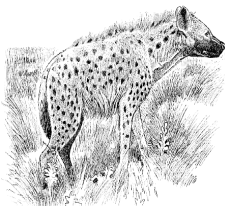


Animal symbolism – Who is in Pi's lifeboat?



In India, **monkeys and apes** symbolize strength, cunning, courage, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and the soul. They are thought to be kind to humans. The monkey-god Hanuman is believed to make barren women fertile.

The **hyena's** symbolism stems from several facts about the animal. It is nocturnal and therefore mysterious. Most species of hyenas are carrion-eaters and so are thought to be unclean, cowardly, and greedy. It is a symbol of greed and its name comes from the Greek "hys" meaning "swine." The spotted hyena is a vicious predator which hunts larger animals in packs and may even attack people.



The hyena was also a symbol of knowledge and cleverness, however, because of its constant laughter, its knowledge was seen to be that of the debased and profane kind.

In Asia the **tiger** is the king of the beasts. He takes on much the same symbolism as the lion in western cultures. He represents royalty, power, courage, ferocity, strength, wrath, cruelty, treachery, and authority.

The wild tiger is thought to be an angry and savage creature. One might ask where the tiger's anger comes from. According to one legend, a young boy severely whipped or "given many stripes" by his teacher ran off into the forest and in his rage became the first tiger.



Besides being a mankiller, the tiger is also noted for being a shapeshifter. Some primitive people believe that tigers are actually humans who change themselves into tigers for the hunt. In southern China there is the "were-tiger" whose existence parallels that of the were-wolf in western cultures. He is a monster of the night and is aroused by the new moon.

Excerpted from <http://ww2.netnitco.net/users/legend01/beast.htm> (accessed 18 September 2007).