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A Study of Kunkana Adivasi Ramkatha

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Abstract

From the ages and ages, the Ramkatha has an eternal place in the hearts of people in India and abroad where the Indians live, through various traditions like oral tradition, memory, drama, poetry etc. Originally Ramkatha was edited and put into an epic poem by Maharshi Valmiki but various deviations and adaptations of Ramkatha in different linguistic areas and social setups are found. Out of these, some of the Kathas are preserved through oral tradition, which is enjoyed through listening only. The oral sings and presents the Katha before audience assimilating their own regional, cultural, social histories and traditions and adding a flavor in it through gestures, changing the pitch of the voice and his expressive abilities make it a memorable religious-aesthetic experience. This Ramkatha of Kunkana Adivasi raises several questions as it blends the sociality, traditional routine and local culture into the delineations of the main events of the story. The characters and their relations to one-another are shown differently in this Ramkatha than other Ramkathas. Besides, the birth of Sita, incident of Maitra vadhans (shooting of the fish), the first meeting of Hanuman and Rama, the conversion of Ravana into a Ten faced and eighteen handed monster, the event of Makar Dhvaja, the secret of Ravana's death, the event of Vasudeva's encounter with the deer, the story of Shrivatsa etc. are preserved vividly in a slightly different note. Since this Ramkatha has been popular in oral tradition only, the traces of the influence of other Ramkathas can be found on it.

From the ages and ages, the Ramkatha has an eternal place in the hearts of the people in India and wherever the Indians live, through various traditions like oral tradition, memory, drama, poetry etc. By going through the history of Ramkatha, it is found that the first Ramkatha was written in Jain tradition and then it was edited and put into an epic poem by Maharshi Valmiki. However, today in almost all the valid cultural languages of India has its own Ramkatha along with the Ramkathas of Adivasi people living in every corner of India. The Dungari Garasiya Bheel people/ hilly tribe of Adivasi having their own land and areas) of North Gujarat region have their own Ramkatha as well as the Adivasis of Panchmahal district and Kunkana adivasis of Daang district of Gujarat have their own version of Ramkatha.