



BALAVIN KURAL

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Know Your Mythology:

Contributed By Sri Thulasinathan, this section essays the story of Crow and Swans from Mahabarata narrated to Karna... page 2

Sage Spotlight:

In this section, Smt. Prema describes the background of Idaikkadar Siddhar who is a disciple of Bogar Siddhar.. page 7



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KNOW YOUR MYTHOLOGY: CROW AND THE SWANS - STORY FROM MAHABHARATA



Image courtesy: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalya>

King of Madra, Shalya, narrated this brief story of a Crow and Swan to Karna in order to make him understand the real gravity of fighting Vasudev Krishna and Arjuna and to stop him from boasting his strength excessively.

Knowing Shalya's skills, on the 17th day of the war, Duryodhana convinced him to be the charioteer for

Karna. While arranging the Kaurava army in Surya Vyugh, Karna went on bragging about his skills and how he can defeat any enemy, including the gods themselves. Upon seeing all this, Shalya started taunting them. Karna then searched for Arjuna, however he could not find them. Then, Karna announced on the battlefield that he will pay a golden car with six bulls of an elephant's proportions to anyone who reveals their whereabouts. Shalya ridiculed Karna and praised the skills of Arjuna and Krishna. In a way, he was trying to get him onto the proper track. Karna's response to these taunts was to condemn the humans of Madra and threaten to kill Shalya. Upon listening to these, Shalya told him about the story of Crow and Swan for Karna's benefit.

There was a rich Vaishya who used to stay close to the sea. He was a saintly person, performed Yajnas, and gave donations. He was forgiving, kind and had many sons. A crow was staying there, which used to eat the leftover food often from Vaishya's young boys. The lads always gave that crow the remaining meat, rice, curd, milk, honey, and ghee from their food. Therefore, the crow became arrogant and began insulting other birds; equal or superior. One day a few Mansarovar lake swans reached close to that sea. Their skill at flying rivalled that of Garuda. They had Chakra signs on their body and were covering ground in a very dignified manner. Observing the swans, those boys said to the crow, 'O ranger of the skies, you are superior to all winged creatures.'

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Forgetting that they are only children, Crow considered it to be the truth. Consequently, the crow flew up closer to the swans to discover the best bird to fly the longest. The crow then challenged the swans to a duel. The Swan spoke back, "Crow! We, Swans, stay in Mansarovar lake and roam around on the earth. We are honoured amongst the birds to fly long distances within the sky. Fool! How could you possibly keep up with the likes of me?". The crow, while insulting the swans, critiqued their flying, "Swan! I am proficient in the competency of flying. Doing every hundred Yojanas in a separate and beautiful kind of motion, I shall display all those motions. Rising and swooping down. Whirling around, and coursing straight. Proceeding gently, and advancing steadily. Performing the diverse courses up and receding back, and soaring high. Darting forward and soaring upwards with fiercer velocity. Advancing steadily and rising by the jerks, circular and diverse other kinds of motion. You just pick a style and I will use it." The swan cited he did not know all these ways like the crow, but knew the regular skills in which he was going to fly. All the crows who came to look at the swan and the crow, laughed a lot amongst themselves after hearing this from the swan saying, 'How will the swan with only one kind of style get the better of a hundred different flights?'

Swan and the crow flew in the sky's direction above the sea. The crow was flying, showing off the many abilities that he knew. All the crows by seeing the fantastic flying ways of the crow started cawing loudly out of pride. All of them began insulting the swan there. It appeared that the swan which started out flying in his normal way had nearly lost out on flying with the crow. The swan after listening to the taunts of Crows directly flew towards the west direction above the sea. The crow became exhausted from flying and couldn't locate any island or tree there to take rest on. It grew tired of this ordeal and tried its best to not drown in the ocean. The swan then left the tired crow at the back but didn't fly ahead. He then waited there for the crow to come close to him and observed the lethargy of the crow. The crow somehow metaphorically limped past the swan, but was on the verge of hitting the surface of the water.

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Swan told him that, “When you went over all those terrifyingly complex techniques, I don’t remember seeing one that looked like this lazed drunken flying right over the water. Are you perhaps employing some esoteric arts?” Seeing the pathetic state of affairs of the crow while falling downwards to the sea, the kind-hearted Swan, determined to rescue it, asked him to come closer. But the Crow reached its limit and fell into the water. The swan then questioned “How could a crow that spoke of such ability fall in such a pathetic state?” The Crow who recovered with the help of the swan, then confessed “I was conceited after eating the leftover foods of the Vaishya boys for which I humiliated many crows and the swans, and thought that I was like the first-rate Garuda bird! Kindly take me to the island now. I will not repeat this mistake once more.” That crow nearly drowned inside the water. The merciful Swan then at once lifted the crow above the water with big pressure, positioned him on his back, and reached the area in which they each had flown earlier. Swans then left for their location. King Shalya in the end attempted to make Karna understand his faults of overestimating his fame and those who used to be greater than him, which occurred after having the leftovers from the sons of Hastinapur King Dhritarashtra.

Shalya then warned Karna by saying that, “You simply survived throughout the Virata war only on account of getting exquisite warriors like Bhishma, Drona, Kripacharya, Ashwathama, and different Kaurava warriors alongside yourself. You could not beat Arjuna that time when you had the chance. Moreover, it was you who ran away first after Gandharva Chitrasena captured the Kauravas, who later escaped with the aid of Arjuna. Furthermore, your Guru Parashurama, Bhishma, and Drona have mentioned the glory of Lord Krishna and Arjuna before the Mahabharata battle. Just like the crow taking the refuge of an incredible swan, you need to take shelter of Lord Krishna and Arjuna.”

SCIENCE SNIPPETS : OLAI CHUVADI – THE STOREHOUSE OF TAMIL LITERATURE



Courtesy: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Olaichuvadi.jpeg>

Olai chuvadi, or the more familiar palm leaflets, were used as writing materials in India during the early days of civilization. Found in wet and dry climates, the palmyra palm, fan palm and the Corypha palm were commonly used to make palm manuscripts for the sole purpose of storing information related to religious topics, horoscopes, Ayurvedic documents, and other literary works. The leaves of these palm varieties were durable, flexible, and decay as well as insect resistant. The writing instrument that was used to make cuts in the leaf cuticle was a sharp iron stylus, which left the impression of the letters on the leaf, just enough to make an indentation without cutting through the leaf. But did you know that the leaflets were subjected to a lot of chemical processing before it was ready to be written on? The leaves were taken from the plant when they were still soft, and then cut to the required sizes, anointed with sesame oil and dried. Then they were boiled with rice and left in the shade to dry out. To get a yellowed look, turmeric was added while boiling. This process removed acidic impurities, sealed the leaf surface, and rendered it fire-resistant and waterproof. Sometimes the boiling took place in a copper vessel to infuse the leaflet with copper ions, thus increasing its durability. To make them resistant to termites and fungi, the leaflets were soaked in a citrus decoction. After the leaflets were dried out, the leaf ridge was removed and the leaflets were trimmed, polished and pressed together. Two holes were made on each side to string a cord to hold the leaflets together, after which they were stored between two wooden planks. To further preserve the manuscripts, lemon grass and camphor oils were applied to maintain flexibility, and stored with herbs to ward off insects. This well practiced technique for preparing palm leaves was probably one of the earliest and cheapest forms of writing material. Olai chuvadi - made from simple palm leaves, processed to perfection, indented with literary brilliance, impenetrable to the ravages of time - were the storehouse of several great literary works in the Sangam period.

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AYURVEDA AWARENESS: "ANJARAI PETTI SERIES: BLACK PEPPER" by Dr. Saranya



Photo courtesy:
<https://www.etsy.com/market/anjaraipetti>

Today, we are going to talk about the various spices that are typically found in an anjarai petti, starting with *milagu* or black pepper, whose botanical name is **Piper nigrum**. Acharya Charaka used to refer to pepper as **Maricha**. In Charaka Samhita, the medicinal benefits of Pepper are categorized under:

Deepaneya - for increasing digestive strength
Shoola Prashamana - helps in alleviating pain
Krimighna - kills worms and insects in the stomach.

There are two varieties of pepper - Black and White. The White pepper is obtained by soaking the black pepper and removing the skin. The most useful part of the pepper plant is the fruit. Now, why is Pepper so important? This is because it has the ability to reduce Kapha (excess phlegm secretion, cough, cold) and Vata (inflammation and joint pain) doshas. When there is poor appetite and sickness, pepper is consumed in the form of sambhar or rasam. For persistent cough, a mix of pepper powder, honey/jaggery, and ghee is chewed on.

In the next session, we will cover another spice in the anjarai petti.

Ayurveda Awareness, Anjarai Petti Series: Black Pepper, by
Dr. Saranya
Audio Link : [AnjaraiPetti](#)

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SAGE SPOTLIGHT: "IDAIKKADAR SIDDHAR"

by Smt. Prema

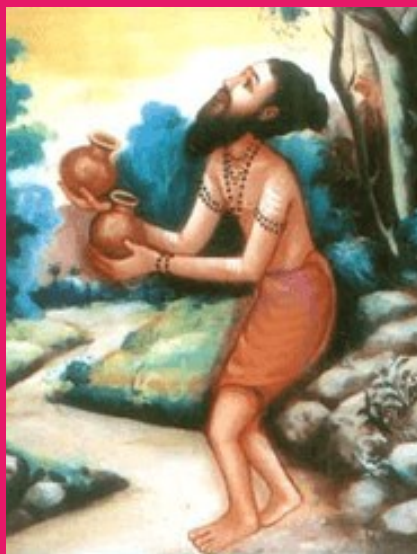


Photo courtesy:
<https://www.tknsiddha.com/medicine/idaikkadar-siddhar/>

In this episode, we will talk about Idakkadar Siddhar, who is believed to be from Tondaimandalam region called Idakkadu. He was born to Nandagopan and Yashoda, and is believed to belong to the Idaiyar or shepherd community. Bogar Siddhar was his guru. He is called Idakkadar as he is believed to be a bridge between grihasta and sanyasa stages of life, between atman and paramatman. He used to stand in meditation thinking of Lord Shiva, while his sheep was grazing. One time, Bogar

Siddhar saw him and landed in front of him. Idakkadar didn't know he was a great man, but as part of Tamil hospitality, offered a seat made of Darbai, and gave him sheep milk. Bogar Siddhar was impressed with his hospitality, and transferred all his knowledge to him. Idakkadar felt some light entering him, Bogar advised him to transfer this knowledge to a worthy person.

Idakkadar wrote a song about the earth and other planetary positions, he was able to know the past, present and even predict the future. He had predicted that dharma is on the decline and adharma is rising, and that in 12 years, a famine is going to hit his land. He trained his sheep to eat a type of plant which is actually poisonous, as that plant will grow even in drought conditions. He made his hut with a special type of seed and mortar, and started living there. As he had predicted, there was a drought. The sheep started feeling an allergic symptom when they ate the plant, and rubbed against the side of the hut. This made the grains fall down and he used to make a porridge to feed himself and disciples.

When they saw him surviving, all the planets came down to see him, he offered them porridge. On consuming this, they went to sleep saying they will discuss tomorrow. When they were sleeping, he changed the position of the planets, and it started raining heavily. The effects of the droughts were completely removed. The next morning, when the grahas woke up, they were astonished seeing the change in the landscape. They wanted to question him, but seeing him meditate, left him alone. This is how Idakkadar solved the famine problem.

Sage Spotlight, Idakkadar Siddhar, by Dr. Saranya
Audio Link : [Idakkadar Siddhar](#)

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Shraddha Suktam *by Smt. Roopa V Rajan*

What is SHRADDHA?

Shraddha is called The Power that Empowers Everything.

Shraddha is our mental attitude, which is constituted primarily with the sincerity of purpose, humility, reverence and faith. For example, we have Shraddha for Gurus - it is a sincere reverence. We have Shraddha for the Bhagavad Gita - it is admiration for Lord Krishna's teaching, that I understand with faith, humility and reverence. You give alms to a beggar with Shraddha; it is a sense of humility, combined with the hope that what you give will be acceptable and serviceable.

Purpose, humility, reverence and faith, all these together constitute Shraddha. So if one has Shraddha, one is endowed with all these qualities. Bhagavad Gita says, "Shraddhavan", meaning one endowed with Shraddha, attains the highest knowledge (both mundane and spiritual). All the four aspects of purpose, humility, reverence, and faith, are interrelated.

Shraddha Suktam is the collection of Mantras where Goddess Shraddha has been considered paramount in the world to accomplish. The Suktam describes how evil forces are uprooted with Shraddha, how the universe is run by Goddess Shraddha. In the first verse of Shraddha suktam recitation, we are seeking Goddess Shraddha, to bestow only pleasing and agreeable things on the charitable one and on the one who wishes to be charitable. Goddess Shraddha, I pray that you may bestow the pleasing and agreeable on those who perform rituals for enjoying the fruits thereof. The second verse explains how gods pay particular attention to the frightening demons (or how they show reverence to the superior gods). In the same way, Goddess Shraddha, we are showing reverence to you. Kindly fulfil our intent and purpose, also Goddess Shraddha, fulfil the purpose, when our priests perform rituals to enjoy the fruits thereof.

The Third verse explains worshipping Goddess Shraddha, how devatas and the performers of rituals, are protected by the God Vayu. May we all worship Goddess Shraddha with devotional intent in our heart. One gains wealth through Shraddha.

We invite the Goddess Shraddha in the morning, Shraddha at noon and Shraddha at sunset. O Goddess Shraddha, bless us that we may have Shraddha in this life, at this time, and in this place.

Vedas ask us to recite Shraddha Suktam everyday morning before starting any activity.

Balambika Charanam