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Tribal and Regional influence in Mohaprasad

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The Jagannath pitha is the confluence of religious faith & faiths in Hinduism. It is one of the four Dhams, Where Lord Jagannath is the presiding deity and Lord Balabhadra & Devi Subhadra other members of Lords clan are his companions. The concept family represents a clear resemblance of tribal & regional undivided family where the eldest is the head of the family. Lord Balabhadra even though is the elder brother Lord Jagannath is considered to be the supreme as he is the replica of Mahavishnu the param Brahma, the soul of the Universe.

Ayabrata is demarketed by its four frontiers by Adi Sankaracharya popularly know as Dham, the holy citade of the Lord of the universe. In the north frontier Lord Badrinarayan is the presiding deity in South Rameswar is the presiding deity, in West the Dwarikadhish is the presiding deity & in the East Jagannath is the presiding deity. The three dhams of East, West, South are close to the sea & the dham of north side is on the hills of Himalayas. If we consider the locality of three dhams the people stayaing near the sea & in the jungle of Himalays are mostly aborgines or tribal folks. Each Dham has unique features in respect of type of worship & prasad. Each Dham is denoted by Karma of the human being.

The dham on East side the Jagannath dham is considered as Bhogapitha. Here the lord enjoys his life with emphasis on food and other celebrations which is famous as Bhog Pitha. Here we find similarity between tribal culture and regional traditions which are simple and based on Bhog i.e. remain happy, blissful, pious and kind. The unique feature of Lord Jagannath is He leads the life like a simple mortal. Here we find the closeness between Bhagawan & Bhakta. The Bhaktas are not corrupt or crook & sing the Holy kirtan. The holy song of the Lord one being always content. This is the influence of tribal & regional culture where the people are content & pray the lord by singing is songs or Kirtan because they feel He is one among them. There are ample folklore where the lord's exploits depict him as a village folk taking care of cowherds playing the Flute enchaent similar to tribals arround him. This relation between the lord & his simple tribal folks dotnot see any difference is cast creed & position. The Lord is the pramatma arround when the Jibatma one clusteris having only one good. That is moksha, or salvation by being completely absorbed in paramatma. This is how Lord Jagannath of Puri Dham is viewed at.

The unique feature of Mohaprasad in the Jagannath :-

Lord Jagannath as is evident is fond of food. This aspect has re- semblance with tribal life. A tribal man is content & happy when his belly is full. This does not construe that the celestial or the ethereal are the same. The celestial is beyond the pangs of hunger or Bhog. But where He descends to earth. He became synonymous with earthen. So that the devote becomes oneness one with their Lord (and consider his as one among) The Lord has relatives among the tribal folk & known as Daitapati who alone take care of him when he is sick, Here the basic philosophy of the Lord is people & Lordare one.

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There is no difference among them as high & low, High caste & Low caste. They are all children of the Lord. This is nothing but a tribal philosophy where castism & high & low determinations are waived out as all mortals are one in the eyes of the Lord.

The History of Bhog offering to the deity :-

The daily rituals of the three deities Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath (along with Sudarsan) followed meticulously as envisaged in sacred creature known as Madalapanji. The daily chores are known as nitis. The niti starts from Brushing of teeth, taking and dressing up of deities. The dressing part varies everyday dependant on that day and "Vesha" from morning to evening and night and the same manner the types of prasad offered from morning to night at different times of the day and night are different in kind and taste. That is how the poet sings for Lord of universe 56 types of prasad everyday you take 60 pauti prasad.

In Jagannath Pitha known as Purusottom Kshetra (there are somanu niti.) Among all the ritual or niti the primary ritual for which Jagannath Pitha is famous for its preparation of Bhog which takes place five times in a day. It is compared of rice, lentil or dal, different types of vegetable curry. Apart from it other items are also prepared out of Bengalgram, Udat dal, Gud (Jggery) wheatfloor, refiend wheat floor in different form of sweet by using pureghee. These are offered to the Lord. The rice part is famous as Mohaprasad which represent the common food items in esterean India and the sweet part is known as dry Mohaprasad or Sukhili Mohaprasad.

There are many temples in India where the food items are offered to the deity are known as prasad where as what ever food item offered to the Lord Jagannath called Mohaprasad and this Mohaprasad can be taken by all irrespective of caste and creed. The main point is Mohaprasad is offered to Devi Bimala which represents the regional & tribal tradition of Gramadevi.

The Magnanimity of Lord Jagannath lies in a casteless society which truly represents the origin of the Lord Jagannath as neelamadhav of tribals where caste did not prevail. The origin of Lord Jagannath starts from the tribal chief Biswabasu who worshiped Jagannath as Neelamahav and that is how the evolution of Jagannath culture is deeply associated with tribal & regional culture of Odisha. In Skanda Puran we find Biswabasu the tribal chief the offerings of nealuwha to Bidyapati a brahmin.

Also the nuances of tribal culture are vividly shrine in the worship and daily services of three deities.

Jagannath culture embodies the rural life style and culture of Odisha. The Lords every ritual represents a unique combination of the civilised and tribal (Arya & Unarya) tradition. The daily rituals of the Lord embodies rural

culture, rural conscience rural life and rural freshees. The daily ritual and Niti such as Brushing the teeth, giving Bath and the dressing up of the Lord, Puja, homa offering prasad are done by people of different caste. The Puja and home are conducted by Brahmins. A number of people associated to carry out the ritual or niti. May not be of the higher caste Brahmini.

Now a days preparation of prasad for the deities and the concept of community kitchen following tribal & rural culture. Every day Prasad is offered to the Lord in following manner. Everyday before the cooking starts the kitchen place and chulla are cleaned washed with cow dung mix water. Every Night after the Badasinghar Dhoop three (3) persons knowns as "Dhopakhalia" Sevak do different seva in the kitchen one see cleans the kitchen and what ever is strewn in the kitchen after days cooking known as Sankhudi. Two other sevaks take out charcoal and ash from the chuli. Every time they sprinkle cowdung mix water clean it separately. Thus the Rabadia Sevak sprinkle cowdung mix water & Dhopakhalia Sevak clean the kitchen Rosaghara.

In traditional villages to start any Karma is First "homa" the worship to firegod. In the same manner in the temple kitchen "Homa" is the first pooja. Thereafter of eringsare made to the Sungod known as Suryapuja. This procedure is following everyday on the kitchen of the lord known as Rosaghar homa. Before cooking the pooja narrated

Above is conducted every day for Rosasudhi i.e. purifyiation As sad earlier sanctifying the kitchen is done by sprinkliup cow-dung mix water. Everyday the ritual of Rosahoma starts after the deity has taken bath (snana). It clearly relates to our regional tradition. Where cooking starts after morning bath.

After completion of Rosahoma the Suar Sevak, Cooks starts cooking prasad. Every day the ritual of homa starts after the lords Snana but in the days of festival.

This works is done before the snana of deities. The tradition of Suryapuja is the representation of riginal and tribal life. The ritual is conducted by the temple priest / Purohita or any other priest as pujapanda Sevak who is Brahmin.

Dynamics of cooking in Rosasala :-

The size of the kitchen is very large. There are as many as 140 no chulla where the prasad is prepared, It represents the concept of community kitchen where food cooked for thousand of people. The process of cooking continues on rotation. Once a batch of suars completes their cooking and the cooked food is transferred to the temple for offering another batch of Suars are is waiting to cook as per orders received from devotees.

The process of cooking in the temple resembles a rural life to a great extent. Everyday 56 varieties and sweet prasad

are being prepared by the Suar or Supakar. The chula where the prasad is prepared is divided in to three classes. (1) Arnachuli, (2) Ahia, (3) Pithachula (for sweet prasad or Sukhili Bhog). The height of Chulla is 3ft. from the base. 2.5ft, wide and 3ft. long. Every chulli is made of earth. Each chulli is having six no of Jhinka or six dome type structure which represents six angulat or Agniyantra on the top small dome or Jhinka Navachakrayantra meaning there by at one time nine earthen vesseless (Kudua) can be placed and the cooking is done.

According to 'Sarada Tilaka' - "Mahatwa Naba Gunitam" each chulli has six jhinka to keep five earthen vesseless. On the top of five earthan vessless 3 (three) small earthen vessless are kept on the top of three and thus the rice prasad is cooked. According to ancient tradition casurina (Jhaun) wood is used as fuel. Every chuli has two opening. On the top opening chula is burnt as fuel and in the lower opening burning charcoal are taken out and put in large narrow drain typed structure known as ahia. In this Ahia sall, vegetable are being cooked over burning charcoal. The prasad is cooked in the water of the well situated at the north side of the kitchen known as Ganga & Yamuna. The water of wells does not contain any chemicals.

The container placed on chuli is made of red colour earth given the shape of Handi cylindrical shape. The earthen pots used for cooking container are of different shape & eco friendly and good for health. Prasad prepared for the deities are wholesome and healthy. As Prasad is cooked in earthen pots there is no chemical reaction. The dal and vegetable cooked as Prasad are purely boiled. The boiled prasad is offered to deities vegetables used contain lot of fibers which are good for digestion and health. Artificial spices are not used pure ghee in used preparing pancake and sweet pithas,

Everyday Prasad is offered five times. Gopal Balabha, Sakaladhupa, Madhyahna Dhupa, Sandhya Dhupa's Badasinghar Dhup.

It is said that one of the largest kitchens in the world is that of Lord Jagannath's. During Ratha Yatra and in the month of Kartika thousands Lakh's of devotees visit the temple & take prasad. That is why it is said that the kitchen of Lord Jagannath can give prasad to thousands of people everyday and in the process of preparing prasad Brahmins and Non-Brahmins are equally associated. At the time of carrying prasad from kitchen to the Ratnasinghasan and Bhog Mandap the Sevak (carriers) cover their face in a piece of cloth (Gamucha). Which is called 'Baghamunha.'

If we analyse the prasad offered to Lord we clearly find the rural and tribal flavour in preparing food. Certain type of food offered to lord are regional's tribal origin. Such as Pakhala, Chupuda Pakhal, Ladu, Ambalu, Parijataka, Nuni Khuruma, & for the month of Pausa - Manda pitha, Arisa,

Gaintha, Enduri, Kakarapitha, Takua, Feni, Kanti Mugei, Chhatua are of rural origin.

In the time of Makar Sankranti festival day - Makara Chaula, Monda Pitha, Tipuri, Kanti, Gaja, Chakuli.

In the Summer Season during chandan Yatra - Mandua, Keli in

Chaitra Amabasya - Chitaupitha.

Kartik Masa - Dobhjalua, Nadia Koram, Lia Khai.

Krishna & Ramjanmastami :- Jeuta

Ansara Anabasara time - Ananya sarapana

Adhara Pana and at the time of Badasinghar Dhop - Kanji, Marichpani, Kadmba are very similar to in tribal food pattern of Odisha.

And another point we find that the daitas perform seva who are considered to be the relative of the Lord Jagannath. They do a gupta Seva secret Service when the lords full sick for 15 days just before the Car Festival. The Daitas apply Balm & lotion (Pholuri oil) on the body of the deities, and medicine known as Dasamularista prepared out of roots & herbs collected from the Jungle is a clear tradition the lords has origin tribal and adopted the rural tradition and life style is to the adivasi life style of Odisha.

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Summary

This article I discusses the tribal and regional influence on the culture of Jagannath temple especially in the tradition of Mahaprasad. It explains how Lord Jagannath is worshipped not as a distant divine figure but as a simple, compassionate member of a family and society, reflecting the lifestyle and values of tribal communities such as equality, simplicity, devotion and communal harmony. The text highlights Jagannath Dham as the "Bhogapitha" where food offerings and celebrations hold central importance, symbolizing the close relationship between the duty and devotees. It also describes how Mahaprasad traditions rituals, and the role of tribal servitors like the Daitapati demonstrate the blending of tribal philosophy with regional Hindu practices, emphasizing that all people are equal before the Lord regardless of caste of social status.

Keyword

Biswabasu, Gramadevi, Mahaprasada, Dho-pkhalia Sevaka, Sankhudi Suar Sevaka, Gopal Ballava, Chupuda Pakhala, Manda Pitha, Gaintha Gupta Seva, Daita