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## Sports in mythology

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### Abstract

Mythology is the science or study of myths. According to the Fascist mythology of the interwar years, a set of stories, traditions, or beliefs associated with a particular group or the history of an event, arising naturally or deliberately fostered.

In A body of myths, as that of a particular people or that relating to a particular person: As a collection of such stories, mythology is a vital feature of every culture. Various origins for myths have been proposed, ranging from personification of nature, personification of natural phenomena to truthful or hyperbolic accounts of historical events, to explanations of existing ritual. Mythology and legend, a man, often of divine ancestry, who is endowed with great courage and strength, celebrated for his bold exploits, and favored by the gods. A person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life: soldiers and nurses who were heroes in an unpopular war. A person noted for special achievement in a particular field: the heroes of medicine.

The principal character in a novel, poem, or dramatic presentation. Hindu mythology it is a large body of traditional narratives related to Hinduism as contained in Sanskrit literature epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Puranas, and the Vedas. Ancient Tamil literature such as the Sangam literature and Periya Puranam. several other works, most notably the Bhagavata Purana.

Several games now familiar across the world owe their origins in India, particularly, the games of chess, ludo (including ladders and snake), and playing cards. The famous epic Mahabharata narrates an incidence where a game called Chaturang was played between two groups of warring cousins.

**Keywords:** Mythology, history, sports

### Introduction

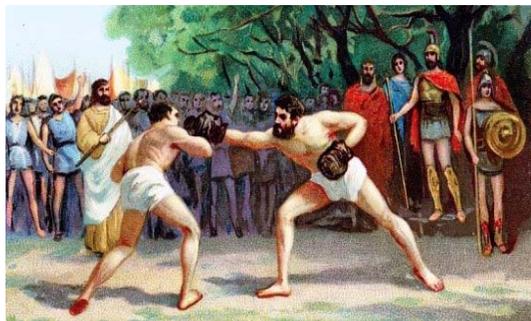
#### Meaning & Origin of Mythology

Mythology is the science or study of myths.

According to the Fascist mythology of the interwar years.

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#### According to Greek Mythology



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Early 15c., "exposition of myths,"

From Middle French *mythologie* From Late Latin *mythologie*,

From Greek mythologia"

Legendary lore, a telling of mythic legends; a legend, story, tale,"

From *mythos* "myth" (of unknown origin) + *logy* "study." Meaning "a body of myths"

(first recorded 1781.)

The roots of mythology that evolved from classical Hinduism come from the times of the Vedic civilization, from the ancient Vedic religion. The four Vedas, notably the hymns of the Rigveda, contain allusions to many themes. The characters, philosophy and stories that make up ancient Vedic myths are indelibly linked with Hindu beliefs. The Vedas are four in number, namely

- Rigveda,
- Yajurveda
- Samaveda
- Atharva Veda.

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Several games now familiar across the world owe their origins in India, particularly, the games of chess, ludo (including ladders and snake), and playing cards. The famous epic Mahabharata narrates an incidence where a game called Chaturang was played between two groups of warring cousins.

The age when epic Mahabharata was written is variously dated around 800 BC to 1000 BC. In some form or the other, the game continued till it evolved into chess. The game of cards also developed in ancient India.

The Mahabharata story throws light on the fact that a game similar to Chess was played in ancient India. The Mahabharata is variously dated around 800 and 1100 B.C. Thus this game was known in India nearly 3000 years ago. It is the view of some historians that this game was also used in the allocation of land among different members of a clan or caste when a new settlement was being established.

As applicable to real armies, the term Chaturanga is frequently used by the epic poets of India. Sir William Jones' essay is substantially a translation of the Bhavishya Purana, in which is given a description of a four-handed game of chess played with dice.

Even the word checkmate is derived from the Persian term Shah Mat which means 'the king is dead!'. The Sanskrit translation of this term would be Kshatra Mruta. Another term viz. 'the rooks' which is the name for one set of the counters used in chess, originated from the Persian term Roth which means a soldier. The Persian term according to the Encyclopedia is derived from the Indian term Rukh, which obviously seems to have originated in the Sanskrit word Rakshak which means a soldier from Raksha which means 'to protect'.

During the era of the Rigveda, Ramayana and Mahabharata, men of a certain stature were expected to be well - versed in chariot - racing, archery, military stratagems, swimming, wrestling and hunting the weapons involved in war and hunting exercises included the bow and arrow, the dagger, the axe and the mace.

These weapons of war, for instance, the javelin (*toran*) and the discus (*chakra*), were also, frequently used in the sports arena. Lord Krishna wielded an impressive discus or Sudarshan chakra. Arjuna and Bhima, two of the mighty Pandavas, excelled in archery and weightlifting respectively. Bhimsen, Hanuman, Jambavan, Jarasandha were some of the great champion wrestlers of yore. (Past days)

Lot of indoor and outdoor games that are being played today originated from India. To name a few: chess, snake & ladders, wrestling, archery, etc.

### Archery



It's quite obvious. Both the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata had references to Archery and how they were being taught to the heroes then.

### Chess



Today's modern day chess evolved from the game 'saturangam' which was played during Mahabharata days and the rules were refurbished.

Chess originated in ancient India and was known as *Chatur-Anga* - Meaning 4 bodied, as it was played by 4 players. From this name we have its current name *Shatranj*. One such instance is in the Mahabharata when Pandavas and Kauravas play this game. Yudhistira the eldest of the Pandavas places his bets on his kingdom, his wife Draupadi and all other material possessions. And by a malevolent trick he loses to the Kauravas everything that he had placed his bets on. Consequently to humiliate the Pandavas, Dushasana one of the evil Kaurava brothers takes hold of Draupadi whom Yudhistira has lost to the Kauravas, and tries to disrobe her

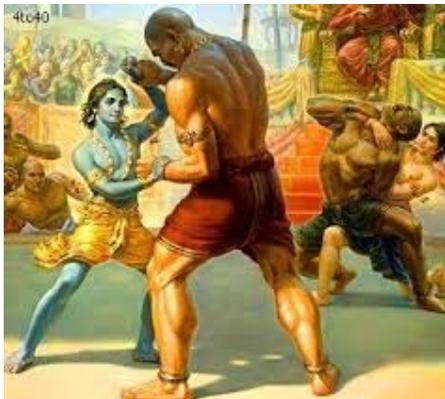
in front of the assembled court. The Pandavas though powerful are helpless as they have lost Draupadi and according to the rules of the game they have no claim on her anymore.

Wrestling was famous in both Ramayana and Mahabharata. Bhima kills Jarasandha in a wrestling match, a folio from Bhagavata Purana.

Wrestlers begin each session by flattening the soil, an act which is considered both a part of endurance training and an exercise in self-discipline. During practice, wrestlers throw a few handfuls of dirt onto their own bodies and that of their opponents as a form of blessing, which also provides for a better grip. Once the arena has been prepared a prayer is offered to the gym's patron deity, most commonly Hanuman. Chariot racing was another sport that was common those days.

The games that were conducted during the svayamvara usually had racing, archery, wrestling, etc.

### Malla-yuddha



It incorporates grappling, joint-breaking, biting, choking and pressure point striking. Matches were traditionally codified into four types which progressed from purely sportive contests of strength to actual full-contact fights known as yuddha. Due to the extreme violence, this final form is generally no longer practised. The second form, wherein the wrestlers attempt to lift each other off the ground for three seconds, still exists in south India. Additionally, malla-yuddha is divided into four styles, each named after Hindu gods and legendary fighters: Hanumanti concentrates on technical superiority, Jambuvanti uses locks and holds to force the opponent into submission, Jarasandhi concentrates on breaking the limbs and joints while Bhimaseni focuses on sheer strength.

Women also excelled in sport and the art of self - defence, and were active participants in games like cock fighting, quail fighting, and ram fighting.

The first written attestation of the term mallayuddha is found in the Ramayana epic, in the context of a wrestling match between the vanara King Bali and Ravana, the king of Lanka. Hanuman, the monkey god of the Ramayana, is worshipped as the patron of wrestlers and general feats of strength. The Mahabharata epic also describes a wrestling match between Bhima and Jarasandha. Other early literary descriptions of wrestling matches include the story of Balarama and Krishna.

Stories describing Krishna report that he sometimes engaged in wrestling matches where he used knee strikes to the chest,

punches to the head, hair pulling, and strangleholds. He defeated Kans, king of Mathura, in a wrestling match and became new king in his place. Siddhartha Gautama himself was said to be an expert wrestler, archer and sword-fighter before becoming the Buddha

With the flowering of Buddhism in the country, Indian sport reached the very peak of excellence. Gautam Buddha himself, is said to have been an ace at archery, chariot - racing, equitation and hammer - throwing. Buddhist monks who travelled far and wide, mostly unarmed, to spread the teachings of the Buddha, accepted this form of self-defense, against religious fanatics, with alternatives that were suitable to their philosophy of non - violence.

### Conclusion

Sports are not recent one. Sport has its glorious history from the Vedic era. In the Atharva Veda there were some well-defined values saying, "Duty is in my right hand and the fruits of victory in my left" which bears the same sentiments as the traditional Olympic oath "For the Honour of my Country and the Glory of Sport". However it is significant to say that back to 975 B.C. the zest for chariot-racing and wrestling was common to both in India and also in other countries. Specially, Greece where Olympic was first introduced.

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