

Indrasmruti

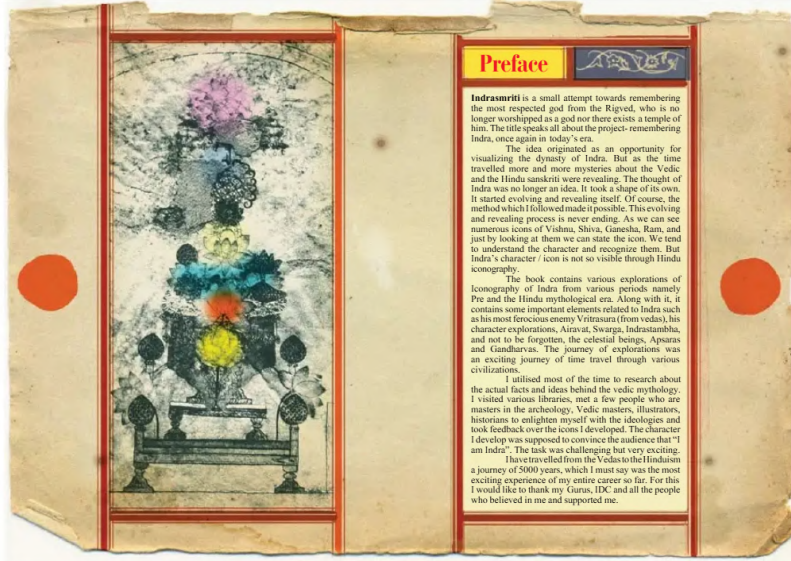
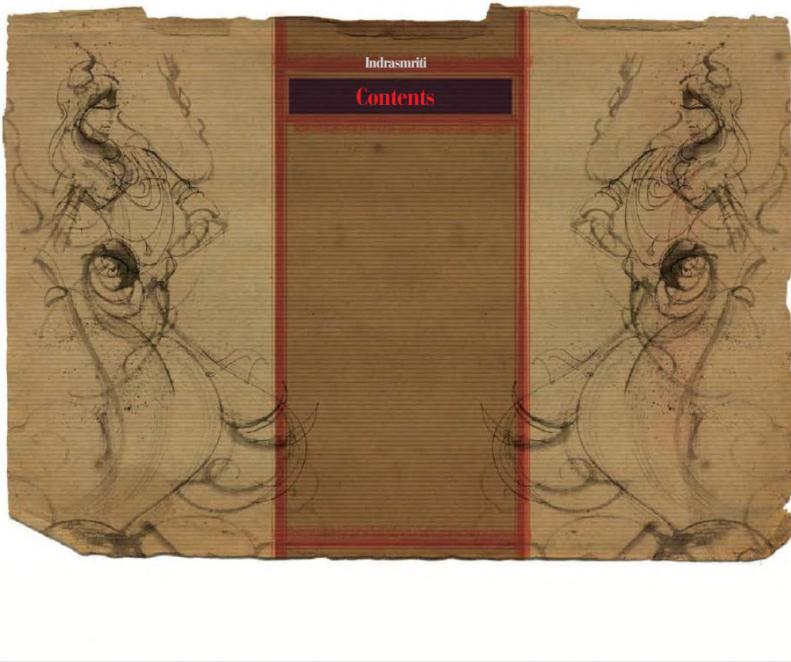
Dedicated to the sacred memory
of my father

*Pita Swargah
Pita Dharman
Pitah hi Prarambhah
Pita Pitram Apne
Priyante Sarvadevah*

I would like to thank all the
people who helped me develop
and evolve from this project. To
the gurus who helped me out in
every step I was stuck in.
A special thanks to Ashutosh
Joshi, who translated and ex-
plained me the idea of evolution
of India.

Thanks to Prof. Shilpa Ranade
for giving me guidance and
showing me directions to take
the project ahead.





Indra in Rig Veda

The Vedas represents the earliest and most important phase of the sacred language and literature of India. The earliest monument of Indian thought. The Vedas reflect the conceptions of life, the structure of living, the occupations of the Vedic Indians. But this description will be on a very superficial level. Vedas teach the existence of humanity. The 1000 shlokas are the way to live the life in respect. They were written down after a long tradition of reciting. The written origins are dated in the 3rd millennium BC and one of the shlokas is

*The chief wise god
who as soon as born surpassed the gods
in power, protected them, before whose
vehemence the two worlds trembled by reason
of the greatness of his valour: he, O men, is
Indra.*

an idea of supreme protector

*Who made firm the quaking earth,
Who set at rest the agitated mountains
Who measured out the air more widely:
Who supported heaven: he O men, is Indra*

Indra is referred as the thunder god, bearing a Vajra, his weapon (thunder). The symbolists says that he protected all the gods at the time of his birth. Thunders roared, it rained, due to the noise, people and animals and surroundings were shaken and scared. He brought down the rains peacefully on the earth. Protected human, his home, cattle, his land from drought or crises. The clouds showered rains after thundering, after the rains, the sun was again visible in the sky, he rescued the sun from the darkness, restored him his position. Indra symbolizes the external life of struggle of the Vedic Indians

Status and Function

Indra is an important god in many tales and epics. He leads the Devas (the gods who form and maintain Heaven) and the elements, such as Agni (Fire), Varuna (Water) and Surya (Sun), and constantly wages war against the demonic Asuras of the nether worlds, or Pitras, who oppose morality and dharma. He thus fights in the timeless battle between good and evil. In addition, he is one of the Guardians of the directions, representing the east.

Vaishnavites and most modern Hindus, see Indra as minor deity and contemporary Hindus generally worship a personal supreme God in the form of Shiva, Vishnu, Devi or Surya. A puranic story illustrating the subjugation of Indra's pride is illustrated in the story of Govardhan hill where Krishna, avatar or incarnation of Vishnu carried the hill and protected his devotees when Indra, angered by non-worship of him, lunched rains over the village.

Why Indra?

In the post-Vedic period and during the age of Puranas Indra falls from the front rank status and is given the lower grade in all respects. Though still the king of other smaller gods, Indra is much inferior to the holy triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Indra is still regarded as the controller of atmosphere, but only under the supervision of the Almighty. Indra in later ages is the ruler of only Swarga.

He is now shown having great weakness and big faults. He is shown even to have a lascivious character; indulging in sexual wrongs. This tells about the change of his character from the Vedic myths till the Hindu myths, a very distinctive and remarkable change of his characteristics through the millennia is unique compared to other gods. It just doesn't make him different but a symbolism political decisions of two different clans, the Vedic and the Hindus. It could be a political move between the two sons of our culture. As Hinduism is a descendant of Vedic tradition.

Indra origin is beyond the timeline. The theory Indra may be reconstructed for Proto-Indo-Iranian, but not for Proto-Indo-European. The ideologies behind the creation of an iconic representation of a supreme power - the soul, so that you can worship it. The early Vedic people were worshippers of soul. The Aryans. They came from northern part of world. They were the worshippers of Atma, the soul. As they migrated, they settled down near today's Iran - Iraq. The plateau is mentioned as the sapta sindhu region, the region where the seven rivers existed. The region was propitious for vegetation, and that's how the agriculture evolved and developed in that area. Before this the tribes ate animal meat raw-baked-burnt in fire. So the element that provided roasted food which digested better than raw meat was worshipped. They knew fire, so the Agni can be claimed as the first god worshipped. That's how these Atrunapaks started worshipping external forms of forces in nature. Slowly the elements in nature were worshipped. The sun, which provides with light, heat, on which the nature is dependent, was worshipped. Water used for drinking, agriculture, and household activities, the rains on which the agriculture was dependent, like this, elements came under worshipping. All these elements kept them alive and healthy. It was all magical and mystical for them. These people, after several millennia of observations of human behaviors like nature, the role of a protector, a supreme human being, preparation of soma, etc., are included in the verses of RV which describe the highly intellectual standards of understanding and perspective of life in that period.

All these stories, ideologies and factors were responsible for me to think of portraying our glorious past in a possible form. Indra as a character or a god

is no more worshipped but a very few iconic evidences are available with us, but he is so beautifully described in the RV that one can't stop thinking of the aura he must be carrying. The timeline factor gave me opportunities to visualize him and his magnificence. I drew a timeline on these observations and the elements around him like his weapon Vajra, which has also gone through a process of development from Vedic to Buddhist and the Hindu Mythology. In the later part of his story, he owns Swarga, the heaven, an Airavat, he owns Aprasara and Gandharvas, he is also the protector of East direction, he has 1000 eyes too. I feel he is the most colorful characters of our mythology.

I conducted a small research within people of different age groups and asked them of what they knew about Indra. Most of them just related Indra with celestial damself and others talked about king of Gods, and he as a womanizer, but only a handful of people knew his existence since RV. It thus clearly shows the filter of our traditional literature through the generations. So taking this as an opportunity, I decided on Visualizing the Dynasty of Indra and contributing a small feather towards the great crown designed by our ancestors. The idea of Indra has a strong potential of communication today. Communication in the sense of Media and communication, namely the films, animation, comics and as the necessity of retelling of mythology is important due to the filter of knowledge since centuries. Technology gives us opportunities to create anything and everything and the work in this book contains the production design of Indra and his dynasty, the artwork can be used as a starting point for some graphic novel or game design, films, etc. The artwork is done on the basis of Indian philosophy of ideation, the meditation way.

The forgotten hero is back in this book. Thus the book says remembering Indra, Indramuni is an outcome of research and an expression of art. It cobbles a selective elements related to Indra and his dynasty, towards the creators of the great mythologies, my gratitude of respect and love.

Stage I Initial ideation Iconography

Talaman

Indian iconography is a very ancient science and art. There are clear references to images in the in the Rigveda and to temples in the Atharvaveda. Subsequent ancient works contain innumerable references to the same.

The icons can be in three postures: sthanka (standing), asana (sitting) and sayana (lying down). Only images of Vishnu are to be seen in the sayana posture.

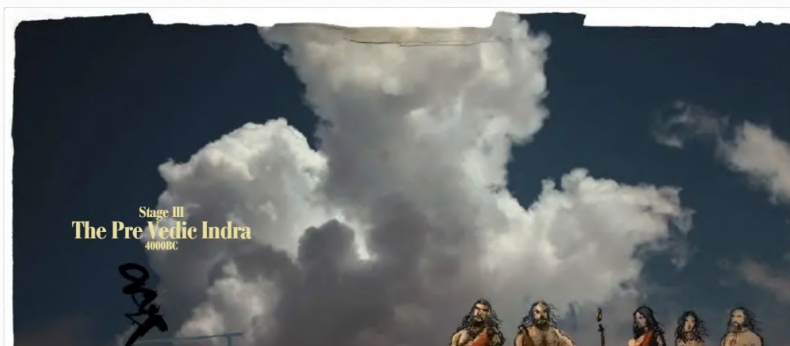
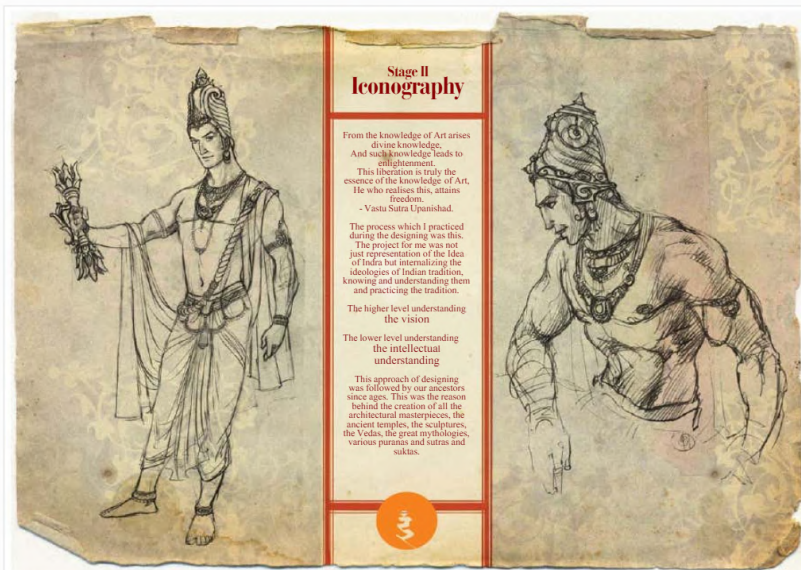
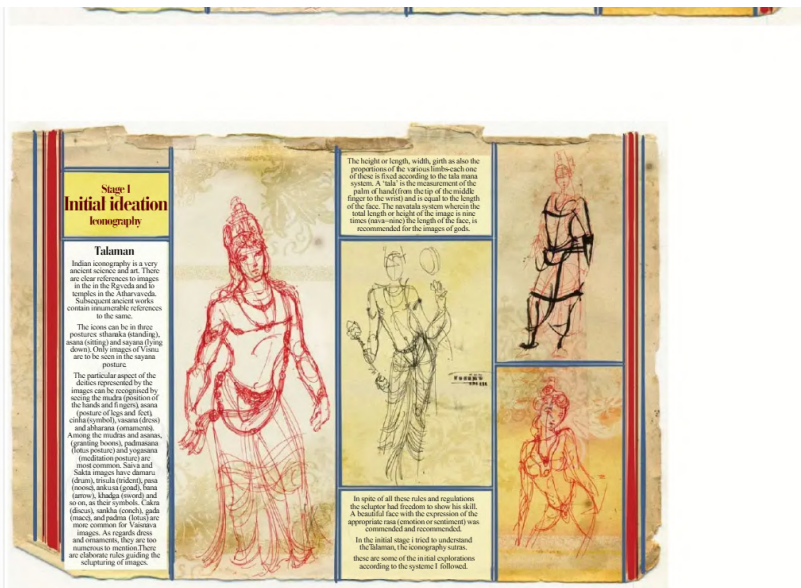
The particular aspect of the deities represented by the images can be recognised by seeing the madra (position of the hands and fingers), asana (posture of legs and feet), embla (symbols), vrasana (dress) and alabharana (ornaments). Among the mudras and asanas, (gratifying) boons, padmasana (lotus posture) and yoganasi (meditation posture) are most common. Saiva and Sakta images have dandara (dram), trisula (trident), pasa (noose), ankusa (goad), kama (arrow), khadga (sword) and so on, as their symbols. Calan (discus), sarila (conch), pada (mace), and padma (lotus) are more common for Vaishnava images. As regards dress ornaments, they are too numerous to mention. There are elaborate rules guiding the sculpting of images.

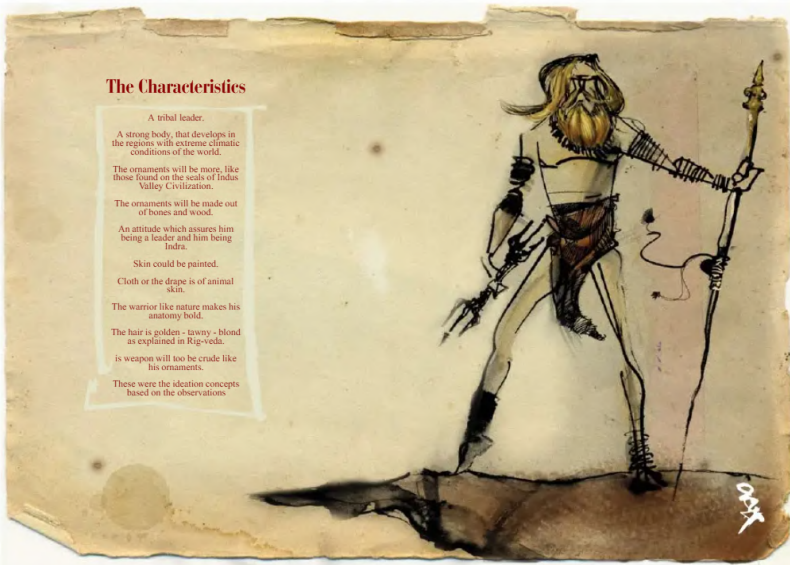
The height or length, width, girth as also the proportions of the various limbs each one of these is fixed according to the tala mana system. A 'tala' is the measurement of the palm of hand (from the tip of the middle finger to the wrist) and is equal to the length of the face. The nayatala system wherein the total length or height of the image is nine times (nava) nine) the length of the face, is recommended for the images of gods.

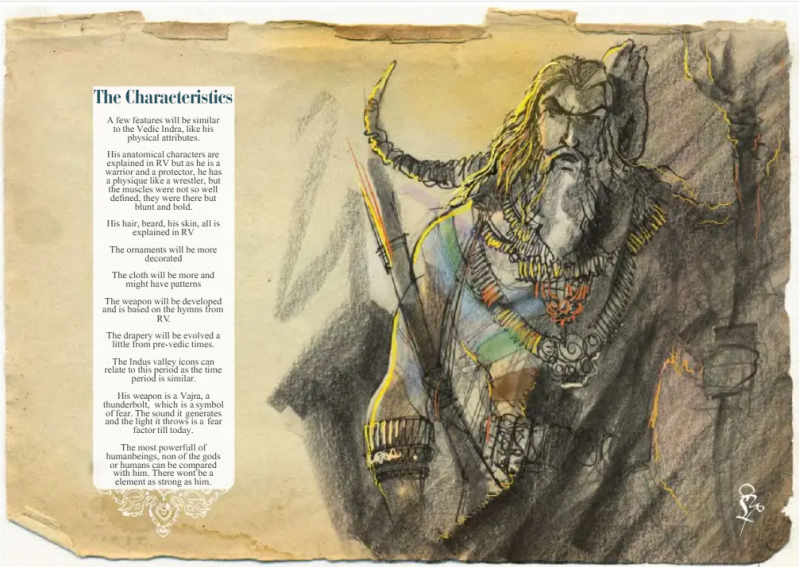


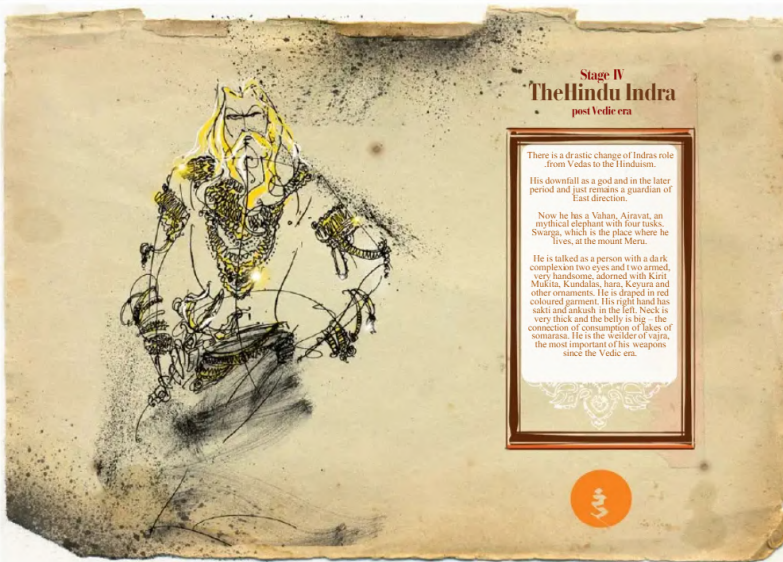
In spite of all these rules and regulations the sculptor had freedom to show his skill. A beautiful face with the expression of the appropriate rasa (emotion or sentiment) was commended and recommended.

In the initial stage I tried to understand the Talaman, the iconography sutras. these are some of the inital explorations according to the system I followed.













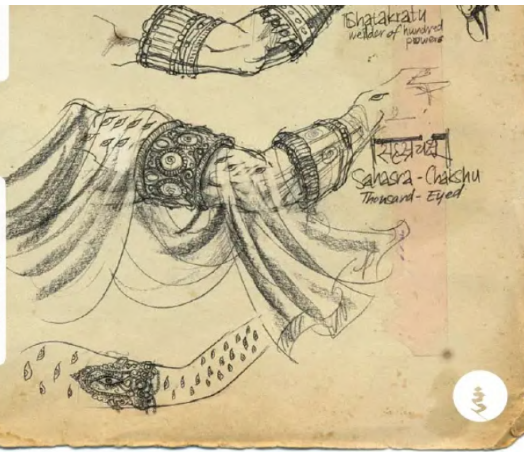


Shasrachakshu

Means a wielder of a hundred powers. This adjective is often used in the Vedas, describing the number of powers Indra had control over.

Shasrachakshu

Indra in the later Hinduism is shown of having greater weaknesses and big faults. He is portrayed to even have a lascivious character including in sexual wrongs. He tried to seduce the pious wife of Gautam rishi, named Ahilya. This enraged the rishi who cursed him to have 1000 wounds resembling female organ on his whole body. When he repented and prayed, these wound marks were changed into 1000 eyes, hence Indra is called Sahasra Chakshu

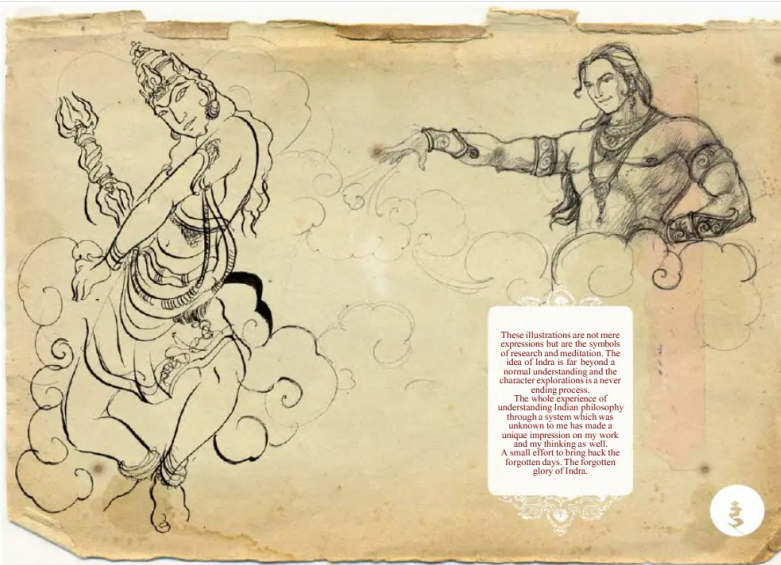


Jatamukuta

It's a style of wearing a mukuta in which five jats or braids of matted hair are taken and tied a knot, three inches in height by coiling them into one or three loops, remaining braids being bound and taken through to be left hanging on both the sides. It is one of the styles Indras crown in the Hindu era.

Meghavahan

As he walks, clouds gather themselves and become his carpet. He can create clouds and thunderstorms on his will. An exploratory illustration to express the above mentioned idea. He bears all the astras, The vajra and the Ankhusha, most important of them. He is the ruler of the clouds.

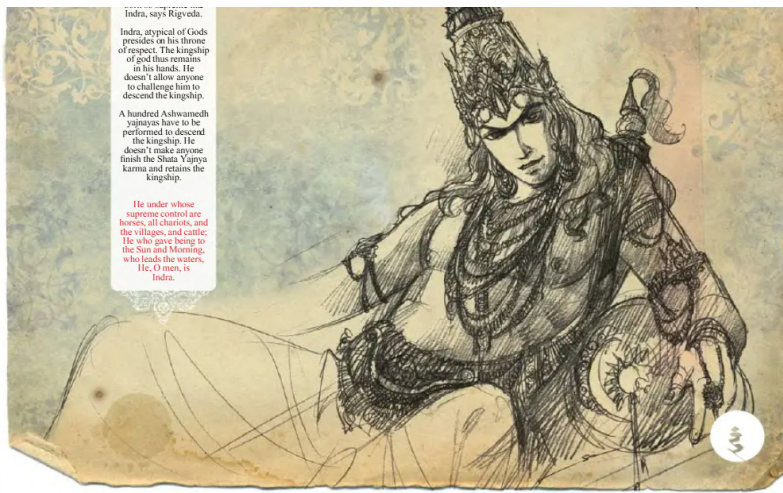


These illustrations are not mere expressions but are the symbols of research and meditation. The idea of Indra is far beyond a normal understanding and the character exploration is a never ending process.

The whole experience of understanding Indian philosophy through a system which was unknown to me has made a unique impression on my work and my thinking as well. A small effort to bring back the forgotten days. The forgotten glory of Indra.



There won't be a god nor a man who will be born as someone like



Indra, says Rigveda.
Indra, atypical of Gods
presides on his throne
of respect. The kingship
of god thus remains
in his hands. He
doesn't allow anyone
to challenge him to
descend the kingship.
A hundred Ashwamedh
yajnyas have to be
performed to descend
the kingship. He
doesn't make anyone
finish the Shata Yajnya
karma and retains the
kingship.
He under whose
supreme control are
horses, all chariots, and
the villages, and cattle;
He who gave being to
the Sun and Morning,
who leads the waters,
He, O men, is
Indra.



Stage VI The Vajra

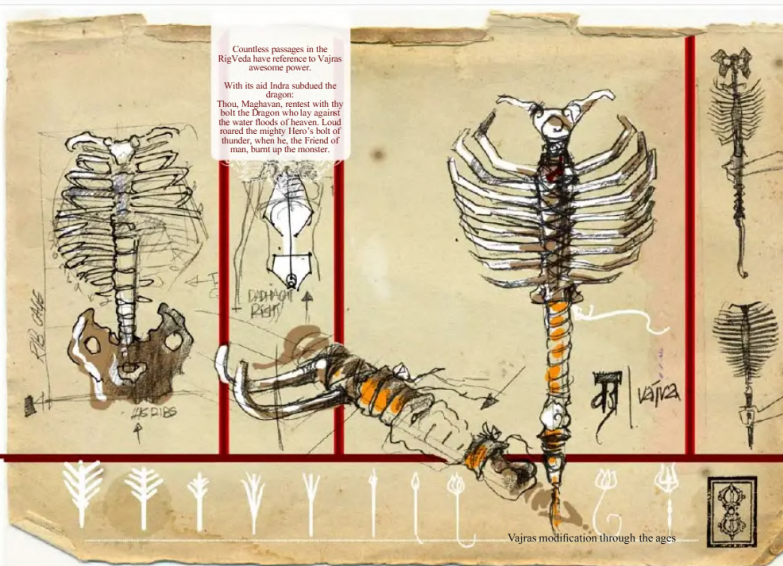
I will declare the manly deeds of
Indra, the first that he achieved, the
Thunder-wielder

He slew the Dragon, then disclosed
the waters, and dethroned the
mountain torrents.

Then Heaven himself, the mighty,
at that Dragon's roar recoiled back in
fear when Indra, thy thunderbolt
in the wild joy of Soma had struck
off with might the head of Vritra,
tyrant of the earth and heaven

A legend says, Indra's thunderbolt
was fashioned from the bones of
the great Rishi Dadhichi, who was
decapitated by Indra in sacrifice.
Dadhichi's "indestructible" bones
gave Indra the most powerful of
weapons. By its energy he slew
innumerable of his enemy demons.

In mythological descriptions,
Indra's vajra is shaped from the
strongest bones of our Dadhichi's
body, the thigh bone. The mention
of any particular bones in the
creation of vajra. Not sticking to
the legend and ideas arose in my
mind which I have depicted.



Countless passages in the
Rig Veda have reference to Vajras
awesome power.

With its aid Indra subdued the
dragon.

Thou, Mahaveen, contend with thy
bolt the Dragon who lay against
the water hoods of heaven. Loud
roared the mighty Hero's bolt of
thunder, when he, the Friend of
man, burnt up the monster.

Vajras modification through the ages

Stage VII The Ratha

Let thy Bay Steeds bring thee, the Strong,
hither to drink the Soma draught
Those, Indra, who are bright as suns.
Here are the grains bedewed with oil: hither
let the Bay Cowsers bring
Indra upon his easiest car,
Indra at early morn we call, Indra in course
of sacrifice,
Indra to drink the Soma juice.

Come hither, with thy long-maned Steeds,
O Indra, to he drought we pour
We call thee when the juice is shed,
Those charioteers of thine, best skilled to
draw the reins, the rapid warsteams, Indra,
lead thee not astray.

The Ratha which Indra rides is drawn by two tawny horses. One of the horses is Pawan the wind himself. The Ratha flies at the speed of light.
This ratha from Vedic mythology has come down to the Hindu era just like his Vajra. The above representations of a chariot falls in the Hindu era. The development of the form according to its function is what you can see here. The chariot is often compared with the speed and flying experience. The form developed here is of a bird and decorative wings and motifs. A peacock for the royal richness and a buck like a swan for the swiftness and intelligence, inter performance and functions.
The Umbrella shelters like a cloud, so the steam has a cloud shaped pattern.



Further development of the chariot according to the architectural origin, India has a great tradition of designing rathas. The great temple architectural tradition have created some enormous and majestic marvels on our land.

They were the basic reference to visualize this particular ratha. The elements and motifs are more decorative and it has a temple like structure and a very decorative umbrella.

This Ratha stands in the Hindu era.

Indrastambha

In the context of Hindu mythology, stambha, also spelt as Skambha, is believed to be a cosmic column. It is believed that the stambha functions as a bond, which joins the heaven (Svarga) and the earth (prithvi). A number of Hindu scriptures, including the Atharva Veda, have references to stambha. In the Atharva Veda, a celestial stambha has been mentioned, and that has been described as a scaffold, which supports the cosmos and material creation.

In Indian architecture, different types of Stambhas have been mentioned and they serve different purpose, including the following:
Flagstaffs, called dhvaja stambhas, are placed opposite the main shrine, on an axis with the main deity.
Kirtistambhas, erected to commemorate victories.

According to Vishnu-Puran, the people of Gokul commemorated a festival in honour of Lord Indra and worshipped him after the end of monsoon season every year. In his young years Lord Krishna once prohibited the people from offering prayers to Lord Indra. Angered Lord Indra sent a torrent to sink Gokul. Lord Krishna lifted the mountain and held it as an umbrella for the people and saved them. It was then when Indra stambhas were erected and after the pooja, they were offered in the water.

Now the worship anymore exists. This stambha is visualized for the same reason, remembering the deeds of Indra



