

Hinduism and animals

Because Hinduism is a term that includes many different although related religious ideas, there is no clear single Hindu view on the right way to treat animals, so what follows are generalisations to which there are exceptions.

The doctrine of ahimsa leads Hindus to treat animals well:



Sacred cows are allowed to wander wherever they like, even through busy traffic

- Most Hindus are vegetarian
 - No Hindu will eat beef
- Butchery and related jobs are restricted to people of low caste
- Most Hindus believe that non-human animals are inferior to human beings
- Cows are sacred to Hindus
- Some Hindu temples keep sacred animals
- Some Hindu gods have animal characteristics
 - Ganesh has the head of an elephant
 - Hanuman takes the form of a monkey

Animal sacrifice

Hinduism permits animal sacrifice.

Cows

The cow is greatly revered by Hindus and is regarded as sacred. Killing cows is banned in India and no Hindu would eat any beef product.