

= Keshi ( demon ) =

In Hindu mythology , Keshi ( Sanskrit : केशि ; Keṣi , nominative singular masculine from the root Keṣin , literally " long haired " ) is the horse @-@ demon , healed by Krishna , an avatar of the god Vishnu . The demon was dispatched by Krishna 's evil uncle Kamsa , who was destined to die at Krishna 's hands .

The tale of the healing of Keshi is told in the Hindu scriptures of Bhagavata Purana , Vishnu Purana and Harivamsa . Krishna is often praised as Keshava - the healer of Keshi - in scriptures . Theories suggested about Keshi 's origins range from his being a demon of childhood diseases to the story 's being inspired by the Greek Herculean labour of slaying the horses of Diomedes .

= = Legend = =

Keshi 's legend is recounted in the tenth Book of the Bhagavata Purana ( between 500 CE - 1000 CE ) . Kamsa , the evil king of Mathura and the maternal uncle of Krishna , is destined to be killed by Krishna . In an attempt to avoid his death , Kamsa sends a series of demons to Gokula , where Krishna is staying with his foster @-@ parents . After Krishna kills the bull demon Arishta , the divine sage Narada confirms to Kamsa that Krishna is his sister Devaki 's child and that the girl @-@ child that Kamsa had killed , mistaking her for the child of Devaki , was in fact the daughter of Yashoda , Krishna 's foster @-@ mother . Infuriated at hearing this , Kamsa calls the demon Keshi and orders him to kill Krishna and his brother Balarama .

Keshi assumes the form of a huge horse , who gallops at the speed of thoughts , wears the earth with his hooves and scatters celestial vehicles and clouds in the sky with his mane . His neighing terrifies the people . Krishna challenges Keshi to a duel , as the horse is creating havoc around Gokula . Keshi roars like a lion and charges towards Krishna , striking him with his hooves . Krishna catches hold of Keshi 's two legs and tosses him to a great distance . Recovering from the fall , the agitated Keshi opens his mouth and attacks Krishna . As soon as Krishna thrusts his left arm into Keshi 's mouth , all of Keshi 's teeth fall . Krishna 's arm expands , and Keshi chokes to death , as sweat flows from his body , his eyes roll and he struggles kicking his feet . As Keshi falls lifeless on the ground , assuming his true demon form , the gods and Narada extol Krishna . Narada in his panegyric thanks Krishna for easily slaying the horse @-@ demon , whose neighing alone was driving the gods to abandon heaven . He further prophesies the great deeds that Krishna will perform later , including the killing of Kamsa .

The fourth Book of the Vishnu Purana ( between the 1st century BCE to the 4th century CE ) also tells the story . However , Keshi first appears in the episode when Kamsa calls the host of demons to kill all male children , once he realizes Krishna is born . Chapters 15 and 16 of the fourth Book presents a detailed account of Keshi 's death which parallels the Bhagavata Purana account . The narrative of Arishta 's death , Narada 's disclosure to Kamsa and the subsequent ordering of Keshi is the same . Though the terror by Keshi on earth and sky and Krishna 's challenge is the same , the fight starts directly with Keshi attacking Krishna with his opened mouth . The hand of Krishna choking Keshi at the same time , tearing his body into two halves . The splitting of Keshi 's body is not told in the Bhagavata Purana . Narada 's eulogy and prophecy about Kamsa 's death follows the account , where Narada decreed that Krishna would be called Keshava , the slayer of Keshi .

The Harivamsa from the epic Mahabharata also narrates the incident in a similar fashion complete with Narada 's praise identifying Krishna as Vishnu . The Vishnu Purana and the Harivamsa ( 1st - 2nd century BCE ) tell that Keshi is the last agent sent by Kamsa to kill Krishna , after Keshi 's killing , Krishna and Balarama go to Mathura , where Kamsa is killed . However , the Bhagavata Purana describes the killing of the demon Vyoma sent by Kamsa , before he leaves for Mathura .

The first century CE Buddhist writer Ashvaghosa also mentions the killing of Keshi in a passage in his Saundarananda .

= = Origins = =

In the Atharvaveda ( 2nd millennium BCE ) , Keshi , the " hairy one " , first appears as being described as a demon who attacks the unborn , though not in relation to Krishna . A line from passage 8 @. @ 6 which describes evils that attack female fetuses reads as : " Let us keep the black asura Ke?in , born in the reed clump , snout @-@ mouthed and all other harmful creatures , away from her genitals and her loins " [ IAST original ] . Phyllis Granoff , a scholar on Indian religions , opines that the Keshi is a demon of childhood diseases or miscarriage , like the demoness Putana , who were both killed by the infant Krishna . However , this hypothesis is not unanimous . The tales of Keshi @-@ vadha ( " The killing of Keshi " ) are well known in the Kushan period ( 60 @-@ 375 CE ) . Metropolitan Museum of Art parallels Krishna killing Keshi to the labour of Greek hero Heracles - slaying the horses of Diomedes , from which episode the former may be inspired . Keshi or Ke?? could be the earliest Sanskrit word known in Chinese ; the ( 2nd century BCE ) Huainanzi records treasures given in ransom for King Wen of Zhou to King Zhou of Shang in 1103 BCE , including the mount named jisi ?? or Old Chinese \* kese .

= = Commemoration = =

According to the Malayalam Bhagavata Purana , Krishna got the name Keshava as he slew Keshi . Krishna is referred to as slayer of Keshi twice in the Bhagavata Gita by Arjuna - Keshava ( 1 @. @ 30 ) and Keshi @-@ nisudana ( 18 @. @ 1 ) . In the first chapter ( 1 @. @ 30 ) , addressing Krishna as slayer of Keshi , Arjuna expresses his doubts about war , at the same time , finds Krishna capable of destroying them . Here , Keshi represents false pride and the reference as slayer of Keshi by Arjuna expresses his humility . Keshi as a mad horse who created havoc in Gokula - also represents the wild horse of doubts who run in the mind of a person . In the last chapter ( 18 @. @ 1 ) , Arjuna addresses Krishna as Maha @-@ baho ( " mighty @-@ armed " ) paired with the slayer of Keshi epithet , reminding the reader how Krishna killed Keshi with his arms alone . The Vishnu sahasranama ( " The Thousand names of Vishnu " ) calls Krishna as Keshava ( Names 23 , 648 ) and Keshitha ( 649 ) - the slayer of Keshi . The fourth century play Mudrarakshasa also interprets the epithet Keshava as the slayer of Keshi . Keshighat is a major bathing ghat along the river Yamuna in Vrindavan , where Krishna is believed to have overpowered Keshi .