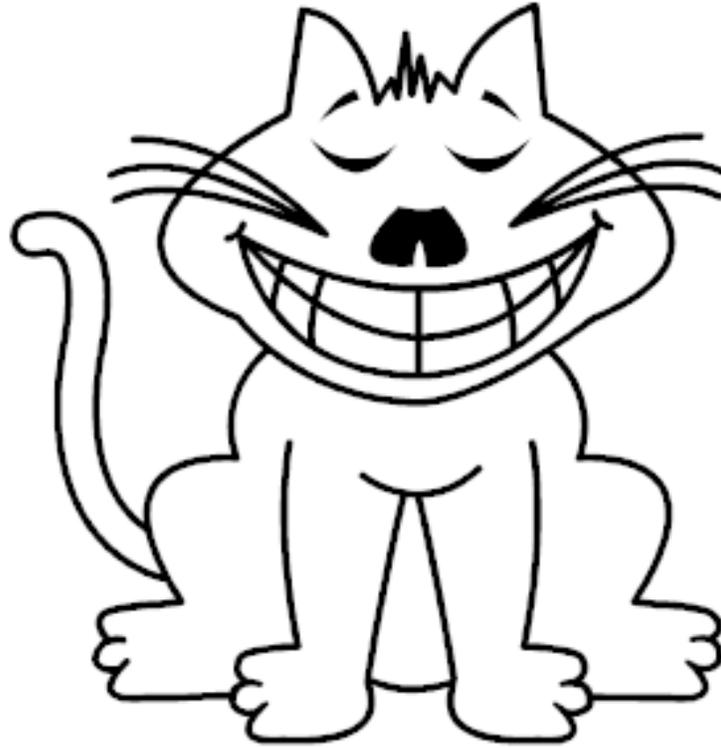


Margara the Cat

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Once there was a pious cat named Mārgāra who never killed an animal, never harmed a mouse, played with children and always drank milk and ate vegetarian cat food. The cows were very friendly with the cat. His piousness did not have a slightest taint of concealed ill will or harm. Even the humans showered him with love, friendliness and adoration. His smile was wide and broad as he closed his eyes. He was quick to jump on the lap of the owner upon invitation. The children played with Margara, who never seemed tired of playing with them from morning to evening.

When the night fell, he retired to his corner and slept on a padded mat. Very near his padded bed was the cat litter box; once used, Margara would meow and look up to the owner for disposal of waste. Very rarely, he climbed on the bed of the owner or his daughter. He was such a cultivated cat.

His sharp teeth were never known to have ripped into flesh. His body was lithe with fire-wire reflexes. He always kept his retractile claws back in his paws, so children didn't get hurt. His sense of smell was very acute so much so he knew when his milk meal was ready inside the



Credit: Dr. Sindagi

house or any critters wandered around the house. He had fun chasing the critters away from the property. Margara's color vision was extraordinary for a cat, known for poor color vision. He sounded his meow before entering the rooms in the large mansion.

The dogs always picked quarrels with gentle Margara. The cat knew how to pacify the dogs. He left sweet biscuits in their lines of sight. That took the edge off the dog's aggression and hostility. The dogs became friends with the cat. That was astonishment for all. That is the feline with the knack to pacify the snack-loving canines. Once he disappeared for no apparent reason in the nearby forest and came back a week later somewhat emaciated. Everybody thought he was starving all these days. No one yet knows the mystery of this disappearance. Later we will find out the mercy mission he undertook for a fellow being.

There was a langur by name, Anuman who used to visit the backyard of the house at least twice a week and watch the cat chasing the critters in the yard. He kept his distance at the top of the tree. The cat and the langur became bosom friends as if they knew each other well from before. The cat meowed and the langur screeched on his arrival, a kind of greeting between the feline and the long-tailed langur. They seemed to have a consummate communication between them. Anuman used to bring fruits from the nearby forest for Margara and drop them on the ground below the tree. That was the level of friendship and trust Anuman had for Margara, who unhesitatingly ate them.

Anuman has a black face with black ears, and a wide bushy circle of grey and russetish fur outlining his face, a body weighing 40 pounds covered with grey fur and a furred tail measuring 30 inches, longer than his body. He is good at hopping like kangaroos but more gracefully. He usually walks on fours, hops on twos, climbs on fours, and sits on his rump with the tail hanging straight down and the back rising straight up or sometimes hunched. He can jump 12 feet on a



level ground and jump off a cliff or tree to a distance of 35 feet. He looks funny when he sleeps on his belly wrapped around a branch with his tail hanging straight down.

Margara was unlike a neighborhood carnivorous cat, who was known to eat birds, mice, lizards or anything that moved on twos and fours and

smaller than him. He used to carry away his kills to a nearby cave in the mountain, where a pile of bones bear evidence of his carnivorous eating habits. Margara kept a tab on him.

Mungus was a mongoose visiting with the cat and had been a friend longer than Anuman. Mungus is entirely carnivorous eating worms, eggs, carrion, snakes, birds...Mungus is very adept in killing cobras because he has a thick coat, chemical immunity against snake poison and most of all its agility. He always crows over his ability to kill a cobra several times his weight and length.

Anuman's friendship to Margara has a history behind it. The days Margara the cat went missing from the house were spent in Parkaya Pravesa (Transmigration of mind and soul into another

body) into Anuman with the black face and bringing him back to life and nurturing him back to good health. Anuman was bitten by a cobra on its tail as he was sleeping with his tail hanging from the branch. Margara knew by “television” that something bad happened to his friend in the jungle. He rushed there, seated himself in a deep cave, left his body, entered the dead body of Anuman with his soul and mind and revived him back to life. In previous life, Margara and Anuman were Yogis with special powers. They could walk on water, be in several places at a time, read the mind of people, withstand extreme weather conditions and hunger for days, become small or big as circumstances demand, fly without being seen, perform levitations, materialize objects from thin air, transmute one object into another object, know the past, the present and the future of a person, impersonate a person to its perfection...

Once Anuman regained his life back into his body and his health, Margara reentered his own lifeless body secreted in the cave away from the carnivores, reanimated it and left the forest for his home. That is why he was missing for a few days from home, the secret of which no one knew.

Mungus was also a fellow yogi in the previous life. In fact the forest adjoining the village was where the Yogis practiced their Yogas and gained extraordinary powers, which they kept even after they were born as animals.

Thus, these three were bosom friends in the past, the present and possibly in the future lives. The cows also were fellow Yogis in the forest and were born domestic cows to serve the needs of Margara in the present life.

One day as the cat was napping on his mat, a cobra slithered into the house slyly and silently to drink the milk, meant for Margara. At once Margara the cat meowed and jumped on the nearby mantel far away from the cobra. There he was, Mungus the mongoose to face the cobra. His response was lightning-fast. He heard the distress call from Margara the cat and traveled the distance from the forest to the house in a fraction of a second. That is what a Yogi does to a friend in need. Yogi Mungus moves faster than a thought. The cobra was hissing, spread his hood and intently looked at Mungus with the intent to sink his poisonous fang into his flesh. In a flash faster than lightning, Mungus bit the cobra at its neck and severed it for good. Down fell the severed head and the upright forepart of his body. Mungus spoke the language of feral cats in the neighborhood. A bunch of them came into the house, licked the floor clean of the blood of cobra, removed the cobra head and all and had a meal of it in the cave.

Margara, Anuman and Mungus decided to go on a pilgrimage to a temple town well known to them in their previous existence. Just think of three yogis in the flesh and blood of a cat, a langur, and mongoose going on the streets holding hands. That is exactly what they did. No one bothered them because they were a friendly bunch. People for the first time witnessed unlikely friendship among three disparate animals. When mischievous children harassed them, they would climb on the nearest tree or building and go out of reach. They sometimes transmuted themselves into human beings, which we know they are capable of.

As they were going from place to place, they met a monkey handler and a performing monkey. The trio now in human form, looked at each other and said in a chorus, “They look like Yoginath and Vanakapi.” Yoginath they knew from previous life has become the monkey handler and their disciple has become the performing monkey. Yoginath recognized the trio instantly and greeted them. Vanakapi had no clue because he was still not an accomplished Yogi with special qualities.

It is now easy to understand that Yoginath is training the disciple in the body and mind of a monkey to become very docile so in his next birth he could become a human and a true yogi like him. Vanakapi was a yogi in making. Poor yogi-in-making had all his teeth yanked out. That was another step in the making of a yogi. One has to shed his anger, aggression, hatred, jealousy, pride...before he becomes a yogi. The toothless monkey was an entertainer to the kids of all ages. He would jump through fiery hoops, make somersaults and shadow boxing, pretend he

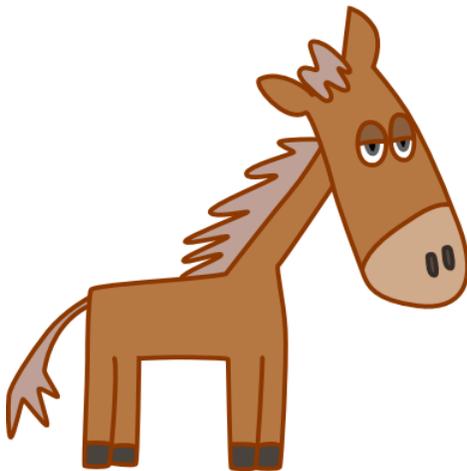


was dead and suddenly jump up laughing, climb up trees and bring fruits and leaves, jump on the shoulders of fearless children and adults, walk on stilts, propel with pogo stick, ride bicycles, and dance to music.

Yoginath was very happy to meet with his old fellow yogis. They shared their experiences, snippets, stories and thoughts. Vanakapi was already getting old, ready to retire, die, reborn as human yogi-in-making and become a full-blown blossom of a yogi. Since Vanakapi was shedding all his animal qualities and could not live out in the wild without human help in this life, Yoginath paid the necessary fees and admitted Vanakapi in the retirement home for performing monkeys.

The threesome became foursome, bid goodbye to Vanakapi and went on their way to the temple town.

On their way, they saw a vigorous bull in pink of health in the meadow trotting towards them and emitting tranquil bellows. The fearless foursome knew at once it was Rishabha, who was not about to charge them. Rishabha Muni was a great forest-dwelling yogi, they all knew very well. He was kind, gentle, a greater preceptor to his disciples and a dear friend to his colleagues.



As they were getting acquainted, Rishabha still in his theriomorphic form, began suddenly tapping and scraping the ground, exhaled violently and lunged towards them ever so slightly. They panicked, withdrew a little bit and yelled, "O Rishabha, what are you up to." Rishabha gave a big laughter as he transfigured from bull to person. Everyone had a hearty laugh.

They resumed their journey as they exchanged tidbits. Now the foursome became a pentad. They went to all the big and small temples on the way absorbing all the good vibrations, naturally resident in the holy places. Bull became the protector of the Yogi group. When they had ruffians on their journey, Rishabha would transmute into a bull in the company of the foursome yogis so the roughnecks would not bother them. Mungus would transmute into mongoose in the night when they were sleeping in the open fields, so the snakes would not bother them. Anuman would transmute into a langur and fetch fruits and coconuts from the trees. It was not uncommon for Mungus, Anuman, Margara and Yoginath to take turn riding on Rishabha, who was very happy to help the foursome anyway he could. The sky with the distant stars was their roof, the moon was their light and the sun was their light of lights. They would sojourn by the lakes, rivers, streams..., which provided water for daily use in rituals. They had only loin clothes, water pitches, walking sticks, and prayer beads and paraphernalia. All temple towns on the way had rich merchants, who donated their daily needs.

They reached a town ruled by a king. He had elephants, horses and beasts of burden. Some of the horses were out on the meadows. One horse in particular neighed as they were passing by. They took a look and recognized Hyagrīva, the horse with beautiful neck. Again Hyagrīva was the fellow yogi, the exponent of Madhu-Vidya (Honey-Knowledge) among the forest dwelling Sadhus. He taught his disciples that there are three entities in the universe: the Perceiver, the Perceived and the Mediator of experience between the first two (Adhiatma, Adhibhuta and Adhidaiva), the last one he called God or Universal Consciousness. Without Adhidaiva, we

would not perceive and experience objects. This in simple terms is Honey Knowledge. All of them sat down in a circle and begged Hyagriva to explicate Madhu-Vidya in great detail. The more they heard on Honey Knowledge, the more they relished and wanted to hear from the yogi of yogis. That is when the expression, “Heard from the Horse’s Mouth” came about.

They reached the temple town and on their way, they lived by the generosity of people. They could not ask for more. They could materialize food or any other want. They desisted doing it because they know becoming a yogi is not for the sake of becoming a miracle worker but to enhance their closeness to the Universal Consciousness.

Though they were physically close, they were able to communicate with each other by thought and their efforts and deeds were focused on one: Mukti, eternal release from mundane living and absorption into the Universal Consciousness.

In the temple town, there were many like them. The salubrious vibrations emanating from them were in sync with the universal vibrations (Spanda) emanating from Siva, by which all universes and the universe from the sun and the eight planets in the solar system to the subatomic particles are held together and dance to the beat of his drum. Spiritual ignorance represented by Muiyalka is crushed under his foot.

They went into the temple singing songs of praise to the aniconic form of Siva in Kasi, who was glad to see them. Rishabha was particularly thrilled to see Siva for his kind was the mount of Siva; their appreciation of each other was mutual and abiding.



Wikipedia notes: Kasi Visvanath Temple was built in 490AD. It was destroyed (every time it was rebuilt) by Muhammad Ghorī in 1194, Qutub-ud-din Aibak, and Firuz Shah Tughlaq in 1351. It was rebuilt in 1585 by Todar Mal, the Revenue Minister of Akbar. Aurangzeb demolished it in 1669 and constructed Gyanvapi Mosque which exists alongside the temple even today. The original Siva-Linga is still there. The current temple was built in 1780 by Queen Ahilya Bai Holkar.

