

HW275

GRAEME JOHN SCOTT LEEMING

[REDACTED]

ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL,
820 VICTORIA AVENUE,
VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA.

2796 TUDOR AVENUE,
VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

CLASS C

4

660 WORDS

This is Graeme's own work.

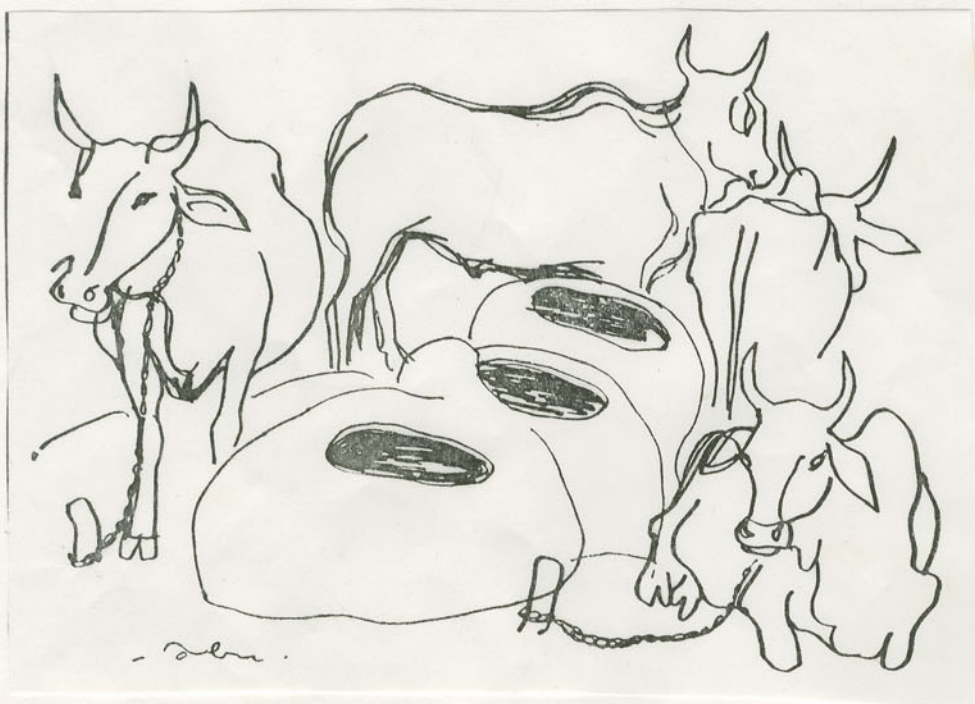
J.R. Penabaz

(Principal)

NUMBER HW 275	READ 1	READ 2
NAME Graeme Leeming	CONTENT 5	CONTENT
COUNTRY Canada.	IMAG 2	IMAG
TOPIC 4	MECH 3	MECH
D Q TOP 201	TOT 10	TOT



Vol. 16,
No. 14



Vol. 16,
No. 16

*Indian and Foreign Review,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, 1979.*

It is summer in India. Under starlight I am nearing the end of tilling the rice paddy fields saturated by the recent monsoon rains. While pulling the plough, I think about my dual purpose in India. As a domesticated zebu bull, I serve man. But because I am a sacred bull and a "symbol of fecundity," Hindus treat me with respect.¹

Suddenly my thoughts are interrupted by the shriek of peacocks announcing dawn. I leave the fields for my Hindu village. All the villagers are happy to see me and pat my humped back and stroke my drooping ears. They share their meager vegetarian meal of curds and dhal with me. The love shown toward all animals and the laws which prohibit the killing of cows and bulls make me feel comfortable around people in my village.

I feel so safe today that I decide to go alone to the city to see everything there is to see.

As I plod along the muddy paths on my way to the city, evaporation clouds envelop me like a cocoon. But, by the

time the sun has reached its zenith, all moisture has been withdrawn and I feel parched. Fortunately I can escape the blistering heat by wallowing with the wild water buffalo in the river Ganges. Chattering monkeys in the banyan and margosa trees along the river bank tease me by swinging down onto my back. I notice that further along, thousands of people have gathered in the river. In a fit of devilment, I run toward them splashing crazily past bathers, women doing their laundry, and pilgrims praying for purification! No one gets angry at me. Then I stop to listen to two fishermen quarreling over possession of a fish. I calmly take command by eating it! The fishermen accept this solution and bow toward me. Still munching on the fish, I climb the ghats which lead away from the river to town.

Even in the city, bulls are treated with respect. When Hindus pass me they touch me and raise that hand to their heads to show they honor me.² I watch a zebu bull with flowers wrapped around his horns and neck leading a procession of cows from a goshala, or animal

shelter. People kneel in the dust and touch their foreheads to the ground because the dust which cattle pass by is holy.³

In the city, bulls are useful to man. Their dung is gathered and dried in the sun for fuel. Bull-fighting zebus provide entertainment; and bullocks pull goods and people in carts.

What is that nauseating smell? It is coming from the tannery! That's where leathers goods are being made from the hides of cattle who have died of natural causes.

Fortunately, the horrible odor is soon erased by the pungent aromas coming from the market place. I inhale the fragrance of flowers and incense, fresh dargjeeling tea and tulsi leaves, ground coffee and spices such as cumin, coriander, cardamom, saffron and garam masala. I wander around taking a mango, okra and chili peppers from the baskets. Kind merchants give me other treats like basmati rice cakes, and carrot laddu. This is a heavenly place!

I am attracted by the sounds of musical instruments. Women with ivory bracelets on their arms and brass water

pots balanced on their heads are performing "The Dance

of the Water Pots."⁴ Snake charmers are playing

melodies on flutes while their hypnotized cobras

sway to the music. I too become enchanted and

swagger into the middle of the street, holding up traffic.

Carts, bicycles, cars and people wait for me to move

on because I have the right of way.

At last I lie down in the shade of a sacred
called *corattha*,

fig tree, I fall asleep and dream about the

experiences I have had today.

My divine sleep is abruptly ended by a

torrential rainfall. It reminds me that I will be

needed to pull the plough tonight. I return to my

blind village.

Bibliography

- Atwood, Mary J., Adventures in Indian Cooking, Bombay, India, Jaico Publishing House, 1975.
- Brown, Joe David, and The Editors of LIFE, Life World Library: India, New York, Time Inc., 1961.
- "Cattle," The Hamlyn Children's Animal World Encyclopedia in Colour, London, The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1980, p. 106.
- Todor's India 1971 ed. by Eugene Todor and William Curtis, New York, David McKay Company, Inc. 1970.
- "India," The Illustrated Library of the World and Its Peoples: India 2, Ceylon, Bhutan, Nepal, The Maldives, New York, Grystone Press, 1970, pp. 217-376.
- Katy, Elizabeth, India in Pictures, Visual Geography Series, New York, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.
- Lodrick, Deryck O., Sacred Cows, Sacred Places: Origins and Survival of Animal Homes in India, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, University of California Press, 1981.
- Thomas, P., "Animism, Serpent and Tree Worship, Ancestor Worship, Etc.," Hindu Religion Customs and Manners, Bombay, India, D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Private Ltd., 1971, pp. 30-32.

Gootnotes

¹ "India," in The Illustrated Library of the World and Its Peoples: India 2, Ceylon, Bhutan, Nepal, The Maldives. New York, Greyton Press, 1970, p. 258.

² Thomas P. "Animism, Serpent and Tree Worship, Ancestor Worship, Etc.," in Hindu Religion Customs and Manners, Bombay, India, D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Private Ltd., 1971, p. 31.

³ Lodrick Deryck O. Sacred Cows, Sacred Places: Origins and Survival of Animal Homes in India, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, University of California Press, 1981, p. 114.

⁴ Op. Cit. "India," p. 247