



***A Collection of Curricula
for the STARLAB
Hindu Mythology Cylinder***

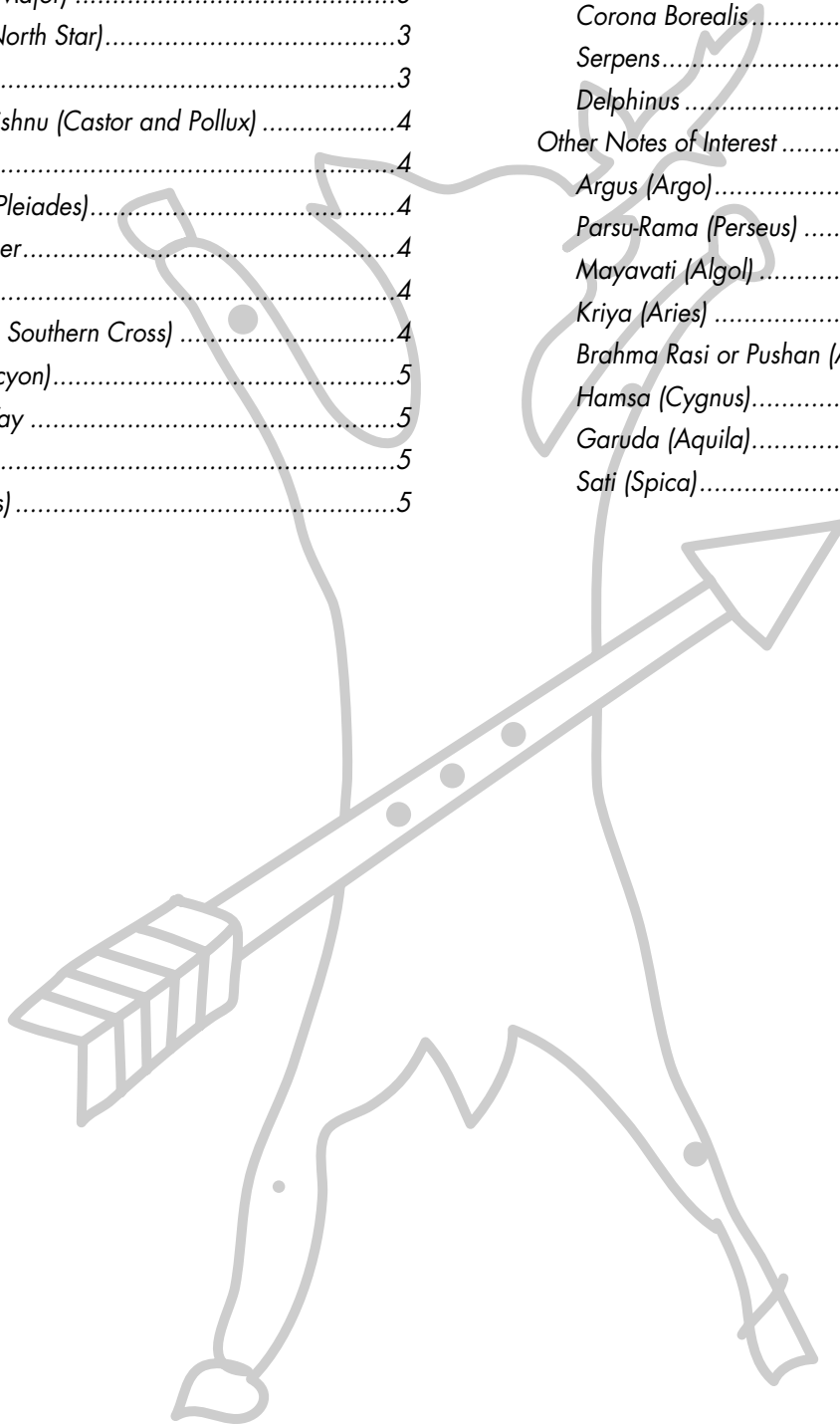


Including:

Notes on the Hindu Mythology Cylinder

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Notes on the Hindu Mythology Cylinder

Background

At this time, we have only notes (no activities) for the Hindu Mythology Cylinder. The following information is taken from:

Mukherji, Kalinath, Popular Hindu Astronomy. Published by Nirmal Mukherjee, Calcutta. 1905, reprinted 1969.

Primary Hindu Constellations and Stars from the Legends of the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas

Kalaparusha or Prajapati (Orion)

This constellation assumes the form of a deer instead of a human and is the Lord of the Beasts who has sovereignty over cattle. The three stars across the center represent the three-knotted arrow used to kill the deer. The four stars at the four corners represent the hooves of the deer. This figure was originally a human who was cruel to his daughter. (The daughter of Kalaparusha was named Rohini, a star in the Hyades. The daughter of Prajapati was Merope, a star in the Pleiades.) As punishment for being cruel to his daughter, he was transformed into a beast, killed with an arrow, and placed among the stars.

Saiph (in the constellation Orion) is a peacock who carries the stellar prince, Skanda.

Svan (Canis Major)

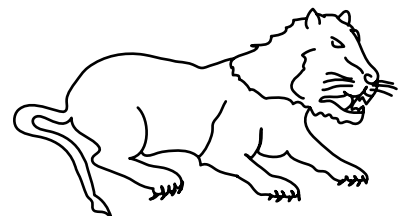
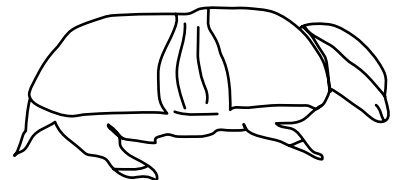
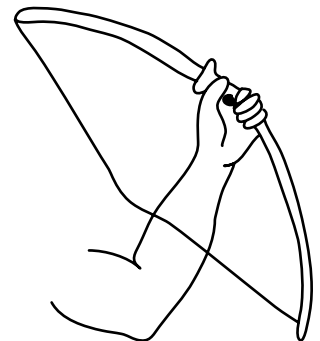
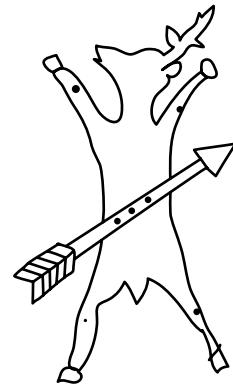
Canis Major or Svan, is the deer-hunting hound that pursues the deer. Sirius is part of the constellation Svan.

Polaris (the North Star)

Polaris is an armadillo or a pangolin. The nocturnal armadillo loves the dark. It stays up all night, every night just like the North Star.

Leya (Leo)

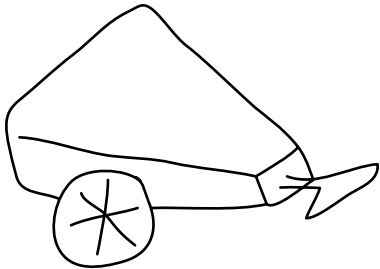
A lioness who pursues a fox.





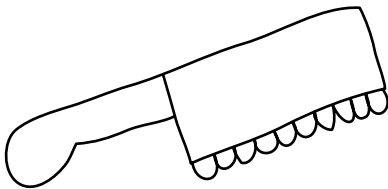
Soma and Vishnu (Castor and Pollux)

Soma and Vishnu are similar to Adam and Eve. A heavenly couple, one holds a club and the other a lyre. This constellation also suggests other types of important pairs – sun and moon, day and night, male and female, heaven and earth.



Taurus

This constellation is represented by a two-wheeled cart with a triangular shape or the celestial bull. Within Taurus is the star Rohit or Suravi, (a.k.a. Aldebaran, a bright orange star which represents a red deer) and the v-shaped asterism, the Hyades (making up the bull's mouth) which is supposed to contain the red deer Rohini, daughter of Kalaparusha or Prajapati.



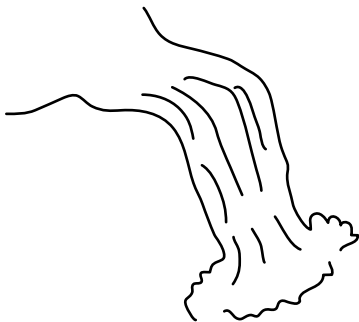
Krittika (The Pleiades)

This constellation represents either a flame or a cutting instrument shaped like a meat cleaver or a razor.



The Big Dipper

To the Hindu, the Big Dipper is represented by the seven wise men or sages (who perhaps became wise from their endless travels around the North Star). Also seen as seven bears.



Cassiopeia

Cassiopeia is a waterfall. The celestial river pours down the steps of the waterfall from the North Celestial Pole. Also sometimes seen as a group of wandering sages like the Big Dipper.



Trisanku (The Southern Cross)

This constellation holds Trisanku, a king of the solar dynasty.

Sarama (Procyon)

Sarama is a constellation in and of itself, not a part of another constellation. This means one who moves swiftly; a primeval parent of the canine species; the first dog; the leader of the pack. She is a helper to the sun and runs before (rises ahead of) the sun.

The Milky Way

Depicted here is only a small portion of the path of the spirits — a luminous cloth or sheet appearing to be 12 feet wide, forming a bandage around the two hemispheres, torn here and there by the ravages of time. Also seen as a celestial snake or a bridge built over the celestial river or the great celestial river. The rain that falls to earth comes from this great river in the sky.

Nakshatra

(Scorpius)

Nakshatra is a conch shell kept in the Hindu house used as a noisemaker during festive celebrations.

Kapoti (Lepus)

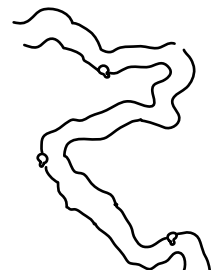
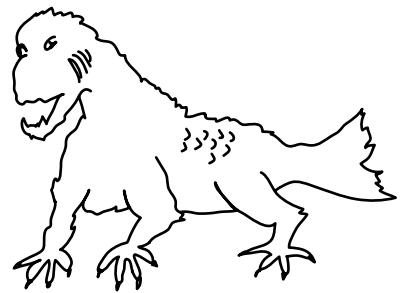
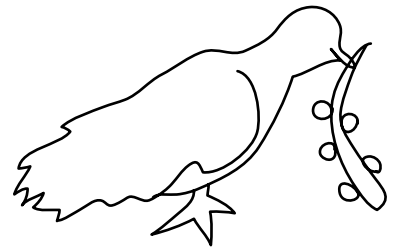
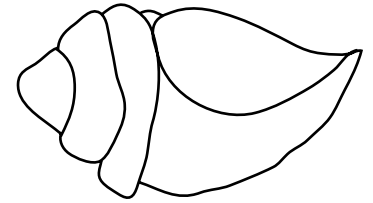
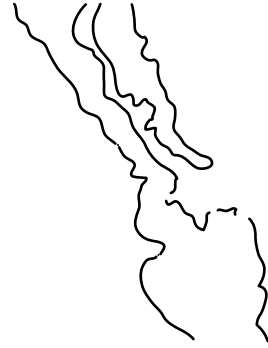
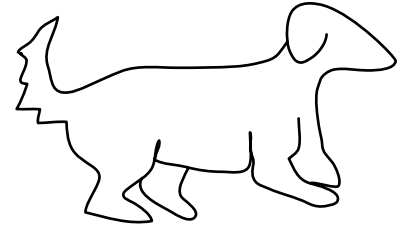
A dove.

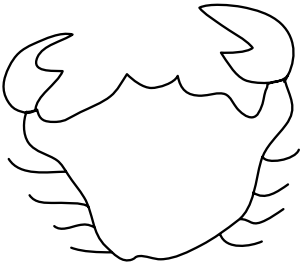
Timi Mandala (Cetus)

A sea monster that is known to swallow humans.

Eridanus

The stars in the constellation, Eridanus, form a river with a human skull on its bank.





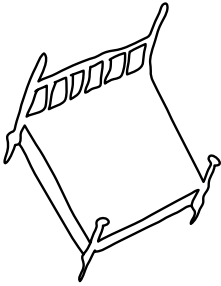
Kulira (Cancer)

The celestial crab.



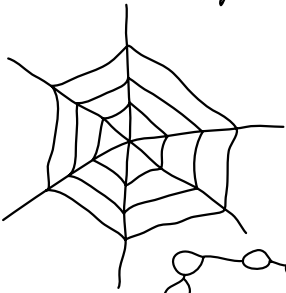
Rahu (Hydra)

The "hidden one" or the water snake. The great snake was able to remain hidden in the water, and could influence the brightening and darkening activities of the sun, as seen in the arrival of summer and winter, and during eclipses. During the darker months of winter, the sun was thought to take a five month ride on the back of the water snake.



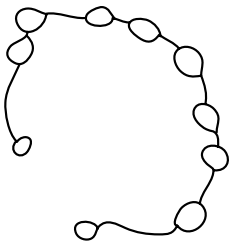
The Great Square of Pegasus

The four corners of a celestial bed.



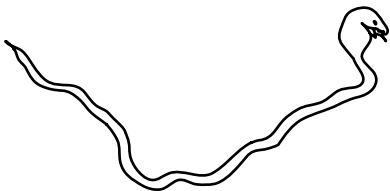
Coma Berenices

These faint stars in Coma Berenices are seen as a spiderweb filled with small spiders.



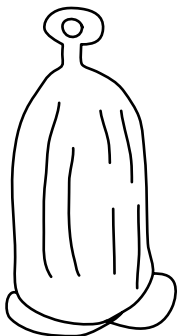
Corona Borealis

A necklace in the sky.



Serpens

A cobra with its hood expanded.



Delphinus

A birdcage.

Other Notes of Interest

(not pictured on cylinder)

Argus (Argo)

A golden celestial ship.

Parsu-Rama (Perseus)

A great warrior, born with a battle-axe in his hands. He is said to have exterminated the entire warrior class twenty-one times. This makes him the most famous of all men in India.

Mayavati (Algol)

The changing star. Because it changes, it is unreliable (implying evil, the evil eye, winking eye, etc.)

Kriya (Aries)

A ram.

Brahma Rasi or Pushan (Auriga)

The best of the charioteers. He drives his chariot (which holds the sun and is pulled by goats) across the heavens around Polaris. Capella or Brahma Hridaya is the main star in Auriga, the constellation of the goat-headed fire god.

Hamsa (Cygnus)

A celestial swan.

Garuda (Aquila)

Garuda stole nectar to use as ransom in order to free his mother from slavery. After stealing the nectar, he was pierced by an arrow fired by the keeper of the nectar.

Sati (Spica)

This star, found in the constellation Virgo, is a bright star in the spring sky. This electric blue star, Sati, represents the Virgin Mother.

