

Design Resource

Kaavad

A Portable Shrine

by

Prof. Nina Sabnani

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/kaavad>



1. The Tradition
2. Making Process
3. The Storytellers
4. The Stories
5. Products
6. Links
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<https://dsource.in/resource/kaavad/tradition>

The Tradition

The Kaavad, a portable, painted, wooden shrine, is made by the Kaavad makers (Basayati Suthars) of Bassi, Chittor, for the storytellers (Kaavadiya Bhats or Ravs) of Marwar. The storytellers unfold the multiple panels of the Kaavad as they recite stories and genealogies of their patrons (Jajmans) spread across Rajasthan and adjoining states. The patrons commission images of themselves in the Kaavad and are represented riding vehicles of the choice, be it a plane, an elephant, a camel or a bullock cart. The experience of travel in the unfolding and recitation of the stories is akin to performing a pilgrimage.



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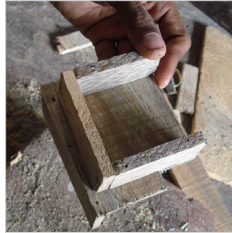
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Making Process



Carpentry



Painting

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/kaavad/making-process>

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Carpentry



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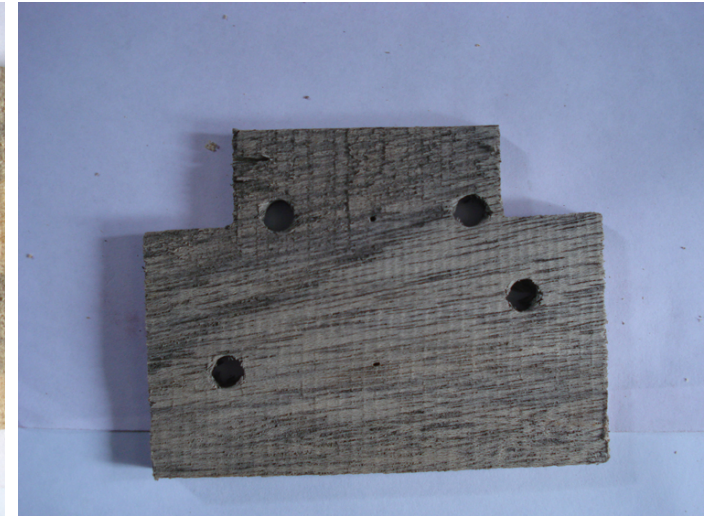
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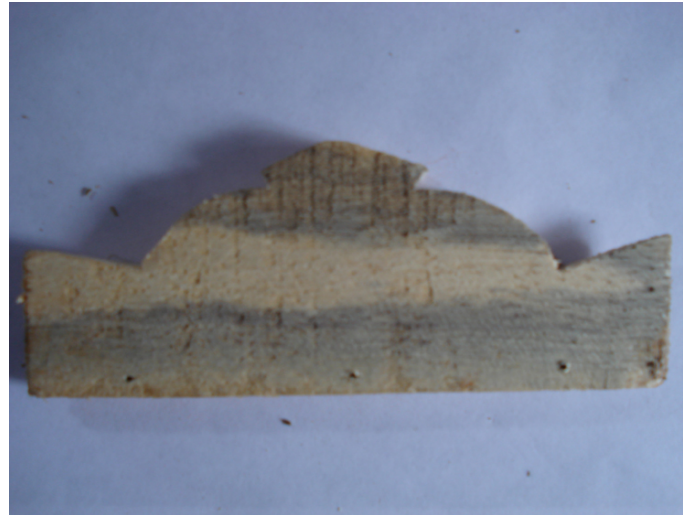
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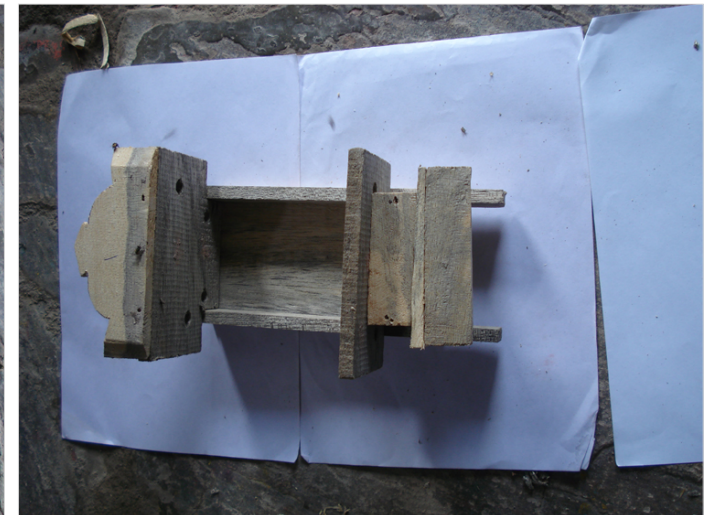
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Painting



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The Storytellers

They belong to the Bhat community and are known as Kaavadiya Bhats or Ravas. They live in Marwar, around the Nagaur and Jodhpur districts in Rajasthan. They believe they are the progeny of Shraavan Kaavadiya from the Ramayana and came from the brow of Shiva, which is why they say they have such good memories and can tell stories for hours at a stretch. They make annual trips to their patrons and recite stories from the epics and the genealogies from them. In return they receive gifts in the form of grains, livestock and money.



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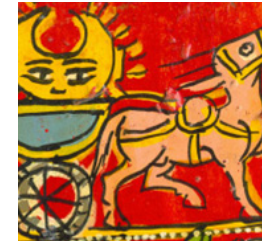
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The Stories



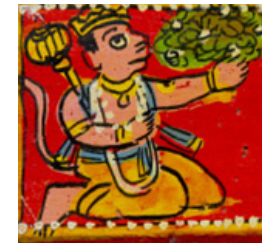
1. Poliyas or Jai and Vijai



2. Ahalaya the Sun and the Moon



3. Krishna and Ajmal Maharaj



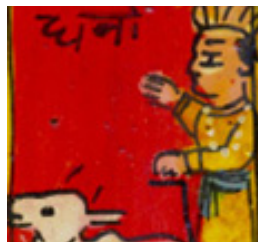
4. Hanuman brings Sanjeevani Buti



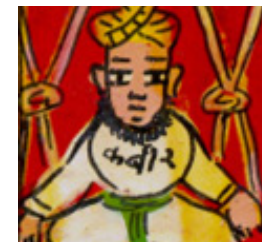
5. Raavan and his pride



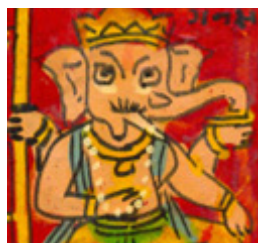
6. Story of Padmavati, Raja Bisal and Raja Mordhaj



7. Dhanna Bhagat and his Kheti



8. Sant Kabir and his chela Kamaal



9. Ganesha is worshipped first



10. Karma Jatni feeds a stone God

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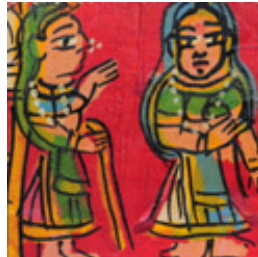
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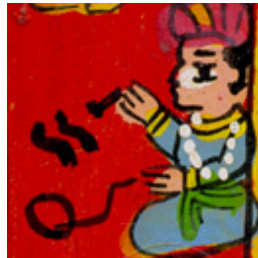
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11. Kundana Bai's gift to the Kaavadiyas



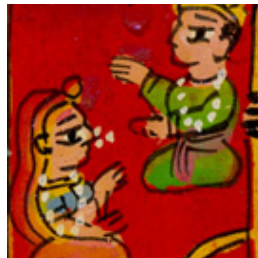
12. Holka(Holika) and Prahlad



13. Raidas Chamar



14. Sen Bhagat who was saved by his faith in God



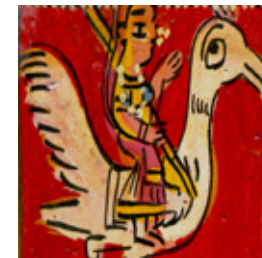
15. Sireeyade who saved the kittens



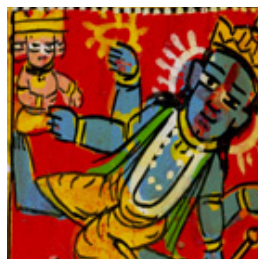
16. Bhagirath got the Ganges to Earth



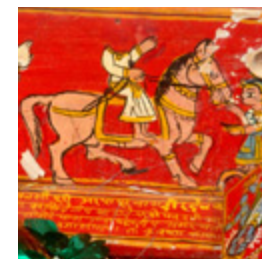
17. Story of Raja Harishchand and Taramati Rani



18. Bemata



19. King Bali



20. Jagdev Punwar

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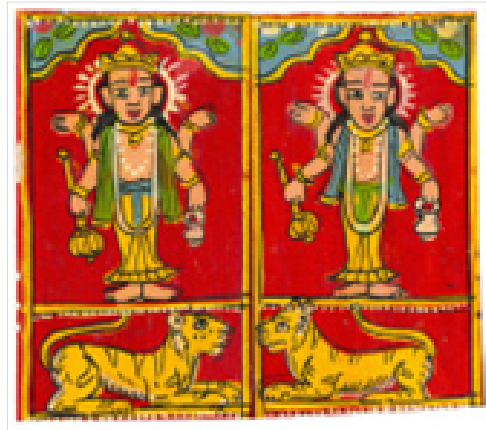
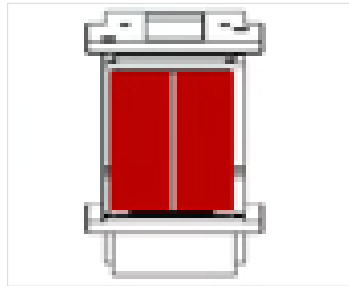
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<https://www.dsource.in/resource/kaavad/stories/10503>

1. Poliyas or Jai and Vijai

Two nephews of Guru Gobind and sons of King Sultan of Udaipur were desirous of their thirteen year old step-mother; their father's youngest of 108 wives. Gods could read their minds. For a desire which was still in their minds, they were banished and reduced to soldiers to guard the gates of the town. Now they are the guardians of the Kaavad shrine accompanied by two lions and no one may enter without their permission.



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2. Ahalya, the Sun and the Moon

Ahalya was the beautiful wife of Gautam Rishi. The Sun and Moon were besotted by her beauty. Even though they had traversed the world every day they had not seen a more beautiful woman. She had been pious and devoted in her life (had done Bhakti) which is why her nails, hands and arms were all golden. The sun and moon were so desirous of Ahalya that they decided to seduce her. They began to observe the routine habits of her husband. They noted that Gautam Rishi woke up every morning when the cock crowed and went immediately to bathe in the river Ganga. So the Sun and Moon imitated the call of the bird in the night and as was his routine, the Rishi woke up, took his towel and left for the river. The Sun abused Ahalya and the Moon seduced Anjani (Rishi's and Ahalya's daughter). No one heard their cry for help.

When he reached, the river Ganga was not ready to meet him. She asked why he had arrived in the night when his usual time was later at 5 am. He told her he always followed the call of the bird. She cautioned him, suspecting that someone was out to cheat him and suggested he return home quickly, but Gautam Rishi insisted he must take his bath. As she was not quite ready she said she would turn her back and he could soak his towel in the water and wipe himself in lieu of a bath. Gautam Rishi did this and then left for home.

When Gautam Rishi returned he saw that the Sun and Moon were indeed with his wife Ahalya and daughter Anjani. The sun escaped as soon as he saw the rishi but the moon was slow and Gautam Rishi managed to hit him with his wet towel, (causing the dark marks on the moon). He cursed his wife Ahalya telling her that she would turn to stone on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar for 12 years. Only when Lord Vishnu visits the Kumbh mela will she turn back into a human. Till then she will be a stone on which people will come to bathe, wash clothes, walk over her and subject her to all humiliation which she will suffer in silence because she will be speechless. To his daughter he said she will be an unwed mother and will give birth to a boy. Ahalya was so angry with her husband for doubting her, that she did not offer any explanation and kept quiet. Anjani, buried half of her body in the earth and did not come out for months hoping that this way she could avoid giving birth to a child. But Gautam Rishi's word was sacred so a child was born from her ear.

This child came to be known as Pavan Putra Hanuman. When Vishnu visited the Kumbha Mela after 12 years his foot accidentally hit a stone that was Ahalya and she came back into her human form. She was then returned to her husband.

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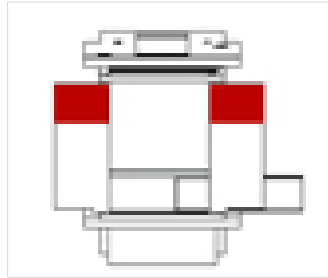
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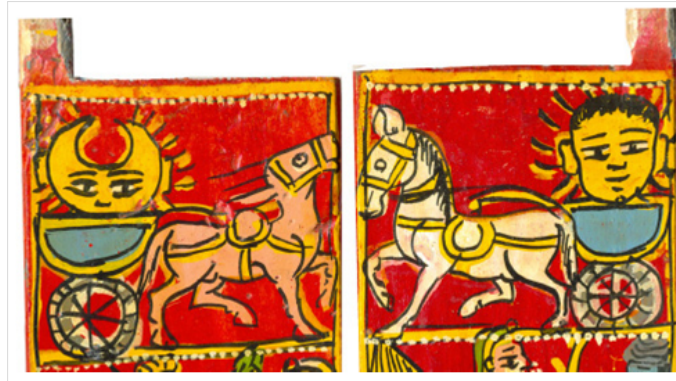
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3. Krishna and Ajmal Maharaj

King Ajmal Maharaj desired children so he did penance for twelve years. At the end of this Krishna appeared to him in a dream and asked him to visit Dwarkapuri where he would be blessed with a son. So Ajmal Maharaj left on foot and reached Dwarka after six months. After bathing he went to the temple and asked the priest to see Lord Dwarkapuri and the priest directed him to a statue. He demanded the priest to direct him to the real Lord who had come to him in his dream and promised him a son. The priest said he did not have the real God. Angry Ajmal Maharaj threw the sweet laddus his wife had given him at the stone image and threatened the priest. The priest got scared and decided to get rid of him.

He told Ajmal the real god was under the water so if he really wanted to see god he would have to jump into the ocean. Ajmal Maharaj leapt into the ocean and found Lord Dwarkapuri sleeping, lying on the serpent with a bandage on his head. A worried Ajmal asked god how he came to have a bandage on his head. God said 'when innocent devotees like you come along and do not recognize me in my other forms then this happens. They can harm me but how can I harm my dear devotees'. Ajmal explained the reason for his anger. Then God said, 'since you have come all the way, tell me what can I do for you?' Ajmal said simply 'I don't have a child and I don't have a moustache. Because I don't have a child people call me barren and because I don't have a moustache people don't look at my face. Please could you give me both?'

God asked him to feel his face and he immediately found a big moustache on his face. Then he blessed him with two sons. One of them he promised would be god himself. Ajmal asked when that would happen. God said one child who would be born to his wife must be named Bhiram Dev and He (God) would come and lie down in the same cradle. And the day he would come, the water in the pot would turn to milk and red footprints would be found in his courtyard. When his son Bhiram Dev was born the next day Ajmal and his wife found two children in the place of one. Ajmal knew that god had arrived in his house. As told there was milk instead of water in the pot and there were red (kumkum) footprints in the courtyard. God had also told Ajmal that Bhiram Dev was to be fed by Ajmal's wife but all he needed was incense sticks for him and he would grow up on that. This child was named Ramdevji, the avatar of lord Krishna or Dwarkapuri.

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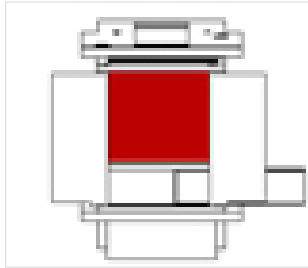
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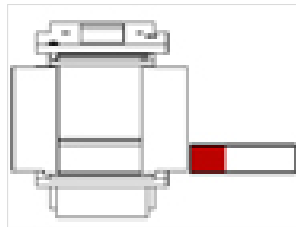
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4. Hanuman brings Sanjeevani Buti

When the war was going on, Raavan almost killed Lakshman. Vishwamitra was called and he asked Hanuman to go to the mountains and bring the medicine Sanjeevani buti. Hanuman left immediately. When he flew up to the mountains he had no idea what this Sanjeevani buti looked like. He could not recognize it. He had never seen it before. If it were a mango tree or a banana he would have known, but this he had never seen. So he kept looking all over the place and he soon realized he had very little time because Lakshman could die if he did not get the herb (buti) in time. He wanted to stop the day from ending so he swallowed the moon and the sun had to wait for the moon to come out. As Hanuman was quite strong he simply picked up the whole mountain and left. He brought it to Shri Ramnagar and told Vishwamitra to identify the buti because he did not know which one it was. Vishwamitra took the buti and made a balm and put it on Lakshman who was restored to life again. Hanuman let the moon out but his cheeks remained puffed up.



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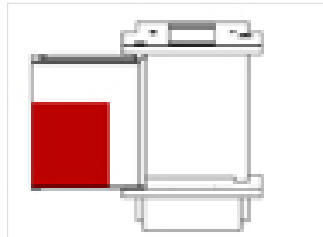
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5. Raavan and his pride

There was a huge ocean called Ratnagar Sagar near King Raavan's village. This body of water became so proud that it proclaimed there was no such ocean like it in the whole earth. When God saw how egoistic the ocean had become he made its water salty. Next to it was a beautiful Chirni tree. This tree too became very proud of its beauty. So God punished her by making her face black. Similarly, Raavan became very proud of his immunity, so God came in the form of Ram and killed him. From Ratnagar Sagar come to the demons who take away bad human beings, those who have done evil deeds. Others, who have done good and been kind and generous, are taken away in palanquins by God.



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6. Story of Padmavati, Raja Bisal and Raja Mordhaj

Raja Bisal had seven daughters. One day he asked them to tell him who provided for their well being. All but one (Padmavati) said our father the King is our sole provider. Padmavati however said it was not he but her own fate and God who provided for her. This made the king very angry. He called for the Brahmin and ordered him to go out of the gates of the village and find the first being to get Padmavati married. When the priest came out in search of the groom for the princess, he could not see anyone except a peacock with a broken leg. He felt sad for the princess as he has seen her grow; and fearing for his own Karma he returned and told the king that he did not find anyone. The king sent him again the next day and again he found the peacock with a broken leg there. He returned and said the same thing to the king as the previous day. The king was now in a rage and threatened the Brahmin that if he did not find anyone this time his head would be chopped off. Therefore when the Brahmin found the same broken-leg peacock for the third time he resigned to the idea that this is probably the fate of the princess. He offered a coconut to the peacock and told him to come to the palace on a particular date when he would be married to the princess Padmavati. Meanwhile the king also arranged the weddings of his other daughters. While all others received chariots full of gifts, Padmavati went to the jungle on a cheap cart with the broken-leg peacock. While they were in the jungle the peacock kept flying away from Padmavati and she kept calling out to him to have his meal as she was now a dutiful wife and could not think of eating without feeding her husband first. However, the peacock went and perched himself on a tall tree. A storm brewed in the night, breaking the branch with the peacock who fell to his death.

Padmavati called out to the Gods wailing about why she suffered such a destiny when she had been faithfully devoted to the gods. The gods' Shiva and Parvati heard her plea and came down to ask her why she was in distress. After listening to her they decided to transform the peacock into a man. Padmavati asked them not to do that since her father may think she had run off with another man. Therefore they transformed the peacock into a prince with the crest of the peacock (Raja Mordhaj) and gave him a kingdom. They also transported them to a new kingdom where they lived happily.

When Padmavati's father heard of a new kingdom in his neighborhood, he decided to befriend his neighbors. There he recognized his daughter and she told him how her fate had provided for her always. He accepted her argument and was ashamed.

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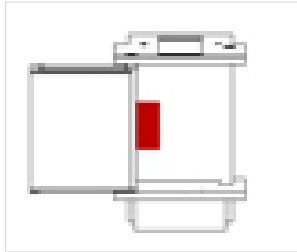
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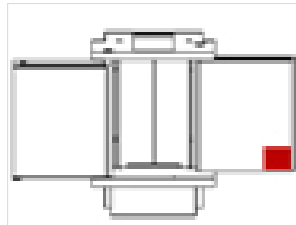
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7. Dhanna Bhagat and his Kheti

Dhanna Bhagat was a very devout farmer. He would bestow many gifts on sadhus and rishis. One day his wife asked him to go plant seeds in the field and warned him not to waste time or get distracted. As he was going, he met with a group of religious men and got so involved listening to them that out of gratitude he gave them all his seeds. He then picked up a few seeds of Tumba (Citrullus Colocynthis) and he planted those seeds in his field. Now every time his wife decided to accompany him to the field he dissuaded her from coming. One day out of curiosity she went to the fields to see how their crop was coming along. She was shocked to see there was nothing like a crop. There were just a few tumbas on the ground. She was so furious that she picked one and dashed it to the ground. As soon as it hit the ground it cracked open. To their utter disbelief it was full of diamonds and gems. Therefore it is said that Dhanna Bhagat sowed the seeds of tumba and found pearls and diamonds. This is the fruit of faith and worship.



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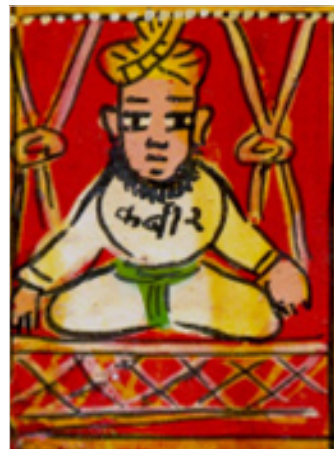
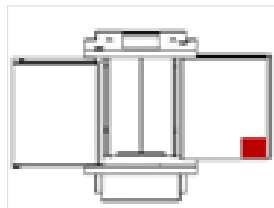
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8. Sant Kabir and his chela Kamaal

One day Kabirji was wandering around the steps along the river (ghats) when he saw a body floating by. As soon as it touched him he came alive. It was a young man whom he took home and called him Kamaal (miracle). A king from Rajasthan came to Varanasi for a cure from leprosy. He was advised to meet Kabirji Maharaj and as the king went looking he accidentally met Kamaal on the ghats. When he asked Kamaal about Kabirji's whereabouts the chela wanted to know the reason for his search. So the king explained the purpose of his visit. Kamaal told him that the task was so simple that even he, the pupil could cure him of it; therefore he need not bother meeting the Guru. The king agreed to be cured by Kamaal; together they went to the river bank and Kamaal asked him to dip himself in the water while chanting the name of Shri Ram. When the king took a dip he was so cold that he barely called the name of Ram and jumped out. There was no visible difference on his skin. So Kamaal asked him to concentrate and chant the name of God with all honesty and sincerity. But again he was too cold to speak the name with any feeling. Now the pupil got so exasperated that he asked the king to allow him to help him. When the king went in for a dip Kamaal pushed and held the king's head under water as a result of which the king called out God's name in earnest, pleading to be saved. His skin cleared completely and he was cured of the dreadful disease. Quite pleased with himself the pupil went home to his guru Kabirji and told him about his success. After Kabir heard him he slapped the boy, scolding him for wasting God's name three times for one man. He asked the pupil to go visit Tulsidas to understand the value of God's name. Tulsidas told Kamaal to write Jai Shree Ram on a tulsi (holy basil) leaf and dip it in water and then sprinkle it on as many victims of leprosy. When he did that he cured about two thousand people. The overjoyed pupil returned to tell his Guru about his resounding success. Again Kabir slapped him and sent him to Surdas to fully understand the meaning of the name of God. Surdas who was blind asked Kamaal to write only half the name of Ram which is Ra to test its potency. Therefore by chanting just half of his name the pupil was able to cure thousands of people. Finally, Kabirdas was pleased the pupil had understood the enormity of chanting God's name.



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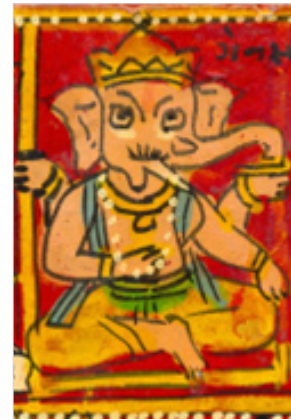
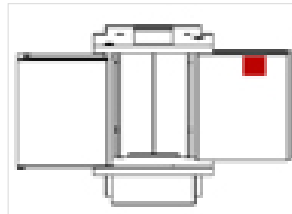
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9. Ganesh is worshipped first

When Sita came of age her father Janak invited several contestants from all over to break a stone of 25 quintals with a bow. Even Sita was able to lift it with her finger to sweep the floor beneath it. Whoever would lift the stone would marry Sita. Ram and Lakshman discussed how to achieve this. Ram asked Lakshman to break the stone and marry Sita. Lakshman said he would break it but would not marry Sita as he had decided to lead a life of celibacy. Therefore Ram became Sita's suitor. Ram and Sita were to be married and the invitation to the wedding was also sent to Lord Shiva. Shiva felt he was too old to travel so he asked his son Ganesh to go in his place. When the procession party realized that it was Ganesh instead of Shiva who was to accompany them they were disappointed. Some were adamant that they would not join the procession if this elephant headed Ganesh went along with them. They made several excuses to not take him along. They told him to stay back and be the first to receive the bride when she came. He began to sulk and sat quietly in a corner. Now the procession with Ram and family took off in a horse carriage. Ganesh took his mice army and got the road all dug up so that the chariot had a great difficulty in moving. They were anxious to reach in time but the road was miserable. The wise ones got together and tried to figure out the cause for this upheaval. Then one of them realized that Ganesh/Gajanand was not with them and it was possible it was he who caused the roads to be destroyed. Gajanand was listening on from behind a bush and as soon as he heard them mention his name he came out. They apologized to him and said henceforth his name would be taken first before any celebration or ritual. He got his mice army to clear the road and the procession went off smoothly.



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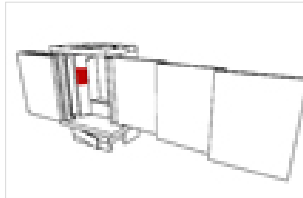
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10. Karma Jatni feeds a stone God

Karma Jatni was very keen to feed God. She made a special meal (Kheech) and offered it to a stone God. She appealed to him to eat. She pledged that till he ate she would neither take food nor drink water. She even covered her head with her dress to make a curtain in between in case God was shy to come. God got worried for her so he came and ate the meal. In this way she was blessed and gained recognition even though she was a Jatni. Every year this day is celebrated and Kheech is cooked in every household on Makarsankranti day.



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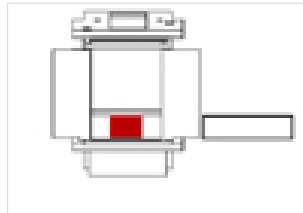
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11. Kundana Bai's gift to the Kaavadiyas

Kundana Bai was a Brahmani priest in Kashi. She was a very devout woman. And because she was so devout she had been given a boon to be immortal. Each morning she would be a small child, in the day she would turn into a young woman and at night she would become an old lady. It was believed that she was never to be seen by any man. Only women could see her.

The storytellers Kaavadiyas were looking for work. She gave the Kaavads to the Kaavadiyas so they could make a living. In return, they were to give half their earnings to her towards the feeding of cows. When Kundana bai took Samadhi the storytellers began to look for artists in Rajasthan to make the Kaavads for them and thus continued with the tradition.

Kundana Bai was also considered to be the eternal bride. Married women in Rajasthan used to donate their own clothes like their blouses in Kanchli. This they did so that they too would be eternal brides. They prayed for the longevity of their husband's lives. When people could not donate animals or money they would donate their clothes.



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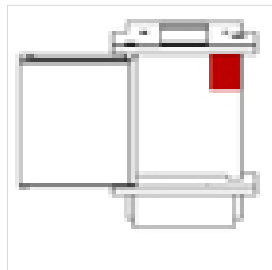
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12. Holka(Holika) and Prahlad

Hiranyakush had a sister, Holika. She had received a boon from Vishnu that she could bathe in fire and was never to die of wood or fire. The only condition was she must never touch a man. Now Holika was very fond of baby Prahlad. So she picked up the little boy and put him on her lap. As soon as her skin touched him, she fell dead and Prahlad walked away.

The same image is used to tell the story of Krishna and Pootana by some tellers.



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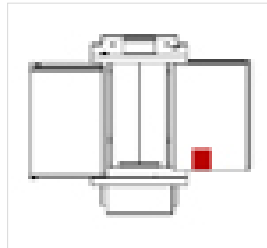
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13. Raidas Chamar

Raidas Chamar used to make Jutis(shoes). Like Kuba Kumbhar (Kuba the potter) he too was a devout man and would make two pairs to sell and donate two pairs of shoes. His shoes also turned to gold. Because he was a shudra he was not allowed to take water from the well and he was not allowed to come near or touch anyone. Then Ganga came to his kund (water tank) where he would soak the leather. Therefore he did not have to go looking for water. When that water touched anyone s/he would get the knowledge of three worlds. Anyone who dared to drink that water with soaking leather shoes would be enlightened. Meera's in-laws used to live in Chittor so she began going to Raidas' place where she drank the water from the kund and it gave her knowledge of all three worlds and she took him as her Guru.



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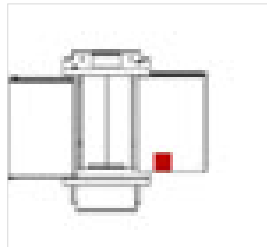
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14. Sen Bhagat who was saved by his faith in God

Sen Bhagat was a very devout man and the royal barber whose duty was to shave the King every day. The king was quite fastidious and a staunch disciplinarian. He was not known to take kindly to anyone being late. The king had a terrible allergy on his face and the barber had to be extremely careful while shaving him. One day Sen Bhagat got busy praying and looking after some sadhus and rishis who were visiting the town. As a result he got late. While rushing to the palace he was quite sure that a punishment awaited him from the king. But as soon as he arrived he saw the king was already shaved and his allergy was gone. When the king saw Sen Bhagat he was surprised and asked him why was he back for the second time in the day? The king was pleased nonetheless and said he had not thanked him adequately earlier in the day but would like to thank him properly by showering him with gifts. And thus Sen Bhagat realized it was God who had impersonated Sen Bhagat so the king would not be furious with him for coming late and punish him severely on that account. When a person is so devout even the gods come to their rescue.



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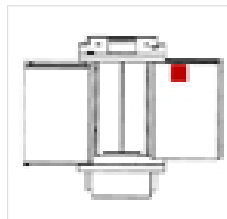
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15. Sireeyade who saved the kittens

Sireeyade was a very devout woman from the potter community. She lived in the time of Hirnakush. Hirnakush had a boon from god that made him invincible. He could not be killed by any weapon or poison, he would neither die in the day nor night. As a result he became so proud that he wanted his entire kingdom to chant his name instead of lord Ram. Sireeyade was a Ram devotee. Once when the kiln was lit she realized that there were some kittens hiding in one of the pots that were being baked. She knew that if she chanted the name of Hrinakush there was no chance of the kittens coming out alive. So she and her husband Udan de began to chant Ram's name. Prahlad the son of Hrinakush was passing by and he wondered why someone was chanting Ram's name and not that of his father. He stopped by and asked Sireeyade why she was not chanting his father's name. She told him she had immense faith in Ram. She planted two saplings of Tulsi, one in the name of Hrinakush and one in the name of Ram. And the one with Hrinakush had withered away whereas the one with Ram's name had blossomed and grown. Prahlad asked her how many days were the kittens inside the oven. She told him it had already been three days. Finally when the oven cooled and the pots were baked the kittens jumped out of the pots as if nothing had ever happened. When Prahlad saw this he was so impressed that he too began to chant the name of Ram. When the king found that his own son was not chanting his name he ordered him to jump off a wall. He did that and was unharmed. Then he asked him to hug a hot iron pillar to see how Ram would save him. He was a little shaken but then he saw a little ant walking on the burning pole so he took this as a sign from God and hugged the pillar and was unscathed. The King was furious and then asked his son to sit on a pile of burning wood with his sister Hodka who had the boon of bathing with fire. She could not burn unless she touched a man. She came in contact with Prahlad and was burnt immediately. Prahlad was treated very poorly by his father. He pleaded with god calling on him to come to save him. Then god took the form of a demon and killed Hrinakush in the evening hours with his nails. That was the end of Hrinakush and Sireeyade became immortal because she popularised the name of Ram.



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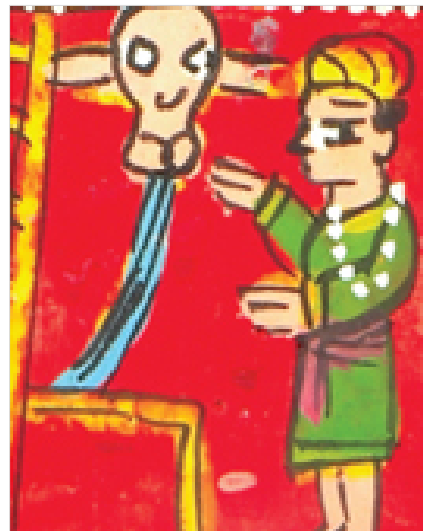
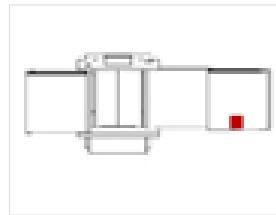
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16. Bhagirath got the Ganges to Earth

Bhagirath was a prince whose father did not have a peaceful death. He was told that unless he could put some holy water of the Ganges on his father's ashes there would be no peace for the dead man. He prayed to Ganga and she said he could take the water in a sieve because his father had been so evil this was the best she would suggest. Since he could not take the water that far he had to invoke divine intervention. Then he did penance (tapasya) for ten years standing on one leg till Lord Vishnu appeared and told him to take Shiva's help to placate Ganga because she was quite aggressive and could cause a deluge in the world. So he prayed for another ten years to Shiva who appeared and said he would help break the fall of Ganga if she agreed to come down. So he prayed for another five years to Ganga and told her Shiva would help in avoiding the deluge if she came down through his hair. She agreed although it took a bit of time because Shiva also had a score to settle with Ganga and made her disappear in his hair for some time. Bhagirath was desperate. He prayed to Shiva to release Ganga so that he could perform the final rites for his father. Because of his devotion and perseverance the Ganges was released and came out of Gau Mukh.



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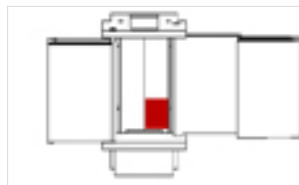
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17. Story of Raja Harishchand and Taramati Rani

Raja Harishchandra was a very honest king. He was known never to tell a lie. Once, God came to test his faith. He told Harishchandra to simply leave the palace. He walked off with just his wife and son. Now the God disguised as a priest asked him to give him a donation (Dakshina) of half a kilo of gold. The king had left everything behind so how could he produce this wealth? God would not hear of it. He said he could grant him time but he must give him the Dakshina. So he promises to work and give the half kg of gold in a few months' time. Harishchandra and his family reach another kingdom and go looking for work. They beg of the King of that land to give them work. The King intervenes on their behalf and gets them jobs. Harishchandra got a job at a cremation ground. For every cremation he receives a gold coin. His wife Taramati got a job at a prostitute's house who is very jealous of her royal status, so she gives her difficult tasks to do every day. Their son Rohitdas (Roidas) is appointed by the King of that land to pluck flowers for the prayer every morning. The prostitute asks Taramati to get a huge pot of water from the pond and tells her if she breaks the pot she will lose her job. Taramati finds it very hard to lift the pot and asks her husband to help her. But he says he cannot because each one must do their own job. He gives her a solution though. He asks her to walk into the water until the water comes to her shoulders and then place the pot of water on her head. So she manages to retain her job. Their son gets bitten by a snake in the garden while he is plucking the flowers for the king. The king advises him to go to his mother. Taramati runs around trying to find a cure for the snakebite. No help is given. The son dies. She takes the son to the cremation ground. Her husband refuses to cremate the child without being paid the gold coin. Taramati asks Harishchandra to kill her because she has no use of her life. He asks her to kill him because he does not want to live either. While all this is going on and they are about to kill each other God appears and revives the son. Harishchandra says he still has to work for the King to pay the priest but God takes back his promise and returns his kingdom and past glory to him.



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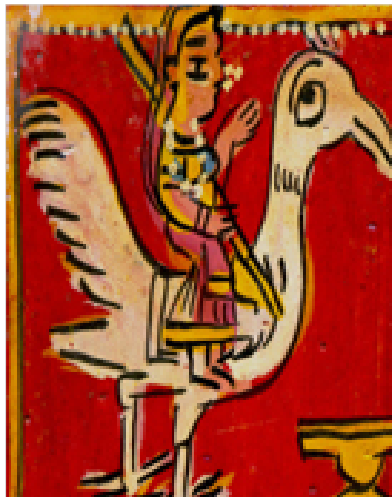
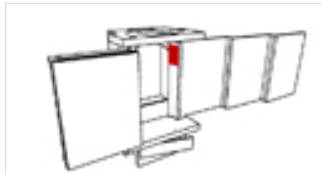
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18. Bemata

Raavan performed austerities (did tapasya) for Lord Vishnu. Pleased, Lord Vishnu granted him a wish. Raavan asked for some of the gods to serve him. He wanted Vayu or Pavan the wind god to sweep his floor, Indra to fill water in his house and Bemata of pressing the feet of Raavan. The Gods were really upset but Vishnu had to honour his word to Raavan. However, Vishnu sent Ram and Lakshman to kill Raavan. After Raavan's death the gods were free and each returned to their tasks. Vayu got busy with blowing the clouds and Indra was occupied with the rains and monsoon. Bemata wanted to do something substantial too. She was given the task of writing the future on the foreheads of all newborn children. She also blesses women with children if they pray to her.



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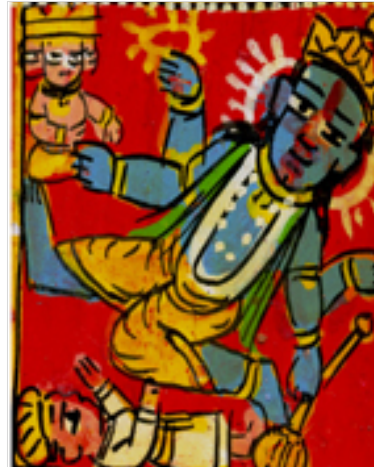
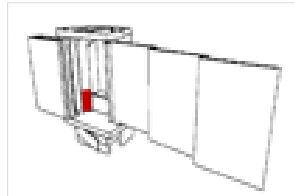
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<https://www.dsource.in/resource/kaavad/stories/10539>

19. King Bali

King Bali was a very generous man, he was so known that the gods feared he will go to heaven. They sent Vishwamitra to test him. The king received Vishwamitra with a lot of respect and great hospitality. Vishwamitra requested to be given two and half steps of earth. King Bali agreed. Vishwamitra then grew in size and covered the earth in two steps and for the half step there was no place so King Bali offered his own head. Vishwamitra put his foot on his head and thrust him down to the netherworld (Pataal). Radhika was sitting there and was surprised to see Bali in such a place. He told her about the two and half steps and she was so moved by him that she tied a string around his wrist (Dharmela) making him her brother. This day has come to be called Raksha Bandhan. King Bali is known as the most generous one.



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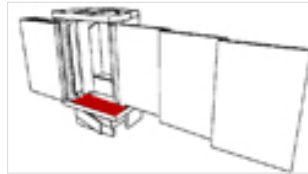
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Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/kaavad/stories/10540>

20. Jagdev Punwar

Once two Kankali Ravs went to the kingdom of Chakve (very vast land belonging to the Parmars) and asked the king to make a generous donation. The king suggested they first visit his younger brother Jagdev Punwar and whatever donation he made they would receive it fourfold from the king. Jagdev Punwar was from the same family but he was poor and did not have much to offer. When he heard about the king's promise to the Ravs he beheaded himself and dared his brother to behead all four male members of his family. When the Kankali Ravs went to the king he was ashamed and admitted defeat as he could not keep his promise. Then Kali Ma appeared and threw some holy water (Ambi ka Piyodi) from the Ganges and restored Jagdev Punwar's life by attaching his head to the body.



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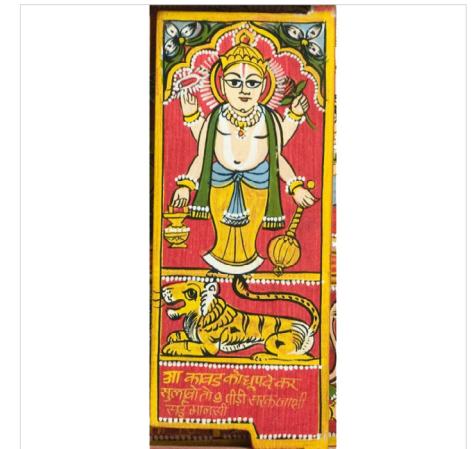
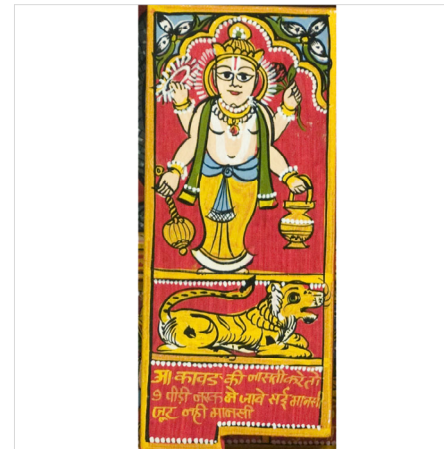
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Products

A storyteller's Kaavad called the Marwari Kaavad has a fixed height, a flat roof, and a red base colour. The number of panels is even and varies from ten to sixteen, depending on the number of patrons a storyteller may have. The images on the panels include those of gods, saints and patrons. The Kaavad is usually wrapped in a red or white cloth and carried on the shoulder by the storyteller.

The Kaavad appears to be conceptually based on a Hindu temple which usually consists of an entrance with guardians, a covered hall for the devotees to gather (Mandap) and an inner shrine or sanctum sanctorum (Garbhagriha). The temple hall may have images of gods as well as images from the epics. Like a temple the Kaavad too has an entrance with guardians and an inner shrine (Ram Mandir/Thakur Mandir) which is reached by turning of the hinged panels. The panels fold into each other and the ones closest to the central core/shrine are held in place by wooden pegs acting as hinges.



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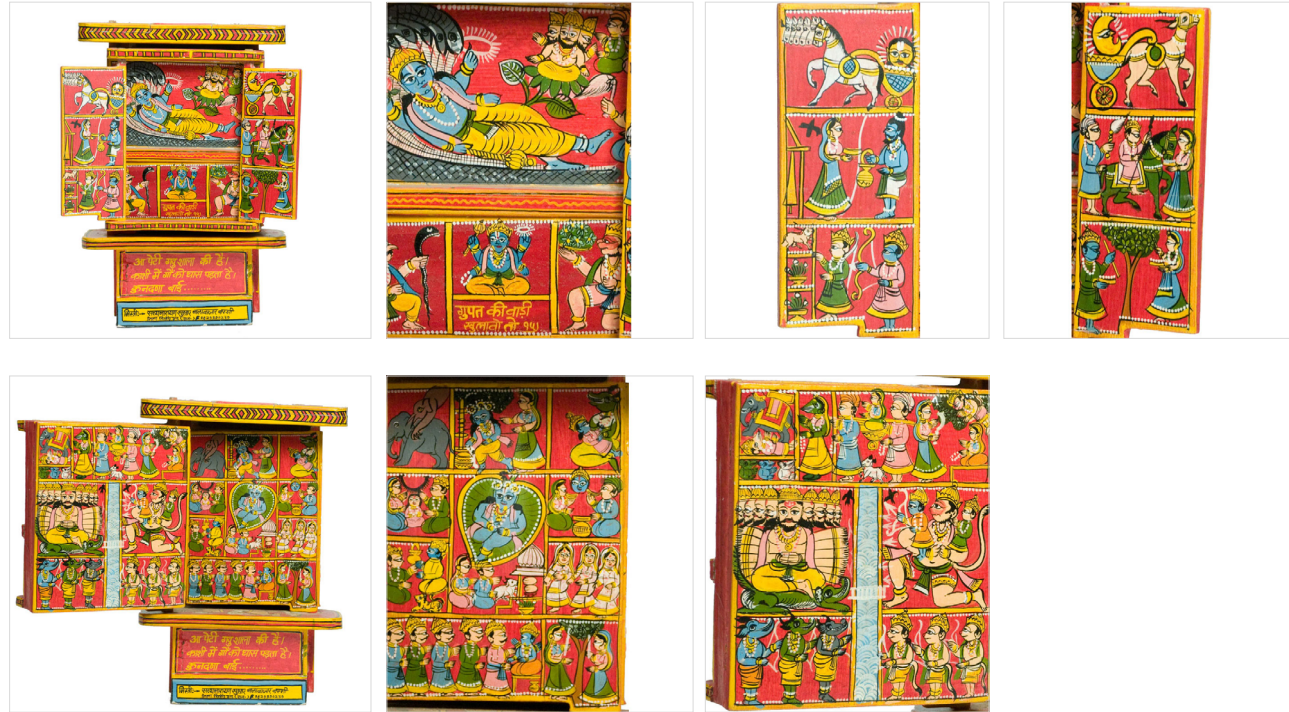
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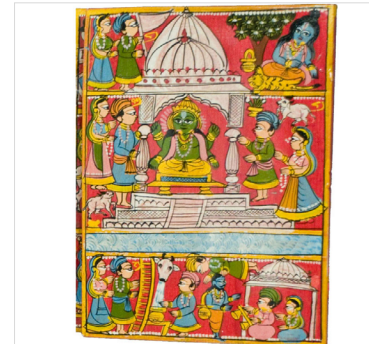
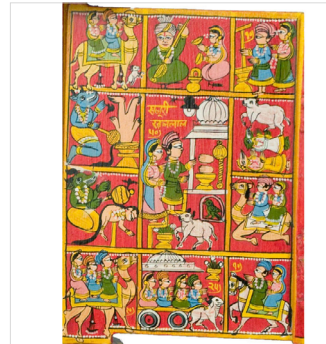
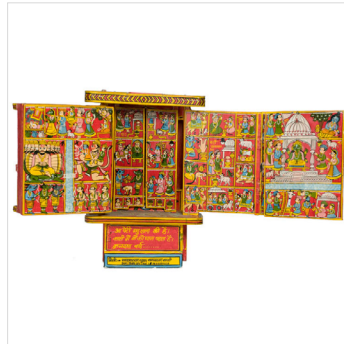
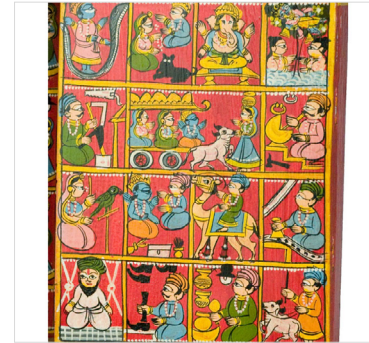
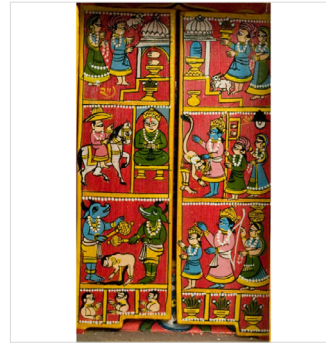
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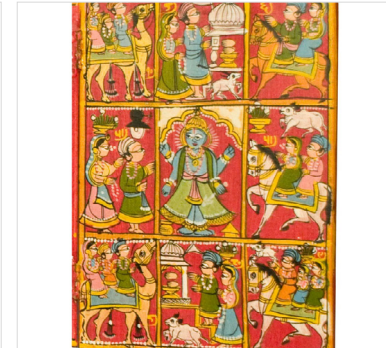
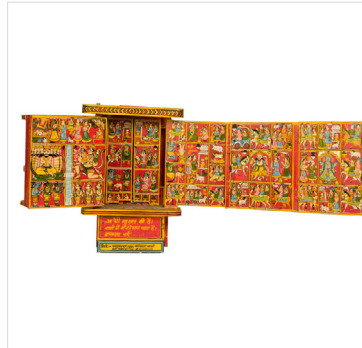
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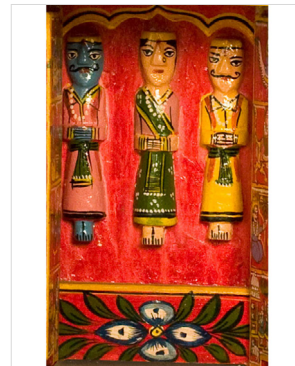
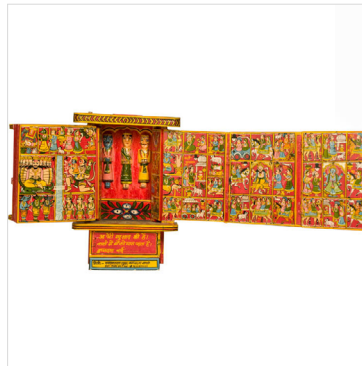
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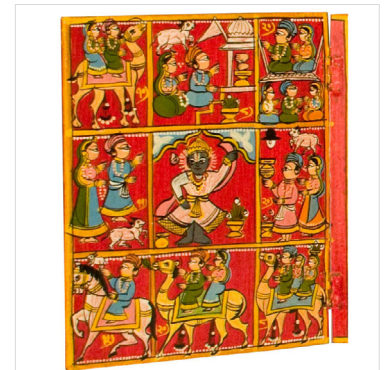
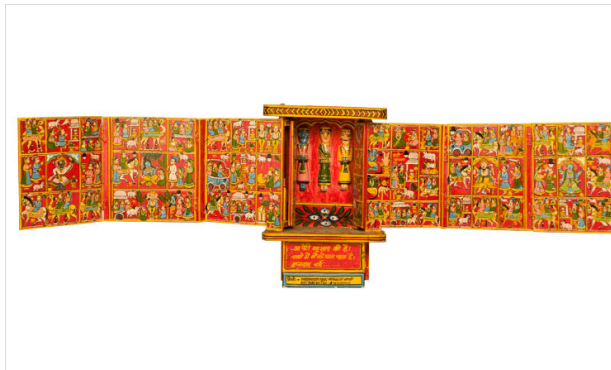
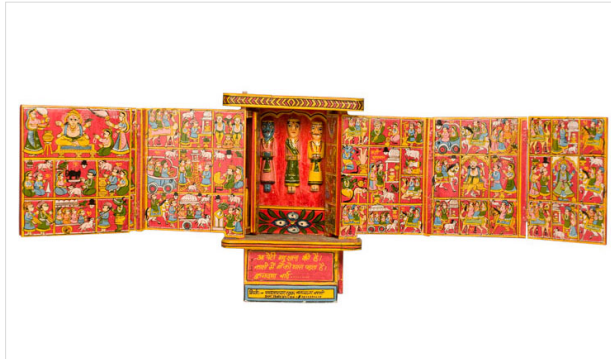
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Links

The Kaavad storytelling tradition of Rajasthan by Nina Sabnani:

- <http://www.idc.iitb.ac.in/resources/dt-july-2009/kaavad.pdf>

Nina Sabnani presents “HOME” - book based on the Kaavad:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHED-s0cDes>

Kaavad: Travelling Shrine, Home by Gulammohammed Sheikh

- <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Kaavad-Travelling-Shrine-Gulammohammed-Sheikh/dp/8190702270>

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Video



Kaavad Making Tales Part 1



Kaavad Making Tales Part 2

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Nina Sabnani, faculty at **IDC, IIT Bombay**.

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