

Folklore of Munda Tribe in Odisha

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ABSTRACT

In India there is a state Odisha popularly known as a state of tribals. In this state there are 62 types of tribes are live in various districts like Korapur, Kandhamal, Phulbani, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj etc. in my article I want to present some folk Stories and Songs which are popularly used in the Munda tribes of Keonjhar District, where their spiritual and social life are reflected.

These Stories and Songs are collected from the various blocks of Keonjhar districts like Joda and Sadar Block of Konjhar. In the preparation of this article Sri. Narendra Kumar Patra and some Munda tribals are help me a lot. This articles helps the readers to know about the tradition of folklore of munda tribes and also help to know about their spiritual and social life.

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INTRODUCTION

The name of the community is 'Munda'. The meaning of munda is 'Chief' or 'Headman'. According to Mundari language munda means 'Horoko'(Man) and their race 'Horo'(Man). At present they claim to be called as Kolarians, Pre-Aryans, Pre - Dravidians, Austric, Protoustroroids, Austria-Asiatic and Austronesia.

Basically Munda tribe belongs to Austro-Asiatic family. Mundas are found in the north-eastern part of India concentrated in the state of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. They also reside in adjacent areas of Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Arunachal Pradesh as well as in some areas of Bangladesh. According to 2011 census report, the total number of Munda population is 2,22,866. And in odisha is 584,346. The Socio-cultured and economic life of munda tribe is associated with traditional Agriculture and the forest. So, they believe in our nature and the natural sources of earth are their God & Goddess, such as Sun (Singbonga), Water, Earth, Tree etc. Munda people have their own system of traditional Administration in their villages, where the 'Puhan' is the sacred village head and also the religious chief of the society.

The munda people elaborate rituals to celebrate their birth, death, engagement and marriage. So the birth of a boy is celebrated as an earner for the family and the birth of a girl is celebrated as a family caretaker. Lotapani is their engagement ceremony, and the marriage considered one of the important rituals of life, is a week-long festivity. Involved in agriculture, the munda tribe celebrates the seasonal festivals such as Mage Parab, Phagu Parab, Karam Parab,

Baha Parab, Sarhul, Sohria etc some seasonal festivals have coincided with religious festivals. The world view of munda tribe is unique in nature and they always believe in rebirth and deeds. Munda people make and use of different types of musical instruments like Mandai, Dholki, Nagaara and Fluit etc during their cultural programme. They perform various types of dances including Maghe, Lahura, Karam etc. like most tribal groups, the mundas have a rich oral folk traditions. This includes historical myth, folk tales, riddles and proverbs. In this article I want to present here some folk tales and songs of munda tribes which are commonly used in the state of Odisha.

Folk Tale-1(Transcription)

kāsiā hātu

ḍāṅguhām āyārte haramuṭurē tāikenā | entāre tāiken te āhdiānā | en tāre ākinhām buḷi rāsā pāsāki tāikenā | en samayare ākināh mid siṭiā habāyānā | ṭhik eka sala bhitare siṭiā awāre gititāete dāhāgulāgid gālā te dāh āgulāgid kiṅ senahayānā | enduite ujulente siṭiāh nel kare siṭiāh gayahjānā | siṭiā kiṅ tapā kij | ente sāp sij habāyānā | en samayare en hātūren haiburu gamake tikiṅ kajikerākiṅ-ḍāṅguhām ābenad nen hātūre kāben tāidāiā | āben eṭāh disum ki nām jam ben | en cānāb ākināb jāgā gelbār mukā tanti lijā āndah miāra peeṭā bhariṭtee emātuṭā | en cānāb ḍāṅguhām sankajhar gālā kuṭire ṭāiken sakaā jāgā rutāguṭure e ṭāiānā | ḍāṅguhām hātu jāgā nāma lāgidā ḍāṅgu pāpāri tāhre barapādāren rāpuā, tikiṅ ḍāṅguhām apākem senahatānā | hātu disumakāh namatānāwamente ḍāṅgu hām kājikerā en samāyare rāpuāhām kim en jāgā buru sankajharbetā dumirtā rutāguṭure tāinben | enā esu baṅiā

jāgā, en samāyare kāsīā hātu lāgīr bhusugā hātūrena ārahāmā sindukalate bādābādi habāyānā | kāsīā hātu lāgīr dāṅguhām kajikerā jadi akāe āsiramā sāndisim āṅdah āi baetā dhiijam nua dāiā ājakathāh jāgāhabāh | en samāyare mantra bādābādi ṭāikenā dāṅguhām tikiñ bhusugāren sidu kakiñ kajīār kiñjā | mār āben ujuhben | dāṅguhām tikiñtāre gel bāriā setāka ṭāikenā | bhusugāren sidu tikiñ ujūh samāyare setaka bukakere dāṅguhām uthākente akāe akāe ujūtānā sābipe | enlekā bār āpeduā ka cestāketā kākiñ dāiyānā | enchānāb dāṅguhām kiñ kajīādā | mār āben misā ujutaben | cānāba dāṅguhām sen kete āi sir mā sāṅdi sim āṅdah āi baitā diā cālāketa bibhari erāh āndure jāgāna ka sāmāh keta ki jama nua keta cānābad muhāre diā kakiñ dula tānakiñāh | setāāh samāyare uṭhākān te siā ci sāṅdi sima bānāāh | enanāda dāṅgu hām tikiñge | āṅdah ākiñlate kābu bādābādi āh | āyāge kāsīā hātu dalabu hārabu mānātiñāh | entā ete dāṅguhām hām buḷi sukhu santirekñ ṭāiyānā |

Munda Folktale- 01(Translation)

Kasia – The Village

This folktale was collected from Mr. Shankarshan Banara of Kashia village under Joda block of Keonjhar district. This story narrates the background of human settlement in that locality. The strong belief of the people of this place on ghost and magic is quite evident in this folktale. Its summarized essence is presented below:

There was a village called “Horomota”. Dangu and family used to live there. There came a time when many villagers succumbed to sudden death due to some mysterious unknown reasons. One day Dangu’s wife went to fetch water leaving her sleeping child in the house. On her return she found the child lying dead and nobody had a clue. Dangu surrendered to the local deity for help. The Goddess came in his dream and told that there was an evil spirit in the village. That spirit used to emerge from the rice mill leaver in the house and killed the housemates with an intention of not letting anyone to live in that village. The deity also advised Dangu to leave this village in order to escape from the trap of that spirit. In desperation, Dangu sold all his properties for only a Black Bull and Sharee with the length measuring that of twelve hands and left the village. But the toughest question he had in hand was “where to go”

He roamed around in search of a new habitat and finally reached at the outskirts of a village called ‘Shankajhara’. A passerby named ‘Bindhara’, of a nearby village ‘Barapada’ asked Dangu “where are you going?” Dangu replied “I am looking for a suitable place to live”.

Then Bindhara told “the place where you are standing right now is a junction of three villages’ like Sankajhara, Durmita and Ranagutu (Barapada). This is an excellent place for you to settle in as you can get help from these nearby villages whenever you require. Bindhara seemed quite logical to Dangu. He built a small hut and started to live there along with his wife.

After some days the members of the Kolha tribe of ‘Bhusugaon’ (a nearby village) began to quarrel and fight with Dangu. They claimed that the place belonged to their forefathers. So Dangu must vacate that place. But Dangu was in no mood to leave and didn’t give in to their demand. Finally, both the parties agreed to a deal. According to it, if the villages could manage to eat seven year-old chicken and

drink the seven day-old ‘Handia’ (a local liquor prepared from fermented water rice) kept in Dangu’s house, then he must leave the place or else he would be allowed to reside there. Accordingly, the villagers reached that site by night. But Dangu’s twelve dogs were divided in two groups of six each. One team guarded Dangu’s house whereas the other patrolled near the Banyan tree at the boundary of the village. As a result, the village could not enter in to the village and thus lost the challenge. But they were not prepared to handover the victory so easily to Dangu. They demanded that Dangu should try the same task with the villagers in order to claim his right to stay there.

In the next night Dangu took the help of a black magician of the Munda tribe to win the challenge. He made the village unconscious with the Black Magic and entered into the village. He killed the chicken with “Bankia” (anklet of local ladies) of one of the village lady and ate it. Then he drank the seven day-old ‘Handia’ kept in the house. He smeared the Handia on the faces of the villagers as a proof of his victory and returned back to his hut.

On the following morning the village gained consciousness and realized that Dunga had won the challenge as their faces were smeared with Handia. As a result they allowed him and his wife to live there happily. Afterwards the name of that village became ‘Kashia’ by the surname of the Black Magician “Bipra Kashiali’ who had helped Dangu to win the challenge.

Now people of the Munda, Bhuyan and other tribes have been living happily in the Kashia village since seven generations.

Folk Tale-2(Transcription)

buṅgā keḍ māṅḍi

mēḍo hātuo nutam taṭibā hātu junum I en hātūre mēḍo buḷe tāikenā I āyāā nutum rasikā I āyāā upunio hanaka tāikenā bāria kaā hanaka, bārio kui hagika I en buḷeo mārāṅge kaā han āndi habā lenā āyāā kiminte o nutum sukuramuni I sukarmuni o kiā āntum rekāṅḍa I musīṅg sukuramuni o hayāringā rasikā buḷe āyā mārāṅge kinin te ke kajikerā ḍieṅga basāṅga to enete āyā kimik cuṅga cāulire ḍieṅga kasabā keḗ I gāpāmeyāṅgā ḍioṅga uputayānā I enacānāpaḍa enbuḷe āyāā upunie han teāyāā mārāṅg kimanteke kāsikerā gaṅgāe teyā ḍesāulijairā telāṅga senābu i āyāra musīṅgi sukuramuni enteāyāā upunie hanak māṅḍiteyā cāli, ḍieṅga, sim mēḍo idiketeka en desāuli jāirāteka sene ānāka I entāre māṅḍi keḍāka, utukeḍākā, enate ḍieṅga cālā kedāka I encānāp māṅḍi utuḍieṅa en jairāre siṅga baṅgāke ḍieṅgarā I cānāpadak māṅḍi Jamakeḗaka, I ne samayare en buḷe māṅḍi emāitāikenāka āye kāyāā yānā I enate sābin ko oā beṭāyānareda ka vḷura beṭākeḗaka kātudaka en desāuli jairāreka bāgeākārā I enta Kiminte niranirate senaayānā ona cānāpadanel keḗ āyā hayāringā enkātūre māyame lāgātār ken sābin jāl tānā I en musīṅg tāyāteāle ā hokaā pān jāti parabare māge paraba, bāā parabare ḍieṅge, māṅḍi sim, kete eāre jāka bāiteā tāine enāka baṅgāyā I

Munda Folktale- 02(Translation)

Offerings to God (Prasad)

This Folktale is collected from Mrs. Sunita Munda. The tale throws light on beliefs, tradition, culture and spiritual sentiments of the “Munda” tribe. The traditional practice of offering rice, Chicken and Handia (local liquor prepared from

fermented water rice) to the deities in each and every festival of these tribes, probably owes its origin to this story that is narrated below:

There was a village called “Tatiba Hanu Hutum”. An old man “Rashika” along with his family used to live there. In his family he had two daughters, two sons and one daughter-in-law whose name was ‘Sukurumani’. One day Rashika asked Sukurumani to prepare Handia. Accordingly she prepared Handia from Raw Rice. Then, Rashika asked the family members to carry the Handia with uncooked rice grains and Chicken and to accompany him to the ‘Hesauli Shala’ (The Kitchen of Village deity). As per his instruction, all had reached the local deity “Sing Banga”. They cooked rice and Chicken and offered this stuff with Handia to the deity as ‘Prashad’. After all the rituals were completed all the family members except Rashika consumed the ‘Prashad’ and returned to home where as Rashika had stayed back. Meanwhile, the family members felt some absurd behavioral changes in Rashika during the last part of the whole process.

While returning on her way back to home, all of a sudden it struck to Sukurmuni that she had forgotten her knife in Hesauli Shala. So she quickly returned to that place to collect the knife. After reaching there, she was quite shocked to see Rashika licking the chicken blood-stained knife. When she asked him about this strange activity of his, Rashika just collapsed to death on the spot. Since then, so many different stories have been speculated about his death. Most of the localities believe that the local deity Sing Banga had entered in to the body of Rashika on that fateful day and ate the offered rice, chicken with Handia. From that day it became a tradition to offer rice, Chicken and Handia to the deities in every festival of the Munda tribe which still continues till date.

Munda Song -1 (Transcription) rāhā gita

buru buru pāram mayē buru param,
buru lukui jumukā bāhānā |
keūjhar jipiteka pāram keṛame,
buru lukui jumukā bāhānā |
keūjhar jipiteka pāram keṛame,
uluh mere uṛuh beṛaye mere,
buru lukui jumukā bāhānā |
kuṇḍāma cānāhbare meṛadah nalama jaraye,
buru lukui jumukā bāhānā
kuṇḍāma cānāhbara meṛadah nalama jaraye,
āmakah ānndimeh musin āñjahya diliyānja,
buru lukui jumukā bāhānā |
kāca sākama reyañja tusu ī tām ā
buru lukui jumukā bāhānā |

Munda Folksong- 01(Translation) Marriage Farewell Song

This folk song narrates about the marriage system, the Kandana (weeping) of the newly married girl when she leaves for her in-law’s house and the long-standing intimacy between two girls. The two girls have befriended since their childhood. Today, one of them is getting married. She is being taken to the Keonjhar town in the motor vehicle. Leaving her hill-surrounding village, she looks at the bunches of wildflowers blossoming on the trees that are bent with the load of them. At that time the sweet memories of her bosom friend comes in her mind. She imagines how her friend is weeping under the thatched door-step of her house without her company. So, she convinces her not to forget their intimacy and hopes her friend would also invite her when the friend’s marriage wills take place. She may not gift a valuable thing to her friend in her marriage, but at least she can present her a pair of bangles.

Munda Song -2 (Transcription) āñja khoḷā hātu

hātūh tāi haṇḍiñ geyā
jakā lekā ayah lutum
lutum tāye khoḷapā-lutum tāye kho ḷapā
purahbareh khoḷapā suñi
pāscimareh sāirāma
uttararēh engā maṅgaḷā
dakhīnarēh gāi sari menaibā
hujūh lenāñja samātite añjāh janama ateteh
etah lenāñja engā jāgār kholapā hātūreh
etah lenāñja āyārate sena eka ātehere
kāṭāema kāteḥ kāṭāme kate|
etah lenāñja alaah pādḥāa lāndājāgārakah
khoḷapā hātūreh|
hatūh tāja huṇḍiñja geyah lutum tāyoh
pakā geyāh kholapā ayāh lutum
pakā geyāh kholapā ayāh lutum|

Munda Folksong- 02(Translation) My village – ‘Kholapa’

This folk-song was sung by Sj. Shankar Singh to us. He is an in-habitant of the Khalapa village, P.o-Timirmunda of the Keonjhar district.

In this folk-song, the love and affection of a villager for his birth place is seen. The natural beauties and the geographical setting of the village are given priority in the song. Kholapa is a hamlet which is surrounded by the Kholapasuni hillock in the East, the temple of Omm Sairam, Maa Mangala and Maa Gaisiree in the West, North and the South respectively. “I had descended in this village with empty hands, learnt my mother tongue for the first time, and, was able to stand up by myself, learnt to walk and got the basic knowledge. This is my own village which name is ‘Kholapa’. I am proud of it”. This is what the song is all about.

GLOSSARY

Word

hātu	-	Village
tāikenā	--	Possible
nutum	--	Name
āyāh	--	Mine
upunie	--	Three(Number)
musiᅅg	--	One day
mārāᅅga	--	Big
jāirā	--	Place
hayānrīᅅga	--	Accidental
kājikerā	--	Told
cānāb	--	Time
baᅅia	--	Well
bādābādi	--	Conflict
buru	--	Mountain
pāram	--	Other Side
kuᅅdāma	--	Backside
dili	--	Invitation
uᅅuhmere	--	Remember
āmākā	--	Your

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