The classification of animals found in Sanskrit Fables

Animals are living creatures. The word animal generally refers to birds and mammals and also other living creatures including the insects. Most animals are free living and are hence divided into different groups. So that they can be observed under different conditions. Each class of animals is treated separately.

The animal living together in a forest, on a mountain top, or in a desert or in the river, form so to speak a ‘community’, where they are bound together by common interest, they live together in a particular type of habitat, because they find in such a ‘habitat’ conditions which are best suited to their needs.

Animals are grouped into different categories according to their intelligence and other habits. Thus, the fox is always cunning, the donkey hard working and patient and monkey imitative. The primitive man lived in close contact with the wild beasts of the forest and the birds of the air. The primitive mind had enough intelligence to decipher the inherent characteristics of the common animals he met with. These ideas have been woven into fables and other tales.

1. ‘Habitat’ of animal is the term, used for the place where an animal lives, and this includes two main categories of animals viz-
   
i) Wild animals
   
ii) Domestic animal

   Animals can also be classified on the basis of their ‘living habitat such as - (i) land, (ii) water and (iii) air.
This classification contains four-footed land animals, such as cows, lions, tigers, cat, camels, monkeys, elephants, foxes and many others.

There are some large as well as small animals living in water and there are some which are semi-water and semi-land dwellers such as crocodiles, tortoise, fish, frogs, some snakes etc. Water living animals and birds are classified as aquatic animals. Birds are known as flying creature related with air or open nature.

These above mentioned animals are also classified on the basis of their food habits. Accordingly, flesh or meat eating animals are known as ‘Carnivorous’ animals. Wild or Jungle living animals are generally considered as carnivorous animals, which include lions, tigers, jackals, leopards, wolf, jungle cats, mongooses etc. Crocodiles are water living carnivorous animals while crabs frogs and tortoises depend on small fishes or insects.

Similarly, deer, elephant, wild Ass, etc. are ‘herbivorous’ animals. Their habitat is the forest and depends upon herbs or plants as their food. Hyenas, jackals and foxes are considered as ‘Omnivorous’ animals as they depend upon both vegetables and meat of other animals.

Some wild animals such as hares, rabbits, rats and mice that fall under the group of rodents depend upon grass and vegetables. Rats and mice are considered as omnivorous animals.

Domestic animals are mostly herbivorous animals for e.g. Cattle (cow, bull, buffalo) horse, camels, goats, elephants, donkeys, asses etc. depend upon grass, plants and shrubs. These animals can also be domesticated and used them for various purposes. Mongooses though treated as wild animal can be tamed and domesticated for household purposes.
Whether Wild or domesticated, various kinds of animals form a community in such a way where all types of animals can maintain their relationship between its members centred largely upon the question of food and its distribution. So, plants or grass form the food of animals like cattle, deer, camels etc. These plant eater or herbivorous animals provide food for and make possible the existence of carnivore or flesh eating animals.

The bull, the camel, the rabbit, the elephants, the deer etc. are generally become the prey of many wild (carnivore) animals like wolf, lion, tiger, jackal and wild cats. Animals fables in world literature show that the Strong-wild animal always prey upon weak and herbivorous animals.

Again, living within the community, as a class apart, there are animals who run their lives as ’Scavengers’. Animals like jackal, hyenas, wild dogs etc. live on remains of other animals.

In this way, it is observed that, both wild and Domestic animals can be classified as carnivorous, herbivorous and omnivorous group of animals on the basis or their food habit and living habitat.

**Genealogy of Animals (Birds and Beasts)**

The Genealogy “Starts with Brahmaṇ, gives him six mental sons, says that Marīcī, the first of these, had a son Kāśyapa, father of all creatures by daughters of Dakṣa, thirteen ( elsewhere fifty) in number, mothers of all created beings.”

Next comes the genealogy of animals. Tāmra (the wife of Kāśyapa) had five daughters, - Kākī, Śyenī, Bhāṣī, Dhṛtarāṣṭrī, Śukī (crow, hawk, vulture, duck, parrot), who became mothers of these creatures and their like. Krodhavāṣa had nine daughter of wrathful nature like herself, mothers of deer, bears, elephants steeds, apes (monkeys) etc., one of the
nine was Surasa, mother of Cranes and Nāgas. Śyenī was the wife of Aruṇa and bore him Sampāti and Jatāyus1 (Aruṇa and Garuḍa are sons of Vinatā).

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa which according to Winternitz is “not much later than the 5th century A.D. and that ‘on the whole, at least, has been preserved in its original form” states that- “Tāmra (the wife of Kāśyapa) has six illustrious daughters, named Śūkī, Śyenī, Bhāṣī, Sugrīvī, Suchi, and Gṛdhraṇa”.

Śūkī gave birth to parrots, owls and crows, Śyenī to hawks, Bhāṣī to kites, Gṛdhraṇa to vultures, and Suchi to waterfowls; (but the vāyu has a somewhat different account. Śūkī married to Garuḍa, mother of parrots; Śyenī married to Aruṇa, mother of Sampāti and Jatāyū; Bhāṣī, the mother of Jays, owls, crows, peacocks, pigeons, and fawls; Krauti ek, the parent of curlews, herons, cranes; and Dṛṣṭarāṣṭrī, the mother of geese, ducks, teal and other water-fowl. The three last are also called the wives of Garuḍa; Sugrīvī to horses, camels and asses. Such were the progeny of Tāmra.

In matters of flying creatures i.e. bird community, it is found that Vinatā bore to Kāśyapa two celebrated sons, ‘Garuḍa’ and ‘Aruṇa’, the former, also called Suparṇa, was the king of the feathered tribes, and the remorseless enemy of the serpent race. Most of the Purāṇas agree in this account; but the Bhāgavata makes Vinatā the wife of Tarksha, and in this place substitutes Saramā, the mother of “Wild animals”.

The family of Krodhavāṣa were all sharp-toothed monsters whether on the earth, amongst the birds, or in the waters, that were devourers of flesh. The Vāyu makes Krodhavāṣa the mother of twelve daughters, Mṛgī and others, from whom all wild animals, such as deer, elephants, monkeys, tigers, lions, dogs, also fishes, reptiles etc.
“Surabhi’ was the mother of cows and buffaloes. The Bhāgavata says, of animals with cloven hoofs. The Vāyu has, of the eleven Rudrass, of the Bull of Śiva, and of two daughters, Rohinī and Gondharbī; from the former of whom descended horned cattle, and from the latter, horses2.

Since immovable things were first created, this is called the first creation. Brahmā beholding that it was defective, designed another; and whilst he thus meditated, the ‘Animal’ creation was manifested, to the products of which the term Tiryakṣrotas is applied. From their nutriment following a winding course- which were called ‘Beasts’ etc., and their characteristic was the quality of darkness, they being destitute of knowledge, uncontrolled in their conduct, and mistaking error for wisdom; being formed of egotism and self-esteem, labouring under the twenty-eight kinds of imperfection, manifesting inward sensations and associating with each other (according to their kinds)”. Twenty-eight kinds of Bādhās, which in the Sāṅkhya system means disabilities, as defects of senses, blindness, deafness, etc.; and defects of intellect, discontent, ignorance and the like3. In place of Bādhā, however, the more usual reading as in the Bhāgavata, Varāha and Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇas, is Vidha, ‘kind’, ‘sort’ as “Aṣṭāvimśadvidhātmakāḥ”, implying twenty-eight sorts of animals. These are thus specified in the Bhāgavata, III. 10 : six kinds have single hoofs, nine have double or cloven hoofs, and thirteen have five claws or nails instead of hoofs. The first are the horse, the mule, the ass, the yak, the sarabha and the gaura, or white deer. The second are the cows, the goat, the buffalo, the hog, the gayal, the black deer, the antelope, the camel and the sheep. The last are the dog, shacal, wolf, tiger, cat, hare, porcupine, lion, monkey, elephant, tortoise, lizard and an alligator4.

The above groupings seem more methodical.
Classification of birds (Carnivore, granivore and omnivore)

Like four looted animals, birds are the best known bi-ped animals and most easily recognisable of all animals.

Almost every household, at one time or another, has kept bird pets of some kind. Domesticated birds are common and familiar to everyone. People know more about them than about any other animals. They are the most widely known, most interesting most beautiful, most melodious, most admired, most studied and most defended of all the higher forms of life. In fact, it is difficult to imagine the beauty of the nature without birds, and above all, the songsters that proclaim the coming of the spring season every year.

Like four footed animals, birds can also be classified as wild as well as domestic. According to their domestic and wild states birds are again classified as (i) Carnivore or birds of prey or hunting birds (ii) granivore or seed eating birds and (iii) omnivorous birds. This classification of birds is mainly based on the food habits.

There are also another group of birds that live in water. They are known as ‘Water-fowls’ or game birds and they depend upon fishes or insects etc.

Under, these groups of birds, there are singing birds that chirp in a melodious voice and most of them are small in size and may sing for hours.

In its wild state, birds like Hawk, Eagle, Owl, Vulture are called birds of prey or hunting birds and they depend upon meat or flesh of dead animals. These are also regarded as earth’s scavengers as they eat and clean the remains of dead animals lying in the forest or paddy fields. Among them Crows and Vultures are the good scavengers of earth which fall under the carnivorous group of birds.
As per their food habits, birds like pigeon, dove, peacocks, parrots, maina, cuckoo etc, fall under granivorous or seed eating birds. Among them parrots, mainas are popular cage bird as they are easily procured. Some of the granivorous birds can be domesticated by men. Mayūr or peacock is regarded as National Bird of India as it is one of the most beautiful birds living in the jungle, preferably the neighbourhood rivers and streams.

Among the Omnivorous group of birds ‘Crow’ is perhaps the most familiar birds of Indian town and villages. They live close association with men.

There are also some aquatic or water-diving birds, known as water fowls or game birds, such as ducks, goose, swans, crane, storks. These birds are not only grain-eaters but also they feed on insects and small fishes in the water. Ducks and Geese are among the fastest birds in level flight.

Depending on the local conditions and species concerned, there are some migratory birds like white stork, koel or cuckoos, partridges which migrate to warmer places in the winter when food become scarce. They return in the spring to breed there as there is plentiful supply of food for themselves and their young, at this time. Migration may help this kind of bird to avoid harsh climatic extremes.

Wild birds such as owl, hawk, vultures, and crows are jungle dwellers. That is why Birds of prey or meat eating birds can not be domesticated. While many of the grain eating birds like pigeon, parrots, ducks, geese, swans etc. are easily domesticated by men for various purposes.

All animals were wild in the beginning. They lived freely in nature. Some animals were useful to man. So, people started keeping some animals for a great variety of things useful to them. It is seen that, people tame them
and they work for the people. They are kept in or near the houses of the people. So they are useful to men in several ways.

In Ujjayanī peacock was domesticated by many people. It is described by the great poet Kālidāsa in his works⁶.

(i) Bandhupritya bhavana Śikhībhirdalla nṛtyopaharaḥ.
(ii) Kekotkaṇṭha bhavana Śikhino nityabhāśvat kalāpah⁸

Crows can never be domesticated. They can’t be kept in cages. But still they are a part of happiness and sorrows of all human beings.

Similarly, parrots are domesticated by the people since long as a good company. In the Śūkasaptati under Jātaka’s tale, a domesticated (Pet) Parrot related some tales to the wife of the merchant (Modūnirōta in his absence) for a period of seventy days, and thus she came to learn how to overcome from any danger by utilising presence of mind⁹.

Classification of animals according to their intelligence and other habits found in Sanskrit fable literature

Animals are classified into different categories according to their intelligence and other habits. Thus, the fox is always cunning, the donkey hard working and patient, camel and deer are meek, monkey is imitative and fickle natured, hare and rabbit are swift runner and quite intelligent as well as wise, tortoise is impatient, snake, stork, crow are wily natured. Lion is shown majestic, haughty and dominating, tiger, wolf etc. are wicked. Elephant is proud, and foolishness is shown in case of donkey, tortoise, crocodile, frog and so on. A brief classification of their nature is stated below:
The above characteristics of these animals are found with their significant roles in Sanskrit fable literature as well as in other tales of the world.

Under the category of clever animals, monkey, fox and jackal, crows surpass other animals. In many stories of the *Pañcatantra*, *Tantrākhyāyikā*, *Hitopadeśa*, also in the *Kathāsarit sāgara* the jackal and fox have played their cunning role and harm other animals. In the frame story of *Pañcatantra* the two jackals were responsible for the death of an innocent domestic bull. In another story of *Tantrākhyāyikā*, a jackal outwits a camel and lion. The ‘Blue Jackal’ “Candarava” after dyeing in blue colour formulated a plan to make the best of the situation, fooled other animals in the jungle, and thus he led his life of ease and authority for sometimes with his attractive blue garb. ‘Mahācaturaka’ the jackal cleverly outwits a tiger and a wolf and enjoyed the flesh of a dead elephant for many days.

Donkey is described as hard working and patient, but due to its stupidity and foolish act the poor donkey lost its life, in the hands of the villagers, though he was wearing a tiger’s skin. In another story, the foolish donkey accompanied the jackal and became the prey of a hungry lion.

In a story of Aesop’s Fable— Ass, in lion’s (tiger’s/panther’s) skin grazes in strange field whose owner run away before the false wild beast. Ass takes fugitive for a she-ass, and brays, whereby his true nature is found out, and he is shot by man only because of his foolishness.

Camel’s nature is always meek. It is a domestic animal. In the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, a camel paid with his life for associating with and trusting the wicked and the cunning friends – viz. a tiger, jackal, wolf, and a crow because the camel offered himself honestly to the lion, they all are wild carnivore animals.
Being wild, ‘monkey’ is very imitative, clever and fickle animal. It attains the reward of fickleness in one story of the Tantrākhyāyikā and Pañcatantra. However, due to its great presence of mind, the monkey, ‘Valivadana’ saves his life from a greedy porpoise (in Tantrākhyāyikā) as we found in Pañcatantra that the monkey, ‘Raktamukha’ saves his life from a crocodile, by his wit and understanding. In Aesop’s fable the story of “Monkey and the Fisherman” shows that ‘monkey’ is most imitative of animals.

The hare and the rabbit are equally intelligent or clever animals. In Sanskrit fable literature, the hare always proves itself as a shrewd animal. Of course he played a role of savior in a story of Pañcatantra. ‘Bhāsuraka,’ the powerful lion who recklessly killed a lot of animals in the jungle was killed by a clever hare while showing the reflection of the lion in the well. In a fit of anger, the lion jumped into the well and was drowned. The proud, wild, carnivorous lion believed the tiny herbivorous hare and invited its own destruction.

In another story, ‘Lambakarna’ the wise hare got rid of the menace of the entire herd of huge, wild elephants by merely mentioning the name of the Moon God.

The tortoise is described as a helpful aquatic animal in the second book of Pañcatantra (Mirasamprāpti). The tortoise ‘Mantharaka’ helped selflessly his friend when a deer ‘Citranga’ was entrapped in the hunter’s net. In another story, due to impatience and foolishness, the tortoise ‘Kambugrīva’ could not reach the lake (with two swans) but met its death because the tortoise could not tolerate the shouting of the villagers while it was flown in the sky.
Snake, Stork, and Crab are equally intelligent and wily animals. 'Priyadarśana', the snake proved himself as an opportunist, while he was engaged in liquidating the opponents of the frog 'Gangadatta'²⁵.

The cunning Stork due to his old age could not catch fish but he hit upon a plan that would secure him food without much effort. But when the stork wanted to change his diet, he was caught by a crab and it lost its life.

Crab is a wise animal. He acted as a saviour of water animals of a lake in Pañcatantra²⁶, though many of them have already been eaten up by a cunning stork. In another story of a Brāhmaṇa unknowingly saved his life from a poisonous snake as he travelled with a crab as his companion²⁷.

In another story a crab intentionally took revenge upon the storks, its natural enemy. The crab advised the storks to invite tactfully a mongoose (to save their young ones) to kill a cobra who ate the young ones of the storks, their natural enemy²⁸.

Crow is also a wily and clever bird. In the first book of the Pañcatantra 'Krathanaka' the innocent camel lost its life because of the treachery of the cunning crow and other friends²⁹.

Tiger is described in a story of Hitopadeśa³⁰ as a cunning animal. Due to its old age, the tiger was unable to kill its prey. It made a traveller become its prey when he was lured by a golden bangle that was to be taken from the ferocious tiger. The tiger is shown as the most cunning animal in Korean Fables also.

The camel is a domestic animal. In the Tantrākhyāyikā³¹ a camel which lives with a lion, and a jackal becomes a prey to the carnivorous animals.

It is common belief that the crow is the most intelligent bird. It is occasionally wise, shrewd and cautious with good judgement.
A female crow once destroyed a black poisonous snake for a golden necklace. The crow’s cleverness is shown in this story. The crow is also described as a wise animal (bird) in the frame story of Second Book of Pañcatantra. ‘Laghupatanaka’; the crow is shown as a wise friend of the mouse, the deer, and the tortoise in the relevant story.

Crow is described as a revengeful animal in the Tibetan Tale. The crow took revenge on a sage because he insulted the crow with the words: "most wretched of birds is the crow". and this bird, unable to tolerate the comment, took revenge on the sage by breaking his earthen pots.

Monkey is also a revengeful animal as found in the Pañcatantra. He took revenge on king Candrabhupati because the king had killed all the monkey’s family for the treatment of half burnt horses where monkey's fat is essentially needed.

Parrot is an imitating bird like a monkey. The story of ‘Two Parrots’ in Pañcākhyānaka shows that both the parrots imitate the good and bad habits of their masters as they were associated with a Hermit and Bhills in two different environments. In the same book it is described that Mandaviṣa, the wicked snake pretending to be old and virtuous, allowed the frog to ride on it, and thereby he ate many frogs, including the king of frogs ‘Jalapada’.

The lion is a majestic animal. It always moves in the midst of perfect security. The court of Pingalaka, the lion king of the forest has its royal court with high position who was just and judicious. Even he was fooled and killed by a small intelligent hare.

The elephant is also a majestic, royal natured animal, endowed with all the virtues of a king. But the elephant in some Sanskrit fables also occasionally behaves foolishly like the foolish lion of the Pañcatantra. This is clear from the story of Karpūratilaka in the Hitopadeśa.
its majesticity ‘Karpūratilaka’ the elephant once lured by the greed of kingship had got stuck in the deep mud and died because of the tricks of a sly old jackal. This huge, majestic animal was made fool by a clever hare who made the entire herd of the mighty animal run out of fear of the Moon-god who did not exist.

The deer is a meek animal. But the deer is occasionally intelligent also. Thus, a deer in the Pañcatantra escaped from the trap of a hunter by pretending to be dead.41

Among the meek animals the bull is an innocent animal. In the frame story of Pañcatantra, ‘Sanjivaka’ the bull was killed by the lion ‘Pingalaka’ only because of deceit and treachery of the two wicked jackals.42

Jungle cat is another wicked animal which by his foul tricks could devour a hare and a partridge (Kapiñjala bird) pretending to be an ascetic in a fable of the Pañcatantra. The jungle cat acted as an arbitrator for decision of a dispute placed by the hare and kapiñjala bird before the cat.43

Crocodile is described as a clever as well as a foolish animal in Sanskrit fable literature. In the fable of the ‘Monkey and the Crocodile’, in the Pañcatantra the crocodile is first shown to have been clever enough to deceive the monkey, but gives himself away by foolishly divulging his wicked mission to the monkey. While the monkey intelligently saved its life from the hands of the treacherous crocodile.

In this way, it is seen that lion boasts his valour, the fox is cunning, the peacock is proud for its feathers, the elephant for its powerful tusks and such other animals whether wild or domestic are classified according to their intelligence and other qualities.
Classification of Animals (Domestic and Wild), their utilities as found in the Sanskrit fables and other tales

It is already mentioned that the word animal not only refers to birds and mammals but also other living creatures including the insects. But in the present context we are mainly concerned with birds and beasts as they occupy the central position in Sanskrit fable literature. There are of course, a reference of two small animals namely a bug and louse in the story of the Pañcatantra. The expression 'small animal' is used here in accordance with this classification made by Patañjali under the Panini rule "kṣudrajantavah" (2.4.8.) The grammarian presents such insects in the class of small animals.

In Sanskrit fables, readers generally come across two classes of animals- viz. beasts and birds, the stories related to which constitute the central part of the fables.

The Indian society is acquainted with both domestic and wild animals since the Vedic age. Infact, all animals branded as domestic present were wild in the beginning. They were tamed and domesticated. The bull, the dog, the ass and the horse were domesticated by the human since several thousand years back. The dog is a glaring example of this which became regular companions of cave-men in the pre-historic age.

**Bull:**

Domestic bullocks are still used for ploughing by the Indian farmers. They are also used as vehicles by the traders on pull carts in ancient times. Bullocks are regarded as most valuable helper to men for cultivation, transportation and the means of communication since long. They are also used by men to carry loads. The frame story of Pañcatantra...
describes that the merchant has used a cart pulled by a pair of bullocks. *(Sanjīvaka and Nandanaka for his trade).*

A bull in the *Tantrākhāyikā* and the *Pāñcatantra*, a domestic animal turned wild due to extra ordinary circumstances plays an equal role with a lion in the frame story of these two works of fables.

There was an initial friendship between these two eternal enemies of the animal world. The ‘lion’ is the representative of an ideal Indian king. The lion ‘Pingalaka’, maintained his friendship with the ‘bull’-‘Sanjīvaka’ for sometime but later on they became enemies of each other.

The author of the *Tantrākhāyikā* and the *Pāñcatantra* nicely show that two wicked jackals (*Karataka and Damanaka*) created discord between these two friends and the bull had to pay the price of his foolishness of making friends with a strong animal. This story suggests that any such friendship between two such persons of contradictory character does not last long and such a friendship invites a disastrous consequence.

Domestic animals are tamed and used by men for various purposes. It is observed that, in order to fulfil the basic needs, gradually man began to tame other wild animals also for their meat and skins as well as for their milk and wool. Formerly, to get more meat and more milk the farmers had been carefully breeding their best animals for hundreds of years. Today domestic animals look very different from their wild ancestors.

The history of Sanskrit fable literature practically starts from the age of the *Mahābhārata* where wild animals in particular play a significant role. In the post epic period the *Tantrākhāyikā* is the first work of fables which describes both domestic and wild animals playing their parts in the different fables.

The *Tantrākhāyikā* is regarded as the first available version of *Ur-Pāñcatantra* which has been discovered by Hertel in North West India.
Many stories of the *Tantrākhyaśīkā* have been borrowed by the author of the *Pañcatantra (Textus Simplicior)* which was written in about the Eleventh Century A.D. A similar work was written in latter times by *Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita* under the title of the *Hitopadeśa*. In all these three works the domestic animals such as the bull, the camel, the goats (ram), the horse, the dog, the ass and the donkey in particular play the pivotal role in the fables among domestic beasts.

**Dogs:**

Among the domestic animals, *dogs* were the first animals to be fully domesticated by men. They have been used for hunting.

Domestic dogs are so faithful that they serve their duty as a guard to their owner. Generally, in spite of the least care taken of by their owners, they depend on human beings for their basic needs and they desire sympathy and love from the people. There is a tale in *Hitopadeśa* when a washer-man maintained a dog with a donkey for his household purpose. The dog in this story, however, proves unfaithful to his master and refuses to bark at the approach of a thief.

**Camel:**

The *camel* is another domestic animal and most valuable helper to men in deserts, especially used to carry people and their goods. It is mainly used for transportation, so the camel is also called as the ‘Ship of the desert’. The camel provides milk, meat, hair and skin. It is usually domesticated by the desert-dwellers. The farmers in the desert area use camels for their farms. They draw ploughs and carts. The camel sometimes gives rides to the people wherever necessary. There is reference to ‘Gurjara Desa’ from where the camels were brought in the age of the *Pañcatantra* by traders for their commercial purpose.
In the *Pañcatantra* there are several stories where camels play an important part. The camel is sometimes a symbol of haughtiness and pride and sometimes it becomes a victim of grievous honesty and simplicity. In one of the stories of the *Pañcatantra*, a camel with a ringing bell round its neck moved about in the jungle in a dauntless and carefree manner for which it lost its life in the hand of a lion. The story suggests that any such carefree movement may invite an unpredictable situations is always fraught with danger, and should always be avoided.

In another famous camel story of the *Pañcatantra*, the friendship of the camel with its treacherous friends and virtuous enemies, a jackal, leopard etc. the false friend of the camel played the foul trick on the camel and pretended to surrender themselves to the king, a lion for its food. The camel on his turn also surrendered itself to the king which was the camel’s grievous mistake. The camel was immediately torn into pieces and devoured by its ‘friends’. This story is very significant. It again reminds the readers that any friendship with a strong natural enemy is bound to pay a fatal reward.

We learn from the first camel story of the *Pañcatantra* discussed above that camel’s milk was regularly drunk by some people in some parts of India. Camel’s milk is used as wholesome food specially in desert areas.

In the *Mahābhārata* (Chap 112) there is a tale of a ‘foolish and lazy camel’ who got a long neck by the grace of Lord Brahmā which met with its tragic death in the hands of a hungry jackal couple during a stormy day due to its idleness.

**Donkey and Ass:**

The domestic donkey is an ass, which is generally used by washermen for carrying loads (of cloths). They are also called as a ‘beast of burden.’ There are many tales about donkey and ass in the *Pañcatantra* and
the *Hitopadeśa*. The author of the *Pañcatantra* refers to a foolish wild ass in one of his tale. The ass became an easy prey of a hungry lion due to its foolishness.

In a story of the *Hitopadeśa* briefly referred to above, a washerman had a dog and a donkey. When one night a thief entered the house, the dog refused to bark because his master did not feed him properly, while the foolish donkey paid for interfering in others’ duties.

The ass is generally recognised in the Indian society as the symbol of the fool. A foolish man is very often scolded as a ‘Gardhava’ in this society. There are several stories of the domestic ass in the stories of the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa*. In a fable of the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, a washerman had an ass. It should be noted here the ‘ass’ is generally kept in India by washermen as their regularly companion for carrying the garments. Now a days, though the practice has changed, to a great extent still in many parts of this country the ass is a regular associate of the washermen.

In the story of the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, the owner of the ass clad the animal with the skin of a leopard which he bought with three silver coins. The washerman released the ‘ass’ in the garden of a neighbour. The neighbour fearing the animal wrongly as a leopard did not approach it. But one day the ass started to bray and it was severely punished by the owner of the garden.

The foolish behaviour of the animal was the cause of its punishment in this case. In the *Pañcatantra* there is another story of a jackal and a donkey which freely moved in the cucumber garden of a rich farmer. The donkey suddenly felt the desire to sing in the moon lit night. It did not listen to the advice of the jackal. The guards of the garden were alerted by the braying of the foolish animal and beat it severely and tied a wooden pounder.
in his neck. But the author of the *Pañcatantra* says that the ass forgot the insult immediately.

In the story of the *Hitopadeśa* when the dog refused to bark at the sight of the thief the donkey started to shout as a symbol of loyalty to its master and was beaten by the washer man.

In India there are some wild asses also apart from the domesticated one. This Indian wild ass known as *khur* is found in the jungles of ‘Saurāśtra’. There are some other wild asses in Tibet and Kurdistan.

There is another story in the ‘*Pañcatantra*’ of a foolish ass lured by a jackal to a disabled lion. The lion attacked the ass and it ran away. But being foolish by nature it once again approached the lion and killed. It was probably a wild ass.

**Goat:**

Besides cattle which are widely domesticated, the *goat* is another important domestic animal that is kept mainly for its milk, meat and skin which are most useful products. The goat is an innocent animal. In a story of the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, we find a reference to animal sacrifice where goat is essentially needed for the purpose. In this story, described as ‘*Three wicked men and the Brāhmaṇa,*’ three cheats (dhurtas) cheated a Brāhmaṇa by creating a false notion that the goat he was carrying was actually not a goat, but an impure animal. The Brāhmaṇa immediately threw down the goat and ran hurriedly for home. The dhurtas then carried away the goat and made a feast upon it. The story is told with a slightly different manner in the *Pañcatantra* (Third Tantra). In another story of the First Book of the *Pañcatantra* two goats fight between themselves which accidentally killed a jackal.

It appears from the above stories that the goat practically plays only a passive role in Sanskrit fables unlike the lion or the jackal.
**Horses:**

The horses are some other domestic animals. They are particularly useful for carrying and dragging heavy loads in rough countryside.

Like the goat, the horse also does not play any important part in Sanskrit fables. In the Pañcatantra there is a casual reference to the horse in the story of “Vikāla and the horse thief”. Horses were an important means of transport in ancient India. The horses which were confined in the stable (‘Demon Vikāla and monkey’) in the story of Vikāla were apparently meant for such purpose of transport and nothing else.

In another story (Monkey’s revenge or Vānara Candrabhupata Kathā) the author mentions about the treatment of the burnt horses only as referred to by the Śālihotraśāstra.

**Elephant:**

The elephants are extremely adaptable. This animal though wild by nature and live in the denser forests, can easily be tamed or domesticated by men for various purposes. Man has utilized the elephant for many different purposes since ancient times. They were an integral part of the armed forces in the olden days and it is said that King Chandragupta Maurya had 10,000 elephants at his command. In the animal fables in Sanskrit as well as other animal fable literature, the elephant occupies an important place in the stories, which are full of amusement and interest.

In a story of Hitopadeśa, an elephant ‘Karpūratilaka’ allured by a greedy jackal to become the king of the jungle-animals entered into a pit of mud while going to bathe at the advice of the Jackal and was bogged down in the mire and was killed by the jackals.
Mongoose:

Some villagers of India keep captive mongooses as pets very frequently. Indeed, this adaptable mongoose has been introduced into areas outside its native range specially for the purpose of destroying the rats and snakes that seriously damage crops. Though Mongooses are wild in nature, they can easily be tamed. There is a tale in the *Pañcatantra* that a Brahman couple had domesticated a (wild) mongoose as their child, but unfortunately the mongoose had to lose its life due to hasty action of the Brähmaṇa lady.

Lion:

The lion has been described by the fable writers of India as the king of the forest. We have already referred to the most dignified position occupied by the animal among the beasts. Its majestic character, strength and courage have elevated it to the highest position in the animal world. In Sanskrit fable literature, the king of the jungle is a powerful hunter. But it has been observed that the male-lion does not take a part in hunting. But it always enjoys a lion’s share of the booty. In the *Tantrākhyāyikā* and the *Pañcatantra* the lion is described as moving within a quadrangular security circle constituted of the *Kākaravarga, Kākaravā, kimvṛttā* etc. quite in a befitting manner like an Indian king which also remained appropriately protected by expert security officers. In the age of the *Pañcatantra* the lion was found even in the *Mathurā* region. But now, its dwelling has shrunk to the *Gir Forest* of Gujrat.

Tiger:

Among the ‘Cat’ family, the majestic tiger which is regarded as National animal of India has always been held in high esteem for its rich colour, illusive design and formidable power. Among carnivorous wild
animals, tiger is very gorgeous and attractive with a roaring voice as a symbol of power. Usually, this wild animal lives freely in nature.

In the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa* the tiger is described as a cunning animal who plays a deceitful game to kill his prey. But its character is significantly different from that of a jackal. Of course, the tiger suddenly jumps upon its prey by cleverly hiding itself in the jungle.

The tiger is generally not treated as a cunning animal. In Sanskrit grammar the tiger is described as the eternal enemy of the cow (Gṛgṛyāghram... ‘yeṣām ca virodhah Śāsvatikah’). The tiger and the lion are generally not an enemy of men, because these animals are not man-eaters. They also do not kill any animal without necessity. Therefore, the very story of the lion rampantly killing animals in the *Pañcatantra* deserves a proper examination.

**Leopard:**

In Sanskrit literature leopard is another big cat which is a carnivorous animal. It is called dwīpi literally meaning a dweller of the Island. In one story of the *Tantrākhyāvīkā* a washer man clothed his donkey with a leopard skin. In a story of the *Pañcatantra* again, the author describes that the teeth of this animal is so sharp that it alone can tear the skin of an elephant.

**Jackal:**

The jackal is a common wild animal of the dog family found almost everywhere in India though its population has dwindled. We have already shown that it is a cunning animal. Its cunning character has been excellently described in several stories of the *Tantrākhyāvīkā*, the *Pañcatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa* and fables in many other Sanskrit works like *Jātakas*. In Western literature also the jackal is a clever and cunning animal. The stories regarding fox are typical examples of the shrewd nature of the animal.
which deceived even the king. ‘Reynard the Fox’ is such an example of Western Fable Literature where ‘Reynard’ is a hero reflecting its cunning nature.

Naturalists have clearly observed the cunning character of this animal. In ancient times the hunters of England found that the jackal jumped and run in a zigzag way in order to avoid the pursuer. The story of the ‘Blue jackal’ in the Tantrākhāyīkā and the Pañcatantra is an excellent story of a clever jackal which turned blue accidentally and declared himself as the king-designate of the forest. The jackal sometimes proves itself as a clever animal and sometimes a foolish one in the stories of Pañcatantra and Hitopadeśa.

In one story of Pañcatantra a jackal tears an abandoned drum in the jungle expectation a large storage of food inside and lost all his teeth. In another story a jackal pursues a bull with a hanging lump of flesh for a long period as expecting all the moment that lump would fall down which it did not. In a story of the Pañcatantra and also in Hitopadeśa another jackal trying to preserve maximum food for future bit the string of a bow and was killed. These are some stories where the real characters of jackals is not truly reflected.

**Deer:**

Most of the deer are forest animals. The ‘reindeer’ are kept as domestic animal in some areas. The cheetal is a deer of brown colour with white spots all over. In grace and beauty this animal surpasses as wild animal, it can easily be tamed (Abhijñānam Śakuntalam). Deer are hunted for their meat and for their ‘antlers’ which are kept by the people as trophies and for medicinal purposes. The hunters and the skin traders are greatly benefited by the ‘deer’ as they provide meat and beautiful skin with decorative antlers.
This innocent wild animal generally provides the basis food to the larger carnivores. There is a story of 'four friends' in Pañcatantra, where a wild innocent deer named 'citrānga' had been freed by the other friends from a hunter's net. In the Rāmāyaṇa, the golden deer, 'Māriccha' is shown responsible for alteration of the very course of the Great Epic.

**Monkey:**

The monkey is another wild animal referred to in the fables of the Tantrākhyāyikā and the Pañcatantra. The authors of these works present the monkey sometimes as a fickle animal and sometimes as a representative of a wise man. However, the more important point is that the authors have quite naturally described the monkey as a fickle creature which cannot remain still. As a result of this, the monkey in the story of the first book of the Pañcatantra (The monkey who pulled the wedge), who badly entrapped and it met its death.

According to popular belief killing of a monkey is considered a sin, as the monkeys helped Lord Rāma while he proceeded towards Lanka.

**Snake:**

The snake appears in several stories of the Tantrākhyāyikā and the Pañcatantra. It is a wild reptile. It has many species. But the cobra is mainly given a place in these works in the stories.

In the Sanskrit fable literature another aquatic bird Sankata and Vikata the two swans have been utilised as saviour towards their friend Kambugrīva, the tortoise, and tried to save its life when the lake (they dwelt in) started drying up due to draught.

The frog, an amphibious animal appears in a number of fables in the Pañcatantra and the Tantrākhyāyikā. It is a simple and innocent wild animal found in almost all parts of India.
The crocodile is a carnivorous aquatic animal. In the Tantrakhyāyikā and Pañcatantra it has been described as living in the sea.

Thus, the classification of animals and birds (domestic and wild) is made according to their habitat, intelligence and other habits as found in the Sanskrit fable literature.

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