

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

(JAIRAJAN)

Jairajan was a benevolent king. His rule was fair, fortuitous and peaceful, and because of this, his subjects revered him. Jairajan believed that bloodshed, warfare and cruelty must be avoided at all costs, and constantly strived to ensure that his realm was peaceful, willing to make any sacrifice to ensure that harmony was maintained and the values of peace upheld.

His kindness granted him a great deal of respect amongst his people, and consequently his rule was never questioned by his subjects. Unfortunately for Jairajan, this earned him the envy of his family, who became jealous of his power and sought to usurp his position as king.

Jairajan knew that there was no way to hold on to his crown without bloodshed; he became aware of a plot –orchestrated by his brothers– to kill him. Instead of calling for their execution, or ordering his armies to fight for him –as he knew they would– he elected to relinquish his crown peacefully and allow his brothers to take his crown.

Jairajan moved to a village far away from the eyes of his brothers, and

took up a simple life. Soon, he married a woman and lived a life of simple peasantry.

His life was happy and fulfilling; working throughout the day and spending the evenings in his small house with his wife.

One evening, as he was returning home from work, he came across a large pile of human remains. The bones were piled high, and looked as though they were comprised of dozens of men, women and children.

Horrified that such atrocities were occurring in the kingdom he used to rule, he rushed back to his house to inform his wife.

Knowing of his past, and his desire for peace, she had been reluctant to tell him that the king to which he had abdicated his throne had been sacrificing young boys to the great eagle, Garuda. With Garuda's power, the king had been able to rule his kingdom with an iron fist. The people lived in fear of the king and the powerful beast to which he paid tribute.

Jairajan discovered that the next sacrifice –which was due in a few days– would be a young boy named Shankar. At once, he made his way to Shankar's house, and informed his parents that –when the day of the sacrifice came– he would take his place instead.

The day of tribute arrived, and Garuda appeared. When Jairajan stepped forwards, offering himself to the powerful eagle, Garuda

snapped Jairajan up in his beak, pounding his wings and taking to the sky.

Seeing the noble sacrifice of Jairajan, Shankar ran towards Garuda and tried to save Jairajan. With a swipe of his talon, Garuda struck Shankar down, killing him instantly.

Jairajan's wife –upon hearing of the sacrifice– journeyed to Garuda's lair, pleading for him to return her husband. Impressed by her selfless devotion, Garuda granted her wish, resurrecting Jairajan.

Jairajan told Garuda of the evils of the king who now ruled the land, and implored him to revive those whom had been taken as a sacrifice. Garuda, who was swayed by the selflessness of Jairajan, his wife and the young boy, Shankar, resurrected all of those whom had been sacrificed.

Q: What is the overall message of this passage:

A: That self-sacrificing goodness with triumph over evil.

Q: Why did Jairajan abdicate his throne?

A: To prevent unnecessary bloodshed.

Q: What was Jairajan's rule like?

A: Fair, fortuitous, peaceful.