



A camel story



Camels, Raika
and a little *story*
about them



They live scattered on the Thar desert of Rajasthan, in the northwest of India. Raika. As long as they can remember, they reared and loved camels. Apparently, they were created to care for the creature.



They believe the camel was created by Shiva, by blowing life to a toy sculpted in clay by Parvati, his wife. For the Raika, however, it was a lot more than a play-thing.



The Raika knew everything about the camel that was there to know. Except how to make it survive the modern times in which motorised transport, made the camel redundant, economically.



Like everything that loses its economic function, the camel population vanished, one by one, day by day. It had to be recreated, economically. A modern Shiva, was required to blow new life into it.



For a long time, none
appeared in the horizon.
However, eventually the
Raika found help. In
creating new products out of
camel hair, milk, and even
dung. Which would make
the camel and the Raika,
survive.



By collecting, sorting,
grading and spinning camel
hair with a drop spindle and
on a wheel, they made a range
of splendid camel yarns, by
hand.



They used technology that was
primitive, yet respectable.
For it took them only patience
and skill.



Besides a little guidance.
And certainly no energy.
Except the one that they
found in their souls, morning
after morning.



The yarn came in a variety of natural colours, like the camels did. Unaltered in any way and entirely natural.



The yarns, were woven into
a wide variety of stoles, shawls,
rugs and caps.



Which, not surprisingly, met
with enthusiastic response
from people interested in
ethical fashion.



From wool gathering to finished woollen products, it keeps the Raika and the rural community employed. And the camels relevant. Nature, sustainable.



Then came paper. From the camel poo. Which went through various processes to make it bacteria-free and safe for people. It has been called the most bio-diverse paper on earth.



It is now available as
notebooks, memo pads, photo
albums, CD pouches, docket,
greeting cards and book
marks.



By choosing to use the camel wool or paper, you can help. After all, blowing new life into the Raika and their camels isn't that hard.



About LPPS

LPPS stands for Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan, which means “welfare organisation for livestock keepers” in Hindi. It is a non-profit organization that was set up in 1996 to deal with a disease outbreak which had affected camels. The main focus then was on providing veterinary help. The goals then broadened to embrace people-centred livestock development and the sustainable development of biodiversity rich agro ecosystems.

As LPPS acts as a bridge between traditional and modern animal cultures and knowledge systems, its work continues to be inspired and shaped by close association with the Raika, the traditional pastoral community of Rajasthan.

Camel Milk Ice Cream



About Camel Charisma

Camel Charisma is a social enterprise that develops, produces and markets products from Rajasthan's camel herds. All our products are natural and eco-friendly, coming from herded or freely roaming camels living in and around the Thar Desert.

The idea behind Camel Charisma is simple: to save the camel by creating income for Rajasthan's camel breeders. In recent decades, the number of camels has plummeted precipitously and unless added incentives are provided for camel herders, this animal is on its sure way to extinction.

As most products are handcrafted primarily by women in remote villages, the purchase of Camel Charisma products also provides a source of employment throughout rural Rajasthan.

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