



Sherlock Holmes Day, celebrated on May 22, pays tribute to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's iconic detective who has captivated readers for over a century. Known for his sharp intellect, keen observation, and logical reasoning, Holmes set the standard for modern detective fiction. From the foggy streets of Victorian London to countless film and television adaptations, his adventures continue to inspire mystery lovers worldwide. The day encourages fans to revisit classic stories, explore new interpretations, and celebrate the enduring legacy of a character who proved that careful observation and deductive thinking can solve even the most puzzling mysteries.

#BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR

When the Mughal Emperor Imprisoned Delhi's Cows

To imprison cows to prevent violence sounds absurd to modern ears. But in 1857 Delhi, it was a rational response to an irrational situation



In 1857, as rebellion tore through north India, Delhi stood on the edge of total collapse. The East India Company was losing control, and mutinous soldiers were flooding the old Mughal capital, and religious tensions simmered dangerously beneath the surface. At the center of this chaos sat an unlikely figure of authority: Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor.



Eighty-two years old, a poet more than a ruler, Zafar commanded little real power. Yet, in one of the most extraordinary and revealing decisions of the uprising, he ordered Delhi's cows to be rounded up and imprisoned.

A City Ready to Ignite

Rumours were spreading rapidly through the city: Muslims, it was said, were preparing to sacrifice cows. In a city where the cow was sacred to Hindus and religious identity had become sharply politicized, such rumours were lethal. One act of violence, or even the belief that one was imminent, could trigger mass bloodshed.

Zafar understood this. Delhi was already stretched beyond breaking point. The rebellion had brought together Hindu and Muslim soldiers against British rule, but that unity was fragile. Religious violence within the city would not only destroy lives; it would shatter the rebellion from within.

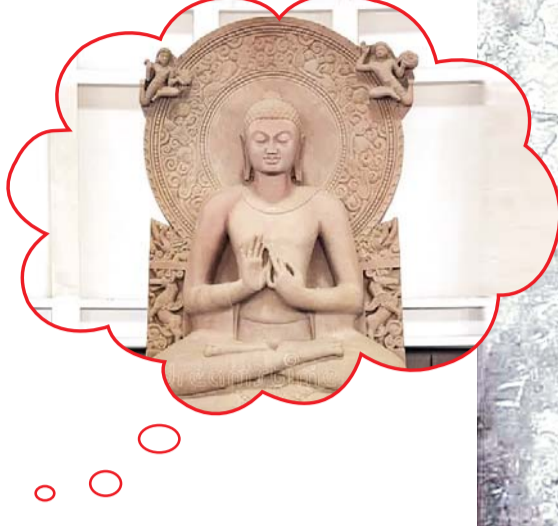
Removing the Spark

Zafar's response was simple, drastic, and deeply symbolic. He ordered Delhi's cows removed from public life altogether. The animals were rounded up and placed under guard, effectively taken out of circulation.

The move was not about livestock management. It was about crowd control, rumour suppression, and religious peacekeeping. If cows could not be accessed, they could not be sacrificed. And if they could not be sacrificed, the rumours lost their power to incite. It was an act of governance born not of strength, but of desperation.



Buddhism Began In China With A Han Emperor's Dream



The Sutra of Forty Two Sayings was in most likelihood written by Kashyapa Matanga to explain the basics of Buddhism wherever he preached. Saunders, who studied the text in detail, said that it was more or less an explanation of Theravada principles. It made him wonder: how well monastic teachings that called for detachment would have been received in a country of "filial piety" like China? "But as if to disarm criticism, the Sutra goes on to suggest a sublimated family life; if the monk meets women, he is to treat the young as sisters or daughters, the old as mothers," Saunders said.



Anjali Sharma
Senior Journalist & Wildlife Enthusiast

No cultural or historic sight in China links the great Indian and Chinese civilisations more than the White Horse Temple Complex in Luoyang in the country's Henan province. In 68 CE, during the reign of Emperor Ming of Han or Mingdi, this temple became the first Buddhist house of worship in China. It was also from here that Buddhism spread further to Vietnam, Japan and Korea.

A reminder of the temple complex's kinship with India is an Indian-style Buddhist temple inaugurated by Indian President Pratibha Patil in 2010. "Historically, it has the unique distinction of symbolising an intermingling of Indian and Chinese cultures," Patil said.

As per a widely believed legend, the temple's construction as well as the arrival of Buddhism in China began with a dream. In this story, Mingdi, the emperor of the Later Han or Eastern Han Dynasty, dreamt that a golden figure flew over his palace, with the sun and moon behind its head. The next

morning, he discussed his dream with his ministers, who suggested it could have been the Buddha.

At that time, it was only the learned men of China who knew of Buddhism, since the message of the Buddha arrived with traders and travellers, while the dominant religion of the country was Confucianism.

"While Gotama was preaching in the Ganges Valley, Confucius and Lao-tse were grafting upon the ancient Chinese stock of Animism, or 'Universism,' their own distinctive teachings," American Buddhist scholar Kenneth Saunders wrote in the University of California, Berkeley's Journal of Religion in 1923. "And while in India and the adjoining countries, the exclusive Theravada Buddhism was being transmuted into the universalist Mahayana, this great parent-stem of Chinese religion was being shaped to receive the new graft."

Saunders believed that Mingdi's dream could not have come out of the blue. "There must have been some basis for the vision in thoughts already in the emperor's mind, and in some Buddhist image or Buddhist teachings already circulating in China," he said. "Indeed, an image is said to have been brought back by an expedition in 121 BC.

After consulting his ministers, Mingdi sent a delegation to India to learn more about Buddhism. Numbering 18, the group set off for India, travelling West and through

#HISTORY

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Mingdi, born Liu Zhang, became emperor of the later Han or Eastern Han Dynasty at the age of 30.

modern-day Xinjiang. For the three years, it was away from Luoyang, the mission interacted widely with laymen and Buddhist monks.

Perilous journey

It is believed that Mingdi's mission convinced two Indian monks to move to China. One of them was Kashyapa Matanga, who hailed from a Brahmin family in Central India and became well versed in the Mahayana sutras, and the other was the learned Dharmaratna.

Saunders believed that the monks were already missionaries in Central Asia and had tried to spread the word of the Buddha to the Yuezhi people, a nomadic community that lived in modern-day Afghanistan and parts of what is now Pakistan.

Travelling to China with Mingdi's delegation, the two monks took with them a white horse that carried a bundle of Buddhist sutras and images of the Buddha. The journey was long and arduous, taking a lot out of the monks, but it was more than made up for by the grand welcome they received in Luoyang.

"Weary with their long journey, they would enjoy the wide prospect over lake and river, and not far away

were mountains dear to the Buddhist heart," Saunders said. "In the year 67 CE, they settled in the capital, and the one work assigned to them, which has come down to us, was a handbook of moral teaching, which could give no great alarm either to Confucianists or to Taoists, and which might be claimed equally well by Theravada and by Mahayana Buddhists," Saunders said.

"In the Royal Library, they worked," Saunders said, "and their first apologetic is still an honoured classic, a proof of the tact and skill with which they approached the Chinese mind. An early record tells us that they concealed their deep learning and did not translate many books, if they did nothing but give the Chinese this Sutra of Forty Two Sayings, their mission was amply justified."

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country of "filial piety" like China? "But as if to disarm criticism, the Sutra goes on to suggest a sublimated family life; if the monk meets women, he is to treat the young as sisters or daughters, the old as mothers," Saunders said.

According to a widely accepted story within a year of the monks' arrival in Luoyang, Mingdi had the Temple of the White Horse built in the memory of the horse that accompanied the missionaries.

"To be sure, there are some scholars who dispute this account. "We were puzzled by the fact that a Buddhist temple should be named after a white horse, a symbol that had no relation to ancient Buddhism in India," Godfrey Liu and William Wang wrote in the Chinese Journal of Linguistics in 1996.

They argued that the name of the temple came from the Sanskrit word for lotus (*padma*), adding that the Chinese word *bai ma* (white horse) was originally a transcription and the symbol of the white horse came about as a result of "folk etymology." Liu and Wang added, "This is a process whereby an expression in a source language X, being semantically opaque in a tar-



An image of Kashyapa Matanga and his name in Chinese at the White Horse Temple in China.

get language Y, gets associated with a phonetically similar expression in Y, which has a different meaning."

The explanation offered by Liu and Wang is quite possible. The lotus is an important symbol in Buddhism, and several older temples in China and other parts of Asia are named after the flower. Still, whatever the origins of the temple name, it is the story of the white horse that is accepted by most pilgrims and the temple management.

Finding respect

The white horse's companions on the journey did not live long. Chinese historians largely agree that Kashyapa Matanga, who was called Jia Yemoteng in Chinese, passed away in 73 CE. Dharmaratna, called Zhu Falan in Chinese, probably died a few years later.

"The two pioneers did not long survive their arrival at the capital, but they left a tradition of sound scholarship and earnest work, and their Monastery of the White Horse became the model for many of its successors," Saunders said. "Toil on as the ox plods through deep mire, his eye fixed on the goals that lie ahead." In these words of their Sutra, we may find perhaps an echo of their resolute endeavour, and their fitting epitaph."

Both Indian monks were buried in the White Horse complex, a rare honour for clergymen in China.

Centuries later, the great scholar and traveller Xuan Zang, who returned to China after an epic India visit (629-645 CE), became the abbot of the White Horse temple.

After the death of Kashyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna, many other monks from India and Afghanistan began to undertake the arduous journey to Luoyang. "Indian monks were no doubt motivated to travel to China, in spite of the difficulties of their journeys and the slim likelihood of ever returning to their homeland, because of the respect and warmth with which they were received in China," Madhavi Thampi, who taught Chinese history at Delhi University for 35 years, wrote in her book *Indians in China 1800-1949*. "From all accounts, the Indian missionaries to China were highly appreciated by their patrons, the Chinese emperors and princes, as well as other sections of society."

Indian Buddhist monks were regular travellers on the ancient Silk Road until the end of the 11th century, after which the decline of Buddhism in India was complete. As KM Panikkar, the writer-diplomat who served as independent India's first ambassador to China, pointed out: this millennium of contact between the two countries, that was facilitated by Buddhist missionaries, was one of the most important occurrences in Asian history.

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An Indian style Buddhist temple in Luoyang.

#TRANSPORTED

WHY ALFRED HITCHCOCK MOVIES GRAB EYES



"Many people have a feeling that we get lost in the story while watching a good movie and that the theater disappears around us."

The movies of Alfred Hitchcock have made palms sweat and pulses race for more than 65 years. Scientists now tell us why he grabs our attention.

They explain how the Master of Suspense affects audience's brains. Researchers measured brain activity while people watched clips from Hitchcock and other suspenseful films. During high suspense moments, the brain narrows what people see and focuses attention on the story. During less suspenseful moments, viewers devote more attention to their surroundings.

"Many people have a feeling that we get lost in the story while watching a good movie and that the theater disappears around us," says Matt Bezddek, a postdoctoral psychology researcher at Georgia Institute of Technology who led the study. "Now, we have brain evidence to support the idea that people are figuratively transported into the narrative."

"They call it 'tunnel vision.' For the study, published in the journal *Neuroscience*, participants lay in an MRI machine and watched scenes from 10 suspenseful movies, including Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. As the movies played in the center of the screen, a flashing checker board pattern appeared around the edges.

There was an ebb and flow of brain activity in the calcarine sulcus: the first brain area to receive and process most visual information. When the suspense grew, brain activity in the peripheral visual processing areas of the calcarine sulcus decreased and activity in the central processing areas increased. For example, during the famous *North by Northwest*



scene, the brain narrowed its visual focus as the airplane bore down on Cary Grant. When he hid in the cornfield and suspense decreased, the neural activity reversed course and attention broadened.

Essentially, when suspense is the greatest, our brains shift in the calcarine sulcus to increase processing of critical information and ignore the visual content that doesn't matter. "It's neural signature of tunnel vision," says Eric

Schumacher, associate professor of psychology. "During the most suspenseful moments, participants focused on the movie and subconsciously ignored the checker boards. The brain narrowed the participants' attention, steering them to the center of the screen and into the story."

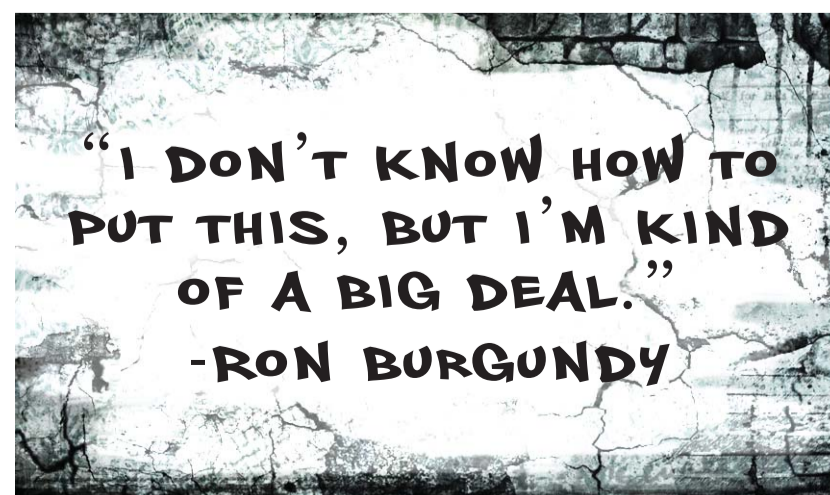
The checker board pattern was used because neurons in the calcarine sulcus are typically attacked to that type of movement. By presenting the checker boards at all times, researchers tested the idea that suspense temporarily suppresses the neuron's usual response.

The calcarine sulcus wasn't the only part of the brain sensitive to changes in suspense. The same was true for areas involved in higher-order visual areas involved in grouping objects together based on their colour and how they're moving.

What is the consequence of increasing processing during moments of high suspense? The researchers have additional research suggesting that it also leads to increased memory of story-related information.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman