

= Kubera =

Kubera ( Sanskrit : कूबेर , Pali / later Sanskrit : Kuvera ) , also spelt Kuber , is the Lord of Wealth and the god @-@ king of the semi @-@ divine Yakshas in Hindu mythology . He is regarded as the regent of the North ( Dik @-@ pala ) , and a protector of the world ( Lokapala ) . His many epithets extol him as the overlord of numerous semi @-@ divine species and the owner of the treasures of the world . Kubera is often depicted with a plump body , adorned with jewels , and carrying a money @-@ pot and a club .

Originally described as the chief of evil spirits in Vedic @-@ era texts , Kubera acquired the status of a Deva ( god ) only in the Puranas and the Hindu epics . The scriptures describe that Kubera once ruled Lanka , but was overthrown by his demon stepbrother Ravana , later settling in the city of Alaka in the Himalayas . Descriptions of the " glory " and " splendours " of Kubera 's city are found in many scriptures .

Kubera has also been assimilated into the Buddhist and Jain pantheons . In Buddhism , he is known as Vaisravana , the patronymic used of the Hindu Kubera and is also equated with Pañcika , while in Jainism , he is known as Sarvanubhuti .

= = Iconography = =

Kubera is often depicted as a dwarf , with fair complexion and a big belly . He is described as having three legs , only eight teeth , one eye , and being adorned with jewels . He is sometimes depicted riding a man . The description of deformities like the broken teeth , three legs , three heads and four arms appear only in the later Puranic texts . Kubera holds a mace , a pomegranate or a money bag in his hand . He may also carry a sheaf of jewels or a mongoose with him . In Tibet , the mongoose is considered a symbol of Kubera 's victory over N?gas ? the guardians of treasures . Kubera is usually depicted with a mongoose in Buddhist iconography .

In the Vishnudharmottara Purana , Kubera is described as the embodiment of both Artha ( " wealth , prosperity , glory " ) and Arthashastras , the treatises related to it ? and his iconography mirrors it . Kubera 's complexion is described as that of lotus leaves . He rides a man ? the state personified , adorned in golden clothes and ornaments , symbolizing his wealth . His left eye is yellow . He wears an armour and a necklace down to his large belly . The Vishnudharmottara Purana further describes his face to be inclined to the left , sporting a beard and mustache , and with two small tusks protruding from the ends of his mouth , representing his powers to punish and to bestow favours . His wife Riddhi , representing the journey of life , is seated on his left lap , with her left hand on the back of Kubera and the right holding a ratna @-@ patra ( jewel @-@ pot ) . Kubera should be four @-@ armed , holding a gada ( mace : symbol of dandaniti ? administration of justice ) and a shakti ( power ) in his left pair , and standards bearing a lion ? representing Artha and a shibika ( a club , the weapon of Kubera ) . The nidhi treasures Padma and Shankha stand beside him in human form , with their heads emerging from a lotus and a conch respectively .

The Agni Purana states that Kubera should be installed in temples as seated on a goat , and with a club in his hand . Kubera 's image is prescribed to be that of gold , with multi @-@ coloured attributes . In some sources , especially in Jain depictions , Kubera is depicted as a drunkard , signified by the " nectar vessel " in his hand .

= = Names = =

The exact origins of the name Kubera are unknown . " Kubera " or " Kuvera " ( कूबेर ) as spelt in later Sanskrit , means " deformed or monstrous " or " ill @-@ shaped one " ; indicating his deformities . Another theory suggests that Kubera may be derived from the verb root kumba , meaning to conceal . Kuvera is also split as ku ( earth ) , and vira ( hero ) .

As the son of Vishrava ( " Fame " ) , Kubera is called Vaisravana ( in the Pali language , Vessavana ) and as the son of Ilavila , Ailavila . Vaisravana is sometimes translated as the " Son of Fame " . The Sutta Nitapa commentary says that Vaisravana is derived from a name of Kubera 's kingdom ,

Visana . Once , Kubera looked at Shiva and his wife Parvati with jealousy , so he lost one of his eyes . Parvati also turned this deformed eye yellow . So , Kubera gained the name Ekaksipingala ( " one who has one yellow eye " ) . He is also called Bhutesha ( " Lord of spirits " ) like Shiva . Kubera usually is drawn by spirits or men ( nara ) , so is called Nara @-@ vahana , one whose vahana ( mount ) is nara . Hopkins interprets naras as being water @-@ spirits , although Mani translates nara as men . Kubera also rides the elephant called Sarvabhauma as a loka @-@ pala . His garden is named Chaitrarath .

Kubera also enjoys the titles " king of the whole world " , " king of kings " ( Rajaraja ) , " Lord of wealth " ( Dhanadhipati ) and " giver of wealth " ( Dhanada ) . His titles are sometimes related to his subjects : " king of Yakshas " ( Yaksharajan ) , " Lord of Rakshasas " ( Rakshasadhipati ) , " Lord of Guhyakas " ( Guhyakadhipa ) , " king of Kinnaras " ( Kinnararaja ) , " king of animals resembling men " ( Mayuraja ) , and " king of men " ( Nararaja ) . Kubera is also called Guhyadhipa ( " Lord of the hidden " ) . The Atharvaveda calls him the " god of hiding " .

= = Changing status and family = =

= = = Early descriptions and parentage = = =

In the Atharvaveda ? where he first appears ? and the Shatapatha Brahmana , Kubera is the chief of evil spirits or spirits of darkness , and son of Vaishravana . The Shatapatha Brahmana calls him the Lord of thieves and criminals . In the Manusmriti , he becomes a respectable Loka @-@ pala ( " world protector " ) and the patron of merchants . In the epic Mahabharata , Kubera is described as the son of Prajapati Pulastya and his wife Idavida and the brother of sage Vishrava . Kubera is described as born from a cow . However , from the Puranas , he is described as the grandson of Pulastya and the son of Vishrava and his wife Ilavida ( or Ilivila or Devavarnini ) , daughter of the sage Bharadvaja or Trinabindu .

By this time , though still described as an asura , Kubera is offered prayers at the end of all ritual sacrifices . His titles , such as " best of kings " and " Lord of kings " ( Harivamsa indicate that Kubera is made " Lord of kings " ) , in contrast to the god @-@ king of heaven , Indra , whose title of " best of gods " led to the later belief that Kubera was a man . The early texts Gautama Dharmashastra and Apastamba describe him as a man . Only the Grihyasutras of Shankhayana and Hiranyakesin call him a god , and suggest offerings of meat , sesame seeds and flowers to him .

= = = Puranic and epic descriptions : Godhood acquired = = =

The Puranas and the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana grant Kubera unquestioned godhood . Kubera also acquired the status of the " Lord of riches " and the wealthiest Deva . He also becomes a Loka @-@ pala ( " world protector " ) and guardian ( dik @-@ pala ) of the North direction , although he is also sometimes associated with the East . Kubera 's status as a Loka @-@ pala and a dik @-@ pala is assured in the Ramayana , but in the Mahabharata , some lists do not include Kubera . Thus , Kubera is considered a later addition to the original list of Loka @-@ palas , where the gods Agni or Soma appear in his place . This status , the Ramayana records , was granted to Kubera by Brahma ? the creator @-@ god and father of Pulastya ? as a reward for his severe penance . Brahma also conferred upon Kubera the riches of the world ( Nidhis ) , " equality with gods " , and the Pushpaka Vimana , a flying chariot . Kubera then ruled in the golden city of Lanka , identified with modern @-@ day Sri Lanka . The Mahabharata says that Brahma conferred upon Kubera the lordship of wealth , friendship with Shiva , godhood , status as a world @-@ protector , a son called Nalakubera / Nalakubara , the Pushpaka Vimana and the lordship of the Nairrata demons .

Both the Puranas and the Ramayana feature the half @-@ blood siblings of Kubera . Vishrava , Kubera 's father , also married the Rakshasa ( demon ) princess Kaikesi , who mothered four Rakshasa children : Ravana , the chief antagonist of the Ramayana , Kumbhakarna , Vibhishana

and Soorpanaka . The Mahabharata regards Vishrava as the brother of Kubera , so Kubera is described as the uncle of Ravana and his siblings . It records that when Kubera approached Brahma for the favour of superseding his father Pulastya , Pulastya created Vishrava . To seek the favour of Vishrava , Kubera sent three women to him , by whom Vishrava begot his demon children . Ravana , after acquiring a boon of Brahma , drove Kubera away from Lanka and seized his Pushpaka Vimana , which was returned to Kubera after Ravana 's death . Kubera then settled on Gandhamandana mountain , near Mount Kailash ? the cosmological abode of the god Shiva ? in the Himalayas . Sometimes , Kailash itself is called Kubera 's residence . His city is usually called Alaka or Alaka @-@ puri ( " curl @-@ city " ) , but also Prabha ( " splendour " ) , Vasudhara ( " bejeweled " ) and Vasu @-@ sthali ( " abode of treasures " ) . There , Kubera had a grove called Caitraratha , where the leaves were jewels and the fruits were girls of heaven . There is also a charming lake called Nalini in the grove . Kubera is often described as a friend of Shiva in the epics . The Padma Purana says that Kubera prayed to Shiva for many years , and Shiva granted him the kingship of Yakshas .

A description of Kubera 's magnificent court appears in the Mahabharata as well as the Meghaduta . Here , Gandharvas and Apsaras entertain Kubera . Shiva and his wife Parvati often frequent Kubera 's court , which is attended by semi @-@ divine beings like the Vidyadharas ; Kimpurushas ; Rakshasas ; Pishachas ; as well as Padma and Shankha ; personified treasures ( nidhi ) ; and Manibhadra , Kubera 's chief attendant and chief of his army . Like every world @-@ protector , Kubera has seven seers of the North in residence . Alaka is recorded to be plundered by Ravana once , and attacked by the Pandava prince , Bhima once . Kubera 's Nairrata army is described to have defeated king Mucukunda , who then defeated them by the advice of his guru Vashishta . Shukra , the preceptor of the demons , is also recorded to have defeated Kubera and stolen his wealth . Another major tale in the scriptures records how Kubera entertained the sage Ashtavakra in his palace .

Kubera is the treasurer of the gods and overlord of the semi @-@ divine Yakshas , the Guhyakas , Kinnaras and Gandharvas , who act as his assistants and protectors of the jewels of the earth , as well as guardians of his city . Kubera is also the guardian of travelers and the giver of wealth to individuals , who please him . The Rakshasas also serve Kubera , however , some cannibalistic Rakshasas are described to have sided with Ravana in the battle against Kubera . Kubera also developed as minor marriage @-@ divinity . He is invoked with Shiva at weddings and is described as Kameshvara ( " Lord of Kama ? pleasure , desire etc . " ) . He is associated with fertility of the aquatic type .

The Puranas and the Mahabharata record that Kubera married Bhadra ( " auspicious " ) , or Kauberi ( " wife of Kubera " ) , daughter of the demon Mura . She is also called Yakshi ? a female Yaksha and Charvi ( " splendour " ) . They had three sons : Nalakubara ( " Reed @-@ axle " ) , Manigriva ( " Bejeweled @-@ neck " ) or Varna @-@ kavi ( " Colourful poet " ) , and Mayuraja ( " king of animals resembling men " ) ; and a daughter called Minakshi ( " fish @-@ eyed " ) . The Mahabharata calls his wife Riddhi ( " prosperity " ) and Nalakubara his son .

= = Worship = =

As the treasurer of the riches of the world , Kubera is prescribed to be worshipped . Kubera also credited money to the god Venkateshwara ( a form of the god Vishnu ) for his marriage with Padmavati . In remembrance of this , the reason devotees go to Tirupati to donate money in Venkateshwara 's Hundi ( " Donation pot " ) , is so that he can pay it back to Kubera .

While Kubera still enjoys prayers as the god of wealth , his role is largely taken by the god of wisdom , fortune and obstacle @-@ removal , Ganesha , with whom he is generally associated .

= = Beyond Hinduism = =

Kubera is recognized outside India and Hinduism as well . Kubera is a popular figure in Buddhist as well as Jain mythology . The Orientalist Dr. Nagendra Kumar Singh remarked that , " Every Indian

religion has a Kubera after the Hindu prototype " .

Kubera is the Buddhist Vaisravana or Jambhala , and the Japanese Bishamon . The Buddhist Vaisravana , like the Hindu Kubera , is the reagent of the North , a Loka @-@ pala and the Lord of Yakshas . He is one of the Four Heavenly Kings , each associated with a cardinal direction . In Buddhist legends , Kubera is also equated with Pañcika , whose wife Hariti is the symbol of abundance . The iconography of Kubera and Pancika is so similar that in certain cases , A. Getty comments , it is extremely difficult to distinguish between Pancika and Kubera . The Japanese Bishamon , also known as Tamon @-@ Ten , is one of the J?ni @-@ Ten ( ??? ) , a group of 12 Hindu deities adopted in Buddhism as guardian deities ( deva or ten ) who are found in or around Buddhist shrines . The Juni @-@ Ten group of twelve deities were created by adding four deities to the older grouping of Happou @-@ Ten , the eight guardians of the directions . Bishamon rules over the north , like his Hindu counterpart Kubera .

In Jainism , Kubera is the attendant Yaksha of the 19th Tirthankar Mallinath . He is usually called Sarvanubhuti or Sarvahna , and may be depicted with four faces , rainbow colours and eight arms . The Digambara sect of Jainism gives him six weapons and three heads ; while the Svetambaras portray him with four to six arms , numerous choices of weapons , though his attributes , the money bag and citron fruit are consistent . He may ride a man or an elephant . He is related to the Buddhist Jambhala rather than the Hindu Kubera .