

Tigers and Deer-- Friends in Hindu World!

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Ancient Hindu seers known as Rishis lived in places of scenic beauty (the word Seer is the mirror image of Sanskrit word Rish). They lived deep inside the forests far from the madding crowd. They went in search of peace, both inner and outer. They were pure vegetarians and so lived with the help of fruits and honey, easily accessible in the jungles. But they always had cows for milk. When they looked at the high and mighty Mountains, they got lofty thoughts. They praised the perennial rivers like Ganges and huge azure blue lakes like Manasarovar. Since they were very kind in 'thought, word and deed', animals rarely harmed them. In fact animals who are natural enemies forgot their natural enmity in their presence. Sanskrit epics Mahabharata and Ramayana speak very clearly about it. Tamil Kamba Ramayanam and Tamil epic Silappadikaram also echoed the same message.

Rishis lived in the mountainous areas of Kailash, Meru and Himalyas. They lived deep inside the forests and held 12 year long Yagnas and philosophical discussions. Puranas were composed there. Vyasa divided the bulky Vedas into four parts and taught to his four disciples in the Himalayas.

Lions and tigers were roaming near the abode of Dadichi Maha Rishi.

The Ashram of Rishi Upamanyu was said to be the abode of lions and tigers. But the tigers of his monastery were described as mild. They used to behave with antelopes (deer) as friends (MB.Anu.14;42)

Colossal elephants were wandering near Kanva Ashrama- (MB.Adi.)

Detailed descriptions of the wild animals, their roars and bleats, the smell of rut of the elephants are referred to in many places in the epics.

Even poisonous snakes behaved like non poisonous snakes due to the influence of the Rishis. Within the hermitage of Upamanyu, the snakes and mongooses lived like friends- (MB.anu 14,42).

Sangam Tamil work Purananuru verse 251 described the wood brought by the elephants for the ascetics. Kamban says that both the deer and tiger drank water from the same water source. He attributed it to the just rule of the kings of Solar race. Tamil prince Ilango of Silappadikaram says the same about Pandyan rule in Madurai. Tamils believed that if the kings rule justly there will be bumper harvests (Kural couplet 545). Great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa also said it in Raguvamsam (5-29/33).

Kalidasa says that very rarely we see knowledge and wealth in one place like we see tigers and antelopes in the Ashrams of the seers. Manu, the law giver and Tamil poet Tiruvalluvar say there will be plenty of rains for the crops in the kingdoms where there is just rule (Manu 9-247 an Kural 559). So much was said about the miraculous powers of kings and seers.

I have already written in my previous posts about a snake holding its hood as an umbrella for a frog in Sringeri and birds flocking to give cover for a Tamil man of Sangam age. We see such things in the story of Saint Francis of Assisi in the West. Even the latest Pope preferred name of Francis for the qualities he portrayed.

Miracles of a Christian Saint: St Francis of Assisi

“St. Francis was born at Assisi in Italy in 1182. After a care free youth, he turned his back on inherited wealth and committed himself to God. Like many early saints, he lived a very simple life of poverty, and in so doing, gained a reputation of being the friend of animals. He established the rule of St Francis, which exists today as the Order of St. Francis, or the Franciscans. He died in 1226, aged 44”.

Voltaire on St Francis:

“A savage mad man who ran around naked, spoke to animals, gave religious instruction to a wolf and built himself a wife out of snow”, said Voltaire (1649-1778)

St. Francis was able to control a wolf that troubled the people of a town in Italy. He spoke to the wolf and struck a deal with it. Half way through his sermons he went to the birds and spoke to them. On the last day of his existence, the sky larks came to him to sing. He cured leprosy patients. In his presence the animals behaved. When he went to the lakes and ponds fishes kissed him.

Catholic Christians are like Hindus in their beliefs, particularly about miracles. Hindus believe that saints can exert great influence on animals and other natural forces. A Tamil saint of Tiruvannamalai, Sri Seshadri Swamikal, brought hundreds of birds of different kinds, just to amuse one of his devotees. Tamil and Telugu films portray snakes that obey the divine commands.

Poem Attributed to St Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.

Please read my earlier articles:

1. Mysterious Tamil Bird Man (posted 19 April 2012)
2. Mysterious Messengers for Ajanta, Angkor Wat, Sringeri (posted 3 Oct. 2011)
3. Animal Einsteins Part 1 and Part 2
4. When Animals worship God, Why not Men?
5. Can Birds Predict Your Future?

And 800 more articles on Indian Culture.

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