

visualizing the dynasty  
of indra

indra smṛti

Remembering Indra



*From the knowledge of Art arises divine knowledge,  
And such knowledge leads to enlightenment.  
This liberation is truly the essence of the knowledge of Art,  
He who realises this, attains freedom.*

*- Vastu Sutra Upanishad.*



**indrasmriti**

Remembering Indra

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My sincere gratitude to my father  
And this project is dedicated to him.

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## Abstract

Indra Smruti is a small attempt towards remembering the most respected god from the Rived, who is no longer worshiped as a god nor there exists a temple of him. The title speaks all about the project- remembering Indra, once again in today's era.

The idea originated as an opportunity for visualizing the dynasty of Indra. But as the time traveled more and more mysteries about the Vedic and the Hindu sanskriti were revealing. The thought of Indra was no longer an idea. It took a shape of its own. It started evolving and revealing itself. Of course, the method which I followed made it possible. This evolving and revealing process is never ending.

As we can see numerous icons of Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Ram, and just by looking at them we can state the icon. We tend to understand the character and recognize them. But Indras character / icon is not so visible through Hindu iconography.

This project is about exploring Indra the way I have perceived and absorbed. I did not want my expressions to be very stereo typed comic style. The initial explorations were very much like the conventional comics style but later on I tried exploring in my personal style though the style was not an issue. The later explorations were more expressive. I tried to draw a line between comics' style and the miniature paintings.

The project includes the rapid scribbles and the final illustrations developed over them. Use of different surfaces and media were beneficial in the exploration.

The artwork includes the iconography of Indra, Vritra his strongest foe, Airavat which is his vahan, the ratha a car he rides, etc. I attempted to create the environment of swarga, exterior and interior. A few explorations visualizing the ratha, the look and the clothes of people in that era, as I have traveled from the Vedas to the Hinduism a journey of 5000 years, which I must say was the most exciting experience of my entire career so far.

For this I would like to thank my Gurus, IDC and all the people who believed in me and supported me.



## concept Art

*“Concept art is your crystal ball to the future; its trying to capture, ahead of time, what it'll feel like to watch the finished movie” as quoted by Andrew Stanton, writer and director of Finding Nemo. “and that's the thing that tells you when you have found it, when somebody gives you that pencil scribble or pastel painting and you feel 'oh my gosh, i'd love to see that'.”*

The term literally communicates the meaning. Representation of a certain idea or a concept, abstract thought. The term originated long back (with respect to films and media) in early 30's and the term was also phrased as pre production art. It evolved during the era of Walt Disney. As designing of characters, their appearance, their qualities, their actions, walk, and all the details are needed to be worked out through a system. So is the set, the place, location, environment, the color schemes also supposed to be paid attention. The storyboards, thumbnail drawings, ideation sketches, all consist of production art. The term took birth then. It has now become a separate discipline which requires a skill set and most important the vision. This discipline now has a prominent position in film industry, gaming industry as the technology provides possibilities of creating your own universe sitting at a place.

Pre visualization art thus is as important as the final product- may be an animation film, live action or a computer game. These are the most powerful media of tomorrow. Pre production is the second stage of production of any product. First is the concept i.e. and the character description, the plot the script and the thought on paper. Later on comes the step of visualization of those elements. These can be represented through traditional drawing techniques or modern digital tools. Most of the production designers practice usage of digital tools for the options it provides. The great epic films and games wouldn't have been possible if the production designers' weren't at work. There are separate studios which only perform tasks related to production art.



There is a necessity of retelling of Indian mythological stories as the newer generations are not aware of the rich literature we have. Storytelling and narration can be made through various media like films, comics, books, graphic novels, websites, and television serials. That is how the hunt for ideas started.

The topics I thought had a good scope were iconography the avatars of Vishnu and the dynasty of Indra. Second one shown powerful signs to move ahead with. That is how the topic was frozen. The topic was more of exploration than any concrete product.



## indra : an introduction

Indra most commonly acknowledged as the king of gods. The power to become the king of gods states the capacity and power and the personality one must possess. Of all the gods of Hindu mythology, Indra has a different story to tell. His character has gone through various stages of delight and victory, achievements and failures. A colorful character. The ebb and tide of his career, the rise and fall of his power provides a very fascinating story to all, who are interested in the lives of Hindu gods and goddesses

The references of Indra are through Rig-Veda and other Vedas as he was the most respected and favorite god of Vedic Indians. This is very clear because almost 250 shloka from Rigveda are describing Indra, his glory, his battles and slaying of demons and protecting the human race.

Though references of Indra occur in Hindu scriptures from Vedic times to the medieval age, there had been a gradual erosion in his importance. The Vedic Indra, wielder of the thunderbolt, was among the most important deities, but by the Puranic period, he became almost a vassal of the Trimurti – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In the Puranas, the heaven over which Indra ruled, is referred to as Indraloka or Devloka, inhabited by the Devas, the secondary deities. His city is Amravati, his elephant the four-tusked Airavata, and his horse Uchchaishravas. Stories like the ones included in this collection, which depict Indra as a benign and noble deity, are rare. Most of the stories in the Puranas depict Indra as a deity jealous of mortals who perform tapas (austerities) or yajnas (fire sacrifices). This was because the position of Indra could be attained (according to Puranic lore) by anyone who performed a hundred Ashwamedha yajnas. All the stories in this collection are based on the Mahabharata. The one relating to Shibi is similar to that narrated about his father Ushinara in the Mahabharata.







Indra holding vajra ['thunderbolt' club]

As explained in Rigved,

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 shloka 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.*

The hidden meaning behind the shloka is:

Indra is a supreme force of existence. With the help of his powers he protected gods and humanity and thus humanity remembers him and praises for his work. This means, that it is a duty of every human being to protect humanity. With the work they do, they must develop the entire nation or civilization. So their names will be written down the histories and remembered.

It was raining heavily at the time when we had to freeze over a topic. Indras association with rains was another reason why i might have finalized the topic because he is no more worshiped as a god and these heavy rains could be his reprisal. Indra's topic was not a topic but I was in a process to internalize it. The process started. I had no extra knowledge about Indra other than that he was king of gods, a thunder god, that he owns heaven and the apsaras and gandharvas, also that he was responsible for the event of Gowardhan parvat in Mahabharat. I was just on the shell and wanted to drill and go deep

He is also mentioned in other mahapuranas like Vishnudharmottara Purans, Brihat Samhita, Amswadbhedagaman. The iconography varies from that of Rigveda. In RV he is supposed to be a well built blond – tawny haired and bearded man. A golden - glowing complexion and most handsome ! The most powerfull of humanbeings, non of the gods or humans can be compared with him. There wont be a element as strong as him. But in other mahapuranas he is shown with a dark complexion two eyes and two armed, very handsome, adorned with Kirit Mukita, Kundalas, hara, Keyura and other ornaments. He is draped in red coloured garment. His right hand has sakti and ankush in the left. Neck is very thick and the belly is big – the connection of consumption of lakes of somarasa. He is the weilder of vajra, the most important of his weapons since the Vedic era.



## The Origins

The theory Indra may be reconstructed for Proto-Indo-Iranian, but not for Proto-Indo-European. Indra is also attested as a god.

If Indra as a deity is cognate to other Indo-European gods, either thunder gods such as Thor or Perun, or heroic gods, or gods of intoxicating drinks, his name has either not been preserved in any other branch, or else it is itself an Indo-Iranian innovation. In the Vedic religion Indra has prominence over the continuation of chief god of the Indo-European pantheon Dyeus (Dyeus appears in the Vedas as Dyaus Pita, a relatively minor deity who, interestingly, is the father of Indra). Compare to this the comparatively low status of Tyr compared to Odin or Thor in Norse paganism. Indra was the Supreme Deity of early Vedic religion, god of war and a natural phenomenon personified for the Indo-Aryans. The battle between Indra and Vritra is depicted in ancient Iranian religions such as Zoroastrianism.

The Rig-Veda states,

*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.*

Indra is the chief god of the Rigveda (besides Agni). He delights in drinking Soma, and the central myth of Vedic religion is his heroic defeat of Vritra, liberating the rivers, or alternatively, his smashing of the Vala, a stone enclosed where the Panis had imprisoned the cows, and Ushas (dawn). He is the god of war, smashing the stone fortresses of the Dasyu, and invoked by combatants on both sides in the Battle of the Ten Kings.

### 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 netherworlds, or Patala, 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, launched rains over the village.



## SWARGA

Indra is King of the Celestials without having any power or influence over the triad (brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh). He lives in His splendid heaven Swarga, the heaven all meritorious souls go to after death according to popular belief. Swarga is on Mount Meru and its capital is a wondrous city called Amravati. There Indra resides with His wife Indrani and His constant attendants the apsaras and the other spirits who sing and dance to entertain everyone there. This is when Indra is not driven out by some asura or other who has achieved universal power through an inadvertent boon from Brahma. The other Gods, especially Vishnu, have to constantly come to Indra's rescue as He and Swarga seem to be the favorite target for every unscrupulous asura that has achieved universal power. To the common Hindu, Swarga is synonymous with heaven.

He is the king of gods as we all know. Many scholars state that Indra was a position. This is stated after observing the various colors of his personalities. Swarga has all the facilities that you might just dream of, and apsaras and gandharvas perform nrityas nad entertain the lucky ones who attain swarga or are invited by indra. It is located at the top of sacred mount Meru, which is the tallest amongst the mountains and above the clouds. It is said that the swargs was being designed by Vishwakarma who was the greatest sthapati(architect) who ever lived. This heaven could move anywhere at its lord's command. In Swarga, there is an enormous hall when slain warriors went after death. Indra and the beautiful Indrani presided over their paradise. No sorrow, suffering, or fear was allowed in Indra's home.







As a few scholars have said, Indra was a leader of a tribe who migrated towards sapta sindhu plateau indo gangatic planes and parts of Iran, Afganistan, Pakistan. Vedas also originated from the same place. This leader of a tribe could have conquered some other tribe and thus became a protector of his clan. Later the tribe must have grown to a civilization, the vedic civilization. The conception of Indra presented the external life of struggle of the Vedic Indians where Agni represented the internal household life (as personified from the sacrificial fire). And that's how Indra must be the favorite god of Vedic Indians. He protected and fought many battles with demons. Thus referred as the warrior god in RV but his role in Atharvaved changes to an internal fighter. He is a protector from germs n infections from epidemics of dog bites, snake bites. Atharva veda is about the medical science developed and one of the chapters is ayurveda. Thus here he is refered as an internal protector where as in RV he is a protector from demons n beasts and the invaders. His important enemy in RV is Vritrasura. Vritra, an asura, stole all the water in the world and Indra drank enough Soma to prepare himself for the battle with the huge serpent. He passed through Vritra's ninety-nine fortresses, slew the monster and brought water back to Earth.

### Vritra is described as in Rigveda

From earth withhold the genial showers;  
Of mortal men the foe malign,  
And rival of the race divine;  
Whose demon hosts from age to age  
With Indra war unceasing wage;  
Who, time unnumbered crushed and slain,  
Is ever newly born again,  
And evermore renews the strife  
In which again he forfeits life.  
And soon the knell of Vritra's doom  
Was sounded by the clang and boom  
Of Indra's iron shower.  
Pierced, cloven, crushed with horrid yell,



The dying demon headlong fell  
Down from his cloud-built tower.  
Now bound by Sushna's spell no more  
The clouds discharge their liquid store;  
And long by torrid sunbeams baked  
The plains by their copious showers are slaked  
The rivers swell, and seaward sweep  
Their turbid torrents broad and deep  
The peasant views with deep delight,  
And thankful heart the auspicious sight.  
His leafless fields so sere and sad,  
Will soon with waving crops be glad;  
And mother Earth, now brown and bare,  
A robe of brilliant green will wear.



In a later version of the story, Vritra was created by Tvashtri to get revenge for Indra's murder of his son, Trisiras, a pious Brahmin whose increase of power worried Indra. Vritra won the battle and swallowed Indra, but the other gods forced him to vomit Indra out. The battle continued and Indra fled. Vishnu and the rishis broke a truce, and Indra swore he would not attack Vritra with anything made of metal, wood or stone, nor anything that was dry or wet, or during the day or the night. Indra used the foam from the waves of the ocean to kill him at twilight.

In yet another version, recounted in the Mahabharata, Vritra was a Brahmin who got hold of supernatural powers, went rogue and became a danger to the gods. Indra had to intervene, and slew him after a hard fight. A horrible goddess named Brāhmanahatya (personified sin of brahmin murder) came from the dead corpse of Vritra and pursued Indra, who hid inside a lotus flower. Indra went to Brahma and begged forgiveness for having killed a Brahmin. "Vajrayudha" which Indra possessed is believed to be prepared from backbone of a sage Dadhichi to kill Asuras.

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 SWARG.

He is now shown having great weakness and big faults. He is shown even to have a lascivious character; indulging in sexual wrongs. He tried to seduce the pious wife of sage GAUTAMA, named AHILYA. This enraged the sage, who cursed him to have a thousand wounds resembling female organ on his whole body. When he repented and prayed, these thousand wound marks were changed into thousand eyes; hence Indra is also called SAHASRA CHAKSHU (the thousand eyed). In later versions of the above story of his battle against Vritra, he is portrayed as vengeful and cowardly, and needs the help of Shiva and Vishnu to slay the dragon. In the Mahabharata, a terrible female goddess called only Brahminicide who rose up out of the dead Vritra, who was a Brahman in that version of the story, pursues Indra. She relentlessly chased him and overtook him in his chariot and clung to him so that he could not escape; he hid inside a lotus blossom, but he still could not dislodge her. Finally, he went before Brahma and acknowledged his crime, for the killing of a Brahman was considered a terrible sin, and Brahma agreed to help him become free. The king of the gods had to perform penance to atone for his transgression. Indra also suffered such indignities as having his elephant's head cut off by Shiva to be given to Shiva's son Ganesha. In the Ramayana comes the story that Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka, attacked heaven and fought against Indra. Indra was badly defeated by Ravana's son, named MEGHNAD, who since then was called INDRAJEET. As Meghnad took Indra captive, other gods under the leadership of Brahma had to purchase Indra's freedom by bestowing on the demon the blessing of an immortal life. He is very much afraid to lose his throne of heaven and regularly sends beautiful female singing and dancing girls to disturb the penances of the holy men, whom Indra thinks may dethrone him. In the life of god Krishna, he





presents himself as one whom the incarnated god teaches a great lesson. Again when Krishna goes to visit Swarg, he wants to carry the divine Parijata tree. Indra opposes it and fights. In the battle too Krishna defeats him and the tree is carried off. Indra is actually a position, which the aspirant god attains if his divine conduct is beyond any blemish according to the mythological details even a moral being or a man could get it, like king Nahush got once. But he fell from grace when he tried to lay hands on Indra's previous wife. Hence whoever becomes Indra has to guard his position by his good conduct. Though Indra is not the object of direct worship in temples, he is constantly appearing in all tales of religious scriptures as the king of gods

### Vajra his weapon

According to legend, Indra's thunderbolt was fashioned from the bones of the great Rishi Dadhichi, who was decapitated by Indra in sacrifice. Dadhichi's 'indestructible' skull-bones gave Indra the most powerful of weapons. By its energy he slew his innumerable enemies the demons. In mythological descriptions, Indra's thunderbolt or vajra is shaped either like a circular discus with a hole at its center, or in the form of a cross with transverse bladed bars. The Rigveda, the most ancient text in the world, identifies the vajra as a notched metal club with a thousand prongs. What is significant is that all these descriptions identify the vajra as having open prongs, unlike the Buddhist one, which has closed prongs. According to a Buddhist legend, Shakyamuni took the vajra weapon from Indra and forced its wrathful open prongs together, thus forming a peaceful Buddhist scepter with closed prongs. The Buddhist vajra hence absorbed the unbreakable and indestructible power of the thunderbolt.

This is Indra and his description in short. Also a few stories to help us know Indra and his changing character through the Veda's which help us understand him better and gives us an idea of his origin and lifestyle.



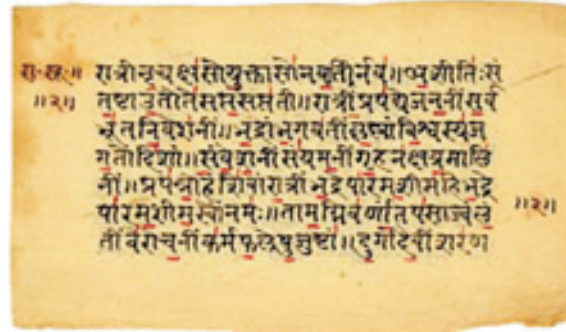
## The process

This was an overview of Indra's journey, his property, his weapons, his Vahan. As we can see numerous iconography of Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Ram, and just by looking at them we can state the character and recognize them. But Indras character / icon is not so visible through hindu iconography. This was a strong point to start off. We hardly have visual icons of Indra though he was worshiped the most in vedas. His decline in Hinduism could be a political move between the two clans those existed then – the Vaishnavas and the Shaivas. The trinity was formed later in Hinduism which declined Indras power. Thus Indra was portrayed more and more as a looser and a weak person who was fond of women and used to cheat them. Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu has defeated indra so many times in mahabharat just to reduce his importance. You can conclude that these could be the political moves between Vedism and Hinduism and to make the hindu trinity – Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, the supreme most power. Thus Indra Puja was not continued and so we donot see any Indra temple anywhere.

The most favorite Vedic deity is no more worshipped. The vedas were written in the 2nd millennium BC. Before they were written down, the Vedic tribes used to recite them, biheart them. The tradition might have existed several centuries before. The vedas are the main scriptural texts of Hinduism, also known as the Sanatana Dharma, and are a large corpus of texts originating in Ancient India. The Vedas, regarded as śruti “that which is heard”, form part of an oral tradition in the form of an ancient teacher-disciple tradition. As per Hindu tradition the Vedas were 'revealed' to the Rishis referred to in the texts, not composed or written by them.

[1] Even though many historians have tried to affix dates to the Vedas there is as yet no common consensus as there is for the scriptures of other religions. The Vedas are arguably the oldest surviving texts in the world. The Vedanta and Mimamsa schools of Hindu philosophy assert that the Vedas are *apauruṣeya* ("unauthored"), that is, they have neither human nor divine origin, and are eternal in nature.

[2] As per Hindu tradition, the sage Vedavyasa



divided the Vedas into Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda and Atharva-Veda at the beginning of the Kali Yuga.

The Rig-Veda ("Veda of verses"; from rig, or before sonants rig, "laudatory stanza") is the oldest and most important of these collections. In its present form it contains 1028 hymns (including eleven supplementary ones in the eighth book), arranged in ten mandalas (cycles), or books, which vary in extent, only the first and tenth being approximately equal. The poems themselves are of different authorship and date from widely different periods. The actual date of these ancient scriptures is a nebulous topic. Yet, the description of an extremely cold climate leads some to believe that the Vedas are close to 20,000 years old, but there are some modern scholars who think that the number is exaggerated and should be about 5000. No matter what the age, it is the belief by many these texts were and are the oldest in the world. They express philosophies, realities and truths about life. The texts themselves show that the collection is the result of the work of generations of poets, extending over many centuries. Books II to VII inclusive are each the work of a single poet, or rishi, and his descendants; hence they are aptly called "family books". Book III is attributed to the family of Vishvamitra, IV to that of Vamadeva, V to that of Vasishtha. The hymns in books I and X are all composed by different families. The ninth consists exclusively of hymns addressed to Soma, the deified plant, the juice of which was used for the Soma sacrifice. Books II to VII are the oldest, and book X the most recent, in point of origin.

The translations and access to these books was at Bhandarkar Institute of Oriental Research, Pune. Not many were available at IIT and IDC libraries. Before visiting BORI, I had paid a visit to Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. As the knowledge from vedas and other myths is not universally known, I had to find people who knew Vedas and archeology.



As the reference books I needed were not available so easily, the guranteed place where I could have found it was BORI of Pune. The place where you will find all the books on Vedas and almost all the topics of Indian mythology, yoga, literature, sanskrit, Vedic Mathematics, various histories, mysteries, dictionaries of all kinds, etc..

I referred to books like

Elements of Hindu Iconography	T.A. Gopinathan Rao
Rigvedic Aesthetics	P.S. Shantri
Swarga	Buddhadev V.
Rigvedic Deities and their Iconic Forms	Jyotsana Chawala
Heart of Rigved	Murli Gopalacharya
Indra and other Vedic Gods	U Chakraborty
Vedic Mythology	A. A. Macdonell
Vedic Reader for students	A. A. Macdonell
Vedic Vritra	Ajoy Kumar

Which proved to be platform for my research and After the extensive research, I could organize the events in a manner, according to the chronology. I have made a timeline, from the evolution of man to the Indra in Hinduism. Since indra remains the central character and is described very well in RV, my conclusions are based on it.





### A small essay based on my observations

I tried to know 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 worshipers 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 prosperous 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 Atmapujaks 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 factors kept them alive and healthy. It was all magical and mystical.

Thus, emerged an idea of supreme protector, a force which maintains all these factors, governs them and controls the forces of nature. It was perhaps an outcome from their personal experiences. As you can judge from RV, the climatic conditions were very harsh, rains, thunders, are being mentioned now and then. The physical conditions were also somewhat similar. There used to be wars between tribes, to obtain more and more land for agriculture, more herds of cows and domestic animals which provided food, meat and milk for their growing civilization. These were the reasons why wars were fought and still the pictures have not changed, just the technology has. The tribe had a supreme protector. He protected the clan, their small identity and increase it. He protected them from the other invaders as the conditions were



war like. Naturally the people developed a warrior nature. This gave birth to an idea of supremeness, ultimate warrior, unique, indestructible qualities in that human.

Scholars do say that this hero was Indra. They also claim that he was responsible for the devastation of the Indus Valley Civilization!! But according to RV, Indra is a character which has all these qualities. Indra is an outcome of the external life of Vedic Indians. It symbolizes the struggle of Vedic Indians, the Aryans. His birth in RV was so magical that he protected the gods the moment he was born.

“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.”

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

His greatness is worshipped all over RV.

The symbolism behind the first hymn: Indra is referred as the thunder god, bearing a Vajra, his weapon (thunder). The symbology 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 droughts 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. So we humans should bear such qualities so that the world will fear and respect you for your deeds. The shlokas were written to make you self-sufficient and strong and thus were recited by every individual in those times.

Thus he naturally became the king of gods and a supreme warrior. The war he fought with was the landmark in his career, One of the greatest deeds performed by Indra is to release the waters held captive by the demons. There are a few legends connected with this theme. At times, the clouds are imagined as cows, which have been trapped in a cave by the demons. Indra rescues the cows after waging a war against the demons, signified by the thunder and lightning. The cows show their gratitude in loud bellowing cries, which mark the beginning of the rains.

According to the myth, the earth is scorched and dry because the rain clouds have been imprisoned by the demon of drought known as Vritra or Sushna. On hearing the pleas of the people Indra descends from his abode in the sky and is offered Soma, an intoxicating drink which is a favourite of Indra. Pleased with his reception, Indra asks the people how he can be of help. Hearing of their plight, he decides to fight the demons and rescue the rains. A graphic description of the battle details the commencement of the rainy season. At last the conflict is over, the rains descend and the earth is made fruitful.

In the vedas, we can see the trinity of Indra, Varun and Agni. Whereas the trinity in hindu literature is Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. As the Hinduism grew, the importance of Indra reduced. As you can see, the role of Indra in hindu mythological stories is very small. He remains as a minor deity. He is a dikhpal, the one who looks after the east direction. He is portrayed as a cheat and a few events show that he has changed from the great warrior to a very materialistic deity(as portrayed in modern hindu hymns)





## The myth of Aryan Invasion Theory

There has been a misconception of the Aryan invasion theory. Saying, “the Aryans invaded the Indus valley Civilization. The theory was proposed by the English men on no basis, on no grounds without any solid proof. The theory was thus chucked out a few years ago and a new theory is proposed. In closing, it is important to examine the social and political implications of the Aryan invasion idea:

First, it served to divide India into a northern Aryan and southern Dravidian culture which were made hostile to each other. This kept the Hindus divided and is still a source of social tension.

Second, it gave the British an excuse in their conquest of India. They could claim to be doing only what the Aryan ancestors of the Hindus had previously done millennia ago.

Third, it served to make Vedic culture later than and possibly derived from Middle Eastern cultures. With the proximity and relationship of the latter with the Bible and Christianity, this kept the Hindu religion as a sidelight to the development of religion and civilization to the West.

Fourth, it allowed the sciences of India to be given a Greek basis, as any Vedic basis was largely disqualified by the primitive nature of the Vedic culture.

Over which swami Vivekanand commented:

*"Our archaeologists' dreams of India being full of dark-eyed aborigines, and the bright Aryans came from - the Lord knows where. According to some, they came from Central Tibet; others will have it that they came from Central Asia. There are patriotic Englishmen who think that the Aryans were all red-haired. Others, according to their idea, think that they were all black haired. If the writer happens to be a black haired man, the Aryans were all black haired. Of late, there was an attempt made to prove that the Aryans lived on the Swiss lake. I should not be sorry if they had been all drowned there, theory and all. Some say now that they lived at North Pole.*

*Lord bless the Aryans and their habitations! As for the truth of these theories, there is not one word in our scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryans came from anywhere outside of India, and in ancient India was included Afghanistan. There it ends."*

"And the theory that the Shudra castes were all non-Aryans and they were a multitude is equally illogical and irrational. It could not have been possible in those days that a few Aryans settled and lived there with a hundred thousand slaves at their command. The slaves would have eaten them up, made Chutney of them in five minutes. The only explanation is to be found in the Mahabharatha, which says that in the beginning of the Satya Yuga there was only one caste, the Brahmins, and then by differences of occupations they went on dividing themselves in to different castes, and that is the only true and rational explanation that has been given. And in the coming Satya Yuga all other castes will have to go back to the same condition"(From The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda)

Many Indian scholars like Aurobondo, Lokmanya Tilak reacted to the AIT. Now it is defined as the Aryan Migration theory.

### Indo-Aryan migration

Refers to the theory that speakers of Indo-Aryan languages migrated into the Indian subcontinent during the 2nd millennium BCE, as opposed to being autochthonous to the region.

Based on linguistic, archaeological and cultural evidence, most scholars have argued that Indo-Aryan speakers migrated to northern India following the breakup of Proto-Indo-Iranian and the subsequent Indo-Iranian expansion out of Central Asia (Mallory 1989) These scholars argue that, in India, the Indo-Aryans interacted with the remnants of the Indus Valley civilization, a process that gave rise to Vedic civilization.

Archaeological data indicates that there was a shift



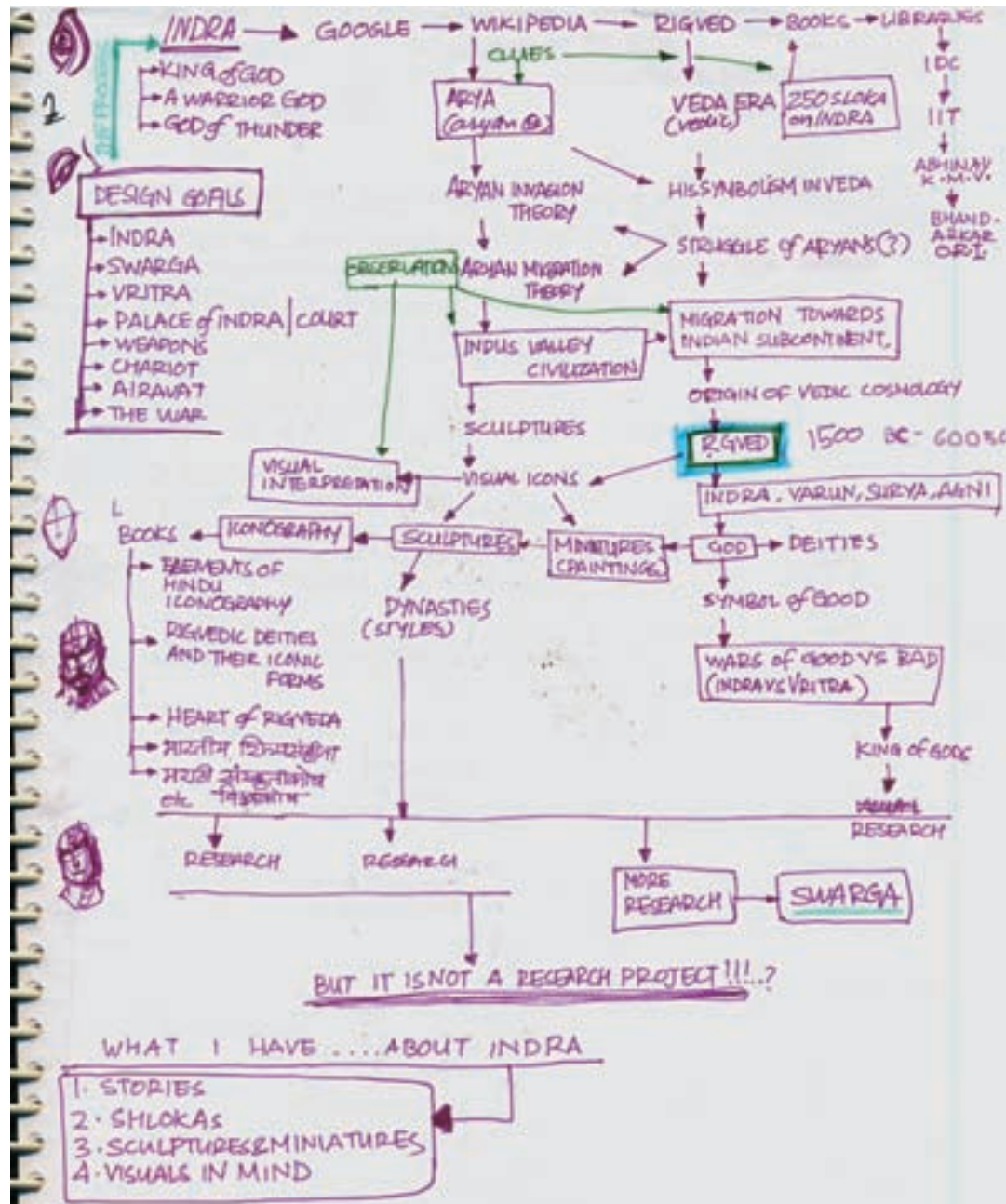


of settlements from the Indus Valley region to the east and south during the later 2nd millennium BCE, but is inconclusive with regard to a preceding immigration into India.

The linguistic facts of the situation are little disputed by the relevant scholars. However, linguistic data alone cannot determine whether this migration was peaceful or invasive. Different linguists have argued for either, or for a combination of both, on extra-linguistic grounds.

The research was getting complicated as the ideologies were revealing. Simultaneously, I was collecting visual iconographic depiction of Indra. There weren't many, just a few sculptures. They have an impression of clothing according to the era they live in. The drapery, the jewelry changes accordingly. So does the vajra, the thunderbolt. The era when RV was written and the era when he has been depicted have a huge timeline in between. the clothes we wear today are very different than the clothes of 16th century. So the iconography of all the gods and goddesses are done according to the current fashion. For me, the closest references for the clothes of Indra and related people were from the sculptures and seals found at Indus Valley sites, Ajanta cave paintings, the jewelry and ornamentations could be very similar to that era.

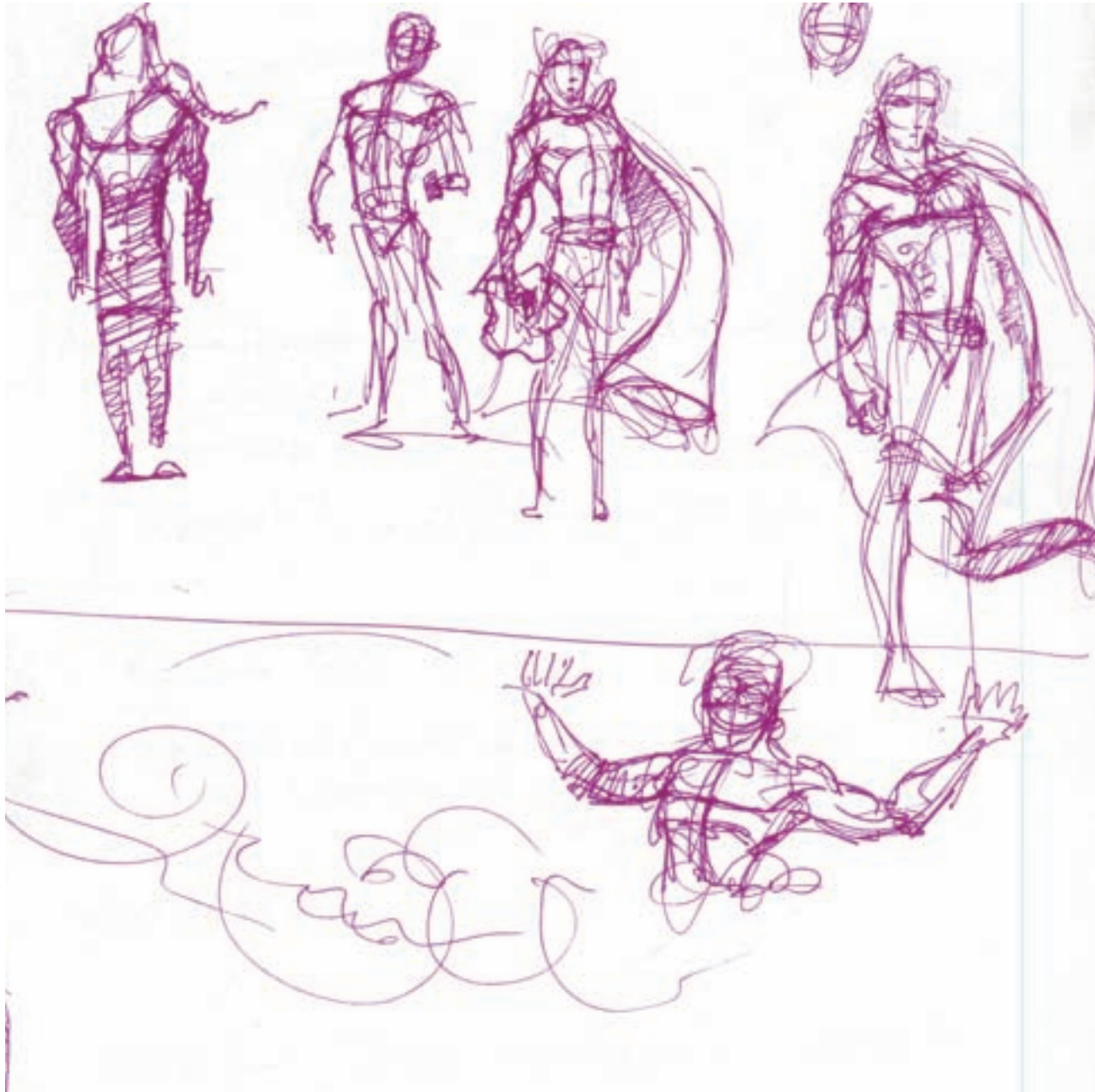




## observations

This extensive theoretical research provided as a strong foundation for my project. I wanted to know and internalize the complete idea of Indra before starting the actual designing of the character and the remaining elements.

- The process of expressing the icons:  
By the time I also understood the process in which the great sculptors of our tradition used to sculpt the icons. I tried to follow a similar system. After understanding the shlokas of particular deities, which were written as the description of the deities, the sculptor needed to meditate over the idea and the description from the shlokas. After and extensive meditation, the visions the sculptor saw, were expressed on to the stones or the given surface. The reason behind the deities look so magical and pleasant is this.
- The essence of depiction and the mood of the depicted deity is not just on the face but the overall body language expresses the mind set, his expressions, his anticipation. All this has been evolved throughout the ages.
- India has developed a very well developed system of iconography and architecture The Talamana system.
- the time travel from 3000 BC to the modern Hinduism
- the various opportunities I can explore
- Availability of Indra visual icons was very less in comparison with other deities. A good scope for me to create and identity as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma has one.
- The overall story has a strong narrative structure and my explorations can form a



- viii. strong visual structure.
- ix. Recreation of an prehistoric – historic era
- x. Indra is fairly known deity for his mis behaves than his deeds.
- x. Clearance of myths of Aryan Invasion Theory
- xi. Vedas a very good scope for explorations in narrative media and story telling  
A rich treasure of mythological and mystical literature which Hinduism has, has been explored tremendously by the philosophers but the essence of its aesthetics as well as the metaphorical elements has not been depicted today the way they were expressed in past.
- xii. such a detailed description of the character splits your mind into the authenticity of his existence.
- xii. It might take ages just to visualize all the mythology in a the way it is written

#### xiii. The Design Goals:

- a. the Indra, the icon, his various forms in the time travel.
- b. The related characters- Vritra, Agni, Varuna.
- c. The Swarga in Hinduism
- d. The weapon Vajra in time travel
- e. The aairavat
- f. The ratha- car







## The explorations

I started the artwork after knowing the ideas. The temptation of not sketching the character out was difficult, but controlled my senses. In between we happened to go to Ajanta Caves, the masterpiece of ancient Indians. The monument of archeology, a Buddhist cave, been carved since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC til the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Some say till the 6<sup>th</sup> century too. There, I sketched the poses and the clothes of the character, the famous Padmapani and Vajrapani paintings from the caves. The study helped me understand the folds and the patterns of the jewelry, the draping style, the mukutas, colors of the precious gems available in that time.

I could visualize the Indra in those clothes. There I scribbled the first Indra.

### Initial explorations:

They mainly focused on anatomical description and the figure dynamic.





Initial explorations mainly focused on anatomical description and the figure dynamic.



## The characteristics of Indras character:

### The pre Vedic times:

- A tribal leader.
- A strong body, that develops in the the extreme regions of the world
- The drapery cloth will be minium
- The ornaments will be more, like those found on
- The seals of Indus Valley Civilization
- The ornaments will not be very decorative but will crude and colorful.
- His weapon will too be crude like his ornaments. compared to the other tribe members, he will be decorated more and will have a strong and impression, which assures him being a leader and him being Indra.
- Here, he is more like a fiction character
- The face will be like a general face, decorated a little.

### In The Vedic Times

- A few features will be remaining same. like his body structure.
- His anatomical characters are explained in RV but as he is a warrior and a protector, he has a physique like a modern day wrestler, but the muscles were not so well defined. they were there but blunt and bold.
- His hair, beard, his skin, all is explained in RV
- the ornaments will be more decorated
- the cloth will be more and might have patterns
- The weapon will be developed and is based on the hymns from RV.
- the drapery will be evolved a little from pre-vedic times.
- A few features from Ajanta Paintings.
- Ornamental references from Ajanta and IVC.







### The characteristics of Vritras character:

#### The pre Vedic times:

- the physical structure will be a very sleek, quarky looking man with evil look on the face.
- the rib bones which are prominently visible on his chest talk about his diet and his living.
- his expressions talk for his intelligence and attitude and evilness he possess.
- long hair, least clothes and standing in unnatural pose, a “hat yogi” a strong yogi.
- he carries a snake a sign of evil.
- a treacherous person
- a stick in his hand for protection.

#### The Vedic Times

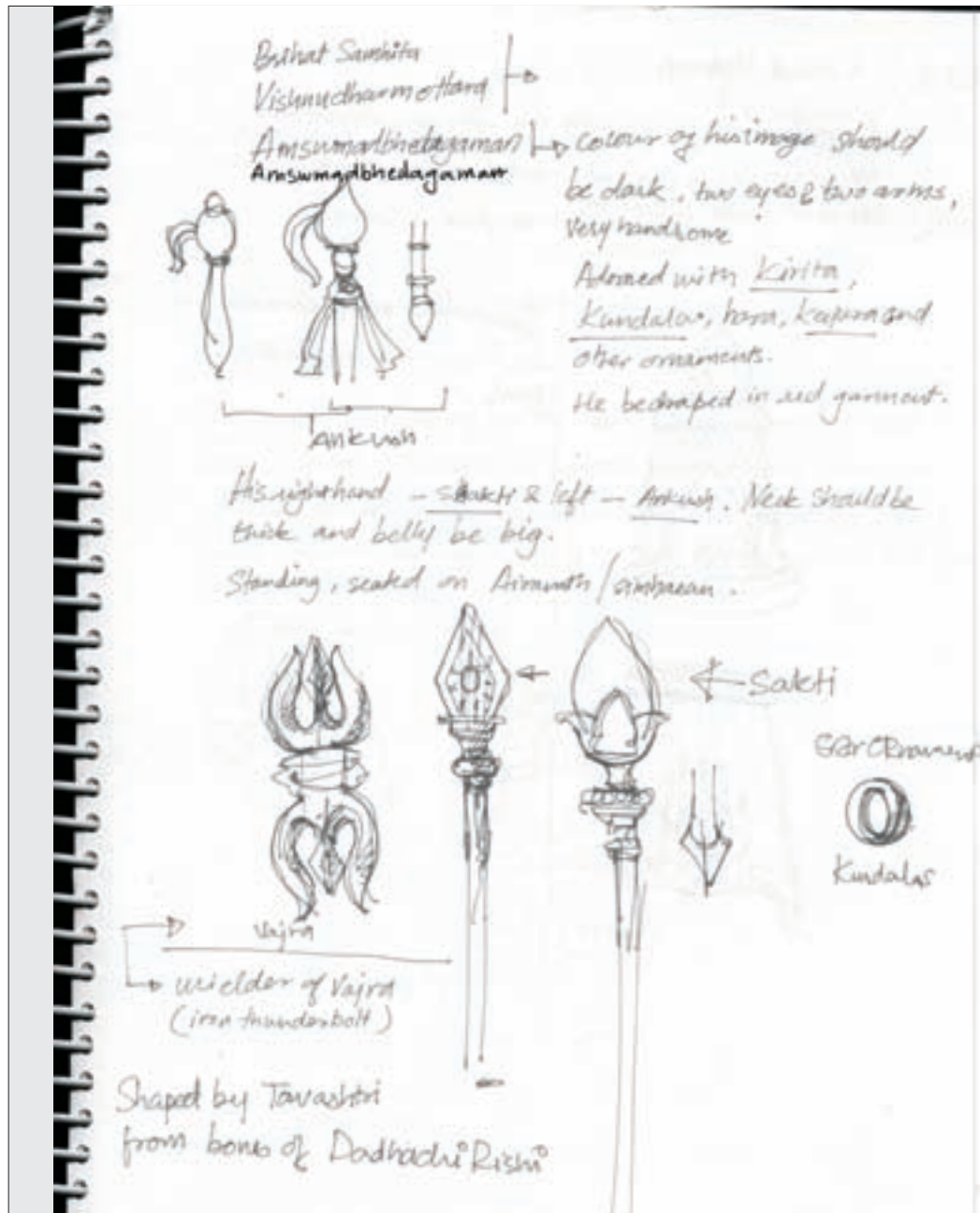
- the physical attributes of Vritra continues so his nature
- the main difference in his character in Vedic times is he can take shape of anything in this universe.
- his abnormality of physique continues.
- a few things may be added as ornaments.











As the project focuses on Indras characterization, I studied the ornaments from sculptures. Their names and Sanskrit terms.

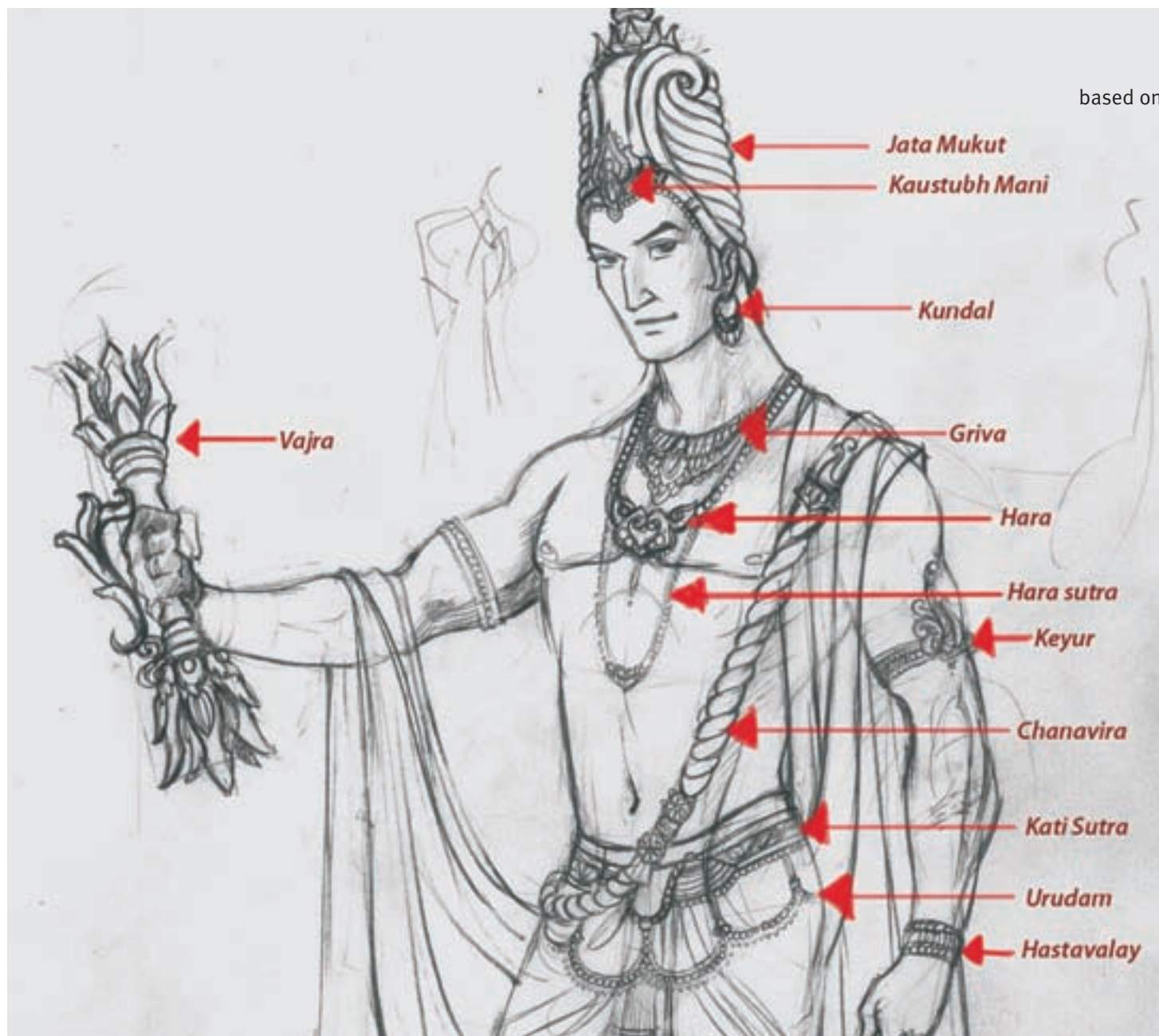
They are as described in the image besides.

these are the weapons as described in various suktas.

the Ankusha,  
 The Sakti,  
 The Vajra

the ornaments like Kundala,  
 Kayura,  
 Mukuts like  
 Kirita Mukutas,  
 Jata Mukuta







The explorations had typical and has western influence

and breaking away from the styles those are seen was a challenge.

### **Study of minatory paintings.**

the flow of characters, the dynamism, the elements of expressions. I saw the way every component makes the image look perfect. the perspective, the colors the clothes.





I followed a simple design process.  
As explained in the observations.

The higher level understanding      the Vision

The lower level understanding      the intellectual  
understanding

The traditional methods have been evolved since the early Vedas. The tradition called the Vishwakarma Tradition. It is still followed by some excellent sthapatis and shlpis. The tradition has been followed since ages. It is said that Vishvakarma was the one who has designed Indra Swarga, and this tradition has been practiced since then. All of my interpretations are an outcome after understanding, thinking and meditating on the ideas.

There was no barrier of medium. I tried to explore as much as I could. Textured papers, colors, dry pastels, watercolors, inks, etc. for th interpretations.





### The character in the time line:

The balance of western or the popular comic book style and the miniature paintings gave a different look to the characters. They looked alive and Indian. The factor which was missing in them was the element of pride and honor. A character is designed well when it convinces what he is. Indra still has to reach that level.













## The swarga

### The Swarga experience in unconsciousness

I experienced the swarga in my sleep. it was consciousness that took me in to the unconscious and I could experience it. the experience was really heavenly, and could not be explained in any form of illustrations or words, accept experienced personally. I was walking with Indra, the king himself but I donot remember him much. I remember myself asking him to take me for a walk and show me a few things around. I remember him getting down from the seat he was sitting and we walking along. the place was magnificent and richness was infinite. the pillars were huge. golden and pink. white marble or may be pearls were stuck on the pillars which were glowing. The windows were having huge transparent curtains and the wind was making them swing and dance. Apsaras and gandharvas were roaming here and there, some bearing instruments I had never seen and some with containers. Air, wind, music all was merry! his throne was gold, the floor was reflective, colourful, changing colours. As we walked behind his throne, I saw clouds making place. these beautiful Apsaras were sitting with containers and pots in their hands, singing, gossiping and very inviting for mischievous ideas! The containers which they had were magical. beautiful coloured fluffy clouds were coming out from those magical containers. I couldn't believe my eyes for such a magical experience. I wished it lasted for ever. I tried to interpret it though not very successful in it.







## final product

### A book

I decided that the final product should be a compilation of all the journey through the project. The numerous illustrations and explorative sketches I have done to visualise the Indra and his dynasty could be best compiled in form of a book. A book which will talk about the unforgotten hero - Indra.

The book includes a few Sanskrit shlokas which explain Indra's character and his greatness.

The book focuses mainly on Indra's character, designing from scratch till the final one, and my personal take on the subject. I have tried to internalize the idea and have taken to a level of respect in my own surroundings.

The book is named Indrasmruti meaning Remembering Indra - the forgotten hero.

The book points towards the origin of the super power Atma in its start and slowly takes you through the journey of Indra's origin. It talks how the idea of Indra evolved and its travel through various ages of human development.



## **Inferences**

- I. Critical analysis of the character helped designing the character in its various stages
- ii. The same study gave me a direction to move ahead in the project
- iii. The iconography of Indra was a huge responsibility as the audience needs to be convinced that he is Indra
- iv. The study decided the style of representation.
- v. The final product will be in a form of a book about Indra
- vi. The styles used to illustrate the characters have varied intentionally according to the purpose of it.

## The Application

The explorations and the illustrations and the character designs, the visualization of Swarga, the Vritra, all these elements are designed or created as a part of production design.

**The application of these elements is wide.**

It can be used for graphic novel.

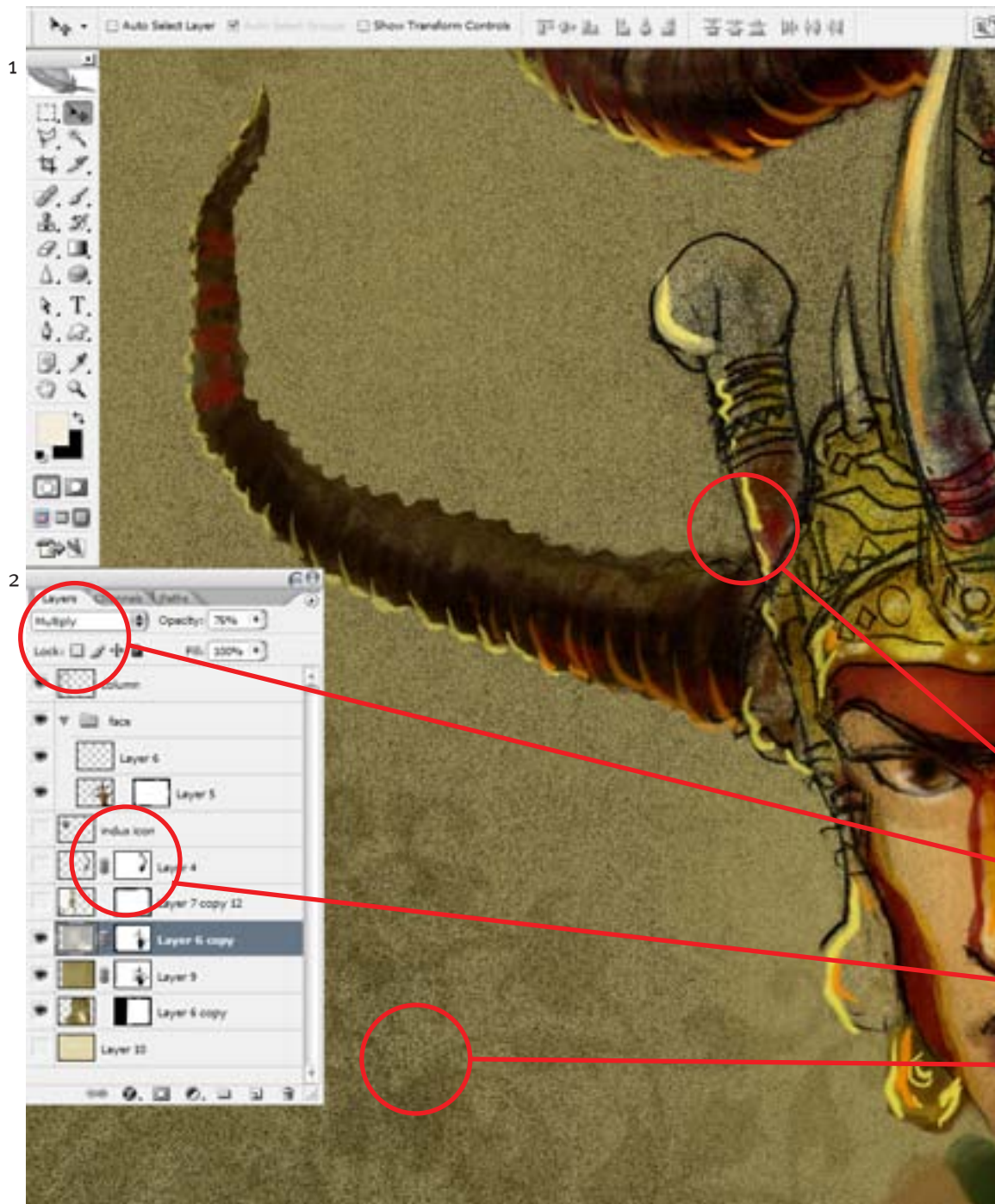
The artwork can be made into actual set, the costume of the character can be designed and created. A beautiful period film can be shot.

A more stylization of the character can make use in an animation film. With a creative display of the artwork, an interactive exhibition can be positioned.

The artwork can be created on a 3D software and can draft a strategy game about wining Swarga or defeating Indra.

A reference book of Indra.





## Rendering an illustration in digital media

Adobe Photoshop CS2

A sketch / illustration/ line artwork should be scanned at 300 dpi and should be imported to Photoshop.

Our intentions shape the process of digital rendering of any illustration because every artwork demands variety of goals.

I will be explaining the process of digital rendering based on one of the artworks of Indrasmriti. I have considered that the reader is already aware with the interface of ps and will be providing information about how to go across the standard usages.

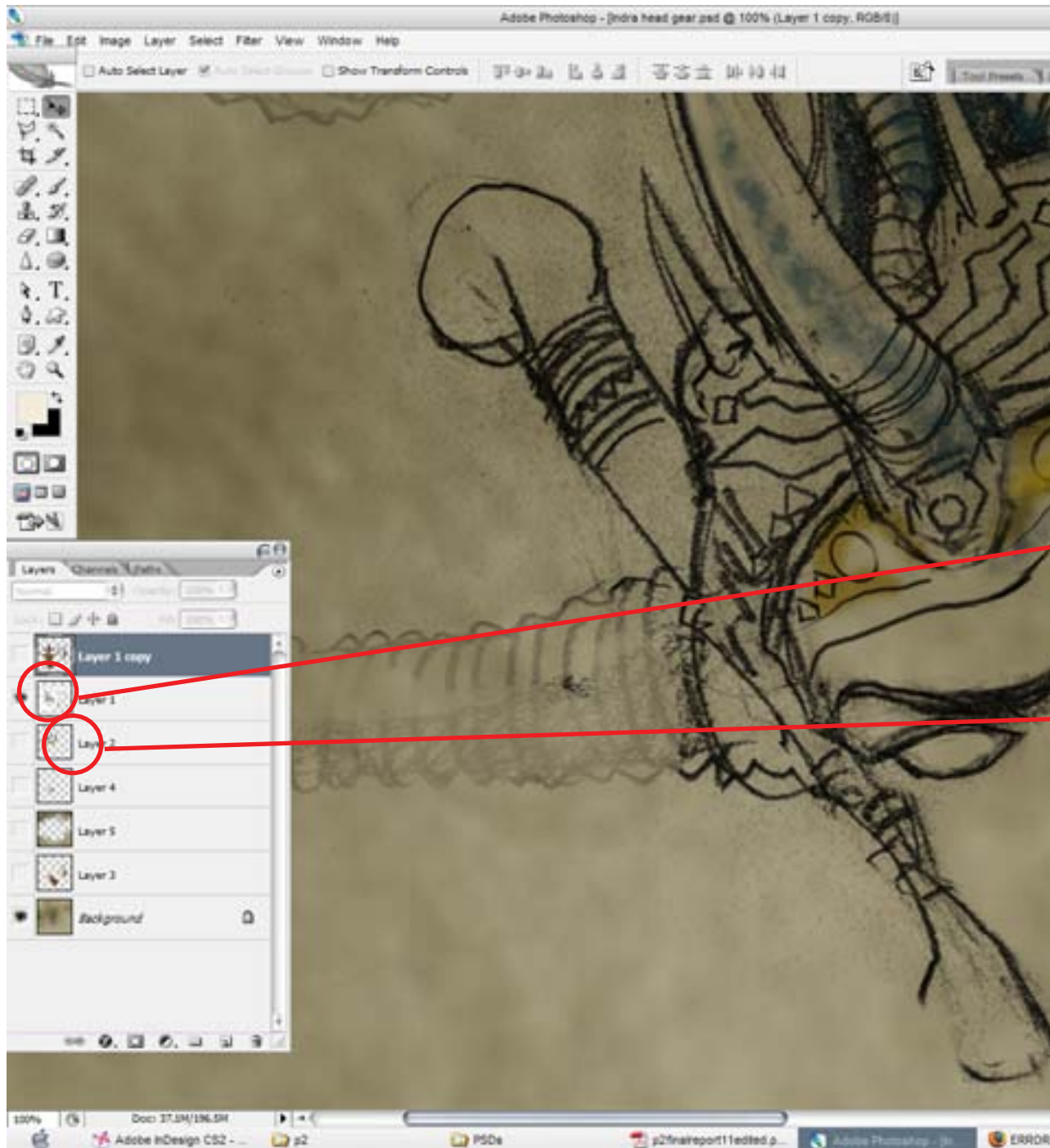
## Interface

The layer window.

- Use a different layer for various applications.

For example,

- The outline of the artwork is on topmost layer and the colour portions remain on the layer below the first. This keeps them flexible for editing.
- The high lights in this illustration have been kept on a layer above the outline so that they look like a highlight, which adds a separate dimension to the image.
- Experiment with the layer properties like multiply, darken, soft light, saturation, which usually show unexpected results but gives you an idea of what else can happen by using these options of Ps
- Do not use eraser tool if you have to erase something. Use the masking option where you just mask the unwanted elements, but if you think you need them back, you can always unmask them.
- Use filters smartly keeping the desired result at the end. Here, Grains filter is used, and later on the layer was "multiplied" on the background colour, then both the layers were merged

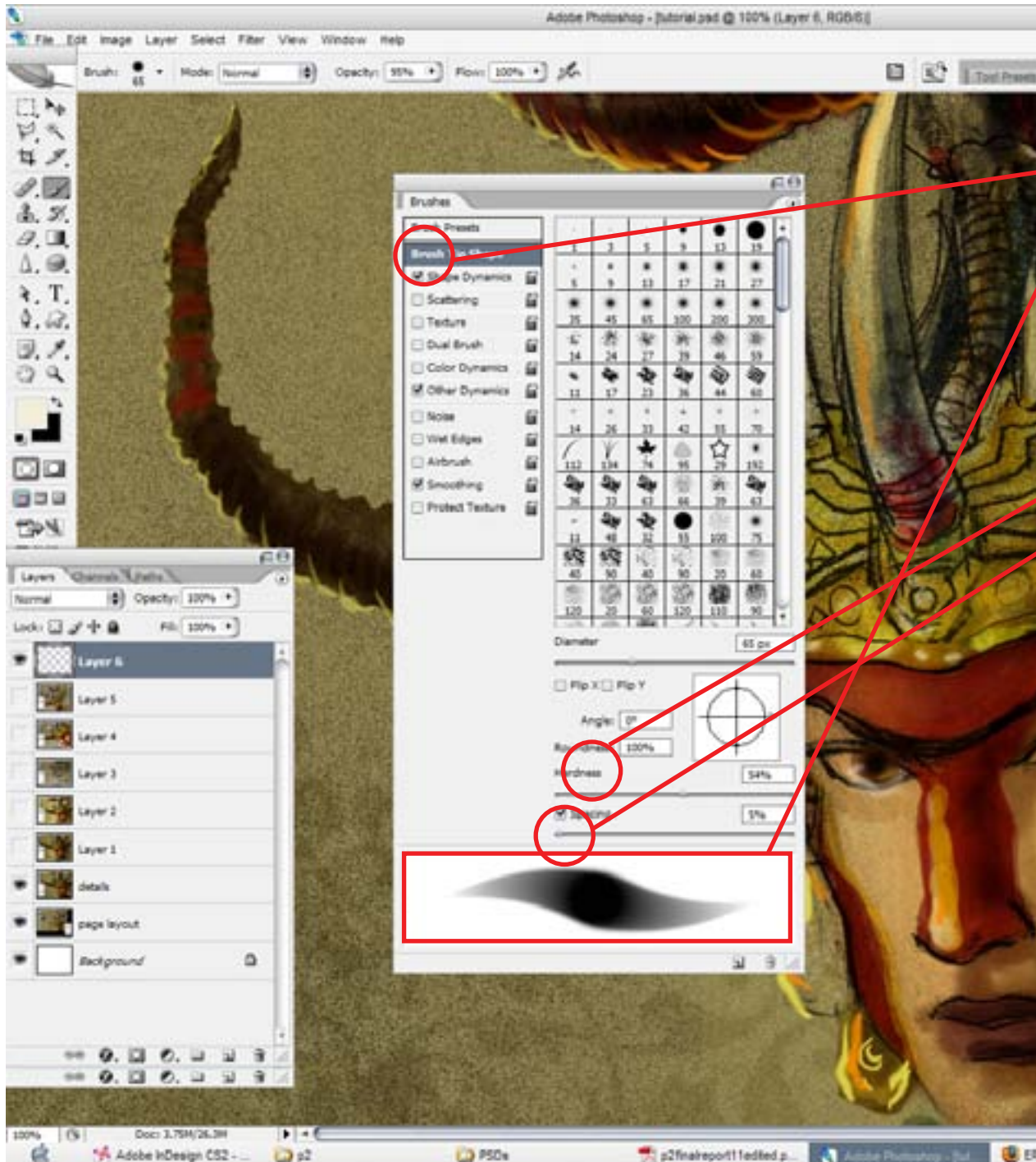


- Layer of line artwork
- Add a simple background colour to set it like a middle tone of skin, atmosphere, or just as a colour for a reference point.
- Multiply the line art layer, so the background becomes transparent, in case of white background and all that remains is the black - grey outline. this layer acts like a transparent layer when multiplied.
- take another layer below and start colouring.





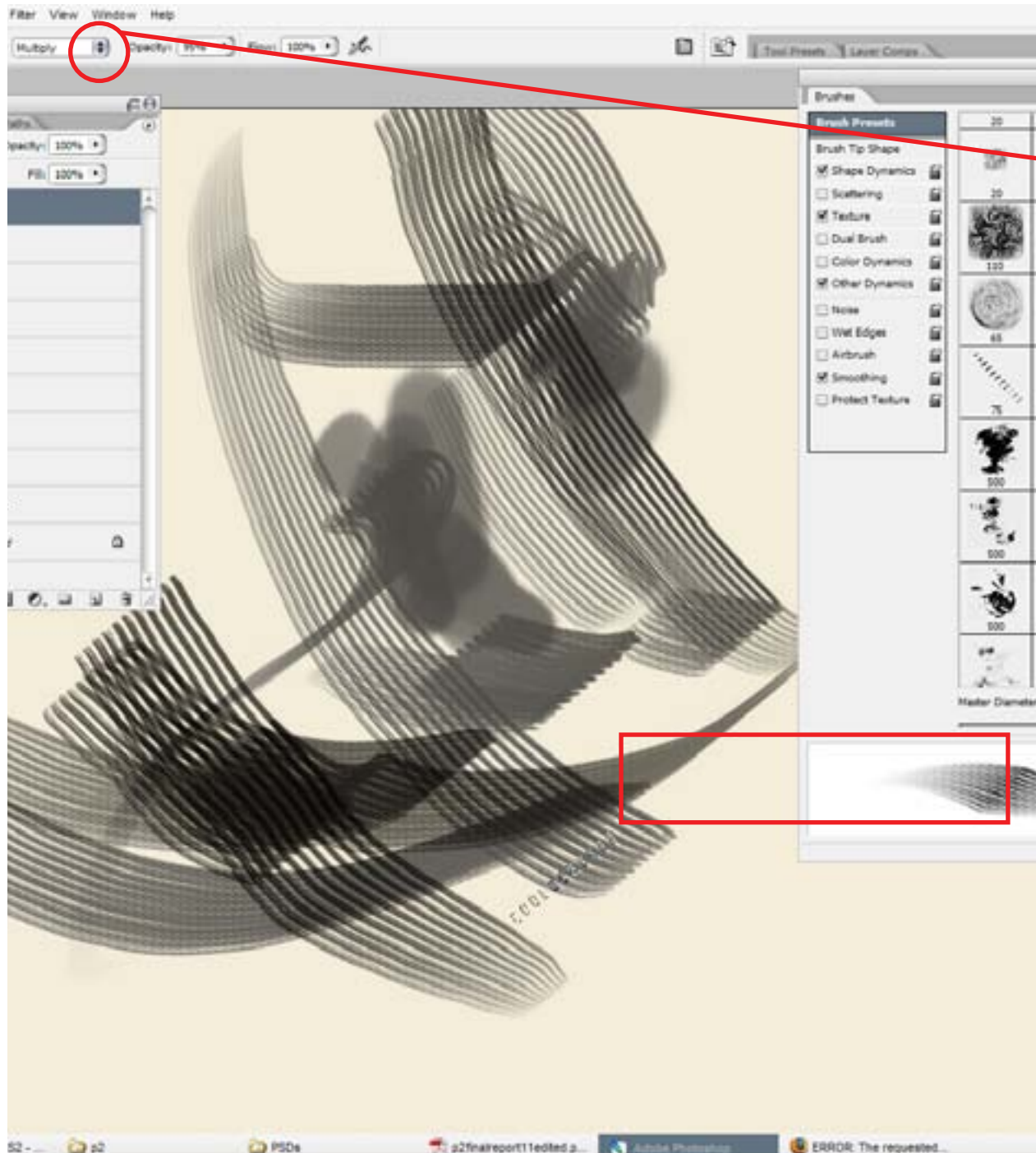
- This is how it looks after colouring
- Correct the levels, brightness contrast, hues and saturation if you think your colour needs to be fixed. go to image→adjustments → for that.



## Understanding the brush tool in Ps.

- Photoshop has tremendous of options of brushes and you get a variety of free brushes on the internet.
- The settings and options for that are in the brush tab (shortcut F5) and you can make custom brushes, edit the available ones, install new ones.
- while using a stylus (pen tablet) Ps provides options such as a pressure sensitive brush, which controls the density of colour depending upon the pressure of stylus pen.
- Try various options by changing the values from the brush tab
- This exercise is more of exploration like you do with a 6B pencil where you understand the language of the pressure, angle flow, stroke, etc of that medium.
- Hardness controls the softness and the crisp outline of a brush, but is inactive for some brushes.
- Decrease - increase the spacing, you get a dotted result
- Never forget to experiment with dual brush, you can use a combination of 2 brushes, they overlay each other in a funny way.





### Understanding the brush tool in Ps.

- We can change the properties of brushes like the properties of layers.
- This property of brushes is very useful for experimental results
- Go ahead and experiment in Ps

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