



· G A R U D A ·

The majestic King of Birds is an imposing creature with a humanoid body and eagle-like features. He has huge wings that can darken the sky, golden feathers that shine like the sun, and sharp talons that symbolise his power. His face combines the fierceness of a bird of prey with the intelligence of a divine being, while his muscular chest and heavenly ornaments reflect his nature between the earthly and the divine. A symbol of strength and speed, Garuda is known for crossing the sky with a single flap of his wings.



He is a celestial protector of Dharma, the natural order of the universe, and an enemy of the naga (serpents who are themselves earthly protectors of Dharma). Although he is often portrayed as aggressive in his Hindu origins, his story evolves in Buddhism: Garuda learns to control his anger and develops compassion for his former rivals. This transformation makes him a symbol of the balance between strength and wisdom. His battle with the Naga represents the overcoming of internal and external obstacles to enlightenment.

In Sri Lankan culture, Garuda symbolises protection, renewal and the triumph of order over chaos. His depictions adorn temples

and festivals, reminding the faithful of the importance of righteousness and compassion. His flight is seen as a path to spiritual transcendence, a link between heaven and earth.



Garuda is a creature
from **SRI LANKA**

Current population: 22.000.000



Known as the ‘Tear of India’ due to its shape and location in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is an island rich in history and culture. Proto-Australoid peoples arrived more than 30,000 years ago, but the

Sinhalese, descendants of Indo-Aryan peoples, settled around the 6th century BC and created kingdoms that thrived on agriculture based on sophisticated irrigation systems.

Theravada Buddhism, introduced by the Indian emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BC, shaped the island's worldview. This branch of Buddhism emphasises simplicity and meditation, and is closely linked to everyday life and popular mythology. Local gods and mythological creatures such as Nagas and Yakshas are revered as protectors of the Dharma, revealing a unique fusion of spirituality and ancestral traditions. Sacred sites such as the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy illustrate the people's deep connection with Buddhism.

The island, which had never been a political or cultural entity, was subjected to centuries of European colonial rule from the 16th century. After independence in 1948, the creation of a unitary state on the island provoked ethnic tensions between the majority Buddhist Sinhalese and the minority Hindu Tamils, leading to a devastating civil war that ended in 2009. The conflict ended in military victory for the Sinhalese.

Today, Sri Lanka remains a traditional, highly agrarian and rural society where religiosity is pervasive in everyday life. Social conflicts persist, a sign of a state that seeks to consolidate itself despite popular and cultural resistance.

