

The Holy Cow



By Madhukar Swayambhu

Out of 8.7 million species of animals in the world, why is cow so important?

How is cow so different? Or is it just a myth that only Cow is given that due respect in India?

Let's understand it a bit better, let's take a closer look on Indian culture and even closer look on – THE COW.

Preface

In the Indian Culture, we see animals as very important part of the basic ecology. To give them the due respect, an animal was associated with each God and demi God, so that while a person prays in a temple or bows in front of a God, he does the same with associated animal, like Shiv has snake & a bull, Ganesh is himself elephant head and has a rat associated, Vishnu has a Sheshnag and a Garuda, Durga has a Lion, Lakshmi has an owl, Kartikeya / Murugan . Senthil has a peacock, Hanuman is linked to monkey, Yam has a buffalo, Dhashavatara of Vishnu has Varaha (wild bore), Matsya (fish), Kurma (tortoise) and Narsimha (lion) and so on. Out of all his brothers and wife the only one to accompany Yudhishthir till heaven was a dog. So animal has a specific space which is sacred, which is holy. But how is cow different?

Cow is the only animal having Kamdhenu as the mother of all cows. "Kamdhenu" – is the one who grants the wishes. All your desires can be fulfilled by just granting a wish – that the literal meaning. The philosophy behind is very important to understand. The philosophical ideology behind "Kamdhenu" is – the one, which can fulfill all the needs of a human family. The question is how?

Why Holy?

I understood the answer to this recently.

There is an age old Indian concept of "Panchagavya" – the term was coined in Vedic India itself. Probably the Vedic Sciences knew the answers at that point in time itself and that is why they had respected the Cow as "Holy". It is because the cow is "wholly" created by God for helping human beings. **The Religion is scientific, but rituals are blind follow-ups of the religion**, without knowing the reason behind it. The ritual of

believing that Cow is “Holy” was carried forward without knowing the reasoning behind it. Most of the modern India wouldn't know the concept of “Panchagavya” as the present day education system is not Vedic, but the one established by the British rule.

So let's come on to the modern world of technology & IT. Let's see what World Wide Web has to say about this ancient age old Indian term. **The Wi-Ki says** “Panchagavya or panchakavyam is a concoction prepared by mixing five products of cow. The three direct constituents are cow dung, urine, and milk; the two derived products are curd and ghee. These are mixed in proper ratio and then allowed to ferment. Panchamrita is a similar mixture that replaces dung and urine with honey and sugar. The mixture which is made using yeast as a fermenter, bananas, groundnut cake, and the water of tender coconut, is a potent organic pesticide and growth promoter. The Sanskrit word Panchagavya means “mixture of five cow products,” and it has been used in traditional Indian rituals throughout history. It is also called cowpathy treatment based on products obtained from cows used in Ayurvedic medicine and of religious significance for Hindus. Panchagavya is also used as fertilizers and pesticides in agricultural operations.”

Just imagine – Cowpathy. Anyways, coming back to our discussion – now that we understand the concept of Panchagavya, we know that even the waste from cows is usable. But we are modern people driven by science. How can we believe in an age old tradition without putting it on to the scientific tests?

So I did a further more research. As we all use cow milk, curd / yogurt and Ghee / white butter in routine, so there's no doubt about it, but how can the waste – cow dung and cow urine be useful? So I did a search focused on the waste only and what I found was amazing again.

Cow Dung Usage

In many parts of the developing world, and in the past in mountain regions of Europe, caked and dried cow dung is used as fuel. Dung may also be collected and used to produce biogas to generate electricity and heat. The gas is rich in methane and is used in rural areas of India and Pakistan and elsewhere to provide a renewable and stable source of electricity. In central Africa, Maasai villages have burned cow dung inside to repel mosquitos. In cold places, cow dung is used to line the walls of rustic houses as a cheap thermal insulator. Cow dung is also an optional ingredient in the manufacture of adobe mud brick housing depending on the availability of materials at hand.

A deposit of cow dung is referred to in American English as a “cow chip,” or less commonly “cow pie,” and in British English as a “cowpat” When dry, it is used in the practice of “cow chip throwing” popularized in Beaver, Oklahoma in 1970. On April 21, 2001 Robert Deevers of Elgin, OK set the record for cow chip throwing with a distance of 185 feet 5 inches. Biomass has become an increasingly important energy source in Denmark over the last 25 years. Being a carbon neutral energy source, it has already helped make a significant contribution to the reduction of Danish carbon emissions. The conversion of more biomass at power stations will help Denmark reach its target of 30% renewable energy by 2020. Today, biomass accounts for approximately 12% of world energy consumption.

<http://denmark.dk/en/green-living/sustainable-projects/cow-dung-a-source-of-green-energy/>

http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/wfc/proceedings2001/micronutrient_status_of_manure.htm

Cow Urine ingredients:

Urokinase, Epithelium growth factor, Colony stimulating factor, Growth hormone, Erythropoietine, Gonadotropins, Tripsyn inhibitor, Allantoine, Anti-cancer substance – Anti-neoplaston, H-11 beta-iodole-acetic acid, directine, 3-methyl gloxal, Nitrogen, Sulphur, Ammonia, Copper, Iron, Phosphate, Sodium, Potassium, Magnese, Carboic Acid, Calcium, Salts, Vitamin A,

B, C, D, E, Lactose Sugar, Enzymes, Water, Hippuric Acid, Creatinine

<http://www.cowurine.com/research-paper.html>

I mean how can excreta be having so much of rich content of minerals? That's amazing – Isn't it?

Now I was able to understand the concept of cowpathy. If the waste can be so useful, what to talk about the normal produce of milk / curd / butter / cheese and other derivatives? So that's the reason behind "Holy cow" or should I say "wholly cow".

That makes an alive cow much more valuable than the dead cow for beef or cow leather.

I can understand the challenges of the human race during coldest weathers of Europe and North America, and the scarcity of food during stone ages. Killing a cattle at that point in time could give food to a family for many days, but what makes it continue the practice today? – Its simple economic reason. As we are unaware of the Vedic reasoning of cowpathy – the dead cattle is more valuable than the living one. But now that we know the reasoning, which is proven by scientific methods, I think we'll value them more.

A living cow would be more beneficial to human society than "beef" or "cow nappa" leather. It's not just for milk, even if the cow doesn't give milk, the very existence of cow is good for human life, for the environment, for the atmosphere, for a healthy life.

That's why the cow is "Holy"

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