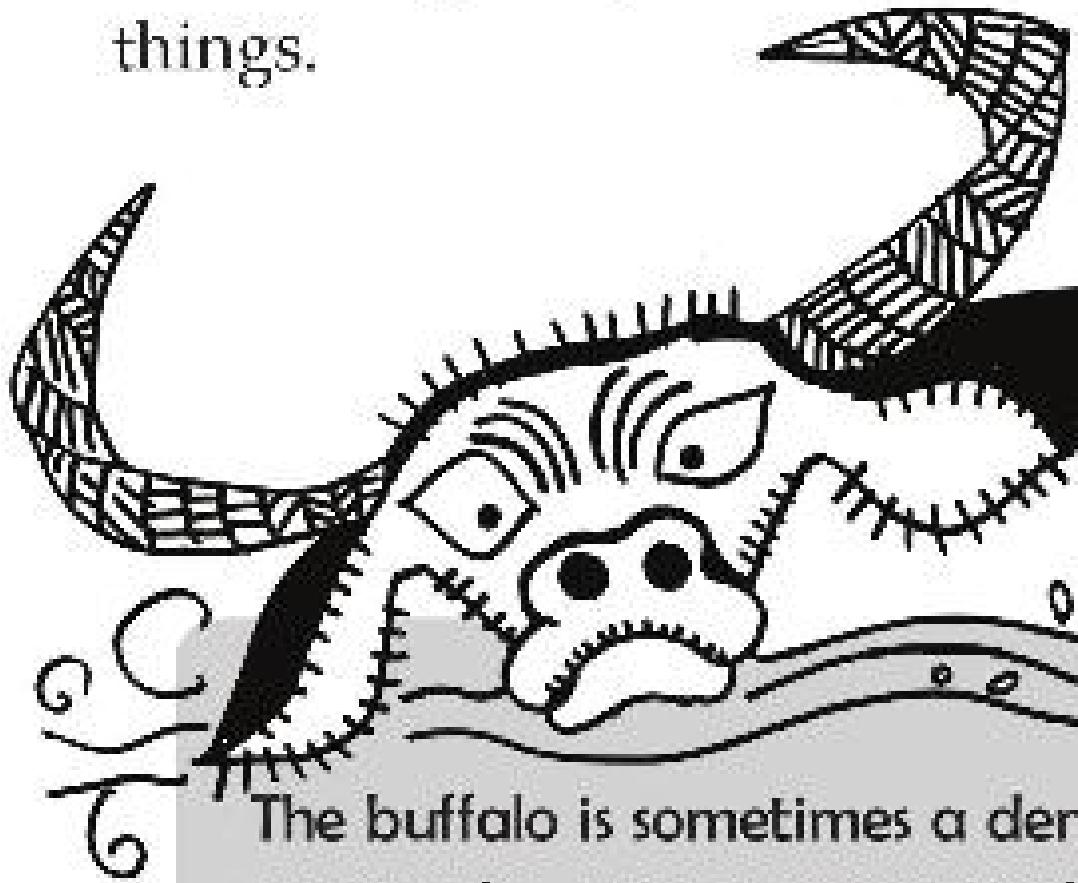
She was a magical cow of the gods that emerged from the ocean and was given to Rishi Vasishta. She could not only produce milk but also anything else that anyone wanted. Naturally, many people tried to steal her, but whenever one of them ended up being caught, he would be turned into a stone statue.

What people did not realize was that Kamadhenu could give anything that she wanted, her keeper, Rishi Vasishta, could give anything. That is why Kamadhenu was always under his care.





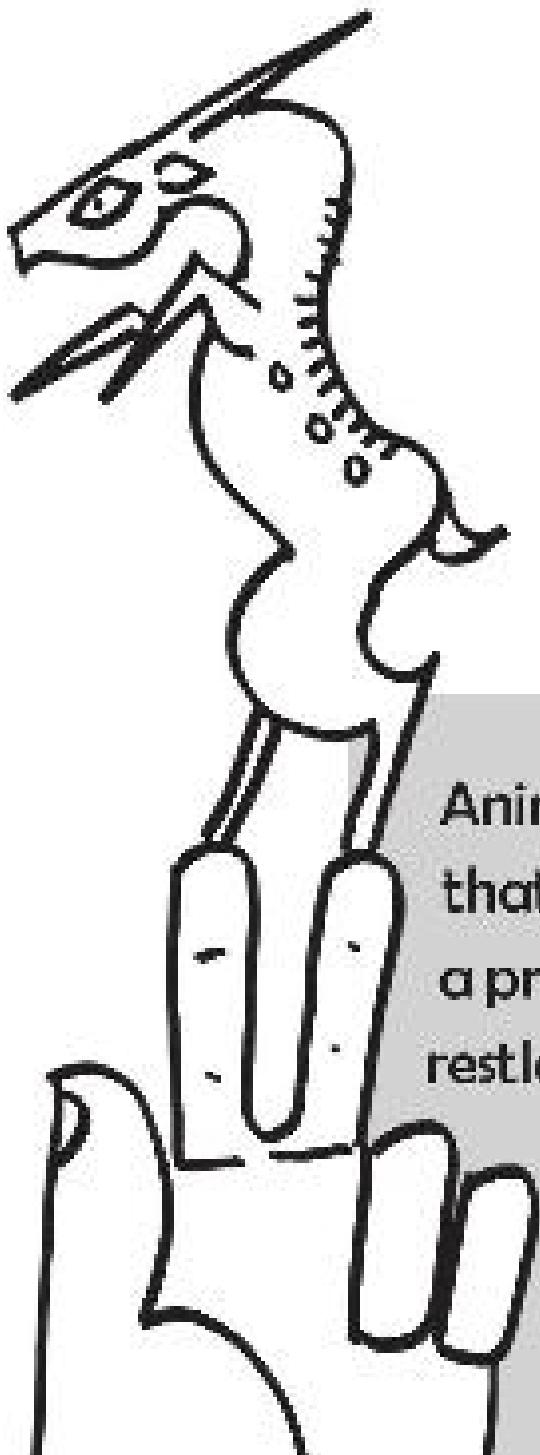
All three were celestial cows, who had no desire of man. But they were always there, who desired nothing. They ran away from those who were greedy and kept asking for things.



The buffalo is sometimes a demon or an asura who was overpowered by the goddess Durga who rides a lion.

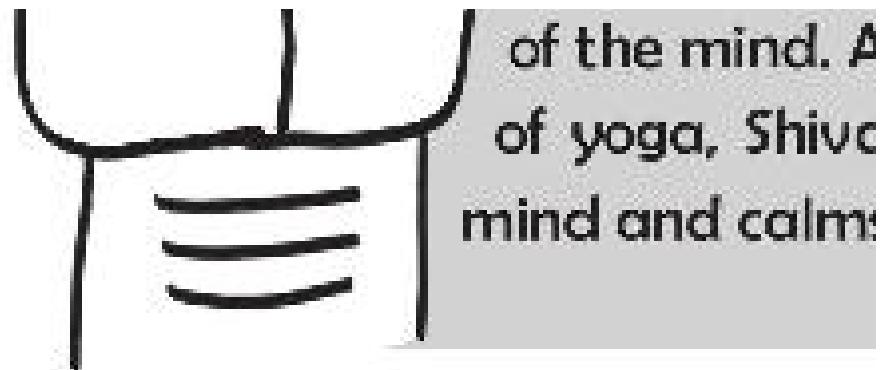
of India, the greatest devotee of Mhaso-ba, or Pota-raja, which king. Thus the buffalo is both seen in the Puranas.

Pashu: Animal Tales from

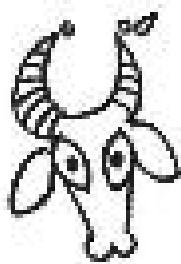


Animals are usually
restless and anxious.
that, if not careful,
a predator. The de-

Pashupati,
shown holding
of his hands.
The restless



of the mind. A
of yoga, Shiva
mind and calm:



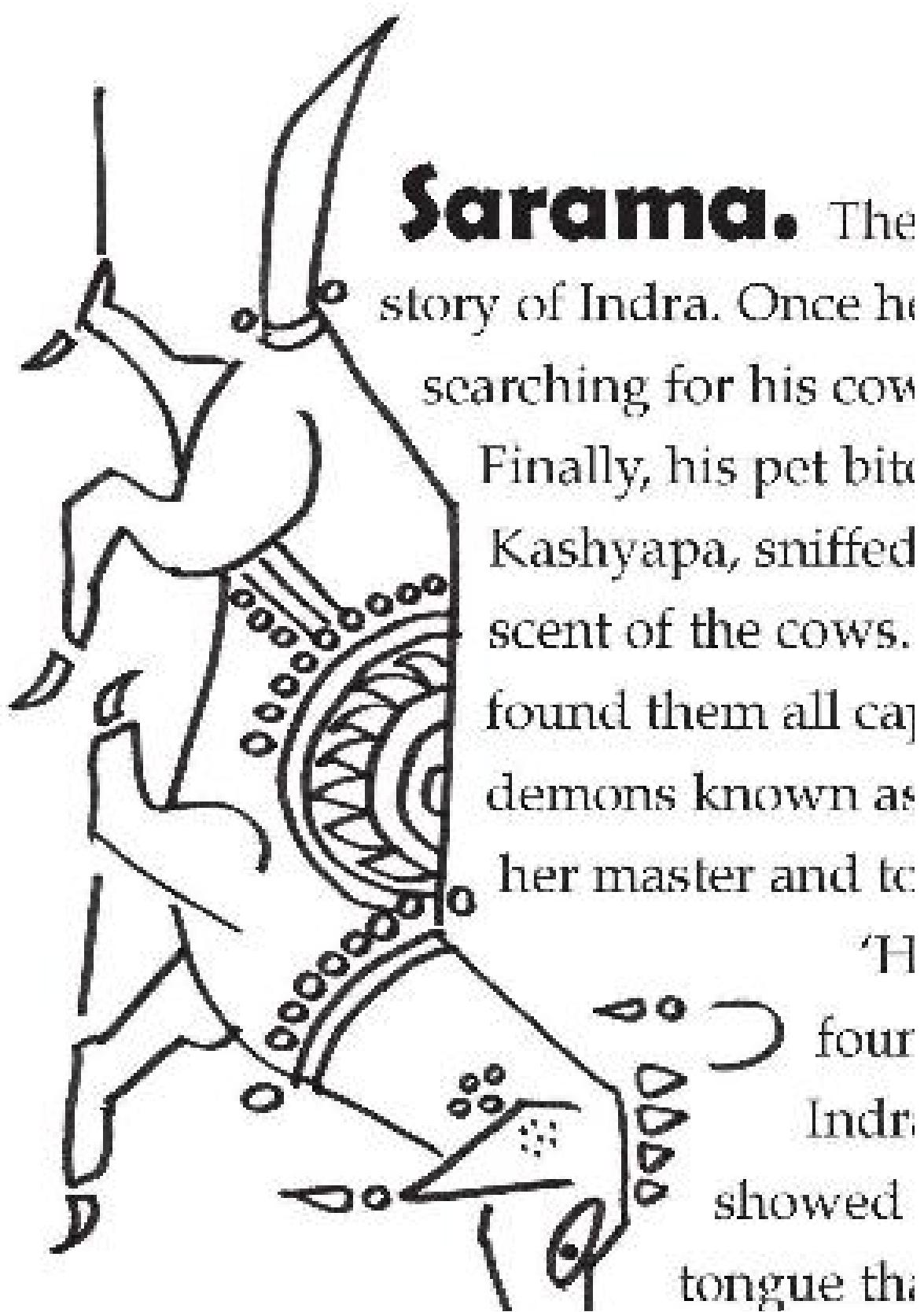
94

Devdutt P

Sarama's with p







Sarama.

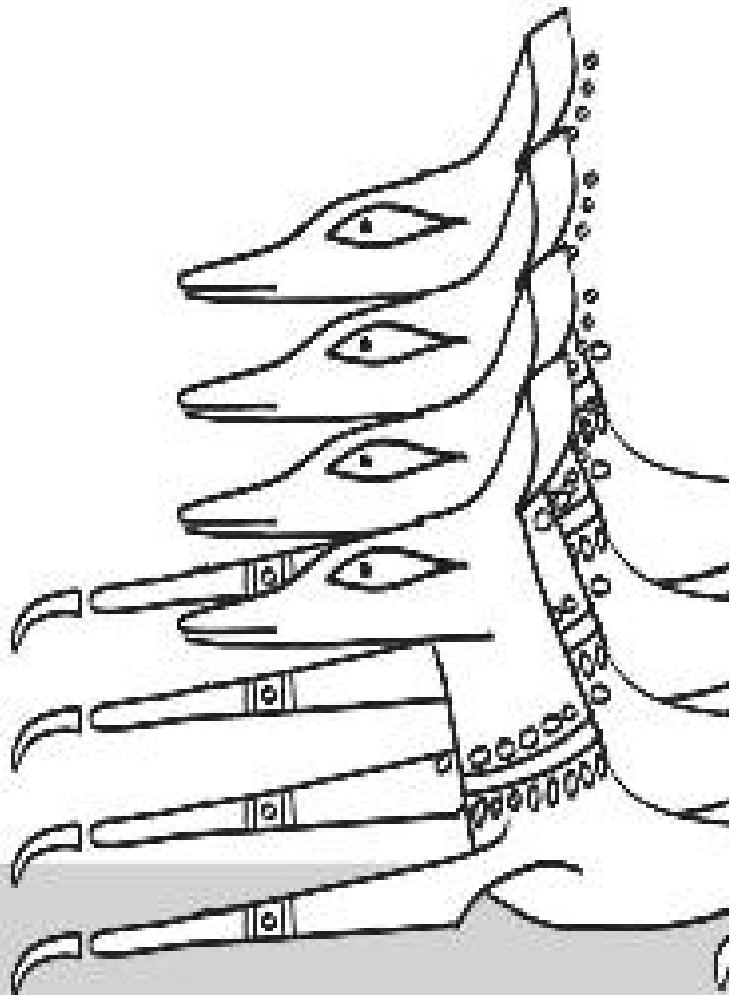
The story of Indra. Once he was searching for his cows. Finally, his pet bison, Kashyapa, sniffed out the scent of the cows. Indra found them all caught in the claws of demons known as the Saramas. Her master and teacher, the sage Kashyapa,

'H

four
Indra
showed
tongue thi

udders of th
apologized t
thanked her for her help and
to liberate his cows from the





Dattatreya, the teacher of teachers, the guru of gurus, always walks with four dogs in front of him and four behind him. The insecure dog turns back to look at him and the

follows him. The dogs are four Vedas, books of wisdom. Lakshmi, goddess of wealth.

Pashu: Animal Tales from

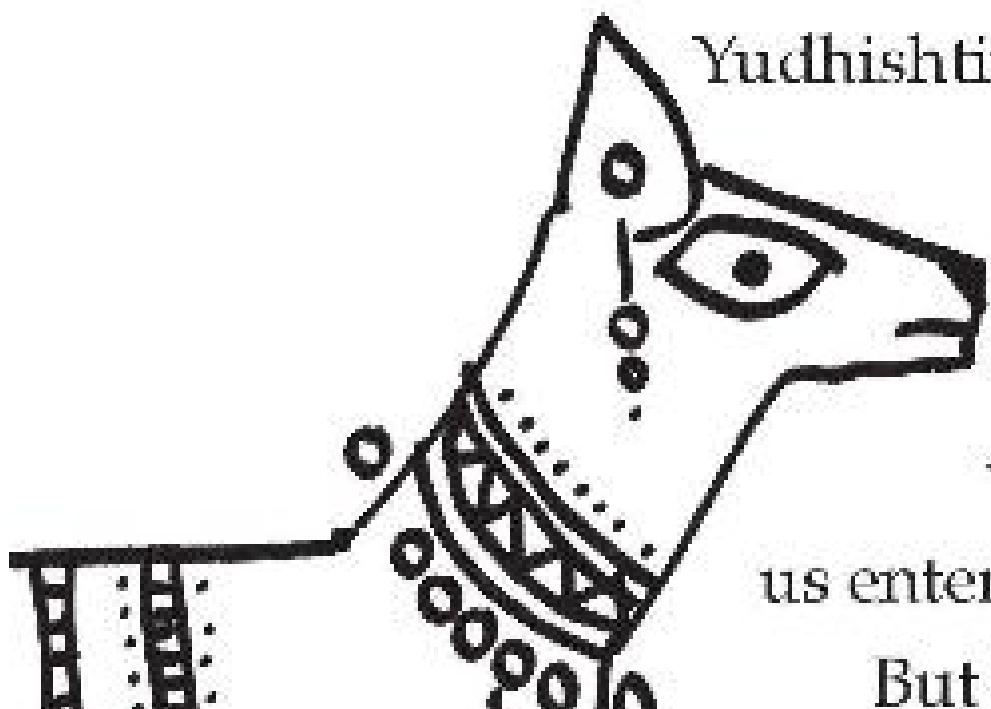
No dogs in heaven

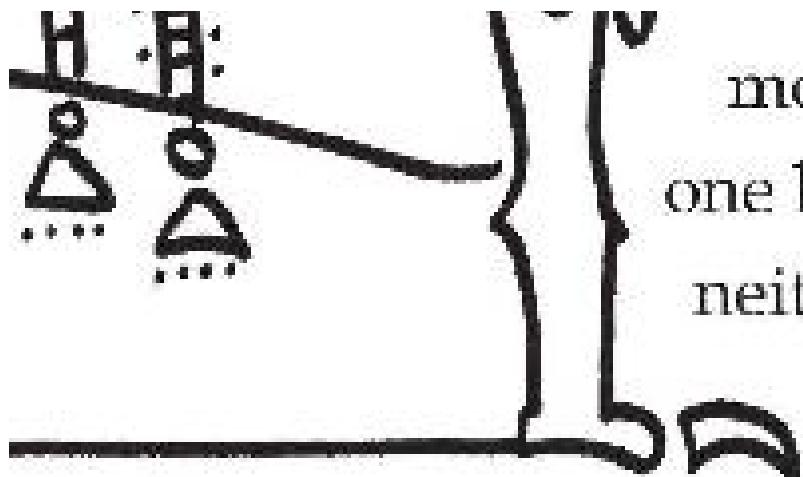
their kingdom for thirty-six years. They had five brothers and their wife Draupadi had given birth to five sets of twins. As they were growing old, they decided it was time to retire. So they gave up their kingdom and all their possessions to their children and their subjects and went into the mountains. 'Where will we live?' asked their wife Draupadi.

Yudhishtira.

'To paradise,' he replied. 'The most virtuous among us enter.'

But as the six





mountains, they :
one by one. Yudhis
neither his wife no
considered v



gods to enter paradise.

Finally, he alone stood at
the gates of heaven.

The gods welcomed
him, but said, 'Only
you can enter, not that dog
behind you.' Yudhishtira turned
saw a dog wagging its tail behind
him. It had followed the Pandavas
from the streets of their city right
to the gates of paradise, surviving
treacherous trek up the mountain
that had claimed the lives of the
others.



'Why not?' asked Yudhishti
'He has taken the same path as I
equal rights.' The gods argued th
welcome in heaven but dogs we

Pashu: Animal Tales from

countered that the difference between
humans was but that of the flesh.
The same. 'If the dog is not allowed
will not enter either,' he said firmly.

The gods smiled and blessed him.
'You have passed your final test. The
dharma is about considering
your willingness to stand up
for your own entry to paradise, you
know that you are a true upholder of
the law; therefore, enter.'

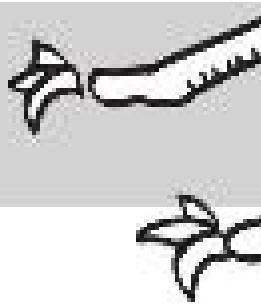




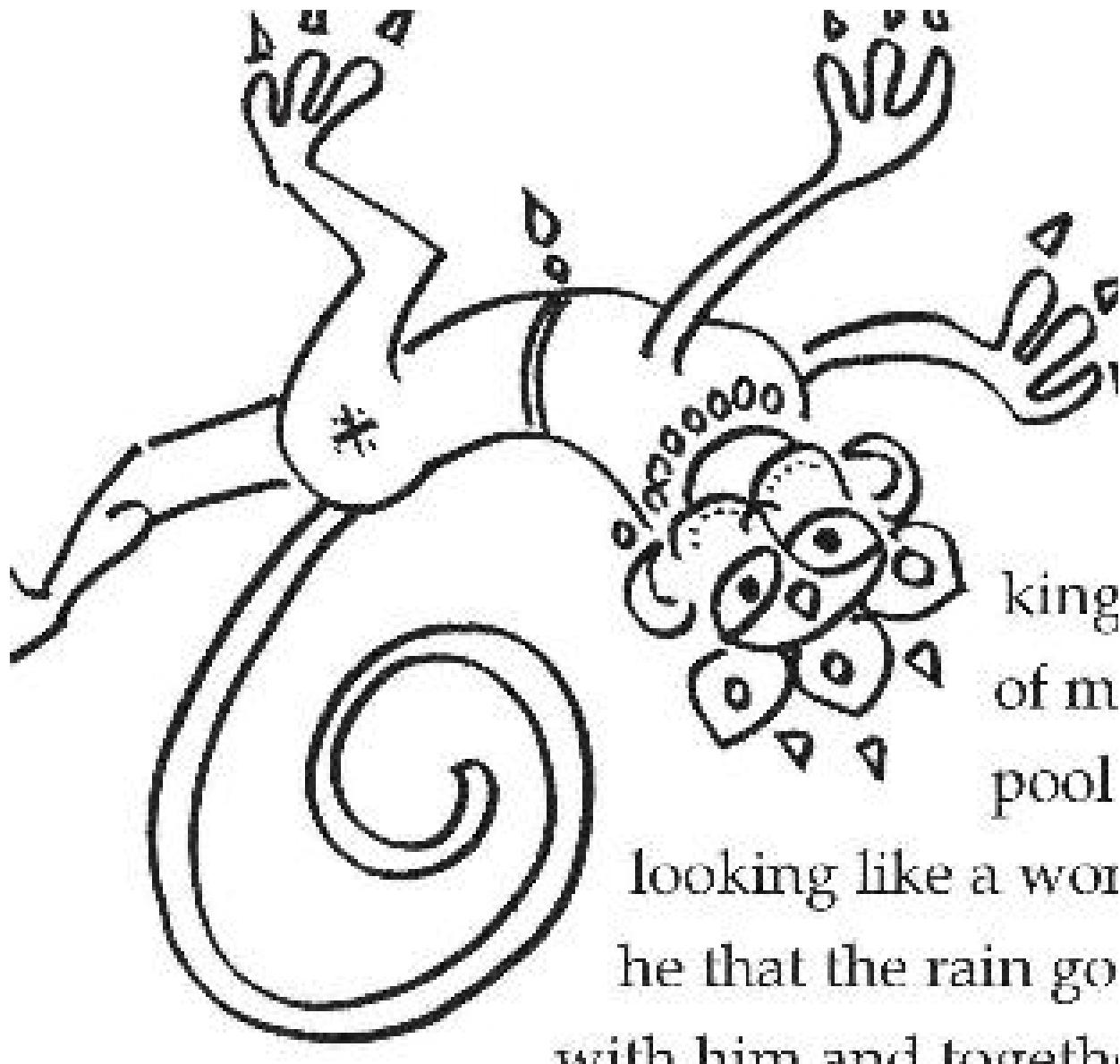
Devdutt P

Shiva in his most fearsome
Bhairava, the lord of bhaya or
he is the guardian of a city.
watchman who rides a dog. Ego
represents the ego. The ego
mind which seeks attention at
the outside world. When the ego
it is happy, like a dog wagging
whining and bending its tail when
not care for it, the ego feels
not acknowledged and validated.
Like a dog barking to ~~protect~~
protect its territory, the ~~ego~~
ego gets nasty when it
feels threatened. By riding

Bhairava tames
our insecure ego.



Pashu: Animal Tales from

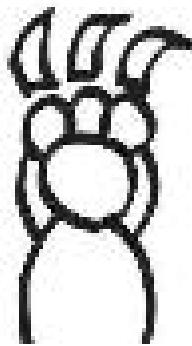


king
of m
pool

looking like a wor
he that the rain go
with him and togeth

Vali. Later, even the sun god,
him and together they had a
Riksha was happy with the cl
into the pool and turned into
His two sons did not recogni

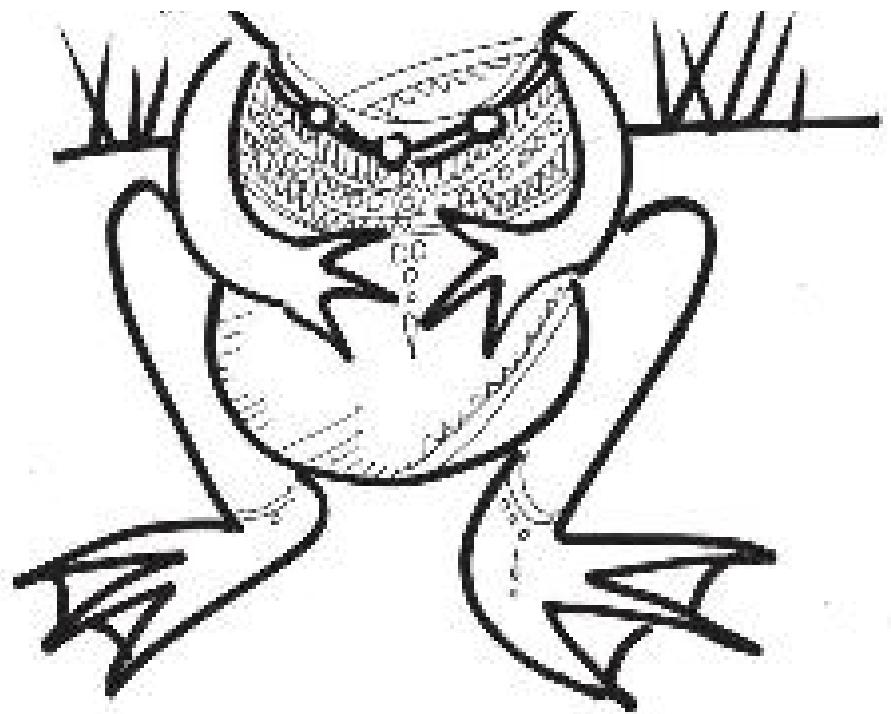
and took shelter in the hermitage. Gautama and his wife Ahalyā, their children and decided to raise the day, Gautama got angry with

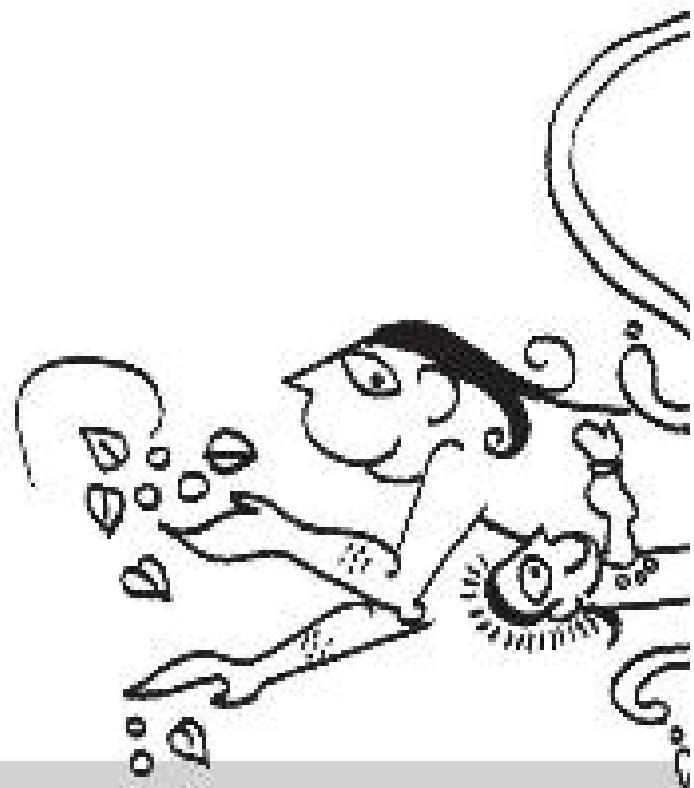


said, 'You are no better than monkeys. May you both turn into monkeys.'

The two brothers immediately turned into monkeys and ran into the forest where they were given shelter by Riksha, who had been watching them all the time.







There are two kinds of leaders.
their followers do

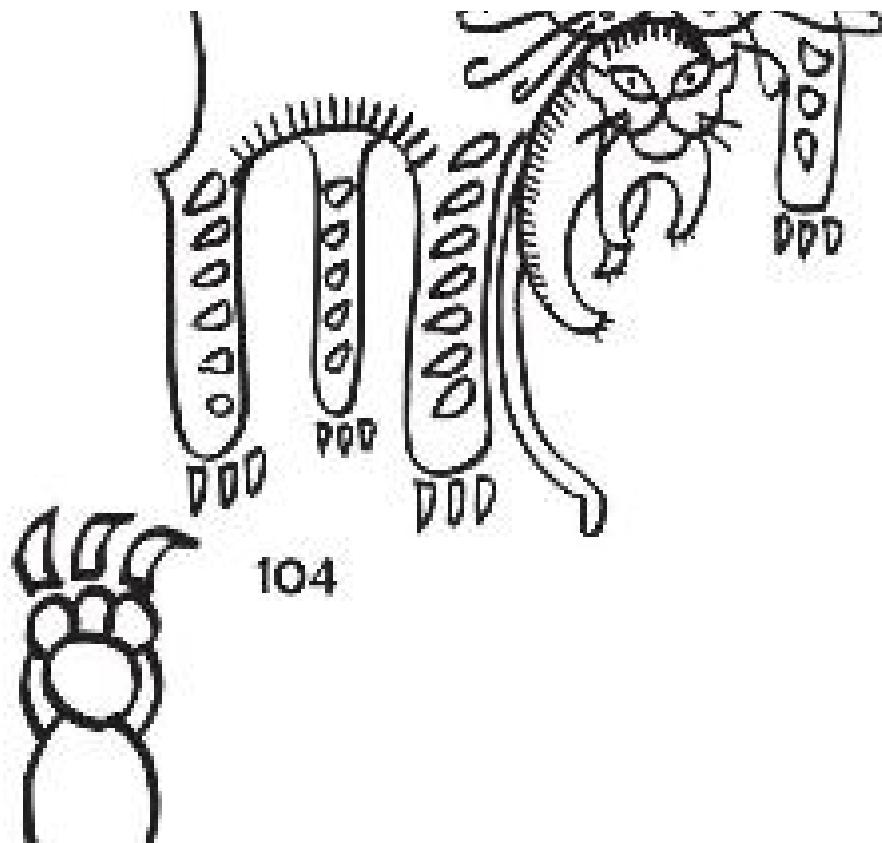
takes care

carrying them

their neck from safe place
expect followers to cling

monkeys

mothers.



Devdutt P

Jambavan.

When R
search of his wife, Sita, who had
the rakshasa king Ravana, he w
called Jambavan. Jambavan was
sound advice, Ram was able to
rescue Sita.

'I want to
offer you a gift,' a
grateful Ram told
Jambavan.

Jambavan replied,
'I am an animal. All that I
need is in the forest. So I
don't really have anything to as



But during our time together, I would feel like to fight you. Then

Ram smiled and said, 'In the Ram, I shall not fight you. But if

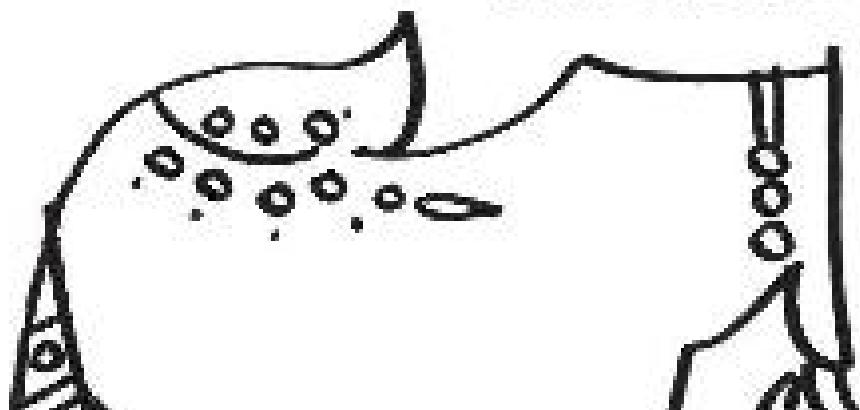
Pashu: Animal Tales from

I shall be reborn as Krishna,
I
good reason to fight.'

Hundreds of years later,
earth in the form of Krishna a
called Mathura. In Mathura, t
nobleman, Surajit, who had b
the Syamantaka, by the sun g
Prasenajit, who had gone on a
wearing the jewel, was found

To find out what had hap-

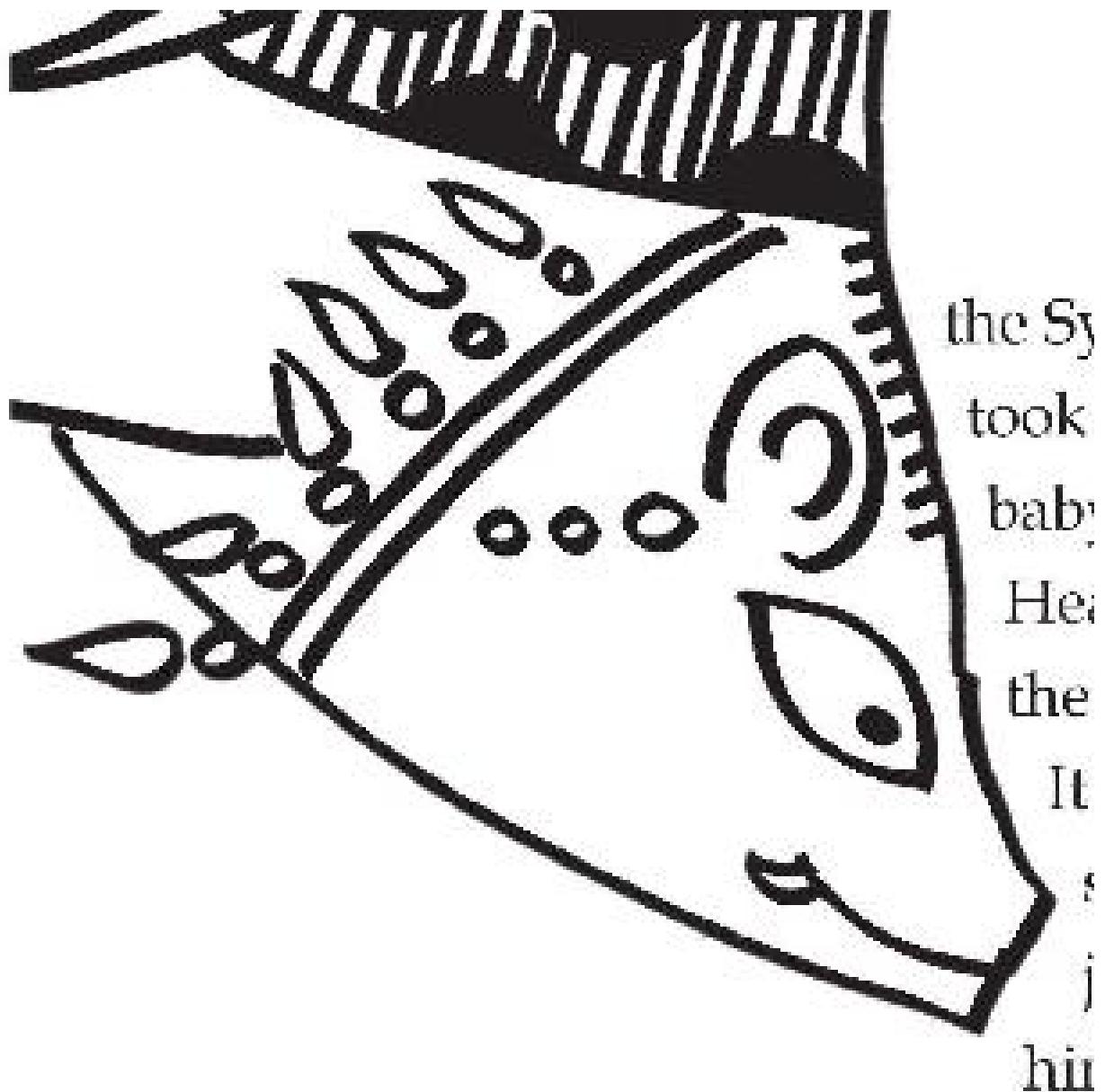
around Pr
and four
He follow
came up





away from
a bear's foot
these tracks tell
a baby bear played

Devdutt P



bear wrestled long and hard, exchanging punches and striking each other. Krishna managed to subdue the

'If you have subdued me,' said the bear, 'you must be Ram reborn. And if you

salute you and offer you my daughter Jambavati as your wife.' And so it was that Jagannatha's desire of fighting Ram was fulfilled. A tiger named Jambavati became Krishna's wife.

Pashu: Animal Tales from India



ago
fore
anim
neve
their
Ravana kidnap
vulture, Jatayu, laid dow
Later, monkeys and bear
where Ravana had take
on the island of Lanka in
and became king of the immor

and bears and the monkeys
built a bridge of stones
They then created an army
from monkeys and apes from
Lanka to defeat Ravana



Manikantha.

A king and queen were unhappy because they had no children for many years. So they consulted a sage named Hari and Hara, who gave them a secret. The king and queen followed the sage's advice and soon became pregnant. The queen gave birth to two sons, one given by Hari and Hara, and another given by the queen. The queen wanted her own son to be the heir to the throne, not Manikantha. She came up with a plan to make Manikantha the adopted son of the king and queen.

Manikantha. She pretended to be a doctor to say that the only thing her was the milk of a tigress. She said that Manikantha should get the milk

Pashu: Animal Tales from India

'Why not another warric
asked the king.

'No,' said the queen. 'I w
milk for me. No other.'

So Manikantha went to t

tigress to milk. The

this was an el

queen to get i

prayed to

hi



sight. Manika



a tiger. Behind him

his hand w

This was

The

that her foster son was no ordinary man. He was a child of the gods, a god sent from heaven. Manikantha told the queen that he should renounce all claims to the throne and that he should be the king of the land. Manikanta ascended a mountain and sat there in a yogic posture. He remained there on that mountain, surrounded by dense forests. He is called Ayyappa and his mountain is called Sabari-malai.





The lion is said to be the kin
most powerful animal in the
enemies. It is not afraid of
other beast. And yet, it has
Durga, who rides it the way ot
Durga is invoked by soldiers b
goddess of kings and warrior
who cannot be conquered'. E
giving out a message. She is s

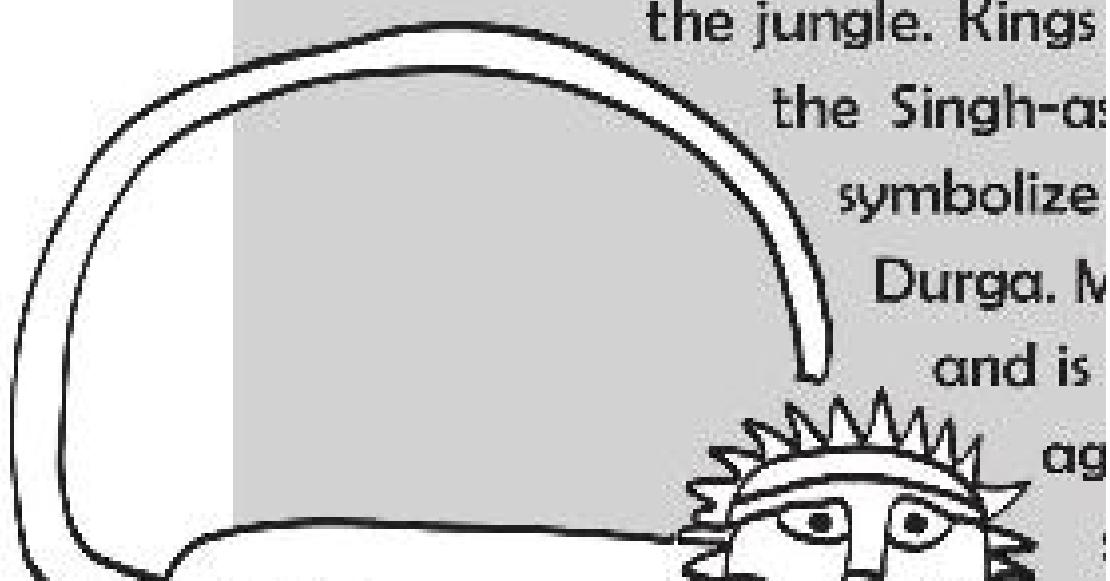
the jungle. Kings

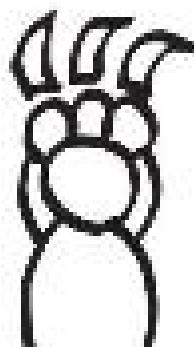
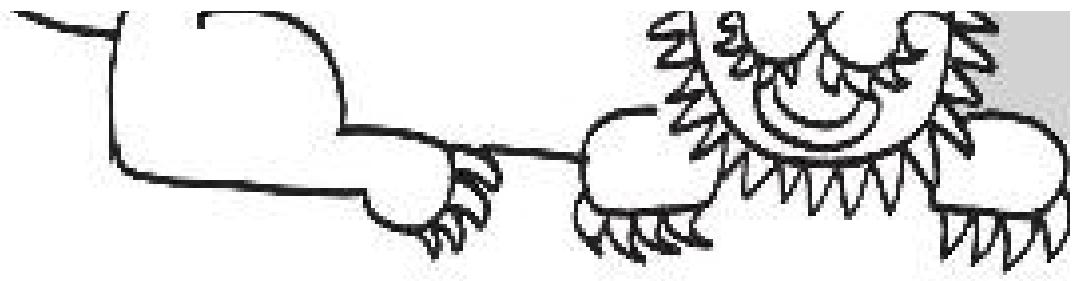
the Singh-as
symbolize

Durga. N

and is

ag



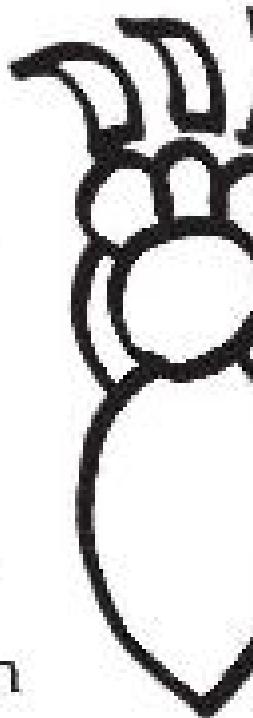


112

Devdutt P

Dilip. One day, a king called Dilip, who belonged to the Raghu clan, saw a lion attacking a cow. He rushed to the cow's rescue, raising his bow and threatening the lion with an arrow. The lion said, 'If I don't eat the cow, what will I eat? Do you want me and my children to die of hunger?'

The king realized that in so doing, he was inadvertently making the



'Instead,' he said, 'but spare the lion.'

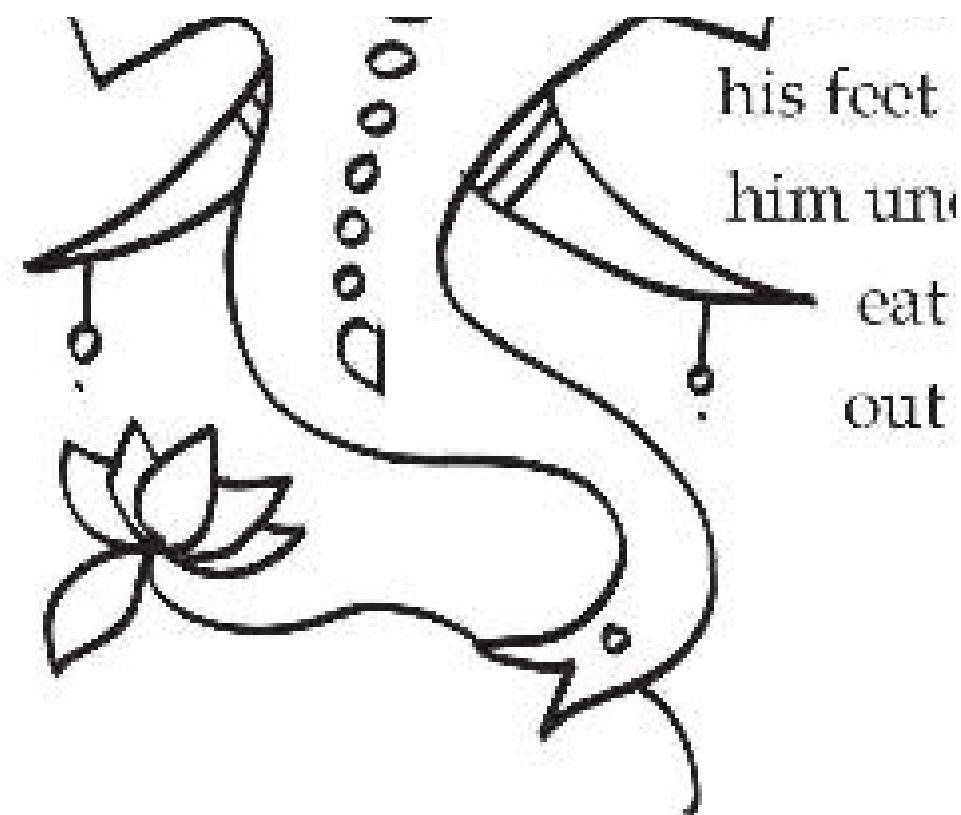
The lion was greatly pleased by this declaration. 'This act of sacrifice is the hallmark of dharma. Animals

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Only humans can. And
only when humans do
this will they realize
divinity,' it said and blessed

King Dilip



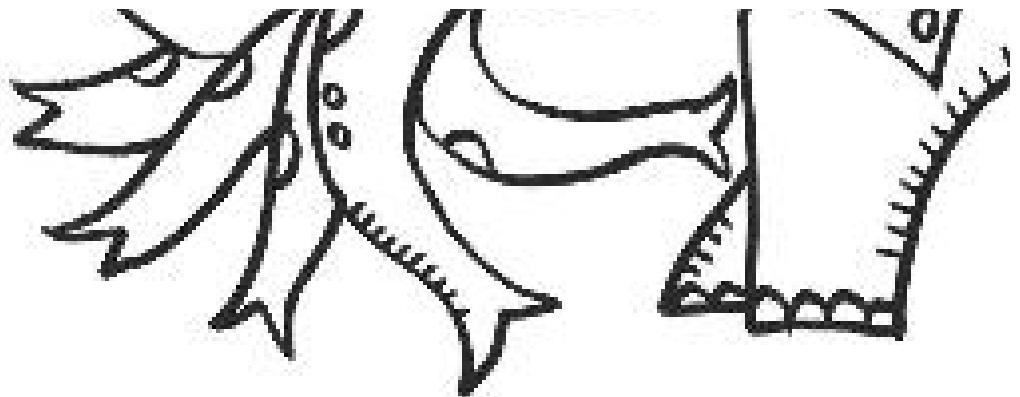


his feet
him un
eat
out

his queens came to his rescue. He cried out to Vishnu in the heat. Immediately rushed to Gajendra Garuda. He hurled his discus at the crocodile, who immediately released him.

Indra, king of the sky, rides the elephant white steed





Pashu: Animal Tales from

Ram's squirrel

bridge across the sea to the island where the demon-king Ravana had taken his wife, Sita. Many helped Ravana's monkeys mostly, but also clever crows. One of those who helped would jump into the water and so that the grains stuck to his



up the bridge
grain
the bridge
The nut
squirrel



116

Devdutt P

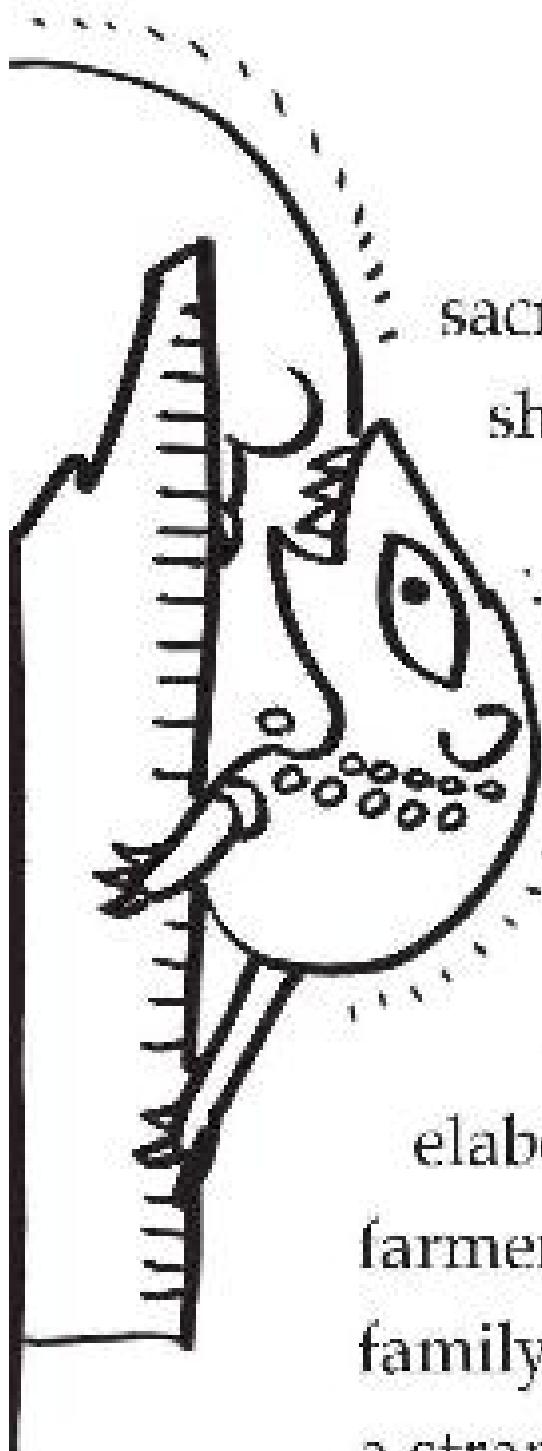
annoying. He kept coming in th
shoved him aside. Ram, howeve
up and comforted him. As a sign
encouragement and appreciatio
fingers create stripes on the squ

The golden mo

Yudhishtira once performed a g
end of which, hundreds of peop
ceremony drew to a close, the p
sight. A mongoose entered the s
its body shining like gold. The r
to enter the sacrificial pit, where

earlier and received the offering for the gods. The fire had been lit and was now full of ash. The mongrel dog stepped forward and spat against the ash and said, 'If this

*Pashu: Animal Tales from
Bihar and Jharkhand*



sacrifice, the other half of it
shine like gold.' But that

The mongoose went to
the great Yudhishtira.
a poor man, whose son
body to gold.'

The priests did not know
asked for an explanation.
elaborated, 'A few years ago,
farmer had collected a few grain
family. Just when the family was
a stranger knocked at their door.
old, weary, sick and very hungry.
farmer and his family gave the

they were eating. The strange
satisfied. But that night, the fi-
died of hunger, as they had e-
I entered their house and rub

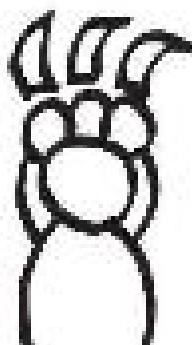
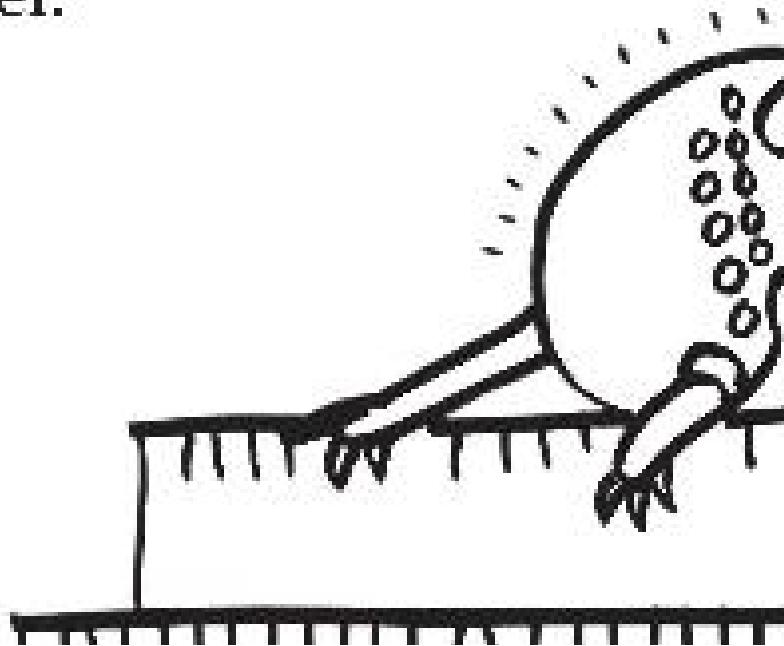
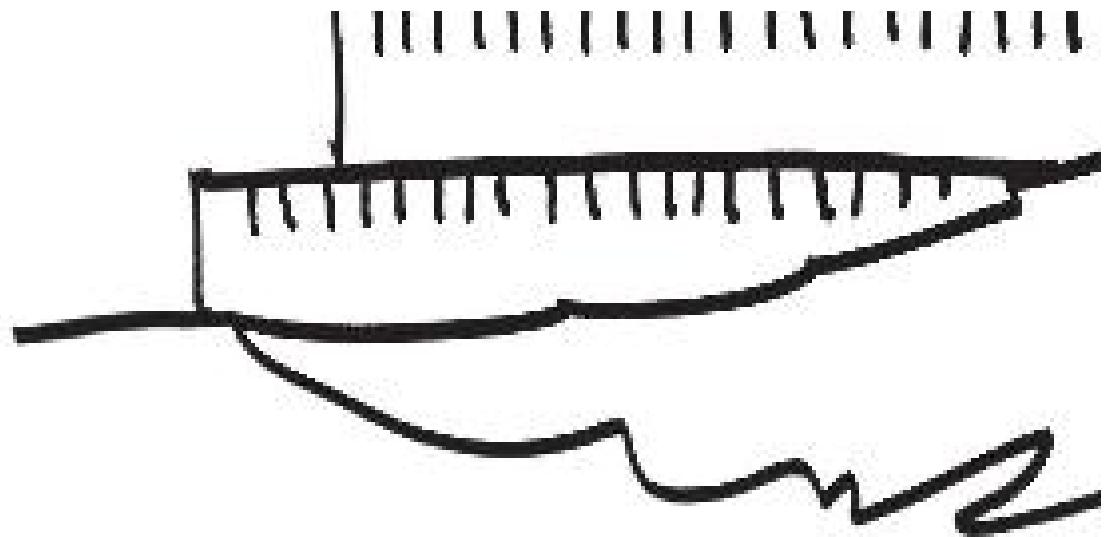


plate on which the rice had been
half my body turned to gold. Si
travelling the world hoping to e
as great as the farmer's so the re
into gold. Unfortunately, I have

And thus Yudhishtira reali
of a true sacrifice was to give up
another.

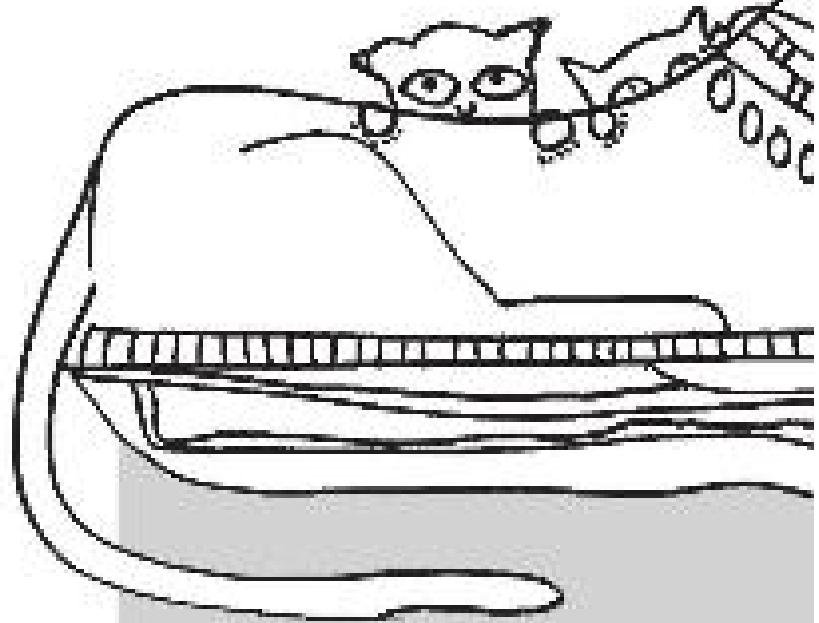




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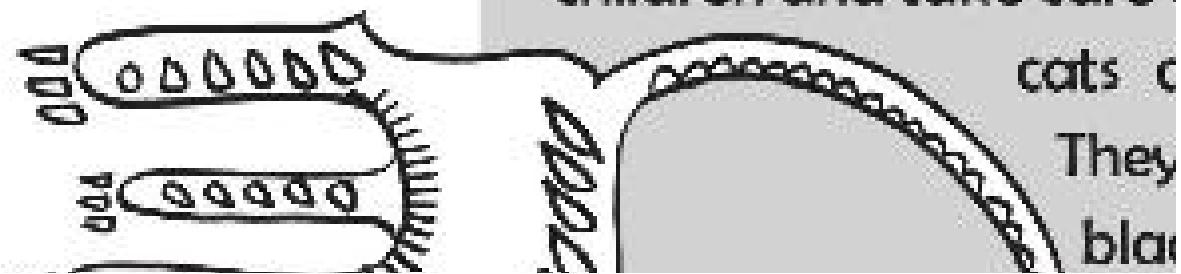
Cat

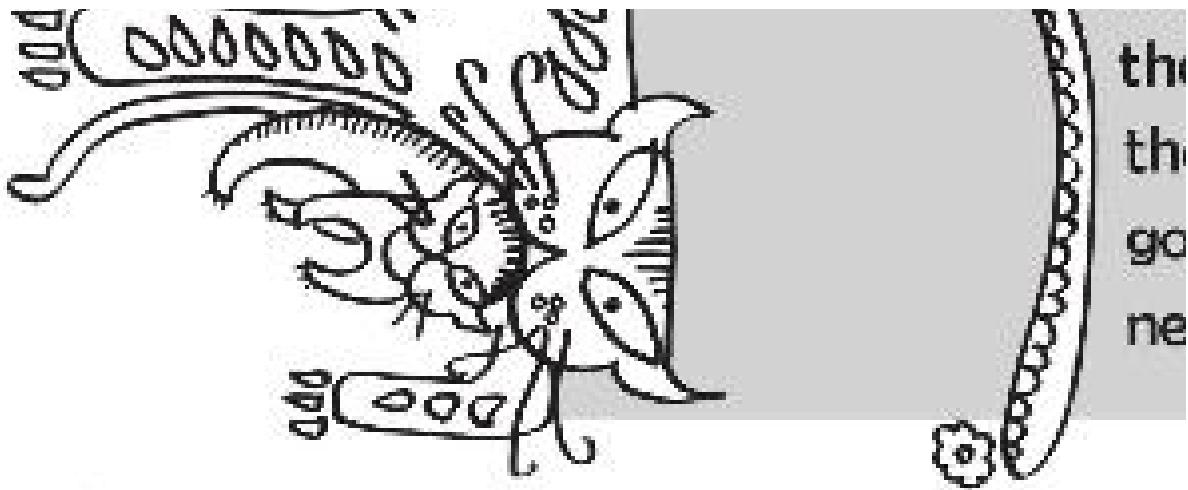
1



Many people in Bengal
is the goddess who he
children and take care

cats c
They
blac





120

Devdutt P

**Surasa's
chicks
who are d**



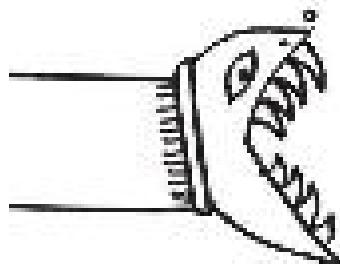


Navagunjara.

a strange creature in the forest
never seen before. It seemed to
be a combination of many animals, with the head of a rooster,
the body of a peacock, the back of a bull,
a lion's waist, a serpent's
tail, and limbs of a human,
a deer, a tiger and an
elephant. At first,
Arjuna thought it was
a monster. He raised
his bow to kill it. But
then he realized that just
because its appearance



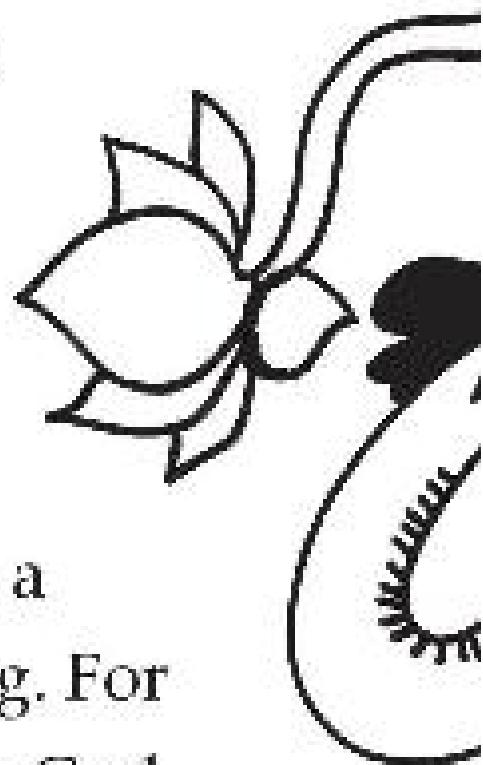
was strange did not mean it was a monster. A creature that does not exist in human imagination can exist in



122

Devdutt P

the imagination
of God. He
lowered his
bow and the
creature raised
its human limb, a
hand, in blessing. For
the creature was God
himself, testing how much
patience and love Arjuna had for
creatures he did not recognize.



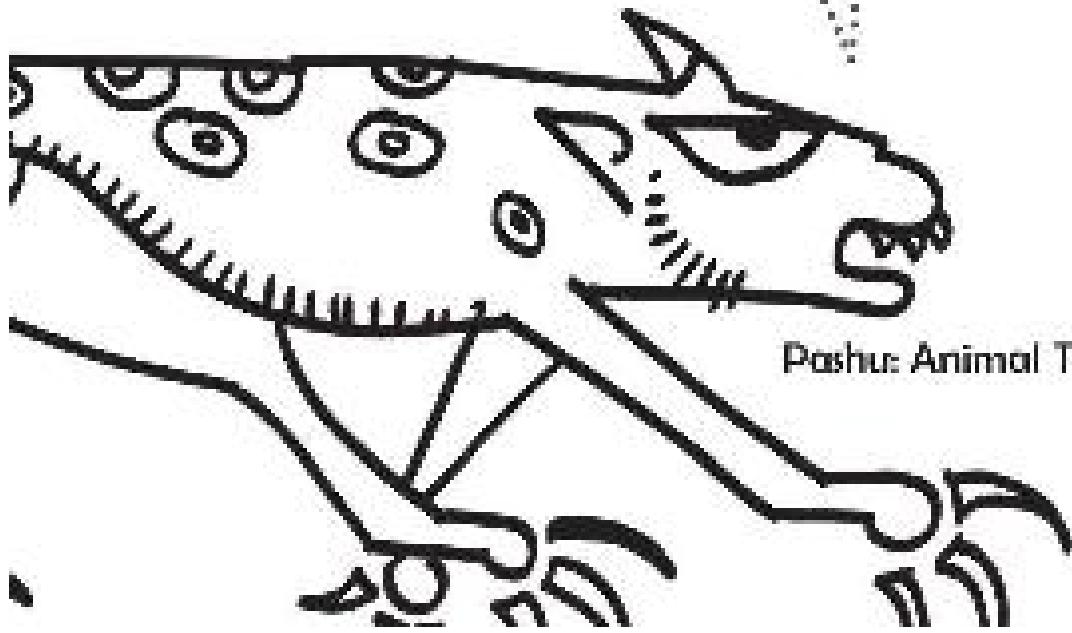
Who is

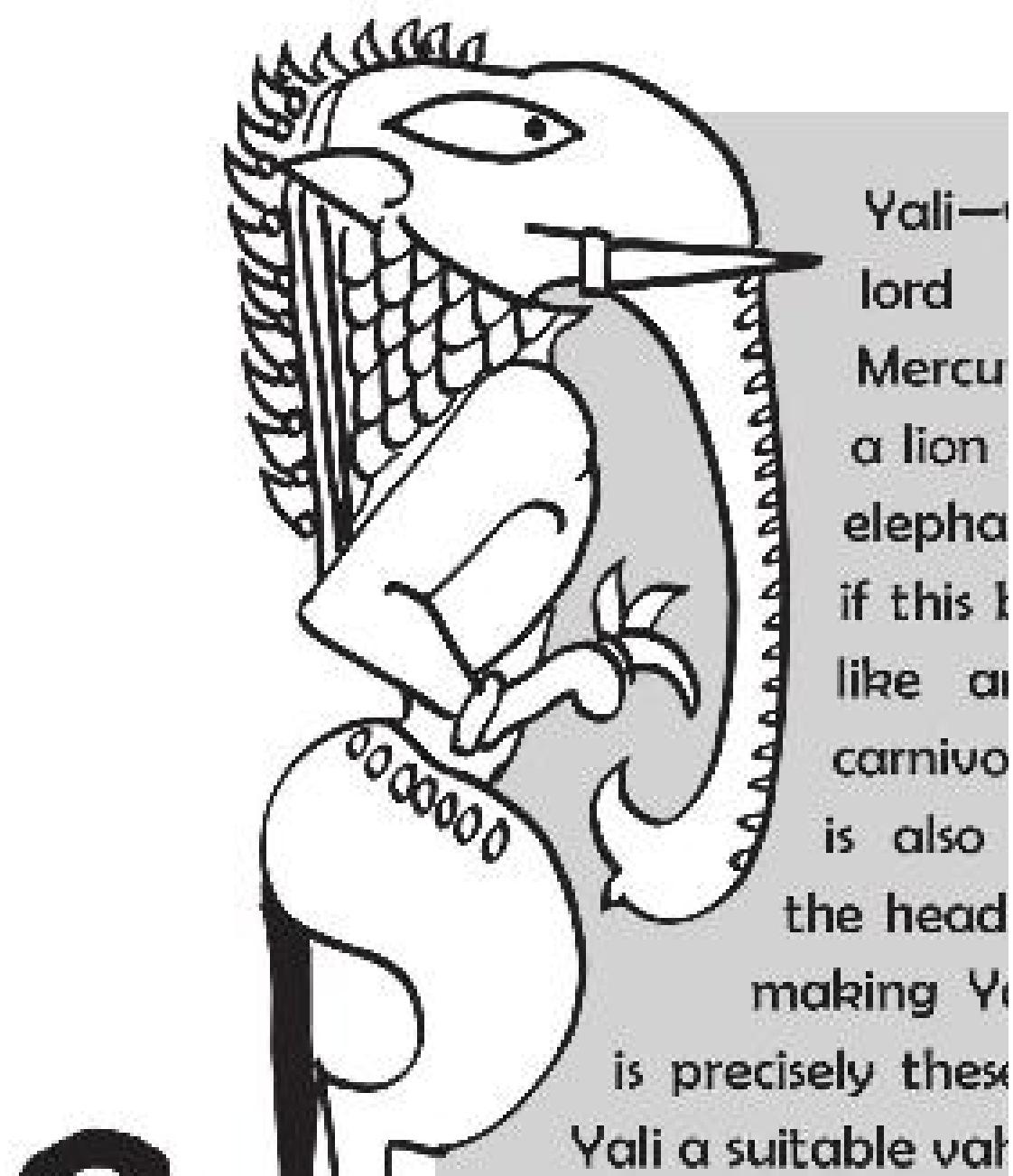


Iumburu



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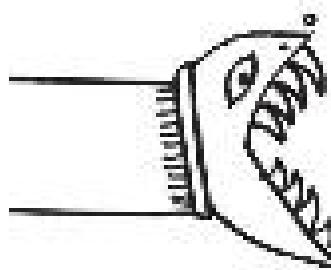




Yali—
lord
Mercur
a lion
eleph
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the head
making Y
is precisely these
Yali a suitable val

ك

shifting, mere



124

Devdutt P

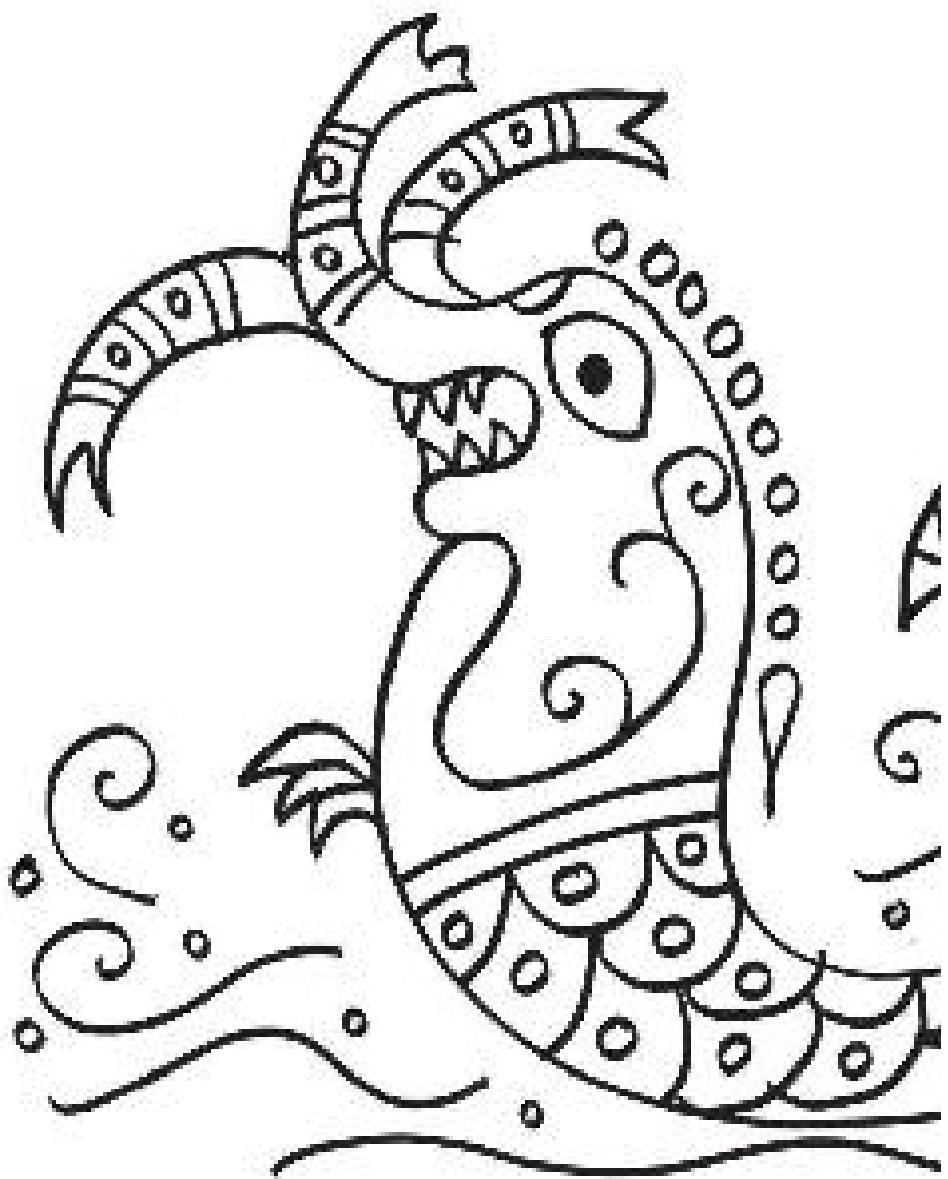
Makaradhvaja.

After Ravana abducted Sita and sea to Lanka, Rama befriended + of Kishkindha, who promised ■ to scour the earth and trace the location where Sita was kept hidden. Amongst the monkeys Hanuman, a vanara so strong th he leapt into the sky, flew across sea and made his way to Lanka, island-kingdom of the rakshasa While he was flying over the sea drop of his sweat fell into the water and was swallowed by a fish. Tl

became pregnant and gave birth called Makaradhvaja.

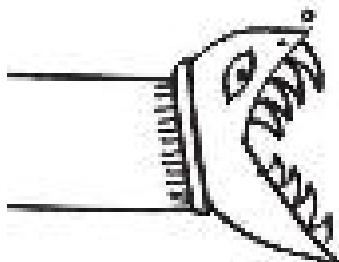
It is said that Makaradhvaj that no one could defeat him in

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man who could be his match
asuras appointed Makaradhv
of Patala, their subterranean]
old monkey came to Patala ai

gates by Makaradvaja. The two were equally matched. Makaradvaja, the half-monkey, realized that this was not overpower, was the father



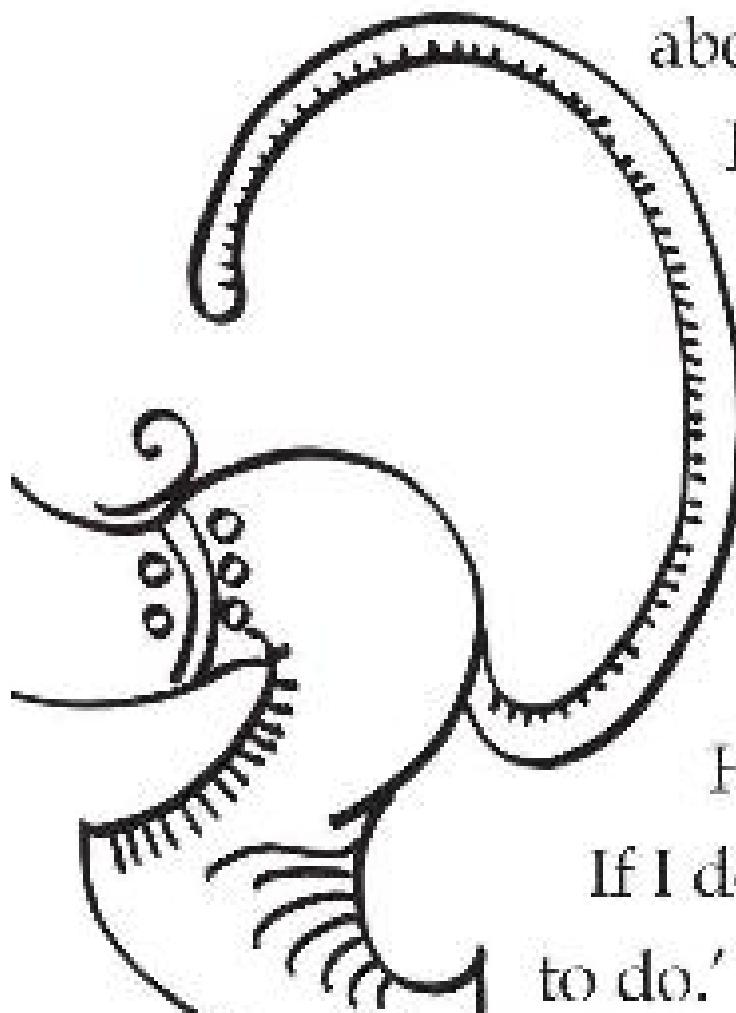
Makara or Capricorn is sometimes seen as a dolphin and sometimes as a crocodile. People believe that it has the head of a crocodile and the tail of a fish. Perhaps it resembles an elephant's trunk. It is a creature that lives in water. When the sun enters the house of Capricorn, it marks the beginning of spring. As a symbol it is associated with spring and warmth and fertility. It also represents wealth and prosperity. To celebrate the arrival of spring, Vishnu wears special earrings that are shaped like a Makara. Kama, the god of love, carries a flag with the symbol of a Makara.

of Makara. Makara is the vahana of both Ganga, the river goddess, as well as Varuna, the

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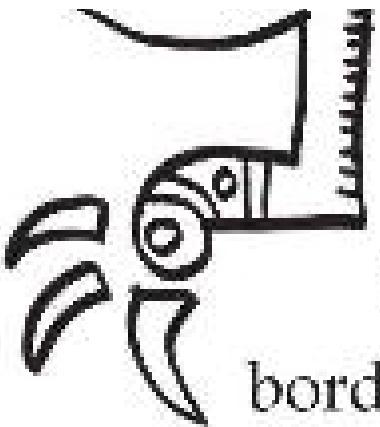
Purushamriga

oldest Pandava, was conduct
succeed he needed a Purusha
there. A Purushamriga is a cr

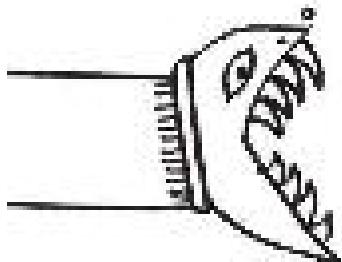


above the waist but
His brother, the n
sent to fetch suc
found him in th
'I will come if y
said the creatur
I catch you befor
Hastinapur, then.'

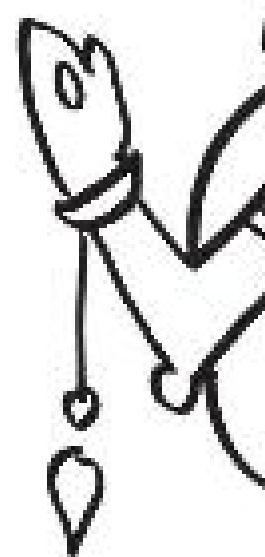
If I don't then I will d
to do.' Bhima took up t



to run. The Purushamri realized that the creature had to use all his might border, just when he put one



into the city of Hastinapur, the Purushamriga caught the other leg and declared victory. 'You are my slave,' he said. Bhima disagreed. As king, Yudhishtira was asked to judge the matter.



Yudhishtira said, 'I will cut Bhima into two. You can have the side you have caught and the other side I will take as mine.'

'Are you willing to kill you

rather than let him be my slave?

'Your half is a slave. My half
am giving you half a slave.'

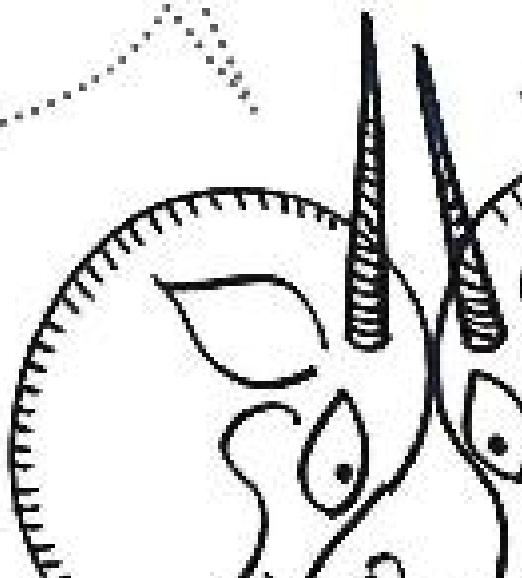
Purushamriga was not sur

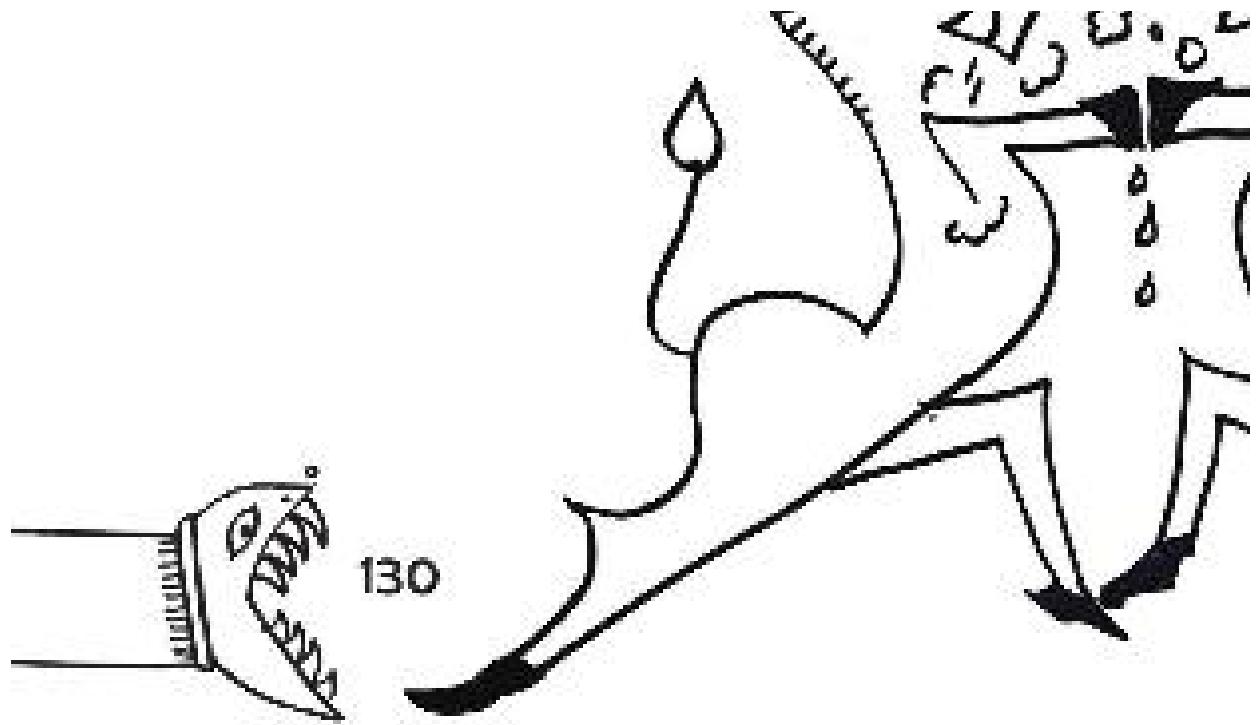
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being fair or clever or stupid.
‘You have made me happy so
free and attend your yagna.’

And thus the yagna was
Purushamriga returned to the

Purushamriga
is a man!





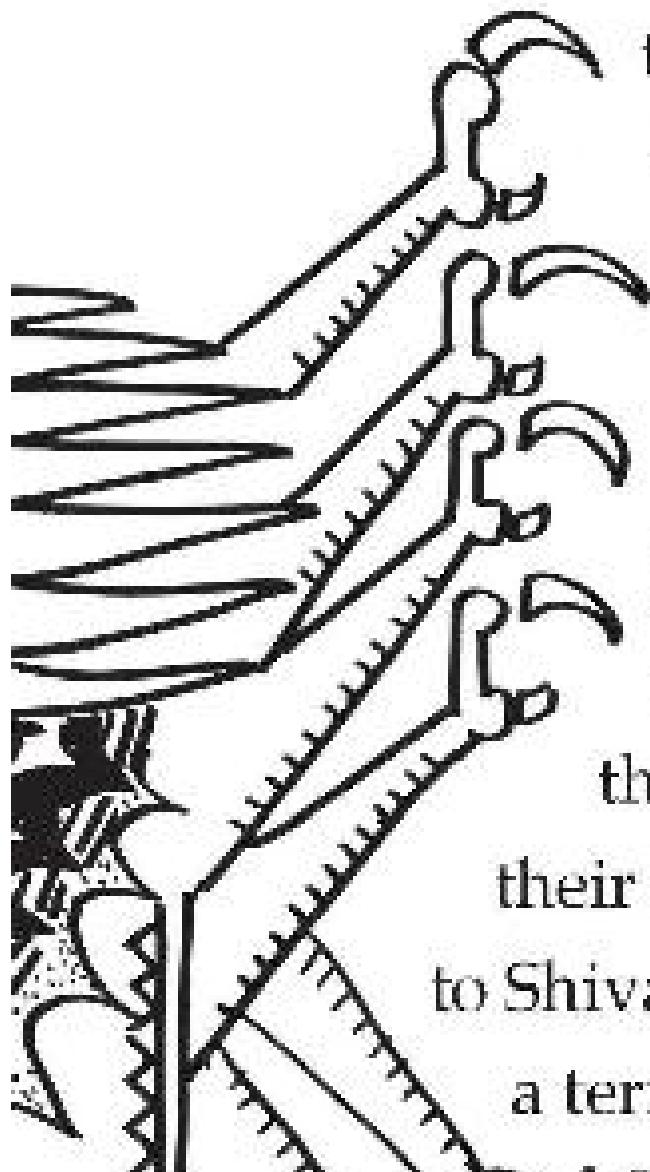
A sage was determined to offer flowers untouched by honeybee. He travelled through the forest and mountains in search of these pure flowers. He had to suffer greatly. Sharp rocks and thorns tore into the soles of his feet. Shiva was so touched by the sage's devotion that he changed the sage's feet into those of a tiger. With his new tiger's paws, the sage could travel through the forests and climb mountains with ease. The sage became known to all.



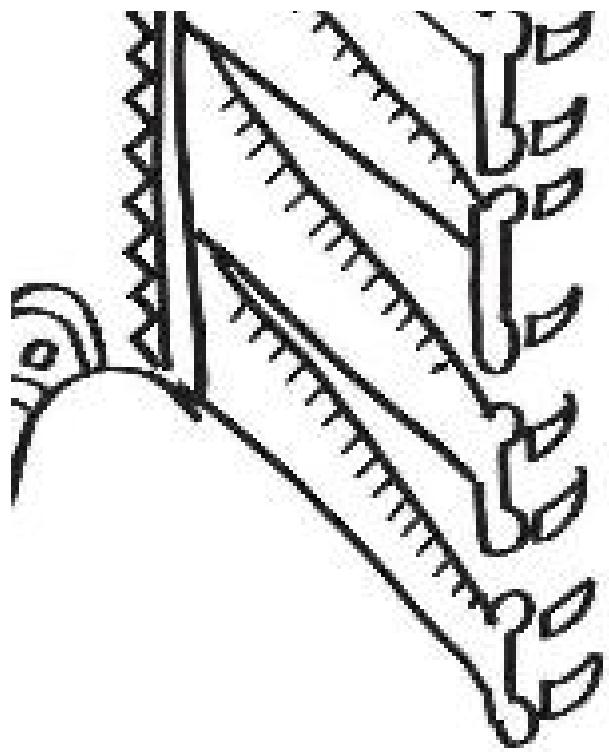
Vyaghrapada—he who has tiger feet

Pashu: Animal Tales from India

Sharabha and Gandaberunda



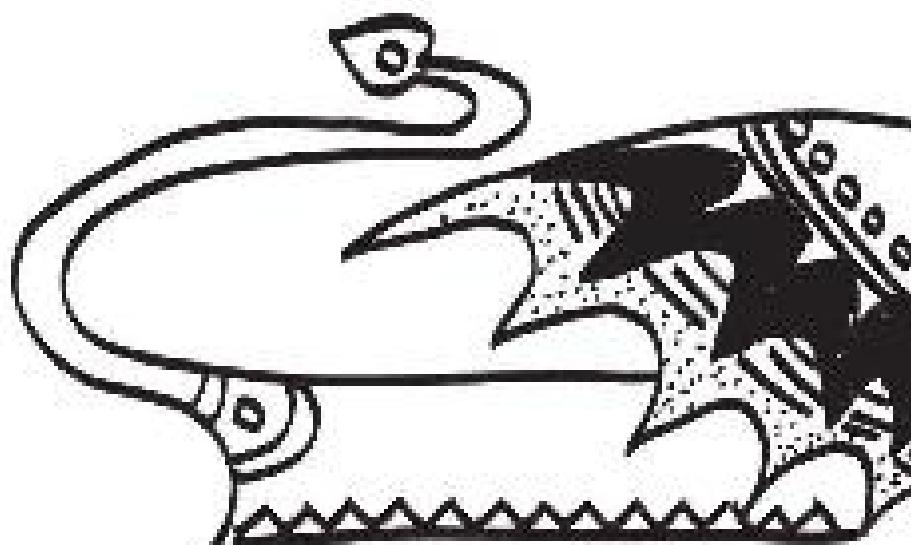
turned into a boar, c
when he turned int
enamoured of the
forgot his divine f
make him return h
his animal forms. B
to confront Vishnu
the lion. So the conce
their father, Brahma, wh
to Shiva. Shiva immediatel
a terrifying beast – the S

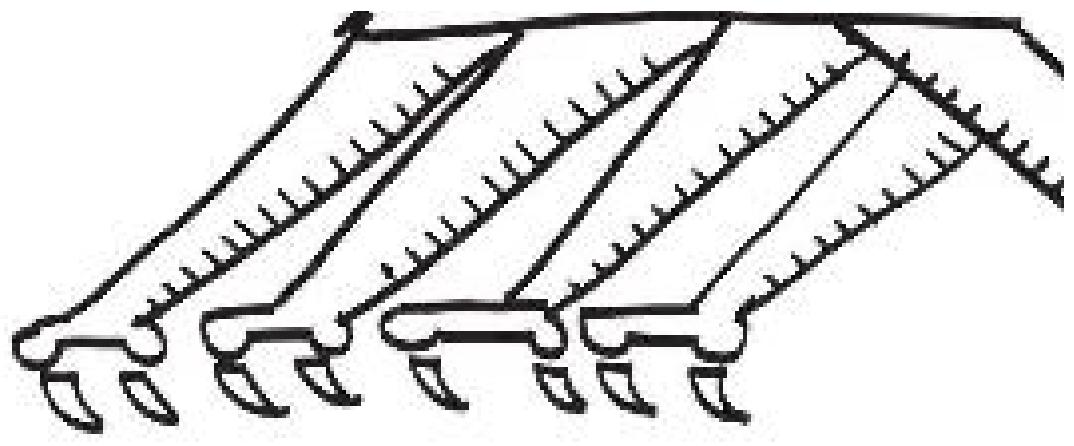


Vishnu from his anit
Sharabha had a lion-
legs, sharp claws, a |
long tail. It rose fron

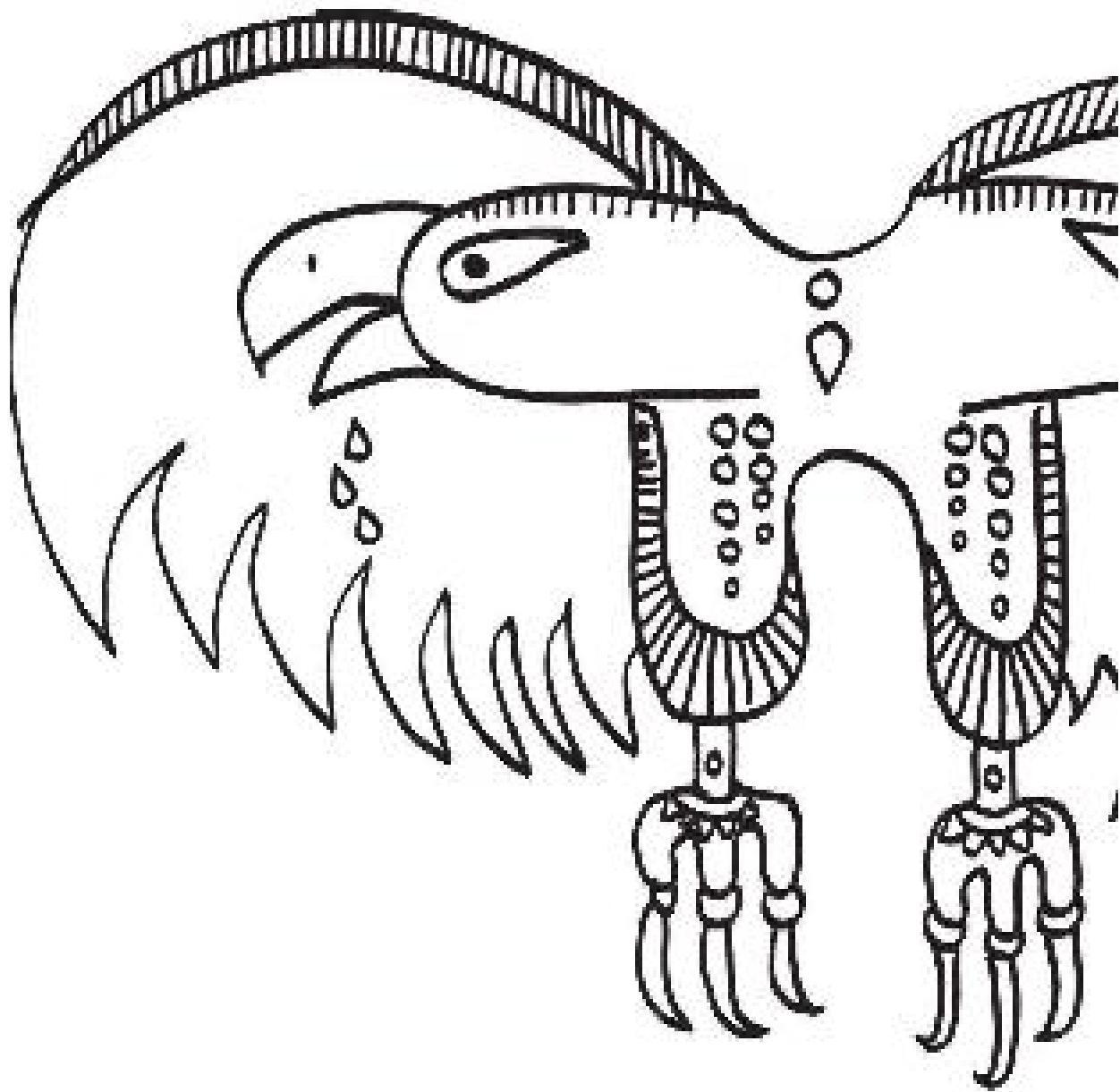
Devdutt P

entered the valley that Vishnu h
The great beast challenged Vish
long fight, Sharabha managed to
ground and rip him to shreds. V
destroyed, Vishnu remembered
He thanked Sharabha and rose to
Vaikuntha, on the ocean of milk



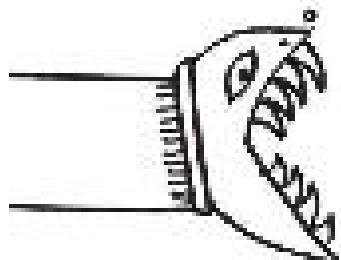


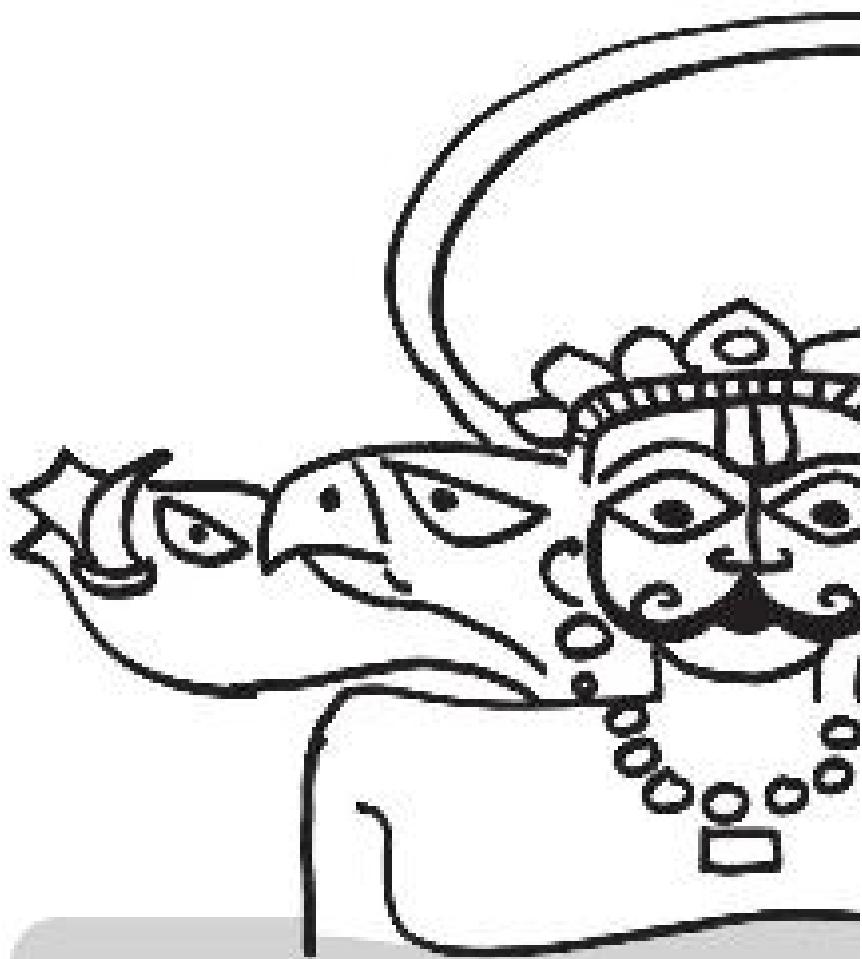
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However, other story tell
Sharabha did not subdue Vis
back in the form of Gandaber
eagle with the strength to car
two beaks and two talons, ac

warrior with eight heads, inc
boar and an eagle, according
the goddess Lakshmi, Vishnu
the ferocious god.

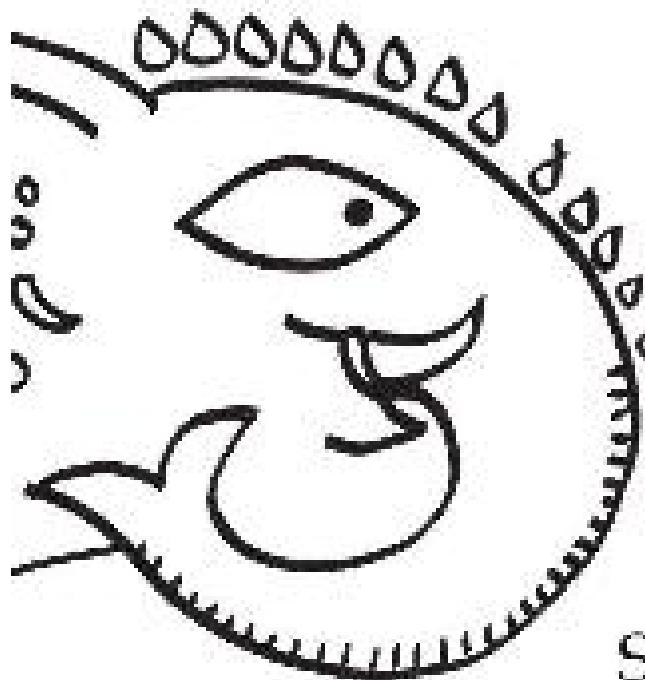




Hanuman, the most powerful monkey in the world, who served Ram and helped in his rescue of Sita is sometimes visualized with four additional heads: that of a lion, an eagle and a horse. The story goes that once he got trapped in Patala, the netherworld, and could not come out until he was freed by Rama.

five lamps simultaneously. He had more—heads of four different animals. So, This form of Hanuman became popular for worship.

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Ganapat

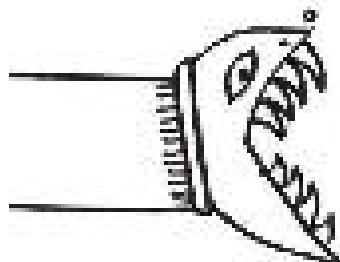
Parvati, wanted a child to give her company while she meditated. But Shiva was away.

So the determined Parvati created a child on her own, with

prepared turmeric paste, and placed it on the ground. She then scraped off the paste which remained on her fingers, and these scraps of turmeric paste fell on the ground. Parvati then gathered them and breathed life into it. Thus, Ganesha, the child created without a name, was born.

Parvati enjoyed the company of her son. When Shiva saw them together, he was surprised at how strange this boy was. He became angry and

in Vinayaka's company, Parashurama missed Shiva. So he beheaded Vamana. Furious, 'Bring him back to life,' he said. 'I will never speak to you again.'

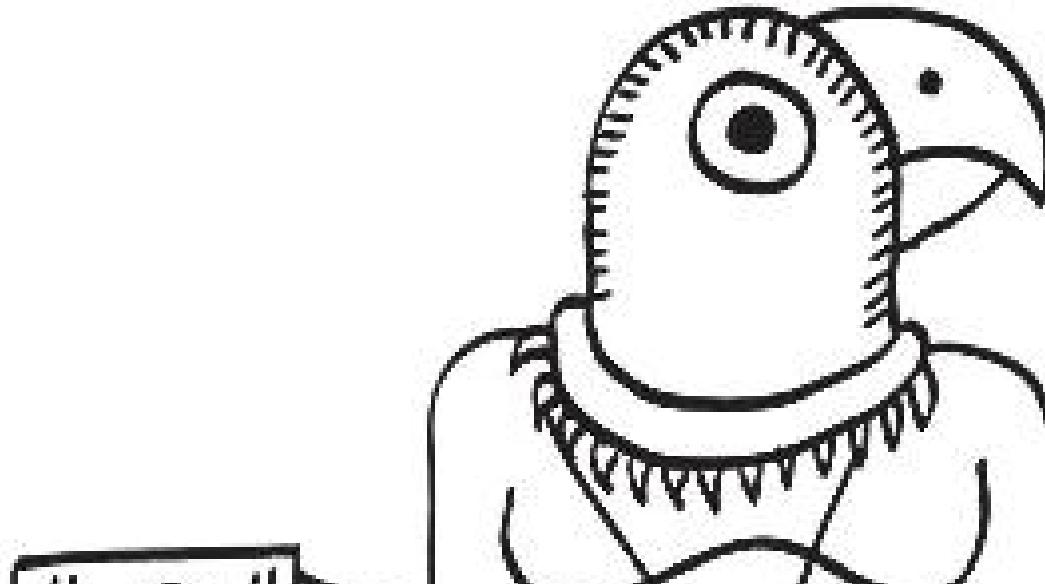


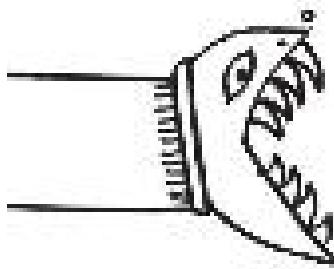
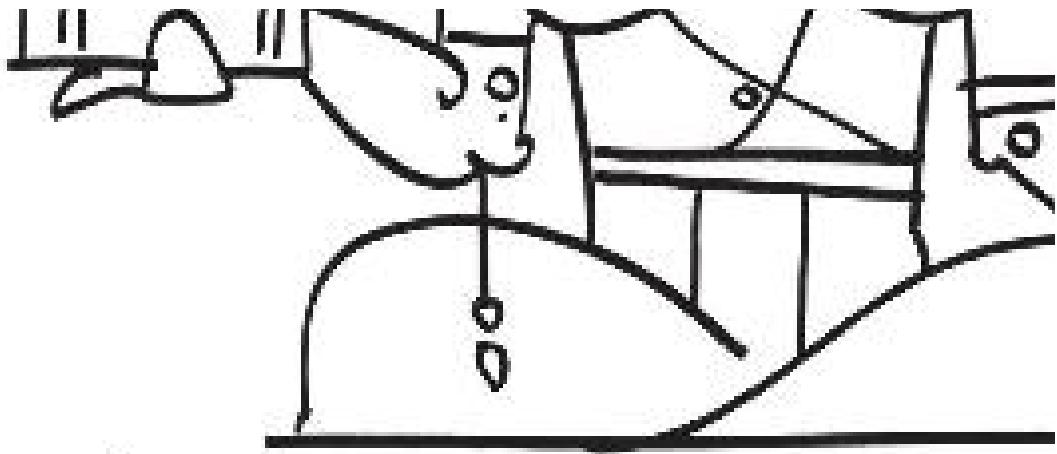
To pacify his wife, Shiva de
Vinayaka's head and neck. But I
nowhere to be found. Shiva then
Vinayaka's head with the head
he saw in the northern direction
skinned elephant. Some say it w
mount. Shiva cut the elephant's
it on Vinayaka's headless body.
elephant-headed one, Gajanan. He
named him Ganapati, the leader
of the ganas, or followers of
Shiva. He is also known as
Ganesha. And thus Shiva
made Gajanan his son.

Gajanan was part elephant
and part human, and
totally divine.



Suka. One day a nymph in the form of a parrot. Vyasa, the sage, saw the parrot and fell in love. When Vyasa was rubbing a pair of fire-sticks, a spark from the friction of the sticks fell on the ground. From that fire emerged a parrot-head. This was Suka, the son of Vyasa. Like a parrot, he could repeat what he heard and recount in detail everything he heard.





138

Devdutt P

meaning of all that he had mem
him a wise sage. Suka told the s
King Parikshit and enabled him
of death.

Tumburu. Tumburu \
gandharva and a great musiciar
is sometimes visualized as havi
the body of a man and the head
horse. Some call him Kimpurus]
which roughly translates as 'Is t

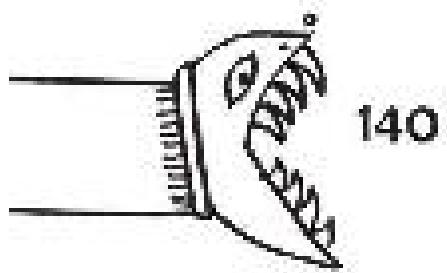
Tumburu and the sage Nar
with each other, each one believ

was inferior. To settle the matter they went to Vishnu, who rather 'Oh? But I thought Hanuman was stronger than both of you.' Hanuman, th

Pashu: Animal Tales from

This upset both Tumburi
set out in search of the singing
him in the Himalayas, sitting
'Sing something for us,' said I
in unison. Hanuman obliged,
beautiful, and its rumbling ca





Devdutt P

prepared to leave too but realize to their surprise, that their feet were sealed in the snow. The melting and refreezing of the snow had trapped them from the knees downwards. They wondered how they could melt and called out to Vishnu for help.

'Simple,' said Vishnu, 'if you ask Hanuman, why don't you simply make the snow to melt once again like he did.'

That sounded like a good idea and Narada began to sing. They sang and the snow showed no signs of melting. The grip of the snow on their feet became

had to admit, finally, that they were singers to Hanuman, who sang not to show off.

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Ha!

Yagnā
his te
‘You
and \
mean

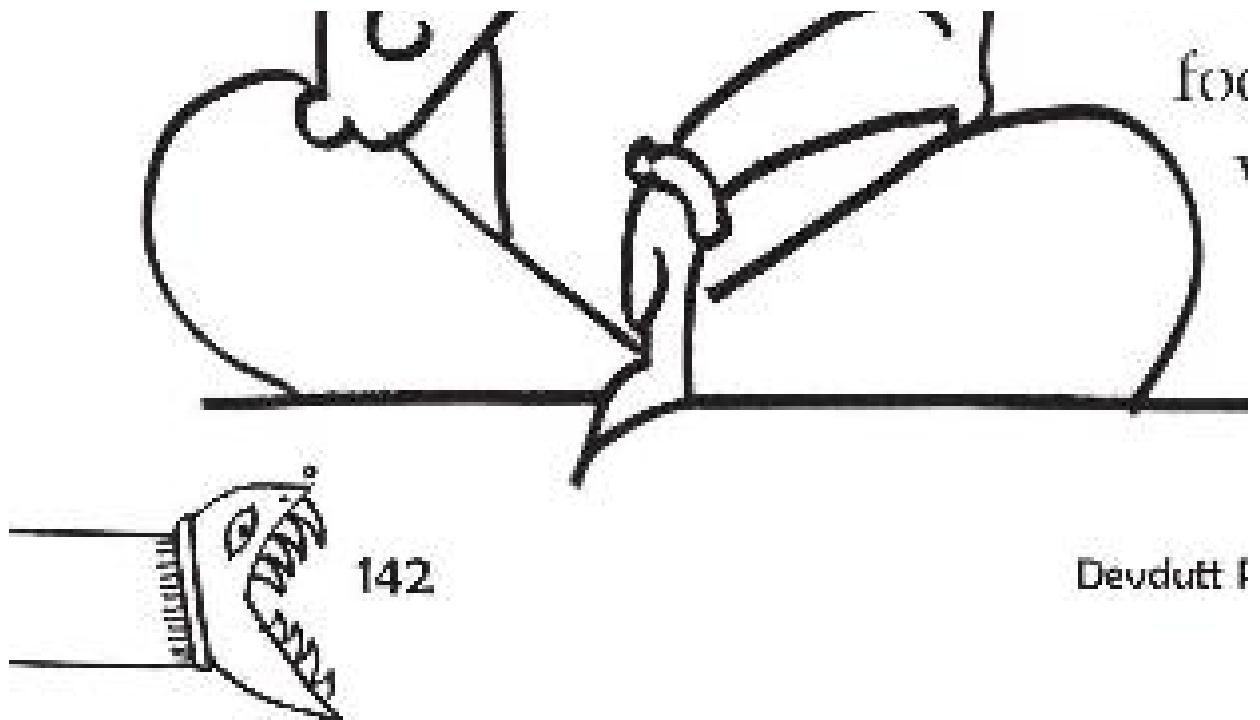
Va

‘Then find

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all the
told to
out of .

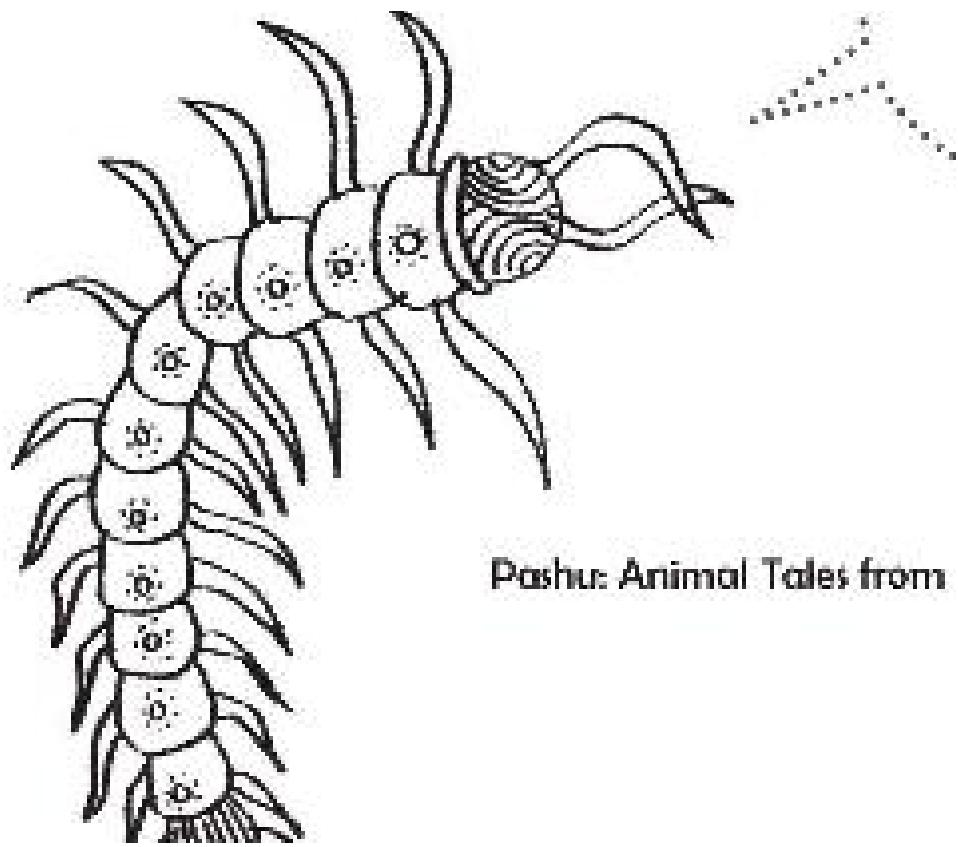


Devdutt P

15

Yagnavalkya went in search of another teacher and found Hayagriva, a horse-headed who told him the secrets of the and verses. Some say that the head is Surya, the sun god. Others say Vishnu, who preserves the cosn

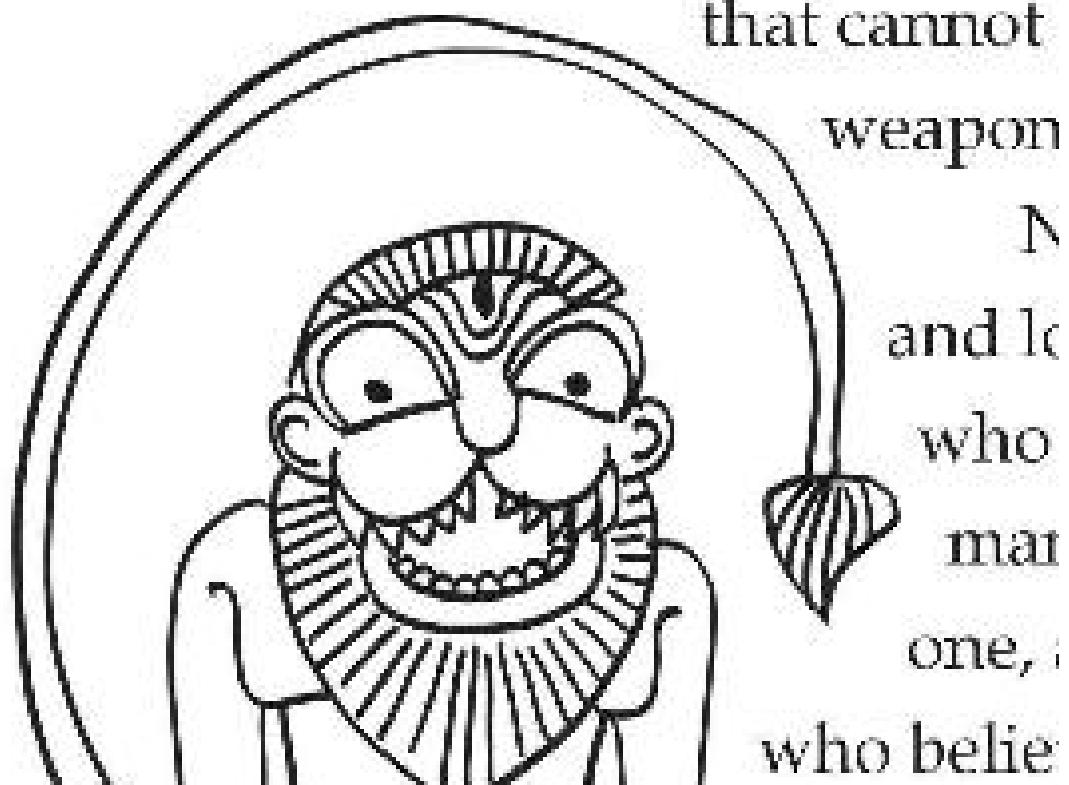
What Vaishampayana taught to be known as Krishna Yajur Veda (Krishna Yajur Veda) and what Hayagriva taught to be known as the Shukla Yajur Veda).

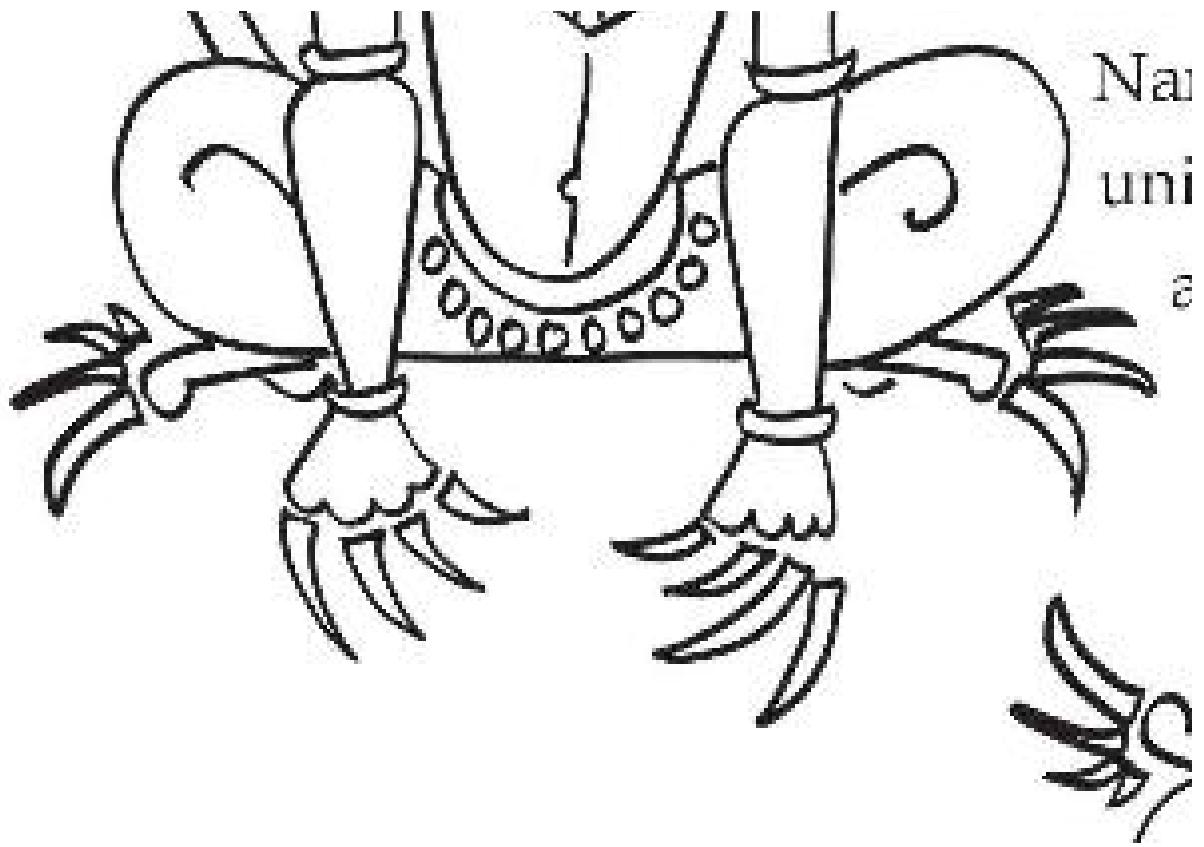


Pashu: Animal Tales from

Narasimha.

The Hiranyakasipu, who had been born as a lion, could not be killed either by fire or water, nor by a weapon, nor a tool. So, Lord Vishnu created Narasimha, a being that was neither human, nor animal, and killed the asura.





**Finally, h
versus an**

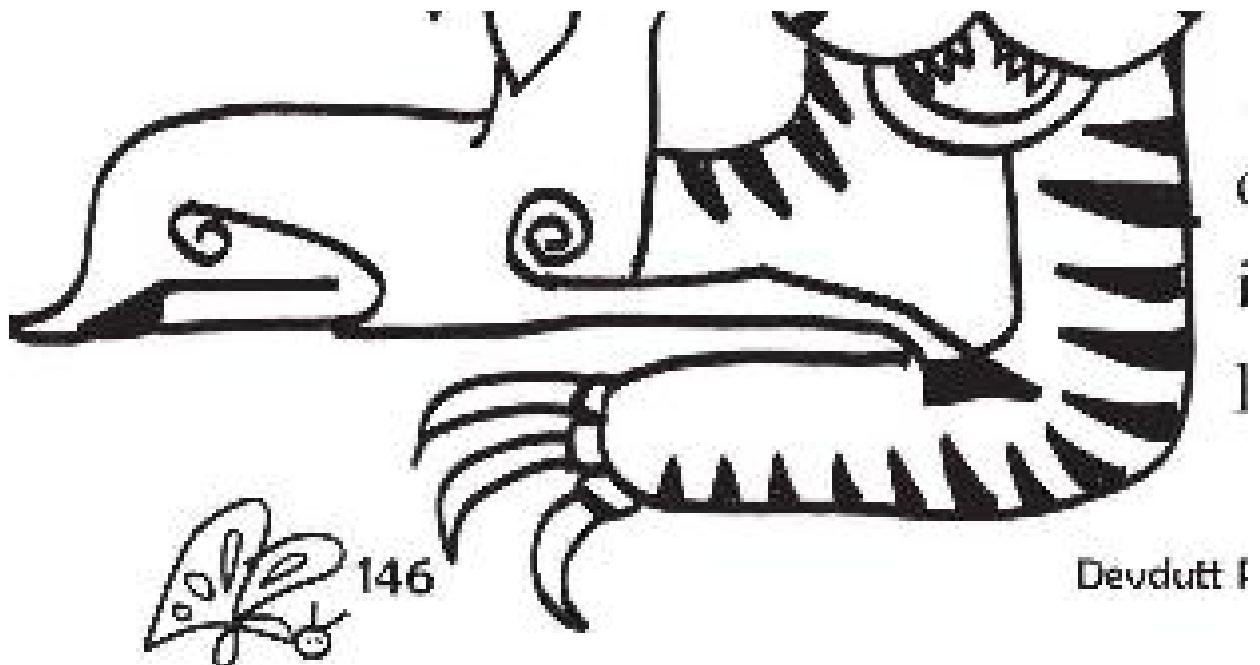




Agastya. People say there is an oral tradition about a holy place where goats are friendly with tigers. It is said that Rama and Sita, during their forest exile, travelled south and reached the hermitage of Rishi Agastya, where they were surprised to find tigers playing with goats. How is it possible? They wondered.

Agastya told them that i





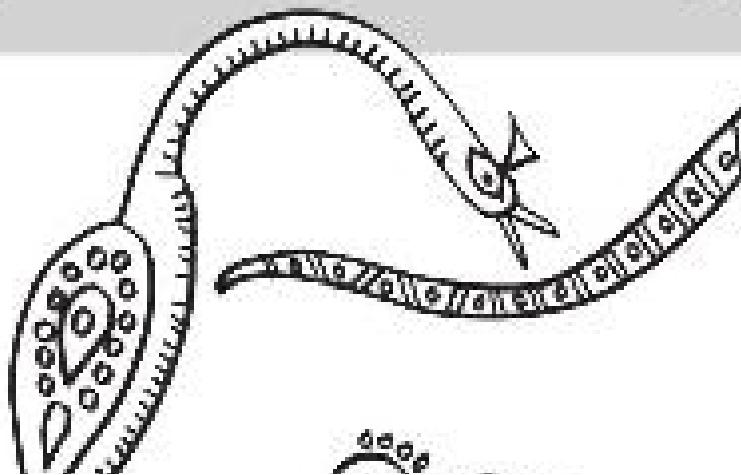
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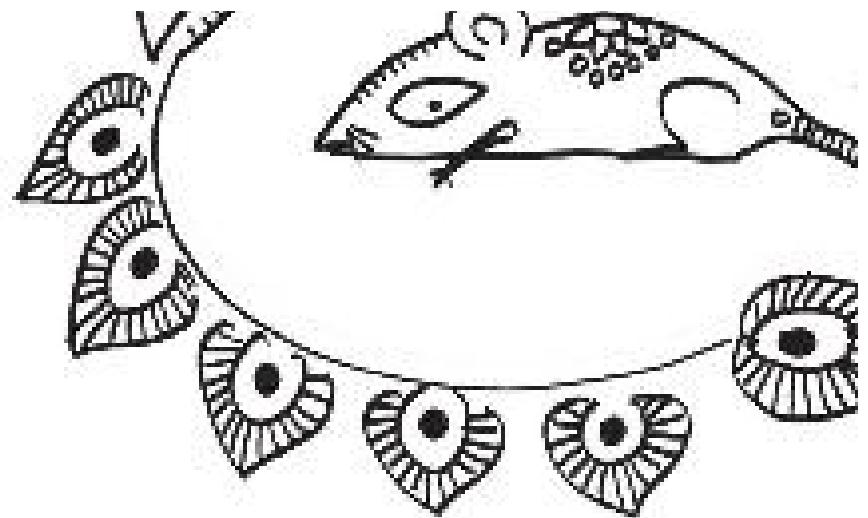
146

not need to feed on the goat and
afraid of the tiger.

Man must aspire to create 1
place where tigers and goats ca

Mount Kailas, where Shiva resides
Shiva's bull is not afraid of Parvati
rat is not afraid of Shiva's snake
is not afraid of Kartikeya's peacock
anyone as no one is ever hungry





Pashu: Animal Tales from

Adventures of Krishna-Balaram

In the Bhagavata Purana, there was a tiger who

lived on the banks of the river Yamuna.

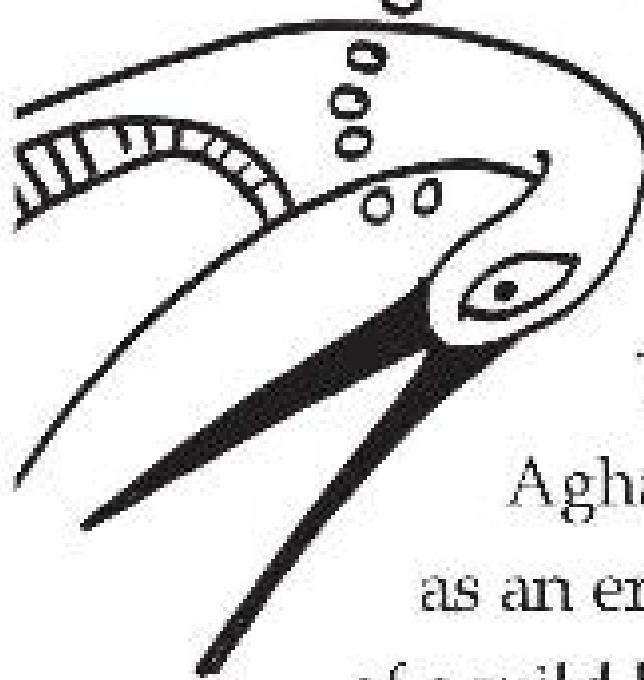
He used to defend their village from attacks by Krishna's uncle Kaliya, who had attacked in the form of a cobra.

There was Baga who

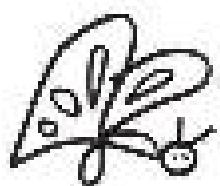
lived in the form of a python.

Agha in the form of a python, Kesi as an errant calf,

Kaliya as a wild horse, Arishta as a boar, and Dhenuka, who attacked in

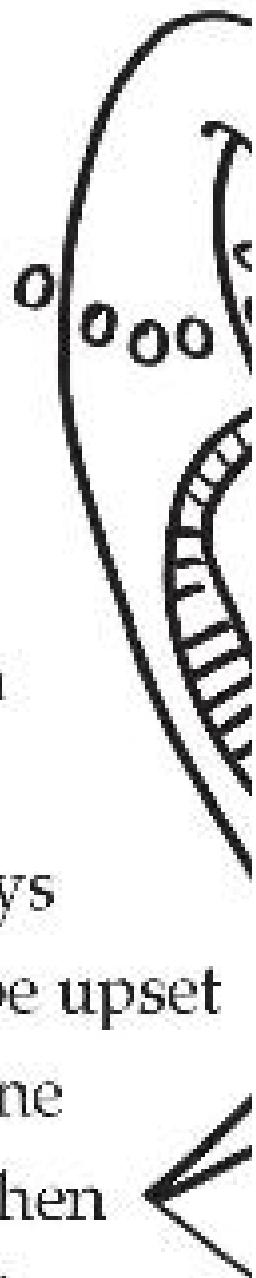


form of a wild donkey. The two brothers successfully dispatch all these animals, to the relief delight of the villagers.



Since Krishna and Balaram incarnations on earth,
one wonders why they killed animals.

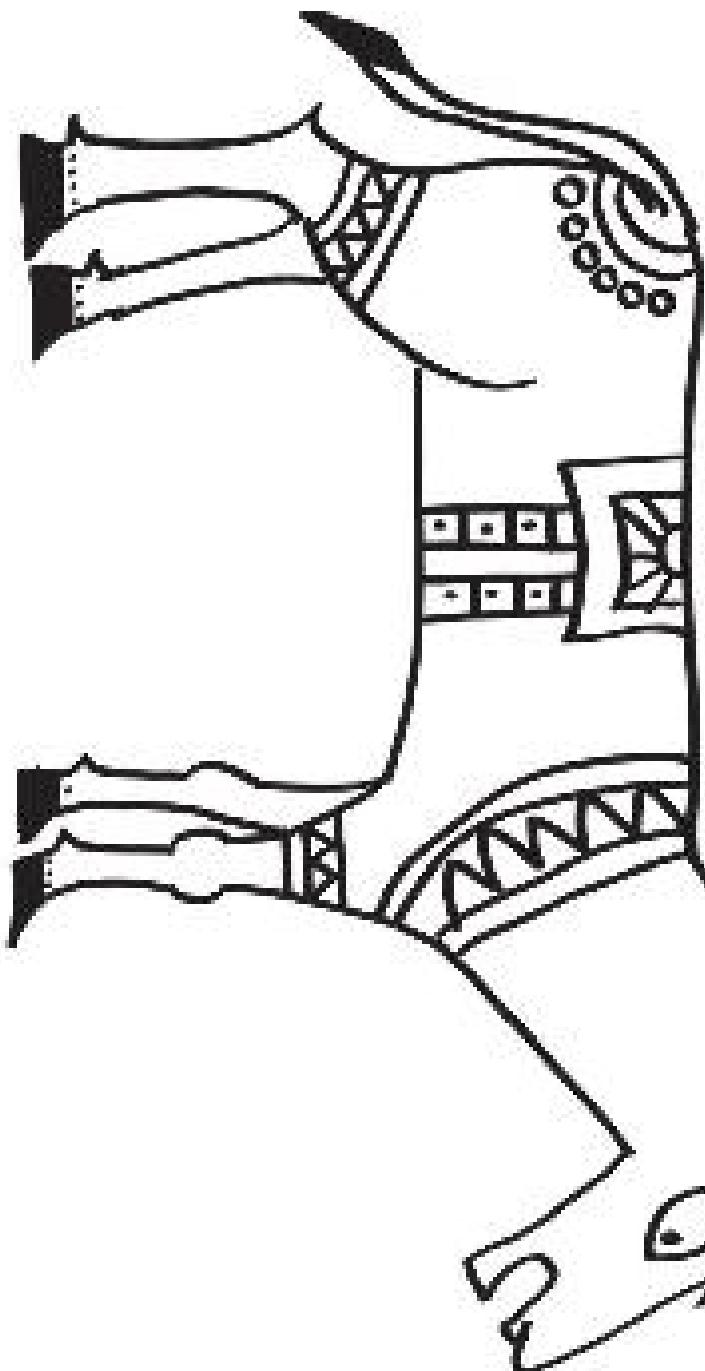
Some say it is to tell man that when one creates a human dwelling, domestication of animals and killing of wild beasts will always happen. One must not be upset by it; at the same time one must not overdo it, for then there will be imbalance in



the natural order, followed by
natural calamities that will destr
the world.

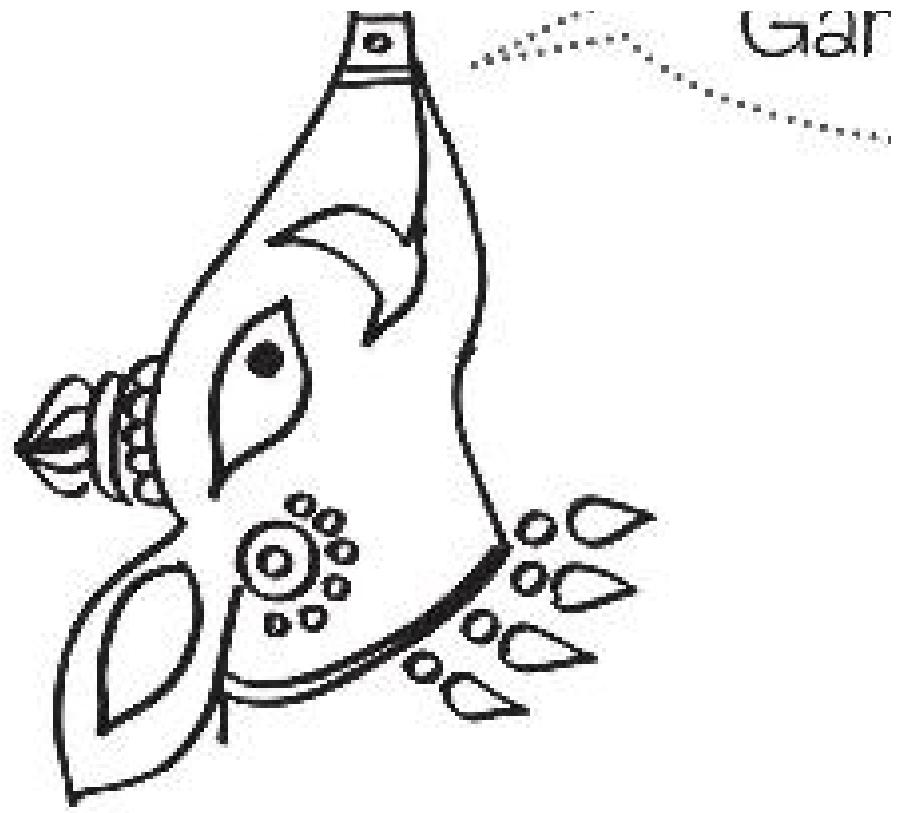


Pashu: Animal Tales from



Others say
to be taken seriously
and Balarama
inside us, the a
believe
we bear
to c
dom.
We becom
creatures and
help the helpless.





The image of a heroic warrior-god with a dog by his side is found in many parts of India. These gods are called grama-virs or the brave men who protect the village, or kula-vira, the brave men who protect the community and are worshipped with offerings of toy horses made of wood or clay.

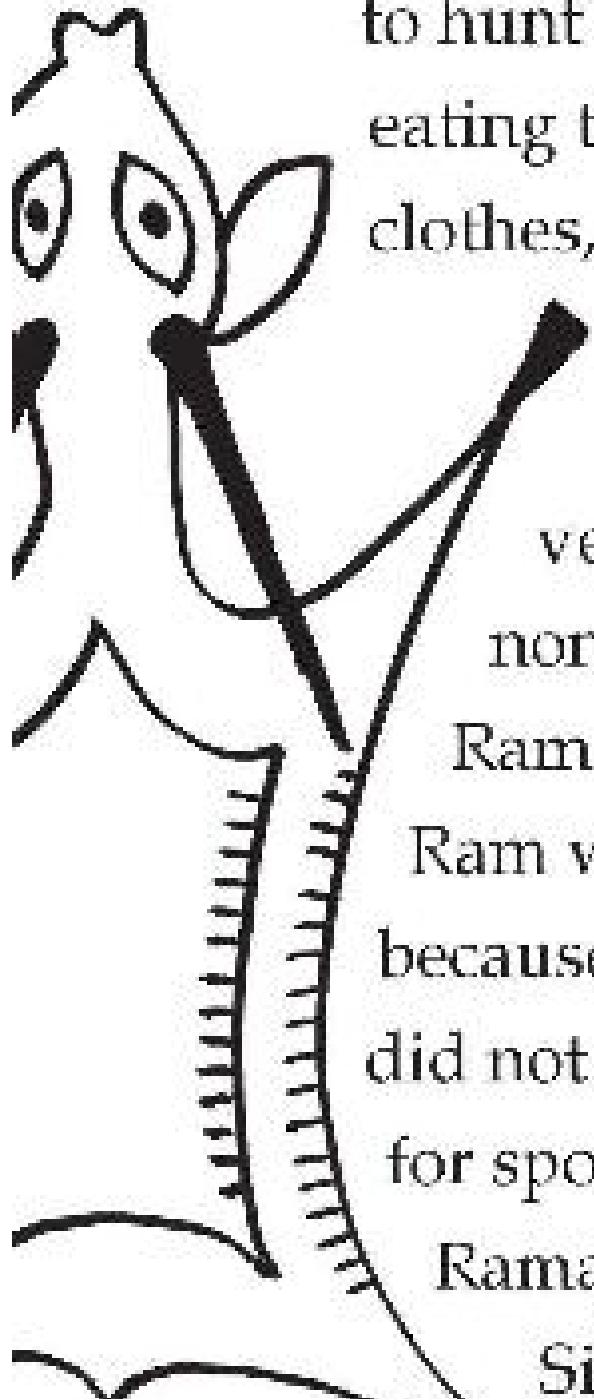


Sita.

When Ram was living

fourteen years, what did he eat? vegetarian – he ate fruits and be brother Lakshman, and his wife forage. Some say that being a pi





to hunt animals and hunted c
eating their flesh, using their
clothes, and their bones and l
make weapons. Nob
really sure. Those w
vegetarians are superio
non-vegetarians insist th
Ram was vegetarian. Othe
Ram would have followed i
because he came from a war
did not eat meat, he would h
for sport. Whatever be the ca
Ramayana it is said that dt
Sita begged Ram not to



'But that is what
explained. How
killing should be motivated by
greed or the desire to pass thi



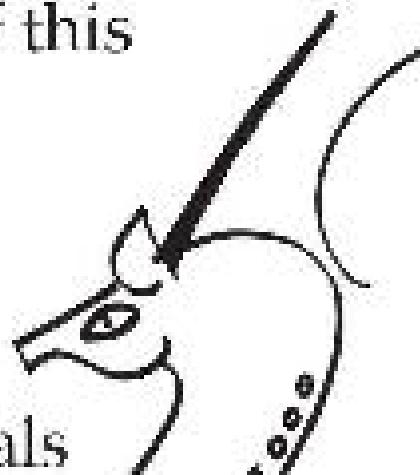
152

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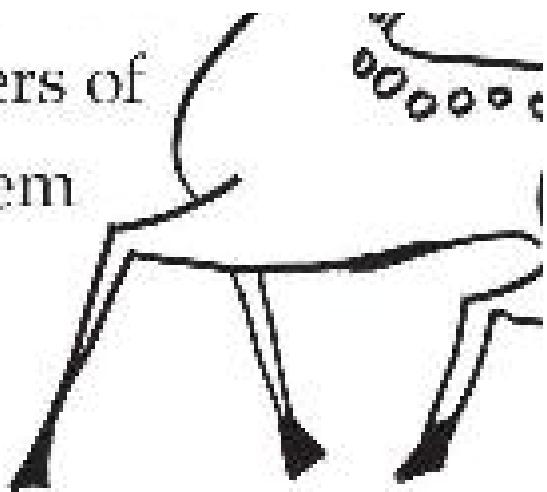
Yudhishtira.

Like F also lived in exile in a forest for this time, they too hunted animals: clothing, for weapons and for sport. deer they had killed appeared in their dream. They begged Yudhishtira to leave the forest, as the number of animals in the forest had fallen and they were afraid. Yudhishtira, a kind and compassionate man, took heed of this and moved to another forest.

He understood the value of animals



and the dangers of
destroying them
completely.



Pashu: Animal Tales from

Prithu. The cruel king
the earth's resources, destroy
clearing forests for his pastur
for metal and hunting for spe
excesses, the rishis performed
to transform a single blade
of grass into a potent
missile. They used
this missile to kill Vena,
then removed all the
impurities from his
body. From the purified
remains they created a
new king, Prithu, who



possessed all the qualities
of a noble ruler.

But when Prithu was
made king, he was told by



Devdutt P

his people that the earth was refusing to let seeds sprout and plants bear flower or fruit. Prithu asked the earth why she was being so unresponsive, the earth took the fort away. Prithu chased the earth and was determined to catch her. As she was running, Prithu raised his bow and threatened to shoot her dead. 'If I kill me, all life will be destroyed and my wealth,' the earth said.

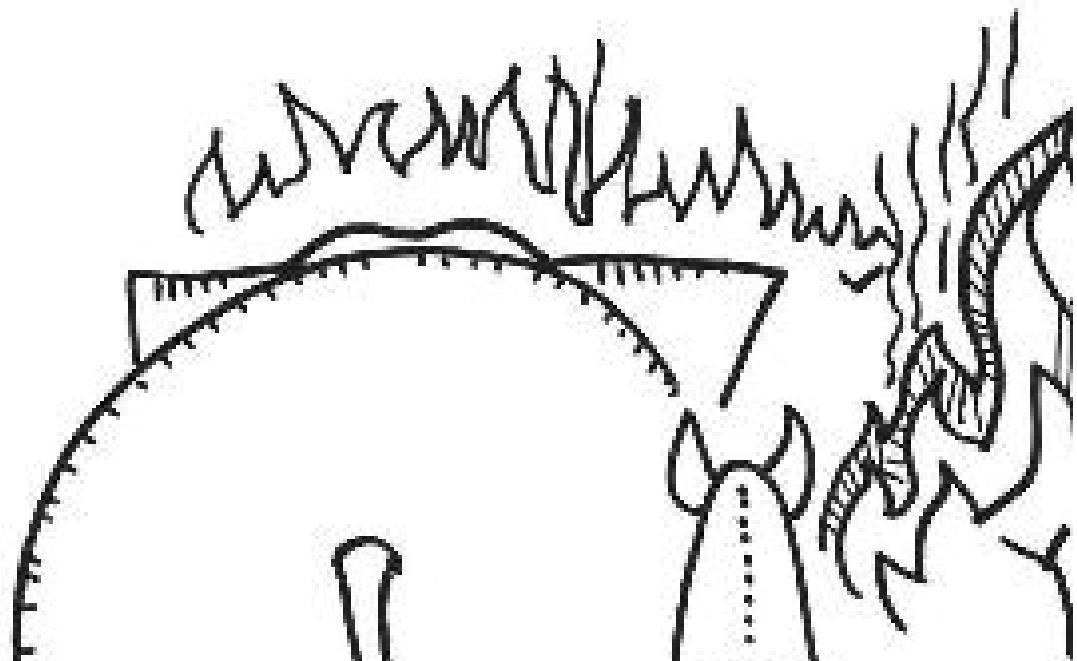
Prithu then took a pledge—dharma, a code of culture that every man respected nature and kept.

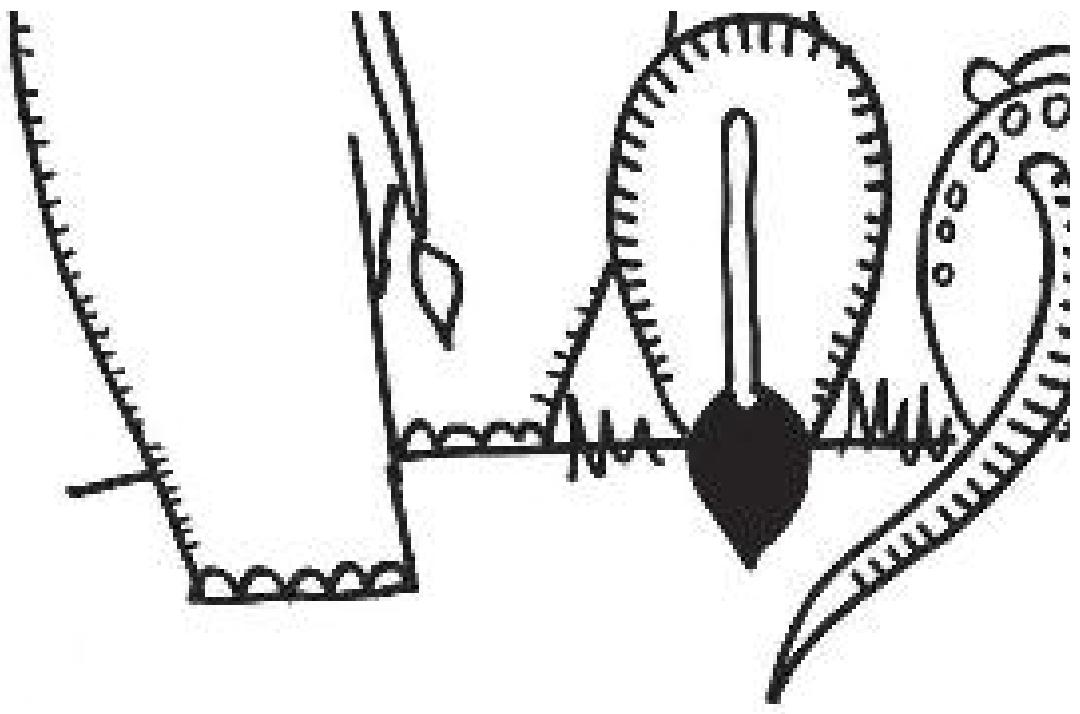
Said Prithu, 'Kings will be to the
are to cows. We will protect and
cow and in exchange, the earth-
food and fuel for our survival.'

Pashu: Animal Tales from

Khandavapras

peace between the Kauravas
the blind king of Hastinapur,
divided his kingdom into two
the developed part, where the
stood, he gave to his sons, the
part, the underdeveloped hal

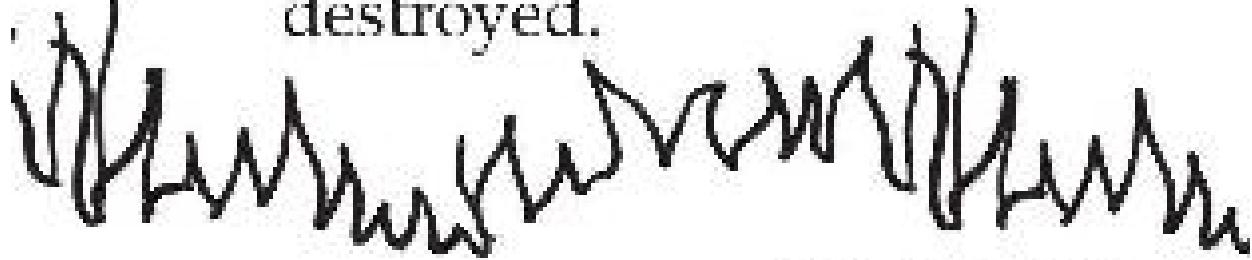




Khandavaprastha stood, he gave the Pandavas. The Pandavas destroyed Khandavaprastha so they could As the flames engulfed the trees forest ran helter-skelter to save them. tried to escape but the fire soon reached them. Finally, when the fire died had been cleared, the Pandavas built their kingdom, Indraprastha.

This story from the Mahabharata highlights the attention to the tenuous relationship between man and animal. Forests are invaluable to man. Man builds cities and cultivates land. If forests are destroyed, animals die. If too many animals die, man suffers.

destroyed and too many animal
natural order will be toppled an
destroyed.



Poshi: Animal Tales from



Takshaka. One day he swallowed a worm into an apple. Inside the apple, the worm transformed into a snake. Takshaka immediately saw that it was Parikshit and before he could do anything, the king of Hastinapura, His son, Janamejaya, conducted a great yagna to destroy all the nagas in the world. This was because the king was determined to kill his species. Janamejaya felt he was wrong because they had killed his father.

It was then that Rishi Asvins told him something he had not heard before:

think Takshaka killed your father. Your kingdom was destroyed when your great-grandfather, King Dhritarashtra, destroyed the forest to build Indraprastha. By killing



158

Devdutt P

took his revenge. Now, by wanting to kill Takshaka, you are reigniting the flames of vendetta.

You will kill them. In retaliation, they will kill you. This will happen again and again unless one of you stops. They are serpents, so they cannot stop. But you are human, you can. So please spare them.'

Hearing this, Janamejaya's anger against the snakes

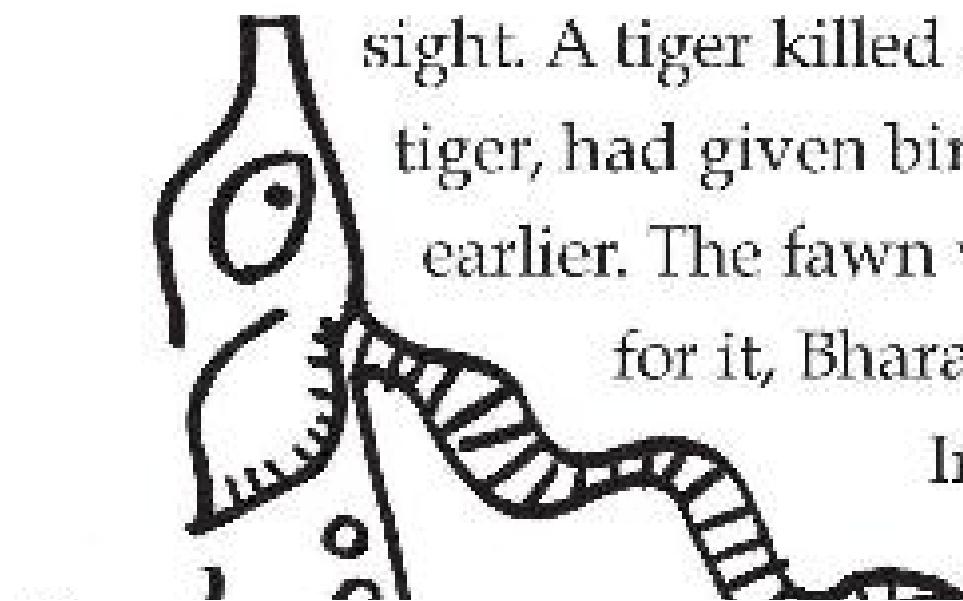


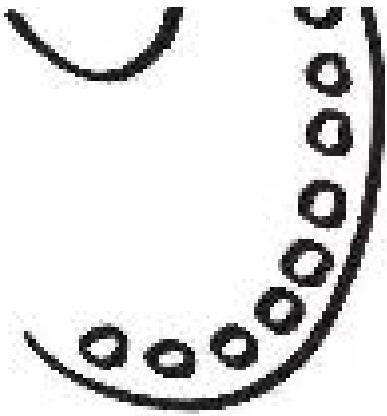
abated. He stopped the sacrifice and let the nagas live.

Pashu: Animal Tales from

Bharata. He was a
he renounced it all to become
that everything in life was ter
no point getting attached to a
his kingdom. He went into th
to withdraw from all things v
meditate and gradually break
birth and death. But in the fo
sight. A tiger killed a doe, wh
tiger, had given birth to a ba
earlier. The fawn was now i
for it, Bharata decide

In a short
believin





mother

wherever he went.

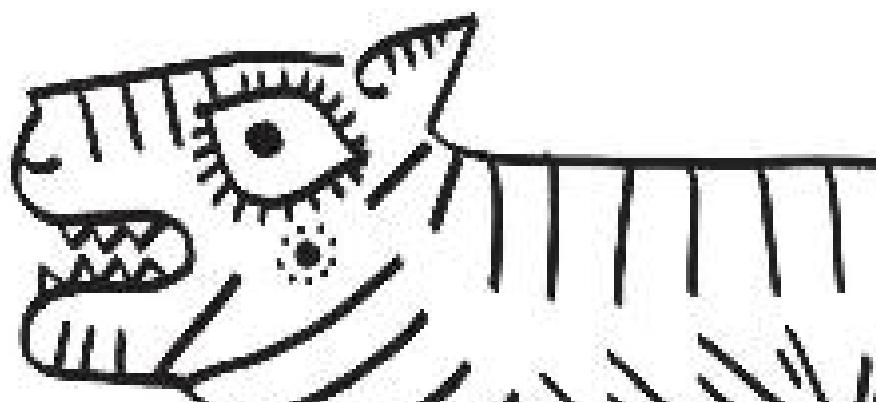
filled Bharata's heart with
affection; he felt responsibl



160

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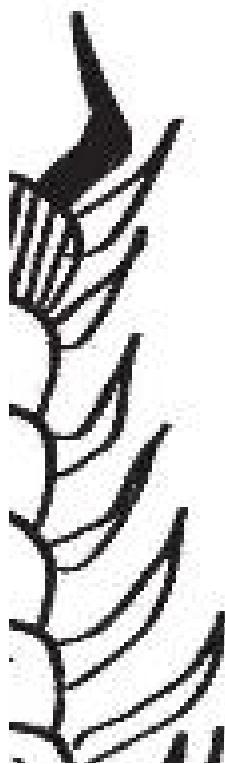
Years later, when Bharata w
he wondered who would take c
he was gone. Since Bharata was
deer, Yama, the god of death an
that he could not escape the whe
take birth once again—this time
comes from the Bhagavata Puran



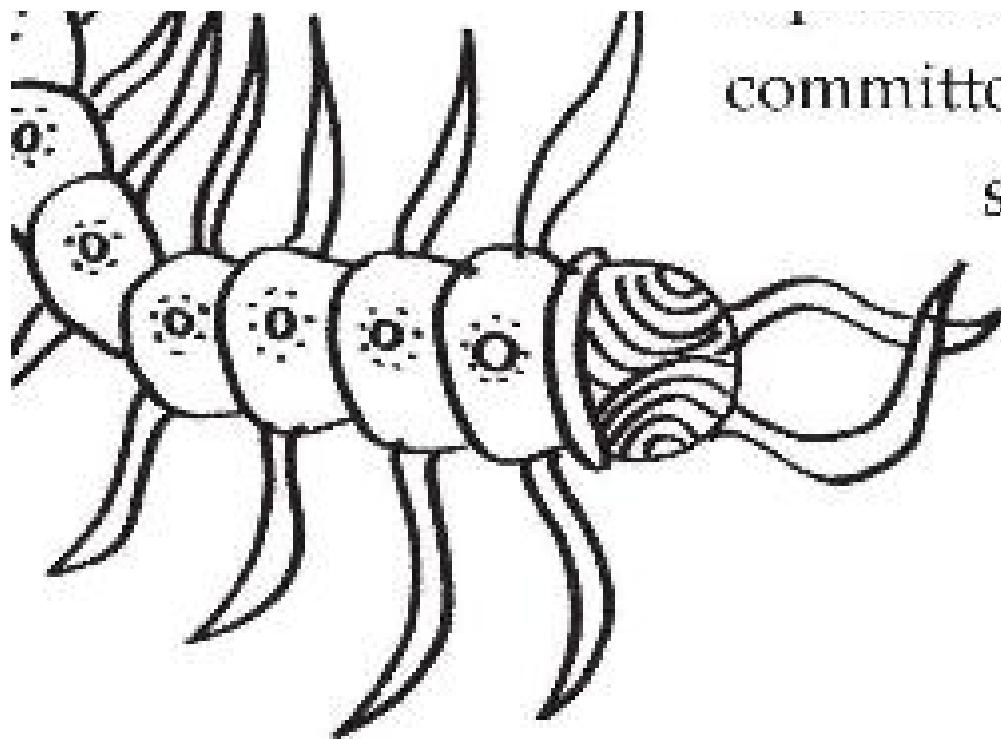


Pashu: Animal Tales from

Gandhari once accidentally stepped on 100 eggs of a bug. The heartbroken mother bug cursed Gandhari that she too would watch her hundred children die before her eyes.



Mandavya. was a very simple and pious life. But he was arrested by a king, who had him impaled on a stick. Mandavya gave an explanation for th



committed no cri
stolen go
in his l
that wl

Devdutt P

and his eyes were shut, robbers had entered his house and hidd there. It was a case of misundere everything in this world happen What was the reason for his tort

After he died, he stood before death, who maintains a record of what happens during one's life. He asked for the unjust punishment he had received at the hands of the king. Yama said to him, you used to torture birds. You used to catch them and pin them to sharp sticks. Because you tortured them without fault of theirs, you were tortured.

story comes from the Mahabharata. In the story the pain of animals does not go away. The person who causes pain to animals has to pay for it. This is what happened to the King of the Elephants.

Pashu: Animal Tales from India

Vadavagni.

The extremely angry with the kin were abandoning dharma (ta

pursuing adharma (taking)

Motivated by greed, the

earth's resources, burr

disturbing the natura

Aurva, was so angry

form of fire. He deci

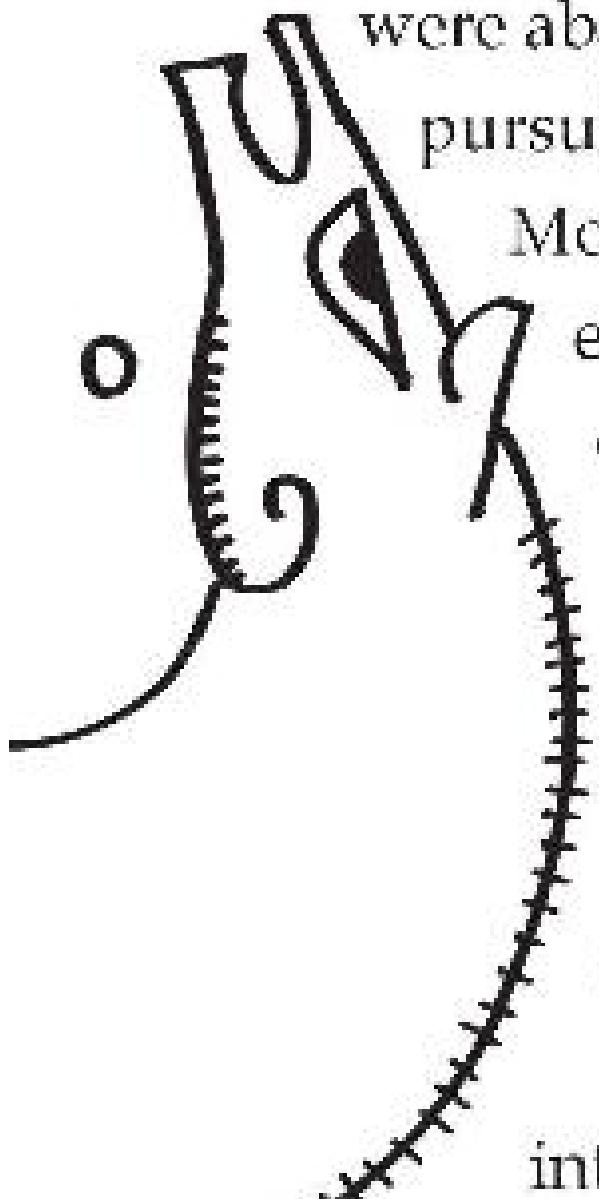
with this rage. The c

him, saying, 'Don't c

so bad. Be patient. M

So Aurva transfo

into a mare – the fire-br



This mare stands at the bo

fire ensures that the waters of
turn into clouds, and then rain
marc's fire prevents the sea fr



164

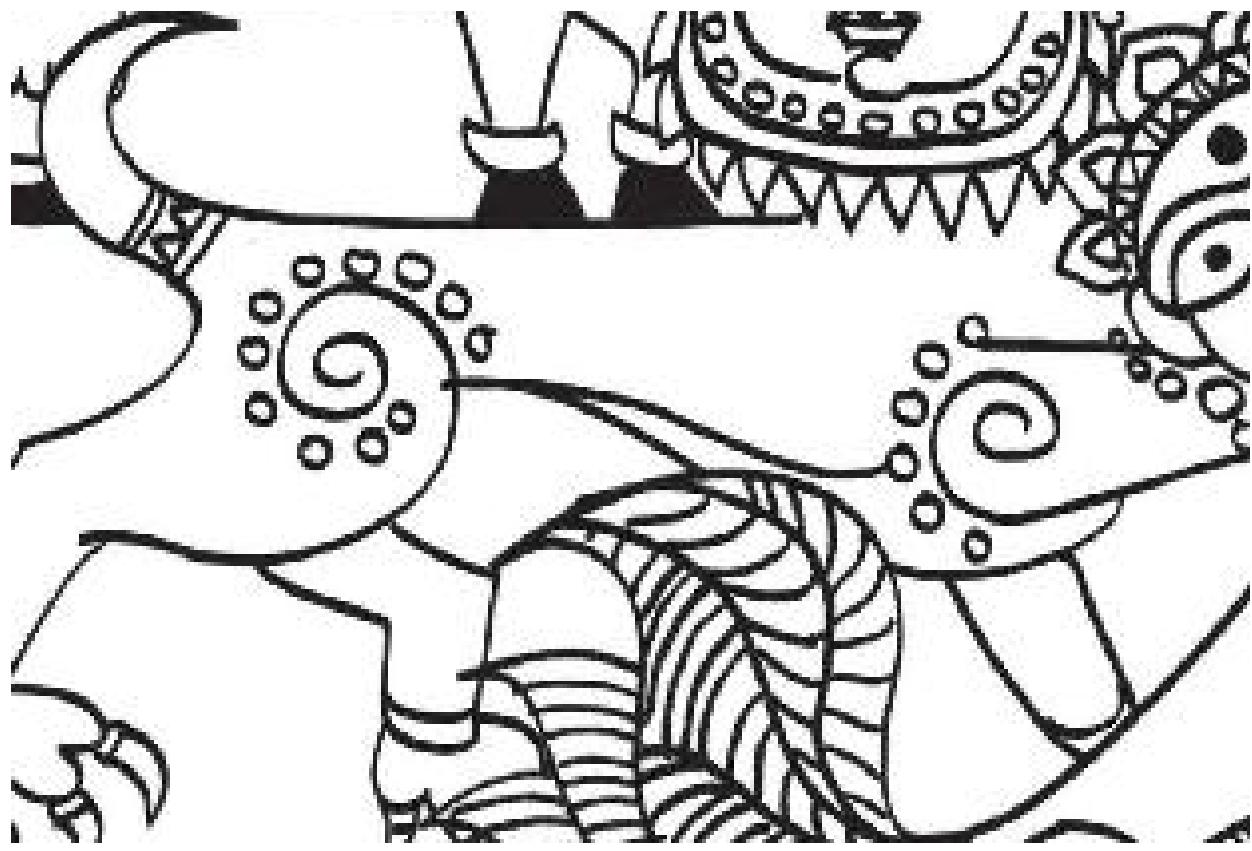
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on to land. But if man destroys it
this fire will not ensure the sea &
it will burst forth like a volcano,
foundation of the earth. The sea
on to land and submerge the m^{any}
all humanity. As long as man re
as man does not destroy the ho
will be safe from the rage of Vac
this mare will be the ride of Visi
Kalki.







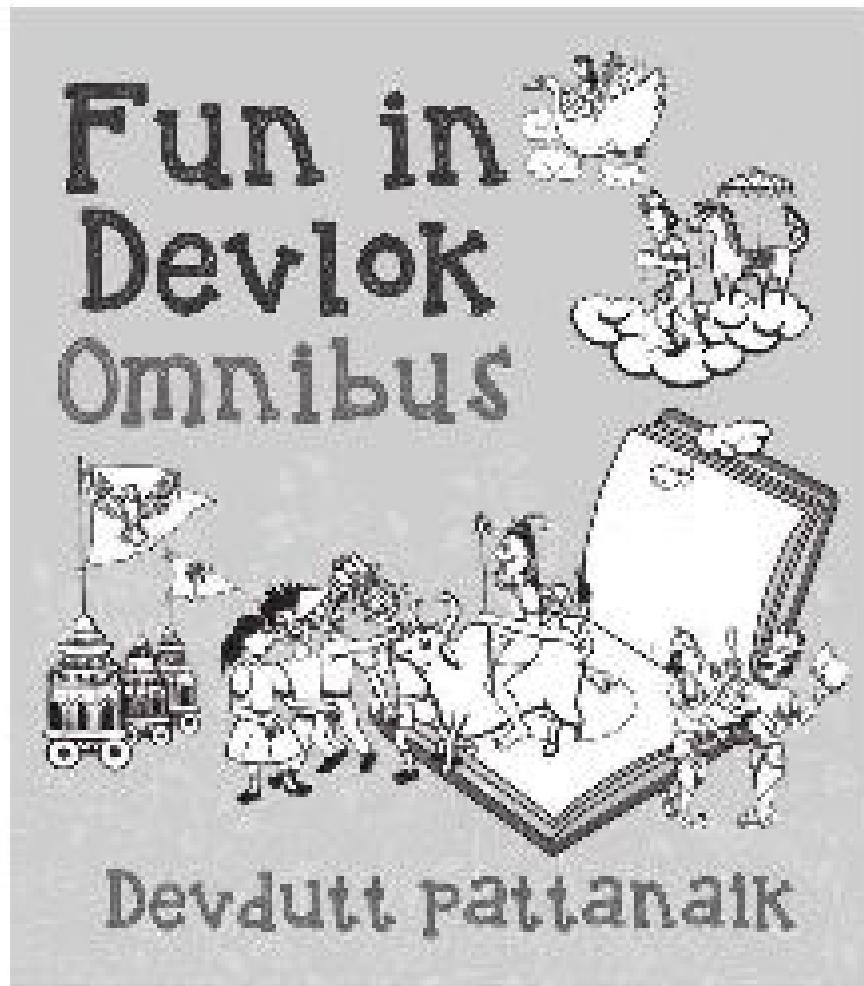


Just another pashu
with too much
imagination!





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