

Art of Costume Devi Rajballavi at Rajbalhat in West Bengal (Approx. 1242 to 1424)AD

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ABSTRACT

One of the earliest iconographic description of 'Devi Rajballavi', in which popular as 'Swath Kali'. Inside the temple Gopal, Narayan, Neel Saraswati, Basudev, Bhagabati and Mahadev are kept with Devi Rajballavi. Indian olden times has a treasure of fine art and craft. Idol and Supernatural being have a very prominent and pious role in Indian mythology. It constituents are the hidden history and information of God and Goddess. The two epics Ramayana and Mahabharata are very popular in Indian mythology. Costume plays important role in iconography of Idol. This research will focus on the changes and evolution of Devi Rajballavi. Affects would be laid on various colour of Design of costume of Devi Rajballavi from olden times to present time. Hindu mythology, sculpture, painting and classics are backbone of Indian costume. It shows the cultural influence in costumes of deities. Like Hindu god Shiva.

The strange Devi Rajballavi, approximately six feet in height, is white in colour and her left leg rests on the head of seated BirupakhaMhadev and right leg rest on the chest of MahakalBhairab. The right hand has a dagger while the left a sindoor case. The temple is still active and devotees from the surrounding region converge to Rajbalhat to pay tribute to the Goddess. Rajballavi temple complex, built by Raja Rudranarayan of Bhursut the Rajballavi Temple complex also houses four shiva temples, one of which is octagonal in shape. Sadly the entire complex has undergone several renovations and has lost all trace of its 500 years of history. But the strange idol of Devi Rajballavi, still reminds one of the historic days of the temple. The temple is still active and pujas can be offered. Naramunda-mala is decorated in Devi's neck and her waist belt is decorated by human hand. All of this present under her dress because Devi is well dressed. For Devi 14 hand cotton sari is required also this blouse pieces with banarasi or silk is prevalence. Raja Sadananda established Natmandir in the front of Devi Rajballavi temple behind this Randhanshala, four shiv temple and nahabat-khana. Now a days Nahabat Tune is listen to the evening.



Fig-1: India & W.B. Map.



Fig-2: Hooghly Map,



Fig-3: Devi Rajballavi—
1424-AD.



Fig-4: Devi Rajballavi-1326



Fig-5: Neel Saraswati,



Fig-6: Old Temple



Fig-7:Devi RajballaviNew Temple, Fig-8:Banessar Shiv,



Fig-9 Traimbakeswar Shiv,



Fig-10: Someswar shiv



Fig-11: Rajrajeswar and Nandiswar Shiv



Fig-12: Rajballavi Dighi

Costume is a universal term referring to actual objects related to the human body. Apparel refers to garments made of fabric, weaves and other wearable resources. Costume is derived from word 'custom' evolving from the environment and customs of society. It refers to Costume for a specific use - be it for a ritual or presentation, ethnic or historical within a specific context of occasion and period. It is essential to know its origin and evolutionary development. The awareness of fashion and costume history is important since they are the inevitable outcome of the socio-cultural-political influences prevalent in society at different ideas in period. Costume are protection of the human body, which in turn, depend on physical conditions like climate, environmental area, available raw material, textiles etc. Costume indicate social significance like religious beliefs and aesthetics; exhibit individual status; proclaim alliance with or create differentiation among a group. Items of Costume and accessories would be included in the expressions of style.

Introduction

Ritual has it that Rajbalhat was once the capital of the Bhursut kingdom. It is said that the last fisherman king of Sanibhangar was defeated by one Chaturanan Neogi, who originally carved Bhursut kingdom out.

Krishna Roy, the son of a daughter of Chaturanan became the first Raja of Bhursut. This event took place near about 1583-84 AD. The family of Krishna Roy belonged to Phulia village.

His great grandson Pratap Narayan, a very charitable ruler, was king from 1652 to 1684 AD. He was given the title of Raja and was known as such in the court of Emperors Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. His son was Shiv Narayan, who was succeeded by his only son Naranarayan. Either during the lifetime of Naranarayan or immediately after his death Kirtichand, the king of Bardhaman, forcibly occupied Bhursutpargana near about 1719 AD. The name 'Rajbalhat' originated from the goddess Rajballavi. River Saraswati probably sakha of Damodar flowing across this Rajbalhat.

Main costume Sari of Devi Rajballavi

Sari like garment - parlla (influence of Greek and Romans), Head ornaments- Mukut and Opasa (A simple Headband), Jewellery Gold (Suvarna), silver (Rupya). Naramunda-mala is decorated in Devi's neck and her waist belt is decorated by human hand. All of this present under her dress because Devi is well dressed. For Devi 14 hand cotton sari is required also this blouse pieces with banarasi or silk is prevalence. Devi like Dark Red, Green colour, navy-blue colour, off-white colour sari. Changes the sari every day. Red choli is present on the head. In winter season Chadar is provided to the devi. Costume has played a very important role in perceptive the idol costume or contemporisation of God costumes in several

modes like serials, movies and Theatre. Reflection of human costume has been seen in the costume of God, mythological epics and numerous art forms. Costume reproduce can be referred to as a dress in general or an individual class or period with distinguishing individualities. It is one of the most visible signs of evolution. Every community had different dresses. It was the community that used to decide what to wear, how to wear, the differences to be made in the costumes on the bases of gender and age, class and castes, religion and region occasion and livelihood. There used to be a public sanction as to which part of body was covered, how to conceal and how to expose. Countrywide costumes or local costumes expressed the local identify and highlighted world. Similarly in ancient time to present time people imagine the costumes of God according to period and time it change. Rajbalhat is famous for handloom saris and gold ornaments.



Fig-13: Red Cotton sari,



Fig-14: Red&Green sari,



Fig-15: Benarasi sari



Fig-16: Tanter sari,



Fig-17: Deep Red sari,



Fig-18: Deep Blue sari,

Take a narrow lane past the temple complex and walk past the textile workshop with its battering looms. Walk past women spinning cotton thread on charka (spinning wheels). The lane meanders on reminding one of North Calcutta or

even of Beneras. Finally the lane emerges in Rajbalhat Bazar and a short walk takes you to the grand temple of Radhakanta in Ghataktala.

Geography

Rajbalhat is located at 22.76°N 88.04°E, Villages in Rajbalhat panchayat are as follows: Rajbalhat, ShibChak, Morhal, Mukundapur, Kuliara, Jhanda, Binodbati, ChaimanChak, Naskardanga, Gultia, DakshinGultia, Tripan, Nabagram, Jabni, and Rahimpur.

Economics

In 1789 East India Company established a commercial residency in this village. Since then Rajbalhat is famous for handloom saris and gold ornaments.

Education

There are two high schools, Rajbalhat High School and Rajbalhat Girls School. Both have facility for higher secondary level education.

Conclusion

Similarly The Sari, The Dhoti, The Urni and The Turban remains one of the garments from ancient period that is still worn in Morden India. The culture of God Costume (Sari) is one such prominent ethnic dress which holds the heritage culture and growing values as well. The Godly spiritual value of sari there merged with some social and cultural values.

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